

Byzantine Dress Accessories in North Africa: *Koiné* and Regionality

Christoph Eger

Byzantine dress accessories in North Africa: an ambiguous term

'Byzantine dress accessories in North Africa' has a twofold meaning: either dress accessories of Byzantine origin or of the Byzantine period. The two are not necessarily identical. For more than 160 years, from 533/4 until 698, North Africa was ruled by Byzantium and produced one of the most important emperors of the time, Heraclius (610–41). However, the region between *Septem* (mod. Ceuta) and the border to Cyrenaica was not one of the core regions of the Byzantine Empire, but was situated on its south-western periphery. And it did not belong to the Byzantine world from the outset: the Late Antique period in North Africa can be divided into two phases: until 429 the whole of North Africa formed part of the western half of the Roman Empire; then from 429 until 533/4 the Vandals controlled major parts of the former diocese of Africa. The geographical situation and historical development alone make quite clear that the material culture cannot have been shaped solely by eastern Mediterranean influences, but was also influenced from elsewhere.

In North Africa, as in other regions of the Byzantine Empire, supra-regional types and fashions sometimes co-existed with local traditions. In terms of provincial Byzantine archaeology, it is therefore desirable to establish a clearer regional differentiation of the find material which records the idiosyncracies of craftwork within the Byzantine Empire. Despite the still unsatisfactory state of publication this seems possible, at least for some groups of objects, amongst them belt buckles.¹ The pre-condition for this is a detailed typological and stylistic analysis, which also includes technical details as far as possible. On this basis, types and variants can be defined and their distribution patterns consequently analysed. It has long been known that the main distribution concentrations of Byzantine small finds do not necessarily indicate major market areas where production sites may be assumed. Inevitable filters for the interpretation of distribution maps are the different quality and quantity of available source material (e.g. different burial customs, which become particularly apparent in finds outside the Empire) and the widely variable state of publication in the various regions of the Mediterranean. The last is particularly true for North Africa where, hitherto, it has been impossible to obtain a clear idea of Late Antique dress accessories.

Source criticism

On many distribution maps of Late Antique metal small finds, North Africa still appears mainly as a blank. Apart from the *corpus*-like publication of bronze finds from Morocco,² there is a lack of comprehensive find-spot analyses.³ Finds of the Vandal period, which have long received special attention from Early Medieval archaeologists and which have been intensively

discussed recently,⁴ are comparatively well known. Compared with these studies, the state of publication of small finds of the Byzantine period has to be considered very poor. Essentially, one can only refer to a few pieces from *Hippo Regius* (mod. Annaba) published by Marec in 1958,⁵ and the finds from the recent excavations at Carthage supported by UNESCO. The final excavation reports of the British, American and German excavations deserve particular mention as they also included the small finds. In particular the German excavations in the coastal sector known as the 'Quartier Magon' unearthed a considerable spectrum of finds of Late Antique and Byzantine objects considering its relatively small surface area.⁶

Almost unknown are finds deriving from the excavations and collections of the White Fathers (Pères blancs, today: Missionari d'Africa) in Carthage over many decades. Their activities are inseparably linked with the name of Alfred-Louis Delattre, who arrived in Carthage in 1875 as a young monk and started the first excavations in the area of the basilica *extra muros* at Damous al-Karita only a few years later. For more than 50 years he actively participated in the archaeological investigation of ancient Carthage and created an impressive collection of material not only from his own excavations, but also by buying stray finds from Carthage and its environs. He made them accessible to the public in the Musée Lavigerie de Saint-Louis on the Byrsa hill. This collection formed the basis of the present-day Musée National de Carthage. Unfortunately, and quite unexpectedly given his long publication list, Delattre never wrote a line on many groups of objects including Late Antique *fibulae* and belt buckles.⁷ This may be the reason why one of the largest collections of Late Antique dress accessories of the Mediterranean has escaped scholarly attention for such a long time. The present inventory of the Musée National de Carthage includes around a dozen *fibulae* and more than 200 buckles and buckle fragments of the 5th to 7th centuries, which I have studied in the last few years as a research project devoted to Late Antique dress accessories from North Africa.⁸ Finds from eastern Algeria and western Libya, amongst them objects from *Thamugadi* (mod. Timgad), *Cuicul* (mod. Jamilah) and *Sabratha* (mod. Sabrāta), complete the find-spot spectrum. All three cities have been investigated over large areas: at Timgad, for instance, nearly all the urban areas plus a Byzantine fortress have been excavated. Mention should also be made of the huge southern necropolis with its several thousand graves that unfortunately has never been published.⁹ However, none of the afore-mentioned cities yielded nearly as many finds as Carthage.

When compared with other Late Antique cities of the Mediterranean, Carthage holds a special position. An overview of Byzantine buckles of the late 6th and 7th centuries reveals that even comparatively well known sites such as Corinth or Sardis yielded hardly more than 20 pieces respectively.¹⁰ One



Plate 1 Buckle from *Hippo Regius*/Annaba, Algeria. (scale 1:1)

Plates 2–3 Buckles of 'Syracuse' type, variants 1 and 2, Carthage (?) (scale 1:1)

must ask whether the finds in the Musée National de Carthage all come from Carthage itself or from other ancient sites in Tunisia and eastern Algeria. Although this problem cannot be dealt with in detail here, it remains to be recorded that the extraordinarily large collection of the Musée National de Carthage and some dozens of pieces from other important North African sites form a sufficient data base for the questions addressed in the introduction. Consequently both the potentials and limitations of regional differentiation will be explained by selected examples of Byzantine buckles.

Byzantine buckles of the Vandal period

It is mainly due to the existence of burials with grave goods, which are likely to be connected to the élite of Vandal and Alan society, that some examples of Mediterranean goldsmith's work of the middle and the second half of the 5th century survive. Amongst these finds are, for instance, two grave groups from *Hippo Regius* (mod. Annaba), now in the British Museum.

Of these finds I would like to argue that an oval buckle from female grave 1 is a clear example of an East Mediterranean Byzantine type (Pl. 1). The contents of this grave from *Hippo Regius* were left to the British Museum in 1865 and have only recently been discussed in detail by Quast. They include a pair of *cloisonné* disc-brooches and a gilt-bronze belt buckle with a looped belt-plate.¹¹ The latter piece consists of an oval loop of circular section, an undecorated club-shaped tongue of semi-circular section, and a kidney-shaped sheet metal plate which displays on the front a lion hunt executed in fine punch work. On the reverse the two hinge-loops turn around to the lower metal plate, which survives intact apart from minor damage on the rim and is of identical size to the upper metal plate. The belt was fixed between the two sheet metal plates by means of three laterally placed rivets with small hemispherical heads.

The piece belongs to a well-investigated type, called IV.1.B by Kazanski, Bône-Csongrád by Quast, and Bro by Schulze-Dörrlamm.¹² The buckles always consist of an oval loop, an undecorated regularly broadening club-shaped tongue, and an oval or kidney-shaped belt-plate. There are only a few differences with regard to this type such as variations in size between the upper and lower plates of the belt-plate. Whenever the reverse is illustrated, the lower plate differs from the upper one by being narrower, trapezoidal or tongue-shaped. There are only a few exceptions to this rule such as a fitting of

unknown provenance made by hollow casting and now in the collection of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz,¹³ and the piece presented here with an upper and lower plate of identical size. The punched or engraved ornamentation is clearly more individual and includes a wide variety of figurative motifs, as well as Greek inscriptions. Simple lion representations are found on three specimens from Syracuse-Grotticelli, Asia Minor, and another piece of unknown origin.¹⁴ They resemble each other to such a degree that they may well have come from the same workshop. No parallel, however, to the lion hunt on the Annaba buckle exists.

The origin of these buckles in the Byzantine Greek-speaking East is beyond doubt, not least because of the epigraphic pieces.¹⁵ The distribution map supports this with surprisingly clear evidence (Pl. 14). Thanks to the six specimens in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum whose provenance is given as 'Asia Minor', one focus can be located here and another on the lower Danube river, more exactly in the Dobruja.¹⁶ Other examples have been noted in Sicily. The buckle from Annaba is the most south-western find-spot. North of the Alps, the type is completely absent, and on the middle Danube only one piece is known, from Csongrád.¹⁷

The most important circumstantial evidence for a dating exclusively in the 5th century is the presence of similarly shaped undecorated buckles of precious metals from the Merovingian Empire, which Wiczorek has dated to the middle and last third of the 5th century.¹⁸ With its large lower metal plate the buckle from *Hippo Regius* grave 1 displays a typologically early characteristic, which places the piece at the beginning of the life span of type Bône-Csongrád/Bro.¹⁹ This fits well with the dating of the pair of disc-brooches to the mid-5th century convincingly established most recently by Quast.²⁰

'Byzantine' buckles with fixed and hinged plates

By far the largest number of dress accessories from North Africa belong to the Byzantine period and specifically to the so-called Byzantine buckles with fixed or hinged plates. A refined typology for buckles with fixed plates was established by Schulze-Dörrlamm only a few years ago, and a similar one for buckles with hinged plates is in preparation by her.²¹ Schulze-Dörrlamm collected numerous parallels in order to define both the distribution and origin of the individual types.

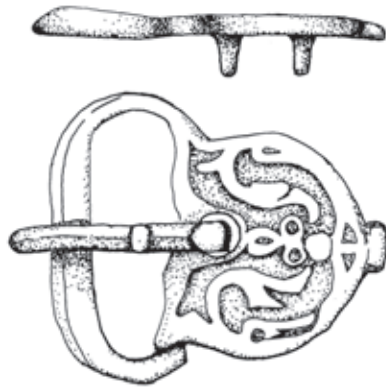


Plate 4 Buckle of 'Syracuse' type, variant 3, Carthage (?) (scale 1:1)

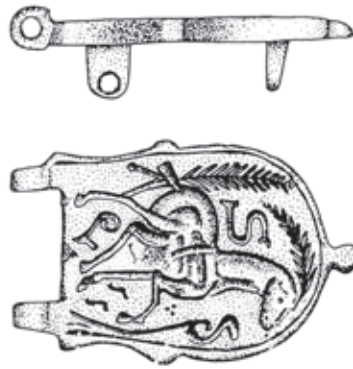


Plate 5 Buckle-plate from Carthage, Quartier Magon, Tunisia (scale 1:1)



Plate 6 Buckle-plate from Siurgus (?) (scale 1:1)

North African buckles, however, were largely unknown to her, so several of her distribution maps require amendments in this region.

Buckles of 'Syracuse' type

A type current all over the Byzantine Empire and far beyond its borders was first introduced into the scholarly literature by Werner under the type-name 'Syracuse' (Schulze-Dörrlamm's type D 12).²² The chronological framework of this buckle type has been thoroughly discussed, most recently by Riemer and Schulze-Dörrlamm. According to their analysis, these buckles can mainly be dated to the late 6th to third quarter of the 7th century.²³ With more than 40 specimens, 31 of which come from Carthage, these oval buckles with fixed sub-circular plates with inverted semi-palmettes form the second largest buckle group in North Africa.²⁴ On the basis of the North African buckles several easily distinguishable variants can be defined, three of which are discussed below (Pls 2–4).²⁵

Variant 1: On the loop, flanking the tongue-rest, punched commas are sometimes found. The decoration of the plate consists of two inverted semi-palmettes. Roundels with two double leaves are situated between the loop and the plate (Pl. 2).²⁶

Variant 2: Size and shape of the plate are identical to variant 1. 'Dot and comma' ornament is consistently found flanking the tongue-rest and on the roundels between the loop and the plate. The plate decoration consists of two narrower semi-palmettes in shallower relief; additional rudimentarily worked semi-palmettes with comma ornament exist on the internal rim side of the plate. A central ornament in the shape of a stylised flower with lateral buds is found between the semi-palmettes (Pl. 3).

Variant 3: The plate is of a broadly oval shape and there are no roundels between the loop and the plate. The relief decoration is closely related to variant 2. With only three specimens in the Museum at Carthage, this is the most infrequent of the three forms (Pl. 4).

Other buckles from Carthage are related to the 'Syracuse' type because of their similar profiles, but their decorative patterns are completely different. Buckles of the 'Syracuse' type, can be found all over the Mediterranean and in many areas on the northern periphery of the Byzantine Empire. The distribution map contains more than 75 find-spots, some of them cemeteries with several specimens (Pl. 15).²⁷ The sites

range from Sussex in southern England to the Caucasus and Sasanid Iran in the east and upper Egypt in the south. There is hardly any other type of Byzantine buckle which demonstrates mass production so clearly as the Syracuse type, although the picture is influenced by various factors: apart from the practice of burial with grave goods, the state of excavation and publication seriously obscures both the real distribution patterns and parameters of use in Late Antiquity. Thus, the great number of find-spots in the Crimea signifies both the distinctive custom of burying with grave goods practised by the population in the so-called Crimean-Gothic cemeteries, as well as the frequent importation of buckles facilitated by the immediate vicinity to Byzantine territory (here the city of Cherson and its hinterland).

The distribution of the 'Syracuse' type within the Byzantine Mediterranean must be appraised quite differently. Italy seems to represent the 'normal case'. Thanks to Riemer's study of Early Medieval graves in Italy, finds are documented more or less evenly nationwide.²⁸ Quite different is the situation in the south-east and south of the Byzantine Empire, both areas which appear almost totally to lack finds of this type. Here the situation is aggravated by the lack of both studies of old material in storerooms and of appropriate publications of small finds from recent excavations.

With the new pieces from North Africa and also a few specimens from Spain,²⁹ the south-western Mediterranean is now more clearly represented in the overall distribution of this type. The great number of pieces from Carthage is particularly notable and is likely to indicate local production. When the distribution is differentiated according to variants, the first one is by far the most frequent, also with regard to supra-regional level. Its distribution pattern largely coincides with the overall distribution. Variant 2 is clearly subordinate numerically, with about a quarter of all finds, but also possesses a supra-regional distribution hardly inferior to variant 1.

'Syracuse' buckles of variant 3 are rarer not only in Carthage, but also in general. They have a clearly different distribution, with all of the northern imperial territories and the barbarian areas beyond devoid of finds of this type. With the exception of two pieces from Italy, the few specimens are exclusively limited to the east and south of the Empire. Therefore, the workshops for variant 3 are likely to have been situated somewhere in the wide crescent between Carthage, the Levant and Asia Minor.

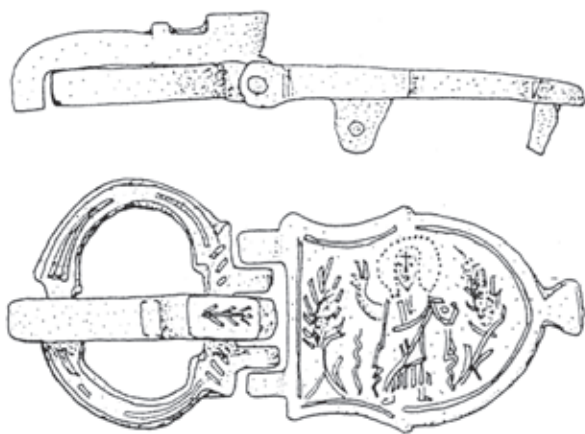


Plate 7 Buckle from Siurgus (?) (scale 1:1)

Buckles of 'Hippo Regius' type

The second type of buckle are those with a hinged plate known as the 'Hippo Regius' type. (Pl. 5). In this case the eponymous finds were several buckles found by Marec during excavations in the city area of *Hippo Regius*.³⁰ This type was dated by Riemer well into the 7th century, although it remains uncertain whether the dating of this type extends into the last third of the century.³¹ In Carthage these buckles form by far the largest group. The 57 specimens are split between half with a larger and half with a smaller variant of plate. Their characteristic features are lateral convexities and a roundish end, which give the fitting an almost horseshoe-shaped appearance.

The type belongs to those few buckles whose decoration was produced not by casting, but by engraving and punching. The iconographic repertoire includes zoomorphic and anthropomorphic representations, more rarely monograms or foliate decoration. Zoomorphic motifs are clearly dominant with more than 40 examples. Amongst the most frequently depicted animals are horses, birds and lions. Mythological animals, such as griffins and Pegasus, are also found, but are insignificant numerically. A uniform iconographic programme cannot be identified. The spectrum ranges from merely decorative images of individual animals, to secular themes such as the world of the circus, to busts of saints and the pious blessing formula of 'light and life' in monogrammatic form.

Their distribution (Pl. 16) spans almost the whole of the Mediterranean and ranges from Spain to Asia Minor and Egypt, where several specimens have only recently been published.³² On the other hand, the 'Hippo Regius' type is unknown in the Crimea and the Black Sea region.³³ Distribution patterns are concentrated, however, in Italy and Northern Africa and therefore quite clearly indicate an origin for this type in the central Mediterranean. Riemer found examples in Sardinia, but also in Sicily and northern and central Italy.³⁴ Their frequent occurrence in Carthage, in combination with a group of a dozen buckles from smaller towns on the southern fringe of the province of Numidia, such as Timgad, illustrates the particular importance of this buckle type in North Africa. An attribution to North African workshops can be assumed for this type, not only due to the large numbers found there but also because of typological and iconographic factors.

In North Africa, the images are all (with one exception) orientated parallel to the longitudinal axis of the plate. When

the buckles were worn these images were turned horizontally so that an observer could not immediately recognize the design. In Sardinia, on the contrary, several examples survive on which the image was arranged at a right angle to the longitudinal axis of the plate and would thus have been more easily visible when worn. Further examples include a plate with Daniel amongst the lions, from the province of Laerru, a plate with two females between crosses (Pl. 6), and a buckle with the figure of a blessing Christ from Siurgus (Pl. 7),³⁵ all unknown in a North African context, and which probably represent the output of an independent workshop situated in Sardinia. On the other hand, iconographic comparisons show that individual North African motifs can also be paralleled on other buckles from the Mediterranean region. Since the decoration of the plate was engraved after the initial casting, the identically executed pictures might hint at the work of one and the same – in this case North African – engraver.

Buckles with a long plate with undulating profile and buckles of 'Riva San Vitale' type

Apart from the numerous types referred to above, there are also a number of unique pieces in the collection of the Carthage Museum which are as yet unparalleled. This is the case with a bronze buckle of long shape with undulating profile and engraved with a biblical scene (Pl. 8) representing Abraham and the three angels by the oak of Mamre, a story told in Genesis 18:1–15. The iconography of this scene is well known in the early Byzantine period as is demonstrated, for instance, by a mosaic in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna. Two other buckles share the same shape, but differ in their decoration. One of them is also from Carthage and is decorated with Christ and the 12 apostles, the other of an unknown Algerian origin and now in the Musée National des Antiquités, Algiers, is undecorated. All three buckles may be dated from the mid-7th to the early 8th century due to the long narrow shape of their plates. Exact counterparts from outside Northern Africa are unknown.

Another unique piece is a gold buckle plate, broken into two pieces, which represents the only gold Byzantine dress accessory so far known from Carthage (Pl. 9).³⁶ The buckle was hollow cast and subsequently engraved and punched. With regard to its shape and decoration, it belongs to a group of buckles with hinged lyre-shaped plates which were first collected by Werner and dated to the 7th century.³⁷ Werner used the term 'lyre-shaped' for two different types of plates: on the one hand for figure-of-eight shaped belt-fittings with an integral plate, often decorated with animals and termed



Plate 8 Buckle-plate from Carthage (?) (scale 1:1)

the ‘Trebizond’ type, and on the other hand for buckles with a medallion-shaped terminal, which he discussed in connection with a buckle from Riva San Vitale, Switzerland.³⁸ Both forms are loosely related to each other and share some decorative elements such as a beaded rim, ‘dot and comma’ ornament, and decorative bosses. However, the two forms need to be differentiated because the designs of their front sides are different. Those buckles of the ‘Riva San Vitale’ type have a quadripartite field, but with two different terminals, one with a round, the other with a tear-drop shaped element. With regard to the last variant, I would draw particular attention to those examples with a combination of geometric and foliate decoration and a beaded profile, as exemplified by the belt-fitting from Carthage.³⁹ They include several gold buckles from, *inter alia*, Italy (Pl. 10), Asia Minor, and from unknown Mediterranean sites.⁴⁰ They have all come from the antiquities trade. None of the aforementioned pieces is exactly identical with the belt-fitting from Carthage. In most cases the faceted bosses, characteristic of the Carthage piece, are absent. The best parallel for the Carthaginian example is, therefore, the gilt-bronze buckle with a rounded terminal from Riva San Vitale. Similar bosses, usually spiral-shaped rather than faceted, are known from different Hispano-Roman derivatives of this type (Pl. 11).⁴¹ But these decorative bosses cannot be explained as purely western Mediterranean features. Although absent from specimens of the ‘Riva San Vitale’ type in the eastern Mediterranean, decorative bosses are not unknown

there, as indicated by a gold buckle of the ‘Trebizond’ type in a treasure from Constantinople⁴² or by a large gold cruciform buckle now in the British Museum.⁴³ Thus, the evidence seems random. Gold buckles were precious accessories, which were surely produced in very small numbers, or as individual productions. Due to their small number and widely scattered find-spots, it remains uncertain where they were made. In the literature, Constantinople is usually considered to be the origin of high-quality goldsmith’s work. However, Roth assumed that the gold buckle plate mentioned above was made in a workshop in Carthage.⁴⁴ This is certainly a possibility as Carthage, the centre of the south-western Mediterranean and the seat of a Byzantine exarch, certainly housed specialised metal workers and also goldsmiths.

Local production of dress accessories in Carthage?

An atelier for polychrome artefacts probably existed by the 5th century in Carthage.⁴⁵ This is indicated by a hoard of partly pre-cut almandine fragments in the Museum of Carthage.⁴⁶ Additionally, there is some evidence in Byzantine times for local fine metal working and goldwork in Carthage. Roth drew attention to a bronze model for forming sheet metal pectoral crosses found during the American excavations at Carthage - Dermech, which can be dated to the late 6th to 7th century because of its palmette decoration and ‘dot and comma’ ornament (Pl. 12).⁴⁷ Furthermore, there are several casting moulds in the Museum of Carthage which clearly served for

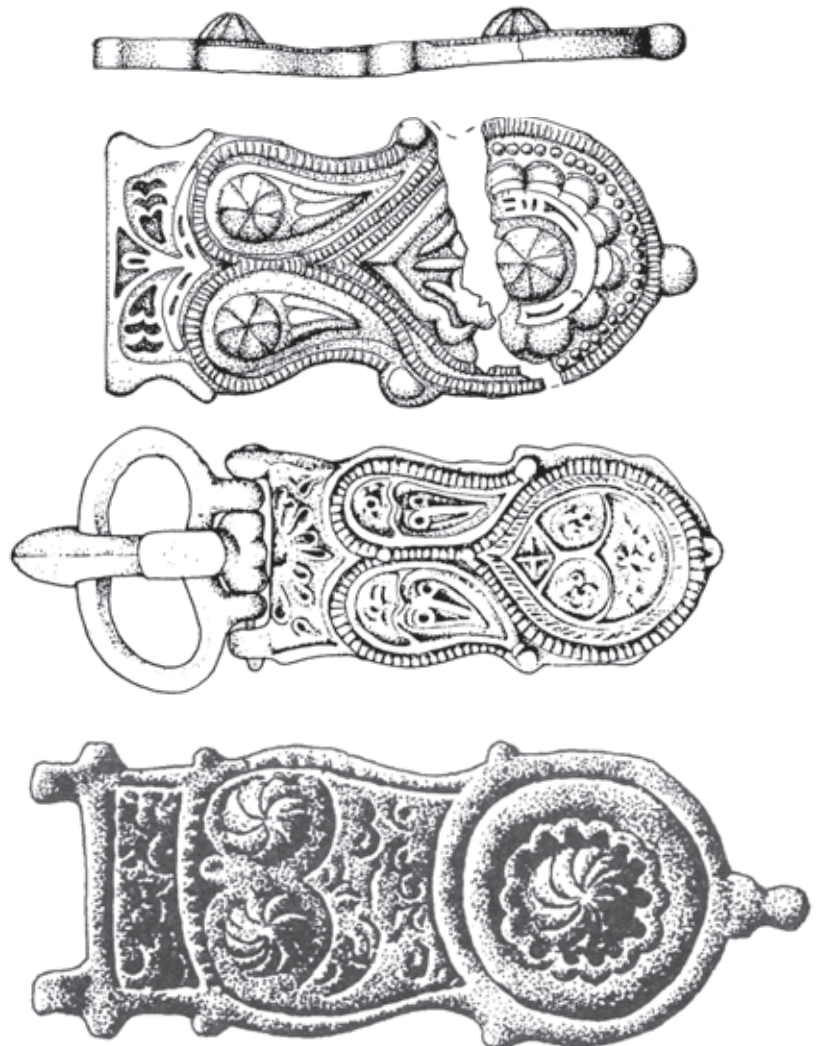


Plate 9 Buckle-plate from Carthage (?) (scale 1:1)

Plate 10 Gold buckle from unknown site, Italy (scale 1:1)

Plate 11 Buckle from unknown site, southern Spain (scale 1:1)



Plate 12 Bronze model, Carthage-Dermech, 'ecclesiastical complex' (scale 1:1)

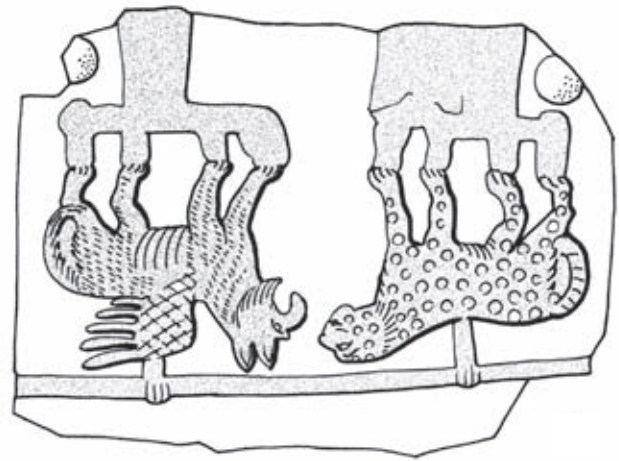


Plate 13 Casting mould, Carthage, Quartier Magon, Tunisia (scale 1:1)

the fabrication of cross pendants and small medallions with cruciform monograms. Two casting moulds found during the German excavations in room 31 of the so-called 'Quartier Magon', together with fragments of copper-alloy waste, also hint at the activity of a metalworker's workshop (Pl. 13). Unfortunately, all particulars for this workshop evidence, which is unique in Carthage so far, are lacking.⁴⁸

Proof for the local production of buckles, on the other hand, also exists. One of the very few relevant pieces is a small hinged fitting of the 'Bologna' type: it survives as a cast blank, the ridges of which have not been removed and hinge eyes and perforated studs have not yet been drilled. The piece was non-functional and likely to have been found in a metal workshop. Unfortunately, it belongs to the old finds in the Musée National de Carthage so there is neither a find-spot nor context for it, although a Carthaginian origin is not unlikely. As a fitting of the 'Bologna' type, it belongs to one of the most ubiquitous types of Byzantine buckle. It proves not only that Byzantine buckle types with a distribution pattern indicative of regional production were made locally, but also that this can be true for types with a *circum-Mediterranean* distribution.

Summary

The products of the minor arts of Late Antiquity tend to be termed 'Mediterranean' or 'Byzantine' by researchers in a general way. Nevertheless, in order to be able to describe the development of craftwork and the relationship between different regions of the Mediterranean, a stronger regional differentiation is desirable as the state of sources and publications improves. For the investigation of such questions, a sufficient data base of the relevant material is necessary. Therefore, belt buckles are a particularly suitable subject for research as many hundreds of examples of the 5th to 7th/8th centuries are now known throughout the Mediterranean. North Africa itself, however, has in the past yielded only a few finds. By the study of Late Antique dress accessories from Carthage and other North African museums this find gap has now been filled. From this rich material five types have been discussed above: one of the 5th century ('Bône-Csongrád' type) and four of the later 6th and 7th centuries ('Syracuse', 'Hippo Regius', 'Riva San Vitale' and buckles with a long fitting with undulating edges), each of which represents a different

distribution pattern. Buckles with an oval loop fitting of the 'Bône-Csongrád' type have a mostly eastern Mediterranean distribution, which only reached Sicily and sporadically North Africa. The 'Syracuse' type was presented as an example of a widely distributed type, present throughout most of the Mediterranean and far away beyond the northern imperial borders. A more detailed subdivision of the type shows, however, that less widely distributed variants occurred. With buckles of the 'Hippo Regius' type on the other hand, one sees a characteristic central Mediterranean and particularly North Africa type. The three buckles with elongated plates with undulating edges, including the buckle with Abraham, may be considered North African regional types. Because of the present state of publication, it is not always possible to specify regional attributions. This was illustrated also by the fourth type ('Riva San Vitale'), a lyre-shaped gold belt-fitting with typical Byzantine elements of shape and decoration, which is unique and has thus escaped a closer regional allocation. Still, it cannot be excluded that it was made in North Africa, possibly even in Carthage itself. Finds of casting moulds for different pieces of jewellery and the cast blank of a buckle-fitting attest to the activity of metalworkers in the North African metropolis.

The evidence provided by the examples discussed above indicates that belt buckles from North Africa of the 5th to 7th centuries include genuinely eastern Mediterranean, central Mediterranean and probably also special North African types. I have not been able to deal here with certain types present both in the central and western Mediterranean or with (north-) western Mediterranean and Pontic 'imports'. For all regional attributions one must keep in mind that we are not dealing with sharp borders. This becomes particularly clear with regard to buckles of the 'Hippo Regius' type: despite a clear concentration of find-spots in North Africa and southern Italy the overall distribution reaches very much further and selectively spans almost the entire Byzantine Empire. This makes manifold connections visible, which I would tend to explain – on the basis of the present find-spot distribution – more to personal mobility than either trade or the distribution of fashions. Buckles of the 'Syracuse' type, on the other hand, could be interpreted as an example of a 'fad', because they are spread literally all over the Mediterranean and their production was quickly adopted in many places, presumably

by passing on models and casting moulds. Although there is no space here to go any deeper into this matter, it becomes quite clear that belt buckles are ideally suited for the study of the mechanisms which lead to *koiné* and regionality in Byzantine metalwork.⁴⁹

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Janine Fries-Knoblach, Munich/Dachau, for reading and translating the manuscript from the German.

Notes

- 1 Cf. J. Drauschke, 'Zur Herkunft und Vermittlung 'byzantinischer Importe' der Merowingerzeit in Nordwesteuropa', in S. Brather (ed.), *Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Archäologie des 4. bis 7. Jahrhunderts im Westen* (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 57), Berlin/New York, 2008, 367–423.
- 2 Ch. Boube-Piccot, *Les bronzes antiques du Maroc IV. L'équipement militaire et l'armement*, Paris, 1994; on Late Antique dress accessories of the *Tingitana* cf. also, N. Villaverde Vega, *Tingitana en la antigüedad tardía (siglos III–VII). Autoctonía y romanidad en el extremo occidente mediterráneo*, Madrid, 2001.
- 3 But one should note the publication of Roman and Late Antique fibulae by R.R. Gerharz, 'Fibeln aus Afrika', *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 43 (1987), 77–107, and the catalogue-like publication of graves and isolated finds of the Vandal period by G.G. Koenig, 'Wandalische Grabfunde des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts', *Madrid Mitteilungen* 22 (1981), 299–360. Both authors, however, restricted themselves to assembling published material only.
- 4 Koenig (n. 3); Ch. Eger, 'Wandalische Grabfunde aus Karthago', *Germania* 79/1 (2001), 347–90; Ch. Eger, 'Silbergeschirr und goldene Gürtel. Die vandalische Oberschicht im Spiegel der Schatz- und Grabfunde Nordafrikas', *Antike Welt* 35/2 (2004), 71–6; J. Kleemann, 'Quelques réflexions sur l'interprétation ethnique des sépultures habillées considérées comme vandales', *Antiquité Tardive* 10 (2002), 123–9; D. Quast, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Frauengräber aus Hippo Regius (Annaba/Bône) in Algerien', *JbRGZM* 52 [2005] (2007), 237–315; Ph. von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus. Kleidung und Repräsentation spätantiker Eliten im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert* (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 55), Berlin/New York, 2007; Ch. Eger, 'Vandalisches Trachtzubehör? Zu Herkunft, Verbreitung und Kontext ausgewählter Fibeltypen aus Nordafrika', in G. Berndt and R. Steinacher (eds), *Das Reich der Vandalen und seine (Vor-) Geschichten* (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 13), Vienna, 2008, 183–95.
- 5 E. Marec, 'Hippone: Objets en bronze récemment découverts', *Libya* 6 (1958), 163–71.
- 6 Cf. M. Mackensen, 'Metallkleinfunde', in F. Rakob (ed.), *Karthago III. Die deutschen Ausgrabungen in Karthago*, Mainz, 1999, 530–44. Very few buckles were found in either of the British excavations: H.R. Hurst and S.P. Roskams, *Excavations at Carthage: The British Mission vol. 1, 1. The Avenue du Président Habib Bourguiba, Salammbô: the site and finds other than pottery*, Sheffield, 1984; H.R. Hurst, *Excavations at Carthage: The British Mission vol. 2, 1. The circular harbour, north side. The site and finds other than pottery* (with contributions by C. Duhig et. al.), Oxford, 1994.
- 7 Delattre published only three Byzantine buckles. Two of them, however, he believed to have originated in the reign of St Louis IX. This French king set off on a crusade to the Holy Land in 1270 and landed near Carthage where he died from the plague shortly afterwards (cf. A.-L. Delattre, *Souvenirs de la croisade de Saint Louis trouvés à Carthage*, Tunis, 1890).
- 8 Ch. Eger, *Spätantikes Kleidungszeug aus Nordafrika* (in preparation); Cf. provisionally, Ch. Eger, 'Boucles de ceinture de la région de Carthage datant des VI^e et VII^e siècles', *CÉDAC Carthage Bulletin* 19 (1999), 12–15.
- 9 Briefly mentioned e.g. by, Ch. Courtois, *Timgad. Antique Thamugadi*, Algiers, 1951, 66–7.
- 10 Only buckles of the late 6th and 7th century were quantified.
- 11 Quast (n. 4), 239–47.
- 12 M. Kazanski, 'Les plaques-boucles méditerranéennes des Ve–VI^e siècles', *Archéologie Médiévale* 24 (1994), 161–2: buckle with oval, respectively kidney-shaped fitting and figurative decoration.
- For buckles with epigraphic decoration: Quast (n. 4), 258–9, fig. 16, 305, find-list 1; M. Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen und Gürtelbeschläge im Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum I. Die Schnallen ohne Beschläge, mit Laschenbeschlägen und mit festem Beschlag des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts* (Kataloge vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer 30), Mainz, 2002, 54–9.
- 13 Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12), 57, no. 51.
- 14 Koenig (n. 3), 345, fig. 18b; Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12), 56, no. 49; L. Wamser (ed.), *Die Welt von Byzanz – Europas östliches Erbe. Glanz, Krisen und Fortleben einer tausendjährigen Kultur*, Munich, 2004, 279, no. 437.
- 15 Quast (n. 4), 259, fig. 16 distinguished between figurative and epigraphic decoration, but found no significantly different distribution, particularly since another example with a Greek inscription from eastern Sicily has been published in the meantime (Manganaro Collection: cf. G. Manganaro, 'Arredo personale del Bizantino in Sicilia (fibbie, spille, anelli)', *Byzantino-Sicula IV. Atti del I Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia della Sicilia Bizantina*, Palermo, 2002, 506, fig. 8, 106).
- 16 Quast (n. 4), 259, fig. 16. These are to be complemented by the following examples: unknown provenance, eastern Sicily (Manganaro [n. 15], 506, fig. 8, 106, 108); Uluköy-Hocalar, Turkey (M. Lightfoot, 'Belt buckles from Amorium and in the Afyon Archaeological Museum', in C.S. Lightfoot (ed.), *Amorium Reports II. Research Papers and Technical Reports* (BAR International Series 1170), Oxford, 2003, 99, pl. VI/22); unknown provenance, environs of Mersin (?), Turkey (R. Taştekin, *Früh- und mittelbyzantinische Trachtbestandteile in der Türkei* (Unpublished Master of Arts-Thesis), Bonn, 1996, 81, pl. 11, fig. 1a–b); unknown provenance (Wamser [n. 14], 279, no. 438); Chersonese, Crimea/Ukraine, cistern P/1967 (I. Gavrituchin, 'Fibuly i remennye garnitury iz cisterny p-1967 g. v Xersonese', *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* 9 (2002), 225, fig. 1, 8). With the last mentioned example, Crimea has henceforth been included into the distribution area.
- 17 D. Csallány, *Archäologische Denkmäler der Gepiden im Mitteldonaubecken (454–568 u. Z.)*, Budapest, 1961, pl. 210, 11. Cf. D. Quast, 'Byzantinisch-gepidische Kontakte nach 454 im Spiegel der Kleinfunde', in E. Istvánovits and V. Kulcsár (eds), *International Connections of the Barbarians of the Carpathian Basin in the 1st–5th centuries AD*. (Proceedings of the International Conference held in 1999 in Aszód and Nyiregyháza), Aszód and Nyiregyháza, 2001, 437.
- 18 A. Wiczorek, 'Die frühmerowingischen Phasen des Gräberfeldes von Rübenach. Mit einem Vorschlag zur chronologischen Gliederung des Belegungsareales A', *Berichte der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission* 68 (1987), 410–16. Cf. Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12), 56–9. Cf. also a recent find from Chersonese (Gavrituchin [n. 16], 225, fig. 1, 8) which is unlikely to be older than the late 5th century.
- 19 Cf. however, J. Kleemann, 'Rezension zu Schulze-Dörrlamm, Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen', *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 46 (2005), 117, who takes the tiny shape of the top-plate amongst other things as circumstantial evidence for an independent western production.
- 20 Quast (n. 4), 248–50.
- 21 Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12), 2002. See: eadem, *Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen und Gürtelbeschläge im Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum II*, Mainz, forthcoming, for her analysis of pieces with hinged (moveable) plates.
- 22 J. Werner, 'Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen des 6. und 7. Jahrhunderts aus der Sammlung Diergardt', *Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 1 (1955), 36–48, at 37; Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12), 171–9.
- 23 Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12); cf. also, Ch. Eger, 'Eine byzantinische Gürtelschnalle von der Krim im Hamburger Museum für Archäologie', *Materialy po arxeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* 5 (1996), 343–7. The early 6th century date is given in E. Riemer, 'Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen aus der Sammlung Diergardt im Römisch-Germanischen Museum Köln', *Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 28 (1995), 777–809, at 779, and, eadem, *Romanische Grabfunde des 5.–8. Jahrhunderts in Italien* (Internationale Archäologie 57), Rahden/Westf., 2000, 149–50, and is based on a single grave find from Sicily.
- 24 Only the 'Hippo Regius' type is more numerous, see below.
- 25 However, I have abandoned my previous typologies/variants

- as formulated in 1996 because this would imply a relative chronological typo-genesis, which cannot be proven, namely a dependence of variants 2 (termed variant 1 in 1996) and 3 on variant 1.
- 26 Variant 1 is identical with the basic type according to Eger (n. 23).
- 27 Schulze-Dörrlamm 2002 (n. 12), 176, fig. 62.
- 28 Riemer 2000 (n. 23). Riemer's study, however, was restricted to published finds.
- 29 Ceuta: Villaverde Vega (n. 2), 497, Taf. 9, PT-81; Cartagena: *La vida en Bizancio en Carthago Spartaria. Aspectos de la vida cotidiana* (5 de abril – 31 de julio 2005. Museo Arqueológico de Cartagena 'Enrique Escudero de Castro'), Cartagena, 2005, 98, no. 41.
- 30 Marec (n. 5); Riemer 1995 (n. 23), 790–1 was the first to describe the type as 'Hippo [Regius]'.
31 Cf. Riemer 1995 (n. 23), 791; Riemer 2000 (n. 23), 217–8.
32 Cf. Riemer 1995 (n. 23), 791. For examples from Egypt see: E. M. Ruprechtsberger, 'Eine byzantinische Gürtelschnalle aus Ägypten mit Inschrift und figuraler Darstellung', in U. Horak (ed.), *Realia Coptica. Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag von H. Harrauer*, Vienna, 2001, 95; J.L. Bacharach, *Fustat Finds. Beads, Coins, Medical Instruments, Textiles and Other Artifacts from the Awad Collection*, Cairo, 2002, 201, figs 2–3.
- 33 Why Ripoll (G. Ripoll, *Toréutica de la Bética (siglos VI y VII d. C.)*, Barcelona, 1998, 187) assumed a distribution also along the Black Sea coast remains a mystery.
- 34 Riemer 2000 (n. 23), 217.
- 35 L. Pani Ermini and M. Marinone, *Catalogo dei materiali paleocristiani e altomedievali* (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari), Rome, 1981, 114–15, nos 189–90. For a parallel for the first example, see R. Temple (ed.), *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, London, 1990, 108, no. 77 (from Asia Minor).
- 36 W. Gernhöfer, 'Die Darstellungen der drei Männer an der Eiche von Mamre und ihre Bedeutung in der frühchristlichen Kunst, *Römische Quaralschrift* 104/1–2 (2009), 1–20.
- 37 Cf. H. Roth, 'Almandinhandel und –verarbeitung im Bereich des Mittelmeeres', *Allgemeine und vergleichende Archäologie Beiträge* 2, 1980, 330–1 (where the material is wrongly described).
- 38 Werner (n. 22), 36.
- 39 J. Werner, 'Byzantinische Gürtelschnalle aus Riva San Vitale (Kt. Tessin)', *Sibrium* 3 (1956/7), 79–84.
- 40 Individual pieces have a figurative decoration. These, and buckles with a representation of Christ derived from this type, also remain unconsidered here.
- 41 For the piece from Italy, cf. Riemer 2000 (n. 23), 219, fig. 25.
- 42 Cf. Werner (n. 39), pl. E; also Ripoll (n. 33), 157, fig. 27, 113–4.
- 43 M.C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection 2. Jewelry, enamels and art of the Migration Period*. With an addendum by S.A. Boyd and St. R. Zwirn, Washington DC (2nd ed.), 2005, pl. 10, 4F.
- 44 Cf. Sotheby & Co., London. Sales catalogue 18 June 1968, pl. facing 9; Schulze-Dörrlamm (n. 12), fig. 3. See also Entwistle, this volume, no. 2.
- 45 Roth (n. 37), 331.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 326–7, pls 5A–B.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 330 fig. 7, 1; cf. W.H.C. Frend and J.H. Humphrey, 'Bronze Cross and Christian Inscription', in J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *Excavations at Carthage 1976 conducted by the University of Michigan III*, Ann Arbor, 1977, 167–8, figs 1–2, who did not recognize the actual function of the Carthaginian example.
- 48 With regard to a dating in the first half of the 6th century, cf. the synoptical table by O. Teschauer in F. Rakob (ed.), *Karthago I. Die deutschen Ausgrabungen in Karthago*, Mainz, 1991, 210. However, a more detailed description and analysis of the Late Antique phases of insula E117 are lacking.
- 49 Cf. also Drauschke (n. 1), 416–22.



Plate 14 Distribution map of buckles of type 'Böne-Csongrád'/B10 (double circle: 5 and more examples; brackets: unknown site; number of site).

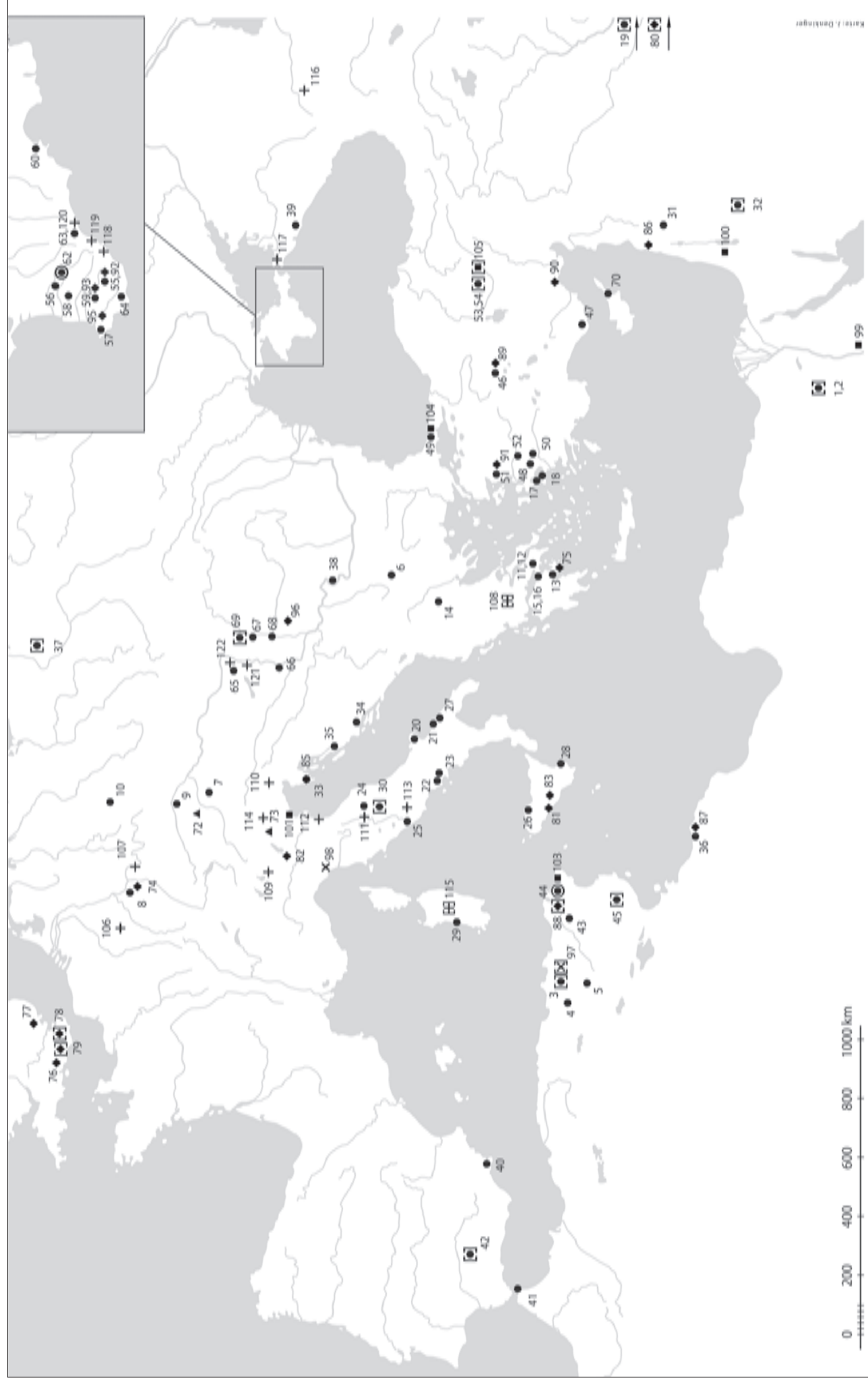


Plate 15 Distribution map of buckles of type 'Syracuse'/D12 (double symbols: 5 and more examples; brackets: unknown site; circle: variant 1; rhombic: variant 2; square: variant 3; diagonal cross: variant 4; cross: other pieces, missing or unknown by the author; number of sites)

VARIANT 1

Egypt

- 1. Unknown
- 2. Unknown

Algeria

- 3. Rummel valley near Constantine
- 4. Djemila
- 5. Timgad

Bulgaria

- 6. Sofia

Germany

- 7. Freilassing-Salzburghofen (grave 68)
- 8. Langenlonsheim (grave 447)
- 9. Regensburg-St. Rupert (grave)
- 10. Sömmmerda (grave 7)

Greece

- 11. Athens (Agora grave 10)
- 12. Athens (Kerameikos grave h)
- 13. Daskaleio
- 14. Edessa
- 15. Corinth
- 16. Corinth-Kraneion
- 17. Samos (Klostergut graves 2, 3, 4)
- 18. Samos (Eupalinos tunnel)

Iran

- 19. Unknown, Iran (?)

Italy

- 20. Mattinata-Stinco, Monte Sacro
- 21. Mondugno
- 22. Neapel
- 23. Unknown, near Naples
- 24. Nocera Umbra (grave 156)
- 25. Ostia, Basilica near Piana Bella (grave 21)
- 26. Piana degli Albanesi-S. Agata (grave 51)
- 27. Rutigliano (grave 6/1983-84)
- 28. Syracuse (?)
- 29. Tharros
- 30. Unknown

Jordan

- 31. Gerasa
- 32. Unknown, region of Shobeq (?)

Croatia

- 33. Pula
- 34. Salona
- 35. Zadar

Libya

- 36. Sabratha

Poland

- 37. Unknown, northern Poland (?)

Romania

- 38. Balta Verde

Russia

- 39. Boriszovo-Djurso near Novorosijsk

Spain

- 40. Cartagena (theatre)
- 41. Ceuta
- 42. Unknown, southern Spain (?)

Tunisia

- 43. Ain Wassel
- 44. Unknown, Carthage (?)
- 45. Unknown, central Tunisia

Turkey

- 46. Amorium
- 47. Anemurium
- 48. Ephesus (Hanghaus 2)
- 49. Istanbul
- 50. Nysa
- 51. Pergamon
- 52. Sardis
- 53. Unknown
- 54. Unknown, Asia Minor

Ukraine, Crimea

- 55. Aromat (graves 1 and 6)
- 56. Bakla (grave 320)
- 57. Cherson
- 58. Čufut Kale (grave 7)
- 59. Eski Kermen (grave 257)
- 60. Feodosia
- 61. Kerč
- 62. Skalistoe (graves 258, 279, 320, 471)
- 63. Suuk Su (graves 58, 157)
- 64. Usen Bash (grave 2)

Hungary

- 65. Csákberény-Orondpuszta (grave 215)
- 66. Kölked Feketekapu A (grave 325)
- 67. Szelevény
- 68. Szeged-Fehértó A (grave 34)
- 69. Unknown

Cyprus

- 70. Salamis

Of unknown origin

- 71. Northern Black Sea

LOCAL IMITATION OF VARIANT 1

Germany

- 72. Aubing (grave 167)

Italy

- 73. Aldeno

Variant 2

Germany

- 74. Hahnheim

Greece

- 75. Plateia, Argolis

Great Britain

- 76. Chichester the Broyle
- 77. Colchester
- 78. Unknown, Kent
- 79. Unknown, Sussex

Iran

- 80. Unknown, Iran (?)

Italy

- 81. Agrigent near San Leone
- 82. Calvisano-Santi di Sopra (grave Q61)
- 83. Sofiana (?), Sicily
- 84. Unknown

Croatia

- 85. Novigrad

Lebanon

- 86. Byblos or Tyros

Libya

- 87. Sabratha

Tunisia

- 88. Unknown, Carthage (?)

Turkey

- 89. Amorium
- 90. Mut near Mersin?
- 91. Pergamon

Ukraine, Crimea

- 92. Aromat (graves 1, 6)
- 93. Eski Kermen (grave 218)
- 94. Kerč
- 95. Sacharnaja Golovka (grave 5)

Hungary

- 96. Kiszombor

(Nos 97–98 see below)

VARIANT 3

Egypt

- 99. Antinoë

Israel

- 100. Beth Guvrin

Italy

- 101. Venice, lagoon
- 102. Unknown

Tunisia

- 103. Unknown, Carthage (?)

Turkey

- 104. Istanbul
- 105. Unknown, Asia Minor

VARIANT 4

Algeria

- 97. Rummel valley near Constantine

Italy

- 98. Luni

Uncertain

Belgium

- 106. Belvaux

Germany

- 107. Stockstadt

Greece

- 108. Unknown

Italy

- 109. Brianza
- 110. Cividale
- 111. Perugia
- 112. Near Ravenna
- 113. Rome
- 114. Voltago
- 115. Unknown, Sardinia

Russia

- 116. Nalčik
- 117. Taman

Ukraine, Crimea

- 118. Gursuff
- 119. Lučistoe
- 120. Suuk Su (Graves 29, 32)

Hungary

- 121. Dunapentele
- 122. Százhalombatta

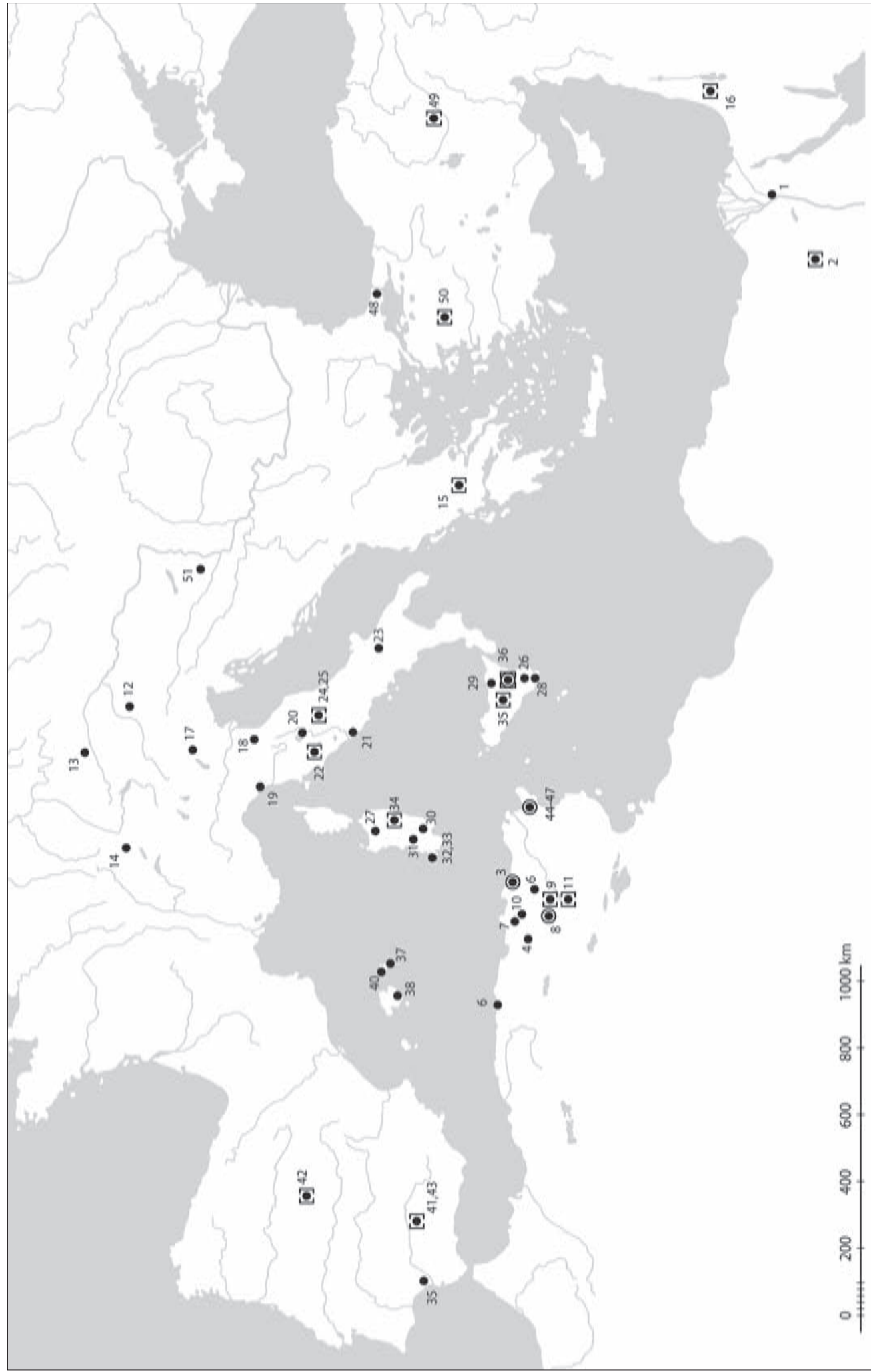


Plate 16 Distribution map of buckles of type 'Hippo Regius' (double circle: 5 and more examples; brackets: unknown site; number of site)

Egypt

- 1. Cairo-Fustat
- 2. Unknown

Algeria

- 3. Annaba
- 4. Djemila
- 5. Khemissa
- 6. Matifou
- 7. Tiddis
- 8. Timgad
- 9. Unknown, 'Numidia'
- 10. Unknown, Rummel valley near Constantine
- 11. Unknown, eastern Algeria (?)

Germany

- 12. Prien am Chiemsee
- 13. Weißenburg

France

- 14. Near Belfort

Greece

- 15. Unknown

Israel/Palestine

- 16. Unknown

Italy

- 17. Civezzano
- 18. Faenza (grave 2)
- 19. Luni
- 20. Perugia
- 21. Rome--Crypta Balbi
- 22. Unknown, Etruria
- 23. Unknown, Lavello (?)
- 24. Unknown
- 25. Unknown

Italy, Sardinia and Sicily

- 26. Canicattini
- 27. Laerru
- 28. Noto
- 29. San Marco d'Alunzio
- 30. Siurgus (?)
- 31. Siurgus Donigala-Su Nuraxi
- 32. Is Pirixeddus near Sant'Antioco
- 33. Sulcis near Sant'Antioco (?)
- 34. Unknown, Sardinia
- 35. Unknown, Sicily
- 36. Unknown, eastern Sicily

Spain

- 37. Alayor, Menorca
- 38. Castell de Santueri, Mallorca
- 39. Itatica
- 40. Torre Llista Nou, Menorca
- 41. Unknown, 'Baetica'
- 42. Unknown
- 43. Unknown, Andalusia (?)

Tunisia

- 44. Carthage-Quartier Magon
- 45. Near Carthage-Byrsa
- 46. Carthage-near Kothon
- 47. Unknown, Carthage (?)

Turkey, Asia Minor

- 48. Istanbul
- 49. Unknown, Asia Minor
- 50. Unknown, western Anatolia

Hungary

- 51. Pecs

From unknown sites

- 52. Unknown, Diergardt-Collection
- 53. Unknown
- 54. Unknown, Cabinet des Médailles, Paris