

REGIONAL PATTERNS IN MORTUARY PRACTICE IN THE LOWER DANUBE REGION IN THE 4TH-6TH CENTURIES

The 4th-6th centuries AD is a complex period in the Lower Danube region. Episodes of war alternated with times of peace, cooperation, and commercial contacts. Tribes from north of the River Danube, including the Sarmatians, Goths, Vandals, Huns, Gepids, Slavs and Avars, launched large-scale incursions into the Roman Empire, eventually settling in various regions south of the border¹. They also crossed the border as slaves, mercenaries, or merchants. Likewise, the Romans had enclaves to the north of the Danube in the bridgehead cities of Sucidava and Drobeta, which lay within barbarian territory and were used mostly for military campaigns². This complexity is reflected in the distribution of material culture such that brooches found in the provinces of Pannonia Secunda, Moesia Prima and Secunda have been used as evidence for barbarian presence in the Roman provinces³, while numerous objects imported from Roman provinces to the south have been discovered in *Barbaricum*, including coins, amphorae, lamps, brooches, buckles, jewellery, ceramics and glass⁴. Recent work on foodways has revealed interaction and mutual sharing in this area of practice⁵.

Despite this political and social volatility and the porous nature of the Danubian border of the Roman Empire, it has long been observed that there are significant differences in the nature of the archaeological record on either side of the river. Given the large-scale population movements of the so-called Barbarians⁶, the radical changes to the landscape caused by this in the 4th century⁷, and the political, economic, and religious changes experienced by the Empire⁸, a relative absence of evidence for tribal »signatures« south of the Danube is perplexing. Here, as elsewhere in the Roman Empire, a long-standing concern has been to »find« the missing Barbarians⁹. For example, Andrew Poulter¹⁰ tried to identify the presence of Goths in the city of Nicopolis ad Istrum based on architectural features but concluded that there was »very little difference« between the Goths and the Romans in this context. When Barbarians cannot be »found«, it has been concluded that they underwent a rapid process of assimilation¹¹.

Attempts to identify Barbarians have frequently relied on mortuary data, this being the context in which it has been assumed that they are most archaeologically accessible. Not only are graves where the physical remains of Barbarians might be found, but it has been suggested that mortuary traditions are conservative and less likely to change, thereby allowing archaeological access to social identity¹². In other words, that Romans and Barbarians express a contrasting »habitus« in the mortuary arena¹³. The underlying assumption of such work is that ethnic identity takes primacy over other forms of identity construction (such as age, gender, status, or religion), is immutable and binary (either Roman or Barbarian), and will be maintained in the mortuary domain, even when in a different cultural setting. This line of thought has led scholars to attempt the identification of Barbarians based on single graves or unique finds¹⁴. Thus, individuals have been categorised as belonging to a »barbarian elite« or »military aristocracy« based on clothes, burial customs, and grave goods¹⁵. However, the number of graves that have been convincingly identified as Barbarian in this way is tiny compared to the overall number of Barbarians thought to have entered the Roman Empire¹⁶. One reason for this may be that identity is complex. Its configuration is not limited to ethnicity and it may be subtle and multi-dimensional. Given the complicated social and political milieu, and the nature of cross-border relations in this part of the late Roman Empire, definitions

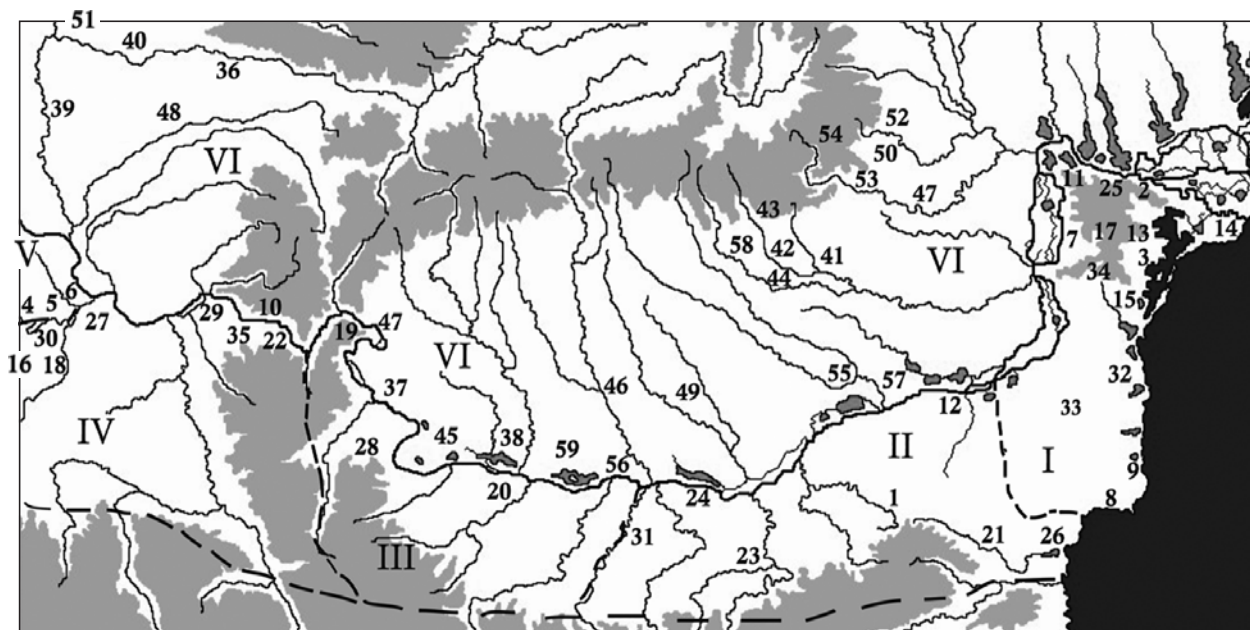


Fig. 1 Map of the sites discussed in the study area. – Sites within the Roman Empire: **1** Abritus, Moesia Secunda = Razgrad (Razgrad Region/BG). – **2** Aegyssus, Scythia = Tulcea (Tulcea County/RO). – **3** Argamum, Scythia = Jurilovca (Tulcea County/RO). – **4** Bassianae, Pannonia Secunda = Donji Petrovci (Srem District/SRB). – **5** Batajnica, Pannonia Secunda (Zemun Municipality/SRB). – **6** Belegiš, Pannonia Secunda (Srem District/SRB). – **7** Beroe, Scythia = Piatra-Ostrov (Tulcea County/RO). – **8** Bizone, Scythia = Kavarna (Dobrich Region/BG). – **9** Callatis, Scythia = Mangalia (Constanța County/RO). – **10** Contra Margum, Moesia Prima = Kovin (South Banat District/SRB). – **11** Dinogetia, Scythia = Jijila (Tulcea County/RO). – **12** Durostorum, Moesia Secunda = Silistra (Silistra Region/BG). – **13** Enisala, Scythia (Constanța County/RO). – **14** Halmyris, Scythia = Murighiol (Tulcea County/RO). – **15** Histria, Scythia = Istria (Constanța County/RO). – **16** Hrtkovci, Pannonia Secunda (Ruma Municipality/SRB). – **17** Ibida, Scythia = Slava Rusă (Tulcea County/RO). – **18** Jakovo, Moesia Prima (Zemun Municipality/SRB). – **19** Korbovo, Dacia Ripensis (Kladovo Municipality/SRB). – **20** Kozloduy, Dacia Ripensis (Vratsa Region/BG). – **21** Marcianopolis, Moesia Secunda = Devnea (Varna Region/BG). – **22** Margum, Moesia Prima = Dubravica (Branicevo District/SRB). – **23** Nicopolis ad Istrum, Moesia Secunda = Nykiup (Veliko Tarnovo Region/BG). – **24** Novae, Moesia Secunda (Veliko Tarnovo Region/BG). – **25** Noviodunum, Scythia = Isaccea (Tulcea County/RO). – **26** Odessos, Moesia Secunda = Varna (Varna Province/BG). – **27** Rakovac, Moesia Prima (Beočin Municipality/SRB). – **28** Romuliana, Dacia Ripensis = Gamzigrad (Zaječar District/SRB). – **29** Singidunum, Moesia Prima = Belgrade (Belgrade District/SRB). – **30** Sirmium, Pannonia Secunda = Sremska Mitrovica (Srem District/SRB). – **31** Storogosia, Moesia Secunda = Pleven (Pleven Region/BG). – **32** Tomis, Scythia = Constanța (Constanța County/RO). – **33** Tropaeum Traiani, Scythia = Adamclisi (Constanța County/RO). – **34** Ulmetum, Scythia = Pantelimonul de Sus (Constanța County/RO). – **35** Viminacium, Moesia Prima = Selo Kostolac (Branicevo District/SRB). – Sites within *Barbaricum*: **36** Arad (Arad County/RO). – **37** Balta Verde (Mehedinți County/RO). – **38** Bistreț (Dolj County/RO). – **39** Bočar (Central Banat District/SRB). – **40** Bókény (Csongrád County/H). – **41** Boldești-Grădiștea (Prahova County/RO). – **42** Ceptura (Prahova County/RO). – **43** Chiojdu (Prahova County/RO). – **44** Ciorani (Prahova County/RO). – **45** Cioroiu Nou (Dolj County/RO). – **46** Drăgănești-Olt (Olt County/RO). – **47** Drobeta = Drobeta-Turnu Severin (Mehedinți County/RO). – **48** Dudeștii Vechi (Timiș County/RO). – **49** Dulceanca (Teleorman County/RO). – **50** Gherăseni (Buzău County/RO). – **51** Kiszombor (Csongrád County/H). – **52** Pietroasele (Buzău County/RO). – **53** Pruneni (Buzău County/RO). – **54** Sărata Monteoru (Buzău County/RO). – **55** Spânțov (Călărași County/RO). – **56** Sucidava = Celei-Corabia (Dolj County/RO). – **57** Sultana Malu-Roșu (Călărași County/RO). – **58** Târgșor (Prahova County/RO). – **59** Vădastra (Olt County/RO). – (Map A. D. Soficaru).

of »Roman« and »Barbarian« are not straightforward. Even if assimilation took place, this notion need not imply that all elements of a host culture's material world were adopted by incomers¹⁷. It is therefore possible that different forms and degrees of integration took place¹⁸. Thus, mortuary practices may have been more flexible, varied, and responsive than hitherto considered, particularly in border zones where there was extensive mobility and prolonged contact between different traditions. Elsewhere, the archaeological challenges of inferring ethnicity as a dynamic and complex phenomenon have long been recognised¹⁹.

In this paper, rather than categorising identity in a binary fashion from mortuary data, we focus on the articulation of practice in the mortuary domain. In other words, we are concerned with what people did

rather than assuming who they were. We aim to explore the range and variability of mortuary practices on both sides of the frontier in order to understand whether interaction took place in mortuary traditions and the nature of that interaction, without simplistic categorisation of specific individuals. Despite a substantial data set in the form of site reports, to date, no synthetic comparison of mortuary data between Roman and Barbarian worlds has been carried out. In part, this is due to a traditional disciplinary divide between archaeologists studying the Migration Period and those who study Roman material. This lack of synthesis has been further accentuated by contemporary history and national borders in the Lower Danube region: in the north, Barbarian finds have been made in Romania, Hungary and northern Serbia; in the south, Roman finds have been found in eastern Romania, Bulgaria and central Serbia. Thus while there are several local catalogues of Roman mortuary data²⁰, these have never been properly contextualised or integrated into a larger comparative framework with data from the north²¹.

In this paper, we address this gap in present knowledge through a comparison of mortuary data from both sides of the Roman border in the Lower Danube from the reigns of Emperor Diocletianus to Emperor Heraclius (broadly the 4th-6th centuries). This period started with the reforms of Diocletianus and ended with the fall of the Danubian Roman frontier at the beginning of the 7th century. Our study area encompasses the region from the shore of the Black Sea in the east, to the Balkan Mountains in the south, the Tisa River in the west, and the Mureş River and the Carpathian Mountains in the north (**fig. 1**). This area was the gateway to the Balkans and thus geographically important to both Romans and Barbarians. The border between the Roman Empire and the Barbarians lay along the Danube River. To cross it, the Barbarians used passages through Scythia in the east, but in the west, they tried to control Sirmium (the area of modern Belgrade) because of its key role in accessing the central Balkans, and from there the Pannonian Plain. The region was thus more or less split in two corresponding to *Barbaricum* (the historical provinces of Wallachia, Lesser Wallachia, and Banat) and the Roman provinces of Scythia, Moesia Secunda, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Prima, and Pannonia Secunda. We begin by reviewing current broad understandings of mortuary traditions in the region, including contexts and locations of burial. We then move to a comparative analysis of mortuary practices based on multivariate correspondence analysis of 1780 single adult graves, these being the most common form of burial in the region.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF MORTUARY TRADITIONS IN THE LOWER DANUBE

Current understandings of mortuary traditions in the region are related to four geo-ethnic contexts: Roman burials within the area controlled by the Roman Empire south of the River Danube, Barbarian burials in the Barbarian-controlled area north of the Danube, burials in the Roman bridgehead north of the Danube, and Barbarian burials within the Roman Empire south of the Danube. Below we consider each of these in turn.

Roman Mortuary Traditions South of the Danube

Mortuary traditions in the Roman Empire had deep roots, which were strengthened by the Christian Church during the 4th-6th centuries²². Previous studies identify extramural and intramural contexts as the two primary locations for burials. Located along routes that linked various cities throughout the Empire, extramural cemeteries are common in Scythia²³, Moesia Secunda²⁴, Moesia Prima²⁵ and Dacia Ripensis²⁶. Single graves are the most common form of burial, sometimes located around a basilica built outside the city walls as at

Novae, Histria and Tropaeum Traiani²⁷. *Hypogaea* (family vaults) were also used, such as at Ibida, Callatis, Tomis, Marcianopolis, Abritus, Durostorum and Odessos²⁸. A single example of a mass grave is known from Ibida. Situated between a defence tower and the cemetery's basilica, the remains of 28 people of all ages and both sexes were scattered in the grave along with animal bones and a very small number of objects. Recent bioarchaeological and radiocarbon analysis of the skeletal material suggests the likely massacre of the interred individuals in the mid-4th century²⁹.

The size of extramural cemeteries was variable, but some contain large numbers of single inhumation graves, for example, Callatis had more than 900 graves and Beroe over 1000³⁰. In construction, they were most frequently simple rectangular graves orientated west-east, but cists built with stone slabs or bricks, and graves with stones or tiles placed around the skeleton are also known³¹. Graves with tiles on either side of the body, suggesting the construction of a niche for the body within a pit, have been recorded, as have spectacular but rare sarcophagi made from tiles: the body was laid on three or four tiles with other tiles placed as if to form the apex of a roof over the body³². A very small number of early cremations are also known. The latter are dated to the beginning of the 4th century at the sites of Romuliana and Abritus³³. Thus, at Romuliana a cremation grave is thought to be that of a Roman officer based on its inventory, which consists of a gold brooch, iron weapons and other objects of military equipment, along with dog bones. The grave was elaborately constructed with a stone square structure around a central grave mound³⁴. Nonetheless, under the influence of Eastern mystery religions, inhumation became a common practice in the Roman Empire from the 2nd century. With the adoption of Christianity, it had become the predominant form of burial by the 4th century³⁵. From 439 the *Codex Theodosianus*, and subsequently in 512 the *Codex Justinianus*, regulated mortuary practices within the Empire³⁶.

Intramural interment became more frequent at the end of the 6th century as a result of the frequent attacks of Avars and Slavs and concomitant reduction in attention paid to earlier prohibitions on inhumation within city limits³⁷. Intramural burials include graves in or around churches located within city walls, such as 16 graves dated to the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 7th century known from the episcopal basilica at Histria³⁸. Martyrs' crypts constitute a particular category of intramural burial. Constructed under churches as places for the relics of saints to be deposited and venerated, they belong to Christians executed during the imperial persecutions, whose remains were recovered after the legalisation of the religion³⁹. Examples are known from Halmyris, Noviodunum, Tropaeum Traiani and Durostorum⁴⁰. Another type of intramural burial is the graves of infants who died before their first birthday. Called *suggrundaria* by the ancient writer Fulgentius, infants were buried in amphorae or under ceramic fragments in domestic contexts next to houses. This was a common custom in the Roman world because children of this age were not yet considered to have been accepted into a social group⁴¹.

The inventory of grave goods identified in both extramural and intramural cemeteries includes personal objects deposited with the deceased such as bracelets made from bronze, silver, animal bone and iron; bronze and gilded brooches together with beads made from glass, amber, coral, and carnelian; rings made of bronze, silver and gold; hairpins from bronze or iron; combs made from animal bone with iron rivets. Other objects include vessels made from ceramic or glass, lamps, and spindle whorls. Weapons are very rare, although found in the 4th-century cremation graves from Romuliana and Abritus⁴².

Barbarian Mortuary Traditions North of the Danube

In contrast to graves from the Roman Empire, where there are a variety of different contexts for burial, those north of the Danube are consistent in the use of flat grave cemeteries. Most are small, reflecting the highly

mobile nature of different tribal groups during this time⁴³, although the size and number of cemeteries fluctuate. Both inhumation and cremation were used, the former being more frequent.

The Sântana de Mureș-Chernyakhov culture dates from the 2nd - mid-5th century and covers the region between the Dnieper River and east Transylvania, and the River Olt to the Danube. Conventionally assigned to the Goths, it should be regarded as mixed from the ethnic point of view⁴⁴. Several thousand graves have been recorded in this region, most in relatively small cemeteries. The bodies were buried in simple flat graves. The majority are inhumations buried in an extended supine position, in rectangular graves orientated north-south. They contain a variety of objects including ceramic vessels, bronze buckles and brooches, combs made from animal bone, beads of glass or amber, and animal offerings. Cremated remains were deposited in ceramic urns in roughly circular pits, with a more restricted number of objects including brooches, buckles, pendants and beads⁴⁵.

Later 5th-century sites in this area consist of small necropoles containing a maximum of 20 graves, such as the sites of Boldești-Grădiște, Chiojdu, Ciorani, Cioroiu-Nou, Drăgănești-Olt and Pietroasele, as well as isolated single, mostly inhumation graves. Burial traditions are a continuation of the Sântana de Mureș-Chernyakhov group⁴⁶. A number of single graves dated to the 5th century assigned to the Huns contain individuals with artificially deformed skulls, sometimes with a sumptuous inventory (e. g. Dudeștii Vechi, Dulceanca, Gherăseni, Bistreț, Arad, Bočar, Bőkény, Hrtkovci, Kiszombor), with similar finds in Moldavia⁴⁷. In the Banat region, while graves have rich inventories and the mode of burial is similar, the number of individuals with deformed skulls is much lower⁴⁸.

The number of known mortuary sites is lower for the 6th century. For example, two rectangular inhumation graves at Nădlac⁴⁹ and three at Sultana-Malu Roșu⁵⁰ were orientated in an east-west or west-north-west – east-south-east direction, with the body placed in a supine position. One of the graves at Nădlac contained several objects: a pair of bronze tweezers, 14 bronze rivets, a bronze buckle, a bronze applique, and a comb. The other contained a bronze buckle and a comb. At Sultana-Malu Roșu a ceramic vessel was found in one of the graves. Further inhumation graves are known from Ceptura and Pruneni, these with west-east orientation⁵¹. At Sărata Monteoru in northeast Wallachia, 1536 graves were excavated belonging to a large cremation cemetery. Dated to 550-620, the bones were placed directly in grave pits or an urn in the grave. 348 of the graves contained grave goods⁵². Elsewhere, however, cremation graves are isolated finds. Two cremation graves of non-adults are known from Dulceanca⁵³, while cremation graves dating to the end of the 6th century were found at Balta Verde, Korbovo and Kozloduy⁵⁴.

Mortuary Practice at Roman Sites North of the Danube

Roman forts built as bridgeheads in the Barbarian hinterland were enclaves in a different cultural environment⁵⁵. Of these, Sucidava is the best known and the only bridgehead site with excavated mortuary contexts. Occupied from the 4th to the beginning of the 5th century, investigations have revealed 109 inhumation and 3 cremation graves. An exceptional burial at this site has been identified as that of a Barbarian warrior⁵⁶. The individual was placed in the grave in an extended supine position, orientated south-south-east – north-north-west, with an inventory consisting of two coins, a gilded bronze buckle, two bronze ornaments, an iron sword, and a dagger. Analogies with similar finds from Bistreț, Cioroiu Nou, and Vădastra indicate a date of 450-500⁵⁷.

The Roman presence returned to Sucidava in the second half of the 6th century, from which seven graves were found around the church; five in cists and two in flat graves. They have west-east orientation and are without grave goods⁵⁸.

Barbarian Mortuary Practice in the Roman Empire South of the Danube

Although historical sources indicate many Barbarian crossings of the Danube – the mass movement of the Goths at the end of the 4th century, the attacks of the Huns in the first half of the 5th century, and almost permanent incursions of Avars and Slavs in the second half of the 6th century – to date no Barbarian cemeteries are known from the Roman-controlled area. This seems somewhat surprising given, for example, the scale of the Goths' migration to the south. Barbarian graves that have so far been identified south of the Danube are isolated cases, typically classified on the basis of grave goods rather than broader aspects of mortuary practice or isotopic analysis that might indicate migration. For example, eight Barbarian graves have been identified in the settlement of Ulmetum. Along with Roman objects, typical Sântana de Mureş-Chernyakhov ceramics were interred with the deceased and one male skeleton had a knife. Two of the skeletons were orientated north-south and were therefore assigned to the Goths⁵⁹. 50 km to the northeast, in the Argamum necropolis a grave was identified as that of a Goth from the first half of the 5th century. This categorisation was based on the two bronze brooches placed on each shoulder of the deceased and a silver earring, although the individual had been buried in an extended supine position in west-east orientation typical of Roman practice⁶⁰. On the opposite side of Scythia province and situated on the Danube bank, the necropolis of Beroe contained 1139 graves dating from the 4th to the beginning of the 7th century. Unfortunately, only 228 graves with inventory have been published making a proper analysis of the material challenging but several of these, in particular those with a rich inventory, artificially deformed skulls, and animal offerings, have been connected with Barbarians⁶¹.

The mortuary discoveries from Singidunum, Sirmium, Viminacium I and II are located in areas that belonged to the Roman Empire, but which were conquered by Barbarians. Linked to the Gepids, several graves from these sites contained a rich inventory including objects such as brooches, combs, buckles, beads (also as strings), spindle whorls, earrings, weaving batons, flints and weapons (swords, arrows, shield boss, scabbards, spears, javelins, and knives), as well as a small number of animal bone offerings⁶². Similar burials have been found at Rakovac, Bassianae, Jakovo, Batajnica and Belegiš dating from the mid-5th to the end of the 6th century. Graves at the relatively small settlements of Margum and Contra Margum contain weapons and ceramics indicating the presence of Germanic *foederati* within the Roman population⁶³. In addition to graves assigned to Germanic people, those of Huns have also been identified in Roman or former Roman territories on the basis of grave goods, such as two 5th-century graves from Hrtkovci and one from Singidunum⁶⁴. A grave from Enisala, in Scythia province, contained the extended supine burial of a female with west-north-west – east-south-east orientation with two bronze brooches on each shoulder and two bronze bracelets at each wrist. Dated to the 6th to the start of the 7th century, bioarchaeological analysis suggests a person with possible ancestry on the northern side of the Danube⁶⁵.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MORTUARY PRACTICES IN THE LOWER DANUBE REGION

Data was collected for 1780 individual adult graves from 19 sites with sufficient detail available to examine mortuary practices; despite the large number of sites in the region, relatively few have well-published data. The selected sites represent all four geo-ethnic contexts described above. Eight sites can be associated with the Roman Empire south of the Danube: Aegyssus, 14 graves⁶⁶; Bizone, 48 graves⁶⁷; Callatis, 584 graves⁶⁸; Dinogetia, 22 graves⁶⁹; Histria, 100 graves⁷⁰; Ibida, 99 graves⁷¹; Storogosa, 46 graves⁷²; Tomis, 188 graves⁷³. Five sites can be associated with the Barbarian population north of the Danube:

Boldești, 17 graves⁷⁴; Drăgănești-Olt, 13 graves⁷⁵; Pietroasele, 19 graves⁷⁶; Spanțov, 54 graves⁷⁷; Târgșor, 199 graves⁷⁸. The Roman bridgehead site of Sucidava north of the Danube contains 112 excavated graves⁷⁹. Five sites are situated within the Roman Empire but have previously been identified as containing Barbarian graves: Beroe, 49 graves⁸⁰; Singidunum, 31 graves⁸¹; Sirmium, 71 graves⁸²; Viminacium I, 38 graves⁸³; Viminacium II, 79 graves⁸⁴. These sites include Roman towns conquered by Barbarians, as well as settlements which are likely to have been Barbarian in origin and where the Roman presence was secondary. The quality of published data can vary within a single site. Thus, where full data were not reported, large sites could not be analysed in their entirety and the number of graves analysed here is smaller than the total number of excavated graves. For example, of 1139 graves excavated at Beroe, just 228 graves (those with grave goods) have been published⁸⁵, while the number of graves from the site included in our analysis (49 graves) is still smaller as descriptions of mortuary practices were not available for all. Only 463 graves from six sites have reliable anthropological data and could be sexed, with particular gaps in the anthropological analysis of cremations (**tab. 1**).

The chronological distribution and precision of dating of sites and individual graves are uneven. Dating is largely based on grave goods and is thus affected by individual objects and their associations in the grave, some offering greater chronological precision than others. A total of 701 graves can be dated to the 4th century, 24 to the 5th century, and 118 to the 6th century. The remainder have a wide date range: 91 are placed between the 4th-5th century, 155 in the 5th-6th century and 694 in the 4th-6th century. This uneven chronological distribution and use of broad chronological categories in the literature means that it is difficult to address change in practice over time with enough resolution. We therefore consider our data as a single set.

Recent anthropological work has highlighted how reflections on the relationship between mortuary processes (including preparation of the corpse and its decomposition) and archaeological outcomes are vital to understanding the nature of mortuary practice⁸⁶. Skeletons were once corpses and the study of the skeleton can be used to shed light on attitudes towards death and the management and treatment of the corpse⁸⁷. With this in mind, mortuary practices were considered across five variables for each site that reflect key aspects of mortuary practice: rite (inhumation/cremation), orientation of grave, grave construction, skeletal position, and presence/absence of grave goods. These variables were selected based on a review of the available data for each site and current understandings of mortuary traditions in the region described above. Where possible, variables were also considered in relation to sex. The lack of systematic publication of material presents a serious challenge to synthesis, but it is nonetheless possible to explore differences and similarities between Roman and Barbarian burial practices by comparing trends between sites and across the region. This approach allows us to examine variability in mortuary practices and whether they may have been affected by mutual interaction.

Site	Location	Number of males	Number of females	Sex not determined	Total number of skeletons
Callatis	South	48	85	0	133
Histria	South	22	34	0	56
Ibida	South	49	46	4	99
Singidunum	South	16	15	0	31
Viminacium II	South	45	24	10	79
Târgșor	North	19	27	19	65

Tab. 1 Sex distribution of adult graves at sites with reliable anthropological data. – (A. D. Soficaru).

Site	Location	Cremation-frequency (%)	Inhumation-frequency (%)
Aegyssus	South	0	14 (100)
Beroe	South	0	49 (100)
Bizone	South	0	48 (100)
Callatis	South	0	584 (100)
Dinogetia	South	0	22 (100)
Histria	South	0	100 (100)
Ibida	South	0	99 (100)
Singidunum	South	0	31 (100)
Sirmium	South	0	71 (100)
Storogosa	South	0	46 (100)
Tomis	South	0	188 (100)
Viminacium I	South	0	38 (100)
Viminacium II	South	0	79 (100)
Boldești	North	7 (41.18)	10 (58.82)
Drăgănești-Olt	North	0	13 (100)
Pietroasele	North	1 (5.26)	18 (94.74)
Spanțov	North	10 (18.52)	44 (81.48)
Sucidava	North	3 (2.68)	109 (97.32)
Târgșor	North	86 (43.22)	113 (56.78)

Tab. 2 Frequency and percentage of cremation and inhumation north and south of the River Danube. – (A. D. Soficaru).

Rite

Inhumation is the dominant rite on both sides of the Danube. Thus, although inhumation is typical for Christian burial, it is not an exclusively Roman trait (**tab. 2**). Conversely, all cremations in the sample are found north of the river indicating a clear geographical distribution for the latter form of practice.

Orientation

Grave orientation also contrasts on either side of the Danube (**tab. 3**). In the Barbarian area, there is a clear preference for the orientation of inhumation graves along a north-south axis, suggesting that this is a Barbarian practice. There is, however, site-specific variation in whether heads are placed to the north or south. At Târgșor, Spanțov, Drăgănești-Olt and Boldești, heads are predominantly orientated towards the north. At Pietroasele heads are orientated primarily to the south. The exception north of the Danube is the Roman bridgehead site of Sucidava where the orientation of the graves bears similarity with sites south of the river. At Sucidava the majority of graves are west-east, although just over 20 % of graves follow Barbarian alignment; this mix of practices may reflect social interaction between different groups at the edge of the frontier.

In line with Christian tradition, graves at sites within the area of the Roman Empire show a clear trend in orientation to the west⁸⁸, but this is not consistent at all sites. In particular, Sirmium and Ibida stand out for the proportion of graves (more than 50 %) with a north or south orientation, while at Aegyssus, Histria and Viminacium II more than 25 % of graves at each site have north or south orientation. Multivariate correspondence analysis of the relationship between rite and orientation places Sirmium and Ibida together with sites that have cremations north of the Danube and can be considered Barbarian (**fig. 2**), even though

Site	Location	Orientation			
		North	South	West	East
Aegyssus	South	1 (11.11)	2 (22.22)	6 (66.67)	0
Beroe	South	0	0	47 (100)	0
Bizone	South	1 (2.08)	1 (2.08)	43 (89.58)	3 (6.25)
Callatis	South	28 (5.27)	6 (1.13)	497 (93.60)	0
Dinogetia	South	2 (9.52)	1 (4.76)	18 (85.71)	0
Histria	South	11 (13.41)	13 (15.85)	55 (67.07)	3 (3.66)
Ibida	South	22 (26.83)	23 (28.05)	36 (43.90)	1 (1.22)
Singidunum	South	1 (3.70)	6 (22.22)	20 (74.07)	0
Sirmium	South	23 (46.00)	6 (12.00)	20 (40.00)	1 (2.00)
Storogosa	South	3 (6.52)	0	43 (93.48)	0
Tomis	South	7 (4.17)	13 (7.74)	143 (85.12)	5 (2.98)
Viminacium I	South	2 (6.06)	2 (6.06)	29 (87.88)	0
Viminacium II	South	6 (8.00)	21 (28.00)	47 (62.67)	1 (1.33)
Boldești	North	8 (100)	0	0	0
Drăgănești-Olt	North	13 (100)	0	0	0
Pietroasele	North	1 (5.56)	17 (94.44)	0	0
Spanțov	North	31 (93.94)	0	2 (6.06)	0
Sucidava	North	12 (11.65)	12 (11.65)	59 (57.28)	20 (19.42)
Târgșor	North	101 (97.12)	1 (0.96)	2 (1.92)	0

Tab. 3 Frequency and percentage of graves with known orientation north and south of the River Danube. – (A. D. Soficaru).

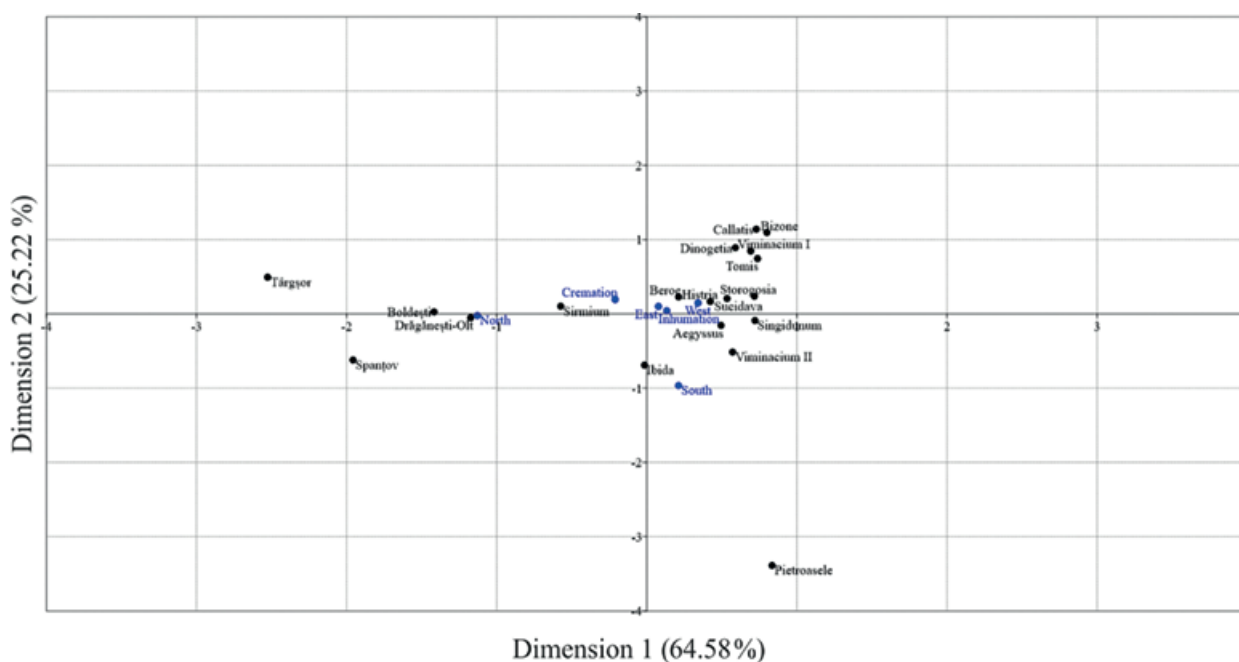


Fig. 2 Multivariate correspondence analysis of the relationship between rite and grave orientation. – (Graph A. D. Soficaru).

Sex	North	South	West	East	X ²	p
Males	18 (41.86 %)	14 (32.56 %)	11 (25.58 %)	0	14.86	0.002
Females	4 (10.81 %)	9 (24.32 %)	23 (62.16 %)	1 (2.70 %)		

Tab. 4 X² test for difference in grave orientation between males and females at Ibida. – (A. D. Soficaru).

inhumation is the only rite south of the Danube in our sample. Barbarian burials have previously been associated with Sirmium but the relatively high proportion of graves with this orientation at Ibida may suggest greater Barbarian influence at this site than has hitherto been recognised. Furthermore, Ibida is the only site at which burial orientation is related to sex; the application of a X² test shows that Ibida male burials are significantly more likely to be orientated along a north-south axis, and female burials west-east (**tab. 4**). This may suggest that males more closely retain aspects of Barbarian or pagan identity at this site. Given the relative absence of cremation south of the Danube, it appears that orientation as an aspect of burial practice may have been more culturally conservative and persistent in its link to Barbarian practice than rites associated with body disposal. Furthermore, orientation as an element of mortuary practice suggests that Barbarian burials may be more widespread in the Roman Empire than hitherto recognised.

Grave Construction

Grave construction presents great variety with seven different broad types in the data (**tab. 5**): Ic) body likely wrapped in a shroud and placed directly in the grave pit. This was identified on the basis of the lack of surrounding structure and the archaeoethanatology of the skeleton⁸⁹. It is the most common type of grave being found in almost half (48.45 %) of all graves on both sides of the Danube; IIc) wooden coffin in a grave pit. This was identified on the basis of the presence of coffin nails and/or wood remains and indications of a void around the skeleton⁹⁰; IIIc) cist made from stone slabs or bricks; IVc) sarcophagus made from tiles; Vc) grave pit with a niche and tiles covering it; VIc) tiles or stones placed directly on or around the skeleton; VIIc) tiles or stones at the head or feet only. Most of this variability is found in sites south of the Danube while in the north, burial construction is relatively consistent. To the north, Pietroasele is distinctive among Barbarian sites in our sample for its strong tradition of placing bodies in wooden coffins, rather than placing the body directly into the grave; multivariate analysis of the relationship between grave orientation and grave construction separates it from other sites for use of coffins and south orientation (**fig. 3**). Although coffins are not present in the other Barbarian sites studied in this paper, they have been documented elsewhere as part of the Sarmatian tradition of the Alans⁹¹. The use of coffins at Pietroasele may thus reflect choices drawn from a particular cultural repertoire of practice that overlaps with Roman tradition but is not linked to it. Mixed traditions are, however, likely at Sucidava where a distinctly Roman regional tradition of cist burial is found. **Figure 3** shows it clustering with most of the sites south of the Danube around the origin of the graph, which display a range of different forms of construction, suggesting that orientation and construction are not related to each other. However, the neighbouring sites of Callatis and Bizone appear as a distinct group due to the consistent use of cists at these sites and their tendency to west-east orientation. Here and at Histria, tiles or stones were placed directly on or around the skeleton. At Callatis and Histria graves with a niche and tile covering were also used. This variation in the practice of grave construction is not related to sex. Rather, at these former Greek colonies in the province of Scythia on the Black Sea, there seems to be a regional tradition of building and elaborating the grave beyond that found elsewhere, although this is not found in all sites in the province and is thus a local practice.

Site	Location	Grave construction						
		Ic (%)	IIc (%)	IIIc (%)	IVc (%)	Vc (%)	VIc (%)	VIIc (%)
Aegyssus	South	5 (62.50)	3 (37.50)	0	0	0	0	0
Beroe	South	37 (75.51)	11 (22.45)	0	0	0	1 (2.04)	0
Bizone	South	3 (6.25)	2 (4.17)	35 (72.92)	0	1 (2.08)	7 (14.58)	0
Callatis	South	99 (18.75)	5 (0.94)	239 (45.27)	1 (0.19)	23 (4.36)	161 (30.49)	0
Dinogetia	South	21 (95.45)	1 (4.55)	0	0	0	0	0
Histria	South	32 (35.16)	1 (1.10)	8 (8.79)	2 (2.20)	21 (23.08)	24 (26.37)	3 (3.30)
Ibida	South	39 (41.05)	20 (21.05)	1 (1.05)	3 (3.16)	14 (14.74)	6 (6.32)	12 (12.53)
Singidunum	South	19 (70.37)	1 (3.70)	5 (18.52)	0	0	2 (7.41)	0
Sirmium	South	0	35 (50.00)	31 (44.29)	3 (4.29)	0	1 (1.43)	0
Storogosia	South	29 (63.04)	3 (6.52)	6 (13.04)	2 (4.35)	0	6 (13.04)	0
Tomis	South	113 (67.66)	51 (30.54)	1 (0.60)	0	1 (0.60)	1 (0.60)	0
Viminacium I	South	32 (84.21)	2 (5.26)	2 (5.26)	0	0	2 (5.26)	0
Viminacium II	South	67 (84.81)	10 (12.66)	1 (1.27)	0	0	1 (1.27)	0
Boldești	North	14 (100)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drăgănești-Olt	North	13 (100)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pietroasele	North	0	18 (100)	0	0	0	0	0
Spanțov	North	51 (100)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sucidava	North	91 (84.26)	0	7 (6.48)	0	0	6 (5.56)	4 (3.70)
Târgșor	North	103 (91.15)	0	0	0	0	9 (7.96)	1 (0.88)

Tab. 5 Frequency and percentage of grave construction for inhumation graves north and south of the River Danube: **Ic** body likely wrapped in a shroud and placed directly in a grave pit. – **IIc** wooden coffin in a grave pit. – **IIIc** cist made from stone slabs or bricks. – **IVc** sarcophagus made from tiles. – **Vc** grave pit with a niche and tiles covering it. – **VIc** tiles or stones placed directly on or around the skeleton. – **VIIc** tiles or stones at the head or feet only. – (A. D. Soficaru).

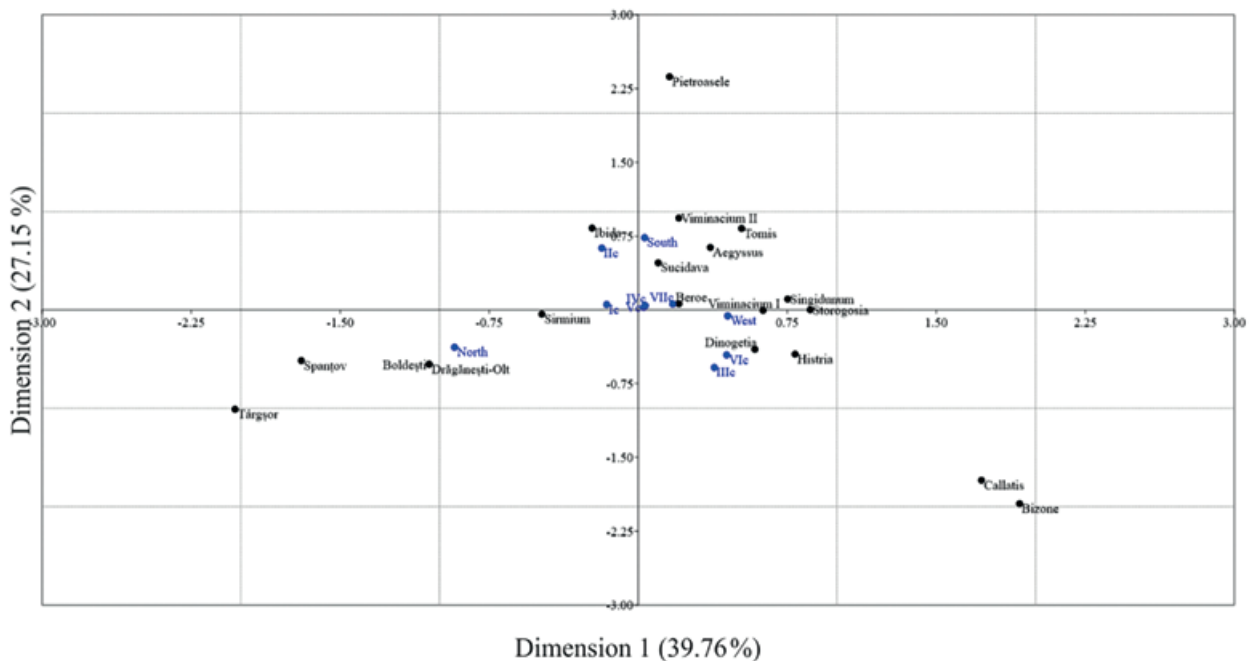


Fig. 3 Multivariate correspondence analysis of the relationship between grave orientation and grave construction. – (Graph A. D. Soficaru).

Site	Location	Body position						
		Ip (%)	IIp (%)	IIIp (%)	IVp (%)	Vp (%)	VIp (%)	VIIp (%)
Aegyssus	South	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0	0	0	0	0
Beroe	South	41 (87.23)	0	0	6 (12.77)	0	0	0
Bizone	South	25 (86.21)	1 (3.45)	1 (3.45)	2 (6.90)	0	0	0
Callatis	South	163 (43.70)	44 (11.80)	23 (6.17)	143 (38.34)	0	0	0
Dinogetia	South	6 (30.00)	0	1 (5.00)	13 (65.00)	0	0	0
Histria	South	46 (62.16)	1 (1.35)	3 (4.05)	16 (21.62)	6 (8.11)	0	2 (2.70)
Ibida	South	51 (61.45)	10 (12.05)	3 (3.61)	12 (14.46)	1 (1.20)	2 (2.41)	4 (4.82)
Singidunum	South	10 (30.30)	1 (3.03)	3 (9.09)	12 (36.36)	1 (3.03)	2 (6.06)	4 (12.12)
Sirmium	South	21 (72.41)	6 (20.69)	2 (6.90)	0	0	0	0
Storogosa	South	25 (54.35)	0	4 (8.70)	17 (36.96)	0	0	0
Tomis	South	87 (64.93)	3 (2.24)	2 (1.49)	41 (30.60)	0	0	1 (0.75)
Viminacium I	South	27 (81.82)	1 (3.03)	2 (6.06)	3 (9.09)	0	0	0
Viminacium II	South	53 (72.60)	4 (5.48)	9 (12.33)	6 (8.22)	1 (1.37)	0	0
Boldești	North	6 (85.71)	1 (14.29)	0	0	0	0	0
Drăgănești-Olt	North	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0	0	0	0	0
Pietroasele	North	17 (100)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spanțov	North	18 (66.67)	0	4 (14.81)	2 (7.41)	0	3 (11.11)	0
Sucidava	North	36 (34.62)	16 (15.38)	16 (15.38)	35 (33.65)	0	0	1 (0.96)
Târgșor	North	58 (61.70)	14 (14.89)	6 (6.38)	10 (10.64)	1 (1.06)	4 (4.26)	1 (1.06)

Tab. 6 Frequency and percentage of position of inhumed skeletons north and south of the River Danube: **Ip** extended supine. – **IIp** extended supine with the right upper arm on the torso and the left along the body. – **IIIp** extended supine with the left upper limb on the torso and the right along the body. – **IVp** extended supine with both upper limbs on the torso. – **Vp** extended supine with crossed legs. – **VIp** flexed on either right or left sides. – **VIIp** extended prone. – (A. D. Soficaru).

Body Position

The position of inhumed skeletons was defined in terms of the relationship between the upper and lower limbs with the body, leading to the identification of seven primary categories: Ip) extended supine; IIp) extended supine with the right upper arm on the torso and the left along the body; IIIp) extended supine with the left upper limb on the torso and the right along the body; IVp) extended supine with both upper limbs on the torso; Vp) extended supine with crossed legs; VIp) flexed on either right or left sides; VIIp) extended prone (**tab. 6**). A total of 692 burials were in an extended supine position, a practice found on both sides of the River Danube (56.91 % of burials in the south and 53.97 % in the north). This practice cannot therefore be associated exclusively with either Roman or Barbarian practice. On both sides of the border, extended supine burial was common practice rather than a rule. Rather than a north-south divide in burial positions, some sites stand out for greater variability than others. At Ibida, Singidunum and Târgșor burials were found in all seven positions, including four extended prone individuals at Ibida and Singidunum. At Callatis most inhumations were placed in an extended supine position (43.70 %) or in an extended supine position with both upper limbs on the torso (38.34 %), while a total of 17.97 % were placed in an extended supine position with either the right or the left upper limb placed on the torso. At Sucidava burial position was almost equally divided into three categories: 34.62 % of burials were in an extended supine position, 33.65 % extended supine with both upper limbs on the torso, and 30.76 % extended supine with either right or left upper limb placed on the torso. Multivariate analysis of the relationship between orientation, construction and position confirms that position plays a relatively little role in distinguishing between sites, with clustering due primarily to the influence of orientation and construction (**fig. 4**). Nor does sex play a significant

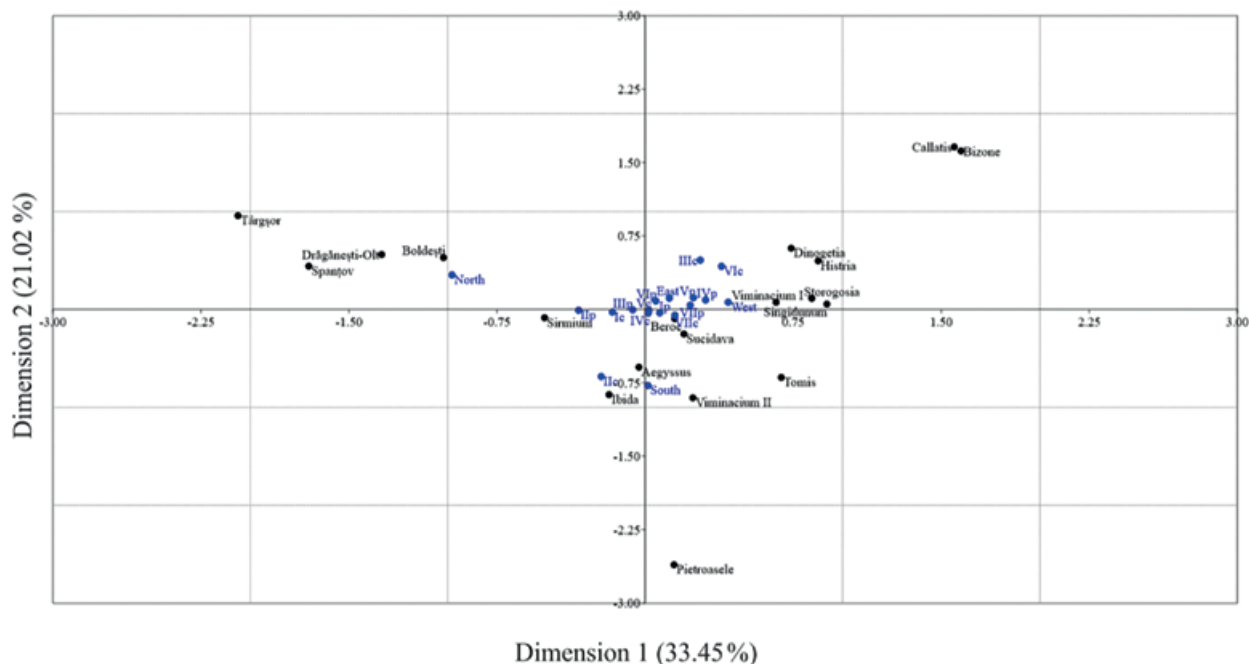


Fig. 4 Multivariate correspondence analysis of the relationship between grave orientation, grave construction, and body position. – (Graph A. D. Soficaru).

Tab. 7 χ^2 test for difference in body position between males and females. – (A. D. Soficaru).

Sex	Position							χ^2	p
	I _p	II _p	III _p	IV _p	V _p	VI _p	VII _p		
Ibida F	12	5	2	6	0	2	1	7.75	0.26
Ibida M	14	2	4	12	1	0	0		
Histria F	9	0	0	10	4	0	2	2.47	0.65
Histria M	7	1	0	4	2	0	1		
Callatis F	10	8	2	35	0	0	0	1.33	0.72
Callatis M	3	5	2	16	0	0	0		
Singidunum F	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	6.3	0.10
Singidunum M	4	0	1	5	0	0	0		
Viminacium II F	15	1	2	1	0	0	0	3.66	0.30
Viminacium II M	22	8	2	4	0	0	0		
Târgșor F	17	2	2	3	0	0	0	7.73	0.26
Târgșor M	13	3	0	3	1	3	1		

role in decisions regarding burial position (**tab. 7**). This dispersed variability between north and south reveals substantial overlap in practice between sites on both sides of the border. The lack of geographical coherence suggests that local customs may have taken precedence over tribal or religious rules in the arrangement of the body in the grave.

Grave Goods

In sites north of the Danube a total of 68.84 % of graves contain objects deposited with the deceased. By contrast, south of the Danube only 39.96 % of graves in the sample contained grave goods (**tab. 8**). These

Site	Location	With grave goods (%)	Without grave goods (%)
Aegyssus	South	3 (21.43)	11 (78.57)
Beroe	South	49 (100)	0
Bizone	South	9 (18.75)	39 (81.25)
Callatis	South	209 (35.79)	375 (64.21)
Dinogetia	South	2 (9.09)	20 (90.91)
Histria	South	27 (27.00)	73 (73.00)
Ibida	South	18 (18.18)	81 (81.82)
Singidunum	South	21 (67.74)	10 (32.26)
Sirmium	South	27 (38.03)	44 (61.97)
Storogosia	South	40 (86.96)	6 (13.04)
Tomis	South	104 (55.32)	95 (44.68)
Viminacium I	South	27 (71.05)	11 (28.95)
Viminacium II	South	11 (13.92)	68 (86.08)
Boldești	North	11 (64.71)	6 (35.29)
Drăgănești-Olt	North	10 (76.92)	3 (23.08)
Pietroasele	North	15 (78.95)	4 (21.05)
Spanțov	North	45 (83.33)	9 (16.67)
Sucidava	North	100 (89.29)	12 (10.71)
Târgșor	North	104 (52.26)	95 (47.74)

Tab. 8 Frequency and percentage of burials with and without grave goods north and south of the River Danube. – (A. D. Soficaru).

figures may be affected by an archaeological bias to report rich graves in large Roman cemeteries, suggesting that the actual discrepancy between north and south may be greater than these figures suggest; to the north of the Danube between 52.26 % and 89.29 % of graves contain objects, while to the south there is much greater variability in the sample with objects reported in 9.09 % to 100 % of graves. Although some sites in the Roman Empire (Beroe, Singidunum, Storogosia, Tomis, Viminacium I) and the Roman bridgehead site of Sucidava have a similar prevalence of objects to sites in the Barbarian region, others have a much lower prevalence (Aegyssus, Bizone, Callatis, Dinogetia, Histria, Ibida, Sirmium, Viminacium II). Of the former, Beroe, Singidunum, and Viminacium I are sites where Barbarian graves have previously been identified. However, the deposition of grave goods at Storogosia and Tomis where burial practice is predominantly inhumation with west orientation suggests that in addition to considerations of status, the Barbarian practice of depositing grave goods may have been more widespread than previously considered, even if the objects deposited were Roman in nature. Thus, it is possible that at sites south of the Danube where the use of grave goods was a pronounced aspect of burial practice, individual choices may reflect the retention of this element of Barbarian tradition. At sites with infrequent use of grave goods, Roman burial in the Christian tradition may have been practised more firmly.

Multivariate correspondence analysis for the relationship between all variables addressed in this study separates the sites into four groups and confirms the role of grave goods in distinguishing burial practices between them (fig. 5). Thus, the Barbarian sites of Boldești, Drăgănești-Olt, Spanțov and Târgșor form a group with north orientation and grave goods; Histria, Dinogetia, Callatis, and Bizone form a group without grave goods and west orientation, with elaborate forms of grave construction particularly at the latter two sites; Pietroasele sits on its own as a site with south orientation, coffin burial and tendency to use grave goods. The remainder of the sites (Sirmium, Sucidava, Beroe, Viminacium I and II, Aegyssus, Ibida, Storogosia, Tomis and Singidunum) form a group around the origin of the graph, revealing the complexity of burial traditions at these sites.

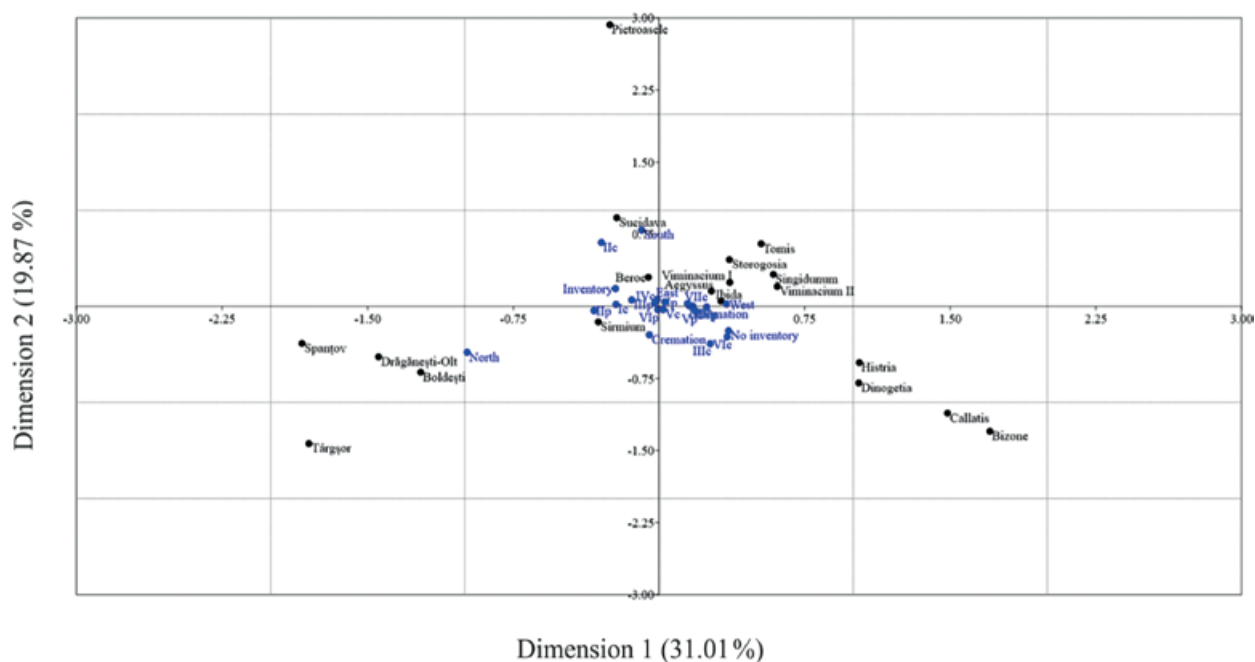


Fig. 5 Multivariate correspondence analysis for the relationship between rite, grave orientation, grave construction, body position and presence/absence of grave goods. – (Graph A. D. Soficaru).

Tab. 9 X² test for difference in presence and absence of grave goods for males and females. – (A. D. Soficaru).

	Frequency with grave goods (%)	Frequency without grave goods (%)	X ²	p
Ibida F	11 (23.91)	35 (76.09)	1.33	0.25
Ibida M	17 (34.69)	32 (65.31)		
Histria F	9 (40.91)	13 (59.09)	1.28	0.26
Histria M	9 (26.47)	25 (73.53)		
Callatis F	23 (26.14)	65 (73.86)	1.88	0.17
Callatis M	8 (16.00)	42 (84.00)		
Singidunum F	14 (93.33)	1 (6.67)	8.71	0.003
Singidunum M	7 (43.75)	9 (56.25)		
Viminacium II F	19 (79.17)	5 (20.83)	1.19	0.27
Viminacium II M	40 (88.89)	5 (11.11)		
Târgșor F	24 (88.89)	3 (11.11)	3.56	0.06
Târgșor M	19 (67.86)	9 (32.14)		

This complexity of burial practice is further revealed in the site-specific relationship between sex and the deposition of grave goods with the deceased (**tab. 9**). At Ibida, Histria and Callatis both males and females are equally unlikely to have grave goods, while at Viminacium II the reverse is true; both sexes are equally likely to have objects. However, at Singidunum, and to a lesser extent at Târgșor, females are significantly more likely to receive objects than males. Although women at Singidunum are most often buried with a west orientation in an extended supine position typical of Christian burial, the inclusion of objects (whether Roman or Barbarian) may be a reference to a Barbarian influence at the site beyond those graves previously identified as such; at this site, burial practice took on gender-specific influences that were not in use elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

Our data indicate that in many instances mortuary practices may have been more complex and multi-dimensional than hitherto understood. Whilst it is possible to identify differences north and south of the border that can be understood in broad terms as »Roman« or »Barbarian«, these are not absolute and act as stereotypes of traditions rather than typical mortuary practices. Thus, a stereotype Barbarian grave can be defined primarily through north-south orientation and the deposition of grave goods, with cremation a further signifier where present. A stereotype Roman burial can be defined through west orientation, variable grave construction including regionally specific complex elaboration, and lack of grave goods, although the latter is a weaker signifier. There are also several overlaps between elements of practice that were familiar to both, including inhumation, placement of the body directly in the grave, and extended supine position (tab. 10). Thus, the burial of Barbarians absorbed within the Roman Empire did not necessarily always require a complete breach of existing habitus. Instead, the existence of areas of overlap in practice may have facilitated the modification of existing traditions in the Lower Danube region.

Burial practice often played out as a mixture of characteristics from north and south of the Danube. This is particularly evident at the Roman bridgehead site of Sucidava where the interaction between Romans and Barbarians might be expected but it is also particularly striking at Sirmium and Ibida where the proportion of burials orientated to the west in accordance with Christian tradition is strikingly low compared to other sites south of the border. However, the data on orientation suggest a notable Barbarian influence at several other sites in the south, although it seems that there were varying degrees of tolerance for the expression of difference. In other words, that some sites were more Roman in practice than others. Given the strict preference for north or south orientation in northern Barbarian sites, the small number of west oriented burials at Târgșor and Spanțov raise interesting questions regarding these individuals. Might they be Christian Barbarians or Romans in the Barbarian area?

Local traditions and gender differences also played an important role in burial practices at some sites, particularly Callatis, Bizone and Histria on the Black Sea in former Greek colonies at the eastern margin of the Empire. Here, burial practice took its own specific expression in grave construction. Local traditions may also have played a part in leading to the variability evident in burial position.

Aspect of burial practice	North	South
Rite	Inhumation, cremation	Inhumation
Orientation	North, South (except Sucidava)	North, South, West, East West > 50 % of burials at Aegyssus, Beroe, Bizone, Callatis, Dinogetia, Histria, Singidunum, Tomis, Viminacium I, Viminacium II West < 50 % of burials at Ibida, Sirmium
Grave construction	Body placed directly in grave; coffins only at Pietroasele; variation in grave construction at Sucidava	Body placed directly in grave; coffins but notable variation at Bizone, Callatis, Histria, Ibida, Singidunum, Storogosia with particular local traditions of elaboration at Bizone, Callatis and Histria
Body position	Extended supine but notable variation at Sucidava and Târgșor	Extended supine but notable variation at Callatis, Histria, Ibida, Sirmium, Storogosia, Tomis, Viminacium II
Grave goods	Present in > 50 % of graves at all sites	Present in > 50 % of burials at Beroe, Singidunum, Storogosia, Tomis, Viminacium I Present in < 50 % of burials at Aegyssus, Bizone, Callatis, Dinogetia, Histria, Ibida, Sirmium, Viminacium II

Tab. 10 Summary of differences between sites north and south of the River Danube. – (A. D. Soficaru, J. Sofaer).

Although grave goods have previously been a strong focus of research in this region, data on this aspect of burial practice is not straightforward to interpret. Choice of object (or absence of objects) intersects with a range of variables including religion, status, sex, and ethnicity. Our focus on practice, of which objects (grave goods) form part, reveals that identification of Barbarians based on object type alone may be missing a fluidity in burial linked to cross-pollination between traditions, where Barbarians are not fully subsumed or integrated into Roman society but manipulate and play with traditions to express different aspects of identity in different ways and forms. The results of our analysis may indicate that at some sites there was an openness to the Barbarian practice of depositing grave goods and that the principles of this practice may have been more widespread than previously considered, even if the objects deposited were Roman in nature.

Rather than suggesting that a Barbarian signature is missing from sites in the Roman Empire and that assimilation was widespread, a comparative analysis of data from both sides of the Danube reveals that the retention of elements of Barbarian practice was actually relatively prevalent and strong at some sites. However, the mixture of traditions seen south of the Danube was not everywhere equal in form or degree of expression. The deployment of Barbarian practices was stronger in some places than in others. Local traditions also played an important role in mortuary practice, reflecting a notion of identity beyond either Rome or *Barbaricum*. Mortuary practices in the Lower Danube Region were thus flexible, complex, and variable, reflecting the complexity of the social, cultural, and political milieu in which people lived and died.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1) Curta 2006, 39-69; Harhoiu/Spânu/Gáll 2011, 28-56; Kulikowski 2007, 352-365; Pohl 2005, 466-471.
- 2) Toropu/Tătulea 1987; Găzdac et al. 2015.
- 3) Stanev 2012; 2014, 65-86.
- 4) Gândilă 2018, 33-100; Madgearu 2011.
- 5) Hakenbeck et al. 2017.
- 6) We use this term in line with convention to cover all tribes that lived north of the Danube in what the Romans termed *Barbaricum* (Kulikowski 2017, 26-29).
- 7) Poulter 2004, 223-253.
- 8) Bowersock/Brown/Grabar 2001; Caldwell 2012; Liebeschuetz 2015; Rousseau 2009.
- 9) Eger 2011, 215-230.
- 10) Poulter 2007, 169-182.
- 11) Giostra 2011, 7-36.
- 12) Fischer/DiPaolo Loren 2003, 225-230.
- 13) von Rummel 2007, 1-17.
- 14) Eger 2015a, 213-236.
- 15) von Rummel 2010, 74-77; Eger 2011, 215-230; 2015b, 269-277.
- 16) Kazanski 1991, 61-75.
- 17) Bugarski/Ivanišević 2018, 291-332.
- 18) Périn/Kazanski 2011, 299-329; Sofaer 2019.
- 19) e.g. Jones 1997.
- 20) e.g. Oța 2013; Rusev 2012; Soficaru 2011.
- 21) e.g. Anke 1998; Harhoiu 1997; Fiedler 1992.
- 22) Rebillard 2009.
- 23) Soficaru 2011, 70-129; Gatev 2011, 230-223; Rusev 2019.
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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Regionale Muster der Bestattungssitten im unteren Donauraum im 4.-6. Jahrhundert

Im 4.-6. Jahrhundert n. Chr. war die Donau eine durchlässige Grenze. Umfangreiche Wanderungsbewegungen von Stammesvölkern in das Römische Reich fanden im Süden statt, während die Römer im Norden Enklaven hatten, die hauptsächlich für militärische Kampagnen genutzt wurden. Trotzdem wird seit Langem beobachtet, dass sich die archäologischen Funde und Befunde auf beiden Seiten des Flusses deutlich unterscheiden, und die weitgehende Abwesenheit von Zeugnissen für »Stammessignaturen« südlich der Donau blieb ein Rätsel. Basierend auf der Analyse von 1780 Gräbern von beiden Seiten der römischen Grenze untersucht dieser Aufsatz die Bandbreite und Variabilität der Bestattungssitten beiderseits dieser Grenze, um zu verstehen, ob und wie sich die Bestattungstraditionen gegenseitig beeinflussten. Unsere Daten zeigen, dass die Bestattungspraktiken wohl in vielen Fällen komplexer und vielschichtiger waren als bisher angenommen. Darüber hinaus könnten gemeinsame Elemente zwischen Römern und »Barbaren« eine Veränderung der bestehenden Traditionen erleichtert haben, und die Bestattungssitten stellten sich oft als eine Mischung von Merkmalen nördlich und südlich der Donau dar. An einigen Orten wurden Elemente der »barbarischen« Sitten relativ stark beibehalten, doch das Ausmaß der Vermischung von Traditionen zeigt lokale Variationen in Form und Ausprägung. Statt davon auszugehen, dass eine »barbarische Signatur« an den Fundorten im Römischen Reich fehlt, zeigt eine vergleichende Analyse der Daten von beiden Seiten der Donau Flexibilität, Komplexität und Variabilität.

Regional Patterns in Mortuary Practice in the Lower Danube Region in the 4th-6th Centuries

In the 4th-6th centuries AD, the River Danube was a permeable border. Large-scale movement of tribal peoples into the Roman Empire to the south occurred, while the Romans had enclaves to the north used primarily for military campaigns. Nonetheless, it has long been observed that there are significant differences in the nature of the archaeological record on either side of the river and the relative absence of evidence for tribal »signatures« south of the Danube has been an enigma. Based on the analysis of 1780 graves from both sides of the Roman border, this paper explores the range and variability of mortuary practices on both sides of the frontier, in order to understand whether interaction took place in mortuary traditions and the nature of that interaction. Our data indicate that in many instances mortuary practices may have been more complex and multi-dimensional than hitherto understood. Furthermore, shared elements of practice between Romans and »Barbarians« may have facilitated modification of the existing traditions, and burial practice often played out as a mixture of characteristics from north and south of the Danube. The retention of elements of Barbarian practice was relatively strong at some sites, but the extent to which a mixing of traditions took place reveals local variation in the form and degree of expression. Rather than suggesting that a Barbarian signature is missing from sites in the Roman Empire, a comparative analysis of data from both sides of the Danube reveals flexibility, complexity and variability.

Les formes régionales de coutumes funéraires dans le Bas-Danube du 4^e au 6^e siècle

Le fleuve du Danube était une frontière poreuse du 4^e au 6^e siècle ap. J.-C. Des mouvements de tribus vers le sud se déroulèrent à grande échelle dans l'empire romain, tandis que les Romains, eux, disposaient d'enclaves vers le nord tout d'abord pour mener des campagnes militaires. On a néanmoins observé des différences significatives dans la nature des traces archéologiques des deux côtés du fleuve et l'absence relative d'indices de »signatures« tribales au sud du Danube était une énigme. Basé sur l'analyse de 1780 tombes des deux côtés de la frontière romaine, cet article examine l'éventail et la variabilité des coutumes funéraires des deux côtés de la frontière pour déceler d'éventuelles interactions au sein des traditions funéraires et déterminer la nature de ces interactions. Nos données indiquent que dans bien des cas les coutumes funéraires auraient été plus complexes et multidimensionnelles que l'on ne le croyait jusqu'ici. En outre, certains éléments partagés par les Romains et les »barbares« auraient facilité l'évolution de traditions existantes, les rites funéraires se déroulant alors souvent comme un mélange de caractéristiques du nord et du sud du Danube. Certains sites ont conservé relativement longtemps des éléments de pratique barbare, mais l'ampleur

du mélange des traditions révèle une variation locale de la forme et du degré d'expression. L'analyse comparative des données des deux côtés du Danube révèle plutôt de la flexibilité, complexité et variabilité que l'absence de signature barbare dans les sites de l'empire romain. Traduction: Y. Gautier

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Untere Donau / Spätantike / Barbaren / Bestattungssitten / multivariate Korrespondenzanalyse
Lower Danube / Late Antiquity / Barbarians / mortuary practice / multivariate correspondence analysis
Bas-Danube / Antiquité tardive / barbares / coutumes funéraires / analyse des correspondances multiples

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