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King Midas and Rodney Young

GORDION

PLACE-MAKERS

BY RICHARD HODGES

WHEN RODNEY YOUNG opted to excavate at Gordion in modern Turkey, he must have hoped he would have the Midas touch, making discoveries that stretched and teased the imagination. Whether the great Phrygian tomb he excavated was indeed the tomb of Midas is a matter of debate. What is not is that this ancient city on the Anatolian plateau gained a new lease on life

thanks to the excavations he began in 1950. Young and his successors, Ken Sams, Mary Voigt, and now Brian Rose, have not only carried out important excavations generating major scholarship, they have also been place-makers. This latter role is no less important than that of the archaeologist. Gordion once again has a community whose local school features lessons on the Phrygians as well as the role played by the Penn Museum in bringing the ancient site to light. Lending essential purpose to this new phase of the ancient city's history is a program of conservation and presentation led by Frank Matero of Penn's Department of Historic Preservation, working in collaboration with Ankara's Middle East Technical University (METU). Added to this, the archives of this history of Gordion are being given new life thanks to the digital project described here in *Expedition*. Could Rodney Young have fully imagined the part Penn would play in reviving this ancient city? I doubt it. But with the aid of hindsight and the skills of the 21st century, Gordion is a model of how archaeology can have an active role in the present, how archaeologists are much more than discoverers, and, as the new villagers at Gordion would acknowledge, how archaeologists are place-makers with an active and important role in the present. Rodney Young, in short, *had* the Midas touch insofar as he made extraordinary discoveries and brought back to life a city that for millennia had lain deserted on the Anatolian plateau. 

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