

Death Embodied Archaeological Approaches To The Treatment Of The Corpse Studies In Funerary Archaeology

An examination of daily life in the Middle Ages which reveals the intimate relations between age groups, between the living and the dead, and between people and things.

Death Embodied Archaeological Approaches to the Treatment of the Corpse
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This book examines the ways in which lived religion in Roman Italy involved personal and communal experiences of the religious agency generated when ritualised activities caused human and more-than-human things to become bundled together into relational assemblages. Drawing upon broadly posthumanist and new materialist theories concerning the thingliness of things, it sets out to re-evaluate the role of the material world within Roman religion and to offer new perspectives on the formation of multi-scalar forms of ancient religious knowledge. It explores what happens when a materially informed approach is systematically applied to the investigation of typical questions about Roman religion such as: What did Romans understand 'religion' to mean? What did religious experiences allow people to understand about the material world and their own place within it? How were experiences of ritual connected with shared beliefs or concepts about the relationship between the mortal and divine worlds? How was divinity constructed and perceived? To answer these questions, it gathers and evaluates archaeological evidence associated with a series of case studies. Each of these focuses on a key component of the ritualised assemblages shown to have produced Roman religious agency – place, objects, bodies, and divinity – and centres on an examination of experiences of lived religion as it related to the contexts of monumentalised sanctuaries, cult instruments used in public sacrifice, anatomical votive offerings, cult images and the qualities of divinity, and magic as a situationally specific form of religious knowledge. By breaking down and then reconstructing the ritualised assemblages that generated and sustained Roman religion, this book makes the case for adopting a material approach to the study of ancient lived religion. This volume explores social responses to stages of childhood from the late Neolithic to Classical Antiquity in Central Europe and the Mediterranean. Comparing osteological and archaeological evidence, as well as integrating images and texts, authors consider whether childhood age classes are archaeologically recognizable.

Scholars of religion have long assumed that ritual and belief constitute the fundamental building blocks of religious traditions and that these two components of religion are interrelated and interdependent in significant ways. Generations of

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New Testament and Early Christian scholars have produced detailed analyses of the belief systems of nascent Christian communities, including their ideological and political dimensions, but have by and large ignored ritual as an important element of early Christian religion and as a factor contributing to the rise and the organization of the movement. In recent years, however, scholars of early Christianity have begun to use ritual as an analytical tool for describing and explaining Christian origins and the early history of the movement. Such a development has created a momentum toward producing a more comprehensive volume on the ritual world of Early Christianity employing advances made in the field of ritual studies. The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual gives a manifold account of the ritual world of early Christianity from the beginning of the movement up to the end of the fifth century. The volume introduces relevant theories and approaches; central topics of ritual life in the cultural world of early Christianity; and important Christian ritual themes and practices in emerging Christian groups and factions.

Brings together archaeologists, art historians, sociologists, and classicists to explore the origins and development of unequal relationships in ancient societies. The Archaeology of Inequality explores the different aspects of social boundaries and articulation by comparing several interdisciplinary approaches for the analysis of the archaeological data, as well as actual case studies from the Prehistory to the Classical world. The book explores slavery, gender, ethnicity and economy as intersecting areas of study within the larger framework of inequality and exemplifies to what degree archaeologists can identify and analyze different patterns of inequality. Orlando Cerasuolo is Adjunct Professor of Etruscan and Pre-Roman Archaeology at the Eastern University of Naples. Many of us accept as uncontroversial the belief that the world is comprised of detached and disparate products, all of which are reducible to certain substances. Of those things that are alive, we acknowledge that some have agency while others, such as humans, have more advanced qualities such as consciousness, reason and intentionality. So deeply-seated is this metaphysical belief, along with the related distinctions we draw between subject/object, mind/body and nature/culture that many of us tacitly assume past groups approached and apprehended the world in a similar fashion. Relational Archaeologies questions how such a view of human beings, 'other-than-human' creatures and things affects our reconstruction of past beliefs and practices. It proceeds from the position that, in many cases, past societies understood their place in the world as positional rather than categorical, as persons bound up in reticular arrangements with similar and not so similar forms regardless of their substantive qualities. Relational Archaeologies explores this idea by emphasizing how humans, animals and things come to exist by virtue of the dynamic and fluid processes of connection and transaction. In highlighting various counter-Modern notions of what it means 'to be' and how these can be teased apart using archaeological materials, contributors provide a range of approaches from

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primarily theoretical/historicized treatments of the topic to practical applications or case studies from the Americas, the UK, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Art and religion are both well-attested and much-studied aspects of ancient Greek life, yet their relationship is not perfectly understood. *Religion in the Art of Archaic and Classical Greece* presents an important rethinking of these two categories. The book examines not only how and where religious activity is presented visually at particular moments and in certain forms, but also what objects and images can tell us about the experiences and impressions of Greek religion. Through an exploration of portable or relatively small-scale art forms--vases, figurines, gems, plaques--Tyler Jo Smith focuses on the visual and material evidence for religious life and customs in Archaic and Classical Greece (sixth to fourth centuries BC). The book introduces its readers to categories of religious practice (e.g., sacrifices, votive offerings, funerals), to the pertinent artistic evidence for them, and to a range of scholarly approaches. Smith combines the study of iconography and the examination of material objects with theoretical perspectives on ritual and performance. When given visual form, religion holds much in common with other ancient Greek modes of artistic expression, including dance and drama. Religion is viewed here as a dynamic performative act, as an expression of connectivity, and as a mechanism of communication. While the complexities of Greek religion cannot be discerned through the visual or material record alone, *Religion in the Art of Archaic and Classical Greece* frames a more nuanced reading of the artistic evidence than has been previously available. Richly illustrated with 245 halftones and seventeen color plates of mostly small-scale objects, the book is much more than a gathering of images and information in a single place. Taken as a whole, it argues for a visual and material tradition that is intended to express the ritualized practices and shared attitudes of religious life, a story that large public works alone are simply never going to tell.

Drawing on archaeological, historical, theological, scientific and folkloric sources, Sarah Tarlow's interdisciplinary study examines belief as it relates to the dead body in early modern Britain and Ireland. From the theological discussion of bodily resurrection to the folkloric use of body parts as remedies, and from the judicial punishment of the corpse to the ceremonial interment of the social elite, this book discusses how seemingly incompatible beliefs about the dead body existed in parallel through this tumultuous period. This study, which is the first to incorporate archaeological evidence of early modern death and burial from across Britain and Ireland, addresses new questions about the materiality of death: what the dead body means, and how its physical substance could be attributed with sentience and even agency. It provides a sophisticated original interpretive framework for the growing quantities of archaeological and historical evidence about mortuary beliefs and practices in early modernity.

Archaeologists excavating burials often find that they are not the first to disturb the remains of the dead. Graves from many periods frequently show signs that

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others have been digging and have moved or taken away parts of the original funerary assemblage. Displaced bones and artefacts, traces of pits, and damage to tombs or coffins can all provide clues about post-burial activities. The last two decades have seen a rapid rise in interest in the study of post-depositional practices in graves, which has now developed into a new subfield within mortuary archaeology. This follows a long tradition of neglect, with disturbed graves previously regarded as interesting only to the degree they revealed evidence of the original funerary deposit. This book explores past human interactions with mortuary deposits, delving into the different ways graves and human remains were approached by people in the past and the reasons that led to such encounters. The primary focus of the volume is on cases of unexpected interference with individual graves soon after burial: re-encounters with human remains not anticipated by those who performed the funerary rites and constructed the tombs. However, a first step is always to distinguish these from natural and accidental processes, and methodological approaches are a major theme of discussion. Interactions with the remains of the dead are explored in eleven chapters ranging from the New Kingdom of Egypt to Viking Age Norway and from Bronze Age Slovakia to the ancient Maya. Each discusses cases of re-entries into graves, including desecration, tomb re-use, destruction of grave contents, as well as the removal of artefacts and human remains for reasons from material gain to commemoration, symbolic appropriation, ancestral rites, political chicanery, and retrieval of relics. The introduction presents many of the methodological issues which recur throughout the contributions, as this is a developing area with new approaches being applied to analyze post-depositional processes in graves.

This collection employs a multi-disciplinary approach treating ancient childhood in a holistic manner according to diachronic, regional and thematic perspectives. This multi-disciplinary approach encompasses classical studies, Egyptology, ancient history and the broad spectrum of archaeology, including iconography and bioarchaeology. With a chronological range of the Bronze Age to Byzantium and regional coverage of Egypt, Greece, and Italy this is the largest survey of childhood yet undertaken for the ancient world. Within this chronological and regional framework both the social construction of childhood and the child's life experience are explored through the key topics of the definition of childhood, daily life, religion and ritual, death, and the information provided by bioarchaeology. No other volume to date provides such a comprehensive, systematic and cross-cultural study of childhood in the ancient Mediterranean world. In particular, its focus on the identification of society-specific definitions of childhood and the incorporation of the bioarchaeological perspective makes this work a unique and innovative study. *Children in Antiquity* provides an invaluable and unrivalled resource for anyone working on all aspects of the lives and deaths of children in the ancient Mediterranean world.

This manual will ensure that the management of massive fatalities forms part of

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disaster preparedness and response plans, and that it is a fundamental aspect of humanitarian assistance to survivors and rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. The manual provides the technical information that will support the correct approach to handling dead bodies. Contents: Preparedness for mass deaths; Medicolegal work in major disasters; Health considerations in cases of mass fatalities; Sociocultural aspects; Psychological aspects; Legal aspects; Cases studies; Final recommendations; Myths and realities of management of dead bodies in disasters; and Glossary. Illustrations.

The human body represents the perfect element for relating communities of the living with the divine. This is clearly evident in the mythological stories that recount the creation of humans by deities among ancient and contemporaneous societies across a very broad geographical environment. Thus, parts of selected human body parts or skeletal elements can then become an ideal proxy for connecting with the supernatural as demonstrated by the cult of the human skulls among Neolithic communities in the Near East as well as the cult of the relics of Christian saints. The aim of this volume is to undertake a cross-cultural investigation of the role played in antiquity by humans and human remains in creating forms of relationality with the divine. Such an approach will highlight how the human body can be envisioned as part of a broader materialization of religious beliefs that is based on connecting different realms of materiality in perceiving the supernatural by the community of the livings. Case studies on ritual aspects of funerary practices is presented, emphasising the varied roles of body parts in mortuary rituals and as relics. Other papers take a wider look at regional practices in various time periods and cultural contexts to explore the central role of the corpse in the negotiation of death in human culture.

Taking cues from current theoretical perspectives and capitalizing on the strengths of new and sophisticated methods of analysis, this book showcases the vibrancy of bioarchaeological research and its potential for bringing 'new life' to the field of mortuary archaeology and the study of human remains.

A Companion to Roman Italy investigates the impact of Rome in all its forms—political, cultural, social, and economic—upon Italy's various regions, as well as the extent to which unification occurred as Rome became the capital of Italy. The collection presents new archaeological data relating to the sites of Roman Italy. Contributions discuss new theories of how to understand cultural change in the Italian peninsula. Combines detailed case-studies of particular sites with wider-ranging thematic chapters. Leading contributors not only make accessible the most recent work on Roman Italy, but also offer fresh insight on long standing debates.

In April 1485, a marble sarcophagus was found on the outskirts of Rome. It contained the remains of a young Roman woman so well-preserved that she appeared to have only just died and the sarcophagus was placed on public view, attracting great crowds. Such a find reminds us of the power of the dead body to evoke in the minds of living people, be they contemporary (survivors or

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mourners) or distanced from the remains by time, a range of emotions and physical responses, ranging from fascination to fear, and from curiosity to disgust. Archaeological interpretations of burial remains can often suggest that the skeletons which we uncover, and therefore usually associate with past funerary practices, were what was actually deposited in graves, rather than articulated corpses. The choices made by past communities or individuals about how to cope with a dead body in all of its dynamic and constituent forms, and whether there was reason to treat it in a manner that singled it out (positively or negatively) as different from other human corpses, provide the stimulus for this volume. The nine papers provide a series of theoretically informed, but not constrained, case studies which focus predominantly on the corporeal body in death. The aims are to take account of the active presence of dynamic material bodies at the heart of funerary events and to explore the questions that might be asked about their treatment; to explore ways of putting fleshed bodies back into our discussions of burials and mortuary treatment, as well as interpreting the meaning of these activities in relation to the bodies of both deceased and survivors; and to combine the insights that body-centred analysis can produce to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role of the body, living and dead, in past cultures.

Humans are unique in that they expend considerable effort and ingenuity in disposing of the dead. Some of the recognisable ways we do this are visible in the Palaeolithic archaeology of the Ice Age. *The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial* takes a novel approach to the long-term development of human mortuary activity – the various ways we deal with the dead and with dead bodies. It is the first comprehensive survey of Palaeolithic mortuary activity in the English language. Observations in the modern world as to how chimpanzees behave towards their dead allow us to identify ‘core’ areas of behaviour towards the dead that probably have very deep evolutionary antiquity. From that point, the palaeontological and archaeological records of the Pliocene and Pleistocene are surveyed. The core chapters of the book survey the mortuary activities of early hominins, archaic members of the genus *Homo*, early *Homo sapiens*, the Neanderthals, the Early and Mid Upper Palaeolithic, and the Late Upper Palaeolithic world. Burial is a striking component of Palaeolithic mortuary activity, although existing examples are odd and this probably does not reflect what modern societies believe burial to be, and modern ways of thinking of the dead probably arose only at the very end of the Pleistocene. When did symbolic aspects of mortuary ritual evolve? When did the dead themselves become symbols? In discussing such questions, *The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial* offers an engaging contribution to the debate on modern human origins. It is illustrated throughout, includes up-to-date examples from the Lower to Late Upper Palaeolithic, including information hitherto unpublished.

Written by an international team of experts, the Handbook makes accessible a full range of theoretical and applied approaches to the study of material culture,

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and the place of materiality in social theory, presenting current thinking about material culture from the fields of archaeology, anthropology, geography, and science and technology studies.

Over the years, impairment has been discussed in bioarchaeology, with some scholars providing carefully contextualized explanations for their causes and consequences. Such investigations typically take a case study approach and focus on the functional aspects of impairments. However, these interpretations are disconnected from disability theory discourse. Other social sciences and the humanities have far surpassed most of anthropology (with the exception of medical anthropology) in their integration of social theories of disability. This volume has three goals: The first goal of this edited volume is to present theoretical and methodological discussions on impairment and disability. The second goal of this volume is to emphasize the necessity of interdisciplinarity in discussions of impairment and disability within bioarchaeology. The third goal of the volume is to present various methodological approaches to quantifying impairment in skeletonized and mummified remains. This volume serves to engage scholars from many disciplines in our exploration of disability in the past, with particular emphasis on the bioarchaeological context.

This is the first book to explore prehistoric warfare and violence by integrating qualitative research methods with quantitative, scientific techniques of analysis such as paleopathology, morphometry, wear analysis, and experimental archaeology. It investigates early warfare and violence from the standpoint of four broad interdisciplinary themes: skeletal markers of violence and weapon training; conflict in prehistoric rock-art; the material culture of conflict; and intergroup violence in archaeological discourse. The book has a wide-ranging chronological and geographic scope, from early Neolithic to late Iron Age and from Western Europe to East Asia. It includes world-renowned sites and artefact collections such as the Tollense Valley Bronze Age battlefield (Germany), the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Tanum (Sweden), and the British Museum collection of bronze weaponry from the late Shang period (China). Original case studies are presented in each section by a diverse international authorship. The study of warfare and violence in prehistoric and pre-literate societies has been at the forefront of archaeological debate since the publication of Keeley's provocative monograph 'War Before Civilization' (Oxford 1996). The problem has been approached from a number of standpoints including anthropological and behavioural studies of interpersonal violence, osteological examinations of sharp lesions and blunt-force traumas, wear analysis of ancient weaponry, and field experiments with replica weapons and armour. This research, however, is often confined within the boundaries of the various disciplines and specialist fields. In particular, a gap can often be detected between the research approaches grounded in the humanities and social sciences and those based on the archaeological sciences. The consequence is that, to this day, the subject is dominated by a number of undemonstrated assumptions regarding the nature of

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warfare, combat, and violence in non-literate societies. Moreover, important methodological questions remain unanswered: can we securely distinguish between violence-related and accidental trauma on skeletal remains? To what extent can wear analysis shed light on long-forgotten fighting styles? Can we design meaningful combat tests based on historic martial arts? And can the study of rock-art unlock the social realities of prehistoric warfare? By breaking the mould of entrenched subject boundaries, this edited volume promotes interdisciplinary debate in the study of prehistoric warfare and violence by presenting a number of innovative approaches that integrate qualitative and quantitative methods of research and analysis.

The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial reviews the current state of mortuary archaeology and its practice, highlighting its often contentious place in the modern socio-politics of archaeology. It contains forty-four chapters which focus on the history of the discipline and its current scientific techniques and methods. Written by leading, international scholars in the field, it derives its examples and case studies from a wide range of time periods, such as the middle palaeolithic to the twentieth century, and geographical areas which include Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Asia. Combining up-to-date knowledge of relevant archaeological research with critical assessments of the theme and an evaluation of future research trajectories, it draws attention to the social, symbolic, and theoretical aspects of interpreting mortuary archaeology. The volume is well-illustrated with maps, plans, photographs, and illustrations and is ideally suited for students and researchers.

Light plays a crucial role in mediating relationships between people, things, and spaces, yet lightscapes have been largely neglected in archaeology study. This volume offers a full consideration of light in archaeology and beyond, exploring diverse aspects of illumination in different spatial and temporal contexts from prehistory to the present.

In the long tradition of the archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean bodies have held a prominent role in the form of figurines, frescos, or skeletal remains, and have even been responsible for sparking captivating portrayals of the Mother-Goddess cult, the elegant women of Minoan Crete or the deeds of heroic men. Growing literature on the archaeology and anthropology of the body has raised awareness about the dynamic and multifaceted role of the body in experiencing the world and in the construction, performance and negotiation of social identity. In these 28 thematically arranged papers, specialists in the archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean confront the perceived invisibility of past bodies and ask new research questions. Contributors discuss new and old evidence; they examine how bodies intersect with the material world, and explore the role of body-situated experiences in creating distinct social and other identities. Papers range chronologically from the Palaeolithic to the Early Iron Age and cover the geographical regions of the Aegean, Cyprus and the Near East. They highlight the new possibilities that emerge for the interpretation of the prehistoric eastern

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Mediterranean through a combined use of body-focused methodological and theoretical perspectives that are nevertheless grounded in the archaeological record.

In the first millennium BC, communities in Italy underwent crucial transformations which scholars have often subsumed under the heading of 'state formation', namely increased social stratification, the centralization of political power and, in some cases, urbanisation. Most research has tended to approach the phenomenon of state formation and social change in relation to specific territorial dynamics of growth and expansion, changing modes of exploitation of food and other resources over time, and the adoption of selected socio-ritual practices by the ruling élites in order to construct and negotiate authority. In contrast, comparatively little attention has been paid to the question of how these key developments resonated across the broader social transect, and how social groups other than ruling élites both promoted these changes and experienced their effects. The chief aim of this collection of 14 papers is to harness innovative approaches to the exceptionally rich mortuary evidence of first millennium BC Italy, in order to investigate the roles and identities of social actors who either struggled for power and social recognition, or were manipulated and exploited by superior authorities in a phase of tumultuous socio-political change throughout the entire Mediterranean basin. Contributors provide a diverse range of approaches in order to examine how power operated in society, how it was exercised and resisted, and how this can be studied through mortuary evidence. Section 1 addresses the construction of identity by focusing mainly on the manipulation of age, ethnic and gender categories in society in regions and sites that reached notable power and splendor in first millennium BC Italy. These include Etruria, Latium, Campania and the rich settlement of Verucchio, in Emilia Romagna. Each paper in Section 2 offers a counterpoint to a contribution in Section 1 with an overall emphasis on scholarly multivocality, and the multiplicity of the theoretical approaches that can be used to read the archaeological evidence.

Prehistoric Europe: Theory and Practice provides a comprehensive introduction to the range of critical contemporary thinking in the study of European prehistory. Presents essays by some of the most dynamic researchers and leading European scholars in the field today Ranges from the Neolithic period to the early stages of the Iron Age, and from Ireland and Scandinavia to the Urals and the Iberian Peninsula

This book analyses in detail the funerary evidence from burial sites in southern and central Sardinia, proposing an alternative interpretation of the island and of other Roman Provinces in which local communities played an active and creative role in shaping back the Roman-world within the specific material and historical conditions they lived in.

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The chronological disjuncture, LBK longhouses have widely been considered to provide ancestral influence for both rectangular and trapezoidal long barrows and cairns, but with the discovery and excavation of more houses in recent times is it possible to observe evidence of more contemporary inspiration. What do the features found beneath long mounds tell us about this and to what extent do they represent domestic structures. Indeed, how can we distinguish between domestic houses or halls and those that may have been constructed for ritual purposes or ended up beneath mounds? Do so called 'mortuary enclosures' reflect ritual or domestic architecture and did side ditches always provide material for a mound or for building construction? This collection of papers seeks to explore the interface between structures often considered to be those of the living with those for the dead.

In ancient Rome, it was believed some humans were transformed into special, empowered beings after death. These deified dead, known as the manes, watched over and protected their surviving family members, possibly even extending those relatives' lives. But unlike the Greek hero-cult, the worship of dead emperors, or the Christian saints, the manes were incredibly inclusive—enrolling even those without social clout, such as women and the poor, among Rome's deities. The Roman afterlife promised posthumous power in the world of the living. While the manes have often been glossed over in studies of Roman religion, this book brings their compelling story to the forefront, exploring

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their myriad forms and how their worship played out in the context of Roman religion's daily practice. Exploring the place of the manes in Roman society, Charles King delves into Roman beliefs about their powers to sustain life and bring death to individuals or armies, examines the rituals the Romans performed to honor them, and reclaims the vital role the manes played in the ancient Roman afterlife.

This volume, with essays by leading archaeologists and prehistorians, considers how prehistoric humans attempted to recognise, understand and conceptualise death.

Explores four key questions around Roman funerary customs that change our view of the society and its values.

Examining a wide range of archaeological data, and using it to explore issues such as the sexual body, mind/body dualism, body modification, and magical practices, Lynn Meskell and Rosemary Joyce offer a new approach to the Ancient Egyptian and Mayan understanding of embodiment. Drawing on insights from feminist theory, art history, phenomenology, anthropology and psychoanalysis, the book takes bodily materiality as a crucial starting point to the understanding and formation of self in any society, and sheds new light on Ancient Egyptian and Maya cultures. The book shows how a comparative project can open up new lines of inquiry by raising questions about accepted assumptions as the authors draw attention to the long-term histories and specificities of embodiment, and make the case for the importance of ancient materials for contemporary theorization of the body. For students new to the subject, and scholars already familiar with it, this will offer fresh and exciting insights into these ancient cultures.

This volume brings together early career scholars working on funerary customs in Greece from the Early Iron Age to the Roman period. Papers present various thematic and interdisciplinary analysis in which funerary contexts provide insights on individuals, social groups and communities.

One day when I was about 15 as I sat in my high school history class someone asked the teacher what the difference was between an Austrian and a German. "Nothing!" he snapped, "Austrians are just Germans. It's the same thing." I was aghast. I felt my whole world shift. How could anyone think an Austrian was a German? They were completely different, everyone knew that. Years later, after I had spent some time in Austria and got to know my family, I began to read academic books written in English about Austrian history and was astonished at how completely at variance they were with my own family's experiences. All the books were written from an American or English academic perspective, many with a faint but perceptible undercurrent of hostility. I felt a lot of it to be factually wrong and misleading, and in some cases found the proof that that was so. I decided I had to tell Austria's story as I saw it so I went back to original sources and started from scratch. And here it is.

This is the first volume ever to systematically study the subject of disabilities in

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the Roman world. The contributors examine the topic from head to toe: mental and intellectual disability, alcoholism, visual impairment, speech disorder, hermaphroditism, monstrous births, mobility problems, osteology and visual representations of disparate bodies.

Remembering the Dead in the Ancient Near East is among the first comprehensive treatments to present the diverse ways in which ancient Near Eastern civilizations memorialized and honored their dead, using mortuary rituals, human skeletal remains, and embodied identities as a window into the memory work of past societies. In six case studies teams of researchers with different skillsets—osteological analysis, faunal analysis, culture history and the analysis of written texts, and artifact analysis—integrate mortuary analysis with bioarchaeological techniques. Drawing upon different kinds of data, including human remains, ceramics, jewelry, spatial analysis, and faunal remains found in burial sites from across the region's societies, the authors paint a robust and complex picture of death in the ancient Near East. Demonstrating the still underexplored potential of bioarchaeological analysis in ancient societies, *Remembering the Dead in the Ancient Near East* serves as a model for using multiple lines of evidence to reconstruct commemoration practices. It will be of great interest to students and scholars of ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian societies, the archaeology of death and burial, bioarchaeology, and human skeletal biology.

In the present-day world order, political disintegration, the faltering of economic systems, the controversial yet dramatic consequences of global warming and pollution, and the spread of poverty and social disruption in Western countries have rendered 'collapse' one of the hottest topics in the humanities and social sciences. In the frenetic run for identifying the global causes and large-scale consequences of collapse, however, instances of crisis taking place at the micro-scale are not always explored by scholars addressing these issues in present and past societies, while the 'voices' of the marginal/non-élite subjects that might be the main victims of collapse are often silenced in ancient history and archaeology. Within this framework *Collapse or Survival* explores localized phenomena of crisis, unrest, and survival in the ancient Mediterranean with a focus on the first millennium BC. In a time span characterized by unprecedented high levels of dynamism, mobility, and social change throughout that region, the area selected for analysis represents a unique convergence point where states rise and fall, long-distance trade networks develop and disintegrate, and patterns of human mobility catalyze cultural change at different rates. The central Mediterranean also comprises a wealth of recently excavated and highly contextualized material evidence, casting new light on the agency of individuals and groups who endeavored to cope with crisis situations in different geographical and temporal settings. Contributors provide novel definitions of 'collapse' and reconsider notions of crisis and social change by taking a broader perspective that is not necessarily centred on élites. Individual chapters analyze

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how both high-status and non-élite social agents responded to socio-political rupture, unrest, depopulation, economic crisis, the disintegration of kinship systems, interruption in long-term trade networks, and destruction in war. A thought-provoking examination of death, dying, and the afterlife. Prominent scholars present their most recent work about mortuary rituals, grief and mourning, genocide, cyclical processes of life and death, biomedical developments, and the materiality of human corpses in this unique and illuminating book. Interrogating our most common practices surrounding death, the authors ask such questions as: How does the state wrest away control over the dead from bereaved relatives? Why do many mourners refuse to cut their emotional ties to the dead and nurture lasting bonds? Is death a final condition or can human remains acquire agency? The book is a refreshing reassessment of these issues and practices, a source of theoretical inspiration in the study of death. With contributions written by an international team of experts in their fields, *A Companion to the Anthropology of Death* is presented in six parts and covers such subjects as: *Governing the Dead in Guatemala*; *After Death Communications (ADCs) in North America*; *Cryonic Suspension in the Secular Age*; *Blood and Organ Donation in China*; *The Fragility of Biomedicine*; and more. *A Companion to the Anthropology of Death* is a comprehensive and accessible volume and an ideal resource for senior undergraduate and graduate students in courses such as *Anthropology of Death*, *Medical Anthropology*, *Anthropology of Violence*, *Anthropology of the Body*, and *Political Anthropology*. Written by leading international scholars in their fields *A comprehensive survey of the most recent empirical research in the anthropology of death* *A fundamental critique of the early 20th century founding fathers of the anthropology of death* *Cross-cultural texts from tribal and industrial societies* The collection is of interest to anyone concerned with the consequences of the state and massive violence on life and death

Death, dying and burial produce artefacts and occur in spatial contexts. The interplay between such materiality and the bereaved who commemorate the dead yields interpretations and creates meanings that can change over time. Materiality is more than simple matter, void of meaning or relevance. The apparent inanimate has meaning. It is charged with significance, has symbolic and interpretative value—perhaps a form of selfhood, which originates from the interaction with the animate. In our case, gravestones, bodily remains and the spatial order of the cemetery are explored for their material agency and relational constellations with human perceptions and actions. Consciously and unconsciously, by interacting with such materiality, one is creating meaning, while materiality retroactively provides a form of agency. Spatiality provides more than a mere context: it permits and shapes such interaction. Thus, artefacts, mementos and memorials are exteriorised, materialised, and spatialized forms of human activity: they can be understood as cultural forms, the function of which is to sustain social life. However, they are also the medium through which values,

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ideas and criteria of social distinction are reproduced, legitimised, or transformed. This book will explore this interplay by going beyond the consideration of simple grave artefacts on the one hand and graveyards as a space on the other hand, to examine the specific interrelationships between materiality, spatiality, the living, and the dead. The chapters in this book were originally published as a special issue of the journal *Mortality*.

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