

Open-work fittings for belts with Sucidava Type buckles (Abstract)

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Twelve metal fittings for belts are discussed (fig. 1 1-9; fig. 2 1-3), dated to the 6th-7th c. and often considered belt buckles of Sucidava Type. Seven of them have not been published previously (fig. 1 5-9; fig. 2 1, 2). The main goal of the present study is to elucidate their function, chronology, and place on the belt. Based on morphological and typological characteristics of the items - shape, dimensions, craftsmanship, material, decoration, and manner of fastening to the belt, it was established that they correspond to and were parts of belts with Sucidava Type buckles. The chronological frame, suggested for the fittings, corresponds to that of the buckles - from the first quarter of the 6th to the end of the 6th or the first years of the 7th c. Six variants could be distinguished, based on the type of open-work decoration:

Variant 1 (fig. 1 1). Highly stylized depiction of human face, shaped by several moon-shaped and one star-shaped opening.

Variant 2 (fig. 1 2). The open-work opening is cross-shaped.

Variant 3 (fig. 1 3-6). Open-work cross with rounded (fig. 1 3, 4) or rectangular (fig. 1 5, 6) arms; under the cross, on the lower part of the fitting, there is a moon-shaped opening.

Variant 4 (fig. 1 7). Cross with two rounded and two rectangular arms, and beneath it, on the lower part of the fitting, two symmetrically arranged and almost vertical moon-shaped openings.

Variant 5 (fig. 1 8, 9). Uprturned T-shaped opening, and beneath it, on the lower part of the fitting,

two symmetrical moon-shaped openings and two small round openings, vertically arranged between the moon-shaped ones.

Variant 6 (fig. 2 1-3). Combination of moon-shaped, drop-shaped, and round openings, shaping a human face.

The identification of the function of the separate metal parts of the belt and the comparative analysis indicate that these elements were fittings and set them apart from the fragmentary buckles and strap-ends.

The correspondence with the discussed identical examples of Sucidava Type buckles in terms of shape, size, and decoration provides the opportunity to identify possible combinations of metal elements on one belt. The similarities between the fittings and the plates of the buckles indicate they belonged to the same belt set.

The present study shows that the belt with Sucidava Type buckles had additional elements.

The suggested graphic reconstruction (fig. 2 4) takes into account the shape, the size, and the position of the buckle on the belt. It is based on the trend for achieving a symmetrical composition when mounting one or more fittings that replicated the shape and the decoration of the buckle.

Studying belt fittings is important as they followed a certain fashion and are therefore a good chronological indicator. They also provide information about the social status, gender, and ethnicity of the person that wore the belt, as well as about commercial contacts and producing centres.

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