

remain without a history and without a record of their existence. Do these people deserve a chapter in the book of human cultural development? None of them are left to state their wishes in the matter. Anthropologists, being explicitly dedicated to the study of humanity in all its aspects, can hardly agree that ancient cultures are to remain in limbo, off-limits to investigation. Even though most anthropologists do not engage directly in studies of the ancient past, anthropology as a discipline is heavily dependent on the perspectives and findings of culture-historical studies. Restrictions on such studies therefore affect all of anthropology and not just the specialists in archaeology.

A number of confusions have led to the present conflicts between archaeologists and those who oppose archaeological study. The first is the assumption of direct continuity and genetic and cultural relationship between living persons and the archaeological past. Of course, there is such a relationship for all living people, but it is attenuated and diffused by all the events of the past and while one may choose to speak for past generations, this is more often than not a personal belief rather than a valid historical or cultural position. The contemporary people who have reconstructed imagined Druidic ceremonies at Stonehenge are rightly considered a band of harmless and well-meaning loonies--no one seriously believes that they represent the life and culture of the people who built Stonehenge. Finding out about those ancient people is the serious business of serious culture historians and archaeologists. Do the builders of Stonehenge deserve to have their history and culture recorded with whatever detail we can reconstruct? If so, it is only archaeology that can provide the needed information.

My conclusion is that if I am studying Stonehenge, part of my obligation is to the people who built Stonehenge--they are my informants. Similarly, if I am studying a site in California occupied 5000 years ago, it is the occupants of that site to whom I am obligated to provide a true statement of their life and culture. As with any study, there are also obligations to living people: property