

IZNIK CHINAWARE OIL LAMPS PRODUCED BETWEEN 15TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

Emel SOLENAY

AnadoluUniversity

Faculty of Fine Arts

Department of Ceramics, Eskisehir

Hasan IN

AnadoluUniversity

Graduate School of Fine Arts

Department of Ceramic Arts, Eskisehir

Abstract

The discovering fire has been accepted as the first and the foremost discovery on earth. Humankind aimed at holding the power that fire brought and controlling it. That the hunter-gatherer societies started to bake their food brought the idea that fire could also be used productively in other areas like heating and protecting from wild animals. Primitive societies started to use torches and oil lamps that can carry fire, lighten the places they lived in at nights and hold fire for a long time. In the periods that they were used, oil lamps, have served as documents that could inform about the societies' cultures and ways of living. In the periods that the oil lamps first started to be used, herbal and animal fat was used as flammable materials in order to maintain oil lamps burn continuously. Iznik is known to be one of the most important places for ceramics and chinaware production between 14th and 17th centuries in Anatolia. In Iznik, ceramics produced in the ceramic and chinaware workshops have been used in various forms in public places and architectural constructions. One of such uses is chinaware oil lamps, which are different in form and produced by using various decorating techniques. Oil lamps' being decorative and functional enable them to be used as illuminating tools especially in religious spaces. The purpose of the present research is to present the historical development of chinaware oil lamps produced between 15th and 17th centuries, and explore their production purposes and techniques.

Key words: Iznik Chinaware Oil Lamps, Ceramic Oil Lamps

Introduction

Illuminating can be defined as lighting dark spaces or objects in a way that eye can perceive them. The adventure of illuminating started with torches and oil lamps and continues with various lighting tools that are produced in light of the development of technology. Illuminating tools, the first uses of which were depended on their functionality, have started to be used as decorative objects considering the visual and esthetic values of the places where human beings lived. With the invention of electricity after the industrial revolution, some illuminating tools such as candle holders, oil lamps etc. lost their functions. After the introduction of mass production, with the help of various colors and shapes, decorations were made on forms that are designed conveniently fit for spaces. Carvings were made on the surfaces of baked soil forms by using open lattice work technique and by this way visual richness was increased.



Picture 1-2-3 : CeramicLampsfor in house

<http://mocoloco.com/archives/000549.php><http://www.roadsidescholar.com/2008/02/18/scabetti-ceramic-lamps/>

The use of illuminating tools can be examined in two groups, interior and exterior space uses. In interior space illuminating, generally, the criteria related to the space size, height and location the objects gain importance. The production of artificial tools and what kind of functions they need to have has been given attention in order not to affect the human constitution that has accustomed to the naturalness of day light. Similarly, in interior spaces, illuminating tools have been preferred when they are convenient for the overall structure of the space, save energy and do not tire the eyes.

In exterior spaces, productions have been carried out considering the size of the used area and appropriateness of the production to the spacestructure. A protective object has been added to the illuminating tools in exterior spaces in order to prevent their being affected from natural weather conditions.



Picture 4-5-6 : SreetLamps

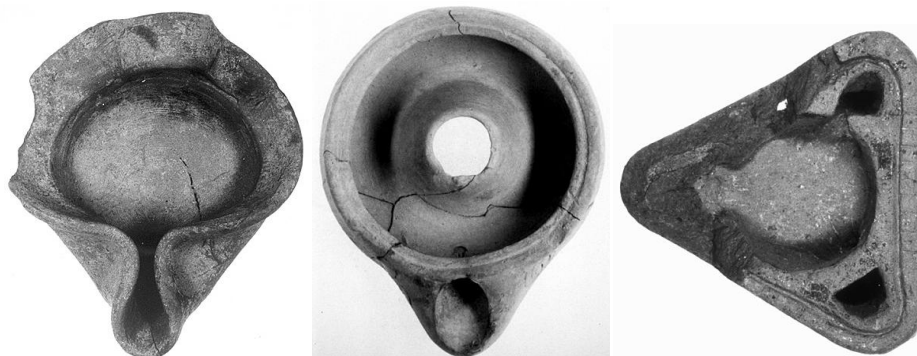
<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com>, <http://www.residetial-wind-power.com/2010/02>

<http://www.edwud.com/2008/08/04/street-lanow/2008/02/vermonica.html> /vertical-axis-wind-turbines-to-power-street-lights/ lamp-in-leith-edinburgh/

As the illuminating distance of light in interior and exterior spaces is limited, lighting tools are located in certain intervals. In interior spaces, the functions and forms of illuminating tools vary depending on their being on the wall, on the table or their being food lamps. Oil lamps, which served as illuminating tools in earlier periods, have various types.

THE DEFINITION OF OIL LAMP AND ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

It has been known that the first and foremost discovery is fire and the primitive human being aimed at controlling fire. In prehistoric times, primitive societies used fire for their basic needs such as sheltering, feeding, heating, protection and illuminating. Humankind, from prehistory to today, has aimed at illuminating the night and dark spaces by using various tools and devices in order to maintain continuity in societal life. To achieve this goal, people have made various inventions by using various materials. "In a cave used in Paleolithic periods, stone containers thought to be used for lighting purposes were found" (ORANSAY, A, 2011). When naming of oil lamps in different languages were examined, the word "kandil" that means "illuminating; candle, lamp" is a Turkish word translated from the Latin word "*candela*" by being affected from the Arab word "*kandil*". It is known that Seljuk and Ottomans used the Farsi word "*çerağ*", Arabs used "*sirac*", (MENEK, S, 2009, p:17), Greeks "*Lykhnos*" and in "*Lychnus*" and "*Lucerna*" were the Latin words used for oil lamps. (ÇOKAY, S, 2000, p; 8)



Picture 7-8-9: Examples of The First Oil Lamp (Picture: A. ORANSAY, in a personal archive)

In the Paleolithic age, stone containers used for illuminating purposes which were found in a cave in France are the first examples of oil lamp forms. “In 8000-6000 BC, seashell forms thought to be used as oil lamps were found” (ÇOKAY, S, 2000, p;8). In oil lamps, animal fat and more frequently vegetable oils (such as olive oil) were used as flammable materials and this confirms the idea that oil lamps were used in Aegean, Mediterranean regions and their surroundings in Anatolia. In the Ancient Era, oil lamps were produced from materials like baked soil, stone, glass, gold and silver. “The studies have shown that the earliest oil lamps made of fired soil were used in Palestine and its surroundings in 3000 BC” (ORANSAY, A, 2011). Significant examples of oil lamp were seen in Anatolia and surrounding regions such as Greece and Cyprus and these areas were seemed to be impacted from each other in terms of oil lamp production.

In the Iron Age (1200-700 BC) and afterwards, the most productive place was Greece. During the Archaic Period (the 7th century BC), Greek created high quality products in terms of technique and form. In Hellenistic Period (3rd- 2nd centuries BC), as the continuance of the Greek oil lamps in their forms, more developed examples shaped in lathes were made. In this period, in Rome art, oil lamp producers skillfully used the techniques of shaping in mold. In late Rome-Byzantine periods, Christianity symbols increasingly became the most frequently used depictions in oil lamps.

Generally speaking, “specifically in early Greek Period, Rome Period and Byzantine Period, the compositions of the things that human experienced and thought in communal life such as various mythological figures, cult scenes, topics related to literature and history, gladiator games, daily life, wedding and erotic scenes, animal figures, plant motifs and geometric decorations were embroidered as relief on the oil lamps” (ÇOKAY, S, 2000, p; 19-20). These oil lamps are ceramic products which serve as documents that provide extensive information on the societies they were produced by.



Picture. 10-11-12: OilLampExamples(Photo: Hasan İN)

<http://www.sadberkhanimmuzesi.org.tr/> <http://www.infrabyte.net/clients>

[default.asp?page=koleksiyon&kl=/yesholyland/page?n=Oil-lamp](http://www.infrabyte.net/clients/default.asp?page=koleksiyon&kl=/yesholyland/page?n=Oil-lamp) Info.kategori&tkid=8&oid=17&aid=46&hl=tr

Parts of oil lamps are “stem or the part that oil was put (oil cap,infundibulum), discus (main part), side, wick holder hole and handle(YALÇINKAYA, C, 1992, p;14). Historically, oil lamps are generally produced by using the techniques like free-shaping, shaping in lathe and shaping in mold. Regional factors have become effective in oil lamp production. Depending on the size of the spaces where oil lamps are used, the quantity of wick holder holes are increased in order to better illuminate the spaces.

THE FEATURES OF IZNIK CHINAWARE AND CERAMICS

Iznik is a center which has gone through cultural and architectural transformations. In the archeological history of Iznik, works of art that belong to various cultures such as Rome, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman Turks had been found. “The chinaware products produced in Iznik starting from the 14th century until the end of the 17th century are called Iznik chinaware. In the 17th century, SuleymanCelebi mentioned in his bookof travels that people made their living on producing earthenware potsin nine streets of Iznik and there were 340 chinaware kilns inthe city” (KÜÇÜKYILMAZLAR, A, 2006, p;8). In Iznik chinaware works, changes were observed across time with the settlement of the craftsman coming from various places to the city. In the chinaware products excavated, it was seen that colors such as brown and yellow were used and the glaze quality decreased.In Iznikregion, chinaware production gained momentum in the 14th century and quality products started to be produced.

“The figures specific to China ceramics frequently found in middle east were seen to be used in Iznik circa 1400” (KÜÇÜKYILMAZLAR, A, 2006, p;8).



Picture13-14-15: Examples of Iznik tiles (Photo: H.INFORMATION, Fire,Game)

The second half of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, chinaware started to be made from red material by using under-glaze technique. Their grounds glazed with white and their decorations covered with colored transparent lead glazes. Generally, colors including cobalt blue, light blue, turquoise, purple and green were used. “A new era in Ottoman Chinaware art started at the end of 15th and the beginning of 16th centuries. The chinaware and ceramics made of red materials were replaced by chinaware and ceramics which were made of white materials and covered with transparent glazes by using under-glaze technique” (BİLGİ, H, 2009, p; 15). The production of Iznik chinaware and ceramic were given importance in the 16th century. This importance was parallel to the increasing architectural activities. This process, which continued until the mid 16th century, comprises the third period of Iznik chinaware (KÜÇÜKYILMAZLAR, A, 2006, p; 9). This type of chinaware had white, clean and hard bases and their glazes were colorless and transparent. The chinaware of this period had rumi, hatayi (kind of plant figures), cloud and animal figures.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Iznik chinaware art and technique went through stagnation. The patterns started to deteriorate and colors melded with each other. “Tulip and carnation patterns and coral red patterns seen in the 16th century disappeared in the 17th century, and instead faded red appeared. In the chinaware of the century, the base became white, green color became bluish and turquoise blue turned into green” (KÜÇÜKYILMAZLAR, A, 2006, p; 9). At the end of the 17th century, the stagnation period of Ottoman Empire, Iznik chinaware art was also seen to be stagnated. Especially the quality of chinaware used in architecture was observed to deteriorate as a result of the decrease in the making of architectural buildings. At the beginning of the 18th century, chinaware production in Iznik stopped at all.

IZNIK CHINAWARE OIL LAMPS AND THEIR USES

The richest examples of Iznik chinaware were known to be used particularly in the architecture of palaces and in religious spaces in Seljuk and Ottoman periods. Chinaware was used in the coverings of interior and exterior walls, columns, window and door frames, niches and domes. “In Seljuk period, there are differences between chinaware decoration used in religious architecture and chinaware used in civil architecture in terms of pattern and technique” (BİLGİ, H, 2009, p; 14).

In addition to the chinaware production used in architecture, the ceramics used in daily life were also produced in Iznik. These ceramic forms are materials such as plates and bowls, hollow bowls with lids, jars, jugs, cups, jug-shaped cups, vases, oil lamps, candle holders and hanging balls. Among these materials, chinaware oil lamps were only used in religious places such as mosques and mausoleums.

Mosques and mausoleums are monumental and sophisticated places in terms of their functions. Chinaware oil lamps have been produced considering certain features which complete the wholeness of these places. While producing the chinaware oil lamps to be used, the width and the sizes of places and the height of their domes have been considered.



Picture 16-17-18: Iznik Tile lamps

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah>

http://www.myturkiye.com/turkce/turkiyehttp://www.bmimages.com/preview._istanbul_arkeoloji_muzesi_7.html

[/works-of-art/59.69.3](#)

[_istanbul_arkeoloji_muzesi_7.html](#)

[asp?image=00034175001&imagex](#)

[=27&searchnum=0002](#)

Oil lamps have been made from various materials including glasses, bronze and brass, but ceramic chinaware oil lamps have been preferred more as they completed the wholeness and the esthetics of the chinaware wall coverings in the places. Unlike the glass oil lamps, chinaware oil lamps are works of art which have rich motifs and reflect the decorative style of the periods that they created in. Oil lamps have been used in mosques more as decorative and symbolic purposes as they do not adequately perform the function of lightening. For acoustics purposes, that the chinaware oil lamps “were hanged in clusters especially over the place where prayers are said might make us think that they had a function of reducing echo” (ATASOY, N,-RUBY J, 1989).

Beside the colorful glaze technique (cuerdaseca) that appeared at the end of the 14th century, “in some architectural structures, chinaware made by using blue-white under-glaze technique draws the attention. In this technique, hatayi, pelmet, rumi, peonies, chrysanthemums and spiral branch motifs were made on white base by using blue tones” (BİLGİ, H, 2009, p;14). Colors were applied by using under-glaze technique. Cobalt blue color represents an important period in Turkish chinaware art. For this reason, blue-white motifs were made on chinaware oil lamps.



Picture 19-20-21: Iznik blue-white tile lamps

http://www.iznik-art.com/urunler/mosque_lamps.htm

<http://www.pbase.com/dosseman/image/39405300>

It is possible to see, the coral red color, which is the most significant characteristic of the 16th century, on some of the chinaware oil lamps. Herbal motifs, and kufi and sulus writings in calligraphic Arabic script were very skillfully embroidered on chinaware oil lamps. In the chinaware oil lamps of the late the 16th century, cobalt blue dominated the form, and writings and motifs were left in white color. The patterns on the chinaware oil lamps produced for religious spaces such as mosques and mausoleums are generally comprised of kufi and sulus writings. Chinaware oil lamps are comprised of chimney, collar, hanger, stem and base. Chimney is in the same width with stem in order to provide illumination. Collar is generally narrow and stem is wide. Chinaware oil lamps were hanged on the ceiling or a higher place in order to illuminate the spaces. They were hanged down by means of chains (three or four) attached to their handles which were on their stems. The chinaware oil lamps that did not have a handle were hanged by placing them from their collars or bases on a metal container.



Figure22-23: TileKandilandDetail View
(http://www.pbase.com/dosseman/cinili_kosk)

Chinaware oil lamps were shaped in mold or lathe due to their oval and symmetric forms. The product shaped in mold was applied under-glaze décor after it was fired. The product glazed after décor application was fired again and became ready to use. Primarily, chinaware oil lamps carrying the features of the period have been used as decorative elements. Today, chinaware oil lamps are seen in some historical places and museums. In some of the workshops in Iznik, the reproductions of the original oil lamps are made. In the present study; the historical development of chinaware oil lamps, the periods they were used in, production techniques and their purposes of use were mentioned.

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