



AIA Policy on the Presentation and Publication of Undocumented Antiquities

The publication and presentation venues of the Archaeological Institute of America will not serve for the initial scholarly publication or announcement 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 or Program Committee, the aim of publication is to emphasize the loss of archaeological context or acquisition history.

Definition of “initial scholarly publication or announcement”¹

Vehicle / Venue: Any one of the elements below constitutes a vehicle / venue for “initial scholarly publication or announcement”:

- A peer-reviewed or similarly vetted publication in a scholarly book or journal, whether in print or online, that conforms to the specifications detailed under “Form” below.
- The permanent and accessible record (e.g. published abstract, conference proceeding, etc.) of a peer-reviewed or similarly vetted presentation at a meeting of a learned society, whether in a paper or on a poster, that conforms to the specifications detailed under “Form” below.
- A peer-reviewed or similarly vetted publication in a scholarly catalog, whether in print or online, that conforms to the specifications detailed under “Form” below. “Scholarly catalog” in this context refers to a catalog produced by an academically affiliated or educationally oriented organization (e.g., a museum catalog), and not catalogs produced by for profit and/or commercial organizations (e.g., an auction house catalog).

Form: Within the vehicles / venues above, initial scholarly publication or announcement must include (1) an illustration (e.g., a photograph, a drawing, or similar graphic), (2) commentary specific to the object (such as dimensions and a description, including, as applicable, details of ware, decoration, production technology, etc.). Initial scholarly publication or announcement of epigraphic material should also include (3) a transcription, and (4) if appropriate, a translation. Initial scholarly publication or announcement does not attach if an object is only referenced generally, for example, by its transaction, owner, or as part of an unspecified cache (e.g., “X purchased a hoard of 100 artifacts / coins / ostraca / papyri, etc.”).

Citation and [non-prov.] designation in a vehicle / venue of the AIA

Publication or presentation in a vehicle / venue of the AIA of any object acquired by an individual or institution after December 30, 1973 without prior documentation or evidence of legal export from its country of origin must mark the object consistently with the designation [non-prov.], e.g. Museum of Ancient Art 2005.076 [non-prov.]. The first mention of the object in an AIA abstract, paper, poster, or publication must include a reference that clearly identifies the venue / vehicle of initial scholarly publication or announcement and contains the following text, “This object was acquired after December 30, 1973; there is no evidence of its documentation before that date or its legal export from the country of origin.” If applicable, a link to the relevant entry in the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) Registry of New Acquisitions of Archaeological Material and Works of Ancient Art (<https://aamd.org/object-registry/new-acquisitions-of-archaeological-material-and-works-of-ancient-art/>) should be provided. The object’s ownership status may be clarified further at the discretion of the author. This same designation should mark objects published or presented as exceptions that emphasize the loss of archaeological context or acquisition history.

¹ Descriptions of “Vehicle / Venue” and “Form” are intended to reflect alignment with ASOR’s Definition of “Initial Publication or Announcement” (<http://www.asor.org/about-asor/policies/definition-of-initial-publication>); modifications reflect harmonization with existing AIA policy.



Objects discussed in reviews

Reviews of exhibitions, catalogues, or publications that include material acquired after December 30, 1973 should note whether any objects were acquired without evidence of prior documentation or legal export from their country of origin. Mention of specific objects in reviews should conform to the guidelines above. Reviewers should indicate if it is unclear whether the objects in the exhibition, catalogue or publication conform to these standards. Reviews of such exhibits or catalogues should contain a link to the acquisitions policy of the museum or exhibition venue.

In all cases, final decisions about publication and presentation in an AIA vehicle / venue remain at the discretion of the Editors and the Program Committee.

Adopted by a vote of Council on January 4, 2020. This policy supercedes the earlier "Resolution on the Presentation of Undocumented Antiquities at the AIA Annual Meeting" and the "AJA Editorial Policy on the Publication of Recently Acquired Antiquities."