

**48<sup>th</sup> international conference  
of the Association Française pour l'Étude de l'Âge du Fer**

**Rodez (France), 9-11 May 2024**

**FUNERARY PRACTICES IN WESTERN EUROPE  
9<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC**

**Date and venue:**

9 - 11 May 2024, MJC auditorium, Rodez (Aveyron, France)

**Themes:**

The specialized theme of the 33<sup>rd</sup> AFEAF conference - which took place in Caen in 2009 - focused on funerary practices in Gaul during the Late Iron Age. Regional syntheses all dealing with the same issues - and all participants perfectly played their part - allowed for a state of research, and more importantly, to compare funerary customs among those different regions. However, such an overview is now lacking for the previous period, namely the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age.

Therefore, we propose to build upon the work accomplished during the conference held in Caen on the occasion of the 48<sup>th</sup> AFEAF conference, which will take place in 2024. Theme 1 will be devoted to that work. The perspective will be broadened by welcoming presentations focusing on neighbouring areas outside France. The second theme will address innovative aspects of research on funerary practices.

Theme 1: Funerary Practices in France and Western Europe from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

This theme focuses on regional syntheses covering the entire territory of France, as well as regional or national syntheses concerning neighbouring countries. In order to facilitate comparisons between the studied areas, participants are requested to address a series of aspects and thus characterize the funerary "facies" or styles of their respective geographical areas.

Five major fields have been identified and classified:

The composition of the population within funerary complexes based on natural criteria: age (is it consistent with pre-Jennerian mortality?), as well as sex, morphology, biological proximity (discrete features or even DNA).

The treatment of the body and manipulation of human remains, as well as the shape and architecture of the tomb (buried part and superstructure), which are strongly connected to those practices.



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Grave inventories, including the deceased's personal items as well as offerings - food and containers, etc.: quantity, quality, and transformation of objects, their arrangement within the tomb; specialization based on age at death and sex (young children, older children, men, and women).

The distribution of tombs within funerary areas: ways of grouping, criteria that may have applied (age and sex of the deceased and their social importance established through grave goods, etc.).

The distribution, within funerary sites, of burials and other structures related to funerary practices (pyres, para-funerary deposits, monuments, etc.).

Finally, the distribution and location of burials and necropolises in the landscape, whether anthropized or not, their links with topography, communication routes, settlements, and earlier monuments, etc.

Of course, this plan may be adapted according to the available documentation, be it extensive or very sparse. However, it will be useful to identify any gaps that may indicate practices that do not leave durable traces, that are more difficult to perceive. The aim is providing a better understanding of funerary systems on a local scale through coordinated analyses of standardized aspects of those practices.

It is also important to understand the situation in Gaul in a broader context. In that scope, theme 1 should also include presentations from international researchers, including both national and regional syntheses, concerning Celtic Europe and the northwestern Mediterranean (Great Britain, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Iberian Peninsula, etc.). The analytical framework established for France can be adopted in order to facilitate comparisons.

In short:

For the French territory, the conference organisers have contacted colleagues in each regional area, gathering different fields of expertise. Professionals involved in both preventive and research archaeology will be involved.

For other countries, proposals for presentations of regional or national scope are expected, taking into account the selected themes for the French regional syntheses as much as possible.

Theme 2: Thematic and Methodological Approaches to Funerary Practices in Europe from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

Theme 2 will include innovative contributions that improve our understanding of funerary practices through new methods, tools, and the discovery of significant sites within the chronological and geographical scope of the conference. The aim is to foster dialogue among



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specialists. It will be addressed through oral presentations or poster sessions. Proposals may include different aspects, such as:

Analyses of the grave and its components (architecture, grave goods, etc.).

Anthropological studies.

Results obtained through recently introduced techniques in archaeology, including the use of tomography in biological anthropology, 3D visualization of grave goods and funerary contexts (photogrammetry, tomography), research on DNA of ancient populations, chemical analysis of organic components to detect plant and animal-based materials involved in funerary practices (offerings, libations, etc.), etc.

Recent and unpublished field discoveries, resulting from both preventive and research-oriented archaeology.

For this theme, proposals for posters or oral presentations are expected from both French and international researchers.

### Call for papers

*Proposals for theme 1 concerning areas outside France and for theme 2 should be submitted by **29 September 2023**, including each author's contact and institution, oral presentation or poster title and abstract (2500- 3000 characters for presentations, 1500 for posters).*

### Conference organisation contact :

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