



# **Crisis and Ambition: Tombs and Burial Customs in Third-Century AD Rome (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture & Representation)**

*Barbara E. Borg*

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Tombs and burial customs are an exquisite source for social history, as their commemorative character inevitably expresses much of the contemporaneous ideology of a society. This book presents, for the first time, a holistic view of the funerary culture of Rome and its surroundings during the third century AD. While the third century is often largely ignored in social history, it was a transitional period, an era of major challenges -- political, economic, and social -- which inspired creativity and innovation, and paved the way for the new system of late antiquity.

Barbara Borg argues that during this time there was, in many ways, a return to practices known from the Late Republic and early imperial period, with spectacular monuments for the rich, and a large-scale reappearance of collective burial spaces. Through a study of terraced tombs, elite monuments, the catacomb nuclei, sarcophagi, and painted image decoration, this volume explores how the third century was an exciting period of experimentation and creativity, a time when non-Christians and Christians shared fundamental ideas, needs, and desires as well as cemeteries, tombs, and hypogea. Ambition continued to be a driving force and a determining factor in all social classes, who found innovative solutions to the challenges they encountered.

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