

УДК 7.033.2(497)

ББК 85.125

DOI 10.18688/aa2313-10-64

A. Ph. Trifonova

## An Unknown Belt Buckle (1732) of Hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina from a Private Collection in Greece

The article presents an important unknown belt buckle with dimensions 22,5×9,5 cm and weight 164 grams, which is preserved in a private collection in Attica, Greece. The belt buckle is made of silver and copper alloy and is gilded for the most part. It consists of three pieces: a main central oval-shaped part and two side parts with wave-shaped edges, linked with the main part by a hook (Fig. 1).

The central part of the belt buckle presents the image of the New Testament Holy Trinity. The Son, who bears nimbus with the inscription *Ο ΩΝ* (He Who is) and holds a cross in his left hand, is depicted on the left part. The Father, who bears a nimbus with the inscription *Ο ΩΝ* (He Who is), and holds a sphere in his right hand, is depicted on the right. Above them comes down the Holy Spirit in the image of a dove with a nimbus and open wings. The scene is surrounded by angelic powers of the first order: on either side, there are two cherubim with a pair of wings, whereas the Father and the Son are standing on three thrones (θρόνοι), depicted as wheels (τροχοί), of which only the central one is winged (Fig. 1).

The two side parts of the belt buckle present the scene of the Annunciation, surrounded by two full length prophets. On the left side, the archangel Gabriel is moving towards the Virgin on the right side. Behind the archangel, there is a figure of the Prophet David, signed as *Ο ΠΡΟΦ(Η)Τ(Η)C Δ(Α)Β(Η)Δ* (The Prophet David), who is holding an open scroll with the prophecy: *Α/ΚΟΥ/CO/N Θ/Π/ΑΤ/ΕΡ<sup>1</sup>* (Hear, daughter) (Fig. 2). On the right side, the Virgin, signed as *Μ(ΗΤΗ)Ρ Θ(Ε)ΟΥ* (Mother of God), is standing in front of a throne with open arms, facing the archangel. Behind the Virgin, there is a depiction of the Prophet Solomon, signed by the inscription: *Ο ΠΡ(ΟΦΗ)Τ(Η)C C(O)Λ(O)Μ(ΩΝ)* (Prophet Solomon), who is holding an open scroll with the prophecy: *Μ/ΙΝ/ ΙΝ/CH/ΜΕ/ΠΙS / ΕΡ(Γ)Α<sup>2</sup>* (Do not grumble about others' accomplishments) (Fig. 3).

On the top side of the belt buckle, there is an engraved dedicatory inscription in Greek that spans the both sides of the buckle: *ΔΙΑ CHNΔPOMHC· EMOY· ICA/IOY IEPOMONAXOY·*

<sup>1</sup> The correct inscription on the scroll of Prophet David would be *ΑΚΟΥCON ΘΥΤΑΤΕΡ* [37, p. 82].

<sup>2</sup> The correct spelling of this inscription is: *ΜΗΝ ΜΕΜΨΙΜΟΙΠΕΙC ΕΡΤΑ*. However, this inscription on the scroll is not seen anywhere else, as far as we know. Moreover, it is not common for the Prophet's Solomon scroll in the scene of the Annunciation, who usually holds a scroll with the following text: “*Πολλὰι θυγατέρες ἐκτίσαντο πλοῦτον· πολλὰι ἐποίησαν δύναμιν, σὺ δὲ ὑπέρκεισαι καὶ ὑπερήρας πάσας*” (Many daughters have obtained wealth, many have wrought valiantly, but you have exceeded and surpassed all) [37, p. 82], whereas in other scenes the Prophet Solomon holds a scroll with other inscription: “*Ἡ σοφία ᾠκοδόμησεν οἶκον, καὶ*” (The wisdom built a building, and) [37, p. 77].



Fig. 1. Belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina. 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova



Fig. 2. The archangel Gabriel of the Annunciation with the Prophet David (detail of the left part). Belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina. 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova



Fig. 3. The Virgin of the Annunciation with the Prophet Solomon (detail of the right part). Belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina. 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova

*ΤΟΥ / ΕΞ ΙΩΑΝΗΝΩΝ 1732 ΕΚΑΤΑC/ΚΙΑΘΗ ΕΙC ΜΕΛΕΝΗΚΟΝ*<sup>3</sup> (with the contribution of me, hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina, 1732, made in Melenikon) (Figs. 4, 5). On the back side of the belt buckle, there are four long support panes, two on each side (Fig. 7). The pane on the right side, which is fastened by the hook, is the only one gilded and bears another inscription on two rows, engraved in a decorative frame: *ΔΟΥΛΟC ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ / ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC*<sup>4</sup> (Servant of God Dimitrios) (Fig. 6).

<sup>3</sup> The correct orthography of the inscription should be: *ΔΙΑ CΥΝΔΡΟΜΗC ΕΜΟΥ ΗCΑΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΞ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝΩΝ 1732 ΕΚΑΤΑCΚΕΥΑCΘΕΙ ΕΙC ΜΕΛΕΝΙΚΟΝ.*

<sup>4</sup> The correct inscription should be: *Ο ΔΟΥΛΟC ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC.*

From the dedicatory inscription, we learn that the belt buckle was made at the expense of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina, as well as that it was made in the town of Melenikon in 1732.

The sponsor of the belt buckle, hieromonk Isaiah (second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>5</sup>, was from Ioannina, a town in the region of Epirus, nowadays in the north-west part of Greece. He was a hieromonk and painter<sup>6</sup> and most probably a member of the monastic brotherhood of the stau-ropegial Rozhen monastery (*μονή Ροζινοῦ*) near Melenikon (Melnik). He decorated with frescoes the monastery's Trapeza (1728), as he mentions that fact on the dedicatory inscription<sup>7</sup>, and also devoted a poetic text to Dionysios of Ioannina who most likely was the metropolitan of Melenikon Dionysios II (1677–1683, 1685–1689) [43, p. 11]<sup>8</sup>. The poetic text was written 39 years after his activity as metropolitan, and it is unknown if he was still alive then. It is likely that Dionysios II was mentioned in the inscription because he was the one who initiated the restoration of the Trapeza, which was finished during the time of hieromonk Isaiah [43, p. 12]. However, it is known that Dionysios, as well as Isaiah, originate from Ioannina, a town in the Epirus region, which stands approximately 400 km from Melenikon (Melnik). It can be deduced that when Dionysios became the metropolitan of Melenikon (Melnik), he invited with him some persons from the ecclesiastical circle of his native Ioannina<sup>9</sup> and probably most of them became part of the brotherhood of Rozhen monastery, like hieromonk Isaiah, the owner of the belt buckle [53, p. 106].

Moreover, from the dedicatory inscription, we learn that the belt buckle was made in 1732 in Melenikon (Melnik), a small Byzantine town in the region of Macedonia, nowadays in South-western Bulgaria. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Melenikon (Melnik) was a seat of the Metropolis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople known for its Byzantine and post-Byzantine monuments<sup>10</sup> and mainly for the nearby Rozhen monastery<sup>11</sup>. At the time of the commission of

<sup>5</sup> For the general information about the hieromonk Isaiah of Ioannina, see: [53, pp. 73–108].

<sup>6</sup> Regarding the painter hieromonk Isaiah of Ioannina, it remains still unknown what else did he paint, as we do not have any other information. Moreover, his name was not included in the book about the Greek painters in Bulgaria after the Fall of Constantinople [31].

<sup>7</sup> This inscription is written on the scroll of St Nicholas and reads as following: *ΤΟ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΟΝ ΕΝΝ(Ο) ΟΥΜΕΝ / ΕΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΝ ΩΝ ΟΥΚ ΙΣΜΕΝ. / ΤΟΥ ΠΟΤΕ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ/ΤΙΚΟΥ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ ΟΠΟΥ ΗΤΟΝ / ΕΞ ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΠΑΥΘΗ / ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΕΛΕΝΙΚΟΝ. ΚΑΙ ΑΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ / ΤΟ Ρ(ΗΤΟΝ) ΠΑΡ' ΕΜΟΥ ΗΣΑΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΥ / ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΝ ΠΝ(ΕΥΜΑΤ)Ι ΑΓΙΩ ΕΙΔΙΚΟΣ ΣΑΚ ΕΥΧΕΤΗΣ / 1728* [20, pp. 47–48, fig. 3–4; 43, p. 11; 15, p. 162; 53, p. 87]. The paintings were commissioned during the time of the hegumenos Anastasios, who was also sakellarios (*σακελλάριος*) of the Metropolis of Melenikon. The 'sakellarios' is a title, which is given to priests and deacons in order to have some control functions on the monasteries in a Metropolis, as well as the right to judge monks who had sinned, see: [3, p. 1562].

<sup>8</sup> The metropolitan of Melenikon Dionysios II, whose first tenure in Melenikon lasted six years, resigned voluntarily in 1683 and moved to Mount Athos, where he bought a kellion of the Iviron monastery. Two years later, in 1685, with the help of the Ecumenical patriarch Parthenios IV Mogilalos (1657–1662, 1665–1667, 1671, 1675–1676, 1684–1685), he was elected again metropolitan of Melenikon for four years. After this second tenure he resigned again and settled in Adrianople (Adrianoupolis), but later returned to Melenikon (Melnik) where he stayed until his death. For the general information about Metropolitan Dionysios II, see: [43, pp. 11–12; 54, pp. 216–218; 53, pp. 87, 96].

<sup>9</sup> For the general information about the presence of people from Ioannina in Melenikon (Melnik) during the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see: [43, pp. 9–23].

<sup>10</sup> For the general information about the monuments of Melenikon (Melnik) see: [27, pp. 292–300; 36, pp. 11–21; 32, pp. 439–460; 28, pp. 205–212; 21, pp. 482–485, 490–503; 34].

<sup>11</sup> In 1727, the painters Theoharis and Nikolaos made a fresco in the narthex of the monastery's katholikon, whereas in 1728, the hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina painted the Trapeza [53, p. 102]. In 1732, the murals of the katholikon were executed with the financial help of the skeuophylax (*σκευοφύλακας*) and archon (*ἀρχοντας*) Doukas; the wood-carved iconostasis of the katholikon was commissioned by the hegumenos



Fig. 4. The dedicatory inscription (detail of the left part). Belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina. 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova



Fig. 5. The dedicatory inscription (detail of the right part). Belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina. 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova



Fig. 6. The inscription of the back side of the belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina (detail). 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova

the belt buckle, Melenikon (Melnik) was under the episcopate of the metropolitan Anthimos I (1716–1737)<sup>12</sup> and had strong connections with Mount Athos because of the Vatopedi<sup>13</sup> and Iviron<sup>14</sup> metochia in the town. Moreover, the town had a multiethnic population and a flourishing Greek community, which undoubtedly contributed for its artistic and spiritual prosperity<sup>15</sup>.

hieromonk Anastasios, who was also sakellarios (*σακελλάριος*) of the Metropolis of Melenikon (Melnik)[53, p. 97]. The murals of the parekklesion of Sts Cosmas and Damian were painted with the financial aid of nun Melania [53, p. 98], as well as one manuscript of Nomocanon was written in 1732 by the hieromonk Iakovos of Ioannina, nowadays in the National Library of Greece in Athens [53, p. 106].

<sup>12</sup> For the general information about the metropolitan Anthimos I, who was from the island of Mytilene, see: [56, p. 89; 21, p. 456; 4, p. 61; 53, p. 96].

<sup>13</sup> For the general information about the Vatopedi metochion in Melenikon (Melnik), see: [38, p. 88; 40, pp. 42–53].

<sup>14</sup> For the general information about the Rozhen monastery, which was a metochion of the Iviron monastery, see: [42, pp. 35–37; 49, pp. 94–96; 36, pp. 11–21; 56, pp. 78–80; 17; 46, pp. 39–48; 15; 4, pp. 119–124; 21, pp. 494–499; 54, pp. 172–178; 13, pp. 148–176].

<sup>15</sup> During this period in Melenikon (Melnik) the wooden-carved iconostasis (1727) of the Virgin Spylaiotissa monastery was made [33, p. 30], whereas in 1731 the frescoes in its katholikon were executed with the financial aid of the brothers Mavroudis and Manolis along with their mother Komniani [53, p. 100]. There were also painters from the workshop of Dionysios from Fourna, who executed the icon of the enthroned St. Nicolas (first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) in the Metropolitan church of St. Nicholas, along with an icon of full length St. John the Baptist (first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century), nowadays in the Crypt of St. Alexander Nevsky's cathedral in Sofia [52, pp. 36–40]. An icon of



From the other inscription on the back of the belt buckle, we learn the name of the servant of God Demetrios. Unfortunately, the text does not provide other clarifying information about this person, but most likely Demetrios<sup>16</sup> could be the craftsman or someone who after the death of Hieromonk Isaiah owned the belt buckle.

The craftsman who engraved the inscriptions made a lot of orthographical and grammatical mistakes<sup>17</sup> and inserted Slavic letters in Greek inscriptions<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, he inserted incomprehensible texts with Greek letters<sup>19</sup>. This leads us to think that probably he was a local person from Melenikon (Melnik), but maybe not of Greek origin, or if he was Greek, he did not know how to write correctly and probably copied some texts which he received from another person. No matter which of the two theories is right, it is important that this work is a masterpiece of the post-Byzantine minor art.

A belt buckle<sup>20</sup> is a metal decorative clothing acces-

---

the Virgin Rodon Amarandon (*Ρόδον Αμάραντον*) (first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) comes from the same church, nowadays in the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia [51, pp. 341–345; 13, p. 533, fig. II. 54].

<sup>16</sup> At this moment we do not have any other information concerning the artistic activity of this goldsmith from Melenikon (Melnik). There are two known goldsmiths with the common name Dimitrios from this period of the nearby region. The first one (first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.) made objects of minor arts for Athos monasteries: two crosses (in 1713 and 1724) for the Lavra monastery, one cross (early 18<sup>th</sup> c.) for the Simonopetra monastery and one cross (18<sup>th</sup> c.) for the Docheiariou monastery. The second Dimitrios also made a cross (18<sup>th</sup> c.) for the Docheiariou monastery, but this could be one and the same person [24, p. 133].

<sup>17</sup> In the dedicatory inscription the name of the donor is written as *ICAIΟΥ* instead of the correct *HCAIΟΥ*; the verb is written as *EKATAKCIACΘI* instead of the correct *EKATAΣKEYACΘEI*, the name of the town is written as *MEΛENHKON* instead of the correct *MEΛENIKON*. The second inscription reads *ΔΟΥΛΟC ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΔΝΜΙΤΡΙΟC* instead of the correct *Ο ΔΟΥΛΟC ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC*.

<sup>18</sup> See the inscription on the back of the belt buckle where the name of the servant of God is written *ΔΝΜΙΤΡΙΟC* instead of the correct *ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC*.

<sup>19</sup> See the inscription on the scroll of Prophet Solomon of the Annunciation.

<sup>20</sup> For the general information about the belt buckles known as *pafta* (*παφτα*), *çapraz* (*чанпраз*), *ke-meri* (*κεμερί*), *fibula* (*φιμπουλα*), *porpi* (*πόρπη*) or *kleidotira* (*κλειδωτήρια*), see: [35, p. 26; 16, pp. 199–218; 1, pp. 25–37; 7, pp. 68–72; 47, pp. 89–103; 43, pp. 459–470; 8; 55; 25, pp. 86–104; 12, pp. 194–211; 19, pp. 227–237; 39, pp. 155–163; 10, pp. 133–148; 23, pp. 15–34]. It is interesting to note that during the last ten years in Bulgaria there were several exhibitions, dedicated to the belt buckles, among which: 1. “Paftite – nakiti na ljubovta” (The belt buckles – jewelry of love) from the collection of Ognyan Boev in the Regional Museum of Pazardzik (2012), see: <https://museum-pz.com/wp/izlojba-paftite-nakiti-na-liubovta/> (accessed 03 October 2022); 2. “Zlatarstvoto po balgarskite zemi 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> c.” (Goldsmiths’ craft across the Bulgarian lands, 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> c.” from the collection of Antonio Vassilev in the National History Museum of Sofia (2018), see: <https://bnr.bg/horizont/post/100938634/nim-pokazva-nai-golamata-izlojba-dosega-na-pafti-i-nakiti-ot-vazrajdaneto-na-5-mart> (accessed 03 October 2022); 3. “Paftite – vselena ot znaci” (The belt buckles – a world of signs)



Fig. 7. The back side of the belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina. 1732. Private collection, Attica, Greece. © Alexandra Trifonova

sory known since the Middle Ages<sup>21</sup>, that is attached to a belt and used to keep it securely closed. Remarkable symbols of rank and status, made generally of metal or by insertion of mother of pearl, belt buckles are divided into two categories: civic and hieratic (ecclesiastical).

Civic belt buckles were intended originally as accessory to men's clothing, but later on they became mostly women's clothing accessory in the Balkans, as they were worn mainly by married women as a sign of marital status<sup>22</sup>. Women received them as a wedding gift, because it was believed that they had an apotropaic power of protection from an 'evil eye'. Furthermore, they wore them during the pregnancy, as it was believed that belt buckles protect the baby in their womb. The civic belt buckles sometimes were decorated with Gospel scenes and images of saints; others decorated with different floral motifs and images of birds (doves, eagles) could be fashioned not only by the Christians, but also by the Muslims<sup>23</sup>.

The hieratic belt buckles were worn by the hierarchs [25, p. 91] and were attached to a special cotton or satin girdle, decorated with silk embroideries<sup>24</sup>. Habitually, these belt buckles were decorated with different evangelical scenes (the Annunciation, the Nativity of Christ, the Dormition of the Virgin, the Last Supper), holy persons (Prophets, the Virgin Hodegetria, the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ), saints (Sts. George and Demetrios on horseback, Sts. Constantine and Helen), places of Christian worship (Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem), or the symbol of Byzantium (the double headed eagle). It is interesting to note that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century these themes habitually appear on metal belt buckles, like the unpublished belt buckle with the enthroned Christ as Great Archbishop and the enthroned Virgin Hodegetria (1741) in the National History Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria; the belt buckle with the Heavenly Jerusalem (1766) in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens, Greece [22, pp. 302–303, fig. 292]; the unpublished belt buckle with the Crucifixion and the Resurrection (18<sup>th</sup> c.) in the National History Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria; the unpublished belt buckle with the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.) in the National Ethnographic Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria. However, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century these themes (evangelical scenes, holy persons, saints, places of Christian worship or the symbol of Byzantium) appear mainly on belt buckles with the mother of pearl<sup>25</sup>, which became widespread in the Balkans.

---

in the Regional History Museum of Rousse (2018), see: <https://bntnews.bg/bg/a/paftite-vseleno-ot-znatsi-izlozhba-v-istoricheskiya-muzej-v-ruse> (accessed 03 October 2022); 4. "Pafti ot fond ana Regionalen istoricheski muzei Pazardzik" (Belt buckles from the fond of the Regional Historical Museum of Pazardzik in the House - Museum "Konstantin Velichkov" of the Regional Historical Museum of Pazardzik (2022), see: <https://museum-pz.com/wp/pafti/> (accessed 03 October 2022).

<sup>21</sup> For example, the two belt buckles (13<sup>th</sup> c.) in the National Museum of Belgrade, Serbia [30, p. 183].

<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, <https://bnr.bg/post/101157456> (accessed 26 May 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Belt buckles fashioned by Muslims depicted only themes from the nature (leaves, flowers, grapes), because the Christian scenes and the animals were prohibited by the Quran.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the girdle with the belt buckle of hieromonk Gedeon (1741) in the National History Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria (private note), the belt buckle of hierarch Ambrosius (1766) in the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens in Greece, see: D. Kōnstandios [22, pp. 302–303, fig. 292].

<sup>25</sup> For example, see the belt buckle with the Virgin Hodegetria (second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.) and the belt buckle with Sts. Constantine and Helen (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.) in the Regional History Museum of Kurdžali, Bulgaria [19, fig. 1, 2]; the belt buckle with the Dormition of the Virgin (19<sup>th</sup> c.) in the Folklore Museum of Larissa, Greece, a photo available at: <https://www.archaiologia.gr/blog/photo/%CF%80%CF%8C%CF%81%CF%80%CE%B7-%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C-%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C-%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF-%CE%BB%CE%AC/> (accessed 19 May 2022); the belt buckle with the Nativity of Christ (19<sup>th</sup> c.) in the Archaeological Museum of Chalkida, Greece, a photo available at: <https://>

The belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah (1732) from the group of hieratic belt buckles<sup>26</sup> has not only an original form, but also unique iconography<sup>27</sup>. It belongs to the rare belt buckles dating back to the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and showing similarities with a hieratic belt buckle of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century, made in a Constantinopolitan workshop, the place of preservation of which is unknown today [35, p. 38–39, fig. 68B; 9, p. 83].

In Melenikon (Melnik)<sup>28</sup>, the place where the belt buckle of hieromonk Isaiah was made, there was an organized guild of the goldsmiths<sup>29</sup> since the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>30</sup>, but unfortunately the names of the goldsmiths remain unknown. During the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and mainly during its second quarter, the time when our belt buckle was made, the data collected from the inscriptions on eight objects of minor arts show the activity of goldsmiths in Melenikon (Melnik)<sup>31</sup>.

---

[www.medievalroutes.gr/el/sylogos/antikeimena/4509\\_el/](http://www.medievalroutes.gr/el/sylogos/antikeimena/4509_el/) (accessed 19 May 2022); the belt buckle with the Nativity of Christ (19<sup>th</sup> c.) in the Folklore Museum of Larissa, Greece, a photo available at: [http://larmouseia.thessaly.gov.gr/foto\\_object.php?EId=335](http://larmouseia.thessaly.gov.gr/foto_object.php?EId=335) (accessed 19 May 2022).

<sup>26</sup> There isn't much research on this category of belt buckles. In Bulgarian bibliography they are known as bishop's belt buckles (vladishki pafiti) or ecclesiastical belt buckles (carkovni pafiti), and it is presumed that they were given during the ordination of the owner, see: <https://liternet.bg/publish26/gatia-simeonova/pafiti.htm#1> (accessed 23 May 2022); [38, pp. 160–161].

<sup>27</sup> At this moment we don't know other belt buckles with similar iconography. This is why we can't exclude the fact that probably hieromonk Isaiah himself gave the idea and chose the representations, as he was a painter.

<sup>28</sup> For the general information about the minor works from Melenikon (Melnik) see mainly: [5, pp. 516–518].

<sup>29</sup> In the official charter of Melenikon (Melnik) Commune, known as *Καταστατικό του Κοινού Μελενίκου* (1813), there is evidence on this type of goldsmiths' guild, see: [41].

<sup>30</sup> See the two vessels (jugs) from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. and from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century from Melenikon (Melnik), now in the Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece, which bear inscriptions referring to the Metropolis of Melenikon (Melnik)[7, p. 269, fig. 95, p. 268, fig. 94; 5, p. 516, note 48]; the orarion with silver-gilt plaquettes with the archangels (1632/3) in the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos [5, p. 516, fig. 462–463]; the old casket of the Holy Girdle (1636) of the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos with the following inscription: *Ἀρχὴν πέρας λέληφα ἐν Μελενίκῳ / κιβώτιον πέλω μὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἀργύρου / ἀλλ' οὖν ἐμαντῶ ἱερὸν γ' ὄλβον φέρω / Ζώνην ἱερὰν Μαρίας Θεοτόκου / χαριζομένης τὴν χάριν γε πλουσίως / τοῖς αὐτομολέουσιν αὐτῇ ἐν πίστει. / Ἄειπὸτ' οὖν γε τὸν Θεὸν λιτανέω / ὁμοῦ κυρίαν τὴν γε Χριστοῦ μητέρα / ἐφ' ᾧ ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς κακοῦ περισκεπτεῖν / τοὺς ἀναλωτὰς ἡδὲ συνδρομητὰς δὴ / τοῦ λοιμικοῦ καὶ θανάτου τὴν σφῶν πόλιν / σὺν τῷ φιλευσεβεί ἐν τοῖς χριστιανοῖς / Κωνσταντίνῳ Δημητρίῳ Καλαμπάκῃ / πασχάλι Γιώργῃ Πασχάλι χρυσοσχόου / κάμοι δοθήτω ἢ χάρις σου, κυρία, τῷ συνδρομητῇ ἱερεῖ Γεναδίῳ / 1636 [29, p. 24–25; 5, p. 516–518].*

<sup>31</sup> In 1725, a hieromonk named Konstantinos Antoniou of Melenikon (Melnik), made a belt buckle for Komnenis Bournazi, kept nowadays at the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos which bears the following dedicatory inscription: *ΔΕΗCΙC ΔΟΥΛΗC ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΚΟΜΝΗΝ[Η]C ΘΥΓΑΤΡΟC ΤΟΥ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ ΘΟΜΑ ΜΠΟΥΡΝΑΖΗ ΑΠΟ ΜΕΛ(Ε)ΝΗΚΟ*, “ΚΟΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟC ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟC ΤΟΥ ΑΝΤΟΝΙΟΥ 1725 ΑΠΟ ΜΕΛ(Ε)ΝΗΚΟ” (A prayer of the servant of Lord, Komnenis, daughter of the late lamented Thomas Bournazis from Mel(e)niko. Hieromonk Konstantinos Antoniou 1725 from Mel(e)niko)[5, pp. 516–518]. In 1730, an unknown goldsmith from Melenikon (Melnik) made several silver-gilt plaquettes with depictions of the Crucifixion, which were sewn as decoration on a velvet orarion kept at the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos [5, p. 516, fig. 462]. In 1732, the presented here belt buckle was made by a goldsmith, most probably named Demetrios, for the hieromonk Isaiah of Ioannina, kept in a private collection of Attica, Greece. In 1733, an anonymous goldsmith made a sanctification cross kept at the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos [5, p. 517]. In 1737, an unknown goldsmith made a silver gilded reliquary of St. Foteini with the financial aid of Makarios, protosyncellos of the Metropolis of Melenikon (Melnik), with unknown place of preservation nowadays [53, p. 97]. In 1750, an anonymous goldsmith made a sanctification cross, kept at the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos [5, p. 517]. In the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century some Konstantinos and his wife

In conclusion, we should mention that our belt buckle is a very interesting and important artefact because it bears a lot of information through its inscriptions. We know the name of the person from the ecclesiastical circle, hieromonk Isaiah of Ioannina, who commissioned it, the name of the town where it was made, Melenikon (Melnik), and the year of its creation, 1732. Moreover, it bears the name of the servant of God Demetrios, who probably was its master or someone who owned it later.

The form of the belt buckle, as well as the depictions of the New Testament Holy Trinity and the Annunciation with the Prophets David and Solomon, demonstrate the stylistic trends and subjects in decoration of hieratic belt buckles, not previously known to the scholarly community. We hope that this new information will help to enrich our knowledge about the post-Byzantine minor arts of the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## References

1. Atanasov G. Traditional Bulgarian Jewelry. On the Collection of Belt Buckles in Silistra Museum. *Balgarska Etnologia (Bulgarian Ethnology)*, 1987, vol. 4, pp. 25–37 (in Bulgarian).
2. Atanasov G.; Dimov K. Again on the Dating and Genesis of Belt Buckles – corrigenda et addenda (on the Collection of Dulovo Museum in Okroš near Silistra). *V poiskah suschnosti. Sbornik statei v chest 60-letia N. D. Russeva (In Search of the Essence. Essays in Honour of Nicolai Russev on the Occasion of His 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday)*. Kišinev, Stratum Plus Publ., 2019, pp. 377–394 (in Bulgarian).
3. Babiniötēs G. *Lexiko tēs Neas Ellēnikēs Glōssas*. Athens, Kentro Lexikologias Publ., 2008. 2318 p. (in Greek).
4. Bakas I. Th. *O Ellēnismos kai ē mēropolitikē perifereia Melenikou (1850–1912) (The Hellenism and the Metropolitan Periphery of Melenikon (1850–1912))*, Ph.D. Dissertation. Thessaloniki, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2003 (unpublished) (in Greek).
5. Ballian A. Postbyzantine and Other Minor Arts. *Iera Megistē Monē Vatopaidiou. Paradosē – Istoría – Technē (Holy Great Monastery of Vatopedi. Tradition – History – Art)*. Mont Athos, Iera Monē Vatopaidiou Publ., 1996, vol. 2, pp. 500–534 (in Greek).
6. Baudrillart A. (ed.). *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, vol. 2. Paris, L. Letouzey Publ., 1914. 950 p. (in French).
7. Borboudakēs M. (ed.) *Oi Pyles tou Mystēriou. Thēsauroi tēs Orthodoxias apo tēn Ellada (The Gates of Mystery. Treasures of Orthodoxy from Greece)*. Athens, Mpastas-Plessas Publ., 1994. 336 p. (in Greek).
8. Cvetkova N. Image of Snake on the Top of a Belt-Buckle from the National museum of Rila Monastery. *Balgarska Etnografia (Bulgarian Ethnography)*, 1991, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 68–72 (in Bulgarian).
9. Cvetkova N. *Pafti ot bălgarskite muzei (Belt-buckles from the Bulgarian Museums)*. Rouse, Rod Publ., 2015. 112 p. (in Bulgarian).
10. Čaušev P. Images of Snake and Dragon on the Top of Belt-buckles from Northern Bulgaria (from the Early 19<sup>th</sup> to the Early 20<sup>th</sup> c.). *Epohi (Epochs)*, 2014, vol. 2, no. 22, pp. 133–148 (in Bulgarian).
11. Duicu I.-G. *Paftaυa podoaba defnitorie a portului balcanic (The Belt-buckle as a Defining Ornament of the Balkan Port)*. Craiova, Universitaria An de aparitie Publ., 2012. 255 p. (in Romanian).
12. Georgieva G. Belt-buckles with Mother-of-pearl Plates from the REM-Plovdiv Fund. *Narodnite zanajati – minalo, nastojašte i bădešte (The Folk Crafts – Past, Nowadays and Future)*, 2016, vol. 11, pp. 194–211 (in Bulgarian).
13. Gergova I.; Gatev J.; Vanev I. *Hristijansko izkustvo v Nacionalnija arheologičeski muzej – Sofia. Katalog*

Komnini commissioned a silver gilded cross of the Metropolis of Melenikon (Melnik), with unknown nowadays place of preservation, which had the following inscription: Οὗτος ὁ τίμι(ι)ος καὶ ζωοποι(ός) σ(αυ)ρό(ς) ὑπάρχει τῆς ἀγιωτάτης μητροπόλεως Μελενίκου διὰ συνδρομῆς καὶ ἐξόδου Κωνσταντίνου ἅμα τῆ συνοδία ἑαυτοῦ Κομνηνοῦ (This Holy and Live-giving Cross is of the Holy Metropolis of Melenikon (Melnik) with the assistance and the expense of Konstantinos and his wife Komnini) [42, p. 22; 53, p. 82].



- (*Christian Art in the National Archaeological Museum – Sofia. Catalogue*). Sofia, Bulgarian Academy of Science Marin Drinov Publ., 2012. 580 p. (in Bulgarian).
14. Gergova I.; Popova E.; Genova E.; Klisarov N. *Korpus na stenopisite v Balgaria ot 18 vek (A Corpus of the Murals in Bulgaria from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century)*. Sofia, Bulgarian Academy of Science Marin Drinov Publ., 2006. 275 p. (in Bulgarian).
  15. Gerov G.; Penkova B.; Božinov R. *Stenopisite na Roženskia manastir (The Murals of the Rožen Monastery)*. Sofia, Balgarski khudozhnik Publ., 1993. 180 p. (in Bulgarian).
  16. Gouël-Badieritakē A. A possible Interpretation of a Decorative Motif on Some Buckles of Greek Traditional Female Dress. *Parousia (Presence)*, 1985, vol. 3, pp. 199–218 (in Greek).
  17. Grunčarov K. *Roženski manastir. Melnik (Rožen monastery. Melnik)*. Sofia, Septemvri Publ., 1985. 15 p. (in Bulgarian).
  18. Karavalchev V. Christian Anghalos. *Pomorie. Drevnost i savremie (Pomorie. Past and Nowadays)*. Burgas, Geopan Publ., 2011, pp. 197–215 (in Bulgarian).
  19. Kirilova L.; Kostadinova S. Mother of Pearl: Nature, Provenance and Use. Belt-Buckles from the Funds of the National History Museum of Kărdžali. *Bălgarski folklor (Bulgarian Folklore)*, 2020, vol. 2, no 46, pp. 227–237 (in Bulgarian).
  20. Koinova-Arnaudova L. Newly Discovered Wall Paintings in the Trapeza of Rozhen Monastery. *Muzei i Pametnici na Kulturata (Museums and Monuments of Culture)*, 1973, vol. 13, pp. 47–48, fig. 3–4 (in Bulgarian).
  21. Koltsidas A. M. *Istoria tou Melenikou. H diachronikē poreia tou Ellēnismou (History of Melenikon. The Diachronic Course of the Hellenism)*. Thessaloniki, Kyriakidi Adelfoi Publ., 2005. 750 p. (in Greek).
  22. Kōnstandios D. (ed.). *O kosmos tou Vyzantinou Mouseiou (The World of the Byzantine Museum)*. Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum Publ., 2004. 509 p. (in Greek).
  23. Kostadinova V. The Composition with Birds Drinking Water in a Garden on the Top of Renaissance Belt-Buckles. *Bălgarska Etnologija (Bulgarian Ethnology)*, 2003, vol. 4, pp. 15–34 (in Bulgarian).
  24. Koutelakēs Ch. *Ellēnes argyrochrysochooi kai xyloglyptes (Greek Silversmiths and Wood-carvers)*. Athens, Smilē Publ., 1996. 415 p. (in Greek).
  25. Maneva E. From Medieval Belt Sets to Later Belt-Buckles. *Godišen Zbornik na Filozofskiot Fakultet na Universitetot v Skopje (Yearbook of the School of Philosophy of the Skopje University)*, 2012, vol. 65, pp. 86–104 (in Macedonian).
  26. Marina A. Bulgarian Belt-Buckle. *Izkustvo (Art)*, 1968, vol. 1, no. 18, p. 30 (in Bulgarian).
  27. Mavrodinov N. Churches and Monasteries in Melnik and Rozhen. *Godišnik na Narodnia Muzei (Yearbook of the National Museum)*, 1931, vol. 5, pp. 292–300 (in Bulgarian).
  28. Mavrodinova L. Some Late Medieval Wall Paintings in Melnik. *Kirilo-Methodievski Studii (Cyrillo-Methodian Studies)*, 2001, vol. 14, pp. 205–212 (in Bulgarian).
  29. Millet G.; Pargoire J.; Petit L. *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos*. Paris, Fontemoing Publ., 1904. 191 p. (in French).
  30. Milošević D. *Nakit od XII do XV veka iz zbirke Narodnog Muzeja Beograd (Jewelry from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century in the Collection of the National Museum of Belgrade)*. Beograd, Narodni Muzej Publ., 1990. 205 p. (in Serbian).
  31. Mutafov E.; Gergova I.; Kuyumdzhev A.; Popova E.; Genova E.; Gonis D. *Grutski zografi v Balgaria sled 1453 g. (Greek Painters in Bulgaria after 1453)*. Sofia, Institut za iskusstvoznanie Publ., 2008. 271 p. (in Bulgarian and in Greek).
  32. Necheva V.; Mavrodinova L. *Églises et peinture religieuse de Melnik. Nouvelles recherches. Oi Serres kai ē periochē tous apo tēn archaia stē metavyzantinē koinonia (Serres and Its Region from the Ancient to the post-Byzantine Society)*, vol. 2. Serres, Dēmos Serrōn Publ., 1998, pp. 439–460 (in French).
  33. Neševa V. *Melnik. Tom 2. Manastirăt “Sv. Bogorodica Spileotisa”. Istoriko-arheologičesko izsledvane (Melnik. Vol. 2. Monastery of Our Lady Spileotisa. Historical-Archaeological Research)*. Sofia, Natsionalen arheologičeski muzej Publ., 1994. 160 p. (in Bulgarian).
  34. Neševa V. *Melnik. Bogozidaniat grad (Melnik. The Town Built by God)*. Sofia, Ivraj Publ., 2008. 363 p. (in Bulgarian).
  35. Oikonomakē-Papadopoulou G. *Ekklesiastika argyra (Ecclesiastical Silverworks)*. Athens, Apostolikē diakonia Publ., 1980. 48 p. (in Greek).
  36. Pandurski V. Church Antiquities in Melnik, Monasteries Rozhenski and Sandanski. *Duhovna kultura (Spiritual Culture)*, 1964, vol. 4, pp. 11–21 (in Bulgarian).

37. Papadopoulo-Kerameus A. (ed.). *Dionysiou tou ek Fourni Ermēneia tēs zōgrafikēs technēs (Herminia of the Art of Painting by Dionysiou tou ek Fourni)*. St. Peterburg, Synodal Typography Publ., 1909. 128 p. (in Greek).
38. Papangelos I. The Metochia in Greece, Asia Minor, Bulgaria and Serbia. *Iera Megistē Monē Vatopaidiou. Paradosē – Istoria – Technē (Holy Great Monastery of Vatopedi. Tradition – History – Art)*, vol. 1. Mount Athos, Iera Monē Vatopaidiou Publ., 1996, pp. 82–88 (in Greek).
39. Parevska E. Belt-buckles from the Ethnological Jewelry Collection of National Institute and Museum in Bitola. *Zbornik na Trudovi na Nacionalna Ustanova Zavod i Muzei (Proceedings of the National Institute and Museum)*, 2021, vol. 24, pp. 155–163 (in Macedonian).
40. Pavlikianov C. *The Athonite Monastery of Vatopedi from 1462 to 1707*. Sofia, St. Kliment Ohridski University Press Publ., 2008. 309 p.
41. Pennas P. *To koinon Melenikou kai to systēma dioikēseōs tou (The koinon of Melenikon and the System of its Governance)*. Athens, Syllogos pros diadosin tōn ellēnikōn grammatōn Publ., 1946. 46 p. (in Greek).
42. Perdrizet P. Melnic et Rossno. *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 1907, vol. 31, pp. 20–37 (in French).
43. Prepēs A. Information on Spiritual and Artistic Activities of Persons from Ioannina in Melnik and Its Region in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century. *Praktika B' Epistēmonikou Synedriou Giannina – Ēpeiros 19os–20os ai. Istoria – Koinōnia – Politismos (Proceedings of the Second Scientific Synedriou Giannina – Epirus 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> c. History– Society– Culture)*. Giannina, 1993, pp. 9–23 (in Greek).
44. Proskynētopoulou R. Women Copper Accessories (Belt-Buckles) from Confiscations in the National Archaeological Museum. Contribution to the Study of Metalwork in Macedonia. *Dinēssa. Timētikos tomos gia tēn Katerina Rōmiopoulou (Diniessa. A Volume in Honor of Katerina Romiopoulou)*. Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki Publ., 2012, pp. 459–470 (in Greek).
45. Simeonova G. *Za knigata na Nadežda Cvetkova „Pafti ot Bālgarskite muzei” (On the Book of Nadežda Cvetkova „Belt Buckles from Bulgarian Museums”)*. Available at: <https://liternet.bg/publish26/gatia-simeonova/pafti.htm#1> (accessed 23 May 2022) (in Bulgarian).
46. Stoianova M. Ossuary of Rozhen Monastery. *Izkustvo (Art)*, 1985, vol. 4, pp. 39–48 (in Bulgarian).
47. Šulekova Ju. Belt-buckles from Gabrovo Region. *Bālgarska etnografija (Bulgarian Ethnography)*, 1993, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 89–103 (in Bulgarian).
48. Tapeinos E. Church History of the Bishopric of Melnik. *Ekklesiastikē Alētheia (Ecclesiastical Truth)*, 1892, vol. 12, no. 11, pp. 87–88 (in Greek).
49. Tapeinos E. Church History of the Bishopric of Melnik. *Ekklesiastikē Alētheia (Ecclesiastical Truth)*, 1892, vol. 12, no. 12, pp. 95–96 (in Greek).
50. Tapeinos E. The Ancient Monastery of Rozhen near Melnik. *Makedonikon Ēmerologion Pammakedonikou Syllogou (Macedonian Calendar of the Pammacedonian Society)*, 1912, vol. 5, pp. 94–97 (in Greek).
51. Tomova B. An Icon of “The Virgin the Unfading Rose” from the Church “St. Nicolas” in Melnik. *Ivanka Akrabova-Žandova. In Memoriam*. Sofia, National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Science Publ., 2009, pp. 341–345 (in Bulgarian).
52. Trifonova A. Two Icons by Dionysios of Fournas or by Painters of his Workshop in Bulgaria. *Problemi na izkustvoto (Problems of the Art)*, 2010, vol. 2, pp. 36–40 (in Bulgarian).
53. Trifonova A. Ph. Greek Post-Byzantine Inscriptions from Melnik and Its Region. *Serraika symmeikta*, 2018, vol. 4, pp. 73–108 (in Greek).
54. Valaēs D. *Symvolē stēn istoria tōn Mētropoleōn tou Oikoumenikou Patriarcheiou kata ton 17o aiōna (Aghialou, Imvrou, Melenikou, Sōzopoleōs) (A Contribution to the History of the Metropolis of the Eccumenical Patriarchate during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Aghialos, Imbros, Melenikon, Sozopolis))*. Thessaloniki, Pournaras Publ., 2006. 327 p. (in Greek).
55. Vitlianova I. *Paftite – nakit i amulet; Paftas (Belt Buckles) – Finery or Amulet*. Veliko Tarnovo, Faber Publ., 2016. 100 p. (in Bulgarian).
56. Vlachos T. *Die Geshichte der byzantinischen Stadt Melenikon*. Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies Publ., 1969. 140 p. (in German).

**Title.** An Unknown Belt Buckle (1732) of Hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina from a Private Collection in Greece

**Author.** Trifonova, Alexandra Ph. — Ph. D., assistant professor. Sofia University “St Kli-

ment Ohridski”, 18, Prof. Ivan Dujčev str., Sofia 1618, Bulgaria; assistant professor. University of Messina, Department of Ancient and Modern Civilizations, Viale Giovanni Palatuci 13, 98168 Messina, Italy; altrifonova@yahoo.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-5221-6220

**Abstract.** The article presents an unknown belt buckle (22,5×9,5 cm) from a private collection in Attica, Greece. It is made of silver and copper alloy, gilded for the most part, and consists of three parts — a central oval shaped part with the New Testament Holy Trinity, and two side parts with the Annunciation, surrounded by two prophets, David and Solomon. The top side of the belt buckle bears a dedicatory inscription in Greek: ΔΙΑ ΧΗΝΔΡΟΜΗΣ· ΕΜΟΥ· ΙCΑ/ΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ· ΤΟΥ / ΕΞ ΙΩΑΝΗΝΩΝ 1732 ΕΚΑΤΑC/ΚΙΑCΘΙ ΕΙC ΜΕΛΕΝΗΚΟΝ (With the contribution of me, hieromonk Isaiah from Ioannina, 1732, made in Melenikon), whereas the back side bears another inscription: ΔΟΥΛΟC ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ / ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC (Servant of God Dimitrios). The object belongs to the group of hieratical (ecclesiastical) belt buckles. It is a very interesting and important artifact for the study of post-Byzantine silverware production, because it bears the name of a person from the ecclesiastical circle, Hieromonk Isaiah of Ioannina, who commissioned it, the name of the town where the belt buckle was made, Melenikon (Melnik), and also the year in which it was made — 1732. Moreover, the belt buckle bears the name of the servant of God Demetrios, who probably was its maker or someone who owned it later. The form, as well as the depictions of the New Testament Holy Trinity and the Annunciation with the prophets David and Solomon, demonstrate some new stylistic trends and new subjects in decoration of hieratical belt buckles so far unknown.

**Keywords:** Post-Byzantine art, belt buckle, Ioannina, Melnik, hieromonk Isaiah, Dimitrios

**Название статьи.** Неизвестная пряжка иеромонаха Исаии из Янины (1732) из частной коллекции в Греции

**Сведения об авторе.** Трифонова, Александра Ф. — Ph. D., ассистент. Софийский университет имени Св. Климента Охридского, ул. Проф. Ивана Дуйчева, 1618 София, Болгария; ассистент. Мессинский университет, Виале Джованни Палатучи 13, 98168 Мессина, Италия; altrifonova@yahoo.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-5221-6220

**Аннотация.** В статье представлена ранее не публиковавшаяся пряжка ремня (22,5×9,5 см) из частной коллекции в Аттике, Греция. Пряжка сделана из сплава серебра и меди, большей частью позолочена. Она состоит из трех частей: центральной овальной с изображением Новозаветной Троицы, и двух боковых с изображением Благовещения и двух пророков, Давида и Соломона. В верхней части надписи имеется греческая надпись: «по поручению моему, иеромонаха Исаии из Янины, сделано в 1732 г. в Мелнике», а сзади имеется другая надпись: «раб Божий Димитрий». Произведение принадлежит к группе церковных пряжек. Оно очень интересно и важно для изучения поствизантийского среброделия, поскольку содержит надписи с именами заказчика, духовного лица, иеромонаха Исаии из Янины, местом изготовления и датой. Кроме того, в другой надписи содержится имя Димитрия, который, вероятно, был мастером, изготовившим пряжку, или один из ее позднейших владельцев. Форма, как и изображения Троицы и Благовещения с пророками Давидом и Соломоном, представляют новые стилистические тенденции и новую тематику в украшении таких произведений церковного прикладного искусства, до сих пор не встречавшиеся.

**Ключевые слова:** поствизантийское искусство, пряжка, Янина, Мелник, иеромонах Исаия, Димитрий