

Kirsty Squires, David Errickson and Nicholas Márquez-Grant (eds), *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains: A Global Challenge in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology* (Cham, Switzerland, Springer, 2019, 649 pp., £59.99 paperback).

At various points in my career, I have had to complete ethics reviews for approval for research involving human remains and related documents. Most of the sections in the applications were easily filled with 'not applicable'. I have felt frustrated by the process. No one was protected from harm because had I completed the application and it had been approved. The problems stemmed from a lack of understanding of bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology (henceforth 'the disciplines') by review boards. However, a part of the problem has been the lack of conceptualisation of ethical principles in the disciplines. This volume helps to address some of these issues.

The volume is well organised into three major sections: 'Part I Ethical Issues Surrounding Human Remains', 'Part II Ethical Dilemmas in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology' and 'Part III Global Perspectives and Case Studies'. For the purposes of this review I have divided the chapters of the volume into various categories.

The first category includes several exceptional chapters that deliver on all the key issues in a well-organised manner. I have already recommended these chapters to my colleagues who are investigating human rights violations. The best example is Chapter 24 'Ethical Considerations in the Investigation and Commemoration of Mass Graves from the Spanish Civil War'. The ethical issues are conceptualised and contextualised, and the strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions are presented in a manner that is transferable. This chapter is not about forensic anthropology. It is about how considering ethical issues at every step, from planning to archiving data for the future, can contribute to the success of the project. Read this chapter if you are working with human remains in an unstructured context and ambiguous legal framework, which is most of us.

The second category includes chapters that I will (or would, given the opportunity) adopt as required reading for my graduate students and upper-level undergraduate and specialist seminars. An example is Chapter 12 on methods that require destructive analysis. The chapter includes the right amount of detail to explain the research potential of these methods, which sets up a discussion on ethical

issues related to destructive sampling. Other examples include Chapter 13 on social media and Chapter 14 on 3D data. In both chapters, the relevant ethical issues are addressed in ways that will still be relevant regardless of technological changes or the popularity of any given platform. There are many other similar chapters that have the Goldilocks approach of getting it just right, with the amount of context and background presented for a meaningful *discussion* of the relevant ethical issues. Furthermore, the chapters situate researchers as active agents in the ethical processes inherent to all research. These chapters will function as intended for interested readers, including researchers, curators and managers at museums and universities, and students with varying degrees of expertise in these specific topics.

The third category includes the chapters that are good scholarship, but from my perspective do not necessarily contribute to the overall scope of a volume with the subtitle ‘... *in* Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology’. Chapter 6, on the online trade of human remains, is interesting and deals with ethical issues, but they are not specific to the disciplines. Similarly, Chapter 22, which reviews religious and cultural practices from the Middle East, is informative, but not useful to me as a forensic anthropologist or educator. Working within the coroner system in the Province of Ontario (Canada), where there are no religious exemptions, a coroner can or is legally required to order a full post-mortem examination. In other jurisdiction, religious exemptions are possible. The ethical issues are not directly applicable to the disciplines. The ethical issues apply to a society enacting laws regarding respect for religious and cultural beliefs with regard to human remains. In contrast to the approach in Chapter 22 to religion, Chapter 19, on the impacts of bioarchaeology on the Maori, uses the discussion about belief systems in a way that is directly relevant. Descendant communities continue to be harmed by colonial practices. Furthermore, there are ways for bioarchaeologists to work with indigenous communities to rectify past practices in the disciplines and to move forward in collaboration.

At 30 chapters, this volume is immense. Leaving out chapters that are less relevant would allow space for my next category: chapters that should have been included. Repatriation issues in the United States and the international implications of NAGPRA (the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) are addressed and there are some country-specific case studies. However, much of the core of the volume – Parts I and II – has a very British perspective, despite the implicit or explicit message that many issues discussed in various chapters are potentially applicable elsewhere. Did the volume bite off more than it can chew? No. We do not need small, manageable bites of porridge. Ethical issues should not be an afterthought. A failure to address them can and does cause real harm to people, and considering ethical issues results in more robust research. Any shortcomings in the book reflect shortcomings in the disciplines. In trying to fill huge gaps, the volume frames and helps to identify ethical problems that the disciplines are failing to consider. I would welcome a second edition of this volume that includes: perspectives of and by bioarchaeologists and forensic anthropologists working and doing research in *various parts* of India, Africa and the Americas (including Mexico and Canada, where NAGPRA is influential but does not apply); ethical considerations of working with skeletal collections that were built on race, racism and structural violence

Book Review

in the United States, South Africa, Portugal and elsewhere; the latent impacts of the disciplines' origin in anatomy; racialisation, anthropometry as nationalism and the politicisation of forensic anthropology.

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