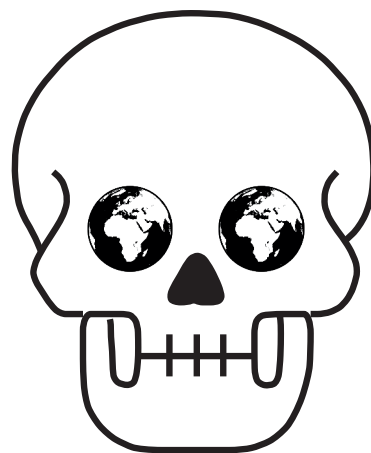


Interdisciplinary Dialogues on Death Rituals: Materializing the Absent

16.–17.09.2021

Room F-122 and F-112
Lerchenweg 36 (Unitobler)
3012 Bern (Switzerland)



Death can be understood as a socially transformative process which is to be regulated by funerary practices. The material results of these intentional and structured actions – often conceptualized as rituals – are, among others, burial sites, graves and their contents. In this context, objects are often used to support the transformational processes. Material culture can therefore be understood as a form of communication. Its functions and meanings are not static but depend on the context and can form a complex relationship with ideologies and actions. Human remains, too, are a part of this material culture, as they can be used as objects within burial practices and become means of expression.

Archaeologically, only the materialization of burial rituals can be recorded by analyzing human remains and other objects found in the context of burials. The corresponding functions and meanings must then be interpreted using historical, ethnological, and sociological analogies. From a religious studies perspective it is possible to perceive how the bodily remains of a deceased person can become the focus not only of veneration or remembrance, but also of self-focused religious development. These studies, however, due to their abundance of options, often neglect the material culture, which is the main focus of archaeological research. An interdisciplinary

dialogue between archaeological sciences and religious studies will therefore open opportunities for both sides to learn from each other and come to new perspectives.

The aim of this workshop is to look at the significance of objects as they are created in the interaction of human beings and materials. In order to understand the functions and meanings of burial practices and burial sites, objects should be approximated to the physical as well as the social context they are part of. Social sciences and the humanities can witness historical and contemporary burial rites with additional tools, such as narratives and ethnological participation.

Contributions to the workshop will therefore focus on:

- archaeological aspects such as intentionality, ritual sequences, spatial arrangement, typology and physical characteristics;
- social or historical aspects such as religious practices and beliefs, political structures, social influences, and narrative cultures;
- analyses of salient case studies using methods from both social studies / humanities and archaeology;
- theoretical considerations on the possibilities and limits of incorporating social scientific / historical theories into archaeology, or vice versa.

Timetable

Thursday, 16.09.2021

- 09.00–09.15 Walk in
- 09.15–09.40 Welcome by Jens Schlieter and Albert Hafner, Institute for the Science of Religion and Institute of Archaeological Sciences, University of Bern
- 09.40–10.00 Introduction by the organizers: Sarah Perez, Noah Steuri and Bastiaan van Rijn
- 10.00–11.40 Changes in Funerary Customs**
- 10.05–10.30 Katharina Rebay-Salisbury: Inhumation & Cremation: Bodies, Graves and Objects in the Bronze Age
- 10.30–10.55 Amelie Alterauge: Crypt Burials in Germany – Changes of Funerary Customs, Body Treatment, and Attitudes to Death
- 10.55–11.20 Sam Hooker: Home Death Care Through the Lens of Kristeva's Powers of Horror
- 11.20–11.40 Discussion
- 11.40–11.55 *Break*
- 11.55–13.45 Social Practices Surrounding the Deceased**
- 12.00–12.25 Oskar Terš: From Ossuaries to Mummy Show – Touristic Enhancement of Central European Places by Rediscovering or Redesigning Rooms for the Dead
- 12.25–12.50 Franziska Fecher: Burial Rites and Ritual Feasting in Pre-Hispanic Honduras
- 12.50–13.15 Lilo Ruther: Materializing the Absent in Death Rituals Outside of Religious Communities
- 13.15–13.45 Discussion
- 13.45–14.45 *Lunch*
- 14.45–16.25 Signs for Beliefs and Evidence for Funerary Practices**
- 14.50–15:15 Emma Pomeroy: The Challenges of Interpreting Mortuary/Funerary Behaviour in the Palaeolithic: Insights from Shanidar Cave (Iraqi Kurdistan)
- 15.15–15.40 Sarah Tarlow: Belief and Bodies in Early Modernity
- 15.40–16.05 Jens Schlieter: Absence
- 16.05–16.25 Discussion
- 16.25–18.05 New Approaches to Studying Graves and the Dead**
- 16.30–16.55 Fredrik Ekengren: Probing the Multimodality of Graves: Scenes, Spectators and Visual Engagement
- 16.55–17.20 Daniel Robins: The Material Agency of the Dead Body
- 17.20–17.45 Michaela Wisler: Human Remains as Religious Objects? A Point of View from Science of Religion
- 17.45–18.05 Discussion
- 19.00 *Dinner*

Friday, 17.09.2021

- 09.30–11.15 Grave Goods, Social Status and Transformations**
- 09.35–10.00 Jessica Ryan-Despraz: Ideology and Function: An Anthropological Approach to Assessing the Links between Warfare and Social Status During the Bell Beaker Period
- 10.00–10.25 Matthieu Honegger: Social Relations and Inequalities Through Funerary Rites: The Example of the Royal Necropolis of Kerma
- 10.25–10.50 Melanie Augstein: The Manipulation of Grave Goods as Means of Transformation or Enchainment
- 10.50–11.10 Discussion
- 11.10–11.30 *Break*
- 11.30–13.00 Interdisciplinary Approaches to Studying Burials and the Dead**
- 11.35–12.00 Gino Caspari/Marco Milella: The Kokel of Southern Siberia – Interdisciplinary Insights into Funerary Rituals of a Pastoralist Steppe Community
- 12.00–12.25 Noah Steuri: Examining the Multiplicity of Burial Practices within Neolithic Stone Cist Graves in the Western Alpine Region
- 12.25–12.50 Sarah Perez, Bastiaan van Rijn: Confronting Death: Inspiring Innovation Through Interdisciplinary Dialogues
- 12.50–13.10 Discussion
- 13.15–13.25 Final Words by the organizers: Sarah Perez, Noah Steuri and Bastiaan van Rijn
- 13.30–14.00 *Goodbye Lunch (optional)*
- 14.00 *Walk through Bern (optional)*