Ancient skeletons and ethical dilemmas

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The skeletal remains of at least twelve thousand individuals from inhumation and cremation burials from all periods of Norwegian prehistory are stored in Norwegian museums and collections. Most of the cremated remains and half of the unburned remains are in the archaeological museums’ repositories while the other half of the unburned remains are kept in the skeletal collection of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Oslo.

The skeletal remains have been collected during the past 150 years. Most of them derive from archaeological excavations, but some have also been collected by scientists who wanted study material for specific research projects.

Until fairly recently, there were few public debates in Norway about the ethical implications of excavating graves, of doing research on ancient human remains, and of storing human remains in museums and collections. In the mid-1980s, however, this situation changed. In 1985, Niilas Somby requested the
release of the skull of his grandfather’s brother, Mons Aslaksen Somby, from the skeletal collection at the University of Oslo. In 1997, the grandchildren of Aslak Jakobsen Hætta requested the release of their own grandfather’s skull. The Department of Anatomy refused to release the remains to the families, and there was a bitter fight over the two skulls. After extensive discussions between the Sami Parliament, the University of Oslo and the Ministry of Church and Education, the Department of Anatomy was ordered to release the skulls for burial. The burial took place in November 1997 (Schanche 2002, Bull 1996, Bull 2001, Sellevold 2002). The establishment of the National Committee for Evaluation of Research Involving Human Remains in 2007 was a direct consequence of the controversy regarding the two Sami skulls.

There are ethical implications pertaining to several aspects concerning ancient skeletons, such as the excavation and disinterment of the remains, the research which is done on the material, and the way in which the remains are stored and handled. The following discussion will mainly concentrate on the ethical dilemmas pertaining to the storing and handling of human remains in museums and collections. Efforts to deal with such dilemmas have resulted in the formulation of codes of ethics and ethical guidelines and in the implementation of practical measures such as repatriation of the remains. With regard to the situation in Norway, the discussion will centre on the endeavours of the University of Oslo to resolve the ethical dilemmas pertaining to the University’s own skeletal collection.
‘Ethics’ may be defined as ‘a philosophy or a system of morals’. All definitions I have found of the term ‘ethics’ emphasise a distinction between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ or ‘good’ and ‘bad’. What is considered right or wrong, good or bad, however, may vary from person to person and from culture to culture.

With regard to human remains, ethical dilemmas often arise because scientists and the general public have different ethical concerns. The issue is further complicated by concerns which range from academic freedom to the rights of the dead.

To scientists, freedom in the pursuit of knowledge is of the utmost importance. Studying human remains can generate information about past cultures and civilizations that is unavailable from any other source. For living people descended from those past cultures, the study of remains is a vital link to their past, a means of gaining insight into their present, and even offers the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the future. (Ubelaker and Grant 1989: 250)

Archaeologists consider it their ethical responsibility to advocate for and to conserve archaeological data. Mortuary evidence is an integral part of the archaeological record of past culture and behaviour, informing directly about social structure and organisation, and also, although less directly, about aspects of religion and ideology. Human osteologists and physical anthropologists consider it their ethical responsibility to glean as much information as possible from human remains. The remains of the dead constitute a unique source of information about our ancestors.
and about past life, social structures and cultural heritage. Scientists have an ethical obligation to contribute to increasing this body of knowledge. For these reasons, mortuary data and the remains of the dead should be kept available for research.

As for the general public, the rights of the dead themselves and the cultural needs of indigenous peoples have been cited as reasons for ethical concerns (Bahn 1984; Bahn and Paterson 1986). Many groups, especially indigenous peoples, have profound concerns about the ethical treatment of the dead by scientists such as archaeologists, physical anthropologists and museum personnel. Human remains should be treated with respect for the dignity of the dead and for the feelings and ethical concerns of relatives and friends of the deceased.

The question is how to combine two seemingly opposing interests: preserving the integrity and dignity of the remains of the dead while at the same time securing the scientific potential of the remains.

THE COMPLEXITY OF ETHICAL CONCERNS

Population groups have different attitudes toward death and the remains of the dead. There is no uniformity across cultures with regard to the ethical concerns surrounding the disposition of human remains. Ethical stances may vary, both between individuals and communities, and relative to specific cases and situations.

Figure 1 below is an illustration of how ethical concerns may vary, given different circumstances and different categories of human remains. The strength of the concerns is ranged on a scale from very weak to very strong.
In order to illustrate ethical concerns, the following six categories have been selected:

- the treatment of the body
- whether or not the remains are of an identified person, whose name is known
- how much time has passed since the burial
- the religious affiliation of the deceased
- the ethnic affiliation of the deceased
- the reason for the excavation or the disinterment of the human remains

Body treatment: With regard to the treatment of the body at burial, there seems to be a considerable difference between the ethical concerns pertaining to unburned remains and those that arise in relation to cremated remains. In Norway, discussions so far have focused exclusively on unburned remains. There have never been any discussions about the ethics pertaining to cremated remains.
Identified remains: There seems to be universal agreement that the strongest ethical concerns pertain when the remains are of an identified individual, and agreement that such remains should be buried, and not kept in a skeletal collection.

Chronology: There also seems to be a general agreement that the closer the origin of the remains is to ourselves in time, the stronger are the ethical concerns. Members of the public associate the remains of the recently dead with their own ancestors. The further back in time, the less is the chance that the remains are identifiable as direct ancestors, and the less is the ethical concern.

Religious affiliation: Different religious systems have different views of the integrity of the remains of the dead. Some of the major religions are violently opposed to any kind of grave disturbance of their own ancestors, while others have no deep concerns for the earthly remains of the dead. Among those who care very strongly about the disturbance of human remains are, for example, Orthodox Jews in Israel. They have fought battles with the authorities to protect graves from being disturbed, going to extremes to prevent the bulldozers from touching old graveyards. In the mid-1990s, Israel’s Attorney General passed a rule that effectively prohibits the examination of human skeletal remains found in archaeological contexts (Yearbook of Physical Anthropology 1995).

The Christian religion as such does not have any generally agreed ethical stance regarding disinterment of the remains of the dead. In the Middle Ages in Norway, for example, there were
set fines for disturbing old graves when new graves were dug. The size of the fine depended on the degree of decomposition of the body in the disturbed grave. There are no such fines today. The practice today is that when an old, abandoned grave is disturbed by the construction of a new grave, the new grave is dug very deep, and the remains from the old grave are gathered and deposited in the bottom of the pit below the new burial (pers. comm., Gravferdsetaten (Cemeteries and Burials Agency), 27.09.01).

Within the Christian religion, there may be differences between e.g. Catholics and Protestants with regard to the ethical concerns pertaining to human remains. Catholics are more used to seeing and handling human remains than are Protestants, being more familiar with human bones in ossuaries or charnel houses and as relics. But even among Catholics there may be differences in attitude: disturbance of graves where an individual has been laid to eternal rest may be a problem to a devout Catholic.

Among Protestants in Norway, however, the situation is different. Public displays of human remains are quite alien to the Norwegian culture. There are no ossuaries and no relics. Although the Church embraces the ethical concerns of the general public, it has not expressed any views on the questions of disinterment of human remains by archaeologists, or on the maintenance of skeletal collections.

**Ethnic affiliation:** As with religious affiliation, there are also differences between ethnic groups. Some ethnic groups have very strong ethical concerns about the remains of their ancestors. Many indigenous populations throughout the world have been,
and are, battling with the authorities in their respective countries for control over the remains of their own ancestors. The question of the rights of indigenous peoples will be discussed below.

*Reason for acquisition:* The last column in Figure 1 deals with the acquisition of remains presently stored in skeletal collections. The ethical sanctions are stronger if the remains were acquired by what are now considered to be unethical means. In some cases, the collection of human remains for research purposes may be regarded as an unethical activity. This was the case in Norway in the 1920s and 1930s, when anatomists collected skulls from churchyards in Finnmark to obtain material for the study of the craniology of the Norwegian Sami, in spite of very strongly voiced protests from the local population. This unethically acquired material is now part of the skeletal collection at the University of Oslo.

If the remains in a skeletal collection derive from excavations that have been performed as rescue operations, however, the situation is different. From an ethical point of view, it is easier to defend the disinterment of bones during rescue excavations. Whereas in research excavations, the scientist deliberately decides to disturb the sanctity of the grave, in rescue excavations, the role of the researcher is to strive to ensure an ethical treatment of human remains with must be removed, for example in connection with building-construction. If the researchers do not take responsibility for the remains, these might end up being handled as refuse and sent off to the local dump, for example. However, even though remains from rescue excavations may be said to have been acquired by more ethically acceptable means
than remains from research excavations, the subsequent manner of their storage and handling may be open to debate.

The application of the model proposed in Figure 1 to four Norwegian finds of human remains will clearly illustrate the complexity of the ethical concerns.

Figure 2: The skulls of Mons Aslaksen Somby and Aslak Jakobsen Hætta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Concerns</th>
<th>Body Treatment</th>
<th>Identified Remains</th>
<th>Chronology</th>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Ethnic Affiliation</th>
<th>Reason for Acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Unburned</td>
<td>Known identity of the individual</td>
<td>Very recent graves</td>
<td>Jews, Muslims</td>
<td>Strong known ethnic identity</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td>Recent graves</td>
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<td>Post-medieval graves</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Religious relics</td>
<td>Medieval graves</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mummified, natural or artificial</td>
<td>Prehistoric graves</td>
<td>Pagan, unknown religious affiliation</td>
<td>Ethnic identity unknown</td>
<td>Rescue excavation</td>
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Figure 2 illustrates the case of the skulls of Mons Somby and Aslak Hætta. Following the uprising of a group of Sami people against the Norwegian authorities in 1852 in Kautokeino, Finnmark, Mons Somby and Aslak Hætta were convicted, sentenced to death and decapitated in 1854 (Zorgdrager 1997). After the execution, the bodies of the two men were buried outside the churchyard perimeter at Kåjord church. The severed heads, however, were not buried with the bodies because the anatomists wanted the heads of these Sami as scientific specimens. The heads were sent off to the University in Christiania (Oslo) where they were placed in the anthropological skull collection of the Department of Anatomy.
Strong ethical concerns apply to these remains. They are the unburned remains of identified persons from the recent past, with a strong ethnic identity. The skulls were acquired through highly unethical means, having been more or less confiscated to be used as scientific specimens.

Figure 3: The skeletal finds from the medieval Hamar Cathedral cemetery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHICAL CONCERNS</th>
<th>BODY TREATMENT</th>
<th>IDENTIFIED REMAINS</th>
<th>CHRONOLOGY</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</th>
<th>ETHNIC AFFILIATION</th>
<th>REASON FOR ACQUISITION</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Mummified, natural or artificial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Cremated</td>
<td>Unknown identity of the individual</td>
<td>Prehistoric graves</td>
<td>Pagan, unknown religious affiliation</td>
<td>Ethnic identity unknown</td>
<td>Rescue excavation</td>
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Figure 3 illustrates a second case, namely the skeletal assemblage from the medieval Hamar Cathedral cemetery. In this case, the ethical concerns regarding the remains are not by any means as strong as is the case with the skulls of Somby and Hætta: although the Hamar remains are unburned, the skeletons are 7-800 years old; the individuals were mostly probably Catholic but they are anonymous and have no strong ethnic affiliation. The excavation was conducted as a rescue operation prior to the construction of a protective building over the medieval cathedral ruins (Sellevold 2001).
Figure 4 illustrates the even weaker ethical concerns regarding a third case, namely the skeletal finds from Hummervikholmen, Søgne, Southern Norway. These remains were accidentally discovered in 1991 in the sea at Hummervika in southern Norway, close to the shore, at a depth of one metre. They have been dated to 6,600 BC and are the oldest human remains ever found in Norway. The remains from Hummervikholmen are almost exclusively seen as having value as scientific specimens, and there have been no ethical concerns voiced. Although unburned, the remains are of unidentified individuals; they are extremely ancient (in Norwegian terms), of unknown religious and ethnic affiliation, and they came to light during a rescue excavation.
Finally, Figure 5 illustrates the case of the category prehistoric cremated remains. So far nobody, lay or professional, has attached any kind of ethical concern to such remains. The cremated remains are ancient; they are from pagan times; they are of anonymous individuals of unknown religious and ethnic affiliation; and finally, they are not even recognisable as human remains. And most often, they derive from rescue excavations.

GUIDELINES AND CODES OF ETHICS

Among the endeavours to resolve the ethical dilemmas regarding archaeological human remains are the formulations of various guidelines and codes of ethics in order to deal with the problems of conflicting interests. Below are outlined three such codes or guidelines that have been formulated by three different interest groups, namely indigenous peoples, museums and archaeologists.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: THE WAC
The point of view of indigenous peoples has been most forcefully expressed by the World Archaeological Congress (WAC). The members of WAC have accepted a set of principles according to which the members have obligations to indigenous peoples. These are set out in the Vermillion Accord, which is a six-clause agreement formulated by WAC’s First Inter-Congress in 1989, *Archaeological Ethics and the Treatment of the Dead*. In the Vermillion Accord, respect is a key concept, both with regard to the rights of the dead and the rights of the living. The Vermillion Accord states among other things that agreement on the disposition of fossil, skeletal, mummified and other remains shall be reached by negotiation on the basis of mutual respect for the legitimate concerns of communities for the proper disposition of their ancestors, as well as the legitimate concerns of science and education.

THE MUSEUMS: ICOM
The point of view of the museums is expressed by ICOM’s Code of Ethics from 1986. ICOM is short for the International Committee of Museums.

Where a museum maintains and/or is developing collections of human remains and sacred objects, these should be securely housed and carefully maintained as archival collections in scholarly institutions, and should always be available to qualified researchers and educators, but not to the morbidly curious. Research on such objects and their housing and care
must be accomplished in a manner acceptable not only to fellow professionals but to those of various beliefs, including in particular members of the community, ethnic or religious groups concerned. Although it is occasionally necessary to use human remains and other sensitive material in interpretative exhibits, this must be done with tact and with respect for the feelings of human dignity held by all peoples. (Ubelaker and Grant 1989: 278)

THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS: THE SAA
The point of view of the researchers is best expressed by the four Guiding Principles which were proposed by the SAA – the Society for American Archaeologists. The guidelines do not differ from those expressed by the WAC, but are more pragmatically oriented. Again, the key concept is mutual respect and recognition of the fact that both the public and the scientists have an interest in human remains. The Guiding Principles point out that remains lacking context and archaeological associations are generally judged less scientifically valuable than carefully documented collections, and that the determination of cultural affiliation must be based on a set of evidence that can be examined and evaluated; cultural affiliation cannot be based on assertions alone (Lovis, Kintigh et al. 1999).

Key concepts in the Vermillion Accord, ICOM’s Code of Ethics and the SAA’s Guiding Principles are: respect, communication and compromise. The ethical concerns both of the indigenous peoples and of the scientific community must be respected. On this basis, compromises and solutions to dilemmas may be reached.
REPATRIATION AND REBURIAL

The codes of ethics and guidelines address the worldwide concerns of indigenous peoples about their rights to the management of their own cultural heritage. One of the practical measures that have been proposed is repatriation, a term which has now become familiar to archaeologists and anthropologists. It means ‘the return of human remains and cultural objects to the associated indigenous people’. In the worlds of Tamara L. Bray of the Repatriation Office of the Smithsonian Institution:

Repatriation may best be understood within the broader historical context of global decolonization. It parallels and is on a continuum with other indigenous movements around the world in which native rights are being asserted. Among the issues being pressed are the right of control over one’s own cultural heritage and the right to the sanctity of the grave. (Bray 1995: 2)

THE UNITED STATES: NAGPRA

In the United States, the differences of opinion about the merit of scientific studies of ancient bones and the question of repatriation and reburial of American Indian skeletal remains have been particularly pronounced. The United States, however, has come far in dealing with the issue: on 16 November 1990 an act was signed by the President which, among other things, regulates the treatment of skeletal remains in collections that are financed wholly or in part by federal funds.

The act is called The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, better known as NAGPRA (McKeown 1995: 13). The term ‘repatriation’ in this case refers to the legislatively
mandated return to culturally affiliated native American groups of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony which are currently housed in museums and other institutions.

NAGPRA has three provisions regarding graves and human remains in particular:

- to increase protection for native American graves on tribal and federal lands
- to prohibit traffic in Native American human remains, that is, the buying and selling of skeletal parts
- to require federal museums and institutions to inventory their collections of native American human remains and funerary objects within five years (after the implementation of the Act) and to repatriate them to culturally affiliated tribes upon request.

THE SITUATION IN EUROPE

NAGPRA regulates the situation in the United States. It has served to establish a new ethical outlook for museums in the United States in their relationships with Native peoples and other minority groups (Bray 1995: 4). There have been similar processes in Canada and Australia.

In Europe, the questions of repatriation, reburial and ethics have not been given the same attention. Few European countries, with the exception of Scotland, have a formal policy on this subject. But there are discussions going on in Europe.

The situation in Scandinavia is as follows:
• In Sweden, the debates about the ethics of excavating and storing skeletal remains have at times been very heated. Reburial of medieval and post-medieval remains is very frequent, while prehistoric bones generally are not reburied. Unburned remains that are reburied are often cremated before being interred.

• In Denmark, excavation, storing and reburial of ancient human remains is not an issue at all. There seems to be universal agreement that ancient skeletons are to be stored in collections to be available for research. There are no plans for repatriation, and no plans for reburial of any of the stored skeletons. All Inuit remains from Greenland, which are formally the property of the National Museum of Greenland at Nuuk, are by agreement stored in the anthropological collection at the University of Copenhagen, whereas the recently investigated well-preserved Inuit mummies have been returned to Greenland, not to be buried, but to be put on exhibit in the museum at Nuuk.

• In Finland, a collection of 57 Sami skulls, which were kept at the University of Helsinki, were repatriated and reburied at Enare in 1995. This event is part of the awakening consciousness on the part of the Sami of the many remains of their ancestors that are kept in museums and collections.

**NORWEGIAN EFFORTS**

In Norway in the first half of the last century, archaeologists frequently reburied human remains, proclaiming that for ethical reasons, Christian remains should be in the churchyard. Prehistoric bones, however, were submitted to museums and collections.
But sometimes, ethical concerns also embrace prehistoric, non-Christian finds. Some prehistoric remains have also been reburied. The most renowned cases are the Oseberg and the Gokstad finds, both of which are pagan finds from the Viking Age. In both cases, the human skeletons were reburied at the instigation of the Vestfold Historical Society. This caused a heated discussion between two scientists, the anthropologist and professor of anatomy Kristian Emil Schreiner, and the archaeologist and professor of archaeology A. W. Brøgger. Brøgger supported the Vestfold Historical Society, while Schreiner wanted to keep the remains available for scientific research. In the end, Schreiner had to capitulate and yield up the remains. In the 1930s, the Oseberg and Gokstad bones were reburied in the reconstructed mounds.

There is an interesting sequel to this story. When I was doing research on the Schreiner collection some years ago, I discovered that Schreiner had not in fact yielded up all of the material from the Oseberg skeletons: he had retained some of the most interesting bone fragments and teeth, and these were still present in the collection.

In 2009, the Oseberg mound was reopened. The skeletal remains were again taken out, and are now on exhibit in the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo.

**THE MUSEUMS’ CODE OF ETHICS**

In Norway, there are legal acts, provisions and guidelines dealing with the treatment of human remains. Ethical committees control the treatment of the remains of the recently dead with regard to autopsies and medical research. The Funerals Act regulates
burials and the treatment of recent graves. The Cultural Heritage Act regulates the excavation of ancient graves, that is, graves older than 1537 AD.

None of the laws, however, provide guidelines for the treatment of ancient human remains after excavation. But the ethics pertaining to the treatment of skeletal remains in museums and collections is increasingly being debated.

A few years ago, the Norwegian Council of Museums adopted guidelines to protect objects in museum collections. Section 5.3 of the guidelines, which deals with human remains, is practically identical to that of ICOM’s Code of Ethics, quoted above: skeletal remains in museums and collections should be treated with tact and respect. Research on the material must be acceptable not only to the scientific community but also to members of the public with different religious beliefs and ethnic affiliations.

Supplements to the code of ethics of the museums are provided by the Directorate for Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren) and the University of Oslo.

**RIKSANTIKVAREN (THE DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE)**

In 1986, Riksantikvaren commissioned a report entitled ‘Questions pertaining to osteology in Norwegian archaeology’ (Brendalsmo, Müller et al. 1986). The report demonstrated that human remains receive adequate ethical treatment only in the museums, since the museums had well-established sets of rules covering the treatment of all cultural historical material, even prior to the present Museum Code of Ethics. The skeletal finds in the collection of the Department of Anatomy at the University of
Oslo, on the other hand, were found not to have any such protection. The report concluded with a recommendation that the archaeologically derived skeletal remains currently housed in that collection should be relocated to the regional archaeological museums (Sellevold 1996: 7).

THE UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

In recent years, the Administration of the University of Oslo has shouldered its responsibility as the keeper of the largest skeletal collection in the country. The University appointed two different committees to evaluate the ethical, political and scientific aspects pertaining to the maintenance of its collection of human remains, in order to provide a basis for deciding the future course of action regarding this collection. There were representatives of the Sami Parliament on both committees.

Subsequent to the burial of the skulls of Mons Aslaksen Somby and Aslak Jacobsen Hætta, the Sami Parliament requested an inventory of all Sami remains stored at the University. In order to do this, it was necessary to examine and update the fiduciary management of the entire collection. In cooperation with the Sami Cultural Heritage Council, the University appointed an interdisciplinary committee (the Lønning Committee) to look into the ethical and legal questions concerning both the Sami and the Norwegian skeletal remains. One of the aims of the committee was to provide a basis for deciding whether or not to repatriate the Sami skeletal remains.

In April 1998, this Committee submitted its report in which it was recommended that:
Sami skeletal material should be kept separate from the other skeletal remains in the collection, and should be kept behind closed doors with limited access.

The Sami Parliament or a representative of this parliament should have the rights of administration over the Sami skeletal material, and the right to repatriate the remains.

A complete revision of the collection was also recommended, since the find documentation in the collection was found to be inadequate. In order to implement such a revision, which would be a very costly process, an assessment of the scientific value of the skeletal collection was needed.

In 1999, the University therefore followed up the work of the Lønning Committee by appointing an international scientific committee to assess the scientific value of the skeletal collection as source material in an interdisciplinary perspective. The scientific committee was also given the task of identifying the Sami skeletal remains.

In September 2000, the international scientific committee submitted its report. The committee concluded that the collection potentially has a scientific value. But before this value can be appraised, the entire collection must undergo a comprehensive revision in accordance with the principles for revisions which govern the university’s museum collections. More than 1,000 find units of Sami remains were identified in the collection. The revision was implemented in 2005 by the University Museum of Cultural History.
CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the awakening political awareness on the part of indigenous peoples around the world, the ethical dilemmas pertaining to the treatment of ancient skeletal remains have been addressed in various guidelines and codes of ethics. In the United States, the efforts have resulted in legal action with the implementation of NAGPRA in 1990. In Europe, there are ongoing discussions about the issues.

In Norway, these discussions have come far. The Directorate of Cultural Heritage, the museums, and in particular, the administration of the University of Oslo, have put the debate about the treatment of ancient human remains on the agenda, not least through the University’s recent endeavours to provide a basis for deciding the future use of its skeletal collection, firstly by determining that the control of and responsibility for the Sami skeletal remains in the University’s collection is in the care of the Norwegian Sami Parliament, secondly by implementing a partial revision of the skeletal collection.

In my opinion, the heaviest responsibility for solving the ethical dilemmas regarding the treatment of ancient human remains rests with the scientific community entrusted with these. The scientists must be responsive to the feelings of descendants and the general public.

If the ethical dilemmas surrounding the treatment of ancient human remains are to be resolved, a consensus must be reached on who should decide which ethical stance should pertain, and whether considerations of the ethical or unethical means of acquisition of the material should be a decisive factor.
A future course of action must be to decide whether or not skeletal remains should be kept accessible for research, or whether they should be reburied. If there are to be skeletal collections, it must be decided whether the skeletons should be stored in central or in local repositories. Finally, it must be decided who should be in charge of such collections, a given institution or a body of governors from different sectors and academic disciplines.

In any case, key words in the process must be Consultation, Informed consent, Compromise, Respect, Dignity and Decency.

REFERENCES:


