

General Remarks

My term as Editor-in-Chief of the *AJBA* ends on December 31, 2025. I have been truly honored to serve in this position for the past six years. In this report, I would like to review the state of the journal and present what I see as challenges for the future. First though, I would like to thank all the members of the editorial board who have served over the past several years. These individuals are listed in Table 1. There are nearly 100 people who have given of their time and expertise to make sure that the *AJBA* presents the best possible science in a timely manner. They, and the many, many reviewers are the heart of a process that strives to be fair, honest and objective. They all deserve our thanks.

The biggest change during my tenure as EIC was the name change of the journal from the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* to the *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* in 2022. This change required considerable coordination with our publisher, establishing a new ISSN, redesigning our website and a close out of the journal with the old name. Even after the name was officially changed, some things were slow to catch-up. For upwards of two years, we have had two impact factor numbers, one for the *AJPA* and one for the *AJBA*. This should finally be concluding next year.

When I became EIC, I elected to have a board with a tiered structure. There are seven Associate Editors each working in a given topical area. Each AE works with a group of Editorial Board Members. The EBMs handle the review. In addition, I added seven early career editorial board members. These individuals serve for a two term and are mentored by an Associate Editor. We also have a Digital Fellow and two Media Review Editors. All openings on the board are advertised to the general membership of the AABA and we believe that this has expanded opportunities for individuals to put themselves forward to serve. The board has achieved gender parity and is more international. The internationalization of the board has been important for allowing us to take greater advantage of Wiley's transformational agreements.

During my tenure we have updated the Aims and Scope of the journal and reworked the guidelines for Letters to the Editor. This year we added instructions to the Materials and Methods guidelines requiring authors to discuss the ethical review of studies that include human subjects or human remains. We have worked with Wiley to harmonize article types and added Resources and Commentary to the types of articles we accept. All editors check manuscripts for a statement on the availability of data used in the manuscript. Authors must choose from a series of ways in which data sharing can be reported or discuss why it is not available. At present, we do not mandate data sharing, but the editorial board remains in continuing discussions on ways in which data sharing can become more common in our field. This year, we are participating in a poster session at

these meeting on data sharing in biological anthropology to discuss ways to further the practice.

In conjunction with our publisher, Wiley, we have instituted a way to transfer manuscripts to six other journals if we determine that the manuscript is not appropriate for the *AJBA*. We have coordinated decision terms among all members of the editorial board and synchronized response letters to authors. We adopted the use of a contribution roles taxonomy (CReDiT) for submissions and DORA metrics for articles. After extensive review, Wiley has determined that individuals locate material by author or article and not by issue. Beginning this year, issues will no longer be put together by the EIC, they will be put together as they come in. In addition, Wiley has introduced a new submission platform to replace Scholar One. This new platform, Research Exchange, will also be used by editorial board members to facilitate their work on finding reviewers and tracking review submissions. Wiley is also working to harmonize the way references are reported and will now use the Chicago style for all references.

To date, we have published four special issues. Each of these has a guest editor and is an in-depth look at a topic (Table 2). We have an additional six special issues that are near completion and I expect that these will be available before I finish my term as EIC. It has been a great experience working with these special issue editors and I am glad I could help facilitate their work.

We are always trying to encourage both submissions and volunteers for manuscript review. To encourage both of these things we have offered workshops at the AABA meetings. Sheela Athreya and I have offered a workshop on equitable peer review at three of our last meetings. Members of the editorial board and I have also offered a topical workshop on writing for the *AJBA*. I have also encouraged members of the editorial board to speak to their communities on writing for the *AJBA*.

Where do we go from here? We are all aware that the publishing landscape is changing. Open access is becoming the norm. Three years ago, I set a target for 60% open access articles by the end of my term as EIC. Thanks to an increased number of transformational agreements, we have come a long way to reaching that goal (Figure 1). As of May, 2024, Wiley had 102 transformational agreements. This is an enormous increase from the 9 reported in 2021. Just last month, Wiley announced a new set of agreements. While almost all of our OA articles are funded by transformational agreements, there remain institutions and countries where these agreements are not available. If these agreements are not in place, the cost of open access can be prohibitive. Since we are a hybrid journal, individuals can publish in our journal without cost. However, these articles will not be open access. Our aim is to make this equitable and fair for all. This may require action from both the publisher and the society. Discussion regarding this are taking place, but this will remain a topic for my successor.

Another issue will be the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) in multiple ways. We currently have some safe-guards to pick up on manuscript and image manipulation. But this is only one aspect of AI; there are other places where AI will be of use during the editorial process. AI currently scans articles for plagiarism. AI can also be used to scan both keywords and references to aid in finding reviewers. The pros and cons of AI use will be another issue for the future.

What about the *AJBA* specifically? Most journals saw an increase in article submission in the first years of the pandemic. This was followed by a drop and then a slow increase. The *AJBA* followed this pattern, however, our increase has been very slow. Last year we seem to have stabilized, but we need to be mindful of the fact that our numbers are not increasing significantly. In addition, it is harder to get reviewers and time in review is high. The editorial board has discussed this. We might consider structured reviews. Again, this is an issue that will be faced by an incoming EIC.

The discipline as a whole will have to come to some agreement on the level of data sharing expected. This year, we are running a symposium on biological anthropology and data sharing. Hopefully, this will generate a discipline-wide conversation that will result in a consistent level of expectations.

Metrics

In 2024 the journal published three volumes (183-185), each of which had four issues. These do not include the two supplements: the annual meeting issue and the *Yearbook of Biological Anthropology*. Since there is effectively no longer a page limit to issues, Wiley no longer routinely reports the number of pages published. We received 318 submissions and published 135 articles. The acceptance rate is 45%. The number of submissions and the number of articles published both decreased by approximately 9%. All Wiley journals saw an increase in submissions in 2020 followed by a post-Covid decline. Unlike many journals, the *AJBA* rebounded quickly but now is decreasing in number of submissions.

The published content of the journal included: research articles (74%), brief communication (8%), media review (4%), technical note (6%), synthesis (2%), commentary (2%), letters to the editor (0.7%), and other, including obituary, resources, reviews and editorials (3.3%). The time from submission to first decision is 82 days. A close analysis of these times indicates that the high number is driven primarily by special issues which have multiple constraints. We are continually trying to find ways to reduce this number by setting short term reminders for editorial board members, providing multiple databases for accessing reviewers, and harmonizing decision terms, but we are limited by reviewer turn-around times.

The number of articles we publish in the subfields of biological anthropology has remained relatively stable over the past five years (Figure 2). For 2024, we published the following: Bioarchaeology/Paleopathology/Forensics (34%), Skeletal Biology (28%), Paleoanthropology

(5%), Human Biology (4%), Genetics (6%), Primatology (10%) and Other, including special issues (13%).

The journal received submissions from 40 countries. Slightly less than half (49%) of submitted articles are from the United States. The countries with the greatest number of submissions are United Kingdom, Spain, Australia and Canada. It is one of our goals to encourage international submissions that adhere to the aims and scope of the journal. We are hoping that our editorial board members can interact with colleagues to encourage appropriate submissions.

This year we transferred or referred 78 articles. If a manuscript is clearly out of scope for the journal, I can immediately transfer it to a Wiley service that will try to place the manuscript appropriately. If the manuscript is potentially of interest to the readers of the journal, I will confer with an Associate Editor and together we will decide whether to have the manuscript reviewed or referred to a journal with a cascading agreement. We can refer manuscripts to the *Yearbook of Biological Anthropology*, the *American Journal of Human Biology*, the *American Journal of Primatology*, *The International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, the *Journal of Forensic Science* and the *Anatomical Record*. Half of the articles we refer or transfer are submitted elsewhere and about a quarter are published elsewhere.

The *AJBA* reports a number of additional metrics on journal performance. Wiley has endorsed the Declaration of Research Assessment or DORA agreement. The goal of DORA was to shift emphasis from a single journal-based metric, such as the Impact Factor, to multiple other means of assessing research. To accomplish this, journals will greatly reduce emphasis on IF as a promotional tool, make available a range of article-level metrics and encourage responsible authorship practices that highlight the specific contributions of each author. If you go to the *AJBA* homepage you will notice a series of additional metrics. We will still report IF. When the name of the journal changed from the *AJPA* to the *AJBA*, this change was filed and recorded with Clarivate, the organization that maintains the IF statistic. For the 2023 Impact Factors there are two values for the two titles as the citations and published articles are spread across both. *AJBA*'s Impact Factor, under its previous title *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, is 2.6 for 2023 and the *AJBA* IF is 1.7 for a combined total of 4.3. All citations and published articles will be unified under the new title in the 2024 Impact Factor which will be released in 2025.

One of the newer metrics is Cite Score which is administered by Scopus. The difference between the Impact Factor and Cite Score is that Cite Score is calculated on four years of citations instead of two. Almost all journals have a higher Cite Score than they do an Impact Factor. The *AJBA* Cite Score is 4.8 which reflects an increase from last year. Last year there were 815,096 downloads of articles. This is similar to previous years.

Acknowledgments

I am extremely grateful to the entire editorial board. This year several people left the board and we added several new board members and early career editorial board members. I especially want to thank Associate Editor Tracy Kivell, and editorial board members and early career editorial board members Jose Iriarte-Diaz, Mathew O'Neill, Gabrielle Russo, Charles Roseman, Thom McDade, James Watson, Victoria Dominguez and Kimberly Plomp for their service. Several early career board members have become regular board members. We welcome Clara Scarry, Aida Miro, Myra Laird, Tesla Monson and Eric Stattuck to their new positions. We have also added several new editorial board members, including Mark Hubbe, Helen Kurki, Scott Maddux, Emily Middleton, Zach Cofran, Samantha Yaussy, Kathleen Paul, and Christopher Lynn to the board. In addition, there are new early career board members – Andre Luiz Campelo dos Santos, Laura Buck, Neysa Grider-Potter, Forios Karakostis, Marianne Brasil, Chrisother Wolfe, Arwa Kharobi, Elizabeth Clausing and Taylor van Doren. We all look forward to working with all of you.

I am also grateful to our publishers at Wiley. Genevieve Richards was replaced by Avriel Licciardi as our publisher. She and Bethany Lawson are the interface with the editorial office and I am extremely grateful for their continuing efforts. I am also grateful to Tyrone Prescod, Karthiga Pughalendhi, Reeni Sunder and Tom Cannon for all their work for the office, production and special issues. I am incredibly grateful for the biological anthropology community that graciously and generously gives of their time to ensure that the review process and the journal succeed. Thank you for the opportunity to edit the journal and thank you for the opportunity to serve the association. I wish my successor much success and hope that they enjoy this as much as I have.

Table 1 – Editorial Board Members 2019-2025

Bridget Algee-Hewitt
Sheela Athreya
Ben Auerbach
Elizabeth Berger
Shara Bailey
Marianne Brasil
Doug Boyer
Laura Buck
Hallie Buckley
Graciela Cabana
Andre Luiz Campelo dos Santos
Elizabeth Clausing
Susanne Cote
Libby Cowgill
Carlina de la Cova
Florent Détroit
Victoria Dominguez
Sharon De Witte
Julia Fischer
Keolu Fox
Missy Gandarilla
Kanya Godde Chrisco
Omer Gokumen
Rolando González-José
Hanya Goro
Neysa Grider-Potter
Ryan Harrod
Jamie Hodgkins
Mark Hubbe
Jose Iriarte-Diaz
Lynne Isbell
Katherine Jack
Mattias Jakobsson
Grazyna Jasienska
Jason Kamlar
Peter Kappeler
Fotios-Alexandros Karakostis
Arwa Kharobi
Marc Kissel

Dawn Kitchen
Stanislaus Kivai
Tracy Kivell
Haagen Klaus
Helen Kurki

Myra Laird
Rebecca Lewis
John Lindo
Christopher Lynn
Scott Maddux
Patrick Mahoney
Ripan Malhi
Thom McDade
Kieran McNulty
Emily Middleton
Aida Miró-Herrans
Tesla Monson
Martin Muller
Connie Mulligan
Elizabeth Nelson
Amy Non
Mario Novak
Matthew O'Neill
James D. Pampush
Kathleen Paul
Marin Pilloud
Dario Piombino-Mascali
Kimberly Plomp
Tracy Prowse
Karim Quattara
Meredith Reiches
Laurie Reitsema
Charles Roseman
Gabrielle Russo
Clara Scarry
Lauren Schroeder
Christopher Schmitt
Eric Shattuck
Larissa Swedell
Daniel Temple
Amanda Thompson
Cynthia Thompson

Christina Torres-Rouff
Marla Toyne
Zwedi Tsegai
Tiffany Tung
Claudia Valeggia
Taylor Van Doren
Krishna Veeramah
Jean Luc Voisin
Noreen von Cramon-Taubadel
Katherine Wander
Qian Wang
Andrea Waters-Rist
James Watson
Laura Wilson
Christopher Wolfe
Samantha Yuassy
Molly Zuckerman

Table 2 – Special Issues

Race reconciled II- Interpreting and communicating biological variation and race in 2021*

Evolutionary, ecological, and biocultural perspectives on infectious disease and pandemics*

A Special Issue in honor of the life and scientific contributions of Professor Mary Marzke*

Ethics in the curation and use of human skeletal remains for teaching and research*

Forensic anthropology as practiced in the United States: Qualifications, standards and ethical practice

Toward a biocultural synthesis of the peopling of the Americas

Primate adaptations in a highly seasonal and heterogeneous African ecosystem

Dialogues in decolonization

Queering biological anthropology: Uses of LGBTQIA+ knowledge and queer feminism in research

Rethinking primate and human origins: Celebrating Matt Cartmill's contributions to biological anthropology

*all articles published

Figure 1 – Open Access Articles

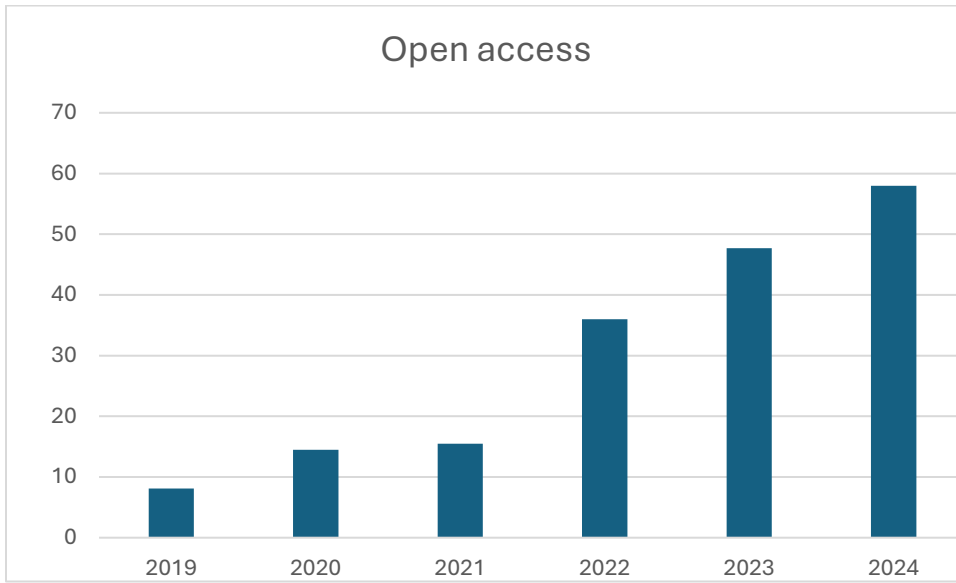


Figure 2 – Submissions by Subfield

