

THE EVER-PRESENT NARRATIVE: SIMILARITIES IN ANCIENT CULTURES' BELIEFS SURROUNDING DEATH AND INTERNMENT IDEOLOGY AS SEEN THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY

Abstract:

With death being an inevitable part of every life in every culture since ancient times, looking at the archaeological findings of the King Tutankamun, Sutton Hoo, and Judahite burial sites allow a bird's eye view of similarities that can be found at each site. This broader view can then be condensed into a more narrow, probing view that allows for an understanding of the beliefs these cultures may have had about death and their view on life. This leads to an understanding of how these cultures honoured and showed pride in their dead, how they protected their dead, and their understanding of what death could mean as a benefit to those entombed.

Who so thou be that passeth by, Where these corps entombed lie:

Understand what I shall say, As at this time speak I may.

Such as thou art, some time was I,

Such as I am, such shalt thou be.

I little thought on the hour of death, So long as I enjoyed breath.¹

As this short segment emblazoned on the tomb of the Black Prince states: none can escape death as long as they live – it is a certainty for all. While one lives, there is little to think of regarding death. There is little one wishes to think of regarding death, but regardless of how little or how much death is thought of, there are certain beliefs held about it based on the culture

¹ On the tomb of the Black Prince where he lies in Canturbury cathedral – Petrus, *Disciplina Clericalis* (Helsingfors: Druckerei der finnischen Litteraturgesellschaft, 1911).

the person in question lives in. Sometimes dictated by religious belief, other times by what may be necessity, burial and funeral practices are a varied field that changes based off of who the deceased is or what they believe.

In modern American culture, the funeral is a time to celebrate the life of a unique individual as stated in the thesis by Lisa Suzanne Crabtree on the evolution of the contemporary funeral industry². In former times, there was a closeness to the dead that came with funerals because it was the responsibility of the community to take care of the deceased, but in the modern funeral, there is a reliance on the professional to take care of those who pass on³ leading in part to a less prominent actualization of the ritual side of funerals. As Crabtree also points out, in the time since the 60's when her study began, the funeral industry could be seen in a time of reinvention and change that was largely seen as losing touch with the more ritual side of funerals and death in modern culture⁴. This in turn has led to a modernized view of death as a more alien and further away concept than it has been in previous generations.

When learning about the differing views of death, there are plenty of sources from ancient text and writings that can be used to gauge the overall views of the society by which a being was being entombed. But just as writing is not always the best way to learn about something in today's culture, one can be left without the full picture of what these people

² Lisa Crabtree, "The Changing Discourse of Death : A Study of the Evolution of the Contemporary Funeral Industry.," *University of Louisville Electronic Thesis and Dissertations*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/286>.

³ Katsumi Shimane, "Social Bonds with the Dead: How Funerals Transformed in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 373, no. 1754 (2018): p. 20170274, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2017.0274>.

⁴ Lisa Crabtree, "The Changing Discourse of Death : A Study of the Evolution of the Contemporary Funeral Industry.," *University of Louisville Electronic Thesis and Dissertations*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/286>

believed in and practiced in regard to death and the end of life. This is where the practice and study of archaeology comes into play as an invaluable resource for understanding death as it was understood for ancient civilizations. As stated about the relationship of historic documentation and archaeological studies by archaeologist Ivor Noël Hume in his book ‘Historical Archaeology’, “Digging in the documents and in the earth must be understood to be part of the same research and that one cannot do without the other”⁵. As death has been ever present in the lives of mankind since their fall in the garden of Eden, there are specific natures of it that are celebrated and feared throughout the history of civilization. The study of archaeological sites dealing with death and burial ritual has helped us understand these and pinpoint what is historically the most revered across multiple civilizations. In looking at archaeological excavations based in different sites throughout the different past civilizations, it makes visible the most common ways that past cultures would honour their dead and the beliefs that influenced those rituals.

Throughout the study of history, documentation has been a primary source for understanding advancements in knowledge. Books and written works left to us by historians, dignitaries, nobles, and notable people throughout history provide for a more than solid foundation of learning and historic breakthrough. But when the modern historian is supposed to “aim to create as complete and true a picture of the human past as it is reasonably possible to do”⁶, the documentation does not quite add up to enough. This is where archaeology comes into play. As archaeology is an area of study dedicated to dealing with the material remains of

⁵ Ivor Noël Hume, *Historical Archaeology* (New York: Knopf, 1989).

⁶ Glyn Edmund Daniel, *A Short History of Archaeology* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

mankind ⁷, it provides a more palpable, easier to physically handle, and newer perspective than what the documentation and historians of ages past are talking about.

While portraying the expert adventurer and archaeologist, Indiana Jones, Harrison Ford states that “Archaeology is the search for fact, not truth. If it’s truth you’re interested in, Dr. Tyree’s philosophy class is right down the hall...”⁸ At the core, this is an accurate description of what archaeology is. By dealing with the physical and material remains of something, there is a certain bias proofing that is done by the fact that excavations are often of commonplace occurrences. Cities that crumbled and were lost died because of what was going on in their time, they weren’t made to reflect a false story. Burials that are excavated are emblematic of the traditions of the time and thus useful for understanding what a culture believes about death. As useful as historic documentation and written sources are, their authors may also have a bias as they write just as any modern historian might. As archaeologist Dr. Dale Manor states, “Since we are fallible, we should approach any discipline with humility and be open to new data.”⁹ It has been this way since the beginning of the development of archaeology.

The varied nature of material remains of a culture provides for a wide variety of what can be studied in the discipline of archaeology. Among the remains of buildings and bodies being found in an archaeological dig, things like geology, art forms, metallurgy, petrology, and multiple other varied traces of past life could be left behind.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid

⁸ *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, directed by Steven Spielberg, featuring Harrison Ford, Sean Connery, Lucasfilm Ltd., Company 1989, DVD, Lucasfilm Ltd., 2003

⁹ Dale Manor. “The testimony of archaeology to the trustworthiness of the bible”. *The Utterance of God*. (2021)

¹⁰ Robin Place, *Introduction to Archaeology* (New York, 1968).

The first archaeologists could potentially be traced back to the king of Babylon, Nabonidus, and his daughter, En-nigaldinanna, as they spent years excavating and collecting the antiquities found around their city of Ur eventually exposing a temple that had been built and lost by past kings of Babylon¹¹. As they found, excavated, and restored the temple (which is now known as the temple of Agade), the most primitive vestiges of archaeology were born. The operative word here is primitive. This is not the procedural archaeology you see on site today; this isn't even the wild adventure-based archaeology seen in Hollywood. This is simply digging on a notion of finding something and seeing what comes up when you do so.

The Greeks and the Romans would both have histories and find value within them, but they would not turn to archaeology. It would be during the 16th century when the study of antiquities from the classical age would begin to truly be studied by a wide variety of scholars¹². This would in turn lead to numerous societies for those wishing to study these antiquities and artefacts of the classical age from Italy to England. Appointed by King Henry VIII in England, John Leland served as the king's antiquary giving him power over all things that dealt with antiquities and material remains of past centuries. In this case, that was chiefly libraries, monasteries, and other buildings¹³. William Camden was an academic who benefited from the study of the antiquities in Britain as he used them to write his book, 'Britannia' which served as

¹¹ Excavating may be a bit strong of a word as they were not procedurally excavating as is typically practiced in archaeology today. In the book, Daniel does not use this word but rather refers to them as "digging" instead. – Glyn Edmund Daniel, *A Short History of Archaeology* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

¹² Much of the following will come from the same source so some citations will be slightly after some quotes or statements that are certainly not my own. It is largely because most all of this will be from the same source. – Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

a guide to the antiquities in Britain and was the first of its kind. Camden would call this study of antiquities, “The back-looking curiosity”¹⁴.

A rush in Italy in the 18th century for more classical artefacts from around Europe only fueled the fire that would burn as archaeology. Excavation and cataloging artefacts in Pompeii and Herculaneum began early in that century with some of the techniques more refined for archaeology¹⁵. Joachim Winckelmann would write his great work, ‘History of Art’ in the middle of the 18th century. His work in looking at art historically would earn him the title of the ‘father of archaeology’ by some as art history is only one plane of archaeology. It would be the end of the 18th century amidst Napoleon’s expeditions and archaeological work in Egypt which brought forth artefacts such as the Rosetta Stone¹⁶.

As some of this historiography of archaeology is bringing up those who worked as antiquaries or dealing with the antiquities of a place, it is necessary to address that. While archaeology is the study of the material evidence left behind by past civilizations, there are many who also classify it by that which deals with antiquity. In their Greek-English Lexicon, Liddel and Scott classify it as “to discuss antiques”¹⁷. Dr. Manor takes this and adds along with it the definition of the Greek ‘historia’ as stated in Liddel and Scott’s lexicon which is “A learning by

¹⁴ Glyn Edmund Daniel, *A Short History of Archaeology* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ While Napoleon was not there purely for excavation and exploration, he made sure his staff was well equipped with skilled men to help survey the land and learn more about Egypt. This did not stop the Rosetta stone from being discovered on accident by a soldier digging a trench for a fort. – Glyn Edmund Daniel, *A Short History of Archaeology* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

¹⁷ Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek - English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

inquiry”¹⁸ because the early historian Heroditus used the word ‘historia’ rather than ‘archaeologia’ for his book “The Histories”¹⁹.

As much as archaeology has to do with history, it is a significant part of the web that is known as ‘Anthropology’. Being one of the four subsets of anthropology, Archaeology is as much about the study of the people associated with the material culture left behind as it is with the material itself. The other three disciplines of anthropology being linguistic, cultural, and physical anthropology puts archaeology firmly in the lead for being used to study specifically the history involved in a culture²⁰.

How this shows itself, however, in the analysis of funeral rites and practices can only be seen by looking at archaeological sites that deal with that very concept. When hoping to see similarities throughout numerous different sites in the belief that there is an almost subconscious built in way to honour the dead, then you must make sure that those sites are varied in both geographical location and the years in which they were instituted. For these reasons looking at things such as King Tutankhamun’s tomb, the cemetery at Sutton Hoo, and the burial practices of the Judahite people should give an in-depth view.

I suppose most excavators would express a feeling of awe – embarrassment almost – when they break into a chamber closed and sealed by pious hands so many centuries ago. For the moment, time as a factor of human life has lost its meaning. Three thousand, four thousand years maybe, have passed and gone since human feet last trod the floor on which you stand, and yet, as you note the signs of recent life around you – the half filled bowl of mortar for the door, the blackened lamp, the finger-mark upon the freshly painted surface, the farewell garland dropped upon the threshold – you felt it might have been but yesterday. The very air you breath unchanged through the centuries, you share with

¹⁸ Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek - English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

¹⁹ While Heroditus was working in ancient Greece, his work was not considered archaeological as it was more ethnographic than material culture putting him into the realm of anthropology – Dale Manor. “The testimony of archaeology to the trustworthiness of the bible”. *The Utterance of God*. (2021)

²⁰ Ibid.

*those who laid the mummy to its rest. Time is annihilated by little intimate details such as these, and you feel an intruder.*²¹

Of all the kings that were buried in Egypt's fabled 'Valley of Kings', Tutankhamun is one of the last two that still resides there after the site was excavated.²² One of, if not the most popular dig of the 20th century, the excavation of King Tut's tomb in 1922 has been unique from the start.

Perhaps one of the most celebrated points that made this find unique is that the inner burial chamber was untouched by human hands in the years since his burial. Both the outer chamber and the corridor had been picked over and looted by raiders of undetermined time period and circumstance.

The layout of the tomb is simple. Stairs leading down from the surface takes you to the first door and into a corridor after that. From the corridor, you would see another door that leads into the antechamber. From the antechamber there are two rooms: A kind of storeroom known as the annex, and the burial chamber itself. That is the room that had the still unbroken seal whereas the other rooms were sealed, but only re-sealed by hands other than those that buried Tutankhamun. In the burial chamber proper is where the sarcophagus was found amidst décor and paintings along the wall previously unseen. On the far end of the sarcophagus room lay the treasure room, also untouched.

²¹ On the first time he stepped into one of the antechambers of the tomb within lied King Tutankhamun – Howard Carter. *The tomb of Tutankhamen*. (New York, Dutton, 1972)

²² Amenhetep II is the other king to remain in the valley of kings. Howard Carter. *The tomb of Tutankhamen*. (New York, Dutton, 1972)

In the sarcophagus room, large painted murals can be found on each of the walls surrounding the dais of the sarcophagus. The walls are divided into the four cardinal directions along with a notation for which side of the south wall it is as it is bisected by the doorway. Starting on the east wall, the mural extends the wall and even above the doorway that serves as the entrance to the treasure room. The mural shows a group of potential political officials and friends of the deceased king pulling an ornate sled upon which Tutankhamun rests in his golden sarcophagus. On the west wall, the mural features scenes from the book of Imi-duat.²³ This scene shows five deities, an Egyptian barque,²⁴ and has the iconography of 12 baboons. Now to the scenes on the south wall divided by east and west. The east scene shows the Egyptian goddess Isis with three underworld deities behind her, while the west scene shows the god Anubis following Tutankhamun as he receives life from the goddess Hathor. The north mural has three scenes on the one wall. The scenes are, from left to right, the Ka of Tutankhamun following him as he embraced the god Osiris, the goddess Nut welcoming Tutankhamun, and the opening-the-mouth ceremony being performed on Tutankhamun by his successor: King Ay.²⁵

In the four walls of the burial chamber stood four small statues of beings in Egyptian myth with the inscription upon them “to repel the enemy of Osiris, in whatever form he may

²³ Also known as the book of Amduat, the book of the hidden chamber, or the book of the Netherworld. The book details the journey of Ra as he goes through regeneration perpetually in twelve hour cycles starting with death (sunset) going through the night to life anew (sunrise). “Egypt - Section of the Papyrus Belonging to Nesmin, with the First Hour of the Amduat,” Royal Collection Trust, accessed January 12, 2023, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/1145266/section-of-the-papyrus-belonging-to-nesmin-with-the-first-hour-of-the-amduat>.

²⁴ A type of ship commonly having to do with transportation of the gods, the most popular being the ship that the god Ra uses to sail the sky. Joshua J. Mark, “Ships of the Gods of Ancient Egypt,” World History Encyclopedia (<https://www.worldhistory.org#organization>, January 10, 2023), <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1062/ships-of-the-gods-of-ancient-egypt/>.

²⁵ Jaromir Malek and Harry Burton, Harry Burton's photographs of decoration in the tomb of tutankhamun. (The Griffith Institute, June 2, 2005), <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4tutgal3.html>. – All information in that paragraph from this one source.

come.” Each statue rested in their respective alcove on top of a corresponding brick made from unfired clay with a chosen passage from the Book of the Dead inscribed on each of them. In the east wall was the figure of Osiris²⁶ cloaked in linen wraps who stood on a brick inscribed with,

“however, it must not be forgotten that a small reed torch with its brick-pedestal of unbaked clay bearing an incantation graven in hieroglyphic characters was found on the floor within the threshold of the entrance of the Treasury”.²⁷

Carter believed that this Osiris figure was a replacement for this reed spoken of in this passage.

In the west, there was an alcove in which the figure of Anubis,²⁸ similarly wrapped in linen, was laying in jackal form atop a brick with the passage,

“This formula is to be spoken over an Anubis of unbaked clay, sprinkled(?) with incense, and fastened on a brick of clay on which this formula has been graven. A hole is made for it in the east wall, its face towards the west, and it is covered up”.²⁹

In the alcove on the southern wall, they found a wooden emblem that lay on the brick inscribed with,

“This formula is to be spoken over a ded of glaze, the cross-bars of which are fine gold, which has been covered with royal linen, and oil allowed to fall on it. It is fastened on a brick of unbaked clay, [on which has been graven this formula], and a hole is made for it in the western wall, its face towards the east, and it is covered up with earth that has been under an aru-tree”.³⁰

²⁶ The Egyptian king of the underworld also associated with being the god over resurrection - “11 Egyptian Gods and Goddesses,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/list/11-egyptian-gods-and-goddesses>.

²⁷ Jaromir Malek, ed., “Tutankhamun: Anatomy of an Excavation - Notes by Howard Carter,” The Griffith Institute, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4suppdocs.html>.

²⁸ Egyptian god of death and funeral practices - The Egyptian king of the underworld also associated with being the god over resurrection - “11 Egyptian Gods and Goddesses,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/list/11-egyptian-gods-and-goddesses>.

²⁹ Jaromir Malek, ed., “Tutankhamun: Anatomy of an Excavation - Notes by Howard Carter,” The Griffith Institute, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4suppdocs.html>.

³⁰ Ibid.

Lastly in the north wall they found a small wooden shawabti³¹ figure on the brick with the final inscription,

“This formula is to be spoken over a brick of unbaked clay, on which this formula has been graven, and a hole made for it in the wall of the nether chamber; and a figure of im-wood seven fingers in height, whose mouth has been opened, is fastened on this brick in the northern wall, its face towards the south, and it is covered up.”³²

Encasing the figurines of Anubis and Osiris were large strips of fine linen. After the alcoves were filled, they were sealed with limestone and painted over in an attempt to match the rest of the room.³³

When the chambers of the tomb were first entered, the clutter was all over. Numerous couches, boats, jars, and weapons had been placed in there for the burial. Even though it had already been picked through by robbers countless years earlier, the antechamber had artefact after artefact made of silver and gold or various and sundry precious stones. Carter talks about mere torch holders being made of silver and gold in the antechamber. This is not even taking into account the amount of precious metals and gifts that were left with Tutankhamun in his burial chamber as well as in the treasure room. Even more so, this is not considering the jewelry that

³¹ A shabti (also known as shawabti or ushabti) is a generally mummiform figurine of about 5 - 30 centimetres in height found in many ancient Egyptian tombs. They are commonly made of blue or green glazed Egyptian faience, but can also consist of stone, wood, clay, metal, and glass. The meaning of the Egyptian term is still debated, however one possible translation is ‘answerer’, as they were believed to answer their master’s call to work in the afterlife. – Manon Schutz, “What Is a Shabti?,” National Trust (National Trust, June 28, 2017), <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/what-is-a-shabti>.

³² Jaromir Malek, ed., “Tutankhamun: Anatomy of an Excavation - Notes by Howard Carter,” The Griffith Institute, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4suppdocs.html>.

³³ Ibid.

remained on the person of King Tutankhamun in his sarcophagus and the gold that made up the shrines in the burial room.³⁴

King Tutankhamun's tomb is a prime example of a royal burial site with specific ritual tied to how the body was eventually found. Similar to this find (albeit with some very notable differences) would be the royal burial site at Sutton Hoo.

One of the most impressive sites of Anglo-Saxon origin, the dig site at Sutton Hoo is an enormous collection of burials of numerous different kinds. Home to a few ship burials, Sutton Hoo had the characteristic of some burials by inhumation inside of the ship as well as cremations that placed the ashes within urns and bowls and had them placed in the same ships or in other barrow tombs.³⁵ Not all the barrows survived till it was further excavated, but by 1938 only about fifteen were left.³⁶

Located near the modern town of Ipswich, the Sutton Hoo site was a cemetery used in the middle of the first millennia in the land of East Anglia. The site of many different barrow tombs, of which the most prominent ship burial was potentially the last barrow in this area as Christianity caused the building of barrow tombs to become less common. It is unclear as to whom this tomb belonged, but what is known is that they were well respected and held lots of power. Stated as potentially the burial place of a king or chief of East Anglia in numerous

³⁴ Howard Carter. *The tomb of Tutankhamen*. (New York, Dutton, 1972)

³⁵ "Burial in the ground by hollowing out a trench in the earth for the body or covering it with rocks or dirt dates back at least to the Middle Paleolithic Period. Grave burial, or inhumation, may be simple or elaborate. Some Eskimo people cover the corpse with a pile of stones or, if stones are not available, with a small ice igloo. The Old Norse people built barrows that sometimes reached enormous heights. In eastern North America, large burial mounds were characteristic of Indian cultures from 1000 BCE to 700 CE." – "Burial," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/burial-death-rite#ref110692>.

³⁶ Martin Carver. *Sutton Hoo in Context*. (1986)

theories, the site of the primary ship burial was discussed as one of the greatest treasures ever found in the land of Britain when it was discovered in 1939 and not just because of the sheer amount of gold and precious metals that were found in the ship.³⁷ Also of great worth was the vast cache of intact or in good condition Anglo Saxon Artefacts such as had not been found up until this time. The prominent ship burial found in 1939 was also an instance where robbers and looters did not find it and tamper with the scene and thus gave us an in depth look into what a ship burial looked like if done by the Anglo Saxons.³⁸

Furthermore, the wealth of the burial is argued not to be particularly wealthy for royalty at the time, but potentially in comparison to other burials that have been discovered. That is where the sheer number of valuables shows that this may have been someone of royal or noble significance.³⁹

There are still plenty of unknowns about this site, as it has no body in the main chamber of the primary ship burial to go with it. Even the ship that was once located in the barrow in question had long since decayed before it was found in 1939. No cenotaph has been found to denote that this was purely a ceremonial space to move the body from after the ritual, but rather there remained a space amid all of the treasures that was the size of what could be a body being honoured by these gifts. While there is no body left where the primary ship burial was, some of the treasures have been dated back to the late fifth, sixth, or early seventh century AD. This in turn gives the possibility that the ship burial was dedicated to the East Anglian King, Raedwald.

³⁷ In all reality, the amount of 'rare' metals and substances was not all that much not counting the coins and currency that was found at the site. – Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells, *Voyage to the Other World: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo* (Minneapolis (Minn.): Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1992).

³⁸ Martin Carver. *Sutton Hoo in Context*. (1986)

³⁹ Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells, *Voyage to the Other World: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo* (Minneapolis (Minn.): Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1992).

This all being considered, only nine of the objects that had been found by the time of Martin Carver's excavations suggested any sort of date. Other portions of the theory include the Christianization of some of the artefacts left in the barrow as Raedwald was a king to convert to Christianity.⁴⁰ As many of the artefacts had Christian symbolism, but not all, it is believed that Sutton Hoo was around that turn of society. This is also a reason why it is believed that the primary ship burial could have possibly been the last barrow in Sutton Hoo as the creation of barrows was widely wiped out when a nation became Christian.⁴¹

Very similar in nature to ship burials found in Scandinavia⁴², there are prominent theories that this burial was for a community or leader greatly influenced by northern nations such as Sweden or Norway. This theory is made more plausible with a look at what was found inside the cavity left by the decayed ship. While it is unclear as to if the wealth of what was found within the ship was supposed to belong to the potential monarch buried within, many of the pieces that were able to be identified told a story of travel for this ship or the artefacts inside.

The cavity was filled with a great number of treasures such as knives, a lyre, a helmet⁴³, a shield, and coins. The metalwork that was found within the burial site was reminiscent of that from Kent, Merovingian France, and Sweden. Some of the other objects such as textiles were similarly not native to the lands of East Anglia where this person likely lived.⁴⁴ This shows that

⁴⁰ "Raedwald," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Raedwald>.

⁴¹ Martin Carver. *Sutton Hoo in Context*. (1986)

⁴² Specifically at the Vendel and Valsgärde sites where bodies were not found either. – Ibid

⁴³ The helmet found at the Sutton Hoo site would be reassembled and become a symbol for the dig site itself as one of the more popular artefacts found there. – "Anglo-Saxon Sites in Britain: Remains, Crosses and Churches," Historic UK, accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryMagazine/DestinationsUK/AngloSaxonSites/>.

the deceased in the ship burial was likely one who was well learned and part of a culture that was active in trade. This implies, along with the style of ship burial that was also common in Scandinavia and along the north coast of the Baltic Sea, that this particular king or chief was influenced by those who had ship burials as well. This theory is further supported by the evidence of the metalwork from the Merovingian dynasty and from Sweden as it is known that the ancient Scandinavians practice ship burials on occasion and that other ship burials were found along the coast of the Baltic Sea and the Merovingian dynasty also made it to the shores of the Baltic.⁴⁵ If there was overlap in trade and the use of ship burials, it is not a large step to ask the question if the mythos behind the ship burials for the Anglo Saxons did not also carry over from their northern Scandinavian neighbors.

While it is undoubtedly useful for the study at hand to look at the larger scale burials that so often accompany the final resting places of nobles or kings, those are not the only graves that have been found and provided insight to those willing to study the ritualistic meaning behind their actions. It is not uncommon for the discovery of a simple grave to give insight into the circumstances of a person's burial. In the region discussed in the bible, many civilizations have lived and died providing for numerous different and distinct archaeological discovery and study as more dead are found and uncovered in the land attributed to the Canaanites and the Judahite people.

In the Mediterranean shore region where places such as Israel, Palestine, and Jordan reside, eight different distinguishable burial types have been discovered among 850 burials from

⁴⁴ Martin Carver. *Sutton Hoo in Context*. (1986)

⁴⁵ Ibid.

the iron age alone.⁴⁶ The overall layout and plan of the tomb is the prime determinate of what denotes each of these different kinds of burial methods, but the container in which the body is placed also helps to categorize.⁴⁷

The first of these different graves is what Elizabeth Bloch-Smith calls a simple or pit grave. Found in numerous places such as Tel⁴⁸ debris, on the coast in a sandy area near a settlement, or even occasionally in the bedrock itself; the space painstakingly hewn out for the body. These were not personal resting places, as most of them housed up to three bodies many times with one of those bodies being no older than a child or adolescent much of the time.⁴⁹

The next kind of burial is a cist burial. Denoted by the presence of mud brick, or stone structure along the sides and sometimes bottom of the pit that was dug. Also sometimes seen are smaller structures that rise above these said graves. Also often used for multiple inhumations, a characteristic that allows these to stand out is the fact that some of them were built with the idea of reuse in mind, so they were made to be more durable. One to three bodies were often put in cist graves as the main inhumations while there would be others that were not as central in the grave. In some cases, such as in the case of the large Ashod intramural pits, it seems to have been a cist tomb with 2000 bodies remaining in it. The practice of leaving gifts was also common in cist graves, but much of what was found seemed to be locally bought or made goods rather than

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ tell, also spelled tel, Arabic tall, (“hill” or “small elevation”), in Middle Eastern archaeology, a raised mound marking the site of an ancient city. Typically taking the shape of a steep sided cone. – “Tell,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/science/tell-mound>.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

extravagant foreign materials. There is a certain number of findings of burials with a high number of metal gifts and linen body wrappings, contributing to the idea that these were potentially influenced by some Egyptian burial methods.⁵⁰

Jar burials largely consisted of the placing of the deceased in a jar or pithos for their burial. Naturally, the size of the deceased body in question dictates the size of the jar or jars used for this type of burial.⁵¹ While adult bodies have been found buried in this fashion, it is primarily the burial of an infant when a jar burial is found. After the inhumation inside of the jar, the jar would find its final resting place on a bench tomb or in another tomb in general as to accompany the other bodies that resided there. The gifts given in these burials were often less considering the more constricted space that the use of a jar presented, but beads and other bits of jewelry and potsherds were not uncommon to find as those could fit inside of the jar with the remains. While they were primarily a single-being inhumation, it is not unheard of for a jar burial to hold bones of another being as well, though seldom a supplementary complete skeleton. The possibility that this may be a Hittite practice initially is heightened in the light of the semi restricted distribution of the jar burials in the northern half of Jordan as well as the ornamentation on the jars.⁵²

With faces emblazoned on the lids of the tapered coffins, anthropoid coffins are exceedingly distinct in how they look. Typically a ceramic receptacle with tapering on both ends, these coffins have been found in pit graves as well as cist graves. The distinct coffin lid would

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁵¹ “A single Jar usually sufficed for an infant or child, whereas two jars placed mouth to mouth or unusually large jars were necessary to encase an adult” – Ibid.

⁵² Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

often times be considered grotesque to behold, but could also provide a very natural looking piece of artwork. The distinction of these was entirely dependent on the features they chose to accentuate on the lid of the coffin in question. As this is seen in the land of Egypt frequently, it is no surprise that even the Anthropoid coffins often showed their owner in an Egyptian style wig to pay homage to the place where this tradition came from. Different from a standard coffin today, these coffins would hold the complete articulated remains of one to six people and would have a larger concentration of goods brought from Egypt buried with it as the gifts to the dead.⁵³

Found in simple graves, bathtub coffins are named for their unique shape. Often made of ceramic, bathtub coffins have a deep bathtub like shape with handles on either side as well as a rounded and a straight end which provides contrast from standard coffins. Bathtub coffins only measure typically a metre long and have the capability of having grave gifts buried within them as well as the bones of a full deceased human and a few bones from another. The bathtub coffin was also used in Assyria, and it is theorized by Elizabeth Bloch-Smith that the nation of Judah was introduced to the bathtub coffin by Assyria due to how it is found in the northern valleys.⁵⁴

Typically located in tall cliffs or in outcroppings of limestone, cave burials are simple as they are the body being left in a cave. Also called chamber burials, a cave burial has the distinction that the hewn cave will be rounded and have irregularities pockmarked around the cave. A chamber cave uses a rectangular floor plan carefully carved to make it look more like a room than it is a cave. It has been noted by the other sets of bones surrounding the central body that these areas were likely often repurposed for more burials after time had eroded the body

⁵³ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

making this a primary burial with secondary deposition situation.⁵⁵ In the piles of bones along the walls of these caves, different pot sherds and treasures were mingled in. This showed that while the body was initially placed in the center of the cave, surrounded by treasures, objects, and other such gifts, they would be moved for the favour of entombing another. This practice is common as these tombs were more than utilized on a first come first serve basis, but rather a type of family heirloom that is looked after and cared for by current living families likely related to the older bones in these tombs.⁵⁶ A similar concept would be importance of being buried in simply the lands of their fathers or their own land, a concept that is plainly seen in instances such as the last wishes of Israelite patriarchs Jacob and Joseph when they passed on in Egypt (detailed in the last chapter of the book of Genesis).⁵⁷ Due to the personal and familial connection within a particular family with these tombs, it was considered a great honour to be allowed a burial in a family's tomb. As pointed out by Saul M. Olyan, one instance of this includes how the burial of Abner was taken on by none other than King David as no other male of Abner's family was available.⁵⁸

In another instance of a hierarchical system to this burial system, there are a few instances in the burials of this type that had the women and children buried together but separated from the men showing a social hierarchy that extends even to death.⁵⁹ Of the gifts in

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith. *The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111, no. 2 (1992): 217.

⁵⁷ Gn. 50

⁵⁸ This point and the scripture reference were both from this source. Saul M. Olyan. *Some Neglected Aspects of Israelite Interment Ideology*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 4 (2005): 604

⁵⁹ One such burial is the Baqah Valley Cave – Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

these tombs, locally made wares were a common find, but so were Assyrian made goods which will further the theory that this was an Assyrian brought practice. Weapons, figurines, and jewelry were common to find among these caves. As a cave tomb necessitates the use of natural outcroppings of rock or stone, they are not as popular in much of the Israeli or Jordan area. In places like Lachish, Tel Beth Shemesh, and Gezer the cave tomb would almost only be used in the twelfth century BC and onward.⁶⁰

Bench tombs and arcosolia have a very particular difference that keeps them separate and that is the time in which a body is entombed in the primary spot of the tomb. While a bench tomb would have numerous places or benches for bodies to be placed for a time and then potentially replaced by a fresher inhumation, an arcosolia was supposed to be for a single burial that would remain permanent. Very similar in layout, bench tombs and arcosolia opened into a main room after going through a door cut into the rock face. In both were found the shelves or benches that the bodies would be placed upon.⁶¹

As their use would continue through the years, bench tombs would become more and more ornate. They would start to sport places for the corpses to rest their heads as well as pillars for the purpose of structure in the caverns where they lay. Decorative carvings along the edges of the benches began to become more and more common and some of the structural pillars were carved with animal heads on them. As it would come to grave goods, it would look similar to what the cave tombs would look like with different pottery that was both local and imported accompanying other artefacts that were no doubt imported by the family who used this tomb.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁶¹ Ibid.

This would include not only goods in the form of jewelry and scarabs from Egypt, but high-end pottery from Mycenae in a tomb located in Pella, Tabakat Fahel. In this tomb would also include pillars made of bone, Egyptian alabaster beads, and anthropoid coffins.⁶²

The use of grave goods in the Judahite culture would expand and become more of a common practice when certain cults of the dead would pop up throughout their history. In multiple areas of Judah and Israel, uniform styles of inhumations are found that give evidence to a rise in a cult following of their dead to ensure they were properly taken care of in this life and the next.⁶³ This would not only ensure that the bodies in the tombs were properly placed, regardless of the style of burial they were given, but also that the proper sacrifices and were performed. Postmortem care would become a staple part of the Israelite and Judahite social structure as a way to honour their dead. This would lead to grave goods and food being left in the tombs of those who had passed on more than just on the initial internment occasion, but also throughout time after the burial.⁶⁴

When it comes to cremation in Judahite burials, it breaks down to a few different kinds. There is cremation and the placing of the ashes into an urn or ceramic bowl and putting that bowl in the sand, then you also have the act of cremation on top of a pyre out in the sand, then finally are the few cremated remains that made their way into the cave tombs that were discussed earlier. The distribution of how widely this burial type was used lends itself to the idea that this

⁶² Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁶³ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith. *The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111, no. 2 (1992):

⁶⁴Postmortem care in this society became such a standard, that there is evidence of Moses denying it to the Korahites who had betrayed Israel, and an implied sense of incredulity when people like Saul would become angry in hearing that David would not be joining a dinner due to an ancestral sacrifice. Ibid.

came from the influence of the Phoenicians. Cremation burials show up in all manner of other tombs and do accompany inhumation burials often. They were often non-discriminatory in the fact that men, women, and children would be cremated at times. These urns, jars, or amphoras would often be sealed with a bowl secured over the opening after they would be filled with one or potentially two different sets of remains, but usually not more than that. There is evidence of grave goods being given here to the recipients of cremation as well, but as some of that evidence is a time when it seems they were burned with the body, much of it did not survive.⁶⁵ What did survive were often ceramics decorated with red slip and burnish and painted with black bands, just as the urns and amphoras were decorated that the ashes were put into. Other surviving grave goods included arrowheads, some smaller bits of gold, and some small jugs or juglets.⁶⁶

The difference in how someone was buried in this culture could easily depend on the honour in which those who were doing the burying wanted to convey. While there was a burial hierarchy among the burials of women and children as opposed to men, there was a further hierarchy that dictated how you would be buried if you were buried at all, and the lower options in that hierarchy meant burial without being honoured.⁶⁷ Specifically this was seen in instances where people were not buried or were given a less than stellar burial. In some cases, this would be conveyed in how the dead of an enemy were treated after a battle. Rather than find a full tomb for the dead, there were instances of simple pit graves or even just simply covering the bodies

⁶⁵ Atlit and Tell er-Ruqeish. “the pyre on which the body and accompanying goods were burned left traces in the sand.” – Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁶⁷ Olyan, Saul M. *Some Neglected Aspects of Israelite Interment Ideology*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 4 (2005): 601–16.

with stones. Already these were lower on the hierarchical scale of burials in the culture, but they were sometimes made worse by the place they were buried. Even worse than this would be lack of burial at all for the beasts of the air and field to feast upon.⁶⁸

While these burial styles were all technically part of the same geographically located culture, it is believed that the preferences of each of them depended not only on the geographic allowances of the area of the death, but also on the influence of other cultures on the more nuanced sub-groups of the Judahite culture. Rather than each of these being a hard and fast one over the other, they would often overlap in a way that was more of a hierarchy. This showed itself in cremations that were then intombed alongside inhumations inside of a bench tomb or next to an anthropoid coffin.⁶⁹

All the dig sites and archaeological finds mentioned paint a very broad picture in the way of burial rituals. Considering only when these sites were established, they span a total of 1800 years at the least.⁷⁰ Geographically speaking, these cover three continents, and the two sites that are furthest apart sit over two thousand miles away from each other. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Anglo Saxons had any contact with the Egyptians of King Tutankhamun. It can be said that the Judahite people could have been able to trade beliefs and traditions with Egypt, and there is even evidence to say that they did with the anthropoid coffins resembling a

⁶⁸ Olyan notes that among some of the dishonourable burial locations there were forest pits, cisterns, and worse than these, what is known as an 'ass's Grave'. Dishonour in this way can go even as far as to how the bodies were moved as supposedly dragging them to their intended internment was considered to be a dishonouring act. Ibid.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1992).

⁷⁰ If the origin of Sutton Hoo were placed at 500 AD, then the Judahite burial practices in the iron age in the 1200's BC, and then the burial of king Tutankhamun in 1300's BC.

pharaoh's sarcophagus. In this way it can reasonably be said that they had contact that could have caused some similarities in their rituals surrounding death. Looking at the burials listed in this paper, it is easy to break up the similarities and any conclusions drawn into different segments: the method, and the belief of the living about life and death.

The modern methods of inhumation and burial are largely based in practicality. This is shown in the promises of life insurance companies being willing to make sure that funeral costs and the subsequent burial do not heavily burden a family who has lost a loved one. This is not the mindset that is seen in these burial sites. For the burial of King Tutankhamun, it was not the most practical thing to build five whole different rooms for the burial of one man.⁷¹ Similar to this, are the rock-cut tombs of the Judahite people in which they also sometimes sported four or so rooms that mirrored some of the houses of the day.⁷² For the burial of the nobleman at Sutton Hoo, the use of a ship as his tomb was not something that is any sort of practical. Not only considering the ship would have to be brought to its final resting place after being plucked from a river and put on rollers while at high tide, a trench not just large enough for the entombed body, but for the whole ship had to be dug for this to work. Beyond that, an analysis of the ship shows that it was a vessel that was used and used to the point of being patched. In using the ship for this burial, they would be getting rid of a usable vessel.⁷³ The most practical are some of the simpler burial methods of the Judahite people. Even then as they are used for more years, they started implementing different aesthetic choices such as the animal heads on the structural pillars

⁷¹ Five rooms being the corridor, antechamber, annex, burial room, and treasure room.

⁷²Faust, Avraham, and Shlomo Bunimovitz. *The Judahite Rock-Cut Tomb: Family Response at a Time of Change*. Israel Exploration Journal 58, no. 2 (2008): 152

⁷³ Martin Carver, Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings ? (London: British Museum Press, 2014).

or the paint on the cremation jars. Based on archaeological evidence, practicality is often disregarded when possible in the care of the dead, and what takes its place is pride. Pride in a king or leader that was lost perhaps too soon. Pride in a family member that was lost so they are set to rest in the cave where all the previous generations of a family were laid to rest before them. Pride in one's dead is inherently shown through archaeological evidence. There even remains further impracticality with the institution of grave goods which is seen at each of these dig sites and burial styles. The things that were left, being of great value and great use to those that are living, were considered of even greater value when left for those who had passed on before them. This greater value is conveyed by two aspects: that pride that is symbolically placed in the tomb with the deceased in the form of the grave goods in the case of an honourable burial, and the belief that it would be useful to those moving on to the afterlife rather than staying on this mortal coil.⁷⁴ As grave goods were a common find in all of the burial sites discussed in this paper, and seeing as these are just a small sample selection of a much wider whole, it is not a far cry to believe that these beliefs and feelings about death were not far from many of these cultures and possibly others throughout the span of the centuries.

While belief is something that can often go unnoticed in everyday life, there are times when that is not the case. When it comes to beliefs that surround a culture's view of life and death at burial sites, it is something that is prominently displayed as a key part in why they make the choices they do. Looking at the placement of all the statuettes and passages in King Tutankhamun's tomb, everything was placed for a reason. That reason can be found in the murals on the walls of his tomb. The murals depicting the embracing of Osiris, being watched

⁷⁴ "Mortal Coil referring to the difficulties of life and everything that comes with it. The scene is most known for the section reading "To be or not to be" where Hamlet contemplates death via suicide. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*. 3.1.67

over by Hathor and Anubis, murals of Isis, and of the baboons are all emblematic of his safe journey to the underworld. Specifically looking into the baboons, they were often seen as a manifestation of the moon god Thoth who would sometimes take the shape of a baboon and sit atop the scales of judgement to help souls on their way to the underworld.⁷⁵

In a similar position is the boat of the Sutton Hoo site. Considering the chance that the ship burial potentially came from the contemporary Scandinavians of that time, it is not a leap to make a statement about the ship burial meaning similar things to the Anglo Saxons. In the Scandinavian belief, if the vessel had served you well in life, then it would serve you well in the afterlife and transport you safely to your final destination. Thus the reason for full ship burials or burials with emblems of the ships as a part of the burial.⁷⁶

This is seen in the actions of the Judahite people when it comes to ensuring the proper sacrifices are made when they are supposed to be made, and the placement of the body in the correct position. This includes ensuring that the tomb is well cared for and treated with the respect that the dead deserve. All of this to ensure that the dead are honoured and a sort of familial community spanning the living and the dead is kept through the generations.⁷⁷

The actions of these cultures show a similar belief surrounding their view of the great beyond. Death is this thing that needs to be protected against and those that venture into its cold, unforgiving grasp must be sent on their way with guardians, guides, or boats to protect them on

⁷⁵ “Sacred Animals of Ancient Egypt,” Reading Museum, December 3, 2021, <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/sacred-animals-ancient-egypt>.

⁷⁶ Morgan, Thad. “How Did the Vikings Honor Their Dead?” History.com. A&E Television Networks, July 20, 2017. <https://www.history.com/news/how-did-the-vikings-honor-their-dead>.

⁷⁷ Avraham Faust, and Shlomo Bunimovitz. “The Judahite Rock-Cut Tomb: Family Response at a Time of Change.” *Israel Exploration Journal* 58, no. 2 (2008): 154

their way. But it seems that is not the only belief being held here regarding death, as it also is seen as a release from the mortal world.

When it comes to the internment of the dead, no one can go far without seeing or hearing something akin to ‘Rest In Peace’. This phrase and this concept of being at peace hold a deeper connotation and belief regarding the life before the internment of the body. A belief that paints life as tiring and death as a chance to finally recline into a sleep that finally provides rest.

In the burial of King Tut this is seen in the worldly pleasures of his being supplanted into his tomb for his use in the Duat. The food, servants, and other paraphernalia all would go toward him having the best afterlife possible, not just a protected one. In the murals on the wall there are scenes of the King with the gods themselves. Not only would he find rest, but he would find the honour of being among those to be worshipped.⁷⁸

In the Sutton Hoo Burial, this comes from some of the similarities seen with the epic tale of Beowulf and the Scandinavian people. In this story of another great chieftain and king, much like who is thought to be honoured with one of the Sutton Hoo ship burials, it is mentioned how Beowulf and his men when laying down to sleep place the shields at their head as they are surrounded by their gear in their sleep.⁷⁹ As shown in the diagrams of the excavations in the ship burials in archaeologist Martin Carver’s “Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings?”, the suspected orientation of the missing body mirror’s this sort of restful recline (Fig. A).⁸⁰ With so much of

⁷⁸ Jaromir Malek and Harry Burton, Harry Burton’s photographs of decoration in the tomb of tutankhamun. (The Griffith Institute, June 2, 2005), <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4tutgal3.html>

⁷⁹ Bruce Mitford and Rupert Leo Scott, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology: Sutton Hoo and Other Discoveries* (V. Gollancz, 1974).

⁸⁰ Martin Carver, *Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings ?* (London: British Museum Press, 2014). Diagram found on page 117.

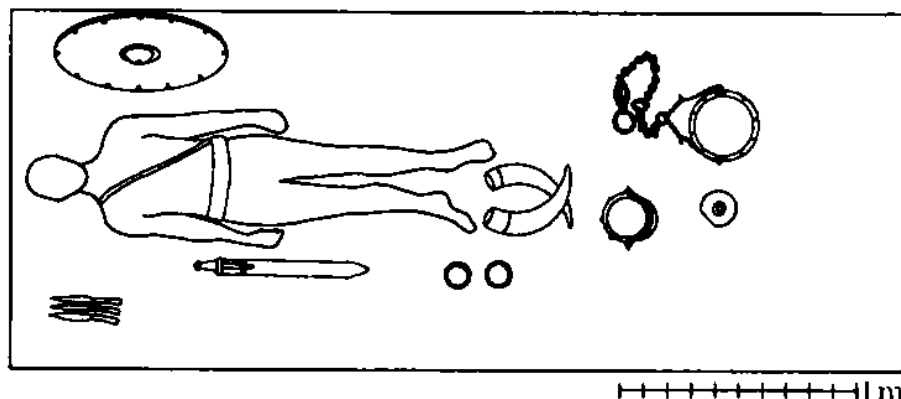


Figure 1: Diagram of the suspected position of the Sutton Hoo Body in relation to the shield also found in the burial site.

the burial being implemented under such scrutiny and detail, enough to bring a ship on land for the sake of this burial, it is safe to assume the placement and

position of the body would be held with as much if not more distinction. Another aspect of this belief would be the story of Beowulf and how one of the earliest passages of the ship burial of the scyld mirrors the ship burials of Sutton Hoo as well as the Swedish ship burials of Uppsala and Valsgärde.⁸¹ The next step of these connections comes with an analysis of the helmet, shield, and sword pommel as they all mirror Swedish design of the contemporary Vendel Period.⁸²

In the Judahite society, the key to understanding the belief in rest for the dead is found in their hierarchy of honourable burials, or more accurately, in their dishonourable burials. One of the more dishonourable burials that one could be granted, was akin to how one in this society would treat the burial of an animal. For this, one would have no care in putting the body in their final residence as it is described that they would simply be “thrown” into their burial place.⁸³ The key point of this that Olyan points out is the absence of the verb that translates “To be set at

⁸¹ L. Whitbread. “‘BEOWULF’ AND ARCHAEOLOGY: Two Further Footnotes.” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 69, no. 1 (1968): 64

⁸² Bruce Mitford and Rupert Leo Scott, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology: Sutton Hoo and Other Discoveries* (V. Gollancz, 1974).

⁸³ Saul M. Olyan, *Some Neglected Aspects of Israelite Interment Ideology*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 4 (2005): 601–16.

rest”. As both the dishonourable and honourable burials are covered in the biblical narrative, the verb for someone to be set at rest does not appear where it typically appears in the passages about the honourable burials and internments.⁸⁴ This suggests that to give someone a dishonoured internment or no internment at all was to condemn them to an eternal restlessness with the body treated like or at the mercy of the beasts of the earth.

This is not to say that these cultures believed life was a constant struggle to be rid of at last in the sweet release of death. Rather this is an idea that in their life they may have understood greatly the amount of work that was present in their life, and upon reflecting on their life and what it held, they realized that in this inevitable end a final peace had been earned. This is why protection in the afterlife was offered and why amenities were given to provide for the best afterlife of the honoured dead, and why a dishonourable burial was such a curse on them and their family.

The similarities found via pride and the belief shown in calling for the need for protection and rest perhaps would have been discovered through the traditional means of documentation with time. In the future, perhaps there will be a manuscript or a crypt wall that is found to dispute this. Perhaps they will claim the items were there simply for the sake of honour and nothing more. Perhaps it will come to light that their belief influenced absolutely none of their burial and funeral rites and it was as it is today, simply a way to say goodbye.

With archaeology, the threads of finding these things out are put in the hands of those studying it and all they must do is pull. Archaeology as a means of study and documentation is

⁸⁴ Ibid.

thus rendering unto the prudent scholar a refreshing means of discovery, in this case, into the beliefs of ancient cultures surrounding death.

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