

A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

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Over the 132 years of its existence, the *AJA* has been in the hands of a distinguished sequence of editors. Through their devotion to archaeological scholarship, the *AJA* has long occupied a prestigious position among journals for Old World archaeology. I am honored to have been selected as the next in this sequence. As the *AJA*'s new Editor-in-Chief, my first priority is to continue the journal's tradition of excellence.

The esteem enjoyed by the *AJA* rests on its publication of research that is thorough, reliable, and innovative. The journal also has an enviable reputation for its highly conscientious copyediting and production. It is essential to maintain these qualities as publishing moves ever further into the digital age. Electronic technology offers unprecedented opportunities for rapid, universal dissemination in visually attractive and compelling forms, and it is certainly in the *AJA*'s interest to take advantage of these opportunities. Dissemination, however, is the easy part. More difficult is using these platforms without compromising the integrity of our content.

The *AJA* has already made more digital inroads than many other journals. It is published in both print and electronic formats, and all content can be accessed through *AJA Online* (www.ajaonline.org) and JSTOR (www.jstor.org/journal/amerjarch). Readers may choose a print, electronic, or combination subscription or may opt to purchase single articles or issues as PDFs. A variety of open access content is also available, some of which is published in the printed journal and some of which is published exclusively online. Open access content is indicated in each issue's table of contents and on title pages and can be found under the "Open Access" tab on *AJA Online* (www.ajaonline.org/openaccess). Articles and reviews that appear in print may be accompanied by supplementary open access material that can include most audio and video formats as well as additional data and color images. This array of options, which can be somewhat bewildering, represents creative initiatives aimed at making the most content available to the widest audience while keeping the *AJA* accountable and solvent. Much credit goes to previous editors and to the staff in Boston for devising and negotiating these resources. The balancing act between printed and digital publication will continue to be a work in progress.

Other aspects of the journal also require balance. One area that particularly interests me is the proportion between contributions from younger scholars and contributions from senior scholars. Younger scholars, especially those in their probationary period, seem eager to place their work in the *AJA*. This is clearly an extremely positive state of affairs. By publishing the work of emerging scholars, the journal offers fresh perspectives and anticipates directions that new research will take. I heartily encourage submissions from junior colleagues and hope to see their work frequently in the pages of the *AJA*.

At the same time, it is important for the journal to include the work of senior scholars whose research has been shaped by decades of study and observation.

American Journal of Archaeology
Volume 121, Number 1
January 2017
Pages 1–2
DOI: 10.3764/aja.121.1.0001

www.ajaonline.org

Not uncommonly, as academic careers progress, scholars tend to present their work at invited conferences. The proceedings of these conferences are then published in expensive volumes that are not acquired by many college and university libraries, nor, as a rule, are their contents openly available online. As a result, some of the most interesting and authoritative work is the least accessible. I would like to attract more work by senior scholars to the *AJA*. While it is not feasible to publish entire conference proceedings in the journal, I invite conference organizers to bring to my attention papers that, perhaps in an expanded form, would be appropriate for the *AJA*. More broadly, I hope that established scholars will often consider presenting their ideas to the large audience of *AJA* readers.

Another critical balance is that between interpretive articles and field reports. During the five years from 2011 through 2015, the *AJA* published 114 interpretive pieces (articles, forums, and notes) as compared with 17 field reports and 3 newsletters. There will always be more interpretation than new data, but these numbers still seem lopsided. There appears to be a trend for field reports to cover multiple years of work and, at times, to resemble final publications more than preliminary accounts. In the interest of focusing attention on current fieldwork, I would welcome more frequent preliminary field reports.

The next issue (*AJA* 121[2]) will see the resumption of museum reviews. Special exhibitions and new installations are the work of professional scholars and are highly influential interpretations of ancient cultures. As such, museum presentations should be noticed and discussed in the scholarly literature.

Editorial policies of the *AJA* set forth by the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) remain unchanged (www.ajaonline.org/submissions/editorial-policy). The scope of the journal, as defined by the AIA's Governing Board, is "the art and archaeology of ancient Europe and the Mediterranean world, including the Near East and Egypt, from prehistoric to Late Antique times." In accordance with AIA policies and in furtherance of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, the *AJA* reaffirms its condemnation of the illegal trade in antiquities (*AJA* 109 [2005] 135–36):

As a publication of the Archaeological Institute of America, the *American Journal of Archaeology* will not serve for the announcement or initial scholarly presentation of any object in a private or public collection acquired after

December 30, 1973, unless its existence is documented before that date, or it was legally exported from the country of origin. An exception may be made if, in the view of the Editor, the aim of publication is to emphasize the loss of archaeological context. Reviews of exhibitions, catalogues, or publications that do not follow these guidelines should state that the exhibition or publication in question includes material without known archaeological findspot.

Though this is my inaugural issue, I have been at work as incoming editor for more than a year and have learned a great deal. The quarterly production of the journal is, as my predecessor Sheila Dillon said in her editorial of January 2015, a "deeply collaborative endeavor" (*AJA* 119 [2015] 1). I am very much obliged to Sheila and to Elizabeth Baltes, her Editorial Assistant, for their unstinting guidance and assistance as I learned the *AJA*'s editorial workflow. The many learned specialists who carry out the time-consuming but indispensable work of peer review make the *AJA* the distinguished journal that it is, and I am deeply grateful for their professional generosity. A new Editor-in-Chief has an enormous advantage in the expertise, proficiency, and dedication of the *AJA* staff: Madeleine J. Donachie, Director of Publishing; Katrina Swartz, Editor; and Vanessa Lord, Electronic Content Editor. Their help is much appreciated. Ann Benbow, imperturbable Executive Director of the AIA, has graciously facilitated the transition to a new editorial team.

The new Book Review Editor is David L. Stone. I am enormously pleased and grateful that David agreed to accept this position, and I want to thank the University of Michigan for providing the necessary support. My very capable Editorial Assistant, responsible for the technical processing of manuscripts and much more, is Michael McGlin, an advanced graduate student in the Department of Classics at SUNY Buffalo and a participant in several archaeological projects. Finally, it is a privilege to recognize and thank the members of the new Advisory Board. They are the ballast of the *AJA*, and I will depend on their erudition and wisdom.

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