

Kilia's sea horizons: the city and its prospects in Nikolaus Kleemann's engraving *Kilianova*

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Rezumat

Orizonturile maritime ale Chilei: orașul și perspectivele sale în gravura *Kilianova* a lui Nikolaus Kleemann

Articolul analizează gravura din secolul al XVIII-lea a lui Nikolaus Kleemann, *Kilianova*, care înfățișează o vedere a cetății Chilia. Autorul articolului se concentrează pe interpretarea gravurii ca text vizual. Articolul subliniază faptul că studiile istorice au folosit gravura fără a-i lua în considerare conținutul simbolic. O atenție deosebită este acordată figuranților, tehnicilor de compoziție și distorsiunilor conștiente întreprinse de autorul gravurii. Autorul demonstrează în articol că gravura *Kilianova* este o sursă istorică valoroasă care permite nu numai reconstrucția imaginii pierdute a Chilei din secolul al XVIII-lea, ci și înțelegerea percepțiilor europenilor despre regiune, precum și particularitățile percepției și interpretării a ceea ce a văzut călătorul. Lucrarea propune o analiză mai profundă și mai cuprinzătoare a conținutului simbolic al operelor de artă în cercetarea istorică.

Cuvinte cheie: compoziție, gravură, Chilia, figuranți, sursă vizuală.

Summary

Kilia's sea horizons: the city and its prospects in Nikolaus Kleemann's engraving *Kilianova*

The publication analyses Nikolaus Kleemann's 18th-century engraving *Kilianova*, depicting a view of the fortress of Kilia. The author of this article focuses on interpreting the engraving as a visual text. The article emphasizes that historical studies have used the engraving without considering its symbolic content. Special attention is paid to the staffage, compositional techniques and conscious distortions undertaken by the author of the engraving. The author proves in the article that *Kilianova* engraving is a valuable historical source that enables not only the reconstruction of the lost image of Kilia of the XVIII century but also an understanding of the perceptions of Europeans about the region, as well as the peculiarities of perception and interpretation of what the traveler saw. The work offers us a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the symbolic content of artworks in historical research.

Keywords: composition, engraving, Kilia, staffage, visual source.

On 29 October 1768, a tug (konak-tui) was solemnly displayed in the hall of the palace of the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire. On the porch of the palace, prayers were said in praise of Allah, and several sacrificial lambs were slaughtered as a sign of gratitude to the Almighty. This ancient Ottoman ceremony symbolised the beginning of a new war. At this time, an unsuspecting Austrian merchant Nikolaus Kleemann made a brief stopover in Belgrade, where he paid a considerable sum to Ottoman customs officers and Janissaries, and travelled further east along the Danube. His route lay to the Crimea, one of the epicentres of the future battles of the already declared war

Given the cool and even hostile Austrian-Turkish relations, this was initially an ad-

venturous venture. The new foreign policy circumstances that caught Kleemann on the road made his journey even more dangerous. The agitated situation was confirmed by the incident of humiliation and robbery of the Austrian envoy Brongniart, including bruising his pregnant wife and daughters in an Istanbul coffee house, in front of top Turkish dignitaries. This incident is an example of the absence of any 'red lines' in the treatment of Christians during hostilities [15, p. 110]. However, neither the potential dangers nor the difficulties with Turkish customs or the inconveniences of everyday life could stop this Austrian merchant in his bold and adventurous endeavour to achieve his goal.

Until the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, which influenced the fate of the entire Black Sea

region, the Black Sea remained closed to foreign merchant ships. Those traders who were not subjects of the Ottoman Empire could only carry out their commercial traffic in the Black Sea on Turkish vessels. European merchants, except for Russians and French, were rare in the Northern Black Sea region, particularly in Crimea. After the 1718 Treaty of Passarowitz, the Austrian administration made many efforts and developed several projects to revitalise eastern trade. The arrival of the merchant Nikolaus Kleeman in 1768 was one of the first occasions when Austrian merchants achieved significant success in trade with the Crimea [6, p. 186].

Kleemann's trade voyage to the Crimea and the Ottoman Empire aimed at establishing trade links and market research, possibly on a state level. One of the results of this trade adventure was proposals and projects to develop trade with Crimea. Russian envoy in Vienna Prince Dmitry Golitsyn in 1776 found a note by Kleeman entitled 'On the establishment of trade from Vienna to the Levant and Crimean Tataria, with an appendix of the resulting benefits for the imperial royal hereditary lands'. In this document, Kleeman proposed to establish a trading company in the Levant, with the support of Turkish sultans and Crimean khans [17].

***Kilianova* engravings: historiography and methodological approaches**

In addition to his main trade-related activities, Kleeman left behind his travelogues and sketches on which his engravings were based. Kleeman's adventurous spirit was evident in this data collection. Making sketches and records under conditions of declared war was a risky endeavour, especially in the Ottoman Empire, where the attitude towards foreigners, especially Christians, was extremely distrustful. One could earn decapitation for such actions.

The published essays and engravings by Kleeman about the journey to Crimea were a wide success in Europe. The first edition of Kleeman's travelogues was out of print in Vienna in 1771. The illustrated 1773 Leipzig edition greatly expanded the readership. The travelogues were translated into French and Russian, contributing to their European fame. The engravings for the Leipzig one edition were made in Vienna by I. Bernd. Among the engraved images of the Danube whirlpools, a Moldavian village, the towns of Căușani, Caffa,

Bakhchysarai, fortresses on the Dardanelles and Gellespont, there is also the already mentioned engraving entitled *Kilianova*, depicting the view from the Danube to the outer settlement and fortress of Kilia. Thanks to this engraving, which in addition to Kleeman's travelogues was also published in various copies, Europe saw for the first time what this Danube fortress and its outer settlement, founded in 1479 by the Moldavian voivode Stefan the Great, looked like. In 1856, according to the Paris Peace Treaty between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, the fortress was destroyed, and the outer settlement subsequently underwent radical changes.

The disappearance of the fortress and the outer settlement from the historical scene further emphasises the interest in visual sources. These materials may provide answers to a curious question, what that already legendary fortress and its outer settlement looked like. In this context, Kleemann's engraving *Kilianova* alongside other images – watercolours by Mikhail Ivanov, architectural drawings, schematics, plans of the fortress assault in 1770, and other visual materials become particularly relevant.

In addition to Kleeman's travelogues, the *Kilianova* engraving has also been featured in several other publications that deal with the fortress or the history of Kilia. In these studies, the engraving and some of its copies were mainly used as illustrations of research texts to facilitate the perception of the scientific material and to help the reader visualise the now-defunct fortress and outer settlement [5].

Moreover, in historical studies, engravings were used as illustrative material and a source of information about various facts. Marianna Shlapak, a researcher of medieval fortresses in Bessarabia, in her work dedicated to the review of written and visual sources on the history of the *Kilianova* fortress, could not but pay attention to Kleeman's engraving *Kilianova*. She considered the visual information of the engraving in accordance with the objectives of her research. Shlapak noted that the fortress was fortified with a coastal palisade, and the walls and towers were completed with cannelures. Regarding the outer settlement, the researcher pointed out that the minarets of the mosques are emphasised as vertical town-planning dominants [21, p. 424]. Andrei Krasnozhon, another researcher of medieval Bessarabian fortification, used visual information from the en-

graving, or rather its interpretation from the plan of the Kilia assault by General Osip Deribas, to determine the location of the ship anchorage of Kilia. The cluster of ships depicted at the mouth of the steppe delta of the Danube allowed him to conclude that this anchorage was 500 metres from the fortress upstream of the Danube [14, p. 196-197].

Historical research has also attempted to analyse the reliability of the visual information presented in *Kilianova* engraving. The essence of this analysis was to compare the external 'similarity' of its elements with the more authoritative, in the researcher's opinion, architectural plans and schemes of Kilia. The discrepancies revealed raised doubts about the reliability of the visual information presented in *Kilianova* engraving. Thus, the historian and archaeologist Igor Sapozhnikov, pointing to some discrepancies in the location, size and number of minarets, as well as the presence of hilly terrain, concludes that the engraving 'cannot be considered a valid historical source'. Despite this harsh verdict, the author notes that the general topography of the city is quite recognizable [18, p. 10].

The above-mentioned approaches are reduced, firstly, to the use of engravings to illustrate research texts; secondly, to the 'scanning' of the image and the use of its local elements in historical reconstructions; and thirdly, to superficial criticism with conclusions about its inconsistency with the historical reality. All approaches have in common the perception of the image as an integral visual system, which can be looked at and used to 'read' the necessary information expressed through fine art. Attempts to analyse this information are reduced to its correspondence/inconsistency with more reliable sources on purely formal grounds.

To read the visual text encoded in *Kilianova* engraving, it is necessary to understand that Kleeman both *saw* and *imagined* Kilia. Seeing is the ability to actively perceive visual information and make judgements about the world around us. Active processes also involve imagination as the ability of a person to create images, concepts, and ideas [20, p. 19]. Imagination allows for modelling various situations and anticipating their possible development in the future. The elements of reality that Kleeman saw and the potential development of Kilia, which he imagined as a merchant, merged into a single structural integrity in

the engraving plot. Researchers, however, generally do nothing but look at the engraving, this way emphasising the process of observation and concentration on the object. Therefore, this publication aims to identify, through the deconstruction of the subject, the main elements that Kleemann noted in his engraving, and to clarify their nature and purpose.

Nowadays, the concept of the visual as a source and its place in the system of historical knowledge has already been defined but there is a lack of necessary methods and approaches to its analysis. The research methodology in this paper, which corresponds to the set goal, is the application of structural analysis in the context of deconstructivist ideas, namely Jacques Derrida's ideas that the image is a text [3, p. 236]. A text or visual text (in our case, an engraving) is a structural and functional model expressed in lines, dots, spots and colour. This model, which Hegel considered a document of a particular region's historical and cultural development in a certain epoch, has a coded character, represented in signs and images linked by various contextual links [4, p. 270].

To unlock the full potential of Kleeman's engravings, it is necessary to switch the focus of analysis. Instead of looking for external similarities, it is sufficient to focus on identifying hidden meanings that reflect the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the epoch. To discover the informational potential of *Kilianova* engraving as a visual source, it is necessary to study it in the context of the author's intention and the peculiarities of the plot creation. The applied procedures of analysing the engraving as a text aimed at finding 'traces' of other visual texts and narratives in it. This methodological approach will give us the opportunity to answer the question of how Kleeman saw and imagined Kilia.

Structurally, *Kilianova* engraving consists of two planes: horizontal – a panorama of the Danube and vertical – a profile of the outer settlement and fortress of Kilia, as well as the hilly terrain in the background.

Danube panorama

The horizontal plane shows a view of the mouth of the steppe delta and a broad panorama of the Kilia mouth of the Danube. The horizon line is exaggerated and is in the upper third of the engraving. The viewpoint is on the opposite bank of the Danube. This composition emphasises the

viewer's attention on the events on the Danube's water surface.

Closer to the right bank of the Danube and the viewer, there is a large three-masted ship and a small one-masted vessel. This huge ship is the dominant element of the entire engraving. Further, the outline shows two small single-masted vessels and two paddleboats along the Danube fairway. Closer to the left bank, many other ships moored in the roadstead can be seen. The flags on all vessels are flying exclusively from left to right. However, the sails of all the vessels are inflated depending on the direction of movement, i.e. in different directions. The image of ships and boats in the foreground belongs to staffage. It is an element of the plot designed to enrich the background with additional nuances, scenes, and episodes [10, p. 236]. These staffage images of ships are irrelevant to the north-western Black Sea coast. At least if a three-masted ship and a one-masted ship depicted closer to the right bank are under consideration – they demonstrate some specificity. Vessels travelling along the Danube fairway are depicted conventionally and it is difficult to define their types. The image of a three-masted ship and a one-masted vessel were borrowed by Kleemann when creating the engraving from other sources. Such borrowing in painting and drawing was normal in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. In Holland and Flanders, by the mid-sixteenth century, a tradition of publishing ornamental engravings intended for use in the decorative arts was well-established [7, p. 50]. Most of them were produced in sets of sheets. Such a set could include from five to thirty-five prints. Unfortunately, many of them did not survive to this day.

Artists and engravers also did not hesitate to copy some images, often using them as staffage. It should be noted that even famous masters did not shy away from copying. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, for example, copied at least one ship from a collection of ship images by Willem Barentsz in his work *Naval Battle in the Gulf of Naples* (1590) [9, p. 149]. The frontispiece of *Caertboek vande Midlantsche Zee*, Barentsz's collection of engravings, shows a single-masted ship with an aft superstructure and rowers in the front, similar to the one shown in Kleemann's engraving *Kilianova* to the left of the three-masted ship [1]. It is most likely one of the many varieties of the tjak, a common Dutch vessel also used for coastal shipping. The centre of this vessel demonstrates the cargo

protected by sailcloth from rain and wave spray. The sailing armament of the three-masted ship, its pear-shaped hull, and the general design features of the deck and superstructures enable us to assert that this is none other than a fluyt. This was a common type of Dutch merchant ship in the 16th and 18th centuries. The image of this fluyt was also apparently copied from an unknown unidentifiable source.

Looking at Kleemann's engraving, one may get somewhat confused. What are these Western European ships doing in an engraving whose plot is set in the north-western Black Sea region? The dominant presence of a large three-masted vessel, which must navigate the sea rather than the riverbeds, can be especially disconcerting. Certainly, such aberrations can also be explained by compositional considerations: perhaps, the engraver decided to use staffage to enliven the image and give it some dynamism.

Undoubtedly, such arguments may also be contemplated. However, we deal with a historical source that expresses an idea and is evaluative. The presence of this three-masted sea vessel (fluyt) is not accidental. Nikolaus Kleemann, assessing the navigability of the Danube riverbed near Kilia, wrote in his travelogues: "And both this part and the right branch of the river are so extensive that the largest three-masted ships can pass through it to the Black Sea" [13, p. 32]. This evaluative passage from Kleemann's notes on the navigability of the Lower Danube channel is reflected in the image of a three-masted fluyt. According to Kleemann, the presence in the image of a three-masted flute ship, which was typical of European maritime trade at that time, indicates that the port of Kiliya had broad prospects for trade relations.

As for the capacity of coastal shipping in the Kilia area, we can assess it by a large number of single-masted vessels depicted. These vessels resemble the one-masted ship in the foreground, next to the three-masted fluyt. They are more than just foreground staffage but a key to understanding the whole engraving, carrying certain meanings, such as the intensity of coastal shipping (the single-masted vessel) and the prospect of large merchant ships (the fluyt) calling here. Kleemann's depiction of the three-masted fluyt, a recognisable symbol of maritime trade for the European viewer, serves as an expressive means of the prospects for the development of the port of Kilia.

Kleemann's depiction of the quay and waterfront, although lacking an exact historical prototype, is a striking example of artistic interpretation designed to emphasise the potential of the port of Kilia. None of the known plans or images of Kilia outer settlement and fortress show such an extended quay and wharf. These objects in Kleemann's engraving are drawn with regular and straight lines, giving the impression of a continuous quay and wharf, which curve around the mouth of the steppe delta. This is the appearance characteristic of the coastlines of the major seaside harbour towns of Europe. These quays served as unloading and loading areas for ships of various classes. The imaginary quay and waterfront of Kilia fully correspond to Kleemann's estimation of the prospects of large three-masted ships calling here. Kleemann imagined the fortress as a major seaport with solid quays and a waterfront similar to those typical of major European cities.

The fluyt, coaster ships, waterfront and quays depicted in the foreground fulfil not only a compositional function but are also key elements of the visual text, expressing the author's idea of the development of Kilia's potential as a major trading port.

Profile of the urban space of Kilia

Unlike the water surface of the Danube, which is represented in the picture in a horizontal plane, the Kilia fortress and outer settlement are depicted in a vertical plane. They seem to grow in profile along the end of the conventional line of the embankment. In this vertical plane, Kleemann expressed himself not as a trade expert, but as an inquisitive tourist. The Austrian merchant created his visual image of Kilia by highlighting the characteristic elements that make up the fabric of the urban environment of this Danube town. Kleemann's eye was drawn to these characteristic elements in the outer settlement area, including the warehouses on the shore, the customs office, the dense development, the minarets and domes of the mosques, and the Armenian church. The fortress zone includes the walls and towers of the fortress, the palisade in front of the fortress walls, the signal buoy and the Sultan Bayezid mosque.

Along the imaginary embankment crossing the profile of Kilia, there are numerous warehouse buildings, and above them rises the imposing two-storeyed customs building. It served as the initial point of introduction to the city for

all traders and passengers arriving in Kilia along the Danube. Kleemann spent a lot of time in and around the customs building. The traveller devotes much of his account of Kilia to describing unpleasant encounters with Turkish customs officials, highlighting bureaucratic obstacles and corruption. This two-storeyed building played a prominent role in the urban space of Kilia. The ground floor of the customs house appears to be a massive construction with blank walls and one main entrance, probably leading to a warehouse where goods were inspected [13, p. 33]. Judging from the large arched windows, the first floor was probably used to house customs personnel.

Kleemann depicted Kilia's densely built-up outer settlement, where the slender silhouettes of minarets pointing up to the sky stood out against the background of red-tiled roofs and houses. The architectural historian Shlapak, characterising Kleemann's engraving, noted, among anything else, that '...minarets of mosques play the role of vertical town-planning accents' [21, p. 424]. These were not so much architectural accents, but rather impressions and markers. Kleemann found here '...a great multitude of mosques...' which was enough to emphasise this multitude in his memory [13, p. 32]. Kleemann was impressed by the number of mosques and minarets, which he emphasised visually in his work. Sapozhnikov draws attention to the 'excessive number of minarets', namely eleven. Based on this, together with the hills in the background, the researcher denies Kleemann's engraving 'fullness' as a historical source for some reason [18, p. 10]. Doubtlessly, the number of mosques and minarets may have been less than depicted, but Kleemann did not endeavour to calculate their number accurately and convey it visually. In his engraving, he recorded his perception of Kilia as an Ottoman town with a predominantly Muslim population. A similar approach was used in his engraving of Theodosia (Caffa). There is also a stereotypical image of many mosque domes and minarets, emphasising the Ottoman character of the city.

On the right of the customs, we can see the outline of the dome, which stands out for its shape. It is conical and pointed, distinguished from the more rounded domes of Ottoman architecture. This one resembles the domes of Armenian churches. In his travelogues, Kleemann mentions two Armenian churches in Kilia [13, p. 21]. The Armenian religious buildings had certain

constructive features and national colouring, recognisable even in general features. One of such elements was tent domes and polyhedral drums under them (often octahedral). Therefore, we can assume that Kleemann's engraving shows the silhouette of one of the two Armenian churches he mentioned.

From the angle suggested by Kleemann, to the right of the outer settlement, there is a view of the fortress of Kilia from the bank of the Danube. From the corner tower named Qanly Kule (Bloody Tower), the walls of the 'civil' courtyard extend conventionally northwards and along the bank of the Danube. From the northern part of the wall, the tops of several towers and a small part of the fortress wall of the 'civil' courtyard stand out. The first half-tower of the outer wall with a reinforced sole (proteichisma) is also in view. The coastal wall is shown only up to the junction of the 'civil' and 'garrison' courtyards. Further on, the view of the walls of the 'garrison' and 'commandant' courtyards is obscured by tall trees and a few huts. These tall trees and huts are clearly added as staffage elements to 'fill in' the unknown space, as is often the case.

Kleeman undoubtedly saw these fortifications but left no detailed descriptions of their configuration. Perhaps, he focused on other aspects of the city and did not consider the fortifications significant enough to represent them. A purely technical variant is also possible. When transferring a drawing to an engraving plate, there are frequent difficulties in fitting the image to the size. The image may not fully fit on the plate, requiring trimming, or it may leave unused blank margins at the edges. In the case of *Kilianova* engraving, it can be observed that there is free space when the engraving is cut on the plate. The free space is filled with trees and a few houses as staffage. This is also evident from the fact that compositionally the engraving is shifted slightly to the right. That is why the engraver beautifully completed the length of this wall with staffage, rather than simply cutting it off or extending it conventionally into fading infinity.

The western (coastal) wall of the 'civil' courtyard has four towers, which corresponds to the number of towers on this section of the wall shown on various known plans and schemes of the fortress. The square shape of the corner tower of Qanla Kule and the half-tower following it are accurately depicted by Kleeman. The next two

towers differ in shape from those on the plans of François Kauffer, the perspective of the fortress of Kilia in 1770, and the plan of the fortress of Kilia after its capture in 1770 by Lieutenant-General Nikolai Repnin [8, p. 105; 21, p. 425; 14, p. 262-263]. They are essentially a copy of the Qanly Kule tower but differ in size. Unlike the real towers of the Kilia fortress, known from drawings by Mikhail Ivanov and Kauffer's profiles, the variants of Kleeman's towers do not have hipped roofs. The towers and the walls end with protrusions (dentils) and recesses (merlons). This is probably a stereotype of European fortifications typical of medieval fortresses, castles and defence walls. On the edge of the shore near the fortress, a small section of fortifications called the palisade is clearly visible. It is located along the western wall and is intended for additional defence and control of the approaches to the fortress. Opposite the palisade is a floating signal buoy, which played an important role in navigation, ensuring the safety of the intensive navigation on the Danube. It marked the tip of the promontory on which the Kilia fortress was located. Inside the 'civil' courtyard, another characteristic marker of Kilia's urban space – the Sultan Bayezid Mosque and its minaret – is also clearly visible.

In the left part of the engraving, in the background of the profile of Kilia, a mountainous area is visible near the outer settlement. The presence of this element in the engraving has nothing to do with the terrain in the Kilia area. The last hilly area along the banks of the Danube River ends about 90 kilometres from Kilia, in the Isaccea area. The depiction of the hilly terrain is a visual representation of Kleeman's general recollection of the landscapes surrounding the banks of the Danube. The mountainous areas to the left and right along the Danube accompanied him throughout his journey, starting in Vienna. Kleeman noted this in his travelogues. Sailing past Belgrade he wrote 'The mountains and hills lying on the other side of Belgrade, and the vast Danube shores are very pleasant and amusing...' [13, p. 14]. Such transpositions or emphasis on impressions of the terrain are sometimes found in paintings and graphics. L. Garneray created his aquatint 'Port Odessa' from the series 'Ports of the World' based on the memories of sailors and merchants. He depicted the mountainous terrain in the background of the Odessa port panorama, which seems to feature the contours of the Crimean ridge Tepe-Oba at

the foot of which Theodosia lies [19, p. 168]. Another example is Ivan Aivazovsky, whose painting 'The oxen on the land bridge' depicted the Per-ekop ramparts, which fulfilled the fortification function, in the background as mountains in a lilac haze. In fact, such transformations of relief pursue primarily aesthetic purposes, creating a spectacular background.

The minarets of mosques, the dome of the Armenian church, as well as the Sultan Bayezid mosque in reality, as Sapozhnikov notes, were much lower or generally hidden from the viewer in the dense urban development, hidden by fortress walls [18, p. 10]. The evidence of this is Mikhail Ivanov's drawings, as well as a profile drawing of the walls of the fortress in 1770 [12; 13]. A technique known in drawing as conventional displacement is often used to emphasise features of the urban environment, landscape, battle or other events. This technique is also widely employed in technical instructions and descriptions [16, p. 194-195]. It is especially frequently used in paintings, drawings, and engravings created not from life but based on sketches and memories. In 'A View of the City of Bakhchysarai', Fyodor Alekseev (1753-1824), a famous artist of urban landscapes, widely used such conventional displacements for a more informative composition of the plot. By relocating the fountain and other objects in the Khan's Palace, Alekseev sought to create a new, more informative perspective of the palace complex. This allowed him to emphasise the significance of certain elements of the composition. Thus, the topography of the territory of the Khan Palace remains characterize, but the reality was transformed with the help of artistic techniques. In fact, the same goal was pursued by Kleeman and Bernd in forming the plot of *Kilianova* engraving.

The vertical plane of *Kilianova* engraving is a mental map of the town of Kilia, in which the most characteristic and characterize objects are marked, as well as stereotypes reflecting the image of the Ottoman city with admixtures of European practices and experience.

Conclusions

Kleeman's voyage to the Crimea, driven by an adventurous spirit and a vision of the prospects of maritime trade, resulted in the publication of travel essays (travelogues) and engravings, among which the most famous was *Kilianova*. This en-

graving, later published many times in Europe, became one of the visual elements reflecting the historical heritage of Kilia. The methodological emphasis placed on analysing the plot structure of the print in the context of Jacques Derrida's ideas of deconstructivism allowed us to understand what ideas and impressions were 'encoded' in it by Kleeman. Compositionally, the engraving consists of two planes – the panorama of the Danube and the 'imaginary' port of Kilia, the profile of the fortress and the outer settlement of Kilia, as well as the hills in the background.

The Danube panorama is characterized by a visual and symbolic meaning shaped as staffage that carries evaluative information and expresses Kleeman's judgement on the prospects for the development of Kilia. Kleeman, even 25 years before the decree of Catherine II on the establishment and development of a commercial port in Odesa on the site of the dilapidated Hadjibey, pointed out the foreign trade potential of Kilia as a possible centre of maritime trade in the north-western Black Sea region. Kleeman expressed these considerations and assessments vividly in *Kilianova* engraving, which he included in his travelogues and published upon his return home. His considerations were based on the favourable geographical position of Kilia, the presence of a large number of coastal ships, the intensity of shipping, the convenient coastline for the establishment of fixed berths, and the well-fortified fortress as a guarantor of the security of trade and navigation in the Kilia area. This visual assessment of Kleeman did not consider some navigational peculiarities of large ships entering the Danube mouth. Kleemann's assumption was most likely based on his observations of the possibility of similar ships entering the mouths of other large European rivers.

The analysis of the vertical part of Kleemann's engraving *Kilianova* presents a unique visual representation of the outer settlement and fortress of Kilia, visible from the Danube. It reflects characteristic elements of the urban environment and architecture of Kilia, based on Kleemann's impressions and observations as a traveller and tourist. In his opinion, as a European traveller, the main characteristic elements of Kilia's urban space were the mosques and their minarets, including the Sultan Bayezid mosque, the Armenian church, the customs building, and the fortress walls and towers. The Austrian merchant also noted less significant elements such as the dense development

of Kilia – typical of many Ottoman cities of the time – as well as the warehouses on the banks of the Danube, the palisades along the fortress walls and the signal buoy on the promontory.

The image of Kilia, created and captured in *Kilianova* engraving by Kleeman, left a significant visual ‘imprint’ in the cultural memory of Europe in the eighteenth century and became an important visual source about the town’s history later on.

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