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IONIC IMPOST CAPITALS FROM THE TAURIC CHERSONESE

In the 5th and 6th centuries Chersonesus became the destination for several hundred marble architectural details from the Proconnesian quarries of Constantinople: columns and capitals, ambos and chancel barriers, tiles for wall facings, floors and doorways. In terms of their variety and number, Chersonesus is exceptionally rich in the Pontic area and could be compared to Ravenna. Interesting in themselves as architectural decoration, they are also very important as an aid in clarifying the chronology of churches in Chersonesus and elsewhere in the Crimea. Many elements of marble decoration may have been moved, and establishing their original location is hardly possible. The capitals from Chersonesus represent virtually all known types of the Late Antique/Early Byzantine capital. They include Composite capitals with fine-toothed acanthus decoration; Corinthian capitals with two rows of acanthus leaves; variations on the Corinthian capital, Ionic impost capitals, imposts and an example of an Ionic capital. The greater part of the capitals date to the second half of the 5th century and the first half of the 6th. It was during this period that the larger basilicas, for which all these capitals, were constructed. The present article is devoted to ionic impost capitals in the Chersonesus collection.

Keywords: Crimea, Chersonesus, Proconnesian quarries, Early Byzantine capitals, Ionic impost capitals, Cross-acanthus, Cross

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ИОНИЧЕСКИЕ ИМПОСТНЫЕ КАПИТЕЛИ ИЗ ХЕРСОНЕСА ТАВРИЧЕСКОГО

В V–VI вв. в Херсонес Таврический были вывезены сотни мраморных архитектурных деталей из византийских мастерских, расположенных на о. Проконнес в Мраморном море, близ Константинополя. Среди них колонны и капители, амвоны и алтарные преграды, наличники окон и дверей, плиты для облицовки стен и полов. По количеству и разнообразию мрамора Херсонес — самый богатый город в Причерноморском ареале, его можно сравнить с Равенной. Эти мраморные детали, интересные сами по себе как вид архитектурного декора, также очень важны для уточнения хронологии церквей в Херсонесе и в Крыму в целом. Многие элементы мраморного декора перемещались, поэтому сейчас едва ли возможно установить их первоначальное положение. Капители из Херсонеса представляют все известные типы позднеантичной / ранневизантийской капители: композитную капитель с тонким зубчатым аканфом, коринфскую капитель с двумя рядами листьев аканфа и ее разновидности, ионическую импостную капитель, простой импост и ионическую капитель (один экземпляр). Большая часть капителей датируется второй половиной V в. и первой половиной VI в. Именно в этот период и были построены базилики, украшенные мраморами. Настоящая статья посвящена ионическим импостным капителям.

Ключевые слова: Крым, Херсонес, Проконнесские карьеры, ранневизантийские капители, Ионические импостные капители, декор «крест-аканф», мотивы креста

Chersonesus, Cherson in Byzantine sources, was the largest Byzantine city in the Crimea. The ruins of more than 20 early Byzantine religious buildings have been preserved here (Хрушкова 2004: 167–194; Khrushkova 2007: 75–125; Khrushkova 2013:

387–402; Хрушкова 2016а: 9–46; Khrushkova 2017b: 856–872). Several hundred marble architectural details, including capitals, were taken to Chersonesus from the workshops on the island of Proconnesus (Якобсон 1959: 144–146; Khrushkova 2008: 141–158; Bier-

nacki 2009; Хрушкова 2011: 174–191; Khrushkova 2012: 129–140; Хрушкова 2017a: 311–341; Хрушкова 2017b: 147–168; Khrushkova 2018: 51–66; Хрушкова 2019: 303–472). The main collection of marble is kept in the “Tauric Chersonese” State Historical and Archaeological Museum-Reserve in Sevastopol, Crimea¹.

Previous article has been devoted to simple impost capitals in the Chersonesus collection (Khrushkova 2023). In the present article, another large part of the marble architectural details, the Ionic impost capitals are analyses.

The Ionic impost capitals comprise 32 whole and 15 fragmented specimens, which represents about 37 % of the total number of Chersonesan capitals presently known (Якобсон 1959: 144; Biernacki 2009: 44–52). One of the first researchers on Chersonesus, Alexandre L. Berthier-Delagarde (1842–1920) (Khrushkova 2012a: 168–169), expressed the opinion that all the marbles of Chersonesus “belong to the 6th or rather to the 7th century” (Бертье-Делагард 1893: 30–31). This opinion no longer holds currency. The first generalizing work on the marbles of Chersonesus in connection with the architecture of the basilicas was published by the known researcher of Chersonesus Anatoly L. Yakobson (1906–1984) (Якобсон 1959; Khrushkova 2014: 153).

A type of Ionic impost capital became more widespread which combined two elements in one block of stone: the impost and the Ionic element. These capitals were widely used in vaulted structures, which in the 6th century became predominant in the Byzantine world. At a time when traditional Ionic capitals had almost become obsolete, their combination with an impost gave them new life. Later forms of the Ionic impost capital outlived their heyday in the Justinian era by a significant margin. A typology of Ionic impost capitals was created by Rudolf Friedrich Kautzsch (1858–1945) (Dennert 2012b: 702), whose seminal work on late antique capitals retains its significance today (Kautzsch 1936). Kautzsch's chronology and typology are based on a consideration of the structure of the capitals, as well as a stylistic analysis of acanthus forms, in the tradition of the German school of art history founded by Alois Riegl (1858–1905) (Dennert 2012a: 1079–1080). The reader will find a historiographical overview in Vasi-

liki Vemi's thesis on the Ionic impost capital in Greece. For the chronology of the capitals in Greece, Vemi attaches particular importance to the ratio of the height of the Ionic element to the height of the impost (Vemi 1989: 6–8). Constructing an absolute chronology of the capitals, most of which are isolated from their architectural context, is a difficult problem.

Ionic impost capitals are a characteristic innovation of the late antique era. They consist of two elements: the Ionic element in the lower part and the impost in the upper part. At the beginning of the formation of the type, both elements existed separately, but soon the form of the Ionic impost, carved from a single block of marble, was formed. The mass construction of vaulted buildings led to the widespread use of Ionic impost capitals, which created a strong support for the arch and vault (Herrmann 1988: 5–66). They were used in the main colonnades of basilicas, for example in Bulgaria and Macedonia, but they were also widely used in auxiliary parts of large basilicas, such as choirs and *atria*. Ionic impost capitals were produced in abundance in workshops on the island of Proconnesus in the second half of the 5th century and in the first half of the 6th century. In the Justinian era, these capitals were mass-produced in Constantinople. They are preserved *in situ* in the churches of Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene, and Saints Sergius and Bacchus; they embellished the church of St John the Baptist in Ebdomon. Ionic impost capitals from the middle of the 6th century have been discovered in Kuşadasi near Istanbul (Russo 2005: 23–45; Russo 2008a: 41–60, fig. 4–8). Excavations of the anonymous Basilica A in the Beyazit area in the center of the ancient part of the city also revealed capitals of this type. In addition, several Ionic impost capitals are preserved in the lapidarium of the Hagia Sophia Church Museum and in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Kautzsch 1936: 172–178; Zolft 1994: 9–45, 242–366; Peschlow 2001: 103–106).

Ionic impost capitals are also common in Asia Minor, for example in the large complex of the Church of St John the Evangelist in Ephesus, in its second phase, which dates from Justinian I (Russo 2008b: 221–234, fig. 5–12), in the Balkans (Stobi, Philippi, Thessaloniki, Nea Anchialos, Lechaion and elsewhere), in the Aegean islands, on Cy-

¹ Further referred to as the “Chersonesus Museum”, as it was previously known for many years.

prus and in North Africa (Sodini 1984: 5–66; Kramer 1994: 25–26, 30, 33–38, 42–46). Several such 6th century capitals are preserved in the Iznik Museum (Pralong 2003: 257, 274). In North Africa, capitals of this type spread during the “Byzantine Reconquista”, as exemplified by the basilica of Latrun A in Cyrenaica, for instance (Duval 1989: 2784, fig. 29).

Despite the apparent uniformity of these capitals, an evolution of the type can be traced in the structure of the capitals, in the decoration of the impost, and in the stylistic treatment of the elements. Gradually, the massivity of the impost increases; the Ionic element is reduced in size and simplified; the volutes lose their plasticity and sometimes turn into spiral motifs carved in marble. Balusters often lack the usual compression in the middle; the motifs decorating them become more varied. It is not uncommon for the impost to be decorated only on the obverse side; in some cases both narrow sides are decorated. The most common decorative motifs are the “Byzantine” cross or Chrismon, sometimes combined with acanthus leaves.

The chronology of the capitals remains a difficult problem. This is primarily due to the insufficient number of reliably dated specimens and the lack of precise methods for analysing the evolution of capitals. It remains unclear whether typological changes in capitals are always related to a chronological factor. Is their typological diversity a reflection of a unilinear development, or are we confronted with the simultaneous action of many factors, such as the particularities of a given job order or differences in the styles of individual craftsmen. For the early phase of capitals, precise dates are known in only a few cases. One dated example are the capitals from the church of St John the Baptist in the Stoudios Monastery, built in the year 453. Some of the oldest examples on the island of Kos can even be dated to the very beginning of the 4th century. Sometimes, the date of capitals with the image of the cross on the narrow side of the impost may be determined by the date of the church itself, as in the case of the Basilica of Acheiropoietos in Thessaloniki from the third quarter of the 5th century (Kramer 1994: 343). In the first half of the 5th century, Ionic impost capitals were already being used regularly in Ravenna and Rome; in the 6th century they began to be mass-produced (Peschlöw 2001: 103–108). In Greece and Macedonia, Ionic impost capitals may

be dated between 480 and 520. In the basilica from the last third of the 5th century in Delphi, composite capitals with thin toothed acanthus (also known as “Theodosian”) and Ionic impost capitals were used at the same time (Déroche 1989: 2713–2726). Obviously, it was possible for these two types of capitals to coexist.

Rudolf Kautzsch's classification of Ionic impost capitals into groups is still valid (Kautzsch 1936: 165–182). More than half a century later, Vasiliki Vemi proposed a more detailed typology in her dissertation on Ionic impost capitals in Greece. In her opinion, a large number of capitals of this type belong to the so-called “simplified type” III. The latter spread all over the Mediterranean from the middle of the 5th century, and “its crystallization” took place between the second half of the 5th century and the end of the 6th century. Type III may be sub-divided into 6 groups (Vemi 1989: 14–26). Vemi enumerates her tasks: to trace the evolution of the type; to create a clear typology; to develop a classification system; to determine dating parameters; and also to identify original specimens, separately for different periods and regions, moreover (Vemi 1989: 3–6). Obviously, such extensive tasks cannot be carried out quickly. Where chronology is concerned, Joachim Kramer assessed the dating proposed by Vemi as “apodictic”. In his opinion, the analysis of style is by nature largely subjective; the best result can be obtained by typological analysis (Kramer 1998: 55).

Ionic impost capitals from Chersonesus belong to the most widespread examples of type III, according to Vemi's classification. In the decoration of the imposts, the motif of the cross or Chrismon prevails, combined with vegetal motifs. The locations where the capitals were found are known only in isolated cases. Excavations of the Episcopal (so-called Uvarovskaya) Basilica in the late 19th century revealed four Ionic impost capitals. Disputes over the time of construction of the Episcopal Basilica have been carrying on for decades. Most probably, it was built in the second half of the 5th century (Хрушкова 2016b: 327–435; Khrushkova 2017a: 27–78).

BELOW IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPITALS.

Capital 1 (fig. 1), Odessa Historical Museum Ionic impost capital from the excavations of the Uvarovskaya Basilica in 1876



Fig. 1. Capital 1. Odessa Historical Museum

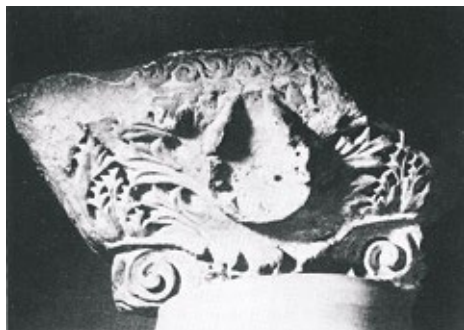


Fig. 2. Capital 2. State Historical Museum in Moscow

(Репников 1909: рис. 46; Измайлова 1927: 125); characterised by particularly meticulous workmanship. The top ends with a shelf on which there is a motif of a wavy line with scrolls in the arcs, as on the capitals from the Basilica of St John in the Stoudion. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a listel. All four sides of the impost are decorated with fine toothed acanthus leaves. On the obverse side in the center, there is a medallion once decorated with a now lost cross. On both sides of the medallion and on the corners of the capitals are acanthus leaves. The side of the capital is decorated with a large wavy shoot, from which leaves of thin toothed acanthus branch off. The volutes are carved clearly and deeply. The echinus has a wavy shoot, with three leaves of fine-toothed acanthus in its arcs. The baluster is decorated with two acanthus leaves extending from the middle to the corners. Second half of the 5th century (Хрушкова 2016b: 351–355; *Khrushkova* 2017a: 58–59, fig. 41).

Capital 2 (fig. 2), State Historical Museum in Moscow, No. 33495, Ionic impost Capital, dimensions 30 × 70 cm on the façade. In 1895, this capital from the excavations of the Uvarovskaya Basilica was given to the Museum by K. Kostsyushko-Valyuzhinich (*Grinenko* 2012: 756–757), and it has been published several times (Измайлова 1927: 121–125; Якобсон 1959: 141–142; Банк, Попова 1977: 91, No. 121; *Khrushkova* 2008: 156–158, fig. 31; *Khrushkova* 2018: 51–66, fig. 2; Хрушкова 2016b, рис. 70; *Khrushkova* 2017a, fig. 37).

The state of preservation of the capital is satisfactory: the corners have broken off; the cross adorning the medallion is lost on the obverse side. The impost is wider than the Ionic element. On the obverse side of the impost in the center is an oval on

which, judging from analogous cases, there was an image of a cross. A peculiarity of the capital is the combination of acanthus leaves of two types. Leaves of thin toothed acanthus are placed on the corners of the Capital, and the usual ("soft") acanthus extend from the oval placed in the middle. The top of the Capital ends with a shelf, which is decorated with a wavy shoot with scrolls in its arcs. The Ionic part is separated from the impost by a listel, which passes to the echinus. The volutes of this capital are characterised by clear, deeply carved scrolls in one and a half turns. The balusters are decorated with acanthus leaves.

The ratio of the height of the Ionic element to the height of the impost is 1:3. Approximately the same proportions of the sections are to be found in the capitals from the Stoudios Basilica of St John the Baptist of 453, a feature *Vemi* considers an indicator of chronology (*Vemi* 1989: 186, No. 279). The decoration of the obverse side of the impost of our capital is close to the impost from the Stoudios basilica (*Wulff* 1913: 273, Abb. 128; *Strube* 1984: 24–28, Taf. 4, 16; *Zollt* 1994: 245–246; *Vemi* 1989: 186, No 279). The Stoudios specimen is characterised by a clearer pattern and more



Fig. 3. Capital 3. State Historical Museum in Moscow



a



b

Fig. 4. Capital 4. Hermitage Museum, exposition in Moscow

careful execution than the Chersonesus one. A fragment of an almost identical capital was found on the western coast of the Black Sea, at Tomi (Constanta) in Romania. Similar capitals also come from the Aegean region, Asia Minor and Constantinople, all dating from the mid-5th century (*Barsanti* 1989: 156–158, figs. 83–85). The Chersonesus capital may be dated to the middle of the 5th century. One group of four capitals comes from the Episcopal (Uvarovskaya) Basilica. Their dating to the second half of the 5th century agrees with the time of construction of the basilica, which is among the earliest of the basilicas of Chersonesus.

Capital 3 (fig. 3), State Historical Museum in Moscow, No. 33494 (*Банк, Попова* 1977: 90, No. 117). Ionic impost capital, given to the Museum in 1895 by Kosciuszko-Valyuzhinich. The capital comes from the Episcopal (Uvarovskaya) Basilica. State of preservation is good; the dimensions are 50 × 60 cm on the façade. The surface of the stone shows traces of tooling. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a listel; the impost is wider than the Ionic part. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a “Byzantine cross”. The volutes are

clearly carved, the echinus is decorated with two acanthus leaves. Geometric motifs are to be found on the balusters. Second half of the 5th century — early 6th century.

Capital 4 (fig. 4, a, b), Hermitage Museum, exposition. Ionic impost capital, a small part of the Ionic element has been lost. The capital was discovered during the Alexei S. Uvarov excavations in 1853 of the Bishop’s Basilica. The impost ends with an outwardly bevelled shelf. On the obverse side of the impost in the center, there is a Chrismon in the form of a combination of the Greek letters “Chi” and “Iota”. The Chrismon is inscribed within a laurel wreath tied together with ribbons, with an ovum placed at the top of the Chrismon. On both sides of the Chrismon are three large leaves of soft acanthus. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a listel. The volutes are carved with plasticity, with an “eye” in the center. The balusters are divided into two parts by a triple valance, each half decorated with long double acanthus leaves facing the corners of the capital.

Capital 5 (fig. 5, a, b), Chersonesus Museum, lapidarium. Ionic impost capital, satisfactory state of preservation, one corner



a



b

Fig. 5. Capital 5. Chersonesus Museum, lapidarium

of the impost is broken off. The width of the impost exceeds the width of the Ionic element. There is a “cross-acanthus” composition on the narrow sides of the impost. The “blossoming” cross is framed on both sides by four-lobed acanthus leaves. Long acanthus leaves flanking the composition fill the entire space above the cross. The composition is the same on both sides; it is better preserved on the obverse side. The volutes are clearly carved; the echinus protrudes in the form of a cone, on which are placed two symmetrical three-lobed acanthus leaves. The balusters are divided in the middle by a listel; both parts are decorated with acanthus leaves.

Capital 6 (fig. 6, *a*, *b*), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital; the impost is labelled with the number 504/971 in black ink. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a “cross-acanthus” composition. The cross has an elongated lower arm, with a cone in the cross-hairs. Above the cross, there are three long leaves of acanthus. On the edges of the capital are three three-lobed leaves of acanthus, which form oval depressions where they meet. This technique, which has been named “acanthus masks”, is often found on capitals from the second half of the 5th century onwards. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a listel. The volutes are carved with plasticity; on the echinus there is a bump decorated with two schematic leaves in the form of rhombi. The balusters are decorated with two arrow-shaped leaves extending from the center to the corners. Second half of the 5th – early 6th centuries.

Capital 7 (fig. 7, *a*, *b*), Chersonesus Museum, exposition. Ionic impost capital. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a “cross-acanthus” composition. The edges



a



b

Fig. 6. Capital 6. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 7. Capital 7. Chersonesus Museum, exposition



a



b

Fig. 8. Capital 8. Chersonesus site

of the impost are flanked by long acanthus leaves filling the space above the cross. The reverse side of the impost is decorated with a "Byzantine" cross. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a narrow channel. The volutes are carved with plasticity. The obverse side of the echinus is decorated with an ovum in the middle and acanthus leaves. On the reverse side, the listel separating the impost from the Ionic element widens in the middle and transfers to the echinus. The echinus is decorated with two acanthus leaves facing downwards. The balusters are divided into two parts by a triple listel, from which three-lobed acanthus leaves extend to the corners.

Capital 8 (fig. 8, a, b), Chersonesus site. Ionic impost capital. The top of the impost ends with a band that is slightly bevelled outwards. The impost is separated from the Ionic part by a small listel. On the obverse side of the impost, there is a "cross-acanthus" composition. In the center there is a cross, under the arms of the which are acanthus leaves; on the sides of the cross are large four-lobed acanthus leaves. The edges of the impost are flanked by long acanthus leaves joining in the middle. The volutes are carved with plasticity. The echinus is decorated with small acanthus leaves. The reverse side of the impost is smooth. The balusters are divided into two parts by a listel and are decorated with long leaves. Each leaf is divided by a horizontal band, from which branch off small lobes.

Capital 9 (fig. 9, a, b), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital, partially damaged impost. On the underside of the capital is the number 123/923 in ink. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with the "cross-acanthus" composition. Between the leaves there are oval and triangu-



a



b

Fig. 9. Capital 9. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

lar depressions characteristic of the “acanthus mask”. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel. The volutes are carved with plasticity. On the echinus there are two three-lobed acanthus leaves facing the centre, forming a rhombus where they meet. The balusters almost merge with the impost.

Capital 10 (fig. 10, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, lapidarium. Ionic impost capital, the impost is partially damaged. The impost ends with a shelf and is separated from the Ionic part by a listel. On the obverse side of the impost is a “cross-acanthus” composition. On the reverse side of the impost there is a cross in the center, enclosed in a medallion with a double outline. The volutes are carved with plasticity. On the obverse side between the volutes is an ovum transferring in to the impost. On the reverse side there is a protruding bump on the echinus decorated with two acanthus leaves. The balusters are divided into two parts by a valance from which large, clearly carved acanthus leaves extend to the corners of the capitals.

Capital 11 (fig. 11, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, lapidarium. Ionic impost Capital, upper left corner lost, surface erased in places. On the obverse side in the centre is an “acanthus-cross” composition. The edges of the impost are flanked by long acanthus leaves, their shoots filling the surface between the arms of the cross. The acanthus leaves form ovals and other geometric figures where they meet, creating the “acanthus-mask” effect. The volutes are carved with plasticity. On the echinus is a disc transferring to the impost; on the disc is a semi-erased image of an equal-pointed cross in a medallion. The balusters in the middle are divided into two parts by a triple valance.

Capital 12 (fig. 12, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. This Ionic impost



a



b

Fig. 10. Capital 10. Chersonesus Museum, lapidarium

capital, a fragment, comes from the Episcopal (Uvarovskaya) Basilica. The impost was decorated on all four sides. On the obverse side there is a “cross-acanthus” composition. The preserved narrow side of the impost has a “flourishing” cross in the centre, with acanthus leaves on its sides and a large acanthus leaf at its right edge. The leaves form ovals, triangles and rhombi, creating an “acanthus-mask” effect. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel that has broken off in the center. The volutes are



a



b

Fig. 11. Capital 11. Chersonesus Museum, lapidarium



a



b

Fig. 12. Capital 12. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

carved with plasticity, their center highlighted by an "eye". The projecting echinus is decorated with three upward-facing acanthus leaves. The impost ends with a shelf depicting a wavy line, in the curves of which are scrolls. This is a characteristic feature of the capitals of the "Uvarov group". The side of the impost is decorated with acanthus leaves facing in different directions, within toothed acanthus leaves side by side with ordinary acanthus. The baluster is divided into two parts by a triple valance, with acanthus leaves facing the centre on the sides.

Capital 13 (fig. 13), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The impost ends with a wide shelf and is separated from the ionic part by a recess. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a "cross-acanthus" composition. In the center is a four-pointed cross with an elongated base stem and extending arms; acanthus leaves fill the surfaces between the arms of the cross. The volutes are elongated, with an ovum located on the protruding echinus. The style is characterised by simplicity.

Capital 14 (fig. 14), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital, the number 973/516, the upper corners

of the impost are broken off. The top of the capital ends with a shelf, bevelled outwards. The front side of the impost is decorated with an "acanthus-cross" composition with acanthus leaves above the cross. Large acanthus leaves are situated along the edges of the impost, with shoots coming from them located under the arms of the cross. The ionic element is separated from the impost by a narrow shelf. The volutes are slightly elongated, on the echinus is a cone decorated with a cross (?).

Thus, ionic impost capitals decorated with the traditional "acanthus-cross" composition make up a group of 14 specimens. The motifs decorating the echinus are traditional: ova and acanthus leaves.

Capital 15 (fig. 15, a, b), State Historical Museum in Moscow. Ionic impost capital in good state of preservation, height 31 cm. The number 8607 is stamped on the lower surface in black paint. On the surface of the base, the letter "E" is carved deep into the surface; the ends are accentuated by indentations. In the center of the base, there is a metal fastener for connecting the capitals to the column. The impost is very bulky, its top terminating in a wide (7.3 cm) shelf. Both narrow sides of the impost are dec-



Fig. 13. Capital 13. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



Fig. 14. Capital 14. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

orated with a “Byzantine” cross. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel. A number of features indicate a late phase of development of the type: the ionic element is small compared to the impost; the volutes are isolated from one another and carved graphically in the form of scrolls. On both sides of the capitals, the echinus is decorated with a protruding bump. On the obverse side, the cone has two three-lobed acanthus leaves; on the reverse side, the cone of the echinus is decorated with schematic “scales”. In the middle of the balusters is a light compression accentuated by a double valance; from it acanthus leaves arranged in two rows. The capital can be dated to the first half of the 6th century.

Capital 16 (fig. 16, *a, b*), State Historical Museum in Moscow. Ionic impost capital, satisfactory state of preservation, one baluster partially broken off. The surface of the stone shows traces of tooling. The height of the capital is 18 cm. On the lower side of the capital is a relief marking in the form of the Greek letter “gamma”. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a “Byzantine” cross. The ionic element is narrower than the impost; the volutes are isolated from one another. On the echinus is a plant motif consisting of two horizontally arranged leaves. A similar motif can be seen on the Ionic impost capitals from the Church of St. Paraskeva in the Rumeli Hisar Museum in Istanbul (Yalçın 2009: 309, çiz. 2). On the reverse side of capital No. 16, the echinus is decorated with an ovum, with geometric motifs on both sides of the capitals. An ovum on the echinus is a common motif on early Byzantine capitals, such as on the capitals from the gallery of the Church of St. John in Ephesus (Russo 2008b: fig. 14). The balusters in the middle are slightly com-



a



b

Fig. 15. Capital 15. State Historical Museum in Moscow



a



b

Fig. 16. Capital 16. State Historical Museum in Moscow



Fig. 17. Capital 17, Chersonesus Museum, on a column in front of the entrance

pressed; long leaves extend from the middle to the corners of the capital. The capital can be dated to the first half of the 6th century.

Capital 17 (fig. 17), an Ionic impost capital mounted on a column in front of the entrance to the Chersonesus Museum. The top of the impost is decorated in the form of four shelves, a rare feature. On the obverse side of the impost is a "Byzantine" cross. The Ionic part is separated from the impost by a listel. The volutes are treated with plasticity; on the echinus there are two three-lobed acanthus leaves. The baluster is divided into two parts by a valance, from which

acanthus leaves branch off, facing the corners of the capitals. Round and triangular depressions are formed where the leaves meet, creating the "acanthus mask" effect.

Capital 18 (fig. 18, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository, Ionic impost capital. In the center of the base is a round hole and a channel for a metal fastening. Both narrow sides of the impost are decorated with a "Byzantine" cross. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a narrow shelf, listel which widens in the middle and transfers to the echinus. On its obverse side, the echinus is decorated with a branch of two three-lobed acanthus leaves; on the reverse side on the echinus there is an ovum. The baluster is divided into two parts by a valance, from which branch off twin acanthus leaves. The "acanthus mask" effect may be observed in the treatment of the acanthus leaves.

Capital 19 (fig. 19, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital; on the underside of the capital is the number 151-973 in ink. State of preservation is satisfactory; on the reverse side the corner of the impost is broken off. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a "Byzantine" cross; the reverse side



a

Fig. 18. Capital 18, Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



b



a

Fig. 19. Capital 19, Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



b

of the impost has been processed roughly. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a narrow shelf. On the echinus of the obverse side, there is a bump decorated with a geometric motif. The baluster is compressed in the middle, with two roughly carved three-lobed acanthus leaves extending to the ends of the capitals.

Capital 20 (fig. 20, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital; the impost is partially fragmented. The surface treatment of the stone is rough. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a shelf. On the obverse side of the impost is an equal-pointed cross in a medallion. On both sides of the Ionic between the volutes there is an ovum. The baluster is divided in the middle by two valances, from which extend schematically executed acanthus leaves.

Capital 21 (fig. 21, *a, b*), Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital, part of the impost is broken off. The impost is separated from the Ionic element by a listel. On the echinus there is a schematic plant motif that transfers to the impost. On the obverse side of the impost is a "Byzantine" cross. On the balusters we see a compression in the middle, from which extend expanding acanthus leaves. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 22 (fig. 22, *a, b*). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The number 503/973 is marked on the lower surface in black paint. The upper section of the capital is damaged; the corner of one impost is broken off. The echinus protrudes significantly on both sides; on the obverse side the motif is not distinguishable. There is an ovum on the reverse



a



b

Fig. 20. Capital 20. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 21. Capital 21. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 22. Capital 22. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 23. Capital 23. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

side. The impost has no images. The balusters are decorated with two acanthus leaves that extend from the middle to the edges. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 23 (fig. 23, a, b). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The upper part and corners of the impost are damaged. On the lower surface there is an illegible number (?) in black paint. There is a hole for a metal fastener in the middle; traces of tool work are visible. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel. On the echinus of the obverse side there is an ovum and leaves of acanthus; on the reverse side the motif is not preserved. On the obverse side of the impost there is a four-pointed cross with expanding ends; the reverse side is smooth. The balusters have large acanthus leaves. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 24 (fig. 24, a, b). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The number 152/973 is marked on the lower surface. On the echinus of the obverse side are two three-lobed acanthus leaves. The balusters are divided in the middle by a double valance, from which the acanthus leaves extend to the edges. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 25 (fig. 25, a, b). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The lower side of the capital has been roughly processed. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a wide listel; the echinus protrudes significantly. On the echinus of the obverse side of the capital there is a schematic plant motif; on the reverse side there is a rhombus. The impost on the front side is decorated with a cross; the reverse side has a cross of the same form, which is only outlined graphically, but



a



b

Fig. 24. Capital 24. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 25. Capital 25. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 26. Capital 26. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

not carved. The balusters are decorated with two schematic acanthus leaves. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 26 (fig. 26, a, b). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The upper part and corners of the impost are damaged. On the side of the impost the number 501-973 is marked in black paint. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel. On both sides of the capitals there is an ovum between the volutes. On the obverse side, there are schematic leaves in the form of triangles on either side of the ovum. The obverse side of



Fig. 27. Capital 27. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository



a



b

Fig. 28. Capital 28. Chersonesus site, capital mounted on a fragment of a column

the impost is decorated with a four-pointed cross. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 27 (fig. 27, a). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital; the corners of the impost are damaged. The number 973–618 is marked on the impost in red paint. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel. There is an ovum between the volutes on the obverse side. The obverse side of the impost is decorated with a four-pointed cross within a medallion; the reverse side is smooth. The balusters are divided into two parts, with acanthus leaves extending from the center. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 28 (fig. 28, a, b). Chersonesus site. Ionic impost capital mounted on a frag-



Fig. 29. Capital 29. Chersonesus site, capital mounted on a column



Fig. 30. Capital 30. Chersonesus site, capital mounted on a column

ment of a column located in the apse of a chapel. The impost is partially damaged. On the obverse side there is a semi-oval between the volutes with geometric motifs on either side. The baluster is divided into two parts, both decorated with acanthus leaves. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 29 (fig. 29). Chersonesus site. Ionic impost capital mounted on a column decorated with a relief of a "Byzantine" cross. On the echinus of the obverse side are three ova; the baluster is smooth. On the obverse side of the impost is a four-pointed cross. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 30 (fig. 30). Chersonesus site. Ionic impost capital mounted on a column. The echinus of the obverse side is decorat-



a



b

Fig. 31. Capital 31. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

ed with two three-lobed acanthus leaves. The baluster is divided into two parts; leaves extend from the center, arranged in three rows. On the obverse side of the impost there is a Byzantine cross. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 31 (fig. 31, a, b). Chersonesus Museum, storage repository. Ionic impost capital. The Ionic element is separated from the impost by a listel. On the echinus of the obverse side there is an ovum within a double frame; on the reverse side is a rhombus motif. The balusters are decorated with two large acanthus leaves. On both sides of the impost there is a Byzantine cross. First half of the 6th century.

Capital 32 (fig. 32). Chersonesus site, storage repository. Ionic impost capital, fragment. One volute and a part of the baluster with an image of an acanthus leaf have been preserved. The impost is decorated with a Byzantine cross. First half of the 6th century.



Fig. 32. Capital 32. Chersonesus Museum, storage repository

Capital 33 (fig. 33). State Historical Museum in Moscow. Ionic impost capital, fragment. The impost is decorated with a Byzantine cross. First half of the 6th century.

The presence of a large series of Ionic impost capitals in Chersonesus permits us to observe the evolution of this type, which represents a process of gradual departure from classical models. The impost grows in size, often becoming twice as tall as the Ionic element; in some cases the Ionic element is only one sixth of the height of the impost. The shape of the impost does not change; it remains a truncated pyramid, but the gradient of the impost faces increases. The Ionic element is simplified and reduced in size, as if "absorbed" by the massive impost. Neither the volutes nor the balusters protrude beyond the edges of the impost. The spirals of the volutes lose their plastic form and be-



Fig. 33. Capital 33. State Historical Museum in Moscow

retain a slight compression in the center, but often a baluster approaches a cylindrical form. A simplification of capital structure is accompanied by increased complexity and enrichment of decoration: plant and geometric motifs on the echinus become more diverse; the impost is also often decorated with plant ornamentation either on the obverse side, or sometimes on both narrow sides (Vemi 1989: 17–18).

The Chersonesus capitals reflect a developed phase of the Ionic impost type of capital dating from the first half of the 6th century. But there are also earlier examples of this type, such as the capitals published by Jakobson from the Halkis Museum in Greece (Якобсон 1959: 51), for instance, which are close to the first quarter of the 5th century (Vemi 1989: 99, pl. 14, No. 37).

Besides Chersonesus, one Ionic impost capital was found in the basilica of Partenit, dating from the 6th century (Репников

1909: 46–48, 112; Хрушкова 2013a: 394–396). One of them, later lost and known only from a photograph, belongs to the class of Ionic impost capitals. On the obverse side of the impost is a cross inscribed in a medallion, surrounded by acanthus leaves. On the reverse side of the impost is a “Byzantine” cross, flanked by a single acanthus leaf. On the corners of the impost are large leaves of fine toothed acanthus. This capital is very similar to Capital I from Chersonesus described above. Possibly this capital may have been brought to Partenit from Chersonesus and not from Proconnesus.

The group of Ionic impost capitals from Chersonesus testify to the fact that, in the first half of the 6th century, there was a significant amount of importation of marble products from Proconnesus to the Crimea. The construction of most of the basilicas of Chersonesus dates from the same period².

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² Translation from the Russian by John Pumphrey. Источники иллюстраций: fig. 1 — Измайлова 1927, с. 125; figs. 2, 3 — Банк, Попова 1977, №№ 117, 121; figs. 4–33 — фото Л. Г. Хрушковой

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