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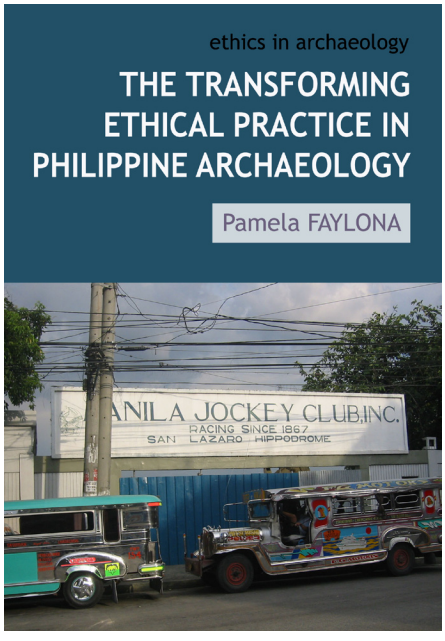
REVIEWS



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ethics in archaeology
The transforming ethical practice in Philippine archaeology

[by Pamela Faylona]

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Summary: In this short book, Faylona describes and outlines the history of archaeology in the Philippines with specific reference to ethical practices. By reviewing archaeological publications, museum exhibitions, and popular writings about archaeology, Faylona arrives at a "periodization" of ethics in the Philippines. Taking into account these periods of ethical practice, elements of moral philosophy, and existing ethical codes from around the world, Faylona suggests future directions for Philippine archaeology, including the beginning of a discussion concerning an ethical framework based on five "valued aspects" for the practice of Philippine archaeology.

Ethics is an important and growing part of discussions, practice, and training in the field of archaeology today. Archaeologists are frequently confronting situations that require sensitive and complicated decisions, whether in the field collaborating with others, in the lab or office deciding how to treat data, in publications, in the classroom, or in interactions with colleagues, Indigenous populations, or other stakeholders. Additionally, the archaeological record is the subject of a number of modern ethical dilemmas, including the illicit trafficking of antiquities, damage to archaeological sites from development,

misrepresentation of the past in popular films, repatriation of objects in museums, and the involvement of archaeological heritages in armed conflict. These are important international issues in global archaeology today that are in need of careful and sensitive discussion and analysis.

Archaeological ethics are specific to the roles and responsibilities of those who practice archaeology. As these roles and responsibilities have changed over time, so have the ethics that give them meaning. There exist some ethical values in archaeological practice that seem to be universally-held ethics (*e.g.* stewardship of archaeological sites). However, ethics are valued and understood differently by people working and living in diverse contexts. Some archaeologists work in museums in Peru, while others work in contract-archaeology in England (or Cultural Resource Management as it is called in the United States). Undoubtedly, these archaeologists have differing opinions on the primary ethical issues facing archaeology today, not only because of their different work-contexts, but also because cultural backgrounds (among other things) influence the way personal and professional ethics are constructed and construed. Additionally, members of the public have diverse ideas about the importance and relevance of archaeological practice and archaeological resources, which affect how archaeologists conduct their work. In order to understand the ethical values and practices of archaeologists and members of the public in the world today, we must seek to understand the specific histories and contexts of those values. Only with this knowledge and understanding can we hope to have true collaboration amongst disparate stakeholders.

In the book *The Transforming Ethical Practice in Philippine Archaeology* (JAS Arqueología 2010), Pamela Faylona attempts to reach this goal of understanding the development of a culturally-situated field of practice and ethics, specifically by examining archaeology in the Philippines. Faylona defines ethics as "*the guiding principles of a group or set of morals and values that govern an individual or a society*" (p. 12). In seven short chapters, interesting insights into the colonial and modern periods of archaeology are discussed and the reader is left knowing much more about the history of archaeology in the Philippines. Extensive appendices augment the text and aid the reader in comparing the ethical frameworks of other countries. The author's content analysis data and bibliography provide the reader with additional sources of information on ethical practices in Philippine archaeology.

The Book

Why do we need to understand ethical practice in Philippine archaeology? Faylona correctly notes that, in studying ethical practice, we are "*providing clarity on how to practice the discipline in a proper or acceptable way within the community*" (pp. 1-2). In the communities of the Philippines, there are several reasons why we need to understand ethical practice of archaeology, which are in turn justifications for Faylona writing this book. The reasons Faylona discusses include: a "*growing public awareness of archaeology in the Philippines*", "*growth of the archaeological community in the country*", advances and developments in the practice of archaeology, and the occurrence of several highly public and visible ethical dilemmas in recent years in the Philippines.

Another important justification for this book is that, as of the time of publication, there are no "codes of ethics" or similar documents specific to Philippine archaeology. Similar situations can be found in many countries of the world, where the number of practicing archaeologists is small or where archaeology is a relatively new science. Thus, as Faylona notes, many archaeologists in Africa, Asia, and South America "*follow the international governing bodies on culture in conducting archaeology*," such as UNESCO or the International Council of Museums (ICOM). But, as Faylona notes and the reviewer agrees, the guidelines of these bodies may not be appropriate or justified in certain areas of the world and they do not encompass the myriad of specific dilemmas encountered in local contexts. To aid the reader who is unfamiliar with existing ethical codes and to provide a comparison of her own proposed framework for archaeological ethics, Faylona discusses and reproduces (in extensive appendices) the major codes of national and international archaeological organizations (e.g. the Society for American Archaeology, Canadian Archaeological Association, European Association of Archaeology, etc.) —a valuable contribution of the book.

To say that a local code of ethics does not exist in Philippines is not to suggest that archaeology is not practiced ethically in the Philippines. Instead, it is to say that the archaeological community has not taken the steps to initiate dialogues about what ought to be included in a code of ethics-style document. This book provides an important first step in that dialogue by taking three steps: 1) "*Distilling the ethics in Philippine archaeology*" (p. 4) through content analysis of archaeological publications, museum exhibitions, and public writings on archaeology; 2) Identifying the periods or transitions in the history

of archaeological practice in the Philippines; and 3) "*Extrapolating the valued aspects of Philippine archaeology*."

Interestingly, step 2 is accomplished first, though the phases that are created in the text could have been explained more thoroughly. The transitions (or transformations) of ethical practice in the Philippines derived by Faylona correspond to three historical periods: 1) Integration (early 1900s-1950), 2) Assimilation (1950-1980), and 3) Recognition (1980s to the present). These periods form the basis of Faylona's content analyses in chapters 3-5, which cover, respectively, the history of archaeology in the Philippines, artifact collection and display by museums, and popular archaeology writings. In chapter 3, the practices of famous anthropologists and archaeologists who worked in the Philippines during its developing phases (including Alfred Marche, Alfred Kroeber, H. Otley Beyer, Robert Fox, William Solheim II, Jesus Peralta, and F. Landa Jocano) and modern phases are discussed. In chapter 4, the processes of acquisition, documentation, and presentation of prehistoric and historic archaeological materials at major museums in the Philippines are presented. Finally, in chapter 5, "popular archaeology" (defined as archaeology "*carried out by non-archaeologists, usually through writing*" (p. 49)) is analyzed in order to define what the public views and what the public emphasizes as ethical practices in Philippine archaeology. To the reviewer, this was the most interesting of the content analysis chapters as it provided the most examples of ethical dilemmas and how they were perceived, addressed, and resolved.

In each of these chapters, ethical values are not as much described in detail but are instead meant to be inferred from theoretical and methodological practices. The theories, methods, and values described mirror many of those during the respective time periods in the United States and other areas of the world, which is not surprising as many of the archaeologists working in the Philippines during the Integration and Assimilation periods were foreigners. As in the U.S., early archaeologists and the public in the Philippines were first concerned with collecting "museum-quality" objects and basic culture-history questions concerning the occupation of the Philippines and the social organizations of past peoples there. Over time, the methods of archaeologists and museums were standardized in the Philippines, and the profession of archaeology was defined within both Filipino university and government contexts. Additionally, cultural property laws were implemented by the Filipino government to protect artifacts and sites at a time when context was

of growing importance to archaeologists and the illicit antiquities trade was growing in prominence world-wide. New sub-fields of archaeology in the Philippines, such as underwater archaeology, and the creation of new national institutions led to new responsibilities for archaeologists, such as collaboration and information sharing.

In chapters 6, Faylona extrapolates the ethics of Philippine archaeology by creating five "*valued aspects*" that "*permeate the archaeological community in the Philippines*" (p. 76): "*(1) the practice of the Archaeologists; (2) treatment of an Artifact; (3) treatment of an Archaeological Site; (4) intentions of an Archaeological Institution and public presentation of archaeology; and (5) the Audience or how the archaeological community portrays the archaeology [sic]—and their ethics—to the public*" (p. 63). In this chapter, Faylona defines each of these valued aspects and compiles evidence from the content analyses of the previous three chapters that relates to each aspect.

In the final chapter, Faylona proposes ethical guidelines for the practice of Philippine archaeology, organized by the five valued aspects. She notes, though, that ethics are dynamic and that any code should "*reflect the context, or milieu of the Filipino archaeology*," and thus the community of archaeologists in the Philippines should debate her guidelines and continuously reflect upon the ethics of their practice. This is a commendable and important point that is currently being dealt with by numerous international anthropology and archaeology organizations, who are struggling to "update" their ethical codes. Faylona's guidelines are a list of "should" statements many of which will not be challenged by archaeologists or heritage professionals. For example, "*An archaeologist should have an educational background and obtain formal training in archaeology*" (p. 78). Others are slightly more controversial and are based on the author's content analysis and, undoubtedly, her opinion, such as: "*All artifacts that are purchased and collected should not be displayed inside museums to prevent looting of artifacts*," (p. 79) or "*All archaeological sites should be explored and excavated by professionals and experts alone*" (p. 80). This observation is not meant as a critique, but instead as praise, for ethical codes and standards of ethical behavior should be contested and incite discussion. Faylona succeeds in her goal of creating a framework that will initiate an endeavor in archaeological ethics "*that the whole community and all its stakeholders can undertake together*" (p. 4).

Conclusion

Overall, this book is successful in its attempt to understand the development of culturally-situated ethical values and issues in Philippine archaeology. There are a few minor critiques about the book that should be mentioned, including the exclusion of two major sources of information in the content analysis: interviews with Filipino archaeologists and case-studies of ethical dilemmas faced by Filipino archaeologists. The author justifies not posing questions to Filipino archaeologists such as "*What is ethics in Philippine archaeology?*" because "*ethics in Philippine archaeology is yet to be articulated. Thus, it will be difficult for the respondents and researcher to discuss this topic*" (p. 7). However, the content analysis the author performed demonstrates that ethical practices do exist and that there are differences in opinion over the importance and implementation of these practices. Ethics is best understood, in the reviewer's opinion, through dialogue. Longer case-studies of ethical dilemmas faced by Filipino archaeologists are missed in the book because case-studies are usually relatable and would have provided the reader who is unfamiliar with Philippine archaeology with additional contextual information and a resource to use in classrooms or public discussions about ethics. An additional critique is that some of the professional codes discussed in the text are out-of-date, such as that of the Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA) (which became the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA) in 1998) and others are missing entirely, such as the codes of the only truly global archaeological organization, the World Archaeological Congress (WAC). Finally, the topic of archaeologists' interactions with and responsibilities to Indigenous people is discussed surprisingly little in both the author's content analysis and ethical guidelines, and the literature reviewed in chapter 2. Indigenous rights (and related topics such as repatriation) have been major themes in archaeological ethics across the globe over the last 20 or more years and undoubtedly there are ethical issues related to Indigenous peoples in Philippine archaeology today.

In this book, Faylona states that applying ethics to a discipline is "*tantamount to affirming the discipline's integrity as well as strengthening the foundations for its practice*" (p. 13). In analyzing and discussing the history of archaeological practice and modern dilemmas in the Philippines, Faylona has strengthened our understanding of archaeology in the Philippines and revealed ethical principles and values which lay at the foundation of its practice. Importantly, within her analyses of the practices of past archaeologists and museum personnel, Faylona does

not pronounce judgment or lay blame on past practitioners for the modern situation. Instead, she "*examine[s] the historical facts, and eventually interpret[s] their meaning and significance in accordance to the values of the discipline*" (p. 9). In doing so, and in proposing ethical guidelines for archaeological practice, Faylona has made a commendable contribution to the literature on archaeological ethics and Philippine archaeology.

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