



Detail of a burial excavation in the Roman catacomb of Sts Pierre-et-Marcellin in Rom (© D. Gliksmann / Inrap)

HYBRID WORKSHOP

HOW TO READ A GRAVE: FIFTY YEARS OF ARCHAEO THANATOLOGY

THE EMERGENCE OF A DISCIPLINE, CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Since the second half of the 20th century, under the particular influence of Leroi-Gourhan's work, archaeology has undergone a major scientific transformation by prioritizing the analysis of human remains within their depositional context. This new approach serves as a nexus between fieldwork and laboratory analysis and has gradually led to profound conceptual and methodological reconsiderations of burials as an archaeological source. This has led to the emergence of a new discipline combining biological, social and cultural aspects of death, initiated in France between 1970 and 1980 by Henri Duday, initially known as "field anthropology" and now called "Archaeo thanatology" or "The Archaeology of Death". This interdisciplinary field seeks to reconstruct the funerary customs carried out around the body of the deceased, as well as the organisation and arrangement of funerary spaces, in order to draw social conclusions and interpret mortuary behaviours. One of the fundamental procedures for understanding taphonomic processes (such as anomalies in the position of bones, constraints and displacements) is to observe the sequence of disarticulation of joints in the body.

This workshop, in which Henri Duday will also participate as keynote speaker, aims to review the circumstances of the emergence and development of Archaeo thanatology in recent decades in France and abroad. This event will examine the various methodological and conceptual aspects of Archaeo thanatology, as well as the new perspectives opened up by the development of new methods such as 3D recording.

A workshop within the framework of the Bioarchaeology Lab of the ÖAI coordinated by Andreas G. Heiss and Alfred Galik, organised by Caroline Partiot (ÖAI/ÖAW, Vienna) and Estella Weiss-Krejci (University of Heidelberg; ÖAI/ÖAW, Vienna).