

These should focus on the environment from which the artefacts have been recovered, the condition or status of the objects at the time they are found, and their new environmental context. Apart from understanding the material, it is equally important to investigate what changes might have occurred to the objects during their life use and whether any deterioration or condition changes occurred after use and before the excavation. This information is useful for determining the appropriate environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, light, etc.) for the storage, or even exhibition, of the recovered objects. Damage or deterioration caused by the excavation must be recorded as well. Nowadays, there are also ethical issues to be considered in terms of storage and access rights, particularly with regards to objects recovered from living tradition sites. Consultation with the relevant stakeholders in all of the processes is required.

However, the manufacturing methods of most artefacts unearthed in archaeological excavations may not be known and traditional methods of restoration may not be suitable. These artefacts have already undergone physical and chemical changes and are in varying stages of degeneration. This will necessitate a strategy and plan of conservation treatment which makes full use of modern science. Therefore collaboration between professionals from many disciplines is an essential requirement for the conservation of archaeological assets.

Human remains

There are sensitive cultural issues surrounding the excavations and conservation of places which may contain human remains, the treatment of which is one of the most emotive and complex areas of archaeology. The principal assumptions underpinning the issues of human remains, as laid out by the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (APABE), are:

- Human remains should always be treated with dignity and respect.
- Burials should not be disturbed without good reason. However, it was noted that the demands of the modern world are such that it may be necessary to disturb burials for development plans.
- Human remains and the archaeological evidence for the rites which accompanied their burial are important sources of scientific information.
- There is a need to give particular weight to the feelings and views of living family members when known.
- There is a need for decisions to be made in the public interest, and in an accountable way (APABE 2017, p. 1).

Human remains in museums have their own set of ethical principles which need to be followed.