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ON THE ETHICAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF STUDYING HUMAN REMAINS

This article explores the ethical challenges faced by archaeologists and physical anthropologists engaged in the study of human remains. It examines the diversity of perspectives on the special status attributed to human remains across different cultural and historical contexts. The analysis highlights the inherent ambiguity in defining the status of such remains—as scientific objects, cultural heritage, and, at times, as entities accorded special rights. Particular attention is given to the role of physical integrity and the persistence of social and historical ties between the living and the dead in shaping attitudes toward the treatment of remains. The article also addresses the dualistic conception of the human being, which presumes a separation between personhood and the physical body after death—a notion reflected in the traditional cultural detachment toward “old bones”.

Keywords: *ethics, human remains, physical anthropology, archaeology, museum collection, personality, social interaction*

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