

**"Death and Agency. Interdisciplinary Studies on the End of Life from a European Perspective" A new series on death and dying in cooperation with Böhlau Verlag
(„Tod und Agency. Interdisziplinäre Studien zum Lebensende aus europäischer Perspektive“)**

We would like to refer to our interdisciplinary series "Death and Agency. Interdisciplinary Studies on the End of Life from a European Perspective" which will be published by Böhlau Verlag. We would like to invite researchers from all disciplines to submit their manuscripts, dealing with questions about death and dying in the long nineteenth century, considering a European context. In addition, the publication of collected volumes on specific topics will be sought.

Why a series about death and dying?

Death and dying are events that are repeated at all times, affecting not only every individual but also complex societies, and are thus inherent in historical processes. This insight suggests that death and the dead should be given a prominent place in history and related disciplines. And indeed, there are numerous works from cultural studies that deal with the material goods of the deceased. So far, the study of the deceased has mostly concentrated on regional or intellectual history, art history or philosophy. In the present series, however, the focus will be increasingly on cultural and social history, explicitly illuminating the people or institutions involved in the context of death. For this purpose, we refer to the term “agency” in the title of the series, understood as "possibilities for action and shaping one's own everyday reality".¹ In doing so, we also want to bring issues of economic history, gender studies or social studies. So far, history has neglected a more intensive involvement with the practical handling of the dying and the deceased. This is where the innovative potential of the planned series is located. This concerns not only research on institutions within the European funeral system, such as the so-called mortuaries, but also on professional groups. An example of this are the *Leichenfrauen* (literally ‘corpse women’), who in the nineteenth century were largely responsible for the professional care of the dead in numerous German states. An intensive examination of the subject of death makes it clear that there are still numerous gaps in history and religious studies. In German-language history, the change towards a more intensive study of the subject is progressing only slowly, but for this reason it also offers considerable potential for opening up and deepening previously neglected aspects and thus providing completely new insights.

¹ Philipp Sarasin: *Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse*, Frankfurt 2003, p. 19.

Framework

The period from about 1750 to the end of the First World War is a suitable time frame for recording decisive caesura and changes in the European funeral system and changing perceptions of death and the deceased. The consequences in terms of a changed evaluation of the deceased as well as innovations and new practices in funeral culture during this period were considerable and ultimately led to the practice and interpretation of death and the dead as it is prevalent in today's Western societies. In the interests of coherence of content, however, the intention is to refrain from extending the time spectrum into the twentieth century. Thus, this long period offers a variety of starting points for dealing with and evaluating the treatment of deceased people due to numerous developments and innovations in the social, political, and technical fields. The rapid developments also provide the basis for the research of phenomena concerning the care of the dead and burials, which show opposing tendencies to the general narrative of progress. The regional limitation to a European perspective provides a cultural frame of reference which is intended to give concrete form to the 'red thread' of all the publications that will appear in the series. The restriction is not geographical in nature. Thus, the European perspective can also be applied to the Western cultures of North America, among others, whose burial culture was undoubtedly oriented towards European ideas. The extent to which this perspective can be spread to other continents outside Europe must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Interdisciplinary approaches

As the subtitle of the series already indicates, there should be no restriction in terms of discipline, although the historical sciences should play a leading role. Disciplines that deserve special attention at this point are religious studies, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history of medicine, literary studies or even art history. Within the historical sciences, particular attention could be paid to the history of emotions, media history, transnational history, military history, urban studies, institutional history and microhistory.

Format of the series

For the planned series, two publication formats will be considered: monographs and collected volumes. Contributions shall be published in German or English.

Editorial team and scientific advisory board

The editorial team consists of: Nina Kreibig (History, Anthropology, Prehistory and Protohistory), Thomas Macho (Cultural Studies/Philosophy) and Moisés Prieto (History/Comparative Romance

Languages). In addition, an advisory board of researchers from various relevant disciplines has been set up to support the editorial team.

Further information on the editorial team can be found at:

Nina Kreibig: <https://www.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/de/bereiche-und-lehrstuehle/euge19/europaeische-geschichte-des-19-jahrhunderts/personen/nina-kreibig>

Prof. Dr. Thomas Macho: <http://www.thomasmacho.de>

Dr. Moisés Prieto: https://www.hist.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/prieto_moiss/index_ger.html

Questions, suggestions and interest in cooperation shall be addressed to Moisés Prieto by e-mail:

moises.prieto@hist.unibe.ch

We are looking forward to working with you.