

To What Extent is the International Trade of Battlefield and Military Relic Material a Matter of Moral Concern?

The international trade of battlefield and military relic material sits at a controversial and precarious intersection between death, heritage, memory, and morality. Unlike many other categories of antiquities – such as Babylonian or Dynastic Egyptian artefacts – conflict material from more recent centuries is frequently entangled with identifiable individuals, memories and landscapes which are very much emotionally “alive”. The discipline of *conflict archaeology* is not just about detail of human war, it also encompasses the recovery of objects from these events and explores how societies might cope with and negotiate violent pasts as they move forward. Ideas of commemoration, engagement and preservation are often prevalent in post-war contexts, but it is also worth considering the role that exchange and movement play here. The international trade of such materials has the potential to enable and facilitate preservation, research and public access, whilst simultaneously providing a framework which encourages desecration, looting and the commodification of suffering. Rather than offer an absolute statement regarding this topic, the question “to what extent” encourages a graded answer - which can be illuminated through a deeper level of synthesis and holistic investigation. To first address this, we must approach and recognise “battlefield and military relic material” as more than a single ethical category; it has huge diversity, incorporating personal effects (badges, clothes, letters), equipment, weaponry, vehicles, shipwrecks, machine wreckage, and perhaps the most emotionally charged of all - human remains and materials directly associated with this. It would be an unfair generalisation to say that the international trade of all battlefield and military relic material is definitely a matter of “significant moral concern”, because there are many situations where this statement would not apply. Arguably, such issues of morality are strongest in situations where trade involves material from war graves, incentivises the destruction of archaeological context, or transforms suffering into spectacle. Notwithstanding this argument, forms of circulation of such relics can be ethically defensible; in situations where they are transparent, legally and professionally regulated, respectful of all parties involved (especially including the dead and those linked to them), or oriented towards a greater public benefit. Therefore, the extent of moral concern is best understood as a deeply complex spectrum, further shaped by the material, provenance, intention and outcome, as this essay seeks to demonstrate.

Before directly addressing and assessing the moral implications of international trade in this context, it would be logical to establish why battlefield and military relic constitutes a distinct

and ethically sensitive category of heritage. As aforementioned, such material is characterised by a wide and diverse range, which crucially foregrounds the importance of treating each object or material as ethically distinct. Unlike certain other types of archaeological material — such as Neolithic flints or Bronze Age pottery sherds — battlefield relics from comparably modern conflicts uniquely retain a close temporal, emotional and biographical proximity to communities and individuals who continue to experience and feel the effects of said conflicts. Such artefacts pull heavily on emotions, arguably through the strong relationship they hold to human absence. There are many battlefield and war contexts from which bodies and remains of the fallen were never recovered, deliberately destroyed, or simply remain unidentified, which is part of the reason why objects which hold association to these individuals require an intensified level of caution and sensitivity. Items can sometimes hold a mnemonic role, being perceived by those grieving as substitutes for bodies or identities which would otherwise have been lost. This intriguing phenomenon has been explored by Stewart (1994) and later by Saunders (2000), who both contest that conflict relics frequently function as stand-ins for lost people as a memory of the body –



Figure 1. Fragment of shell retaining scrap of uniform trousers that wounded the Reverend Alexander Ian Dunlop, Chaplain (1942–1945), south of Moyland, Germany, 15 February 1945. National Museums Scotland, museum reference M.2007.25.1. Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.nms.ac.uk/discover-catalogue/souvenirs-of-service-mementoes-from-the-first-and-second-world-wars>.

ultimately collapsing a strong distinction between material culture and human presence.¹ National Museums Scotland describes how some people collect battlefield objects and retain them as family heirlooms to recall specific people or events.² (Figure 1 shows a perfect example of this). Therefore, it can be said that some conflict objects are not simple physical traces of past violence, but can instead function as mediators and memories of relationships between those living and those who are no longer with us. Their movement through trade networks consequently

has significant ethical implications which extend beyond issues of legality and ownership,

¹ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 133; Nicholas J. Saunders, "Bodies of Metal, Shells of Memory: 'Trench Art', and the Great War Re-cycled," *Journal of Material Culture* 5, no. 1 (2000): 58–59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/135918350000500103>.

² Julie Holder, "Souvenirs of Service: Mementoes from the First and Second World Wars," *National Museums Scotland*, accessed February 15, 2026, <https://www.nms.ac.uk/discover-catalogue/souvenirs-of-service-mementoes-from-the-first-and-second-world-wars>

towards questions of morality and values of humanity. Tarlow's work on remembrance further illuminates this conundrum by explaining that responses to death and conflict cannot simply be reduced and confined to abstract ideological or political frameworks.³ Instead, it should be made clear that commemoration can be actively shaped by expressions of grief or shock, through tangible mediums such as objects, monuments, or practices of curation. This manner of framing helps to illustrate why battlefield relics provoke moral concern in ways that many other categories of archaeological material cannot. Their ethical sensitivity is not only derived from factors relating to age or politics — as some items might be — but from their complicated entanglement with contested memory and unresolved loss. As a result, any evaluation of international trade must surely encompass the acknowledgement that certain artefacts are strongly embedded within existing social relations and moral expectations which persist in post-war contexts.

Having established a significant driving force in why battlefield and military relic material occupies such a distinct and ethically sensitive position within heritage discourse, it is now necessary to consider how the moral implications of its trade might be evaluated. The moral concern surrounding this topic does not simply arise in a vacuum, but is instead actively shaped through constructed frameworks which help us to define what constitutes harm, legitimacy, and responsibility. To structure a reliable evaluation regarding this, the overlapping, but individual, perspectives of archaeological ethics, conflict archaeology and heritage ethics are particularly useful. By comparing and contrasting the theory behind these approaches, it promotes a deeper synthesis of moral concern not as an abstract reaction to trade itself, but instead as a consequence of how trade intersects with context, memory, and care. From the perspective of archaeological ethics, one of the most persistent concerns in this debate can be traced to the integrity (and destruction) of archaeological contexts (see example of compromised archaeological context from unrecorded excavation in Figure 2). The European Association of Archaeology strongly asserts that artefacts must be delicately, meaningfully, and responsibly separated from the conditions of their deposition, including the sometimes intangible nature of some contexts.⁴ Renfrew's arguments surrounding the demand-led destruction (although developed primarily in relation to the antiquities market) fit uncomfortably well to modern conflict relic material, wherein he suggests that the purchases of unprovenanced artefacts contribute to the mechanisms

³ Sarah Tarlow, "An Archaeology of Remembering: Death, Bereavement and the First World War," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 7, no. 1 (1997): 105–121, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774300001499>.

⁴ European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), *EAA Code of Practice*, approved 15 September 2022 (Prague: European Association of Archaeologists, 2022), accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/EAA/About/Codes.aspx>

which unfortunately finance further unsustainable extraction through the creation and maintaining of predictable demand and profit.⁵ From this perspective, sustainably extracted and correctly documented artefacts which find their way into the international markets are far less of a moral concern than those which do not meet these standards. As Vitelli's edited book *Archaeological Ethics*, strongly foregrounds: professional responsibility in archaeology is not confined to the physical recovery of objects alone, but is just as important in the recording and preservation.⁶ This very issue becomes particularly acute when assessing the removal of material from battlefield context, since many of these conflict landscapes are often extensive, shallow, and already subject to prior disturbance



Figure 2. Unrecorded excavation of a Second World War battlefield site, illustrating disturbance of burial context and loss of archaeological integrity. From Pierre Kosmidis, "Battlefield Archaeology: An Insider's View on WW2 Battle Relics Excavation," *WW2 Wrecks*. Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.ww2wrecks.com/portfolio/battlefield-archaeology-an-insiders-view-on-ww2-battle-relics-excavation/>.

through clearance or memorialisation. When related relics enter the international markets, whether it be through the hands of metal-detectorists or via commercial recovery, much of the ethical responsibility lies in the practices of intervention and disturbance themselves.⁷ From this angle, it could be maintained that moral concern should be directed towards stricter digging regulations and more thorough control of goods exported from countries. Of course, a heightened level of policing and control might be beneficial in controlling the flow of illicit artefacts in the international markets, but attention must also be given towards limiting the detrimental removal practices which precede the trades. With this being said, it is still important to recognise the negativity which arises from the act of trade itself without disregarding it or blaming it wholly on other mechanisms, as will be discussed in more detail.

⁵ Colin Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2000), 15–16.

⁶ Karen D. Vitelli, ed., *Archaeological Ethics* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996), 1–15.

⁷ Gabriel Moshenska, "Ethics and Ethical Critique in the Archaeology of Modern Conflict," *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 41, no. 2 (2008): 159–175, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00293650802522662>.

From the perspective of conflict archaeology, the question of moral concern is not as clear as the tangible issues of unscientific removal as discussed with archaeological ethics. Rather, this angle highlights more intangible factors including the disruption of ongoing processes of memory, commemoration, and the social negotiation in post-conflict landscapes. Moshenska (2008) asserts that the conventional archaeological ethics are not always applicable in modern conflict, because much of material involved exists within fields of unresolved memory and political sensitivity, not simply closed historical pasts.⁸ Conflict archaeology elevates away from this closed narrative by treating material remains as more than data and typologies – it approaches and views it as more of an active participant in the processes of closure from violence, loss, and responsibility. When relics are extracted and circulated across international goods markets, it is easy for them to become detached from these local processes of meaning-making, which could ultimately undermine the commemorative practices or silence stakeholder voices which wish to remain invested in the



Figure 3. Visitor balancing on railway tracks leading to the gatehouse of the former Auschwitz concentration camp, illustrating the coexistence of tourism and spaces of mourning. Photograph published by *ABC News*, “Auschwitz museum tells visitors to WWII Nazi concentration camp to stop posing for pictures on train tracks.” Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-21/auschwitz-museum-urges-people-to-stop-balancing-on-train-tracks/10923408>.

landscape. This concern is further intensified by the fact that some sites – such as Auschwitz Death Camp – simultaneously function as touristic destinations and as places of

⁸ Moshenska, “Ethics and Ethical Critique,” 159–163.

mourning (see Figure 3).⁹ As Schofield emphasises, these types of places and the material associated with them is deeply intertwined with living environments where public memory, identity and ethical obligations are all prevalent.¹⁰ By considering this, one could argue that the moral concern is less about the legality of a related object's acquisition, but more about whether its removal and trade have disregarded or shunned the social relationships binding it to communities and descendants. In this regard, trade thus becomes morally problematic when it prioritises private ownership over the responsibilities of care, sensitivity, and dialogue. This does not apply to all battlefield objects and military relics, since items which are from less recent conflict such as materials from the English Civil War or The Napoleonic War carry far less emotional baggage by current societies. Despite this, ethical concerns still exist for older battlefield relics, but in the context of conflict archaeology, it could be argued that moral concern is much stronger when the trade actively interferes with the meaningful living relationships tied to more modern artefacts.

Heritage ethics has less of an emphasis on the aforementioned technical questions of legal and correct acquisition, or intangible concepts of emotional bonds, but reframes the moral implications of international trade towards issues of authority, value, and representation. By delving further into this field, the ethical problems involving how trade redistributes control over the interpretation and ownership of the past become more prominent. Lowenthal argues that heritage is a selective and present-oriented construction, which is shaped by contemporary desires rather than objective historical truths.¹¹ Leading on from this, recognising the recontextualising of conflict materials as it enters and moves through international trade markets is vital. This alteration or reassignment of a prior historical narrative tied to a certain object is damaging, since often ideas of authenticity and rarity become prioritised, neglecting critical engagement with violence and its consequences. This process is explained well through Tunbridge and Ashworth's discussion of dissonant heritage, wherein the same type of material carries contrasting and sometimes incompatible meanings for different groups.¹² To expand on this point: some battlefield relics may represent sacrifice or mourning for some, while functioning as rare collectible commodities and trophies for other groups. As Bevan (2006) explains in his work, the control over

⁹ Gila Oren, Yaniv Poria, and Arie Reichel, "The Positive Role of Negative Emotions in Heritage-Site Visits: The Case of Auschwitz Death Camp," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 17, no. 2 (2022): 158–173, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2021.1937186>.

¹⁰ John Schofield, *Aftermath: Readings in the Archaeology of Recent Conflict* (New York: Springer, 2009), 3–5.

¹¹ David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1–5.

¹² J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: Wiley, 1996), 6–9.

material traces of violence is often a means of controlling memory itself, since the meanings attached are socially produced and politically motivated.¹³ Through this theoretical framework, it could be contested that the international trade of conflict and military artefacts faces serious moral issues when it prioritises and privileges certain perspectives which do not align with or respect the original meaning given to such artefacts. The exchange of battlefield relics from less recent conflicts (The English Civil War as an earlier example), are less significant in this instance, since they lack the political charge and contested meaning that fresher objects possess. Undoubtedly there are many more such examples of exception, but these should not be used to disregard the ethical injustices produced when markets consider market values and alternative narratives as superior to a person's or people's suffering and story – instead an increased intention to expose these challenges further should be adopted.

A particularly useful concept for the analysis of moral concern here can be drawn from Appadurai's discussion of value as a product of circulation and trade.¹⁴ As objects are moved away from their original contexts and enter new regimes of exchange their economic significance in the eyes of the beholders become progressively re-authored. This process can be well understood by examples of recovery and international circulation of numerous WWII aircraft from the former Soviet Union, as documented by Page (2005).¹⁵ Such material has frequently been exported to Western Europe and North America, entering private



Figure 4. Handley Page Hampden TB.1 (P1344) being transported from RAF Museum Midlands to RAF Museum London for public display, following recovery from a Second World War crash site on Russia's Kola Peninsula. Photo via RAF Museum Midlands. *Vintage Aviation News*, photograph by Moreno Aguiari. Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://vintageaviationnews.com/aviation-museum-news/rare-handley-page-hampden-moves-to-london-for-first-public-display.html>.

¹³ Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 9.

¹⁴ Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–5, 13–18.

¹⁵ Gordon Page, *Warbird Recovery: The Hunt for World War II Aircraft* (London: Crowood Press, 2005), esp. chapters on Eastern European and post-Soviet aircraft recoveries.

collections, restoration markets, and museum displays (see Figure 4.). The significance of these journeys could perhaps be understood by relating it to Kopytoff's "object biographies" theory.¹⁶ Through this lens, such material can be viewed as having different life stages intertwined with different meanings: the Handley Page Hampden starting as a commodity of war, to an emotionally charged piece of material evidence of combat and loss, to a rare technological artefact or commodity, and finally a unique piece to be shared by the public in a museum context. Of course, this example of an object biography could be altered or seen differently depending on the viewer or object in question, but the general point of significance worth recognising is the trajectory of shifting meaning which many of these conflict-related materials experience. It could be contested that there are very limited factors of ethical concern about this example of battle relics being internationally traded, since museum acquisition via trade can actively facilitate conservation and research whilst providing public access to something which might otherwise have remained lost and neglected in the ground somewhere. However, a deeper analysis reveals that within this transformation there still exists ethical concerns, particularly regarding that which is lost through this process. The removal of plane wreckages and similar remains detach them from their original crash landscapes — which arguably holds some level of emotional charge — alongside weakening local custodianship and limiting the capacity of local communities to interact and narrate the site on their own terms. As such removals are increasingly normalised within international markets, heritage risks being defined by aspects of mobility and legality, rather than by the familiar issues of place, relational accountability, or social responsibility. It could be said that in this context, the moral concern is not intensified at the moment of sale to an institution, but through the intangible erosion of context and meaning.

Another angle which offers valuable insights regarding the moral implications is that of trench art. Unlike many other forms of internationally traded battlefield material, trench art can be said to occupy an ambiguous position of something between relic, souvenir, and personal expression. This art is created by repurposing materials from war trenches, such as spent ammunition, shell casings, and other military debris left by soldiers, civilians, or prisoners (see Figure 5). Objects made through this craft therefore hold hybridised meaning and sit at a peculiar intersection between artefact, mnemonic, and commodity, with the circulation of such items testing whether moral concern can be applied uniformly across all

¹⁶ Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91.

forms of battlefield relic trade. One argument which stands against the moral concern for the trade of trench art lies in the intentional transformation of meaning at the point of creation. Nicholas Saunders contends that trench art is an active representation of meaning making, in which the destructive items and material traces of violence and suffering are reshaped into objects of creativity, memory, or survival.¹⁷ Unlike the extraction and exchange of human remains, unmodified weaponry, personal items, or vehicle wreckage, trench art could alternatively be viewed



Figure 5. Bullet Crucifix, First World War trench art. © Imperial War Museum (EPH 1915). Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/trench-art>.

as an item which represents new beginnings through the repurposing of materials and detachment from original violent function. A counter argument which raises some moral concern is that some pieces of trench art - as highlighted by Stewart's work on souvenirs - might hold significance as material mediators of suffering and loss standing in for absent bodies and experiences.¹⁸ Considering this, it could be argued that the creation and use of trench art in itself has minor moral shortcomings, but rather the trade and movement of trench art into unfamiliar contexts as collectible commodities where their meaning risks being flattened into aesthetic or monetary value is where the real moral concerns exist.

A further source of moral concern arises from the increase and normalisation of battlefield relic trade through globalised internet marketplaces. As Renfrew has argued in relation to antiquities, the repeated exposure to commodified heritage gradually erodes ethical sensitivity, which transforms objects which were once recognised as culturally or morally

¹⁷ Saunders, *Trench Art*, 9–15.

¹⁸ Stewart, *On Longing*, 132–135.

charged into routine items of exchange with monetary or collectable value.¹⁹ A simple search for “WW2 Artefacts” on eBay with filters adjusted to “Highest Price + P&P” reveals

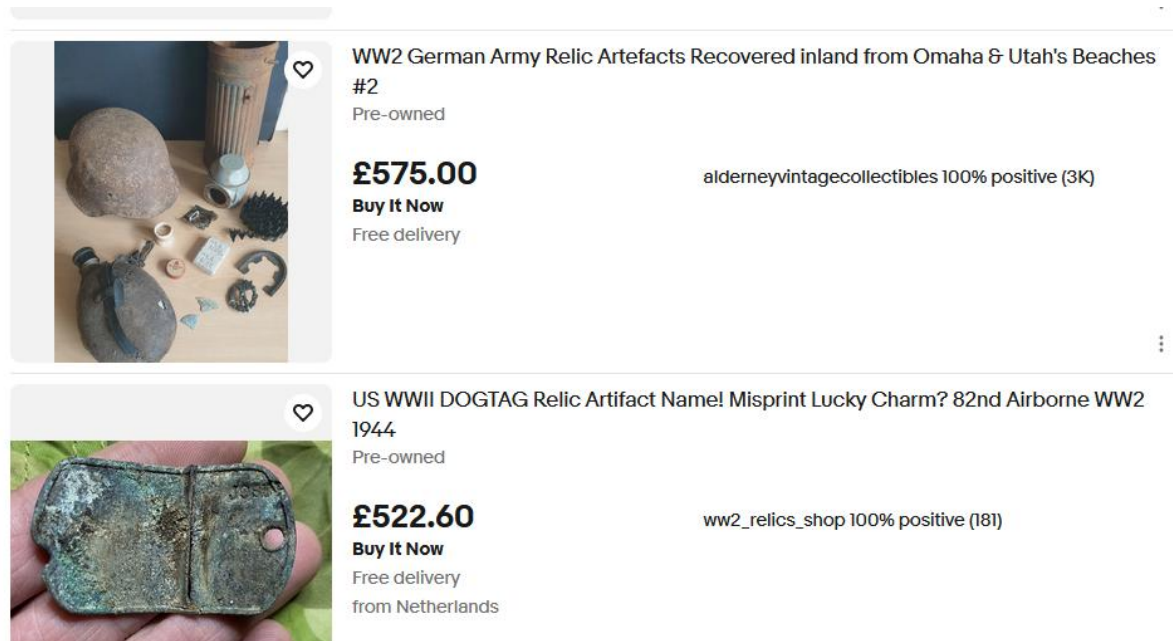


Figure 6. Screenshot of eBay listings for “WW2 artefacts,” filtered by highest price, showing German Army relics and U.S. Army dog tags priced above £500. Screenshot by author. Accessed February 19, 2026, https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/i.html?_nkw=ww2+artefacts&_sacat=0&_from=R40&_sop=16.

listings for German Army relics and US Army dog tags worth over £500 (see Figure 6). These items have been removed from their sites of origin and reframed as collectible artefacts worth significantly more than they cost to make. The moral concern is perhaps not found in the legality of these transactions and whether or not the eBay seller has the legal right to sell them, but instead in the process of ethical dilution produced through the nature of the scale, repetition, and distance of this trade. When this type of battlefield material is encountered so casually through digital interfaces, it becomes far easier to consume without reflecting on deeper meaning. Objects associated with violence, loss, or even identifiable individuals risk being reduced to aesthetic or economic value, with the element of human association fading away. This process produces a risky form of demand-led normalisation, aligning with Renfrew’s critique that sustained market circulation actively normalises ethically compromised materials.²⁰ An increased mindset of apathy regarding unsavoury methods of extracting in conjunction with incredibly important processes of grieving and closure is surely a cause for moral concern.

¹⁹ Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership*, 15–20.

²⁰ Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership*, 15–16, 19–20.

Drawing towards a conclusion, the analysis thus far has indicated that the international trade of battlefield relics and military materials is not inherently immoral on the surface level, but carries significant ethical risks when contextualised in a thoughtful manner. The extent of the moral concern is certainly wide-reaching, but cannot simply be blamed on the international trade of such goods as an action in itself, but rather the conditions under which that movement occurs must be also considered. Ethical problems spring forth in situations when factors of care, context, and responsibility are neglected - like the destruction of archaeological contexts, disruption of graves, or interference with human mourning processes. These hazards vary in nature and do not apply consistently to the diverse examples, since objects such as trench art, or artefacts moved through interpretive frameworks demonstrate that some circulation can be defensible when it preserves material which would otherwise be lost, to allow wider public access. The extent of the morality issues surrounding this therefore partly intersects with a spectrum shaped by provenance, intention and outcome. In scenarios where trade sustains an indifference towards suffering, or where it transforms the material traces of violence into economically motivated commodities, a feeling of ethical concern is unavoidable. Ultimately, the question of ethics around this type of international trade demands continual ethical scrutiny and guidance to ensure that material with association to violence and loss is engaged with responsibly and respectfully.

Bibliography

Appadurai, Arjun. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 3–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Bevan, Robert. *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*. London: Reaktion Books, 2006.

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA). *EAA Code of Practice*. Prague: European Association of Archaeologists, 2022. Approved 15 September 2022. Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/EAA/About/Codes.aspx>.

Holder, Julie. "Souvenirs of Service: Mementoes from the First and Second World Wars." *National Museums Scotland*. Accessed February 15, 2026. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/discover-catalogue/souvenirs-of-service-mementoes-from-the-first-and-second-world-wars>.

Kopytoff, Igor. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process." In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Lowenthal, David. *The Past Is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Moshenska, Gabriel. "Ethics and Ethical Critique in the Archaeology of Modern Conflict." *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 41, no. 2 (2008): 159–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00293650802522662>.

Oren, Gila, Yaniv Poria, and Arie Reichel. "The Positive Role of Negative Emotions in Heritage-Site Visits: The Case of Auschwitz Death Camp." *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 17, no. 2 (2022): 158–173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2021.1937186>.

Page, Gordon. *Warbird Recovery: The Hunt for World War II Aircraft*. London: Crowood Press, 2005.

Renfrew, Colin. *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology*. London: Duckworth, 2000.

Saunders, Nicholas J. "Bodies of Metal, Shells of Memory: 'Trench Art', and the Great War Re-cycled." *Journal of Material Culture* 5, no. 1 (2000): 43–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135918350000500103>.

Saunders, Nicholas J. *Trench Art: Materialities and Memories of War*. Oxford: Berg, 2003.

Schofield, John. *Aftermath: Readings in the Archaeology of Recent Conflict*. New York: Springer, 2009.

Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.

Tarlow, Sarah. "An Archaeology of Remembering: Death, Bereavement and the First World War." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 7, no. 1 (1997): 105–121.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774300001499>.

Tunbridge, J. E., and G. J. Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. Chichester: Wiley, 1996.

Vitelli, Karen D., ed. *Archaeological Ethics*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.

Figures

Figure 1. National Museums Scotland. "Souvenirs of Service: Mementoes from the First and Second World Wars." Discover National Museums Scotland collection. Accessed February 19, 2026.

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/discover-catalogue/souvenirs-of-service-mementoes-from-the-first-and-second-world-wars>.

Figure 2. Kosmidis, Pierre. Unrecorded excavation of a Second World War battlefield site (photograph). In "Battlefield Archaeology: An Insider's View on WW2 Battle Relics Excavation," *WW2 Wrecks*. Accessed February 19, 2026.

<https://www.ww2wrecks.com/portfolio/battlefield-archaeology-an-insiders-view-on-ww2-battle-relics-excavation/>.

Figure 3. Visitor balancing on railway tracks leading to the gatehouse of the former Auschwitz concentration camp (photograph). *ABC News*, 21 March 2019. Accessed February 19, 2026.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-21/auschwitz-museum-urges-people-to-stop-balancing-on-train-tracks/10923408>.

Figure 4. Moreno Aguiari. Handley Page Hampden TB.1 (P1344) being transported to RAF Museum London following recovery from Russia's Kola Peninsula (photograph). *Vintage Aviation News*, July 4, 2025. Accessed February 19, 2026.

<https://vintageaviationnews.com/aviation-museum-news/rare-handley-page-hampden-moves-to-london-for-first-public-display.html>.

Figure 5. Bullet Crucifix, First World War trench art. © Imperial War Museum (EPH 1915).

Accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/trench-art>.

Figure 6. Screenshot of eBay listings for “WW2 artefacts,” filtered by highest price.

Screenshot by author. Accessed February 19, 2026,

https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/i.html?_nkw=ww2+artefacts&_sacat=0&_from=R40&_sop=16.