

International Conference
Southeast European Silversmithing
4 – 5.11.2022, Belgrade

The conference on Southeast European Silversmithing aims to gather researchers dedicated to the study of sacral silver objects from the early modern period who will, through their research and work, contribute to the comparative analysis of this complex field. Material presented at the conference will contribute to the objective of improving methodological means of interpretation through the gathering of devoted researchers working in this area. The conference will enable the presentation of, thus far unpublished and unknown to the academic community, artistic silver objects. We believe that a more meticulous approach to this field of research will represent a valuable contribution to the field of art history and to a more comprehensive understanding of the visual culture of the specified period.

Organizers

Vuk Dautović, Ph.D. Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade
Darina Boykina, Ph.D. Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Mateja Jerman, Ph.D. Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka

Friday 4 November 2022 from 09:00 AM
The Rectorate Building – University of Belgrade
Studentski trg 1, (1 The Students` Square)

Saturday 5 November 2022 from 09:00 AM
Faculty of Philosophy – University of Belgrade
Čika Ljubina 18-20, (18-20 Čika Ljubina Street)

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN SILVERSMITHING: Liturgical Objects and the Construction of a Cultural, Technological and Iconographical Network in the Early Modern Period

Belgrade, 4th – 5th November 2022

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

BELGRADE 2022

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS



Society for the Study of Decorative Arts
and Silversmithing

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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Front page photo: *Venetian goldsmith workshop „Il Trionfo“, Hanging lamp - detail, 1706-1718, Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Rijeka (Croatia), photo by Mateja Jerman*

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

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ORGANIZED IN CONJUNCTION WITH:

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF DECORATIVE ARTS AND SILVERSMITHING
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Artistic objects made from precious metals and intended for liturgical use play a key role in the complex and rich history of Christianity. Such objects from the early modern period are kept in large numbers in various church and monastery treasuries, museums, and other collections. Liturgical objects were frequently marginalized by art historians and treated as less important in comparison to sacral architecture, painting and sculpture. However, the arts of goldsmithing and silversmithing were considered equal to so-called "fine art" until the 19th century, when the emergence of Great Exhibitions and technological processes that increasingly excluded hand-made crafts led to the categorization of goldsmithing and silversmithing as applied arts, crafts, or decorative arts. Moreover, research on goldsmithing and silversmithing was largely focused on the study of representative commissions by the European aristocracy, mainly belonging to the profane domain. Such objects were most frequently exhibited in world museums, while liturgical objects were less commonly represented. A key reason for this is their liturgical function and sacral status, which make them less easily available to academic researchers.

Artworks made from precious metals reflect the artistic, social, religious, and economic context of their time, as well as social changes that took place throughout the early modern period, and earlier, on the territory of southeastern Europe. In this case, the geographical definition of southeastern Europe encompasses all states of the eastern Mediterranean and neighboring countries. Southeastern Europe is, in a cultural sense, deeply connected to the Mediterranean. Levantine master goldsmiths,

Venetian workshops, Ottoman culture, imports from the Russian Empire, and precious objects from Mount Athos and the Holy Land, all intertwine to create a very complex and distinct material culture in the region. Objects made from precious metals, predominantly silver, were intermediaries which could travel vast distances, carrying ideas and iconographical patterns, various kinds of "secondary decorations" as well as morphological characteristics of certain types of liturgical objects. This is why we, as experts engaged in the academic research past of sacral silver, were striving to organize a gathering of colleagues that will offer answers to the multitude of questions that have emerged from our research to date.

The aim of the conference on *Southeast European Silversmithing: Liturgical Objects and the Construction of a Cultural, Technological, and Iconographical Network in the Early Modern Period* is to gather scholars dedicated to the study of liturgical objects made from precious metals produced in the early modern period, approximately from the 1450s to 1850s. The invited papers deal with the cultural roots of the artistic shaping of objects, the technological possibilities of their production, and the iconographical themes and motifs present in them. Also, the papers reveal the specificity of southeast European silversmithing centers, or artistic centers connected with liturgical objects kept in church and monastery treasuries and museum collections in the region. Academic research on relics and their presence in reliquaries of different types is also considered, as well as the production of silver reliquaries and reliquary boxes and their role in contributing to the dissemination of saintly cults. Furthermore, suggested topics include the phenomenon of popular piety, particularly the practice of the production and offering of different votive gifts (*Ex voto*),

and the making of silver fittings for Orthodox icons. The Conference is presenting the studies emerging from the methodological approach of contextualization, which will encourage interpretations of social, political, and ideological issues that influenced the artistic shaping and decoration of sacral silver objects. Lastly, one of the aims of the conference is to collect the hallmarks of silversmiths and goldsmiths from the region and to consolidate ways of hallmarking and measuring the purity or fineness of silver alloys, as well as their attribution to specific silversmiths and their workshops in southeastern Europe.

The conference is especially focused on the following topics:

- The Role of Sacral Silver in the Transfer and Dialogue Between Different Cultural Models
- Iconography, the Transfer of Iconographical Themes and Motifs, and the Characteristics of Symbolic Decorations of Liturgical Silver on the Territory of Southeastern Europe
- The Stylistic Development and Periodization of Silver Objects Made in Southeastern Europe
- “Secondary Decoration”: Geometric and Natural Motifs as a Universal Pictorial Language in Southeast European Silversmithing
- The Cult of Relics, their Veneration and the Use and Production of Silver Reliquaries and Reliquary Boxes
- Popular Piety in Southeastern Europe: Ex Voto and Fittings on Icons

- Sacral Silver and Comparative Religious Practices of Christians, Jews and Muslims in Southeastern Europe
- Engraved Inscriptions on Sacral Silver Objects: from Historical Sources to Private-public Liturgical Memory
- Social, Political, and Ideological Phenomena as Influencing Factors in the Shape and Decoration of Silver Liturgical Objects
- Hallmarking and Control of Silver Purity and Fineness, and the Hallmarks of Master Craftsmen and their Workshops on the territory of Southeastern Europe

Academic committee:

Dr. Vuk Dautović

Dr. Darina Boykina

Dr. Mateja Jerman

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Friday 4 November 2022

The Rectorate Building – University of Belgrade
Studentski trg 1, Belgrade (1 The Students` Square)
Room 016

9:00 WELCOME

9:30 – 10:00 INTRODUCTION

Prof. Milan Stančić Vice Dean for Research, Faculty of
Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Prof. Saša Brajović On behalf of the Art History Department at
the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Vuk Dautović Introduction on behalf of the Organization
Committee

**10:00 – 11:00 ARTISTIC PATRONAGE AND
OBJECTS IN MOTION**

Mateja Jerman MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND MEDIA OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CROATIA AND UNIVERSITY OF
RIJEKA

*Commissioning Goldsmiths' Works in Istria and the Kvarner Bay (Croatia)
in the Early Modern Period*

Snježana Orlović UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

*Artistic Metalwork in the Territory of the Dalmatian and Gornjokarlovac
(i.e. Upper Karlovac) Bishoprics*

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 IMAGERY AND ICONOGRAPHY

Georgi R. Parpulov INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR, PLOVDIV

Silver Drinking Cups of the Late Ottoman Period

Anita Paolicchi UNIVERSITY OF PISA

*More than Meets the Eye: Political Reasons Behind the Adoption of a
Confessionally-Connotated Iconography*

Yannis D. Varalis & Constantine Dolmas UNIVERSITY OF
THESSALY

*Prolific Imagery on Metal: The Gospel Book Covers of the Silversmithing
Workshop at Retziani, Thessaly*

13:00 – 14:00 Snacks & Coffee break

14:00 – 15:00 MATERIALISATION OF PIETY

Francesca Stopper INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Precious Sacred Sculptures in 17th and 18th centuries Venetian Republic

Iglika Mishkova INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY AND FOLKLORE
STUDIES WITH ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM,
BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Ex-Votos from Bulgaria

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 17:00 FUNCTION AND APPEARANCE

Arijana Koprčina MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS, ZAGREB

*Late Gothic and Renaissance Sacral Silver Objects in the Area of the
Zagreb (Arch)diocese*

Lucian Lechintan PONTIFICAL ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, ROME

*The Tismana Censer: Argyrokastron or Heavenly Jerusalem? Function,
Patrons and Strategic Views at the End of the 14th-century Walachia*

Nona Petkova INSTITUTE OF ART STUDIES, BULGARIAN
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

*Fabulous World of Filigree Enamel in the Southeast European
Silversmithing: The Case of Sacral Silver Objects from Bachkovo
Monastery*

19:30 Dinner

Saturday 5 November 2022

Faculty of Philosophy – University of Belgrade
Čika Ljubina 18-20, Belgrade (18-20 Čika Ljubina Street)
Dragoslav Srejšović Hall – 1st Floor

9:00 – 10:00 VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND SENSES

Tera Lee Hedrick WICHITA ART MUSEUM

*Earthly and Heavenly Banquets: Sacred and Secular Dining Vessels and
the Sensory in Late Byzantium*

Milena Ulčar UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Somatic Triggers of Holiness: Early Modern Reliquaries in the Venetian Bay of Kotor

10:00 – 10:30 Coffee break

10:30 – 11:30 SILVERSMITHING CENTERS AND THE CREATION OF VISUAL CULTURE

Darina Boykina INSTITUTE OF ART STUDIES, BULGARIAN
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

In the Search for Silversmithing Centers: Contextualizing the Church Plate from the Region of Central Southern Bulgaria in the Early Modern Period

Vuk Dautović UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

The Belgrade Goldsmith's Guild and the Shaping of Visual Culture Through Sacral Silver Objects in the Principality of Serbia in the 19th century

11:30 – 12:00 Snacks & Coffee break

12:00 CONFERENCE RESUME

Dimitrije Tadić HEAD OF CREATIVE EUROPE DESK SERBIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION OF
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Southeast European Silversmithing: Building a Cultural, Professional, and Institutional Network Now or Possibilities for Cooperation Within EU Programs and Funds?

12:30 Common Discussion and Closure

GUIDED WALKING TOUR



13:00 Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church

14:00 Belgrade Cathedral Church

14:30 Museum of the Princess Ljubica's Residence

16:00 Lunch

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS



*Reliquary, Bachkovo monastery (Bulgaria), 1860,
photo by Darina Boykina*

Darina Boykina

INSTITUTE OF ART STUDIES, BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

In the Search for Silversmithing Centers: Contextualizing the Church Plate from the Region of Central Southern Bulgaria in the Early Modern Period

There are a number of silversmithing centers on the territory of Central Southern Bulgaria from which church plate of high artistic quality are produced. However, these silversmithing centers are still understudied and, for that reason, their historical development and artistic production remain unknown to the researchers. The main information we have so far in Bulgarian art historiography is reduced to the false assertion that most silversmith workshops situated in that region functioned from the late 18th century to the late 19th century, and their works were aimed solely at the needs of the churches and monasteries located in their vicinity. The proposed article focuses on that visible gap in the literature and aims to thoroughly study the available information about the silversmiths, silversmiths' guilds, and their production for the Church in a wider cultural and historical context. Several written sources and newly discovered works show that those silversmithing centers existed long before the late 18th century and grew steadily for several centuries. A completely different picture of silversmithing in Bulgaria in the early modern period is thus outlined. The data collected enables us to build a hypothetical notion of the influence of the silversmiths and their production on the economic, religious, and artistic life of the local population and offers an opportunity

for a more precise study of the connections between the individual silversmithing centers in the European part of the Ottoman Empire. The comparative analysis made of the individual silversmithing centers on the territory of Central Southern Bulgaria also provides an opportunity for reconsideration of the hypotheses for the localization of the so-called "silversmithing center in the area of the Monastery of Bachkovo and Plovdiv", to which some luxury liturgical objects with enamel decoration are attributed. Although at first glance, this question does not seem fundamental for the study of silversmithing, finding an answer to it will contribute to a more accurate analysis of the church plate in Bulgaria and the Balkans, which will support a more thorough understanding of the processes concerning the development of silversmithing in the different regions of Southeastern Europe in the early modern period.



*Reliquary, first half of 18th century, Bachkovo monastery, (Bulgaria),
photo by Darina Boykina*

Vuk Dautović

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

*The Belgrade Goldsmith's Guild and the Shaping of Visual Culture
Through Sacral Silver Objects in the Principality of Serbia in the
19th century*

During the 19th century, the Belgrade Goldsmiths' Guild was comprised of the most prominent master craftsmen in the Principality of Serbia. The Guild encompassed members of diverse origins, equally from Central Europe as from the various areas of the Balkans. Moreover, well-preserved archival documents and guild member books inform us of the ethnical and religious diversity as well, testifying that they were all gathered with the same goal of supplying the needs of wealthy citizens for luxurious objects. The master goldsmiths of Aromanian ("Cincar") origin, known for their exquisite commissions for the monasteries of Mt. Athos, and renowned Bulgarian craftsmen, were equally present as those who were trained in artistic centers such as Vienna and Budapest. That diversity resulted in an analogous flourishing of current European artistic styles and traditional Balkan goldsmith practices that followed certain techniques like niello and filigree. The production of liturgical silverware for the Orthodox Church in the Principality of Serbia was supported by complicated donor structures and patron-client politics, and the choice of stylistic currents derived from profane artistic silverware reflected the general taste.

Preserved liturgical objects from both urban and country church treasuries, together with the source documents, illustrate the dynamic migrations of

people and exchanges of mutual ideas and concepts across a wide space of Southeastern Europe. Artistically shaped liturgical silverware is important for the learning of the mechanisms of how material objects contribute to the dialog between different cultural models, particularly the influence of the world of utilitarian objects of everyday life on the sacral ceremonial utensils. The nineteenth-century Orthodox Church, wrongly considered as retrospective and conservative, fully accepted and adopted European styles from *biedermeier* to historicism. That transfer was reflected in the change in employment of certain iconographical types and themes connected with the very function of the objects. The liturgical silverware of the new type was important for the fashioning of the visual culture in the same way as the changes that occurred in the church paintings of the epoch. Instead of imagining separate, self-contained areas that practiced strictly defined styles, the case-study of the Belgrade Goldsmith's guild is the perfect example of a more complex reality: the nurturing of cultural interchange and artistic conversation.



Goldsmith Toma Isidorović, Silver Processional Cross and a Pair of Liturgical Fans (Rhipidia), 1853, The Old Church of Descent of the Holy Spirit in Kragujevac (Serbia), photo by Vuk Dautović

Mateja Jerman

MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND MEDIA OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
AND UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA

*Commissioning Goldsmiths' Works in Istria and the Kvarner Bay
(Croatia) in the Early Modern Period*

In the early modern period, the areas of Istria and the Kvarner bay in Croatia were divided between two states: the Republic of Venice and the Holy Roman Empire. In Venetian Istria, goldsmiths' works, i.e., liturgical objects, were mainly acquired in the capital of the Serenissima. On the other hand, in central Istria and in the Kvarner bay, examples of liturgical silverware from Augsburg, Vienna, Graz, and Venice are equally represented. The circumstances of commission are impossible to retrace for most of these works, as only a few dozen items contain identification features (heraldic markings, inscriptions, or figural representations) necessary for their contextualization. Archival sources relevant to goldsmiths' works are very limited, while church treasuries' inventories have mostly been lost. The documents discovered so far indicate that commissioning liturgical silverware was quite financially demanding since the raw materials for their production were, as it is today, very expensive. The value of goldsmiths' works was defined not only by the cost of the materials, but also by the variety of their production techniques and the complexity of the resulting decorative compositions. Therefore, new items were mostly acquired when the old ones deteriorated and could not be used any longer, as well as to mark important events in the parish, such as the

arrival of a new pastor or a bishop's visit, the reconstruction of a sacred building or the celebration of the church's titular. They were also given as a vow to individual saints or as a sign of the donors' self-promotion and attachment to their religious communities. Lastly, numerous new liturgical vessels needed to be commissioned after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), during which the instructions on the preferred materials and appearance of liturgical objects were precisely defined. Based on several case studies of preserved goldsmiths' works in Istria and the Kvarner Bay, this presentation will examine the possibilities of researching the cultural circle around the acquisitions of these valuable artworks. Furthermore, it will provide possible explanations for how liturgical objects were commissioned, transported, and donated, thus permanently enriching church treasuries, using a variety of examples.



Augsburgian goldsmith Johann David Saler, Silver Sculpture of Our Lady of Sorrows - detail, 1719-1723, Cathedral of St. Vitus in Rijeka (Croatia), photo by Damir Tulić

Arijana Koprčina

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS, ZAGREB

*Late Gothic and Renaissance Sacral Silver Objects in the Area of
the Zagreb (Arch)diocese*

Liturgical utensils at the turn of the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era connected to the area of today's Zagreb Archdiocese, a Diocese until 1852, are stylistically and historically very interesting; they are mostly preserved at the Zagreb Cathedral Treasury, but also in certain Zagreb churches and some churches of the (Arch)diocese. Only a few utensils from that period, covering the area of the Diocese, are part of the Museum of Arts and Crafts' holdings.

Vessels and artwork, subject to this review, made during the second half of the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries, were preserved despite turbulent events and Ottoman conquests, especially after the lost battle of Mohács in 1526. Utensils from the legacies of Zagreb bishops who were active at the time and quite influential at the Hungarian-Croatian court: Oswald Thuz, Luka Baratin (de Szegedi), and Simon Erdödy are noteworthy. Utensils, property of court orderers like John Corvinus, also belong here. They are the most representative examples of the period, today mostly preserved at the Zagreb Cathedral Treasury.

Stylistically seen, the multitude of works belong to the Gothic and Late Gothic periods, also of mixed Gothic and Renaissance styles on the same item, though predominantly Gothic. The review of preserved liturgical utensils reveals the domination of Gothic and Late Gothic metalworking

until the beginning of the 16th century; politically, until the second rule of the Jagelović dynasty. Elements of the Renaissance are encountered more frequently from the beginning of the 16th century. Only a few Renaissance examples were kept. Chalices are the most common type, but pastoral staffs, paxes, monstrances, and individual items of thuribles and aspersories for the Holy Water were also kept.

Regarding the attribution of goldsmith work and the place of creation, no data so far has helped ascribe the preserved objects to a specific locality or master. However, parallels were perceived in the shaping of certain vessels like chalices, preserved in more items of very similar metalworking. These elements point to identical sources. Analogies in shaping, decorative elements, especially engraved motifs, indicate the use of graphic patterns. So far, motifs and elements that could be attributed or partially linked to Martin Schongauer and his teacher, Master ES, have been identified. The aim of the presentation is to provide a selection of the most representative objects and a stylistic and morphological review of liturgical vessels connected to the Zagreb diocese, created during the second half of the 15th and the first half of the 16th century.



Crosier / bishop's staff from the possession of bishop Oswald Thuz de Szentlaszlo, around 1490, Zagreb Cathedral Treasury (Croatia), Photo Srećko Budek

Tera Lee Hedrick

WICHITA ART MUSEUM

*Earthly and Heavenly Banquets: Sacred and Secular Dining
Vessels and the Sensory in Late Byzantium*

This paper considers wares from two Late Byzantine dining rituals—the Divine Liturgy and elite banquets—to explore how objects from each served to create identity and reinforce status for hosts and guests. At its inception in the first and second centuries, the Eucharist was conceived of as a communal banquet, in which the physical ingestion of bread and wine effected a change in the worshiper and connected him or her to both the community and God. In its first incarnation, the Christian meal upended traditional Late Antique banqueting mores. If Late Antique imperial or elite banquets were staged to perform and cement hierarchical relationships, the communal meal was staged to undo them. Although liturgical vessels were formally similar to those used in domestic contexts, the ways in which they were used—and the purposes they served—were inverted. Indeed, while domestic wares trumpeted the status and identity of their owners, early Eucharistic wares, such as those found in the Kaper Koraon Hoard, used material and iconography to cement social and religious ties among members of the community, bonding laity and clergy.

By the Late and Post-Byzantine periods, however, this had changed drastically—the hierarchical nature of the Byzantine liturgy rivalled, and possibly surpassed, that of an elite banquet, bearing little resemblance to the communal meal of Antiquity. As they had for centuries, secular dining

wares from this period, such as the Preslav Cup, speak to a host's power and status. Reflecting and reinforcing ritual changes that had occurred in the Divine Liturgy over centuries, so did liturgical wares. By this period, most liturgical objects were primarily seen and held by clergy rather than laity and reinforced the clergy's role as representatives of Christ. On objects such as two patens associated with Thomas Preljubović, materials, iconography, and form are designed to reinforce the status of clergy as intercessor. By Late and Post-Byzantium, liturgical vessels—always like secular wares in form—had become more like them in purpose.

Lucian Lechintan

PONTIFICAL ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, ROME

*The Tismana Censer: Argyrokastron or Heavenly Jerusalem?
Function, Patrons and Strategic Views at the End of the 14th-
century Walachia*

The aim of this paper is to introduce and to interpret an important liturgical object preserved in the permanent collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania in Bucharest, dated to the end of the 14th century or beginning of the 15th century. The censer was found in the Tismana Orthodox Monastery and was first presented to the scholars in the 1885-1886 session of the Romanian Academy.

The object is a silver-gilded model of a church, crafted in the repoussé technique with perforated and cast parts, partially engraved. The rectangular body of the censer rests on a flaring foot-ring and is topped with a central windowed dome. A series of smaller cylindrical towers and gothic pinnacles are distributed on the sides. The suspension of the body is made by an ingenious system of chains introduced in the corner tubes, while a central chain is directly connected to the ring handle. There is no horizontal rim between the two parts of the censer, and the lips are joined perfectly.

Even if the shape sends back to the Greek-cross Byzantine churches, the lack of the apse, the insertion of four small statues of Latin monks as well as the gothic decorative elements (the double-lancet windows, the over-standing roses, the pointed arch cusps above the windows and the niches),

point out the gothic style. This eclectic artefact has to be related to a Transylvanian or Dalmatian metalsmith's workshop.

Censers with architectural shape were first attested in documents at the end of 7th century and important evidence has been found in German world since the 11th and 12th centuries: among one of the most notable examples here is the Gozbertus byzantine Censer (Trier, Domschatz). Other similar examples are the incense burner in the Treasury of Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice (12th century), or the reliquary – artophorion from Aachen, dedicated to Saint Anastasios the Persian (late 10th century, Domschatzkammer).

The Censer of Tismana was first recorded in a traveller's diary from the half of the 17th century and was described as being a representation of Buda Castle, Hungary. According to the same source, the object was a royal gift to the Serbian orthodox monk Nikodim, active in Wallachia at the end of the 14th century. In all probability, the donor was the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg. My view is that the Tismana Censer is not just a common liturgical object but a masterpiece, and this paper will provide insights into how this object unifies identities, confessions, and styles in a crepuscular late Byzantine Commonwealth.



The Tismana Censer, 14th-century, Walachia, collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania in Bucharest (Romania)

Iglika Mishkova

INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY AND FOLKLORE STUDIES WITH
ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM, BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Ex-Votos from Bulgaria

Part of ex-votos represent genuine pieces of goldsmith's art and have been elaborated by goldsmith's masters (kuyumdzhii – Bulg.). They were made of different materials by stamping over templates and the design was further shaped and finished with swages. Embossed of thin silver plates or cast in molds, many of them were additionally worked on with dot or arch shaped swages, in order to convey details in the images. Other represent just silhouettes lacking any additional decoration, but embossed all over the surface to obtain volume.

In the archives and publications there are no stories of the goldsmiths themselves about the techniques they use, about the ways of decorating the votive offerings and the presence / absence of a special canon for their production. Unlike other of their works which were signed, the votives offerings remain anonymous. Some of the master goldsmiths had special molds with which they made votive offerings. I will present the first mold that was discovered in Bulgaria and is currently in a private collection.

The text will draw parallels between votive figures from museum collections and the one from the Bachkovo Monastery, where an unstudied and unpublished collection of votive offerings is preserved. In it is a miraculous icon of the Virgin. Next to it, believers place the most gifts of various origins. Her image is the most popular in folk culture.

The votive figures that I present were attached to the icons with a different offering. Some of them depict votive figures of the Virgin with the child Christ, a saint (The Virgin or other popular saint in the region), figures of men with books (can be interpreted as an request for education, profession), other female figures. It is curious that some of them have a year of production. Special attention should be paid to models made in 1954, in the years of socialism. In the collection of the monastery are kept votive children's swings, which are for the purpose of praying for a child. Other figures represent parts of the human body that beg for healing of various diseased organs in humans. Gifts are personal and presented individually, and the practice of giving ex-votos from one person to another or to a family may be less common.

Snježana Orlović

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

*Artistic Metalwork in the Territory of the Dalmatian and
Gornjokarlovac (i.e. Upper Karlovac) Bishoprics*

Although we are dealing with bishoprics which have existed in two seemingly diverse cultural, political, and economic circumstances, the interconnectedness of their history and cooperation becomes evident when observing objects of artistically elaborated metalwork. Unfortunately, owing to difficult historical circumstances, poverty, and all-too-frequent wars, only a fraction of the material housed over many centuries in the churches of the Dalmatian and Gornjokarlovac Bishoprics has been preserved to date. This material is currently stored in parochial churches, monasteries, museums, and temporary warehouses in Croatia and Serbia. It consists mainly of liturgical and numerous other objects for church use. However, they also include panagias and pectoral crosses, votive gifts, reliquaries, and the like. The majority of these objects date back to the 18th century, but there are also those made in the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries. The objects were acquired in a variety of ways: they were ordered, bequeathed, received as gifts, bought from travelling salesmen, or transferred under various circumstances from other churches. It should be mentioned that Gomirje Monastery in the Gornjokarlovac Bishopric was founded in the 16th century by monks who came from the Krka Monastery in Dalmatia, and who brought with them the first liturgical objects. In addition to the cited monasteries, rich treasuries were also housed in the

Krupa and Dragovic Monasteries of the Dalmatian Bishopric, in the Komogovina and Medak Monasteries of the Gornjokarlovacka Bishopric, as well as in the larger churches of other dioceses. The objects were ordered by eminent and wealthy individuals and national elders, but above all by bishops, monks, and clergy. These artefacts of applied art were manufactured in the workshops of different centres of art, principally in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Venice, Genoa, Vienna, Mount Athos, Corfu, et. Contacts with centres of art in other states brought new artistic influences to local master artists who frequently received orders. A considerable number of objects were received as gifts when monks went on charity-seeking expeditions in order to seek help for their monasteries. Special mention should be made of archimandrite Gerasim Zelic from the Krupa Monastery in Dalmatia and archimandrite Teofil Aleksic from the Gomirje Monastery in the Gornjokarlovac Diocese, who brought rich gifts from their trips to the most prominent artistic centres of their time not only to their own monasteries but also to other churches in the two bishoprics.



*Cross – detail, 16th century, Gomirje Monastery (Croatia),
photo by Snježana Orlović*

Anita Paolicchi

UNIVERSITY OF PISA

*More than Meets the Eye: Political Reasons Behind the Adoption
of a Confessionally-Connotated Iconography*

According to the bibliography, Transylvanian Saxon goldsmiths were instrumental in introducing new iconographies and decorative styles into Orthodox liturgical precious objects produced for Wallachian lay and religious élites. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the reception of such novelties was passively received by the Orthodox donors. The presentation will focus on a case study—the use of Apocalyptic imagery based on the Lutheran Bible on a book cover—to investigate the historical and political factors that led to such confessionally-connotated iconography being acceptable for an Orthodox liturgical object donated to a monastic foundation by an Orthodox voivode. Furthermore, together with other minor examples, this will allow us to track a particular route followed by iconographical prototypes which connected Central-Western Europe and the North of the Balkans.

*Workshop of Lucas Cranach,
Colored version of the Whore of
Babylon illustration from
Martin Luther's 1534
translation of the Bible.*



Georgi R. Parpulov

INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR, PLOVDIV

Silver Drinking Cups of the Late Ottoman Period

On the basis of their style, a relatively large number of bowl-shaped drinking vessels made of chased silver are attributable to the 18th century Ottoman Balkans. Their function remains poorly understood because they carry no inscriptions. I will argue that they were intended for ecclesiastical use, namely, for drinking wine diluted with warm water (ζέον, *теплота*) immediately after receiving Holy Communion. This custom (known in Russia as *зативка*) seems to have been sporadically adopted in the Balkans under Russian influence. The religious use of the silver cups is borne out by certain motifs in their relief decoration, e.g. the double-headed eagle (an emblem of the Patriarchate of Constantinople), the deer (a reference to Psalm 41:1, 'Just as the doe longs for the springs of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. '), Samson struggling with the lion (Judges 14:5-6), the four evangelists, and so on.



*Drinking bowl, 18th century, Walters Art Museum,
photo by Susan Tobin*

Nona Petkova

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*Fabulous World of Filigree Enamel in the Southeast European
Silversmithing: The Case of Sacral Silver Objects from Bachkovo
Monastery*

Filigree enamel became an important part of Southeast European silversmithing during the 17th and 18th centuries, according to examples of church silverware preserved to this day. Unfortunately, this impressive combination of techniques (filigree and enamel) is rarely the object of special interest in publications on artistic production from that period. These studies usually only mention the presence of filigree enamel (mainly as framing bands) in the analysed works, but sometimes there are also notes on its quality of execution as well as on its ornamental patterns.

This paper will focus on the fantastic world of filigree enamel as part of the tradition of decorating sacred silver vessels in the Balkans during the 17th and 18th centuries. It also brings up a few simple and important questions. For example, why, where, and in which form did the filigree enamel turn into one of the most popular and widespread silversmithing practices in that period? The text will also discuss the Ottoman aesthetics' influence on many of the ornamental

motifs found in some of the works with rich filigree enamel decoration.

All these lines of research will be followed in this paper through a group of sacral silver objects (treasury Gospel bindings, artophoria, chalices, etc.) with a lavish filigree enamel ornamentation that were executed for the Bachkovo monastery. The works are related to the production of the silversmith center that operated from the early 17th to the mid-18th centuries in the regions of Bachkovo and Plovdiv, which is well known for the use of filigree enamel. The focus of the research will be four outstanding examples from Bachkovo monastery executed in this technique, which belong to the collection of the National Church Historical and Archaeological Museum of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. The surfaces of these objects (two artophoria, a chalice and a zeon) are entirely covered by filigree enamel ornamentation: lotus palmettes, little leaves, different types of flowers, etc.



*Artophorion, 1705, Bachkovo monastery (Bulgaria),
photo by Nona Petkova*

Francesca Stopper

INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Precious Sacred Sculptures in 17th and 18th centuries
Venetian Republic

Sacred silver sculpture is arguably one of the most mysterious products of Venetian goldsmithery. Very few objects have been preserved after the Venetian Republic's fall in 1797 and Napoleon's raids. These are mostly found outside of Venice, in its overseas territories (Stato da Mar) and on the mainland (Stato da Terra), as well as in neighboring countries, which typically stock silver handcrafted in Venice. Sacred silver sculptures were often melted down in the Lagoon because silver was so precious and because they were not strictly functional for Christian worship. Even modern literary sources do not cite these types of works, instead praising the great opulence of silver objects in sacred places in general. Many archival references, such as church and monastery inventories or confraternity deliberations, have come to light that attest to this manufacturing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The silverwork comprises sacred objects, such as bust reliquaries, processional insignia, and sculptures or votive offerings, that, due to their size and magnificence, outclass the usual definition of 'minor arts' and affirm themselves as real plastic arts. Taking surviving sculptures as a starting point, this proposal aims to investigate this rare Venetian production in the 17th and early 18th centuries. It analyses formal and stylistic changes, focusing on the main goldsmith workshops, their internal practices, and the events surrounding

their masterpieces' executions. This overview could start with the bust-reliquary of Saint Anastasia (Zadar, Treasure of the Cathedral) and end with that of Saint Bartholomew (Daone, parish church). Within this span, it will be possible to focus on the figure of Andrea Balbi, goldsmith at the sign of Cappello. Balbi occupied a central role in Venice, making votive statues for the cities of Padua and Treviso after the plague of 1630 and the Saint George sculpture for the Collegiate Church of Saint George in Piran (Croatia). Worthy of interest in this proposal is also the Augustan goldsmith J. Adolf Gaap, author of the silver shutters in the marble cabinets that contain the chapel of the Relics' treasure in the Basilica del Santo (Padua). Another workshop of some interest is that of the Trofeo goldsmiths, whose marks have been identified on a reliquary-bust preserved in Split. Behind each masterpiece, it will also be possible to deepen our understanding of the interactions between goldsmiths and patrons, worship traditions, and, above all, the influences of contemporary sculpture.



*J. A. Gaap, Reliquary of Saint Philip Neri,
1710-20 ca., Ecclesiastical region of the
Triveneto (Italy)*

Milena Ulčar

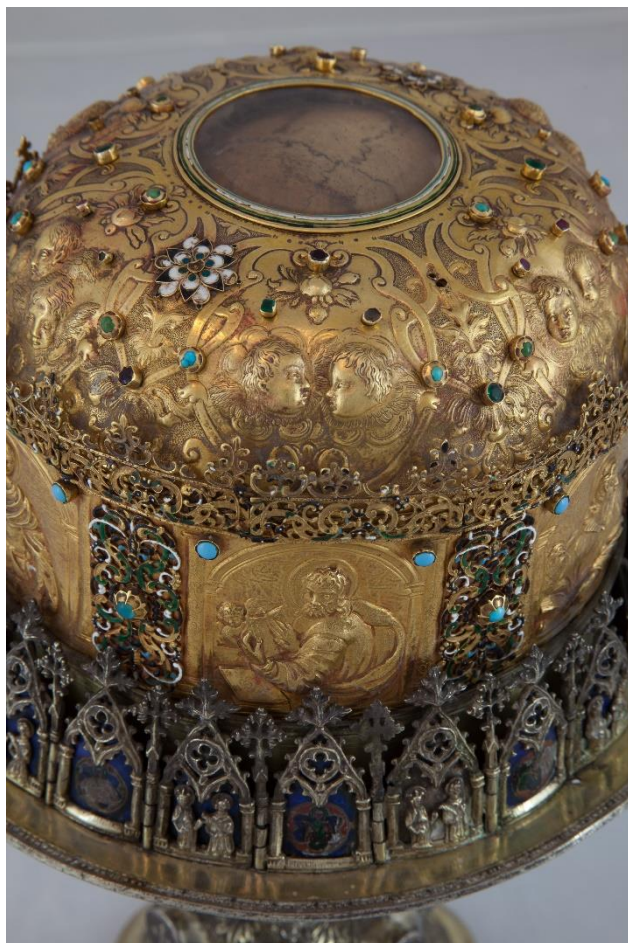
UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

*Somatic Triggers of Holiness: Early Modern Reliquaries in the
Venetian Bay of Kotor*

From the early Middle Ages through the early modern period, churches and treasuries in the Bay of Kotor acquired hundreds of silver containers for the saintly remains. In body-part reliquaries, a striking visual change in appearance became visible during the 17th and 18th centuries. Emphasized muscles, veins, layers of skin, and other bodily fragments replaced ornamental elements of medieval reliquaries. A peculiar "iconography of the body" was created in order to communicate with the observer, relying on tools of naturalism and illusionism. With the help of similar visual language, the image of an "ordinary" human body was fragmented and displayed on silver votive plates across the churches in the Bay. Once again, the iconography of realistically depicted corporal fragments served as identity markers in the context of the early modern Catholic church.

On the other hand, dozens of non-anthropomorphic reliquaries used different visual languages to convey similar messages about the body, identity, and holiness. Without instruments of naturalism and corporal iconography, those objects displayed somatic elements that could have triggered similar responses in observers as those incited by their anthropomorphic neighbors. In these examples, iconography of the body was fashioned through the materiality of the relic, the use of a specific color, or through emphasizing some of its silver fragments.

In this paper, it will be argued that both groups of silver containers, despite their differences, used similar mechanisms of relating to believers. Special emphasis will be placed on visual elements used as somatic markers that triggered a corporal, affective and cognitive response in observers, seen as the participant in complex contextual network of early modern devotional world.



*The golden calotte of the reliquary of the head of Saint Tryphon,
17th century, Cathedral of St. Tryphon in Kotor (Montenegro),
photo by Stevan Kordić*

Yannis D. Varalis & Constantine Dolmas

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY

*Prolific Imagery on Metal: The Gospel Book Covers of the
Silversmithing Workshop at Retziani, Thessaly*

This paper will focus on the Gospel book covers that were produced by a silversmithing workshop at the village of Retziani (modern Metaxochori near Aghia), in the district of Larissa, Thessaly, Greece, in the 17th and 18th centuries. Our research has registered more than fifteen Gospel book covers that present the same and almost unique characteristics. Firstly, numerous metal cast plaques and filigree stripes, partly gilded and enameled, are nailed with pins on wooden boards, enveloped with velvet. Secondly, this plethora of plaques can be grouped into three units: square plaques mostly with Dodecaorton scenes; oblong plaques with standing saints, and rectangular plaques with the Evangelists' symbols and other representations. Lastly, the plaques are placed not according to a specific iconographic program but almost randomly, in order to fill the surface of the book covers. This kind of decoration stems from Byzantine tradition, according to which a few fittings are placed at the center and in the corners of the book covers, so as to retain and decorate the leather or the velvet envelop of the boards. Although the iconography of the plaques used by the Retziani workshop is Russian and Greek and the style is mixed, the decoration as a whole is surprisingly rich and cohesive.

The diffusion of the products of the Retziani workshop is considerable. The northernmost site, where a Gospel book cover of the kind is recorded, is the

Bačkovo monastery in Bulgaria, and the southernmost location is the island of Andros in the Cyclades. The majority of the gospel covers encountered are concentrated in Thessaly. Other distant locations are Dečani monastery, in the treasury of which are kept the so-called crosses of Stefan Uroš Dečanski and Stefan Dušan with identical enameled plaques, and Saint Catherine at Sinai, where a reliquary and a bishop's miter are decorated with enamels of the same style. A few of the book covers preserve dedicatory inscriptions, which mention the names of the donors, the craftsmen, and the production dates, which help us to document the history and evolution of the workshop.



*Retziani Silversmithing Workshop, Gospel Book Back Cover 1673 (Greece),
photo by Yannis D. Varalis*

PARTICIPANTS



*Silver reliquary in the form of a hand and arm,
18th century, Cathedral of St. Tryphon in Kotor (Montenegro),
photo by Stevan Kordić.*

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Arijana Koprčina graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Department of Art History in 1992. Ph.D. in 2012. The dissertation *Metalworking in Croatia in the 19th Century* synthesized stylistic and morphological metalworking of profane utilitarian silverwork and a production overview of domestic and foreign, imported 19th-century goldwork of a trade and manufactural level and factory-made products, including the area of design based on the holdings of the Museum of Arts and Crafts and other museums and archives in Zagreb and Croatia. Since 1997 head of the Metalwork Collection of the Museum of Arts and Crafts; museum advisor since 2016. Her research fields are applied arts, profane and sacral goldwork and silverwork from the Middle Ages, and jewelry, focused on the oscillation of style, fashion, and taste in makes of liturgical vessels and practical everyday utensils, including table and household decor accessories, eating utensils and similar products as well as historical and recent jewelry. She is the author of exhibition sections of metalwork and, jewelry of cultural expositions and projects: *Biedermeier in Croatia* (1997), *Historicism in Croatia* (2000), *Secession in Croatia* (2003), researching profane silverwork and jewelry for *The Magnificent Vranyczanys* (2016), curating exhibits of liturgical vessels, votive tablets and jewelry for *Visovac – Spirituality and Culture on Bila stina* (2019). She took part in the exhibition and catalog project *Ars et Virtus, 800 years of shared cultural heritage in Zagreb and Budapest* (2020). She is also the

author of metalwork sections of permanent museum exhibitions at the Cathedral of St. Teresa of Ávila treasury in Požega (2015), the Diocesan Museum of the Požega Bishopric (2016), and the Jewish Museum in Zagreb (2016). She wrote scientific and professional papers and chapters on goldwork, jewelry, and liturgical utensils in publications and scientific monographs.

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Lucian Lechintan was born on 1979 in Cluj-Napoca (Romania). He studied Art History at the National University of Fine Arts – Bucharest (2005-2008). The final-cycle paper concerned: *The Representations of the Holy Bishops in Medieval Romanian Mural Paintings*. During this period he was also interested in metal works of art. Lucian Lechintan studied theology in Paris – Center Sèvres (2008 – 2011). He has achieved a license in Oriental Liturgies in Rome (2013 – 2015). The final degree paper concerned: *The representation of the “Ark of Covenant” in the Princely Church of Curtea de Argeş (half of the 14th century)*. Lucian Lechintan is a professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute (PIO). He is teaching Byzantine History of Art. In the academic year 2022-2023, he is teaching a course Arts and Liturgy. His doctoral thesis *The Iconographical Program of the Byzantine Church of Curtea de Argeş (half of the 14th c.)* is about Palaiologan Monumental Art. He received a grade Summa cum Laude (board committee: Massimo Bernabò – University of Pavia, Michele Bacci – University of Fribourg, Valentino Pace – University of Udine).

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Georgi Parpulov read History at the University of Sofia and Art History at the University of Chicago. As a graduate student, he worked at the Walters Art Museum, where he catalogued the museum's collection of Greek manuscripts. After submitting a doctoral thesis on Byzantine Psalters, he taught Byzantine Art and Archaeology and Greek Palaeography at the University of Oxford, then did curatorial work at the European and Middle East departments of the British Museum. He now works for a research project at the University of Birmingham, studying the manuscript tradition of Greek commentaries on the New Testament.

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in Sciences of Cultural Heritage with a thesis on the silversmith Angelo Scarabello, and a master degree in Art History with a research on the Venetian goldsmith Andrea Fulici. She had been a teaching assistant in Modern Art History of the Humanities Department, University of Trieste, between 2015-2019. In 2017 she obtained the Francis Haskell Scholarship. Her research activity has always focused on Venetian art of the 17th and 18th centuries, in particular on decorative arts and painting – collaborating on several occasions with the Venetian Civic Museums Foundation and the Institute of Art History of the Giorgio Cini Foundation. The main subject of her studies is the history of Venetian goldsmithing in the Baroque and Rococo ages, carried out with attention to the workshops and masters active in the 17th and 18th centuries, to the interrelation between the arts and visual sources. Moreover she turned her attention to the aspect of training in Venetian workshops, participating in the project: *Garzoni: Apprenticeship, Work, Society in Early Modern Venice (16th-18th centuries)*, promoted by University of Lille 3 – Université de Rouen – Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne. Since 2021, she has been working with the Italian Ministry of Culture.

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NOTES



The Stamp of the Belgrade Goldsmith's and Casting Guild, 1883, (Serbia), photo by Vuk Dautović

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Southeast European Silversmithing: Liturgical Objects and the Construction of a Cultural, Technological and Iconographical Network in the Early Modern Period

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