Renovation & Innovation

This is a time of tremendous excitement and anticipation in the Penn Museum as we prepare to transform our keystone galleries—Ancient Middle East, Asian, and Egyptian—into stunning showcases for our collections and the important stories they tell of our own past.

In the meantime, one such showcase is currently on view: *The Golden Age of King Midas* exhibition gathers together objects from our own collection with treasures on loan from the Republic of Turkey, mostly from the site of Gordion, where Penn archaeologists have worked since the 1950s. This remarkable exhibition runs until November, so I encourage you to explore the myth and real legacy of King Midas and the realities of life in his world of ancient Phrygia.

While enjoying the treasures of Gordion, we look forward to the renovation of key permanent gallery spaces. The construction to the south side of the Museum of the New Patient Pavilion, designed by Norman Foster for the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS), has prompted an extensive inventory of our Egyptian collections and a survey of how displayed objects might be affected by vibrations from the construction. This ongoing project includes securing large objects to walls, replacing shelving material, dismantling some pieces for restoration, and moving others to off-site storage. The UPHS construction dovetails with our own, as architects Gluckman Tang prepare to start the first phase of work on the Museum’s Coxe and Harrison Wings.

Planning continues on our Galleries of the Ancient Middle East, scheduled to open in Fall 2017, pending funding. These signature galleries will explore our shared past: ways of seeing the world that developed 10,000 years ago in the Middle East persist today, and our collection is uniquely positioned to explore and illustrate how modern urban life came to be. Gallery designers Haley Sharpe and interpretative planners Tim Gardom Associates are crafting an innovative and dynamic space next to the Kamin Entrance of the Museum. These new galleries will engage visitors of all ages, from Philadelphia middle-school students in Learning Programs’ *Unpacking the Past* series to specialists, tourists, and longtime Museum members.

All of us at the Museum are excited about this time of renovation and innovation, and I look forward to sharing more developments with you in the coming months.

Julian Siggers, Ph.D.
Williams Director