

NEW CONSIDERATIONS ON THE LATE ROMAN LAMPS FROM THE MARIA AND DR. GEORGE SEVEREANU COLLECTION

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Abstract: *This paper revisits the late Roman lamps from the Maria and dr. George Severeanu collection, namely the Pontic, Micro-Asian and African types, both imported and imitations. The lamps featured have been previously published by George Severeanu himself and later by C. Băluță, mainly in a purely descriptive manner. George Severeanu's publication is of particular importance as it registered the provenance of the artefacts, lost for many other pieces of his vast collection. Most of the pieces were discovered at Tomis, one at Callatis and one other at Olbia. One of the lamps has no place of provenance, but by means of analogies for the type we can suggest one, at least for the centre of production. The present paper revisits these lamps and attempts to bring new information and insight, while placing them into a larger social and economic context.*

Rezumat: *Articolul de față reia studiul lămpilor romane târzii din colecția Maria și dr. George Severeanu, și anume a celor pontice, de tip micro-asiatic și african, atât importuri, cât și imitații. Lămpile selecționate au fost publicate anterior de George Severeanu și mai târziu de Cloșca Băluță, într-un mod mai degrabă descriptiv. Publicația lui George Severeanu are o importanță deosebită deoarece a înregistrat proveniența artefactelor, pierdută pentru multe alte piese din vasta colecție acumulată. Majoritatea pieselor au fost descoperite la Tomis, una la Callatis și o alta la Olbia. Una dintre lămpi nu are loc de descoperire cunoscut. Prin intermediul analogiilor pentru tipul din care face parte se pot sugera cel puțin ipoteze cu privire la centrul de producție. Prezenta lucrare revine asupra studiului acestor lămpi și încearcă să aducă noi informații și perspective de interpretare, în același timp plasându-le într-un context social și economic mai larg.*

The paper revisits a lot of 14 late Roman lamps from the Maria and George Severeanu collection, previously published in a descriptive manner by George Severeanu himself and later by Cloșca L. Băluță.¹ This paper adds new features previously ignored, as well as decorative details and new analogies that point to potential production sites. Although differentiated according to Pontic, Asian and African types, most of the lamps featured are rather regional products from the north and western coast of the Black Sea. Revising these

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¹ Severeanu 1936; Băluță 1994.

pieces offers new details, as well as it places them in a larger regional economic context regarding the production and trade of lighting devices during the Late Antiquity. We have divided the assemblage into three main categories according not to their place of manufacture, but rather to the prototypes followed by the artisans, since, with two exceptions, all the lamps were made in Pontic and Danubian workshops.

Pontic lamps

Most of the Late Roman lamps from the Severeanu collection are Pontic, either imitations of Micro-Asian models or particular local/regional lamps. These latter lamps do not follow clear Asian prototypes, albeit they might have been influenced by some. The first lamp featured is registered as discovered at Olbia, and it was considered to be a north Pontic product imitating a Micro-Asian type (Pl. I/1). The lamp is slightly pear-shaped, decorated with a radial line on the shoulder and with a distinctive mark on the base, consisting of a central rosette surrounded by radial lines. Lamps of similar type, with the same decoration patterns and the mark on the base, were discovered at Chersonese, products of local workshops from the third – fourth centuries AD². They are also called “sunburst lamps” or “Rubchatye” and have been considered local products of the cities where they were discovered, as copies of Asian types.³ Another piece with the radial lines on the base was discovered at Kertch⁴. Similar lamps from Dobroudja were discovered at Tomis⁵, Noviodunum⁶, Histria⁷, either as local products or possibly north Pontic imports arrived there by ships. One other lamp from Tomis seems to be an imitation of this type, possibly local, but without the marking on the base, dated according to its discovery context also to third–fourth centuries AD⁸.

The last two lamps included in this category are both decorated with radial lines on the shoulder and dated to the same period as the previous (Pl. I/2-3). Better preserved, no. 2 has a perfect analogy at Tomis⁹, while similar lamps with the same narrow channels on the nozzle were discovered at Troesmis¹⁰, Halmyris¹¹ and

² Chrzanovski, Zhuravlev 1998, p. 135-136, nos. 75-76 with inscriptions on the discus and the base, nos. 77- 79, the latter two are the most similar both in shape and in decoration and base; p. 133-134 and footnotes 466 and 476 referencing further finds in the northern Pontic area as well as the western.

³ Chrzanovski, Zhuravlev 1998, p. 133-134, also mentioning the first typology made by Sergey Sorochan: type 1 includes pear-shaped lamps with a round body and stretched nozzle and type 2 that includes round-egg-shaped lamps with a stretched body and a short nozzle. The lamp in the Severeanu collection fits into Sorochan’s Type I.

⁴ Lyon-Caen, Hoff 1986, p. 155, no. 279.

⁵ Iconomu 1967, type XXXVI, p. 131, no. 675 with the mention of the decoration consisting of radial lines on the basis, possibly a local variant; Băjenaru 2008, p.195, Pl. 9, no. 1.

⁶ Barnea, Barnea 1984, p.102, Pl. X, no. 8 at Noviodunum, with no description and thus uncertain if it bears a mark on the base; Baumann 2009, no. 122 has a similar base mark. In the territory of Noviodunum, at Poșta, a similar lamp, with no base decoration, was found in a grave, dated at the middle of the second century-beginning of the third - Paraschiv, Nuțu 2012, p. 289, no. 11, Pl. 3.

⁷ Bădescu, Bottez 2014, p. 225-226, Pl 3, nos. 1-2, consider them Pontic products and attributed to type Iconomu 1967 XXX, with no visible nozzle channel and dated to the sixth century AD. The lamps are fragmentary and one preserves a trace of a cross on the base (no. 2). Lamp no. 1 seems closer to Iconomu type XXXI.

⁸ Iconomu 1967, p. 24-25, Type XXVI, fig. 47, one similar lamp found in a tomb together with a coin issued by Gallienus; Iconomu 1986, type XXXVIII, var.V/subvar. II, Pl. VII.2.

⁹ Iconomu 1967, Type XXXI, p. 145, Figs. 173-174, no. 757 seems identical; Iconomu 1986, p. 83, type XXXVIII, subvar. II, Pl. VII, no.2.

¹⁰ Topoleanu 2016, p. 98, Pl. X/DA 11-12.

¹¹ Topoleanu 2000, p. 205, no. 531, with the analogies provided, considered a provincial product from the first half of the sixth century AD.

Capidava¹². Capidava is another possible centre of production of imitations following Micro-Asian models as lamp no. 2 finds a close analogy in this centre, a lamp made of kaolin paste and considered a local production.¹³ The last item, no. 3, fragmentary preserved, could be considered as belonging to the same typology, although it appears to not have a channel on the nozzle and an earlier variant¹⁴. Most of the analogies are at Tomis, from the fifth-sixth centuries AD.¹⁵ A similar piece, with a different pattern on the nozzle, however, was discovered at (L)Ibida¹⁶. Another lamp was discovered at Sucidava bearing Christian symbols on the nozzle¹⁷. Yet other similar fragments were discovered at Histria and were dated to the second half of the sixth century AD¹⁸.

*Catalogue*¹⁹

1. Inv.no. 19036

Dimensions: D.base 3 cm; L 7.8 m; D.basin 5.8 cm; H 3.5 cm (handle)/2.4 cm (basin); D.wick-hole 1.4 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR7/6 reddish yellow. Fragmentary lamp with an oval–biconical basin; broad shoulder; fragmentary circular convex discus, surrounded by a ridge; short nozzle with a fragmentary elevated wick-hole; slightly concave base; rounded and broad vertical handle. Decorated on the shoulder with radial lines and on the base with a Central rosette surrounded by radial lines; covered with a dull red slip. Burn marks around the wick-hole.

Type: “sunburst lamps”.

Place of discovery: Olbia.

Date: 3rd- 4th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 73, no. 82, fig.76; Băluță 1994, p. 208, no. 71, Pl. V.16.

2. Inv.no. 19029

Dimensions: D. base 3 cm; L 8.9 cm; D. basin 6.5 cm; Hp 3.7 cm (handle)/3.2 cm(basin); D. filling hole 1 cm; D. wick-hole 1.5 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 2.5YR5/6 red. Lamp with oval–biconical basin; broad shoulder, round and convex discus with central filling hole, surrounded by a grooved ridge connected to the rounded wick-hole by a narrow canal;

¹² Opreș, Rațiu 2017, p. 107, 109, Pl. 19, no. 103, Type Opreș V and considered local.

¹³ Opreș, Rațiu 2017, p. 107, and footnote 256 which refers to works on imitations in other Centers in the province and the article signed by Covacef, Corbu 1991, p. 295, fig. 1/15 discussing the local production at Capidava.

¹⁴ Similar to Iconomu 1967, type XXVI, p. 132, Fig. 155, no. 683, discovered in a tomb and dated to the third-fourth centuries AD; Iconomu 1986, type XXXVII, var.V/subvar. II.at Tomis.

¹⁵ Iconomu 1986, Type L, considered to follow Micro-Asian or Syrian prototypes.

¹⁶ Nuțu, Bîrliba 2019, Pl. III.12, considered an Asian import with dots decorating the nozzle and a fish-tail motif on the back.

¹⁷ Elefterescu 2017, p. 117, no. 17.

¹⁸ *sim.* Bădescu, Bottez 2014, nos. 1-2, attributed to type Iconomu XXX, assuming they have a channel.

¹⁹The catalogue of lamps will follow after the discussion in each category and consist of the following abbreviations: D=diameter, L=length, H=height, w=width; p=preserved. For the description of the fabric we used Munsell Soil Color Chart 2015.

flat base; fragmentary solid vertical handle. Decorated on the shoulder with radial lines. Burn marks around the wick-hole and on the left side.

Type: Iconomu 1967, type XXXI; Iconomu 1986, type XXXVII, var.V/subvar. II.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 6th century AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 80, no. 103, fig.94; Băluță 1994, p. 208, no. 73, Pl. V.15.

3. *Inv.no.* 19906

Dimensions: D. base 3 cm; Lp 7.3 cm; H 4 cm (handle)/3 cm (basin); D. filling hole 0.8 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR6/6 reddish yellow. Fragmentary lamp with oval-biconical basin; broad shoulder; circular and convex discus surrounded by a grooved ridge, with a central filling hole; round, flat base, surrounded by a fine groove; elevated vertical handle with a Central groove. Decorated on the shoulder with radial lines and tongues on the nozzle. Burn traces on the right side.

Type: Iconomu 1967, types XXX-XXXI; Iconomu 1986, type XXXVII, var.V/subvar. I.

Place of discovery: unknown.

Date: 6th century AD.

Bibliography: Băluță 1994, p. 223, no. 109, Pl. VIII.8 considered north African.

Micro-Asian type lamps

The next two lamps are typical of a late Micro-Asian type²⁰ (Pl.I/4-5). Both pieces were discovered at Tomis²¹. Decorated with strings of granules on the shoulders and Ephesian underbodies²², under the handle, they find analogies in almost all late Roman sites in Scythia: Tomis²³, Histria²⁴, Halmyris²⁵, Callatis²⁶, Troesmis²⁷, Capidava²⁸, Babadag-Topraichioi²⁹, Sucidava,³⁰ and nearby at Novae³¹.

²⁰ Hayes 1992 Type 2, p. 80, Pl 18, nos. 10-12 at Istanbul, local color coated; Deneuve XII (PL. CII, no. 1135, but also similar to Pl. XCIII, type IX, no. 1033, p. 209 as derived from Firmalampen); Bailey 1988, p. 389 referencing Brooner type XXIX, Pl. 110. nos. Q3172-Q3173 at Ephesus.

²¹ There are other similar finds here, see Icononomu 1967, p. 26, type XXVIII, Fig. 50, dated during the fifth and sixth centuries AD.

²² Bailey 1988, p. 371, fig. 162; Bussiere, Lindros Wohl 2017, p. 386, Fig. 4.

²³ Iconomu 1967, type XXVIII.

²⁴ Bădescu, Bottez 2014, no. 4 also considered a product from Asia Minor (Ephesus or Miletus).

²⁵ Topoleanu 2000, p. 209, nos. 542, 544-555, a diversity of variants at Halmirys, with the back decoration called a *fish-tail* motif, with extensive references.

²⁶ Topoleanu, Croitoru 2015, p. 178, no. 50, first published by Harțuche, Bounegru 1982, from a west-Pontic workshop, see also the analogies and comments on p. 179-180 regarding the various opinions on dating proposed for lamps of this type.

²⁷ Topoleanu 2016, p. 98, Pl. X/DA 2-5, dated during the fifth-sixth centuries.

²⁸ Opriș 2003, p. 166, Pl. LXIII, nos. 427-429, the Micro-Asian imports with decorated bases (Ephesian style), also called a *fish-tail* motif.

²⁹ Opaiț 1991, p. 294; Nuțu, Bîrlița 2019, Pl. 3.13, import from Asia Minor, the back decoration again called a *fish-tail* motif.

³⁰ Gherghe, Cojoc 2011, Pl. 34/157-158, no. 158 with a Ephesian underbody/*fish-tail* motif and a line of dotted circles from the nozzle to the base.

³¹ Stawoska – Jundziłł 2008, p. 107-108, Pl. VI, nos. 42-50, some with the Ephesian-style grooves on the back.

The copies could have been made from imported moulds, as they appear to continue the use of the Ephesian-style grooves on their backs or new moulds were made locally after Asian lamps. The other particular element of this type of lamp is the presence of the decoration with strings of globules on the shoulder, considered as an evolution of the decoration with vines from the early Roman era.³² John Hayes is the one who refines the dating of these pieces according to stratigraphy and morphological features. Thus, the rounder pieces, without a channel, date to the end of the fifth century-beginning of the sixth century AD, and the elongated ones, with a channel, to the end of the sixth century.³³ Lacking any information about the find contexts and following Hayes's typology, the lamps in the Severeanu collection can be dated to the sixth century AD.

Unlike their contemporary African lamps, there are still no certain production sites identified for the Asian lamps, although there are known sites where imitations were made. In Scythia, one such site is Halmyris, where 30 whole or fragmentary lamps were discovered near a ceramic kiln, attesting to a local production of imitations of these particular Micro-Asian pieces.³⁴ For a broader perspective on distribution in an urban centre, imported lamps, both African and Micro-Asian, represent 37% of finds, while the local production reaches 29 %, along with another 23% consisting of western Pontic lamps.³⁵

Catalogue

4. Inv.no. 19034

Dimensions: D. base 2.5 cm; L 8.1 cm; D. basin 6.3 cm; H 3.2 cm (handle)/ 2.8 cm (basin).

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 10YR7/4 very pale brown. Lamp with oval-biconical basin, broad shoulder; fragmentary circular convex discus surrounded by a grooved ridge connected to the wick by a short canal; concave ring base, slightly deteriorated; solid vertical round handle. Decorated on the shoulder with three rows of granules and under the handle with five fine grooves – Ephesian underbody /fish-tail motif; covered with a dull reddish-brown slip. Burn marks on the wick-hole.

Type: Hayes 1992, type 2; Iconomu 1967, type XXVIII; Topoleanu 2000, Var. C, nos. 548-551.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 6th century AD.

³² Curta 2017, p. 184 referencing footnote 60.

³³ Hayes 1992, p. 82, also referencing type Iconomu XXVIII.

³⁴ Iconomu 1986, type LI calls them Justinian Lamps because the height of their spread was achieved during his reign; Topoleanu 1996; Topoleanu 2000, p. 208-209; Topoleanu 2018, p. 267-268, nos. 744-746, local products, the latter with the Ephesian-style grooves and the foot stamp at the center of the base; Curta 2017, p. 184 gives another example at Arcear (Ratiaria) where a mould was also found. Topoleanu 1996, p. 91, 93 mentions the lamps of this type from a deposit (H20) dated to the last quarter of the sixth century-beginning of the seventh century AD.

³⁵ Topoleanu 2000, p. 219, Graf. 15; Topoleanu 1996, p. 91: 123 lamps discovered at Halmyris, 57 are imported, including 35 late Roman Micro-Asian lamps and 16 north African – the Micro-Asian lamps are considered imports from Ephesus and Miletus. We want to thank Florin Topoleanu for his suggestions and comments regarding the lamps from the Severeanu collection.

Bibliography: posib. Severeanu 1936, p. 77, no. 93-95, fig.86; Băluță 1994, p. 222, no. 102, Pl. VII.15

5. Inv.no. 19035

Dimensions: D. base 2.8 cm; Lp 7.6 cm; D. basin 6 cm; H 3.6 cm (handle)/ 2.8 cm (basin).

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 5YR6/8 reddish yellow. Fragmentary lamp with oval-biconical basin, broad shoulder; fragmentary circular convex disc surrounded by a grooved ridge connected to the wick by a short canal; concave ring base, solid vertical round handle. Decorated on the shoulder with three rows of granules; four grooves from the handle towards the base - Ephesian underbody /fish-tail motif, and two dotted lines from the nozzle to the base; covered with a dull red slip. Burn marks around the fragmentary wick-hole.

Type: Hayes 1992, type 2; Iconomu 1967, type XXVIII; Topoleanu 2000, Var. C, nos. 548-551.

Place of discovery: Tomis

Date: 6th century AD.

Bibliography: posib. Severeanu 1936, p. 77, nos. 93-95, fig.86; Băluță 1994, p. 222, no. 103, Pl. VII.11.

Danubian type lamps

A related sub-category of late Roman lamps from the Severeanu collection, consisting of only three items, are the so-called *provincial, Balkan or Danubian* lamps (Pl. II/6-8), although considered to be copies of Asia Minor lamps³⁶. Their particular characteristics include a taller body, oval-pear shaped basin, often figurative handle. The first one (Pl. II/6) has a plain decoration of small, radial, relief lines on the shoulder and a plain grooved handle, similar to other lamps with leaf-shaped handles. The closest analogy to this lamp is a piece discovered at Istanbul.³⁷ This lamp also has analogies in the same city where it originates from, Tomis³⁸, as well as at Noviodunum³⁹, Capidava⁴⁰, Sucidava⁴¹ and Novae⁴².

The last two lamps featured share similar characteristics with the exception of the handle decoration. One is shaped like a palm or stylized depiction of the tree of life⁴³(Pl. II/7), while the second is shaped in the form a ram's head (Pl. II/8). Neither style is uncommon. The palm-shaped handles are inspired by the shapes of the bronze ones or by the sculptural and mosaic motifs. Lamps with such handles were discovered in numerous sites, such as Tomis, Dinogetia, Histria, Halmyris, Sucidava, Budureasca

³⁶ Hayes 1992, p. 83, types 11 and 12.

³⁷ Hayes 1992, p. 83, type 12, providing analogies at Novae and Sirmium, Pl. 24, nos. 117-118

³⁸ Iconomu 1967, type XXXIII with a variety of handle decorations.

³⁹ Similar to Baumann 2009, Fig. 17, no.137.

⁴⁰ Opriș 2003, Pl. LX, nos. 407, 409;

⁴¹ Elefterescu 2017, p.120-121 and 117, no. 24, with a simple handle considered to possibly represent a bull's head, similar to finds from Oltina, Capidava, Tropaeum Traiani and Odessos.

⁴² Stawoska – Jundził 2008, p. 197-198, Pl. XII-XIII, although some of the better-preserved lamps show a floral decoration at the center of the disc. At Novae there are also moulds for the lower half of this type (p. 199, Pl. XIV, no. 150).

⁴³ Interpretation suggested by Covacef, Corbu 1991, p. 288-289, nos. 1-2

(Prahova county), Cape Kaliakra, Kavarna, Oescus (Gigen), Mesembria (Nesebar), Panitsovo, Rupkite, Sadovets, Shumen, Durostorum, Apollonia, Odessos, Svishtov, Voivoda (Bulgaria), Chersones (Ukraine), Romuliana (Gamzigrad, Serbia), Constantinople (Turkey).⁴⁴ The same kind of handle is on a lamp from Callatis, of the same type and fabric, but also with shoulder decoration, considered an import from Asia Minor, Ephesos or Miletus.⁴⁵ One other similar lamp, again with a shoulder decoration, is part of the collection of the The History and Archeology Museum of Prahova County, with no information on its discovery, but also made in a Micro-Asian centre.⁴⁶ They were also called Justinian lamps, Balkan lamps, Danubian and cord-shaped lamps with broad shoulders⁴⁷.

The decoration on the discus, lines radiating from the filling hole, is also frequent on the same type of lamps, but with a cross-shaped handle⁴⁸ or palm-shaped⁴⁹. The depiction of a ram's head was associated with Christianity, even if such lamps were not discovered in churches or their annexes⁵⁰. Similar lamps were discovered at Tomis⁵¹, Capidava⁵² and Sucidava⁵³. The lamp from Severeanu's collection has the closest analogy at Histria, including the decoration of radiant lines on the disc.⁵⁴ Their features make it likely that both pieces were made in the same mould, or at least, the same centre, which would further suggest that the Severeanu lamp was also purchased from Dobroudja. Moreover, it is also possible, that given the high number of finds at Tomis, both with palm-shaped and ram-head handles, a manufacturing site for this type developed here, distributing its products in the province, including at Histria⁵⁵. As noticed from the distribution maps made by F. Curta, these particular pear-shaped lamps with figurative handles cover a very limited area, around the western shore of the Black Sea and few finds further west,⁵⁶ making them part of a rather regionalised production and trade. Other moulds for similar late Roman lamps were discovered at Sacidava,

⁴⁴ Curta 2017, p. 212-214, nos. 1-44, with references for each; in a sixth century context at Capidava, see Opriș, Rațiu 2017, Pl. 17. 97.

⁴⁵ Topoleanu, Croitoru 2015, p. 172, no. 48, also associated to Hayes 1992, type 11; the authors offer extensive analogies, including the lamp in the Severeanu collection.

⁴⁶ Topoleanu 2012, p. 198-199, no. 115 and the analogies. Two other lamps are in the custody of the Carol I Museum from Brăila, see Topoleanu, Croitoru 2015, p. 176 for a brief discussion on the manufacture and distribution of this type.

⁴⁷ Topoleanu 2000, p.183; Topoleanu, Croitoru 2015, p. 176 reference ca. 150 such lamps from Scythia, discussing their morphological characteristics.

⁴⁸ Schoolman 2012, p. 195, no. 14, Pl. 4/3 at Amorium, the discus decoration is referred to as "Catherine wheel"-lines radiating from the filling hole.

⁴⁹ Bogdan-Cătăniciu, Barnea 1979, p. 222, Fig. 173, 9.5.

⁵⁰ Curta 2017, p. 206, included a list of lamps discovered in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey; see also p. 207, Fig. 36 the map of the distribution of finds.

⁵¹ Iconomu 1967, type XXXIII, p. 150, Fig.181, no.766.

⁵² Opriș 2003, Pl. LXII, no. 421.

⁵³ Tudor 1966, fig. 25.

⁵⁴ Curta 2017, p. 206, no. 6.

⁵⁵ Iconomu 1967, type XXXIII included a variety of these lamps; Histria could have had its own production center, but there are no clear indications.

⁵⁶ Curta 2017, p. 207, Fig. 36 and p. 216, Fig. 43, but see also p. 214, nos. 24-27 referencing the lamps discovered at Istanbul and published by Hayes in 1992.

Capidava, Ulmetum, Tomis and Callatis⁵⁷. Argamum is another site where lamps were made from as early as the Hellenistic period until late Antique⁵⁸.

Catalogue

6. Inv.no. 19040

Dimensions: Base 4.5 × 3.9 cm; L 10.9 cm; w of basin 6.5 cm; H 6.1 cm (handle)/ 4.4 cm (basin); D. wick-hole 1.3 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR6/6 light brown. Lamp with an oval-biconical basin; broad shoulder; oval convex discus with a deteriorated filling-hole, surrounded by a tall grooved ridge forming a canal on the nozzle; round wick-hole surrounded by the same tall ridge; tear-shaped flat base; compact, elevated and grooved handle, flat on the back. Decorated with a row of small relief lines on the shoulder. No traces of use.

Type: Hayes 1992, Type 11; Iconomu 1967 type XXXIII.

Place of discovery: unknown.

Date: 6th-7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Băluță 1994, p. 221-222, no. 96, Pl. VII.5.

7. Inv.no. 18998

Dimensions: Base 4 × 3.5 cm; L 9.2 cm; w of basin 6.9 cm; H 5.9 cm (handle)/ 3.7 cm (basin); D. filling hole 1.3 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow. Fragmentary lamp with an oval-basin with biconical profile; broad shoulder; oval convex discus with a central filling-hole, surrounded by a tall grooved ridge forming a narrow canal on the nozzle; tear-shaped slightly concave base; compact and elevated palm-shaped handle, flat on the back. Burn marks on the nozzle.

Type: Hayes 1992, Type 11; Iconomu 1967 type XXXIII; Iconomu 1986, type LI

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: sec. 6th-7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 85, no. 114, fig.105; Băluță 1994, p. 221, no. 97, Pl. VII.6.

8. Inv.no. 19905

Dimensions: Wp 6.1 cm; Hp 4.2 cm (handle)/2.6 cm (basin); L of handle 3.5 cm; w of handle 3.4 cm; thickness handle 2.5 cm; D. filling hole 1.5 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR6/8 reddish yellow. Fragmentary lamp preserving the oval-biconical basin surrounded by a wide ridge; broad shoulder and a compact, elevated handle in the shape of a ram's head, flat on the back. Decorated on the shoulder with a row of small relief lines and on the discus with radial, curved lines.

Type: Hayes 1992, Type 11; Iconomu 1967 type XXXIII; Iconomu 1986, type LI, var.I, subvar.I.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 6th-7th centuries AD.

⁵⁷ Elefterescu 2017, p. 125 lists moulds discovered at Sacidava, Capidava. Ulmetum, Tomis, Callatis, Halmyris, see footnotes 194-199 for references for each mould discovered from the sixth-seventh centuries AD.

⁵⁸ Coja 2005, p. 69-81, p.130-161, fig. 15, 17.

African and African-type lamps

The second major category of late Roman lamps in the Severeanu collection consists of *African* and *African-type* lamps. The collection includes only one fragmentary Tunisian lamp, type Atlante X⁵⁹, discovered at Tomis (Pl. II/10). Preserved only as the upper half, the lamp is decorated on the discus with the depiction of two fishes and stamped motifs on the shoulder, a product of a Tunisian workshop. A perfect analogy for this lamp from the Severeanu collection is now part of the British Museum's collection.⁶⁰ From Severeanu's publication in 1936 we find that the collection included another African lamp, of the same type, also from Tomis, decorated on the discus with the depiction of a horse.⁶¹ This latter lamp is now in the custody of The History and Archeology Museum of Prahova County, purchased from a private collector, presumably the one who received the artefact from dr. Severeanu.⁶² Lamps of this same type are not uncommon at Tomis⁶³. Tunisian lamps with stamped decoration were produced and distributed starting with the second quarter of the fifth century AD and prompted many imitations in centres all over the empire. It is likely that African lamps and/or African moulds for lamps arrived to Scythia together with amphorae⁶⁴ or fine wares (ARS)⁶⁵ via Constantinople. In the sixth century, the popularity of these lamps encouraged many imitations in the Aegean area, using imported patterns (overmoulding).⁶⁶ Lamp no. 10 (Pl. II) is one of such imitations, purchased by Severeanu as discovered at Tomis. It belongs to the same type as the previous, but is a likely local or regional product, decorated with the symbol of the cross between the basin and the nozzle⁶⁷. The piece is identical to another found at Tomis⁶⁸. The Christian symbol is also present on the next lamp from Tomis (Pl. III/11), another local or regional

⁵⁹ Atlante X; Bailey 1988 Q1829 Tunisia –see also Q1753-1760 for molds and similar lamps with various decoration motifs; Bonifay 2005, fig. 4 classifies Tunisian Atlante Type X lamps; other Tunisian lamps depict one fish on the discus, see Hermann, van der Hoek 2002, p. 93, no. 102 and Katsioti 2017, p. 503, NA 8, at Rhodes, dated to the second half of the fifth century AD.

⁶⁰ Bailey 1988, Plate 26, Q1829 MLA.

⁶¹ Severeanu 1936, p. 80, no.102.

⁶² Four lamps from the collection are now in the museum at Ploiești - Topoleanu 2012, p. 60, no. 18; p. 66, no. 23; p. 111, no. 50; p. 189-190, no. 112 (Severeanu 1936, p.52, no. 29, p. 61, no.53, p. 71, no. 78, p. 80, no.102).

⁶³ Iconomu 1967, type XXIX.; Curta 2017, p. 162-167 makes a list of finds in Romania and the Balkans and a map of their distribution (p. 169, Fig.6).

⁶⁴ Curta 2017, p. 170 suggests that the lamps accompanied the *annona militaris*. This can be true for the some of the imports, however, there was a local and regional production that also supplied the needs of local markets.

⁶⁵ For a broad overview of African amphorae in Scythia see Opaït 2004, p. 33-39; Paraschiv 2006, p. 123-142. For an overview on African fine wares in Scythia see Mocanu 2012.

⁶⁶ Curta 2017, p. 168 references moulds, p.173 references the copy of moulds and mixtures of different types when making new moulds.

⁶⁷ Analogies at Novae - Dyczek 2008, Pl.29/9; at Tomis – Iconomu 1967, p. 28, Fig.55 and Curta 2017, p. 190, Fig.22, nos. 7 and 12, possibly even the same mold and p. 190, Fig.22, no.4 from Bumbesti (Gorj); another identical piece see Topoleanu 2012, p.190-191, no. 113, with no provenance and considered a possible product from Tomis.

⁶⁸ Iconomu 1986, p. 93, var. I, Pl. VIII, no. 10, also mentions that there are three lamps of this type at Tomis and one at Ulmetum.

imitation of the popular African type⁶⁹. One more almost identical lamp was found at Tomis⁷⁰, possibly even made from the same mould, while further analogies are found at Durostorum⁷¹, Tropaeum Traiani⁷² Capidava⁷³ and Babadag-Topraichioi⁷⁴.

The third lamp is particular due to its rectangular discus⁷⁵ (Pl. III/12). Similar lighting devices are known from the Athenian Agora, where a local production of lamps with rectangular discus and a narrow canal on the nozzle flourished, dated to the second half of fourth century to the fifth and sixth centuries AD. Some of the lamps from Athens have analogies in Asia Minor, indicating that this type too inspired wide spread local productions in different regions⁷⁶. The back of the Severeanu lamp is decorated in a similar fashion as a lamp from Chersones⁷⁷ and it is possible that it originated from a Pontic workshop. Another analogy for the pattern of grooves from the back is found on Italian imitations of African lighting devices.⁷⁸ Just like the previous Micro-Asian types, the imitations also continued the use of the back decoration as well, indicating the use of moulds made after original pieces, while their distribution makes it harder to pin point the original workshop⁷⁹. However, this particular variant is less frequently found as the previous ones and less replicated.

As we have seen, African-type lamps are quite frequent at Tomis⁸⁰, which is not unusual at all as it was the main point of entry for goods in the province. Some of the most interesting finds, however, came from the Mosaic Edifice, decorated with Christian symbols, both depictions of the cross and the tree of life, dated to the fifth century AD.⁸¹ Even more interesting is the discovery of five moulds for the same type of a late Roman lamp in the Mosaic Edifice. The lamps produced in these moulds were imitations of an African type and two of them were also marked, one with the letter *e* and the second with an exterior cross. These moulds were discovered hidden in the masonry of a room in the building, just before its destruction at the end of the sixth century – beginning of the seventh century AD.⁸² However, the more interesting question is not how, but why they ended up there in the first place. Part of the answer is

⁶⁹ Hayes 1980, p. 66, Type I; Bailey Q1747; two identical pieces, one from Dobrodja, the other unknown, see Topoleanu 2012, p. 204-205, nos. 122-123.

⁷⁰ Iconomu 1967, type XXX, p.27, Fig. 54; Iconomu 1986, type XLVIII, var. I, Pl. IX, no.4

⁷¹ Mușețeanu, Elefterescu 2008, p. 148, fig. 18.IV, marked on the base.

⁷² Bogdan Cătănicu, Barnea 1979, p.223, Fig. 174, 9.4.

⁷³ Opriș 2003, Pl. LIX, nos. 395-400.

⁷⁴ Opaîț 1991, p. 295, no.4.

⁷⁵ similar to African type Atl. VIII D6 (Tav. XCVIII.7).

⁷⁶ Perlzweig 1961, p.143-144, Pl. 27, nos. 1424-1445 and Pl. 41, 2546 with a cross on the discus. The lamps from the Athenian Agora are all glazed and bear marks on their bases, and analogies for some of them were given at Smyrna and Ephesus.

⁷⁷ Chrzanovski, Zhuravlev 1998, 156-157, nos. 94-95, different type lamps (African, type Atl. IX A1 and Atl VIII C/Hayes 1) – the authors consider the base as Barbera type I.1.1, see footnote 539 (Barbera&Petriaggi 1993, pp.147 and 149).

⁷⁸ Bailey 1988, p. 383, Type S, group i, Pl.87, nos. Q1429-1433, copies of Hayes Type I.

⁷⁹ We chose to integrate this lamp in the African type category, but as we have seen, there are variants in the Aegean and Asia Minor, thus it seems still unclear where the prototype appeared.

⁸⁰ Iconomu 1967, Type XXIX.

⁸¹ Papuc 1976.

⁸² Iconomu 1976, p. 137 and 140, Figs. 2,4, 7. Besides offering analogies in the province and at Athens, the author also mentions the discovery of 36 molds in Bulgaria, dated to the sixth century AD (p. 138-140).

probably the attempt to protect them⁸³. A plausible hypothesis is that they were ordered by a local or regional artisan wanting to produce lamps of this type and he never got the chance to retrieve them. The practice was already common in the Aegean during the sixth century⁸⁴ and similar moulds as the finds from Tomis are known from Bulgaria.⁸⁵ North African imports, type Atlante X, with various stamped decorations, have also been discovered within the same building.⁸⁶ The author of the publication states that the small number of finds suggests that they were not for daily use, but rather luxury items. However, considering that the Mosaic Edifice from Tomis was a place for receiving and distributing imported goods, it is likely that other imports were already dispatched before the destruction of the storage rooms. Another hypothesis would be that the moulds were displayed to be sold on site, considering the nature of the Mosaic Edifice and the flux of people that would have filled it on a daily basis. All these copies of the African products and moulds are consistent with the development of a regional-provincial production and subsequent market, not only for the originals, but also for the copies. In the fourth century there is a drop in the price of lamps, stated in Diocletian's Edict, which could have contributed to the loss in quality and development of local productions, as trading such items would have generated only small profits.⁸⁷ The fact that African and micro-Asian lamp are still being traded could be the result of piggy-backing on larger cargoes consisting of amphorae and table wares, as a special order, while the local demand for lighting devices was supplied by local/ regional workshops. Although there were other sources for illuminating (e.g. wax candles), we can assume that every household had a lamp. Aiding this assumption is a passage from Justinian's Digest, stating that lamps should never be confiscated from the poor in order to accommodate newly arrived soldiers and officials⁸⁸.

Catalogue

9. Inv.no. 19028

Dimensions: Lp 13.4 cm; D. basin 8.6 cm; Hp 3.1 cm (handle)/2.6 cm (basin); D. filling holes ca. 1.9 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 10R6/8 light red. Fragmentary lamp with an oval elongated basin; broad shoulder; round concave discus with two equal sized filling holes on the sides, surrounded by a ridge making a canal towards the nozzle fragmentary round wick-hole; compact, elevated and flaring skewed handle. Decorated on the shoulder with a repetitive string of concentric circles, rosettes and beaded squares; the discus depicts two facing fish; covered with dull red slip.

Type: Atlante X; Icononu 1967, types XXIX-XXX.

⁸³ Papuc 1976 suggests that they were hidden facing an attack.

⁸⁴ Curta 2017, p. 168 and 173.

⁸⁵ At Kranevo-Balcic in Iconomu 1976, p.139.

⁸⁶ Papuc 1976 lists and discusses 14 lamps with stamped decoration, all in a fragmentary state and dated to the fifth century AD. The author also states that a small number of finds suggests that they were not for daily use, but rather luxury items. However, considering that the Mosaic Building from Tomis was a place for receiving and distributing imported goods, it is likely that other imports were already dispatched before the abandonment of the building.

⁸⁷ Bailey 1987, p. 60, references Diocletian's Edict on prices, mentioning that the price must not exceed 4 denarii.

⁸⁸ *Dig.* 1.18.6.5.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 5th -7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 79-80, no. 101, fig.92; Băluță 1994, p. 223, no. 108, Pl. VIII.5.

10. Inv.no. 19031

Dimensions: D. base 2.5 cm; L 9.5 cm; D. basin 6.3 cm; H 3.6 cm (handle)/2.8 cm (basin); D. filling hole 1.1 cm; D. wick-hole 1.7 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR6/4 light brown. Lamp with a round and biconical basin; broad shoulder; flat discus with a Central filling-hole, surrounded by a ridge, forming a canal on the short nozzle; round wick-hole; slightly irregular ring base; compact, elevated and skewed handle. Decorated on the shoulder with a row of stylized leaves and circles enclosing points and crosses; the filling hole is surrounded by circles enclosing dots and a cross on the nozzle; traces of a dull reddish-brown slip. On the back is shown three ridges from the base to the handle and shoulder. Burn marks around the wick-hole, basin and handle.

Type: Atlante X; Icononu 1967, types XXIX-XXX; Ionomu 1986, type XLVII.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 5th -7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 83-84, no. 106; Băluță 1994, p. 222-223, no. 106, Pl. VIII.2.

11. Inv.no. 19030

Dimensions: D. base 3 cm; L 9.5 cm; w of basin 6.3 cm; H 3.5 cm (handle)/2.8 cm (basin); D. filling-hole 1.1 cm; D. wick-hole 1.8 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR6/4 light brown. Lamp with an oval – biconical basin; broad shoulder; flat discus with a Central filling-hole, surrounded by a wide groove, with a canal on the nozzle; the wick-hole is round; the ring base has a central *umbo*; compact, elevated and flaring skewed handle. The sides of the lamp show a careless joining of the two halves. Decorated with radial lines on the shoulder and a cross on the nozzle. Burn marks around the wick-hole.

Type: Hayes 1980, Type I; Atlante VIII; Ionomu 1967, type XXX; Ionomu 1986, type XLVIII, var. I.

Place of discovery: Tomis;

Date: 5th -7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 81, no. 104, fig.95; Băluță 1994, p. 223, no. 107, Pl. VIII.3.

12. Inv.no. 19032

Dimensions: D. base 3.4 cm; L 11.5 cm; w of basin 7.6 cm; H 5.3 cm (handle)/3.7 cm (basin); D. filling hole 0.5 cm; D. wick-hole 1.5 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 2.5YR7/8 light red, with numerous fine red inclusions. Lamp with an oval-biconical basin, with no shoulder; rectangular discus, slightly convex, with a central filling hole enclosed in a square; elongated nozzle with a round wick-hole; round concave base surrounded by a fine groove; compact, elevated skewed handle, with three incised lines on the back. The discus is surrounded by two types of radial lines; incised lines between the handle and discus; the nozzle has

a rectangular canal united with the wick hole. On the back, the groove around the base elevates towards the handle and encloses a third. Burn marks around the wick-hole.

Type: Atlante VIII D6.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 4th – 7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, no. 107, fig. 98; Băluță 1994, p. 222, no. 105, Pl. VIII.1.

Lamp no. 13 (Pl. III) is rather difficult to place, as it replicates an African model, but its very micaceous fabric indicated a production site in Asia Minor, likely Ephesus or its surroundings⁸⁹. Discovered at Tomis and decorated with a Christian cross on the nozzle, it was probably an import. We found no close analogies that would indicate the development of a local production; it could have arrived at Tomis as someone's property.

13. Inv.no. 18916

Dimensions: D. base 3/3.5 cm; Lp 11.7 cm; D. basin 6.5 cm; H 4.7 cm (handle)/3 cm (basin); D. filling-hole 1.2 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 7.5YR6/4 light brown, highly micaceous (golden). Fragmentary lamp with round-biconical basin; broad shoulder; flat discus with a Central filling hole, surrounded by a grooved ridge forming a canal on the nozzle; slightly oval and flat base; elevating nozzle; compact, elevated and skewed handle. Decorated on the shoulder with radial lines and dotted circles towards the nozzle; the discus is decorated with two spiralled circles, two curved grooves around the filling hole and a cross between the discus and the nozzle. On the back it shows a ridge from the base to the handle, flanked by two wide grooves; two other wide grooves are visible between the basin and the nozzle. Light burn mark on the discus, handle and the backside of the basin.

Type: Atlante X; Iconomu 1967, type XXX.

Place of discovery: Tomis.

Date: 4th – 7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 81, nr. 105, fig. 96.

Last but not least, there is a single piece from Callatis in the collection, similar to African lamps. Its particularity comes from the incised inscription around the filling hole: KAAATIANO (Pl. III/14). The only close analogy in Scythia is a lamp from the rural settlement at Telița-Amza, dated in the fourth century AD.⁹⁰

14. Inv.no. 18921

Dimensions: D. base 3.2 cm; Lp 7.8 cm; D. basin 6.4 cm; H 3.8 cm (handle)/3 cm (basin); D. filling hole 1.3 cm.

Description: Mouldmade out of fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow. Fragmentary lamp with oval-biconical basin; round convex discus with a central filling hole, surrounded by a ridge connecting to the nozzle by a canal; slightly concave ring

⁸⁹ Atlante X A1; Iconomu 1967, Type XXX. We would like to thank Horatio González Cesteros for his help in determining the Micro-Asian origin of the lamp.

⁹⁰ Baumann 1995, p. 101, no. 33, Pl. LVIII.7. The author mentions an analogy at Halmyris; see also Atlante Type VI A (Tav. XCV.1-2). The lamp is slightly peculiar, and we do not exclude the possibility that it may be a forgery.

base surrounded by two fine ridges; elevated broad handle. The shoulder is decorated with a row of spirals ∞ and the filling hole is surrounded by an incised inscription KAAATIANO; covered with a dull light brown slip.

Type: Atlante VI; Deneuve XII; Iconomu 1967, type XXX.

Place of discovery: Callatis.

Date: 4th – 7th centuries AD.

Bibliography: Severeanu 1936, p. 75, no. 88, fig.82; Băluță 1994, p. 222, no. 103, Pl. VII.14.

The lot of 14 Late Antique lamps from the Maria and Dr. George Severeanu collection consists of only five certain imports, from three regions: one African (no. 9), three Micro-Asian (nos.13 and seemingly nos. 4-5) and one north-Pontic (no.1), as for the rest of the items they appear to be products of local workshops from Scythia, most likely Tomis, but not exclusively.⁹¹ This paper aimed to add further information on the items, from a morphological point of view, decorative, as well as in regards to potential centres and trade. Even though the lamps were part of a private collection and lack more elaborate information of their finding contexts, they can nonetheless be taken into consideration when discussing larger topics such as the production of lighting devices, their trade, distribution and the development of local industries.

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⁹¹ We do not exclude Halmyris and Histria as potential centres.

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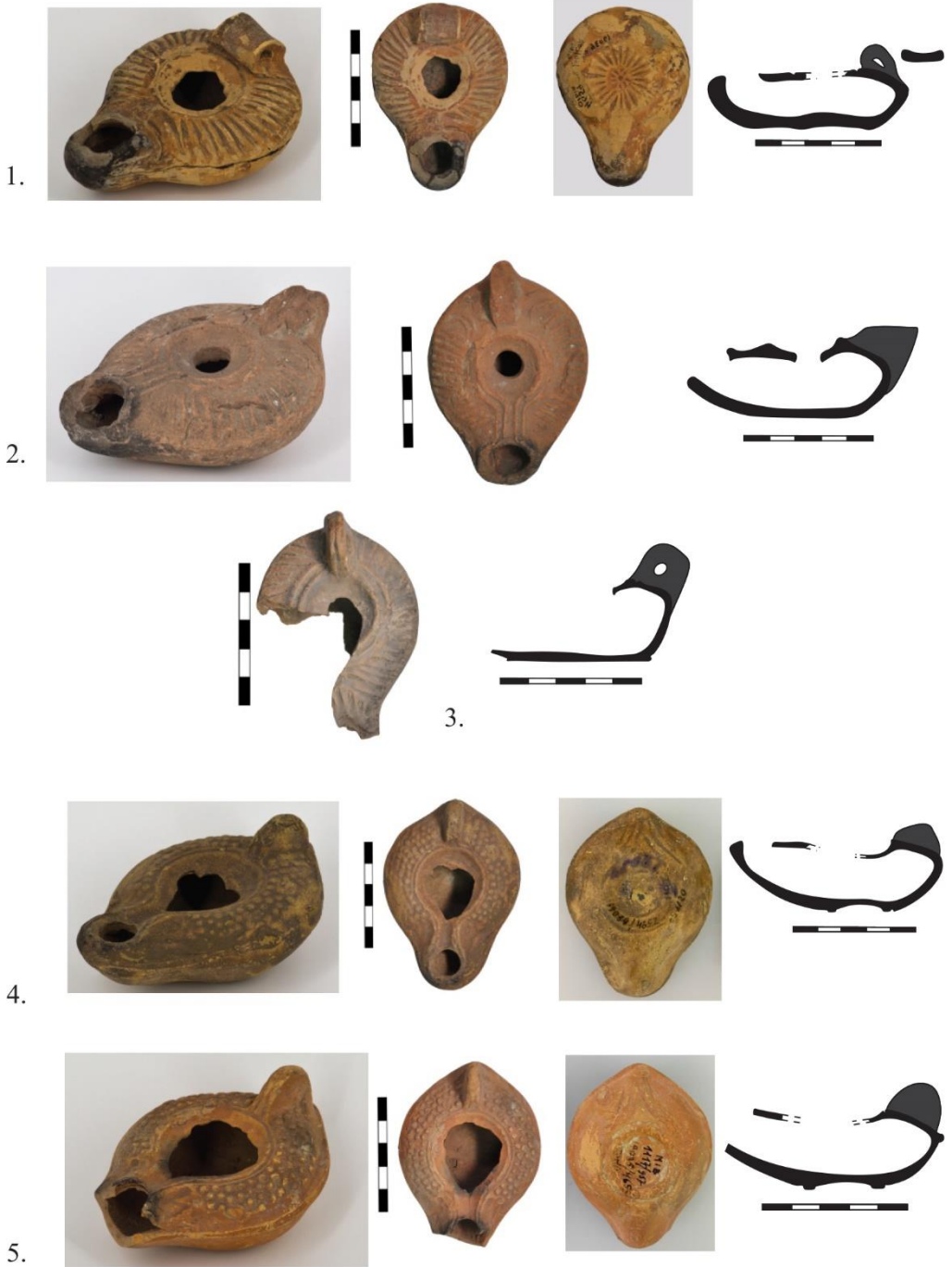


Plate I. 1-3. Pontic lamps; 4-5. Micro-Asian type lamps.



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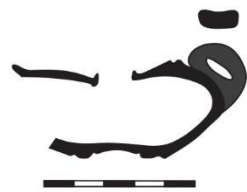


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