

## In Memoriam: Professor Alan Ralph Millard (1937–2024)

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Alan Ralph Millard, a British orientalist, died on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June of this year at age 86.

Millard (born in 1937) studied Semitic Languages at Magdalen College, Oxford, under Sir Godfrey Driver, graduating in 1959. From 1961 to 1964 he was Assistant Keeper in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum. From 1964 to 1970 he was the librarian at Tyndale House in Cambridge, an institution with which he remained deeply involved throughout his career. Millard completed an M.Phil. at SOAS under D.J. Wiseman in 1967. He joined the University of Liverpool in 1970 serving as Rankin Lecturer in Hebrew and Semitic Languages (1970-1976), progressing to Senior Lecturer (1976-1985), Reader (1985-1992), and Professor (1992-2003). He also was an Honorary Senior Fellow in the Department of Oriental Studies at the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology (SACE) at the same institution (retired in 2003).

Millard was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1971. In 1984, he was a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. From 2001 to 2005 he served as Vice-Chair of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (now British Institute for the Study of Iraq).

For many years he was on the editorial board of *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* and an active member of the Society for Old Testament Study.

Millard worked on excavations at Tell Nebi Mend (ancient Qadesh-on-the-Orontes) and Tell Rif'at (ancient Arpad) in Syria, at Petra in Jordan, and at the Assyrian capital Nimrud (ancient Kalḫu) in Iraq.

His main interests lay in Semitic epigraphy, and in editing Akkadian cuneiform tablets and Aramaic inscriptions. Scribal practices in the ancient Near East were a dominant concern for him; the importance he ascribed to this topic stems largely from his belief in the essential historicity of the Bible – a point of view he shared with his colleague at Liverpool, the Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen.

While working at the British Museum as an Assistant Keeper, he rediscovered the Epic of Atrahasis, which had lain unrecognized in a drawer for several decades. He recognized it as an important account of the Babylonian Flood Story and thus he went on to publish an authoritative edition of it (with W.G. Lambert, with whom he established a life-long collaboration on Sumerian literature). Besides this, he did important work publishing Aramaic inscriptions from the British School of Archaeology in Iraq's excavations at Nimrud, and cataloguing tablets from old excavations at Kuyunjik (Nineveh, Iraq).

Millard was prolific as an author during his whole life, publishing on a large range of subjects, including popular books. He had interests and an international reputation in the primary publication

of Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions and in the Akkadian of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. His monographs *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 B.C.* and *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne*, with Ali Abou-Assaf and Pierre Bordreuil, are fundamental presentations of primary data that continue to be widely cited.

Millard also had a strong interest in the history of writing and questions of literacy in the biblical period. These interests, and his personal commitment to the evangelical expression of Christianity, were represented in his popular and public-oriented work. His books *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.

By conviction and by association he was an evangelical scholar, who revered the Bible. He was heavily involved in both Tyndale House and the Tyndale Fellowship. He chaired the Tyndale House Council and later chaired the Archaeology study group of the Tyndale Fellowship. He was also involved behind the scenes in many ways, for instance as a peer reviewer for the *Tyndale Bulletin*.

Millard visited Denmark on several occasions and left a lasting impression on Danish Old Testament scholarship. He was one of the primary motivators for the establishment of the Danish Society for Biblical Archaeology (SBA). At the opening of SBA in 1990, he held the inaugurating lecture, and over the years he contributed many articles to its journal, *TEL*.

Millard had a strong impact as a teacher, mentor and colleague, both in his academic duties and as a member of faith communities on and off campus. Those who met him encountered not only a learned man with cautious and objective judgments, but also a very gentle, generous and caring person.