My first glimpse of Beth Shean occurred in the 1990s. I was a graduate student at the University of Toronto working on the excavation of a Neolithic farmstead in Jordan. At night, in the distance, we could see lights from the town of Beth Shean, which had been restored as a Roman town and was soon to become a major tourist destination. I traveled to the area again in 2009, while working on a Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition for the Royal Ontario Museum. We were including objects from Beth Shean in our exhibition, and seeing this site while learning about Roman Israel enabled us to add greater depth and context to the world of those texts.

We saw the spectacular tell that the Penn Museum dug from 1921 through 1933, truly a massive undertaking. The Museum project at Beth Shean was one of the largest excavations of its time, conducted on a scale that is unheard of today. What was amazing then and remains so today are the many stories of the ancient world that can be told through this single site. Penn Museum excavated 18 city levels that dated from the Late Neolithic period (ca. 4500 BCE) through the 12th century CE. During this time, Beth Shean was at the crossroads of history, a place where East met West. It was occupied by many different cultures including Israelites, Canaanites, and Philistines, as well as Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians. Decades after Penn worked at Beth Shean, the site was also excavated by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in 1983 and from 1989 to 1996.

In this issue of *Expedition*, we investigate the Late Antique occupation level at Beth Shean, which dates to the middle of the 1st millennium CE. Penn graduate students and senior scholars examined objects from the collection and excavation records from the Archives, rediscovering early 20th century evidence from this remarkable site. This is the type of research we encourage at the Penn Museum: investigations that result in new interpretations of ancient sites utilizing our vast collection of objects and archival documents.

In addition to this issue on Beth Shean, Israel is also represented in a current exhibition at the Museum. The Lod Mosaic, discovered during the construction of a highway in Lod, Israel, will be on display through May 12, 2013. The significance of this Roman floor mosaic—with wonderful depictions of animals, birds, and fish—is described in the first article in this issue. This is an exhibition you will not want to miss. ☞