
A DISPLAY OF FAITH

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN HOUSEHOLD CONTEXTS FROM SCYTHIA MINOR DURING THE LATE ROMAN PERIOD (5TH–6TH CENTURIES AD)

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Abstract: *The paper aims to identify and discuss, based on a specific case study, some of the ways in which the new official religion of the Roman Empire and its “trademark”, the sign of the cross, pervade the everyday life and become embedded in the material culture of the period. The archaeological excavations conducted in Histria/Istros by a team from the University of Bucharest bring a better insight into the life of this ancient city from the Western Coast of the Black Sea (the province of Scythia Minor) during its last phase of existence. The Late Roman/Early Byzantine insula (second half of the 6th – beginning of the 7th centuries AD), currently under research in the Acropolis Centre-South Sector (henceforth ACS), offered so far rich and varied archaeological materials, among which of special interest for this article are objects bearing the sign of the cross or shaped as a cross. These items, such as pots incised with the sign of the cross, lids decorated with relief crosses, fine tableware decorated with stamped crosses, lamps with cross-shaped handles, bricks marked with the cross, bronze weights decorated with the cross, metal cross-shaped elements belonging to hanging devices, seem to be used on a daily basis by the inhabitants and as such represent a constant element in their life. Based on these observations and placing this case study in the larger context of the Roman world, the authors intend to shortly discuss the role and significance of the sign of the cross in household, everyday life, contexts, as a constant reminder, a protection, and a statement of belief, but also as a reflection of the place of this community in the larger socio-economical, ideological, and political network of the Roman Empire.*

Rezumat: *Articolul are drept scop identificarea și discutarea, pornind de la un studiu de caz definit, câtorva dintre căile prin care noua religie oficială a Imperiului roman și marca sa, semnul crucii, pătrund în viața de zi cu zi și devin parte din cultura materială a acestei perioade. Cercetările arheologice desfășurate la Histria/Istros de către o echipă de la Universitatea din București oferă o privire mai în profunzime în viața acestei cetăți de pe coasta de vest a Mării Negre (provincia Scythia Minor) de-a lungul ultimei faze de locuire. Insula romană târzie/bizantină timpurie (a doua jumătate a secolului VI – începutul sec. VII p. Chr.), în prezent cercetată în Sectorul Acropolă Centru-Sud (în continuare ACS), a oferit până în prezent un bogat și variat material arheologic, din care de interes deosebit pentru această discuție sunt obiectele purtând semnul crucii sau în formă de cruce. Aceste piese, precum oale incizate cu semnul crucii, capace decorate cu cruci în relief, ceramică fină de masă decorată cu cruci ștampilate, lămpi cu toarta în formă de cruce, cărămizi marcate cu semnul crucii, greutăți din bronz decorate, piese componente ale unor candelabre realizate în formă de cruce, par să fi fost folosite în mod uzual de către locuitori și ca atare reprezintă un element constant în viața acestora. Pornind de la aceste observații, și plasând acest studiu de caz în contextul mai larg al lumii romane, autorii intenționează să discute pe*

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scurt rolul și semnificația semnelor crucii în contexte gospodărești, obișnuite, ca memento, protecție și manifestare a credinței, dar și ca reflectare a locului acestei comunități în rețeaua socio-economică, ideologică și politică a Imperiului roman.

Keywords: Histria, Late Roman/Early Byzantine, cross representations, vasa escaria, lamps, pots, lids, bricks, small finds.

Cuvinte cheie: Histria, perioadă romană târzie/bizantină timpurie, reprezentări ale crucii, oale, capace, veselă de masă, opaițe, cărămizi, obiecte mărunte.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents and discusses a series of artefacts that have been discovered on the *Acropolis Centre-South Sector* in ancient *Istros* (Constanța County, Romania), which has been researched since 2013 by a team from the University of Bucharest.¹ The archaeological excavations carried out so far have led to the discovery and investigation of a large residential block (conventionally named *insula Ia*) located in the southern part of the Late Roman citadel (Fig. 1) and dated to the Late Roman period, more specific to the 6th century.² Once this building was completely uncovered, further research aimed on the one hand to delimit all the spaces inside it and to determine their functionality, and on the other hand to establish whether the *insula* had several functioning phases and how they can be dated. Thus, a large part of the building was excavated, and new details of its structure were identified (Fig. 2).³ As far as the evolution of the *insula* is concerned, so far two functioning phases have been identified with certainty, the first one being dated at the beginning of the 6th century AD and the second dated to the second half of the 6th century – beginning of the 7th century AD.⁴

During the 10 years of archaeological research a wealth of material has been discovered, consisting of pottery, zoo-archaeological finds, metal and glass objects, coins, architectural and epigraphic finds, etc.⁵ Among them, we have chosen for this study a series of pieces that differ in many ways (functionality, morphology, material), but whose decoration is similar in general representation and symbolism. The 34 items that will be presented have in common the fact that they all bear the sign of the

¹ A variant of this paper was presented at the 14th Annual Conference of the International Society for Cultural History held in Verona between 2-5 August 2022.

² Bottez *et alii* 2015, 172.

³ Bottez *et alii* 2018, 318-319; Bottez *et alii* 2019; see also the preliminary report published in this volume: Bottez 2022.

⁴ Bottez *et alii* 2019, 130.

⁵ Some of these materials has already been published; for instance, see Iliescu, Bottez 2018; Iliescu, Bottez 2021a; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b (for pottery); Vîlcu, Țârlea 2016 (for coins); Beldiman *et alii* 2018 (for zooarchaeological finds); Lițu, Bottez, Țârlea 2021; Lițu, Bottez 2021 (for epigraphic discoveries); Țârlea, Clianțe 2020 (for glass); etc.

cross or are cross-shaped, thus being of special interest for our attempt to discuss the significance of this sign in household contexts. They were found scattered all over the *Acropolis Centre-South Sector* (Fig. 3), the vast majority in contexts related to the destruction and abandonment of the building, and only a few from clearer contexts, i.e., living surfaces represented by clay floors or pavements (cat. nos. 14, 23, 29 and 30). The items will be presented grouped by functionality, and divided as follows: one pot, two lids, 18 serving vessels, nine lamps, two bricks, and two metal objects (a weight and a hanging device). For each group, where necessary, stylistic subgroups (based on the type of cross) will be created.

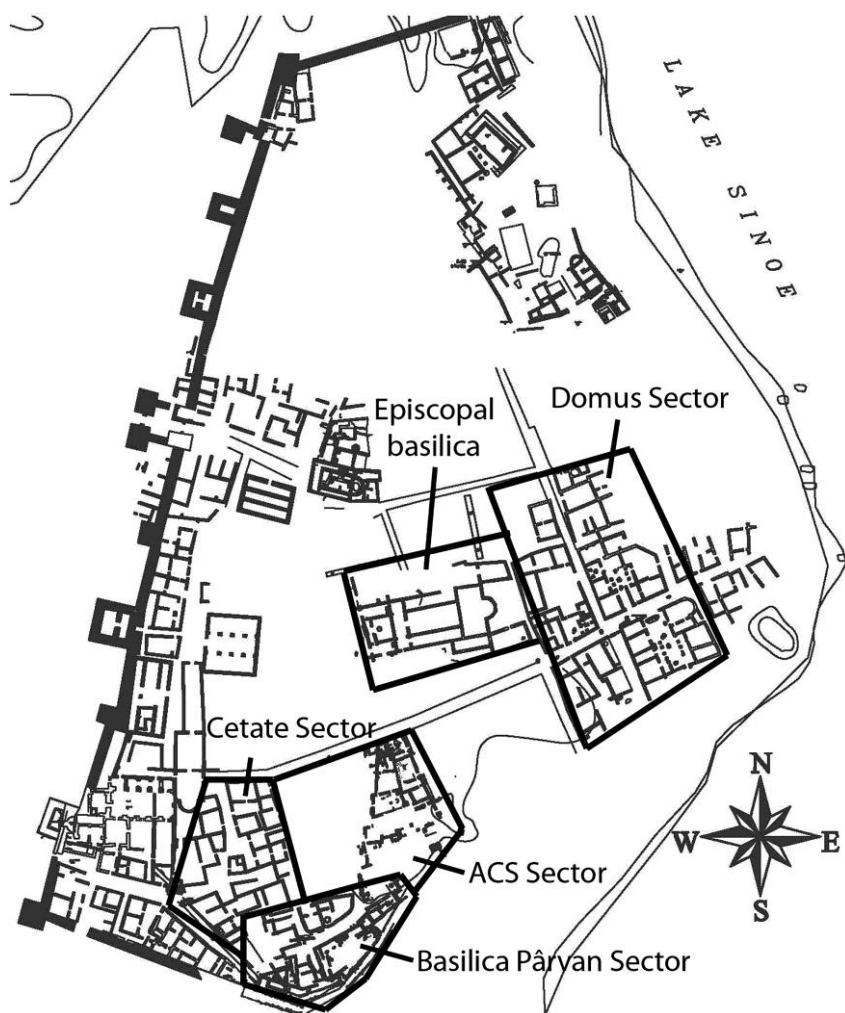


Fig. 1. General plan of Late Roman *Istros* with the location of the *Acropolis Centre-South Sector*.



Fig. 2. Drone photo of the Acropolis Centre-South Sector in 2022.

POTS

This category is represented so far by a single item, fragmentary preserved (cat. no. 1; Fig. 4/1): the base of a pot made of coarse fabric, fired in reducing atmosphere (greyish brown with dark grey core), that does not present soot traces. The shard presents on the outer surface an incised cross, made of two simple lines. The arms of the cross were originally equal, but now incompletely preserved. Despite the relatively poor state of preservation, it was possible to determine that the cross was incised on the clay surface *ante cocturam*.

LIDS

Of the lids with relief decoration discovered on the *Acropolis Centre-South Sector*, only two fragmentary items are relevant to the present study as they partially preserve the cross motif. Regarding their functionality, the estimated diameter of the complete items to which these two shards belong, 15 cm and 13 cm, respectively, makes them too large to have been used as amphora stoppers. Thus, their dimensions and details make them more appropriate for use as lids for pots. The technological details which could be noticed in their case indicate that they were made using moulds.

One of the shards (cat. no. 2; Fig. 4/2), belonging to a lid made of pink semi-fine fabric with no engobe applied, presents a part of the relief decoration in the shape of a cross with splayed ends, with a dot in the upper part and a volute continuing from the right arm; to the left, one can notice a small part of the square that delimited the handle.⁶

The other (cat. no. 3; Fig. 4/3), belonging to a lid made of light grey semi-fine fabric with no engobe applied, it is also relief-decorated, but of the decorative pattern only two fragmentary crosses with flared arms and dots between them survived.

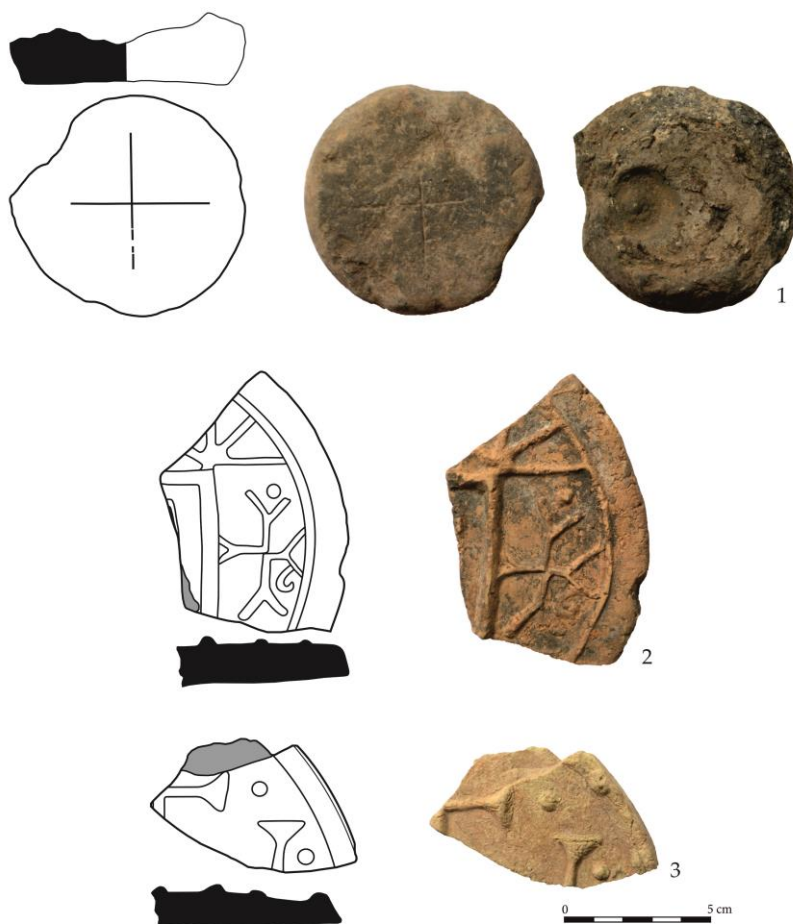


Fig. 4. Coarse wares: 1. pot with incised cross; 2-3. lids with cross-shaped relief decoration.

⁶ For similar pieces, see Barnea 1965, Fig. 3/4, and Popescu 1976, 157, cat. no. 122.

Such large lids, made of quite good quality clay and decorated with various motifs in relief, are a surprisingly constant presence in the province of *Scythia Minor*, as numerous generally-similar finds (aspect and dimensions) are known from several archaeological sites in this region. At *Dinogetia*, I. Barnea mentions the discovery of a fragmentary lid, larger than the amphorae lids, decorated with a relief radial pattern of leaves (palm branches / palmettes), in a house dated to the 4th-second half of the 6th centuries AD, and described as a type specific for this city.⁷ Other finds from *Istros* are relief decorated with Christian formulas and, in some cases, with palm branches, dated to the 5th-6th centuries AD.⁸ The closest analogy so far to the two finds from the ACS Sector comes also from *Istros*: a fragment from *Thermae* II Sector, in a context dated to the 6th-beginning of the 7th centuries AD, which is decorated in relief with palm branch, star and cross.⁹ The fact that such items seem to be the result of a provincial production is supported by the large number of clay and stone moulds for this type of lids found in several sites: three in *Istros* (for one specified that it is a clay mould); six in *Callatis* (out of which one stone mould); five in *Ulmetum*; one in *Tomis*; three in *Axiopolis*; one in *Capidava*; 12 in *Dinogetia*; to which two others from unknown sites could be added.¹⁰

TABLEWARE

The fine tableware is the best represented category of finds bearing the sign of the cross, with 18 shards found so far on the *Acropolis Centre-South* Sector. Concerning the pieces' provenance, all of them are Eastern-Mediterranean products, the vast majority belonging to Phocaean vessels (17 shards out of the total), while one fragment is of Pergamene origin. The cross motif usually applied on these vessels is extremely varied, with multiple types and variants attested.¹¹ The same diversity can be observed in the items found in this Sector; thus, the pieces will be presented based on the type/variant of the cross decorating each fragment.

Cross-monogram with two pendants below arms

The motif of the cross-monogram with two pendants below arms was included by J. Hayes in his Type 67, present in several variants. This type of cross is described as being rendered in a single outline, sometimes with slight serifs at the extremities; the letter *rho* is represented open and can have single or double outline; the cross is decorated with two circular or drop-shaped pendants, each containing a circle, in the

⁷ Barnea 1969, 262, Fig. 10/8.

⁸ Popescu 1976, 156-157, cat. nos. 119-124.

⁹ Suceveanu 1982, 119, phase IV A-B, cat. no. 59, pl. 18/59.

¹⁰ Barnea 1965, 408-414, 416-417, Figs. 1/1-12, 2/1-5, 2/9-11, 3/1-10.

¹¹ For an overview, see Hayes 1972, 363-368.

angles between the horizontal and vertical arms.¹² This type of cross is included among the decorations belonging to Hayes Group III, dated to the late 5th-end of the 6th centuries AD. The decoration specific to this group usually consists of a single stamp impressed at the centre of the vessel, only occasionally more, with no grooves or additional decoration. It comprises a wide range of motifs, among which crosses, and cross-monograms are the commonest, followed by animals and floral patterns, and only rarely human figures. The stamps tend to be fairly large and sometimes quite elaborate and are usually associated with *vasa escaria* belonging to Hayes Form 3 (Types C-H). It was noticed that the latest examples tend to be poorly impressed on an unsmoothed surface, case in which they are usually associated with vessels belonging to Hayes Form 10, and as such dated to a later chronological framework, comprising the second half of the 6th century and even the beginning of the 7th century AD.¹³

A number of four fragments decorated with the cross-monogram with two pendants below arms (Hayes Type 67) were found so far in the 6th century AD dwelling level of the *insula* from the ACS Sector (cat. nos. 4-7).

In the case of the first fragment (cat. no. 4; Fig. 5/1), belonging to a Hayes Form 3 plate, the partially-preserved cross-monogram is decorated with two drop-shaped motifs and a single outline *rho* ending the upper vertical arm. The details of the decoration place it inside Hayes Type 67, variant 67i. Among the identified analogies for this item can be mentioned finds from other areas of the empire, such as Athens¹⁴ and Antioch on-the-Orontes (North Syria)¹⁵, but also items found in *Scythia Minor*. Cross-monogram stamps are known from older excavations at *Istros*; for example, a shard bearing a stamp with a very similar shape of the cross as this item, but with circular pendants under the horizontal arms.¹⁶ An even closer analogy could be another stamp of a cross decorated with drop-shaped pendants from the same site¹⁷; unfortunately, the shard preserves only the lower part of the cross. Quite a large number of shards stamped with similar crosses come from older excavations at *Tomis*, in connection with the Edifice with Mosaic.¹⁸ One of these fragments, found during the 1974-1975 campaigns, on the eastern side of the access stairs, in a context dated to the 5th-6th centuries AD, preserving a complete cross-monogram with two pendants, is described

¹² Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67i.

¹³ Hayes 1972, 346-347.

¹⁴ Hayes 1972, Fig. 78i (Athens Agora P 3081).

¹⁵ Waage 1948, Fig. 34 (last column, fourth item).

¹⁶ Popescu 1965, 707, 710, Fig. 8/2; Popescu 1994, Fig. 81a-b.

¹⁷ Popescu 1965, 707, 710, Fig. 9/4; Popescu 1994, Fig. 81a-b.

¹⁸ Papuc 1973, 180, Fig. 21/5 (14 fragments decorated with this type of cross).

as having reddish brown fabric and brownish slip with metallic hues.¹⁹ Another close analogy comes from (L)Ibida (Slava Rusă): a cross-monogram stamp included in Hayes Group III and dated to the end of 5th-6th centuries AD.²⁰

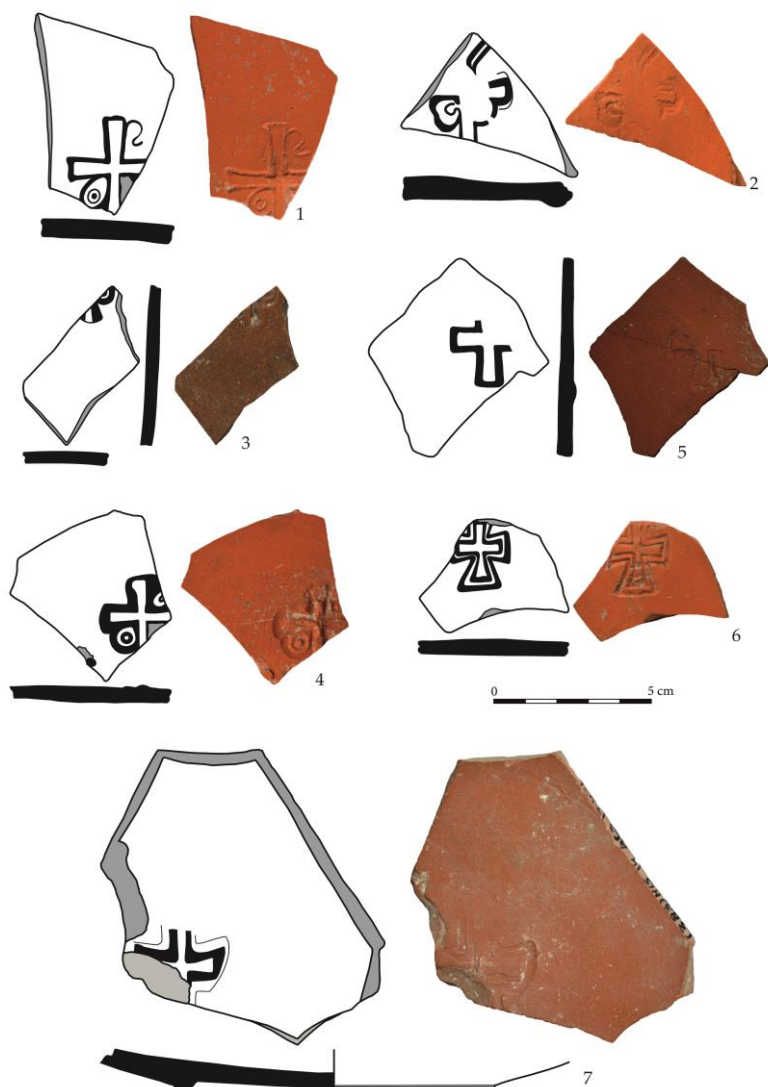


Fig. 5. Fine ware – Late Roman C wares: 1-4. with cross-monogram; 5. with plain cross with flaring arms; 6-7. with cross with flaring arms and double outline.

¹⁹ Munteanu, Papuc 1976, 148, 150, Pl. 3, Fig. 8a.

²⁰ Mocanu 2011, 299, no. 14, Fig. 4/20.

The cross-monogram decorating the second fragment (cat. no. 5; Fig. 5/2), which could belong to either a Form 3 or Form 10 plate, is poorly impressed. Based on the observations made by J. Hayes²¹, it is possible that this situation indicates that the shard belonged to a late production, when less care was taken on the quality of the decoration, and as such there is a strong possibility that the shard was in fact part of a Form 10 plate. Still, the details of the cross include this example also in Type 67, variant 67i. A possible close analogy comes also from *Istros*, a vessel decorated in a very negligent manner with such a cross-monogram. The vessel was found during the 1958 archaeological campaign in Sector D, in a layer dated to the second half of the 6th century²², and it belongs to Hayes Form 10.

The third piece (cat. no. 6; Fig. 5/3), also a fragmentary Hayes Form 10 plate, is decorated with a small cross-monogram with short broad arms. Although only a part of a pendant survived, the stamp can be tentatively included in Hayes Type 67, probably variant 67l. No close enough analogies could be identified for this item until now.

The last representation included in the group of cross-monogram decorations (cat. no. 7; Fig. 5/4) is poorly preserved, with only one pendant clearly visible, on a Hayes Form 3 shard. Based on the preserved details, the stamp could be considered a variation of Type 67, variant 67k, with a possible analogy among the finds from Athens.²³ No other close enough analogies could be identified for this item, due also to its very fragmentary state of preservation.

Plain cross with flaring arms

The plain cross represents another very much used decoration on Phocaeen tableware, this type of cross being depicted in two main variants: some examples have flaring arms, while others are characterised by splayed extremities. There seems to be a difference regarding the quality of the application, in the sense that the crosses with splayed arms tend to be poorly impressed. However, both decorative patterns were included by J. Hayes in his Group III, dated to the late 5th-6th centuries AD. This type of cross, Type 73, was used both singly and in groups of three, side by side.²⁴

The ACS Sector provided so far one such find, previously published²⁵, belonging to a Hayes Form 10 plate and stamped with a plain cross (cat. no. 8; Fig. 5/5), which could be attributed to Type 73, variant 73k. The fragment bears a stamp consisting of a single outline cross with flaring arms which has a good analogy in a find from the

²¹ Hayes 1972, 346-347.

²² Popescu 1965, 712, Fig. 14.

²³ Hayes 1972, Fig. 78k (Athens Agora P 689).

²⁴ Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79.

²⁵ Iliescu, Bottez 2021a, 572, Fig. 1/5.

Byzantine Palace in *Apollonia* (Cyrenaica), stamped with three such crosses in a row.²⁶ As the fragment found on the ACS Sector is quite reduced in size, the possibility that the original vessel was also decorated with three crosses, and not only one, cannot be completely excluded.

Cross with flaring arms and double outline

This type of cross represents a common type found stamped on Late Roman C tableware. It is considered that the cross with double outline comes normally with straight square-ended arms, while a few variants have flaring arms. These stamps were included by J. Hayes mostly in his Group III, dated to late 5th-early 6th centuries AD, even though this type of cross can be occasionally included in Group II A and C, with a later chronological framework.²⁷ Based on the differences in the quality of stamping, some poorly impressed examples are considered later.

The excavations on the ACS Sector have led to the discovery of five shards stamped with this type of cross, in all cases the attested variant is with flaring arms (cat. nos. 9-13; Figs. 5/6-7 and 6/1-3). All of them could be attributed to Type 71, variants 71b or 71f. One of these shards was previously published²⁸ (cat. no. 10; Fig. 5/7), while the others are published here for the first time. All the stamps included in this group present the strongest similarities to stamps from the Athenian Agora and Corinth.²⁹

The first fragment, a Hayes Form 3 plate, decorated with a plain cross with a double outline and unequal flaring arms (cat. no. 9; Fig. 5/6), presents good analogies in *Thasos*³⁰ and at Antioch on-the-Orontes (North Syria).³¹ Another good analogy is known from *Tomis*, found in association with the Edifice with Mosaic, the cross being the central motif of a more complex decorative pattern – the cross is surrounded by a band of hares, of which six are preserved.³² This type of cross appears also at *Halmyris*, on a plate dated to the second half of the 6th century.³³ Again, the dimensions of our fragment impede any observation regarding the presence of other motifs encircling the cross, and as such it is impossible to determine with certainty whether the decoration belonged to Group III or Group II.

²⁶ Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79k.

²⁷ Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79b and f.

²⁸ Iliescu, Bottez 2021a, 572, Fig. 1/6.

²⁹ Hayes 1972, 365-367 – Athens Agora P 8650 (Fig. 79b), associated with Hayes Form 3, type C, and Corinth C-34-312 (Fig. 79f), belonging to Group II of decorations.

³⁰ Abadie-Reynal, Sodini, 1992, 28, Pl. II, g-CF141.

³¹ Waage 1948, Fig. 34.

³² Papuc 1973, 176, Fig. 8/7.

³³ Topoleanu 1996, 150, Pl. VI/28.

Another fragment (cat. no. 10; Fig. 5/7) is decorated with a partially-preserved cross, with a double outline and flaring arms. Based on the morphological characteristics, but also on the low quality of the stamping, this shard could be tentatively considered as belonging to a late form of fine tableware – Form 10 –, dated to the end of the 6th century AD.

The next shard to be discussed (cat. no. 11; Fig. 6/1), a Hayes Form 3 plate, is decorated with a cross with double outline and flaring arms, only partially preserved. A similar stamp is known from *Tomis*, on a vessel found among the archaeological material associated with the Edifice with Mosaic, in that case the cross being surrounded by concentric grooves.³⁴

As for the last two pieces (cat. nos. 12-13; Fig. 6/2-3), they were discovered in a very fragmentary state of preservation, but even so the first fragment can be attributed to a Hayes Form 3 plate, while the second to either a Form 3 or a Form 10 plate. Moreover, the stamps can be included in this type, having the closest identifiable analogies among the previously discussed items.

Greek cross with double outline

The Greek cross with double outline is generally represented by small motifs with flaring arms. Most of the finds belong to Hayes Group III, although it is possible that some pieces in fact belong to Hayes Group II, in cases when the additional decoration has not survived. They were usually dated to late 5th century and included in Hayes Type 72, variant 72h.³⁵

Only two fragmentary vessels from the ACS Sector show this decorative motif. The first one (cat. no. 14; Fig. 6/4) is a base fragment that was originally part of a Hayes Form 3 plate and later reused as a token; it belongs with certainty to this type and variant, having good analogies at Corinth³⁶, and an almost identical analogy at Antioch on-the-Orontes.³⁷

The second motif (cat. no. 15; Fig. 6/5), stamped on a Hayes Form 3 shard, could be tentatively included in this type, based on the flaring arms and double outline, the main difference being that the arms of the cross seem to be slightly unequal. From this perspective, the general shape in fact brings this item closest to Hayes Type 73, variant

³⁴ Papuc 1973, 180, Fig. 25/4 (the author mentions nine similar finds from that context, the motif being described as Greek cross with double outline).

³⁵ Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79h.

³⁶ Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79h – Corinth C-65-199 (decoration included in Hayes Group III).

³⁷ Waage 1948, Fig. 34 (first column, third item).

73i³⁸, although the stamps included in this variant are normally characterised by a single outline, not a double one.

Cross with straight square-ended arms

The cross with double outline appears normally with straight square-ended arms, although a few variants have flaring arms. Most of the stamps belong to Group III, dated to late 5th-early 6th centuries AD. As in the case of other types of cross, the poorly impressed examples are usually dated later. The cross with double outline and straight square-ended arms appears occasionally in Group II A and C, with a later dating. This is considered a common type of cross on Late Roman C pottery, and it was included by J. Hayes in his Type 71, variant 71d.³⁹

Three fragments bear stamps which can be included in this type, although one of them is atypical in that it has a single outline (cat. nos. 16-18; Fig. 6/6-8).

One of the stamps, partially preserved on a shard belonging to a Hayes Form 3 plate, with only one of the horizontal arms still complete (cat. no. 16; Fig. 6/6), has good analogies in various parts of the empire, i.e., in the Athenian Agora⁴⁰, at Corinth⁴¹, and Antioch on-the-Orontes.⁴² Also, this variant seems to be well-represented in the region, as similar finds are known so far from *Istros* (two stamps quite similar to the item discussed here)⁴³; *Tomis* (two stamps illustrated as representative for a larger number of finds from the Edifice with Mosaic)⁴⁴; *Tropaeum Traiani* (stamped on a deep bowl dated to Justin II)⁴⁵ – cross similar to the discussed item, only with narrower arms; *Halmyris* (cross on a plate preserving also the legs of an animal, most likely a hare)⁴⁶ – again, cross similar in shape and details, but with arms narrower than those of the find from the ACS Sector.

Another piece that can be included in this group (cat. no. 17; Fig. 6/7), despite its very fragmentary state of preservation, is a Hayes Form 3 shard. The surviving part of the arm shows details of representation indicating that the original decoration was very similar to the previous item, and as such the same analogies can be taken into consideration.

³⁸ Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79i, Type 73i.

³⁹ Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79.

⁴⁰ Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79, Type 71d – Athens Agora P 746.

⁴¹ Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79, Type 71d – Corinth C-37-2211.

⁴² Waage 1948, Fig. 34 (second row, second item).

⁴³ Popescu 1965, Fig. 7/3-4.

⁴⁴ Papuc 1976, 180, Fig. 23/4, 6.

⁴⁵ Bogdan-Cătăniciu, Barnea 1979, 186, NV 2(3), Fig. 160/2.3, 161/2.3.

⁴⁶ Topoleanu 1996, 151, Pl. 6/29.

The third fragment (cat. no. 18; Fig. 6/8), belonging to a Hayes Form 3 plate, was tentatively placed in this group, based on the general shape, although it deviates from the type since is characterised by a single outline, not a double one.

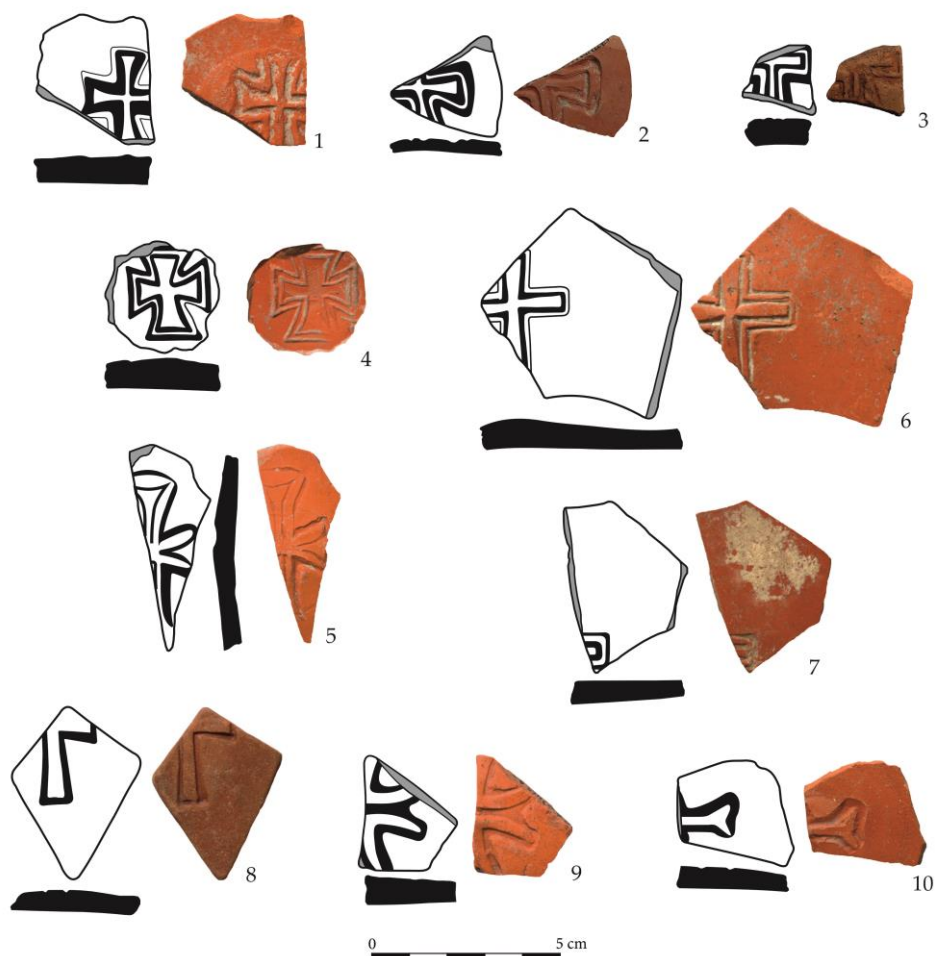


Fig. 6. Fine ware – Late Roman C wares: 1-3. with cross with flaring arms and double outline; 4-5. with Greek cross with double outline; 6-8. with cross with straight square-ended arms; 9. with double-ribbed Greek cross; 10. with cross with four circle-motifs between arms.

Double-ribbed Greek cross

A fairly common motif, the double-ribbed Greek cross, characterised by the vertical arm cutting off the side arms and the splayed tips of all arms, was included by J.

Hayes in his Group IIA, with the mention that it is always used as central motif in more complex patterns.⁴⁷

One item from the ACS Sector, a fragmentary Hayes Form 3 plate, is decorated with a cross showing similarities in general outline and splayed tips with Type 69p, but differing in one main aspect, namely the vertical arm does not cut off the side arms (cat. no. 19; Fig. 6/9).

Cross with four circle-motifs between arms

This type is characterised in most cases by straight arms with splaying ends and were included by J. Hayes in Type 79, Group III, dated to late 5th – mid 6th centuries AD. The type comes in several variants: some early examples are tall and narrow, with flaring arms, while later ones have broad splaying tips. Although another characteristic of the type is the circular shape of the motifs placed between arms, a few crosses are decorated with drop-shaped pendants.⁴⁸

One shard from the ACS Sector, a Hayes Form 3 plate, preserves the tip of an arm which could have belonged to this type, more precisely to variant 79q⁴⁹, based on its single outline and splaying tip (cat. no. 20; Fig. 6/10). A very good analogy comes from Antioch on-the-Orontes.⁵⁰ A similar find may be a vessel from *Istros* stamped with a cross characterised by single outline, splayed tips and only two circular pendants below arms.⁵¹ Another possible analogy is a stamp from *Halmyris*, the cross being surrounded by a band composed of six lions, impressed on a plate dated to the second half of the 6th century AD.⁵² A cross belonging to this type was also found in the Late Roman fort from *Ulmetum*, on a Hayes Form 3 vessel dated to the third quarter of the 5th century AD.⁵³

Jewelled cross

An interesting find is represented by a plate belonging to the *Late Roman Light-Coloured Ware* Group, whose production was initially attributed to Knidian workshops⁵⁴, but for which more recent studies rather indicate a Pergamene origin.⁵⁵ The half-preserved plate is decorated on the inner surface with a jewelled cross which is part of a more complex decoration (cat. no. 21; Fig. 7/1): the jewelled cross is

⁴⁷ Hayes 1972, 364-365, Fig. 78p, Type 69, variant 69p.

⁴⁸ Hayes 1972, 366, 368, Fig. 79.

⁴⁹ Hayes 1972, Type 79q, Fig. 79q – Athens Agora P 3540.

⁵⁰ Waage 1948, Fig. 34 (last column, second item).

⁵¹ Popescu 1965, 710, Fig. 9/1.

⁵² Topoleanu 1996, 154, Pl. VII/35.

⁵³ Băjenaru 2018, 504, Fig. 5/91.

⁵⁴ Hayes 2008, 91.

⁵⁵ Domžalski 2012, 340.

stamped in the centre, being almost completely preserved, and is surrounded by three circular grooves; two bands of rouletting encircle the central motif. The outline and the other details bring the stamp really close to crosses with flaring arms and double outline – especially to the Greek cross –, due to the fact that it has equal flaring arms. Nevertheless, its special character, i.e., the “jewelled” aspect, is given by the relief dots that decorate the band formed by the two outlines and the central larger dot. Even though the general decorative pattern is quite commonly attested on this group of tableware during the late 5th century and the first half of the 6th century AD – for the Aegean basin the closest analogies are to be found in Athens⁵⁶ and *Thasos*⁵⁷, while for *Scythia Minor*, we mention *Tomis*⁵⁸, *Tropaeum Traiani*⁵⁹ or *Ulmetum*⁶⁰ –, for the stamped cross we were unable so far to find identical analogies.

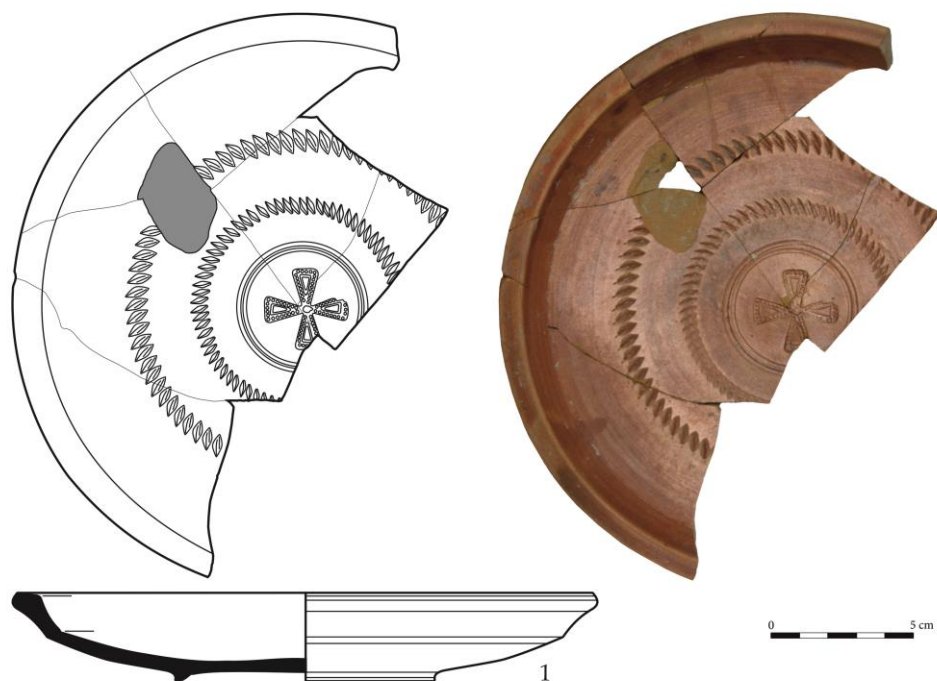


Fig. 7. Fine ware: Late Roman Light-Coloured Ware with jewelled cross.

⁵⁶ Hayes 2008, 250, cat. no. 1434, Figs. 43 and 70 – Athens Agora P 27169.

⁵⁷ Abadie-Reynal, Sodini 1992, 33, Fig. 13/CF 182.

⁵⁸ Papuc 1973, 187, no. 8, Fig. 25/3-5.

⁵⁹ Domžalski, Panaite 2019, 118, Fig. 7/6-7.

⁶⁰ Băjenaru 2018, 510, Fig. 7/111.

LAMPS

The 2013-2022 archaeological excavations conducted on the ACS Sector brought to light a large number of lamps, characterised by great diversity, both chronological and typological. The Late Roman lamps, generally dated between the 5th century and the beginning of the 7th century AD, is represented by approximately 200 pieces, mostly fragments and fragmentary-preserved.⁶¹ Of these, nine lamp fragments still preserving cross-shaped decorations were identified (cat. nos. 22-30; Figs. 8-9). The position of the cross varies on the lamps' body as follows: one item is decorated on the channel towards the wick; two items are decorated on the discus; one item is decorated on the base; one item has a cross incised on the reservoir; one item has the cross decorating the nozzle towards the wick; and three items present cross-shaped handle.

The crosses represented on these lamps vary quite a lot in general shape and especially in details. Thus, their inclusion in specific groups, types or variants proves to be quite a challenge. Based on their outline, these motifs can be split into two main groups: five crosses have flaring arms (one jewelled cross on the channel, one cross with stars on the discus, and three cross-shaped handles) and three, even those extremely stylised, can be considered as having straight arms (a jewelled cross on the reservoir, a simple cross on the base, a stylised cross close to the handle). The ninth item is interesting in that, although strongly stylised, the cross has flaring horizontal arms and straight vertical arms.

Cross with flaring arms

The first item to be discussed (cat. no. 22; Fig. 8/1) preserves part of the wick-hole, channel and shoulder. The lamp presents strong soot traces, especially on the inner surface. A **relief jewelled cross with flaring arms, with a single outline**, inscribed in a circle, is partially preserved on the channel. As for the rest of the decoration, only a V-shaped motif with a central circle is preserved on the shoulder. The lamp represents an imitation of a North-African product and it can be attributed to type Atlante X/Hayes II, variant A⁶², with a very loose dating from the 5th century to the first decades of the 7th century AD.⁶³ Regarding the decoration of this fragment, a very good analogy is to be found in Rhodes, where on a lamp dated to the 6th century AD a similar cross, but without the surrounding circle, is applied.⁶⁴

⁶¹ For the discussion regarding the lamp finds discovered between 2013 and 2020, see Iliescu, Bottez 2021b.

⁶² Anselmino 1981, 198-204; Hayes 1972, 310-314.

⁶³ Bonifay 2004, 360-361, Fig. 202 a-b.

⁶⁴ Katsioti 2017, 542, Un 86.



Fig. 8. Lamps: 1. North-African type lamp, type Atlante X, with relief jewelled cross with flaring arms and single outline; 2a-b. Micro-Asian type lamp, type Broneer XXIX, Group 4, with relief cross with flared arms and central circle; 3-5. Danubian type lamps, Iconomu 1967, type XXXIII/Iconomu 1986, type LI, variant I, with cross-shaped handle.

Several fragments are preserved from a lamp previously published (cat. no. 23; Fig. 8/2a-c)⁶⁵: a fragment preserving the discus almost complete (Fig. 8/2a), another fragment preserving the front part of the shoulder and a small portion of the wick-hole (Fig. 8/2b), and three fragments belonging to the base (Fig. 8/2c). The discus is decorated with a **relief cross with flared arms and central circle**, with two stars above the horizontal arms and two filling holes below them. The shoulder preserves one

⁶⁵ Bivolaru, Bottez 2016, 138, cat. no. 12, Fig. 4/12; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 192, Fig. 6/4a-c.

relief dot and two loops towards the wick-hole. The base is also decorated, in this case with seven circles surrounding a central one. The lamp belongs to Type Broneer XXIX, Group 4 / Bailey 1988, Q3123 MLA / Hayes 1992, type 1⁶⁶, being a Micro-Asian type, imported in this area and dated to the 5th-6th centuries AD. The lamp has very good analogies at Ephesus⁶⁷ and on Rhodes⁶⁸, in items with identical discus.

The most homogenous group of lamps regarding the characteristics of the cross representation is formed of three lamps with handles shaped as a cross with flared arms and double outline (Fig. 8/3-5). Two of the crosses are decorated in the centre with a circle, and the third one is decorated with a central dot.

One of these lamps (cat. no. 24; Fig. 8/3), previously published⁶⁹, is in a fragmentary condition, preserving the handle, shoulder, part of the discus, the filling-hole, and part of the reservoir. The lamp belongs to Ionomu 1967, type XXXIII / Ionomu 1986, type LI, variant I⁷⁰, a Danubian type, possibly a regional product dated to the 6th - first quarter of the 7th centuries AD. The handle is cross-shaped, with flared arms and a circle at the intersection of the arms; the cross has double outline which continues in the ridges that delimit the discus; the discus is undecorated and has a central filling-hole; the shoulder is decorated with short parallel lines. Identical lamps are known both from *Tomis*⁷¹ and *Chersonesos*.⁷²

An almost identical item (cat. no. 25; Fig. 8/4), also previously published⁷³, belonging to the same type, has still preserved the cross-shaped handle, with flared arms, double outline, and a central circle at the intersection of its arms.

The third lamp of this group (cat. no. 26; Fig. 8/5), yet unpublished, belongs to the same type, Ionomu XXXIII, and has a cross-shaped handle very similar to the other two, with flaring arms and double outline, the main difference being that instead of a circle, the centre of the cross is decorated with a dot. The finds already mentioned, from *Tomis* and *Chersonesos*, can be taken into consideration as quite good analogies, also not identical items, for this lamp. An identical find, from an unknown site, is exhibited in the Split Museum, dated to the 4th century AD.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Broneer 1930, 114-116; Bailey 1988, 371-372; Hayes 1992, 80, 82.

⁶⁷ Bailey 1988, 384, Q3123 MLA, Pl. 106.

⁶⁸ Katsioti 2017, 273, AM 129.

⁶⁹ Bivolaru, Bottez 2016, 136, cat. no. 2, Fig. 4/2; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 211, Fig. 13/2.

⁷⁰ Ionomu 1967, 146-147; Ionomu 1986, 100.

⁷¹ Ionomu 1967, 148, no. 771, fig. 58.

⁷² Chrzanowski, Zhuravlev 1998, 173-174, N110.

⁷³ Bădescu, Bottez 2014, 231, cat. no. 13, Pls. 3/13 and 4/13; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 213, Fig. 13/3.

⁷⁴ Bubić 2011, 267, cat. No. 50, pl. 7.

Cross with straight arms

An interesting cross-shaped decoration with straight arms is present on a recently published lamp⁷⁵ (cat. no. 27; Fig. 9/1), preserved in a fragmentary state, with only a small part of the base and a part of the reservoir surviving. The lamp can be included in the Micro-Asian types, more exactly type Iconomu XXXVII, variant II / Broneer XXIX, Group 3-4 / Hayes 1992, type 1-2⁷⁶. It is possibly an imported product, with a large chronological framework, from the 5th century to the first half of the 7th century AD. In the case of this item, the reservoir presents towards the nozzle a decoration consisting in double V-shaped grooves, with impressed concentric circles and crescent motifs in a cross-like pattern between them. Thus, this decoration could be considered as a **stylised variant of a jewelled cross**, as long as such motifs are sometimes present on stamped or moulded representations of the cross in an attempt to suggest that items decorated with gemstones are depicted. A similar lamp was found at *Istros*, in the *Domus* Sector, and dated to the end of the 5th-end of the 6th centuries AD.⁷⁷

A fragmentary lamp (cat. no. 28; Fig. 9/2), previously published⁷⁸, preserves part of the shoulder and discus, the handle and the inferior valve (the base and reservoir). The discus is undecorated, and it has a central filling-hole. The shoulder is delimited from the discus by two ridges and is decorated with short lines, disposed radially. The lamp has a tall vertical handle. In this case, the base of the lamp is decorated with a **simple cross**, poorly preserved. This item represents a provincial product, based on a North-African type, belonging to Iconomu type XLVIII, variant I.⁷⁹ Moulds to produce such lamps were found in the Edifice with Mosaic in the neighbouring city of *Tomis*, dated to the 6th century AD.⁸⁰

Three fragments are preserved from a lamp (cat. no. 29; Fig. 9/3) previously published⁸¹: a part of the base and reservoir; a part of the shoulder, channel and the wick-hole; the handle and a small part of the shoulder. Traces of soot were still present on the upper valve, on the channel. The item belongs to type Iconomu XXXVII, variant II / Broneer XXIX, Group 3 / Hayes 1992, type 2, being a Micro-Asian import in this area, dated to the second half of the 6th-first half of the 7th centuries AD. It has a lamellar handle, ending in a fishtail shaped as two wide-spaced tongues with

⁷⁵ Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 195, Fig. 8/8.

⁷⁶ Iconomu 1986, 80-82; Broneer 1930, 114-116; Hayes 1992, 80-82.

⁷⁷ Popescu 1994, 355-356, no. 5c, fig. 58a.

⁷⁸ Bădescu, Bottez 2014, 226, Cat. No. 1, Pl. 3/2; 4/2; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 205, Fig. 11/3.

⁷⁹ Iconomu 1986, 95.

⁸⁰ Iconomu 1976, 136-137, Fig. 3-5.

⁸¹ Bădescu, Bottez 2014, 229-230, cat. nos. 8 and 11, Pls. 3/9, 11, and 4/8, 11; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 189, Fig. 4/2.

an **incised stylised cross** between them and concentric circles towards the base (type Eph. C)⁸²; the base is delimited by a wide ridge; the shoulder is decorated with a band of concentric circles. This find has a very good analogy on the same site, in *Istros*, an identical lamp found in the *Sacred Area* Sector and considered to date to the 5th-6th centuries AD.⁸³



Fig. 9. Lamps: 1. Micro-Asian type lamp, Broneer XXIX, Group 3-4, with cross with straight arms, a stylised variant of a jewelled cross; 2. North-African type lamp, type Iconomu 1986, XLVIII, variant I, with simple cross; 3. Micro-Asian type lamp, type Broneer XXIX, Group 3, with an incised stylised cross; 4. North-African type lamp, type Atlante X, with stylised cross, with flaring horizontal arms and straight vertical arms, and double outline.

⁸² Bailey 1988, 371, Fig. 162.

⁸³ Popescu 1994, 353, no. 4, fig. 55a.

Cross with flaring horizontal arms and straight vertical arms

The last item to be discussed (cat. no. 30; Fig. 9/4), previously published⁸⁴, is a fragmentary lamp preserving the lamellar handle, part of the discus and shoulder. The shoulder is delimited from the discus by a ridge and is decorated with a band of alternating quatre-foils and triangles. The discus is decorated with a **stylised cross, with flaring horizontal arms and straight vertical arms, and double outline**, surrounded by quatre-foils, almost completely preserved. This lamp is also an imitation of the North-African type Atlante X / Hayes II, variant A, dated to the 5th-first decades of the 7th centuries AD.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Even though the ceramic building material is a very well represented category on the *Acropolis Centre-South Sector*, with numerous discoveries every year, only two finds bearing the sign of the cross have been identified so far.

The first item (cat. no. 31; Fig. 10/1) is a fragmentary pavement brick decorated with an incised cross, which has the closest analogy at *Sucidava*, where a brick dated to the 6th century AD, that bears on its top surface two crosses dug into the raw paste, one with splayed ends, the other possibly with flaring arms, was discovered.⁸⁵ In this case, the surviving fragment, still preserving one of the corners, bears the *graffito* of a cross with arms represented by simple lines with splayed ends, circumscribed by an uneven circle. The brick, of very pale brown colour, with limestone and rare mica particles, has the top surface flat, even, and unsmoothed. The sides were treated in the same manner. The corner is slightly protruding upwards. The bottom is flat and unsmoothed, still preserving traces of the straws from the bed on which the raw brick was laid.

The second item (cat. no. 32; Fig. 10/2) is a fragmentary brick, still preserving two corners, stamped with a cross presenting good similarities with a stamp on a fragment belonging most likely to a brick found at *Dinogetia-Bisericuța*, in this case the four arms of the cross being obtained by superposing two crosses.⁸⁶ The brick is reddish yellow in colour and has as inclusions rare calcite particles and numerous mica grains. The top surface is flat, slightly uneven, and partially smoothed; it also has two parallel impressions, probably made by a tool. The sides are also partially smoothed and are slightly protruding upwards. The bottom is flat, not smoothed and preserves small shell fragments from the bed on which the raw brick was laid. The stamped decoration consists of two superposed crosses, resulting in an eight-ray star, only partially preserved, on a maximum length of 2.5 cm.

⁸⁴ Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 204-205, Fig. 11/1.

⁸⁵ Barnea 1979, 264-265, Pl. 114/2.

⁸⁶ Ștefan 1948, 306-307, cat. no. 4, Fig. 4/3.



Fig. 10. Ceramic building materials: 1. pavement brick decorated with an incised cross with splayed ends; 2. brick with stamped cross.

SMALL FINDS

Two items representing the category of small finds found so far on the ACS Sector will be discussed here due to the fact that they bear the sign of the cross: a weight and an element belonging to a hanging device, both published here for the first time (cat. nos. 33-34; Fig. 11/1-2).

The first item (cat. no. 33; Fig. 11/1), an almost square piece of metal, 2.02×2 cm, with a height of 0.8 cm, and a weight of 25.56 g, is in a good state of preservation. At the moment of discovery, it was covered by a green patina layer, masking all the

details which could be noticed only after the item underwent cleaning.⁸⁷ The item was made of yellowish metal, presumably a copper alloy, and was decorated on the face, which is slightly stepped back from the edge, while the bottom was left undecorated. The sides are also decorated with four longitudinal grooves of unequal width and depth (Fig. 11/1h-j).⁸⁸ The decoration on the obverse was created using engraving and incrustation of metal on metal, and it is quite complex. The main motifs consist of a façade composed of a central rounded arch resting on two columns (Fig. 11/1e-d), with Doric capitals (Fig. 11/1g); in central position beneath the arch there is a cross with flaring arms of equal length (a Greek cross) (Fig. 11/1c), and beneath it two letters, Γ and Α. All the elements of the decoration were made by shallow engraving. They were further embellished by incrustations made using very small plain rectangular bands made of reddish metal (most likely unalloyed copper), which cover them only partially (Fig. 11/1g).⁸⁹ The only exception is the arch, covered completely by the incrustation, in this case a band made of the same reddish metal, but decorated with a herringbone pattern and covered in its turn by a very thin layer of whitish metal (which could be either silver or tin), only partially preserved. Based on its general shape, dimensions, weight, and decoration, this item was identified as a square commercial weight of the lowest denomination, namely one ounce (*uncia*).

Regarding the composition of the metal used for casting the weight, the XRF analysis conducted on the patina offered the following result: Cu 58.54%; Zn 3.45%; Pb 27.92%; Sn 4.25%.⁹⁰ These results indicate that the cross was made of a copper alloy, more specifically a quaternary alloy Cu-Pb-Zn-Sn. The added lead most probably helped the casting process, as it would have decreased the temperature of the melting point for the alloy and would have also ensured a better filling of the mould with the hot metal. Still, even keeping in mind that the lead forms “tears” on

⁸⁷ The authors would like to express their thanks to Mrs. Georgiana Mureșan from the restoration and conservation laboratory of the Institute of Archaeology “Vasile Pârvan” Bucharest for her help with both metal objects (Cat. Nos. 33-34).

⁸⁸ The authors would like to thank Dr. Zizi Baltă from the National Museum of Romanian History for the photomicrographs.

⁸⁹ An observation should be made here: it can be easily noticed on the photo that some of these small plain bands still display a layer of green patina. The reason, for which not all of them were cleaned, to expose the metal in its original reddish colour, is that some of the incrustated bands are so thin that they ran the risk of being completely removed if it was insisted with the cleaning.

⁹⁰ The authors would like to thank Dr. Migdonia Georgescu from the National Museum of Romanian History for her help with the analysis of both metal items. The X-ray fluorescence analysis was conducted with a portable XRF spectrometer Innov-X Systems Alpha Series, with W anticathode tube, SiPIN diode, Peltier cooling effect, and work parameters 40 kV tension, 35 μA intensity, acquisition time 2 min.

the surface of objects when alloyed with copper (and as a result showing a much higher value than in reality), there is quite a lot of lead; a possible reason for the high percentage of lead could be the necessity of obtaining a specific weight while preserving reduced dimensions for such an item, which was used on a balance plate. Thus, it would be interesting to check in the case of similar weights if adding lead was a standard procedure, or this item represents an exception. The added zinc, a frequent occurrence during the Roman period, had the advantage of offering a golden appearance to the alloy.

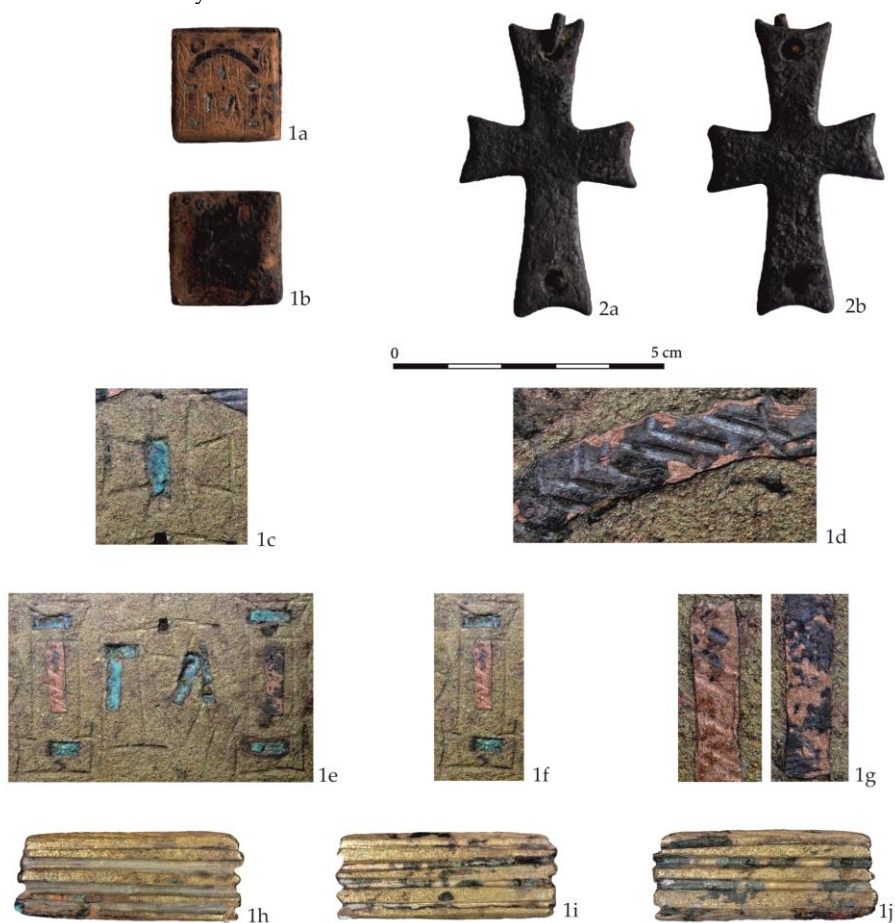


Fig. 11. Metal objects: 1. weight with incised Greek cross, with detail photos; 2. hanging device shaped as a cross with flaring arms (1c. 15× magnification; 1d. 30× magnification; 1e-f. 10× magnification; 1g. 30× magnification; 1h-j. 8× magnification; photomicrographs by Zizi Baltă).

Until now, we were unable to identify perfect analogies for this item. In fact, although this category of items was subjected to a set of specifications, quite logically given their intended function which required a certain level of standardization, the published material for this chronological frame seems to indicate a large variation in details inside those standards. Not only that the decoration seems to represent variations on fixed themes, with a series of motifs to be picked or disregarded for any specific item, but even the most important features, the weight, and dimensions, vary inside certain limits. In the case of this last mentioned peculiarity, there were discussions regarding an evolution during time of the accepted weight, with a pound equivalent to 324 g between the 4th and the 6th centuries, 322 g between the 6th and 7th centuries, 320 g between the 7th and 9th centuries, and 319 g between the 9th and 13th centuries, afterwards falling below this value.⁹¹ Still, it was also emphasised that not only it is clear that the pound fluctuated, but it is extremely unlikely that an administrative system of sufficient complexity existed to impose a standard weight system throughout the vast expanse of the Late Roman empire, and on the evidence of the existing weights for the 4th-7th centuries such figures should be treated with scepticism.⁹²

Similar decoration composition and details of the weight, including the groove decoration on the sides, can be noticed on an item from *Seleucia ad Calycadnum*, Turkey, a two ounce square commercial weight.⁹³ Similar decoration composition is found in the case of a three ounce square commercial weight found in the site from Küçükçekmece Lake Basin, Istanbul, Turkey⁹⁴, and an one ounce square commercial weight from Anamur, Turkey.⁹⁵ The outlines and general treatment of the cross and letters show similarities to those represented on an ounce round commercial weight and a two ounce commercial weight from Turkey.⁹⁶ Also, at the provincial level, there are similarities in the treatment of cross and letters on a two ounce square commercial weight from *Tomis*⁹⁷, and on two other one ounce commercial weights with unknown context from Romania.⁹⁸ Based on these analogies, the weight could be dated to the 5th-6th centuries AD.

The second item (cat. no. 34; Fig. 11/2) is a cross-shaped object cast of metal in one piece, with total length of 5.36 cm (vertical arms) and total width of 3.14 cm (horizontal arms), and a weight of 13.02 g. At the moment of discovery, its surface was

⁹¹ Acara Eser 2003, 33.

⁹² Entwistle 2002, 611.

⁹³ Tekin 2016, 858, cat. no. 7.

⁹⁴ Tekin 2013b, 8, Fig. 66.

⁹⁵ Tekin 2013a, 177, cat. no. 8.

⁹⁶ Acara Eser 2003, 216, cat. nos. 53 and 52.

⁹⁷ Severeanu 1929, 41-42, Fig. 1.

⁹⁸ Ocheșeanu 1984, 90, cat. nos. 9-10.

covered by a green layer of patina. The cleaning showed no signs of decoration, the resulting colour being a dull greyish covering a bright yellow core. The dimensions and general shape of the item could send it into one of two categories: either a cross-shaped pendant, quite in trend during this chronological framework all over the empire, or a cross-shaped intermediary element belonging most probably to a lighting hanging device. The fact that, unlike in the case of pendants, this cross presents holes for wire links on both tips of the vertical arms, with rests of those links still attached in place, is an argument in the favour of the second function. Regarding the outline, the cross can be included in the category of crosses with unequal flaring arms, due to the fact that not only the horizontal arms are shorter than the vertical ones, but the upper vertical arm is also shorter than the lower vertical arm.

Regarding the composition of the metal used for casting this cross, the XRF analysis conducted on the patina offered the following result: Cu 85.84%; Zn 4.83%; Pb 6.07%; Sn 0.95%. The same analysis conducted on the cleaned object offered the following result: Cu 95.54%; Zn 2.78%; Pb 0.62%; Sn 0.90%.⁹⁹ These results indicate that the cross was made of a copper alloy, more specifically a ternary alloy Cu-Pb-Zn, which could be described as a variant of brass (Cu-Zn). The small percentage of tin (Sn) both before and after the patina was removed shows that most probably tin was not intentionally added to the alloy, as it can be seen in some cases; either occurred naturally in the copper source, or it could be a sign of recycling tin-based bronze. The same observation made above, in the case of the weight, is valid here: the added lead most probably helped the casting process, as it would have decreased the temperature of the melting point for the alloy and would have also ensured a better filling of the mould with the hot metal.

DISCUSSION

The items taken into consideration in this paper, covering quite a large range of categories of the archaeological record, from cooking/storage and serving vessels to lighting devices, building material, and weights, would have been used on a daily basis by the inhabitants of the building, and as such perceived as a constant presence in their life.

⁹⁹ The significant difference in the percentage of lead (Pb), before and after the removal of the patina, is a result of the characteristic of this metal of migrating to the surface of the objects when in combination with copper (creating "tears", see above), same as the tin (Sn). This is the reason why every time it was possible, copper-alloyed objects from the ACS Sector (including coins) were analysed both before and after cleaning. In the cases when lead or tin were not added in large quantities in the alloy, the greatest part can be lost during cleaning; it is very possible that the results of surface analyses such as XRF to be quite biased, and thus marring the interpretation and conclusions of technological nature.

The discussion of this group of finds could be approached from several perspectives. From a chronological perspective, the typology of the items can be used in some cases to determine or narrow the period of their production or the time span of their use. For example, regarding the ceramic material, all the shards belonging to fine tableware can be dated to an interval between the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 7th century AD. Similarly, the lamps can be dated to the same interval. In the case of the pot lids and building material, the analogies identified so far support a dating in the 6th century AD. Unfortunately, the base with the incised cross belongs to a pot, a functional category which is not chronologically expressive. As for the metal objects, the weight could be dated quite loosely based on analogies to the 5th – 6th centuries AD, while similar cross-shaped elements used as part of hanging devices are generally dated to a larger chronological framework, between the 4th and 7th centuries AD. This situation matches well the observation made by various researchers in this field. It was noticed, for instance, that the lamps with clear Christian decoration do not become common until the middle of the 5th century AD, leaving a period of a hundred years in which Christianity became the dominant religion while simultaneously competing with the continued popularity of paganism, and implicitly pagan motifs.¹⁰⁰ In the case of *vasa escaria*, the use of Christian motifs in decoration seems to follow a similar pattern, with the earliest examples dating to the early/mid-5th century and being used on a larger scale from the second half of the 5th century AD.¹⁰¹ The use of rectangular bronze weights decorated with a façade composed of an arch supported by two columns, framing a cross and the letters indicating the weight, seems to begin already during the 4th century AD and continuing until the end of the 6th century AD, although a stylistic evolution had been proposed.¹⁰² Still, taking into account the high variability of the decoration of these weights in combination with the lack of contextual and chronological data for such finds¹⁰³, it was deemed risky to narrow the chronological frame of the production and use of the item discussed here.

From the perspective of their place of origin/area of production, the analysed objects could be split into two main categories: imports and regional/local products. The most homogenous group is that of *vasa escaria*, since, as already mentioned, they are exclusively imported products, in majority from Phocaeen workshops (cat. nos. 4-20). The lamps can be attributed to both categories, with several items produced in

¹⁰⁰ Schoolman 2017, 169.

¹⁰¹ Hayes 1972, 219, 349; Bonifay 2004, 192 (in the case of African Red Slip Wares, the earliest cross-motifs stamps are applied in the A(iii) decorative style, dated between c. AD 410-470; on the Phocaeen Red Slip Wares, the first crosses are stamped starting with the mid-5th century AD).

¹⁰² Ocheșeanu 1984, 93.

¹⁰³ Ross 1979; Ocheșeanu 1984; Entwistle 2002; Acara Eser 2003; Tekin 2013a; 2013b; 2016.

Eastern Mediterranean (cat. nos. 22-23, 27, 29-30) and others in regional workshops (cat. nos. 24-26, 28). The lids are representatives of the regional production, as similar finds come from numerous cities of *Scythia Minor* – in fact, we could even talk about a fashion characteristic for this province. Moreover, in their case, the available analogies and the presence of moulds could be used as arguments in favour of a local production, in workshops from *Istros*. Again, the pot offers no clear clues regarding the area of production. The building material in general is considered in the archaeological literature as being locally produced.¹⁰⁴ Regarding the cross-shaped element belonging to a lighting device, more or less similar items are known all over the empire, so it can be presumed that numerous workshops were implicated in the production of such systems for hanging lamps. Still, a fragmentary mould for casting cross-shaped objects, most likely, based on the dimensions of the surviving part, intended for the same purpose, discovered at *Istros*, in the neighbouring *Centre-North Sector*, in a 6th century AD context¹⁰⁵, could hint towards a local production. As for the weight, its intended use would have led by necessity to a strict control of the production, and as such to restrictions regarding the workshops.¹⁰⁶

From the perspective of the producers/decision-makers, most of these categories could have been the result of the activity of private workshops. Still, it is very difficult to determine whether at least in some cases the state or the church were controlling or influencing the production centres. For example, in the case of the mould for casting cross-shaped items mentioned above, its discovery in the vicinity of the Episcopal Basilica led the author to proposing a production of liturgic objects under the control of the local church.¹⁰⁷ In the case of the bronze weight, the existing sources clearly indicate a strict control, with state officials who had among their attributions the responsibility of supervising the production in conformity with specific standards.¹⁰⁸

From the perspective of the users, they could be perceived as having both an active and a passive role in the introduction and dissemination of Christian-related motifs in the decoration of various objects, of which the sign of the cross seems to have played a prominent role. If the variant of private workshops is considered, at least for categories such as pottery or lamps, then it can be presumed that the tastes and preferences of the consumers would have been played an important part in the

¹⁰⁴ Rădulescu 1969, 350-351; Nuțu 2019, 203.

¹⁰⁵ Ciantă 2014, 195-198 (although the mould was used for casting larger items than the cross discussed here, the fact that they were also characterized by flaring arms and unequal vertical arms could be used as further arguments in favour of this hypothesis).

¹⁰⁶ Ross 1979, 301.

¹⁰⁷ Ciantă 2014, 197.

¹⁰⁸ Ross 1979, 301; Acara Eser 2013, 36, 40.

selection of shapes and decorations. Thus, the people buying those products would have been active players in establishing the trends of the market, as the workshops would have adapted to the highest demand. On the contrary, if the market was controlled by either the state or the church (or both), then we witness a process of transmitting the official ideology through officially accepted symbols, with the consumers playing a more passive role, mostly as receivers.

It is important to emphasise that the functional dimension is prevalent in the case of all the discussed items, the cross being present as a means of decorating the objects. Thus, we do not deal with the cross as an object of devotion per se, but with a Christian symbol associated mainly with habitual items, found in any household. Their frequency and the large range of objects seen as appropriate for being decorated with this motif or cross-shaped, when their intended use allowed, could reflect a growing popular belief in the apotropaic and healing power of the sign of the cross and its ability to access transcendent powers.¹⁰⁹ The increasing presence of this motif, clearly visible in the case of serving vessels, lamps or weights, in combination with the slow disappearance of pagan themes could attest to the changing religious demography¹¹⁰, with the sign of the cross and the Christograms prevailing as the main visual forms of expressing Christian piety.¹¹¹

The household which provided the items discussed in this paper seems to align very well with the general trends noticed in the entire empire, having in use both imported objects and local ones bearing the sign of the cross. These would have connected the inhabitants to the larger religious community, reflecting shared values and beliefs, but also the need of divine protection during very troubled times.

In conclusion, the sign of the cross played a significant role in this household, everyday life, context, as a constant reminder, a protection, and a statement of belief, but also as a reflection of the place of this community in the larger socio-economical, ideological, and political network of the Roman Empire.

CATALOGUE

Pots

1. **Code:** HIS 17 ACS (Fig. 4/1)
ID: 439/2017
Trench: C035
Depth: -0.02 m
Context: 35002
Preservation: fragment (base)

¹⁰⁹ Garipzanov 2018, 314.

¹¹⁰ Schoolman 2017, 177.

¹¹¹ Garipzanov 2018, 316.

Description: incomplete reducing firing; coarse fabric, greyish brown (10YR 5/2), with dark grey core (GLE Y1 4/N); inclusions: mica and quartz particles; the fragment does not present soot traces.

Dimensions¹¹²: BD = 6.8 cm; MPD = 8 cm; PH = 2.4 cm; Th = 1.5 cm

Decoration: simple cross; incised on the bottom, most probably before firing

Form: cooking pot

Type of cross: cross with straight arms

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

Lids

2. Code: HIS 17 ACS (Fig. 4/2)

ID: 130/2017

Trench: C023

Depth: +0.07/-0.14 m

Context: 23002

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; semi-fine fabric, pink (7.5YR 7/4); no engobe applied; inclusions: grog, mica, and iron oxide particles

Dimensions: D = 15 cm; L = 6.3 cm; W = 9.1 cm; Th = 1.3 cm

Decoration: cross with splayed ends; relief decoration using mould

Form: lid

Type of cross: –

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

3. Code: HIS 18 ACS (Fig. 4/3)

ID: 811/2018

Trench: C035/C036

Depth: +0.04/+0.02 cm

Context: 35001/36001

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; semi-fine fabric, light grey (2.5Y 7/2); no engobe applied; inclusions: limestone particles

Dimensions: D = 13 cm; L = 6.4 cm; W = 6 cm; Th = 1.4 cm

Decoration: cross with flaring arms; relief decoration using mould; dots associated with crosses; parts of two crosses preserved

Form: lid

Type of cross: –

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

¹¹² The following abbreviations are used in the catalogue: BD = base diameter; D = diameter; FD = foot diameter; H = height; L = length; MPD = maximum preserved diameter; PH = preserved height; RD = rim diameter; Th = thickness; W = width.

Fine ware**4. Code:** HIS 18 ACS (Fig. 5/1)**ID:** 632/2018**Trench:** C043**Depth:** -0.09/-0.35 m**Context:** 43002**Preservation:** fragment**Description:** even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/8); slip of the same colour applied on the inner surface; inclusions: limestone, mica, and iron oxide particles**Dimensions:** L = 4.2 cm; W = 6.1 cm; Th = 0.55 cm**Decoration:** cross-monogram with two pendants below arms; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; almost three-quarters of the stamp preserved**Form:** Hayes Form 3 plate**Type of cross:** Hayes Type 67i (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67i)**Analogies:** Athens Agora P 3081 (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67i)**Bibliography:** unpublished**5. Code:** HIS 20 ACS (Fig. 5/2)**ID:** 523/2020**Trench:** C029**Depth:** -0.05/-0.13 m**Context:** 29005**Preservation:** fragment**Description:** even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/8); slip of the same colour applied on the inner surface; inclusions: limestone, mica, and iron oxide particles**Dimensions:** L = 5.7 cm; W = 3.4 cm; Th = 0.6 cm**Decoration:** cross-monogram with two pendants below arms; stamped; poorly impressed; approximately three-quarters preserved**Form:** Hayes Form 3 or 10 plate**Type of cross:** Hayes Type 67i (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67i)**Analogies:** Athens Agora P 3081 (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67i)**Bibliography:** unpublished**6. Code:** HIS 18 ACS (Fig. 5/3)**ID:** 609/2018**Trench:** C045**Depth:** -0.67/-0.71 m**Context:** 45002**Preservation:** fragment**Description:** even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/4); reddish brown slip (5YR 4/3) applied on both surfaces; inclusions: numerous limestone particles**Dimensions:** L = 3.9 cm; W = 5.1 cm; Th = 0.3 cm**Decoration:** cross-monogram with two pendants below arms; small variant with short broad arms; stamped; only part of a pendant and the lower arm preserved

Form: Hayes Form 10 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 67l (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67l)

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

7. **Code:** HIS 19 ACS (Fig. 5/4)

ID: 104/2019

Trench: C048

Depth: +0.08/+0.01 m

Context: 48000

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); red slip (2.5YR 4/8) applied on both surfaces; inclusions: limestone and mica particles, and possibly grog

Dimensions: L = 4.7 cm; W = 5.5 cm; Th = 0.5 cm

Decoration: **cross-monogram with two pendants below arms**; small variant with short broad arms; only one pendant clearly visible; stamped; well impressed, but possibly worn stamp; possibly a small part of another motif preserved below

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: possibly a variant of Hayes Type 67k (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67k)

Analogies: similar to Athens Agora P 689 (Hayes 1972, 363-365, Fig. 78/67k)

Bibliography: unpublished

8. **Code:** HIS 15 ACS (Fig. 5/5)

ID: 902/2015

Trench: C022

Depth: +0.43/+0.28 m

Context: 22001

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); slip of the same colour applied on both surfaces; inclusions: limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 5.6 cm; W = 6.2 cm; Th = 0.5 cm

Decoration: **plain cross with flaring arms**; stamp; poorly impressed; almost complete

Form: Hayes Form 10 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 73k (Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79/73k)

Analogies: Byzantine Palace, Apollonia (Cyrenaica) – three crosses in a row (Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79/73k); Antioch on-the-Orontes (Waage 1948, Fig. 34, second column, second item)

Bibliography: Iliescu, Bottez 2021a, 572, Fig. 1/5.

9. **Code:** HIS 20 ACS (Fig. 5/6)

ID: 40/2020

Trench: C053

Depth: +0.29/+0.14 m

Context: 53000

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/8) applied on the inner surface; inclusions: fine limestone and iron oxide particles

Dimensions: L = 4.8 cm; W = 3.8 cm; Th = 0.45 cm

Decoration: cross with double outline and flaring arms; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; almost complete (missing tips of a horizontal and a vertical arms)

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71b and f (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b and f)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 8650 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b); Corinth C-34-312 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71f); Antioch on-the-Orontes, North Syria (Waage 1948, Fig. 34, last column, third item); Tomis (Papuc 1973, 176, Fig. 8/7); similar to Thasos (Abadie-Reynal, Sodini 1992, 28, Pl. 2, g-CF141)

10. Code: HIS 14 ACS (Fig. 5/7)

ID: 389/2014

Trench: C017

Depth: +0.38/+0.34 m

Context: 17001

Preservation: fragment (complete base with lower part of the walls preserved)

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); no slip applied; inclusions: limestone particles

Dimensions: BD = 10 cm; MPD = 14.8 cm; PH = 1.2 cm; Th = 0.6 cm

Decoration: cross with double outline and flaring arms; stamped; poorly impressed; poorly preserved; approximately half of the stamp preserved

Form: Hayes Form 10 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71b and f (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b and f)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 8650 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b); Corinth C-34-312 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71f)

Bibliography: Iliescu, Bottez 2021a, 572, Fig. 1/6

11. Code: HIS 17 ACS (Fig. 6/1)

ID: 946/2017

Trench: C006/C008

Depth: +0.59/+0.47 m

Context: 6001/8001

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; semi-fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/8); self-slip; inclusions: numerous limestone particles, rare iron oxide grains

Dimensions: L = 3.2 cm; W = 3.5 cm; Th = 0.6 cm

Decoration: cross with double outline and flaring arms; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; approximately three-quarters of the stamp preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71b and f (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b and f)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 8650 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b); Corinth C-34-312 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71f); Tomis (Papuc 1973, 180, Fig. 24/5) – surrounded by concentric grooves

Bibliography: unpublished

12. Code: HIS 22 ACS (Fig. 6/2)

ID: 211/2022

Trench: C054

Depth: +0.18/+0.11 m

Context: 54001E

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, light red (2.5YR 6/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/8) applied on the inner surface; inclusions: limestone and iron oxide particles

Dimensions: L = 3 cm; W = 2.6 cm; Th = 0.3 cm

Decoration: cross with double outline and flaring arms; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; only one of the horizontal arms completely preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71b and f (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b and f)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 8650 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b); Corinth C-34-312 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71f)

Bibliography: unpublished

13. Code: HIS 22 ACS (Fig. 6/3)

ID: 71/2022

Trench: C058

Depth: +0.62/+0.43 m

Context: 58000

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, reddish yellow (5YR 6/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/6) partially preserved on the outer surface; inclusions: rare limestone and iron oxide particles

Dimensions: L = 1.9 cm; W = 1.8 cm; Th = 0.7 cm

Decoration: cross with double outline and flaring arms; stamped; well impressed; poorly preserved; two arms partially preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 or 10 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71b and f (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b and f)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 8650 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71b); Corinth C-34-312 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71f)

Bibliography: unpublished

14. Code: HIS 19 ACS (Fig. 6/4)

ID: 563/2019

Trench: C040

Depth: +0.55/+0.53 m

Context: 40006

Preservation: fragment (reused as token)

Description: even oxidizing firing; very fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/8) applied on the inner surface; inclusions: fine limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 3.1 cm; W = 3 cm; Th = 0.7 cm

Decoration: Greek cross with double outline; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; almost completely preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 72h (Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79/72h)

Analogies: Corinth C-65-199 (Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79/72h); Antioch on-the-Orontes (Waage 1948, Fig. 34, row one, under the third fragment); similar to Histria (Popescu 1965, 710, Fig. 13/7)

Bibliography: unpublished

15. Code: HIS 18 ACS (Fig. 6/5)

ID: 607/2018

Trench: C043

Depth: -0.04/-0.5 m

Context: 43002

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/8); light red slip (2.5YR 6/8) applied on the inner surface; inclusions: rare limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 2 cm; W = 5 cm; Th = 0.4 cm

Decoration: close to Greek cross with double outline, but with unequal arms; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; approximately half of the stamp preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: close to Hayes Type 72h; general outline closest to Type 73i, but with double outline (Hayes 1972, 366-367, Fig. 79/72h and 73i)

Analogies: Antioch on-the-Orontes (Waage 1948, Fig. 34, first column, third item)

Bibliography: unpublished

16. Code: HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 6/6)

ID: 179/2021

Trench: C022/C012

Depth: +0.32/+0.24 m

Context: 22001/12001

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/8) applied on the inner surface; inclusions: limestone, mica and iron oxide particles

Dimensions: L = 5.6 cm; W = 5.3 cm; Th = 0.45 cm

Decoration: cross with straight square-ended arms; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; almost three-quarters preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71d (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71d)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 746 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71d; Hayes 2008, 248, Pl. 68/1405); Antioch on-the Orontes (Waage 1948, Fig. 34, second row, second item); Histria (Popescu 1965, 707, 710, Fig. 7/3, 4; 1994, Fig. 81a-b); Tomis (Papuc 1973, 180, Fig. 23/4, 6); Tropaeum Traiani

(Bogdan-Cătănciu, Barnea 1979, 186, NV 2(3), Fig. 160/2.3, 161/2.3); Halmyris (Topoleanu 1996, 151, Pl. VI/29); similar to Corinth C-37-2211 (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71d)

Bibliography: unpublished

17. Code: HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 6/7)

ID: 297/2021

Trench: C057

Depth: +0.58/+0.44 m

Context: 57002

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); slip of the same colour applied on both surfaces; inclusions: numerous limestone particles, rarer mica and iron oxide grains

Dimensions: L = 3.1 cm; W = 4.6 cm; Th = 0.5 cm

Decoration: **cross with straight square-ended arms**; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; small part of an arm preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: Hayes Type 71d (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71d)

Analogies: Tropaeum Traiani (Bogdan-Cătănciu, Barnea 1979, 186, NV 2(3), Fig. 160/2.3, 161/2.3); Halmyris (Topoleanu 1996, 151, Pl. VI/29)

Bibliography: unpublished

18. Code: HIS 18 ACS (Fig. 6/8)

ID: 746/2018

Trench: C034/C042

Depth: +1.02/+0.89 m

Context: 34000/42000

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); reddish brown slip (2.5YR 4/4) poorly preserved on both surfaces; inclusions: numerous limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 3.4 cm; W = 4.6 cm; Th = 0.5 cm

Decoration: **cross with straight square-ended arms**; stamped; watered fragment, poorly preserved cross with single outline; half of the stamp preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: close in shape to Hayes Type 71d (Hayes 1972, 365-367, Fig. 79/71d), but with a single outline

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

19. Code: HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 6/9)

ID: 640/2021

Trench: C027

Depth: -0.20/-0.45 m

Context: 27002

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/8) applied on the inner surface; inclusions: numerous limestone particles, rare iron oxide grains

Dimensions: L = 2.5 cm; W = 3.3 cm; Th = 0.8 cm

Decoration: close in general outline to **double-ribbed Greek cross**; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; almost half of the stamp preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: close in shape to Hayes Type 69p (Hayes 1972, 364-365, Fig. 78/69p), but without the cutting off the arms

Analogies: possibly similar to Histria (Popescu 1965, 710, Fig. 11/9; Popescu 1994, Fig. 80a)

Bibliography: unpublished

20. Code: HIS 17 ACS (Fig. 6/10)

ID: 463/2017

Trench: C038

Depth: -0.53/-0.56 m

Context: 38000

Preservation: fragment

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/6); slip of the same colour applied on the inner surface; inclusions: numerous limestone particles, rarer iron oxide grains

Dimensions: L = 2.9 cm; W = 2.6 cm; Th = 0.5 cm

Decoration: possibly **cross with four circle-motifs between arms**; stamped; well impressed; only part of an arm preserved

Form: Hayes Form 3 plate

Type of cross: possibly Hayes Type 79q (Hayes 1972, 366, 368, Fig. 79/79q)

Analogies: Athens Agora P 3540 (Hayes 1972, 366, 368, Fig. 79/79q); Antioch on-the-Orontes (Waage 1948, Fig. 34, last column, second item); Halmyris (Topoleanu 1996, 154, Pl. VII/35); Ulmetum (Băjenaru 2018, 504, Fig. 5/91); similar to Histria (Popescu 1965, 710, Fig. 9/1)

Bibliography: unpublished

21. Code: HIS 14 ACS + HIS 17 ACS (Fig. 7/1)

ID: 8/2014 + 550/2017

Trench: C008 and C036

Depth: +0.21 m and +0.19/+0.02 m

Context: 8001 + 36002

Preservation: fragments found in two different campaigns

Description: incomplete oxidizing firing; fine fabric, reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6), with very pale brown core (10YR 7/4); red slip (2.5YR 5/6), strongly metallic, applied on both surfaces; inclusions: limestone and iron oxide particles

Dimensions: RD = 20 cm; MPD = 20.2 cm; FD = 9.2 cm; H = 3 cm; Th = 0.4 cm

Decoration: **jewelled cross with flaring arms and double outline**; stamped; well impressed; well preserved; almost completely preserved; surrounded by three circles of grooves and two bands of rouletting

Form: Late Roman Light-Coloured Ware plate (Hayes 2008, 91)

Type of cross: variant of cross with flaring arms and double outline

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

Lamps

22. Code: HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 8/1)

ID: 430/2021

Trench: C056

Depth: +0.12/+0.05 m

Context: 56000

Preservation: fragment (part of the wick-hole, channel and shoulder)

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, red (2.5YR 5/8); red slip (2.5YR 4/6) unevenly applied on the outer surface; inclusions: limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 3.1 cm; W = 3 cm; PH = 1.6 cm; Th = 0.7 cm

Decoration: **jewelled cross with flaring arms and single outline;** on the channel is preserved part of a relief jewelled cross inscribed in a circle; of the shoulder decoration, only a V-shaped motif with a central circle is preserved

Type: North-African type lamp; Atlante X/Hayes II, variant A (imitation; the 5th – first decades of the 7th centuries AD)

Type of cross: –

Analogies: Rhodes (Katsioti 2017, 542, Un 86) – without circumscribing circle

Bibliography: unpublished

23. Code: HIS 15 ACS (Fig. 8/2a-c)

ID: 290/2015

Trench: C020

Depth: +0.11/-0.01 m

Context: 20003

Preservation: several fragments preserved (the discus, almost completely preserved; the front part of the shoulder and a small portion of the wick-hole; three other fragments from the base).

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, pink (7.5YR 7/4); strong brown slip (7.5YR 5/6) applied on the outer surface; inclusions: iron oxide particles

Dimensions: for the discus L = 3.6 cm; W = 5.1 cm; PH = 0.9 cm; Th = 0.35 cm; the front part of the shoulder L = 2.4 cm; W = 2.4 cm; base fragments L = 5.8 cm; W = 5.1 cm; H = 1.9 cm; Th = 0.3 cm

Decoration: **cross with flaring arms, single outline and central circle;** flanked by two stars above the horizontal arms; two filling-holes below them; the shoulder preserves one relief dot and two loops towards the wick-hole; the base decorated with a row of seven circles surrounding a larger one

Type: Micro-Asian type lamp; Broneer XXIX, Group 4/Bailey 1988, Q3123 MLA/ Hayes 1992, type 1

Type of cross: –

Analogies: Rhodes (Katsioti 2017, 273, AM 129); Ephesus (Bailey 1988, 384, Q3123 MLA, Pl. 106)

Bibliography: Bivolaru, Bottez 2016, 138, cat. no. 12, Fig. 4/12; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 192, Fig. 6/4a-c.

24. Code: HIS 13 ACS (Fig. 8/3)

ID: 192/2013

Trench: C004

Depth: +0.63/+0.10 m

Context: 4001

Preservation: fragmentary (handle, shoulder, part of the discus, the filling-hole, and part of the reservoir)

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6); light gray slip (10YR 7/2) applied on the outer surface; inclusions: iron oxide and limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 5.1 cm; W = 6.8 cm; PH = 4.8 cm; Th = 0.8 cm

Decoration: cross with flaring arms, double outline and central circle; cross-shaped handle; the double line continues in the ridges that delimit the discus; the discus is undecorated and has a central filling-hole; the shoulder is decorated with short parallel lines

Type: Danubian type lamps; type Iconomu 1967, XXXIII / Iconomu 1986, LI, variant I (possibly regional product; 6th – first quarter of the 7th centuries AD)

Type of cross:

Analogies: Chersonesos (Chrzanovski – Zhuravlev 1998, 173-174, N110); Tomis (Iconomu 1967, 148, no. 771, fig. 58)

Bibliography: Bivolaru, Bottez 2016, 136, cat. no. 2, Fig. 4/2; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 211, Fig. 13/2.

25. Code: HIS 14 ACS (Fig. 8/4)

ID: 169/2014

Trench: C013

Depth: +0.51/+0.47 m

Context: 13001

Preservation: fragment (handle)

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, reddish yellow (5YR 6/6); no slip applied; inclusions: iron oxide particles

Dimensions: L = 4.9 cm; W = 5.6 cm; PH = 5.2 cm; Th = 0.85 cm

Decoration: cross with flaring arms, double outline and central circle

Type: Danubian type lamps; type Iconomu 1967, XXXIII/Iconomu 1986, LI, variant I (possibly regional product; 6th – first quarter of the 7th centuries AD)

Type of cross: –

Analogies: Chersonesos (Chrzanovski – Zhuravlev 1998, 173-174, N110); Tomis (Iconomu 1967, 148, no. 771, fig. 58)

Bibliography: Bădescu, Bottez 2014, 231, cat. no. 13, Pl. 3/13 and 4/13; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 213, Fig. 13/3

26. Code: HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 8/5)

ID: 226/2021

Trench: C056

Depth: +0.34/+0.16 m

Context: 56001

Preservation: fragment (handle)

Description: incomplete oxidizing firing; fine fabric, light brown (7.5YR 6/4), with dark gray core (10YR 4/1); no slip applied; inclusions: numerous limestone and quartz particles

Dimensions: L = 4.2 cm; W = 3 cm; PH = 3.1 cm; Th = 0.7 cm

Decoration: cross with flaring arms, double outline and central dot

Type: Danubian type lamps; type Iconomu 1967, XXXIII/Iconomu 1986, LI, variant I (possibly regional product; 6th – first quarter of the 7th centuries AD)

Type of cross: –

Analogies: similar to Chersonesos (Chrzanowski – Zhuravlev 1998, 173-174, N110); similar to Tomis (Iconomu 1967, 148, no. 771, fig. 58)

Bibliography: unpublished

27. Code: HIS 17 ACS (Fig. 9/1)

ID: 83/2017

Trench: C034

Depth: +0.81/+0.51 m

Context: 34001

Preservation: fragment (small part of the base and part of the reservoir)

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6); no slip applied; inclusions: limestone particles

Dimensions: L = 4 cm; W = 2.6 cm; PH = 1.2 cm; Th = 0.4 cm

Decoration: stylised cross; in front, towards the wick, the nozzle presents double V-shaped grooves and in the space between them are impressed concentric circles and crescent-shaped motifs in a cross-like pattern

Type: Micro-Asian type lamp; Iconomu XXXVII, variant II / type Broneer XXIX, group 3-4 / Hayes 1992, type 1-2 (possibly imported product; 5th – first half of the 7th centuries AD)

Type of cross: –

Analogies: similar to Histria – Domus (Popescu 1994, 355-356, no. 5c, fig. 58a)

Bibliography: Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 195, Fig. 8/8

28. Code: HIS 14 ACS (Fig. 9/2)

ID: 361/2014

Trench: C016

Depth: +0.34/+0.09 m

Context: 16002

Preservation: fragmentary (part of the shoulder, discus, the handle and the inferior valve with the base and reservoir)

Description: even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, yellowish red (5YR 5/6); no slip applied; inclusions: iron oxide particles

Dimensions: L = 7.2 cm; D = 5.9 cm; PH = 4.3 cm; Th = 0.7 cm; Th_{handle} = 1.6 cm

Decoration: stylised cross, decorating the base, poorly preserved; the shoulder is delimited from the discus by two ridges and is decorated with short lines, disposed in a radial pattern

Type: North-African type lamp; Iconomu 1986, type XLVIII, variant I (provincial product; moulds found in the Edifice with Mosaic at Tomis – Iconomu 1976, 136-137, fig. 3-5; 6th century AD)

Type of cross: –

Analogies: –

Bibliography: Bădescu, Bottez 2014, 226, cat. no. 1, Pl. 3/2; 4/2; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 205, Fig. 11/3

29. Code: HIS 14 ACS (Fig. 9/3)**ID:** 473/2014**Trench:** C001/C007 and C007**Depth:** +0.46/-0.55 m and -0.55 m (clay floor - 7004)**Context:** 1001/7001; 7001 and 7004**Preservation:** fragments (one fragment preserves a part of the base and reservoir; the second preserves part of the shoulder, channel and the wick-hole; the third preserves the handle and a small part of the shoulder)**Description:** even oxidizing firing; fine fabric, light reddish brown (2.5YR 6/4); no slip applied; inclusions: iron oxide and limestone particles**Dimensions:** for the upper valve: L = 8.3 cm; W = 4.7 cm; PH = 3.1 cm (with handle)/1.4 cm (without handle); Th = 0.4 cm; for the base: L = 4.4 cm; W = 4.2 cm; PH = 1.8 cm; Th = 0.4 cm**Decoration:** **stylised cross**; the lamellar handle ends in a fishtail shaped as two wide-spaced tongues with a stylised cross between them and concentric circles towards the base**Type:** Micro-Asian type lamp; type Broneer XXIX, group 3 / Hayes 1992, type 2 (imported product; second half of the 6th - first half of the 7th centuries AD)**Type of cross:** –**Analogies:** Histria – Sacred Area (Popescu 1994, 353, no. 4, fig. 55a; 5th – 6th centuries AD)**Bibliography:** Bădescu, Bottez 2014, 229-230, cat. nos. 8 and 11, Pl. 3/9, 11, and 4/8, 11; Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 189, Fig. 4/2**30. Code:** HIS 19 ACS (Fig. 9/4)**ID:** 224/2019**Trench:** C046**Depth:** -0.01/-0.12 m**Context:** 46004**Preservation:** fragment (the handle, part of the discus and shoulder)**Description:** even oxidizing firing; very fine fabric, reddish yellow (5YR 6/6); red slip (2.5YR 5/6) partially preserved on the outer surface; inclusions: limestone and iron oxide particles**Dimensions:** L = 4.5 cm; W = 4.3 cm; PH = 2 cm (with handle)/1.1 cm (without handle); Th = 0.3 cm; Th_{handle} = 0.8 cm**Decoration:** **stylised cross** on the discus, with flared horizontal arms, double line, surrounded by quatre-foil motifs; the shoulder is delimited from the discus by a ridge and is decorated with a band of alternating quatre-foils (Bailey III, Q 1789) and triangles (Bailey III, Q 1756, 1757)**Type:** North-African type lamp; Atlante X/Hayes II, variant A (imitation; 5th - first decades of the 7th centuries AD)**Type of cross:** –**Analogies:** –**Bibliography:** Iliescu, Bottez 2021b, 204-205, Fig. 11/1**Ceramic building materials****31. Code:** HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 10/1)**ID:** –**Trench:** C027/C011

Depth: -0.02/-0.13 m

Context: 27001/11001

Preservation: fragment (one corner preserved)

Description: even oxidizing firing, fine CBM fabric, very pale brown (10YR 7/3); no engobe applied; inclusions: limestone particles, rare mica particles; lime accretions; the top surface is flat, even and not smoothed; the sides are not smoothed, and the corner is slightly protruding upwards; the bottom is flat, not smoothed and preserves traces of the straws from the bed on which the raw brick was laid

Dimensions: L = 14 cm; W = 13 cm; Th = 2.9/3.4 cm

Decoration: cross with splayed ends circumscribed in an uneven circle (8 cm x 7 cm); incised on the top surface

Type: pavement brick

Type of cross: cross with splayed ends

Analogies: Sucidava (Barnea 1979, 264-265, Pl. 114/2)

Bibliography: unpublished

32. Code: HIS 21 ACS (Fig. 10/2)

ID: –

Trench: C057

Depth: +0.07/-0.13 m (sq. A1) and +0.30/-0.18 m (sq. D1)

Context: 57002

Preservation: fragmentary (two corners preserved)

Description: even oxidizing firing, fine CBM fabric, reddish yellow (5YR 6/6); no slip/engobe applied; inclusions: rare calcite particles, numerous mica particles; the top surface is flat, slightly uneven and partially smoothed; it also has two parallel impressions, probably made by a tool; the sides are also partially smoothed, and are slightly protruding upwards; the bottom is flat, not smoothed and preserves small shell fragments from the bed on which the raw brick was laid

Dimensions: L = 46 cm (complete); W = 24 cm; Th = 2.8/4 cm

Decoration: two superposed crosses, resulting in an eight-ray star; stamped; the width of each ray is 7 mm, and the maximum preserved length is 2.5 cm. Given the fact that the estimated centre of the star is at an equal (24 cm) distance from two perpendicular sides, we can hypothesize that we are dealing with a square shape.

Type: pavement brick

Type of cross: cross with flaring arms

Analogies: Dinogetia (Ștefan 1945-1947, 306-307, Fig. IV.3)

Bibliography: unpublished

Weights

33. Code: HIS 16 ACS

ID: 89/2016

Trench: C032

Depth: +0.95 m

Context: 32000 (sq. A3)

Preservation: complete; patina removed

Description: square weight; made of yellowish metal; face decorated; sides decorated with four grooves of unequal width

Dimensions: $2.02 \times 2 \times 0.8$ cm

Weight: 25.56 g

Decoration: cross with equal flaring arms, incised beneath arch supported by two columns, seemingly with Doric capitals; beneath the cross the Greek letters Γ and Α; all the elements of the decoration have incised outline; inside the contour of each motif small rectangular bands made of reddish metal (copper) were inserted, covering only a part; the only exception is the arch, covered completely by an inserted band of similar reddish metal, but decorated with a herringbone pattern and covered in its turn by a silvery/tinny layer of metal (either silver or tin), only partially surviving

Type: commercial weight of 1 ounce

Type of cross: Greek cross

Analogies: similar decoration composition and details of the weight to Seleucia ad Calycadnum, Turkey (Tekin 2016, 858, Cat. No. 7) – 2 ounce square commercial weight; similar decoration composition to Küçükçekmece Lake Basin, Istanbul, Turkey (Tekin 2013b, 8, Fig. 66) – 3 ounce square commercial weight; similar decoration composition to Anamur, Turkey (Tekin 2013a, 177, Cat. No. 8) – 1 ounce square commercial weight; cross and letters similar to KMA 550 – 1 ounce round commercial weight (Acara Eser 2003, 216, Cat. No. 53); cross and letters similar to KMA 1304 – 2 ounce commercial weight (Acara Eser 2003, 216, Cat. No. 52); cross and letters similar to Tomis – 2 ounce square commercial weight (Severeanu 1929, 41-42, Fig. 1); cross and letters similar to two items from Romania – 1 ounce square commercial weight (Ocheșeanu 1984, 90, Cat. No. 9-10)

Bibliography: unpublished

Hanging devices

34. **Code:** HIS 13 ACS

ID: 378/2013

Trench: C007

Depth: -0.39 m

Context: 7001

Preservation: complete; patina removed

Description: part of a hanging device, made of metal, cast, shaped as a cross, with a small hole at each of the tips of the vertical arms; parts of the small links attaching the cross to other elements of the system still preserved in the holes

Dimensions: $L_{\text{vertical arms}} = 5.36$ cm; $L_{\text{horizontal arms}} = 3.14$ cm; $L_{\text{upper arm}} = 1.96$ cm; $L_{\text{lower arm}} = 2.24$ cm; $L_{\text{horizontal arm}} = 1.13$ cm; $W_{\text{horizontal arm}} = 1.2$ cm; $W_{\text{upper arm}} = 1.37$ cm; $W_{\text{lower arm}} = 1.4$ cm; $Th = 0.3$ cm; $D_{\text{link hole}} = 0.4$ cm; $D_{\text{link wire}} = 0.24$ cm

Weight: 13.02 g

Decoration: cross with unequal flaring arms; the vertical arms longer than the horizontal ones; the vertical arms are in their turn of different length (the upper arm shorter than the lower one)

Type: hanging device

Type of cross: cross with flaring arms

Analogies: –

Bibliography: unpublished

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