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## **42**

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## A Fragment of the “Pula type” of lustreware immured at the exonarthex of the Katholikon of the Monastery of Hilandari (Mount Athos peninsula)

The Katholikon of the monastery of Hilandari on Mount Athos, reconstructed by the Serbian king Milutin, is one of the masterpieces of Late Byzantine and Serbian church architecture. Built as a developed cross-in-square church with a central dome resting on four columns and lateral conchs, it has a large narthex with two domes. Later on, an exonarthex (outer narthex) was added to the west of the narthex (ĆURČIĆ 1971: 333–344; NENADOVIĆ: 1974, 87–152; MANGO 1976: 178–179; ĆURČIĆ 1978: 14–15; BOGDANOVIĆ, DJURIĆ, MEDAKOVIĆ 1978; KORAĆ 1978: 75–98; MYLONAS 1985: 66–83; MYLONAS 1986: 7–38; BOŠKOVIĆ 1989: 91–99; BOŠKOVIĆ 1992; NENADOVIĆ 1997: 59–124; KORAĆ 1998a: 145–152; KORAĆ 1998b: 159–160; ŠUPUT 1998a: 153–158; ŠUPUT 1998b: 161–164; MARKOVIĆ, HOSTETER 1998: 201–220; ĆURČIĆ 2000: 477–487; ĆURČIĆ 2005: 18–37; ĆURČIĆ 2010: 597 654–655, 664, 669, 674, 682). The church of Milutin was erected, according to the results of the last researches, either between 1300 and 1303, or between 1306 and 1311 (MARKOVIĆ, HOSTETER 1998: 201–220). The outer narthex, built around 1380 by the Serbian prince Lazar Hrebeljanović (1371–1389), has two bays stretching from East to West and another three in width, with a central dome. It is distinguished by its decorative painted façades and its architectural sculpture which belong to the “Morava decorative scheme”. These early Morava decorative motifs include coat-of-arms, rosettes, window frames and painted ornaments (NENADOVIĆ 1974: 94, 98; ŠUPUT 1998a: 153–158). According to Professor V. Korać the outer narthex served as a model for the outer narthexes in the katholika of the monasteries of Ravanica and Manasija in Serbia (KORAĆ 1998b: 159). Unlike other scholars Professor S. Ćurčić suggested a rather earlier date for the exonarthex (*circa* 1350) (ĆURČIĆ 2000: 477–487; ĆURČIĆ 2005: 18–37; ĆURČIĆ 2010: 655), which is not in accordance with the use of prince Lazar’s coat-of-arms (a western-style helmet) in a medallion in the marble panel of the south bifore (BOGDANOVIĆ, DJURIĆ, MEDAKOVIĆ 1978: 118, fig. 6).



Fig. 1. The Katholikon of the Monastery of Hilandari from the South-west (photo: P. Androudis)



Fig. 2. Detail of the façade of the outer narthex of the Katholikon of the Hilandari Monastery, where the immured fragment is shown (photo: P. Androudis)

Our study aims to present an unusual object that is still immured at the South side of the South-west façade of the exonarthex of Hilandari (fig. 1, fig. 2, fig. 3). It is a fragment from the bottom of an open vessel, probably a bowl, decorated with a combination of cobalt blue and lustre<sup>1</sup>. Most of it rests on a stone which has been appropriately carved to match the fragment's form (fig. 3). Glazed vessels immured in the façades of churches, the so-called *bacini*, were well diffused, mostly in Italy, but also in Greece, where the practice is noted since the middle-byzantine period (BERTI, TONGIORGI 1981; VELENIS 1984: 194, 195, note 1, 267, 270; TSOURIS 1988: 113–116, pl. 3; ATTI 1993; TSOURIS 1996: 614, 620–621; YANGAKI 2010: 827, 837–839; YANGAKI 2013a: 375–384).

The fragment of the Hilandari monastery (fig. 4) belongs to the lustreware production of the Iberian peninsula. The majority of the lustreware pottery found to date in Greece belongs to the mature phase of Valencian production, forming part of the “mature Valencian lustre-ware” category also known as “Loza dorada clásica” or “estilo clásico” (LERMA et al. 1986: 194, 196, 199, 201; MARTÍ 1994: 5 fig. 1; GERRARD et al. 1995: 286; PAZ SOLER 1997: 59; YANGAKI 2013b: 287–326). Nevertheless, the fragment from the Hilandari Monastery belongs to

<sup>1</sup> Its dimensions are: 7 cm of width and 9 cm of length.

the “early Valencian lustrewares” (GERRARD et al. 1995: 285–286) and, more precisely, to the so-called “Pula type” of lustreware (BLAKE 1986: 365–407; BLAKE et al. 1992: 202–224; PAZ SOLER 1997: 155–157; RAY 2000: 50–51). This category, which is characterized mostly by open vessels bearing rich, mainly geometric, painted decoration is attributed to the workshops of the Valencia region and covers the period between the second or third quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century with a possible circulation into the beginnings of the next century (BERTI, TONGIORGI 1985: 14–15; BLAKE 1986: 372–375; BLAKE et al. 1992: 203–217; PAZ SOLER 1997: 156–157; RAY 2000: 51). In areas of Greece, vessels immured in the chapel of the Hagioi Anargyroi (THEOCHARIDIS 1996: 156 fig. 119; TSOURIS 1998: 5–14) and in the bell-tower in Vatopedi Monastery (on the Athos peninsula) (fig. 5), in the church of the Vlatadon Monastery (Thessaloniki) (PHILON 1985: 303–306, 312–313), in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Episkopi (Ano Volos) (ANDROUDIS 2007: 91–92; YANGAKI 2013b: 294 and note 43) and fragments from Rhodes (MICHAILIDOU 1994: 55–57, 136 no. 109) and Naxos (VIONIS 2012: 243, 289 N.vi.1, 391, fig. N.vi.1; YANGAKI 2013b: 294) are related to the “Pula type” of lustreware.

The fragment immured at Hilandari (fig. 4) forms part of the base of a bowl and has a reddish brown body and white tin-glaze, decorated in red-brown lustre and darkish blue. It bears at its centre a white medallion on a lustred background, with four lustred circles on the medallion and a large, blue circle encompassing the disc’s centre. Within the central, lustred circle is a small cross. Based on part of a similar discoid motif which is still visible on the body of the bowl, it is possible to suggest that the whole interior surface of the vessel was covered with similar motifs; a stylized type of lettering in reserve on the



Fig. 3. Detail, showing the way the fragment is immured (Hilandari Monastery) (photo: P. Androudis)



Fig. 4. The “Pula type” fragment from the outer narthex (Hilandari Monastery) (photo: P. Androudis)



lustred ground covers the in-between surface. While the motif of discs with lustred circles is not very usual in the late-Medieval lustred production of the Iberian peninsula, bowls or dishes with the same motif occur in Palermo (BLAKE 1986: 402 pl. 17, nos. 992–993), in Avignon (CARRU 1995: 68 no. 141), in Rougiers (DÉMIANS D'ARCHIMBAUD, LEMOINE 1980, 370–371 pl. VIII, 12), in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (RAY 2000: 53–54 nos. 114–115) (fig. 6, second row) and a drug-jar (*albarello*) decorated on its body with the same medallions forms part of the collection of the Louvre Museum (SOUSTIEL 1985: 176–177 fig. 201). As for the letters occurring between the white medallions, they have similarities with the motifs on part of a vessel from the Victoria and Albert Museum (RAY 2000: 56, no. 123) and with those on a bowl, once immured on the chapel of the Palazzo Chiaramonte in Palermo (BLAKE 1986: 373, 402 pl. 17, no. 993). In fact, the example from Hilandari is almost identical, as to its form of decoration, to the bowl from this chapel, which is considered to belong to the “Pula type” of Iberian lustreware pottery (BLAKE 1986: 373, 402 pl. 17, no. 993). Furthermore, given that in some cases these discs are combined with stylized palm-leaves in reserve (RAY 2000: 53–54 nos. 114–115), the last feature common in Valencian lustrewares, the attribution of the base-fragment immured in Hilandari to the lustreware production of the area of Valencia and most precisely to the “Pula type” of lustreware seems secure<sup>2</sup>. These vessels have been dated from after the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and to the same period must be attributed the fragment from Hilandari. Additionally, discs rendered in blue on a white tin-glaze surface, dated to the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and attributed to workshops in the area of Valencia, decorate drug-jars at the Victoria and Albert Museum (RAY 2000: 47–48 nos. 98–99) and at the Istituto Valencia of Don Juan (MARTÍNEZ CAVIRÓ 1982: 149 fig. 113). From the region of Greece it is interesting to note that a bowl with the same white medallions/disc motifs is found immured at the church of Theotokos in the village of Kapetaniana (Crete)<sup>3</sup>, where from an inscription occurs the date 1401 (GEROLA 1932–1940: 567; GALLAS, WESSEL, BORBOUDAKIS 1983: 328–329; GRATZIOU 2010: 56–57, 120 note 93, 131). The decoration of this vessel consists of discs on a lustred ground, similar to those on the fragment from Hilandari, combined with stylized palm-leaves rendered in reserve on the lustred ground. These stylized palm-leaves, related to the “Pula type”, find exact parallels on vessels immured at the churches of the Transfiguration of the Saviour and Christ Pantocrator of the Vlatadon Monastery (Thessaloniki) (PHILON 1985: 303–305, 316 fig. 1), of Santa Maria Novella in Marti (Pisa) (BLAKE 1972: 71, 93 fig. 12, 18) and of Santa Maria Maggiore (Rome) (BLAKE 1986: 401 nos. 14, 29), on vessels from Pula (BLAKE 1986: 378–379 nos. 2–3), and also on dishes from the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (RAY 2000: 52, 54, 56, 57), of the Louvre Museum (ROSE-ALBRECHT 2002: 85 OA 7592) and of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, in Lyon (ROSE-ALBRECHT 2002: 80 nos. D 544, D 637–85; TILLIARD 2002: 246–247 nos. D 544, D 637–85).

It should be stressed that the two examples from Hilandari and Kapetaniana find exact parallels, as to their form and decoration, in two *bacini* once placed on the chapel attached to Palazzo Chiaramonte (Palermo). The date ascribed to the construction of the chapel ranges

<sup>2</sup> For the attribution of vessels with similar motif to the “Pula type” of lustreware, see: RAY 2000: 51, 53–54 nos. 114–115.

<sup>3</sup> The bowl is immured at the church of the Virgin Mary together with another four vessels, in a cruciform arrangement.

between 1370 and 1390 (BLAKE 1986: 373, 402 pl. 17, nos. 992–993). Thus, these three buildings, which are placed after 1370, offer a common “ceramic” horizon, forming a chronological *faciès* which should be further enriched and verified. Noteworthy is the fact that the rest of the vessels from the chapel of the Palazzo Chiaramonte together with another bowl from the church of the Virgin Mary in Kapetaniana can be closely matched to the “Pula type” examples found immured in two other Italian buildings, Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and the convent of Santa Anna in Pisa, which were constructed after 1370 (BLAKE 1986: 373–374, 400 pl. 15, no. 618, 401 pl. 16, nos. 9, 31). In contrast, they have a restricted number of similarities with those “Pula type” pots immured in Italian churches dating from the second and the third quarter of the 14th century and decorated with radiating patterns consisting of several panels or with parallel, large bands, the main one consisting of close-set lustre grid placed within squares (BLAKE 1986: 372–374). The remarks of G. Berti and E. Tongiorgi should here be mentioned, since they consider that the *bacini* of Santa Maria Maggiore –a monument attributed to 1370–1380– should be seen as reflecting a point of transition in the lustreware production of the Iberian peninsula, since motifs of the “Pula type” in use earlier in the 14th century seem to become more elaborate later on (BERTI, TONGIORGI 1985: 22–23).

As for the “Pula type” examples of pottery from Hilandari (Athos peninsula, northern Greece) and Kapetaniana (prefecture of Herakleion, Crete), different historical conditions characterize the two regions at the end of the 14th century and the early 15th century; however the bowls enter into a general scheme, according to which by the end of the 14th century lustreware pottery from the Iberian peninsula begins to witness a diffusion in various regions of Greece (YANGAKI 2013b: 287–326). Regarding the related information from the Athos peninsula (see above), although it has been suggested, given the restricted, up until now, number of related evidence, that these objects should not be seen as the result of trade (TSOURIS 1998: 11), additional, even though limited, information from Thessaloniki, along with the fragment from Hilandari, speak in favor of the latter (MAKROPOULOU 1985: 270 BK4430, 304 pl. 4δ, ε; YANGAKI 2013b: 297 note 86, 298 note 92).

Given the position of the bowl in Hilandari at the exonarthex of the church, for which a date around 1380 can be posited (see above), and taking into consideration the chronological range of circulation of the “Pula type” of lustreware, it becomes obvious that the fragment was set in the wall of the outer narthex at its building stage<sup>4</sup>. It is interesting to note that –judging from the current condition of the fragment immured at Hilandari and given the fact that the form of the stone, on which most of its part rests, shows no traces of place for receiving the rest of the vessel– the main part of its body and all of its rim was broken off prior to its insertion in the wall. Its fragmentary nature is comparable with the “Pula type” *bacino* found in the church of the Vlatadon Monastery, since there, too, only a fragment of the original open vessel has been immured<sup>5</sup> (PHILON 1985: 303–304, 316, fig. 1). It seems logical to suggest that the example from Hilandari has been in use for some time before its placement on the wall of the exonarthex.

<sup>4</sup> On the whole problematic regarding the relations between the dating of the *bacini* and that of the respective churches, in general, see: NIKOLAKOPOULOS 1978: 11–12; TSOURIS 1988: 182; TSOURIS 1998: 9–10; YANGAKI 2013a: 381–382 and notes 25–26 (with additional bibliography).

<sup>5</sup> In this case, the space made available by a frame consisting of vertical bricks leaves no doubt as to the fact that only a large fragment of the vessel was originally been placed in the wall.



Fig. 5. Vatopedi Monastery, chapel of the Hagioi Anargyroi, immured vessel (photo: P. Androudis)

This observation together with the particular position of the vessel, placed almost at the very end of the South-western corner of the outer narthex of the Katholikon of the monastery creates further thoughts as to its use/significance. In particular, according to studies regarding the positioning of *bacini* in churches in Greece (VELENIS 1984: 194, 270; TSOURIS 1988: 107–111; TSOURIS 1996: 617–619), these were mostly embedded either at the gables or at window tympana, or filling blind surrounding arches, immured next to grouped-type windows or accompanying arched surroundings of windows, occasionally having specifically designed frames, or in other cases taking arrangements of their own (YANGAKI 2010:

827–840; YANGAKI 2013a: 377), thus either following specific architectural elements or creating a free decorative synthesis. Particularly in Crete, the cruciform arrangement of immured vessels, mainly found at the western or the eastern part of the church, is the most frequent one (YANGAKI 2010: 827–840; YANGAKI 2013a: 377). In most of the above cases there is evidently “an obvious desire for symmetry” (TSOURIS 1998: 11). No such symmetry occurs regarding the fragment from Hilandari and its position does not indicate a planned design, as was the case in other monuments in Greece (TSOURIS 1988: 108–110; TSOURIS 1996: 617–618). In fact, its position is particularly awkward. The only concrete parallel for such an asymmetrical position is the “Pula type” bowl embedded in the apse wall in the Vatopedi chapel (TSOURIS 1998: 7–11) (fig. 5). Regarding that bowl Professor K. Tsouris has suggested that the bowl either initially formed part – together with other vessels – of a synthesis which has not survived, or that the position of this single piece was deliberate, since, given its position, it would have been more visible to passers by (TSOURIS 1998: 11). Regarding the bowl at the outer narthex of the Katholikon at Hilandari (fig. 2, 3), this last suggestion seems even more probable, since there is no evidence of other vessels having been immured at the specific place and the fragment’s position, next to the corner of the wall, also makes it highly improbable that there were initially additional pots. Furthermore, the fragment is immured at quite a low height – compared to the much more elevated position that most of the immured vessels usually have – thus it could have been easily visible from whoever entered the outer narthex from the door to the right of it; nevertheless, its small dimensions rather impeded visitors from noticing it. *Bacini* were primarily used to further enhance the external decoration of churches, as has been stressed by various researchers (BERTI, TONGIORGI 1983: 9, note 3; VELENIS 1984: 270; TSOURIS 1988: 107; BERTI 1993: 9; TSOURIS 1996: 603). However, given the previously mentioned characteristics of the *bacino* from Hilandari as to its position and its size, it is obvious that this particular example did not serve quite this purpose. Other interpretations are to be sought, in order to offer a better explanation as to its occurrence in the outer narthex. Rather than being considered as accidental, perhaps its use as a votive offering or as having a symbolic meaning could be taken into consideration, two



hypotheses that have also been put forward in other cases, as well (NIKOLAKOPOULOS 1978: 5–6; BERTI 1993: 9–10; TSOURIS 1996: 619; TSOURIS 1998: 11; YANGAKI 2010: 830).

Up until now, the “Pula type” of lustreware from the Valencia region has been found in a limited number of areas of Greece and is represented by a restricted number of examples (see above). As these rare examples imply, it occurs more often in northern Greece (Thessaloniki, Athos peninsula). Additionally, the fragment from Hilandari (fig. 3) shares in common with the vessel from the chapel of the Hagioi Anargyroi, in Vatopedi, the awkwardness of the position and with the example from the Katholikon of the Vlatadon Monastery, in Thessaloniki, the fragmentary nature of the examples prior to their insertion on the walls. Further examples are needed, before attempting any additional interpretation. Nonetheless, what derives from the above analysis is the emblematic use of these objects.



Fig. 6. On the second row of the caption: two fragments from dishes of the “Pula type” in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Museum numbers of the fragments of the picture, from left to right: C.829–1921, C.830–1921, C.828–1921 and C.566–1917; RAY 2000: 53–54, nos. 114–115; photo@Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

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ФРАГМЕНТ ПУЛСКОГ ТИПА СЈАЈНИХ ПОСУДА УЗИДАН У СПОЉНУ  
ПРИПРАТУ КАТОЛИКОНА У МОНАСТИРУ ХИЛАНДАРУ (СВЕТА ГОРА)

Резиме

У раду се представља фрагмент са дна посуде, вероватно чиније, украшене комбинацијом кобалтног плавог и сјаја, која је узидана у јужну страну југозападне фасаде католикона у Манастиру Хиландару на Светој Гори. Фрагмент припада пулском типу иберијског сјајног посуђа чија се производња приписује подручју Валенсије и датира се крајем XIV века н.е. На основу проучавања ове посуде, коментаришу се други предмети из Грчке који спадају у исту категорију, док додатне информације о пулском типу керамике зазидане у црквама у Италији и њихово датирање нуде занимљиве доказе о њиховој циркулацији и времену производње. Поред тога, на основу положаја одређеног објекта у спољној припрати споменика и његовој фрагментарној природи, износе се претпоставке везане за његову употребу и значај узимајући у обзир сличне случајеве зазиданих посуда на подручју Грчке.

Кључне речи: Манастир Хиландар, спољна припрата, зазидана керамика, сјајне посуде, пулски тип посуда, Иберијско полуострво, Грчка, источно Средоземље, XIV век.