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The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice, edited by Chris Scarre & Geoffrey Scarre, 2006. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; ISBN 0-521-84011-2 hardback £45 & US$80; ISBN 0-521-54942-6 paperback £19.99 & US$34.99; xi+318 pp., 1 table

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The Ethics of Archaeology has been carefully planned and assembled by the archaeologist Chris Scarre and the philosopher Geoffrey Scarre; and rewarding this book certainly is. The editors determined that an about equal number of contributions from archaeologists and philosophers should be able to advance important debates in archaeological ethics, for the benefit of both disciplines. Such a project is rare, and one wonders if it takes the chemistry between two brothers to make it happen. Together they compiled a truly unique volume which brought together ten archaeologists, four anthropologists and seven philosophers. Among the fifteen chapters, four have been co-authored by at least one archaeologist and one philosopher whereas the others are written within the context of only one discipline.

The issues addressed in this volume are some of the most important ones archaeologists are facing today, and they are political to the same extent as they are ethical. Just like other recent volumes on archaeological ethics (Lynott & Wylie 2000; Karlsson 2004;

Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006), the present volume underlines the political currency of the broadly defined field of archaeology. Topics addressed include ongoing conflicts regarding the legitimate ownership of archaeological finds; the complicated relations between professional archaeologists on the one hand and Native American groups on the other hand; the existence or otherwise of moral rights of the dead in relation to archaeologists excavating their graves; and controversies regarding the idea and use of the concept of 'world heritage'. Archaeologists are thus well advised to consider seriously the arguments made in this book. Members of other disciplines are likely to gain significant new insights about the amazing politics of the past in the contemporary world.

One specific issue addressed is the problem of 'illicit antiquities' and the 'looting' of archaeological sites. Julie Hollowell reminds us that it is inappropriate to condemn outright the so-called looting of ancient artefacts. She rightly points out that the term 'looter' lumps together people with very diverse motivations and interests, none of whom would refer to themselves as 'looters'. Hollowell's prime attention is to poor people engaged in what she calls 'subsistence digging', the finding and selling of archaeological finds to support their basic requirements of subsistence. From an ethical position, people may indeed be justified under certain conditions of poverty to treat archaeological goods as an economic resource. This ought not to be controversial, given that most archaeologists are likely to agree that concern for artefacts or sites should never come before concern for human life. Hollowell cites one Alaskan who digs for ancient ivory artefacts and stated that 'our ancestors used ivory to make the tools they needed for survival. We have a different use for ivory today, but it is no less important for *our* survival' (p. 79). Bob Layton & Gillian Wallace similarly emphasize in their paper that 'the meaning of things inevitably changes' as they move from one realm of use and appropriation to another (p. 57) — archaeological uses constituting no more than one such realm.

Some of the larger underlying issues are also addressed in Leo Groarke & Gary Warrick's critique of the Society for American Archaeology's (SAA) principle of stewardship. Among others, they raise the important question of why a professional organization like the SAA should tell any non-Western community how they should and should not use their ancestral heritage. The archaeological preference for the preservation of heritage does not arise from a special awareness and ethical duty of archaeologists but simply from one particular perspective on the past and its remains that is shared by (many) archaeologists but not by all existing stakeholders including, for example, subsistence diggers.

In this light, I can only agree with Groarke & Warrick (pp. 172–3) that it is inappropriate to define 'stewardship' exclusively in terms of preservation, ignoring other human needs and desires, and to do this with a code of ethics or conduct disqualifying alternative strategies as unethical or misconduct. As Jeffrey Bendremer & Kenneth Richman point out, Native American participants in early archaeological excavation projects often considered them as essentially indistinguishable from those of looters who plundered sites for pleasure and profit. In short, different uses and perceptions of archaeological sites and artefacts are ultimately political and ideological rather than strictly moral matters and they should be openly discussed as such.

Whereas all the papers assembled here are eminently readable in their own right, it is a pity that they had obviously not been circulated among the authors in order to inspire direct discussion on matters of mutual concern to members of the two (or indeed three) disciplines. To me, the most successful parts of the book are a few glimpses of what such a discussion might look like. For example, Geoffrey Scarre engages directly in one footnote with a point made to him by his brother. Chris Scarre had told him about anthropological concepts of relational identities and distributed personhood, that in some instances individual persons may better be understood as *dividual* entities and that parts of the relations that form such a person can thus be harmed even after death. Although Sarah Tarlow raises a similar point in relation to a previously published paper by Geoffrey Scarre, I would have liked to read a more extensive discussion of the possible ethical consequences of such a view: would archaeologists have to consider bones as parts of persons rather than as the physical remains of persons that no longer exist? Can there be material parts of persons unrelated to bodies and might they likewise be treated as 'human remains' and possibly be subject to claims by descendant communities? And which additional ethical dilemmas might derive from a view of the archaeologists themselves as distributed persons?

Arguably, dialogue would have been particularly desirable when issues are raised about the other discipline that its own members would probably never have formulated in quite the same way. I for one would like to know how a seasoned archaeologist would reason regarding James Young's distinction between archaeologists discovering either lost or abandoned property. Would an archaeologist always want to agree that in the case of archaeological evidence that is abandoned property 'those who originally owned it have forfeited their claim to it' so that 'it may be appropriated by the first person who finds it' (p. 21)? By the same token, precisely how might an archaeologist, or for that matter an anthropologist, respond to Oliver Leaman's intriguing suggestion that our society might want to look after archaeological artefacts in the same way it looks after children and animals?

It occurred to me while reading this book that nearly all the issues discussed, although generally relevant to all archaeologists, are rather remote from the daily practices of many as contractors, managers, teachers, authors, researchers, intellectuals etc. (Pluciennik 2001). In most parts of Europe, looting, non-Western perspectives, and indigenous claims to burials are largely of theoretical interest. At the same time, there are many issues in urgent need of more discussion. They range from student–supervisor and client–contractor relations to human relations and group dynamics in the field, from the temptations and responsibilities of academic peer-review to the politics of local decision-making and national quality assessment criteria, from dilemmas in furthering one's own career *vis à vis* one's colleagues', employees' or students' to the growing power of academic publishers and editors, and from choosing an appropriate degree of implementing political directives to the democratic duty to speak out against any kind of suspected injustice and unfair discrimination. There is much that could be learned from case studies and informative ethical reasoning concerning issues many archaeologists actually face daily in their professional lives.

As Chris and Geoffrey Scarre rightly point out in their introduction, 'we should be good persons before being good archaeologists' (p. 4). But it remains open as to precisely what this might entail for an archaeologist. This volume and its recent companions make me want to see in the future a broader discussion of practical ethics applicable to archaeologists as persons.

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