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## Editor's Preface

Brock M. Mason

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

This issue marks my first issue as sole editor of *Studia Antiqua*. I am deeply grateful for Alan Taylor Farnes, the previous editor, and all the work he did for the journal. I am also indebted to him for training me as his replacement editor. Alan has since moved on to graduate school, and I wish him all the best. I'm sure he will be successful in whatever he does.

This issue also coincides with the first ever Ancient Near Eastern Studies undergraduate essay contest. I am proud to have started the contest, and I expect it to continue annually for many more years to come. I was overwhelmed by the abundance of submissions to the contest, and the quality of the papers was excellent. It was a difficult decision for the contest judges to decide a winner, but the top three papers, published in this issue, are superb.

The winning essay came from David B. Ridge, an article he wrote about 2 Samuel 11 as an inverted betrothal journey narrative. His paper leads off this issue. The second place essay was written by Laura Lingmann Daly and discusses a double-seated house shrine believed by some to have housed Yahweh and his consort, Asherah. The third place essay was written by Joshua M. Matson; it discusses the remains of the opening of the mouth ceremony in the Hebrew Bible.

Following these three articles from the essay contest, we also have two other articles rounding out this issue. The first of these articles comes from professor Kerry Muhlestein and Bethany Jensen. Their piece compiles an exhaustive list of all the mummy portraits which can be connected to Fag el-Gamous, the site of the BYU excavation project. The final article of this issue comes from David M. Calabro, a PhD student at the University of Chicago. David's essay, an outgrowth of his dissertation research, presents ten ways to interpret ritual hand gestures. Finally, Daniel Becerra, of Harvard Divinity School, reviews a recent book by Margaret Mitchell about the birth of Christian hermeneutics.

As always, I am deeply grateful to the academic advisors who spur this work onward. Dr. Dana M. Pike continually offers priceless insights and advice. His knowledge of the scholarly community and its issues is greatly needed to publish a work such as this. Also, once again, R. Devan Jensen and his crew of editors at the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University have been invaluable in helping me learn the ropes and teaching me the necessary technology. This issue would not have been possible without the help of Daniel Belnap, Shon D. Hopkin, Eric D. Huntsman, Dana M. Pike, John Thompson, and David Whitchurch for peer reviewing the submitted articles. Their time is always precious, and I am grateful to them for their willingness to assist this publication.

The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship has contributed generously to the publication of this journal, as have Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Classics. We wish to especially thank the Religious Studies Center, which provides the internship that makes it possible for us to dedicate

the time necessary to publish this journal. Finally, Joany O. Pinegar continues to provide invaluable support for the publication of this journal.

As a final note, all citations, formatting, and abbreviations in this journal follow the *SBL handbook of style*. For further information and a guide to the abbreviations, please consult the *SBL handbook*.

Brock M. Mason  
Editor in Chief, *Studia Antiqua*