

HOMINES, FUNERA, ASTRA 3-4

THE MULTIPLE FACES OF DEATH AND BURIAL

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The cover image illustrates Cx04 feature/2014 from Alba Iulia – *Lumea Nouă* archaeological site (Romania)

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Disappearance of grave goods: changes in burial practices in 14th century Ivanec, Croatia

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Foreword

The third volume of the HFA series gathers works presented at the third and fourth editions of the International Symposium on Funerary Archaeology “Homines, Funera, Astra”: *Death and Fire in Ancient Times* (15 – 18 September 2013), and *Time and Cause of Death from Prehistory to the Middle Ages* (21 – 23 September 2014), both held at the “1 Decembrie 1918” University in Alba Iulia, Romania.

The organizing committee of the above-mentioned encounters consisted of Mihai Gligor (“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, Romania), Raluca Kogălniceanu (“Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania) and Roxana-Gabriela Curcă (“Al. I. Cuza” University of Iași, Romania).

The studies submitted for publication in the present volume focus on two extremely actual topics regarding past funerary behaviour in Central and South-Eastern Europe: cremation, and cause and time of death.

As in previous volumes, interdisciplinarity was the common denominator. The study of the archaeological contexts alongside ¹⁴C dating and their Bayesian modelling, osteological studies covering paleopathologies, and epigraphic and numismatic evidence, were all taken into account to establish the various causes of death and/or the moment these tragic events took place.

Six studies are dedicated to prehistoric funerary practices dated to the Neolithic and Eneolithic periods (four studies), Bronze Age (one study) and Iron Age (one study). Other three papers focused on the Roman Age and the other four were dedicated to the Medieval period, providing new information concerning the funerary behaviour in this part of Europe at various moments.

HFA 3-4 debuts with the *Neolithic and the sacred fire* where Sanda Băcucț Crișan and Corina Bejinariu propose an overview study of the Neolithic *intra muros* graves and the hearths with double symbolic value – domestic and ritual –, within an ethnoarchaeological approach, holding the symbolism of the fire as its central element.

One of the most representative Neolithic cemeteries in present-day Romania is discussed again by Raluca Kogălniceanu and Angela Simalcsik in the study *Burned bones from the Late Neolithic Hamangia cemetery from Cernavodă, Romania*. The main aim of the paper is to analyse in detail the evidence of secondary cremations within an inhumation cemetery, and to offer possible interpretations.

The well-known Neolithic site of Polgár – *Csőszhalom* in the Great Hungarian Plain offers a remarkable chronological sequence supported by the Bayesian modelling of no less than 47 ¹⁴C dates on funerary samples took. The authors of the study *The times of their death – question of contemporaneity in burials from a Late Neolithic settlement in Polgár – Csőszhalom (NE Hungary)* are Alexandra Anders and Zsuzsanna Siklósi.

The exceptional 2013-2014 Early Eneolithic discovery from Alba Iulia – *Lumea Nouă* is presented in the study *A Ditch in Time: A bioarchaeological analysis of the human skeletal remains discovered at Alba Iulia – Lumea Nouă (Romania)* by Mihai Gligor, Kirsty McLeod, Ana Fetcu and Călin Șuteu. The paper reviews the unique archaeological context, while also giving the estimation of sex and age at death, an analysis of the cranial trauma as well as the cause of death and the chronology of the funerary feature investigated in an area where several other multiple graves had been excavated previously.

The Bronze and Iron Ages are illustrated by one study each: *Landscape of the living and landscape of the dead. Long barrows: fire in the mortuary practices of Funnel Beaker culture communities in the Polish Lowland* (by Andrzej Pelisiak) and *Early Iron Age burials at Gelmar (Hunedoara County, Romania)* by Gabriel Bălan, Adrian Bolog, Cristian Dima, Silviu Popa, Daniel Tentiș and Andrei Soficar. The first study offers an up-to-date synthesis on the use of cremation by

the *Funnel Beaker* communities in Poland, while the second paper presents an overview on the funerary practices of a Hallstattian community in Transylvania, benefitting of a rigorous anthropological and grave goods analysis.

On a trend opened in HFA 2, Alexander Rubel (*Mors immatura. The causes of death in inscriptions from the Roman Empire*) capitalizes new epigraphic data from the Roman Age, analysing and placing into context funerary inscriptions with the aim of establishing causes of death. The paper also starts an interesting debate concerning premature death on the territory of the Roman Empire. As if resuming this challenging topic, Kai Brodersen (*The critical years of life: Censorinus on the right time of death*) brings into discussion the work of Censorinus, *Birthday Book*, and illustrates by clear examples the proper age to die within the Roman society.

The section dedicated to the Roman Age is completed by an osteoarchaeological study by Mario Novak and Smiljan Gluščević (*Osteoarchaeological study of cremation burials from the Roman period necropolis of Zadar: taphonomy, demography and pathology*) which analyse exhaustively the cremation graves from the necropolis investigated at Zadar (*Colonia Iulia Iader*), bringing an important contribution to the history of city founded during Julius Caesar.

HFA 3-4 gathered also four studies dedicated to the funerary practices during the Middle Ages. Luminița Andreica-Szilágyi, author of *Meeting a medieval community of Bizere Monastery: lifestyle, occupation and nutritional status*, brings to our attention, for the first time, a set of relevant osteological data concerning the monastic community at Bizere. No less than three different studies approach specific aspects of medieval cemeteries from the present-day Croatia: *Disappearance of grave goods: changes in burial practices in 14th century Ivanec, Croatia* (Juraj Belaj and Filomena Sirovica), *Can the position of the forearms serve as a dating determinant in medieval and early modern cemeteries on the territory of the northern Croatia?* (Siniša Krznar) and *Coin finds at Crkvari – Saint Lawrence Church site (northern Croatia) as terminus ante quem non for funerary features* (Tatjana Tkalčec).

Finally, while succinctly introducing the new volume of the *Homines, Funera, Astra* series, we would like to thank our contributors for their work, and especially for their patience in crediting us up to the time their important studies would get to print and enter the scientific circuit.

We are convinced that with this volume, the HFA community gets more numerous and more diverse and definitely better highlighted in the extremely dynamic field of funerary archaeology.

The Editors