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**From the dark into the light: a recent find of the Late Roman cave burial near Lipnik, continental Croatia**

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**Keywords**

Cave burial; Late Antiquity; Human remains; Mortuary practices; Bioarchaeology

**Abstract**

Mountainous parts of continental Croatia, especially the regions of Kordun, Lika and Gorski kotar, are characterised by a large number of speleological objects. Many of these objects contain archaeological remains from different time periods. Over the last two decades, rescue excavations of Roman and Late Roman Period cemeteries (2011, 2016, 2020) within the modern town of Trogir revealed the remains of more than 150 burials. Continuing exploration of buried individuals in a holistic approach is beginning to paint a picture of life and death in Roman *Tragurium* – an urban and commercial centre located on the western end of Central Dalmatian Kaštela Bay, which flourished under the administration of Dalmatian provincial capital *Salona*. This presentation focuses on the case-study of an adult-infant burial found during the 2020 excavations in the western part of the *Tragurium* communal necropolis. Burials 54 and 64 are a double pit burial dating to the first phase of the communal necropolis, buried between early 2<sup>nd</sup> and late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE. Burial 54 is a middle adult male interred in a rectangular pit (possibly in a wooden coffin) and Burial 64 is an infant (1.5-3 months of age at death) interred on top of the legs of Burial 54 (soon) after his burial and covered by a large stone slab. Burial 54 was a robust male in good skeletal health at the time of death, but who experienced at least two instances of trauma during their life. Both antemortem cranial depression (CDF) and rib fractures are present as well as a large perimortem penetrating cranial depression fracture on the frontal bone. Antemortem CDFs can lead to behavior or personality changes consistent with traumatic brain injury, potentially leading to additional trauma (such as the perimortem injury). The infant exhibits pathological changes consistent with metabolic diseases similar to the majority of other individuals interred in the cemetery who died as infants. Using an osteobiographical approach, we will discuss these burials, examining the double burial in the context of the rest of the cemetery and the region.

**What is your preferred presentation format?** Poster  Podium (15 minutes)  No preference

**How do you plan to present?** In-person  Virtual