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What Constitutes Authorship?

The work is complete. We are about to write an article for the professional literature, and we need to decide whose name will be on the paper. How do we make that decision? Should we give this decision some thought? What does it mean to be an author, and what responsibilities go with that role? The *Webster's New World Dictionary* (Furalnik 1970) defines "author" as follows:

Author, *n.* [*<OFr. < L. auctor < augere, to increase*], 1. One who makes or originates something; creator. 2. The writer (*of a book, article, etc.*).

The terms authorship, authoritative, and authority derive from this root—strong terms alluding to great responsibility. While the dictionary definition provides an inkling of the nature of authorship, the definition does not help us sort out the complexities of assigning authorship. More important, the very question of who an author should be is fundamentally an issue of scientific ethics (USDA 1997).

A better definition for "author" can be found

in Huth's book, *How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences*. He distills the essence of the role and responsibilities of authorship in his definition: "A person who actively contributed to the design and execution of the experiments and who takes intellectual responsibility for the research results being reported" (Huth 1990).

For the conservation community, the experience of writing for professional publications, and consequently, how authors are given credit varies considerably. Moreover, while some members of the conservation community may have had formal instruction in the finer points and ethical nuances of assigning authorship, some may have only learned by experience or through information passed on by word-of-mouth. Also, conservation is not a single discipline. This fact makes decisions of assigning authorship credit particularly difficult. For example, it is quite typical in the arts and humanities for a professional article to bear a single author. In contrast, publications in

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The Status of Certification in Europe

Introduction

The article that follows is meant to inform AIC members of ongoing discussions about a few certification issues that have evoked dissenting views among conservators in the European community. Conservators in the United Kingdom and Europe differ in their definitions of the qualifications used to define a conservator or restorer, in part, because of the specific needs of conservation communities in various countries. The certification committee feels that the AIC membership can benefit from an awareness of these differing approaches to certification. Please come to the issues session on Saturday, June 10, at the 28th AIC Annual Meeting in Philadelphia for an update on AIC's certification activities. Let's continue the dialog!

—Terry Drayman-Weisser and Members of the Certification Committee

The AIC Certification Task Force has been reviewing and comparing the status of professional certification in other countries as part of an effort to review all available information on the certification of conservators. This article addresses the status of certification in European countries and the various views of the conservation profession among the nations.

In 1991, the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organization (ECCO) was created to address the issues and concerns of conservators in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. In Europe, efforts are under way to establish a definition of "conservator-restorer" and establish legal recognition of professional standards. It is hoped that these efforts will help affirm and

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Authorship

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the physical and life sciences, as well as other scientific disciplines such as archaeology, nursing, medicine, psychology and the social sciences, tend to include multiple authors.

AIC and Authorship

How does conservation view authorship? Has conservation defined any guidelines that might help in assigning authorship credit? The *AIC Code of Ethics* and *Guidelines for Practice*, the Commentaries and the *JAIC Submission Guidelines* touch on the issues. The *Code of Ethics* and *Guidelines for Practice* revealed only cursory guidelines for publishing and almost no guidance in making decisions concerning authorship. Although the *Guidelines for Practice* indicate that conservation professionals are expected to be aware of laws and regulations bearing on their professional activity, no mention is made of laws

and regulations pertaining to intellectual property and copyright. While it is beyond the scope of this article to deal with issues of intellectual property and copyright, both, nonetheless, are important considerations when assigning authorship credit. Commentary 19 does not address authorship, but rather suggests that "the conservation professional should publish the results of scientific investigation in peer-reviewed literature." The commentary suggests venues for publication, but not how to assign authorship. The *JAIC Submission Guidelines* define the "Corresponding Author," and the "Permissions" section says, "Authors are responsible for the content and accuracy of their articles" (AIC Directory 2000).

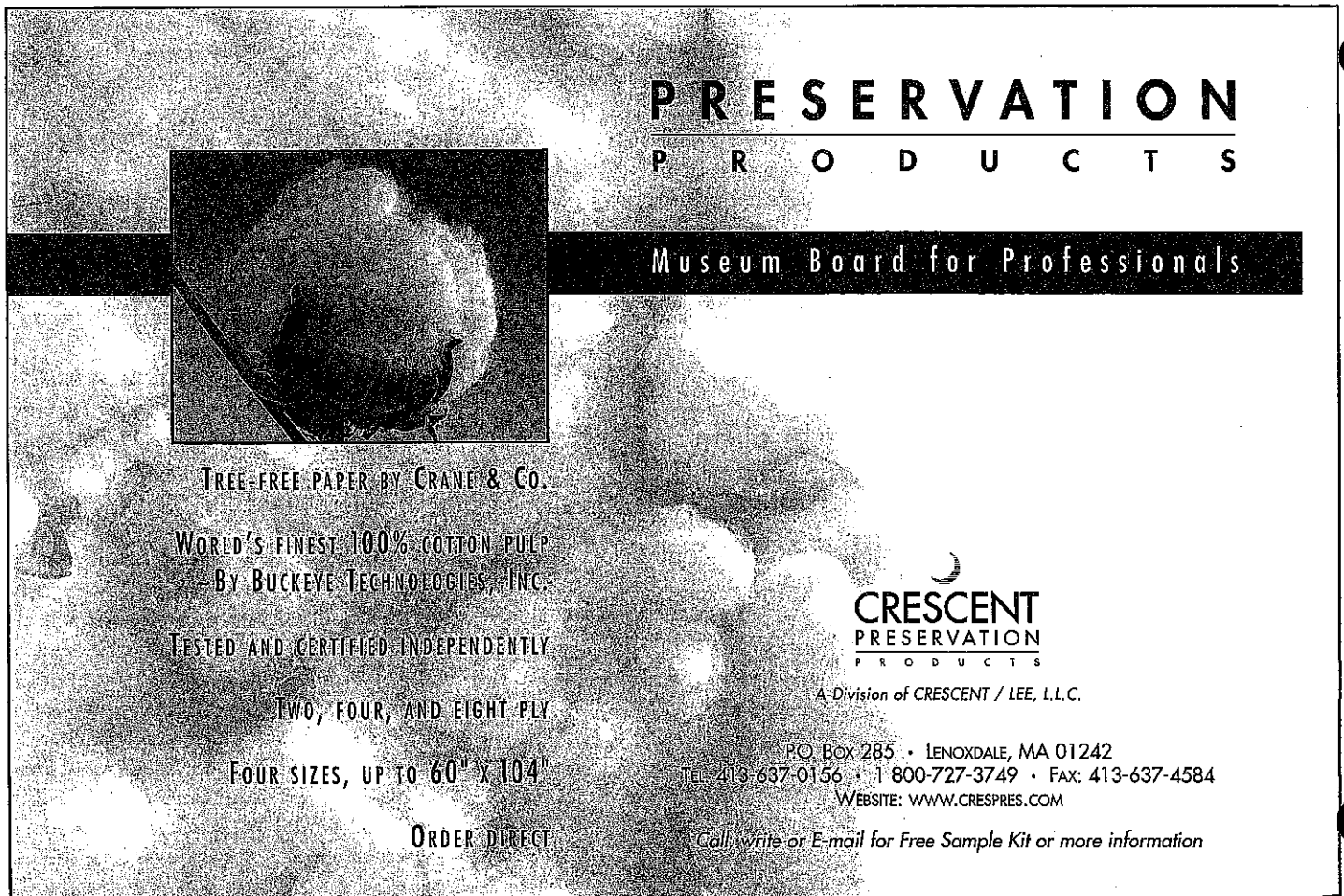
Guidelines in Other Disciplines

Numerous sources from other disciplines address the subject of authorship. Many of these sources agree that the issue of authorship is one of ethics, and all agree that authorship is a critically important

issue for anyone involved in research. Some sources assert that authorship is probably the most important acknowledgment of the contributions to a profession's body of knowledge. It is frequently the means by which our employment, promotions, grants, and peer approval are evaluated. For those investigators who are judged based on these contributions and for those institutions that deem this activity to be critical, authorship should be reserved for those and only those who have made significant intellectual contributions to the research.

Authorship is a two-fold issue: 1) Authorship credit and 2) the sequence of authors. Two additional issues arise from the issues of authorship. First, how does one handle acknowledgements? That is, who should be given authorship, and who should only be acknowledged? The other deals with the role and responsibilities of editors.

This presents a dilemma for the field of conservation. How does a field as diverse as conservation assign authorship credit



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when its members come from so many different disciplines and when its members write professional articles for so many different venues. One could argue that it would be impossible for the profession to create guidelines for authorship that would be generally applicable.

Despite this dilemma, guidelines for authorship used in other fields could easily be applied to the publications in conservation dealing with new or novel treatments, technical studies or fundamental research on the nature and behavior of art, archaeological, ethnographic, historical, or conservation materials. These guidelines could even be applied to the authorship of other written works such as reports, commentaries, letters to the editor, surveys and catalogs, to name a few additional venues.

Author Listings

Numerous examples of conservation and allied literature by a single individual as well as by multiple authors exist. When there has been any sort of collaboration—for example, when an individual calls on the expertise of others—that individual must think about who should be included as authors.

Although guidelines have been proposed and defined by various professions over the years, the guidelines that are now generally accepted by many journals and journal editors are the basic ones outlined below by Huth (1986).

All authors should have made a substantial contribution to the conception, design, analysis, or interpretation of data (or information).

They should have been involved in writing and revising the manuscript for intellectual content.

They should have approved the final draft and be able to defend the published paper.

These guidelines pose several implications. First, anyone who has been designated as an author must qualify for authorship, as described above. It follows that these authors should agree to serve in that capacity. Second, the “obvious authors” should decide who else ought to be invited as an author. The literature suggests that it is prudent, in order to avoid later misunderstandings, to make such decisions early in the research. In cases where participants change, the list of authors needs to be periodically reviewed. An important implica-

tion of the third criterion—the ability of all authors to defend the published paper—is the complete participation in the research and writing of the manuscript. This could be problematic in conservation, where research frequently involves collaborations among individuals with disparate backgrounds. These situations can easily be resolved by using endnotes to designate what role each of the authors played in the collaboration.

Choosing the Primary Author

Deciding on the “first author” or the “principal author” can be difficult. This choice is clearly defined in some fields. For example, in chemistry it is typical that the principal investigator is also the first author and the person listed first on the publication. A subordinate is rarely considered the first author (unless that person is a post-doctoral fellow). In some biological disciplines, however, the person who has contributed most to each of the three criteria will be listed first, but the principal author will be last in the list.

Subsequent Authors

Once the principal investigator and the first author have been determined, a quagmire of policies, opinions, and even politics can jam the process of choosing the order of authors. Often the order is dictated by the practice of the specific discipline or by the manuscript guidelines of the journal to which the article is being submitted. For example, some journals stipulate that authors be listed alphabetically. Sometimes the order of authors is decided by flipping a coin (which is then indicated in a footnote). The literature on authorship strongly urges that such decisions be decided jointly by the co-authors early in the research process.

Author Invitations

The guidelines for authorship imply that there are persons who cannot be justified as authors. It is not appropriate to include nonessential contributors as authors. For example, participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of routine data may not justify authorship.

Acknowledgments

Just because someone does not qualify for authorship does not mean that the authors have no further responsibilities. Authors should acknowledge the work of anyone who has participated in at least one of the areas outlined in the guidelines for authorship. For example, authors should acknowledge research assistants who perform routine work, or individuals or laboratories contracted to perform work in connection with the research. It is customary to acknowledge anyone who has given advice or a critical review of the study proposal or who has been involved in data collection, technical help, or financial or material support. It is important that such individuals or institutions grant permission to be named to avoid the inference that they are endorsing data and/or conclusions drawn by the research.

Right of Refusal

Authors should provide the option of right of refusal to the potential author; it is a breach of ethics to be listed as an author without prior knowledge because the reputation of the uninformed author may be compromised. Such an act can leave an author open to undeserved criticism or praise. Authors should always be given the opportunity to assess the validity of the research prior to being listed as an author.

Honorary Authors

While it might seem desirable at face value to be listed as an author when little contribution has been made to the research, there is a danger in agreeing to honorary author status. Fine and Kurdek (1993) explain the ethical dilemma associated with honorary authorship:

First, a publication on one's record that is not legitimately earned may falsely represent the individual's scholarly expertise. Second, if because [(s)he] is now a published author, [(s)he] is perceived as being more skilled than a peer who is not published, [(s)he] is given an unfair advan-

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tage professionally. Finally if [(s)he] is perceived to have a level of competence that [(s)he] does not actually have, [(s)he] will be expected to accomplish tasks that may be outside [his or her] range of expertise.

Editorial Responsibility

Editors are often chosen to serve in this capacity based on their expertise in a particular field. They are generally charged with assessing the content and relevancy of groups of manuscripts for a publication of compiled material. Editors are rarely included as primary authors—nor should they be—because they are not the individuals who have participated in the conception, design, analysis, or interpretation of data. They may, however, be involved in asking authors to justify their assignment of authorship. Editors may also work closely in helping authors clarify their writing, providing assistance in fitting an article to the manuscript guidelines, or participating in the review process.

Conclusions

Needless to say, many gray areas in dealing with authorship issues exist because of the ethical basis and complexity upon which decisions of author credit are made. However, because many conservation professionals are involved in adding to the profession's body of knowledge, establishing guidelines for authorship is a topic worth considering. Some very good models could be adapted for use by the conservation profession. Organizations such as the American Medical Association (International Committee 1997) as well as colleges and universities—for example, Universities of Alberta, Harvard, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Hawaii, Western Australia and Wollongong (see website listings in the sidebar)—could provide excellent examples for use by the conservation profession. While space limitations do not allow for a more detailed discussion of all of the issues surrounding assignment of authorship credit, this article should a basic foundation for further discussion within the conservation community.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge a number of my colleagues for sharing with me their thoughts on authorship in their various disciplines. My appreciation goes to Heather Youngs, Christa Mulder, and Dori Henderson from the Graduate Women in Science ListServ, Chandra Reedy of the Museum Studies Program at the University of Delaware, and Marc Walton, my graduate intern.

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Some Online Resources

University of Western Australia

<http://www.gu.uwa.edu.au/departments/psa/draftcode/att4.html>

University of Western Australia

<http://www.gu.uwa.edu.au/departments/psa/draftcode/author.html>

University of Wollongong

<http://www.uow.edu.au/research/authorship/authorship.html>

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

<http://www.als.uiuc.edu/pubs/misc/apa.html>

University of Hawaii

<http://www.pbrc.hawaii.edu/~lab/labonly/authorship.html>

University of Alberta

http://www.ualberta.ca/~univhall/vprea/re_ser/repol76.htm

Tour Cancellations

The Longwood Garden and Philadelphia Center City tours have been cancelled due to low registration.

Refunds will be issued within 30 days of the conclusion of the annual meeting.