ROMAN LAMPS DISCOVERED AT ROMULA (I)

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Abstract: This article presents a batch of lamps discovered, in 2022, in the central area of the Roman city of Romula.

Import lamps of the type Loeschcke VIII/Ivanyi VII, Loeschcke X with the marks FORTIS, IANVARI and OCTAVI, respectively Loeschcke VIII/Bailey Type K. They circulated from the second quarter of the 2nd century AD to the middle of the third century, with greater frequency from the second half of the 2nd century to the first third of the 3rd century AD.

Lamps of local production are of the type Loeschcke VIII similar to Ivanyi VII, Loeschcke X with the mark FAOR, IANVARI, respectively modelled to Alicu XXI type wheel.

They have been discovered in archaeological contexts dated from the second half of the 2nd century to the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD, one lamp of Loeschcke X type with FAOR mark, another with the same mark being dated to the last decade of the 2nd century AD, and the first third of the 3rd century AD. Loeschcke VIII lamps were dated, similar to Ivanyi VII/Bayley O-Q/Ponsich III B/Deneaue VIIA, Loeschcke X with IANVARI stamp, respectively Alicu XXI type lamps.

In conclusion, there are more numerous occurrences of imported lamps between the second quarter of the 2nd century AD, and the first third of the 3rd century AD., with a higher frequency in the second half of the 2nd century AD. Lamps of local production begin to circulate in the second half of the 2nd century AD, until the middle of the 2nd century AD, with greater frequency from the last decade of the 2nd century AD, to the middle of the 3rd century AD.

Keywords: Romula, Roman Period, archaeological excavation, lamps, local production, imported lamps.

In 2022, the archaeological research in the central area of the Reşca-Romula site continued. The lot presented includes a number of 18 lamps, one of which is whole, one is to be made whole, and the rest is fragmentary, discovered during the mentioned archaeological campaign.

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Loeschcke VIII type

*Similar to Ivanyi VII, Bayley O-Q, Ponsich III B, Deneauve VIIA*

Lamps with small round body, concave disc, oblique shoulder, flat base, solid *ansa*, short nozzle.

The fragments discovered come from the reservoir, shoulder and disk. They are decorated with the rosette on the disk, with a row of stamped concentric circles on the shoulder (Pl. 1: 1, 4), respectively vegetal motifs (Pl. 1: 2, 3).

Some of these lamps were made of fine, yellowish fabric, with fine sand and mica. They have orange paint on the top, partially fallen (Pl. 1: 2, 4). Others are made of fine greyish fabric, containing sand and mica, with blackish colour-coating, partially fallen (Pl. 1: 1, 3).

**Archaeological context.** Two of the lamps were discovered in archaeological contexts dated to the last decade of the 2nd century AD, and the first third of the 3rd century AD (Pl. 1: 1, 3). Other two lamps were discovered in archaeological contexts dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD (Pl. 1: 2, 4).

**Area of circulation.** In Germany these lamps circulated until the end of the 2nd century AD, at Novae in Moesia Inferior in the second half of the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century AD², and in Pannonia they were frequent in the middle of the 2nd century AD³. In the North of the Danube, in Dacia Porolissensis, they circulated in the 2nd-3rd centuries AD⁴, in Dacia Inferior (Malvensis) in the 2nd-3rd centuries AD⁵, and at Sucidava they were dated in the 2nd-4th centuries AD⁶.

**Chronology and origin.** The circulation period of these lamps is a wide one, they were discovered in archaeological contexts from the 1st-4th centuries AD.⁷

Lamps of this type were produced in numerous archaeological sites in the Lower Danube area. Among these sites we mention the one at Sucidava, where a mould was discovered, for the upper part of a lamp of this type decorated, with rosette on the disc and concentric circles on the curb⁸.

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⁶ P. Gherge, M. Cojoc, *Opaiete romane si romano-bizantine descoperite in teritorial Sucidavei*, Universitaria Publishing, Craiova, 2011, p. 37, Fig. 15–33.
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Firmalampen

Type Loeschcke X

Similar to Brooner XXVI, Deneauve IV.5, Ivanyi XXVI-XXVII, Alicu X

Round body, with round flat disc, the shoulder is slightly inclined outwards. On the shoulder they had two or three knobs. The disc and long nozzle were bordered by an embossed stripe, which creates the impression of an open canal. The reservoir is flat. Inside the concentric circles in relief, there is the brand. The feeding orifice is small, the nozzle is long.

This type appeared at the end of the first century AD, and circulated frequently until the first half of the 3rd century AD, being rare in the fourth century AD⁹.

Lamps of this type were produced in many provinces of the Roman Empire, including the Danube. We mention in this context the lamp patterns of Loeschcke X type, discovered at Celei-Sucidava¹⁰ in Dacia Inferior (Malvensis) and Durostorum, in Moesia Inferior¹¹.

Within the studied group, there were identified lamps with the stamps ARMENI, FAOR, FORTIS, IANVARI and OCTAVI.

ARMENI branded lamp

In the archaeological campaign of 2022, a fragment of the flat base of a lamp with the stamp ARMEINI was discovered, of which only the letters MEN were preserved (Pl. 1: 5).

The lamp was made of fine brick-red yellowish fabric, containing fine and small sand. On the outside it is covered with red paint, partially fallen.

Archaeological context. It was discovered in an archaeological context dated from the second half of the 2nd century to the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD.

Area of circulation. Numerous items were discovered in the provinces of the Middle and Lower Danube. North of the Danube they were discovered in Dacia

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Superior (Apulensis)\textsuperscript{12} and Dacia Inferior (Malvensis)\textsuperscript{13}, in the south of the Danube in Moesia Inferior, at Barbosi\textsuperscript{14} and Durostorum\textsuperscript{15}.

**Chronology and origin.** These lamps circulated between the middle of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century and the beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD\textsuperscript{16}.

The location of the original workshop was made in Apulum or Tomis\textsuperscript{17}, in Moesia Inferior and at Romula\textsuperscript{18}.

**FAOR branded lamps**

Two of the fragments of lamps have the stamp FAOR (Pl. 1: 6, 7). The fragments come from the reservoir of lamps.

These lamps were made of semi-fine brick-red coloured common fabric, containing sand, mica and small fragments of limestone.

**Archaeological context.** One of the lamps was discovered in an archaeological context dated from the second half of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD, to the penultimate decade of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD (Pl. 1: 6). The other lamp was discovered in an archaeological context dated to the last decade of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century and the first third of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD (Pl. 1: 7).

**Area of circulation.** These lamps were discovered in Dacia Superior and Dacia Porolissensis\textsuperscript{19} and Dacia Inferior (Malvensis)\textsuperscript{20}, in Moesia Inferior and in Pannonia\textsuperscript{21}.

**Chronology and origin.** Lamps of this type began to be produced in the workshops of Favorinus, Italy, in the second half of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD, at


\textsuperscript{19} C. A. Roman, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–61.

\textsuperscript{20} G. Popilian, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–90; M. Negru, A. Badescu, *Roman lamps discovered in Romula*, in Acts of 2\textsuperscript{nd} International congress on Ancient and Middle Age Lighting Devices (Zalau – Cluj-Napoca, 13\textsuperscript{th}–18\textsuperscript{th} May 2006), *Trade and local production of lamps from the Prehistory until the Middle Age*, Cluj-Napoca, Mega Publishing, 2008, p. 192, no. 8.

\textsuperscript{21} D. Alicu, *Opaiêtele romane de la Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, p. 15.
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22 E. Buchi, op. cit., p. 55.
24 Ivanyi 1935, 316, no. 4548.
27 See the bibliography at P. Gherghe, M. Cojoc, op.cit., pp. 45–46.
28 D. Alicu, op. cit., p. 18.
29 C. A. Roman, op. cit., p. 64–65.
31 D. Ivanyi, op. cit., p. 316, nos. 4549–4560.
32 P. Gherghe, M. Cojoc, op. cit., p. 45.
33 C. A. Roman, op. cit. p. 65.

Poetovio22, circulating until the first half of the 3rd century AD23. A mould for these lamps was discovered at Aquincum in Pannonia24.

The fragments of lamps discovered at Romula may be local, given the common semi-fine ceramics, different from the fine brick or yellowish with colour-coating, specific to those imported from Italy and Pannonia25.

**FORTIS branded lamps**

Within this batch, two fragments of lamps were discovered with the stamp FORTIS (Pl. 1: 8, 9). They are fragments of reservoir, shoulder, disc and nozzle. The brand FORTIS was inside of two embossed rings, on the base of the lamp.

The lamps were modelled from fine fabric, containing fine, small sand and rare small fragments of limestone, yellowish coloured, covered on the outside with brick-yellowish paint, partially fallen.

**Archaeological context.** One of the lamps was discovered in an archaeological context dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD (Pl. 1: 8), the other in a context dated in the second quarter of the 2nd century AD. (Pl. 1: 9).

**Area of circulation.** Lamps with the FORTIS stamp are among the most widespread in the Roman Empire, including Dacia. Their number is very large, so we will only refer to a recent work, in which there is the bibliography on addressing the ones discovered at Porolissum26, respectively in Dacia Superior (Apulensis) and in Dacia Inferior (Malvensis)27, from the geographical area of the archaeological site where the lamps presented in this article were discovered.

**Chronology and origin.** These lamps were originally produced in Italy during the time of Augustus28, later in most provinces of the Roman Empire29, until the middle of the 4th century, as indicated by the archaeological discoveries in Moesia Inferior.30 Proof of this are the patterns discovered in numerous Roman provinces, of which the closest to Dacia is Pannonia31. In Dacia they were massively imported in the first half of the 2nd century AD, then the imports became rare32. In this context, probably contributing to the reduction of imports, local imitations of these lamps were produced in Dacia in large numbers33.

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22 E. Buchi, op. cit., p. 55.
24 Ivanyi 1935, 316, no. 4548.
27 See the bibliography at P. Gherghe, M. Cojoc, op.cit., pp. 45–46.
28 D. Alicu, op. cit., p. 18.
29 C. A. Roman, op. cit., p. 64–65.
31 D. Ivanyi, op. cit., p. 316, nos. 4549–4560.
32 P. Gherghe, M. Cojoc, op. cit., p. 45.
33 C. A. Roman, op. cit. p. 65.
IANVARI branded lamps

Within the lamps of the IANVARI brand, two variants of brands can be distinguished. The first variant contains lamps with a more neatly made brand, while the second contains fragments of lamps with a hard-to-decipher mark.

The first variant includes fragments of the lower part. The fragments come from the bottom, with the base having two rings, inside which there is the brand IANVARI (Pl. 1: 10, 11).

The both fragments come from a lamp made of fine grey fabric, containing sand and mica. On the outside, they have blackish colour-coating, partially fallen (Pl. 1: 10, 11).

Archaeological context. One of the lamps was discovered in an archaeological context dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD (Pl. 1: 10), the other was found in an archaeological context dated in the 2nd–3rd centuries AD (Pl. 1: 11).

Area of circulation. In the Danube provinces, lamps with this stamp were discovered in Dacia Porolissensis, Dacia Superior (Apulensis), Dacia Inferior (Malvensis) and Moesia Inferior. They were generally dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, to the 2nd century AD to Novae, respectively in the second half of the 2nd century and the 3rd century AD at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa.

Chronology and origin. Lamps with the brand IANVARI originated in northern Italy, at Aquileia, from where they were exported to the provinces on the Rhine and Danube, reaching Moesia and Dacia.

It is assumed that in Dacia Superior (Apulesnis) could have been produced at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, respectively in Moesia Inferior at Novae and Sexaginta Prista.

Firmalampen with the brand IANVARI difficult to decipher

Some fragments come from lamps with brands that are difficult to decipher. They are similar to lamps discovered at Sexaginta Prista.

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37 D. Alicu, op. cit., no. 1158.
39 D. Alicu, op. cit., no. 1158.
40 M. Cicikova, op. cit., Pl. XIX: 163.
42 Ibidem.
Within the presented batch, there are some fragments of the lower part of such lamps, with a base with two rings, inside which there is a hard-to-decipher brand, consisting of vertical lines, probably IANVARI brand, carelessly rendered (Pl. 1: 11–12; Pl. 2: 2).

They were moulded from fine greyish fabric, with blackish colour-coating, containing sand and mica.

**Archaeological context.** The fragments presented were discovered in archaeological contexts dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD.

**Area of circulation.** Similar lamps with similar brands in design were discovered at Sexaginta Prista\(^43\), in Moesia Inferior.

**Chronology and origin.** Lamps of this type were probably produced in Moesia Inferior, but they are probably of local production, due to the common fabric used, similar to the fabric of some tableware items, produced at Romula.

### OCTAVI branded lamps

A complete lamp had the mark OCTAVI (Pl. 2: 3a-c). The round body has a slightly inclined border on the outside, decorated with two pyramidal knobs. The lamp has no disc. On the base of the lamp, inside two embossed rings, there is the brand OCTAVI.

The lamp was made of yellowish fabric, containing fine and small sand, being covered on the outside with orange paint, partially fallen. On the nozzle, the lamp has traces of blackish colour, from the end of the wick flame.

**Archaeological context.** The lamp was discovered in a context dated from the second half of the 2nd century AD, to the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD. (Pl. 2: 3a-c).

**Area of circulation.** Lamps produced in Italy were exported after the middle of the 2nd century to Gallia, Pannonia, Rhaetia, Noricum, Dalmatia and Moesia Inferior. They were also very numerous in the Roman north-Danube provinces of Dacia Porolissensis, Dacia Superior (Apulensis) and Dacia Inferior (Malvensis)\(^44\).

**Chronology and origin.** These lamps circulated from the end of the 1st century AD, to the 3rd century AD. They were produced in Italy, but also in the neighbouring provinces of Dacia, as in Pannonia, at Siscia, where a mould was discovered.\(^45\)

### Loeschcke Type VIII

**Similar to Bailey Type K/Alicu VII D**

One of these lamps has a short, round body, small nozzle, decorated with two rings embossed on the outside, the feeding orifice is small, the base is flat decorated with two rings in relief. The nozzle is short and the handle is solid

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\(^{43}\) *Ibidem.*


(Pl. 2: 4). It was made from the common semi-fine fabric of brick-red colour, which contains fine sand and mica.

**Archaeological context.** The lamp was discovered in a context dated from the middle of the 2nd century AD, to the last decade of the 2nd century AD.

**Area of circulation.** Lamps of this type are widespread throughout the Roman Empire. In the region of the Lower Danube, we mention the similar ones discovered at Romula\(^46\) in Dacia Inferior (Malvensis) and Callatis\(^47\) in Moesia Inferior.

**Chronology and origin.** The above-described lamp was produced locally and circulated at Romula in the 2nd-3rd centuries AD.

**Wheelthrown lamps**

**Type XXI Alicu,**

*similar to Benea XIII, Iconomu XX, Benea VIC, Roman a2, Ponsich 1961, III. 34–35*

During the archaeological research, two fragments of lamps, wheelthrown, were discovered. They come from concave disc lamps, delimitate by a threshold from the disc inclined slightly outwards, with relatively deep reservoir, flat base and solid handle (Pl. 2: 5, 6). The used fabric is common semi-fine, of brick-red colour, containing fine sand and mica.

**Archaeological context.** Both fragments of lamps were discovered in archaeological context dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD.

**Area of circulation.** These fragments of lamps have analogies at Porolissum\(^48\), where they were dated in the 3rd century AD, respectively at Sucidava, dated in the 3rd-4th centuries AD\(^49\).

**Chronology and origin.** The lamps of this type, wheelthrown, were made of common fabric, specific to ceramic tableware, indicating a local production in Dacia, at the beginning of the 2nd century AD\(^50\).

**CONCLUSIONS**

The group of import lamps comprises those of Loeschcke VIII type, similar to Ivanyi VII, Bayley O–Q, Ponsich III B, Deneauve VIIA (Pl. 1: 1, Pl. 1: 3), Loeschke X with the brands FORTIS (Pl. 1: 8, 9), and OCTAVI (Pl. 2: 3), respectively Loeschcke VIII type, similar to type Bailey K (Pl. 2: 4).


\(^{47}\) C. Iconomu, *Opaiți greco-romani*. Muzeul Regional de Arheologie Dobrogea, Constanța, 1967, p. 153, nos. 797, Fig. 201.

\(^{48}\) C. A. Roman, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–28, 86, pl. 6: 18, pl. 6: 9, 17.

\(^{49}\) P. Gherghe, M. Cojoc, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 66, Pl. 6: 25, 28.

\(^{50}\) C. A. Roman, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
They were made of fine yellowish fabric, covered with orange paint, partially fallen (Pl. 1: 1, 3; Pl. 2: 3), with brick-red yellowish paint, partially fallen (Pl. 1: 8, 9), with semi-fine fabric, of brick-red colour (Pl. 2: 4).

The above-presented imported Roman lamps circulated between the second quarter of the 2nd century and the middle of the 3rd century AD. In the second quarter of the 2nd century AD, a Loeschcke X lamp with the FORTIS stamp (Pl. 1: 9) was dated. From the second half of the 2nd century AD to the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD, Loeschcke X lamps with OCTAVI (Pl. 2: 3) brands were dated, respectively a Loeschcke Type VIII/Bailey Type K lamp (Pl. 2: 4). In the period between the last decade of the 2nd century AD, and the first third of the 3rd century AD, lamps of the Loeschcke VIII type were dated, similar to Ivanyi VII, Bayley O–Q, Ponsich III B, Deneauve VIIA (Pl. 1: 1, 3), and, in the middle of the 3rd century AD, lamps of the Loeschcke X type with a stamp FORTIS (Pl. 1: 8), IANVARI (Pl. 1: 10).

The group of locally produced lamps includes fragments of Loeschcke VIII type specimens, similar to Ivanyi VII, Bayley O–Q, Ponsich III B, Deneauve VIIA (Pl. 1: 2, 4), Loeschke X FAOR (Pl. 1: 6), IANVARI (Pl. 1: 10), with vertical line stamps, difficult to decipher, probably IANVARI (Pl. 1: 11, 12; Pl. 2: 2), respectively fragments of lamps, thrown on the Alicu XXI wheel, similar to Iconomu XX, Benea VIC, Roman a2, Ponsich 1961, III. 34–35 (Pl. 2: 5, 6).

The lamps of local production were made of fine fabric, grey colour, blackish paint (Pl. 1: 2, 4, 10–12; Pl. 2: 2) or semi-fine brick-red coloured fabric (Pl. 1: 6, 7; Pl. 2: 5, 6).

Chronologically, they were discovered in archaeological context from the second half of the 2nd century AD, to the middle of the 3rd century AD. In the second half of the 2nd century, and until the penultimate decade of the 2nd century AD, a Loeschcke X lamp with FAOR brand (Pl. 1: 6) was dated. Another lamp of the same brand was dated to the last decade of the 2nd century AD and the first third of the 3rd century AD (Pl. 1: 7). In archaeological contexts, dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD, there were discovered lamps of Loeschcke VIII type, similar to Ivanyi VII, Bayley O–Q, Ponsich III B, Deneauve VIIA (Pl. 1: 2, 4), Loeschcke X with hardly decipherable stamp IANVARI (Pl. 1: 11, 12; Pl. 2: 2), respectively lamps thrown on the wheel of Alicu XXI type, similar to Iconomu XX, Benea VIC, Roman a2, Ponsich 1961, III. 34–35 (Pl. 2: 5, 6).

The origin of imported lamps can be assumed to be from the neighbouring provinces of Pannonia, Moesia Superior and especially Moesia Inferior. In order to establish exactly the origin of these lamps, as well as the local ones, laboratory investigations are necessary and especially the existence of a reference database for the fabric of the similar lamps, discovered in the neighbouring provinces of Dacia, or in the more distant.
Pl. 1. Roman lamps discovered at Romula.
Pl. 2. Roman lamps discovered at Romula.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


