Book Reviews

Of the past, for the future: integrating archaeology and conservation. Edited by N Agnew and J Bridgland. Pp. 336. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute. 2006. $75.00 (PB). ISBN 978-0-89236-826-6.

This substantial volume summarizes the proceedings of the conservation and archaeology theme of the Fifth World Archaeological Congress (WAC5), held in Washington DC in June 2003. The papers presented are primarily case studies demonstrating contemporary approaches to, and problems associated with, the joining together of archaeology and conservation aims within heritage management.

The edited papers are presented within a number of themes. A long preface to the volume gives an introduction to these and discusses the issue of joining the disciplines of archaeology and conservation within context. Given the origin of the volume, the location of WAC, and the contributors, this section is perhaps unsurprisingly a little weighted towards US Cultural Resource Management approaches, and for those already familiar with the literature for our discipline, a number of issues are perhaps a little laboured.

The themes addressed are concerned with: innovative approaches to policy and management of archaeological sites; conserving archaeological sites — new approaches and techniques; finding common ground — the role of stakeholders in decision-making; issues at World Heritage Sites; archaeology and tourism — a viable partnership; and challenges in conserving archaeological collections. There are also three themes addressing area-specific issues: Iraq and Afghanistan; China; and the problems posed by rock art sites in southern Africa. For each theme there is also a short summary, introducing the theme and the papers presented within it. The 61 papers within the themes are mixed: some offer new and informative examples of practice, whilst others are rather repetitive, either in terms of the sites used or the methodological developments.

Within the first five themes the papers explore problems and issues in site management and conservation, they are well illustrated and (for the most part) the issues thoughtfully explored. These papers show how the discipline has developed in recent years and especially how the incorporation of values, stakeholders and sustainability are seen as key factors for the majority of the case studies presented. The first five themes are a little difficult to digest in one sitting, and are perhaps best used as a ‘pick and mix’ of contemporary issues, with case studies providing real insight into the complexity of contemporary site management. Highlights include: a case study from Tell Mozan which demonstrates the integration of ‘enlightened’ archaeology and conservation for a complex tell site (Buccellati); how a diverse range of community values and significances are understood through active and thorough stakeholder involvement (Harrison); the tensions between sites and authenticity in a post-Nara context (Wijesuriya); and the problems posed by adventure tourism in Egypt (Wendrich). The more methodological papers are also interesting, including the exploration of a management model for monitoring change through remote sensing at Petra (Comer).

I found the later themes in the volume more interesting. The inclusion of the theme concerning archaeological collections gives an insight into the problems, cost and potential offered by the curation of archaeological archives. The final three geographical themes give a coherent overview of the problems and issues affecting sites in Iraq and Afghanistan, with that of site exploitation, and political and military use, at Babylon (Bahrani) of particular interest. The review of archaeological heritage management in China, in the context of unprecedented urban expansion and development, is also very interesting and includes a good case study of Liangzhu
(Tongbin). The theme on the geographical and site-specific problems of rock art sites in southern Africa is perhaps the most successful within the volume, providing a summary of regional and specific issues (Deacon), interesting case studies (papers by Thebe and Smith), and a fascinating paper examining holistic, traditional and local approaches to seeing rock art sites as ‘patients in need of care’ (Loubser).

Overall, perhaps inevitably, a number of the papers blur similar issues, with some overlap. The summaries and introductions for each section assist in adding coherency to the themes, but the introductions are too brief. Just two of the themes (tourism and rock art) provide a summary of the discussion resulting from the conference presentations; this would have been useful for all of the themes. Indeed, the volume would have benefited from a ‘voice’ to link, join, compare and contrast the multitude of papers into a more coherent whole.

Criticisms aside, however, this is a useful contribution to archaeological site management studies and shows the implementation of contemporary site management approaches on a number of sites around the world. Some of the more significant papers will become, I am sure, set readings for students within the discipline.

The WAC5 theme resulted in resolutions at the conference calling for the integration of archaeology and conservation, and these are now included within the WAC statutes. Overall, this volume highlights the well-voiced and documented problems of archaeology undertaken without a framework for conservation. I was surprised, given the location of the session within WAC, that the counterpoint was not raised: the problems of undertaking conservation work without archaeological input. Many of the papers come from already ‘converted’ conservation-minded archaeologists or archaeologically minded conservators. To progress the discipline both positions and strands must be joined together in order to achieve holistic conservation and archaeology. To this end the volume perhaps fails to achieve its aim of undoing ‘the artificial divide between archaeology and conservation’ and it is a great pity the theme was not repeated at the most recent WAC6 conference held in Dublin in June 2008. However, the WAC5 session and this resultant volume represent a significant, aspirational and worthy challenge to us all.

The Open University

Louise Cooke

Which past, whose future? Treatments of the past at the start of the 21st century — an international perspective. Edited by S Grabow, D Hull and E Waterton. Pp. 175. BAR series 1633. Oxford: Archaeopress. 2007. £35.00 (PB). ISBN 978-1-407300-47-4

This volume comprises the proceedings of a conference held in York in May 2005. Of the 18 papers, the majority are written by PhD students or based on doctoral research. It is not the kind of book I would usually read from cover to cover, so reading and digesting it for this review was an interesting challenge in its own right! According to the overview and introductory chapter, the overall aim of the conference and the proceedings was to evaluate the way in which archaeology and heritage management have responded to postmodernism. In more practical terms, the book aims to evaluate how diversity is dealt with by modern practitioners.

The volume presents a wide range of case studies from across the globe, as is implicit in its title. As well as archaeology, cultural heritage and museums studies, it also draws on other subjects such as sociology, education and politics. The editors have grouped the papers by theme rather than geographically. For the most part, the theoretical papers are presented early in the volume and the more practical ones towards the end. The three key themes addressed are: inclusivity and community recognition; archaeology as political currency; and the past and identity-building.

The insightful foreword by Jane Grenville concludes that the current generation of archaeologists and heritage managers needs to get ‘out there’ and manage real world situations; that
academic talk with no practical experience is of limited value. The real benefit of these papers lies in how far the ideas and concepts can influence our practical actions. From my perspective, as an archaeologist and heritage management practitioner, my assessment of this volume is based on how well the papers can stimulate my recognition and understanding of the value of both subjectivity and objectivity in my working practices.

Several of the theoretical papers early in the volume explore the role of community and indigenous archaeologies versus the ‘authorized heritage discourse’ represented by the state heritage agencies. Some valuable issues are raised, but the papers are all rather similar. Doeser’s paper uses Stonehenge as an interesting case study and discusses the role of politics, pointing out that what archaeologists do is always political, even if it is undertaken with the most apolitical of motivations. The discussion by Glazier of the benefits of the analysis of folklore to archaeologists is also of interest.

From halfway through the volume, the papers become more pragmatic and less theoretical. One of the most interesting papers is Alexopoulos’s account of how the concept of heritage management has developed on Mount Athos in northern Greece. Here, a once isolated monastery is now a well-visited World Heritage Site where the needs of the visitors and the resident religious community are carefully balanced. It is, however, probably the only World Heritage Site where women are banned! Similarly, Hull’s case study of Syria offers some insights into the difficulties and complexities for foreign archaeologists trying to work in other countries and the difficulties of engaging with local counterparts in a meaningful way.

Three papers on education and interpretation are included in close succession, the most interesting being Colling’s focus on perceptions of the Iron Age. Here, she encourages the development of explicit interpretations about the subjectivity and diversity of the archaeological debate. Colling advocates reconstructions and role-play as methods of presenting multiple pasts, allowing the audience to take an active role in the process of interpretation.

The paper I found the most stimulating and valuable is towards the end of the volume. Fouseki outlines the use of conflict management models in heritage management. Using the case study of the construction of the new Acropolis Museum in Athens (started in 1989 but not finished at the time of writing), Fouseki demonstrates the need to use a multidisciplinary approach to the difficult and complex negotiations with diverse stakeholders in contentious projects. With its links to the Parthenon Marbles controversy, the Acropolis Museum project, rather like the Stonehenge improvement project, would surely have benefited from the adoption of a conflict management model at the very start of proceedings. I entirely agree with Fouseki’s observation that the skills of conflict resolution should be incorporated into heritage management theory and practice.

The volume ends on a rather less intriguing theme, with two papers on the interpretation of European cultural identity.

The conference from which these papers derive was intended to address the frustration of applying multiple interpretations of the past to practical situations. With the exception of a small number of papers, I am not convinced that the proceedings volume does this entirely successfully. Although the papers are well written and edited, the volume highlights the difficulties of turning heritage studies theory into heritage policy practice.

Count-Ray Archaeology Service Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre

MELANIE POMEROY-KELLINGER

The ethics of archaeology: philosophical perspectives on archaeological practice. Edited by C Scarre and G Scarre. Pp. 332. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2006. £50.00 (HB). ISBN 978-0521840118. £20.99 (PB). 978-0521549424. $31.00 (E-book). 978-0511144868.

The discipline of archaeology has had its share of ethical and moral debates through its evolution as a profession. In The ethics of archaeology: philosophical perspectives on archaeological practice, brothers Chris (an archaeologist) and Geoffrey (a philosopher) Scarre suggest
that a closer collaboration between philosophers and archaeologists/anthropologists is needed to better delve into many contemporary debates. They state that in other disciplines, ‘new insights and understanding ... would have ... remained elusive’ (p. 2) until philosophers and professionals worked together, and the authors proceed to demonstrate how this might be possible in archaeology.

With this goal in mind, the editors have brought together ten archaeologists, four anthropologists, and seven philosophers to address the ‘ethical issues raised by the contemporary practice of archaeology’ (p. 1). The 15 papers are divided into four main parts, (1) The ownership of cultural objects; (2) Archaeologists and the living; (3) Archaeologists and the dead; and (4) The common heritage of humankind.

Part 1, which includes four chapters, examines issues related to the ownership of cultural objects. In Chapter 1, James Young introduces four candidates that might be considered as ‘rightful owners’ of archaeological finds, and then examines the complexity of ‘ownership’, suggesting that ‘a culture’ often has the strongest claim to ownership, although it does depend upon the philosophical principles being applied. Oliver Leaman then compares ‘legal ownership’ with ‘moral or political’ criteria that are often used to justify actual ownership. He asserts that the care of artefacts is similar to parental care, where authorities should get involved only in cases of neglect or abuse. Robert Layton and Gillian Wallace start Chapter 3 by considering whether artefacts should be considered ‘private property’, and proceed to discuss the commodification of artefacts, emphasizing that ‘the meaning of things inevitably changes’ as they move from one realm of use to another (p. 57). In Chapter 5, Julie Hollowell constructs the moral arguments in favour of ‘subsistence digging’ — the finding and selling of archaeological finds to support basic substance requirements.

The five chapters of Part 2 examine archaeologists’ relationships with other interested parties. In their essay, Jeffrey Bendremer and Kenneth Richman identify the needs of local and descendant communities. They argue that human subjects’ reviews should be extended to archaeological projects to certify ‘informed consent’ from these communities; thereby providing better protection of and empowerment to affected parties. Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and T J Ferguson acknowledge the importance of principles and codes of ethics in archaeology. However, they suggest archaeologists should proceed using ‘virtue’ ethics, which revolve around questions of character and trust, with other archaeologists; the general public; peoples whose culture is under examination; the government; and ‘past and future generations who are associated with archaeological sites or who may (or may not) have interest in archaeological knowledge and materials’ (p. 123).

David Cooper also speaks on virtue and truth in Chapter 8; however, he argues that archaeologists have a responsibility to have both professional integrity and ‘truthfulness’. He states, ‘But no archaeologists could agree to relinquish or share “control of the past” by deciding to abandon or modify their understandings or interpretations of the past in favour of, say, an indigenous people’s account of that past’ (p. 133) — a statement which I am sure will generate some interesting discussions. Douglas Lackey, in Chapter 9, presents a philosopher’s view of two decades of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). He feels that, along with respect for indigenous beliefs and practices, other interests demand equal consideration (e.g. science and aesthetics). Like many others in this volume, he concludes that ethical arguments can be complex; and recognizes the possibility of scenarios where multiple parties have equally legitimate claims. Leo Groarcke and Gary Warrick critically examine the Society for American Archaeology’s Principles of Archaeological Ethics, which defines ethical obligations to the archaeological record. They consider what is meant by stewardship and the need to manage archaeological resources for all stakeholders. Further, they provide an alternative ‘principle of archaeological stewardship’ and define ‘archaeological professionalism’.

The two chapters of Part 3 examine the interests of the dead. Geoffrey Scarre discusses whether archaeology may harm the dead by considering both real and ‘Cambridge’ changes,
where ‘Cambridge changes’ represent relational changes rather than a change in existing properties. He argues that the dead cannot suffer real harm, but they can suffer ‘Cambridge harm’ when subjected to conditions that they would have viewed as damaging. In Chapter 12, Sarah Tarlow agrees that the treatment of people of the past is problematic. She illustrates this in her discussion of what is ethically ‘owed’ to the dead when she argues that ethical practices are culturally mediated. Therefore one cannot know what is right, given the enormous cultural diversity of past peoples.

The three chapters of Part 4 address the idea that cultural and archaeological remains cannot belong to private owners. Sandra Dingli’s argument that the past belongs to no one allows her to conjecture that the past must be managed for the benefit of all humankind. It must be conserved for future generations, and it should be used for exclusively peaceful purposes. In Chapter 14, Atle Omland provides a captivating discussion of the concept of world heritage, including key questions of how inclusive the concept of heritage should and might be. He acknowledges the intrinsic ethical problems and ambiguities related to an inclusive past; nevertheless he favours the world heritage concept, mentioning its power in achieving peace. The final chapter by Robin Conningham, Rachael Cooper, and Mark Pollard looks in detail at the criteria used for determining which sites are ‘worthy’ of protection and preservation, framing their discussion around UNESCO’s conventions and guidelines, and questioning the use of terms such as ‘scientifically’ and ‘objectively’.

Overall, the fifteen chapters work well independently and contribute valuable insights into ethical and moral issues related to contemporary archaeological practices. However, the editors make little effort to link the chapters together, suggesting they may not have been circulated prior to publication. Further, the purpose of the edition was to promote dialogue, which I feel might have been better facilitated by joining up some of the concepts and terms (and authors), mainly across disciplines, and actually starting the conversation within the papers. This inclusion would have added to the volume’s goal of raising questions, without necessarily providing solutions.

Regardless of this, the book achieves its major claims to present philosophical perspectives on practice, but not to provide a ‘how to’ guide. Furthermore, the volume is thought-provoking and presents both a range of topics and viewpoints found inside and outside the discipline. It goes beyond its predecessors, which discussed ethics within the discipline or presented ethical topics to a more general audience. Finally, the book exposes readers to fundamental differences in epistemology and ethical constructions, reflecting significant division within and outside the discipline. In conclusion, the book is a valuable contribution and will be a welcome edition to graduate-level seminars and undergraduate classes that focus on ethical issues in archaeology.

International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies, Dr Myra Giesen
Newcastle University.

From space to place: 2nd International Conference on Remote Sensing in Archaeology. Proceedings of the 2nd international workshop, CNR, Rome, Italy, December 4–7, 2006. Edited by S Campana and M Forte. Pp. 579 + lxxvii. BAR series 1568. Oxford: Archaeopress. 2006. £70 (PB). ISBN 978-1-84171-98-6.

This extensive volume publishes the papers presented at the Second International Conference on Remote Sensing in Archaeology, organised by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche — Istituto per le Tecnologie Applicate ai Beni Culturali held in Rome, 4–7 December 2006. This event followed the first such meeting in October 2004, organised by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Joint Laboratory of Remote Sensing Archaeology held in Beijing. The volume includes numerous contributions presented during the event in Rome, which reflect the growth of interest in Remote Sensing since the Beijing meeting. The sessions included: Satellite Remote
Sensing Archaeology; Aerial Archaeology — verticals and oblique photography; Airborne Scanning; Ground-based Remote Sensing; Integrated Technologies for Remote Sensing Archaeology; Interpreting Landscapes and Reconstruction of Settlement Patterns; Remotely-sensed Environment Analysis; 3-D Visualisation and Virtual Reality Reconstruction; and Landscapes, Cultural Resource Management and Ethics.

The volume offers great methodological (satellite; airborne; ground-based techniques) and geographical (Europe, Americas, Asia, and Africa) coverage, the latter both in terms of the case studies and provenance of the contributors. It represents largely a collection of methodological papers, illustrating the latest achievements in Remote Sensing Archaeology, and Site and Landscape Analysis, but also issues of visualisation /presentation and conservation /resource management. Case studies equally illustrate the more traditional approaches (aerial photographic research; geophysical surveying) along with more recent technologies, at both the higher (and the more expensive) end of the spectrum such as high resolution satellite imagery (papers by Lasaponara and Massini; Aurald et al; Grøn et al; Piro and Capanna; Powlesland), Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) (Bofinger et al; Challis et al; Doneus and Briese, Kishbol et al; Rowlands et al; Sittler and Schellberg) and Multispectral Infrared and Visible Imaging Spectrometer (MIVIS) (see papers by Traviglia; Merola et al), as well as the lower-end (and more easily affordable) for example, Google Earth™ (see Madry’s case study in the area of Dijon, France).

Given that there is no remote sensing method without inherent bias, the increased trend of studies to combine several techniques and data sources in order to eliminate each other’s biases are of particular importance. Notable are blends of ground-based surveying techniques, including topographic, geophysical and fieldwalking coverage, applied to Roman urban landscapes in Italy (Hay et al), or air and ground-based mixtures, such as the aerial photographic, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and geoelectric surveying at Mycenae (Maggidis and Stamos) or the satellite, geophysical surveying and fieldwalking at Maalga-Karthago (Piro and Capanna). By far the most comprehensive and longlived research approach involving a mixture of remote sensed techniques is that utilised in West Heslerton by Dominic Powlesland (aerial photographs, Daedalus multispectral and LIDAR scanners, satellite imagery, geophysical survey and fieldwalking). Equally important are the papers presenting the latest developments in the use of technologies that transcend the capacities of human beings’ natural perception for example, hyperspectral and multispectral data (see Powlesland; Grøn et al).

New methods for presenting archaeological sites through the internet — both specifically to tourists and more widely to the public — were also explored (Web-based Geographical Information System (webGIS) — Bertachhini et al and Calori et al; virtual reality — Blerschi et al; Boochs et al; Coben et al). The discussion of environmental monitoring of areas with sites under threat was investigated (Yugsi et al) and Niknami and Harsini explored the potential use of predictive mapping in Chalcolithic settlements in Iran as a basis for settlement pattern reconstruction, although such analyses may indicate potential rather than certainties.

Despite this wide coverage, the highly technical language employed by some of the contributors presupposes a certain knowledge and level of awareness of the topics and methods, which may put off some of the potential readership. This is unfortunate, particularly when involving students, where a greater variety and quantity of available literature on these topics is absolutely necessary. The editorial task of assembling all the material accumulated in this volume must have been a huge undertaking, there would not have been much chance for detailed editing across all the material as a collective rather than separately as individual papers. The ensuing problems with English grammar and spelling were inevitable, especially given the international list of contributors. Spelling problems and inconsistencies (e.g. Quick Bird or Quickbird, rather than QuickBird) were also apparent, although this is unfortunately a common occurrence. The number of high-quality illustrations included is a welcome surprise (including a limited number of colour illustrations), although some images would have benefited from being printed at a larger scale and/or resolution, this is particularly the case
with screen prints illustrating various computer applications. The resolution problem may have put off the authors of a 3-D visualization case study (Sheets and Sever) whose paper has no images. The captions and references to some illustrations, which were originally meant to be reproduced in colour, have not been amended for their subsequent publication in black and white and some captions are missing entirely (e.g. De Minicis et al).

Nevertheless, this is a very useful collection of papers and making them available to a specialised readership constitutes a welcome effort from both the editors and the publisher.

Department of Archaeology, Ioana A Oltean
University of Exeter, UK