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**SOME POST-BYZANTINE EXAMPLES OF THE
SILVERSMITH'S ART WITH SERBIAN CONNECTIONS
KEPT IN HUNGARIAN MUSEUMS**

Museums in Hungary have numerous items of silverware with Serbian connections. A considerable portion of these were still added to the inventory of the respective public collections by means of purchase in the course of the 19th century, mostly as part of major collection units previously owned by private collectors. Special attention was paid to silver items of Balkan origin at the grandiose 1884 exhibition of silverware, for which, courtesy of the Metropolitan of Sremski Karlovci, several outstanding works of art from the treasuries of the monasteries of Fruška Gora were selected and put on display.¹ A fairly large number of liturgical objects with inscriptions alluding to Orthodox clients, including Serbs, were also exhibited at the monumental show organised to mark the Hungarian Millennium in 1896.²

In the early 20th century, the Hungarian National Museum bought several items of silverware of evidently Serbian provenance. These include the large filigree altar cross made by the silversmith Nikolich somewhere in the Southern Territories of the Kingdom of Hungary in the first half of the 19th century.³ Following the historic changes after the First World War, the collection of Post-Byzantine objects in the Hungarian National Museum would be

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Pulszky K. and Radisics J., *Az ötvösség remekei a magyar történelmi ötvösműkiállításon*, Budapest n. d., 117–118. Descriptions in French and photographs were published in: C. Pulszky and E. Radisics and É. Molonier, *Chefs d'oeuvre d'orfèvrerie ayant figuré à l'exposition de Budapest*, Paris 1900, 111–112.

² *Az 1896-iki ezredéves országos kiállítás. A történelmi főcsoport hivatalos katalógusa, Közrebocsájtja a Történelmi Főcsoport Igazgatósága, II. Füzet (A Renaissance-épület földszintje) (1835–5240. számig)*, Budapest 1896, 5, 8, 12, 209. Mihalik J., *Az ötvösség emlékei a renaissancétól a XVIII. század végéig*, Magyarország történelmi emlékei, az 1896 évi ezredéves orsz. Kiállításon, Szalay I. editor, Budapest 1896, 301–323.

³ The cross was purchased in 1911: *Jelentés a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum 1911. évi állapotáról*, Budapest 1912, 45. Full-page photograph: Ibid. 51.



Fig. 1 Silver case, rear side, 1726. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Photo: Iván Jaksity
Сл. 1 Сребрна кутија, задња страна, 1726. Музеј примењених уметности, Будимпешта, фото: Иван Јаксита



Fig. 2 Silver case, front side, 1726. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Photo: Iván Jaksity
Сл. 2 Сребрна кутија, предња страна, 1726. Музеј примењених уметности, Будимпешта, фото: Иван Јаксита

in decline, and the existing heritage material would receive little attention. In 1934 the National Museum was restructured, and the Museum of Applied Arts, shorn of its independence, was merged with it; the resulting new institution was named the Hungarian History Museum.⁴ It was then that a group of Post-Byzantine specimens were transferred to the Museum of Applied Arts, including the cross referred to above.⁵ After the Second World War, in 1948, the Museum of Applied Arts regained its independence, and the collecting of Post-Byzantine items would soon see a surge. At that time, through purchase via art trade, it was possible to obtain several objects that could potentially pique the interest of researchers from Serbia.

In this brief discussion, I shall present four examples of the silversmith's art – three from the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, and one from the Hungarian National Museum – each with Serbian connections of some sort: For the first two, the link is made obvious by the inscriptions specifying the clients commissioning the respective items; for the other two, it may be inferred on the basis of criticism-of-style-related considerations.

Silver-case

The object purchased by the Diet of Hungary for the National Museum in 1836, thanks to the intercession of Palatine Joseph, was originally part of the first collection of the prominent collector, Miklós Jankovich (1772–1836). It was exactly a hundred years later, in 1936, that it was

⁴ Kovács T., *Fejezetek két évszázad múzeumtörténetéből, A 200 éves Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum gyűjteményei*, Pintér J., editor, Budapest 2002, 12. Horváth H., *Az Iparművészeti Múzeum műgyűjteményének története – vázlat, Az idő sodrában. Az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményeinek története*, Budapest 2006, 71–74.

⁵ Height: 38 cm (15 inches); base diameter: 16 cm (6.3 inches). Museum of Applied Arts, Hungary; Inventory No. 19124. The subject is covered in more detail by the author in: Terdik, Szilveszter, 'Athonite' miniature carvings at the Museum of Applied Arts, *Ars Decorativa* 30, Budapest 2016, 57–59, Pict. 1–2.



Fig. 3 Traveller's cutlery set, 1775 (?). Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Photo: Attila Ferancz

Сл. 3 Путнички прибор за јело, 1775 (?), Музеј примењених уметности, фото: Атила Феранц

transferred from that location to the Museum of Applied Arts.⁶ The silver-case attracted the attention of the profession as early as the end of the 19th century: It was featured at the 1884 exhibition of silverware and was even extensively described; subsequently, an engraved image of it would be published.⁷

The case is of a rectangular shape, with a semi-circular top attached to one of the longer sides by hinges. The edges of the sides of the box are covered with carved foliated scrolls, mainly palmettes, whereas individual sides and the top are decorated with chased inscriptions filled with niello. On its top, between the arms of the Greek cross, the Christogram (IC XC) and the word 'conquers' (NI KA) are displayed. However, on its front- and rear-side, the following date and name are written: 'In the year of the Lord, 21 November 1726' / 'Arsenije, Patriarch of the Serbs'. (fig. 1)

In his stock book, Jankovich assumed that the box had been a personal possession of Patriarch Arsenije III, the leader of the Serbian immigration in 1690, suggesting that the deciphering of the date inscribed in Slavonic characters was inconclusive. This piece of data was adopted in the literature, but later it would come to be rectified by the proposition that it must have been the next patriarch by the same name, i.e. Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta (Арсеније IV Јовановић Шакабента) (1698–1748), Patriarch of Peć, who commissioned the manufacturing of the case. Arsenije was patriarch from 1726 to 1737. He subsequently fled the advance of the invading Turkish forces and sought refuge

⁶ Silver, with repoussé, chiselled niello decoration. Height: 6.7 cm (2.63 inches); length: 9 cm (3.54 inches); width: 4 cm (1.57 inches). Museum of Applied Arts, Hungary; Inventory No.: 19.139. Jankovich's description in Latin, with a description of the current condition of the object and a presentation of the Slavonic inscriptions (with an imprecisely transliterated date), was published in: Pandur, Ildikó, *Ládika, 1726 körül*, Jankovich Miklós gyűjteményei, Mikó Árpád editor, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria 2002. november – 2003. március 1. Budapest 2002, p. 173. kat. 140.

⁷ *A magyar történelmi ötvösmű-kiállítás lajstroma. Megnyitott 1884. év február hó 17-én*, Budapest 1884, 25. It is described again in the same volume when a Hungarian translation of the inscriptions of the object is presented: *Pótlék a II. Teremhez: az orthodox egyházi szereken előforduló feliratok fordítása, A magyar történelmi ötvösmű-kiállítás lajstroma. Megnyitott 1884. év február hó 17-én*. Budapest 1884, 180.



Fig. 4 Niello inscription on the traveller's cutlery set, 1775 (?). Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Photo: Attila Ferancz

Сл. 4 'Niello' натпис на путничком прибору за јело, 1775 (?). Музеј примењених уметности, фото: Атила Феранц

in the Hapsburg Empire, where he would continue to serve as Metropolitan of Sremski Karlovci till his death. It is remarkable that the date on the box coincides with the year when Arsenije was appointed patriarch, a circumstance that could also account for the request for this item: He may have received it as a gift or he might even have ordered it himself. There are no data available on the master or the place of production, but it seems safe to speculate that it could be the work of a Christian silversmith living in the Balkans.

The function of the case was identified correctly even by Jankovich in surmising that it could be used for holding the Eucharist.

Traveller's or hunter's cutlery set

A fork and its case previously belonging to the Hegumen of the Studenica Monastery were added to the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, through purchasing.⁸ The core of the case is made of wood, has a triangular shape and tapers off at the top. The wooden core is covered with several chiselled, repoussé silver-plates decorated with niello; on the neck and tip of the case, in front of a button reminiscent of a small mace, convex ornamental lines run in a circle; the silver pieces are also separated by a leather overlay. Inside the wooden core, two pieces of cutlery may be accommodated; out of the two, only a two-pronged fork with a bone-handle has survived; the other slot was presumably designed for a knife. The upper rim of the case is also fitted with a ring for a loop. (fig. 3)

Establishing the provenance and date of the object may be facilitated by the niello inscription on a silver-plate, on the upper part of the case commemorating the owner and possibly the year of production as well: Ieromonk Dionisije, Hegumen of Studenica, 1775.⁹ The transliteration of the third number is uncertain; '60' may not be ruled out, either. (fig. 4)

⁸ Cast silver, with chiselled, repoussé, chased, niello decoration; leather, wood. The length of the case: 22 cm (8.66 inches); weight: 144.1 grams (5.08 ounces). The fork is made of silver, bone and steel. Length: 18.9 cm (7.44 inches); weight: 34 grams (1.2 ounces). Museum of Applied Arts, Hungary; Inventory No.: 54.1634.1-2.

⁹ + ермонаха дионисие игумень студеничаи..ъ љѡѡд



Fig. 5 Knife, 18th century. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Photo: Attila Ferancz
Сл. 5 Нож, 18. век. Музеј примењених уметности, Будимпешта, Фото: Атила Феранц

In Studenica, the Hegumen's name between 1769 and 1777 was Maxim. The priestmonk Dionisije is mentioned a decade earlier, in 1765.¹⁰ On account of other data emerging from relevant sources, further research is necessary to accurately determine the identity of the original proprietor.

On the silversmith, however, no data has been found as yet. Knives supplied with cases of a similar type were already popular in the Turkish Empire as of the 17th century; several specimens would eventually be found in western collections as spoils of war.¹¹ It is plausible to suppose that this traveller's set was also made by the Christian silversmith working in the Balkans.

A knife from an unknown place was added to the collection in an unspecified time as well, with a handle decorated in a manner comparable to the silver ornamentation of the case: chased and embossed silver, with niello floral decoration evocative of tulips.¹² The blade is also punched. It cannot be ruled out that this knife or a similar one could initially come with the case, and the original cutlery items that were lost over time would be replaced by the fork, as a result of the collectors' choice. (fig. 5)

Panagia in the form of a diptych

The collection of the Hungarian National Museum holds a *panagia* in the form of a diptych or book.¹³ The outer side of the silver setting of the diptych was decorated uniformly: In the centre, the pattern composed of roses, tulips and other flowers emerging from the filigree is organised around a pair of blue chiselled glass stones placed in octagonal settings. In each corner, there are four red chased glass stones with round settings; the sections surrounded by filigree were filled with blue, green, ochre and black enamel. The two silver components were attached by a hinge; they may even be closed with the help

¹⁰ М. Шакога, *Студеничка ризница*, Београд 1988, 74. The author wishes to thank Xénia Golub for bringing this title to his attention.

¹¹ A representative specimen made in 1656 was preserved in the Esterházy Collection as well: Kovács, S. Tibor, *Kés*, *Műtárgyak a fraknói Esterházy-kincstárból az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményében*, Thesaurus Domus Esterhazyanae I. Kat. II. 18. Szilágyi András editor, Budapest 2014, 183–184.

¹² Length: 21 cm (8.26 inches). Museum of Applied Arts, Hungary; Inventory No.: 59.1810.

¹³ Boxwood, silver, filigree, enamel. 6.5 x 4.5 cm (2.55 x 1.77 inches) (when closed). Hungarian National Museum; Inventory No.: 115/6/1887. It was bought by the Museum from a private individual in 1887.



Fig. 6 Panagia in closed position, first half of 18th century. Hungarian National Museum, Budapest. Photo: Ágnes Haranghy

Сл. 6 Затворена панагија, прва половина XVIII века. Мађарски народни музеј, Будимпешта. Фото: Ањес Харанги



Fig. 7 The frame of the panagia. Hungarian National Museum, Budapest. Photo: Ágnes Haranghy

Сл. 7 Оквир панагије. Мађарски народни музеј, Будимпешта. Фото: Ањес Харанги

of a small hook; at the top, suspension is provided by rings; one of them also contains a twisted silver wire ring with a relatively large diameter. (fig. 6)

In the diptych, two boxwood carvings, presumably originating from Mount Athos and made in the early 18th century, were accommodated. On one of the wings, in the central axis, the Theotokos with the infant Jesus is seated on a throne, surrounded by the half-figure depictions of twenty prophets in medallions created out of vine-tendrils; the sleeping figure of Jesse, with the tendrils shooting from his side, may be discerned at the bottom. On the other wing, Christ, sitting on a throne, gives blessing with both of His hands. Similarly to the previously described carving, He is flanked

by twenty medallions amidst vine-tendrils; as the counterpart of the character of Jesse, the Prophet Jonah, set free from the monster, materialises. The prints on the edges of the carvings reveal that they were originally covered with mica.

Neither name nor date is featured on the diptych. Dating may be facilitated by the fact that a specimen with a strikingly similar shape is known of from the collection of the Monastery of Krušedol (The Collection of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, Belgrade). The carvings are also of a comparable style and share the same iconography. However, more interesting is the apparent proximity of their silver parts. The inner side frame of this specimen bears the names of two monks: Hadji Paisije and Avakum; the outer side displays the date 1728,¹⁴ rendering the dating of at least the silverware components easy.

¹⁴ B. Radojković, *Sitna plastika u staroj srpskoj umetnosti / Les objets sculptés mineur en Serbie ancienne*, Beograd 1977, 54.; Č. Popov editor, *Serbia, The Cultural Bridge*

Fig. 8 The panagia in open position.
Hungarian National
Museum, Budapest.
Photo: Ágnes Haranghy

Сл. 8 Отворена
панагија, Мађарски
народни музеј,
Будимпешта. Фото:
Ањес Харанги



Panagias of a similar type are in evidence from as early as the Middle Ages. An important example happens to have survived in Hilandar Monastery, though its carving may date from a later period.¹⁵ The iconography of items of the same form but dating from the 17th and 18th centuries has been discussed in detail by Mirjana Tatić Đurić.¹⁶ It may also be supported by data that bishops would indeed wear such encolpia as symbols of their episcopal office: as *panagias*.¹⁷

Traveller's icon

The Museum of Applied Art, Budapest, also has a small-size wooden icon.¹⁸ The fretwork carving was placed in front of a wooden background and was subsequently enclosed in a silver frame, which would be decorated with chased floral ornamentation strung on a double wavy line. The frame displays

between East and West, Novi Sad 2010, 88–89.

¹⁵ The encolpion of Hilandar Monastery was presented by Lady Jelena between 1368 and 1371, in memory of her deceased son, who was buried there. Radojković *op. cit.*, 25–28. The carvings of the diptych are these days regarded as dating from the 17th century: B. Radojković, *The Treasury*, Hilandar Monastery, G. Subotić editor, Belgrade 1998, 340.

¹⁶ She also mentions this *panagia* but proposes 1733 as its date. M. Tatić – Ђурић, *Панагијар из Војловице*, Eadem, Студије о Богородици, Београд 2007, 315–322, Pict. 11.

¹⁷ According to the church inventory, the *panagia* in the form of a diptych, made in 1736, originating from the Cathedral of St George in Argypolis (Gümüshane), constituted part of the episcopal vestments. A. Ballian editor, *Relics of the Past. Treasures of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Population Exchange. The Benaki Museum Collection / Reliques du Passé. Trésors de l'Église orthodoxe grecque et l'Échange de population. Les Collection du Musée Benaki*, [n.d.] 2011, 90–91.

¹⁸ Height: 10.5 cm (4.13 inches); width: 8.5 cm (3.34 inches). Museum of Applied Arts, Hungary; Inventory No.: 79.53.1 Terdik *op. cit.*, 69–70.



Fig. 9 Traveller's icon, woodcarving cc 1800, silver frame from 1865. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.
Photo: Agnes Haranghy

Сл. 9 Путничка иконица, резбарија у дрвету око 1800. сребрни рам из 1865. Музеј примењене уметност, Будимпешта. Фото: Ањес Харанги

the date 1865, but it may be speculated that the carving may as well have been made a few decades earlier. (fig. 9-10)

The centre of the board is occupied by the depiction of the Crucifixion in an area twice the size of the remaining scenes. At the foot of the cross, there is the Sorrowful Mother and perhaps Maria Magdalena, whereas, on the other side, the beloved disciple, John, and the centurion are standing. The blood and water flowing from the side of Christ are collected by an angel into a chalice, while another angel is looking at John directing his eyes up towards the cross and is pointing at the Saviour. Above the arms of the cross, the Moon and the Sun are shown with human faces. In the area above the Crucifixion, the Holy Trinity is seen: The Father is sitting on the right; His nimbus is triangular; He is raising His blessing right hand towards

the Son and is looking at Him, holding a sceptre in His left hand. The Son has the cross in His right hand, and, between the two of Them, the Holy Spirit is hovering in the form of a dove. On the right of the Holy Trinity, from top to bottom, the following scenes are depicted: the Transfiguration, the sinful woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears, the Baptism of Jesus and the Resurrection of Jesus. The pillar on the left of the Holy Trinity begins with the Ascension. One of its peculiarities is that, under the Saviour sitting in a *mandorla*, raised by two angels, only the Virgin Mary is standing, with an angel on her two sides; the disciples, who were also witnesses to the Ascension of Christ, are not included in the composition. Below this, the series continues with the scenes the Raising of Lazarus, the Nativity of Jesus and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. The Slavic appellations of the three scenes in the upper row, as well as of the left-most scene in the bottom row are engraved on the wooden fringe of the board.¹⁹

¹⁹ ВОЗНЕСЕНИЕ, СТИ ТРОИЦЕ, ПРЕОБРАЖАНИЕ, СРЕТЕНИЕ

Fig. 10 Holy Trinity, detail from the Traveller's icon, cc 1800. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Photo: Agnes Haranghy

Сл. 10 Света Тројица, детаљ Путничке иконице, око 1800. Музеј примењене уметности, Будимпешта. Фото: Ањес Харанги



Determining the date of the carving is by no means a simple task. It reveals analogies in terms of form with two small-size fretwork boards kept in the Museum of Applied Arts of Belgrade, showing the enthroned Theotokos and Christ as the Great High Priest surrounded by Gospel episodes and saints framed by grapevine ornaments. It is likely that the carvings dated to the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries were made in the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos.²⁰ With respect to style and iconography, the board kept in Budapest appears to be more akin to the carving found in the National Museum in Belgrade. In the rectangular fretwork carving, in medallions of differing sizes, surrounded by vine-tendrils, various scenes and saints were accommodated by the carver, who even disclosed his name in the inscription in the area below the panoramic view of the Monastery of Krušedol: Hadji Ruvim, 1798.²¹ The double-sided fretwork cross from 1799, decorated with Gospel episodes and kept in the same location, was also made by the same master.²² Hadji Ruvim was born as Rafailo Nenadović (Рафаило Ненадовић/Нешковић) (1752–1804). Having become a widower, he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (hence the prefix 'Hadji')

²⁰ B. Radojković, *Sitna plastika u staroj srpskoj umetnosti / Les objets sculptés mineur en Serbie ancienne*, Beograd 1977, 52, 70. Pict. a–b. Olive wood; size: 9.8 x 1.15 cm (3.85 x 0.45 inches). Inventory No. 4090 and 4091. Д. Милановић, *Ризнице Манастира Хиландара. Студијска колекција I./ Treasures of Chilandar Monastery. Study Collection*, I, Београд 2008, Кат. 82.

²¹ 85.9 x 16 cm (33.81 x 6.29 inches). Museum of Applied Arts, Belgrade; Inventory No.: 5446. М. Ђоровић-Љубинковић and Д. Милошевић and М. Татић-Ђуровић, *Средњовековна уметност у Србији. Народни Музеј*, Београд 1969, 76, kat. 105.

²² 38.4 x 20 x 3.5 cm (15.11 x 7.87 x 1.37 inches). Museum of Applied Arts, Belgrade; Inventory No.: 2227. Ђоровић-Љубинковић and Милошевић and Татић-Ђуровић, *op. cit.*, 79, kat. 113; *Nationalmuseum Beograd, Führer durch Museumsammlungen*, Beograd 1970, 49. Photographs of both of its sides were published by: Radojković, *op. cit. ult.*, 52, 78. a–b.

and later became a monk in his native country. Owing to his role in the Serbian national movement, the Turks captured him in Belgrade and executed him.²³ In addition to his large-size and miniature carvings, his woodcuts are also well documented in Serbian art history.²⁴ On the basis of the stylistic relations between the small-size board kept in Budapest and the carvings attributed to Hadji Ruvim and his associates, setting the date of creation for the late 18th century or early 19th century appears to be more justifiable. Its creator may even have known the works of Hadji Ruvim first hand.

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НЕКОЛИКО СРЕБРНИНА СРПСКЕ ПРОВЕНИЈЕНЦИЈЕ
ИЗ МАЂАРСКИХ МУЗЕЈА

Неколико предмета балканске, прецизније речено српске провенијенције чувају се у колекцијама Мађарског народног музеја и Мађарског музеја примењених уметности. Предмети воде порекло из приватних колекција из XIX века, као и XX века (вероватно доспели посредством трговине антиквитетима). Реч је о предметима али и предметима попут дрвених кутија или кутија од кости. Трговина оваквим предметима углавном је била поприлично актуелна током 19. века, за потребе манастира на Светој Гори. Предмети пружају податке и о уметницима који су их израђивали, а могуће је да је традиција израде оваквих предмета постојала и током претходног столећа. Рад представља преглед различитих предмета из мађарских колекција, предмета који су по свим одликама српске провенијенције и који пружају могућности за будућа потпунија испитивања.

²³ Biographical data with previous literature: Б. Маринковић, *Хаџи Рувим, пре целине, пре смисла, Записи с коментарима*, Ваљево 1989; В. Кривошејев, *Цртице за биографију Хаџи Рувима Нешковича*, Гласник 26–27, Историјски архив Ваљево, 1992, 872–878; Н. В. Радосављевић, *Архимандрит Хаџи Рувим Нешковић (1752–1804): прилози за биографију*, Историјски часопис, 59 (2010), 297–320.

²⁴ The Patriarchate of Peć, 1797. Д. Давидов, *Српска графика XVIII века*, Београд 2006, 88–90.