Sabine Deschler-Erb – Umberto Albarella – Silvia Valenzuela Lamas – Gabriele Rasbach (eds.): *Roman Animals in Ritual and Funerary Contexts: Proceedings of the 2nd Meeting of the Zooarchaeology of the Roman Period Working Group, Basel, 1st–4th February 2018*. Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 26. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2021. XVI, 256 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-11641-1. EUR 78.

Over ten years ago, in 2012, the European Association of Archaeologists arranged their 18th Annual Meeting in Helsinki. One of the sessions concentrated on the methodologies of studying faunal remains in archaeological contexts, that is, zooarchaeology. As a non-archaeologist, but a specialist in human-animal relationships in Antiquity, I was impressed by the data on animals this branch of study could give, but especially the methodological validity of inducing hypotheses pertaining to cultural phenomena and animal agency from pieces of animal bones and other animal remains. Although zooarchaeology or archaeozoology (or bioarchaeology) is not a new branch of archaeology, the International Council for Archaeozoology (ICAZ) was only founded at the end of the 1970s. Since then, ICAZ has held meetings and conferences, contributing both new methodologies and striking results.

The present volume is the Acta of the colloquium arranged in Basel (2018) by the Zooarchaeology of the Roman Period Working Group. It was a continuation of the Group's first meeting in Sheffield, 2014, when the focus was on animal husbandry in the Western Roman Empire (see https://www.alexandriaarchive.org/icaz/workroman).

This second meeting focused on "rituals and funerary contexts" as the title of the colloquium suggests. Like in the first meeting, the geographical reach embraces the Western Roman provinces (the modern France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Britannia, Italy, Serbia, and Netherlands) but also includes some eastern territories, too, like Turkey and Egypt (see the map of the main archaeological sites on p. XII). Besides the introductory chapter by Sabine Deschler-Erb ("Diversity in unity: Animals in Roman ritual and funeral contexts", pp. XI–XVI), over 30 writers with sixteen papers – one of them in French, two in German and the rest in English, all with trilingual abstracts – cover a vast portion of time and a wide range of sites. Besides the Roman Period, the paper by Angela Trentacoste discusses Etruscan remains ("In the Belly of the earth: Bones and the closing of sacred space in central Italy", pp. 217–236) whereas Veronica Sossau analyses the shift from the practice of Early Bronze Age meat-sharing to sacrificial meat-eating, especially in the iconography of Greek Geometric and Archaic vases ("Animals to the slaughter. Meat-sharing and sacrifice in Geometric and Archaic Greece", pp. 201–215).

The volume contains very informative tables and charts of the animal remains in the discussed areas listed according to the species, drawings of animals illustrating from which parts of the animal body the bones and other remains have been situated (see, e.g., p. 115 of a cow), photographs of

archaeological sites, deposits like tombs (like on pp. 154–156), and maps. Because each paper contains – after the clear presentation of archaeological data – a discussion on the possible ritual or ceremonial context of the animal remains, the book is not too specialized a reading for a non-archaeologist.

While researching on animal remains, the term 'ritual' is obviously especially precarious. (*NB* Funerals are rituals, too, so the more exact title of this volume could have been "animals in funerary and *other* ritual contexts"). On the one hand, animals were generally forbidden to enter sanctuaries because they were thought to pollute the sacred areas, and, on the other, there were sacred animals, which were fed in the sanctuary areas (cf. Ar. *Plut.* 732–741: snakes fed in the Asclepium). However, sacred districts could often have been "safe spaces" for many non-human animals because they could have been less frequented by humans than residential areas.

The first and foremost role for a ritual animal was to act as victim, and after execution partly cooked and eaten, or not eaten but parts of it burned or/and buried. Animal remains could truly reveal information of the possible cultic functions of animals. For instance, if the burnt remains are of juvenile animals, they would be more likely to be used for ritual purposes. If there are no gnawing marks (by a predator) on bones, it means that the animal had been buried quickly after its death.

In one paper in this volume, "Faunal Remains from a 4th–5th century church complex at 'Ain el-Gedida, Upper Egypt" (pp. 19–24), the ritual context is merely the site, the Christian church, not that animals were killed or treated in any of its rituals. However, the excavations reported by Pam J. Crabtree and Douglas V. Campana give interesting data on local people's diet and that the site was populated by such companion animals as cats and dogs, and obvious "commensal" animals, like rodents.

In her introduction, Deschler-Erb points to the adoption of Roman practices, like cremation as the burial method, in Roman provinces (p. XII). Burnt animal bones refer to burnt offerings and often to the feasting of animals, ritual or not. One of the most famous *literary* funerary offerings of animals is in the *Iliad* (23.170–177), where horses and dogs (but also humans, young men) were placed on Patroclus' funeral pyre. However, in most cases, as the papers in this volume show, animals were sacrificed to be eaten as part of a funerary meal (in the just mentioned passage of the *Iliad*: sheep and cattle). Three papers of this volume focus especially on funerals. Maaike Groot ("Animals in funerary ritual in the Roman Netherlands", pp. 61–78) begins with the account of cremation and how some animal parts were burnt along with the human corpse and then put in the grave; animal parts could also be remains of a memorial feast arranged much later, possibly even a year after the funeral (see the chart on p. 62). Fabienne Pigière mentions the 'primary deposits' (animal offerings put in the funerary pyre) and 'secondary' deposits (unburnt animal offerings put in grave) in her paper "Animals in funerary practices during the early and late Roman periods in southern Belgium" (pp. 175–184). The material for the third article focusing on the funeral is also from Belgium. Sébastian Lepetz's "Animals in funerary practices in Belgic Gaul between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the

5th century AD: From Gallic practices to Gallo-Roman practices" (pp. 141–174) contains informative pictures on tombs and animal bones (one of them is a skeleton of a new-born puppy, p. 168). One of Lepetz's results is the changing of the species of animals, whose parts were put into the graves during the period under discussion as showing the possible Romanization of the local diet.

Cremating animals could have had merely practical reasons behind them. Clare Rainsford, Anthony C. King, Susan Jones, Rose Hooker and Gilbert Burleigh analyse two sites in (modern) England ("Cremated animal bones from two ritual ceremonial sites in Britannia", pp. 185–199) and suggest that some cause for animal burnt offerings might have been simply to incinerate the remains of the offerings and to clean areas of ritual activity regularly.

Some papers discuss unusual temples and cults. In their paper "Sabazios-Kult in *Sorviodurum*: Tierknochen aus einer Kultgrube in Straubing (Bayern/Deutchland)" (pp. 101–111), Constanze Höpken and Hubert Berke report the firm indicator of this poorly known cult, namely finds of "snake pots" (Schlangentöpfe) decorated with the images of snakes, lizards, frogs and tortoises (see picture on p. 104). The animal remains of this cult site in Bavaria include a few weeks old piglets and lambs and even a bear's paw, which point to the choice of animals for more uncommon culinary purposes. Thanks to the literary references (Strabo and Dio Cassius), more is known of the underground ceremonial site of the god Pluto at Hierapolis with its natural carbon dioxide emission and its practice of leading bulls and throwing birds into it so that they suffocate from the emission. Jacopo De Grossi Mazzorin and Claudia Minniti confirm in their "Bird and other animal sacrifice in the Ploutonion of Hierapolis, Phrygia (Turkey): Some results from two votive deposits" (pp. 39–52) that the account of the literary evidence of the sacrificial practice is valid.

Because the area covered by this volume is vast, the ritual practices, like what animal species were sacrificed or used in rituals, surely varied according to local husbandry strategies (which animals were tended and/or used as work animals, which were permitted or forbidden to eat). There could also be discrepancies between local ceremonial practices and Romanizing tendencies (see also Lepetz's paper mentioned above). De Grozzi Mazzorin gives one possible example of the latter in his paper, "Evidence of ritual practices from the animal remains found in the Juno Sanctuary at Tas Silg, Malta" (pp. 25–37), by suggesting that the absence of pig remains – the most common sacrificial animals in the Roman Empire – may be due to the taboo of the local people about eating pigs. The small sanctuary dedicated to the Danubian Gods Domnus and Domna in Romania was set up by a certain Roman centurion. In their paper ("Tierknochen aus dem Heiligtum der größeren Götter Domnus und Domna in Sarmizegetusa (Rumänien)", pp. 113–121), Constanze Höpken and Manuel Fiedler analyse the high proportion of bovine bone found in the area to refer to the bovine ritual because, for instance, jawbones were transferred into pits with lamps and incense burners. The site has also revealed skull parts with horns found in the foundations of the walls – possibly put there for apotropaic reason.

Sometimes there is evidence of an offering of a large number of animals or a large number of attendants at the rituals. Sabine Deschler-Erb and Andreas Schaflitzl report about a hecatomb in which hundreds of sheep were butchered ("A herd of sheep led to the slaughter – evidence of hecatombs at Losodica/Munningen (Bavaria)", pp. 53–60), whereas Alice Bourgois accounts a ritual feast where two thousand people may have attended after the sacrifice of two bullocks ("Deux dépôts exceptionnels à *Briga* ('Bois l'Abbé' Eu, France)", pp. 1–17). It is possible that this populous event may indicate the closure or the deconsecration of the Norman sanctuary in question. Another closing of a sacred place marked by a sacrificial animal offering is the above-mentioned Etruscan sacred space analysed by Angela Trentacoste (pp. 217–236).

One paper compares two sacred sites – a Gallo-Roman sanctuary and a Mithraeum discovered in 2015 – with two profane areas in modern Switzerland: "Animals in ritual and domestic context: A comparative study between the faunal assemblages from residential areas and two sanctuaries at the *vicus* of Kempraten (Rapperswil-Jona, CH)" (pp. 79–99). The paper is written by seven writers (Simone Häberle, Sabine Deschler-Erb, Heide Hüster Plogmann, Barbara Stopp, Sarah Lo Russo, Pirmin Koch and Regula Ackermann), who notice the link between the economy of the time and cultic practices, that is, that the same animal species (cattle and pigs) played as important a role in the basic everyday diet as animals eaten ritually.

The last paper of the volume, "Sacrificing dogs in the late Roman World? A case study of a multiple dog burial from *Viminacium* amphitheatre" (pp. 237–256), written by Sonja Vuković, Mladen Jovičić, Dimitrije Marković and Ivan Bogdanović, begins with a short general introduction of animal sacrifice in the Roman world. The joint burial of 13 dogs, both adults and puppies, in a Serbian arena, may point to a sacrifice – there are potential roasting marks on the bones – but the team also suggest the possibility that dogs were killed to control the dog population. The carcasses were then simply discarded in the disused amphitheatre.

The problem of interpreting 'ritual' in connection with animal remains and the possible actions by which they were produced, is the problem how to identify, as Angela Trentacoste puts it, "which action(s) were ascribed as [having] symbolic meaning" (p. 230). Complete skeletons of pet animals may refer to an offering to chthonic gods (p. 237) or, in the vicinity or inside children's graves, to the execution of the companion animal when its young master or mistress has died.

The volume contains some mentions of specific animal graves for companion animals, dogs and horses (pp. 166, 206). But what about funerary rituals for companion and pet animals buried in their own, specific graves? If pet burials had some kinds of ceremonies, commensurable or private, did they count as some kinds of rituals too?

There are some unusual animal remains found in these (mostly rescue) excavations, like a hedgehog and a gazelle. An *Index animalium* could have been useful. However, it is also possible to

read the volume online (https://doi.org/10.34780/b03671ada6) and use the FIND tool to search for animal species.

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Dictionnaire de l'épigramme littéraire dans l'antiquité grecque et romaine. Tome I: *A – H*; Tome II: *I – Z*. Direction scientifique et éditoriale Céline Urlacher-Becht avec la collaboration de Doris Meyer et l'expertise scientifique de Kathryn Gutzwiller – Alfredo Mario Morelli – Évelyne Prioux. Brepols, Turnhout 2022. ISBN 978-2-503-59310-4. XVIII, 1528 p. EUR 475.

Se l'epigramma, che non apparteneva al canone letterario nell'antichità, possa essere considerato un genere letterario, è abbastanza difficile definirlo con precisione. Un prodotto letterario sotto forma di epigramma può essere tanto conciso quanto molto ampio nella sua espressione, leggero o serio nel contenuto, assai variabile nelle dimensioni poetiche, infinitamente versatile in termini di argomenti e scopi. L'epigramma godette di una longevità eccezionale in tutta l'antichità, sia nella sua forma iscritta che in quella di libro. La sua vitalità fu, inoltre, accompagnata da una costante diversificazione delle sue forme e funzioni, fino a portare, nella tarda antichità, a un ampliamento dei limiti tradizionali del genere. Nel complesso, il concetto dell'epigramma letterario, spesso di carattere mutevole e facilmente sfuggente, risulta un fenomeno talmente vasto e multidimensionale da richiedere una presentazione sistematica che aiuti a meglio comprenderlo. Con la presente opera, a questi problemi viene dato nuovo ordine e chiarezza. Pertanto, chiunque sia interessato agli epigrammi antichi, ai loro autori e agli argomenti in essi trattati, deve essere grato per quest'opera di consultazione a Céline Urlacher-Becht e al team di redazione da lei guidata, nonché a più di un centinaio di specialisti internazionali in letteratura, epigrafia, papirologia, storia e teologia: il dizionario è destinato a rimanere un repertorio estremamente utile per gli studiosi del settore.

Il risultato del progetto, iniziato nel 2014, è imponente: più di 1.500 pagine in due volumi ragguardevoli (non solo nei contenuti ma anche fisicamente). Il dizionario si propone di rendere conto dell'infinita ricchezza dell'epigramma antico, offrendo una panoramica sugli sviluppi del genere dal periodo greco arcaico fino alla metà del VII secolo d.C., così come i sottogeneri, gli stili e i temi da essi emersi: tutti sono oggetto di uno studio diacronico che, inoltre, si interroga sui rapporti tra tradizioni greche e latine. Tale arco di tempo viene esaminato da molteplici prospettive, che tengono conto, tra l'altro, dei contrasti e delle variazioni intervenute nei canali espressivi, linguistici e religiosi: epigrafia e letteratura; greco e latino; profano e cristiano.