

Call for Papers

Special Issue of *Mortality* on the topic of “The Materiality and Spatiality of Death, Burial and Commemoration”

Editors: Christoph K. Streb and Thomas Kolnberger

University of Luxembourg

Materiality is more than simple matter, void of meaning or relevance. It is charged with significance, has symbolic and interpretative value – perhaps a form of selfhood. The apparent inanimate has meaning, which originates from the interaction with the animate. Consciously and unconsciously, by interacting with materiality, one is creating meaning, while materiality retroactively provides a form of agency. Spatiality provides the context that permits and shapes such interaction. Thus, artefacts, mementos and memorials are exteriorised, materialised and spatialised 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, ideas and criteria of social distinction are reproduced, legitimised or transformed.

Death, dying and burial produce artefacts and occur in spatial contexts. The interplay between such materiality, spatiality and the bereaved who commemorate the dead yields interpretations and creates meanings that can change over time. In this special issue of the interdisciplinary journal *Mortality*, we 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. This call for papers originates from the *Transmortality International*:

Materiality and Spatiality of Death, Burial and Commemoration conference, held 2017 at the University of Luxembourg, organised by the R.I.P. research project.

We invite papers from all disciplines to reflect on the materiality and spatiality of death, burial and commemoration. We suggest the following – non-exhaustive – list of themes:

- The agency of materiality and spatiality
- Theoretical considerations regarding materiality and spatiality in sepulchral culture
- Innovative research methods in the field
- The application of digital humanities to sepulchral culture
- Ethics in the study of death, burial and commemoration
- Ideology and/or politics
- Regional and cultural contexts, including migration and transborder issues relating to sepulchral culture.

This special issue will be published in 2019. Potential contributors should send their full paper to christoph.streb@uni.lu by **17:00 CET on Fri, 2 February 2018**. The journal's style guidelines should be followed for all submissions: <http://bit.ly/2pdhEET>

All papers must be explicit in their consideration of issues of materiality and spatiality in death, burial or commemoration. International contributions are encouraged, as are submissions from authors at all stages of their careers. We welcome conversations and informal enquiries with prospective authors prior to submission. Please contact us via christoph.streb@uni.lu.

Submissions will be peer-reviewed and potential authors notified by Fri, 20 April 2018. Resubmissions of revised papers are expected by Fri, 31 August 2018 and final drafts must be ready for submission by Mon, 31 December 2018.