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THE AFTERMATH OF A DARK PAST

Forensic archaeology and memorialization of the 1994 Genocide
against the Tutsi

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ABSTRACT (IN ENGLISH)

This dissertation discusses two transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms: forensic archaeology, its techniques, its application and its importance for international tribunals like the ICTY and the ICTR, and memorialization efforts and their impact on the community. Both aspects are explained from a general view, providing a theoretical framework that can be applied to the case study of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. There have only been two forensic excavations in Rwanda. The vast majority of efforts to recover the remains of victims of the genocide, have been non-scientific and driven from different actors (governmental and non-governmental, like relatives and survivors). Over the years, the exhumations and the reburials became more centralized and overseen by a central government committee, the National Committee for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG). Using the framework by Cook (2004), there are many different memorialization activities to be noticed at genocide locations in Rwanda: preservation and restoration, memorialization and commemoration, and documentation and research. These have a different meaning to the different stakeholders involved in the memorialization process: the relatives and friends, the survivor communities and NGOs, the government and its national genocide narrative, perpetrators or bystanders and dark tourists. It becomes clear that the national discourse is in reality a dissonant heritage issue, that is gradually evolving towards a more peaceful approach, willing to make the genocide at thing of the past.

ABSTRACT (IN DUTCH)

Deze masterthesis behandelt twee aspecten van het transitionele justitie- en verzoeningsproces: enerzijds de forensische archeologie, haar technieken, toepassing en belang voor internationale strafhoven zoals het ICTY en het ICTR, en anderzijds de inspanningen om gebeurtenissen te memorialiseren, en hun impact op de gemeenschap. Beide onderdelen worden benaderd vanuit een algemeen oogpunt via een theoretisch kader dat telkens toegepast kan worden op de gekozen case study, namelijk de genocide tegen de Tutsi in Rwanda uit 1994. Er hebben maar twee forensische opgravingen plaatsgevonden in Rwanda. Het overgrote merendeel van de inspanningen om de resten van de slachtoffers van de genocide te kunnen bergen waren niet-wetenschappelijk, en geïnitieerd door verschillende actoren (gouvernementeel en niet-gouvernementeel, zoals familieleden en overlevenden). Doorheen de jaren zijn de exhumaties en herbegravingen meer gecentraliseerd en worden ze nu beheerd en gecontroleerd door een centraal overheidscomité, het Nationaal Comité voor de Strijd tegen Genocide (CNLG). Gebruikmakend van het theoretisch kader van Cook (2004), kunnen heel wat verschillende memorialiseringsactiviteiten onderscheiden worden in Rwanda: preservatie en restauratie, memorialisering en herdenking, en documentatie en research. Deze activiteiten hebben een verschillende betekenis voor de verschillende stakeholders die betrokken zijn bij het memorialiseringsproces: familieleden en vrienden, de gemeenschap van overlevenden, Ngo's, de overheid en haar nationaal genocidediscours, de daders of omstanders, maar ook de door dood gefascineerde toeristen (*dark tourists*). Het wordt zo duidelijk dat het nationale discours in werkelijkheid een problematiek van dissonant erfgoed is, die geleidelijk evolueert naar een meer vreedzame benadering, vanuit de wens om de genocide in het verleden te plaatsen.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

After six dissertations, my relatives and beloved ones are rather getting tired of the whole thesis issue that resurfaces every few years. I cannot say they are wrong. I become an awfully focused robot for several weeks, living like a hermit and abstaining from every form of social life that might distract me from my subject. In the case of mass atrocities and genocide, I must say that – to use Stone and Sharpley’s idea – there was a darker edge this time¹. You should try to imagine the faces of concerned friends and colleagues, wanting to have a nice little chat about hobbies and latest life updates, when you tell them you have been busy the last few months immersing yourself in genocide, human remains – preferably commingled – and dark tourism. But I have to quote an anonymous genius providing the quote “... (to be inserted at one’s own choice, in this case: ‘trying to convince yourself that this is the last dissertation ever’) *is like wrestling with a pig. After a few hours (or years in this case), you notice that the pig actually likes it*”. In conclusion, writing dissertations is a dirty business, but I love it.

To come back to the part where I actually thank my inner circle, I would like to thank my parents and my beloved man of my dreams, for really putting up with me. My colleagues, for sparing me the last weeks so I could work on my thesis. My promotor, for giving me advice and lending me his book, and especially for recommending me to go to Rwanda to experience the country and its burdened past myself, which was indeed amazing. I would like to thank the two great guys from IBL, who were ever efficient and happy to help me out, for so many years now. The mail woman, for ringing the doorbell really early so I not only received the books that I had ordered, but also was awake early enough to work for another day.

To conclude this story about never again, I cannot say never again when I’m asked if this will be the last dissertation. This experience was just too amazing.

¹ Stone and Sharpley, 2006.

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GLOSSARY OF KINYARWANDA TERMS

- Agahozo:* Literally: 'where tears are dried'. Part of the name of AVEGA (Agahozo Association for the Widows of the Genocide)
- Akazu:* Literally 'little hut'. Name for the Hutu elite linked to president Habyarimana and his wife Agathe Kanziga.
- Amagaju:* Local association of survivors in the Murambi region.
- Amahoro:* Peace
- Bazungu:* Foreigner
- Ibuka:* The umbrella body of Genocide survivors' associations
- Impuzamugambi:* Literally: those who have the same goal. Militia formed by extremist Hutu party.
- Interahamwe:* Literally: those who work together. Youth militia trained and armed by the MRND party
- Inyenzi:* Literally: cockroaches. Pejorative term used by Hutu extremists to describe members of the RPD and later Tutsi in general. It is in fact a word joke for 'ingenzi', brave, the name that Tutsi exiles gave themselves.
- Kwibuka:* Literally: remembrance. Annual commemoration period of 100 days, starting on 7 April.
- Mwami:* A sort of king.
- Uburetwa:* A form of unpaid labour, that was the base for the Tutsi-Hutu client system.
- Umuganda:* Modern day *Umuganda* can be described as community work. On the last Saturday of each month, communities come together to do a variety of public works (infrastructure development and environmental protection).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AAAS: American Association for the Advancement of Science
- AAFS: American Academy of Forensic Sciences
- AERG: Student and Pupil Genocide Survivors Association
(*Association des Étudiants et Élèves Rescapés du Génocide*)
- AVEGA: Agahozo Association for the Widows of the Genocide
(*Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo*)
- CIEM: Murambi Initiative Committee for the Burial of Victims
(*Comité d'Initiative pour l'Enterrement des victimes de Murambi*)
- CMGM: Memorial Commission on Genocide and Massacre
(*Commission mémorial du génocide et des massacres*)
- CNLG: National Commission for the Fight against Genocide
(*Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide*)
- EAAF: Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team
(*Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense*)
- EAFG: Forensic Anthropology Team of Guatemala
(*Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*)
- ES: Execution Site
- ETO: Official School of Technology
(*École Technique Officielle*)
- FAFG: Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala
(*Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*)
- FAR: Rwandan Armed Forces
(*Forces Armées Rwandaises*)
- FIDH: International Federation of the Human Rights Leagues
(*Federation Internationale des ligues des Droits de l'Homme*)

GAF:	Forensic Anthropology Team of Chili <i>(Grupo de Antropología Forense de Chile)</i>
GES:	Grave Execution Site
GOR:	Government of Rwanda
GPR:	Ground Penetrating Radar
HCM:	High media council <i>(Haut Conseil des Médias)</i>
ICC:	International Criminal Court
ICMP:	International Commission on Missing Persons
ICRC:	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTJ:	International Centre for Transitional Justice
ICTR:	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY:	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDP:	Internally displaced persons
IRIN:	Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa
KGMC:	Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi
LIS:	Looted Inhumation Site
MDR-Parmehutu:	Democratic Republican Movement – Movement of Hutu Emancipation Party <i>(Mouvement démocratique républicain - Parti du mouvement de l'émancipation Hutu)</i>
MINITRASO:	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MNI:	Minimum Number of Individuals
MRND:	National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development

(Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement)

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

ORTPN: Rwandan Office of Tourism and National Parks
(Office Rwandais du Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux)

Parmehutu: Movement of Hutu Emancipation Party
(Parti du mouvement de l'émancipation Hutu)

PDS: Primary Deposition Site

PHR: Physicians for Human Rights

PILPG: Public International Law and Policy Group

PIS: Primary Inhumation Site

PMI: Post-Mortem Interval

RDB: Rwanda Development Board

RPA: Rwanda Patriotic Army

RPF: Rwanda Patriotic Front

RTLTM: Free Radio Television Mille Collines
(Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines)

RWF: Rwandan Franc

SES: Surface Execution Site

SIS: Secondary Inhumation Site

SIU: Special Investigation Unit

SONUMA: Company for the Scanning and Commercialization of the Audiovisual Archives
(Société de Numérisation et de commercialisation des Archives audiovisuelles)

SSSFR:	Social Security Fund of Rwanda
TDS:	Temporary Deposition Site
TSD:	Time Since Death
TST:	Total Station Theodolite
UNAMIR:	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAR:	National Rwandan Union <i>(Union Nationale Rwandaise)</i>
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
UNMICT:	United Nations Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals
UNOHCHR:	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
USHMM:	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
WHO:	World Health Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Genocide and mass murder are as old as the human species itself. In spite of countless cries and promises that this type of atrocities should never happen again, even nowadays there seems to be no success in putting an end to massive violation of human rights.

The research question of this dissertation is a very pragmatic one: What role can the bodies of the victims of an act of genocide or mass murder play in transitional justice and the reconciliation process? There are several possible initiatives that countries can adopt to address the aftermath of atrocities and extensive human right abuses. This dissertation will focus on two different transitional justice mechanisms. Firstly, the role of forensic archaeology in the criminal prosecution process will be addressed to provide an answer to the question: How can mass graves be excavated in a way that targets a maximum gathering of evidence that can be used in court? Secondly, the process of memorialization and its potential for the process of reconciliation is studied to answer the question 'How are events of mass murder and genocide memorialized and who are the stakeholders involved?'. In this dissertation, the framework that will be used to analyse mass murder and genocide locations is that designed by Cook², who distinguishes three categories of activities at sites of mass murder and genocide, namely (1) preservation and restoration, (2) memorialization and commemoration and (3) documentation and research.

The research questions above are addressed via a literature study and a case study to apply the general theoretic framework that will be outlined. This implies that there will not be an empirical section included in this dissertation. As subject for the case study, the events of 1994 in Rwanda were chosen, because they could supplement the literature with my own experience from a visit to Rwanda in March 2015. Rwanda is often described as 'the Switzerland of Africa'. The country's beauty and peaceful atmosphere stand in stark contrast to the constant reminders of the tragic events of 1994, which makes it an interesting topic to further investigate.

² Cook, 2004.

The first chapter of this study constitutes a general outline of forensic archaeology and its origins, providing several examples of cases and going through important literature. Subsequently, the importance of forensic archaeology for international criminal law is explored. The last part of this contextualization chapter, is a short overview of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and its historical origins.

The second chapter contains the archaeological part of this dissertation. First, a short theoretical framework is provided about important definitions. Secondly, forensic archaeological procedures for necrosearch and the investigation of mass graves are explained. This theoretical information is subsequently applied to the Rwandan case, exploring the excavation and exhumation efforts that have taken place in the aftermath of the genocide and their consequences and impact on society.

The third and most elaborate chapter concerns the memorialisation of locations of mass atrocities, providing a short theoretical framework for assessing these locations and the human tendency towards memorialization. Thereafter, this dissertation touches upon the subject of dark tourism and thanatourism, two aspects of a recently booming social activity that is closely connected to death. These phenomena are interesting side-effects of the memorialization of atrocities, and therefore deserve to be included. Like in the other chapters, the last part is the application of the explored theoretical framework to Rwanda as a case study. A chronological and typological overview of memorialization, preservation and documentation efforts is made, providing several examples and using photographs to endorse the findings.

This dissertation contributes to the hiatus that exists in the treatment of the bodies of victims of mass atrocities after death, from a non-medical angle. Until now, there has not been much study dedicated to activating the dead in reconciliation mechanisms. Especially the application of the theoretical framework of forensic archaeology, memorialization and dark tourism to the case of post-genocidal Rwanda, is innovatory. However, especially for the case of Rwanda, there is still room for more research in the field of non-forensic exhumations and their initiatives, visitor motivations for dark tourism and further evolution of the genocide narrative. The theoretical framework can also be applied to other events of mass killings or genocide, like the Cambodian or Armenian genocide.

There are several difficulties to be expected in this research. First of all, there has been a torrent of literature about the Rwandan Genocide, about dark tourism and about memorialization. Other topics, like the exhumation of victims, the use of human remains for displaying or dark tourism in Rwanda, received almost no scholarly attention. Many sources are inaccessible, often because they are only available in Kinyarwanda, sometimes because not a trace is to be found. It seems that the Rwandan government applies very thorough measures to remove everything that is outdated and does not fit the national discourse anymore. A third difficulty is the tendency of Rwandans not to openly discuss issues that go against the formal governmental point of view. Much of the opportunities to ask questions to government officials or survivors during the visit to Rwanda were taken, but answers were almost always standardized and drilled. This caused some time lost, starting from naïve points of view and assuming that these answers were correct. Fortunately, some critical literature was published in the last years that can explain some actions in a neutral, less biased way.

To enhance legibility, the APA reference system is not used for references in the text. Footnotes are used to refer to sources, applying the Kluwer system. In the bibliography itself, the APA reference system is used. It is nonetheless influenced by the Anglo-Saxon system, that is often used in archaeology circles and is taught at the K.U.Leuven Faculty of Arts. This is clear in the lack of ampersands and a different way of referring to page numbers.

The sources of the images that are incorporated in this dissertation are listed in the section 'List of figures'. To keep the text itself as uncluttered as possible, there are no sources listed in the image description.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides a historical framework of the topics that are to be addressed in this dissertation. First of all, forensic archaeology is defined and situated in the scientific field. Secondly, its origins are analysed through a number of cases that contributed to its status nowadays. Secondly, the importance of forensic archaeology is advocated. Thirdly, a part of this chapter is dedicated to the historical framework of the chosen case study, the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

1.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF MASS GRAVES THROUGH FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Thanks to the media and a number of TV-series like CSI, forensic sciences have entered the public sphere and can count on mass interest³. Forensic archaeology is nowadays generally accepted as a subdiscipline of forensic science – but it was not always like that. Thanks to the excavations in former Yugoslavia, forensic archaeology has become one of the core sciences of a mass grave investigation. It was the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) that put archaeology on the map as an indispensable forensic science for the gathering of evidence to be used in court for the prosecution of the culprits.

The word forensic is derived from the Latin word *forensis*, that means “belonging to the market (*forum*)”. The forum (market) is the roman place where people gathered to discuss public matters, to trade their goods and to engage in lawsuits. That is how the forum got its more figurative meaning of a public courtroom and why the word forensic means juridical. A forensic science is the tracing and study of scientific evidence that can be used in court⁴.

³ Crossland, 2015, p.106; Morris, 2011, p.15-18; Thomas, 1999, p.5. See also Thomas, 2006.

⁴ Quintelier, 2005, p.8; Dilley, 2005, p.177; Menez, 2005, p.312.

FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

In the 1970s, forensic archaeology developed in the United States from forensic anthropology. Here anthropology (the study of human kind) consists of four subdisciplines: cultural or social anthropology, linguistics, physical or biological anthropology and archaeology. Forensic anthropology falls within the discipline of physical anthropology and consists itself of several sciences: it has its roots in archaeology and also touches the subjects of palaeontology, biochemistry, pathology, odontology, anatomy and part of forensic medicine⁵.

In the United States, a forensic anthropologist is a physical anthropologist with an archaeological training, who gathers the biological data of human remains in order to determine the identity and cause of death of the victim for medico-legal purposes. In Europe, anthropology and archaeology are two separate sciences⁶.

The first book about the forensic application of human osteology was written in 1878 by an anatomist, Thomas Dwight, and was called '*The Identification of the Human Skeleton: A Medico-Legal Study*'. He is considered the father of American forensic anthropology⁷. The first anthropologist involved as an expert witness in court, was G.A. Dorsey in the case of Louise Luetgart in 1897. His study of the remains recovered from a sausage barrel pointed out that her husband had murdered her⁸.

However, it was only at the end of the 1930s that forensic anthropology became an indispensable part of criminal investigation through tightening bonds between the FBI and the physical anthropologists of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Especially the publication of the '*Guide to the Identification of Human Skeletal Material*' by W.M. Krogman in the F.B.I. Law Enforcement Bulletin in 1939 put the forensic use of

⁵ Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.3; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.16-7.

⁶ Alempijevic et al., 2003, p.82; Crist, 2001, p.43; López and Umaña, 2007, p.170; PHR, 2006, p.4; Poulsen and Vesterby, 1997, p.97; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.224 and p.231; Vandenbruane, 2003, p.251-252 and p.261-262; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.58; Connor and Scott, 2001c, p.101 and 2001b, p.3; Juhl, 2005, p.19; Haglund and Simmons, 2005, p.159; Duhig and Turnbull, 2007, p.76-78; Lucy et al., 1996, p.101; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.16-17; Hunter, 2002, p.xxv, İşcan, 2001, p.1.

⁷ Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.2, Crist, 2001, p.40, Hunter, 1996, p.9.

⁸ Crist, 2001, p.40; Hunter, 1996, p.9; AAFS, 2015.

physical anthropology on the map. This evolution was crowned by the establishment of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) in Colorado Springs in 1948⁹.

FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Generally speaking, forensic archaeology is the use of the techniques and paradigms of conventional archaeology to discover physical evidence at a crime scene in a juridical framework¹⁰. From a theoretical point of view, a forensic excavation does not differ much from a 'regular' one: the body or bodies are the artefact(s) and the grave and its fillings are the layers in the archaeological stratigraphy. In practice however, a forensic excavation is not as simple as that. Forensic archaeology aims at recovering human remains, but is more ambitious than just exhuming bodies. By investigating the complete context, it can reconstruct patterns of human behaviour. So getting to the body is one thing, but preserving all information that is not directly adhering to the body is equally paramount. In older cases, it is clear that many crucial details were overlooked in reaching the 'big prize', which is the body. Staining of the soil, broken leaves, traces of utensils, prints, insects, ... they all matter to provide a full image of the crime¹¹.

There are three main differences between forensic archaeology and 'regular' archaeology. First of all, there is the time factor. Whereas forensic archaeology is used for recent cases, 'regular' archaeology focuses more on older ones. This has to do with the second difference, which is the purpose. Forensic archaeology gains evidence to be used in court, whereas for 'regular' archaeology it is mostly about gaining knowledge of the past to study broad patterns of human behaviour, knowing that there will never be a criminal conviction. This has also mental implications for the forensic archaeologist, who now is confronted with soft tissue and decomposition. The general feeling of detachment is harder to maintain. A third difference is the application of forensic protocol. Most forensic sites are subject to multidisciplinary investigations, and the

⁹ Craig, 2005, p.9-10; Black, 2000, p.492; Crist, 2001, p.40-41; Lucy et al., 1996, p.101.

¹⁰ Definition based upon and summarized from the definitions in Haglund, 2001, p.26; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.4; Blau, 2005, p.19; Blau and Skinner, 2005, p.451, Connor and Scott, 2001c, p.101; Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.5; Crist, 2001, p.41, Juhl, 2005, p.19, López and Umaña, 2007, p.170, Menez, 2005, p.312 and Nawrocki, 1996, p.1.

¹¹ Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.40; Menez, 2005, P.312; Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.3-4; Connor and Scott, 2001c, p.101; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.96; Dockril and Hunter, 1996, p.41-42; Nawrocki, 1996, p.1-2; Hunter et al., 1994, p.760.

forensic archaeologist must respect several procedures, ensuring the chain of custody of the crime scene (see *infra*, section ‘The chain of custody’)¹².

It was only in the 1930s that archaeological techniques were applied for the first time in a criminal investigation, under the influence of American physical anthropologists who were trained in archaeology as one of the four pillars of the physical anthropology university curriculum¹³. However, due to a lack of professionalism, archaeological evidence seldom led to a case in court until the 1970s¹⁴. In 1976 forensic archaeology was born as a separate discipline with the article ‘*Forensic Archaeology*’, by Morse, Crusoe and Smith¹⁵. In the 1980s archaeological techniques were used for the first time in Argentina in investigations of human rights’ violations¹⁶. The distinction between forensic archaeology and forensic anthropology became clearer¹⁷.

A very useful handbook for forensic archaeology is the book ‘*Studies in Crime: An Introduction to Forensic Archaeology*’ by Hunter, Martin and Roberts, which was published in 1996. This gem is filled with archaeological techniques to be applied at forensic investigations of human remains (identification of burial sites, 3D space measurement, geology, stratigraphy and dating methods etc.)¹⁸. The involvement of human rights organizations in the investigation of mass graves everywhere in the world gave an extra impulse for the incorporation of archaeology in forensic investigations¹⁹.

In the latest years forensic archaeology is getting more and more professionalized through standardized procedures. The books of Cox et al. (2008) and Dupras et al. (2012) can be seen as the best manuals of procedures for the forensic archaeologist for now²⁰.

¹² Saul and Saul, 2002, p.72 and p.93; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.18; Haglund, 2001, p.28-29; Heron and Pollard, 1996, p.157; Connor and Scott, 1997, p.27; Hunter et al., 1994, p.760; Hunter, 2002, p.xxvii; Hunter and Simpson, 2007, p.270; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.40; Jimenez and Melbye, 1997, p.65.

¹³ Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.2-3; Crossland, 2013, p.123.

¹⁴ Blau, 2005, p.20; Blau and Skinner, 2005, p.450-451.

¹⁵ See Morse et al. 1976. Crist, 2001, p.42.

¹⁶ Blau, 2005, p.20; Blau and Skinner, 2005, p.451.

¹⁷ Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.2.

¹⁸ See Hunter, Martin and Roberts, 1996.

¹⁹ Crist, 2001, p.43; Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.2; PHR, 2006, p.39. See Groen et al., 2015, for an overview.

²⁰ See Cox et al., 2008; Dupras et al., 2012.

A brand new, 728 page thick manual by Blau and Ubelaker has just been published as we speak (28 July 2016), and could therefore not be incorporated in this thesis²¹. However, most books that are the holy grail for methodology and theoretical framework of forensic archaeology, date roughly from the period 1995-2005.

A SHORT HISTORY OF APPLIED FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY THROUGH A NUMBER OF CASES

The prosecution of war criminals dates from the Nürnberg and Tokyo Trials. The first investigation of a mass grave dates from during the **Second World War**, when some unprofessional excavations took place in among others the Katin Forest in Belarus, where more than 4.000 bodies of Polish soldiers were exhumed by a team of Germans, Italians and Swiss²².

The first steps in the more methodological use of archaeological techniques in more professional mass grave investigations are to be found in Latin America, where in the middle of the 1980s more scientific excavations by anthropologists took place, who had however very little knowledge of archaeological methods. It took almost another decade before 'real' archaeologists were involved in investigations of mass graves, more specific in Iraqi Kurdistan (cfr. *Infra*)²³.

After the military coup in **Argentina** at least 8.800 people were murdered or simply vanished in the years between 1976 and 1983. After democracy was restored, a number of excavations were conducted throughout the country. Since there were almost no archaeologists or anthropologists involved, most of them were very unprofessional. It was the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) that was called to aid and sent a professional team led by Dr. Clyde Snow to teach the basics of forensic sciences. The main purpose of the excavations was victim identification, not criminal investigation. However, it was the first time that forensic excavations played a role in mass grave investigations²⁴.

²¹ Blau and Ubelaker, 2016.

²² Haglund, et al., 2001, p.58; Haglund, 2002, p.245-246; Juhl, 2005, p.24; Klonowski, 2007, p.148-149.

²³ Dille, 2005, p.201, Ferllini, 2007b, p.10, Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.223.

²⁴ Juhl, 2005, p.24-25; Blau and Skinner, 2005, p.451; Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.2-3; Haglund et al., 2001, p.58; Ferllini, 2007b, p.12, p.18 and p.24; Stover and Shigekane, 2002, p.849; Stover, 1997, p.40; Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.9-11; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.222; EAAF, s.d.; Crossland, 2013, p.123-124.

By 1986 the students trained by the AAAS founded their own forensic anthropological team: the Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF). The team has conducted excavations and trained others throughout the world (Congo, Brazil, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Croatia, Kosovo, etc.)²⁵.

A similar course of historical events took place in **Chili**, where a military coup put an end to the presidency of Salvador Allende in 1973. To investigate crimes during the following Pinochet Regime (1973-1990), students were trained and established in 1989 a short-lived forensic anthropological group, the Grupo de Antropología Forense de Chile (GAF)²⁶.

A third near identical process happened in **Guatemala**, where a military coup in 1954 led to more than thirty years of terror. Thousands of people were murdered and dumped in mass graves throughout the country. More than 100 mass graves were located and some poorly excavated with a tremendous loss of evidence as a consequence. The AAAS led by Clyde Snow and Eric Stover was again called to aid and in 1991 the first forensic training program in Guatemala City took off. Later these students established the Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (EAFG), a team that worked among others in Former Yugoslavia and developed itself in the Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG)²⁷.

The first case where a truly international and interdisciplinary forensic team operated was at the site of Koreme in **Iraqi Kurdistan** in 1992. This was an execution site during the Anfal Campaign (1987-1988) by the Iraqi Baath regime. This campaign took place during the last phase of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), and targeted the Kurdish population through mass executions, torture and disappearances²⁸. The team consisted of archaeologists and anthropologists from Argentina, Guatemala, Chili and the US and was led by Snow and Brisco. For the first time, a multidisciplinary approach made it possible to gather the three types of evidence that are crucial in a trial: physical evidence, witness evidence and document evidence. This approach became a model for

²⁵ EAAF, s.d.; Juhl, 2005, p.24-25.

²⁶ Rosenblatt, 2015, p.61; Ferllini, 2007b, p.13-15; Haglund, et al., 2001, p.58; Bernardi and Fondebrider, 2007, p.212; Juhl, 2005, p.28.

²⁷ Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.11-13; Juhl, 2005, p.27; Bernardi and Fondebrider, 2007, p.212; Ferllini, 2007b, p.15; Stover, 1997, p.40; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.222; Juhl, 2005, p.27; FAFG, 2015.

²⁸ Juhl, 2005, p.35-36.

later forensic investigations in El Salvador, Croatia, Bosnia and Rwanda. The purpose of the excavation of Koreme was not fact finding or the identification of bodies but to provide evidence and develop methods to gather this evidence in a professional and scientific way. However, the special investigation commission and ad hoc tribunal the UN wanted to establish in order to gather more evidence never became a reality²⁹.

The most important case of mass murder where professional excavations were (and are still being) conducted is **Former Yugoslavia**. It would take up too much space to discuss the historical events of this long, sombre chapter in history in detail. In the summer of 1991 Croatia and Slovenia declared themselves as independent from Yugoslavia, which led to a broad scale war in Croatia. More than 14.000 people went missing until a cease-fire was reached in 1992. Not long after, Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence, which led to three years of ethnic conflict in the region before the Dayton Agreement put an end to the mass killings in 1996. Nonetheless, this was not the end for this troubled region with another insurgency in the province of Kosovo that led to the death or disappearance of another 11.000 people until the NATO intervention in 1999³⁰.

A temporary tribunal was erected in Den Haag in 1993, the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia). This tribunal is competent for the prosecution of war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the Geneva Convention that took place on Balkan territory since 1991³¹. The ICTY caused a revolution for the exhumation of mass graves: for the first time the excavations were to be used to provide evidence for criminal convictions, not information for identification only. To satisfy the high scientific standards of court evidence, the excavations had to be conducted in the most scientific manner possible. The use of experienced archaeologists, in cooperation with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), gave the scientific excavation of this special

²⁹ See Human Rights Watch, 2003; Connor and Scott, 1997, p.34-36; Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.15-18.

³⁰ Roos, 2004, p.5; Connor, Skinner and York, 2002, p.294-295; Juhl, 2005, p.37; Klonowski, 2007, p.149-152; Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.18-20; EAAF, 1992, p.1-3; EAAF, 1997, p.83-84; Koff, 2004, p.131, p.181 and p.223; Stover, 1997, p.41; Kimmerle, 2004, p.3-4 and p.10; Komar, 2003, p.713; Lalu, Rainio and Sajantila, 2007, p.57; De Poot and De Winne, 2007, p.174; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.222.

³¹ EAAF, 1998, p.18; EAAF, 1999, p.22; Juhl, 2005, p.33; Kimmerle, 2004, p.3-4; Stover, 1997, p.40; Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.18-20; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.222-223; ICTY, s.d.

type of graves a real boost, with examples as Ovcara (Croatia), Srebrenica, Nova Kasaba, Tuzla (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and many others³².

For the first time environmental profiles were composed based on geological and botanical elements, which led to a more detailed knowledge of the transfers of the bodies and the presence of Execution Sites (ES), Primary Inhumation Sites (PIS), Looted Inhumation Sites (LIS), Secondary Inhumation Sites (SIS). Also clothing, personal belongings, ballistics and documents were used as forensic evidence. Since the main purpose was not individual identification but general determination of cause of death and the identification of the ethnic group, excavations were conducted in a very fast manner³³.

For the ICTY the focus of the investigations lay on gathering evidence, but this did not mean that efforts to provide individual identification to the families of the victims were not made. The **International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)** was created in 1996, with the initial mandate of elucidating the faith of the 40.000 persons that disappeared during the turmoil in the period from 1991 to 1995. The ICMP provided a more neutral and more scientifically justified approach than the national agencies that sprouted early on in the conflict. Their mission is less juridical than the evidence-driven excavations of the ICTY, and are motivated by more humanitarian incentives: giving back a name to the many anonymous victims, that were often stripped from their belongings, which made identification almost impossible. The introduction of a DNA identification system meant a breakthrough on the terrain as a complementary technique next to forensic archaeology and anthropology. The results were indeed remarkable: more than 70% (around 27.000) of the 40.000 missing persons were accounted for. Since 2003 the ICMP has an extended global mandate, not only for conflict context, but also for cases that involve natural disasters³⁴.

³² EAAF, 1998, p.18; EAAF, 1999, p.22; Juhl, 2005, p.33; Kimmerle, 2004, p.3-4; Stover, 1997, p.40; Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.18-20; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.222-223; Lalu, Rainio and Sajantila, 2007, p.57; PHR, 2006, p.6.

³³ Klonowski, 2007, p.149-156; EAAF, 1992, p.1-3; Stover, 1997, p.41; Roox, 2004, p.3-4; Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.20; Brown, 2006, p.204-210; Cordner and Coupland, 2003, p.1325; EAAF, 1998, p.18; EAAF, 1999, p.28; Haglund and Simmons, 2005, p.171; Kimmerle, 2004, p.4-10; Mills, 2005, p.21; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.228-230; Skrbic, 2004, p.1-2; Vollen, 2001, p.337; Hanson, Sterenberg and Wright, 2005, p.142 and p.149-150; PHR, 2006, p.18, p.66 and p.80; Weaver, 2001, p.1110; Juhl, 2005, p.33; ICMP, 2005, p.1.

³⁴ Juhl, 2005, p.33; ICMP, 2005, p.1; Hedman et al., 2001, p.172; Klonowski, 2007, p.166-167; Komar, 2003, p.713, Komar and Lathrop, 2006, p.974; Vollen, 2001, p.338; ICMP, 2014; Tuller, 2015, p.88-90.

In 1999 the ICTY launched the biggest international investigation of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and violations of the Geneva conventions until now. Several teams of specialized forensic archaeologists were sent to **Kosovo** to gather evidence at several gravesites about the cause of death and categorical identity of the victims. In two years' time, about 300 sites were excavated by mobile teams that could work in a very quick and flexible manner to gain legal evidence. Nowadays, mass graves are still being found in the area. They are investigated by local forensic groups with the support of the ICMP in order to identify the victims³⁵.

In November 1994, in the direct aftermath of the 1994 genocide in **Rwanda**, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to prosecute those considered most responsible for the gravest crimes committed in 1994. As the tribunal recently ended its mandate on 31 December 2015, it has turned out to be very money- and time-consuming³⁶. Since its creation, the ICTR indicted 93 individuals for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in 1994. Proceedings have been concluded for 85 accused, of whom 14 persons were acquitted and 2 died. Five accused have been transferred to Rwandan (3) and French (2) jurisdiction. Eight fugitive cases have been transferred to other jurisdictions (5 to Rwanda and 3 to UNMICT³⁷)³⁸. The contribution of forensic archaeology to the ICTR will be considered in detail in the section 'International forensic excavations' below.

³⁵ Ryan and Stover, 2001, p.23-24; De Poot and De Winne, 2007, p.174 and p.182-185; Juhl, 2005, p.46; Kimmerle, 2004, p.2-5; Ferlini, 2007c, p.131; Hunter and Simpson, 2007, p.278; López and Umaña, 2007, p.199; Roos, 2004, p.5.

³⁶Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations, s.d.; Republic of Rwanda – National Service of Gacaca Courts, 2012, p. 27-28.

³⁷ United Nations Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, created in December 2010 by the UN Security Council to guarantee a follow-up of the ICTR and ICTY after their mandates have ended. See UNMICT – About, s.d.

³⁸ UNMICT, s.d.

1.2 *THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY FOR INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW*

As became clear in the preceding section, archaeologists have increasingly been involved in the forensic investigation of individual criminal cases and in cases of international human rights abuses. Aside from this legal application, the use of archaeology for exhumation as part of human rights investigations can also count on growing interest³⁹.

A mass grave contains the concealed remains of victims of mass murder, and the evidence concerning the events will as a consequence be found inside the grave. If gathered correctly, the evidence from a mass grave can link the physical episode to persons or other events or locations. The importance of the archaeological gathering of evidence to be used in an international court like the ICTY and the ICTR can therefore not be understated.⁴⁰

The archaeological evidence that is accepted by international tribunals is mostly in the form of statistical data: the number of bodies found in the grave, demographic profiles, the presence of blindfolds, handcuffs, the amount of bullets and/or bullet wounds, etc.⁴¹. The chain of custody and thorough recording of the evidence found are paramount, as will be explained *infra*, in chapter 2.4 'Excavating mass graves'.

Archaeological excavations are destructive: they damage *in situ* evidence and the context forever. It is important that the gathering happens with the greatest care possible and according to international scientific standards. The worst punishment for overlooking objects, colouring stains, shreds of material or environmental particles is that the perpetrator will remain unpunished, but next to this, chances are that through the excavating process this information will be lost forever for other purposes, like truth finding or identification of victims. As a consequence, forensic archaeologists are under a lot more pressure than archaeologists who work at historical excavations⁴².

³⁹ Crossland, 2013, p.124.

⁴⁰ Cox et al., 2008, p.15-16.

⁴¹ Koff, 2004, p.63; Mills, 2005, p.21-23; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.229; Shute, 2005, p.95; Martin, 2015, p.161.

⁴² Peterson, 2008, p.2; Cerone, 2007, p.52; Juhl, 2005, p.37; Skinner, 1987, p.280; Tuller, 2015, p.94-95; Martin, 2015, p.165-166.

There are no official methodological or recording standards for forensic archaeology, except for the short so-called '1991 Minnesota Protocols of the United Nations'⁴³. Two small documents are sometimes referred to as guidelines: the 'PILPG Protocol' (2015)⁴⁴ and the 'ICRC brief report on the identification of human remains' (2013)⁴⁵. In the absence of comprehensive general guidelines, therefore, the Inforce Foundation, a UK based charity that operates as an international centre for forensic excellence⁴⁶, provided an overview of the efforts of the numerous national teams and NGO's that have taken part in excavations of mass graves⁴⁷. The 2008 book by Cox et al., called '*The Scientific Investigation of Mass Graves*', provides an extensive manual with clear, standardized procedures and rules to be followed⁴⁸.

⁴³ UN, 1991. In fact, the UNOHCHR is about to finish a revision of the Minnesota Protocols. See OHCHR, 2016.

⁴⁴ See PILPG, 2015.

⁴⁵ See ICRC, 2013.

⁴⁶ See Inforce – About us, 2016.

⁴⁷ See Groen et al., 2015.

⁴⁸ See Cox et al.; 2008.

1.3 CASE STUDY: SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE 1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI

THE PREAMBLE TOWARDS GENOCIDE

Although the genocide ideology was designed and fine-tuned by the Habyarimana regime, the roots of the problem lay further back in time. For the period prior to 1860, virtually nothing is known about how the terms ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Twa’ were used in social discourse. During the Tutsi monarchy, the *mwami* (king) ruled the country, together with an elite of cattle herders. Around 1890, *uburetwa*, a form of unpaid labour requiring tenant farmers to work for the ruling elite, was introduced. The clients, who did not possess cattle, were called Hutu. It were the Germans that first colonized Rwanda in 1897. After World War I, the Belgians took over with a League of Nations Mandate in 1922. At first they did not pay much attention to their new colony (Ruanda-Urundi), but after some years, they gradually enhanced their influence over the country. The hierarchic power division between Hutu and Tutsi was intensified by using a layer of racial, social evolutionary ideology, the Hamitic hypothesis⁴⁹. Basing upon the physical differences of Hutu and Tutsi, they saw the first as the lesser, and the latter as trueborn leaders. The Belgian authorities formalised the division by introducing identity cards in 1932, identifying 15% as Tutsi, 84% as Hutu and 1% as Twa⁵⁰. Tutsi had higher access to employment opportunities, power, land and resources, whilst Hutu were mostly confined to physical labour and agricultural cultivation and the Twa were isolated in forests for hunting and pottery⁵¹.

It was during that time that the foundations for the genocide were unknowingly laid by the Belgian colonial power: by promoting one group over the other, they caused an enormous inferiority complex with the Hutu and an overconfidence with the Tutsi. By issuing the identity cards, they rendered any social movement between the originally economical categories impossible and officialised the frozen ethnic differences⁵².

⁴⁹ Eltringham, 2015, p.162-163; Eltringham, 2004, p.12-19; Eltringham, 2006, p.433-435; Newbury, 1988, p.51, p.85; Newbury, D., 1998, p.73-97.

⁵⁰ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.306; Text panel exhibition Gisozi (own notes); Eltringham, 2006, p.433-435; Prunier, 1995, p.72; Taylor, 1999, p.62.

⁵¹ Newbury, 1988, p.82, p.140. Des Forges et al, 1999, p.31-34; Alluri, 2009, p.13.

⁵² Hintjens, 1999, p. 242 and 247; Hintjens, 2001, p.33; Prunier, 1995, 1-40; Longman, 2001, p. 346-358; Magnarella, 2005, 801-822; Fussell, 2001; Wierzynski, 2004, p. 1940-1944; Alluri, 2009, p.14-15.

Discontent with the monopolization of power within a small Tutsi elite, led to a social revolution in 1959, abolishing Tutsi monarchy and giving rise to revenge violence towards Tutsi. Many Tutsi fled or were expelled to Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania. The independence of Rwanda and the Belgians leaving the power in Hutu hands, marked the beginning of a post-colonial, Hutu era⁵³. Two political parties were formed in 1959, the UNAR (*Union Nationale Rwandaise*), which was elite-Tutsi and the Parmehutu (*Parti du mouvement de l'émancipation Hutu*), the Hutu party of Grégoire Kayibanda. This gave rise to the first clashes between Hutu and Tutsi. In July 1960 the communal elections were won by the MDR-Parmehutu (*Mouvement démocratique républicain Parmehutu*), which seized power a year later with Kayibanda as Prime Minister. Later that year, Kayibanda became president after winning the parliamentary elections. A period of violence and discrimination towards Tutsi began⁵⁴.

Juvénal Habyarimana seized presidential power in July 1973, and created a new party, the MRND (*Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le développement*) further discriminating and excluding Tutsi from public life⁵⁵.

In October 1990, an elite of Tutsi officers in Uganda formed the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), with an armed wing, the RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army), that was determined to reclaim its homeland. The Tutsi exiles' army launched several raids on Rwandan territory, causing retaliation attacks against Tutsi civilians and a stream of more than 300.000 refugees⁵⁶. The clashes between the RPF and the government army, the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), sparked a civil war, encouraged by other underlying issues like unemployment, population growth and poverty. The difficult conditions during the war, gave rise to extremist ideologies, fuelled by president Habyarimana and its circle, blaming Tutsi for Hutu suffering⁵⁷. Hate media like the Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) and the Kangura newspaper spread genocidal thoughts on a daily basis⁵⁸.

⁵³ Prunier 1995, p. 41-53 ; Pottier, 2002, p.16; Des Forges et al, 1999, p.41; Alluri, 2009, p.13.

⁵⁴ Eltringham, 2015, p.163; Eltringham, 2004, p.40.

⁵⁵ Reed, 1996, p.479; Chrétien, 1995, p.28; p.175-179.

⁵⁶ Eltringham, 2015, p.164; Eltringham, 2004, p.42-44.

⁵⁷ Pottier, 2002, p.21; Alluri, 2009, p.13.

⁵⁸ Des Forges et al, 1999, p.62-63.

After two years of continuous fighting between the FAR and the RPF, the Arusha Peace talks were initiated in June 1992 to appease the conflict between Hutu and Tutsi through power sharing⁵⁹. Habyarimana's concession to the Arusha Peace talks seems to have been a misleading strategy to pretend to share the concerns of the international community, while the Hutu Power movement relentlessly kept spreading genocidal ideology, advocating violence and actively recruiting thousands of civilians into the *Interahamwe* militia. Following the Arusha agreement, a UN peacekeeping mission of 2.500 peacekeepers (UNAMIR) was established to oversee democratic change and the installation of a new multi-party government. It would become one of the most traumatized UN missions ever⁶⁰.

THE 1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI

On April 6, 1994, Habyarimana's aircraft that was returning from Tanzania, was shot down, killing him and the Burundese president who was on board. There never has been an official culprit, since both the RPA as Hutu extremists have been accused for the attack. However, a report by experts commissioned by a French judge concluded in 2012 that the surface-to-air missile was fired from a position held by the Presidential Guard⁶¹. The deaths of the two presidents sent a shockwave through the country, with both the FAR and the RPF accusing each other of firing the missile. The Rwandan media immediately called for revenge. The official start of the genocide is dated to 7 April 1994, when moderate political opponents who had been lenient in the Arusha negotiations were killed by the Presidential Guard. One of them was Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, along with her guarding troops, ten Belgian UN peacekeepers. It was clear that the plans for a widespread genocide were already prepared by Hutu extremist political parties, Akazu members (the circle of the president), and military officials. An interim government was set up, chaired by Colonel Théoneste Bagosora and Prime Minister Jean Kambanda of the Hutu Power party. Coordinated massacres started to take place all over Kigali and quickly spreading over the rest of the country. It turned out that the extremist parties had already formed and

⁵⁹ Wage and Haigh, 2004, p.5-10.

⁶⁰ Baines, 2004, p.134-135; Alluri, 2009, p.14; Eltringham, 2015, p.164-165; Eltringham, 2006, p.78-79, p.84-85, p.88-89; Des Forges et al, 1999, p.78.; Prunier, 1995, p.199.

⁶¹ See report by Oosterlinck et al., 2012. Eltringham, 2015, p.165; Eltringham, 2006, p.111-118;

trained two militia, the *Interahamwe* and the *Impuzamugambi*⁶², having pre-written lists with the names of Tutsi who had to be killed. Arms were distributed and the media called for mass killings of '*inyenzi*'⁶³ through live broadcasts, often by members of the new interim government. The killing of Tutsi was merciless: men, women and children were mostly manually slaughtered with every day tools like machetes, hoes, spears, hammers and nailed clubs, regardless of their location in churches, schools and hospitals⁶⁴. It is impossible to give a complete account of all killings and atrocities that took place in a period of about a hundred days⁶⁵.

The failure of the broader international community to respond to the genocide, led to the UNAMIR mission being diminished and not being given a Chapter 7 mandate and that other UN forces were not deployed to the region until late June⁶⁶. The RPF reacted unilaterally and started marching on Kigali, advancing through the east and south, finally stopping the violence in July 1994 when they invaded Kigali on 15 July 1994. This date is marked as the end of the genocide. The new government – a Tutsi government – stood before an enormous challenge: rebuilding the devastated country.

There are no official numbers for the death toll of the killings. The 2001 census estimated 937.000 Rwandans lost their lives during the period April – July 1994, with a total of 1.074.017 Rwandans for the period 01/10/1991 and 31/12/1994⁶⁷. Another report by student members of the AERG (*Association des Étudiants et Élèves Rescapés du Génocide*) claims that the number should be as high as 1.952.078 Rwandans, according from their study of 390 genocide memorial sites and other cemeteries across the country. This number, however, still does not include the victims that were thrown in rivers and lakes and victims that were burnt⁶⁸. It is clear that the exact number will never be clear nor certain, with estimates between 500.000 and 2 million.

⁶² Des Forges et al, 1999, p.106-108.

⁶³ Inyenzi, cockroach, as a denigrating word play for the name 'ingenzi', the brave ones, that exiled Tutsi called themselves.

⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch, 2006, p.16; Eltringham, 2015, p.165.

⁶⁵ See Des Forges et al, 1999; Hatzfeld 2006a and 2006b and Fujii, 2009 (among many others) for a detailed account.

⁶⁶ Steele, 2006, p.2.

⁶⁷ IRIN, 2001.

⁶⁸ Musoni, 2008a.

1.4 CONCLUSION

This first chapter is a rather short one, to provide a general framework of the origins of forensic archaeology and its importance for international tribunals like the ICTY and the ICTR. Although a rather young discipline, archaeology managed to climb up, providing a valuable addition to international criminal justice and its evidential procedures.

As outlined in this chapter, the importance of forensic archaeology in judicial contexts has clearly increased over the years. Especially in the ICTY and ICTR, the use of forensic archaeology has been an essential contribution to support legal cases. The techniques and paradigms archaeologists use in 'traditional' archaeological sites provide valuable additions for site location, excavation, documentation and analysis in forensic investigations. There are however differences in the application of archaeological techniques to forensic contexts, like keeping very detailed records and logs and securing the chain of custody at all times. These will be clarified in the next chapter, in the sections 2.3 'The search for mass graves' and 2.4 'Excavating mass graves'.

The third part of this chapter is formed by another historical overview, but this time about the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda. Although hard to summarize in a few pages, it becomes evident that the 100 days of atrocities had a long build-up and did not come out of nowhere. It is unfeasible to cover all the murderous events that happened all over the country, the sheer amount of atrocities and victims is innumerable, literally. The fact that after twenty years the estimations cannot even give a number within the 100.000s, is a gruesome indication of the scale and number of the horrific events that took place in this beautiful African country.

CHAPTER 2: FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF MASS GRAVES IN PRACTICE

This chapter starts with defining several important concepts for the forensic archaeology framework in this dissertation, since misunderstandings and false conceptualization are common when it comes to atrocities like mass killings, mass murder, genocide and crimes against humanity.

Secondly, this chapter addresses some of the taphonomic processes that are frequently present in mass graves and can help the forensic archaeologist to better understand and determine the time of death, ante-, post- and peri-mortem events, cause of death and decomposition process, etc.

Forensic archaeology searching and excavation practices are outlined in the third and fourth sections of this chapter, providing a very short overview of the different techniques used in forensic contexts. The main issues and key concerns of gathering archaeological evidence are also outlined.

The fifth section of this chapter is the application of the provided archaeological theory to the context of Rwanda, where two forensic investigations took place.

2.1 MASS MURDER AND MASS GRAVES: CONCEPTS AND TYPOLOGY

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, GENOCIDE AND MASS MURDER

Crimes against humanity, mass murder and genocide are as old as the human race itself. The oldest proof of a mass killing comes from an excavation in Talheim (Germany), where a mass grave with 34 murdered bodies of men, women and children was found, dating back to about 5.000 B.C. and therefore dubbed 'the Neolithic Genocide'⁶⁹.

In a willingness to prevent and prosecute atrocity crimes, there are international legal and other responses towards this behaviour, especially since the Holocaust. However, the Holocaust is only one of the many acts of democide (mass murder and genocide) that

⁶⁹ See Guilaine and Zammit, 2008, p.86-90 for the Talheim Massacre, and the whole book for prehistoric violence in general.

have taken place. In the 20th century, more than 170 million people have been murdered, according to estimations⁷⁰.

Definition of crimes against humanity

The contemporary definition of a crime against humanity is enshrined in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), article 7:

“For the purpose of this Statute, “crime against humanity” means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

- (a) Murder;*
- (b) Extermination;*
- (c) Enslavement;*
- (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;*
- (e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;*
- (f) Torture;*
- (g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;*
- (h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;*
- (i) Enforced disappearance of persons;*
- (j) The crime of apartheid;*
- (k) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health⁷¹.”*

Definition of genocide

The definition of genocide is clearly stated in article 6 of the 1998 Statute of Rome:

“For the purpose of this Statute, “genocide” means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

⁷⁰ Cox et al., 2008, p.8-9.

⁷¹ Statute of Rome, 1998.

- (a) *Killing members of the group;*
- (b) *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- (c) *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- (d) *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- (e) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*⁷²."

The international community has always been reluctant to give mass killings the label of genocide, because it triggers a legal responsibility to protect and intervene, as accorded in the 1948 Genocide Convention⁷³. The term 'genocide' was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944 to describe the Holocaust⁷⁴. Media and aid workers, however, are more generous with the term 'genocide' because they don't always have the legal understanding and because of the shock-and-awe effect that 'the G-word' sparks⁷⁵.

Because of the controversy about the determination and qualification of these crimes, more neutral terms, like 'mass killing', 'mass murder', 'atrocities', etc. are used in the general chapters. Since the events in Rwanda have been officially labelled as the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the word genocide is used in this context.

Definition of mass murder and massacre

A mass murder or mass killing is, according to general agreement, "*the killing of four or more victims in a single location and a single event, without 'cooling-off' period in between*" (which is typical for serial murder). Mass murder, serial murder, and spree murder are types of 'multicide' (multiple killings). When less people are killed, the correct terminology is 'single, double or triple homicide'⁷⁶.

Another term that can be used, but is less neutral, is 'massacre'. A massacre is, according to Melson, '*the intentional killing by political actors of a significant number of relatively defenceless people.*' It is to be distinguished from mass killings, that are criminal or pathological, but not initiated by political bodies⁷⁷.

⁷² Statute of Rome, 1998.

⁷³ UN, 1951.

⁷⁴ Lemkin, 1944.

⁷⁵ Cox, 2008, p.9-11.

⁷⁶ Aggrawal, 2005, p.216.

⁷⁷ Melson, 1982, p.482-483.

MASS GRAVES

There is no agreement on the exact definition of a mass grave, since there is a variety of types and contexts. In fact, there have been two different strategies to define a mass grave: on the one hand, some scholars simply use a threshold number of bodies that a grave should contain to be marked as a mass grave⁷⁸. On the other hand, there are scholars who focus more on *mens rea* and criminal motive, adding an element of mandatory concealment and unlawfulness that has to be present before a feature can be labelled as a mass grave. The first to do this was Bacre Waly Ndiaye, the UN Special Rapporteur of the ICTY, who stated that a mass grave is “*a location where three or more victims of extra-judicial, summary, or arbitrary executions were buried, not having died in combat or armed confrontations*”⁷⁹. This definition is still in use at the ICTY, and since it is a very broad definition, it also covers depositions of multiple bodies in caves, wells, latrines, etc⁸⁰. This definition was complemented by Jessee and Skinner, who propose a new, holistic definition, that contains a threshold number, criminal motive, legal aspects and placement of the bodies: “*A mass grave is any location containing two or more associated bodies, indiscriminately or deliberately placed, of victims who have died as a result of extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions, not including those individuals who have died as a result of armed confrontations or known major catastrophes*”⁸¹.

This detailed definition however, does not include all features that will be covered in this dissertation. Some of the burial features in Rwanda are indeed not mass graves according to this definition, since they were not dug by the perpetrators, but by relatives, survivor communities and by the government. To also include these, the neutral definition suggested by Cox et al. will be used: “*A mass grave is a demonstrable place of deliberate disposal of multiple dead within the same grave structure*”⁸². This definition covers both concealed and non-concealed burials, and includes all graves that contain more than one individual. A broad interpretation of grave structure will be in order to not only include burials in the ground, but also caves, wells, latrines etc.

⁷⁸ A minimum of six individuals for Skinner, 1987, p.268.; a minimum of two individuals for Mant, 1987, p.65; a

⁷⁹ Mazowiecki, 1993, Annex I (Summary of the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on his mission to investigate allegations of mass graves from 15 to 20 December 1992) p.60, §5.

⁸⁰ Jessee and Skinner, 2005, p.56.

⁸¹ Jessee and Skinner, 2005, p.56.

⁸² Cox et al., 2008, p.10.

Jessee and Skinner have proposed a typology of mass graves⁸³:

1. **Execution sites (ES)**, with a distinction between pre-dug grave execution sites (GES) and surface execution sites (SES).
2. **Deposition sites (DS)**, where the bodies are piled up after being executed at a SES for later transport or burial. If the gathered bodies are not immediately transferred to another location, they will leave traces, resulting in a temporary deposition site (TDS). If the bodies remain where they were piled up, the site is defined as a primary deposition site (PDS).
3. **Primary inhumation sites (PIS)**: this PIS can be located at a GES, or can be a new location, possibly far from where the victims were killed (SES) or temporarily piled up (TDS). Depending on the time between death and the burial at the PIS, the remains will be more complete when there has been only a small timespan.
4. **Secondary inhumation sites (SIS)**, where the remains of a PIS are reburied. This can happen clandestinely to conceal the remains even further, at more remote locations. The remains at a SIS will likely be commingled and fragmentary, leaving traces at the PIS, but also transferring elements from their original burial place (soil, botanical parts, ...).
5. **Looted inhumation sites (LIS)**: this is what a PIS becomes when the human remains are removed to be reburied at a SIS⁸⁴.

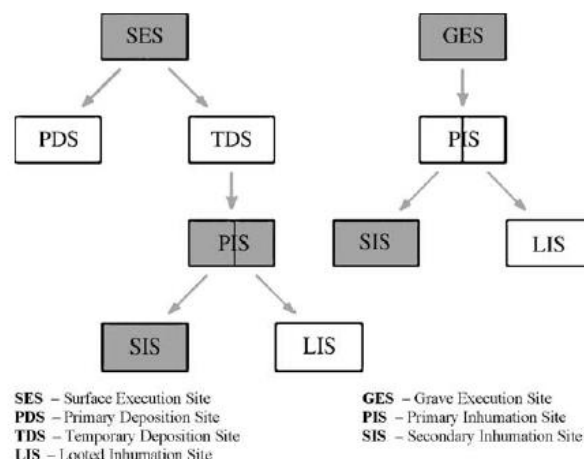


Image 1: Typology of mass graves

⁸³ Jessee and Skinner, 2005, p.56-58.

⁸⁴ Jessee and Skinner, 2005, p.56-58; Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.4.

There are three main reasons to excavate mass graves: for forensic purposes, for pure archaeological reasons to gain knowledge about our past and for humanitarian reasons⁸⁵. In this dissertation, the emphasis lies on excavations for forensic purposes, but it will become clear that in Rwanda most efforts have been done for humanitarian reasons.

2.2 TAPHONOMY

The term taphonomy comes from the Greek word for burial (τάφος) and is defined by founding father Ivan Efremov as “*the study of the transition of remains, parts or products of organisms, from the biosphere to the lithosphere*⁸⁶”. In common language, taphonomy studies the processes of decomposition and fossilization in a grave. It originated as a part of palaeontology and studies all types of organisms (humans, plants, animals) and all types of graves: purposely dug or the hazardous location of a natural death where there is no real burial⁸⁷.

The taphonomic models are used in forensic archaeology to reconstruct the circumstances of the burial and to determine the Time Since Death (TSD)⁸⁸. Aside from this, they help to distinguish the products of human behaviour and the products that are generated by the biological, chemical, geological and physical processes of the earth’s soil. The modifications a buried body (and its clothing) undergoes after burial, are called peri-mortem (around the time of death) and post-mortem (after death) processes. Examples are decomposition, transportation of parts by animals or dispersion of particles by vegetation growth. The result of a taphonomic investigation is a thorough interpretation of all processes that affected the remains from the time of death until the discovery of the body. In this interpretation every particle, its location and its context is important and has to be taken into account. The use of taphonomic models can also help to confirm eyewitness records⁸⁹.

⁸⁵ Juhl, 2005, p.4; Tuller, 2015, p.86-87.

⁸⁶ Efremov, 1940, p.85.

⁸⁷ Lyman, 2002, p.xix; Efremov, 1940, p.81-93; Martin, 1999, p.1; Ubelaker, 1997, p.77; Vandenbruane, 2003, p.258.

⁸⁸ Time Since Death (TSD) is not the same as Post-Mortal Interval (PMI). PMI is used for the investigation of a very recent death, while TSD is being used for bodies that have been dead for a longer time (48h+), which is invariably the case in mass grave investigations.

⁸⁹ Haglund and Sorg, 1997b, p.3; Haglund and Sorg, 1997c, p.13 and p.19-22 and Haglund and Sorg, 2002, p.7-12; Hedman et al., 2001, p.171; Koff, 2004, p.40; Alempijevic et al., 2003, p.84; PHR, 2006, p.52; Connor and Scott, 1997,

As said, every burial site is different and can be influenced by different taphonomic factors, that each have their effect on the body. The decomposition speed can be influenced by the surrounding environment, gravity, geological forces, climate, fauna and flora (also human interaction), the body itself and so on.

EVIDENCE THROUGH FACTORS INTRINSIC TO THE BODY

A lot of information about the PMI and the circumstances of death can be accessed by investigating the body itself. In most forensic excavations, it is not the forensic archaeologist who examines the body. This work is normally taken up by anatomists or pathologists, and not on-site, but at a morgue. However, it is important for the assessment of a burial site, that the forensic archaeologist has a perfect understanding of the processes involved. After all, some of these processes will leave stains in the soil or will change its mineral composition, which are important markers in necrosearch⁹⁰.

1. The presence of livor and rigor mortis

Although in a mass grave these two processes will almost never be still present, they are mentioned here to provide an integral overview.

The phenomenon of *rigor mortis*, also called body stiffness, starts between two and six hours after death (depending on body features) and stays for 24 to 72 hours, mainly depending on the ambient temperature. The phenomenon of *livor mortis* (also called *hypostasis* or post-mortem lividity) starts between twenty minutes and three hours after the pumping of the heart, when the heavier red blood cells settle in the lower parts of the body to form red or purple stains on the skin. After six to twelve hours, the body reaches full lividity, which stays visible until the body decomposes. When there is considerable blood loss, there will be no *livor mortis* stains present. These stains can provide information about post-mortem transport: the blood sinks to where the lower parts of the body are right after death, leaving the parts blank that make contact with the ground. If the *livor mortis* does not match the position of the body at the moment of discovery, it has been transferred from another location⁹¹.

p.27; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.39 and p.51-52; Davis, 1997, p.xv; Ubelaker, 1997, p.78-87; Dockrill and Hunter, 1996, p.49; Schmitt, 2002, p.280.

⁹⁰ Platt, 2004, p.94-95; Craig, 2005, p.233-234.

⁹¹ Ellis, 2007, p.112; Pollard, 1996, p.140-141; Kaatsch et al., 1994, 209; Claridge, 2015.

2. *Autolysis versus putrefaction*

The presence of oxygen has a big influence on the decomposition of a body. Autolysis is the anaerobic destruction of tissue by enzymes that are released after death, without interference of bacteria. Putrefaction, on the other hand, is the aerobic decomposition of soft tissue by micro-organisms, that results in gasses, inflation of the body and the softening and dissolving of the soft tissue into a fluid⁹².

The velocity of decomposition is influenced by the physiology of the body: heavier bodies will putrefy slower than lighter bodies. Also the thickness and consistency of the bones plays a role. Tooth enamel is the least prone to decay⁹³.

3. *Saponification and adipocere*

In some cases, a cast of waxy material called adipocere surrounds the body, preserving body shape and sometimes even facial features or injuries. Adipocere is formed by saponification, a process that transforms human fats into a solid, white, greyish or red-brownish substance. The formation is triggered by a moist, anaerobic environment such as a coffin or a grave in wet soil and starts about a month after death. As long as all air is absent, the adipocere prevents the body from putrefaction – even for centuries⁹⁴.

Some intrinsic factors make a body more prone to saponification: the amount of fat present in the body, gender (females are more likely to develop adipocere), age (infants are more likely to develop adipocere) and the presence of open wounds. There are also extrinsic factors that have an influence on saponification: the pH value of the soil, temperature, humidity, oxygen level, soil type etc. The presence of clothing also enhances the chance that adipocere will be formed. Especially in mass graves where many bodies are piled up, low levels of oxygen stimulate saponification, hereby preserving of the bodies of the lower layers⁹⁵.

⁹² Micozzi, 1997, p.172; Janaway, 1996, p.63; Mays, 1998, p.15; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.99-103.

⁹³ Janaway, 1996, p.68; Ubelaker, 2002, p.344; Mays, 1998, p.22.

⁹⁴ Fiedler and Graw, 2003, p.291-293; Dent et al., 2002, p. 225-229; Manhein, 1997, p.472-473; Black, 2000, p.495.

⁹⁵ Dent et al., 2002, p. 225-226; Dent et al., 2005a, p.24-25; Dent et al., 2005b, p.35; Fiedler and Graw, 2003, p.291-297, Ubelaker, 1997, p.80, Manhein, 1997, p.472-473; Janaway, 1996, p.70.

4. *Evidence through bones*

A closer investigation of the bones of a body can provide information about the cause of death. Aside from several diseases (leprosy, tuberculosis, syphilis etc.), also violence leaves traces: blunt force trauma, bullet wounds and torture are easy to spot features on a body, even when it is fully skeletonized.⁹⁶

EVIDENCE THROUGH FACTORS EXTRINSIC TO THE BODY

Not only the body, but also other external factors can provide information about the TSD and the cause of death: the burial environment, geological forces, faunal and floral activities and human interaction.

1. *Burial environment*

Soil

A thorough knowledge of pedology (soil science) is indispensable for an archaeologist, who has to 'read' the ground to assemble all stored information about its contents. A soil consists of four components: water, air, organic components and mineral components. All of them influence the decomposition of human remains: the presence of water and/or oxygen in sizeable amounts will damage the body and its clothing, rendering the identification more difficult. An acidic soil, with a pH value between 1 and 7, will speed up the decomposition process – with the exception of acidic mire environments, where bodies tend to preserve quite well, including hair and nails⁹⁷.

Temperature and climate

The ambient temperature has an impact on the velocity of the decomposition process. Cold temperatures will slow the process, especially in circumstances under 4°C, when bacterial growth is impeded. In freezing temperatures however lies another risk: cryoturbation. When the water in the ground freezes, it expands. The circular process of freezing and melting can cause the body to break up in several pieces, which complicates

⁹⁶ Haglund and Sorg, 1997c, p.16; Janaway, 1996, p.68; Craig, 2005, p.130.

⁹⁷ Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.52; Mays, 1998, p.17; Vandenbruane, 2003, p. 258; Baličević et al., 2006, p.3-6; Turner and Wiltshire, 1999, p.113-114; Janaway, 1996, p.58-63 and p.75.

the recovery and facilitates further destruction. The season and the climate in general thus have a considerable influence on the preservation of the body⁹⁸.

Location of the body

There is a big difference in decomposition between a body that is lying at the surface and a body that has been buried. Exposure to sunlight and wildlife will cause significant damage to the remains. In fact, the deeper the grave, the more the body is sheltered from its surroundings. There is less oxygen, the temperatures are cooler and – when there is no high groundwater table – it is drier. These circumstances slow down the process of putrefaction⁹⁹.

2. Geological forces

Aside from cryoturbation, which is mentioned above, there are other natural forces that can cause disintegration of the body. Aquaturbation is the transportation of human remains by water (precipitation, erosion, sedimentation etc.). Seismoturbation is the dislocation of human remains through earthquakes. Graviturbation is the dislocation of human remains by landslides, falling rocks etc. All these events that are triggered by geological forces can be further aggravated extra by gravity, causing dislocated pieces to roll down slopes or fall down to the lowest point possible¹⁰⁰.

3. Faunal and floral activities

There are three faunal groups that each can cause traces on the remains that can be confused with human interaction. The first type are micro-organisms (bacteria, algae, fungi etc.) that are active in the putrefaction process. The second type are meso-fauna (insects, worms etc.), that are paramount in the determination of TSD. Entomologists can determine the different stages of decomposition by the presence of certain types of insects and their larvae or connect PIS and SIS or ES an PIS¹⁰¹. The third type are macro-fauna, especially rodents and scavengers. When lying at the surface or buried in a shallow grave, the body is an easy prey. The remains can be shattered over a large range,

⁹⁸ Vandenbruane, 2003, p.258; Micozzi, p. 171-172 and p.177, Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.52; Connor and Scott, 1997, p.31; Ubelaker, 1997, p.78; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.100-101.

⁹⁹ Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.100-101; Ellis, 2007, p.113; Janaway, 1996, p.75; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.49-52.

¹⁰⁰ Haglund, 1997b, p.378; Haglund, 1997c, p.388-391; Janaway, 1996, p.61; Micozzi, 1997, p.174-175; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.52; Ubelaker, 1997, p.77; Craig, 2005, p.56.

¹⁰¹ Turner and Wiltshire, 1999, p.113-114; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.140; Menez, 2005, p.313.

and some parts like clothing, teeth or smaller bones can end up in the animal's digestion system and eventually in their droppings. They can also leave traces on the body that can be confused with human interference. It is important that the archaeologist can determine the origin of the markings: human or faunal¹⁰².

Just like faunal traces, vegetation can leave traces too that can be easily confused with human actions. Forensic botany uses the presence of certain floral parts, as small as pollen even, to link a perpetrator to a crime scene. Some plants are useful to help determine the TSD, but most plants will damage the body through their developing roots. These can dissolve the body and make holes that resemble bullet holes or traces from other weapons¹⁰³.

In most cases it is the archaeologist who gathers samples of pollen and floral material, that are later studied in the lab by a specialized forensic botanist. The collection has to follow certain rules, since parts of plants have to be stored properly to prevent damage (for example not in a bag)¹⁰⁴.

4. Human interaction

First-hand interaction

The key factor in the investigation is – aside from the victim – of course the perpetrator(s). A lot of the choices that are made by the perpetrator(s) will determine the decomposition process and the possibilities for identification. First of all, the cause of death will have an influence on the decomposition process: a body that is cut into pieces or a victim with defence wounds will decay much quicker, since it attracts insects and animals. The decision to bury a victim or not plays a role as well. A body that remains unburied will decay much quicker, will be more likely to be scattered by natural and geological forces and fauna and flora. However, many perpetrators will bury their victim(s) to cover up their crimes. This covering up enhances the chances that the victim will be found in an identifiable way, since the decomposition process is hampered and

¹⁰² Haglund and Sorg, 1997c, p. 16; Haglund and Sorg, 2002, p.7; Rodriguez, 1997, p.459; Ubelaker, 1997,p.77; Haglund, 1997b, p.367; Haglund, 1997d, p405-406; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.124-125; Janaway, 1996, p.61-63 and p.68; Murad, 1997, p.397-400.

¹⁰³ Haglund and Sorg, 1997b, p.4; Hall, 1997, p.353-354; Saul and Saul, 2002, p.79-81; Dockril and Hunter, 1996, p.50; Bachman and Pickering, 1997, p.100-101; Ubelaker, 1997, p.78, p.82 and p.87.

¹⁰⁴ Hall, 1997, p. 356-358; Craig, 2005, p.233-234; Platt, 2004, p.94-95.

the body is less vulnerable to external forces. The depth of the grave is also important: the depth and density will protect the body. If the grave has been flattened by a bulldozer or a similar vehicle, the ground will have been pressed and the pressure will be higher, which also slows down the process and prevents the body from being dug up by animals. The decision to strip the bodies has also an influence. Clothing protects the body in most cases from falling apart and slows down the decomposition process (especially synthetic fabrics, denim, leather and metal pieces). The same is the case when the body is positioned inside a carpet, blanket, bag or coffin, or is covered with plastic¹⁰⁵.

As stated above, bodies can also be transported and reburied in another location (secondary inhumation site, SIS), which complicates the determination of the taphonomic processes that played a role in the decomposition of the body during its first burial. A trained archaeologist will be able to determine that a grave is a SIS, but in many cases it turns out to be unfeasible to match the SIS with its original PIS (primary inhumation site). Sometimes the PIS is found, since the clandestine exhumation and transportation of the bodies to the SIS leaves traces, that can also be discovered and analysed by a trained archaeologist. For example the trampling and ploughing of a field will be clear indicators for the transportation of human remains¹⁰⁶.

Disturbance

After the burial of the body, the grave can be disturbed by other human activity, like ploughing, farming or construction. Also the investigators can damage the site or the body if they do not follow forensic protocol and the chain of custody¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ Janaway, 1996, p.63 and p.69 and p.78; Rodriguez, 1997, p.459; Ellis, 2007, p.113; Haglund, 2002, p.250; Stover, 2002-2006; p.2-3; Manhein, 1997, p.472.

¹⁰⁶ Ellis, 2007, p.114-115; Haglund and Sorg, 1997c, p.18; Connor, Haglund and Scott, 2002, p.134 and p.144; PHR, 2006, p.41; Connor, Skinner and York, 2002, p.305-306.

¹⁰⁷ Ubelaker, 1997, p.78-82 and p.87.

SPECIFIC TAPHONOMY OF A MASS GRAVE

The taphonomic processes described above are generally also applicable to the context of a mass grave. The only difference that has to be noted, is that the presence of multiple bodies will also have an influence on the decomposition and that in most cases will cause commingling, further complicating the recovery of the remains and the interpretation of the site¹⁰⁸.

The body mass in a mass grave creates a complex taphonomic context, with skeletonized remains at the side edges and top layer of the grave, saponified remains in the middle of the grave and fleshed remains at the bottom. It was Mant who studied the micro-environment of mass graves and ascertained that "*the bodies in the centre of a mass grave decompose more slowly than those on the outer edge*¹⁰⁹", the so-called feather edge effect¹¹⁰.

2.3 THE SEARCH FOR MASS GRAVES

Before any forensic excavation can take place, the location of the grave must be determined. In most cases the local population can point out the sites where possible mass graves are located. In other cases however, the digging of the graves happened clandestinely and a thorough search, called *necrosearch*, will be in order. It is not always possible to determine the exact location of a mass grave, so elimination of sites is also an important activity¹¹¹.

There are several categories of necrosearch, depending on the type of terrain, the area to be considered, the weather circumstances, the time and staff available etc. Non-destructive methods are preferred in initial stages, to avoid loss of evidence and context¹¹².

¹⁰⁸ Haglund, 2002, p.247-248; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.30; Ferllini, 2007c, 127.

¹⁰⁹ Haglund, 2002, p.247.

¹¹⁰ See the studies of Mant, 1950; Mant and Furbank, 1957; Mant, 1987.

¹¹¹ Hunter, 2002, p.xxx-xxxi.

¹¹² Owsley, 1995, p.735; Peterson, 2008, p.5-6.

NON-DESTRUCTIVE SEARCHING TECHNIQUES

1. *Naked Eye detection*

There are several methods to conduct a naked eye search for a (mass) grave, called a surface prospection or survey. Any findings of potential evidence are marked and photographed. Initially they are left in place, to have a better overview of their in situ coordinates. The simplest method is a rectilinear search (side by side on an imaginary line). The quickest method is the grid method, where the terrain that is searched is divided into squares. The use of vehicles is also feasible when this method is used. The third method is the radial or wheel method, where investigators start from the middle and follow radials of equal degrees, away from the core¹¹³.

A burial always leaves traces, especially when it is a mass grave. The traces are often noticeable through vegetation (crop marks) and colour inconsistencies (soil marks). Crop marks are created when anomalies in the soil cause plants to grow quicker and thicker or – on the contrary – hamper the floral growth. Positive crop marks are formed by higher, thicker vegetation and are indications that the ground has been disturbed by a burial of a body, whose decomposition results in additional nutrients for the vegetation. When the burial pit is filled with stones to cover the body, the plants will grow less high than normally, forming negative crop marks¹¹⁴.

Soil marks are colour variations that are noticeable on barren terrains. The colour of the soil can change due to its contents, so a burial with a body will evidently have its impact. This anomaly in colour can be visible with the naked eye in recently ploughed fields, when the mostly darker coloured material surfaces, or in recently dried up ground, when the colour markings are easier to spot. A soil that is too wet or too dry however doesn't show soil marks. A greenish appearance in clay soils can also be an indicator of a buried body¹¹⁵.

¹¹³ PHR, 2006, p.37 and p.42; Nawrocki, 1996, p.3-4; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.36-38; Waelkens, 2003, p.269; Kubic and Petraco, 2005, p.60-61.

¹¹⁴ Cheetham, 2005, p.67; Martin and Hunter, 1996, p.87-89; Waelkens, 2003, p.267; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.30; France et al., 1997, p. 504-505.

¹¹⁵ Waelkens, 2003, p.268;

2. *Aerial photography*

A suitable method to cover very large areas at once, but is logistically harder to organise, is the use of aerial photography. The best results are obtained from a helicopter or small plane at a rather low altitude, taking pictures in an oblique angle. These images can be compared to older images – when available of course. To make a comparison possible, at least three different reference points should be included in the photo¹¹⁶.

Aerial photography can point out traces based on shadows. Recent graves will regularly have a small mound of surplus dirt, while older graves will show a depression due to the decomposition of the body, that will cause the soil to become more compact and sink a bit. Both types will cast shadows that can be detected by aerial photography. By flying in circles, photos can be made from different angles, showing all kinds of shadows that can indicate possible locations¹¹⁷. More expensive infrared images can provide better indications of colour anomalies, while thermography uses heat sensors that signpost temperature anomalies in the ground, caused by hydrographic context or the presence of a body¹¹⁸.

3. *Remote sensing and geophysical prospection methods*

Remote sensing techniques measure geophysical characteristics of a terrain to detect anomalies like stones, metal objects and bodies. Active methods emit a signal that produces a mirror image of the anomalies (electrical resistance measurement, electromagnetic prospection (metal detector) or ground-penetrating radar (GPR))¹¹⁹. Passive methods use natural radiation (thermal imaging with infrared cameras and the less useful magnetic profiling). There are several restrictions in reference to depth (max. 10m), resolution and disturbance by noise¹²⁰.

¹¹⁶ Owsley, 1995, p.735-736; Waelkens, 2003, p.266; Nawrocki, 1996, p.4; Hunter et al., 1994, p.764; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.33-36; Martin and Hunter, 1996, p.90; PHR, 2006, p.44.

¹¹⁷ Martin and Hunter, 1996, p.86-89; Owsley, 1995, p.735; Waelkens, 2003, p.267.

¹¹⁸ Waelkens, 2003, p.268.

¹¹⁹ Davenport, 2001, p.87-88 and p.91-92; PHR, 2006, p.42-44; Waelkens, 2003, p.269; Martin and Hunter, 1996, p.97-98; Cheetham, 2005, p.69-75, p.82-87; Hunter et al., 1994, p.764; France et al., 1997, p. 502; Miller, 1996, p.649-651; France et al., 1997, p.506; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.38-39; Owsley, 1995, p.736.

¹²⁰ Cheetham, 2005, p.76-81; Waelkens, 2003, p.270; Martin and Hunter, 1996, p.91, p.97-98; Davenport, 2001, p.89-91 and p.96-97; Hanson, Sterenberg and Wright, 2005, p.143; Hunter et al., 1994, p.764; France et al., 1997, p.504; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.34-36.

4. *Necrosearch involving animals*

The most common and well-known animal to reinforce the investigation team is the cadaver dog or the trailing scent hound. These dogs – mostly special breeds like bloodhounds, bassets, herding breeds (shepherds or border collies) or sporting dogs – are specially trained for search and rescue (SAR). There are two types of SAR dogs: discriminate scent smelling dogs, that smell individuals to track them, and non-discriminate scent smelling dogs, that smell humans or cadavers in general. They can cover large areas and rough terrains and are trained to respond in either a passive way (sitting silently at the spot) or an active way (loud barking or even come to the trainer and lead him back to the spot). If trained as such, a cadaver dog can spot decomposing bodies and skeletonized remains alike. There are several climatic situations that complicate the search: too hot or too dry circumstances and a completely wind still or too windy environment will decrease the quality of the outcome¹²¹. For a long time, it was thought that SAR dogs deliver worse results in cold environments (under 4°C), but experiments organized by Kumar however showed that some dogs get excellent results, even in snowy and freezing circumstances¹²².

DESTRUCTIVE SEARCHING TECHNIQUES

If the potential gravesite has been determined or at least narrowed down, there is opportunity to use destructive searching techniques to provide confirmation. In many investigations however, there will be such a lack of time that the non-destructive step is skipped and the team immediately proceeds towards the use of destructive techniques. A much-used method is probing (with a stick or an auger) or scraping (with a shovel or with more heavy machinery like excavators or bulldozers)¹²³.

¹²¹ De Poot and De Winne, 2007, p.55; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.39-40; France et al., 1997, p.506; Owsley, 1995, p.735.

¹²² Komar, 1999, p.405-407.

¹²³ Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.39; Owsley, 2001, p.36.

1. *Probing*

Probing is a very simple procedure, using a stick of about a meter long to track down buried human remains using scent. After penetrating the top layers of the ground, the investigator sniffs the stick to detect the smell of decomposition. The same procedure can be executed with an auger, combining scent detection and sampling through the use of some sort of giant corkscrew that recovers samples, in which colour variations can be detected. This procedure is very quick and simple, but there can be minimal destruction of the remains and the user must be experienced enough to detect smells¹²⁴.

2. *Scraping*

The least time-consuming but most destructive necrosearch method is scraping. By removing the top ground layer, the underlying structures can become clear through variations in colour or compactness. Using a mechanical excavator (preferably with a wide bucket with a straight, non-toothed cutting edge) is a very quick method and very useful when under time pressure. However, it is certainly not a preferred or textbook methodology, since it almost certainly will cause damage to the contents of the grave. Manual scraping is less destructive since smaller and slightly more delicate tools are used (trowels, brushes or spades) and there is more control over the action¹²⁵.

¹²⁴ Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.59; Owsley, 1995, p.735-736, PHR, 2006, p.42.; Koff, 2004, p.49.

¹²⁵ Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.42; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.42; Koff, 2004, p.49; Owsley, 1995, p.736.

2.4 EXCAVATING MASS GRAVES

Once the mass grave is located, everything is prepared for the excavation. There is a difference between the term ‘exhumation’, which is the recovery of a human body that was buried in the ground and the term ‘excavation’, which uses archaeological methods to gather evidence about the past¹²⁶. The meaning used here is ‘the identification, definition, recording, recovery and interpretation of features, evidence and human remains from a surface or burial site’¹²⁷.

Since archaeology is a destructive method, there is only one shot at gathering the necessary evidence and guarantee the mandatory chain of custody. Every gravesite is different, so there is no such thing as a standard excavation method¹²⁸. It would take us too far to describe all possible methods to excavate different types of sites or specific mass graves like caves¹²⁹, but a general overview of the excavation process and the chain of custody will be given below.

PREPARING THE EXCAVATION

Survey and mapping

After the grave area has been located using necrosearch methods as described above in the section ‘The search for mass graves’, a double perimeter is set and guarded at all times to avoid contamination of the site and shield it from media and spectators. Subsequently the surroundings of the grave are recorded and mapped thoroughly by conducting a survey. During a survey all evidence and points of interest are identified and recorded, creating detailed maps to determine the exact location of a feature. All human remains and all artefacts found in or around the grave must be correctly located and recorded using the reference points that the survey has provided. To guarantee accurate measuring, a total station theodolite (TST) is used to determine the exact location of an artefact or human body part. The item is logged using site codes, exhibit numbers and a code used for the type of item¹³⁰.

¹²⁶ Juhl, 2005, p.3, p.17; Cox et al., 2008, p.216.

¹²⁷ Cox et al., 2008, p.216.

¹²⁸ Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.4.

¹²⁹ See Cox et al., 2008, p.252-254.

¹³⁰ Connor, 2007, p.148; Haglund et al., 2001, p.64; Skinner, 1987, p.277; Cox et al., 2008, p.219-228; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.44; Koff, 2004, p.104; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.104.

Grave preparation and protection

Once the grave is located and the surroundings mapped for future reference, there are some protective measures to be taken, often involving quite some logistic personnel. There are several health and safety procedures to be respected, to guarantee the security of those working at the excavation. First, a risk assessment is made, followed by the clearance of all hazardous materials and securization of unsafe environments. Besides these measures, suitable drainage, cover from sun and rain, electricity and temperature control should be provided, besides constructive measures to avoid sliding or collapsing of the grave. Safe access to and from the grave can be secured through the use of steps, ramps or ladders. The site should also be prepared to be documented through photography, providing fixed photography points for a standardization of the pictures taken¹³¹.

THE EXCAVATION OF THE MASS GRAVE

Determination and excavation of the grave outline

After the site preparation is finished, the perimeters have been set and the site is safe, secured and sterile, the excavations can start. The first thing to be done, is the determination of the grave outline. For recent mass graves, the contours can often be seen by the naked eye. For older graves, it is often necessary to remove vegetation and the top soil layer first to reveal the outlining of the grave. The older the grave, the more blurred its edges will become¹³².

The assessment of the structure and stratigraphy of the grave will determine the best excavation method for the grave and its surroundings. Every grave is different, and its creation, contents and filling will influence the choice for the best approach¹³³. The standard excavation method is the 'vertical method', where trenches are dug around the grave's walls as a first step. It provides necessary draining, a clear outline of the grave and a valuable stratigraphy to better understand the sequence. If time is short, the deposits unstable or there is no need to preserve the grave outline, this is the best

¹³¹ Peterson, 2008, p.6; Hanson, Sternberg and Wright, 2005, p.139-140; Cox et al., 2008, p. 229-234, Hunter and Simpson, 2007, p.274, p.284-285; Connor, 2007, p.149-150; PHR, 2006, p.14.

¹³² Haglund et al., 2001, p.65-66; Hochrein, 2002, p.64-65.

¹³³ Skinner, 1987, p.272; Juhl, 2005, p.3; Connor and Scott, 2001b, p.4; Cox and Hunter, 2005, p.18, p.108-113; Haglund, 1997b, p.377; PHR, 2006, p.39.

method to us, since its only major disadvantage is the destruction of the walls of the grave. Other methods are the hybrid use of trenches of different lengths or perpendicular trenches (as a compromise to preserve some of the grave's walls from destruction) or not using trenches at all by gradually excavating what is in the grave outline as a whole, using horizontal 'spits' (step-shaped removal of grave filling). All trenches, spits, grave walls and grave floor should be cleaned and photographed at all stages¹³⁴.

Recovering forensic evidence

The surroundings of the grave (walls, bottom layer, edges and circumference) can provide evidence about the tools that were used to dig the grave (mechanical or manual). They can also contain small bone fragments, bullets or evidence for the removal of bodies through stains or detached parts of adipocere¹³⁵. For every item of evidence, Cox et al. describe a ten stage procedure to guarantee an adequate standard¹³⁶:

1. Cleaning and identification of the item (evidence/human remains/context)
2. Recording I and assignment of exhibit number
3. Photography and recording in photography log
4. Recording II through logging and filling in the correct form
5. Excavation and observing of stratigraphic sequences
6. Recording III and (if necessary) additional logging and photography
7. Recovery and removal of the item and re-evaluation of the context
8. Sampling and sieving, further completion of the log (if necessary additional exhibit numbers)
9. Cleaning to check on further evidence/human remains/context
10. Recording IV: completing all logs, adding cross-references, double-check of log and packaging

¹³⁴ Cox et al., 2008, p.234-243.

¹³⁵ Cox et al., 2008, p.243-246.

¹³⁶ Cox et al., 2008, p.235-236.

These are clearly the ideal standards for a forensic excavation. In practice, there is often an enormous time pressure, causing the archaeologist to combine or skip steps to move faster, while guarding the accurate logging and scientific standards at all times¹³⁷.

The excavation of the grave itself

Once the outline of the grave has been determined, necessary trenches have been dug and evidence of the construction of the grave and its contents has been gathered, the whole horizontal surface of the grave is gradually lowered by removing grave filling to determine and clear the top layer of the grave's contents. A lot of information can be gathered from the difference in compactness of soil between the grave filling and the grave contents. If a grave has been disturbed, the stratigraphy will be more complex. Graves can have been robbed, used multiple ways or filled in several stages, but if the excavation is well executed, this will become evident by using the stratigraphic 'vertical' method. The 'horizontal method' is especially practical for very small, shallow graves. Access to the pit can be provided using wooden planks that are put over the grave, upon which the archaeologist can lie down to easily excavate without disturbing the grave and its content. If the grave is small in outline, but very deep, one of the side walls will have to be removed to provide access¹³⁸.

Types of evidence besides the bodies that can be found in a grave are trace evidence, personal effects, documents, weapons and associated evidence, botanical remains, soil and geological evidence, entomological samples, indented surfaces that are markings of tools or human prints, markings on topographical surfaces like wheel tracks and garbage and debris. A multidisciplinary team is a must for any forensic excavation, ensuring correct recovery and processing¹³⁹.

¹³⁷ Haglund, 2002, p.257; PHR, 2006, p.35; Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.231; Schmitt, 2002, p.285-286; Haglund et al., 2001, p.66.

¹³⁸ Bernardi and Fondebrider, 2007, p.221-222; Dockril and Hunter, 1996, p.49.

¹³⁹ Peterson, 2008, p.7; Cox et al., 2008, p.246-252, Connor, 2007, p.150-160.

Excavation and recovery of human remains

When the top layer of the grave contents is cleaned and thoroughly recorded by logging and photography, the MNI (minimum number of individuals) has to be determined, based on the human remains present. A forensic archaeologist therefore needs to have an at least basic knowledge of anthropology, especially when the remains are skeletonized. Most analysis of the remains will however take place after the removal of the body and in a laboratory or morgue. Most forensic excavations of mass graves will establish a morgue on site in an appointed building (if present) or a tent structure with appropriate cooling. There are however exceptions, when there is no permission for removal, when it is an emergency excavation due to imminent destruction or a 'quick peek' due to time limits. In these cases, an anthropological assessment is performed with the remains in situ¹⁴⁰.

Before the human remains can be recovered from the grave, they have to be completely exposed, cleaned using non-destructive tools, logged and photographed. In mass graves, the remains can however be entirely commingled, making the outline of the body preparation process to recover it very complex. Especially in cases where bulldozers have been used to put the bodies in the grave, it is infeasible to avoid overlap or detachment of limbs. If recorded accurately, labelling the detached remains separately but assigning them to the same evidence (body) number, this procedure poses no problems for the evidential standards necessary in forensic excavations. Upon removal, saponified hands, feet, heads and other loose remains should be bagged and secured in place using tape to keep them from damage or loss during movement. This bagging process should also be logged and photographed¹⁴¹.

The best method to excavate human remains will depend on the state of the body (fragmented, skeletonized, saponified or fully fleshed), the clothes (if any), the type of soil (mud, stones etc.) and the commingling of the remains. The more skeletonized the body, the more difficult the recovery is, sometimes requiring every bone to be individually packed to protect them from damage. Clothing can provide a 'natural' wrap,

¹⁴⁰ Connor, 2007, p.161-162; Cox et al., 2008, p. 254-255.

¹⁴¹ Cox et al., 2008, p.255-260; Joyce, 2015, p.175-176.

keeping the bones together. It is not recommended to remove the clothing first in this case, since it can easily be done in the morgue¹⁴².

Sampling and sieving

To be certain that every piece of evidence associated with the body is recovered, all removed soil should be sampled and sieved. Samples should be logged and photographed, labelled and stored following the same scientific procedure as other types of evidence. Sieving (wet or dry) can be complicated if the grave is very large or the soil less suitable for sieving (clay, stones etc.). If there are time restraints, the process of sieving can also be altered to provide a general idea, using metal detectors to identify bullets or relevant shrapnel in the grave. Although not absolutely jeopardising the forensic excavation, the failure to sieve the soil will cause evidence loss to some degree¹⁴³.

THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY

To be able to use the evidence gathered during the excavation, a process called 'the chain of custody' must be respected at all times, using specific documents to keep track of found evidence in the grave until use in court. Any disruption can cause evidence to become void. Therefore, during a forensic excavation, there has to be an evidence log in which every find is immediately logged. There are three types of evidence: objects, human remains and soil marks or prints. The paramount importance of meticulous documentation, labelling, photography and logging cannot be understated, since archaeology is a destructive investigation and the fate of the evidence to be used in court depends on it¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴² Vandenbruane, 2003, p.253; Koff, 2004, p.8, p.246; Haglund, et al., 2001, p.66; Cox et al., 2008, p.261-263; Ferllini, 2007c, p.131.

¹⁴³ Hanson, Sterenberg and Wright, 2005, p.149-150; Cox et al., 2008, p.264-265; Dockril and Hunter, 1996, p.47, p.51; Adovasio and Dirkmaat, 1997, p.45-49; Haglund et al., 2001, p.66.

¹⁴⁴ Murad, 1997, p.395; Skinner, 1987, p.272, p.278; Connor, 2007, p.7-8; Koff, 2004, p.272; Crist, 2001, p.46; De Poot and De Winne, 2007, p.117.

2.5 CASE STUDY: EXCAVATING THE 1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI

It is an understatement to say that archaeology is virtually non-existent in Rwanda. There is no such thing as a Faculty of Archaeology and whoever wants to incorporate archaeology in his academic curriculum should travel abroad to develop the necessary knowledge. The archaeological contributions to our knowledge about Rwanda's past have been inspired mainly by foreign initiatives¹⁴⁵.

However, in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, there have been several kinds of 'archaeological' efforts to exhume the victims who perished¹⁴⁶. Roughly, these efforts can be divided into three, more or less consecutive, groups: exhumations by survivors, international forensic excavations and official exhumations by the government. The first and the last group consist of the largest number of human remains, but were unscientific and largely undocumented. The excavations of the middle group have been conducted by international experts in order to gather evidence to use in court, and have been thoroughly documented. However, this group consists of only a handful of locations where excavations have taken place.

EXHUMATIONS BY SURVIVORS

In the immediate aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Tutsi survivors returned to their homes and tried to pick up their old lives. Aside from reclaiming their houses and assets, they tried to locate the remains of their loved ones in order to give them a decent burial¹⁴⁷. The identification, however, was almost impossible, despite the fact that the bodies of most massacres were left as and where they were murdered. The genocidaires not always took the time to collect all human remains and bury them in mass graves, leaving the country literally littered with thousands of decaying bodies. The weather conditions in this hot and wet part of Africa accelerated the putrefaction process, swiftly turning the remains unrecognisable.

Nevertheless, many efforts were done by the survivors, often helped by government officials and churches, to gather information about the supposed locations of killings, exhuming the remains and cleaning the bones in order to bury the bodies in a decent

¹⁴⁵ See for example the studies by Giblin (Giblin, 2010; Giblin, 2012) and UCL (UCL News (2008)).

¹⁴⁶ Korman, 2015b, p.203.

¹⁴⁷ Jessee, 2012, p.4; Korman, 2015b, p.204-205.

way. Identification happened unofficially through clothing, ID-documents and other, less certain methods, based on 'feelings' and the need for closure¹⁴⁸. How many bodies were wrongly identified and buried as being part of a family remains unclear. In the light of providing closure to families, it can be imagined that scientific certitude is probably a subsidiary of psychological conclusion and peace of mind¹⁴⁹.

When the individual burials turned out to be infeasible, measures were taken to bury the bodies collectively through a dignified burial process. This emergency burial programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MINITRASO) was funded with a \$ 150.000 grant by UNICEF and WHO¹⁵⁰. For more information about this burial programme, see the section 'Collective burial by the state' below.

INTERNATIONAL FORENSIC EXCAVATIONS

In 1994 the UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), an ad hoc tribunal for the prosecution of the responsible individuals of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. To assure impartiality, stability, credibility and expertise, the court was set up in Arusha (Tanzania) and run by international staff. The advantage of this court is that the trials could individualize responsibility and promote individual accountability while avoiding ethnic stigma. The ICTR and the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia) are both important sources of jurisprudence on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Their rulings have been vital for the development of international criminal law and the creation of rules of evidence and procedure in international court settings¹⁵¹.

To gather the necessary evidence to support the trials, international multidisciplinary forensic teams were sent to Rwanda to investigate two sites of mass burial (Home Saint Jean and the church of Kibuye and the Amgar Garage area in Kigali) that would support two cases: the Kayishema-Ruzindana case and the Rutaganda case¹⁵². It was the non-governmental organisation Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) that carried out the

¹⁴⁸ Jessee, 2012, p.9-11; Korman, 2015b, p.204-205.

¹⁴⁹ Jessee, 2012, p.9-11.

¹⁵⁰ The New York Times, 1994; Korman, 2015b, p.205.

¹⁵¹ Roht-Arriaza, 2006, 6-7; Korman, 2015b, p.209-210. See Cruvellier, 2010, for an extensive work on the ICTR.

¹⁵² ICTR, 2001 and ICTR, 2003. See Cruvellier, 2010, p.81-82; p.34, p.147.

official excavations in 1995 and 1996 under the auspices of Bill Haglund¹⁵³. After initial assessment visits, Haglund selected two sites that met the necessary criteria: ease of transport and logistics, security conditions on and around the sites, and the lack of any previous excavations of the sites. Due to the unorganized efforts of the survivor communities to exhume as many relatives as possible, this last criterion was the most difficult to meet¹⁵⁴.

The main objective of the excavations was threefold¹⁵⁵:

1. Determining sex, age, cause of death and pattern of injuries for each individual whose remains were recovered.
2. Collecting and documenting any personal identifying information.
3. Determining the circumstances surrounding the burial and time of death of the victims.

Home Saint Jean and the church of Kibuye (01/12/1995-27/02/1996)

The first excavation of a mass grave under the auspices of the ICTR took place at the Roman Catholic Church and Home Saint Jean Complex of Kibuye in January and February 1996. On April 17, 1994, thousands of Tutsi refugees that gathered in the church for protection were slaughtered and subsequently thrown into five mass graves. Several people managed to flee the church, but were killed on the slopes of the neighbouring hills and left there to disintegrate¹⁵⁶.

After a short assessment in September 1995 of the mass graves by digging two perpendicular test trenches to confirm the presence of human remains and determine their condition and preserve the most vulnerable remains on the surface using plastic covers¹⁵⁷, a formal investigation subsequently took place between 01/12/1995 and 27/02/1996, led by Dr. William Haglund and Robert Kirschner and a team of 14 forensic

¹⁵³ Stover and Shigekane, 2002, p.849, Haglund et al., 2001, p.59-60, Ferllini, 2007b, p.10, Juhl, 2005, p.44, Skinner and Sterenberg, 2005, p.222, Rook, 2004, p.3; Jessee, 2012, p.4; Haglund, 1997a, p.1; Haglund and Kirschner, 1997, p.3; Korman, 2015b, p.210-211; Seutcheu, 2012, p.11; Rosenblatt, 2015, p.52-53.

¹⁵⁴ Korman, 2015b, p.210

¹⁵⁵ Jessee, 2012, p.11.

¹⁵⁶ Haglund and Kirschner, 1997, p.1; O'Brien, 2011, p.162.

¹⁵⁷ Haglund et al., 2001, p.59.

pathologists, archaeologists and anthropologists from the Americas and Europe, aside from a team of local labourers to carry buckets and body bags¹⁵⁸.

Due to time restraints, only the skeletal remains on the surface and one of the five burial pits were investigated¹⁵⁹. After the obligatory preparation of the site and organizing 24-7 security on site by UN forces, the excavation started in three phases. The first phase lasted for about two weeks and was used for surveying and mapping the site, taking photographs and



Image 2: Flagging of human remains during survey

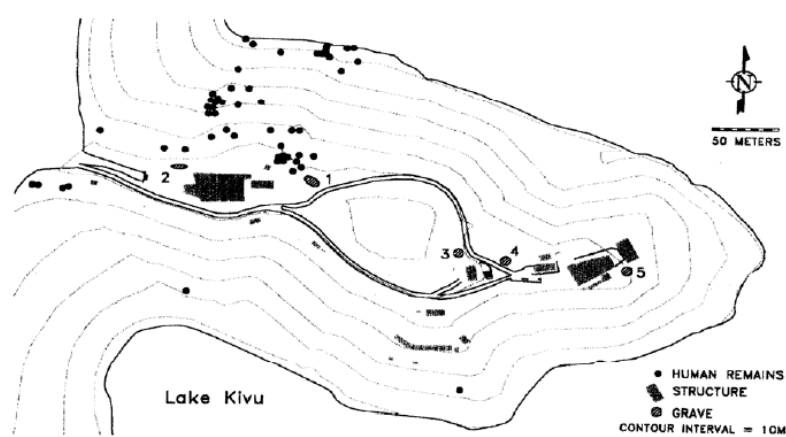


Image 3: Map of the Kibuye Church site

documenting every detail.

The second phase of three weeks consisted of the recovery and investigation of the human remains that were recorded during the first phase and were scattered on the surface of the terrain. The third and last phase, about four to six

weeks, was used to excavate the mass grave and examine the remains¹⁶⁰.

During phase 1, there were no human remains recovered, since everything had to remain in place to be thoroughly documented. During phase 2 all surface remains, recognizable through little red flags, were recovered after clearance of the vegetation, and exposing, cleaning and documentation of the remains. 53 individuals were located and recovered, inventoried and analysed¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁸ Jessee, 2012, p.11-12; Haglund and Kirschner, 1997, p.ii; Danieli, 2001, p.261-262; O'Brien, 2011, p.158-159.

¹⁵⁹ See Haglund and Kirchner, 1997 for the detailed scientific report, see Haglund et al., 2001, for the abridged version. See Koff, 2004, for practical insights.

¹⁶⁰ Haglund et al., 2001, p.59-60.

¹⁶¹ Haglund et al., 2001, p.60; Peterson, 2008, p.14-15.

Although the decision was made to only excavate one mass grave, other potential grave locations were tested using the probe (see Probing, p.36) and by manual trenching using a shovel (see Scraping, p.36)¹⁶².



Image 4: Mass grave 1 at Kibuye

During the investigation of the mass grave, phase 3, a MNI of 493 individuals were exhumed, of whom two third were women and children under 15 years old. Sharp or blunt force trauma was in almost 75% of the bodies the cause of death, with a small number who died by firearms (bullet wounds, grenades, shrapnel etc.). The cause of death of the rest of the victims remains unknown,

but there is little doubt that they died a violent death. The report with all findings and conclusions is about 700 pages thick and was used as the main evidence in the trial of Kayishema¹⁶³.

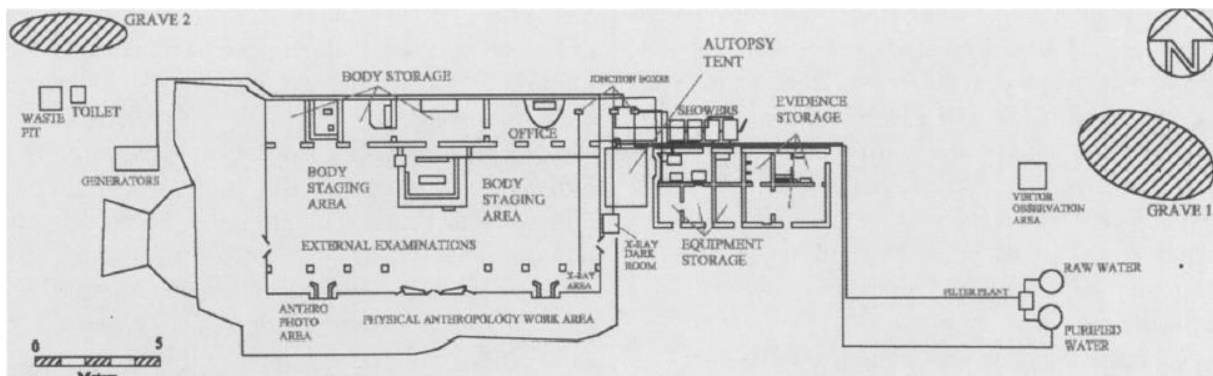


Image 5: Site plan of Kibuye with the examination and excavation flow

To secure the chain of custody and limit movement of the bodies, an on-site morgue was constructed to examine the human remains that were recovered. This autopsy tent was located between the church, where the bodies were stored and some other storage rooms for evidence and equipment. The grave was filled with a bulldozer, causing the remains to be commingled and redeposited, creating a puzzle of fleshed, saponified and skeletonized remains. The complexity of the grave contents made it very difficult to assign case numbers. The archaeologists had to change strategy and assign the number when the total body was exposed and not at the beginning, because the intertwined

¹⁶² Haglund et al., 2001, p.61.

¹⁶³ Jessee, 2012, p.12; Haglund and Kirschner, 1997, p.iv; Korman, 2015b, p.210-211.

bodies provoked confusion¹⁶⁴. When all human remains were recovered, the bottom of the grave was test trenched and checked by metal detector to ascertain that there was nothing evidential underneath it¹⁶⁵.

Out of the nearly 500 individuals exhumed, only 16 identifications could be established. Five persons carried identifying documents and eleven persons had clothing or personal items that were recognized during 'clothing day'. During this day, organized on 17 February 1996, all clothing and possessions that were found in the mass grave were on display to the public that was allowed on the site for the occasion. Only eleven sets of clothing could be recognised, which led to further tentative identifications. None of the victims had X-rays or dental records. Mitochondrial DNA comparison could locate surviving blood relatives in only two cases¹⁶⁶.



Image 6: Clothing day at Kibuye

Amgar Garage area in Kigali (30/05/1996-17/06/1996)

The excavation of the vicinity of the Amgar Garage in Kigali was much smaller, recovering and analysing 27 bodies as supporting evidence in the Rutaganda case¹⁶⁷. It was a smaller PHR team of six forensic experts and a local team of labourers, again under the auspices of Haglund, that excavated the premises. Again, a perimeter was set and secured, using a private security contractor for 24-7 security¹⁶⁸.

Before the excavation, the area was surveyed and mapped¹⁶⁹. The mass graves were detected using witness testimonies and naked eye detection of surface irregularities, differences in vegetation, soil compaction and coloration and depressions¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁴ Haglund et al., 2001, p.61-62; O'Brien, 2011, p.163.

¹⁶⁵ Haglund et al., 2001, p. 62.

¹⁶⁶ Stover and Shigekane, 2002, p.851; Jessee, 2012, p.12; Haglund and Kirschner, 1997, p.v; Koff, 2004, p.72-77.

¹⁶⁷ ICTR, 2003.

¹⁶⁸ Haglund, 1997a, p.v, p.38, p.53.

¹⁶⁹ Haglund, 1997a, p.4-6.

¹⁷⁰ O'Brien, 2011, p.165; Haglund, 1997a, p.6.

There was no large mass grave like in Kibuye, but the excavation comprised seven small, shallow graves containing twelve bodies in total (RUG-7), a latrine with three bodies (RUG-1), a ravine with three bodies (RUG-6) and a pile of remains of at least nine people (RUG-4), that had been found by neighbours in the vicinity. Three locations were tested for human remains but RUG-3 and RUG-5 contained no human remains, and RUG-2 contained a sock with human foot bones but was not further examined¹⁷¹.

All evidence items were logged, labelled, mapped, photographed and stored in a special evidence container. Human remains were transferred to the Amahoro complex in Kigali, where an ICTR examination centre was established to examine the remains and determine their cause of death, sex and age¹⁷².

International forensic excavations discredited

It did not take long before survivor communities started to protest the idea of outsiders tampering with the remains of their beloved ones. Rumours started surfacing about the true nature of this of this *bazungu* (foreigners) presence, namely the use of the remains for black magic. Simultaneously in Kigali there were protests against the forensic investigations as well. These actions are symptomatic of the miscommunications and overall lack of information that was provided to the general public, that was not consulted or involved in the investigations, except for clothing day¹⁷³.

The forensic investigations conducted in Rwanda proved in many ways counter-productive. Aside from the discomfort of the survivor communities, there was a lack of time, resource and personnel¹⁷⁴. Soon after the two forensic excavations, the Rwanda tribunal officially ended its forensic programme: "*Acting on the advice of the Government of Rwanda and with due respect to the wishes of the families of the deceased, no further mass graves will be exhumed by the Office of the Prosecutor. The Prosecutor is satisfied that this decision will not prejudice the bringing to justice of the persons responsible*"¹⁷⁵.

¹⁷¹ Haglund, 1997a, p.8-30

¹⁷² Haglund, 1997a, p.6-7; O'Brien, 2011, p.165. Unfortunately, the photos in the report are of such bad quality, that they could not be used here.

¹⁷³ Jessee, 2012, p.12-13; Koff, 2004, p.68; Shute, 2015, p.96, Cruvellier, 2010, p.13.

¹⁷⁴ Jessee, s.d.

¹⁷⁵ Adede, 1996.

This mutual decision was probably taken due to a lack of funds of the ICTR and withdrawal from the Rwandan side, probably due to the stated protests above¹⁷⁶. Other reasons that have been put forward were the closure of the UNAMIR II mandate which led to a changing political climate of more independence for Rwanda, and old-school jealousy of the more prominent role the ICTY played on the international level. Anyway, the halt in forensic excavations weakened the evidence build-up in the cases that followed¹⁷⁷.

The evidence collected during the excavation of the Amgar garage area to be used in the Rutaganda case was eventually dismissed by the ICTR along with the reports and expert testimonies. In a devastating report (exhibit 254 or D7¹⁷⁸), expert witness for the defence Kathleen Reichs condemned the shortcomings of the scientific methodology used by the PHR team as stated in their report about the investigation of the Amgar garage (exhibit 254c)¹⁷⁹.

"As I have indicated in the report, I divided these (difficulties) into two sections: difficulties with the report itself and difficulties with the work that was actually done, in Kigali.(...) I've listed, I believe sixteen different points and these are in addition to typographical and grammatical errors. The primary problem that I have with the report is that there were so many either errors or confusing points within it. And there were incorrect tables, there were pie charts that were incorrect, there was incorrect labelling of photographs, that made it very difficult. (...) In some cases, the information in the table was clearly wrong. There were contradictory statements made in the anthropology versus the pathology reports."

Witness statement by Kathleen Reichs, 15/03/1999, ICTR Room 1. Farage, 1999, p.27-29.

Reichs criticised the investigation for lacking certification by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology¹⁸⁰, inadequate post-mortem interval estimation and outdated

¹⁷⁶ Stover and Shigekane, 2002, p.851; Korman, 2015b, p.211.

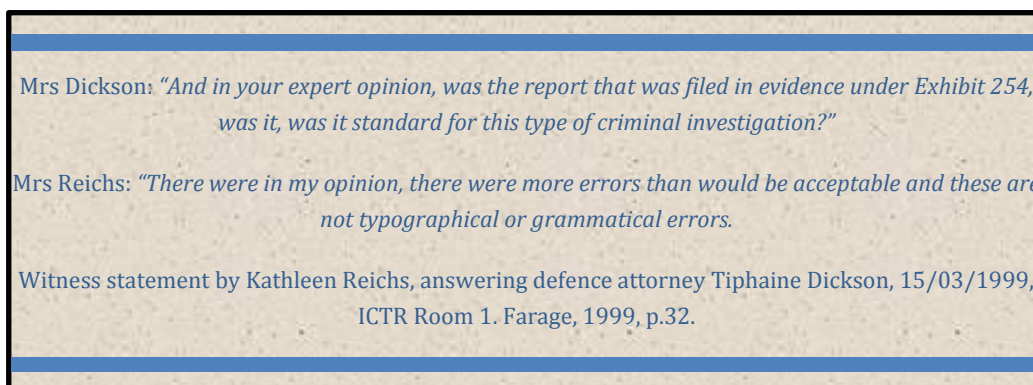
¹⁷⁷ See O'Brien, 2011, p.167-181 for an extensive analysis of possible reasons for the withdrawal. Korman, 2015b, p.211.

¹⁷⁸ For the confusion in court about the evidence exhibits, see Farage, 1999, p.20-24.

¹⁷⁹ For the analysis of Haglund as an expert witness and his discredit, see Klinkner, 2009, p.122. N.B.: Reichs is now mostly known as the author of several fiction novels about forensic anthropology and the author who was at the base of the popular television series 'Bones'. See Crossland, 2015, p.108.

¹⁸⁰ ABFA, 2008.

and inaccurate methods of laboratory analysis of the skeletal remains¹⁸¹. The court eventually followed her reasoning and dismissed the evidence.



OFFICIAL EXHUMATIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT

As the years went by, the Rwandan government increasingly assumed control over the exhumations of genocide victims, progressively taking a more active role through governmental initiatives like the Gacaca courts, IBUKA (umbrella organization of survivors' communities), the Association of the Widows of Genocide (AVEGA) and the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG, see *infra*, section 'Memorialization and Commemoration ceremonies')¹⁸². Especially in the last ten years, the main strategy of the Rwandan government, especially embodied by the CNLG, is one of centralization and the provision of a dignified burial for all victims¹⁸³. To avoid an amalgam of burial practices, the Rwandan government issued a law in 2008¹⁸⁴, forbidding independent burial of the victims of the genocide and claiming ownership of the remains of the victims of the genocide by declaring all memorials public assets¹⁸⁵.

According to this new law, all victims should be buried either at one of the genocide memorial sites, defined as "*a place where victims of genocide were buried and which has a special history in the planning and execution of Genocide*¹⁸⁶" or at one of the

¹⁸¹ Reichs, 1999, p.1-2; Farage, 1999, p.27-69; Jessee, 2012, p.13.

¹⁸² Jessee, 2012, p.4 and p.13-14.

¹⁸³ Korman, 2015a, p.63.

¹⁸⁴ See Government of Rwanda. (2009) Law N°56/2008 of 10/09/2008. Law governing memorial sites and cemeteries of victims of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

¹⁸⁵ Korman, 2015a, p.63; Rosenblatt, 2015, p.58.

¹⁸⁶ Law N°56/2008 art.2 §b in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.68.

genocide cemeteries, defined as *“a public place where remains of victims of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda were collectively buried^{187.}”*

There are seven national genocide memorial sites (see below, section ‘National genocide memorials’), and at least one per district, as the law imposes^{188.}

For remains of victims that have already been buried, article 6 provides a transfer to a genocide memorial site or cemetery, but *“upon the initiative of the relatives or upon consultation with the District administration”^{189.}*

Following the 2008 law, it are the district authorities that are responsible for *“searching for remains of the genocide victims which are not yet buried or which were not accorded a decent burial and to do whatever possible to accord them a decent burial within a period not exceeding six months from the time the remains are discovered^{190.}”* This means that survivor communities cannot independently search and exhume bodies anymore, but should always operate under the auspices of the district authority.

Remains of victims that are preserved and on display are treated as a separate category, stating that *“Remains of genocide victims who are not yet buried due to preservation of genocide evidence on a durable manner shall be preserved and be placed in a respectable place and only be visited under circumstances of paying tribute to genocide victims.¹⁹¹”* The law provides for a clause, imposing the burial of all damaged remains and those in storage within a year from the law’s publishing date^{192.}

Officially, the motives for this law were *‘preventing the loss of evidence which would render education of future generations about the dangers of genocide impossible and the guarantee of a treatment with perpetual respect for the victims’ remains^{193.}*

¹⁸⁷ Law N°56/2008 art.2 §c in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.68.

¹⁸⁸ Law N°56/2008 art.10 in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.70-71.

¹⁸⁹ Law N°56/2008 art.6 in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.69.

¹⁹⁰ Law N°56/2008 art.5 in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.69.

¹⁹¹ Law N°56/2008 art.12 §1 in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.73.

¹⁹² Law N°56/2008 art.12 §2 in Government of Rwanda, 2009, p.73.

¹⁹³ Jessee, 2012, p.14.

However, this law created some misunderstandings about who is in charge for the genocide memorials. Only very recently (March 2016) a draft law passed the Rwandan Lower House, aiming to replace the 2008 law. The new law puts the ownership and management of all memorials in the hands of the government¹⁹⁴.

There will be four categories of genocide memorial sites:

1. National memorial sites, managed by the CNLG
2. District memorial sites, managed by the district local governments
3. Genocide memorial sites erected in foreign countries whose management will be ensured by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see section 'International cross-border genocide memorials' below)
4. International memorial sites in case the sites are taken over by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites¹⁹⁵.

The law has not been published yet.

Every time new information comes up (by witnesses, perpetrators, etc.) or human remains are stumbled upon (accidentally, during infrastructure works, etc.) new exhumations follow. Even today, this still happens regularly all over Rwanda. These exhumations are by no means forensic or scientific in any way. Since they involve the



Image 7: Exhumations by the survivor community

relatives and survivor communities, the exhumations are more perceived as a joint community work. Several newspaper articles announce proudly that family members were able to positively identify their relatives by the clothes they were wearing¹⁹⁶. However, since there are no efforts to provide scientific identification and there are virtually no ante-mortem data of the victims, these identifications might as well be only

¹⁹⁴ Kwibuka, 2016a; Kwibuka, 2016b.

¹⁹⁵ There are currently four genocide memorials on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage (Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre at Gisozi, Murambi, Nyamata and Bisesero). See UNESCO, 2012; De la Croix Tabaro 2012. They have been proposed in 2012, but there is still no official decision. See The Rwandan 2015; Kwibuka, 2014.

¹⁹⁶ Mbonyinshuti, 2014b.

tentative. The recovered bones are being cleaned and provisionally stored until the next commemoration period in April¹⁹⁷.

Every year, especially around the National Commemoration Week in April, several articles feature the reburial of victims of the 1994 genocide that have been exhumed for the opportunity or during the years. Even after all those years, thousands of victims are being found, exhumed and reburied in the local or regional memorial site. Large crowds take part in the reburial, and trauma and sorrow are still very existent in present-day Rwanda. Central themes in the commemoration masses are the condemning of genocide denial, the request to track down fugitive genocidaires and repeated calls towards perpetrators to reveal the locations of the other remains of victims¹⁹⁸.

The role of the CNLG

The National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) was established in 2008, and besides fighting genocide denial and organizing commemorations, its aim was to complete the process of dignified burial through reburial of remains exhumed from perpetrator graves or makeshift post-genocidal graves. Immediately after the genocide, many remains had been buried by local communities to give them some degree of burial, but due to inadequate funding and cheap, non-durable materials, the burials could hardly be called dignified or sustainable. It became clear after a few years, that the graves were not apt to resist the elements, and would be destroyed if no action was taken. Therefore, mass graves and memorials had to be refurbished, or new memorials comprising mass graves had to be constructed. (Cfr. *Infra*, section ‘Calls for refurbishment and new memorials’). The bodies were often transferred from smaller, local memorials to larger district memorials or national memorials. The bones were cleaned to add the ‘dignified burial’ label, the clothing and objects were removed and the remains were put in coffins, holding up to 50 bodies¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁷ Jessee, 2012, p.4 and p.13-14.

¹⁹⁸ Asiimwe, 2008; Babijja, 2013; Bucyensenge, 2010; Bucyensenge, 2011a; Bucyensenge, 2012b.; Mbaraga, 2016a; Mbonyinshuti, 2013b; Mbonyinshuti, 2014b; Mugisha, 2007; Mugisha, 2008a; Mugisha, 2008b; Mukombozi, 2008; Musoni, 2015; Mwesigye, 2008; Nakayima, 2008d; Nakayima, 2008e; Nakayima, 2011b; Ngabonziza, 2011; Nkurunziza, 2010b; Nkurunziza, 2012b; Ntambara, 2009b; Ntirenganya, 2009; Rwamapera and Rwembeho, 2016; Rwembeho, 2010e; Rwembeho, 2012a; Rwembeho, 2014c; Rwembeho, 2015c; Rwembeho, 2015b; Rwembeho, 2016b; Rwembeho, 2014a; Rwembeho, 2016a; Sabiiti, 2008a; Sabiiti, 2008b; Sabiiti, 2011a; Sabiiti, 2011b.

¹⁹⁹ Korman, 2015a, p.62; Korman, 2015b, p.205.

As a consequence, some victims were reburied and transferred several times, from their family land to a local cemetery, to a more central cemetery or a national cemetery, with obvious discomfort and retraumatization for their relatives. To avoid this painful process in the future, more and more emphasis is put upon building sustainable structures like metal tent-like structures²⁰⁰.

The practice of collective burial fits the governmental idea of a shared national unity, with a collective burial without distinction. However, there is a paradox between the collectivity of the burial and the official terminology used for the victims, namely the victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. This excludes the moderate Hutu victims, killed during the genocide, and the numerous victims that perished during civil rights abuses by the RPF and subsequently by the Kagame regime (see section 'Perpetrators: memorialization and commemoration as dissonant heritage' below)²⁰¹.

IMPACT ON SURVIVORS: HAMPERING RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION?

It seems that the exhumations that have been conducted in Rwanda have had only a minor positive impact on Rwanda's survivors' community. Several survivors stated that they experience their inability to locate, identify and bury the remains of their loved ones as very distressing, regardless of the efforts of collective burial places²⁰². According to Rwandan tradition, those who experienced a 'bad death', and have not been buried with respect, will haunt their family members with an array of misfortunes (sickness, failed harvests, infertility, etc.)²⁰³. Signed off as unscientific superstition, only minor efforts have been undertaken to investigate the impact this experienced distress from fear of angry spirits has on survivors and their reconciliation²⁰⁴. In efforts for transitional justice, this psychological aspect is often overlooked. A study by Jessee, based on qualitative interviews with members of the survivor community, shows that there is a demand for new humanitarian exhumations, not for forensic use, but for the purpose of identification, decent burial and closure. If not, there will continue to be a

²⁰⁰ Korman, 2015a, p.62-63.

²⁰¹ Cook, 2006, p.304; Jessee, 2012, p.6; Kinzer, 2008; Waldorf, 2009, p.15-16; Williams, 2007, p.45; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.312; Thomson, 2009a p.75; Alluri, 2009, p.24.

²⁰² Mutesi, 2009; Fondation Hironnelle, 2009; Korman, 2015a, p.64. See also the research among the survivor community of Kibuye by Jessee, 2012, p.16 and p.4.; Shute, 2015, p.94.

²⁰³ Van't Spijker, 2005, p.249-250; Korman, 2015a, p.57-58.

²⁰⁴ See the work of Baines, 2010, in Uganda.

struggle that impedes reconciliation²⁰⁵. Many survivors stated that *“there can be no reconciliation until those responsible for murdering their missing loved ones reveal the locations where their bodies have been deposited so they can be identified and reburied with respect according to Rwandan tradition”*²⁰⁶.

Offering the victims a decent burial is a way of honouring them and restoring their dignity²⁰⁷. Rwandan burial tradition prescribes that the body of the deceased must be cleansed, dressed in good clothes, placed in a coffin or shroud and buried two meters deep on family land. To prevent disturbance, the grave must be covered with cement or plants and flowers²⁰⁸. However, after the mass killings of 1994, this traditional practice would be inexecutable for most members of Rwandan society by lack of enough land and financial resources. At first, survivors were grateful for the help the government provided by assigning land for mass burials. Displeasure emerged when the burial sites were not always maintained adequately and human remains were put on display. The arrival of flocks of dark tourists further complicates the process (Cfr. The section ‘Dark tourism in Rwanda’ below)²⁰⁹.

The location and identification of victims to provide psychological closure through reburial, is an aspect not included in transitional justice initiatives like the Gacaca or the ICTR²¹⁰. During the time of the existence of the Gacaca courts, it became clear that locating the bodies of the victims was not a priority, and that when the question was asked, only few perpetrators revealed the location where they dumped the remains. There is no official explanation for this reluctance, however, it is not unthinkable that one of the main reasons constitutes the fear that providing physical evidence would lead to further charges of additional crimes. There is also a possibility that perpetrators purposely avoid closure by survivors out of ideology²¹¹. However, during almost every commemoration speech in all different districts, a call is made towards the perpetrators

²⁰⁵ Jessee, 2012, p.4-5; The same conclusion is formed by Baines, 2010, p.409; Roht-Arriaza, 2006, 3-5; Teitel, 2003, p.78; Rwamapera and Rwembeho, 2016.

²⁰⁶ Jessee, 2012, p.6.

²⁰⁷ Bucyensenge, 2012b.

²⁰⁸ Jessee, 2012, p.17.

²⁰⁹ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.302; Jessee, 2012, p.17.

²¹⁰ Teitel, 2003, p.78; Jessee, 2012, p.6.

²¹¹ Waldorf, 2010, p.198; Stover and Shigekane, 2002, p.847; Jessee, 2012, p. 7; Mutesi, 2009.

to urge them to reveal the location of the bodies of their victims²¹². To persuade alleged perpetrators that are afraid to be charged, the mayor of Huye, Muzuka, told residents that “having information on the victims’ whereabouts doesn’t necessarily mean you killed them” and pleaded with all those who have information about their whereabouts to reveal them so as to give them a chance to be offered a decent burial²¹³.

Aside from these undoubtedly correct concerns for the need of identification to provide closure, there are a number of reasons why it is infeasible to identify all victims that have been found. First of all, the number of individuals that perished during the 1994 genocide is simply too large (at least 800.000 bodies). The technological and financial resources are insufficient and the alternative that is provided through the memorials and collective burial places is deemed as enough, making individual identification of a crime so collective and impersonal as genocide, superfluous. The opposite reasoning is even used, stating that the remains in the new mass graves have been buried respectfully and should not be disturbed to avoid angering the spirits²¹⁴. However, reburials of reburials are taking place in the meantime (Cfr. the section ‘Calls for refurbishment and new memorials’ below).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an overview was presented of the adequate techniques used by forensic archaeology to locate graves and to excavate them in such a manner that the evidence gathered is useable in courtrooms. Aside from eyewitness accounts, that still provide for a large part of grave locations, there are several destructive and non-destructive methods that can be used to locate a grave. A short synopsis was presented of the taphonomic processes that are at work in a mass grave and that can influence the excavation methods that will have to be used. A brief overview of the different steps of an archaeological excavation and the chain of custody completed the theoretical archaeological part of this dissertation.

For the case study, this archaeologically ideal procedure was projected upon the excavations that took place in Rwanda for the ICTR. This exercise was finished rather

²¹² Asiimwe, 2010; Bucyensenge, 2014f; Mbaraga, 2016c; Mbonyinshuti, 2015; Mbonyinshuti, 2013a; Mukombozi, 2011a; Tindiwensi, 2008b.

²¹³ Bucyensenge, 2014f.

²¹⁴ Stover and Shigekane, 2002, p.847; Jessee, 2012, p.18-19.

quickly: there have only been two forensic missions in Rwanda, more specific in Kibuye and in Kigali (Amgar Garage). Although rigorously following protocols and logging and documenting every step while guarding the chain of custody, the evidence in the Amgar investigation was dismissed after the report was considered sloppy and full of mistakes. The Rwandan government and the ICTR ended their cooperation in forensic archaeological investigations shortly after, for reasons that are still not completely clear.

As a consequence, the results of forensic archaeology in the case of Rwanda are a bit of a disappointment. However, this does not mean that the corpses of the victims are still lying strewn around the country. Survivor communities and the Rwandan Government have cooperated relentlessly to provide the victims with dignified burials by exhuming their remains, cleaning the bones and reburying them in mass graves. However, the lack of identification remains a large issue for relatives, since they cannot find peace until they were able to locate their beloved ones. As time goes by, the chances that the victims will ever be identified are reduced to a virtual zero.

CHAPTER 3: MEMORIALIZATION AND THE LEGACY OF MASS

MURDER

This chapter focuses on the potential activities at sites of mass atrocities and genocide. First of all, the fate of location of mass killing and genocide is discussed, using the theoretical framework by Cook²¹⁵, stating three possibilities: (1) preservation and restoration, (2) memorialization and commemoration and (3) documentation and research. Secondly, the human tendency toward memorialization is shortly discussed, leading up to a section about human fascination with death and the morbid, more specifically called dark tourism and thanatourism. This type of tourism, that is situated at the crossroads of sociology, psychology and tourism, became very popular during the last few decades.

Like in the other two chapters, the last part is dedicated to the case study. Memorialization in Rwanda is widespread and very diverse. Therefore, the framework provided in the first sections of this chapter can be used very well to assess the Rwandan practices. This last part therefore provides an overview of not only memorialization activities in Rwanda, but also preservation and documentation efforts that have been done in the last 22 years. Aside from an overview of the most important genocide memorials, special attention is given to sensitive aspects, like the displaying of human remains and the dissonance between the different stakeholders in the memorialization process. Ultimately, the concept of dark tourism is applied to Rwanda, which is considered one of the best dark tourism destinations in the world. For this last part, the interesting approach by Peter Hohenhaus²¹⁶, who uses a darkometer to rate tourist attractions, are applied to the Rwandan context.

²¹⁵ Cook, 2006, p.293.

²¹⁶ See Hohenhaus, s.d.

3.1 *THE FATE OF LOCATIONS OF MASS KILLING AND GENOCIDE*

Little study has been focusing on what to do with the geographic locations where mass killings took place. Some sites will inevitably be destroyed, some can be reverted back to their previous use, but sometimes the choice is made to keep them as a place of memory.

According to Cook, who provided a theoretical framework to assess locations of mass killing and genocide, there are roughly three overlapping and sometimes contradicting activities that can take place at these locations²¹⁷:

1. *Preservation and restoration*

The location is actively maintained in a frozen state, at a certain point in history. Since several sites are in fact international crime scenes, they contain evidence that must be preserved, not only for legal purposes, but also for pedagogical use through reconstructing the precise nature of what happened.

2. *Memorialization and commemoration*

The central idea of memorialization is the human need to honour the victims and remember them and what happened to them (cfr. *Infra*). This can be a very personal experience through individual remembrance, or a collective activity of a community. The latter is often influenced by political motives to create a group spirit and a common identity.

3. *Documentation and research*

The collection of primary sources to reconstruct particular events is mostly organized by scholars for scholarly, legal or political purposes. It is mostly rather costly and has the narrowest set of applications.

²¹⁷ Cook, 2006, p.293, p.296-298.

3.2 THE HUMAN TENDENCY FOR MEMORIALIZATION

MEMORIALIZATION AS A CORPOREAL FORM OF MEMORY

Although the practice of collective remembrance of wars and atrocities has always existed, there has been a rapid proliferation in all kinds of activities of collective remembrance of genocide and mass killings during the last century. Societies and individuals alike have almost all undertaken this predominantly social act, that can be categorized in two groups: permanent sites (memorials, cemeteries, museums, art works, transcripts, literature, even cinema) and impermanent gestures (ceremonies and street theatre)²¹⁸. Although studied from a historical, sociological and anthropological point of view, there is more or less consensus about the definition of memorialization: *'the practice in which individuals, communities, and societies, interact at sites of symbolically represented memory, deriving from, and impressing on, an item or act narratives about specific times, places, persons, and events laden with affective meaning'*²¹⁹. Most attention has focused on memorialization as the social or 'collective' embodiment of the practice of remembering, less on memorialization as the corporeal form of 'memory'. The latter form is much more diverse and complex, having more ritual and historical dimensions through the use of narratives projected on the memorial site to bridge past, present and future. Especially in post-genocide communities, memorialization encompasses the interpersonal ritual dimension and becomes a broader, almost mandatory narrative with international, political dimensions²²⁰. Speaking of an obsession with memory, caused by the inability to master the anxiety of loss, anthropologists use the term 'mnemotropism'²²¹.

The location where the rituals of memorialization are practiced, is seldom randomly chosen. The site is often located where the events took place, or is situated in a place especially constructed for the memorialization, as religious buildings, museums or graveyards. They are public places, accessible to all (but sometimes with an entrance fee for the upkeep of the memorial site). Memorials are not the same as monuments, the latter being constructed to celebrate heroes from a victor's point of view and vibrating a

²¹⁸ Kuhn, 2000, p.186; Edkins, 2003, p.54.

²¹⁹ Evans, 2002, p.2, cited in Steele, 2006, p.3-4 and in Mhando and Tomaselli, 2009, p.34.

²²⁰ Steele, 2006, p.2-3.

²²¹ Candau, 1998, p.104-105; Winter, 2012, p.58; Berliner, 2005, p.199.

sense of power and self-worth. Memorials ritualise remembrance from the victim's point of view and prevent forgetting through a more didactical message of 'never again'²²².

MOTIVES FOR MEMORIALIZATION

As stated above, there is agreement about the definition of memorialization. Far less agreement exists, however, on the motives for this practice. Memorialization is not only an individual practice, but also serves broader social purposes through interaction between different individuals and social groups, making the memorial a dynamic place²²³.

Studies by Edkins and Ronell have summed up several motives²²⁴:

1. Rituals of mourning: the most basic core motivation for memorialization is the remembrance of lost ones through remembering what happened to them. This can be very individual or a collective event²²⁵.
2. Searching for meaning: an extension of this mourning is the search for a meaning that can be attributed to death. This is often more of a collective practice, where people come together to support each other²²⁶.
3. Bonding between individuals, social groups and communities²²⁷.
4. Rite of passage to tackle trauma: memorialization as a therapeutic way to express trauma in a comprehensible way and overcome it²²⁸.
5. Constructing identity for ideological or political purposes: the state appropriates memorialization through the creation of a collective memory by offering a comprehensive, official narrative. This official narrative can be the meaning the mourning individual is looking for (point 2) and is often transmitted through generations, sometimes even unconsciously. The narrative consists of the identifying elements that should be remembered, leaving out the dissonant elements that should be forgotten²²⁹.

²²² Snyman, 1998, p.318; Kuhn, 2000, p.186; Edkins, 2003, p.54; Steele, 2006, p.4.

²²³ Kuhn, 2000, p.186; Edkins, 2003, p.54; Steele, 2006, p.4.

²²⁴ Edkins, 2003, p.177; Ronell, 1998, p.312-313.

²²⁵ Olick and Robbins, 1998, p.129; Nora, 1972, p.398; Berliner, 2005, p.200.

²²⁶ Steele, 2006, p.3-4.

²²⁷ Steele, 2006, p.4-5.

²²⁸ See Caruth, 1995; and Caruth, 1996; for a comprehensive overview of the psychological aspects.

²²⁹ Climo and Cattell, 2002, p.39-40; Steele, 2006, p.4-5; Carsten, 1995, p.318.

3.3 *DARK TOURISM AND THANATOURISM: FIFTY SHADES OF DARK*

Since the end of the 20th century, an increasing interest was noticeable in tourism focusing on death, disaster and horror, not only by tourists, but also by scholars. This gave rise to a whole new field of study: 'dark tourism' or 'thanatourism'²³⁰. Although sometimes frowned upon, this type of tourism can also be beneficial for a number of stakeholders. Aside from visitor motivations, the tourism industry can play a role in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction of a country that has been devastated by war, conflict, mass killings or disasters. Tourism can collapse suddenly, since it is extremely susceptible to the direct and indirect effects of violence²³¹. However, right after the conflict, it is often dark tourism that is the first type of tourism to re-emerge, thriving on 'fresh' horrors. The potential of tourism (dark or normal) for social change, conflict prevention, conflict settlement or post-conflict peacebuilding has only been investigated by a few scholars, hampering awareness of states, NGOs and even private tourism companies about their impact on conflict²³².

DEFINITION AND SEMANTICS OF DARK TOURISM AND THANATOURISM

There are many words in use to designate the visit of sites that have been the location where atrocities took place: dark tourism, thanatourism, morbid tourism, grief tourism, atrocity heritage etc.²³³. Dark tourism clearly became the most popular and mediatized term, but it is less clear if it is also the most appropriate one. The misunderstanding of dark tourism has led to pejorative connotations, especially by local communities. Some suppliers of tourism attractions that have been labelled as 'dark' denounce the term 'dark tourism' because of the morbid undertone and reproaches of perceived unethical profitmaking through exploiting tragedy and human death²³⁴. The term thanatourism apparently escaped media attention and therefore seems less sensitive²³⁵.

²³⁰ There have been countless studies about 'dark tourism' in the last twenty years. It would take us too far to sum them all up here. The most important authors are Lennon and Foley, Stone, Seaton, Hartmann, Ashton, Sharpley and Walter (among countless other meritorious studies).

²³¹ Alluri, 2009, p.7.

²³² Alluri, 2009, p.10-11; Strong-Cvetich, 2007, p.1-2; Feil et al., 2008, p.6, p.34. See Joras, 2009 for an extensive study of private actor motivation for peacebuilding through tourism.

²³³ See the studies by Lennon and Foley, 1996a; Blom, 2000; Asworth, 2002; Seaton, 1996; Stone, 2006; Lennon and Foley, 2000; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013.

²³⁴ Stone, 2006, p.158; Alluri, 2009, p.11.

²³⁵ Bowman and Pezullo, 2009, p.199; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.303-304, p.317.

The term dark tourism was first coined by Lennon and Foley in 1996²³⁶. Due to the endless variety of sites, there is little clarity or agreement about the terminology and definitions that are currently at use²³⁷. In this dissertation, the definition for dark tourism by Stone will be used: *“The act of travel to tourist sites associated with death, suffering or the seemingly macabre”*²³⁸.

Thanatourism, from θάνατος (death), has roughly the same meaning, but comprises the notion of a longer tradition and a ritualization. The contemplation of death, the so-called ‘thanatopic tradition’, is a practice that dates far back. Thanatourism is the travel dimension of this thanatopsis. Therefore the definition of thanatourism used here, is the definition of Seaton: *“To travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death”*²³⁹.

Both terms therefore point to the same phenomenon, but approach it from different sides. Where ‘dark tourism’ represents a pragmatic view of demand and supply, thanatourism represents a behavioural, motivation-based phenomenon, located in more symbolic, psychological spheres²⁴⁰. Both terms will be further analysed, since they both have their merits.

TYPOLOGIES OF DARK TOURISM AND THANATOURISM

Several categorizations have formed under the umbrella of ‘dark tourism’. There is a typology based on subject-phenomenon related characteristics: holocaust tourism, genocide tourism, slavery heritage tourism, morbid tourism; black-spot tourism²⁴¹; extreme thanatourism (watching executions)²⁴². Another straightforward typology depends on locational characteristics: celebrity death sites, graves, prisons, execution sites, battlefields etc.²⁴³.

²³⁶ Lennon and Foley, 1996a; p.198; Lennon and Foley, 1996b, p.195.

²³⁷ Collins-Kreiner, 2016, p.1185; Yuill, 2003, p.10-13.

²³⁸ Stone, 2006, p.146.

²³⁹ Seaton, 1996, p.240.

²⁴⁰ Stone, 2006, p.146; Sharples, 2005, p.215-226.

²⁴¹ Rojek refers to *“commercial developments of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of peoples have met with sudden and violent deaths”* as black spots. Rojek, 1993 p.136.

²⁴² See the studies of (respectively) Ashworth 1996; Beech, 2000; Dann and Seaton, 2001; Blom, 2000; Rojek, 1993; Dunkley, Morgan, and Westwood, 2007.

²⁴³ See the studies of (respectively) Lennon and Foley, 1996a; Seaton, 1996; Seaton 2002; Strange and Kempa, 2003; Wilson 2004; Williams, 2004.

The concept of dark tourism lends itself perfectly for a typology based on 'shades' of dark, reaching from pale to dark. The first to apply a distinction between 'dark' and 'darker' tourism, is Miles, who concluded that location played a role in the perception of 'darkness'. He differentiates between a site associated with dark, and a site *of* dark, the former being less dark, since it is not the site where the actual events happen²⁴⁴. This idea is applied to penal tourism by Strange and Kempa in their comparative study of the prisons of Robben Island and Alcatraz²⁴⁵.

This idea of shades of darkness was further elaborated by Sharpley, who drafted a typology to assess sites based on consumer-driven motivations, building further on the work of Holt²⁴⁶. He suggests varying shades of darkness via four categories²⁴⁷:

1. Dark tourism as experience: mildly dark category that provides phenomenological meaning to tourists' own social existence. Example: locations of celebrity deaths, war cemeteries, etc.
2. Dark tourism as play: pale category that focuses upon sharing the consumption of dark tourism sites or experiences, which calls for a collective celebration or mourning. Example: the funeral of Lady Di.
3. Dark tourism as integration: this category can range all the way from pale to dark, by letting the tourist submerge in a new world. At the palest extremity, the consumption of fantasy worlds, recreating death in its broader context (crawling through the Cu Chi tunnels in Vietnam); at the darkest extremity the tourist can submerge himself in real death, of others (traveling to active war zones) or of his own (euthanasia tourism).
4. Dark tourism as classification: a pale category of seeking social status by deliberately travelling to dangerous or macabre destinations, to later show off that they have been there (and survived it). Example: 'I survived El Salvador' T-shirts.

The proposed categories are not clearly demarcated, leaving the possibility for overlap²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁴ Miles, 2002, p.1175; Stone, 2006, p.151.

²⁴⁵ See Strange and Kempa, 2003

²⁴⁶ See Holt, 1995 for a study of consumer-based typologies.

²⁴⁷ See Sharpley, 2005 and 2009; further elaborated by Stone, 2010, p.77-80; and Stone, 2012, p.1568.

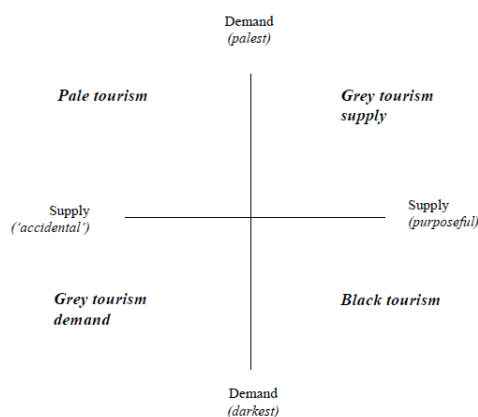


Image 8: A matrix of dark tourism

A second typology proposed by Sharpley in the same article is a ‘continuum of purpose’, varying from accidental supply to deliberate exploitation²⁴⁹.

Both typologies of Sharpley were summarized in a matrix²⁵⁰.

Taking this idea of shades of darkness, Stone proposes a spectrum of supply, being a dynamic continuum with seven categories of dark suppliers of dark tourism products²⁵¹:

1. Dark Fun Factories:

Sites, attractions and tours which predominately have an entertainment focus by presenting real or fictional death and macabre events. Commercial, ‘fun-centric’ and boasting extensive professional tourism infrastructure²⁵².

Very light. Example: The Tower of London (UK).



Image 9: Family fun at the Tower

2. Dark Exhibitions:

Exhibitions, museums and sites, designed for education, reflection and learning opportunities. Although mostly located on sites only associated with death and thus less dark, these tourist products approach death in a more serious, thought-provoking and sometimes commemorative way, carefully avoiding emotional overload through association and avoiding direct death images²⁵³.

Slightly dark. Example: September 11 exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.



Image 10: 9/11 exhibition in the Smithsonian Institution

²⁴⁸ Stone, 2010, p.80.

²⁴⁹ Sharpley, 2005, 215-226.

²⁵⁰ See Sharpley, 2005, cited in Stone, 2010, p.80.

²⁵¹ Stone, 2006, p.151-157.

²⁵² Stone, 2006, p.152-153; Londonist, 2016.

²⁵³ Stone, 2006, p.153; September 11 – Bearing witness to history, 2011.

3. Dark Dungeons:

Representing penal tourism and justice tourism from a historical point of view. The tours of former prisons and courts combine entertainment and education in a commercial and touristic infrastructure.

Moderately dark. Example: Robben Island (South Africa)²⁵⁴.

4. Dark Resting Places:



Cemeteries and graveyards can act as a romanticized urban tool, similar to municipal parks but slightly more macabre. Exploring them via promenades, or via dedicated guide tours, the cemetery is perceived

more as a charming place than a scary one, although one is being among the dead²⁵⁵.

Moderately dark with both dark and light elements. Example: The Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris (France).

5. Dark shrines:

At locations of sudden mass, violent or celebrity death that featured in the media, a type of makeshift shrine for remembrance is hastily constructed by the public in an informal way. The heaps of flowers and cuddly toys attract scores of other, non-related people to the scene, causing sometimes a snowball effect. Since the events feature in the mass media, they quickly gain momentum until they are absorbed by political awareness and formal remembrance, which often is concluded by the construction of a memorial in a more convenient spot. Although meant to pay respect to the dead, they become a recreational activity for society and the human tendency towards rubbernecking²⁵⁶.

Rather dark. Example: Ground Zero in New York (US)²⁵⁷.

²⁵⁴ Stone, 2006, p.153; Strange and Kempa, 2003, p.388-390.

²⁵⁵ Stone, 2006, p.154-155. See also: Seaton, 2002.

²⁵⁶ Rubbernecking is the act of staring at an object of interest, like a car accident or a celebrity.

²⁵⁷ Walter et al., 1995, p581-583; Stone, 2006, p.155-165; Blair, 2002, p.1.

6. Dark Conflict Sites:

The touristic exploitation of sites related to warfare is big business²⁵⁸. There are innumerable tours of battlefields and former warzones, that serve several purposes: education, commemoration, recreation and fun, historical awareness, etc. The sites give often cause to discussions about their dissonant heritage, tensions between political ideology and the interpretation by the public. Although non-purposely and often in the middle of nowhere, they tend to develop tourist infrastructure if their potential is sufficient and realized. Although originally more dark, they are very light if there is a more fun-led approach through real-life battle re-enactments²⁵⁹.



Image 12: Re-enactment at Waterloo

Between very light (re-enactments) and rather dark. Example: Waterloo (Belgium).

7. Dark Camps of Genocide:

Last but not least, these sites have the worst atrocities like genocide and catastrophe as their main focal point. They can be very popular among tourists, regardless of the fact that they are rather scarce, often hard to reach because of their accidental location, with minimal tourist infrastructure and limited site interpretation. They are seen as the ultimate dark experience and extremely emotional and provoking, since they are located at the actual site of the death event. They serve multiple purposes, like education, commemoration, but also highly politicized ideology and identification²⁶⁰.



Image 13: Stupa of Choeung Ek

Extremely dark. Example: Choeung Ek (Cambodia).

²⁵⁸ See Smith, 1998.

²⁵⁹ Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Smith, 1998, p.216-220; Stone, 2006, p. 156.

²⁶⁰ Stone, 2006, p.157; Keil, 2005. See Sion, 2011, for more information about Choeung Ek.

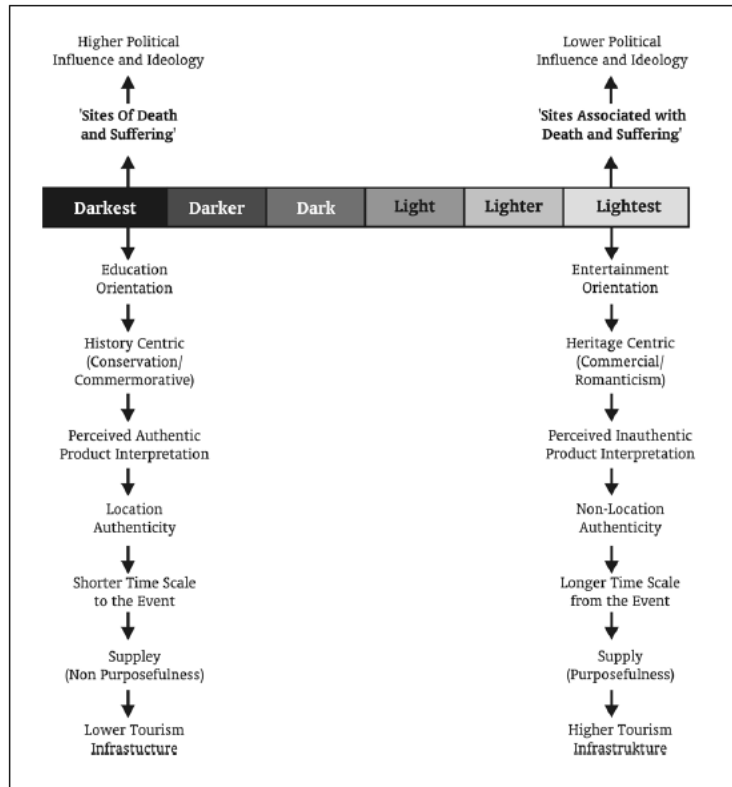


Image 14: A dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006)

Summarizing Stone’s model on the dark tourism spectrum, there is a dark tourism spectrum, influenced by different characteristics. However, this spectrum is more of a continuum of possible shades of dark that are created when several characteristics are matched²⁶¹. Sites can be dynamic, shifting from one category to another as time passes and sites become less or more politicized, attractive or outdated²⁶².

According to the study by Seaton, there are five categories of thanatourism²⁶³:

1. Witnessing public enactments of death,
2. Visiting sites of individual or mass deaths,
3. Visiting memorials or interment sites,
4. Seeing symbolic representations of death,
5. Witnessing re-enactment of death.

²⁶¹ Stone, 2006, p.150-152.

²⁶² Stone, 2006, p.150.

²⁶³ Seaton, 1996, p.240-242; further elaborated in Stone, 2006, p.149.

EXPLAINING THE ORIGINAL DRIVERS OF DARK TOURISM

Dark tourism is not a new phenomenon, that only surfaced the last decennia²⁶⁴. It is probably more due to the democratization of travel in the fifties and the increase in supply than from a real growth of interest for death, that dark tourism could develop to the widespread and varied activity it is today²⁶⁵. Through (religious) pilgrimage, death has been a central aim of traveling since ancient times²⁶⁶. The same goes for traveling to sites of warfare (cfr. Supra)²⁶⁷. Aside from the actual traveling, also gladiator games and public institutions were events related to death that were very popular since antiquity²⁶⁸.

Nevertheless, despite the long history, it is only the last twenty years that scholarship about dark tourism started thriving, not only in scientific magazines, but also in the media, like regular newspapers²⁶⁹. Research focused mainly on certain attestations of dark tourism, like war tourism, and less on the proposed 'drivers'. Therefore, it is still not entirely clear whether dark tourism is demand or supply driven²⁷⁰.

Although probably not complete, a list can be drawn of major drivers²⁷¹:

- Morbid curiosity: a general interest in death
- '*Schadenfreude*' (taking pleasure in harm)
- Sensation seeking
- Voyeurism
- Collective sense of identity
- Survival in the face of violent disruptions of collective life routines.
- A quest for authentic experiences.
- Searching for mystical, life-changing experiences.

²⁶⁴ See studies by Stone, 2005a, 2005b, 2006 and 2009; Seaton and Lennon, 2004; Biran, Poria and Oren, 2011; Stone and Sharpley, 2008; Sharpley, 2009; Lennon and Foley, 1996a; Podoshen and Hunt, 2011; Sturken, 2007; Lennon and Foley, 2000; Dunkley, Morgan and Westwood, 2011; Tarlow, 2005; Wight, 2005.

²⁶⁵ Stone, 2012, p.1567; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.304.

²⁶⁶ Hohenhaus, 2013, p.145; Collins-Kreiner, 2016, p.1185-1187; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.575; Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005.

²⁶⁷ Smith, 1998; Stone, 2006, p.147.

²⁶⁸ For an exhaustive overview of the history of dark tourism, see Stone and Sharpley, 2008; Stone 2005a.

²⁶⁹ Stone speaks of a significant amount of research and media interest and refers to his website www.dark-tourism.org.uk, branding itself as 'a world leading research hub for dark tourism scholarship' and 'a new retail store and subject hub for dark tourism research'. However, since 2006 there does not seem to have changed much to the website, that is still under construction. Examples of dark tourism in the media (among many): Freeman, 2005; IOL Travel, 2016; Robinson, 2016; Hillier, 2016; Johanson, 2012.

²⁷⁰ Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.575.

²⁷¹ Rojek, 1999, p.61, p.110; Stone, 2006, p.148; Hohenhaus, 2013, p.145; Collins-Kreiner, 2016, p.1185-1187; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.305; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.579. See also studies by Seaton, 1996; Rojek, 1997; Cole, 1999; Sharpley, 2009; Seaton and Lennon, 2004; Tarlow, 2005; Wight, 2006; Stone, 2009.

However, the underlying reasons why people are drawn towards places of death are more complicated and driven unconsciously by evolutions in the 20th century.

Sequestration of individual death versus mass consumption of extraordinary death.

In the last sixty years, the perception of death has changed significantly. 'Ordinary' death is shielded from the public and reserved for the personal sphere. Aside from this sequestration, there has also been an increase in medicalization and professionalization, in a way that our present society can be called death-defying. The influence of the overarching church on the other side, which provided a moral and psychological framework to give death a place in our lives, has diminished significantly, leaving a gap where the living and the dead used to meet in public events and ceremonies. This denial of death and grief from daily life inevitably has consequences for the psychological aspects of individual mourning experiences. Suffering and the act of dying became a personal issue, creating confusion and anxiety about one's own mortality. The act of dying has not changed, but in the past, mortality was less frightening through omnipresent religious belief in the afterlife, a thought that has diminished significantly due to secularization²⁷².

Several studies on the topic conclude that modern Western society has failed to replace the traditional religious certainties with scientific certainties, leaving society craving for ontological security and a sense of order and continuity. This uncertainty turns to growing confusion, anxiety and even terror when individuals are confronted with their own mortality²⁷³.

To substitute the individual death, an interest in the (re)created death of the 'other' has sparked through a variety of modern popular channels, like the mass media and the internet, and to a lesser extent traditional cultural practices like religion, art, folklore, ancestral tales, or literature. Through the media, death is prominent but also abstracted and depersonalised²⁷⁴.

²⁷² Stone, 2011a, p.25 and 2012, p.1565 and p.1571-1572; Walter, 2009, p.39; Mellor, 1993, p.19; Mellor and Shilling, 1993, p.411-414; Bauman, 1992a, p.5; Willmott, 2000, p.651-654; Winkel, 2001, p.68-69; Giddens, 1991, p.160.

²⁷³ Tercier, 2005, p.13; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.580; Giddens, 1991, p.156, p.160; Mellor, 1993, p.19; Mellor and Shilling, 1993, p.411-414.

²⁷⁴ Walter, 1991, p. 295, p.307; Tercier, 2005, p.234; Stone, 2012, p.1575.

As a result of this, an 'absent death paradox' emerges: on the one hand death is hidden through privatization of meaning, medicalization of dying and professionalization of the death process; on the other hand, death is omnipresent within popular culture²⁷⁵. The individual is stuck in the middle, without clear answers.

However, mass media and dark tourism can both fill the gap when there is a disaster and our desacralized, medicalized society cannot provide answers about death. People do not turn to their priest or doctor when there is a disaster, they turn on the TV news and read the newspaper. This advertising by the mass media creates possibilities for dark tourism, especially since sudden or violent deaths are being broadcast regularly, informing the public about the opportunity to look at death. In this way, the media makes rubbernecking socially acceptable, which increases the demand for dark tourism, so people can go and see for themselves²⁷⁶.

It is no coincidence that dark tourism sites boast extraordinary deaths, and not everyday deaths from cancer, stroke and dementia. For the individual, the horrific deaths shown at dark tourism locations, are not felt as one's own death, which will be peaceful and painless. These violent deaths are therefore not that disturbing, since they do not represent in any way one's own mortality²⁷⁷. Through dark tourism, individuals can satisfy their curiosity and fascination with death, and build a pragmatic confrontational mechanism to neutralize the impact of mortality. In this way the fear for inevitable death can be temporarily overcome through a perceived immunity from death, but also a growing acceptance that 'a good' death will ultimately arrive²⁷⁸.

In conclusion, dark tourism provides a strategy for confronting the inevitability of one's own death by re-conceptualizing death and mortality, avoiding primordial terror and dread²⁷⁹. On the following page, a schematic image by Stone and Sharpley provides an overview of the absent death paradox and its relation to dark tourism.

²⁷⁵ Durkin, 2003, p.47; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.585; Stone, 2012, p.1568, p.1572 and p.1575; Barthes, 2000, p.92; Walter, 2009, p.44.

²⁷⁶ Walter, 2009, p.43-44; Lennon and Foley, 2000, p.11; Stone, 2006, p.149.

²⁷⁷ Walter, 2009, p. 52-53.

²⁷⁸ Bauman, 1992a, p.6; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.587; Hart et al., 1998, p.68-72; Tercier, 2005, p.22; Stone, 2006, p.149.

²⁷⁹ Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.585-586, p.589.

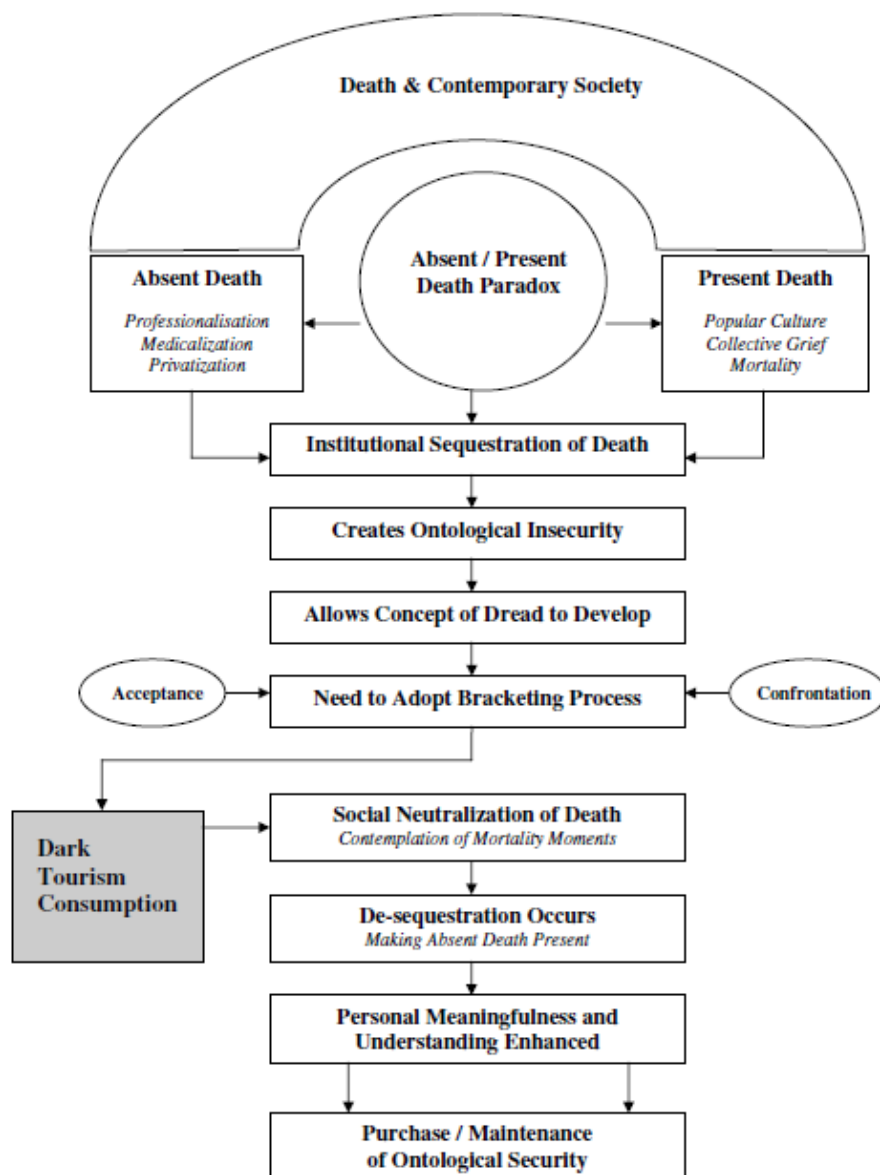


Image 15: The absent death paradox and dark tourism

Individual motivations for dark tourism

Since dark tourism is very diverse and fragmented, the motives of tourists who visit and consume dark products are likewise²⁸⁰. As stated above, consuming dark tourism does not per se involve the experience of real death, and has more to do with life than with death. Dark tourism experiences can help to neutralize terrifying mortality and give death a place in one’s individual life.

²⁸⁰ Stone, 2006, p.147.

Bauman calls the experience of sudden and violent deaths reassuring, since it makes one's own death distant and unrelated. This is why 'normal' deaths do not really have a potential for tourism consumption²⁸¹. Given the enormous diversity both of dark tourism places and of the needs, experience and expectations of visitors in addition to various socio-cultural circumstances of individuals, the potential effectiveness of dark tourism consumption as a mechanism for confronting, understanding and accepting death will vary almost infinitely. The level of mortality meaning to the individual will undoubtedly depend upon their socio-cultural background and the varying intensities of darkness²⁸².

If one looks at demand-driven motivations, there is a difference between occasional dark tourists and dedicated dark tourists. The former are driven by the spontaneity of sensation tourism, while the latter have an interest that is large enough to undertake premeditated visits²⁸³.

Aside from the general drivers, several possible influences for personal visitor motivation were identified by Dann, including the fear of phantoms, the search for novelty, nostalgia, the celebration of crime or deviance, basic bloodlust and 'dicing with death' (undertaking journeys that challenge the tourist and heighten the sense of mortality). However, his study is criticised as being too descriptive and supply-driven rather than being an explanation for individual behaviour²⁸⁴.

On the other hand, Walter suggests that most dark tourism, like much heritage tourism, is not specifically motivated at all, but both are dependent on tour packages and availability of other sites in the vicinity. Visits to dark tourism sites are sometimes merely side trips within a bigger trip. The major exception is personal heritage tourism, where there is a clear individual motive, such as genealogy, mourning or remembrance, for visiting a site of personal significance²⁸⁵.

²⁸¹ Bauman, 1992a, p.6; Stone, 2012, p.1566, p.1570-1574 and p.1581-1582; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.590.

²⁸² Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.587-588.

²⁸³ Hohenhaus, 2013, p.145; Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.577, p.589; Stone, 2006, p.148.

²⁸⁴ See Dann, 1998, criticized by Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p.576.

²⁸⁵ Walter, 2009, p.53-54; Timothy, 1997, 752-753.

A dark tourism experience can have a considerably larger impact if there is personal heritage involved. First-generation memory involves personal experience with the events, and therefore has an enormous impact on the visitor. This influence diminishes over the generations: while it is still tangible for second-generation memories, after three generations the memory becomes genealogy, ancestry and history. Likewise, first-hand memory evolves to remembrance and later memorialisation and history. All this means that the same dark tourism site can have different meaning and impact to each visitor²⁸⁶.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

The combination of tourism and death is not an obvious one. Dark tourism became nevertheless broadly known as a leisure activity: in the must-see lists of many great cities or countries death is omnipresent: the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, the London Dungeon, the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former site of the World Trade Center in New York etc. These touristic sites provide a way for the visitor to experience death, which is otherwise such a taboo topic, up close. Although these death experiences are not meant to be entertaining, they are marketed as a not-to-be-missed part of the touristic tour of a location in the context of general leisure and recreation. The fact that the experience of death in a tourism context became gradually more socially acceptable helps the visitor to relativize death and mortality²⁸⁷.

Although the darkest tourism sites, like genocide memorials, can cause a shock for visitors, this does not lessen the educational potential of the actual location of the atrocities²⁸⁸. As long as the boundary between education and commercialisation stays clearly marked and a focus on commercialisation is avoided, there is a general acceptance of the use of dark tourism for educational purposes²⁸⁹.

²⁸⁶ Walter, 2009, p.46-48; Stone, 2012, p.1579-1580.

²⁸⁷ See Stone, 2006, p. 152-157; 2010, p.91-99; and 2012, p.1569-1572 and p.1578-1580.

²⁸⁸ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.305; Charleston, 1996, p.177, p.180.

²⁸⁹ See Lennon and Foley, 2000; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.305.

3.4 CASE STUDY: MEMORIALIZATION IN RWANDA

THE FATE OF GENOCIDE SITES IN RWANDA: BACK TO BUSINESS?

As stated above in the section ‘The fate of locations of mass killing and genocide’, little study has been focusing on what to do with the geographic locations where mass killings took place. There are countless genocide sites in Rwanda, with more to be found every year. During the genocide, many Tutsi fled to public places like schools, churches, governmental buildings or sport stadiums, thinking they would be safe there. However, many of the sites turned into loci of massacre²⁹⁰.

After the genocide, the choice had to be made what would become of these locations. Some sites have been reverted back to their previous use. For a number of sites however, the choice has been made to keep them as a place of memory (cfr. Murambi for example). Especially for churches, the moral dilemma was troubling. Therefore, a mixed commission was established in 1996, including members of the Catholic Church and the Rwandan government, to negotiate an agreement. The constructive attitude of the representatives of the Catholic Church in Rwanda was somewhat obstructed since the Vatican issued a veto against any form of desecration of churches. The commission eventually decided to convert only the churches of Nyamata and Ntarama to memorials, failing to reach a compromise about the church of Kibeho. In this church, a massacre started on April 14, 1994, that would last for several days, during which the people inside the church were attacked with grenades, firearms and machetes, before the building was set on fire²⁹¹. Therefore, the Rwandan state and the local survivor community wanted the site to be desecrated and converted to a memorial. The Catholic Church, however, firmly opposed any desecration, because this particular church was the location where between 28 November 1981 and 28 November 1989 several apparitions of the Virgin Mary have been reported²⁹². The quarrel turned ugly when during the fifth commemoration on April 7, 1999, president Bizimungu openly accused Monseigneur Misago, the bishop of Gikongoro, of taking part in the genocide. A week later, the bishop was arrested, provoking heated reactions from the Vatican, that heavily

²⁹⁰ Korman, 2014b, p.207.

²⁹¹ Bucyensenge, 2014b.

²⁹² For more details see Ilibagiza, 2008; Matter, 2001.

criticised the Rwandan government. The controversy lasted for years²⁹³, until in 2002, a year after the acquittal of Monseigneur Misago and two years before the conviction of Bizimungu²⁹⁴, a compromise was reached: Kibeho became a hybrid memorial, with a functioning church that would comprise a separate memorial with the remains of the victims²⁹⁵.

Applying the typological framework provided by Cook in the section ‘The fate of locations of mass killing and genocide’ (supra), there are three overlapping and sometimes contradicting activities that take place at genocide locations: (1) Preservation and restoration, (2) memorialization and commemoration and (3) documentation and research²⁹⁶. In Rwanda, there are examples present of each of the three activities, sometimes overlapping.

Rwanda’s initial memorialization strategy was mainly preserving genocide locations in situ and displaying bones of the dead, combined with annual commemorations and the regular construction of memorials to rebury the victims in centralized locations²⁹⁷.

In the latest years, preservation has been pushed to the background, focusing more on memorialization and commemoration, and increase efforts to construct documentations centres and archives. However, the preserved remains on display in some memorials like KGMC, Murambi and Ntarama have become touristic focal points, maintaining preservation on the memory agenda²⁹⁸.

²⁹³ See Simpson, 2000, p.4; AllAfrica, 1999; BBCNews, 1999a; BBCNews, 1999b; Catholic Culture.org (2001).

²⁹⁴ See Waldorf, 2009c; for a complete account.

²⁹⁵ Korman, 2014b, p. 208-209; Genocide Archive of Rwanda, 2015, Kibeho Memorial.

²⁹⁶ Cook, 2006, p.296-298.

²⁹⁷ Guyer, 2009, p.157; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.312.

²⁹⁸ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.314.

MEMORIALIZATION AND COMMEMORATION CEREMONIES

Since the end of the genocide, various forms of memorialisation have been undertaken, some privately but most publicly. Not minimizing the role of art, images, cinematic projects, literature and trials, emphasis here will be put only the physical memorials of the genocide: the preservation of sites and the erection of memorial structures and museums²⁹⁹. There are two distinct groups of memorials in Rwanda: national memorials and local memorials. The first group consists of seven genocide locations, that are operated and funded by the Rwandan state through the CNLG (cfr infra). The local memorials (about 400) are mostly run by the local survivor communities in cooperation with the district or local authorities.

Improvisatory measures: individual burials

In the direct aftermath of the genocide, the country was in shambles. The first task of the new government was to restore key institutions to reestablish law and order, and to end impunity. The memorialization of the genocide was far from a priority, and even the decent burial of the victims was not a key item on the to do list. However, as seen in the section 'Exhumations by survivors' (supra), returning refugees tried to locate and bury their beloved ones on their own accord, following traditional funeral rites. There is not much known about these burial practices, since they are not well documented.



Image 16: Individual graves of victims of the 1994 genocide

²⁹⁹ For more information, about the different forms of memorialization, see Steele, 2006. For more information about filming the genocide, see Korman, 2014c, p. 184-186, Destors, 2014, p. 155-158, p.167; Réra et al., 2014, p. 35-96; Waintrater, 2003, p.95.

It is clear that an alternative funerary ritual appeared as a substitute for the traditional practice of a dignified burial on family plots. The basis of the concept is still the treatment of the body like in traditional funeral rites, but the implementation is much more pragmatic and aimed at the specific characteristics of a decomposed body from a mass grave. First of all, an additional phase to the process includes improvised necrosearch and exhumation. The detachment of the commingled remains makes the individualization of the remains often impossible, especially when the remains are skeletonized. However, efforts are made to collect body parts and clean the bones. This act of cleaning substitutes the embalming and clothing of the body³⁰⁰.

A few months after the genocide ended, an amalgam of commemorations and graves was appearing, causing the government to take responsibility and provide a uniform, comprehensive approach. Besides that, many survivors found that, in practice, these individual family funerals became infeasible due to financial and logistical reasons³⁰¹.

Collective burial by the state.

When the individual burials turned out to be infeasible, measures were taken to bury the bodies collectively through a dignified burial process. The first official burial ceremony for victims of the genocide took place on 13 November 1994 in Muyumbu (Kigali district), as a part of an emergency burial programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MINITRASO). This project was funded with a \$ 150.000 grant by UNICEF and WHO donated a car to spread the new burial methodology³⁰².

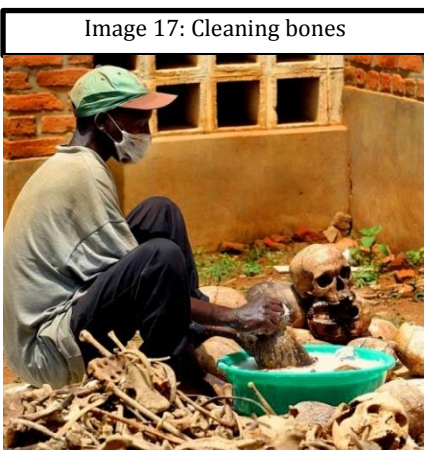


Image 17: Cleaning bones

Several methods have been used for the collective burials of the remains of victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. To guarantee a dignified burial, the bones that were collected at the surface or were exhumed from makeshift mass graves, were cleaned, just like the ritual for individual burials. In the most simple graves, the remains were put in a massive pit covered with the typical blue canvases.

³⁰⁰ See Gishoma and Kanazayire, 2013.

³⁰¹ Korman, 2015a, p.57-58.

³⁰² The New York Times, 1994; Korman, 2015b, p.205.

In more sophisticated graves, the bodies were placed in coffins. A coffin could contain up to fifty bodies, since the remains that were found on the ground were almost all skeletonized³⁰³.

When funding of UNICEF and WHO came to a halt in 1996, the newly created Memorial Commission for Genocide and Massacres (CMGM) took over the difficult task of further burying Rwanda's dead. The CMGM, created in December 1995, focused mostly on the main genocide locations across the country, gathering collected remains in storage rooms, churches, classrooms etc. until they could be given a decent burial. Aside from this, the commission had the task to gather testimonies and support local communities and local authorities to bury the victims with respect³⁰⁴.

Internationalization and politicization of the memorial process

With the regime change in 2000, the memorialisation in Rwanda evolved simultaneously and the memory became gradually more international.

Since 2000 a growing influence by foreign actors in the memorialization process is noticeable. Especially the Aegis Trust Foundation, a British NGO preventing genocide,



Image 18: Logo Aegis Trust

gave professional impulses to the Rwandan memorial practices, using their experience with Holocaust memorials. The creation of the KGMC in 2004 and the new exhibition at Murambi in 2011 are two very important realizations and clearly the most modern and professional memorial infrastructures in Rwanda³⁰⁵.

Since 2003, the UN has adopted a resolution (A/RES/58/234) to designate April 7th as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda³⁰⁶. The internationality of the memory of the Rwandan genocide further developed through the creation of monuments in other countries and the proposition by the Rwandan government in 2012 to put several memorials on the UNESCO World Heritage List (see below)³⁰⁷.

³⁰³ Korman, 2015a, p.58.

³⁰⁴ Korman, 2015a, p.57-59; Korman, 2014a, p.160; Rousso, 2007, p.3.

³⁰⁵ Aegis Trust, 2011; Aegis Trust, 2015.

³⁰⁶ Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations, s.d.; Steele, 2006, p.6.

³⁰⁷ Korman, 2014a, p.162; de la Croix-Tabaro, 2012.

In 2008 the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) was created, replacing the CMGM. This new government commission marked the start of a more powerful, but also more politically driven national memorialisation actor³⁰⁸. The constitutional reform of the same year included memorial laws, like the criminalization of genocide denial and the management of memorials³⁰⁹. The CNLG took over the management of all memorial sites (like the KMGC), but still cooperates with the Aegis Trust on activities like the creation and management of the genocide archives and the virtual tours of memorials³¹⁰.

According to Steele, by internationalizing, the memorialization process in Rwanda has moved beyond merely being a rite and ritual for the victim and their community. Serving other purposes than only mourning and education, it became a compulsively practiced politicized ritual for the nation and for international society³¹¹.

Kwibuka: the national commemoration

The annual commemoration period in Rwanda (Kwibuka) starts on 7 April and lasts for a period of 100 days, just like the genocide. Up till now, there have been 22 editions that change location every year and have a yearly theme that is the emphasis of the remembrance³¹².

The first official commemoration of the 1994 genocide took place at Rebero memorial site in Kigali, with an emphasis on national unity. This power sharing principle is evident in the term ‘genocide and massacres’ that was used to equally focus on Tutsi and Hutu victims alike. Despite this political message, the commemoration was predominantly religious, with several Catholic masses.



Image 19: Rebero memorial

³⁰⁸ Korman, 2014a, p.161; Korman, 2015a, p.62.

³⁰⁹ See Government of Rwanda, 2009.

³¹⁰ Korman, 2015a, p.62; Aegis Trust – Genocide archive of Rwanda, 2015a; Aegis Trust – Genocide archive of Rwanda, 2015d.

³¹¹ Steele, 2006, p.1, p.10.

³¹² For more information, see Kwibuka, s.d.

The burials that took place during the ceremony were both of nameless Tutsi victims that were exhumed from graves around the Centre Hospitalier of Kigali and the remains of the assassinated Hutu politicians, buried side by side in large mass graves³¹³.

Although it was still the CMGM that organized the 2nd commemoration, there were sizeable differences to be noticed. The ceremony of 7 April 1996 was no longer a religious event, but a secular one. Already during the preparation, the upcoming competition between the church and the state to claim the commemoration event became noticeable. 7 April 1996 was Easter Sunday, but the government refused to postpone the date and organized a secular event in Murambi. Aside from the obligatory burials, the scientifically preserved human remains in the school were shown to the public (Cfr. the paragraphs on Murambi in the sections ‘National genocide memorials’ and ‘National memorial sites from a dark perspective’ (infra), and the section ‘The display of human remains’ (infra))³¹⁴.

From then on, most commemoration events (*kwibuka*) followed the same pattern, with burials, political speeches and emphasis on the fight against genocide, reunification, remembrance and sharing testimonies. However, new memorial practices emerged during the 16th commemoration on 7 April 2010, causing a breach with the previous years. The ceremonies did not revolve solely around burials and human remains anymore, but advocated peace, reconciliation and healing. Central themes in commemoration masses are the condemning of genocide denial, the request to track down fugitive genocidaires and repeated calls towards perpetrators to reveal the locations of the other remains of victims³¹⁵. Also in the media, the very graphic images of victims being hacked to death, that were broadcasted regularly, were replaced by documentaries about forgiveness and reconciliation. This phenomenon is called ‘euphemization of the memory of the genocide’ by Korman³¹⁶.

³¹³ Korman, 2015a, p.58-59.

³¹⁴ Korman, 2015a, p.59.

³¹⁵ Asiimwe, 2008; Babijja, 2013; Bucyensenge, 2010; Bucyensenge, 2011a; Bucyensenge, 2012b.; Mbaraga, 2016a; Mbonyinshuti, 2013b; Mbonyinshuti, 2014b; Mugisha, 2007; Mugisha, 2008a; Mugisha, 2008b; Mukombozi, 2008; Musoni, 2015; Mwesigye, 2008; Nakayima, 2008d; Nakayima, 2008e; Nakayima, 2011b; Ngabonziza, 2011; Nkurunziza, 2010b; Nkurunziza, 2012b; Ntambara, 2009b; Ntirenganya, 2009; Rwamapera and Rwembeho, 2016; Rwembeho, 2010e; Rwembeho, 2012a; Rwembeho, 2014c; Rwembeho, 2015c; Rwembeho, 2015b; Rwembeho, 2016b; Rwembeho, 2014a; Rwembeho, 2016a; Sabiiti, 2008a; Sabiiti, 2008b; Sabiiti, 2011a; Sabiiti, 2011b.

³¹⁶ Korman, 2015a, p.64.

In the last years, this euphemization of the memory of the genocide has been reinforced, leaving out burials completely in the 20th, 21st and 22nd commemoration ceremony. An additional pre-commemoration period from January till April has been added, during which a flame of hope makes the tour around Rwanda's districts, spreading the message of peace and reconciliation through speeches and small ceremonies at every stop³¹⁷.

Tackling trauma: euphemization of the memory of the genocide

After rising psychological problems and surging trauma issues, especially during the commemoration periods, the tackling of trauma became key on the memorialization agenda³¹⁸. The new political discourse evident from the 16th *kwibuka*, focused on healing, reconciliation and resurrection. The repercussions of this much more pacifistic approach were noticeable in the media, but also in the memorial language. Lists for journalists were created by the Media High Council (HCM) with the appropriate vocabulary to report about the genocide. Several words to refer to human remains and their exhumation were deemed too traumatizing and banned³¹⁹.

Aside from the official national commemoration ceremonies, there has also been a change in more local events organized by survivors' associations. Turning towards more symbolic remembrance, the central focus point of several commemorations were not the victims in the memorials or on display, but the people whose bodies disappeared, people who were thrown in rivers and families that had been wiped out completely³²⁰.

It seems that following his re-election in 2010, president Kagame embarked on a new path towards peace and forgiveness, gradually making the genocide a thing of the past and moving on towards the future. This is also evident in the closure of the Gacaca court system in 2012³²¹.

³¹⁷ Korman, 2015a, p.65-66.

³¹⁸ Fondation Hirondelle, 2009; Audoin-Rouzeau and Dumas, 2014, p.12-16; Ibreck, 2012, p.109; Rwembeho, 2012a. See Gishoma, 2014, for an overview.

³¹⁹ The words *ibisigazwa* (remains), *intumbi* (human or animal body) and *amagufa* (human or animal bones), although currently used by Rwandans, were hence forbidden. The official terminology was *imibiri y'abazize jenocide yakorewe Abatutsi*, the bodies of the people killed during the genocide against the Tutsi. The verb *gutaburura* (dig up) was replaced by *gushakisha* (search for). For an overview, see Korman, 2015a, p. 64-65.

³²⁰ Muramira, 2014; Korman, 2015a, p.65-66; Bucyensenge, 2014d; Byumvuhore, 2016; Muramira, 2014.

³²¹ See De Brouwer and Ruvebana, 2013.

Memorialization through names and photographs

A common practice in Rwanda revolves around paying respect to the victims by naming them. Very often, a list with names is being read out during the commemoration ceremony³²².

Some (especially national) memorials comprise a wall with names of the victims that have been identified. Most walls contain far less names than there are victims buried, because an identification could not have been established. Some walls therefore feature large blank spaces as stark



Image 20: Wall of names at Ntarama memorial

reminders that there is still hope that every victim will be identified.

The enouncing of names gives victims a face and an identity, which is often followed by heavy reactions of sorrow and even hysteria. By naming the person, the crime seems even more real, causing trauma even so many years after the genocide. Despite the possible traumatizing effects, most survivors state that they welcome the idea of walls with the names of the victims³²³.

Image 21: Photographs at the KGMC



The use of pictures is also a recurring practice in memorials, especially the ones with more infrastructure. Many Rwandans do not own pictures of themselves, and often the family has only one photograph of their killed relative. Nevertheless, several families donated the pictures to memorials as reminders.

³²² Mukombozi, 2008.

³²³ Barigye, 2010; Nakayima, 2011c.

By capturing the individual, photographs provide immortality. For the beholder, they function as memento mori, reminders of one's own death. This practice of memento mori has a long history through religion, art, folklore and oral tradition³²⁴.

National genocide memorials

Officially, there are seven national genocide memorials in Rwanda: Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi (KGMC), Camp Kigali Belgian Memorial, Nyamata, Ntarama, Murambi, Bisesero and Nyarubuye. However, the Belgian Memorial at Camp Kigali is often not counted as a national memorial, leading to a list of only six national genocide memorials, or it is replaced by the new Nyanza-Kicukiro memorial.

There is considerable variation to be noticed between the seven official memorial sites, making each of them unique. Although they are all branded as international visitor destinations, most international tourists will only visit one memorial, the KGMC. This centre is in fact no competition for the other sites, since it is very centrally located in the capital, features several exhibitions, a documentation centre, a didactical and congress wing, mass graves and a contemplative garden. The others are smaller, harder to find, more remote and thus more of a challenge to reach for visitors. These simple features have led to a negative spiral: low visitor numbers at some sites lead to lower funding, less maintenance of the infrastructure and less visitors since the places become increasingly difficult to visit³²⁵.

1. Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi (KGMC)

The Gisozi Genocide Memorial Centre is the biggest memorial centre of Kigali and of Rwanda, located in the Gisozi district. It was opened in 2004 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the genocide. Aside from the governmental initiative, it is the Aegis Trust that created the site. The site consists of a documentation centre, a conference room, class rooms, a museum with three permanent exhibitions, ten mass graves with the remains of about 250.000 victims in the Memorial Gardens and a wall with the

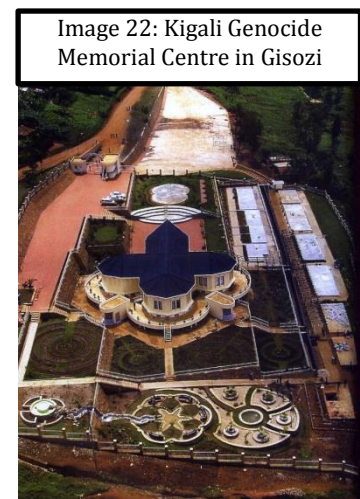


Image 22: Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi

³²⁴ Stone, 2012, p.1575; Beloff, 2007, p.183; Walter, 2009, p.41-42.

³²⁵ Hohenhaus, 2013, 142-145; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.315, p.317.

names of the identified victims. It is also the location of the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, another initiative by Aegis Trust (cfr. *Infra*).

The creation of the Memorial Centre was led by two British brothers, James and Stephen Smith, helped by a giant team of 400 workers. They had been contacted by the Rwandan government after their design of the UK Holocaust Centre in Nottingham. This museum in the British countryside is based upon the museum of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, an enormous memorial complex to remember and honour the victims of the Holocaust, while providing the visitor with the necessary information to contemplate the atrocities. Mark Kabandana, Director-General of the Rwanda Institute for Administration and Management and in charge of the exhumations and reburials of the victims of the Kigali area, had visited the Yad Vashem memorial complex in 1998 and dreamt about a similar project in Kigali³²⁶. The building was allocated by the city council, the funds for the exhibitions (1.8 million dollar) came from international donors (Belgium, Sweden and the Clinton Foundation)³²⁷.

Choices had to be made about how the biggest memorial site of the country would be designed. In order to commemorate the massacre in a discrete and serene way, no fancy museum could be erected. Therefore, the building is a dimly lit, quiet and almost peaceful environment. It has the form of a cross, and has a house-like appearance, symbolising the genocide that took place on the 'normal' level of neighbours and families. The emphasis of the memorial site lies on the memorial garden with a row of giant



Image 23: Concrete slabs with mass graves at KGMC

concrete slabs, that cover the underground burial chambers. Under these slabs, more than 250.000 people are buried. The last slab provides the opportunity to peek inside the burial chamber, where a few coffins covered with purple cloth are visible. The site is very peaceful, clean and neutral to respect the delicate balance between honouring the memory of the dead and keeping the peace among the living.

³²⁶ Meanwhile, he just spent a five year sentence in prison for embezzlement. See Kagire, 2010a.

³²⁷ Aegis Trust, 2004; Korman, 2015a, p.61.

The site of Gisozi is not randomly chosen. The hillside was already used as a mass grave to rebury the many victims in Kigali, who were dumped in ditches, fields and even latrines. Even until this day, bodies keep being found all over the city and its suburbs. Once a year, during the *kwibuka*, the gathered remains are added to the mass grave during a ceremony.



Image 25: Wall of Names at KGMC

Although a Commemoration Wall features thousands of names, the majority of victims are buried anonymously. Only a few bodies could be linked to a name, which means that many families have no idea where their beloved ones' last resting place is located. The majority of the wall thus remains empty.

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi exhibition is the largest of the three permanent exhibitions and features a trilingual thematic tour (Kinyarwanda, English and French). The fact that the Kinyarwanda texts are slightly bigger and put first, indicates the fact that the main target audience consists of Rwandan nationals.



Image 24: Exhibit in KGMC

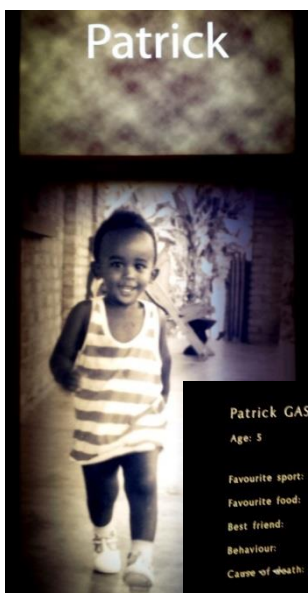


Image 26: Children's exhibition

The use of multimedia adds up to the experience: next to the big panels with text and life-size pictures, videos and audio fragments enhance the reality of genocide. The most powerful rooms feature skulls and bones in a dimly lit space, and a wall of photos of victims, donated by their families³²⁸.

On the first floor, the rooms are flooded with daylight and feature the Children's Memorial exhibition. Giant pictures depicting children that were murdered during the 1994 genocide are accompanied by smaller panels, stating trivia like their favourite food,

Patrick GASHUGI SHIMIRWA
Age: 5
Favourite sport: Riding bicycle
Favourite food: Chips, meat and eggs
Best friend: Alliane, his sister
Behaviour: A quiet, well behaved boy
Cause of death: Hacked by machete

³²⁸ For more information about the KGMC, see Blum, 2005; Aegis Trust, 2004, Kigali Genocide Memorial, s.d.

their hobbies and the way they were killed. Although the exhibition is small, it is a powerful and haunting experience that leaves no one unmoved. The aim is not to provide information, but to give opportunity to reflect and learn.

The third expedition features the history of mass violence around the world, and places Rwanda in the context of other atrocities of the 20th century (Herero massacre in Namibia, Cambodia, Armenia etc.)³²⁹. It is titled 'wasted lives', because 'the massacres documented here have not been recognized as genocide by international law'³³⁰.

According to the Aegis Trust, the museum is remarkably neutral: *"The museum skirts controversial issues. It makes no judgement on who was responsible for shooting down the presidential jet in 1994, the act that triggered the genocide and which has been the subject of furious exchanges between President Paul Kagame and France. It also avoids the sensitive subject of Tutsi reprisals against Hutus which, according to historian Gerard Prunier, accounted for up to 450,000 deaths in the wake of the genocide. We are concentrating on the genocide. If we start that discussion, the survivors will get overlooked. Let's give them peace of mind for now"*³³¹.

However, there are some panel texts that are not so neutral: they blame the colonial powers and the UN for providing a base for genocidal ideology and emphasize the cowardice of the international community. In some paragraphs, a strong 'we – them atmosphere' is noticeable. Reproaches are made towards several foreign states and the UN Security Council³³². On several panels, Belgium as a former colonial power is referred to as the root of all evil³³³. Aside from this, in a few cases the neutral, dignified statement of truth that Aegis Trust aimed for, is disrupted by unnecessary sensational

³²⁹ Steele, 2006, p.8.

³³⁰ Kigali Genocide Memorial – Memorial exhibitions, s.d.

³³¹ Aegis Trust 2004.

³³² *"On 21 April, the UN Security Council passed a Resolution stating that it was "appalled at the ensuing large scale of violence in Rwanda", which had resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children. The same meeting voted to reduce the UNAMIR force to 270 volunteer Ghanaian personnel and to limit its mandate."* Text from a text panel in the exhibition about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

³³³ *"Over 700.000 Tutsis were exiled from our country between 1959-1973 as a result of the ethnic cleansing encouraged by the Belgian colonialists."* Text from a panel in the exhibition about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

word use³³⁴. The pictures used on the panels are already extremely graphic, and tell the gruesome reality without these descriptions.

A lot of space is dedicated to the historical build-up, background and context of genocide in general and the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, while the actual events from April to July are only shortly, but very graphically mentioned. The structure of the museum reflects a trend noticeable in Holocaust museums: to maximize the reflection aspect for the visitor, a (seemingly) neutral space with few details and large images invites the visitor to think for himself how these atrocities can be avoided in the future³³⁵.

Nevertheless, the story told by the exhibition could be a lot more horrific. The amount of human remains on display is limited, to assure a peaceful, honourable memorialization. The Gisozi Genocide Memorial consequently is by far the most extensive, educational, developed and dignified memorial. By making the choice to subdue the actual events, the educational and memorialization aims of Aegis Trust to remember and honour the dead in a dignified way are met. In addition to this, the target audience can be broadened to include (Rwandese) children³³⁶.

It is not a surprise that the Rwandan government is very pleased with the memorial, and wants to use it as a model for the other memorials. After all, the site fits the official narrative wonderfully. Originated as a difficult, tedious task instructed by the public health services demanding the burial of the human remains that were strewn around Kigali, the memorial now serves the national political discourse and the ideology of reconciliation, while educating both Rwandan and non-Rwandan visitors³³⁷.

³³⁴ "Children watched as their parents were tortured, beaten and killed in front of their eyes, before their small bodies were sliced, smashed, abused, pulverised and discarded." Text from a panel in the exhibition about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

³³⁵ Steele, 2006, p.7; Mirzoeff, 2005, p.89-90.

³³⁶ Auchter, 2014, p. 51-57; Aegis Trust, 2004; Cook, 2006, p.298; Steele, 2006, p.9.

³³⁷ Steele, 2006, p.6-7; Mistiaen, 2004.

2. *Camp Kigali Belgian Memorial*

Camp Kigali, where the former barracks of the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) are situated, became on 7 April 1994 the scene of a massacre that would change the course of events considerably. Ten Belgian peacekeepers of the UNAMIR mission were attacked and killed at this spot, while on a mission to protect Hutu prime minister Agathe



Image 27: Camp Kigali

Uwilingiyimana. This murder was however not just blind violence, but a calculated move to force ex-colonial power Belgium to withdraw from Rwanda, causing the near decimation of the UNAMIR Mission and therefore the UN presence and international auspices. The destabilization move worked, clearing the road for unrestraint genocidal violence³³⁸.



Image 28: Memorial for the ten Belgian peacekeepers

The memorial, a joint cooperation between Rwanda and Belgium, consists of the partly ravaged barracks where the peacekeepers were killed and where a small exhibition is installed. Outside, ten columns represent the ten men, taken away in the highlight of their lives.

3. *Nyamata*

The memorial site of Nyamata consists of a large church and its gardens. Although situated in a beautiful and peaceful environment, the church was the scene of one of the largest mass killings during the genocide: about 10.000 people were killed inside the building, and about 15.000 people around it.

Image 29: Church of Nyamata



³³⁸ See Suhrke, 1998, for an account on the Belgians.

During former outbursts of violence against Tutsi, the church had been a safe haven for refugees. In 1994 however, the Tutsi who had locked themselves inside the church were trapped and virtually all butchered or killed by bullets or grenades³³⁹.

Nyamata church was one of the first memorials set up in 1997 by the government after the genocide (Cfr. section ‘The fate of genocide sites in Rwanda: back to business?’, supra), and saw large numbers of Rwandans visiting to pay their respect. At first there were large piles of bones still present in the church, but in 2005 they have been buried in two large mass graves behind the church, along with the remains of the victims found in the neighbourhood.



Image 30: Piles of bones inside the church

In total, about 45.000 bodies are buried here, some in coffins, but most neatly stacked on shelves in the crypts that are accessible to the public. There are no memorial gardens or a quiet place to reflect about the genocide. There is no exhibit about what happened, no signs or text panels. The visitor is guided by a local guide, who tells the stories of what happened while touring the in- and outsides of the premises. Although very watchful inside the church that nobody takes pictures, the guide does not enter in the crypts of the mass graves.

Inside the church, the only reminders of what happened are the bloodstains on the altar cloth, the bullet holes in the iron roof, the grenade holes in the walls and the piles of clothes on the pews. In the two crypts under the church, there are victim’s belongings and some skulls and bones in glass display cabinets³⁴⁰. The site will be refurbished in the future, funded by the US Embassy³⁴¹.

³³⁹ Kanimba Misago, 2007, p.11.

³⁴⁰ For more information, see Kigali Genocide Memorial, s.d.; Blum, s.d.; Hohenhaus – Nyamata (s.d.).

³⁴¹ Opobo, 2015.

4. *Ntarama*

Located only a few kilometres away from Nyamata, the church of Ntarama saw similar atrocities. About 5.000 Tutsi had sought refuge in the small Catholic church, that was subsequently attacked with grenades and rifles. Who survived the initial attack was slaughtered ‘manually’ with machetes, hoes or clubs.

For several years, the remains of the victims have been left as they had fallen. The badly decomposed and mostly skeletonized remains lay strewn across the pews and around the altar, like a frozen account of what happened. After a while, the clothes and personal belongings were separated from the bones, the latter being heaped up in

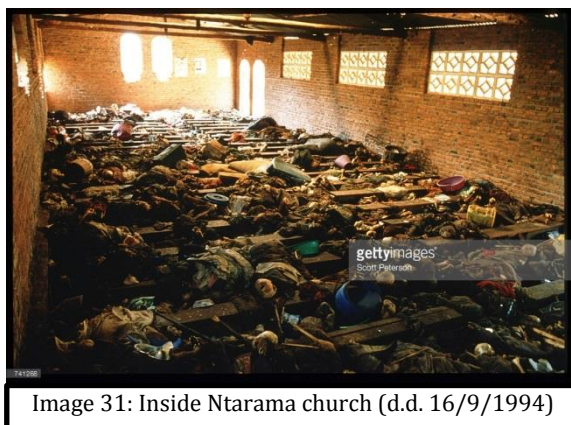


Image 31: Inside Ntarama church (d.d. 16/9/1994)

large piles in the church and its storage rooms. After more than a decade, it became clear that time had come to provide the remains with a dignified burial. The memorial was in a bad shape, with water seeping through the bullet holes in the roof and animals scavenging the bones that were strewn around the premises³⁴².

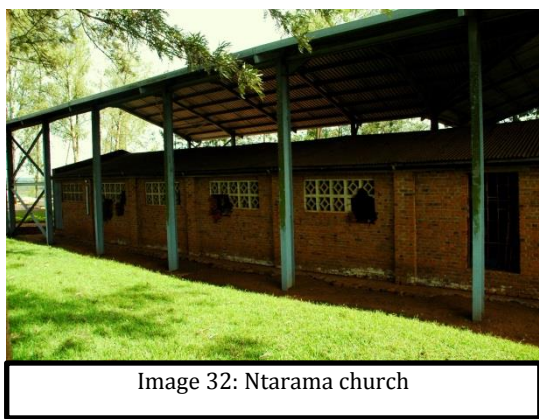


Image 32: Ntarama church

Therefore, most remains were buried in mass graves and a metal tent was put over the church to protect it from the elements. The clothing is now hanging from the walls and the roof beams and in the back of the church skulls and femur bones are neatly stacked on shelves. A small memorial garden, like at KGMC, is added to the side of the church, with a wall of

names. Like in Nyamata, there are no text panels or pictures to provide more details about what happened. A guide gives visitors a tour, accounting the events and answering questions – as it befits the national narrative, of course.

³⁴² Aegis Trust, 2004; Blum, s.d.; Hohenhaus – Ntarama (s.d.); Kabasinga, 2014; Munyaneza, 2011; Ngoboka, 2013b.

5. Murambi

The memorial at the ETO school in Murambi is one of the most controversial memorials of Rwanda because of its 'shock and awe' strategy, its grim history and the high number of casualties.

The new school complex at Murambi was not even finished when it was used to gather all refugees from the region who fled from the violence to local churches. They were told that at the complex they would be safe from harm, but in hindsight it was a strategy by the genocidaires to simplify their 'job'. The first attempt to massacre the Tutsi present in the school on 18 April 1994 failed and the outnumbered genocidaires were fought off. The second attempt however was successful due to the joined forces of the *Interahamwe* militia with FAR soldiers, who managed to encircle the buildings and attacked them with grenades and rifles. Like at Ntarama and Nyamata, the work was finished manually with machetes and clubs. The next day the genocidaires returned to bury the corpses in mass



graves with bulldozers³⁴³.

The memorial was the location for the 2nd *kwibuka* commemoration in 1996, during which the remains of about 25.000 victims were buried. The remains had been exhumed by the

Image 33: Murambi Genocide Memorial

local survivor association (*Amagaju*) and the local burial committee (CIEM, Murambi Initiative Committee for the Burial of Victims) in December 1995 and January 1996 from several mass graves on site. The overall majority of the victims were buried during the ceremony, but about 2.000 unclaimed bodies were preserved and displayed in the classrooms of the school³⁴⁴.

The most haunting part of the Murambi memorial are indeed the classrooms filled with bodies on wooden tables. The bodies have been covered in chemicals and lime to preserve them and avoid decomposition. Small



Image 34: Classrooms at Murambi

³⁴³ See Hohenhaus – Murambi Genocide Memorial, s.d.; Des Forges et al, 1999, p.316-320; The New Times, 2009b.

³⁴⁴ Korman, 2015a, p.59; Cook, 2006, p.298-p.301.

cups with mothballs and salt hidden between the bodies keep the preservation going. Since there are no signs, the bodies have to speak for themselves, and that is exactly what they do. They show very clearly the wounds that have been inflicted to them, and the fact that men, women and small children were all massacred alike³⁴⁵. It is not clear if there are burials planned of the preserved remains of Murambi. For more information on the display of human remains, see *infra*.



Image 35: Perpetrator mass grave at Murambi

There are also a few rooms with the ‘classical’ human remains on display: neatly stacked skulls and femurs on shelves. Several mass graves are located near the entrance under a metal tent. One of the only signs available outside, is that of a small lawn that has been used by the French soldiers of Operation Turquoise as a volleyball field, while it is on top of a mass grave dug by the genocidaires. There are actually several of those perpetrator-dug mass graves on site. All of them have been closed again, except for one, that is on display.



Image 36: Volleyball sign at Murambi

There are also mass graves present, covered in white tiles, where about 50.000 victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi are buried³⁴⁶. The graves have been refurbished since 2010³⁴⁷. In May 2011, after quite some delay, an exhibition and documentation centre very similar to that of the KGMC was opened to the public. The narrative and methodology is quite the same, since it was also Aegis Trust that – in very close cooperation with the CNLG – constructed the huge graphic panels³⁴⁸.

The memorialization at this site happens by documenting, by commemoration and by preservation. The bodies are preserved as they were, but no longer where they have been killed, since they come from several mass graves³⁴⁹.

³⁴⁵ Eltringham, 2014, p.207-209; Boubakar Diop, s.d.; Hohenhaus – Murambi Genocide Memorial, s.d.; Cook, 2006, p.301; The New Times, 2009b.

³⁴⁶ Des Forges et al, 1999, p.16, p. 320.

³⁴⁷ Ntambara 2010b.

³⁴⁸ Aegis Trust, 2011; Kanyesigye, 2011b; Bucyensenge, 2011b.

³⁴⁹ Cook, 2006, p.302.

6. Bisesero



Image 37: Bisesero national resistance memorial

The remote Bisesero Genocide Memorial is unique among the memorials in Rwanda, since it is not only a place to remember the genocide and its atrocities, but also a place to celebrate resistance, and the only place where resistance was successful – at least to some extent. In these steep hills, thousands of Tutsi camped out and fought off the genocidaires with sticks and stones. The siege was carried

on relentlessly until a safe zone was created by Opération Turquoise in June 1994³⁵⁰. There is controversy about the role of the French in the creation of this safe zone: only Hutu perpetrators were protected from the RPF, not so much the Tutsi of Bisesero³⁵¹.

Although Bisesero is profiled as a symbol of resistance, it should be a genocide memorial in the first place: of the about 50.000 people putting up a fight, only some 1.500 survived. This is however not what is the central thought at this location, and this is confirmed in the rusty entrance plate that states it is a ‘place of national resistance’, ergo: not a genocide memorial. The construction of the complex, designed by architect Vedaste Ngarambe, started in the 4th commemoration period of 1998, and is still ongoing. In 2010, the memorial was so dilapidated that the CNLG had to take action³⁵². An ambitious plan similar of a small KGMC was laid out, including complete refurbishment of the buildings, a museum and documentation centre, a memorial garden with a wall of names etc. In 2014, for the 20th anniversary of the genocide, a new mass grave was constructed and the site was cleaned up, adding a reference to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi on the Japanese looking entrance gate³⁵³.

³⁵⁰ Des Forges et al, 1999, p.216-221; Martz-Kuhn, 2010, p.3-4; Nakayima, 2008a; Ngabonziza, 2009a; Cruvellier, 2010, p.79-80.

³⁵¹ Martz-Kuhn, 2010, p.4-5; Hohenhaus - Bisesero, s.d.

³⁵² Musoni, 2010; Nkurunziza, 2011.

³⁵³ Bucyensenge, 2014g.



Image 38: Refurbished entrance (2014)

However, when the company Tigo Rwanda donated solar panels in 2016 to light the site that still had no electricity, the rest of the works were still to be done³⁵⁴. The fact that the location is so remote, makes it very difficult to assess the progress that has been made since the condemning report in 2010.

At the time, visitors reported that there were no signs, no exhibits, no tourist infrastructure. A guide is mandatory and necessary to understand the local symbolism used here, like the use of the number nine (spears, buildings) as a representation for the nine sectors of Kibuye prefecture³⁵⁵. It is clear that as a site of pilgrimage, it is mostly oriented towards a Rwandan public. In the nine buildings along the zigzagging road uphill, representing the fleeing route of the resistance, remains of the victims are on display on shelves like at the other memorials: neatly stacked, organized per type. Most of the remains of the 50.000 victims are rested in white-tiled mass graves on top of the hill, constructed in 2004.

7. Nyarubuye

Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial is in many ways comparable to that of Nyamata and Ntarama, with the important difference that the Catholic church refused the desecration of the building. This means there are still masses, weddings, baptisms etc. taking place in the church.

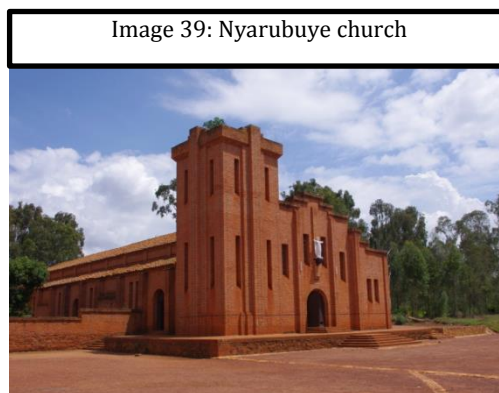


Image 39: Nyarubuye church

Thinking they would be safe in the church premises, around 20.000 Tutsi refugees fled to Nyarubuye church when the violence surged. There, they were almost all massacred in an attack that was personally led by Sylvestre Gacumbitsi, the district mayor. Screaming in a megaphone, he not only instigated the violence, but took also part in it³⁵⁶.

³⁵⁴ Mbaraga 2016b.

³⁵⁵ Hohenhaus – Bisesero, s.d.

³⁵⁶ Convicted by the ICTR to life imprisonment after being acquitted in 2001 and convicted to 30 years in 2004. See ICTR, 2004. Asimwe, 2009b; Rwembeho, 2012b; Rwembeho, 2013; Rutayisire, 2014, p.44-49.

The massive brick church where the atrocities happened is nowadays back to the clean and peaceful sacred space it used to be. Since the remains have been transferred to the adjacent convent, it is hard to picture that it was once filled with slain bodies. The convent was a killing site too, for that matter. Aside from the neatly stacked skulls and bones, there are also many weapons on display, testifying of the genocidaires' creativity to find weapons. Nevertheless, the memorial complex is probably the most serene and dignified in Rwanda. However, it is only in the last years that it was completely cleaned up and refurbished. Before that, there were a lot of human remains strewn across the property³⁵⁷.



Image 40: Human remains at Nyarubuye



Image 41: Headless Jesus of Nyarubuye

A sign of how all-consuming the hatred must have been, is the headless Jesus that is displayed in the convent. Because the long nose and long fingers of traditional religious iconography were perceived as a 'Tutsi trait', the son of God had his limbs and head cut off with a machete. Genocidal ideology clearly overpowered religion, which is also evident in the very active role some clerics had in the killings. The giant statue of Christ above the entrance of the church was too high to reach but was shot several times, causing the hand to fall off³⁵⁸.

A memorial garden gives the visitor the opportunity to reflect upon the extent of the atrocities, and provides a peaceful environment for the mass graves where about 25.000 victims are buried. The wall of names is largely left blank. Less than at other sites, only few victims could be identified, since many individuals that perished here, were actually refugees coming from all over the region and stayed over at the church on their way to the refugee camps of Tanzania, just 10km further to the east³⁵⁹.

³⁵⁷ Hohenhaus – Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial, s.d.; Asiimwe, 2009a.

³⁵⁸ Turner, 2010; Hohenhaus – Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial, s.d. See Korman, 2014d, for the characteristics of the Tutsi body and its destruction during the genocide.

³⁵⁹ Hohenhaus – Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial, s.d.

Local genocide memorials

Rwanda has about 400 of these local genocide memorials scattered over the country. Some of them are recognizable by the purple banners provided by the CNLG, some have small inscriptions and others are barely marked. Most of them evolved organically from the mass graves where perpetrators dumped the bodies. Others were constructed by local survivor communities to centralize the remains found in the region that had not been buried or had been found in a location unsuitable to remain. Gradually, more and more infrastructure was added to some of the sites, to accommodate the thousands of bodies that accumulated through the years and to protect the remains from the elements. The outlook of the graves is very heterogeneous: from cement slabs to dirt with wild flowers, from a side room in a school to a special terrain where a building used to stand where mass atrocities took place. Most of the memorial sites are rather unobtrusive and there are seldom human remains on display.

Calls for refurbishment and new memorials

The last years, more and more complaints have arisen criticizing the deplorable state of some of the genocide memorials³⁶⁰. Two reports were prepared by the CNLG in 2012 and 2013 for use by the parliamentary commission, stating the bad shape of some memorials and providing lists of monuments on the verge of destruction³⁶¹. Some of the complaints, like bush and weeds overgrowing the memorials, could be solved through *umuganda*³⁶², the mandatory community work³⁶³. Other claims needed bigger renovation works, often by contractors, which apparently do not always finish their work, use inappropriate materials or treat the remains without the necessary respect in moving them to get the work done. This causes discomfort and resurfacing trauma to the friends and relatives³⁶⁴.

³⁶⁰ Nkurunziza, 2010b; Nkurunziza, 2012b; Agatha, 2012; Mbonyinshuti, 2016; Mukombozi, 2012; Ntawokuriryayo, 2010; Rwagatare, 2012; Rwembeho, 2010a; Rwembeho, 2010b; Rwembeho, 2010c; Rwembeho, 2015a.

³⁶¹ The reports by the CNLG could not be found, but they are briefly summarized in the article by Tashoa, 2014b.

³⁶² See Rwandapedia – Umuganda, 2014.

³⁶³ Gafaranga, 2010; Gahigi, 2009a.

³⁶⁴ Mukombozi, 2012; Nkurunziza, 2010a; Rwembeho, 2010a.

According to the CNLG, the budgets allocated for the refurbishments are insufficient, since aside from tending to the memorials, they also have to fund activities concerning issues of genocide denial and trauma³⁶⁵. There are some sponsorships by Rwandan companies and associations, and funding by the district authorities and the state, although the latter mostly focuses on the national memorials. The idea of international financial support was formally rejected by the parliament in 2009³⁶⁶. However, in 2012, a number of genocide memorials were proposed for the UNESCO World Heritage list (Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre at Gisozi, Murambi, Nyamata and Bisesero)³⁶⁷. Since government funds are lacking or are insufficient, survivor communities try to raise funds themselves through a type of crowdfunding³⁶⁸.

Not all promises for modernization and extensions like archives seem to be actually honoured. Of some rather concrete plans that were announced in the media, there is no trace of any realization to be found in later media articles³⁶⁹. Other plans do not seem to be feasible. In 2010, CNLG stated in a newspaper article that it embarked on a task of reforming all genocide memorial sites using an architectural plan that involved more documentation of the events, to clearly visualise the magnitude of the atrocities. Using the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre as a model, the other sites would be smaller, less technological versions with a detailed narrative of the local events, but with the same message of reconciliation³⁷⁰.

Besides refurbishment and renovation, another option that recently is put forward is the relocation of the remains from dilapidated local memorial sites to newly constructed memorial sites, often at more central locations³⁷¹. This contrasts however with the idea of leaving the remains alone to not anger the spirits (Cfr. section ‘Impact on survivors: Hampering reconciliation and social reconstruction?’ above). It is not clear if the relocations are just pragmatic solutions or part of a centralization policy by the government, that seems to claim ownership for the memorials more and more actively.

³⁶⁵ Tashoa, 2014b.

³⁶⁶ Musoni, 2009c.

³⁶⁷ De la Croix Tabaro, 2012.

³⁶⁸ Asiimwe, 2009a.

³⁶⁹ See for example the Ngororero memorial site, that would be modernized in 2009 but no trace is to be found of actual work done. “*Construction works of the centre which will be named Ngororero Memorial Centre for Peace and Hope is estimated to cost over Rfw 30m and will have various facilities including a counselling centre, archives for books and documentaries about the Genocide and mass graves.*” Nkurunziza, 2009a.

³⁷⁰ Mutara, 2010c.

³⁷¹ Mbonyinshuti, 2016; Rwembeho, 2009.

A few examples of new memorials constructed to replace more local sites of memory, are the new Rwesero memorial in Nyanza district³⁷², the Rukara memorial in Kayonda district³⁷³, the Rubavu memorial in Rubavu district³⁷⁴, the Nyanza-Kicukiro memorial in Kigali district³⁷⁵, the Karama memorial in Huye district³⁷⁶, the Cyanika memorial in Nyamagabe district³⁷⁷, the Musha memorial in Rwamagama district³⁷⁸, the Gihombo Memorial in Nyamasheke district³⁷⁹ and the Rukumberi Memorial in Ngoma district³⁸⁰.

The Rwesero memorial (Nyanza district)

About 15.000 remains of victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi will be buried in this new memorial site on the outskirts of Nyanza. The bodies, that were buried on several gravesites and makeshift memorials in Nyanza District, will be exhumed and given a decent burial at their new resting place. Most of the bodies come from the mass graves at Nyanza stadium³⁸¹.



Image 42: Rwesero memorial

The Nyanza-Kicukiro Memorial (Kigali district)



Image 43: Nyanza-Kicukiro memorial

On top of a hill looking over Kigali, not far from the Rebero Memorial, a new memorial site has been completed on the premises of the former ETO School. There are about 11.000 victims buried here. Most of them were buried here in 2012, when a mass burial of the remains of 6.000 individuals

³⁷² Bucyensenge, 2014e.

³⁷³ Rwembeho, 2014c.

³⁷⁴ Tindiwensi, 2007.

³⁷⁵ Barigye, 2010; Kanyesigye, 2011a.

³⁷⁶ Bucyensenge, 2011c.

³⁷⁷ Bishumba, 2012; Bucyensenge, 2012d, Bucyensenge, 2012a.

³⁷⁸ Rwembeho, 2010f; Rwembeho, 2011.

³⁷⁹ Mugisha, 2009a; Mugisha, 2009c.

³⁸⁰ Nyaramatama, 2010; Rwembeho, 2010d.

³⁸¹ Bucyensenge, 2014e.

took place during commemoration: 5.771 that were exhumed and relocated from the dilapidated Nyarugunga memorial site and 229 bodies that were recovered from various locations in the district. Next to the mass graves, there is a small documentation centre and library. Plans to construct a trauma counselling centre have been announced in the media, but it is not clear if this has ever been completed. The site is also the headquarters of IBUKA, the umbrella body of genocide survivors' associations. The site has been sponsored by the Social Security Fund of Rwanda (SSFR)³⁸².

The Cyanika memorial (Nyamagabe district)

Last but not least of the three more elaborate examples, is the newly constructed memorial for the 30,000 victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi killed at Cyanika Parish. The memorial centralizes the remains that were dumped in three mass graves around the Parish using tractors. The graves were tended by a priest, called Father Nichols, but without a roof



Image 44: Cyanika memorial

sheltering them from the elements, the graves decayed after some years. The new memorial site is a joint initiative of the CNLG, two private corporate sponsors and by the local survivor community³⁸³.

³⁸² Musoni, 2008b; Musoni, 2014b; Barigye, 2010; The New Times, 2008c; Kanyesigye, 2011a.

³⁸³ Bishumba, 2012; Bucyensenge, 2012d; Bucyensenge, 2012a.

International cross-border genocide memorials

In the last years, efforts have been made to give the victims whose remains got thrown in rivers (Kagera and Nyabarongo River) and lakes a proper burial in new memorials. However, since many bodies carried on by the flow of the rivers crossed borders, a vital cooperation with neighbouring countries like Uganda and Tanzania is necessary.



Image 45: Rivers of Rwanda

Tanzania

The talks with Tanzania started in 2009, concerning the remains of about 1.000 victims, buried in the border area. For almost twenty years, these bodies were untouched, until suddenly an official memorialization had to be put into place³⁸⁴. According to Waters, the official narrative that is used for the bodies, stating they are all victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, forgets the fact that many bodies (as many as 616 in the TCRS body project in Tanzania) came flowing down the rivers after the genocide ended. The bodies showed traces of ligatures around their upper arms and were finished off with a single bullet. It has never been investigated who these victims were and who killed them. However, both sides of the conflict had at least some benefit by leaving the safety and security in Rwanda in doubt³⁸⁵.

So who is sending bodies to TCRS's "body project" so faithfully? Is it the new Rwandan government? A revitalized Interahamwe militia [from the old government]? Both? I still do not know. However, my own conclusion after six months of collecting and burying 700 bodies is that both sides like the polarizing effects that bodies in the river creates among the 400,000 Hutu refugees in nearby Ngara refugee camps. The Hutu militants of course want the population to remain the refugee camps so they can organize a resistance movement. The Rwandan government on the other hand is avoiding the politically untenable consequences of the millions of Hutus outside Rwanda returning. Seemingly, the bodies in the river serve both parties.

Quote by Waters, 2015.

³⁸⁴ Muramira, 2009; Babijja, 2013;

³⁸⁵ Waters, 2015.

Uganda

There was a lot more controversy about the human remains buried in Uganda. Following a condemning parliamentary commission report by CNLG, a heated debate was sparked concerning an action plan for providing the bodies with a decent burial. The deplorable state of the six mass graves, and the alleged use of the remains for witchcraft, made a quick intervention necessary³⁸⁶. Although negotiations started early in 2009, the cooperation did not have much success. The RWF 50 million (about EUR 57.000) that was provided to the Rwandan embassy to exhume and rebury the bodies, could not be used since Uganda rejected all propositions of reburial due to ‘cultural restrictions’³⁸⁷. What also caused dismay, was the use of the terminology on the mass grave signs: ‘victims of the Rwandan conflict’ instead of the official terminology ‘victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi’³⁸⁸. However, during new negotiations later the same year, an agreement could be reached on the reburial of almost 11.000 victims. Instead of six mass graves, there will be three memorial sites built in the Rakai, Mpigi and Masaka districts. In 2010, 4.771 remains were reburied in Mpigi district, attracting hundreds of Rwandans taking part in the commemoration³⁸⁹. The other two memorials were constructed at a later time, but are fully functioning now. In 2016 work started on a museum complex at the memorial in Mpigi district, housing clothes and personal items of the victims, along with didactical information³⁹⁰.

The display of human remains

One of the most substantial issues present in Rwandan memorialization, is the display of human remains. There is no consensus about the appropriateness or legitimation of this practice. However, the practice is not solely used in Rwanda. Also in Cambodia, victim’s remains of mass killings have been put on display in memorials³⁹¹.

³⁸⁶ Korman, 2015a, p.63.

³⁸⁷ Quote by Rose Museminari, Minister of Foreign Affairs: “*At the beginning, the proposal of exhuming the bodies was rejected by the Ugandan authorities claiming that their culture does not allow exhuming bodies.*” in Musoni, 2009d.

³⁸⁸ Musoni, 2009a; Musoni, 2009d; Namata, 2009.

³⁸⁹ Muramira, 2010b; Muramira, 2010c; Muramira, 2010d.

³⁹⁰ Muramira, 2016.

³⁹¹ Shute, 2015, p.95.

Concealment of bodies

During (or after) genocide and mass murder, bodies of victims are mostly concealed to hide the crimes. In Srebrenica (Bosnia), many of the primary mass gravesites were dug up and the bodies reburied in secondary mass graves in more remote locations³⁹². This is in stark contrast to so-called ‘cultures of terror’³⁹³, where bodies of opponents, rebels or disobedient civilians serve an instrumental and didactic role though being displayed³⁹⁴.

Rwanda, however, is an exception of this ‘concealment versus didactic display’ binary. There were only minor efforts to conceal the bodies of the victims of the atrocities or to make them disappear. The remains were often just left where the individuals had died, or they were buried in makeshift mass graves or thrown in rivers, caves or latrines. In the Kigali district, bodies were more often and more quickly buried than elsewhere in the country. It is not completely clear what the real driver for this phenomenon was: the presence of UNAMIR soldiers (international control), the incapability of local authorities to implement a public health policy or a lack of necessary equipment³⁹⁵? Even the ICTR could not determine whether the efforts to bury the bodies were more sanitary precautions because of smell and diseases or acts of deliberate concealment³⁹⁶. According to Vidal and van ‘t Spijker, the genocide provoked Rwandans to return to the old custom of exposing the corpse to the natural elements³⁹⁷. To understand these burial practices during genocide, more ethnographic research is necessary to determine if their nature was pragmatic, ritual or symbolic³⁹⁸.

The wish for a ‘traditional, decent burial’

In the last decennia, a lot of emphasis has been put on the ‘decent burial’ of genocide remains as a Rwandan tradition. However, this concept has only developed after the colonization and the introduction of Christianity. Before that, there was no ritualised burial in cemeteries. The body of the deceased was simply rolled in a mat and

³⁹² For descriptions by the ICTY about the concealment, see Fournet, 2015, p.68-71.

³⁹³ See Margold, 1999 and Taussig, 1984 on cultures of terror.

³⁹⁴ Eltringham, 2015, p.161; Margold, 1999, p.64.

³⁹⁵ Eltringham, 2015, p.167-170.

³⁹⁶ The court could not reach a consensus if the mass burial of the victims in Kigali was an act of concealment or of mitigating the public health risk. See ICTR, 2009, paragraph 342.

³⁹⁷ Van ‘t Spijker, 1990, p.61; Vidal, 2004, p.578.

³⁹⁸ Whitehead, 2007, p.45; Chrétien, 1995, p.185.

abandoned in a forest or an unmarked grave, without ceremony³⁹⁹. According to the field studies by van 't Spijker in the 1980s, general burial practice in Rwanda consisted of being buried in a grave, located on family land, although a great diversity in the treatment of corpses and funeral rites existed⁴⁰⁰.

This is consistent with the wish that some Rwandans expressed to bury their loved ones at home instead of in the government memorials⁴⁰¹. The prohibition by the government of private burials on private land since 2008, is generally deplored out of moral reasons. From a practical view however, the burials in state memorials provide a solution since many people cannot afford to bury all their loved ones on private land⁴⁰².

Using human remains for didactic and evidential purposes

The display of human remains is one of the most striking and conspicuous practices in Rwanda, that gave rise to moral discussion⁴⁰³. There have been no precedents in the past, and besides from colonial or religious heritage, Rwanda did not feature a monumental tradition or heritage⁴⁰⁴.

The first time human remains were officially put on display, was during the 2nd national commemoration in Murambi on 7 April 1996. Besides the burial of almost 20.000 victims of the genocide, about 2.000 bodies were preserved using lime and put on display in the barracks of the ETO school⁴⁰⁵. At that moment, this preservation and displaying of human remains was not part of a political plan, but a forensic project by a group of academics of the National University of Rwanda in Huye, working in close cooperation with the predecessor of the CNLG, the CMGM. This informal task force consisted of Rwandan scientists like C. Kanimba Misago, J.J. Karega and A. Rufangura, members of the CMGM like L. Kanamugire and C. Muhoza and the Chilean scientist Mario Ibarra, who worked for the Rwandan government⁴⁰⁶.

³⁹⁹ Vidal, 2004, p.579

⁴⁰⁰ Van 't Spijker, 1990, p.39.

⁴⁰¹ Jessee, 2012,18-19.

⁴⁰² Van 't Spijker, 1990, p.39; Ibreck, 2010, p.334; Meierhenrich, 2011, p.290; Vidal, 2004, p.578.

⁴⁰³ Brandstetter, 2010,p.6-22; Vidal, 2004, p.575-592; Guyer, 2009, p.155-175; Meierhenrich, 2011, p.283-296; Cook, 2006, p.293, p.296.

⁴⁰⁴ Korman, 2015a, p.56-57.

⁴⁰⁵ Korman, 2015a, p.59.

⁴⁰⁶ Korman, 2015a, p.59-60.

The scientific efforts to preserve bodies and bones using pharmaceutical products should be understood from a forensic point of view, since these practices coincided with the forensic excavations in Kibuye and Kigali, and the expectations of many more for the ICTR. The preservation of human remains even became an integral part of heritage since 1996, when J. Kanimba Misago became director of the National Museum in Rwanda and was put in charge of the preservation of genocide memorial sites and the bodies of the victims at national level⁴⁰⁷.

Although the forensic excavations no longer took place after 1996, the foundation was laid for the displaying of human remains as evidence of the genocide. This potential was quickly exploited by the government to politicize the bones and mobilize them in their national and international political discourse. Every official visit to Rwanda between 1994 and 2000 involved a visit to a memorial site where human remains were on display. As Korman states: *'Coming face to face with bodies and bones emerged as the political ritual for recognising the genocide'*⁴⁰⁸.

This political practice culminated in 2000, when Belgian prime minister Verhofstadt visited the new Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi for the 6th national commemoration of 7 April 2000. During his speech, he apologised for the lack of intervention of Belgium and, by extension, the international community, marking a new point of international recognition⁴⁰⁹. However, in the following years, criticism of the Rwandan government surged, accusing it of using the bodies of the victims for political benefit⁴¹⁰.

De-fetishization of human remains for memory

The year 2010, when president Kagame was elected for a second term, was a turning point for Rwanda's memorialization strategy (cfr. supra). For the first time, there was no inclusion of the common practice of dignified burial during the 16th national commemoration at Amahoro stadium, and the annual theme was the issue of trauma⁴¹¹.

⁴⁰⁷ Korman, 2015a, p.60. Unfortunately, the reports of Kanimba Misago (1996) and Ibarra (1996) that Korman used are not accessible online.

⁴⁰⁸ Korman, 2015a, p.60.

⁴⁰⁹ Korman, 2015a, p.61; SONUMA, 2000.

⁴¹⁰ See Vidal, 2004, p.582-586, who calls it 'corpse voyeurism'; see Brauman et al., 2000, p147-161, who speaks of instrumentalization of the genocide; see Reyntjens, 2004, p.199-200.

⁴¹¹ Korman, 2015a, p.64.

Since 2004, there had been increasing numbers of trauma crises during commemorations, requiring a revision of the commemoration practices⁴¹². As a consequence, the displaying of human remains has no more place in this more pacific discourse, with an emphasis on reconciliation and unification. The bones of the dead are no longer needed in this new chapter of the Rwandan state, and are therefore ‘demobilized’⁴¹³.

It is not clear if Rwanda has concrete plans to remove the human remains currently on display from sight. If the concept of a dignified burial is uniformly used, this inevitably means that all human remains should get a proper burial. However, the memorial sites would lose a considerable amount of power and of attraction towards international visitors. The remains are also a weapon in the fight against genocide denial (cfr. *infra*).

Image 46: Visitors in the crypts of the Kinazi memorial in 2015



Although many members of the survivor community have stated that they do not wish to be re-traumatized by being confronted with human remains on display, it is clear from newspaper articles that during commemorations, large scores of Rwandans do visit the crypts of mass graves, not

only staying above ground where the memorials are ‘clean’ slates. The author therefore wonders if mass events, that create scores of people all performing similar behaviour, could have an influence on people, causing them to take part in things they then see as appropriate or even mandatory, but would never do on their own?



Image 47: Visitors in the crypts of the Kinazi memorial in 2015

⁴¹² Fondation Hirondelle, 2009; Audoin-Rouzeau and Dumas, 2014, p.12-16; Ibreck, 2012, p.109. See Gishoma, 2014, for an overview.

⁴¹³ Korman, 2015a, p.66.

The use of human remains to fight genocide denial

An issue that is fiercely being addressed by the Rwandan government on a daily basis, is the fight against genocide denial. Several projects and initiatives by the CNLG were developed to maximize awareness and abolish genocidal ideology. Aside from this, several laws have been issued, criminalizing genocide denial.

The use of human remains on display is a valid weapon in this fight. Perpetrators and people harbouring genocidal ideology will use the absence of bodies as evidence that there was no crime at all. This may sound as a paradox, but by denying the crime happened, it can continue happening through questioning the existence of the victims and keeping them out of society⁴¹⁴.

However, by displaying thousands of anonymous human remains, the effect is exactly the dehumanization that is so characteristic for genocidal ideology. One could ask the question what would be best for Rwanda: forgetting what happened and focus on the future or remember what happened and focus on the future? It seems an utter paradox: in trying to prevent a second genocide through remembrance, the underlying division that caused the genocide is slumbering under the surface.

Stakeholders and their expectations

There are several stakeholders involved in the process of memorialization: not only the fallen victims, their families and friends and the survivors of the atrocities are concerned, but also the perpetrators, bystanders and national government are involved⁴¹⁵. With so many stakeholders implicated, with each of them having their own idea as to how the genocide should be interpreted and presented, tension is impossible to avoid. This lack of agreement on how the past should be used in the present is called 'dissonant heritage'⁴¹⁶. Aside from the practical issues of memorialization (construction, burials, preservation, ceremonies), there are important political and interpretative issues in the establishment of a genocide narrative⁴¹⁷.

⁴¹⁴ Fournet, 2015, p.66-67; Piralian, 1994, p.30, note 40.

⁴¹⁵ Cook, 2006, p.293.

⁴¹⁶ See Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) on dissonant heritage.

⁴¹⁷ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.306.

Families, friends and survivor communities

The main beneficiaries of the memorialization process, and often the founders of the memorials, are the families and friends of the victims and survivor communities, often represented by NGOs. IBUKA, the umbrella organization for survivors' communities in Rwanda is the most important NGO, taking the needs and concerns of the survivors' communities to heart⁴¹⁸. IBUKA has three major fields: justice, assisting survivors and commemoration. They are very closely involved in the organisation of the commemoration ceremonies, and assist at a national and at a local level. They are concerned with the gathering of survivor testimonies for documentation purposes, but less with preservation and construction of memorials⁴¹⁹.

The concept of documentation as a first step to establish a correct narrative to be used in commemoration and memorialization is widely followed by the survivors, families and friends. The importance of preservation is less agreed upon: there is tension between the idea providing a dignified burial in mass graves for all and preserving the genocide locations as vivid reminders of what happened and as an antidote against genocide denial.

According to the studies by Jessee and by Friedrich and Johnston⁴²⁰, the main complaints of survivors and relatives are:

- The lack of maintenance and contextualization of genocide memorials. With the exception of the national memorials, that all are refurbished regularly, many memorials are in a poor state. Due to the lack of information panels, they are often overlooked (Cfr. section 'Local genocide memorials' above)
- The lack of identification. Many survivors keep searching for their missing relatives. They realize however, that this is virtually impossible (Cfr. section 'Impact on survivors: Hampering reconciliation and social reconstruction?' above).

⁴¹⁸ See IBUKA Rwanda, 2003.

⁴¹⁹ Cook, 2006, p.306-307.

⁴²⁰ See Jessee, 2002; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013.

- The display of human remains (Cfr. section ‘The display of human remains’ above). Without derogating the didactic function of these displays for perpetrators and international visitors, many survivors prefer as few remains on display as possible. Overall, dignified burials are favoured, since they provide them with the opportunity to commemorate the dead without being confronted with graphic, re-traumatizing images. The KGMC is widely regarded as a good compromise. Despite the discomfort with displayed human remains, local visitor numbers show that during the mourning period (April-July) friends and relatives do go to commemorate their loved ones⁴²¹.

Perpetrators: memorialization and commemoration as dissonant heritage

Aside from remembering the victims of the genocide, the commemorations are also a stage for protest. There have been several instances of violence during commemoration, mockery of survivors and personal threats, demonstrating that tensions in the community remain⁴²².

Although open to all Rwandans, there are few Hutu participating in the commemorations, especially not when they are perpetrators. It is not always clear if the perpetrator’s absence is out of guilt or out of still cherishing a genocide ideology. Aside from the perpetrator perspective, many innocent Hutu do not participate since they feel left out of the commemorations. According to Longman and Rutagengwa, these Hutu make a political statement by not taking part in the mainly Tutsi-biased commemorations and speak of a ‘clash between competing memories’. Interviews revealed that many Hutu felt that the commemoration ignored the suffering of Hutu refugees and denied the Hutu that tried to help Tutsis and even gave their lives to protect them⁴²³.

There are indeed strong indications that the memorialization is (at least to some extent) Tutsi-oriented. In 2008 the official terminology for the genocide was put in legal writing: the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Motivated by the alleged confusion the term

⁴²¹ Jessee, 2002, p.14-15; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.308-309, p.313.

⁴²² Karuhanga, 2009; Kimenyi, 2014a; Mugyisha and Kagira, 2009; Mugyisha, 2009b; Munyaneza, 2008; Musoni and Ssuuna, 2008; Ntirenganya, 2016.

⁴²³ Longman and Rutagengwa, 2006a, p.251 ; Longman and Rutagengwa, 2006b, p.132-133; Korman, 2014a, p.160-161.

Rwandan genocide provoked, this legislative change was heavily criticised for putting stress on only one group of victims, creating a 'good Tutsi versus bad Hutu' idea⁴²⁴. Aside from this, there are no commemorations at sites where mass killings by the RPA took place, like the Kibeho refugee camp⁴²⁵. Elisabeth King argues that the Rwandan government only emphasizes memories of violence that coincide with their official narrative, and leaves out all dissonant civilian narratives, thus creating a fictional, political history⁴²⁶. Whoever disagrees or tries to put a more nuanced story forward, is accused of genocide denial, whether it is a Hutu, a Rwandan or an international journalist⁴²⁷. The broad definition of genocide denial that the Rwandan government uses, is the perfect weapon to simply brush aside all dissonant narratives, reinforcing its own.

During the commemoration period, tensions in the community tend to resurface and show that some communities in which perpetrators and survivors live side by side are still deeply divided. The post-conflict struggle for reconciliation is still ongoing today. However, the political narrative of unity and reconciliation forces victims and perpetrators to live side by side. To cope with this very difficult situation, Susanne Buckley-Zistel argues that many Rwandans utilize 'chosen amnesia' in order to co-exist locally. Although a very practical coping mechanism, it does not eradicate the underlying issues⁴²⁸.

Another dissonant heritage issue is the inclusion of Hutu remains. The genocide locations are generally considered as memorials for the victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, although there are also Hutu remains buried. It is not only contrary to the government narrative to separate the remains of Hutu and Tutsi again, but it would be infeasible since there is no identification possible. However, some individuals interviewed by Friedrich and Johnston advanced their desire to have separate graves⁴²⁹.

⁴²⁴ Alluri, 2009, p.25-26; Korman, 2014a, p.162.

⁴²⁵ See Ishimwe, 2015; Jordan, 2003.

⁴²⁶ See the study by King, 2010.

⁴²⁷ Blake, 2014.

⁴²⁸ See the study by Buckley-Zistel, 2006.

⁴²⁹ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.313.

At the end of the line, it are the Twa that remain the forgotten victims of the Rwandan civil war and genocide. There are no peacebuilding programmes for them, and they keep being neglected and segregated from society, often choosing to remain in rural and forest areas of the country and making their income through pottery⁴³⁰.

The dubious role of the Catholic church

As stated in the section ‘The fate of genocide sites in Rwanda: back to business?’ above, the role of the church during the 1994 genocide is to be called dubious at least. Many churches were used by fleeing Tutsi as a refuge, but to no avail. Many churches became slaughter houses, were bulldozed to the ground or burned to ashes (often with people inside)⁴³¹. Several members of the clergy have been convicted for their part in the killings, and until now, the wounds are not healed. Catholicism however is still the most important religion in Rwanda.

According to Rutagengwa, the participation of the Catholic Church in the Tutsi Genocide of 1994, came as no surprise due to their involvement in the divisive politics during colonial and post-colonial Rwanda. First in the 1880’s they started the racial segmentation by introducing Darwinist evolutionary racial theories through the Hamitic hypothesis, then in the 1950’s the Belgian clergy introduced new social theories, sympathizing with the underdog, namely the oppressed Hutu majority. Rutagengwa holds the Belgian priests directly responsible for the power shift from Tutsi to Hutu in 1959 and states they have a very active role in creating the genocide legacy⁴³².

In the aftermath of the genocide, there has been a lot of tension between the state and the church (cfr. Kibeho), with the state actively advocating the preservation of churches as genocide locations, and the church vehemently disagreeing and refusing desecration. In the latest months, new rumours are being spread that the catholic church is pushed by the Vatican to pay for new memorials, provided that the genocide remains would disappear from their churches. This plan is perceived by critics as a strategy by the church to eradicate visible evidence of her complicity of the genocide⁴³³.

⁴³⁰ Alluri, 2009, p.24-25.

⁴³¹ Rutagengwa, 2008; Totten et al., 1997, p.416; Peterson, 2008, p.10.

⁴³² Rutagengwa, 2008.

⁴³³ Kalinda et al., 2016.

There have been many calls against the clergy and the role of the Catholic Church, asking for apologies⁴³⁴. These calls were not only issued from private persons, but also from government members, stating that the untrue claim of innocence of the religious leaders hampers unity and reconciliation⁴³⁵.

There is also some controversy towards the role of the church nowadays. Especially the plans of the church to honour the silver jubilee of two clerics, Emmanuel Rukundo and Joseph Ndagijimana, who have been convicted in 2009 for their role in the genocide to – respectively – a 25-year sentence by the ICTR and life sentence by Gacaca, sparks a lot of resentment⁴³⁶. The Catholic Church has claimed that the two men were accidentally put on the list without cause, but the damage was done⁴³⁷.

National government

Although mostly initiated by local communities for mourning and commemoration purposes, the memorials were within two years claimed by the national government for a more politicized and nationalist interpretation. The narrative that is created towards the outside world, is nonetheless not always in accordance to the wishes of the rest of society.

Initially, the government preferred genocide preservation and memorialization as strategies to advance national reconciliation⁴³⁸. However, since 2010, a tendency towards less preservation and more memorialization and documentation is visible (Cfr. the section ‘Tackling trauma: euphemization of the memory of the genocide’, supra), as long as it fits the narrative, that apparently is deemed to be sufficiently established to provide only the documentation in support.

According to interviews with members of the Rwandan judiciary conducted by Cook, the preservation of genocide sites for forensic purposes has never been regarded as a priority. The Gacaca courts that provided justice in local communities mainly base their cases upon eyewitness testimonies and documents, not on forensic evidence. The ICTR

⁴³⁴ Sabiiti, 2009b; Buyinza, 2009; Ntawukuriryayo and Ntambara, 2010; Rutagengwa, 2008; The New Times, 2009a; Kalinda et al., 2016.

⁴³⁵ Buyinza, 2009.

⁴³⁶ Muvunyi, 2016b.

⁴³⁷ Kalinda et al., 2016.

⁴³⁸ Cook, 2006, p.303; Caplan, 2007, p.22; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.314.

in Arusha is seen as a remote, alien court with 'luxurious' procedures that are not needed at the Rwandan national level⁴³⁹.

It would go too far to discuss the national narrative in detail here, but it is clear that the Rwandan government has constructed a well-established, Tutsi-biased national narrative, with the help of Aegis Trust as a legitimization of neutrality for the international community. The initial political discourse of shared identity with a shared victimization of the Rwandan population that was prominent during the commemorations of the first years after the genocide⁴⁴⁰, has made room for a paradoxical discourse of national unity and a collective Tutsi victimization. The government has banned all forms of ethnicity while controlling ceremonial memory, but in the meantime referring to the genocide as the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi consequently imposes guilt on the Hutu population⁴⁴¹.

International community and tourist visitors

The international community, and especially the UN and Belgium, are seen by the Rwandan government as cowards that looked away and left Rwanda to its fate. The position of foreign countries towards Rwanda is clearly one of guilt. This guilt translates itself in the many donations that were given by the UN organizations, the USA and several European countries. In a recent report, the World Bank confirms that about 30 to 40 percent of the national budget is accounted for by foreign aid. It warns for the risks involved in this dependency, and calls for more domestic resource mobilization⁴⁴².

To end impunity and clear their conscience, the UN set up the ICTR to prosecute and punish those responsible for the mass killings they let happen. Therefore, they expected Rwanda to cooperate and preserve the genocide locations, so that independent forensic investigations could take place supporting the cases. After two excavations however, Rwanda backed down (see the section 'International forensic excavations discredited', *supra*)⁴⁴³.

⁴³⁹ Cook, 2006, p.303-304; Cox et al., 2008, p.15.

⁴⁴⁰ Sodaro, 2011, p.75-82; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.313.

⁴⁴¹ Waldorf, 2009a, p.15-16; Waldorf, 2009b, p.105; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.306, p.313-314.

⁴⁴² World Bank, 2016.

⁴⁴³ Cook, 2006, p.293-294; p.303.

Besides political aspects, the international community is also a stakeholder through tourism (Cfr. the section 'Dark tourism in Rwanda', *infra*). Tourists and visitors coming to Rwanda want to learn about and reflect upon what happened through a coherent narrative about the events. They desire to see an authentic account, supported by authentic remains, to avoid that the atrocities would be forgotten. Judging by the visitor book entries, there is an educational and cathartic effect by the memorials, surpassing the morbid fascination for killing and atrocities. This seems to provide an antidote for the unilateral view of thanatourism driven by sensation and voyeurism⁴⁴⁴.

DARK TOURISM IN RWANDA

Although Rwanda can count on about 650.000 foreign visitors each year, only about 10% of these visits are holiday-related and not for business, meeting friends and family, transit or other purposes.

It is self-evident that the warlike 90's, and especially the year 1994, knew a large relapse in visitor numbers, to the point during the genocide where virtually no foreigners were present anymore, not even the ones that were living as expats in Rwanda. By their withdrawal, the international community not only looked away from the violence, but evacuated their countrymen, leaving the Rwandans to their gruesome fate.

However, after the genocide, tourism recovered fairly quick thanks to ecotourism and dark tourism⁴⁴⁵. Although a bit morbid, dark tourists tend to enjoy a 'fresh' dark location, and the genocide locations of Rwanda are as fresh and raw as a dark tourist attraction can get. Rwanda's genocide locations are the textbook example of the darkest possible shade of the dark spectrum: the genocide camps (Cfr. Image 14: A dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006), *supra*)⁴⁴⁶.

⁴⁴⁴ Sharpley, 2012, p.109; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.305, p.316; Cook, 2006, p.293-294; p.303.

⁴⁴⁵ Unfortunately, there are no numbers to be found after 2010.

⁴⁴⁶ Stone, 2006, p.157; Keil, 2005. See Sion, 2011, for more information about Choeng Ek.



Since there was some humanitarian and development personnel present in the country, there was a rather quick revival of gorilla tourism, funded by guilt-ridden international donors and conservationists⁴⁴⁷. The efforts of the government-run Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN) were a real boost for the sector and helped it overcome the lack of infrastructure and services. In less than ten years, tourism became a key focus again to promote economic development⁴⁴⁸. One of the key ORTPN strategies was the development of partnerships with the neighbouring communities and encouraging tourism companies to do the same. The benefits of this connection are not only the acquirement of a sustainable form of tourism but also peacebuilding and conflict prevention⁴⁴⁹.



Image 48: Mountain gorilla in Volcanoes National Park

⁴⁴⁷ Alluri, 2009, p.17-18, p.23; Reyntjens, 2004, p.179; Richter, 1999n p.44.

⁴⁴⁸ See Strong-Cvetich, 2007, on ecotourism.

⁴⁴⁹ Alluri, 2009, p.7, p.16; p.21-22; Bray, 2009, p.2; Strong-Cvetich, 2007, p.11; Plumptre et al., 2001, p.12; Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.312.

Mainstream genocide tourism emerged more as a form of accidental tourism, since the genocide memorials that were created were aimed towards the local Rwandan community (local memorials) or towards the international political leaders and the Rwandan people through a political narrative (national memorials)⁴⁵⁰.

When tourists come to Rwanda, there are often two movies that influence their expectations: 'Hotel Rwanda' (2004) by Terry George and 'Gorillas in the Mist: The Story of Dian Fossey' (1988) by Michael Apted⁴⁵¹. Both movies address the two main motives why tourists come to Rwanda: visiting the genocide memorials to understand more about what happened in 1994 and tracking mountain gorillas, one of the most endangered species on the planet, but thriving in the forests of Virunga and Volcanoes National Park⁴⁵².

Rwanda is a tiny, landlocked African country, and the most popular tourist attractions are to be counted on one hand and still have fingers left. Besides the capital, Kigali, and the Volcanoes National Park, only Virunga National Park, Akagera Park and Nyungwe Forest are to some degree popular tourist destinations. Most people only stay for a few days in Rwanda as a part of a bigger trip through Central and Eastern Africa, and are often based in Kigali⁴⁵³.

In comparison to holocaust tourism, there has been little study about genocide tourism management and consumption in African countries⁴⁵⁴. Only few authors have focused on the presence of 'dark' tourism in Rwanda⁴⁵⁵. The term is not well-known and even less appreciated here, and it is mostly replaced by the lighter 'history tourism'⁴⁵⁶. Over the years, it became clear that the Rwandan Government promotes genocide tourism less and less, aside from a visit of the KGMC. The national memorial sites are maintained and refurbished, but if you look at the official tourism website,

THINGS TO DO

- Gorilla Tracking
- Primate Tracking
- Birding
- Congo Nile Trail
- Cultural Experiences
- Game Safaris
- Coffee & Tea
- Musanze Caves
- Helicopter Tours
- Festivals

Image 50: Screenshot
Rwanda Tourism website

⁴⁵⁰ McKinney, 2014, p.302-303.

⁴⁵¹ IMDb - Gorillas in the mist, s.d.; IMDb - Hotel Rwanda, s.d.; McKinney, McKinney, 2014, p.290; Destors, 2014, p.155.

⁴⁵² The New Times, 2008b.

⁴⁵³ Bray, 2009, p.2.

⁴⁵⁴ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.303-304.

⁴⁵⁵ Hohenhaus - Rwanda, s.d.; Ntunda, 2012; Hohenhaus, 2013.

⁴⁵⁶ Alluri, 2009, p.25.

www.rwandatourism.rw, and the website of the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), www.rdb.rw, there is virtually no reference to the genocide memorials. After some searching reference is made only to five national memorials: the KGMC, Nyamata, Ntarama, Nyanza Kicukiro and Murambi). Nyarubuye and Bisesero are probably too remote. Mostly ecotourism through ORTPN is promoted.

OUR TOP EXPERIENCES

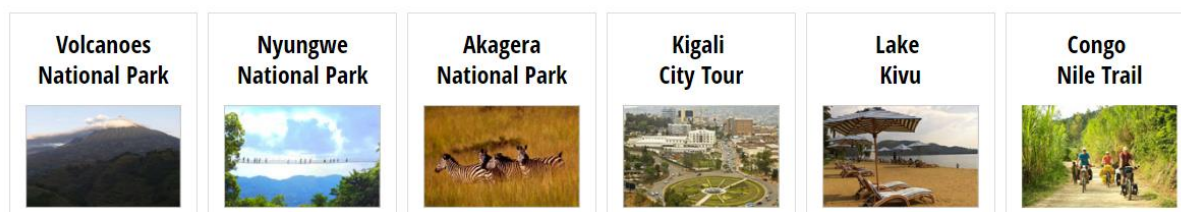


Image 51: Screenshot Rwanda Tourism website

However, as already stated above, Rwanda is described as a textbook example of a country having several genocide camps, the darkest shade that dark tourism can have. Dark tourism expert Peter Hohenhaus, who has travelled the world looking for the most dark, macabre and weird places on earth, ranks Rwanda among the countries with the highest number of dark sites, and some of them as the darkest places in the world (especially Murambi and Nyamata)⁴⁵⁷. However, it is hard to assess Rwandan tourism without visitor numbers or up-to-date statistics. The most recent to be found are general statistics from 2010. The well-known and widely used Tripadvisor application and website⁴⁵⁸, that invites tourists to rate their experiences and write reviews, is however a – not so scientific, but in case of a lack of data – valuable source of information, since it is not government-controlled and therefore probably reflects a more honest overview.

⁴⁵⁷ Hohenhaus – Rwanda, s.d.

⁴⁵⁸ See www.tripadvisor.com or the Tripadvisor App.

THE AFTERMATH OF A DARK PAST

1	Volcanoes National Park (Ruhengeri)	16	Libarie Ikirezi (Kigali)
2	Kigali Memorial Centre in Gisozi (Kigali)	17	Karisoke Research Center - Dian Fossey Camp (Ruhengeri)
3	Inema art centre (Kigali)	18	Iby'iwacu cultural village (Ruhengeri)
4	Akagera park (International Rwanda/Tanzania)	19	Ivuka arts Kigali (Kigali)
5	Nyamata church (Kigali)	20	The palace of king Mutara III Rudahigwa (Nyanza)
6	Nyungwe National Park (Butare)	21	Avenue du Commerce (Kigali)
7	Ntarama church (Kigali)	22	Ethnographic museum Huye (Butare)
8	Niyo art gallery (Kigali)	23	Parliament (Kigali)
9	National Museum of Rwanda (Butare)	24	Nyabugogo Marché market (Kigali)
10	Ivuka arts centre (Kigali)	25	Camp Kigali Memorial (Kigali)
11	Virunga National Park (International Uganda/DR Congo/Rwanda)	26	Butare Catholic Cathedral (Butare)
12	Murambi Genocide Memorial Center (Butare)	27	Gogisenyi (Gisenyi)
13	Muslim Quarter (Kigali)	28	Kandt House Natural History Museum (Kigali)
14	Presidential Palace Museum (Kigali)	29	Casino Kigali (Kigali)
15	Lake Kivu (International Rwanda/DR Congo)	30	Rusumo Falls Rusumo

Image 52: Tripadvisor Top 30 Things to do in Rwanda

It becomes clear from the table above, that lists the 30 most popular things to do in Rwanda according to tourist reviews on Tripadvisor⁴⁵⁹, that ecotourism indeed counts for the most popular tourist destination in Rwanda, with Volcanoes National Park. For Rwanda, this is an amazing tourist attraction, since the demand far exceeds the supply. Because of the fact that the mountain gorillas are so endangered, draconic measures are taken to protect them. There are only 56 permits per day for tourists to go gorilla tracking, each costing \$ 750. There are long waiting lists however of visitors willing to pay this small fortune to spend about 30 to 60 minutes in a range of about 7m of these animals⁴⁶⁰.

Genocide tourism, however, is less profitable. There has been discussion about charging an entrance fee to memorial sites, but it was generally acknowledged that these venues cannot give the impression that they are lucrative, and there is a risk of limiting visitors by charging. Commercialization of genocide locations is felt as insensitive, just like the term dark tourism is perceived as inappropriate⁴⁶¹. What is remarkable is that, although 'Hotel Rwanda' is one of the key influences of visitors' expectations, the hotel itself, the Mille Collines, does not brand itself as a genocide attraction, and prefers a business profile⁴⁶².

⁴⁵⁹ Self-made table based on the exact names on Tripadvisor, 2016d.

⁴⁶⁰ McKinney, 2014, p.292-298; For a good overview, see Bwindi National Park, 2016.

⁴⁶¹ Friedrich and Johnston, 2013, p.311.

⁴⁶² McKinney, 2014, p.301. N.B.: the movie was not filmed at the Mille Collines, but in South Africa.

National memorial sites from a dark perspective.

The national memorial sites that have been described above from a historical and memorialization point of view, will now be shortly reviewed from a dark tourism point of view. For every site, the popularity score by Tripadvisor will be displayed, along with the score on Peter Hohenhaus' 'darkometer'. This scale is used to score the darkness of a tourist attraction and varies between 1 (not dark) and 10 (extremely dark).

1. Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi

Darkometer: 8/10

Tripadvisor: #2 of things to do in Rwanda, #1 of 51 things to do in Kigali. The Kigali genocide memorial centre was awarded a Travellers' Choice Award 2016 by Tripadvisor for its seventh place in the top 25 Landmarks in Africa⁴⁶³.

The KGMC is by far the most popular genocide memorial⁴⁶⁴, due to its favourable location in the capital and the large and professional infrastructure. It is part of almost all Rwanda packages and is branded by the government as the most important memorial site and a must see (although only if you look beyond ecotourism for genocide memorials). In short, if you want to do one thing besides ecotourism, visit this memorial. It is rated an 8 on the darkometer, but in all honesty, it is more the suggestion of horror and the idea of 250.000 people that do the trick here. The amount of human remains on display is small, and the smoked glass cabinets are sterile and almost scientific. For the true dark tourist, this scientific environment and dignified, peaceful gardens with concrete slabs, are probably only moderately dark. This makes the centre therefore accessible to a very broad public, of all ages and nationalities, more as an attraction of historical heritage.



Image 53: Skulls on display at KGMC

⁴⁶³ Tripadvisor, 2016c.

⁴⁶⁴ Tripadvisor, 2016a and 2016b.

2. *Camp Kigali*

Darkometer: 5/10

Tripadvisor: #25 of things to do in Rwanda, #20 of 51 things to do in Kigali

Although an official national memorial site – in cooperation with Belgium – there is almost no publicity and the site is hence less known. The site is not a popular destination, not for Rwandans and not for anyone who's not Belgian. Here the theory by Walters⁴⁶⁵ becomes evident: a site will appear as more striking for a visitor who has a link with the location, so it becomes personal heritage tourism. For a Belgian, this location is probably more touching, and therefore darker than for other nationalities. Especially the bullet holes in one of the corners of the barracks are chilling, since they mark clearly the spot where the peacekeepers who were still alive after the siege, were finished off.



Image 54: Inside the barracks

3. *Nyamata*

Darkometer: 10/10

Tripadvisor: #5 of things to do in Rwanda, #4 of 51 things to do in Kigali. Nyamata church was awarded a Travellers' Choice Award 2016 by Tripadvisor for its fifteenth place in the top 25 Landmarks in Africa⁴⁶⁶.

The church of Nyamata has different aspects that make it a very dark tourist attraction. Aside from the gruesome historical events themselves, there are a lot of visual markers preserved. The bullet holes in the roof, the wrenched iron bars of the entrance gate, the piles of bloodstained clothes on the pews, the bloodstained altar cloth, they are all grim reminders of the massacre. When remains are found during the year, they are set out on blue canvases at the back of the church, waiting for being buried in April. In March, the remains pile up high, giving the room an unsettling atmosphere. The two crypts downstairs are covered with white tiles, giving them a sterile, clean look like in a morgue. The remains on display there in glass cabinets have the same scientific feel to

⁴⁶⁵ Walter, 2009, p.53-54; Timothy, 1997, 752-753.

⁴⁶⁶ Tripadvisor, 2016c.

them as those in the KGMC. There is only one individual that received a final resting place in a coffin at the church: Theresa Mukandori. The remarkably well preserved body of this young Tutsi woman was on display for years as a gruesome reminder of the violence. She was raped and impaled with a wooden stick and killed by machete blows. After complaints from her family, the body was eventually put in a coffin, that still is standing in the crypt of the church⁴⁶⁷. All images of the exposed body have been removed from the internet.

The darkest experience in Nyamata are the two mass graves that are open to visitors. In the middle of the clean, white-tiled concrete slabs, a small staircase leads into the dark, damp space, where thousands of skulls and bones are put on shelves reaching all the way to the ceiling, about 3m high. As a consequence, the visitor stands face to face with the faceless victims of the genocide, anonymous and innumerable.



Image 55: Skulls and bones in the mass graves

4. *Ntarama*

Darkometer: 8/10

Tripadvisor: #7 of things to do in Rwanda, #5 of 51 things to do in Kigali



Image 56: Inside Ntarama church (d.d. 2014)

Although Ntarama is often described as the less dark version of Nyamata, it has a very dark atmosphere. Upon entering the church, the first thing that visitors see are shelves with piles of bones and skulls, too many to count. The church is very dark because of the clothing that covers the windows, and one must stand still for a few moments to adjust to the darkness. The bloodstained clothes that hang from the beams of the roof and from the windows and walls give the inside a very eerie look, creepy and surreal at the same time. Coffins are put on top of the pews, ready to be buried during the next commemoration period.

⁴⁶⁷ Hogarth and Edwards, 2013, p.58-59.

Although more or less cleaned up now, the remains in the church have been left on the ground for many years (cfr. Image 31: Inside Ntarama church (d.d. 16/9/1994), supra), and even when the remains were separated from the clothing and personal belonging, they were stored in large piles for an extended period. One can only imagine – if the church is now already so dark – how horrific and

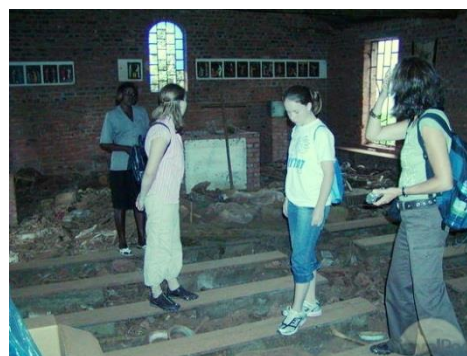


Image 57: Visitors standing on the pews at Ntarama

raw a visit could have been before the remains were buried. Visitors had to stand on the wooden pews not to step on the remains. The side storage rooms housed piles of remains for several years before they were officially buried after cleaning.



Image 58: Blood stain on the wall at Ntarama

The most haunting sight in Ntarama, or maybe in Rwanda as a whole, is however the back wall of the Sunday school, one of the adjacent schools. On the wall, there is a large, dark stain, about a meter wide and half a meter high. This is the spot where babies and children were smacked against the wall to

kill them, and the stain is formed by dozens of skulls being smashed, leaving blood spatters and brain tissue on the wall in such a thick layer that more than twenty years later, it is still clearly visible.

It is not clear how many people visit the site per year. According to the guide, there are a few small groups per day, and during the commemoration some more Rwandan visitors. Ntarama genocide memorial was awarded a Travellers' Choice Award 2016 by Tripadvisor for its tenth place in the top 25 Landmarks in Africa⁴⁶⁸.

⁴⁶⁸ Tripadvisor, 2016c.

5. *Murambi*

Darkometer: 10/10

Tripadvisor: #12 of things to do in Rwanda, #3 of 4 things to do in Butare (Huye)

Probably the most haunting experience in Rwanda nowadays, Murambi is famous among dark tourists because of the bodies on display that have been preserved with lime to a sort of mummy state.

Image 59: Bodies at Murambi

Classroom after classroom are filled with these remains, all white and looking alike, but when one looks closer, they have individual traits. There are men, women and small children, with clear machete wounds, missing limbs, holding up their arms in defence. Aside from the sight, an unforgettable smell leaves the visitor silent, nauseous and genuinely appalled. Violence cannot get much more clearly visible and touchable.



6. *Bisesero*

Darkometer: 7/10

Tripadvisor: Not in top 30 of things to do in Rwanda, #2 of 3 things to do in Kibuye

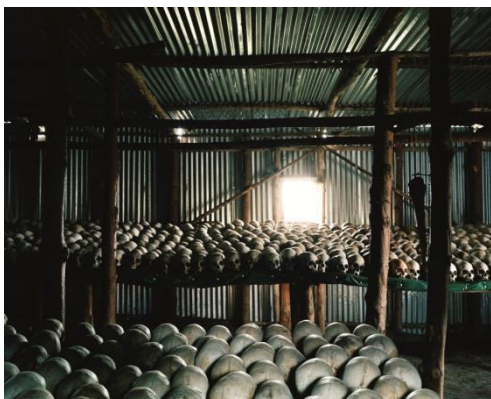


Image 60: Remains at Bisesero

The Bisesero national resistance and genocide memorial has a very deep symbolic meaning for Rwandans, but has less interesting features for the dark tourist. There are many remains on display in the buildings, displayed in the 'usual' way: skulls and different types of bones neatly stacked per type. The shocking effect lies in the enormous quantity of the remains.

7. Nyarubuye

Darkometer: 9/10

Tripadvisor: Not found

Just like Bisesero, Nyarubuye is a remote genocide memorial, hard to reach and far from the main roads. Not discovered (yet) by Tripadvisor and not promoted by the Rwandan government, this site as a hidden gem of dark tourism. The image of the seemingly peaceful church is completely destroyed by the exhibitions in the large adjacent convents and the pictures published about this site in the months and years after the massacres. The exhibitions contains many human remains displayed on tables per type of bone. Aside from this, many weapons that were used in the massacres are also on display here: simple, everyday farming tools like machetes, clubs and hoes and other tools like carjacks. On some tools, the blood spatter is still visible. A dozen of long, pointy sticks against the wall were used to kill pregnant women by impaling them from the vagina all the way up, piercing the foetus on the way. A last point of interest for the dark visitor are some rocks in the courtyard that were used to sharpen the edges of machetes that had gone blunt after too much hacking⁴⁶⁹.



Image 61: Carjack with blood spatter

THE GENOCIDE ARCHIVE OF RWANDA

The creation of documentation centres is regarded by the CNLG as one of their most important missions. The highlight of these efforts is the Genocide Archive Rwanda, a joint program of the CNLG and Aegis Trust.

The documentation centre

The online Genocide Archive of Rwanda contains over 8.000 historical photos, videos, documents, audio files and artefacts as first-hand sources. The emphasis lies very clearly on the didactical potential of the data to stimulate peacebuilding, reconciliation and fighting genocide denial⁴⁷⁰.

⁴⁶⁹ Hohenhaus, Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial, s.d.

⁴⁷⁰ Aegis Trust – Genocide Archive of Rwanda, 2015a.

Through the creation of the archive, previously inaccessible material can now be consulted for personal, educational, and research purposes. Aside from sources that were gathered from libraries, universities etc. , they are constantly updated with new materials. The archive was further developed through the gathering of testimonies of families and friends that lost their loved ones during the genocide. It also provides confessions of perpetrators⁴⁷¹.

The archive is the first of its kind in Rwanda, but there are plans for smaller versions in other national genocide memorial sites like Murambi⁴⁷².

Virtual tours of genocide memorials

Aside from the documentation aspect of the archive, it is also possible through the project to access genocide memorials across Rwanda online through virtual tours⁴⁷³. In this way, the visitor public can be tremendously increased, removing the physical distance. Since the tours consist of 360° photographic images and text panels, the focus of the virtual visit is clearly on learning a lesson⁴⁷⁴. After exploring the paradigms of dark tourism (cfr. Supra), it is to be doubted however that a true dark tourist will find this substitute satisfying. Nevertheless, it is a very ambitious and worthwhile project the CNLG and Aegis embarked upon.

⁴⁷¹ Aegis Trust – Genocide Archive of Rwanda, 2015b.

⁴⁷² Bucyensenge, 2011.

⁴⁷³ Aegis Trust – Genodie Archive of Rwanda, 2015d.

⁴⁷⁴ Aegis Trust – Genocide Archive of Rwanda, 2015c.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The third and largest chapter of this dissertation addressed the three possible activities that can take place at a genocide location: preservation and restoration, memorialization and commemoration, and documentation and research. The human tendency towards memorialization was discussed, showing that there is more at stake than only mourning and remembering lost ones. Besides memorialization, the interesting concepts of dark tourism and thanatourism were explored, providing a framework of a phenomenon that has a long history, but is booming in the last decennia.

Using the theoretical framework on the Rwandan case, it turns out there are enormous efforts that have been done to memorialize the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi through burials, the creation of memorials, commemoration processes and didactical examples. Although preservation was the most focused upon in the first years after the genocide, after two decades the emphasis is completely on commemoration and documentation. Displaying human remains to show the world what has happened and what the international community allowed to take place, has gently made room for a much more peaceful political narrative of national unity and gradually making the genocide a thing of the past.

This is evident in the promotion of ecotourism above 'dark' heritage tourism and in the changed atmosphere of the commemorations that are not only burial-oriented anymore but provide a forum to talk about peace and trauma.

However, it is not all that simple, and life in Rwanda is certainly not problem-free. The national political narrative that has been created, is Tutsi-biased and a potential threat to the future, with cracks formed by dissonant heritage that still divides Hutu and Tutsi, despite the beautiful story of national unity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The topic of this dissertation was the role that the bodies of the victims of an act of genocide or mass murder can play in transitional justice and the reconciliation process. Two different transitional justice mechanisms were addressed: forensic archaeology and memorialization. Aside from the drafting of a relevant, general historical and theoretical framework for both, the theory was each time applied, using a case study: the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Firstly, the role of forensic archaeology in the criminal prosecution process was discussed in the first two chapters. The first chapter provided a general framework of the origins of forensic archaeology and its importance for international tribunals like the ICTY and the ICTR. It became clear that the importance of forensic archaeology in judicial contexts clearly increased over the years, becoming an essential contribution to support legal cases. In the last part of the chapter a historical overview of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda provided the necessary context to understand the gravity of the events that happened and the magnitude of the efforts needed for the reconciliation process. In the second chapter, the techniques and paradigms archaeologists use in forensic contexts were discussed. Although many techniques from 'traditional' archaeological sites can be used, important differences have to be taken in account when excavating in forensic contexts, like keeping very detailed records and logs and securing the chain of custody at all times. It became clear that a good knowledge of taphonomy and excavation peculiarities surrounding mass graves is indispensable for the forensic archaeologist. During the application of the theoretical framework discussed in the first part of the second chapter to the Rwandan context, it turned out that Rwanda is not exactly a textbook example of how the ideal excavations should be carried out. First of all, there have been only two forensic excavations by international teams from Physicians for Human Rights in Rwanda, supporting two ICTR cases. Secondly, there have been many non-scientific exhumations, organized by different actors, like friends and relatives of the victims, survivor communities, NGOs, the government (through committees like the CMGM and the CNLG, or ministries like the MINITRASO) and local authorities.

Although the last years some more attention has been given towards a more coordinated management and approach, the uncoordinated efforts of the first years after the genocide have created some chaos, especially concerning the decent burial of the remains. It became clear that despite the efforts to recover the remains of the victims and give them a decent burial, many relatives continue to experience trauma due to the lack of identification of the individuals, providing closure to the searching process.

The second transitional topic, the process of memorialization and its potential for the process of reconciliation, was covered in the third chapter, using the framework designed by Cook⁴⁷⁵ as a start. Three categories of activities at sites of mass murder and genocide were distinguished, namely (1) preservation and restoration, (2) memorialization and commemoration and (3) documentation and research. The human tendency towards memorialization was discussed, showing that there is more at stake than only mourning and remembering lost ones. Besides memorialization, the interesting concepts of dark tourism and thanatourism were explored, providing a framework of a phenomenon that has a long history, but is booming in the last decennia.

By applying the theoretical framework of the first parts of the third chapter to the Rwandan case, it turned out that enormous efforts were made to memorialize the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi through burials, the creation of memorials, commemoration processes and didactical examples. Although preservation was the most focused upon in the first years after the genocide, after two decades the emphasis shifted towards commemoration and documentation. Displaying human remains to show the world what has happened and what the international community allowed to take place, has gently made room for a much more peaceful political narrative of national unity and gradually making the genocide a thing of the past.

This is evident in the promotion by the government of ecotourism above 'dark' heritage tourism and the changed atmosphere of the commemorations that are not only burial-oriented anymore but provide a forum to talk about peace and trauma. It seems that Rwanda is ready to make genocide a thing of the past.

⁴⁷⁵ Cook, 2004.

For many reasons, Rwanda was a great choice as a case study. The events that happened here are truly horrific and account for one of the most violent outbreaks of democide recorded in the last century and a half. Especially the amount of victims in such a small period of time is almost incomprehensible. Secondly, Rwanda has done an impressive job in rising from the dead. Through several creative solutions, the government managed to let the devastated country rise from its ashes to become one of the most modern and impressive countries of Africa. The creation of Gacaca courts, the start-up of a national program of dignified burials, peace and reconciliation, the creation of a chain of memorials and commemoration events, ... the examples are countless. Third, Rwanda is a perfect tourist destination, not only for ecotourism lovers, but also for those who want to learn about genocide and want to experience 'dark' visitor attractions with a shock-and-awe effect that cannot be understated. Combining own experiences with the adventures of Peter Hohenhaus, provide a wide overview of dark tourism in Rwanda.

For one big reason, Rwanda was a really bad choice. Rwanda provides a rather disappointing example of a country where forensic archaeology has been used. Although granted its own international tribunal, the ICTR, Rwanda preferred its own system of Gacaca courts and withdrew itself from international forensic investigations after two rather small missions by PHR. Although respectful of the procedures outlined in the theoretical framework, the evidence of the Amgar Garage investigation was dismissed due to reasons of sloppiness and lack of certification. Paradoxically enough, the story of forensic archaeology in Rwanda thus has become the opposite story of burying victims, rather than exhuming them.

The aim of this dissertation was contributing to the hiatus that exists in the treatment of the bodies of victims of mass atrocities after death, from a non-medical angle. Activating the dead in reconciliation mechanisms is an interesting topic that deserves more study, especially in other, less known contexts like the Cambodian or the Armenian genocides. Especially for the case of Rwanda, there is still room for more research in the field of non-forensic exhumations and their impact on the survivor communities, visitor motivations for dark tourism and further evolution of the genocide narrative.

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ANNEX: MAP OF RWANDA'S MEMORIALS



Annex: Map of Rwanda's memorials