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Interpreting the body. Burial practices at the Middle Bronze Age cemetery at Pitten, Austria

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1. Introduction and Background

The relatively rapid introduction of cremation into large parts of Europe during the Middle Bronze Age and the subsequent development of the so-called Urnfield culture remains a seminal question for archaeologists. This phenomenon challenges us to consider cultural forces that take place at large geographical scales, yet at the same time reflecting immediate human concerns such as death. It reminds us that change takes place at different scales and is expressed and in turn affected by its emerging material manifestations. It is also clearly a sequence of such complex events, emulations, transmissions, and transformations that archaeologists must continue to explore the multifaceted nature of this change and develop methods for interrogating the data in ever more complex manners. The aim of this paper is to show how the data from one site may help to explore these events. Our basic assumption is that funerals, as formal social response to death, were closely linked to beliefs about the body, the self, and the immaterial world, such as ideas about what happens after death. This means that changes in burial practices, as changes in how relatively routine activities were performed, provide a significant basis for the analysis of changing motivations and emerging ideals.

The rich evidence of funerary activities at the cemetery of Pitten provides important insights into the changing burial rites during the relevant period. The cemetery was in use from the early Middle Bronze Age to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (mid 16th to mid 13th century BC) thus covering the transition from inhumation to cremation. It is one of the largest known cemeteries from Central Europe and its excavation included not only the individual burial mounds but also the areas in between them, thus providing a detailed data set that can be explored for indicators of change in burial practices. The characteristics of the graves suggest that the transition was neither rapid nor consistent; one is rather left with the impression of a time of experimentation and fusing of different ideas with regard to the formal disposal of the dead.

The cemetery of Pitten is situated in Lower Austria, south of the Danube, in a hilly, fertile landscape. The cemetery is located at the bottom of the Pitten valley between the Pitten stream and the low ranges of hills running along its western edge. From the cemetery visibility is restricted to the valley itself, while from the surrounding hilltops the view opens up towards the Alps in the west and the Steinfeld region and further valleys and plains towards the east and north. This setting suggests simultaneously a well defined local area and the obvious potential for long distance contact and influences. The local area appears to have been less densely occupied than the region to the north of the Danube, but some contemporary finds from settlements, hoards and other cemeteries are known, and Bronze Age finds have occasionally been found in the area, hinting at the existence of contemporary sites nearby.

The first Bronze Age graves of this cemetery were discovered in 1932 during building works. Since the middle part of the cemetery was destroyed in 1967, graves from this area were not fully documented, although some of the
### Grave constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flat graves (Flachgrab)</th>
<th>Burial mounds (Hügelsgrab)</th>
<th>Cylinder graves (Zylindergrab)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>131 burials in 92 mounds</td>
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### Burial practices

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Inhumations</th>
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### Types of cremation burials

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<th>Cremation graves on ground surface (Brandfläche)</th>
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<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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### Locations of cremation burials

<table>
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<tr>
<th>In situ cremation graves (Bastum)</th>
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<td>23</td>
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### Grave constructions in relation to the Bronze Age surface

<table>
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<th>under ground</th>
<th>on ground surface</th>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>46</td>
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Table 1. Burial forms and grave constructions.

Bronze objects were rescued. Professional rescue work began around that time and resulted in the systematic excavation of the southern part of the cemetery. Over time, a number of archaeologists were involved, including F. Hampel and H. Friesinger as site directors. Excavations continued intermittently until 1973. The southern and western edges of the cemetery extend into the inhabited areas of the modern town of Pitten and therefore remain undefined. Trial trenches have established that the cemetery continues some distance to the north. Towards the east, however, the limits of the cemetery appear to have been reached, as a contemporary ditch and a stone layer suggest a barrier against high water or a deliberate delineation of the cemetery.

Thus, while the total extension of the cemetery is unknown, it is clear that it was a substantial and, at least in parts, a well-defined site. The excavations have recovered a large part of the original cemetery (221 graves), and the superb preservation conditions (especially in the southern part where floods have left protective layers of silt up to two meters deep) mean that many details are available for analysis.

Much of the data about Pitten is published in the Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission (edited by H. Friesinger) and is therefore accessible for further study. Various specialist analyses, for instance on the geology, the animal bones, the chronology of the bronze finds and the

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6 Hampel, Kerchler, Benkovsky-Pivovarová, s. fn. 3, 9 ff., 120.

7 Schluche, s. fn. 5.

skeletal remains, have been published, while a number of general studies have used the data from Pitten to explore aspects of Bronze Age society. Since the excavation data has been thoroughly published, a brief summary of the main characteristics of relevance to our research will suffice.

The chronology of the cemetery is complex and various versions exist. Blischke’s four phase chronological system (MD I–III, SD I) will be used in this study, as it is based on stratigraphic observations in combination with bronze typology. In this scheme the chronological framework for Pitten covers the whole Middle Bronze Age. The earliest graves date to Bronze Age BI or MD I and the Koszider respectively the Lochham-horizon, which corresponds with an absolute date of around 1600 BC. The latest graves belong to Bronze Age C2 or SD II and can be dated to the transition to the early Urnfield period, from the mid 14th to the mid 13th century BC. The cemetery would have been in use for some 250 years, and it has been estimated that it represented a living community of approximately 31 persons living at any one time.

The main publication of the cemetery has given substantial attention to the classification of the different burial forms and grave constructions found. The publication proposes the following principal differentiation based on construction form and burial practice (Table 1).

In the documented part of the cemetery, there were 235 burials in 195 Bronze Age grave structures, plus four platforms. As shown in Table 1, the burials appear in a number of forms, some common within the cemetery and others rare. In terms of our research questions these differences can in principle be seen to represent three different approaches to the construction of a grave: i) A pit is excavated to hold the grave and associated constructions, as exemplified by shaft graves and some of the urn graves, ii) the surface is used for the funeral as exemplified by cremation pyres in situ, or iii) a construction is made above ground either of soil (e.g. burial mounds) or stone and soil (e.g. cremation platforms) and various grave constructions are placed within or on top of them.

While variation and mixture characterise each of these approaches, there is particular variation amongst the constructions built out of soil and stone (Figure 1). For instance, while most burial mounds are very small, usually less than a meter diameter, and contain only one burial, larger burial mounds containing more than one burial and with a diameter of up to 10 m also occur. This variation has been paid

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12 BUSCHEK, s. fn. 11.
16 Reinecke, s. fn. 12.
17 Hasel, s. fn. 13.
19 Teischler-Nicola, s. fn. 10, 219.
20 In this text, 'cremation' will be used to refer to both, the event of cremation as a funerary rite, and to cremation as a burial form. The total number may vary between different analyses depending upon the quality of the data set. Since total numbers are usually relatively small, the percentage given is primarily used to outline trends.
little attention in the published report\textsuperscript{21}. There is, however, clearly a significant difference in terms of the monumentality of single constructions and the role of the single monument within the overall cemetery, as will be discussed later. Similarly, while many of the stone constructions follow familiar grave designs, such as stone packing, cairns, and stone linings, there are some forms that are more unusual and suggestive of the development of specific rituals and distinct attitudes to the body as well as desired architectural form. These are the cylinder graves, graves with door openings, and the so-called cremation platforms. These constructions are associated with the south-western part of the cemetery and seem to belong to the later phases of constructions; they will therefore be further considered in the discussion of the spatial and temporal layout.

In addition to these variations it is important to note that many of the grave constructions show signs of change in use or extensions, and 21% of the burial mounds (19 out of 92) have more than one interment. It is also important to stress that the cemetery shows considerable variation in the treatment of the body itself (Figure 2). This includes bodies being placed on top of constructions, being encircled by such constructions, being placed secondarily in multi-layered burial mounds, and early incidences of cremation. There is also considerable variation in the form of the cremation burials, and although cremation becomes more dominant in the later phases of the cemetery, inhumation does not disappear until phase four (Table 2).

One of the interesting differences in the construction of the cremation burials is how the cremated bones are treated. At Pitten it seems that in more than 80% of the graves the place of cremation and the final location of the burnt bones are identical, i.e. the cremated remains are left in situ (although the bones might be scraped together or piled up) and become the loci for the grave construction. The cremated bones, together with other remains of the funerary ritual such as charcoal, burnt soil, and possibly elements of the dress, are at the same time treated in a number of different ways to be discussed later.

Due to the specific aims of this paper, the artefacts found in the cemetery will only be discussed in terms of their connection with the burials and their inclusion in the funerary rituals and bodily practices. A brief outline of the finds therefore suffices. The grave goods in general consist of personal ornaments (common types, such as pins, and exceptional ones like the diadems and the cruciform decorative plates), some weapons and a few tools. Benkovský-Pivovarová has published the typology and chronology of the bronze artefacts\textsuperscript{22}. The pottery has been catalogued\textsuperscript{23}, but the distribution of various types within the cemetery has not

\textsuperscript{21} Hampl, Kerchler, Benkovský-Pivovarová, s. ffn. 3, 16.
\textsuperscript{22} Benkovský-Pivovarová, s. ffn. 9, 23 f.
yet been published. The pottery forms include jars, bowls, cups and storage vessels. Both fine and coarseware were used, and there are many pots with simple plastic or incised geometric decoration.

The variations in burial practices can be used to investigate the introduction of cremation as a regular burial rite within this cemetery. In doing this we will focus on different scales of praxis, which are directly linked to the burial of an individual and thus reveal attitudes towards the status of bodies as individual substances. One scale is the spatial layout of the cemetery and in particular the relationship between inhumation and cremation burials within the context of decisions made about where to place graves and whether explicit associations were sought between different kinds of constructions. This will include attention towards the range of physical constructions used within the cemetery. Though this, the analysis aims to explore the relationships between or departures from different funerary rituals in terms of the physical form of the construction with which it is associated. At another, more individual scale, we shall investigate how the body is placed within these structures and what associations are made between bodies, their parts and objects. In addition, subsidiary activities such as feasting or the deposition of offerings will also be discussed as they provide important supplementary insight into the range of further activities through which beliefs may have been given attention and manifestation. Clearly, the site shows complex intermingling between two different approaches to the treatment of the death during burial. It is through this merging of ideas and in the fusing of different objectives and practices that we can begin to investigate how a local community came to develop its understanding of what a cremation burial might be – not detached and in isolation from influences beyond the local area but practiced and understood in resonance with established ‘burial technologies’. Furthermore, in this development of new agreements and understandings of how people were buried, the earlier inhumation practices were not merely replaced and rejected but were also in themselves rethought, with social prestige and positions probably being invested in these changes. It is these entangled processes that we shall explore in the following.

2. Space, age, gender, and status: the social layout of the cemetery

It is reasonable to propose that we would see some clear differences in the use of the cemetery if the introduction of cremation was due to an external agent, such as migration or other changes in the population, or if it were the result of radical ideological changes. For instance, migrations would most likely result in new cemeteries being established
rather than in the continuation of existing ones, while one may expect radical ideological rupture to be expressed in distinct changes and segregations.

It is therefore important to investigate whether and how inhumation and cremation burials at Pitten are separated from each other. Inhumation graves occur more frequently in the northern and eastern parts of the cemetery and cremation graves are more densely distributed in the south-western part (see Figure 3), but this differentiation is not sufficient to suggest a distinct separation between the two, as cremations are found scattered throughout the cemetery. The first point to notice is therefore that the spatial layout of the cemetery does not separate the two burial forms from each other in a rigid manner.

Another set of variables through which segregation could be performed is the social characteristics of the deceased, in particular age, gender and status. In short, was cremation in Pitten used for certain social groups, as is sometimes suggested to be the case at the transition to cremation in other parts of Bronze Age Europe?

**Fig. 3. Burial forms in Pitten.**

Palaeodemographic analysis shows that the cemetery population consisted of roughly equal numbers of males and females, with 47% infants and juveniles, 33% adults and 20% mature and older individuals. This means that the use of inhumation versus cremation amongst males and females and amongst adults and children should roughly correspond with these numbers; decisions about burial practices were otherwise informed by these variables.

The age groups are almost evenly represented in the different grave forms and burial practices. The ratio between inhumation and cremation is 44%:56% for sub-adults, 39%:61% for adults, and 50%:50% for mature individuals (see also Table 2). It is interesting to note that the age group that differs most from the average is Infans II where only 32% are cremations. The small number of graves in question (25) and the problems associated with the aging of cremated bones mean that this pattern should be treated with some caution; but it is interesting that this age range may represent the time of transition from childhood to adulthood and thus may represent a group where special attention is given to mark their social status. Inhumation would provide a more traditional as well as less ambiguous way of presenting the body. The spatial distribution of the various age groups shows that each is present throughout the cemetery. It is worth noting, however, that while the ratio of the age groups within the different grave forms (flat graves versus burial mounds and cylinder graves) does not reveal any pattern, the distribution map shows that infants in the northern part of the cemetery were most commonly buried in small clusters around, but not inside, the bigger burial mounds. In contrast, in the southern part a substantial number of infant burials were placed in clusters within the large burial mounds and around mound 163.

Overall, these are minor differences and they may be due to a variety of factors, only some of which directly relate to the introduction of cremation. It seems, for instance, that while age was a significant factor during the early phases of the cemetery, with mature individuals given a privileged position, in the later phase age does not seem to determine who receives formal burial, and children become a more distinct group within the cemetery population. Thus, even if the differentiation of the age group Infans II is real, the data as such does not support the proposition that the distinction between inhumation and cremation is a result of...

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26. Age groups according to TESCHLER-NICOLA, s.f. 10, 205: Infans 1 (0–7 years), Infans II (8–14), Juvenis (15–20), Adultus (21–40), Maturus (41–60), Senilis (60–80), Adultus in the wider sense (21–80).
27. 26 cremations, but only four inhumations could be classified as adult, which leads to a distorted account for mature age group when comparing against burial form.
Table 3. The proportion of cremations to inhumations and flat graves to burial mounds in relation to the age groups in the cemetery.

different age groups responding differently to new ideas (Table 3).

It is common for Middle Bronze Age cemeteries from central Europe to show gender differentiation, and Nönnig analysed clearly gender differentiation within the cemetery of Pitten.\textsuperscript{28} Weapons are exclusively found in male graves, as are tools such as razors and tweezers. Male individuals can have a single pin or even a dagger from the age of around four with additional weapons and tools added during the juvenile-adult transition.\textsuperscript{29} Females are marked by a pair of pins from the age of around twelve and jewellery for the head, chest and legs are exclusive to females.\textsuperscript{30} Nönnig also suggests that there were additional subdivisions based on age, as the juvenile-adult age transition between 12 and 20 years of age shows a clear break for both males and females in the equipment associated with the deceased.

It is therefore relevant to investigate whether this explicit differentiation between male and female was a significant variable in the introduction of cremation, i.e. was cremation associated with a particular gender or were similar numbers of males and females cremated? Although the relevant data is limited, it suggests that gender was not crucial for determining who was inhumed and who cremated, and we can propose that on this site gender differentiation was not maintained through the use of explicitly segregating burial rites.\textsuperscript{31} There were, nonetheless, some reflections of gender differentiation in the use of the different burial rites. For instance, while the bodies in general are not strongly aligned in any particular direction, there is an interesting difference in terms of gender. According to Teschler-Nicola 73.7% of male inhumation graves were orientated SE–NW and 60% of female inhumation graves were orientated NW–SE, i.e. there is a tendency for male and female graves to be orientated in opposite directions. In comparison, the cremation graves (the alignment could be assessed for 80 out of 154 cremations) show greater similarity with 90% orientated N–S.\textsuperscript{32} There was also a stronger tendency for males to be buried in burialmounds/cylinder graves (57%) while women dominate in flat graves (64%), and the ratio of females to males increases in the later phases when cremations become more popular. These differences are, nonetheless, less explicit than the engendered use of objects. On this basis we suggest that the funerary ritual itself was not used as a prime gender marker. Rather, the enactment of gender differentiation within the mortuary sphere took place primarily during the preparation of the corpse prior to the burial, as it was at this stage that links between gender-specific objects and an individual were confirmed. The choice of burial form was clearly informed by several variables, but gender on its own was not a dominant factor.

The finds from Pitten have been used by Nönnig in a detailed study of social stratification.\textsuperscript{33} She calculated social indices based on a range of variables including finds and grave constructions, and on this basis the social stratification and wealth expressed within the cemetery was analyzed.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{28} Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 190.
\textsuperscript{29} Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 78.
\textsuperscript{30} Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 191.
\textsuperscript{31} Amongst the securely sexed bodies five females and four males were cremated. Including ‘probable’ males and females the ratio becomes 26:15.
\textsuperscript{32} Teschler-Nicola, s. fn. 10, 129.
\textsuperscript{33} Nönnig, s. fn. 11.
\textsuperscript{34} Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 146 ff.
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<th>[n]</th>
<th>Female [n]</th>
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<tr>
<td>MD I</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>SD I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
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Table 4. Calculation of social indices over the cemetery phases (after Nönnig s. fn. 11).

She proposed that there is no obvious norm dictating who was buried in the burial mounds in terms of sex, age and status and suggested that the most likely scenario was that the cemetery was composed of groups of individuals based on descent or family links who were buried close to each other\textsuperscript{30}. However, she did not explicitly discuss social status with regard to the choice of cremation versus inhumation, and it therefore remains to be clarified how social status and choice of burial form interacted at this cemetery.

It is to be expected that cremation graves will appear poorer than inhumation graves, since the body and its equipment and ornamentation are transformed and often destroyed during the cremation. Similarly, social indices based on grave form including the amount of resources and time taken, most often assign inhumation graves higher 'values' than cremation graves – an obvious difference that at times has led scholars to assume that cremations were for poorer individuals and that their introduction represents a democratising period or a time of increased social equality. In contrast, some scholars assign cremation burials a higher 'value' because of the additional effort of gathering wood\textsuperscript{31}. If, however, inhumation and cremation represent different sets of norms and beliefs, including possibly different reasons for the inclusion of objects in the funeral, then the burial forms cannot be compared in such a direct way.

In response to the question of whether the people being cremated represent a different social group from those receiving inhumation we have to consider social indices based on finds alone, and even that must be done carefully.

Nönnig calculated find index counts for the objects from the graves\textsuperscript{32}. Her analysis shows that the average find index is significantly higher for females than for males (23.17 versus 10.22). The small numbers make any pattern inconclusive, but it is nonetheless interesting to follow this differentiation over the life of the cemetery as the average value increases through time, due to the remarkable increase in the value for females (see Table 5). Her analysis also suggested that the social index increases with the age of the individual until adulthood, thereafter it begins to decrease (Table 4).

\textsuperscript{30} Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 64.
\textsuperscript{31} Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 153.
\textsuperscript{32} This is based on the number of objects plus the number of types divided by the number of objects, and this number is divided by two and expressed as a value from 0 to 100 (Nönnig, s. fn. 11, 152).
Table 6. Female graves with two and more pins and additional jewellery (ordered by burial rite and age of individual).

Contrasting burial mounds and flat graves, it is striking how similar the graves appear in terms of their finds (14.47 as opposed to 15.00). Surprisingly, the analysis shows cremation burials to be slightly better equipped than inhumations: 16.29 for cremations (65 graves) and 12.83 for inhumations (56 graves). Interestingly, the average of the six urn burials included in the data set is very high (23.76), and although the urn automatically contributes to the value, it is clear that the objects placed in the urns were at least equivalent to those in the other cremation graves.

Some of the objects associated with bodies can be interpreted as symbols, in particular status symbols, and as specific markers of differentiation along gender and age. The presence of such objects within the two burial forms can therefore be used to add to the investigation of whether cremation was used equally by all social groups. Generally, a pair of pins seems to have acted as a common female ‘marker’ used for women on the threshold of adulthood (from around 14 years of age) and older, while single pins are less gender and age specific and are found in graves of younger female individuals as well as in male graves. 29 of the 45 sexed female individuals were found with a pin. Of these, 16 women had a pair of pins, five were found with only one pin and one had three pins. A few adult females had two pins together with additional dress elements that emphasise the head²⁶, and pins in general seem to accompany graves that are richly equipped (Table 5).

The proportion of burials with two pins as opposed to one increases from phase MD II to III. As there is no change in the demographic composition of the cemetery, Blischke interprets this as a higher proportion of younger females gaining access to the particular status marked by two pins. Blischke concludes that an important social change took place between these two phases²⁷. However, overall the data summarised in table 5 suggests that the choice of cremation versus inhumation was not influenced by a woman’s dress and therefore, presumably, neither by her status (Table 6).

There are less male-specific objects to investigate. Status seemed to be expressed through differences in the association with weapons (including the use of daggers from an early age), tools, and toiletries. Again, the question is whether such differences relate to the kind of burial practice that was used. About half of all the graves that could be

²⁶ NONNIG, s. fn. 11, 77.
²⁷ BLISCHKE, s. fn. 11, 240.
classified were equipped with one pin, with a smaller number having a dagger. Other types occur each in a single case (see Table 7). Single pins are found in both cremation and inhumation graves, as is the case with daggers, although daggers show stronger association with inhumation graves. The graves with combinations of objects tend to be inhumations, only a few are cremations. Overall, male status as expressed through the association with bronze objects seemed to be of limited importance in the choice of burial practice (Table 7).

It is clear from the above analyses that the introduction of cremation in various ways intersects with other social concerns as expressed in the differentiation of people based on age, gender and status. It is, however, equally clear that the social discourses through which such differences were articulated were not in themselves the vehicle for the introduction of cremation. The new way of treating the deceased was not 'hijacked' as a means of making simple statements about differences within the community; the reasons why some people were inhumed and others cremated were not based on simple principles of segregation and differentiation. Understanding why and how cremation gradually became the dominant practice in this cemetery therefore needs a more detailed study of how burial practices shifted and were transformed.

3. Phasing: the cemetery’s biography

In order to appreciate the actual temporal topography and physical constructions within which changes took place, it is necessary to look beyond the two dimensional plan of the cemetery and obvious social groupings. This means turning to the stratigraphy and chronology of the cemetery as a reflection of how activities and changing concerns affected each other through time. It is when we begin to investigate the ‘biography’ of the cemetery that the construction details reveal a far more complex series of building phases, responses, re-uses and adaptations than the focus upon inhumation or cremation alone would suggest. It also shows that distinct constructions such as the so-called cremation platforms often only share characteristics at a simple formal level rather than in how they were used and what their construction was responding to. With the example of the platforms in mind, it is significant to recognise that rigid classification may not be suitable for what is happening at
Pitten. It seems that Pitten, in contrast to nearby Early Bronze Age cemeteries, was a cemetery in which prescriptive normative understandings of how a burial should be constructed were being abandoned. On the basis of the four stage phasing proposed by Blischke⁶⁰, the gradual changes in how and where different constructions were placed and what may have affected their location and form can be outlined.

The number of graves that can be allocated to the first phase (MD I) is limited (nine graves). Most of these are inhumations in addition to one urn grave and one cremation-pyre, and there is a clear division between the northern and southern parts of the cemetery, with relatively shallow shaft-graves placed in the former and burial mounds erected in the latter (see Figure 4). The limited number of graves means that further comparisons must be considered inconclusive, but it is interesting that while the shaft-graves by definition are inhumations and are used for adults or mature men as well as women, the burial mounds suggest a wider age range and possibly a dominance of women/girls. The only male grave (grave 163 f) in the southern part of the cemetery is an urn burial placed centrally under the largest mound. This is an unusually early occurrence of this burial form, and it may indicate that in this case the introduction of cremation was associated with a rift from an alternative contemporary practice of using shaft-graves. It should be noted, therefore, that the difference between the shaft-graves and burial mounds is not just a matter of degree, as these methods of burial represent substantially different ideas about the relationship between the body and the earth and soil. One may describe it as a difference between 'being in' and 'being under', with all the different implications this may have for the idea of a resting place.

During the next phase (MD II), we see a substantial expansion in both the northern and the southern area (a total of 38 graves have been allocated to this phase). The majority of these graves are inhumations; in addition there are three cremation pyres, one cremation pit, and one urn grave. Interestingly, during this phase the difference between the two parts declines to some degree and the importance of the southern part seems to become stressed. In the northern part this is expressed through two burial mounds being erected over earlier shaft-graves, and through the expansion of the cemetery towards the west with the addition of new burial mounds there. It is, however, noteworthy that in the area between these parts, shaft-graves were still being constructed and located in loose linear arrangements or in pairs (Figure 4). The cremation pyres were placed in the same central area. In the southern part we see reuse of all the existing burial mounds together with the construction of new and slightly smaller mounds (these are still generally larger than the ones in the northern part)⁶¹. These mounds are placed in-between the existing ones with two larger mounds erected towards the east (see Figure 5). During this phase we begin to see the use of the mounds for multiple interments as well as clear indications of bodies being aligned with each other in a manner that suggests that they were responding to one another. In burial mound 20, for example, two adult females were buried parallel to one another, half a metre apart, while in grave 15, a mature male and a 12-14 year old child of unknown sex were found three metres apart but with the same orientation. There are also, however, cases where the orientation of the skeletons is opposite. In burial mound 26, for instance, two skeletons were found in almost parallel stone grave-chambers. One of these, an adult female, was orientated N–W, whilst the other, a juvenile male, was orientated S–E. Whether the bodies are emphasised as similar or opposite, it is clear that the burials found within one mound were often buried in a manner that stressed a comparison with the other interment. This practice of alignment of bodies continues in the next phase.

⁶⁰ BLISCHKE, s. fn. 11, 204 ff.
⁶¹ The average size of the burial mounds changes through time, in phase one it is 4 m, phase two 4.5 m, phase three 4.7 m, and phase four 4.7 m; the biggest mound 16 with 10 m, and it was in use through all the phases.
It seems that a kind of dynamic interaction or tension existed between the shaft-graves and burial mounds at this time and, whilst the former are still made, one gets the impression that burial mounds gained greater significance throughout the cemetery during this phase. This predominance of the burial mounds continues during subsequent phases.

In phase three (MD III) a number of extremely interesting developments can be observed (see Figure 6). 50 graves are associated with this phase, of which 35 are cremations. Shaft-graves are not used any more and inhumations are now found only in mounds. In the northern part of the cemetery most of the burial mounds from the previous phase continue in use and new ones are added in the area which was previously used for shaft-graves. In addition, cremation pyres continue to be found and may be placed in pairs (e.g. graves 17 and 21 and graves 4 and 30). In the southern part, two of the three burial mounds from phase two are still in use, but we see a shift in distribution, with new mounds erected to the west of the existing distribution and north of burial mound 163, and the most easterly part of the cemetery going out of use. At the same time, cremation pyres become common with a substantial cluster around mound 163. It is interesting to note the high frequency of children in this cluster (six out of eight identified bodies). During this phase cremation graves become common in both parts of the cemetery, although slightly different internal patterning is suggested by the clustering of cremation graves around the old mound 163 in the southern part and the more widespread location of cremations in the northern part.

The construction of the so-called 'cremation platforms' seems to take place between phase three and four. There are four cremation platforms (see Figure 7), and they introduce an innovative and different architectural form to the repertoire of the site. The special role of these constructions is indicated by their location within the cemetery – they are found in the south-western part skirting the boundary of the cemetery, and emphasising the continuous central role of mound 163. It is worth describing these platforms in some details in order to gain a clearer idea of their role within the cemetery and their potential contribution towards changing practices and understandings of the dead body.

The platforms have both significant similarities to and differences from the other constructions in terms of their building technique and appearance. These constructions were neither built around a body nor designed to receive and contain one, as they were solid stone constructions with a flat plastered top. Furthermore, although they have been labelled 'cremation platforms', the evidence of burning is ambiguous, and it is not entirely clear whether they were all used for cremation or whether some were used for other ritual purposes and display.

The variations between the individual platforms are interesting, and although the publication does not focus upon such details it is nonetheless clear that considerable care was invested in their construction. The variation in size is small,
ranging from 3.5 x 3.8 m to 3 x 5.5 m, but in plan they differ from almost round (platform 3), to rectangular (platform 1 and 2), to vaguely D-shaped (platform 4). Their interior was made of a mixture of small stones and soil, while the stones used for the wall and the top show differences in colours, type and textures that seemed to have been chosen deliberately and carefully used in a manner that would have resulted in distinct visual effects. The outside walls of the platforms were built to a height of 50 to 80 cm, and were made of carefully placed stones. For platform 1 light limestone was used for the outer wall to create a white and yellowish impression, while the top surface was plastered with green slate, creating a contrast in colour and texture. The top surface of platform 2 was covered evenly in small flat stones, while platform 3 was built of blocks of various kinds of stones, among them limestone, slate and erratic. The walls of platform 4 were built of stones of various colours, and their shades of yellow, red, grey, brown and green must have created a colourful pattern while its top was covered evenly with small and medium sized stones of every variety.

The careful construction aiming at creating a striking appearance suggests that the platforms had a particular importance. They were not graves in the traditional sense of structures containing bodies. At the same time, the lack of cremation remains together with the limited amount of debris makes the interpretation of these structures as cremation platforms problematic. The top surface of platform 1 had a slight depression, but there are no traces of fire. Platform 3 was covered by a 10-15 cm thick layer of soil, but it was only the top 3 cm that were coloured by fire\textsuperscript{a}, this seems to suggest that the platform itself was not used for cremation. Only platform 4 shows clear evidence of the burning on the platform itself: a 10 cm thick layer of soil with intensive evidence of fire (even the stones have been coloured red) suggesting exposure to fire several times or once for a long duration. It seems likely, therefore, that the platforms were built for some kind of display or ritual that did not necessarily involve the cremation itself. It is therefore significant that the stratigraphic sequence shows these were short-lived constructions suggesting may be a short period of experimenting with ritual practices.

During phase four (SD 1), to which 20 cremation pyres have been allocated, a number of grave constructions were in use, and variations were now expressed in the grave construction rather than in different treatments of the body. In the northern part of the cemetery, four cremations were placed within available space, while in the southern part a

\textsuperscript{a} HAMPL, KERCHLER, BENKOVKY-PIVOVAROVÁ, s. n. 3, 82.
have a carefully constructed wall that encircles the place of the cremation. The inner chambers are almost rectangular, usually about 2 m long and between 0.6 and 1.3 m wide, with round inner corners. They can be well lined and clearly defined, as is the case of grave 189 (see Figure 8). The tops of the cylinder graves are flat and even, and their shape is round to oval. Their flat roof must have been supported by some other structure and there is evidence for an inner construction (probably a wooden chamber) and stone structures erected around and over it. In four cases an entrance or door opening was included in the design of the grave. The cylinder graves were built of various kinds of limestone, gravel and slate. The outer layer was in most cases constructed of large stones up to approximately 60 cm in diameter. These graves are thus constructed in a way that creates a body-sized space around the cremation. Unfortunately, comparisons between the extent of the cremation pyre and the size of the chambers have generally not been provided in the publication. It is nevertheless clear that the cremation pyre in most cases was larger than the space built for it. The best example is grave 189, where red burnt soil was recorded extending more than half a meter from the door opening to the grave. This raises interesting questions about how a part of the pyre became reconstituted to house the remains within a grave.

The constructions with entrances or door openings, including lintels and 'door posts', also reflect the invention of a more elaborate form of grave architecture. They raise intriguing questions about access to the deceased while continuing the emphasis upon visually striking constructions that was first seen in the building of the platforms. Ten constructions have some kind of opening, and they all have a number of distinct similarities. They are all graves for adults, and they are all orientated N-S (although their actual entrances may be in opposite directions). In addition, there is usually a cluster of sherds in front of the door opening (see Figure 9). A chamber was built around the site of the cremation, presumably of wood and further reinforced by various stone constructions including the laying of a roof, sometimes using large limestone slabs. Particular care was shown in the construction of the doors and this often involved the use of especially large stone slabs (up to 90 cm long in the case of grave 121) as lintels or posts.

The stone chambers with the doors all 'housed' in situ cremations, and they seem to have been built around the

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43 It is worth mentioning that layers of silt seem to have covered many of the less distinct constructions from phase three by the time the graves of phase four were built. While the duration of this silting episode is not known, it may explain the concentration of graves on the slightly higher ground to the west.

44 HAMPL, KERCHLER, BENKOVSKY-PIVOVAROVA, s. fn 3, 114.

45 In grave 121 an adult and an infant were found together (HAMPL, KERCHLER, BENKOVSKY-PIVOVAROVA, s. fn 3, 74).
cremation, framing and defining it. The profile of grave 147, for example, strongly suggests that the cremation took place before the stone construction was built. In some cases, such as grave 121, the layer of burnt soil continued outside the built structure. The doors suggest that, at least for a while, some kind of relationship may have been maintained with the deceased. These constructions have interesting implications about variation in the definition of what constituted the body.

It is further worth noting how during phase four the development of new grave forms in various ways drew upon some of the characteristics of the platforms, for example in their careful use of stones. It is also striking to observe that the location of burial mound 163 (the mound erected already in phase one and containing the first urn burial) continued to be respected. Throughout the duration of the cemetery, burial mound 163 clearly played a significant central role, and this seems to have become even stronger in the latest phases where it is clearly used as a reference point so that the graves, and especially innovative elements, become organised around it.

4. The treatment of the cremated body

An additional layer of insight can now be gained through looking at the treatment of the body itself. The variability in how the different elements of the single cremation, such as the cremated bones, the charcoal, the burnt earth and the artefacts, were treated after the cremation itself is of central importance to the analysis of how beliefs were linked to the change in burial practice. Two elements are of particular interest: firstly the status of the bones themselves and secondly the role that objects and constructions had in the final treatment and transformation of the body.

The size, colouring and hardness of the bones suggest a minimum cremation temperature of 800 to 900°C, a proposition supported by the fact that in some cases bronze objects have melted onto the bones. Detailed data, such as cracks on the bones, also provides hints about the placing of the body on the funerary pyre. It seems that the bones were still fleshed when cremated, and that some parts of the body, especially the long bones, were sometimes exposed to slightly lower temperatures. It has been suggested that the bodies were placed on their backs on the funerary pyre, because parts of the spinal column, the pelvis and the scapula are best preserved, whereas the ventral parts of the skeleton are less well preserved. Teschner-Nicola, who investigated the bones, suggests that the evidence shows thorough knowledge of and experience with cremation techniques. The presence of burnt metal suggests that in many cases the body was dressed before being cremated and it may even have been accompanied by pottery – in these cases the lay-out of the cremation may have followed similar schemata to those used in the preparation of traditional inhumations. In other cases, the evidence suggests that the body would have been literally reassembled after cremation, either at the pyre or in another location, and that during this process items of dress and pottery may have been linked to the cremated remains, thus apparently confirming their substantiality.

What happens to the physical remains after the cremation is revealing in terms of what kind of substance they are seen to represent. A range of practices can be discerned, suggesting that varied and mixed understandings were involved. The cremated remains have been chemically transformed, shrunk, broken and deformed. However, fragments of bone, for example pieces of the skull, the vertebral column, the teeth and the long-bones were probably still identifiable to the Bronze Age community, and it is therefore important to investigate how these remains were treated.

There are essentially two responses through which the cremated remains become re-established or relocated as a body that has to be buried. One is by defining and treating the in-situ remains as a body and making them the focus for the burial, the other is through the moving of the remains to another, final destination.

Of the 154 cremation burials, a large proportion (123 graves) was in situ, meaning that the pyre itself became the grave. Here the soil underneath the human remains shows clear traces of fire. The length of the pyres varies from 0.8 to 5 meters, with an average of 2 m, and the width ranges from 0.25 to 3.90 meters with an average of 1.25 m (based on 109 graves). The shape varies, with the smallest cremation pyres often being round and of irregular shape, and most of the larger ones being rectangular. While the largest pyre is 17.55 m², the average size is 2.96 m², and 39 pyres covered an area of less than 1.5 m². The in situ remains were either left without any further elaboration, or else various constructions, often similar to those used for inhumations, were built around and over them. Through this, a particular part of the cremation pyre is usually confined or reconstituted as the place of the body.

The relocation of the remains after cremation only takes place in a minority of cases, and these clearly do not constitute a coherent alternative practice but rather a somewhat diffuse merging of different understandings of the body. There are five examples of cremations being placed in pits.

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46 HAMPI, KERCHLER, BUKOVSKY-PYUNUKOVA, s. fn. 3, 75.
47 TESCHLER-NICOLA, s. fn. 10, 130, 137.
The need to choose what constitutes the body is explicit in such cases, where parts have to be selected from the pyre. It is therefore interesting that the weight of the bones for some of these graves is surprisingly low (as low as 12 g in contrast to the average from the cremation burials in Pitken in general, which is 308 g). This may suggest that only some of the remains were needed to represent the body, the completeness of the burnt remains no longer seems crucial for the funerary rite. It is therefore also interesting that there is no evidence of particular body parts being selected for these graves. The moving and subsequent burial of remains away from the cremation pyre suggests a fundamentally different understanding of the cremated remains; the body becomes represented by some parts rather than treated and confined as an integral 'whole'. In this selection and separation of parts of the body from its cremation pyre we see similarities with the new practice of urn burials, which also involves a separation between the cremation and the burial.

These examples of relocation suggest the development of an additional stage in the burial ritual which included the selection of elements to represent the body and their burial. It is usually taken for granted that the stages between the cremation of the body, the gathering of the bones and the placing of the bones in other contexts, such as pits or urns, were continuous and took place one after the other as a coherent flow of actions. There is, however, no evidence about the time involved or the rhythm of these events. It is likely that some time should be allowed for the funerary pyre to cool down before the ashes, charcoal and bones could be handled and it is possible that the gathering of the bones took place at a later stage. The green bronze discouraging of some bones in graves where no bronze objects were present adds an intriguing stage to this scenario as it suggests that bronze objects were removed after some time from the remains as they lay in the pyre and that some of the bones were later collected and buried elsewhere, or the final burial was later reopened and the bronzes removed.

There is much evidence to suggest that cremation did not challenge the idea of there still being a body present that needed to be defined or confined. This is achieved in various ways. It seems that the body must have been displayed on the funerary pyre, dressed and accompanied with grave goods, similar to the display of an inhumation. In the plan of grave 110, for example, the placing of the two pins at the shoulder region, a finger ring in the middle body region, and pottery towards the head and the side of the body can still be observed after the cremation. It may be that in such cases the dress elements were somewhat rearranged after the cremation, before the cremation was covered. However, this only confirms that the remains of the body are re-constituted in the form it had prior to the cremation: dress elements might be readjusted or placed to match their position on the displayed body.

Another way of re-forming the body is seen in the frequent practice of pushing and sweeping the burnt bones together and even shaping parts of the remains; through such action fragmentated and disjointed remains are reconnected and the body regains a resemblance of corporeality. An excellent example of the attempt to regain body shape is grave 166. The cremation site itself appeared as an almost rectangular area of 2.5 by 1 m, but the human bones with fragments of a broken pin and charcoal were placed between two neatly aligned parallel rows of stones along the centre. A vessel with traces of secondary firing was found among the human remains, while broken pottery from various vessels was found outside the stone rows, suggesting that ancillary activities took place around the grave. In grave 192 the attempt to reform the body goes a step further: at the far end of the burial chamber of this cylinder grave, opposite the entrance, was a vessel filled with cremated bones next to a small cup. Further cremated bones, mixed with soil and charcoal, were spread over the floor of the chamber but concentrated in a linear arrangement of three heaps: one in the centre, one next to the entrance, and one at the far end. In this case, the vessel was used to contain cremated bones, but not all of the bones were placed in it; on the contrary, the cremated bones were also used to suggest the presence of a body on the floor of the chamber. As there is now evidence to suggest that more than one individual was buried in this grave, it seems that two different ideas about how the body should be presented and contained were being expressed here.

The body size and shape can also be re-defined by building grave structures on top of the site of the cremation. These constructions similarly reveal that the body is thought of as explicit, coherent, and corporeal even if not all its constitutive parts are collected. Primarily, what characterises these constructions is that instead of simply covering the

\[49\] The excavators refer to those primary cremation burials as *Brantflächenbestattung*. If the cremation took place on a spatially separated cremation place, i.e., when secondary cremations or cremation deposits are concerned, they are called *Ursteinbestattung* or *Brantflächenbestattung nach Verbrennung auf Urtina* (Hampl, Kerchner, Benkovský-Pivovarová, s. ftn. 3, 16).

\[50\] Tschikler-Nicolai, s. ftn. 10, 150, 152, 175.

\[51\] Hampl, Kerchner, Benkovský-Pivovarová, s. ftn. 3, 67, Taf. 48.

\[52\] Hampl, Kerchner, Benkovský-Pivovarová, s. ftn. 3, 101.

\[53\] Hampl, Kerchner, Benkovský-Pivovarová, s. ftn. 3, 115 f.
cremations over with earth and soil, we see different kinds of body-sized and body-shaped containers and chambers built over a part of the pyre. Since the extension of the cremation pyre is usually larger than the construction built over it this clearly suggests that the size and proportions of the construction are adjusted to what would have been needed for a body (like in an inhumation) rather than simply covering up the remains of a funerary pyre. The chambers were constructed to reconstitute the bodies after cremation, to shape them and define them, and to give them a new “house”. Doors, lintels and other characteristic architectural features might be used to underline the close connection to the architecture of the living and express new ideas about the dead in a familiar, readable form.

Gathering bones together and placing them in pits cut into the remains of the cremation pyre are additional ways of redefining the body. This practice combines close ties to the actual location of the cremation with emerging ideas about further treatment of the body that requires the selection, collection and reassembling of the bones. It is the creation of a specific place designated for the deposition of the bones that signals a change in the understanding of what cremation is about – an understanding in which the cremated remains must be separated from the pyre in order to be redefined, enclosed, and buried. Some graves in Pitten show this transitional practice. Grave 155, for example, is an unusually large cremation site (3 by 2 m) with well preserved traces of the funerary pyre. A small, round pit (40 cm diameter and 20 cm deep) containing the cremated bones was dug into the middle of the pyre. One pin and three arrowheads were found in the pit together with the bones of a mature male individual, while a cup and five additional arrowheads were placed outside the pit. In such transitional cases, the actual burial space is less than body-sized, suggesting that the grave structures were adjusted to the actual remains of the cremation, rather than to the idea of the full body.

Overall these variations in the treatment of the bones suggest that in most cases the cremated body was still perceived and treated as a whole corpse but also that new understandings were emerging. In some cremation burials there was clearly a well understood idea about how far the burnt bones represented particular body parts and how grave goods and dress fittings should relate to them. In such graves, objects, including bronzes as well as pots, were used to confirm the body and its parts; such arrangements were made both during the preparation of the cremation and in the reassembling of the body afterwards. The definition and limits of the body were further reaffirmed through the building of body-sized constructions. In other cases, it seemed significant to separate the pyre from the burial and some bones were selected or simply gathered up to be placed in a separate context. In these cases, the confirmation or marking of the different constituent parts of the body cease to be a concern and the substance buried must have been seen to represent the body rather than being a reconstituted version of it.

Urns become the extreme example of this practice of separation between the cremation and the body through the relocation of the latter. A consistent pattern is that the mouth of the urn is covered, usually with one or more stones, sometimes with an upside down bowl or sometimes with both. This suggests that the enclosure and containment of the bones was important; in urn burials the body is held within this container. These graves combine the ideas of shaping, confining, and enclosing the body in a very rigid manner; metaphorically, the urn constitutes the body’s new skin.

5. The use of pottery

The use of pottery within the cemetery has interesting characteristics and hints at a wide range of ancillary activities that may be of importance for understanding the change in burial practice. At Pitten, in contrast to Early Bronze Age cemeteries, where pottery appears regularly and is placed close to the body, the pottery is rarely directly associated with the body but more often appears to be offerings or left over from visits or feasts. It seems that pottery rather than just being part of the grave setting is included in a range of further activities taking place within the cemetery. This is an important observation as it may herald a change towards funerals including activities that are only loosely linked to the actual burial of the deceased. In Pitten there is plenty of evidence that social engagement and communication with the dead did not end with the interment.

Pottery can be directly associated with the body, and this association appears in both inhumation and cremation graves, although it is much more common in the latter. This link between cremation and pottery is furthermore expressed in the use of pottery as urns. The pottery found inside inhumation graves, mainly small fine ware cups, is most commonly placed next to the feet or the lower part of the body. Pottery is also found in cremations, and it appears it had a similar role there as the sherds are not spread throughout the remains of the pyre but form discrete clusters that seem to represent the position of single pots. The gender and age pattern is interesting: individuals under 20 are less likely to be associated with ceramics (36% instead of the...
expected 46% of graves) and females are more often accompanied with pottery than men (82% : 18% instead of the expected 50 : 50%, see Table 8).

In the use of pottery outside the graves a number of distinct practices can be identified. Again, the proportion of cremation graves with pottery clusters outweighs the proportion of inhumation graves with pottery clusters. Flat graves are less likely to be associated with pottery than burial mounds and cylinder graves. There seems to be no preference in terms of age and gender, and clusters of sherds are more common in graves from the latest phase. It is common for such pottery to be found close to the openings or entrances of structures (see Figure 10), although there are also examples of clusters of sherds found in the area between the graves. As the sherds are found in different layers it is likely that they reflect repeated visits to the graves (Table 8).

Despite the ubiquity of ceramics, real urn burials are scarce, and it is hard to find any consistent pattern amongst them. The urns themselves are generally large ceramic vessels and are not distinctive in any way. They contain cremated bones and bronzes damaged by fire, and ancillary vessels can be found either next to the urn or in it. The integration of the urns within the cemetery is different in the northern and southern parts. The four northern urns (56, 60, 94 and 116), which were all in flat graves, seem to be placed along the northern and eastern edge of the cemetery. In this part the urns were separate, individual structures. Grave 94 is unusual in so far as the urn shows strong traces of fire, possibly suggesting that it was placed next to or on the funerary pyre during the cremation, thus being already marked out for its future function as an urn. In contrast, all the urn graves of the southern part were found in burial mounds and distributed in the central part of the cemetery.

Fig. 10. Pitten. Location of pottery outside the graves.
The physical relationship to the mound may, however, differ.

The introduction of pottery as cremation urns in addition to their traditional role as grave goods is very difficult to trace, but one of the so-called 'mortuary houses' may give a glimpse of an intermediate stage. The 'mortuary houses' refer to two constructions, graves 116 and 167. These are well defined U-shaped ditches enclosing the site of the cremation, forming a rectangle approximately 2.5 by 2 m. One side was left open, facing south-east, away from the cemetery. In grave 116 an urn was placed in the south-western corner of the structure, inside a shallow pit. It was covered with a flat stone and contained the burnt bones of an adult female, two broken pins and four ceramic vessels (dated to phase MD II). In contrast, in grave 167 burnt bones were scattered widely inside the 'house' and at least two individuals were present: a juvenile of unknown sex and a mature individual, presumably female. A shallow pit in the centre held a small barrel-shaped pot with a small quantity of burnt bones. The pottery is presumably an ancillary vessel rather than an urn as it is of a different type to the other urns. In this case the ancillary vessel seems to have simultaneously functioned as a kind of urn and a gift.

Clearly, pottery plays a number of roles within the cemetery. We can discern both references to traditional associations and the merging of new practices and meanings. Pottery is used to a limited extent in its traditional role of grave goods placed next to the body, regardless of whether it was being inhumed or cremated, but it also took on new meanings and was used for new activities within the cemetery. In particular, a number of activities took place that were not directly or solely focused upon the interment of the deceased but which took the form of feasting and the reuse of locations within the cemetery. This possibly involved the deliberate smashing ('killing') of the pottery. Furthermore, pots began to be used as the storage place for the deceased. Through this practice the earlier relationship of pottery accompanying the body within the grave is reverted to one in which the body is contained within the urn. In a certain sense, in these cases the urn comes to embody the deceased.

Another form of post-funerary engagement with the dead is witnessed via the phenomenon of 'grave robbing'. Systematic grave robbery is widespread in some areas during the Early Bronze Age, known from cemeteries such as Gemeinlebn or Franzenhausen and has been extensively discussed. The predominant explanation has been materialistic: bronze is considered to be such a valuable material that the sacrifice of disturbing a grave would not be sufficient to protect it. Other interpretations include simple treasure-hunting and grave plundering in connection with changes of population or as a means of marking changes in the control of territory. It has also been argued that grave plundering may be carried out in the wake of political and social changes.

The phenomenon of reopening graves and removing objects is too widespread to be random. The deliberate reopening of graves and reuse of the objects should therefore be understood as a repeated and accepted social practice. In terms of our objectives, it is important to recognize that whatever additional reasons there might be, such practices give some insights into the contemporary attitudes to death and the deceased. One possibility is that the role of the objects in the graves are thought of as temporally limited, i.e. grave goods are interpreted as given to the dead only for a limited time, and after a certain period, which is probably associated with the process of bodily decomposition, objects could be transferred back into the possession of the living. Alternatively, the frequent robbing may suggest a change in the perception of the purpose or the sanctity of the grave and the role objects were assigned in the further 'life' of the deceased.

Interference with the grave has been well documented for the early phases of Pitten, when inhumation was predominant. Disordered and missing human bones as well as green discoloration of bones despite the absence of bronze finds in the graves suggest that up to 60% of the graves were reopened. Reopening of the graves is more difficult to trace for cremations. However, as cremation destroys the bone tissue it exposes the chemically transformed burnt bones to diffusion of copper salts from decaying bronze artefacts. This process has not yet been investigated in detail, and the time involved for discoloration to develop has not been estab-

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58 NEUGEBAUER, s. ftn. 55, 128.


61 E.G. SPEUNGER, s. ftn. 56, 19.

62 BUSCHE, s. ftn. 11, 215 ff.

63 Green stains on burnt bones can be explained by bronze objects that lay next to the bones for sufficient time to decay and allow copper minerals to diffuse into the bones (SPEUNGER, s. ftn. 56).
lished, but it is worth noting that more than half of the cremated bones that were not associated with bronze artefacts in the graves show discouraging. This suggests that the reopening of graves seen in the inhumation graves was also practiced for cremation graves, which again makes the difference between cremation and inhumation appear smaller.

6. Conclusion

Pitten is an especially interesting cemetery due to its variability, development and experimentation with new burial practices as well as grave forms. Amongst the rich details, our analysis has revealed a number of patterns and trends that can be outlined through the intertwined themes of first the biography of a local cemetery and secondly how a community changes the beliefs and practices it holds about death and the deceased body. The first of these themes emerges through the reconstruction of the phasing of the cemetery and the specific tension and differentiation that existed between its northern and southern parts. We can trace how the southern part became increasingly dominant and how its grave forms gradually became used throughout the cemetery. The sense of this part taking a leading role is furthermore supported by the innovative forms found there, such as the cremation platforms, whose short-lived use indicates fluctuation in practices as well as form. Burial mound 163, one of the oldest and the largest in the cemetery, plays a particularly interesting role in this development, as it stays in use throughout the cemetery's life and becomes a 'landmark' for the other constructions within the cemetery. One can interpret that this as a burial mound became an ancestral reference point for the local community. It is important to stress that the central grave of this burial mound, and thus presumably its first interment, is an urn burial. There are no concrete data to suggest that this cremation represents an intrusive and foreign element, but the treatment of the body is strikingly different from that seen in the contemporary graves as well as the practices developed later. This leads us to suggest that the urn burial in mound 163 may be the instance that triggered the introduction of cremation.

The second theme, the change of beliefs and practices, emerges from modifications of and transformations in how the body is treated, and in particular the gradual and explorative manners in which people cope with the differences between inhumation and cremation burial practices. We can trace this in the treatment of the physical remains of the cremation pyre as well as the treatment of the body itself. Clearly, the use of cremation practices did not immediately and automatically introduce a new understanding of the body as a reduced substance that could be removed and contained in an urn at another location. Rather, during the first phases of cremation, when this practice becomes increasingly common, we see a wide range of responses to the remains, which in various ways aimed to confirm the continued presence of a corporeal and substantive body. We see these understandings of the bodily remains as an emphasis on their redefinition and location after the cremation, an emphasis which in a few cases went to the point of physically reshaping the remains in the form of the unburned body. Objects used to adorn the dress are subsumed into these practices and their position on the cremated remains is frequently used to make associations with the dressed and living body.

Traditional grave constructions are similarly used in an explicit and effective manner to redefine the remains as a body, being made to 'house' and simultaneously confine the body. In contrast, while urn burials also confine the body, they do not acknowledge the body's size but accept its reduction to another kind of matter. Various intermediate stages between the in situ cremation, which is 'dressed' and housed within the grave, and the urn cremation with its reduced body can be seen within the cemetery. They seem to point to a major pivotal change: the removal of the remains of the body and placing the body within a container, whether this be a pit or an urn. The substantial change indicated by these practices is from a body that rests at the location of its cremation, merely needing to be 'taken care of', to a practice where remains are selected and moved, and where the bones become token representations of the body rather than the actual body. On this basis, we propose, that the community at Pitten was able to adopt the cremation rite without this resulting in an all-embracing disruption of their beliefs about the body as long as the cremated remains could be treated in a manner that echoed the care shown to the body in inhumation graves. Thus, while the local community were absorbing new ideas about appropriate ways of treating the dead, these ideas were manifest in a manner which for some time continued to present the dead in ways that drew upon traditional norms and practices. Surprisingly, it seems that the cremation of the deceased could be accommodated within existing understandings of the body, while the separation between the remains and the place of representation may have been a far bigger challenge to the local community's beliefs about the dead body.

64 Discolouration is sometimes hard to see on cremated bones, but it has been recorded thoroughly by M. Teschner-Nicola (TESCHNER-NICOLA, s. fn. 10, 137.)
7. Acknowledgements

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8. Zusammenfassung

Die Interpretation des Körpers. Bestattungssitzen im mittelbronzezeitlichen Gräberfeld von Pitten, Österreich


Das Vorkommen von Brand- und Körperbestattungen auf einem durchgehend belegten Friedhof führte zunächst dazu, sämtliche Variablen und soziale Charakteristiken der Toten selbst, wie etwa Alter, Geschlecht und Status, und Zusammenhänge mit den Bestattungsformen zu untersuchen. Die Paläodemographie spricht dafür, dass sämtliche Mitglieder einer prähistorischen Gesellschaft, die etwa 30 Personen umfasste, im Gräberfeld von Pitten bestattet wurden. Die Einführung der Brandbestattung erweitert das Repertoire sozialer Differenzierung und Charakterisierung um eine weitere Variable, ist aber nicht eindeutig mit anderen Variablen korreliert und kann daher nicht durch sie erläutert werden. Das Verhältnis von Brand- und Körperbestattungen im Bezug zum Alter der Verstorbenen verhält sich anährend erwartungsgemäß, nur die Gruppe der 7-14jährigen (infans II) ist durch besonders wenige Brandbestattungen charakterisiert. Das ist besonders interessant, zumal dieses Alter mit einer Phase des Lebenszyklus zusammenfällt, die wichtig für die (Eigen-) Definition als Person ist. Zahlreiche subadulte Individuen gruppierten sich um den Grabhügel 163. Das Geschlecht der Toten dürfte ebenfalls eine eingeschränkte Rolle bei der Wahl des Bestattungsmodus gespielt haben. Zwar wurden Frauen häufiger in einfachen Flachgräbern bestattet, doch die Entscheidung über Verbrandung oder Körperbestattung beruhte nicht auf


Während die Leichenverbrennung immer üblicher wird, können wir eine Vielzahl von Reaktionen feststellen, die zum Ziel haben, die fortlaufende Anwesenheit eines substantiellen, materiell fassbaren Körpers zu bestätigen. Die Körpergröße und -form kann nach der Verbrennung durch den Bau von Grabstrukturen über dem Verbrennungsplatz wieder hergestellt werden, was besonders in den Gräbern mit Steininmien unter Zylindergräbern und Grabhügeln zum Ausdruck kommt. Wir verstehen die Behandlung der körperlichen Überreste als eine Betonung ihrer Neudefinition nach der Einäscherung, die in manchen Fällen so weit gehen kann, dass die verbrannten Knochen physisch wieder in die Form eines unverbrannten Körpers gebracht werden. Objekte wie Trachtbestandteile und Grabbeigaben werden durch ihre Positionierung in Bezug zu den verbrannten Überresten verwendet, um Assoziationen zum bekleideten und geschmückten, lebenden Körper hervorzurufen.

Traditionelle Grabkonstruktionen werden in expliziter und effektiver Weise dazu benutzt, die Überreste als Körper zu bestätigen, indem sie gleichzeitig den Körper „beherbergen“ und begrenzen. Im Gegensatz dazu begrenzen Urnenbestattungen den Körper zwar, sie berücksichtigen jedoch nicht die Körpergröße und akzeptieren vollständig die Reduzierung des Körpers zu einer anderen Art von Substanz. Verschiedene Stufen zwischen in situ-Verbrennung, die wie eine Körperbestattung behandelt wird, und der Urnenbestattung mit ihrem reduzierten Körper, können innerhalb des Gräberfeldes beobachtet werden. Eines der zentralen Elemente des Wandels scheint das Entfernen der Überreste vom Verbrennungsplatz und die Verlegung an einen anderen Ort zu sein, egal, ob es sich dabei um eine Grube oder Urne handelt. Bei dieser Vorgangsweise reicht die übliche Totenbehandlung nicht aus, die Überreste müssen selektiert und bewegt werden, was schließlich dazu führt, dass Teile des Körpers im Sinne eines "natur pro toto" ausreichen, um den Körper zu repräsentieren.


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