

EDITORIAL REFLECTIONS

The Maturation of a Discipline: Celebrating the Journal's 10-Year Anniversary

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In celebration of the ten-year anniversary of the journal, this brief editorial note reviews the ways the field of Islamic archaeology has developed in the last decade, and the ways in which the journal has generated growth, facilitated innovation and collaboration, and given visibility to the field.

When Equinox launched the Journal of Islamic Archaeology in 2014, the field of Islamic archaeology was becoming established within the larger discipline of archaeology. It took about twenty years for it to find a place in academia: students could take courses in it (although usually in art history, area studies, history, or general archaeology departments), and there were increasingly more panels devoted to it in professional conferences. Nonetheless, there were precious few jobs in educational or cultural institutions, a few journals had started (and came to an end), and the relationship between Islamic art and Islamic archaeology was still being debated. People were “doing” Islamic archaeology, but it was not always clear what that was, and that had yet to be communicated to the public.

In 2014 there was no journal specifically dedicated to Islamic archaeology, rather than Islamic material culture in a general sense, and nothing on a global scale. The original vision for our journal was three-fold: to provide a venue for publication of the best scholarship in this growing field, to cover the Islamicate world in a holistic fashion, and to mold the development of Islamic archaeology in the twentieth century, particularly at a time of disciplinary self-discovery and experimentation. We wanted to push boundaries: geographical, chronological, thematic, and methodological. The eighteen issues and 84 papers published to date have done this. While many of our contributions have focused on the Islamic “central lands,” there have been increasingly more devoted to the Africa (sub-Saharan and the Maghreb), al-Andalus, the Gulf, medieval

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Persia, Central Asia, and East Asia. There is an exciting burst of energy in Ottoman archaeology today; it is perhaps currently the most rapidly growing chronological specialization in our field, if one looks at doctoral student numbers alone. The *JIA* has experienced real growth in this area, as increasingly more contributions are focused on the later historical periods and address issues related to cultural heritage. Thematically, while still honoring the scholarly traditions that have laid the foundations of the field—studies on ceramics, architecture, urban form, and the Late Antique–Early Islamic transition—we have expanded the kinds of questions we ask and our lines of inquiry. Our contributions have been systematically investigating the process and timing of Islamization (in different parts of the Islamic world), the lives of religious minorities under Muslim rule, building archaeology, materials analysis, industry and technology, and landscapes and agriculture. As for methods, the journal has benefitted from the work of a new generation of archaeologists who are trained in the natural sciences, are text-savvy and well-trained in regional languages (making conscientious and critical use of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish sources), and do their fieldwork in a transdisciplinary, tightly collaborative fashion. The first collaboration in the journal between an archaeologist and a historian was published in 2016 (Quickel and Williams). Future issues are planned that include jointly-written articles with historians, historical geographers, botanists, and anthropologists. Together these trends represent what Islamic archaeology really is today: it reaches out to other disciplines, raises new questions about society and culture that makes it relevant to other kinds of archaeology, and engages with theory in a way not possible before.

As an editor, I have welcomed good ideas, and the journal has benefitted from some really innovative special and themed issues, by guest editors. They have included volumes on the “Archaeology of the Medieval Maghreb and al-Andalus” (2.2—winter 2015, which was our first bi-lingual issue in French and English), “The Sphero-Conical Vessel: Name, Object and Usage” (3.2—winter 2016), “Islamic archaeology in sub-Saharan Africa” (4.2—winter 2017), “Agropastoral Landscapes in the Islamic World: Producing, Trading and Feeding” (5.1—summer 2018), “Refuse And Reuse in Islamic Archaeology” (9.1—summer 2022), and “The Archaeology of Islamization in Africa” (9.2—winter 2022). Each of these issues has an interesting history, growing out of conferences, debates in the field, and even graduate seminars!

We have experimented with different report formats and venues of distribution. While we have discontinued the online blog of short reports, we have incorporated shorter articles at the end of several issues, and our book review section, ably managed by Editorial Board member José Carvajal López, has become an important part of nearly every volume. The journal is available in print and digital form, has been offering Open Access options to authors for several years, and it is now indexed in UGC CARE, Scopus, and Web of Science (ESCI).

The *JIA* has also spawned a much-needed publication venue in our field: a monograph series. *Monographs in Islamic Archaeology* was launched in 2000, with its first publication appearing last year, a work on Islamic archaeology in Europe focused on cultural heritage (Govantes-Edwards). Three more monographs are in the pipeline, all introducing us to diverse perspectives on medieval Islamic and Ottoman Jerusalem. The series, co-edited by myself and Asa Eger, continues to accept book proposals (<http://www.equinoxpub.com/home/monographs-islamic-archaeology/>).

Our anniversary issue (10.1—summer 2023) celebrates what makes the *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* a leader in its field today: its diversity and openness to new approaches and

themes. The five articles that follow are concerned with various aspects of pilgrimage and the materiality of cultural and religious entanglements: reconstructing the lives of Christian pilgrims in Early Islamic Alexandria, a Muslim pilgrims' station in Saudi Arabia, daily life in a village of central Jordan, Persian contacts with Caucasia and Anatolia (as reflected in Jalayirid funerary art), and Christian-Muslim relations in medieval Georgia (as they take material form in a medieval monastery).

We are grateful to our contributors, readers, editorial board, and the staff of Equinox for the last ten years' of fruitful collaboration and exploration. I look forward to the decades to come!

References

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