

X Architectural details

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Since all the houses excavated in Sector NGS follow a design without an architectural order, finds of ordered architectural elements here are extremely rare and, as a rule, are not found in context. These finds are represented by just one capital and five pillar bases. All these elements belong to the so-called Attic order – a simplified form of the Doric order, in which a wooden, or occasionally a stone, pillar of square or rectangular section was used instead of a column. The use of stone bases is also characteristic for this order.¹³¹⁵ While the capitals of the pillars have several variants of profiling and are widely distributed throughout the entire Black Sea littoral, the shape of the bases, on the contrary, is very specific and unique to the architecture of Olbia.¹³¹⁶ Capitals on pillars, pilasters and antae in combination with this specific form of base were used in Olbia not only in domestic architecture but also in public buildings such as, in particular, the internal courtyard of the so-called gymnasium.¹³¹⁷

The pillar capital X-1 is interesting for its profile – the shape of the *echinus* resembles a Lesbian *kymation*. Although the use of such a profile is well known, it is, nevertheless, rather uncommon in the architecture of the Doric order of the Hellenistic period.¹³¹⁸ The pillar base X-2 has a typical profile with a plinth at the base and a weakly accentuated transition to its upper surface. The pillar capital X-1 was found out of context among a heap of collapsed stones in the upper layers. The base X-2 was uncovered during excavation of a collapse of stones over one of the basements in a house in the northern part of the central block.

The further simplification of this type of base can be seen in the four bases (X-3-X-6) found *in situ* in one of the rooms of a house in the southern part of NGS. Given their plain form and the absence of plinths, it is evident that they belong to the latest phase of the development of the above-mentioned order in Olbia, dating to the late Hellenistic period. This dating is further confirmed by the archaeological context of their find spot. These elements were used in the interior of the room, serving undoubtedly as supports for wooden pillars. All the architectural elements found were cut from local limestone.

¹³¹⁵ Kryžickij 1971b, 130-136, figs. 63-64.

¹³¹⁶ Bujs'kich 1997, 100-101, fig. 4.

¹³¹⁷ Levi 1985, 99-108, fig. 104.

¹³¹⁸ Vasdaris 1987, 106 (Gruppe E, Kymakapitelle).

Catalogue

X-1 99-755

Pillar capital. H 22; lower surface 25.5 x 18.5; *abacus* 37.5 x 31-32. The profile is constituted (from top to bottom) of: *abacus* with a bevelled edge at the lower surface, *echinus* in the shape of the Lesbian *kymation*, two large faceted strips and a *fascia* separating the strips from the neck of the capital. On the lower surface there is a depression for attachment to the pillar measuring 5.5 x 5, D 5.

X-2 90-410, IV-2 B 280/162. Pl. 406

Pillar base. H 28.3; upper surface 20.5 x 12.5; lower surface 27.5 x 20. The profile includes a plinth, H 5.5, and a shallow elliptical *trochilus* (*scotia*) constituting the transition to the upper surface of the base. On the upper surface there is a depression for attachment to the pillar measuring 6 x 5.5, D 3.

X-3 02-663a. Pl. 406

Pillar base. H 22; upper surface 22 x 17; lower surface 22.5 x 19. Simplified variant of X-2 but in the shape of a truncated cone. Traces of tools are discernible on the upper and facing surfaces.

X-4 02-663b. Pl. 406

Pillar base. H 24; upper surface 21 x 17.5-18; lower surface 21.5 x 19.5. Simplified variant of X-2 in the shape of a slightly asymmetric truncated cone. Traces of tool marks are discernible on all surfaces.

X-5 02-663c. Pl. 407

Pillar base. H 23.5; upper surface 16.5 x 16; lower surface 19.5 x 18.5. Simplified variant of X-2 in the shape of a truncated cone, but the transition to the lower surface shows a slight curvature. The traces of tool marks are smoothed and almost indiscernible.

X-6 02-664d. Pl. 407

Pillar base. H 23.5; upper surface 19.5 x 15.5; lower surface 22.5 x 19.5. Simplified variant of X-2 in the shape of a truncated cone with an accentuated curvature at the transition to the lower surface. The face sides are smoothed.