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**BELT BUCKLES FROM A LATE ANTIQUE CITY
QUARTER. EVIDENCE OF THE MATERIAL CULTURE
IN THE 6TH AND 7TH CENTURIES IN EPHEOS**

Abstract: There are several find complexes from Ephesos that can be dated with certainty to the late 6th and 7th centuries AD. Unique discovery conditions, especially due to the latest excavations in the City Quarter south of the Church of Mary, provide an insight into the material culture of a Late Antique-early Byzantine provincial centre. This article is dealing with a special artefact group, namely the buckles, and their analyses with regard to everyday life and society in early Byzantine times.

Key words: buckles, Ephesos, City Quarter, Late Antique-early Byzantine period

Ephesos in particular – along with other cities in Asia Minor such as Assos, Sardis and Pergamon – offers an ideal opportunity to study the Late Antique and Byzantine city and the everyday life associated with it due to its intensive archaeological research. In particular transformation processes in Late Antiquity can be traced with the help of the material evidence and, in combination with structural and architectural changes, can give an insight into the Late Antique world.

As part of the living environment objects or artefacts are in the centre of the study of material culture. They provide us with data on material, production processes and intended uses, but also on activities, interpersonal actions and interactions as well as non-material functions, and are therefore important for recognising social realities. Similar to ceramic research, stratified small finds like the belt buckles offer us the opportunity to answer questions about settle-

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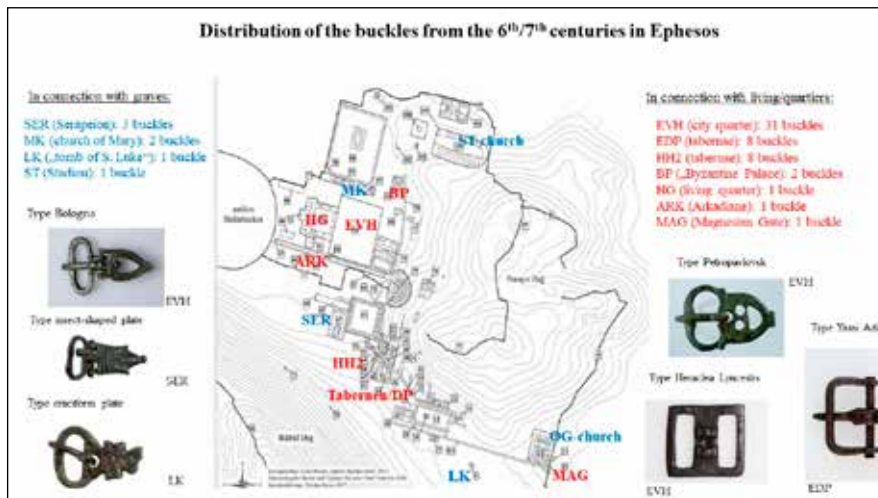


Fig. 1: Distribution of the buckles from the 6th/7th centuries in Ephesos (map by the author; based on city plan and photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Sl. 1 Rasprostranjenost pojasnih kopči iz VI i VII veka u Efeesu (mapa autora; bazirana na gradskom planu i fotografijama ©Austrijski arheološki institut/Austrijska akademija nauka)

ment history in Late Antiquity. How and why the objects were used and what qualities and values were attached to them are important topics in this context. So, the analyses of the buckles are an excellent starting point to investigate these questions.

There are several find complexes and locations in Ephesos that can be dated with certainty to the end of the 6th and 7th centuries AD. The rich material evidence, especially due to the latest excavations in the so-called City Quarter south of the Church of Mary and at the Domitian's Square, provides a unique insight into the material culture of the Late Antique and Byzantine world.

The City Quarter – excavated between 2011 and 2018 in the lower city of Ephesos² –, consisting of three independent houses, combines representative living, the processing of agricultural goods, craft production and shops in a very confined space. Frequently rebuilt after visible earthquake damages, the entire area was finally destroyed by fire in the later 7th century, albeit the inhabitants apparently were able to escape the destructions in time, because no human remains showed in the corresponding horizons, but a large number of finds were found³, including dress accessories like different buckles. To gain information

² Cf. Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts, Jahresberichte 2011–2018; H. Schwaiger, J. Scheifinger, K. Sahn, *A Late Antique City Quarter in Ephesos: Social Differentiation and Functional Heterogeneity*, Shops, Workshops and Urban Economic History in the Roman World: Panel, editors M. Flohr, N. Monteix (Cologne/Bonn 2018), 47–61.

³ The houses were erected in the early 5th century in the area of the Imperial Harbour Gymnasium. Massive destructions happened mainly in the 2nd half of the 7th century:

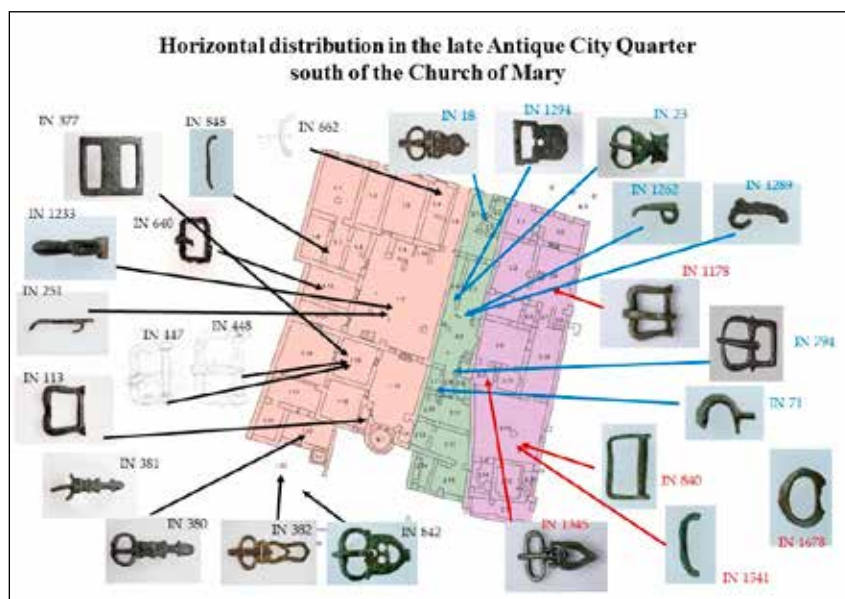


Fig. 2: Horizontal distribution in the Late Antique City Quarter south of the Church of Mary in Ephesos (map by the author; based on plan and photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 2 Хоризонтална дистрибуција у касноантичком градском кварту јужно од Богородичине цркве у Ефесу (мапа аутора; базирана на плану и фотографијама ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)

on the daily life of the residents of these houses, this group of artefacts will be examined in more detail below and not just in regard to a chronological classification, but also in terms of gender and social systems.

A total of 59 buckles or at least parts of them, dating to the 6th/7th centuries are known from Ephesos itself so far, which can be attributed to at least 24 different types. This relation clearly demonstrates the diversity of buckle types used in this region in this limited time span⁴ (fig. 1). The most numerous types

Schwaiger, Scheifinger, Sahn, City Quarter, 50 (cf. note 2).

⁴ A. M. Pülz, *Byzantinische Kleinfunde aus Ephesos. Ausgewählte Artefakte aus Metall, Bein und Glas*, Forschungen in Ephesos 18, 1, (Vienna 2020), 1 334–335.

The abbreviations for the find places in Ephesos are as followed:

EVH = City Quarter south of the Church of Mary

EDP = Domitian's Square

BP = so-called Byzantine Palace

MK = Church of Mary

SER = Serapeion

HH 2 = Terrace House 2

LK = so-called Tomb of St Luke's

ST = Stadion

ARK = Arkadiane

MAG = Magnesian Gate

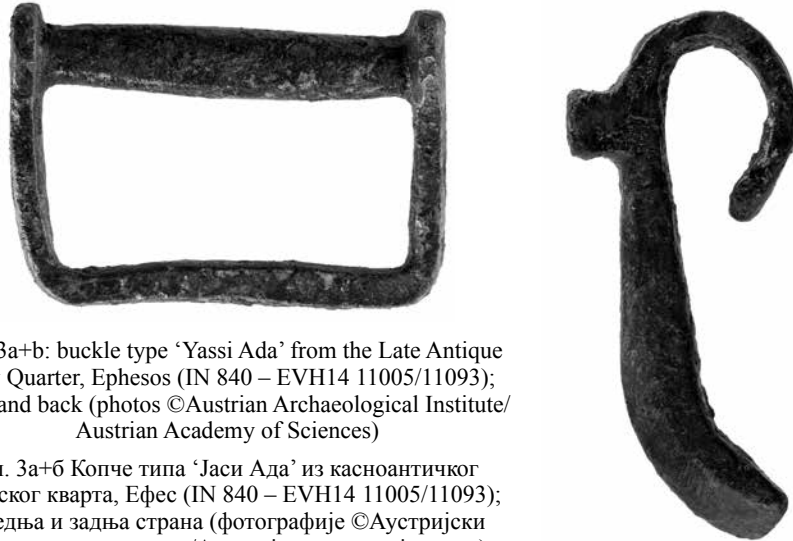


Fig. 3a+b: buckle type ‘Yassi Ada’ from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (IN 840 – EVH14 11005/11093); front and back (photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 3а+б Копче типа ‘Јаси Ада’ из касноантичког градског кварта, Ефес (IN 840 – EVH14 11005/11093); предња и задња страна (фотографије ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)

are the type ‘Petropavlovsk’ (6th century – 1st half of the 7th century)⁵ with five buckles and the type ‘Yassi Ada’ (before 625/626 AD)⁶ with also five buckles. Most of the 24 types, however, are represented only by one or at most by two examples. Typical forms for Asia Minor and the heartland of the Byzantine Empire, for example, are the miniature buckles with cruciform plates (1st half of the 7th century) or the buckles of the ‘Bologna’ type (1st half of the 7th century) which are also represented in Ephesos. It is worth mentioning, however, that individual types have been found in Ephesos which have not been known in Asia Minor up to now, such as the ‘Heraclea Lyncestis’ type⁷ or the buckles with insect-shaped plates from the so-called Serapeion⁸, whose known distribu-

⁵ S. Uenze, *Die spätantiken Befestigungen von Sadovec (Bulgarien)*, MünchBeitrVGF 43, (München 1992), 186 fig. 14, 6; for examples in Ephesos Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, I 32–33 (cf. note 4).

⁶ The buckle type was named after the shipwreck that sank off the coast of Asia Minor and offers at least a *terminus ante quem* of AD 625/626 for the dating of the buckles: S. Womer Katzev, *Miscellaneous Finds, Yassi Ada 1. A Seventh-Century Byzantine Shipwreck*, editors G. F. Bass, F. H. van Doorninck, (Dallas 1982), 278–279 no. MF 20 fig. 12–7; M. Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen und Gürtelbeschläge im Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum I. II*, Kataloge Vor- und Frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer 30, 1. 2, ²(Mainz 2009), II 315 with literature and examples.

⁷ J. Werner, *Byzantinischer Trachtzubehör des 6. Jahrhunderts aus Heraclea Lyncestis und Caričin Grad*, editor Uenze, *Befestigungen* (cf. note 5) 591–592: Named after the finds from coin-dated houses in Heraclea Lyncestis (Bitola).

⁸ A. M. Pülz, *Die Kleinfunde aus der Grabung 2015, Die Bestattungen im*

tion area is limited to southern Italy and Sicily, the Balkans, the Peloponnese, Cyprus, the Crimea and the Caucasus whereas Asia Minor was believed until now to be devoid of finds⁹.

In the City Quarter south of the Church of Mary itself, a relatively large number of buckles was found, namely a total of 31 pieces – in contrast to the other sites in Ephesos¹⁰. Of these, one buckle is made of silver alloy, one is gilded, twenty-two are of non-ferrous metal, and seven are made of iron (fig. 2).

The most relevant types are discussed in more detail in the following:

Typical examples of very simple buckles from the City Quarter are the buckles of the ‘Yassi Ada’ type¹¹ (fig. 3a+b), of which several variants have been found at Ephesos. Despite their simplicity, these buckles are interesting because they are the most common type in all three houses within the City Quarter: they appear four times in total¹² (fig. 2). But they were also found in other sites of Ephesos, namely in the Church of Mary and at the Domitian’s square¹³.

The copper alloy buckle from the City Quarter has a rectangular frame which at the same time serves as the loop and a round hinge bar which is moulded onto one narrow side. The separate found tongue shows a small basal cube. The tongue of the example from the City Quarter originally must have been fixed on the rectangular loop because there is no separate and movable axle or strap bar (which however is typical for the ‘Yassi Ada’ type buckles) – a phenomenon which is also recognisable on one of the iron buckles from the same location as well as on the buckle from the Church of Mary in Ephesos. Similar buckles are summarised under the type A14 by M. Schulze-Dörrlamm – attributed to the 2nd half of the 6th century – which were found exclusively in the western provinces and are not yet known from the Byzantine east¹⁴. However, a buckle from the early Byzantine settlement in Kefalos/Kos (destruction horizon of 551) may also be an example of this type, even if it is only depicted in a collective photo¹⁵. A simple rectangular buckle frame made of iron, albeit with a rectangular cross-section, comes from Sadovec (undated)¹⁶.

sog. Serapeion von Ephesos, editors M. Steskal, L. Rembart, A. M. Pülz, M. Binder, *ÖJh* 84, 2015, 283–284 KF 2.

⁹ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 36–39 (cf. note 6) distribution map fig. 16.

¹⁰ For example, we only know of two specimens from the so-called Byzantine Palace.

¹¹ See above note 6.

¹² IN 840 – EVH14 11005/11093: one example made of copper alloy from the collapse of room 3.13; two made of iron from the collapse of room 1.15 with movable bars; a further example made of iron derives from a pit (?) in room 1.12 – all unpublished.

¹³ Church of Mary: Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 9 cat.no. T 9 colour pl. 1 (cf. note 4); Domitian’s square – unpublished.

¹⁴ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, I 29–30 (cf. note 6).

¹⁵ E. Militsi, *Small Finds from the Early Christian Settlement of Kefalos in Kos, Dodecanese*, Byzantine Small Finds in Archaeological Contexts, *BYZAS* 15, editors B. Böhlendorf-Arslan, A. Ricci, (Istanbul 2012), 273 fig. 14 (inv.no. 118).

¹⁶ Uenze, *Befestigungen*, 174 plate 9, 13 (cf. note 5).

The ‘Yassi Ada’ type itself is mainly found in the eastern Mediterranean¹⁷, the Balkans and Pannonia and is dated to the 6th century until the 1st third of the 7th century¹⁸. The same chronological classification might be assumed for some of the Ephesian specimens even though they do not possess a movable bar. In spite of that, the settlement finds from Carinčin Grad offer an excellent comparison to Ephesos here, as they also represent the most frequently represented buckle type (10x) there¹⁹.

Another buckle of interest is the example of the type ‘Heraclea Lyncestis’ with a rectangular frame²⁰ from the collapse in room 1.15 (fig. 4a+b) – a type which can be dated according to the finds in coin-dated houses in ‘Heraclea Lyncestis’ as well as a female grave in Arcisa (Tuscany) to the later 6th century²¹.

The form of this buckle type with a frame-shaped plate (composed of two equal rectangular halves) has a cheek-hinge. One half serves as the loop, the other as a fixed fitting with a strap bar, the tongue originally was attached to the cheek-hinge. Presumably a similar example is a buckle from the Church of Mary/Olympieion, here too the tongue is attached to the non-retracted middle bar by a cheek hinge²². In order to avoid riveting, a solid rectangular frame with two openings and a cheek-hinge on the middle bar was created whereas the axle pin and tongue remain movable²³.

¹⁷ For example: Sardis: J. C. Waldbaum, *Metalwork from Sardis: The Finds through 1974*, Sardis 8, (Cambridge, MA 1983), 121 no. 704 pl. 44. – Anemurium: J. Russell, *Byzantine Instrumenta Domestica from Anemurium: The Significance of Context, City, Town and Countryside in the Early Byzantine Era*, editor R. L. Hohlfelder, (New York 1982), fig. 6, 7–8; Karthago (?): C. Eger, *Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen aus Nordafrika – ein typologischer Überblick*, *Ephemeris Napocensis* 20, 2010, 149 fig. 6, 4.

¹⁸ For Pannonia s. V. Tivadar, *A sztyeppei, a Bizánci és a Meroving birodalmak között. Kulturális változások a Kárpát-medence nyugati felén a 6-7. században. Akadémiai doktori értekezés* (Budapest 2018), 132–133 list 27.

¹⁹ B. Bavant, V. Ivanišević, *Carinčin Grad IV. Catalogue des objets des fouilles anciennes et autres études*, (Rome 2019), 219–221 cat. 1785–1795.

²⁰ IN 377 – EVH12 1022/1434: Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 10 cat.no. T11 colour plate 1 (cf. note 4).

²¹ About the type see above note 7. Dating after Werner, *Heraclea Lyncestis*, 591. 593 (cf. note 7).

²² Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 9 f. cat.no. T10 plate 1 colour plate 1 (cf. note 4).

²³ On a more simple form with retracted sides on the middle bar see type A15 after Schulz-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, I 30–33 (cf. note 6); Eger, *Nordafrika*, 147 f. (cf. note 17); A. Blay – L. Samu, *Über die mediterranen Kontakte des frühawarenzeitlichen Karpatenbeckens am Beispiel ausgewählter Fundgruppen*, *Grenzübergänge* editors O. Heinrich-Tamáska, V. Ivanišević, D. Syrbe, (Remshalden 2016), 299–301.



Fig. 4a+b: buckle type 'Heraclea Lyncestis' from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (IN 377 –EVH12 1022/1434); front and back (photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 4а+б Копче типа 'Хераклеа Линкестис' из касноантичког градског кварта, Ефес (IN 377 –EVH12 1022/1434); предња и задња страна (фотографије ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)



Fig. 5a+b: buckle with cruciform plate from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (IN 23 – EVH16 11003/11025); front and back (photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 5а+б Копче са крстеликом плочом из касноантичког градског кварта, Ефес (IN 23 – EVH16 11003/11025); предња и задња страна (фотографије ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)

The area of distribution so far lies in the provinces of the Empire and includes the Balkans, North Italy, the Carpathian Basin, the Crimea²⁴ and N-Africa (Timgad)²⁵ and now we also have two specimens from Asia Minor with the buckles from Ephesos.

The next two buckle types from the 1st half of the 7th century on the other hand are typical Byzantine examples:

²⁴ Distribution map in Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, I 32 fig. 12 (cf. note 6) and Blay – Samu, *Kontakte*, fig. 8 (cf. note 23) – both with sites and literature.

²⁵ Eger, *Nordafrika*, 147–148 Abb. 6, 1 (cf. note 17) with an example from North Africa.

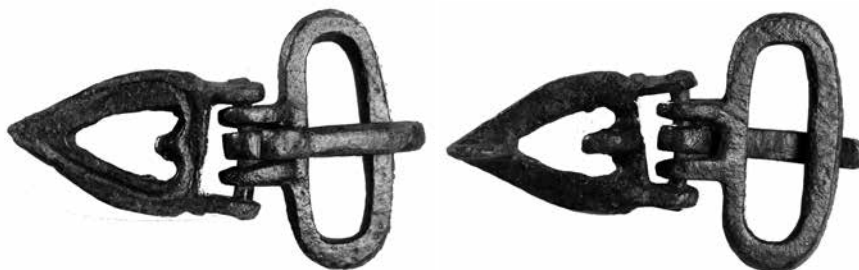


Fig. 6a+b: buckle type 'Bologna' from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (IN 1345 – EVH15 5028/5141); front and back (photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 6a+b Копче типа 'Болоња' из касноантичког градског кварта, Ефес (IN 1345 – EVH15 5028/5141); предња и задња страна (фотографије ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)

First, an oval buckle with an – originally – cruciform plate²⁶ (type D22 after Schulze-Dörrlamm²⁷) and dot-circle ornament, deriving from Room 2.4 (fig. 5a+b). It is made of copper alloy and cast in one piece. Other examples of this type are also known from Ephesos i.e., from the so-called Byzantine Palace²⁸, or in the underfilling of the floor of the lower church of the so-called tomb of Saint Luke²⁹ associated with human bones, suggesting a sepulchral context, as well as in form of stray finds from the surroundings of Ephesos³⁰.

This type is widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Crimea³¹, particularly in the 1st half of the 7th century³², but is also found, for example, in

²⁶ IN 23 – EVH16 11003/11025: unpublished.

²⁷ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, I 193–199 (cf. note 6).

²⁸ Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 14 f. cat.no. T 29 pl. 3 and colour pl. 2 (cf. note 4).

²⁹ H. Liko, *XI. Keramikauswertung*, Das sog. Lukasgrab in Ephesos. Eine Fallstudie zur Adaption antiker Monumente in byzantinischer Zeit, *Forschungen in Ephesos* 4, 4, author A. Pülz, (Vienna 2010), 189. 219 Kat. 357; Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 14 cat.no. T 28 pl. 3 and colour pl. 2 (cf. note 4).

³⁰ Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 14–15 cat.no. T 27. 30. 31 (cf. note 4) from Aslanlar Köyü and from Tire.

³¹ E. Chajredinova, *Byzantinische Elemente in der Frauentracht der Krimgoten im 7. Jahrhundert*, *Byzanz – das Römerreich im Mittelalter*, Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum 84, 1–3, editors F. Daim, J. Drauschke, (Mainz 2010), 76–83 fig. 2, 13–15; 11.

³² Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, I fig. 71 (cf. note 6) with distribution map and comparisons: for example, Samos: W. Martini, C. Steckner, *Das Gymnasium von Samos. Das frühbyzantinische Klostergut*, Samos 17, (Bonn 1993), 123. 127 fig. 36, 5; 39, 4 plate 15, 5; 17, 4 a. b. – Anemurium/Kilikien: Russell, *Anemurium*, 138. 142 plate 7 fig. 18–20 (cf. note 17) with further comparisons.

the Crypta Balbi in Rome³³, where it was made locally. Due to its small size, the buckle is referred to as a miniature buckle, which was used either for children's belts or as a bag buckle – often found in female graves. W. Martini and C. Steckner have calculated a belt width of approx. 1.3–1.4 cm for the specimens of this type from graves 2 and 5 in the monastery complex on Samos³⁴, which is quite comparable with the loop and plate heights of the buckles from Ephesos.

The other typical Byzantine buckle is from room 3.11 in the City Quarter and belongs to the 'Bologna' type³⁵ (type E8 after Schulze-Dörrlamm³⁶) (fig. 6a+b). A further buckle of this type derives from Terrace House 2 in Ephesos, a variant with a central bar was found in the Serapeion³⁷.

Characteristic is a heart-shaped and elongated openwork plate with a deep, decorative incised line as a frame which follows the shape of the plate, a terminal knob, an oval loop without tongue-rest and two attachment lugs on the reverse. The tongue itself shows an undecorated, basal cube. The 'Bologna' type is one of the most common Byzantine buckle types with hinge fittings or plates. Its area of distribution stretches from southern Italy to Greece, Asia Minor, the Crimea, Jordan and Iran³⁸. For example, a buckle of this type was found in grave 1 of the early Byzantine monastery complex on Samos, which is dated to the 1st half of the 7th century on the basis of coins³⁹.

The 'Bologna' type is mainly made of non-ferrous metal and was worn by men, at least this is confirmed by grave finds (grave associated with lance in Selvicciola, Colli di San Colombano)⁴⁰.

A belt buckle made of a more expensive material with a hinge plate from the collapsed rooms 2.1/2.2/2.3 is made of silver alloy⁴¹ (fig. 7a+b). This buckle with an oval loop and a constricted hinged plate cannot be clearly assigned to any known buckle type, but could perhaps be a locally produced variation

³³ M. S. Arena – P. Delogu – L. Paroli – M. Ricci – L. Sagui – L. Vendittelli (eds.), *Roma. Dall'Antichità al Medioevo Archeologia e Storia. Nel Museum Nazionale Romana Crypta Balbi*, (Milano 2001), 386 Kat. II.4.687.

³⁴ Martini, Steckner, *Samos*, 123. 128. 135 (cf. note 32).

³⁵ IN 1345: EVH15 5028/5141: unpublished. On the 'Bologna' type see J. Werner, *Byzantinische Gürtelschnallen des 6. und 7. Jahrhunderts aus der Sammlung Diergardt*, Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte 1955, 38. 40. 48 list 4 pl. 8, 12; E. Riemer, *Romanische Grabfunde des 5.–8. Jahrhunderts in Italien*, Internationale Archäologie 57, (Rhaden 2000), 160.

³⁶ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 29–33 (cf. note 6).

³⁷ Terrace House 2: Pülz, *Kleinfunde 17* cat.no 41 pl. 4 colour pl. 3. 119 (cf. note 4); Serapeion: Pülz, *Serapeion*, 282–283 KF 1 (cf. note 8).

³⁸ On distribution maps see Riemer, *Grabfunde*, 274 list 5 (cf. note 35); Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 30 fig. 12 (cf. note 6).

³⁹ Martini and Steckner assume a belt width of max. 1.9 cm: Martini, Steckner, *Samos*, 121 grave no. 1, 5 fig. 35, 5 pl. 14, 4 (cf. note 32).

⁴⁰ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 33 (cf. note 6); L. Paroli, *L'Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda*, (Florence 1997), 234 fig. 10, 9. 13.

⁴¹ IN 18 – EVH16-3027/3222: unpublished.



Fig. 7a+b: variant of the buckle type ‘Trapezunt’ from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (IN 18 – EVH16 3027/3222); front and back (photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 7a+b Варијанта копче типа ‘Трапезунт’ из касноантичког градског кварта, Ефес (IN 18 – EVH16 3027/3222); предња и задња страна (фотографије ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)

of Joachim Werner’s ‘Trapezunt’ type⁴² or of the type E18 after Schulze-Dörrlamm⁴³: The plate of the Ephesian example is lyra-shaped, the decoration consists of a chased imitation of a pearl or notched wire along the edge which encloses a deeply engraved cross in the circular terminal ending. The free space in the front part of the plate shows three V-liked deep punches – one below the other. A much more distinct V-ornament is to be found on the terminal knob.

If we look at comparisons with similar plates, such as a silver buckle from the Benaki Museum in Athens⁴⁴ or a gold buckle from the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore⁴⁵, both of which belong to the ‘Trapezunt’ type, the buckle from the City Quarter in Ephesos is clearly more simple in execution: for example, it lacks the connecting piece between the hinge and the plate with the typical dot-comma motif or the depression for an inlay on the tongue as in the Baltimore piece. The Athenian example has a block monogram in the medallion, which places the buckle in the late 6th century, because this is when block monograms were replaced by cross monograms⁴⁶. However, we find the same flattened shape of the shield tongue. The thickened tongue is cut off straight at its tip and is semi-circular in cross-section. The tongue of the buckle from the

⁴² Werner, *Gürtelschnallen*, 36–37 42 pl. 4, 6 (cf. note 35): dating 2nd half 7th century.

⁴³ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 55–61 (cf. note 6).

⁴⁴ A. R. Bromberg, *Gold aus Griechenland, Kat. Pforzheim*, (Pforzheim 1992), Nr. 60; E. Georgoula (ed.), *Greek jewellery from the Benaki Museum, Kat. Athen* (Athens 1999) Nr. 123.

⁴⁵ A. Garside (ed.), *Jewelry: Ancient to Modern. Walters Art Gallery*, (Baltimore 1979), no. 431; I. Baldini Lippolis, *L’oreficeria nell’Impero di Costantinopoli tra IV e VII secolo*, (Bari 1999), 230 4.d Nr. 12.

⁴⁶ W. Seibt in: *Rom und Byzanz: Archäologische Kostbarkeiten aus Bayern. Katalog zur Ausstellung der Prähistorischen Staatssammlung München*, 20. Okt. 1998 bis 14. Feb. 1999, editors L. Wamser, G. Zahlhaas, (Munich 1998), 222. The earliest dated cross monogram belongs to the time of Justinian (518–527) and decorates small bronze coins from Antioch: J. Spier, *Some Unconventional Early Byzantine Rings*, ›Intelligible Beauty‹: Recent Research on Byzantine Jewellery, editors C. Entwistle and N. Adams, (London 2010), note 31.

City Quarter is hollow on its underside except for its tip, which is closed with a semi-circular sheet of metal. The buckle from Baltimore, which is only roughly dated to the 6th/7th centuries and whose find location is given as Hama/Syria, is different. It has a typical depression for a former inlay, but the decoration of the end medallion is also decorated with a very similar cross motif.

The ‘Trapezunt’ type with lyre-shaped plates and a massive “shield tongue” is a typical Byzantine buckle form of the 7th century: The main areas of distribution are Italy, Spain and, of course, the Black Sea region⁴⁷. This example from the City Quarter is probably of medium quality in terms of its manufacture: the plate itself is made up of a total of nine parts, which are attached to each other by soldering; the chased pattern imitates a bead or notched wire; the triangular decorative elements on the raised medallion and on the imitation of the tongue are punched; the individual parts (loop, tongue and plate) are connected to each other by a hinge construction with an iron pin. The buckle has been finely reprocessed, the tool marks of this reworking are clearly visible, especially at the adjustment points or soldered areas⁴⁸.

Nevertheless, the comparisons mentioned (Athens and Baltimore⁴⁹) are of higher quality and much more beautifully executed than the example from Ephesos, which probably also indicates that the buckle from the City Quarter is a local variation⁵⁰.

The names of the monograms on the comparisons suggest that this kind of buckle was often worn by men⁵¹. Whether this can also be assumed for our buckle must remain open, since on the Crimea for example, buckles of the ‘Trapezunt’ type were also found in female graves⁵².

Presumably also made locally is a buckle with a lyre-shaped, openwork plate⁵³, which was found in the collapsed layer of room 1.23 of the City Quarter (fig. 8a+b). It is made of copper alloy and afterwards gilded, as well as cast in three parts. A small remnant of the terminal knob is preserved, which has been

⁴⁷ According to Werner, *Gürtelschnallen*, 36 fig. 1 plate 4, 3. 5–8 (cf. note 35).

⁴⁸ Autopsie D. Zs. Schwarcz.

⁴⁹ See above notes 44 and 45. Another golden example is part of a small treasure, said to be from Constantinople, 2nd half 6th century, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington DC: M. C. Ross, *Jewelry, Enamels and Art of the Migration Period. Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection 2. With an Addendum by S. A. Boyd and S. R. Zwirn*²(Washington, DC 2005), 4 nr. 2C plate 7.

⁵⁰ For a brass model of a buckle with presumably fixed fitting and end medallion from the 6th century found in Caesarea, today in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nürnberg/Germany see B. Haas – R. Schewe, *Byzantinische Gürtelbeschläge im Germanischen Nationalmuseum*, Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums 1993, cat. 11.

⁵¹ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 300 and note 1125 (cf. note 6).

⁵² Chajredinova, *Krimgoten*, 86–87 fig. 2, 20; 15, 12 (cf. note 31) about a female grave in Lučistoe; Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 60 (cf. note 6) with examples and literature.

⁵³ IN 382 – EVH12 1078/12292: in Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, II 19 cat. T 48 plate 4 (cf. note 4).



Fig. 8a+b: variant of the buckle type E24 after Schulze-Dörrlamm from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (IN 382 – EVH12 1078/12292); front and back (photos ©Austrian Archaeological Institute/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Сл. 8a+b Варијанта копче типа E24 по Шулце-Дерлам из касноантичког градског квартa, Ефес (IN 382 – EVH12 1078/12292); предња и задња страна (фотографије ©Аустријски археолошки институт/Аустријска академија наука)

reprocessed into a semi-circular form. The (recessed) decorative elements at the front end of the plate as well as on the tongue are darkened: this discolouration could indicate originally niello or an organic material as an inlay.

This example from the City Quarter is a buckle of medium quality due to the gilding and the manufacturing technique; the lyre-shaped plate, consisting of one heart-shaped and one tulip-shaped openwork, has a notched decoration. The transition to the hinge features ornamental comma-decoration.

So far, no exact parallel is known. The Ephesian artefact may perhaps be considered a local variation of Schulze-Dörrlamm's type E24⁵⁴. The loop, tongue and plate of a gold buckle from the Mytilene Treasure, which was probably hidden in the 1st third of the 7th century due to the coins (solidi of Heraklios and Phokas⁵⁵), also features comma ornamentation, but with a different openwork⁵⁶. The same applies to a gilded buckle in the Cleveland Museum in Ohio⁵⁷.

Cheaper imitations of these valuable gold buckles are known above all from the Pannonian region with similarly designed openwork, but made of cheaper material. According to E. Garam, the buckles were used mainly in the 2nd half of the 7th century⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 77–79 (note 6).

⁵⁵ E. Kypraiou, *Greek Jewellery. 6000 Years of Tradition, Catalogue Thessaloniki*, (Athens 1997), 204 nr. 232.

⁵⁶ Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria*, 229 Nr. 4.d.1 (cf. note 45); E. ME in: *Everyday Life in Byzantium, Catalogue Saloniki*, editor D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, (Athens 2002), 391 Kat. 479: Byzantine Museum Athens; L 7,4 cm, Inv. 3051. About the date see Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 79 (cf. note 6).

⁵⁷ <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1947.31> (18.01.2024).

⁵⁸ É. Garam, *Über die Beziehung der byzantinischen Goldschnallen und der awarenzeitlichen Pseudoschnallen*, Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.–7. Jahrhundert editor C. Bálint, (Budapest 2000), 221 fig. 1, 9 after Á. Cs. Sós – Á. Salamon, *Cemeteries of the Early Middle Ages at Pókaszepetk (6th–9th c.)*, (Budapest 1995), 166 pl. 20; É. Garam, *Funde byzantinischer Herkunft in der Awarenzeit vom Ende des 6. bis zum Ende des 7. Jahrhunderts*, Monumenta

It is very likely that our specimen from Ephesos – due to its gilding and a simpler execution – can be addressed as an imitation of the above mentioned precious golden buckles, but with a similar chronological classification.

While grave finds prove that the bronze buckles of this type were worn by men, the additional finds in the treasure of Mytilene, such as earrings etc., indicate that the golden buckle could have belonged to a woman⁵⁹.

What is now the significance of these considerations for the City Quarter in Ephesos?

Based on the previous and with regard to the social hierarchy within the Late Antique community it can be assumed that people of the lower social classes merely knotted their belts or at best fastened them with a simple iron or bronze buckle. Among them there may have been buckles of the types ‘Yassi Ada’ or ‘Heraclea Lyncestis’, whereby both variants predominate in the City Quarter south of the Church of Mary in Ephesos just as in other early Byzantine cities⁶⁰. Artefacts that have come to light in areas outside the Byzantine Empire can provide information about the carriers of these simple and extremely durable types of buckles⁶¹, because these objects as burial finds always were affiliated with very few grave goods, such as in Kölked-Feketekapu⁶². The non-ferrous metal and iron buckles of the types ‘Yassi Ada’ and ‘Heraclea Lyncestis’ were therefore worn by people who obviously were not very wealthy⁶³.

Silver belt buckles, on the other hand, represented by only one specimen in the City Quarter, were worn by people who were wealthy but nevertheless belonged rather to the middle class in the social hierarchy⁶⁴. Until present, the number of silver belt buckles and belt fittings found inside the Empire is still relatively small, which fits well with its scarce appearance in Ephesos. According to M. Schulze-Dörrlamm buckles made of silver are rather frequently found in graves of the so-called “barbarians” who obviously had been neither kings nor princes, but rather military officers of a “middle level”⁶⁵. In this context, it is worth mentioning, that until now no gold buckles have been found in Ephesos.

Avarorum Archaeologica 5, (Budapest 2001), 106–107 pl. 73, 1.

⁵⁹ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 79 (cf. note 6).

⁶⁰ For example: Carinčin Grad: Bavant, Ivanišević, *Carinčin Grad IV* (cf. note 19); Anemurium: Russell, *Anemurium*, 138 fig. 6, 7, 8 (cf. note 17); Assos: B. Böhlendorf-Arslan, *Transformation von Stadtbild und urbaner Lebenswelt. Assos in der Spätantike und in frühbyzantinischer Zeit*, Veränderungen von Stadtbild und urbaner Lebenswelt in spätantiker und frühbyzantinischer Zeit. Assos im Spiegel städtischer Zentren Westkleinasiens, editor B. Böhlendorf-Arslan, (Mainz 2021), 60 fig. 48, 3.

⁶¹ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 315–316 (cf. note 6) with further examples and literature.

⁶² Graves A66 and A291: A. Kiss, *Das awarenzeitliche gepidische Gräberfeld von Kölked-Feketekapu A*, Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie 2, (Innsbruck 1996), 34. 84 plate 29.

⁶³ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 316 (cf. note 6).

⁶⁴ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 309 (cf. note 6).

⁶⁵ Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 310 and n. 1200 (cf. note 6).

Buckle type	W plate (cm)	W loop (cm)	Rec. Strap (cm)	Gender	Quality	Function	Material	Frequency	date (typological)
Trapezium ⁶⁶ – variant (?)	1.9	2.3	ca. 2.2	fm	medium (Ag-alloy)	girl's tomb/military (?)	Ag	1	late 6 th to 7 th c.
E24 – variant (?)	-	2.8	-	fm	medium (gilded)	belt	Cu, gilded	1	caq 630 AD
D22: cruciform plate	1.7	2.3	ca. 2	fm	simple	Children's belt / bag buckle	Cu	1	1 st half 7 th c.
E8: 'Bologna'	1.6	2.3	ca. 1.9	m	simple	Belt	Cu	1	1 st half 7 th c.
D31 – variant (?)	2.2	2.6	ca. 2.5	?	simple	Belt (?)	Cu	1	mid 6 th c. to 1 st half 7 th c.
'Petrovskovsk'	1.9	2.3	ca. 2.2	f (Crimea)	simple	Belt (?)	Cu	1	6 th c. to 1 st half 7 th c.
D35: roof-shaped	-	1.9	-	m (?)	simple	Belt (?)	Cu	2	late 6 th c. to 1 st half 7 th c.
'Yassi Ada' – variant	-	3.8	-	?	Very simple	Belt	Cu and Fe	4	caq 625/626 AD
'Heracles Lyncestis'	-	2.7, 3.8	-	fm	Very simple	Fabric belt (?)	Cu	1	late 6 th c.
trapezoidal buckle	-	3.1	-	?	Very simple	Belt (?)	Cu	2	3 rd Third 6 th c. – 600 AD
Rectangular frame	-	2.9	-	?	Very simple	Belt (?)	Cu	1	2 nd half 6 th c. – 1 st half 7 th c.

Fig. 9: Overview of the buckles from the Late Antique City Quarter, Ephesos (table by the author; based on information in Martini – Steckner, *Samos*)

Сл. 9 Преглед појасних копчииз касноантичког градског кварта, Ефес (табела аутора; базирана на информацијама из Мартини – Штекнер, Самос)

Therefore, we can summarise, that the majority of the Ephesian buckles – as the great mass of the mostly standardised copper alloy buckles in the early Byzantine period – are presumably produced rather cheaply, and were worn by ordinary people and soldiers of the Byzantine army or the lower officials of the state⁶⁶.

The somewhat a little higher value of belt buckles made of gilded bronze like the Ephesian example (fig. 8a+b) was observed by W. Martini and C. Steckner in the grave goods from the cemetery at the Gymnasium of Samos⁶⁷. They determined four different belt widths from the measurements of the belt buckles found as burial gifts and realised that only belts with the largest width (2.8–2.9 cm) had a gilded bronze buckle, while all the narrower belts had a less valuable buckle made of copper alloy. The same could also apply for the buckles from the City Quarter presented here (fig. 9). Our gilded buckle is actually larger (loop width 2.8 cm) and therefore can probably be assigned to a wider belt⁶⁸.

The Ephesian 'Bologna' type buckle has a loop width of 2.3 cm, which fits very well with the belt width of approx. 1.9–2.1 cm calculated by W. Martini and C. Steckner for the 'Bologna' type on the basis of the Samian buckles (found in grave 1 and grave 3). The buckle with a cruciform plate from the City Quarter with a loop width of 2.3 cm as well may also have belonged to a similarly wide belt; in this case the Ephesian example is somewhat larger than the Samian comparisons (found in grave 2 and grave 5).

Somewhat more difficult based on the preliminary analysis is the link between certain buckle types and gender⁶⁹. Based on the comparative finds from

⁶⁶ Schulze-Dörlamm, *Gürtelschnallen*, II 310 (cf. note 6).

⁶⁷ Martini, Steckner, *Samos*, 135 (cf. note 32).

⁶⁸ However, I have to point out, that there exist also bronze buckles in the Quarter such as a variant of type D31 with a width of 2.6 cm. Also, the types 'Yassi Ada' and 'Heracles Lyncestis' do not count, as they are structured differently.

⁶⁹ Unfortunately, the careful analysis by W. Martini and C. Steckner cannot be of any

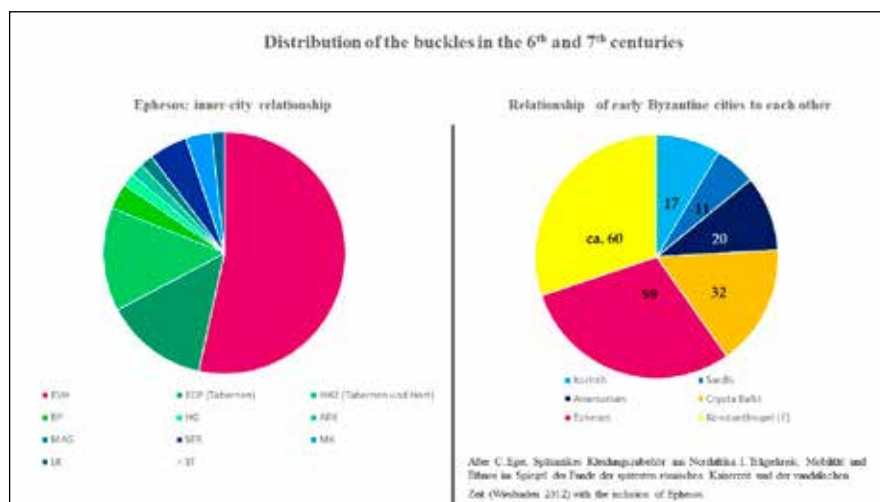


Fig. 10: left: distribution of the buckles within the city of Ephesos (diagram by the author) Right: relationship of Late Antique-early Byzantine cities and provincial centres to each other with regard to the distribution of the buckles (diagram by the author, based on information in Eger, *Spätantikes Kleidungs-zubehör*)

Сл. 10 лево: Распрострањеност појасних копчи у граду Ефесу (дијаграм аутора) Десно: однос касноантичких-рановизантијских градова и провинцијских центара међусобно у вези са распрострањеношћу појасних копчица (дијаграм аутора, базиран на информацијама из књиге Кристофа Егера, *Spätantikes Kleidungs-zubehör*)

graves mentioned above, it can at least be cautiously stated that the somewhat more valuable buckles of medium quality, such as the ‘Trapezunt’ (fig. 7a+b) and E24 (fig. 8a+b) variants, may be assigned to men’s belts (with the exception of the Crimea, where they were also found in female graves). The same probably also applies to the ‘Bologna’ type, which is repeatedly described as a military belt buckle. Due to its rather small shape, the type with cruciform plate on the other hand is often categorised as a buckle for a child’s belt or as a pocket buckle – in our case, however, the loop of the specimen, whose plate is not completely preserved, has the same width as the ‘Bologna’ type example.

Looking at the horizontal distribution of the finds in the City Quarter of Ephesos in fig. 2, it must be admitted that there are no distinguishable combinations between certain buckle types, as was the case for example in the Samian tombs⁷⁰. There, based on the inventory and combinations of the grave goods, a certain social hierarchy could have been established, such as which buckles have been combined with others (for example the Syracuse type in combination with shield buckles) and which types with which coins, etc. However, the local

help here, as no distinction was made between male and female burials: Martini, Steckner, *Samos*, 130 (cf. note 32).

⁷⁰ A future topic of the research project is the investigation of the socialisation of finds in each room.

finds from Samos should not be generalised with regard to the lack of a broader spectrum of comparable data⁷¹, but can be taken as an incentive to investigate these aspects in other sites in more detail.

These preliminary results show that there are certainly variations of the common forms and types in Ephesos, which probably point to regional peculiarities and above all to local productions⁷², as in the case of the buckles, which represent simpler forms of the well-known and widely used Byzantine types. With the current state of research, it can therefore be summarised that there apparently was a relatively wide range of different buckle types in Ephesos and there were no individual preferences for a particular one. At first glance, quite few buckles (59 examples) are known from Ephesos and its surroundings, measured against the size of the city in the Late Antique-Early Byzantine period. However, this contrasts with the inner-city relation, where 31 buckles come from the City Quarter alone, and this within a the relatively short time period of the 6th and 7th centuries, in contrast to other Ephesian sites such as the so-called Byzantine Palace with only two specimens (fig. 10)⁷³.

However, if one compares the buckle spectrum of the 6th and 7th centuries of Ephesos with the research of C. Eger⁷⁴, a different picture emerges: In relation to the cities mentioned in his study (with the exception of Carthage, although not all examples from Carthage have an exact find location), the quantity of the Ephesian buckles is comparatively above average. Similar to Ephesos, the buckles from other sites in western Asia Minor such as Sardis, Pergamon or Assos but also, for example, from the Cilician Anemurium, or even outside Asia Minor such as from Corinth, are of the same types and qualities: namely hardly ever of high-quality material, but predominantly made of copper alloys and iron⁷⁵.

⁷¹ Martini and Steckner give at least one parallel for grave 4, namely a double grave on Cyprus that has the same combinations of buckles: Martini, Steckner, *Samos*, 137 n. 385 (cf. note 32).

⁷² D. Zs. Schwarcz, *Die metallverarbeitenden Werkstattbereiche im Hanghaus 2 und weitere Hinweise auf Metallverarbeitung in Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit*, in: Pülz, *Kleinfunde*, 297–302 (cf. note 4).

⁷³ One is therefore tempted to assume that this circumstance is rather due to the focus and attention of the respective excavations in the course of the 125 years of exploration of the site of Ephesos.

⁷⁴ C. Eger, *Spätantikes Kleidungszubehör aus Nordafrika I. Trägerkreis, Mobilität und Ethnos im Spiegel der Funde der spätesten römischen Kaiserzeit und der vandalischen Zeit*, (Wiesbaden 2012), 51–53 fig. 7 compared the material between several North African sites with those from Corinth (17 objects), Sardis (11 objects), Anemurium (20 objects), the Crypta Balbi (32 objects) and Constantinople (approx. 60 buckles).

⁷⁵ This essay is only an initial evaluation of the buckles from the City Quarter south of the Church of Mary in Ephesos, which, in combination with the other material evidence, should contribute to their clarification in the form of a contextual analysis of the individual rooms and, subsequently, their function.

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ПОЈАСНЕ КОПЧЕ ИЗ КВАРТА КАСНОАНТИЧКОГ ГРАДА.
ДОКАЗИ О МАТЕРИЈАЛНОЈ КУЛТУРИ У VI И VII ВЕКУ У ЕФЕСУ

Група појасних копчи из касноантичког градског квартa у Ефесу представља део материјалне културе VI и VII века н.е. и стога је добар почетни пункт за различите интерпретативне приступе. Због контекста у коме су пронађени и њихове релативно прецизне хронолошке класификације, различите врсте појасних копчи пружају информације о употреби појединачних просторија унутар кућа и њихових становника. Касније, међутим, они су такође битан индикатор за потврду претпоставки о свакодневном животу у касноантичком граду и историји насељавања у Ефесу у целини, као и процесу трансформације од друге половине VII века. Као пример за касноантичко-рановизантијски провинцијски центар могло се установити да нема налаза појасних копчи пре краја VII века. Постоје налази мањег броја кочи средњег квалитета, које по својој техници израде и материјалу, тако и по типолошким карактеристикама, представљају варијанте познатих и уобичајених византијских типова копчи. Тренутни ступањ истраживања указује на релативно широк спектар различитих типова појасних копчи у Ефесу што указује на посебне регионалне особености и пре свега на локалну производњу. Колико је познато за сада, исто важи и за друге византијске градове и провинцијске центре у VI и VII веку.

