

# KRIPTOKRŠĆANSKI SARKOFAZI U DALMACIJI

## CRYPTO-CHRISTIAN SARCOPHAGI IN DALMATIA

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**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:**  
kriptokršćanstvo,  
kršćanstvo, paganstvo,  
sarkofazi

*Razdoblje kraja III. i samog početka IV. st. je bilo bremenito sukobima pogana i kršćana. Kršćanstvo se širilo, a pogani pokušavali suzbiti razvoj i na državnoj razini (progoni traju od veljače godine 303. do Galerijeva edikta od 30. travnja 311., ali već od godine 305. barem na Zapadu nestaju, premda je vrijeme kršćanima još nesklono). Jedno je desetjeće bilo veoma opterećeno sukobima dviju religija. Pitanje koje sebi autor postavlja jest ima li arheoloških tragova toga sukoba. Kršćani su često sasvim otvoreno iskazivali svoje vjersko opredjeljenje, ali to je nosilo velike opasnosti. Mnogi, međutim, nisu bili spremni izložiti se opasnostima, ali ni odstupiti od nove religije. Je li to bilo moguće? Kako pokazati svoj svjetonazor, a pri tome se ne odati, barem brojnijem sloju društva (paganima). Ima u Saloni nekoliko sarkofaga na kojima se uspješno otvoreno skrivalo svoja uvjerenja, a ipak teško primjetljivim znakovima otkrivalo suvjernicima svoju pripadnost. U radu se donosi nekoliko sarkofaga kriptokršćanskog karaktera i upozorava na potrebu daljnog traganja za sličnim primjerima.*

**KEY WORDS:**  
Crypto-Christianity,  
Christianity, paganism,  
sarcophagi

*The period at the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries saw numerous conflicts between the pagans and Christians. Christianity was expanding and the pagans were trying to contain it, including on the state level (the persecution went on from February 303 AD to Galerius' Edict of 30 April 311, although it subsided in 306). Undoubtedly, the conflict between the two religions spanned a decade. The question this author asks is whether there are any archaeological traces of it. Christians often openly manifested their religious affiliation but at great risk to themselves. Many of them neither wanted to face a danger nor to give up the new religion. Was that possible? How does one conceal one's beliefs without giving himself or herself away – at least to strangers? There is a number of sarcophagi in Salona that can be seen as evidence that successful concealment of one's beliefs could be combined with subtle signs of one's affiliation. This paper gives a few examples of Crypto-Christian Sarcophagi and encourages further search for similar examples.*

Jedan sarkofag bez poklopca od lokalnog vapnenca (kamenolom Rasohe na otoku Braču) danas se nalazi kod hotela Jadran u Preku, na sjevernoj obali otoka Ugljana, nasuprot Zadru. Sarkofag je po svoj prilici otkriven negdje u blizini, ali nije poznato točno mjesto nalaza. Sarkofag donedavno nije bio objavljen.<sup>1</sup> U središtu sanduka nalazi se *tabula ansata*. Na površini ansa isklesani su sa svake strane po jedna rozeta i dva akantova lista. Poviše ansa su palmete ispod listova (Sl. 1-5).

U poljima između ansa tabule i ruba sanduka prikazani su eroti sa spuštenom bakljom. Dimenzije sanduka su uobičajene: duž. 1,95 m; vis. 0,57 m; deblj. stjenki 0,08 m. U tabuli je natpis koji je veoma oštećen i gotovo nečitljiv. Koliko mi je poznato, do sada ga nitko nije ni pokušao pročitati. Nakon dosta muke, osobito zbog toga što je sarkofag smješten pozadi brda smeća i otpada te uz pomoć brojnih fotografija koje su načinili Miroslav Glavičić i Igor Borzić, na čemu im srdačno zahvaljujem, držim da sam ipak natpis uspio

A lidless sarcophagus made of local limestone (from Rasohe quarry on the island of Brač) can be seen near Jadran Hotel in Preko, on the northern coast of the island of Ugljan, off Zadar. The sarcophagus was probably found somewhere in the area, although the exact location is not known. It was not published until recently.<sup>1</sup> There is a *tabula ansata* in its center. A rosette and two acanthus leaves are carved on each side of the ansae. Palmettes under leaves can be seen above (Fig. 1-5).

The Erotes bearing reversed torches can be seen in the fields between the ansae of the *tabula* and the box's edge. The box is of usual size: 1.95m long, 0.57m high, with walls 0.08m thick. The *tabula* contains a much damaged, almost illegible inscription. To my knowledge, no one has even tried to read it yet. After quite a lot of trouble – particularly because the sarcophagus had been moved behind a large pile of garbage – and with a help of numerous photos made available to me courtesy of their authors Miroslav Glavičić and Igor Borzić, for which I am indebted to them, I believe I have managed



**SLIKA 1.** Sarkofag iz Preka, prednja strana (foto: M. Glavičić).

**FIGURE 1** Sarcophagus from Preko, front side (photo: M. Glavičić).

<sup>1</sup> Sarkofag sam nedavno objavio nakon što sam ga dosta dugo proučavao. Usp. N. CAMBI, 2012, 90-93, sl. 1-2. Spomenuo sam ga i u sintezi o lokalnim sarkofazima: N. CAMBI, 2010, 132-133, br. 176, tab. CII. Prvospomenuta publikacija je slabo dostupna u Hrvatskoj. Sarkofag je iznimno važan u sklopu studije o kriptokršćanskim nadgrobnim spomenicima pa sam ga opet sam uzeo u obzir i u ovoj radnji.

<sup>1</sup> I published the sarcophagus recently after having studied it for a long time. Cf. N. CAMBI, 2012, 90-93, fig. 1-2. I also mentioned it in my synthesis on local sarcophagi N. CAMBI, 2010, 132-133, no. 176, tab. CII. The former publication is not readily available in Croatia. As this sarcophagus is of particular importance for the study on crypto-Christian sepulchral monuments, I analyze it in this paper once again.



**SLIKA 2.** Sarkofag iz Preka, prednja strana, detalj erota lijevo od tabule (foto: M. Glavičić).

**FIGURE 2** Sarcophagus from Preko, front side, Eros to the left of tabula (detail) (photo: M. Glavičić).



**SLIKA 3.** Sarkofag iz Preka, prednja strana, detalj erota desno od tabule (foto: M. Glavičić).

**FIGURE 3** Sarcophagus from Preko, front side, Eros to the right of tabula (detail) (photo: M. Glavičić).

to decipher it. This is my reading of it:

*Bonae memoriae Flaviae  
Saturnine conivgi (sic!)  
optimae ab (c) filiae rarissimae (sic!)  
Castae  
Ianvarius Her(es ili mes) maritus  
et sibi posvit*

The inscription is simple and conceived in the style of sepulchral monuments from Late Antiquity. It informs us that Ianuarius, the husband and, perhaps, an heir, put up this sarcophagus for his wife Flavia Saturnina and his exceptional daughter Casta. Obviously, both women were dead then and he envisaged that he, too, would be buried in the same sarcophagus, although he was still alive at the moment. Burials of three or more persons in the same sarcophagus were not uncommon.

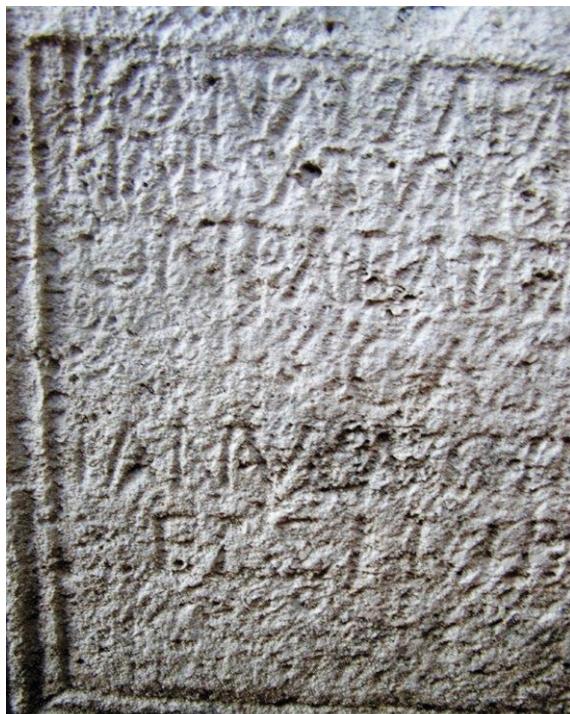
Many sarcophagi of this type are known from Salona. They were also made there of Seget limestone or – even more often – Brač limestone. One such example is the sarcophagus kept in the Archaeological Museum Split,

odgonetnuti. Moje čitanje je sljedeće:

*Bonae memoriae Flaviae  
Satvrnine conivgi (sic!)  
optimae ab (c) filiae rarissimae (sic!)  
Castae  
Janvarius Her(es ili mes) maritus  
et sibi posvit*

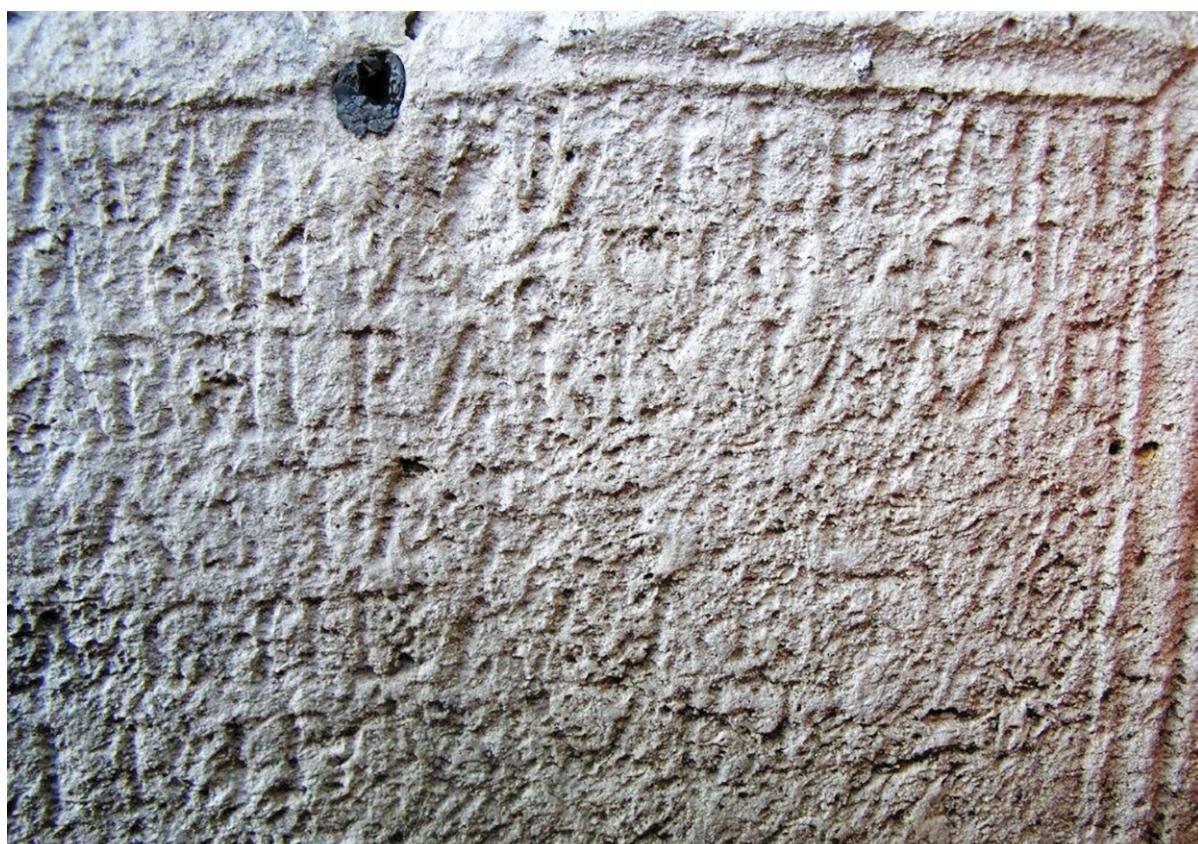
Natpis je jednostavan i koncipiran je na način nadgrobnih spomenika iz kasne antike. U natpisu se spominje da je muž Januarije postavio sarkofag svojoj najboljoj ženi Flaviji Saturnini, čiji je i baštinik te iznimnoj kćerki Kasti. Očito je da su obje žene mrtve, a predviđio je da i sam bude pokopan u istom sanduku, iako je još živ. Pokop triju i više osoba u jednom sarkofagu nije rijedak. Nisu navedene godine života žene i kćerke.

Ovaj tip sarkofaga poznat je u velikom broju u Saloni gdje je i izrađivan od segetskog ili još češće od bračkog vapnenca. Jedan takav



SLIKA 4. Sarkofag iz Preka, lijeva strana natpisa (foto: I. Borzić).

FIGURE 4 Sarcophagus from Preko, left-hand side of the inscription (photo: I. Borzić).



SLIKA 5. Sarkofag iz Preka, desna strana natpisa (foto: I. Borzić).

FIGURE 5 Sarcophagus from Preko, right-hand side of the inscription (photo: I. Borzić).



SLIKA 6. Sarkofag Klodija Secundina iz Kaštel Sućurca (Arheološki muzej u Splitu; foto: T. Seser).

FIGURE 6 Sarcophagus of Clodius Secundinus from Kaštel Sućurac (Archaeological museum Split; photo: T. Seser).

primjer je sarkofag u Arheološkom muzeju u Splitu, približno iz sredine III. st (Sl. 6).<sup>2</sup>

Ovakvih sarkofaga, koje karakterizira središnja tabula, najčešće s ansama i dva slobodna polja sa strana, nema izvan rimske provincije Dalmacije.<sup>3</sup> Tabula je najčešće predviđena za natpis, ali ponekad je ovaj izostao. Polja sa strana tabule često su urešena erotima od kojih su najomiljeniji upravo oni s izvratnom bakljom. Ovakav raspored prednje strane sanduka određen je od samog početka produkcije ove iznimno brojne skupine nadgrobnih spomenika koja počinje sredinom II. st.<sup>4</sup> Promjene su tijekom trajanja te vrste gotovo nikakve. Ovakav tip sarkofaga nazvao sam salonitanskim koji je već u manjim dimenzijama bio zacrtan na urnama samo bez erota.<sup>5</sup> Na urnama, naime, eroti nisu mogli stati na raspoloživ prostor a da to ne bilo na uštrb natpisa koji je uvijek najvažniji dio nadgrobnog spomenika. Međutim, eroti su već od ranije pripadali sepulkralnom repertoaru koji se počinje pojavljivati na stelama, a već mnogo češće na arama krajem I. st. Sara eroti su našli svoje mjesto i na poslijе iznimno

dated roughly to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century (Fig. 6).<sup>2</sup> Such sarcophagi, characterized by a central tabula, usually with ansae and two empty sections on the sides, are not found outside the Roman province of Dalmatia.<sup>3</sup> Tabulae were usually used for inscriptions, but sometimes they are missing. The sections on the sides of a tabula are often decorated with the Erotes – the favorite ones being those with reversed torches. This arrangement on the front side of the box had been in use since the beginning of the mass production of these sepulchral monuments in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> During that time, this type of sarcophagi had undergone almost no changes. I named this type “Salonian sarcophagi”; their precursors were urns, which exhibited a similar style, only without the Erotes and in smaller dimensions.<sup>5</sup> The reason for the absence of the Erotes was the lack of space on the urns. However, the Erotes had been part of the sepulchral repertoire since earlier times. They were first depicted on stelae and – more often – on arae, as early as in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century. When sarcophagi were introduced, the Erotes found their place on them, too. Clearly, the work-

<sup>2</sup> Sarkofag potječe iz Kaštel Sućurca u neposrednoj salonitanskoj okolini. Natpis mu glasi: *D(is) M(anibus) Clodio Secundino de/functo annorum XXV/infelicissimo Avrelivs Secundus et Clodia Firmina parentes.* Usp. N. CAMBI, 2010, 112, kat. br. 81, tab. XLVI, 2.

<sup>3</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 47-50.

<sup>4</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 64-66.

<sup>5</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 21-28, sl. 5.

<sup>2</sup> This sarcophagus originates from Kaštel Sućurac, in the immediate vicinity of Salona. The inscription on it reads: *D(is) M(anibus) Clodio Secundino de/functo annorum XXV/infelicissimo Avrelivs Secundus et Clodia Firmina parentes.* Cf. N. CAMBI, 2010, 112, cat. no. 81, tab. XLVI, 2.

<sup>3</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 47-50.

<sup>4</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 64-66.

<sup>5</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 21-28, fig. 5.

omiljenim sarkofazima. To je jasan znak da su radionice koje su radile are prenijele erote i na sarkofage, a njihovo trajanje proteglo se kroz još dva stoljeća.<sup>6</sup> Potom se produkcija sarkofaga počela raspadati na način da su najprije nestali eroti, a zatim i tabula, a mjesto nje, ukoliko je bilo potrebe za natpisom, tekst je slobodno tekao po praznoj prednjoj strani. No, i bez ikakve dekoracije sarkofag kao vrsta nadgrobnog spomenika trajati će sve do VII. st.

U središtu rimske Liburnije, Jaderu, sačuvan je razmjerno mali broj sarkofaga, a većina njih je, kao i ovaj, bio izrađeni u Saloni a potom transportiran na mjesto upotrebe. To jasno potvrđuju brojni veoma slični primjeri serijske produkcije na nekropolama u Saloni, ali i izolirani primjeri na mnogim drugim mjestima.<sup>7</sup> Natpis na sarkofagu iz Preka morao je biti uklesan na licu mjesta kako bi se unijeli specifični osobni podatci. Šteta je što nije sačuvan pokrov. Međutim, kako je sanduk pripadao poznatom tipu, tada s pravom smijemo zaključiti da je i taj gornji, odvojeni dio, bio istog oblika, a to bi značilo da je bio poput krova na dvije vode s četiri ugaona akroterija. Akroteriji su često nosili portrete pokojnika. U ovom slučaju to je teško čak i prepostavljati jer njegova datacija pada u doba kad portreti polako izlaze iz upotrebe.

Pri analizi natpisa posebnu pozornost valja usmjeriti na izraz *bonae memoriae* (Sl. 4). Ta formula nije poganska, kako bismo očekivali prema ikonografskom sadržaju, jer je nema među gotovo tisuću poznatih natpisa na salonitanskim pouzdano poganskim sarkofazima. Međutim, na dvadeset objavljenih kršćanskih natpisa pojavljuje se takav početak.<sup>8</sup> *Bonae memoriae* ili u kratici BM odnosi se na lijepu uspomenu na nekog pokojnika. Kratica BM

shops that had carved arae started applying the Erotes on sarcophagi, so their use extended for two more centuries.<sup>6</sup> The production then started to wane: The Erotes were the first ones to disappear. They were followed by tabulae; instead of tabulae, if there was a need for an inscription, the text would be carved across the empty front side, without any lines around it. Even without any decorations, sarcophagi as a type of sepulchral monuments would persist until the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

In Iader, the center of Roman Liburnia, a relatively small number of sarcophagi has been preserved. Most of them – like this one – were made in Salona and then transported to wherever they were to be used. This is clearly confirmed by the very similar mass-produced specimens found at necropolises in Salona and as isolated specimens in many other places.<sup>7</sup> The inscription on a Preko sarcophagus had to be carved in situ so that specific personal data could be used in it. It is pity that the lid has not been preserved. However, as the sarcophagus was of the Salonian type, it is only logical to assume that the separate upper part was of the same type. If so, the lid must have been shaped as a double-sloping roof, with four corner acroteria. Portraits of the deceased were often depicted on the acroteria. In this case it is even hard to assume because the sarcophagus was dated to the period when portraits were going out of style.

When analyzing the inscription, particular attention should be paid to the expression *bonae memoriae*. It is not a pagan formula, as we might expect given the pagan iconographic contents. It cannot be found in any of almost one thousand inscriptions on the Salonian, positively pagan sarcophagi I am familiar with. However, such beginning is found in twenty published Christian inscriptions.<sup>8</sup> *Bonae memoriae*, or abbreviated as BM, refers to the memory of a

<sup>6</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 66-72.

<sup>7</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 105, br. 61, 62, tab. XXVI, 2, XXVII, 1 i drugi.

<sup>8</sup> Usp. SALONA IV, 2010, 111, 118, 142, 167, 171, 180, 208, 239, 275, 328, 349, 352, 363, 366, 434, 453, 459, 463, 467, 659.

<sup>6</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 66-72.

<sup>7</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 105, no. 61, 62, tab. XXVI, 2, XXVII, 1 and other.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. SALONA IV, 2010, 111, 118, 142, 167, 171, 180, 208, 239, 275, 328, 349, 352, 363, 366, 434, 453, 459, 463, 467, 659.

može značiti *B(ene) m(erenti)*, ali u tom slučaju nije na samom početku natpisa, a ime mora biti u dativu.<sup>9</sup> Stoga ovakav početak natpisa treba pripisati kršćanima.<sup>10</sup> Međutim, u natpisu nema drugih obrazaca kao što su *requiescit* ili *requiescat in pace* ili samo *in pace* i sl. ili pak drugih kršćanskih sigla križeva ili monograma.

Osim prvih dvaju početnih riječi natpis je koncipiran kao jednostavni poganski nadgrobni natpis. Imena pokojnika su dosta česta u Dalmaciji. Žena se naziva *Flavia Saturnina*. Gentilicij *Flavia* je dosta proširen još od doba flavijevskih vladara i povezan je uz podjelu rimskog građanstva puku u Dalmaciji, a dakako i u drugim provincijama, što su flavijevski vladari radili u svrhu privođenja indigenih naroda u okvire rimskog društva i načina života.<sup>11</sup> Uobičajen je i *cognomen* *Saturnina*.<sup>12</sup> Naravno da je *cognomen* poganske religijske derivacije. Rimski Saturn je bio duboko povezan s državnim kultom<sup>13</sup> pa i samim carem.<sup>14</sup> Međutim, kršćani ga nisu odbacili kao nepočudnog. Muž se pak naziva *Ianuarius*.<sup>15</sup> Ovdje se postavlja pitanje njegova nomena koji je izostao, jednako kao i *praenomen*. Gubitak ostalih dijelova imenske formule, osim kognomena, je česta pojava u kasnoj antici Dalmacije.<sup>16</sup> Poslije kognomena čitaju se jasno riječi HER, a poslije još jasnije MARITVS. Mogućnosti za čitanje prve riječi su *her(es)*, nasljednik, ili pak Her(mes). U prvoj kombinaciji malo je čudno što se riječ *heres* javlja prije *maritus*, a nasljednik je već zato što joj je muž. S druge strane, *Hermes* bio je još jedan kognomen i to teofornog karak-

loved one. The abbreviation BM can also mean *B(ene) m(erenti)*, but in such case it is not used at the very beginning of an inscription.<sup>9</sup> This is why the inscriptions with such beginnings should be attributed to Christians.<sup>10</sup> However, the inscription does not contain other patterns such as *requiescit* or *requiescat in pace* or, simply, *in pace* etc. or some other Christian sigla, crosses or monograms.

With the exception of the two initial words, the inscription was conceived as a simple pagan sepulchral inscription. The names of the deceased are rather common in Dalmatia. The wife's name is Flavia Saturnina. The gentilitium *Flavia* had been widespread ever since the Flavian rulers. It had to do with the awarding of the Roman citizenship in Dalmatia and other provinces – part of the Flavian rulers' attempts to make the indigenous peoples adopt the Roman ways and thus make them part of the Roman society.<sup>11</sup> The *cognomen* *Saturnina* is also common.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, this cognomen is derived from the pagan religion. Roman god Saturn was deeply connected with the state cult<sup>13</sup> and with the emperor himself.<sup>14</sup> However, Christians did not discard him as objectionable. The husband is called *Ianuarius*.<sup>15</sup> There is the question of his *nomen* which is missing, same as his *praenomen*. Omission of other elements of the name formula with the exception of the cognomen is a common phenomenon in Late Antiquity in Dalmatia.<sup>16</sup> After the cognomen, words HER and MARITVS are clearly discerned. The first word could be interpreted as both *her(es)* (heir) and Her(mes). In the first case, it is some-

<sup>9</sup> Usp. popis kratica u E. MEYER, 1973, 112.

<sup>10</sup> Među gotovo 1000 poganskih natpisa na salonitanskim sarkofazima ni jedan ne počinje na takav način. Usp. N. CAMBI, 2010, 33.

<sup>11</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 38-39.

<sup>12</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 288.

<sup>13</sup> B. H. KRAUSE, 1983, 12-19.

<sup>14</sup> F. JOHANSEN, 1995, 134-135, 56. Autor hermu pripisuje Kronu i nepoznatom Rimljaniću, ali riječ je o liku Saturna koji je zatiljkom vezan uz portret cara Kara.

<sup>15</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 220.

<sup>16</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the list of abbreviations in E. MEYER, 1973, 112.

<sup>10</sup> Of almost 1,000 pagan inscriptions on Salonian sarcophagi, not one of them has such a beginning. Cf. N. CAMBI, 2010, 33.

<sup>11</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 38-39.

<sup>12</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 288.

<sup>13</sup> B. H. KRAUSE, 1983, 12-19.

<sup>14</sup> F. JOHANSEN, 1995, 134-135, 56. The author attributes the herma to Cronos and an anonymous Roman, but it is actually Saturn, connected by the back of his head with a portrait of Emperor Carus.

<sup>15</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 220.

<sup>16</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 38.

tera<sup>17</sup> pa se ipak odlučujem na čitanje *heres*. Moguće da je imetak na Ugljanu pripadao ženi pa muž naglašava da mu pripada pravo nasljedstva. Kognomen *Ianuarius* je također veoma raširen u Dalmaciji. Geza Alföldy drži da je upotreba ovog kognomena posljedica utjecaja pridošlih orijentalaca. *Ianuarius* nije orijentalno ime pa to ne bi trebalo prihvatići zdravo za gotovo bez obzira na Alföldyev autoritet. Postoji još jedna dvojba glede imena u natpisu sarkofaga iz Preka. Moguće je da je kćerka imenom *Casta* ili da je pokojna kćerka bila *filia casta*, tj. čista, neokaljana. Odlučujem se ipak da je kćerki ime *Casta*, jer joj ime nedostaje, a kao apelativ javlja se jedan rasprostranjeni superlativ *rarisima* (iznimna), pa bi prvi bio nepotrebno gomilanje, a tražio bi i da među ta dva izraza stoji veznik *et*. Žena se pak karakterizira kao *optima*, tj. najbolja, što je također veoma poznato i u kršćanskim i u poganskim natpisima. Time više što se u natpisu rabe superlativi *optima* i *rarisima*, pa bi u slučaju želje za izricanjem čistoće kćerka trebala biti *castissima*. Superlativi su u takvim slučajevima gotovo uobičajeni, kao na primjer *optima*, *infelicitissima*, *fidelissima*, *castissima* i sl.<sup>18</sup> Kognomen *Casta* nije mnogo korišten u Dalmaciji, iako je poznat,<sup>19</sup> ali još poznatiji je drugdje u rimskom svijetu.<sup>20</sup> S tim u vezi, Iiro Kajanto koji se mnogo bavio rimskom onomistikom drži da je kognomen *Castus* spadao među ona nadimke koji izražavaju ljudske moralne i mentalne vrline preminulih osoba.

Dakle, moglo bi se s pravom prepostaviti da su pokojnici po svojoj religijskoj pripadnosti bili kršćani, ali da se u javnosti nisu željeli pokazati kao takvi. Ovakav stav bio je normalan u doba velikih tenzija među kršćanima i poganim krajem III. i početkom IV.

<sup>17</sup> Po G. Alföldiju takav kognomen je jako rasprostranjen osobito u Italiji među robovima i oslobođenicima (G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 215).

<sup>18</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 38.

<sup>19</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 220.

<sup>20</sup> I. KAJANTO, 1965, 68.

what strange that the word *heres* precedes the word *maritus*, for he is an heir if only because he is her husband. On the other hand, *Hermes* would be yet another *cognomen*, of a theophorous nature,<sup>17</sup> so I choose to read this word as *heres*. The cognomen *Ianuarius* was widespread in Dalmatia. G. Alföldy argues that the use of this cognomen reflects the influence of the newcomers from the Orient. As *Ianuarius* is not an Oriental name, this contention should not be taken for granted, regardless of Alföldy's authority. There is another dilemma as regards the names in the inscription on the Preko sarcophagus. It is possible that the daughter's name was *Casta* or that the late daughter was *filia casta* – pure, untarnished. I choose to interpret this as that her name was *Casta*: First, the name is missing. Second, a well-known appellative – *rarisima* (exceptional) – is used here, so the first one would be redundant and using both of them would also require the conjunction *et*. As for the wife, she is described as *optima* – the best – which is also very common in both Christian and pagan inscriptions. All the more so because, since superlatives *optima* and *rarisima* are used in the inscription, the daughter's purity would be underlined using the term *castissima*. Superlatives are almost customary in such cases – e.g. *optima*, *infelicitissima*, *fidelissima*, *castissima* and so forth.<sup>18</sup> The cognomen *Casta* was not used in Dalmatia that much, although it was known<sup>19</sup> (but it was even better known elsewhere in the Roman world).<sup>20</sup> In respect of this, I. Kajanto, who engaged a lot in the Roman onomastics, believes that the cognomen *Castus* belonged to the *cognomina* that expressed the moral and mental virtues of the deceased.

We could therefore assume that the deceased were Christians by their religious affiliation but did not want to announce that in public. Such

<sup>17</sup> According to G. Alföldy this cognomen was widespread, particularly among slaves and freemen in Italy (G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 215).

<sup>18</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 38.

<sup>19</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 220.

<sup>20</sup> I. KAJANTO, 1965, 68.



SLIKA 7. Sarkofag Domicija Vincencija, vjerojatno iz Salone (Arheološki muzej u Splitu; foto: T. Seser).

FIGURE 7 Sarcophagus of Domitius Vicentius, probably from Salona (Archaeological museum Split; photo: T. Seser).

st. S druge strane, moguće neprijatelje mogla je navesti na krivi zaključak poganska ikonografija, tj. eroti s izvrnutom bakljom koji će brzo nakon priznavanja kršćanstva nestati kao simbol ugaslog života koji se u ranije vrijeme produciraо u serijama.

Međutim, upotreba takvih izvorno poganskih motiva nije bila nepoznata među kršćanima. Veoma sličan primjer je i fragment sanduka od prokoneškog mramora Domicija Vincencija, vjerojatno iz Salone (Sl. 7).<sup>21</sup> Na tome fragmentu je po sredini tabula pelte tipa unutar koje je natpis:

Domitio Vincent[io]  
qui vixit annis qv[in]  
que diebus n(umero) XX  
Domitivs Evfrasvs  
[fi]io Karissimo in pa-  
ce fecit

Natpis završava još providnjom kršćanskom formulom *in pace*. U poganskim natpisima ta je formula nepoznata, a na kršćanskima se javlja u velikom broju i u različitim varijantama.<sup>22</sup> I u staroj molitvi za pokojne

an attitude was quite normal in the late 3d and the early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries – a period of strong tensions between Christians and pagans. On the other hand, pagan iconography – the Erotes with reversed torches – could have misled potential enemies. Soon after the recognition of Christianity, this iconography, mass produced in the old days, would disappear as a symbol of the deceased.

However, the use of such motifs of pagan origin was not unknown among Christians. A fragment of the marble box of Domitius Vicentius, probably from Salona, is a very similar example (Fig. 7).<sup>21</sup> The fragment contains a central tabula of pelte type with an inscription:

Domitio Vincent[io]  
qui vixit annis qv[in]  
que diebus n(umero) XX  
Domitivs Evfrasvs  
[fi]io Karissimo in pa-  
ce fecit

The inscription ends with the telltale Christian formula *in pace*. While pagan inscriptions never contain this formula, the Christian ones contain it very often and in various versions.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 129, br. 160; SALONA IV, 2010, 719, br. 359.

<sup>22</sup> J. BRØNDSTED, F. WEILBACH, E. DYGGVE, 1922, 75; R. EGGER, 1926, 74, br. 79; 93, br. 162; 94-95, br. 172; 97, br. 191; 100, br. 216; 100-101, br. 220; 109, br. 288.

<sup>21</sup> N. CAMBI, 2010, 129, no. 160; SALONA IV, 2010, 719, no. 359.

<sup>22</sup> J. BRØNDSTED, F. WEILBACH, E. DYGGVE, 1922, 75; R. EGGER, 1926, 74, no. 79; 93, no. 162; 94-95, no. 172; 97,



SLIKA 8. Sarkofag Dobrog pastira, Salona (Arheološki muzej u Splitu; foto: N. Cambi).

FIGURE 8 *The Good Shepherd sarcophagus, Salona (Archaeological museum Split; photo: N. Cambi).*



SLIKA 9. Sarkofag Dobrog pastira, lijeva bočna strana, Salona (Arheološki muzej u Splitu; foto: N. Cambi).

FIGURE 9 *The Good Shepherd sarcophagus, left-hand short side, Salona (Archaeological museum Split; photo: N. Cambi).*



**SLIKA 10.** Sarkofag Dobrog pastira, desna bočna strana, Salona (Arheološki muzej u Splitu; foto: N. Cambi).  
**FIGURE 10** The Good Shepherd sarcophagus, right-hand short side, Salona (Archaeological museum Split; photo: N. Cambi).

(*requiem*) formula se javlja *requiescat* ili *quiescat in pace*. S druge strane bočno od tabule u slobodnim prostorima bili su prikazani nagi eroti u stojećem stavu na dupinima koji rukama podržavaju tabulu. To, doduše, nije par erota s izvrnutom bakljom, ali je s obzirom na svoju morsku tematiku još izrazitije pogansko. Stoga se i u ovom slučaju smije kazati da je riječ o kriptoršćanskom sarkofagu iz prelaznog razdoblja koji na vješt način skriva vjersku opredijeljenost, a poznavateljima je ipak sve jasno. Zapravo, svrha kriptiranja je da istovremeno skriva i otkriva. Nagi eroti na dupinima su do sada nepoznat motiv na salonitanskim sarkofazima, ali mitološka bića i dupini jasno aludiraju na prevoženje pokojnika na otok blaženih što je svakako još grčka vizija zagrobnog života koja se u rimsko doba još detaljnije sofisticirala.<sup>23</sup> U ovom salonitanskom primjeru ništa nije u svom životu mogao skriviti dječak od 5 godina i dvadeset dana. S obzirom na nevelike dimenzije oči-

The formula appears even in the old prayer for the dead (*requiem*), in the form of *requiescat* (or *quiescat*) *in pace*. In the empty sections on the other side, laterally from the tabula, naked Erotes are used, riding dolphins and supporting the tabula with their hands. This is not a pair of Erotes with reversed torches, but the marine theme makes it even more pagan. This is why we can safely say that this is also a crypto-Christian sarcophagus from a transitional period, aiming at hiding the religious affiliation in such way that those who know can tell the truth. The purpose of the encryption was to hide and disclose at the same time. Naked Erotes riding dolphins may be a hitherto unknown motif on Salonian sarcophagi, but the mythological creatures and dolphins hint at the transport of the meritorious to the island of the blessed<sup>23</sup> – certainly a pagan vision of the afterlife, additionally sophisticated in the Roman times. In this Salonian example, a five-year-and-20-day-

<sup>23</sup> HESIOD, 169, 173.

no. 191; 100, no. 216; 100-101, no. 220; 109, no. 288.

<sup>23</sup> HESIOD, 169, 173.



SLIKA 11. Pokrov sarkofaga s akroterijem, s kristogramom i slovom D(is), Salona, Manastirine (foto: N. Cambi).

FIGURE 11 Lid of the sarcophagus with acroterion and Christogram and letter D(is), Salona, Manastirine (photo: N. Cambi).



SLIKA 12. Pokrov sarkofaga s akroterijem, kristogram i slovom M(anibus), Salona, Manastirine (foto: N. Cambi).

FIGURE 12 Lid of the sarcophagus with acroterion and Christogram and letter M(anibus), Salona, Manastirine (photo: N. Cambi).

to je da se radi o sanduku za dječaka kojega je pribavio njegov otac Domicije Eufrazije. Otac i dječak su iz veoma proširene obitelji *Domitia*,<sup>24</sup> a kognomen dječaka *Vincentius* je poznat među kršćanima u rimskom svijetu,<sup>25</sup> ali i u Dalmaciji. Očev *cognomen Euphrasius* je orijentalnog postanja, ali osobito je čest među kršćanima.<sup>26</sup> Taj je sarkofag bio skup jer je takav bio prokoneški mramor, iako nije prelazio dječačke dimenzije (dužina oko 1,15 m), a tome naravno pridonosi i veoma dobra izvedba. Stoga bi zaključak bio da je dječak potomak orijentalaca konvertiranih na kršćanstvo koji, u strahu od progona, skrivaju svoju novu vjeru.

Najpoznatiji primjer kriptokršćanskog karaktera je znameniti i monumentalni sarkofag Dobrog pastira s Manastirina (Sl. 8) koji na lijevoj bočnoj strani pod arkadom ima također erota s izvrnutom bakljom (Sl. 9).<sup>27</sup> Na prednjoj strani u edikuli je bio prikazan Dobar pastir po standardnim ikonografskim shemama (figura u kratkoj potpasnoj tunici je u raskoraku, a na potkoljenicama nosi *fasciae tibiales*). Na desnoj strani prikaz je molitve uz grobnu (ljudi, žene i djeca u molitvenom stavu; Sl. 10). I to je bio primjer kriptokršćanskog sarkofaga jer nema ništa što bi izravno upućivalo ni na jednu ni na drugu vjersku skupinu.

Dok u prva dva slučaja ne znamo kontekst nalaza, u potonjem je pouzdano da je sarkofag nađen na kršćanskoj nekropoli (Manastirine). S obzirom na frizure muškarca i žene sarkofag je izrađen u doba između 300. i 320. godine, u doba nesigurnosti, pa nisu bili naznačeni jasni kršćanski determinirajući ikonografski (Dobar pastir je motiv koji je nastao još u pogansko, ali je bio prikladan i za kršćansko doba) niti epigrafski elementi.

<sup>24</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 82. Po citiranom autoru čest osobito na istoku.

<sup>25</sup> I. KAJANTO, 1965, 278; G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 328.

<sup>26</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 197. Po citiranom autoru čest kod kršćana u Rimu i na Zapadu.

<sup>27</sup> Zadnji put u M. JARAK, N. CAMBI, 2016, 305-337. Literaturu usp. u bilj. 30 nav. dj.

old boy certainly could not have been guilty for anything in his life. Given the small size, it is clearly a box of Proconnesian marble bought for the boy by his father *Domitius Euphrasius*. The father and his boy belonged to a very extended family, the *Domitia*,<sup>24</sup> and the boy's cognomen *Vincentius* was known among the Christians in the Roman world,<sup>25</sup> but also in Dalmatia. Father's cognomen, Euphrasius, was of Oriental origin, but was particularly common among Christians.<sup>26</sup> The sarcophagus must have been expensive because, regardless of the smaller size intended for a child (approx. 1.5m long), Proconnesian marble was expensive and such was the very good quality of the sarcophagus. We can therefore conclude that the boy had been born into a family of Orientals converted to Christianity, who were afraid of persecution.

The best example of a crypto-Christian sarcophagus is the well-known monumental Good Shepherd Sarcophagus from Manastirine (Fig. 8), which also has an Eros with a reversed torch under an arcade on its left lateral surface (Fig. 9).<sup>27</sup> On the front surface, in the aedicule, the Good Shepherd is depicted according to standard iconography (his figure in waste-high tunic standing astride in landscape, with *fasciae tibiales* on his shanks). On the right side, men, women and children are depicted praying by a tomb (Fig. 10). This is also an example of a crypto-Christian sarcophagus because it contains nothing that would directly indicate any other religious group.

While the contexts of the first two finds are not known, we know for a fact that the latter sarcophagus was found at a Christian necropolis (Manastirine). Based on the hairstyle of both the man and woman, the sarcophagus can be dated to the period between 300 and 320 AD. As those were the times of insecurity, neither

<sup>24</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 82. According to the author, particularly common in the Orient.

<sup>25</sup> I. KAJANTO, 1965, 278; G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 328.

<sup>26</sup> G. ALFÖLDY, 1969, 197. According to the author, common among Roman and Western Christians.

<sup>27</sup> Latest in M. JARAK, N. CAMBI, 2016, 305-337. Cf. literature in note 30.

Na dva akroterija istog pokrova otkrivena na Manastirinama, koji se i danas tamo nalaze, pojavljuje se poganske sigle DM. Na jednom je slovo *D(is)*, a na drugom njen nastavak *M(anibus)*. Poviše oba je uklesan monogramatski križ (Sl. 11, 12).<sup>28</sup> Ispod drugog je i dio natpisa koji je evidentno kršćanski (datiran po indikcijama), ali bez nekog posebnog značenja. Za ove akroterije moglo bi se radije reći da su izvorno poganski, a kasnije su reupotrebljani bili kršćanski kontramarkirani. Značajno je da poganska posveta DM nije izbrisana. Očito je da već u V. st. za ovakvu oznaku više nitko nije mario pa nije bila ni otučena.

Nije isključeno ni da je sarkofag iz Preka bio reupotrebljen, što bi se moglo naslutiti po nekim promjenama u natpisu. To nije pouzdano, ali je nedvojbeno da se nije željelo razotkriti. Pouzdano je pak da sarkofag Dobrog pastira nije pretrpio nikakve promjene u dekoraciji niti kasnije. Reupotreba i kriptiranje nisu jedna te ista stvar pa treba dobro odvagati radi li se o jednom ili drugom fenomenu.

Neki sarkofazi iz Dalmacije jasno pokazuju težak međuodnos u vjerskom životu pri kraju III. i početku IV. st. Bijaše to razdoblje u kojem nije bilo oportuno otvoreno pokazati svoju kršćansku pripadnost. Samo su neki nezatni elementi, bilo u natpisu ili dekoraciji mogli biti poznati ljudima koji su poznavali kriptokršćanski jezik. Ovih nekoliko sarkofaga najvjerojatnije nisu osamljeni primjeri i bilo bi korisno utvrditi imali takvih primjera još i gdje.

clear determining nor iconographic (the motif of the Good Shepherd originated from the pagan times but was also acceptable for the Christian period) nor epigraphic Christian elements were depicted.

One acroterion on the lid of the sarcophagus found in Manastirine and still located there contains a pagan siglum *D(is)* and the other acroterion contains its continuation *M(anibus)*. A monogrammatic cross is carved above both of them (Fig. 11, 12).<sup>28</sup> Below the latter acroterion, part of an obviously Christian inscription can be seen. The inscription, dated on the basis of indications, has no any particular meaning. We could say that these acroteria were originally pagan and were later reused and countermarked with Christian symbols, but the pagan dedication DM was never removed. Clearly, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, nobody cared about this designation anymore, so it was not chiseled off.

It is possible that the Preko sarcophagus was also reused. Some changes in its inscription indicate this, but we cannot be certain. The only thing that is certain is the fact that no changes were made in the decorations on the Good Shepherd Sarcophagus. It is possible, though, that the details of its resting place were changed. Reuse and encryption are two different things, so one has to analyze things thoroughly before deciding on either phenomenon.

Some Dalmatian sarcophagi clearly show the difficult relations between the religious communities in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and the early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was a period when it was wise not to manifest one's Christian affiliation openly. There were, however, some minute details, in inscriptions or in decorations that were known to the people familiar with the crypto-Christian language. The few sarcophagi mentioned in this paper are most likely not the only ones. It would be interesting to find out if there are such examples elsewhere.

*Translation: Duško Čavić*

<sup>28</sup> CIL III 9644 i add. na str. 2141; R. EGGER, 1926, 102, br. 237.

<sup>28</sup> CIL III 9644 and add. on p. 2141; R. EGGER, 1926, 102, no. 237.

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