Preface

The idea for a book on marine environmental history was put forward by Alexandrine Cheronet from Springer Publishers after listening to a talk by one of the editors at the YouMaRes Conference in Bremerhaven (Germany) in 2011. It came at a perfect time. We, the editors, both had worked for a number of years in what we think of as an exciting multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary new field of environmental and historical research: marine environmental history. We had seen promising research coming together at the Oceans Past conference series, as well as in large collaborative projects such as the History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP) project of the Census of Marine Life. Moreover, marine environmental history gained increasingly attraction in the historical sciences as well as within the environmental sciences through a number of monographs, edited volumes and journal articles. Further recognition of this emerging subfield was reached in 2008, as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) supported the establishment of an expert group for the history of fish and fisheries, which is still in existence.

Yet, we also felt something was missing. As more researchers entered the field from diverse backgrounds ranging from zoo-archaeologists to mathematical modelers, from marine ecologists to human ecologists, there was in increasing need to take stock of all the new methods and techniques coming along at the intersection of the development of human society and marine ecosystems over time. This is what this book is about.

This volume offers a collection of theoretical and methodological considerations on how to do marine environmental history across traditional disciplinary boundaries. This goes even across what C. P. Snow, more than half a century ago, lamented as the two cultures, the humanities and the natural sciences, where a dialogue is much needed, but too rarely occurs. To further this dialogue, our idea has been that each chapter should be readily accessible for social scientists and natural scientists alike, as well as for any interested student at an institution for higher learning. In this way, we hope to solidify a subfield, where diversity is an intellectual strength on the one hand, but on the other hand, lends a fragile basis for community building.

The extent to which we have succeeded, the reader will have to judge. However, there is no doubt that any success of this book owes to the committed and diligent

contributions we received from colleagues around the world spanning a wide series of disciplines and themes of interest. Any mistake or shortcoming on the other hand is entirely the responsibility of us as editors.

In addition to the contributors, we would like to extend our gratitude to a number of people that have lent their support to this project. Over the past 4 years, we have profited from frequent encouragement and moral support from the Executive Board of the Oceans Past Initiative, (www.oceanspast.net). We presented the idea of having this volume at a session of the Oceans Past IV conference in Fremantle, Australia, in November 2012. We are very grateful for the feedback we received on this occasion. More recently, we received financial support for promoting this volume from the EU network, COST Action IS1403: Oceans Past Platform. The scope of Bo Poulsen's contributions was significantly improved through the work of his parallel research project, 'Navigator – Johannes Schmidt, ICES and the Carlsberg Laboratory, c. 1898–1933' sponsored by the Carlsberg Foundation. We would also like to acknowledge the support from our home institutions, Aalborg University (Denmark) and the Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology in Bremen (Germany). Special thanks to the librarians at ZMT Bremen, particularly to Hanna Thimm, who provided invaluable support with final formatting and references. Springer Publishers, namely, Alexandrine Cheronet and Judith Terpos, have been extremely helpful and very patient during the 4 years which we needed to finalize this volume.

Finally, we would like to thank our families for their support and for reminding us that there is a world outside of history and science. In fact, Kathleen Schwerdtner Máñez's interest in marine environmental history was only drawn by her wife (Gracias, María, para todo). As we both had a child during the course of making this book, we would like to dedicate the volume to our loved ones in Ashausen (Germany), María and Laia Edith, and in Dronninglund (Denmark), Anne Dorthe, Astrid, Niels and Laura.

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