

## **DECORATED LAMPS OF THE ROMAN PERIOD FROM APOLLONIA, 1<sup>ST</sup> - 4<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY A.D.**

**Klodian Velo**

Center of Albanological Studies, Albania, Email: klodianvelo@hotmail.com

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to identify the different types of decorations applied to terracotta lamps from the ancient city of Apollonia in Illyria during the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Apollonia is located in the eastern side of the Adriatic coast. Due to its geographical position, Apollonia served as trades' and goods' gateway for the Balkan Peninsula. During the Greek period terracotta lamps were manufactured mainly with the potter's wheel. Starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., they were mold made manufactured. Despite the functional mode, the usage of the molds enabled the additional elements such as decoration. These decorations have different patters such as Gods, mythological heroes, gladiators, animals, birds, floral patterns, scenes from everyday life, erotic scenes, as well as theatrical masks. Lamps were used for lightening different environments such as home, public buildings, religious buildings etc. To some extent, the decorative element may determine the environment in which the objects have been used, their origin and dating. Over 200 lamps coming out from the excavations of the Apollonia city during the last decades have been used as the purposes of this research. Then a typological division was performed to the material. Same decoration patters were divided within each lamp type. As a result of this division we observed that the decorations with patterns from everyday life, gladiator fight, mythological heroes, and erotic scenes have a wider use in the terracotta lamps of the "volute type". This is a manufacture of the central Italy, which have been used in Apollonia during the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. The decoration patters from everyday life, various animals and floral ones are much common used in the "short rounded nozzle type" lamps. These lamps have been imported from the Greek city of Corinth and circulated during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. We have a simplified decoration patterns dominated mainly from the theatrical masks in the "firmalampen type" group, which are imported material from the northern Italy. "Firmalampen type" lamps have been circulated in Apollonia during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. As a result of this research it has been concluded that in the ancient city of Apollonia a large number of terracotta lamps have been circulating with diversified decoration patterns. This also concludes valuable information about the economic and cultural development of the city during the Roman period.

**Keywords:** *lamps, Apollonia, decoration, Roman period*