

Recent Finds of the Latest Lamps from Olbia

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Recent Finds of the Latest Lamps from Olbia

Iryna Sheiko^a

In the paper there are presented the chronologically latest ceramic lamps that have been found in the Olbia Pontica collection while studying the whole range of these devices from the end of the 7th century BC till the 5th century AD. The items considered here are mostly imported types and are dated to the middle of the 3rd–beginning of the 5th centuries AD. The study includes recently found lighting devices in the R-23 and R-25 excavation sectors in Olbia that are connected with the latest historical events at the settlement. A brief history of research, a catalogue of lamps and discussion of local and imported ceramic lamps are provided.

KEY-WORDS: lamps, Olbia Pontica, 3rd–5th centuries AD, recent finds, ancient imports

INTRODUCTION

Oil lamps, which are specifically shaped ceramic devices that were used to illuminate premises in the dark, are often used by researchers to suggest a date for other finds during the excavation of both settlement and funerary contexts. A developed typology and chronology of the lamps makes it possible on occasion to expand or, conversely, to narrow down an already existing and generally accepted chronological framework for specific ancient settlements. Thus, the more archaeological material is studied, the more likely it is that the dating of objects and sometimes settlements could change significantly.

The study of lamps of the period of antiquity from Olbia among other ceramic material occupies a small part of the historiography. Apart from O. F. Val'dgauer's catalogue (1914), lamps appeared only in excavation reports and random publications of materials. Among them, it is worth highlighting the publication of R. I. Vetshteyn, who first drew attention to lamps as a separate group of archaeological material

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and made an attempt to systematise them and typologise them, again on the basis of O. F. Val'dgauer's catalogue (Vetshteyn 1975: 183–191). It is also worth noting that there is only one article devoted exclusively to Olbian lamps, which contained materials on red slip lamps of the Roman period (Iofa 1964). A series of publications by O. I. Levi on the materials from the excavations of the Olbian Agora and the Eastern Temenos also contains several lamps (Levi 1956: 121–134; 1964: 131–174). It is typical that the earlier authors who published ceramic assemblages from settlements in the Olbian chora did not distinguish lamps separately. Today, there are a number of publications of archaeological materials that also contain photos or images of these items, but they are not described in the text, but are mentioned only as single finds, sometimes even without dating (Zakysova Balka: Shtitelman 1958: fig. 5, 15; Stara Bogdanivka-2: Marchenko and Domanskiy 1981: pls. 5, 15, 17; Kutsurub-1: Marchenko and Domanskiy 1991: figs 9, 7).

The collection of ancient lamps from the first centuries AD, including those from Olbia, stored in the Odesa Archaeological Museum of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, is particularly noteworthy (Levina 1992). In addition, at the present stage, materials from the excavations of certain areas of Olbia have been introduced into scientific circulation. These are, first of all, publications of items found during the research of the Western Temenos. Among them are several handmade lamps (Gavrylyuk 2006: 193, fig. 214) and Ionic lamps, with a section on the technology of making these items and analogies (Rusyaeva 2006: 167–168, fig. 175). The section of the collective monograph on the lamps of the NGS site should also be mentioned in particular (Højte 2010: 423–437).

A similar study has already been carried out on the materials of another site in Olbia – the residential buildings of the Central Quarter (Sheiko 2014a). The research in question included early lamps (Sheiko 2013c), rare forms of these items (Sheiko 2013a), items with vertical loop handles (Sheiko 2013b), imports from Asia Minor and their imitations from Olbia (Sheiko 2014b). Some issues of national historiography on lighting devices of Olbia and its chora have also been considered separately (Sheiko 2013d).

Taking into account the development of native historiography, it should be noted that only in the last two decades has systematic work been carried out on the study of lamps as a separate type of ceramic products originating from the monuments of Antiquity in the Northern Black Sea region. At the same time, the vast majority of scholars have focused mainly on lamps found on the Bosporus. The collection of lamps originating from the North-Western Black Sea region, in particular, from the territory of the Olbian polis, still remains unexplored at a modern level and is therefore unknown to the general scientific community.

METHODOLOGY AND DATING

The issue of dating the lamps also remains relevant. The excavation reports of recent years, which contain data on closed and clearly dated complexes, have very narrow chronological boundaries, which allows us to adjust the insufficient data from previous years. It should be noted that previously all the latest objects and pottery items found at the settlement were dated by the 4th century AD. However, recent finds of imported ceramic materials, including lamps, dated to the 4th and even the beginning of the 5th centuries AD, have led to a reconsideration of the dates for the decline and ultimate fall of the settlement. It now seems that Olbia may have experienced a continuation after the 4th century AD, albeit a brief one.

The recent lamp finds in the Olbian collection presented in this paper are dated from the middle of the 3rd to the beginning of the 5th centuries AD and can be referred to the latest period of the existence of the settlement. Most of these lamps are of imported origin, with complete parallels known from Chersonesos, Cimmerian Bosphorus, Asia Minor and possibly also from Corinth, Syria and Palestine.

CLAY LAMPS OF THE LATEST PERIOD OF OLBIAN (SEE TABLE 1)

Lamps ornamented with “grooves” on the rim (Fig. 1.1–8). There are 24 such lighting devices in the collection. In the paper there are only eight lamps that represent two main variants and some subvariants of this type. This type of devices is widespread mainly among the cities of the Northern Black Sea region, especially in Chersonesos (Crimea, Ukraine), where they constitute 30% of the total number of ceramic lamps found at the necropolis and in the settlement in general (Sorochan 1982: 43). That is why it seems reasonable to use the classification for the typology and dating of Serhii Sorochan. The author divided these lamps by the shape of the body into two main variants: pear-shaped and round-egg-shaped (Sorochan 1982: 44). Besides Olbia and Chersonesos, they were found also in large quantities in Tanais, Rostov region, Russian Federation (Arsen'eva 1988: pls. 19–23). Due to the discovery of such a lamp at the R-25 sector in 2017 (Buisykh and Sheiko 2018: 18), it can be dated identically to the lamps of Tanais to the 3rd–4th centuries AD.

Denis Zhuravlev also relies on Sorochan's typology and dates them to the second quarter of the 3rd – the end of the 4th centuries AD (Zhuravlev and Turova 2012: 375; Chrzanovski and Zhuravlev 1998: 133–135). As for the centre of production of this type of lamps, it should be noted that, despite their significant distribution in the Northern Black Sea area, the fabric of some specimens is different, which may indicate several different production centres, as Denis Zhuravlev noted (Zhuravlev

Table 1. Catalogue of the latest lamps from Olbia.

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Illustration
					height	body Ø	bottom Ø	
1	O-38/1750/ B5/93	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The bottom is round and flat.	“grooves” on the rim, a rosette on the outer side of the bottom	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red-brownish slip of bad quality on the surface	3.8	5.8	2.8	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
					3.8	5.8	2.8	
2	O-38/2346/ B5/1041	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The bottom is round and flat.	“grooves” on the rim, a rosette on the outer side of the bottom	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red slip of bad quality on the surface. The nozzle has traces of soot	3.5	5.2	2.4	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
					3.5	5.2	2.4	
3	O-37/1850/ B4/464	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The nozzle is fragmented. The bottom is round and flat	“grooves” on the rim, a rosette on the outer side of the bottom	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red-brownish slip of bad quality on the surface	3.5	5.4	3.0	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
					3.5	5.4	3.0	
4	O-36/2159/ B3/117	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a base for a vertical handle that is not preserved. The bottom is round and flat	“grooves” on the rim	dense; admixture of silver mica. Red slip of bad quality on the surface	2.5	5.6	3.0	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
					2.5	5.6	3.0	

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Place of find	Place of storage	Illustration		
					height	body Ø	bottom Ø				length	handle
5	O-38/4171/ B5/86	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a vertical handle. The bottom is round and flat.	"grooves" on the rim, a dot on the outer side of the bottom	dense; no visual admixtures. Red slip of bad quality on the surface	3.7	5.5	2.5	7.2	1.8x0.7	Lower Town of Olbia. Accompanying material is of the 1st – 3rd c. AD	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:5
6	O-39/968/ B2/824/ KB.15889	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a vertical handle. The nozzle is fragmented. The bottom is round and slightly concave.	"grooves" on the rim	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red slip of good quality on the surface	3.0	5.5	2.6	6.5	1.6x0.4	Lower Town of Olbia. Quadrat no. 15889. Accompanying material is of the 1st – 3rd c. AD	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:6
7	O-38/1425/ B5/1083	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus with a vertical handle is preserved	"grooves" on the rim	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red slip of good quality on the surface	2.8	5.0	x	5.5	1.4x0.6	Lower Town of Olbia. Accompanying material is of the 1st – 3rd c. AD	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:7
8	O-39/1373/ B6/468	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a vertical handle. The nozzle is fragmented. The bottom is round and slightly concave	"grooves" on the rim; a rosette on the outer side of the bottom	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red slip of bad quality on the surface	3.1	5.2	2.4	6.3	1.7x0.4	Lower Town of Olbia. Accompanying material is of the 1st – 3rd c. AD	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:8

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Place of find	Place of storage	Illustration
					height	body Ø	bottom Ø			
9	O-2008/ P-25/1017	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The discus is fragmented. The bottom is flat	no ornament	admixture of small fractures of limestone and sand. The surface without any covering	3.7	5.0	7.3	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 4th c. AD	Museum of Archaeology, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:9
10	O-87/ P-25/161	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus and a part of the nozzle are preserved	a fuzzy zigzag pattern around the filling hole	admixture of small fractures of mica. The surface has a light-yellow clay covering	×	5.0	6.7	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 2nd-3rd c. AD	Museum of Archaeology, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:10
11	O-38/1053/ B5/1085	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus with a solid vertical handle is preserved	a rosette in the centre of the discus and a series of round indentations along the edge of the rim that are considered as leaves	dense; admixture of small fractures of limestone. Red slip of bad quality on the surface	3.5	5.0	6.8	Lower Town of Olbia. Accompanying material is of the 1st – 3rd c. AD	Museum of the History of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:11
12	O-2003/ P-25/2261	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus, a part of the nozzle and a vertical handle are preserved. The nozzle has traces of soot	a stylized shell on the discus	admixture of small fractures of golden mica and limestone. The surface is rough, has a light-yellow clay covering. 4/8 2.5YR	4.8	6.5	10.0	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 1st-3rd c. AD	Museum of Archaeology, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1:12

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Place of find	Place of storage	Illustration		
					height	body Ø	bottom Ø				length	handle
13	A-1264	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The bottom is flat	a stylized shell on the discus	admixture of limestone. The surface hasn't any traces of covering; smooth. 6/6 5YR	5.8	5.5	×	11.2	1.3×0.5	unknown	Mykolaiv Local History Museum "Staroflotski Kazarmy", Mykolaiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 13
14	O-99/ P-25/3047	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The bottom is flat	several rows of dot ornaments and barely visible volutes near the nozzle	admixture of small fractures limestone. The surface hasn't any traces of covering. 6/6 5YR	3.2	5.0	×	7.5	×	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 1st-3rd c. AD	Museum of Archaeology, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 14
15	O-2004/ P-25/808	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus, a part of the nozzle and a solid vertical handle are preserved	fuzzy zigzag pattern around the filling hole	admixture of big fractures of limestone and sand. The surface is rough, without covering	3.1	6.2	×	8.7	×	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 1st-3rd c. AD	Museum of Archaeology, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 15
16	O-92/ P-25/2284	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus, and a vertical handle are preserved	no ornament	admixture of small fractures of limestone and sand. The surface is rough, with light-yellow clay covering	2.1	5.8	×	3.9	0.9×1.0	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 1st-3rd c. AD	Museum of Archaeology, Kyiv, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 16

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Place of find	Place of storage	Illustration		
					height	body \emptyset	bottom \emptyset					
17	O-2017/ P-23/391	A moulded lamp. The item has got one nozzle and a solid vertical handle. The bottom is flat. There is soot on the nozzle	no ornament	admixture of small fractures of limestone. The surface is smooth, with red slip of good quality	4.2	6.0	2.8	8.5	x	R-23 sector. Accompanying material is of the 1st-3rd c. AD	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve "Olbia", Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 17
18	O-2004/ P-25/3477	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus, a part of the nozzle and a solid vertical handle are preserved. There is soot around the filling hole and nozzle	floral ornament with bunches of grapes made on raw clay	admixture of small fractures of limestone. The surface is smooth, with red slip of bad quality	2.8	5.8	x	7.4	x	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 4th-5th c. AD	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve "Olbia", Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 18
19	O-2016/ P-23/270	A moulded lamp fragment. Only a part of the body, a part of the base of vertical handle are preserved, and a part of the bottom. There is soot around the filling hole and nozzle	floral ornament with bunches of grapes made on raw clay	admixture of small fractures of limestone and mica. The surface is rough, with no covering	2.5	5.5	x	6.7	x	R-23 sector. Accompanying material is of the 5th c. AD	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve "Olbia", Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 19

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Place of find	Place of storage	Illustration
					height	body Ø	bottom Ø			
20	O-2004/ P-25/3923	A moulded lamp fragment (upper part). Only a part of the discus	groove-shaped décor around the filling hole, but the grooves are wider than in the cat. nos. 1-8	admixture of small fractures of limestone and mica. The surface is smooth, with red slip of bad quality	1.3	3.8	4.8	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 4th-5th c. AD	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve "Olbia", Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 20
21	O-2017/ P-25/224	A hand-made lamp. The item has one nozzle and a side solid handle. The bottom is flat. There is soot on the nozzle	no ornamentation	admixture of big fractures of limestone and sand. The surface is rough, with no covering	3.8	3.8	7.2	R-25 sector. Accompanying material from the pit no. 1900 is of the 4th – early 5th c. AD	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve "Olbia", Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 21
22	O-51/2495	A moulded lamp. The item has one nozzle. The bottom is flat. The nozzle if fragmented	no ornamentation	admixture of big fractures of limestone and sand. The surface is rough, with light-yellow clay covering	3.0	5.0	9.2	unknown	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve "Olbia", Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 22

No.	Inv. no.	A moulded lamp / a handmade lamp	Decoration	Clay	Dimensions (cm)			Place of find	Place of storage	Illustration	
					height	body \varnothing	bottom length				handle
23	O-2003/ P-25/2262	A moulded lamp fragment. A solid vertical handle with a part of the discus around it is preserved	a pair of fish on the edge of the discus	Clay admixture of small fractures of limestone. The surface is rough, with no covering	3.2	7.0	3.1	x	R-25 sector. Accompanying material is of the 3rd – 4th c. AD	Repository of the National Historical-Archaeological Reserve “Olbia”, Parutyne, Ukraine	Fig. 1: 23



Fig. 1. Inventory numbers of the lamps: 1 – O-38/1750/B5/93; 2 – O-38/2346/B5/1041; 3 – O-37/1850/B4/464; 4 – O-36/2159/B3/117; 5 – O-38/4171/B5/86; 6 – O-39/968/B2/824/кв.15889; 7 – O-38/1425/B5/1083; 8 – O-39/1373/B6/468; 9 – O-2008/R-25/1017; 10 – O-87/R-25/161; 11 – O-38/1053/B5/1085. Photos: I. Sheiko.

and Turova 2012: 376). Their probable production area seems to have been the southern part of the Western Black Sea region (Kostova and Dobrova 2008: 163).

Rounded-shaped “grooved” lamps dominate in our collection (Fig. 1. 2, 4–7), and there are only a few pear-shaped ones (Fig. 1.1, 3, 8). We have identical lamps among the collections of the Yalta Museum (Zhuravlev and Turova 2012: pl. 14, nos. 83, 85, 86, 93) and the National Museum in Warsaw (Bernhard 1955: tab. XCIII, nos. 331–333). An identical lamp to ours (Fig. 1.6), originates from Ephesus, and is dated from the end of the 2nd century AD, but the latter has volutes on the sides of the nozzle, indicating an earlier date (Lyon-Caen and Hoff 1986: cat. no. 125). In addition, such lamps are common in the Danube River region (Kuzmanov 1992: cat. nos. 277–278).

Lamp with a stylized shell on the discus (Fig. 2.1–2). Such lamps are reminiscent of a Hellenistic type shape, however, the closed form of the reservoir indicates their later date. They are decorated with round protrusions, and ribbed ornament. They were believed to be a variant of the “grooved” lamps, but this was a false conclusion. Oskar Val’dgauer mistakenly dated them to Hellenistic times (Val’dgauer 1914: cat. nos. 70–71) because of their body shape, similar to the products of this time. However, the material from the Cimmerian Bosporus (Panticapaeum, Tyritake, Iluraton) indicate that such lamps are dated to the 3rd century AD (Zabelina 1992: pls. 6.6; 322; Arsen’eva 1988: pls. 5–6). Denis Zhuravlev classifies them as Type No. 36 and writes that they are one of the most common types of lamps in the Bosporan Kingdom (Crimea, Ukraine and partly in Russian Federation) in Roman times, and believes that they were made there (Zhuravlev *et al.*, 2010: Type 36).

In the Tanais area, identical devices to our lamp (Fig. 2.2) were found during the excavations of a destroyed building dated to the first half–middle of the 3rd century BC (Arsen’eva 1988: 28, pls. 5.1–4; 6.1–3). In Panticapaeum too, such lamps were discovered in houses of the 3rd century AD (Zabelina 1992: 322).

Lamp with a rosette in the centre of the discus (Fig. 1.11). This object had a series of round indentations along the edge of the rim that are considered to represent leaves. It was found during a survey of the Lower Town in the late 1930s (Sheiko and Puklina 2019: 78). It resembles a similar lamp with a 13-petal rosette on the discus and ornamentation with leaves around it dated to the 3rd century AD from the collection of the Belgrade Museum (Krunić 2011, cat. nos. 322–323). Another analogy is among the products of Argos (Bovon 1966: pl. 11, no. 447), but the handle has a hole and the dating is later, that is – the 4th century AD. Among the materials of Kerameikos, there are two lamps that have similar decorations, however, the ornamentation around the discus is different: they are both of Attic



Fig. 2. Inventory numbers of the lamps: 1 – O-2003/R-25/2261; 2 – A-1264; 3 – O-99/R-25/3047; 4 – O-2004/R-25/808; 5 – O-92/R-25/2284; 6 – O-2017/R-23/391; 7 – O-2004/R-25/3477; 8 – O-2016/R-23/270; 9 – O-2004/R-25/3923; 10 – O-2017/R-25/224; 11 – O-51/2495; 12 – O-2003/R-25/2262; 13 – the lamp depicting the Jonah story.

After: Zhuravlev and Kostromichev 2017: table 46, 13, 177.

origin and are dated to AD 350–360 (Böttger 2002: pl. 54, no. 3446) and one – from Pompeii with the date – of AD 360–390 (Böttger 2002: pl. 68, no. 4002).

Lamp with several rows of dot ornaments and barely visible volutes near the nozzle (Fig. 2.3). This is a rare type in our collection. It was found, as the main part of the presented lamps in this paper, at the R-25 sector in Olbia. The handle also does not have a hole, as in the previous item. There is an analogy to this lighting device among the “Globuli-Lampen” from Kerameikos in Athens, with the dating AD 360–390 (Böttger 2002: pl. 69, no. 4072). The lamp from Olbia has a rather vague outline and a blurred design, which indicates that the matrix from which it was made was worn from frequent use. The clay is red with no visual impurities except for small fragments of limestone which corresponds to the imported types of lamps.

Lamp with no ornament with the handle without a hole (Fig. 1.9). The only complete analogy found to it is in the collection of the Louvre Museum (Lyon-Caen and Hoff 1986: cat. no. 281), of unknown origin and dating. The quality of the clay of this product indicates that it was poorly kneaded before firing. It was found in the R-25 sector while investigating a layer of the 4th century AD (Krapivina and Buiskykh 2009: 11).

Lamp with a indistinct zigzag pattern around the filling hole (Fig. 1.10). The elongated shape suggests a late dating. Lamps, similar in ornament and morphology, belong to the group of so-called “North African lamps”. This form appears in the 4th century AD near Alexandria and Egypt, also it was common in Italy and Greece at this time, where imitations of such lamps were made (Kuzmanov 1992: Type 36, cat. no. 304). In the 5th century AD, such lamps were popular in the Central Mediterranean, Thrace, Pannonia, and weakly in Dacia.

Georgi Kuzmanov convinced that such lamps (Fig. 2.4) belong among the Syrian-Palestinian products, which are dated from the end of the 4th century AD, and which were widespread in the region of Lower Moesia and Thrace in the 4th–5th centuries AD, but in the Istrian-Pontic area are found even until the 7th century AD (Kuzmanov 1992: Type 32, cat. no. 294).

Lamp with decoration similar to the “grooved” (Fig. 2.9). This small fragment comes from a lamp that is identical to a find dated to the 5th–6th centuries AD stored in the Museum of Hannover (Mlasowsky 1993: cat. no. 440), however, for Olbia it is more likely to consider the dating to the 5th century AD. Another analogy is from the collection of lamps from the British Museum (Bailey 1988: pl. 55, no. Q2262).

Lamp with a flat simple discus with no decoration (Fig. 2.5). The very small fragment of this object does not allow complete identification of its shape. Similar devices with such a discus without ornament, but with a different handle are found in Noricum, Pannonia, among the material of the 3rd–4th centuries AD (Kuzmanov: 1992, Type XLII, var. 1, see cat. no. 371). Moreover, there is a similar item among the collection of lamps of the British Museum (Bailey 1988: pl. 5, no. Q1577). The origin of such lamps was Gallia/Britannia, as it came from the western cemetery in the Ohlengärten in the north of Praunheim (Nida-Heddernheim). The dating is determined by the accompanying material and is much earlier than our lamp is – AD 120–150. It should be noted that identical shapes of lamps could have been popular for a long time before, for instance, a similar device is in the collection of Argos dated to the 2nd–1st centuries BC (Bovon 1966: pl. 4, no. 189).

Lamp with semi-closed form with no decoration (Fig. 2.6). This was found during research on the R-23 excavation site in Olbia among materials of the 1st–3rd centuries AD (Buislykh *et al.*, 2017: 34). This lamp is unique in shape, because it has the morphology of a late Hellenistic lamp, but the handle and elongated nozzle are not similar to the lighting devices of this time. Such a product has an analogy among the material from Trier, to a lamp dating from the 2nd–3rd centuries AD (Zeischka 1997: cat. nos. 67; 88), however, the handle has some extension at the top. Among the material from Tanais, a similar lamp was found with a later dating – the end of the 4th – beginning of the 5th century AD (Arsen'eva 1988: pl. 24.2). Almost identical lamps of orange clay and red slip covering like the Olbia item was found among the material from the Chersonesos necropolis in Grave 134 and Tomb 26 with the inventory dated to the 4th–5th centuries AD (Zhuravlev and Kostromichev 2017: pl. 36.5; pl. 41.4).

Lamp with a floral ornament with bunches of grapes (Fig. 2.8). This fragment also originates from the R-23 sector in Olbia. It depicts a floral ornament with bunches of grapes impressed in the raw clay. The lamp was possibly of Syrian origin, as its analogy was found among the materials of Dura-Europos (Baur 1947: fig. 34). According to the stratigraphy of the R-23 site, the lamp comes from a layer with the numismatic materials of the early 5th century AD (Buislykh *et al.*, 2017: 34). A similar lamp, but of bigger size, comes from the R-25 sector in Olbia (Fig. 2.7). Here the item has a part of a handle without a hole preserved, which is an indicator of a 4th–5th centuries dating.

Lamp with elongated form without decoration on the discus (Fig. 2.11). This has no analogies from any other ancient sites, but its shape indicates a dating to

the 3rd–4th centuries AD, the macroscopic features of the fabric clearly show that it was imported to Olbia, possibly from Asia Minor.

Lamp with hand-made construction (Fig. 2.10). This comes from the fill of a pit on the R-25 excavation site, which makes it possible to date it to the 4th century AD. However, it should be noted that the morphology of its shape is more similar to the lamps of Hellenistic times.

Lamp with a pair of fish on the edge of the discus (Fig. 2.12). This fragment is one of the most interesting pieces among the latest finds of lamps in the Olbian collection. It has been previously published in the work dedicated to the Corinthian imported lamps from Olbia Pontica (Sheiko 2017: 119–120, fig. 4.1). The reported study allowed the whole decorative composition of this lamp to be identified, which is impressive (Fig. 2.13). A much better preserved lamp was found in a closed deposit in the Chersonesos necropolis in a crypt that was dated by the second half of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD (Zhuravlev and Kostromichev 2017: 110–112; 177, pls. 46. 13; 2020: 70). The depicted scene corresponds to the story described in the Old Testament of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a sea monster. Such a scene on a lamp discus was popular in the ancient world (see more: Belousov *et al.*, 2018: 42; 2022: 69–70). The Olbia find is of Corinthian origin, judging by the characteristic clay, although the find from Chersonesos, according to Denis Zhuravlev, comes from one of the Greek centres (Belousov *et al.*, 2018: 41). This is the only find so far in Olbia with an image that belongs to the early Christian tradition. The scene with the ship, Jonah and the sea monster is one of the most popular in Early Christian art. It is shown for example on a number of sarcophagi of the second half of the 3rd–4th centuries, the most famous being the Jonah Sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum (Gerke 1940: taf. 1:1).

DISCUSSION

The issue of local production and imports is no less important in the study of ancient lamps found on the territory of Olbia Pontica. The discussion of local pottery production has been going on since the mid-20th century: scholars' works mainly concerned the analysis of ceramic products, although at that time firing kilns were discovered on the territory of the Olbian settlement (Slavin 1940: 12; 1952: 55; Vetshteyn 1958: 61–62) and the question of the existence of local pottery production has been raised (Knipovich 1940).

Signs of local Olbian ceramic production include the presence of limestone and sand fragments in the clay, often a rough surface of the products and poor slip or paint coating: the presence of ceramic moulds for the manufacture of lamps, which are found alongside the finished products. Such moulds have also been found on the territory of Olbia (for example, in the NG area in the complex dating from the 2nd–1st centuries BC, a ceramic mould for making two-nozzled lamps that imitated imported Pergamon examples was found, as well as several lamps made of local light estuarine clay, probably made from this mould (Vetshteyn 1975: 184, fig. 3).

Small golden mica fragments in the clay of most of the lamps are typical for Mediterranean pottery centres (Zhuravlev *et al.*, 2007: 31), which suggests that they were imported from there. The main characteristic of Miletian production is the clay, which has a significant admixture of small golden mica specks. Grey burnishing, dotted ornamentation, and small silver-coloured inclusions in the clay make it possible to assert Ephesian production (Zhuravlev *et al.*, 2010: 20).

The need to conduct ceramological analyses of Olbian clay is urgent in the study of local lamp production in particular and the possibility of conducting comparative statistical studies on the distribution of imports and local production.

CONCLUSION

The article examines the most recent lamps coming from the territory of Olbia Pontica. The prevailing number of the lamps considered in the paper (the total number of such items is 39) come from the section R-25, and the several remaining – section R-23 and the Lower Town of Olbia. Most of these lamps are of imported types and variants, with complete parallels known from Chersonesos, Cimmerian Bosphorus, Asia Minor and possibly also from Corinth, Syria and Palestine.

It should be noted that only in the past two decades has there been a systematic effort to study lamps as a distinct type of ceramic artefacts from ancient Northern Black Sea sites. Most scholars have concentrated primarily on lamps discovered in the Bosphorus area. Consequently, the collection of lamps from the North-Western Black Sea region, particularly from the Olbian polis, remains largely unexplored and unknown to the broader scientific community.

The study of ancient lamps from Olbia Pontica highlights significant issues of local production. There is an urgent need for ceramological analyses of Olbian clay to confirm local production and differentiate it from imports.

The finds of the latest lamps in Olbia are an extremely important aspect of the study of the political and economic history of the city, prompting research into a little known period, for which there are few archaeological artefacts, and contributing new data to correlate with the overall picture of site development created by scholars so far.

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