EDITORIAL 2025

The journal is now entirely Open Access, a welcome development that will continue for future issues and that we hope will make Mesopotamian research more easily accessible, particularly to colleagues in the Middle East and at less-wealthy institutions. Our subscriptions are now mainly online, and the current academic journal publication and subscription landscape is increasingly reducing the production of hard copies, especially for region-specific journals like ours. We realise, however, that many readers will have a strong attachment to their long shelves of green volumes, and a print option is still available for those who wish to receive paper copies.

The articles in this issue span almost the full extent of the journal's (and BISI's) temporal remit, from late prehistoric Late Chalcolithic fine ware ceramics from Asingeran to an early Christian burial at Gatwa-sûr. Themes include Early Bronze Age urbanism at Hamoukar, religious diversity and code-switching at Hatra, patients and temples, and averting the effects of ill omens. Scholars of Mesopotamia continue to be at the cutting edge of methodology, drone-based mapping (Shamash Gate at Nineveh), 3-D photographic reconstruction of cylinders containing texts (Nebuchadnezzar's cylinders from Kish), and theoretical approaches using intervisuality (images of Anzu) and intergenerational reciprocity (Neo-Assyrian building projects). The journal also continues to prove that well-known monuments and legacy materials can still provide new insights, in articles examining the processes that went into producing the last edition of the Babylonian version of the Bīsotūn Inscription and publishing for the first time cuneiform tablets from British excavations at Balawat in the 1950s. Some of the cuneiform copies of the Balawat tablets were produced by Alan Millard, whose obituary also appears here. As usual, we are proud to have both early career and well-established scholars among our authors.

We were initially very happy that the 71st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale was scheduled to come home to Iraq in late March – early April 2026. However, at the time of writing (mid-March 2026) the RAI has been cancelled in the wake of the US and Israel's attack on Iran, which has significantly destabilised the region.

Our long-term translator of the journal abstracts into Arabic, Saadi al-Tamimi, has recently stood down; we thank him for his many years of help and support. We are happy to introduce our new translator, Zainab Mizyidawi, who has excellent experience working with the British Museum, Oxford's Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East & North Africa project (https://eamena.org/), and Jon Taylor's Thin Edge of the Wedge podcast (https://www.wedgepod.org/). We recommend both of the latter sources for accessible information about current research in Mesopotamia and modern threats to cultural heritage in the Middle East. We also are most grateful to all our article reviewers, who invest significant time and effort in suggesting supportive improvements for our authors and who make our jobs as editors possible. Many colleagues continue to provide this crucial service to our field even as they are facing significant challenges, as academic research funding is reduced and administrative duties expand. We also thank our Editorial Board and our colleagues at CUP for their valuable support.

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