

Report to the Annual meeting of the SGA/SSA and the AGHAS, November 2016

Enjoying fine but cool weather and the ongoing Basler Herbstmesse the members of the SGA/SSA and the AGHAS gathered for the annual meeting of 2016. The meeting was held in the beautiful Aula of the Natural History Museum in Basel. The day started with the business meeting, for which nearly 40 members enrolled. The most important agenda items included amendments of the statutes of the association, the financial report and the presentation of the new website.

After the business meeting of the SGA and the AGHAS the participants welcomed the guest speaker George McGlynn, curator and deputy director of the Staatssammlung für Anthropologie and Paläoanatomie, Munich, Germany. In his thoughtful and impressive talk he presented the excavation of the graveyard from the Psychiatric Hospital in Hall, Tirol that included the skeletal remains of 228 patients who died between October 1942 and July 1945. The anthropological assessment of the skeletons in combination with historical documents and letters from relatives of hospital patients presented a shattering picture of institutional euthanasia. Also the next talk by Christine Cooper about the graveyard of the lunatic and correctional asylum in Cazis-Realta (GR) showed the tragic destiny of its occupants. The morning session of the annual meeting was then completed by the presentation of Gerhard Hotz about the "ladies" from the Barfüsserkerche in Basel.

The annual meeting of the SGA/SSA is always a good opportunity for students to present their projects to a scientific audience within a familiar atmosphere. Already the first talk of the afternoon took the audience into spell. PhD student, Amelie Alterauge combined anthropological, archaeological and historical details about the life and death of human mummified remains from 17th to 19th century crypts in Germany. Two master projects by students from the IPNA Basel were following. One by Cordula Portmann about a nearly forgotten histological methodology for age estimation and the other by Laura Rindlisbacher about selection criteria for burials in collective graves. Carola Berszin presented a pathological spine exhibited in the museum of tuberculosis in Heidelberg that recalls into memory that tuberculosis is again rising in Europe. The talks from Inga Siebke and Anja Furtwaengler finally represented new findings from the Dolmen of Oberbipp in the context of the Neolithic transition in Central Europe.

After the poster presentations by Joke Somers and Nakita Frater the participants had the great opportunity to see the new exhibition about "mummies – mysteries of time" in the Natural History Museum Basel with an exclusive tour by Gerhard Hotz and Amelie Alterauge. The exhibition showed mummies of animals, bog bodies, and other witnesses from different cultures and also explained the mummification process in ancient Egypt.

After this highly recommendable tour to the mummies the participants finalized their meeting with a delicious aperitif at the restaurant Rollerhof. With interesting discussions and a fine glass of wine the meeting closed.

Zürich, Sabine Landis