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THE TRADITIONAL MODEL IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CONTEXT: THE JONAH SARCOPHAGUS FROM SINGIDUNUM*

Abstract: The Jonah sarcophagus from Singidunum belongs to a group of Budakalász travertine sarcophagi. These types of sarcophagi were produced in Budakalász quarry(ies) and in Aquincum workshops and then exported via the Danube, before being finished in local workshops. This paper uses the Jonah sarcophagus as a case study to examine the integration of traditional tombstones into Early Christian cultural and social contexts.

Keywords: sarcophagus, Budakalász travertine, Singidunum, Aquincum, Early Christian art

This paper proposes a new perspective on a theme already covered in the study *The Jonah Sarcophagus from Singidunum: A Contribution to the Study of Early Christian Art in the Balkans*, published in 2016. (Pilipović and Milanović 2016: 219–245). In the 2016 study, the unique iconography of this sarcophagus (fig. 1) was researched, pointing out its connection with Norico-Pannonian production. The sarcophagus was examined in the context of the early growing Christian community in and around Singidunum. In addition, the closest analogies in early Christian art that might have influenced the creation of the iconographic program of this sarcophagus were pointed out.

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Fig. 1 Jonah Sarcophagus from Singidunum
(Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 1 Јонин саркофаг из Сингидунума
(документација Народног музеја Србије)

Interdisciplinary scientific research conducted in recent years has highlighted the importance of materials used in the production of funereal monuments. The most important quarries and workshops were identified, as well as the distribution of monuments created in them (Đurić 2005: 75–82; Đurić 2008: 159–165; Đurić and Müller 2009: 111–127; Pochmarski 2012: 29–36; Đurić 2016: 176; Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018; Đurić 2019, with previous literature). The importance of Eastern-Alpine quarries was highlighted, especially by Gummern and Pohorje, as well as that of Pannonian Budakalász. The Jonah sarcophagus was made from travertine originating in the Budakalász quarry (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 478; Djuric 2019: fig. 5C). Travertine monuments from these Pannonian quarries and in the Aquincum workshops, were then transported along the Danube, before most likely being finally completed in local workshops. Bearing in mind these findings, the Jonah sarcophagus once again demands our attention, in order to better understand the production process, and thus the use of early Christian motifs on the traditional sarcophagus.

After the publication of the 2016 Jonah study about Jonah, interest in this remarkable sarcophagus within the scientific community grew. In her excellent catalogue of funereal monuments from the National Museum's Lapidarium, Veselinka Ninković presented the Jonah sarcophagus in detail (Нинковић 2019: cat. 129, T. 40/129). From the example of the Jonah sarcophagus, Gordana Jeremić and Olivera Ilić have highlighted the importance of early Christian monuments in the Danube Limes (Jeremić and Ilić 2018: 229–230). Ivana Popović also gave careful consideration to the Jonah sarcophagus within the context of late Antique monuments with Biblical motifs from Serbia (Поповић 2019: 276–278, fig. 6). An exceptional study on the Christianization of late Antique Singidunum by Olga Spehar also gives due attention to the sarcophagus (Špehar 2022: 27–64, especially 49, fig. 7). However, the typology and production process of this remarkable object is not considered in

these works, and the adaptation of early Christian motifs to traditional sarcophagus forms has yet to be examined.

An increase in the production of sarcophagi, a type of monument that was especially attractive to Christians at the beginning of the 2nd century AD in the Roman Empire, was a consequence of the transition from cremation to inhumation (Koch 2000: 1–6). Sarcophagi were not only important visual elements of the presentation of funerary *memoria*, but also indicated the economic status of a certain social stratum of the population. It was precisely the “wealth” of the patron or purchaser that determined the quality of the sarcophagus (Eichner 2002: 73–79). As Ben Russell points out, “sarcophagi were not only functional coffins for the dead, they were monuments more like tombs than coffins (Russell 2011: 140)”. A sarcophagus could possess various qualities, and the material from which it was made was of high importance. In determining the quality of the sarcophagus itself, the key factors were the technique and sculptural quality of the decoration. These qualitative elements in the production of the sarcophagus varied during different periods. Likewise, they could also vary among sarcophagi produced around the same time.

At first sight, the variety of iconographic solutions in the production of sarcophagi may seem limited, but the number of different scenes and the freedom with which they were selected and combined were very significant. The iconography of Christian sarcophagi is characterized by both continuity and change. Just as themes of death and resurrection lay at the center of Christian belief, so the shape and decoration of the sarcophagus were subordinated to the theme of the afterlife: the grave served as a starting point for the heavenly life. Typically, iconography thus expressed not only the early Christian theology of triumph over death, but also triumph through sacrificial death (O’Connor 2013: 40–45).

The clients themselves could play an important role in the creation of iconographic models. Although many were recent converts, their familiarity with the new religion could have been sufficient to justify their participation in the selection of the decorative program (Couzin 2013: 213). It is assumed that they were also familiar with the current fashion in sarcophagus decoration. Sarcophagi with biblical themes, such as that of the Jonah sarcophagus from Singidunum, appeared in the late 3rd century AD, but they became more numerous after the Edict of Milan in 313 AD (Koch 2000: 1–6).

The application of Christian motifs to the traditional form of the sarcophagus is understandable in light of the social and cultural circumstances of that time. The practice of reusing or recycling sarcophagi was not a novelty among the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, but with the appearance of Christians, this practice became much more frequent. Christians not only reused “pagan” sarcophagi, with or without modifications, but they also included pagan motifs in the decoration of sarcophagi, giving them new, Christian, meaning, e.g. the Good Shepherd, the Orans (Studer-Karlen 2012: 59–170). Increased reuse of sarcophagi among Christians could have been for practical reasons. Most pagan beliefs, which did not cause anxiety for Christians, indicated that the soul of the deceased whose tomb had been defaced would return to torment the newly buried body of its Christian occupant (Raynaud 2006: 137–156). Obviously, from a religious point of view, Christians

were less disturbed by the idea of reusing a sarcophagus, so it is not surprising that they reused sarcophagi more often (Rebillard 2009: 28). It seems that the reuse of sarcophagi was more common among people with important positions or for those who had a special status, such as saints. One of the best examples of the reuse of a sarcophagus is that of Saint Euphemia (fig 2). According to legend, the saint perished in the time of Diocletian but her body was kept and buried in the time of Constantine the Great in a stone sarcophagus in Constantinople. During a storm in 800 AD, the sarcophagus mysteriously disappeared and reappeared on the sea coast at Rovinj in Croatia, where it is today preserved in the church of Saint Euphemia. This sarcophagus is made of Proconnesian marble and belongs to the type 2a of sarcophagi, most likely originating in *Aquileia* at the end of the 3rd century AD (Ubal dini 1987: 29–35; Ubal dini 1985: 65–73).



Fig. 2 Sarcophagus of St. Euphemia from the church of St Euphemia in Rovinj
(photo: Lj. Milanović)

Сл. 2 Саркофаг Св. Еуфимије из цркве Свете Еуфимије у Ровињу (фото: Љ. Милановић)

As can be seen from the above, the reuse and redecoration of sarcophagi in the early Christian period was a widespread practice. Guntrum Koch identified around fifty early Christian sarcophagi from various regions, which, in his opinion, had been made by recarving or redecoration (Koch 2000: 7–14). This was likely the fate of the Jonah sarcophagus from Singidunum after it was transported from the Pannonian workshops.

The Jonah sarcophagus from Singidunum is made of travertine and belongs to the group of travertine sarcophagi that were provided from the Budakalász quarry(ies)

and Aquincum workshops (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 476sq, fig. 9; Djuric 2019: fig. 5C and fig. 19: map of distribution of travertine production along the Danube). Travertine sarcophagi made in these workshops appear in centers along the Danube all the way to Viminacium, which indicates their popularity and prestige (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 476). They actually competed in regional markets with those of Eastern Alpine marble. The prevailing general shape of the sarcophagus was the same in both groups, those made of travertine and those made of marble.

Like most travertine examples, the Jonah sarcophagus is characterized by its traditional form (fig. 1). Traditional sarcophagi had a tripartite front panel with a profiled central field intended for an inscription; only a small number of these sarcophagi have a flat front panel. Such a general form could then acquire a more specific character by showing various decorative motifs of the central field, the Norico-Pannonian volute or pelta-type decoration (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 476).

According to the classification of volutes by Erwin Pochmarski, the type of volute on the Jonah sarcophagus is one of the most frequent on Norico-Pannonian monuments and is defined as type 3a (Pochmarski 2014: 415, fig. 9; Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 476 sqq). This type of volute was very popular and is found on many Noric-Pannonian monuments, notably: altars (*Lupa* 4843, 4898, 8856), honorary inscriptions, and on 2nd century steles (*Lupa* 641, 2756, 3066, 3283, 3429, 3544, 12782) (Pilipović 2022: 37, fut. 177–179); however, it is especially characteristic of Lower Pannonian sarcophagi and those from Aquincum. In his exceptional study of sarcophagi, Erwin Pochmarski points out that the type 3a volute is characteristic for those originating in Aquincum, while type 3 is more characteristic of the production of Brigetio, and then also of Aquincum (Pochmarski 2011: 257, T. 1; Pochmarski and Pochmarski-Nagele 2013: 9, T. 7; Pochmarski 2014: 415, T. 9). There are twenty four sarcophagi from Aquincum that have the Norico-Pannonian volute as the only ornamental element decorating their inscription field, and eleven sarcophagi that have additional, typical sculptural decorations in the niches on the sides of the inscription (Pochmarski 2011: 255 sqq; Pochmarski 2014: 412sq). Unfortunately, the dating of these travertine sarcophagi, both on the basis of epigraphic as well as on iconographic data, is very complex. The appointment of the *Legio X Fretensis*, stationed in *Aquincum* during the Marcommanic wars, provides *terminus ad quem* for sarcophagi bearing the name of this legion. The mention of the gentile name (*nomen gentilicium*) *Septimius* or *Iulius* on sarcophagus relates to the end of the 2nd century, and that of *Aurelius* or *Aurelia* probably sets the time frame to the beginning of the Caracalla era. The appearance of the name of the colony of *Aquincum* on sarcophagus dates it to the time of Septimius Severus. No iconographic forms, such as the form of naked Eros, those with figures of children or youths, or their different body positions, assist much in the precise dating of these Pannonian sarcophagi. Unfortunately, there are also no conditions for precise dating of the travertine sarcophagi from Upper Moesian Limes; rather, they are orientated towards a broader period from the end of the 2nd century to the beginning of the 3rd century, or the 3rd century.

There are two travertine sarcophagi from Viminacium with the identical type 3a decoration as the Jonah Sarcophagus from Upper Moesian Limes. They are marked

by tripartite frontal panels and Norico-Pannonian volutes of the type 3a, as decorative motifs in the central field. They lack decorated lateral fields. One of them (fig. 3) is kept today in the Lapidarium of the National Museum in Belgrade (Нинковић 2019: no. 135; Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 476 sqq, fig. 9/2) and one in the Viminacium archaeological site.² On another sarcophagus with type 3a decoration (fig. 4) from Viminacium, both lateral fields have moulded frames which terminate above in a volutes, and include standing figures: Amor and Psyche on one side, and a married couple on the other (Пилиповић 2007: no. 7; Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 476 sqq, fig. 9/3). Type 3a volutes may also be found on two Viminacium steles, one with three arcades made of limestone, and one made of travertine (Pilipović 2022: cat. 12 and 13).



Fig. 3 Sarcophagus from Singidunum, type 3a
(Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 3 Саркофаг из Сингидунума, тип 3а (документација Народног музеја Србије)



Fig. 4 Sarcophagus from Viminacium with Amor and Psyche, type 3a
(Documentation of the National Museum Požarevac)

Сл. 4 Саркофаг из Виминацијума с приказом Амора и Психе, тип 3а
(документација Народног музеја Пожаревац)

² According to data obtained from archeologist Ilija Dankovski, this unpublished sarcophagus was discovered in 2016 in the locality Burdej (G-1 in the numeration for this location). It had been looted, with only a few dislocated bones.

Alongside these examples, three more travertine sarcophagi with type 3 decoration and moulded lateral fields with standing figures, are preserved, one only fragmentarily. They are the sarcophagus from Singidunum (fig. 5) with figures of Genius (Нинковић 2019: no. 130), a sarcophagus from Viminacium (fig. 6) with Jason and Perseus (Pilipović 2004: 65–78; Pilipović 2007: no. 11; Нинковић 2019: no. 134), and a fragment of one sarcophagus from Viminacium on which can be seen part of the figure of Genius (Narodni muzej Požarevac, inv. 02_2686). Additional examples of travertine sarcophagi with Norico-Pannonian volutes of type 7 or pelta-type decoration from Singidunum (Нинковић 2019: no. 4) and Viminacium have survived (National Museum Požarevac, inv. 02_2660, 02_2661, 02_2667 and several unpublished sarcophagus from Viminacium).



Fig. 5 Sarcophagus with Genii from Singidunum
(Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 5 Саркофаг с генијима из Сингидунума (документација Народног музеја Србије)



Fig. 6 Jason Sarcophagus from Viminacium
(Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 6 Јасонов саркофаг из Виминацијума (документација Народног музеја Србије)

Although the distribution of Budakalász/Aquincum finished and semi-finished sarcophagi closely follows the waterway transport routes, it is noticeable that imports of these items are less common in places with significant local producers (fig. 7). The Tašmajdan underground quarry of Badenian limestone in Singidunum was one of the most important regional quarries. Beside the Tašmajdan, other important quarries were the Mecsek Hills, which supplied Sopianae, or the Dardagani, which supplied Sirmium (Đurić 2019: 23, based on the analyses of Igor Rižnar). Monuments of this regional limestone from the Tašmajdan quarry are prevalent in Singidunum, with about 93% being fashioned from it. This is the highest percentage of the use of local stone in comparison to other locations along the Danube from Mursa. The percentage for Cibalae is 72%, for Sirmium it is 53%, and for Viminacium it is 63% (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 474–475). Only 3% of the 61 analyzed monuments from Singidunum are made from travertine (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 474). The significance of local workshops in Singidunum is well demonstrated by this data.

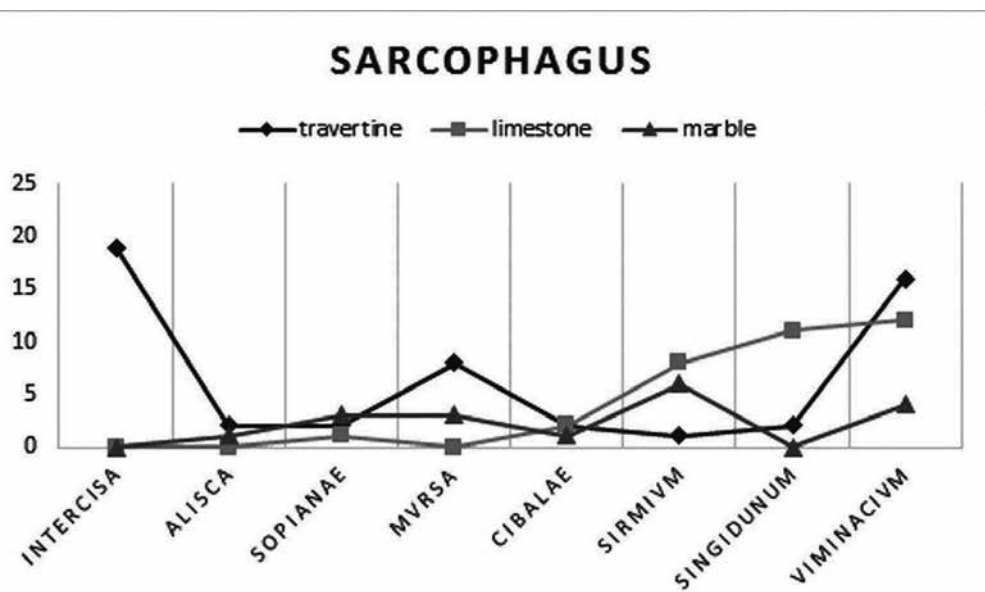


Fig. 7 Occurrence of travertine, limestone, and marble in sarcophagi in the centres along the Danube (after: Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 475, fig. 7)

Сл. 7 Појава травертина, кречњака и мермера на саркофазима у центрима дуж Дунава (према: Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 475, fig. 7)

An important number of stone sarcophagi were found in Singidunum (Pop-Lazić 2002: 47–51; Нинковић 2019: nos. 1–4, 130–133). The travertine sarcophagus with figures of Genius (Нинковић 2019: no. 130) has already been mentioned (fig. 5), as well as one with Norico-Pannonian volutes type 7 (Нинковић 2019: no. 4). Other sarcophagi, with a flat front panel, or the *tabula ansata* type, were made of Badenian limestone from the Tašmajdan quarry (Нинковић 2019: nos. 1–3, 131–133).

The uniformity of travertine Budakalász/Aquincum sarcophagi indicates that they were traded as semi-finished and then finished in the next phase (Đurić, Kele and Rižnar 2018: 478). This means that the basic form of these sarcophagi, includ-

ing that of Jonah, were made in these Pannonian workshops, and then transported to Singidunum as a half-finished product. The question that arises is where exactly the decoration of the Jonah sarcophagus was executed; could it have been produced in the workshops of Singidunum? As could be seen from the discussion above, the Tašmajdan quarry was one of the most important regional quarries along this part of Danube, and it could have been a possible place where the Jonah sarcophagus was finished. It is difficult to comprehend how a sarcophagus with an unfinished relief had been traded. The sculptural quality of the decoration indicates that it was probably created in a local workshop.

As already stated, clients could play a prominent role in the selection of a motif and the creation of the iconographic program. The significance of Singidunum as an early Christian centre was already discussed in the previous article about the Jonah sarcophagus published by Pilipović and Milanović in 2016 (Pilipović and Milanović 2016: 225ssqq). More recently, Olga Spehar's study on the Christianization of Late Antique Singidunum appeared (Шпехар 2022: 27–64). Her research researches the persecution of early Christian martyrs at the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century, when the presbyter *Montanus* and his wife *Maxima* escaped from Singidunum to Sirmium (AA.SS III, 615-7), one of four former capitals of the Roman Empire (Pilipović and Milanović 2016, 225ssqq). Deacon *Ermilus* was a martyr from early fourth century Singidunum, who had converted his jailer, *Stratonicus*, to Christianity. Scholars disagree about the exact date of this event (Pilipović and Milanović 2016: 225ssqq). In the middle of the fourth century, Singidunum, along with Sirmium, Margum, Viminacium, Horreum Margi, Naissus and Remesiana, became an episcopal seat (Pilipović and Milanović 2016: 226ssqq). The bishop of Singidunum, *Ursacius* (about 335–370 CE), played an important role at the time in the strengthening of Arianism, together with *Valens*, bishop of Mursa. Although Singidunum was a significant Christian centre in the fourth century (Pilipović and Milanović 2016: 227ssqq) archaeological finds are not numerous (Ilić, 2005). It is therefore important to mention that, in addition to Jonah, only one other Christian sarcophagus has been identified as originating in Singidunum: a lead sarcophagus discovered in the north-eastern necropolis, near the find site of the Jonah sarcophagus (Црнобрња 2003: 314–315: fig. 2; Шпехар 2022: 50, fig. 8). This lead sarcophagus bears four symbols on its lid, forming a cross whose arms each end in an arrow shape. It can be dated to the first decade of the 4th century on the basis of these motifs alone. As we have seen, the Christian community and the cult of martyrs were well developed in Singidunum by the fourth century. Apart from the Jonah sarcophagus, however, there are no preserved funerary Christian stone monuments. The Jonah sarcophagus is, therefore, important confirmation that a prominent Christian lived in Singidunum, capable of ordering this notable sarcophagus, whose decoration was likely made in a local workshop.

Sarcophagi in the traditional form of a coffin with a lid, with a tripartite front panel, can be found in two completely different contexts: Roman, that is pagan, and Christian. Examples of the assimilation of Christian motifs on traditional sarcophagi are not frequent, but do exist, seen in Upper and Lower Pannonia. These examples demonstrate how traditional models were transposed into the early Christian,

or Christian context, and that the Jonah sarcophagus was not an isolated example in these provinces. The same manner of transposing Christian motifs to the traditional form of a sarcophagus can be seen in four typologically different Pannonian sarcophagi, of which one is only preserved fragmentarily. Here one finds confirmation that the system of applying Christian motifs was independent of the typology of the sarcophagus itself. It was a system that was adapted to various traditional models, depending on the occasion.

A sarcophagus (fig. 8) dating to the 3rd century from Vinkovci (*Cibalae*) is especially significant since it was on this traditional form of sarcophagus that early Christian motifs were applied. The sarcophagus has a tripartite front panel and is made of local limestone (Migotti 1997: 42–43; Migotti, 2017: 507, no. 4, fig. 9). The inscription field is in the form of *tabula ansata*, with two small trapezoid *ansae* inscribed with a rosette. A fish is carved to the right of the inscription field, while *Chi Rho*, Christ's monogram, is engraved to the left.

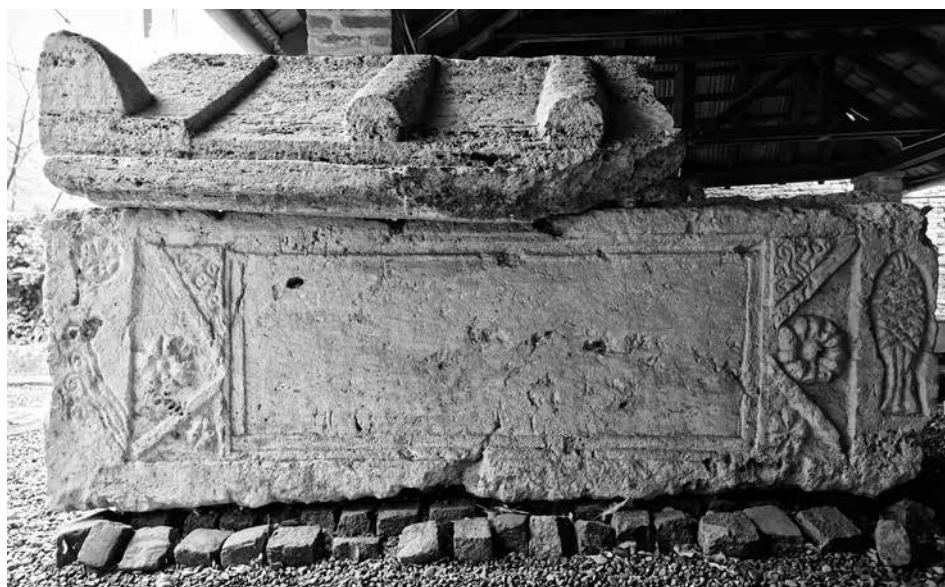


Fig. 8 Sarcophagus from Cibalae (Documentation of the Vinkovci Municipal Museum)

Сл. 8 Саркофаг из Цибала (документација Градског музеја Винковци)

The same manner of transposing the traditional form of sarcophagus into the early Christian context can be seen on a sarcophagus from Sisak (*Siscia*), made from local limestone in the tradition of Pannonian sarcophagi (fig. 9) (Vukelić 2006: fig. 7–8, *CIL* III 3996; Migotti 2017: 509, no. 6, fig. 13; Migotti, Šašel Kos and Livaja 2018: 30–31, cat. S II. 22, fig. 55–56). The sarcophagus is preserved together with a lid and acroteria with pronounced relief plates. The inscription field is in the form of *tabula ansata*, with two small trapezoid *ansae* on which *Chi Rho* is engraved. On both sides of the inscription field there is a crater from which vines with leaves and grape clusters emerge. The inscription reveals that the sarcophagus belongs to *Servilla*, Christ's female servant (*XPI (famula Cristi)*) who was buried by her husband *Marcellianus*. The sarcophagus may be dated to the beginning of the 4th century, af-

ter 313 AD, both because of its bucolic motifs, and because of the inconspicuous Monogram of Christ.



Fig. 9 Sarcophagus from Siscia (Documentation of the Archaeological Museum of Zagreb)
Сл. 9 Саркофаг из Сисције (документација Археолошког музеја у Загребу)

There is a fragment of another early Christian sarcophagus from Sisak made of local Badenian sandstone (Migotti, Šašel Kos and Livaja 2018: 119, cat. (AB[t] II.2), fig. 239). This was most likely a sarcophagus whose inscription field was in the form of *tabula ansata*. The fragment preserved today formed the right front portion, on which a geometric form of a fish was engraved next to a possible *tabula ansata*. This fragment can be broadly dated to the 3rd or 4th century.

A different example of a traditional sarcophagus form with a Christian context can be seen in a sarcophagus from Veliki Bastaji (*Aqua Balissae*), from Upper Pannonia (fig. 10, 10a, 10b), which is made of Pohorje marble (Migotti 2017: 507–509, n. 5, fig. 10–12; Migotti and Šašel Kos and Livaja 2018: 117–119, cat. (AB[t] II.1), fig. 235–238; *Lupa* 3811). This sarcophagus is a reveal of how the context of a find can contribute to the Christian reading of iconography. The form of the sarcophagus was traditional and most probably had a lid with acroteria, lost today. The tripartite front panel has a blank central field and moulded lateral fields with standing figures. The bucolic decoration on the lateral sides of the sarcophagus is especially significant. On the left side there is an arabesque of a vine with leaves and grape clusters, flanked by two trees. The right side features two panthers in a heraldic position with bowed heads turned towards a *cantharus* on which they rest one paw. The *cantharus* contains fruit, and from it emerges a vine with leaves and grape clusters. Behind each panther there is a tree. The new Christian meaning of the sarcophagus comes from a tablet with a liturgical text inscribed in a hexameter form found in the tomb,



10



10a



10b

Fig. 10, 10a, 10b Sarcophagus from *Aquae Balissae*
(Documentation of the Archaeological Museum of Zagreb)

Сл. 10, 10а, 10б Саркофаг из *Aquae Balissae*
(документација Археолошког музеја у Загребу)

which gives a Christian explanation of the lateral Dionysian motifs (Migotti, Šašel Kos and Livaja 2018: 121–123, cat. (AB[t] VII.1), fig. 246–249; *Lupa* 26165). The liturgical text on the tablet was written in large, elegant, late Roman letters *scriptura actuarialia* or *capitala actuarialia*. The sarcophagus dates to the turn of the 3rd or beginning of the 4th century, while the inscribed tablet, made of local Badenian limestone, dates from the 4th century.

These Pannonian sarcophagi from Vinkovci and Sisak, made of local stone, are exceptional examples of the application of Christian motifs on the traditional sarcophagus form. The Jonah sarcophagus followed the same pattern. The application of Christian motifs on sarcophagi of traditional form were not frequent in this part of Roman Empire, and the Jonah sarcophagus is one of the most important examples.



The Jonah travertine sarcophagus was a product of the Budakalász/Aquincum workshops, which were distributed along the Danube centers. This sarcophagus, as was common for Pannonian sarcophagi, is marked by a tripartite front panel and a moulded central field, intended for an inscription, decorated with the type 3a Norico-Pannonian volute. Christian motifs were applied on this field intended for inscription, probably in local Singidunum workshops. The application of Christian motifs on sarcophagi of traditional form was not frequent in this part of Roman Empire, and the Jonah sarcophagus is one of the most important surviving examples.

Translated by Esther Helajzen

ABBREVIATION / СКРАЋЕНИЦЕ

- CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin 1962–.
Lupa *Bilddatebank zu Steindenkmälern* (<http://lupa.at/>)

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ТРАДИЦИОНАЛНИ МОДЕЛ У РАНОХРИШЋАНСКОМ КОНТЕКСТУ: ЈОНИН САРКОФАГ ИЗ СИНГИДУНУМА

РЕЗИМЕ

У истраживању се предлаже нов поглед на већ обрађену тему у студији *The Jonah Sarcophagus from Singidunum: A Contribution to the Study of Early Christian Art in the Balkans* (Pilirović and Milanović 2016). Имајући у виду нова сазнања, учинило се неопходним да се поново посвети пажња Јонином саркофагу како би се боље разумео ток његове израде, а самим тим и процес приписивања ранохришћанског контекста саркофагу с традиционалном формом.

Јонин саркофаг из Сингидунума је начињен од травертина. Припада групи саркофага који се везују за продукцију каменолома у Будакаласу (*Budakalász*) и радионица из Аквинкума (*Aquincum*), а који су потом, као полузавршени производи, допремани у градске центре на подунавском лимесу, све до Виминацијума. Ти саркофази се најчешће одликују трипартитном поделом предње стране и имају натписно поље декорисано пелтом или различитим типовима норичко-панонске волуте.

Као и највећи број травертинских примерака, Јонин саркофаг из Сингидунума одликује традиционална форма, с троделном поделом предње стране. На њеном централном делу је натписно поље уоквирено норичко-панонском волутом, док су поља с обе стране необрађена. Према класификацији волута Ервина Похмарског, на Јонином саркофагу је присутна волута типа 3а, једна од најчешће приказиваних. Осим Јониног, потврђена су још два саркофага типа 3а у Сингидунуму и Виминацијуму.

С обзиром на то да су саркофази допремани, колико се данас може претпоставити, као грубо моделовани или аботирани производи, остаје отворено питање где је настала ранохришћанска декорација Јониног саркофага, сматра се у IV веку. Иако су сачувани примери травертинских саркофага, највећи број споменика у Сингидунуму је начињен од камена из ташмајданског каменолома баденијског кречњака, који је имао важан регионални значај. Да је управо у тим важним радионицама Сингидунума настала и декорација Јониног саркофага може да показује чињеница да она није завршена, као и њене стилске вредности.

Примери појаве хришћанских мотива на саркофазима традиционалне форме нису били чести, али постоје и могу да се виде на четири панонска саркофага, на по једном из Винковаца и Великих Бастаја и на два из Сиска. У питању су типолошки различити примерци, што управо пружа значајну потврду да су хришћански мотиви примењивани на саркофаге различите типологије. Радило се о систему који се прилагођавао различитим традиционалним моделима у зависности од прилике, а Јонин саркофаг је свакако један од најзначајнијих примера у римским провинцијама на Балканском полуострву.