

# A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Twenty years ago I published my first article in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, and I still vividly remember my delight at opening the fascicle of the *Journal* to find my name in its Table of Contents. Because the *AJA* has always been an important part of my professional life, I am honored to have been selected as its next Editor-in-Chief and to present this, my inaugural issue. As a reader and contributor to the *Journal* for many years, I look forward to the exciting challenges that lie ahead. And challenges there are. Recent reports of archaeological sites and collections threatened by conflict in Iraq and elsewhere remind us that the past is a valuable but fragile resource that requires our attention and investigation. Archaeology is a valuable enterprise, one worthy of human endeavor. The *AJA* has long contributed to that endeavor and will continue to do so during my tenure as Editor-in-Chief.

My immediate goals for the *Journal* represent both continuity and innovation. For 108 years the *AJA* has been a broad-based journal “devoted to the art and archaeology of ancient Europe and the Mediterranean world, including the Near East and Egypt, from prehistoric to late antique times” as it says on our copyright page. One of the greatest historical strengths of the *Journal*—one of the things that gives it its distinctive flavor—has been its practice of publishing important articles on a range of topics, fields, methodologies, and time periods. This will not change during my tenure as Editor-in-Chief.

But there will be some changes. I want to continue recent efforts to widen the perspective of the *Journal* by including more theoretical, methodological, and comparative articles. This is crucial for attracting new scholars, not only as readers, but also as contributors and subscribers. To this end, I am creating two new sections within the *Journal*. First, for a “State of the Discipline” feature I am inviting leading scholars to write synthetic articles assessing the history, current trends, and future avenues of research in a variety of fields in archaeology. Second, the “Forum” will serve as a venue for publishing articles and responses on controversial, popular, or neglected topics to stimulate dialogue and the exchange of ideas. This issue of the *AJA* contains the very first Forum exchange: an article by Frank Kolb on the place of Troy VI within the framework of Late Bronze Age trade and a response by Peter Jablonka and C. Brian Rose. To supplement the Forum we have created a new

space on the *AJA* web site ([www.ajaonline.org](http://www.ajaonline.org)) where other scholars may post comments on this and future Forum debates.

The *AJA* will continue to publish interim reports from excavations when those reports highlight the emerging importance of the work to the discipline as a whole. I would, in addition, like to see more articles addressed to field archaeologists, specifically articles that deal with methodological issues, offer theoretical frameworks for interpretation of archaeological data, or explore the symbiosis between field methodology and the analysis of material culture. I define archaeology in the broadest possible terms and therefore welcome interdisciplinary studies that illuminate in novel ways the art and archaeology of the ancient world. I also hope to expand the coverage of the *AJA* Newsletters by including pieces from areas beyond the usual geographical scope of the *Journal*. Another of my goals is to redesign the *AJA* web site to make it a more active site and less a static archive.

My hope is that these initiatives—along with the variety of important articles traditionally published between the covers of the *Journal*—will not only maximize the global readership of the *AJA* but also help define and shape the discipline for the twenty-first century and make Old World archaeological research accessible to a broader audience. In these endeavors, I am assisted by the members of the Advisory Board whose expertise and counsel will guide the *Journal* and by John Younger who has agreed to continue as the Book Review Editor and whose dedication and hard work—along with that of Paul Rehak who served as Book Review Co-editor before his sudden death this summer—have been evident in every issue of the *Journal* over the past six years. I have also appointed Elizabeth Bartman to serve as the first Museum Exhibition Editor of the *AJA*. She will commission reviews of important traveling exhibitions and new permanent museum installations; we plan to publish four reviews each year and to post additional reviews on the web site.

Let me also thank R. Bruce Hitchner, my predecessor as Editor-in-Chief. With unflinching courtesy and enthusiasm, he provided invaluable advice and assistance during the transition, as did Mark Kurtz, the former Director of Publications and New Media of the Archaeological Institute of America. Bruce accepted all of the articles in this

issue, and I thank him for leaving the *Journal* in such good shape. Marni Blake Walter, the previous *AJA* Editor, resigned this summer to await the birth of her first child but stayed on briefly to answer questions and offer help as this issue moved into production. Michael Mozina, the former Production Editor, came back briefly from his new job at Brill Academic Publishers to prepare this fascicle for printing, for which he has my great thanks. I wish them all the very best.

With this issue, I welcome and introduce the new *AJA* staff: Madeleine Donachie, Managing Editor,

and Trina Arpin, Associate Editor. Kevin Mullen continues as the Print and Electronic Publications Manager of the AIA and in that capacity will oversee the planned upgrades to the *AJA* web site. All of us welcome constructive suggestions from subscribers and look forward to publishing in the *AJA* the very best in archaeological research.

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