

Among the most basic challenges of human existence is how to care for the departed. Forms of solicitude for the dead can be usefully divided between deathbed and funerary rituals performed shortly before and after physical death, including burial, and memorial practices meant to ensure the survival and nourishment of the deceased in the afterlife, encompassing concentered efforts to ameliorate the fate of the soul. Though focused respectively on the moment of death and the period afterward, both areas might also include actions taken while the deceased was still alive. In the former case these included practices associated with the *ars moriendi*, which in Christian traditions included confession and the anointing of the sick, or in the latter case masses celebrated for the living. Funerary practices might include the preparation of the body for burial, ritualized feasting or fasting and the burial itself. The circumstances of inhumation – close to or distant from human settlement, with or without a variety of grave goods, etc. – varied enormously between cultures.

With these (inter-)cultural considerations in mind, the planned workshop will focus on care for the dead in the pre-modern Eastern Christian context, including both the Eastern Roman Empire and then Byzantium as well as the Islamicate and Slavic worlds. We want to explore different forms of caring and commemorative practice that go beyond the care for the dead body. The aim is to identify cultural, religious and *mentalité* similarities, but also differences.

## “40,000 Years of Human Challenges: Perception, Conceptualization and Coping in Premodern Societies”

The Research Area offers a holistic research framework that brings together multiple disciplines to explore human challenges and functions as a platform for the development of larger inter- and transdisciplinary research that is fundamental for a better understanding of current and future challenges and the development of their potential solutions. It will thereby substantially contribute to contemporary discourses on the general topic in the humanities, the social and life sciences, politics and the broader public with the integration of new, long-term and hitherto neglected data from the last 40,000 years. The long-term aim of the Research Area is the sustainable institutionalization of this platform that will enhance the scientific profile of the JGU, Mainz and the RMU area as a research hub for transdisciplinary research in that field.

### Contact

Profilbereich 40,000 Years of Human Challenges:  
Perception, Conceptualization and Coping in  
Premodern Societies

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz  
Raum 01-225, Philosophicum II, Jakob-Welder-Weg  
20, 55128 Mainz  
Email: [challenges@uni-mainz.de](mailto:challenges@uni-mainz.de)



40,000 Years of Human  
CHALLENGES



November 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Fakultätssaal, Philosophicum

International Workshop

Between Funerary Ritual  
and Commemorative Praxis

New Approaches to Care for the Dead in  
the Eastern Christian World

Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fakultätssaal, JGU-Mainz

9:30-10:00 Welcome and opening remarks

10:00-12:00 Session 1:

*Elizabeth Tingle.* Commemoration and Catholic Reformation in France: The Memorialisation of Cathedral Canons in the Sixteenth Century

*Alice Croq.* The Middle Byzantine Necropolis at Labraunda: Labor Investment and Community Co-operation at Peasant Graves

*Eva-Maria Butz.* Praying for the Deceased as a Political and Social Responsibility – Functions of Liturgical Commemoration in the Early Medieval West

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00-15:00 Session 2:

*Jon C. Cubas Díaz.* Mortuary Practices and Commemoration in Late Antiquity. Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence

*Anna Sitz.* The Middle Byzantine Necropolis at Labraunda: Labor Investment and Community Co-operation at Peasant Graves

*Marie-Emmanuelle Torres.* Singing for the Dead. Liturgical Commemoration in Byzantine Monasteries

15:00-15:30 Coffee break

15:30-17:30 Session 3:

*Anna Adashinskaya.* Was Commemoration a Commodity? The Evidence from the Late-Medieval Balkans

*Thomas Blank.* From Democratic Dirge to Documentation of Decline. Public Funerals in Classical Athens

*Kirill Maksimovič.* Methodological Considerations on the Editing of Slavic Commemorative Lists of the Late Middle Ages: The Example of Cod. Hil. slav. 519, 15th Century

17:30-19:00 Plenum:

*Béatrice Caseau.* The Sensory Aspect of *memoria*

19:00 Dinner

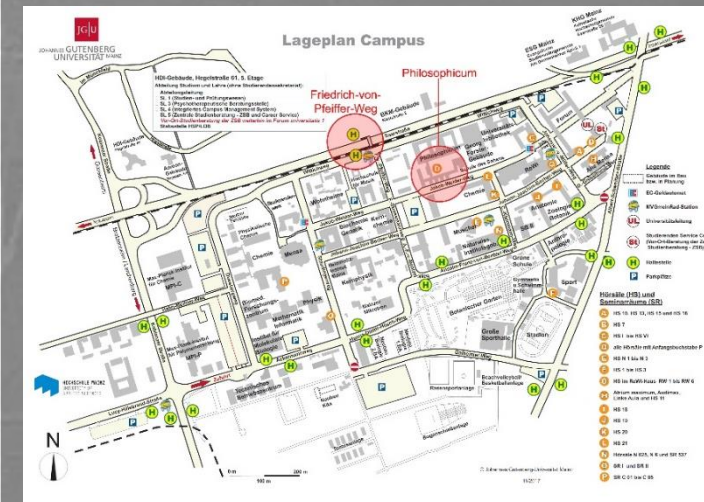
Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, Fakultätssaal, JGU-Mainz

9:30-12:00 Session 4:

*Zachary Chitwood.* The *memoria* of the Komnenoi (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Centuries): Dynastic Commemorative Strategies

*Sibel Kayan.* Memoria and Salvation: The Benefits of Caring for the Dead in Byzantine Texts from the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century

12:00-13:00 Lunch and departure



JGU, Fakultätssaal Philosophicum  
Jakob-Welder-Weg 16  
55128 Mainz  
Room 01.185

Organizers

Dr. Zachary Chitwood and Sibel Kayan, M.A.  
Johannes Gutenberg - Universität Mainz  
FB 07: Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften  
Historisches Seminar  
Byzantinistik  
Jakob-Welder-Weg 18  
D-55099 Mainz

[zchitwoo@uni-mainz.de](mailto:zchitwoo@uni-mainz.de)  
[sousta@uni-mainz.de](mailto:sousta@uni-mainz.de)

