



SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARISTS

THE ANTIQUARIST CODE

SERVARE · SCIRE · TRADERE

To preserve · To know · To pass on

CHARTER OF THE SOCIETY · ADOPTED BY THE FOUNDING MEMBERS · MMXXVI

We, the members of the Society of Antiquarists, holding that the private collecting of ancient antiquities carries a public trust — to the objects in our care, to the scholarship they serve, and to the peoples and places from which they came — do adopt this Code and bind our practice to it.

I

ART.

DOCUMENT EVERYTHING

Every object in a member's care shall have a record: a description, photographs, its condition, and the fullest account of its collecting history that diligence can assemble. An undocumented antiquity is a mute one; the record is what transforms possession into stewardship.

II

ART.

ACQUIRE LAWFULLY

Members acquire only objects they reasonably believe to have been exported and imported in accordance with law, and decline material whose history cannot withstand scrutiny. Where doubt is serious and cannot be resolved, the antiquarist walks away.

III

ART.

PRESERVE FIRST

Decisions of cleaning, restoration, storage, and display shall favor the object's long-term survival over its appearance or market value. Members undertake no intervention beyond their competence, and engage professional conservators where the object's welfare requires it.

IV

ART.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Objects in private hands should still serve scholarship. Members make their collections available to study, publish and photograph what they hold, welcome legitimate research inquiries, and contribute what they learn back to collectors and scholars alike.

V

ART.

PLAN THE SUCCESSION

Stewardship includes the day it ends. Members provide for the future of their collections — by sale with full records, by gift, by bequest, or by placement with an institution — so that no object leaves their care less documented, less stable, or less understood than it entered.

In affirmation whereof, I subscribe my name to this Code, and bind my collecting to its articles.

MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE