

Preface

This book is the culmination of a journey which began with a group of Master's students at the University of Hamburg in 2019, who envisioned a conference to highlight early career researchers in maritime archaeology. Planned for 2020 in Hamburg, the conference aimed to provide a platform for these researchers to present their work, to network, and to gain valuable experience within a supportive environment. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 Pandemic necessitated a shift to a virtual format. Despite this challenge, the conference was a resounding success, leading to transform the initiative into an ongoing project.

Since then, the project has evolved in many ways. In January 2021, M.A.R.E. launched an ongoing online lecture series. Over the course of more than 40 lectures, participants were drawn from across Europe and beyond. From 2023 onwards, a new monthly newsletter, delivering updates on recent publications, upcoming conferences and job opportunities from the field was introduced to the project. Now in 2025, the project has expanded into the dissemination of academic research to a broad public with the M.A.R.E. Podcast.

These facets enable the project to make a meaningful contribution to maritime archaeology. At its core, nonetheless, the mission is to support and connect the next generation of researchers. For this, the online lecture series is the main vessel and in a step to make the project more tangible, the idea for this book was born. Hence, it presents a selection of the lectures from 2021 to 2023.

For the creation of this volume, the speakers were asked to contribute with an article, and with great enthusiasm eight agreed to do so. This approach explains the broad scope of the book. The content covers a wide temporal and geographical range—from the Bronze Age to the Modern era and across the entire Mediterranean region, from the Pillars of Hercules to Alexandria, with a detour to the Black Sea. This volume is a comprehensive display of different methodological approaches, interdisciplinary work and various aspects of maritime research.

The study of Soledad Solana Rubio and Felipe Cerezo Andreo employs the use of advanced non-intrusive methodologies to explore underwater archaeological sites in the Strait of Gibraltar. The aim is to deepen the understanding of maritime culture from Protohistoric times to Late Antiquity. Furthermore, this work addresses methodological challenges and seeks standardization and terminological consistency in the classification and analysis of these sites. The article of Mieke Kassulke explores the role of sirens in ancient seafaring myths, analyzing how these myths reflect and shape the principles of navigation and perceptions of coastal geography in the Classical Mediterranean world.

The study of Julia Zerafa examines the preservation of Maltese traditional working boats, specifically the *Firilla* and the *Dghajsa tal-Latini*, highlighting their heritage value and the implementation of heritage management plans to maintain their historical and cultural values. Angiolo Querci reconsiders the Bronze Age trade network proposed by J. L. Davis, suggesting the existence of local sailing networks and presenting a circulation model. Max Fiederling, Thomas Simeth and Felix Moser give us an insight into a small-scale exhibition featuring AR technology and 3D reconstructions. The exhibition was based on the findings of a well-preserved Roman merchant ship that was discovered in 2016 off the Romanian Black Sea coast. Mohamed Abdelaziz and Mohamed Elsayed outline the comprehensive methodology employed by the Centre d'Etudes Alexandrine (CEAlex) to document and study the submerged archaeological site of the lighthouse of Alexandria. It includes the use of photogrammetry and RTI software to create 3D models, georeference the site, and reveal new information about related finds. Georgia-Dimitra Kyriakou examines and reinterprets the construction and evolution of the mast-step, a key structural component in ancient sailing ships that secures the mast. Finally, the paper of Pascal Hoffmann investigates the physical health impacts and occupational hazards experienced by Roman civilian seafarers, utilizing archaeological and literary evidence alongside modern comparisons to understand their work environment. The contributions reflect the diverse interests and expertise of the early career researchers involved. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the views and interpretations expressed in the individual chapters are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or positions of the editors.

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Thank you all for joining this remarkable voyage of discovery and scholarship.

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