Over 20 years ago, I got hooked on mummies. It began when we first x-rayed the many South and North American mummies that are part of the Physical Anthropology Section collections at the Penn Museum. This led to a drive to glean even more information from the mummies. For several years, on Sunday mornings at 6 am, my students and I drove all the mummies of the collection one city block to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Department of Radiology, to CT scan and even MRI them. Eventually we included the Egyptian Section mummies, both human and animal. I am still hooked on mummy studies that give us both a view to the biology of peoples in the past as well as the cultural circumstances that produce these unique artifacts of human mortuary history. The articles in this special issue of *Expedition* illustrate the diversity of mummy studies, the nature of mummification, and the cultural context of preserving the body.

They also challenge us to consider questions like: what is a mummy? And what are the ethical concerns with manipulation, study, and display of these bodies? As both cultural and biological artifacts of past peoples, these authors bring together a diversity of

Look for an upcoming *Expedition* on Egyptian mummies, with articles by Egyptian archaeologists and scholars at the Penn Museum!
perspectives encapsulated within case studies of frozen, plastinated, naturally mummified, and artificially mummified remains from around the world.

It is no surprise that the Penn Museum is known in Philadelphia and beyond as the “Mummy Museum” for our scientific expertise in mummy studies. This reputation is driven by our famous Egyptian collections and especially of the mummified remains that are part of the “The Egyptian Mummy: Secrets and Science” exhibition. In addition, visitors can watch the conservation efforts of Molly Gleeson in the Artifact Lab with her expertise applied often to Egyptian mummies. In classrooms and in public programming, thousands of students of all ages are challenged to think about the scientific nature of the body, the social and cultural context that lead to the preservation of these remains, what these mortal remains can tell us about peoples in the past, and finally about the ethical considerations in dealing with these remains now and into the future.

Like all great work in archaeology and anthropology, this issue expands our view of mummies and draws us towards a deeper understanding of our own Penn Museum collections. Enjoy!

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