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on Ancient Bronzes

edited by Dávid Bartus, Zsolt Mráv and Melinda Szabó

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Budapest 2024



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Budapest, 20–24 September 2022

Edited by
Dávid BARTUS – Zsolt MRÁV – Melinda SZABÓ

Budapest, 2024

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Recycle, repair and reuse in Roman Napoca

The case of an ‘antiquarian-restorer’ from the site at Victor Deleu Street (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)*

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Abstract: The archaeological rescue excavations carried out between 1992 and 2001 and again in 2012 in Roman Napoca (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), on the site from Victor Deleu Street revealed important information regarding the life of the ancient town and its residential areas. One of the most interesting discoveries is represented by an assemblage of twelve metal objects: a statue, a statuette, three fragmentary metal vessels, four pieces belonging to lighting equipment (candlesticks and a lamp base), a pair of scissors fragmentarily preserved and two decorated bronze plates. They were identified on the floor of an annex belonging to a private residence, in a context which can be dated during the fourth–fifth decades of the 3rd century AD. The paper is a preliminary analysis of the assemblage. The objects are all high-quality imports and most of them present traces of repair or were recomposed from different parts coming from other objects. They attest the existence of a ‘antiquarian-restorer’ in Roman Napoca and reveal a clear concern for selecting, collecting, recycling, repairing and refunctioning good quality objects.

Keywords: Napoca, imported bronzes, recycle, repairs, reuse

This paper aims to provide a preliminary analysis of an exceptional group of Roman metal objects which were discovered during rescue excavations in a residential area of ancient Napoca, nowadays Cluj-Napoca, Romania, on the site from Victor Deleu Street. As it will be shown, part of the artifacts were repaired during the Roman times by using parts recovered from other bronze objects, in order to give them a new life.

Roman Napoca and the site from Victor Deleu Street

The Roman town of Napoca is located along the Someşul Mic River and during ancient times it was part of the province Dacia Porolissensis. The settlement became a *municipium* during the reign of emperor Hadrian and a *colonia* probably in the time of Marcus Aurelius. Though speculations have been made, there is no proof for the existence of a Dacian settlement at Napoca, prior to the Roman

* The term “antiquarian-restorer” was first used by SANTROT et al. 1996 in the context of the analysis of the hoard discovered at Dax (Landes, France), to which we also refer in this paper.

conquest or of an early military fort. But for a long period of time, Napoca was the only settlement with urban status from the northern part of Dacia and also the seat of the financial procurator of Dacia Porolissensis. Because the modern town of Cluj-Napoca is overlapping the ancient one, most of the archaeological information that we have comes from rescue excavations. The eastern limit of the town has not been identified yet but based on the current research, it is considered that the settlement covered an area of approximately 20 hectares.¹

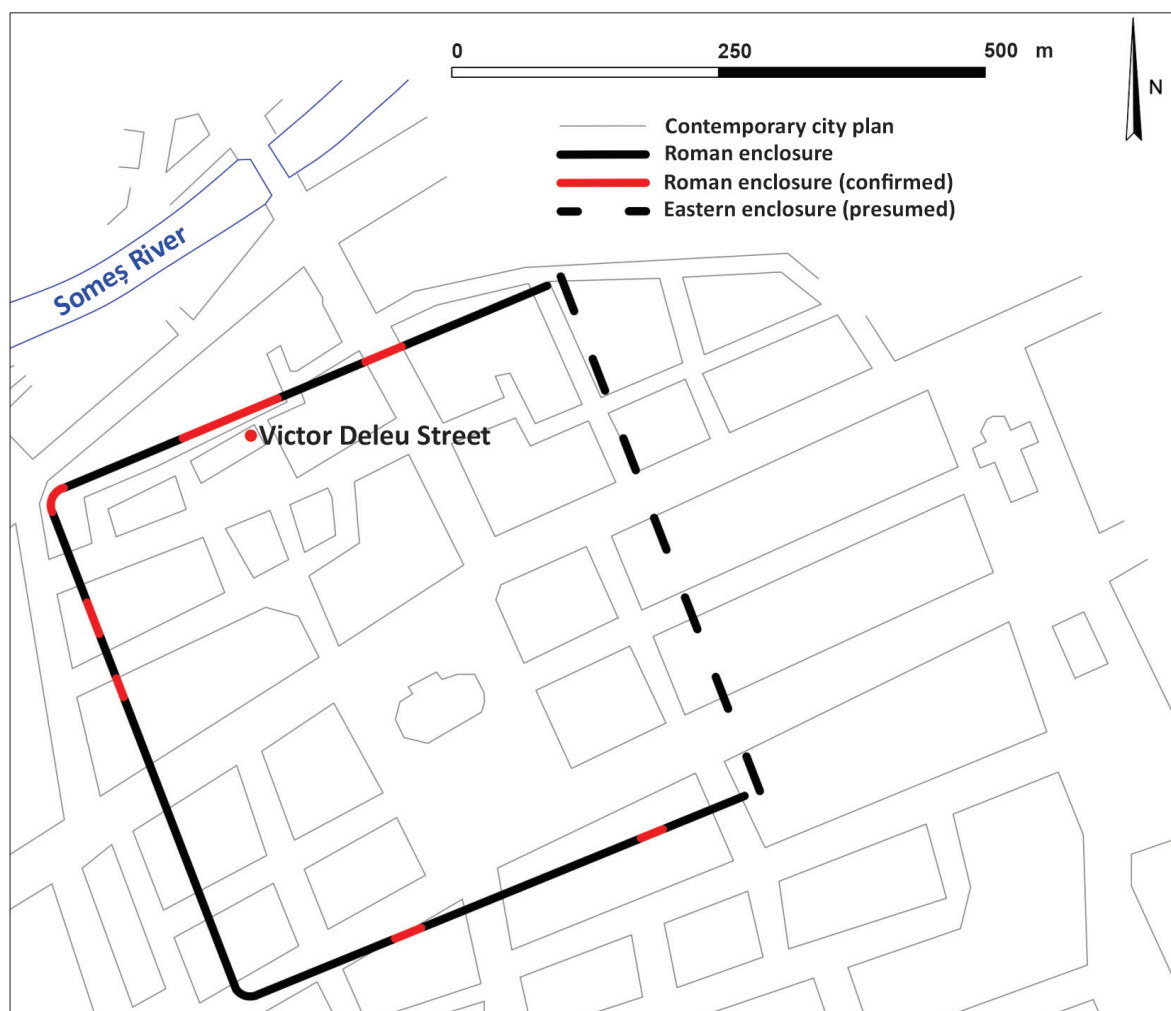


Fig. 1. Plan of Roman Napoca with the location of the excavations from Victor Deleu Street (processed after CUPCEA et al. 2022, Pl. 1).

The site from Victor Deleu Street, where the objects discussed in this paper were discovered, is positioned in the northern residential part of the Roman town, near the precinct wall (Fig. 1). The site was researched during several campaigns of rescue excavations, between 1992 and 2001 and again in 2012, under the supervision of Sorin Cociș.²

The site's stratigraphy indicates a continued occupancy from the time of Trajan to the abandonment of the province. Three wooden and two stone phases were established. The first phases, from Trajan to the middle of the 2nd century AD are characterized by traces of habitation related to the presence of the

1 For the evolution of the settlement and discussions regarding its history and archaeology see, ARDEVAN 1998, 61–65; DIACONESCU 2004, 117–120; RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 68–88; CUPCEA et al. 2022.

2 The main results have been published over the years in several archaeological reports. See, COCIȘ et al. 1995; COCIȘ et al. 1996; COCIȘ et al. 1997; COCIȘ et al. 1998; COCIȘ et al. 1999; COCIȘ et al. 2002. See also: RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 97–98; GĂZDAC et al. 2010, 7–8; MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 185–187.

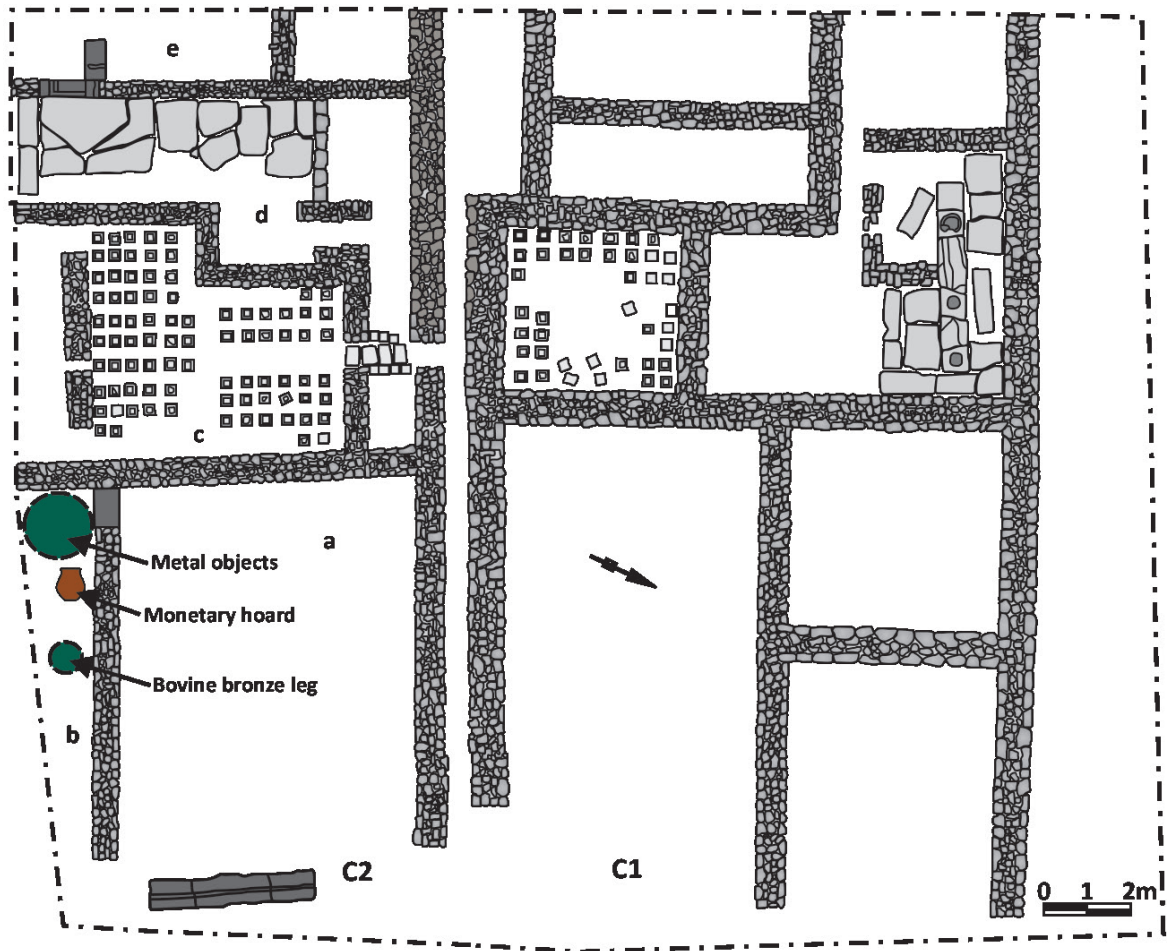


Fig. 2. Plan of buildings C1 and C2 during the 2nd stone phase with the discovery context of the metal objects (processed after MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 186, Fig. 25).

first colonists from Noricum and Pannonia and by the timber structures of the *vicus* and *municipium*. Starting with the mid-2nd century AD, two stone houses were built (C1 and C2 divided by an alley), with two phases (the first one from the mid-2nd century AD to Septimius Severus and the second one from Septimius Severus to the abandonment of the province).³ For each stone phase one can establish that the houses were repaired at least once during their existence, and for the second stone phase of building C2 (Fig. 2) such circumstance can be rather safely chronologically determined: two floors were identified in chamber b, which probably functioned as a storage room, separated by a destruction layer with heavy burn marks. The first floor was broken into and a ceramic vessel containing a small fragment of an unidentified piece of gold and 1269 coins was hidden underneath. The ceramic vessel contained: 1251 *denarii*, 9 *antoniniani*, 1 *drachma*, 7 plated *denarii* and 1 Greek provincial coin, with last issues from Severus Alexander.⁴ On the new floor overlying the destruction layer, coins issued by Philippus Arabs were found.⁵ It was surmised that the hiding of the monetary hoard and the destructions suffered by this area of the Roman city might be connected to the conflicts between Maximinus Thrax and the northern Barbarian populations, which had an impact on the city in the mid-3rd century AD; however, this hypothesis will have to be confirmed by future research on the ancient city.⁶

3 COCIȘ et al. 1995; RUSU-BOLINDEȚ 2007, 98; OPREANU 2008, 393; See also MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 185.

4 For the monograph of the monetary hoard, see GĂZDAC et al. 2010.

5 COCIȘ et al. 1995, 638.

6 OPREANU 2009, 134; GĂZDAC et al. 2010, 15; MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 185.

The assemblage of metal objects

The metal objects analysed here were discovered on the first floor, near the pit with the monetary hoard, in the north-western corner of chamber b (Fig. 2). The objects together with the monetary hoard were identified in the first year of the rescue excavations, in 1992. The site was heavily affected by construction works which destroyed much of the 3rd century layers. The constructor started the site without previous excavation and did not announce the archaeologists. No in situ photos and plans with the finds were made. The only available information consists of the descriptions preserved in the archaeological journal.



Fig. 3. The assemblage of metal objects from Victor Deleu Street (photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

The assemblage is composed of 12 objects (Fig. 3): a small statuette, three fragmentary metal vessels, four pieces belonging to lighting equipment (candlesticks and a lamp base), a pair of scissors fragmentary preserved and two decorated bronze plates. Three meters away towards south, in the same room, a gilded bronze leg, coming from a bull, was discovered (Fig. 2). Given its fragmentary state, it is very probable that it was part of the same assemblage, and it can be related with the same activities which led to the hiding of the monetary hoard prior to the destruction.

Statues

The bronze leg measures 23 cm in height and comes from the bronze statue of a bovine, a bull (cat. no. 1, Fig. 4). The height of the preserved part indicates an overall size of the animal at the withers of 1.2–1.3 meters, which is normal for cattle of this period.⁷ Thus, we deal with the life-size statue of

7 GUDEA 2007, 231–235; GROOT 2020.

a bull which was very probably a cultic statue. This is a unique discovery for Roman Dacia and the parallels from the rest of the Roman world are scarce. Since the statue is not entirely preserved, a precise identification is unlikely, but the possibilities are not so many.⁸

Given the military character of Roman Dacia, the first potential identification could be related to Jupiter Dolichenus, who was popular in the province.⁹ However, we do not know any life-size representations of the god riding the bull, neither in stone, nor in bronze. He is usually depicted in smaller dimensions. The exception is one of the god's statues from Carnuntum, which measures 1.6 m in height.¹⁰ However, this is a different iconographic type: the god is not depicted riding the bull and the presence of the animal is only suggested by the bull's head placed at his feet.

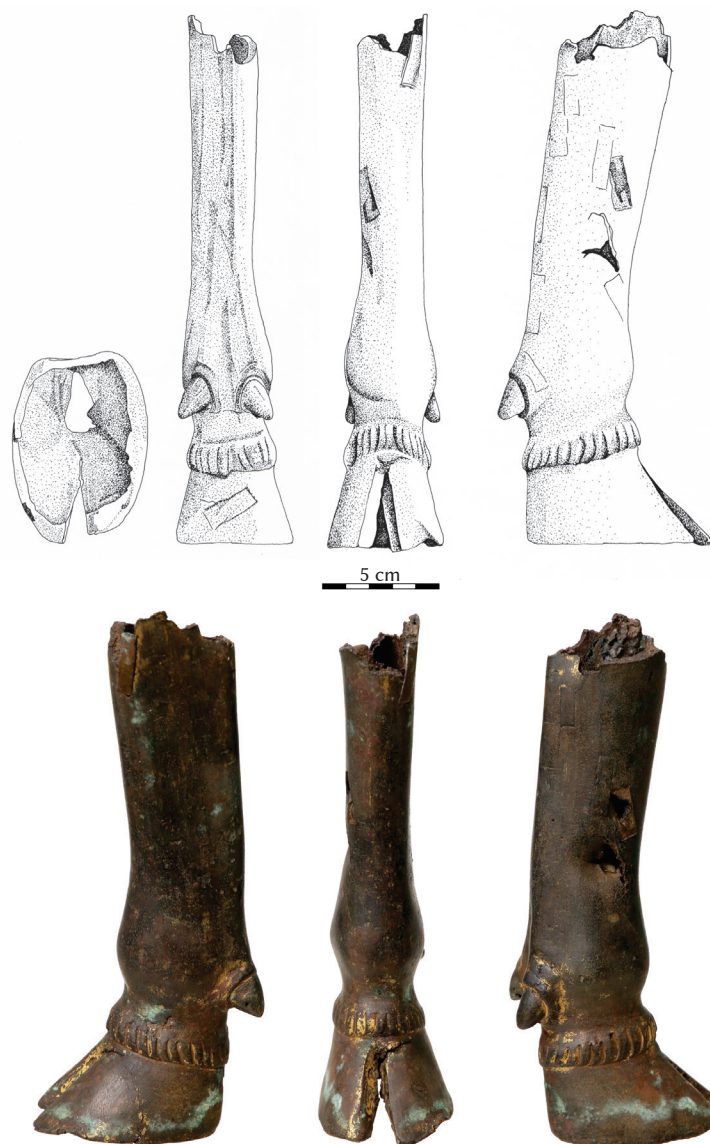


Fig. 4. Bovine leg (drawing: S. Cociş; photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

8 We would like to thank our colleagues, Dr. Sorin Nemeti (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca) and Dr. Dan Deac (History and Art County Museum, Zalău) for the useful discussions regarding this interesting find.

9 NEMETI 2019, 233–251.

10 UBI ERAT LUPA, no. 6676 (<https://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/monument.php?id=6676>; accessed 20. 3. 2023).

The only life-size statue of a bronze bull that could be identified was discovered in 1883 in the *forum* at Martigny (Switzerland). It is fragmentary, only the head and a leg being preserved. The presence of the three horns on the forehead lead to its identification as the Gallic bull, which some scholars put in relation with *Tarvos Trigaranus* from the Pillar of the Boatmen in Paris.¹¹ The presence of such a statue in Roman Dacia would be exceptional because we have no evidence for the veneration of the Gallic Bull in this part of the Empire.

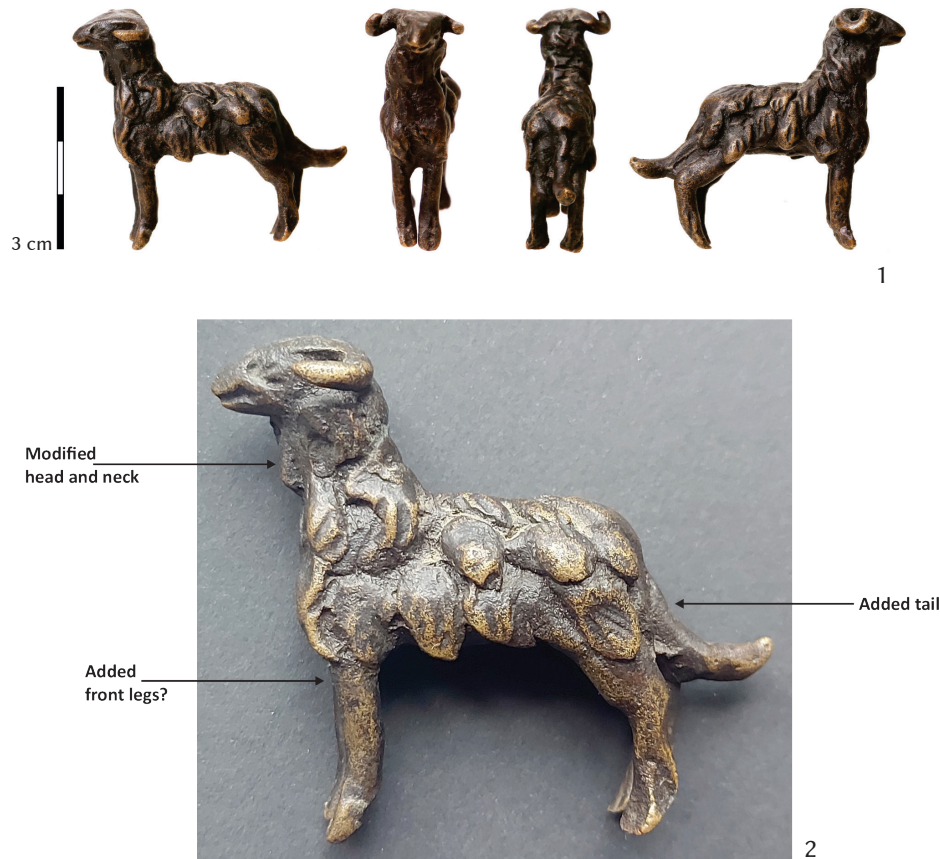


Fig. 5. 1–2 – Ram (1 – Photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023, 2 – Photo: S. Mustață).

The most probable identification, at least in this phase of the research, is related to the Egyptian cults, which were very popular in Dacia Porolissensis, especially near Napoca, at Potaisa.¹² No life-size depictions of Apis in bronze have been identified so far, but life-size or bigger cultic statues of the god made of stone are attested, like the famous statue dedicated by emperor Hadrian in the *serapeum* from Alexandria.¹³ Thus, the bronze leg can be assigned to a life-size statue of Apis, that must have functioned as a cultic image in a temple dedicated to the Egyptian deities. The god is usually represented stepping forward, with the right or left leg. Taking into consideration the vertical position of the leg from Napoca, it is probably one of the front or back legs which are standing.¹⁴ We have no information regarding the worship of Isis and Serapis at Napoca, but this hypothesis cannot be totally excluded, because in the present state of the research we know very little about the materiality of the religion in this important urban centre of Roman Dacia.

11 BOUCHER 1976, 170–173, Pl. 65; LEIBUNDGUT 1980, 142–143, no. 189, Taf. 175–178.

12 DEAC forthcoming.

13 See most recent MCKENZIE et al. 2004, 98, note 122 with the literature.

14 For details regarding the iconography of Apis, see DEAC 2012 with the literature.

Statuettes

The small statuette depicting an animal similar to a ram (cat. no. 2, Fig. 5) was very probably placed, at least initially, on a base accompanying Mercurius. The complete statuette, together with the god must have served as a cult statuette in a *lararium*. Bronze statuettes of rams discovered individually or together with Mercurius are numerous in the Roman Empire.¹⁵ Considering that the animal is usually depicted in a schematic manner, the ram from Napoca is of very good quality. For the body of the animal and the rendering of the fur, good parallels can be found at Emona.¹⁶

However, a closer examination of the object shows a high discrepancy between the detailed rendering of the body and the rest of the object. While the locks of fur were finely shaped on the wax model, the features of the neck and legs are quite primitive. The locks of fur are only suggested, the horns are asymmetrical and not properly curved. Moreover, the pointed, slightly elevated tail is not natural for a ram. It seems that from the original object only the body was preserved, while the neck and head, the tail and possibly the legs, or at least the front ones were added later, in an attempt to repair it. The analysis of this assemblage has just begun, and these observations will have to be tested in the future, after thorough archaeometric analyses.



Fig. 6. Metal vessels. 1 – Iron *balsamarium*, 2 – Handle from a bronze-sheet spouted jug, 3 – Millingen spouted jug (1–3 after MUSTAȚĂ 2017, Pl. 70, Pl. 73, Pl. 92).

15 See e.g., BOUBE-PICOT 1969, 232, no. 266, Pl. 190.1; BOUCHER 1973, 146–147, nos 231–232; KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1977, 90, no. 99, Taf. 94.99; FAIDER-FEYTMANS 1979, 96, no. 114, Pl. 60.114; KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1987, 295, 298, Abb. 4, 312–314; KELLNER – ZAHLHAAS 1993, 41–44, no. 7, Taf. 21–23; KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN et al. 2019, 123–124, no. 19.

16 GIUMLIA-MAIR 2001, 10–11, Fig. 2.

Metal vessels

Three more or less complete metal vessels were part of the assemblage: an iron *balsamarium*, a fragmentary handle coming from sheet-bronze jug and a spouted jug with trefoil mouth. The metal vessels have already been published;¹⁷ therefore, in the following lines we will only discuss their general characteristics.

The iron *balsamarium* (cat. no. 3, Fig. 6.1) is fragmentary: its second handle is missing (it was reconstructed during restorations); its suspension chain is also missing. It has a specific form, very similar to the Dressel 20 olive oil amphorae and it was used for storing/transporting the oil to the baths, on a ring, together with other toilet instruments. The X-ray of the object offers important details regarding the production technique. Taking into consideration the nature of the raw material, iron, it was made from two hammered hemispheres joined together in the middle, in the area of the maximum diameter, and a separately worked lid with a closing mechanism.¹⁸

From the same site—but this time from the area of building C1, related to the last phase of use of the building—comes another iron *balsamarium*, displaying a different, globular shape and with part of the bronze fastening system preserved. The X-ray shows the same production technique.¹⁹

The two iron vessels are unique finds in Roman Dacia and, in general, iron toilet vessels are rare discoveries. In terms of the production centres, the fastening system of the lid, which is similar with the one observed on bronze toilet vessels, indicates a provincial production and a use during the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD.²⁰

The fragmentary handle (cat. no. 4, Fig. 6.2) belongs to a Bolla I bronze sheet spouted jug used for boiling the water. Because only part of the handle is preserved, it is not possible to identify the variant. This provincial type is the most common type of bronze vessel in Roman Dacia, appearing usually in discovery contexts dated beginning with the mid-2nd century AD.²¹

The spouted jug with trefoil mouth of Millingen type (cat. no. 5, Fig. 6.3) belongs to a later provincial variant of the type, manufactured in Gallic or other provincial workshops during the 2nd, possibly beginning of the 3rd century AD. It was discovered in a fragmentary state, with the body broken in small bits. For its restoration, the body was completely reconstructed over a wire framework. Therefore, the formal characteristics currently displayed by the piece can slightly differ from its original shape. The same advanced state of degradation does not allow more precise observations regarding the technological stages the jug went through. The only integrally preserved part is the



Fig. 7. Lamp base (drawing: D. Gheorghe-Șerban; photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

17 MUSTAȚĂ 2017.

18 MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 152, no. 85, 153–157, Pls 44–45, Pls. 92–93.

19 MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 152, no. 84, Pls 42.84a–43, Pls 90–91.

20 MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 156.

21 MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 111–114, no. 34, Pl. 25.34, Pl. 73.34.a–b.

handle, which exhibits signs of intensive/lengthy use. The jug was very probably part of a hand-washing set, though one cannot exclude that individual finds were used as serving vessels.²²

Lighting equipment

Concerning the lighting equipment, four such objects have been identified in the assemblage, coming from a lamp and candlesticks.

The lamp foot (cat. no. 6, [Fig. 7](#)) cannot be attributed with certainty to a specific type of Roman bronze lamp, but such bases seem to characterize the metal lamp production of Hellenistic tradition and of the 1st century AD.²³ A chronological indicator could be the concentric circles on the base which were heavily worked on the lathe. This aspect indicates a dating starting with the mid of the 1st century AD.²⁴ One cannot exclude that it might have belonged to another type of object, but no parallels have been identified in this sense.

The first candlestick (cat. no. 7, [Fig. 8](#)) is not complete (the upper part for fixing the candle or possibly a small platform for a lamp? is missing). The object, in the shape in which it was discovered, has no analogies, but the two components, the tripod base and the shaft (part a and b), can be traced back to different parts or objects related to lighting equipment. One can easily notice that the two parts of the object were poorly joined. The shaft comes very probably from a candlestick similar to the one from Volubilis,²⁵ with the mention that this baluster shape of the shaft is not frequent during the period of the Principate. Likewise, the tripod base was initially used as a candlestick on its own. Simple bronze tripod candlesticks with the base shaped as schematic human legs are rare as well, but they are attested as shown by one example from Britain, at Carlaeon, dated to the 2nd century AD.²⁶

The fragmentary flower shaped object, with the end of the petals broken (cat. no. 8, [Fig. 9](#)) comes from the upper end of another candlestick. These pieces do not allow the identification of the exact type of candlestick, but we find with good parallels at Nida²⁷ and Volubilis.²⁸

The pricket candlestick (cat. no. 9, [Fig. 10](#)) was discovered with only two legs (one of them detached), the third one being reconstructed during restoration. Small tripod candlesticks decorated with griffins or lions on the legs are quite common in the Roman world. Recent research carried out by L. de Chavagnac and M. Feugère in the context of the re-assessment of the bronze treasure from Bavay, has listed more than thirty discoveries.²⁹ They are found in contexts dated during the 2nd and 3rd centuries and are attested on other sites from Roman Dacia as well, like Apulum.³⁰ As mentioned before, one of the legs was missing in the moment of the discovery and it was reconstructed during restoration. But the other two display different decoration. In [Fig. 10](#) one can observe the original leg, in the shape of a griffin, while the second one seems to have been replaced in Roman times with a similar leg from another tripod candlestick, in order to repair it.

22 MUSTAŢĂ 2017, 103–105, no. 30, Pl. 23, Pls 68–70.

23 BOUBE-PICOT 1975, 147–148, no. 169, 171–172, nos 199–200, Pl. 78, Pl. 102; BAILEY 1996, 9, nos Q3551–Q3552, Pl. 5.

24 For the evolution of the bronze working technique at the lathe during the Roman period see PETROVSZKY 1993, 21–24, 29, 47–48, 64–65.

25 BOUBE-PICOT 1975, 197, no. 274, Pl. 130.

26 ECKARDT 2002, 259–260, Fig. 122.1721, 340, no. 1721.

27 KOHLERT – NÉMETH 1990, 56, no. 30.

28 BOUBE-PICOT 1975, 208–209, nos 322–323, Pls 142–143.

29 DE CHAVAGNAC – FEUGÈRE 2019, 351–354, no. 189.

30 CIUGUDEAN 1998. The author mentions unpublished examples from Micia and Porolissum.

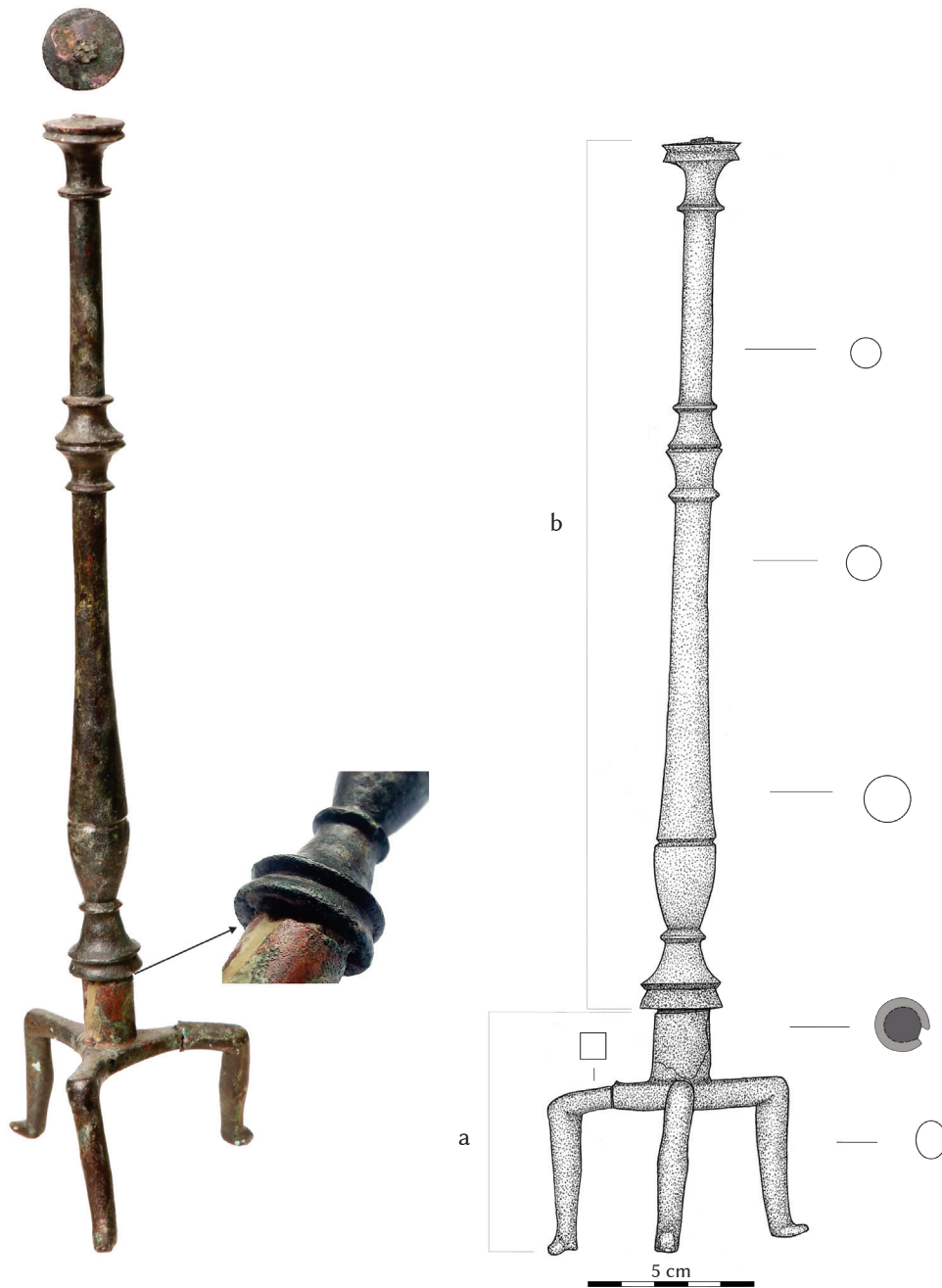


Fig. 8. Candlestick (drawing: D. Gheorghe-Șerban; photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

Scissors

The scissors from the assemblage (cat. no. 10, Fig. 11) preserve only the flexible part, made of bronze, incised with a rhombic decoration. The two active missing parts were made of iron and were fastened to the bronze band with the help of iron rivets. Scissors made of both iron and bronze were not frequent in the Roman Empire, and this is even more valid for the examples with rhombic decoration on the bronze band, sometimes provided with decorated bronze rivets. E. Deschler-Erb listed only six such objects, only part of them with decoration, stressing on their special function as toilet instruments or part of medical kits.³¹

31 DESCHLER-ERB 1996, 56–57, Abb. 53, and note 357.



Fig. 9. Candlestick (drawing: S. Cociş; photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

Decorated plates

The last two objects from the assemblage are two bronze plates decorated by embossing. The first one depicts a winged Victoria holding a crown with both hands (cat. no. 11, Fig. 12.1) and the second one a variety of sea dragon with panther head or sea panther (cat. no. 12, Fig. 12.2). Both pieces have on the edges holes for the iron rivets used for fixing them on other materials. The exact objects on which these plates were fixed are hard to identify. We know no analogies for them yet. But what is important is their decoration which is typical for the repertoire of the Roman military parade equipment. Similar images to the ones from the plates, of winged Victoria holding a crown and sea dragons, can be seen on three of the chamfrons and one of the greaves from Straubing³² and on the chamfron from Eining.³³ An image of Victoria in the same position, holding the crown with both hands was embossed twice, flanking the image of Mars, on the frontal piece of the pseudo attic cavalry sports helmet of type Ostrov, Phrygian in style, preserved in the collections of the Mougins Museum, France.³⁴ A Victoria crowning a Roman soldier was also depicted on the frontal part of the helmet from Tell Oum Hauran, Syria.³⁵ The two plates from Napoca must have been originally part of a chamfron or of another piece of military parade equipment and after it was no longer functional, they were cut and reused as decorative plates on other objects. The use of the same matrix for the production of different objects is not excluded, but at least for the moment all the analogies that have been identified come from the sphere of the military equipment.

Interpretation

Considering the context of the discovery, it is clear that the individuals who lived in house C2 from Roman Napoca during the fourth–fifth decades of the 3rd century did not have the chance to come back and recover their goods. After the massive destruction by fire, the area of room b was levelled, and a new floor was constructed. The new inhabitants had no knowledge of the monetary hoard and of the group of metal objects.

It is not clear if the objects were intentionally hidden in storage room b or they were kept there in a chest or cupboard and were left behind by their owner in a moment of peril, after hiding the monetary hoard under the floor. Yet, what is interesting is the high number of objects which have been repaired or rather recomposed from old objects. And it is obvious that this is not a classic case of collecting scrap metal. No broken pieces from common bronze objects were identified in the assemblage.

32 GARBSCH 1978, 49, nos 12, 15–15, 21, Abb. 5.B 12, 15–16, 21, Taf. 4.1–2, Taf. 6.1.

33 GARBSCH 1978, 46, no. 6, Abb. 5.A6.

34 FISCHER 2012, 211, Abb. 307.

35 GARBSCH 1978, 61, no. 1, Taf. 16.1–2.

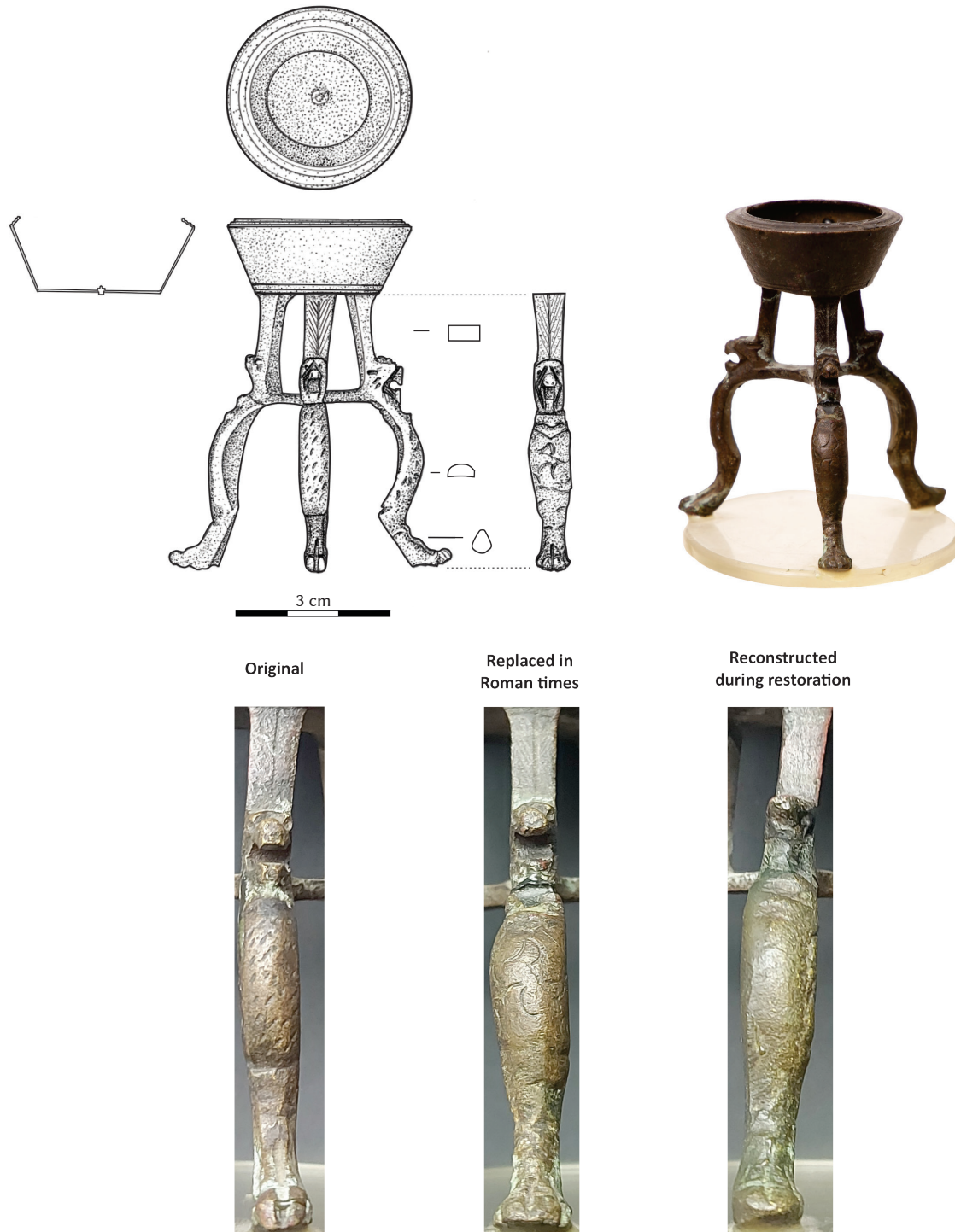


Fig. 10. Pricket candlestick (drawing: D. Gheorghe-Șerban; photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023; detail photo: S. Mustață).

All the artefacts are high-quality products and were imported in Roman Dacia. We can observe here a clear concern for selecting, collecting, recycling, repairing and refunctioning good quality objects which were expensive and, probably, not very accessible. This behaviour can be better understood in the unstable situation from the fourth decade of the 3rd century which affected the Roman town.³⁶ Even though building C2 was reconstructed after the fire and a last subphase of inhabitancy was

36 See OPREANU 2009.

documented during excavations, we are in the last decades before the abandonment of the province. Imported bronze products from the western provinces must have been rare and, in this context, we can better understand this practice of restoring ancient pieces.



Fig. 11. Scissors (drawing: S. Cociş; photo: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

Such cases have rarely been documented. A similar intention was observed on part of the objects from the hoard at Dax (Landes, France), hidden in a wooden chest at the end of the 3rd or along the 4th century AD.³⁷ The assemblage was composed of bronze statuettes, lighting equipment, weights and implements, measuring instruments, as well as iron tools. Besides the interventions observed on the statuettes, clear intentions of restoring by using older parts can be seen on two of the bronze lamps: one was repaired with the handle of a bronze bowl³⁸ while the other was placed on the lower part of a pricket candlestick.³⁹ The authors of the study interpreted the find as a result of the activity of an “antiquarian-restorer”⁴⁰ who hid the objects he was refashioning together with his tools in times of danger. And, partially, this is probably the best interpretation for the objects from Napoca as well. In this context it is worth mentioning that the site did not produce any traces of metallurgical activity which could be related to the stone phases. It is hard to assess the status of the owner of house C2. The planimetry of C2 (Fig. 2) is typical for the private residences from the Danubian provinces during the 2nd century AD: a courtyard provided with a monumental entrance (a) which offered access to the annex (b) and the main heated room (c) the latter continuing with an inner courtyard, paved with stone (d).⁴¹ Thus, the owner must have had an important economic status in the Roman town and was involved, among other things, with trading good quality bronzes. The

37 SANTROT et al. 1996.

38 SANTROT et al. 1996, 295–298, no. Dax 9, Figs 30–33.

39 SANTROT et al. 1996, 299–302, no. Dax 13, Figs 34–35.

40 The term is not anachronistic when used with respect to ancient realities, and it is mentioned in the Latin sources. See, SANTROT et al. 1996, 323–325.

41 OPREANU 2008, 393.

value of the metal from the assemblage⁴² and the monetary hoard are probably not representative for his wealth. The analysis of the monetary hoard has shown a structure that would rather indicate its assembly in a very short time, for the purpose of a transaction.⁴³

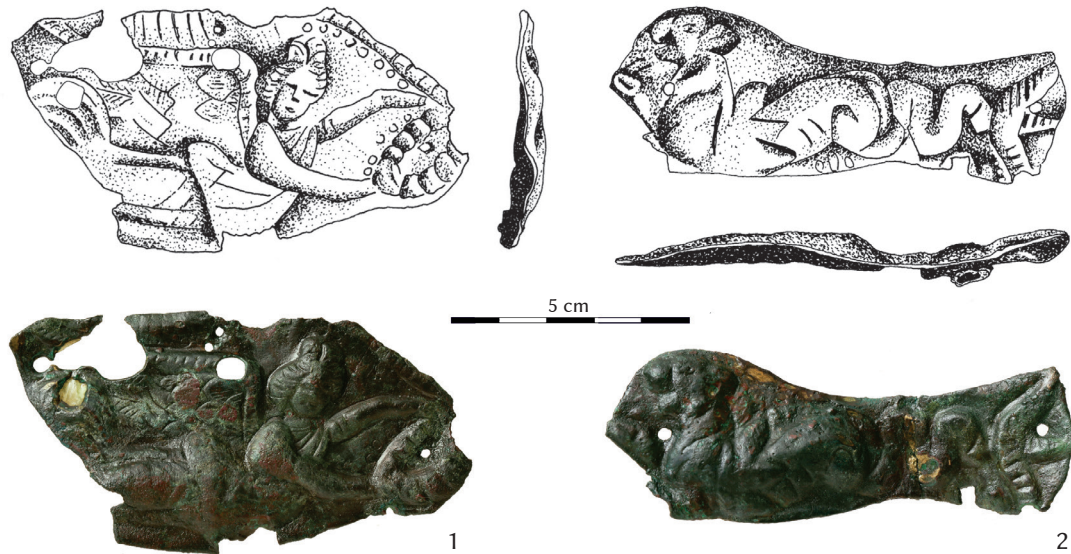


Fig. 12. 1–2 – Decorated plates (drawings: S. Cociș; photos: S. Odenie, The Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca; © MNIT 2023).

As discussed above, most of the objects from Napoca were not functional in the moment of their abandonment, for this reason they cannot be interpreted as household inventory. We will never know with certainty if they were collected to be melted or, more likely, they were stored in room b, waiting for the right part for their repair to be found. However, the selection of the pieces and the interventions on the objects do not support the hypothesis of hoarding good quality bronze in order to be melted. Though speculative, this situation could suggest the existence of a local market trading spare parts which came from imports and good quality bronzes, at least in Roman Napoca.

Catalogue⁴⁴

1. Bovine leg (Fig. 4). Cooper alloy and traces of gliding on the lower half. Fragmentary, restored. Cast, incised and repaired: ten patches were identified on the surface, placed after casting to cover the faults. The leg belongs very probably to a bull; only the lower half is preserved, from the knee down; it was intentionally or not intentionally damaged in the area of the divided hoof and above the ankle; the part above the hoof is marked by a register of vertical, slightly curved lines. Inv. no: MNIT v. 41355. H: 230 mm; Wgt: 1059 g (Unpublished).

2. Ram (Fig. 5). Cooper alloy. Complete, restored, with ancient traces of repair. Cast. The animal is depicted in a static position, looking ahead, with the legs on the ground; the locks of the fur were finely shaped on the body, but the head (horns, eyes and mouth) and the tail are schematic and not natural for a ram; it was very probably repaired in ancient times and during this process the head, tail and possibly the front legs were modified. Inv. no: MNIT v. 41352. H: 45 mm; Wgt: 55 g (ȚEPOȘU-MARINESCU – POP 2000, 125, no. 162, Pl. 76.162).

42 The metal objects weight in total 2061 g, out of which 259 g are iron (the iron *balsamarium*). The Millingen spouted jug was reconstructed during restauration and its weight does no longer correspond to the one of the ancient object.

43 GĂZDAC et al. 2010, 11.

44 The following headings and abbreviations were used: Storage (inv. no.: inventory number; MNIT: The National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca); Dimensions (D: diameter; H: height; L: length; Th: thickness; W: width; Wgt: weight).

3. *Balsamarium* (Fig. 6.1). Iron. Fragmentary, restored (one of the handles reconstructed during restoration). The body is worked up from two raised parts, manufactured separately, which are joined in the area of the maximum diameter; the upper part includes the rim; the handles and closing mechanism were made separately. Amphora-shaped vessel with vertical rim, short and narrow neck and spherical body; it was not provided with a base and the inferior part of the body is elongated and terminates in a knob; the preserved handle ends in its inferior part with a leaf-shaped attachment which still holds the first loop of the chain used for hanging, now missing; a closing mechanism was fixed to the interior of the rim: a mobile, superior plate with two knobs and an inferior, fixed one; because the vessel was restored, the two holes from the plates, one used for fixing the upper plate, the other for accessing the contents, can no longer be seen. MNIT, without inv. no. H: 100 mm; $D_{\text{max. body}}$: 82.8 mm; D_{rim} : 38.9–41.6 mm; Wgt: 259 g (MUSTAȚĂ et al. 2012a; MUSTAȚĂ et al. 2012b; MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 152, no. 85, Pls 44–45, Pls 92–93).
4. Bronze sheet spouted jug handle (Fig. 6.2). Cooper alloy. Fragmentary, restored. Cast. The end of a handle belonging to a spouted jug, round in cross-section; the attachment is leaf-shaped and displays two circular perforations. Inv. no: MNIT v. 47737. H approx.: 75 mm; Th_{handle} : 8 mm; W attachment: 47.4 mm; Wgt: 102 g (MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 111, no. 34, Pl. 25.34, Pl. 73.34.a–b).
5. Spouted jug with trefoil mouth (Fig. 6.3). Cooper alloy. Complete; restored: the piece was discovered seriously damaged; the body being broken into small bits of metal; only the handle was integral; during restoration it was recomposed over a wire mesh and covered with resin. Cast in several separate pieces which were subsequently joined together. Jug with trefoil mouth, short, wide neck, bulbous body and flat base; the handle is curved and raised and its upper part ends in a lion's head with open mouth, resting its front paws, highly stylized and ending in volutes, on the mouth of the vessel; the handle ends below in an attachment shaped like a lion's paw. Inv. no: MNIT v. 41351. H: 114 mm; $H_{\text{with handle}}$: 156 mm; Wgt: 945 g (MUSTAȚĂ 2017, 103, no. 30, Pl. 23, Pls 67–70).
6. Lamp foot (Fig. 7). Cooper alloy. Fragmentary, restored. Cast, worked on the lathe. Circular foot with concentric circles on the base and traces of soldering alloy preserved on the area which was attached to the body of the lamp. Inv. no. MNIT 41354b. H: 32 mm; D_{base} : 55.5 mm; Wgt: 125 g (Unpublished).
7. Candlestick (Fig. 8). Cooper alloy. Fragmentary, restored (one of the legs of the base was discovered broken and it was reattached during restoration; the upper part with the spike or/and flower for fixing the candle is broken). Cast. The object was restored during the Roman period and consists of two different candlesticks; part a: tubular tripod candlestick with the base in the shape of three stylized human legs; part b: baluster shaped rod coming from another candlestick/lamp stand; the joining area of the two parts is visible and it was done in a careless manner. Inv. no: MNIT v. 41354a; Part a: H: 73.5 mm; part b: H: 263 mm; H_{total} : 336.5 mm; Wgt_{total} : 415 g (Unpublished).
8. Candlestick (Fig. 9). Cooper alloy. Fragmentary, restored. Cast. The upper part of a candlestick shaped as a flower calyx, pentagonal in section, with five petals (partially broken). Inv. no: MNIT v. 47735. H: 21.5 mm; Wgt: 8 g (Unpublished).
9. Pricket candlestick (Fig. 10). Cooper alloy. Fragmentary, restored (it was placed on a plastic base). Cast, incised. It consists of a drip-collector with slightly flaring walls and inturned rim; the spike for holding the candle in a vertical position, inserted into the base of the drip-collector is missing; the drip-collector is supported by tripod legs (joined by a triple bar) with vegetal decoration on the outer face, resting on gryphon heads which continue with lion legs; the object preserves only one original lion leg, with the fur marked by incised dots; from the other two, one was reconstructed during restoration, while the second one, coming from another pricket candlestick, represents an ancient repair (it has a different shape and the fur was marked by semi-circular incisions). Inv. no: MNIT v. 41353. H: 69 mm; $D_{\text{rim drip-collector}}$: 31.6 mm; Wgt: 54 g (Unpublished).
10. Scissors (Fig. 11). Cooper alloy and iron. Fragmentary, restored. Cast, incised, hammered. The object consists of a cooper alloy curved, elastic band, incised on the outer face with a double rhomboid decoration, which had attached at each end, with the help of two iron rivets, the iron active parts of the scissors, now missing. Inv. no: MNIT v. 47734. L: 54.5 mm; W_{band} : 18.8 mm; Wgt: 27 g (Unpublished).
11. Decorated plate (Fig. 12.1). Cooper alloy. Fragmentary, restored. Cast, embossed, incised. Plate decorated *au repoussé* and with incisions, depicting a winged Victoria holding a crown with both hands; several holes are visible on the surface, some of them for fixing with rivets on another material. Inv. no: MNIT v. 41356. L: 95.7 mm; W: 51.5 mm; Th : 0.8–1.7 mm; Wgt: 20 g (Unpublished).
12. Decorated plate (Fig. 12.2). Cooper alloy and iron. Fragmentary, restored. Cast, embossed, incised. Plate decorated *au repoussé* and with incisions, depicting a schematic fantastic animal, probably a sea panther; two holes are visible at both ends, for fixing with rivets on another material, while a third one, preserving the iron rivet, can be observed near the tail of the animal. Inv. no: MNIT v. 41357. L: 95.7 mm; W: 36 mm; Th : 0.6–1.5 mm; Wgt: 15 g (Unpublished).

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