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THE SARCOPHAGUS WITH AMAZONOMACHY FROM BARGALA

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Abstract: *The broken lower part of the chest of this sarcophagus has been discovered during the regular archaeological excavations in 2010. In the early Christian period it was reused as a trough of a fountain in the inner part of the north-eastern fortress wall. Already during the excavations of 1971 two more fragments have been also found, adding to our knowledge of its decoration.*

Only the representations on the lower part of the front long side are preserved. The left short side of the sarcophagus was also decorated. The right short side and the other long side were not decorated because they were stuck to the wall of the tomb and were not accessible. Later during the secondary use the representations on the left short side have been deleted, its surface smoothed to a greater extent and the trough turned with its non-decorated sides to the viewer.

The Amazonomachy from the Trojan War was represented, very popular in the decoration of the sarcophagi from the 2nd-3rd century. Most probably in the central part of the long side the mythological scene of the battle between Achilles and the queen of the Amazons Penthesilea has been sculpted. Other parts of combating Greek warriors and Amazons were covering all the surface of this long side. At the corners two figures of Nike/Victory with the wreath/garland were represented.

The distribution of the separate scenes and the right side without decoration relates the sarcophagus to some extent to the Roman centre of production of Amazonomachy. But some other parallels demonstrate the strong influence of the Attic centre reaching to the north to Thessaloniki and to the south and east even to some eastern cities like Caesarea Maritima. Because of the local marble from quarry Sivec, the sarcophagus from Bargala should be considered as a work of an itinerant Attic master or as a local imitation of the production in Rome and Attica made for a prominent citizen of Bargala. The technical and stylistic features relate the monument from the end of the 2nd to the end of the first quarter of the 3rd century.

Key words: sarcophagus, Amazonomachy, local production, centres of production in Rome and Attica.

The ancient and late Antique town Bargala is located 17 km to the northeast from the modern town of Štip in Northern Macedonia. It is situated at the foot of the mountain Plačkovica on the right bank of the river Kozjachka in the locality Kalle, near to the village of Gorni Kozjak. The ancient town is mentioned in a Latin inscription from 371, announcing the building of the town gate by the governor of the province Antonius Alipius.¹ During the regular excavations of the north-eastern fortress wall in 2010, the north-eastern gate has been discovered between the towers NN 7 and 8, connecting the town with its suburbs. The sarcophagus was found during this research from the inner side of the south-eastern wall of the gate. The sarcophagus was secondary used for a trough of a fountain, proved by the additionally made hole for the outflow of the water (**fig. 1**). The trough was put in such a way that its figurative decoration to be hidden and only the non-decorated ones could be observed. It should not challenge with the scenes from the pagan myth the anger and the indignation of the citizens of the already early Christian Bargala.



Fig. 1. The sarcophagus from Bargala at the moment of its discovery (photo by T. Nacev)

The preserved outside dimensions are: 205 cm by 86 cm, the height at its preserved maximum is 77 cm. The inner dimensions are 168 cm long, 60 cm wide and the preserved maximum height is 66 cm. The chest of the sarcophagus is made of a sparkling white marble with, from small- to middle grained sugar-like structure, covered with yellow-reddish patina. The marble has a huge amount of quartz mixture which is reflecting the light.

¹ И. Венедиков, 1948, 86.

Two marble fragments are also published in the preliminary report of the excavations in 1971 by B. Aleksova and C. Mango, which they considered to belong to sarcophagi.² The first one they thought to be a representation of a menade³ and the second one as a male torso riding a horse with a fling over the shoulder *paludamentum* (figs. 2 and 3). For both fragments the authors suppose that they have been taken from the village of Dolen Kozjak.⁴ The kind of marble and the iconography of these two fragments reveal that they also belong to the same sarcophagus, broken into many pieces, and that the so-called menade in fact is an Amazon from the Amazonomachy.



Fig. 2. A fragment from the torso with the uncovered right breast (by B. Aleksova, C. Mango, 1971, fig. 66)



Fig. 3. A fragment from the torso of a man, Greek warrior (by B. Aleksova, C. Mango, 1971, fig. 67)

The preserved relief decoration is covering the main long side of the sarcophagus (fig. 4). Most probably also decorated was one of its short sides, where one can see traces of hammering out of the representations smoothing of the surface in the early Christian period (fig. 5). The second long side was also left non-decorated (see fig. 1), as well as its second short (right) one, where the hole for the water has been drilled for the secondary use of the sarcophagus (fig. 6).

Although the decoration is preserved only at the lower part of the chest, nevertheless it is very rich and in high relief, very well polished. The base is very carefully

² B. Aleksova, C. Mango, 1971, 277, figs. 66 and 67.

³ The one from fig. 66.

⁴ B. Aleksova, C. Mango, 1971, 177.

prepared from all four sides and levelled. Then, over the concave horizontal groove consisting of two plain strips, a frame is modelled, the lower part being wider than the upper one. A garland of oak leaves consisting of left and right part stretches in the field between both frames. Each part of the garland begins from the angle of the chest and meets the other one in the centre of the long side, the edges of the leaves following the adequate directions to the right and left. Two kinds of leaf configuration are shown, separated by a vertical concave line. The first leaf configuration reveals a whole leaf in the centre, flanked by two acorns, with two halves of the leaves besides. The second configuration consists of two whole leaves with an acorn in the centre.⁵



Fig. 4. Sarcophagus from Bargala. The long decorated side (photo by T. Nacev)

Both short sides are also decorated with garlands.⁶ The right short side contains configuration of a central whole leaf with two flanking halves, with a concave vein in their centre. It impresses that the leaves nearer to front long side are more carefully carved. The more the garland is withdrawing from it towards the second long but non-decorated side, the more the leaves become schematic and carelessly made. The configurations on the left short side repeat the ones on the front long side: two halves with a whole leaf in the centre with two flanking acorns or two whole leaves with one acorn between them. The only difference is that the ends of the leaves are smooth and look like rather laurel than oak ones (see figs. 4, 5, 6).

⁵ The oak leaves with acorns established themselves in the stone sculpture of the provinces Moesia and Thracia in the period of Emperor Trajan, followed by that of Hadrian, most often on capitals, connected with sepulchral buildings as a mausoleum in Odessos and in Philippopolis. See: C. Περποβα, 1996, Κατ. Νο. 2, 4, 5 and 26.

⁶ With similar leaves, from both kinds – oak and laurel with acorns, are decorated the garlands at the base of the Attic sarcophagi from the museum of Thessaloniki. See: Ε. Παπαγιάννη, 2007, ΠΙΝ. 6, 2.39; ΠΙΝ. 7, 3.38; ΠΙΝ. 8, 3.85; ΠΙΝ. 9, 4.85; ΠΙΝ. 11, 1.164; ΠΙΝ. 12, 3.147; ΠΙΝ. 19; ΠΙΝ. 20, 1.159, 2.159; ΠΙΝ. 55, 1.101, 2.101; ΠΙΝ. 56, 2.101, 1.101; ΠΙΝ. 65, 3.152.



Fig. 5. Sarcophagus from Bargala. The left short side (photo by T. Nacev)



Fig. 6. Sarcophagus from Bargala. The right short side (photo by T. Nacev)

A sarcophagus from Caesarea Maritima, now in the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum of Jerusalem (**fig. 7**), has also two bands with garland, at the lower and at the upper part of the chest, although of another kind. This parallel also shows that the chest from Bargala possibly possessed a second band with garland at its upper end (?).



Fig. 7. A sarcophagus from Caesarea Maritima.
Rockefeller Archaeological Museum of Jerusalem.

From the sarcophagus in Bargala are preserved only the bottom line representations and only one full-length figure at the right corner of the front long side. As it has been already underlined, two of the sarcophagus' sides are decorated and the other two are left plain on purpose. Because of the position of the chest, both parts couldn't be observed. The fallen body of a dead Amazon in a very complex pose is carved in the lower central part of the front long side.⁷ The dead Amazon is lying on her back in direction to the right, but slightly diagonally to the viewer. Only her torso in tunica with apotygmata and rich folds are preserved, fastened over the right shoulder. Otherwise the parallels show her whole stretched body to the end of the feet (**fig. 8**), but the lower part of her body is not preserved. The left hand is bent in the elbow, touching the upper part of the frame with oak leaves. At the right side of her head a boot and part of a saddle (?) are shown in a flat manner, also in slightly diagonal position. Here and almost everywhere on the chest the different plans of the volumes are remarkably outlined, beginning from the background up to the most protruding part of the hair of the dead amazon. Her head is unnaturally turned from the body, not continuing its direction, but inclined to it and almost vertically placed, with the chin upwards. The wavy hair is divided into three parts made in low relief or incised: the short central and the long left and right ones, falling di-

⁷ The iconography of the fallen Amazon is closer to Grassinger's *Gefellene Q*. See: D. Grassinger, 1999, Taf. 91.1.178.

rectly to the end of the frame with oak leaves, as if disturbing in some points its horizontal line. A very small part of the tunica's folds over her left hip is also shown, interrupted by a thick and heavy leg to the right, stepping over the folds immediately left from the elbow. Most probably this is the boot of a second standing Amazon according to the sarcophagus from Caesarea and to the so-called Pio-Clementino sarcophagus.⁸ Generally, the whole iconography is known from the painted shield of Athena Parthenon of Pheidias⁹ and is often repeated in the sarcophagi with Amazonomachy.



Fig. 8. Sarcophagus from Bargala, an image of an amazon (photo by T. Nacev)

The lower part of a male figure is sculpted to the right of the dead amazon (**fig. 9a**). His hips are parted like triangle and he is sitting on his knees. Part of the mantle is wrapped around his right hip and leg, leaving bare only the knee. The other end of the mantle is covering his genitalia and spreads to the right over the band with leaves in the same manner as the hair of the dead Amazon does. This pose is known since the tomb stele of Dexileos and the Alexander sarcophagus¹⁰ and is often exploited in the Roman sarcophagi with Amazonomachy, but the legs in many other monuments are shown in full-length after the knees. On the sarcophagus from Bargala his left leg from the knee downwards is squeezed by the torso and the head of a fallen down horse, represented in profile to the right, with a long wavy flowing mane. His muffle is opened as if neighing and suffering from pain. Again according to the sarcophagus in the Rockefeller museum (**fig. 9b**), the man was attacked by a third Amazon, not preserved in Bargala. He is trying with his right hand to take out the weapon from the wound on his right breast. Remnants of the fingers of this hand of the warrior are also well seen in the relief from Bargala. In his left

⁸ Amazonomachy, Pio-Clementino, Inv. 896.

⁹ E. Harrison, 1981, 281-317.

¹⁰ T. Eliopoulos, 2009, p. 22, fig. 16; A. Pasinli, 1997, 14-24.

hand he holds a dagger or a shorter weapon, the hand being wrapped very artistically to the elbow by the *paludamentum* in half circle. Another small portion of the folds of the same mantle is only partly preserved left from the mentioned half circle.



Fig. 9-a. Sarcophagus from Bargala, an image of a Greek warrior (photo by T. Nacev).



Fig. 9-b. A sarcophagus from Caesarea Maritima, an image of a Greek warrior detail

At the corner itself, a full-length female representation is placed, whose head is not preserved (**figs. 10 and 6**). Her left leg in boot is represented stepping diagonally over the very corner. An extremely rich drapery of a *peplos* is falling down from the almost smooth left leg in the centre at both sides of the corner. The right leg is strongly withdrawn and hidden under her own drapery. A garland which usually the Nike/Victory holds can be seen on the short side from the right. Nothing is preserved from her supposed wings. Such Victories with garland/wreath at the one corner and with *tropheion* at the other one are shown on the sarcophagi made in the Roman workshops with Amazonomachy, for example in the Capitoline Museum¹¹ in Rome (**fig. 11**). In some cases, an Amazon in full-length¹² is shown instead of Nike at both ends of the relief.

It is clear that the short side, to the right of the main long side, was not decorated. From the figure of Nike on the right short side, close to the edge, the end of a garland was preserved, wrapped with a ribbon, which ends are falling downwards as well as the drapery of the *peplos*.

The left part of the front long side is badly preserved both at the top and the bottom of the chest (**fig. 12**). At the left corner a left leg in *sandalia* can be seen, with well modelled fingers and nails. The falling drapery is lower than the leg itself. To

¹¹ G. Koch, 1993, 74-75, Abb. 43.

¹² A sarcophagus in Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. See: Ibid, p. 101, Abb. 56.



Fig. 10. Sarcophagus from Bargala. An image of Nike/Victory in the right corner of the relief (photo by T. Nacev).



Fig. 11. Capitoline Museum Amazonomachy Sarcophagus (by G. Koch 1993, Abb. 43)

the left of the leg towards the centre of the relief probably a fallen soldier or Amazon was represented. The figure was standing in movement to the centre of the long side. Only a part of the foot and the ankle of this representation are preserved. Behind the leg a horse's leg can be seen. Also to the right another horse's front leg is carved with the hoof stepping on the flat surface of the band over the oak leaves. Immediately over this leg with hoof, probably the lifted and bent in the knee left leg of an Amazon is shown.



Fig. 12. Sarcophagus from Bargala. Images of the left part of the relief (photo by T. Nacev)

The sarcophagus from Bargala without a doubt represents the Amazonomachy, an episode from the Trojan War known from numerous Greek, Hellenistic and Roman monuments (vase paintings, the painted shield of Athena Parthenon of Pheidias, the sculptural decoration of monumental cult buildings, mausoleums and sarcophagi). The eastern big group of monuments of the type “Achilles-Penthesilea sarcophagus” had as prototypes the friezes from the metopes of the western side of Parthenon in Athens and the mausoleum in Halicarnassus.¹³ This initial iconography shows them with covered or opened and bare left or right breast. The same composition can be seen in the sarcophagus from Soloi (Cyprus), now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna,¹⁴ where the Amazons are represented with unusual for them iconography, without one bare breast. This dress is considered as Iranian and the Greek warriors are represented like hoplites, almost entirely nude.¹⁵ Another also not typical dress of the Amazons is shown on a front panel of sarcophagus with a relief Amazonomachy dated in 230-250 and exhibited in the Pius-Clementine Museum of the Vatican Museums (Octagonal Court, Nord portico, Inv. 933).¹⁶ We can suppose that in the case of Bargala there existed a central representation in height in the middle of the long side, with Achilles slaying the queen of the Amazons Penthesilea. But in some overcrowded Roman battle sarcophagi this central scene is absent and replaced by numerous groupings of combating pairs. Connected with the

¹³ A. Galoin, 2015, 46, 135 and cit. lit.; E. Harrison, 1981, 281; K. Schwab, 2005, 159-198; B. F. Cook, B. Ashmole, and D. E. Strong, 2005, 42-64.

¹⁴ G. A. Plattner, 2016, 177-190. The sarcophagus is dated in the 30s of the 4th century BC.

¹⁵ Ibid, 178, figs. 4.5.

¹⁶ H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, 1975, 23-24 No 12, Taf. 26.2, 27, 28.

Roman centre of production there are also the representations of Nike/ Victory at the corners of the long side, as well as the two non-decorated sides.

There are also many sarcophagi from the Balkans with the battle between the Amazons and the Greeks and with the particular scene of Achilles against Penthesilea.¹⁷ According to G. Koch up to the 90s of the last century, about 85 monuments show the Amazonomachy, 12 of them being real masterpieces.¹⁸ In the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki¹⁹ there are several sarcophagi from the Roman province of Macedonia exhibited with an extraordinary quality and compositions which can be related to the Antonine and Severan dynasties and to the so-called Attic centre of production.

In the opinion of G. Koch, the regional groups of sarcophagi are defined by the three centres, carving and distributing this kind of monuments. The first centre is Rome; the second centre is Attica and the third one is Docimium.²⁰ Each of these centres has its specific features allowing the identification of a sarcophagus with it.

The sarcophagi from the centre Rome are decorated only from three sides. The fourth one is left non-decorated because it sticks to the walls of the tomb. There are also sarcophagi found with decoration only on two of the sides²¹, similarly to the monument from Bargala. The forms and the dimensions of the “Roman” sarcophagi are extremely variable. Their decoration is dealing with motives descending from mythological scenes up to scenes from everyday life.²² In the recent several decades not only the iconography of the decoration is a subject of study, but also all the activities connected with the quarries, production, workshops as well as the place of the sarcophagi in the family tombs and necropolises.²³ The reliefs and the scenes on the front (the long) sides of the sarcophagi of the “Roman” centre are sculpted in a higher relief, than on the side ones. The Attic sarcophagi have decoration on all four sides. Usually they have standard form and dimensions. They deal with wide palette of themes, the mythological being predominant, as well as with historical battles between the Greeks and the barbarians, also mythologized. Many monuments preserved entirely, or as fragments, from the same centre have been found in

¹⁷ For the distribution of sarcophagi in the Roman provinces in the Balkans see G. Koch, 2013, 101-156.

¹⁸ G. Koch, 1993, 98-99.

¹⁹ Καταλογος γλυπτων 2010, sarcophagi with Amazonomachy, Attic center, Pentelic marble, see: E. Παπαγιάννη, 2007, No 631, Εικ. 1778-1783, dated 230-240, pp. 317-321; No 633, Εικ. 1787-1791 dated of second quarter of 3 c., pp. 322-323; No 635, Εικ. 1792-1793, dated 240, pp. 324-325; No 639, Εικ. 1794-1796, dated 250, pp. 329-333.

²⁰ G. Koch, 1993, 58-61.

²¹ These are more frequently sarcophagi decorated with battle scenes: See the Palermo Sarcophagus, in R. Brilliant, 1963, fig. 4.63.

²² Numerous studies are devoted to the scenes, the iconography, the composition etc. on sarcophagi from the “Roman” centre in the series “Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs”. The second series – “Sarkophag-Studien” – is dealing exclusively with the iconography.

²³ See: K. Meinecke, 2014.

the provinces of Asia Minor and mainly in Ephesos.²⁴ The Docimium centre, called also the Asiatic centre, has its own specifics, one of them being the representations placed among columns, which are dividing one scene from the other.²⁵

The whole composition and decoration of the sarcophagus from Bargala relate it to the groups of the Roman and Attic sarcophagi.²⁶ But this similarity does not exclude its production in a local atelier or by an itinerant sculptor from Attica. The marble used in Bargala is very similar to the marble from the quarries near Prilep in Macedonia and especially from the quarry Sivec, exploited for a very long period from Antiquity up to the end of the early Christian period.²⁷ This marble is dolomitic, very white, with semi-transparent grayish diagonal threads. Because of its fine-grained structure and the very white colour, similar to the high-qualified calcite marble of Carrara, the one from Sivec is called also “Macedonian Carrara” and defined with the term ‘*statuario*’. The production of the Prilep quarries is witnessed not only on the territory of Macedonia, but also as export to the south in Greece.²⁸

The production and distribution of sarcophagi of this Macedonian workshop reveals that there probably existed a pattern ordered by the clients. On the basis of the big amount of sarcophagi produced by the ateliers to the quarries of Nicomedia, Ward-Perkins considers that the trade was mainly with ready pieces.²⁹ But according to B. Russell, the connection between the production and the trade is more complex and is based on the demand and supply among the consumer of the marble, the sculptor and the quarry. In his opinion, the bigger workshops at the quarries have been keeping stockpiles of ready sarcophagi. At the same time, in their major part the workshops were smaller and their production was dependent on the clients demand.³⁰ Some researchers consider that the sarcophagi representing the clash between the barbarians and the Greeks could easily be replaced with scenes from the Amazonomachy; also that the monuments with Amazonimachy were intent to reveal the female virtues and were preferred for female burials.³¹

²⁴ C. Kintrup, 2017. See Amazonomachy-sarcophagi and Achilles-sarcophagi, pp. 41-72 for the monuments from Attica and pp. 141-142, p. 154 (Kat. L1): fragment of a sarcophagus with a fallen Amazon, local production made of Docimium marble.

²⁵ M. Waelkens, 1988, 139-140; J.C. Fant, 1985, 655-662.

²⁶ The sarcophagus from Bargala, with decorations on both sides is associated with the Roman center but its dimensions and relief are closer to the Attic center.

²⁷ W. Prochaska, 2013, 179-197.

²⁸ Ibid, 194; See more: Y. Maniatis, D. Tambakopoulos, E. Dotsika, 2010, 45-58.

²⁹ Similar is the situation in Nicomedia with the trade with marble, studied by Ward-Perkins. See: J. B. Ward-Perkins, 23-69; J. B. Ward-Perkins, 1980, 325-338.

³⁰ B. Russell, 2013, 256-310; B. Russell, 2011, 119-147, B. Russell is concentrating on the stages of production and the qualification of the sculptor. In his opinion, at least three masters take part in the carving of a sarcophagus, according the division of activities and the qualification: the work in the quarry, the work on the semi-manufacture and on the final ready piece according to the wish of the client.

³¹ C. Russenberger, 2015, 149-151.

The sarcophagus from Bargala and the two fragments discovered 40 years before it, raise several questions connected with the provenance of the marble, the concrete quarry and its atelier (workshop). We believe to have answered partly to some of them in this article. It is obvious that the scene on the long side is representing the Amazonomachy, most probably with the central scene with Achilles and Penthesilea. The composition already does not consist of combating pairs, Amazon-Greek warrior, repeated mirror-like from the left and the right side and with free spaces around. According to the most close analogy, the sarcophagus from Rockefeller Museum, the composition in Bargala is more crowded and without any free space around each representation. Two Amazons can be placed next to each other, the legs of a third *personalia* or a horse can cross or dividing a group. Nevertheless they do not reach the last stage of over-crowding of the later sarcophagi of the 3rd century, because each figure and pose is still well readable.

The differences in the combat groupings and especially in the iconography of the Amazons³² should not be considered strange in the light of the theory of copying and combination in the Roman ideal sculpture of iconographic details from different originals and copies belonging to the Classic, Hellenistic and Roman period.³³ Having in mind, that from all the crafts, the sculpture in stone is one of the most labour-intensive activities, that the marble is expensive and difficult for modelling and transportation, we should appreciate very high the sarcophagus from Bargala for its craftsmanship in the composition, the carving and the polishing of the nude bodies and for the magnificent folds of the drapery. In spite of its fragmentary state, the sarcophagus from Bargala demonstrates a very high artistry made locally either by an Attic itinerant master using the local Sives dolomitic marble or by a very good Macedonian master imitating extremely well the Attic sarcophagi with Amazonomachy. Nevertheless the influence of the Roman centre of production is felt too in the non-decorated sides and in the presence of the Nike/Victory at both ends of the main side.

The hair-style of the fallen Amazon, the very fine polishing and the treatment of the folds of the drapery, as well as the mighty male and female bodies, display a strong similarity with the round sculpture of the time of the Severi, from the end of the 2nd to the end of the first quarter of the 3rd century. The high artistic quality of the composition, the carving and the treatment of the bodies show that this local masterpiece has been made for a prominent citizen of Bargala in the best traditions of the Roman and Attic centres for sarcophagi.³⁴

³² Achilles and Penthesilea sarcophagus in Vatican. The Amazons are represented with a left or right uncovered breast. See: D. Grassinger, 1999, Taf. 111.3.

³³ The subject of copies, replicas etc. is studied in details recently by M. Koleva in her *Римска идеална скулптура от България*, София 2017, with numerous references concerning this theory.

³⁴ See on the problem of distribution of tomb steles and sarcophagi on the territory of the province Macedonia A. D. Rizakis, I. Touratsoglou, 2016, 120-136.

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САРКОФАГОТ СО АМАЗОНОМАХИЈА ОД БАРГАЛА

Резиме

Саркофагот беше откриен при редовни археолошки ископувања во текот на 2010 г. Но два други фрагменти беа откриени уште за време на ископувањата во 1971 г, коишто ги дополнуваат нашите сознанија за неговата декорација.

Зачувани се само релјефите во долниот дел на една од подолгите страни, како и на левата кратка страна. Релјефите на пократката страна биле исчукани и видот бил грубо замазнет уште во Христијанскиот период, кога коритото на саркофагот било преупотребено. Не ја исклучуваме можноста и десната кратка страна да била декорирана со релјеф. Втората долга страна не била декорирана и токму таа била свртена кон набљудувачот, кога саркофагот бил пренаменет како корито за чешма.

Претставена е Амазономахијата, една од епизодите на Тројанската војна, многу популарен мотив во декорацијата на Римските саркофази во текот на II-III век. Најверојатно како централна сцена била претставена, но не е зачувана, битката меѓу Ахил и Пентесилаја, царицата на Амазонките. Зачувани се делови од телата на други парови учесници, амазонки и грчки војници. Аглите меѓу оваа долга страна и двете кратки се декорирани со исправена фигура на Нике/Викторија со венец во рацете.

Начинот на распределување на некои сцени и претстави и неукрасената втора долга страна се белези на Римските центри на производство на саркофази. Но други паралели за целосната композиција и за иконографијата и стилот на одделни фигури демонстрира силно влијание на центрите од Атика, кое достигнувало на север до Тесалоника и на југ и југоисток до Мала Азија и Палестина. Поради користењето на локален мермер од рудникот Сивец, саркофагот од Баргала може да се смета како дело на патувачки мајстор од Атика или за локална имитација на атичка продукција, изработен за истакнат граѓанин на Баргала. Техничките и стилските црти го определуваат овој споменик кон првата четвртина на III век.

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