



The enduring vision of Agustín Udías

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Received: 7 August 2026 / Accepted: 7 August 2026
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The passing of Professor Agustín Udías marks the loss of an outstanding seismologist, educator, and scholar whose scientific and personal legacy has already been honoured in thoughtful tributes by colleagues who knew him closely (Bufo and Mattesini 2026a, b). For the *Journal of Seismology*, however, his legacy has an additional and fundamental dimension. As its founding Editor-in-Chief, he established an editorial vision that has shaped the Journal's identity for almost three decades. Writing as the current Editor-in-Chief, I feel both privileged and responsible to reflect on this aspect of his contribution and on how the principles he established continue to guide the Journal through a period of profound transformation in both seismology and scientific publishing.

When the first issue appeared in 1997, launching a new international journal devoted to seismology was by no means an obvious undertaking. The scientific publishing landscape was already crowded, and the need for another specialised journal was questioned. Udías' response was not to compete with existing journals, but to promote a broader and more ambitious understanding of the discipline itself (Udías 1997, 1998). In his inaugural editorial, *Seismology: a multidisciplinary science* (Udías 1997), he argued against reducing seismology to the study of

generation, propagation, and recording of seismic waves, a narrower view that had gained prominence during the 1990s. Instead, he reaffirmed seismology as the science of earthquakes in all their physical, geological, engineering, historical, and societal dimensions. This multidisciplinary perspective was not presented as a new definition but as a return to the full breadth of the discipline, and it became the defining characteristic of the *Journal of Seismology* from its foundation.

For Udías, the journal was far more than a vehicle for disseminating research. It was a collective scientific endeavour founded on rigorous peer review, editorial independence, international openness, close ties with the European Seismological Commission while maintaining a global perspective, and service to the scientific community (Udías 1998, 1999, 2001, 2005). His reflections on the difficulty of rejecting manuscripts and on the indispensable contribution of Associate Editors and reviewers remain remarkably relevant today.

This vision was carried forward by his successors as Editors-in-Chief, Torsten Dahm and Mariano García-Fernández. During their respective tenures, editorial processes evolved, scientific priorities expanded, publishing technologies changed profoundly, and the Journal, which had transitioned from Kluwer Academic Publishers to Springer, strengthened its international profile (Dahm 2005, 2013; García-Fernández 2013). Yet throughout these

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Agustín Udías (1935–2026), founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Seismology* (courtesy of Elisa Bufo).

changes, the principles established by Udías remained its guiding framework.

In 2025, I succeeded Mariano García-Fernández as Editor-in-Chief. My own relationship with the *Journal of Seismology* had begun in 1998, when it published my first paper as lead author based on my PhD research. Having since then served as an author, reviewer, and Associate Editor, I now appreciate even more deeply the strength of Udías' vision and the responsibility of carrying it forward.

Over nearly three decades, the *Journal* has evolved considerably through the dedication and sustained work of Udías and his successors. What was predominantly European in its early years has become a truly international publication, with contributions from more than one hundred countries. Its scope has also expanded to include emerging methods, new technologies, Open Science practices, datasets, and software alongside traditional research papers. This evolution reflects the enduring relevance of Udías' multidisciplinary vision and the gradual fulfilment of the *Journal's* international mission.

The rapid growth in submissions has placed increasing demands on the editorial process. I am

deeply grateful to our Associate Editors and reviewers, whose expertise and largely invisible work are essential to the *Journal's* credibility.

The responsibilities of scientific editors have also expanded considerably. Securing qualified reviewers has become progressively more difficult, while maintaining rigorous evaluation, ensuring timely editorial decisions, safeguarding research integrity, and promoting transparency, reproducibility, and data availability have become central responsibilities of scientific editors. In an increasingly competitive publishing landscape, characterised by a greater reliance on bibliometric indicators, maintaining a clear editorial direction is equally essential.

Artificial intelligence represents one of the most rapidly evolving challenges facing scientific publishing. It offers powerful opportunities for seismological research and scientific communication, while also raising important questions concerning originality, authorship, responsibility, and trust. Its use should therefore remain transparent and responsible, supporting rather than replacing critical thinking and scientific judgement.

These challenges may not have existed in their present form when Agustín Udías founded the *Journal of Seismology*, but the principles needed to address them were already embedded in his editorial vision. Applying that legacy today means adapting it to a discipline and a publishing system undergoing a profound transformation.

Remembering Udías therefore means more than honouring an outstanding scientist. It means reaffirming scientific rigour, multidisciplinary thinking, international collaboration, inclusiveness, editorial independence, and service to the seismological community as the enduring foundations of the *Journal*. As Editor-in-Chief, I am committed, together with the Associate Editors, to preserving those values while embracing innovation and responding to new scientific and editorial challenges.

Acknowledgments I thank Elisa Bufo and Mariano García-Fernández for kindly reading an earlier version of this editorial.

Data Availability Not applicable. No datasets were generated or analysed for this editorial.

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