

Editorial

Dear Readers,

starting with the new issue of 2024, the journal *KASKAL. Rivista di storia, ambienti e culture del Vicino Oriente Antico* becomes a digital, open-access publication, with Paola Corò as Editor-in-Chief and Stefania Ermidoro as Assistant Editor. The Editorial and the Advisory Boards remain unchanged.

The new publisher, Edizioni Ca' Foscari – Venice University Press, will not charge authors for open access and will allow free downloading of the entire volume and of individual articles. This will certainly contribute to a wider dissemination of the published materials.

To bypass a number of legal and administrative constraints, we made the decision to label this digital series “KASKAL – Nuova serie” starting with number 1 (2024). As you will see, the format and graphics remain essentially the same, apart from the use of a new font and a number of elements that have become typical of any digital journal.

The new KASKAL website will provide practical information for submitting papers, as well as full indexes and PDF versions of previous volumes in the series.

The last issue of the printed series (KASKAL 20) was published about eight months ago. Much can still be improved in terms of dissemination and content, but the results achieved between 2004 and 2023 are undeniably positive: we know this from the reviews (and often compliments) of many colleagues, the circulation and quality of the articles, the requests for publication, and the inclusion of KASKAL in the list of journals of high scientific prestige in Italy.

Apart from the introduction of a Editor-in-Chief assisted by an Assistant Editor, the current organization and prerogatives of both the Editorial and Advisory Boards will be maintained in the digital series. We will have to adapt to a peer review system that is formally different from, but essentially similar to, the current one. Until now, papers submitted to KASKAL were thoroughly reviewed by all members of the Advisory Board, then discussed together and finally approved or rejected after revision by the authors. From now on, the standard double-blind review system will be applied, although the opinion of the Board will continue to play a decisive role. The reviews will be archived on the Publisher's peer review platform called ECFPeerflow.

The Editorial Board of KASKAL has so far tried to work in a traditional way, treating the Journal like a craftsman's workshop: it has always encouraged dialogue between authors and reviewers, and has always made useful and sometimes substantial changes to submitted articles. Nevertheless, the adoption of changes to the review system and procedures has proved indispensable, especially for ranking assessment.

So far, all members of KASKAL's Advisory Board have done their best to raise the quality standard of the published articles, devoting special attention and patience to the contributions of younger authors. We have all participated in passing the baton between generations of scholars, as was the programmatic intention of the Journal from the beginning. We hope, of course, that this commitment will remain alive in the future. One of our priorities is to increase the number of Board members who will have to contribute to this joint effort. Everyone will be entrusted with the task of being innovative in terms of the Journal's content, keeping in mind KASKAL's programmatic subtitle: Journal of History, Environments and Cultures of the Ancient Near East. The dialogue between history and archaeology, and the cultural horizons of these two disciplines, represent our field of inquiry; but the methodological challenges are also of crucial importance, and we must devote more space to them in the future. We are sure that all this will increase the motivation for our work.

Lucio Milano, Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi,
Stefano de Martino, Simonetta Ponchia

