

MORTUARY ARCHAEOLOGY TODAY

Approaches, methods and ethics



ARCHON
research school
of archaeology



Symposium and Workshop
University of Groningen, April 19-20, 2018

Programme & Abstracts

Version March 26, 2018



PROGRAMME Symposium 19-4-2018

Het Heerenhuis, Spilsluizen 9, Groningen

9.30 *Welcome and Registration*

10.00 Opening by Mortuary Archaeology Today Committee

Session 1A: New methods in funerary archaeology

Chair: Dr. Eveline Altena, LUMC

10.10 Eveline Altena et al.,
LUMC A stable story: Insights in the development of a (post)medieval population in the east of the Netherlands.

10.30 Hayley Mickleburgh,
Leiden University Death in high definition: Current use and future development of archaeoethnatology to understand funerary practices.

10.50 Sabina Ghislandi, Brendan Keely et al.,
University of York The InterArChive project: Signatures of archaeological burials contained in grave soils.

11.20 *Coffee Break*

Session 1B: Bioarchaeology: Diet, health and disease

11.40 Christian Meyer, *OsteoARC*
& Kurt W. Alt. Biocultural analysis of a large Merovingian cemetery: On the interrelation of human skeletal remains and funerary features.

12.00 Barbara Veselka et al.,
Leiden University Bioarchaeological interpretations of Vitamin D deficiency prevalence in two 17th-19th ct. populations from Beemster and Hattem, Netherlands.

12.20 Rachel Schats,
Leiden University Medieval Malaria: New ways for studying a neglected disease in the Netherlands.

12.40 (TBA)

13.00 *Lunch*

Session 2A: Interpreting burial practices: variability, transformation and continuity

Chair: Prof. Howard Williams

14.00 Daniela Heilmann,
LMU Munich Analyzing the Macedonian burial records: Facing differences and commonalities within iron Age Burial customs in the lower Vardar Valley.

14.20 Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin,
Jagiellonian University, Krakow. The dead and alive in the early Egyptian funerary practices: The case of cemeteries in Tell el-Farkha, Egypt.

14.40 Tian Tian,
University College London Absence of grave goods: Transformation of funerary rituals in EBA Egypt.

15.00 Sarah Schrader,
Leiden university Mortuary trends and tenets in Ancient Nubia: A case study from the third Cataract (Sudan).

15.20 *Tea Break*



Session 2B: Death and Mourning

15.40	Caroline van Toor, <i>University Groningen</i>	Past emotions and the study of Greek funerary epigrams.
16.00	Lidewijde de Jong, <i>University of Groningen</i>	Funerary beliefs and the afterlife in Roman Syria: an archaeological perspective
16.20	Sylviane Déderix, <i>University of Heidelberg & Aurore Schmitt, CNRS</i>	Double funerals in Minoan Crete? The evidence from the cemetery of Sissi (Zone 9)
16.40	Roosmarie Vlaskamp, <i>Leiden University</i>	Burials and everyday life in pre-Hispanic Nicaragua, AD 300-1250.
17.00	Prof. Howard Williams	Keynote: Cremation Past and Present Discussion

18.00 **Drinks at Groningen Institute of Archaeology**
Location: Poststraat 6, Groningen

19.30 **Optional: Symposium Dinner**
Sign up before 16th of April, approx. costs 25 euro.

PROGRAMME Workshop 20-4-2018 *Harmonie Building, Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 26*

9.30 Welcome and Introduction *Mortuary Network*

9.45 **Workshop part 1**

11.15 *Coffee Break*

11.30 **Workshop part 2**

13.00 Discussion *Mortuary network*

13.30 *Lunch*

14.30 **Guided tour cemetery: *Zuiderbegraafplaats, Groningen***

Keynote

Thursday April 19th, 17.00

Howard Williams

Professor at University of Chester

Cremation Past and Present

The archaeological study of cremation practices is a vibrant strand of archaeological research that challenges both representational approaches to mortuary variability and change, but also queries the parameters, processes and scales by which we work as bioarchaeologists and mortuary archaeologists. This presentation will attempt to sketch the range of ways in which the archaeology of cremation has, in recent years, facilitated new perspectives about death and society. I offer some case studies from my own research in early medieval archaeology, contemporary archaeology, and the public archaeology of death, that have sought to connect the archaeological investigation of cremation with broader interdisciplinary questions regarding mortality and identity in the past and present.

The sessions (Thursday 9-17.00)

SESSION 1 Bioarchaeology and the use of funerary remains for population studies

This session will examine the possibilities and limits of the (microscopic) study of human remains. We welcome papers on laboratory research such as isotope and ancient-DNA analyses, but also on morphological studies of bones and/or cremated remains. As examples - the results of recent demographic studies (population, migration, health etc.), new methodologies or current problems.

SESSION 2: Funerary archaeology and exploring approaches to death and mourning

This session will focus on the meanings behind particular mortuary rites and what they represent for both the deceased and those coping with their death. What do differences and commonalities mean? How do we deal with the intersection between ritual/religious and the individual emotional impact of mourning? How can the funerary context help us to understand the motives and values of past peoples? Considering all of this, can we really attempt to understand someone's life (and the impact of their death) from their burial context?

Session 1A

New methods in funerary archaeology

Dr. E. (Eveline) Altena, L.M. Kootker, R. Panhuysen, M. Smeding, E. Vaske, P. Reusink, A. Friedler, P. de Knijff.

Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC)

A stable story: insights in the development of a (post)medieval population in the east of the Netherlands

Recent excavations in the historic cemetery of the eastern Dutch town of Oldenzaal yielded 2750 skeletons, of which 200 were selected for detailed analysis. We applied a combination of different bioarchaeological methods to create a detailed picture of the population of Oldenzaal and surroundings and its development over time between the early middle ages and early 19th century.

Research questions concerned the themes demography, socio-economic position, health, diet and migration and mobility, with a focus on diachronic changes. The following methods were applied on all 200 skeletons: physical anthropology, palaeopathology, DNA analysis (autosomal and Y-chromosomal STR's and mitochondrial and Y-chromosomal haplogroups) and isotope analysis (strontium, oxygen and carbon and nitrogen).

Overall, we see proof of a stable population. There are no significant changes over time in the level and type of genetic diversity or amount of migrants and diet based on isotopes. Although several migrants from outside of the Netherlands could be identified, the results of the DNA and isotope analysis indicate that this population was not so much influenced by large distance migration, but rather by mobility on a regional level. The temporal changes that are observed are mainly related to changes in life conditions and daily activities over time.

Dr. Hayley L. Mickleburgh

Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University

Death in High Definition. Current use and future development of archaeoethanatology to understand funerary practices

An important aim of archaeology is to understand how people in the past dealt with death and the dead. In order to understand the social and cultural aspects of burial, it is important to be able to distinguish the effects of a multitude of taphonomic processes on assemblage patterning from human funerary practices.

This presentation examines how the French-developed methodological approach *archaeoethanatology* is used to reconstruct the original mode of burial and subsequent taphonomic processes in the grave. Particular attention is given to body position, body treatment and timing of deposition (i.e. stage of body decomposition upon burial), since these are intimately associated with concepts of death and decay, the afterlife, and agency of the deceased. Important limitations of the methodological approach are highlighted, and the potential of interdisciplinary actualistic experimental research at human decomposition research facilities to improve our understanding of past funerary practices is discussed.

Sabina Ghislandi^{1*}, Matthew Pickering², Scott Hicks², Raimonda Usai¹, Don Brothwell¹ and **Brendan Keely**^{2*}

¹Department of Archaeology, University of York, Kings Manor, Exhibition Sq. York YO1 7EP, UK

²Department of Chemistry, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD, UK

Signatures of archaeological burials contained in grave soils

The InterArChive project, a collaborative venture involving the Departments of Archaeology and Chemistry of the University of York, and the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences of the University of Stirling, aimed to reveal a hidden archive contained within the soils of archaeological burials. The project involved a unique combination of soil micromorphology, inorganic geochemistry and trace organic chemical analysis to characterise sediments surrounding the skeletal remains in archaeological burial contexts. The project, funded by an ERC Advanced Researcher Grant, was led by Brothwell (archaeology) and Keely (organic chemistry) assisted by Usai (micromorphology) and Wilson (inorganic elemental analysis).

The presentation will detail micromorphological and organic analyses of soils from a selection of archaeological sites, highlighting several key features relating to the impact of the burials on the soil structure and the extent and nature of organic matter preservation. A specific example will be highlighted from which the analyses reveal signatures derived from the human remains and where they evidence conditions within the burial environment. The presentation will demonstrate how the complementary nature of the results from micromorphology and inorganic geochemistry enable deeper insights into the factors influencing organic preservation as well as revealing further insights into burial practices and soil processes that are potentially indicative of burial environments. Intriguingly, the studies reveal unprecedented aspects of burial practice as well as distinctive changes to the soil structure and chemistry that can be indicative of buried organic matter even in situations where organic matter decomposition is extensive or even complete.

Session 1B

Bioarchaeology: Diet, health and disease

Christian Meyer*, Kurt W. Alt

OsteoARC – OsteoArchaeological Research Centre

Biocultural Analysis of a Large Merovingian Cemetery: On the Interrelation of Human Skeletal Remains and Funerary Features

When analysing human skeletal remains it is essential to record all data in a systematic way that allows later comparison of the obtained results with other sites. Unfortunately, this basic issue has long been neglected in the past.

Using the Merovingian Period as an illustrative example, this presentation will focus on the systematic, biocultural analysis of a large cemetery from Mannheim, Germany. This almost completely excavated cemetery contained about 900 graves and is therefore an ideal sample to identify patterns concerning the interrelation of funerary features and the human remains contained therein. The large sample size enables comparative analyses based on internal subdivisions by sex, age, body height, presumed social status etc. Selected results will be presented that exemplify such biocultural interrelations, e.g. between cranial injuries and social status in male individuals.

In addition to this population-based approach, analysis may also focus on individuals that deviate from the established burial norm of the site. These graves often provide very specific insight by reflecting the actions of the surviving community under special circumstances. The combination of these specific spotlights on specific individuals and statistically sound population-wide patterns within the same cemeteries allows to reconstruct a fine-grained and informative “holistic funerary archaeology”.

Barbara Veselka¹, Menno Hoogland¹, Andrea Water-Rist^{1,2}, and Megan Brickley³

1 = Leiden University, Faculty of Archaeology, Human Osteoarchaeology Laboratory

2 = Western University, Department of Anthropology

3 = McMaster University, Department of Anthropology

Bioarchaeological interpretations of vitamin D deficiency prevalence in two 17th – 19th century populations from Beemster and Hattem, the Netherlands

One of the most important functions of vitamin D is the mineralisation of newly formed bone tissue, ensuring the skeletal durability to withstand gravity and muscular tension. The most effective way of obtaining vitamin D is via dermal synthesis under the influence of UVB radiation from sunlight. A small amount of vitamin D can also be obtained by consuming certain foods, such as oily fish, beef liver, and egg yolk. Insufficient sunlight exposure and a diet low in vitamin D will lead to a deficiency. After a prolonged period of time, skeletal manifestations will become visible, including mostly bending deformities of the long bones. Skeletal evidence of vitamin D deficiency provides essential information on activities related to sunlight exposure and diet, and can aid in the reconstruction of past lifeways. Two Dutch populations from the Netherlands were assessed for this paper: Beemster, a rural population (N = 295) in the province of

North Holland and Hattem, an urban population (N = 133) in the province of Gelderland. Recent research on the Beemster population showed that 9.5% (9/95) of the nonadults suffered from rickets (non adult vitamin D deficiency) while 14.5% (29/200) of the adults showed residual rickets (childhood bending deformities that persist in the adult skeleton). The prevalence of rickets in Hattem was 25.0% (4/16) and 20.0% (21/105) of the adult individuals displayed residual rickets. Beemster was a cattle farming community and Hattem a small town involved mainly in agriculture whereby the availability of sunlight is thought to have been adequate. Yet, in both populations a high number of nonadults suffered from vitamin D deficiency. Research on the Beemster adults showed that the majority of affected individuals are females (21/29) and postulated that a traditional gender related division in activities increased the risk of developing rickets in girls. In Hattem slightly more of the affected adults are female (12/21), but this difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.450$). This suggests that gendered behaviours may have been less important in contributing to vitamin D deficiencies. However, macroscopic methods alone cannot provide information on the age of onset of the disease nor assess whether an individual experienced more than one period of vitamin D deficiency. This information would improve our knowledge of vitamin D deficiency development within a population and enhance our understanding of differences between populations. A recently developed method, uses micro-CT scanning of the teeth to detect poorly mineralised patches of dentine indicative of vitamin D deficiency. This way, macroscopically visible vitamin D deficiency in the skeleton can be confirmed radiographically in the teeth. In addition, the age of onset can be determined and the frequency of vitamin D deficient periods within an individual can be assessed. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to combine the results of the macroscopic analyses of the Beemster and Hattem skeletons with the analyses of micro-CT scans of the teeth of the affected individuals to enhance our understanding of the impact of vitamin D deficiency on Dutch populations in the past.

Dr. Rachel Schats

Laboratory for Human Osteoarchaeology, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University,

Medieval Malaria. New ways for studying a neglected disease in The Netherlands

Malaria is known to have had—and still has—a massive impact on health. The disease is associated with debilitating symptoms such as fevers, muscle pains, and severe anaemia, incapacitating entire populations. Although currently absent in the Netherlands, written records indicate that the disease was endemic here from the 17th to the mid-20th century, mainly in the coastal regions. Unfortunately, very little is known about malaria in the medieval period, hampering complete and nuanced interpretations of health. Gaining a better understanding of malaria in the medieval period is therefore essential. This paper will discuss a new approach to studying this disease and its potential impact on medieval societies by exploring the relationship between cribra orbitalia, a marker of anaemia and potential malarial areas in the medieval period in the Netherlands. The findings demonstrate that cribra orbitalia was significantly more common in regions identified as malarial, suggesting that the disease potentially was an important illness in the medieval period in certain areas. The results of this study show that it is crucial that malaria is included in discussions of medieval health to forward our interpretation of past society.

SESSION 2A

Interpreting burial practices: variability, transformation and continuity

Daniela Heilmann M.A.

LMU Munich, Affiliate member Graduate School "Distant Worlds"

Analyzing the Macedonian Burial Record: Facing Differences and Commonalities within Iron Age Burial Customs in the Lower Vardar Valley

The comprehension of Macedonia's Iron Age is mainly based on the study of cemeteries and grave contexts. Due to the general custom of burying individuals mainly separately in stone constructions as well as a good preservation of bones and assemblages, detailed studies are possible regarding grave constructions, the position of the deceased in the grave as well as the deposition of pottery and personal belongings in the graves. The quantity and quality of grave contexts set the stage for analyzing the burial record within the Macedonian region along the Vardar River.

The aim of the paper is at first to present the data basis and the methodology applied to analyze and to categorize the burial record. To approach the semantics of an object, not only the type or the style of the object in the grave context is important but also the position and the relation to the inhumed body. Therefore, anthropological data regarding gender and age are evaluated helping to understand if certain objects correlate with a certain (horizontal) status of the deceased and to approach the question if we get insights not only in the moment of death but also into the lives of the deceased.

Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin, PhD

Assistant Professor in the department of Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland.

The dead and alive in the early Egyptian funerary practices- the case of cemeteries in Tell el-Farkha, Egypt

Graves give us a unique opportunity to look inside the minds of ancient people preparing to the afterlife or, at least, what they thought they should take with them in their last journey. The reality we find in burials is a combination of facts (construction details, number of objects, measurements, etc.) and creations (the deceased social and economic status, rituals and religion, etc.) which can tell us a part of the ancient people life story, both of individuals and whole civilizations. In the Early Dynastic Egyptian case, the picture will never be complete, as we lack not reliable but almost any written sources and with them we miss also contemporary explanations of diversified phenomena we can discuss only on the basis of their randomly preserved elements. However, some of them that allow us to reconstruct a piece of Predynastic Egyptian funerary rituals and with them attitudes of the living ones to death and mourning.

The site of Tell el-Farkha is located in the eastern Nile Delta, Egypt, and preserved remains of Proto- and Early Dynastic burial rituals, dated in absolute dates to the 4th millennium BC. Traces of special mud and ochre deposits, grave goods composed of diversified objects and a particular importance of food offerings used by the dead and the living ones creates a complex environment in which we can reach out from the basic object analysis to interpretation of the ancient life and death. In the presentation I am going to

discuss archaeological evidence collected at the site against a wider background of the region and period, with a special focus on transformations that lead to creation of the mature ancient Egyptian civilization.

Graves are a special kind of archaeological evidence, each of them tells a different story, but taken together they picture whole societies. Burial customs, even today, touch a very sensitive part of our life being practiced in moments of grief and reflection, and so they are very innovation-proof. It means that if something changes in the funeral sphere it was already adopted by the living people. That is why sepulchral data, especially that supplemented with related settlement evidence, are a great tool for explaining some difficult social issues, the only limitations being the preservation state of original materials and the quality of recorded information.

Tian Tian

UCL (University College London) Institute of archaeology

Absence of the Grave Goods: Transformation of Funerary Rituals in Early Bronze Age Egypt

Ancient Egypt was well-known for its elaborate funerary ritual and abundant grave goods. However, grave goods were almost absent from the burials during the Early Bronze Age Egypt (3000-2000 BC). Such phenomenon seems to be contradicting to our common impression of the ancient Egyptian culture.

This research looks into one of the largest cemeteries during this period, Tarkhan-Kafr Ammar, and explores the reasons behind the disappearance of the grave goods. By seeking for reasons behind this phenomenon, it also aims to explore the transformation of commemoration during this time. It argues that the visibility of the grave goods in the funerary ritual encouraged or discourage people to deposit them. And the absence of the grave goods in the burial was the result of the impaired visibility of them. This was caused by changes in the grave structure and the purpose of the interment. An altered visibility of the grave goods also made Egyptian to change their strategy in commemoration. The centre of the funeral gravitated from the interment to the procession. Objects found in the beginning of the 3000 BC disappeared from the underground part of the burial, but they probably exist on the ground. This transformation is consonant with the rise of the over-ground structure such as mastaba during this period; it also illustrates the emergence of the painted coffin, a focus in Egyptian funeral procession that thrived from the end of the 3rd millennium BC.

The paper for this symposium is of three parts. The first part covers the geographical and chronological background of the site. The second part explores methods to approach the grave goods from the perspective of visibility. The third part offers several case studies to show the transformation of the funerary ritual and the grave goods. The discussion in this part also offered evidence beyond archaeology.

Dr. Sarah Schrader

Leiden University, faculty of archaeology

Mortuary Trends and Tenets in Ancient Nubia: A Case Study from The Third Cataract (Sudan)

South of Egypt, ancient Nubia thrived as an independent and complex civilization from the Third to First millennium BCE. Stretching from the First Cataract to the Sixth Cataract of the Nile River, the Nubian state extended for more than 1,200km. Throughout the process of state formation, expansion, and consolidation, Nubian burial practices remained remarkably constant. With very few exceptions, individuals were buried in a flexed burial position (head in the East, facing North). Oftentimes, Nubian-style ceramic vessels, animal sacrifices, bronze swords, and jewelry were buried with the dead. Some elements of funerary ritual seem to have been flexible. For example, the deceased could be placed on either an animal hide or a burial bed; burial pit size and shape is also known to have varied chronologically. Despite this, one component of Nubian burial tradition seems to have stayed constant: burial position. While we cannot speak to the motivation behind this funerary uniformity, we can surmise that it played an important role in Nubian social identity and mortuary ritual. What is particularly interesting about burial position continuity is that (1) it speaks to the cultural unification of Nubia, and (2) it persisted through thousands of years across a large geographic area. This presentation will use mortuary data from the archaeological sites of Abu Fatima and Hannek (Third Cataract region) to illustrate broader trends in Nubian burial practices through time. These interpretations will be framed within applicable anthropological concepts of remembrance and practice, and will serve as an example of how archaeologists can tease apart stringent customs from more fluid conventions.

Session 2B:

Death and Mourning

Caroline van Toor

University of Groningen

Past emotions and the study of Greek funerary epigrams

One place where we can get a unique insight into the feelings of people burying their deceased is in funerary inscriptions, and especially in the epigrams. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, these texts are beginning to be found on the gravestones of people more than just society's elite, making them interesting material for studying the motives and values of a broader part of society than literary texts usually do.

In this paper, I will show how these texts can contribute to our understanding of the ways past peoples dealt with their deceased. My case study will consist of Greek funerary epigrams from Ephesus, Miletus, and Smyrna. We will take a look at the ways in which ritual aspects of death come forward (e.g. in references to gods) and if and how they are interwoven with personal emotions. It will become clear that there often seems to be a special treatment for children in the monuments – something recognized in differences in burial practices in various times and places as well.

I am looking forward to discussing this source material and the difficulties of interpreting such semi-literary texts with an audience of archaeologists.

Lidewijde de Jong

University of Groningen

Funerary beliefs and the afterlife in Roman Syria: an archaeological perspective

The study of afterlife beliefs in the archaeological record of mortuary practices is hindered in several ways. A direct link between religion and funerary beliefs often lacks. Recorded notions, for instance, about journeys by the deceased to an underworld ruled by chthonic deities, rarely left material traces in or around the grave. Even when these existed, in the form of coins placed in the mouth of the deceased or decoration of so-called underworld scenes on the tomb walls, their occurrences were rare and too diverse to reconstruct a coherent set of afterlife beliefs.

This paper offers a different approach to studying afterlife beliefs by reconstructing the biography of a tomb, and by broadening the approach to and definition of 'afterlife'. The material remains of tombs, which include architecture, receptacles, gravegoods, and human remains, inform us about what people thought happened during and after death. From Roman Syria between the 1st and the 3rd c. CE, the focus of this paper, there is ample evidence from these sources. Directly after death, the integrity of the body was a great concern, and the deceased (or some) were thought to stay at or close to the burial site. The tomb, thus, was a place for continuous interaction with the deceased, and offered a portal, so to speak, to the afterlife. Evidence for magic practices highlights that the dead could be summoned to aid the living. At the same time, spirits of the dead were greatly feared, and actions were taken to keep them satisfied, friendly, and locked-away.

Sylviane Déderix & Aurore Schmitt

1. Postdoctoral fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt foundation at the University of Heidelberg, Institute of Classical Archaeology, Germany; 2. Aix-Marseille Université, CNRS, EFS, ADES, France.

Double funerals in Minoan Crete? The evidence from the cemetery of Sissi (Zone 9)

The mortuary record of Pre- and Protopalatial Crete consists mostly of collective tombs and commingled assemblages that are traditionally interpreted as illustrating the practice of secondary burial, and by extension, of double funerals. The reconstruction of double funerals has major implications for our understanding of mortuary behaviour, funerary beliefs, mourning processes, but also social organization. Until recently, however, the reconstruction of Minoan funerary practices relied on data collected in the first half of the 20th century, during excavations that were often conducted hastily and which encountered masses of bones and grave goods that were later interpreted de facto as the result of secondary burial. Yet, multiple anthropogenic and natural taphonomic processes other than secondary burial can account for commingled deposits. Only meticulous excavation methods involving physical anthropologists working in the field have the potential to discriminate the various processes – both intentional and accidental – affecting burial deposits and, based on these, reconstruct funerary gestures and rituals. This paper will discuss recent archaeo-anatomical work in the house tomb cemetery of Sissi (Zone 9) with a view to assessing the evidence regarding the practice of double funerals at the site.

Roosmarie J.C. Vlaskamp

PhD Candidate, Nicaraguan Research Group. Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University

Burials and everyday life in pre-Hispanic Nicaragua, AD 300-1250

Burials are some of the most prevalent and remarkable features of the archaeology of Nicaragua. Not only because they are some of the most encountered pre-Hispanic remains in the country, there is also a large variety of mortuary practices present. While a few foreign archaeology projects have included the analysis of human remains in their research, local archaeological initiatives have mainly focused on prevention of destruction of archaeological remains. Therefore, detailed studies into pre-Hispanic mortuary practices are scarce until now. Poor preservation of the skeletons and a small sample size further complicate detailed osteological analysis. Subsequently, interpretations of mortuary practices in Nicaragua are often limited to the social status or ideological affiliation of the deceased.

During my PhD research at the site of La Pachona in central Nicaragua, human remains were encountered. In a relatively compact area both primary and secondary depositions, placed both directly into the soil as well as in ceramic vessels were documented, indicating a variety of mortuary practices. The remains pertained to both adults and sub-adults, male and female, grave goods were sparsely ascertained. The archaeological context indicated that the site was not exclusively a funerary area, as evidence for domestic practices was present across the entire site and also directly associated to the burials.

In this paper, I examine how studying mortuary practices as part of everyday life practices (sensu Robin 2013) can inform and change the study and interpretation of burials in pre-Hispanic Nicaragua. As the findings from the site of La Pachona suggest that mortuary practices in this part of Nicaragua should not be interpreted solely as an expression of social status or ideological affiliation of the deceased, instead treatment of, and interaction with the dead was part of everyday life practices.

Preparation for Mortuary Workshop , Friday April 20

Handling the dead in past and present

A. Introduction

The aim of the workshops is twofold. Firstly, we want to bring you into contact with current research themes as discussed on Thursday April 19, and secondly, we want to bring you into contact with each other. In order to achieve this, the organizers have deliberately sought a mix of early career students and advances researchers. We think a lot can be gained by creating a network of people working in the field of mortuary studies.

Questions addressed will focus on ways in which data can be integrated: how can a mortuary archaeology researcher critically assess and use results from bioarchaeological studies? Also, the other way around, how can a bioarchaeologist critically assess and use mortuary archaeological theory to both further the meaning and impact of their results and communicate this to a wider audience?

We recommend that all participants view the list of suggested literature, by means of inspiration (see **section B**). ARCHON-students preparing for ECTS will choose at least three articles from the list to incorporate in their assignment (Please read under **section C** and see below, for the specific preparation of the ECTS-assignment attached to the workshop). We also encourage everyone to think about the assignment, to make for vivid discussions.

As we realize that not all students have selected their specialization yet, or are engaged in their own research, we suggest that they read the term “your research” as to also include ‘my interest’; ‘the study in the article by prof. X, that struck me...’; ‘the topic I always wanted to know more about’.

The assignment is compulsory for ARCHON-members who want to earn 1 ECTS. They need to bring c. 500-1000 words of written text with references in place, answering the questions under section C, to the workshop on Friday April 20 (please bring two copies).

Duration preparation in advance: max. 24 hours

Duration Friday 20 April 2018: c. 4 hours

Total 28 hours = 1 ECTS

ARCHON-members can **also** earn 1 ECTS by writing a standard ARCHON-report on the symposium of Tuesday, April 19th. Of course, you can do both, and earn 2 ECTS. Your workload will then be divided in earning 1 ECTS before, and 1 ECTS after the conference (see <http://www.archonline.nl/education/about-credits>).

Speakers obtain 1 ECTS by handing in their powerpoint and/or paper to ARCHON, they do not need to prepare a report on the conference. However, if they want to obtain 2 ECTS, they need to prepare for the workshop, as listed below.

B. Suggested reading

Please contact the organizers if you have difficulty finding chapters or papers you would like to read.

- Cerezo-Román, J. I., & Williams, H. (2014). Future directions for the archaeology of cremation. In: I. Kuijt, C. P. Quinn, & G. Cooney (Eds.), *Transformation by Fire. The Archaeology of Cremation in Cultural Context*. Arizona: University Press, 240–255.
- Kaliff, A., & Oestigaard, T. (2008). Excavating the Kings' Bones: The Materiality of Death in Practice and Ethics Today. In: F. Fahlander & T. Oestigaard (Eds.), *The Materiality of Death. Bodies, burials, beliefs*. BAR International Series vol. 1768, 47–57.
- Kootker, L., Geerdink, C., van den Broeke, P., Kars, H., & Davies, G. (2017). Breaking traditions: an isotopic study on the changing funerary practices in the Dutch Iron Age (800 – 12 BC). In: S. Arnoldussen, A. Müller, & E. Norde (Eds.), *Bijdragen in de studie van de Metaaltijden*. Leiden: Sitestone Press, 97–106.
- Nilsson Stutz, L. (2015). A proper burial. Some thoughts on changes in mortuary ritual, and how archaeology can begin to understand them. In: Brandt, J.R., M. Prusac & H. Roland (Eds.), *Death and changing rituals. Function and meaning in ancient funerary rites*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1–16.
- Olade I., C. Lalueza-Fox (2015). Modern humans' paleogenomics and the new evidences on the European prehistory. *STAR* 1(1), STAR20152054892315Y.0000000002.
- Weiss-Krejci, E. (2011). The Formation of Mortuary Deposits. Implications for Understanding Mortuary Behavior of Past Populations. In: S. C. Agarwal & B. A. Glencross (Eds.), *Social Bioarchaeology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 68–105.
- Weyrich, L.S. et al. (2015). Ancient DNA analysis of dental calculus. *Journal of Human Evolution* 79, 119-124.
- Williams, H. (2004). Potted histories - cremation, ceramics and social memory in Early Roman Britain. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 23(4), 417–427.
- Williams, H. (2011). Cremation and present pasts: A contemporary archaeology of Swedish memory grove. *Mortality* 16(2), 113-130.

Some Websites

- Link to Prof. Williams blog: <https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/>
- Website of the Biologisch-Archeologisch Platform (Dutch): <https://www.bioarch.nl/>
- Link to ethical debate on Mungo-culture (Aboriginal people) and the research of human remains: <http://www.visitmungo.com.au/where-are-they-now>

C. Prepare a brief – referenced – essay (500-1000 words) discussing the following questions:

- a. What is the main research question you want to see answered in your study? And, how does this contribute to the field of research?
- b. Which bioarchaeological research methods do you want to include in your research? And, what are the questions you want to see answered by applying them?
- c. What would be limitations of applying of these methods? Do the benefits outweigh the costs?
- d. The focus of study in laboratories (ranging from aDNA to palaeopathology) can be on individuals or on populations, meaning either on a person-scale or a group-scale. In your opinion, which of these focusses would contribute more to the ongoing debate in archaeology? Or, do they contribute equally?
- e. Well-known case studies in North America and Australia demonstrate that time depth is not relevant to some indigenous peoples, claiming that ancient human remains are not to be disturbed. Taking cases like these into account, do you consider ethical questions in your research? And, have you considered what is to be done with the remains after the present study is conducted?
- f. List one or two theme's you want to bring forward during the workshop and indicate why they are important.