

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT A ROMAN MIRROR FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE BUCHAREST CITY MUSEUM

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Popești is a hamlet of Mihailești city (Giurgiu county), placed at around 20 km Southwest from Bucharest. There was identified one of the most important Dacian fort from the South of the Carpathian Mountains.

The first archaeological researches have been carried out there by Dinu V. Rosetti¹ between 1941-1947. He practiced some trenches inside the fort from Popești-Nucet² and some excavations in two tumuli from Popești-Novaci³. Radu Vulpe⁴, then Alexandru Vulpe⁵, Nona Palincaș⁶, George Trohani⁷ and other ones continued the archaeological diggings in that fort. Also, Alexandru Vulpe⁸ excavated 4 tumuli in the cemetery placed at 1 km South of the fort, between Popești and Novaci hamlets.

In the collection of the Bucharest City Museum are some archaeological materials (pottery, iron and bronze objects) found in the archaeological excavations of Dinu V. Rosetti. Unfortunately there is no information that could place these objects inside the fort or in one of two tumuli that were excavated by the before named archaeologist.

One of these objects is a Roman mirror of bronze⁹ (Fig. 1). It has a circular body with 92 millimeters in diameter¹⁰ and perforations next to the rim. On its face are two incised circles, on the back four relieved or incised concentric circles and a little thickness. It has a gray silver surface because it contains tin or is tinned.

Until present the mirror was dated in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC¹¹. Almost all the mirrors found in the Dacian forts from South of Carpathian Mountains dated in the 1st century BC and 1st century AD¹² is different. They are simple discs without perforations and concentric circles. One exception is a fragment of an identical mirror found at Ocnița-Buridava (Grave no. 381)¹³. The cemetery from that site contained graves dated between the end of the 3rd century BC and the end

¹ Turcu 1979, p. 63.

² Vulpe 1997, 163.

³ Vulpe 1976, 193; Turcu 1979, 184.

⁴ See the bibliography (Turcu 1979, 63).

⁵ Vulpe 1997, 163-172.

⁶ Palincaș 1997, 173-192.

⁷ Trohani 1997, 193-230.

⁸ Vulpe 1976, 193-215.

⁹ Turcu 1979, 101, fig. 14.

¹⁰ *Tezaur de Istorie Bucureșteană*, 12, no. 109.

¹¹ Turcu 1979, 104.

¹² Glodariu 1976, 212-213; Vulpe, Vulpe 1924, 217, fig. 47:2, 48:8; Vulpe, Vulpe 1927-1932, 334, fig. 113:33, 40-48.

¹³ Berciu 1981, 103, fig. 22:3.

of the 1st century AD. Unfortunately there is no information about context and a more exactly dating of this piece. However, identical mirrors of Riha variant B were discovered in some sites from *Dacia*¹⁴, *Pannonia*¹⁵, *Thracia*¹⁶ and *Dalmatia*¹⁷, where they were dated in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

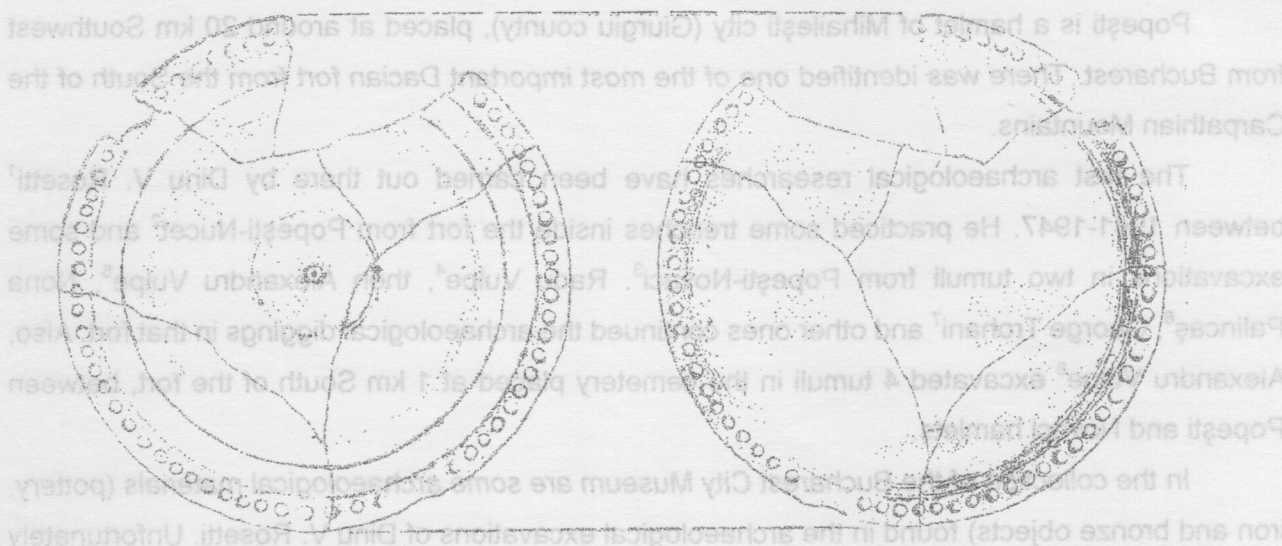


Figure 1. Bronze mirror found at Popești (after Turcu 1979, 102, fig. 14).

The latest archaeological researches at Popești showed the possible use of this fort in the first years¹⁸ or the beginning¹⁹ of the 1st century AD. Usually, the end of the fort of Popești was connected with the expedition of *Aelius Catus*, who in the *Augustus* period²⁰, at the beginning of 1st century AD²¹ translated 50.000 of Dacians in the south of Danube. But it was observed that the last level (LT II 5) seems to be abandoned and not destroyed²². On the other hand, Ioan Glodariu has mentioned there a bronze lamp and a joint of saucer dated in the 1st century AD²³.

The cemetery from the south of the fort was dated in the 2nd and 1st century BC²⁴. Also, there were found some iron amulets that could continue to be used in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD²⁵, and a mirror possibly to be dated and in the 1st century AD²⁶.

¹⁴ Popilian 1980, 45, pl. XXX:6.

¹⁵ Istenic 1999, 31, pl. 10:6; 52, pl. 53:1; 106, pl. 64:3; 120-121, fig. 52; 136, pl. 87:2; 220-221, pl. 48:7; 243, pl. 168:3.

¹⁶ Popilian 1980, 96.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ Vulpe 1997, 166; Palincaș 1997, 185.

¹⁹ Trohani 1997, 217.

²⁰ Strabo, VII, 3, 10.

²¹ Pârvan 1926, 94; Pârvan 1958, 142; Vulpe 1960, 317; Bichir 1984, 95; Vulpe 1997, 166; Palincaș 1997, 185.

²² Palincaș 1997, 185.

²³ Glodariu 1976, 200-201.

²⁴ Vulpe 1976, 198.

²⁵ Vulpe 1976, 214.

The presented Roman mirror could indicate contexts of 1st or even 2nd century AD. Only the next research will establish if are some correlations of this piece with the fort and cemetery or if somewhere it is a different latter level.

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²⁶ *Ibidem*, 198.