

Examining Body Proximity and “Sacredness” at/in Relation to Treblinka Extermination Camp

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Fig. 1 A photograph of Eva Simon hidden at times in the mouth of her sister Margret to keep it safe. Author photograph.

- 1 During a visit to the Shapell Center in 2018, as part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s (USHMM) “Material Culture and the Holocaust Workshop,” my fellow scholars and I were shown a photograph by Chief Conservator Jane Klinger, which resided, not in the museum’s extensive photographic archive as one might expect, but rather in its object collection (Fig. 1).¹ This crumpled item, we were told, was situated there in part because it had been clandestinely hidden in the mouth of

its owner Margret Hantman when she was forced to hand over her belongings upon arrival in Auschwitz. Hence, its creases and folds symbolized its “object journey” and Margret’s efforts to stay connected to and later memorialize her sister Eva Simon who was murdered in Riga, Latvia.² The unique materiality of this item clearly altered (and seemingly elevated) the status of this photograph within the archive in the eyes of the conservators who cared for it, both as evidence of a unique microhistory and as an educational tool. Like objects found in or near mass graves of Holocaust victims (which I often encounter as part of my work in Holocaust archaeology), the impact of this photograph appeared to stem predominantly from the fact that it had been in extremely close contact with the human body. When I had the opportunity to be part of another workshop at USHMM entitled “Interrogating the Sacred: Holocaust Objects and their Care” in 2023, I was reminded of the encounter with Margret’s photograph and I decided to explore the relationship between body proximity, the value placed upon objects, and sacredness. After hearing another moving talk by Jane Klinger about her evolving relationship with this object in light of her own personal experiences of loss, I was further drawn to these interactions.

- 2 Before moving on to discuss the objects through which I will further explore these issues, it is important to reflect on the subject of sacrality. According to Oxford Languages and Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, the term “sacred” may mean any of the following:
 - “connected with God or a god; considered to be holy.”
 - regarded with great respect and reverence by a particular religion, group, or individual.”
 - “very important and treated with great respect; that must not be changed or challenged.”
- 3 Therefore, although it often has religious connotations, sacrality may have a secular meaning that relates to the value placed upon entities, things, and processes by human beings. In the context of the Holocaust and in its aftermath, it is possible to observe objects that were and are considered sacred through all these lenses (asynchronously or synchronously): religious items such as menorahs that were buried by their owners to hide them from the Nazis; prayer shawls clandestinely used by Sonderkommando Jews to pray in the death camps; victims’ shoes and personal effects that form part of many exhibitions and archives around the world, to name just a few examples.³ Hence, I will adopt this broad suite of definitions in my analysis as I attempt to unpack the role of the body in increasing or decreasing the sacrality and value of things.
- 4 Here I present four objects that would have been worn on the body of Holocaust victims but which each illustrate differences in their journeys, uses, spatialities, and temporalities of proximity. These four items relate to a site that I have researched for more than 17 years: Treblinka extermination camp, a Nazi-German killing site at which between 800,000 and one million people, most of them Jews, were murdered from the spring of 1942 (when the camp was built) and November 1943 (when it was demolished).⁴ From July 23, 1942, trains packed with Jews arrived at this remote area

of forest in occupied Poland (which became known as Treblinka II). Many people died during the journey. Others—such as the elderly and young children—were shot on arrival. The majority were sent from the Reception Camp to undressing barracks to hand over their belongings before they were sent to purpose-built gas chambers, which were contained within an area known as the Death Camp (see a [map of Treblinka](#) for more information about the camp layout). The bodies of the victims were then buried in mass graves or, from the winter of 1942/1943, burnt on cremation pyres in this area. When the SS closed the camp in the months that followed a prisoner revolt on August 2, 1942, they tried to hide the evidence of these crimes, mostly by burying it beneath the ground. Hence, few material traces of the camp have been found. While the first two items I present were found during archaeological excavations conducted by my team and me in 2013 and 2017, the final two now reside in the object collection of USHMM, having been transferred there by the two Holocaust survivors who came to own them.⁵ These items give pause to reflect on how value and sacrality is affected when objects have been in extremely close physical contact with the (living or dead) human body, and how the context in which they are found may affect their perceived status amongst a variety of groups. I chose these items over others recovered during my archaeological surveys and excavations, and those which reside in archives around the world, because they speak to a range of emotions, interactions, and responses to material things and sacredness. I also chose them because they are items that can be identified as having belonged to the victims of Treblinka. Many of the items that I recovered during my archaeological work were domestic items found in the camp waste pit or on the surface; thus, it was often extremely difficult or impossible to assign them to victims, perpetrators, bystanders, or individuals who encountered the space post-war.⁶



Fig. 2 A gold pendant found during excavations in the vicinity of the Old Gas Chambers at Treblinka extermination camp. Author photograph.

- 5 The discovery of the first object—a gold pendant (minus its chain)—in the rubble of the Old Gas Chambers was a moment that my team and I will never forget (Fig. 2). At a site like Treblinka, where total eradication of the traces of the victims was the Nazis' primary goal, finding this tiny personal item amongst bricks, tiles, and sand was an unexpected and powerful reminder of the individuals whose stories we were trying to salvage from obscurity. The object itself did not have any distinguishing features that would allow us to identify its owner, a reality that exists due to the nature of the crimes committed and efforts to hide them. To borrow from Oren Stier's argument, the pendant and items like it are "parts of a whole, as it were—because their existence as postmemorial artifacts is predicated upon the murders of those who wore them."⁷ In this context, the power of this object for us, for the Treblinka museum, and for visitors to the exhibition in which it now resides, is in its anonymity; in some strange way, this connects us to all of the women who were sent to Treblinka, one of whom likely owned the pendant. As we do not know to whom the item belonged, it forces us to think about the varied experiences they may have had—what they might have been through, how they might have felt at the various points in their journey and what they decided to hold onto in their final moments—thus engendering empathy. In a museum or educational setting, this allows us to provide the means by which visitors and learners can build connections with Holocaust victims and see beyond the often unfathomable numbers of deaths, not least of all because many people will relate the actions of the objects' owner to their own lives..
- 6 Returning to an archaeological context, the condition in which the pendant was found, coupled with where it was discovered, also offered the opportunity to reflect on its journey and that of its owner. It was evident that it had been damaged as its central stone is missing and its filament is bent, likely due to being crushed by the building debris amongst which it lay. Its discovery amongst this material indicated that it had been missed during the body searches that took place after the victims had been gassed (on the SS's orders, so-called Sonderkommando [a special command unit of work Jews] were forced to look for valuables, gold teeth and any other items that had been retained by those sent to the gas chambers). It was also evident that this item—and other personal effects that we found—should not have been in this part of the camp, as the arriving Jews had their personal belongings taken from them in the Reception Camp (where they were forced from the trains and into undressing barracks) as opposed to the Death Camp (where the gas chambers were located alongside the mass graves and cremation pyres). Here we have an object that its owner deemed important enough to hide (and to risk their life for) and which was likely one of the last things they held. To them, this item certainly appeared to have considerable importance, and, in a museum context, it is "regarded with great respect and reverence"; hence, it suggests it has acquired sacred status in a number of different ways.
- 7 During the same excavations in Treblinka, several sets of dentures were discovered in the rubble of the gas chambers and in the small trench excavated next to where this building resided. These are the second set of objects from Treblinka I discuss here. On the one hand, the discovery of these dentures was not unexpected. As already noted, we know from numerous witness testimonies that the victims killed in the gas chambers had their bodies violated further through searches by the Treblinka "dentists";

members of the Sonderkommando tasked with extracting gold teeth so that the Nazis could profit from mass murder. However, the appearance of these items (alongside fragments of human bone) in the sandy earth provided an instant and visceral reminder of the lives lost in the extermination camp. As Layla Renshaw has said of items used for personal care, “these objects have not only outlived their owners but also survived the decomposition of their tissues”; they are objects that were once in proximity with a body that is no longer there and they are evocative of that body in its absence.⁸ For the archaeological team, these items confronted us with the ethical question of what should happen to these dentures. Physically, they are material objects, manufactured not of flesh and bone. Yet, as a facial prosthesis, they were literally integrated into the body. They formed part of the people that the Nazis had sought to erase from the earth. As such, Jewish perceptions of the human body must also be considered here. Although there has been much debate about its “image” and “likeness” to God, the human body is viewed in Judaism as God’s creation and is seen as sacred as it sustains life (which is described as the most sacred of all things).⁹ The body is often (though not unanimously) perceived as a “vessel” that houses the soul and, when a person is alive, as a form through which God’s work can be done.¹⁰ It must be protected and cared for, even after death.¹¹ Not interring the body or body parts, failure to perform burial rites (e.g. the washing of the body), cremation, and interactions with the human remains are viewed as forms of defilement which lead to tumah (impurity).¹² Consequently, the dentures found at Treblinka, like the fragmented human bones next to which they lay, needed to be treated like other bodily remains not buried within a grave. At the request of the Chief Rabbi of Poland, they were thus reburied in an appropriate location within the memorial site that now covers much of the former camp. Although they are no longer visible, the discovery of these dentures provided a clear reminder that traces of the victims do still exist beneath the ground. In recent years, considerable attention has been given to the subject of the publication of Holocaust photographs, images of human remains, and the display of items of the body.¹³ Given the status of the dentures (as described above) and the online medium of this article, I have not included an image of them here.¹⁴

- 8 While these items remained at Treblinka literally amongst the bones and ashes of the victims, other objects connected to the camp situated on the human body either found their way out of the camp or never made it in. While at USHMM in 2023 for the aforementioned workshop, I was able to view and discuss some of these items that now reside in their collection with the curators who care for them. I was particularly drawn to a “gold ring taken by a Jewish youth when he escaped Treblinka death camp” as an item that would have been worn by its original owner before they were murdered in the camp and as an item which, to return to Renshaw, should have been “worn in perpetuity” (Fig. 3).¹⁵ Once again, this item symbolized an anonymous individual whose fate could be surmised, but not confirmed, bringing their story to light but still placing them just out of reach. For reasons that are now lost to history, the “Jewish youth” Eddie Weinstein took this ring when he fled Treblinka and held onto it for decades.¹⁶ After the liquidation of the Łosice ghetto on August 22, 1942, Weinstein was sent to Treblinka II, where he was selected by the SS to join the sub-unit of the Sonderkommando whose job it was to remove the corpses from the arriving trains. He was shot shortly after this but managed to hide in a pile of clothing in the Reception Camp area with the help of his

brother. Once recovered, he joined the group responsible for sorting the belongings of victims sent to the gas chambers. After 17 days, he escaped by hiding in the belongings of victims; this time, those which were being shipped to Germany. It is clear from Weinstein's testimony after the war that he was given many items of jewelry by a fellow inmate when he escaped to help him survive. However, it remains unclear why he chose to keep this particular ring rather than trade it for goods and shelter (as he did with other rings and other items) or why he chose to retain one that was incomplete. Perhaps it was because it was damaged and lost value that he kept it over the other items. But the fact that Weinstein wished to keep an item from his time in the camp at all stemmed, I imagine, from an emotional attachment to this ring, which he saw as a way of remaining connected to and even perhaps commemorating what he and fellow Jews experienced at Treblinka. Without his testimony on the subject, however, this remains speculation. This example thus illustrates how the dissociation of an object from its context can limit our knowledge of its value and usage by different individuals. This reality is perhaps particularly frustrating because relatively few objects belonging to the victims at Treblinka have been found in comparison to the millions of items that testimonies tell us were taken from them. Although this rarity seemingly elevates the status of the ring on the one hand, and thus perhaps its sacredness (in a secular sense), this item highlights how the paucity of more items like it has left significant gaps in our material understandings of pre-war and wartime Jewish life, and the ways in which the Nazis commodified their victims and their belongings. This speaks to the importance of archaeological endeavors that seek to fill this void.



Fig. 3 A ring taken from Treblinka extermination camp by Eddie Weinstein when he escaped. Author photograph.

- 9 Another worn item from USHMM's collection is a "light purple cloth blouse with three-quarter length puffed sleeves and a bow collar," originally owned by Basia Warhaftig but given to her 23-year-old daughter Hanna Warhaftig (Fig. 4).¹⁷ Although this object was never in Treblinka, it is an item that narrowly escaped that fate, as did the person who came to own it. Therefore, it once again highlights the actual and potential journeys of Holocaust-related objects and their owners. According to the archival entry that accompanies the blouse, Hanna wore it with her mother's "blessing" when she escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto in March 1943 and later "on special occasions while living in hiding on the Aryan side because it made her feel safe." Its original owner Basia was murdered in Treblinka in May 1943 after the bunker she was hiding in was discovered by the Nazis during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto.¹⁸ Hence, the blouse provided a physical, bodily connection between Hanna and her mother, seemingly becoming a surrogate for her as Hanna navigated life alone. As a material object, the stains in the fabric beneath the arms reflect Hanna's (and perhaps even her mother's) physical struggle to survive. Thus, when taken in conjunction with Hanna's testimony (contained in the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies), the blouse embodies the blood, sweat, and tears she experienced due to the looming and realized threat of deportation to Treblinka. Hanna had in fact been sent to Umschlagplatz for deportation to Treblinka in the days before her escape, but she had managed first to avoid execution in the holding area and then being loaded onto the trains by hiding in one of the adjacent buildings. Although she was caught thereafter, the arrival of her employers from the factory in which she worked saved her life once again. She was selected to return to the ghetto and escaped the firing squad that had lined her and others up for execution. After returning, her mother told her that she must escape. As her mother had, according to Hanna, a non-Aryan appearance, she said that she would not try to go with her; rather Hanna should come back for her if she found a safe place. Hanna did manage to get out, but she never saw her mother again. She later learnt that her mother had tried to help many people in the bunker in which she hid beneath a burning building and that she said to someone who managed to escape deportation to Treblinka "how lucky that my daughter is not here. That she didn't stay with me, even though she wanted me to be with her." Interestingly, Hanna does not mention the blouse specifically in her testimony. Rather, she describes how she wore layer upon layer of clothing during her escape, something she could do without arousing suspicion as she was "very skinny" having been ill with typhus. It was additionally something she had to do as she could not carry a suitcase for risk of being caught. Hanna also does not describe, however, the parting from her mother, only referring to it as "the most traumatic goodbye." It may have been the agonizing nature of this memory that prevented her from revealing the blouse's significance during her interview in 1984. Seemingly, when she came to donate and part with the item in 2007, she felt ready to share the physical connection it allowed her to maintain with her mother.
- 10 As scholars Elisabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey described in their book *Death, Memory and Material Culture*, "death is a life crisis, a conjecture of changes and transformations of the physical body, social relations and cultural configurations" and "material culture mediates our relationships with death and the dead."¹⁹ Mass violence elevates the scale and impact of this "life crisis" and, with it, this mediation. Objects may become



Fig. 4 A “lavender blouse” belonging to Basia Warhaftig worn by her daughter Hanna when she escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

reminders and memorializations of lives lost, lifelines, weapons, valuables/currency/treasure, grave goods, trash, physical and forensic evidence, and courtroom exhibits. They become something that some want to find while others want to hide or destroy. Something to give your life to hold onto and things to avoid at all costs. Particularly in cases where perpetrators have attempted to erase all traces of their victims (as often happens), material culture may provide unique physical connections to the deceased, taking on the role of evidence, the “archives of touch and intimacy,” and even surrogates.²⁰ These connections often imbued these items with “sacred” status in both the secular sense and as objects that are venerated by various individuals and communities.

- 11 Bringing together the four items I present here highlights just some of the complex relationships that emerge between the living, the dead, and objects in the context of genocide. In all these cases, the objects invoked a connection to a real and/or imagined body and their sacrality (in its various forms) was seemingly heightened. Although none of these items were religious objects (and hence they may not immediately appear to be sacred in the religious sense), it is important to reflect on the fact that all of them were owned or encountered by Jews, who, whether they were practicing or not, would undoubtedly have been influenced in some way by perceptions of the human body in Judaism. As Yakir Englander has highlighted, as well as being seen as sacred, the body is also central to the performative nature of “halakhic practice,” e.g. the movement and closing of the eyes required to fully immerse oneself in prayer, the wrapping of the body in a tallit and tefillin. Englander notes that “halakhic literature contains a consensus

about the inability to fulfill a halakhic obligation merely through mental contemplation and emotional experience.”²¹ Howard Eilberg-Schwartz has taken this even further, arguing that Jews should be seen as “people of the body” because of the diverse range of interactions, identity formations, and memory constructs associated with “making sense of what it means to be and to live as Jews.”²² Therefore, if one takes the view that the body is sacred due to its connection to God, it becomes possible to imagine a potential scenario whereby holding items with sentimental or other value close to the body might be perceived as moving them closer to God or perhaps even calling for God’s protection (particularly when they are being hidden from those who would seek to defile or destroy them and their owner).

- ¹² As I have highlighted in my analysis, and as I have noted in my wider work in Holocaust archaeology, items that have a bodily connection are often perceived as having a different status to those that do not for other reasons too—possibly even being considered as part of the body—and this requires us to consider complex ethical questions around their treatment. Therefore, we must ask: Should these objects either associated with or part of the body be viewed in the same way? Should they be sought out? If so, how should they be examined? If the remains are buried, should they be excavated? If so, should they be reburied, exhibited, or stored? For items already in museum collections, how should they be handled? How can their status be reflected in the ways in which they are handled from discovery through to representation? A strong case can be made for the inclusion of some items that are considered to be part of the body, or which have a strong connection to it, in existing guidelines surrounding the treatment of human remains in archaeological and museum settings. Here we can look to discussions surrounding Indigenous material culture in Australia and the United States where these issues have a longer history of consideration in relation to sacred (religious) and secular objects considered sacred, and where greater engagement with communities with connections to the items has been advocated.²³ However, while the treatment of items such as dentures and prosthetics as if they were human tissue or bone might be appropriate, in the context of the Holocaust it seems unlikely that anyone would suggest burying items such as a blouse or jewelry as there is a sense amongst their owners, their descendants, archaeologists, and museum professionals that these should be seen. Hence, the type of object, its relationship to the body and any religious or cultural associations will clearly need to be considered. There will be no “one size fits all” approach but certainly there needs to be greater awareness of the perceived value and sacrality/sacralities of objects when determining how they should be handled and analyzed, especially where body proximity is a factor.
- ¹³ Finally, the form that connections, sacrality, and value takes will of course differ based on the individuals who come into contact with them, influenced by whether they belong to or are being witnessed by survivors, descendants, forensic archaeologists, museum professionals, or other people from other communities, and whether those individuals’ religious beliefs (e.g., regarding what constitutes the human body, the relationships between the body and objects, and mediation with God through objects) come into play. For experts who engage in the study of material culture, this issue of body proximity and objects that have been in contact with the human body may insert us into the final stage or moments of a person’s life, enabling us to examine them in more detail and also to

explore the layers of meaning assigned to objects in the context of their death. This can be a traumatic, humbling, and insightful experience, and certainly one which highlights the importance of Holocaust materiality in broadening our understanding of these atrocities and the legacies they have left behind.

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Notes

1. USHMM, 2018.70.5, Portrait of a German Jewish girl in a handmade burlap frame.
2. The object biography is available at “Portrait of Eva Simon in a handmade burlap frame,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed July 18, 2025 <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn594801>.
3. Items in the collections of the Auschwitz Jewish Center and Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau provide countless well-known examples. See also the Editors’ Introduction and the other contributions to this volume.
4. Sara Berger, *Experten der Vernichtung: Das T4-Reinhardt-Netzwerk in den Lagern Belzec, Sobibor und Treblinka* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2013).
5. For further information about the forensic archaeological investigations at Treblinka, see Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Finding Treblinka: Forensic and Archaeological Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2026); Caroline Sturdy Colls and Kevin Colls, “The Heart of Terror: A Forensic and Archaeological Assessment of the Old Gas Chambers at Treblinka,” in *Archaeologies of Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism, and Repression: Dark Modernities*, eds. Pavel Vareka and James Symonds (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 83–105.
6. These issues are discussed further in Chapter 1 of Sturdy Colls, *Finding Treblinka*.
7. Oren Baruch Stier, *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (Rutgers University Press, 2015).
8. Layla Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss: Memory, Materiality and Mass Graves of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2011), 159.
9. Genesis 1:26-27; Vayikra Rabbah 34:3; Elliot N. Dorff, “Judaism—The Body Belongs to God: Judaism and Transhumanism,” in *Transhumanism and the Body: The World Religions Speak*, eds. Calvin Mercer and Derek F. Maher (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 101-119; Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, “The Problem of the Body for the People of the Book,” in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 1-16.
10. Genesis 1:26-27; Vayikra Rabbah 34:3; For some of the debates on this topic, see Aaron Segal, “Body and Soul,” in *The Routledge Companion to Jewish Philosophy*, eds. Daniel Rynhold and Tyron Goldschmidt (London: Routledge, 2025), chapter 4.
11. Dorff, “Judaism—The Body Belongs to God: Judaism and Transhumanism,” 101.
12. Ephraim Diamond, “Introduction to the Jewish Rules of Purity and Impurity,” *My Jewish Learning*, accessed July 18, 2025, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/introduction-to-the-jewish-rules-of-purity-and-impurity/> Numbers, 19.
13. For examples, see Claudia Linda Reese, “New Approaches to Photography in

Holocaust Exhibitions,” *Holocaust Studies* 30, no. 3 (2024): 369–391, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2023.2251323>; Lilijana Radonić, “Displaying Violence in Memorial Museums – Reflections on the Use of Photographs,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 34, no. 1 (2023): 59–84, <https://doi.org/10.25365/oezg-2023-34-1-4>; Trish Byers, “Rethinking Purpose, Protocol, and Popularity in Displaying the Dead in Museums,” in *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains: A Global Challenge in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology*, eds. Kirsty Squires, David Errickson and Nicholas Márquez-Grant (Switzerland: Springer, 2019), 239–263; Caroline Sturdy Colls and Kevin Colls, “Holocaust victims, Jewish Law and the Ethics of Archaeological Investigations,” in Zuzanna Dziuban and Rob van der Laarse, eds. *Accessing Campscapes: Critical Approaches and Inclusive Strategies for European Conflicted Pasts*, special issue, *Heritage, Memory and Conflict* 3, no.1 (2023): 25–30. <https://doi.org/10.3897/hmc.3.69978>; “Preserving Original Camp Relics: Philosophy, Theory, and Practice,” *Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau*, published February 16, 2004, accessed July 4, 2024, <https://www.auschwitz.org/en/museum/news/preserving-original-camp-relics-philosophy-theory-and-practice,353.html>.

14. For the issues surrounding the online publication of images, see Ruth-Anne Lenga, “Seeing Things Differently: The Use of Atrocity Images in Teaching about the Holocaust,” in Stuart Foster, et al, eds., *Holocaust Education: Contemporary Challenges and Controversies* (University College London Press, 2020), 195 and David Errickson and Tim J.U. Thompson, “Sharing is not Always Caring: Social Media and the Dead,” in *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains*, eds. Kirsty Squires, David Errickson and Nicholas Márquez-Grant (Switzerland: Springer, 2019), 299–313.

115 USHMM, 1995.72.1, Gold ring taken by a Jewish youth when he escaped Treblinka death camp; Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 159.

16. Eddie Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka: Daring to Resist and Refusing to Die* (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2009), 163.

17. “Lavender blouse with tie worn during a young woman’s escape from the Warsaw ghetto,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed December 1, 2025, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn519054>

18. What follows is derived from the USHMM object record and Yad Vashem, The Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, Item ID: 13859255, Basia Warhaftig; Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, 285, Hanna H.

19. Elisabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (London: Routledge, 2020), 1.

20. Santanu Das, “Sensing the Sepoy: Objects, letters and songs of Indian soldiers, 1914–1918,” in *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, eds. Nicholas Saunders and Paul Cornish (London: Routledge, 2017), 313. This is a point I also explore in more detail in my book: Sturdy Colls, *Finding Treblinka*.

21. Yakir Englander, “The Concept of Body in Judaism: The Shaping of the Halakhic

(Jewish legal) Body from a Phenomenological Perspective,” in *The Concept of Body in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, eds. Christoph Böttigheimer and Konstantin Kamp (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024), 1-2, 6, 19 and 28.

22. Eilberg-Schwartz ed. *People of the Body*, 8.

23. For examples, see Michael Pickering, “Qualifying the Sacred: Recognising First Nations Cultural Values in the Management and Repatriation of Museum Collections,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 39, no. 1 (2024): 20-35; Krystiana L. Krupa, Jayne-Leigh Thomas, Rebecca Hawkins, Julie Olds, and Scott Willard, “Holding Ground: Reconsidering the Sensitivity of Backdirt in the Context of NAGPRA,” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 49, no. 3 (2024): 186-191; Emily Bergeron, “The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: Where Are We Now?” *Human Rights* 49, no. 3 (2024), accessed December 1, 2025, <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/resources/human-rights/2024-january/native-american-graves-protection-repatriation-act-where-are-we-now/>



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