

MARITIME STUDIES (MAST): AN EDITORIAL REINTRODUCTION

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Between 1988 and 1993 *MAST* (*Maritime Anthropological Studies*) was published twice yearly by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. It was an international and reputed anthropology journal on fishing and maritime communities that aimed to disseminate knowledge about contemporary and historical societies and cultures of people exploiting maritime environments. More than seventy articles appeared in its pages, covering a wide range of topics, theoretical perspectives and locations. Although primarily an anthropological journal with an emphasis on fishing and fishing communities, *MAST* also published articles by authors from other disciplines, as well as on topics other than fishing.

Due to a number of circumstances, its editors (Rob van Ginkel and Jojada Verrips) decided to stop publishing the journal after its sixth volume. They felt it increasingly difficult to attend to all the editorial chores, at the same time acting as publishers, in between academic tasks such as teaching, doing research and publishing. They had to solicit papers time and again and keep subscriptions in good repair. Without the backup of an institute, the work became too burdensome, even though the editors took much pride in 'their' product and were loath to discontinue publication.

Many experts in the field appreciated *MAST*. This became all the more obvious once it ceased being published. For example, in an article in *American Anthropologist* James M. Acheson and James A. Wilson wrote: 'The journal *Maritime Anthropological Studies* (*MAST*) is now unfortunately defunct. In its short life, a large amount of good maritime anthropology appeared in its pages' (1996: 589). The journal *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* even decided to prepare a detailed index to *MAST* 'in recognition of the ongoing value of the collection, and to improve accessibility to its contents. Although publication of *MAST* was discontinued, the issues continue to provide an excellent representation of articles illustrating the theoretical and research directions of maritime anthropology' (Hovde 1996:17). The author, Karen Hovde, deemed *MAST* 'a journal of consistently high quality, dedicating the majority of its space to generally excellent articles by an international array of authors' (ibid.:18). She goes on to state that '[t]he research value of these subjects is not likely to become outdated. In fact, some of the topics investigated, such as political activism and legislation for indigenous fishing rights, management of community property resources, and changing women's roles in traditional societies, are at the forefront of research (ibid.).

Of course, we are in no position to disagree with Hovde's laudation. The editors could only add that *MAST* dealt with some other subjects that deserve mention, for example contributions on chaos theory and on the impact of policy on fishing populations. In addition, they made an effort to let *MAST* also be an outlet for scholars from the South and for controversial articles, for example on

whaling, and a platform for debate. The journal was also nicely illustrated with photographs.

The editors have always regretted MAST's demise and felt it left a void in the field of maritime social science. When asked what happened to the journal, they would say it was 'dormant', implying that one day it would hopefully be awakened. Though they have attempted to interest others to take over editorial responsibility, they were unsuccessful. They are well aware that it is no small deal to edit and publish a journal without a firm institutional basis. As soon as MARE, the Center for Maritime Research in Amsterdam, received financial backing from the University of Amsterdam, they felt that the time had come to resurrect MAST in a slightly different format. The name Maritime Studies (maintaining the acronym MAST as an indication for continuity) is intended to signal that the journal is a platform not only for anthropologists, but also for scholars from a broad range of disciplines who are engaged in research on maritime peoples, cultures and adaptations, from an academic or applied point of view. With this first issue of MAST resurrected, we hope to be able to give readers an idea of our intentions as regards the broadening of scope.

The issue contains articles by scholars with a background in anthropology, ethnology, sociology, history, development studies, and the EU administration. It covers such diverse topics as piracy, coastal tourism, canoe decorations, and methodological reflections on the uses of comparisons as regards the global fisheries crisis. The authors take us to various corners of the world: from Southeast Asia to Slovenia, from Ghana to Canada and India. The opening article is the thought-provoking keynote address delivered by John Kurien at the MARE conference People and the Sea (Amsterdam, 30-31 August and 1 September 2001). It is followed by two commentaries.

While the editors hope that the decision to broaden the journal's scope will attract a wider readership, they intend to maintain the high quality standards that characterized its predecessor. Of course, we need your support to do so. So please subscribe and submit your work to MAST. The editors invite articles, commentaries, research reports of work in progress, review essays, and book reviews on any aspect relevant to social scientific approaches to maritime studies. They would especially welcome cross- and interdisciplinary contributions, theoretical and methodological reflections and sound empirical writings concerning such themes as common pool resource use, traditional ecological knowledge, legal pluralism, multiple-use conflicts, integrated coastal zone management, maritime policy analysis, socio-cultural representations of maritime life, and maritime social worlds, lifestyles and occupational cultures. Undoubtedly, fishing and fishing cultures will be dealt with extensively in the journal, but the editors would like to emphasize that other aspects of the ways in which people exploit and relate to coastal and ocean environments and resources also deserve considerable attention. Therefore, they would in particular like to encourage social scientists whose research concerns, for example, shipping and shipboard life, mineral exploration and exploration, land reclamation, oilrig crews, maritime and coastal tourism, ocean and coastal environmentalism and so on to contribute papers.

You will find more information on how to subscribe and guidelines for

contributors on our website: www.siswo.uva.nl/mare. Two peer referees will review all articles submitted. Get involved and help keep MAST upright!

REFERENCES

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