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Bodies without rest[1]

An analysis proposal for post-mortem mobility

Paraules clau: rituals funeraris, repatriació, deathscapes, migracions, mobilitat.

Palabras clave: rituales funerarios, repatriación, deathscapes, migraciones, mobilidad.

Key words: funerary rituals, repatriation, deathscapes, migration, mobility.

For some decades now, social sciences have attempted to divulge the cultural rationales that are called into play around the end of life. The historical and ethnographic corpus is so diverse and changing at the same time that it casts doubt on whether it is possible to synthesise a universal sense of that which is understood by a 'good death' (Kaufman-Morgan, 2005; Green, 2008). The classic literature regarding studies of death[2] has only ventured to emphasise the obligation of caring for the deceased and of those that make up their inner circle as a general trait, through the deployment of rituals of celebration, of mourning and of remembrance, and in which the treatment of the body and its final destination take on a central dimension. From Durkheim and Hertz, we know that the death of someone close (through consanguinity, affiliation or belonging) imposes obligations on the living and represents a test of the highest order in measuring the strength of the internal bonds within the groups that suffer the loss of one of its members. Hertz asserted that "when a man dies, society loses in him much more than a unit; it is stricken in the very principle of its life, in the faith it has in itself" (Hertz, 1990: 90). As Louis-Vincent Thomas (1989: 11) pointed out, ritualisation around death becomes a desperate attempt on the part of social groups to thereby integrate the wrench that death represents. The rituality, through its cadences and liminalities, serves to reintegrate the social order that has been temporarily disrupted by the physical loss of one of the members of the collective. Death, then, becomes a matter of the living, since, as John Berger said in his *Twelve Theses on the Economy of the Dead* (Berger, 1994), thanks to them, the living are able to complete our lives. This represents a classic analytical framework although we believe that it remains relevant despite certain nuances that we will propose here.

Each funerary culture is based on a canonical definition of what is understood by a 'good death', which represents an ideal that is not always attainable. While biological finitude imperceptibly marks our life span, we continue to recreate the way in which we position our own and other people's death in our lives. The transition between life and death is understood to require completion

1
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2
Without being exhaustive, the works of Ariès (1999), Bloch-Parry (1982), Catedra (1988), Di Nola (2007), Gorer (1965), Huntington-Metcalf (1979), Lomnitz (2008) and Thomas (1983) can all be cited.

and not be eternally extended. Many cultural traditions have developed complex argumentations and ritual practices in order to usher the soul, spirit or consciousness of the deceased in the correct direction and prevent them from returning to disturb the living. The return of the dead, apart from having become an integral part of our popular culture (we only have to look at the success of novels, movies and television series related to vampires and zombies), continues to evoke classic forms of fear (Fernández Juárez-Pedrosa, 2008). What we would like to look at here, however, is not the dead returning to life, but the absence caused by the mobility of the deceased.[3] In the perceptions associated with that which is understood by a 'good death' a key aspect is often the place, either the place of death or the final resting place of the deceased (Saraiva and Mapril, 2012).

The ritualised transition between life and death ends once the deceased body is permanently deposited in a suitable place, as dictated by the group to which it belonged. That is not always the situation, however, demonstrating that, sometimes, bodies do not stop moving after death: in the classic study by Jessica Mitford on the American funeral industry in the 1960s (Mitford, 2008), there were already an estimated one hundred and fifty bodies being transported by air from one place to another on a daily basis in the United States. Based on a review of the way in which this issue has been dealt with in anthropology, this article aims to reflect on post-mortem mobility which, contrary to what one might think, is far from rare. (Rowles-Comeaux, 1987; Schmitz, 1999; Jassal, 2015; Grenet, 2017). Deceased bodies have their own 'social life' (Favole, 2003) and the issue opens up new areas of research within the field of anthropology of death.

Post-mortem mobility: an interpretive essay

A popular saying suggests that until the body of a deceased person is at rest in the ground, the hearts of those who have mourned their death cannot be comforted. The definitive rest represents the final phase to which all the funerary rituals and procedures associated with caring for and preparing the corpse aspire. As stated previously, places of death are clearly delimited in each society (Urbain, 1978; Ragon, 1981; Baudry, 1999) and, therefore, it is inconceivable that deceased bodies could be in any other space. In fact, the only mobility after death provided for within the different regulations defined by the mortuary hygiene department (which is responsible for the "surveillance and control of cadavers and cadaveric remains", as defined by the Catalan Public Health Agency),[4] relates to transporting a body from the place of death to their home (or,

3
In the seminar entitled 'The Wandering Dead. Displacement and the Critical Movement of Dead Bodies', held in Paris on 15 and 16 June 2017 within the framework of the MECMI project, it was possible to identify that, in modern times, the wandering dead acquire new forms and expressions.

4
The relevant current legislation in Catalonia can be consulted via the following link:http://salutpublica.gencat.cat/ca/ambits/proteccio_salut/policia_sanitaria_mortuoria/

Aquest text planteja una aproximació bibliogràfica a les manifestacions de la mobilitat *post mortem*. Al llarg de la història es troben diferents exemples que han volgut respondre al fet que suposa trobar la mort "lluny de casa", i que proposen les accions necessàries per corregir aquesta absència dels difunts en les ritualitats funeràries i procurar que els seus cossos puguin reposar prop dels seus familiars. Es crea un deure solidari entre els membres dels col·lectius als quals aquells pertanyien, que suposa la reapropiació dels cossos dels difunts en termes de pertinença. El text analitza aquests processos i suggereix futurs terrenys de recerca dins l'àmbit de l'antropologia de la mort.

Este texto plantea una aproximación bibliográfica a las manifestaciones de la movilidad post mortem. A lo largo de la historia se encuentran diferentes ejemplos que han querido responder a lo que supone encontrar la muerte "lejos de casa", y que proponen las acciones necesarias para corregir esta ausencia de los difuntos en las ritualidades funerarias, y procurar que sus cuerpos pudieran reposar cerca de sus familiares. Se crea un deber solidario entre los miembros de los colectivos a los que aquellos pertenecían, lo que supone la reapropiación de los cuerpos de los difuntos en términos de pertenencia. El texto analiza estos procesos y sugiere futuros terrenos de investigación dentro del ámbito de la antropología de la muerte.

This text presents a bibliographic approach to manifestations of post-mortem mobility. Throughout history there have been many examples of responses to meeting death "away from home", proposing the necessary actions to correct the absence of the deceased in their funerary rituals, and ensure that their bodies could rest near their relatives. A sense of solidarity is created among the members of the groups to which they belonged, which represents the reappropriation of the deceased bodies in terms of belonging. The text analyses these processes and suggests future areas of research within the field of anthropology of death.

nowadays, to the funeral home), to the religious space where, if applicable, the obsequies will be performed, to finally arrive at the cemetery in the case of burial, or the crematorium, if it is decided that the body should be cremated. The funerary services regulation determines exactly how to proceed at all times and the time frame in which it must be carried out. But, as suggested by Maurice Bloch (2017), this ideal definition of the journey that the organic element (the body) takes to be deposited in an inorganic container (be it a tomb or, in the case of cremation, the urn into which the ashes will be deposited), is not a guarantee that the corpse will definitively come to a halt. Indeed, Bloch himself (Bloch, 1971) studied the Famadihana funerary tradition in Madagascar, a ceremony in which the bodies of dead ancestors are exhumed to participate in a dance and rewrapped in fresh cloths before being returned to their crypt. Closer to home, when ashes are given to the relatives of the deceased, no kind of indication is established which requires them to determine exactly where the final destination of these human remains will be, nor any kind of instruction given.[5] The final resting place of the ashes is entirely uncertain, because they may be deposited at a relative's house, or distributed in different portions among several relatives, or even – in a practice that has become quite commonplace – deposited in some kind of natural setting, whether at sea, in rivers or in the mountains. Some funeral businesses, appealing to the dimension of preserving the memory of the deceased, offer the possibility of depositing ashes in columbaria or family tombs, thus representing the return of the body to the cemetery space. All this uncertainty regarding the final destination of the ashes is the source of some debate from which proposals have been made with regard to the development of controls for their traceability or of regulations to prevent ashes being freely deposited (Hanus, 2007; Clavandier, 2009: 190; Esquerre, 2011). Despite all this, the most interesting aspect that remains relates to the new ties that are established between the living and the dead, given the transformation undergone by the distance traditionally established between the two when depositing the body in the cemetery (Mathijssen, 2017, 2018).

Death, ever unpredictable, is made even more tragic when it occurs outside of a context that is considered as 'belonging' to the deceased. 'Dying away from home' is the expression that summarises the social anxiety generated when someone dies away from the warmth of relatives, friends and acquaintances. If, furthermore, in addition to the distance, the body of the deceased is also absent, the weight of the tragedy is multiplied as a result of being deprived the opportunity to witness the transition or dispose of the body as part of a funeral ceremony. The obsequies performed in the absence of a corpse have formed part of the daily life of many maritime communities that, when faced with the loss of entire crews, have been obliged to hold ceremonies to bid their loved ones farewell in the absence of any evidence, proof or certainty of their death. Conversely, however, we are also aware of the existence of bodies that are unable to be identified, such as those washed up on the shores of Southern Europe of those who, fleeing war and poverty, hoped to reach the European continent (Brian, 2013; Edkins, 2016; Perl, 2016; Zagaria, 2015).[6] The shocking testimony of cemeteries such as those in Algeciras and Nador, in which bodies are buried that have not been identified, is further aggravated by the general indifference of Europe's political institutions.[7]

There is no worse context for having to come to terms with death than when the deceased is absent. This is an issue raised by L. V. Thomas, who provides numerous historical and ethnographic examples of the desire to redress the untimely and transgressive death that occurs 'away from home'. Even the Bible provides specific accounts which demonstrate the will to restore the deceased (in this case, only the bones) from the place where they are found dead to the land where they were born: "David took the bones of Saul and those of his son Jonathan. And they gathered the bones of those who had been executed. And they buried the bones of Saul and his son in the land of Benjamin at Zela,

5
On the contrary: aware of how easy it is to transport the remains of a relative to a specific destination, funeral companies usually issue a certificate that states that the content of the urns correspond to the ashes of the deceased person. Being in possession of this certificate undoubtedly avoids encountering access control problems in the case of transporting ashes by plane.

6
The estimated number of people who have met their end in the Mediterranean is quite difficult to establish and represents the tragic testimony of the symbiotic relationship between the illegal trafficking of people and the administrative and securitarian closure of the European borders (see Kobelinsky-Le Courant, 2017).

7
With reference to said cemeteries, it is worth mentioning the work of photographer Sebastián Conejo, 'Desconocidos' (Unknown), an exhibition organised at the Huelva Museum in 2011 (see Conejo, 2018) that provided a stark portrayal of the anonymous headstones found in the cemetery in Algeciras. In the case of Nador, the excellent article by journalist Cristina Mas deserves to be cited: 'Morts a les portes d'Espanya i enterrats sense nom al Marroc' (Deceased on the shores of Spain and buried without name in Morocco), *Ara*, 23 September 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.ara.cat/internacional/Morts-nom-comiat-portes-Espanya_0_2094390590.html [consulted on 23 September 2018].

in the tomb of Kish his father". (2 Samuel 21.12-14). Another example of historical post-mortem *mobility is the movement of so-called relics, which correspond to human remains belonging to people who had aroused the popular devotion of the faithful of different religious traditions (Manseau, 2010).*

However, many of the historical examples of body transfers correspond to deaths that have occurred in the context of wars. In Medieval times, the movement of the bones of nobles and dignitaries transported during military campaigns, particularly during the Crusades, was subject to a ban on the part of Pope Boniface VIII, who argued that the body of a Christian had to be buried whole (Brown, 1981). Also, during the conquests of the early ages of Islam, the Mediterranean became the sea of the "martyrs of the battlefields", and their sacrifice of death while fulfilling a religious duty was interpreted by the Muslim jurists of the time as a reason to be granted the "reward of two martyrs" during the memorial ceremonies held for the deceased (Picard, 2012: 18).

The memory of those who died "in foreign lands" has been able to be maintained and honoured through the cenotaphs, or funerary monuments that, despite not containing any tombs, served as a memorial for a person or a group of people. Nowadays, it is common to see cenotaphs in cemeteries, in memory of the victims of air accidents or natural disasters that influenced public feeling. Each country also honours its soldiers who died away from their homeland, by erecting funerary monuments, even though the repatriation of the bodies of dead combatants has now become ordinary practice, with each armed force equipped with an organisational unit responsible for the management of this task,[8] and the return of the coffins wrapped in the relevant national flag has become a ceremony exalting patriotism (Zins, 2005; De Clerck, 2014).

Thus, the bodies of specific figures become powerful symbols of a political nature and, therefore, great efforts are made to move them to a specific burial place (Rader, 2006). The location of these tombs is the object of debate to the extent that it stimulates bonding processes with those spaces as a place to position the memory or desire to forget. There are countless historical examples of this: from the transfer of the body of Alexander the Great from Babylon to Egypt (and not to Olympia, as was the wish of his mother) in the fourth century BC, to the transfer of Napoleon's corpse to France, not to mention the remains of General Francisco Franco and his exhumation from the Valle de los Caídos.

For several years now, an intense debate has also been raging with regard to the restitution of human remains removed during archaeological excavations carried out during the colonial period, which went on to become part of the collections exhibited by museums and other cultural institutions. The call from indigenous communities for the recovery of ancestral remains is expressed in terms of respecting their human dignity (Brothwell, 2004; Payne, 2004; Price, 2004; Smith, 2004; Hole, 2007; Conaty, 2008; Jenkins, 2008; Kakaliouras, 2012; Nash, 2018). One such case in Catalonia concerned the dissected remains of the San individual preserved at the Darder Museum in Banyoles. The current Spanish National Museum of Anthropology (MNA) also contains a section that preserves unusual human remains (such as the skeleton known as the 'Giant of Extremadura', originally from Puebla de Alcocer, Badajoz). Another high profile example corresponds to the campaign organised in 1999 for the repatriation of the remains of Ishi – undoubtedly one of the most famous indigenous individuals in ethnological literature as a result of his close collaboration with Alfred L. Kroeber – which sparked an intense debate on the exercise of moral reparation required in the field of anthropology in order to recognise its implication in the invisible genocide suffered by the indigenous peoples of the Americas (Scheper-Hugues, 2001; Kenny-Killian, 2002).

The obligation to restore the deceased body, in order to establish its appropriate resting place

8
According to the *Handbook on International Rules Governing Military Operations* by the International Committee of the Red Cross (September 2016), the conditions under which the evacuation of those who have died as the result of conflicts are clearly established, as well as the treatment and handling of mortal remains for the purposes of repatriation.

and correct the untimeliness of the death, is at the root of most of the processes that activate the post-mortem mobility of the dead. The reasons that explain this correction represent and respond to specific rationales. In short, however, they represent the expression of a collective desire to correct a double absence, and a test, as the groups that have suffered the loss of one of their members put the strength of their feelings of belonging to the test. The etymological meaning of the term 'repatriation' (return, restore someone to their homeland) itself is sufficiently revealing of the intention behind the efforts to prevent the spatial absence of the deceased from resulting in their social oblivion.

The following sections aim to further explore this moral obligation convened in order to reappropriate deceased bodies within those contexts and situations that death has attempted to subvert. Our objective is to thereby suggest new areas of interest for future research.

To whom do the dead belong?

Death tests the affiliations connecting the deceased with those closest to them. Among the main obligations that correspond to the living to which Hertz referred, perhaps one of the key ones is the assertion of ties with the dead. No society expects family members to deny or disown their dead; neither

Coffin waiting to be transported to Morocco. Barcelona Airport (5 June 2015).
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does the scenario of unclaimed corpses enter into the collective imagination. And yet, it is a frequent occurrence: in the case of the former, the bureaucratic rationale corresponding to cemetery spaces that prevails within our society forces the remains of the deceased to move for the last time (which corresponds to the reduction and subsequent destruction of the remains), if the concession of the burial ground is not extended. The passage of generations leads to ancestral relatives being forgotten. In the latter, anonymous death not only relates to the study of the mass graves of those murdered during the Spanish Civil War (Ferrandiz, 2006, 2013), or with the deaths of those who have drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean.[9] A database of Missing Persons and Unidentified Human Remains (PDIRH) was established in Spain in 1968, to which all police forces have access, and which currently (as of March 2018) lists a total of 3,580 unidentified human bodies or remains.[10] An unidentified body needs to be identified and it is the states that have the ultimate responsibility when it comes to the management of human remains and "assigning them a specific location" (Esquerre-Truc, 2011: 10), in the relevant socially determined spaces. The anonymous graves of the Algeciras and Tarifa cemeteries wait in the hope that they will one day be identified and, as a result, be transferred to an as yet unknown destination. But, for the moment, the mortal remains are correctly placed within this cemetery space, as the dead are mourned by their loved ones and their bodies are managed by the states in relation to how they are viewed according to what they represent for the living (Verdery, 1999; Posel-Gupta, 2009). The dead participate in the (re)construction of a specific national identity and, therefore, become subjects reclaimed on a basis that asserts their belonging to the group. In the case of former Yugoslavia, Elisabeth Claverie (2011) demonstrates how the recovery of bodies that had been victims of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia had become a matter that went beyond identifying them and ensuring a dignified burial, to becoming a political controversy, in which the identification of the bodies was transformed into "a process that makes it possible to go from 'missing' to 'victim', then from 'victim' to legal evidence" (p. 14). Sometimes it is the relatives themselves that are required to correct that which constituted an 'incorrect burial', as in the case of the inhabitants of northern Uganda, after almost twenty-two years of civil war and the total abandonment of the victims by the State (Meinert-White, 2016). Also, the return of the deceased (and ill) to their country, after having contracted HIV/AIDS, not only became a morally conditioned act (which led to the stigmatisation of the sick/deceased), but also a matter which involved state intervention based on a rationale of public health protection (Pourette, 2002; Whyte, 2005; Welaga *et al.* 2009; Nuñez-Wheeler, 2012).

But if there is one area in which the states are increasingly insistent in asserting their ownership of the corpses, it is with respect to the circularity of the deceased which is established with regard to the border areas that separate north from south (such as the border between Mexico and the United States, or that of the Mediterranean). Paradoxically, death facilitates mobility that is denied in life and contributes to the establishment of a real "industry of repatriation", as highlighted by the authors who have studied these processes (in the case of the former, Lestage, 2008, 2012; Félix, 2011; and in the latter, Chaïb, 2000; Petit, 2002, 2005). The confluence of interests produced by this movement of deceased individuals is explained in terms of "an economy of bodies in which the term of exchange is national identity" (Chaïb, 2000: 131). Adrián Félix (2011) analyses the initiatives employed by the Mexican state which makes the repatriation of their dead compatriots into an opportunity to "canonise the repatriated dead as if they were fallen soldiers within a fantastical national imaginary" (p. 177). The Mexican case is not an isolated one: the website for Moroccan nationals living abroad features a specific section specifically outlining the administrative procedures in the event of deceased repatriation, headed by a statement which praises the commitment of King Mohamed VI to his subjects abroad and covers "the

9
The Guardian newspaper's initiative to publish the list of 34,361 documented people who had died crossing the Mediterranean up until June 2018 (see https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/20/the-list-europe-migrant-bodycount, consulted on 25 September 2018) is unable to conceal the existence of many other deaths that will never be able to be identified despite the efforts of NGOs, such as United for Intercultural Action: http://www.unitedagainstracism.org.

10
2018 Missing Persons Report Ministry of the Interior. Retrieved from: http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/Documents/060318INFORME_PERSONASDESAPARECIDAS.pdf [consulted on 26 September 2018].

repatriation costs of the remains of Moroccans in need who have died abroad from their host country to the address of their families in Morocco", and offers "condolences to the families of the deceased on behalf of the minister and all the department officials at the time of their burial".[11] At no point in the required documentation is the full Moroccan nationality of the deceased questioned; regardless of whether the individual has been able to adopt the citizenship of the country in which they resided, the Moroccan code of nationality does not provide for the renunciation of the national link. Osman Balkan (2015) explores the different dimensions of ethnic identity corresponding to the death of Turkish nationals in Germany, whether they are Turks, Kurds or Alevis, and the ways in which they sought alternatives to the action carried out by the Turkish government through Diyanet, or the delegation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Ankara, which works to impose an official model of national and religious identity.[12] Besim Can Zirh (2012), in turn, explains the strategies developed by the members of the Alevi minority group in order to facilitate the return of the deceased to their region of origin and avoid the assimilationist interference of the Turkish powers, which represents the expression of a "ritualised and spatial practice of (transnational) community-making beyond national categories and cartographies" (p. 1769).

When the emigrant – that anonymous figure that represents a collective yearning to achieve the opportunities that their own land has denied them – is renamed an exiled compatriot for whom a posthumous homage is desired, is when the interest of the states is manifested for reclaiming the deceased as their own and sealing their commitment with a national affiliation that never went away, regardless of the ties and sense of belonging they constructed with their host society in life. This symbolic appropriation of the bodies-subjects acts to restore the essential anomaly that emigration represents (in the words of Abdelmalek Sayad), interfering with the genealogical will to restore the deceased to the land of their ancestors. When the deceased becomes an object of collective appropriation, the issue that remains to be resolved is whether, at some point, it is possible to discuss their social agency in order to decide on their final place of rest.

The convergence of deathscapes and funerary cultures

The concept of deathscapes, or funerary landscapes, has been used in geography to refer to those spaces where death-related practices are conducted, which can have an obvious impact on the landscape (such as the case of cemeteries) or create a much more discrete impact (as in the case of spaces where the ashes of the dead are deposited, without having been formally established as such). Also considered as part of these landscapes are the social spaces that have been designated as places of remembrance and memory (Teather, 2001; Maddrell-Sidaway, 2010). Alistair Hunter (2016) proposes the recovery of the notion of deathscapes by incorporating the notion of diaspora and other relevant funerary practices that correspond to cultural and religious groups. Based on the analysis of two specific cases (the creation of a Muslim cemetery near Glasgow and the call for the provision of open-air Hindu funeral pyres in Newcastle), Hunter asks to what extent the development of these practices represents a reformulation of the notions that these migrant groups develop with respect to their society of origin, and pave the way towards the negotiation of their membership of the (British) society in which they find themselves.

What Hunter suggests is at the heart of the discussion that has led other authors to consider how cultural practices and ritual forms (which include funerary ones) developed by immigrant groups serve to maintain links with their relevant references of origin, or otherwise connect them with the society of which they now form part. Hunter suggests that these links with place of origin will eventually be replaced by an increasingly strong affinity with their current society. In contrast, Mathieu Grenet (2017) argues that it is necessary to rethink the dialectic between 'land of origin' and 'host society',

11
See "Rapatriement de dépouilles-Ministère chargé des Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger et des Affaires de la Migration" (Repatriation of Remains - Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs). Retrieved from: http://www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/fr/social/rapatriement-des-d%C3%A9pouilles [consulted on 26 September 2018].

12
Bruce (2018) presents an interesting comparison of the attempts made by the Moroccan and Turkish governments to monitor the construction of specific national and religious identities and intervene in all the everyday aspects related to these groups, one of which is the issue of repatriation of the deceased to their regions of origin.

to overcome the binary opposition between 'here' and 'there' and find alternatives that correspond to the way in which death is positioned in the lives of migrant people. To that end, he proposes three areas of reflection. First of all, the distant death does not become an indifferent death, since a kind of "transnationalisation of attachments" is established, which means that, through social media networks, the trial of bereavement is not circumscribed to the family context or the immediate friendships of the deceased, but is an experience that can be shared by other people who are thousands of kilometres away. Secondly, considering the numerous initiatives that end up forming a true "repatriation industry", a different relationship is established between 'here/there' that is not exempt from processes for the reconversion of emigrants/immigrants into nationals – as discussed above – and that causes the issue of death to be reinstated within the context of global negotiation of the role of borders between states. Finally, for Grenet, death in a migratory context becomes a source of ritual recreation, in which numerous practices exist that attempt to correct the impossibility of returning the deceased body by means of their symbolic substitution through their belongings (Petit, 2005) or repatriating only part of their body (Hassoun, 1993).

Regardless of the sense that surrounds this duality conditioning the method by which the deceased individual is returned, Western societies have decided to incorporate this sense of diversity into funerary practices and spaces and facilitate a plural ceremonial perspective with regard to death. However, whether due to the inherent difficulties associated with this progressive adjustment or the development of a genealogical principle that favours the return of the deceased to a country of origin (Chaïb, 2000; Moreras-Solé, 2018), it may be that this idea of deathscapes needs to be understood in far broader terms.

We would like to suggest that all the practices associated with the process of repatriation of a deceased body facilitate the exemplification of a point at which a variety of funerary cultures come into contact, which, in principle, would not normally coincide. The delivery and receipt of a corpse cannot be understood solely as the ordinary transportation of an object, in accordance with international legal regulations that dictate the conditions under which this transport must be carried out. It also results in the convergence of different ways of considering, handling, protecting and caring for mortal remains with a specific identity and which the relatives of the deceased and those close to them have decided to send to their region of origin in order to be buried near their family members.

This set of practices related to the return of the deceased to their homes cannot be interpreted solely from a bureaucratic perspective, as it incorporates new scenarios and situations where contact can be demonstrated between societies and cultures that understand death differently, and that, up to that point, have not had to make any kind of attempt to connect or complement each other. International post-mortem mobility thus generates an unexpected intercultural convergence and paves the way for thinking about repatriation as a link, and not as the simple transfer of a commodity.

The eternal migratory return

Austrian sociologist Alfred Schutz, in his well-known essay on the stranger (originally published in 1944), affirmed that, "from the point of view of the approached group, he is a *man without a hist*ory" (Schutz, 1974: 76, emphasis by the author). He is only expected to prove his new loyalty to the host society, in the present and in the future. His past and his memory ("Tombs and memories cannot be transferred or conquered") hold no significance for the host society. The also Franco-Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad understood that the return was a constituent element of the immigrant condition, which facilitated an end to the chronic provisionalisation of their spatial and referential detachment: "there is no presence anywhere that is not paid for by an absence somewhere else" (Sayad, 1998: 15).

Migrant belonging has always been subject to controversy, both during life and in death.[13] Arguments have been proposed that state that an individual's desire to want to be buried in their adopted land represents conclusive proof of the definitive establishment of the migrant. Their tomb, regardless of the funeral rituals deployed during the farewell ceremony, would represent the testimony of a willingness to remain, and perhaps the last stage of a mobility that began long before. What was permanently questioned during their lifetime – their integration – seemed to be settled, paradoxically, at the time of their death.

It is above all this set of assumptions which supports a public belief, which relates the singularities corresponding to immigrant groups with the progressive pluralisation of the societies that host these communities. This is an oversimplified conclusion, based on the idea that time leads to a progressive accommodation of those singularities and fails to appreciate that they may alter that process. Thus, a series of recommendations have been proposed in the funerary area whereby the actors involved (both from the public sphere, such as city councils, and from the private sector, funeral service companies) are able to provide for the plurality of rituals and ways of understanding the process of death, as well as the treatment and final destination of the corpse, as long as they meet current health regulations. For example, one recommendation relates to the allocation of specific areas within local cemeteries in order to bury the dead affiliated with those traditions in which a specific type of funeral is required. All these actions are focused on achieving the continuity of these expressions and their progressive incorporation within this specific area. However, the fact that there are collectives that, in the main, prefer to repatriate their deceased for burial in the region from which they originated, as another element of the transnational circularity that interconnects different territories and social spaces, attests to this projection of assumptions of continuities and accommodations in which the return to place of origin was not a variable that was anticipated at any point.

The post-mortem return has ceased to be seen as a marginal fact in understanding specific migratory cycles to address previously unforeseen issues (such as the ageing of the immigrant population), or to review the previous approaches with regard to notions such as return, transnational relationships and the construction of belonging (Tarrés-Solé-Jàvega-Moreras, 2012; Lestage-Grenet, 2018). The anxiety surrounding return, explicitly expressed by those who communicated their wish to be buried in the region where they were born,[14] or even turned into a kind of collective duty in relation to the deceased and their family, becomes an inescapable dimension when this population ages. Prior to this demographic evolution taking place, however, the fact that the duty of care for the deceased would fall to the collectives was already a given. Even when mobility was not as accessible as it is now, people sought the necessary resources to repatriate the deceased to their country of origin. During the 1970s, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese migrants who had died as a result of illness or accidents at work were repatriated from France[15] using the services of funeral companies that soon caught on to the interest that prevailed within these groups for returning their deceased to their homelands. António Branquinho Pequeno (1983) explains how "the last return" of Portuguese workers from France was turned into a community obligation, in which everyone was called on to make a donation for whatever they could to cover the costs of the transfer (around 11,000-14,000 French francs, the equivalent of three months' salary of one of these workers). The preference was for the bodies to be transported by vehicle to the region of origin and was organised by the first Portuguese insurance agencies that had begun to be introduced in France. According to this author, most Portuguese deaths were repatriated, especially when they still had relatives at home, who often petitioned for the body of the deceased to be returned. In his account, Branquinho Pequeno points out some of the issues associated with this

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It is also important to remember the fact that processes associated with returning to the place of origin also correspond to cases of rural-urban migration, often in relation to the rural ancestral home from which they are believed to have originated (Mueggler, 2018; Smith, 2018).

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In his work *Au Pays* (A Palace in the Old Village; Gallimard, 2010; translated into Spanish by Alianza Editorial under the title *El retorno*), Franco-Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun recounts the anguish of its protagonist, an emigrant who is approaching old age and fears dying far from home: "The fear of dying far from his homeland never left him, he imagined himself in the morgue, his body covered by a white sheet, abandoned there for several days until the administrative arrangements were made; then, in his coffin, repatriated with other commodities. He imagined his colleagues organising a collection to help his family with the expenses [...] No, I will not go back in a box. No. I will anticipate death and I will wait for it among my people" (p. 94, own translation).

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The dangerous working conditions to which these workers were subjected is evidenced by the significant number who suffered accidents either at work or travelling to work. The same situation also occurred in the case of the Moroccans in Catalonia in the 1970s, as ascertained by looking at the data from the Moroccan Consulate in Barcelona (Moreras, 2004).

return, which could not be separated from the situation that had caused initial emigration (an "original hardship", an observation also expressed by Abdelmalek Sayad), and he saw in the return of the deceased to their homeland the expression of a last wish to be reconciled with the community and the family nucleus left behind years earlier. The actual return of the body activated a whole series of symbolic references, which served to articulate a kind of "posthumous catharsis" of the wish to want to be buried near their ancestors.

Repatriation is clearly facilitated according to whether immigrant groups develop more concrete organisational structures capable of making decisions for the common good of their members, such as establishing solidarity funds (common in the case of African collectives; see Solé Arraràs, 2015) or negotiating with insurance companies a type of policy that provides coverage for the repatriation of the deceased. The role of consular representations, which, according to international regulation, is required to play a fundamental role in terms of the administrative management of repatriation, is usually discussed, either due to the fact that they act with a certain indifference or that no attempt is made to hide the fact that (see Félix, 2011 and Balkan, 2015) a deceased individual's desire to return is viewed as a test of their sense of national identity. Returning to the case of the Portuguese migrants in France, Yacine Chaïb (2000) cites the comment of Maurizio Catani (1988) on the demands by the Portuguese associative network for the state to cover the expenses of these transfers, based on the principle of

Anonymous tomb Lleida Cemetery (2008).
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the common good and the link maintained by these collectives with their nation of origin. A lukewarm institutional response is a widespread phenomenon and is observed as a constant in numerous cases, both past and present. One of these is exemplified through a personal story regarding Spanish emigrants who emigrated to Switzerland during the 1960s in an account researched and written by Víctor Canicio (1974: 48), which recalls the conversation between a group of Spanish emigrants and the relevant Spanish official representative:

> "–We've come to claim the subsidy to transport a compatriot's corpse home. He does not have anyone here but has a lot of family in his homeland.
>
> –And why would they want so much expense and so many remains?"

In short, we are witnesses to a series of reappropriation processes corresponding to the deceased and their bodies, which symbolically become subjects of a struggle to determine their final destination. The agency of the deceased is suspended, especially in cases where the individual was unable to convey their last wishes while they were still alive. In becoming a body, it becomes an element that tests the solidity of the group (and its capacity for solidarity) and activates a genealogy that unites all its members and connects them with a specific origin. According to Nur Yasemin Ural (2012: 65), it is important for members of the Turkish community in Germany to "join together hand in hand when one of them separates from the 'body' of their collective, as a response to the intense threat to the community". Caring for the body not only seeks to ensure it is treated with all the necessary care and attention but also to convert it into a testimony of the collective will to remain faithful to a specific genealogy. And if the most appropriate course of action is for the body to be returned to the place the individual came from, this appeals more to a dimension of returning to a familiar and known space, than to following a religious prescription, such as in the case of Muslims. Family genealogy prevails over religious duty (Chaïb, 2000; Moreras-Solé, 2012, 2018; Balkan, 2015). This poses new questions that need to be analysed in detail: how is the context of reception of the body of the deceased articulated? In what way is the arrival/return of someone who has been absent for years conceptualised? Is the type of relationship-bond that the deceased maintained with their homeland/family nucleus taken into consideration? What kind of contact did the deceased maintain with the context to which they are now being returned? What status does the returning individual have? (Trans, 2014).[16]

There is one last question that we believe also needs to be formulated: in spite of the predominance of the return as a constant, we should also be alert to the suggestion made by Grenet (2017: 18; see the previous section), about that which represents the idea of recreating the rituals and the symbolic forms that funerary practices adopt in an immigration context. Contrary to ruminations by Mohamed H. Benkheira (1998) and Nathal Dessing (2001) – both corresponding to cases of Muslim communities in Europe – the loss of ritual substance or the erosion of rituals does not necessarily lead to their normalisation or dissolution, but rather it is our belief that we may be on the brink of new syncretic forms of ritual expression, which have managed to overcome the assimilationist footprint of hegemonic cultural models and which have opened the door to new ways of expressing shared identities. Valérie Cuzol's work (2017) on the French situation contrasts the prevalence of repatriation (80% of Muslim deaths are repatriated) and the expression of forms of individualisation in the selection burial methods. The constant that sets one option apart from another seems to be strongly correlated to the family ties that remain, which seems to hold far more weight when it comes to making the decision to repatriate than the religious norm. This does not prevent religiosity from playing a significant part in the celebration of these rituals, or affect the preference to be buried in a Muslim cemetery in France in the event that the decision is made not to repatriate. The fact that one wishes to uphold religious convictions does not mean,

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A parallel can be established between these questions and what is represented by the return of those migrants, who return let down by their migratory experience. In his classic study, Gilkey (1967) analyses the manner in which the return of Italians who emigrated to the United States of America was conceptualised and how, on returning to the region they had left, they were ignored by the social context into which they were reincorporated, due to a stigma placed on them for coming back without having made their fortune. Are those who return to be buried considered victorious or only worthy of respect because they wanted to maintain a genealogy that linked them to their place of departure?

however, that expressions associated with the rituality of funerary practices do not adopt parameters related to individualisation. For example: during a visit to the Schaerbeek multiconfessional cemetery (Brussels) in January 2011, we observed significant diversity in the graves located in the section designated for Islamic burials, ranging from the simplest without any type of headstone, to those that included a photograph of the deceased, as well as others that reflected the kinds of activities the deceased had enjoyed during their life. One even featured a full-size model of a motorcycle, reflecting the deceased individual's love of speed on two wheels (a passion, however, that would lead to their death). The company responsible for the management of the municipal cemetery did not impose any guidelines defining the form to which headstones or graves should conform, as long as they remained within the limits of the allotted space. Individuality was respected, within the framework of a cemetery that recognised the duty of people to be buried according to their convictions.

Deferred grief

All cultural or religious traditions make provision for the possibility of being required to perform some form of obsequies in the absence of the body of the deceased. This absence is somewhat mitigated by the inclusion of some kind of symbolic element. Agathe Petit analyses the practice of the "mortuary suitcase" of the Manjak people that replaces the body of the deceased and includes some of their personal belongings (Petit, 2002, 2005), a practice similar to that documented among the Fulani of Senegal (Solé Arraràs, 2015). Sunni Islam includes what is known as the 'prayer for the absent', but the practice of funerals is not permitted without the body being present. We have already mentioned funerals held in maritime communities to honour sailors lost at sea and the fact that they often constitute expressions of intense collective grief, since the loss derived from the disappearance is intensified by the impossibility of contemplating the body. One specific example of this kind of practice is the proella tradition seen the maritime communities of Brittany in France, a ceremony in which a wax cross represented the lost sailor. This cross was subsequently moved to the cemetery on the first of November, to be placed in a tomb under the collective name of 'proella' (Bacque, 2003).[17] An important element to keep in mind in cases such as these is the fact that these ceremonies were not restricted to a strictly family dimension, but that it was the community as a whole that paid tribute to the deceased and joined the relatives in their loss. These ceremonies seek to limit the period of grieving, which cannot be prolonged permanently, and to enable the living to return to their ordinary life. The remembrance of the deceased, established in our festive calendar, serves as a brief substitution of the grief, which is situated in the closer familiar dimension.

Other situations exist, however, in which absence is not synonymous with being missing, in which there is evidence that the death of that relative or loved one has occurred, albeit far from home. The series of events generated on hearing of a person's death, the repatriation of the body from the place where they died to the region where they were born (or where their family resides), the organisation of the transfer and the administrative procedures, the wait experienced by relatives, the delivery of the body and its burial after performing any obsequies that are considered pertinent, prolongs this liminal period of social farewell for the deceased, as a result of which the mourning period is extended beyond that which is considered habitual. The forty-day periods that Mediterranean societies have applied to births and deaths (Baghdad, 2015) are irreparably altered and grieving no longer has a unique temporal dimension to be expressed at certain points: when the fatal news is delivered and on reception and the farewell/burial of the deceased at their final destination. It is a type of grief that could be called deferred and which proposes new adaptations of the funerary rituals that need to be analysed in detail.

On receiving news of a death, the absence of the body redoubles the absence that accom-

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According to Guillandre (1921), who describes this funeral ceremony, the term *proella* "seems to mean *to take home*, *repatriate*, and therefore, *repatriation*. By virtue of the ritual of the fictitious burial, the lost body is found; he returns mysteriously to be buried on the land where he was born, and the soul that wandered in agony finally achieves eternal rest". The common grave, is usually inscribed with the following: "Here we place the *proella* crosses, in memory of our sailors who die, far from their homeland, in wars, disease, shipwrecks" (p. 628-630).

Prayer for the deceased. Mosque of Reus (29 December 2017). JORDI MORERAS

panies the death itself. As asserted by Thomas (1985: 146), without the presence of the body of the deceased, "the ritual becomes an entirely hollow piece of free theatre. Unless, of course, the centre of gravity is completely transferred to the anguish of the survivors". Perhaps here we find one of the keys that explains the overriding need to repatriate the corpse, to be able to correctly position it in the ritualised transition between life and death or, if that is not possible, to create possible alternatives in order to offset the absence of the body. Thomas also includes a number of ethnographic examples to demonstrate how people turn to the placement of objects, belongings or photographs in the tombs of the absent deceased or return to the practice of double funerals (already studied by Robert Hertz) in order to perform obsequies subsequent to those organised *in absentia* of the deceased, in the event that some of their remains (or evidence of their death) are later recovered, or the socially established period of mourning has come to an end. Thomas emphasises the different funeral ceremonies held by the Dogon people on news of the death of Marcel Griaule in Paris, or the second obsequies performed in memory of the sailors and fishermen lost at sea in some maritime towns in Brittany during the All Saints' festival. The cemeteries located in Alpine towns, such as Zermatt or Chamonix, could also be added to this, which contain the tombs of mountaineers lost on the Alpine glaciers, where years later, as the glaciers retreat, bodies that could not previously be recovered are revealed.

Another example of a reverse situation would be the post-mortem photographs taken as testimony to the death of a relative, and sent to relatives living abroad. Here, we should cite the work of Galician photographer Virxilio Vieitez (1930-2008), who was commissioned to take photographs of deceased individuals which served as proof of their death: "commissioned as testimony and irrefutable evidence of the event, they embarked on a journey across the *pond*, thus transferring the custom of the funeral

rite. [...] Photography, like parish records or funeral honours, becomes a notarial document of the death, attesting to the event and informing family members that were unable to travel" (Lichet, 2010).

The feeling of emptiness that is experienced on finding out about a person's death (even more so when it comes to a sudden and unexpected death as opposed to one occurring as a result of old age or illness), and the absence of the deceased body to be honoured posthumously could be partially mitigated by the fact that, as Grenet (2017: 16) describes it, a "transnationalisation of attachments" is activated. Social media networks have become mechanisms for the extension of grief among people who had family ties or knew the deceased, and who express condolences via messages sent over the internet. Vanessa Bravo (2017) analyses the impact of these messages on the experience of undocumented Latin American immigrants in the United States, who are unable to travel to attend the funerals of their relatives or acquaintances. Online funeral spaces or funerals broadcast through social media may seem like one of the many eccentricities associated with the online world but the truth is that, according to Falconer *et al* (2011) they play a very specific role in the modulation of the feelings of grief expressed by individuals that form part of groups displaced over a wide geographical area and that maintain their ties on a transnational basis.

These and other ways of expressing grief are the proof that there are always people who mourn *their* dead as a way of asserting their sense of belonging. At a time in which the value of a human life seems to be based on the degree of indifference or consternation evoked, we need to remember the strategies and arguments that are activated by the different human groups that experience the death of their relatives and acquaintances from a distance and that, in the best case scenario, experience this in terms of a temporary absence until they are once again reunited with the body of the deceased, but, in others, are faced with the painful addition of their disappearance and the impossibility of finding any evidence of their death. There is real resonance here with Judith Butler's reflections on those lives that deserve to be mourned and remembered. It is as a result of their loss that we are able to "create a tenuous dimension of 'we'" (Butler, 2006: 46), and perhaps that is why all the mechanisms of social bereavement are activated. And this deferred grief is extended for as long as necessary in order to complete the cycle in which the living bid farewell to the dead, as, for them, they are indeed important. Grief as an antidote to the indifference we have so often maintained throughout history, for example, for the tragically lost lives of those Moroccan workers who died in the construction of the Barcelona metropolitan area in work-related accidents during the 1970s and who were quietly and anonymously buried in charity tombs. Or, in the present day, with respect to those people, with names and surnames and a whole life beyond that who, fleeing death in their own country, have met a tragic end, drowning while trying to reach the coasts of a European continent that is increasingly closed off in terms of its prejudices and indifference to human life. In the face of all indifference, the grief of relatives and acquaintances becomes a mechanism of resistance to the oblivion and silence, in the conviction that "grievability is a presupposition for the life that matters" (Butler, 2010: 32).

Conclusions

In 2018, All Saints' Day coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the first photograph published in the media showing someone who had drowned in an attempt to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. It was published in the *Diario de Cádiz* newspaper and was taken by the photographer Ildefonso Sena.[18] It is an image that very few would remember today despite possessing the same iconic significance that the image of Alan, the child who drowned on a Greek beach had when it was published. We do not know the identity or final destination of the corpse found in Tarifa. All we can hope is that he was perhaps able to be returned to the place he came from and only temporarily occupied a place in the morgue. It could be that somebody claimed

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'Trenta anys de tragèdies a l'Estret', (Thirty years of tragedies in the Strait), *La Vanguardia*, 2 November 2018.

the body and was able to thereby mitigate the pain of this death in a distant location.

We have been able to observe the way in which the constant of redressing that which is considered a 'bad death' has served to activate a whole series of actions that go to great lengths to ensure the body of the deceased is returned to the place to which it was affiliated. Yet another demonstration that the living do indeed care about their dead. In the hope of preparing the last migration of souls that is contemplated by many cultural and religious traditions, that which remains pending in the worldly dimension is the procurement of rest for the bodies. And, as we have seen, this desire to reappropriate corpses, to return them to their final destination, acts as an antidote to indifference. ■

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