

Three Gold Pendants with Precious Stones from the Preslav Treasure

The three gold pendants in the Preslav Treasure have hitherto been dated to the same period as the other jewellery objects, i. e., to the tenth century. The dating was particularly based on the presumed burial date of the treasure in 971 (capture of Preslav) and the fifteen Byzantine silver coins found together with the jewellery, issued under the co-emperors Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos and Romanos II (945-959)¹. This chronology was adopted for the presentation in the Veliki Preslav Museum and for seven international exhibitions of the Preslav Treasure (or parts of it) outside Bulgaria². The same is true of the only detailed study of the treasure by Antje Bosselmann-Ruickbie in her book on Byzantine jewellery³. The present study puts forward a new date for the three pendants in the Early Byzantine period, based on morphological and stylistic analyses.

Two Round Pendants with Emeralds (figs 1a-c. 2a-c)

Height 6.61 cm, width 5.16 cm, thickness 0.53 cm, weight 33.7 g
 Height 6.45 cm, width 5.05 cm, thickness 0.53 cm, weight 32.0 g
 Veliki Preslav Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 3381/3 A-B

The pendants consist of a concentric structure formed by three hoops. The core is a deep circular setting with a profiled strip on the rim holding the now lost stone. Remnants of an unidentified dark filling material have survived in the central setting of the first pendant, while such is completely missing on the second one.

The first hoop is made of a flat wire set on edge, creating a wavy appearance on the front of the pendant like a double-sided festoon. The hoop that surrounds the setting in the centre is connected with it through ten relatively equally distanced spokes of round wire, radially pointing outwards. The spokes are fixed in small gold ringlets soldered on the inner side of the hoop. The spokes are not perpendicular to the curved planes of the hoop strips, but are slanting slightly to the right, thus not adding any aesthetic value, but rather set in this way due to the assembly method. Nine grey and one white pearl mounted on the spokes of the first pendant have survived, while the pearls of the second pendant are entirely missing.

The second hoop strip again holds spokes, this time 15, made of the same round wire and soldered radially along the outer face of the first hoop. These too are fixed in gold ringlets on the inner face of the second hoop, which is made



Fig. 1 a-c Round pendant from the Preslav Treasure. – (Photo S. Steidl, LEIZA). – Scale 1:1.

1 Totev, Zlatno sākrovište 26-27. 72-75 figs 25-26. – Totev, Preslavskoto sākrovište 101-102 pl. XVII, 1-3. – Totev, Veliki Preslav 107 no. 96. – Totev, Sākrovište 60 figs 33-35; 70-73.

2 Cat. Paris 1980 nos 158-159. – Cat. Paris 2018 no. 63. – Cat. Rom 2001 no. 58.8-9. – Cat. Magdeburg 2001 no. VI.58. (A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie). – Cat. Schallaburg 2012 no. XI.25-26. – Cat. Paris 2018 nos 38-39.

3 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Byzantinischer Schmuck 21-22.



Fig. 2 a-c Round pendant from the Preslav Treasure (pair of fig. 1). – (Photo S. Steidl, LEIZA). – Scale 1:1.



Fig. 3 Round pendants from the Preslav Treasure: computer reconstructions. – (Photo S. Steidl, LEIZA; reconstruction by E. Boyadzhieva). – Scale 1:1.

out of sheet metal with a wavy upper rim. There are 15 precious stones (emeralds) of different sizes and shapes mounted on the spokes. Most of them have the shape of an irregular truncated pyramid with rounded corners or a multi-faceted cylinder with deformed edges. Two of the emeralds on the first pendant and three on the second are partially broken, and parts of the stones are missing⁴, so that in some cases the wire on which the gemstones are strung is exposed. Again, the spokes are slightly slanting to the right, but less so than the inner ones.

On the outside, 23 gold eyelets with elongated »feet« are soldered radially onto the second hoop. Made of thick semi-circular wire to shape loops, they are cut open at the reverse of the pendant to receive the round wires holding the threaded pearls (both pearls and wire are now missing). At the top of the pendants, a hinge construction is attached to two of the eyelets that connects the pendant to a solid ring of semi-circular profile, set in a right angle to meet a chain or a string to fasten it. The outer surface of the suspension ring on the first pendant is perforated with a row of 13 squares that originally were likely to have been filled. Although the first and second pendant are clearly made as a pair, this decorative feature is missing in the second pendant.

On the basis of their state of preservation, the two round pendants can be reconstructed with the help of computer animation to a high degree of reliability, visually restoring the missing wire elements and pearls (fig. 3). As to the stone in the centre, we can assume that it was the same smooth and slightly convex flake like that preserved in one of the almond-shaped bezel settings of the rhomboid pendant (fig. 4a-c).

⁴ See the contribution by M. Heinzel in this volume on the restoration and re-arrangement of the emeralds.



Fig. 4 a-c Rhomboid pendant from the Preslav Treasure. – (Photo S. Steidl, LEIZA). – Scale 1:1.

Rhomboid Pendant (fig. 4a-c)

Height 6.99 cm, width 5.94 cm, thickness 0.45 cm, weight 29.2 g
Veliki Preslav Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 3381/4

This pendant is composed similarly to the two round pendants. In the centre is an oval bezel setting, surrounded by two rhomboid frames of thick sheet metal with a wavy edge. The oval setting is today empty apart from a dark filling material. The edge of the setting has a profiled rim similar to the round pendants that was supposed to keep the now lost stone in place.

In contrast to the round pendants, the internal space between the oval setting and the inner frame is occupied by four settings in the shape of pointed ovals, each made of a thin strip of metal, set in the middle of each side of the rhomboid. The corners are filled with rings, with two short wires holding pearls. At the corners between the two frames, four almond-shaped settings with flat emeralds are fixed, and three violet stones (one is lost) of different shape and size are mounted between them on each side. The stones – rubies and one amethyst (perhaps dating from a later repair) – are pierced and mounted on round wire pegs, which are soldered to the inner frame, while the ends are unfixed. Three stones are instead strung on thin wires whose ends are somewhat carelessly coiled around the inner and outer frames. The large frame holds 19 eyelets, very similar to those of the round pendants and also cut at the back to allow wire to be slid in. On one of the two corners of the pendant, there is a small ring instead of an eyelet, made of the same metal strip with a wavy edge. The round wire running along the outside of the pendant, on which the grey pearls are strung, passes through holes in the ring, and inside there is a pearl similar to those on the outside. Originally, there must have been a total of 21 pearls, but only eleven have survived. There are



Fig. 5 Rhomboid pendant from the Preslav Treasure: digital reconstruction. – (Photo S. Steidl, LEIZA; reconstruction by E. Boyadzhieva). – Scale 1:1.

two more holes in the strip of the ring made apart from those used for the string. This might be due to a jeweller's error in construction. The ends of the wire are fixed with a single coil around the eyelets where the preserved string of pearls ends.

The pendant has a hinge construction at the top similar to the round pendants, but the suspension ring is lost. In contrast to the round pendants, however, the hinges are connected with the pendant via the round pearl holder, constructed of a metal strip with the characteristic wavy rim.

The rhomboid pendant has been reconstructed digitally (fig. 5). I assume that the same type of flat emerald was used, similar to the one preserved (albeit cracked) in one of the almond-shaped bezel settings. It remains unclear what was set into the leaf-shaped cells that are arranged around the oval centre setting.

Analysis of the Pendants

The two round pendants have no direct parallels in the medieval jewellery of the chronological period of the Preslav Treasure. There are analogies regarding the general morphology, such as the round shape and the suspension loops (which indicate their function as pendants). In the following, we meticulously compare the morphology of the Preslav pendants and analyse their separate elements. The same applies to the rhomboid pendant, which likewise has no direct parallels. Thus, the evaluation of the three pieces of medieval jewellery is based on the method of comparing certain details in other artefacts, along with their general morphology. This method has been applied successfully in the work of Yvonne Stolz on the necklace from Assiût (Egypt)⁵. For this study, I have selected details of the three jewels that are not found in the – rather few – surviving pieces of Byzantine jewellery from the ninth and tenth centuries.

As to the circular and rhomboid pendants, they differ little in size, but rather in the diameters of the wire used for these. This could mean that they are either made in different workshops or by different craftsmen, or that they were made at different times. Judging by their similar execution (construction, morphology and style), they are likely from the same chronological period.

A direct *comparandum* is the crescent-shaped earring in the Benaki Museum in Athens with its gemstones and pearls strung on a wire (fig. 6a)⁶. The earring has not been treated yet in a detailed study, but it was described in catalogues and commented on in the last century. Aimilia Yeroulanou dated it to the seventh century, mainly based on its distinctive decorative style of two birds (peacocks?) that flank (or hold in their beaks) an openwork monogram. The row of gemstones and pearls along the periphery of the earring is strung on a wire that runs through »holders« that resemble those on the Preslav pendants, this time formed from nearly flat sheet-metal strips. The distance between the loop-holders is irregular and corresponds with the size of the four pearls and the four green beads. If they are not genuine emeralds, they are certainly imitations in glass.

The wire's ends are fixed with a one-and-a-half coil at the loop-holders at the end. How this string was mounted, however, cannot be understood because the reverse of the earring has not been published (perhaps the wire just passed through the loops). What is remarkable here is the lack of something usual for Byzantine jewellery: centred symmetry. This could have been achieved by using nine beads/pearls instead of eight. In the publications that mention the earring, the monogram has been deciphered differently, such as N.A.E.T.O.⁷,

which makes no sense. Georgi Sengalevich reads the name ΛΕΟΝΘΑ, Empress of Byzantium⁸ and wife of Emperor Phocas (602-612). If this reading were correct, it would match the stylistic dating of the earring to the early seventh century. The inscription would further link the piece of jewellery to the imperial family. Yvonne Stolz mentioned the Edict of Emperor Justinian I (527-565), the *Codex Iustinianus*⁹, according to which certain precious stones were reserved for the decoration of imperial insignia of the ruling dynasty. Emeralds were reserved in this manner, although they might in this case be glass imitations. The earring is a representative of the typical openwork style of Early Byzantine jewellery, called in Greek διατρίτα (*diatrita*), and in Latin *opus interrasile*. Jewellery of this technique is made of thin sheet gold that was punched out from the front to create different motifs, the contours of which are contrasted against the openings in the metal. Precious stones mounted in bezel settings can be added (see discussion below).

A second parallel for the type of strung wire is found on two luxury gold bracelets, which are part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York¹⁰ (one of them is depicted in fig. 6b). Each earring consists of two halves of a hoop, made of flat wide bands connected by a hinge, and on the opposite side, a round plaque is mounted, again connected with two hinges. The exterior of this structure is densely covered with two rows of pearls framing a row of precious stones in high cabochon settings containing glass inlays on an inorganic filler. The two rows of pearls are strung on a wire, which passes through extended loops. They are soldered onto the solid band of the hoop along both sides of the rows of claw settings and nearly square settings. The decoration of the round plaque is similar, made from two elements: an openwork back and solid front. The latter is decorated with a rosette-shaped composition. In the middle sits a smooth hemispherical gemstone in a small round setting, fitted on each of the four sides with a pair of claws and surrounded by a string of ten pearls passing through ten loop-holders whose feet are soldered around the bezel in a way that they are slanting towards the stone. They are slightly longer than the extended loops-holders on the pendants in the Preslav Treasure. They are made in the same way, i.e., made of semi-circular wires, which on the string of the rosette are cut on the outside. On the hoop, however, they are cut at the top and are folded more carefully so that they fit very closely with barely noticeable gaps. Moreover, the holders of the pearl strings are set at a wider distance with four pearls between them and not between each pearl. To retain the effect of the alternating loops and pearls, golden beads of the same semi-circular wire are strung between the pearls.

5 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen*.

6 Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 168-169 fig. 322; 290 no. 554.

7 Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 169 fig. 322; 290 no. 554.

8 Stanilov/Sengalevich, *Earring with Monogram*.

9 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 552-554.

10 Dennison, *Gold Treasure 157-159* figs 53-55 pl. XLIX, 28-29. – Peirce/Tyler, *L'art byzantine* 41. 110 pl. 200a-b. – Weitzman, *Late Roman World* 57. – Cat. New York 1979 no. 300 (K. R. Brown). – Brown, *Morgan Bracelets* fig. 9. – Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 63-64 fig. 90; 69. 97. 100-102 fig. 175; 127. 154. 161. 177. 195. 245 no. 228. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen*.



Fig. 6 Early Byzantine jewellery: **a** Earring with monogram, Benaki Museum Athens, below: reading of the monogram. – **b** Bracelet from the Assiût Treasure, Metropolitan Museum Collection New York. – **c** Necklace from the Assiût Treasure. – **d** Detail of necklace from the Assiût Treasure. – (a photo G. Sengalevich; b-d after Yeroulanou, Diatrita; photomontage by S. Stanilov). – Not to scale.

The bracelets from the Metropolitan Museum were purchased on the art market by John Pierpont Morgan and donated by him to the museum collection¹¹. Their findspot is unknown, but they are often mentioned in connection with the above-mentioned treasure from Assiût¹², and some researchers even think that they are part of the same find.

This treasure consists of 36 pieces of Byzantine jewellery, subjected many times to technical and stylistic analysis, but without a general study of the whole. The most detailed study is the above-mentioned paper by Stolz, which deals with a comprehensive analysis of the jewelled collar. Stolz also commented on some of the other finds, particularly on those that

11 Dennison, *Gold Treasure* 157-159 pl. XLIX, 28-29.

12 See overview on this treasure: Dospél Williams, *Assiut Treasure*.

have similar features. The necklace was dated between the fifth and seventh centuries, and by most researchers to the sixth century¹³. The bracelets, however, were mostly dated to the end of the sixth century, assuming that the production and use of ornaments with this type of pearl row continued throughout the seventh century¹⁴.

A necklace from the Assiût Hoard¹⁵ (fig. 6c), now kept in the Antikensammlung Berlin¹⁶, is related to the above-mentioned earring and two bracelets. The necklace, together with other items from Assiût, formed the »Gans Collection« housed in the Antikensammlung der Königlichen Museen in Berlin, to which it was donated in 1912 by the Frankfurt collector of antiquities, Friedrich Ludwig von Gans. He had previously purchased many of the treasure objects at the Imperial Art Market in 1909¹⁷.

The necklace is made of 28 elements, connected to each other with small rings soldered to their peripheries (details in fig. 6d). The central element is made of a sardonyx cameo in a circular gold setting; it depicts the Greek goddess Artemis in profile. Half of the elements are made in openwork (*opus interrabile*) showing six-leafed rosettes set in a profiled circle, while 13 elements consist of bezel settings (to which we will refer again below). By their shape, the bezel settings are divided into two groups: seven are oval »claw« settings, i.e., the precious stones are fixed by four symmetrical prongs; six are rectangular box settings with emeralds. Each setting is encircled with a string of pearls passing through the small loops soldered to the periphery. There are eight pearls, four on either side between the connecting rings where the wire ends are fixed. The rings themselves are made of semi-circular wire pieces, bent and soldered at the frame joint. As a decorative scheme, they seem to precede the holders of the above-mentioned earring and bracelets because they alternate after each pearl, thus the aesthetic value is differently expressed – the loop-holders are not an adjunct element to the row of pearls, but participate equally in the composition. Here, it is necessary to note that strings of pearls are often found on Early Byzantine almond-shaped earrings, however, in those cases, they always represent long rows of pearls or beads threaded through loop-holders. The extended »feet« of the longer holders appear on the earring in the Benaki Museum, the bracelets in the Metropolitan Museum and the pendants in the Preslav Treasure. The fact that this feature is found on very few items and was seemingly discontinued suggests that it was the work of the same workshop under the guidance of the same jeweller. The divergent morphology

of the holders is probably due to different craftsmen, and perhaps also to different customers' orders.

The pendants from the Preslav Treasure, which form a set, judging from their morphology and style, raise questions about the craftsmen who made them. We have already noted that the execution shows differences – the sheet metal for the frame of the rhomboid pendant is thinner than that of the round pendants. In addition, the festoon imitation is different on the rhomboid pendant: it is finer, while on the circular ones, it is larger. In the three Preslav pendants, we have already noted a difference in the shape of the extended loops-holders. The semi-circular wire of the holders on the rhomboid pendant is thinner than that on the round pendants. This perhaps indicates different hands within the same order.

On the rhomboid pendant from the Preslav Treasure (fig. 4a-b), there are four shapes of deep, straight-walled box settings with a profiled rim to hold the stones: round, oval, almond-shaped and leaf-shaped. Both the rhomboid and the circular pendants (figs 1a-c. 2a-c. 4a-c) display a similar morphology and technology, including the deep, straight-walled box settings with profiled rims. Stolz has studied the box settings on the jewelled collar from Assiût in Berlin¹⁸. The settings on the Berlin necklace are deep and have a profiled rim, with the difference being that they are narrower at the bottom, resembling a cone. The closest comparison is offered by the box settings on the above-mentioned bracelets in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 6b), which are believed to have belonged to the same Assiût Treasure as the Berlin piece. Again, the inlays have not survived, but in one of the cells, a pale green glass stone has survived, similar to that in one of the almond-shaped settings on the rhomboid pendant from the Preslav Treasure (only there it is an emerald). Deep straight-walled bezels occur on the plaque of the third bracelet in the Berlin Antikensammlung¹⁹, again from the Assiût Treasure²⁰, which differ from the bracelets in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 6b) in that they are made of a single hoop rather than of two hinged halves (fig. 7c). Its deep and straight-walled gemstone settings have profiled rims that are similar to the examples in the Preslav Treasures.

The four original leaf-shaped cell settings of the rhomboid pendant from the Preslav Treasure (fig. 4a-b) have a direct parallel in the two bracelets from the Assiût Treasure, also housed in the Berlin Antikensammlung (fig. 7a-b. d), whose hoops are not solid, but in the shape of foliate scrolls. The central decorative element of each bracelet has the shape of

13 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 522 and ref. 9.

14 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 538-539.

15 Cat. München 2004 no. 490 (G. Platz Horster). – Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria* 34 no. 2, ill. 1. – Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 45 fig. 57; 139 fig. 249. – Greifenhagen, *Schmuckarbeiten* 69-70 pl. 51.1, 5. – Heilmayer, *Antikenmuseum Berlin* 360-361 *Vitrine* 24, 4 no. 5 (fifth to sixth centuries). – Peirce/Tyler, *L'art byzantine* 126 pl. 176. – Dennison, *Gold Treasure* 144-145 pl. XII.2. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 534-555. 577. 581 pl. 3.1. – Cat. London 2008, 171. 410 no. 125 (A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie). – Dospěl Williams, *Assiut Treasure*.

16 Berlin, *Staatliche Museen Antikensammlung inv. no. 30219, 508b*.

17 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 520-521.

18 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 534-535.

19 Berlin, *Staatliche Museen Antikensammlung inv. no. 30994*.

20 Dennison, *Gold Treasure* 163-164 pl. LII (162 no. 34). – Greifenhagen, *Schmuckarbeiten* 70 pl. 51.2-3 figs 58. 66. – Lepage, *Les bracelets* 16-17 fig. 27. – Heilmayer, *Antikenmuseum Berlin* 358-359 *Vitrine* 24, 3, 3. – Metzger, *Bracelet byzantine* 9-10 fig. 3a. – Cat. Künzelsau-Gaisbach 1995, fig. 85. 167 no. E 2, 2 fig. 132. – Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria* 184 no. 2. VI.3.b.3. – Cat. München 2004 no. 501 (G. Platz-Horster). – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 565. 601 pl. 23.2.



Fig. 7 a Detail of bracelet from the Assiût Treasure, Antikensammlung Berlin. – b, d Bracelets from the Assiût Treasure, Antikensammlung Berlin. – c Bracelet Antikensammlung Berlin. – e Bracelet Musée du Louvre Paris. – f Ring from Chersonese, Hermitage Saint Petersburg. – (a after Stolz, *Juwelenkragen*; b, d after *Cat. München* 2004; e after Durand, *L'orfèvrerie*; f after Zalesskaya, *Pamjatniki vizantijskogo*). – Not to scale.

a rosette²¹. These are embellished with deep, straight-walled box settings in the shape of pointed ovals with profiled rims (fig. 7a). Attention should also be drawn to the use of the surrounding pearls, which are pierced and mounted on pegs. They are combined with deep box settings, which are found

on the sixth to seventh century Byzantine collar in Berlin (from the Assiût Treasure)²². Similar settings are also found also on the plaque of a bracelet in the Louvre Museum, which is dated to the sixth century (fig. 7e)²³.

21 Dennison, *Gold Treasure* 161-163 pl. Ll. 160 no. 32-33. – Greifenhagen, *Schmuckarbeiten* 70-71 pl. 52, 1-4 figs 59. 64. – *Cat. New York* 1979, 322 no. 298. – Heilmeyer, *Antikensammlung Berlin* 360-361 *Vitrine* 24.4 no. 4. – *Cat. Künzelsau-Gaisbach* 1995, 122 fig. 86; 169 no. E2.4. 43 fig. 24a. – Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria* 185 no. 2.VI.3.e.1.2. – *Cat. München* 2004 no. 499 (G. Platz-Horster). – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 560. 599 pl. 21.5.

22 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 522. 579 pl. 1.

23 Metzger, *Bracelet byzantine* 7-12. – Durand, *L'orfèvrerie* fig. p. 80. – *Cat. Paris* 1992 no. 76 (C. Metzger). – Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 96 figs 157. 245 no. 226. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 537 fig. 140.

The deep box settings in the shape of pointed ovals are also known from a gold ring made in *διάρτριτα* (*diatrita*) / *opus interrasile* (fig. 7f) that was found in Chersonese²⁴ and attributed to the fourth century by Vera Zaleskaya²⁵. The ring's bezel is decorated with two settings in the shape of pointed ovals with additional metal strips to hold the (now lost) gemstones, almost identical to those on the bracelets from Assiût (fig. 7a) and another ring from Germany attributed to the Roman period²⁶. These details are significant in terms of the dating of the rhomboid pendant from the Preslav Treasure (fig. 4a-c). The details of their manufacturing and the style of the settings suggests a time frame of the fourth to seventh centuries. These specific details of the box settings, in combination with rings with pearls held by two pegs, do not appear on any later Byzantine jewellery except for this piece. In the pearls held by two pegs, the rhomboid pendant (fig. 4a-c) is more complex than the circular pendants that only have box settings (figs 1a-b, 2a-b).

The rhomboid pendant displays a style, a »tradition«, also encountered in the bracelets in the Louvre Museum²⁷ and from the Assiût Treasure²⁸, the plaques of which are constructed in an analogous concept (fig. 7b, d-e). The Louvre bracelet (fig. 7e) even has the same number of box settings and pearls held by pegs (eight around the central setting), forming a square instead of a rhomboid. As in the Preslav rhomboid pendant, the pearls are set in the four corners of the square. The square plate of the Assiût bracelet (fig. 7c) is, despite the higher number of gemstones and pearl settings (twelve around the central setting), also arranged in a similar fashion: pearls in the corners, the other settings grouped around the central setting. The diadem from a treasure discovered in Varna (fig. 8d), dating from the same chronological frame, is also comparable in its arrangement and the number of nine settings arranged on its square part between the hinges²⁹. It differs from the rhomboid Preslav pendant (fig. 4a-b), however, in its pentagonal shape and the gemstones settings (today empty), which are made with four prongs (»claw settings«). The space between the settings is larger and it is filled with thin openwork ornaments (*διάρτριτα* [*diatrita*] / *opus interrasile*).

Earlier stages of this design can be seen on a gold body chain from the Hoxne Treasure in the British Museum (fig. 8b), coin-dated to the end of the fourth/beginning of the fifth century (the last coins were issued in 407-408)³⁰. The central plaque of the body chain is decorated with a large oval am-

ethyst cabochon in a bezel setting with a profiled metal strip at the top. It is surrounded by four smaller, round settings of the same type, to which are attached wire loops holding the lion-headed terminals of the gold loop-in-loop chain. The spaces between the round settings are filled with almond-shaped settings of the same type, holding garnets. The round settings are today empty, but the lack of *comparanda* questions Catherine Johns's idea that they once held pearls. All other pearl-encrusted jewellery from this period displays pegs or claws to hold the pearls. Nonetheless, the »classic« scheme of arranging settings in a square is comparable to the bracelet in the Louvre³¹ (fig. 7e), the so-called Fibula from Mengen in the Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte in Freiburg³² (fig. 8a) and the diadem element from Varna³³ (fig. 8d). In the latter case, apart from certain technological and morphological differences, the same components are placed in a square with oval and circular cabochons in the middle, pearls in the corners, and, between them, square and smaller oval cabochons. Stolz mentions three other appliques on Early Byzantine diadems with identical compositions from Nicosia, Palmyra and Mainz, dating them to the seventh century³⁴. These comparisons suggest that the pendants from Veliki Preslav, discovered together with jewellery from the ninth to tenth centuries in a treasure, deposited very likely in 971, belong to the Early Byzantine goldsmith production of the fifth and seventh centuries. This means that they were already considered antiques by the time they entered the Preslav Treasure.

The comparisons drawn by Stolz suggests a »production« group of Early Byzantine jewellery: the jewelled collar in Berlin; the two bracelets in the New York (one of those in fig. 6b); and the other necklace in the Antikenmuseum Berlin (fig. 6c-d). Stolz assigned them to a period covering the second half of the sixth to the seventh centuries³⁵. The above-mentioned earring in the Benaki Museum in Athens (fig. 6a) belongs to the same group and is a key object for dating the Preslav pendants due to the long holders for the surrounding row of pearls. The necklace in the Antikenmuseum Berlin (fig. 6c-d) stands at the beginning of a »typological series«, to which the two bracelets from the Assiût Treasure in the Antikenmuseum (fig. 7a-b, d) can be added³⁶, and we also suggest to adding the Preslav pendants.

The three pendants in the Preslav Treasure also allow observations on the social value of the precious stones and pearls used in their making. Paragraph 11.12 of the *Codex Iustinianus*

24 Jašaeva et al., *Nasledie* 174. 455 no. 60.

25 Zaleskaja, *Pamjatniki vizantijskogo* 80 no. 60.

26 Henkel, *Fingerringe* 89.

27 Metzger, *Bracelet byzantine* 7-12. – Durand, *L'orfèvrerie* no. E.7. fig. 78. – Cat. Paris 1992 no. 76 (C. Metzger). – Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 245 no. 226. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 537 fig. 140.

28 See n. 19.

29 Dimitrov, *Sakrovishhte*. – Dumanov, *Diadem aus Varna*. – Cat. Rom 2001 no. 28. – Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria* no. 2.I.1.3; Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 41 fig. 53; 42. 93. 159 fig. 298; 162. 194. 216 no. 68. – Metzger, *Bracelet byzantine* 9-10 fig. 4. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 537-538 n. 41.

30 Yeroulanou, *Diatrita* 47 fig. 59; 211-212 no. 44. – Johns, *Body Chains* 10-15. – Cat. London 2008, 164. 176 no. 131 (K. Johns).

31 See n. 22.

32 Zeiß, *Frühbyzantinische Fibel* 270-272. – Banghard/Hiller, *Amor* 122 fig. 4. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 537 pl. 8.1.

33 Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria* 65 no. 2.I.1.2. – Garside, *Jewelry* 148 fig. 150 no. 421. – Verdier, *Notes*. – Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 536-537. 585 pl. 7.4.

34 Stolz, *Kaiserlich oder Bürgerlich* 117-123 figs 6. 9-10.

35 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 538-639.

36 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 560.



Fig. 8 a Fibula from Mengen, Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Freiburg. – b Body chain from the Hoxne Treasure, British Museum London. – c Pendant of a diadem, Walters Art Museum Baltimore. – d Plaque on a diadem from the Varna Treasure, Regional History Museum Varna. – (a after Stolz, *Juwelenkragen*; b after Johns, *Body-chains*; c after Garside, *Jewelry*; d after Yeroulanou, *Diatritia*). – Not to scale.

anus mentions that the combination of pearls, emeralds and »hyacinths« (this might refer to sapphires or dark amethysts) was reserved for imperial adornments and could only be used exclusively for the jewels or the insignia of the imperial family (dynasty)³⁷. The three pendants in the Preslav Treasure seem to reflect this colour scheme, although the stones used for the rhomboid pendant were rubies (and only one amethyst, perhaps from a later repair). Thus, they might have been part of a ruler's adornments. Based on their proposed dating, we can speculate that the pendants may have belonged to the Bulgarian tsars, perhaps to Khan Tervel (700-721) who was enthroned in the pagan period as »kesar« (Bulg.), i. e., caesar, *καῖσαρ*³⁸. After the Christianisation of Bulgaria, the inscriptions on seals mention the titles »*Basileus*«, »*peacemaking Basileus*«, »*Basileus of the Bulgarians and of the Romans*« (for

Simeon I, d. 927)³⁹; »*Basileus*«, »*Basileus of the Bulgarians*« (for Peter I, 927-969)⁴⁰. The question remains open whether the jewellery was used by the Bulgarian tsars at the Preslav court as some sort of insignia and how it was acquired.

The three Preslav pendants seem to be the only artefacts of this kind to have survived. Only a few objects can be compared to them, which indicates a limited time period in which such jewellery was produced. After this, the »*fashion*« seems to have changed. The main, defining features – deep bezel settings, openwork ornaments in a thin gold sheet, square plaques decorated with gemstones and pearls, long holders for wire with strung pearls – do not occur after the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries. Therefore, the Preslav pendants would have been out of fashion. The Byzantine coins in the Preslav Treasure⁴¹, issued under the

37 Stolz, *Juwelenkragen* 552-554.

38 The enthronisation of Tervel was thoroughly examined by G. Atanasov, see Atanasov, *Insigniite* 35-46. – Atanasov, *Parvostritelite* 269-270. The author, however, has not commented on the torque as an attribute of the Caesar, although as I have noted above, he describes the insignia in detail as element of the ruler's male adornments (see Atanasov, *Insigniite* 261-262).

39 Atanasov, *Insigniite* 62-96.

40 Atanasov, *Insigniite* 96-102.

41 See the contribution by S. Bonev and P. Slavov in this volume, fig. 10.

Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos and his son and Co-emperor Romanos II (joint rule 945-959), provide a *terminus post quem* for the burial. Therefore, the new suggested date of the three pendants would make them antiques within the treasure, which calls for an »historical« explanation.

The written sources regarding the question of when the luxury jewellery, as represented by the three pendants, could have entered the treasury of the Bulgarian rulers. A similar, though comparatively short review has already been provided in my study of the decorative metalwork in the Danube Bulgarian Khanate⁴². It proves that throughout the history of pagan Danube Bulgaria from 681-865, constant military conflicts alternate with diplomatic contact with the Byzantine Empire. Chronologically, the event closest to the date of the three pendants from the Preslav Treasure suggested

here, is the battle at the mouth of the Danube, where Khan Asparukh (c. 660-701) defeated Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatos (668-685) in 680⁴³. Another possible date is the diplomatic exchange between Khan Tervel (700-721) and Emperor Justinian II (685-695) in 705, when the Bulgarian ruler was enthroned as »kesar« (*caesar*, καῖσαρ) of the Empire⁴⁴. Yet another scenario could be the acquisition of the jewellery in the first half of the seventh century when Khan Kubrat (635-c. 660), Khan Asparukh's father, visited the imperial court in Constantinople and was awarded the honorary title of patrician (*patricii* / πατρικίος)⁴⁵. The first assumption regarding the acquisition of the jewellery in the pagan period of Danube Bulgaria is, in my opinion, the most probable, although some doubt remains. Further consideration of when and how the jewellery came to Preslav remains a task for the future.

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42 Stanilov, Hudozestvenijat metal 205.

43 Bojilov/Gijuzelev, Istorija 83-90.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung / Résumé

Three Gold Pendants with Precious Stones from the Preslav Treasure

The chapter re-evaluates the dating of three gold pendants with precious stones from the Preslav Treasure, challenging the previously accepted tenth-century date based on their discovery context alongside Byzantine coins dated to 945-959. Through detailed morphological and stylistic analysis, the study suggests that the pendants date to the Early Byzantine period (fifth to seventh centuries). The pendants (two round and one rhomboid) exhibit unique features, such as concentric hoop structures, intricate wire spokes to serve as pegs to hold pearls, and various gemstone settings that find parallels in Early Byzantine jewellery. The study argues that the pendants were likely antiques by the time they were buried, possibly acquired through diplomatic or military exchanges between the Bulgarian tsars and the Byzantine Empire during the seventh century. The materials – pearls, emeralds, and corundums – are reminiscent of those reserved for imperial adornments, as mentioned in the *Codex Iustinianus*. This positions the pendants as valuable items and as potential insignia of authority, raising questions about their function at the Bulgarian court.

Drei Goldanhänger mit Edelsteinen aus dem Preslav-Schatz

In diesem Kapitel wird die Datierung von drei Goldanhängern mit Edelsteinen aus dem Preslav-Schatz neu bewertet, wobei die bisher angenommene Datierung in das zehnte Jahrhundert, die auf dem Fundkontext mit byzantinischen Münzen aus der Zeit von 945 bis 959 beruht, infrage gestellt wird. Durch eine detaillierte morphologische und stilistische Analyse legt die Studie nahe, dass die Anhänger aus der frühbyzantinischen Periode (5.-7. Jahrhundert) stammen. Die zwei runden und ein rhombenförmiger Anhänger weisen einzigartige Merkmale auf, wie konzentrische Kreisstrukturen, raffinierte Drahtspeichen, die als Stifte für die Aufnahme von Perlen dienen, und verschiedene Edelsteinfassungen, die Parallelen zu frühbyzantinischem Schmuck aufweisen. Der Studie zufolge waren die Anhänger zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Vergrabung wahrscheinlich Antiquitäten, die möglicherweise im Rahmen des diplomatischen oder militärischen Austauschs zwischen den bulgarischen Zaren und dem Byzantinischen Reich im 7. Jahrhundert erworben wurden. Die Materialien – Perlen, Smaragde und Korunde – erinnern an diejenigen, die dem kaiserlichen Schmuck vorbehalten waren, wie im *Codex Iustinianus* erwähnt wird. Dies macht die Anhänger zu wertvollen Gegenständen und potenziellen Insignien der Autorität, die Fragen zu ihrer Funktion am bulgarischen Hof aufkommen lassen.

Trois pendentifs en or ornés de pierres précieuses provenant du trésor de Preslav

Ce chapitre réévalue la datation de trois pendentifs en or ornés de pierres précieuses provenant du trésor de Preslav, en remettant en question la date du X^e siècle précédemment acceptée, sur la base de leur contexte de découverte à côté de pièces de monnaie byzantines datées de 945-959. Grâce à une analyse morphologique et stylistique détaillée, l'étude suggère que les pendentifs datent du début de la période byzantine (du V^e au VII^e siècle). Les pendentifs (deux ronds et un rhomboïdal) présentent des caractéristiques uniques, telles que des arceaux concentriques, des rayons de fil de fer complexes servant à retenir les perles, et divers sertissages de pierres précieuses qui trouvent des parallèles dans la joaillerie byzantine ancienne. L'auteur considère que les pendentifs étaient probablement des antiquités au moment où ils furent enterrés, peut-être acquises dans le cadre d'échanges diplomatiques ou militaires entre les tsars bulgares et l'Empire byzantin au cours du VII^e siècle. Les matériaux utilisés – perles, émeraudes et corindons – rappellent ceux réservés aux parures impériales, comme le mentionne le Code justinien. Les pendentifs sont ainsi considérés comme des objets de valeur et des insignes d'autorité potentiels, ce qui pose la question de leur fonction à la cour bulgare.