Corpses, dead body politics and agency in human geography: following the corpse of Dr Petru Groza

This paper follows the mobilities of the dead body of Dr Petru Groza (1884-1958), a significant political figure in post-World War II socialist Romania, to explore the implications for human geography of engaging with the dead. Although there has been a considerable interest in 'geographies of the body' and 'deathscapes' human geography has had relatively little to say about dead bodies. The paper draws on literatures from death studies, memory studies, history, anthropology, law and dead body politics to develop an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the role of the corpse in society, and argues that human geography should do more to consider how dead bodies contribute to the formation of contemporary geographies. To illustrate these points the analysis first explores how the treatment of Groza's corpse and the 'deathwork' associated with it is an example of 'dead body politics'. Second, the analysis draws out the agency of the corpse and its role in a variety of 'deathscapes'. The conclusion considers the implications for human geography of engaging with dead bodies more generally.

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Introduction

This paper follows the mobilities of the corpse of Dr. Petru Groza (1884-1958) to explore the implications for human geography of engaging with the dead. Petru Groza lead the first post-War Romanian Communist government, was Prime Minister 1945-52, and titular Head of State 1952-58. Following his death the Romanian Communist regime appropriated Groza's body as part of broader projects to legitimate socialist Romania. After the 1989 'Revolution', Groza's body was moved from Bucharest to his birthplace, Băcia, in Transylvania (see Figure 1 for locations).

The paper first explores the intersection of literatures on 'the body', mobilities, death studies, memory studies, anthropology, law, history, and dead body politics to argue that while human geography has generally neglected dead bodies it could be enriched by the study of corpses. As an example, we derive an inter-disciplinary approach to understanding the corpse in society to frame the analysis of the mobile dead body of Dr Petru Groza. The paper then outlines Groza's historical significance, before following the travels of his dead body across Romania. The analysis draws out how Groza's corpse was the subject of the dead body politics of the Romanian Communist state but also how, in tension with this, it displayed agency. The conclusion draws out the implications of the analysis for how human geography can engage with dead bodies more generally.

<center>< Figure 1 about here ></center>

Geography, 'dead body politics' and the agency of corpses

Studies of dying, death and the dead have only relatively recently emerged as a sub-field of geographical enquiry, reflecting the tendency in modern Western societies and academia to sequester death. However, work in a range of other disciplines, and an emerging geographical literature, have developed theoretical insights into dying, bereavement and dead bodies as corpses have become more visible in society and perhaps death has become less taboo (see

the discussion of debates around death as taboo in Woodthorpe 2010). Drawing on literatures from death studies, memory studies, anthropology, law, history and dead body politics we argue that human geography could productively engage in interdisciplinary studies of dead bodies at a range of scales. To begin with, it is important to note the theoretical turn within the discipline of death studies towards the 'continuing bonds' model of bereavement (Klass *et al*. 1996; Klass and Goss 2003), which recognises the importance of people's continuing attachment to their dead loved ones (in contrast to the 'broken bonds' model which has until recently dominated modern Western societies and bereavement counselling ie. putting the dead aside in order to 'move on'). Continuing bonds can take the form of personalised memorialisation practices, for example, and the integration of memories of dead loved ones into the present. However, engagement with the dead also presents an opportunity to analyse a range of processes which are central in reshaping contemporary society and politics. As Foltyn (2008, 99) suggests:

> the dead body has never been a more intriguing, important subject for scholars, public policy officials, the mass media, and the general public. The human corpse, and its social meanings and how it should be valued, discussed, disposed of, imaged, and used, is a critical subject, generating public debate, enormous media attention, and corporate interest.

Human geography has done much to develop insights into contemporary society through the study of 'geographies of the body', but the focus has been predominantly on live rather than dead bodies. As Longhurst (2005, 94) notes 'Questions of the body – its materiality, discursive construction, regulation and representation – are absolutely crucial to understanding spatial relations at every scale.' The living body is a primary site of identity and social experience, and bodies and spaces are mutually constituted through embodied practice and performance (Butler 1990; McDowell 1995). This relationship is both political and subject to/expressive of power relations (Nast and Pile 1998; Foucault 1980). More recently, the importance of mobile (and immobile) bodies has been stressed within the 'mobilities paradigm' (Sheller and Urry 2006, 6), which emphasizes that places are shaped by 'the multiple networked mobilities of capital, persons, objects, signs and information.' The meaning of a place can be defined by what is moving in and out of it as a part of banal 'corporeal mobilities', such as commuting or shopping.

Despite conceptualising bodies as 'multiple, fluid...complex amalgamations that are multiply situated' (Longhurst 2005, 93-4) the literature on geographies of the body has done little to engage with the significance of bodies once they cease to be living. While there is a long tradition of studying mortality within population geography this approach to death is statistical and demographic and has not engaged with the meanings of death and dying. Notions of 'biopower' (disciplining the body and monitoring and regulating populations - Foucault 1980) and 'necropolitics' (sovereignty and state control over life and death - Mbembe 2003) have barely been extended beyond the living, for example, as Rose (2009) and Olds *et al.* (2005) do when drawing attention to the racialised representation of the dead in recent natural disasters and terrorist attacks and how this interacts with broader geopolitical processes.

However, there has been a recent growth in geographical analyses of death, dying and the dead, including consideration of the spatial variation in patterns of death and its causes and how societies engage in various rituals and performances associated with the dead (Pitte 2004; and see Davies 2002). Literature has begun to focus on how the mutual constitution of the body and space change over the life course particularly through illness and death (eg. Teather 1999; Maddrell and Sidaway 2010a). Analyses of memorialisation practices highlight the politics of death and commemoration, especially their links to the construction of national identity (eg. Johnson 1995; Forest and Johnson 2002; Sidaway 2009). Geographers have explored how the dead have a presence and effect among the living by analysing spiritualism, the spectral and hauntings (eg. Bell 1997; Pile 2005; Till 2005; Holloway 2006, 2010; Holloway and Kneale 2008; and see May 2010 on zombie bodies), though the focus here is on spirits and ghosts rather than material remains.

A major focus of recent geographical enquiry has been the analysis of 'deathscapes' (eg. Teather 1998; Hartig and Dunn 1998; Kong 1999; Yeoh 1999; Foote 2002; Muzaini and Yeoh 2007; Graham and Whelan 2007; Cloke and Pawson 2008; Wylie 2009; Sidaway 2009; Maddrell 2009; Maddrell and Sidaway 2010a, 2010b). In an important contribution, Maddrell and Sidaway (2010a, 2010b, 4-5) define deathscapes as:

> ...both the places associated with the dead and for the dead, and how these are imbued
> with meanings and associations: the site of a funeral, and the places of final disposition

and of remembrance, and representations of all these. Not only are those places often emotionally fraught, they are frequently the subjects of social contest and power; whilst sometimes being deeply personal, they can also be places where the personal and public intersect. Deathscapes thereby intersect and interact with other moments and topographies, including those of sovereignty..., memory...and work, life and beauty.

Deathscapes are thus highly varied sites in which the dead are buried and/or represented and where the living undertake various forms of performance and embodied practice in relation to the dead. As Maddrell and Sidaway (2010b) summarise, these can include formal spaces such as memorials, crematoria and cemeteries but also diverse informal spaces such as the home or different locations associated with the life and death of the deceased (roadside shrines, a seat in the pub or sports club, a memorial bench on their favourite part of a walk). Many of the studies in Maddrell and Sidaway (2010a) address examples of the 'continuing bonds' model of relationships with the dead.

Within the context of this literature we argue that it is important to extend consideration of what dead bodies actually do in such 'deathscapes'. As Woodthorpe (2010, 64) suggests 'bodies quite literally underpin – both metaphorically and materially – everything that happens in the site. Without these buried bodies, a cemetery is not a cemetery.' Dead bodies have tended to be overlooked or conceptualised as neutral, static remains (Sørensen 2010), fixed in space, with little consideration for their potential mobility and agency. The buried body should be seen as a component of the material culture of the cemetery (Woodthorpe 2010), but as Rugg (2003) suggests, there is little academic analysis of what happens to corpses in the medium-long term. As Sørensen (2010, 112) suggests 'It is crucial to understand the embodied interaction between the bereaved and the deceased – as well as the very significance of the dead body – in order to overcome the rendering of the corpse as neutral, which is an inherent problem in much writing on body, burial and cemeteries.'

Thus in this paper we seek to explore further one area of engagement between human geography and the dead - the role of corpses in social processes and landscapes. At first glance this might seem problematic since, alongside a focus on how the body is disciplined and regulated, geographical analyses have highlighted the importance of the agency, embodied practice and performance of bodies. However, recent developments in death studies have challenged the conceptualisation of the corpse as 'merely' material remains,

stripped of agency, identity and self. Corpses form a link between the living and the dead. Even when dead the body remains a site of identity (Foltyn 2008) and a vehicle for remembrance (Hallam and Hockey 2001). Tarlow (2002, 87) argues that 'the dead body...is...powerfully meaningful' and that we should focus on the 'complex interaction of interests, desires and understandings which are played out through the dead body...'. Dead human beings have power amongst the living, for example through the ways in which 'a dead human body can...represent the living body politic or society itself' (Cantwell 1990, 614). Here the dead body becomes:

> the space of conflict between different interests of power, knowledge and the sacred. The body is politicised, it becomes an institution, and death itself turns out to be more of a political fact than an individual experience. (Domanska 2005, 403).

For example, Verdery (1999, 127) analyses how dead bodies serve as symbols of political order and how 'dead bodies have posthumous political life in the service of creating a newly meaningful universe' (and see Cantwell 1990 on the socio-religious and political role of various mobile corpses). This points to the political use of corpses, and, as Cantwell (1990, 626) argues, 'the transformation of the dead illuminates the transformation of society'. How the corpse continues to interact with the living is controlled by various forms of 'deathwork', specialist work following a death (Walter 2005). While the literature focuses on professionals who work with the dead (eg. priests, embalmers, funeral directors, mediums), we would argue that the state and the family also engage in a range of spatial deathwork practices.

One way in which the corpse has a continued presence in society is through 'dead body politics' (Verdery 1999; Roberts 2008; Lyon-Johnson 2005; Vukov 2003; Davies 2002). Our analysis follows Katherine Verdery's (1999) seminal work *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, which argues that bodies have a considerable posthumous political life. The presence of bodies in landscapes inscribes spaces with particular meanings. Similarly, moving corpses is one strategy to reconfigure space following a period of political change. She argues:

> By repositioning [corpses], restoring them to honor, expelling them, or simply drawing attention to them, their exit from one grave and descent into another marks a change in social visibilities and values (Verdery 1999, 19).

Verdery argues that such mobilities have particular significance in the post-socialist context within strategies to redefine national identities. She traces the movements of the corpses of cultural, political and military figures who were killed or exiled by socialist regimes and subsequently exhumed and reburied as part of constructing narratives about the post-socialist nation through emphasizing links to Europe and 'the West'. The reburial of Imre Nagy (the Hungarian Communist prime minister at the time of the 1956 revolution) in June 1989 is one example. Nagy was executed by the Communist regime and buried in an unmarked grave but his ceremonial reburial with full state honours was a significant moment in Hungary's break with state socialism (see also Maxiánová 2003 on the politics of the return of Milan Hodža's body to post-socialist Slovakia). Funerals and graveyards can thus be employed as 'communicative symbolic actions for the construction of...identity' (Reimers 1999, 147).

However, corpses have an influence beyond what the living make of them. Death studies explores how corpses, though lacking intentionality, nevertheless possess social and mnemonic agency (Hockey *et al*. 2010; Tarlow 2002; Williams 2004; Sørensen 2010; Hallam *et al*. 1999; Hockey and Hallam 2001). Sørensen (2010, 129) sees the corpse as 'an active and potent material agent', while Williams (2004, 265) suggests that:

> the corporeal presence of the dead provides an agency to affect the experience and actions of mourners and evoke memories of the past, rather than serving as a static and passive set of substances manipulated and disposed of by the mourners to serve their socio-political ends.

Hockey *et al*. (2010) argue that corpses have agency in terms of their capacity to have effects. Such effects include how instructions issued before death influence the actions of mourners (Williams 2004), how their remains act as 'dynamic accomplices' in cemetery design (eg. buried or cremated bodies requiring different cemetery landscapes (Sørensen 2010)) or shape practices of dealing with battlefield dead (Gough 2010), or how they become a focus around which beliefs, memories and identities are constituted (Hockey and Hallam 2001; Hockey *et al*. 2010; Williams 2004). Furthermore, the material culture of death, including the corpse itself, is interwoven with a variety of other processes, such as the visual, textual and embodied processes of memory formation (Hockey and Hallam 2001; Williams 2004).

Corpses are thus elements of assemblages of embodied practice and material culture which form a 'distributed personhood' of the dead (Hockey *et al*. 2010, 9). The dead body is 'a node in a nexus of social relationships, objects and exchanges through which personhood and remembrance are distributed and constituted' (Williams 2004, 267). Studying assemblages of death and burial can illuminate the analysis of elite politics and memory (Verdery 1999; Adebanwi 2008). In this way:

> ...the deceased has the potential for social action after their biological death...the physicality and materiality of the dead body and its associated artefacts, structures and places can be seen as extensions of the deceased's personhood, actively affecting the remembrance of the deceased by the living and structuring future social action. Therefore the bodies of the dead...may have...'agency' to affect the actions of mourners and their social memory through their corporeality...the bodies of the dead...need to be considered as a further influence upon social choices and social remembrance. (Williams 2004, 266)

Thus in this paper we trace the mobilities and immobilities of the corpse of Dr Petru Groza to illustrate its role in dead body politics in the socialist and post-socialist eras, but also to explore its agency, in the sense of how the materiality of the corpse creates possibilities and also sets limits to social action. Before this, the following section provides a brief outline of Dr Petru Groza's significance for Romanian society.

Dr Petru Groza: 1884-1958

Dr Petru Groza had an unconventional biography for a socialist prime minister (Cioroianu 2005). He was born in Băcia, Transylvania (then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire) into a family of wealthy priests and intellectuals. Fluent in Romanian, Hungarian and German, Groza studied in Budapest and Leipzig, returning to Transylvania as a lawyer and businessman. In 1919 he entered politics and was elected to parliament six times. In 1933 Groza launched the Ploughman's Front, a left-wing party which represented agrarian interests. The Front allied itself with the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) and Groza gained the nickname '*burghezul rosu*' (the Red Bourgeois). Romania allied itself with Nazi Germany, and as an opponent of fascism Groza was briefly jailed which worked to his benefit after the War.

In August 1944 the Soviet Army invaded Romania and brought it under Soviet influence. However, the RCP lacked the members and popular support to take control. Therefore the Soviets allowed them to enter into a coalition government to give them time to win popular confidence (Fischer-Galati 1967). Stalin and the RCP leadership identified Groza as the preferred leader of this coalition (Cioroianu 2005) since he was an experienced politician and his party was allied to the RCP. Moreover, as a lay member of the Romanian Orthodox Church he could win over the predominantly Orthodox population. Under Soviet pressure Groza was appointed Prime Minister on 6 March 1945. One of his first acts was to return northern Transylvania (annexed by Hungary in 1940) to Romania, an event orchestrated by the Soviets to win him popular support (see Figure 2).

< Figure 2 about here >

During 1945-47 Groza set about transforming Romania into a socialist state modelled on the Soviet Union and in December 1947 the Romanian Peoples' Republic was declared. Groza was never a member of the RCP but he was their highest profile and most successful 'fellow traveller' (Cioroianu 2005). Following bitter feuds within the RCP, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej emerged as party leader in 1952. Dej took over as Premier while Groza became President of the Prezidium of the Grand National Assembly (the communist-era parliament), a position which made him titular head of state but gave him relatively little power.

Petru Groza enjoys an ambivalent reputation in post-communist Romania as a bourgeois property owner who was instrumental in the installation and development of a communist regime. Much post-communist historiography condemns him as a cynical opportunist. For example, the presidential commission inquiring into the communist era (Comisia Prezidenţiala 2006) regards him as a puppet of the RCP and a figurehead intended to give the impression of a representative government. On the other hand, Groza has generally been overshadowed by the considerable body of work focusing on Gheorghiu-Dej and, alongside Dej's ruthless Stalinism, Groza appears relatively humane. Many Romanians admire Groza as a patriot and for returning Transylvania to Romania. In the county of Hunedoara (where Groza had his power base) Groza is held in some regard, especially among older people.

Corpses, dead body politics and agency: following the dead body of Dr Petru Groza 1958-2011

Petru Groza's death on 8th January 1958 was the first among the Communist elite which seized power after WWII and it provoked a set of deathwork practices by the Romanian socialist state regarding the treatment of the bodies of its leaders (Petre 1998). Ceremonial burials of political figures in support of nation-state building projects are common, but what makes Groza significant is that he was buried three times – twice by the Communist regime (1958 and 1963) and again by his family (1990). The mobilities and reburials of his corpse illustrate both the use of corpses for dead body politics and allow an exploration of the degree to which corpses possess agency. In this section we reconstruct the mobilities and three burials of his corpse drawing on semi-structured interviews with key actors associated with the interments, archival sources including official Romanian Communist Party publications, and fieldwork at burial and other sites associated with Groza in Bucharest, Băcia and Deva. It is important to note that in Romania the 'continuing bonds' model of relationships with the dead is more prevalent, for example through practices such as corpse washing before burial, the celebration of *parastas* (a liturgical observance in Eastern Orthodoxism in honour of the deceased) and the holding of the *pomana* (a meal in honour of the deceased which may be repeated over several years in their memory).

Burying Groza at Ghencea Cemetery, Bucharest, 1958

Death, and corpses, must be understood within the specific socio-spatial context in which they occur (Connor 2005; Woodthorpe 2010; Maddrell and Sidaway 2010b; Klass and Goss 2003). As Klass and Goss (2003, 808) suggest 'narratives of grief and continuing bonds at particular times and places need to be understood in terms...of their relationship to cultural narratives that legitimize political power.' The authority of states to govern the disposition of the dead can disrupt their personhood interests and how their kin assign identity in death, provoking tensions along the axes of nationalism, patriotism, religion, family, and personhood (Clark 2005). Thus Klass and Goss (2003, 807) note that those holding political power can police grief 'by controlling the narratives that instruct the bereaved about how to think, feel, and behave in their grief and their continuing bond with the deceased.' State-socialist regimes devoted much attention to the treatment of their heroic 'special dead'

(Vukov 2002, 2003, 2006). Vukov (2006, 1) argues that the socialist state appropriated the means of producing the sacred and placed specific ways of using death as central to its constitution:

> Historiographic and propaganda materials, visual representations in monuments and memorial sites, commemorative ceremonies, and political rituals all abounded with explicit reminders that heroes had to receive veneration and eternal remembrance. Related to a wide network of activities...commemorations legitimised the right of the [Socialist] ideology's special personalities to stay permanently 'alive' and 'vital' and sustained the narratives of their 'eternal presence.'

The exemplar of such practices was, of course, the public display of Lenin's embalmed corpse in a mausoleum in Moscow following his death in 1924.

Although Groza had expressed his wish to be buried in his home village of Băcia, his burial represented an opportunity for the regime to devise its own ceremonies and public spectacles to honour its founders. Therefore Groza's wishes were disregarded in favour of an elaborate state funeral in Bucharest. This occasion instigated a number of practices to construct cultural narratives around Groza to frame his memory as a part of legitimating Communist Party power. A *Comisie de Stat* (State Commission) was announced headed by the Prime Minister, Chivu Stoica. A period of national mourning was declared during which the state altered many of the practices and rhythms of everyday life. State and Party flags were to be flown in the Romanian equivalent of half mast; sporting and cultural events throughout the country were cancelled; and cinemas and concert halls adapted their programmes to the occasion (Anon 1958a).

Groza's body was placed on display for two days in the Palace of the Republic (opposite the Party headquarters) to enable members of the public to pay their last respects. This followed Romanian Orthodox tradition but it also allowed the socialist state to shape the performance and representation of Groza's burial. The period of lying in state and the funeral itself received blanket coverage in the Party newspapers which included images of long queues filing past the coffin to pay homage (Anon 1958b). A permanent honour guard stood by the coffin although its composition varied and, at one stage, it was formed by peasants from Groza's home village (Anon 1958c). Foreign heads of state and diplomats attended the ceremony, a performance shaped by socialist protocols, and the Party newspaper gave

prominent coverage to telegrams of condolence received from other states. Thus the textual, the visual and forms of embodied practice determined by the socialist state were used to create particular narratives shaping 'continuing bonds' with Groza as one of the regime's 'special dead'.

Groza's body also provoked embodied practices and forms of mobility which shaped other, non-state structured, narratives around him. Malarney (1996) details how after 1954 the attempts of the Vietnamese Communist Party to reform funerary practices to reflect state ideology was limited as it was impossible to control all the meanings and values that mourners bring to a ritual. Williams (2004) suggests that the deceased may give instructions to mourners regarding how they should be remembered and that this can be interpreted as a form of agency. Foreseeing his burial in Bucharest, Groza privately stipulated that an envelope containing soil from the rose beds at his family home in Băcia should be buried with him. The priest in Băcia collected the soil and gave it to five railway workers from Băcia who wished to attend the funeral. They discovered that they were travelling on the same train to Bucharest as the Groza family and managed to give the soil to Groza's daughter. Once in Bucharest they exploited personal connections (through associations with Groza's head bodyguard) and were allowed to spend a short time forming the honour guard beside Groza's body (Interviews in Băcia in September 2010 with one of the five railway workers and the retired parish priest who reburied Groza in 1990). These narratives are retold in Băcia as part of the way that Groza's connections with the village are remembered.

On the day of the funeral (10 January 1958) a ceremony was held in central Bucharest attended by the whole Party leadership. Groza's body was subsequently transported to Ghencea cemetery on the edge of the city. Huge crowds turned out to line the streets and parade along the route of the funeral cortege (see Figure 3) which was interpreted as an indication of the esteem in which the former Premier was held (Leustean 2009). While Groza's body was being moved in this ceremonial fashion the state sought to use the occasion to alter the rhythms and mobilities of life across the country to make the interment of his body central to people's everyday lives. In addition to live radio coverage the Funeral Commission decreed that work in all enterprises would stop for three minutes, all traffic was to stop for one minute, and all factories, locomotives and river vessels should sound their sirens for one minute (Anon 1958a). Groza was interred in the military section of Ghencea Cemetery in a ceremony which included full state and military honours.

< **Figure 3 about here** >

However, in other respects Groza's funeral was unexpected for the burial of a Communist leader. It began with a religious service attended by Groza's family and the Party leadership which was broadcast on state radio (Leustean 2009). Moreover, the graveside service was officiated by priests (Cioroianu 2005) and ended in what even the Party newspaper reported as a 'short religious ceremony' (Anon 1958d). Groza's corpse displayed agency here contingent on his personality and former position. His was the body of a man who was the son of a priest and a former synod member of the Orthodox Church. In addition he was not a Communist Party member. In terms of dead body politics the occasion of Groza's burial was an opportunity for the regime to affirm a particular model of state-church relations (Leustean 2009). Unlike some other communist states, religious worship was not banned in Romania. The Party realised that the Romanian Orthodox Church (an institution that retained the allegiance of the majority of Romanians) could be used to further the Party's economic, political and social goals. Hence, the church was permitted to continue its activities (under tight state control and supervision) in return for unconditional support for the Party's agenda (Deletant 1995; Stan and Turcescu 2007). Other non-Orthodox denominations were, however, forcibly suppressed. Groza's funeral was an opportunity for the regime to demonstrate both the nominal religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution but also the Orthodox Church's close allegiance to the state (Leustean 2009). Moreover, since numerous international dignitaries attended the funeral of the Romanian Head of State, Groza's body was co-opted into broader strategies through which the People's Republic of Romania sought to present itself to an external audience on its own terms as a modern, plural and tolerant socialist state. In this context, Groza's corpse shaped various embodied performances and representational practices associated with his burial as well as broader identity-building projects on the part of the socialist state.

Burying Groza at the socialist mausoleum, Bucharest, 1963

Groza's body lay in Ghencea Cemetery for the next five years during which time the Romanian state developed various symbolic practices to celebrate its achievements. This included a wider commemoration of Groza through such activities as erecting four statues of

him and renaming streets, schools, an agricultural and a medical institute, a collective farm and even a mining town after him (and see Light and Young forthcoming). However, the Party lacked a dedicated burial site through which to perform the memory of their 'special dead'. Consequently they constructed a large-scale mausoleum complex, the *Monumentul eroilor luptei pentru libertatea poporului si a patriei, pentru socialism* ('Monument to the heroes of the struggle for the freedom of the people and of the motherland, for socialism'). The mausoleum consisted of a central rotunda reserved for the coffins of top Communists, seventy ceremonial tombs for leading socialist activists and other members of the ruling elite, and a single-story hemicycle for the funeral urns of lesser Party figures (Light and Young 2010). The mausoleum was a part of the regime's spatial reconfiguring of death (Vukov 2006), a shift away from spaces associated with the religious treatment of death to spaces for the dead which were suitable for ideological control and surveillance, in which Communist regimes shaped the nature of the sacred.

On 31 December 1963 (the 17th anniversary of the Romanian People's Republic) the mausoleum was inaugurated in a lavish ceremony (Anon 1963) during which Groza's body was moved from Ghencea Ceremony and reinterred in the central rotunda of the mausoleum. The occasion was attended by the top Party leadership and members of Groza's family, along with leaders of community organisations and state institutions, scientists, artists, army officers, working people and a military honour guard and band. The ceremony started with the state hymn. Then Chivu Stoica gave an address praising the militants of the Party. He said of Groza:

> Here are also found the earthly remains of the eminent patriot and outstanding statesman Petru Groza, courageous militant for democracy and progress who, in the role of high responsibility which he held in the leadership of the democratic peoples' state, brought a great contribution to the creation and consolidation of our socialist society. (Anon 1963)

The ceremony concluded with the singing of the Internationale, a 21-gun salute, the lighting of an eternal flame on the rotunda and the laying of wreaths from several military, academic, workers' and young people's organisations. Finally, Party leaders visited the crypts and graves to pay their respects.

The fact that Groza's corpse still existed was significant for this dead body politics and the deathwork of the Communist state. Cremation was (and remains) rare in Romania since it is forbidden by the Romanian Orthodox Church. In the Romanian system of death the idea of respect towards the body overlaps with that of burial (Rotar 2010). The fact that Orthodox practices were followed in Groza's original burial ensured the continuation of Groza's 'earthly remains' ie. a corpse which the state could appropriate for its dead body politics. The existence of a body and coffin supported the state's shaping of the sacred which could be organised around Groza's and others' corpses. His corpse was thus incorporated into the 'socialist notion of sacred bodies and immortal heroism.' (Vukov 2003, 50).

Groza's body remained in the mausoleum for 27 years. During this period the monument continued to play an important role as a symbolic space for the Party. The bodies of two other socialist leaders (Constantin Parhon and Gheorghiu-Dej) joined Groza's in the rotunda while eighteen other Party dignitaries were buried in the surrounding tombs. Annual ceremonies were held at the mausoleum on the anniversaries of the deaths of those buried there (see Figure 4). The site became the focus for ceremonies on state occasions such as 1 May and 23 August (the date of the 1944 *coup d'etat* which overthrew Romania's pro-Nazi leader Ion Antonescu). School and Pioneer groups regularly visited the site. A solemn visit was also a standard element of state visits by other socialist leaders. For example, the state visit of the vice-president of the Chinese Communist Party in 1966 was marked by a visit to the crypts of Groza and Gheorghiu-Dej (Anon 1966). The corpses of Groza and other socialists were thus central to the Romanian socialist state's performance of dead body politics to construct memory and symbolise its achievements and power.

<   **Figure 4 about here** >

Burying Groza in Băcia, Transylvania, 1990

Romania's socialist regime violently collapsed in the 'Revolution' of December 1989 and the Romanian Communist Party was declared illegal in January 1990. In this context, the mausoleum was suddenly redundant. As Klass and Goss (2003) suggest, where the state has appropriated and shaped the nature of continuing bonds with the dead, a change in political regime can lead to an alteration in the nature of those continuing bonds in which the claims of

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other actors become more powerful, such as the family. There was no longer a Party to maintain the mausoleum, which in any case was discordant with the values of the new regime. Moreover, the individuals interred in the mausoleum were now part of a history that was officially repudiated - Romania's new heroes were those who had died in the 'Revolution' and were buried in the nearby Bellu Cemetery. After 1989 the strongly sacrilized discourses attached to the socialist 'special dead' withered and the nature of the sacred attached to these bodies and the monuments representing them changed in a way central to the shaping of post-socialist identities (Vukov 2003; Verdery 1999). In Romania there was a resurgence of religious practice and people maintained respect for the sacredness of death in a way informed by Romanian Orthodoxism, while at the same time the post-socialist state was active in shaping accounts of the Communist past. It was in this context that bodies (among them Petru Groza's) started to move out of the mausoleum. However, the removal of his corpse in March 1990 is more complex than a simplistic de-Communisation of the cultural landscape and discrediting of the socialist past by the post-socialist Romanian state and, again, we can point to the agency of the corpse in the events that followed.

Romania in 1989-90 was a violent and unpredictable place (Rady 1992; Gallagher 1995). More than a thousand people had died during the 'Revolution' which many Romanians regarded as little more than a stage-managed seizure of power by second-tier Communist Party members (the National Salvation Front). In the euphoria of the 'Revolution' some elements of socialist-era cultural landscapes were removed, vandalised or destroyed. Groza's corpse was interred in a major ceremonial site of the socialist era and thus potentially open to desecration as a part of the ongoing generalised destruction of 'all things Communist'. Not surprisingly, this provoked fear and concern among his family. Additionally, the Romanian Orthodox Church holds that the correct way to bury a corpse is below ground in the earth. Again, the existence of a corpse was significant because as Sørensen (2010, 129) suggests:

> The dead move us, the living, as we react to the presence of death, its social and mental affinity and the materiality of the corpse. Like any other kind of material culture and like all other forms of bodies, we relate to...the dead body, and we are moved by the emotional, social and cultural effect provoked by the body (and see Williams 2004; Tarlow 2002).

Groza's body was lying in a crypt above ground, and thus for his family was not properly buried. Moreover, he was interred in Bucharest and not in Băcia as had been his wish. The materiality of the corpse was thus central to its mobility and further performances of death, remembrance and memory as part of complex emotional geographies (Davidson *et al*. 2005; Anderson and Smith 2001).

Groza's son contacted the authorities to reclaim the body (this section draws on interviews in September 2010 in Băcia with the former parish priest who reburied Groza there and in Bucharest with Groza's nephew and daughter-in-law in September and November 2010). Members of Groza's family drove to Bucharest in March 1990 to reclaim his body and had to physically manoeuvre the coffin (weighing up to two tonnes) out of the rotunda (Interview with Groza's daughter-in-law, November 2010). They then phoned the priest in Băcia and asked him to prepare a grave for Petru Groza in the family plot. The priest asked local gravediggers who were already working in the Băcia cemetery to prepare a grave for Groza's coffin. The family then drove with the coffin back to Băcia (a journey of several hundred kilometres which would have taken almost a day). This can only have been a traumatic experience for the family, in close proximity to Groza's corpse, and in a climate of fear and uncertainty. As Williams (2004, 265) suggests, this illustrates how the dead are often perceived to 'influence and even control the manner of their treatment, their identities and remembrance through a dialogue with the living...the corporeal presence of the dead provides an agency to affect the experience and actions of mourners.' In this context the family's deathwork practices changed during the journey from Bucharest and they phoned the Băcia priest several times to change their plans. The original intention was to take the body to Deva where Groza had practised as a lawyer and where the family owned a large house. However, they first altered this to holding a religious service at Groza's house in Băcia, and then changed plans again, electing to go straight to the cemetery in Băcia.

Upon arrival at Băcia the family had intended a swift and secret burial but local people had noticed the newly opened grave in the Groza plot and had ascertained what was going to happen (Interviews with the former parish priest and Groza's relatives, September and November 2010). The corporeal presence of Groza's body arriving in Băcia had a complex effect on local villagers and their performances (Interview with the former parish priest, September 2010). The decision to move Groza's body was driven by the family's fear (rather than by state sponsored 'de-Communising' of space) and this fear extended to what it might

signify to be involved in Groza's reburial. On the one hand, many would have been worried about being associated with the reburial of a prominent Communist-era leader at a time when state-socialism and everything associated with it was being publically and violently rejected. On the other hand, the prospect of the reinstatement of socialism was not unimaginable and villagers may have been fearful about *not* attending the reburial of such a prominent figure. In addition, Petru Groza was (and is) held in high esteem in Băcia and was recognised as having helped the locality significantly during his lifetime. For this reason, many in the village wanted to pay their respects (having not had the opportunity at his original burial in 1958). Thus the arrival in Băcia of Groza's corpse provoked a variety of responses as people tried to negotiate their relationship to Groza's body and the Communist regime more generally during the uncertain early post-socialist period.

In the event, the Băcia cemetery was crowded with villagers during the reburial ceremony and subsequent *pomana* (memorial meal). The family's fears that the reburial would be the occasion for a public denouncement of Petru Groza proved to be unfounded. Three priests officiated at the reburial, and since the Romanian Orthodox Church has no formal ritual for a reburial the family asked the village priest to perform the full burial rites (even though this had already been done in Bucharest in 1958). At the family's request the Băcia priest spoke at the service and praised Groza as a defender of the Church. However, in the climate of uncertainty and fear all three priests left the cemetery immediately after the ceremony.

Since 1990 Petru Groza's body has remained in his home village (see Figure 5). The presence of his body inspired new practices of commemoration. For more than a decade, until he retired, the parish priest organised an annual *pomana* to commemorate Groza. Candles and flowers are left at the grave. For his family and for the residents of Băcia he remains an esteemed figure in local memory. Although Groza is dismissed in official state-level discourse, attitudes to Groza in Băcia are overwhelmingly positive. He is remembered as a 'local man made good', someone who did great things for Romania while remembering his roots, and as an impressive statesman who resisted the Soviets. The presence of Groza's corpse in the village graveyard thus shapes contemporary and future ways in which he is remembered and commemorated.

< Figure 5 about here >

While state-led narratives of Groza (such as the 2007 Tismăneanu Commission) repudiate him and have no use for him to legitimate their power under post-socialism, the role of his corpse in local dead body politics continues in a very different way. The positive local memory of Groza is deployed as part of efforts to build a strong local identity for the commune to help it negotiate the political and economic upheaval of post-socialism. The official website of the commune has featured a picture of his grave and includes the information that:

> The village of Băcia is the place of birth of Petru Groza. The personality of Petru Groza is very powerfully rooted in the memory of the inhabitants of the commune, who make a distinction between their fellow villager and the politician whose actions had an unfortunate influence on the fortunes of Romania. (Commune of Băcia 2011).

As the *Primar* (mayor) of the commune stated, when people ask what Băcia is known for he replies '*satul în care s-a născut Petru Groza*' ('the village where Petru Groza was born' – Interview with the mayor of Băcia commune, September 2010). It also intended to exploit the village's association as the place where Groza was born and is buried for local economic development initiatives. In 2007 the *Primar* suggested that a socialist statue of Groza erected in the nearby industrial town of Deva in 1962, which had been torn down and abandoned in 1990 (Anon 2011), should be re-erected in Băcia in a new park to be built near the Groza family home (Anon 2007; Interview with the mayor of Băcia commune, September 2010; Light and Young forthcoming). This was done in an attempt to draw down funding from the county administration and to boost tourism. The statue has been moved but currently lies in the garden of the family home awaiting re-erection (fieldwork in Băcia, September 2010; Light and Young forthcoming). Thus the new assemblage of corpse, grave and statue can potentially shape future local identity formation.

Conclusion

This paper has followed the mobilities of the corpse of Dr Petru Groza to explore how it was co-opted into different forms of state-socialist and post-socialist dead body politics, but also to illustrate how his corpse displayed various forms of agency which impacted on processes of burial, commemoration, mobilities and identity formation. More generally, we have argued

that human geography's neglect of dead bodies obscures their role in a variety of geographical processes. Geographers could profitably engage with the study of corpses in various ways, informed by a synthesis of the insights offered by the overlapping literatures of death studies and deathscapes.

There are many contemporary processes in which space, place, death and dead bodies are mutually constituted. There are numerous assemblages incorporating the dead and the dying which are central in reshaping contemporary society and politics. These include: ageing and illness; technologically assisted life and assisted suicide; emerging forms of bereavement, burial and remembrance; systems of belief; organ donation and the illegal trade in organs; the commemoration of victims of terrorist attacks; mass graves and the geopolitics of war and genocide; and the mediatisation of the corpse (eg. in forensic television dramas). Corpses play a significant role in broader processes as parts of complex assemblages of memories, representations, embodied performances and the material culture of death which the death studies literature (eg. Hockey *et al.* 2010) conceptualises as making up the 'distributed personhood' of the dead. All of these are areas where human geographical research could do much to examine their intersection with contemporary geographical concerns about assemblages, emotions and affect (eg. Farías and Bender 2009; Davidson *et al.* 2005; Anderson and Smith 2001; Pile 2010; Holloway 2010). As Foltyn (2008, 104) suggests:

> ...[As] Relic, museum exhibit, dissection spectacle, ''other,'' site of ethnic and religious identities, organ/tissue donor, monster, sex object, porn star, infotainment, funeral icon, 'data trash', clone precursor, simulation or real, dead bodies are maps of power and identity. In the twenty-first century, the corpse in contemporary culture is all of these things and more.

In this paper we have sought to demonstrate how a focus on the corpse, as a complex and neglected form of 'the body', can bring greater depth to the understanding of geographical processes. In particular, we have developed current understandings of deathscapes by analysing what dead bodies actually do in these landscapes. The literatures on commemoration and deathscapes have generated valuable insights into the performances of mourners and the bereaved, and the socio-culturally and politically contested nature of

landscapes associated with death. However there is remarkably little work on the role that the bodies of the dead (which are central to, and essential for, these processes) play. As might be expected, corpses are subject to discipline from various sources. Funerary practices cosmetically re-present the dead body in ways acceptable to the living, seeking to control the unruly and threatening aspects of the corpse (Walter 2005). State power regulates the practical disposal of corpses and we have illustrated how the socialist and post-socialist Romanian state (at different scales) co-opted Groza's body as part of 'dead body politics' (and see Verdery 1999).

However, the analysis also developed perspectives from death studies which encourage a view of the corpse as a powerfully meaningful and active agent, extending current geographical analysis of 'the body' to include dead bodies. Corpses are not neutral, static remains. The mobilities of Petru Groza's corpse destroyed assemblages and created new ones over time and space in the context of changing views of the sacred in Romania which provoked the negotiation and renegotiation of identity formation, political legitimation, commemoration and memory. By developing our example of the various forms of agency displayed by Groza's corpse, we also argue that there is an extra dimension to consider by looking at the complex role of corpses in landscapes. This could lead to better understandings of, for example, cultural and symbolic landscapes, memory, the interaction of the living and the dead, geographies of the body and biopower. Corpses are a further dimension to the complex materialities and symbolisms of the body while in life and deserve more attention in human geography.

Such a research agenda must be sensitive to the geographical and temporal contexts in which the interaction between the living and corpses are shaped. Our example of Petru Groza concerns a member of a political elite in the context of radical political change, but further grounded geographical studies could do much to reveal the complexities of these relationships and move beyond studies concerned with sketching general societal models of bereavement and relationships to death. Each death, and corpse, is also an individual experience which people deal with in different and complex ways. Human geography could do more to examine the relationships between the living and the dead through understanding relationships with dead bodies as processes which are increasingly not sequestered away. There is considerable geographical and temporal variation in such relationships, including some cultural contexts in which people's physical and emotional contact with the corpses of

loved ones is much more immediate. For example, consider the practices of corpse washing before burial in Bali (Connor 1995) and Romania, or the ritual exhumation and rewrapping of ancestral bodies practiced in Imerina, Madagascar (Graeber 1995).

This is not to fetishize the relationships of non-Western 'others' to corpses but to draw attention to the wide range of relationships with corpses that exist. The example of Petru Groza illustrates how even the same corpse within one country can be both the object and active subject of different relationships between the living and the dead at different times and under different regimes. While Woodthorpe (2010) found in her study of a contemporary London graveyard that mention by family members of the dead buried there was still predominantly taboo, Walter (2005) questions portrayals of a modern West in which the dead are cut off from the living as increasingly inaccurate. Other practices of disposing of the dead which involve very different relationships to them are increasingly popular, such as the growth in 'natural' or 'green' burials (see Clayden *et al.* 2010) or making jewellery or ornaments from cremation ashes. The introduction of cremation, whether due to changing social attitudes or imposition by authoritarian regimes seeking to reshape people's everyday values, has produced very different outcomes in terms of burial practice, the design of cemetery landscapes and the performances of mourners in such vastly different contexts as China, Denmark and Vietnam (Klass and Goss 2003; Sørensen 2010; Malarney 1996). Engaging with grounded, situated research on dead bodies thus offers a potentially rich avenue of geographical enquiry.

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Anon 1958b Mitinguri de doliu în întreprinderi, instituţii de stat şi sate *Scînteia,* 10 January 1

Anon 1958c Untitled picture *Scînteia,* 10 January 1

Anon 1958d Mare miting de doloi *Scînteia,* 11 January 4

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Captions

Figure 1: location of places mentioned in the text.

Figure 2: Dr. Petru Groza (centre, holding hat), March 14th 1945, following the celebration of the return of Northern Transylvania to Romania, accompanied by senior Romanian and Soviet political and military leaders. Photo credit: Photo #HA115, *Online Communism Photo Collection*, (accessed 15.07.2011), (ANIC, fund ISSIP, Petru Groza photographs, 115/1945) (originally published in *Scînteia*, the Romanian Communist Party newspaper).

Figure 3: Crowds march along the route of Groza's funeral cortege to his burial in Ghencea Cemetery, 10th January 1958. Photo credit: Photo #E226, *Online Communism Photo Collection*, (accessed 15.07.2011), (ANIC, fund ISSIP, Petru Groza photographs, 7/1958) (originally published in *Scînteia*).

Figure 4: Official state commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Groza's death, 8th January 1968 at the mausoleum where he was reburied in 1963. Photo credit: Photo #G340, *Online Communism Photo Collection*, (accessed 15.07.2011), (ANIC, fund ISSIP, Petru Groza photographs, 3/1968).

Figure 5: Groza's grave in the family plot in Băcia cemetery where he was reburied in 1990. Photo credit: C. Young.