

**The Publishing Process for Beginners: Start to Finish**  
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“Publishing in Classical Archaeology: Tips for the Timid”

Tracey Cullen  
Editor, *Hesperia*

I'm pleased to be here and open this session on the publishing process in archaeology. My colleagues at *AJA* and I have decided to split the discussion of journal practices: I'll cover issues that pertain to the initial submission of an article and Madeleine [Donachie] and Vanessa [Lord] will focus on details of the process after an article has been accepted.

I'll first recommend a few things to think about *before* you submit your article, and then offer some tips to help with smooth sailing through the process. To put these tips into context, I'll also briefly outline the publication process at *Hesperia*.

### **Early Considerations**

1. *Choosing a journal.* Before sitting down to write your paper, think about the audience you wish to reach, the scholarly level of the paper, and the character of the possible journals to choose from. Before you choose a journal to submit your work to, you should browse through a number of recent issues and assess the scope and quality of the journal, and its suitability for your particular topic.

Take a look at a journal's guidelines or recent editorials to see if there are preferred areas of coverage, a page limit, possibility of color illustrations or online supplements, the ethics policy on publishing antiquities, and an estimate of how long the publishing process takes. See if the journal appears on an online platform such as JSTOR or Project MUSE, so that your article, if accepted, will reach the widest audience possible.

If you have any questions, write to the editor—and describe your idea for a submission. This is a particularly good idea if you are considering publishing in a journal connected with one of the archaeological schools in Athens—find out what their policy is in regard to submissions. After a dozen years at *Hesperia* publishing a wide range of articles, I still run into people who assume we publish *only* American School work, and that our authors and even manuscript reviewers are all American! This is very far from the truth. So, thoroughly scope out any journal you are thinking of submitting a paper to—and see if you are a good match.

2. *Length.* Decide if you are writing a book or an article. This may sound absurd, but as one who has been caught in the trap of thinking I was writing a very long article—only to have it turned away for being too long, and so now—after much work—having turned it into a book—I can't overstate the importance of taking this step at the beginning!

## Writing the Paper

1. *Outline.* Outline the paper before writing it. Use headings to help organize your thoughts and act as signposts for the reader. Short punchy headings are much more effective than long detailed ones.
2. *General approach.* Once you've chosen a journal, it's a good idea to conform to the general approach of that journal as you sit down to write. I don't mean that the paper needs to be in the journal's stylistic format—at least at *Hesperia* we don't require this for initial submissions. But if a journal has a preferred way of handling, for example, subheads, footnotes, catalogued items, or illustrations, it's wise to absorb that while putting together your own paper. Putting the article into a journal's particular style, while not required, is also not a bad idea since you may psyche the editor and reviewers into thinking it *looks* like an article that belongs in that journal. Obviously, the content of the article will have to hold its own, but a familiar stylistic veneer is not a bad thing!
3. *Title and abstract.* Choose a lively title. Interesting titles pose a question or a problem that should make the reader curious to read on. A purely descriptive title such as “A Geometric Grave in the Agora” is less intriguing than, say, “A Social Outcast in Early Iron Age Athens.” Reports from JSTOR on the relative number of “hits” *Hesperia* articles receive confirm the importance of a good title. On the other hand, your title should convey what the article is about. Breaking the title into two phrases, with a hook and a descriptive phrase, is often effective. Examples include “Not Twins at All: The Agora Oinochoe Reinterpreted” and “Byzantium and the Avant-Garde: Excavations at Corinth, 1920s–1930s.” A well-written abstract, which summarizes not only the goals of an article but also its conclusions, is also appreciated by reviewers and readers alike.
4. *Tone.* Consider your audience as you find the proper tone for your article. Avoid jargon. You want your article to be broadly accessible, but writing for a professional journal in our field generally means there is no need to explain who Thucydides is or where Knossos is.
5. *Introduction.* Explain your topic and its importance at the outset of the article. Make it clear how your work fits into the wider discipline, how it makes a contribution, and why the reader should continue reading. I cannot overstress this point. The introduction is *critical* to your article—and often the weakest part. Reviewers are grumpy if the premise and scope of the article are not made clear from the beginning or if there is assumed knowledge that some readers will not have. Do not write for an elite few—think of someone reading your article who is generally educated in the classical field but knows little about your specific topic. It is not easy to write a good introduction—you must explain where the article is going before it goes there, and provide a hook for the reader. My recommendation is to write a draft introduction, then return to it after writing the rest of the article, and *rewrite* it.

6. *Text.* In the body of your article, build your case step by step in a logical fashion. Be careful of a free-flow style where topics morph into one another—it's much easier to follow an outline with clear headings and transitions. Strip down your prose to the essentials—don't overwrite! You'll lose the reviewer's patience. I highly recommend multiple drafts. Be careful how you cite your sources. Undocumented claims or sweeping generalities are easy targets for reviewers. Also, don't cite whole books for very specific points; give detailed citations.

7. *Tables and Illustrations.* Tables are invaluable for presenting complex datasets, although it's preferable that they not go on for several pages. If you do use them, be careful not to repeat all of the information in the text as well! This tends to irritate reviewers.

Consider creating new artwork specific to your article rather than trying to repurpose artwork used in another context (e.g., using a map from your dissertation that has many sites on it not mentioned in your article). Also think about the desired reproduction size of your artwork—and make sure your labels will be legible. A common error among beginners is to submit maps with tiny labels and with spellings different from those in the text. Consider the layout of the article and whether the illustrations or tables you cite will fit near their first mention. It's not a good idea, for example, to refer to Figures 1–10 in a 2-page introduction.

Madeleine and Vanessa will talk more about preparing artwork, but here is another tip for the submission stage. If you are scanning a photograph from a book (and assuming you have the permission to do so), you will need to set the scanner to *descreen* the artwork. Otherwise your image will be obscured by what is called a moiré pattern.

Usually there will be a setting on the scanner that says Descreen and then asks for a number stated in lines per inch (lpi). Normally a descreen value is set to 133 lpi or 150 lpi (try both). The reason you need to do this at the scanning stage (and not in Photoshop later on) is because a photograph in a book is printed using a dot pattern. Scanning introduces yet another dot pattern, resulting in a moiré pattern. Only the scanner can remove this pattern successfully.

8. *Conclusion.* It's a good idea to summarize your argument and again articulate the value of the work presented. Make it clear what is original or new in your approach. *Think big.* Even if you have a small topic, situate it in the wider discipline to show how it makes a contribution and offers something of interest to readers.

### **Before You Submit...**

1. *Reread and rewrite.* Try to read your paper as if you've never seen it before—make sure everything is explained adequately and that the illustrations really do show what you say they do. Check that your argument holds water and that all of your bibliographic

references appear in the footnotes, and everything in the notes appears in the bibliography. A sloppy presentation usually reflects sloppy thinking.

2. *Review.* Anticipate the review process of the journal by holding your own review first. Think of who would be a critical but fair and good reviewer for your work—and ask them if they have time to read your paper and make suggestions for improvement. Papers that have been vetted *before* submission always do better than those read only by the author and his or her mother.

### **Mechanics of Submission**

So, you've chosen a journal and written your article. At *Hesperia*, we ask that you submit your manuscript as both a hard copy and a PDF, along with a short abstract, and a cover letter. The process that follows is quite simple.

1. Two outside reviewers are asked to read the paper and make recommendations within a month or so.
2. When the reviews are in, I send a decision letter to the author along with the reviews and my own recommendations—even if accepted, most papers require revision. Various forms—a checklist, art inventory form, and copyright transfer form—are also sent.
3. The author sends back the revised paper and the forms, along with the final artwork, permission letters, digital files, and a brief account of the revisions made.
4. We check the paper and the artwork and then place the manuscript in the production queue, eventually editing and typesetting the paper in consultation with the author. Articles requiring extensive editing are sent to the author as redline files (showing the edits and any further queries) for approval prior to typesetting.
5. Galley proofs are emailed to the author and to proofreaders as a PDF, with a one-week turnaround requested.
6. We collect and compile corrections, and generate final proofs.
7. We then go to press, first as an electronic posting, available to subscribers online. Mailed copies of the journal follow in a few weeks.
8. The author receives a PDF offprint and 25 printed offprints gratis (with an option to purchase more).

### **How to Help the Process Go Smoothly**

1. Read and follow the journal's guidelines for submission before submitting! I only mention such an obvious point because it is not always followed. Many journals post Author Resources on their website. The *Hesperia* page includes a number of useful PDFs (e.g., style guidelines, checklists, sample request letter for obtaining permission to reproduce an image) and information about a range of related subjects.
2. Include a professional cover letter with your submission, addressed to the editor by name (not "Dear Editor" or "Dear Sir") and with the name spelled correctly (if I had a nickel for every letter addressed to me as Tracy, I'd be a rich woman). Make sure all your contact information is there.
3. If the journal requires an anonymous copy for review, be sure to comply.
4. Assuming acceptance, follow the editor's advice and that of the reviewers closely. I make it clear in the decision letter how much is negotiable, how much not. A hasty read of this letter, without following through carefully, leads to much more time and trouble, and back and forth with the publications staff, than it is worth.
5. If accepted, the paper must be put into the format of the journal. Spend some time on this—it pays off not only in the good will of your editor but in a smoother and faster production process. It helps to look not only at the guidelines posted on the journal's website, but at recent copies of the journal itself. Again, while it may seem obvious, few papers come in ready to go in this respect. The worst offenders go back to the authors for another try, and the whole process is delayed.
6. In exchanges with your editor, take time to be clear! It is frustrating to have to go back to an author for clarification, especially when time is running short. Ditto in marking up proofs. If your handwriting isn't famous for its beauty, consider typing up your changes, either in an email or directly on the PDF, using the comment and mark-up tools in Acrobat.
7. Meet your deadlines!

### **Last Point**

The title for my presentation was first "Tips for the Terrified," which I modified to "Tips for the Timid." But the truth is, there's no need for you—as someone new to publishing—to feel either timid or terrified. Please remember that journals in our field are *eager* for new and exciting work and we are always looking for authors with something interesting to say. The process can actually be quite gratifying and even fun, and the reviewer comments—though sometimes painful to read—are generally very helpful in improving your work.

Good luck, good writing, and I look forward to your submissions!