

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Adopted 21 June 2003

Historical archaeologists study, interpret and preserve archaeological sites, artifacts and documents from or related to literate societies over the past 600 years for the benefit of present and future peoples. In conducting archaeology, individuals incur certain obligations to the archaeological record, colleagues, employers and the public. These obligations are integral to professionalism. This document presents ethical principles for the practice of historical archaeology. All members of The Society for Historical Archaeology, and others who actively participate in society-sponsored activities, shall support and follow the ethical principles of the society. All historical archaeologists and those in allied fields are encouraged to adhere to these principles.

Principle 1

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology have a duty to adhere to professional standards of ethics and practices in their research, teaching, reporting, and interactions with the public.

Principle 2

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology have a duty to encourage and support the long-term preservation and effective management of archaeological sites and collections, from both terrestrial and underwater contexts, for the benefit of humanity.

Principle 3

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology have a duty to disseminate research results to scholars in an accessible, honest and timely manner.

Principle 4

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology have a duty to collect data accurately during investigations so that reliable data sets and site documentation are produced, and to see that these materials are appropriately curated for future generations.

Principle 5

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology have a duty in their professional activities to respect the dignity and human rights of others.

Principle 6

Items from archaeological contexts shall not be traded, sold, bought or bartered as commercial goods, and it is unethical to take actions for the purpose of establishing the commercial value of objects from archaeological sites or property that may lead to their destruction, dispersal, or exploitation.

Principle 7

Members of the Society for Historical Archaeology encourage education about archaeology, strive to engage citizens in the research process and publicly disseminate the major findings of their research, to the extent compatible with resource protection and legal obligations.