

2nd Roman Period Working Group Meeting  
of the



S.V.

International Council for Archaeozoology

Animals in ritual and funerary context



1st-4th February 2018  
at the "Old University" Basel



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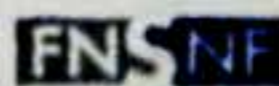
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- ARS Associazione per l'Archeologia Romana in Svizzera

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## Dog sacrificing in the roman world: Examples from Viminacium (Upper Moesia, Serbia)

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Aside from the practical role the dogs had in the Roman world, their symbolic and ritual aspects were exceptional. Dogs were considered as companions to the Underworld of human spirits, but also as beings with special powers, especially healing ones. They were companions of ancient deities, such as Artemis/Diana and their sacrificing was used in rituals dedicated to the gods, mostly chthonic ones. Dog skeletal remains from archaeological sites are the most direct evidence of dog usage and human-dog interrelationships in the past. Although it is challenging to confirm the usage of animals in rituals at archaeological sites, deposits of animal skeletons with specific features could be attributed to rites. In this paper we present a few contexts from the area of the Roman city of Viminacium, which could be linked to dog sacrificing: a pit from the area of the Roman amphitheater, with a common burial of at least 12 dogs, and also several specific contexts with individually buried dogs and common burials of dogs and horses. According to archaeozoological data (taphonomy, biometry, pathology, butchering marks) and archaeological context of Viminacium finds, and also indirect evidence, such as ancient texts and iconographic data, we will study different aspects and forms of dog offerings in the Roman world.

### Notes: