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## MUSINGS AND VISIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Looking at the rich array and diversity of the articles in this issue of *Expedition*, I was struck by the feeling that even those of us who know the University of Pennsylvania Museum well tend to forget about the incredible importance of our permanent collection. We rightfully celebrate the extraordinary research that our staff undertakes across the globe, the superb permanent and traveling exhibits that we mount, and the terrific public outreach that all of our departments, including Education, Museum Services, Special Events/Membership, and Publications, take part in. But we sometimes take for granted the value and utility of our huge collection which numbers approximately one million pieces.

This point was brought home to me by Don White's article on the lead sarcophagus on display in our Roman gallery and Elin Danien's article on the Ratinlixul vase which can be seen in the Mesoamerican gallery. I was struck as well as by the terrific reception for our collaborative exhibit with the Dallas Museum of Art on "Searching for Ancient Egypt: Art, Architecture, and Artifacts from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology." I had the good fortune to attend the grand opening of this spectacular exhibit, which was ably curated by Dr. David Silverman and his colleagues in the Egyptian Section. In fact, I am writing this column on the plane home from Dallas, still basking in the glow of the acclaim that the Museum's 138 Egyptian artifacts in "Searching for Ancient Egypt" received at the opening. Certainly much of this praise is due to the brilliant display of these pieces devised by the Dallas Museum of Art exhibition staff. But much is also due to both the aesthetic beauty of the pieces on display and the useful cultural contexts that our Egyptian Section provided for these objects.

Of course, these pieces represent just a small part of the great Egyptian collection the Museum has amassed in the hundred plus years since Sara Yorke Stevenson became the first curator of the Egyptian Section. The depth and breadth of this collection is remarkable and is equaled or surpassed in this country only by the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the Brooklyn Museum. In his remarks at the opening of "Searching for Ancient Egypt," Jay Gates, the Director of the Dallas Museum of Art, pointed out in this regard that our 42,000 piece Egyptian collection itself is larger than the entire Dallas Museum of Art collection. And the Egyptian collection is far from our biggest!

In the coming years, we will strive to increase our ability to share our exceptional archaeological and ethnographic materials with the general public in the United States and, where possible, in other countries through traveling exhibits, loans, publications, distance learning, and our ever-expanding Web site (<http://www.upenn.edu/museum/>).

*Jeremy A. Sabloff*  
*The Charles K. Williams II*  
*Director*

The false door to the Old Kingdom chapel of Kapura, one of the University of Pennsylvania Museum's objects on display at the Dallas Museum of Art.

*Photo by Michel Fortier, Dallas Morning News*

