Foreword

This peer-reviewed edited volume is based on research presented at the 7th International Congress for Underwater Archaeology (IKUWA 7), which was organised by the University of Helsinki, the Finnish Maritime Archaeological Society and the Finnish Heritage Agency and took place 6–9 June 2022 in Helsinki, Finland. This was the first time an IKUWA conference had been planned to convene in one of the Nordic countries, and it had to be postponed twice from its original date of June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only after most of the obstacles of the pandemic had been overcome were around 250 maritime archaeologists from different continents and countries able to meet in June 2022 in Helsinki to participate in the seventh IKUWA-series conference.

The theme of IKUWA 7 was Delivering the Deep—Visions for the Future of Maritime Archaeology. This thematic choice envisioned a productive amalgamation of underwater and maritime cultural heritage studies with research on the challenges the world faces at present, including climate change, erosion threats, water pollution, mismanagement and other types of human-related activities that make the future of maritime archaeology and the conservation of maritime resources uncertain. Overall, the theme urged participants to engage in discussions about the potential for our field to help shape a more promising future for all members of society.

The scientific program consisted of three days and nearly 130 presentations, along with a two-day poster session. The presentations explored maritime perspectives on topics such as climate change, trade, inland waterways, lake and wetland dwelling, war, material reuse and ritualistic and cognitive signs, as well as maritime cultural landscapes. Additionally, maritime cultural heritage was examined as an integral part of ‘Blue Growth’ and marine science, for generating new knowledge on historical use of marine resources and human relationship with the sea. Subsequently, maritime archaeological research was signified as extremely relevant on an international scale at present, particularly because the United Nations recently proclaimed the 2021–2030 period as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. This edited volume embodies that relevance by displaying the diversity of research topics and approaches as presented during the conference and highlighting the versatility of our field and its relevance to the wider field of archaeology and heritage studies.

Besides the scientific program, one of the objectives of IKUWA 7 was to accentuate the importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2001 Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (CPUCH), which Finland has not yet ratified. The remarks that make the future of maritime archaeology and the conservation of marine resources uncertain. Overall, the theme urged participants to engage in discussions about the potential for our field to help shape a more promising future for all members of society.

IKUWA 7 was made possible thanks to the infrastructure set up between the Finnish Maritime Archaeological Society, the Finnish Heritage Agency and the University of Helsinki. The conference received vital financial support from the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, the Weisell Foundation and the Finnish Cultural Foundation. The University of Helsinki provided the conference facilities, while the Finnish Heritage Agency and the University of Helsinki also contributed through their staff’s working hours. The volunteer support from student assistants and members of the Finnish Maritime Archaeological Society also contributed significantly to the success of IKUWA 7, and we are very grateful to them. Our most sincere thanks also go to our colleagues in the IKUWA Steering Committee, who were always ready to assist and advise us in the challenges we encountered.

In any conference, the opportunity for networking and getting together with colleagues is crucial. On this point, the feedback from the conference has been overwhelmingly appreciative. As we say in Finland, ‘guests make the party,’ and we believe this holds true for scientific conferences as well. We extend our most heartfelt gratitude to all the participants of the conference for the unforgettable encounters. We look forwards to seeing everyone again at the upcoming IKUWA 8 in Belgium!

On behalf of the organizing committee,

Minna Koivikko
Chair of the committee

Kalle Virtanen
Vice-chair of the committee

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The many facets of maritime archaeology

Kristin Ilves, Veronica Walker Vadillo and Katerina Velentza

In June 2022, about 250 maritime archaeologists gathered in Finland’s capital of Helsinki by the Baltic Sea for the 7th International Congress for Underwater Archaeology (IKUWA 7) to celebrate our academic field after two postponements and almost three years of social distancing and academic isolation. It was a week of joyful reunions and new meetings, excited conversations and intellectual discussions with all-things-maritime taking centre stage. The event, in its seventh iteration, called upon maritime archaeologists to think about the future of maritime and underwater archaeology under the title Delivering the Deep—Visions for the Future. In the 22 sessions of the conference, central, fundamental and classic themes related to shipwreck analysis and interpretation, maritime trade and commerce and the management of underwater cultural heritage were presented. Newer topics emerged, such as the links between climate change and maritime archaeology, as well as the utilisation of creative citizen science in maritime archaeological initiatives. Themes connected to theoretical frameworks, especially those focussing on maritime cultural landscapes, were expanded from previous conferences, a sign of the growing theoretical insights and maturing research laying the way for a more nuanced understanding of past societies, their behaviours, technologies, economies, beliefs and interactions with their watery environments.

The wide range of themes discussed at the conference underscored the changing nature of maritime archaeology, which has expanded from a subject area originally focussing on underwater archaeology and the study of nautical technology to a dynamic and interdisciplinary field encompassing all tangible and intangible elements of culture related to human activities on, in and around aquatic environments—inland waters and wetlands, as well as seas and oceans. Maritime archaeology is highly interdisciplinary, frequently using and borrowing methodologies and approaches from fields such as oceanography and marine sciences, engineering, geography, anthropology, ethnography and history, to state but a few (Muckelroy 1978; Adams 2002; Bass 2011; Catsambis et al. 2011; Ford et al. 2020). This interdisciplinary, as coupled with the continued evolution of the theoretical frameworks applied (e.g. Westerdahl 1992, 2011; Tuddenham 2010; Campbell 2020), has yielded a progressive knowledge base equipped with a wide set of tools with which to pursue ambitious academic enquiries. In a fashion similar to archaeology, the openness of maritime archaeology and the internationality of the field (Martin 2011; Maarleveld 2012) allow limitless possibilities of research, as well as the participation of scholars from any disciplinary backgrounds studying cultural elements of human activities within the context of watery environments.

In this edited volume, rendered from the work presented at IKUWA 7, we want to set forth the multifaceted nature of maritime archaeology and underscore the significant role which maritime scholars should play within the broader field of archaeology. Having transcended the technofunctional studies that characterised maritime archaeology for the most part of the twentieth century, the sample of work contained in this book aims to put to rest that now-outdated idea of maritime archaeology as we showcase the ways in which our sub-field can be used to understand how human societies interact and have interacted with their watery environments. While most contributors to this volume would call themselves maritime archaeologists, the definition of this label can vary down to individual levels due to the wide breadth of the field and the unique path through which each scholar has approached the discipline. Concurrently, some contributors may also characterise themselves with additional academic identities, including Stone Age archaeologists, Nordic archaeologists, Classical archaeologists, field archaeologists, maritime historians, historic environment specialists and heritage specialists, to name just a few. What characterises and unites us as maritime scholars is a desire to view human societies from the water (e.g. Cooney 2004; Ilves 2004; Adams 2006; Tana 2006; Fleisher et al. 2015; Fowler et al. 2015; Trakadas and Corbin 2015; Mylona 2020), and by doing so, to extract past maritime cultural landscapes. Our work offers a counterweight to land-oriented research, where the role of maritime communities is often obscured, and it becomes particularly important in regions of the world where societies have developed ways of life deeply entangled with watery environments. Water has provided unique resources and opportunities to humankind along with intricate challenges. Uncovering and understanding the delicate balance of bridging the natural environment with the complexity of the human social environment through the documentation of maritime histories, tangible and intangible heritage, along with contemporary attitudes, and values of maritime communities are key outputs of our field. The examples from the human–environmental past, our insights into the impact of aquatic environments on material culture, and our ability to unveil local, traditional and indigenous knowledge can play a fundamental role in reshaping humanity’s relationship with the water, in the present and the future (Trakadas 2022; Velentza 2023). Through immersive and participatory, place-based and historically-informed heritage approaches maritime archaeology has already revealed its contribution to assisting communities reconnect with maritime and...