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Any correspondence will be sent to the editor:
INSTITUTUL DE ARHEOLOGIE ȘI ISTORIA ARTEI
Str. M. Kogălniceanu nr. 12–14, 400084 Cluj-Napoca, RO
e-mail: choprean@yahoo.com

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MINIATURE MIRRORS FROM APULUM- DEALUL FURCILOR CEMETERY

Marina Musteață¹, Adrian Cosmin Bolog²

Abstract: *Apulum, one of the largest urban settlements of Roman Dacia, housed a population with many ties around the empire. This could be observed in the city's cemeteries, including the one situated on Dealul Furcilor. Thus, studies of the funerary treatment of the deceased individuals are necessary for the archaeologists and historians to uncover the ways in which the individual and collective identities were expressed. Two graves included in the cemetery's monograph, initially published as M612 and M670, have both among their grave goods a miniature lead mirror. The miniature mirrors are a type of artefact with a disputed function. One reason for this situation is the small size that could question their practical function as objects used to reflect someone's image. The second reason is related to their many contexts of discovery, such mirrors being found in funerary, votive and also domestic contexts.*

Keywords: *miniature mirrors, graves, social identities, burial practices, Roman Dacia.*

1. Introduction

The article discusses two Roman graves from Apulum – Dealul Furcilor cemetery, each including in their inventory one miniature mirror³. These mirrors are made of lead and have a small diameter, which make them hard to be considered toiletries. Such artefacts were found all over the Roman world in many different contexts, and having different shapes, so questions about their function have been raised⁴. It is thought that they could be votive gifts, some of them being found in sacred areas and having inscriptions dedicated to different female deities, like Venus, Selene, Isis etc⁵. The magical function is brought into discussion when such mirrors are found in funerary contexts, some of them being associated with women and children⁶. It is also known that the material from which they are made was considered to have magical powers, its perceived features being considered suitable for the transmission of messages to the world of spirits⁷. If the context is unknown, the inscribed love or erotic messages could also indicate this function⁸. When appearing in military camps, it is said that they merely had a practical function⁹, but in this case, their durability could be questioned, the lead being softer than other metals¹⁰. Sometimes, mirrors bear inscriptions that betray the fact that they were probably gifts offered to women¹¹.

¹ Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei Cluj-Napoca, Str. M. Kogălniceanu, nr. 12–14, Cluj-Napoca, marinamusteata@yahoo.com;

² Muzeul Național al Unirii Alba Iulia, Str. Mihai Viteazul 12–14, Alba Iulia, adrian_bolog@yahoo.com

³ BOLOG 2017 105–114.

⁴ TREISTER 1994, 423; GRAHAM 2018; STREINU ET AL. 2020, 180–182.

⁵ BARATTA 2010, 91–92; KOSANOVIĆ/MILOVANOVIĆ 2017, 204.

⁶ OTA 2009, 32; GRAHAM 2018; STREINU ET AL. 2020, 178.

⁷ GAGER 1992, 3–4; GRAHAM 2018.

⁸ KOSANOVIĆ/MILOVANOVIĆ 2017, 204.

⁹ NEMETI 2017a, 60.

¹⁰ GRAHAM 2018.

¹¹ DANA 2015.

But who really knows what they were made for? A simple answer would be, the person who made them. Their manufacturers are not always a mystery. Some of the mirrors have inscriptions that reveal the names of the craftsmen, like in the cases from Arelatina, Cuccureddus, Moyland, and Sucidava. In Giulia Baratta's opinion, they were freemen that worked in the *officinae* of the Roman world¹². Anyway, not many mirrors discovered so far have such details inscribed on them, and the same thing is available for the motives, further research being needed. Therefore, although they are much harder to interpret than a written text, the answer should probably be searched also in the archaeological contexts of discovery.

Considering all of these observations, one scope of this article is to clarify the significance of the mirrors in the burials from Apulum – Dealul Furcilor cemetery. The second scope is to identify the social identities of the deceased individuals from the researched graves.

Methodologically, the article is divided into three parts, the first part discussing the previous publications focused on the lead mirrors discovered in Roman Dacia, or the ones that included them among other finds.

The second part consists of the description and contextual interpretation of the graves and their inventory based on previous information published in the cemetery's monograph¹³ and some new information, including the reassessment of two ceramic vessels and the identification of the coin from the first grave (M612). For the descriptions of the artefacts, it was used the catalogue of the monograph. The drawings were also taken into consideration when the information from the catalogue was too brief. In the graves' description are also mentioned the results of an anthropological study conducted by Drd. Ileana Buzic from the "1 December 1918" University of Alba Iulia.

The third part presents a typologically classification of the studied mirrors and their analogies from the Roman world. The possible functions of similar mirrors found in the archaeological contexts of Roman Dacia, including those found in the two selected graves from Apulum are also discussed.

Finally, it has to be said that physical access to the artefacts was not possible in this pandemic context, so the analysis is mainly based on the drawings and photographs published in the cemetery's monograph or taken during the excavation of the archaeological site.

2. Lead mirrors in Roman Dacia

The lead mirrors discovered on the territory of Roman Dacia are mentioned and sometimes typologically classified in archaeological monographs, though many are included in articles that have them as the main subject. They are thus attested at Apulum¹⁴, Drobeta¹⁵, Ilișua¹⁶, Obreja¹⁷, Potaișsa¹⁸, Slăveni¹⁹, Soporu de Câmpie²⁰, Sucidava²¹, and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa²².

¹² BARATTA 2010, 91–95.

¹³ BOLOG 2017.

¹⁴ BĂLUȚĂ 1997, 562; OTA 2009, 32–33 – for the picture of the mirror, see BOUNEGRU ET AL. 2011, 128; BOLOG 2017, 105–114.

¹⁵ BENEĂ 1974.

¹⁶ DANA 2015; GAIU 2017, 61.

¹⁷ PROTASE 1971, 155.

¹⁸ BĂRBULESCU 1994, 149; NEMETI 2017a, 60.

¹⁹ POPILIAN 1971, 636.

²⁰ PROTASE/ȚIGARA 1959, 387.

²¹ TUDOR 1948; TUDOR 1959.

²² ALICU/COCIȘ 1987, 146.

One old but often cited publication that takes into consideration the lead mirrors from Roman Dacia is including 72 artefacts, both complete and fragmentary ones, discovered at Sucidava²³. In this article, one type of mirrors was identified according to their shape, and over 20 types according to their decoration. They were generally dated between the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD and were ascribed a practical or a votive function according to their morphology. Because of their great number and the fact that some of the mirrors bear the names of their manufactures, *Brutus* and *Lollianus*, it has been suggested that multiple workshops were active in Sucidava. Most of the analogies for the mirrors from this site are found in Bulgaria, and because of that it was supposed that a relation was established between the workshops from this area of the Roman world. Other workshops specialised in casting lead mirrors were presumed at Apulum, Drobeta (between the reigns of Septimius Severus and Gallienus), and Gârla Mare²⁴.

At Apulum were discovered not only lead mirrors, but also moulds with one or three valves to produce them²⁵. The first mould was found in the *Municipium Septimium*, and the second one in the *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis*. A mould from the Museum of Sebeş collections, with an unknown place of discovery, also resembles the one found in the *Colonia Aurelia*²⁶. The presence of these artefacts attests a local production of at least two types of lead mirrors, the first one having a star-shape, and the second having a round rim, geometrical motifs, and a denticiform decoration on the circumference²⁷.

Sometimes, the published lead mirrors from Roman Dacia have an unclear context of discovery, but when the context is known, it can be observed that the situation from the rest of the Roman world is also encountered in Dacia. That is, lead mirrors are found in the following contexts: burials²⁸, settlements²⁹, votive contexts³⁰, and military forts³¹. It can be therefore noted that each mirror could have had different or multiple functions (votive, ritual, practical), according to the context in which it was found, the relations with other artefacts, and their morphology. Their state of preservation, for example when the mirror is found folded or has the reflecting surface broken, could indicate an unusual utilisation of the artefact, and maybe an intentional damage³².

3. Graves M612 and M670 at Apulum-Dealul Furcilor

The Roman cemetery on Dealul Furcilor is situated in modern Alba Iulia (Fig. 1–2)³³, between the two Roman urban settlements. The first one was formed to the south of the Mureş River, gaining the *municipium* rank under Marcus Aurelius, and becoming *colonia* under Commodus. The second settlement, formed around the military camp of *Legio XIII Gemina*, gaining the *municipium* rank under Septimius Severus. The cemetery is the biggest in the area and its limits are not yet fully discovered³⁴.

²³ TUDOR 1959, 417–432.

²⁴ BENEÀ 2008, 237–240.

²⁵ CIUGUDEAN 1994; BĂLUȚĂ 1997.

²⁶ BENGÀ 2003, 94.

²⁷ BENEÀ 2008, 238.

²⁸ BENEÀ 2008, 240; OTA 2009, 32.

²⁹ BĂLUȚĂ 1997, 562.

³⁰ TUDOR 1959; ALICU/COCIȘ 1987, 148–149.

³¹ BĂRBULESCU 1994, 149; GAIU 2017, 61; NEMETI 2017a, 60.

³² GRAHAM 2018.

³³ BOLOG 2017, 14.

³⁴ HAMAT/ BOUNEGRU 2016, 135.

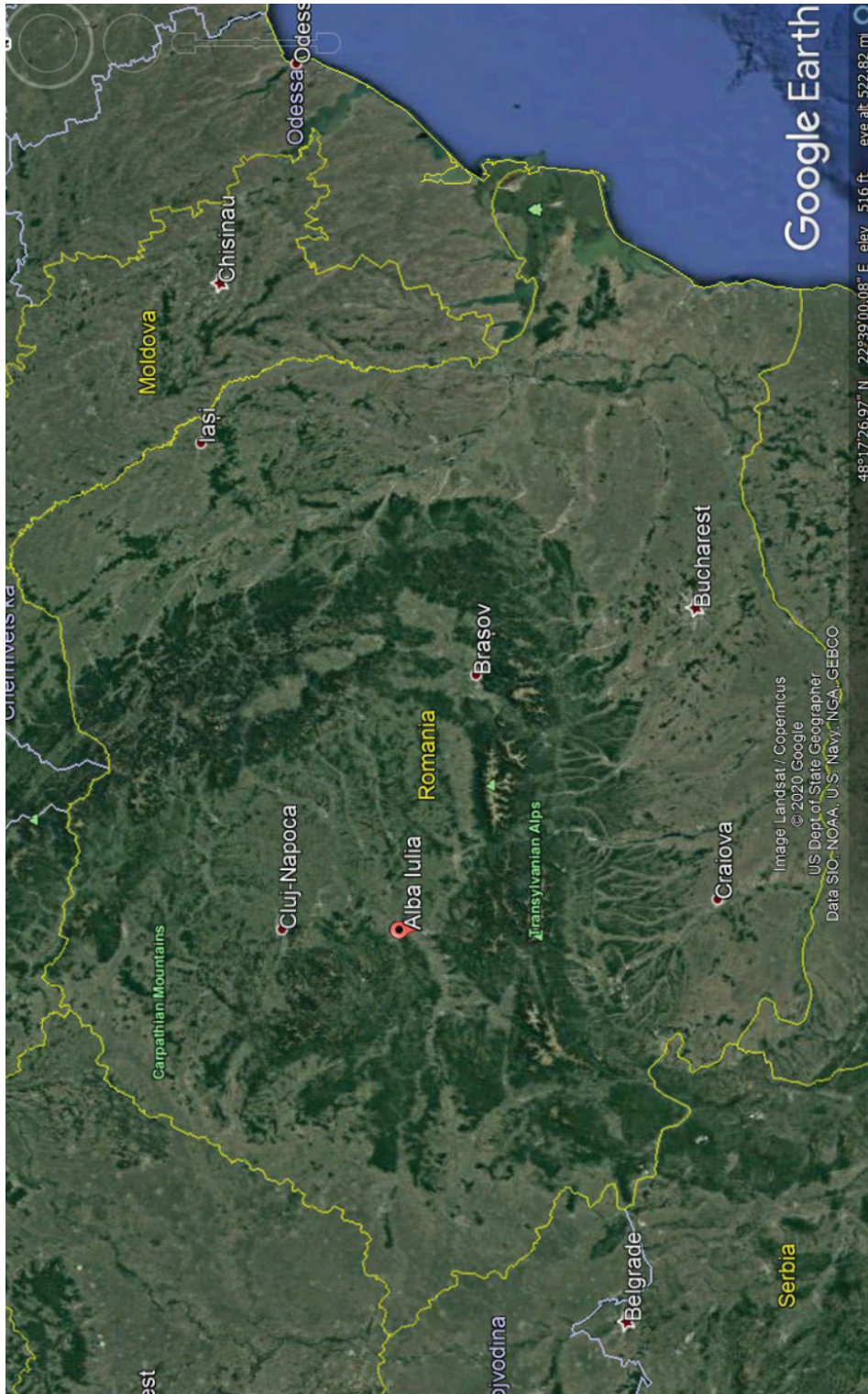


Fig. 1. The location of the archaeological site (after MUSTEAȚĂ 2020).



Fig. 2. The location of the cemetery (after BOLOG 2017).

The discoveries made in this cemetery are partially published in a monograph, one of the most well-known contributions to the investigation of funerary practices in Roman Dacia³⁵. According to the published catalogue, there are two graves that contained miniature lead mirrors, M612 and M670.

The two graves are situated in different parts of the cemetery, the first one (M612) being in area 14, and the second one (M670) in area 21 (Fig. 3). The funerary rite of the graves is different, M612 grave being an inhumation, and M670 a cremation³⁶.

The first grave (M612) has an irregular shape³⁷ and a simple treatment of the pit (Fig. 5/1). According to the monograph, the grave contained the osteological remains of a child that are not well preserved. There is also an unfinished anthropological study that cannot yet confirm the age of the deceased³⁸. The grave has a NE-SW orientation. Due to these characteristics, the grave resembles the majority of the children's graves found in this cemetery³⁹. The NE-SW orientation is commonly associated in this cemetery with coins issued between Trajan's and Caracalla's reigns⁴⁰. It could indicate the season of the year when the deceased was buried, or could be a sign of the cemetery's organization in a certain time and area⁴¹.

³⁵ BOLOG 2017.

³⁶ BOLOG 2017, 105–114.

³⁷ Although in the monograph it is described as rectangular with rounded corners, the photos of the grave show an irregular shape.

³⁸ Conducted by Drd. Ileana Buzic from the "1 December 1918" University of Alba Iulia.

³⁹ MUSTEAȚĂ 2020b, 48–53.

⁴⁰ BOLOG 2017, 44, M205; MUSTEAȚĂ 2020a, 134–135.

⁴¹ LĂZĂRESCU/TURCU 2013, 129–144; DE JONG 2017, 31–33.



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Fig. 3. 1- The analysed areas (after BOLOG 2017); 2- The location of the two graves (after BOLOG).

The inventory of the grave consists of the following artefacts: a nail, a miniature lead mirror, a ceramic vessel⁴², three lamps and a coin. Dimensions: $D_c=1.25\text{m}$; $D_f=1.70\text{m}$; $L=0.94\text{m}$; $l=0.77\text{m}$ (Fig. 4).

The fragmentary iron nail has a straight body and a square cross-section. The lower and the top parts are missing. No precise function can be ascribed to the nail, though it could have been part of an artefact that was made of organic materials, which did not survive. Dimensions: $L=4.8\text{ cm}$, $L_{\text{section}}=0.4\text{cm}$ (Fig. 4/1).

The first lamp (intact) belongs to the Loeschcke X type and was made of a fine orange ceramic fabric. The round discus is smooth, has a central orifice, and is delimited from the rim through a prominent ridge, which is prolonged on the spout, surrounding it and forming a groove. The rim has two knobs that are not placed symmetrically. The elongated spout has one wick-hole. The basin is conical. The handle has a *palmette* shape with a dorsal axial nervure. The lamp was made in a bivalve mould. Dimensions: $L=8.2\text{ cm}$; $l=4.1\text{ cm}$; $h=4.3\text{ cm}$. Inventory no. R10984 (Fig. 4/2).

The second lamp (intact) also belongs to the Loeschcke X type and was made of a fine orange ceramic fabric. The round discus is smooth, has a central orifice, and is delimited from the rim through a prominent ridge, which is prolonged on the spout, surrounding it and forming a groove. The rim has two knobs⁴³. The elongated spout has one wick-hole. The basin is conical. The handle has a *palmette* shape with a dorsal axial nervure. The lamp was made in a bivalve mould. Dimensions: $L=9.4\text{ cm}$; $l=4.3\text{ cm}$; $h=4.6\text{ cm}$. Inventory no. R10985 (Fig. 4/3).

The third lamp (intact) belongs to the Loeschcke X type and was made of a fine orange ceramic fabric. The round discus is smooth, has a central orifice, and is delimited from the rim through a prominent ridge, which is prolonged on the spout, surrounding it and forming a groove. The rim has two knobs. The elongated spout has one wick-hole. The basin is conical. The handle has a *palmette* shape with a dorsal axial nervure. The lamp was made in a bivalve mould. Dimensions: $L=8.4\text{ cm}$; $l=4.2\text{ cm}$; $h=4.4\text{ cm}$. Inventory no. R10986 (Fig. 4/4).

The Loeschcke X type of lamps, known also as the *Firmalampe*, appears in the last half of the 1st century AD and continues to be used in the 4th century AD and later, being preferred mostly in the 2nd century AD⁴⁴. The *monolychnis* Loeschcke X type lamps with a *palmette* handle are discovered in many settlements of the Roman Dacia, but the way in which the leaf motif is made differs from one place to another⁴⁵. Most of them are found at Apulum and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the motif being probably preferred in the 3rd century AD⁴⁶.

Most of the analogies for these three lamps come from Apulum. Many similar lamps, *monolychnis*, *bilychnis*, and *trilychnis*, have the same style of the leaf, but their context of discovery is often unclear⁴⁷. Among them, a *bilychnis* lamp has a CRESC(E)N(S) stamp, and a *trilychnis* one has a C(AIUS) DESSI(US) stamp. It is supposed that Crescens' products were brought into Dacia during the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. The workshop of Caius Dessius was active during the second half of the 2nd century⁴⁸. A *trilychnis* lamp, dated between the second half of the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century, was discovered in the *canabae*⁴⁹. A handle of a *monolychnis* lamp, also found in the *canabae* of the *Legio XIII*

⁴² Although the vessel is listed as a jar in the monograph, the ceramic fragment is too small for a proper typological identification (reassessment made by Dr. Mariana Egri).

⁴³ According to the description in the monograph, not to the drawings.

⁴⁴ ISAC/ROMAN 2001, 376; OTA/BOUNEGRU 2009, 91.

⁴⁵ CĂȚINAȘ 2002, 94.

⁴⁶ EGRI 2005, 86.

⁴⁷ BĂLUȚĂ 1961, 198–199; BĂLUȚĂ 1965, 287, figs. IV/9, V/1, IV/11.

⁴⁸ BĂLUȚĂ 1961, 198–199.

⁴⁹ OTA/BOUNEGRU 2009, 72, ob. 31.

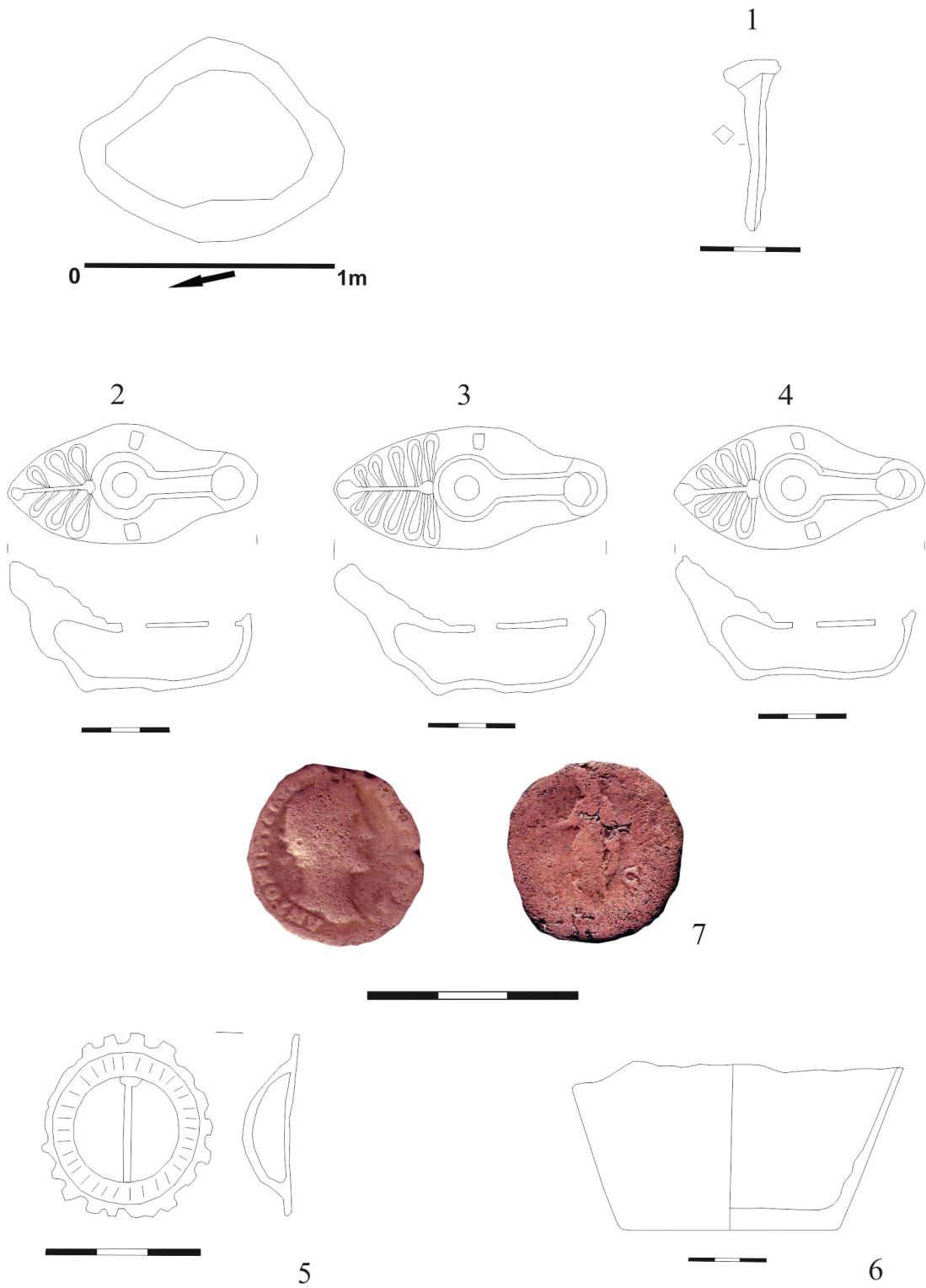


Fig. 4. M612 grave and inventory: 1 – iron nail; 2–4 lamps; 5 – lead mirror; 6 – ceramic vessel; 7 – coin (after BOLOG 2017).

Gemina, dated to the second half of the 2nd century, resembles the motif from the studied lamps⁵⁰. *Palmetta* handles were also discovered in the *Liber Pater* sanctuary, from *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis*⁵¹.

Lamp offerings could indicate a belief in the protective role of light in the afterlife. The objects could have had an active role in the funerary ceremony, or could have just been symbolic gifts⁵². Their number could be related to a different funerary ritual that implicated more participants with similar roles in the ceremony⁵³.

A heavily worn archetype for casting bivalve lamp moulds that have a similar *palmette* handle to the ones from the cemetery was discovered on the territory of *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis*, close to a large building. This artefact was dated to the period between the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius⁵⁴.

Another analogy comes from the *praetorium* of the *castrum* from Gilău, being dated to the 3rd century AD⁵⁵. Another lamp with a similar *palmette* handle, but with two wick-holes, was found in the Aesculapius and Hygeia sanctuary at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁵⁶. Two handles of some unknown types of lamps but having a similar *palmette* motif, from Micia, resemble the one from Apulum⁵⁷.

The fragmentary lead mirror has a circular frame bordered by two concentric ribs. Between them is a decoration with radial and hemispherical striations. On the circumference, the rim has a dentiform decoration. There is a horizontal handle on the back of the frame. The support plate and the reflecting surface are not preserved. Dimensions: h=1 cm; d_{ext}=3.4. Inventory no. R10820 (Fig. 4/5 – Fig. 5/2).

The fragmentary ceramic vessel was made of a semi-fine orange ceramic fabric and was fired unevenly. The flat base has a diameter of 8 cm. The height of the preserved fragment is 5.2 cm (Fig. 4/6). Ceramic vessels are one of the most encountered artefacts in this cemetery, in the case of both child and adult graves. The offering of vessels could indicate the belief in the afterlife and the need of the dead to be fed⁵⁸, though they could also express the status of the deceased⁵⁹. The breaking of the vessel probably was part of the funerary ritual, representing an intentional act of destruction⁶⁰.

The much worn coin is a bronze *sestertius* issued by Antoninus Pius in AD 159. Obverse: ANTONINVS AVG [PIVS PP TR P XXII], laureate head, to the right. Reverse: [VOTA SVSCEPTA DEC III], veiled emperor to the left, standing and sacrificing at flaming tripod, [S]C in field, [COS III] in exergue⁶¹. Dimensions: 9.05 g; 26.7 × 25.2 mm; axis=6⁶². Inventory no. 8787 (Fig. 4/7). The offering of coins could indicate the belief in the myth of Charon, or in other related beliefs. Their location in graves is important for this supposition because it can help in determining the relations between the grave-goods and, through that, their role and time of

⁵⁰ OTA/BOUNEGRU 2009, 69–70, ob. 19.

⁵¹ EGRI 2005, 86.

⁵² ŞÖFÖROĞLU/SUMMERER 2016, 259–264; RIFE/MOORE MORINSON 2017, 51.

⁵³ POPA 2018, 18; FAHLANDER/OESTIGAARD 2008, 7.

⁵⁴ BĂLUŢĂ 2002, 273–275, Pl. VI/55.

⁵⁵ ISAC/ROMAN 2001, 376–384.

⁵⁶ ALICU/NEMEŞ 1977, 30–72. The sanctuary has three phases of utilization and it is not clear in which one the lamp was found.

⁵⁷ BOCAN/NEAGU 2015, 155; GHEORGHITĂ 1975, 52, fig. III/8.

⁵⁸ PARKER PEARSON 1999, 10; CARROLL 2006, 4.

⁵⁹ LEPETZ ET AL. 2011, 110–112.

⁶⁰ RUSU-BOLINDEŢ 2014, 241.

⁶¹ RIC III 1010 (identified by Dr. Mariana Egri).

⁶² OARGĂ/BOLOG 2013, 213, no. 30 (only offering a brief description).



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Fig. 5. 1- M612 grave; 2 – lead mirror (after BOLOG 2017).

using in the funerary rituals⁶³. Unfortunately, the exact place of this coin is not recorded, so it cannot be said whether it was placed just after the death of the individual, during the burial, or during the grave filling up. In this situation a single coin was offered, a well encountered practice in Dacia⁶⁴ and also in this cemetery⁶⁵. The depiction from the reverse of the coin can also say something about the intentions of the mourners. In this case, it was depicted the emperor standing and sacrificing at flaming tripod. This could be a message related to religious behaviours, noticed quite frequent at Apulum⁶⁶.

The second grave (M670) is a cremation on the *ustrinum*, and has a circular shape with a simple treatment of the pit. The orientation of the grave is NW-SE. The cremated remains were scattered on the bottom of the pit. The inventory includes a miniature lead mirror and four ceramic vessels. Dimensions: $D_c=0.68\text{m}$; $D_f=0.95\text{m}$; $L=1.17\text{m}$; $l=1.00\text{m}$ (Fig. 6)⁶⁷.

The fragmentary lead mirror has a circular frame bordered by two concentric ribs. Between them is a decoration consisting of radial striations with spherical ornaments in the

middle. On the circumference, the rim has a dentiform decoration. On the back of the frame is

⁶³ STEVENS 1991, 215–229; PÎSLARU 2003, 44–49; ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC 2018, 60–61.

⁶⁴ ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC 2018, 64.

⁶⁵ MUSTEAȚĂ 2020a, 108.

⁶⁶ ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC 2018, 68–71.

⁶⁷ BOLOG 2017, 114.

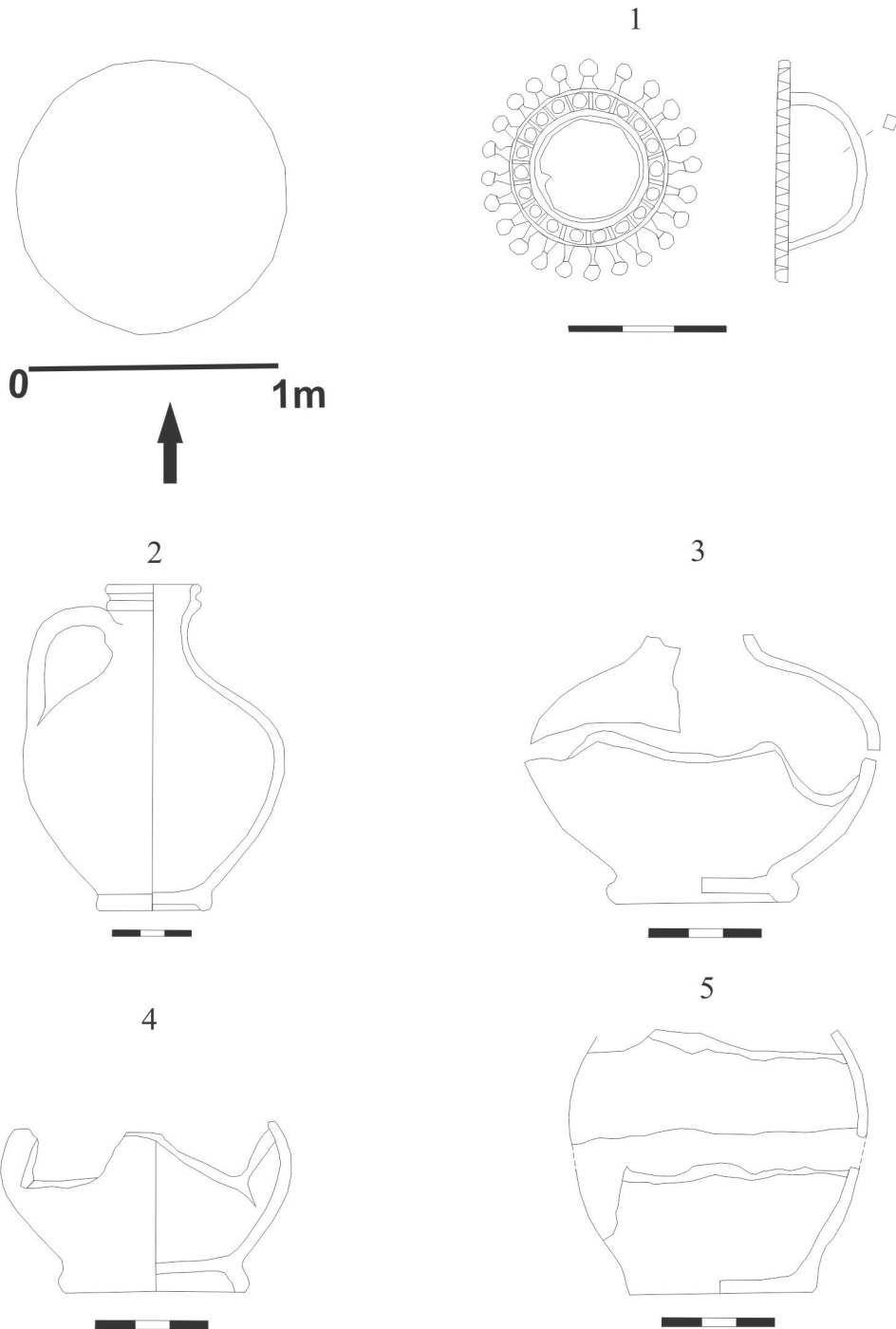


Fig. 6. M670 grave and inventory; 1 – lead mirror; 2 – 5 ceramic vessels (after BOLOG 2017).

a horizontal handle. The support plate and the reflecting surface are not preserved. Dimensions: $h=1$ cm; $d_{ext}=4.2$ cm. Inventory no. R11036 (Fig. 6/1).

The first pitcher (intact) has a fine ceramic fabric of an orange colour and is uniformly fired. The vertical rim is decorated with a wide groove and has a diameter of 3.4 cm. The neck is short and narrow; the undecorated handle is attached to the neck and above the maximum

diameter of the vessel. The body is globular and has a diameter of 9.2 cm. The annular base has a diameter of 4.2 cm. The height of the pitcher is 11.8 cm. Inventory no. 10977 (Fig. 6/2).

The second pitcher (fragmentary) has a fine ceramic fabric of a yellowish colour and is uniformly fired. The body is globular and the base is annular, with a diameter of 4.6 cm. The height of the preserved fragments is 1.4 cm (Fig. 6/3).

The third pitcher (fragmentary) has a fine ceramic fabric of a yellowish colour and is uniformly fired. The globular body has a maximum diameter of 9.4 cm. The annular base has a diameter of 4.6 cm. The height of the preserved fragment is 6.4 cm (Fig. 6/4).

The last vessel⁶⁸ (fragmentary) has a fine ceramic fabric of a yellowish colour, is uniformly fired and has an orange slip. The body has an ovoid shape. The flat base has a diameter of 4.7 cm. The height of the preserved fragments is 9 cm (Fig. 6/5).

The pitchers can be included in the *ministerial* category, including vessels used “for storage and for pouring wine and water”, and in funerary contexts as offerings vessels⁶⁹. The first pitcher has relative analogies at Băneasa, Buciumi, Cioroiu Nou, Dinogetia, Drobeta, and Romula, dated in the last case from the middle and the second half of the 2nd century AD⁷⁰. They were also found at Napoca, being dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD⁷¹. The ceramic vessels from its inventory, as in the previous case, could indicate a belief in the afterlife and the need of the soul to be fed, or could be a funerary gift that symbolized the new status of the deceased. In this case, three of the vessels carried probably liquid offerings. One of the pitchers is complete, and the other three vessels are broken. When it comes to the funerary ceremony, probably after the *cena feralis* (the funerary banquet), the vessels used by the mourners were burnt or destroyed⁷². This could be a possible example of a ritual that caused the destruction of the discussed pitchers. Another potential ritual could be involving the washing of the cremated remains with wine⁷³. This ritual can only be confirmed by some biochemical analyses. The complete vessel was probably laid after the cremated remains were put into the grave.

4. Analysis of the miniature lead mirrors

Due to their shape, the two miniature lead mirrors belong to the 5Y type in the Glenys Lloyd-Morgan typology. In Dacia, most of their analogies came from Apulum, five similar artefacts being found in the *praetorium consularis*⁷⁴, though all with an uncertain dating⁷⁵.

For the first mirror (from grave M612), another similar analogy also comes from Apulum, more exactly from a place called “Lăbuș”, in Partoș (in the *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis*), where a lead mirror was found in a mould valve. This discovery has no proper archaeological context and its dating is similar to that of the mirrors from the *praetorium consularis*⁷⁶. This mirror attests the existence of a workshop specialised in casting lead mirrors in this area⁷⁷. Another analogy comes from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, where a fragmentary mirror was

⁶⁸ Although the vessel is listed as a pitcher in the monograph, the ceramic fragment is too small for a proper typological identification (reassessment made by Dr. Mariana Egri).

⁶⁹ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 423.

⁷⁰ POPILIAN 1976, 97.

⁷¹ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 424.

⁷² SCHEID 1984, 131.

⁷³ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2014, 241.

⁷⁴ BĂLUȚĂ 1997, 562–563.

⁷⁵ For the dating, see OTA 2009, 32–33.

⁷⁶ BĂLUȚĂ 1997, 561–563; For the dating, see OTA 2009, 32–33.

⁷⁷ BĂLUȚĂ 1997, 563.

found in the EM24 building, probably the *basilica* located near the Asklepeion, being dated between the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD⁷⁸.

For the second mirror, a perfect analogy comes from the Apulum-Dealul Furcilor cemetery, from the fill of a child inhumation grave (*infans I* category) dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD⁷⁹. A second very similar analogy was found at Ilişua, in the *castrum*⁸⁰. A relative analogy was found at Potaissa, also in the *castrum*, where a fragmentary mirror with a similar rim decoration was discovered in a *porticus* situated between two barracks⁸¹.

This type of mirrors is also found in other parts of the Roman world, one analogy coming from the Hungarian National Museum's collections. Unfortunately, the context of discovery and the dating of the artefact are unknown. In the catalogue of this collection, it is considered that this type is a transitional one to a group of star-shaped mirrors. Other analogies from the rest of the empire come from Carnuntum⁸², Durostorum⁸³, and Emona (from a funerary context dated between the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD)⁸⁴.

Considering that most of the analogies from Dacia come from Apulum, it can be presumed that this shape is local, being made by the local artisans⁸⁵. The fact that similar artefacts were also found in Pannonia and Moesia Inferior may suggest some kind of exchanges between the three provinces, either through trading or the mobility of the individuals that made or used them. The presence in certain places of an artefact is not only suggesting this kind of mobility, but also the transformation of its original function through practice⁸⁶. In Dacia, this type of mirrors is found in civilian contexts, sacred areas, graves, and also in military camps. Their functions, according to the contexts in which they are found, are discussed below.

The first analogies come from a civilian environment, the *praetorium consularis* at Apulum⁸⁷. Unfortunately, these mirrors have no certain context of discovery, and their relations with other artefacts are not mentioned. According to their decoration, only the first three mirrors resemble the ones found in the cemetery, the last two having no dentiform decoration. All of the mirrors have a broken reflecting surface, an explanation for this feature being hard to formulate in this case. The mirrors found in this area could have had multiple functions, the Governors' Palace from Apulum having over 260 of uncovered constructive structures⁸⁸ in which they could have been found.

One analogy for the first mirror was found in the *basilica* located near the Asklepeion at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁸⁹. The relations with other finds or the exact context of discovery are also not mentioned. It can only be supposed that the mirror had a votive function, because it was discovered in a sacred area. The mirror was found without a reflecting surface, so it can be supposed that it was utilised in some kind of ritual. Like the other mirrors, this one has a decorated rim and a very fragmentary dentiform motif on the circumference, a greater impor-

⁷⁸ ALICU/COCIŞ 1987, 148–149; For the location of the *basilica*, see: DIACONESCU 2010, 8; BĂEŞTEAN 2015, 86, fig. 2.

⁷⁹ OTA 2009, 33.

⁸⁰ GAIU 2017, 61.

⁸¹ NEMETI 2017a, 60.

⁸² NOWOTNY 1910, 113–115; MUŞEŢEANU/ELEFTERESCU 2012, 107; <https://www.kulturdatenbank.at/entry/11751> (accessed 22.09.2021).

⁸³ MUŞEŢEANU/ELEFTERESCU 2012, 107.

⁸⁴ NOWOTNY 1910, 108; BÓZSA/SZABÓ 2013, 95–96.

⁸⁵ Other studies already showed that this type of mirrors was produced in Apulum. See BĂLUŢĂ 1997; BENGA 2003, 94.

⁸⁶ EGRI 2019, 11.

⁸⁷ BĂLUŢĂ 1997, 562–563.

⁸⁸ RUSU-BOLINDEŢ 2018, 103.

⁸⁹ ALICU/COCIŞ 1987, 148–149.

tance being put into the decoration of the frames, than in the size of the reflective surface. The dentiform feature represents the reason why all these mirrors are included in a category which makes the transition to the star-shaped mirrors⁹⁰. The physical features may have something to do with the reason for which this mirror was offered to the gods, since this kind of artefacts were often seen as “active material agents in the complex negotiation of the meanings and knowledge associated with religious practices”⁹¹. The shape could also be just an indicator for certain aesthetic preferences⁹².

One of the analogies was found in a grave at Apulum⁹³, this being the only case with a more detailed information about the context of discovery. The deceased individual was a child buried “in a brick sarcophagus” having slack lime on the bottom. A coin issued by Lucius Verus was found near his head, and a miniature mirror in the filling of the grave. The mirror has the reflecting surface broken, so probably it had a ritual function during the burial. It can also be observed that the mirror is not located near the body of the child, or the coin. Its location is important because when objects are put together, they form an assemblage that has certain roles to fulfil⁹⁴, and in this case the role of an amulet would probably be to protect the soul of the child. Because it was found in the fill, the mirror was offered later, during the filling up of the grave, and probably the gesture was more private, known only by the person who made the offering. However, its magical role could not be excluded, because of the material from which is made, which was related to magical acts⁹⁵, and because some amulets could protect only by their presence, without being exposed openly⁹⁶.

When they are found in military camps, like in the case of the mirrors found at Ilișua and Potaissa, it is assumed a more practical function⁹⁷. However, other functions should not be ignored. For example, in the *castrum* from Potaissa votive acts are attested, an altar dedicated to the *genius* of the *centuriae* being found in the same area (S08/2014) as the lead mirror⁹⁸. Relations between the mirror and the altar are not recorded, so the function of this mirror cannot be surely known. Their protective role should also be presumed because men also used amulets in Roman times, when their power was needed⁹⁹. For example, the mirrors could reflect the eyes of the user, allowing him to look at someone standing behind, or could “protect against the evil eye cast by someone else”¹⁰⁰.

Having these cases in mind, it can be seen that the miniature mirrors, according to their context of discovery, but also according to the relations formed with other finds and their features, can have multiple functions. In this light, the mirrors found in the two graves from Apulum, M612 and M670, have to be closely analysed, every detail being important.

The mirror from the first grave (M612), because it is made of lead, could have had a magical function¹⁰¹. The grave belonged to a child, so the artefact could have acted like a protective amulet, the children being most of the time in need of amulets¹⁰². This role could be also

⁹⁰ BÓZSA/SZABÓ 2013, 95–96.

⁹¹ GRAHAM 2017, 120.

⁹² LERNER 1996, 11.

⁹³ OTA 2009, 33.

⁹⁴ GRAHAM 2020, 210–211.

⁹⁵ GAGER 1992, 4.

⁹⁶ RUSTOIU 2019, 123.

⁹⁷ NEMETI 2017a, 60.

⁹⁸ The mirror was found in S08/2014, c4, h. 0.35 cm, cf. NEMETI 2017a, 60; the altar was found in the southwestern corner of the area, cf. NEMETI 2017b, 23.

⁹⁹ DASEN 2015, 178.

¹⁰⁰ GRAHAM 2018.

¹⁰¹ GAGER 1992, 3–4; NÉMETH/SZABÓ 2010, 102.

¹⁰² DASEN 2015, 178; CARROLL 2018, 99–100.

expressed by the association of the mirror with other protective artefacts, like the three lamps¹⁰³. In this situation, the mirror was found broken, which could be interpreted as a ritual killing of the artefact¹⁰⁴. The mirror could have had an active role during the burial, but the reason why it was broken cannot be known for sure, many beliefs being hidden under a ritual act¹⁰⁵. Because these mirrors are often associated with female burials, it can be presumed that the child had a female gender. If this is the case, the mirror could indicate beliefs related to fertility and beauty. It is also suggested that miniature mirrors could have been personal objects that were offered as grave-goods when their female owner died¹⁰⁶.

In the case of the second mirror, although the grave (M670) has a different funerary rite and grave-goods, some of the previous remarks could be still valid. One of them is referring to its ritual function. The mirror probably was included into a ritual from which resulted the breakage of the reflecting surface¹⁰⁷. The second function could be the magical one, because of the material from which is made, the artefact probably being an amulet offered for the protection of the deceased individual's soul. Since most of the lead mirrors are found in female graves, it can be assumed that the deceased individual was also a woman. If this is the case, the mirror could be associated to issues related to fertility and beauty, thus being an "appropriate" grave-good for women. The mirror could have also been a personal object that accompanied the owner in death¹⁰⁸. The rest of the grave-goods, namely the ceramic vessels, indicate a belief related to the hunger of the souls¹⁰⁹. This could be an indicator of a different social identity of the deceased individual.

5. Conclusions

The main purpose of this article was to discuss the most likely functions of the two miniature lead mirrors discovered in two graves from Apulum-Dealul Furcilor cemetery. In order to identify their roles, one has to take into consideration similar discoveries found in Roman Dacia and their interpretation, their characteristics, their relations with other artefacts, and their morphology.

In Roman Dacia, these mirrors are found in civilian¹¹⁰, military¹¹¹, votive¹¹² and funerary contexts¹¹³, but most of the time their context of discovery and the relations with other artefacts are not mentioned in publications. Because of that, the functions of these mirrors were only supposed by some of the researchers, not many contextual variables being taken into consideration in their interpretation. However, based on the recorded information, these mirrors could have had multiple functions, being used in rituals, in votive acts, they were magical artefacts, acting like amulets, and they also could have been used as toiletries.

The mirrors from the two graves probably had two main functions, the ritual one and the magical one. It is worth noting that in the first grave the mirror is associated with other artefacts related to the need of protection in the afterlife, the three lamps and the coin. Their association could indicate actions driven by the age identity of the deceased individual, a child

¹⁰³ RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2014, 241; ŞÖFÖROĞLU /SUMMERER 2016, 259.

¹⁰⁴ GRAHAM 2018.

¹⁰⁵ LANERI 2007, 5; WEEKES 2017, 290.

¹⁰⁶ GRAHAM 2018.

¹⁰⁷ GRAHAM 2018.

¹⁰⁸ NÉMETH/SZABÓ 2010, 102–112; GRAHAM 2018.

¹⁰⁹ PARKER PEARSON 1999, 10.

¹¹⁰ BĂLUȚĂ 1997, 562.

¹¹¹ GAIU 2017, 61; NEMETI 2017a, 60.

¹¹² ALICU/COCIȘ 1987, 148–149.

¹¹³ OTA 2009, 32.

probably having a bigger need for this kind of protection. The mourners could have also been more superstitious, thinking at an easy passage into the afterlife of their loved one.

In the second grave, the age identity of the deceased is not known, but the mirror could have still acted like an amulet, protecting the deceased individual's soul. If the individual had a female gender, the mirror offering could also indicate beliefs related to the fertility and beauty.

The ritual function could be identified based on the preservation state of the reflective surface, which most of the times is broken. It has been suggested that in the funerary contexts this action could be compared to the ritual killing of an artefact¹¹⁴, but other explanations could also be valid. The magical function comes from their material that was used in the transmission of the curses to the spirit world, and had features that were considered magical¹¹⁵. Because they are mostly found in female burials, maybe the mirrors could indicate this gender.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Cm	= centimetre
D _c	= contouring depth
D _{ext}	= exterior diameter
D _f	= final depth
L _{section}	= section length

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¹¹⁴ GRAHAM 2018.

¹¹⁵ NÉMETH/SZABÓ 2010, 102.

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ABBREVIATIONS THAT CAN NOT BE FOUND IN BERICHT DER RÖMISCH-GERMANISCHE KOMMISSION

Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin	= AKAWB
Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debrecensis, Debrecen	= ACD
Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapesta)	= Acta Ethnogr Acad Scien Hungaricae
Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile secțiunii istorice	= An. Acad. Române. Mem. Sec. Istor.
Analele Banatului (Timișoara)	= An. Banatului
Analele Dobrogei (Constanța)	= An. Dobrogei
Muzeul Județean Vaslui (Vaslui)	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis
Muzeul "Vasile Pârvan" (Bârlad)	= Acta Musei Tutovensis
Analele Universității București	= An. Univ. București
Analele Universității Iași	= An. Univ. Iași
Analele Universității „Dimitrie Cantemir” (Constanța)	= An. Univ. Constanța
Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations (Paris)	= Ann. Écon. Soc. Civil.
Arheologia Moldovei, Institutul de Arheologie (Iași)	= ArhMold
Arkheologiya, Natsional'na akademiya nauk Ukraini. Institut Arkheologii (Kyiv)	= Arkheologiya
Annales Universitatis Apulensis (Alba Iulia)	= AUA
Annali di scienze religiose, Milano	= Annali di scienze religiose
Anuarul Institutului pentru Studii Politice, de Apărare și Istorie Militară	= Anu. Instit. Stud. Pol. Apăr. și Istor. Milit.
Archaeologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich (-Ungarn), Wien	= AEM
Archiv des Vereines für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Hermannstadt – Kronstadt (Sibiu – Brașov)	= AVSL
Archaeologia Baltica Polonia = Peregrinatio Gotica (Łódź)	= Arh Baltica
Arheologia Medievală (Iași)	= Arh. Medievală
Antigüedad, religiones y sociedades, Huelva	= ARYS
Az alsóféhérmegyei történelmi régészeti és természettudomány évkönyve (Alba Iulia)	= AlsóTermÉvkönyve
Balcanica Posnanensia. Acta et Studia. Czasopismo wydawane przez UAM w Poznaniu	= Balcanica Posnaniensia
Buletinul cercurilor științifice studențești (Alba Iulia)	= BCȘS Alba Iulia
Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice (București)	= BMI
Instrumentum Bulletin du Groupe de travail européen	= Bull Instrumentum

sur l'artisanat et les productions manufacturées dans l'Antiquité (Montagnac)	
Bulletin antieke beschaving Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology	= BABesch
Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome (Rome)	= BullInst Hist Belge (Rome)
Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz, Sorbonne (Paris)	= Cahiers Centre Gustave Glotz
Complexul Muzeal „Julian Antonescu” (Bacău)	= Carpica
Cercetări arheologice, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României (București)	= Cercetări Arheologice
Muzeul Municipiului București (București)	= Cercetări arheologice în București
Classical Philology (Chicago)	= Class. Philol.
Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România (București)	= CCA
Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică (București)	= Cron. Numis. Arh.
Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie, București, I-XII (1924–1928); Nouvelle Série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne (București)	
Muzeului de Istorie Galati	= Danubius
Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne, Paris-Besançon	= DHA
Dicționarul limbii române moderne (București 1958)	= DRLM
Documenta Romaniae Historica (București)	= DRH
Les Dossiers d'archéologie, Paris	= DossPar
Ethnic and Racial Studies (London)	= Ethnic and Racial Studies
Ephemeris Napocensis, Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei, Cluj-Napoca	= EphemNap
File de Istorie = Revista Bistriței (Bistrița)	= FI (Rev. Bistriței)
Muzeul județean Ilfov (București)	= File de Istorie
Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford 1966)	= Greek-English 1966
Harvard Studies in Classical Philology	= Harvard Stud. Class. Studia Philol.
A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve (Miskolc)	= HOMÉ
Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak (Zagreb)	= Hrv. Arh. God.
Historica. Historia Antigua (Salamanca)	= Stud. Hist. Hist. Antigua
Il Mar Nero Annali di archeologia e storia (Roma)	= Il Mar Nero
Izvestija Russkogo Arheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole	= Izv. Ross. Arch. Inst. Konstantinopole
Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien	= ÖJh
Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology,	
Institute of Archaeology and History of Art Cluj-Napoca	= JAHA
Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)	= JAMÉ
Journal of Indo-European Studies (Washington DC)	= JIES
Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatists	= Journal Soc. Ancient Numism.
Könyv és könyvtár, Budapest	= Könyv és könyvtár
Labeo Rassegna di Diritto Romano (Napoli)	= Labeo
Lateinisch-Deutsch Schulwörterbuch (Leipzig 1891)	= Lateinisch-Deutsch 1891
Lateinisch-Deutsch Handwörterbuch (Hannover-Leipzig 1918)	= Lateinisch-Deutsch 1918

Litua. Studii și comunicări. Muzeul Județean Gorj, Târgu Jiu	= Litua
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Krymskoe otdelenie Instituta vostokovedeniya NAN Ukrainy (Simferopol')	
Muzeul Municipiului București	= Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie
Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice (serie nouă) (București)	= MCA (S.N.)
Mélanges de l'École roumaine en France (Paris)	= Mél École roumaine en France
Mélanges de l'Univ St Ioseph (Beiruth)	= Mél Univ St Ioseph (Beiruth)
Mémoires de la Société Historique et Archéologique de Langres (Langres)	= Mém Soc Hist et Arch Langres
Memoria antiquitatis Acta Musei Petrodavensis	= Memoria Antiquitatis
Revista Muzeului arheologic (Piatra Neamț)	
Monumenta Germaniae Historica (München)	= MGH
Mousaios Anuarul muzeului județean Buzău	= Mousaios
A Nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)	= Josa Andras Múz Évk
Muzeul Național de Istorie a României (București)	= Muzeul Național
Norba Revista de arte, geografía e historia (Cáceres)	= Norba
Numismatische Zeitschrift	= NZ
O Arqueólogo Português, Lisboa	= Arque. Português
Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași	= Opțiuni istoriografice
Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Lovaina (Leuven)	= OLP
Ostraka Rivista di antichità (Napoli)	= Ostraka
Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague)	= Památky Archeologické
Patrimonium Apulense, Alba Iulia	= Patrim. Apulense
Rossijskaya Arkheologiya. Institut arkeologii Rossijskoj akademii nauk (Moskva).	= RA
Rad Muzeja Vojvodine (Novi Sad)	= Rad Muz. Voj.
RepArAb Repertoriul arheologic al județului Alba, Alba Iulia, 1995 [= Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, II]	= RepArAb
Res Antiquae (Bruxelles)	= Res Antiquae
Revista de etnografie și folclor (București)	= Rev Etnogr și Folclor
Revista Bistriței	= Rev. Bistriței
Muzeul Municipiului București	= Revista de Cercetări Arheologice și Numismatice
Muzeul Național de Etnografie și Istorie Naturală a Moldovei (Chișinău)	= Revistă de Etnografie, Științele Naturii și Muzeologie
Revista de Istorie (București)	= Rev. de Istor.
Revista Facultăților de teologie din Patriarhia Română (București)	= Stud Teologice
Revista Muzeelor, București	= Rev. Muzeelor
Revue archéologique de l'Est et du Centre-Est (Paris)	= RAEst
Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes (Bucharest)	= Rev. Études SE Européennes

Revue Historique (Paris)	= Rev. Historique
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Revista Storica dell'Antichita (Roma)	= Riv. Stor. Antichita
Strabon (Iași)	= Strabon
Studia Archaeologica, Roma	= StArch
Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica (Iași)	= SAA
Studii și Cercetări de Istorie veche și Arheologie, Institutul de Arheologie "Vasile Pârvan" (București)	= SCIV(A)
Slovenská Archeologia. Archeologický ústav SAV (Nitra)	= SlovArch
Stratum plus, Vysshaya Antropologicheskaya Shkola (Chișinău)	= Stratum plus
Studia Universitatis „Babeș-Bolyai”, seria Historia, Cluj-Napoca	= Stud. Historia UBB
Studia historica. Historia Antigua (Salamanca)	= Stud.Hist. Histor. Antig.
Studia Thracologica (București)	= Stud. Thracologica
Studii și Comunicări Câmpulung	= Stud. Com. Câmpulung
Studium, Debrecen	= Studium
Symposia Thracologica (București)	= Symp. Thracologica
Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Atlanta	= TAPA
Transsilvania. Ein Beiblatt zum Siebenbürger Boten, Hermannstadt (Sibiu)	= TranssilvBB
Uniwersytet Im Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Seria Historia (Poznań)	= Uniw Adama Mickiewicza Poznan
Vestigia. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte (München)	= Vestigia
Arkheologicheskij muzej-zapovednik "Tanais" (Rostov na Donu)	= Vestnik Tanaisa
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