

MAC Inc. Image Use Policy Committee Report

In November of 2021, MAC Inc. President Jan Brashler assembled a committee drawn from the membership to develop a draft image use policy for both MAC publications and MAC annual meeting presentations especially with regard to images of human remains and associated mortuary items. The committee included:

Mark Schurr, John Doershuk, George Milner, Kat Sterner, Susan Kooiman, Jeremy Wilson, and Don Gaff, with Schurr and Doershuk serving as co-chairs.

The committee meet multiple times via Zoom, assembling and reviewing policy examples from several publication outlets—primarily anthropological¹. Each committee member also independently consulted with Tribal contacts with whom they had connections. Additionally, committee members reached out to SEAC and PAS leadership contacts about how these organizations were approaching this issue. By design, a deliberately slow-paced approach was followed to allow committee members and their contacts ample time to consider existing policies and formulate thoughtful responses. By late spring 2022, many useful existing policies had been thoroughly considered and many informative responses from Tribal contacts² were received and discussed by the committee. Most of the Tribal contacts who responded requested to comment on the written draft policy once it was available.

The committee presented a draft policy in June to the MAC Inc. Board which approved it for sharing with the Tribal representatives who had expressed an interest. The Tribal representatives were provided the written draft policy mid-June and requested to provide comments by phone call or email as they preferred by July 30. The committee met via Zoom in August to review the comments received, which were minimal. These fell into two categories, the majority reflecting approval as written. The other comments didn't directly address the MAC draft policy per se but rather voiced the opinion that all photographic documentation of Indigenous skeletal material is inappropriate regardless of storage venue, access, or intended use. While the committee agrees the latter position is part of a much larger societal conversation than the MAC Image Use Policy can address, the policy as written clearly directs prospective authors to consult with appropriate Tribes about potential image use prior to submitting manuscripts for consideration.

The committee communicated its activities with the Board which adopted the policy August 16, 2022, and arranged for posting to the MAC Inc. website under the MCJA tab (<https://www.midwestarchaeology.org/annual-meeting/mcja/image-policy>):

¹ Society for American Archaeology, American Anthropological Association, Taylor and Francis, SAPIENS, Kiva, British Museum, American Journal of Physical/Biological Anthropology, International Journal of Paleopathology, Bioarchaeology International.

² Tribes contacted represented include: Pokagan Band of Potawatomi, Miami of Indiana, Nottawaseppi Huron Potawatomi, Saginaw Chippewa, Osage, Menominee, Delaware, Peoria Tribe of Oklahoma, Quapaw, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, Citizen Pottawatomie, Choctaw, Lakota (note, not all individuals who provided the committee feedback are officially designated spokespersons for their Tribe).

Midwest Archaeological Conference Image Policy

The Midwest Archaeological Conference, Inc. (MAC) publishes the *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* (MCJA). The journal presents original research on all periods of Midwestern archaeology. The MAC believes human remains, funerary objects, and items of cultural patrimony must be treated with respect and that may include limiting their depiction in publications.

The MCJA will not publish photographs of Native American skeletal remains or burials, but may publish line drawings if they are necessary to convey essential information. It is the author's responsibility to provide satisfactory justification that explains why it is beneficial to the journal's readership that burial-related imagery is included. This justification is addressed to the MCJA Editor, and it is done when the manuscript is submitted with updates accompanying manuscript revisions as necessary.

If the remains are affiliated with a Federal or State recognized tribal group(s), the author must consult with the group(s) to obtain their views on the portrayal of ancestral remains and funerary objects prior to submission. The only exception to the prohibition on publication of photographs of Native American burials would be when the remains are affiliated with a Federal or State recognized tribal group(s) and written permission from the group(s) accompanies the submission. It is the author's responsibility to conduct the consultation and provide documentation.

If the publication of a photograph of a portion of a human bone with a specific feature (e.g. a pathological lesion, breakage from trauma, etc.) is the only way to present essential information, the photograph must be limited to the specific feature in question.

While photographs of funeral items are currently acceptable if justified as essential, line drawings are strongly preferred if they can adequately convey the necessary information. Authors should limit photographs to specific features if possible.

Authors may include images as on-line supplemental figures. Supplemental information will be reviewed by the MCJA editor and will be subject to external review along with the submitted manuscript.

The article abstract must include a notice that portrayals of burials, funerary objects, or objects of cultural patrimony covered by this policy are presented in the article.

The committee strongly recommended to the Board that it work with La Crosse annual meeting host Connie Arzigian to create an analogous policy for images used in presentations (posters or verbal) that include the requirement for some sort of disclosure along the lines of what SEAC and SAA have recently adopted-probably best included in the program listing as the well as the presentations themselves. This led to the following statement on the MAC, Inc. website:

*Special note on the use of images of human remains: The MAC recognizes that images of human remains have the potential to be offensive and unsettling to some members of our community and those communities with whom we work. MAC policy encourages presenters NOT to use photographs of human remains but that if essential, line drawings are preferred. We ask that presenters please indicate on their abstract submission that your presentation will include any such images of human remains. We will mark these with an asterisk in the program and on the conference app. We also request that presenters disclose at the beginning of their presentations if such images are included. These measures are intended to create a more respectful environment for all.

[<https://www.midwestarchaeology.org/annual-meeting/upcoming>, accessed 10/4/2022]