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CONSTANTINOPLE HAYES 8 - A RARE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN LAMP TYPE IN THE PROVINCE OF SCYTHIA. SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS DERIVED FROM ITS ICONOGRAPHY AND DISTRIBUTION

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“Consider the most famous and enduring relic of all: the tomb of Christ.”
Gary Vikan, *The Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, Dumbarton Oaks, 1982

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Abstract: The article is specifically tackling the *Constantinople Hayes 8* type of clay lamps, dating from the second half of the 5th century to early 7th century AD. Our analysis pinpoints the sites where such lighting devices have been found in the Balkans, along the Lower Danube and in the Black Sea basin, as well as their specific clustering (namely at Constantinople, in association to the Church of St. Polyeuktos at Saraçhane, at *Halmyris* in the Lower Danube province of *Scythia*, as well as at *Tauric Chersonesos* in Northern Pontus). The keywords for understanding these lamps are urban sites, maritime or river distribution, the connection to pilgrims and pilgrimage sites, Eastern Mediterranean and Pontic trade network, not to forget the *annona* maritime route within the *Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus*. Considering the uncommon canopy on the discus and based upon known archaeological evidence and contexts, our terracotta lamps are arguably embodying concurrent plebeian iconic ways and profound symbolic multiplications of the Holy City with the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

Keywords: *Late Roman/Early Byzantine lamp; Constantinople Hayes 8 type; architectural features; second half of 5th - early 7th century; Early Christian shrines; Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.*

Twenty three lamps of this specific type are known so far in *Scythia*, coming from six different sites (Fig. 1). While publishing his thorough monograph on the Roman to Early Byzantine pottery from *Halmyris* two decades ago, Florin Topoleanu presented a solitary lamp fragment (type IV – Kuzmanov 1992 A, type 33; Abadie-Reynal, Sodini 1992, L51) of Oriental origin. It had been found in a N9 context and was subsequently dated to the second half of the 5th century AD¹. The colour of the fabric is reddish-brown, as well as that of the overall applied gloss-slip. The preserved fragment

¹ TOPOLEANU 2000, type IV, no 459, 180-181, 348 = pl. LVI.



Fig. 1. Map with the distribution of the Constantinople Hayes 8 type of lamps (Vlad Călina, National Heritage Institute, Bucharest).

belongs to the relief decorated discus with filling-hole and raised shoulder. On the same occasion, the existence of two more unpublished fragments from *Argamum* and *(L)ibida* – both dated in the 6th century AD – was also signalled². The lamp from *(L)ibida* (Constantinople Hayes 1992 type 8) was thereafter published³; the total number of such lighting devices found so far in the largest interior city from the north of the province eventually went up to five⁴.

As I had already embarked on writing this article, it came to my attention that an association of top specialists in Roman lychnology was actually doing more or less the same thing for Peuce XVII, 2019 – the review of the Eco-Museum Research Institute in Tulcea⁵. Therefore, I anxiously waited for the (excellent) development of their work, hoping there would be anything left for me to say. The reading of this article is direct proof that our subject is not yet closed and that I have still found some aspects worthwhile bringing in addition to the extensive approach of the topic by Laurent Chrzanovski, Denis Žuravlev and Florin Topoleanu. The first contribution of the 2019 article is the thorough charting of the finds in Scythia and that is a fact: the number of the lamps of this type from *Halmyris* dramatically rose, for instance, to

eleven instead of one⁶; at *Argamum*, three instead of one⁷.

The lamps of the cited type have a round body, projecting nozzle with raised edge to wick-hole and (if not broken) applied vertical band-handles. The discus is wide and in most cases the available description includes a decoration of architectural/ vegetal features: two columns with gable, supporting an arch, bunches of grapes (?), as well as other triangular details between columns, with inner dots probably suggesting again grapes⁸. (see Fig. 4)

Four decades ago another lamp belonging to this Eastern Greek type had been published on the occasion of the systematic excavations in the 1970's at *Sacidava* (Muzait, Constanța county)⁹. The 9.5 cm long / 7 cm diameter lamp was produced in a worn mould. The original fabric was red, but the lamp had been exposed to intense secondary burning, so it turned to grey. One can still observe on the preserved part of the discus the typical decorative features (one column, as well as the arch with dotted elements). Allegedly based upon the stratigraphic position of the lamp, yet rather unconvincingly argued, the 4th century dating advanced by C. Scorpan was implausibly early.

Two more lamp fragments of this kind were found at *Capidava*, during an excavation inside the *horreum* of

² TOPOLEANU 2000, 181. The lamp fragments are kept in the storage of ICEM Tulcea: inv. no 43900 - *(L)ibida*; inv. no 42429 - *Argamum*.

³ NUȚU/MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2016, 212-213, 221 = pl. 2.13.

⁴ NUȚU/MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2016, 212; NUȚU/MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2019, 331, pl. 3.15. For *(L)ibida*, Laurent Chrzanovski, Denis Žuravlev and Florin Topoleanu indicate just four such lamps, see CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 226-227, nos. 39-42, but we decided to give credit to the excavators of the site.

⁵ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019.

⁶ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 223-227, nos 28-38.

⁷ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 226-227, nos 43-45.

⁸ See the typological description at BAILEY 1988, 415 (Q 3309 MLA and Q 3310 MLA), pl. 122.

⁹ SCORPAN 1978, 159 and pl. III/12 (no 12, inv. 14211). The lamp is fragmentary; still a large part of the discus with known features and base has been preserved. See also CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, no 46.

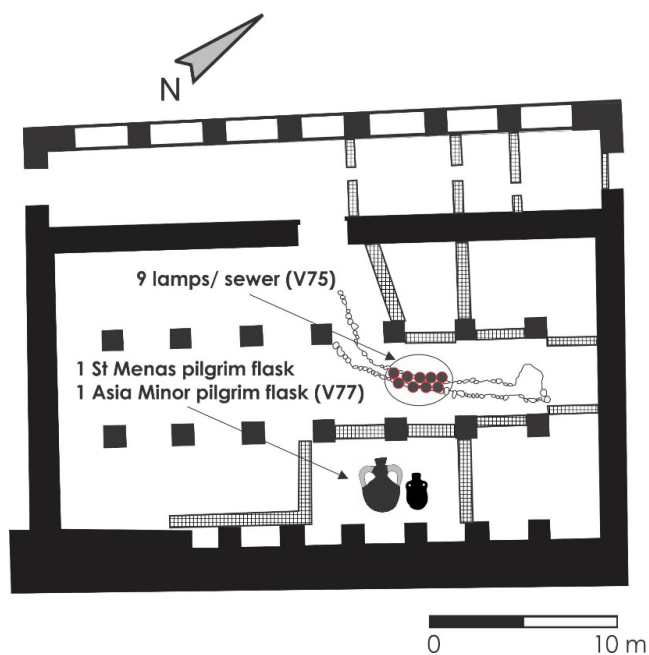


Fig. 2. The horreum at Capidava (Scythia). Archaeological contexts of the Constantinople Hayes 8 type fragments and of two other pilgrim flasks.



Fig. 3. 1-2. Constantinople Hayes 8 lamp fragments from Capidava: 1. Inv. 2199; 2. Inv. 3156.

the *castellum* during the late 1980's – early 1990's¹⁰. Both belonged to a well dated 6th century AD context, when the central nave of the imposing building was transformed into an open space (court) with stone pavement and a channel for water drain/ sewer was also added (Fig. 2). The two fragments were found inside this sewer in 1990¹¹. The first (no. 425, inv. 2199) is 5.9 cm long and belongs to the relief decorated discus with filling-hole and raised shoulder. Both architectural and vegetal patterns are visible. The fabric is reddish-brown, as well as the slip, covering the whole surface of the discus, including the interior; the slip is no more than a fine film, non-glossy and fused with the body clay. The second sherd (no. 426, inv. 3156) is 5.6 cm long and presents on its discus the same decorative patterns, yet one can observe both a better quality of the orange-red micaceous fabric and the glossy appearance of the slip. The decoration is rendered in a much finer way (meaning a new and superior mould); finally, the slip is dull gloss. When comparing the two sherds, one might conclude that the former could be a low quality copy of the latter (Fig. 3.1-2). Some 20 km east of *Capidava*, an almost forgotten outer discus and handle fragment of the referred type, with no description, was found during the first two excavation campaigns of Vasile Pârvan in *Ulmetum*, most likely in a 6th century context¹².

Far upstream the Danube, the only find of this kind on the left bank is a recently published lamp belonging to the inventory from the 6th century strategic reborn *Sucidava*, in front of *Oescus* in *Dacia Ripensis*¹³. On the right bank of the river an isolated half discus and handle of a lamp belonging to this type was reported at *Novae*, with no additional description¹⁴.

The closest regional analogies come indeed from Bulgaria. A completely preserved lamp kept in the collection of National Museum in Sofia had been published decades ago by G. Kuzmanov, without any indication of a known find place¹⁵; a second one comes most likely from a 6th century context in *Sadovec* (*Sadovsko Kale*)¹⁶. In the same monographic contribution G. Kuzmanov mentioned four other unpublished lamps from *Odessos*, in *Moesia Secunda*, offering supplementary information: two of them had been cast in the same mould¹⁷. Subsequently, these quite well preserved lamps coming from the *thermae* in *Odessos* have been recently published by G. Kuzmanov and Al. Minčev¹⁸; close finds along the western coast of the Black Sea comprise several discus and rim or handle fragments further south in

¹⁰ See, lately, OPRIȘ/RĂȚIU 2017, 19-21.

¹¹ OPRIȘ 2003a, 172, nos 425-426, pl. LXII (type III); see also CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, nos 47-48.

¹² PÂRVAN 1913, pl. XXXI.1, no 11; see also CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, no 49.

¹³ GHERGHE/COJOC 2011, 98, no 171; see also CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, no 51.

¹⁴ CHICHIKOVA 1999, 106-107, fig. 3.

¹⁵ KUZMANOV 1992b, 40, 117, type XXXIII, No. 296; CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, no. 54.

¹⁶ KUZMANOV 1992a, 223, 229, pl. 44.4, 144.6 (type 3, No. 4). See also HAYES 1992, 82, n. 19; CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, no 52, indicating a 527-602 AD dating, according to the numismatic evidence associated with it.

¹⁷ KUZMANOV 1992a, 225, n. 17 (Archaeological Museum in Varna, inv. II 1232.4084; III 236.237).

¹⁸ KUZMANOV, MINČEV 2018, 144-145, nos 716-719 (pl. XLXI, LXXIV); see also CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, nos 55-58.

*Anchialos*¹⁹, but also in Akra²⁰.

Further afield, the type was reported with a rather unlikely early 4th century dating at *Sirmium*²¹; in the Northern Aegean, it occurred in Thasos²², and a consistent grouping has also been identified at Constantinople²³. From the same area come other lamps found either at *Hadrianopolis* (Edirne), or on the Asian continent at Akçakoca and at another *Hadrianopolis*, in Paphlagonia²⁴.

Nonetheless, the most abundant and at the same time the most significant assemblage of all known analogies has been recorded in the North-Pontic area²⁵. So far, *Chersonesos* is the main distribution site and twenty lamps of this kind were found at different places in the Crimean town²⁶. Denis Zhuravlev considered they could be indirectly connected to the so-called „Basilica of 1935”, where the excavations carried out in the mid-20th century unearthed „remains of a sacral building belonging to the synagogue of Chersonesos”²⁷. He further inferred the possibility of a production centre (centres) somewhere on the Black Sea littoral, based on the concentration of such finds in the Pontic area, as well as on the „visual characteristics of clay and glaze”²⁸. Except for the Chersonesos assemblage, four other lamps of said type in the Hermitage come from unspecified sites of the North Pontic shore, from the Il'ichevskaya fortress in the Taman Peninsula, as well as from a 4th century context at Olbia (?); finally, a solitary lamp belongs to the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Odessa, most likely discovered in the mentioned coastal area²⁹.

One should undoubtedly pinpoint this high concentration of such *Constantinople Hayes 8 type and derivates* lamps in Chersonesos and the surroundings, but exactly the same thing can be stressed on two other findplaces. One of them is the site of Church of St. Polyuktos, subsequently superposed by Saddler`s Market (Saraçhane) in Constantinople, and the other is the Late Roman *castellum* at

the end of the Lower Danube Limes *via militaris* at *Halmyris*. In the latter, 18 such lamps have been reported until now, coming from 6th century layers³⁰. The three findplaces cumulate more than half of all known lamps³¹. The main theory of Chrzanovski, Žuravlev & Topoleanu, according to which the origin of the type is Constantinople and the nearby production area, with subsequent Pontic derivatives in Crimea and North Black Sea coast, also expanding to Danube sites and once again to Western Black Sea port cities, is very plausible³². I will not insist here neither on typological features, nor on the four distinctive variants and production areas, as the three cited co-authors already covered it in a convincing manner. Nevertheless, what I find worth noting (and I am particularly thinking about variant A of the Constantinople Hayes 8 type) is the precise association of the finds with urban sites and, even more important, the connection to pilgrims and pilgrimage³³. *Chersonesos* is such a site, with its notorious patron St. Phocas, defender of seafarers and sea travel³⁴. The paradigm is equally valid for *Halmyris*. The 2.5 ha fortified city was most respected and famous for the earliest confirmed martyrs in the *Scythia*, i.e. *Epictetus presbyter* and *Astion monachus*, beheaded in *Almiridensium civitatem* on the 8th of July 290³⁵.

Constantinople, on the other hand, is not just the crux of most of the empire`s trade relations³⁶, halt and destination to pilgrims, but also the perfect melting pot for any sort of innovation in terms of religious ideas or iconographic types and themes. The capital stood at the conclusion of the journey for every convoy carrying either the corn supply - *annona civica* (αἴσια ἐμβολή) from Egypt, or a wide range of goods transported by ship, in order to fulfil basic needs and sophisticated desires of its huge stratified population. This route via Constantinople was also mandatory for the Cilician fleet supplying *Moesia Secunda* and *Scythia* within the *quaestura Iustiniana exercitus* in the 6th century. Starting from the main production area of LRA 1 containers in the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean (Cilicia/ North Syria/ Cyprus), the fleet headed for the ports of *Tomis* and *Odessos*. On its way, it had to cross the Aegean and stop for LRA 2 amphora consignments at certain gathering bases³⁷. In Eastern Mediterranean the western coast of Cyprus (Cape Drepanon, for instance), Rhodes, Chios or Tenedos were all stopovers to every grain ship leaving Egypt or to *annona* convoys belonging to the supply-network of the *quaestura exercitus*³⁸. The Mediterranean exchange patterns in the century of Justinian also meant that luxury products,

¹⁹ RUSEV 2015, 96-97, nos 73-74; CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, nos 59-60.

²⁰ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 228, nos 61-63; MUTAFCHIEVA 2013, 148, nos 6-8 (although the patterns on no 8 look rather different). A fourth different lamp fragment from Akra was published by HRISTOV 2013, 133.

²¹ RUBRIGHT 1973, 49, 59, pl. V (type XI, no 54, 3rd-4th century); CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 227, no 53.

²² ABADIE-REYNAL/SODINI 1992, 75-76, pl. X/i-j (L 51).

²³ HAYES 1992, 82, 85-86, pl. 20 (nos. 34-44); CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 228, no. 64-74. See also ABADIE-REYNAL/SODINI 1992, 76. Further to the south, in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean such lamps have been found in excavations at Corinth, see WILLIAMS 1981, No. 462, pl. 20; *Miletus*, see MENZEL 1956, 99, Abb. 72.3; *Salamis (Constantia)* in Cyprus, see OZIOL 1977, 276-277, No. 837, pl. 46 and *Alexandria*, see BERNHARD 1955, 187-188, fig. 56.

²⁴ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 229, no 75 (Akçakoca); nos 76-77 (*Hadrianopolis* in Paphlagonia); 230, no 79 (*Hadrianopolis*, Edirne). According to the same CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 231, nos 80-81 two more lamps at the British Museum come from unassigned sites in the Greek East or from the Balkans.

²⁵ ABADIE-REYNAL/SODINI 1992, 76 (*Olbia*, but especially *Chersonesos*). See also CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 220-223, nos 1-27.

²⁶ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 220-223, nos 1, 7-25.

²⁷ ZHURAVLEV 2012, 28.

²⁸ ZHURAVLEV 2012, 28.

²⁹ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 220-221, nos 2-5 (Hermitage Museum); 221, no 6 (Il'ichevskaya, Taman Peninsula); 221, no 26 (Olbia); 221, no 27 (Archaeological Museum in Odessa).

³⁰ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 210.

³¹ See CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 210, 220-231, nos 1-26 (*Chersonesos* and other North Pontic sites); 28-38 (*Halmyris*); 64-74 (Constantinople, Saraçhane).

³² CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 212.

³³ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 218.

³⁴ VIKAN 1982, 14.

³⁵ See ZAHARIADE 2003 and latest major contribution on the Bishop`s basilica in Halmyris and associated martyrs, ZAHARIADE 2009. For the *Passio Epicteti et Astioni* in *Acta Sanctorum*, see also ZAHARIADE/ALEXANDRESCU 2011, 8-9.

³⁶ MORRISSON/SODINI 2002, 209.

³⁷ KARAGIORGOU 2001, 154-155.

³⁸ BAKIRTZIS 1995, 247-248; see also the latest contribution of OPRIS/RAȚIU 2019 on the *quaestura Iustiniana exercitus* and the northern provinces of *Moesia Secunda* and *Scythia*, with bibliography.



Fig. 4. Constantinople Hayes 8 lamp from *Halmyris* (Murighiol, Tulcea County). Courtesy of Fl. Topoleanu.

tableware, lamps included, followed the same routes and were most likely subsidiary to the primary transport, riding piggyback on strategic grain and oil shipments³⁹. Some of the ports of call keep memory of the sailors and their prayers for safe journey: at Agios Georgios, by Cape Drepanon in Cyprus, the Proconnesian marble pulpit in Basilica A presents the inscription $\Upsilon\text{IIEP EYXH\S NAYT\text{O}\text{N}$ (Most Blessed Sailors); St. Isidore, another patron of seafarers, had his own cult centre in Chios, where he was beheaded under the persecutions ordered by emperor Decius, in AD 251⁴⁰. In tokens or *ampullae* with patron Saints of sailors, such as St. Phocas and St. Isidore and/or images of sailing ships, such as an Egyptian flask for the pilgrims transiting Alexandria, we may well acknowledge sea voyage anxieties⁴¹.

The connection of the abovementioned finds to pilgrims, literally the $\text{o}\dot{\iota}$ πολλοί coming from all strata of society and from every corner of the Christian world is obvious. They embarked those ships to and fro the most famous sanctuaries of the Holy Land, Egypt and Asia Minor carrying on their way back home souvenirs or *eulogiai* – i.e. mobile “blessings” or blessed objects (from Gr. $\epsilon\dot{\upsilon}\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\acute{\alpha}$) empowered with the sanctity or the holiness of a place, object or person. Resuming our topic, one should also remark the association of such lamps with pilgrim sites and pilgrimage products, such as clay *ampullae*, rightly stressed by the authors of the latest study on Constantinople Hayes 8 lamp type⁴². This approach might well explain the presence of such lighting devices on the fringes of the Empire at *Capidava* or (*L*)*ibida*, for instance, where St. Menas or Asia

³⁹ CURTA 2016, 103-104.

⁴⁰ BAKIRTZIS 1995, 250-251.

⁴¹ VIKAN 1982, 16, 24.

⁴² CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 218.

Minor *ampullae* are also known⁴³; furthermore, two St. Menas pilgrim flasks in State Historical Museum – GIM with no handles and broken slender neck were found in the late 19th century in *Chersonesos*⁴⁴. The pattern is obvious and we should further expect a multiplication of sites where both *ampullae* and this specific type of lamps are associated.

The decoration itself is intriguing, as the elements on the discus of *Constantinople Hayes 8 type* and derivate lamps have been interpreted in different ways: J.W. Hayes, who published the late 6th century lamp assemblage from „church building levels” in Saraçhane, recognized a „baldacchino” on four columns sometimes resembling a crude diademed head in frontal view with columnar ornaments at the sides⁴⁵; the Egyptian magic life knot⁴⁶; a symbolic image of a synagogue with its most holy place, the tabernacle of the Testament (*Toraschrein-Motiv* according to E. Lapp)⁴⁷. Similar images are common issue in Jewish art, and Rachel Hachlili gathered the available iconography of niches and arks for Torah scrolls long time ago⁴⁸.

Vera Zaleskaya saw in this architectural display the schematic facade of a *martyrium* with *baptisterium* rendered in the foreground as a dotted triangle⁴⁹. According to our opinion, Michael Grünbart is in fact the one to come directly to the very essence of the ensemble, while writing the catalogue entry to a beautiful Egyptian (prototype) lamp in WWU Museum in Münster: *Tonlampe mit Darstellung des Grabeskirche*⁵⁰ (see fig. 7, *infra*). This unique lamp is undoubtedly the most sophisticated of the series, with its (Calvary) cross potent between the arcade and filling-hole. The cross potent has good analogies in early 7th century coinage minted under Heraclius and a close analogy coming to my mind for associating the upmentioned lamp to the Calvary cross should be the pewter alloy pilgrims` ampulla with Holy Women at the Sepulchre from Dumbarton Oaks Collection⁵¹. Grünbart’s interpretation is that of the image of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and all available reconstructions offered by John Wilkinson and Martin Biddle fully support his hypothesis⁵² (see Figs. 5.1-3).

⁴³ An Asia Minor *ampulla* from (*L*)*ibida* is in print, submitted for publication to the Acta of the 24. International Limes Congress, Belgrade-Viminacium, 2nd-9th September 2018. Personal communication of Dr. Dan Aparaschivei (Institute of Archaeology in Iași): *Pilgrims from the province of Scythia in Ephesus*. For the two *ampullae* in *Capidava* (St. Menas and Asia Minor types), see OPRİŞ 2003a, 162, nos 190-191, pl. LVIII; OPRİŞ 2003b, 447-449, 468 = pl. 3.1-3; OPRİŞ 2004, 266-267, 274-275 = figs. 13-16.

⁴⁴ ЖУРАВЛЕВ 2012.

⁴⁵ HAYES 1992, 82 (type 8).

⁴⁶ ŽHURAVLEV 2012, 26; UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 295.

⁴⁷ LAPP 1991, 158.

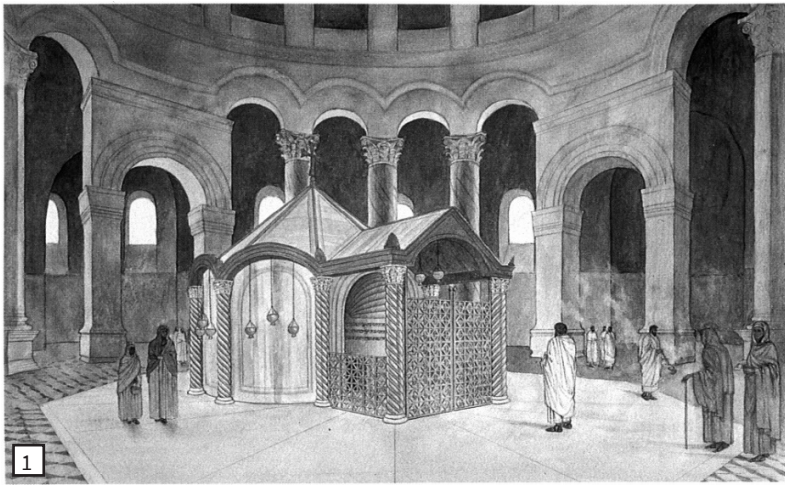
⁴⁸ HACHLILI 1976, *passim*, with the following constitutive elements of the ensemble: a niche and its interior; a façade of two/ four columns; an arch or gable supported by columns; a conch decorating the vaulted upper part of the niche/ arch/ gable; a base on which the niche is built; a flight of stairs leading up to the niche (see the same HACHLILI 1976, 43).

⁴⁹ ZALESSKAJA 1988, *non vidi*; see also ŽHURAVLEV 2012, 26-27 and n. 26: „stylized depiction of the roof of a holy martyr’s grave (i.e. a Christian *martyrium*) and a baptistry that can symbolize the second birth of the neophyte through the sacrament of christening”.

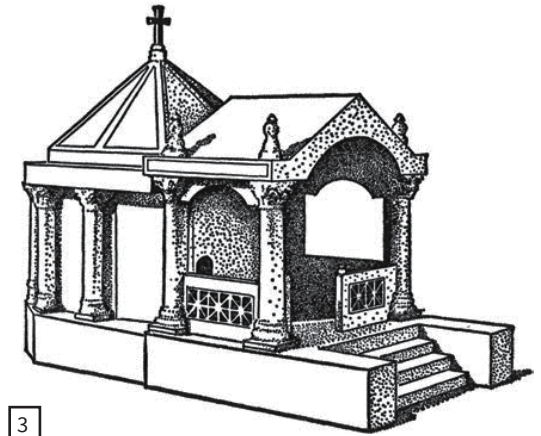
⁵⁰ GRÜNBART 2012, 188-189, no 69.

⁵¹ WEITZMANN 1979, 585-586, no 524 (by Archer St. Clair).

⁵² WILKINSON 1972; WILKINSON 2006, 174, fig. 34 – the Cave of the Anastasis; BIDDLE 2000, 32-37, with artist’s reconstruction of Constantine’s Edicule at p. 35. See also MURPHY-O’CONNOR 2008, 49-54, 56, fig. 15; OUSTERHOUT 1990, for the relationship between early representations of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tomb aedicula at the Holy Sepulchre, with



Manza 9



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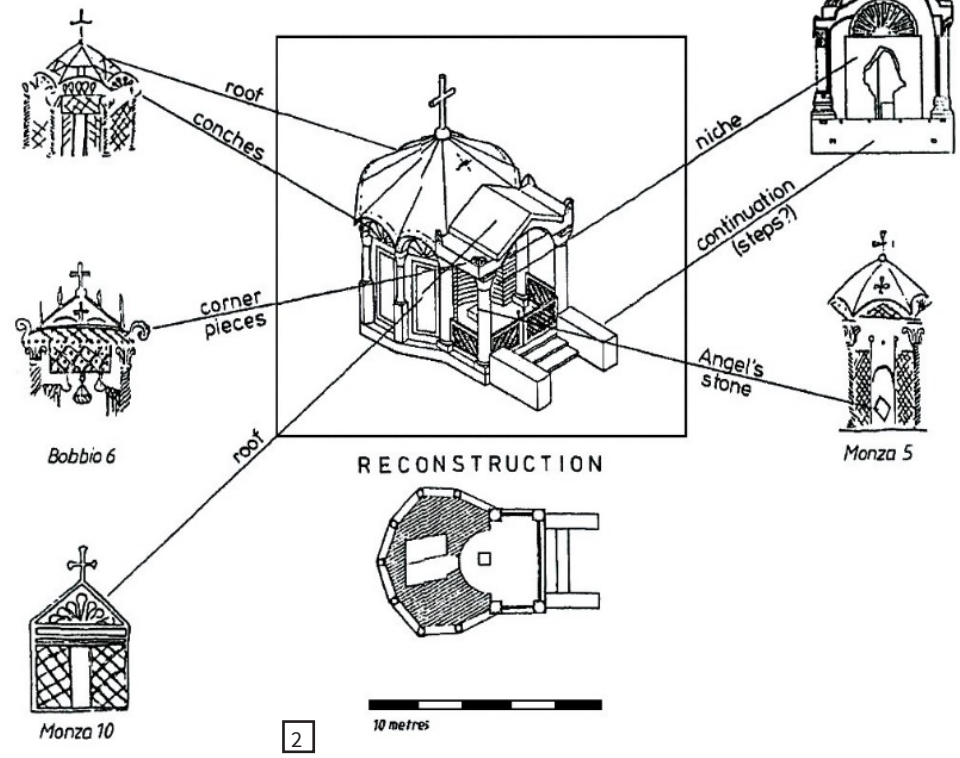


Fig. 5. 1-3. The Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre: 1. BIDDLE 2000, 35; 2. WILKINSON 2006, 174, fig. 34; 3. MURPHY-O'CONNOR 2008, 56, fig. 15). the flasks as a rectangular shape at the floor-level within the gates and we know that before the Persians ravaged the stone it had been covered with gold and jewels, according to the Piacenza Pilgrim or the later 7th century bishop of Jerusalem, Sophronius⁵⁶. The triangle instead of rectangle might be the answer to concurrent issues: the limited space on the discus and, perhaps, obscure aesthetic strategies, as well.

The conspicuous relationship between early representations of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tomb aedicula at the Holy Sepulchre⁵⁷ unveils the expected strong ties to Jewish tradition, but also ambiguous, intricate artistic ways. Until the 7th century, when aniconic synagogue art becomes the rule, one

As to the inverted triangle filled with relief dots (relief globules) on the *Constantinople Hayes 8* lamps, it has been mostly seen as grape clusters⁵³, architectural detail, yet other abstract encoding suggestions are not missing, as well⁵⁴. I am just wondering if we should not approach this puzzling dotted triangle in a totally different way, i.e. as the image of the "Stone of the Angel"⁵⁵. It is figured on

(again) Wilkinson's reconstructed model, 50, fig. 9. The Tomb of the Lord is also shown on the the Sancta Sanctorum wooden reliquary lid from the Lateran "Treasury" kept at Musei Vaticani (Chapel of St. Peter Martyr), in the upper left panel (*Holy Women at the tomb*) of an encaustic 6th century painting from Syria or, more likely, Palestine.

⁵³ OZIOL 1977, 277; ABADIE-REYNAL/SODINI 1992, 75; NUȚU/ MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2016, 213.

⁵⁴ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 295, n. 38 citing Zalesskaja's idea that the triangle might represent the Trinity.

⁵⁵ OUSTERHOUT 1990, 46, although it was described as a "cube". See also WILKINSON 1972, 85; BIDDLE 2000, 33: part of the Stone is preserved in the altar of the Chapel of the Angel inside the Edicule.

might have had difficulties discerning the artistic decoration of synagogues vs churches, neither uniform nor distinctive and (in some cases) involving the same artists using the same style and motifs⁵⁸. More than a decade ago, Nicholas de Lange launched a troubling question in *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*: „How distinctive were the Jews? We do not hear of any outward sign that would distinguish Jews from non-Jews. Neither clothing nor language marked them out, and they mingled freely with non-Jews, even if in some cities they had their own quarters"⁵⁹.

What do we actually know about Jews and Jewish communities in the Black Sea and Western Pontus area

⁵⁶ WILKINSON 1972, 93 (figs. 10a-b) and n. 57.

⁵⁷ OUSTERHOUT 1990, 50, with the Eusebian perspective on the Tomb of Christ becoming the new Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holies in the New Temple of Jerusalem.

⁵⁸ DE LANGE 2006, 416.

⁵⁹ DE LANGE 2006, 414.



Fig. 6. Map with known synagogues in the Roman Empire, according to literary and archaeological sources: HANSEN 2014, 45, Abb. 11 (courtesy of Prof. Svend Hansen, DAI Berlin).

during 6th to 7th centuries, at a time and place where part of the cited lamps were also circulating? Some important steps have been taken during the last decades, so that the general picture is getting much sharper (Fig. 6). A fascinating assemblage of finds was known for a long time in the Cimmerian Bosphorus. As early as the 1st century Jewish communities are known in major cities as *Pantikapaion* and *Phanagoreia*⁶⁰, but the cult of $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma \delta\upsilon\psi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (Most High God) is mentioned at *Gorgippia* (nowadays Anapa), and *Tanais* as well⁶¹. Over 60 funerary stelae rendering the *Menorah*, *Schofar* and the *Lulav* had been found in *Phanagoreia* in the second half of the 19th century and this extraordinary concentration of ancient Jewish population is completed by similar finds circa 15 km south, at *Vyšesteblievskaja*⁶². Some of them are bilingual (with Greek text, as well). The chronology of the finds unveils enduring communities, uninterruptedly lasting until 8th-9th century. In an entry for the year 678/679, Teophanes Confessor mentions them in his early 9th century *Chronographia*, later on followed by the Abbasid geographer Ibn-Khordadbeh⁶³. On the other shore of the Kerch strait, on Crimean soil, an inscription from *Pantikapaion* informs us that the governor Aurelius Valerius Sogus from *Theodosia* built a $\pi\rho\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\chi\eta$ (Jewish prayer house) to the local community in 306 AD⁶⁴.

An important assemblage of finds comes from the western side of the Peninsula, namely from *Chersonesos* and its territory, as Jewish funerary stelae have been recorded at *Vilino* and *Eski-Kermen*, in the nearby inland, as well⁶⁵. In *Chersonesos* a synagogue built in the 4th century AD functioned until the time of Theodosius I, and was later superposed by two subsequent basilicas (the so-called 1935

Basilica)⁶⁶. The Tauric *Chersonesos* – with so many lamp finds of *Constantinople Hayes 8 type* – was the terminus harbour for large-scale commercial operations, yet we cannot put aside pilgrims and the pilgrimage phenomenon, as well. With its famous St. Phocas shrine, the city was an important centre of local pilgrimage, as already mentioned, but archaeological proofs of long distance pilgrimage to supra-regional sanctuaries, as Abu Mena in Egypt, had been also traced. A strong local Jewish community and the conspicuous signs of flourishing Christian life lead to the idea of an explicit, moreover privileged relationship to the Holy Land, given the important quantities of Late Roman 4 and bag-shaped amphorae discovered in Late Roman and Early Byzantine archaeological contexts. The LRA 4 containers were carrying the famous *vinum Gazetum* (also known as *Gazetina*, or *Gazeticum*), the *DOCG* or *premier grand cru* of late Roman wine production⁶⁷. These amphorae were produced in the Negev (particularly in the area of Avdat), Gaza and Ascalon (25 km away from Gaza), and huge concentrations were also recorded in the city-port of *Pelusium*⁶⁸. As to the bag-shaped ones (LRA 5-6), the production sites are situated in a wider area, in both North and South Palestine⁶⁹. All those wine containers are well known in *Chersonesos* deposits⁷⁰. LRA 4 is dated there in archaeological contexts from the first half of the 5th century to third quarter of the 7th century (circa 650-670), whereas LRA 5-6 have a later dating range, from the end of the 6th century to late 7th/ early 8th century.

Several other uncharted lamps of assumedly North Pontic find place, including an improbable 4th century (?) piece from *Olbia*, will not puzzle the big picture⁷¹. Coming to the Western Pontus, the ancient cities where *Constantinople*

⁶⁰ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 281. See also HANSEN 2014, 47.

⁶¹ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 282.

⁶² UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 282.

⁶³ TOCH 2013, 161; CURTA 2019, 71-72.

⁶⁴ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 282, i.e. the CIRB, 71-73, no 64 inscription.

⁶⁵ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 297.

⁶⁶ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 287-291.

⁶⁷ WICKHAM 2005, 714.

⁶⁸ PIERI 2005, 109-110.

⁶⁹ PIERI 2005, 124-127.

⁷⁰ ROMANCHUK/SAZANOV/SEDIKOVA 1995, class 4-5, 21-24, figs. 3-6; SAZANOV 1997, 88-89, types 3-4, fig. 1; SAZANOV 2014, 413, 420 = fig. 4.

⁷¹ CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 220-225, cat. nos 1-5, 26.

Hayes 8 type lamps have been equally recorded concentrate in the province of *Scythia*, with *Halmyris* undisputedly as main site. One can draw a pattern with two different concentration groups, the first along the Black Sea coast (*Argamum*, *Odessos*, *Anchialos* and *Akra*) and a second one along the Danube (*Halmyris*, *Capidava*, *Sacidava*, *Novae* and westernmost at *Sucidava*, on the left bank). Inland finds come from *Ulmetum* and (*L*)*ibida*, and the latter city with its 27 ha surface is one of the largest in the province in the Late Roman/ Early Byzantine period. One can therefore imagine that the lamps came by sea and upstream the river, in ships carrying the annona amphorae and pilgrims, as well. One should nevertheless mention that, unlike in the Bosporan fringe area or in Pannonia⁷², Jews and Jewish communities are little known here.

Up the Danube, at *Oescus* (i.e. in front of *Sucidava*, where one of our lamps was found) a Jewish epitaph (in Latin) of *Joses*, *archisynagogos* and *principalis* with his wife *Cyria* (or better *Kyria*) could be dated to the 4th century⁷³; a second fragmentary inscription in Greek with the image of the menorah was further reported, in *Oescus* again⁷⁴. In the 6th century Procopius of Caesarea (De Aed. IV.6.21) mentions a watchtower called **Ἰουδαῖος** near *Dorticum*, in *Dacia Ripensis*, most likely after a neighbouring tavern owned by Jews⁷⁵. In the capital and chief port of *Tomis* and nearby suburban habitations or at the legionary headquarters in *Troesmis* inscriptions of Orientals generically coming from Syria-Palestine are quite numerous in 2nd – 3rd century inscriptions: *Flavia Neapolis* and *Antipatris* (in Samaria), *Neapolis* (in Syria) *Emesa*, *Laodicea (Syriae)* are all proudly mentioned hometowns. Some of them could have obviously had a Jewish origin⁷⁶. Either conscripts in the army units stationed in *Moesia Inferior*, veterans or merchants – and the phenomenon is general for the Danubian provinces – , they gravitated towards the rich capital of *Moesia Inferior* and the headquarters of *legio V Macedonica* in *Troesmis*, both strategic and highly attractive cities. A female dedicator of Jewish origin (*Aurelia Sambatis*) is later known from an inscription at *Tomis* in late 3rd – early 4th century⁷⁷, and she is surely not the only one, since two other patronyms might indicate a wider community: *Sulifera*⁷⁸ and *Seppon*⁷⁹, a wine trader from *Alexandria*. The latter's name is accompanied on the stone by two specific graphic features, i.e. the pentagram

and the palm branch (*lulav*)⁸⁰.

The pattern is obvious. Natives from the East are either connected to the army or trade⁸¹ and the two do not exclude each other, settling down in major centres on the right bank of the river, along the Black Sea Coast or in large continental cities. They definitely must have had to do with the associations of sea merchants or shippers, such as **ὁ οἶκος τῶν ἐν Τόμει ναυκλήρων** in 2nd century *Tomis*⁸². From *Oescus* southwards, crossing the Balkans, the next important Jewish community in Late Roman Thracia was that of *Philippopolis*, with its synagogue built in early 4th century, renovated a hundred years later for being destroyed in the 6th century⁸³. Nevertheless, things are definitely more complex than the few pieces of epigraphic evidence can describe: during the turbulent 6th century, we learn about havoc brought by *Antes* in the Balkan provinces to unnamed urban Jewish communities from a complaining Midrashic homilist⁸⁴.

So, let us get back to our *Constantinople Hayes 8* lamps, for final remarks. One has established a high concentration of sites (6) and a clustering (11 such lamps for *Halmyris*) in the Lower Danube province of *Scythia* during the 6th century and a further distribution route upstream the river, in several military sites. The westernmost point known so far is *Sirmium*. Surprisingly, no lamp of this kind has been recorded until now in the capital and main port of the province at *Tomis*, but a few other finds are scattered along the Western Black Sea Coast. In return, dominant findplaces are *Tauric Chersonesos* in Northern Pontus, and, again, *Constantinople*, where the type seemingly originated from. The keywords for understanding these lamps are urban sites, maritime or river access, the connection to pilgrims and pilgrimage, Eastern Mediterranean and Pontic trade network, not to forget the annona maritime route within the *Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus*⁸⁵. So, are the lamps Jewish or Christian? G. Nuțu and L. Mihăilescu-Bîrliba, who published the lamps from (*L*)*ibida*, are doubting both local Pontic origin or any Jewish connection, arguing that no tangible presence of a Jewish community in *Scythia* has yet been established⁸⁶.

Is it, however, possible to draw a relationship between the *Constantinople Hayes 8* finds and the former 4th century synagogue in *Chersonesos*? During 6th century when these lamps were circulating, the synagogue had been for a long time destroyed and converted to a church, and if not just a pure match the distinct cluster identified in that place (*Basilica 1935*)⁸⁷ might indicate a subtle tradition. An archaeological element of high symbolic value to this conversion is a re-used Menorah-decorated slab identified in the church's foundation

⁷² BOUNEGRU 2014, 304-305, with abundant Jewish archaeological elements known in *Mursa*, *Intercisa*, *Solva*, *Brigetio*, *Aquincum*, *Tricciana*, *Sirmium*, *Siklós* and *Savaria* (including explicitly mentioned synagogues in *Mursa* and *Intercisa*). See also MOGA 2018, 121-130, especially 122-123. According to HANSEN 2014, 45, Abb. 11, a third Pannonian synagogue could be charted in *Brigetio*. I am grateful to Prof. Svend Hansen (Eurasien Abteilung – DAI Berlin) for the electronic version of the map and the permission to (re)publish it.

⁷³ ILBulg 67.

⁷⁴ IGBulg 2, 597 ter. See also PANAYOTOV 2014, 56; PANAYOTOV 2004, 56-57, fig. 11.

⁷⁵ PANAYOTOV 2004, 65.

⁷⁶ ISM II, 96(62) for *Flavia Neapolis* and *Antipatris* (in Samaria); ISM II, 97(73) for *Flavia Neapolis* (in Samaria), again; ISM II, 188 (24) for *Neapolis* (in Syria). For *Troesmis*, see ISM V, 178-179, mentioning veterans from *Emesa* and *Laodicea*. See, recently, MOGA 2018, 130.

⁷⁷ IGLR 17 = ISM II, 367 (203).

⁷⁸ IGLR 44; MOGA 2018, 131; BOUNEGRU 2014, 306.

⁷⁹ IGLR 28; for analogies, see MOGA 2018, 131-132. Against this opinion, see TOCH 2013, 22 and n. 58.

⁸⁰ BOUNEGRU 2014, 306.

⁸¹ PANAYOTOV 2004, 61, 63.

⁸² ISM II, 60, 132.

⁸³ PANAYOTOV 2014, 56-57. The Jewish presence in Roman to Byzantine times becomes much more expressive South of the Rhodopes and in Northern Macedonia, see PANAYOTOV 2014, 56-62 (besides *Philippopolis* and neighbouring *Stanimak*/*Assenovgrad*, one should also name here *Byzie/Vize*, *Heraclea Perinthos*, *Gallipoli*, as well as *Philippi*, *Drama*, *Christopolis/Kavala*, *Dimitritsi* next to *Serres*, *Stobi*, *Thessalonica*, *Beroea/Veria* etc.).

⁸⁴ CURTA 2001, 79, n. 19.

⁸⁵ For newest approaches on the *quaestura exercitus* topic, see SARANTIS 2019; OPRIȘ/RAȚIU 2019.

⁸⁶ NUȚU/MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2019, 331.

⁸⁷ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 297; ŽURAVLEV 2012, 26 (= fig. 8), 28.

of the apsis during the 1957 restoration works⁸⁸. It is true that such lamps are known from areas with strong Jewish communities in the Taman Peninsula and *Pantikapaion*⁸⁹, but also from *Olbia*, where a synagogue might have possibly functioned until 4th century⁹⁰, yet one should not exclude Christians from the general picture. The reason resides in the very dating of the lamps, i.e. from the second half of 5th to early 7th century, and by that time the Christians were largely taking over even on the northern fringes of the Empire. On the other hand, the documented co-existence of Jews and Christians in *Chersonesos* and the Northern Black Sea territories was not matched in any way by corresponding circumstances in Western Pontus, where lamps of this type have been recorded as well. That is why I believe these lamps in *Chersonesos* and the northern territories are in fact related to Christians, to pilgrimage and local shrines, as well. The city was one of the transit pilgrimage points on the way to the Holy Land, mentioned by a German Archdeacon Theodosius around AD 518-530⁹¹.



Fig. 7. Egyptian lamp depicting the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre (GRÜNBART 2012, 188-189, no 69 - Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster Museum <https://westfalen.museum-digital.de/data/westfalen/images/201207/09151455912.jpg>)

Both routes, from *Tomis* and from *Chersonesos* to the Holy Land or to the other pilgrimage sites in Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean were maritime and had to pass by Constantinople, where the iconography on the discus of these lamps actually developed. Chrzanovski, Žuravlev & Topoleanu inferred an initial Levantine (*Caesarea*) provenance, taken over by the Egyptian workshops in Alexandria, before getting (iconographically) completed in Constantinople and their hypothesis is entirely plausible⁹².

⁸⁸ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 289, Abb. 12.

⁸⁹ UŠAKOV/ŽURAVLEV 2014, 285.

⁹⁰ For a synagogue at *Olbia*, see TOCH 2013, 159, 265.

⁹¹ GILDEMEISTER 1882, 21-22 (*Theodosius*, 54).

⁹² CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 218.

It is precisely at Constantinople⁹³ that they pinpointed the other important cluster of *Hayes 8* lamps and one should add that it found itself in close relationship to the Church of St. Polyeuktos (*Saraçhane*). A beautiful sculptural marble niche belonging to a huge exedra brings to mind some of the artistic features rendered on our lamps⁹⁴. To sum up, both the Church of St. Polyeuktos built by Princess Juliana Anicia in the capital and Basilica no. II (1935 Basilica) at *Chersonesos* are somehow involved in the distribution of these lamps. It definitely had to do with pilgrimage.

The iconographic scheme, as we have already seen, includes architectural elements – niches and gables or decorated arches supported by columns – earlier used in Jewish art to house the ark with Torah scrolls⁹⁵. With the clay lamp in Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster Museum as finest of all known, the *Constantinople Hayes 8* series is just part on the long list of pyxides, ivory plaques and diptychs, reliquaries, book covers, chalices, lighting devices (*κανδήλαι*) or *ampullae* iconographically emphasizing sumptuous architectural features⁹⁶. Under the canopy on the discus of the above-mentioned lamps one should perceive what Gary Vikan named “plebeian art of the pilgrim”, characterized by lack of elegance and lowly substance, but enjoying mass distribution⁹⁷. In my opinion, with their very special “Zeichencode” these portable items are just more conspicuous props of the pilgrimage, though indistinctly associated to maritime pilgrims, merchants or soldiers. If not local low copies, they practically acknowledge the same pattern the pilgrim flasks do: long-distance luxury goods with little intrinsic worth, but high symbolic value, esteemed as “contact relics”⁹⁸.

The devotional practices they serve are way out of doubt to me, yet the answer to the question on how they arrive on the fringes of the Empire remains obscure. Is it actually a result of long-distance trade or long-distance pilgrimage? Or the combined consequence of both? What is certain is that piggybacking on grain and oil military *annona* transports⁹⁹ large quantities of consumable, utilitarian and such luxury goods arrive to Lower Danube, Western and Northern Pontus during the Justinianic revival and later, in the 6th – early decades of the 7th century, pilgrims included¹⁰⁰. A wider focus unveils new concepts of the time, with precise implications to our topic: Constantinople – Second Jerusalem¹⁰¹, the “constantinopolarisation” of the Imperial power, with huge effects on the entire Balkans¹⁰², and furthermore, the rising rivalry between a wide local

⁹³ With a *Hadrianopolis* (Edirne) production extension, see CHRZANOVSKI/ŽURAVLEV/TOPOLEANU 2019, 212 and n. 37.

⁹⁴ WEITZMANN 1979, 646-647, fig. 96.

⁹⁵ HACHLILI 1976; OUSTERHOUT 1990.

⁹⁶ WEITZMANN 1979, 528-530, no 474; 560-562, no 504; 575-576, no 514; 578, no 517; 579-582, nos 519-520; 585, no 524; 599, no 552; 609, no 545; 618, no 554; 632, no 571. See also HOXHA 2016, 17, Abb. 8 a-d, for a bronze *κανδήλα* decorated with the images of Christ, Angels and Saints under arches filled with scallop shells (Church of Peca, Kukës Region in Northeastern Albania); METZGER 1981, 9-21, 43-45, for the *ampullae* in the Louvre.

⁹⁷ VIKAN 1982, 42-43.

⁹⁸ ANDERSON 2007, 221-222.

⁹⁹ CURTA 2016, 104-105.

¹⁰⁰ ANDERSON 2007, 229.

¹⁰¹ BITTON-ASHKELONY 2005, 201-202, 205-206.

¹⁰² DESTEPHEN 2019.

network of cultic sites and the Holy Land, the Holy City, with the True Cross and the Aedicula at Holy Tomb of the Lord¹⁰³.

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¹⁰³ BITTON-ASHKELONY 2005, 184-206.

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