



To: The ASOR Board of Trustees
From: The Committee on the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct (Susan Ackerman [Chair]; Carol Meyers; Jason Ur)
Date: November 2022
Subject: Recent Activity Regarding the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct

According to the “Introduction” to the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct, the Board committee charged with oversight of the Policy (Susan Ackerman [Chair]; Carol Meyers; Jason Ur) is “empowered to record concerns and to bring forward for discussion to ASOR’s Board of Trustees any action that may contravene the guidelines contained in this policy.”

We write, therefore, to report that an ASOR member expressed some concerns to us about one of the papers presented during the October 2022 Virtual Annual Meeting and that paper’s consideration of materials retrieved through a less-than-ideal process of excavation and recovery. More specifically, the member raised concerns that the PowerPoint presentation and talk posted prior to the Virtual Annual Meeting did not make note of these problems, contrary to the member’s understanding of what is called for in ASOR’s Policy on Professional Conduct, Section III.E.2. This part of the Policy states that “with respect to PROGRAMS AND PUBLICATIONS, ASOR Members recognize that authors of publications or presentations should be transparent when introducing data of uncertain reliability to the realm of public knowledge.”

In considering this matter, our Committee determined that there was no actual violation of the ASOR policy, since the language quoted above articulates an aspiration, rather than a requirement (“*should* be transparent”). We also were gratified that in the discussion session of the paper during the Virtual Annual Meeting, the paper’s presenter (one of several authors) made multiple unprompted acknowledgements of the problems regarding the means used to recover the excavated materials.

Nevertheless, we also determined that we should write the presentation's authors and urge that in any future presentations, they make sure that they acknowledge the problems of recovery. We also have sent copies of this letter to the co-chairs of the session in which the paper was presented and to the co-chairs of the ASOR Program Committee, so that they are aware of this issue.