

Decorated Bronze Mirrors from the necropolis of Apollonia Pontica

(Abstract)

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The present paper discusses the seven most elaborate examples in the collection of bronze mirrors, discovered in the necropolis of Apollonia Pontica.

All mirrors under consideration here belong to the same type, with the reflecting disc and the tang for fastening the handle cast together. Depending on the decoration, two groups could be distinguished – mirrors with decoration on both sides of the reflecting disk and mirrors with decoration only on one side of the disk. Five specimens of different size and decoration belong to the first group. Three of them, Field Inventory No. 232, Inventory No. 2403, and Field Inventory No. 107, are among the earliest Greek mirrors, the appearance of which could be dated to the late 6th c. BC. In the necropolis of Apollonia, such mirrors are found in considerably later graves – last quarter of the 5th c. BC to the middle of the 4th c. BC. These are massive and heavy discs with decoration at the base of the disk, consisting of the volutes of the Aeolic type, with a palmette in between. This motif, typical of the Ionian East, was adopted and developed by Attic

workshops. In Greece in the first half of the 5th c. BC, mirrors appeared with elegant tendrils added to the main decorative scheme of the earlier examples. They were manufactured in Attic workshops. Two mirrors belong to this group – Field Inventory No. 84, dated to the second quarter of the 4th c. BC, and another one from the necropolis of Apollonia, with unknown context.

Two mirrors, Field Inventory Nos. 66 and 4613, belong to the second group of mirrors, with decoration only on one side of the disc. They have a much thinner disc. The decoration of the mirror with Field Inventory No. 66 is very similar to that of the specimens with Field Inventory Nos. 107 and 232, and Inventory No. 2403. It was found in a grave from the second half of the 5th c. BC. The mirror with Field Inventory No. 4613 has a vertically developed composition “volutes with palmettes”. It is without context.

The anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains indicates that the mirrors with Field Inventory Nos. 232 and 66 belonged to women, aged 21-35 years.