

Editorial

This is the sixtieth volume of *Buried History*, and to mark the occasion, a paper tracing its history has been included in this edition. It describes how the journal developed from a newsletter-bulletin style to its current form as an open access peer reviewed publication. Under three of the longer-term editors, Clifford Wilson, Piers Crocker and myself, the journal retained standard formats and editorial policies, but under its founder, Gordon Garner, there were several abrupt variations in content and production. Readers will understand why we cannot include digitised volumes from before 2001 on the *Buried History* website, however, there is a possibility that some significant earlier papers may be included on the Institute website.

The first paper in this volume is a tribute to a long-standing supporter of *Buried History*, Professor Alan Millard. Alan was a significant Akkadian scholar and a respected tertiary teacher. From the late 1970s, he influenced the Australian Institute of Archaeology through people such as Piers Crocker, Ian Edwards and myself, providing contributions to *Buried History* and serving as a member of its Editorial Board. He visited Australia on more than one occasion to participate in Institute activities. His methodical, evidence-based approach to archaeology and ancient history, often in the face of frenzied media hype, was an example to all of us.

We are again delighted that the Petrie Oration has been included in *Buried History*. The 2024 lecture was given by Dr Claudia Sagona on her work on the Maltese Archipelago. Claudia was introduced to the island and its archaeology by her late husband, Professor Tony Sagona. Claudia is an Honorary Principal Fellow in Archaeology in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at The University of Melbourne. Her research has taken her from the highlands of north-eastern Turkey and the Caucasus to the central Mediterranean. She has excavated on Malta with the University of Malta, and has carried out substantial research on Malta's rich archaeological record, culminating in a comprehensive book, *The Archaeology of Malta: From the Neolithic through the Roman Period* (2015, Cambridge University Press). In recognition of her contribution to Malta, she was made an honorary member of the National Order of Merit of Malta in 2007. Her lecture for the Petrie Oration focussed on the south-eastern sector of the island, through which there was interaction with other Mediterranean cultures.

Since arriving at La Trobe University, the Institute has been carefully researching its museum collection. One consignment of ancient Egyptian material sent by Lady Petrie in 1949 was not registered or studied on its arrival in Melbourne, but the information about the objects provided at the time was kept and has been important for confirming provenance of the artefacts. Dr Lisa

Mawdsley and a significant group of student volunteers have ascertained the original contexts of many of the objects, which turn out to be from the site of Lahun. Their role in the life of a Middle Kingdom Egyptian town and pyramid complex can now be investigated. To assist with this research, several of the objects have been made available on the Institute's online Pedestal3D Gallery. Dr Mawdsley completed a PhD at Monash University on the First Dynasty Egyptian site of Tarkhan. She is the Institute's Collection Manager.

We are pleased to have three extended reviews. An Institute Research Fellow, Susan Balderstone, has reviewed Dr Gillian Bowen's publication of the excavations in the Dakhleh Oasis relating to *The Christian Monuments of Kellis: The Churches and Cemeteries*. These are some of the earliest Christian communities that have been studied archaeologically. Writings found at the site reveal the presence of catholic Institutional Christians and Manicheans. Dr Bowen is associated with Monash University and has published preliminary reports of her work at the Dakhleh Oasis in *Buried History*.

Professor Eckart Frahm's history of Assyria is reviewed by Dr Luis Siddall, another Institute Research Fellow. The book deals with Old, Middle, and Neo-Assyria, and comments on the role played by Assyria in world history; indeed, the recent destruction of Assyrian monuments by ISIS is seen to have modern political and ideological dimensions. As a secondary school history teacher, Dr Siddall has found that the book opened the way to historical insights that his students may not have otherwise had.

Professor David Gill has reviewed the first three volumes of the series on the *First Urban Churches*, edited by James Harrison and Larry Welborn. The books aim to use the most recent literary, historical, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence to establish a context for the New Testament epistles, the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation. David is a member of the *Buried History* Editorial Board. He is an Honorary Professor in the Kent Law School and a Fellow of the Centre for Heritage. David has conducted fieldwork in Greece, and is currently researching the history of collecting and archaeological ethics. David is the holder of the 2012 Archaeological Institute of America Outstanding Public Service Award, and the 2012 SAFE Beacon Award, in recognition of his research on cultural property.

As always we acknowledge the referees and reviewers who have been generous with their time and advice.

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