

Forensic Archaeology in Europe – Past, Present, Future

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Abstract:

The emergence and development of forensic archaeology is usually associated with research in South America, when, starting in the 1980s, a group of specialists began searching for victims murdered by successive military juntas. In the following years, the use of archaeological methods and tools to locate mass graves where the bodies of murdered people were hidden became common practice around the world.

The Second World War completely transformed Europe and the world. The conflict claimed tens of millions of lives, and entire villages, towns, cities, and regions were razed to the ground. The legacy of these events is increasingly being studied by archaeologists. Forensic archaeology is increasingly providing the theoretical and practical framework for this type of work. The aim of the session is to bring together archaeologists and specialists who conduct research in various parts of Europe within this focused framework. We want to consider the role and significance of forensic archaeology – its development in the past, the present, and the directions in which it might develop in the near future. Given that wars, armed conflicts, mass atrocities, and so on, are no longer just a thing of the past, it can be assumed that such archaeology will be necessary and important.