Ethics in Archaeological Practice

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Abstract

In this text the ethical dimensions of Swedish archaeology will be discussed from several angles – those of the archaeology of the past, critical archaeology, contemplative archaeology, and antiquarian archaeology. These themes overlap in the various fields of archaeology. In my opinion ethical perspectives on archaeological practice are vital for the survival and legitimacy of archaeology. Thus, archaeologists should to an even greater extent relate "their" archaeology to the world at large. The types of archaeology represented in teaching, research, mediation, and in the preservation of our cultural heritage, relate to a complex reality in which human dignity, fairness and responsibility are high-priority ethical problems. In consequence, the ethics of archaeology include examining the epistemological outlook of the archaeologists as well as the objective of archaeology in society – whether this involves reconstructing the past, critical archaeology, contemplative archaeology or antiquarian archaeology.

Introduction

Ethical discussion does not come easy to the archaeological community. Accordingly, it is important to define what archaeological activities might have ethical implications, and to examine to what extent a scrutiny of the norms and values of our particular system might be facilitated by the structure of which archaeology is a part. In my opinion the concept of ethics is not limited to how interpretations of history are exploited for political purposes, or how trading in archaeological objects is dependent on capitalist considerations. Ethics also include the epistemological outlook of archaeologists, as well as what individual archaeologists choose to emphasize, i.e. their personal wishes to elaborate and evaluate their

professional achievements. Yet another ethical dimension of archaeology is the awareness of its particular position in a wider context.

What is concerned are the objectives of archaeological practice, and whether these include desirable qualities of life. What are the fundamental norms and values that characterize archaeological activities? In the survey below I will make use of cases taken from such Swedish archaeological traditions as are expressed mainly in the journal *Current Swedish Archaeology*. I am well aware that my choices may reflect only a limited part of the involvement of the archaeological community in ethical issues and my examples are chosen to show their interest. Swedish archaeological traditions are not notably different from those of other countries. I intend, however, to examine the ethical aspects of archaeological activities, and to find out to what extent Swedish archaeological practice has been inspired by the historical and social background of the country. Will there be scope for alternative procedures?

The straitened circumstances for Swedish educational and cultural institutions have forced Swedish archaeologists to assert the role of archaeology in society. One approach to discussing the bearing of archaeology on society would be to find out what ethical dimensions are represented in the various fields of archaeology. How does archaeology contribute to our historical awareness? How does it promote a scrutiny of attitudes in a complex reality in which human dignity, fairness and responsibility are problematic ethical issues.

These archaeological fields have different aims, hence the prerequisites for questioning the traditional norms differ as well. Naturally, the values of our age will be evident in archaeology, comprising as it does teaching, research, mediation, and preservation of the cultural heritage. On that account archaeological practice displays a large number of different properties. There are different rationales for what archaeologists do and for what they do not care to do, which questions they decide to ask and which they avoid asking.

A number of conventions concerning archaeology and archaeological practice have been passed both by the United Nations and by European countries. For instance, in the early 1990s the Malta convention was passed by some twenty countries, including Sweden. This European convention applies to the protection of the archaeological heritage. Its general intent is that archaeology is a

source for the collective memory of the countries of Europe, and an instrument for the study of their history. The Malta convention, which has now been signed by almost every European country, has been subject to changes. Although it has had a certain impact its scope has gradually been limited to cover chiefly finds and excavations (Trotzig 2001). Conventions dealing with various types of trading in cultural objects have been far less successful; Sweden is among the countries reluctant to sign the Unesco Convention of 1970 (Lundén and Häggström 1999: 93). In spite of pressure from professional archaeologists with media backing, Sweden has still not signed this convention – which among other things outlaws the import of stolen objects.

During the past few years ethical discussions within the Swedish archaeological community have been devoted chiefly to the managing of bones, the role of archaeologists in overseas projects, and the trade in archaeological objects (Iregren and Werbart 1994; Iregren and Redin 1995; Lundén and Häggström 1999). In the autumn of 2000 the Swedish Archaeological Society arranged a minor conference at the East Asia Museum in Stockholm. The theme of the conference was "Swedish archaeology in foreign countries – ethical aspects". The conference was intended to reflect the long tradition of Swedish archaeologists undertaking projects in foreign countries, but also to focus on the problems occasioned by such projects. Another intention was to discuss the international trade in archaeological objects mentioned above, and the involvement that Swedish museums might have in this trade (Ringstedt 2001). The forthcoming anthology *Swedish Archaeologists on Ethics* voices other aspects of ethical dimensions discussed within the Swedish archaeological community.
For the needs of Swedish archaeology a document, "Guidelines for good archaeological practice", was accepted at the third meeting of the Swedish Archaeological Society at Östersund, in May 2000. The wording of this document had been discussed within the Swedish Archaeological Society after the "EAA principles of conduct for archaeologists involved in contract archaeological work" had been accepted at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Gothenburg (Thomas 1999). The "Guidelines for good archaeological practice" published by the Swedish Archaeological Society is based mainly on the EAA principles mentioned, and refer to the public responsibility of archaeologists for

preserving the cultural heritage. Besides clauses on teaching, research and mediation these guidelines include clauses relating to cultural resource management.

In the following I will choose not to discuss archaeological practice according to specific clauses in the document. Instead I will focus on the different types of archaeological activities. In this way I hope to bring forward such aspects on archaeological practice as were not emphasized in the document, although in my opinion they are crucial to the survival and legitimacy of the discipline.

These ethical guidelines concerning good archaeological practice apply as well to every category of archaeologist in the country. As in other countries, archaeologists are represented in several types of positions, where they work with teaching, research, disseminating results, and the preservation of the cultural heritage. Below, I will discuss ethical issues and Swedish archaeology in pursuing four themes traversing different archaeological fields. I have chosen four central and fundamental archaeological approaches. Describing the prehistoric period may be called an "archaeology of the past", organizing archaeological activities in accordance with legislation may be called an "antiquarian archaeology". In discussing ethics "critical archaeology" may be the most fundamental perspective in archaeology. In my opinion interesting approaches are offered also by a "contemplative archaeology", approaches which will be of increasing importance.

My intention is to bring out those ethical perspectives which characterize various archaeological practices prevalent in Swedish archaeology. The angle of my approach has been determined by my own position in a large and ancient university. The crass cost-benefit argumentation of the powers that be has made me wonder about the place of academic scholarship in improving undergraduate as well as postgraduate teaching. Billy Ehn, an ethnologist, finds it hard to work in the humanities, gaining from history and culture all sorts of insights about man but all the time suspecting that there is a deep chasm between realization and action (Ehn 2001: 13). Will we be given an opportunity to make use of our research, and all our scholarly exertions, in the world outside the groves of Academe, now that we are barely allowed to use them within the universities?

The archaeology of the past

One of the most significant commitments of archaeology is, and has always been, to tell people what things were like in an age older than our extant traditions. In consequence, reconstruction of objects and events has been the leading field in archaeological research, in fact what most often comes to mind when archaeology is mentioned. Generally it might be said that the term 'archaeology of the past' covers the study of people, cultures and societies in a long-term perspective. Since archaeology was first introduced as an academic discipline archaeologists have categorized, described, analysed and interpreted evidence of human life in the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. *Time, space, function, symbolism* and *context* are a few words that characterize reconstructions of the past.

The principal departure in archaeological research is the material culture, but written sources are utilized as well. The methods archaeologists have used to gain knowledge of the past have varied over time. Constant and fundamental in their search for knowledge about people in a distant past has been, and remains, the question of the interdependence of form and substance. What is the relationship between the material culture described and analysed by archaeologists, and the meanings and implications given to this material culture in days gone by? Since anthropological analyses show that the same type of material culture can have different significations, depending on the context, this basic issue is an existential problem in archaeology. However, despite its importance, the attention given to this issue has been varying throughout the history of archaeology. During the 1960s and 1970s, when archaeological research was predominantly economic and ecological, the significance of the material culture was all but neglected. Today, archaeology is busy looking at how the people of yesterday related with each other and with their habitat. The endeavours to solve the basic archaeological problems have thus led to contacts not only with such disciplines as sociology, social anthropology, ethnology, comparative religion, human ecology, and history, but also with the sciences.

It is an established fact that different theoretical approaches lead to different interpretations of the past. There is also a growing acceptance of even ambiguous interpretations. Since homogeneous meta-

theories have gone out of fashion each period and phenomenon will instead be given a diversity of significances. There is thus, among archaeologists as well, a lost faith in the "modern project". The concepts of science and rationality are called in question. The scrutiny of basic values opens interesting ethical perspectives, as does the archaeologists' epistemological outlook. In their scholarly endeavours the archaeologists reveal what they regard as valuable for an understanding of history.

In my opinion there is a danger that reconstructions of prehistory are seen as truths, not as the fictions they actually are. A rich stock of myths has grown up about man in the distant past. Who among us does not recognize the women grinding and the men hunting (fig. 1)? Who has not heard that it was when grain was first grown in the Neolithic Age that man began to transform and control nature? Who has not imagined an idyllic, opulent and beautiful Bronze Age? Who has not heard of Odin's Sleipnir or Thor's rams, the beasts that steadfastly serve the gods?

Fig. 1. Toil and trouble. The sex roles are apparently firmly set (after Figuier 1870: 206).

Fig.2. Antiquity as a model. Bronze Age gardening (after Figuier 1870: 329).

The issues brought forward in archaeology are marked by the conceptions and fundamental values of our time. It may be said that the archaeological reconstructions of prehistoric communities are modern constructions, in the same way as Talal Asad, an American professor of comparative religion, sees religion as a historical category which, emerging in the West, was subsequently introduced as a universal concept (Asad 1993). In the archaeological discipline there is cause for questioning the departures for these reconstructions of the past. The archaeologists should make it clear that these are fictions about the past, not truths (cp. the session on *Studies on relations in prehistoric procedures – fictions as truths*, 6th Nordic TAG, Oslo 2001, in Jennbert 2002). Interpretations of the past are dependent on today's values. Archaeologists participated in shaping modern Sweden, and their methods, and interpretations of prehistory, were in turn influenced by the modern country they had helped to shape (Magnusson Staaf 2000; Svedin 2000).

The archaeology of the past – i.e. what is generally meant by archaeology – extends throughout the entire discipline. In undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, as well as in research, reconstructing the past is by far the predominant type of archaeology. The common stock of archaeological myths is constantly brought up, not

only in disseminating archaeological finds but also among the archaeologists themselves, on their home ground. Just as a rumour may after some time be mistaken for a truth a 19th-century interpretation may become a truth in an archaeological account from the early 21st century. That is why, when teaching, it is important not to discuss the modern archaeological myths without critical reference to the sources, and to apply a critical mind to interpretations of the past.

Also in cultural resource management and in disseminating results reconstructions of the past are the indisputably most important objective for archaeology. What is good, high-quality scholarship is in itself not beyond dispute. Unfortunately, what is generally emphasized is the *fictional* character of the interpretations, as well as their origin in a particular epistemological outlook. In order to question archaeological reconstructions I would like to stress the importance for archaeologists of self-examination, and of reflection on the real significance of these evocations of the past. There is no doubt that the workings of the archaeologists' minds are influenced by their images of human beings, and their norms and values in the continually growing society around them.

Critical archaeology

Critical archaeology is the outer manifestation of the internal self-reflection of archaeologists. Post-processual and feminist archaeology came into being in the 1970s, and both these perspectives were instrumental in establishing a critical archaeology. Archaeologists as well have to a very great extent been influenced by the concept of 'the other'. As they considered their individual situations in research they began to question their own scholarly objectivity and their impartiality on values. The critics perceived and emphasized the ideological and political dimensions of the archaeological discipline, pointing out that researchers must inevitably be influenced by the age they live in. Below, I will bring up some examples of archaeological departure points and problem fields which I believe to be crucial for this self-examination of the archaeologists.

Questions regarding archaeologists' attitudes to knowledge and scholarship, to gender and to 'the other', are essential in teaching and

research, and in disseminating results. In my opinion the necessity of scrutinizing the departure points for archaeological reasoning can never be over-emphasized. Such scrutiny is part of the ethics of archaeology and the basis of its legitimacy. Since the 1970s the debates on different approaches have virtually ballooned (cf. Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 1987b). In Scandinavian archaeology as well there was a burgeoning critical school, gradually to put its stamp on various archaeological environments, particularly in Norway and Sweden (cf. Olsen 1997: 67-68, 219-68; Hegardt 2000; Sørensen 2000; Arwill-Nordbladh 2001).

The traditional scholarly models were called in question. A number of voices from the research seminar at the department of archaeology in Lund will probably be representative of the academic climate. In the spring of 1985 I introduced a research seminar on the theme "Scholarly/Research procedure – what is it?" by giving the participants the unexpected task of answering this very question. Some thirty answers that they jotted down indicate their great disagreement and consternation about what this procedure might be. A few examples: "Research procedure: descriptions of the state of the world. Hypotheses are tested by verification/falsification through logical analysis or empirical experiment"; "a truer knowledge than belief, experience, and understanding"; "a rational way of seeking knowledge about the world"; and "creativity, analytical skill, critical judgment". Today's students might very well give the same answers, and in the various archaeological environments there is a great variety of views on knowledge and scholarship. Critical archaeology is determined rather by the archaeologists' individual readiness for self-reflection than by the general targets within their work fields.

A concept that archaeologists should look into much more closely than they have done so far is that of 'culture'. Used inadvisedly this concept will lead to unwanted consequences. What sort of associations do archaeologists get when they hear the word 'culture'? On closer inspection reconstructions of the past are built on a foundation of archaeological theories and methods dating from the 19th century. In archaeology the concept of 'culture' is still associated with characteristics formulated in the doctrine of cultural spheres (Kulturkreis), the same characteristics that have so often been used for nationalistic purposes. In archaeology 'culture' was the equivalent of 'common origin and identity', and as a consequence of the

archaeologists' efforts to classify the material culture they found, chronologically and geographically, borders were created that had to be defended. An explanation often put forward by archaeologists for prehistoric transformations of a "pure culture" is the concept of 'migration'. This concept, too, poses problems; it presupposes that there has somewhere, at some time, existed a homogeneous culture. Multicultural societies may not be a novel phenomenon (Cassel 2000). In view of the state of the late capitalist and post-colonial world there is, in my opinion, a danger that 'culture' may lead to both oppression and exclusion. In war 'culture' seems to be transformed into a defensive bulwark, doing additional service as a barrier against human rights.

The concept of 'culture' leads on to questions on the view of 'the other', and involves issues covered by international law and specific humanitarian law. The clauses in humanitarian law have over the centuries grown out of customs. Obviously there are extremely awkward cases of experts using archaeological arguments for supporting interventions in another state, or one of the parties in a conflict. In 1991 an Iraqi professor of archaeology spoke out in favour of the invasion of Kuwait, and the very same week there were news broadcasts from the Baltic countries introducing historical arguments for their independence. In 2000 the Afghan Taliban blew away offensive statues of Buddha. There are countless examples of archaeology being used for colonialist, racialist and political purposes. It is impossible to deny that archaeology is used to endorse oppression, and to defend crimes against human rights and principles of humanitarian law. Questions on the view of 'the other' also bear upon the conventions that regulate the Swedish antiquarian archaeology. These will be discussed below, in connection with questions on the cultural heritage.

Since our attitudes to knowledge and scholarship influence our interpretations of the past, as well as of the present, feminist archaeology and gender structures give perspectives on our own age. Questions on sex roles and sexuality turn the customary gender roles and family patterns upside down. The gender perspective also makes it possible to put the spotlight on the archaeological discipline itself, its images of the human being and, as a consequence, androcentrism and Western European ethnocentrism. Since our views of the people of the past are shaped by the present-day conceptions archaeological

interpretations of the past are dependent on our modern views on gender and equality. Here we find links to the different working conditions for female and male archaeologists, and to the emancipation that only in the mid-20th century made it possible for more women to work as professional archaeologists.

From an ethical perspective it is interesting to discuss what spheres it is that are analysed and discussed by archaeologists. Not long ago it was regarded as impossible to study prehistoric religion through archaeology. However, following a post-processual view of material culture the archaeology of rituals is today an established field of research, in which the study of rituals and myths give perspectives on unfamiliar encounters. In the pre-Christian period people probably categorized the world around them differently. Reaching beyond Christianity, to find other images handed on and transformed by tradition, gives perspectives on age-old syncretistic customs. Different types of material culture – objects, ruins, landscapes and written sources – are departures for the study of ritual practices in relation to mythological conceptions.

In short, ever since the 19th century pre-Christian religion has been discussed in several countries, from several theoretical angles, evolutionist, diffusionist, functionalist or structuralist. Prehistoric religion used to be a field for scholars in comparative religion and anthropology. Now that the archaeological interest in material culture, with contextual and symbolic connotations, is added to the research in rituals carried out within religious studies conditions are favourable for the study of religion also through archaeology (Jennbert, Andrén and Raudvere 2002). Attempting to discuss Christianization in terms of mentality and ideology touches upon the important question of whether novel religious systems were adopted more readily by the aristocracy than by the masses of the population (Gräslund 2001). Studies in this archaeology of rituals often have extended time perspectives. Among other things they confront the idea of homogeneous religious systems, racialist mysticism and New Age movements, as well as the political right wing of the last decade (Raudvere, Andrén and Jennbert 2002).

Yet another issue that illustrates the type of problems that archaeologists might investigate is the links between culture and nature and the relationship between man and animal. In the pre-Christian North there seem to have been alternatives to the anthropocentric

conception of the universe. If this type of research is added to international conventions on the environment, on the world cultural heritage, on wetlands, flora and fauna, our annals of the past dates back several thousand years. Thus, nature and culture are no obvious categories and cannot be regarded as opposites. Another phenomenon that is brought out by the extended time perspective of archaeology is the undoubted metaphorical significance of animals. This issue is motivated by a critical view of civilization, and reveals a complex reality with links to today's environmental and animal ethics.

Consequently, a critical attitude is in many ways essential to the entire discipline of archaeology. Unless we take time for self-reflection, unless we ask ourselves what sort of knowledge it is that we reconstruct and reproduce, archaeology will be reduced to "a game of glass beads". Archaeologists will use their elaborate classifications to wall themselves up against the disorderly world outside (cp. Hermann Hesse's novel *Das Glasperlenspiel*, 1943), but their intra-mural problems will be many.

Scrutinizing the modern myths of archaeology (cp. figs. 1 and 2) and the extremely valuable approaches introduced by post-processual and feminist archaeology, and by the view of "the other", is vital for the survival of archaeology in the present age. In my opinion the impact of critical archaeology has been strong among Swedish archaeologists, despite the varying tasks they work with in different environments. The most important place for critical archaeology is in teaching and research, but it is required also in publicizing and popularizing archaeological findings, and in antiquarian archaeology. We can never stop asking ourselves why and in what ways archaeology concerns us.

Contemplative archaeology

A quite different type of archaeology is the one we might call *contemplative*. It is only in the last few years that a sort of existential archaeology has been formulated, inspired by Heidegger's philosophy. It is by nature self-reflecting, and the object of the material culture is to be a basis for reflection. It is not used because of *what* it is, but because it *is*. We might say contemplative archaeology is more concerned with the present than with the past – archaeology leads to

self-reflection and consideration in our modern world. This is at least the definition given to contemplative archaeology by Håkan Karlsson, who contends that it enriches our archaeological insight and our existence as archaeologists (Karlsson 1998).

The contemplative archaeology also inspires us to question the anthropocentric departure characterized the whole gamut of theoretical perspectives in archaeology. Somehow, archaeology becomes terapeutic, satisfying not only the demands for wide-ranging accounts of what things were like in the long distant past but also of what it is today (Karlsson 1999).

If there is anything that is of importance in our time it is material objects – things, contraptions, gadgets, odds and ends, or whatever name we give them. We surround ourselves, as a matter of course, with absolutely indispensable things that some fifty years ago were utterly unknown. Man creates a meaning for himself through buying and using commodities. Without wishing to bolster the market economy I might say that while, on the face of it, inanimate objects were ostensibly used to give people a meaning in their life, paradoxically also take on a meaning of their own. For this very reason the archaeological focus on material objects might help people to re-cover themselves, to be able to discover the beauties and qualities of life. I regard the contemplative archaeology as adding valuable ethical dimensions to the archaeological profession.

Antiquarian archaeology

It is in the antiquarian archaeology that most archaeologists in this country are working. Swedish archaeology, as well as the collections of its finds, is largely a consequence of cultural resource management (what used to be called rescue archaeology). It is also the authorities responsible for the protection of the cultural heritage that administer the largest financial resources necessary for archaeological undertakings and assignments. In protecting the cultural heritage it is primarily the archaeology of the past that is instrumental, through planning and implementing the intentions of the law. Because of the hierarchy of these authorities, as well as their obligation to conduct financial negotiations before archaeological assignments can be carried out, the latitude for the archaeologists to combine their

excavations with critical or contemplative archaeology is quite limited. It would be a gain for Swedish archaeology if an interactive approach could be used in which theory and practices were joined. In such a way academic teaching and research would tie up even better with antiquarian archaeology and cultural resource management (Berggren 2001).

The basic idea in the Swedish legislation on the cultural heritage is preservation. It is possible that the fact that archaeology has the backing of the law promotes a conservative and traditional attitude in Swedish archaeology, although there are several exceptions. Perhaps their secure and well established position in society is the reason why archaeologists gather facts. They prefer to do puzzles rather than giving archaeology a provocative profile in their teaching and research, in mediation, and by participating in a general debate on the humanities in the mass media.

The protection of the Swedish cultural heritage is regulated also by European and world-wide conventions. All over the world archaeologists, as well as authorities charged with protecting the cultural environment, are working for human rights and adherence to humanitarian laws. The United Nations and other international organizations specify principles for the right to autonomy of every nation. United Nations conventions on civil and political rights also concern economic, social and cultural rights. In this context it is important that ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities should be entitled to their own cultural heritage. No person should be subjected to discrimination on account of race, sex, language, or ethnicity (Bring and Mahmoudi 2001: 98-99). In some cases ethnic minorities that have been settled in a region since time immemorial, or that have been forced out by imperialist states, have managed to strengthen their judicial claims by co-operating with archaeologists and anthropologists.

Archaeologists are active in lawsuits concerning the territorial rights of the Aborigines. A pressing and hotly debated question is the relations between Sámi and non-Sámi in northern Scandinavia. It was only in the early 20th century that Sámi fraternities were formed, reacting against the Swedish agricultural colonization. The breeding of reindeer, which involves territorial rights, became a burning question. Reindeer breeding rests on ancient tradition, and remains a complex issue in which archaeologists have taken part on both the

Sámi and the Swedish side. Issues in humanitarian law are thus quite important in the relationship between Sámi and non-Sámi and the rights of the Sámi to their cultural heritage.

If the archaeological community is to avoid political manipulations of the cultural heritage it must make ethical decisions on the suitable approach in such questions. According to Kristian Kristiansen there should be an ethical rule stating that archaeologists cannot and should not support today's ideological or political claims. What is right or wrong in the use of the past cannot be determined by objective or non-ideological methods (Kristiansen 1998). Besides, an un-reflected attitude to the prehistory of one's country leads to abuse of the archaeological heritage, whether the forum is an exhibition (Lundström and Pilvesmaa 1998) or the archaeological discipline itself (Østigaard 2001).

Ethical dimensions on antiquarian archaeology are also dependent on the accessibility of the cultural heritage, which after all has a large number of aspects. Should only healthy people with good eyes, good hearing, and strong legs, be able to enjoy the cultural heritage? Human rights, as agreed on in international declarations, apply to every individual; hence they impose far-reaching demands on authorities responsible for antiquarian archeology and the communication of archaeology. Whether a cultural heritage is accessible depends also on who you are and where you live. In small regions the conditions are quite different from those in large urban areas. In the spring of 2001 the Swedish government initiated a large scale campaign in the cultural field, when the project "Agenda kulturarv", designed to extend over several years, was started. The project is intended to find formats for the so-called "democratic cultural heritage", for giving the people an opportunity to share in it, for a dialogue with the people, and for the integration of this heritage into the development of the community. This project may turn out to be quite interesting, since the reasons for the preservation and dissemination of the cultural heritage are not obvious. Preserving the cultural heritage is not an indisputable concern, nor is archaeology an indispensable necessity (Wienberg 1999). In order to widen the perspectives on the cultural heritage we must go beyond archaeology, to people's fundamental need for a history, a mythology and an allegiance.

Several aspects of the cultural heritage are linked in particular to its selection and accessibility. Nor is it linked solely to the historical and social background in Sweden, it may be relevant also to people from other parts of the world. Different groups of people have different views on what is worth preserving, thus the antiquarian authorities should be open to a dialogue with laymen (Burström 2001). Since a multi-channel communication is necessary new roads must be opened to make way for contacts both between different archaeological institutions (universities, museums, protection of the cultural heritage), and with the interested public. Encounters between archaeologists and the public are particularly important, since it is in these contacts that archaeology can find justification (Karlsson and Nilsson 2001). A skilfully made selection of our archaeological and topographical heritage has a great influence on what images are created of the past. It is thus equally important to consider sex and gender in the cultural environments selected. This is crucial if the intention is to create a gender-neutral cultural heritage in which one half of the population has not been rendered invisible (Magnus and Morger 1994). It should also be possible to consider the archaeological heritage as more multi-cultural and universal, not as linked to a specific population (Burström 1999). The encounter with the past can be an encounter with the unexpected, an encounter between 'us' and 'them' (Eriksen 1993). Thus, antiquarian archaeology involves several ethical problems which demand well-considered decisions in managing a cultural heritage.

Ethics and archaeological practice

The extended time-perspective of archaeology makes it possible to write a history across chronological and cultural boundaries, by bringing to the fore attitudes on and impressions of various patterns of human life. Archaeology can be found in museums and reconstructed prehistoric villages, on radio and television, in periodicals and in books. Archaeology is attractive to the mass media and interesting to the general public. Never before have archaeology and history been as much in demand as in our time. Could it be that the past is a sort of Paradise Island, a fantasy or an illusion?

In a world with unstable political situations and a world-wide information coverage archaeology is, in my opinion faced with more pressing demands. Ethical issues are increasingly important in our society, on the political arena but also in commonplace situations and person-to-person relationships. In the humanities and the social sciences opinions oscillate between the rational world view of the Enlightenment and the conviction of the Romantic Age that throughout history man has been his own creation. Norms and values are linked with ideologies and religions, and a topical subject for discussion in waning welfare societies, in which the boundaries between rich and poor, between regions and countries, are unsolved problems. Issues of identity, ethnicity and nationalism are followed by issues of human rights and humanitarian law.

In the archaeological community some work with protecting the cultural heritage while others work in universities and museums. The four themes that I have chosen to call "archaeology of the past", "critical archaeology", "contemplative archaeology", and "antiquarian archaeology" overlap, and must not be regarded as separate spheres of interest. Whether archaeologists are really concerned with something on which ethical considerations might have bearing depends on where in these fields they are working. Unfortunately, it is not every type of archaeological activity that provides opportunities to examine the norms and values of one's own particular system.

In Sweden the archaeological practice is founded on an antiquarian tradition dating back four centuries. On numerous occasions international archaeological conventions have been used to good effect in the management of the archaeological heritage. These conventions prove that the legislations of different European countries rest on national traditions. In this respect antiquarian archaeology is deeply rooted in the Swedish social and historical traditions. There is no doubt that this long tradition, in a country that has been spared war and devastation for two centuries, has influenced the outlook on archaeological practice. Archaeology has various manifestations and purposes. The hierarchy of professional archaeologists is entrusted with various functions in society. Since their tasks are different they cannot analyse their particular archaeological activities on a uniform basis. In all these fields archaeology is bound up with the present age, and so is political and ideological by nature. Hence it is necessary to examine the

reconstructions made of the past, and how antiquarian archaeology is implemented and made accessible. Thus, the next generations of archaeologists will benefit from our self-critical outlook on archaeology and its activities (Karlsson 2000). For the sake of future archaeologists it is also vital that the teaching of archaeology takes into account the role played by the discipline in society, and includes e.g. critical archaeology, gender archaeology or contemplative archaeology (Lövkvist and Hjørungdal 2000). Accordingly, the responsibility for examining their own attitude and what type of activities they undertake as professionals rests on archaeologists in all fields of the discipline.

Unfortunately, archaeologists are notably absent in debates on general issues within e.g. religion, health, the environment, multiculturalism, identity, or on the significance of material culture, nature, and the arts. Although the perspectives of archaeology are universal it seems as though archaeologists are just dragged along by trains of rational and utilitarian thoughts on their own exclusive activities, thoughts that are quite often motivated by a sentimental and somewhat romantic fascination with days gone by.

In my opinion archaeology, too, has a share in an examination of our own age, and is thus linked to the public debate on the cultural policy. Through its extended time perspective it facilitates questioning ingrained opinions. The archaeologists must examine their own epistemological outlook, as well as the fundamental values of their discipline. Archaeology may function as a sort of vehicle for criticizing our civilisation, thus providing angles for scrutinizing the present day and its consciousness of history. However, words and concepts used in archaeology do not always coincide with the phraseology used by for example social scientists, philosophers and politicians in discussing ethics. They are fond of such terms as "modern project" and "post-modernism". But there are several archaeological problems that can be discussed in terms of ethics and concern major ethical issues such as human rights, humanitarian law, social justice, and the fusion of individuality with welfare for all. Since the intra-disciplinary issues are always connected with society at large the prevailing sets of values are implicitly linked with the practical as well as the theoretical aspects of archaeology. Ethical perspectives on archaeological practice are vital for the survival and legitimacy of archaeology. The types of archaeology represented in

teaching, research, mediations, and in the preservation of our cultural heritage, relate to a complex reality in which human dignity, fairness and responsibility are high-priority ethical problems. In consequence, the ethics of archaeology include examining the epistemological outlook of the archaeologists as well as the objective of archaeology in society – whether this involves reconstructing the past, critical archaeology, contemplative archaeology or antiquarian archaeology.

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