



Transformation by Fire: The Archaeology of Cremation in Cultural Context (Amerind Studies in Archaeology)

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Ash, bone, and memories are all that remains after cremation. Yet for societies and communities, the act of cremation after death is highly symbolic, rich with complex meaning, touching on what it means to be human. In the process of transforming the dead, the family, the community, and society as a whole create and partake in cultural symbolism. Cremation is a key area of archaeological research, but its complexity has been underappreciated and undertheorized. *Transformation by Fire* offers a fresh assessment of archaeological research on this widespread social practice.

Editors Ian Kuijt, Colin P. Quinn, and Gabriel Cooney's volume examines cremation by documenting the material signatures of cremation events and processes, as well as its transformative impact on social relations and concepts of the body. Indeed, examining why and how people chose to cremate their dead serves as an important means of understanding how people in the past dealt with death, the body, and the social world.

The contributors develop new perspectives on cremation as important mortuary practices and social transformations. Varying attitudes and beliefs on cremation and other forms of burial within the same cultural paradigm help us understand what constitutes the body and what occurs during its fiery transformation. In addition, they explore issues and interpretive perspectives in the archaeological study of cremation within and between different cultural contexts.

The global and comparative perspectives on cremation render the book a unique contribution to the literature of anthropological and mortuary archaeology.

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