The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology

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*The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology* is a survey of the current state of the field as seen by fifty-seven scholars from across the globe. The volume is organized into seven parts: an introduction by the eminent American scholar George F. Bass, one of the pioneers of the field; a section on process, with fifteen topical chapters; on ships and shipwrecks, with sixteen chapters; on maritime culture and life ashore, with seven chapters; on matters “beyond the site,” with eight chapters dealing with an eclectic group of topics ranging from maritime history to underwater tourism, international law, heritage site management, and museum issues; a single concluding chapter dealing with future directions; and finally, a section that includes both a glossary of ship terms and an appendix on scientific analyses and dating techniques. Each of the separate chapters includes an extensive and useful selected bibliography, and there is a general index of the entire volume.

Overall, this volume constitutes a major complementary work to James L. Delgado’s *Encyclopedia of Underwater and Maritime Archaeology* (British Museum, 1997, and Yale University Press, 1998), and as such it represents a benchmark by which to measure the growing sophistication of the field over the fourteen years that separate Delgado’s work from this one. As George Bass points out in his introduction, maritime archaeology has become a worldwide methodological approach, one that has grown from single-site research in the past fifty years. Its future now rests on the synthesis of geographically and chronologically diverse data. At the same time, the volume demonstrates that not all its practitioners have yet transformed the breadth of their understanding in order to achieve this vision fully.

This work suggests a number of important and encouraging signs of maturation within maritime archaeology. First, there is a growing appreciation that the field extends outward from underwater shipwrecks and is linked to a number of areas. These areas range from the concept of maritime cultural landscape, as explained by Christer Westerdahl, to the remains of ships that have survived ashore, as Delgado describes, to archaeological work being done on coastal sites to understand the littoral interaction between life afloat and ashore, to studies of ancient harbors in the Mediterranean, and the archaeology being done in shipyard sites. Second, and even more importantly, there are clear signs of important broad synthesis in topics where underwater archaeology is able to provide information missing from other sources. This welcome trend is evident in the chapters by Mark Polzer on early shipbuilding in the eastern Mediterranean, by Deborah Carlson on the seafarers and shipwrecks of ancient Greece and Rome, by Eric Rieth on Mediterranean ship design in the Middle Ages, by Susan Rose on medieval ships and seafaring, by Fred Hocker on postmedieval ships and seafaring in the West, and by Randall Sasaki on East Asia shipbuilding traditions during the era of Chinese maritime expansion. Curiously, few authors mention at any length the
maritime archaeological contributions to social history that constitute such a feature of terrestrial archaeology. As this handbook suggests, underwater archaeology is best known for its contributions to understanding ship construction in periods and places for which other sources are either scarce or nonexistent, but at the same time, additional areas are opening up for the field as it expands. The long section with fifteen chapters on the processes of maritime archaeology shows that the field is becoming increasingly complex and changing rapidly as new technological capabilities are brought to bear. This work repeatedly displays the immature aspects of the field, with several authors suggesting that they prefer a closed and private field of inquiry and others noting the relative lack of analytical publication, the numerous investigations that have produced little in the way of written results. Nevertheless, this work provides room for optimism that more and more maritime archaeologists are moving beyond the earlier narrow foci on process, procedure, and intrinsic objects toward wider interpretations. Francisco C. Domingues, in his contribution, touches on this point when he emphasizes the relationships of maritime archaeology to the broader study of maritime history, the study of mankind’s interaction with the seas, oceans, and waterways of the world. Indeed, maritime archaeology is one of the many complementary disciplinary approaches by which we can better understand that basic theme in global history. It is a distinct methodological discipline, but its meaning must extend beyond its process and procedures, just as the work of an archival researcher or library reader extends beyond methodologies and processes. Maritime archaeology is a means to find greater understanding and meaning in traces and remains that can be found in an underwater equivalent of libraries and archives, but to do so its results need to be merged with those from other complementary methodologies and processes. As is clear from this volume, practitioners of maritime archaeology have a way to go, but the reader is left with hope that there is movement toward that end.

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Reinhard Heydrich, Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, favorite of Heinrich Himmler, and architect of the Nazis’ notorious “final solution,” stares out of a seventy-year-old photograph looking more movie star than monster. Yet monster he was, in a party of monsters. Any biography of this once-rising star of the Third Reich must ask and attempt to answer the question, How does a person become a monster? Robert Gerwarth does as well as any scholar in answering this question. He meticulously charts the course of Heydrich’s life. Heydrich’s childhood was relatively normal. His family held the values of the middle class, perhaps a bit more so than most, since his father ran a music conservatory. Heydrich accepted, along with most of his generation, the military myth of betrayal as an explanation for Germany’s defeat in