



## E-conference: Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine Fibulae, 12–13 May 2022, Izmir, Türkiye

Julij Emilov <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Ancient History, Thracian Studies and Medieval History, Faculty of History, Sofia University „St Kliment Ohridski“, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd, 1504 Sofia, Bulgaria; j.emilov@uni-sofia.bg

International online conferences is the new black. Travel restrictions caused by the pandemic affected academic gatherings and imposed inevitable adjustments of research communication to online platforms. Since 2007, Ergün Lafli and the Archaeology Department of Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi in Izmir have organized twelve Colloquia Anatolica and Aegaea. In the turbulent 2020, the regular spring meeting in the picturesque Turkish city moved to Zoom and Youtube. The international symposium “Cappadocia and Cappadocians in the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Periods” was the first meeting of Congressus internationales Smyrnenses online, followed by 2021 e-conference on “Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine engraved gems in the eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea area”(fig. 1).

The e-conference “Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine Fibulae” took place online and lasted for two days (Thursday and Friday), the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2022. All the lectures and discussions were in English, recorded for later viewing on YouTube. As the organizers announced, “the purpose of the video conference was to create an analytical framework for understanding the fibulae in their social and material contexts”. The focus on the popular artefact for garments fastening aimed “to set out a comprehensive model for the study of fibulae, including their definition, typology, chronology, contexts, function, regional characteristics and distribution patterns in the whole Mediterranean and Black Sea geographies”.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Congressus Internationales Smyrnenses is dedicated to the 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of Maurizio Buora, the former director of the Civici Musei Castello di Udine in Italy, renowned for his contributions to the study of Roman and Late Antiquity fibulae.

Junior and senior scholars from 16 countries responded to the e-conference call at Izmir. Following thematic, chronological, and regional principles, 45 presentations were divided in ten sessions.

After the welcome address (on behalf of the organizers) by Ergün Lafli, the virtual host provided an overview of the archaeology of fibulae in the publications of Maurizio Buora. The Italian archaeologist was the chairman of the first session with the opening lecture by Sorin Cociş on Late Aucissa brooches. Considering Maurizio Buora’s contributions and expertise in the research on Roman fibulae, this was an appropriate beginning of the e-conference, touching upon key issues of artefact typologies, distribution area, chronology and fashion, discussed during the following sessions.

The second session focused on the Near Eastern and the Early Greek fibulae. Marissa Tsiao set

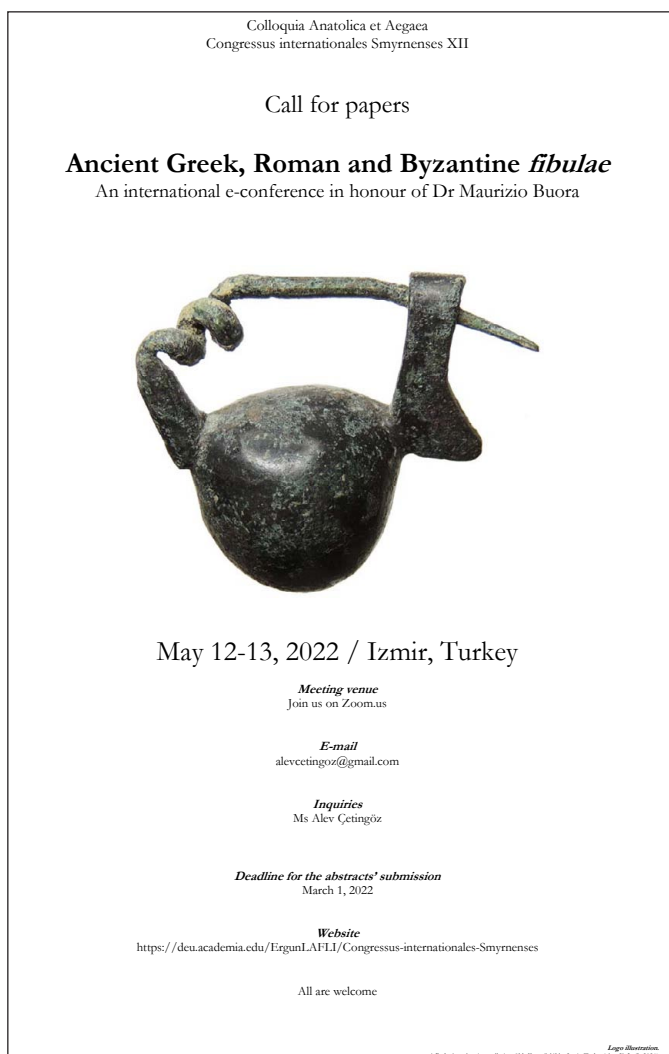


Fig. 1 Official poster of the e-conference  
Обр. 1 Постер на онлайн конференцията

the stage exploring the earliest evidence on the spread of the new fashion with these dress accessories from the Aegean to the Levant and their adoption among different social groups in the Assyrian empire. Two case studies illustrated the practice of votive deposition of fibulae in Greek sanctuaries during the Archaic period. Kerstin Bauer discussed finds of a spectacle type with bone plate from Pheneos in Arcadia. Examining the data from the Apollo sanctuary on the Cycladic Despotico island, Manolis Petrakis provided further insight on the context and typological variety of the fibulae in cult sites. The presentation of Angeliki Liveri turned the attention to gold pins and to fibulae in mainland Greece, dated from the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic periods. Most of these luxury items are found in graves of individuals of high social status. The overview of the shining gold pieces with elaborate decoration outlined several changes in fashion among the elite. In a very informative and mind-stimulating presentation Emre Erdan discussed multiple questions concerning the production, symbolism and popularity on the so-called Phrygian type fibulae in western Anatolia and in the Aegean region. In the same vein, Petya Ilieva suggested local production of five items from Aegean Thrace, variations of the Phrygian type. Despite the lack of archaeologically identified centre of manufacture, these finds and their cultural context support the idea of a „Northern Aegean“ group, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The third session included presentations on Caucasian and Thracian fibulae. As an organizer Ergün Lafli read two papers submitted by Nino Sulava. The current reviewer failed to follow some of

the generic typological links of the Caucasian fibulae, but the contributions of the Georgian archaeologist provided a useful overview of the finds from the region. Georgi Nekhrizov and Ivet Kirilova turned the attention to a distinctive group of Early Iron Age double-looped fibulae with bronze inlay on the bow. The analysis of old and new finds in their archaeological context confirmed the wide geographical distribution of these items in the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> mill. BC Thrace. New data on the manufacture techniques raised multiple questions about the workshop(s) and the transfer of technologies in the eastern Balkan region.

The fourth session was on the Pre-Roman fibulae in Italy. Cesare Vita discussed the finds from the cemeteries of the indigenous communities in southern Italy (dated to the Archaic and the Classical period) as indicators of status and local identity. The case study of Josipa Mandić on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC fibulae from San Brancato in ancient Lucania provided further insight on the topic of these items as status and gender markers. In the last presentation of the session Tayla Leigh Newland suggested a new typological study of Pre-Roman fibulae in ancient southeast Italy.

A Roman fibula is a Universe. Three sessions of the e-conference included discussions on these artifacts from many parts of the Roman world. Margherita Bolla and Nicoletta Martinelli presented some of the examples kept in the Archaeological Museum of the Roman Theatre in Verona. Having in mind that the collection consists of Pre-Roman (Early Iron Age and Late La Tène) and Roman (Jezerine and Aucissa) items, it was a smooth transition to the Roman theme of the fifth session. Gian Luca Gregori and his colleagues discussed inscribed fibulae of Roman soldiers in a Sienese private collection. Due to lack of reliable information of their provenience, the presentation illustrated the difficulties in the interpretation of these artefacts, based entirely on inscriptions or on general typological analogies. Maria Farmaki suddenly changed the focus to Roman hairpins (acus) arguing their symbolic function was more significant and perhaps more recognizable in the past than nowadays. Discussing a find of omega type brooch with pendant from ancient Hispania (dated to the Late Republican times), Romana Erice Lacabe managed to turn the attention back to the dress accessories. In the final part of the fifth session on Roman fibulae in Italy and the Roman Occident, Christof Flügel and Martina Meyr suggested that a small group of gilded silver fibulae with human head in a laurel wreath represented images of the emperor Caracalla, produced as symbols of loyalty for influential commanders. The closing remarks came from Thomas Schierl, who discussed the fibulae from Central Germany in the framework of the complex relations between the Romans and their barbarian neighbours.

The sixth and the seventh sessions of the e-conference focused on the Roman fibulae from eastern and southeastern Europe. Mojca Vomer Gojkovič provided an overview of the finds from Poetovio. Archaeological excavations near the Mithras temples revealed evidence of a workshop of Almgren type 68 fibulae. An example of animal fibula associated with the cult is discovered near the Mithraem in Spodnja Hajdina (Slovenia). Alca Starac presented the Roman fibulae in the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Istria in Pula (Croatia). Still focused on the Adriatic zone, Sabina Veseli discussed some military types of Roman and Late Roman fibulae from Albania as indicators of the Roman army presence and/or of integration of local population in military service. A case study, presented by Csilla Sáró, of fibulae from the municipium of Brigetio (Komárom-Szöny, Hungary) showed the typological variety of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD examples in Pannonia, as well as evidence of local manufacture. Vlad-Andrei Lăzărescu examined the spatial distribution and the chronology of the crossbow brooches (Zwiebelknopffibel) in the Lower Danube regions focusing on the changing modes of interactions between the Romans and the barbarians in „buffer“ or „Vorlimes“ zones. Two case studies of Roman fibulae in the collection of the National Historical and Archaeological Museum of Constanța and the fibulae from Ulmetum turned the attention to Roman and the Late Roman period in the region along the Black Sea coast.

The seventh session of the e-conference started with a Bulgarian panel on the Roman fibulae from Thrace and Lower Moesia. Elena Bozhinova and Tsvetelina Slavkova presented the evidence for a brooch workshop excavated in Philippopolis. Located near the Eastern gate of the urban centre it stands out as the first discovery of its kind in the region. Archaeological data in high resolution provide valuable information about the production of fibulae during the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. In a presentation about the fibulae from the excavations on Sexaginta Prista, Varbin Varbanov and Svetlana Ivanova discussed the archaeological context and typological features of the items, dated in the wide chronological span from the Late Hellenistic to the Byzantine periods. In the third presentation of the panel on Thrace and Lower Moesia Kaloyan Pramatarov examined the Roman fibulae in the collection of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum in Sofia. The geographical scope of the seventh session included the Roman fibulae in Eastern Europe and the Near East. Natalia Novichenkova reviewed the finds from the sanctuary of Gurzufskoe Sedlo in Crimea and Benyamin Storchan interpreted an enameled shoe-shaped brooch from villa rustica near Jerusalem as evidence for Roman soldier or a veteran who settled in the region.

Following the chronological order, the eighth session focused on the Byzantine fibulae. Paula Puppo examined the typological diversity of the fibulae from the Ceriolo necropolis in Piemonte. The analysis of the grave inventories suggests that the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> c. AD burial place was related to a large community comprised of individuals with Transalpine or Mediterranean origin. Giovanni Di Stefano and Salvo Micciché discussed examples of “Bologna” type fibulae in relation to depictions of Byzantine clothing in Eastern Sicily. Gold and silver artifacts with elaborate decoration from Sardinia illustrated the presentation of Marco Mureso on status symbol objects of the island’s elite during the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> c. AD. The second contribution of Angeliki Liveri at the e-conference was on the representations of fibulae on mosaics from Ravenna and Thessaloniki. Her final remarks were on the reflections of these images in modern jewelry design. The last presentation in the session was by Alexander Minchev and Valeri Yotov. The archaeologists from Varna discussed the typological features and dating of the Late Antique/Early Byzantine fibulae from the ancient port town at Cape Sveti Atanas near Byala.

In contrast to the popular proverb “a swallow does not make a spring” the single presentation in the ninth session on “archaeometry of the fibulae” deserves special attention. Miglena Stamberova and Petia Penkova examined six gold items from the collection of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum in Sofia by nondestructive XRF analysis and microscopic traceological observation. Their aim was to explore the potential of metalwork (use)wear investigation to determine if and for how long these artifacts were used before their deposition. The life cycle of a pair of miniature bilateral Early Hellenistic fibulae from Seuthopolis appeared to be quite short as no signs of use were detected. Traces on four massive Roman crossbow fibulae associated with their use suggest a different story and much longer life cycle. In both cases the archaeometric analysis provided important observations about the artefacts with significant functional and chronological implications.

The last, tenth, session of the e-conference was entitled “Turkish contribution to the archaeology of fibulae”. In essence it was a half an hour lecture by the Ergün Lafli on his research on fibulae from different parts of Anatolia. The virtual host arranged his presentations according to the chronological position and the geographical findspots of the discussed items.

Setting out a comprehensive model for the study of fibulae is probably too ambitious endeavor for e-conference. Beyond any doubt the video conference in Izmir was a useful resource for understanding the ancient fibulae in their specific social and material contexts.

From now on, the international archaeological meetings under the series of Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea will be organized in electronic form regularly every third week of May.