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Guides, Guards and Gifts to the Gods: Domesticated Dogs in the Art and Archaeology of Iron Age and Roman Britain (British Archaeological Reports British Series, 422)

By Smith, Kate

Oxford : British Archaeological Reports, BAR Publishing, 2006. Soft cover. Condition: New. IX, 84 pages. This study investigates the symbolic role of the domestic dog in Iron Age and Roman Britain through contextual analysis of their faunal remains and interpretation of their representations in iconography. Previous studies have highlighted linkages between the species and ideas about death, healing and regeneration. Although these connections clearly did exist in the cosmologies of Britain and the Western provinces of Rome, this detailed examination of the evidence seeks to identify reasons why this might have been so. The work also highlights previously unnoticed patterns in the dataset that might add a further dimension to our understanding of how the domestic dog was perceived at a symbolic level. It has been established for some time that dogs appear in statistically significant numbers, compared to other species, in the special animal deposits that are a feature of certain Iron Age pits. Dramatic evidence for ritual practice involving animals found at a Romano-British temple complex in Springhead, Kent, and comparable finds from both sacred and secular sites, suggest that domestic dogs were also a favoured sacrifice during this period. As well as analysing such archaeological evidence, this study draws on...



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