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Interacting with the Dead

Perspectives on Mortuary Archaeology for the New Millennium

Edited by
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Human bones may enter the archaeological record as articulated, disarticulated, or cremated deposits. The archaeologist must explain the differences in the physical remains of the dead and determine the causes that are responsible for variability in the mortuary record. One first step to accomplish such a goal is to decide whether deposits with human remains represent expressions of funerary behavior or result from other processes. This is not an easy task. Human remains from funeral rituals, for example, may end up in nonfunerary contexts. Bones and artifacts from river burials will be most likely found in nonfunerary contexts, if found at all (Bradley 1995). Bones in funerary contexts, by contrast, may be the product of various natural and cultural postdepositional processes (O'Shea 1984:25–26; Schiffer 1987) or may represent a phase in a program of mortuary treatment (Brown 1995b:16; Hutchinson and Aragon 2002).

When corpses are incomplete or disarticulated, it is difficult to evaluate the original burial mode. This may be one reason why archaeologists refer to such deposits as “secondary burials” without regard to their potential complex nature. There exists increasing awareness among mortuary specialists that the concept of “secondary burial” implies a wide range of rather unrelated mortuary practices (Houlbrooke 1998:372; Orschiedt 1997; Williams and Beck 2001). A term that does not allow researchers to distinguish between secondary rites in Indonesia (Hertz 1960 [1907]) and the relocation of bones into European charnel houses is bound to confuse any cross-cultural discussion of mortuary practices. Additionally, there is no commonly applied method to evaluate whether disarticulated remains result from human sacrifice, cannibalism, body processing, or reburial, and only a few studies have addressed the problem (for example, Murphy and Mallory 2000; Peter-Röcher 1997).

In the past I have discussed the complex potential scenarios of “secondary burial” formation using historical data from two European dynasties, the Babenbergs and the Habsburgs. I have shown that both multistage burial programs (body processing and temporary storage) and postdepositional processes (post-
funeral relocation and disturbance) are responsible for a high percentage of disarticulated remains in elite mortuary contexts. Of a sample of 868 people who died between A.D. 994 and 1993, 40 percent of the remains had been tampered with in one way or the other. Three people were excavated, and 32 had been temporarily stored and later reburied. Bones of 70 people had been moved from one country, town, or building into another after the funeral; 247 corpses had been relocated inside a building. Additionally, coffins of 226 individuals had been either renewed or opened. No specific intention can be made responsible for these manipulations. The reasons for “secondary burial” formation lie in a wide range of circumstantial and intentional, ritualistic and nonritualistic behavior (Weiss-Krejci 2001:778–779).

Such processes are not restricted to the burials of the Babenbergs and Habsburgs but occurred among many members of the European aristocracy. There exists a large body of literature on the treatment and whereabouts of corpses from a variety of other European dynasties (Boase 1972; Brown 1991; Daniell 1997; Dodson 1994; Ehlers et al. 1996; Kolmer 1997; Meyer 2000). This chapter discusses the formation of “secondary burial” in a wider European context and reveals multiple and complex factors that determined variability in mortuary behavior among Medieval and post-Medieval elites.

Variability in Mortuary Treatment

Before the nineteenth century the ideal burial mode in Christianized Europe was deposition of a body in the flesh in consecrated grounds. This burial mode was born out of a deep concern with resurrection of the body. Cremation of the corpse was considered a heathen procedure, and burning was seen as destruction of the body and hence the soul, and therefore was used only as punishment for heretics (Finucane 1981:55–56; Naji this volume).

The considerable size of territories under the rule of kings, long-distance warfare, pilgrimages to Rome, interdynastic marriages, and the Crusades all resulted in kings, queens, and nobles leading very mobile lives (figure 12.1). Despite their mobility, aristocrats often chose, for a variety of reasons, a specific burial place. Many nobles wanted to be buried in their own territories, surrounded by other family members, to await resurrection there (Boase 1972:113; Daniell 1997:88; Schaller 1993:66). Especially with the foundation of new orders between the eleventh and the thirteenth century, monastic lineage burial places widely spread through Europe. Founders of religious houses could expect spiritual welfare for themselves and their family members in return for their donations. The most important new orders were Cartusians (founded in 1084), Cistercians (founded in 1098), Premonstratensians (founded in 1120), Franciscans (approved in 1209), and Dominicans (founded in 1214) (Bordua 1997; Dunn 1997).

Royal burial places were sometimes also established in newly acquired lands and served to tie the foreign dynasty to the new territory or to create a link to the
Figure 12.1. Part of Europe, showing sites mentioned in the text.
preceding dynasty (Schaller 1993:67). These political motivations explain the burials of Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI in Palermo (Staufen dynasty, died September 28, 1197, in Messina), Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV in Prague (House Luxembourg, died November 29, 1378, in Prague), and Castilian Queen Isabel “the Catholic” in Granada (House Trastámara, died November 26, 1504, in Medina del Campo). On the verge of death, Rudolph of Habsburg rode to Speyer to make sure that he would be buried in the cathedral among the emperors from the Salian dynasty. One day before his death, on July 14, 1291, he said: “On to Speyer, where more of my ancestors are, who have also been kings. And so that you don’t have to bring me, I will ride there myself” (Meyer 2000:19 [my translation]).

As aristocrats traveled hundreds of kilometers per year over the European continent, death frequently occurred at a distance from the assigned burial place. If a person had expressed a wish to be buried at a specific place, the corpse had to be transported from the place of death to the place of burial. Such transport could either involve bodies in the flesh or only the bones (see also Naji, this volume). Bodies that were transported in the flesh were usually embalmed and eviscerated. To transport merely bones, two methods were possible: one was active excarnation (defleshing), the other consisted of temporary storage and later exhumation (a passive way of excarnation). Which of these three basic methods—evisceration, excarnation, or storage—was applied depended on the conditions at the place of death, distance from the burial place, the climate, and the projected time between death and burial.

Treatment of the Corpse

Evisceration

One way to delay putrefaction of corpses was evisceration and treatment with aromatics or salt. In Europe embalming was not highly efficient, and the technique was perfected only in seventeenth-century France and England (Dodson 1994:82; Giesey 1960:27). But it was sufficient for a short time, especially if death occurred during cold seasons and waterways could be used for transport. The earliest historical accounts on mortuary treatment in the Middle Ages relate to circumstances surrounding the death and burial of kings. Son of Emperor Charlemagne, Emperor Louis I “the Pious” (who died June 20, 840) was transported approximately 250 kilometers from Ingolheim to Metz, and grandson King Louis II “the German” was transferred from Frankfurt to Lorsch (70 kilometers) after his death on August 28, 876 (Schramm and Mütherich 1962:122–128). We do not know how their bodies were treated.

The first detailed historical account of evisceration relates to the circumstances surrounding the death and burial of Emperor Charles “the Bald,” son of Louis I and half-brother of Louis II, in October 877. After passing Mount Cenis in the Alps, the king passed away in a mountain hut approximately 2,000 meters
above sea level. The body was eviscerated and treated with spices and wine so that it could be taken to Saint-Denis. After carrying the corpse approximately 1,800 meters down in altitude and 250 kilometers in distance, a presumably exhausted burial party reached the flatlands. Though the body had been encased in a barrel, sealed with pitch, and surrounded by leather, the bad smell that emanated from inside urged them to bury the cask with the corpse at Nantua. The deceased's wish to be buried at Saint-Denis was granted seven years later (E. Brown 1981:226; Schäfer 1920:493–494).

To the reign of the German emperors, the Saxon kings (Ottone dynasty), and their successors the Franconian kings (Salian dynasty), we owe the first accounts of separate burial of intestines (with the heart) from the corpse. Otto I died on May 7, 973, in Memleben: his entrails were buried at the place of death, and the corpse was transported to Magdeburg and buried before two weeks had passed. Emperor Conrad II died on June 4, 1039, in Utrecht, where his entrails remained; the corpse was buried at Speyer Cathedral after 38 days. His son Emperor Henry III died at Bodfeld in 1056 and was buried at Speyer Cathedral after 23 days (Gerbert et al. 1772:62–63; Schäfer 1920:479–481). Henry III's entrails and heart were buried not at the place of his death but at Goslar, where his daughter Mathilda rested and where "his heart was" (E. Brown 1981:228).

Separate burial of entrails from the corpse was also practiced in the Norman Kingdom in Sicily at the end of the eleventh century (Giesey 1960:20). The first incidence of separate heart burial comes from France and is connected to the death of Robert of Abrissel in 1117, the founder of Fontevrault Abbey. His heart remained at the place of his death, Orsan, but the rest of his body was taken to Fontevrault (E. Brown 1981:228).

The first eviscerated English ruler is Henry I (House of Normandy), who died December 1, 1135, in Lyons-la-Forêt near Rouen and was buried at Reading Abbey four weeks later. His viscera, brain, and eyes were buried at Rouen, but the person who performed the embalming died from an infection and according to a chronicler became "the last of many whom Henry destroyed" (Boase 1972:113). As Henry's example shows, embalming was not particularly successful. After having been brought to Caen, Henry's corpse—though sewn into a bull's hide and filled with salt—leaked black liquid that was caught in vessels and discarded by the disgusted servants (Schäfer 1920:495). The practice of evisceration might have been directly brought to this English king through his daughter Mathilda (ancestor of the Plantagenet dynasty), whose first husband, German Emperor Henry V, had been eviscerated 10 years earlier.

From the Plantagenet dynasty we not only have evidence for evisceration, but also for the first time the corpse was buried at three separate places. Entrails, blood, and brain of King Richard "the Lion-Hearted" (who died 1199 at Chalus) were buried at Charroux, his heart at Rouen (where body parts of his great-grandfather Henry and the corpse of his grandmother Mathilda rested), and his corpse at Fontevrault with his parents and sister (Giesey 1960:20; Schäfer
Among French royalty and nobility, evisceration and separate burial of body parts became a common practice in the thirteenth century.

While in the Middle Ages embalming flourished in France, England, and Scotland independent from a necessity to transport a corpse, in the German Empire the treatment remained predominantly functional (Meyer 2000:212). The establishment of two and three different burial places for one corpse developed between the sixteenth and seventeenth century in the Houses of Habsburg and Wittelsbach. Although the tradition ceased in the nineteenth century, it saw a revival in 1989, when the heart of the former empress Zita was buried in Muri, Switzerland (Hawlik-van de Water 1993:311).

Excarnation

To facilitate the transportation of bones, corpses had to be defleshed or temporarily stored and later exhumed. Active excarnation became known as mos teutonicus (the German custom). The bodies were eviscerated and cut into pieces, and the flesh was removed by boiling the body in water, wine, or vinegar. Flesh and intestines were usually buried at the place of death (sometimes cremated), while clean excarnated bones were wrapped in animal hides for their journey (Finucane 1981:46; Schäfer 1920:484).

The earliest historical account for dismemberment dates to A.D. 992, when the corpse of Bishop Gerdag of Hildesheim, who had died coming home from a pilgrimage to Rome, was cut into pieces and taken back to Germany in two containers (E. Brown 1981:226; Schäfer 1920:486). Emperor Otto III died January 1002 in Paterno, Italy. The chronicle reports that his intestines were taken back to Germany in two containers and buried at Augsburg, while the remaining body was buried at Aachen (Schäfer 1920:480). Although the chronicler mentions only intestina, the long distance (more than 1,000 kilometers) and the fact that the inner organs were transported in two containers may indicate that the corpse was defleshed.

Whether bodies of men who died in battle before the twelfth century were eviscerated or excarnated is also not clear from the historical record. In the battle at the Unstrut, many noblemen died in their fight against the rebellious Saxons in June 1075, and Emperor Henry IV ordered their transport home (Schäfer 1920:491). Among the dead was Babenberg Margrave Ernest, who was transported to Melk, Austria (approximately 550 kilometers away), where he still rests today. His bones were exhumed and reburied several times after the first deposition, and in 1735 they were deposited in a collective coffin together with other family members, all of whom had died in the eleventh century. In 1968 when the remains were investigated by physical anthropologists, the bones of 15 individuals were found. One skeleton was ascribed to Margrave Ernest based on sex, age, and four distinctive unhealed injuries inflicted by axe and sword, all interpreted as battle wounds. The collective coffin also held one scarred isolated humerus and an unidentified male skeleton, which also showed traces of burning.
and an unhealed injury. The burnt bones were ascribed to a fire that broke out in the monastery in 1297 (Jungwirth 1971:663–665). The issue of excarnation was not addressed at the time.

The first evidence that a body was boiled and defleshed is based on results from an investigation of the bones of Saxon King Lothar of Supplingenburg and two of his relatives. Through determination of aspartic acid racemization in bone samples and comparison with the ratios in the bones of two relatives, Bada and colleagues (1989) came to the conclusion that Lothar, who died in December 1137 near Breittenwang in the Alps, had been boiled for about six hours. The historical records are silent on that matter, and all we know is that it took 27 days to transport the body 500 kilometers from the Alps to Königslutter in Saxony (Schäfer 1920:482).

By the second half of the twelfth century, excarnation seems to have become well established. After dying in battle at Milan in 1158, Ekkebert of Puntten was excarnated in a nearby monastery. Fredrick of Altena was defleshed in Pavia in the same year. Henry of Liege was boiled also in Pavia in 1164. Many noblemen were killed in the summer of 1167 when the plague broke out in Rome in Frederick Barbarossa’s army. The bodies were boiled and stripped of flesh and their clean bones brought back to their homelands (Schäfer 1920). Frederick Barbarossa was excarnated after he drowned at Seleucia during the Third Crusade on June 10, 1190 (Pruetz 1879:30–33). Babenberg Duke Frederick I died April 16, 1198, during the Crusades and was treated in more teutonico (Lechner 1976:193). His remains were buried in the chapter house of the Cistercian monastery Heiligenkreuz (figure 12.2) in Coffin VIII. The eighteenth-century engraving displays a tightly packed bone bundle that differs from other secondary arrangements at the site, such as bones in Coffins I, II, and III that have been reburied from the monastery of Klosterneuburg in the thirteenth century (Koch 1976:194–196). It is generally accepted among historians that Coffin X from Heiligenkreuz (figure 12.2) holds the remains of Count Henry “the Cruel” (Koch 1976:198). The articulated state of his bones points to burial in the flesh and supports the assumption that differing corpse treatment is a result of distance and climatic conditions. Count Henry met his fate in the autumn or winter of 1228 in Swabia. The much shorter distance (approximately 400 kilometers) and the colder time of the year did not require excarnation. The small urn that was found beside the left side of the body might have once held the intestines.

Excarnation was not restricted to the German Empire. French Capetian King Louis IX “the Saint” (who died in Tunis in 1270) and his son Philip III (who died in Perpignan in October 1285) were both eviscerated and boiled. The rulers’ bones were buried at Saint-Denis, Louis’ nine months and Philip’s two months after death (E. Brown 1981:235–236; Vones 1996:192–193; Zotz 1996:201). English King Henry V, from the House of Lancaster, died in France in 1422 and was buried at Westminster Abbey in London two months after his death (Dodson 1994:77).
Regulation of Burial Practices

In the Middle Ages, monks who tended the dying and took care of their corpses often processed bodies. King John “Lackland” (who died in 1216), for example, was eviscerated by his father confessor, the abbot of Croxton (Dodson 1994:73). Despite being a clerical occupation and a benefit to the monasteries that received body parts, division of the corpse was banned in 1299 and again in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII (Schäfer 1920:497; E. Brown 1981:221). The pope wanted to end the savage practice and ruled that if someone died in a Catholic country the body should be instead temporarily buried in or near the place of death. Nevertheless, privileges were granted to Philip the Fair in 1305 (when Clement V became pope), permitting him to determine “that his body should be eviscerated, boiled, split or divided in any other way and buried wholly or partly in as many churches as he wished” (E. Brown 1981:256). More licenses for separate burial of the corpse were obtained, and the difficulty of gaining papal permission made it an even more desirable practice, since it became a sure sign of status and distinction (E. Brown 1981:264). In the fourteenth century the Church gave way and the custom regained its former popularity.
In the aftermath of the ban, alternative techniques to chopping up bodies and boiling may have been sought. Meyer (2000:55) suspects that the treatment of German Emperor Henry VII (House of Luxembourg) may represent such a response. Henry died in Italy on August 24, 1313. According to some sources the body was roasted over a fire. When the sarcophagus was opened in 1727 the bones exhibited signs of burning.

**Variability in Treatment of the Corpse**

Body processing arose out of the necessity of transporting a corpse, and both excarnation and embalming were applied only to people of noble descent. A sample of 85 high-status individuals (76 males, 9 females) who died between 877 and 1493 partially reveals the motives for the choice of treatment. The sample—which draws data from the German Empire, Bohemia, France, and the British Isles—includes members from the Capetian (n=12), Plantagenet (n=11), Habsburg (n=6), Luxembourg (n=5), Babenberg (n=4), and Salian (n=4) dynasties as well as members of other houses (such as Przemyśl, Ottone, Staufen, Ludovingian, Valois, Bruce, Lancaster). Among them are kings and queens (41 individuals); princes, dukes, and margraves (30 individuals); and clerics (14 individuals). Of 85 treated individuals, 52 were eviscerated and 33 excarnated. Of the excarnated individuals only one was female. Over two-thirds of the excarnated people died during wars.

A direct comparison between the two methods of treatment shows that defleshing was applied if someone died far from home and the assigned burial place (figure 12.3), if death occurred in a warmer season or climate (figure 12.4), or if a long time period between death and burial was required. If bodies were defleshed, at least one of these three factors applied. If transport occurred over shorter distances and the time period between death and burial was shorter, bodies were usually eviscerated and embalmed. While excarnation remained predominantly functional and ceased after the fifteenth century, evisceration became gradually disconnected from any function. It is a status marker at all times, but at least in England the number of separate burials of different body parts dropped after Boniface VIII banned division of the corpse in 1299 (E. Brown 1981:253). Sometimes doctors refused to eviscerate corpses of people who displayed signs of communicable diseases. Such fate befell Bohemian and Hungarian King Ladislas Posthumus (Habsburg), who died in 1457 and whose symptoms of leukemia were confused with the plague (Bláhová 1997:104). Duke Albert VI (Habsburg) died in 1463 two days after black carbuncles had emerged on his body. The doctors interpreted them as plague-boils, and Albert’s untreated corpse was temporarily buried in a plague pit (Mraz 1988:43). The doctors who cared for the son of Duke Christoph of Württemberg, Eberhard (who died in 1568), were afraid of infection from the festering ulcers that had obviously caused his death (Schukraft 1989:42).
Figure 12.3. For 78 of 85 treated individuals in the sample, both death and burial places are known. The graph plots the relationship between the distance of corpse transport, evisceration, and excarnation over time in the Middle Ages.

Figure 12.4. For 66 of 85 treated individuals in the sample, the month of death is known. The graph shows the relationship between evisceration, excarnation, and month of death from the ninth to the fifteenth century.
Deposition of the Corpse

Temporary Storage as Passive Excarnation

Pope Boniface VIII suggested temporary storage as an alternative to body processing when banning division of the corpse. This method had been used before 1299 when corpses had to be transported. The temporary burial of Charles “the Bald” at Nantua in 877 is an early example. But temporary storage required a possibility to recover the bones at some later point in time. The expansion of new monastic buildings all over Europe after the eleventh century promoted temporary storage and improved the conditions. If bodies could not be transported, there were many new ceremonial structures available for them to be stored in (Weiss-Krejci 2001:775).

Waiting for the Funeral

Temporary storage was not only a method to separate flesh from the bones; it was also applied for other reasons that were unrelated to transport of the corpse. Excommunicated people were sometimes stored. Such a ban on a person denied the right to burial in consecrated ground and thus seriously endangered the destiny of the soul (Schaller 1993:62). It was probably one of the most powerful—and therefore most frequently used—political instruments that a pope could direct against a ruler who did not follow his orders. Salian Emperor Henry IV died on August 7, 1106, in Liege while excommunicated. After four weeks he was transported to Speyer and buried in a nonconsecrated side chapel of the cathedral, where he remained for five years. When the ban was lifted, he was buried on August 7, 1111, beside his father, Henry III (Ohler 1990:147).

Storage could also take place when buildings, crypts, or tombs were not yet ready to house the mortal remains. Since death dates of family members often preceded the construction of tombs and crypts in which they are buried now, the implication is that they entered those places as “secondary burials.” It is not always easy to determine whether these corpses were previously deposited with the intention of exhumation (temporary storage) or whether a decision to exhum and rebury was made at some later point in time (postfuneral relocation).

In 1263 Ludwig II of Bavaria (House of Wittelsbach) founded the monastery Fürstenfeld, to conciliate the execution of his first wife, Mary of Brabant. The Founder’s Chapel became the burial place of Ludwig, his second and third wives, and several children. His second wife, Anne of Glogau (who died in 1271), and his daughter Agnes (who died in 1269) were most probably first buried in the Prince’s Chapel at the monastery Scheyern, which was given up as a burial place for the Wittelsbach family at the end of the thirteenth century (List 1980:524, 527). King John I of Portugal, founder of the Avis dynasty (who died in 1433), and his wife, Philippa of Lancaster (who died in 1415), were both reburied into a double tomb in the Founder’s Chapel at the monastery of Batalha in 1434 (Mosteiro da Batalha 1988).
In a few cases we can be sure that corpses of family members were simply stored to await burial with another family member. Two previously deceased young adult sons of French Valois King Francis I were included in his funeral and buried together with their father at Saint-Denis in 1547. According to Giesey (1960:8), Francis had not buried the bodies of his sons when they died, since he wanted them to be buried together with him in his mausoleum.

Stored people were not always reburied. In the chapter house of Heiligenkreuz rest the remains of two members of the House of Wittelsbach. Rudolph and Heinrich in Grave IV are the children of Catherine of Habsburg (daughter of Rudolph of Habsburg) and Duke Otto III of Lower Bavaria (alias Bela V, King of Hungary) (Koch 1976:194). Niemetz (1974:23) thinks that their burial at Heiligenkreuz in 1280 was meant to be only a temporary solution until they could be transferred to the monastery of Tulln, which had been founded in the same year by Rudolph of Habsburg. But for unknown reasons the transport never took place, and the bones remained at Heiligenkreuz.

Deposition and Funeral
In Europe months could pass before a body was deposited, but deposition did not always imply that the funeral was completed. Disposal of the corpse and funeral rite in Europe could form distinct, temporally separated events that could be performed independently of each other. Such behavior has resulted in situations in which both primary and secondary burials can represent the remains of either incomplete or multiple funeral rites.

In post-Medieval Europe, corpses that were buried in dynastic crypts were enclosed in two coffins. A simple wooden coffin was usually used to deposit the corpse soon after death. Sometime later the first coffin was put into a larger outer coffin, which was made from wood, tin, or lead. In the House of Württemberg, burial was considered complete only when the inner coffin had been deposited in the outer one, but this had not always been the case. Duke Eberhard Ludwig (who had founded the crypt Ludwigsburg) lost his heir, Friedrich Ludwig, in 1731 and wanted his son's inner coffin to be enclosed in an outer elaborate tin coffin, as this had been the custom in the House of Württemberg since the seventeenth century. By 1733 court-tin founder Tambornino had made a cost calculation, draft, and model for the coffin, but when Duke Eberhard Ludwig died in the same year the coffin had not yet been commissioned. Since Eberhard Ludwig had died without heir, his cousin Carl Alexander inherited the duchy, a change in inheritance that also caused a religious shift, since Carl Alexander was Catholic in contrast to Eberhard Ludwig, who had been Protestant. Carl Alexander ordered two tin coffins (one for the duke and one for his son), but when the contract with Tambornino was signed the original plan and model could not be found and the project was cancelled. As a result, both Eberhard Ludwig's and Friedrich Ludwig's burial remained incomplete. Four years later, on March 12, 1737, Carl Alexander died. It took less than a month for Carl Alexander's outer coffin to be
ready, and the new tradition using a simpler outer coffin was probably a direct result of the previous experiences. Carl Alexander's funeral took place in three stages. First his intestines were buried in the floor of the burial crypt five days after death. Then almost four weeks after death, the corpse was quietly deposited in the crypt on April 6 in a black-velvet-covered coffin. In the meantime an empty red-velvet-covered coffin was lying in state in the castle. Five weeks later the funeral was held. The empty consecrated red coffin was lowered into the crypt, and the black coffin was put inside. Similar procedures were conducted at the later burials of Dukes Carl Eugen, Ludwig Eugen, and Friedrich Eugen at the end of eighteenth century. On the occasion of Carl Alexander's funeral in 1737, the unnamed simple wooden caskets of Friedrich Ludwig and Eberhard Ludwig were walled in and the evidence for unfinished burial made invisible (Schukraft 1989:94–98).

Carl Alexander's funeral with an empty coffin indicates that funerals can be held independent from deposition of the corpse. The example from Ludwigsburg further shows that too expensive or too elaborate projects may either inhibit complete burial or cause a major delay. The latter was the case with Habsburg Emperor Fredrick III (V), who received two funerals. Frederick III (V) died on August 19, 1493, in Linz and was immediately eviscerated and embalmed, his heart and intestines buried in a dignified ceremony in the City Parish Church of Linz (Meyer 2000:178). After burial of intestines and heart, Frederick's corpse was transported to Vienna. The summer weather instigated the need for rapid burial, and on August 28 the royal corpse was temporarily laid to rest at St. Stephen's Cathedral, accompanied by a "small" ceremony in which 6 bishops and 13 abbots and prelates were present (Lipburger 1997:132). The big funeral was scheduled to take place whenever the future emperor, Frederick's son Maximilian I, arrived, but this took a while. A few days after Frederick had been deposited, the Turks attacked Carinthia, and Maximilian was too busy to hold the funeral. When Maximilian finally arrived in Vienna, a pompous funeral was held on December 6 and 7, but there exist doubts whether the corpse was present during the funeral (Lipburger 1997:133). Thirty years before his death Frederick had commissioned a large marble monument in which he wanted to be buried (Hertlein 1997:139), but in 1493 the tomb was not ready. Another 20 years passed before the mortal remains could be moved to their final resting place. This last relocation in November 1513 was accompanied by yet another funerary ceremony, almost as splendid as the one of December 1493, but in the absence of Emperor Maximilian. From the records we know that this time the mortal remains were displayed for a few days (Lipburger 1997:134) before they were deposited in the marble monument at St. Stephen's Cathedral.

For political reasons French King Louis X also received two funerals. The king died suddenly and unexpectedly on June 5, 1316, in Paris and was buried two days later. His brother Philip of Poitier had missed the funeral, but since Louis did not have an heir, Philip was one of the potential successors. In missing his
brother's funeral Philip had failed to perform one of the functions expected of a person destined to succeed to the throne. So Philip arranged a second funeral five weeks after the first and thus secured the regency and ultimately the crown of France. In the second funeral Louis X was not disinterred, but clothes were laid on his grave. According to Brown (1978:256), Philip clearly intended the ceremony to be seen as a second funeral, not an ordinary commemorative service.

The use of historical evidence from Europe underscores the problem of equating deposition of the corpse and funeral. Some stored corpses were never moved to their destined burial location, and some people did not receive the full funerary treatment, whereas others received more than just one funeral.

Postfuneral Processes

Disturbance

Once a body is finally buried, a series of other formation processes can change its state. Disturbance frequently occurred in burial crypts into which sequential interments were made. Bones were disturbed when coffins were opened during inspections. Artifacts were sometimes removed and bones taken. Charlemagne's grave, after having been hidden from the Normans in 882, was disturbed by Emperor Otto III in 1000 and Frederick Barbarossa in 1165. Otto III cut Charlemagne's nails, broke a tooth from the jaw, and took a golden cross and parts from the clothes. His deed was considered a sacrilege in his time, and Otto's death two years later was seen as a just punishment by one chronicler (Ohler 1990:142).

Postfuneral Relocation

While a disturbed corpse at least remains in its original mortuary context, postfuneral relocation poses a serious problem from the point of mortuary analysis. In Medieval and post-Medieval Europe, relocation could take place within a crypt or funeral chamber, within a building or building complex (internal relocation), or from one building, town, or country into another (external relocation). This happened for ritual and profane, friendly and hostile reasons (Weiss-Krejci 2001:775–778).

Postfuneral Long-distance Transport

Corpses were sometimes transported over hundreds of kilometers and hundreds of years after the funeral, with bones ending up in rather unexpected places. In 1770 Abbot Martin Gerbert exhumed 14 Habsburgs who had been buried in Switzerland between 1276 and 1386 and reburied them at his newly rebuilt monastery St. Blasien in the Black Forest. But only 36 years later the monastery was secularized, and the convent was forced to leave. In 1809 the monks took the
bones to St. Paul im Lavanttal in Carinthia, where they were eventually buried in a small crypt under the main altar of the monastery church in 1936 (Gut 1999:105-110). These burials cannot be understood from the Habsburg perspective. During the Habsburg reign only one person chose to be buried in Carinthia—Maria Anna (died 1789), daughter of Maria Theresa, who had joined a convent there (Leitner 1989:102). It is primarily through the intentions and fate of the monks rather than through the identity of the bones that we can understand their present location.

Violence

The most radical and destructive postdepositional process in European history, both in scale and quantity, was exhumation of emperors, kings, queens, and their family members during the French revolution. "Let all the coffins of these divinized monsters be broken open! Let their memory be condemned!" wrote journalist Lebrun in a poem that was published February 6, 1793, in Paris (E. Brown 1985:252). By the end of the year any archaeological testimony of the royal funeral ceremony (Giesey 1960) had disappeared. The bodies from Saint-Denis were thrown into two pits on the north side of the abbey (one called the Valois pit, holding the remains from Merovingian, Carolingian, Capetian, and Valois dynasties; the other, the Bourbon pit). During exhumation people took teeth, hair, bones, and other relics. But in 1817, three years after the accession of Louis XVIII, the desecrated royal bones were exhumed once again. Since it was impossible to single out individual bodies, the bones were put in five coffins (four for the Valois pit and one large one for the Bourbons) and reburied within the abbey in a ceremony. Eventually funerary monuments were also returned to the abbey (E. Brown 1985:255-256).

During domestic conflicts violence was often directed against royal corpses. King Wenceslas IV of Bohemia was desecrated only a year after his death when the monastery of Zbraslaw (Königsaal, south of Prague) was plundered and set on fire by raiding Taborites in 1420. According to one account, men put the cadaver on the altar, adorned it with a crown made from hay, and poured beer over it (Millauer 1830:59-60; Bláhová 1997:102). The remains were collected by a loyal man and buried but were exhumed and reburied at Prague Cathedral in 1424 in a huge public funerary ceremony (Meyer 2000:140). At Notre-Dame-de-Cléry, Huguenotts played ball with the head of Louis XI in 1562 (E. Brown 1985:250), and at Saint-Denis the cadaver of Henry IV was struck by a woman during the exhumation in 1793 (E. Brown 1985:253).

During wars, tombs were also frequently desecrated; grave goods were stolen, and the bones were disturbed or thrown out. The grave of Duke Frederick II (Grave IX) at Heiligenkreuz (see figure 12.2) was probably opened and plundered by the Turks (Niemetz 1974:22).
Ritual Deposition of Bones

While the relics of Christian martyrs were exhumed from the early Middle Ages on and distributed through Europe, in the later Middle Ages some royal corpses achieved saintly status. Once canonized, the bodies were exhumed in the ritual of translation and the relics were moved to a more honorable position and distributed (Finucane 1981:52–53). French King Louis IX was canonized 27 years after his death in 1297. When his grandson Philip IV “the Fair” wanted to move the remains from Saint-Denis to Paris, the monks first refused to give up the bones but finally gave in. In 1306 Philip was able to translate the upper part of the king’s head to Saint-Chapelle. One rib was awarded to Notre-Dame; Louis’ chin, teeth, and mandible, which were considered the inferior part of the head, were left at Saint-Denis. In 1304 Philip had already presented one of Louis’ finger joints to the king of Norway (Brown 1980).

Discussion

Variability in mortuary treatment has been interpreted as the result of age, gender, wealth, social position and affiliation, prestige, occupation, kinship ties, ideology, level of grief, and circumstances and cause of death (Binford 1971; E. Brown 1981; Goldstein 1995:116; Häusler 1968; Hodder 1982b; MacDonald 2001; Pader 1982; Saxe 1970; Shay 1985; Steuer 1968; Tainter 1978). Hence the evidence from Medieval and post-Medieval Europe shows that no factor alone can be held responsible for variability.

Unfortunately for the archaeologists, high-status individuals are not always buried where they lived or died. Although exceptions exist (Murphy and Mallory 2000), there has been very little discussion of people’s mobility and its meaning for the mortuary record. In Europe, transport of the corpse was a status marker, and if a corpse had to be transported it was treated. How the corpse was treated depended on the place of death, the distance from the burial place, the climate, and the prospective time before burial of a body. But a simple correlation between status and treatment does not explain variability, since not everybody was transported. Additionally, societal change and individual decisions have played a role (Daniell 1997:87–92). Though evisceration became slowly detached from its original function and a sign for distinct status, some people rejected it. Others did not receive such treatment because they had died (or at least were believed to have died) from a communicable disease. But most important is the point that evisceration and excastration can be understood only in the context of a belief system that abhorred destruction of the bones through fire.

Another serious methodological problem is that dead people are mobile not only before or during, but also after the funeral. In Medieval and post-Medieval Europe, bones were frequently exhumed (see, for example, Daniell 1997:93; Weiss-Krejci 2001). Whatever the reason for exhumation, in dynastic contexts bones were usually reburied. Though the majority of dynastic reburials indeed
took place in a ritual, the new mortuary context may be entirely different from the earlier one. None of these ceremonies can be considered funeral rites, despite the ritual mortuary context of the remains. The postfuneral ceremony can also completely mask the reasons for exhumation. Such exhumation acts can sometimes be explained within the framework of ancestor veneration but often result from a range of nonritualistic activities.

Härke (1994, 1997) has argued that burials can reveal past reality through functional data. These data, which mainly consist of information that physical anthropologists gain from skeletal remains, would form undistorted and unbiased evidence that could be contrasted with a second data type, the intentional data. Intentional data (such as burial type, grave construction, and grave goods) do not reflect past reality but the thinking of the ritual community. Härke has applied this methodology to analyze Anglo-Saxon burials and has shown that the contrast between the two data types may reveal ancient ideology behind the burial ritual (Härke 1994:35–37). Nevertheless, the evidence from dynastic Europe shows that this approach can work only when bodies show signs of burial in the flesh. The analysis of disarticulated bones that may be older than their context or come from somewhere else will surely bias any analysis. Such skeletal data are also intentional and will reflect only the ideology of the community that performed the reburial.

Tombs that hold primary and secondary remains are frequently interpreted as evidence for human sacrifice (Parker Pearson 1999:18), even when “victims” lack signs of violent death. In historic European dynastic mortuary contexts, evidence for human sacrifice and “non-persons” (Arnold and Wicker 2001:xii) does not exist. The frequent combinations of double or multiple, same-sex or mixed-sex burials and combinations of articulated and disarticulated bones result from a behavior in which excarnation, body storage, collective burial practices, multiple burial practices, and postfuneral relocation played an equally important part. As Ucko has already argued in discussing the Merina, an interpretation of such burials as sacrifices “would be quite out of place” (Ucko 1969:269).

While one may argue that such observations may be restricted to historic Europe, a specific burial ideology should not a priori be ascribed to any ancient society without careful consideration. If we want to uncover past realities all possibilities have to be considered. A first step would be to develop methodologies to distinguish which burials are the result of funeral rites from those that are not. This would imply the application of a wider variety of examination techniques for disarticulated bones and an increased utilization of skeletal biological data. A close collaboration between archaeologists and bioarchaeologists may further help to understand the nature of such evidence.

In European dynastic contexts the older the bones, the rarer the chance that they still reflect funerals. But if funeral redefines a person’s status, so do exhumation and reburial. The evidence from burial deposits with disarticulated remains
may neither hold any information on the status of a person at the time of death nor reflect the intentions of the community that participated in the funeral. But the analysis of jumbled, incomplete, and disarticulated bones may display ideological change and social process and therefore open a different window to understanding ancient human behavior.

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Notes

1. According to historical sources from later times, Klosterneuburg was the primary burial place of Henry “the Cruel.” Historians debate when the transfer of corpses from Klosterneuburg to Heiligenkreuz took place (Koch 1976). If Klosterneuburg was indeed the primary burial place, the articulated bones in Coffin X would point to transfer not too long after primary burial, when the flesh had not yet decayed.

2. Dauphin Francis (who died in 1538) was stored in Tournon; Charles Duke of Orléans (who died in 1545) was stored in the abbey of St. Lucien near Beauvais.

3. In England and France, the use of effigies permitted long time periods between death and funeral (Giesey 1960:112; Metcalf and Huntington 1991:171).

4. Ucko (1969:269) also said that a costly tomb may not necessarily imply a ruling family. This is also true for Europe. In Vienna, for example, several burial crypts hold elaborate metal coffins, but only a few crypts served as burial places for the Habsburgs. As J. Brown (1981:29) has argued, it is not necessarily wealth distinction in graves that marks social variables but the right to a special burial location.
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