

RURALIA CODE OF CONDUCT ¹

Preamble

The objective of this Code is to inspire good practice by the members of *Ruralia Association* and participants of Ruralia Conferences, both amongst their colleagues and amongst other parties in society. This Code places the responsibility for making ethical judgements on the individual archaeologist who carries the responsibility for conforming to its requirements: failure to meet the standards set here may result in sanctions against the person by the Association.

It has been approved by the General Meeting of the *Ruralia Association* on the 2023.

Guiding Principles

Members of *Ruralia Association* and participants of Ruralia Conferences are expected to adopt codes of conduct which adhere to the following principles.

1. Archaeologists must respect individual human rights and never practise any form of discrimination against individuals. Guarantee equal opportunities.
2. Violence, disregard for national and international law, especially disregard for human rights, civil liberties, and scientific freedom, pose a grave threat to the scientific system. Archaeologists should ensure that they understand, and operate within, the legal and other regulatory frameworks, including but not limited to national and international law and professional guidance, governing all aspects of archaeological work in the country where they conduct their activities.
3. The removal of archaeological remains from their depositional context is an inherently destructive activity. Archaeological work should be practised carefully, with scientific, social, cultural benefits and the wellbeing of present and future societies in mind. As good scientific practice in archaeological research requires well documented records, a sustainable approach to our archaeological resources is a precondition for valuable research. Therefore the use of unprovenanced artifacts is only responsible and possible in a way that does not benefit robbers and traders by providing them scientific publications as a form of academic certification increasing the market prices and the dealers' reputation.
4. We are convinced that good scientific practice is based on the freedom of science but also on the idea that science and humanities require the absence of prejudice and is not compatible with racism or populism. We therefore encourage and appreciate any approaches integrating various social groups concerned by our research in an open dialogue. Archaeologists should have regard for the interests and viewpoints of all stakeholders concerning the past and its remains, considering that archaeology is a scientific activity in the most comprehensive sense, and works for the benefit of humanity.
5. Archaeologists should be accountable for their actions and decisions to the public and must remain transparent and open to any scrutiny that is deemed necessary by the relevant legal bodies.

¹ Approved at the meeting of the General Board: Fredrikstad 5 September 2023.

6. Archaeologists must not exploit their position to gain undue advantages, including financial profit for themselves, their family or associates, nor should they use their capacity to further their private interests or those of external parties.

7. Archaeologists must not be involved in criminal behaviour such as corruption, for example, offering or accepting gifts in the form of money, loans, or favouritism.

8. We prohibit all forms of harassment, assault, bullying, intimidation and discrimination. Such offensive behaviour includes: racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, and discrimination on the basis of age, ability, religious or other cultural tradition, and gender identity.

9. Ruralia denounces forms of harassment, victimisation and intimidation which are aimed at negatively impacting career advancement through stealing or appropriation of data, analytical results, ideas, publications, and through blackmail, threats, defamation, or personal attacks in public settings.

RURALIA PUBLICATIONS ETHICS POLICY

Background and general standards

The *General Meeting of Ruralia Association* and the Editors of Ruralia volumes are committed to ensuring that high ethical publishing standards are maintained by the *Ruralia series*. As a benchmark, *Ruralia Association* subscribes to the Core Practices of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE): <https://publicationethics.org/core-practices>. This *Ruralia* Policy is based on COPE, but also on the particular experiences of the Editors of Ruralia volumes.

The Editors reserve the right to reject manuscripts that do not comply with these standards and misuse archaeological data for non-science based political agenda, disgrace any social groups or fostering the illegal antiquities market.

1. Allegations of misconduct

The Editors of Ruralia volumes and the *General Meeting of Ruralia Association* take seriously, and will investigate, any allegations of misconduct, pre- and post-publication. Editors should follow the COPE flowcharts where applicable and make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation into alleged misconduct is conducted; if this does not happen, editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a resolution to the problem. This is an onerous but important duty.

2. Authorship and contributorship

The Editors of Ruralia volumes expects transparency around who contributed to a submitted piece of work and in what capacity.

The list of authors should accurately reflect who carried out the research and who wrote the article. The names of individuals who have not contributed significantly to the work should not be included.

Authors should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable.

The corresponding author ensures that all co-authors have approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication. The Editors of *Ruralia* volumes expects authors to resolve disputes between themselves but will investigate allegations of authors stealing work and seeking to publish it under their own name.

3. Complaints and appeals

The Editors of *Ruralia* volumes takes seriously, and will respond to, complaints about the volumes, its staff, editoris or publisher.

Authors have the right to appeal against editorial decisions. Appeals or complaints about reviews can be addressed directly to the Editors of *Ruralia* volumes. Major appeals or complaints will be referred to the *President and Management Board of Ruralia Association*. We will investigate and respond to all appeals and complaints in a timely manner.

4. Conflicts of interest*/competing interests

We will seek to handle and resolve conflicts of interest of authors, reviewers, editors, our journal and our publisher.

All authors and peer reviewers must declare any conflicts of interest relating to submitted work. Sources of support for the research to be published must be acknowledged by authors. Authors are invited to suggest specialist peer reviewers, and can also indicate the names of certain experts whom they would prefer not to be included in the peer review process for stated reasons (e.g. a strong personal conflict), although the final decision on selection of peer reviewers will be taken by the Editors.

* 'Conflicts of interests' might include (but are not limited to) situations where authors or others involved in research might receive financial benefit from publication or have personal relationships which affect the conduct and dissemination of the research.

5. Materials and methods

The Editors of *Ruralia* volumes expects authors to make all relevant data available, as well as details of methods used, although it reserves the right to publish this as Supplementary Information online only.

Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable. Any allegations of data manipulation will be investigated by the Editors of *Ruralia* volumes.

6. Ethical oversight

The ethical oversight of the Editors of *Ruralia* volumes extends to issues such as consent to publish, publication on vulnerable heritage, and ethical conduct of research using cultural and human remains. We expect ethical approval, if needed, to have been secured for all research published in *Ruralia series*. Editors of *Ruralia* volumes expects authors to guarantee that their work was produced free of research misconduct. Archaeological material knowingly obtained illegally from unprovenanced sources should not be published in the *Ruralia series*.

Work dealing with human remains must have been undertaken according to national legislation and informed by professional standards. In line with Code of Ethics of BABAO (British Association of Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology), we request that 'Where applicable, images of human remains should not be published without consideration

to the views of any demonstrated genealogical descendants or affiliated cultural communities'. It is the responsibility of corresponding authors to obtain consent to submit work to the journal from all co-authors, before the work is submitted.

The *Ruralia Association* advocates freedom of scholarly expression and, therefore, reserves the right to publish criticisms of published work and of scholars, including any firmly substantiated claims of misconduct, and to report them to professional organisations and higher authorities for further investigation.

Ruralia Association will seek to support their authors who can produce convincing evidence that they have been bullied or harassed by other scholars for the views that they have expressed in *Ruralia series*.

The editors reserve the right to edit peer reviews, including reviewers' requests that authors cite their own work.

7. Intellectual property, including copyright

Authors are responsible for ensuring that they hold intellectual property rights to the work that they submit, including copyright on all illustrations. They are also responsible for any costs associated with obtaining such rights.

Suspected plagiarism in a submitted manuscript will always be investigated, and—if proven—authors will be presented with the evidence.

The Editors of *Ruralia* volumes will not consider any paper submitted simultaneously to another journal.

We do not usually publish work that has been previously published elsewhere, including in a different language.

Full acknowledgement to other works used to produce the paper must be given. Copyright of articles published in *Ruralia series* (including online version) is held by the authors. Copyright of the page image is held by current publishing house but maybe reproduced with their permission.

8. Journal management

The Editors of *Ruralia series*, working in collaboration with our publishers, are responsible for managing the series in an efficient manner. Our work and processes are subject to the regular scrutiny of the *Management Board of Ruralia Association*. Submitted papers, specialist peer reviewers' comments and editorial decisions are stored securely, and are subject to the Privacy Notice of the current publishing house (at the moment: Sidestone Press: <https://www.sidestone.com/contact/privacy-policy>)

9. Peer review processes

The *Ruralia series*' peer review process is expected to be transparent and well managed. The editors determine the internal and external (anonymous) referees to evaluate the paper (using *Ruralia*'s special form).

Peer reviewers' comments are only shared with the Editors and authors. Peer reviewers are expected to maintain confidentiality of any information supplied by the Editors or by the authors, but are invited to alert the Editors to any content that has previously been submitted for publication elsewhere.

10. Post-publication discussions and corrections

The Editors of *Ruralia* volumes encourage debate post-publication.