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# SOUTH-EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN LAMPS AND THEIR RECENT BIBLIOGRAPHY. FROM *TERRA (QUASI) INCOGNITA* TO LYCHNOLOGICAL RESEARCHES WHICH CHANGED SEVERAL TYPO-CHRONOLOGICAL AND REGIONAL 'AXIOMS'

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**Abstract:** Even if rather poor compared to other areas of the Ancient world, the lychnological bibliography and hence knowledge on lamps produced or imported in the Near East and Egypt has witnessed a small 'boom' in the last twenty years. Erasing too many approximations, we were forced to use before, lacking of data issued from in-depth studies made on large corpuses, provided either by large museum collections or from recent excavation stratigraphic contexts.

Five books recently appeared, widening dramatically the number of published artefacts and allowing further new reflections. This study is devoted to underline and bring to the researchers' awareness the most recent and the most important lamp studies published about materials from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Holy Land and Egypt for a better understanding of the frame in which these five volumes, analysed at the end of the paper, fit in.

**Keywords:** Ancient Lamps, Near East, Egypt, Bibliography.

**F**or all those who are a little familiar with the lychnological panorama of the Southern Mediterranean region and in particular with its Eastern part, the publication of lamp studies are very rare. Moreover, I like to underline this situation especially on the Egyptian finds. Therefore, when five volumes entirely dedicated to lamps are published, we cannot be anything but positively astonished.

In the last three years, successively, we were gifted with the publication of two volumes, finally coming to furnish a little the incredibly thin library shelf collecting the monographic works handling with lamps of the country of the Nile. On this line comes the Jolanta Mlynarczyk's *opus* on the lamps from Tell Atrib<sup>1</sup> or as constituting the largest part of a museum catalogue such as the in-depth research on all ancient lamps preserved in New Zealand<sup>2</sup>. In

<sup>1</sup> MLYNARCZYK 2012.

<sup>2</sup> HANNAH/ANSON 2013.

the same time, science was greeted with two books dedicated to the lamps of the Holy Land: the third volume, by Varda Sussman, of the corpus of the lamps of the Israel Antiquities Authority<sup>3</sup>, and the publication of one of the largest Israeli collections of lamps<sup>4</sup>. Finally, the last book offers to the public an in-depth research, masterly directed by Jean Bussière, dedicated to an important French collection of lamps coming mainly from the Southern Mediterranean Sea, from Tunisia to Asia Minor<sup>5</sup>.

Before commenting on these works to understand better why they were so awaited, we will draw a state of the question of the actual lychnological knowledge on these regions by underlining the most recent publications. Among them, the ones which have deeply changed the typological and chronological hypothesis that were previously adopted since decades by the whole scholar community. To enable an easy and useful reading for further research, we chose to present this subjective list by actual countries and to limit it to the 1990s with very few exceptions. For older publications, we invite the reader to consult – country by country – the complete bibliography we propose online on the International Lychnological Association's (ILA) website<sup>6</sup>.

## I. LATEST RESEARCHES PUBLISHED BY COUNTRY, WESTWARDS, FROM SYRIA TO EGYPT.

### Syria

Despite its enormous richness and diversity, Syria, from a lychnological point of view, has been intensively studied, for its main antique cities – mainly Antioch, Palmyra, Dura-Europos, Anab Safina, Apamea), from the 1920s up to the 1970s, culminating with a regional typo-chronological study<sup>7</sup>.

Alas, in comparison with architecture, epigraphy or statuary, lamps have been progressively neglected afterwards. In the late 1980s, finally, the enormous work of the Danish Expedition at Hama was published, with huge parts of one of the four volumes dedicated to lamps<sup>8</sup>.

Then, a few studies appeared, the first dedicated to the late antique and Islamic lamps preserved at the Bosra Museum<sup>9</sup>, then on a huge corpus from a single grave excavated in Palmyra<sup>10</sup> followed by an analysis of the Roman period lamps of the desert city<sup>11</sup>. Finally, we have also to quote three short articles on the lamps of the Czech excavations at Tell Erfad<sup>12</sup> (ancient Arpad), of the Australian excavations at

Jebel Khalid<sup>13</sup> and of the Belgian excavations at *Apamea*<sup>14</sup>.

For lamp specialists, the masterwork about a Syrian production recently published is doubtlessly the one resulting from the lamp-production centre discovered at Usays, the first research able to frame a type in the very first years of the Umayyad conquest<sup>15</sup>.

### Lebanon

The Country of the Cedar is one of the few areas in the whole Greek and Roman world, which does not benefit of a single volume dedicated to lamps.

Until recently, we were obliged to come back to articles written from the 1940s to the 1960s to give at least a typological frame to lamps found there. Fortunately, several scholars came to reveal the extraordinary importance of the Lebanese workshops, naturally during the Phoenician period<sup>16</sup>, but also putting into light some exclusive productions manufactured there during the Early Roman period and then during the late antique and Byzantine period.

For the first period mentioned, we learned that the skills of the workshops of Lebanon coastal cities seduced so much the Italian lamp-makers that some of them, like *Phoetaspus*, decided to open a branch in Tyre.<sup>17</sup> This was a well-known phenomenon especially for Alexandria. Moreover, the largest quantities ever quantified of the most delicate early imperial lamps ever produced, the “egg shell-thin” lamps, are attested in the Beirut region<sup>18</sup>.

For Late Antiquity, three recent researches established that two specific types, a rounded one and the ovoid lamps pierced by a very small filling-hole<sup>19</sup> were almost all produced in Lebanon and in the upper coastal part of Israel: for the last, a complete typo-chronology has been established by one of the most known experts of the area, T. Waliszewski<sup>20</sup>.

Besides, several recent excavations, mostly in Beirut<sup>21</sup>, but also in Byblos<sup>22</sup> provided extremely interesting corpuses of lamps.

### Jordan

For the purpose our topic, the Hashemite kingdom is quite poorly studied as a whole, with the exception of three major archaeological sites: Petra, Jerash and, less researched, Pella. Before coming to these great ancient cities, let us underline some recent researches devoted to other sites,

<sup>3</sup> SUSSMAN 2012.

<sup>4</sup> KAUFMANN 2012.

<sup>5</sup> BUSSIERE/RIVEL 2012.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.lychnology.org/bibliography/antiquity/local-researches-by-country/>.

<sup>7</sup> DOBBINS 1980.

<sup>8</sup> PAPANICOLAOU CHRISTENSEN 1986; PLOUG 1986.

<sup>9</sup> GUIDONI 1990 and 1995.

<sup>10</sup> HEIMBERG 1993.

<sup>11</sup> ROEMER-STREHL 2013.

<sup>12</sup> BOHAC 1997.

<sup>13</sup> JACKSON 2000.

<sup>14</sup> LORAND 2011.

<sup>15</sup> BLOCH 2010.

<sup>16</sup> CHARAF 2011.

<sup>17</sup> MIKATI 2003.

<sup>18</sup> MULDER-HYMANS 2001-2002.

<sup>19</sup> AWARKEH 2005; ALA EDDINE/AWARKEH 2011.

<sup>20</sup> WALISZEWSKI 2011.

<sup>21</sup> MIKATI 2002; MIKATI 2005; FRANGIE 2011.

<sup>22</sup> FRANGIE/SALLES 2011.

respectively Amman<sup>23</sup> and *Hippos/Sussita*<sup>24</sup>, not to forget the extremely interesting spectrometric analyses made on lamps from Petra<sup>25</sup> and Aqaba<sup>26</sup>.

Now, coming back to the three main sites, we will start with Pella, which is the least studied of them. The recent researches of K. da Costa within the Australian Mission revealed the lychnological importance of the site, where the lamps were at the base of one of the most accurate geo-chronological typology of the area's lamp production and diffusion<sup>27</sup>.

On the contrary, Jerash has recently known an intensification of researches and publications.<sup>28</sup> Above all, they were focused on the late antique and early Islamic typical productions of the amazingly creative workshops of the city. The products were exported and had impact upon the lamp production on a vast area, well beyond the *Decapolis*<sup>29</sup>.

Lastly, Petra is undoubtedly the most studied of the Jordanian sites, by its importance and its diversity, the Nabatean lamp productions being often quite seldom by their rendering or shapes. On this particular topic, see the PhD research published by Grace Barrett<sup>30</sup>. On groups of unearthed lamps, we will underline that only the Swiss Mission published a complete corpus of the excavated lamps<sup>31</sup>. As far as the lighting devices are regarded, the other foreign missions offered to us very important researches on Petra's settlements and towns, like Jabal Harûn<sup>32</sup>, Khirbet et-Tannur<sup>33</sup> or Khirbet Edh-Dharih<sup>34</sup>. Special studies were also dedicated to the Nabatean glass lamps<sup>35</sup>.

### The Holy Land

The Israeli colleagues are so active, together with all foreign missions excavating in the area, not to forget the daily work of the archaeologists of the *Institutum Biblicum Franciscanum*, that it would be impossible in this frame to draw a recent bibliography. We gladly invite scholars to visit the special page of the website of the ILA for a complete list of publications dedicated to this area.

In a very short and subjective list, we will just indicate a few books or articles that allowed in the past years to build an even more exact chronology and typology of the lamps of specific sites or types. As far as major archaeological sites are concerned, we must pay tribute to the major contribution of the complete researches resulting into major volumes

<sup>23</sup> ABU SHMAIS 2011 and MANSOUR 2011.

<sup>24</sup> MLYNARCZYK 2011a and 2011b.

<sup>25</sup> GARNIER/TOKARSKI/ORLANDO 2011.

<sup>26</sup> LAPP 2012.

<sup>27</sup> DA COSTA 2001 and 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *in primis* the numerous studies focused on, or integrating lamps in ZAYADINE 1986.

<sup>29</sup> KEHRBERG 1989, 2001, 2011 and SCHOLL 1991.

<sup>30</sup> BARRETT 2006.

<sup>31</sup> KELLER/GRAWEHR 2006 with an update article, GRAWEHR 2011.

<sup>32</sup> HOLMQVIST 2011.

<sup>33</sup> BARRETT 2011.

<sup>34</sup> DURAND 2011.

<sup>35</sup> LINDBLOM 2005; KELLER 2010.

dedicated to the lychnological panorama of Bet Shean<sup>36</sup> and Capernaum.<sup>37</sup> Both volumes, and moreover in the one dedicated to Bet Shean, the lamp types are re-discussed, from typologically, chronologically and geographically points of view, and set into their full list of known analogies coming from excavations. An equivalent work has been done, for Qumran, in an important study questioning all previous typo-chronologies of that the site<sup>38</sup>.

As far as specific periods are concerned, let us point out the new results offered by the researches led on Roman period lamps found at Apollonia<sup>39</sup>, on the late antique and Early Islamic period lamps found in the Roman Baths of Hammat Gader<sup>40</sup> and on the Early Islamic period at *Tiberias*<sup>41</sup>.

We will conclude by underlining two of the most interesting studies made in this area, the first deserving to be implemented almost everywhere in the ancient world, by its innovative methodology and unbelievable results. It deals with the geographic expansion in neighbouring cities and areas, i.e. refusal, acceptance, inspiration given to local manufactures, of the lamps and lamp types made in Jerusalem during the Early Roman Period.<sup>42</sup> The second comes to analyse in all its depth a specific inhabit of some communities towards Roman standard lamps with ornamented discus, the last being intentionally broken. The authors took the example of Apollonia, because not only more than 600 such Roman lamps were found, but also, as a harbour, the city had a very different sociology between its inhabitants and their religion, way of life, daily choices<sup>43</sup>.

Finally yet importantly, at the moment, the most colossal works in the Holy Land is Varda Sussman's full publication of the lamps preserved by the Israel Antiquities Authority.<sup>44</sup> A 'monument' that will be later discuss later, in the frame of the review of the third volume, recently published.

### Egypt

Historically, most of the excavations held on the land of the Pharaoh's have neglected the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic periods. It is worth here to remind that the very first antique lamps published were edited after the pioneer British excavation at Ehnasya (1904) and after the foundation, in the early 1920s, of the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria and the birth of its regular "Bulletin". This situation has changed progressively, mainly after WWII. Recently, a particular wave of interest has concerned the area between the Nile and the Red Sea and its vital trade roads, with specific attention to sea harbours like

<sup>36</sup> HADAD 2002.

<sup>37</sup> LOFFREDA 2008.

<sup>38</sup> MLYNARCZYK 2013.

<sup>39</sup> WEXLER/GILBOA 1996.

<sup>40</sup> COEN-UZZIELLI 1997.

<sup>41</sup> STACEY 2004.

<sup>42</sup> ADAN-BAYEWITZ/WIEDER/ASARO et al. 2008.

<sup>43</sup> TAL/TEIXEIRA-BASTOS 2012.

<sup>44</sup> SUSSMAN 2007 and 2009.

Marea<sup>45</sup>, Myos Hormos<sup>46</sup> the Roman settlements and *castra* protecting the caravans from desert pirates. Some of the excavations delivered an impressive quantity of lamps, such as the ones held at *Mons Claudianus*<sup>47</sup> or *Mons Porphyrites*<sup>48</sup>.

Alexandria itself was also the object of new excavations led by the French Mission.<sup>49</sup> On the same line, the Roman and later levels of the cities from the Mediterranean coast as *Pelusium*<sup>50</sup> or El-Alamein<sup>51</sup>, and of inner Egypt well-known sites such as Saqqara<sup>52</sup> and of El-Ashmunein<sup>53</sup> have undergone archaeological investigations.

Typologically, the Hellenistic lamps of Alexandria and their typologies have been the subject studied of two important works<sup>54</sup>.

Finally, we will emphasize the publication of an outstanding discovery, for the entire ancient world, a series of intact lamp-wicks found by the French Mission in the monastery of Bawit<sup>55</sup>. Worthy to be underlined are also the amazing results of the first research ever led on fingerprints on lamps<sup>56</sup> and the quite astonishing data extracted from the analysis of oil and animal fats used on a panel of lamps discovered in Egypt<sup>57</sup>.

## II. The five recently published volumes: a short review of their values.

**Jolanta Mlynarczyk, *Terracotta Oil Lamps (Tell Atrib 1985-1995, Vol. III)*, Varsovie, Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, 2012, 180 pp., 44 fig., 30 pl. (ISBN: 978-83-7543-233-6).**

We face a rarity: the second book ever published on a lamp corpus issued of excavations led in Egypt, after the monograph dedicated to the lighting devices Karanis<sup>58</sup>.

Since the 1970s and the publication of her first works dedicated to the lamps of the Polish excavations on the ancient site of Athribis<sup>59</sup>, J. Mlynarczyk revealed the lychnological importance of this city located on the Nile's Delta. The author quickly revealed to be one of the best experts in Middle Eastern lychnology, publishing Jordanian, Israeli as well Cypriot contexts.

However, the largest part of her studies is dedicated to the phenomenon of production, innovation, import and

<sup>45</sup> SZYMAŃSKA 2008.

<sup>46</sup> PEACOCK 2011.

<sup>47</sup> KNOWLES 2006.

<sup>48</sup> BAILEY 2007.

<sup>49</sup> GEORGES 2001, 2003a, 2003b.

<sup>50</sup> WASILEWSKA 2008.

<sup>51</sup> ZYCH 2003.

<sup>52</sup> BAILEY 2007.

<sup>53</sup> BAILEY 1998.

<sup>54</sup> MLYNARCZYK 1997; BLONDE 1998.

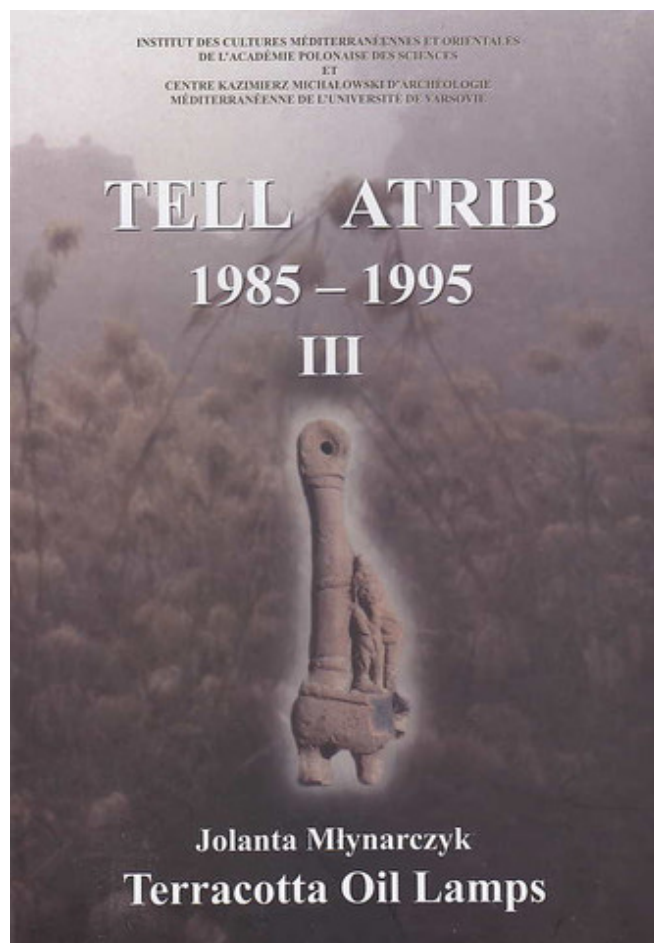
<sup>55</sup> CORTOPASSI 2008.

<sup>56</sup> DZIERZYKRAY-ROGALSKI/GRZESZYK 1991.

<sup>57</sup> COPLEY/BLAND/ROSE et al. 2005.

<sup>58</sup> SHIER 1978.

<sup>59</sup> MLYNARCZYK 1973 and 1974.



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export of lamps in/from Alexandria. It is mainly focused on the periods when the workshops of the main metropolis of the Southern Mediterranean Sea knew how to mix external influences with own innovations to produce brand new types, as for example in the late Hellenistic period<sup>60</sup> or during the late Antique period<sup>61</sup>.

The volume analyses 354 lamps discovered during the excavations led by the Polish team during a decade. Far from being just a catalogue, this work can be considered as one of the titanic works in this field of research. This research is a real compendium about Egyptian lychnology for almost ten centuries (from the end of the 4th century BC to the 5th century AD).

The commercial importance of the site justifies the wealth and the diversity of the panorama of the lamps, which were unearthed. We see a mix of imports, copies, inspirations and original works. Thanks to the enormous knowledge of the author on the subject, we also learn to distinguish better, through the Athribis artefacts, the various types produced on the Egyptian territory, created at Alexandria or at the Fayyum, then sold or copied in different cities. This study finally comes to complete our knowledge, especially in ceramological approaches, which were still based, until its publication, on the researches made by Hayes<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> MLYNARCZYK 1997 and 1998.

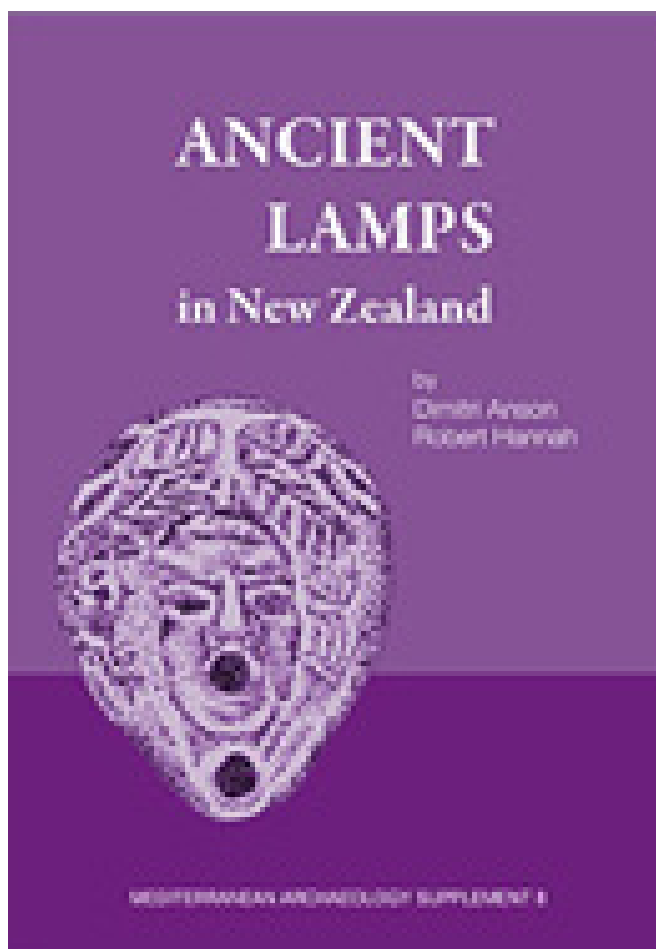
<sup>61</sup> MLYNARCZYK 1995.

<sup>62</sup> HAYES 1980.

We have no doubt that this volume is going to become a milestone within the specialized literature. The only reproach that we can make, as well as for the other major reference study published by J. Mlynarczyk, namely the typology of the Hellenistic lamps of Alexandria<sup>63</sup>, is to leave (a little) the enthusiast on his hunger in matter of the number of illustrations. The choice, voluntarily centred on the explanation of the types and their subcategories, and not on the individual lamps, is reflected in both volumes by a strong selection, for the plates, choosing to illustrate only the most important artefacts or fragments.

Let us underline nevertheless the excellence of the typographic realization, allowing to seize all the problems and the hypotheses formulated by the author, thanks to three successive and very different illustrative parts (drawings, photographs in grey-scale and very interesting comparative colour plates).

**Robert Hannah, Dimitri Anson, *Ancient Lamps in New Zealand (Mediterranean Archaeology, Supplement 8)*, Sydney, Meditarch, 2013, 292 p., 600+ ill. (ISBN: 978-0-9580265-4-3)**



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The most recent of the volumes, the work of Robert Hannah and Dimitri Anson, was expected for a long time,

<sup>63</sup> MLYNARCZYK 1997.

as it had been announced since more than a decade, by its authors, as being on work<sup>64</sup>. If its little “exotic” name (antique lamps in New Zealand) can intrigue, it is well and truly, a reasoned and exhaustive catalogue of all the Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic lamps preserved in the museums of New Zealand.

About 600 lamps are studied, with an illustrative part of the highest quality (every artefact is rendered by a zenithally picture and a profile one as well as, if needed, a detail of the potter’s mark and an additional drawing), allowing the reader to observe perfectly every detail of each lamp. The catalogue records for each lamp follow the classic standard containing all the necessary elements needed by scholars.

When looking at the regional and typological categories represented, we observe that a huge majority of the lamps fit into to the big categories well attested in the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and then Muslim Egypt and Near East. A panel of lamps produced in the Southern Mediterranean areas (mainly North Africa) as well as in Greece and in Italy comes to complete this picture.

For the reader interested in the quite ‘bizarre’ fact, to find such a geographical homogeneity of the origin of artefacts in museums situated to the antipodes of their finding spots, the introductory chapter is a real treaty on contemporary history, delivering us a map of the operation zones of the New Zealand and Australian units during the two world conflicts.

In this frame, several officers, but also sometimes of private soldiers, during their permissions spent in big cities such as Cairo or Alexandria, became interested in antiques, among which lamps, and purchased them. The most striking example is certainly the one of Lieutenant-colonel Fred Waite, who, during the Second World War, became a real enthusiast of Egyptian archaeology, consulting the best professionals on-the-spot before acquiring numerous artefacts, among which 140 lamps.

After the war, his desire to share his knowledge and the “small treasures” he bought will urge him not only to offer to public institutions his whole collection - mainly the Otago Museum -, but also to become a honorary curator of the last, for which he will even publish the guide of the collection of pre-dynastic Egyptian ceramics.

Returning to the volume itself, its qualities, already mentioned, are uncountable. Nevertheless, it presents, from our point, of view two weak points, which cannot be considered as major, but which do not facilitate the use of this research as a comparative search tool.

The first one reflects a choice, assumed by the authors, to separate the catalogue into two parts, the first one being dedicated to the biggest corpus of the country, the Otago Museum’s one, while the second part presents the lamps

<sup>64</sup> Cf. ANSON/HANNAH 1990.

of all other collections held in New Zealand. As a direct consequence, every typological and geographical section is redoubled. We would undoubtedly have preferred to find lamps in unified sections, for a simpler and quicker reading by lychnologists in search of useful parallels.

In another register, most probably financial parameters forced the editor to publish the plates without insuring the scale homogeneity of the lamps reproduced, which has been designed to be one of the most complete and most well thought known to us. This option is a minus for the quality of the illustrative part. Due to the small sizes of the reproductions of several lamps and, thus, the reader is forced to go back to the lamp description in order to find out its sizes.<sup>65</sup> Finally, the bibliography presents some *omissis*. However, this aspect may not damage the overall quality of the volume, but could have influenced a certain inaccuracy in some (rare) cases of typological attributions or in some of the chronologies proposed by the authors.

On conclusion, this volume comes to join a series of works led in the museums of the Australian neighbour, some published<sup>66</sup>, others just resumed on-line<sup>67</sup>.

**Varda Sussman, *Roman Period Oil Lamps in the Holy Land. Collection of the Israel Antiquities Authority. BAR International Series 2447 (Oxford, Archaeopress) 2012, 431 pp., 500+ ill. (ISBN: 978-1-4073-1027-5)***

With six books and several dozens of scientific papers, Varda Sussman is one of the best specialist on the very eclectic theme of the oil lamps made and found in the Holy Land, which is characterized, mainly in Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine times, by an incredible number of micro-regional differences and subtypes. This book is in fact the third volume of a series by the same author, devoted to a complete publication of the lamps preserved in the Collection of the Israel Antiquities Authority. After the monograph targeting the “saucer lamps” – establishing the first ever rock-solid typo-chronology of the so-called “Phoenician lamps”<sup>68</sup> – and the research dedicated to the Greek and Hellenistic lamps<sup>69</sup>, this third opus is a typological study of 1081 lamps, dated between the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD. It includes both moulded and wheel-made lamps, imports and imitations from the neighbouring countries. At the same time, it extends the usefulness of the research to a much broader area than the actual territory of Israel.

The knowledge of the author allowed her to find several new data and to confirm or infirm previous hypothesis. As in

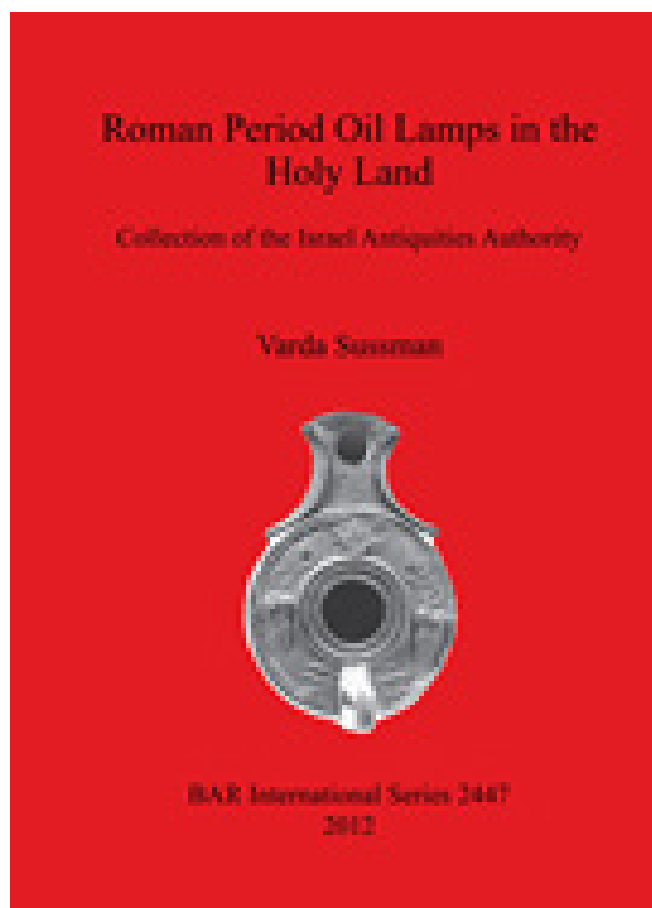
<sup>65</sup> Most of the lamps are illustrated on a 1:2 scale, some even in a 1:3 scale, while the lychnological standard has since years been defined as a homogeneous representation of all lamps in a 2:3 scale.

<sup>66</sup> MACDONALD 1898; DESCOEUDRES/HARRISON 1997.

<sup>67</sup> BEAMES 2004, QUEENSLAND 1 and 2. *N.B.*: the 26 lamps, almost all illustrated, and their individual study are available at: [http://sydney.edu.au/museums/collections\\_search/index.php](http://sydney.edu.au/museums/collections_search/index.php) (search: lamps).

<sup>68</sup> SUSSMAN 2007.

<sup>69</sup> SUSSMAN 2009.



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the two previous volumes, the immense bibliography quoted, associated to the data collected in the excavation archives, made possible to draw for each sub-type a geographical production and distribution chronological discussion, and to draw the relationships between the different micro-regional specific variants.

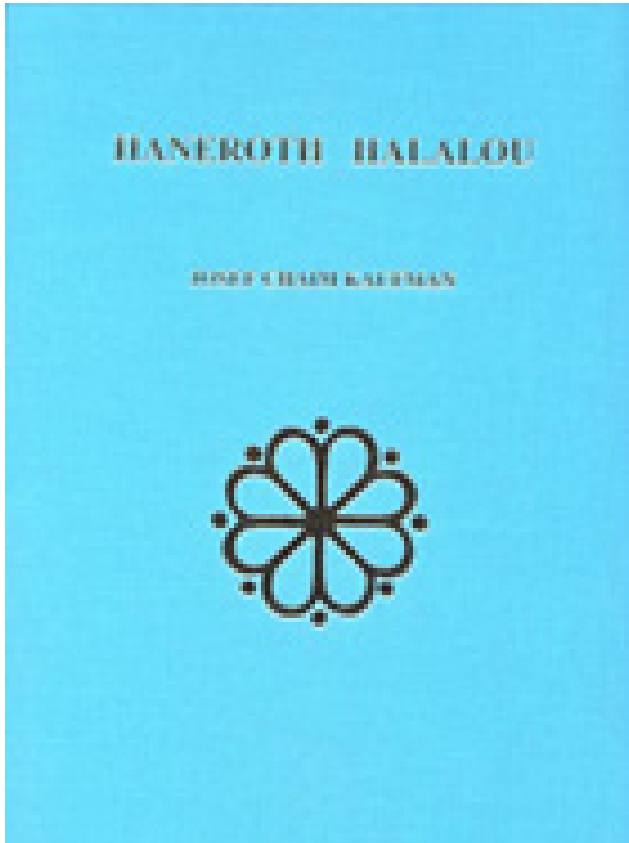
The greatest innovation proposed by the author is to take into consideration the shape and the dimensions of the wick-hole of the lamps. This idea never suggested nor used before proved to be extremely pertinent for her research, as several local productions of almost identical artefacts could be identified thanks to this specific approach. Of course, this method would be hard to use in other geographical areas, but we are convinced that an attempt to use it in the Near East and in Egypt on specific types such as the famous “*Frog-Lamps*” could be a very interesting perspective.

The quantity of the illustrations (almost all the lamps are reproduced, either by a drawing or by a zenithally grey-scale picture) allows to the book to be used by scholars not only as a typology, but also as a reference manual in the search for exact parallels.

The lonely drawback we could find in this masterpiece is a certain lack of care in the details of the text (mainly the bibliography): small typographical mistakes abound. The same could also be said as far as the pictures are regarded. If published by the same editor, we hope that for the next volume, we are already waiting for, the Israel Antiquities

Authority will support V. Sussman with a proof-reader and a graphic expert.

**Josef Chaim Kaufmann, Haneroth Halalou. My Collection of Ancient Oil Lamps from the Land of Israel, Jaffa, Archaeological Center Publications, 2012, 288 pp., 1034 ill. (ISBN: 965-7162-20-3)**



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This nice, bound book, with its 1033 lamps and 1 lantern published, “is not based on scientific or archaeological research”, as its author points out with honesty since the first page. As such, the text is limited to a single small French/English bilingual introductory section (pp. 7-20). The lamps are not accompanied with any detailed record. Worse, the choice not to give any of the basic technical data (dimensions, characteristics of clay and slip) is hard to understand, and will probably, alone, drive this monograph out of the purely scientific shelves of the research libraries.

Nevertheless, assisted by archaeologist Robert Deutsch in the classification of all the lamps, Josef Kaufmann offers us an iconographic *apparatus* among the most well printed of its kind. Each lamp is illustrated by high-quality picture in grey-scale and sometimes in colour<sup>70</sup>, which allows an easy and pleasant use for the archaeologists in search of additional analogies. Besides a brief description of each lamp on the plates plate, J. Kaufmann and R. Deutsch took care of mentioning, when possible, at least the most similar analogy found on the main academic books published on the lamps

<sup>70</sup> We can only presume that the scale is 1:1, as there is no precise information on this aspect.

of Holy Land.

As such, this work deserves to be acquired, as it comes to complete the existing scientific corpuses. Another asset, which can be further exploited by the researchers, is the grouped publication of lamps nos. 1-95, all decorated with the menorah symbol, constituting a unique corpus, by its number, of Roman and late-antique local, but also oriental or African lamps. By itself, this collection becomes an extremely precious lychnological appendix to the famous treaty on the representation of the sacred candelabrum on all antique possible supports, including the lamps, in the Greek and Roman world, Rachel Hachlili’s essential work<sup>71</sup>.

However, it regrettably to notice the far too simple way this collection was handled, especially that, a few years before, another famous Israeli collector, Noam Adler<sup>72</sup>, had published his corpus of 1046 lamps. He has provided simple typological introductions with basic bibliography, and associating each lamp with a small record containing a minimum of information (above all the dimensions of each artefact).

**Jean Bussière, Jean-Claude Rivel, Lampes antiques de Méditerranée. La collection Rivel (BAR International Series 2428), Oxford, Archaeopress, 2012, 380 pp., 500+ ill. (ISBN: 978-1-4073-1027-5)**



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<sup>71</sup> HACHLILI 2001.

<sup>72</sup> ADLER 2004.

It is very hard to find the words to review Bussi re and Rivel's work. The corpus analyses lamps coming from several international museum and private collections. However, many lamps have unknown or uncertain provenience. Hence, the studies of such heterogeneous groups provide, often, quite scarce scientific publications. This led to exaggerate points of view we hear sometimes by some rare "fanatics" of the pure field archaeology who, regularly underestimating the value of museum publications, consider that an object without context is not worth a research and only excavation corporuses deserve the scientific interest of the scholars.

The proof of the untruth of this point of view, for the lychnological science, was set by the milestones built since the 1970s on huge museum collections, *in primis* by the researches published by Hayes<sup>73</sup>, Bailey<sup>74</sup>, Larese and Sgreva<sup>75</sup>, the same Bussi re<sup>76</sup>, or B mont and Chew<sup>77</sup>, which came to complete with harmony the missing information gathered in the excavation publications.

Together with the other books mentioned above this volume can be framed in the top list of the most useful publications for scholars. This work succeeds to make from each of the 406 lamps - from Phoenicians to Medieval Arab times - a reference for scholars desiring to find an up-to-date database for their typology, chronology, area of production/distribution, bibliography, etc.

The structure of the book is a treaty of perfectly-mastered methodology - Jean Bussi re's 'trademark' -, by its structure, chapter descriptions, individual lamp records, chronology and list of analogies, perfected with one of the most complete and well-rendered illustrative *apparatus* we've seen recently.

The drawing skills of Jean-Claude Rivel offer to the reader amazing renderings of the top view, the base view and the profile section of each type. The same, each lamp is illustrated with three pictures, top and bottom, and one lateral. At the end of the volume, the discus scenes are drawn to build a ready-to-use iconographical index, coupled with the index of the potters' signatures and marks, rendered with their date range if known. At the end of the book, a selection of the most interesting exemplars is rendered into six colour plates, allowing us to observe the different color patterns described within the records.

Chronologically and geographically, the corpus is divided into 88 Phoenician, Punic Greek and Hellenistic Lamps; 70 Early Roman Imperial Lamps made in Italy or in the provinces. While the huge majority of the collection is based on Tunisian lamps, with an interesting choice of Near Eastern, Micro-Asiatic and Egyptian artefacts, it must be mentioned here the very nice selection of the scarcely studied wheel-made Arab medieval lamps.

<sup>73</sup> HAYES 1980.

<sup>74</sup> BAILEY 1975, 1980, 1988, 1996.

<sup>75</sup> LARESE/SGREVA 1997.

<sup>76</sup> BUSSI RE 2000 and 2007.

<sup>77</sup> BEMONT/CHEW 2007.

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