Searching for Stories

I am often asked how I find stories for Expedition. Some are written by Museum curators and keepers as well as Penn professors and recent graduates. Others begin as lectures I attend that I believe would interest Expedition readers; the article on coins in the Fall 2018 issue began as a short lecture by a scholar I knew would write about coins in an engaging way. I maintain a network of archaeologists and anthropologists around the world who send me tips on new discoveries and exciting excavations. I attend conferences, sometimes delivering papers myself, and seek out other scholars on topics of interest.

In November 2018, I traveled to the ASOR (American Schools of Oriental Research) annual meeting to present a paper on jewelry from Gordion, a project I have worked on for the last several years. I attended lectures on many topics, including new findings from excavations in Israel, ancient Mesopotamian games, underwater archaeology, and the treasure of the Egyptian Queen Ahhotep. Hopefully, some of these speakers will agree to write for Expedition.

The articles in the current issue, Winter 2018, come from many sources. Steve Phillips, Penn Egyptologist, put me in touch with Salima Ikram, who, with Paul Nicholson, wrote on the fascinating dog mummy catacombs at Saqqara. Since we have an extensive collection of animal mummies at the Museum, we interviewed conservators to find out more about their work with these interesting creatures and created a complementary second article. Our third article, “Brazil from Above,” the story of a celebrated Brazilian general and his first airplane ride, began with research in the Museum Archives. Again, we augmented this with an article on the Museum’s 1931 Matto Grosso expedition. Our fifth and last article is anthropological in nature, focusing on the San Lorenzo Market in Florence, Italy; it explores the idea that globalization has far-reaching effects that cannot always be anticipated.

As always, we also update you on the transformation occurring at the Museum, upcoming exhibitions and programs, and the research and daily work of our many divisions. Thank you again for your support of the Penn Museum, and please write if you have ideas for stories you would like to read in your magazine.

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EDITOR