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Funeral at the frontier

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Session Abstract: A small number of large and well published sites have dominated our idea of what a typical Roman burial is within specific regions. Recent research however, has increasingly shown variation in burial practices and the cemeteries itself. For example, excavations in the Netherlands have made apparent differences in burial practices between, relatively small, stretches of the limes zone. In particular cases this may be visible on the civitas or tribal level. The session aims to promote a comparison on the supra-regional level along the frontier of the empire. This is necessary in order to establish the uniqueness of, or similarities between, certain practices and burial goods. In addition it is to be expected that the significant influx of soldiers and people from the Mediterranean into the limes zone had an impact on the aforementioned aspects.

Regional variation is, not exclusively, expressed through; treatment of the deceased body, material culture in the form of burial goods, the organisation and layout of cemeteries in both rural and urban environments and the visibility through above ground structures, such as tumuli, tombstones, steles and funerary gardens. It raises a number of questions, i.e.: Which regional variations have come to light in other countries along the limes? Do such differences derive from context, i.e. rural, urban or military, or rather from the availability of goods and raw materials? Which aspects of burial practices along the border are anchored in pre Roman burial traditions and developed regionally and which are influenced by outside, Mediterranean, ideas about the afterlife?

The session welcomes contributions on the following subjects: Roman and local believes in the afterlife, burial rites, material culture in the form of burial goods, types cremation burials and tomb forms, funerary monuments, funerary gardens, military cemeteries and civilian cemeteries