

During the Hellenistic period (332-63 B.C.E.) the city of Beth-Shean enjoyed a revival and came to be known as Scythopolis, or "City of Scythians," perhaps from a unit of Scythian cavalry in the army of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.E.). During the second century B.C.E., it was also known as Nysa, after the nurse of the god Dionysus, as legend says she was buried here. The city fell into Jewish hands again when conquered by John Hyrcanus, king of Israel from 134-104 B.C.E., but fell to Rome in 63 B.C.E. Josephus mentions Scythopolis as capital of the Decapolis, or league of ten cities (*Antiquities* 14.75).

Public works of the Roman period included a theater that sat 8,000 (visible top right in slide), a colonnaded street, a temple to Dionysus, baths and a hippodrome. From the Byzantine period (324-637 C.E.), remains of a circus, a circular church on top of the tell (the prominent mound in the picture), a monastery and two synagogues have been excavated.