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Residential Burial in Global Perspective

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ABSTRACT

While the study and interpretation of mortuary practices have long been important parts of archaeological analyses, rarely has residential burial – the practice of burying the deceased in and around houses – been a specific focus of investigation. Here, we examine some of the global contexts in which residential burial has occurred and discuss the different ways that archaeologists have interpreted residential burial. Though practices vary in time, place, and context, the presence of burials in residential settings compels archaeologists to carefully consider the relationship between the living and the dead and to explore the importance of social memory, social reproduction, relations of power, mortuary ritual, and social landscapes. [burial, ancestors, social reproduction, memory, landscapes]

Archaeologists have long considered burials and burial location pivotal to the examination of prehistoric social practices. Since early work that considered burials as reflections of prehistoric social orders (e.g., Binford 1971; Renfrew 1973, 1976; Saxe 1970) and as important to the analyses of the social practices of the living (e.g., Flemming 1973), mortuary analyses in archaeology have expanded in scope to explore topics related to social reproduction, social memory, social cohesion, and landscapes (e.g., Kuijt 2001, 2008; Parker Pearson 1999; Van Dyke 2003). Many studies of prehistoric mortuary practices have put specific emphasis on issues concerning burial placement when considering the relevance of burials to the social and symbolic worlds of the living (e.g., Ashmore and Geller 2005; McAnany 1995). The presence of human remains within residential areas forces a particular consideration of the role of the deceased in the lives of the living. Here termed "residential burial," this practice is spatially and temporally widespread and can entail entirely different meanings than cases of burials placed in locations far away from living quarters. The close proximity of the living and dead in residential contexts prompts a reexamination of the relationships between prehistoric peoples and their deceased forebears and the impact burials had on social relations in residential contexts.

What has been lacking up to this point is a comprehensive discussion of this important and growing topic of archaeological and anthropological inquiry. A desire to advance the discussion of residential burial and bring the topic to the forefront of anthropological discussions of funerary practices prompted the creation of this volume. Most of the essays in this volume were first presented in a symposium on the same topic at the 2007 Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas. The primary goal of the symposium was to assemble a group of papers with a wide range of geographic and theoretical perspectives on the subject of residential burial. The chapters in this volume reflect this diversity. The themes discussed range from macro-level analyses looking at regional patterning and changes through time in burial practices to those examining the more localized meanings of residential burial in particular cases, ranging from Southeast Asia to Mesoamerica. Social memory, identity, power, and social reproduction

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are among the topics discussed in these chapters. Despite the diversity of contexts and perspectives represented, all of the chapters are united by a focus on the various realms of meaning associated with burials in domestic contexts. Collectively, the contributions address how the practice of residential burial entails particular forms of sociality and has diverse social implications, yet also show which facets of residential burial seem to be unique and particular to particular peoples at particular times.

The chapters in this volume address themes that build on a long line of mortuary studies in archaeology and anthropology. Mortuary analyses in the first half of the twentieth century were influenced by the work of Kroeber (1927), who argued that mortuary behavior had little to do with other aspects of social life and, thus, could not provide clues to the nature of past societies. This view continued to have a major influence on mortuary archaeology as late as the 1960s (Ucko 1969). The advent of the "New Archaeology" led to a paradigm shift in relation to mortuary archaeology. The works of Saxe (1970) and Binford (1971) took a systematic and cross-cultural approach to the study of burials that sought to link burial and mortuary treatment to the social position of the deceased and the degree of complexity within a society. Burials and mortuary ritual were thus viewed as material manifestations of prehistoric social orders. Many researchers (e.g., Chapman 1981; Goldstein 1980; Peebles and Kus 1977; Morris 1991) have revised and expanded the general principles of the "Saxe-Binford approach" and the paradigm continues to influence current analyses of mortuary practices.

The Saxe-Binford approach has also drawn substantial criticism. Most critics caution against the universal application of this perspective on the social importance of burial patterning. Many of these criticisms have been considered to represent the overall outlook of a post-processual approach and have called attention to the historically contingent, contextual variability associated with burial and mortuary behavior (Hodder 1982; Parker Pearson 1982). The backlash against the Saxe-Binford perspective has also criticized the embedded assumption that mortuary treatment embodies the deceased's social position in life. Instead of being a static reflection of the social role of the deceased, many have argued, mortuary remains can be the result of funerary traditions in which social distinctions are idealized or masked (Carr 1995; Chesson 1999; Hodder 1990, 1994; McGuire 1983; Metcalf and Huntington 1991; Morris 1987; Schiller 1997). Examining cycles of mortuary behavior in different societies, Cannon (1989) has also shown how social distinctions are not always linked to mortuary elaboration and how the expression of social distinction in mortuary practice can change over time. Still others have observed that mortuary treatment has just as much, if not more, to do with the living and those who are participating in the mortuary rituals as it does with the deceased individual (e.g., Gillespie 2001).

Indeed, the importance of the living context of mortuary behavior is an issue that has come to the forefront of archaeological mortuary analysis (Laneri 2007). Such discussions of mortuary ritual highlight funerary practices and have shown that death and mortuary ritual are not only concerned with mourning and reverence but also can be occasions for the enhancement of group solidarity, the advancement of power, and the expression of a "symbolic discourse on life" (Humphreys 1981:9; Raharijaona and Kus 2001:64). Archaeologists and anthropologists have begun to explore the dynamics of identity and solidarity associated with mortuary ritual and how the rituals can reaffirm contexts of meaning within social groups. In many cases, mortuary rituals have been shown to possess integrative mechanisms by highlighting real or perceived links between individuals and groups (Berreman 1981; Flanagan 1989; Flanagan and Rayner 1988; Gerlach and Gerlach 1988; Kuijt 2001; McKinnon 1991, 1995; Paynter 1989; Rayner 1988).

Archaeologists have also begun to address the importance of funerals as venues for sociopolitical action among the living (Morris 2007; Pollock 1999, 2007; Schwartz 2007). Pollock (1999:216–217) has argued that death can be a "contested realm" in which the living competed for control of the dead in the same way they competed for the control of resources and labor. In the context of the third millennium C.E. in Mesopotamia, Pollock (1999:217) asserts that differences in burial treatment reflected political and socioeconomic differentiation and were part of strategies in establishing relations of dependency. Many archaeologists have addressed such social issues in relation to funerary feasts in South American contexts as well (Gummerman 2004; Hastorf 2003; Lau 2002; Shimada et al. 2004:383, 386). Ethnographic studies in Southeast Asia, Africa, Polynesia, and northwestern North America have illustrated how funerary rituals can be events at which individuals and groups are able to promote their interests and success through hosting lavish feasts and establishing important relationships of sociopolitical support (Adams 2004; Bond 1987; Clarke 2001; Hayden 2009; Hayden and Villeneuve n.d.; Perodie 2001).

While many chapters in this volume deal with similar issues related to the living context of funerary traditions and attempt to connect burial patterning to social patterning, the emphasis here is not on cross-cultural generalizations in the sense of the Saxe-Binford perspective. Instead, a more recent trend in mortuary archaeology that considers the spatial and

social significance of burial placement influences the chapters of this volume. In particular, the overall discussion of this volume resonates well with previous works that have examined the placement of the dead and their relation to the living (e.g., Ashmore and Geller 2005; McAnany 1995; essays in Silverman and Small 2002). The in-depth look at residential burial from geographically diverse locales is what sets this volume apart. As is demonstrated in the following chapters, residential burial practices can take many forms, ranging from subfloor burials within houses to burials in front of or behind houses. The purpose of this volume is to explore the many ways in which residential burial and burial ritual are linked to the social and symbolic realms of the living. More specifically, it addresses how the placement of the dead in places so intimately connected to everyday life impacts the living and is reflective of an array of concerns for individuals and groups. This perspective on mortuary behavior is thus similar to previous discussions in which the dead and their treatment in burial have been viewed as the key to understanding past societies. The goal of this volume, however, is not to generate a grand theory that explains the phenomenon of residential burial in all cases, but rather to explore the complexities of the practice in a variety of contexts.

What Is Residential Burial?

As a topic currently lacking a major synthetic discussion, just what constitutes residential burial is a theme that is addressed throughout this volume (most intensively in the chapters by Gillespie and by Adams and Kusumawati). Residential burials can take on a variety of forms. Classic examples include the Great House burial rooms in pueblos of the U.S. Southwest (Akins 2003; Van Dyke 2004) and the subfloor burials of the ancient Near East (Kenyon 1981; Rollefson 1983, 1986). In past analyses of residential burial, "residential burial" or "intramural burial" has often been used to denote subfloor or other types of burials within residential structures, such as those within structure walls (e.g., Düring 2005; Kuijt 2000, 2008; Laneri 1999; Lull 2000). Burials designated as "residential" in this volume do not always adhere to the strict classification of burials that occur within the walls of a residential building. In this volume, burials within houses as well as burials in outdoor living areas, where everyday domestic activities occur and where a clear spatial relationship between the living area and the domestic structure exists, are considered residential. Although the issue has not been discussed comprehensively in the past, others have alluded to a similar designation of residential or intramural burial for interments located within domestic contexts, but outside of residential structures (e.g., Schwartz 2007). These kinds of burials can include tombs in the center of settlements (Schwartz 2007), graves in front of and beside houses (in this volume, Adams and Kusumawati, chapter 2; Sullivan and Rodning, chapter 6; White and Eyre, chapter 5), burials in platform mounds (Gillespie, chapter 7, this volume), and burials in patios (Gillespie, chapter 7, this volume). These residential contexts are clearly distinguishable from cemeteries and other types of burials, such as long barrows and other types of megalithic burials of the European Neolithic, that are spatially set apart from a domestic setting and therefore clearly represent "extramural burials." Chapters by Adams and Kusumawati, Gillespie, Sullivan and Rodning, and White and Eyre all deal with burials that are not necessarily found within residential structures but are nonetheless residential in their association with domestic structures and the meanings they convey.

Gillespie's (chapter 7, this volume) examination of burials both within and immediately adjacent to residential structures in Formative period Chalcatzingo, Mexico, provides an important discussion of the differences and similarities between within-house and other types of "residential" burial. Gillespie reworks her own earlier analysis of residential burial at Chalcatzingo from a synchronic perspective of shared practices and interrogates the ways in which residential burial is sequential, repeated, and changed through time. In examining the pattern of mortuary behavior at Chalcatzingo, Gillespie concludes that subfloor burial was not the only "normative" burial pattern in the area. Burials in patios and platform mounds outside of houses were also within the spatial domains of social houses and these more "public" burials were found to have many similarities with and to reference the same "citational network" as subfloor burials, challenging the notion that burials within residential structures represent the only burial practice that should be considered residential. Gillespie shows how both the burials within residential structures and those outside the structures were important for social reproduction and memory and how employing a practice-oriented approach focusing on the vertical connections between successive interments over time as well as the horizontal connections between interments across spatial scales can be useful heuristic tools in mortuary analysis.

Connecting the Living and the Dead

A major framework for the chapters in this volume is that the living and the dead are linked to one another through residential burial. Archaeologists have traditionally viewed

the living and the dead in opposition to one another, entailing separate interpretations. Such a perspective is enhanced by the placement of the dead in cemeteries, away from the domestic contexts of the living. On the contrary, chapters in this volume view living societies in terms of their connection to deceased forebears in line with a paradigm that has been referred to as an "ancestral-descendant" perspective to mortuary analysis (Rakita and Buikstra 2005:8). According to this perspective, the social, material, and symbolic worlds of the living are shaped by their connection to and interaction with ancestors. Such a connection can be expressed through inherited claims to property and other material wealth (Ashmore and Geller 2005:84; Gillespie 2002; McAnany 1995). In this way, the spatial locale of burials creates a "genealogy of place that links descendants to that land" (McAnany 1995:65).

In many cases, the connections between the living and the dead can be extended to indicate an actual presence of the dead within the lives of the living. This perspective views the deceased as active agents in the lives of the living. In the context of Anglo-Saxon burial practices, Williams (2004:264) has argued that the dead can affect the actions and thoughts of the living. Ethnographically, beliefs that ancestors are essential to the well-being of the living are widespread (Raharijaona and Kus 2001:58). In some societies, this connection can be manifested in beliefs that the dead could haunt or cause misfortune to the living if certain rituals were not performed, as was the belief in Mesopotamia and second-millennium Syria (Lewis 1989:31). Similar beliefs are prevalent among groups in eastern Indonesia. In West Sumba, Indonesia, Kuipers (1990) has noted that performing large feasts is considered to be, in part, an obligation to ancestors to continue long-standing practices. Hardships are believed to result when such obligations are not fulfilled. By the same token, performance of certain rituals and proper care of the deceased can be considered beneficial for individuals and groups (Lewis 1989:31; Richardson 1999–2001:194). Thus, the real or perceived "agency" of the deceased can be viewed as altering or steering the behavior of the living.

Living groups' connections to deceased ancestors have also been examined in terms of the importance burial traditions and associated funerary practices have in creating an identity and social memory for individuals and groups (Chesson 2001; Hodder and Cessford 2004; Kuijt 2000, 2008). This perspective has been heavily influenced by the work of Connerton (1989) and moves beyond the material importance of rights and inheritance to address issues of social cohesion and reproduction. Connections to the past and to past ancestors exemplified in such things as burials, landscape, and architecture are what bring the discussion of social memory into archaeology (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003). Such material manifestations of collective memory are what Connerton (1989:75–79) referred to as "inscribed" memories. Situated within the space of everyday domestic activities, residential burials can serve as important mnemonic devices for collective and individual memories.

Rituals associated with the dead and the material remains they leave behind are aspects of commemoration that also become part of the archaeological record. In this sense, as ancient practices, the rituals associated with the deceased invoke the memory of past ancestors through their continued practice. This type of commemoration in relation to ritual practice was outlined by Connerton (1989:44–45) in his comprehensive discussion of social memory and is discussed in relation to the continuation of ancient mortuary practices in the context of eastern Indonesia in this volume (see Adams and Kusumawati, chapter 2). Archaeologically, the remnants of this kind of behavior can range from ceramic pot fragments and food refuse found in front of tombs of the European Neolithic (Hayden 2003:232, 233; Sherratt 1991:56) to large *menhir* stones traditionally erected on the occasion of large funerals in the Torajan highlands of eastern Indonesia (Crystal 1974).

In contemporary North America, the issues associated with NAGPRA further illustrate the continued importance of ancestors and social memory to descendant communities. Aside from the complexities, difficulties, and conflicts that have arisen and are perhaps best illustrated in the controversy surrounding the handling of the remains of Kennewick man (Watkins 2004), the NAGPRA legislation underscores the continued importance of the deceased in the lives of the living. NAGPRA has forced a reconsideration of the dead in the United States by addressing the obligations the living have to the deceased and their descendant communities (Colquhoun 2000). By facilitating the repatriation and reburial of Native American human remains, NAGPRA is a contemporary example of the importance of social memory for the collective meanings and identities of groups. The respectful reburial of archaeological skeletal remains in contemporary North America has not been limited to Native American communities. Although not an example of residential burial, the African Burial Ground investigations and reburial in New York resulted in the reclaiming of a nearly lost aspect of African American history with the potential to enhance the collective social memory and identity of the descendant communities involved (Perry et al. 2006). Importantly, not all descendant communities approve of mortuary analyses involving their deceased ancestors, an issue the authors in this volume are mindful of when approaching and presenting mortuary data.

Residential burials in archaeological contexts, particularly those under house floors, have been considered to give clear indications of the importance of social memory and identity in a variety of contexts (e.g., Hodder and Cessford 2004; Joyce 1999; Kuijt 2001, 2008). The placement of burials in residential contexts can provide the living with a direct, ongoing connection to ancestors and a constant reminder of their place in what can be a long line of descendants originating from the founding ancestor of a household or larger group. Several chapters in this volume explore such issues related to social memory and how it is manifested in residential burial practices (particularly Adams and Kusumawati, chapter 2, and King, chapter 4). In prehistoric coastal Oaxaca, Mexico, King (chapter 4, this volume) explores the role of residential burial in the construction of social memory during the Early Postclassic period (C.E. 975–1220) and presents a case in which she argues that residential subfloor burials both reinforced the collective identity of social groups and memorialized individual ancestors. From an ethnoarchaeological perspective, Adams and Kusumawati (chapter 2, this volume) illustrate how the memorial aspects of residential burial can be entwined with practical sociopolitical concerns of individuals and groups in the context of the megalithic residential burial tradition in West Sumba, Indonesia.

Other forms of monumental burial, although not residential, also exemplify the link between the living and deceased forebears. Large Mississippian burial mounds of the U.S. Southeast considered to contain the remains of powerful lineages are a cornerstone for North American interpretations of chiefdom societies as markers of the location of dominant settlements and symbols of their power (Beck 2003; Blitz 1993, 1999; Steponaitis 1978, 1991). Similarly, many archaeologists over the years have interpreted megalithic tombs in western Europe to be particularly symbolic of descent groups (Powell 2005; Sjögren 1986) and markers of territories or resources (Chapman 1981, 1995; Lidén 1995; Madsen 1982; Renfrew 1976). Whittle et al. (2007) examined long barrow and long cairn burials of southern Britain in the fourth millennium B.C.E. considering both their commemorative significance in connecting the living with deceased ancestors and the specific meanings that monument form may have had in referencing a deeper past when long houses were first constructed. This connection is also addressed by Hodder (1984, 1990). Adams and Kusumawati (chapter 2, this volume) present a case in which residential burials in West Sumba, Indonesia, reach monumental proportions and elucidate the similarities in the social meanings conveyed between these more elaborate forms of residential burial and simpler forms of residential burial, such as subfloor interments.

Continuity and Integration of Social Groups

As an extension to social memory, burial and mortuary practice can foster the integration of individuals and related households that form social groups and the continuity of these groups through time. Geertz (1980:32) has argued that one of the important ways in which relations of kin are expressed is through "rights and obligations" associated with mortuary practices. Archaeologically, intramural burial placement has been interpreted as a defining characteristic of practices linked to rights of inheritance and membership in social groups (Gillespie 2002; McAnany 1995). Kuijt (2001) considered subfloor burial practices and patterns of architectural renovation, which included design standardization, as exemplifying the social continuity and integration of communities in an analysis of southern Levantine Pre-Pottery Neolithic mortuary practices. In reference to this mortuary tradition, Kuijt noted that "architecture was continually linked to mortuary practices through the placement of burials inside of residential structures, highlighting elements of continuity and standardization in the design of residential and nonresidential structures over multiple generations, and anchoring the architecture to the social landscape as a geographical focus of ritual action" (Kuijt 2001:93).

Hodder and Cessford (2004) examined residential burial within a larger discussion of daily practices, social memory, and the generation of a *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977) at Çatalhöyük. Drawing upon Connerton's (1989) theories concerning social memory, Hodder and Cessford (2004) suggested that the presence of subfloor burials and repetitive practices that referenced the past, such as the standardized rebuilding of houses over time, contributed to the generation of social memory. According to Hodder and Cessford (2004), subfloor burials at particular houses, repetitive practices concerned with social memory, and standardized rebuilding of houses through time are suggestive of the presence of house societies (Lévi-Strauss 1983). As such, each symbolically elaborated residential structure at Çatalhöyük was linked to a particular social group whose connections to others were created and strengthened through shared practices in architectural spaces. The link between residential burial and house societies at Çatalhöyük was further discussed by Düring (2007), who argued that the high concentrations of subfloor burials in the more elaborate houses at Çatalhöyük were indicative of the presence of structures that served as the focal ritual locales of house society groups.

Beyond Çatalhöyük, the house society model has been widely applied in analyses of prehistoric social organization (see Beck 2007; Joyce and Gillespie 2000). The house society, as an analytical category for classifying social

structures, was developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss developed the category of house society as an alternative to more traditional categories of social groups, such as lineages and clans. In simple terms, house societies are social groups associated with "an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth" that is perpetuated by the "transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line" (Lévi-Strauss 1982:151). Unlike lineages and clans, house societies do not necessarily follow strict rules of descent and inheritance. Instead, a house society can have more flexible membership rules and entail both exogamy and endogamy as well as variability in postmarital residence (Gillespie 2000a:7; Helms 1998:15). Importantly, members are linked to a specific named house or physical architectural space that defines their relationship not only with others in their group but with other house society groups as well (Beck 2007:7).

The utility of the house society concept in archaeology derives, in part, from its emphasis on material culture (e.g., residential architecture, property and material goods, and burial) and repeated practices, both of which are evident in archaeological contexts. The model allows for flexibility in the composition of social groups, since house members need not be defined through kinship alone. Most importantly, the house society model explicitly connects material practices to forms of social organization. Residential burial is thus a common way that ideas about house origins, collective memory, and the temporal and spatial continuity of the house are communicated. Gillespie's (2000b, 2000c) examination of prehistoric house societies among the Maya illustrates how residential burial and associated rituals can enhance the connections between the living and the dead and integrate individuals tied to houses and house compounds. Borić (2007) suggested that residential burial served to shape collective identity and spatial continuity of house societies in the Mesolithic and early Neolithic of the Upper Gorge of the Danube (Borić and Stefanović 2004). In the U.S. Southwest, Heitman (2007) explored the applicability of the house society model to Pueblo Bonito by examining various architectural elements, such as the cyclical replastering of kiva murals and episodes of reflooring in the Great House, and burials housed in the oldest portion of the pueblo. Heitman suggested that these practices fostered an anchoring of place, ancestor reverence, and a concern for the collective memory of the pueblo. In a reinterpretation of large burials in Mississippian Etowah Mound C in Alabama, Brown (2007) used the house society model as a heuristic tool to show how the burial evidence points to the presence of multiple rival decent groups at the society's top level as opposed to the traditional interpretation that there was a single paramount chiefly lineage.

The majority of contributors in this volume expand the discussion of residential burial within house societies (see Adams and Kusumawati, chapter 2; Gillespie, chapter 7; Joyce, chapter 3; King, chapter 4; Sullivan and Rodning, chapter 6). King (chapter 4) puts particular emphasis on house society dynamics and their relation to residential burial in her discussion of the role of residential burial in the construction of social "house" histories during the Early Postclassic (C.E. 975–1220) of Oaxaca. King argues that subfloor burials reinforced a collective identity and memory of house-based groups. Among these burials is variability in treatment of the deceased, whereby only adults were buried beneath house floors. The lack of children in subfloor burials, according to King, is indicative of a scenario in which full-fledged membership in certain houses was potentially age-dependent and only adults were able to serve as house ancestors and have access to rights and property of the house. The standardization associated with subfloor burials in terms of both placement and grave goods is also highly suggestive of a concern for maintaining the collective identity of houses, while individual ancestors were celebrated by giving them exclusive burial locations undisturbed by later interments. King argues that in this way residential burial commemorated specific and generalized ancestors at the same time and marked the house as the appropriate medium for individual and collective social practice.

Landscapes and Mortuary Practice

Apart from the obvious connection between the living and the dead manifested in residential burial, the practice is unique in terms of the cultural landscape that it creates. Analyses of prehistoric landscapes in relation to burial have for many years aided the development of theories related to the dynamics of complex Mississippian societies of the U.S. Southeast (Brown et al. 1978; Scarry 1996; Steponaitis 1978, 1991) and Neolithic Europe (Chapman 1981, 1995; Madsen 1982; Renfrew 1976). Regional analyses of broad patterns of sociopolitical development have continued to shape many archaeological studies of landscape (e.g., Martindale and Supernant 2009; Mizoguchi 2009; Munson and Macri 2009; Peterson and Drennan 2005; see also Rodning 2010). Archaeological studies utilizing a landscape approach have also begun to emphasize the way in which prehistoric people experienced and shaped their surroundings from a more symbolic perspective (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Rodning 2010; Thomas 1999; Van Dyke 2003). This approach to cultural landscapes has highlighted the many ways that values, beliefs, and social entanglements

can shape the way in which people perceive landscape (Bender 1998; Bender et al. 1997; Fowles 2009; Thomas 1999; Wesson 1998). In relation to the placement of the dead, such methods of analysis have led to a focus on the importance of the connections between the past and the present in terms of social reproduction as well as the materialization of kinship rights to property (Buikstra and Charles 1999; Parker Pearson 1999:124; Philip 2003:119, 122). A landscape approach to burial patterning has also been shown to illuminate the gender roles within prehistoric societies (Rodning 2001; Sullivan 2001). In some contexts, burials have been interpreted as creating a landscape of the dead symbolically distinct from the landscape of the living (Parker Pearson and Ramilisonina 1998). Residential burial connects the domains of the living and the dead in a unique landscape that forces archaeologists to consider the entanglements of the living and their deceased forebears.

The volume authors set out to make sense of this unique landscape and thereby expand the discussion of residential burial by looking at residential mortuary practices in geographically dispersed locales, while exploring new theoretical perspectives and broadening the scope of existing interpretations. Above all, the authors in this volume expose the varying reasons for and implications of residential burial in diverse settings and connect these practices to distinct historically specific traditions and changing sociopolitical structures in everyday social landscapes. Sullivan and Rodning (chapter 6, this volume) offer a specific examination of burial in relation to the larger cultural landscape in the context of the southern Appalachian region of North America during the mid-second millennium C.E. During this time, male burials tended to be situated in the public settings of platform mounds, while burials of women were more commonly placed within residences. Sullivan and Rodning demonstrate how this pattern of burial placement is indicative of women's leadership roles within house-based clan structures and men's roles as warriors and brokers of intercommunity relations and trade, while challenging the traditional view that only male roles were associated with social dominance and power in this context.

Likewise, White and Eyre (chapter 5, this volume) take a renewed look at the spatial patterning of burials in Metal Age Thailand (ca. 2000 B.C.E. to C.E. 500) and challenge previously held notions of burial and social structure. Contrary to traditional archaeological interpretations of Metal Age Thailand that have been grounded in the notion that the dead were buried in cemeteries, White and Eyre present evidence indicating that residential burial was also a common practice during this time. According to White and Eyre, this evidence forces not only a reinterpretation of Metal Age burial practices, but also a reevaluation of the social dynamics that are thought to have been in place during the Metal Age. White and Eyre argue for the existence of a social order characterized by heterarchy and group-oriented, corporate political dynamics that contrasts with the traditional view of the Metal Age as a time of hierarchical forms of sociopolitical organization in Thailand.

Diachronic Considerations

It has become an old adage that one of the benefits of archaeology as a subfield of anthropology is in its potential to analyze societal change over long periods of time. This diachronic orientation is at the heart of the field and is reflected in the organization of innumerable textbooks and works dealing with regional overviews. Archaeologists have frequently looked to burial in the analysis of macro-level changes in prehistoric societal organization, such as the emergence of particularly elaborate monumental burial practices as an indication of the emergence of new social orders (e.g., Bradley 1998; Hodder 1990; Mizoguchi 2002; Nelson 1999; Sherratt 1990, 1995; Steponaitis 1978). In residential burial contexts, significant changes in social structures have also been considered to accompany a shift in burial practices. For instance, the Argaric period (2250/200–1500 cal B.C.E) in southeastern Spain is marked by a shift from nonresidential, monumental communal burials of the earlier Copper Age to burials beneath the floors and within the walls of individual houses. This change in funerary customs is considered to have accompanied a change from a society in which social identity and power were associated with competing lineage groups to a more hierarchical society in which power was consolidated in a politically and economically dominant elite class, reflected in clear indications of wealth disparities between houses, and identity was based on membership in nuclear families (Chapman 1990, 2005, 2007; Lull 2000).

In this volume, essays by Joyce (chapter 3) and Laneri (chapter 8) also examine the emergence of residential forms of burial from other, earlier types of burial. Joyce explores the origins of residential burial in prehispanic Honduras. According to Joyce, the importance of residential burial in shaping identities and naturalizing claims to differential social status does not necessarily implicate these factors as being present in the minds of those who made the conscious decision to inter the deceased within their residences. To more closely examine the origins of residential burial, Joyce offers a long-term historical perspective on funerary practices

at the site of Puerto Escondido in Honduras, where there is evidence for occupation extending from before 1600 B.C.E. to after C.E. 450. She shows that pre-residential burial practices at Puerto Escondido contain similar elements to those that were present when residential burial was adopted, including incorporation, disjunction, and commemoration. Incorporation refers to activities such as the caching of body ornamentation beneath house floors, which brings materials into constructed spaces. Disjunction refers to the separation of items from their surroundings and their placement in different locations (e.g., the placement of body ornaments in subfloor caches). Activities associated with commemoration are those that are consciously undertaken to evoke memories, such as rebuilding structures in the same locations. The long-term acceptance of practices of incorporation, disjunction, and commemoration at Puerto Escondido, according to Joyce, allowed for the ease with which these practices became associated with and incorporated into residential burial.

Nicola Laneri takes the discussion of residential burial to Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C.E. with data from the site of Titriş Höyük in southeastern Turkey. It is during this time that very significant changes occurred in the socioeconomic landscape of the region that coincided with a shift from funerary customs associated with extramural cemeteries and mausolea to intramural tombs within private dwellings, palaces, and temples. According to Laneri, this change in burial practices was vital to the power consolidation of emerging elites during the mid-late third and early second millennia B.C.E. of Mesopotamia. Laneri offers a sociohistorical perspective on the subject and references the broader patterns throughout the region in which funerary practices and economic subsistence are viewed as being the result of long-term transformations in production and consumption.

Dealing with much smaller time scales, Adams and Kusumawati (chapter 2, this volume) explore the nuanced changes in the meanings that burials have over time to living people in their ethnoarchaeological study of residential tombs in West Sumba, Indonesia. Employing a biographical perspective, Adams and Kusumawati reveal a complexity attached to the emblemic significance of residential tombs that can undergo shifts in meaning from the time the tombs are erected to the time when they become long-lasting monuments, depending on the perspective of the agents involved in their creation. While initially tombs are primarily symbols of the power of individuals and clan groups, the monuments' significance in terms of the social memory of clan groups grows through time as they become not only symbols of power but also testimonials to prominent ancestors and the long-term continuity of groups.

Volume Organization and Goals

Within this overall framework of exploring the links between the living and the dead in residential burial, the chapters of this volume cover a great deal of contextual and theoretical variability. The goal of the volume is to advance the discussion of residential burial and give it deserved consideration as a central topic in current discussions of mortuary archaeology and anthropology. The case studies open with a discussion of the living residential burial tradition in West Sumba, Indonesia (Adams and Kusumawati, chapter 2), followed by an analysis of the origins of residential burial practices in prehispanic Honduras (Joyce, chapter 3). From these chapters dealing with the persistence of the practice in one context and its origin in another, the discussions shift to prehistoric settings in Postclassic Oaxaca, Mexico (King, chapter 4), Metal Age Thailand (White and Eyre, chapter 5), late prehistoric and early Cherokee cultures of the Southern Appalachians (Sullivan and Rodning, chapter 6), Formative period Chalcatzingo, Mexico (Gillespie, chapter 7), and ancient Mesopotamia (Laneri, chapter 8). Patricia McAnany (chapter 9) concludes the volume with a discussion of theoretical approaches to residential burial and the different kinds of residential burial presented in this volume. McAnany summarizes the themes that are addressed in this volume that cross-cut the variations in residential burial in case studies from across the globe and through time. She also provides a commentary on the successes and failures of these approaches, and helps to evaluate the contribution of this volume within mortuary archaeology.

In spite of the diversity of regions, years, and perspectives represented by the volume authors, all have a common belief that residential burial practices offer unique insights into how people in the past and in the contemporary world perceived and continue to perceive their relationships with their deceased ancestors and with one another. The authors are also united by the belief that a synthesis of the subject of residential burial is overdue and particularly relevant to many of the current discussions within archaeology and anthropology. It is hoped that this volume will inspire new ideas and further research into this important topic.

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