

A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Open Access on AJA Online

This is the last issue of the *AJA* for which I have editorial responsibility. It has been an honor and a pleasure to hold the position of *AJA*'s Editor-in-Chief for the last five years. I was most fortunate that my predecessor, Sheila Dillon, handed over a strong and distinguished *AJA*, and I leave the journal in the capable care of the new Editors-in-Chief, Emma Blake and Robert Schon.

There have been important changes in the last five years. Beginning with the October 2018 issue, color illustrations submitted by authors appear in color, in both the print and the digital versions of the journal, at no cost to the authors. The large increase in color has made the illustrations both more informative and more attractive. David Stone, the Book Review Editor, has restored greater visibility to the book reviews. For a decade, beginning in January 2010, all book reviews appeared online only, were not listed in the issue's contents on JSTOR, did not have direct links on the home page of *AJA Online*, and were not individually linked in the *AJA e-Update* sent to subscribers. Through Stone's efforts, in 2020 the book reviews began to be linked individually in the quarterly emails listing the contents of new issues, and, starting in January 2021, book reviews are now released each month and announced in a dedicated *AJA e-Update*. Since 2018, under the editorship of Josephine Shaya, museum reviews have again become a regular fixture, and Shaya introduced quarterly listings on *AJA Online* of current and upcoming exhibits worldwide that are relevant to the scope of the *AJA*. Most recently, the academic editors and members of the *AJA*'s advisory board composed a new statement of purpose for the journal (*AJA* 125.3:331–32, July 2021).

In 2020, to comply with the reformulated AIA Policy on the Presentation and Publication of Undocumented Antiquities (www.archaeological.org/about/governance/policies/), the *AJA* revised its practices regarding the citation of objects in public and private collections (www.ajaonline.org/submissions/antiquities-policy). The guidelines now ask that citations of objects in collections include basic information about where the collections are and when the objects were acquired; in general, objects that are in a collection and cannot be documented before 30 December 1973 may not be cited. The implementation of this policy has caused us to rethink the citation of all ancient objects, not only those held in collections. Excavated objects, for example, may be stored in depots or reburied. Inscriptions, tomb monuments, and architectural members may be left in situ, and some of these inevitably disappear over time. Coins are usually cited as types, and some types may not be represented by examples that have an excavated provenance. It seems evident that the provenance and status of such objects should be as carefully documented as the provenance and status of objects in collections. The modern history of such objects, whether excavated, found by accident, or examined in situ, is as important as that of objects in collections.

American Journal of Archaeology
Volume 125, Number 4
October 2021
Pages 477–78
DOI: 10.3764/aja.125.4.0477

www.ajaonline.org

The documentation of the evidence used in archaeological research is a basic responsibility of the *AJA* and its authors. The studies and reports published in the journal should provide enough documentation about the material evidence cited so that readers can assess the nature of the evidence used and pursue additional information. We have, therefore, begun to ask that citations of excavated objects provide documentation about where, when, and by whom the objects were excavated. We request that citations of inscriptions include the find context and present location (if known) of the stones. The citation of a coin type should include one example with a legitimate provenance.

As we have worked to develop standard procedures for citing objects that are not in public or private collections, we have repeatedly realized that the circumstances through which ancient objects have become known and in which they presently exist are almost as varied as the objects themselves, and we have adjusted the procedures from issue to issue. It is our goal to develop efficient and reasonable citation guidelines for most kinds of ancient objects, and we truly appreciate the cooperation and patience of *AJA* authors in this process.

I am very grateful to the many people who have participated in the editing and publication of the *AJA* over the past five years. The sequence of editorial assistants with whom I have worked, Elizabeth Baltes, Michael McGlin, Christine Johnston, Bethany Simpson, and Anne Duray, have helped identify appropriate reviewers for submitted material and have checked (and rechecked) the style and formatting of accepted articles. The members of the Editorial Advisory Board have contributed their wisdom and experience about matters of policy as well as many peer reviews. Book Review Editor David Stone and Museum Review Editor Josephine Shaya have garnered and edited excellent reviews. Madeleine Donachie and now Meg Sneeringer, Elma Sanders, and the freelance copyeditors and proofreaders have unfailingly produced issues that are virtually error-free.

Finally, the *AJA* would not exist without the scholars who submit their work and the experts who evaluate it, and I have been most privileged to work with the *AJA*'s authors and reviewers.

Jane B. Carter
Editor-in-Chief