



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# A newly discovered Early Christian burial in the Sasanian site of Gatwa-sr (Mountains of Soran, modern-day Iraqi Kurdistan)

GARCIA-RAMIS F. <sup>1</sup>, GLUITZ A. <sup>1\*</sup>, SULIMAN A. <sup>2</sup>, ZEBARI A. <sup>3</sup>, BACH GEZ A. <sup>1</sup>, MOLIST MONTA M. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GRAMPO-SAPPO, Department of Prehistory, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Bellaterra, Spain

<sup>2</sup> General Directorate of Antiquities of Kurdistan (Soran District), Soran, Iraq

<sup>3</sup> Department of Archaeology, Salahaddin University, Erbil, Iraq

\*Corresponding author

## Abstract

A salvage excavation of a burial in the site of Gatwa-sûr (Mountains of Soran) has provided valuable knowledge regarding Early Christian burial practices in Northern Iraq during the Sasanian period. The presence of Christian oriented groups in the region is highlighted by the discovery of an earthenware sarcophagus adorned with symbols and challenges previous assumptions about burial customs under Sasanian rule. This finding encourages a rethinking of previous historical narratives and raises questions about the coexistence of different faiths within the Sasanian Empire. As a result, it makes a substantial contribution to the understanding of religious, cultural, and social dynamics in Late Antiquity Kurdistan, emphasizing the necessity for further exploration and preservation initiatives in the region.

The anthropological remains provide significant insights into the health, lifestyle, and demographic profile of individuals during this era. The anthropological analysis revealed tooth loss, degenerative osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, and infectious periostitis. Furthermore, the presence of enthesopathies indicates the engagement in strenuous physical activities, which were likely related to agricultural or manual labor. The interdisciplinary approach, involving archaeologists, residents, and media, has contributed to an increased awareness about the importance of the safeguarding of archaeological sites and the fostering of community engagement in research endeavors.

## Keywords

Sasanian Empire, Early Christianity, Burial, Anthropology, Iraqi Kurdistan

## Session

8. Islamic archaeology

## Workshop

A16406AT - Advances in Sasanian Archaeology

## Type of paper

