Changes at the Helm

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Since the first systematic archaeological excavations of ships such as those at Skuldelev, Denmark, and Cape Gelidonya, Turkey, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, our discipline has undergone changes. Maritime archaeology/nautical archaeology/underwater archaeology—terms that were and are sometimes still applied interchangeably—have undergone natural progressions that reflect the interests, values and foci of the societies and cultures in which they are practised. When the *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* (*JMAR*) first appeared in January 2006, it was conceived as a manifestation of these perceivable and undeniable changes within the discipline.

In the over fifty years since those first ground-breaking excavations, an increasing number of research projects were focusing on not only the archaeology of ships under water and on land, but also of past human activities within the marine environment and maritime spaces and the present preservation of past traditions. Regional programs, thematic specialisation and methodological advances were promoted not only through research and fieldwork activities, but through the increasing number of graduate degree programs being established around the globe. As a result, more publications were produced to inform peers of the variety and number of new data being generated and to encourage scholarly debate on hypotheses and interpretations.

JMAR was envisioned, in part, as an outlet to support this growth of scholarly articles being submitted for publication. *JMAR*'s mission is not to serve as a competitor to other journals such as the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* (*IJNA*) and *Mariner's Mirror*. Additionally, the intent was not simply to produce “more of the same” (Adams 2015: 1–2), but to fulfil, complement and supplement what was aptly perceived by Jon Adams and the founding Editorial Board as the increasingly diverse applications, methods and approaches that were being applied to studying maritime material culture: “... the appearance of the *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* manifests change, not just within the maritime field itself but right across the wider discipline of archaeology and beyond. The ‘beyond’ includes other disciplines whose concerns bear on the same source material, and for that matter, other institutions, whether of government, education, industry or the media” (Adams 2006: 1).

Broadening the scope to include a focus not just on ships, but the infrastructure that supported the use, and the impacts of coastal geomorphological change and ethnography, the

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journal aimed to provide “a forum for approaches that, while rooted in the materiality of the past, seek to intersect with other archaeologies, other disciplines and engage with current concerns” (Adams 2006: 3). Just as much as this was the intention with the publication of Volume 1, Issue 1 in 2006, it still rings true today with the publication of Volume 16, Issue 4.

Since 2006, we have altered the journal’s original aims and scope twice—in what we hope serves as an honest reflection of the on-going development of the discipline (Trakadas and Corbin 2015: 9–10). This alteration has also been reflected in practical ways: originally, the journal was conceived as publishing two issues a year; in 2015, we increased to three issue per volume in order to allow the increase in quality papers that were being submitted to find a home. And in 2020, we increased to four issues a year for the same reasons, including the demand for what we hope will become an annual mainstay: special thematic issues that provide authors and guest editors the opportunity to more deeply explore interconnected issues and research. These thematic issues have become a much sought-after publication outlet within our field.

At the same time, *JMAR*’s editorial board has also changed rather frequently compared to most journals in an effort to ensure a global representation of expertise in the field, and the varied approaches currently being utilized and expanded within the discipline. Just as the field has made use of new and ever-changing technologies, methodologies and shifting theoretical points of view, the journal’s editorial leadership has actively recruited a diverse set of influences for the editorial board. Thus, we fully expect to continue this tradition of rotating participants on the editorial board as the discipline shifts.

At the same time, changes have also occurred at the helm of *JMAR*: Founding Editor, Jon Adams welcomed onboard Annalies Corbin, Athena Trakadas and Sheli Smith in 2010 as co-editors. In 2011, Shelli stepped down, and in 2015, Jon fully handed over the rudder to Annalies and Athena. Helen Farr, our Reviews Editor since 2009, passed the tiller to Maddy Fowler in 2017. It is also with this last issue of 2021 that the journal is undergoing another change: Annalies is taking over as sole editor as Athena is leaving to take over the mantle of *IJNA*.

Change is inevitable and as with the previous changes within the journal’s ecosystem, this change will only bring new opportunities to *JMAR*. Maddy Fowler’s role will be expanded as our Book Review and Special Issues Editor while Annalies turns her attention to continue to seek a greater diversity of manuscript submissions that represent the breadth and depth of work in maritime archaeology as Editor-in-Chief. Athena will do the same at the helm of *IJNA*. Both journals will continue to work diligently to provide outlets for the highest level of research and scholarship for our field.

References

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