

What kind of science are we contributing to produce? Editorial strategy of *Intersecciones en Antropología*

Editorial board

This brief introduction plays two roles. In the first place, we proudly present the first special volume of *Intersecciones en Antropología (IeA): Taphonomic Approaches to the Archaeological Record*, with Karen Borrazzo and Celeste Weitzel as guest editors. This volume is a pioneer contribution with a remarkable diversity of contents and solid in terms of the efforts invested, both in the original research and the thorough editorial work carried out by the editors. This first volume reflects the development of taphonomic approaches in Argentina since the early research in the 1980's. This evolution is evident in the remarkable range of contexts and materials studied from this perspective, the diversity of methodological tools applied, and specially, in the maturity shown by the increasing incorporation of taphonomy to answer broad archaeological questions. Argentina is a pioneer country in the application of taphonomic studies in Latin America. The early and varied development of zooarchaeology in Argentina enabled a prompt incorporation and expansion of the discipline. The recognition of the substantial contributions of taphonomy to archaeological interpretation led to the consolidation of lines of research focused in solving archaeological problems from a taphonomic perspective. This development stimulated the incorporation of the methods and theory of taphonomy to varied archaeological records. This volume, edited by two young researchers, reflects the maturity of the discipline in Argentina, with a proposal that goes beyond the application of taphonomy exclusively to faunal remains. The papers in this volume show the various materials (wood, shells, lithic, starch, etc.) that can be approached from a taphonomic perspective as part of what Borrero defines as 'unbounded Taphonomy'. We celebrate that the guest editors have chosen our journal for this innovative proposal.

In the second place, we take this opportunity to make some considerations on several points of the editorial work in our

discipline. Throughout this reflection we will bring up some aspects of the history of *IeA* that allow us to contextualize and understand the editorial challenges that we face in the present. Precisely, the process that led to the creation of this special volume is a central aspect of this reality. On this basis, we present some tenets of our editorial strategy. What underlies an editorial strategy? We suggest that a particular conception of science to which we aspire to contribute to. Or the sum of innumerable small decisions aimed at a long-term goal.

BRIEF HISTORY AND GOALS OF *INTERSECCIONES EN ANTROPOLOGÍA*

Figure 1 shows the number of papers that were published in the journal since volume 1 in 2000 until volume 15 in 2014 (book reviews –with a different reviewing process– and obituaries are not included). A glimpse of this information reveals the bursting evolution of the journal, particularly since 2006, when the number of published papers doubled in comparison to previous issues. This growth continues in the present. These numbers are just the 'tip of the iceberg' regarding the editorial work, as rejected papers are not included here.

The growth experienced by the scientific community linked with academic or research institutions, like CONICET or the State Universities, is clearly reflected

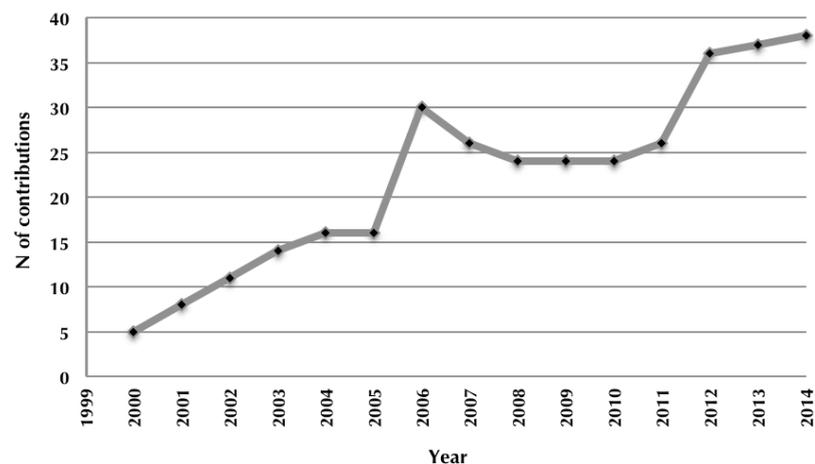


Figure 1. Number of papers published by *Intersecciones en Antropología* (years 2000-2014).

in these numbers. The academic community that submits papers to *IeA* has grown ostensibly from the beginning of this period to the present. The latest requirements of national research institutions for admission and promotion as a researcher, research fellow or to obtain funding have set several challenges for authors, reviewers and editors. This required, and still requires, changes in the journal's structure and editorial strategy.

Every scientific publication has a specific academic profile, built according to long-term goals set by the editorial board. These goals are achieved through countless small decisions. The situation could be summarized in two major dimensions: which *message* do we want to communicate and who are the *receivers* we are aiming for. The sum of these two factors builds an editorial strategy.

EDITORIAL STRATEGY OF *IeA*

Every healthy and efficient editorial system is based on unbiased and precise criteria. It is valuable -and usually correct- to discuss and criticize particular criteria about the revision of the quality of a paper or of a scientific journal. Having said this, we believe that these criteria are a key part of a scientific system that seeks to improve itself over time.

National scientific journals are not divorced from the national and international requirements of quality control. In our own institutions (Universities, CONICET, FONDECYT, among others), Social Sciences and Humanities areas have followed the global requirements ruled by other fields of knowledge, although considering the special features of each discipline. In this way, a growing demand for publishing in indexed journals has developed. Journals are ranked through an indexation system in the form of a specialized journals data-base. The essential variables for ranking a journal are scientific and editorial quality, visibility and access.

We agree with quality control and ranking measures for our publications as a part of an evaluation system. Since the beginnings we worked to get *IeA* indexed in the most prestigious national and international data-bases (Social Science Citation Index; Arts & Humanities Citation Index; SCOPUS; Anthropological Literature; Directorio y Catálogo LATINDEX; Núcleo Básico de Revistas Científicas Argentinas; Directory of Open Access Journals; Zoological Record; Redalyc, among others). Nevertheless, we are also aware that indexations have taken a role that contributes to the commercial goals that some of them entail, since they are part of the publishing companies themselves. We need to improve our knowledge on how the indexes are built and which is their actual role in order to give

indexations their appropriate place as a measure of the scientific quality of our publications. We believe that a dialog and debate among authors, editors and reviewers are needed to design paths that combine the diverse interests and aspects of Social Sciences and Humanities with the global indexation requirements.

About *IeA*

The academic profile of a journal in the long-term is not isolated from the economic and social conditions of its community. Two trends influence scientific publications in a global manner. In the first place, there is a notorious increment in the number of articles published in journals considered of high quality within each field. A quick analysis in *Science Direct* of the number of papers published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* (Elsevier) since the 1980's to the present depicts this trend (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03054403>). Recently, this led to the creation of a new publication format: *Journal of Archaeological Science. Reports* (<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-archaeological-science-reports/>) that incorporates part of the manuscripts usually sent to the original journal. The massive irruption of the *Public Library of Science* (PLOS) is another example.

Secondly, the economic resources of the public institutions funding many of these journals have not experienced a similar growth to that of the current scientific community and its published production. This creates an increasing asymmetry between the requirements of the scientific community and the available economic and human resources. This is the case of *IeA*. And it is also the case of many Archaeology journals in the world that had to recur to publishers with the capacity to cover the costs and offer broader worldwide diffusion. A recent example is the merge of *Archaeology in Oceania*, founded by Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown in 1930 in the University of Sydney, with Wiley in 2013 (<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/publications/oceania/about.html>). *Anthropological Forum*, created in 1963 in the University of Western Australia, represents a particular case since it was taken over by Taylor & Francis but it remains in hands of that University (<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/canf20/current#.U8vsS4B5M0c>).

Currently *IeA* receives and reviews more than 60 papers over a year. As a first measure, the editorial board had to enlarge its team, but this is only a partial solution. Since its beginning the scope of *IeA* included all the disciplines within Anthropological Science. However, with the growth of the Argentine scientific community, the advent of numerous new and specific fields, as well as the increasing number of contributions received from Chile, Uruguay, España,

México and the USA, among other countries, our editorial work is becoming an increasingly demanding task. In the following years the journal will have to face a redefinition of some aspects. This is imperative to guarantee its viability in the mid- and long-term.

leA pays special attention to the review process, a stage that we consider key in the editorial process. Our reviewer board is wide, diverse and multinational, and is updated on a permanent basis. Currently, *leA* considers three revisions per manuscript as a minimum number and the final editorial decision on each paper is based on a balance of all reviewers' comments. According to reviewers' opinions, the final decision on a manuscript can be based on five or more reviews. This process minimizes the relative incidence of biased or poorly sustained reviews, although it does not remove the subjective character of the peer-review process. We believe that a rigorous review process benefits the discipline globally. From the point of view of the long-term health of any academic system, our position is quite simple: **we only need to be concerned when dealing with undemanding editorial systems of scientific selection** (even though when, eventually, this leads to the refusal of manuscripts).

Within this framework, we believe that if special issues of periodic journals are appropriately reviewed they provide a powerful tool of information transmission on specific fields. There are very good examples of this in world archaeology (*Current Anthropology*, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, among many others). This is also the case of *Taphonomic Approaches to the Archaeological Record*. We are confident that this special issue will become a milestone in the discipline, also representing a one-way path in our editorial work through the incorporation of special issues as a tool in broadcasting archaeological knowledge.

Who is *leA* addressed to?

We can analyze this topic by answering the following question: Are there boundaries in knowledge production and diffusion? Our reply is: absolutely not. *leA* is funded by the Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires de la República Argentina. Therefore, it is natural that the Argentine scientific community is its main receiver, and it actually is indeed. However, since the beginning, *leA* has struggled to go beyond the local scale of knowledge diffusion, reaching the scale of southern South America opportunely, and currently attempting to transcend it. Publishing papers written in English language is a key factor in this endeavor. This is the means to widen the scope of our local production, as well as to incorporate works produced by researchers from other scientific communities worldwide. We consider a virtue to bring local ideas to multiple and different academic spheres.

In sum, we have taken the opportunity provided by this first special issue to comment on several central aspects of the editorial strategy of *Intersecciones en Antropología*. We firmly believe in a perfectible academic system by means of explicit and 'universal' quality criteria. And we look forward to show southern South American research in a global scale. This implies to transcend imposed artificial boundaries for knowledge diffusion.

The production of knowledge is local.

Its diffusion and evaluation have to be global.

