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SHADOWS AND FLAMES: OIL LAMPS FROM THE *BASILICA WITH CRYPT* SECTOR AT HISTRIA (2002-2023)

ALINA STREINU
IRINA ACHIM

ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of a ceramic lamp assemblage comprising 52 specimens recovered through systematic archaeological excavations carried out between 2002 and 2023 in the *Basilica with crypt* Sector at Histria. Most of the lamps are fragmentary and date from the Classical period to Late Antiquity, reflecting a broad geographic range that includes Asia Minor, the Black Sea region, Africa, as well as local production. The research examines their typology and chronology, encompassing Classical and early Roman forms, Pontic and Danubian types, African imports, imitations, and locally produced handmade lamps. Despite the limited number of artifacts, the findings are analyzed within both local and regional contexts, providing insights into the occupation and functional dynamics of this area over time.

RÉSUMÉ: OMBRES ET FLAMMES : LES LAMPES À HUILE DU SECTEUR DE LA *BASILIQUE À CRYPT* DE HISTRIA (2002–2023)

Cette étude propose une analyse exhaustive d'un assemblage de 52 lampes en céramique, recueillies lors de fouilles systématiques menées entre 2002 et 2023 dans le secteur de la *Basilique à crypte* à Histria. La majorité des exemplaires, fragmentaires, sont datés de la période classique à la fin de l'Antiquité tardive, illustrant une large aire de diffusion géographique englobant l'Asie Mineure, la région de la Mer Noire, l'Afrique et la production locale. L'analyse typologique et chronologique rigoureuse intègre des formes classiques et de la période alto-impériale, les types pontiques et danubiens, les importations africaines, les imitations et les lampes produites localement. Bien que le corpus soit limité, les découvertes sont (ré)interprétées dans leurs contextes stratigraphiques locaux et leurs schémas de diffusion régionaux, permettant une meilleure compréhension de la nature de l'occupation et des fonctions possibles de cette zone au fil du temps.

KEY WORDS: Histria, Early Roman period, Late Roman period, *Basilica with crypt* Sector, clay lamps, area(s) of manufacture

MOTS-CLÉS : Histria, période alto-impériale, antiquité tardive, Secteur de la *Basilique à crypte*, lampes en céramique, centre(s) de production

During the extensive archaeological campaigns conducted between 2002 and 2023 in the *Basilica with crypt* Sector at Histria, a total of 52 lamps were discovered, the majority fragmentary, with only three complete specimens.¹ In terms of the archaeological contexts, most of the finds were discovered in the area east of the apse, followed statistically by the area west of the Basilica (trenches B4-C4), some of the areas of the so-called *North Sector* and only very few finds within the basilica itself.

The Basilica and its crypt, first uncovered in 1931,² were re-examined during the 1949-1952 excavation campaigns, when an Est-West trench was cut through the entire Late Roman city (in Romanian, in original: *Secțiunea Est-*

¹ For an overview of the main publications addressing the issue of Late Roman lamps from Histria, see Iliescu and Achim 2025, 67-68, fig. 1, which provides a mapping of the discussed finds along with the bibliography.

² The excavations that led to the identification of this Christian cult monument, the Basilica with Crypt, were conducted by Marcelle and Scarlat Lambrino in the autumn of 1931, within Sector A. It is the only Christian Basilica at Histria discovered between the two World Wars for which the exact date of discovery is known, 8 September 1931 (see Lambrino 1928-1934, *Recent Field Notebook* 1931 and 1932, f. 3). This notebook provides valuable information on the progress of the Lambrinos' excavations in Sector A, covering both the Basilica with Crypt and the area north of it, documenting fieldwork up to 8 October

Vest, Sector III).³ These investigations, however, yielded limited data on adjacent structures or associated material culture.

An overview of the archaeological campaigns conducted between 2002 and 2023 has already been published, providing details on the Basilica and offering further insight into the structures west of it, as well as into the adjacent road network.⁴ However, the focus was on excavating and documenting the Christian building, so the overlapping edifices were not fully uncovered and their functionality remains uncertain. As for the buildings west of the Basilica, excavations carried out in 1958 and 1959 revealed their layout, dating them to the Late Antique period, the latest coin being an issue of Emperor Phocas (602-612). However, very little information is available about their functionality, although it is implied that at least some of them served as commercial spaces.⁵

The chronological variety and continuity of finds in the area west of the basilica indicate a continuous occupation and overlapping of habitation, more obvious for the early Roman period (from the mid-first c. AD to the third c. AD) and during Late Antiquity (mostly fifth-early seventh c. AD). As for the lamps discovered within the Christian edifice, two were found in the nave, in a very fragmentary state, and we have no reason to assume their actual use, rather that the edifice benefited from more elaborated lighting such as candelabras.⁶

The lamps are presented chronologically, from the pieces dating from the Classical period (only three), to the one from the Late Antiquity. The most numerous finds date from the early Roman period and cover a broad spectrum of types and areas of production. Some of the most remarkable finds are the two fragmentary Corinthian lamps (nos. 4-5) and the three whole Loeschke V lamps from Asia Minor, for the first time discovered at Histria (nos. 6-8). No less relevant is the group of West Pontic *Euctemon*-type lamps, well documented at sites in Dobruja, with similar morphological and fabric features and a diverse iconographical repertoire. The Late Antique lamps consist of African and Asia Minor imports as well as local and Danubian lamps. Unfortunately, the only African lamp discovered is poorly preserved and the discus decoration is hard to decipher. Two of the most interesting pieces, however, are two fragments of Asia Minor lamps (nos. 37-38) with analogies known only at Histria thus far. Last but not least, two handmade lamps were also discovered, one in the North Sector and the second, a miniature, in the rich area east of the apse.

A secondary criterion for establishing sub-groups is that of the area of production, thus the lot includes lamps from the Black Sea workshops, both western and northern, from Asia Minor centers (e.g. Pergamon), Aegean workshops, African and Danubian. As is the current state of the research, these broad regional determinations for the areas of production are still extremely lacking. The main issue is the lack of archaeological discoveries of actual workshops and material evidence of local productions. Most of the evaluations are based on quantitative discoveries and morphological and/or iconographical characteristics. For instance, lamps belonging to the broadly defined groups referred to as *Euctemon*-type have been primarily discovered in the western Black Sea sites, such as Tomis, Callatis, Histria, leading to the assumption that they are locally/regionally made, but without actual traces or information on workshops. The notable exception is Halmyris, where a workshop producing Broneer XXXIX lamps was identified, dating from the Late Antique period.

Classical lamps

All three fragments of Classical lamps are wheel-made, with open basins and short nozzles. Only the first fragment preserved traces of soot as a sign of use, whereas in the case of the last, the absence of the nozzle makes any assumption irrelevant. Similar lamps are known in the Western Black Sea colonies.⁷

1931. From the same period dates the first partial plan of the remains of this monument and its surrounding area (see Lambrino 1928-1934, *Drawings Notebook* 6, f. 242, dated 6 October 1931). A copy of the unpublished documentary collection of Marcelle and Scarlat Lambrino is currently housed in the archives of the 'Vasile Pârvan' Institute of Archaeology of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest.

³ Canarache and Dimitriu 1954, 163-169, pl. XII-XIII and fig. 56-59.

⁴ See Achim 2014 and footnote 5 (which lists previously published excavation reports) and Achim 2025 (for the updated bibliography).

⁵ The reference is to Building Group I, located on the northern side of the Main Square, between Streets A and B, according to A. Petre's notation, see Petre 1962, particularly 392-396, pl. IV. This complex building and the adjacent streets were later reexamined by Munteanu, 2011, especially 236-238, fig. 1-4.

⁶ This situation is exemplified by the Transept Basilica, located immediately north of the Basilica with crypt, where a glassware deposit was uncovered during the 1990 excavation campaign in its northeastern annex (second phase, second half of the sixth century AD; see Băjenaru and Băltăc 2000-2001).

⁷ For Callatis, see Ionomu 1967, type I, figs. 61-62; for Odessos, see Kuzmanov and Minchev 2018, no. 1.

Howland 16/Broneer I/Iconomu type I (late sixth c. BC up to ca 480 BC)

1. Histria 2003, S2, c. 8-9 (North Annex), -0.83 m; inv. no. 82. Wheel-made fragmentary lamp with overhanging rim. Fine fabric 7.5YR5/4 brown, with fine white inclusions (not Athenian or Corinthian fabric). Dull black slip on the interior and soot on the fragmentary nozzle.
DB 3 cm. L.p. 11.6 cm. H.p. 2.5 cm.

Howland 16/21/Iconomu 1967, Type I/Broneer I

2. Histria 2004, trench B1, c. A2⁸, -0.35/0.40 m; inv. no. 106. Wheel-made fragmentary basin and short nozzle. Fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow. Reddish brown dull slip on the nozzle, unused.
L.p. 4.1 cm. H.p. 1.6 cm.

Howland 21 (?)/ Broneer III (?) (second half of the sixth-beginning of the fifth c. BC)

3. Histria 2010, S13, -1.99/2.10 m; inv. no. 293. Wheel-made fragmentary shoulder with curved rim. Fine fabric 7.5YR5/4 brown, light brown wash (local?). Discovered in the same context as an early Roman fragment.
H.p. 1.5 cm. L.p. 4.4 cm.



Fig. 1. Classical lamps

Early Roman Corinthian lamps (second half of the second c. AD)

Loeschcke VIII; Broneer XXVII/ Bussière form D VII⁹

Only two fragments were discovered in archaeological sections on both sides of the apse, both preserving the end of the basins, with attached compact and grooved handles. Both lamps were made from a fine, light-coloured fabric, the first with denser inclusions, plain with no applied paint. Although similar, there are consistent differences in the fabric of the two lamps, suggesting different workshops. Corinthian lamps are scarce in the cities of the western Black Sea, but widely circulated and were imitated in Asia Minor.¹⁰ Considering the trade routes established with Aegean centers, it is possible that these lamps arrived at Histria *via* Asia Minor along with other imported goods or as personal possessions, considering the current low number of discoveries.

⁸ The abbreviation "C." in the catalogue refers to the excavation grid squares (carouri), following the original field labels.

⁹ Bussière and Lindros Wohl 2017, 220, nos. 313-314.

¹⁰ Katsioti 2017, 23.

4. Histria 2010, S13, -1.80/1.99 m; inv. no. 271/1. Fragmentary mould made shoulder and the compact, grooved handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR8/3 pale brown, with fine white inclusions and trace of a reddish-brown slip.
H.p. 4.8 cm, L.p. 4.6 cm.
5. Histria 2010, S12, cleaning; inv. no. 246. Fragmentary mould made shoulder and the compact, grooved handle. Fine fabric 10YR7/4 very pale brown.
H.p. 4.9 cm, L.p. 5 cm.



Fig. 2. Corinthian/Attic lamps

Early Roman lamps - Asia Minor imports (first-second c. AD)

Loeschcke V; Bailey 1980, type C, group V; Iconomu XI; Iconomu 1986, type VII

All three lamps of this type are the best preserved of the lot and share the same morphological characteristics: elongated nozzle with a narrow canal, round basin and attached compact handles. These three particular lamps preserve traces of soot on the nozzles; the only variations consist of the differences in fabrics and decoration. The first lamp is decorated on the shoulder with a wreath and has two fine volutes on the nozzle, marked by a *planta pedis* on the base. Close analogies for this piece, in terms of type, decoration and stamp, were discovered in a pit at Durostorum, dating from the first half of the second c. AD,¹¹ a tomb at Tomis,¹² another at Callatis,¹³ dating from the second half of the first c. AD onwards; other similar finds at Noviodunum¹⁴ and Sucidava *as passim*.¹⁵ The next two lamps, with denser traces of soot and less fine than the first, both preserve a *fish-tail/Ephesian underbody* on the back, although the last lamp is visibly more deteriorated. Lamp no. 7, decorated on the shoulder with a vine motif and on the discus with a rosette, has a close analogy at Tropaeum Traiani.¹⁶ The last piece of the group and the most poorly preserved, is also decorated on the shoulder with a vine and on the discus with the depiction of a winged Eros holding an undetermined object. This type of lamps is for the first time attested at Histria and has a better preserved analogy at Arrubium.¹⁷

¹¹ Mușețeanu and Elefterescu 1983, 118, no. 8, fig. 1/8.

¹² Lungu and Chera 1986, 105, Pl. V/47-48; for analogies see also Severeanu 1936, 71, no. 79, fig. 73; Băluță 1994, 204, no. 38, pl. III/9.

¹³ Iconomu 1967, 59, no. 176, fig. 89.

¹⁴ Baumann 2009, fig. 5/36 and pl. 7/36, looks more worn and the nozzle is broken.

¹⁵ Elefterescu 101, no. 2, also references additional finds from Novae, Plevna, Ratiaria, Nicopolis ad Istrum, Montana, and the Sofia Museum.

¹⁶ Bogdan-Cătănciu and Barnea 1979, fig. 164/91.

¹⁷ *Romanii în Pontul stâng*, 128, no. 162.

6. Histria 2003, bulk between 2 walls, East of apse; inv. no. 59. Mould made lamp with handle, flat base, concave discus with slightly off-centred filling hole, slightly bevelled nozzle. The shoulder is decorated with a wreath motif, the nozzle has a narrow canal and fine volutes with a triangle in the middle. *Planta pedis* on the base and traces of soot around the firing hole. Covered with a dull red slip.
H. 4 cm with handle/2.7 basin; L 8.6 cm; D. base 3.5 cm; D. filling hole 0.6 cm; D firing hole 1.1 cm.
7. Histria 2002, S1, c. 1, -0.42 m, East of apse; inv. no. 35. Mould made lamp with fragmentary compact handle, short ring base, concave discus with central filling hole and a secondary one at the extremity, rounded nozzle. Fine fabric 5YR7/6 reddish yellow, with fine white inclusions. The shoulder is decorated with a vine motif, the discus with a rosette and the nozzle has a narrow canal; traces of soot around the firing hole. On the back of the basin, under the handle, there is a worn *Ephesian underbody*.
H 4.3 cm with handle/ 2.7 basin; L 10.6 cm; D. base 3.8 cm; D. filling hole 0.6 cm; D. airing hole 0.3 cm; D firing hole 1.3 cm.
8. Histria 2005, North Sector, trench C1, c. A, East of Z2, -0.55/0.90 m; inv. no. 138. Rather worn mould made lamp with compact handle, low ring base, concave discus with off-centred filling hole, short rounded nozzle. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/6 red with white inclusions. The discus is decorated with a worn depiction of Eros holding an unidentified object, the shoulder preserves traces of a vine décor; worn *fish-tail/Ephesian underbody* under the handle. Traces of soot around the firing hole.
H. 3.7 cm with handle/ 2.5 basin; L 10.5 cm; D. base 4 cm; D. filling hole 0.7 cm; D firing hole 1.4 cm.

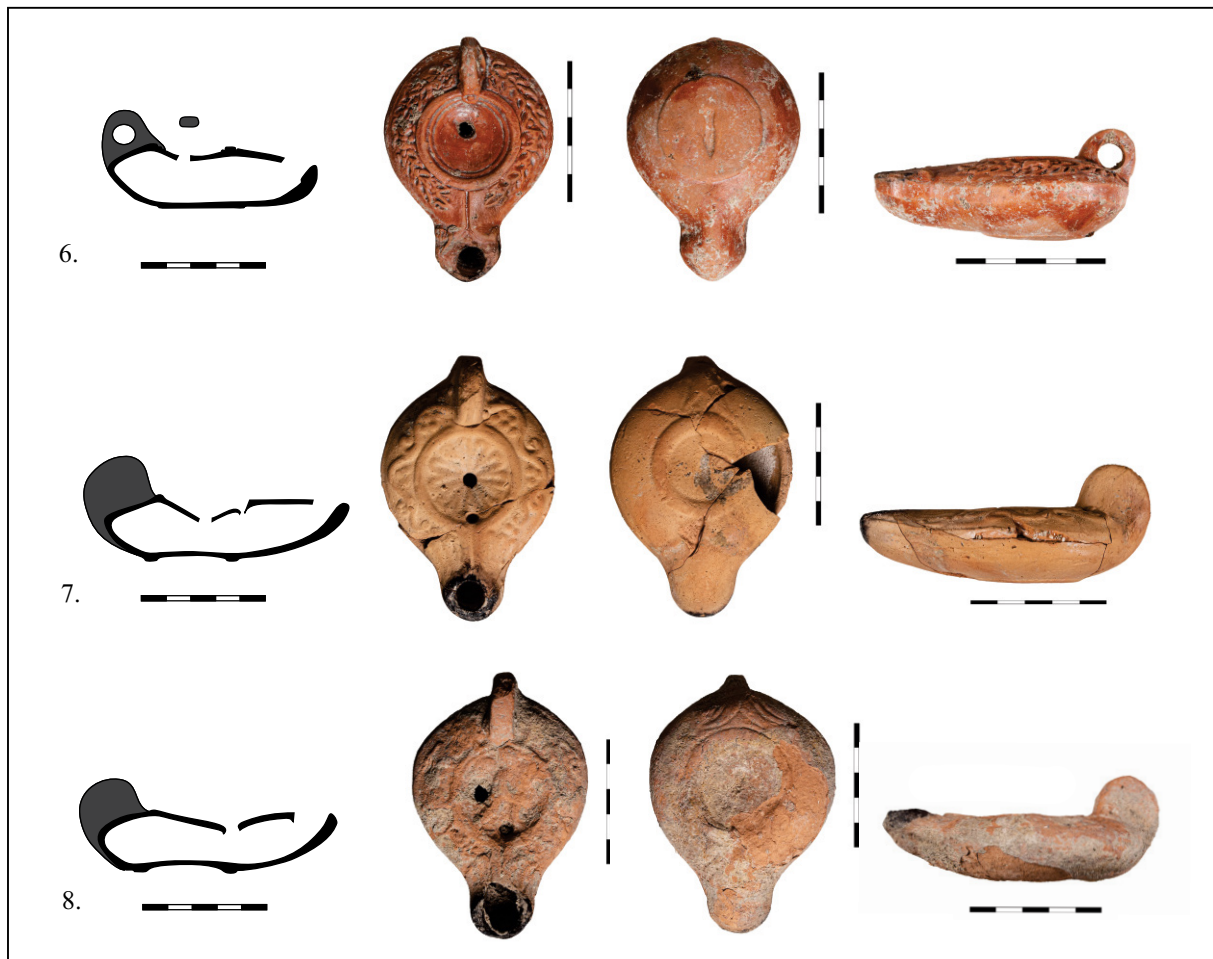


Fig. 3. Early Roman Asia minor lamps

Loeschcke IV

Although extremely fragmentary, we attributed this piece of lamp to a Pergamon workshop due to its fabric qualities.¹⁸ Another fragment of a Pergamene lamp, but of a different type, is known from the Central Sector at

¹⁸ Heimerl 2001, 36-37.

Histria, dating from the second half of the first century-first half of the second century AD, as well as a light-coloured Phocian lamp, type Loeschcke IV.¹⁹

9. Histria 2007, Sector North, trench B2, c. A, -1.04/1.96 m; inv. no. 413B. Fragmentary mould made discus with off-centred filling hole and traces of fine volutes. Fine fabric 7.5YR7/8 reddish yellow, with fine white inclusions. Covered with red slip. L.p. 2.4 cm.

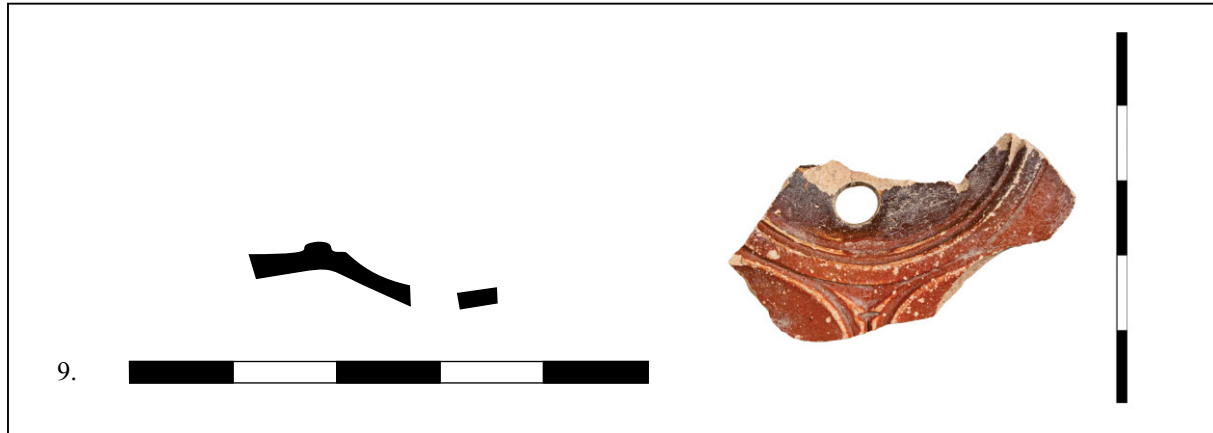


Fig. 4. Early Roman Asia minor lamp - Pergamon

Early Roman lamps - West Pontic workshops (second-third c. AD)

Iconomu XX /Loeschcke VIII

The first five lamps in this group, nos. 9-17, can be attributed to a West Pontic workshop. As for the discovery spots, the majority was discovered in the area west of the apse, one fragment was found in the narthex (no.12). Following their morphological features (fabric quality, morphology and iconography), they could be attributed to one of Euctemon's workshops, extremely prolific in this period. The only complete piece is no. 10, but the state of ware does not allow for a clearer identification of the discus decoration, resembling a bull or another type of large animal (horse?),²⁰ with a very close analogy at Tomis.²¹ Lamp no. 11, fragmentary, is decorated with the depiction of a bunch of grapes, a rather common iconographical motif, attributed to the workshop of Euctemon, some marked, but often made from different fabrics indicating several workshops.²² The closest analogy for the fabric, thus far, is a lamp from Histria²³ and another from Tomis, the latter with the most detailed depiction of the bunch.²⁴ A partially preserved filled *kantharos* is preserved on the discus of lamp no. 12, which is one of the trademark motifs of Euctemon's workshop,²⁵ previously attested at Histria,²⁶ together with the depictions of rosettes.²⁷ Two other fragments considered as part of this same group were recovered from the pit excavated in the apse, but will be published together with the rest of the materials from this particular context. Euctemon's workshop was one of the most prolific in Dobrodja and it is likely that it set up branches or distribution networks spanning several sites, including at Histria.²⁸ The rest of the finds are extremely fragmentary to made any further iconographical

¹⁹ Băjenaru 2014, 110, no. 55 and no. 15 (Phocian).

²⁰ For depictions of bulls see Iconomu 1967, 20, 96-102 and Lungu and Chera 1985, pl. 1/ 1-3 at Tomis; Suceveanu 1982, pl.12/82 at Histria; Nicolae 1994, 203, no. 6, pl. III/3B at Carsium; Baumann 1995, pl. XLV/5 at the rural settlement at Telița; Parasciv 1997, pl. IV/32 at Măcin; Stănescu *et alii* 2021, 174 at Jijila; Chrzanovski and Zhuravlev 1998, 86-87 at Chersones.

²¹ Iconomu 1967, 110, 121, fig. 133, no. 553; see also Severeanu 1929, 7, fig. 5, from Callatis.

²² At Histria see Suceveanu 1982, pl.10/100; Bocan and Dabica 2023, 66-67, nos. 6-8 (all three have different fabrics and finish); Iconomu 1986, 45, pl. II/ 6; Băjenaru 2013, 75, pl. 23/121; Topoleanu 2016, 75, pl. III/19 at Troesmis, considered as a product from Tomis; Kuzmanov and Minchev 2018, nos. 277-280 at Odessos.

²³ Bocan and Dabica 2023, 66, no. 7.

²⁴ Băjenaru 2013, no. 121, see also no. 124 for a similar fabric.

²⁵ Iconomu 2013, featuring the morphological difference of lamps with this motif.

²⁶ Suceveanu 1982, pl. 3/9, pl. 10/101-102; Rusu-Bolindeț 2010, pl. 15/13 and 14 with *krater*; Bocan and Dabica 2023, 65, nos. 3-5.

²⁷ At Histria see Suceveanu 1982, pl. 10/98; Bocan and Dabica 2023, 69-70, nos. 14-16.

²⁸ Rusu-Bolindeț 2010, 407-408; Croitoru and Diaconu 2019, 58.

determinations, only no. 14 still preserves a shoulder decoration reminiscent of the *kantharos/krater* and/or bull decorated lamps, also among the most frequent motifs.²⁹

10. Histria 2013, S15 east, -1.56 m; inv. no. 307. Rather worn mould made lamp with round handle, flat base, concave discus with off-centred filling hole, short rounded nozzle. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red with white inclusions. The discus is decorated with the depiction of a seated large animal (horse?). Traces of reddish wash on the basin and soot around the firing hole.

H. 4.5 cm with handle/ 2.6 basin; L 7.7 cm; D. base 3 cm; D. filling hole 0.7 cm; D firing hole 1.3 cm.

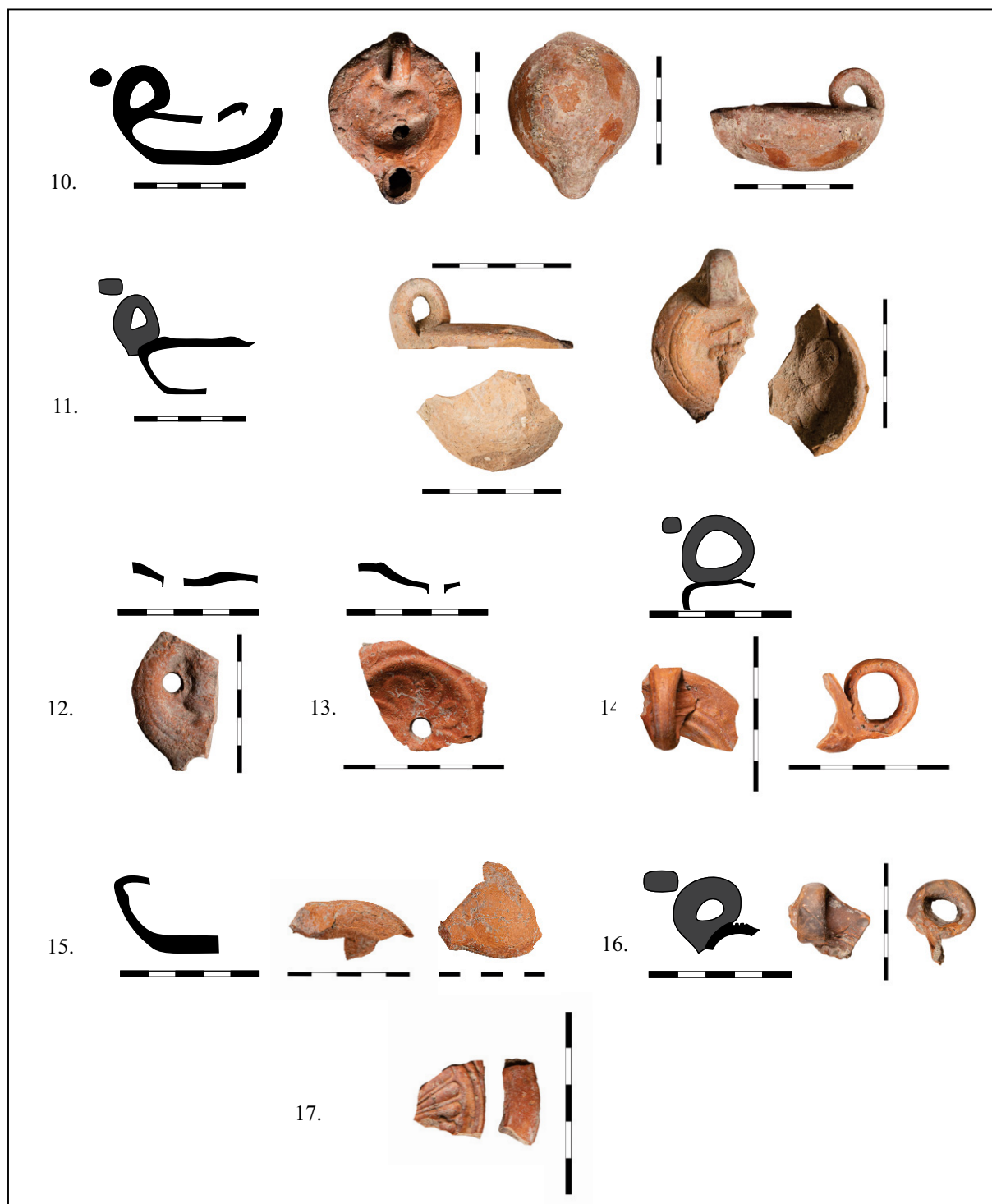


Fig. 5. Early Roman West Pontic lamps - Euctemon type

²⁹ Ionomu 1967, 120, figs. 114-115, or plain lamps such as fig. 109.

11. Histria 2013, S15, - 1.021/1.12 m; inv. no. 303/1. Fragmentary mould made concave discus and shoulder, elevated handle and flat base. Fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow with rare mica and white inclusions (some large). The discus preserves part of the depiction of a bunch of grapes. Traces of red wash and soot in the proximity of the firing hole.
H.p. 5.5 cm with handle/2.5 basin; L.p. 5.7 (basin); D. base 3 cm.
12. Histria 2002, S1, c. 14-16, in the Narthex, -0.90 m; inv. no. 6. Fragmentary concave discus with off-centred filling hole and fragmentary nozzle with firing hole. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red with fine white inclusions. The discus preserves the worn depiction of a *kantharos*, covered with reddish wash.
L.p. 4.4 cm; D filling hole 0.7 cm; D. of firing hole 1.4 cm.
13. Histria 2003, S 1 extension, East of apse, -1.48 m; inv. no. 54. Fragmentary mould made concave discus with central filling hole. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 red with fine mica and white inclusions. Decorated with rosette and red wash.
L.p. 3.6 cm; D. filling hole 0.6 cm.
14. Histria 2013, S15, -1.44/1.76 m; inv. no. 308/1. Fragmentary thin-walled mould made concave discus, shoulder and a round handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/6 light red with dense white inclusions. The shoulder preserves poor impressions of *ovae*. Covered with red wash.
H.p. 2.4 with handle/ 1.1 basin; L. p. 2.7.
15. Histria 2002, S1, c. 1-2, -0.10/0.45 m; inv. no. 5. Fragmentary mould made basin, shoulder and concave discus, with trace of handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red with white inclusions.
H.p. 2.8 cm; L.p. 3.7 cm; D. base 3 cm.
16. Histria 2013, BFL, S15, -0.95/1.16 m; inv. no. 305. Fragmentary mould made shoulder, concave discus and handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 red with fine white inclusions. The discus preserved part of a rosette decoration. Covered with reddish brown dull slip.
H.p. 2.6 cm with handle/ 0.9 cm basin; L.p. 1.4 cm.
17. Histria 2013, S15, - 1.021/1.12 m; inv. no. 303/2. Fragmentary mould made shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red. Discus decorated with rosette. Covered with dull red slip and reddish brown wash on the interior. L.p. 2.7 cm.

Early Roman lamps - undetermined centers (second-third c. AD)

Loeschcke VIII/Iconomu XX

The lack of discoveries of actual workshops and fabric analyses makes the attribution of certain lamps problematic. Generally assigned to type Loeschcke VIII, there are small morphological differences, not to mention the one related to the fabric and iconography. The first lamp in this sub-group (no. 18) shows fabric characteristics (e.g. consistency and presence of red inclusions) that makes it hard to determine its area of origin, which could be north Pontic. The presence of this kind of red inclusions is not visible in the fabrics of other lamps in this lot. The following piece, no. 19, still preserves the shoulder decorated with globules and analogies are known both at Histria and at Tomis.³⁰



Fig. 6. Early Roman North Pontic (?) lamp

³⁰ Iconomu 1967, fig. 120, no. 268 plain and no. 262 with a discus decorated with gladiators; Bocan and Dabîca 2023, 73, no. 24, shoulder and heart-shaped nozzle.

18. Histria 2010, S13, -2.25/2.30 m; inv. no. 296. Fragmentary mould made shoulder, basin and discus with elevated handle. Fine fabric 5YR7/8 reddish yellow, with white and red inclusions, some visible on the surface. Covered with a dull red slip. The discus is decorated with flaring rays. L.p. 3.5 cm, H.p. 3.4 cm.
19. Histria 2013, S14, -0.27/0.47 m; inv. no. 300. Fragmentary mould made shoulder, concave discus and handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 red with white inclusions. The shoulder is decorated with two rows of globules. Covered with red wash.
H.p. 2.7 cm with handle/ 1.2 cm basin.
20. Histria 2013, S15, -1.44/1.76 m; inv. no. 308/2. Fragmentary mould made, thin-walled shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 5YR7/6 reddish yellow. The discus is decorated with a rosette and covered with a dull reddish brown dull slip. L.p. 2.3 cm.
21. Histria 2013, S15, -1.21/1.50 m; inv. no. 304. Fragmentary mould made basin, flat base, shoulder, concave discus and a round elevated handle. Fine fabric 7.5YR6/3 light brown with fine white inclusions. Covered with a reddish brown wash.

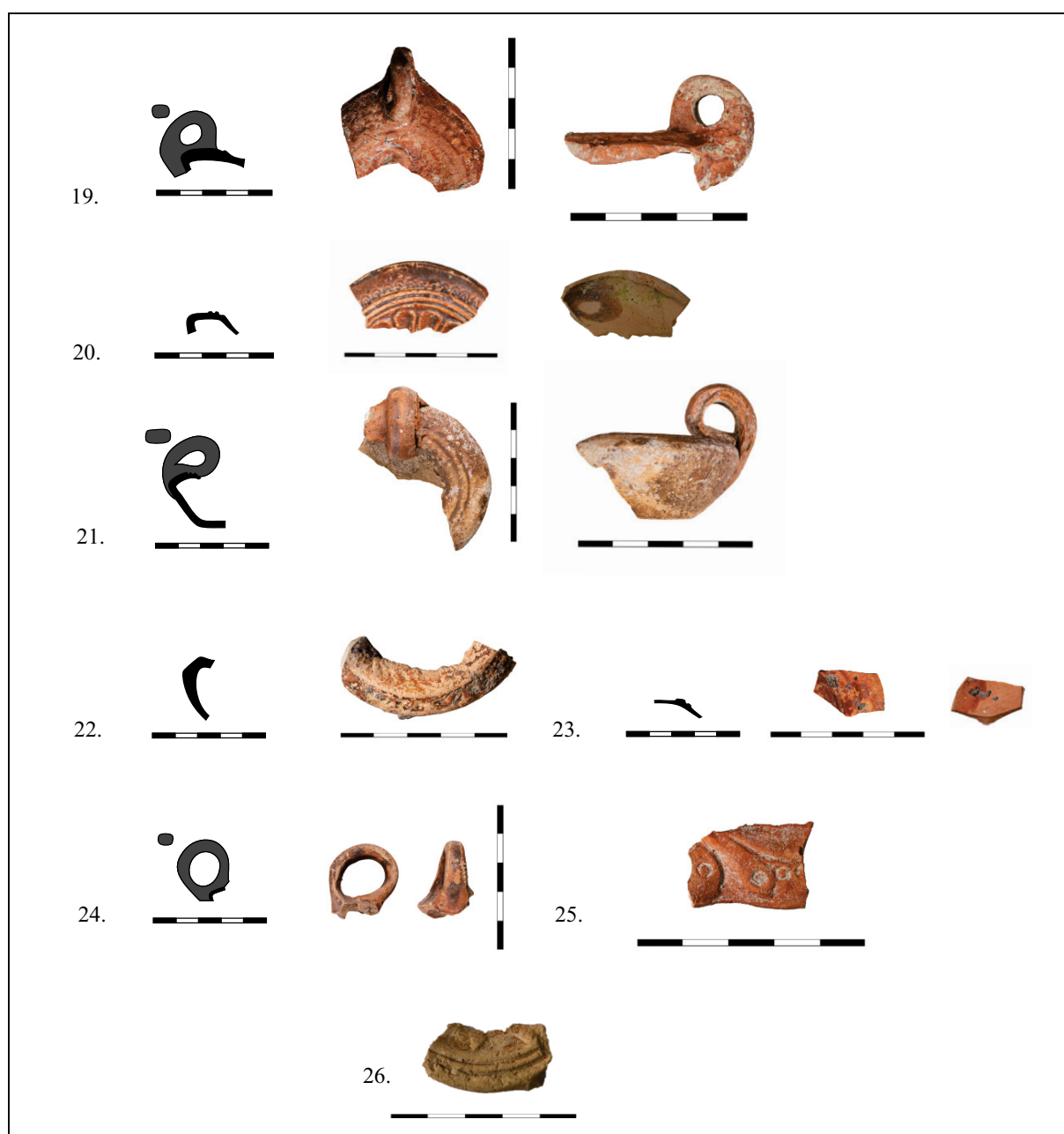


Fig. 7. Early Roman Pontic lamps

- H.p. 4 cm with handle/ 2.4 basin; L.p. 2.5 cm; D. base 3 cm.
22. Histria 2010, S13, -2.25/2.30 m; inv. no. 295. Fragmentary mould made basin and shoulder. Fine fabric 5YR7/8 reddish yellow with rare mica. On the shoulder is a row of worn radial impressions. Covered with a dull red slip and traces of soot. H.p. 2.2 cm.
 23. Histria 2010, S13, -1.99/2.10 m; inv. no. 293. Fragmentary thin-walled shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red, with fine white inclusions. Covered with red wash/dull red slip. L.p. 2.1 cm.
 24. Histria 2010, S13, -2.10/2.25 m; inv. no. 294. Fragmentary shoulder and round handle. Fine fabric 7.5YR7/6 reddish yellow. Covered with a reddish brown wash. H.p. 2.7 cm with handle.
 25. Histria 2023, trench C4, c. A1-A2, B1, -1.69/1.75 m; inv. no. 344. Fragmentary discus, shoulder and nozzle. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 red. The shoulder and nozzle are decorated with a wavy line and incised dots. L.p. 2.5 cm.
 26. Histria 2010, S13, -2.50/2.63 m, inv. no. 248. Fragmentary shoulder with two circular grooves and fragmentary discus with undiscernible relief decoration. Fine fabric 7.5YR7/6 reddish yellow, traces of a dull red slip. L.p. 1.8 cm.

Loeschcke VIII thin-walled - Asia Minor (?)

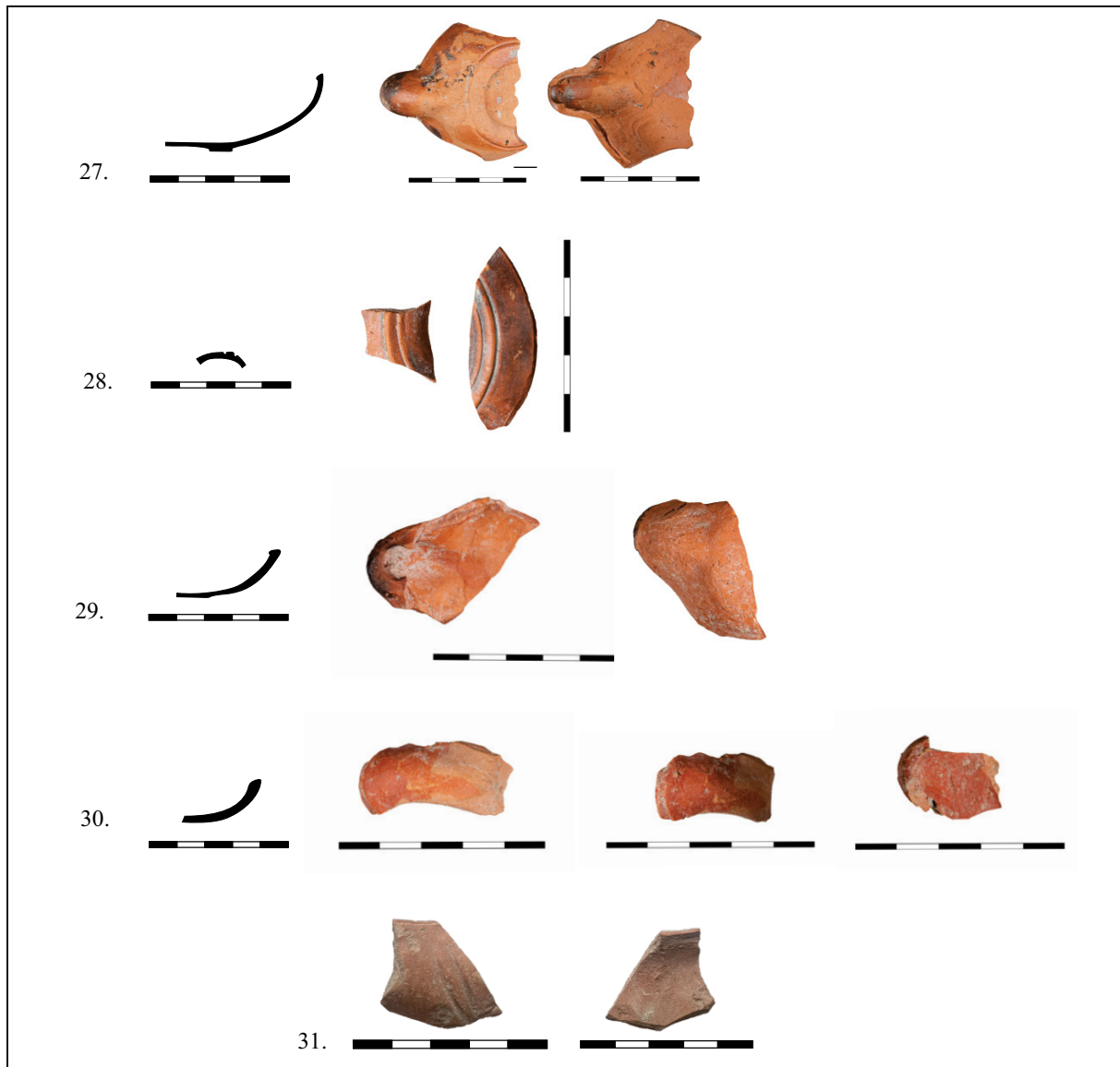


Fig. 8. Early Roman Asia minor (?) lamps

The fragments placed in this group are difficult to determine both from a typological point of view as well as from the possible place of origin, but they all share characteristics that would suggest an Asia Minor workshop. The first two fragments are very thin-walled and resemble the fine Asia Minor fine wares. We do not exclude the possibility that the three fragments, nos. 27-29, came from the same lamp, while interestingly, they were also discovered in the same context as the fragmentary Corinthian lamp no. 4.

The fabric is different in the following cases, fine, thin walled, but with inclusions and sometimes abrasive, which could indicate a Pontic origin for fragments 29-33, whereas the micaceous fabric of the last piece could rather indicate an Asia Minor workshop. However, further indications are lacking and thus difficult to place at this stage. The last fragment, no. 30, stands apart as the fabric is very rich with mica and the lines preserved seem to indicate a *fish-tail* motif.

27. Histria 2010, S13, -1.80/1.99 m; inv. no. 271/2. Fragmentary thin-walled basin, ring base and lower part of the nozzle. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 red. Covered with red wash.
28. Histria 2010, S13, -1.80/1.99 m; inv. no. 273. Fragmentary thin-walled shoulder and discus (2 fragments). Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red. Covered with dull red slip on the exterior. L.p. 1.8 cm.
29. Histria 2002, S1, c.14, in the Narthex, -0.90/1.28 m, inv. no. 11. Fragmentary thin-walled base and lower part. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 red, with fine white inclusions. Covered with red wash on both sides. L.p. 3.7 cm, H.p. 1.8 cm. Soot on the nozzle.
30. Histria 2002, S1, c.15, in Narthex, -0.39/0.70 m; inv. no. 23. Fragmentary nozzle. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red, with fine white inclusions. Red wash on both surfaces. L.p. 2.7 cm, H.p. 1.6 cm.
31. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. A1, inv. no. 797. Fragmentary basin. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 light red, with dense golden mica. Decorated with two lines (*fish-tail*?) and covered with reddish wash.

Unclassified

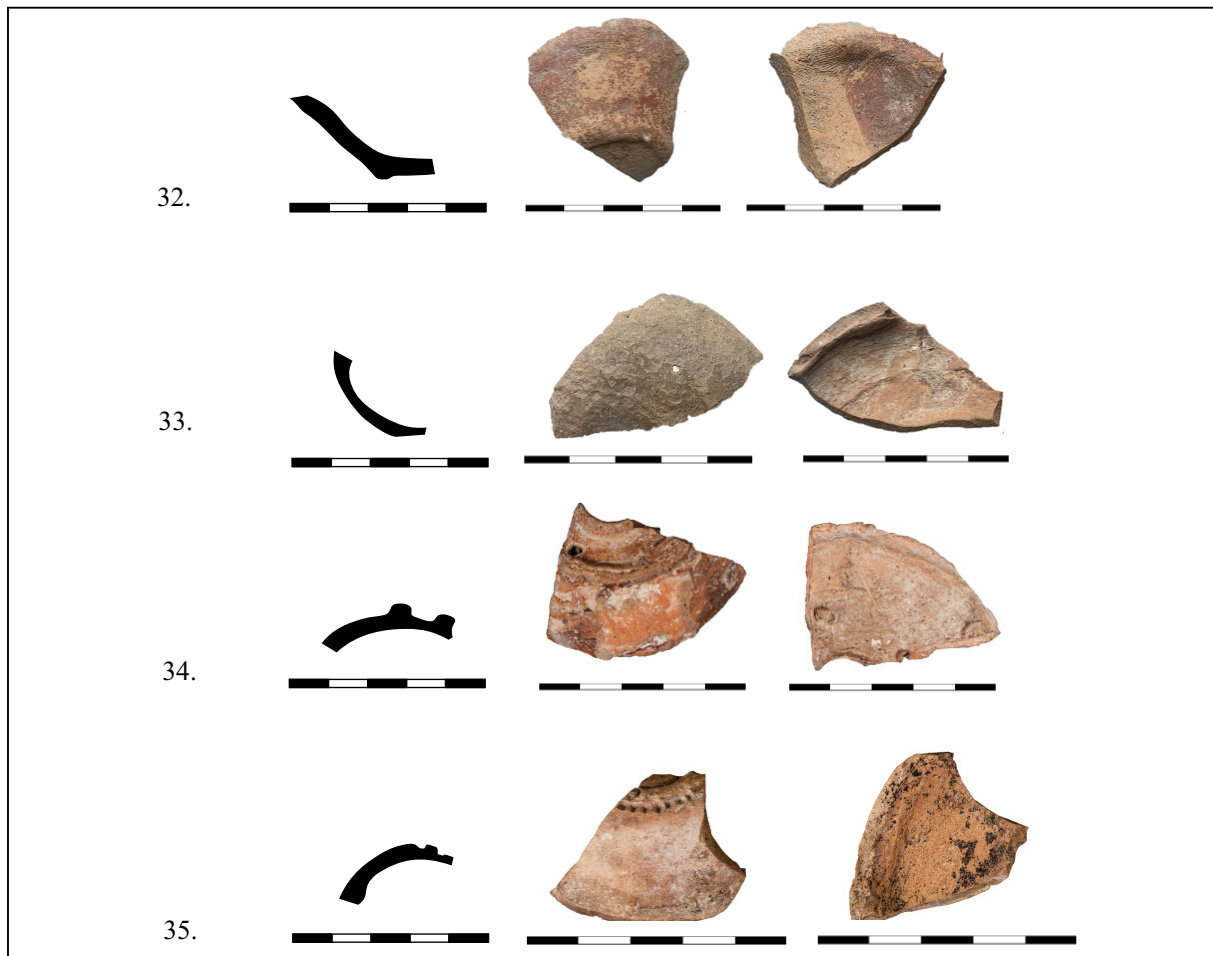


Fig. 9. Unclassified lamps

32. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. B1, -1.34/1.47 m; inv. no. 796. Fragmentary ring base and basin. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 red, with fine white inclusions. Covered with dull red slip on both surfaces.
L.p. 3.2 cm, H.p. 2.2 cm.
33. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. B1, -1.34/1.47 m; inv. no. 796. Fragmentary ring base and basin. Fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow, with white inclusions, some visible on the surface. Traces of red wash and soot.
H.p. 2.2 cm.
34. Histria 2002, S1, c. 3, debris of the wall Z22 (East of apse); inv. no. 31. Fragmentary shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red. Covered with red wash.
L.p. 3.4 cm.
35. Histria 2002, S1, c. 3, debris of the wall Z22 (East of the apse); inv. no. 31. Fragmentary shoulder and discus with a rim decorated with fine impressions. Fine fabric 7.5YR5/4 brown.
H.p. 2 cm.

Late Roman African lamp (second half of the fifth c. AD)

Atlante X/XI; Hayes II A

A single Tunisian lamp was discovered, no. 36 and one imitation of this popular African type of lamps. Due to the lack of nozzle, it is difficult to categorize this lamp as type Atlante X or XI. The stamped shoulder decoration is not among the most frequent as it alternates concentric circles³¹ with quatrefoils.³² In Scythia, very few pieces are known, one at Halmyris.³³ Similarly decorated pieces are known from the Getty collection (one lamp with its discus adorned with the depiction of a martyr/ Apostle or Christ, with doves, vase, branch; a second lamp with its discus decorated with an octagonal star; a third lamp with its discus decorated with the depiction of a dog).³⁴ Unfortunately, the discus is poorly preserved and a bit worn, making it difficult to identify the iconography.

36. Histria 2013, S14, - 0.10/0.27 m; inv. no. 299/1. Fragmentary mould-made basin, shoulder and discus, with compact handle. Fine fabric 10R5/8. The shoulder is decorated with concentric circles and quatrefoils; the discus appears to preserve the figure of a man holding a cross(?).
H.p. 4.5 cm (Handle)/ 2.8 cm (basin).



Fig. 10. Late Roman African lamp

³¹ Hayes 1972, 235, fig. 40/27 on pottery.

³² Bussi re and Rivel 2015, Motif 107; Curta 2016, 53, no. 18 a lamp from Istria (Croatia) with the same shoulder decoration (Da20 Fa30).

³³ Topoleanu 2000, pl. LXI, no. 492, with references, but there are other fragments with quadrifoil decoration, although not alternating with circles.

³⁴ <https://www.getty.edu/publications/ancientlamps/catalogue/492-500/#493>, inv. no. 83. AQ. 377.529; <https://www.getty.edu/publications/ancientlamps/catalogue/492-500/#499>, inv. no. 83. AQ. 391.1 and <https://www.getty.edu/publications/ancientlamps/catalogue/492-500/#500>, inv. no. 83. AQ. 377.552.

Late Roman African-type (sixth-early seventh c. AD)

Iconomu XXX/ variant Atlante VIII

Only two fragments originate from a variant frequently found in Scythia and preserve the shoulder decoration with radial lines, a spiral motif and the depiction of a cross. Similar finds are known from Histria,³⁵ Tomis,³⁶ Durostorum,³⁷ Tropaeum Traiani,³⁸ Capidava,³⁹ Aegyssus,⁴⁰ Dinogetia,⁴¹ Babadag-Topraichioi,⁴² while local variants of the type were discovered in the kiln chamber researched in the workshops area at Oltina.⁴³ Close to Odessos, a similar lamp was discovered in the narthex of a basilica.⁴⁴

37. Histria 2009, S10; -1.28/1.49 m; inv. no. 228. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder decorated with radial lines and a cross (two fragments), the discus preserves the rest of a decoration with a spiral line. Fine fabric 5YR5/6 yellowish red, with fine white inclusions, self wash. Traces of soot. L.p. 5 cm, H.p. 2.8 cm.



Fig. 11. Late Roman African-type lamp

Late Roman Asia Minor lamps (sixth-seventh c. AD)

Type Broneer XXIX, group 3 /Iconomu XXX / Iványi XL

The first three fragments originate from two different lamps of the same type and with the same decoration, the second clearly more worn than the first. Both lamps are decorated on the shoulder with the quatrefoil, just as the original Tunisian lamp above. The shape seems to point towards Broneer's typology for Asia Minor lamps, corroborated by the specific decoration of the lower half, as seen in the analogies. However, the lamp is also reminiscent of African type Atlante VIII type, thus it could be an Asian adaptation of both the aforementioned types. The two lamps have an almost perfect analogy at Histria,⁴⁵ together with two other variants, but none other in the province.⁴⁶ These analogies also preserve the lower halves, all with *planta pedis* and decorated with the *fish-tail/Ephesian underbodies* and row of incised circles.⁴⁷ The fabric is similar in all these lamps and together with the distinctive markings, we can suggest an Asia Minor origin, perhaps Ephesian or its surroundings.⁴⁸

38. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. A1, -1.37/1.47 m; inv. no. 330 and 798. Fragmentary mould-made basin, shoulder, discus with central filling hole, nozzle with canal, with compact handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/8 red, with fine white inclusions and mica. The shoulder is decorated with quatrefoil, the discus with fine globules. Traces of red wash. L.p. 6.1 cm, H.p. 3.2 cm (handle)/ 2.2 (basin).
39. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. A1, -1.37/1.47 m; inv. no. 330. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder and compact handle with three stripes. Fine fabric 5YR6/6 yellowish red. Red wash, rather worn. H.p. 1.8 cm; L.p. 3 cm.

³⁵ Suceveanu 1982, pl. 4/4 at the Therme; Popescu 1994, 366, fig. 75, 76.

³⁶ Iconomu 1967, type XXX, 27, fig. 54; Iconomu 1986, type XLVIII, var. I, pl. IX, no. 4.

³⁷ Mușețeanu and Elefterescu 2008, 148, fig. 18.IV.

³⁸ Bogdan Cătănciu and Barnea 1979, 223, fig. 174/9.4.

³⁹ Opreș 2003, Pl. LIX/ 395-400.

⁴⁰ *Romanii în Pontul stâng*, 252, no. 337.

⁴¹ Barnea 1966, 243, fig. 5/2; Barnea 1977, 245, 244, fig. 98/7.

⁴² Opaț 1991, 295, no. 4.

⁴³ Iconomu 1968b, 397, fig.18.

⁴⁴ Curta, 2017, 190, no. 27, see also all the analogies from the territory of Bulgaria.

⁴⁵ Popescu 1994, 359, no. 6, fig. 62.

⁴⁶ For other variants of these late Ephesian lamps see <https://www.getty.edu/publications/ancientlamps/catalogue/524-41/>

⁴⁷ Iliescu and Achim 2025, Table 1, nos. B1.11, B1.12, B1.13. The article features a lot of Late Roman lamps from Histria, in the custody of the "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of archaeology, pre-selected by Emilian Popescu and partially published.

⁴⁸ <https://www.getty.edu/publications/ancientlamps/catalogue/524-41/>; Hayes 1992, 80, considers the fabric as not Ephesian, but suggest an Eastern Aegean workshop.

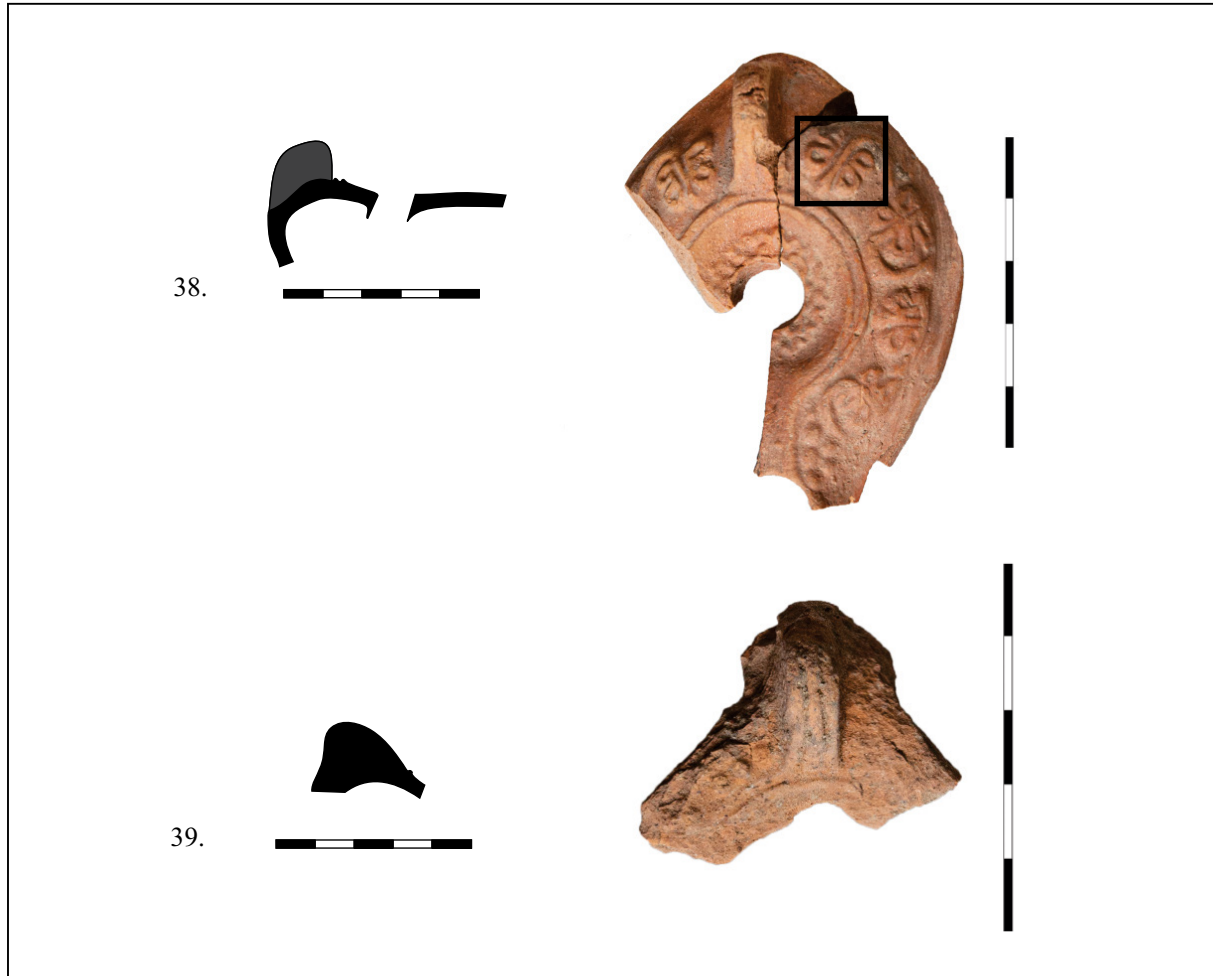


Fig. 12. Late Roman Asia minor lamps

Type Broneer XXIX/ Hayes 1992, type 2

The latter two fragments, nos. 39-40, are both from the lower half of the lamps, with insufficient burning leading to a greyish color, while only the first is better preserved and features the ring base and circle decoration, the same as in many other similar type of lamps discovered at Histria.⁴⁹

40. Histria 2008, S8, -0.64/0.88 m; inv. no. 218. Fragmentary mould-made low ring base, basin and nozzle. Fine fabric Gley 1 3/10Y very dark greenish greys, with mica. The ring base is decorated with circles, the basin with a schematic bunch of grapes and lines. Slightly deformed.
41. Histria 2003, S1, East of apse, -0.92 m, in bulk; inv. no. 63. Fragmentary mould-made basin and compact handle. Fine fabric dark greyish brown, with mica and fine white inclusions. Exposed to fire. H.p. 3.4 cm (handle)/2 cm (basin).

Late Roman Asian-type (sixth-seventh c. AD)

Type Broneer XXIX/ Iconomu XXVIII/ Topoleanu 2000, type XV

The fragments from Histria can be assigned to the Asia Minor type Broneer XXIX that circulated in the Black Sea and successfully imitated at Halmyris and other sites in Scythia Minor⁵⁰ during Late Antiquity. Although fragmentary, lamp no. 41 from Histria preserves traces of the radial decoration around the filling hole and an

⁴⁹ Iliescu and Bottez 2021, 197, fig. 8.

⁵⁰ Topoleanu 1996, 91, identifies 36 lamps made at Halmyris, from a larger lot of 66 lamps of which 30 are considered to have been made at Durostorum and Tomis; Scorpan 1978, pl. IV/17 (Sacidava); Vâlceanu and Barnea 1975, fig. 1/3-4 (Beroe); Preda 1980, pl. LIII, M25.1 at Callatis; Opriș 2003, pl. LXIII, nos. 427-429 (Capidava); Topoleanu 2016, 98, pl. X/DA 2-5 (Troesmis); Tudor 1945-1947, 197, 169, fig. 20/4, Tudor 1953, 709, fig. 12/g and Gherghe and Cojoc 2011, pl. 34/157-158, no. 158 (Sucidava, with decoration).

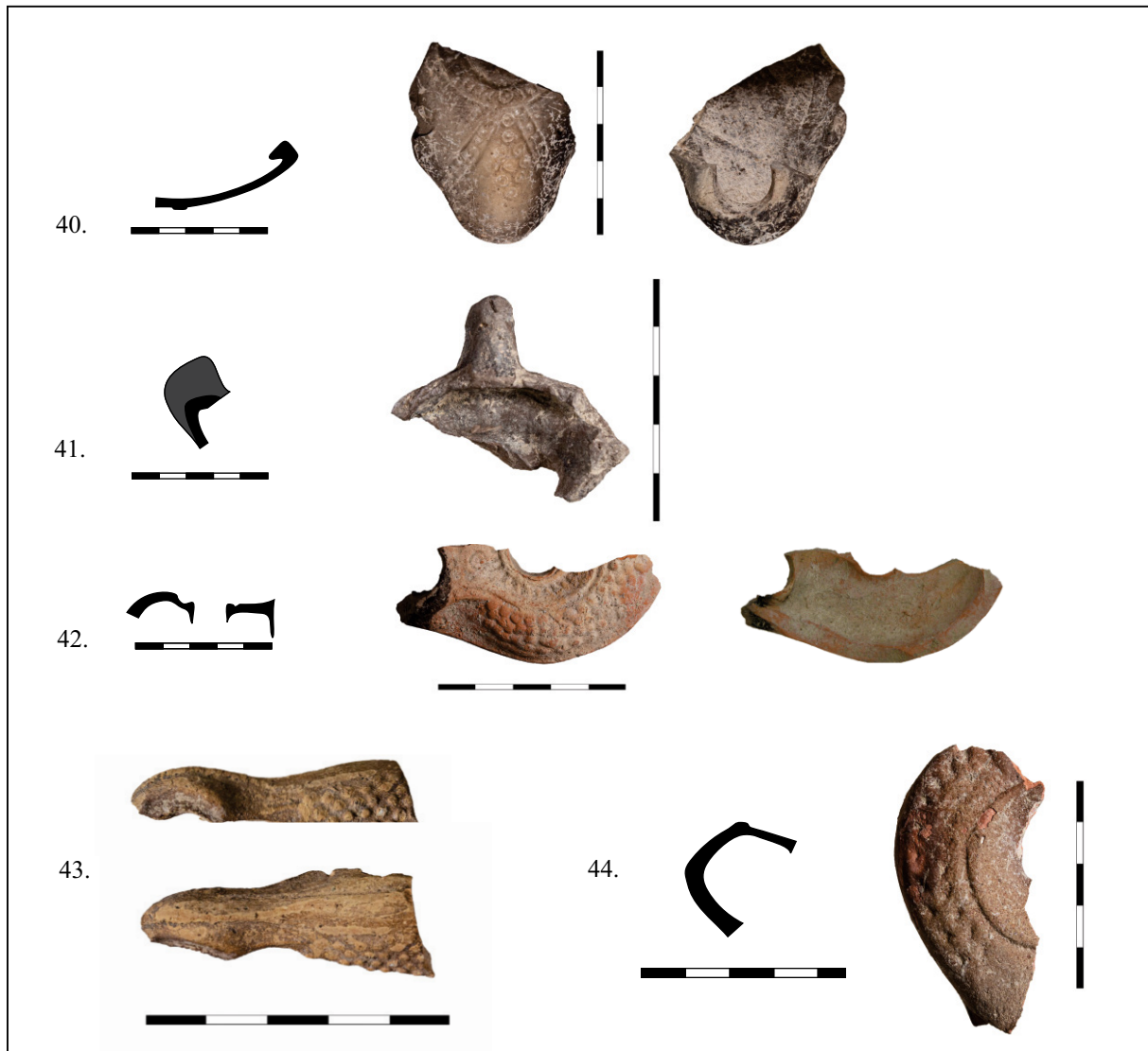


Fig. 13. Late Roman Asia minor lamps - Broneer XXIX

impressed circle, corresponding to Variant 2 of the Halmyris lot,⁵¹ however it is difficult to ascertain whether this piece is an import or a regional variant, as an identical lamp from southern Anatolia is now in a private collection⁵² and two other lamps with the same decoration of radial lines around the filling hole were discovered at Dinogetia⁵³ and Odessos.⁵⁴ A similar specimen was previously discovered at Histria.⁵⁵ Lamps belonging to this type, with globules decorating the shoulder, but without the decoration around the filling hole and the circle, have been previously discovered at Histria,⁵⁶ as well as in a sixth c. context, together with *Danubian* type lamps.⁵⁷

42. Histria 2003, S2, c. 8-9 (North Annex), 0/0.83 m; inv. no. 88. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder, nozzle and discus with central filling hole. Fine fabric 2.5YR6/8 light red, with fine white inclusions. The shoulder is decorated with rows of globules, the discus with a row of flaring rays; on the short nozzle are three circular impressions. Soot on the firing hole. Covered with red wash and a light yellowish coating (firing?). L.p. 5.5 cm.

⁵¹ Topoleanu 1996, fig. 1/2; Topoleanu 2000, Variant A, pl. LXVIII/542. See also the illustrations of lamps featured in the catalogue *Supply of ceramic goods....* 267-268, nos. 745-747, of which no. 746 is almost identical to lamp. no. 41 from Histria.

⁵² <https://www.getty.edu/publications/ancientlamps/catalogue/492-500/#500>.

⁵³ Barnea 1967, 250, fig.16/2, in the Baths.

⁵⁴ Kuzmanov and Minchev 2018, no. 530.

⁵⁵ Bădescu 2021, pl. 192/18.

⁵⁶ Bădescu and Bottez, 2014, 227-230, pl. 3/7-7, 10, sixth century variants; Iliescu and Bottez 2021, 186-191, also featuring an overview of the type and its production and referencing all the known finds at Histria, spanning from the fifth to the seventh c. AD.

⁵⁷ Condurachi *et alii* 1961, 242, fig. 15.

43. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. A1, -1.44/1.58 m; inv. no. 299. Fragmentary mould-made nozzle. Fine fabric 7.5YR6/6 reddish yellow, with fine white inclusions. Decorated with globules. L.p. 4.9 cm, D. firing hole 0.7 cm.
44. Histria 2013, S14, - 0.10/0.27 m; inv. no. 299/2. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 10R5/6 red, with fine white inclusions. The shoulder is decorated with two rows of circular impressions. Covered with a light brown wash. L.p. 6.5 cm, H.p. 2.5 cm.

Danubian/Moesian lamps (sixth-seventh c. AD)

Six fragmentary lamps belong to the so-called *Danubian* lamps, sometimes called *Justinian*,⁵⁸ similar finds were also discovered in the northern Black Sea and broadly considered *Moesian*.⁵⁹ Many analogies in the province are at Tomis⁶⁰, nearby on the Black Sea shore at Odessos⁶¹ and at Chersones⁶², while a large assemblage is known from Constantinople⁶³. The fragmentary state of the pieces from Histria allows for a broad identification of two types, the first with plain ridges (nos. 45-47) and the second with radially decorated shoulder (no. 49). The only fully preserved handle, cross shaped (no. 48), is common among this type of lamps and other finds have been previously discovered at Histria⁶⁴, Tomis⁶⁵, Noviodunum⁶⁶, Capidava⁶⁷, Halmyris⁶⁸, Ibida⁶⁹, Sucidava-Celei⁷⁰. The fabric of the cross shaped handle is very similar to that of the fragmentary lamp no. 49. The last fragment in this group is a partially preserved basin with no other indications for a better identification.

Hayes 1992, Type 11/ Iconomu XXXII/XXXIII

45. Histria 2013, S14, -0.70/0.79 m; inv. no. 313. Fragmentary mould-made basin, shoulder and firing hole. Fine fabric 5YR5/4 reddish brown, with dense white inclusions. Unclear decoration on the discus, soot on the firing hole. L.p. 7.8 cm, H.p. 2.9 cm.
46. Histria 2022, trench B4, c. A2, -1.33/1.50 m, inv. no. 799. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 7.5YR5/6 strong brown, with fine mica and inclusions. The discus is decorated with relief circles. L.p. 3.4 cm.
47. Histria 2002, S1, c. 2, -0.77 m; inv. no. 30. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder and discus. Fine fabric 7.5YR6/4 light brown, with fine inclusions. Unclear decoration on the discus and trace of a handle. L.p. 2.5 cm, H.p. 2.6 cm.
48. Histria 2021, trench B4, c. B2, -0.96 m, inv. no. 327. Cross-shaped mould-made handle. Fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow. Covered with a whitish coating. Smooth on the back. H. 4.2 cm, W. 3.7 cm, thickness 1.3 cm.

Hayes 1992, Type 12/ Iconomu XXXII/XXXIII

Although partially preserved, the handle on this lamp was clearly taller than other variants⁷¹. The shoulder preserves a radial lines decoration, whereas the motif on the discus is uncertain.

49. Histria 2023, trench C4, c. A1, A2, B1, -1.34/1.50 m; inv. no. 342. Fragmentary mould-made shoulder, discus and handle. Fine fabric 2.5YR5/6 red, with white inclusions. The shoulder is decorated with radial lines; the discus preserves one relief circular line. L.p. 5.1 cm, H.p. 4.2 cm (handle).

⁵⁸ Topoleanu 2000, 183; Topoleanu and Croitoru 2015, 176 mentioning ca. 150 such finds.

⁵⁹ Zhuravlev 2007, 230, nos. 1-3. See also Curta 2016, 85-87 for references in other southern and northern Black Sea sites.

⁶⁰ Iconomu 1967, 29, figs. 57-58.

⁶¹ Kuzmanov and Minchev 2018, nos. 733, 786, 801, 802, 843-845, 869-871.

⁶² Chrzanovski and Zhuravlev 1998, 171-174, nos. 109-110, also mentioning finds at Sofia and Stara Zagora and moulds discovered at Kranevo (Bulgaria).

⁶³ Hayes 1992, 80, types 11-14.

⁶⁴ Suceveanu 1982, pl. 16/10, with an anthropomorphic handle; Bădescu and Bottez 2014, 231, no. 13.

⁶⁵ Iconomu 1967, 29, figs. 57-58; Barnea 1944, 173-174, figs. 2-3; Barnea 1977, 244, 242, fig. 96/4-5.

⁶⁶ Baumann 2009, fig. 18/140 bis, just the handle; pl. 3/140 referencing Topoleanu 1984.

⁶⁷ Covacef and Corbu 1991, 291, 290, fig. 1/12; Opriş 2003, 171, pl. LXI/416-417.

⁶⁸ Topoleanu 2000, 351 pl. LIX/474, 477; 352 pl. LX/481.

⁶⁹ Opaiţ, Opaiţ and Bănică 1990, 27, pl. IX.

⁷⁰ Tudor 1937-1940, 387, fig. 21a; Tudor 1945-1947, 197, 169 fig. 20/5; Tudor 1953, 708, fig. 11/d.

⁷¹ Curta 2016, 81-82, fig. 42/Type Kuzmanov XXXVIII, also referencing all known finds at Tropaeum Traiani, Capidava, Halmyris, as well as in Bulgarian sites.

Undetermined

50. Histria 2013, S14, - 0.10/0.27 m; inv. no. 299/3. Fragmentary mould-made lower basin with ring base. Fine fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow, with rare mica and white inclusions. H.p. 3.9 cm, L.p. 8.1 cm, D. base 3.5 cm.

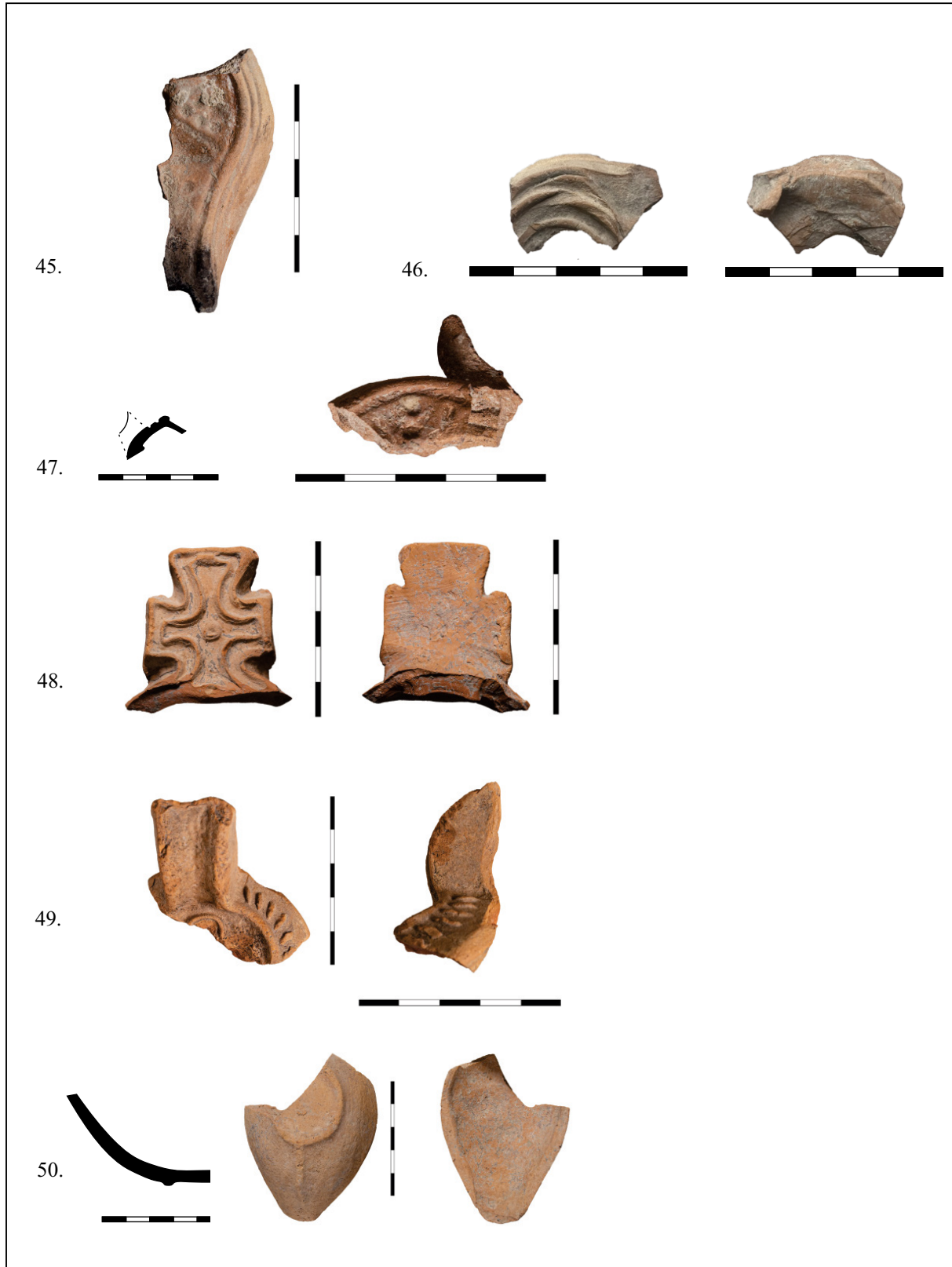


Fig. 14. Danubian lamps

Local handmade lamps

Two entirely preserved handmade lamps were discovered, with traces of soot. Both are open lamps, the first with a larger basin and one handle, whereas the second is much smaller, rather a miniature, and its basin is flanked by two perforated handles. Open handmade lamps were also discovered at Tomis and Dinogetia⁷², nearby at Odessos⁷³ (dated 4th - 6th c. AD), as well as in Dacia at the fort at Căței⁷⁴ and Poiana⁷⁵.

51. Histria 2007, trench C2, c. A, -2.07 m; inv. no. 201. Handmade open lamp with one compact handle. Coarse fabric 7.5YR7/6 reddish yellow. Soot around the rim.
D. base 8.5 cm, H. 3.7 cm (basin)/3.9 cm (handle).
52. Histria 2013, S15, -1.60/1.68 m, under the northern extremity of Z22; inv. no. 312. Miniature handmade open lamp, with two opposing and perforated handles. Coarse fabric 5YR6/6 reddish yellow. Soot on the base and on the interior.
L. 5.8 cm; H 1.9 cm (basin), L. base 5 cm.

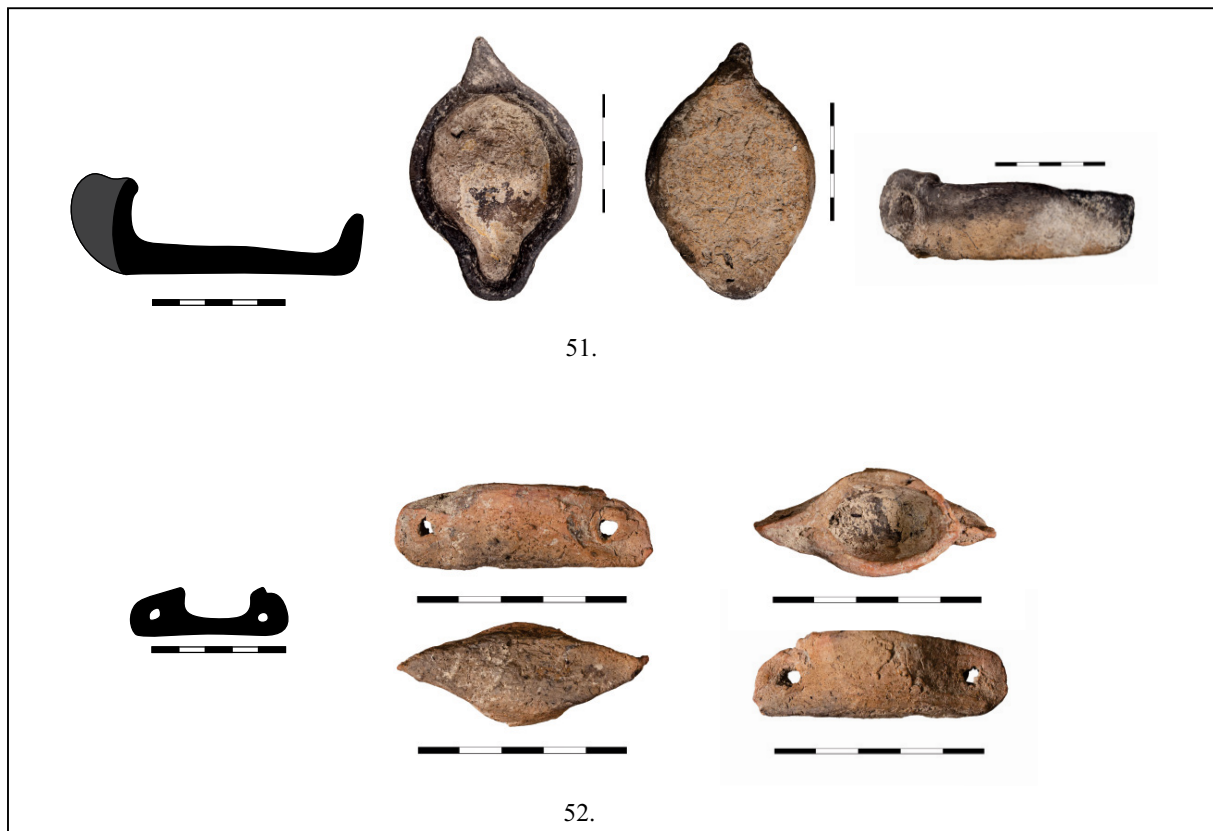


Fig. 15. Hand-made lamps

Some concluding observations

The assemblage of 52 lamps from the Basilica with crypt at Histria derives from nearly two decades of systematic fieldwork. This long-term research provides a comprehensive archaeological dataset and has enabled the subsequent mapping of the lamps within the site, illustrated through a diagram and a distribution map (Figs. 16-17). Moreover, the consistency of the assemblage allows for several observations concerning not only the specific archaeological context but also the economic history of the site.

Firstly, the chronology of the finds spans from the Classical to the Late Antique period, encompassing most of Histria's historical development and suggesting continuous occupation as well as successive remodeling of the area occupied in its final phase by the Basilica with crypt (Fig. 17).

⁷² Scorpan 1969, 258-259.

⁷³ Kuzmanov and Minchev 2018, nos. 939-940.

⁷⁴ Roman 2005, 214, no. 1.

⁷⁵ Popescu 2011, 11, pl. 2/14-15.

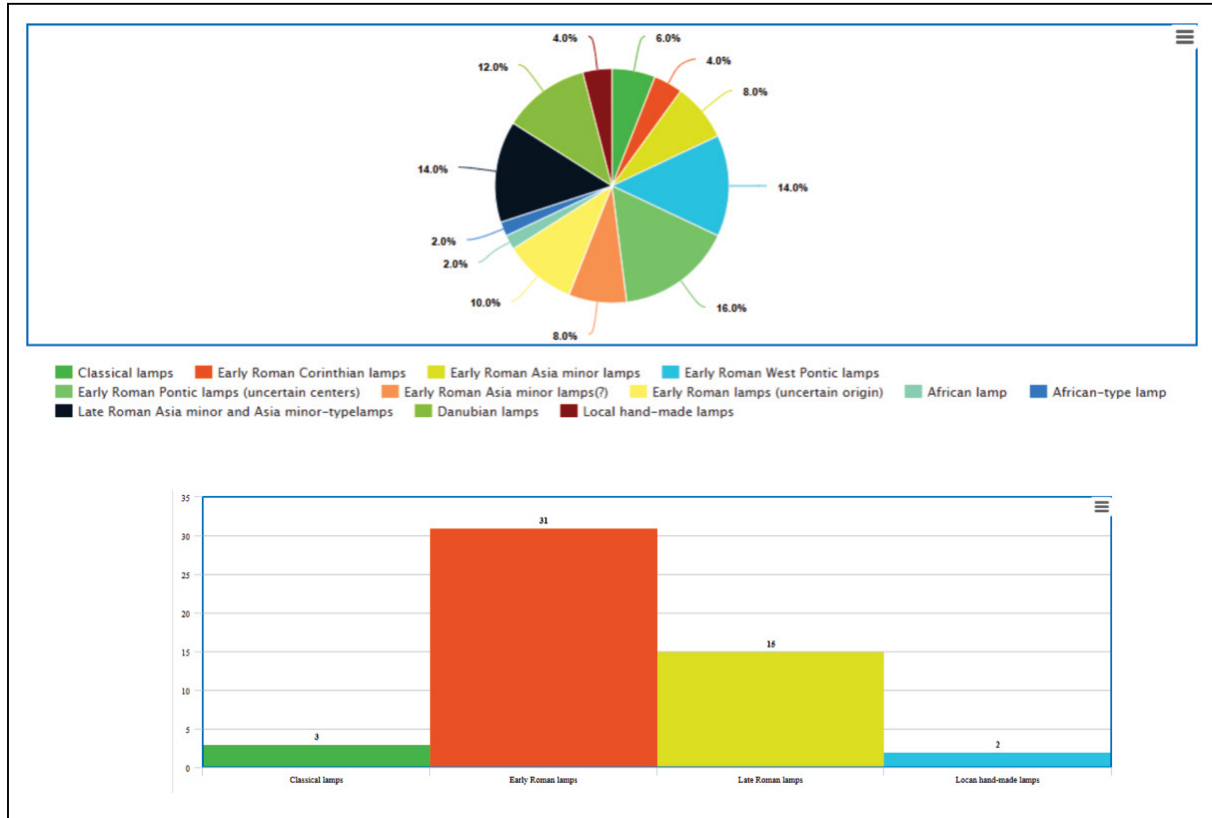


Fig. 16. Distribution of finds according to origin and chronology

Secondly, the variety of finds attests to a diverse network of trade that allowed for these pieces made in further Pontic, Aegean and African workshops to travel and be distributed and used at Histria. Even considering the many gaps in our knowledge of workshops and trade, this variety is still a testimony to the existence at Histria of a consumer's market connected to the products made in major workshops and accessibility to complex trade routes throughout the centuries. This is true especially for the first-third centuries AD when there is a much more obvious diversity of products and more prolific workshops, especially in the Black Sea area. Economic conditions shift starting with the fourth century AD and seem to function without major interruptions well into the early seventh century.

During Late Antiquity new types of lamps flood the markets, less varied than the earlier ones and arguably less qualitative in some cases. Only the Asia Minor workshops continue to manufacture and distribute their products, likely together with other categories of goods, whereas new areas of workshops emerge on the trading maps - *e.g.* North Pontic workshops lose their distribution, while the new African and *Danubian* types find their place on the market and occupy a considerable segment. Some of the latest products, such as types Broneer XXIX and the *Danubian* lamps, attest to the long occupation of the area, well up to the early seventh c. AD, similarly as shown by the ceramic finds from the excavation of the street west of the basilica⁷⁶. Moreover, the Late Antique buildings west of the Basilica are thought to have had a commercial⁷⁷ rather than a private function, which suggests that the sale of various objects, including lamps, might have taken place there.

As a whole, the assemblage reflects Histria's integration into long-distance exchange routes linking Asia Minor, Aegean, African and Danubian markets, while the handmade pieces illustrate the persistence of local, small-scale traditions alongside imported, standardized products.

⁷⁶ Streinu and Achim 2021.

⁷⁷ The ceramic finds from the area of *Street a* indicate that the surrounding buildings may have served a commercial function (for the ceramological analysis, see Streinu and Achim 2021; for the general archaeological framework, see Achim and Bottez 2024, 175-178, fig. 8-9, 16). Further research conducted after 2018 in the area of the buildings west of this street, previously investigated by A. Petre, could either support this interpretation (see Iliescu and Achim 2024) or point to an alternative interpretation: that this group of buildings was intended for the charitable activities of the church, with openings oriented both toward the *Street A* and the open space (the so-called Main Square) west of the Christian building in front of the Main Gate.

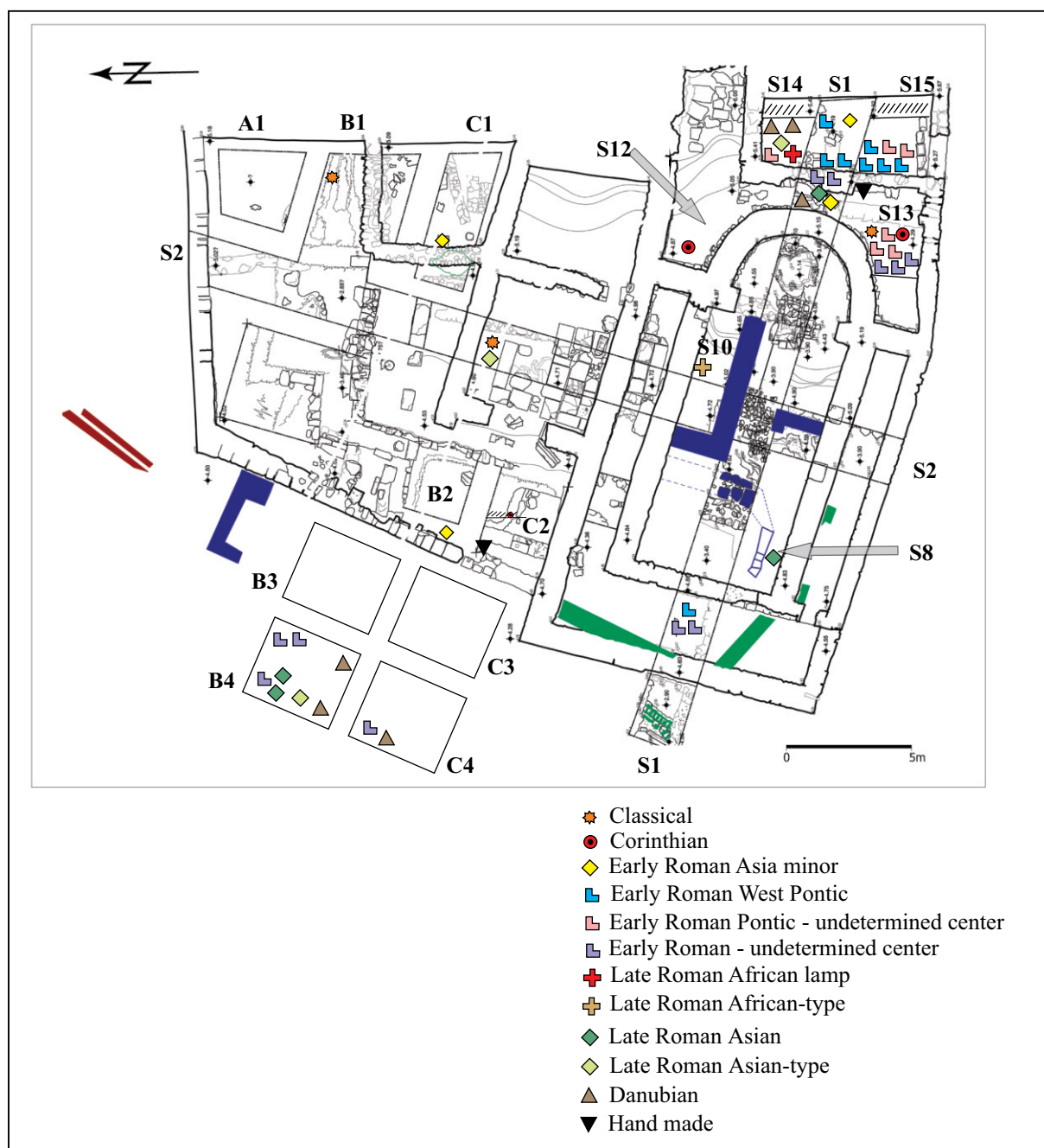


Fig. 17. Distribution of lamps in archaeological contexts

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