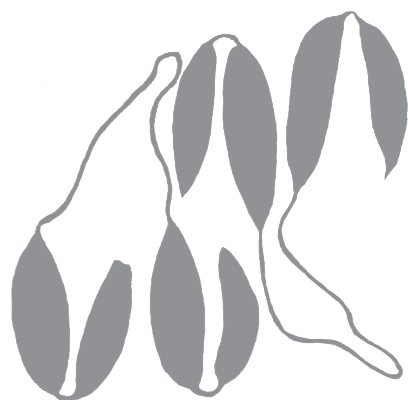


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STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

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Any correspondence will be sent to the editor:

Museum Arad

Piata George Enescu 1, 310131 Arad, RO

e-mail: ziridava2012@gmail.com

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A new stamped *mortarium* from Napoca*

Sorin Cociş

Abstract: The *mortaria* yielded by the rescue archaeological excavations conducted in the city of Cluj-Napoca bear the RVFI stamped inscription. Similar stamps were identified in Dacia at Arcobadara, and within the empire, in Britannia and Gallia. Chronologically, the discussed exemplar may be dated in the time interval comprised between the second half of the 2nd c. – first decades of the 3rd c. AD.

Keywords: Roman Dacia; Napoca; pottery; *mortaria*; stamp.

Mortaria or *pelves* are large vessels, worked of fine or coarse clay or made in stone, with thick walls and everted rim, provided in certain cases with a spout tapering towards the exterior. Occasionally, on vessel rims emerges the producer's name or that of the *officina*. However, most exemplars lack such potter's mark.

The study of these recipients has developed over the last four decades once with the publishing of such vessels discovered in various sites or even the issue of provincial corpora regarding the stamped examples¹. The scholarly interest in the latter is mainly explained by the fact they offer epigraphic information (the maker's name) as well as information concerning their production centres and diffusion on vast areas.

The functionality of the *mortaria*, ever present in Roman cooking, has been interpreted differently at the scale of both the empire and in Roman Dacia over the course of time. First interpretations belong to E. Ritterling², who argued these were used for crushing grains or boiled vegetables. The idea is adopted in the Romanian specialty literature by D. Tudor³ and partially by G. Popilian. The latter makes a distinction between the *mortaria* made of fine fabric and those coarse, the first having multiple functions and being used including in milk curdling⁴. More recent studies have evidenced on the basis of deposition analyses on vessel walls, animal origin remains⁵ as well, hence their use range may be extended to many recipes of Roman cooking. It must be also specified that certain *mortaria* types were discovered in graves too⁶.

Beside the examination of their appearance, another approach is represented by the analysis of the chemical and petrographic composition, which make possible appreciations concerning production areas⁷.

In Dacia, with few exceptions⁸, this vessel type was not investigated in detail and there is no corpus of such items despite the fact their number is not small. Only from Arcobadara are known 65 exemplars⁹. The ratio is though entirely favorable to those without stamp¹⁰.

Mortaria wares displaying the producer's name discovered at *Napoca* are extremely rare¹¹. The excavations performed at no. 4 Muzeului Square led to the identification of a portion of a Roman

* English translation: Gabriela Safta.

¹ Bjelajac 1992–1993; Hartley 1998; Krekovic 2004; Pfahl 2004; Varga 2010; Jauch 2011; Symonds 2012; Pfahl 2018; Pfahl 2020.

² Ritterling 1909, 101.

³ Tudor 1968, 85–86.

⁴ Popilian 1976, 47.

⁵ Cramp *et al.* 2011, 1344–1348.

⁶ Krekovic 2006.

⁷ Jauch 2011; Chinelli, Öllerer 2014.

⁸ Popilian 1976, 46–49; Băluță 1977; Petolescu 1985, 157–171; Lipovan 1992; Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007, 44, 408–409; Cociş, Beu-Dachin 2014; Gaiu 2016–2017.

⁹ Gaiu 2016–2017.

¹⁰ See analysis in Gaiu 2016–2017.

¹¹ Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007, 44, 408–409; Cociş, Beu-Dachin 2014.

Table 1. List of *mortaria* stamps from Dacia.

No.	Place	Stamps	References
1	<i>Acidava</i>	CL DOMITI /EVARESTI	ILD I, 148.
2	<i>Ampelvm</i>	..NDER DOMITIANI FECI	IDR III/3, 380.
3–8	<i>Apulvm</i>	... CL.DONITI EVARESTI; GERMANI (incised on the soft fabric prior firing; G V HERMAN; OFFICINA IVSTINIANV; THEOTIMI OF; ...EOTIMVS	IDR III/6, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324.
9–19	<i>Arcobadara</i>	CL DONITI /EVARESTI; ...DONI „;...DONIT.. / ERAVEST...; CL IANV; CL IANV;VALVCIVS/RVFVS; RVFVS; RVF...; RVFVS; RVFVS; RVFI;...VI,	Gaiu 2016–2017, 76–77, fig. 1, pl. II-III.
20	<i>Bvridava</i>	MARCVS ARETIO FECIT	IDR II, 568.
21–22	<i>Cioroiul Nou</i>	THEO/TIMETI;...DONATI	ILD II, 853a, 852b.
23–24	<i>Drobeta</i>	THEOTIMVS; URSVLVS;	ILD I, 77, 78.
25–26	<i>Gârla –Mare</i>	.. ARPV.../ IENIV; L/ DONITI	ILD I, 89 ILD II. 849b.
27	<i>Jidova</i>	THEOTIMI /STEFANI	ILD I.159.
28	<i>Micăsasa</i>	CL DONITI /EVARESTI	ILD I, 429.
29.	<i>Micia</i>	FORTIS	Petolescu 1985, no. 32.
30–31	<i>Napoca</i>	CL DONITIA/ EVARESTO; RVFI	Cociş, Beu-Dachin 2014, fig. 3.
32–33	<i>Porolissvm</i>	...IGEMO; CII F/ CII F	ILD I, 751,752.
34	<i>Răcari</i>	PHILEM/MINNE	IDR II, 172=ILD I, 98.
35–40	<i>Romula</i>	CL DONITIA /EVARESTO;CL DONITIA/ EVARESTO; MARCVS ARETIO FECIT; MILONIS /MILONIS; STEF./...ANOV; THEOTIMVS	ILD I, 144, 145; Petolescu 1985, 160–161, no. 8, 9, 10, 11.
41–43	<i>Slăveni</i>	CL DONITIA/ EVARESTO; THEOTIMVS; THEOTIMV	Petolescu 1985, 161, no.12; ILD I, 133.
44–46	<i>Svcidava</i>	...ON.../...VA...THEOTIMVS; ...EOTI..	ILD I, 127, 128.
47–49	<i>Tibiscvm</i>	AUGUSTA/...MC; SEVERVS; PHILEM.../MINNE...	IDR III/1, 234, 235, 268
50–59	<i>Vl pia Traiana Sarmizegetvsa</i>	AELI IUL; MARCVS ARETIO FECIT; CRAT./ DAVIO...; ...OCLES; EM; EIM; PRIM/TR...V; THEOTIMI/ STEFANI; PAVR; SABINVUS /VOLVPTATIS	IDR III/2, 572, 573, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580; ILD I, 299, 300.

road and to a certain degree, of a building provided with a courtyard¹². Two rooms could be partially delimited and a paved internal courtyard. A *mortarium* fragment was discovered in the first room. The piece is fragmentary, being made of a sandy, coarse, orange fabric, with small pebble insertions on the internal surface. Part of the vessel rim survived, strongly outcurved and rounded, with a circular groove towards the vessel rim and a small body part. Sizes: surviving height is 11 cm; the rim diameter is 46 cm; the base diameter is approximately of 30 cm; the vessel wall thickness is 2 cm; the thickness of the vessel rim is of 2.5 cm; the rim width is 8 cm; poorly pressed rectangular label 4.4 × 3.5 cm; the letters imprinted in relief are 2.9 cm high and 0.3 cm wide. Stamp RVFI., in the Genitive, is impressed across in relief on the vessel rim (Fig. 1). Cognomen *Rvfvs* is of Latin origin¹³. The exemplar was discovered in an archaeological level that may be dated to the second half of the 2nd c. – first decades of the 3rd c. AD. Typologically, the piece belongs to group 13 in R.P. Symonds's classification of 2012¹⁴.

Vessels bearing the same stamp have been also identified in the fort and *vicus* of Arcobadara¹⁵. The large number of the finds (six exemplars yielded by previous and recent excavations) to which also adds the stamp *VALERIVS LVCIUS RVFVS* was a decisive factor for C. Gaius to ascribe this artisan stamp to a local producer¹⁶. We believe that in the current state of research, it is impossible to speak

¹² Cociş *et al.* 2017, 174.

¹³ Kajanto 1965, 26, 27, 30, 64, 65, 121, 134,229.

¹⁴ Symonds 2012, 185–186.

¹⁵ Gaiu 2016–2017, 76–77, fig. 1, pl. II-III.

¹⁶ Gaiu 2016 –2017, 77.

of a local producer for several reasons; 1. Several producers may bear the same name; 2. Stamps with this name emerge in the provinces of *Britannia* and *Gallia*¹⁷ as well; 3. This product type is diffused on a vast region¹⁸, which rarely allows the establishment of a production area¹⁹, however not of a single production centre²⁰; 4. There is no archaeological material to support the record of a workshop in this site; 5. Chemical and petrographic analyses to confirm local production are lacking.

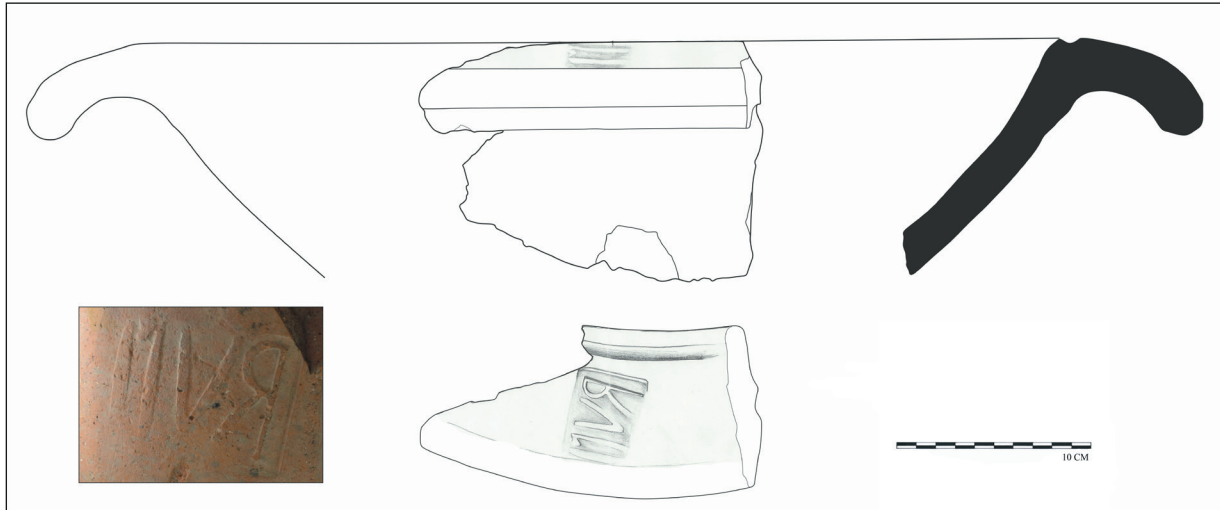


Fig. 1. The stamped mortarium from Napoca.

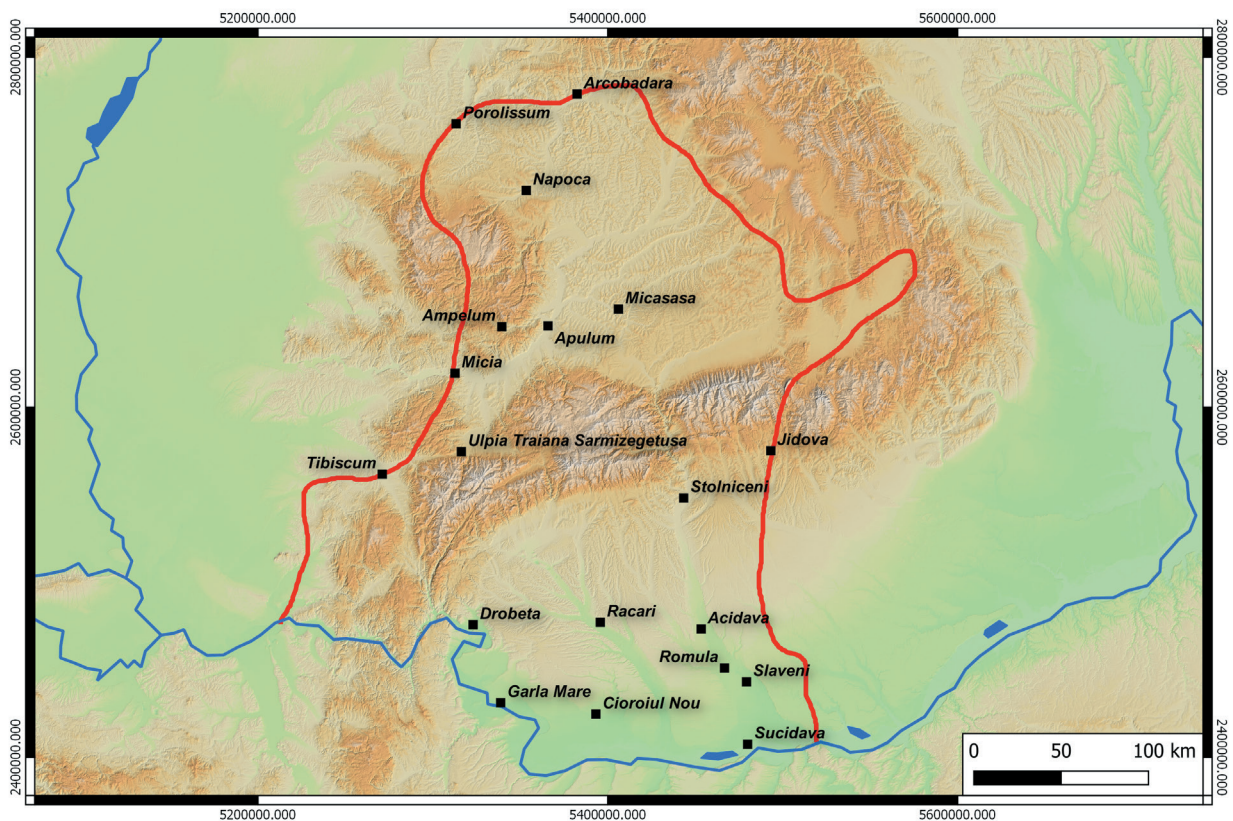


Fig. 2. The list of places with stamped mortarium finds from Dacia.

¹⁷ Dubois *et al.* 2009, 684.

¹⁸ Hartley 1998; Cociș, Beu-Dachin 2014.

¹⁹ Jauch 2011.

²⁰ Symonds 2012, 172.

Returning to the stamped exemplars from Dacia, it must be though noted their large numbers. Thus, 59 exemplars originating from 17 sites, especially military and civil are known (table 1, Fig. 2). Compared to the Danubian provinces, the number of stamped vessels is, for the 2nd–3rd century AD interval, similar²¹.

Sorin Cociș

Romanian Academy Cluj Branch
Institute of Archaeology and Art History Cluj-Napoca
Cluj-Napoca, RO
scocis@yahoo.com

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²¹ Bjelajac 1992–1993; Krekovic 2004; Pfahl 2018.

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Abbreviations

AEM	Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn, Vienna.
AM	Arheologia Moldovei, Iași.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău.
AMV	Acta Musei Varnaensis, Varna.
Angustia	Angustia. Revista Muzeului Național al Carpaților Răsăriteni, Sf. Gheorghe.
Anuarul MJIAP (S.N.)	Anuarul Muzeului de Istorie și Arheologie Prahova, Serie Nouă, Ploiești.
Antiquity	Antiquity. A review of world archaeology, Durham.
Archaeological Journal	Archaeological Journal. New Series. Chișinău.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
ArchPol	Archaeologia Polona, Warsaw.
ArchRozhledy	Archeologické Rozhledy, Praha.
ASM	Archaeologica Slovaca Monographiae, Bratislava.
BAR (Int. S.)	British Archaeological Reports (International Series), Oxford.
Biharea	Biharea. Culegere de studii și materiale de etnografie și artă, Oradea.
BMG	Bibliotheca Musei Giurgiuvensis, Giurgiu.
BMJT	Buletinul Muzeului Județean Teleorman. Seria Arheologie, Alexandria.
BMM	Bibliotheca Musei Marisiensis, Târgu Mureș.
Budapest Régiségei	Budapest Régiségei Régészeti és Történeti Évkönyv. Budapest.
CA București	Cercetări arheologice în București, București.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice, București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CsSzME	A Csíki Székely Múzeum Évkönyve. Csíkszereda.
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EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
Erdély	Erdély. Turistai, fürdőügyi és néprajzi folyóirat, Cluj-Napoca.
FontArchPrag	Fontes Archaeologici Pragenses, Prague.
Földtközl.	Földtani közlöny, Budapest.
HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve, Miskolc.
ILD	C. C. Petolescu, <i>Inscripții latine din Dacia</i> , Bucharest 2005.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca.
Jahrb. RGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch Germanischen Zentralmuseums zu Mainz, Mainz.
JAMÉ	Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyiregyháza.
Karpatika	Karpatika, Uzhorod.
LMI	List of Historic Monuments, updated 2015.
Marisia	Marisia. Studies and Materials. Archeology. Târgu-Mureș.
MCA (S.N.)	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice Serie Nouă. București
MemAntiq	Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț.
NNA	Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift, Stockholm.
PAS	Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa, Rahden/Westf.
PAT	Patrimonium Archaeologicum Transylvanicum, Cluj-Napoca.
Paléo	PALEO – Revue d'archéologie préhistorique, Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil.
Pallas	Pallas. Revue d'études antiques, Toulouse.

PNAS	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, Washington.
PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
RAN	National Archaeological Repertory.
RM	Revista Muzeelor, București.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SatuMareSC	Satu Mare Studii și Comunicări, Satu Mare.
SCIV(A)	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie, București.
SCȘMI	Studii și Comunicări Științifice ale Muzeelor de Istorie, București.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului, Timișoara.
SlovArch	Slovenská archeológia, Nitra.
SP	Studii de Preistorie, București.
St.Cerc.Antropol.	Studii și Cercetări de Antropologie, București.
StudUBB-G	Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Seria Geologia, Cluj-Napoca.
ZborníkSlovNMA	Zborník Slovenského Národného Múzea. Archeológia, Bratislava.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica, Arad.
ИАИ	Известия на Археологическия Институт при БАН, София.