

1 EDITORIAL

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3 **The introduction of article numbers in *Palynology***

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5 **1. Introduction**

6 I am often contacted by authors of accepted papers which have been published online, asking
7 me when their article will be assigned to a volume/issue of the journal and given a page
8 range. When a paper appears in one of the quarterly parts of *Palynology*, this of course is the
9 ultimate iteration, despite the online finalised form being the ‘Version of Record’. The
10 paginated version in an issue does appear to be more formal than a typeset and proofread
11 paper with a digital object identifier (doi) number in the ‘latest articles’ section of our
12 website. These ‘unassigned’ (an unfortunate term) papers are what used to be termed ‘in
13 press’ prior to the digital revolution. However in terms of, for example, key metrics such as
14 altmetrics, citations, reads and recommendations, the Version of Record without a volume
15 and page range has exactly the same status as the final, serially paginated, form. Regarding
16 the status of any taxonomic novelties, the publication date of the Version of Record trumps
17 the date of the version assigned to a volume, especially if the years are different. Specifically,
18 if a paper is published online in one year, and allocated to a volume during the following
19 year, certain taxonomic complications may ensue (Riding et al. 2019).

20 I completely understand the desire of our authors to see their publications appear in their
21 ultimate iteration as soon as is possible. The process of planning and producing a scientific
22 manuscript, and carefully shepherding it through the often convoluted publishing process, is
23 no small undertaking, and often with substantial implications for careers. In order to address
24 this issue, the publishing industry has come up with the concept of article numbering. This is
25 the procedure that, once a typeset paper has been finalised after proofreading, it is simply
26 given a unique number which is an abridged version of its doi number (specifically the last
27 six or seven digits depending on the journal). This is absolutely the final version; no further
28 edits or reformatting are possible. The articles are assigned to a volume/issue immediately,
29 and individually paginated from page one onwards. A major difference, however, is that the
30 part/volume will not have sequential page numbering throughout as before. There is
31 absolutely no need to refer to the number of pages should this article be cited in the future.

32 This means that the only differences in format you will see are on the header for the first
33 page, where the volume, issue and article numbers appear, and the fact that every paper is
34 paginated individually. It is possible that an article will have a different year to the year in
35 which the issue/volume is completed. This is absolutely unimportant; for example, for
36 taxonomic purposes; it is the year of publication of the paper, not the volume/issue, which is
37 key. In summary, the numbering of journal volumes and parts will remain, but the article
38 numbers will henceforth identify specific papers, and not the page range.

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40 **2. Article numbers and *Palynology***

41 From 2022, i.e. Volume 46 of *Palynology*, we are changing to article numbers in order to
42 avoid potential taxonomic ambiguities, to give better customer service and to help bring the
43 journal up to date with contemporary developments in the industry. This could have
44 happened during 2021, but we felt it would be best if this major change occurred at the
45 beginning of a volume rather than in the middle of it.

46 The change does not mean that *Palynology* is going paper-free at the moment, nor
47 does it mean we are ditching volume and issue numbers. Furthermore, our annual page
48 budget will be unchanged. Articles will still be assigned to quarterly parts of the journal in
49 chronological order of acceptance. As previously mentioned, this means that a paper can
50 possibly be finalised in one year and assigned to a volume in the next, but the date of
51 publication of the article will not change. To cite a paper with an article number, all you need
52 to do is quote this numeral as opposed to the page range. This is what a citation of a paper in
53 *Palynology* from January 2022 will look like:

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55 Smith, J. and Bloggs, F. 2022. A palynological study of the Random Formation (Upper
56 Ordovician) of the Askaban region, near Hogsmeade, Lilliput. *Palynology* 46(3), 1122334
57 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/01916122.2022.1122334>).

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59 Note that the inclusion of the full doi number (above in parentheses) is optional, and its
60 inclusion will depend on the journal house style. The journal name, the volume/issue and the
61 article number are sufficient information to unequivocally identify the paper.

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63 **3. The benefits of article numbers**

64 Many other journals have found that article numbers are a very effective way to cite articles.
65 Several well-known titles related to palaeontology and palynology have recently moved to
66 this system including *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* and *Review of Palaeobotany and*
67 *Palynology*. Aside of the obvious benefits of having the Version of Record published online
68 and citable a very short time after the proof checking process, thereby obviating taxonomic
69 timing issues, there are other benefits of moving to article numbers. The editors now have the
70 option of placing articles in any order in the volumes/parts. However, I stress that we do not
71 intend to depart from chronological order in regular issues of *Palynology*, but this strategy
72 could be adopted for Supplements and Thematic Issues in order to align closely related
73 papers.

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75 **Reference**

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77 Riding JB, Fensome RA, Head MJ. 2019. Citing the taxonomic literature: what a difference a
78 year makes. *Palynology*. 43:1–3.

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