

## Discussion

# 12 Entangled rituals: Death, place, and archaeological practice

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Howard Williams

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### 12.1. Introduction

Exploring the archaeological investigation of ritual and religion, this collection tackles case studies from Finland and Sápmi over the last millennium revealing multiple fresh insights into the entangled nature of belief and ritual across contrasting subsistence strategies, social structures, and worldviews and encapsulating both colonial and post-colonial contexts. In particular, multiple chapters tackle fluidity and hybridization between traditional and Christian belief and practice over the long term. In doing so, while archaeological theory and method is the principal focus, many chapters effectively synergize linguistic, folkloric, anthropological, and historical research in decisive ways.

The theme of entanglement simultaneously encapsulates multiple planes and registers in this book, including the entangled nature of people with things, monuments, and landscapes, but also the entanglements between the living world and the places and spaces of the dead. Entanglements are considered in temporal terms too, as sites, monuments, and buildings both sacred and secular are built, used, transformed, abandoned, reused, reactivated, and re-imagined through ritual practice. The chapters thus tackle new ways of investigating a range of contexts and material cultures and their material, spatial and, biographical significances from portable artefacts and costume (Hukantaival; Lipkin; Moilanen and Hiekkanen; Piha; Ritari-Kallio), settlements and sacred buildings (Modarress; Moilanen and Hiekkanen), factories (Hemminki), and natural places (Äikäs and Ahola; Piha). Throughout, attention to mortuary environments – graves, cemeteries, and memorials – are a particular and pervasive theme.

Rituals and sacred places are considered as mechanisms and media respectively by which social memories are conjured and conveyed, and by which both continuities and changes are mediated through time. This is shown to apply both for people in the human past through the study of ‘the past in the past’, and for people today as they encounter and reinterpret ancient monuments and reinvent and reconfigure rituals considered ancient in contemporary settings. Archaeological investigations are demonstrated through chapter after chapter as key to how ritual practices and ritualized places are both investigated and afforded new meanings and significances in contemporary society.

Together, the studies exhibit the high calibre, interdisciplinarity and global significance of Finnish archaeological research. Most significantly, the collection showcases the value of historical archaeological investigations, eschewing the often default focus on prehistoric and protohistorical periods in the archaeology of ritual and religion (cf. Insoll 2011) and the archaeology of death and burial (cf. Tarlow and Nilsson Stutz 2013) to embrace diversity and change from the Middle Ages through the Modern era and the contemporary past.

The introduction (Äikäs, Lipkin and Ahola) effectively encapsulates the book's key themes by focusing on the dynamics, fluidity, and hybridity in the archaeology of ritual and religion. Therefore this discussion does not replicate or expand their review but instead considers the chapters under three subheadings – death and memory, biographies of place, archaeologists and ritual – thus picking out some influential achievements of each and identifying potential for future research building upon their insights. Throughout, I try to cite some of my past research which chimes with the topics being tackled in order to draw out further points of consideration.

## 12.2. Death and memory

Many of the books' chapters are primarily or partly studies in mortuary archaeology, offering a welcome focus on the last millennium. While there have been invaluable contributions which have furthered the investigation of later medieval, modern, and contemporary death in recent years (e.g. Gilchrist and Sloane 2005; Williams 2011a; Cherryson et al. 2012; Tarlow 2015; Anthony 2016), it is seldom that studies have incorporated cross-fertilization between those studying the last millennium and earlier periods (although a rare example is Downes and Pollard 1999).

### 12.2.1. Saami death ways

Many of the chapters challenge ahistorical perceptions of medieval and modern death. I wish to begin with Piha's combination of archaeological and lexical data attempting to seek changing pre-/non-Christian religion among the southern Saami of Scandinavia evolving from prehistoric times into recent centuries. The implications for death rituals and beliefs are particularly revealing. Piha identifies temporal disjunctions between words and things thus showing the challenging task of integrating sources of data into a coherent picture of religious belief and ritual practices; for example, Saami drums are only confirmed by archaeological evidence from the region for recent centuries, but the words for them are presumed to be far, far older. Yet her analysis proposes a similar age of the word *saajve* meaning 'realm of the dead' with the archaeological evidence of 'hunting ground graves' from the early first millennium AD. She thus postulates that these graves were perceived as a 'gateway' to the world of the dead. Conversely, Piha identifies that the phenomenon of 'bear graves' is both late in the archaeological record and in the lexical data. Whilst such inferences are fraught with difficulties, Piha's work promotes the value of interdisciplinary endeavour and challenges a static, thus ahistorical, approach on Saami religion and attitudes to death and the dead specifically.

### 12.2.2. Bodies and bones in circulation: Medieval mortuary variability

It is important to reiterate that death rituals were varied during the mid-/late first millennium AD across Southern Finland, revealed by cremation, inhumation, and disposal of the dead in watery locations (Wessman 2010; Wessman and Williams 2017). Cremation dominates but inhumation constitutes a far-from-rare intermittent practice (e.g. Wessman 2010: 35). However, during the 11th century AD, inhumation graves are increasingly added to pre-existing cremation cemeteries (Wessman 2010: 27) as well as dominating at newly established burial grounds. Puolakka considers the latter:

inhumation-dominant cemeteries dating between the 11th and 14th centuries AD and traditionally described as 'Christian'. She shows that although most graves were unfurnished and uniform in their west–east alignment, they incorporate considerable variability in mortuary behaviour, including two notable elements of arguably non-Christian/unorthodox practice: (i) cremation burials as a minority, often inserted into inhumation graves, and (ii) the inclusion of additional unburnt bones, articulated limbs and heads, within inhumation graves.

While the chronology of these practices has yet to be refined, Puolakka discounts the possibility that they are short-lived 'pagan' survivals, especially as the cremation burials often post-date inhumation graves. Likewise, Puolakka argues that the additional bones found in graves do not appear to have disturbed earlier interments and thus the bones cannot be considered 'charnel'. The data for both practices instead indicates a persistent hybridization in dealing with the dead within what she characterizes as to the borderland status of the region, situated as it was between the emerging Christian power centres of Sweden and Novgorod.

Studies elsewhere in medieval Europe have already warned of characterizing cremation as 'early', 'pagan', or 'low-status'. While their choice is far from arbitrary, it is rarely so simple. Cremation and inhumation practices are frequently discovered in close association and seemingly in use contemporaneously for long periods of time. As such, in addition to charting longer-term trends favouring one disposal method over others, the choice to cremate might have incorporated multiple motivations, including attitudes and perceptions of fiery technologies, but also requirements upon transporting, curating, and integrating the dead within above-ground architectures and cemeteries (see Meyers Emery and Williams 2018). Thus, cremation and inhumation need to be considered in relational, not in *oppositional*, terms. They could be deployed together, be internally diverse ritual trajectories, and negotiate various different social, cosmological, and other distinctions and relationships within and between communities (Williams 2002, 2014; see also Lippock 2020). Equally pertinent to this discussion, archaeologists have long critiqued attempts to read off Christian conversion and Christian theology from complex medieval burial data and identified considerable variability within Christian mortuary ritual (e.g. Gilchrist and Sloane 2005; Maldonado 2013; Hausmair 2017). Specifically, medieval archaeologists have only begun to carefully evaluate the various ways in which bodies and bones were circulated within medieval Europe and how they were treated within and beyond funerals. The exhumation and circulation of bodies was not only reserved for the very special dead in terms of Christian saintly relics prior to the Reformation and during the Counter-Reformation (Weiss-Krejci 2013: 292–293), but also as strategies of royal, aristocratic, and episcopal politics (e.g. Weiss-Krejci 2016). Charnel practices were also commonplace and involved ossuary cults which in some cases persisted long after the Reformation (e.g. Kenzler 2015: 150–152). Moreover, archaeologists are increasingly finding evidence of grave re-openings to retrieve artefacts and/or rebury the dead elsewhere as acts of posthumous conversion or to sacralize the burial space (Klevnäs 2015). These might be linked to beliefs in revenant corpses which might prompt post-mortem treatments to burials both within and beyond churchyards, including mutilating and burning bodies (Mays et al. 2017). Crucially, none of these practices and beliefs need to be seen as counter to Christian teaching and some, indeed, might constitute clerical agency, if not clerical sanction at the very least.

This context prompts further reflections on Puolakka's evidence. First, the poor bone survival and limitations on the quality of the field archaeology utilized for Puolakka's study strongly suggests that both cremation and additional unburnt articulated body parts, and perhaps also the inclusion of animal remains in graves (given one instance of a goat skull found in a grave), all remain significantly under-represented. Cremation graves discrete from inhumation graves might have also been regularly missed by investigators, or when found, presumed to be of prehistoric date (see also Wessman 2010: 17–18). Furthermore regarding the interpretation of these ritual traces, might we move beyond seeing this as evidence of a 'borderland' context where Christian belief and practice had varied regulation and

localized manifestations to infer commemorative practices linked to the curation, transportation, and above-ground display of the dead, perhaps even necromantic or other magical practices utilizing human remains and the materials placed in graves? For while the circulation of human remains, notably skulls, in settlement contexts is now finally receiving systematic attention for the first millennium AD (Eriksen 2020), their potential diverse roles – burned and in fragments – in funerary environments of the early and middle parts of the second millennium AD has received limited attention. Archaeologists still struggle to consider cemeteries as places of power involving complex textual, monumental, and corporeal dialogues between the living and the dead and the supernatural, both during and between funerals (e.g. Härke 2001; Williams et al. 2010; Semple and Williams 2015; Gardela 2016; Klevnäs 2016; Wessman and Williams 2017). Hence, ‘Christian’ medieval cemeteries need to be increasingly considered as unfamiliar and complex burial and commemorative environments with local, regional, and broader variations in the disposal and circulation of bodies and body parts.

### 12.2.3. Vital bodies and substances: Post-medieval mortuary practices

Moving to the post-medieval period, archaeologists frequently have to consider the complex factors affecting mortuary practices alongside religious organization and theological frameworks, including the social, emotional, and mnemonic dimensions to disposing of and commemorating the dead (see Tarlow 1999, 2015; Cherryson et al. 2012; Mytum 2004). Moilanen and Hiekkanen touch on aspects of these interpretative challenges in their report on the 71 graves excavated in 1984 within the church at Renko. This constitutes a rare case for investigating 15th–17th-century burials in Finland undisturbed by later interments due to the abandonment and rebuilding of the structure in the late 18th century. They identify considerable uniformity in the treatment of the intact inhumation graves, orientated west–east and supine, likely to reflect the high-status families of the parish. Yet grave B had no coffin and the knees and elbows were flexed, possibly related to burial whilst rigor mortis was still in effect. There was also a grave of the late 17th or early/mid-18th century showing signs of autopsy: the skull cut in half. Most distinctively, three graves, two of them infants, were buried with a distinctive north–south alignment (this practice is known in Continental Europe for Catholic priests to ensure they are orientated on the high altar (Kenzel 2015: 154)). The authors justifiably struggle to find an explanation for this in the Finnish context, suggesting it represents a possible sign of punishment, or else perhaps a distinctive placement to articulate sympathies to a revivalist movement, neither of which fully make sense in the context of burials within such a prominent church context. They conclude that it might ‘convey feelings, ideas, and ideologies’, but we could consider more specific possibilities and solutions to these aberrant alignments. One dimension not considered in reflecting on the position and orientation of the graves might be the desire to associate them with specific intramural tombs or other church furnishings and fittings, such as pews or the font: associations now lost.

While grave goods are relatively rare across Europe after the 8th century, archaeologists repeatedly challenge the assumption that there was a Christian prohibition against clothing and furnishing the dead, and there is an upturn in their frequency in the 17th century across Europe among both Catholics and Protestants (Cherryson et al. 2012; Kenzler 2015: 158–159). Moilanen and Hiekkanen deliver one of a series of chapters reporting on the roles of artefacts in church rituals and mortuary practices. In addition to 48 medieval coins, 38 post-medieval coins were uncovered, although they lack confirmed associations with specific graves (see also Cherryson et al. 2012). Four graves interred after abandonment contain beads and rings reflecting broader patterns of lavishly clothed high-status burials despite regulations forbidding exquisite garments and accessories. The authors suggest these represent ‘respect and remembrance’, but one might also suggest they could constitute evidence of devotion (rosaries would, however, make more sense in a Catholic context: Cherryson et al. 2012; Kenzler 2015: 159–160), commemoration through the provision of family heirlooms (cf. Costello and Williams 2019), or an expression of emotional attachments linking the living with the dead during the burial process (Cherryson et al. 2012). A further dimension lacking consideration in the

literature to date is the possibility that these items operated in dialogue with the representation of the elite dead upon portraiture or, indeed, church monuments, where idealized representations of the deceased's body was frequently posed in elaborate clothing among the uppermost echelons of society (Llewellyn 2001).

The interpretation of portable artefacts and the body's clothing is taken up by Lipkin for Northern Ostrobothnian Finland. She reevaluates dress in death rituals, seeing costume as an inseparable part of social identity in life that is transformed and renegotiated in the emotive and intimate washing and dressing of the cadaver for burial. Considering the immediately dead body as *object* as Lipkin does has theoretical merit, although it harbours a potential inherent ahistoricity of transposing a modern anxiety regarding the 'failure' of the individual body onto past times. Moreover, the abjection of the dead might relate to a very short duration within the funeral, and the work to clothe and position the dead might be not only serve to counter this but also to prepare and transform the deceased into a new social, spiritual, and ontological status. Thus, rather than turning bodies into stable things as Lipkin suggests, clothing mediated a more complex rite of passage for body, soul, and survivors through the ritual process. Here, a more direct and effective use of the anthropological work of van Gennep and Hertz might be constructively adapted for archaeological interpretations (see Williams 2006: 20–22) while respecting the variability in the data, no doubt in part reflecting Fenno-Ugric folkloric traditions and different competing Christian Orthodox and Lutheran influences.

If clothing and charms were emotive and facilitated the cadaver's transformation to facilitate Resurrection, one wonders how this related not only to metaphors of sleep (see Cherryson et al. 2012) but also to portrayals of the dead found upon church and churchyard monuments. Again, relating this funerary and folkloric evidence to above-ground monuments, both inside and outside churches, seems a missed opportunity for further consideration. Indeed, given the evidence of coins in the Hailuoto church and Oulu Cathedral's graveyard, mirroring the coins found in the excavations at Renko by Moilanen and Hiekkänen, there is clearly considerable potential for thinking further about votive and funerary depositions in churches and churchyards during and between funerals (cf. Cherryson et al. 2012).

The theoretical insights of Lipkin regarding clothing the dead are enhanced and extended by Ritari-Kallio who surveys 17th- and 18th-century graves and compares this with 19th-century folkloric data. The grave goods found in archaeological data are rings, smoking equipment, and books, which contrasts somewhat with the folklore data. This difference is hardly surprising given differential survival (cf. Kenzler 2015: 164–165). In the folklore, which is 19th-century in date and therefore not directly comparable, rings and religious books are confirmed as common offerings for the dead. Yet, alcohol, money, and food, as well as body parts lost in life (limbs, hair, teeth) appear more frequently than tobacco. Notable in their absence are items of 'taboo' cited by Kenzler (2015: 161–162) including washbowls (particularly in Protestant regions), medicines, scissors, razors, and combs (see also Cherryson et al. 2012).

Again, the role of coins is cited, although once more the challenge remains in identifying how many were once placed in or upon graves as opposed to deposition at other times as votives. Trying to identify precise motives for individual grave goods might not be as easy as for earlier periods (Härke 2014; see also Valk 2015), but their possible roles in mnemonic transformation might be a profitable avenue for further research: thus considering not only the clothing of the dead, as Lipkin indicates, but also other items as mediating the new ontological, spiritual, and social identity of the deceased (cf. Williams 2006). The emphasis on continuing bonds and exchanges/dialogues between the living and the dead, in which the items reveal care and comfort, might help us to explain these items in more nuanced fashions, connecting seemingly disparate items that comfort and 'nourish' the senses of the dead spiritually and corporeally. None of these need to be interpreted in terms of material transmittance to the afterlife as the aspiration or expectation of the survivors. In particular, this might explain items linked to the body's surface and its management, but also objects that mediate between the liv-

ing and the dead, including rings and items as diverse as Bibles, smoking equipment, drink, and food (cf. Williams 2006: 79–116; see also Valk 2015). Again, more careful consideration of above-ground funerary monumentality might assist in considering these items in graves, but the combination of folkloric and archaeological data is shown to be effective in both Lipkin's and Ritari-Kallio's research.

It is at this point that we might discuss the 'vital scrap' in Hukantaival's discussion of pre-modern perceptions of material agency. While burial archaeologists have tackled non-human agency in various fashions for at least two decades (e.g. Gilchrist 2008), Hukantaival's survey identifies the synergies between folklore and archaeology to reveal 19th-century worldviews that regard 'objects and materials [...] as potentially alive'. Exploring the *väiki* concept in which the elements and materials have power, this has multiple potential applications for rethinking the significance of far-older ritual practices, including fire rituals (including cremation as an agent for transforming cadavers and commemorating the dead by distributing their remains into communal cemeteries-under-level-ground, see Wessman 2010). Likewise, it might contribute to understanding later historical treatments of material culture in mortuary contexts as evaluated by Puolakka, Moilanen and Hiekkänen, Piha, Lipkin, and Ritari-Kallio. Hukantaival foregrounds the potential use for understanding the power of objects of unknown origin, reflected perhaps also in the use of old objects in prehistoric and early historical graves (Eckardt and Williams 2003). Yet again we return to the potential power of cemeteries and churchyards in a tangible sense: places where objects placed within and retrieved might then be invested with a socially recognized potency: the *väiki* of the burial site. This affords archaeologists the potential to revisit and reconsider not only grave goods but also cemeteries as environments of material and spiritual exchange between the living and the dead.

#### 12.2.4. Human-animal relations in death

So far the discussion has focused on human cemeteries, but in many periods of the past, animals had multiple roles in funerals and cemetery space (e.g. Williams 2001, 2006: 133–135). Piha's chapter touched on the Saami practice of burying bears, and Ikäheimo takes up the theme of animal death from multiple fresh perspectives. For while contemporary death has attracted some attention (e.g. Williams 2011a; Anthony 2016; Williams and Wessman 2017; Williams and Williams 2019), human-animal relationships have only begun to be explored in terms of cemeteries and funerary commemoration (e.g. Davenport and Harrison 2011; Williams 2011b). Ikäheimo's auto-archaeological approach reflecting on the exhumation, reburial, and memorialization of family pets is insightful in itself. Moreover, his own interactions with a pet cemetery during this process and also within field archaeology provide multiple original new insights into the complexity of ritual and practice in relation to disposing of and commemorating non-human agents in death. The wider exploration of animal commemoration practices is a field ripe for future research, exploring new perspectives on animals materialized and represented within human cemeteries, as with the goat skull mentioned in the Illinsaari medieval cemetery by Puolakka, through to the role of animals in contemporary deathways and mortuary environments including both clandestine and formally sanctioned disposals and commemorative practices. The past, present, and future of pet cemeteries fits into this emergent field of archaeological enquiry.

### 12.3. Biographies of places

I have steered the discussion of death and memory towards identifying the importance of burial sites as places of power, considering not only what goes into graves but also the relationship between graves, above-ground monuments, sacred architectures, and funerary spaces (see also Semple and Williams

2015; Williams 2016, 2017). I have identified how further attention to place and memory might have enriched them (cf. Valk 2015). The flip side are those chapters that focused instead on sites, monuments, and locales and the social memories that accrue to them through both ritual practices over the longer term and during modern-day processes of fieldwork and heritagization.

A logical starting point is the insightful chapter by Äikäs and Ahola. They explore the long-term biographies of two archaeological sites from prehistory to today. Contrasting an urban environment in Southern Finland with a Saami sacred natural place, they argue that ‘heritagization’ is a process we can trace from at least the 10th century AD at the Taatsi offering site through to present-day Pagan and touristic engagements. Meanwhile, the Jönsas cemetery is considered in regard to its multiple uses and reuses from the Stone Age through the Bronze and Early Iron Ages and its rediscovery through archaeology and manifestation in street names, a below-floor display in the museum, and a second reactivation within urban planning. While it would be easy to see this as a ‘continuity’ of ritual practice linking the pre-Christian past or a post-Christian/secular present, there are other ways of reading this evidence that take into account both social memories and ritual practices over the long term. I refer here not to an evolving ‘tradition’ or a series of unrelated events and processes, but to staged and ritualized processes of engagement with these locales, involving very different processes of remembering and forgetting: mnemonic palimpsests (cf. Holtorf and Williams 2006). In such a framework, incorporating Lash’s (2018) approach to taskscapes for understanding ritual practice, Jönsas might have already experienced multiple mnemonic disjunctures and re-engagements before it was ‘slowly forgotten’ after the Early Iron Age. This interleaving of remembering and forgetting certainly seems to apply to the 20th- and 21st-century story of the site’s excavation and significance in contemporary society. Meanwhile Taatsi and Taatsinkirkko’s offerings need not constitute the persistence of a singular tradition by a specific group, but perhaps competing and interleaving rituals performed with various motivations in relation to a sacred soundscape and the visual opposition between offerings and the Taatsinkirkko cliff. A specific analogy can be found in the reactivation of early medieval *leachta* in 19th-century *turas* rituals on Inishark of the western coast of Ireland (Lash 2018). Specifically, the associations of these ritual sites with watery and coastal locations might be considered part of a broader present-day revitalization of interest in wells, springs, streams, and rivers (particularly bridges and fords) connecting multiple faith groups and traditions including Pagan and Christian pilgrims, as well as secular visitors and tourists (e.g. Houlbrook 2017).

Returning to Moilanen and Hiekkanen’s chapter reporting on excavations of the Renko church, one aspect that needed further consideration concerns the specific *biography* of churches and other sacred architectures. Notable is the tenacity of burial after the place of worship had fallen out of use in the mid-17th century because of structural issues and the building had been robbed by locals until 1783 when the stone church was rebuilt. The fact that the church remained a prestigious – expensive and respected – location for burial by wealthier families shows the mnemonic power of sacred architecture to operate as ‘timemarks’ even as a ruin (Ingold 1993; see also Holtorf and Williams 2006). This prompts me to remark on the need for studies of death, burial, and commemoration to pay closer attention to the installation and citations between graves, funerary monuments, and church architecture (see Williams 2017), as well as other furnishings and fittings with potential memorial dimensions, from windows and doors to flooring and pews.

Modarress also addresses a sacred building in exploring the biographical relationship between place and the Turkansaari chapel. This was a prayerhouse built in the mid-/late 17th century. The chapel was established in the centre of an island to serve salmon-fishing communities and traders east of Oulu, but it also acquired a distinctive afterlife of multiple translations and reuses. It was removed to serve a warehouse in the early 19th century, but in the 1920s it was acquired and transferred back to the island where it was rebuilt on its original spot, later becoming an outdoor museum. Modarress reviews the finds from archaeological excavations before considering the broader pattern of chapel

construction as more than providing convenient places of worship but part of the infrastructure of the Lutheran church institutionalizing the faith in the Finnish landscape. There is potential for taking this approach further by considering how the architecture reflected the strength, status, and self-esteem of communities, but also in considering how the island chapel had not only a practical significance in relation to the communities served, but a link to sacred geography. One dimension of this observed by Modarress is the association with burial islands known from elsewhere and used for temporary and (at least sometimes) permanent disposal of the dead for dispersed fishing and trading communities. There is considerable potential for also investigating the quotidian environments of these buildings, including associations with dwellings but also markets and other public gatherings, much akin to the recent flood of recent archaeological research looking at the socio-political and sacred geographies of medieval assembly places and practices (e.g. Murrieta-Flores and Williams 2017). Specifically, the sensorial environments, including viewsheds and soundscapes, of chapels might be profitably investigated. Likewise, their comparative biographies from building to abandonment and (in this case at least) reuse might help to situate the Turkansaari chapel in the context of shifting ritual uses through time.

We next move to non-sacred architecture. The fascinating documentary archaeology of Hemminki explores literal and pictorial representations of the Devil and devilish caricatures in discourses relating to metalworking, masculinity, and architectures before and during the industrial revolution in Finland. As well as reviewing the dangerous and magical qualities perceived for metalworking in pre-industrial societies, which has importance for understanding relationships between fiery technologies, including those with overt ritualized dimensions, Hemminki takes the discussion forward to evaluate the factory as demonic hellscape and the portrayal of both mill owners, scabs, and strikers, in opposing narratives, as in league with the Devil.

There is considerable potential for extending this approach to evaluating the perceived fickle, both benevolent and hazardous, agencies of factories and their environs, particularly their machinery, when in operation and thereafter. The personification of industrial landscapes through naming practices, from steam engines to mineshafts, might be regarded as a rich avenue of further investigation into how these spaces were perceived as in some ways 'animated' with spiritual forces. Furthermore, are abandonment and ruined post-industrial landscapes also perceived as inhabited by material agencies?

If factories might be perceived as 'haunted' by ghosts of former devilry, we next turn to the German POW camp of Kankiniemi by Herva and Seitsonen. Again, the dead are part of this landscape, with exhumations for reburial taking place in the 1950s. This reveals that all archaeologies of entangled beliefs and rituals have emotive qualities and how archaeologists working with local communities must be sensitive to the sense of places haunted by bad memories, if not actually by ghosts.

## 12.4. Archaeologists doing ritual

This leads us to our third theme: a crucial dimension of the book is how the chapters tackle not only how archaeologists interpret the traces of past ritual practices and the material evidence of entangled and hybridizing belief systems but also how archaeologists are themselves 'ritual practitioners' in various ways. This has serious ethical considerations regarding how our field practice and heritage interpretations are implicated in contemporary communities, politics, and popular culture linked to the ritual practices conducted at specific sites, sacred buildings, monuments, and landscapes.

This is pertinent to field archaeologists digging up and reporting on church burials. Notably, Moilanen and Hiekkanen report on the ethics of uncovering, recording without exhumation, and then covering over the graves. This reflected both limitations in storage and also a strong feeling from the parish that the remains should not be moved. However, the right clavicle of each grave was removed and stored in the archaeological collections of the Finnish Heritage Agency for future study. Archaeol-



ogists here are mediators of mortality in ethical and sociological terms (cf. Giles and Williams 2016).

Likewise, the biographies of ritual sites are discovered and transformed through archaeological interventions. For the Jönsas cemetery and Taatsi offering site, Äikäs and Ahola reveal the potential influence of archaeological work upon contemporary perceptions: can we always be objective bystanders when our work is physically and conceptually altering how visitors understand and experience these environments? The same question most certainly applies to archaeological work at Neolithic monuments in the UK, as recently exemplified by public archaeological investigations at Bryn Celli Ddu, Anglesey, Wales (Hijazi et al. 2019) and the Cochno Stone rock art site, West Dunbartonshire, Scotland (Brophy and Sackett 2019).

Regarding investigation of pet cemeteries, Ikäheimo hints at the potential role of extending the long tradition of community projects involving graveyard survey to these environments of animal commemoration. This rightly recognizes the long tradition of volunteer involvement in graveyard survey as a positive and versatile mechanism of community engagement (Mytum 2004). Similarly, latent in Hukantaival's study is the potential for museum collections to inform and enrich public understandings of pre-modern perceptions of material agency.

A further instance of archaeologists' ethical practice is their role in working with volunteers and negotiating their emotive and spiritual entanglement with material culture, as addressed via investigating 'haunted' abandoned POW camps by Herva and Seitsonen. Their case study sheds light on how archaeological projects often mediate uncomfortable dark memories for local communities, but is archaeology unleashing or helping to exorcize past horrors?

These studies together reflect on how and when archaeologists should themselves serve as death-dealers and ritual specialists, mediating community engagements with dying, death, and the dead (see Williams and Williams 2007; Sayer 2010; Brown 2016; Giles and Williams 2016; Sayer and Sayer 2016; Büster et al. 2018; Goldstein 2018). As well as through our formal reports, there is considerable potential for thinking further about how we might profitably use dialogues with folklore and fiction to promulgate our theories, methods, and techniques within public archaeology projects. At present, there is a hardening of the boundaries between archaeology and faith groups, with a particular tendency to regard all spiritualities and stories not grounded in rational scientific understandings of the past as 'fake news' (cf. Gazin-Schwartz 2011). Certainly archaeologists must work hard to denounce and distance themselves from racist and white supremacist fantasies about the past, as well as all manner of interconnected pseudoarchaeologies (e.g. Anderson 2019). Yet equally, this need not involve a retrenchment away from working with local indigenous communities and stakeholders to fashion new insights into ritual and religion past and present. In doing so, however, we should question whether we should be content with conducting and writing anodyne parables that cause little or no offence and respect local sensitivities? Alternatively, should our responsibilities as archaeologists extend to uncovering and touching upon troubled pasts and disturbing narratives in our narratives for diverse publics?

## 12.5. Conclusion

Together, the chapters in this stimulating and successful edited collection explore the long roots of contemporary ritual practices. The collection tackles changes and continuities, as well as the fluid borders between quotidian and ritual spheres. The book engages with how archaeologists work in the field, at museums or heritage sites, and through our publications, public outreach, and digital engagements as mediators in the ongoing entanglement of people with sacred places and ritual practices past and present.

There is striking potential here to inspire future research. There are also inevitable lacunae. From my perspective, there is an underlying tendency to still try to disentangle that which is fully entangled, including ‘Christian’ from ‘folklore’, people from place. Also, what I perceive as a limitation is the lack of integration with archaeological approaches into the rich mnemonic above-ground terrains of cemeteries and churchyards (see Tarlow 1999; Mytum 2004; Williams and Williams 2019). Furthermore, this is connected to a bias in the collection towards below-ground traces whilst above-ground funerary monuments and ritual traces receive less consideration. Richer investigations into the fabrics, furnishings, and fittings of sacred architectures, including memorials integrated into church doors, windows, walls, and floors, is surely an important trajectory for future work. More extended and critical reflection is also required regarding the roles archaeologists take in mediating between field investigations, museum collections, and storytelling. If these research topics are tackled alongside the rich strands of enquiry reflected in this book, archaeologists will be able to develop fresh and rich directions in the study of entangled rituals and beliefs.

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**Howard Williams** is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Chester and researches mortuary archaeology, archaeology and memory, the history of archaeology, and public archaeology. He founded and currently co-edits the *Offa's Dyke Journal* and regularly writes an academic blog: *Archaeodeath*.

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