

Editorial

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With the end of the first decade of the 21st century almost in sight the intellectual terrain of maritime archaeology continues to develop rapidly and in intriguing ways. Evident in the now frequent maritime-flavoured conference sessions is a rich harvest of interdisciplinary work undoubtedly associated with increased intermingling of those who might not have seen themselves as ‘maritime’ but who are being drawn inexorably towards the water or at least to the material left by those who lived (or live) by and on it. In this more integrated world, prehistory enjoys a growing presence, both things identified as priorities in this journal’s first issue and demonstrated in its output (though unusually not in this issue). For some the association of maritime archaeology with prehistory is unfamiliar or new and a few seem to be unaware that they have met at all, yet their association is a long one, rooted in investigations that far predate the arrival of maritime archaeology in its modern sense. Keller, Montelius and Blundell all for a time contemplated ancient remains within lakes, and OGS Crawford’s distinctly maritime paper in the first issue of *Antiquity* was also noted in the first issue of this journal. Now maritime archaeologists whose principal research interest is in prehistory are growing in number and they are well placed for the potential is enormous.

Another signal advance occurred on January the 2nd 2009, the day the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* entered into force, the twentieth State having ratified the Convention 3 months earlier. In fact the total number of States Parties has already increased to 24 and others have stated their intention to ratify in due course. Encouraging though that is, there are still many States who have not ratified or accepted the convention, the UK and the USA being prominent examples, although the UK Government ‘has expressed its willingness to comply with the Convention’s Annex, which establishes ethical and scientific rules, widely recognized by archaeologists, for activities directed at underwater sites’ (UNESCO 2009). The Convention is not a cure-all, especially while there are relatively few States Parties and while so many of the world’s prominent maritime nations remain coy but it is a start that not so many years ago seemed beyond reach. To see that is needed one needs look no further than the recent discoveries in

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international waters by commercial operators and the ethical and legal problems that result. It is to be hoped that we will be reporting equally dramatic finds in the future but made by organisations who will investigate them in accordance with the Convention rather than for profit and dispersal at auction.

There remain of course plenty of important subjects in shallower waters and above it. In this issue, Markoulaki offers one of several comments that are being submitted following up discussions of education in maritime archaeology that formed the basis of the last issue edited by Jesse Ransley.

Also in the spirit of continuity Jim Dolwick returns with a paper that builds on his investigation of the social (Dolwick 2008 this Journal). Here, he goes ‘beyond the social’ and holds up actor networks to the light. Most people would be forgiven for not being aware of Actor Network Theory until recently but if one gauges the prominence of a theoretical perspective or approach by the number of times it is invoked at major conferences like last year’s TAG, then ANT is becoming part of the currency of debate about how we deal with material, things and ourselves. Dolwick however, has been investigating these approaches for some time as a medium for his research into the steamship technology of early industrial North America. His two papers comprise a resource that many will find a useful orientation in a field that is broad and at times baffling.

Also on the theoretical front, we use Matthew Harpster’s paper about the work of Keith Muckelroy as an ideal vehicle to initiate the practice of some other journals in running comment alongside the paper.

It is nearly 30 years since Muckelroy’s tragic accidental death and yet he remains a prominent figure in the minds of those who practice maritime archaeology today as well as in the history of the subject’s development. There has not really been anything to supersede his book ‘Maritime Archaeology’ published in 1978 but is this because the community is collectively unequal to his genius or simply that, as an opening bid in the scoping of the subject, it served its purpose and did not need replacing? Recent years have seen a rapid increase in the rate of publication (see the review of Red Bay, this issue) so the lack of a ‘maritime archaeology 2’ may be explained by the fact that many of the issues he found important are now taken up broadly across the spectrum of published work rather than being the focus of single volumes.

Irrespective of what is coming next (and there are several working towards theoretical goals), Muckelroy’s work as well as the man himself will remain subjects for study and discussion. One might see this as introspective and backward-looking yet from another perspective it indicates a healthy reflexive analysis of what we did, what we do, how and why we do it, and where we are going next. This is what Harpster aims to promote. And there are many good precedents, for example in all those who have written about Vere Gordon Childe, soon to be augmented by an entire volume of the *European Journal of Archaeology*.

On the waterfront Sam Willis presents a fascinating and revealing paper that promotes an archaeology of smuggling, which perhaps along with slavery and piracy is one of those aspects of society and its maritime activities that remain relatively under researched in spite of being prominent in literature and popular imagination. Willis shows just how rich this vein is as a powerful component of the maritime landscape and how it feeds so informatively into social issues that one might have thought had little connection.

So many sites preserve accumulations of material that attest to human activity over long periods of time but which may or may not be sequential or directly related. This has obvious archaeological potential but equally presents difficulties in disentangling evidence that is temporally and spatially mixed rather than being comfortably stratified. Chris

Horrell and colleagues present an intriguing case study of a site in the Apalachicola River, Florida, a good example of how methodical fieldwork and interdisciplinary research can achieve clarity (and in this case a twist in the tail).

Lastly, we salute a significant milestone: the much anticipated publication of the Red Bay wreck by Parks Canada. This impressive work in five volumes is reviewed below and is a welcome addition to the major synthetic reports that have begun appearing in recent years. The second *Vasa* volume and the last two *Mary Rose* volumes are also on the horizon.