

20th Colloquium on Cemeteries

17 May 2019

King's Manor, University of York

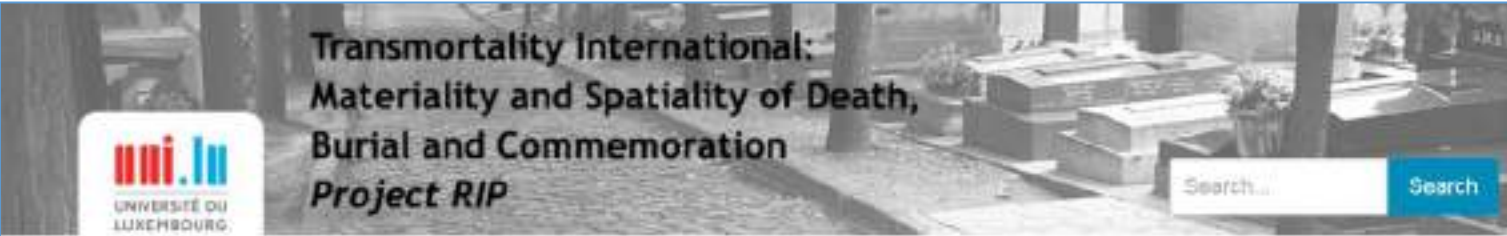
The Materiality and Spatiality of Graves and Grave Markers in the Luxembourg-German Border Region: Preliminary Findings

Christoph K. Streb

University of Luxembourg

Durham University





**Transmortality International:
Materiality and Spatiality of Death,
Burial and Commemoration
Project RIP**

UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG

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Research Output

Survey Tool


Special Issue in "Mortality"

Project RIP


This project seeks to examine the historical evolution of sepulchral culture from the early 19th century to the present, with an outlook towards the use of cemetery areas in Luxembourg in the future.

Our research will focus on the spatiality and materiality of remembering the dead, including the changing layouts of graveyards and the emergence of alternative sites, new designs of tomb stones and tomb slabs, and changes and continuity in the practices of burial and grave tending.

To examine the impact of materiality on the social processes of individualisation, pluralisation, de- and re-sacralisation (or vice versa) etc., this project has a three-pronged approach: spatial analysis, history and qualitative social research.



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The material culture of burial and its microgeography: A Luxembourg cemetery as a methodological example of an object-centred approach to quantitative material culture studies

Christoph K. Streb, Thomas Kolnberger, Sonja Kmeč

First Published April 9, 2019 | Research Article [Check for updates](#)<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183519840744>[Article information ▾](#)

Altmetric

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Abstract

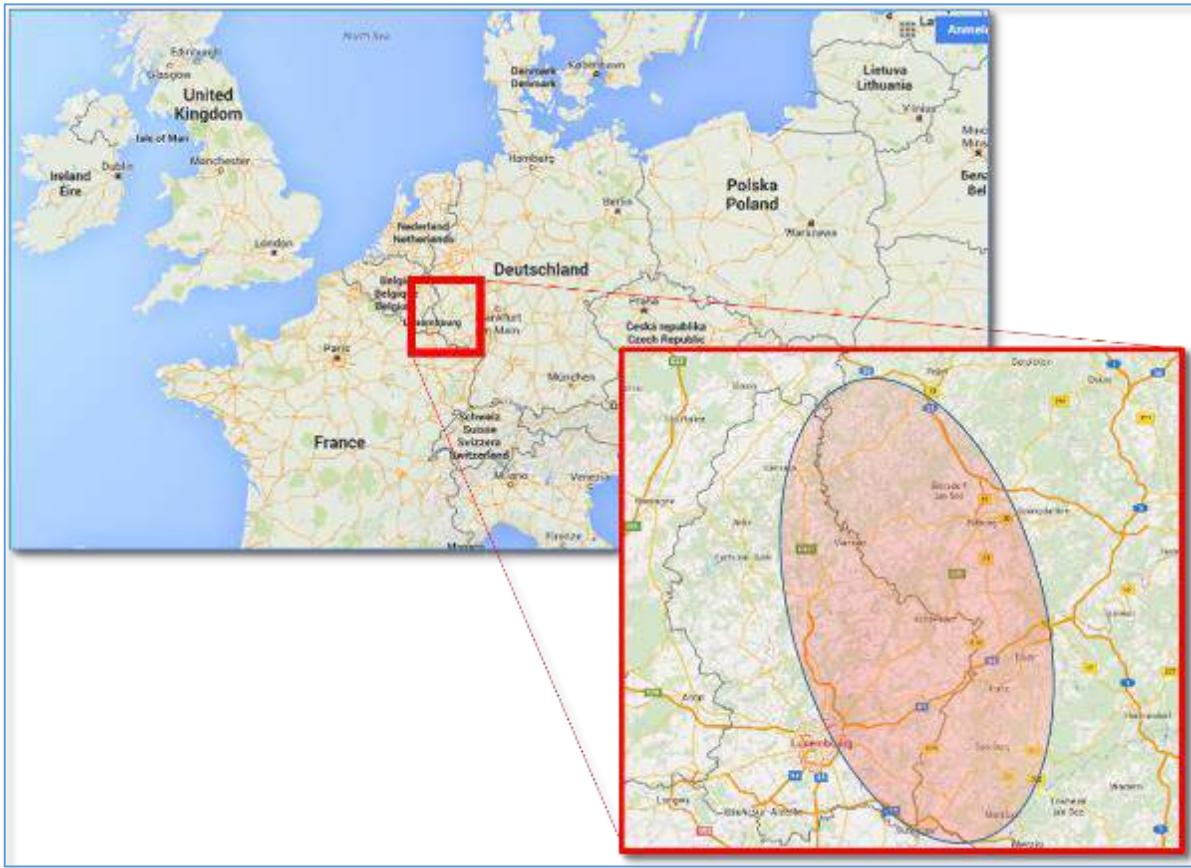
This article uses a novel quantitative methodology to examine sepulchral material culture. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of social spatialization and art as agency, the authors contend that variations in grave designs and materiality cannot simply be explained in terms of changes in fashion and mentality. Other factors also need to be taken into account. Using a digital data collection tool, the Cemetery Surveyor Application (CSA) developed at the University of Luxembourg, they compile a set of data encompassing all the material aspects of each grave in a cemetery in Luxembourg (Western Europe), the setting of their case study. The graves are dated from the 1850s to 2015. [The

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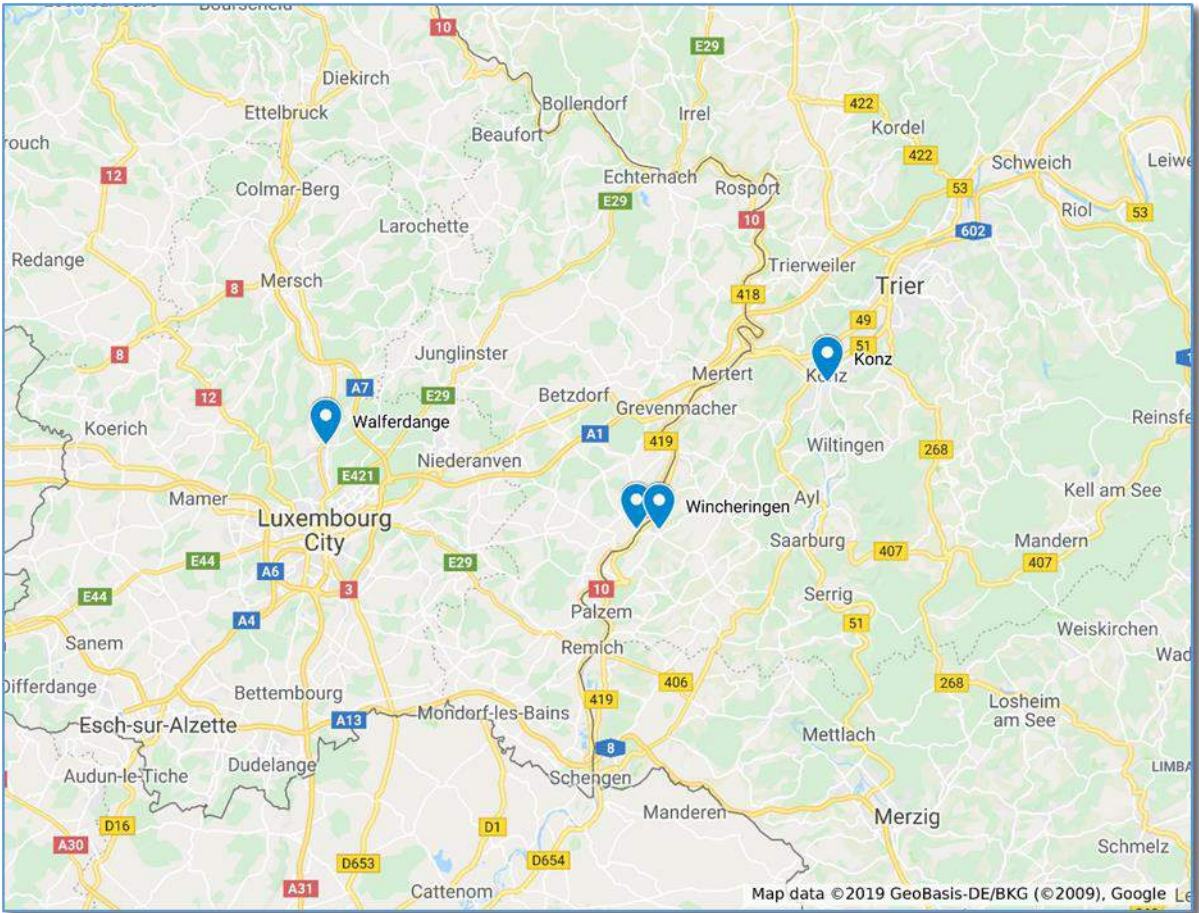
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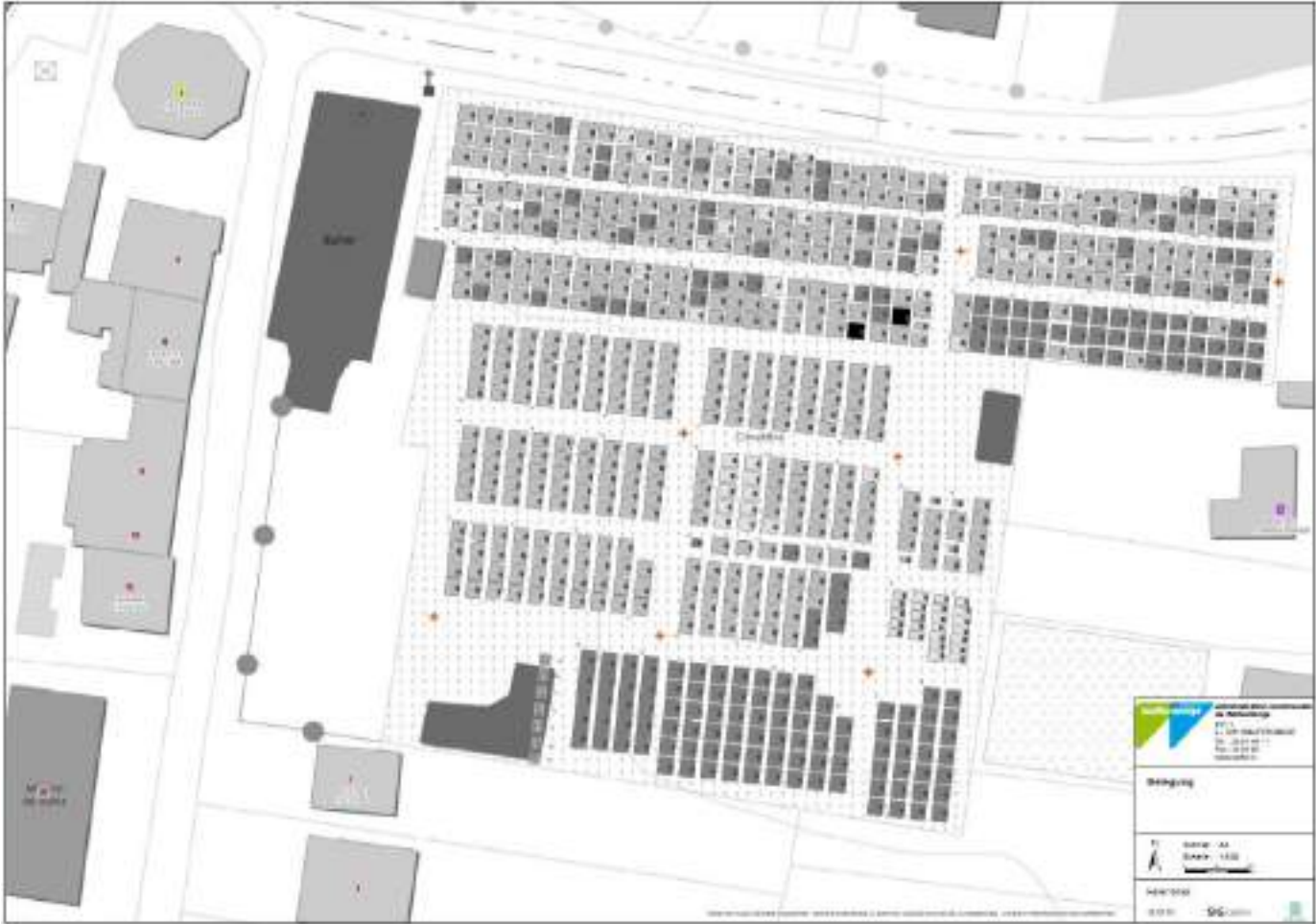


Region of Interest

Location of Cemeteries



Walferdange (Luxembourg): 739 Graves

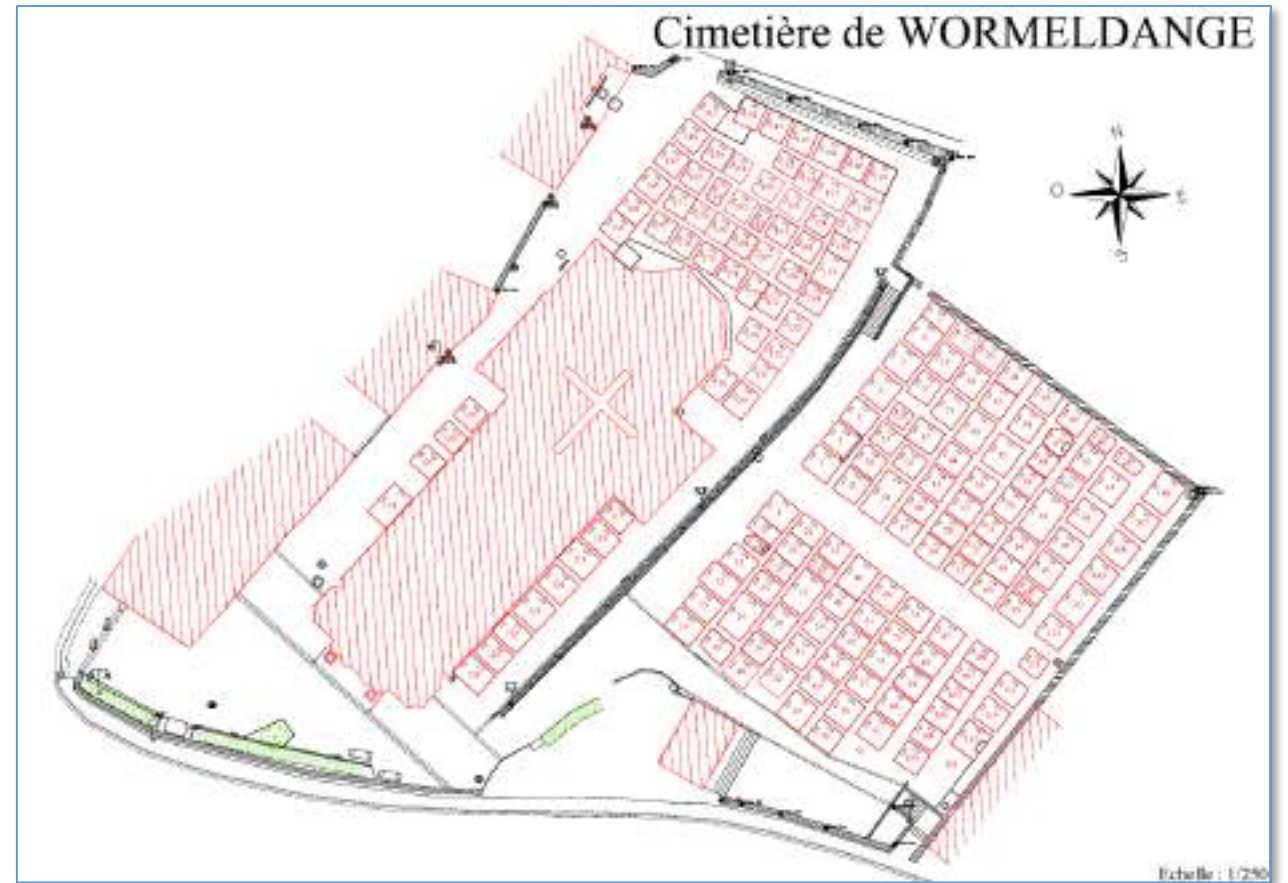




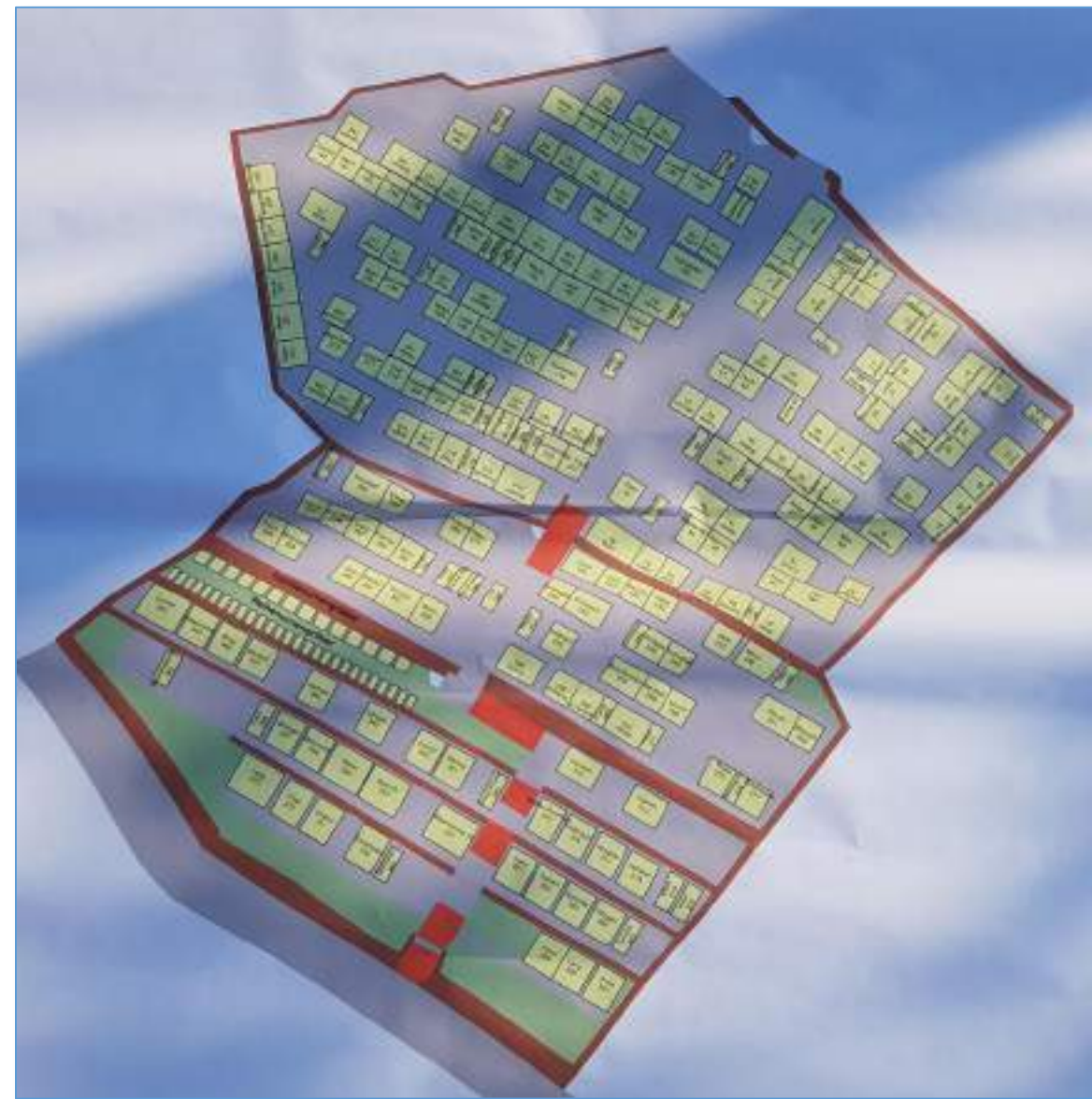
Konz (Germany): 1310 Graves



Wormeldange (Luxembourg): 184 Graves



Wincheringen (Germany): 388 Graves



Meine Apps

Einkaufen

Spiele

Familie

Empfehlungen

Konto

Zahlungsmethoden

Meine Abos

Einlösen

Geschenkkarte kaufen

Meine Wunschliste

Meine Play-Aktivitäten

Leitfaden für Eltern



Cemetery Surveyor

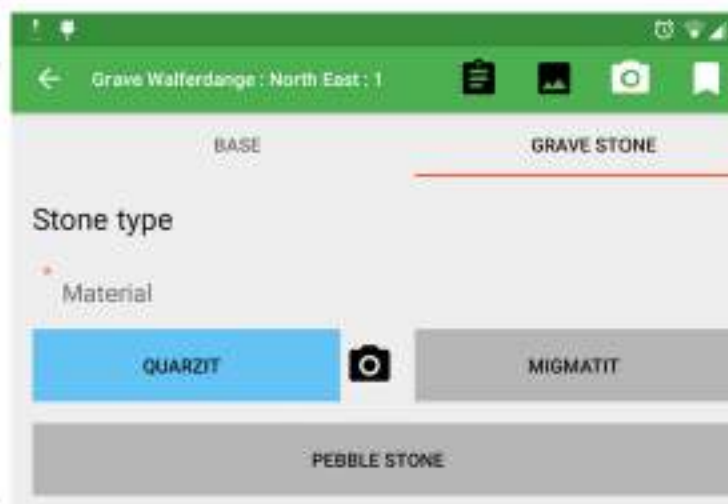
Frakturmedia Effizienz

★★★★☆ 2 ⭐

📄 USK ab 0 Jahren

🔖 Zur Wunschliste hinzufügen

Installieren



GRAVESTONE

GRAVE

PARAPHERNALIA

LINGUISTICS

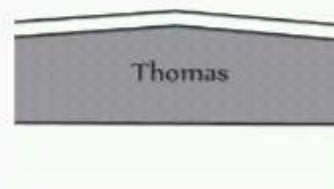
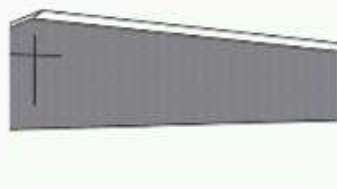
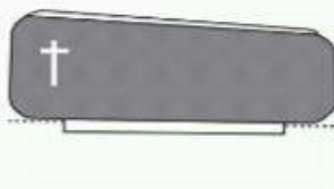
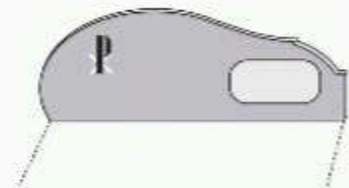
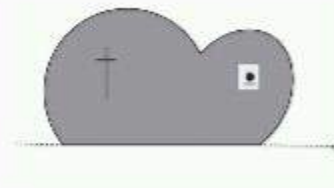
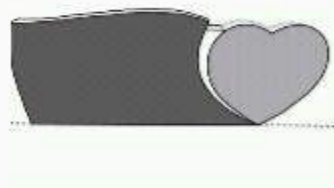
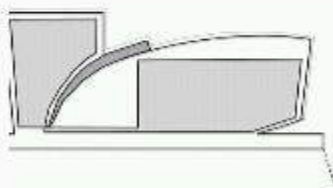
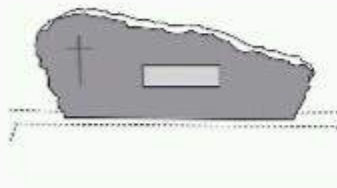
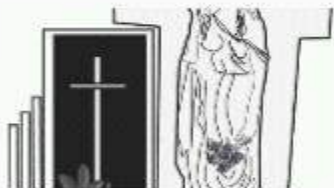
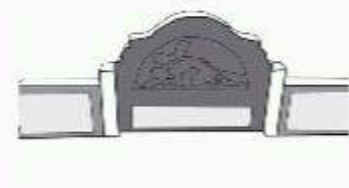
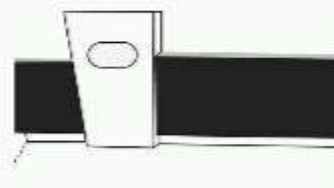
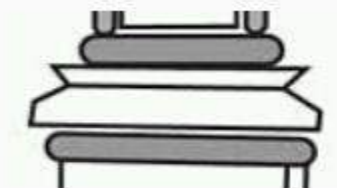
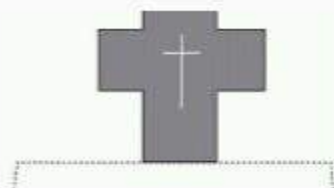
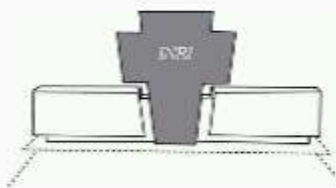
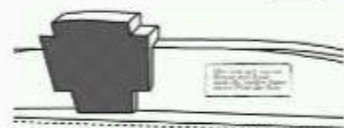
Gravestone Details

Gravestone type



unoccupied

Other



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Font: Calibri, 11, Bold, Italic, Underline, Text Color, Background Color, Merge & Center

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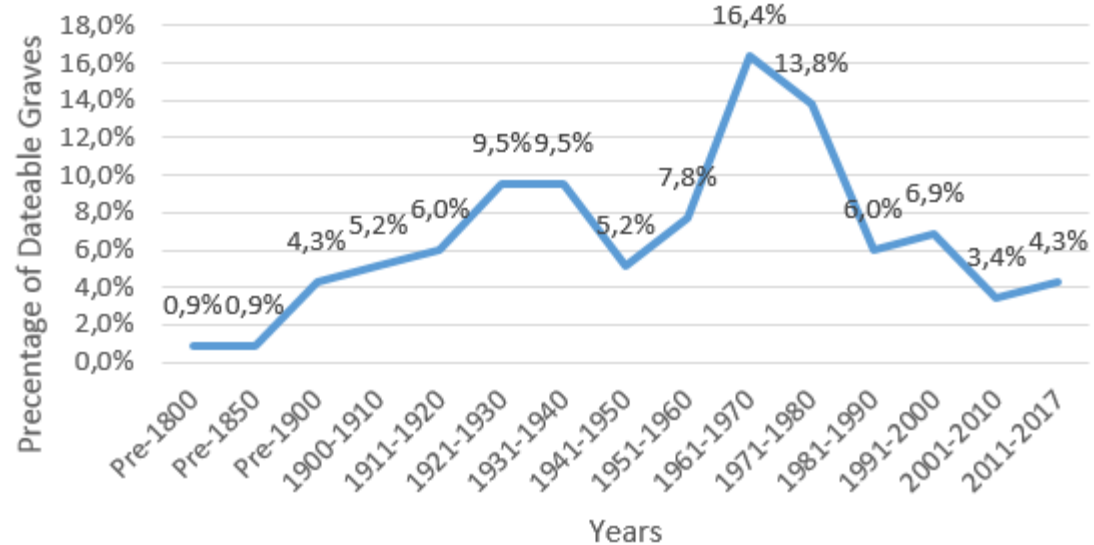
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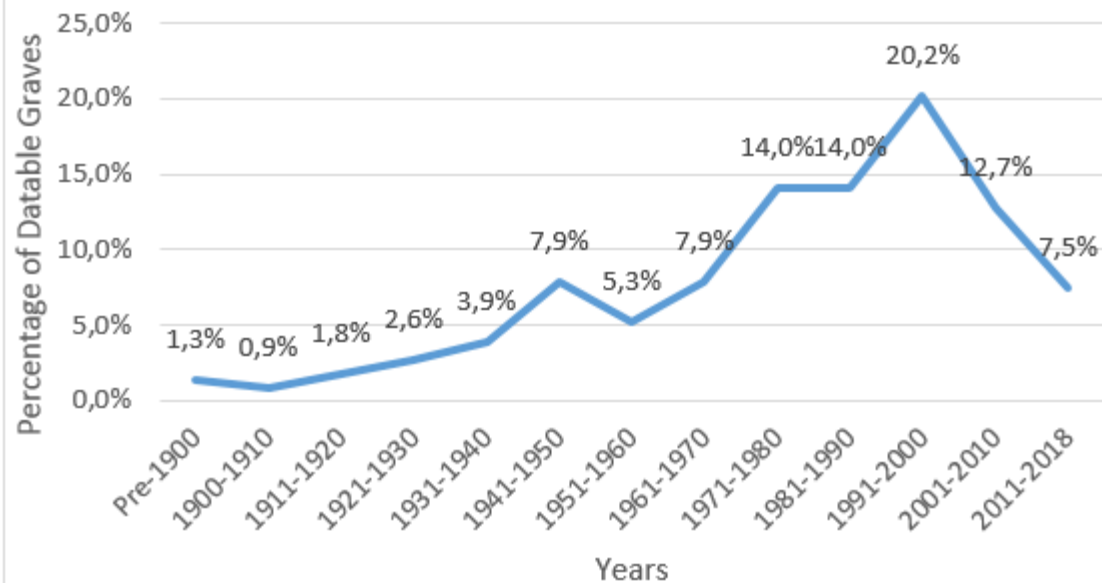
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A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	
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Wormeldange



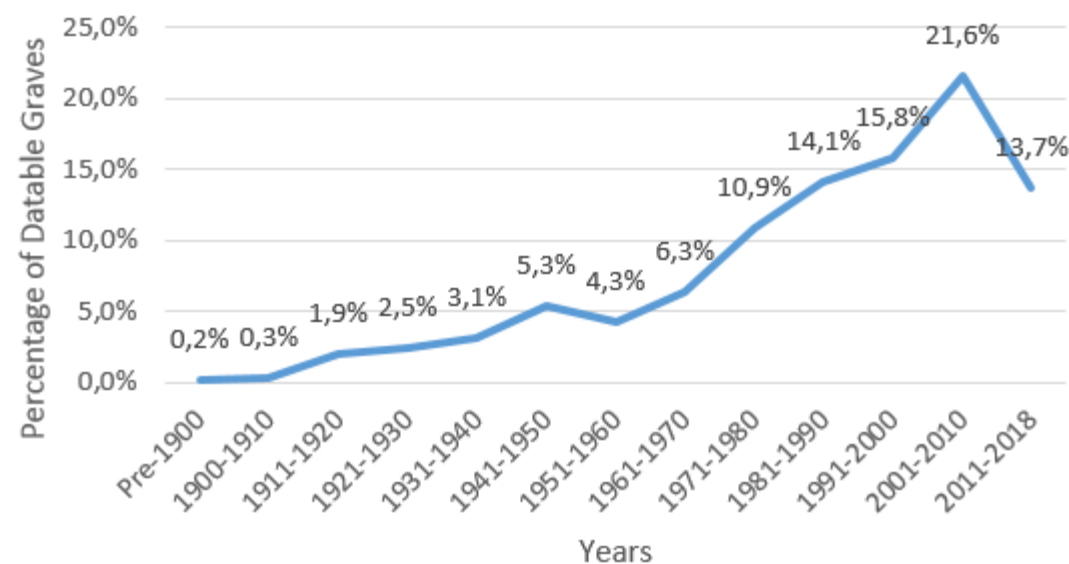
Wincheringen



Walferdange



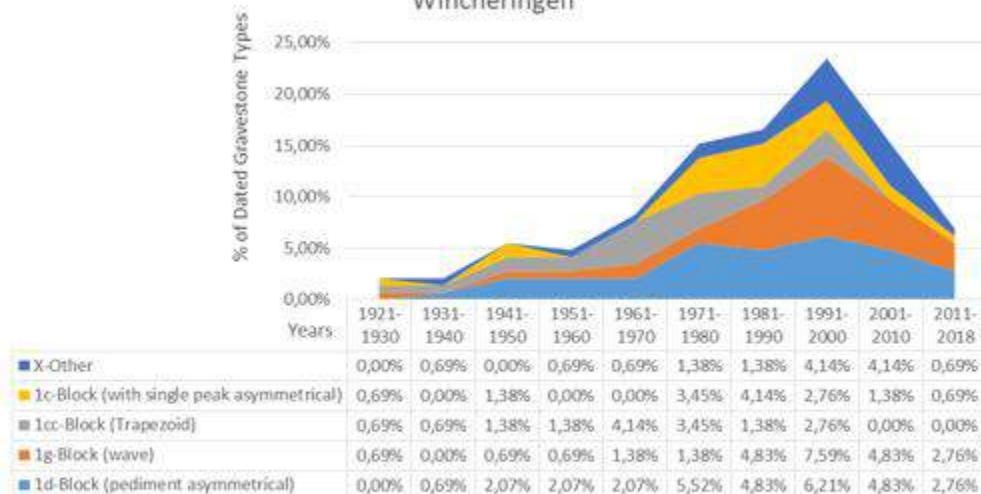
Konz



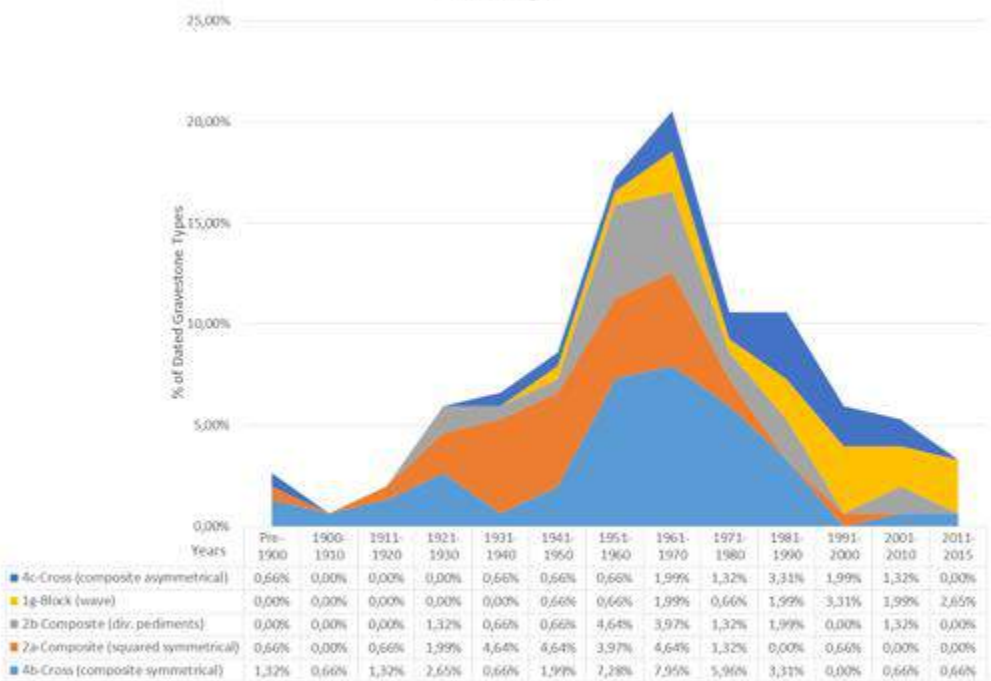
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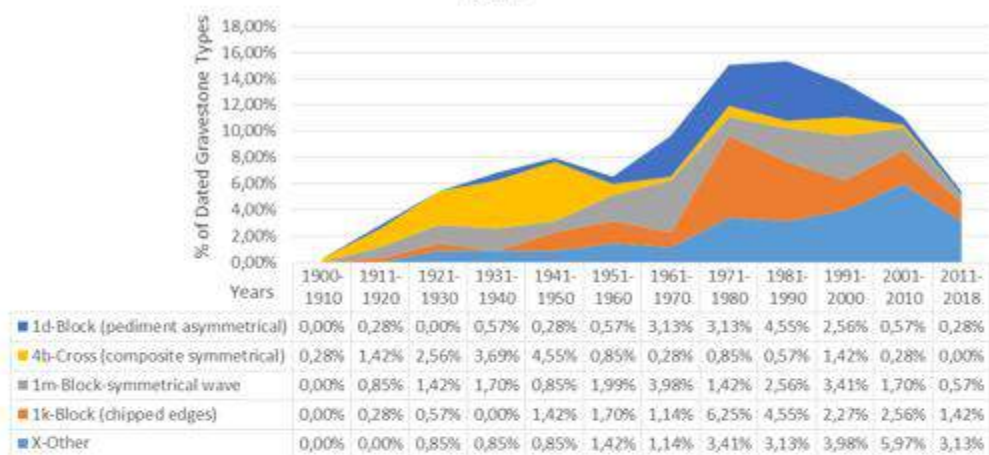
Wincheringen



Walferdange



Konz





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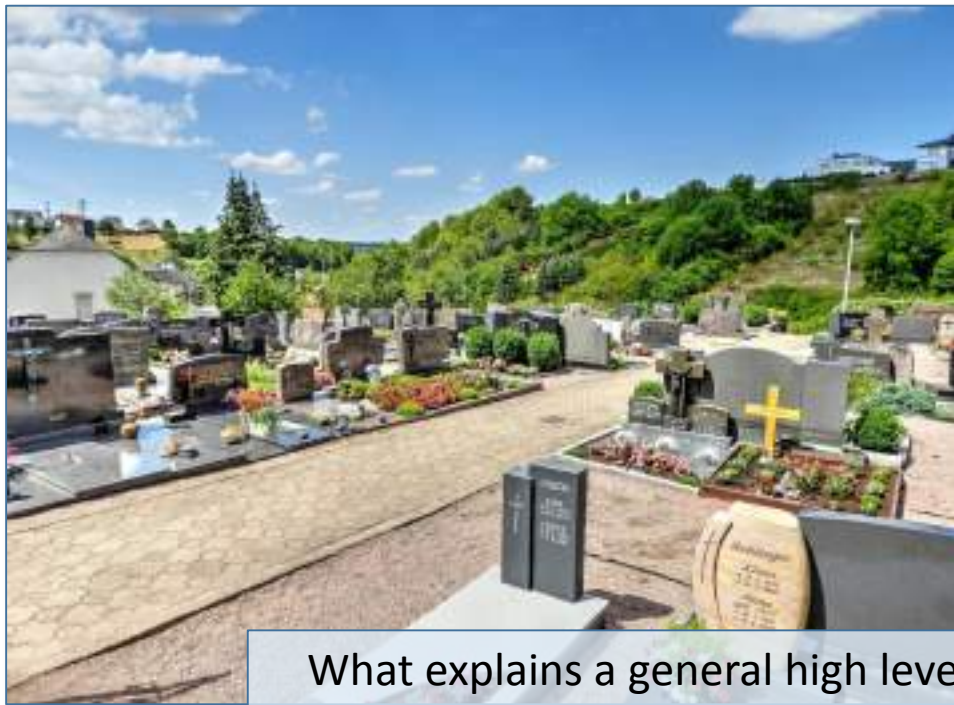
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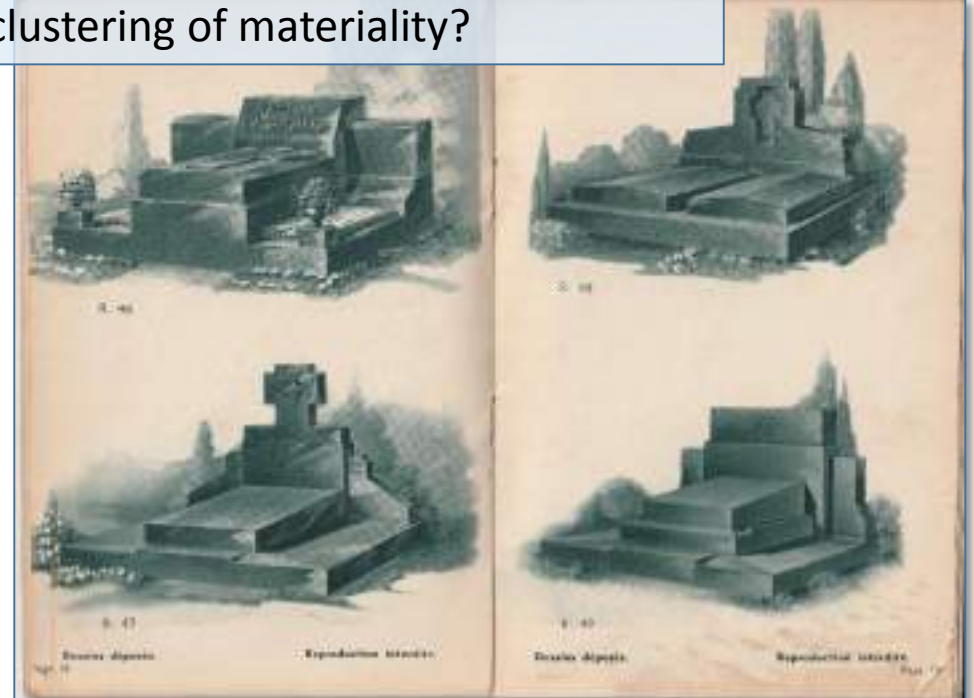
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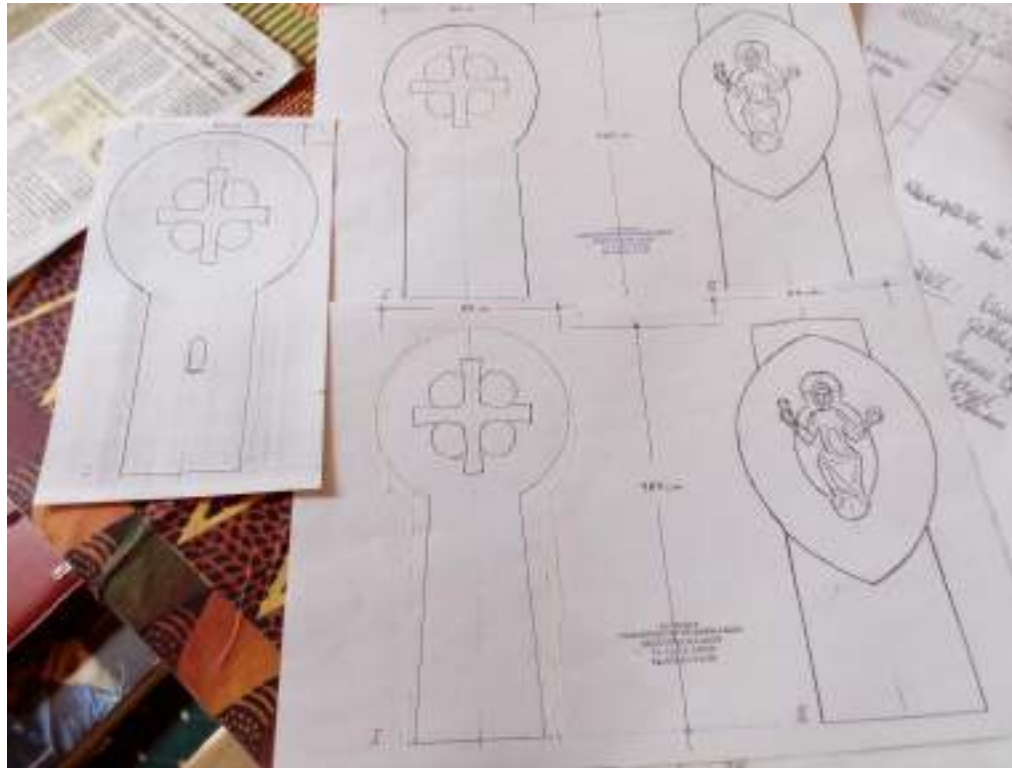


What explains a general high level of homogeneity within these cemeteries, the differences across borders and the clustering of materiality?





**Interessante Grabmalgestaltung am Stand
der Firma Natursteinwerk Rudolf Büttner**



“I always wondered, can one honour people with a stone. People are something lively, warm, soft, and gentle. A stone is hard [...]. Personally, I believe a stone cannot honour a human being. I cannot honour my wife like that. Additionally, many [of the grave markers I saw] where crosses. For me, this is not a hopeful symbol. Although I am a Christian and Catholic. The cross belongs to the past. It belongs to an event, from which our faith profits, but before us lies something different. An abundant life, in eternity [...]. There needs to be a symbol of hope. A symbol of my own personal hope and the hope faith provides, this needs to be expressed on a grave.”

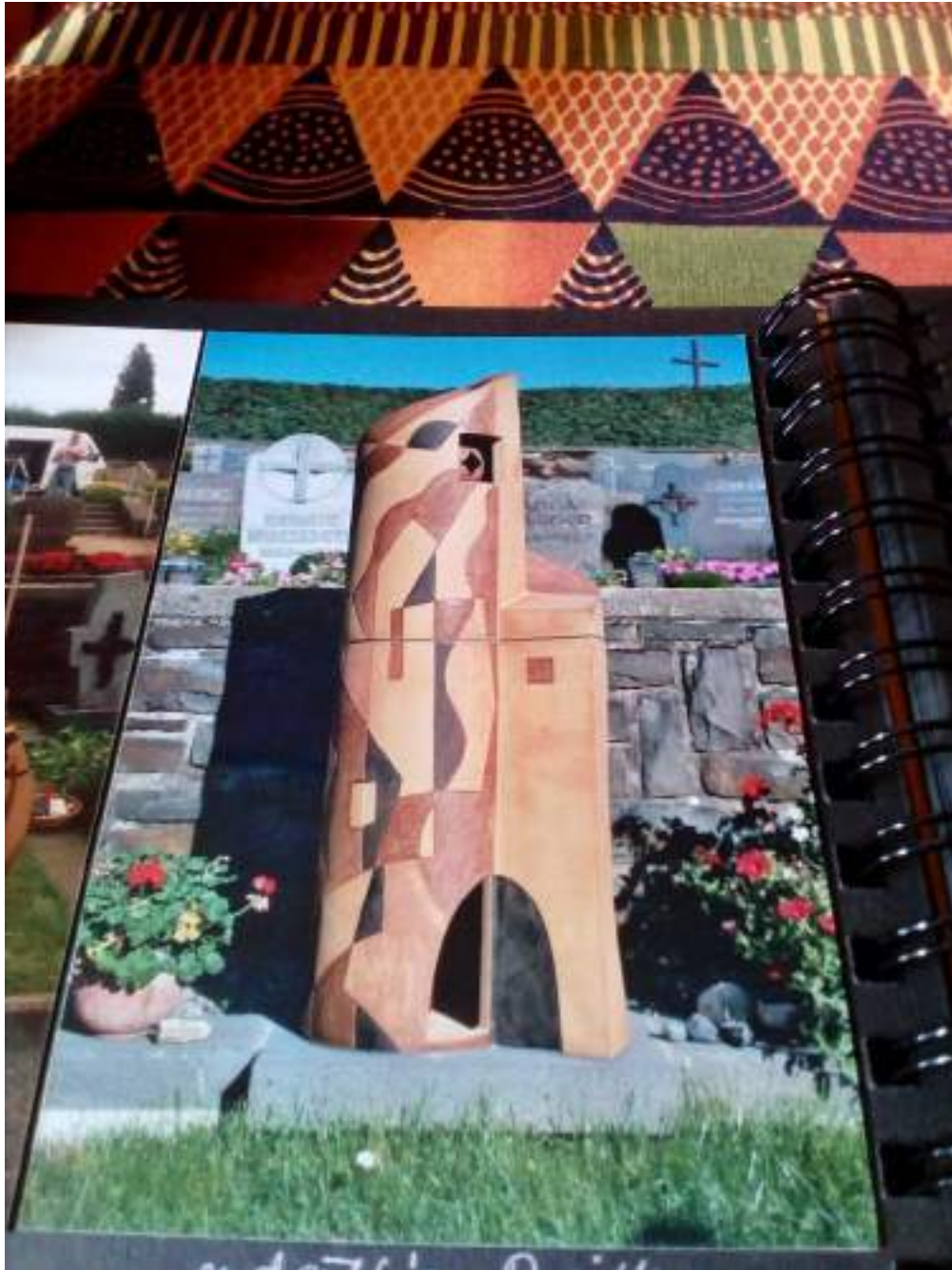
(C7, 05:03)



“This sphere, again a symbol of God, was supposed to be broken-up, or ‘exploded’, like what I saw at the Way of the Cross. But this is very difficult to achieve for the artist. How to do this in clay, how to break it up? First, she did not succeed so well, but I was fine with it. When connecting the corners, there is another cross shape and the cross symbolizes my faith.”
(C7, 23:50)

“And right in the middle of this ceramic sphere, I wanted to have another symbol for God. And based on esotericism, I thought of a berg crystal. It is a symbol for God.”
(C7, 24:55)





“To me, this was the last service I could do to my wife. To design her grave monument. To make sure it is beautiful and at the same time I can be satisfied with it. Because I know, I will lie here too one day.”

(C7, 1:29:35)



Anja von Becker, Jutta, Lara



*“For sure, [C7] and I integrated a certain symbology and tried to implement that. However, this is not as strict and fixed like a heart or praying hands on the monument. For me, the house is a sturdy castle. For him it is an expression of his faith. It is not like I am not a Christian myself, though [...]. Of course, the gate, that there are new spaces, the sun as source of light or a symbol of God [...]. In many cultures the boat symbolizes the transfer between conditions of being [...]. I used it many times. I would not have used it as a vase [as he did].”
(S1, 26:40)*

“Right from the beginning it was clear to me, I did not want granite, polished, Chinese-stone, on the grave. I knew, I need to go to someone who does handicraft and who understands a little about what I want and what this is about. And then it was clear that [S8] is the best address.”

(C4a, 04:39)

“I think I could have dealt with this memorial any earlier. I needed to be further in my development before taking care of such trivia. For me, this grave is not something I am very concerned of. I know that friends visit the grave and his family. It should definitely be a place where he can be honoured, a place where people say, it is a nice spot to visit. But for me, there is no meaning beyond that.”

(C4a, 39:58)

“The material is mottled sandstone. It is somewhat varved. [...] The stone itself shows some life in it. My husband is from Calabria and once we had a conversation about our favourite places. His family had an orange grove. And he told me that his favourite place in the whole world would be under an orange tree. That is why the stone will be elongated, higher, and it is an orange tree. It will sort of grow from the stone. [...] with roots, stem and a crown on top.”

(C4a, 12:15)









*“It is not the place where I need to go. It is not the place where I feel connected to. Although [hesitates] I need to admit, the grave marker makes a difference [laughs]. It is more, more ... like a memorial. The wooden cross was temporary, a stone is fixed. I have now more the feeling of something more personal [...].”
(C4b, 12:00)*

