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To the memory of my Father,
and of Dr D. L. Clarke

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KEITH MUCKELROY

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CONTENTS

Preface vii *Acknowledgments* x

Part One

The scope of maritime archaeology

- 1. Introducing maritime archaeology 3
- 1.1 General introduction and definitions 3
- 1.2 The development of maritime archaeology 10
- 1.3 Summary and prospectus 22
- 2 The constraints of work under water 24
- 2.1 The organisation of work under water 24
- 2.2 Some problems in work under water 36
- 2.3 The advantages of excavation under water 49
- 3 The contribution of current work under water 59
- 3.1 Mediterranean shipbuilding in classical times 59
- 3.2 Mediterranean trade in pre-classical and classical times 69
- 3.3 Early Mediterranean harbours 75
- 3.4 Ships of the early medieval period in north-west Europe 84
- 3.5 Post-medieval ship construction 91
- 3.6 The Spanish Armada, 1588 98
- 3.7 The expansion of Europe, sixteenth to nineteenth centuries 105
- 3.8 The annexation of the New World 111
- 3.9 Navigational instruments 118
- 4 The unrealised potential of maritime archaeology 127
- 4.1 Prehistoric craft 127
- 4.2 Medieval shipbuilding in north-west Europe 131
- 4.3 Shipbuilding in Asia 135
- 4.4 Inland craft 138
- 4.5 Pre-1500 trade outside the Mediterranean 141
- 4.6 Anchors and anchorages 146
- 4.7 Deep-water archaeology 149

Part Two

Towards a theory of maritime archaeology 155

- 5 The archaeology of shipwrecks 157
- 5.1 Introduction 157
- 5.2 Wreck-sites and their environments 160

Contents

5.3	Extracting filters	165
5.4	Scrambling devices A	
	The process of wrecking	169
5.5	Scrambling devices B	
	Sea-bed movement	175
5.6	The analysis of sea-bed distributions A	
	Continuous sites	182
5.7	The analysis of sea-bed distributions B	
	Discontinuous sites	196
6	The archaeology of ships	215
6.1	Introduction	215
6.2	The ship as a machine	216
6.3	The ship as an element in a military or economic system	219
6.4	The ship as a closed community	6.4
7	The archaeology of maritime cultures	226
7.1	Introduction	226
7.2	Nautical technology	230
7.3	Naval warfare and maritime trade	237
7.4	Shipboard societies	240
7.5	Incidental contributions to archaeology in general	242
7.6	Conclusions	246
8	Theory and practice	248
	Bibliography	255
	Index	268

PREFACE

The emergence of archaeology from the antiquarian amusements of leisured Victorian gentlemen and clergymen into the highly complex and scientific discipline that it is today was accompanied, in the first half of this century, by a serious consideration of the value and purpose of this new study. This movement was associated with the work of Professors Gordon Childe, Grahame Clark, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, and other members of the first generation of professional archaeologists. Together, they established a theoretical basis from which the discipline has subsequently evolved. Maritime archaeology, however, has been a late developer within even this short lifespan, its appearance having followed from the wartime invention of the aqualung. Furthermore, it has arisen from a background of lucrative salvage operations and the tentative endeavours of amateur divers, so that it is only just beginning to achieve some kind of internal cohesion. Nevertheless, the volume of material now coming from underwater investigations, and the recent appearance of a few full-time professional maritime archaeologists, suggest that the moment has come to consider similarly the value and purpose of this sub-discipline, as an aid to the planning of future research and as a statement of the case for according it wider academic recognition and greater support from public funds. With a clear definition of its scope and potential, it will have come of age and can take its place within the modern discipline of archaeology. This book seeks to fulfill these objectives.

It may be as well to state from the start what this book is not about. It is not a manual on how to practise archaeology under water; guidance in this can be found in several widely available works, although full competence can only be achieved through thorough practical training and widespread on-site experience. Neither is it an attempt to summarise the results of every underwater investigation ever undertaken, or even of every important investigation; where recent work is discussed, as in chapter 3, it is solely in an attempt to highlight some significant contributions made to certain aspects of maritime studies. Finally, it is most definitely not a wreck-hunters' guide to untapped wealth on the sea-floor; it is the principal thesis of this book that interference with the submerged remains of past ships and seafaring is irresponsible and

destructive unless it is solely and consciously undertaken with a view to solving specific problems in maritime research. This book is a statement (of necessity a tentative one at this stage) of which problems constitute the proper concern of maritime archaeology, the extent to which recent work has tackled such matters, and the directions in which future studies might profitably proceed. Naturally it reflects in detail the attitudes and ideas of one individual maritime archaeologist studying in Britain in the second half of the 1970s, but it is intended that the framework proposed should be applicable to all responsible and scientific archaeological investigations under water, wherever and whenever they may be undertaken.

Inevitably, an essay in synthesis such as this owes a great deal to the work of others. Above all, I must personally thank all those listed in the acknowledgements for so freely making available their illustrations and other material for use in this book. My own involvement in the field would never have come about without the exceptional tradition of solid scientific work under water maintained by the Cambridge University Underwater Exploration Group, whose members, past and present, have supported and assisted me in many ways; particular mention should be made of Dr Nic Flemming, one of the founders of the Group, and Mr Jeff Dubery, who was the Diving Officer brave enough to try to teach me to dive. On various expeditions, I have particularly benefitted from the guidance and advice of Mrs Margaret Rule (Archaeological Director of the *Mary Rose* Project), Mr Tom Henderson (Curator of the Shetland County Museum), and Mr Bob Yorke (leader of the Maghreb and Carthage underwater surveys). In this context, I must especially acknowledge the debt I owe to Mr Richard Price, who has organised, equipped, and led the excavations in the Out Skerries since 1973, who was kind enough to invite me to participate in them initially, and who has since then endured my theorising and archaeological rigour with patience and good humour, tempered by much critical common-sense. As with so many other workers in this field, I am particularly grateful to Dr Joan du Plat Taylor, the editor of the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, for all she has done to lay the foundations of this sub-discipline in Britain and elsewhere, and for her never-failing encouragement and support for me personally.

The structure and scope of this book was conceived on a rocky islet in the Sound of Mull called Eilean Rudha an Ridire, in the summer of 1974, shortly after I had taken up the post of Research Assistant at the newly formed St Andrews Institute of Maritime Archaeology. It was researched and written over the remaining three years of my stay there, so I owe an immeasurable debt to the Council and sponsors of that Institute, and especially its principal benefactor, the Leverhulme Trust. My colleagues on the staff there, Mr and Mrs Colin Martin (Director

and Research Assistant), Mr Tony Long (Technician), and Mr Andy Fielding (Research Student), provided the intellectual framework within which these ideas have grown, and have read through and discussed much of the resulting text with me; I hope they can find in the final product some recompense for their kindness and consideration. In addition, earlier drafts of the script have been considered by Mrs Margaret Rule, Professor George Bass, and Dr Ian Hodder, whose helpful comments and criticisms have been greatly appreciated. Similarly, the book in its present form owes an enormous amount to the judgement and skills of the staff of the Cambridge University Press, whose patience in the face of the unusual demands of a specialist in this unfamiliar field was well-nigh unbelievable. Finally, the overall approach here bears the marks of one who graduated from that hot-house of academic archaeology, the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge University under Professors Grahame Clark and, more recently, Glyn Daniel; I must express my gratitude to all the lecturers and supervisors there who were prepared to devote time and energy to my education. despite my addiction to a specialism of dubious respectability and uncertain validity. Above all, I must mention the late Dr David Clarke, to whose memory this book is conjointly dedicated, who inspired me and my fellow students with a breadth of understanding and an intellectual vitality which we shall never forget; it is sad that this work, which he had the courage to commission, must now be offered as an inadequate tribute to that inspiration.

December 1977

K.M.

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