FROM THE DIRECTOR

An Active Research Museum

As an active research museum, the Penn Museum’s knowledge of the human story is ever-evolving. Continued exploration of sites around the globe, and ever deeper research on our own collections, is at the heart of our mission. We are thrilled this year to support 18 research projects, described briefly below, through the Director’s Field Fund.

The Golden Age of King Midas exhibition showcased research that Penn archaeologists began at Gordion, Turkey, in the 1950s. Work continues this summer at this important site through several initiatives. Since 2007, Brian Rose has co-directed or directed the Gordion Archaeological Project. Work is ongoing on the Gordion Cultural Heritage Education Program, environmental education and site conservation, and the Gordion Jewelry Project. Peter Cobb will join the fieldwork at Gordion and scout locations for 2018 Penn excavations in western Anatolia.

Brad Hafford returned in March to excavations at Ur, the site of one of the Museum’s earliest and best-known excavations. In Azerbaijan, Lauren Ristvet begins a second season of the Lerik Project, investigating the intersection of empires around the site of Halasa Yeri (500 BCE–500 CE). In Georgia, Theodore Schurr explores the genetic history of the western regions of Adjara and Guria through fieldwork and DNA analysis.

In the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, the Penn Cultural Heritage Center (PennCHC) supports the Tihosuco Heritage Preservation and Community Development Project, led by Richard Leventhal with Suzanne Abel. The project investigates the archaeological traces of the 19th-century Maya rebellion in that area and engages the modern community of Tihosuco in educational and community initiatives. In Guatemala, Joanne Baron continues work on the ancient monumental architecture at La Florida. Additionally, Jamie Forde will investigate the origins and social context of the Lienzo de Filadelphia (PM object 42-7-1), a Mexican map painted on cloth (ca. 16th century). Simon Martin will be taking the Museum back to Tikal, Guatemala, where he will follow up on his recent research about a monumental inscription dating to 735 CE.

In northern California, Brian Daniels continues work on the Wayka Heritage Project, a collaboration between the PennCHC and the descendants of the Shasta Indian communities from the Klamath River Basin. In Utah, Robert Schuyler works with the Silver Reef Museum in St. George on public outreach. In the Museum, Harold Dibble’s Laboratory for the Study of Ancient Technology has received new instruments to enhance its study of stone tool technology.

In central Thailand, Andrew Weiss uses radiocarbon chronology from the Thailand Archaeometallurgy Project to date the initial agricultural settlement and copper production in the Khao Wong Prachan Valley.

Many of these projects will be featured in upcoming issues of Expedition, but I am pleased to share this preview with you now, as the Museum’s discoveries continue every day.

Julian Siggers, Ph.D.
Williams Director