

GOOD PRACTICE REGARDING THE ACCESS TO AND USE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA AND DERIVED ANALYSES

Background

This note was prepared on the initiative of the Archaeological Committee under the Association of Danish Museums (ODM), with an input from all museums with an archaeological remit, the National Museum, the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, the organisation NatArk as well as the Board of Examiners for Archaeology and Heritage Studies, with representatives from the archaeological departments of the Danish universities and museums. This note has been approved by all the above institutions.

Aims and objectives

The purpose of the present communication is to support a joint ambition towards strengthening our inter-institutional research collaboration through increased access to research and data. At the same time, the demands of society to make the results of investigations and interpretations of archaeological finds available for research and dissemination is met. Finally, we wish to ensure that the intellectual copyright of researchers is supported. It also has an ethical objective and focuses on underexposed areas, but it does not replace existing legislation.

Preconditions

Archaeological data in the form of excavation notes, artefacts, portable antiquities and derived analyses and research results should, as far as possible and with as few restrictions as possible, be made available for further research and public scrutiny.

Archaeological data represent intellectual processes, and the results are covered by intellectual copyright, which must be respected. The archaeological data also form an essential component of the museums' own research activities and obligations, which must be considered in connection with the management of data access. It is therefore considered good practice always to approach an institution before its unpublished data and analytical results are included in anyone's own research. It is appropriate for the institution with the

archaeological responsibility within a particular field to define relevant guidelines for, for example, the reporting of this secondary research results.

Basic principles

Access to data

Archaeological data generally include artefacts, reports, original excavation notes (e.g. excavation plans), case files and derived data (analyses, scientific research results, databases and collections of other data).

- Access to reports, including derived analyses, is open and free from the time of the report's submission, provided that any use of information includes a reference to the original report and its author(s) and/or other published material, and that other individuals with intellectual copyrights, such as relating to illustrations, are also credited.
- The institution carrying the archaeological responsibility within a given area is responsible for the credits of reports, appropriately reflecting the authorship and creativity of intellectual contributions, and for all copyright information being clearly defined.
- Access to original documents should be open and free from no later than the time of their submission.
- Access to case files should be open and free unless the inclusion of sensitive information regarding personal, competition or business issues suggests otherwise.
- Commonly, the access to derived data (analyses, databases, collections of other data, etc.) depends on the kind of framework within which the data was produced (for example research funded by external partners, research carried out within the institution itself and data relating to ongoing research). However, the access to derived archaeological data, including scientific analyses, should be open and free in the same way as access to archaeological reports. The institution carrying the archaeological responsibility within a given area must make sure that the principles for the access to derived data are unequivocal and transparent, for example, through the agreement of written rule sets.
- The access to data on which published scientific research is based must always be open and free as this allows scrutiny and discussion of the research.
- The institution has the right to ask for reimbursement of expenses relating to the reproduction of data or to facilitate the user's reuse of the data.

Special cases

The museum, university or other institution producing the derived data may in certain cases (for example regarding exceptional finds) restrict access with reference to defined research or publication projects. An embargo of this kind should not exceed three years from the submission of the report, and no more than five years from the conclusion of the research, unless the research or publication project is ongoing and in progress. The embargo should be limited to well-defined parts of the dataset(s), and it should be clearly explained how the publication of any new research would affect ongoing work negatively.

Accreditation and co-authorship

In connection with work which includes research results or derived analyses, which form a substantial part of the work's scientific conclusions, it is considered good scientific practice to offer co-authorship to those responsible for the research and reports or those responsible for the derived analyses.

If invited to clarify data, supply background information or give access to derived research and analysis, a researcher has the right to claim co-authorship of any final publication. Whether co-authorship should be offered always depends on how relevant and important any information is to the scientific work as a whole (The Danish codex for research integrity: ufm.dk/publikationer/2015/den-danske-kodeks-for-integritet-i-forskning and Icon's ethical sampling guidance: www.icon.org.uk/resource/icons-impact-a-practical-tool-for-ethical-sampling.html).

It is the individual user's responsibility to follow good scientific practice, but the institution should support this through information and dialogue with the users of the data.

The responsible institutions must ensure that their own employees and users of their data follow the principles for good practice regarding the access to, and use of, archaeological research data.

On behalf of the Archaeological Committee under the Association of Danish Museums.
Copenhagen [date].

Mads Runge, Chair

Nils M. Jensen, Director, ODM