Notes on Selected Recent Acquisitions of Byzantine Jewellery at the British Museum

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The Department of Prehistory and Europe in the British Museum houses one of the largest known collections of Byzantine jewellery, numbering over 750 items. The collection underwent two major periods of expansion: in the late 19th century when it benefited in particular from the collecting activities of one of the Museum's principal Victorian characters, Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, and in the last decades of the 20th century. This second collection phase reflected the diverse amount of interesting material available on the London market at the time combined with available funding. Much stricter acquisition regulations concerning provenance are now applied by the museum, meaning that the collection at present is essentially static. The 50 objects selected here are intended to give a flavour of the purchases made during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Belt-fittings

Gold

1. Gold buckle
   Byzantine, 7th century
   L. 44mm, W. 19mm, Wt 16.10g
   Reg. no. PE 1976.9-10.1

   Gold buckle with lyre-shaped plate joined by a hinge to both tongue and loop. The ovoid loop, which has a moulded tongue-rest, is engraved with geometric ornament; the tongue is hollow-cast and has a basal cube engraved with similar ornament, which is replicated beneath the tip of the tongue and the reverse of the loop. The hinge consists of eight scallops, visible from above as twin trefoils, the top edge deeply incised with 'dot and comma' ornament. The plate is embossed with a Latin cross, the head and arms scalloped and the foot terminating in a roundel; the decoration, stamped from either side, consists of concentric punch-marks with rosette bosses in the corners of the cross, at the intersection of the arms and in the centre of the roundel at the foot. The plate has a side running all round it, but no back plate was ever fitted; on the reverse, four attachment lugs.

   Although numerous copper-alloy buckles with cruciform plates have survived, I know of no examples made of gold. The closest parallel to this buckle is one in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, which replicates the shape of the tongue and loop, the construction of the hinge, the use of a fret design on the top of the tongue and, on the loop, of the 'dot and comma' ornament. The decorative technique of the plate is also very similar with its concentric punch-marks and bosses stamped from behind and an identical chip-carved engraved design. A final analogous feature is the use of the leaf-shaped motif under the tip of the tongue, which is so close as to suggest that the two buckles may have been made in the same workshop. The Dumbarton Oaks buckle was said to have come from a small treasure consisting of a necklace, a pendant cross, a bracelet, a pair of earrings, and a gold and niello marriage ring, all probably dating on stylistic grounds to the first half of the 7th century. The British Museum buckle also shares certain technical features with another gold buckle in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, this of Werner's Type 'Trebizond', which was said to have been found with two solidi of Heraclius (613–30).

   Published: Cormack and Vassilaki (n. 11), no. 132, 179 and 412.

2. Gold buckle
   Constantinople (?), 7th century
   L. 98mm, W. 39mm, Wt 52g
   Reg. no. PE 1980.7-8.1

   Gold buckle with cruciform plate joined by a hinge to both tongue and loop. The loop consists of eight scallops, visible from above as twin trefoils, the top edge deeply incised with 'dot and comma' ornament. The plate is embossed with a Latin cross, the head and arms scalloped and the foot terminating in a roundel; the decoration, stamped from either side, consists of concentric punch-marks with rosette bosses in the corners of the cross, at the intersection of the arms and in the centre of the roundel at the foot. The plate has a side running all round it, but no back plate was ever fitted; on the reverse, four attachment lugs.

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   Published: Cormack and Vassilaki (n. 11), no. 132, 179 and 412.
3. **Gold strap end**  
Byzantine, 7th century  
L. 30mm, W. 24mm, Wt 7.60g  
Reg. no. PE 1982.5-7.1

Gold strap end of hollow-box construction, shield-shaped, with rounded end, straight sides, and an aperture for the strap. The front is decorated with a heart-shaped motif with punched geometric ornament, including the ‘dot and comma’ design, above and below; the border is embossed and chased in imitation of swaged wire and granulation. On the back is a central vegetal motif with further geometric ornament.

Similar pieces are known from the Mersin treasure in Turkey\(^{16}\) and from near Naples in Italy\(^{17}\) to name but a few. Particularly close parallels for the geometric ornament can be seen on belt-fittings from Kunágota and Ozora-Tótipuszta in Hungary.\(^{18}\) The form was also imitated in bronze.\(^{19}\) This and the following two examples probably belonged to composite belt-sets.

Published: Andrásí (n. 17), 74–5, fig. 10; Cormack and Vassilaki (n. 11), no. 133, 179 and 412.9.

4. **Gold mount**  
Byzantine, late 6th–7th century  
L. 18mm, W. 17mm, Wt 2.69g  
Reg. no. PE 1985.3-4.18

Gold mount of thin sheet, shield-shaped (now badly buckled), with down-turned edges; punched ‘dot and comma’ and other geometric ornament beneath a line across the top; on the reverse, two attachment lugs.

Mounts of this simple form and construction are known from, *inter alia*, the Crimea,\(^{20}\) Syria,\(^{21}\) Italy\(^{22}\) and Hungary,\(^{23}\) and are too numerous to list here.

Unpublished.

5. **Gold strap end**  
Byzantine, 7th century  
L. 43.2, W. 21mm, Wt 9.75g  
Reg. no. PE 1986.10.1.1

Gold strap-end of hollow box construction with openwork head-plate, straight sides and a vesica-shaped foot; the strap held in place by two rivets, one now missing; the centre of the plate decorated with a stylised symmetrical foliate motif enclosed by engraved and punched ‘dot and comma’ and other geometric ornament. On the reverse is an elongated double-lobed opening.

Published: Andrásí (n. 17), 74, no. 1, fig. 9.

Silver

6. **Silver buckle**  
Byzantine, 7th century  
L. 42.8mm, W. 21mm  
Reg. no. PE 1993.6-1.1

Silver buckle with ovoid loop and moulded tongue-rest; the tongue-shaped plate is engraved with a symmetrical foliate motif; pierced at the base of the plate; on the reverse, two attachment lugs.

The highly stylised symmetrical foliate motif with scroll-like terminals is reminiscent of the ornament found on some of the brooches and belt-fittings from Martynivka, some of the horse-fittings and belt-tabs from Nocera Umbra, and on some of the belt-tabs from Kiskőrös and Kunágota in Hungary.\(^{24}\)

Unpublished.

7. **Gilded copper-alloy buckle-plate**  
Byzantine, 7th century  
L. 70.5mm, W. 28.3mm  
Reg. no. PE 1984.10.4.1

Gilded copper-alloy buckle-plate with waisted profile and two hinges at the top and a small projecting knop at the bottom. The plate is decorated with the figure of a crocodile enclosed by three contiguous borders: the outer imitating square-toothed wire, the middle in the form of a debased herring-bone pattern, and the inner in the form of a snake’s body terminating in two snakes’ heads. At the head of the plate, chip-carved decoration possibly representing two confronted quadrupeds; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

This belongs to Werner’s Type ‘Trebizond’,\(^{25}\) with examples known in both gold and bronze.\(^{26}\) An example of the former, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, is decorated with a sea-monster instead of a crocodile; it was found with two *solidi* of Heraclius.\(^{28}\)

Unpublished.

8. **Copper-alloy buckle-plate**  
Byzantine, c. 650–750  
Said to have been found in Sicily.  
L. 42mm, W. 25mm  
Reg. no. PE 1991.12.8.2
Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops and an openwork, sub-triangular plate terminating in a medallion; the medallion engraved with a seated (?) figure at left apparently blessing a smaller figure at right; in the field, two crosses; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

This belongs to Werner’s Type ‘Corinth’ and Csallány’s Group 7, which enjoyed a wide geographical distribution with examples found in Spain, Sardinia and mainland Italy, Sicily, Greece, Albania, Bosnia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Crimea and Turkey. The medallions on these buckles are variously decorated with chevrons, crosses, cruciform monograms, ring and dot motifs, or diminutive figures, the latter in some instances perhaps representing a stylised Annunciation.

Unpublished.

10. Copper-alloy buckle
Byzantine, late 6th – early 7th century
L. 52.2mm, W. 29.5mm
Reg. no. PE 1984,10-4-2

Copper-alloy buckle with openwork plate and ovoid hoop with moulded tongue-rest; the tongue, which has a basal cube, is threaded through a hole at the top of the plate; the plate engraved with simple geometric decoration; on the reverse, three attachment lugs, two of which are broken.

This appears to be a slight variant of Schulze-Dörrlamm’s Types D7 and D8, examples of which are known from Egypt, the Crimea, Morocco and Spain. Although sharing the same form of hoop, tongue, plate, and engraved ornament resembling hatching, they differ from the Museum’s example in the openwork designs of their plates which form either a cross or a vertical bar with two internal volutes.

Unpublished.

11. Copper-alloy buckle
Byzantine, c. 600–50
L. 42mm, W. 23mm
Reg. no. PE 1980,11-6-5

Copper-alloy buckle with trapezoidal loop and a tongue-shaped plate with an openwork face-mask design; the tongue, which has a basal rectangle, is threaded through a hole at the top of the plate and fused to the top of the loop; on the reverse, three broken attachment lugs.

This buckle belongs to Schulze-Dörrlamm’s Type D2, a slight variant of Werner’s Type ‘Sucidava’. Its distribution is largely restricted to the Crimea and Romania, although examples from Macedonia and Egypt are also known.

Unpublished.

12. Copper-alloy buckle
Byzantine, late 6th - middle of 7th century
L. 42.2mm, W. 24.5mm
Reg. no. PE 1980,11-6,6

Copper-alloy buckle with cruciform plate, ovoid loop with tongue-rest, and lyre-shaped plate terminating in a roundel engraved with a cruciform monogram resolving as ΠΕΩΡΙΟΥ (‘of Georgios’); the tongue missing; on the reverse, two attachment lugs, one broken.

This buckle belongs to Schulze-Dörrlamm’s Type D15. An identical example is known from S. Mauro Sotto (Caltagirone) in Sicily. Other examples of this type, but with different cruciform monograms, are known from Athens, Medinet-el-Fayum in Egypt, the shipwreck at Yassi Ada off the south-western coast of Turkey, the Uluköy-Hacolar region, Afyon, also in Turkey, and from Szekszárd-Bogyszló in Hungary.

Unpublished.

13. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th century - early 8th century
H. 29.5mm, W. 42mm
Reg. no. 1983,10-1,12

Copper-alloy buckle with ovoid loop with tongue-rest and lyre-shaped plate terminating in a roundel engraved with a cruciform monogram resolving as ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ (‘of Georgios’); the tongue missing; on the reverse, two attachment lugs, one broken.

This buckle is a slightly larger variant of Schulze-Dörrlamm’s Type D22, a type which enjoyed a wide distribution throughout the Mediterranean and its hinterlands with particular concentrations in the Crimea and Asia Minor.

Unpublished.
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Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops; the U-shaped plate cast and punched in low relief with a lion with frontal head to left; on the reverse, three attachment lugs, one of which is broken.

A number of similar examples have been found at Cava Ipsica, Comiso and Syracuse in Sicily. A slight variant of this type, showing a lion fighting another animal, is known from Corinth.

Unpublished.

14. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th century–early 8th century
L. 41mm, W. 28mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,12-8,1

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops and a plate of insect-like form with knobbed terminal, punched wing-like mouldings and ring and dot ‘eyes’; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

This and the following six examples all have plates which have been described in the literature as ‘insect-like’, with the degree of stylisation more pronounced the smaller the plates become. Their distribution seems to be almost entirely restricted to the western and central Mediterranean, namely Spain, Italy and Sicily.

Unpublished.

15. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), 7th century
L. 50mm, W. 26.5mm
Reg. no. PE 1990,6-4,9

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two broken hinge-loops and a plate of insect-like form with knobbed terminal, wing-like mouldings and ring and dot ‘eyes’; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Unpublished.

16. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), 7th century
Said to have been found in Sicily.
L. 38mm, W. 18mm
Reg. no. 1995,11-7,4

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops and a plate of insect-like form with knobbed terminal, wing-like mouldings and ring and dot ‘eyes’; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Unpublished.
20. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), 7th century
Said to have been found in Sicily.
L. 37.50mm, W. 18mm
Reg. no. 1995,11-7,5

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two broken hinge-loops and a plate of insect-like form with a knobbled terminal, wing-like mouldings and ring and dot ‘eyes’; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Unpublished.

21. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), 7th century
Said to have been found in Sicily.
L. 31.50mm, W. 17.50mm
Reg. no. 1995,11-7,6

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops with the remains of a corroded pin and a U-shaped plate; engraved and punched with the figure of a stylised bird to left; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Buckles of this form and stylised animal decoration have predominantly been found in the western Mediterranean, in particular Sicily\textsuperscript{44} and Italy\textsuperscript{45}, although examples from Greece are also known.\textsuperscript{46}

Unpublished.

22. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th–early 8th century
H. 22mm, W. 34.5mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,1-2,1

Copper-alloy buckle-plate almost identical to no. 23, but with both hinge-loops and one of the attachment lugs broken.

Unpublished.

23. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th–early 8th century
H. 23mm, W. 35.5mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,1-2,2

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with one intact hinge-loop and a U-shaped plate; engraved and punched with the figure of a stylised animal (a lion ?) to left; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Like the previous example, buckles of this type tend to have been found in either Sicily\textsuperscript{47} or southern Italy.\textsuperscript{48}

Unpublished.

24. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th–early 8th century
H. 22mm, W. 32mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,1-2,3

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops with the remains of a corroded pin and a U-shaped plate; punched and engraved with an eight-pointed star; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Similar examples are known from Cotominello, San Mauro Sotto and Centuripe, all in Sicily.\textsuperscript{49}

Unpublished.

25. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th–early 8th century
H. 23mm, W. 36mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,1-2,4

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops with the remains of a corroded pin and a U-shaped plate; punched and engraved with the figure of a stylised bird to left; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

Like the previous example, buckles of this form and stylised animal decoration have predominantly been found in the western Mediterranean, in particular Sicily\textsuperscript{50} and Italy,\textsuperscript{51} although examples from Greece are also known.\textsuperscript{52}

Unpublished.

26. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Sicily (?), second half of 7th–early 8th century
H. 22.5mm, W. 34mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,1-2,5

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with two hinge-loops with the remains of a pin and a plate of insect-like form with a knobbled terminal, wing-like mouldings and ring and dot ‘eyes’; on the reverse, three attachment lugs, one broken.

Unpublished.
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25. Copper-alloy buckle
Byzantine, second half of 7th–early 8th century
L. 56mm, W. 26mm
Reg. no. PE 1985,10-10,1

Copper-alloy buckle-plate almost identical to no. 25, but one of the hinge-loops and one of the attachment lugs broken.

Unpublished.

27. Copper-alloy reliquary buckle
Sicily (?), 7th century
L. 25mm, W. 61.5mm, H. 16.2mm
Reg. no. PE 1991,6-2,1

Copper-alloy reliquary buckle with long rectangular body with rounded end; engraved on the front with two confronted quadrupeds; on the side-plate, further linear ornament; below the rim of the base a deep groove into which the missing back-plate would have fitted; each of the two hinge-loops has the remains of a corroded pin.

Like the preceding five examples this type of buckle seems to be almost exclusively a western Mediterranean type. It is typified by its deep long narrow body; either the front or the back could slide back to reveal the cavity for the relic. A rough terminus post quem for this type is provided by an analogous example in a private collection in Munich where both the second animal is replaced by a cruciform monogram, invoking ‘Theotokos, protect’, suggesting a date of not before the middle of the 6th century.63 A not dissimilar example is from Prizzi in Sicily.64

Unpublished.

28. Copper-alloy buckle-plate
Italy (?), 6th–7th century
L. 32.3mm, W. 22mm
Reg. no. 1991,10-7,1

Copper-alloy mount in the form of a central openwork chi-rho attached to two rectangular openwork elements, each of which terminate in symmetrical vegetal motifs and attachment rings.

Unpublished.

29. Copper-alloy mount
Byzantine, 4th century
H. 34.8mm, W. 39.2mm
Reg. no. 1980,11-6,7

Copper-alloy buckle-plate with four hinge-loops and intact pin; the plate engraved with a circle enclosing a Latin monogram; between the monogram and hinge, two foliate scrolls; on the reverse, three broken attachment lugs.

This buckle belongs to Type ‘Hippo Regius’ whose distribution is concentrated in the central Mediterranean.64 The closest example to it is in a private collection in Munich which differs, however, in having the inscription Φω/Ζω (‘Light, life’) instead of a monogram.65 An Italian provenance is suggested by the form of monogram which closely resembles those found on the coinage of the Vandalic and Ostrogothic kings.66

Unpublished.

30. Copper-alloy buckle
Byzantine, second half of 7th–early 8th century
L. 56mm, W. 26mm
Reg. no. PE 1985,10-10,1

Copper-alloy buckle with ovoid loop with moulded tongue-rest and a sub-triangular openwork plate terminating in an oval medallion engraved with a cross; at the junction of the plate and medallion, two pierced projections resembling stylised birds’ heads in profile; the plate, engraved and punched with circles and triangles; the loop, which is attached to the plate by two hinges, is bent almost at a right angle to the plate; on the reverse, two attachment lugs, one broken.

An almost identical example is known from Palmyra in Syria67 and a slight variant from Jerash in Jordan.68

Unpublished.

31. Gilded copper-alloy buckle
Byzantine, 6th–7th century (?)
L. 48.5mm, W. 22.2mm
Reg. no. PE 1985,10-10,2

Gilded copper-alloy buckle with ovoid loop with tongue-rest and a sub-pear-shaped plate engraved with a debased symmetrical foliate motif; the tongue is threaded through a hole at the top of the plate; on the reverse, two attachment lugs.

Unpublished.
Copper-alloy buckle with ovoid loop with moulded tongue-rest and the plate terminating in a medallion with a prominent knop; the tongue, which has a basal rectangle, is attached to the plate by a hinge composed of five loops; the medallion is cast and engraved with a wolf biting a horned animal; between the hinge and medallion, two stylised human faces; on the reverse, three attachment lugs.

I know of no exact parallels, but the arrangement of two stylised faces can be seen on Visigothic buckles from Spain. The type would seem to be a variant of a complete version of no. 34, where the busts of Peter and Paul have become extremely stylised.

Unpublished.

Gilded copper-alloy buckle fragment in the form of a medallion with a knop; embossed and engraved with a frontal bust of Christ with a cruciform nimbus, holding a book in his right hand, and with his left emerging from his robe in a gesture of benediction; around, a border imitating beaded wire.

Buckles with similar busts of Christ, but with two additional busts (the apostles Peter and Paul?), are in the Walters Art Museum, a private collection in Munich, and the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum in Jerusalem.

Unpublished.

Copper-alloy buckle plate in the form of an openwork heart with a projecting knop at its base; there are two hinge-loops with the remains of a pin and two attachment lugs on the reverse.

This belongs to Werner’s Type ‘Bologna’. Examples are known from the Crimea, Samos, Mount Nebo, Carthage, Corinth, Sicily, Sardinia, and mainland Italy.

Unpublished.
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Copper-alloy buckle, the tongue wanting; the oval openwork hoop with a moulded, grooved tongue-rest and a deep oblong depression at its base with the remains of a fastening pin for the tongue; the openwork plate with two moulded projections and a rectangular aperture through which the belt would have been threaded. The deep sides of the buckle-hoop have a slightly angled and rounded profile; the sides of the buckle pounced with stylised vegetal and geometric ornament.

Unpublished.

Necklace pendants

The following six objects, five pendants and a clasp, were found on the Karpas peninsula in northern Cyprus shortly before the First World War. Although the shape of the pendants is by no means uncommon for the Early Byzantine period, they do share a number of unusual technical features which perhaps support a later date, in particular the different types and combinations of decorative wire employed, which include: beaded wire for the outer and inner borders (nos 38–42); undulating strip set edgeways and a running scroll of closed S-shapes (no. 38); undulating strip set edgeways and corrugated strip set facing (nos 39–40); and finally, corrugated strip set facing (nos 41 and 42). Both the undulating strip set edgeways and the border of closed S-shaped scrolls can be paralleled on rings, earrings, and necklace clasps normally dated to the 6th and 7th centuries, although both types of wire can equally be found on Carolingian and Ottonian metalwork in the West and on 10th–12th century jewellery in the eastern Mediterranean. The corrugated strip set facing is, however, much harder to parallel and I know of only one comparable piece, a pendant in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Kassel, which has been dated to the 5th to 6th century. This date again may well be too early as the technique (or variants on it) are observable on both Western and Eastern objects dating from the 10th century onwards. A final feature which reinforces the idea of a Middle Byzantine date for this group is the drawing striations which can be observed between the grooves of the beaded wire on no. 38, indicating that it is drawn wire.

Unpublished.

38. Gold and glass necklace pendant
Cyprus (?), 9th–10th century (?)
L. 46.5mm, W. 33.50mm, Wt 6.27g
Reg. no. PE 1981,5-5,1

Gold openwork pendant, almond-shaped, with a suspension loop of triple-ridged strip and a central glass bead. Twelve flattened hollow spheres are soldered between an outer border of corrugated strip set edgeways, and an inner border consisting of a running scroll of closed S-shapes. The glass bead is drilled longitudinally and threaded on a gold wire which is soldered above and twisted below. Three amorphous strips of gold are soldered on either side of the upper sphere. Beaded wire runs along the outside and the inside of the gold work.

Published: Whitfield (n. 91), fig. 13; Ogden (n. 91), fig. 3.

39. Gold and glass necklace pendant
Cyprus (?), 9th–10th century (?)
L. 45.5mm, W. 32.2mm, Wt 7.27g
Reg. no. PE 1981,5-5,2

Gold openwork pendant similar to no. 38, with the exception that the inner running scroll of closed S-shapes has been replaced by corrugated strip set facing.

Unpublished.

40. Gold and glass necklace pendant
Cyprus (?), 9th–10th century (?)
L. 48.2mm, W. 32.2mm, Wt 7.63g
Reg. no. PE 1981,5-5,3

Gold openwork pendant, a pair to no. 39.

Unpublished.

41. Gold and glass necklace pendant
Cyprus (?), 9th–10th century (?)
L. 41mm, W. 27.5mm, Wt 4.83g
Reg. no. PE 1981,5-5,4

Gold openwork pendant, almond-shaped, with a suspension loop of triple-ridged strip and two centrally threaded glass beads. Ten flattened hollow spheres are soldered between an outer border of gold strip and an inner border of corrugated strip set facing. Two glass beads, the larger one almond-shaped and opaque, the smaller spherical and green, are drilled longitudinally and threaded on a gold wire soldered above and twisted below. The upper sphere is partially masked on both sides by approximately circular strips of gold, and a similar strip covers the upper end of the wire on which the beads are threaded. Swaged wire runs around the outside and the inside of the goldwork.

Unpublished.
42. Gold and glass necklace pendant

Cyprus (?), 9th–10th century (?)
L. 41mm, W. 26.5mm, Wt 4.34g
Reg. no. PE1981.5-5.5

Gold openwork pendant, a pair to no. 41, with the exception that the two beads have been replaced by an incomplete bead and a seed-pearl.

Unpublished.

43. Gold cylinder

Cyprus (?), 9th–10th century (?)
L. 31mm, D. 10mm, Wt 2.35g
Reg. no. PE1981.5-5.6

Gold cylinder, the body divided into four sections each embossed with three symmetrical vegetal motifs. It is damaged in two places.

This object could have served a number of functions. Although it bears a superficial resemblance to a necklace-clasp, most Early Byzantine clasps are circular in shape, openwork in design, and with attachment loops soldered to the outer edge of the goldwork. On the other hand, gold cylinders, often hexagonal in section, were commonly used as necklace-links/spacers in the 6th and 7th centuries.

Byzantine clasps are circular in shape, generally hollow, the chain being threaded through the loops which are reasonably uniform, were created when the loops were broken. If so this cylinder may have functioned as an amulet case. Unpublished.

Jewellery hoard

The seven objects described below (nos 44–50) were understood by the vendor to have been found together and the internal stylistic and technical homogeneity of the group would support this. Individual objects are related by the techniques of hollow-box construction (nos 44 and 45), of chased and embossed opus interrasile (nos 46 and 47), of butt-soldering (nos 44–46), by the use of triple-ridged strip (nos 44, 45 and 47), of flattened granules (nos 44 and 46) and of square-toothed wire (nos 46 and 47). In addition the gold of all these objects has a remarkably consistent colour and appearance. This group must originally have formed part of a larger hoard, as four of the objects would seem to form part of two separate necklaces. The repoussé leaf-shaped pendant (no. 45) would have been suspended on one side of the pendant cross (no. 44), with another missing pendant to complement it. The two opus interrasile pendants (nos 46 and 47) were also probably suspended from the same necklace, but whether the almond-shaped pendant was the principal/central one is uncertain as leaf-shaped pendants were normally, but not exclusively, suspended on either side of a central pendant cross. In composition this hoard has some superficial similarities to several other Early Byzantine treasures, notably that from Mersin.

44. Gold cross

Byzantine, 7th century
L. 55.8mm, W. 37.2mm, Wt 7.42g
Reg. no. PE1981.1-4.1

Gold cross of hollow-box construction, the stamped and chased obverse fashioned in one piece and butt-soldered to a plain gold reverse. The arms of the cross end in fleurons flanking a small medallion decorated with a whorl design, and the centre is in the form of a quadrilobe containing a cross. The suspension loop is of triple-ridged strip with a flattened stud-like granule in the angle between the loop and the obverse of the cross. Early Byzantine pendant crosses with figural representation or foliate/geometric motifs fall into three separate but interrelated categories. Crosses of the first type have slightly flaring arms ending in medallions, sometimes framed with fleurons, containing busts of the evangelists or of St John and the Virgin, or personifications of the sun and moon and the two soldiers casting lots; in the centre is the crucified Christ or, more rarely, the Virgin. The second type also has flaring arms ending in medallions, again framed with fleurons, but instead of busts, the medallions are decorated with whorls, foliate motifs or small crosses. The figure of Christ or the Virgin is replaced in the centre by a quadrilobe or cross, or a shallow setting, in either of these forms. The final type is a hybrid of the previous two having flaring arms with figural medallions of the first type, but with either a real or imitative cruciform or quadrilobe setting in the centre. This cross, together with the leaf-shaped pendant (no. 45), would have formed part of a typical 7th-century necklace whose design was perhaps ultimately derived from a well-known sculptural motif which Talbot Rice termed a ‘leaved cross’, consisting of a cross standing erect, framed on either side by a plant or leaf motif, whose origin he traced to a slab from the church of SS Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople, constructed between 527 and 536.

An almost identical example to the above cross is in a private collection in Munich. Three very similar crosses, two of which were found with coins of Heraclius, are in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection: they differ, however, in that the central quadrilobe is not repoussé, but in the shape of a cruciform opening clearly intended to hold a gem or paste. The same is true of two crosses found in the district of Agios Vasileios, near Rethymnon, and now in the Historical Museum, Herakleion, and another from Kéléguïiskie Khoutora in the Ukraine. A somewhat ‘debased’ version is known from Ozora-Tótipuszta in Hungary, found with coins of Constantine IV struck in 669–70.

Unpublished.
Gold pendant of hollow-box construction in the shape of a curved leaf; the convex obverse, which is damaged, is stamped and chased with foliate designs; the suspension loop is of triple-ribbed strip, the angle between the loop and the obverse masked by a short length of the same strip. On the reverse is a roughly triangular-shaped flap of sheet.

Leaf-shaped pendants executed in repoussé are known from necklaces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Unpublished.

46. Gold, amethyst and pearl pendant
Byzantine, 7th century
L. 42.9mm, W. 19.3mm, Wt 2.10g
Reg. no. PE 1981,1-4,3
Gold almond-shaped pendant executed in opus interrasile. Seven hollow spheres, butt-soldered from hemispheres, are soldered to a strip of gold attached by six loops to an openwork plaque, in the centre of which is an almond-shaped hole edged with square-toothed wire soldered to the plaque. An amethyst, drilled longitudinally, is threaded on a wire soldered above and twisted below the hole. Seed-pearls, strung on wire, are threaded through the six loops. The suspension loop is of convex plain strip with a flattened stud-like granule at the angle between the loop and the front of the pendant. A similar feature covers the upper end of the wire on which the amethyst is threaded. There is also a piece of wire wrapped around the base of the suspension loop.

Pendants of this general design enjoyed great popularity in the 6th and 7th centuries: the Empress Theodora, for instance, is bedecked with a necklace with similar pendants on the San Vitale mosaics. This pendant may have been worn in conjunction with the following leaf-shaped pendant (no. 47), serving either as the central pendant of a necklace, or more likely, as on a necklace from the Mersin treasure, as a subsidiary piece.

Published: Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 2.III.8.3; Yeroulanou (n. 87), no. 129, 227.

47. Gold leaf-shaped pendant
Byzantine, 7th century
L. 42.2mm, W. 19.3mm, Wt 2.10g
Reg. no. PE 1981,1-4,4
Gold opus interrasile pendant in the shape of a curved leaf with embossed and chased foliate designs and outlined with square-toothed wire soldered to the face of the plaque. A slightly flattened granule is soldered to the face at the tip. The suspension loop is of triple-ridged strip.

The best parallels for this pendant are two leaf-shaped pendants in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia, both of which have similar chased designs and granules at the tips of their faces. Two necklaces in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and one from the Mersin treasure in the Hermitage, St Petersburg, also have pendants of a similar form.

Published: Yeroulanou (n. 87), no. 135, 228.

48. Gold bracelet
Byzantine, 7th century
L. 37.5 x 5.1mm, Wt 13.40g
Reg. no. PE 1981,1-4,6
Oval gold bracelet in the form of a tube tapering towards the ends, one of which has a triple-ribbed ferrule. Halfway round the thickest part of the tube, on the outside, is soldered a length of beaded wire, rubbed almost smooth.

Similar bracelets are known from Cyprus, Mersin, Constantinople and Sicily. Unpublished.
in this paper, but I list here in abbreviated form her relevant parallels according to the catalogue numbers in my article:

2. Gold cruciform buckle: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Types E1–E3, 9–15, with the Museum’s example published on 13, Abb. 3.

5. Gold strap end: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Types H3 and H4 and no. 584, 247, for similar symmetrical foliate decoration on silver and gold belt fittings respectively from Eski Kermen in the Crimea, and Asia Minor.

8. Buckle-plate of Type ‘Corinth’: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Type E6, 19–26.


30. Buckle: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Type F1, 136–9.

33. Buckle-plate: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Type E23, 71–7, for slight variants.

34. Buckle fragment with Christ: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Type E28, 89–91.

36. Buckle-plate of Type ‘Bologna’: Schulze-Dörrlamm *ibid.*, Type E8, 29–33.

Notes
1. This article was not presented as a paper at the conference. I would like to thank Christoph Eger and Noel Adams for their comments.


3. Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 2), 184–6; cf. no. 11 below.

4. Inv. no. AM 1909, 82.


8. Ross (n. 5), no. 4F, 7–8, pl. X.


14. Ross (n. 5), no. 4F, 7–8, pl. X.

15. *ibid.*, no. 6H, 11, pl. XIV. The rosset bosses which decorate the plate are also reminiscent of another 7th-century buckle type, Werner’s Type ‘Riva San Vitale’ (J. Werner, ‘Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen aus Riva San Vitale’, *Sibirum* 3 (1957), 79), which Eger dates from the mid-7th to the early 8th century: see *Eger, this volume, in particular Pls 9 and 11*.


18. Garam (n. 2), pls 87 and 99.


20. Albabin (n. 2), pl. 43:3–19.
Notes on Selected Recent Acquisitions of Byzantine Jewellery at the British Museum

21 Ross (n. 5), no. 42A, 41–2, pl. XXXIV.
22 A. Pasqui, ‘Necropoli barbarica di Nocera Umbra’, Monumenti Antichi 25 (1918), 137–352, at 310, fig. 165.
23 Garam (n. 2), pl. 85.
28 Werner (n. 30), no. 184–6.
29 Werner (n. 25), 47; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, ibid., nos 731–2, 120–1, pl. 19; A.H.S. Megaw, Die Funde aus Sizilien 149–52, Abb. 5.
30 Werner (n. 25), 47; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, ibid., 48.
31 Werner (n. 25), 47, Papanikola-Bakirtzi (n. 13), no. 480, for six examples found in a tomb in the basilica at Timiolo, and no. 481 for a further two examples.
32 Ibid., 48.
33 Ibid., 48.
34 Garam (n. 2), pl. 621, 313.
35 N. Proftantová, ‘The Middle Avar period and the problem of a “cultural change”’, Antaurus 29–30 (2008), 215–32, at 223, fig. 3.
37 Lightfoot (n. 2), no. 15, 86.
38 I. Mikučiūn, Sp触动tine and švyﮣtine: Pr moltai būstininkų Biejtinų, Nordmakdonien, Munich, 2002, pl. 47.9 (from Cučer).
39 See Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 2), nos 245–6, 156–7, pl. 49); also, R. Steen, ‘Intelligible Beauty’ (n. 2), pl. 4.2, 2.2.
40 Garam (n. 2), pl. 90, 54.5 and 105.5.
41 Garam (n. 2), ibid., no. 433, 154.
42 Stiegemann (n. 2), nos 123, 341–2; Wamser (n. 16), no. 442, 279.
43 Eger (n. 2), no. 8, 344–5, fig. 2.3.
44 Garam (n. 2), 90, pl. 54.2.
45 Werners (n. 25), 47–8, pl. 5.3.
46 Albaini (n. 2), pl. 42: 10, 13.
47 Gavrutiuca (n. 38), fig. 20.15.
48 Eger (n. 2), 437, pl. 93.14, 446, pl. 4.5.
49 Davidson (n. 52), no. 219, pl. 114 for a slight variant.
50 Riemer (n. 2), 448, pl. 101.9 (from Chiaramonte Gufi).
51 Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 4.1, 233 (from Maria Storici). See W. Wroth, ‘The monogram types, the closest being those of the Apostelmonogramme, Antiquitaten of S. Tommaso, Cimitile); Arena et al. (n. 19), no. II.5, 374–5 (from Southern Italy).
52 For see for instance the pendants worn by the Empress Theodora on the San Vitale mosaics, as illustrated by Stolz, this volume, Pl. 2.
53 For earlier examples of the strip set edgeway, see for instance the openwork hoops of a ring in the Benaki Museum (B. Segall, Katalog der Goldschmiede-Arbeiten: Museum Benaki, Athens, Athens, 1938, no. 256, 162, pl. 50), and one in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (C. Katsougiannopoulou, ibid., 48, 1935), and an earring in the Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens (Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 475, 97. For the scroll of closed S-shapes, see a number of gold earrings in the British Museum (O.M. Dalton, Catalogue of the Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum, London, 1901, nos 268–70, 44, pl. V) and in the Benaki Museum (Segall ibid., nos 245–6, 156–7, pl. 49); also, A. Yeroulanou, Diacreia. Gold pierced-work jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th century, Athens, 1999, no. 464, 278. Also noteworthy are a group of copper-alloy earrings composed of openwork filigree wire in the form of crosses and scrolls which have traditionally been ascribed to Egypt (see Pupinokola-Bakirtzi (n. 13), no. 554 (with bibliography) for two pairs in the Benaki Museum, Athens). As with the gold filigree examples they are normally dated to the 6th and 7th centuries. I am not aware, however, of the existence of any
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reliable archaeological evidence to justify this dating and it may well be that both groups are later than supposed.

88 For later Western examples as, for instance, exemplified by three Ottonian brooches in the British Museum’s collection - the Towneley brooch, the Dowgate Hill brooch, and a brooch set with a Roman cameo from the Franks Bequest – see: J. Ogden, ‘The Technology of Medieval Jewellery’, in D.A. Scott, J. Podany and B.B. Considine (eds), Ancient & Historic Metals. Conservation and Scientific Research, Getty Conservation Institute Malibu, 1994, 153–82, at 168–71, figs 12, 17; I am grateful to Jack Ogden for this reference. For jewellery in the East, see in particular the so-called basket earrings of the 11th or 12th centuries, both Byzantine and Islamic: A. Gonosová and C. Kondoleon, Art of Late Rome and Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1994, nos 28 and 30; Papanikola-Bakirtzi (n. 13), no. 558; H.C. Evans and W.D. Wixom (eds), The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era AD 843–1261, New York, 1994, no. 274, where an Islamic origin for these earrings is argued.

89 F. Naumann, Antiker Schmuck (Katalog dargestellt unter der Sonderausstellung vom 31.5 bis 31.8.1980), Melsungen, 1980, no. 29, pl. 8. A not dissimilar piece is an earring from Kyrenia in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia, which appears to have corrugated strip set facing, but which is in reality beaded wire (A. Pierides, Jewellery in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, 1971, pl. XXXVII, no. 3, 29).

90 For a brief discussion of corrugated or undulating strip in a historical context, see: Ogden (n. 88), 168–71.

91 N. Whiffield, ‘Round Wire in the Early Middle Ages’, Jewellery Studies 4 (1990), 13–28, fig. 12; J. M. Ogden, ‘Classical Gold Wire’, Jewellery Studies 5 (1991), 95–105, fig. 3. The origins of drawn wire are still uncertain, although Ogden (n. 88), has recently remarked: ‘on the basis of our current knowledge, it is possible to conclude that gold wire-drawing probably first appeared in the Western world in about the seventh or eighth century CE’. It was certainly widespread in northern Europe by around 800 (cf. Whiffield, ibid., 24–6). The gold earring in the British Museum illustrated by Oddy (A. Oddy, ‘Gold wire in Antiquity’, Aurum 5 (1981), 8–12, fig. 10), and sometimes stated to be an early example of 7th-century Byzantine drawn wire, is in fact a much later Middle Byzantine type.

92 Links of this form have a long tradition going back at least the 3rd century.


94 Banck (n. 16), no. 104, fig. 104.


96 For a necklace in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection with two pendant amulet cases flanking a cross, see: Ross (n. 5), no. 6B, 10, pl. XII; for three 7th-century examples from the Mytilene treasure, see: Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 2.III.92–2.3, 146–7, fig. 14.

97 For three variants, see a necklace in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection which has two leaf-shaped pendants flanking a rectangular pendant stamped with a cross (Ross (n. 5), no. 6A, 10, pl. XIII), a necklace in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, which has two leaf-shaped pendants in the centre with a circular pendant on either side of them (H. Pierce and R. Tyler, Lurt byzantin. II, Paris, 1991, pl. 189C), and a necklace from the Mersin treasure with a cross flanked by one circular and one leaf-shaped pendant (V. Zalesskaya, Monuments of Byzantine Applied Arts 4th – 7th Centuries. Catalogue of the Hermitage Collection, St Petersburg, 2006, no. 137, 99–100 (in Russian).


99 For this type see, inter alia: M. Chatzidikakis (ed.), Byzantine Art, an European Art, the 9th Exhibition of the Council of Europe, Athens, 1996, nos 412–13, 373; Ross (n. 5), nos 6C and 6D, 10, pl. XII; Zalesskaya (n. 97), no. 137, 99–100; K. Weitzmann, Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, third to seventh century (exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), New York, 1979, 298, fig. 36, and no. 285, 311. For an example from Kerch, where the central setting has been inlaid with garnets, see: O.M. Dalton, ‘A gold pectoral cross and an amuletic bracelet of the sixth century’, in Mélanges offerts à Gustav Schlumberger, Paris, 1924, 386–90, pl. XVII.

100 For this type, see: Collection Hélène Stathatos: les objets byzantins et post Byzantins, Limoges, 1957, no. 44, 59, pl. V; Pierides (n. 89), 56, pl. XXXIX; Ross (n. 5), no. 6B, 10, pl. XII.

101 D. Talbot Rice, ‘The leaved cross’, Byzantinoslavica XI (1950), 72–81. A typical example of this type of necklace is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, on which Brown commented: ‘the leaf pendants are similar in shape to the Cyprus tree that often flank the cross in Byzantine representations, where they are symbolic of the trees in the Garden of Eden that brought death and the tree of Golgotha which brings life’: Weitzmann (n. 90), 311.


103 Wamser (n. 16), no. 512, 30. See also, A.I. Alabin, ‘Pogrebennaja konza VII-pervoy poloviny VIII v. k Krymu’, in A.K. Ambroz and I.F. Erdelyi (eds), Drevnosti epokhi velikogo pereselenia narodov V – VIII vekov, Moscow, 1982, 165–92, at 185, fig. 10.10 for what appears to be a very similar example from catacomb 257 at Eski-Kermen.

104 Ross (n. 5), nos 6B, 6C, 6D, pl. XII.

105 Chatzidikakis (n. 99), no. 414, fig. 412; Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 2.III.10A.6-7.

106 Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 2.III.10A.8, 148.

107 Garam (n. 2), pl. 39.2.

108 For an excellent photograph see: Yeroulanou (n. 87), 37.

109 Ross (n. 5), nos 6A and 11, 10, 16–17, pls XIII and XVIII. For similar single pendants, see: Price (n. 98), 96; Alabin (n. 103), fig. 10.15.

110 See for instance: Collection Stathatos (n. 100), no. 203A, 284, pl. XLII; Chatzidikakis (n. 90), no. 411, 373; Yeroulanou (n. 87), no. 130, 227. The combination of a centrally-threaded stone (amethysts, pearls or sapphires) and borders of pearls or seed-pearls, is best paralleled on almond-shaped earrings: Ross (n. 5), no. 89, 68–9, pl. XLVIII; Stylianou (n. 93), 58, fig. 44; Pierides (n. 89), pl. XXXVII, 2 and 3.

111 See Stolz in this volume, Pl. 2.

112 Zalesskaya (n. 97).

113 Myers (n. 95), 109, fig. 1.

114 Stylianou (n. 93), figs 40 and 41; Zalesskaya (n. 97), no. 104, 348, fig. 104.

115 Pierides (n. 89), 58, pl. XXXIX.

116 Banck (n. 16), no. 102.

117 Ross (n. 5), no. 4C, 7, pl. IX, and no. 179G, 136, pl. XCVI.

118 P. Orsi, Sicilia bizantina, I, Rome, 1942, pl. 10, no. 1; Baldini Lippolis (n. 30), no. 2.VI.14–16, 182.