

ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT EISENZEIT

beim

WEST- UND SÜDDEUTSCHEN VERBAND FÜR ALTERTUMSFORSCHUNG E.V.

Call for Papers

Dear colleagues, we are pleased to invite you to the

Annual conference of the Iron Age Study Group, November 12th–14th 2015 at Hallein (Austria).

We ask for contributions to the following topic:

Worlds of Transition – Rites of Death New Approaches to Burial Customs of the European Iron Age

Please send your proposals for a contribution to the conference, including a short summary (maximum 2000 characters including blanks) to the chairman of the Iron Age Study Group (see contact details) by

April 30th 2015.

Please use the attached form for submitting your proposals via e-mail.

From the beginning of systematic prehistoric archaeology, burials have been the epitome of a 'closed find', i.e. a simultaneous composition and deposition of objects. Thus, when considering periods of use and discard, burials serve as a basic means of seriation and allow for the establishment of relative sequences of fatal events and material culture.

Apart from chronological reference, burials convey important information on buried individuals and their social context. Although the simplistic perception of graves mirroring life has been critically challenged and reconsidered, funeral archaeology still significantly contributes to the reconstruction of social structures of Iron Age communities. However, it is widely accepted that grave goods do not unanimously indicate individual status but do rather represent tangible intentions of the community burying the deceased. The selection of grave furniture, the choice of burial rites as well as the form and size of the grave are subject to a variety of factors that both disguise or emphasise social hierarchies and provide external separation. Thus, burials and grave goods are among the most important means of creating communal identity and ideologies.

Apart from social studies in funerary archaeology, the apparent ideological dimension of burials fostered research on funeral symbolism. Hallstatt and La Tène burial customs increasingly show processes of transformation altering the dead body, the grave furniture and the architecture of burial sites. The interment, i.e. the burial in the strict sense, probably was only one part of a ceremonial process that started much earlier and might have continued for a considerable time involving ancestral worship and memorial ceremonies. The perception of burials as ritual action and as a peculiar sort of 'rites de passage' is not entirely

new. The transgression from life to death and the transition into an otherworldly sphere can be defined as a liminal phase. This period might have been staged deliberately by the descendants and might also have involved subtle ceremonies that seem rather unimportant when compared to obvious rituals like cremation or the construction of grave chambers and barrows. The aim of the conference is to identify and discuss those seemingly marginal rituals such as the textile wrapping of grave goods in Hallstatt and Early La Tène burials. This custom most certainly had a very distinct and well defined position and meaning in the funeral process. The same is true for the natural or anthropogenic excarnation of the dead body, its mummification, any destruction or subsequent removal of grave goods, traces of ancestral worship, the deposition of secondary burials or structural modifications of the grave.

The identification of **funeral processes and burial customs** and the interpretation of their symbolic actions and meaning that might be visible in the archaeological record offer a substantial field of research on Iron Age 'worlds of transition', ideas of afterlife and religion, hardly exploited so far.

Contributions to all aspects of Iron Age burial rituals and funeral transitional ceremonies are welcome at the 2015 annual conference of the Iron Age Study Group. A focus is put on the variety, dynamics and sequence of ritual action which left traces in the archaeological, anthropological or historical record of the Hallstatt and La Tène periods. The interpretation of the sources aims at a descriptive reconstruction of burial customs and at an understanding of the ideological background of those rituals. Both methodological approaches to funeral archaeology and archaeological case studies may be presented.

In addition, the session is an opportunity to present **results of recent research on the European Iron Age**. Proposals on different topics are equally welcome.

Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes. Media for presentation (projector & laptop) are provided. If the number of contributions exceeds the time available, a selection will be made by the study group board. Colloquium languages will be German, English, and French.

Scientific poster presentations are invited, too. Please do only propose posters on Iron Age studies. These do not necessarily have to deal with the topic of the session. If the number of contributions exceeds the space available, a selection will be made, too. **Deadline for poster proposal is August 30th 2015.**

If you wish to contribute a presentation or poster please fill in the attached form completely and insert a short summary of your presentation or poster (maximum 2000 characters including blanks) into the text field (note that longer entries are not possible!).

For general conference registration (speakers & other participants) please use the conference registration form **which will be sent out separately**. There will be an obligatory conference fee for all participants. You will receive more information on the conference (accommodation, presentation venues, travelling details, excursions, fees etc.) together with the general conference announcement and the registration form.

Yours sincerely,

Holger Wendling

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Melanie Augstein (Leipzig), Janine Fries-Knoblach (Erlangen), Katrin Ludwig (Bonn), Peter C. Ramsel (Wien), Claudia Tappert (Münster), Peter Trebsche (Asparn an der Zaya), Stefanie Wefers (Mainz), Julian Wiethold (Metz)

E-Mail: AGEisenzeit@yahoo.de

Proposal of presentation / poster

at the

annual conference of the Iron Age Study Group, 12th–14th November 2015 at Hallein (Austria).

**Worlds of Transition – Rites of Death
New Approaches to Burial Customs of the European Iron Age**

Name:

Title/Degree:

Institution:

Full Address:

Telephone:

E-Mail:

Type of contribution (presentation/poster)

Title of presentation/poster:

Summary (max. max. length 2000 characters incl. blanks)

Please send your proposals to the chairman of the Iron Age Study Group (AGEisenzeit@yahoo.de) until
April 30th 2015