

## Growing together and embracing change: A farewell editorial

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I am stepping down after serving for 20 years as editor of the Journal of *Accounting and Management Information Systems/Contabilitate și Informatică de Gestiune* (JAMIS). Regularly editors have term limits imposed upon them, with the resulting advantages (such as instilling change) and, potentially, limitations (as rapid or drastic changes sometimes may dilute the brand or prevent accumulations over time). My appointment of editor of JAMIS did not have any term limit, as an institutional journal issued by a university, but it feels like now it is the right moment to pass the baton and to embrace change, both for myself and the journal. I would like to reflect in this farewell editorial on the field, the journal, our journey together, as a platform for our professional future.

I started my work at JAMIS in 2006, when I was a young university lecturer (having defended my PhD in 2005). Therefore, we (the journal and I) professionally grew together. I became editor when the academic interest started to shift in Romania from teaching to research, similar to other countries (Albu & Albu, 2012; Albu & Lungu, 2012). Therefore, the evolution of the journal parallels the one of the Romanian (and international) academic environments. The whole story is complex, and it is explained below.

### A few details about the journal – the numbers

JAMIS has been founded in 2002 and publishes four regular issues per year. The only deviations from this model occurred in 2002, when only 2 issues were published, and in 2006, 2007 and 2008 when a supplement was issued. Each issue

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includes between 6 and 10 papers (with a few exceptions, and with a mean value of 7-8 papers per issue). As the purpose of this editorial is rather to reflect than to count, I estimate (without going to the archive to do the math) that I supervised the publication of more than 80 issues and of more than 600 papers.

JAMIS is a university-run journal, belonging to the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (Academia de Studii Economice din București - ASE). While the first issues were authored by academics from ASE, the geographic diversity significantly increased over time, to include other Romanian universities but also other countries. This phenomenon started early, in 2006 (Albu & Lungu, 2012) and continued ever since. For example, in 2025 only about 15% of the articles published have Romanian authors, going down from 26% in 2024 (6 papers out of 34 have authors affiliated with ASE, and 3 papers authors affiliated with other Romanian universities).

Early after 2005, higher research orientation in academia became increasingly important in Romania, which also implied setting up and following national rankings of journals, and managing expectations to become international, through geographic diversity of boards and authorship, but mainly through coverage in international databases and rankings. All databases and international exposure were important, but Clarivate (previously Thomson Reuters, known as the 'ISI' list) was always the benchmark in evaluating journals (and authors) in Romania (as the promotion and evaluation criteria for academics were based on the ISI list). Apart from that, a Scopus listing also holds a special place, as it is considered as a steppingstone towards Clarivate coverage. The editorial mission of JAMIS, alongside other Romanian journals, was therefore to access these rankings and databases, and in this respect various changes were needed – publishing in an international language, the existence of a clear and updated website, a calendar of appearance, the development of an editorial policy, the geographical diversity of authors and board members, a double-blind review process etc.

As a result of these changes, JAMIS was classified as B+ by the CNCSIS in 2007 (national ranking), and was indexed in Ulrich's Periodical Directories in 2008, in ProQuest, EBSCO and Cabell's Directories in 2010, in REPEC in 2011, and in ESSEC's Ranking of Journals 2011. In order to facilitate the inclusion in other databases and to attract foreign authorship, in 2009 the board decided to exclusively publish papers in English. Over the following years, the journal continued to attract submissions from foreign authors, and to increase its coverage in international databases. (Albu & Lungu, 2012: 150)

Editorial Board members come from both Romania and other countries (predominantly), and in the second category we currently have members from both developed (economically and research-wise) or less developed countries. At the time I end my editorship, the Editorial Board comprises 53 members, of which only 11 (21%) are from Romania (7 from ASE and 4 from other universities).

Currently (2025) JAMIS is indexed, abstracted and recognized in 17 databases or national and international rankings (including ProQuest, EBSCO, DOAJ, CEEOL and erih+). However, our successive attempts to have the journal included in Scopus or the ISI list were not successful. Despite several attempts, the main reasons for not being accepted included the limited geographic diversity of authorship (around the year 2010), and the small number of citations (afterwards).

Citation-wise, as of December 2025, the H-index of the journal on Google Scholar is 50, with about 900-1,100 citations per year. 11 papers have more than 100 citations, and the most cited paper has 283 citations. Inclusion in Scopus and Clarivate depends on the number of citations obtained for the papers published in the last 2-3 years. This number is indeed low, but this is a phenomenon widespread in the accounting field. In JAMIS, the papers published in 2024 (2023) have until the end of 2025 61 (156) citations (with a maximum 7 citations for one paper published in 2023). While the citation metrics may not be optimal in the way impact factors are computed, we are proud that papers published in the journal have been cited in top accounting journals such as *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, *Management Accounting Research*, *Pacific Accounting Review*, *Accounting Forum*, *Accounting and Finance*, *Accounting in Europe*, to name a few. This is a fair recognition that the topics, ideas, and results included in the pages of the journal are significantly relevant for the core of our international accounting community.

#### **A few details about the journal – the context**

The evolution of the journal mirrors the one in the national and international academic and publishing environment. Details about these evolutions over time were also presented in much more detail elsewhere (e.g., Albu & Albu, 2012; Albu & Lungu, 2012; Albu *et al.*, 2015). I will only remind here of the main trends.

The life of a Romanian academic related mostly to education before 2005. Even being involved in education was not an easy task at that time, with all the social, regulatory and economic changes happening after the fall of communism, such as switching (in terms of understanding and educating) from one system (communist-based) to another (market-based) one. Even in terms of market-based systems, in Romania we had ‘nuances’, with a predominantly French orientation in the first decade, followed by an Anglo-Saxon one. This implied a continuous learning and knowledge upgrading exercise by the entire accounting community, professors included, particularly in terms of concepts and teaching cases. Academics in our university benefited from short stages in Western Europe (through various international projects), particularly in France. I lived that experience, so I can only testify how a bus or train-ride travel to France, and the return with a big volume of photocopied articles and mainly books, changed our way of understanding the world and accounting, in general, and what we were supposed to teach in particular.

The journal was created as a platform to disseminate the knowledge gained through these international visits. These visits increased the knowledge of Romanian university managers about Western journals, but in many cases at that time (around 2000s) they also published descriptive or normative papers (Albu & Lungu, 2012, provide various references in this respect). So, the then Dean of the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems, Professor Pavel Năstase, established a journal, i.e. JAMIS, to initially disseminate (in Romanian language) the main conceptual developments resulting from the encounter with the Western literature. Each journal issue was assigned to a department, and those benefiting from international experiences were expected to share their new knowledge.

But around 2005 national reforms changed the face of academia. We were expected to mimic the academic life from the West (as in some Continental European countries the pressure was to mimic particularly the American environment; see references in Albu & Lungu, 2012). This implied that research had to become the center of academic life (particularly in terms of measurement of academic performance). English necessarily became our *lingua franca*. International conferences became a necessity. As such, Dean Năstase also initiated in 2006 an in-house annual international conference, i.e. the AMIS conference (international conference on Accounting and Management Information Systems), in which I was also involved from the very beginning. The conference benefited from the very beginning from the international partnerships established by Dean Năstase with several established international schools and academics, which also covered academic programs, exchanges and other activities: Alain Burlaud (CNAM Paris), Allan Hodgson (University of Amsterdam) and Donna Street (University of Dayton, and representative of International Association for Accounting Education and Research - IAAER) (AMIS, 2015). This group of key people and their endorsement attracted thereafter an impressive number of internationally recognized academics to Bucharest.

Therefore, the AMIS conference has been associated from the very beginning to JAMIS, so they evolved together. Their main objectives were to create a network of researchers in Romania and in Central and Eastern Europe that would connect to the international research community; to provide a platform to develop the research skills in the country and the region; to create a platform for the development and exchange of research ideas, to advance knowledge, policy and practice (AMIS, 2015). The adherence of academics to these ideals was generally satisfactory, but very diverse, over time and from a geographical perspective. Much of this adherence has been significantly influenced by other factors impacting academic life: resources available for research (including knowledge, time and financial resources), and patience and resilience in relation to the pressures emerging in the research process (expectations in terms of the level of journals where to publish, high rejection rates). The publication expectations established at the national level increased at a much higher pace than the resources available for research. Shortcuts also became

available and visible (examples in Albu & Albu, 2012; Albu *et al.*, 2015), with generalist journals having, for example, a more local and descriptive focus, and a limited theoretical background (Dumitru *et al.*, 2011), and, in many cases, a superior ranking. This resulted in frustrations, and, on the longer term, in some reduction of resources and commitment for research, or even alienation (Albu & Albu, 2012).

We are mostly forced to publish, sometimes to give up quality in order to comply with quantity, in order to obtain the required score for promotion [...] I feel constrained and not motivated. (respondent 3, assistant) (interview reported in Albu & Albu, 2012: 164)

Spending time for vast research projects is discouraged because an article based on an important research effort and time is regarded as equivalent with any other superficial article published in the same journal or, even more dangerously, is viewed as inferior to a superficial article published in a better ranked journal. More than that, an article published in an international journal is regarded as less important in the current evaluation grid in Romania than an article with no contributions or methodology published in an ISI Romanian journal [...] I cannot restrain from saying that it is frustrating to be served examples of false academic performance in order to justify a refuse for promotion and/or for financing. But despite all these, I would be honoured to publish in an international journal in which reputed academics publish, even though this true accomplishment will be ignored by the current evaluation system in Romania.” (respondent 29, lecturer) (interview reported in Albu & Albu, 2012: 165)

What it has not been understood by regulators of (the Romanian) academic life is that “We simply can’t all be publishing in ‘top’ journals!” (Hardies, 2018). However, in a country with almost no (knowledge, time and financial) resources for conducting quality research back in 2000s when the reform started, everyone in academia was expected to regularly have a number of publications in ‘top’ journals in the first decade of 2000s. The problems with journal rankings and promotion have been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Dumitru, 2023; Sangster, 2015), but I would like to emphasize here the negative effect on the journals that strived to help researchers grow and prepare them for publications at a higher level such as JAMIS. As continuously changing and challenging rankings and evaluation criteria gave academics little time to comply, they also offered loopholes and shortcuts to meet the criteria. On the long term, this lowered the commitment and patience of early to mid-career academics in taking the time to learn and practice for the international arena.

This is not a unique example of the unintended or undesirable consequences of journal rankings (Sangster, 2015) over local journals and academic behavior. I paid attention overtime to how various local journals tried to find their place in this international movement towards impact factors, citations, rankings (Dumitru, 2023),

but also local recognition. In some cases (e.g., France, Spain) local journals were included in the ISI list, as a result of sustained national support (or even international, as academics who were emigrants continued to support the journal), but even so they score quite low in rankings. Another case is Poland, where the journal “Zeszyty Teoretyczne Rachunkowości” (ZTR, “The Theoretical Journal of Accounting”) has been only now indexed by Scopus and Clarivate (in the Emerging Sources Citations Index). All of these are indications about the struggles of local journals, usually published by smaller, local publishing houses, to access international rankings. However, in these cases mentioned above, there is usually a national association of academics or accountants supporting the journal, thus offering an institutional umbrella for various local universities and academics to cooperate.

In our case, JAMIS is a university journal and there is no national association of Romania accounting academics. More than that, there is competition with accounting journals published by professional accounting organizations (see Albu *et al.*, 2015 for details), and with other Romanian generalist journals. The support provided by Romanian academics from abroad, as board members (Oana Apostol, currently at the University of Vaasa, Finland, Andrei Filip from IESEG School of Management, France, Ioana Lupu from ESSEC, France, Raluca Sandu from SKEMA Business School, France) or Florin Vaşvari from London Business School, UK) or authors (e.g., Barbu & Baker, 2010; Urdari *et al.*, 2015), and by Romanian academics from other universities, as board members, reviewers, authors, and as associate editors, only got the journal thus far.

This description of the context illustrates the pressures in academia, locally and globally, which influence what authors write and where they submit their papers. After all, journals are a mirror of the academic community that they serve.

While journals are central to the academy, they are ultimately at the end of the research cycle. Editors are largely dependent on what gets submitted and ends up in our inboxes. As an editor, you simply run with what you get. (Dijkstra, 2023: 491).

### **Editorial changes over time**

JAMIS has been set from the very beginning on a trajectory following Western developments. The early expectation was to report on the acquisition of Western concepts, and then to publish articles aiming at following Western standards in terms of ideas, structure, and methods.

If before 2006 the journal mainly published descriptive papers, after a lax screening, I initiated in 2006 the creation of an international editorial board, collaborations with other Romanian universities, and a double-blind review process. We moved in 2006 from papers published exclusively in Romanian to papers published in Romanian (with an abstract in English or French), English and French, and to fully publishing

in the English language in 2009. These successive decisions created some pushback from senior Romanian academics, as they felt that Romanian should have been maintained as the only official language of the journal. Yet, the goal of preparing the Romanian academic environment for the international community prevailed.

From a personal perspective, the journal and I grew professionally together, as my international encounters (in conferences, university visits, publication experience in various journals) resulted in the implementation of various new practices at JAMIS. Some of these modernizations are detailed below.

One of the practices implemented was to have a special issue per year, between 2011 and 2017. In 2011 the special issue covered the topic “National perspectives on international accounting harmonizations”, with Cătălin Albu (ASE, Romania) and David Alexander (University of Birmingham, UK) as guest editors. The 2012 special issue was intended to bridge the gap between academia and practice, and included an introduction (Albu & Toader, 2012) and 5 academic papers, each joined by a commentary from a practitioner. In 2013, the special issue edited by Robert Faff (University of Queensland, Australia at that time) gathered an impressive collection of international, high-quality research. Starting 2014, the special issues were focused on the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region and covered important topics:

- IAS/IFRS in 2014 (guest editors Cătălin Albu and Nadia Albu (ASE, Romania), including an editorial and 8 articles from Romania, Czech Republic, Poland, Moldova, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, Estonia);
- accounting academia in 2015 (guest editors Cătălin Albu (ASE, Romania) and Belverd Needles (DePaul University, USA));
- sustainability reporting in 2016 (guest editors Cătălin Albu (ASE, Romania), Cagnur Balsari (Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey), Joanna Krasodomska (Krakow University of Economics, Poland), and covering three countries (Poland, Romania and Turkey), each with a literature review on the topic and with a paper investigating the relevant institutional context)
- SMEs reporting in 2017 (guest editors Cătălin Albu (ASE, Romania) and Karol Klimczak (University of Navarra, Spain at the time)).

This is an illustration of how various formats and a diversity of topics were pursued, how the CEE region has been covered, and, overall, also how these issues contributed to the internationalization of the journal.

Another innovation is the pitch-type publications and the pitch-based template for the abstract, all developed by Robert Faff. Robert has been a regular mentor at the AMIS conference. In the 2013 edition he has been invited to deliver a presentation on developing research designs. This (alongside other presentations on the same topic delivered later) resulted in the creation of the pitch template, with these origins recognized in the initial paper disseminating the template (Faff, 2015). Starting 2016,

JAMIS has a section in which pitch-type papers are published (section introduced and managed by Robert Faff). Moreover, Robert published two pitch-related articles in large international teams in 2017 and 2018 (Faff *et al.*, 2017, 2018). Robert Faff has also provided the template of the structured abstract for JAMIS, derived from the pitch template, which is in place starting in 2018.

A third modernization is the creation of a team of associate editors. Albeit the journal is based at ASE and the leadership of the journal being based here, from the very beginning editing the journal implied a wider team. Initially, the team included a few academics from other top Romanian universities, with a less defined mandate. Starting with 2014, we benefited from the guidance of three editorial consultants, Professors David Alexander, Robert Faff and Donna Street. At the beginning of 2023, I appointed a team of Associate Editors who became actively involved in managing the journal: Cătălin Albu and Mădălina Dumitru (ASE, Romania) with the role of managing editors, and Alina Almășan (West University of Timișoara, Romania), Carmen Giorgiana Bonaci (Babes-Bolyai University, Romania), Konrad Grabinski (Krakow University of Economics, Poland), Mihaela Ionașcu (ASE, Romania), Karol Marek Klimczak (Lodz University of Technology, Poland), Camelia Iuliana Lungu (ASE, Romania), and Ioan Bogdan Robu (A.I. Cuza University of Iași, Romania). The aim of this move was manifold: to have more editors involved in the editorial process to focus the attention of the editorial team on the papers and, implicitly, to increase the quality of publications; to prepare the next editors of the journal; and to obtain the support of researchers from other countries and universities for the journal.

A fourth modernization is the development and implementation of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy in 2024. Our endeavor is in line with the current editorial practices of large publishing houses and leading journals (e.g., Gatrell *et al.*, 2024).

Other changes over time include: offering a fast-track process to various partner conferences, particularly AMIS; inclusion of the name of the editor handling the paper in the published version of the paper; inclusion of the date when the paper was received and the date when the paper was accepted for publication.

### **The need for continuous change ... and some impediments**

The above sections faithfully describe the situation of the journal with its developments. The contextual details also hint towards some of the ‘bitter’ aspects, who represented and continue to represent impediments for the journal’s development.

One of these impediments is the ‘business model’ of the journal, which is actually ... non-existent. The journal is edited at no cost by a team of editors, and it is published by the publishing house of ASE. The actual publication costs are very low,



as the involvement of the personnel from the publishing house is minimal, and also there are very few copies printed on paper. The team of editors not only manages the papers (until the final decision), but also ensures the proper formatting of the papers, maintains the website, ensures the upload in various databases, which is all considered to be part of the academic load of these editors. The journal is open-content and does not charge any publication fee. Therefore, there are no revenues generated. While it is generally recognized that the job of the reviewers and editors is unpaid, despite recent backlash of this policy of international publishers, this type of service is also only marginally valued by the university, given the existing evaluation criteria. Therefore, the journal does not benefit from an infrastructure, which is usually the case for the journals published by the large international publishing houses. But “Journals do not run themselves and require a strong infrastructure” (Dijkstra, 2023: 493). This infrastructure contains human and financial resources, implies marketing, or an online system for paper submissions and review, for example. Functioning with limited resources has always been a challenge. It has been addressed and surmounted through the colleagues’ support for the journal, but this remains an impediment in the long term.

Another impediment is the journal ranking systems and evaluation criteria for academics. All of these impacted who, what and when gets published in the journal. For example, CEE researchers regularly published in JAMIS around 2010-2015, and even less so afterwards, since the journal was not recognized in their country or university anymore. However, it is rewarding to see that a new generation started with JAMIS and then moved towards international journals – and all those serving as associate editors are excellent examples in this respect. We have already addressed the long-term negative effects of these rankings elsewhere (Albu & Albu, 2012; Albu *et al.*, 2015). For academics, this means a bigger leap in trying to publish in higher level journals, as the intermediate steps (such as JAMIS) matter less in national and university evaluations. Additionally, for the journal it is a missed opportunity to provide a platform for research from the CEE region, to have a common forum where to find relevant research. I believe an eloquent example of this ideal would be the *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies*, serving as a platform for researchers from the so-called non-Western contexts (mainly Asian and African countries), and a steppingstone towards higher level publications (which otherwise provide very good citations for the journal). In this context, a challenge will continue to exist on how to position the journal to find its place in the international arena.

A third impediment of a pervasive nature thereafter is the increasing speed and volume expected in the publication process, sometimes resulting in less ethical practices from authors (e.g., slicing or duplicating research; plagiarism; unethical use of AI). The pressures on authors to publish more results in a high volume of submissions and managing them (even for a desk rejection) requires (more) time. More than that, checking for plagiarism or the use of AI is even more time consuming, and diverts important resources away from more value-adding editorial

activities. Besides the short-term pressure and ethical issue, all of these issues raise serious questions about the future model for publication and academic evaluation on the long-term (Dumitru, 2023).

**Thank you... and good luck!**

Journals are the result of a community – publishers, editors, reviewers, authors, readers. The author and reader base of any journal is of paramount importance, and I am grateful to each and anyone of them. With respect to internal support, everything that we have achieved over these 20 years was a group effort. I would like to sincerely thank all of those who contributed to the ongoing activity of the journal. I also have a few special mentions. First, I would like to thank Professor Pavel Năstase for entrusting me with this task, and for all the support he showed the journal, the associated conference, and the academic community in general. His early vision has put the Romanian academic community on the international radar. Second, I would like to thank Cătălin Albu – I was the editor of the journal, but his soul was equally invested in it, as he contributed, sometimes with visible (such as guest-editing special issues or representing the journal in various editors' panels) and sometimes with invisible actions (such as checking the papers for publication and formatting them when I was pressured by time). At least before the associate editors joined the team, this was a job quite big for one person, and I relied a lot on his help. Third, I would like to thank our colleagues, from ASE, other Romanian universities and particularly from abroad, who supported the journal over the years. I would like to start with the associate editors, whose work is invaluable, and with the senior consultants. They offered the journal their full support over the years. I would like to mention here particularly Robert Faff, who greatly contributed with the pitch articles, abstract template and other editorial advice, to the development of the journal. Moreover, I would like to thank all well-known academics who published in JAMIS (such as David Alexander, Richard Baker, Charles H. Cho, Christine Cooper, Allan Hodgson, Brigitte Eierle and Wolfgang Schultze, or professionals such as Mary Tokar (IASB member at the time) to name just a few) (e.g., Alexander, 2010; Alexander *et al.*, 2022; Barbu & Baker, 2010; Byrne *et al.*, 2013; Cho, 2020; Cho *et al.*, 2020; Eierle & Schultze, 2013; Tokar, 2015). Fourth, I would like to thank ASE – the management of the university and of our school for their administrative support, and to the Publishing House of ASE (particularly Simona Buşoi, Silvia Răcaru and Emilia Velcu) for their work on the journal and its speedy publication. My deepest thanks to Andrei Stanciu, Mădălina Dumitru, Cristina Țarțavulea and Ofelia Aleca for all the website and database related work. They worked during weekends and holidays, after long days of teaching, to make sure that we ensure a timely publication of the journal. This is the list of people who did not say 'no' to the journal, and I am very grateful to have had such a supporting network! Thank you all very much (and sorry if I miss anyone).

Now it is time to pass the baton to Mădălina Dumitru, to work along with Sînziana Rîndașu, as the journal's co-editors. Sînziana has been appointed co-editor in chief in September 2024, and we worked together for more than one year now. She is a young promising academic, and she also has now the opportunity to grow together with the journal. I started to work with Mădălina at JAMIS many years ago, and she assisted the journal in many capacities. She has been involved in the editorial process of other journals, and she is an author, reviewer and editorial board member in several international accounting journals. She became an associate editor JAMIS in 2023. All of these, and her assessment of the publication landscape (Dumitru, 2023) are clear indications that she is ready for the role. I am sure that their enthusiasm and vision will take the journal further and wish them all success in this respect.

It has been an honor and a privilege for me to edit this journal. JAMIS has been my academic companion for almost my entire academic career so far (and approximating half of my entire one). I learned a lot in this capacity, and this experience allowed me to serve on the editorial teams of other journals. As such, over the last years I was associate editor of *Accounting in Europe* (since 2022) and *Accounting Forum* (since 2024), and I will take over *Accounting in Europe* as Editor for the period 2026-2029. What I learned in these positions I worked to transfer to JAMIS, to the extent possible. The main duty of an editor is to leave the journal at least as strong it was when they started editing it. While much remains to be done to improve the journal's standing, I have peace that I fulfilled this duty. Now it is time to say thank you and goodbye!

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