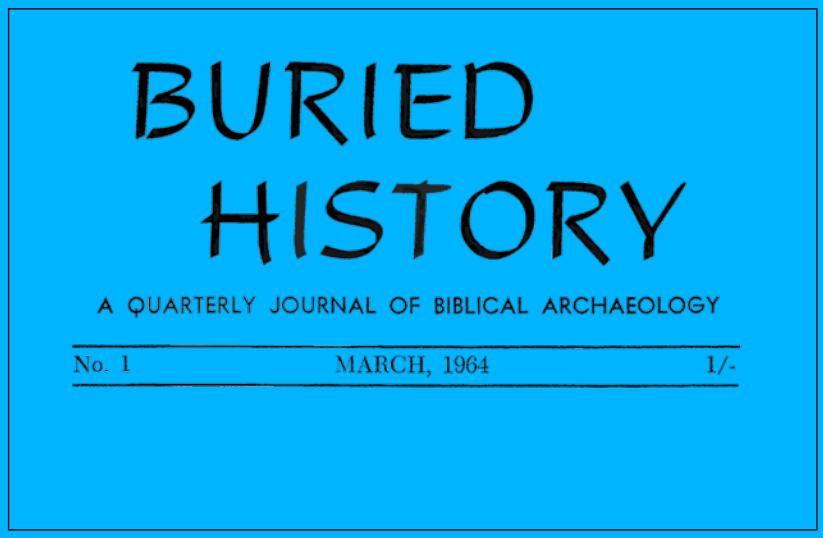
Buried History

The Journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology


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Buried History is the annual journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology. It is an open access journal that does not charge article processing fees and publishes papers, subject to double-blind peer review, short articles and reviews. The intended readership includes both academic researchers, teachers, and those with an informed interest in ancient history, archaeology and heritage. It publishes articles relating to the history of the Mediterranean, Western Asia, North Africa, involving archaeology, epigraphy and the biblical text. It also publishes papers about the history of archaeology more generally.

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Cover Image: The Masthead of the first issue of *Buried History* (1964)

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Volume 60

2024

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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 3D Gallery. Dr Mawdsley completed a PhD at Monash University with Professor Colin Hope on the First Dynasty Egyptian site of Tarkhan. She is the Institute's Collection Manager.

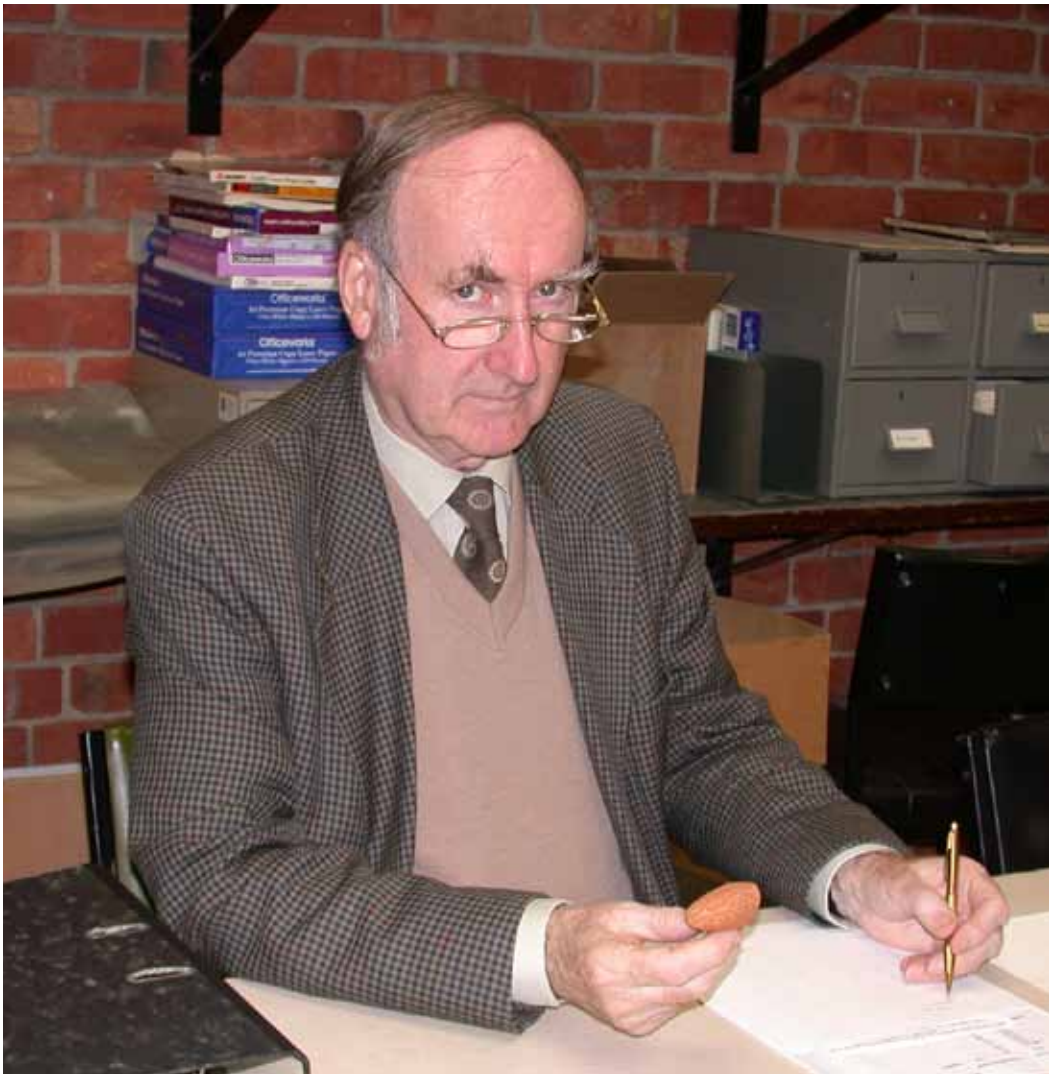
We are pleased to have three extended reviews. An Institute Research Fellow, Susan Balderstone, has reviewed Dr Gillian Bowen's publication of the excavations in the Dakhleh Oasis relating to *The Christian Monuments of Kellis: The Churches and Cemeteries*. These are some of the earliest Christian communities 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.

Christopher J. Davey
https://doi.org/10.62614/1hvwx726



Alan Ralph Millard FSA (1937–2024)

When Emeritus Professor Alan Millard died at home in Leamington Spa on 6 June 2024 aged 86, the Australian Institute of Archaeology lost a friend and a valuable scholarly advisor, and this journal lost a member of its Editorial Board. Several members of the Institute's Board knew Alan personally and mourn the loss of a friend. In preparing this tribute, I acknowledge the assistance of Dr Paul Lawrence, a former student of Alan's, Dr Bruce Routledge a University of Liverpool colleague, and Professor Jim Hoffmeier.

The picture above depicts Alan during his visit to Australia in 2004, when he studied the Institute's tablet collection. The tablet he is holding comes from Nimrud and has an interesting Aramaic label. During the visit he delivered the 2004 Petrie Oration entitled *Half a pot is better than no pot at all: The role of accident in archaeology* (2004), drawing attention to the fact that archaeologists are often reliant on ancient mistakes and mishaps.

Prior to retirement in 2003, Alan was the Rankin Professor of Hebrew and Ancient Semitic languages, and Honorary Senior Fellow (Ancient Near East) at the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology (SACE) in the University of Liverpool. He had been at Liverpool since 1970, where he was a colleague of Egyptologist, Kenneth Kitchen. He continued writing and publishing in his retirement; the last off-prints we received arrived in April 2024.

Alan was born in Harrow, Middlesex on 1 December 1937. As a schoolboy, he displayed an interest in archaeology by digging at The Manor of the More in Rickmansworth, the 16th-century palace where Catherine of Aragon lived after the annulment of her marriage to Henry VIII. He participated in publishing the results as a member of the Merchant Taylors' School Archaeological Society. He went on to study Semitic Languages at Magdalen College, Oxford, under Sir Godfrey Driver, graduating in 1959.



At Tell Nebi Mend in 1975, inspecting Area A where tablets were later found. From the left: Peter Parr, Director; Majid Museli, Government Representative; Cecil Weston, Conservator, and Alan Millard. Photo: the Author

Between 1961 and 1963, Alan was an Assistant Keeper in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum. While at the Museum, he published Aramaic inscriptions from the British School of Archaeology in Iraq's excavations at Nimrud, catalogued tablets from the old excavations at Kuyunjik (Nineveh, Iraq) and, most notably, rediscovered tablets forming part of the Babylonian Epic of Atrahasis, a creation and flood story, which had remained in a drawer unrecognised for several decades.



Alan making an intial examination of a recently found tablet, Tell Nebi Mend 1975. Photo: the Author.

From 1964 to 1970, Alan was the librarian at Tyndale House, Cambridge, a position which allowed him to complete an MPhil. at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, with Professor Donald J. Wiseman, another member of the Tyndale Fellowship. In 1970, he took up a post at the University of Liverpool.

He was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1971, and became a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study, Hebrew University in 1984. Between 2001 and 2005, he served as Vice-Chair of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (now the British Institute for the Study of Iraq). For many years he was on the editorial boards of *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* and *Buried History,* and was an active member of the Society for Old Testament Study.

Alan fostered his interest in archaeology by digging with Peter Parr at Petra, Jordan, in 1958. In 1975, he again dug with Peter Parr joining the first season of excavation at Tell Nebi Mend, Syria (ancient Qadesh-on-the-Orontes). He served as the project's epigraphist, and began his time at the site by checking the ancient stones used by the villagers in their houses to see if they bore inscriptions. Many of the houses on the tell were founded on Classical archaeological deposits. The residents were somewhat bemused when having their doorsteps, or whatever, overturned and inspected. He had little success, but eventually some tablets were discovered in the excavation. Alan's publication of them (2010) confirmed that the site was, indeed, ancient Qadesh.



A Third Dynasty of Ur tablet held by the local history museum on Horn Island that was seen by Alan when he visited the islands. Photo: courtesy of the Torres Strait Heritage Museum, Queensland.

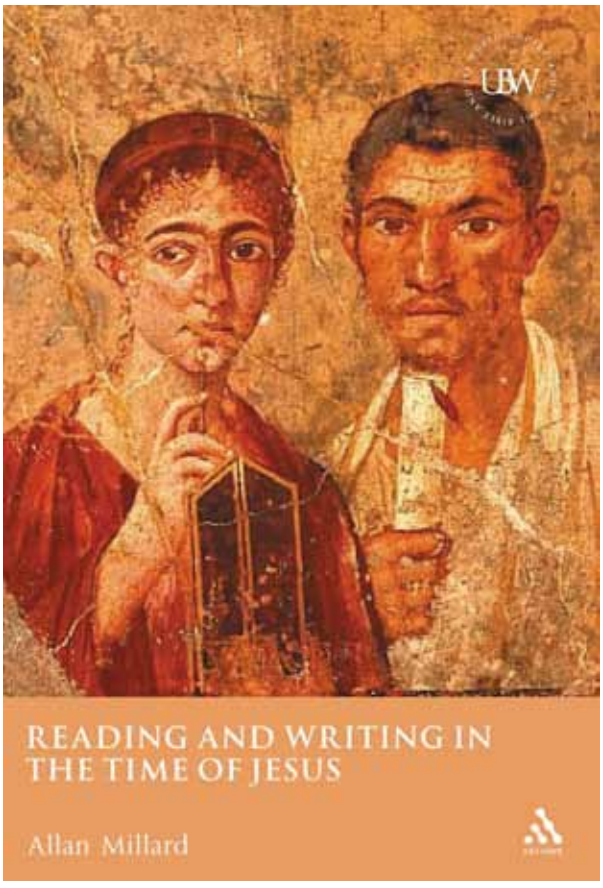
When I informed Alan about the project to publish all the known cuneiform material in Australia and New Zealand, he told me that when he and wife Margaret were visiting the Torres Strait Islands some years before, he had noticed a cuneiform tablet in the Torres Strait Heritage Museum on Horn Island. He thought that it should be included in the publication. As far as the museum knew, the tablet was donated to them by a local resident who had served in Mesopotamia during World War I, and it was not related to other Australian collections. Alan would not have minded having his holiday interrupted by such an artefact.

Semitic epigraphy, and editing the publication of Akkadian cuneiform tablets and Aramaic inscriptions, were Alan's main scholarly interests. In 1965, Professor Wilfred G. Lambert and Alan published the additional texts belonging to the Atrahasis epic that he had located in the British Museum. It included an Old Babylonian copy written in about 1650 BC, which is the most complete recension of the tale to have survived (1969). These new texts greatly increased the knowledge of the epic and were the basis for this first English translation of the nearly complete Atrahasis epic. Like the Book of Genesis, the Atrahasis fable contains both cosmological creation and flood stories. It was Alan's view that the Genesis and Atrahasis narratives derived independently from an earlier source. The later Gilgamesh epic features only a flood.

Additional publications of Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions, and the Akkadian of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, helped Alan gain an international reputation. His monographs *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910-612 B.C.* (1994) and *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (1982), with Ali Abou-Assaf and Pierre Bordreuil, continue to be widely cited. He had the rare distinction of receiving two festschriften.

Alan had an intense interest in the history of writing, scribal practices and questions of literacy in the biblical period, as did Professor Wiseman before him. He was acutely aware of the importance of the alphabet. These interests, and his personal commitment to the evangelical expression of Christianity, were represented in his popular books, such as *Discoveries from Bible Times* (1997) and *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (2000). Both reached wide audiences. He also served as one of the translators of the New International Version of the Bible, which was published in 1978.

He appeared on TV as an expert witness in the TV-film *Joanna Lumley: The Search for Noah's Ark.* He was treated with more respect than he received in 1977, when he tackled Magnus Magnusson's TV series and book, *BC, the Archaeology of the Bible Lands*.



The dust jacket of the Bloombury Publishing (T&T Clark imprint) 2000 edition of Alan's Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus.

His bibliography at https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/theo_millard.php reveals a steady flow of publications over a period of nearly sixty years; some years have over ten entries. Peter Williams, the Principal of Tyndale House, said of Alan, 'Throughout his entire life not once did he adopt a remotely sensationalist interpretation, which is really quite remarkable for someone so involved in biblical archaeology and regularly explaining discoveries to lay audiences' (https://tyndalehouse.com/updates/news/professor-alan-r-millard-1937-2024/ accessed 3-7-2024). He was reserved, but not shy when it came to issues that needed addressing; however, he was loathe to talk about personal matters. This restraint flowed through to his popular books.

Some tributes to him have expressed the view that despite his many academic achievements, Alan's real impact came as a teacher, mentor and colleague, both in his academic duties and as a member of faith communities on and off campus. His students are sure that it will be his teaching that will endure. They were taught to be cautious, detailed and evidence-based, and not to indulge in broad generalisations.

Alan's contribution to the Editorial Board of this journal exemplified and promoted this approach. He often commented on its contents, but only once criticised a contribution, which he deemed to be superficial and general. That was in the early days of my editorship. Sadly, I will have to wait to find out his perspective on this tribute.

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https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1345-8638

Festschriften:

Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Essays in Honor of Alan Millard, Elizabeth A. Slater, Piotr Bienkowski, Christopher B. Mee, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005.

Write That They May Read: Studies in Literacy and Textualization in the Ancient Near East and in the Hebrew Scriptures: Essays in Honour of Professor Alan R. Millard, Edited by Daniel I. Block, David C. Deuel, C. John Collins and Paul J. N. Lawrence, Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020.

Alan Millard's references:

1969 *Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (with W.G. Lambert), Oxford: Clarendon Press; reprinted Winona Lake, ID: Eisenbrauns, ISBN 1-57506-039-6 (1999)

1982 *La Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (with A. Abou-Assaf and P. Bordreuil), Paris: Association pour la diffusion de la pensée française.

1994 *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire, 910–612 B.C.*, State Archives of Assyria Studies vol. 2, Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, University of Helsinki.

1997 *Discoveries from Bible Times*, Oxford: Lion Publishing.

2000 *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

2004 Half a pot is better than no pot at all: The role of accident in archaeology, *Buried History* 40, 7–14. https://doi.org/10.62614/3c5zaj51

2010 The Cuneiform Tablets from Tell Nebi Mend, *Levant* 42, 226–236, with a note on a Clay Sealing by Dominique Collon.

The southeast sector of Malta: A gateway for cultural change

Claudia Sagona[1]

DOI: https://doi.org/10.62614/60jwk372

Abstract: Margaret Alice Murray was a pioneer for women's involvement in Egyptology and in archaeology. Due to teaching commitments at the University College London (1898 to 1935), she turned to the Maltese Archipelago as a destination for excavation. Her accounts of work in Malta hold gems of information, and it would be a mistake to dismiss or overlook Murray's contribution to the early archaeological investigations of the islands. Subsequent decades of fieldwork and research have clearly demonstrated that the southeastern sector of Malta played a significant role in cultural and economic change through trade and the influx of people from the eastern Mediterranean. This discussion draws on Murray's work as a springboard for a closer examination of cultural developments in the southeast of the main island of Malta and the archaeological sites in the region.

Keywords: Margaret Murray, Late Neolithic, Borġ in-Nadur, Bronze Age, Tarxien Cemetery, Agricultural fields scars, Purple murex dye, Phoenicians, Wine trade

Introduction

This discussion explores the theme of ancient economic strategies evident in Malta that was presented on the occasion of the Australian Institute of Archaeology's Petrie Oration in October 2024. There is a connection between Malta and William Matthew Finders Petrie through his student and later colleague, Margaret Alice Murray. Her work in the southeast of the main island of Malta forms the launching point for an exploration of why this sector was significant in the major cultural developments that came with the influx of eastern Mediterranean influences and settlers from the Aegean, and later from the Levantine coast. The focus of this discussion falls on what Malta had to offer economically, whether through the labours of its Neolithic community for daily sustenance, or for the maritime traders and settlers who saw commercial advantages in targeting the islands.

Geographic setting

The archipelago lies in the central Mediterranean, 93 km from Sicily and 180 km from North Africa, Figure 1. There are five islands in the group, Malta, Gozo, Comino, Cominotto, and a lesser rock outcrop called Filfla to the south, as well as some smaller islets. The main island is only 27 km long and 14.5 km wide, and is 246 km^2 in area. Packed within this space is an array of remarkable archaeology. The same can be said of the smaller, north island of Gozo. Access to most of the southern coastlines of both main islands is thwarted by high and abrupt cliffs that fall into the sea. In some places they can rise to 130 m above sea level, Figure 2. Malta's resources are few. Limestone bedrock with occasional nodules of flint and chert, clay deposits, natural springs, thin but fertile soils, and the abundance of the sea were all exploited by its inhabitants. Otherwise, there are no other stone or mineral

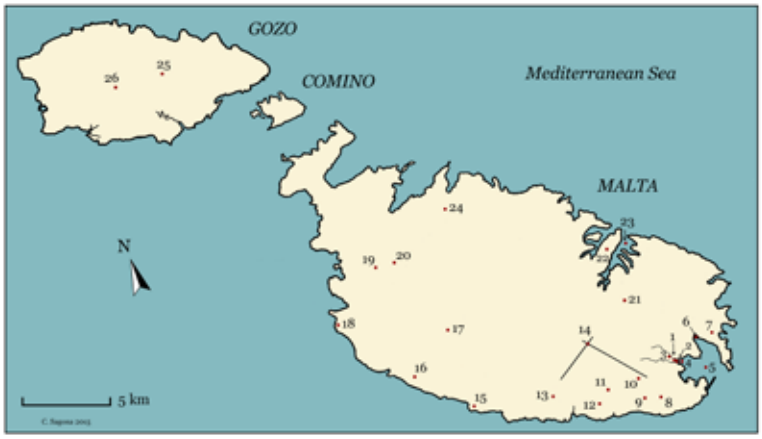


Figure 1: *Map of the Maltese Archipelago. Malta — 1 Borġ in-Nadur; 2 St George's Bay vats; 3 Għar Dalam; 4 St George's Bay; 5 Marsaxlokk Bay; 6 Il-Magħluq ('cothon'); 7 Tas-Silġ; 8 Santa Sfia (Ħal Far); 9 Santa Maria tal Bakkari; 10 Ta' Ġawhar; 11 Safi; 12 Żurrieq; 13 Qrendi; 14 Malta airport; 15 Wardija ta'San Ġorġ; 16 Misraħ Għar il-Kbir; 17 Rabat; 18 Baħrija; 19, Mġarr; 20 Skorba; 21 Tarxien; 22 Valletta; 23 Grand Harbour; 24 Burmarrad. Gozo — 25 Ġgantija; 26 Victoria. Drawn: C. Sagona.*



Figure 2: *View of coastline cliffs looking west from the Bronze Age site of Wardija ta' San Ġorġ. Photo: C. Sagona.*

resources. At the outset, there can be little doubt that the first of Malta's assets lies in its natural harbours, which offered welcome refuge in the Central Mediterranean. Significant sites around Marsaxlokk Bay throughout the centuries point to this region as one of the key access points to and from the island, and this discussion concerns this southeastern sector of Malta, Figure 3.

Margaret Murray in Malta

Margaret Alice Murray (1863–1963) was a pioneer for women's involvement in Egyptology and in archaeology, and an active supporter of women's equality. She had worked on recording monuments with Petrie at Abydos and Saqqara in 1902 and 1903 (Drower 2006; Ellul-Micallef 2013, vol. 1: 277–79; vol. 2: 253–55; Vella, et al. 2011). When her teaching commitments at the University College of London were such that she could not participate in fieldwork with Petrie in Egypt during the winter field seasons, she turned to the Maltese Archipelago, after meeting Dr, later Sir, Themistocles Zammit in London (Murray 1963: 129). It was the year 1920 and he was there to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Oxford (Ellul-Micallef 2013: 259, 331). Zammit was an eminent medical doctor, but as director of the museum in Valletta, he is also recognised for his archaeological skills. He promoted the islands' archaeology abroad, and actively investigated existing sites and new discoveries.

More recently, Murray's contribution has been recognised through publications by Kathleen Sheppard and Ruth Whitehouse, not to mention her autobiography, *My First Hundred Years* (Sheppard 2013: 197–222; Whitehouse 2013: 120–27; Murray 1963). Sheppard noted 'as far as I am able to ascertain there are no existing field notes like the ones Petrie would write from the field to his subscribers' (2013: 209). Murray's detailed reports, however, clearly reflect the documentation she made at the time. Her publications concerning Malta were significant (Murray 1923; 1925; 1928a; 1928b; Murray & Caton Thompson 1923; Murray et al. 1929; Murray et al. 1934). The four volumes about fieldwork and museum research were reviewed in several journals, and most recognise



Figure 3: *Satellite image of the southeast region of Malta showing Borġ in-Nadur Late Neolithic and Bronze Age site, dye vats at the shore, some field furrow locations and a grape pressing pan on the east side of Wied Ħas-Saptan, see Figure 22, right. Image: Google Earth (1985), accessed 7/9/2023.*



Figure 4: *Santa Maria tal Bakkari ruins with upright pillars that once supported the roof; behind the property wall in the background is the Punic tower Tal-Bakkari iz-Żurrieq (not visible). Photo: C. Sagona.*

the skill shown by Murray for excavation (E.A.P. 1926; 1929; E.N.F. 1929; 1930; Fallaize 1928; L.H.D.B. 1926; Schuchhardt 1928; V.G.C. 1929; Zammit 1924).

Her summer holidays between 1921 and 1927 were spent in Malta, excavating and working in the museum on a corpus of Bronze Age pottery (Murray 1963: 129). At the same time a colleague, Gertrude Caton-Thompson was excavating at the site of Għar Dalam, the 'Cave of Darkness', in search of hominid remains. Some finds were also recovered from the upper deposits.

Murray had initially been allocated the site of Santa Sfia, and later Santa Maria tal Bakkari. Santa Sfia was later impacted by Malta's first airfield at Ħal Far, so important in World War 2 (MAR 1921–1922: 1; NB 1921–1922: 1–4). One of its runways has now been converted into a road, and the other is used for car racing. Some large prehistoric stones were displaced, and a small length of wall remained, possibly from the Roman period, but no significant ground plan could be discerned, having been stripped of stone in antiquity (Murray 1923: 14–15, pl. 4). Pottery fragments of Punic or Roman date were considered to have come from a robbed tomb, and only one fragment was possibly Bronze Age in date (MAR 1921–1922: 1; NB 1, 1921–1924: 3).

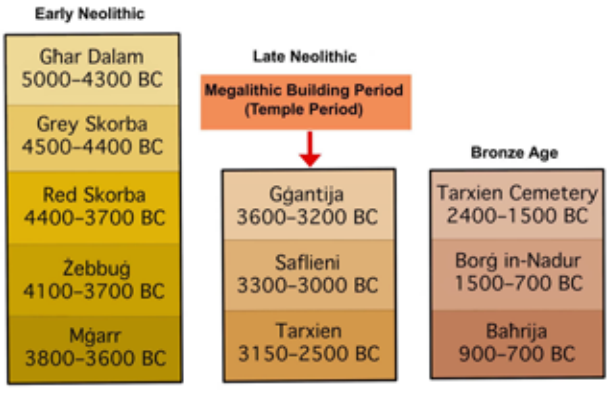


Figure 5: *The prehistoric sequence in Malta. Drawn: C. Sagona.*



Figure 6: *View across prehistoric ruins at Borġ in-Nadur in 1991. Photo: C. Sagona.*

The second site of Santa Maria tal Bakkari, about one kilometre to the west, was in better shape (NB 1921–1924: 3–4). It was a small chapel with pillars that once supported a roof, and an adjoining chamber. Even though it had incorporated some prehistoric stones, it was a shallow deposit, Figure 4. Murray considered that the building could have served as a sacred site, but one that was non-Christian (Anon 1922: 27; MAR 1921–1922: 3–4; Murray 1923a: 16–17, pl. 5).[2] Cultural finds were few, some fragments of Punic or Roman period pottery, as well as a small number of possible Bronze Age wares. Murray was particularly interested, however, in the Late Neolithic and the monumental stone buildings, generally referred to as temples. Indeed, this whole period is usually known as the Temple Period.

The prehistoric, cultural sequence spans the Neolithic, when the islands were first settled, the Late Neolithic, characterised by the massive lobed structures and Bronze Age, when the islands experience an influx of new cultural traditions, Figure 5. The Late Neolithic is also known for the statuary and elaborate carved blocks found in the structures and burial grounds. Depictions of the human form often portray quite corpulent proportions, no doubt indicating the importance of food production and abundance for its inhabitants within this island setting (Vella Gregory & Cilia 2005; Evans 1971; Trump 2002).

Borġ in-Nadur, Murray's third site, is located on land rising a short distance from St George's Bay, within Marsaxlokk Bay in the southeast of the island, Figure 6. A thick Bronze Age wall defined this later settlement, which had grown around the prehistoric, megalithic architecture of the Late Neolithic period. Murray exposed the lobed structures characteristic of that period and, despite its somewhat disturbed deposits, documented the array of cultural finds that were recovered. The lobed plan of the Late Neolithic building can be discerned, in front of which is a large walled forecourt, even though the site was impacted by later interventions, and the collapse of some stones, Figure 7. It is now a heritage-listed open air museum, fenced and with controlled access to the ruins (Bugeja 2011).

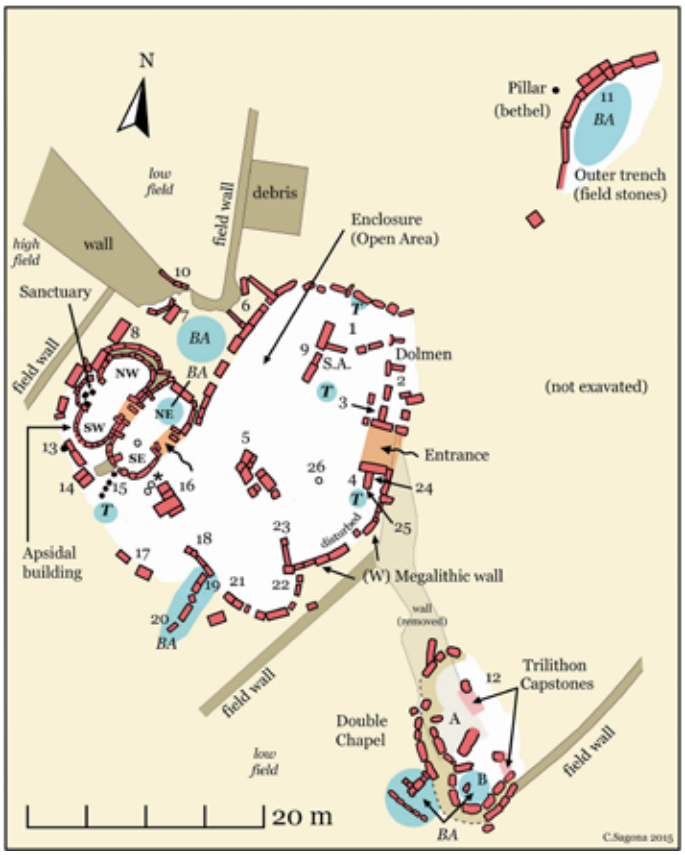


Figure 7: *Borġ in-Nadur complex with Murray's locations indicated on her plans or in her text, as well equivalent abbreviated markings on the artefacts she found: A and B – chambers in the so-called 'chapel' (see Double Chapel and no. 12); Apsidal building – Neolithic Period comprising chambers SW, SE, NE, NW and the small apse described as the Sanctuary with three standing stones in the space (black squares); BA – shaded areas with Bronze Age deposits; Dolmen (DW or dolmen wall) – standing stones incorrectly identified as a dolmen, it was part of the Neolithic structures, perhaps a niche; Double Chapel – remnants of another Neolithic structure (see A and B and 12); S.A. – perhaps 'south area' relative to chamber no. 1 (1923: 27–28); Small circles indicate well-used mortars; T – areas of torba, plaster floor from the Bronze Age; W – reference to the megalithic boundary wall from nos 24 to 18; 1 – Chamber 1 (1923: 32); 2 – Chamber 2; 3 and 4 – small niche-like alcoves (1925: 24; see cat. no. 239); 5 – group of stones; 6 – Chamber 6; 7 – flat slab with three standing stones; 8 – flat slab; 9 – short wall of three stones; 10 – tops of megaliths in the wide field wall (1923: 26); 11 – outlying structure; 12 – megalithic structures enveloped by a later wide field wall; 13 – upright column; 14 – two unconnected slabs; 15 – four small pillars; 16 – stones with steps on southeast side; 17 – stones not in the original position; 18 – segment of megalithic wall; 19 – a possible Bronze Age wall lines; 20 – north-south wall, possibly Bronze Age; 21 to 22 – possible remnant curved structure; 23 – offset in megalithic wall; 24 – small niche described as a 'guardroom' by Murray; 25 – torba floor remnant (Bronze Age); 26 – mortar C. Sagona after Murray (1923; 1925; 1929). Drawn: C. Sagona.*

Murray's finds

Although Murray's publications are now dated, the recent identification of the material she excavated, which is held in the British Museum, has opened the way to a deeper understanding of her field methods, and greater clarification of the excavated material in the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta (Briffa and Sagona 2017, Collection 12, cat. nos 239–403). It was clear from a reappraisal of the Borġ in-Nadur site that Murray's markings had not been recognised (Tanasi and Vella 2011). Davide Tanasi, after re-examination of Murray's finds, noted:

> *It is not known in which way Murray marked the fragments after the excavations and no traces of signs previous to those made in 1952 [by John D. Evans] can be observed on the pieces with the exception of specimen BN/P58c (2011: 73–74).*

The fragment in question was simply inked '1924' on the surface (Tanasi 2011: 74). Excavation practices were outlined in Murray's reports, which included re-burying the pottery each evening in between twice weekly transportation of finds to Valletta, but only after they had been 'washed, dried and *marked*' (author's emphasis; Murray 1925: 20).[3]

As Evans apparently did not work on Murray's excavated material in the British Museum, he could not have made the markings on that pottery (Tanasi 2011: 72). It should be noted that markings similar to those on the British Museum pottery do appear on the fragments in the Valletta Museum, Figure 8. One fragment in the British Museum, for instance, was inked by Murray as coming from 'SU of entrance' meaning 'southern upright of the entrance', Figure 9.

As Murray's plans of the site can be matched to the markings on the pottery, it would have been possible to make the association, Figure 7. Not all fragments were inked, and it is possible that the existing markings once represented groups of pottery fragments she stored in separate boxes, perhaps in lots that she considered could be reconstructed (Tanasi 2011: 72, after Murray 1923a: 31). If so, the original association is now lost, apart from some that were reconstructed in the Valletta Museum at the time, and later illustrated by Evans (1971: 16–17, cat. nos BN /P.1–6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19; also Tanasi 2011: 71–73). It is worth noting that Murray was working before sites were excavated, using a grid system developed in the 1930s by the Tessa and Mortimer Wheeler at British locations (Dever and Lance 1982), hence her documented contexts are descriptive.

Blue highlights on the plan are later Bronze Age areas and the locations named on the plan, are those used by Murray in her mapwork and texts, Figure 7. She did indicate, however, her field practices concerning deposits:

> *The whole was sifted by hand so that every particle of flint and scrap of pottery should be found. In this way a number of small flint chips were obtained, some not larger than 1/16 of an inch across; they appear to be the débris left by a workman when making or sharpening a flint implement. (Murray 1923a: 31).*

Until recently, the lithic finds from Borġ in-Nadur that she published remained one of the few accounts of stone tools for the island (Murray 1923b; 1925: 28, pls 23–24; cf. Vella, C. 2011: 191–192).

As all the material in the British Museum derived from Murray's excavations was added to the collection in 1923, it must have come exclusively from the areas excavated to that date. The map in the first report that

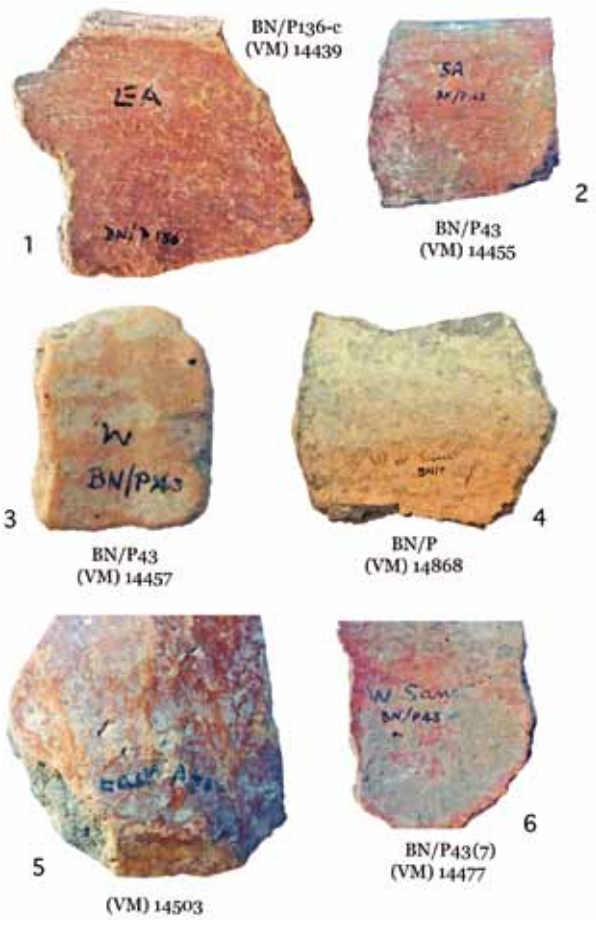


Figure 8: *Pottery fragments held in the National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta, inked with museum inventory numbers (BN code for Borġ in-Nadur; /P for pottery; other numbers are more recent catalogue entries); additional markings by Murray: 1. 'EA'; 2. 'SA'; 3. 'W'; 4. 'W of Sanct.'; 5. 'East Apse'; 6. 'W sanct.' Images: C. Sagona.*

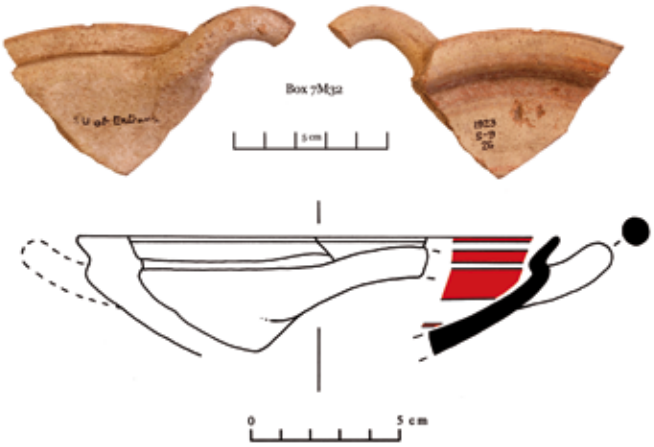


Figure 9: *Kylix, Phase II, c. 600–500 BC, held in the British Museum, Box 7M32, inv. no. 1923/5–9/26, inked 'SU of Entrance.' Image: C. Sagona, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.*

appeared in the same year clearly shows the excavation had only uncovered about two thirds of the Open Area or Enclosure, and the ground plan of the lobed building, but not the areas immediately to its south, the remaining enclosure, nor the cluster of megaliths that would later be designated the 'Double Chapel', comprising two partial rooms, Figure 7 (A and B) and possible Bronze Age remnant architecture (Murray 1923a: pl. 7).

In 2023, another important collection of Maltese antiquities held in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge, appeared online. One group was given by Murray from her Borġ in-Nadur excavations, but also included in this collection were finds from Baħrija, Mġarr, Skorba, and Tarxien.[4] It is worth noting that lithics also feature in the collection held in Cambridge, including at least one imported obsidian flake (cf. Vella, C. 2011: 178).

Aspects of the late Neolithic economy

Factors driving change in Malta across successive cultural horizons were characterised by offshore contacts and the settlement of newcomers. Fuelling these new arrivals was a range of economic interests. While domesticated animals – sheep, goat, pig and cattle – and marine resources formed part of the prehistoric diet, grinding querns and lithic implements with gloss from use as sickles indicate that agriculture was a significant part of the ancient economy between the Mġarr and Tarxien Late Neolithic Phase, 3800–2500 BC (Figure 5; Marriner et al. 2012; Carroll et al. 2012: 38).

Although there are signs that the Maltese inhabitants had sporadic contact with neighbouring islands, they had to maximise the productivity of their homeland for their daily needs. The so-called 'cart ruts' found extensively across the islands should figure strongly in this evaluation. I have argued that 'cart-ruts' is a misnomer, and that they are in fact scars of regular field lines cut into the

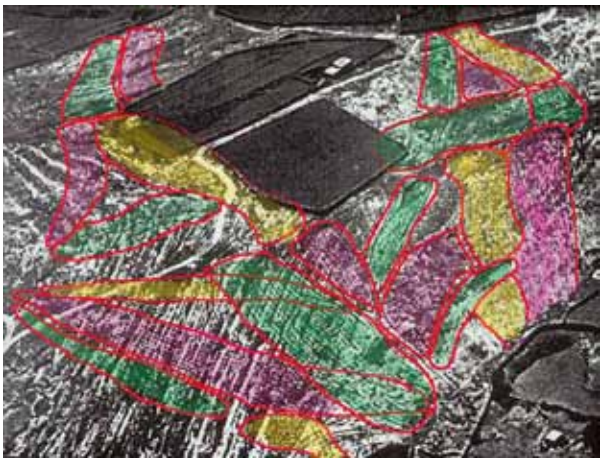


Figure 10: *Aerial photo with rock-cut furrows clustered within possible ancient field plots (coloured pink green and yellow) at Misraħ Għar il-Kbir, after Zammit (1928: pl. 3; field plot overlay by the author).*

bedrock, coupled with intersecting lines used for runoff management to channel water to or from the furrows (Sagona 2004; 2015a: 115–129). When viewed in satellite images, the evidence is clear. They are proof of a deep knowledge of their ancient island environment. No doubt the inhabitants faced a problem of a growing population, and the ever pressing need to increase food supply.

Extensive scars can be found throughout the main islands, in areas not compromised by urban development. One very large group is located south of Dingli, at Misraħ Għar il-Kbir, with clusters of furrows running in different directions, which are likely to have been ancient fields, Figure 10. Unfortunately, these cuttings are given the nickname 'Clapham Junction', which only helped to cement the notion that the scars were the result of extensive traffic by wheeled vehicles.

In a detailed plan of one cluster drawn by Joseph Magro Conti and Paul Saliba, field furrows are clearly shown cut by Roman period quarries marked C, D, E, and by cross channels used to funnel away excess water and possibly capture valuable silt, Figure 11 (Magro Conti and Saliba 1998; cf. Magro Conti and Saliba 2007: 223, ref NW_0064). Often, furrows and channels run into pits and depressions, where both water and soil could be conserved. That the furrows are cut by Roman period quarries strongly suggest that, by that time, these furrows were no long in use.

The Neolithic communities worked at building soil, and honed water-wise practices with clever agricultural strategies. With the current state of technology, it would be possible to record these scarred landscapes in greater detail, documenting additional anomalies that may demonstrate an associated agricultural function, such as trickles lines, catchment pits and depressions, pecked areas from furrow manufacture, stepped areas that formed at the juxtaposition of adjoining fields, and so on. We

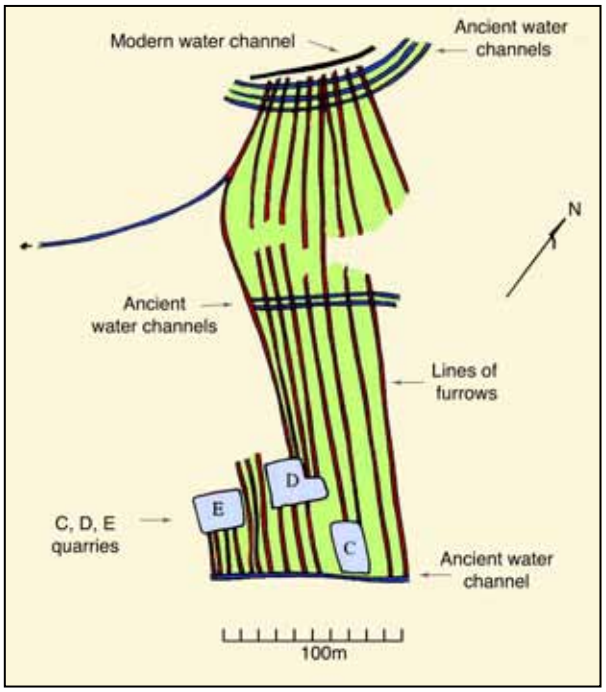


Figure 11: *Plan of one of the rock-cut furrows groups at Misraħ Għar il-Kbir showing water channels crossing the furrow lines at roughly 90° angles; C, D, E are areas of later Roman period quarries that cut through the ruts, base plan after Magro Conti and Saliba (1998; author's annotations).*

should think of these rocky and barren lands as once under mixed crops, and possibly under fields of grains like barley (Sagona 2004: fig. 4).

Efforts to run animal-drawn carts along the ruts essentially failed. In view of this, it has also been argued that the vehicles could have been sleds with stone runners (Trump 2002: 284–85). But how much simpler to see such stone runners as agricultural plough shears, like those fitted into ancient 'ards' used by hand. There are no prehistoric depictions of carts, or wheels, or sleds in Neolithic Malta. If Malta had the wheel, it would have been cutting-edge technology. To date, wheeled vehicles are thought to have been invented around 4200 to 4000 BC in Mesopotamia.

Building soil

As to the process of making soil on rocky terrain, the ancient communities could have utilised manure and seaweed, depending on their proximity to coastal areas. Most importantly, however, there are two similar ethnographic accounts concerning soil production in Malta (Sagona 2015a: 127–28). One that appeared in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* for 1830 made this very important observation about the Maltese bedrock:

> *...this rock, which consists chiefly of carbonate of lime with about seven per cent of alumina, is ... remarkably soft and crumbly, so that with very little expense of labour, it may be easily*



***Figure 12**: Satellite image of adjoining disused fields in southern Gozo with rock-cut furrows running in varying directions (36° 1.889'N, 14° 19.392'E. Image: Google Earth (1985), accessed 23/5/2021.*

> *broken down and converted into a soil of extreme productiveness. In this way, fields are every year reclaimed, and it is probable that much of the land at present under cultivation has been reclaimed in a similar manner. (Anon 1830: 154).*

Examples of field patterns are numerous; for example, four walled fields can be seen in one satellite image of southern Gozo, Figure 12. It clearly captures short spans of field furrows oriented in varying directions relative to the landscape. If these are cart tracks, why are they equally spaced in rows, why are they running in varying directions, and why would anyone run vehicles for such short distances?

A fundamental economic reason, namely vital food production, was the driving force behind the rock cuttings. Essentially, the furrows point to the ingenuity and strategic economic thinking of the indigenous islanders. From this approach, we have an indelible window by which to calculate the extent of arable land exploited in antiquity, of possible crop yields and, hence, the likely maximum population number that could be supported in the islands during prehistoric times. 'Indelible' only as long as the areas in which they are found are not targeted for development.

Submerged furrows

Returning to southeast of the island, offshore, into Marsaxlokk Bay, one satellite image is quite informative. On a calm day in April 2013, the shallow sea floor was clearly visible, revealing submerged furrows channelling into catchment areas, now sand-filled pits, Figure 13. They suggest that the need to increase arable land was pushed as far as the islands could support, and that rising sea levels eventually and permanently covered this area. Even more important, these cuttings indicate the great antiquity of the practice of building fields. They did not function as roads, they were certainly not Roman in date, nor were they associated with quarries, and they did not facilitate the movement of quarried stone, which is one of the prevailing interpretations.



***Figure 13:** Likely submerged field furrows in Marsaxlokk Bay running into pits. Image: Google Earth (1985), accessed 15/4/2013.*

New directions: Aspects of Tarxien Cemetery and Borġ in-Nadur period economy

It seems that the indigenous communities were ready for change, perhaps driven by adverse climate and an increase in arid conditions (Weinelt et al. 2015: 472). One study placed a time of rapid change toward aridity in the west Mediterranean between 2200 and 2000 BC, and the 'sudden cessation of cereal pollen, perhaps signalling agricultural collapse' (Carroll 2012: 38). There are signs that the local communities carried out closure rituals for their massive lobed complexes. Tarxien was backfilled with clean sand after its shelves were stacked with animal bone. At Tas-Silġ, one statue seemed to have been damaged deliberately (Vella 1999: 228). Stone slab roofing material may have been removed intentionally from the Late Neolithic complexes (Sagona 2015a: 84). These processes do suggest that people remained on the islands, whatever forces were at play, though some argue for depopulation (Trump 2002; Evans 1971). Some buildings were abandoned, and others were re-used with a distinct shift in spatial organisation or function, like the cremation burials within the Tarxien complex (Sagona 2015a: 132, 356 ns 79–81).

The late Neolithic way of life petered out around 2500 BC, when there is clear indication that the island was infiltrated by newcomers who made Malta their home. The first signs of contact were examples of a pottery known as Thermi Ware, from finds in Lesbos, northern Aegean, that started to appear in isolated instances in late Neolithic contexts (Trump 2002: 249). Other pottery types point to contact with Lipari, Sicily, and lands east of the Adriatic Sea (Trump 2002: 248–49).

The new cultural horizon is referred to as the 'Tarxien Cemetery Period', heralding the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, Figure 5. It was marked by the introduction of cremation. Notable is the Bronze Age burial site within

the abandoned Late Neolithic complex at Tarxien, hence the origin of the cultural name, Tarxien Cemetery Period. Bundles of woven cloth, small beads including Egyptian faience, copper axes and knives, anthropomorphic figurines with disc-shaped bodies, and dolmen structures were introduced. Although metal weapons were among the grave goods left in cremation burials, there are no signs of violent occupation of Malta (Trump 2002: 262–63). They brought a new range of pottery, some intricately decorated. Tarxien Cemetery settlements are few, but the site of Borġ in-Nadur was one (Sagona 2015a: ch. 5).

In subsequent deposits at the site, the next group to appear in Malta is known as the 'Borġ in-Nadur Culture' because their pottery type was first recognised there. Their closest links suggest Sicily as an origin. They also built modest homes, and comparatively speaking, their sites were more prevalent across the islands, and there does seem to have been some mingling of the two traditions for a short time, judging by the stratigraphy at Borġ in-Nadur (Evans 1971: 225). By the Middle Bronze Age, the shape range of the local pottery is quite diverse, from small cups through to storage jars. Red slipped surfaces are common, and hand production is the norm. Later Borġ in-Nadur pottery was still handmade, but the quality is somewhat diminished, with eroding clays and drab surfaces.

An argument can be made that a significant point of entry into Malta during both Tarxien Cemetery and Borġ in-Nadur times was through Marsaxlokk Bay. A substantial Bronze Age fortification wall was built at Borġ in-Nadur and within it, the remains of very modest dwellings have been exposed through excavations in the 1880s and in 1959 by Antonio Caruana and by David Trump respectively. By contrast, the scale of the 'D-shaped' bastion makes the Neolithic structures to the south look small, Figure 14. In terms of a perceived threat, it could be asked if there is any significance that it faced inland?

The Bronze Age textile industry in Malta

In 1870, naturalist Andrew Leith Adams published a small sketch of a series of rock-cut pits at the very shore of St George's Bay, within the larger Marsaxlokk Bay, and only a few minutes' walk from the Borġ in-Nadur ruins (Adams 1870: 244, pl. 7). The site is partially preserved, with a small number of pits still exposed at the shore, Figure 15. In all, 73 pits were originally counted, Figure 16; 32 were destroyed or obscured when the coastal road was constructed, and 41 remained visible. Decades later, however, road widening obscured the bulk of the features (Grima 2011: 365–66, fig. 11: 8). Significantly, these rock cut pits are likely to have functioned as dye vats for the production of purple dye from the glands of the murex sea snail. Estimates suggest some 12,000 molluscs were needed to produce one gramme of dye. The earliest date of purple dye industry in the Mediterranean comes from Coppa Nevigata, in Apulia, Italy. Research has demonstrated that purple dye production started there

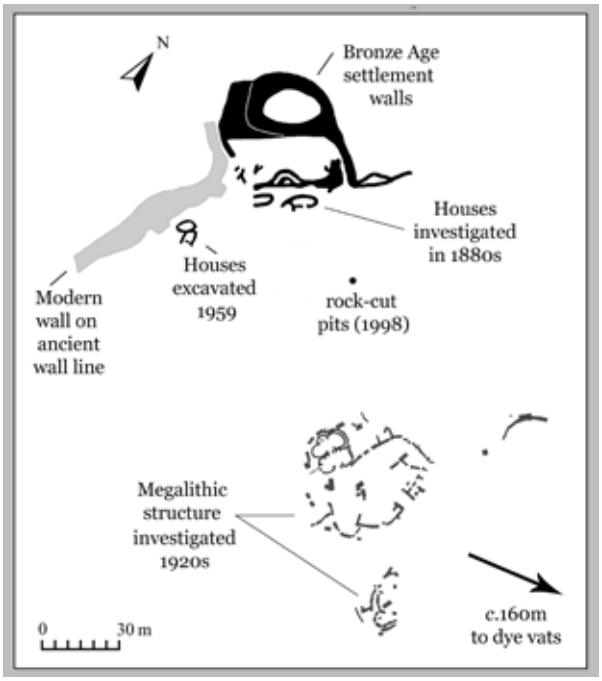


Figure 14: *Plan of the megalithic structures and Bronze Age fortifications, houses and other features at Borġ in-Nadur. Drawn: C. Sagona.*

sometime in the nineteenth to eighteenth centuries BC, becoming a significant industry in the Middle Bronze Age, spanning the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries BC (Minniti and Recchia 2018). Given the chronological overlap with the Tarxien Cemetery, and into the early Borġ in-Nadur periods, Figure 5, it is not inconceivable that Malta was drawn into this flourishing, central Mediterranean, textile industry. Certainly, the textile manufacturing tools from Bronze Age Malta strongly suggests this was the case, Figure 17.

Artefacts, notably 'T-shaped', hooked ceramic objects, were likely used to manage skeins of yarn, both generally and during the dying process (Trump 2002: 256). Such implements have been documented in the Early Bronze



Figure 15*: Surviving dye vats at the water's edge east of Borġ in-Nadur. Photo: C. Sagona.*

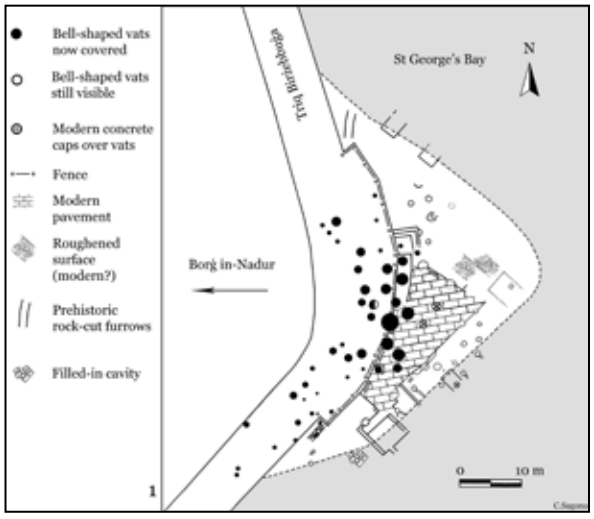


Figure 16: *Plan of the dye vats east of Borġ in-Nadur incorporating pits recorded in the archive 'Plan showing position of ancient pits and holes at San Giorgio, Birzebbugia', dated 9 May 1921 by J. Galizia. Plan: C. Sagona; after the archive plan in Grima (2011: fig. 11/ 8).*

Age Macedonian region, the Balkans, central Greece and Corinth (Carington Smith 1992: 692–94, pl. 11: 38, nos 2800, 2801). Conical loom weights and spindle whorls were found in most Middle Bronze Age contexts in Malta, Figure 17 (Evans 1971: 151; Zammit 1930: 72–73). This evidence alone points to textile production across the islands. The value placed in textiles, however, is also reflected in the bundles of cloth found in some of the Tarxien Cemetery cremation jars mentioned previously (Sagona 2015a: 151–152, 359 n. 52).

Illegal digging in AD 2000 around Borġ in-Nadur revealed archaeological deposits, and three vats were identified within the perimeter Bronze Age wall (Vella et al. 2011: 47, fig. 3: 2). Archaeological assessment of the damage reported that: 'a *thick ash layer* … was also revealed lying over bedrock (author's emphasis).' Without systematic archaeological excavations, one can only speculate that the ash, resting on bedrock and outside the Neolithic complex, dated to the Bronze Age, and it had accumulated during the dye production process that involved heating the dye solution.



Figure 17: *Spindle whorl (inv. no. 1923/5–9/57) and loom weight (inv. no.1923/5–9/54) from Borġ in-Nadur held in the British Museum. Images: C. Sagona, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.*

Long distance maritime contact

Another particularly noteworthy find in regard to offshore contact is an agate fragment, which came to light in Tas-Silġ, a Phoenician-Punic temple precinct, during the Italian Archaeological Mission to Malta, excavated by Alberto Cazzella and Giulia Recchia in 2010. On the strength of the find, the excavators rightly considered that the Maltese islands 'were included in the trade networks that crossed the Mediterranean' (Recchia and Cazzella 2011: 577). A path can be suggested for the object, starting with the stone source in Afghanistan or Türkiye. It was worked into a crescent-shaped amulet, possibly in Georgia, where a parallel (manufactured in two halves and joined with gold fittings) was found in a Trialeti tomb in the 1930s, dated between 2000 and 1700 BC. Likely robbed from a Caucasian tomb, the fragment ended up in Mesopotamia, where it was inscribed in cuneiform around 1300 BC, left in a temple (likely to have been Nippur), robbed again, and carried to the Levantine coast. It was shipped to Malta sometime during the Borġ in-Nadur period around 1200 to 1000 BC. Through disturbance and remodelling of the temple precinct, it ended up in a fourth to third century BC context in Tas-Silġ. Notably, it still remains the westernmost example of cuneiform writing (Sagona and Sagona 2017; Sagona 2015a: 191–93, fig. 6.3: 4).

The proposed date for the agate's arrival in Malta between 1200 and 1000 BC is significant. It is important for the debate concerning when Malta was contacted by Levantine mariners and traders. With a dearth of radiocarbon dates for the Phoenician tomb evidence, the issue of when Phoenicians arrived in Malta hinges on finds such as this, because the traditional lower date posed for the Phoenician appearance in Malta is set around 700 BC. The agate reinforces that Malta figured in the east-west contact across the Mediterranean at an earlier date, and the knowledge that must have travelled with the ships' crews paved the way for growing Levantine interests in the west. In any case, a Bronze Age date for the dye works in this location is likely, and it may have functioned as a textile production site through both the Tarxien Cemetery and early Borġ in-Nadur periods.

Phoenician interests in southeast Malta

During the late Borġ in-Nadur Bronze Age, Phoenician traders and mariners were targeting coastal locations around the Mediterranean rim in search of resources, such as copper, gold, ivory, and so on. Significantly. the ancient sources pointed to their earliest colonies at Cadiz

or Gadir in Spain at 1110 BC (Strabo, *Geography* 1: 3.2), Lixus in Morrocco in 1180 BC (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 19: 63) and Utica in Tunisia in 1101 BC (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 16: 216). Logically, Malta would have been a valuable early staging point in their westward journey, Figure 18.

Considering Phoenician involvement in the trade and procurement of purple dyed cloth, their knowledge of the established purple dye centres in the central Mediterranean may have been one of the lures for them to colonise Malta. Purple cloth production may have been advanced through the Mediterranean by other communities, but it was well recognised in antiquity that the Phoenician traders established a strong grip on the commodity.

There are indications that the Phoenician interest in Malta was focused initially in the southeast. As mentioned previously, Marsaxlokk Bay offered safe harbour, vital for maritime trade, and there is no evidence of a hostile reception shown toward Levantine traders. Anthony Bonanno at the University of Malta made the observation that, within Marsaxlokk Bay, a rock-cut mooring point called Il-Magħluq, still in use, was likely to be a Phoenician constructed harbour or 'cothon' (Bonanno 2011: 53). Over the ensuing centuries, the archipelago was completely settled by Phoenicians. It was never a Greek colony, although Greek wares circulating the Mediterranean found their way to Malta. The local inhabitants were eventually integrated culturally and commercially into the Levantine way of life.

We know that the strategy Phoenicians employed when settling new lands was to quickly build a temple; Carthage, Lixus and Gadir are examples. In the case of

PHOENICIAN-PUNIC PHASES IN MALTA

Phase	*Date Range*	*Broad Cultural Developments*
I	*c.* 1000?–750 BC	Archaic Phase I: Period of trading contact and sporadic settlement (Orientalising period)
	750–620 BC	Established Phase I: fully fledged Phoenician colonisation
	620–600 BC	Late Phase I to Early II
II	600–500 BC	Period of introversion: minimal foreign influence; down-turn in wider Mediterranean economy
III	500–410 BC	'Classic' Punic: Early Phase III
	410–300 BC	'Classic' Punic: Late Phase III to Early IV
IV	300–100 BC	Incipient 'Romanisation': includes the Roman conquest of Malta in 218 BC
V	100 BC– *c.* 50 AD	'Romanisation' of the local repertoire

Figure 18: *Phoenician-Punic sequence for Malta based on the tomb evidence. Drawn: C. Sagona.*

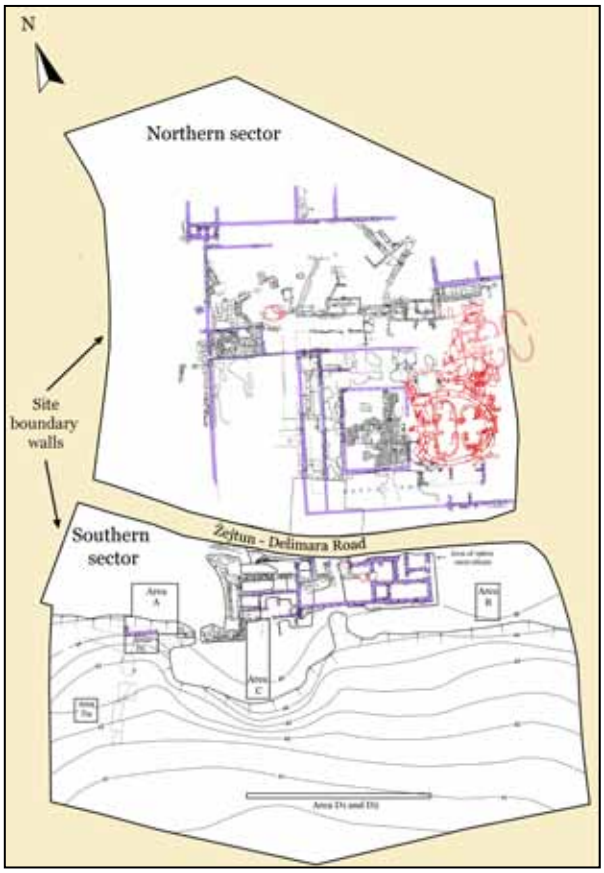


Figure 19: *Tas-Silġ northern and southern sectors; prehistoric architectural elements (in red) are concentrated in the east of the northern sector and a roughly ovoid rock basin in the centre and some isolated blocks in the southern sector plan by C. Sagona, after Bonanno and Vella (2015, Vol. 1: fig. 1: 3; Cazzella and Recchia 2014: 571).*

Malta, they built two, one at Tas-Silġ dedicated to the Phoenician goddess Astarte, later assimilated with Juno, and the other to Melqart, assimilated with Hercules (Ptolemy *Geography* VIIIc.3). Only the location of Astarte's temple is known situated at Tas-Silġ, Figure 19. A temple was vital in their colonisation plan as a permanent link to the homeland, especially to Tyre, but a temple was not just a place of worship. It was a centre of administration, a repository for accumulated wealth, and a focal point that likely played a role in commercial negotiations with indigenous communities. Certainly, the substantial, permanent and quite foreign form of architecture on high ground overlooking the region must have played a role in the psychology of gaining acceptance and a dominant influence, whether grudging or welcomed among the local people.

Astarte was the Phoenician goddess of love, sex, war, and hunting and, like Melqart, her temples were connected with seaports in the Mediterranean. Her temple at Tas-Silġ is only a ten-minute walk uphill to the northeast of the cothon. The most intriguing aspect of the site is that the Phoenicians chose to build their temple around the

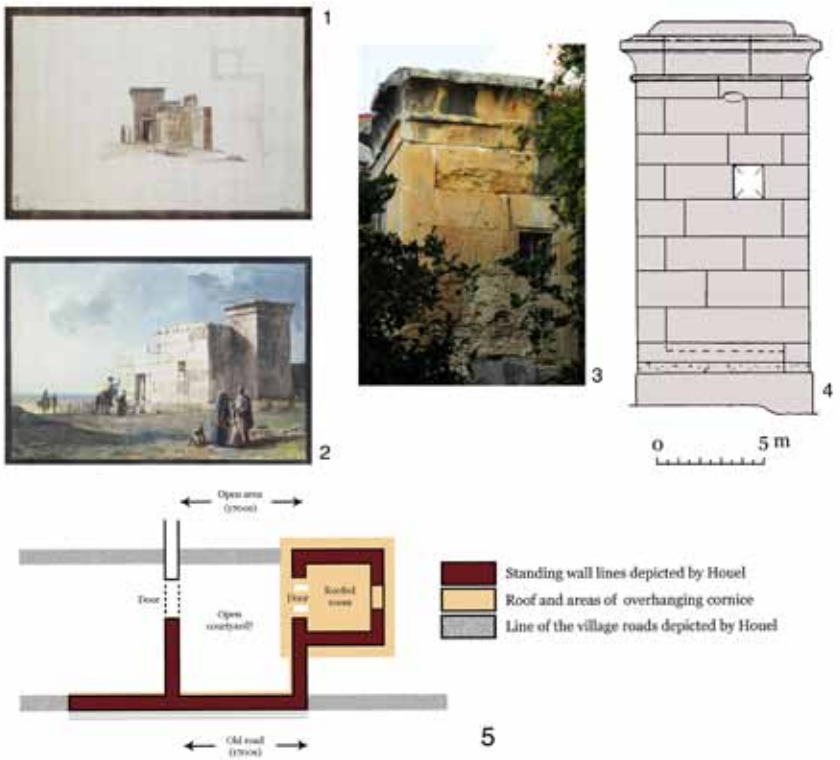


Figure 20: *1–2. Extant Phoenician building and additional walls as they appeared to the artist Jean-Pierre-Laurent Houel in the late 1770s (two images by Houel: 'Greek House in Casal Zurico on Malta' and 'Plan and Cross-Section of a Greek House', acquired by Catherine II from the artist courtesy of the Hermitage, in the public domain), http://www.arthermitage.org/acquired-for-Catherine-II-from-the-artist.html; 3. photo of the building with gorge cornice in Żurrieq, . Images: C. Sagona; 4. drawing of the southeast side, after Bonanno and Vella (2000: fig. 3); 5. plan of the building, after Houel (1782: pl. CCLIX, fig. 2).*

remaining stones of a Neolithic lobed temple; it became virtually an inner sanctum of the Phoenician, and later Punic, complex (Bonanno and Vella eds 2014; 2015; Bonello et al. 1964; Bozzi et al. 1968; Busuttil et al. 1969; Cagiano de Azevedo 1965; 1966; 1967; 1972; 1973; Sagona 2015b). In a way, this mirrors the approach to settlement seen with the previous Tarxien Cemetery; Bronze Age settlers from the east Mediterranean at Borġ in-Nadur who wrapped their settlement around the late Neolithic ruins, Figure 14. Perhaps both groups chose locations among ancient ruins as a means of legitimising their claim on lands they infiltrated.

The location of Melqart's temple remains unknown. For a time, antiquarian scholars thought it was the ruins at Borġ in-Nadur, but as a Neolithic and later Bronze Age site with virtually no Phoenician or Punic remains, this can be dismissed (Murray and Caton Thompson 1923, pl. 12: 95; Bugeja 2011). Reused architectural blocks in the ruins at Tas-Silġ were encountered, notably gorge cornice stones (or cavetto cornice), which came from an earlier Phoenician temple building on the site. This has relevance to another truly remarkable survival on the island. In Żurrieq, a major urban area to the west of Marsaxlokk Bay is an extant Phoenician building, Figure 20. It has in situ gorge cornice identical to that reused in later walls at the temple of Tas-Silġ, Figure 20: 3 & 4. The Żurrieq building indicates what these early temples might have looked like in Malta. Water colour paintings by the artist Jean-Pierre-Laurent Houel in 1782 clearly show that the building was standing within a rural landscape on a road, Figure 20: 1 & 2. The paintings were acquired by Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, and they are now held in the Hermitage. Investigations were conducted in the garden around the building in 1938 and 1964, but very little additional evidence came from them.

The structure is located beside the street, Triq il-Karmnu, very close to St Catherine Church in Żurrieq. It is tempting to link the building to the sacred precinct of Melqart. The church was under construction between 1632 and 1659, about the time that a famous Maltese antiquarian collector and historian, Gian Francesco Abela, acquired a pair of identical pillared monuments, sometime between 1647 to 1655. Their plinths carry bi-lingual inscriptions in Phoenician-Punic and in Greek. One of the monuments was gifted to Louise XVIth in 1780 by Emanuel de Rohan, Grand Master of the Order of St John, and it is now held in the Louvre. The inscription was instrumental in the decipherment of Phoenician by Jean-Jacque Barthélemy. The tops of the monuments are broken away, but they probably supported bowls that served as incense burners. Acanthus leaves around the lower pillar symbolised resurrection and renewal, especially linked to the later assimilated god, Hercules, and the inscription, made by two brothers, was to 'Melqart

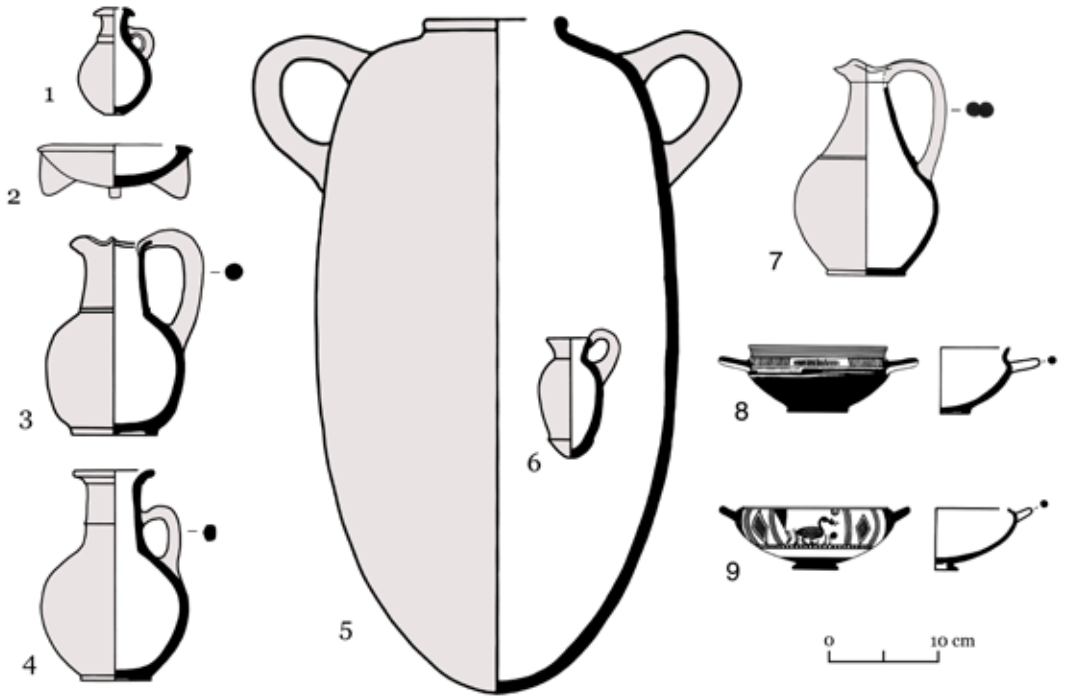


Figure 21: *1–9. Pottery wine drinking kit from Ghajn Qajjied tomb, after Baldacchino (1953: figs 34–38).*

Lord of Tyre' for hearing their pleas. Melqart was a god of the underworld, connected with the Levantine notions of a dying and rising god.

As noted, Borġ in-Nadur was not settled by the Phoenicians, perhaps because it was still occupied by the late Middle Bronze Borġ in-Nadur community within the fortified area. However, Phoenicians did claim lands to the east and west, indicated by their distinctive architecture associated with the temple at Tas-Silġ and the building in Żurreiq. Only one Phoenician cup (or kylix) fragment was documented from the site, now held in Murray's collection in the British Museum, Figure 9, dated around 600 to 500 BC (well after colonisation), and a Punic coin was also found (Sagona 2002: 24, 197–98, kylix form II:1). In any case, temple or not, during early Phoenician settlement, both areas were developed utilising identical architectural cornice features.

Along with the purple dye industry, the Phoenicians became one of the main distributors of wine and the wine-drinking culture around the Mediterranean (Sagona 2015a: 206, 211–213, fig. 6: 8). Malta was no exception. The Phoenician tombs clearly have a wine-drinking kit, which included fine, imported Greek cups, Figure 21: 8–9. Rectangular, rock-cut, grape crushing floors, which fed into rounded and deeper collection pits, can be found in Malta and Gozo, Figure 22: left. A damaged example was cut into the flat rocky pathway above the Wied Ħas-Saptan valley west of Borġ in-Nadur, Figure 22: right.

The most prevalent artefact left by the Phoenicians and their Punic descendants are hundreds of rock-cut burial chambers. Tomb finds are made every year in Malta, but large numbers were documented in field notes left by Zammit and others. The contents of the burials, predominantly ceramic vessels, have been preserved in



Figure 22: *Left, grape pressing pan and catchment pit at the Misqa tanks north of Mnajdra. Right, damaged grape pressing pans west of the Borġ in-Nadur ruins. Photos: C. Sagona.*



Figure 23: *Typical Phoenician-Punic pottery from tomb contexts in Malta, held by the Australian Institute of Archaeology. Images: C. Sagona.*

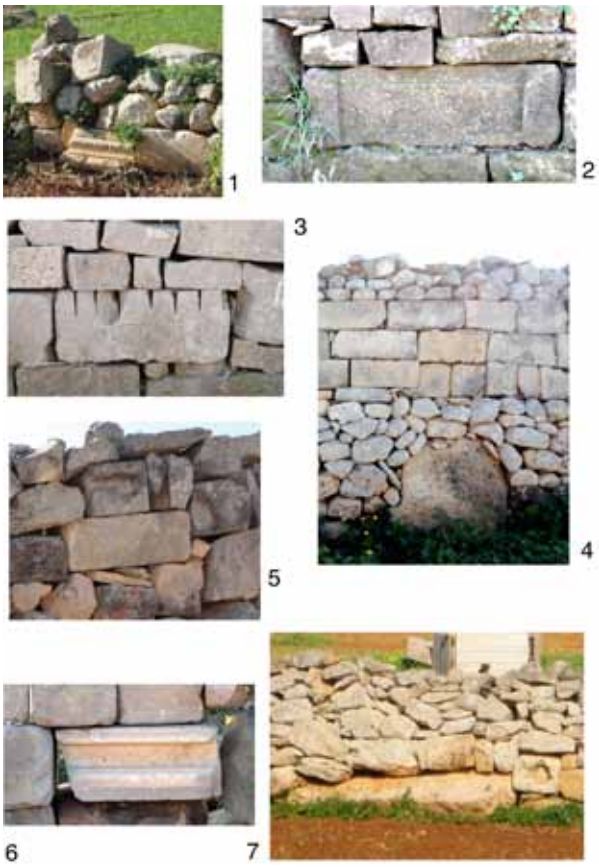


Figure 25: *Reused architectural elements in field walls east of Safi and Żurrieq. Photos: C. Sagona.*

the Valletta Museum and smaller ecclesiastic museums. Large numbers are also held in the private collections of antiquities in Malta and overseas, such as those held by the Australian Institute of Archaeology, Figure 23 (Sagona 2002; 2003; 2011; Sagona et al. 2006).

Overall, the southeast region of Malta still has potential for archaeological exploration. Antonio Caruana indicated the great significance of the southeast, stating that: 'That whole coast… is full of ruins … indicating that the place was once a very populous centre' (Caruana 1896: 38). Remnant archaeological features can be observed in drystone walls, flanking the roads and lanes meandering through agricultural fields, due east of the towns of Safi and Żurrieq, as far as the southern end of the airport runway precinct, and beyond, Figures 24–26. A sculptured head placed on top of a house in the area is of uncertain age, Figure 26: 1, but it does bear strong similarities



Figure 24*: Satellite image of the area around the Punic-Roman Ta' Ġawhar tower; the possible stepped foundation of a Punic monument is north of the Triq it-Torrita Ġawhar road. Image: Google Earth (1985), accessed 7/9/2023.*

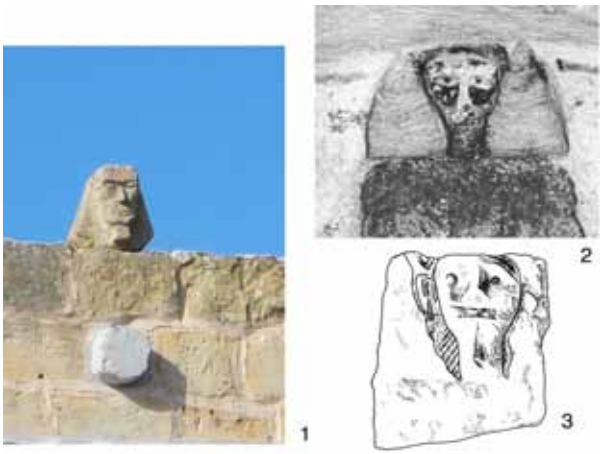


Figure 26: *1. Sculptured head of unknown age on a roof top in the area east of Safi and Żurrieq, resembling rare examples of carved heads from Punic tombs. Photo: C. Sagona; 2. Rabat, Ferris Street tomb, sculptured and painted features (Sagona, 2002: 538–39, fig. 218); 3. Qrendi tomb [399] 1961, face with raised hand on the left cut into the chamber wall, from Sagona (2002: fig. 133: 1).*

with examples found in Phoenician-Punic tombs in Ferris Street, Rabat, the exact location of which is now unknown, and another in a Qrendi tomb, Figure 26: 2–3 (Sagona 2002: figs 133: 1 & 218).

One ruined feature strongly suggests a monument with stepped foundations, Figure 24 centre top and Figure 27. Such stepped architectural platforms have been well documented, supporting Punic monuments such as the Pozo Muro monument in Chincilla de Monte-Aragón, Albacete province, Spain, and the Dougga or Thugga Libyco-Punic mausoleum in north Tunisia, Figure 28 (Guerrero Ayuso and Lopez Pardo 2006: fig. 5). Plans of burial grounds documented in Malta, based on Zammit's measurements, indicated 'open' areas that were not cut by tombs shafts, yet tomb shafts were clustered together as if to avoid above ground features that have not survived, Figure 29 (Sagona 2002: figs 170, 171, 172, 176, 183). Some zones were clearly pathways, others were likely



Figure 27: *Stepped foundation of a possible Punic monument east of Safi (35° 50.019'N, 14° 29.905'E. Photo: C. Sagona.*



Figure 28: *Restored Libyco-Punic Mausoleum of Dougga in Tunisia with stepped foundation (aka Mausoleum of Atban), 2nd century BC. Image: c. 1900, Wiki Commons, unknown author.*

to be where monuments once stood. That stepped monuments were associated with burial grounds is further indicated by a monument and an altar painted in tomb 8, in Kerkouane (Gebel Mlezza), near Cape Bon in Tunisia, dated to the fourth to third century BC (Guerrero Ayuso and Lopez Pardo 2006: 227, fig. 3: 1; Moscati 1972: 449). The area around the possible stepped monument in Malta is not devoid of other sites, Figure 24. A round Punic tower known as Ta' Ġawhar lies southeast of the stepped ruin. Furthermore, the location of three towers, including Ta' Ġawhar in the southern sector of Malta, gives the impression that they defended the interior, perhaps protecting the Punic urban centre in Żurrieq with the possible Temple of Melqart at its heart (Sagona 2015a: 239–242). Overall, significant sites have been officially recorded, but it is clear that more are yet to be recognised.

In summary

Archaeological investigations have come a long way since Margaret Murray worked in Malta. The building of fields, coupled with intensive farming practices in the Neolithic, was directly related to population growth. This practice may have pushed the islands to a fragile limit that could have seriously affected local communities with any negative environmental or other impact. When Malta was infiltrated by offshore settlers, ushering in the Bronze Age, the Tarxien Cemetery and subsequent Borġ in-Nadur periods, one of the incentives for settlement would seem to have been the establishment of a textile industry, including the development of a large, purple dye works at the shore of St George's Bay. In turn, Levantine

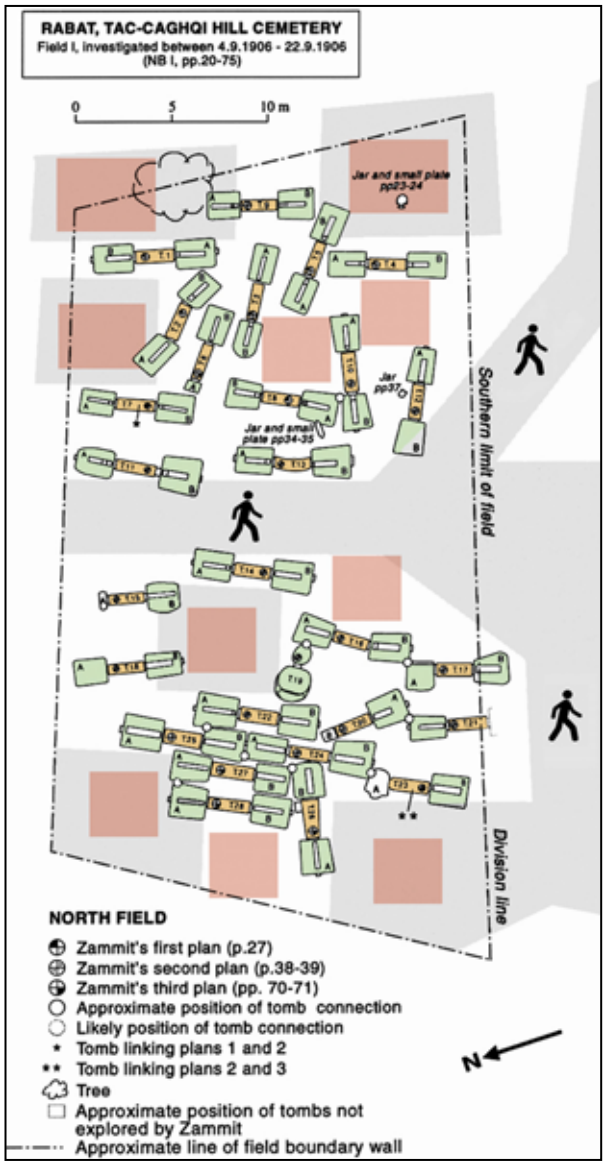


Figure 29: *Plan of Tac-Caghqi Hill Cemetery drawn from the records kept by T. Zammit NB I, 20–75, after Sagona (2002: 492, fig. 172).*

mariners and traders targeted Malta through Marsaxlokk Bay, possibly tapping into the existing textile industry, but equally seeking safe harbour for the ships in their westward journey to the mineral wealth of the Spain and the resources of the African interior. No doubt, at first, Malta offered the crews a vital staging point to renew water and food supplies, but the flow of immigrants from the Levant would continue to grow, until the cultural character of the island became distinctly Levantine.

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Abbreviations

MAR: 'Museum Annual Reports' 1904 to 2002, *Annual Report on the Working of the Museum Department* (title varies), compiled by the Curators and or Museum Directors, Malta: Government Printing Office. Superseded by 'Superintendence of Cultural Heritage's Annual Reports,' from 2003.

NB: abbreviation for Archaeological Field-Notes hand-written by Themistocles Zammit concerning excavations and inspections of sites in Malta; held in The National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta.

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Endnotes

1 I am grateful to the Australian Institute of Archaeology (AIA) for the invitation to present the prestigious Petrie Oration at the Institute on 24 October 2024.

2 I have argued elsewhere that a rock cut cave in the southwestern tip of Gozo was a Mithraeum, which could point to the possible function and identity of the non-Christian character of the Santa Maria tal Bakkari complex (Sagona 2009: 46–47, fig. 69).

3 Limitation of accommodation close to the excavation saw Murray residing in Valletta and commuting to the site in the south of the island, hence, finds had to be secured at the end of each day (Murray 1963: 129–134).

4 Other artefacts came to the MAA as loan or gifted items from various sites (some simply listed as coming from Malta) made by Caton-Thompson, T. Zammit, J.D. Evans, M.C. Burkitt, G.F. Rogers and D.H. Trump; see https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk.

The fourth box: Material from Lahun in the Collection of the Australian Institute of Archaeology

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Abstract: In 1949, the Australian Institute of Archaeology (the Institute) received a large consignment of objects from Egypt and Tell el-'Ajjul. A recent audit of the Institute's Egyptian collection drew upon the detailed packing lists prepared by Hilda Petrie, tags, packaging, and published excavation reports to ascertain the provenance of the material. Many small finds and much pottery from the Fayum site of Lahun were identified. This paper describes processes and practices adopted, the results of the investigation, and a sample of key objects. It appears that the Institute holds the largest collection of artefacts from Lahun in Australia, which can now add to our knowledge of the site and its excavation history.

Keywords: Lahun, Fayum, Hilda Petrie, Middle Kingdom, Foundation deposits.

*This paper is dedicated to the memory of Lady Hilda Petrie – the authors like to think that she would be happy with their w*ork.

Introduction

In 1949, the Australian Institute of Archaeology (the Institute) received a substantial consignment of objects from Egypt and Tell el-'Ajjul (Palestine), packed in boxes marked 'TY I–IV'.[1] This material represented a division of finds from stored material, primarily associated with excavations conducted by the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (BSAE), under the directorship of Flinders Petrie (1853–1942).[2] Most of the Egyptian material from this division was sourced from the Fayum sites of Tarkhan, Harageh, Lahun, Gurob, and Sedment (Petrie et al. 1913; Petrie 1914a; Engelbach & Gunn 1923; Petrie et al. 1923; Brunton & Engelbach 1924; Petrie & Brunton 1924) (Figure 1).[3] The Institute's collection of material from these sites is considered to be the largest in Australia. Many of the objects from both Egypt and Tell el-'Ajjul were recorded in detailed packing lists sent by Hilda Petrie (1871–1956) to the founder of the Institute, Walter Beasley (Davey 2017: 20–21). These lists form part of the Institute's digitised archives, and are referred to as AIA Doc. 4902 (hereafter Doc. 4902).[4] Egyptian material from this division included pottery, shabti figures, stone vessels, amulets, and beads. A variety of other objects in flint, bronze, stone, faience, and organic materials were also represented.

An audit of the entire Egyptian collection commenced at the Institute in 2022, as a collaborative project with graduate and undergraduate student volunteers.[5] The project aimed to identify uncatalogued or missing items, enhance existing catalogue entries, and undertake detailed legacy and site provenance research. As a collection management process, the accession register, Excel artefact database, and the division lists were used to identify the location and description of the Egyptian objects, although Doc. 4902 was the primary source used to track this division.

Amongst the handwritten and typed lists that constitute Doc. 4902 were references to objects from Lahun (Figure 2). These objects were packed and sent to the Institute in Box TY IV. Some of the smaller objects were further stored in cigarette or match boxes labelled with references to tomb numbers or find-spots, or were themselves annotated with 'L' or 'Lahun' (Figure 3). These invaluable

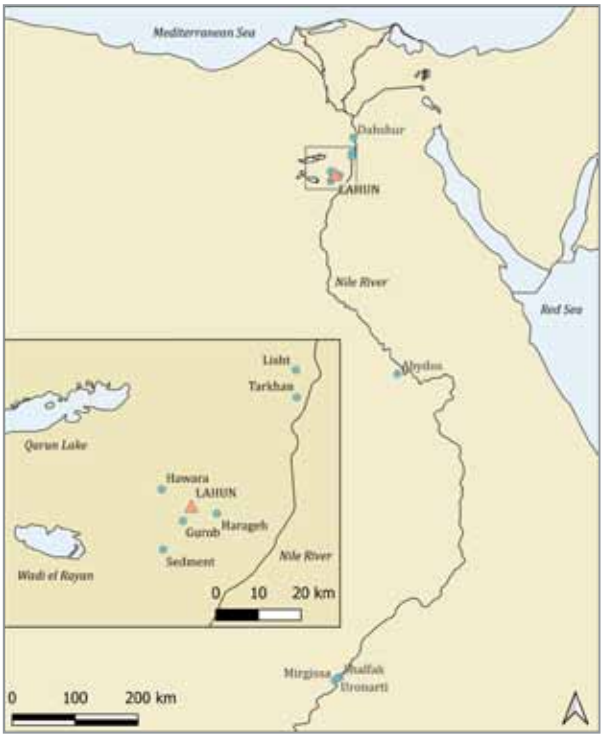


Figure 1: *Map of Egypt, showing the location of Lahun in relation to other sites mentioned in the text. Drawn: Emily Tour.*

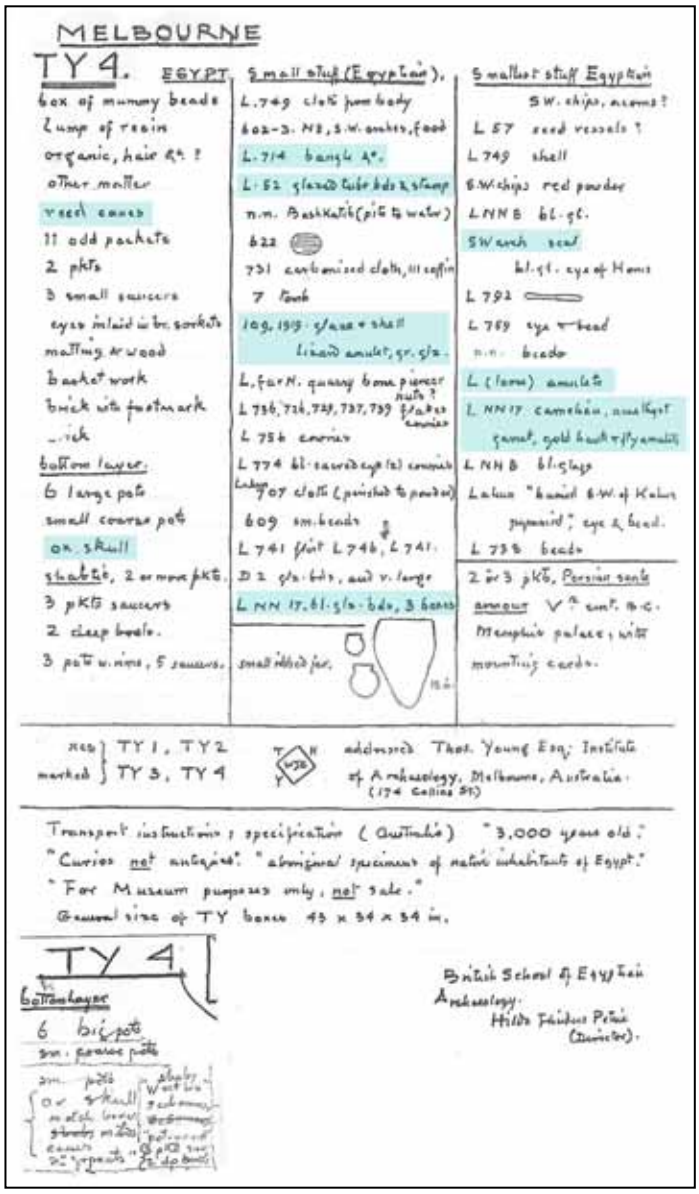


Figure 2: *Handwritten and illustrated packing list made by Hilda Petrie (AIA Doc. 4902), recording items included in a division of finds sent to the Institute in 1949. Items mentioned in-text have been highlighted.*

details were used to identify objects, tombs, and other locations in the original excavation report, *Lahun II* (Petrie et al. 1923). It was initially thought that the amount of Lahun material held at the Institute was small, however, research to date has identified 142 objects from the site, dating from the First Dynasty (c. 3100–2986 BCE) to the early Roman Period (c. first century CE). This number is expected to increase as we continue to audit and work our way through the Institute's collection of Egyptian pottery (280+ complete vessels and fragments).

This paper outlines the identification of the Lahun material in the legacy and site documentation, and introduces a collaborative project, producing high-resolution three-dimensional models via photogrammetry, which are being continually added to the Institute's Pedestal3D platform (https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/).

Hilda Petrie and the 1949 Division

Following Flinders Petrie's death in 1942, Hilda Petrie began to wrap up the BSAE's affairs, which included distributing consignments of finds to the Institute, the University of Sydney, and the Bowen Bible Museum (Drower 1985: 426–427; Stevenson 2019: 184).[6] The dwindling enthusiasm of museum curators in the UK towards acquiring ancient Egyptian material, declining memberships in Egyptian societies, and the passing of many sponsors who once supported the BSAE, meant there was little interest in the fate of artefacts stored in the basement of University College London (Stevenson 2019: 184–185).[7] These objects were principally from the Egypt Exploration Fund and BSAE excavations conducted in the Fayum and Abydos, and from sites excavated by the Petries in Palestine. Notably, amongst this stored material was a large number of objects from Lahun (Stevenson 2019: 184). The exact reasons for storing this material for decades are unclear. Perhaps the objects were stored for future distribution when financial support of the BSAE was required,[8] or were held back for study by Flinders Petrie. Although, between regular Egyptian excavations, report writing, sponsorship drives, exhibition displays, and public speaking engagements, it is unlikely that much time was left to arrange the distribution of all excavated objects. With diminishing support in the UK, it was time to look elsewhere for institutions willing to provide funding to acquire this stored material.

In a letter to Beasley dated 18 June 1946 (Figure 4; Doc. 4902), Hilda Petrie writes 'Australia has little of Flinders Petrie,+ a unique opportunity arises to have some of the odds + ends left by F. P.'[9] The letter goes on: 'after a very lonely 4 yrs in a small room in Jerusalem, (I have not seen my children for 10 years). I must get home to edit – that is why I must part with everything here – also I so badly want money for publishing + some typing'.



Figure 3: *Photograph of shell bracelet (IA1.940), and the original cigarette box used to store the item (IABox.0009). Note the corresponding annotation 'L.714' on both the bracelet and box lid. Photo: Emily Tour.*

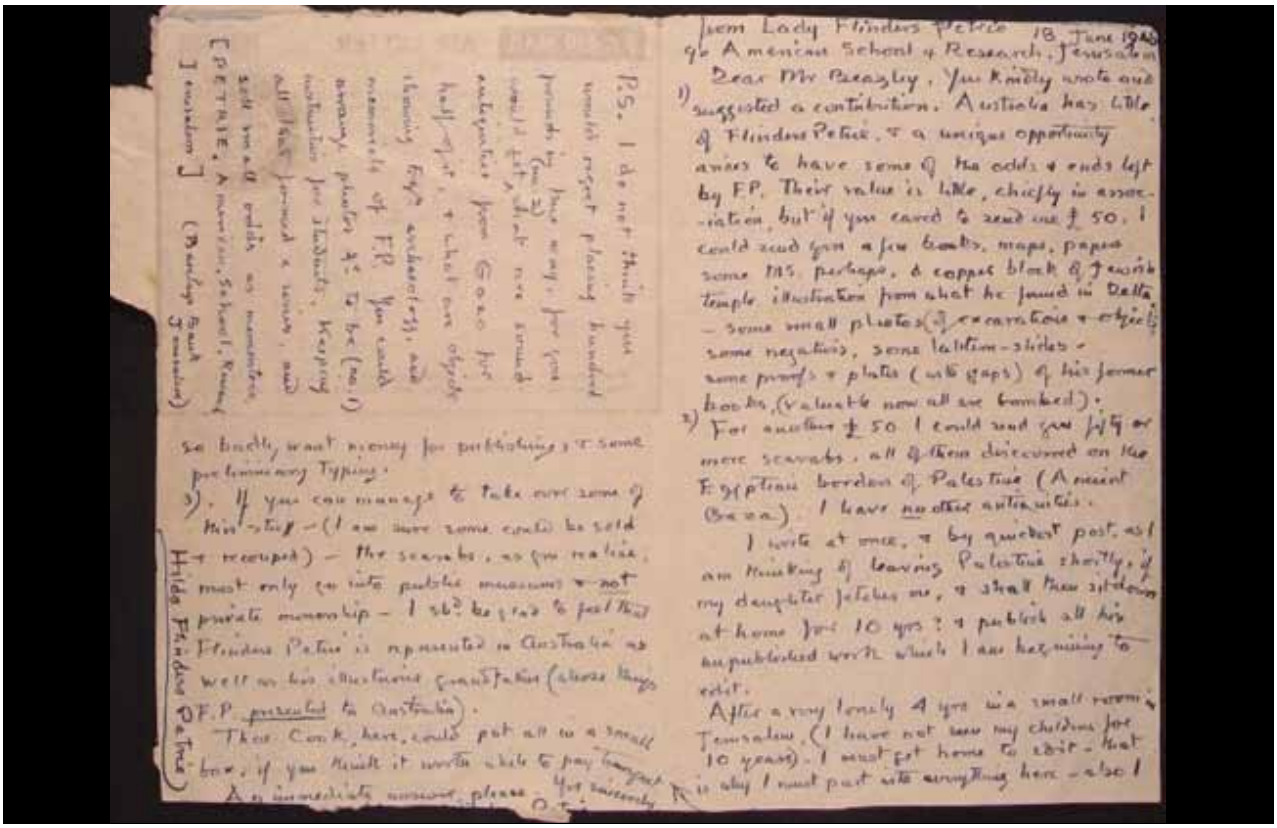


Figure 4: *A page from one of Hilda Petrie's letters to Walter Beasley, dated 18 June 1946 (AIA Doc. 4902).*

These comments are quite telling. She wanted nothing for herself from Beasley's prospective support, but was concerned with completing her husband's unfinished work. Fortunately, this opportunity was taken up by Beasley, who saw the potential of this material for public display and educational purposes in Melbourne.[10]

After accepting the offer, Beasley was sent numerous packing lists and letters. These documents demonstrate Hilda Petrie's awareness of the issues associated with sorting and organising such a large consignment. Indeed, as an archaeologist in her own right, and the major recorder of objects for her late husband's BSAE excavations, she was aware of potential errors in her recording and dating of the pottery in particular. In another letter to Beasley dated 24 October 1949 (Doc. 4902), this issue is addressed, as 'it is now 23 yrs since I left off my 30 yrs' work in Egypt, so I have got rusty + can no longer tell a dynasty at sight'. She also clarified that pencil marks on the pottery indicate 'L' meant Lahūn, and 'G' or Gh was Ghurob, 'H', Harageh. No mention was made of any Lahun material specifically, so it is presumed that further explanation was unnecessary, given the meaning of any alphabetic letters in the lists was already clear.

Beasley was also advised not to open the four packing cases until the object list arrived (air-letter, dated 22 October 1949; Doc. 4902). Further instructions for unpacking the materials were provided: 'A very long run of table, bench or planking would take them best in their groups or layers. It is essential to keep the groups together, by tallying with the lists as you remove them… The separate small boxes are filled either with a group, or where they are obviously odds, it is because they are fragile, or in bits, or because they are rare'. It is unclear how well Hilda Petrie's instructions were followed. In the subsequent years, Institute staff were fully engaged in teaching, and had neither the time nor the specialist knowledge to research the objects contained in the consignment. Some objects from Lahun were catalogued, such as the seal impression and reed trays discussed below, but the significance of this material went unrecognised until the commencement of this current research project.

Following BSAE excavations, finds from Lahun were distributed to museums in the UK, USA, Europe, and Australia (Petrie et al. 1923: 44–45).[11] The movement and accounting of Egyptian objects was complex, and the distributions were not permanent, with many artefacts being deaccessioned and further dispersed onto other museums (Stevenson 2019: 185–195). As the Institute began as a private organisation and not a traditional museum, understanding its role as a supporter of archaeological excavations is crucial to building a more comprehensive picture of the distributive pathways and final locations of the many Egyptian artefacts uncovered by early twentieth century excavators. As Stevenson (2019: 1) notes, the 'history of this material diaspora can be told from any number of perspectives'. We have decided therefore to focus our story on the Lahun material sent by Hilda Petrie across the world to Melbourne and the Australian Institute of Archaeology.

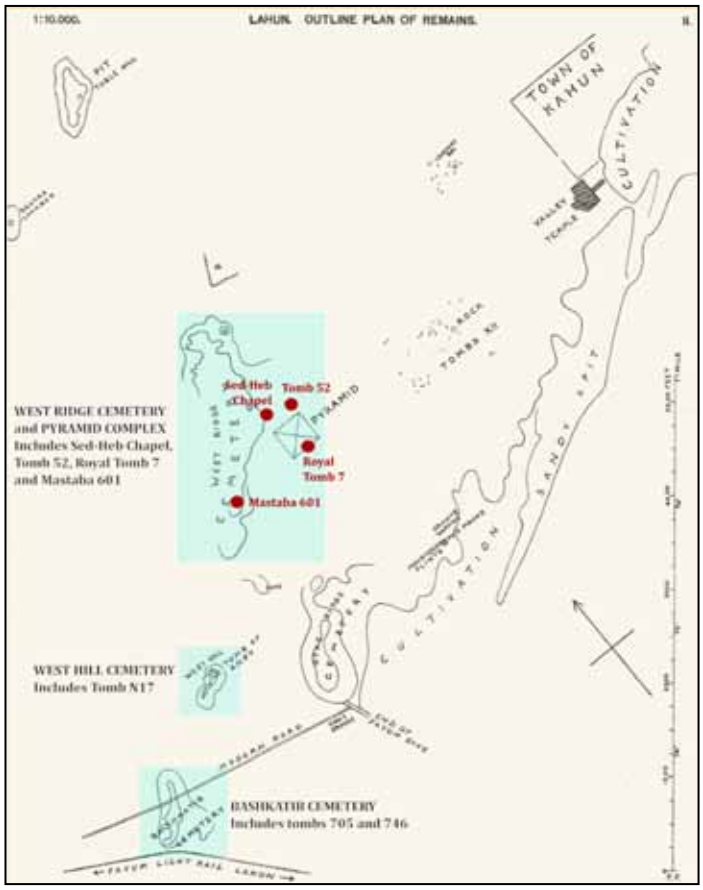


Figure 5: *Outline plan of Lahun from the original excavation report. Locations discussed in-text have been highlighted, after Petrie et al. (1923, pl. II).*

Lahun – site overview

Lahun (also known as Kahun or Illahun) is situated in the Fayum, over 100 km south-west of Cairo (Figure 1).[12] The site includes numerous discrete cemeteries and quarries, together with a pyramid complex, associated temples, and a state-planned settlement of the Middle Kingdom ruler Senusret II (fourth pharaoh of the Twelfth Dynasty, r. 1887–1878 BCE) (Quirke 2005; Mazzone 2017; Moeller 2017; Grajetzki 2024). During the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1991–1802 BCE), Lahun formed part of a network of important Memphite-Fayum sites, including Dahshur, Lisht, and Hawara (Quirke 2005: 7–10) (Figure 1).

Lahun was one of several Fayum sites excavated by Flinders Petrie during a period of patronage by Jesse Haworth (1835–1921) and Martyn Kennard (1833–1911), and then under the auspices of the BSAE.[13] Petrie, alongside Guy Brunton (1878–1948) and their respective teams, was at the site for several seasons between 1889–1921 (Petrie 1890, 1891; Brunton 1920; Petrie et al. 1923).[14] Objects from the last two seasons (late 1919–1920 and 1921) are represented in the Institute's collection, and many are published in some way in *Lahun II* (Petrie et al. 1923). The archaeological evidence, as recorded by these early excavators, demonstrates that the site served various mortuary, settlement, administrative, and ritual functions from the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods through to the Roman and Coptic periods, and had a complex history of re-use over time (Quirke 2005). The Lahun material in the Institute's collection reflects this long connection between people, practices, and landscape.

Objects and inorganic materials in the collection were excavated from various areas across the site, including the larger Bashkatib (see below), West Hill and West Dyke cemeteries, Cemetery 900, and the smaller burial grounds identified as Dameshqin, Kahun Wady, and the group north east of the pyramid (Tombs 50, 52 and 57).[15] These locations can be identified on the relevant site maps (Petrie et al. 1923: pls II–III, XIII, XXIII, XL) (Figure 5). Harder to pinpoint are broad locations or spoil heaps such as 'S.W. Chips' (outside the walls of the pyramid), 'pits to water' (west of the Bashkatib cemetery), and some of the quarry areas. Foundation material from an enigmatic structure referred to as the 'Sed-Heb Chapel' to the north of the pyramid, and beads from Royal Tomb 7 in the pyramid complex, represent important additions to the collection (Petrie et al. 1923: pls III, VIII) (Figure 5). A variety of pottery vessels left as offerings on a platform to the east of the pyramid temple, within the foundation deposits of the Sed-Heb Chapel and Queen's pyramid, and as grave goods in several tombs and mastabas, were also included in the 1949 division. The pottery from Lahun is not discussed here, but is listed in Appendix 1, Part D. Due to the size of the Egyptian pottery collection, site identification for this material is an ongoing project. In total, material from 38 tombs and at least 15 locations across Lahun have been identified to date.

Bashkatib Cemetery

The Institute holds material associated with 17 tombs from the Bashkatib cemetery, 15 of which are listed on Doc. 4902 (Figure 2; Appendix 1, Part A). This cemetery was located to the south-west of the pyramid of Senusret II, and takes its name from the nearby station of Bashkatib (Petrie et al. 1923: 21) (Figure 5). The chronological importance of the cemetery, covering the 'first three dynasties', was noted in the excavation report (Petrie et al. 1923: 21). Based on the recorded data, principal use of this cemetery can be assigned to the First to Third Dynasties (c. 3100–2575 BCE), with evidence of grave chamber re-use during the Third Intermediate Period (c. 1070–644 BCE) (Petrie et al. 1923: 24; Quirke 2005: 124). Most of the Bashkatib material in the collection can be associated with the earlier (First Dynasty) or later (Third Intermediate Period) phases of cemetery use, which covers a period of nearly two thousand years (Quirke 2005: 124).

Material in detail

Our audit of the Institute's Egyptian collection grew naturally into a large-scale rediscovery and reassessment event. With the Lahun material now under a microscope, we have been able to better identify, classify, and research objects. Notable examples include some interesting beads, amulets, a clay or mud sealing, and organic materials.

During the audit, small tags were found attached to some of the objects. These tags were annotated with tomb numbers and other information. Based on comparisons with Hilda Petrie's handwriting on Doc. 4902 (Figures 2 and 4), most of these tags appear to have been written by her. This similarity extends to the handwriting found on some of the Lahun objects, as seen on the shell bracelet from Bashkatib Tomb 714 (Figure 3). While the object annotations were probably done at the time of excavation, or at the field house, it is not known when the tags were created. It is possible that these were made once the objects reached the UK, or even later when Hilda Petrie was organising the material for distribution to the Institute. Original storage boxes annotated with Egyptian object and provenance information were also identified, but most of these had become separated from the objects since receipt into the collection. Again, similarity to Hilda Petrie's hand is seen on this material (Figures 2 and 4). There is certainly scope to widen our project to include a comparative handwriting analysis, in order to confirm our thoughts about these tags.

In 2023, an ephemera project was established to catalogue the storage boxes, and connect this information with the artefact catalogue. We recognise that the term 'ephemera' may imply that this material is of little importance, or peripheral to our research. This is not the case. We have been actively attempting to combat the loss of core archaeological information through documenting these boxes (Davey and Mawdsley forthcoming). Most associated with the Lahun objects are cigarette and match boxes, which we consider to be key documentary evidence of excavation activities. Finds were probably placed in the boxes at the site, which provided convenient storage for small objects (Figure 3). It is presumed that the boxes were then annotated with descriptive information at the same time. A samples database was also established to record any small fragmentary material or residues found either in the boxes, or with the objects as currently stored. This material has been linked to the artefact catalogue, and is available for scientific testing. Currently, we have catalogued boxes as IABOX.[Object #], and samples as IASample.[Object #]. The information provided by these ephemera has helped us confirm provenance, as we demonstrate below, particularly with the beads. It also offers a historical perspective, providing a unique physical connection to early excavations.

The material presented in the following section represents a sample of key objects in the Lahun collection. These objects were selected for discussion on account of their importance for understanding the complicated distributive pathways (from Lahun to the Institute) associated with archaeological material, and for their contribution to our knowledge of the site and its excavation history. For a full list of Lahun material, accurate as of the time of publication, refer to Appendix 1.[16] References to specific objects follows the Institute's registration format of 'IA[Region #].[Object #]' (for example, IA1.1028), and any such numbers present in this paper refer to material listed in Appendix 1.

Amulets

During the audit, three large boards were found with numerous objects attached, including faience amulets, beads, small bronze figures, a miniature stone vessel, and a large wooden Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure. The objects were selected and mounted by Institute staff for display purposes at Ancient Times House, a since-closed antiquities museum established by Beasley in 1954 (Davey & Mawdsley forthcoming). Following this discovery, efforts were made to safely remove the mounted artefacts and catalogue them accordingly; this included cross-referencing the material against the Fayum excavation reports (Engelbach & Gunn 1923; Petrie et al. 1923; Brunton & Engelbach 1924; Petrie & Brunton 1924). This process facilitated the identification of 15 amulets likely originating from Lahun. Unfortunately, due to a lack of clarity in some of the report drawings, coupled with minimal descriptive detail in both the tomb registers and Doc. 4902, we have been unable to positively identify all the Lahun amulets. Likewise, tomb provenance was recorded for some, including a 'Lizard' (Nehebkau, see below) and wedjat eyes, but most were listed as 'L (loose) amulets' (Figure 2).[17]

Nehebkau

A blue-green faience amulet of Nehebkau was described by Hilda Petrie as a 'Lizard amulet, gr. glz.' (IA1.1028; Figure 6). This amulet is depicted in the round, with the head of a serpent on a human body, supported by a snake's



Figure 6: *Amulet of Nehebkau (IA1.1028) and associated faience beads (IA1.2767) from Tomb 601 in the West Ridge Cemetery. The amulet has its original tag attached, with a tomb number and find date. Photo: Chloe Rankin.*

tail. The serpent's face is elongated, with clenched hands raised to its mouth. Nebhebkau is often shown in this anthropomorphic style, but can also be depicted with a serpent head and body, coupled with human arms and hands (Petrie 1914b: 49, pl. XLVII.254d; Shorter 1935: 42; Andrews 1994: 25, fig. 22).

Nehebkau was a chthonic serpent deity, whose name first appeared in the *Pyramid Texts* of the Old Kingdom (Shorter 1935: 41–44). In the *Book of the Dead*, Nehebkau was one of 42 judges of the dead, and considered a protective deity (Petrie 1914b: 49; Wilkinson 2017: 224). Nehabkau could not be harmed by water or fire, nor be subjected to harmful magic, so it is unsurprising that these qualities were channelled through amulets, most of which are associated with burials of the Third Intermediate Period or Late Period (Shorter 1935: 41; Andrews 1994: 25–26; Wilkinson 2017: 224–25). There is a loop for threading at the back of IA1.1028, so it is possible that the piece was once worn in life, before it was deposited as a grave good.

Notably, Nehebkau was attached to a string of 11 faience beads (IA1.2767; Appendix 1, Part B), along with a tag annotated with '601 1919' (Figure 5). This information appears to have been written by Hilda Petrie, and a later transcription error on her part can be seen on Doc. 4902, where 601 is listed as '109' (Figure 2). An examination of the excavation report confirmed that the Nehebkau amulet was not associated with Tomb 109 in the Kahun Wady. This particular tomb was unfinished, with rough-cut rooms and no grave goods (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLVIII). Rather, the tag clearly identifies the amulet as coming from Tomb 601 in the West Ridge Cemetery, and provenance is further confirmed when cross-referenced with the excavation report (Petrie et al. 1923: pls XLVIII, LXVIII.33). This tomb was cut during the Twelfth Dynasty, and later reused in the Third Intermediate Period. Whilst the exact find-spot of the amulet is unknown, it is associated with the later phase of use (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLVIII). IA1.1028 was also one of nine Nehebkau amulets tabulated in the register of Twenty-Second Dynasty amulets by Guy Brunton, one of which was recorded for Tomb 601 (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLIX).[18] It is also interesting to note that the original tag is annotated with '1919', indicating that the discovery of this amulet occurred in the December 1919 phase of the excavation of Tomb 601

Thoth

The Institute has two Thoth amulets (IA1.1064 and IAI.1066), which are considered part of the 'loose amulets' mentioned on Doc. 4902 (Figure 2). Thoth has two manifestations: as an ibis or ibis-headed man, and as a baboon (Stadler 2012: 2; Wilkinson 2017: 216). IA1.1064 is depicted in the round as a squatting baboon, with forepaws resting on the knees, and a lunar disc and crescent on his head, in light green faience (Figure 7). This theriomorphic form is thought to represent Thoth in his guise as a lunar deity (Stadler 2012: 3). Thoth is best known as the god of writing, wisdom, and education, as well as the protector of scribes and priests (Andrews 1994: 27; Stadler 2012: 1). Thoth also played a significant role in funerary culture, appearing as the recorder in judgement scenes associated with the *Book of the Dead* (Stadler 2012: figs. 4–5; Wilkinson 2017: 216).



Figure 7: *Thoth amulet in the form of a seated baboon with lunar disc and crescent (IA1.1064) from Tomb 746 in the Bashkatib Cemetery. Photo: Chloe Rankin.*

There was a distinct absence of any reference to Thoth or baboon amulets on Doc. 4902. Despite this, a drawing of a squatting baboon amulet, with a lunar disc and crescent, was identified and attributed to Tomb 746 in the Bashkatib Cemetery (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. LXVIII.41).[19] The features of this baboon, and more specifically, the marks above the knees, can be seen as lines on the faience of IA1.1064 (Figure 7). This was considered enough corroborating detail to connect the amulet with Tomb 746. IA1.1064 is associated with the Third Intermediate Period use of the tomb, and is listed as a generic amulet in the general register entry for Tomb 746 (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLVIIIA).

Interestingly, this amulet appears as one of three monkeys listed in the register of Twenty-Second Dynasty amulets (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLIX). The other two amulets are attributed to Tombs 610 and 618 from the West Ridge Cemetery. It seems that no distinction was made between a baboon and a monkey, and this is confirmed by a drawing of a small monkey with hands to its mouth from Tomb 618 (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. LXVIII.40). This leads to thoughts about the Institute's other baboon amulet, IA1.1066, which is also depicted as a squatting baboon with hands on the knees, but with what appears to be a solar rather than lunar disc on the head (Figure 9).[20] This form may reference Thoth's role as an agent of Ra (Stadler 2012: 9). Despite the lack of a drawing, IA1.1066 is considered to be one of the three monkey amulets tabulated for Lahun, and part of the grave goods deposited in Tomb 610 during the Third Intermediate Period (Petrie et al. 1923: pls XLVIII, XLIX). A small brown envelope was also found amongst the Institute's ephemera, annotated with 'figure of Thoth in the form of



Figure 8: *Thoth amulet in the form of a seated baboon with sun disc, and storage envelope annotated in Hilda Petrie's handwriting (IA1.1066). Possibly from Tomb 610 in the West Ridge Cemetery. Photo: Emily Tour.*



Figure 9: *Beads from Tomb 705. L: Restrung beads (IA1.2793), with tomb number written on original tag; R: individual limestone bead (IA1.2800), with tomb number annotated directly on it. Photo: Alexis Green.*

a baboon with sun disk. Saite/Ptolemaic Period', probably in Hilda Petrie's handwriting (Figure 8). This envelope has since been reunited with IA1.1066.

Beads

The Institute has a selection of strung and loose beads from Lahun, dating from approximately the First Dynasty through to the Roman Period. These beads can be attributed to seven different burials (see Appendix 1, Part A–B).

Most of the Lahun beads reflect a rounded typology (spheroids, rings, and cylinders), which were standard throughout much of Egyptian history, allowing for shifts in popularity over time (Harrell 2017: table 2). Many of the beads are made of blue or green faience, this material and these colours being amongst the most commonly used (Kaczmarczyk & Hedges 1983: table XXIII; Xia 2014: 104). Some strings also feature soft stones like steatite and limestone, or hard stones like amethyst, garnet, and carnelian. All these materials were consistently popular choices for bead manufacture, and could be locally sourced (Xia 2014: 84: 103; Harrell 2017: table 1).

During the audit, some beads were linked to specific burials with relative ease. This is because they featured small, handwritten tags or marks with references to Lahun, grave numbers, and sometimes the year of excavation. Where possible, these tags have been cross-referenced with other legacy and accession data (Doc. 4902) to provide further archaeological and historical context for the Lahun objects. For instance, IA1.2793 has a small green tag with 'Lahun 705' written on it, whilst IA1.2800 has 'L705' annotated on the bead itself (Figure 9).[21] These annotations associate both items with Tomb 705 from the Bashkatib Cemetery.

It is worth noting that it can be difficult to put these finds in context with their origins. Tomb 705 was a mid–late First Dynasty burial, but the excavation report does not discuss it in detail, nor do we have tomb cards from Lahun (Petrie et al. 1923: 22). Whilst this greatly impacts our understanding of the material's placement within the tomb itself, relative to the burial and other finds, it also limits the use of these sources to verify finds and provenance information listed on Doc. 4902. In their absence, we needed to look elsewhere. Although the distribution list states that finds from Tomb 705 were sent to Melbourne (Petrie et al. 1923: 44), this refers to objects housed at the National Gallery of Victoria – there is no connection between the initial distributions and the 1949 division. Instead, it was the tags and annotations found on the beads, coupled with the tomb register and bead corpus in the excavation report, that helped to positively attribute the Institute's material to Tomb 705 (Petrie et al. 1923: pls XLV, LXIII).

Bead-burial identification is already a tricky affair, so being able to confidently verify information across multiple sources, whilst still not necessarily straightforward, certainly makes the process easier. The annotated tags are a wonderful and welcomed element of the Lahun collection. They demonstrate the diversity of find-spots for our material and provide crucial provenance information when it may have otherwise been lacking. To further this point, and illustrate some of the more interesting beads and burials associated with the Lahun collection, the following is a brief discussion of finds from Tombs N17 and 7.

Tomb N17

Tomb N17 in the West Hill Cemetery is thought to be one of the earliest Middle Kingdom burials at the site (Petrie et al. 1923: 33–34; Quirke 2010: 27) (Figure 5). Upon excavation, it was found to contain 'beads of many kinds', made of garnet, carnelian, amethyst, blue and green faience, electrum, lapis lazuli, and feldspar (Petrie et al. 1923: 34, pl. XLVIIIA). The Institute received a large number of beads from N17, including three boxes



Figure 10: *A selection of three bead strings from Tomb N17. L–R: amethyst and carnelian (IA1.2787), garnet (IA1.2768), faience and fly amulets (IA1.2786). Original tags are attached. Photo: Chloe Rankin.*



Figure 11: *A string of green faience disc beads (IA1.2738) from Royal Tomb 7, with original tag attached. Photo: Chloe Rankin.*

of loose, faience cylinder and ring beads (IA1.2794), and several bead strings (IA1.2768; IA1.2786; IA1.2787; Figure 10). Two of these strings – IA1.2768 and IA1.2787 – featured tags with 'L NN17', further confirming their provenance.

The N17 finds also included three strings of tiny lapis lazuli, carnelian, and feldspar beads (Petrie et al. 1923: 34). Whilst IA1.2787 does feature small amethyst and carnelian ball beads, it is unclear whether these are related to the three strings referenced in the report. The Institute also retains IA1.2768 – a string of tiny garnet ball beads (Figure 10). Garnet beads are mentioned for N17, but miniature ball beads are not; neither in the excavation report, nor the tomb register (Petrie et al. 1923: 34, pl. XLVIIIA). They are attributed to N17 because of an attached tag, which provides provenance data, and supplies information and evidence for objects that may not have been reported in the original excavation reports.

One of the more striking bead strings from N17 in the Institute's collection is IA1.2786 – a small set of blue-green faience beads with miniature fly amulets (Doc. 4902; Figure 10). Flies are a type of homopoeic amulet typically found on necklaces (Petrie 1914b: 9). They invoke protection from insects, persistence, and valour, but are not as commonly featured in Egyptian jewellery compared to scarabs or butterflies (Andrews 1990: 181; Andrews 1994: 112; Binder 2008, 52). Since the Predynastic period, they were made from a variety of materials, including gold, limestone, steatite, faience, lapis lazuli, and red jasper (Petrie 1914b: 12). Several Twelfth Dynasty fly amulets, some strung with beads, comparable to IA1.2786, are known from Lahun (see Petrie 1914b: pls II (19f) and XLIV (19g)).[22] Interestingly, the excavation report notes that N17 contained an amethyst fly, with no mention being made of the faience ones (Petrie et al. 1923: 34).

As with IA1.2768, IA1.2786 was not associated with N17 through information provided by the excavation report. Rather, Doc. 4902 was the primary identifying source. However, while Doc. 4902 clearly lists the faience fly amulets in association with N17, it is odd that they were not reported in *Lahun II* when similar finds (the amethyst fly) were. Further, whilst flies are referenced in the *Qau and Badari* amulet typologies, neither the N17 finds or any flies from Lahun were included (Brunton 1927; Brunton 1928: 11). The fly amulets from N17 therefore represent an important find, and further research is necessary. They also highlight a key issue with the inconsistency of archaeological documentation.

As researchers, we must acknowledge potential inaccuracies in documentary evidence – although it is possible that some artefacts were simply excluded from *Lahun II* for uncertain reasons, there is a chance that they were incorrectly attributed to N17 in Doc. 4902. In a similar example, Doc. 4902 indicates that the Institute received a gold hawk amulet from N17. Excavators attribute a carnelian hawk to the burial, but no reference is made to a gold variant, either in the initial description of N17 or the tomb register (Petrie et al. 1923: 33–34, pl. XLVIIIA). Considering that the Institute's Lahun material was received nearly 30 years after the initial excavations, and we have no information regarding how it was catalogued prior to shipment, potential errors in labelling and site attribution may be what is reflected in Doc. 4902. Though, given that it is a key provenance source, this remains purely speculative.

Tomb 7

Among the Lahun collection, we also identified a string of green faience ring beads associated with Royal Tomb 7 (IA1.2738; Figure 11). Like the 705 and N17 beads, the string featured a tag with 'Lahun 7 1919'. Located within the Lahun pyramid enclosure, Tomb 7 was a Twelfth Dynasty burial that had been looted in antiquity (Brunton 1920: 11; Petrie et al. 1923: 15). No inscriptions were found that could identify the tomb owner; excavators presumed that it belonged to a princess buried during the reign of Senusret II (Brunton 1920: 14). All finds from this tomb, including the beads, were noted as being typical of this period (Brunton 1920: 14). The excavation

report states that a variety of beads were discovered, including several hundred faience ring beads (Petrie et al. 1923: 15). These are drawn on pl. LXIII and further described as 'light & dark blue glaze, many' (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. LXIII (type L)). They closely resemble the IA1.2738 beads which, despite some degradation, range in colour from a light green to darker shades of blue, and presumably represent a portion of the many faience ring beads from Tomb 7.

Following excavation, the Tomb 7 beads were sent to the Petrie Museum (Petrie et al. 1923: 15, 44); for example, see LDUCE-UC6766, which was supposedly recovered from the dust inside the sarcophagus (Petrie et al. 1923: 15; Stevenson 2015: 106). However, we have no indication that IA1.2738 was ever part of the Petrie Museum's collections. It is possible that they were separated from the Tomb 7 finds at some stage, and stored with other objects from the 1949 division. The presence of the tag suggests an active process of separation and storage. Again, we must exercise caution with this. As discussed above, we have no records relating to the treatment of the Lahun material following its initial excavation and export to London. False site attribution or, in this case, tomb attribution is plausible. It should be noted that we would have been unable to associate IA1.2738 with Tomb 7 in the absence of its tag – whilst Doc. 4902 references '7 tomb', indicating that objects from that location were included in the division, no specific items are listed or described (Figure 2). Therefore, despite the object tags having proved crucial in site and tomb identification, there exists the possibility of documentary error.

Sealing

During the initial Lahun excavations, several hundred sealings were uncovered. According to the excavation report, two were found either within or near the pyramid, another two in a pit beneath the quarry chips, and the remaining 226 within the town area of Lahun (Petrie et al. 1923: 41). Of this material, the Institute received multiple fragments from what is recorded as a single seal impression (or sealing) (IA1.991; Doc. 4902). This was drawn and described as a single seal impression in the original excavation report (Petrie et al. 1923: 19, 41, pl. LXV.342). The sealing was excavated from a pit at the south-west corner of the Sed-Heb Chapel, one of the four foundation deposits associated with this structure (Petrie et al. 1923: 19, 41).

Find context in the Sed-Heb Chapel

Four pits identified as foundation deposits were uncovered in the excavation of the Sed-Heb Chapel, one at each corner of the building. Three of the deposits – those located in the south-west, south-east and north-east – contained an array of finds, with only the north-west pit proving empty (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). The south-west foundation deposit was filled with 'clean sand' throughout, and held an array of items besides the sealing, including 32 small pots, a model brick, a bag of white linen, a small roll sewn up in white linen, a triangular piece of bone, a bull's head and haunch, and two reed trays (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). In terms of broad stratigraphy, the pit was overlain by brick, with the bull's head at the top of the deposit, and the two trays immediately beneath. The bag and small roll were found in association with the lowest layer of pots, which are described as having been 'broken anciently' (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). The sealing is recorded as laying at the bottom of the pit, beneath a saucer. Interestingly, excavators suggested that it 'must have broken off the string which was tied round the neck of the linen bag' (Petrie et al. 1923: 19); the potential relationship between these two items will be explored further below.

Foundation deposits in Middle Kingdom Egypt

Foundation deposits were votive offerings placed in or around the foundations of a building prior to its construction, often in the corners or beneath door thresholds (Weinstein 2005). They served as a form of sanctification and protection for the structure (Müller 2018: 189). The contents of the south-west deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel, along with those from the south-east and north-east pits, appear typical of Middle Kingdom foundation deposits, which generally consisted of food offerings (including bovine sacrifices), pottery, objects associated with construction or foundation rituals (either miniature representations, or full-sized items), beads or other small items of value, and miniature bricks or plaques (Petrie et al. 1923: 19; Weinstein 2005; van Haarlem 2013). Comparable examples from the Twelfth Dynasty are found at the mortuary complexes of Amenemhet I and Senwosret I at Lisht, the Osiris temple complex at Abydos, and the pyramid of Amenemhet III at Dahshur (Weinstein 2005).[23]

Sealing description

Returning to IA1.991, the Institute holds five fragments associated with this single accession number. Three of the fragments are considerable in size, and bear visible impressions of seal motifs on one side. The largest measures c. 39 mm (length) by 20 mm (width), the second largest c. 21 mm (length) by 11 mm (width), and the third largest c. 18 mm (length) by 10 mm (width), although all are of a notably irregular shape (Figure 12: left, centre and right, respectively). The other two fragments are of a more diminutive size (each under 10 mm in length), and lack informative or diagnostic features; as such, they will not be considered further in this discussion. The fragments are all a light greyish-brown colour, and are made of either clay or mud. Embedded within them are remnants of a fibrous material, which appears to be a double-stranded string binding. The fragility of the fragments and preservation of the organic binding indicate that they have not undergone any accidental firing. Their surface appears lightly coated in a whitish powder, presumably applied by Petrie in the process of inspecting and drawing the seal motif, to enhance its visibility (Petrie 1904: 76).

It is possible that the item was fragmented by the time of its discovery. However, its condition was not clearly



Figure 12: *Fragments of clay sealing or sealings (IA1.991) from the south-west foundation deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel. Photo: Emily Tour.*

specified in the excavation report, which only describes it as a 'portion of a very fine sealing' (Petrie et al. 1923: 41), indicating that it was potentially a single, larger fragment, which has since degraded over time. Indeed, a drawing in the excavation report depicts it as a single, whole item (Figure 13). However, it is customary to illustrate composite reconstructions of sealings from multiple fragments carrying impressions from the same seal, therefore this cannot be taken as definitive evidence of the find condition.[24] Its condition is not remarked upon in Doc. 4902 (which simply describes a 'seal' from the 'S.W. arch'), but the Institute's own accession records describe IA1.991 as 'seal imprints', with this plurality suggesting that they were fragmentary by the time they arrived in Melbourne.

Seal impression

As shown in Figure 13, the seal motif drawn by the excavators depicts a necklace with a seal (the hieroglyph S20 𓋴) above a bird, surrounded by several tight coils. The two coils flanking either side of S20 end with uraeus



Figure 13: *Reconstruction of clay seal impression, found in south-west foundation deposit, as drawn by Flinders Petrie, after Petrie et al. (1923, pl. LXV.342).*

heads; an ending that is noted as unusual (Petrie et al. 1923: 41). In the excavation report, the bird is interpreted as a swallow, representative of sign G36 𓅱. As S20 𓋴 generally represents the ideogram *ḫtm*, meaning 'seal bearer', and G36 often represents the ideogram *wr*, meaning 'great' or 'elder', it is suggested that these signs could be read as a single inscription – *ḫtm wr*, or 'chief sealer' (Petrie et al. 1923: 41; Martin 1971, 147 no. 1895, pl. 44.11).

After re-examining the seal motif, and consulting with several colleagues, we would like to propose a re-reading of this inscription: the bird is a representation of sign G43 𓅱, which depicts a quail chick, and can be read as the phonetic complement *w*.[25] This would read as *ḫtm.w*, or 'sealer'. Our suggestion is primarily based on the tail of the bird, which is notably pointed rather than wedge-shaped, and visually more similar to G43 𓅱 than G36 𓅱. Furthermore, according the *Persons and Names of the Middle Kingdom* database,[26] there are no known uses of *ḫtm wr* as a title during this period, whereas *ḫtm.w* is attested at least 135 times as a standalone title, and another 1,124 times alongside other qualifiers (for example, *ḫtm.w-nṯr*, 'sealbearer of the god'). There is only one tentative attestation of a title similar to Petrie's original reading, where the words have been reversed: *wr ḫtm.w*. This is found on a Middle Kingdom limestone stela (E 516/C 236), currently held at the Louvre, directly to the upper right of the head of the seated figure; but again, it is difficult to confirm that the bird sign here is truly G36 𓅱, based on the tail shape.[27] Regardless, as the preserved pieces of the Institute's sealing fragments appear to show a bird with a pointed tail, the new reading of *ḫtm.w* appears well supported. However, this interpretation is still open to review, and could be revisited in our upcoming publication on the foundation deposits of Lahun, which will include a detailed consideration of the relevant Sed-Heb Chapel material in the Institute's collection (Tour et al. forthcoming). An updated illustration of the sealing may assist in re-analysis, the accuracy of which could potentially be enhanced by examining 3D models of these fragments (discussed below in *Addendum: Digitising the Collection)*.

On the largest and third largest fragments, there are clear impressions of a bird of a comparable shape and size (G43 𓅱), surrounded by coils, as depicted in the original excavation illustration (Figure 12: left and right). On the third largest fragment, the seal on a necklace (S20 𓋴), flanked by uraeus heads at the terminus of the coils to either side, is also visible, again in accordance with this illustration (Figure 12: left). Unfortunately, as the area above G43 𓅱 on the largest fragment is significantly degraded, it is not possible to confirm the presence of S20 𓋴 here; however, it very likely once existed, given the other visual correspondences with the motif on the third largest fragment. It therefore seems that we have the same motif repeated on at least two sealing fragments. It is difficult to make out much of the impression on the second largest fragment, although there appears to be

traces of the swirl or coil patterns visible (Figure 12: centre). Consequently, it is unclear whether we have multiple fragments of a single sealing, which has been repeatedly stamped with the same seal, or fragments of several sealings, all stamped with the same seal. We were unable to identify clear joins between any of the fragments. Given the degraded nature of the pieces, and possibility of missing fragments, this should not be taken to support one interpretation over the other.

It is also difficult to determine the exact size and shape of the seal used to make the impression, which could in turn be used to determine its type. Examining the largest fragment, a tentative length measurement of the seal impression (which would correspond to the seal base size) can be made at c. 33 mm, and there is a definite curvature to the borders of the impressions on the two largest fragments (Figure 12: left and centre). Typically, Middle Kingdom scarabs average c. 22–24 mm in length, and c. 15–17 mm in width, which places this seal impression well above the standard size range. Notwithstanding that some exceptional Middle Kingdom scarabs can reach larger sizes, c. 33–39 mm, it appears more probable that this impression was made by an oval stamp seal.[28]

Sealing type and associated objects

It was put forward in the excavation report that the 'sealing' was initially attached to the small linen bag found in the same deposit (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). This



Figure 14: *Linen bag found in south-west foundation deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel, Lahun (LDUCE-UC6536). Image: courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London.*



Figure 15: *Linen bag with sealing affixed to binding around neck (left item), found at Lahun in an unspecified location (LDUCE-UC7502). Image: courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London.*

linen bag is currently held at the Petrie Museum (LDUCE-UC6536; Figure 14). The bag remained unopened at the time of its discovery, but 'seem[ed] to contain nothing but folds of linen' (Petrie et al. 1923: 19); it remains in this condition today. However, there are some potential issues with the association of the two items. Firstly, it is unclear why the excavation report so emphatically connects the two objects. Although they appear to have been found nearby one another, they were clearly separate, with the linen bag at the lowest layer of broken pottery in the deposit, and the clay sealing at a similarly low level, but 'under a saucer' (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). There is no explicit mention of their exact proximity, nor any given reasoning for why it is believed the sealing had broken off the bag. Rather, the fact that the sealing was found beneath the saucer is evidence that it was deposited separately from the bag.

A linen bag with its sealing still affixed is known from Lahun. It is presently held at the Petrie Museum, and traces of its contents are noted to remain as a 'dark mass' (LDUCE-UC7502; Figure 15). Unfortunately, this item is not included in the excavation report, and no further details are provided by the Petrie Museum online catalogue, making potential comparison with our own sealing and its supposedly associated linen bag impossible in terms of find context. Further indirect evidence for the sealing of linen bags is provided by loose sealings at other Middle Kingdom sites. In particular, their reverse impressions can demonstrate what types of items the



Figure 16: *Reverse impression of largest sealing fragment (IA1.991). Photo: Emily Tour.*

sealings were impressed against, and the different binding types used. Many examples interpreted as being fixed to bags, both linen and otherwise, have been noted in a range of Middle Kingdom contexts, including Wah-Sut in south Abydos (Wegner 2004: 225; Picardo 2015: 260), the fortresses at Mirgissa (Foster 2001: 130, pl. 8), Shalfak (Foster 2000: 173, fig. D), and Uronarti (Reisner 1955: 29), and both the settlement and pyramid complex at Lisht (Aruz 2000: 133).

This leads to the second issue in associating the sealing with the linen bag: the reverse impression does not resemble those on other known bag sealings. At Lisht, sealings interpreted as securing small bags are described as bearing 'a strongly curved profile and the impressions of material and cord' (Aruz 2000: 133, fig. 25). Those from Shalfak and Mirgissa have 'the impression of string or reed bisecting two areas which are smooth and undulating', representing the gathered fabric of the bag drawn together by bindings (Foster 2000: 173, fig. 3d, 2001: 130, pl. 8). These surfaces are often noted to be variously convex or L-shaped, depending on how they were affixed to the bag (Aruz 2000: 133; Foster 2000: 173, 2001: 130). Wegner (2018: 248, fig. 13.11) also emphasises the significance of fabric impressions on the reverse side of sealings used to secure bag openings in his depiction of different sealing types at Wah-Sut.

None of these examples bear any similarity to the reverse impressions on IA1.991. Instead, the impressions are all relatively flat and smooth, except in areas where the surface has degraded. On the largest fragment, there is a straight ridge across the reverse, running perpendicular to what appears to be a string channel (Figure 16). A second probable string channel is found across the front of the same fragment, although at a slightly different orientation to the one on the reverse. Similar channels are found across the back of the other larger fragments. None of these reverse impressions show any marks indicating that they were pressed against a woven, gathered fabric, as would be expected if it were ever attached to a linen bag. The flatness of the reverse side is also odd, given the rounded neck of the bag, and the string channels appear notably thick (c. 2.5 mm) compared to the fine string used to close it.[29]

The most curious element is the straight ridge on the reverse of the largest fragment, which does not correspond to any visible element of the bag. This ridge strongly resembles examples of sealings attached to either the join between a wooden box and its lid, or on shrine door-slits, which bear a raised ridgeline from where clay entered into the slit between the two flat surfaces (Aruz 2000: 128, fig. 15; Foster 2000: 173, fig. 3k). Whilst Foster (2000: 173) notes that examples of this type from both Shalfak and Uronarti do not bear any string marks, those from Lisht are known to bear a cord impression running roughly perpendicular to the ridge, apparently capturing evidence of some sort of knob closure between the two surfaces (Aruz 2000: 128). This feature is shown clearly in the depiction of a chest/door slit sealing fragment from the pyramid complex in Lisht South (Aruz 2000: fig. 15). Consequently, it appears likely that the Institute's fragments were impressed against a hard, smooth, flat object, rather than a malleable linen bag, refuting the association made between these items in the excavation report. More specifically, the larger fragment preserves some more specific evidence for it being used as either a chest or door sealing, which possibly also incorporated some sort of knob closure using a string.[30] There are no objects described within the deposit that could have generated such an impression. Considering the totality of the evidence – particularly, the location of the sealing under the saucer, and the nature of the reverse impression – we can conclude that the sealing was deposited unattached to any object.

Significance within the deposit

The detached state of this sealing raises an important question as to its purpose within the deposit. Rather than considering it an accidental loss, or an opportune discard, it is interesting to consider parallel evidence from the Aegean that could indicate a more symbolic element to its deposition. This is Schoep's (2021: 262–64) interpretation of sealings discovered within a number of Minoan 'structured deposits', where seemingly ritually deposited material was sealed in sub-floor contexts – for example, the stone cists within the Temple Repositories at Knossos, or the *Dépôt hiéroglyphique* at Malia. A comparison to the Vat Room Deposit at Knossos is particularly striking, with a range of high-value items, including obsidian cores, ostrich shell, gold, rock crystal and faience inlays, and figurines alongside two clay sealings, entirely detached from any object (Schoep 2021: 264). It is possible that the sealing fragments within the Institute's Lahun collection held a similar place within their own context, as one element of a larger collection of objects intentionally taken out of standard functional circulation for ceremonial deposition at the Sed-Heb Chapel.



Figure 17: *Reed tray (IA1.901) from the south-east foundation deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel. Photo: Christopher Davey.*

Organic materials

A range of organic materials have been identified in the Lahun collection, including wood and reed, shells, seed and nuts, bone and animal hair, ochre, and textile fragments. Of importance are two reed trays (IA1.901) and bovine skeletal material, which includes a mandible set and a pair of horns (IA1.941 and IA1.906, respectively). These items are referred to as 'reed canes' and 'ox-skull' under the subheading 'bottom layer' in Doc. 4902 (Figure 2). The material is associated with the Sed-Heb Chapel's south-east deposit (Petrie et al. 1923: 18), which also contained a linen bag, pith roll, and 33 pots, some of which held barley, seeds, and other food items (Petrie et al. 1923: 19; see IA1.1089, Appendix 1, Part B).

Three reed trays were found in the south-east deposit, of which two were sent to the Institute (IA1.901; Figure 17). This is confirmed by the original tags written by Flinders Petrie, reading 'arch S.E. 2nd Tray' and 'arch S.E. 3rd Tray' respectively (Figure 18). The tags were attached to the side of each tray, and provided the initial information used to track and identify the site provenance for these objects. The two trays each contain a base and four sides held together by twined papyrus and wax. The second tray measures 29 cm in length and 22 cm in width, while the third tray measures 30 cm in length and 23 cm in width, noting that the sides are slightly uneven. The trays are similar in design to the trays from the south-west deposit (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). It is assumed that the photographs of the south-west deposit trays (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XXVA.1) accurately capture what those from the south-east deposit would have looked like in complete form. Regardless, the trays are well preserved, suggesting that the environmental conditions of the site were stable and suitable for the preservation of organic materials.

During an assessment of the trays, it was noted that there were additional reeds, finer than the rest, and which lacked the same residue as the reeds of the two trays. Where the



Figure 18: *Handwritten label that accompanied the above reed tray (IA1.901). Photo: Christopher Davey.*



Figure 19: *One of the bull horns (IA1.906) from the south-east foundation deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel. Photo: Christopher Davey.*

reeds of the trays had wax residue on the tips, some of the finer reeds had wax residue approximately 2 cm from the tips, while others lacked any clear evidence of residue. These reeds measure between 20–21 cm, with most 20.5 cm in length. These measurements are smaller than those of the two trays. It is possible then, that the Institute received a third tray (perhaps from the south-east deposit). Based on the placement of the residue, it is speculated that the reeds belonged to a tray that contained a base and two supports on the bottom. An example of this form was found in the south-west deposit, and photographed for the report (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XXVA.2–3). Despite the number of finer reeds identified, a full third tray could not be reconstructed. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed if the Institute received a third tray, or if there were spare reeds that accompanied the other contents in the deposits.

Trace materials were also discovered, which likely accompanied the trays from Lahun. The trace materials (IASample.0011) contained pieces of dried wax, reeds, and papyrus, along with what is potentially decomposed organic matter and glazed fragments, some of which appear to be similar to faience. A review of the excavation report confirms that no faience objects were identified or recorded in the south-east deposit. It is possible that faience fragments became associated with the trays during a period of interaction, either prior to their placement in the foundation deposit or after excavation. This interaction could also have occurred during the transportation and storage of items. As the fragments are small and require further examination, no conclusions can be made at this stage. The presence of trace materials on the trays demonstrates a need for further scientific analysis



Figure 20: *Cow mandible (IA1.941) from the south-east foundation deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel. Photo: Christopher Davey.*



Figure 21: *Rough limestone stamp seal (IA20.3) from Tomb 52. L: Detail on the seal face; Middle: View of the seal body, including perforation, Photos: Christopher Davey; R: Drawing of the stamp seal from the excavation report, from Petrie et al. (1923, pl. LXIII.2).*

of the material, which may provide crucial evidence of the potential associations between objects prior to their placement or abandonment in graves, fills, or deposits.

The Institute also has a pair of horns (IA1.906; Figure 19) and a set of mandibles believed to be the remains of a bull's head (IA1.941; Figure 20). Examination of the mandible confirms that they belonged to a cow. This conclusion is based on the imagery and description from Fillios and Blake (2015: 5–9), which shows the diagnostic characteristics of a cow's mandible. These diagnostic features include a saddle-shaped condyle, a deep and rounded mandibular notch, and a long, high coronoid process (Filios & Blake 2015: 5–6). The teeth of the mandible suggest that the cow was young when it had died, as not all permanent molars had fully erupted – the M3 was still in the process of perforating through the bone at the time of death (Grant 1982: 95). An examination of the mandible wear stage (M.W.S) of the teeth resulted in an M.W.S score of 23 for one mandible, and 31 for the other. The higher an M.W.S is, the older an animal was at the time of death (Grant 1982: 96). Based on the M.W.S of the mandibles, the bull is assumed to have been between 18–30 months old when it died. Additionally, the Institute has the distal end of a femur, which matches the identification of a bovine femur (see IA1.949). There is also a fragment that could be the proximal end of the femur. Further, the Institute retains what appears to be three hyoid bones (also part of IA1.949), suggesting that the bones may be from more than one cow or bull.

Within Egyptian foundation deposits, a primary food offering consists of the sacrifice of a bovine, and the subsequent placement of its severed head in the foundation deposit (Weinstein 2005). Bovine skulls and other skeletal remains were also located in the south-west corner of the Pyramid of Senusret II, and the north-east foundation deposit of the Queen's pyramid (Petrie et al. 1923: 4, 8, 10, 12, pl. XV). Each foundation deposit of the Sed-Heb Chapel, apart from the empty north-west pit, contained a severed bovine head (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). In the south-east deposit, the bull's head was accompanied by the reed trays. Indeed, 'one tray was just below the head' (Petrie et al. 1923: 19), suggesting that the tray may have carried the head during the foundation ceremony. At the time of excavation, the bull heads from the Sed-Heb Chapel deposits were well preserved. The bull's head in the south-east deposit had light hair, whereas those from the south-west and north-east deposits were dark haired (Petrie et al. 1923: 19). This is an interesting visual arrangement, which may have some significance when considering the rituals associated with establishing the chapel structure, and for Middle Kingdom ritual practices associated with the living or deified king.

A Problem Clarified Through Research

In this final section, we note that this audit, and particularly the review of legacy documentation, has allowed us to identify objects within the Institute's collection that were previously unknown to be part of the 1949 division. This is important in allowing researchers to clearly identify the provenance of these items, and to confidently tie them to contextual information within the excavation report. As the audit continues, it is probable that this list will expand.

One notable example that demonstrates the above is the attribution of a soft, chalky limestone stamp seal to the Lahun collection (IA20.3; Figure 21). The seal was previously thought to have been acquired by Beasley in 1935 from Edward Jawahery in Baghdad, and suggested to be Anatolian in origin by Merrillees (2015: 139–40), based on comparanda from the region. Merrillees also raised the possibility that the script pattern on the seal face depicted 'crude Hittite hieroglyphs', but concedes some similarity to Egyptian hieroglyphic signs (Merrillees 2015: 140). During the inspection of Doc. 4902, an entry recording items from Tomb 52 was noticed, which made

mention of a 'stamp'. This prompted a review of the excavation report for further mention of this stamp, and both a short description ('a rough limestone seal') and an illustration confirmed that not only did this object indeed originate from Tomb 52 (Petrie et al. 1923: 33, pl. LXIII.2) (Figure 21), but it was IA20.3. This discovery also highlighted an error in the tomb register, where this stamp seal was mistakenly listed as a 'scarab', even though it is associated with the correct tomb (52) and illustration number (LXIII.2) (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLVIII). Whilst such inconsistencies in the original reports are understandable, given the volume of material and short period of time in which they were recorded, they impede accurately provenancing material, again demonstrating the value of legacy documentation in supplementing and enhancing such work.

Whilst no further information is provided in the excavation report on the stamp itself, its attribution to Tomb 52 is significant, and opens up potential lines of enquiry. Tomb 52 is part of a larger group of ten tombs (50–59) located at the bottom of a hollow in the pyramid complex (Figure 5). In many cases these tombs were unfinished, and in all instances they were interpreted by excavators as remaining unused, being filled with 'clean sand, which had been compacted with storm-water, and set hard' (Petrie et al. 1923: 33). It is also noted that items had apparently been 'thrown down' the various grave shafts after their construction, including a bead collar and wooden staves (Tomb 52), broken pots, painted sherds, 'workmen's *débris*', and a cylinder seal of Senusret III (the latter associated with Tomb 57) (Petrie et al. 1923: 33, pl. XLVIII).[31]

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the exact nature of this deposition, whether it be simply refuse, as implied in the report, or rather some kind of intentional ceremonial act, similar to what has been discussed above with regards to foundation deposits. Concerning the latter, the proximity of these tombs to the pyramid of Senusret II, and the inclusion of seals, is intriguing. It is also unclear whether these items represent a single or short-term deposition event, or whether they accumulated over time, which renders the chronological attribution of items (including the stamp seal) difficult, although it should be noted that the manufacture of both the pottery and cylinder seal can be dated to at least the Twelfth Dynasty. Whilst the information provided by the excavation report adds little to our understanding of the stamp seal's function and ownership, its newly confirmed provenance calls for a re-evaluation against other known examples of rough limestone stamp seals (or those of comparable soft stone materials, such as steatite), both from Lahun, and the Middle Kingdom more broadly.

Conclusion

The Lahun excavations conducted by Petrie and Brunton from 1889–1921 produced a diverse assemblage of material that has since been dispersed to museums throughout the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Europe. The Australian Institute of Archaeology holds 142 objects from the site, which remained largely unknown until the commencement of an internal auditing project in 2022. As the material was stored and only sent to the Institute in 1949, this division was not reflected in the published *Lahun II* distribution. This article raises awareness of the Lahun objects in the Institute's collection, which, to our understanding, constitutes the largest number of small finds and pottery from Lahun in Australia. It also represents the first extensive discussion of the Sed-Heb Chapel's foundation deposits, revealing new information about the material within them, and associated ritual practices. This has contributed to our understanding of foundation deposits in Egypt, and the Sed-Heb Chapel more generally. Of course, our work is far from complete. Not only does the audit continue, but there is the potential to embark on collaborative projects with other institutions, such as the Petrie Museum. Further research is required for many of the objects, including scientific testing and analysis.

Notably, this current work has demonstrated how a thorough interrogation of legacy data – including storage boxes, packing lists, excavation tags, and so on – is crucial in the review and understanding of archaeological collections. Not only do these sources supply information and evidence for objects that may not have been published in the original excavation reports, but they can reveal significant provenance information, and previously unknown or overlooked connections between objects and on-site locations. Most importantly, this research has enabled us to reconnect an otherwise little-known division with the people, practices, and landscape of Lahun, as well as the broader excavation and material distribution history of the site.

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Addendum: Digitising the Collection

Presently, we are in the process of digitising a representative selection of the Institute's Lahun material, producing 3D models via photogrammetry. These are progressively being loaded onto our publicly available Pedestal3D platform (https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/), and include a number of items discussed in this article: the sealing fragments (https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/r/Ht7_roeWys; https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/r/fEJfXbUoNL; https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/r/eTdyPtg1R2), the Nehebkau and Thoth amulets (https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/r/EE0OCed_uS; https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/r/RgYASDCTrq), and the limestone stamp seal (https://aiarch.pedestal3d.com/r/hBOSYwy_Wo).

It is hoped that the availability of this material will facilitate research access for Egyptian scholars, and potentially engage local stakeholders from Fayum and Beni Suef communities in heritage-based education programmes. It will also provide Australian and international scholars alike access to new data and objects from Lahun. An in-depth discussion of this digitisation project is planned as a companion piece to the current paper, and will be published in the 2025 edition of *Buried History*. This article will explore the photogrammetry process undertaken at the Institute, the capabilities of the Pedestal3D platform, the research advantages of 3D models, and our overall goal to foster greater access to, and collaboration on, this important collection.

Appendix 1

Online at https://www.bhjournal.au/bhattachments/Mawdsley-etal_Lahun_Appendix

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Endnotes

1 Most of the material in this consignment was Egyptian. A smaller selection of objects from Tell el-'Ajjul included scarabs, jewellery, objects of bronze, stone and flint, and imported Egyptian calcite vessels.

2 Two other consignments of stored material were sent to the Nicholson Museum, now the Nicholson Collection at the Chau Chak Wing Museum, University of Sydney, and the Bowen Bible Museum, now the Bowen Collection of Antiquities at the Museum and Gallery, Bob Jones University, South Carolina.

3 For further information on these sites and excavation seasons, see https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk.

4 Hilda Petrie refers to the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (BSAE) as the British School of Egyptian Archaeology (BSEA) on documents sent to the Institute (AIA Docs. 3606, 3701, 4901, and 4902). In 1926, the work of the School was formally transferred from Egypt to Palestine, and the name change was probably intended to reflect this shift (Drower 1985: 363–64; Alice Stevenson, pers. comm).

5 Apart from the 1949 division, two earlier divisions of Egyptian material were received in 1938 (AIA Docs. 3703–3704) and 1947 (AIA Doc 4702). Beasley obtained a collection of Egyptian antiquities through the Australian High Commission in Cairo, which were selected and documented by British archaeologist Alan Rowe (1891–1968). This included scarabs, necklaces, amulets, pottery, stone vessels, and stelae. The material was shipped in December 1937, and received by Beasley in 1938. A smaller division was received in 1947 from British archaeologist John Garstang (1876–1956), and included necklaces, flint blades, scarabs, and nine small faience and stone amulets (Davey 2017: 18–19; Davey and Mawdsley forthcoming). As priority has been given to researching the 1949 division, provenance and object research for the 1938 and 1947 material remains ongoing.

6 The material sent to the University of Sydney was from Tell el-'Ajjul (Palestine). The Institute received the largest collection of Egyptian artefacts, with a smaller number sent to the Bowen Bible Museum. The Institute and the Bowen Collection of Antiquities are in the process of comparing and verifying distribution lists. We wish to thank Candace Richards (University of Sydney) and Rebekah Cobb (Bowen Collection of Antiquities) for providing information about these collections.

7 Crates of Egyptian and Palestinian materials were stored in the Zoology Department basement at University College, London (Stevenson 2019: 184). 'Boxes in Zoology Basement, Foster Court, University College' is also written on one object list sent to the Institute (Doc. 4902).

8 For information on the funding problems encountered by the Petries and the BSAE after shifting excavations from Egypt to Palestine, see Sparks (2013: 1–15).

9 Abbreviations follow the format used by Hilda Petrie, and have been maintained here. These letters form part of the Institute's archival documentation as Docs. 4901 and 4902.

10 For more on the 1949 division, Walter Beasley, and the history of the Institute's Near Eastern collection, see Davey (2012; 2017: 18–21).

11 Objects from Lahun, such as stone vessels, can be found in the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria

and the Australian Museum, Sydney. These institutions were the only collections in Australia to receive material from the last two excavation seasons at Lahun. They are listed as Melbourne and Sydney in the site distribution list (Petrie et al. 1923, 43–44). The Australia Museum received 16 stone vessels from Lahun (E026824–27, E026829–37, E026851, E026799 and E026851). We would like to thank Stan Florek and David Chan, World Cultures Collection, Australian Museum for information about this division. For information on the distribution of objects from Lahun to other museums, see the various pages relating to the site at https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/excavations-index.

12 For information on the site, with a bibliography, see https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/node/1129.

13 For a list of excavations under the directorship of Petrie, and the principal sponsors of these excavations, see https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/archaeology/petriedigsindex.html. On Jesse Haworth and Martyn Kennard, and their support of Egyptian excavations, see https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/people-index.

14 Further archaeological investigations have been undertaken by: Ludwig Borchardt (1899), a Canadian mission directed by Nicholas Millet from the Royal Ontario Museum (1988–1997), a mission from the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest (2008–2012) (Moeller 2017: 188), and an Egyptian team in 2009 (Gehad et al. 2022). On the Egyptian workforces at Lahun, see Quirke (2010: 38–39, 74–77, 135–136, 159–160, 227–228, 301–302).

15 The current location of the original tomb cards for these cemeteries is unknown. As Brunton undertook most of the excavation work at Lahun, the cards were probably taken to South Africa upon his retirement in 1948 (Wolfram Grajetzki, pers. comm.).

16 Appendix 1 is arranged as follows: Parts A and B list objects by tomb/location, and object description is based on Doc. 4902; Parts C and D list objects following the Institute's registration format.

17 While tomb numbers were listed for some of the wedjat eyes, we have not been able to positively identify these against the illustrations in the excavation report (see Appendix 1, Part C).

18 The eight remaining examples of Nehebkau include single amulets from Tombs 602, 603, 620, N2, and Dome North, and three from Tomb 609 (Petrie et al. 1923: pl. XLIX). Most of the tabulated examples are seated, or have the body supported by the tail (Petrie et al. 1923: LVA.7, LXVIII.32–34). Some of these amulets have been identified in museum collections, including at The ISAC Museum, University of Chicago, E11848 (Tomb 620), and E11893 (Tomb N2). At least two further Nehebkau amulets were found earlier at Lahun (Petrie 1891: 25, pl. XXXIX.12–13), one of which is held in the collection of the Petrie Museum (LDUCE-UC6609; Petrie 1891: pl. XXXIX.12). A parallel to IA1.1028, also from Lahun, can be found in the collection of the Manchester Museum (6160.a), although exact tomb provenance is unknown. We would like to thank Campbell Price for information relating to material from Lahun held in the collection of the Manchester Museum.

19 Numerous examples of Thoth as a baboon with the lunar disc can be found in museum collections, see examples in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (51.2177), The Met (68.170), and the Art Institute of Chicago (1894.759). See also the painting of Thoth on papyrus from the Book of the Dead of Nakht (British Museum, EA10471,11).

20 Thoth as a baboon with the crescent moon, or as a seated baboon without lunar or solar discs, appear more frequently in collections, although an example of Thoth with a solar disc and a uraeus can be found in the collection of The Met (10.130.1940). Another seated baboon with a solar disc from Lahun was drawn in an earlier excavation report (Petrie 1891: pl. XXIX.41), but does not match the style of IA1.1066. Further, while a baboon amulet from Lahun was recorded and photographed in Petrie's (1914b: 48, pl. XLV.206m) amulet typology, it is not published in any of the Lahun reports. This amulet is very small, threaded with beads, and lacks either a lunar or solar disc.

21 We would like to thank Rachael Sparks for reviewing IA1.2800, and providing further clarification regarding site provenance.

22 A fly amulet from Tomb 603 is currently held at the Glasgow Museum (see 1914.64), and several originating from Lahun form part of the Petrie Museum's collections (see LDUCE-UC51856 and LDUCE-UC7547).

23 See also Petrie et al. (1923: 4, 8, 10) for a summary of Middle Kingdom foundation deposits from other areas of Lahun, particularly Senusret II's pyramid, and the associated 'Queen's pyramid'.

24 We would like to acknowledge and thank Alexander Ilin-Tomich for this observation.

25 We would like to acknowledge the invaluable expertise and guidance provided by Alexander Ilin-Tomich and Camilla Di Biase-Dyson in this interpretation of the reading.

26 To access the database, see https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/info/.

27 For an image of the stela, and more information, see the Louvre online catalogue: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010022521.

28 A comparable example would be a late Twelfth–Thirteenth Dynasty ivory stamp seal of the scribe Sehetepibrê, measuring 38 mm in length and 20 mm in width (Morfoisse et al. 2014: 85, 276 (item 44)). We would like to thank Alexander Ilin-Tomich for the information regarding average seal sizes, and his suggestion of a possible sealing type identification.

29 A more accurate measurement of the string width may be sought from the Petrie Museum to verify this observation.

30 The Institute's accession records make note of the reverse of these sealing fragments: 'Seal imprints – Note papyrus binding marks'. This suggests the fragments were impressed to a papyrus document that had been bound with string or fibre. Comparison with other known reverse impressions from papyrus documents offers little to support this interpretation (Foster 2001: 3a; Wegner 2018: 13.11); there are no clear papyrus marks on IA1.991, nor does it account for the ridge.

31 Material from Tombs 52 and 57 were sent to Edinburgh. The staves from Tomb 52 are listed in the National Museum of Scotland's records (as 'Portions of Staves') but were deaccessioned in 1960. We would like to thank Daniel Potter for this information.

The story of a journal: Sixty years of *Buried History*

Christopher J. Davey

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Abstract: The progress of *Buried History* is described, from its beginning as a quarterly Bulletin to an annual online refereed journal. There is discussion about its name, editorial policies, content, presentation and role in Australian and international archaeological publishing.

Keywords: Buried History, Biblical Archaeology, Archaeological publishing,

Introduction

The Australian Institute of Archaeology (the Institute) began in 1946, in Melbourne, with purposes that included the education of students and the general public about archaeology. Initially, that was done by providing public lectures and mounting exhibitions. In 1954, a permanent display was opened at Ancient Times House at 116 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne. Associated with these activities, the Institute produced pamphlets and leaflets that discussed specific subjects. However, it was not until 1956 that a regular publication was commenced; and 1964 in the current series of *Buried History* (*BH*) began. Its development is the subject of this paper. There have been five editors and one guest editor, all of whom are remembered appreciatively. However, *BH* was not the Institute's first venture into journal publication.

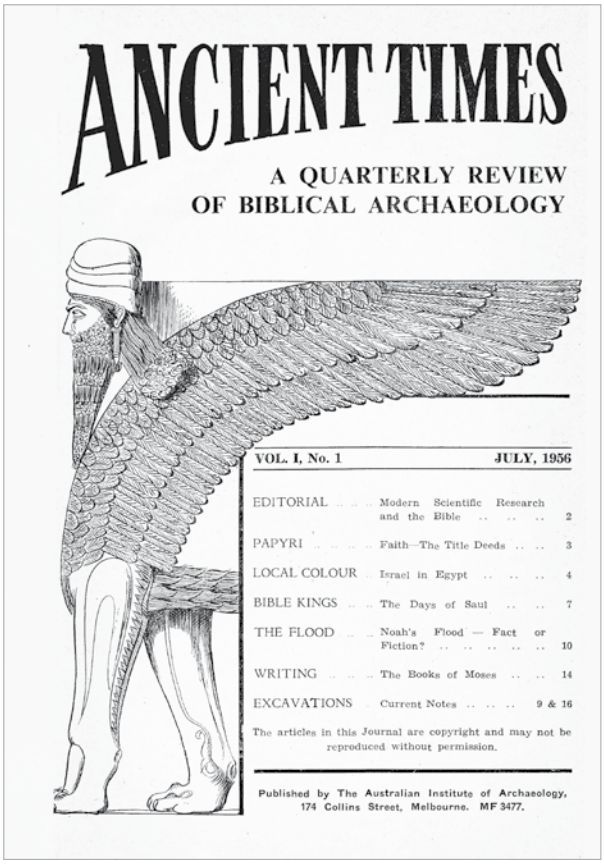
Ancient Times

In July 1956, the Institute began a 'quarterly review of Biblical Archaeology' called *Ancient Times* (*AT*), Figure 1. It was circulated to subscribers for 5 shillings annually. The first editorial was written by the Institute's founder and President, Walter J. Beasley (1890–1975), who stated,

> *"Ancient Times" is issued as a testimony to the world that the Church was founded on no structures of shifting sand of myth or unsupported traditions, but on the solid rock of Eternal Truth. The Apostle's words were never more true that today, even though uttered nearly 2,000 years ago AT.*

As it turned out, this apologetic approach overlooked the New Testament. *AT* contained mainly unreferenced papers about Old Testament subjects written by Institute staff, only one of whom, John Thompson (1913–2002), had any archaeological field experience (Davey 2001–2). His departure from the Institute was announced in the second issue of *AT* (October 1956). Clifford Wilson (1923–2012), who may have been the prime mover for *AT*, also left the Institute soon after in April 1957.

AT also contained news about the Institute and recent archaeological discoveries. Book reviews were included; John Thompson's book, *The Bible and the Old Testament*, was an early review (April 1958: 15–16). Archaeology as it related to the Bible was the main focus, and problematic Old Testament issues, such as the walls of Jericho that fell down at the time of Joshua, were discussed. Mr Beasley was convinced that Professor John Garstang had excavated these walls, proving the biblical story to be true (Beasley 1938). However, as one of the Institute staff members, Mary Neely, later Mary Dolan (1931–2004) (Horsley 2004: 3), wrote, Kathleen (later Dame) Kenyon had found that the walls described by Garstang were built in the Early Bronze Age, at least one thousand years before Joshua (*AT* Jan. 1958: 11–14). Neely drew on Kenyon's work to explain that the tell was abandoned in the Late Bronze Age, and that it had been subjected to substantial erosion, removing much archaeological evidence. Beasley never really accepted Kenyon's findings, so the fact that Neely was able to publish on the subject suggests that there was a certain level of intellectual freedom at the Institute.


ANCIENT TIMES

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

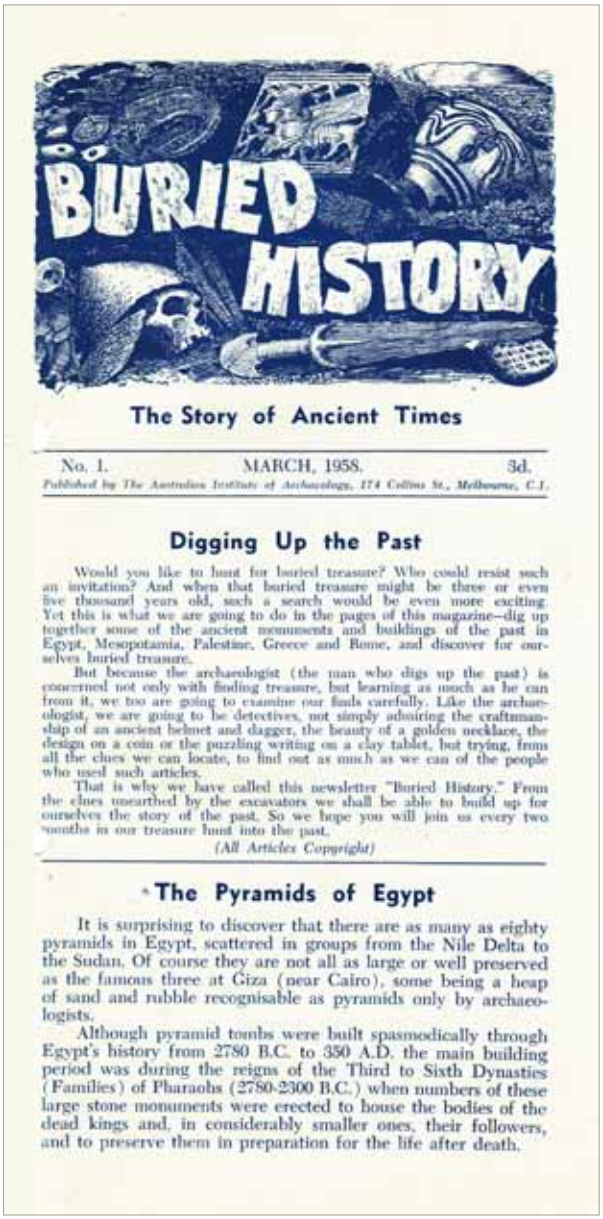
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Published by The Australian Institute of Archaeology, 174 Collins Street, Melbourne. MF 3477.

Figure 1: *The cover of the first edition of* Ancient Times, *July 1956.*



BURIED HISTORY

The Story of Ancient Times

No. 1. MARCH, 1958. 3d.

Published by The Australian Institute of Archaeology, 174 Collins St., Melbourne, C.1.

Digging Up the Past

Would you like to hunt for buried treasure? Who could resist such an invitation? And when that buried treasure might be three or even five thousand years old, such a search would be even more exciting. Yet this is what we are going to do in the pages of this magazine—dig up together some of the ancient monuments and buildings of the past in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Greece and Rome, and discover for ourselves buried treasure.

But because the archaeologist (the man who digs up the past) is concerned not only with finding treasure, but learning as much as he can from it, we too are going to examine our finds carefully. Like the archaeologist, we are going to be detectives, not simply admiring the craftsmanship of an ancient helmet and dagger, the beauty of a golden necklace, the design on a coin or the puzzling writing on a clay tablet, but trying, from all the clues we can locate, to find out as much as we can of the people who used such articles.

That is why we have called this newsletter "Buried History." From the clues unearthed by the excavators we shall be able to build up for ourselves the story of the past. So we hope you will join us every two months in our treasure hunt into the past.

(All Articles Copyright)

The Pyramids of Egypt

It is surprising to discover that there are as many as eighty pyramids in Egypt, scattered in groups from the Nile Delta to the Sudan. Of course they are not all as large or well preserved as the famous three at Giza (near Cairo), some being a heap of sand and rubble recognisable as pyramids only by archaeologists.

Although pyramid tombs were built spasmodically through Egypt's history from 2780 B.C. to 350 A.D. the main building period was during the reigns of the Third to Sixth Dynasties (Families) of Pharaohs (2780-2300 B.C.) when numbers of these large stone monuments were erected to house the bodies of the dead kings and, in considerably smaller ones, their followers, and to preserve them in preparation for the life after death.

Figure 2: *The cover page of the first edition of* Buried History: The Story of Ancient Times.

AT ceased publication in 1961 with Volume 5, Number 4 (April–June 1961), which carried a notice stating that the 'economic situation in Australia' had made it necessary to 'suspend' the publication of *AT*. The anticipated resumption in 1962 did not eventuate.

Buried History for young people

The first format of *Buried History: The Story of Ancient Times* (*BHAT*) appeared on 1 March 1958, Figure 2 (*AT* April 1958: 2). It was a six-sided bi-monthly pamphlet written for a senior-school student readership by Mary Neely as part of her Education Officer responsibilities, Figure 3. In the editorial of the first edition, she explained that the title appeals to the idea of buried treasure, but that 'we are going to be detectives, not simply admiring the craftsmanship of an ancient helmet and dagger, … but trying, from all the clues we can locate, to find out as much as we can of the people who used such artefacts' (*BHAT* March 1958: 1). The publication used colour printing, had half-tone photographs, and line drawings. Mary left the Institute in 1960 to take up a tutorship in Prehistory and Ancient History at the University of New England, Armidale, with Isabel McBryde. *BHAT* ceased to be published in November 1963.

Buried History – A new look

In March 1964, *Buried History: A Quarterly Journal of Biblical Archaeology* (*BH*) was first published, Figure 4. It was a twenty-page bulletin, approximately half-quarto in size (200x130m). The editor was the Director of the Institute, Rev. Gordon Garner (1926–2001) (Davey 2000: 5–6), Figure 5, who described it as a 'new look' *Buried History,* and that:

> *Important discoveries will be reported as details are received from overseas. News of Institute activities, its support of excavations and the acquisition of new museum pieces will be included from time to time, so that our members will become familiar with the Institute they have joined .*

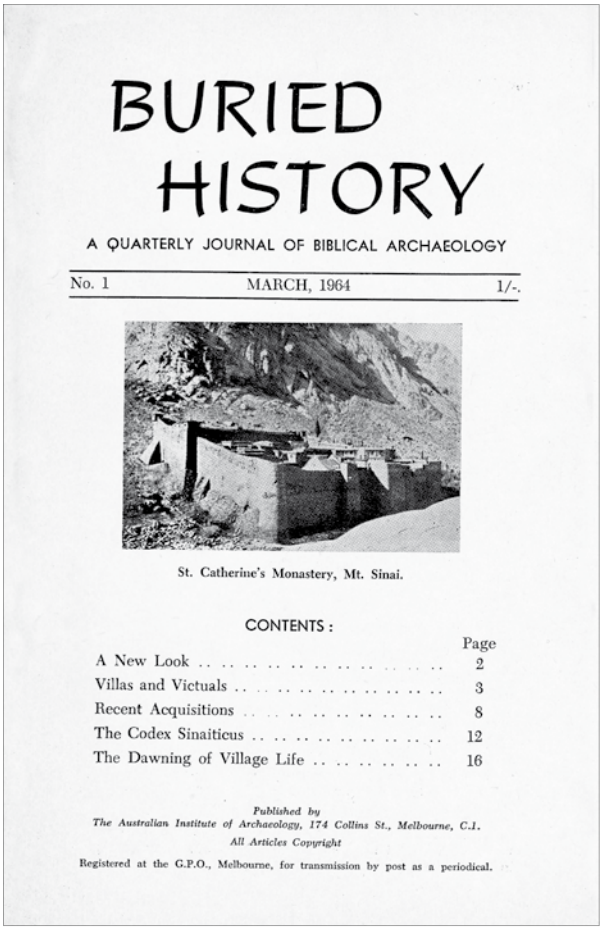
The first edition had an article on Roman Palestine, a report on the acquisition of a bronze cast of the goddess Asherah and bronze Baal figurine, an article on Codex Sinaiticus and a report on James Mellaart's excavation at Catalhöyük, which the Institute had been supporting financially for three years. The documentary sources for the content were not quoted and no author names were given, although it is probable that Garner wrote most it.



Figure 3: *Mary Dolan (Neeley) in academic dress.*

The most common sources were probably the publications of the American Schools of Oriental Research. This approach continued for the next sixteen years.

The editorial of the first issue of Volume 3 (March 1967) began with an apology for the failure to publish *BH* in 1966. It was said to have be the result of 'staff changes;' Garner had left the Institute in early 1966, in unfortunate circumstances, and his replacement, Mr W. Porter-Young, had not attended to the preparation of *BH*. The editorial announced that Porter-Young's 'association with the Institute' had 'concluded' in February 1967, and that Wilson, Figure 6, had returned to the Institute and 'taken over' Garner's 'responsibilities' and was now the editor of *BH* (*BH* 1967/1: 3).



BURIED HISTORY

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

No. 1 MARCH, 1964 1/-.

St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai.

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Registered at the G.P.O., Melbourne, for transmission by post as a periodical.

Figure 4: *The cover page of the first edition of The masthead font is*

Wilson had a commitment to publication. The March 1967 edition was thirty pages in length, and *BH* continued to be so until Wilson's time as editor finished in September 1970. Its cover was still badged as *A Quarterly Journal of Biblical Archaeology*, but the copyright page referred to it as the *Quarterly Journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology.* This double badging continued for ten years. There was also a statement that the journal was 'written and compiled' by Wilson, or was 'from his pen'.

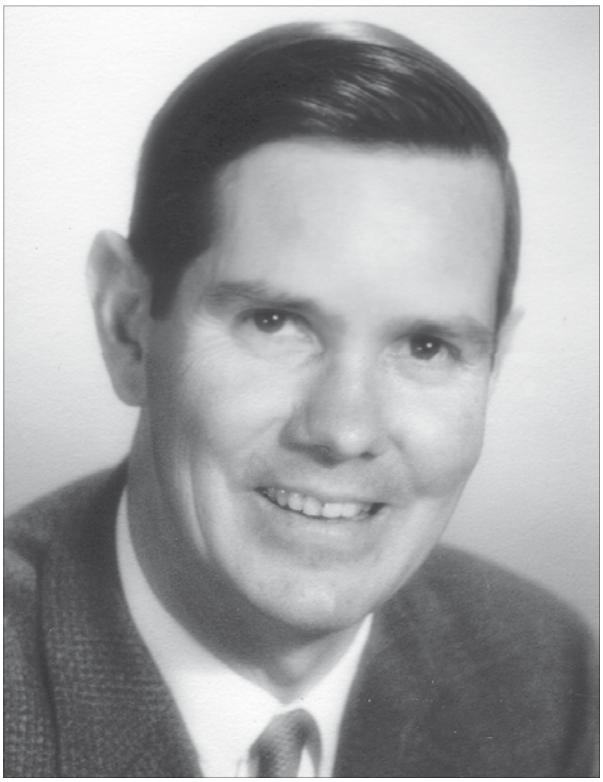


Figure 5: *A 1970s photograph of Gordon Garner.*

His writings ranged widely and only loosely alluded to sources. Summaries of interesting papers in international journals and reviews of important books were common, and there were news items, which normally quoted



Figure 6: *A photograph of Clifford Wilson (BH 1967).*

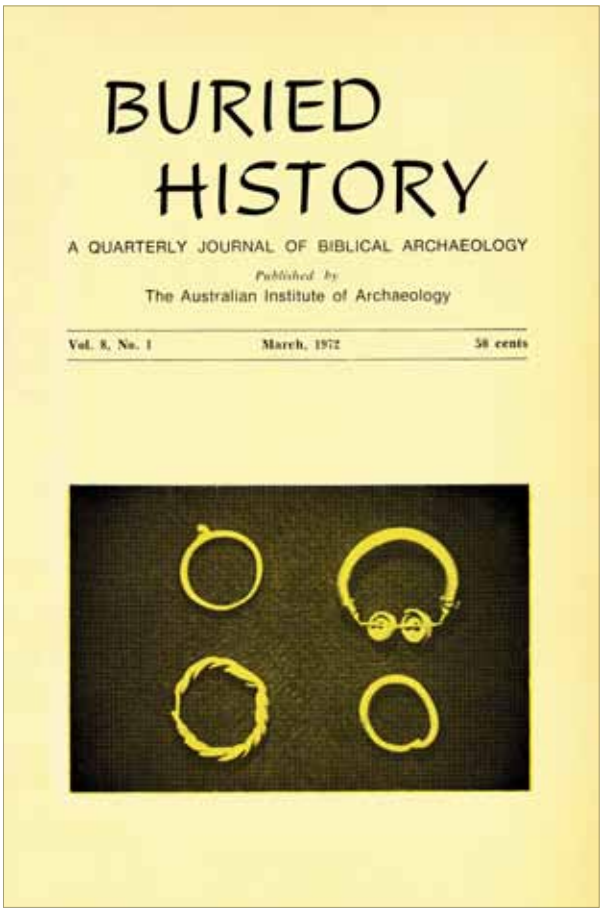


Figure 7: *The first colour cover page of* Buried History, *March 1972.*

a source. The September 1968 edition, for example, included a precis of the Tyndale Lecture given at Cambridge by A.R. Millard entitled *A New Babylonian Record of Creation* on the Atrahasis discovery. Some issues included answers to readers' questions. The 1967 Six-Day War passed without comment, which is notable because Keith Macnaughtan, a staff member of the Institute and regular contributor to *BH*, later joined the Jewish Evangelical Witness, an organisation with a Zionist outlook (*BH* 1968: 12). The Institute was not political.

During this time, readers of *BH* were well informed, although students may have found it difficult to pursue subjects in more depth because of the lack of references and further reading recommendations. Wilson's efforts were all the more impressive since he was also engaged in Institute exhibitions throughout Australia and New Zealand, excavations at Gezer, and lectures in the USA.

An international involvement

In 1970, Garner returned from Ridley College to again be the Director of the Institute. From December 1970 until December 1986, he edited *BH*. Volume 7, 1971 was produced on a higher grade of paper and included articles written by international scholars; Professor Donald J. Wiseman wrote on the biblical site of Ai and Professor George E. Wright discussed Thor Heyerdahl and his papyrus boat. These papers had footnotes and references, something that was progressively taken up by local contributors. More effort was devoted to book reviews, and extended obituaries were included, the first being that of Nelson Glueck by journalist Pamela Ruskin (*BH* 1971: 26–29). Papers on artefacts held by the Institute were again included, and Institute news continued.

The following year a colour cover was introduced, Figure 7. The June 1974 edition was jointly written by Dr John Thompson, the first Director of the Institute, and Dr Francis Andersen (1925–2020), who had been a member of the Institute Council and was then employed by the Institute (Judge 2020). Later, these two scholars became Consulting Editors for *BH*; Wiseman also joined them in 1975. The March 1975 issue saw a change to a more spacious font, an increase in size to 60 pages, and the start of a significant series by Colin Hemer on the archaeology of the seven churches of the Book of Revelation.

For the next two years *BH* had original articles written by recognised scholars; it was a high point for the journal. The March 1977 edition began with an announcement that *BH* would cease publication in its present format. The reasons given for the change was that subscriptions had been falling and production costs were rising. There is, however, some confusion. It was claimed that *BH* was a 'secondary source', which reprinted material from 'published works', and it was inferred that Institute staff no longer had the time to locate and prepare such copy. But for the preceding two years most articles in *BH* were prepared by international writers; indeed, the March edition was 52 pages long and was written mainly by non-staff members; Andersen, who was then at Macquarie University, Sydney, and myself, in London. Subscriptions were refunded, if people did not want to continue as Associate Members, and subscribers who wished 'to maintain regular contact with Biblical Archaeology in greater depth' were recommended to get *The Biblical Archaeologist* or *Biblical Archaeology Review.*

The June 1977 edition was badged the *Quarterly Newsletter of The Australian Institute of Archaeology.* It was 16 pages in length and was written almost entirely by Garner. This format continued for three years until another announcement in the December 1979 edition stated that 'heavy pressure of work' and poor subscriptions meant that from 1980, *BH* would appear as half A4 size! When it appeared, it was not professionally printed, and it was written in a sans serif font. This clearly was a cost-cutting measure, although the Institute was still funding excavations (*BH* June 1980: 1), and purchasing antiquities (*BH* September 1980: 8). Unfortunately, Yale University's Professor Benjamin Foster's important publication of some of the Institute's Akkadian tablets was in this photocopied newsletter format (*BH* June 1980: 3). Professional printing returned in 1981; and from June 1981, *BH* was again referred as a 'Journal'. Thompson, who was then President of the Institute, contributed a

series on *Everyday Life in Ancient Times,* covering the Town, Village, Water Supply, Household Utensils and Activities, Industry, Writing, War and Religion. By 1984, the journal had returned to a 64-page format.

Piers Crocker, Figure 8, was welcomed to the Institute staff in June 1986 and contributed a documented article on *Cush and the Bible.* Crocker had been a teacher in Khartoum after graduating from Cambridge University, where he majored in Egyptology at Trinity Hall. He became the editor of *BH* at the beginning of 1987. Initially, he seems to have written many of the contributions himself without attribution but always with references. Garry Stone joined the Institute in February 1987 and immediately began contributing papers to *BH*.

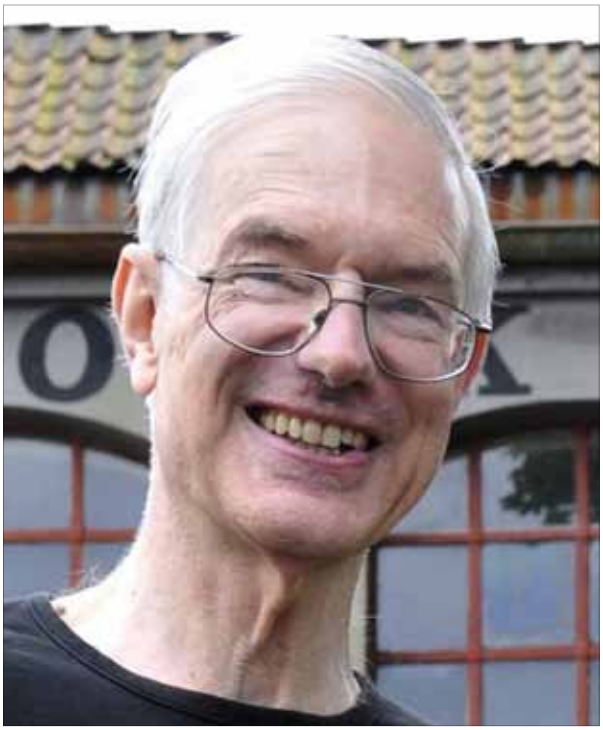


Figure 8: *A recent photograph of Piers Crocker. Photo: © Bente Foldvik KYSTEN, courtesy Crocker.*

In June 1988, the *BH* carried news of Crocker's appointment as Director, and the retirement of Garner and George Ashley, who had been working voluntarily since 1983. It also reported that the Institute had purchased an IBM PS/2/50 computer, enabling it to typeset *BH*. The September 1988 edition was the first to be so prepared. The format was substantially unchanged except for the adoption of a new font, probably *Times*, which increased in size to 12 point in September 1989. An interesting first occurred in the last two 1988 issues; an article published in *Biblical Archaeology Review* was reprinted in two parts, minus the colour illustrations, courtesy of the US-based Biblical Archaeology Society.

For the next ten years, a 32-page *BH* appeared quarterly, with articles and the occasional obituary, or book review, and news about additions to the library. Crocker often

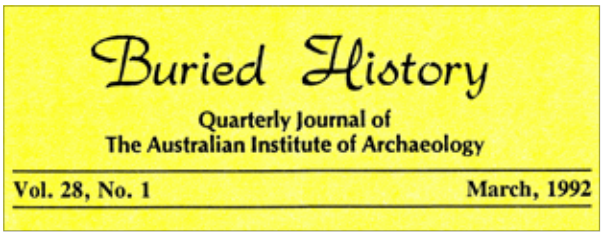


Figure 9: *The masthead of* Buried History *from June 1977 until March 1992. The font is* Rondo. *It had been used on the copyright page from March 1967, when Clifford Wilson became Editor.*

tackled archaeological and Old Testament problems and the latest news, while Stone was more inclined to study artefacts. There were also articles from Australian supporters of the Institute.

One change that passed without comment in 1992 was the font of the *BH* masthead. It was originally printed on the cover in a font called *Studio*, Figures 4 and 7. In June 1977, the font changed to *Rondo*, which had been used for the name on the copyright/table-of-contents page from March 1967, Figure 9. In June 1992, *Brush Script MT* was adopted, and continues to be the masthead font, Figure 10.

Toward the end of 1996, the Institute experienced some major changes. A new President and Council were elected, the office was relocated, and the format *BH* also changed. The March 1997 edition announced that *BH* would increase in size to an A4 format. This was implemented in the September 1997 edition, which began with Crocker's editorial explaining:

> *Welcome to the new format Buried History, which I trust will continue to bring you the same mix of articles, but more of them, and at a very reasonable rate – as from January 1998. It is often hard, as an Editor, to make choices between tradition and progress, or between a magazine which can be easily digested in one sitting, or one that may require more time. We aim to have more pictorial content, which is easier in the larger format. So too, the larger size should help to gain*

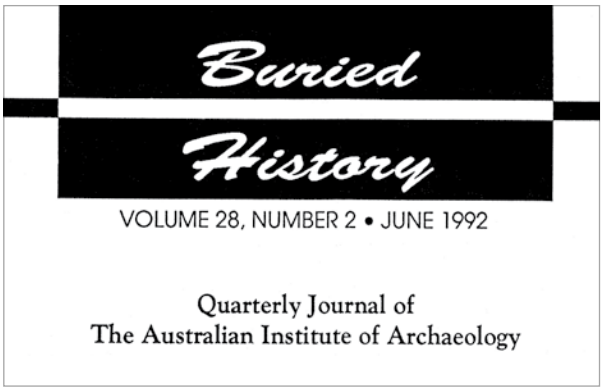


Figure 10: *The June 1992 masthead of* Buried History *using the font* Brush Script MT, *which is still used.*

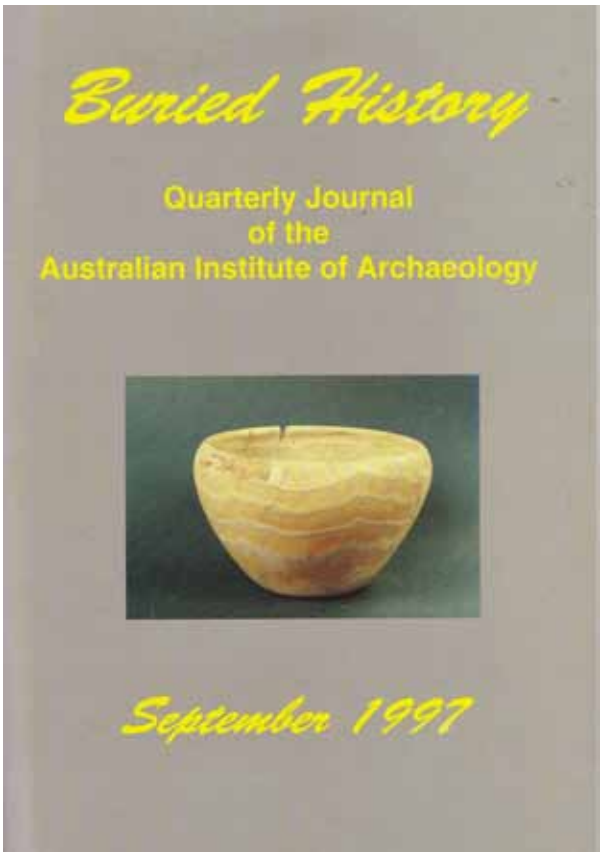


Figure 11: *The cover of the fist A4 format edition of* Buried History.

> *additional subscriptions, and ultimately support the survival of the Institute BH*

The covers of the new format were in colour with a picture, Figure 11, but internally, there were almost no illustrations. Crocker was responsible for much of the content. John Currid, the 1998 Petrie Orator, wrote a paper on *The Rod of Moses* (*BH* Dec 1997: 107–117), Richard Hess, recently appointed to Denver Seminary, wrote on the Institute's Alalakh tablets (*BH* March 1998: 4–15); Andersen's Beasley Lecture text entitled *I have called you by name…* filled the June 1998 edition; Margaret Zarifeh wrote on ancient libraries (*BH* Sept 1998: 69–76); and Kenneth Kitchen wrote on the possible location of the Garden of Eden (*BH* Dec 1998: 101–103). Crocker announced his resignation in this last edition for 1998, as he and his family were heading for Norway.

More Institute changes were to follow in 1998 and 1999. Ancient Times House closed, and the museum collection was put into storage. The new President left, and Garry Stone, who had health issues, was farewelled. The office was closed, and the library joined the collection in storage.

Rev. Dr Paul Swinn became the Director in 1999, and paid tribute to Crocker for his 'scholastic acumen', 'good humour' and 'Christian character' (*BH* March 1999: 3). Pier's commitment to quality content in *BH* was certainly significant. Swinn also announced that the new Editor of *BH* was Professor Francis Andersen. Andersen's first editorial claimed that 'Buried History tries to interest a wide range of readers' and that it would 'report the latest discoveries', 'publish in-depth studies of significant finds' and 'review recent publications' (*BH* March 1999: 4). The March 1999 edition of *BH* went to a different level with Andersen's paper on the dedicatory Philistine inscription from Eqron, and Kitchen's paper on the recently published Rameses II stele from Damascus. This primary research on current archaeological subjects was a new dimension for *BH*, but the renaissance was short lived. At the end of 1999 Andersen resigned because of ill-health.

After a hiatus of a couple of years, Professor Greg Horsley, a member of the Institute Council, guest edited and published a double issue of *BH* March–June 2000. He was assisted by Mary Dolan, who had been a colleague of his at the University of New England, Armidale, and who had started the original series of *BH* in the 1950s. This edition was published at the end of 2001.

Picking up the pieces

In late 2002, I became the honorary Director of the Institute after retiring from a merchant banking position. Paul Swinn had collected material for the next edition of *BH*, but he had also joined the British Army as a chaplain and had been posted to Iraq. Thus, the editorship of *BH* came to me. *BH* Volume 36, July–December 2000 was formatted as the previous editions had been, and contained papers written by past contributors, Andersen, Dolan, Peter Hill, Paul Lawrence, and Nicholas Hardwick, and I compiled a tribute to Gordon Garner, who had died in 2001. The editorial apologised for the two-year delay and said:

> *… from Volume 37 will be an annual and will be refereed. It will not become an academic journal and will continue to target a readership that may*



Figure 12: *Professor Francis Andersen 2017*

be described as archaeologically informed but not specialist.

The circumstances faced by *BH* were not straightforward. *The Biblical Archaeologist,* produced by the American Schools of Oriental Research, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, from the Biblical Archaeology Society, and *Archaeology*, published by the Archaeological Institute of America, all provided good, up-to-date, well-illustrated information about archaeology in the Middle East. There was also the *Bible and Spade,* published by the Associates for Biblical Research, that gave a theological perspective on recent finds and biblical archaeological controversies. In Australia, from about 1995, David Downs' *Archaeological Diggings* had a glossy layout, similar content to the American journals, and an Australian circulation through newsagents of about 40,000. These journals all published at least quarterly. At the other end of the academic spectrum in Australia there were scholarly annuals such as, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies,* edited by the University of Melbourne and published by Peeters, and The University of Sydney's *Mediterranean Archaeology,* published by the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.

BH had already been developed into an A4 format, with articles that carried a level of scholarly content and discussion of archaeological issues. In Australia, archaeological journals of this format included *The Artefact*, published by the Archaeological and Anthropological Society of Victoria, which dealt with Australian prehistory, and *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, published by the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology that covered historical subjects. These journals were intended for non-academic and academic people, who were members of professional societies, and who had an informed knowledge of the subject areas, but did not necessarily know all of the jargon. It was therefore decided that with an improvement in presentation, more illustrations, and a system of peer review, *BH* could fulfil a similar role in ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean archaeology.

In preparation for publishing, an Editorial Board was established, comprising scholars on the Institute Council, and Professor Alan Millard. Since then, *BH* has always maintained a Board with members who are recognised in the fields that it publishes. Detailed peer review protocols have never been developed. Instead, *BH* aims to have at least one of the reviewers to be an acknowledged world authority on the subject of the paper. Very occasionally, there have been conflicting recommendations from reviewers, which have been resolved with reference to the Editorial Board.

It took eight months to prepare the double-volume, 37 and 38 for 2001 and 2002, the years that the Institute was closed. Papers needed to be edited and reviewed, and in some cases illustrations were obtained or prepared. In keeping with most archaeological publishing practice, the Harvard referencing system was adopted, although



Figure 13: *A photograph of the the current editor, Christopher Davey, Cyprus 2018. Photo: Barbara Porter.*

endnotes were also allowed. The first paper was a reflection on the history and current significance of the Dome of the Rock, *al-Haram al-Sharif*, by Noel Freedman and his colleague, Rebecca Frey. In *BH* tradition, I contributed a paper on ancient Egyptian excavation techniques as evidenced in tombs, an earlier version of which had been published in a German mining history journal. A member of the Editorial Board organised the review of that paper. A doctoral student, Matthew Whincop, also provided a well-illustrated survey of Iron Age Philistine culture.

The former practice of having an expensive colour cover was discontinued. Instead, the cover was a colour card printed with a line drawing highlighting one paper in the journal, Figure 14, and the contents were printed on superior quality gloss paper, which improved the presentation of illustrations. Typesetting was undertaken using Adobe *Pagemaker*. The two-column page layout, which had been adopted by Andersen in March 1999, continued to be used, as was the Times font. Author, issue details and page numbers were in a footer. Apart from the change of font to Times New Roman in 2005, when Adobe *InDesign* was adopted, and some minor spacing modifications, the format has remained unchanged to the present. Colour was adopted in 2015.

Content commentary

Prior to the editorship of Andersen, most *BH* content was derived from sources published elsewhere. With the adoption of a professional society journal model and peer-review, papers were expected to make a distinct and interesting contribution to the understanding of a subject;

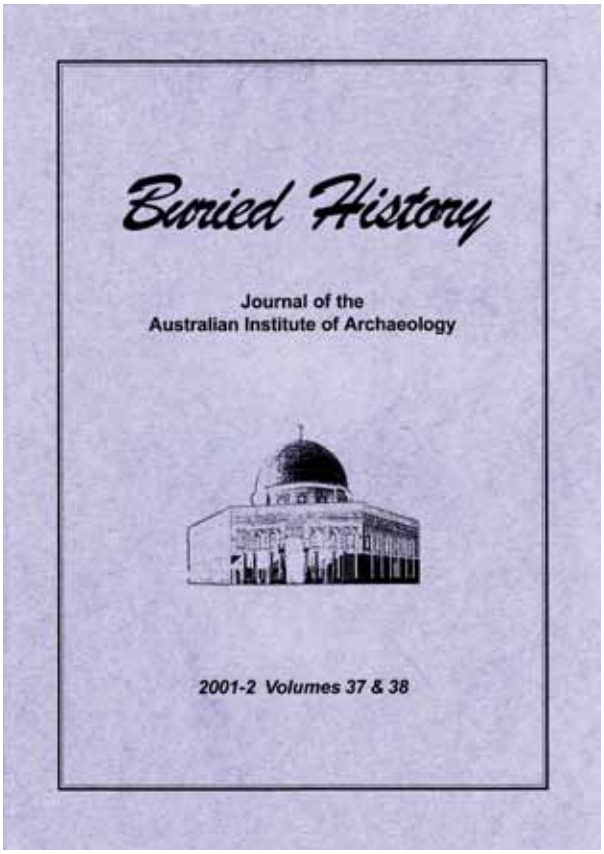


Figure 14: *The cover of the double volume for 2001-2.*

they were not meant to report on, or rework, material from other publications. *BH* has also steered away from detailed excavation reports and has instead offered the freedom for authors to explore issues not normally discussed in higher-level academic journals.

The Institute has an annual lecture, the Petrie Oration, which commemorates the contribution to scientific archaeology by Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie and recognises the work of present-day distinguished scholars. Many of the addresses have been included in *BH*. Professor Rosalie David's 2003 Oration on *Petrie and the Egyptology collection at the Manchester Museum* was the first to appear (*BH* 2003: 3–10), and the most recent 2024 Petrie Oration by Dr Claudia Sagona on the archaeology of southeastern Malta, is in this edition.

A regular theme in *BH* has been the history of archaeology and the life stories of archaeologists. Volume 49, 2013 had: an extended tribute to Basil Hennessy by his daughter, Linda; a paper on Australia's first female archaeologist, Nancy Champion de Crespigny, by her son Geoffrey Movius; a paper on Australia's second female archaeologist, Veronica Seton-Williams, by Dr Robert Merrillees; an investigation of the origin of the archaeological field techniques of Dorothy Garrod and Gertrude Caton-Thompson by Dr Phillip Edwards; an archaeological biography of G.R.H (Mick) Wright by Christopher Davey; and reviews of archaeological biographies of Eve and Jim Stewart, and Tessa Wheeler. *BH* interest has often dealt with the history of archaeological practice. Ron Tappy's 2016 Petrie Oration on the early Harvard excavations at Samaria, for example, included many quotations from personal journals and images of Gottlieb Schumacher's maps and field notes (*BH* 2016: 3–30).

The history covered by *BH* has gone well beyond archaeological excavation:

- with his capacity to read German handwriting and Gothic script, Dr Albrecht Gerber penned a revealing history of philologist, archaeologist and peacemaker, Gustaf Adolf Deissmann (*BH* 2005: 29–42);
- the strategic contribution of Dean Arthur Penrhyn Stanley to the historical geography of Sinai and Palestine prior to the formation of the Palestine Exploration Fund was described by Dr Geoffrey Treloar (*BH* 2008: 13–34);
- the importance of imperial iconography of Augustan triumphal arches to the theology of St Paul was explored by Dr James Harrison (*BH* 2011: 3–18);
- at its centenary, Professor Greg Horsley documented the history of the Loeb Classical Library in a paper that was adopted by Harvard University, the publisher of the Library (*BH* 2011: 35–58); and
- Michael Lever examined the secret service files on Vere Gordon Childe in England and Australia (*BH* 2015: 19–30).

All these contributions described original research, based on primary sources that had not previously received very much attention.

Original papers reporting on archaeology include Dr Gillian Bowen's article on early Christian burial practice at Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt (*BH* 2004: 15–28), which is now being published in a book, and Dr Jo Verduci's preliminary report on her excavations at Tuleilat Qasr Mousa Hamid, south of the Dead Sea (*BH* 2015: 3–16). Also subsequently in book form is Susan Balderstone's paper on the expression of liturgy and doctrine in the plans of churches from the fourth to sixth centuries (*BH* 2004: 29–38; Balderstone 2007).

Papyrological analysis of several early Christian texts was provided by Scott Charlesworth (*BH* 2006: 25–36). He later studied the origins of British Library Papyrus 2053 (*BH* 2017: 35–44); and Alan Mugridge drew attention to possible early Christian school texts, some of which were written on papyri (*BH* 2012: 11–26).

BH has had a steady stream of scientifically-based papers. The Institute's mummified material has been the subject of several papers, most recently one by Carla Raymond and Joseph Bevitt on the investigations carried out on the cat mummy at the Australian Synchotron, and at the neutron neutron beamline at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (*BH* 2018: 15–22). A three-dimensional reconstruction of the architecture at Kellis was described in Volumes 41, 42 and 44 (*BH* 2005: 41–64; 2006: 17–24; 2008: 35–38).

Cuneiform texts have often featured in *BH*. Terrence Mitchell drew attention to the reference to Nebo-Sarsekim (Jeremiah 39:3) in a recently published British Museum tablet (*BH* 2009: 7–10). A most significant paper on a tablet held by the Institute appeared in Volume 54. Using scans taken at the Australian Synchrotron, Dr Luis Siddall, and Raymond and Bevitt reported on the discovery of a tablet enclosed in a clay envelope, and the translation of the tablet's text (*BH* 2018: 3–10). Another paper in that volume on Old Babylonian clay bullae by Professor Wayne Horowitz and Dr Peter Zilberg was also significant. It identified the city of Lagaba to be bullae's the place of origin, and located five other bullae originally from the same group, which are now held by museums in Sydney, New Zealand and Israel (*BH* 2018: 11–14).

Professors Eric and Carol Meyers discussed the problem of carrying out archaeological research in the 'Holy Land' where the current 'religious and political issues often play a role in site selection and in the interpretation of finds' (*BH* 2014: 3–16). Sadly, the topic remains relevant.

In the last few years, *BH* has extended its interest in the history of archaeology to Australia. Michael Lever discussed some historiographical aspects of Aboriginal history in the writing of Peter Beverage (*BH* 2022: 17–26), and Joanne Besley and Uncle Richard Widders reported on a recent repatriation of stone implements (*BH* 2023: 3–10). *BH* does not cover archaeological excavations and the analyses of Aboriginal material, which are left to journals that have the remit for such subjects.

BH has often examined the relationship between archaeology and the Bible. A paper by myself on the late nineteenth century controversy between two Oxford scholars, Professors Samuel Driver and Archibald Sayce, suggested that problems may derive from the differing attitudes to uncertainties in ancient evidence and the methodologies adopted to deal with it (*BH* 2022: 5–16). The failure of biblical studies scholars to appreciate the nature of ancient evidence means that they are unlikely to engage with archaeologists. This may explain why *BH* has often not been popular in theological colleges.

Changing times

In 2019 Macquarie University's journal, *Ancient History: Resources for Teachers*, ceased publication, prompting *BH* to consider the requirements of the history teachers. Two people with a knowledge of the field joined the Editorial Board, Dr Luis Siddall, Head of History at Sydney Grammar School, and Alanna Nobbs, Professor Emerita, Macquarie University. Access to past editions of *BH* was one issue to be considered.

The circulation of *BH* in Australia has declined in recent years. Andersen's editorship promoted *BH* in the international arena; in fact since then its main circulation has been in US universities, colleges and seminaries. Two American scholars are on the *BH* Editorial Board, and numerous American scholars have contributed to its content. While most major US universities and many seminaries receive *BH*, in Australia only Macquarie University has taken it, by way of exchange.

The cost structure of *BH* has become more difficult to manage. It has generally been 50 pages in length, as any larger puts it into the next postal category. This has become a significant concern. Printing costs have not risen greatly since 2000, but postage has increased many times, especially for international addresses. This situation led to the consideration of online publishing.

Going online

The pattern of journal usage has developed over the last twenty-five years, and now seems to have standardised. Students and academics need journal material in a timely manner to assist with their studies and research. They do not normally want hardcopy on their shelves, and appreciate electronic resources that can be searched. Libraries have been struggling with shelf-space, and so have been turning to online resources.

As a publisher, we found commercial journal publishing companies to be expensive, and the levying of article processing charges made it expensive for authors. Instead, the Institute opted to use Open Journal Systems (OJS) as its online publishing platform, like many other international archaeological journals. OJS is an open source and free software for the management of peer-reviewed academic journals, created by the Public Knowledge Project, and released under the GNU General Public License. The software has all the necessary functionality, although at the moment only a portion of it is utilised. The site is at www.bhjournal.au, Figure 15. The completion of the documentation for the website and the technical aspects of the loading and operation of the software were not straight forward. Deputy Editor, Emily Tour, and Carringbush.com General Manager, Simon Jackson, worked assiduously to solve the many inevitable and frustrating problems that arose.

The journal layout has been retained and the electronic text is PDF-based. This facilitates a print-run of the journal for those who have subscribed and for cataloguing/indexing institutions that still require hardcopy. An HTML version may be contemplated in the future.

Volume 59, 2023 was the first edition published online. Back issues from Volume 37–38, 2001–2 were also uploaded. This was not straightforward, as the earliest issues were set up using Adobe *Pagemaker* and did not load easily into *InDesign*. Where colour photographs had been supplied and were still held, they were used in place of the half-tone images originally published. This improved the supporting information significantly.

Loading pre-2001 issues would be problematic. Digitised copies are not held, and there will be copyright concerns, as the arrangements under which authors submitted at that time did not envisage holding and distributing the journal in electronic form.

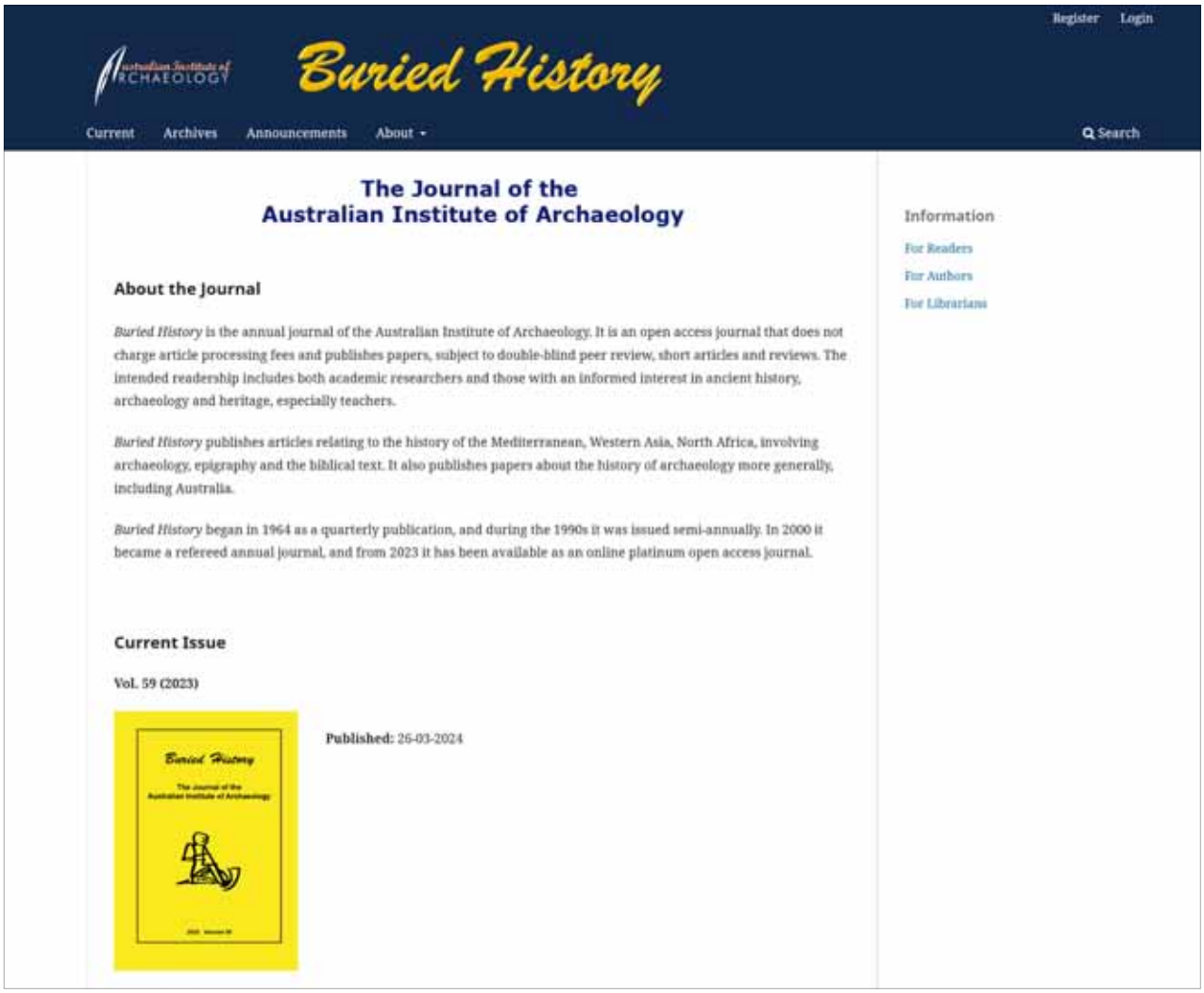


Figure 15: *The Home page of the* Buried History *website*. www.bhjournal.au.

The Institute has a small bequest, which covers the costs of typesetting and formatting of each edition, the maintenance of software, and the cost of hosting. The online journal is therefore available free of charge to online readers, and it publishes papers as open access, without charging authors fees.

The future

Most of the international journals that were exchanged for *BH* have followed a similar, path and are now available online as open access journals. Very few of them levy fees.

BH still has an 'in-house' character, but that may change as its online presence develops. It is hoped that its practical archaeological and evidence-based historical perspectives will attract content, continue to grow the readership and prove useful to students and researchers, while continuing to be attractive to a general audience.

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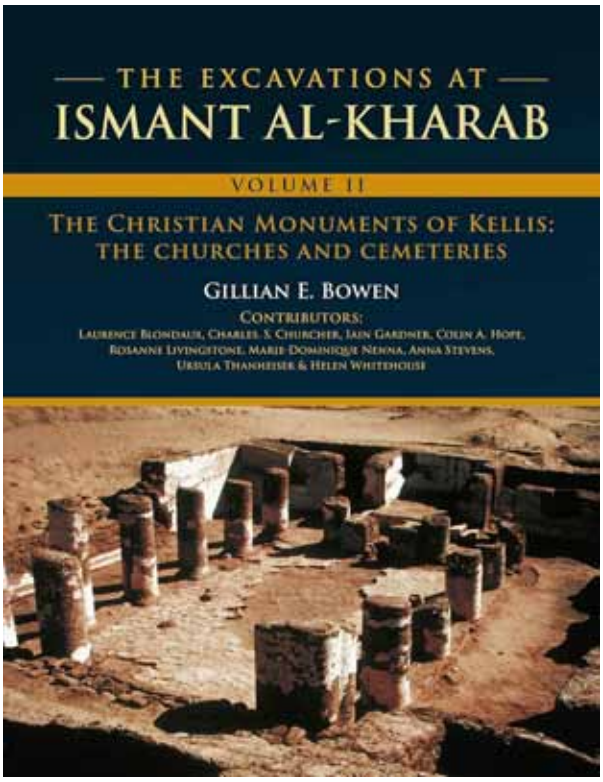
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Reviews



Gillian E. Bowen, 2024 *The Excavations at Ismant al-Kharab Volume II, The Christian Monuments of Kellis: The Churches and Cemeteries*, Dakhleh Oasis Project: Monograph 23, Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, Hardback ISBN: 978-1-78925-963-6; Digital ISBN: 978-1-78925-964-3, pp. 468, + xxix, multiple figures, tables and b&w photographs, colour plates 40, A$205.

Reviewed by Susan Balderstone

This volume brings together the results of more than thirty years of investigations at the Dakhleh Oasis in Upper Egypt, begun by Colin Hope at Ismant al-Kharab (ancient Kellis). Contributors to the publication include Laurence Blondaux, Charles S. Churcher, Andrew Connor, Iain Gardner, Colin A Hope, Rosanne Livingstone, Marie-Dominique Neen, Anna Stevens, Ursula Thanheiser, and Helen Whitehouse. The work comprises part of the Dakhleh Oasis Project, founded by Anthony J. Mills, which has involved current and former staff and students of Monash University since 1978. Information about the project can be found on the Monash web site https://www.monash.edu/arts/philosophical-historical-international-studies/dakhleh-oasis-project. The location of the oasis, about 350 kilometres west of Luxor as the crow flies, is shown on a map on the web site, together with other nearby sites.

As described by Mills in his Preface to the publication, Kellis was a settlement covering the period between the fading of the earlier Pharaonic and Roman religions and the arrival of Islam. It was a Christian community that included Manichaeans, as revealed by the finding of numerous texts including in Greek, Coptic and Syriac. The excavation of the three churches and cemeteries, containing numerous graves dating from the early fourth century, has added much information to our knowledge of this period. Mills notes that, considering the remote location of Dakhleh oasis, it is significant to find such early, well-developed churches with plans implying sophisticated liturgical arrangements. Other sites within the oasis, including churches and cemeteries that can be dated to the early fourth century, indicate that Christianity there was well-established. Several of these, sites including Kellis, were gradually abandoned during the 390s, for reasons that are not clear. On the other hand, others continued to flourish. There were also early Christian settlements at the Kharga Oasis, located between Dakhleh and the Nile, including the well-known Bagawat Necropolis, which was investigated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2012/kharga-oasis). Others have been found at Shams el-Din and el-Deir in the Kharga Oasis, and at Berenike and Pelusium.

Following the Introduction, which includes a brief description of the Dakhleh pottery fabrics, the publication is arranged in four main parts, covering the Small East Church, the Large East Church, the West Church, and the Cemeteries. These are followed by the Discussion of Kellis in Context, Appendices, Bibliography, and Colour Plates. The three sections relating to the churches present the evidence from each site, including the stratigraphy, then the finds by type and material, followed by discussion. The fourth section covers the three cemeteries in three sub-sections, each of which deal with grave numbers, buildings, burial details and materials, and finds, and conclude with discussion; all as listed in the Contents. The whole volume is meticulously presented, and is a major achievement, given the long period of excavation and the large number of people who worked there.

Since my main interest is in the churches, I will focus my comments primarily on them. To begin with the Small East Church, in particular the apse: the three-quarter circle plan suggests the roof could possibly have been a cupola. However, the section showing the front of the sanctuary (Figure 1.7) indicates that the central arch springing would have been too high for a cupola to rest on top of the arch, indicating that the first one third of the apse was barrel-vaulted behind the arch, finishing with a half dome over the rear section. Either way, the engaged half column slightly north of centre on the east wall is puzzling, and is not explained in the discussion of the church. Together with the painted columns either side, it suggests to me the intention to partially encircle the altar with an engaged colonnade, as described by Eusebius in

Constantine's original martyrium basilica at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Coüasnon 1974: 44). Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* was written in the year of Constantine's death, 337, so the apse he described was presumably finished before then. At the Kellis church there are niches in the north and south walls of the apse, as well as painted cupboard doors imitating niche cupboards of similar size, between the painted columns. There are painted panels of a geometric design, with *crux ansata* at the centre arranged below the niche level around the apse. These do not line up below the niches. No complete drawing of the apse decoration is provided, and there is no investigation of the chronology of the decoration in the apse.

An example of this apse type, not mentioned by Bowen, is a partly rock-cut church in the Nile Valley at Dair al Bakarah (Convent of the Pulley, now known as Deir Al Adhra) at Qulusna, north of El Minya. It was recorded by Alfred Butler towards the end of nineteenth century (Butler, 1884: 348–351, fig. 25). Four applied columns with three niches between them surrounded the semi-circular apse, plus one column either side of the apse opening. This cave chapel within the monastery is held by Coptic tradition to mark one of the Holy Family's resting places as they travelled through Egypt. The church, including the apse, was altered by removal of the stone roof and extended upwards in the 1930s. Further south along the Nile, the White Monastery church at Sohag, dating from around 440, has a triconch sanctuary in which each apse had attached columns interspersed with niches (Grossman 1991: 768). Another example of this apse type is the subterranean convent church of St John in an ancient quarry at the town of Madinah, near the ruins of Antinoöpolis. The deep apse or haikal is crowned by a cupola and surrounded by engaged columns alternating with niches (Butler, 1884: 364–366, fig. 29). However, this church is not a basilica-type church like the others, but has domes and semi-domes over the nave and aisle bays, suggesting it is of a later date.

The apse of the Large East Church at Kellis takes a similar form to that of the Small East Church. The plan is a three-quarter circle and it was perhaps roofed with a similar combination of barrel vault and semi-dome. Traces of painted columns and painted dado lines containing a foliate scroll were found around the walls of the apse, together with two niches to north-east and south-east. Fragments of painted plaster decoration found in the east aisle, bema and apse area included stylised vines, geometric designs, flowers, and *cruces ansatae*. The apses differ in that the Large East Church has a door opening between the apse and the south side chamber. The bema projects into the east aisle and is approached from steps at either side, whereas in the Small East Church there are no aisles or bema and the apse is raised by only two steps at the front, above the floor of the nave. The Large East Church has a central, rectangular colonnaded nave, with aisles returning across the east and west sides, as well as along the north and south. In this it is considered by Grossman, as quoted in the discussion, as a further development of the Southern Cemetery Church at Antinoöpolis, also dated to the fourth century.

Both churches were partially built into existing buildings. Three phases have been identified for the Large East Church, but only two for the Small East Church. It is not clear whether the earlier structures in each case could have been used for religious purposes before they were modified to accommodate the churches. However, the apse design in each case does corroborate a Constantine date, as indicated by the coins, but doesn't negate the possibility of Christians using the pre-existing buildings from an earlier date.

The discussion at the end of the Large East Church section mentions two other fourth century churches in the Dakhleh Oasis, and one in the Kharga Oasis, none of which have a similar apse design. It does not contemplate that the East Church apses, with their painted colonnades, can be seen as the forerunner of the *ciborium* or baldachin over the altar. Coptic churches from the sixth century have the altar and *ciborium* placed further out from the apse, to allow for the seating of the clergy around the apse behind the altar. The Church of Abu Sargah (St Sergius) within the old fortress of Babylon, Old Cairo, built over a well where the Holy Family was believed to have found refuge on its flight into Egypt, is an early example (Butler, 1884: 181–205, plan after 182).

The West Church is located north-west of the East churches, just north of the temple area and adjacent to a burial ground (Enclosure 4 Cemetery). It was purpose-built as a church with adjacent service rooms, rather than adapting existing buildings, as with the East churches. The east end comprises a central semi-circular apse flanked by two side chambers. As in the Small East Church, the floor of the apse is raised two steps above the aisleless nave. But here there is a small square bema located centre-front of the apse, raised one step above the level of the apse floor and accessed from the nave by three steps. There was no encircling colonnade and only one niche in the south wall of the apse.

The discussion dates the church to the mid-fourth century. It considers that the church may have functioned a funerary church for the adjacent Enclosure 4 Cemetery, and points to Tomb 32 at Oxyrhynchus as a similar example, fitting into Grossman's category of cemetery churches from that period.

The cemeteries covered in Section IV include the Enclosure 4 Cemetery, North Tomb I, and Kellis 2 Cemetery. Enclosure 4 Cemetery contains burials identified as Christian by their east-west orientation, and is assigned to the late fourth century. The function of the small, two-room Building A is unknown. Graves appear to have been clustered in family groups.

The North Tomb I building dates from the first or second century, and was published by Hope in 2003. It contains 24 intrusive pit graves identified as Christian. The discussion finds that the burials follow the same practice as those in Enclosure 4. It is considered that it was regarded as a family tomb, and is not the only tomb in the Dakhleh oasis to be appropriated by Christians. It is noted that the pharaonic iconography decorating the walls of such reused tombs was apparently not of concern to the Christians who reused them.

The Kellis 2 Cemetery is located some distance to the north-east of the north tomb group, and separated from the settlement. The location doesn't show on the plan given in the publication. Excavated by a team of bioarchaeologists, the cemetery comprises pit graves, some located within small tomb enclosures. Detailed plans are given with grave and tomb enclosure numbers shown. An illustration of 24 grave types given as sections is provided, together with an accompanying tabulated description. Table IV.12 gives a summary of over 700 graves, burials and contents. The discussion focusses on demography, wealth and status, cemetery organisation, the date of the cemetery, and parallels of similar period. This last included another cemetery in Dakhleh, Bagawat and el-Deir in Kharga, Saqqara, and further afield, that of Poundbury in Britain. In summary, it was concluded that the uniformity of burial practices within the Roman Empire suggests a directive by the Church from at least the early years of the fourth century.

The Kellis in Context discussion concludes the overall account of these investigations. It begins with consideration of the vast array of texts on papyrus and wooden boards found in the residential buildings of Area A, north-east of the East church complex, written in Greek, Coptic, and some in Syriac. They include a large number of texts identified as belonging to the Manichaean sect, as well as many identified as belonging to the Institutional or catholic Christian community, dating from the late third and first half of the fourth century. This evidence for a Christian presence in Kellis is supported by ostraca found elsewhere in Dakhleh, dating from the early fourth century. Coptic documents found in Kharga, dating from the third century, add to the evidence for a Christian presence in both the Dakhleh and Kharga oases from the late third and early fourth centuries. There was no evidence to indicate whether the churches belonged to Manichaeans or Institutional Christians. Similarly, there was no evidence to assign burials to one or the other community.

The discussion concludes from documents found in the Main and West Temples that Christianity co-existed with the traditional Egyptian/Roman religion during the late third and early fourth centuries, and for longer among the people generally, as attested by the terracottas found in their houses.

In the discussion of the churches, a number of other churches in Dakhleh are listed as awaiting investigation, including the triconch monastery church at Dayr Abu Matta in central Dakhleh, of similar plan type to the White Monastery at Sohag. It is noted that the oasites would be familiar with the monasteries and churches of Middle Egypt, as there was constant contact between the two regions, evidenced by documents from Kellis, in particular one recording exchange of ownership rights with properties in the Antaiopolite district.

Not discussed is the expectation that the Church leadership in Kellis would have known about the design of churches being built in other places along the Nile, and why they adopted particular forms. Pilgrims were visiting Jerusalem and the place of Crucifixion, where Constantine's Basilica was being built, and continued to do so later in the fourth century (Patrich 1993: 110 & 112). Descriptions would surely have reached Christians along the Nile. It is conceivable that, when a special place needed to be marked by a shrine or chapel, the design would follow what was known from Jerusalem, as is indicated by the cave chapel at Qulusna. So, one wonders why the colonnaded apse was chosen for the East Churches at Kellis? It seems likely the Small Church was built first – did it house a reliquary under the altar? Did the first church prove too small, so a second, larger church had to be built to house the reliquary, and to allow for pilgrims and processions to pass easily along the aisles around the church and in front of the altar? No evidence of such a scenario has been found. But it could explain the existence of the 'chancel' or second pulpit at the rear of the Large East Church, which would allow the officiating priest to be better heard by additional people at the rear, crowding in from the narthex on special feast days.

Bowen concludes with the Legacy of Kellis, in which she records that the Ismant al-Kharab investigations confirm the presence of Christians in the oases during the third century, and that the region was Christianised by the end of the fourth century. She concludes that the Large East Church dating to the reign of Constantine confirms that the Institutional Church was developing its architectural form in Upper Egypt in line with that of the liturgy.

Regarding the claim that developments (meaning the tri-partite east end) 'previously considered to be of a later date or of Syrian origin are now known to be Upper Egyptian and firmly rooted in the fourth century', I would disagree that they are of Egyptian origin. The tri-partite east end is known in Palestine from the time of Constantine's church at Bethlehem, with chambers either side of the central octagon over the place of the Nativity (Tsafrir 1993: 7, based on Richmond's excavations). In Syria, although the earliest known dated example is the Church of the Holy Apostles at Farfirtin, dated by inscription to 372 (Butler 1969: 33, ill. 32), there are other similar examples recorded by Butler whose date could

be considerably earlier. Brad Cathedral in Syria (Smith 1950: fig. 205) is dated to 392. The tri-partite sanctuary arrangement fulfills the requirements of the liturgy set out in the Syrian document of the third century, the *Didascalia Apostolorum.* Hence, its widespread adoption in Syria. Its early adoption in Egypt is likely as the Church had access to that document. The finding of Syriac texts at Kellis may indicate the presence of Syrian Christians, although these texts apparently belong to the Manichaean community. The Manichean presence is said to be unexpected, although it is known that Manicheans spread through Egypt in the third century. The number of texts found belonging to their community is apparently far greater in number than those belonging to the Institutional Church, and of considerable interest in furthering knowledge of their beliefs.

To reiterate, the publication is a major achievement by all concerned, particularly Gillian Bowen, who has pulled it all together. The data has been excellently laid out, and together with the appendices on coins, personal names, textile fragments from the graves, and the list of publications on the Bioarchaeology of Kellis, provide a depth of information for other scholars to use and compare. For me it was of great interest to discover the East Churches. I am sure the publication will have a wide appreciation.

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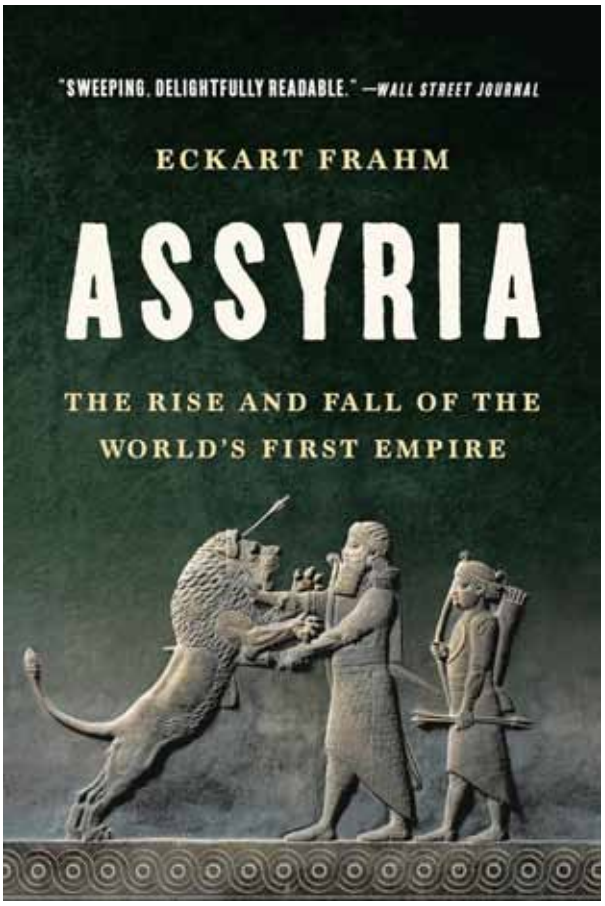
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Eckart Frahm, 2023 *Assyria: The Rise and Fall of the World's First Empire,* New York: Basic Books, ISBN 9781541674400, pp. xviii + 510, illus. A$42.

Reviewed by Luis R. Siddall

For the first time in decades the market has an excellent range of popular histories that provide insightful and up-to-date scholarship on the history and cultures of the Ancient Near East in an accessible format. Eckart Frahm's *Assyria: The Rise and Fall of the World's First Empire* takes place among other impressive titles, such as Amanda Podany's *Weavers, Kings, and Scribes*, Lloyd Llewellyn Jones's *Persians*, and Eric Cline's two books on the Bronze Age collapse and its aftermath. In this book, Frahm provides a full history of Assyria, from its origins as a small city on the Tigris River to the world's first empire, and then its legacy and afterlife in antiquity, down to the early modern period in Europe. Hence, this book offers more than a narrative of Assyria's political history, as central to Frahm's work is to understand why the Assyrian empire of the first millennium BC should be considered the first world empire, and why it played a crucial role in world history. Of interest to many readers will be Frahm's views about the influence the Assyrians had on the Hebrew Bible, and even the ancient Judeans' conception of God.

Eckart Frahm is professor of Assyriology at Yale. A good deal of his research has investigated the Assyrian empire, often concentrating of the reign of Sennacherib (705–681 BC). Frahm is one of leading philologists of this generation of Assyriologists, but this book demonstrates his ability as an historian. While those familiar with Frahm's work will recognise that he has weaved a number of his earlier studies into this historical narrative, the text never feels piecemeal and, importantly, some of Frahm's ideas appear in English for the first time. A strength of Frahm's style in this book is to furnish the narrative with a selective incorporation of source materials, both textual and archaeological, and scholarly debate – a method that brings important evidence and competing ideas to readers' attention without losing the narrative thread. The structure of this work is chronological, as Frahm states in the introduction; the change and continuity observed in Assyria's long history helps explain how the city of Ashur grew overtime to become, first a territorial state, then an empire that developed systems of organisation to control its territories. While mostly a political history, Frahm also interpolates his historical narrative with chapters and discussions on Assyrian society, culture, and the experiences of those under and on the edges of the Assyrian empire.

The book is divided in to three parts. The first, *The Long Road to Glory*, comprises four chapters that trace the emergence of the city of Ashur on the Tigris River in the late third millennium, and its sporadic transition to a powerful state with a driving imperial ambition in the eighth century. In each phase of the pre-empire era one can see the development of certain attributes of the later imperial state. Chapter 1 covers the Old Assyrian period (c. 2020–1736 BC), in which an archaeologically recognisable culture emerges at the site of Ashur, governed by an assembly-styled political structure dominated by leading families, and conducting long-distance trade with a colony in Kanesh in central Anatolia. By the end of the Old Assyrian period, a new political reality arrived with the Amorite ruler, Shamshi-Adad I (c. 1808–1776 BC), who brought Ashur into his northern Mesopotamian kingdom: 'the idea of having a territorial state ruled by a king, rather than a city-state with civic bodies in charge' (p. 56).

The transition was not immediate, as the city of Ashur receded in significance during the following centuries until the accession of Ashur-uballit I (c. 1363–1328 BC), whose reign marked both the beginning of the Middle Assyrian period, and the formation of the power of the royal institution in Assyria. In Chapter 2, Frahm shows how a number of crucial changes occurred in the early Middle Assyrian period. The new royal court in the palace replaced the City Hall at Ashur and the assembly as the place of decision making and, by the 13th century, the state controlled the economy, replacing the Old Assyrian system of private ventures. More formalised systems of royal authority are also evident in the textual records of

the Middle Assyrian period, with the composition of a coronation ritual, laws, and palace decrees appearing for the first time. Externally, from Ashur-uballit I's time, we see soft-power diplomacy in action in the Amarna period resulting in Assyria being recognised by the Pharaoh as one of the great powers of the era, while also wrestling for authority in Mesopotamia with Babylonia. Ashur-ublallit I's successors in the thirteenth century started the first period of Assyrian expansion into the Khabour River region, forming the blueprint for the provincial and administrative systems so characteristic of the later empire era.

Chapters 3 and 4 cover the tumultuous centuries from the twelfth century to the 760s, which saw the rise of Assyrian brutality and administrative efficiency under Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, but also crippling stagnation and territorial reversals by the mid-eighth century. In chapter 3, Frahm details how the Assyrians and Babylonians emerged as two of the few kingdoms to survive the Bronze Age collapse at the end of the thirteenth century. The Levant in this period was dominated by tribal states, but from the mid-tenth century, Assyria's rulers embarked on an aggressive recovery of territories lost during the previous century. Frahm calls this era a 'Reconquista', drawing analogy from the Christian actions against Muslims in Spain. The Reconquista was completed by Ashurnasirpal, whose aggressive warfare was accompanied by characteristically Assyrian solutions to insubordinate opposition: violent coercion, annexation of states, deportation, and resettlement of populations. Ashurnasirpal also built a new political capital, Calah (Kalhu), possibly in an attempt to separate to new royal court from the old powerful families of Ashur.

In Chapter 4, *The Crown in Crisis*, Frahm offers an astute coverage of the problematic years, both for Assyria and modern scholars, from the end of Shalmaneser III's reign to the great revolt of 745 BC. Some see the prominent role of the magnates in this period as reflecting decentralisation and a weakening of the Assyrian royalty; others (like the present reviewer) have argued that the magnates represent an attempt to stabilise the empire. In addition to what the sources suggest is the magnates' loyalty to the crown (none attempted to break away or become king), there was a substantial increase in agricultural production in the territories, with increased settlements along the northern river systems. This was partly due to the Assyrian infrastructure, but also because of the changes in climate with the arrival of the 'Assyrian megapluvial' after 925 BC. A good historical point that Frahm makes is that the era of the magnates occurs, not at the end of Assyrian empire (as was the case in the final era of Rome's Western Empire or Qing Dynasty, China), but immediately before Assyria's greatest era, which bucks the trend in world history.

The main section of the book, *Empire*, looks at the time of Tiglath-pileser III and the Sargonid Dynasty's rule of Assyria (745–610 BC) over ten chapters. This era is the most common designation of the Neo-Assyrian empire. In Chapter 5, Frahm covers the activities of Tiglath-pileser III and his sons, Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, and justifies his view that it is here for the first time that an imperial state is forged in world history. While acknowledging that earlier states may be seen as 'aspirational empires', such as New Kingdom Egypt or Sargonic Mesopotamia, Frahm draws on the definition of empire by Stephen Howe to argue that only with the late Neo-Assyrian period can one observe a state that had a centralised ideology, a complex, provincial system administered over a significantly large region with a highly developed communication network, an organised labour force, and rule over a diversity of cultures, languages, and religions. This last qualification of Howe's is often what distinguished the Assyrian empire from earlier states.

In Chapter 6, Frahm turns to look at the peoples who lived at the edges of the Assyrian Empire and how they engaged with the newly cemented power in the Near East, namely the Phoenicians, Greeks and Cypriots, Arabs and peoples of the Zagros Mountains. Points of particular interest are the carefully couched discussion on the Assyrian role in the orientalising phase of Archaic Greek culture and possible influence of Assyrian epic writings and royal inscriptions on Homer, as well as the echoes of Assyrian conflicts with the Queens of the Arab tribes in later Islamic writings.

Three chapters cover the most significant events of Sennacherib's reign (705–681 BC). Chapter 7, *A Ghost Story*, presents one of Frahm's earlier studies (*Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 51, 1999, 73–90), reconstructing the events of 705 BC, which saw Sennacherib's accession to the throne following the death of Sargon II while on campaign in Anatolia, and the consequences of not being able to retrieve the dead king's body from the battlefield. A clever investigation led Frahm to identify a copy of the twelfth tablet of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to have been produced by a leading Assyrian scholar, Nabû-zuqup-kenu. The date of the composition is recorded as 27th of Du'uzu 705 BC, which falls shortly after it is believed Sargon was killed in battle. Frahm suggests that Nabû-zuqup-kenu consulted the epic to help the royal court understand the fate of Sargon's ghost in the afterlife: there will be no rest for the ghost of Sargon, and he would be likely to haunt his residence in the newly built royal capital, Dur-Sharrukin. Frahm connects this alarming interpretation with Sennacherib's decision to abandon Dur-Sharrukin and to build a new centre for the empire in Nineveh.

In Chapter 8, Frahm looks at the vexed question of Sennacherib's third campaign and the siege of Jerusalem. The outcome of the siege of Jerusalem has troubled scholars for 150 years. After presenting a careful reconstruction of the phases of the third campaign, making clear the difficulties of the evidence, Frahm argues that Sennacherib decided to end the siege of Jerusalem using a cost-benefit analysis. Once Hezekiah agreed to pay

tribute to the Assyrian king, Sennacherib returned with his army to Nineveh. As Frahm states, this was a feature of Sennacherib's reign as distinct from his predecessors: consolidation of the empire over continued expansion. It is also important to understand Sennacherib's decision in the context of the years after 705 BC. Following the death of his father, Sennacherib had spent the first four years of his reign quelling the rebellions that broke out across the empire. Regaining authority over Judah and the southern Levant at the end of the 701 BC campaign season without annexing the rebellious state would have made good sense at this stage of Sennacherib's reign.

Chapter 9 continues with Sennacherib's foreign policy and turns to the other major event: the destruction of Babylon. The complexity of Assyria's relationship with Babylon is raised earlier in the book, but Frahm's adaptation of Horace's comment on Greece and Rome sums up the relationship perfectly: 'captive Babylonia took captive her savage conqueror' (p. 215). However, by the end of the chapter, one can only conclude that Frahm should have added to the end of the line 'and brought her arts to (rustic) Assyria' (Horace's line is quoted in full in n. 3 on p. 459). After a series of failed attempts to rule Babylon with puppet rulers and installing his son, Ashur-nadin-shumi, on the throne, Sennacherib decided to raze the centre of Babylon to the ground. Interestingly, Sennacherib is the only king of this era to have treated Babylonia in the same manner as any other state of the Near East. At face value, sacking a city that not only revolted regularly, but also allowed the Elamites to abduct and presumedly murder the king's son, should, according to Assyrian strategy, be attacked and annexed. However, the lofty position of Babylon in Mesopotamian culture caused a problem for the Assyrian court, and Frahm provides a fascinating coverage of the way Sennacherib's scholars filled the cosmic and intellectual voids left by the assault on Babylon. What took place was a literary and pubic campaign to denigrate Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon, and largely replace him with the Assyrian god, Ashur, in key mythological texts. Similarly, the New Year's Festival was relocated and refocused on Assyria and Ashur, as was a program of redeveloping Ashur's temples according to Babylonian style. Hence, Assyrian religion was 'Babylonianized', and the irony of Horace's view of Greece and Rome is indeed fitting.

Chapter 10 looks at the significant royal women of the era. Most of the queens (and nearly all princesses) of Assyria have disappeared from history. But some remarkable evidence for a number of royal women from the empire period has survived, from Esarhaddon's aunt, Abi-ramu, serving as a governor, to the names and graves of a series of Assyrian royal women discovered by Iraqi excavations in the 1980s. The most prominent of these women is Naqia, Sennacherib's queen, and the mother of Esarhaddon. Her rise to prominence seems to have come in the wake of her husband's assassination, and her activities probably even extended beyond Sammu-ramat's, who went on campaign with her son, Adad-nirari III (c. 803 BC). Like, Sammu-ramat, Naqia's importance might be the result of the conflict that preceded her son's accession and helped ensure the success of his reign. The written evidence attests to the extent of her activities: she commissioned a palace for Esarhaddon at Nineveh, her receipt of a share of tribute delivered to the Assyrian court, and she seems to have been consulted regularly by the administration on political and military matters. For Frahm, she might have been the architect of Esarhaddon's restoration of Babylon. Naqia may have needed to take such a leading role on account of Esarhaddon's debilitating illness, which often affected his reign. Another point of interest is the number of Assyrian queens, like Naqia, who have West Semitic – perhaps Hebrew – names. Other such queens attested for this period are Yabâ, wife of Tiglath-pileser III, Atalya, wife of Sargon II, and Ra'imâ, wife of Sennacherib. Frahm is non-committal, but shows sympathy for Stephanie Dalley's theory that these three women could have been from the Judean royal house.

Chapter 11, *671 BCE*, looks at the contradictory nature of the reign of Esarhaddon. Echoing back to p. 1 of the introduction, this year near the end of Esarhaddon's reign saw the king successful campaign against Egypt, while at the same time battling the seemingly constant challenges from rival claimants to the throne. So significant was the conspiracies against the king that, while the empire had expanded to its greatest extent, Esarhaddon had to execute many officials in 670 BC – an act that, Frahm rightly points out, most likely contributed to a political and administrative weakening of the empire. But should this drama and contradictory state be limited to a discussion of Esarhaddon? It seems that the Assyrian empire's military activity and territorial administration had been its strength from Tigath-pileser III onward, but the frequent assassinations, plus an inability to find a consistent approach to either competitions between princes, or to relations with Babylon, suggest that the dichotomy of this era should be seen as a particularly intense period of the general nature of the Assyrian empire.

Chapter 12, picks apart the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), the last great king of the empire. Scholarship has typically been kind to Ashurbanipal, often emphasising the fact that his library at Nineveh was hitherto the greatest known repository of knowledge, and that his palace at Nineveh reflected the political strength of the empire during his reign. This has resulted in some Assyriologists calling Ashurbanipal 'enlightened' (Labat), an 'economic expert' (Fink), and an ancient version of a 'humanist' (Ito). But Frahm is more critical. His method of examining the imperial correspondence and economic documents reveals a king who ruled over a long decline. Frahm challenges the common view of Ashurbanipal on a number of fronts. First, Ashurbanipal's warrior image comes under heavy scepticism. For Frahm, the famous military victory over Elam came long after initial losses

in both Elam and Egypt early in his reign, and a four-year civil war against his brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, who ruled Babylon. He was also unsuccessful in establishing a long-term alliance with Gyges of Lydia, who soon opted to support Psamtik I against Assyria. This meagre military career is also critiqued in the light of the unusual statements in Ashurbanipal's annals that the goddess Ishtar requested for him to remain in the palace while she herself went to fight the Elamites. Ashurbanipal's later inscriptions do not include this passage, but Frahm is right to point out that this episode is a striking departure from the norm of Assyrian royal inscriptions. Similar, scepticism is laid against the depictions of Ashurbanipal as a lion hunter. Careful study of economic texts shows that after 650 BC there were serious signs of drought and crop failure, in the 640s there were signs of heavy inflation, and from the 630s there are records of people needing to sell their own children. Hence, a far fuller picture of Ashurbanipal's reign emerges, which sheds light on significant problems for the late phase of the Empire.

Chapter 13 looks at daily life in the Assyrian empire. Here, Frahm goes beyond looking at the day-to-day socio-economic aspects of life and the family unit in Assyria, and includes details of the rougher edges too: death and grieving, family breakdown, bawdiness, and local hostility are all featured. Roles of women are also detailed, and when read in connection with Chapter 10, provides a good survey of women in the Assyrian social structure.

The last chapter of the second section looks at why the empire fell. As is common in ancient history, when states and empires fall, the sources become scant. Despite this, Frahm is able to piece together a general narrative of the political turmoil of Ashurbanipal's successors, and the military events that saw the Medo-Babylonian alliance conquer the Assyrian capital cities from 614–609 BC. Frahm follows an idea of Karen Radner that sees this conflict as a 'world war', as it was fought on a scale not seen before, drawing all large states of the time: Assyria, Babylonia, Iranian Medes and Manneans, Elam, Arab groups, Egypt, and Judah, with secondary theatres of war on the upper Euphrates and eastern Anatolia. The strength of this view is that the conflict saw these states combine through alliances, and that the war certainly would have reached 'total war' status on most of the home fronts. But no major event in history occurs for a single reason, and scholars have long questioned why this one conflict saw the fall of the world's first empire. Frahm considers the varying theories of modern scholars about the causes of the fall: climate pressures that disrupted the economic system; the Herodotean idea of the Scythian invasion that wiped out the western provinces; and ideas about political factors, such as the Assyrian empire needed to continue to expand to maintain the system, or that a series of poor decisions by the rulers set in play crucial weaknesses. For Frahm, none of these ideas stand on their own. Rather, Assyria most likely suffered a 'perfect storm' after 630 BC; Assyria had no imperial mission beyond accumulation of wealth and territor,y and failed to develop a meaningful Assyrian-orientated identity for those incorporated into the empire. The environmental pressures exacerbated the internal and external pressures, all of which enabled a total military victory for Babylon and her allies by 609 BC.

The final section of the book, *Afterlife*, comprises four chapters, each of which cover topics seldom discussed (in depth) in popular histories. Chapter 15, *Assyria's Legacy on the Ground* looks at what can be traced of the Assyrians after the fall of the empire in the late seventh century. Assyrians are still evidenced in former centres and some regional areas during succeeding periods, down to the Sasanian empire. Striking is the 'Assyrian renaissance' under the Parthian empire, when residents of Ashur had traditional Assyrian names, the old state gods were worshiped, and the local governors produced stelae in the fashion of the royal monuments of the empire period. Frahm also sensitively discusses the continuation of Assyrian identity among Iraqi Christians in the modern era.

However, Frahm states that the strongest legacy of the Assyrian empire was the idea and practice of imperialism in succeeding empires of the first millennium. It is often stated by historians that the Babylonians and Persians adopted and adapted the Assyrian model of empire, and in Chapter 16, Frahm demonstrates that this was the case. There are two important observations in this chapter: first, that the Babylonians were uninterested in fully adopting the Assyrian's system of tight control of regional areas and turning main cities into imperial capitals. Instead, the Neo-Babylonian rulers kept the temples as the dominant institutions, which led to a 'fragmentation of power', and the risk of open revolt. The second observation is that the Persian empire shifted back to the Assyrian system because it minimised the risk of revolt, which both Darius and Xerxes had to manage in Babylon itself. In fact, the Assyrian universal imperial ideology better suited the ambitions of the early rulers of the Persian empire. Hence, Assyria's legacy was confirmed by the Persian adoption of their provincial system of satrapies and organisation of power structures.

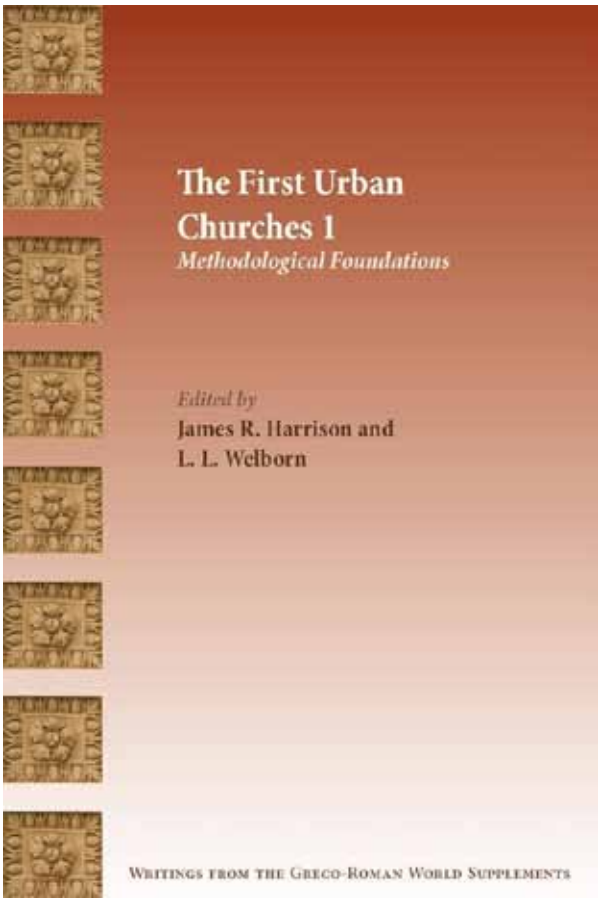
In Chapter 17, *Distorted Reflections*, Frahm considers how Assyria came to been seen in biblical and classical sources, and how later Europeans adopted the orientalist and biblical view of the Assyrians up to the nineteenth century. What may be thought controversial, at least in more conservative biblical circles, is Frahm's discussion of the way Assyrian imperialism shaped Deuteronomy, and by extension the Deuteronomic portions of the Hebrew Bible. Frahm also contends that, in the face of Assyrian domination, the ancient Israelites and Judeans projected the power of the Assyrian king onto their own god with 'specific qualities of Assyrian authority' (p. 393). While not an entirely new thesis, it remains to be seen if

this will impact biblical studies and scholarship on the Deuteronomist historian.

The final chapter looks at the effects of the Islamic State's control of northern Iraq and Assyrian sites. By analysing a 2015 article published by ISIS in *Dabiq*, Frahm argues that the destruction of Assyrian monuments and sites was not merely religiously inspired, but also because Assyria had served as a nationalising identity in modern Iraq, particularly under the Ba'ath Party. The silver lining, if there is one, from ISIS control of Mosul is that their tunnelling at the site of Nineveh has uncovered more of the palace structures, which are currently being excavated by a joint Iraqi-German team.

This is a nicely produced book, and Frahm's written style is a straightforward, which will hopefully result in *Assyria* reaching a wide audience. There is no question that this is a clear and balanced presentation of the current state of knowledge of Assyrian history. While reading this book for review, I used the chapters on Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem and his conflict with Babylonia in my Year 11 Ancient History class. My students' questions, discussions, and written work showed that Frahm's book provided them with historical insight and a depth of understanding of the source materials.

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J.R. Harrison, & L.L. Welborn eds, 2015 *The First Urban Churches 1: Methodological Foundations,* Writing from the Greco-Roman World suppl. 7, Atlanta: SBL Press, ISBN 9781628371024pp. 345+xiii, A$88.

J.R. Harrison, & L.L. Welborn eds, 2016 *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth,* Writings from the Greco-Roman World suppl. 8, Atlanta: SBL Press, ISBN 9780884141112, pp. 353+xvi, A$71.

J.R. Harrison, & L.L. Welborn eds, 2018 *The First Urban Churches 3: Ephesus,* Writings from the Greco-Roman World suppl. 9, Atlanta: SBL Press, ISBN 978088414, pp. 361+xx, A$88.

Reviewed by David W.J. Gill

These three volumes form part of *The First Urban Churches* project that considers the movement of Christianity across the eastern cities of the Roman empire as far as Rome. The series of contributions seek to look at the literary, historical, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence that can be used to provide the setting for the New Testament epistles, as well as the Acts of the Apostles and the book of Revelation.

This holistic approach to the study of early Christianity places New Testament studies alongside the study of the Roman empire, especially the provinces in the eastern Mediterranean. This move towards a broader approach should be welcomed both by those researching early Christianity, as well as the classical world.

Methodological Foundations

The first volume in the series considers the methodological approach. James R. Harrison presents the rationale for the series (pp. 1–40).

Epigraphy provides key evidence for the working of urban environments and administrative structures. Two essays explore this area: Paul Trebilco, 'Epigraphy and the study of polis and *ekklesia* in the Greco-Roman world' (pp. 89–109); Julien M. Ogereau, 'Methodological considerations in using epigraphic evidence to determine the socioeconomic context of the early Christians' (pp. 245–75). Trebilco presents a useful introduction to some key documents that relate to New Testament studies. He reminds us that few inscriptions provide direct evidence for the spread of Christianity. He rehearses the inscription relating to the Roman governor Gallio from the Panhellenic sanctuary of Delphi as a way of fixing the chronology for Paul's visit to Corinth (pp. 95–96). The benefaction of a piazza outside the theatre at Corinth by the aedile Erastus – the praenomen and the nomen are lost – suggests a possible link with the Erastus, the *oikonomos* of the city, mentioned in *Romans* (16:23; see also 2 *Timothy* 4:20; pp. 96–98). One of the issues is how the Roman role of aedile would be translated into Greek: is *oikonomos* the equivalent or would it be a lesser role? The *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* tends towards the lesser roles: manager or steward. The use of εὐαγγέλιον in the calendar inscription of 9 BC relating to Augustus presents a different view of how the 'gospel' could be understood (p. 99). The inscription of C. Vibius Salutaris from Ephesus perhaps sheds more light on the importance of the cult of Artemis in the city than perhaps the spread of Christianity (pp. 100–1). Ogereau presents a thought-provoking essay rooted in the work of Louis Robert. The question of whether or not epigraphy should be the exclusive domain of epigraphists, or if scholars from other parts of the discipline should be able to use this type of evidence, is intellectually fascinating. The *Lex Portorii Asiae* is applied to the church at Ephesus (pp. 264–67).

Malcolm Choat considers papyrological evidence, 'The city in Roman Egypt: the evidence of the papyri' (pp. 67–88), and the reader is reminded that the cities of Egypt were not totally representative of cities in other parts of the Greek east. Bradley J. Bitner presents the numismatic evidence for the colony of Corinth: 'Coinage and colonial identity: Corinthian numismatics and the Corinthian correspondence' (pp. 151–87). The duoviral coinage issued in Corinth reinforces the Roman nature of the colony. Methodologically, this essay fits into this first volume, but perhaps it could have tried to place the series

in a wider colonial context for the eastern Mediterranean; the contribution could equally have been placed in volume 2 of the series alongside other Corinth-based studies.

Brigitte Kahl responds to the iconographic approach of Paul Zanker (Zanker 1988) by exploring the place of the gate to the *agora* at Miletus: 'Gaia, polis, and *ekklesia* at the Miletus market gate: an eco-critical reimagination of Revelation 12:16' (pp. 111–50). Can a Hadrianic structure like this have a bearing on our understanding of the iconography of the mid-first century CE? The iconographic theme is continued by James R. Harrison: 'Urban portraits of the "barbarians" on the fringes of the Roman Empire: archaeological, numismatic, epigraphic, and iconographic evidence' (pp. 277–317). The creation of the image of the 'barbarian' was influenced by the Greek perception of the other, adopted by Rome as the iconography of Pergamon with its victories over the Gauls in Anatolia was assimilated. Among the buildings considered in this essay is the propylon at Pisidian Antioch. There is also a consideration of Augustus' victories over barbarians that were celebrated in Rome (see also Favro 1996).

Alan Cadwallader explores aspects of gladiatorial events in Anatolia: 'Assessing the potential of archaeological discoveries for the interpretation of New Testament texts: the case of a gladiator fragment from Colossae and the letter to the Colossians' (pp. 41–66). The focus is on a relief showing a gladiator that was found at Colossae. There is mention of a relief now in the Royal Ontario Museum (inv. 980.278.B) 'said to have come from Asia Minor', though also linked to Lycia. Cadwallader also discusses the gladiator cemetery at Ephesus (p. 56) and links the reference to fighting with beasts at Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32) to gladiatorial shows. He mentions three amphitheatres from Asia (p. 50). It would be worth noting the epigraphic evidence for the provision of a wooden amphitheatre at Pisidian Antioch by L. Calpurnius Longus in the middle of the first century CE, where *venationes* and gladiatorial shows took place over a two-month period (*CIL* III. 6832; Ramsay 1924: 178–79, no. 5; see also Robinson 1925: 254; Robert 1940: 140, no. 92; Mitchell and Waelkens 1998: 224–25).

L.L. Welborn uses different types of evidence to explore socio-economic issues: 'The polis and the poor: reconstructing social relations from different genres of evidence' (pp. 189–243). There is a presentation of the definitions of 'the poor' and how that would be considered in the ancient world. Different genres of writing are considered, from poetry to historical texts. Archaeological evidence is drawn mostly from Italy, though the excavations at Corinth are also considered.

One wonders if the urban framework could have been framed around the civic status of urban communities. For example, a series of case studies on early Christian communities in Roman colonies in the Greek east would have been helpful (see Gill 2017). The richness of evidence for Pisidian Antioch, Philippi and Corinth, each from different provinces of the Greek east, could have allowed a more sensitive approach to the urban environments. Alongside this would be the Romanised Hellenistic cities or *poleis* of the Greek east, some of which came to prominence under Alexander the Great and his successors (see Fraser 1996). The contrast between the reception of Christianity in the Greek *polis* of Athens and the Roman colony of Corinth, both in the same Roman province, would have been worth considering (see Williams II 1987).

Corinth

James R. Harrison provides an overview of the material culture of Roman Corinth with an essay on 'Excavating the Urban Life of Roman Corinth' (pp. 1–45). It is important to stress the break between the Hellenistic *polis* destroyed by Rome in 146 BCE, and the foundation of the Roman *colonia* in 44 BCE (see Gill 1993). Little of the earlier city remained visible except for the archaic temple that overlooked the forum, though this appears to have been adapted for Roman cult (Williams II 1987). Harrison includes mention of the Isthmian Games, which may have provided the athletic imagery for Paul (1 Cor. 9:24–27). This is expanded in the volume's final essay again by Harrison: 'Paul and the *agonothetai* at Corinth: engaging the civic values of antiquity' (pp. 271–326). The wealth of Latin inscriptions from the colony is in marked contrast to the Greek of the Corinthian correspondence.

L.L. Welborn writes on 'Inequality in Roman Corinth: Evidence from Diverse Sources Evaluated by a Neo-Richardian Model' (pp. 47–84). Did there need to be a more nuanced approach to the use of Strabo (pp. 48–49)? When Strabo passed through the colony with Octavian in 29 BCE (post the victory at Actium in 31), the city would have been newly established. How far did Strabo draw on the widely held perception of the classical and Hellenistic city? There is a helpful overview of Tiberius Claudius Dinippus, the *curator annonae*, and the implications for food shortages (pp. 60–64). Welborn revisits the possible link between the aedile Erastus, who provided a square next to the theatre, and the *oikonomos* of the city Erastus known from Romans (16:23) (pp. 71–72).

Cavan Concannon writes on 'Negotiating Multiple Modes of Religion and Identity in Roman Corinth' (pp. 85–104). The movement of individuals is considered, which of course would have been necessary, given that this was a newly established colonia. How did migrants from Italia or Asia have an impact on the city? This essay is balanced by Kathy Ehrensperger: 'Between polis, oikos, and ekklesia: the challenge of negotiating the spirit world (1 Cor 12:1–11)' (pp. 105–32). The mention of the re-establishment of the cult of Aphrodite (Venus) on Acrocorinth perhaps needs to be seen in the light of the mythological origins of the founder of the Roman colony, C. Julius Caesar. Michael Peppard writes on 'Brother against brother: *Controversiae* about inheritance disputes

and 1 Corinthians 6:1–11' (pp. 133–51). He considers the section in the Corinthian correspondence against the Roman colonial legal setting.

David K. Pettigrew emphasises the territory of the colony: 'The changing rural horizons of Corinth's first urban Christians' (pp. 153–83). The place of the colony of Corinth within the province might have been considered. For example, the honorific Augustan inscription – dated specifically to CE 1/2 – awarding L. Licinnius Anteros the right to graze flocks on the Methana peninsula adjacent to Troezenia, is a reminder how the colonial social élite were honoured by some of the minor *poleis* in the province (see Foxhall, Gill, and Forbes 1997, 273–74, no. 15). Evidence from intensive field surveys in Greece have suggested that the countryside in the first century CE was less well populated (e.g. Jameson, Runnels, and van Andel 1994; Bowden and Gill 1997; Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988).

The language used in the colony and the rest of the province of Achaea is so important. The Corinthian correspondence was written in Greek, and yet the public language witnessed by the inscriptions and texts on coins was Latin: Corinth itself was responsible for the organisation of the Panhellenic games at nearby Isthmia, a celebration of Greekness. Bradley J. Bitner considers language in the Roman colony through epigraphy: 'Mixed-language inscribing at Roman Corinth' (pp. 185–218). It includes a useful list of mixed Latin-Greek inscriptions from the colony.

Frederick J. Long writes on '"The God of the Age" (2 Cor. 4:4) and Paul's empire-resisting gospel at Corinth' (pp. 219–69). He picks up on the theme of the imperial cult. Perhaps there needs to be sensitivity between how the imperial cult was presented in Greek cities and Roman colonies of the east (see Price 1984; Williams II 1987; Walbank 1989). In particular, what were the differences in the worship of the emperors across the province? It might have been worth considering the evidence from major *poleis,* such as Messene (see conveniently Themelis 2003), or from Sparta (Cartledge and Spawforth 1989).

Ephesus

The great port city of Ephesus, serving the province of Asia, is the subject of the third volume. An introductory essay on the history and topography of the city would have been helpful. A possible oversight in the literature is Stephen Mitchell's two volume work on *Anatolia*, which would have placed Ephesus, and the rise of Christianity, in a wider regional setting (Mitchell 1993a, 1993b).

James R. Harrison provides 'An epigraphic portrait of Ephesus and its villages' (pp. 1–67), drawing on the wealth of well over 3,500 inscriptions from the city. He considers the rich inscriptions relating to the cult of Artemis, and provides an overview of some of the élite families. There is a helpful section on freedmen and slaves in the epigraphic evidence. Harrison's second essay in the volume, 'Ephesian cultic officials, their benefactors, and the quest for civic virtue: Paul's alternative quest for status in the epistle to the Ephesians' (pp. 253–97) further explores the social élite in the city. He makes the point that this has not been the subject of New Testament scholarship in the way that Corinthian correspondence has.

Guy MacLean Rogers considers mystery cults in 'An Ephesian tale: mystery cults, reverse theological engineering, and the triumph of Christianity in Ephesus' (pp. 69–91). Bradley J. Bitner writes on 'Acclaiming Artemis in Ephesus: political theologies in Acts 19' (pp. 127–169), exploring the gathering in the theatre at Ephesus with the acclamation, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians'. His comments on the inscription relating to Mên and dated to 57 CE from Lydia could have been considered against the richness of texts from the extra-mural sanctuary outside Pisidian Antioch (Lane 1971, 1976, 1978; see also Mitchell and Waelkens 1998), where (male) Mên was equated with the (female) Luna. Stephan Witetschek considers the cult image of the Artemision in 'From Zeus or by Endoios? Acts 19:35 as a peculiar assessment of the Ephesian Artemis' (pp. 235–52). Are we considering the blending of a cult where a venerated image that was considered to have fallen from Zeus was replaced with one that was more visually (and intellectually) acceptable to worshippers in a classical city? In the same way, the cult of Mên could be seen either in terms of a crescent moon or in anthropomorphic forms. Likewise, the *baetyls* that formed the focus of cult in cities across the eastern empire, such as Aphrodite of Paphos on Cyprus, could be replaced by anthropomorphic deities (Gill 1992). A further study on Artemis appears in Michael P. Theophilos' essay 'Ephesus and the numismatic background to νεωκόρος' (pp. 299–331).

Paul Trebilco provides a particularly strong, and clearly structured, 'The Jewish community in Ephesus and its interaction with Christ-believers in the first century CE and beyond' (pp. 93–126). Trebilco maps out the origins of the Jewish community at Ephesus, suggesting that it was probably firmly established during the third century BCE. He helpfully rehearses the possible size of the Jewish community, perhaps several thousand in number (p. 102). He considers this community as a background to 1 and 2 Timothy. His reflection on the possible interaction between the Jewish and Christian communities in Ephesus is particularly thought-provoking.

Mikael Haxby writes on 'The gladiator graveyard of Ephesus as evidence for the study of Martyrdom' (pp. 171–91). He draws on the evidence derived from the 1993 excavation of a necropolis on the road leading to the Artemision. A number of funerary reliefs depicting gladiators were found. A forensic examination of the associated bones suggests that individuals had suffered serious trauma. He then turns to the question of diet and draws on a number of Christian martyrdom texts.

Fredrick J. Long's essay 'Εκκλησία in Ephesians as godlike in the heavens, in temple, in γάμος, and in armor: ideology and iconography in Ephesus and its environs' (pp. 193–234) reflects on the Romanisation of Ephesus following its incorporation into the Roman Empire. He considers the Christian use of the term *ekklesia* against its political meaning in the *poleis* of the Greek east. Equally significant is the use of *soter*, both within a Christian setting (as a title of Jesus), and the title of the emperor, as well as other deities (see, for example, Gill 2004).

Conclusion

The essays in these three volumes record a snapshot of scholarship on the topic of the first urban churches. This reviewer would have found it helpful to have a position chapter both introducing the city and drawing out how the chapters in the volume have clarified the issue of Christianity in an urban setting. The Ephesus volume, in particular, could have been strengthened by adopting a clearer structure that grouped the essays around some common themes. An introduction and/or a conclusion would also have helped to identify what had been gained from the contributions towards our understanding of the setting of these early Christian communities.

The methodological chapter might have been clearer in looking at different types of evidence. What are the different approaches? What case studies could be deployed? Would some of the methodological essays have been better placed in the subsequent city volumes? Should there have been clearer editorial direction about how the essays fitted together? A methodological essay (or two) looking at how the Corinthian correspondence could be read against the backdrop of the classical world would have been a valuable contribution.

How could the approach of this series be expanded? The richness of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for Pisidian Antioch could be read against the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and Galatians. How did the Jewish community fit into the Roman colony? How did the church develop compared to that at Corinth, or indeed at Philippi? It was the Roman governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, who appears to have given (the newly renamed) Paul an introduction to this key Roman colony in Galatia. Was this a particularly strategic establishment of a church community in the Anatolian heartlands?

Do New Testament scholars need to be more sensitive to chronological issues? Evidence drawn from the mid-first century CE is very different to the material derived from the second century, in which there was a stronger Greek identity fostered by the emperor Hadrian.

The essays in these three volumes contribute to our understanding of the cultural and sociological setting of two early church communities in the Greek east. However, there is probably a need to try and develop a reconstruction of life in these cities against the backdrop of the New Testament documents (see Winter 2001).

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