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Allegedly from Olbia
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Magnificent Finds from the Migration Period from Central Bohemia

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et al. (eds.)
Early Byzantine Jewellery from Olbia
Early Byzantine Jewellery in the Cloissonné Style Allegedly from Olbia

Michel Kazanski

This chapter deals with the finds of artefacts with cloisonné-style decoration from the post-Hunnic period (from the mid-5th century to the end of the 6th century) in the Hermitage Museum collections. According to dealers, they came from the region of Olbia, an important ancient city near the mouth of the Southern Bug River. It is assumed by some that these finds can be linked to the existence of an unrecognised steppe power centre of the period, but their apparent similarity to the "princely" finds of the period from the Middle Danube area may indicate the eastward movement of some Germanic groups, such as the Angisciri, whose migration is described by Jordanes. However, there are other "princely" finds associated with Olbia, such as an ostentatious polychrome buckle with thickened, round loop and round belt-plate, or earrings with three-lobed pendants.

Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that in the Hunnic period there may have been a power centre of some kind – hypothetically it could have been the "kingdom of Gesimundus", according to the Hunnic ally known from Jordanes's notes on the Hun-Goth war. It is necessary to emphasise, however, that Jordanes took a significant part of his testimony from a Germanic epic, and therefore any historical considerations formed on the basis of the mentioned episode from Jordanes's chronicle are only hypothetical.

But even more significant is the fact that Olbia as a site for the discovery of artefacts must be considered undocumented and perhaps even fraudulent. It is common knowledge that antiquities dealers, in an attempt to achieve the highest possible price, actually claimed a fictitious origin for the goods on offer, from well-known ancient sites such as Panticapaeum (Kerch) or Olbia. So, the geographical location of the origin of the artefacts analysed here is very conditional. We can only speak with greater certainty about their origin in the area of the northern Black Sea coast.

The Olbia Treasure

The most famous find of the post-Hunnic period is the so-called treasure from the collections of P. A. Mavrogordato, which later ended up in the U.S. (Fig. 1). The artefacts from this assemblage formed part of a prestigious female costume and were probably part of the funerary equipment. The most significant part of the jewellery set is a pendant chain with an oval medallion with a cross motif (Fig. 14). Judging by the nature of the cloisonné-style decoration of the medallion, it was produced by Constantinopolitan jewellers. This is also confirmed by the reverse side of the stroke-ornamented medallion, typical of Mediterranean production, while the massive decorated disc clasp of the necklace also corresponds to the traditions of Greco-Roman art workshops.

The "treasure" also includes two gold open bar bracelets with club-shaped ends (Fig. 19, 20). This type of bracelet appears in Europe in the 1st century AD as a result of an unknown impulse from Asia. For the 5th to the first half of the 6th centuries such "royal" bracelets, albeit more massive, are strongly represented in the burial sites and treasures of the barbarian aristocracy, among others in the tomb of King Childeric at Tournai in Wallonia, in the tomb of the Gepidic prince at Apahida in Transylvania, and of the Hunnic chieftain at Balchina in southern Moravia. Bracelets with club-shaped ends can also be found in aristocratic female graves, such as the grave from the Hunnic period at Regio1y in the territory of former Roman Pannonia, as well as in the burial mound of a Frankish princess from the first half of the 6th century, in the Hunnic-Bulgarian (Onogurian) burial mound at the Morský Čulek burial site on the lower Don River, or at the 2nd half to late 5th century Gepidic burial mound at Berehove in Transcarpathia. In the Olbia assemblage and in the finds from Morský Čulek, the bracelets are paired, although from the same period, in the predominantly male "princely" graves, gold bracelets with club-shaped ends also occur singly. It should be pointed out that such finds are also known from the Byzantine territory, but for example one of the bracelets from Morský Čulek bears a Latin weight marking.

The "hoard" also contains two gold rings with rectangular bezels with spiral ends and cloisonné decoration (Fig. 13, 14). Rings of this type are well known and documented for the European setting of the post-Hunnic period. Let us recall the finds from the "princely" mound of Bakodpuzsta in the area between the Danube and the Tisza, as well as from a set of female artefacts from Cluj-Someşeni in Transylvania, in the already mentioned grave at Berehove, the Alemannic burial site of Lütach in southern Germany, the Ficarola burial site in northern Italy, and finally the finds from the northern Black Sea coast at Dūrga-Oba near Kerch, Taman and Kuban.

These analogies dating from the middle to the end of the 5th century allow a more precise dating of the Olbia assemblage, while the geographical extent of their distribution, in my opinion, clearly indicates their origin in the Mediterranean region.

The Olbia set also includes a pair of circular twisted earrings strung with polyhedral beads and probably of Danubian origin (Fig. 15). It also includes two earrings with moon-shaped pendants, below which leaf-shaped pendants are suspended, all again decorated in the cloisonné style (Fig. 12, 13). Ornaments from the Italian hoard of Reggio Emilia and the earrings from Varna are analogous to these jewels dating from the second half of the 5th century to the first half of the 6th century. Another pair of similar earrings also came from a burial chamber among forty graves near Dūrga-Oba in eastern Crimea (Fig. 15). The reverse side of the Olbia earrings is stroke-ornamented, as in the central medallion of the Olbia necklace mentioned above. It is likely that we are dealing with a set of ornaments made at the same time as part of a single order in an unknown art workshop in the Mediterranean. The Olbia assemblage also includes a pointed pin with a hemispherical garnet head (Fig. 14), the analogy for which is unknown to me. The Olbia "treasure" chronologically falls into the post-Hunnic period of the second half of the 5th century, i.e., the famous Germanic "princely" finds of Bakodziuzsta (graves 1–2) 15, Cluj-Someşeni 17 and Apahida 19. The ostentatious female jewellery set from Olbia points to a Mediterranean, probably early Byzantine origin.

Buckle

The buckle, supposed to be from Olbia (Fig. 21), was purchased from the antiquities dealer Nadelius in 1903 by the Imperial Archaeological Commission, along with other artefacts from the Hunnic period represented by a polyhedral end-ring in polychrome style and a buckle with a thickened circular loop and circular buckle plate. It is currently housed in the Hermitage. The buckle has an oval loop fitted with...
an oval plate, and is decorated all over the surface in the cloisonné style – the Zaseckaja V group. An important characteristic is the decoration of the loop made up of small garnets in separate cells. This type of ornamentation is not common. However, one can recall the typologically related buckles, the scabbard fitting and the decorative appliqué from the aforementioned grave of Childeric in Tours. Figs. 3:8, 10, 11:4, 15:38–40, the buckle from Apahida – burial I Figs. 7:28–29, and artefacts from burial II Figs. 3:18, 3:20 and burial III from the same locality21, as well as the buckle from the Alamanic “princely” burial at Rädern Figs. 3:20, 21, and a buckle from a similarly discovered grave at Krani-Lajh in northern Illyricum, Slovenia Fig. 3:22. The last-mentioned can be referred to a period no older than the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries, according to the analogous shape of the tongue with a basal shield22. Analogous decoration of the edges is represented by the head-plate and the foot of the brooch in the “Moda domhina” from the Desana hoard Fig. 3:23, and the rim decoration of a patera from Gourdon in Burgundy Fig. 3:24. All these finds are dated to the second half to the end of the 5th century or the first half of the 6th century. In the older Hunnic period (second half to late 4th – first half of the 5th century), similar decoration of small garnets in separate cells was used on sword handles from burials dated to 24th June 1904 at Kerč Figs. 4:9, 10, and also in the case of the central medallion of the phalera from the treasure from Szilágysomlyó/Şimleul-Siǎneşti in Transylvania Fig. 4:22.

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Buckles analogous to the Olbia one formed part of the prestigious male “warrior” clothing of the second half of the 5th century, although they can sometimes also be found in women’s clothing. These examples are representative of the Mediterranean arts and crafts tradition and are often considered to be imports from Byzantium or, more generally, from the Mediterranean. It cannot be ruled out that the buckle in question represents a part of the “central” art workshop at Constantinople, as suggested by the production technology used.

Necklace of Polyhedral beads

According to the dealers, the necklace made of polyhedral metal beads decorated with inlaid semi-precious stones is also of Olbian origin Fig. 5:35, analogues of which can be found in the central Danube region in Zmajevo, Apahida, Cluj-Someşeni, and in Crimea in the aforementioned Kerč burial chambers destroyed on 24th June 1904.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize once again that the Olbian origin of all the above mentioned artefacts is based on the claims of antiquities dealers only, whose interest was to increase the price of their goods by linking it to the attractiveness of the site. However, as the finds from Morskoj Čulek near Tanais Fig. 5:38 show, there is a link between the “princely” post-Hunnic finds in the steppe and older ancient centres. On the basis of the finds of these prestigious artefacts it can then be stated with certainty that the early Byzantine elite’s predilection for luxury objects with cloisonné decoration, widespread in Europe, was reflected in the regions of the northern Black Sea.

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Notes, Sources and Bibliography
Chapter 2: Discovery of the Gold Jewellery Hoard at Mšecké Žehra

2.1 An early 5th-century settlement was identified in the Ruzyně cadastral, but its cemetery is unknown (Kuchařík–Bureš–Pleinerová–Jiřík 2008).

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Chapter 3: Natural Science and Technical Analysis

Non-destructive Analytical Assessment of the Finds

1. SEM/EDS analyses were carried out by the scanning microscopy department with an energy dispersive system (Tescan Mira III) at the EDS analyser Bruker Quantax 2000 at the laboratory of the Department of Chemical Technology, faculty of Restoration, University of Parma. The measurement of the specimens took place in a high vacuum chamber with an accelerating voltage of 20 kV, the detection of backscattered electrons and a data accumulation period of 300s. The data were evaluated using the Bruker XSoft software.

2. EDXRF analyses were carried out on the Spectro-Mides device in the Nuclear Physics Institute of the CAS in Řad. Measurement of the samples took place in the metal specimen arrangement in an KEV with a working voltage of 30 kV and a current of 0.5 mA. Data were evaluated using the Spectro XCellPro software.

Identification of the Non-metallic Parts of the Buckle


Chapter 4: The Jewellery of the Tournai Hoard

1. The artefacts from the three Apollon groups are at present curated at the National History Museum of Romania and part of the History Museum of Romania. On the other hand, many of them were included in various exhibitions, some accompanied by catalogues. Thus, given the specificity of each exhibition and its subsequent editorial restrictions, I wrote different catalogue descriptions of the contexts and objects selected on each occasion (L’or des princes barbarques, 2020; 172–171; Măceșanu–Ardeleanu (eds.) 2020; 167–160; Delbrueck 1927–1929, 184–186; Oanță-Marghitu 2019; Oanță-Marghitu 2019).


Chapter 1: City of Carnum (Kran) and one of the Greatest Early Medieval (Slavic) Cemeteries

1. Its name comes in various forms: Carnum, patria Carnicam/Carnium and patria Carnia. 
2. A similar situation was observed at Turda (Potaissa), ca. 30 km southeast of Cluj-Napoca, where a female burial was found in the former court of the Maramureș Mansion, in the area of the Thermes. The grave goods were made of gold and silver; some also inlaid with garnets. Among them was a buckler decorated apparently with laurastria (from Greek: λαύραστρια, laurastria) see, e. g. Šašel-Petru 1971, Kusetič et al. 2014; Kos 2015; Kopek 2013, 457–458, fig. 2. Of the southeast Alpine area (e. g. 1999a; 1999b; 2000). See also related material and old publications, have already started to use revised assessment of the analyses from 1952. 
3. It seems that at the beginning of the 5th century, the defense system of Carnum/Kranj was quite solid, however, could be used for the defense of Italy at least in the first area see also the contribution by Vinski (2017) for instance. 
4. See also the contribution by P. Périn in this volume, 
5. This is a fairly reliable indicator of their importance for this reason the cemetery showed mixed Germanic elements because the cemetery units who brought their families with them (see for instance the last quarter of the 6th century). Also it can be mentioned that the Amper and the Vršnik rose. The burial of the individual could be an important indication of the importance of the surrounding area played an important role since the beginning of the 5th century. 
6. See also, e. g. Vinski 2017, 231, 232. 
7. This idea seems to have been approved by the later excavations in Carnium are cited in Knific–Lux 2015, 31, notes 32; 2015, 29; Bratož 2014, 387–391; Sagadin 2020a, 202. 
8. See also the contribution by R. Oanţă-Quast 2011.

Chapter 2: The Belt Buckle from Rüdern

1. Actually, the Apsis-Rüdern-Traun group was worked out as a chronological stage by Werner 1953, 52–54, who used it to describe the older section of his group (A–D/550–450 BC, cf. Werner 1976, 65–67.
2. On the Chalcolithic tomb, now Quast 2005, and on the dating bird: 237; cf. also the contribution by Z. Štefanič in this volume.
3. Christlein 1722, 242; Christlein 1798, 163–164 no. 295.
6. Modern colour illustration of the preserved finds in Fuchs (1977), fig. 152, fig. 148.
9. Quast 2015, 76, fig. 3.
14. A similar situation was observed at Turda (Potaissa), ca. 30 km southeast of Cluj-Napoca, where a female burial was found in the former court of the Maramureș Mansion, in the area of the Thermes. The grave goods were made of gold and silver; some also inlaid with garnets. Among them was a buckler decorated apparently with laurastria (from Greek: λαύραστρια, laurastria) see, e. g. Šašel-Petru 1971, Kusetič et al. 2014; Kos 2015; Kopek 2013, 457–458, fig. 2. Of the southeast Alpine area (e. g. 1999a; 1999b; 2000). See also related material and old publications, have already started to use revised assessment of the analyses from 1952.
Among the Germanic peoples in general, not just the eastern Germanic groups.

Birnž – Nézár 2002, Ch. 30 et al.

Schröder 1975, 68–78.

Ogilvie 1979, 209 et al.

Pác 1991, 273 et al.


Micheletto 2003, 700, 702, fig. 6–8; Bierbrauer 2007, 107, 109, 106–113 (summarized and included in this paper).

Micheletto 2003; Bierbrauer 2007, 106–113 (summarized and included in this paper).

Buškariol 1988, 49, 61, fig. 1, 2; Piteša 2009, 22, 33–36, 47; Urek et al. 2016, 223–227; Gold dust from the graves of the deceased, discovered in 1899 (fig. 7), also points to clothing typical of West Germans. The garment was found by Helena Brisa Korn (in her dip in 1899).

Buškariol 2018, 224, 227, fig. 1; Stare 1980, fig. 16, pl. 2: 7–16; Knific 1995, 38–39, fig. 16, table 2; for garnet types, see also Calligaro et al. 2002.

Birnž et al. 2016, 243–244, fig. 144–145.

Horváth 2012, 210, note 5.

Ticx 2011, 155.

Figure 2 of Kateřina Blažková, Jaroslav Jiřík and Jana Malec 1997.

Quast 1993, 54.


Šmit et al. 2014, 9–13, table 2; for garnet types, see also Calligaro et al. 2002. Red coral and ulva in uranium light, gave an opaque creamish-white fluorescence. Red coral and amber were also identified in a pair of bow brooches from a woman’s grave in Carniuni (Vinci 1972–73, 178–179, 187).

Kranj-Lajh cemetery.

Kranj-Lajh cemetery.

Carinthian.

Buškariol 1988, 49, 61, fig. 1, 2; Piteša 2009, 22, 33–36, 47; Urek et al. 2016, 223–227; Gold dust from the graves of the deceased, discovered in 1899 (fig. 7), also points to clothing typical of West Germans. The garment was found by Helena Brisa Korn (in her dip in 1899).

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Birnž et al. 2016, 243–244, fig. 144–145.

Horváth 2012, 210, fig. 2a, 4c.

E. g. on the mourns from Apalódia (Birnž–Nézár 2000, 627, cat. no. 167.12) or on the pedigrees from Kastoria–Panelli Street (Máler 2002, fig. 7).

E. g. on the mourns from Domazero treasures (Kiall 1918, fig. 31–33) or on a pair of bow brooches from a woman’s grave in Carniuni (Vinci 1972–73, 35, 36; Ticx 1980, pl. 10a, 1bc; 17a, 17b).

Horváth 2012, 210, note 5.

Ticx 2010, 194–195, fig. 2.


Probably from the Germanic grave in Carniuni (Vinci 1972–73, 35, 36; Ticx 1980, pl. 10a, 1bc; 17a, 17b).

Kranj-Lajh cemetery.

Kranj-Lajh cemetery.

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26 For example for Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

27 Jordanes, Getica, 41a (aqua non-ente multas annos Rudolf rex, qui contemptum prope regnum Gothorum necrum regnum considerable).

28 Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof (2020, 232, n. 108) remind us that Jordanes Rudolfus ‘promises to the king of the Romans’ a seat on various thrones including the Roman, which are listed by Jordanes.

29 The date 14 August 205 could possibly be Rudolphus’s (King of the Burgundians of 516–523) death date. He was killed in battle against the Lombards in 493, and who may have been killed in battle against the Lombarids in 493. Nevertheless, Merrills (2005, 128) decided to merge these two events.

30 However, as the original form probably was *Gaisa-laiks (see Heather 1996, 232, who believes it happened probably in 513.

31 Schönfeld 1911, 107, (king of the Thuringians), we should call this king Gesalech.

32 Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof (2020, 232, n. 108) believes this to have happened in 487.

33 Halsall (2007, 281), too, sees the original form probably was *Gaisa-laiks (see Heather 1996, 232, who believes it happened probably in 513.

34 For these variants, see Halsall 2007, 281, too, sees the original form probably was *Gaisa-laiks (see Heather 1996, 232, who believes it happened probably in 513.

35 For example Sarantis 2010, figs. 10, 12). However, as the original form probably was *Gaisa-laiks (see Heather 1996, 232, who believes it happened probably in 513.

36 See f. example Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) for the possible alternative etymology of the name *Amala-swinþa.

37 Profantová 2013.

38 Arwidsson 1942, 54–59, pls. 23, 24; 121.

39 E. g. Heims Edd. 1999-2003, fig. 56.}

Chapter 14: Childeric, Odowulf... and Bohemia?

1 Fascher – Lind 2009.

2 Brøndal 1870; Peron 1867; Chavarría 1994; Arve 1996; Tor kneeling – Bieber 1998; Olex, N. 1991; Balobj – Price-Gill 2010. See also Arvedson 2015, Fascher 2014.

3 Caron 2004; Fascher – Lind 2011.

4 Fascher – Lind 2015.

5 Fascher – Lind 2015.

6 Questel 2015.

7 Questel 2015.


9 Arvedson 2005, 14. According to Schröter (1997, 199), the proper form of his name could be Rodulfus in any case.

10 Pauls Discorsi, Marieta Lengobardoian, L. 20.

11 Merrills 2005, 128 (year 491).


13 See for example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

14 Jordanes, Getica, 41a (aqua non-ente multas annos Rudolf rex, qui contemptum prope regnum Gothorum necrum regnum considerable).

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21 Odoacer.

22 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

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27 Jordanes, Getica, 41a (aqua non-ente multas annos Rudolf rex, qui contemptum prope regnum Gothorum necrum regnum considerable).

28 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

29 Jordanes, Getica, 41a (aqua non-ente multas annos Rudolf rex, qui contemptum prope regnum Gothorum necrum regnum considerable).

30 Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof (2020, 232, n. 108) remind us that Jordanes Rudolfus ‘promises to the king of the Romans’ a seat on various thrones including the Roman, which are listed by Jordanes.

31 Odoacer.

32 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

33 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

34 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

35 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

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37 For example Sorabia 2001, 346. Cf. Steinacher (2010, 345) and Voght (2007, 328) on Roquepertuis (571, 394–396), who are more cautious about such identifications.

38 Arvedson 2005, 14. According to Schröter (1997, 199), the proper form of his name could be Rodulfus in any case.

39 Pauls Discorsi, Marieta Lengobardoian, L. 20.

40 Merrills 2005, 128 (year 491).
Chapter 2: Trade and Relationships at the Turn of the Period

1. Hildgens is known through the work of Storia longobardi (75), where he appears as an unsuccessful successor to the Lombard throne. Due to his short reign, and 3,000 other Lombards had to flee to the sea (Storia longobardi), where he gained an important social position. He is later known through his incursions led by the Slavs and Gapisi into the Byzantine Balkans and in 550 B.C., his incursions into Italy to help the Ostrogothic king Theodoric.


Machlova, L. 2016: Early medieval hoards in the awareness of the Early 6th to the End of the 7th Centuries. Stuttgart.


