

Editorial

This edition of *Buried History* includes a series of papers related to the collections of the Australian Institute of Archaeology. For over a decade the Institute has been systematically registering its collections, something which was previously done spasmodically. It has also discovered many documents associated with the origin of the collection. These have been arranged into an archive where they can be referenced to trace accession paths of the collection. In more than one of the following papers, this capacity was beneficial for understanding the objects being studied. It also helped to establish the authenticity and legitimacy of the artefacts, something now required by most journals, including *Buried History*.

The first paper describes what appears to be a world first; the imaging of a cuneiform clay tablet hidden inside an inscribed clay envelope by a synchrotron. The image produced by this means enabled the cuneiform text to be transliterated and translated. Disappointingly, a republication of a group of Assyrian tablets, which include the envelope, is imminent and would have benefitted from the inclusion of the tablet which has been hidden until now. Dr Luis Siddall and the reviewers of the paper have been at pains to ensure that his transliteration and translation closely follow the principles of the republication. Luis is a regular contributor to *Buried History*. He has undertaken doctoral studies in cuneiform and recently became a Research Fellow of the Australian Institute of Archaeology.

Dr Siddall's co-authors undertook the imaging of the tablet at the Australian Synchrotron and its tomography. Carla Raymond is a PhD student at Macquarie University where she is investigating aspects of imaging ancient artefacts with Neutron and X-ray Computer Tomography. Dr Joseph Bevitt, is one of her supervisors. Joseph is a scientist at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and has recently been spending much time imaging and studying dinosaur fossils.

The paper on the Old Babylonian inscribed bullae held by the Institute describes a fascinating journey of discovery by the CANZ group of scholars demonstrating the relatedness of objects held in different collections. These objects have been left unstudied until the last couple of years. Professor Wayne Horowitz and Dr Peter Zilberg

of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have contributed to several recent editions of *Buried History*.

The paper on the Institute's mummified animal by Carla Raymond and Dr Joseph Bevitt was the subject of Carla's Master's degree. Her research was published in the International archaeological science journal, *Archaeometry*. The paper published here draws on the results of her research, to inform Institute supporters, and explores some of the Egyptological and religious issues raised by her research. Papers such as this are used by presenters and teachers involved in the Institute's secondary school program.

The paper on the sail plan of Roman-period merchant ships distils ideas from two previous *Buried History* papers, discussions with several international scholars and feedback from some seminar presentations. Nautical archaeology in the Mediterranean is a rapidly developing field of research with the discovery and excavation of new shipwrecks every year. The paper encourages scholars to draw on more recent maritime experience to help interpret their finds.

The paper on Tauchira (Tocra) and Euesperides, Libya was submitted some years ago and not published. Since that time the identification and registration of the objects from these sites held by the Institute have been completed so that they could now be incorporated into the paper. We are pleased that Jody Mitchell, who manages a contract archaeology company and Professor Soren Blau, who has Senior Forensic Anthropological positions at Monash University and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, have been prepared to put the paper forward again with the updated information. The excavation, which is at the heart of the paper, was undertaken by G.R.H. (Mick) Wright in 1954; it is the only excavation solely funded by the Institute.

A significant number of papers and reviews have been in preparation for this edition but have not been finalised. We expect that they will appear in following editions. As usual we recognise our anonymous reviewers who have made significant contributions and often provided insightful comments.

Christopher J. Davey