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С. Г. Бочарова, В. Франсуа, А. Г. Ситдикова*

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С. Г. Бочарова, В. Франсуа, А. Г. Ситдикова

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Edited by

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Anastasia G. Yangaki. PhD. Institute of Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation.

Янгаки Анастасия Г. Доктор. Институт исторических исследований Национального Греческого исследовательского фонда.

E-mail: yangaki@eie.gr

Address: Vass. Constantinou Av., 48, Athens, 116 35, Greece

Immured Vessels in the Church of Panagia Eleousa, Kitharida, Crete

Keywords: Crete, Kitharida, 15th c., church, donor, immured vessels, imported glazed pottery, Late Byzantine pottery, "RMR Ware", Maiolica, Spanish lustreware, pottery from Syria and Egypt, *bacini*

Ключевые слова: Крит, Кифарида, XV век, церковь, даритель, вмурованные сосуды, импортная поливная керамика, поздневизантийская керамика, южноитальянская керамика группы Рамино Манганезе Россо, майолика, испанская лощёная керамика, египетская и сирийская керамика, использование поливных сосудов в качестве архитектурных вставок

A. G. Yangaki

Immured Vessels in the Church of Panagia Eleousa, Kitharida, Crete

The paper focuses on the detailed presentation of the numerous vessels which are immured in the main wall of the narthex of the church of Panagia Eleousa. The church is located to the north of the village of Kitharida, southwest of Herakleion (Crete). Given their number, their state of preservation, the various categories of pottery to which they belong which were imported from regions of the western and eastern Mediterranean, the particular interest in their disposition and possible hidden symbolic meanings behind their decoration, the vessels constitute one of the most representative groups of *bacini* immured in Cretan churches. This is corroborated by comparison with the immured vessels from other sites in the Herakleion prefecture and based on the data collected by the research programme focused on *bacini* in Greece implemented by the National Hellenic Research Foundation in collaboration with the local Ephorates of Antiquities from other Cretan churches.

Their detailed study contributes to the history of the church and to the presentation of the types of pottery that were in circulation on the island in the 15th c. AD. Some of these *bacini* were produced in Byzantine workshops, while most belong to glazed categories imported from the Iberian and Italian peninsulas or the Near East. Special reference is made to their seemingly careful disposition, which would have required specific planning. This observation, combined with the particular decoration on some vessels, which seems to incorporate symbolic meanings, leads to suggestions as to the possible donor who played the leading role in this decoration.

A. Г. Янгаки

Вмурованные сосуды в церкви Панагия Элеуса (Кифарида, Крит)

Статья посвящена полной и детальной публикации многочисленных поливных сосудов, вмурованных в основную стену нартекса церкви Панагия Элеуса (Богоматери Милостивой). Эта церковь расположена в северной части селения Кифарида, которое находится в северо-восточной части префектуры города Ираклион (остров Крит). Автором приведены количественные показатели поливных сосудов, описано состояние их сохранности, указаны западно-средиземноморские и восточно-средиземноморские керамические группы, к которым они относятся, выделены особенности их размещения на северной стене нартекса церкви и возможное символическое значение их росписей. Отмечается, что эти сосуды представляют одну из самых представительных групп сосудов, использованных в качестве архитектурных вставок в церквях острова Крит. Данные, приводимые в статье, сопоставлены с материалами по вмурованным в стены церквей Крита сосудам из других памятников в префектуре Ираклион, собранными в рамках программы исследований, направленных на изучение использования поливных сосудов в качестве архитектурных вставок в Греции, осуществляемых Национальным фондом Hellenic Research в сотрудничестве с местными органами охраны древностей.

Детальное изучение этих сосудов способствует более глубокому исследованию истории церкви Панагия Элеуса, а также даёт представление о группах керамики, которые использовались на острове в XV веке. Некоторые из публикуемых сосудов были произведены в византийских мастерских, в то время как большинство из них относится к импортам с территории Иберийского и Апеннинского полуостровов или Ближнего Востока. Отдельное внимание уделено продуманному расположению сосудов на стене нартекса, которое, скорее всего, требовало специального планирования. Это наблюдение, в сочетании с особым символическим значением декора, который эти сосуды несут на себе, приводит автора к мысли о наличии дарителя, который играл ведущую роль в схеме украшения этой церкви.

Introduction

In the framework of the research programme entitled “Immured vessels in churches of Greece: an electronic *corpus*”, which was initiated by the author at the Institute of Historical Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation with the collaboration of the respective Ephorates of Antiquities, numerous churches have been recorded which bear *bacini* — pots immured into their façades (Yangaki 2008a: 827—840; 2012a: 361—370; 2013a: 375—384; 2014: 313—339; Immured Vessels n. d.). The programme aims at expanding in a more systematic way earlier isolated efforts undertaken by scholars in Greece (for the related references: Yangaki 2013a: 375, notes 1—2), offering a synthetic approach on a subject already studied analytically for medieval churches in the Italian peninsula (indicatively: Berti, Tongiorgi 1981; 1983: 37—79; Atti 1996). Extensive research into monuments bearing immured clay vessels has been undertaken in collaboration with colleagues from the local Ephorates (Immured Vessels n. d.) in Attica, the Peloponnese and Crete. The *bacini* in these areas have now been located and catalogued, while there is a plan to extend the research into other areas such as Central Greece and the Dodecanese.

During the course of the research conducted on Crete, apart from the most common scheme of a group of four or five open vessels generally immured in the western and eastern façades of a monument (Yangaki 2013a: 377), a few churches have also been located where more than five (and sometimes more than ten) vessels have been immured (Yangaki 2008b: 221; 2013a: 378).

The open vessels immured in the outer part of the main wall of the narthex of the church of the Virgin Eleousa to the north of the village of Kitharida, 21 km southwest of Herakleion in Malevizi province in the region of Krousonas (Κρουσώνας), are also highly characteristic (Gerola, Lassithiotakis 1961: 70; Detorakis 1984—1986: 305—314; Patramani 1994: 21, 41, 50—51, note 4; Psilakis 1994: 155—162; 1998: 150, 155—156, 158; Tsoungarakis 1996: 15—16, no. 15).

The church of the Virgin Eleousa is a three-aisled, barrel-vaulted basilica with a transverse narthex, in which at least three construction phases have been distinguished (Gallas 1983: 213—216; Gallas et al. 1983: 355—356, figs. 312—313; Mylopotamitaki 1998: 121, figs. 9—10; 123—126, fig. 11; Andrianakis, Giapitsoglou 2012: 90—91). The monument is oriented with its apses towards the north, instead of the east, thus its narthex lies to the



Fig. 1. Lustreware plate bearing the inscription “Ave Maria gra[tia] plena”, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete) (scale: 1:6; drawing by Manthos Remoundos).

Рис. 1. Тарелка с росписью люстром и надписью «Ave Maria gra[tia] plena», церкви Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит) (Масштаб 1:6; автор рисунка Manthos Remoundos).

south (Mylopotamitaki 1998: 121, fig. 9, 125—126; Andrianakis, Giapitsoglou 2012: 91). The narthex, which has been dated to the 15th—16th centuries, is probably one of the later additions to the church (Gallas et al. 1983: 356). The church of the Virgin Eleousa originally formed part of a monastery (Psilakis 1994: 162). According to a number of documents, the monastery was in use during this period but also later (Van Gemert 1977: 41—43, no. III.2; Detorakis 1984—1986: 307—314; Patramani 1994: 34—35, 88—90, nos. 5—6), during the Ottoman occupation and afterwards, when several repairs are mentioned (Detorakis 1984—1986: 309—314; Patramani 1994: 41—45; Psilakis 1994: 155—162; 1998: 150, 155—156, 158). Nowadays, the monastery of the Virgin Eleousa in Kitharida is abandoned. The church is also known among locals as Agios Fanourios after one of its three aisles (Psilakis 1994: 162; 1998: 160; Mylopotamitaki 1998: 121, figs. 9—10).

The present state of the south façade of the narthex bears evidence on the existence of twenty-three open glazed vessels immured on its exterior wall, of which only seventeen survive. They mostly constitute dishes, but large plates or small bowls also occur. A previous study concentrated on a very characteristic plate (fig. 1) (Yangaki 2008b: 213—224) which, although mentioned by various scholars, had not been published in detail (Gerola 1908: 239, fig. 279; 240, n. 10; 241, fig. 280; 257, fig. 317; Gallas et al. 1983: 356, fig. 314; Curuni, Donati 1988: 338, no. 652—653; Gerola 1993: 257, fig. 317; Psilakis 1998: 149).

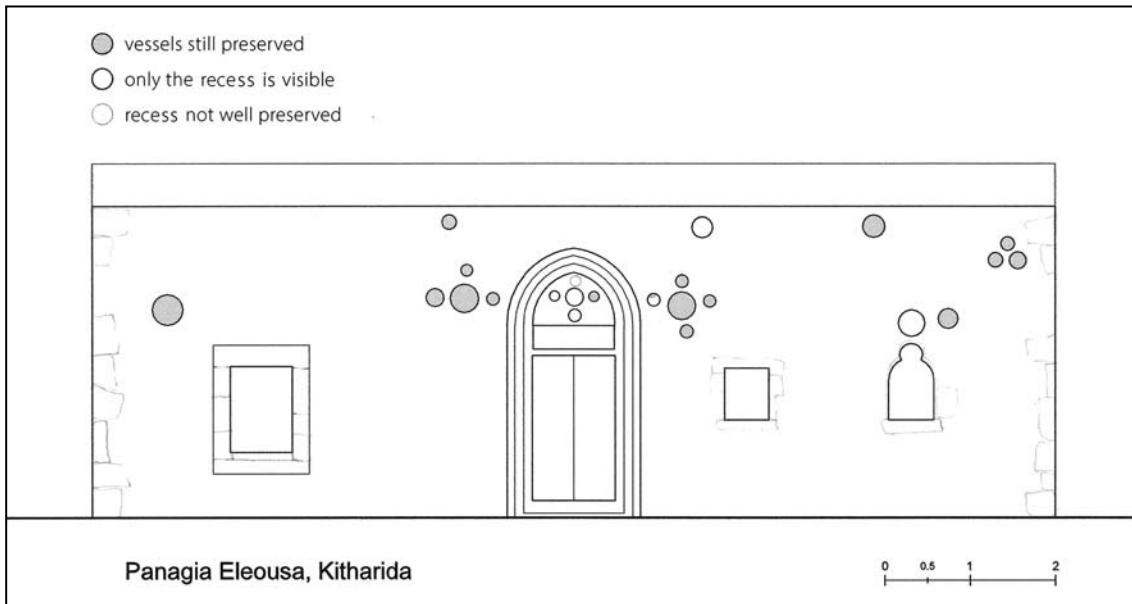


Fig. 2. Schematic drawing of the façade of the narthex with the position of the immured vessels and the empty recesses marked (dimensions of the narthex after: Gerola 1993: 239, fig. 279; Gallas 1983: 214—215, fig. 61—62; drawing by D. Tagmatarchi).

Рис. 2. Схематический чертёж фасада нартекса с показанием расположения вмурованных сосудов и пустых лакун от вмурованных сосудов (размеры нартекса по: Gerola 1993: 239, fig. 279; Gallas 1983: 214—215, figs. 61—62; автор чертежа D. Tagmatarchi)

The Immured vessels of the church of Panagia Eleousa

The immured vessels of the church of Panagia Eleousa (fig. 2) can be distinguished into four different groups: a) products of Late Byzantine workshops, b) ceramics from the Italian peninsula, c) ceramics from the Iberian peninsula, d) ceramics from Syria or Egypt. An additional fragment is of uncertain origin¹.

a) Late Byzantine productions

Two bowls with a rim diameter of 17 and 20 cm respectively, with a curved body and a simple rim belong to the painted incised-sgraffito pottery of the Palaeologan period. They are both immured at the south-east end of the wall of the narthex (fig. 2). Forming a horizontal axis, they constitute the two ends of a triangular formation (for the third vessel, see below). Both bear a thick white slip on their internal surface and have incised and sgraffito decoration under a yellowish glaze. The bowl on the left has five parallel incisions on the upper side of its body (fig. 3: 21; 4). The central medallion is divided by large in-

cisions, two of them intersecting to form four spaces; these large incisions create the impression of a cross. An incised rhombus with curved sides covers part of these spaces, while the spaces in between are covered with a fine incised spiral. Random green blobs cover part of the interior, while a green band runs around the edge of the rim. The vessel bears exactly the same decoration as a bowl from the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999a: 214, no. 245 [D. Makropoulou]), which dates from the 14th c. and is attributed to the well-known pottery production of Thessaloniki during the Late Byzantine period (Bakirtzis, Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1981: 434—436; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1983: 377—387; 1999b: 188—189). The motif of intersecting incisions with spirals in between is quite common on vessels attributed to the same production and dating from the same period, as is clear from examples from Thessaloniki (Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1987: pl. III: a; 2009: 457, no. 9, fig. 10, 458, no. 11, fig. 12), from Olynthus (Xyngopoulos 1933: pl. 204 II A I (c)), from Akronauplia (Yangaki 2012b: 90—21, nos. 64—65, 318, fig. 55—56), the Museum of Byzantine Culture (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999a: 215—216, nos. 246—249 [I. Moutsianos]), or from the Byzantine Museum of Veroia (Petkos, Karayanni 2007: 26, fig. 1). A fragment from the ancient Agora of Thessaloniki, in particular, bears the exact same incised decoration as

¹ The Credit Line of the objects presented in this study belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports — Archaeological Receipts Fund and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Herakleion.

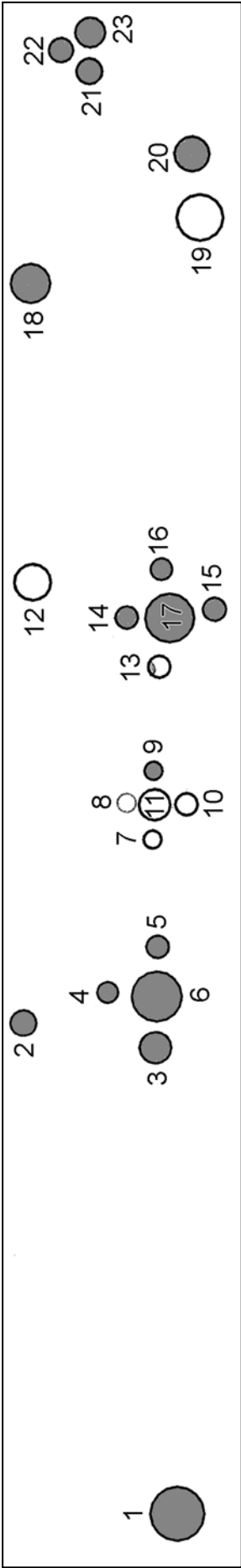


Fig. 3. Schematic drawing indicating the positions of immured vessels and empty recesses with their corresponding numbers (drawing by D. Tagmatarchi).

Рис. 3. Схематический чертёж с показанием расположения вмурованных сосудов и пустых лакун от вмурованных изделий (автор чертежа D. Tagmatarchi).

Table 1.
Details of the immured vessels and empty recesses in the wall of the narthex of the Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida;
the numbers follow those on fig. 3; all dimensions are given in centimeters (table by A. G. Yangaki)

Number	Pre-served	Not pre-served	Form	Rim diameter	Vessel's depth	Category	Decoration	Prove-nance	Date
1	+		Large plate	36	8	Lustreware ("loza dorada")	Bird motif; plant motifs; fern leaves; scrolling tendrils.	Valencia region	First half of the 15 th c.
2	+		Dish	17 (body diameter)		Lustreware ("loza dorada")	Disc-flowers; disc-like petals; dots; bryony flowers.	Valencia region	c 1430—1470
3	+		Dish	21		Lustreware ("loza dorada")	Plant and floral motifs; dots.	Valencia region	First half of the 15 th c.
4	+		Bowl	13,5	4	Monochrome blue pottery ("loza azul")	Eight radii; four-leaf shapes; four palm-tree tops.	Valencia region	End of 14 th — first half of 15 th c.
5	+		Bowl	14,5	5	Lustreware ("loza dorada")	Four-pointed star; triangular panels; strokes and spirals; stylized plant motifs; triple-towered castle (Coat of arms of the Crown of Castile).	Valencia region	First half of 15 th c.
6	+		Large plate	33	10	Lustreware ("loza dorada")	Cross; tendrils; dots; stylized vegetal themes; inscription (Ave Maria/gratia) ple/na).	Valencia region	First half 15 th c.

Table 1 (continuation)

Number	Pre-served	Not pre-served	Form	Rim diameter	Vessel's depth	Category	Decoration	Provenance	Date
7		+	Bowl	12					
8		+	?	15					
9	+		Bowl	18	5	Maiolica	Bird turned towards its left; stylized vegetal decoration all around it	Italy	18 th c
10		+	Bowl	15					
11		+	Plate	21					
12		+	Plate	24					
13	Only a small frag-ment		Frag-ment of a bowl	14,5		Blue maiolica (?)	Bands of blue decoration.	Italy	15 th c (?)
14	+		Bowl	15	7	Blue and black painted	Hexagonal; trapezoidal panels; cross-hatching; geometric motifs.	Syria	14 th c
15	+		Dish	15,5	4,5	Blue painted	Dense vegetal decoration; schematic vases with flowers.	Egypt	15 th c
16	+		Bowl	14		Monochrome blue pottery ("loza azul")	Eight radii; four-leaf shapes; four palm-tree tops.	Valencia region	End of 14 th —first half of 15 th c
17	+		Large plate	32,5		Lustreware ("loza dorada")	Bird; fern leaves; flowers and flower-like motifs; dots; spirals; inscription (Ave Ma/ria/grat/ia ple/na).	Valencia region	First half 15 th c
18	+		Plate	26	8,5	Polychrome glazed pottery ("RMR Ware")	Animal figure (possibly a sheep or a goat); spirals; vegetal motif.	South Italy	14 th —15 th c
19		+	Plate	31					
20	+		Plate	25	7,5	Polychrome glazed pottery ("RMR Ware")	Shield; trefoils inserted in circles; schematic leaves.	South Italy	14 th —15 th c
21	+		Bowl	17	7	Painted Incised-Sgraffito	Geometric motifs; spirals.	Thessa-loniki	14 th c
22	+		Dish	16	3	Monochrome sgraffito pottery ("graffita monocroma")	Incision.	North Italy	14 th —15 th c
23	+		Bowl	20	4	Painted Incised-Sgraffito	Two trees or leaf; standing female figure; rich garments; cup.	Thessa-loniki	14 th c

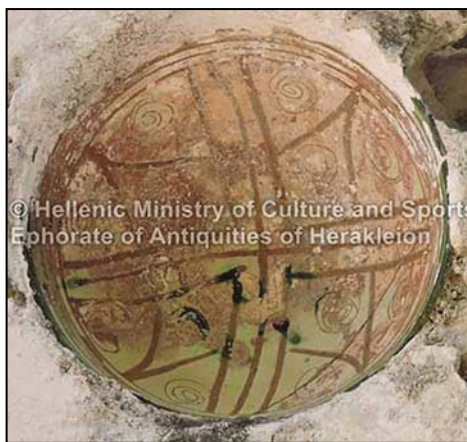


Fig. 4. Painted Incised-Sgraffito bowl, Panagia Eleoussa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:3 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 4. Полихромная поливная чаша с орнаментом сграффито, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:3 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

the example from Kitharida, including the random blobs (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2009: 457, no. 9). The same row of five parallel incisions on

the upper part of the body together with thick, green colour on the upper part of the rim characterizes other vessels attributed to the production of Thessaloniki (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999a: 192, no. 217, 194, no. 219 [I. Moutsianos], 199, no. 225 [D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi], 200, no. 226 [I. O. Kanonidis]).

The bowl on the right (fig. 3: 23; 5) has on its upper part a slightly out-turned upper body which ends in a simple rim, a characteristic also found in other vessels attributed to the production of Thessaloniki (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999a: 193, no. 218 [I. Moutsianos]). It bears three parallel incised lines that define the central medallion, which has an elongated tree or leaf on each of its two sides, one of which is inverted. They both bear characteristic diagonal, parallel incisions on their foliage. The centre of the medallion is taken up by a single standing woman, depicted frontally. Her left arm is held out and she is holding a cup, thus relating the bowl to drinking habits. Two thirds of the cup are decorated using the *champlevé* technique, which imparts a dark brownish colour on the middle and lower sections of the cup. The upper part close to the rim is not similarly elaborated, bearing a whitish slip as background. This rendering may be intended to reference a glass cup half-full of liquid

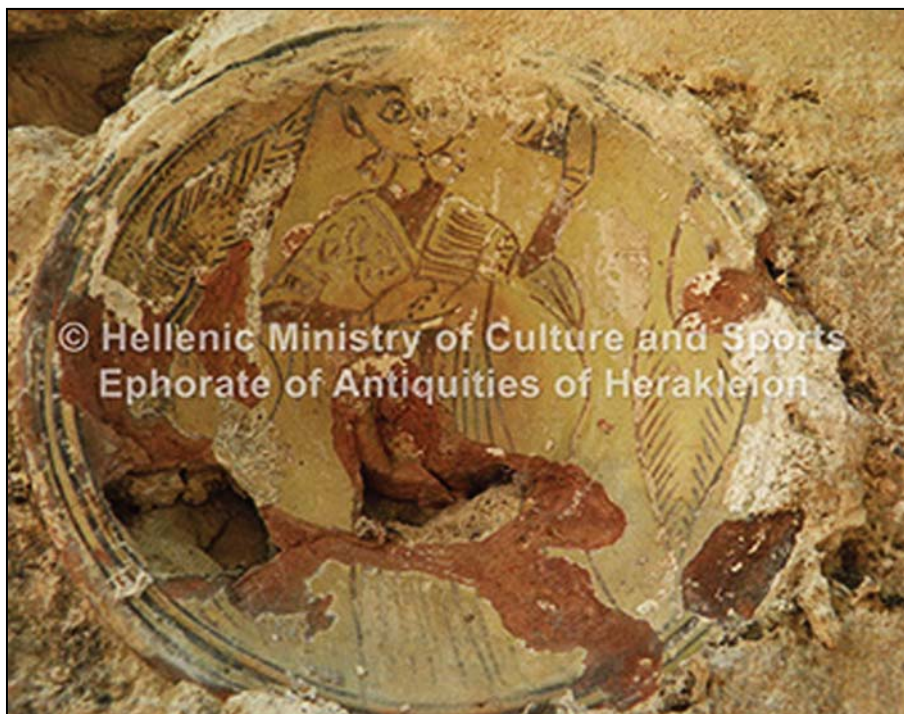


Fig. 5. Painted Incised-Sgraffito bowl with female representation, Panagia Eleoussa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:2 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 5. Полихромная поливная чаша с орнаментом сграффито с изображением женской фигуры, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:2 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

(red wine, perhaps?). Similar interpretation has been suggested for the goblets of the depiction of the seated man with a goblet, a decorative theme characteristic of Port Saint Symeon Ware but also encountered on other mediums in Islamic art (Vorderstrasse 2005: 67–68). The woman's right arm is crooked under her breasts. Although her costume is rendered in a stylized and conventional way, it is clear that she is dressed in a full-length garment with a belt around her waist; the garment bears simple incisions on one part of the chest and the shoulder and curved incised lines and dots on the other, which may well recall some form of decoration or embroidery. Behind the lower part of her body two incised lines represent a long veil that hangs almost to her feet. Some sort of napkin, kerchief or scarf is hanging from her left elbow (for related representations: Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1989: 94–95, no. 16; Redford 2014: 137–139, figs. 2–3; Vroom 2014: 164). Her large eyes and bold eyebrows stand out from her face. Unfortunately, the plaster that covers the upper part of her head prevents us from distinguishing the style of her hair or what she wore on her head, as we can in other depictions of similar women (Vroom 2014: 163–166, figs. 11–12).

Both this and the previous bowl can be considered to be most probably products of the workshops of Thessaloniki which were active during the Late Byzantine period, and particularly from the mid-13th through into the 14th c. This production is characterized by various themes, and although recent excavations at Sirkeci in Constantinople did bring to light a significant quantity of vessels bearing incised decoration similar to the above, meaning that Constantinople must be considered as an additional centre where ceramics with similar characteristics were produced (for details on the main decorative themes: Waskman, Girgin 2008: 443–469; Waksman et al. 2009: 457–467; Waksman 2012: 147–151), details on the two bowls from Kitharida would seem to favour the former attribution. Most of the characteristics of the first bowl have been previously analyzed. Both cases share the same dark red, medium fabric that — macroscopically, at least — conforms to the characteristics of the Thessaloniki production (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2003: 56). The geometric decorative theme of the first bowl with the additional use of random blobs of green finds closer analogies to vessels which have been considered products of that area until now.

As for the second bowl, the rendering of the two elongated trees/leaves and the use of the *champlevé* technique on the upper part of the chest and the lower part of the figure's arms re-

calls the use of the same technique in products with a similar provenance (Thessaloniki) to differentiate between different parts of the main decorative theme (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999a: 192–193, nos. 217–218 [I. Moutsianos]). In addition, the curvilinear incisions and dots on the upper right part of the figure's garment find parallels, in the rendering of the details, in the main depiction of a bowl that is also attributed to the workshops of Thessaloniki (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999a: 200, no. 226 [I. O. Kanonidis]) and which is not as yet evident among the published evidence from Sirkeci.

This depiction, although showing a degree of detail, is presented in a rather conventional way and does not, of course, constitute a realistic representation of a specific person. This was also the case for most similar human representations on ceramics of the Late Medieval period produced not only in centres on Cyprus and in the Near East but also in Italy (Cozza 1989: 34–37; Munarini 1990a: 78; Michailidou 1994–1995: 195–209; 2000: 423; Vroom 2014: 177). These show similarities to human depictions in contemporary paintings (Michailidou 2000: 423; Vroom 2014: 172–173), with illustrations on manuscripts having influenced their representations (Vroom 2014: 179–180). In some cases, these female figures are not portrayed alone. Based on the scene and the lady's costume, one can easily deduce that it refers to a specific social class — a local elite, as is also suggested by other similar depictions (Redford 2014: 130, 151; Vroom 2014: 177). More in detail, the cupbearer scene probably depicted on this bowl references drinking, another activity which relates to an elite (Redford 2014: 130). The depiction of a seated male cupbearer with a handkerchief was a common theme in Port Saint Symeon ceramics of the 14th c. (Redford 2014: 136–140). A napkin, kerchief or towel (*mandil*), which accompanies the male representation, was used in Islamic dining for wiping the drinker's mouth (Vorderstrasse 2005: 68). The specific pottery production was intended to satisfy a diversity of consumers, although its iconography refers to Islamic prototypes found on various artistic forms (Vorderstrasse 2005: 63, 67). Under the influence of these ceramics, but not expressing direct imitation, Cypriot ceramics of the 14th c. contain frontally depicted standing women holding a cup with or without an object that recalls a kerchief (Redford 2014: 136–140, figs. 1; 3; Vroom 2014: 163–166). According to J. Vroom (Vroom 2014: 162, fig. 8, 181–182), given the evidence of the cup, these depictions of women refer in most cases to dancing and wine drinking. It might also be supposed, given that the

schematic representation of the veil behind her back seems to imply some sort of movement, that the figure on the bowl from Kitharida depicts a woman dancing subtly, holding her right arm under her breasts and probably a cup in her left hand. The figure thus may well refer to the upper classes of the 14th c. and their activities and habits (Vroom 2014: 177, 181—182). The vessel features a reversed version, with the woman's left hand holding the cup, since in depictions of a man sitting cross-legged holding a goblet it is his right hand that is holding it; it also depicts a standing woman rather than a seated man. Interestingly, the decorative bands on the woman's sleeves, which bear vertical incisions to recall some sort of decoration, find close parallels in the tiraz bands on the upper garment in the representations of seated men holding a goblet which depict a feature of Islamic clothes (Vorderstrasse 2005: 63, 64 figs. 4—7, 65, figs. 11, 14—15). It is thus interesting to note that a bowl attributed to a Thessaloniki centre of production bears a theme that finds similarities to those found in other pottery productions of the 14th c., and in particular to Cypriot ceramic products, thus showing the contemporary diffusion of iconographic themes in different cultural environments. One can also suppose that its insertion in the wall of the narthex was unlikely to have been random and may express the intent, on behalf of its initial owner, to refer specifically to the social class to which he belonged and which also possessed the economic wherewithal to contribute to the erection of the narthex.

b) Ceramics from the Italian peninsula

Four vessels constitute examples of different categories of pottery imported from the Italian peninsula. The first (fig. 3: 22; 6), immured at the apex of the triangular pot formation at the south-eastern end of the exterior wall of the narthex, is a shallow dish with a rim diameter of 16 cm. It has curved walls and a flat, slightly oblique, rim which is rounded at its end. An incision covers the transition from the body to the rim. The orange-brown glaze which covers the whole interior seems to have been placed directly onto the body. It is not of very good quality. Tripod stilt marks can be seen on the vessel's interior. It is characterized by a dark, red, fine fabric. Given its fabric, form and decoration, it constitutes an example of monochrome sgraffito ("graffita monocroma") pottery from Italian workshops, probably from Venice, and can be dated to the 14th c. (Munarini 1990b: 20—23); similar vessels occur in Corinth and Herakleion (Papanikola-

Bakirtzi 1999: 115, no. 130 [I. Tzonou-Herbst]; Poulou-Papadimitriou 2008: 178, figs. 31—32).

Two plates belong to the Italian polychrome glazed pottery known as "RMR Ware" or "ceramica invertiata policroma". This category was produced mostly in the south of the Italian peninsula, in Apulia and mostly in the Salentine peninsula, with Taranto and Ugento being two important centres (Whitehouse 1980a: 82—83; 1986: 579; Dufournier et al. 1986: 251—277; Ebanista, Fusaro 2000: 126—127; Tagliente 2000: 167—181; 2003: 153—154; Vroom 2005: 128—129; Tinelli 2012: 515—517; Castello Carlo V Lecce n. d.). This ware witnessed a large diffusion, particularly from the middle of the 13th and during the whole 14th c., with the production of various centres continuing into the 15th c. (Dufournier et al. 1986: 24—25; Tagliente 2003: 153—154; Castello Carlo V Lecce n. d.). The first plate has a rim diameter of 26 cm (fig. 3: 18; 7) and is immured towards the upper part of the wall, close to the roof of the narthex, between the cruciform arrangement of vessels to the right of the entrance and the window in the south-west part of the wall. Although most of its rim is covered with plaster, it can be deduced that it has a convex body ending in an out-turned, quite flat rim. Part of the painted decoration is preserved on the yellowish fine fabric, with the outline made in a dark brown colour and the details in light green and red. Even though two thirds of its interior decoration is worn, a central animal figure covers most of the body. A quadruped is represented moving towards the right, with his head looking backwards. Judging by the care taken in rendering the details of its cloven hooves, it can be deduced that a sheep or goat — though the possibility of a deer cannot be excluded — was initially depicted. The general form of the body and the short tail do not contradict such an identification, while part of a somehow elongated and otherwise indistinguishable formation on its head could correspond to the animal's muzzle. The animal's rather stocky appearance, with his belly not far off the ground, and the details of its hooves would favour the former over the latter identification. In either case, zoomorphic/animal depictions of this sort are not among the most common for this category of pottery, where birds and fish prevail (Dufournier et al. 1986: 267); in fact they are considered quite rare (Vallenzano 2013: 45), with one example recognized as a lamb from Capitanata (Vallenzano 2013: 46, 52, fig. E, F). However, depictions of sheep and deer do occur in other categories of pottery such as the "graffita rinascimentale canonica", which dates from the *Quattrocento*, which is to say the same general period to which this vessel is at-

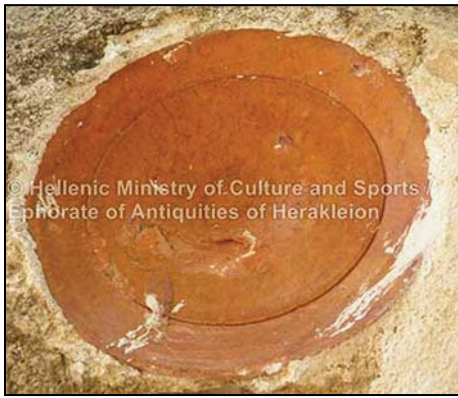


Fig. 6. Monochrome sgraffito (“graffita monocroma”) shallow dish, scale 1:3 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 6. Монохромное поливное блюдо с орнаментом сграффито, масштаб 1:3 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

tributed, but later, too (Munarini 1990a: 79—80; Munarini, Banzato 1993: 136—137, no. 29, 171, no. 86). Most of the animal’s body and the two feet on the first level of the depiction are covered in red, while the other two feet are green. The animal’s neck is covered with dark brown cross-hatching. Cross-hatching was also used to render part of the body of bird themes on a similarly shaped polychrome glazed plate from the church of S. Michele degli Scalzi which is dated to the fourth quarter of the 12th c. (Berti 1997: 31, fig. 13, no. 268; Berti, Giorgio 2011: 55—56, fig. 75a, b). The cross-hatching (“grid-iron motif”) is quite common not only in pottery of this category, but also in other categories of painted Italian pottery such as Proto-Maiolica or Archaic Maiolica (Whitehouse 1980a: 82, pl. X, d-e; 1980b: 77, pl. II; 79, fig. 11; Berti 1997: 26, fig. 9, no. 58; Riavez 2000: 213—214, pl. 3, 8; Vallenzano 2013: 52, fig. 3: E). There is a schematic, possibly vegetal, motif below the belly of the animal and a spiral design behind the animal which is repeated on the upper part of the rim that is still visible. There is schematic vegetal decoration in front of the animal. The whole surface was initially covered with light greenish glaze, which has been partially preserved. At a first level, the representation of a sheep or a goat on this immured plate could perhaps constitute an indirect reference to the pastoral life that characterized most of Crete’s hinterland. On a second level, however, the representation of a sheep besides other symbolisms such as Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection (Mangenot 1923: 610; Brubaker 1982: 74) could refer to the figure of

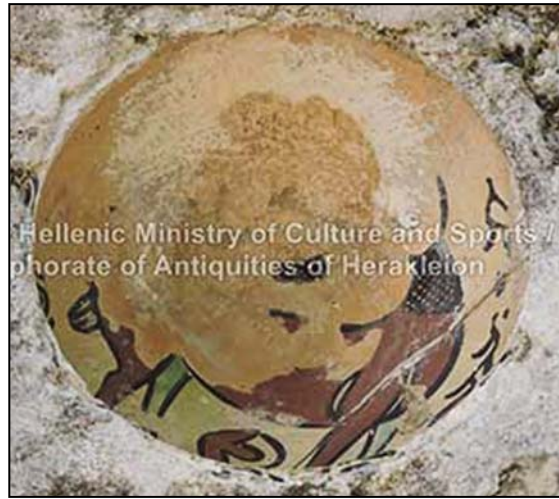


Fig. 7. Polychrome glazed pottery (“RMR Ware”), plate immured in the church of Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:4 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 7. Полихромная поливная тарелка (группа Рамино Манганезе Россо), вмурованная в стену церкви Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:4 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

Jesus, who is referred to as the Lamb of God in the Gospel According to John (Vollet, Bayet n.d.: 855; Mangenot 1923: 610; Brubaker 1982: 74; Bulgakov 2008: 263). On the aforementioned example from Capitanata, a lamb is combined with a cross on a stick, which constitutes a more condensed form of the original theme of *Agnus Dei*, very commonly depicted in wax medallions (Vollet, Bayet n.d.: 855—856; Mangenot 1923: 605; Brubaker 1982: 74), which constitutes a predominantly western theme during the Medieval period (Brubaker 1982: 74), and possibly refers to the theological concept of the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) (Vallenzano 2013: 46 with note 21; <http://balda.beepworld.it/> [accessed 10.04.2016]). In fact, this interpretation seems possible for the plate from Kitharida: iconographically, with the body of the sheep positioned towards the right but the head turned backwards, it has strong ties with the depiction of this theme both in pottery (Vallenzano 2013: 52, fig. 3, F; Riccetti 2015: 104, fig. 9, 106) and other mediums — part of the sculptural decoration of Monza cathedral, for example (<http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/agnus-dei-detail-of-sculptural-decoration-high-res-stock-photography/173285559> [accessed: 10.04.2016]), or a detail of the mosaic from the Baptistry of San Giovanni Battista in Florence (<http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/agnus-dei-detail-from-mosaic-in-apse->

high-res-stock-photography/159618586 [accessed: 10.04.2016]) — even if it is not certain that the original representation on the plate was accompanied by a cross. It should be added that the *Agnus Dei* constitutes a communion chant in liturgy and forms part of the Catholic Mass (Vollet, Bayet n.d.: 855; Bower 1982: 73; Marshal 1989: 369; Linman 2010: 148). Even if the initial representation was of a deer, one could also find a symbolic meaning referring to Christ, since it recalls the soul that desires the Lord, or refers to prudence, longevity and good Christian behaviour (Munarini 1990a: 79).

The second plate (fig. 3: 20; 8) is on the right at the top end of the window frame. Part of its interior decoration, particularly in the centre of the body, is worn. Although most of its rim is covered with plaster, it seems that the oblique walls end in a flat, down-turned rim which is clearly distinguished from the body. In terms of shape, it has close similarities to the previous plate and a rim diameter of 25 cm. The same three colours also decorate this vessel, and the whole surface is covered with a light greenish glaze. In this case, two parallel dark brown circles create a medallion which comprises a schematic rendering of a shield. At least five vertical bands are preserved from the interior of the shield; they alternate, either being left undecorated or covered with green and red. Unfortunately, its bad state has precluded a secure attribution to a specific coat of arms, despite efforts made in that direction (Le arme; Freschot 1682; Arme, Blasoni; Spreti 1928—1932). Nevertheless, it must be noted that several vessels of the polychrome glazed category bear various shields, as examples from Italy show (Dufournier et al. 1986: 269—271, fig. 7: 1, 4—5; Tagliente 2000: 171, fig. 3, 12; 2003: 154—155, fig. 1, 4; Vallenzano 2015: 82, 89, fig. 2). The rest of the body is covered by a large band containing a row of medallions formed in dark brown, each one bearing a schematic leaf form resembling a trefoil; these are painted in green and red, alternately. Two parallel circles delineate the upper part. Small schematic dark brown leaves decorate the spaces between the medallions. A similar arrangement of a central motif and leaves, although not quite trefoils, placed in medallions all around the body, is found in a plate of Proto-Maiolica ware from Apulia, dating to the end of the 12th — early 13th c. and decorated in green (Berti 1997: 31, fig. 13, no. 332; Berti, Giorgio 2011: 30, 56, no. 332), and in a plate of the “RMR Ware” of the late 14th c. (Tagliente 2000: 173, 175, fig. 5, 23). It is also common in the polychrome glazed category to find various vegetal motifs painted alternately with the above



Fig. 8. Polychrome glazed pottery (“RMR Ware”), plate immured in the church of Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:4 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 8. Полихромная поливная тарелка (группа Рамино Манганезе Россо), вмурована в стену церкви Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:4 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

colours inserted in circles (Dufournier et al. 1986: 268).

Morphologically, both of the above forms, with their characteristic large body and flat, out-turned or down-turned rim, bear closer analogies to vessels that P. Tagliente considers characteristic of the latest phase in the production of polychrome lead-glazed pottery (“RMR Ware”), which extends into the late 15th c., rather than that of earlier periods, which were characterized by more closed forms with different rim formations (Tagliente 2003: 153—154, 155, fig. 1, 4). Unfortunately, given their permanent position on the monument, no additional reinforcing evidence can be deduced by studying the formation of their base. Their fabric and form, the use of a greenish glaze with the combined use of dark brown, red and green in both examples speak in favour of a common provenance from an Apulian centre; a similar green glaze characterizes a fragment found in Lecce and given an Apulian provenance (Castello Carlo V Lecce n.d.). On various occasions, the glaze of this category can be greenish (Campanella 2000: 150). They could be dated within the 14th and 15th c.

The last example attributed to Italian production (fig. 3: 9; 9) is immured in the lunette above the entrance into the narthex. It forms part of another cruciform arrangement, where it constitutes the right arm of the cross. It is a small bowl with a rim diameter of 18 cm, curved walls



Fig. 9. Small bowl, maiolica, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete) (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo of the vessel after restoration: E. Kanaki).

Рис. 9. Маленькая чаша, майолика, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Китарида (Крит) (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото сосуда после реставрации Е. Канакис).

that end with a simple rim and a low, ring base. Unfortunately, its state of preservation is not good, since cracks devided it before restoration into three pieces, while more than two thirds of its body was covered in a thick layer of plaster. After its removal from the wall and restoration undertaken by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Herakleion, a rich decoration was revealed (fig. 9) executed using thick bands of blue on a white background combined with thin, dark, blackish lines for additional details. The central part of the interior is covered by a schematic representation of a bird facing left with its head held up. The bird is perched on a schematically rendered branch, part of a plant growing out of a wide horizontal blue band that probably represents the ground. Rich, schematic vegetal decoration covers the remaining surface. Two tall trees flank the bird and two pairs of schematic floral representations flank each of the trees. A lower level is created by a similar horizontal blue band right below the main decorative scene. This band contains schematic floral representations that may represent bushes. Three similar floral compositions emerging from a wide blue band cover the surface above the main scene. The trees and bushes are rendered using thick bands of fluid blue colour of various lengths; fine black lines represent their trunks and stems. Judging by the quality of the white background, the use of a rather fluid blue colour and the rendering of

the decorative theme, the bowl is an example of maiolica which can be attributed to the Italian production probably of the 18th c. and of Ligurian provenance (Keruhel 1986: 93—94; Beltrán de Heredia Bercero, Miró i Alaix 2010: 41, 117, pl. 35). The decorative theme finds analogies in vegetal themes and in the depiction of birds characteristic of 17th—18th century “*calligrafico-naturalistico*” style, examples of which date from the second half of the 17th and throughout the 18th c. and characterize the production of various centres, not only in Liguria, such as those of Turin and Faenza (Loreti 1980: 10 no. 4; Ravaneli Guidotti 1987: 260 no. 136; Farris 2004: 80, pl. X, a-b; Beltrán de Heredia Bercero, Miró i Alaix 2010: 41; Mazzacane, Mazzacane 2012: 62, 65, 227 no. 30, 229 nos. 38, 42; Ravaneli Guidotti 2014: 69, fig. 10, 70—71, figs. 14—15, 73, fig. 18, c). A characteristic example is the representation of a bird found in Barcelona (Beltrán de Heredia Bercero, Miró i Alaix 2010: 117, pl. 35: 4). The lunette it adorns is covered in numerous layers of plaster. However, close in situ examination — before the removal of the vessel for it to be restored — makes it clear that, while all the other vessels immured in the church are embedded in the walls with plaster covering their rims, in some cases almost completely, here the upper part of the rim protruded and the bowl did not seem to have fit into the recess. This observation, together with the fact that, based on the vessel’s typology, an 18th-century date can be proposed — that is, more than two centuries later than the other vessels — indicates that it was a later insertion which replaced an original bowl now lost.

c) Ceramics from the Iberian peninsula

Seven of the vessels immured in the narthex are imports from the production centres of the Crown of Aragon in the Iberian peninsula. More precisely, among the various pottery production centres on the Iberian peninsula (which included Andalusia, Castile, Granada, Murcia, Aragon and Catalonia), the vessels in Agia Eleousa constitute imports from the Valencia region. A recent analytical study of pottery from the Iberian peninsula in regions of present-day Greece indicates that it is this region’s ceramics that seem to have dominated the area studied during the Late Medieval period (see in detail: Yangaki 2013b: 287—326; see also: François 1997: 401—404). The vessels constitute examples of the lustreware and monochrome blue pottery which are also known in the bibliography as *loza dorada* and *loza azul*, respectively. These types formed the bulk of the ceramic material produced in the Valencia

region (Lerma et. al. 1986: 183—201; Martí 1994: 5; Paz Soler 1997: 137—166; Ray 2000: 41—102; Rose-Albrecht 2002b: 76) and were widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean and central and northern Europe during the 14th and 15th c. Valencia itself, Manises and Paterna (Llubiá 1967: 132, 149—150, 157—161; Guiral 1977: 191—196; Caiger-Smith 1985: 105—122; Guiral-Hadziiossif 1986: 389—391; Paz Soler 1997: 149—166; Ray 2000: 41) were their main production centres. A coat of tin-glaze serves in both categories as background for the painted decoration (Ray 2000: 45, 59), which covers both the interior of open vessels and the exterior, as well. According to written and archaeological evidence (Spallanzani 2006: 151—166, esp. 151—153, 161—162, 164, 166), these objects could have been destined for everyday use, although they were considered of high quality and were thus sometimes regarded as objects for display.

Of the seven vessels, three constitute very large plates — disks — with a diameter ranging from 32,5 cm to 36 cm, a curved body and either quite high rims or large, horizontal rims. The plate (fig. 3: 1; 10) immured at the end of the western side of the narthex, which seems isolated from the other vessels that mostly occupy the central and eastern part of the narthex, is covered on its interior with a characteristic representation of a bird rendered in cobalt blue with rich plumage, a long neck and long legs, which may have intended to represent a crane or even a heron. The bird is flanked by a pair of blue plant motifs with buds. The ground is scattered with fern leaves in lustre. The rim is divided into eight frames consisting of scrolling tendrils rendered in a row and alternating between blue and lustre. The second plate (fig. 3: 6; 11), immured next to the left part of the narthex door, has a high, vertical rim. The centre of the plate is covered with a blue square which is filled with lustred vegetal pattern. The square forms part of a blue cross whose arms end in heart-shaped motifs with protuberances on their sides and filled with tendrils with blob-like dots rendered in lustre (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: pl. V, 11—12; Ray 2000: 63, no. 127); each of these motifs recalls the tree of life (Ray 2000: 45, fig. 7). The main theme is superimposed on the ground of lustred tendrils and stylized vegetal patterns. The rim bears the inscription: “ave/ma/ria/gra<tia>/ple/na” [Hail Mary, full of grace] painted in blue in Gothic script between frames covered with stylized vegetal motifs — mostly running tendrils similar to those on the body of the vessel — rendered in lustre. The third plate (fig. 1; 3: 17; 12) on the other side of door of the narthex from the previous plate has

already been identified as an example of the so-called “Ave Maria group” (Ray 2000: 69—70), since it bears the same inscription as the previous plate and has been published in detail (Yangaki 2008b: 213—224). It has a straight body and a quite large, horizontal rim. A bird in dark blue, facing right, is superimposed on the ground, which is covered with fern leaves, flowers, dots and flower-like motifs filled with parallels and spirals rendered in brownish lustre (Camps Cazorla 1936: 32; Martínez Cavió 1982: 141). More flowers decorate the inner sides of the plate. The inscription in Gothic script is placed among fern leaves and small flowers. The verse “Ave Maria gra<tia> plena” is the beginning of the most common Catholic prayer to the Virgin Mary (Berlière 1923: 1273—1277; Janssens 1931: 995—996; Thurston 1937: 1161—1165; Hennig 1983: 13—14). As has already been noted (Yangaki 2008b: 219—220), together with the “Pater Noster”, they were and are the most popular Catholic prayers and were and are included in many rosary books (Berlière 1923: 1274; Thurston 1937: 1163—1164; Hennig 1983: 13; Reynolds 1989: 530—531). This specific pottery group is also represented in paintings, with the best-known example being in Jaime Ferrer’s version of the Last Supper in Catalonia (Solsona), which dates from c.1450 (Gerrard et. al. 1995: 286; Ray 2000: 70; Rose-Albrecht 2002a: 41). According to a study, the use of this inscription on the vessels might also recall sermons in which the Spanish Dominican Saint Vincent Ferrer criticized women who simulate religiosity (Lerma 2002: 119, n. 19), thus adding a more secular dimension to this group of pottery. Nevertheless, both the iconography and the tangible evidence, based on the two vessels from Kitharida, with the association of the “Ave Maria group” of ceramics with religious environments, would seem to indicate that, for the majority of their owners, these verses, which formed part of the well-known salutation and prayer, maintained their sacred meaning rather than constituting purely decorative elements. The central bird motifs of the two plates (fig. 10; 12) from Kitharida have much in common with other depictions of birds, some of which been identified as possible representations of either cranes or pelicans (Llubiá 1967: 153, fig. 241, left; Rose-Albrecht 2002c: 141—142; Tilliard 2002: 255 inv. E 538—27) (though they might also be herons); these have been found on Spanish lustreware from Paterna (Rose-Albrecht 2002c: 140) and Pisa (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: pl. VI, 10) and on vessels held in Lyon’s Musée des Beaux-Arts (Rose-Albrecht 2002c: 141—142; Tilliard 2002: 255 inv. E 538—27). Pots or tiles with oth-



Fig. 10. Large lustreware plate with a representation of a bird, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:5 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 10. Большая тарелка с росписью люстром и изображением птицы, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:5 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

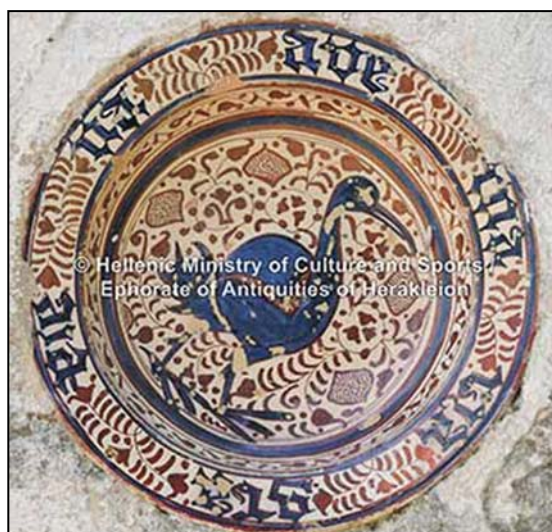


Fig. 12. Large lustreware plate bearing the inscription "Ave Maria gra [tia] plena", Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:5 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 12. Большая тарелка с росписью люстром и надписью «Ave Maria gra [tia] plena», церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:5 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

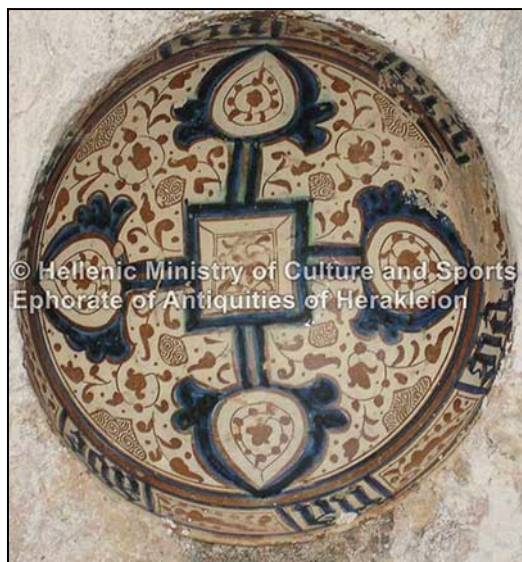


Fig. 11. Large lustreware plate with a representation of a cross, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:5 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 11. Большая тарелка с росписью люстром и изображением креста, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:5 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

er inscriptions in Gothic letters are related to the "Ave Maria group" and form part of the repertoire of Spanish lustreware (Camps Cazorla 1936:

32; Ray 2000: 316—317; Rose-Albrecht 2002b: 88—89; Tilliard 2002: 236—237 inv. D 171—D 172). These include pots with abbreviated forms of sacred names or phrases (Carru 1995: 55, 73, nos. 167—168; Casanovas 2003: 56, fig. 2.8; Dectot 2008: 95, no. 65) or more elaborate inscriptions (Carru 1995: 55, 73, nos. 167—168; Dectot 2008: 95, no. 65; Casanovas 2003: 56, fig. 2.8). This group was imitated during the 19th c. (Ray 2000: 398, nos. 1027—1028).

Two further dishes of smaller diameter with a curved body and large, horizontal rims were also imported from the Iberian peninsula. The first (fig. 3: 3; 13), with a rim diameter of 21 cm, forms the left arm of the cruciform formation immured next to one of the larger dishes from the Iberian peninsula. It is decorated on its body and rim with pairs of elongated blue plant motifs superimposed on lustred dots and similar plant motifs which alternate on the main body with ragged floral motifs recalling parsley leaves on a dotted ground and surrounded by a semi-circle. Two similarly decorated fragments in the Victoria and Albert Museum have been dated to 1400—1450 (Ray 2000: 64, no. 132, 72, no. 150R), while analogous fragments occur in Avignon dated to 1420—1440 (Carru 1995: 55, no. 143, 70, no. 143), in Albenga (Gobbato 1998: 287—288, 293, pl. IV, 8) and in Pisa during the 15th c. (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: 30—31, pl. VI,

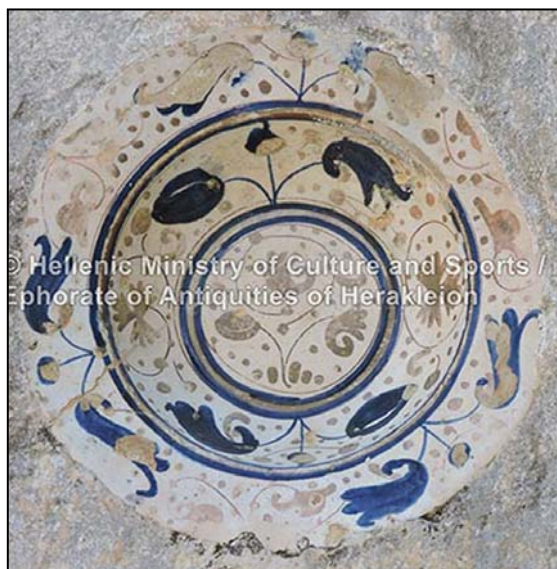


Fig. 13. Lustreware dish with plant motifs, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:3 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 13. Блюдо с росписью люстром и растительным орнаментом, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:3 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

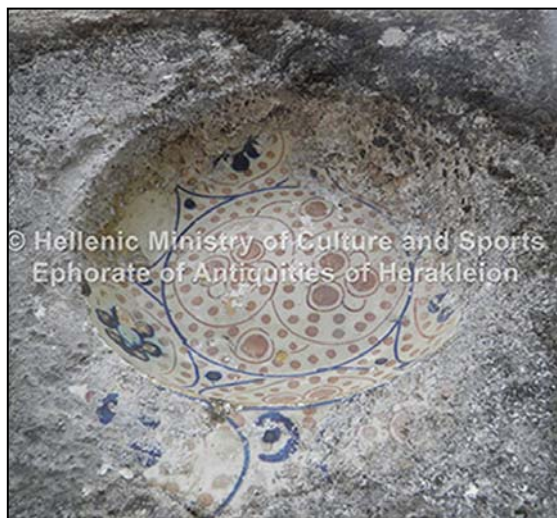


Fig. 14. Lustreware dish with disc-flowers and disc-like petals and dots, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:3 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 14. Блюдо с росписью люстром и круговым изображением цветов, листьев и точек, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:3 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

1, 3). The glaze on its interior surface is not as brilliant as in the examples of the other types, a characteristic already noticed by G. Berti and

E. Tongiorgi for similar vessels (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: 30). The second (fig. 3: 2; 14) is immured at the top of the cruciform formation, right under the end of the narthex's roof and at some distance to the left of cross upright beam. It has an interior body diameter of 17 cm, but most of its flat, horizontal rim is covered in plaster, preventing a clear observation of the vessel. The vessel's central medallion bears two disc-flowers ("flores de puntos") (Martínez Caviro 1982: 137) consisting of three disc-like petals in lustre on a dotted lustred ground, each one surrounded by a semi-circle with the space in between covered with single disc-like petals and dots (Ray 2000: 72). The rest of the body and the rim are covered on a dotted background with semi-circles in blue, the contents of which alternate between similar groups of three disc-like petals in lustre or bryony flowers in blue. Both of these motifs are quite common on vessels from the first half of the 15th c. up until c.1470, with the first ones dated in the main to between 1400 and 1450 and the latter from 1430 to 1470, as examples from Avignon (Carru 1995: 55, no. 144; 70, no. 144), Narbonne (Amigues 1998: 213, 220, fig. 11), Florence (Marini 1998: 296—297, 303, fig. 3b, 304, fig. 4c), Madrid (Retuerce Velasco, Melero Serrano 2012: 92—93, fig. 2, 10) and Victoria and Albert Museum (Ray 2000: 72—75, nos. 149R —151, no. 153, no. 156) indicate. The vessel from Malevizi, which features a combination of both motifs, could therefore be dated from after 1430 until 1470.

A smaller example (fig. 3: 5; 15), from a bowl with a rim diameter of 14,5 cm, forms the right arm of the cross-shaped formation on the left of the entrance. It has curved walls and a straight, simple rim. It combines geometric with stylized vegetal motifs and a crown pattern. The central part of the bowl is covered with a four-pointed star formed out of a square, all in cobalt blue. It forms part of a central medallion that is created from two parallel blue bands, while the upper part of the bowl bears pairs of stylized plant motifs. The rest of the decoration is rendered in lustred brown. The space in each part of the four-pointed star is covered with triangular panels of strokes and spirals ("paralelas con espiral", "barre parallele con spirali") (Martínez Caviro 1982: 133; Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: 28—29), common complementary motifs on various vessels from Pisa (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: 28—29, pl. V, 10—12), in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ray 2000: 48—49, no. 102), and in the Louvre and the Museum of Sèvres (Rose-Albrecht 2002b: 82, 94—95), all of them dated to the first half of the 15th c., while the specific motif has been dated to the first third of the 15th c. (Martínez Caviro 1982:



Fig. 15. Lustreware bowl with geometric decoration and stylized plant motifs, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:2 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 15. Тарелка с росписью люстром и геометрическим орнаментом с растительными элементами декора, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:2 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).



Fig. 16. Bowl, monochrome blue pottery ("loza azul"), Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:2 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 16. Монохромная чаша с росписью голубой глазурью, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:2 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

133). The spaces between the star and the vegetal motifs of the upper part of the body are covered with stylized floral motifs. The centre of the central square features a representation of a triple-towered castle with schematically rendered entrances. The exact same motif rendered in dark blue covers the central medallion of a dish (Llubiá 1967: fig. 201). The motif has been identified as the coat of arms of the Crown of Castile (Martínez Caviro 1982: 165) and is represented in a more condensed form on vessels of this production with a lion rampant of the Crown of León or, additionally, with the pallets of the Crown of Aragon, as on examples at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Martínez Caviro 1982: fig. 99; 101; Ray 2000: 78—79, no. 163, 93, no. 200) dated to the 15th c., the Museum of Sèvres (Martínez Caviro 1982: 117, fig. 78; Rose-Albrecht 2002b: 94—95), dated to within the first or second quarter of the 15th c., the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (Tilliard 2002: 242, no. D 327), dated to the end of the 15th c., and in other collections (Martínez Caviro 1982: fig. 121; 148). It has been suggested that some of these examples could have been offered as matrimonial or coronation gifts (Rose-Albrecht 2002b: 94). Heraldic themes were common in the Late Medieval glazed pottery of the Iberian peninsula (Martínez Caviro 1982: 165—169).

All the aforementioned examples belong to the "mature valencian lustrewares" group (also



Fig. 17. Bowl, monochrome blue pottery ("loza azul"), Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:2 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 17. Монохромная чаша с росписью голубой глазурью, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:2 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

known as the "Loza dorada clásica" (Gerrard et al. 1995: 286; Rose-Albrecht 2002b: 76)), which comprise various ceramics groups of the 15th c. painted in brownish lustre and dark blue. For

these vessels, the Valencia region is considered the centre of their production, while the majority of the vessels in this particular group are attributed to workshops in Manises (Ray 2000: 70—71, no. 145—146; Dectot 2008: 94—95, no. 63; Casanovas 2003: 55—56, fig. 2.7b). This group witnessed a large diffusion in the central and eastern Mediterranean but also, according to the collected evidence, in northern Europe (for the related references, see analytically: Yangaki 2008b: 218—219, with notes; 2013b: 295—299, with notes). This type of decorated vessels was initially dated to the second half of the 15th c. (Camps Cazorla 1936: 31; Martí 1994: 4; Gerrard et. al. 1995: 286), but more recent research coupled with archaeological data has shown that this category of Spanish lustreware was in use during the first half of the 15th c. (Martí 1994: 4; Gerrard et. al. 1995: 286; Ray 2000: 69, 72). For example, bryony leaves, crowns and “disc-flowers” as well as the inscription “Ave Maria gratia plena” appear before 1413 (Gerrard et. al. 1995: 286; Ray 2000: 59, 72—73), and the “disc-flowers” decoration is generally considered as almost contemporaneous with bryony and parsley leaf decoration (Ray 2000: 72—73), though it has been argued that the bryony motif appeared later c.1425 (De Crescenzo 1996: 217). In addition, a drug-jar bearing a similar tendril motif to the second vessel has been dated to 1400—1450 (Ray 2000: 63, no. 127). Taking into consideration, too, the date proposed for the fifth vessel (fig. 14), then the above pottery seems to have been in circulation on Crete after the early 15th c.

The last examples belong to two small bowls (rim diameter: 13,5 cm and 14 cm) with a curved body and a simple rim, forming part of the monochrome blue pottery (“loza azul”) from the Iberian peninsula which was produced in Manises, Paterna and Valencia but also at other sites from the first quarter of the 14th c., the 15th c., and also later on (for details on this category: Lerma et. al. 1986: 190, 194; Paz Soler 1997: 163—165; Ray 2000: 45; Yangaki 2013b: 290—291, with analytical references). The best-preserved bowl (fig. 3: 4; 16) is placed above the main dish in the cross-shaped formation to the left of the narthex entrance. The second (fig. 3: 16; 17) forms the right arm of the cross-shaped formation to the right of the entrance. Unfortunately, more than two thirds of its interior is covered with plaster, which prevents a detailed examination but, given that part of the characteristic motif is distinguishable on part of its upper body, it can be identified as having exactly the same decoration as the previous bowl. In both cases, on the white ground it consists of a central circle in cobalt blue in the middle of the body with eight radii leading to

four-leaf shapes with hatching and four palm-tree tops; in between the stylized leaves, parts of a rectangle consisting of double dark blue bands have survived (Yangaki 2013b: 291, note 26, 315, fig. 2). Vessels with the same decoration have been found in Rhodes (Michailidou 1996: 134, no. 105; 2000: 421, 427, no. 9, pl. 165 ε — στ), Cagliari (Dadea, Porcella 1998: 328, fig. 4), Naples (Arbace 1998: 341, fig. 3), Pisa (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: 13, pl. II, 2), Genoa (Pringle 1977: 147, no. 203), Savona (Gobbato 1998: 286—287, 292, pl. III, 7), Avignon (Carru 1995: 55, 59, 62, no. 80), Arévalo (Villanueva Zubizarreta et al. 2012: 497, fig. 8), and form part of the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ray 2000: 48, no. 101). The examples from Pisa and Savona are dated to the 14th c. (Berti, Tongiorgi 1985: 13; Gobbato 1998: 286—287, 292, pl. III, 7), the material from Naples to the middle of the 14th c. (Arbace 1998: 341, fig. 3), while those from Cagliari (Dadea, Porcella 1998: 328, fig. 4) and those held in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ray 2000: 48, no. 101) have been dated to the early and the first half of the 15th c. respectively. Based on their decoration, they form part of the “Loza azul clásica” (Gobbato 1998: 286—287).

d) Ceramics from Syria or Egypt

Two of the vessels forming part of the cross-shaped formation to the right of the narthex's entrance are imported from Syria or Egypt. The underglaze painted decoration is executed using blue, turquoise or blue and black. This group of painted pottery on a frit body witnessed an important production during the 14th and 15th c. (Lane 1957: 15—20, 29—31; Soustiel 1985: 223—224; Grube 1976: 292; Féhervari 2000: 246—247; Watson 2004: 56—58, 62). The first (fig. 3: 15; 18) is a small, deep dish (rim diameter: 15,5 cm), placed as the lower upright section of the cross. It has curved body and a flat, horizontal rim. The whole interior surface is covered with a rich blue, densely textured vegetal decoration consisting of two central, schematically-rendered vases which face one another, each holding three flowers with luxuriant petals and stalks. Schematic, dense, vegetal decoration is rendered next to these and on the rim between two dark blue, parallel bands. The decoration of the vessel reveals the influence of the Chinese blue-and-white porcelain which inspired these wares (Féhervari 2000: 249; Watson 2004: 62, 417, 422), as is clear from characteristic Chinese examples (Shanghai Museum... n.d.: 17, right, 22, top; Quette 2014: 30, no. 20). The cobalt blue pigment had a tendency to run, and the outlines

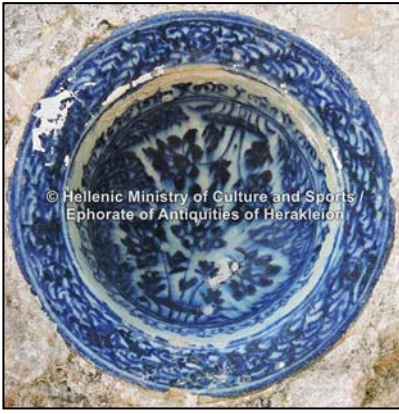


Fig. 18. Small deep dish with painted decoration in blue, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:3 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 18. Маленькая глубокая тарелка с росписью голубой глазурью, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:3 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

are blurred as a result, a characteristic also found on other ceramics of the same production. The dish finds close analogies, in terms of its decoration, with a dish from Herakleion (Poulou-Papadimitriou 2008, 186—187, fig. 49) dated to the 14th—15th c., a dish at the Benaki Museum's Museum of Islamic Art, dated to the 15th c. (Ballian, Moraitou 2006: 125, fig. 164), fragments of vessels at the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (Borboudaki 2010: 187—188, figs. 16—18), dated to the 15th c., fragments from Alexandria (François 1999: pl. 6, 130—131), a jar from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Lane 1957: pl. 14), an albarello from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Lane 1957: pl. 15), an albarello from Avignon (Thiriot 1995: 26, 34, no. 24, 45, no. 24) dated from the early 15th c., fragments in the Kuwait National Museum (Watson 2004: 422—423, nos. LNS 925 C a-c, LNS 924 C h), dated to the 15th c., and fragments from tiles from Potamia-Agios Sozomenos in Cyprus (François, Vallauri 2014: 46—47, fig. 2, pl. V, a). Most of these vessels have been ascribed an Egyptian provenance. Given the dish's significant similarities to the others detailed above, a similar date and provenance can be proposed.

A deep bowl (fig. 3: 14; 19), also of Near Eastern provenance, is positioned on the upper upright section of the same cross-shaped formation. It has a deep, straight body and a simple rim (with a diameter of 15 cm). Its painted decoration combines blue-turquoise and black. The black pigment is stable, allowing for detailed and precise designs. The central medallion is formed

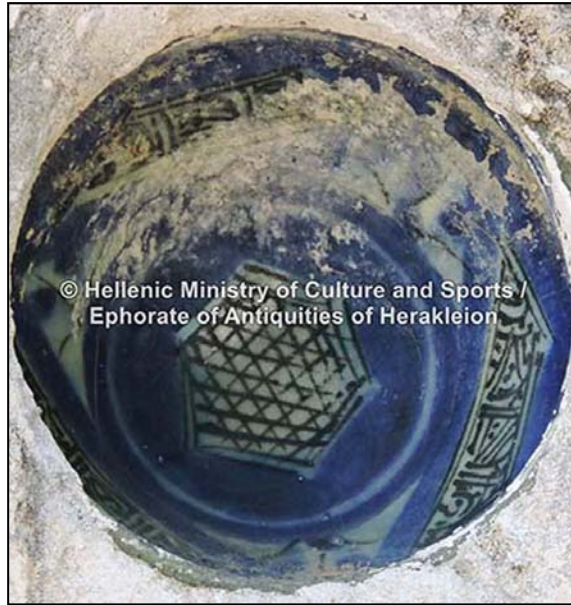


Fig. 19. Small deep bowl with decoration in blue-turquoise and black, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:2 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 19. Маленькая глубокая чаша с росписью ярко-голубой и чёрной глазурями, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:2 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

from a wide, blue band. Its central section is covered with a hexagonal design in black. A similar hexagon decorates the main body of a vessel from Hama (Poulsen 1957: 208, fig. 702). The space in between is covered with a blue-turquoise colour, and similar blue-turquoise bands create three trapezoidal panels on the walls. In addition to the central cross-hatching in black covering the interior of the hexagon, geometric designs feature in trapezoidal panels which are divided into three or four vertical bands. Similar designs in black are found on other vessels of Syrian or Egyptian provenance (Lane 1957: pl. 10; Poulsen 1957: 207, fig. 698, 700; 214, fig. 727; Féhervari 2000: 246, no. 308; Watson 2004: 402, nos. R.7—R.8). Two blue parallel bands cover the upper part of the wall and the rim. The decoration follows the panel style, which was quite common during the 14th c., though it usually consisted of radial rather than rhomboid panels (Féhervari 1998: 49, no. 36; Watson 2004: 56, 58, 62; Pancaroğlu 2007: 96). For similar use of large blue bands to delineate the more detailed decoration, see examples from Hama (Poulsen 1957: 214, figs. 726—727), in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Lane 1957: pl. 10), the Kuwait National Museum (Watson 2004: 402, no. R.7)

and the Tareq Rajab Museum (Féhérvári 2000: 246, no. 308). Its glaze has become matt, a characteristic observed in other vessels of Syrian provenance (<http://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/mamluks/art/21-1992> [accessed: 10.04.2016]). Given the characteristics of the vessel and its panel-type decoration which, according to scholars, preceded that of the previous dish and was common during the 14th c., it can be dated to within the 14th c. (Lane 1957: 17—18; Poulsen 1957: 204—206; Watson 2004: 62). Only a few ceramics from Syria or Egypt have so far been published from Crete, more particularly from Herakleion (Poulou-Papadimitriou 2008, 186—187, fig. 49) and Prinós (Yangaki 2013a: 380—381, fig. 6).

e) Unidentified pottery

The last example of pottery still preserved in the narthex belongs to a small sherd (fig. 3: 13; 20) from a curved body probably, judging from the dimensions of its 14,5 cm recess, from a small bowl. On a white ground with a clear glaze, partially preserved bands of blue decorate its interior. The bands are quite large and do not seem to follow a specific pattern. Judging by its general appearance, it could constitute an example of Italian maiolica painted in blue, in which case a date within the 15th c. could be envisaged,

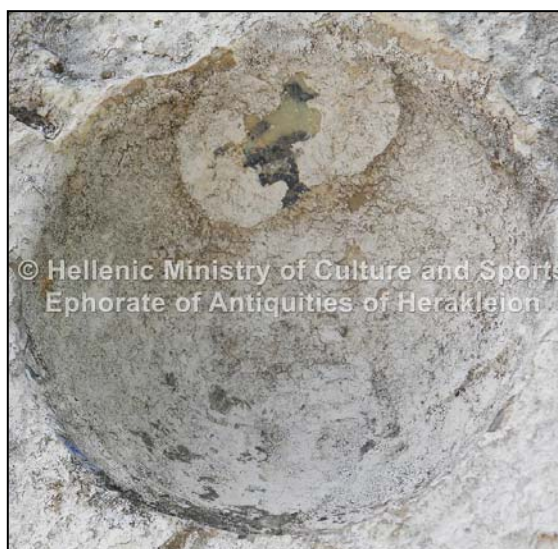


Fig. 20. Fragment of a bowl with blue painted decoration, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete), scale 1:2 (The copyright for the depiction of this artefact belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 20. Фрагмент сосуда с росписью голубой глазурью, церковь Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит), масштаб 1:2 (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А. Г. Янгаки).

but this will need to be further verified if it is detached in the future and restored.

Remarks on the vessels' date

As has been previously mentioned, current research suggests that the narthex constitutes one of the later additions to the main church and dates from the 15th—16th c. (Gallas et al. 1983: 356; Mylopotamitaki 1998: 121, fig. 9, 125—126). Comparing the form of the doorframe and its characteristic decoration with monuments from the first half of the 15th c., points to a date within the 15th c. (Borboudakis 2007: 61—62, fig. 1; 80—81, fig. 31, 70, 76—77, fig. 27; Gratziou 2010: 59, fig. 62). This is further indicated by the form of the window of the exterior wall (fig. 21) and particularly by the characteristic formation of its upper section, which has a circular form in the central lobe and finds not exact but close parallels with those at the church of the Panagia in Kapetaniana, Vrontisi monastery and the monastery of Kera Kardiotissa at Voroi (Borboudakis 2007: 63—64, fig. 6; 67—68, fig. 10; 69, fig. 12; Gratziou 2010: 62—64, fig. 73, ε—ς). In addition, the placement of immured vessels, usually in cruciform formation but also individually or in pairs just above the upper part of the window, is common in monuments from the 15th c., especially from its first half, such as Agios Antonios in Vrontisi, Panagia Chanoutia in Gergeri or the catholicon of Valsamonero monastery (Agios Fanourios aisle) (Borboudakis 2007: 68, fig. 10; 76, fig. 25; 81—82, fig. 34; Gratziou 2010: 63, fig. 73, ε—ς); it is also encountered in the window of Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida.

Turning to the vessels that have been immured in the narthex, based on their previous detailed presentation it becomes obvious that, apart from some vessels that belong to categories mainly dated to within the 14th c. or which are analogous with pottery dated to that period (i. e. those attributed to Thessaloniki workshops, the bowl with a Syrian provenance), the majority date from within the 15th c., while the most numerous group — that from the Iberian peninsula, which is also used to create the more complete decoration around the entrance to the narthex — dates from the 15th c. (mostly the first half). In fact, of all the ceramics that adorn the narthex, it is those imported from the Iberian peninsula that can be dated with the greatest confidence and to the latest period. Careful study of the vessels' various motifs and the dates suggested for them (see above), combined with the disc-like petals in lustre alternating with bryony flowers in blue points that adorn the vessel on the upper part of the wall (fig. 14), point to a date between 1430 and

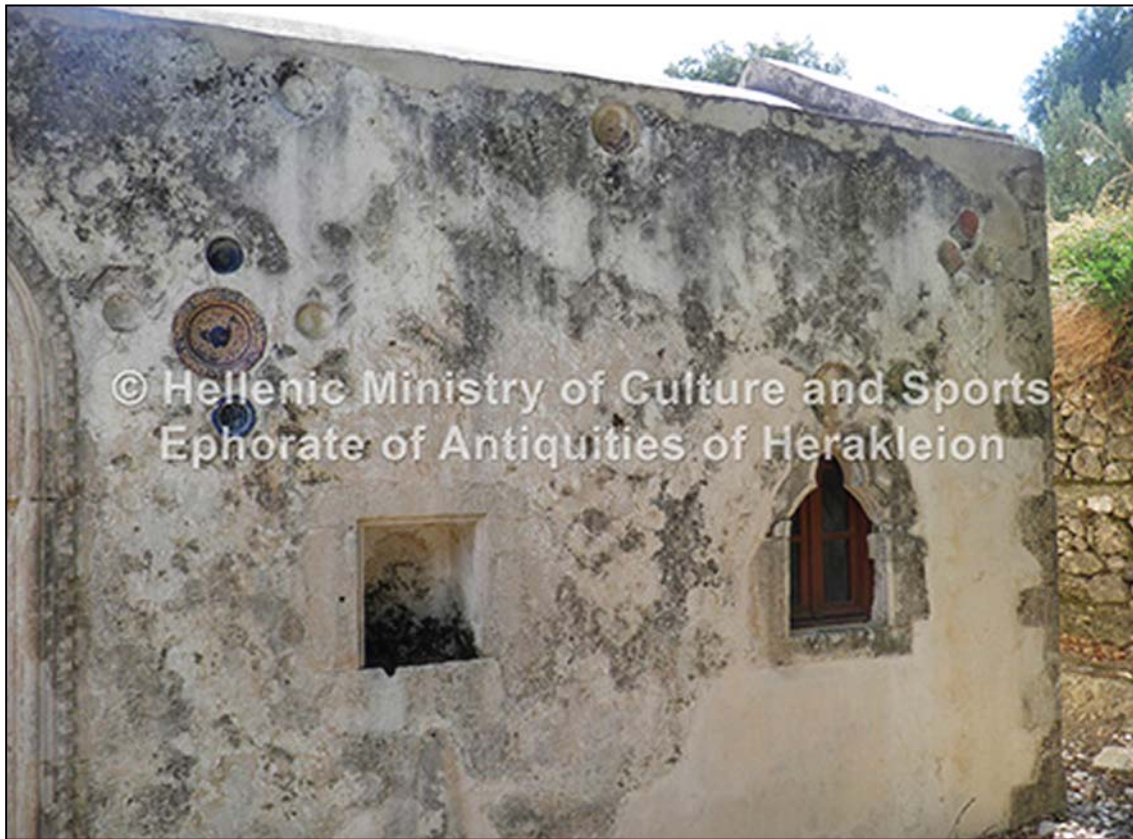


Fig. 21. View of the southern part of the façade of the narthex, Panagia Eleousa in Kitharida (Crete) (The copyright for the depiction of this monument belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; photo: A. G. Yangaki).

Рис. 21. Вид южной части фасада нартекса церкви Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит) (Авторское право на изображение этого артефакта принадлежит Министерству культуры и спорта Греции; фото А.Г. Янгаки).

1470. The contemporaneous occurrence of all the above ceramics from the Iberian peninsula in the same monument allows us to posit a date during the first half of the 15th c. for the whole group of vessels, though this could perhaps be further limited to the period between the first decades of the 15th c. and its middle (see also: Yangaki 2008b: 221). The fact that it would be rare, according to the existing evidence relating to pottery in Crete, to have in one's possession vessels with the inscription "Ave Maria gratia plena" prior to the erection of the narthex provides further support for this hypothesis; rather, it is more reasonable to think that these vessels, together with the rest of the group from the Iberian peninsula, were deliberately acquired for this specific purpose: to flank the door of the church whose central nave was consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Given the fact that there is no evidence to suggest that the vessels were not immured at the same time on the façade, since they are all (apart from the later replacement) embedded quite deep in the current plaster and there was clearly an initial plan for their positioning (see below) as a group, it is evident that they offer a more

precise date for the building of the narthex itself. The fact that a few ceramics which mostly circulated in the 14th c. are included should not prevent us from accepting the above date. It is, of course, true that *bacini* research has until now, and in the case of Crete in particular, proposed a date that accords with the date ascribed to each respective monument based on other criteria (Yangaki 2013a: 382). However, it should also be taken into consideration not only that pottery could have a more extended life span in circulation in places that constituted consumption sites, as Crete and Herakleion did for the above vessels, than it did in its production sites, but also that some categories of vessels, among them tablewares, could have an extended use-life which could possibly reach a quarter of a century, especially given that decorated fine tablewares such as the glazed wares presented above were considered more valuable than others, so special care would have been taken to prevent them from becoming unusable (Peña 2007: 58–59). Finally, the vessel which appears to have been added to the composition much later (fig. 9) constitutes for Crete, quite a rare case. Replacements of vessels

with later additions in the existing recesses do occur but only rarely, and they usually date from the 19th — early 20th c. It is interesting to note that this later insertion bears as central motif that of a bird, thus constituting the third example with a bird depiction which has been immured in the specific church, possibly under the influence of the earlier similar representations.

Remarks on the vessels' position

Turning to the study of the arrangement of the vessels in the façade of the narthex, some interesting remarks can also be made. Besides the fact that the use of cruciform dispositions (Yangaki 2008a: 829—830; 2013a: 377—378) or the practice of immuring vessels above windows is common in Crete, as has previously been shown, in this particular monument extra care was taken in order to create a complex composition. Thus, in the majority of Cretan churches where a group of four or five vessels is arranged in the shape of the cross, most churches present no more than five vessels and on the rare occasions where more vessels have been embedded in the walls, these are usually placed in two parallel or almost parallel rows — as is the case at the church of Agios Georgios in Vistagi (Rethymnon), the church of Panagia in Lithines (Lassithi). In the case of Kitharida, however, the

composition is of a complexity that can only be compared with the immured vessels in the catholicon of the monastery of Valsamonero. In the former, two cruciform arrangements flank the door (fig. 2). There is a harmony between the two, since both arrangements place the vessel with the largest diameter in the centre, with vessels of smaller dimensions forming the arms and upright section of the cross, and because both arrangements include only objects with painted decoration and with similar colour combinations (blue and brownish lustre) on a white ground. It is characteristic that the vessels creating the vertical axis of the cross have a rim diameter of between 13 and 15 cm in both cases, which further emphasizes the quest for symmetry (fig. 3: 4, 6, 14, 15). Unfortunately, in the lower part of the vertical axis of the cruciform composition on the left of the doorframe (fig. 22) neither the vessel nor the initial recess have survived; still, it would be reasonable to suggest that it existed in the original form. It is also clear that special care has been taken to leave the same distance from the doorframe to both left and right (fig. 2), which would seem to further support the hypothesis that the arrangement was pre-planned and contemporaneous with the building of the door. In fact, that the bulk of the selected pottery belongs to common categories with specific decorative characteristics, rather than

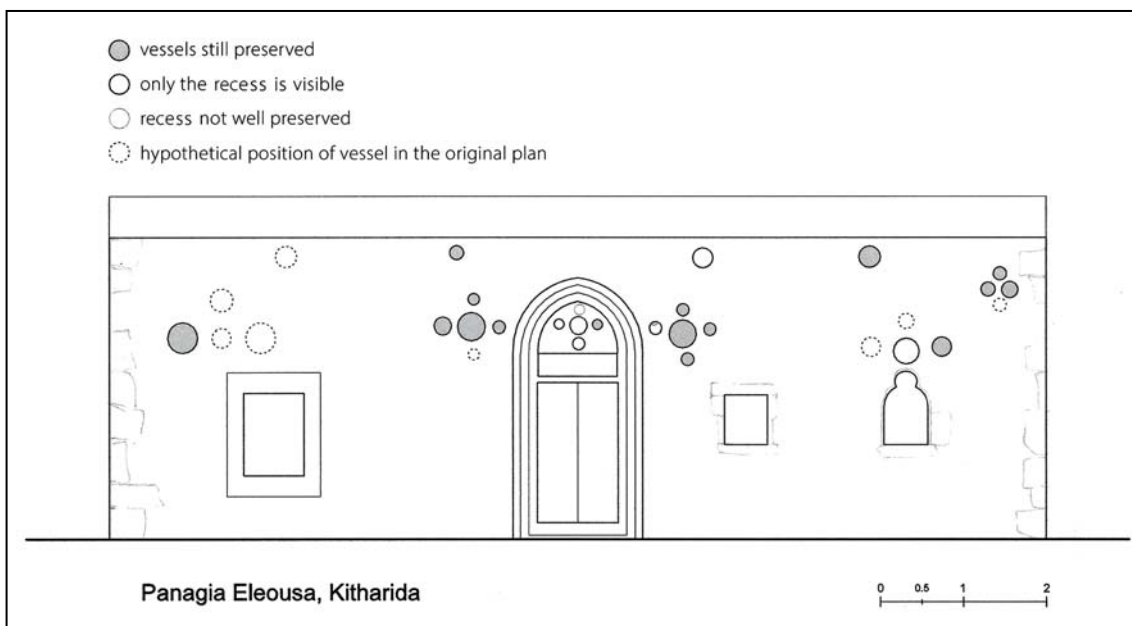


Fig. 22. Schematic drawing with a hypothetical representation of the initial position of immured vessels and their dispositions, Panagia Eleousa, Kitharida (dimensions of the narthex after: Gerola 1993, 239, fig. 279 and Gallas 1983, 214—215 figs. 61—62; drawing: D. Tagmatarchi).

Рис. 22. Схематический чертёж с предполагаемым размещением точных позиций вмурованных сосудов фасада нартекса с указанием расположения вмурованных сосудов и пустых лакун от вмурованных сосудов церкви Панагия Элеуса в Кифариде (Крит) (размеры нартекса по: Gerola 1993, 239 fig. 279; Gallas 1983, 214—215, figs. 61—62; автор чертежа D. Tagmatarchi).

constituting isolated, randomly placed ceramics, provides further support for the existence of central planning. Similarly, in a third cruciform arrangement covering the lunette over the entrance (fig. 2; 3: 7—11), although most of the original pieces are missing, traces of the recesses show that the main vessel was substantially larger than the others. This arrangement also exemplifies a symmetry of dimensions. A fourth composition located just above the narthex's window (fig. 2; 3: 19—20) has one preserved vessel and one empty recess aligned horizontally just above the window. There again, based on the diameter of the empty recess, the central vessel seems to have been of a larger diameter than the other and was in direct contact of the window, which would also argue in favour of their having been simultaneously installed in the wall. This obvious quest for symmetry allows us to suppose that a third vessel was placed immediately to the left of the central one; in fact this is further corroborated by examining a photo of the church by G. Gerola during the early 20th c., where it is evident that a third vessel did exist (Gerola 1993: 241, fig. 280). In addition, it is also possible that a fourth vessel, just above the central vessel did originally exist, given the fact that similar compositions on the upper part of windows generally employ cruciform formations (Borboudakis 2007: 68, fig. 10; 76, fig. 25; 81—82, fig. 34; Gratziou 2010: 63, fig. 73, ε-ς). Unfortunately, no traces of either vessels or their recesses have been preserved (see below). The fourth composition lies just below the roof, at the end of the narthex (fig. 3: 21—23; 21), and is composed of three preserved vessels of similar diameters (between 15 and 17 cm) forming a triangle. Special care has been taken to group vessels decorated with the same technique. Thus, the horizontal axis is formed out of painted, incised-sgraffito (fig. 3: 21, 23), leaving the monochrome sgraffito bowl for the vertical axis. Given that triangular dispositions of immured vessels are not very common on Crete, although it could be supposed that the disposition is preserved in its initial form, it seems likely that a fourth vessel, probably a bowl and probably also monochrome, originally formed the lower section of the vertical axis, creating a cross. Apart from these four compositions, three more vessels and one empty recess are preserved which appear to constitute isolated cases in the current façade. However, this does not seem to be the case: as will be shown, they follow the practice of creating a horizontal axis of decoration. The one empty recess and the two plates have all been immured to the upper part of the narthex wall, just below the roof (fig. 3: 2, 12, 18), creating a common horizon-

tal axis. A series of ceramics on the gable end are also found in the catholicon of the monastery in Valsamonero. In fact, two of the vessels (fig. 3: 2, 12) in Panagia Eleousa are quite symmetrically positioned to the left and right of the central entrance, both higher than the two main cruciform dispositions and between the right arm of the left-hand cross and the central plate of the cross on the right. They both belong to painted categories of pottery, the one decorated in blue and lustre, the other in red, green and brown. This would seem to indicate careful pre-planning and it can reasonably be assumed that more vessels were originally immured: at least one more to the left on the western section, perhaps close to the actual guttering, without excluding the possibility of two additional vessels having been immured in the wall's top corners. Given the general interest in symmetry expressed in this façade, it would seem reasonable to suggest that, since the vessel to the left of the entrance (fig. 3: 2) belongs to the *loza dorada* of the Iberian peninsula, as do most of the vessels in the two cruciform dispositions below it, the empty recess to the right originally (fig. 3: 12) contained a vessel of similar provenance and with similar colours, thus creating a refreshing variety in the eye of the observer in combination with the nearby piece of "RMR Ware" (fig. 3: 18). Finally, a single, large plate is found on the western end of the wall (fig. 3: 1), quite near the corner. It is adorned with an impressive bird. Given the rather large diameter of the plate and its quite impressive decoration, it could either constitute an isolated case, since it is perhaps placed too close to the wall's corner to have been surrounded by other vessels, or it could constitute the left-hand end of a composition similar to that placed just above the window at the opposite end of the wall, albeit with vessels of larger diameter. It must be stressed here that the window placed to the left of the portal is clearly a later addition to the monument, given its differences in size, form and manufacture from the window in the right section. In fact, the initial window is still visible in Gerola's photograph from the beginning of the 20th c. (Gerola 1993: 241, fig. 280). By close examination of that photo it becomes apparent that initially at least two more vessels had been immured next to the one preserved, forming again a horizontal composition and thus verifying what has previously been supposed. It is evident that for this, lower, horizontal axis of decoration there was once again an intent for variety, judging by the fact that the preserved vessels, all of which belong to painted, glazed pottery categories, are decorated in blue and brownish lustre and in red, green and

brownish colours, just like those forming the higher, horizontal axis below the roof.

From the above analysis, it becomes evident that apart from the seventeen surviving ceramics and the four now empty recesses visible in the wall, at least two more vessels must have been originally immured in the wall to achieve symmetry in the individual compositions (fig. 22). It is also possible that at least two more were immured on the high horizontal axis below the roof, with two more next to the plate on the left part of the wall, one more below the triangular disposition, and one on top of the central vessel at the eastern window. Thus the original total was somewhere between 25 and 30 ceramics (fig. 22), at least, with the possibility of initially being much more, since it seems, based on a Gerola's photo, that at least one more vessel adorned the eastern façade of the narthex (Gerola 1993: 241, fig. 280). The feasibility of the previously mentioned scenario derives not only from the pursuit of decorative variety that has previously been noted and the need for symmetry in the form of the compositions and in the colourful result they would create, but also from the observation made by various researchers that several important repairs and additions were made to the church at various times after the 15th c., and in particular during the second half of the 19th c. and in various periods during the 20th c. as well, when another entrance to the church and the bell tower were built (Patramani 2994: 41—45; Psilakis 1994: 159; Mylopotamitaki 1998: 121, fig. 9, 125; Psilakis 1998: 150, 155—156, 158—159). It can thus be suggested that some of the initial vessels were removed and the corresponding recesses covered with additional plaster during these later phases. This seems to have been the case at least for the vessel constituting the upper arm of the cruciform disposition in the lunette of the entrance, the vessel in the position now taken by the guttering, the vessel to the left of the central vessel on top of the east window, and the vessel at the lower end of the now triangular composition at the end of the wall (fig. 22). Traces of later plaster, easily distinguishable on the surface of the façade, indicate this in the most eloquent way.

Remarks on the vessels' use and a possible patron of the narthex

Can this pursuit of symmetry simply be attributed to a very particular interest on the part of the builder-donor to create an impressive final result for the main entrance into the church? Could something more be hidden within? As previously shown, the current state of preser-

vation of the series of immured vessels in the narthex of the church of the Virgin Eleousa in Kitharida impedes us from acquiring a complete image of the vessels in the wall. However, from what has just been deduced, it becomes clear that a specific plan was followed for the decoration of the narthex (fig. 22), which allows us to speak of an "iconographic" programme implemented through its clay vessels. One can only imagine which categories of pottery were originally placed in the now empty recesses, or which other vessels were immured in line, following the previously mentioned symmetry, in positions which have now been lost due to the subsequent restorations and the addition of later plaster; what is certain, however, is that the original complete decoration would have been far more impressive (fig. 22). The extremely colourful result can be compared with the fact that the walls mostly of inland churches were painted non-white; in some cases, the walls even bore painted decoration, while some doorframes were also coloured (Gratziou 2010: 69—71, figs. 88—89; 271, fig. 287). It was also common for the built lunette over the entrance to have been painted with a mural depicting the saint to whom the church was consecrated (Borboudakis 2007: 64—65, fig. 11, 89; Gratziou 2010: 56, fig. 58, 65, fig. 77, 70—71, figs. 88—89). In the case of the lunette over the entrance of the narthex of the Virgin Eleousa, this has been adorned with a cruciform disposition of five vessels while the Virgin Mary is referenced through the "Ave Maria" verses on the vessels framing the portal.

As far as the decoration on the clay vessels is concerned, careful observation reveals that they seem to convey mostly religious meanings and connotations, though some secular realities are included. This constitutes a rare instance in the embellishment of churches with *bacini*; indeed, our systematic research on the subject in the context of the aforementioned research programme, in which we examined this type of adornment in more than 350 churches on Crete but also in mainland Greece, revealed no comparable examples. No other instance has thus far come to light in which so many vessels with particular decorative themes have been used; usually, plain glazed wares alternated with others bearing geometric or vegetal motifs. There are, of course, other churches, usually linked to monastic institutions, which, as previously mentioned, have numerous vessels immured on their exterior, generally in symmetrical dispositions, implying that a plan was followed in these cases, too. And it has already been suggested that, at least in the case

of Crete, given the prevalence of cruciform arrangements of *bacini* on the island, a symbolic meaning can be envisaged for the practice of inserting clay vessels (Yangaki 2008a: 829–831; 2013a: 382). One could even arrive at the assumption that they constituted special votive offerings made by people responsible for the construction of the church acting as patrons for its erection, particularly given the quality of the vessels used in most cases as *bacini*. However, in addition to these first two levels of connotations — the first being purely decorative and the second being purely symbolic and, if the previous assumption is correct, referring to and reflecting only upon the person/s offering the vessels — in the case of the vessels of Virgin Eleousa, one can also distinguish a third level of connotation. This level is much more complex: one could posit that the donor/s, meaning the individuals behind the decision to immure these particular vessels, and the way in which they are arranged on the wall combined the careful selection of objects which comprised stylized, in some times non-figurative, very colourful pieces pleasant to the eye of the visitor — and, as research on *bacini* shows, in line with current trends regarding the exterior decoration of churches on the island — with textual, human, animal and symbolic representations that express hidden connotations. And while these may have conveyed a symbolic meaning for the initial donor of the vessels (second level), it must also be considered that they were intended to attract the attention of the alert and devout visitor/s at a third level and to convey to them a polyvalent message in a most original and eloquent way: From a religious point of view, verses from the Catholic prayer “Ave Maria” in combination with the representation of a cross comprised of what may well be a sheep (*Agnus Dei*) and two birds, one of them possibly corresponding to a pelican, may thus also have included a religious symbolic meaning referring to the Passion (and Crucifixion) of the Christ and to Atonement and intended to prepare the visitor to enter the house of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. From a secular point of view, the plate bearing a coat of arms conveyed ownership and pride (let us not forget that several Cretan churches bore on their portals the coats of arms of feudal lords). Combined with the woman referring to the cupbearer theme, this may constitute an indirect reference to a specific elite, a noble class, one of whose members may have been responsible for this decoration. The alert visitor/s would thus pick up on specific messages, wonder who was responsible for the decoration in

question, and admire the façade for more than just one reason. In this rare case, instead of a much more costly painted decoration, clay vessels were carefully selected to convey meanings, in particular since the religiously-themed vessels are specifically placed in central positions around the entrance to convey a religious connotation, while the others, which refer to secular realities, are placed towards one end of the narthex’s wall. It is an ingenious choice and one that would have cost less than painted decoration.

And who could have been responsible for this arrangement, which does not find analogies in other churches on Crete, with the exception of the catholicon of the monastery of Valsamonero (Gallas et al. 1983: 313–321)², or in contemporary monuments on the Greek mainland, where immured vessels were usually secondary to architectural elements?

Research has not as yet yielded indisputable evidence on the donor/s that contributed to the erection of the narthex; nor there is solid evidence regarding the erection of the rest of the church, which was built, as already noted, in earlier phases. The above presentation, however, suggests a well-educated Venetian or Cretan lord who would have had the financial wherewithal and spiritual cultivation to direct an arrangement of this sort. M. Georgopoulou has pointed to the Venetian feudal lord Marinos Falieros, who was also a poet, as having participated in the decoration of the specific church (Georgopoulou 2012: 472). Indeed, according to the written sources, Marin Falier or Faletro (±1395–1474) was an important member of the Venetian nobility in Crete who possessed important fiefs in two parts of the island in particular, Pediada and Malevizi, was in possession of a considerable fortune, held high positions in the local community and was a permanent fixture on various councils (Van Gemert 1977: 7–16; Van Gemert 1980: 15–20; Bakker, Van Gemert 2002: 1–8; Van Gemert 2013: 785–796; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 10–20). He was educated, possessed significant wealth and composed varied poetic work which touched on secular and religious themes. According to documents such as those dating from 1436 and 1473, his estates included fiefs in the village of Sarchos and the surrounding area in addition to Kitharida, which lies 1.5 km away (Van Gemert 1977: 11, 41–42,

² Although, there, the interest in symmetry is restricted to a smaller space, mostly the narthex, and occupies the vertical axis of the wall.

no. III.2; 49—50, no. III.8; Van Gemert 1980: 19, note 23; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 17). While living in Crete, he maintained his contacts with Venice, which he visited several times during his life, and with that part of his family that resided there (Bakker, Van Gemert 2002: 3—4; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 14—15). Given this brief portrait — that of a feudal lord, a wealthy, educated person who maintained ties with the West and was contemporaneous with the period in which the narthex was added to the church — it can be argued that he could be the patron of the specific decoration, even if this is not self-evident. Further corroborate of this view can be found in the archival sources, which state that he showed particular interest in the villages belonging to his fiefs not becoming depopulated and the churches of the villages of Sarchos and Kitharida not being left without priests — for which goal he made a particular request to the Senate of Venice in 1436 asking that priests be ordained for these villages (Van Gemert 1977: 41—42, no. III.2; Van Gemert 1980: 19, note 23; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 16—17). Moreover, according to A. Van Gemert, he could also have been responsible for decorating churches in nearby Sarchos with Gothic architectural elements (Van Gemert 2013: 785—786, note 2; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 16—17). This profile would seem to make Marinos Falieros a suitable candidate for the patron of the building and the decoration of the narthex of the church of the Virgin Eleousa, since he would have been able to acquire imported, mostly high-quality, glazed pottery of the sort used, and also had the personality and the spiritual knowledge required to select and implement the disposition of the imured vessels in order to create a scenography at the entrance of the church which is almost theatrical. That Marinos Falieros was a devout Catholic and a devoted supporter of the union of the churches before and after the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438—1439) also constitutes an argument in favour of the above attribution (Tsirpanlis 1967: 39, note 3; Van Gemert 1977: 11, note 10; 1980: 19, note 21; 2013: 786; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 11). As we have seen, the specific decoration was carefully positioned in order to convey specific meanings. Thus, pottery from the “four corners of the Mediterranean”, which was in circulation on the island during the same period, has been carefully positioned on the façade of the narthex of this Orthodox church. Two fragments of a Catholic prayer occur, together with a possible reference to the *Agnus Dei*, a theme which was predominantly western at that period, as does a represen-

tation of a coat of arms, another western attribute. If this is combined with the previous suggestion that, on the basis of the pottery used, the narthex was most probably built between 1430 and 1450, this would mean it occurred either just before or just after the Council of Ferrara-Florence (Tsirpanlis 1967: 34, 37—41); in the latter case, it could be seen as exemplifying its patron's support for the newly-established unity. This date also seems probable given the fact that Marinos Falieros left Crete and lived in Venice during 1450—1455 as a result of the Union of the churches, which caused a gradual intensification to the relations between Cretans and Venetians (Bakker, Van Gemert 2002: 4; Van Gemert, Bakker 2014: 15). A further argument in favour of the above interpretation is the existence of a holy water stoup in the form of a rectangular recess in the wall to the right of the entrance to the narthex (fig. 2; 21). Several constructions with the same use and similar or not to the latter can be found in other Cretan churches, among them the church of the Panagia in Prinós in the prefecture of Rethymnon (Gratziou 2010: 275, 277, fig. 298, 294—295, fig. 325).

Let us not forget that even before this Union and the Council of Ferrara-Florence, “cross-religious communications” (Mersch 2015: 477) between the Latin-Catholics and Greek-Orthodox Christians of Crete existed, given the architectural and artistic evidence but also the written sources (Tsirpanlis 1967: 32; Gallas et al. 1983: 441, 443, 459; Gratziou 2010: 127—183, 215—227, 324—326). As M. Mersch puts it, churches could have served as “shared spaces” (Mersch 2015: 476—482), with Orthodox churches in the hinterland participating in this scheme of inter-religious worship (Mersch 2015: 476—477, 481—482; see as well: Gratziou 2010: 226, 304—305, 326). After the Council of Ferrara-Florence, as a consequence of the unionist movement, Venetian policy supported these efforts at union: Orthodox churches should be Uniates and there was less tolerance towards the Orthodox population of the island than in earlier periods (Tsirpanlis 1967: 34, 37—41; 1974: 114; Gratziou 2010: 226, 293, 326). It is in this new climate that the planned decoration with *bacini* under the patronage of the aforementioned personality should be viewed. If it was Marinos Falieros who arranged for the *bacini* to be laid out as they were in the narthex of the church of the Virgin Eleousa in Kitharida, he would have been expressing his own beliefs, but also, given his express interest in his land and its inhabitants, he would also have been offering the local community an expanded and renewed vision of

the church as an expression of a new era emerging in relations between the two Christian denominations on Crete.

Concluding remarks

The *bacini* that decorate the exterior wall of the narthex of the church of the Virgin Eleousa in Kitharida in Malevizi constitute, on the basis of the above analysis, a rather particular case in the study of vessels immured in the façades of churches in present-day Greece. On a first level, they inform us that various good quality, glazed ceramics were imported onto the island during the 14th and early 15th c., thus providing archaeological evidence to supplement the scant related information deriving thus far from excavations and surveys. They also offer more tangible evidence on the period in which they could have been immured, thus providing a date for the construction of the narthex, as well. However, their most important contribution, as it has hopefully been possible to demonstrate, lies in the fact that they constitute a rare case in

which clay objects were selected and used in a façade with a purpose that transcended decoration or even plain symbolism, extending to the conveying of specific meanings — mostly religious, but also secular — in order to allude to issues of concern to members of 15th-c. Cretan society.

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