# Goal:

This week we focus upon two issues which are crucial in dealing with human or animal remains: taphonomic changes to the bone itself and interpretation of in situ remains

# Preparation:

Read (both in drop box under Lab Readings)

Buikstra, J and Ubelaker, D 1994 Recording Standards for the Human Skeleton Chapter 8. Available on dropbox.

Roksandic, M Recording a grave. [https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/books/9781420058352 Chapter 5](https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/books/9781420058352%20Chapter%205).

# Task:

## Part 1:

What we have given you is a series of fragments that have experienced different taphonomic circumstances. Think about these in relation to the reading and describe them. So in recording you need to consider:

size of the fragment,

possible identification of the fragment,

Surface texture (including weathering, polish),

Colour changes,

nature of breakage (type of break, bevelling, angles),

Timing of breakage (premortem, perimortem, antemortem),

any evidence of modification (animal, human)

If bone is burnt then all of the above are important but also consider the location and colour changes on the bone’s surface, surface text (longitudinally split, transverse checking, or curved), the presence of deformation or warping, any indication of shielding and on what surfaces.

We have laid out trays with modification identified and then ten examples for you to record. You may get through all of these or you may not but make sure you do a thorough job of thinking through taphonomy. I have attached recording sheets for you to use.

## Part 2:

I am giving you a sense of what we often face in the field by laying out a series of photographs of different finds of human remains. Based on your ability to identify elements, species, and to think about articulation, taphonomy, location – answer the following questions which are often what we need to assess:

What is it?

How did it get to be where it was (think about is it in situ) etc.?

What should be done next?

Now while these are the questions you will need to answer think about the data you need to observe:

Elements present

Degree of completeness

Number of indvidiuals

Position of the elements

Condition of the remains

Nature of the sediment

Any indicators of personal identity

What’s missing what else do you need to know.

RECORD THESE ANSWERS IN YOUR LAB BOOK.



