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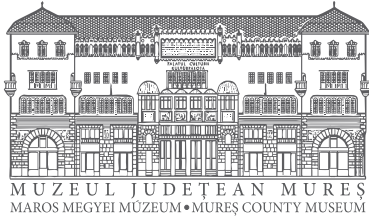
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In memoriam dr. István Bajusz (1954–2021)



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AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURINE BELONGING TO THE COȚOFENI CULTURE FROM SÂNGEORGIU DE MUREȘ

Sándor BERECKI*

The article presents an anthropomorphic figurine discovered incidentally in 2009 in Sângeorgiu de Mureș. The fragmentary figurine can be dated to the third phase of the Coțofeni culture and presents a person with arms in an orans position. Figurines similar to this specific type were discovered in several contemporary settlements in Transylvania as well as in the neighbouring regions.

Keywords: anthropomorphic figurine, Late Copper Age / Early Bronze Age, Coțofeni culture, Mureș Valley

Cuvinte cheie: figurină antropomorfă, eneolitic / epoca bronzului timpuriu, cultura Coțofeni, valea Mureșului

The Late Copper Age / Early Bronze Age settlement from Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Mariaffy Chapel* can be found on the left side of the Mureș River on a terrace of a medium height, on the right of the road that leads from Târgu Mureș to Reghin (DN 15), close to the entrance to Sângeorgiu de Mureș from Târgu Mureș, on the territory of the cemetery situated around a chapel. This plateau is in fact the first terrace of the Mureș found outside the floodplain, a plateau which follows the river from the region of Reghin until Târgu Mureș, in certain parts fragmented by secondary valleys of streams, tributaries of the Mureș. Close to the site from the chapel other five contemporary settlements are known from the end of the Copper Age and the beginning of the Bronze Age (Fig. 1): 1. at the former hippodrome from Târgu Mureș, to the northeast from the County Clinical Hospital; 2. Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Sub Ghera / Gyéra-alja*, researched through systematic excavations by Zoltán Székely; 3. Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Vârful*

Dealului with incidental finds; 4. Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Cânepiști* also with incidental finds of Copper Age pottery; 5. Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Dealul Bunii / Buna-hegy*, researched in the '80s by Valeriu Lazăr.

The archaeological site of Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Mariaffy Chapel* (Fig. 2) – which most probably is part of the same settlement as the site at Hippodrome – is known in the literature due to some incidental discoveries from 1951 and the excavations of Székely Zoltán from 1957.¹ The excavations conducted at approximately 8 m (surface of 6 × 4 m) respectively to 25 m westwards (section of 10 × 1 m) from the chapel a dwelling was unearthed with a 40 mm thick adobe floor. Here, also the stratigraphy of the site was identified, consisting of a lower archaeological layer of 0.30–0.50 m with rich material coming from the Coțofeni culture, and an upper layer of 0.30–0.40 m. The archaeological material, largely unpublished, dates from the third phase of the Coțofeni culture.

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¹ SZÉKELY 1959.

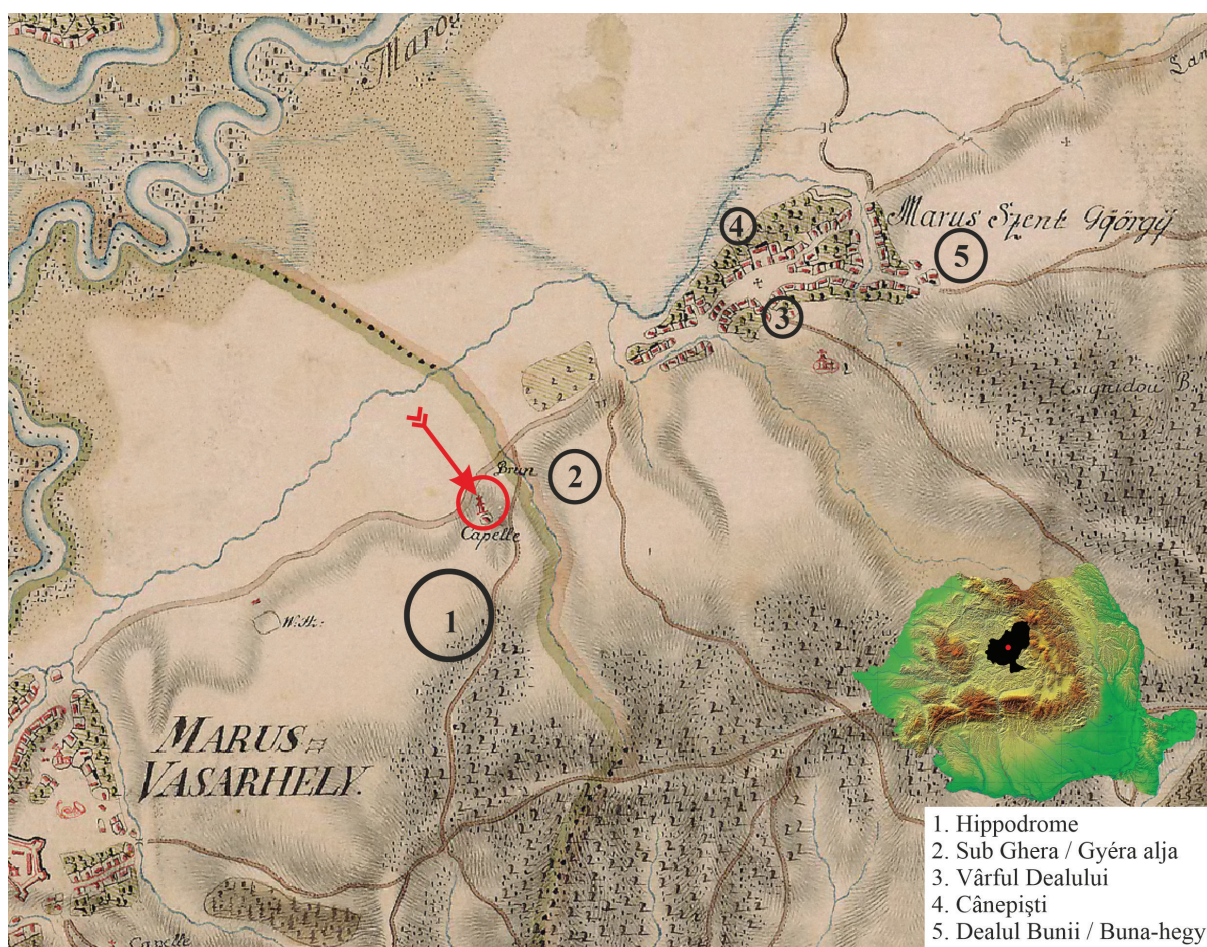


Fig. 1. The location of the site and other contemporary sites from the region mapped on the first Austrian military survey (1763–1785).

The cemetery around the chapel is still in use even today, and with the occasion of digging new graves in 2009 new finds were unearthed, among which besides the pottery fragments also a spindle whorl and a slightly fragmented anthropomorphic representation came to light (Fig. 3).

The anthropomorphic representation recovered in three pieces is part of the flat type, with a wide neck, rounded, oval in section, short arms with narrow ends in *orans* position, with slender hip, thin and a missing lower part.

The preserved lower part of the object is decorated, each side bares a different motif, on the front side a horizontal row of successive elongated stabbed pattern, situated obliquely, under which oblique rows of *Furchenstich* type successive stabbed motif forms one triangle on each

side. On the back side the ornament is separated in two dials by an incised central line, flanked on both sides by two oblique rows of three circular stabbed patterns, followed by *Furchenstich* type oblique lines towards the center of the piece. On the two sides of the object horizontal rows can be found, executed also through successive stabbed motifs. The decoration compiled through successive 'stab-and-drag' (*Furchenstich*) technique a combination of the A-Roman type and the K-Roman type, was almost exclusively used with the incrustation, largely spread especially in the center of Transylvania.²

The sex of the representation could not be defined. The clay from which the artefact was produced as well as the production technique does not differ from the one used for the make of

² ROMAN 1976, 28, 46, pl. 46/8; 118.



Fig. 2. The location of the site Sângeorgiu de Mureș–*Máriaffy Chapel* (photo: S. Berecki, 18 September 2014).

recipients: the paste is homogenous, tempered with sand and pebbles, oxidizing irregular firing, which resulted in a grey core and a brownish brick-red slightly smoothed surface with black fringes. Height: 88.1 mm; diameter at the hands: 73.9 mm; diameter of the hip: 44.7 mm; diameter of the neck: 28.9 mm; thickness: 15.7 mm.

Anthropomorphic figurines are specific objects of Neolithic and Early Copper Age settlements from southeastern Europe. After a period in which they do not appear, such objects reappear in the settlements from the end of the Copper Age and the beginning of the Bronze Age, rarely also in the Middle Bronze Age³ or the first part of the Iron Age.⁴

In the Coțofeni culture such human representations appear in all chronological phases.

Anthropomorphic figurines are known from Agrișteu (two pieces), Boarta–*Cetățuie* (two pieces), Călnic (two pieces), Cicău, Lelicieni–*Locul Oprit* (three pieces), Lopadea Veche, Modoia, Petrești–*Groapa Galbenă*, Pianu de Jos, Poiana Ampoiului, Răchita–*Vârful Zăpozii*, Războieni, Râmnicu Vâlcea–*Copăcelu-Valea Răii*, Săcuieni (three pieces from which two are typical Coțofeni and one specific to the Baden culture), Sebeș–*Râpa Roșie*, Straja, Șeușa–*Gorgan* (13 pieces), Turdaș (two pieces), Unirea–*Dealul Cămării* (two pieces), Vâlcele, and in the collection of E. Orosz.⁵ Most of the artefacts can be dated to the third phase of the Coțofeni culture, except the finds from Lelicieni (Coțofeni I), Unirea, and Turdaș (Coțofeni II).⁶ Their predominance inside the Carpathian Arch,

³ KACSÓ 2019.

⁴ BERECKI 2013.

⁵ ROSKA 1941, 302, pl. CXXIX/20; ROTH 1943; PAUL 1969; DUMITRAȘCU–TOGAN 1971; ROMAN 1976, pl. 51/5–12; LAZĂR 1979; CIUGUDEAN 1983; PETRE–GOVORA 1995; CIUGUDEAN 2000, 39–40, pl. 117–118; LUCA 2001, 92; POPA ET AL. 2004; TATÁR 2006; TUȚULESCU 2008; POPA 2012; POPA–CIUTĂ 2016.

⁶ POPA 2004, 130.

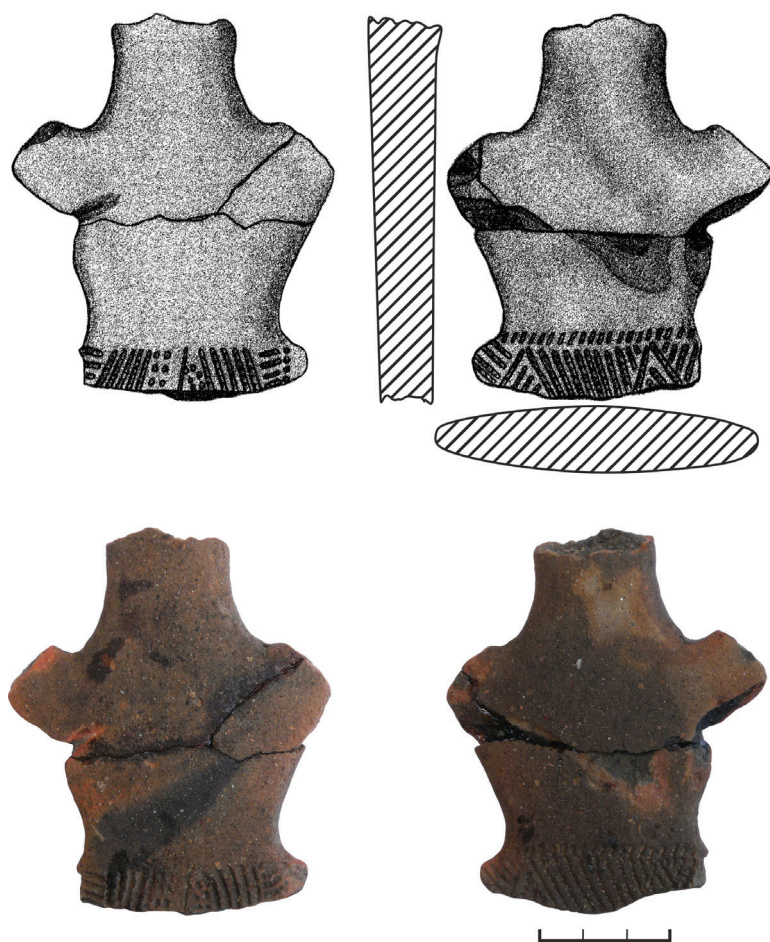


Fig. 3. The anthropomorphic figurine from Sângeorgiu de Mureș–Máriaffy Chapel.

especially along the middle course of the Mureș River, can be explained through the local cultural background or the cultural contacts with the western neighboring regions.⁷

In most cases however, these objects come from the culture layer of the settlements without a well defined archaeological context. In Șeușa–Gorgan, Boarta–Cetățuie, and Unirea–Dealul Cămării they were discovered in houses, while one of the artefacts from Șeușa–Gorgan was found in a pit with possible ritual character.⁸

The majority of the anthropomorphic figurines from the Late Copper Age are decorated,

but frequently they are found in such fragmented state that the entire ornament of the objects cannot be reconstructed. The most widespread decorations are the executed through incisions or stabbing. From the point of view of the ‘message’ the decorations can be considered symbolic designs, which most probably illustrate elements of clothing, clothing accessories, and jewelry or hairstyles.

In some cases, like on one of the three representations from Lelicieni and on the piece from Vâlcele details concerning the sex of the representation are illustrated through small round protrusion indicating breasts. On the artefact from Pianu de Jos and from Șeușa, as well as most likely on the ones from Agrișteu, Boarta, Unirea, and Valea Răii also the pubic triangle is illustrated with a decoration. However, in most of the cases details indicating sex are missing. Thus, even though, when the defining elements of the sex are represented and these indicate the female sex, defining these anthropomorphic representations as exclusively feminine figurines⁹ is questionable. It is arguable that in some cases the maker consciously sought to leave out sexual elements, creating deliberately an asexual or sexless figurine.¹⁰ The artefacts from the Copper Age in the Balkans were seen as representations of individuals, reflecting a society which was not limited to a simple male–female division, but included individuals who were neither male nor female.¹¹

Extremely rarely the eyes are represented on such figurines through perforations.¹²

⁷ RIȘCUȚA 1996, 75.

⁸ POPA–CIUTĂ 2016, 166.

⁹ RIȘCUȚA 1996, 70.

¹⁰ BERECKI 2013, 317.

¹¹ BAILEY 1994, 329.

¹² POPA–CIUTĂ 2016, 168.

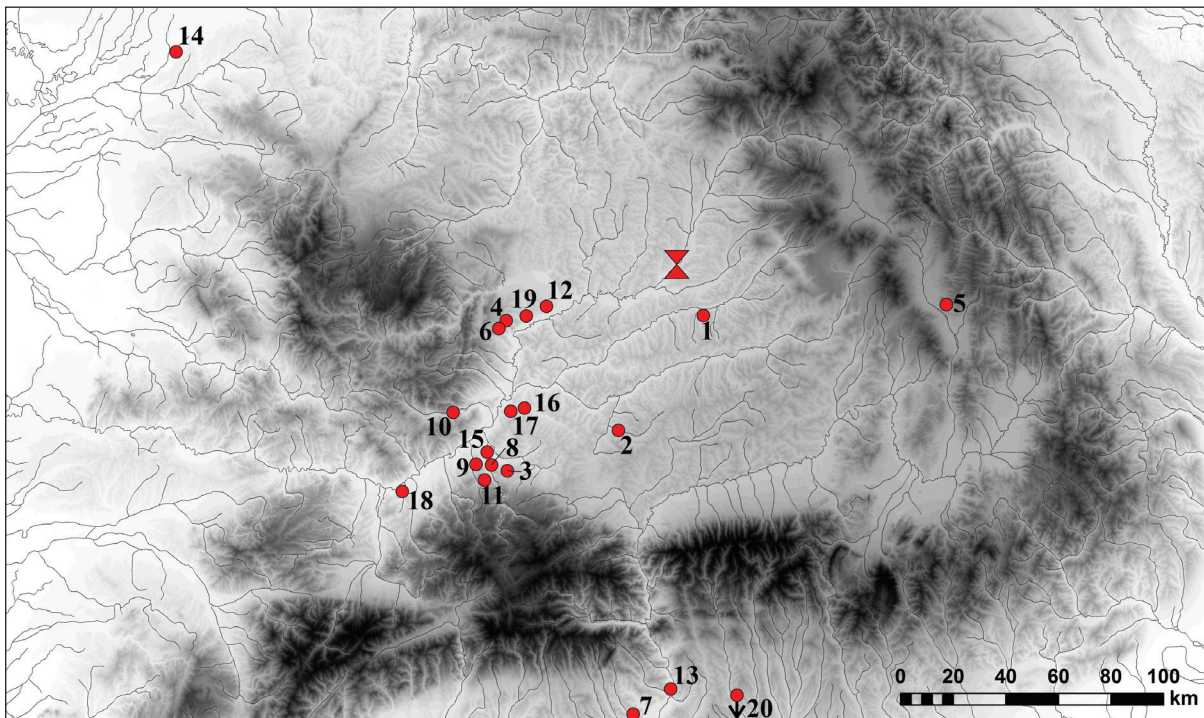


Fig. 4. Sângeorgiu de Mureș on the distribution map of the Coțofeni culture anthropomorphic figurines (base map by L. Rupnik). 1. Agrișteu; 2. Boarta; 3. Câlnic; 4. Cicău; 5. Lelicieni; 6. Lopadea Veche; 7. Modoia; 8. Petrești; 9. Pianu de Jos; 10. Poiana Ampoiului; 11. Răchita; 12. Războieni; 13. Râmnicu Vâlcea; 14. Săcuieni; 15. Sebeș; 16. Straja; 17. Șeușa; 18. Turdaș; 19. Unirea; 20. Vâlcele.

Additional anatomical details are missing. When such figurines were preserved integrally it could be observed that their hands are raised up in an *orans* position (Agrișteu, Boarta, Lelicieni, Lopadea Veche, Pianu de Jos, Săcuieni, Șeușa, Unirea). This position of the human body appears also on the pottery of the Baden culture as well as in the cotemporary Aegean-Anatolian area.¹³ Due to the fragmentary state of the majority of the artefacts the inferior part of the objects cannot be reconstructed. However, from a typological point of view the flat figurines, such as the one from Sângeorgiu de Mureș, are considered to have had a disk-shaped lower part, just as the ones from Agrișteu, Câlnic, Modoia, Pianu de Jos, Turdaș, Unirea, and the one from the Orosz collection. Yet, it cannot be excluded that some of the objects had also legs represented similarly to those from the contemporary cultural medium of the Baden culture.¹⁴

The deliberate fragmentation of the statuettes was a custom frequently presumed in the case of prehistoric communities, connected to certain rituals and magical practices. The abandonment of the objects and their frequent appearance in the archaeological layer and rarely in closed contexts still raises certain questions about their role connected to ritual practice or their function as representations of certain deities. Therefore, due to the lack of conclusive circumstances of discovery in all cases, it is impossible to firmly determine if these objects ornamented on both sides were ceremonial accessories, gods, toys, apotropaic figurines or game pieces.¹⁵ In each case however, they were expressions of a common symbolic language reflecting the common identity construct of the Late Copper Age / Early Bronze Age Coțofeni communities.

¹³ CIUGUDEAN 2000, 40.

¹⁴ BONDÁR 1999, 4–7. kép; KALICZ 2002.

¹⁵ BERECKI 2013, 318.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ActaArchHung</i>	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
<i>ActaMN</i>	Acta Musei Napocensis
<i>AISC</i>	Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice Cluj
<i>Aluta</i>	Aluta. Studii și cercetări
<i>AnB</i>	Analele Banatului (Serie nouă 2006–)
<i>Angustia</i>	Angustia. Muzeul Carpaților Răsăriteni
<i>AnnUA-Hist</i>	Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica
<i>Antiquity</i>	Antiquity. A Quarterly Review of Archaeology
<i>Apulum</i>	Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis
<i>ArchÉrt</i>	Archaeologiai Értesítő
<i>ArchHung</i>	Archaeologia Hungarica
<i>ArchKorr</i>	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt
<i>ArchSlovMonComm</i>	Archaeologica Slovaca Monographiae: Communicationes
<i>Argesis</i>	Argesis. Studii și comunicări
<i>AVSL</i>	Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde
<i>Banatica</i>	Banatica, Muzeul Banatului Montan
<i>BB</i>	Bibliotheca Brukenthal
<i>BCȘS</i>	Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studentești
<i>BeitUfGMMKR</i>	Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte des Mittelmeer-Kulturräumens
<i>BerRGK</i>	Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission
<i>BICA</i>	Bullettino dell' Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica = Bulletin de l' Institut de correspondance archéologique
<i>BHAUT</i>	Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis
<i>BJ</i>	Bonner Jahrbücher
<i>BMA</i>	Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis
<i>BMM</i>	Bibliotheca Musei Marisiensis
<i>BudRég</i>	Budapest Régiségei
<i>CA</i>	Cercetări Arheologice
<i>Carpica</i>	Carpica. Muzeul Județean Iulian Antonescu
<i>CCAR</i>	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România
<i>CH</i>	Cahiers d' Histoire. Publiés par les Universités de Clermont-Ferrand
<i>CommArchHung</i>	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae
<i>Dacia (N. S.)</i>	Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie, I–XII (1924–1948), Nouvelle série (N. S.): Dacia. Revue d' archéologie et d' histoire ancienne
<i>DDMÉ</i>	A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve
<i>DissArch</i>	Dissertationes Archaeologicae ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae
<i>DM</i>	Dissertationes et monographiae Beograd
<i>DolgKolozsvar (Ú.S.)</i>	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, (Új sorozat 2006–)
<i>DolgSzeged</i>	Dolgozatok a Szegedi Tudományegyetem Régiségtudományi Intézetéből
<i>EDR</i>	Ephemeris Dacoromana
<i>EMúz</i>	Erdélyi Múzeum

<i>EphemNap</i>	Ephemeris Napocensis
<i>HOMÉ</i>	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve
<i>IA</i>	Internationale Archäologie
<i>ICA</i>	Interdisciplinary Contributions to Archaeology
<i>IPH</i>	Inventaria Praehistorica Hungariae
<i>JAHA</i>	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology
<i>JAAH</i>	Journal of Archaeology and Ancient History
<i>JASc</i>	Journal of Archaeological Science
<i>JbRGZM</i>	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums
<i>JRA</i>	Journal of Roman Archaeology
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies
<i>KM</i>	Keresztény Magvető. Az Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház Folyóirata
<i>KuBA</i>	Kölner und Bonner Archaeologica
<i>Lymbus</i>	Lymbus. Magyarástudományi Forrásközlemények
<i>Marisia</i>	Marisia (V–XXXV): Studii și Materiale
<i>Marisia-AHP</i>	Marisia: Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium
<i>MCA</i>	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice
<i>MFME (StudArch)</i>	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve, (Studia Archaeologica 1995–)
<i>MGLDMS (N. F.)</i>	Magazin für Geschichte, Literatur und alle Denk- und Merkwürdigkeiten Siebenbürgens, Neue Folge
<i>Mousaios</i>	Mousaios. Muzeul Județean Buzău
<i>MSVFG</i>	Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte
<i>MűvtÉrt</i>	Művészettörténeti Értesítő
<i>NuclInstMethPhys-Sect. B</i>	Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research. Section B
<i>OJA</i>	Oxford Journal of Archaeology
<i>PAS</i>	Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa
<i>PBF</i>	Prähistorische Bronzefunde
<i>Radiocarbon</i>	Radiocarbon. An International Journal of Cosmogenic Isotope Research
<i>ReiCretActa</i>	Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta
<i>RégFüz</i>	Régészeti Füzetek
<i>RevBis</i>	Revista Bistriței. Complexul Județean Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud
<i>Sargetia (S.N.)</i>	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis
<i>SBA</i>	Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
<i>SCIV(A)</i>	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie 1974–)
<i>SlovArch</i>	Slovenská Archeológia
<i>StCl</i>	Studii Clasice
<i>StComSibiu</i>	Studii și comunicări. Muzeul Brukenthal
<i>StComSM</i>	Studii și Comunicări Satu Mare
<i>SUBB-Historia</i>	Studia Universitatis Babeș–Bolyai, series Historia
<i>StudUCH</i>	Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis, Series Historica
<i>Terra Sebus</i>	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis
<i>Thraco-Dacica</i>	Thraco-Dacica. Institutul de Arheologie “Vasile Pârvan” Centrul de Tracologie
<i>Tisicum</i>	Tisicum. A Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Múzeumok Évkönyve
<i>Tyragetia</i>	Tyragetia. The National Museum of History of Moldova
<i>UPA</i>	Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie
<i>VAH</i>	Varia Archaeologica Hungarica
<i>WMMÉ</i>	A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve
<i>ZPE</i>	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

MARISIA. ARCHAEOLOGIA, HISTORIA, PATRIMONIUM

With a publishing tradition since 1965, in 2019 the annual of the Mureş County Museum initiated a new series entitled: *Marisia. Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium*. The publication provides a panel for new research results in archeology, architecture and material heritage of the history of arts and culture. The studies mainly focus on the inner Transylvanian region that encompasses also Mureş County. Beyond local valuable contributions, the annual aims at a regional and global concern that is relevant for the whole of Transylvania. Among the annual's missions is to provide mutual interpretation of the research results produced by the Romanian and Hungarian scientific workshops. Therefore, the annual articles are mainly in English but based on the field of research and the approached topic studies in German, Romanian or Hungarian are also accepted.

Cu o tradiție din anul 1965, anuarul Muzeului Județean Mureş s-a relansat în 2019 sub titlul *Marisia. Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium*. Această publicație se descrie ca o platformă științifică care cuprinde rezultatele cercetărilor în domenii precum: arheologia, arhitectura și patrimoniul material din zona istoriei artelor și a culturii, studii localizate în regiunea centrală a Transilvaniei, din care face parte județul Mureş. **In extenso**, anuarul își propune să ofere un spațiu unitar contribuțiilor științifice valoroase, relevante din perspectiva geografică a ceea ce înseamnă întreaga regiune a Transilvaniei. Una dintre misiunile publicației este aceea de a oferi tuturor celor interesați spațiul de schimb pentru cele mai noi rezultate din atelierelor științifice românești și maghiare. Articolele anuarului sunt scrise în general în limba engleză, existând totodată articole scrise în germană, română și maghiară, în funcție de specificul domeniului și a temei abordate.

A Maros Megyei Múzeum 1965 óta megjelenő évkönyvének 2019-ben útjára bocsátott új sorozata, a *Marisia. Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium* elsősorban a mai Maros megyét is magába foglaló belső-erdélyi régió régészeti, épített és tárgyi örökségére, nemkülönben az ezekhez kapcsolódó művészettörténeti, művelődéstörténeti kérdésekre vonatkozó újabb kutatások tudományos fóruma. A lokális perspektíván túl igyekszik kitekinteni a regionális és univerzális összefüggésekre, így a tágran értelmezett Erdély területére nézve is közöl kiemelkedő értékkel bíró tanulmányokat. Küldetésének tekinti a hazai román és magyar tudományos műhelyekben született eredmények kölcsönös tolmácsolását. A dolgozatok nyelve főként az angol, de szakterülettől és témától függően német, román vagy magyar nyelven is közöl írásokat.