

PUBLISH OR PERISH

August 1, 2013 Liesel Gentelli Day of Archaeology
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Back in the first year of my undergrad I remember being told “for every day spent in the field, expect to spend three in the office”, because “excavation without publication is destruction.” I didn’t believe it for a second, I thought I’d be gallivanting all over the place, digging things up with gay abandon, without a second thought for paper work or grant proposals or journal submissions. But here I am, in my office, working on four projects.

Hi, I’m [Liesel](#). I’m a first year combined Masters/PhD student at the [University of Western Australia](#). I’m in the [Centre for Forensic Science](#) because my research is in analytical chemistry, using techniques developed for use in forensic science and applying them to artefacts, rather than evidence.

The first project I’m working on today is writing up the excavations I just got home from in Egypt. I work with the University of Hawaii at [Tell Timai](#), in the eastern delta. It’s an amazing, sprawling Greco-Roman city, slowly being eaten up by the two villages on either side of it. This season I worked on finishing the excavation of a Hellenistic house, you can read more about it on [my blog](#). Today I have been in touch via email with other people on the project, all over the world, trading elevations for maps, maps for photos, and photos for past reports. We’re working on writing the site’s first monograph, and I will be co-authoring two chapters, one on the house and one on the coins from the site.

Today’s conundrum was; was the house built all in one go? Or was the west half added on later? I think it was added on later, because the walls are at a slightly different bearing, and they’re thicker. Also, the site ceramicist says the ceramic fill under the floor of the east and west halves are different.

The second is my PhD project, which involves chemical analysis of thousands of beautiful Spanish silver coins. As exciting as that might be, getting the coins from the [museum](#) to my university has proven more complicated than I had thought, and they haven’t arrived yet. So instead I am doing some background research and trying to teach myself the periodic table. I can recite up to Zinc without too much trouble now.

The third project is being on the national committee for [NASC14](#), it’s a conference being held next year in Adelaide, South Australia for students of archaeology, run by students of archaeology. I think it’s a great idea and so just this week I decided to be a part of it.

The fourth project is coursework for my Masters degree. It’s in forensic science and I’m doing it at the same time as my PhD. Today was Advanced Forensic Anthropology, and I spent all afternoon measuring skulls. I’ll measure them all three more times and then run my measurements through some stats to look at how precise I am.

Even though I've been in the office all day, there's plenty of interesting things going on here.