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*MANUSCRIPTS* and all communications for the editors should be addressed to Professor Naomi J. Norman, Editor-in-Chief, *AJA*, Department of Classics, Park Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602-6203, fax 706-542-8503, email [nnorman@aia.bu.edu](mailto:nnorman@aia.bu.edu). The *American Journal of Archaeology* is devoted to the art and archaeology of ancient Europe and the Mediterranean world, including the Near East and Egypt, from prehistoric to late antique times. The attention of contributors is directed to “Editorial Policy, Instructions for Contributors, and Abbreviations,” *AJA* 104 (2000) 3–24. Guidelines for *AJA* authors can also be found on the World Wide Web at [www.ajaonline.org](http://www.ajaonline.org). Contributors are requested to include abstracts summarizing the main points and principal conclusions of their articles. Manuscripts, including photocopies of illustrations, should be submitted in triplicate; original photographs, drawings, and plans should not be sent unless requested by the editors. In order to facilitate the peer-review process, all submissions should be prepared in such a way as to maintain anonymity of the author. As the official journal of the Archaeological Institute of America, *AJA* will not serve for the announcement or initial scholarly presentation of any object in a private or public collection acquired after 30 December 1973, unless its existence was documented before that date or it was legally exported from the country of origin. An exception may be made if, in the view of the Editor-in-Chief, the aim of the publication is to emphasize the loss of archaeological context. Reviews of exhibitions, catalogues, or publications that do not follow these guidelines should state that the exhibition or publication in question includes material without known archaeological finds.

*BOOKS FOR REVIEW* should be sent to Professor John G. Younger, Editor, *AJA* Book Reviews, Classics Department, Wescoe Hall, 1445 Jayhawk Boulevard, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-2139, tel. 785-864-3153, fax 785-864-5566, email [jyounger@ukans.edu](mailto:jyounger@ukans.edu). The following are excluded from review and should not be sent: offprints; reeditions, except those with great and significant changes; journal volumes, except the first in a new series; monographs of very small size and scope; and books dealing with the archaeology of the New World.

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# Editorial Policy on the Publication of Recently Acquired Antiquities

NAOMI J. NORMAN

In December 2004, the Executive Committee of the Governing Board of the Archaeological Institute of America, President Jane C. Waldbaum presiding, revised the AIA policy on the publication of recently acquired antiquities. The revised policy states:

As a publication of the Archaeological Institute of America, the *American Journal of Archaeology* will not serve for the announcement or initial scholarly presentation of any object in a private or public collection acquired after December 30, 1973, unless its existence is documented before that date, or it was legally exported from the country of origin. An exception may be made if, in the view of the Editor, the aim of publication is to emphasize the loss of archaeological context. Reviews of exhibitions, catalogues, or publications that do not follow these guidelines should state that the exhibition or publication in question includes material without known archaeological findspot.

This revision of the *Journal's* long-standing policy on the publication of recently acquired material expands that policy to give the *AJA* Editor-in-Chief the flexibility to make an exception for publications that emphasize the loss of archaeological context. This will, in effect, highlight the threat to the archaeological record that the illicit trade in antiquities creates. The revised policy was recommended to the Executive Committee by the Professional Responsibilities Committee, whose chair, Malcolm Bell III, and members wanted to call attention to the continuing problem of illegally excavated and exported antiquities.

To place this revised policy into context, let me explain briefly how the original policy came about, as well as its intended purpose. The original policy, which was first announced in 1978 (in somewhat different language) by Brunilde S. Ridgway and Tamara Stech Wheeler in their initial editorial statement,<sup>1</sup> grew out of a series of resolutions passed by the Council of the Archaeological Institute of America in December 1970 and December 1973. The first of these resolutions endorsed the UNESCO

Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, stating that the AIA condemned "the destruction of the material and historical records of the past by [the] plundering of archaeological sites . . . and by the illicit export and import of antiquities." The last of these resolutions, which was adopted on 30 December 1973, stated that the Annual Meeting of the AIA "should not serve for the announcement or initial scholarly presentation of objects in conflict with the Resolution on antiquities," which was adopted in December 1970. These two resolutions provided the framework (and the 30 December 1973 cutoff date) for the *AJA* policy that was announced by Ridgway and Wheeler. They merely extended the Annual Meeting policy to the *AJA* and announced that the *Journal* would not serve for the announcement or initial scholarly presentation of antiquities acquired after 30 December 1973 that were in private or public collections and that could not be shown to have been part of a previously existing collection or to have been legally exported from the country of origin. The clear intent of the policy was not to enhance the market value or importance of these objects by giving them the imprimatur of the AIA by publishing them for the first time in the *AJA*. This policy has routinely appeared at the front of the *Journal* since then and has guided the publication decisions of many *AJA* editors since it was first announced by Ridgway and Wheeler.

For years this policy has signaled that the AIA and its *Journal* are opposed to the illicit trade in antiquities, the despoliation of archaeological sites, and the irretrievable loss of information that occurs when objects are illegally removed from their archaeological contexts. What was less clear is what happens once such an object appears in another publication. Therefore, in 1990, *AJA* Editor-in-Chief Fred Kleiner issued a new editorial statement that sought to clarify the policy and define its parameters.<sup>2</sup> At that time, he wrote that the *AJA* would

<sup>1</sup>B.S. Ridgway and T.S. Wheeler, "Editorial Statement," *AJA* 82 (1978) 1.

<sup>2</sup>F.S. Kleiner, "On the Publication of Recent Acquisition of

Antiquities," *AJA* 94 (1990) 525–7; this statement also includes the full texts of the various resolutions adopted by the Council of the AIA.

not “stand in the way of legitimate scholarly discussion of antiquities . . . once they have been published elsewhere. . . . [in] a proper ‘scholarly presentation’,” which he defined as something other than an annual report or catalogue. According to Kleiner, “to do so would be contradictory to the very principle of free and open scholarly inquiry for which the AIA and its *Journal* stand.”<sup>3</sup> This is, of course, exactly the point at which the policy becomes subjective—just what constitutes a “proper scholarly presentation” of an object? It is also the point at which the original intent of the resolutions and the policy begin to fade from consciousness.

So let me return at this point to the original intent of those AIA resolutions and policies. It is clear that neither the resolutions nor the *AJA* publication policy can, in and of themselves, stop the illicit trade in antiquities or the looting at archaeological sites. Indeed, here we are, 35 years after the adoption of the first resolution, and the problem of the illicit trade in antiquities is as bad as ever, and the despoliation of archaeological sites continues unabated around the world. It is equally clear that neither the editors of the *Journal* who have enforced the policy nor the members of the AIA Council in 1970 or 1973 who first adopted the resolutions believed that they would bring an end to the problem. Nevertheless, the resolutions and the publication policy do cast a bright spotlight on the problem and take an unequivocal stand against the illegal export and exchange of ancient artifacts and the destruction of the archaeological record that such trade causes. Since such trade continues to be a serious problem, this seems an opportune moment to take another look at the *AJA* policy that governs the publication of recently acquired objects—hence, the revised policy adopted by the Executive Committee.

The intent of this revised *AJA* publication policy is to bring the problem to the center of the archaeological debate by allowing the Editor-in-Chief to publish articles that discuss the issue, even if those articles result in the “initial scholarly presentation” of such problematic material. In addition, the revised policy requires that reviews of exhibitions, catalogues, or publications that do not acknowledge the inclusion of problematic material “should state that the exhibition or publication in question includes material without known archaeological findspot.” The intent here is to keep the checkered past of an object out in the open and part of the continuing scholarly discussion of that piece. All too often, once a piece gets “proper scholarly presentation” and the debate begins, scholars forget that the object is without archaeological context and may have come to the market illegally. If the original intent of the resolutions and the *AJA* policy was to cast a spotlight on the problem of the illicit trade in antiquities, the intent of this revision is to try to keep the spotlight on the problem, even after an illicit object has become part of standard scholarship. The point is to remind us all of how much information and value is lost when an object is illegally removed from its archaeological context.

Having said all this, it is worth repeating that the usual caveats apply. All articles submitted to *AJA* will continue to be screened in the usual way, and all of the usual rigorous scholarly standards will apply. As is always the case, the Editor-in-Chief will make the decision whether or not to publish an article, based solely on the recommendations of peer reviewers, the merits of the article, and the Editor-in-Chief’s judgment.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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<sup>3</sup>F.S. Kleiner, “On the Publication of Recent Acquisition of Antiquities,” *AJA* 94 (1990) 526. This reading remains in effect and is not changed by the revised policy.