

If on a Winter's Night a Ship Wrecks

Peter B. Campbell

Figure 17.1. Unfinished *Ship in a Storm* from J.W.M. Turner's sketchbook (Sequels to the Liber Studiorum ('Little Liber') Watercolours, *Ship in a Storm*, c.1823-6, Joseph Mallord William Turner, Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856. © Joseph Mallord William Turner. Photo: Tate).

Contemporary Philosophy for Maritime Archaeology has sought to address two aims, as outlined in the introduction. First, "to help usher the alienated subdiscipline of maritime archaeology into the broader discourse of the humanities" and, second, "to issue a call to action for fellow maritime archaeologists to respond to ecocide more urgently, more cross-disciplinarily, and more responsibly with new interventions into old research questions" (Rich and Campbell, this volume). The extent to which these aims are successful – measured by engagement of the field with the ideas proposed in this volume – remains to be seen, but this concluding chapter reviews the contributions and responses to tease out the recurrent themes within the chapters that further these lofty aims.

The great 20th century novelist Italo Calvino wrote *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler*, from which the title of this chapter is derived. Calvino taps into human nature to tell a story about the search for knowledge in unlikely places. More than a story about knowledge, Calvino also creatively sought to re-engage readers with the medium of a book, making *you*, the reader, the protagonist of the novel to sweep you along with the narrative.

If On a Winter's Night a Traveler starts by addressing you and has you go to your local bookstore to buy Calvino's new book by the same title (Calvino, 1981, p. 3). You grab a copy from a freshly printed stack and pay for it. The story is enjoyable but as you read you start to notice pages are misprinted and misaligned. Returning the book, the shop owner explains that the publisher made an error, both in the page order and the cover. In fact, the text was from a book titled *Outside the Town of Malbork*. Unfortunately, the shop does not have the corrected version of *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler*, but offers you a copy of *Outside the Town of Malbork* since you were enjoying it. However, as you return to reading you discover something frustrating – it is clearly not the same story. And so Calvino skilfully weaves a narrative, explaining this new novel is in fact *Leaning from the Steep Slope* and, yet again, due to circumstances beyond your control, you are unable to finish it. Calvino takes you through a series of story beginnings – each more gripping and exciting than the last – and an anxious search for endings. The protagonist travels the world with a growing list of titles in an attempt to reach an end to any one of the stories.

One might consider *Contemporary Philosophy for Maritime Archaeology* a book of beginnings and the search for knowledge. And like Calvino's novel, it is an experiment in the application of new methods of thought. Furthermore, an archaeological discovery is a story beginning which can lead to any number of conclusions; in fact, the application of new theory or methods can re-interpret an old story. Archaeology is a mix of perspectives and identities: I, you, us, Other, reader, author, community, ancestor, stakeholder, etc. Material culture is, therefore, less concrete than its materiality may imply. Much like the weaving of Calvino's narrative, archaeology is constantly being re-examined, reinterpreted, and reframed without a definite conclusion. This chapter reflects upon the ideas the authors have presented in this book, as we search for a path forward within maritime archaeology.

Broken and Displaced Objects

As a fragmentary source, the archaeological record primarily addresses incomplete contexts. Wrecking break apart ships with certain types of objects dispersing during the initial event, while others degrade or disappear over weeks, years, or centuries (Muckelroy, 1978; Ward, Larcombe and Veth, 1999). Material culture degrades preferentially based on the material and environment, with warm saltwater environments often leaving behind little organic material while wetlands preserve organics at a higher rate (Coles, 1988). Maritime archaeologists therefore begin investigations with broken or displaced artifacts, or objects to use the terminology of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), and seeks to understand culture through this fragmentary and disrupted dataset.

With Claire Watson's complicit objects we see how even broken and displaced objects are agents. "Objects help construct subjects, and things help power not only function, but exist in the first place" (Watson, this volume). According to Watson, shipwrecks retain their complicity to power structures even when they've been submerged for hundreds, or thousands, or years. The Church Wreck at Marzamemi is a power example of the persistence of complicity, as even in its current state – degraded and partially consumed by the sea's forces and endolithic organisms – the cargo conveys the power of Justinian. In fact, the emotional impact is perhaps all the more powerful in its fragmentary, corrupted state than if it was intact in a church.

Bjørnar Olsen argues that a shipwreck is "released from its chains of relations" and is perhaps a "truer" representation than a complete vessel (Olsen, this volume), building on Graham Harman's shipwreck of Theseus chapter. Or as Steve Mentz poetically writes, "Shipwreck becomes beauty-maker, transformer of life into aesthetic objects" (Mentz, this volume). Matthew Harpster addresses Harman and Olsen as well, discussing the generational repairs to HMS *Victory*, making its timbers a palimpsest of repairs and conservation decisions rather than an 18th century ship of the line. These chapters raise questions about authenticity in cultural heritage: is a broken object more authentic than a conserved one? Further insight is provided by Sara Rich, who argues against scholar-saviours in *Shipwreck Hauntography* (2021), shining a light on the discipline's unspoken preference for 'saved' and whole ships on the surface rather than the seafloor.

Drift, Flow, and Cast Upon Shore

Following shipwreck, broken and displaced objects spread across the sea's surface and floor, carried in currents, and wash up on shore in unexpected places. Þóra Pétursdóttir's drift, Matt Edgeworth's flow, and Mentz's beach capture the depositional and spatial confusion of maritime archaeology.

Pétursdóttir's provocative chapter on drift addresses Anthropocene deposits on beach, but also contends with the nature of theory (Pétursdóttir, this volume; see also Pétursdóttir and Olsen, 2018). Within the often overlooked detritus that washes upon beaches, she finds deep meaning about the nature of our current epoch. Norway has become a formidable bastion of archaeological theory through the work of Olsen, Pétursdóttir, and their students. Significantly, Norway's landscapes and maritime culture bestow theories with a distinctly nautical tone. This is seen in the chapters by Pétursdóttir and Olsen, but also the origins of nautical archaeology (Hasslöf, 1963) and maritime cultural landscapes (Westerdahl 1992). Maritime archaeology would be well served to keep up to date on Norwegian theoretical developments. While maritime archaeology has focused on shipwrecks and submerged cities, assemblages such as the flotsam are a powerful tools for thinking through archaeology, one

that Olsen, Mentz, and Christopher Witmore join Pétursdóttir in discussing in this volume. Indeed, if a line could be traced between hyperobjects – the ocean and atmosphere – it is along the narrow strip of drift that accumulates between their inexhaustible forces.

Edgeworth, highly regarded by maritime archaeologists for his book *Fluid Pasts: Archaeology of Flow* (2011), finds a window into the “archaeosphere” and “hydrosphere” where a landfill deposit is eroded by a river. Neither entity is static, as the “archaeosphere overflows, seeps, teems or cascades into the hydrosphere” (Edgeworth, this volume). As archaeologists learn to address the Anthropocene, it is this type of amorphous deposits that will become commonplace. Wearing protective gear, he records waste erupting from the bank and entering the river’s flow. Little by little the river carries these Anthropocene objects – plastics to be sure, but also pesticides? Asbestos? Toxins? – away from the landfill deposit and out to sea. Edgeworth’s scholarship on rivers, as well as the Anthropocene (Waters *et al.*, 2016), is critical for maritime archaeologists rethinking theory and methods for this new epoch.

Mentz contends with meaning for objects that are cast upon shore, finding among them a true “democracy of objects”, to use the phrase coined by philosopher Levi Bryant (2011). Further, shipwreck detritus allows one to defamiliarize the objects and give a new perspective of structures. His list of shipwrecked objects shows there are worlds of meaning – trauma, politics, art, change, and inequality to name a few – in single artifacts cast into the beach context (Mentz, this volume). As Jon Adams’ theory of shipbuilding see infinite fluidity between environment, materials, ideology, technology, tradition, economics, and purpose influencing ship design (Adams, 2013, p. 23), Mentz finds infinite meanings within the objects washed up upon shore.

With a Sea Change Rich and Strange

The corrupting nature of the sea was evident to Shakespeare who wrote of the “sea change” that underwent the shipwrecked in *The Tempest*. Termed ‘site formation processes’, these changes reveal important information about the processes impacting a site after deposition. Rich, Leila Hamdan, Justyna Hampel explore “naufragic architecture” and the microorganisms that colonize and thrive on shipwrecks. This process begins immediately, even during the ship’s use-life as biofilms appear within the first 24 hours of submergence and later shipworm, and other species, inhabit the vessel as it sails. Following sinking, the ship experiences a dynamic transition into an ecosystem for diverse species. Is “resurrection” of the anthropogenic “cultural resource” more important than the multispecies ecosystem? Rich et al. draw on Stacy Alaimo who writes, “it is possible for the agency, the activities, the becomings of the nonhuman to recreate a seemingly static site into a place of energy and transformation” (2016, p. 38). The anthropocentric nature of the scholar-savior resurrection model (Rich, 2021; Rich et al., this volume) is a mirror for the Anthropocene’s over-exploitation of resources that is driving the planet toward mass extinction. Rich et al. instead see shipwrecks as sources “of community, of biodiversity, of nutrients, of toxicity, of hazardous waste, of contemplation, of knowledge” (Rich et al., this volume). This view adds complexity to ‘site formation processes’ as they are no longer passive, but entities-unto-themselves either creating ecosystems (e.g. colonizing invertebrates) or bringing death (e.g. hazardous waste).

In my chapter I likewise examine the changes that undergo human objects in the sea, but through the lens of dark *amphorae* and octopus archaeology. Drawing on Mark Hudson’s concept of dark artifacts, it explores the non-human afterlives of 3rd century BC warships

sunk during a naval battle (Campbell, this volume). The distribution of crashed objects led to new ecosystems for sponges, corals, fish, and octopuses, among other species. *Amphorae* spread over dozens of kilometres formed micro-habitats for these species while marine consciousness in the form of the octopus reformed the spatial distribution of these objects. At the same time, a variety of endolithic marine organisms bored into the *amphorae* changing their form and colonizing species such as coral grew strange, alien shapes on their surfaces. Nevertheless, the objects persist, interacting with these entities in different ways. As Witmore writes, “a shipwreck withholds its reality from barracudas, barnacles, and scuba divers alike” (Witmore, this volume).

The Efforts of Maritime Archaeology

Archaeological excavation of shipwrecks and sunken cities has been a mechanism for thinking about our existence and dynamic planet since at least the 11th century AD (Campbell, this volume). Human interaction with the hyperobject ocean through watercraft is found in the great religious texts, works of literature, and art, while the submergence of cities and landmasses occupied great thinkers like Plato, Hooke, Linnaeus, Celsius, and more.

The development of modern maritime archaeology in the period after 1960 has experienced many stops and starts with regard to theory. The field has struggled for legitimacy within archaeology, an academic life-or-death tension that occupied much of archaeologists’ efforts until recently. The first theorist in the field, Keith Muckelroy, unfortunately passed away in a diving accident shortly after his landmark book *Maritime Archaeology* was published (1978). Advocacy for theory in the field by Richard Gould (1983), Suzanne Spencer-Wood (1990), and Jon Adams and David Gibbins (Gibbins *et al.*, 2008), among others, has met a muted response. Nevertheless, the field has made significant advances in many areas, blossoming from 1960 to present into a diverse field of research areas.

Despite this trajectory, many contributions to this book use a reflexive approach to maritime archaeology that challenge long-standing notions in the field, while simultaneously demonstrating the importance of maritime archaeology to wider discourses in the Humanities. Many existing approaches have conscious and unconscious biases which affect interpretation, such as the Great Man and technological fetishism (Killian and Rich, this volume; Rich *et al.*, this volume; Han, this volume). A critical and reflexive approach is often necessary for growth. Intellectual progress can be accretive or disruptive, but both honour the scholars that came before by continuing the centuries-long discourse on our underwater pasts.

Contributions seek to further the efforts of maritime archaeology, but the book arrives within a specific context. Harpster sets the work in an historical context, noting that “this collection of essays is... part of an intellectual maturation of the discipline of maritime archaeology” (Harpster, this volume). It is not, however, a continuation of level trajectory, as the global disruptions of 2020-22 affected the authors; the three C’s that Joe Flatman identifies – COVID19, culture wars, and climate change. Flatman writes that this is “one of the first ‘pandemic’ archaeological works” which is “emotive... politically-aware and self-conscious” (Flatman, this volume). This echoed by Harpster who writes, “We are maturing and asking uncomfortable questions about our past practices and future efforts, and building a body of theory and research agendas unique to our disciplinary sphere” (Harpster, this volume). If we ascribe to idea that all observations are theory-laden (Salmon, 1976, p. 376), then theory imbues all archaeology whether the archaeologist wishes to acknowledge an explicit theory or not. Theory originates from perspective and it provides perspective, making new theories necessary to better understand a changing world. Do past theory-laden observations of 1960

have the same understanding of archaeological pandemics, culture wars, and climate change that our theory-laden observations have today? New approaches refresh and reinvigorate interpretation. The current wave offers interpretation fitting our circumstances of climate and social change. The field should heed Flatman's call that "Archaeologists ought to care, emote, be alive to the lives of others and wider social contexts" (Flatman, this volume).

Pull Back the Curtain

Maritime metaphors and case studies have long served philosophy and the Humanities. Maritime archaeology has the opportunity to provide information that is unavailable elsewhere, providing rich datasets for interdisciplinary studies. This is evident in chapters by philosopher Harman and archaeological theorist Olsen. Harman, as Olsen notes, "makes the point that the shipwreck in some sense becomes "more" than the operating, fully functional ship" (Olsen, this volume; Harman, this volume). Olsen argues that there is profitable thought to be found here and I found myself considering parallels to Pliny the Elder's writings on art. He states that the Romans most desired art that was unfinished due to the artist's death, as one can see the mind of the artist within them. "It is also a very unusual and memorable fact that the last works of artists and their unfinished panel-paintings... are more admired than those they finished, because in them are seen the artists' remaining lines and very thoughts, and amidst the niceties of praise, there is sorrow that the artist's hand was extinguished whilst bringing forth the work" (*Natural History* 35.145). What is the goal of nautical archaeology if not finding the "very thoughts" of the shipbuilder in a ship "extinguished" by wrecking? A ship's fragmentary timbers reveal the scaffolding underlying the shipbuilder's intent, just as the sketched lines on the unfinished painting reveal the same for the artist (Fig. 17.1).¹ As Harman conceives, archaeologists are true to Pliny's model, though the medium is timber rather than paint. The practice of nautical archaeology makes the ship 'more' than its former fully functional nature through mapping 'afterlives' (e.g. site formation processes), 'non-human interactions' through wood sourcing and material characterization, and the social life of the vessel (e.g. ship construction and shipboard life). Maritime archaeology therefore pulls back the curtain on the mind of the shipbuilder-artist, but also can address larger questions being asked by the Humanities.

The ship is the favoured example of both philosophers and social theorists to describe an emergent phenomenon, a whole that is different than the parts. The elements function in association to become a *gestalt* entity, one which displays *emergent properties* that are not evident in the constituent parts (Law, 2012). The *gestalt* ship can float, sail, and carry cargo, which are different attributes to individual planks, sailcloth, or rope. In the book *Immaterialism*, Harman argues that the Dutch East India Company was an "object" possessing agency that exhibited emergent properties different from those of its constituent parts of people, ships, stocks, treaties, etc. (Harman, 2016). The entity existed for 190 years and outlasted the individual ships and people, an entity of vast temporal and geographical scale that lasted nearly two centuries and transcended languages, religions, political systems, and individual lifetimes.

Harpster inverts the gross anatomy of the ship inward, exploring the changes that overtake objects entering the context of the ship. It is a significant insight, as he argues that objects are transformed on ships, or rather through their interaction with the ship, whereby goods

¹ Indeed, I have gain a better conception of the construction of the Egadi warships (Tusa et al. 2021), as limited and degraded as the few surviving timbers may be, than the complete *Olympias* trireme reconstruction, whose completeness obscures its internal structure to probing eyes.

become weight and volume that are carefully distributed within the ship, and even the mundane, such as rice, become threatening (Harpster, this volume). More than a few ships have been fatally sunk by their cargo, such as expanding rice bursting the ship's seams. A Greek sponge boat captain I worked with tells the story of a prolific season of sponge fishing that filled his hold with a profitable cargo. However, a leak began expanding the sponges and increasing the weight in the boat until its structure burst and it sank to the seafloor in a poignant revenge of the sponges. In re-thinking the role of objects as they enter new contexts – or rather encounter new objects – Harpster indicates how potential agency shifts between objects as new interactions occur.

Ships in art and graffiti is one of the most common interpretive exercises of maritime archaeology, attempting to marry timber ruins with artistic rendering in order to recapture a sense of the whole (e.g. Tzalas, 1990; Lambrou-Phillipson, 1996; Murray, 2001). Jeremy Killian and Sara Rich use metaphor and art to reframe this practice, combining OOO, Renaissance art, religion, and maritime archaeology.

If looking forward into the Anthropocene, we see that maritime archaeology has a role to play thanks to the insights of Witmore. He writes, “All researchers become archaeologists in the Anthropocene (Shanks, 2012, pp. 21–42), with a sizable portion of them being of the marine variety. When sperm whales are found with abandoned fishing nets, plastic cups, and tubing in their stomachs; when deep-water explorers reach uncharted areas of the ocean bottom only to be confronted with plastic bags; when the carcasses of Laysan albatross chicks are filled with cigarette lighters, bottle caps, plastic straws, and toothbrushes; then marine biologists, oceanographers, and photographic artists all must observe and measure what has become of human-generated malfeasance” (Witmore, this volume). If maritime archaeologists are one day able to pull back the curtain on big questions through the use of contemporary philosophy then it is due to decades of pioneering work of Witmore and Olsen. They have tied contemporary philosophy close to archaeology, allowing for engagement with philosophers such as Harman, Bryant, and Timothy Morton (Witmore, 2007, 2019; Olsen, 2010; Olsen *et al.*, 2012; Olsen and Witmore, 2015). Without their foundation for archaeological engagement with contemporary philosophy, this volume for maritime archaeology would not have been possible.

Peering into the Depths

By nature maritime archaeology peers into the depths. While shipwrecks and sunken cities have been accessed for centuries – the first shipwreck excavation as an intellectual pursuit was in Lake Nemi in 1446 (Campbell, this volume) – the depths were an obstacle not easily overcome. The widespread availability of the Siebe diving suit in the mid-19th century and then the SCUBA system in the post-WWII period increased human exploration (and exploitation) of the seafloor. Depth flattened, becoming accessible to a larger population. However, the digital turn in archaeology has revolutionized access to the maritime cultural heritage, removing shipwrecks from the depths through digital simulacra and bringing them into people's devices.

Lisa Yin Han's chapter explores the eradication of remoteness, making the black ocean depths no further away than the black mirror of one's phone. She describes the high-tech methods that are the “key” to unlocking the seafloor, as it is now possible to host online museums of underwater heritage and livestream shipwrecks. The benefits of these technologies have been lauded and gone largely unquestioned as, “The challenge of any shipwreck museum is to make present things that are absent” (Han, this volume). However,

Han notes the male-oriented technological fetishism inherent in these digital methods. Indeed, looking back to the machismo of the Siebe and early SCUBA practitioners one sees that technology has long been the centre of diving cultural identity as well as a crutch for archaeological interpretation. Where once the ocean's depths were abyssal, are they now game-ified, commodified, anthropocentrically gentrified?

Han's chapter, including the male and Western gaze, recalls Christopher Begley's criticism of the digital gaze, such as LiDAR that map and 'discovers' indigenous sites in Central and South America without engaging with the communities living at those very sites (Begley, 2017, p. 1). The digital gaze, based on Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze, renders the natural world and indigenous culture into passive spectacle and exposes a power imbalance. This is evident in that "Local Indigenous peoples maintain that they always knew about this place... Its 'discovery' [by LiDAR] and naming by outsiders was offensive to them on many levels" (Begley, 2017, p. 1). Parallels to the digital mapping of the ocean are evident, especially with coastal communities who maintain a relationship with underwater natural and cultural resources. Han raises questions about the digital turn and the ocean's depths, but offers a roadmap for a less anthropocentric approach.

Peering into Time

The study of archaeology is about peering into the past; however, contemporary philosophy is reframing our conception of objects and time. Archaeologists examining contemporary material culture have questioned our entrenched paradigm of time within archaeology, notably in recent work by Assaf Nativ and Gavin Lucas (2020). It may have served 20th century archaeology to look backward at pots and hand axes from the comfortable distance of time, believing artifacts to be passive or inert. However, we now dwell in the Anthropocene, or more accurately the "hypanthropos" as coined by Witmore (2014), where "a metabolic assemblage in excess of monstrosity" composed of radiation, chemicals, plastics, and more permeate Earth's soil, water and air (Witmore 2014, 2019: 140–41). All of a sudden archaeology is confronted by 'artifacts' that extend into the past but also long into the future, some with deadly agency.

It is with this new conception of objects and time that authors engaged. When considering non-human archaeologies I write, "archaeology is less about the gap between the lived (human) past and ruined present", drawing on Shanks (1995, p. 17), "and more about objects of varying finitudes bumping into each other in a frame of reference that we call the present" (Campbell, this volume). Much like the octopus' amphora, Olsen's afterlives of Norwegian fishing boats display multiple lives that exist outside the narrow frame of reference of their use-life, extending beyond uses (perhaps) considered by the boatbuilder. Olsen asks, "when turned upside down and used as human dwelling did the northland boat lose its 'boatness'?" Artifacts are hardly as passive or inert as archaeology once conceived.

Chelsea Cohen addresses this through examining ship abandonments as time transcendent objects, despite their short use-lives. Cohen explores the reuse or deposition of hulks to find vibrancy in the many lives of the hulls as "ships, infrastructure, archaeological objects, ecological artifacts, and much more" (Cohen, this volume). She argues that the ships are not only shaped by the ports they sailed to, but, in their re-use or abandonments, the vessels shaped those very harbours. Her approach advocates for the study of ships not just focusing on their use-life, but in the *longue durée*, as they experience many lives over time.

Perhaps the most compelling discussion of time is raised by Flatman; understandably, as he is a heritage manager tasked with conceiving of the role of culture into the distant future. He outlines how social activism is not simply important, but necessary. “Things – places and communities alike – will be different in the future as much as they were in the past,” (Flatman, this volume). This bookends well with Nativ and Lucas, introduced at the start of this section, who write, “archaeology can and should be much more than the pursuit of the past. As a field of study that empirically engages with humanity’s material signature on the world, archaeology is not exhausted by the search for origins” (2020, p. 861). Flatman has long been the conscience of the field (2003; 2007a; 2007b; 2008) and a lodestar to guide us, so we would do well to follow his insights on management and activism. If archaeologists looked to the future as much as the past, we might better situate the present.

Toward an Entanglement of Human and Non-Human

A recurrent theme is the entanglement of the human and non-human, which nearly every chapter touches on. This is, I believe, due to the centrality of the non-human in OOO and Symmetrical Archaeology, but also due to global warming and the growing *zeitgeist* that this human-made disaster increasingly places us at the whims of the non-human. Study of the entanglements between the human and non-human is critical to maritime archaeology, as ships exist within the tension between the atmosphere and ocean hyperobjects (Normark, 2014; Campbell, 2020). As Witmore and Mentz note, drawing on Carl Schmitt, the planet would be better called Oceanus than Earth, as this is a water world (Witmore, this volume; Mentz, this volume).

Johan Normark’s chapter on water as a hyperfact is a critical reading for maritime archaeologists. While most of the objects that archaeologists study are bounded, “limited spatiotemporal units”, Normark identifies a new type of object, “The *hyperfact*... is vastly distributed, it can dissolve into most of its parts without affecting its ‘essence’, and it can be in several physical states at the same time” (Normark, this volume). Water is used by humans in countless ways (consuming, freezing, evaporating, hydraulics, etc.), but none of these exhaust water or affects its essence. Water remains water. Normark applies this model to the Maya region, but also provides important commentary on rivers, advocating they are “entanglements of many objects that are neither natural nor cultural” (Normark, this volume). His contribution provides fresh perspective on water, whether the ocean, rivers, lakes, or use within settlements.

Several chapters examined the non-human entanglement of shipwrecks. Rich, Hamdan, and Hampel explore shipwreck ecology as microorganisms and then macro-organisms colonize and inhabit the wreck. It is clear that shipwrecks are not passive in their posthuman form, but agents formed non-human entanglements with other species and objects. This is likewise explored in my chapter on octopus archaeology, where artifacts from a 3rd century BC naval battle experience non-human afterlives as settlement tiles for invertebrate species like coral and sponges, and dens for octopuses.

Non-human aspects of archaeological sites raise questions about the potential of archaeology. My colleague Derek Smith, a coastal ecologist who studies shipwrecks as ecosystem catalysts (2010), often says that archaeologist and ecologist are asking the same questions but from different perspectives. Other fields researching oceans or the non-human could likewise benefit from collaborations with archaeologists. With thousands of documented shipwrecks, hundreds of sunken cities, and large-scale projects mapping submerged paleolandscapes, who is better suited to address these questions than archaeologists?

Ask the Archaeologist

If we look toward the future of the field, one possible route is engagement with fields that have been leading the movement of maritime-based theory. For the last decade there has been growing calls for oceanic thinking as a lens for understanding the Humanities and social sciences. Geography, architecture, literature, and other social sciences have advocated for a maritime perspective, though archaeology has rarely engaged with the movement. Mentz called for a Blue Cultural Studies offering new analytical frameworks addressing globalization, postcolonialism, ecocriticism, and more (2009), and his book *Ocean* is necessary reading (2020). Kimberley Peters (2010) and Philip Steinberg (2013) advocated for new approaches to maritime materialities, jointing calling for Wet Ontologies through “oceanic thinking” (Steinberg and Peters, 2015). This approach breaks down the static, linear framing of geography in favour of a more complex oceanic thought that draws on “the ocean [as] an ideal spatial foundation for addressing these challenges since it is indisputably voluminous, stubbornly material, and unmistakably undergoing continual reformation” (Steinberg and Peters, 2015, p. 247). Rachel Armstrong advocates for liquid materiality as means to break away from machine-based worldviews in favour of more dynamic conceptions of the world (2019). These approaches use maritime culture, historical sources, and other related material to examine broad social questions. At the same time, in contemporary philosophy Harman and Ian Bogost use maritime sources to explore OOO (Bogost, 2012; Harman, 2016). For the first time philosophy and the broader Humanities come seeking maritime archaeology, rather than the other way around.

Maritime archaeological datasets have a lot to offer these movements, as Olsen writes. “Maritime archaeology, as with the rest of the field, may gain a lot from interacting with object-oriented and other thing-friendly philosophies, but it is equally important to say, that if these philosophies plunges deep into the field of maritime archaeology they will not be unmoved by this encounter. The maritime archaeological material should not just be informed and enriched by these philosophies but they themselves be affected, perhaps even shattered, by the richness and uniqueness of this material” (Olsen, this volume). Wet Ontologies and Blue Humanities would be all the richer by interacting with the shipwrecks, sunken cities, and coastal communities that archaeologists research. We should hope that the broader Humanities will ask the archaeologist.

“What Story Down There Awaits Its End?”

The conclusion of Calvino’s novel states, “Reader, it is time for your tempest-tossed vessel to come to port. What harbour can receive you more securely than a great library?” Unfortunately, the librarian cannot find *If On a Winter’s Night A Traveler* on the shelves, much less other books from your journey such as *Without Fear of Wind or Vertigo*. Perhaps another reader has taken *Looks Down in the Gathering Shadow* from the shelves?

What you have sought is not in the library, but instead you start a discourse with the other readers (Calvino, 1981, pp. 254–7). One states that they dart from book to book, never completing any, for they find universes of possibilities in only a few pages. Another reader says they read for the word choices, syntax, and metaphors, while another rereads for the new discoveries made in books they already know. One advocates for reading to learn how a new book is formed through relationships and dialogues with books across time. Still a different reader seeks old books that evoke primeval or childhood ideas within their mind, and another reads for the search itself and the feelings that a title evokes. Each reads, but for themselves. The diversity of approaches does not diminish the others, but expands and enriches the books.

Each book can be read in as many ways as there are readers. If Harman were in the library he might comment that a book is withdrawn, inexhaustible in however many which ways a reader engages with it.

“What Story Down There Awaits Its End?” asks the novel’s protagonist (Calvino 1981, p. 243), contemplating books, libraries, and indeed knowledge itself.

There are many ways to interpret the past, as we all know. Archaeology today draws on a wide range of philosophies, which are reframing our understanding of past cultures. We would do well to do so in maritime archaeology. Past interpretations can say more about the archaeologist than the artifact, such as a bronze object that was interpreted for many years as a crown, but was in reality the remains of a bucket (Landsberg 2018, 1). Edgeworth writes of well-known sites like Stonehenge which still provide new discoveries, such as 28 carvings recently found on Stone 53, positing “how much do we really know about the objects we think we are familiar with? What further, as yet unknown, aspects will one day reveal themselves, or recede, or remain forever untapped and buried in the object’s withdrawn inner core?” (Edgeworth, 2016, p. 97). Feminist theory has re-interpreted archaeology that was the product of the male gaze, such as Palaeolithic female figurines that male archaeologists had interpreted as fertility votives while feminist archaeologists demonstrated the figurines depict elder women past child-bearing age (McCoid and McDermott, 1996; McDermott, 1996). Decolonization action in archaeology is countering dominant colonial narratives or dogma that lie unconscious or consciously within Global North archaeology to advocate for indigenous perspectives and non-Western systems of knowledge (McGhee, 1997; Bruchac, 2014; Sinamai, 2020). In culture there are endless ways of being, and as a result there are endless ways of interpreting. When theory becomes codified it enters a stasis that allows it to go unchallenged, perhaps for decades, which reflects the outmoded *clientela* of academic thought more than the reality and diversity of culture. What a richer field it would be if everyone read a site for themselves and created space for these ideas. It is for this reason this volume is a mix of original contributions and chapters that respond to them; the flow of ideas are remixed and interpreted by everyone, engaging with different educational backgrounds, cultural perspectives, and life experiences.

The past is composed of foreign cultures that speak through material culture. It is a *strange stranger*, to use the philosophical device of Morton, which describes the unexpected and unknowable, a “stranger whose strangeness is forever strange” (2013). The past is seemingly familiar but simultaneously distant and unknowable. “Our understanding of the past is imperfect”, writes Christopher Begley, but archaeology is a process in which archaeologists add knowledge that “build[s] a stairway. We add steps to allow the next in line to climb higher, and see further. The particular step we build is not the accomplishment; the stairway is” (2021, p. 13).² New theoretical perspectives shore-up older steps and contribute to seeing further by thinking differently about the past, and ourselves.

Searching for a Conclusion But Finding More Questions

Calvino famously ends *If On a Winter’s Night A Traveler* with the protagonist – you – wandering the great library with a scribbled list of book titles in hand. Don’t you deserve at

² Calvino ends *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler* with a library reader dismissing the traveler in the story (i.e. the protagonist: you) as a literary mechanism irrelevant to the broader story. Perhaps we should all de-center ourselves from scholarship, heeding both Calvino and Begley.

least one conclusion? Haven't you earned closure? You hand the paper to another reader for help, who reads the text aloud, misunderstanding that it is a list.

*If on a winter's night a traveler,
Outside the town of Malbork,
Leaning from the steep slope
Without fear of wind or vertigo,
Looks down in the gathering shadow
In a network of lines that enlase,
In a network of lines that intersect,
On the carpet of leaves illuminated by the moon
Around an empty grave
What story down there awaits its end?
He asks, anxious to hear the story* (Calvino, 1981, p. 258).

In searching for conclusions, your own story inadvertently emerged. Or perhaps Calvino meant that the stories' conclusions do not matter, or there is but one universal story. Maybe the search is as important as the narrative, or the sum is more than the parts. Take your pick, they are all true, or none. What matters is that there are many ways of being, and learning.

For maritime archaeology, there are similarly many starts. The field is small and new; we are living in the second generation since its inception. The foundational intellectual insights and paradigms have been valuable for its development. However, the intellectual richness of the archaeological record offers today's maritime archaeologists the opportunity to cast off into the seas of contemporary philosophy, Wet Ontologies, and the Anthropocene. It is time to unshackle from existing paradigms, question the dogma accreted over the last sixty years, and try new intellectual toolkits. It is time to confront the field's conscious and unconscious colonial mindsets, gender bias, technological fetishism, and anthropocentrism. It is a journey without a clear endpoint, promising only an intellectual adventure and unintended discoveries along the way. Great steps forward are not found in conclusions, but on the trails blazed by intellectual curiosity.

This volume has engaged with diverse ideas and fields, publishing some of the first examples of maritime archaeology thinking through OOO, Blue Humanities, and non-human agency, while raising important questions about theory in the field. The most important paradigms, such as nautical archaeology, site formation processes, and maritime cultural landscapes, came through scholars including George Bass, Keith Muckelroy, and Christer Westerdahl challenging orthodoxy and, in the case of Bass and his contemporary colleagues, creating an entirely new field of study to accommodate their ideas. This volume pays them the greatest respect; it attempts to grow the field beyond their ideas and into fresh intellectual pastures.³ Like all new approaches, and Calvino's narrative, these offer – for the moment – only beginnings while the conclusions lie in the distant future. However, shining light through the cracks of an aged foundation is often the first step toward building a more robust one. This book is meant to be a doorway which opens to new, untrod paths – only beginnings, no endings in sight.

³ The pioneering maritime archaeologist Peter Throckmorton, while reflecting on the state of the field at the end of the 1960s, wrote, "I believe it is more unkind to a dead or retired colleague's memory to gloss over his failings than to discuss his place in history of what the Italians call "our mystery." Everyone who gets involved in marine archaeology today soon discovers that he is struggling to learn more things than he ever imagined existed. None of us knows enough" (Throckmorton, 1969, p. xii).

And with this we conclude both chapter and book:

*If on a winter's night a ship wrecks
Broken and displaced objects
Drift, flow, and cast upon shore
With a sea change rich and strange.*

*The efforts of maritime archaeology
Pull back the curtain
Peering into the depths
Peering into time
Toward an entanglement of human and non-human.*

*Ask the archaeologist
"What story down there awaits its end?"
Searching for a conclusion but finding more questions.*

References

- Alaimo, S. (2016) *Exposed: Environmental politics & pleasures in posthuman times*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Armstrong, R. (2019) *Liquid Life: On Non-Linear Materiality*. Santa Barbara: Punctum.
- Begley, C. (2017) 'The Lost City That's Not Lost, Not a City, and Doesn't Need to Be Discovered', *Sapiens*, April 13.
- Begley, C. (2021) *The Next Apocalypse: The Art and Science of Survival*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bogost, I. (2012) *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bruchac, M. (2014) 'Decolonization in Archaeological Theory', in Smith, C. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*. New York: Springer, pp. 2069–2077.
- Bryant, L. R. (2011) *Democracy of Objects*. London: Open Humanities Press.
- Calvino, I. (1981) *If on a winter's night a traveler*. Translated by W. Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt.
- Campbell, P. B. (2020) 'The sea as a hyperobject: Moving beyond maritime cultural landscapes', *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology Heritage Studies*, 8(3), pp. 1–22.
- Coles, J. M. (1988) 'A Wetland Perspective', in Purdy, B. A. (ed.) *Wet Site Archaeology*. New Jersey: Telford Press, pp. 1–14.
- Edgeworth, M. (2011) *Fluid Pasts: Archaeology of Flow*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.
- Edgeworth, M. (2016) 'Grounded objects. Archaeology and speculative realism', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 23(1), pp. 93–113.
- Flatman, J. (2003) 'Cultural biographies, cognitive landscapes and dirty old bits of boat: "theory" in maritime archaeology', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 32(2), pp. 143–157.
- Flatman, J. (2007a) 'The Origins and Ethics of Maritime Archaeology – Part I', *Public Archaeology*, 6(2), pp. 77–97.
- Flatman, J. (2007b) 'The Origins and Ethics of Maritime Archaeology – Part II', *Public Archaeology*, 6(3), pp. 141–154.
- Flatman, J. (2008) 'Maritime Archaeology' Are We Teaching? A Comment on 'Context' and 'Setting', *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 3, pp. 121–122.
- Gibbins, D. et al. (2008) 'Shipwrecks and maritime', 32(3), pp. 279–291.
- Gould, R. A. (1983) *Shipwreck Anthropology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Harman, G. (2016) *Immaterialism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hasslöf, O. (1963) 'Wrecks, Archives, and Living Tradition: Topical Problems in Marine-Historical Research', *Mariner's Mirror*, 49(3), pp. 163–177.
- Lambrou-Phillipson, C. (1996) 'The Reliability of Ships' Iconography: The Thera Miniature Marine Fresco as an Example', in Tzalas, H. (ed.) *Tropis IV*. Athens: Hellenic Institute for the Preservation of Nautical Tradition, pp. 351–365.
- Law, J. (2012) 'Technology and Heterogeneous Engineering: The Case of Portuguese Expansion', in Bijker, W. E., Hughes, T. P., and Pinch, T. (eds) *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, pp. 105–128.
- McCoid, C. H. and McDermott, L. D. (1996) 'Toward Decolonizing Gender: Female Vision in the Upper Paleolithic', *American Anthropologist*, 98(2), pp. 319–326.
- McDermott, L. (1996) 'Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines', *Current Anthropology*, 37(2), pp. 227–275.

- McGhee, F. L. (1997) 'Toward a Postcolonial Nautical Archaeology', *Assemblage*, 3(1).
- Mentz, S. (2009) 'Toward a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture, and Early Modern English Literature', *Literature Compass*, 6(5), pp. 997–1013.
- Mentz, S. (2020) *Ocean*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Morton, T. (2013) *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Muckelroy, K. (1978) *Maritime Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murray, W. M. (2001) 'A Trireme Named Isis: The Sgraffito from Nymphaion', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 30(2), pp. 250–256.
- Nativ, A. and Lucas, G. (2020) 'Archaeology without antiquity', *Antiquity*. 2020/07/02. Cambridge University Press, 94(376), pp. 852–863.
- Normark, J. (2014) 'Water as a Hyperfact', *Current Swedish Archaeology*, 22(1), pp. 183–206.
- Olsen, B. (2010) *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*. Lanham: AltaMira.
- Olsen, B. et al. (2012) *Archaeology: The Discipline of Thing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Olsen, B. and Witmore, C. (2015) 'Archaeology, symmetry and the ontology of things. A response to critics', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 22(2), pp. 187–197.
- Peters, K. (2010) 'Future Promises for Contemporary Social and Cultural Geographies of the Sea', *Geography Compass*, 4(9), pp. 1260–1272.
- Pétursdóttir, Þ. and Olsen, B. (2018) 'Theory adrift: The matter of archaeological theorizing', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 18(1), pp. 97–117.
- Rich, S. A. (2021) *Shipwreck Hauntography: Underwater Ruins and the Uncanny*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Salmon, M. H. (1976) "'Deductive" versus "Inductive" Archaeology', *American Antiquity*. 2017/01/20. Cambridge University Press, 41(3), pp. 376–381.
- Shanks, M. (1995) 'Archaeological realities: embodiment and a critical romanticism', in Tusa, M. and Kirkinen, T. (eds) *The Archaeologist and Their Reality: Proceedings of the 4th Nordic TAG Conference*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki, pp. 1–30.
- Shanks, M. (2012) *The Archaeological Imagination*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Sinamai, A. (2020) "'We are Still Here": African Heritage, Diversity and the Global Heritage Knowledge Templates', *Archaeologies*, 16(1), pp. 57–71.
- Smith, D. M. (2010) *The ecology of shipwrecks: An assessment of biodiversity*. University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- Spencer-Wood, S. (1990) 'Stretching the Envelope in Theory and Method', in Carrell, T. L. (ed.) *Underwater Archaeology Proceedings from the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference*. Rockville: Society for Historical Archaeology, pp. 21–44.
- Steinberg, P. E. (2013) 'Of other seas: metaphors and materialities in maritime regions', *Atlantic Studies*, 10(2), pp. 156–169.
- Steinberg, P. and Peters, K. (2015) 'Wet ontologies, fluid spaces: Giving depth to volume through oceanic thinking', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 33(2), pp. 247–264.
- Throckmorton, P. (1969) *Shipwrecks and Archaeology: The Unharvested Sea*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Tusa, S. et al. (2021) 'The Battle of the Aegates Islands, 241 BC: mapping a naval encounter, 2005–2019', in Prescott, C. et al. (eds) *Trinacria, 'An Island Outside Time': International Archaeology in Sicily*. Oxford: Oxbow, pp. 167–179.
- Tzalas, H. (1990) 'Kyrenia II in the Fresco of Pedoula Church, Cyprus: A Comparison with Ancient Ship Iconography', in Tzalas, H. (ed.) *Tropis II*. Athens: Hellenic Institute for the

Preservation of Nautical Tradition, pp. 323–328.

Ward, I. A. K., Larcombe, P. and Veth, P. (1999) 'A New Process-Based Model for Wreck Site Formation', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 26(5), pp. 561–570.

Waters, C. N. *et al.* (2016) 'The Anthropocene is functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene', *Science*, 351(6269), p. 10.1126.

Westerdahl, C. (1992) 'The maritime cultural landscape', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 21(1), pp. 5–14.

Witmore, C. (2007) 'Symmetrical Archaeology: Excerpts of a Manifesto', *World Archaeology*, 39(4), pp. 546–562.

Witmore, C. (2019) 'Hypanthropos: On Apprehending and Approaching That Which is in Excess of Monstrosity, with Special Consideration given to the Photography of Edward Burtynsky', *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*, 6(1), pp. 136–153.



DSPACE

<https://dspace.org/>

Conclusion: If on a winter's night a ship wrecks

Campbell, Peter B.

2023-03-14

Sidestone Press Academics

<https://www.sidestone.com/books/contemporary-philosophy-for-maritime-archaeology>

Campbell PB. (2023) Conclusion: If on a winter's night a ship wrecks. In: Contemporary philosophy for maritime archaeology: flat ontologies, oceanic thought, and the Anthropocene, Sidestone Press Academics, March 2023