From Editor-in-Chief:

Navigating the Dual Horizon of Maritime Innovation and Research Integrity

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Dear readers,

the maritime world is changing fast, and this issue of Transactions on Maritime Science (ToMS) is a perfect reflection of that energy. Today, we are standing at a fascinating crossroads. Artificial intelligence (AI) has moved out of the lab and into the real world. You can see this clearly in the pages of this issue. Our authors look at everything from how autonomous ships will change daily operations to how we can use Large Language Models (LLMs) to track subsea cables.

But this rapid tech leap brings a massive paradox for academic publishing. While AI is an incredible tool for engineering, shipping, and data analysis, using generative AI to ghostwrite scientific papers is a huge threat to academic honesty. Since today's AI-detection tools simply don't work reliably, our entire editorial process relies on a very human value: trust. We have to lean on authors' self-declarations and pure scientific honesty. It reminds us that no matter how smart our software gets, research must stay grounded in genuine human scholarship and ethical responsibility.

Of course, maritime science is about much more than just digital tools. What is interesting about this issue is how it shows the multidisciplinary nature of our field. Alongside heavy-duty operational studies - like crane scheduling and upgrading traditional Phinisi ship tools - our authors tackle major legal and social questions. You will find great insights on maritime domain boundaries, ship mortgages in Croatian law, and occupational health at liquid cargo terminals. We also dive into the blue economy, look at how passenger traffic has recovered in hubs like the Port of Split, and address the daily challenges of teaching English to maritime students.

Managing such a wide mix of topics is a massive job, and it really shows how far we have come since we started back in 2012. Now in our 15th volume (2026), ToMS has grown from a small local initiative into a globally trusted platform. This cycle alone, we were flooded with 132 new submissions. Keeping up with our rigorous standards and our WebFirst fast-track publishing model takes an incredible amount of work. To give you an idea of the scale: we accepted 22 exceptional papers for this issue, rejected 70, and the rest are still going through our strict peer-review process.

This kind of growth only happens when you have an amazing global community. The authors in this issue come from eight countries across three continents - including Algeria, Croatia, Germany, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Türkiye, and Vietnam. On top of that, a massive thank you goes out to the 204 reviewers from 39 countries across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas who helped us shape this volume. While we saw especially strong contributions from Croatia, Indonesia, Türkiye, and China, every single reviewer and author has played a part in pushing ToMS forward. Enjoy the read!

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