

S15B. Session: *Man and his companions (horse and dog) in Eurasian Graves (3rd mill. BC-1st mill. AD)*

Organizers: Valeriu Sirbu, Cristian Schuster (Romania)

Dogs' remains in ritual context during the 1st millennium BC northern Thrace

Maria-Magdalena Ștefan (Romania)

The analysis will take into consideration several archaeological contexts of depositional character in which entire or partial dogs' skeletons occur, based on which we will argue that the sacrifice of dogs was a consistently persistent and, thus, characteristic feature of the rituals performed by Thracian people throughout the entire 1st millennium BC until the Roman conquest, in sites considered sanctuaries (like the fields of pits from the Aegean into Transylvania or Dniester), in the sacred areas comprised inside settlements, or in offering pits under tumuli. The analysis will investigate the chronological dynamic and intensity of this practice, attempting to identify regional trends. The inquiry will consider evidence of consumption, infliction of violence or symbolic construction and representation by associating the dog remains with various categories of artefacts or actions.

Among the discussed cases will be the dogs sacrifices in central places and sanctuaries around 10th-9th centuries BC at the Lower Danube, with analogies in the Rhodopi area, the occurrence of dogs in ritual setting in the first indigenous settlements founded in the late 6th century BC in the western Pontus area after the Archaic Greek colonization. A comparison of the phenomenon with the sacrifice of dogs during funerary events performed during the Late Iron Age will be attempted, by considering its intensity on geographical and chronological grounds.

We will also show that in those areas of Thracian presence, not comprised in the Roman state, like the western peripheries of the Roman province of Dacia, under Sarmatian influence, or the eastern fringes around Tyras, the habit of depositing dogs in pits with a strong ritual nature, continued throughout and outlasted the Roman authority.