



ACCUMULATIONS OF CATTLE SCAPULAE IN ROMAN FAUNAL ASSEMBLAGES: AN ONLINE DISCUSSION EVENT, 6TH MAY 2026, 6 P.M. (CEST)

Large accumulations of cattle scapulae with a standardised set of chop and cut marks are a pattern frequently observed in faunal assemblages throughout many regions of the Roman empire. Since this phenomenon has been initially described by Elisabeth Schmid in the 1960s, its interpretation and origin have been the subject of much debate within the zooarchaeological community. Nevertheless, many aspects remain unresolved.

With this discussion event, the GAPA (*Gesellschaft für Archäozoologie und Prähistorische Anthropologie*/Association for Archaeozoology and Prehistoric Anthropology) aims to bring together different perspectives from zooarchaeology, experimental archaeology, ethnoarchaeology and Roman archaeology to address the following questions:

- In which regional and chronological framework does the phenomenon occur and is there also evidence from contexts beyond the Roman period (Iron Age/early Medieval sites)?
- Can we note local variabilities, especially with regard to skeleton elements, which are often associated with scapula accumulations, such as cattle mandibles and ribs?
- In which contexts do these patterns occur: Rural/urban, military/civilian, autochthonous/"Romanized"?

INTRODUCTION (SIMON TRIXL)

KEYNOTES

BENJAMIN M. SICHERT: Smoked or simply butchered? Reconsidering butchery marks on Roman cattle scapulae based on observations from present-day butchery and first experimental applications

NISA I. KIRCHENGAST: From Lines, Chops and Scoops – On the visibility and interpretation of Roman cattle scapulae and other "Signature Fragments"

SHORT TALKS (MAX. 5 MINUTES)

THIERRY ARGANT: De scapulīs allobrogicis: an example from late latenian site of Revel-Tourdan (Isère, France)

SIMON TRIXL: Late La Tène cattle scapula and mandible accumulations: Evidence from the Oppidum Altenburg-Rheinau (Southwest Germany and Northern Switzerland)

TAREK OUESLATI: Military occupation of Rirha (Morocco, 1st-3rd c AD) and the introduction of Roman butchery techniques

MICHAËL SEIGLE: Scapulae in the heart of the vicus: a case study from Annecy (France)

DISCUSSION