The current academic year has seen the launch of an exciting period of renovations and updates for the Penn Museum and its neighbor, the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS). UPHS began the demolition of Penn Tower, located directly to the south of the Museum, in preparation for construction of a new Patient Pavilion designed by noted architect Lord Norman Foster. Shared facilities between UPHS and the Museum, including a pedestrian walkway and new loading docks, will be created as part of the Patient Pavilion project, and the Museum is pleased to be working cooperatively with UPHS and timing the renovation of its Coxe and Harrison Wings—which house collections mostly from Egypt and Asia—concurrently, pending funding.

Beginning during the demolition of the Penn Tower parking garage in September 2015, the Penn Museum and UPHS initiated careful vibration monitoring within the Museum’s galleries and store-rooms, and Museum conservators, preparators, and other Collections staff worked to stabilize some objects in situ and remove others to offsite storage for the duration of the construction period.

In the first half of 2016, Penn Museum visitors will notice the following changes:

The Kaipure Chapel in the 1st floor Egypt (Sphinx) Gallery was stabilized and then de-installed in fall 2015 and is now stored behind a plexiglass wall—similar to that of the 3rd floor display In the Artifact Lab—along the entire east side of the gallery. Conservators expect to begin treatment of the Kaipure Chapel in this space in late spring 2016.
The two large Buddhist murals in the 3rd floor China Gallery are under study and treatment during normal operating hours. They will be de-installed during June 2016 for further treatment and in anticipation of renovations to the Harrison Wing Rotunda.

The Secrets & Science exhibition and Mummy Room entered from the 3rd floor Egypt (Mummies) Gallery will close in February 2016 for object stabilization, with expected re-opening of the Secrets & Science exhibition in April 2016.

The Islamic Near East Gallery on the 1st floor will also close in February 2016, with objects coming off display for conservation in preparation for the new Middle East Galleries, expected to open in fall 2017, pending funding.

Visitors will also notice changes in the 2nd floor Africa Gallery, as a result of a major loan to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for the special exhibition Art from Africa: Looking Closely, running from May through fall 2016 as part of the PMA’s Creative Africa umbrella exhibition and programming initiative. With the loan of more than 200 objects to the PMA, including our noted Benin bronzes, the Penn Museum has taken the opportunity to make changes in its own Africa Gallery, including the installation of new maps and improved exhibition lighting. When the objects return, they will be installed in new cases with fresh interpretation in a refurbished Africa Gallery to open in spring 2017, pending funding.

OPENING SOON

The Golden Age of King Midas

The Golden Age of King Midas will feature over 125 rare objects from Turkey, Greece, and other parts of the Mediterranean, in addition to objects from the Museum’s own collection. Bring your friends to this very special exhibition to see objects from the “Midas Mound,” a tomb built by King Midas for his father, Gordios, ca. 740 BCE, and excavated by Penn Museum archaeologists in the mid-20th century. Many of these objects have never before been exhibited in the United States. $5 plus Museum admission. Members see it free—call 215.898.5093 for details.

FEBRUARY 13–NOVEMBER 27, 2016
2nd Floor Special Exhibitions Gallery

COMING SOON: PENN STUDENTS COLLABORATE ON TWO NEW EXHIBITIONS

Year of Discovery: Kourion, Cyprus

ON VIEW MARCH 26, 2016–MARCH 5, 2017
This student-curated display features 20 objects from the Museum’s collection of more than 2,000 objects excavated at Kourion since 1934. Also included in the exhibition are correspondence and photographs from the Museum Archives.

Magic in the Ancient World

ON VIEW APRIL 16, 2016–APRIL 30, 2017
Ancient cultures believed in magic and it permeated their daily lives. Through magical acts, they attempted to control supernatural powers—gods, demons, spirits, or ghosts—to accomplish something beyond the scope of human capabilities. Explore a presentation of objects associated with magical practices from the Penn Museum’s Mesopotamian, Mediterranean, and Egyptian collections, and developed as part of a Penn graduate seminar, in this new exhibition.