

MARISIA

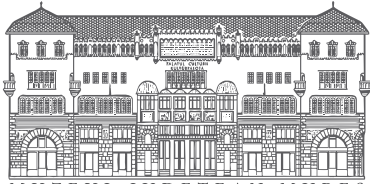
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NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS: A NEW LATE BRONZE AGE SWORD FROM THE CONCRETE CRUSHER

János Gábor TARBAY*

The brief report presents a new Late Bronze Age metal-hilted sword with a cup-shaped pommel, discovered in a concrete crusher at the former site of Kis & Társa Ltd in Budafok (Budapest, HU) in 2008. The damaged artefact likely originated from the Danube River, as indicated by riverine sediment and gravel adhering to its surface. Use-wear analysis revealed that it had been deposited in an originally intact state, while the notches along its cutting edge are of modern origin. The style of the motifs on the cup-shaped pommel and the formal characteristics of the weapon's hilt and blade suggest that it was produced during the Ha B1 phase.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age (Ha B1), sword, use-wear, typo-chronology

Cuvinte-cheie: Bronz Târziu (Ha B1), sabie, urme de utilizare, tipocronologie

INTRODUCTION

On 27th of March 2023, Andrea Ébl from Kulcs (Fejér County, HU) donated a new metal-hilted sword with a cup-shaped pommel to the Prehistoric Collection of the Hungarian National Museum (Fig. 1). The weapon was found discovered by chance around 2008 on the former premises of Kis & Társa Ltd in Budafok, a company owned by Andrea Ébl's family. The object was found in a concrete crusher by an operator, who was unaware of its historical significance, initially intended to sell it to a metal recycling company. Andrea Ébl's husband recognised the sword's value beyond its copper content and purchased it from the operator. For years, the artefact was kept by the family until they contacted the author, who facilitated its donation to the Prehistoric Collection. Given the unusual circumstances of discovery, the exact topographical position of the findspot remains unknown. According to Andrea Ébl,

their company regularly purchased concrete materials from areas in and around Budapest. The object was covered with a patina containing numerous small river sediments and pieces of gravel (Fig. 2), supporting the idea that the sword's original findspot may have been the nearby River Danube. Even in the complete absence of archaeological context, this remains a plausible scenario, as the section of the Danube at Budapest has yielded numerous weapons, including swords recovered during dredging operations at various locations.

DESCRIPTION

Metal-hilted sword with a cup-shaped pommel, a ricasso, and a broken and bent leaf-shaped blade. Only the upper half of the weapon has been preserved. The blade's midrib is slightly protruding. The metal hilt is attached to the blade by two metal pegs. The hilt is decorated with chased patterns, most of which have worn away. Traces of decoration are partially preserved on the hilt shoulders, appearing as

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Fig. 1. Metal-hilted sword from the concrete crusher.

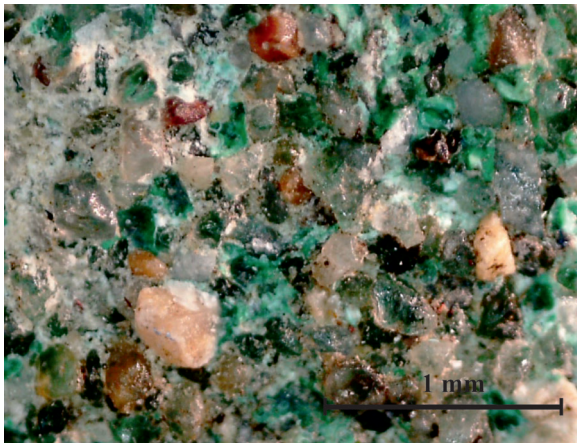


Fig. 2. Patina containing numerous small river sediments and pieces of gravel.

bundles of lines. The most complete remnants of the pattern can be observed within the cup-shaped pommel, consisting of bundles of lines and rows of cross-hatched triangles. A hole is visible near the hilt knob. The surface of the artefact, as found, was covered with small river sediments and gravel. Length 237.76 mm; Length of the hilt 100.28 mm; Diameter of the cup 53.93×57.59 mm; Length of the cup 15.70 mm; Width of the hilt 27.28–47.79 mm; Thickness of the hilt 18.64–7.07 mm; Thickness of the blade 23.87×8.27 mm; 35.53×6.53 mm; Weight 441.4 g. Inv. No. 2023.1.1 (Bronze Age Subcollection, Prehistoric Collection, Hungarian National Museum) (Fig. 1/1–3).

USE-WEAR

The artefact was studied by metalwork-wear analysis¹ carried out by the author, using a *Toolcraft Digi-Micro* mobile camera prior to conservation. The analysis revealed traces morphologically identical to those that metalwork-wear analyst call *V-shaped notches* (Fig. 3/1, 3)² when these traces are viewed individually. Since these traces show clustering along the cutting edge, they can be interpreted as *edge notching*,³ a type of intentional damage in the Bronze Age, usually performed prior to deposition of hoarded edged

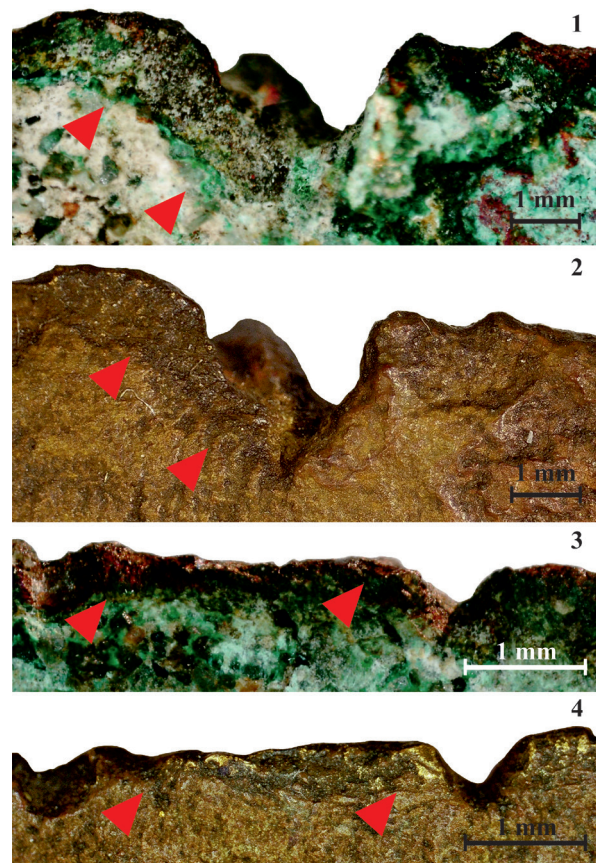


Fig. 3. Comparison of modern damages before conservation (1, 3) and after conservation (2, 4).

artefacts. However, the patina break around these damages (Fig. 3/1, 3) clearly suggests that these are not of prehistoric origin, and were likely caused by the concrete crusher operator, who may have attempted to test the material or cut the object into manageable pieces.⁴ The fragmentation and bending of the sword are also modern, as evidenced by the patina break around the damaged areas. Thus, the current state of the sword reflects the unfortunate circumstances of discovery rather than its original deposition condition, which was likely intact or near intact, a state more characteristic of aquatic finds from this area.⁵

The conservation of the find also served as a methodological example. It aimed to reveal the previously unknown details of the typologically important motifs. During conservation, the

¹ DOLFINI–CRELLIN 2016.

² BRIDGFORD 2000, 105.

³ QUILLIEC 2007, 105 (la repetición de impactos); BELL 2019, 156, fig. 10/5.

⁴ Our results resonate well with what David R. Bell has concluded in his reassessment of non-prehistoric reuse of weapons from the Irish Bronze Age (see BELL 2019).

⁵ MOZSOLICS 1975; SZATHMÁRI 2005.

sediment and gravel layer was removed from the sword by alkaline-glycerol immersion. Images taken with a *Bresser 1080P* digital microscope show changes in the surface topography surrounding modern damages (Fig. 3/2, 4). These changes in the characteristics of the damages highlight the importance of pre-conservation use-wear analysis, as they provide clear methodological examples of how modern traces can become almost indistinguishable from prehistoric ones after conservation. This is a particularly acute problem in case of use-wear analysis of previously conserved finds lacking accompanying conservation documentation, especially those subjected to wet chemical cleaning⁶ during the socialist era, an outdated method that has completely eroded the objects' surfaces.

TYPO-CHRONOLOGY

The sword fragment has a cup-shaped pomel and a leaf-shaped blade with a protruding midrib. Its exact pattern is unclear due to abrasion caused by its presumed riverine environment, which often erodes fine lost-wax cast and chased patterns on metalwork. Another reason, though less likely in the case of the studied sword, is the prolonged gripping of the sword's hilt, resulting in a phenomenon known as a *worn-out hilt*.⁷ Although never tested experimentally, this may be considered an extreme form of use-wear, suggesting an extended period of use. Both scenarios, together with the effects of corrosion, can account for the lack of ornamentation on Bronze Age sword hilts.⁸

Following conservation, the decoration appeared only partially. The bottom of the hilt's cup was likely decorated with bundles of lines. The grip may also have been ornamented with identical patterns, based on faint traces of such bundles near the cup (Fig. 1/3). Under grazing light, parts of the stylised bird-barge motifs are also observable on the shoulders of the hilt. The preserved parts of the motif suggest that the interior of the cup was decorated with bundles

of lines and three rows of cross-hatched triangles (Fig. 1/1–2). This pattern appears on both the inside and outside of the cup-shaped pomels of other swords, such as those from 'Diosig' [Pocsaj-Kasza-puszta] (Hungary),⁹ Pergine (Italy),¹⁰ Zemianske Podhradie (Slovakia),¹¹ and Hajdúböszörmény (Hungary).¹² Since the remaining patterns along the metal hilt and potentially on the blade have been lost to erosion, this poses a challenge for further comparison. The above-mentioned swords have been classified into different types by various authors: Type Cobor, Variant III; Type U, Variant 2; Type Königsdorf, Variant Kremnica.¹³ Considering the surviving motif and the morphological characteristics of the finds, it is plausible that the new sword is most similar to those that Ph. Stockhammer refers to as the Diosig-type. These swords appear in Romania, northeastern Hungary, and as a stray find in Mecklenburg, and are

⁶ CRONYN 1990, 172–175.

⁷ KRISTIANSEN 2002.

⁸ HANSEN 1996.

⁹ HAMPEL 1893, 366; BADER 1991, 151–152, Taf. 48/359. Based on preserved archive documents, we are confident that the findspot of the so-called 'Diosig' hoard was, in fact, located south of Pocsaj (Hajdú-Bihar County, Hungary). In the letters between Miksa Erdős (former owner of the hoard) and József Hampel, the findspot consistently appears as *Kasza puszta*, while Diosig (Bihar-Diószeg, Bihardiószeg) is mentioned only as the residence of Miksa Erdős (See HNM Archive Documents Nos. 118/1893, 131/1893, 182/1893, 201/1893, 208/1893). In the inventory book, both Bihardiószeg and *Kasza puszta* are listed, however, it seems that the latter entry was added after the objects had already been inventoried. According to the Cadastral Maps of the Habsburg Empire, *Kasza puszta*, the findspot recorded by Hampel is clearly situated south of Pocsaj, within the modern political borders of Hungary. <https://maps.arcanum.com/hu/map/cadastral/?layers=3%2C4&bbox=2419902.9964294448%2C5984741.909881786%2C2446044.9554493935%2C5993297.460106497> (last accessed: 08:16, 03.11.2025). According to the IVO database of Hungarian archaeological sites, the extensive area marked as *Kasza puszta* on the Cadastral Maps encompasses several sites, some of which are associated with the Gáva culture, and are likely contemporaneous with the hoard.

¹⁰ MÜLLER-KARPE 1961, 79, 112, Taf. 48/2; BIANCO PERONI 1970, 104, Taf. 42/284.

¹¹ MÜLLER-KARPE 1961, 109, Taf. 39/8; NOVOTNÁ 2014, 82, Taf. 29/129.

¹² MOZSOLICS 1984; KEMENCZEI 1991, 55, Taf. 52/231; TARBAY 2023.

¹³ BIANCO PERONI 1970, 104; BADER 1991, 150–153; KEMENCZEI 1991, 54–56; NOVOTNÁ 2014, 80–83.

characteristic of the Hajdúböszörmény horizon (Ha B1).¹⁴ Datable swords with similar patterns, such as those from ‘Diosig’ [Pocsaj-Kaszapusztá] and the eponymous Hajdúböszörmény hoard, also support this dating.

CONCLUSIONS

The weapon recovered from the concrete crusher belongs to the supra-regional group of metal-hilted swords with cup-shaped pommels. Based on the sediment and gravel layer found on its surface, it was likely deposited in an aquatic environment, possibly the River Danube. At the time of its deposition, it was probably more intact, and if it bore traces of use, these would have been less prominent than the modern damage observed along its cutting edge prior to conservation. Due to its fragmented state and the partially preserved patterns on the hilt, it is challenging to classify this object within a precise type. We believe that its morphological characteristics and the stylistic counterparts of the cup’s patterns allow the sword to be dated to the Ha B1 phase, aligning it with eastern Carpathian metal-hilted swords.

If its provenance is correct¹⁵ and the find did indeed originate from the Budapest river section of the Danube, it represents a new example of the riverine metalwork, particularly the latest development of this phenomenon (Ha B), which is otherwise represented by only a few finds from the Budapest area.¹⁶ Emblematic among these is the

Ha B1 bracelet hoard, consisting of undecorated *Lovasberény*-type and fringe-decorated *Kelčice*-type bracelets from the Csepel-MAHART shipyard, allegedly recovered from a gravel pile during the dredging of the Danube riverbed.¹⁷ Another example is a sword with a cup-shaped pommel from Budapest that was sold to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. This weapon is typologically related to the Stanovo-type swords of the northern-eastern Carpathians, dated to the Ha B1–Ha B2 phases, and presumably slightly younger than the new sword.¹⁸

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Andrea Ébl for donating the sword to the Prehistoric Collection of the Hungarian National Museum. The author is also indebted to Eszter Tóth for conserving the artefact, and Balázs Köpfler for providing me archive documents on purchase of the ‘Diosig’ [Pocsaj-Kaszapusztá] hoard.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Tibor Kemenczei (1939–2024), author of the Hungarian Swords *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* volumes and many other seminal works, without whom research on the Central European Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age research would not be what it is today.

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¹⁴ STOCKHAMMER 2004, 184, list 53.

¹⁵ The provenance of the gravel and river sediments will be subject for a separate study.

¹⁶ MOZSOLICS 1975; SZATHMÁRI 2005.

¹⁷ SZILAS 2003.

¹⁸ TOMPA 1942, 108, pl. 20.12; MOZSOLICS 1975, 17, 19, fig. 9.2; KEMENCZEI 1991, 60, Taf. 59.250; STOCKHAMMER 2004, 307.

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ABBREVIATION

<i>ACMI</i>	Anuarul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice, București
<i>Acta Antiqua</i>	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
<i>Acta Siculica</i>	Acta Siculica. A Székely Nemzeti Múzeum Évkönyve, Sfântu Gheorghe
<i>ActaArchHung</i>	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
<i>ActaMN</i>	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
<i>ActaMP</i>	Acta Musei Prolissensis, Zalău
<i>AEM</i>	Archaeologisch–Epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Oesterreich–Ungarn, Wien
<i>American Antiquity</i>	American Antiquity, Society for American Archaeology
<i>Analele Banatului (S.N.)</i>	Analele Banatului S.N., Arheologie – Istorie, Muzeul Național al Banatului, Timișoara
<i>Angustia</i>	Angustia, Muzeul Carpaților Răsăriteni, Sfântu Gheorghe
<i>ANRC</i>	Arhivele Naționale ale României, Cluj
<i>Apulum</i>	Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis, Alba Iulia
<i>Aquincumi Füzetek</i>	Aquincumi Füzetek, Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, Budapest
<i>Archaeolingua</i>	Archaeolingua, Budapest
<i>ArchÉrt</i>	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest
<i>ArchKorr</i>	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt: Urgeschichte, Römerzeit, Frühmittelalter, Mainz
<i>ArchKözl</i>	Archaeologiai Közlemények, (1859–1899), Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Archaeológiai Bizottsága, Budapest
<i>ArhMold</i>	Arheologia Moldovei, Institutul de arheologie Iași, Iași
<i>ATF</i>	Acta Terrae Fogarasiensis, Muzeul Țării Făgărașului, Făgăraș
<i>AUA (SH)</i>	Anuarul Universității 1 Decembrie 1918, Alba Iulia
<i>AUASH</i>	Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica, Universitatea 1 Decembrie 1918”, Alba Iulia
<i>BiblEphNap</i>	Bibliotheca Ephemeris Napocensis, Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei, Cluj-Napoca
<i>Bibliotheca Marmatia</i>	Bibliotheca Marmatia, Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Arheologie Maramureș
<i>BiblThrac</i>	Bibliotheca Thracologica, București
<i>BMM</i>	Bibliotheca Musei Marisiensis, Seria(es) Archaeologica, Târgu Mureș
<i>BMN</i>	Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
<i>Buridava</i>	Buridava. Studii și materiale, Muzeul Județean „Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu” Vâlcea
<i>Caiete ARA</i>	Caiete ARA (Arhitectură. Restaurare. Arheologie), Asociația ARA, București
<i>CAN</i>	Cercetări arheologice în aria nord-tracă, Institutul de Thracologie, București
<i>CCA</i>	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, București
<i>CIL</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Berlin
<i>Coll. Med.</i>	Collegium Mediense. Comunicări Științifice, Muzeul Municipal Mediaș, Mediaș
<i>ComArchHung</i>	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae, Budapest
<i>Complutum</i>	Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid
<i>Crisia</i>	Crisia, Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, Oradea

<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>DissPan</i>	Dissertationes Pannonicae, Budapest
<i>EDR</i>	Ephemeris Dacoromana. Annuario della Scuola Romana di Roma, Roma
<i>EphNap</i>	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
<i>ErdÉvsz</i>	Erdélyi Évszázadok, a Kolozsvári Magyar Történelmi Intézet évkönyve, Kolozsvár
<i>ErdMúz</i>	Erdélyi Múzeum. Az Erdélyi Múzeum Egylet Történelmi Szakosztályának Közölnye, Kolozsvár
<i>ETF</i>	Erdélyi Tudományos Füzetek, Kolozsvár
<i>FileIst</i>	File de Istorie, Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița-Năsăud
<i>HTRTÉ</i>	A Hunyadmegyei Történelmi és Régészeti Társulat Évkönyve (1880–1912), Déva
<i>Hung. Archaeol.</i>	Hungarian Archaeology, Archaeolingua, Budapest
<i>Hungarian Archaeology</i>	Hungarian Archaeology, Archeolingua, Budapest, e-Journal
<i>IDR</i>	Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae, Academia Română
<i>Istros</i>	I stros. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, Muzeul Brăilei, Brăila
<i>JAHA</i>	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology and Art History of Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca & Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca
<i>JAMÉ</i>	A Nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve
<i>JAMT</i>	Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory, Springer Nature
<i>JAS</i>	Journal of Archaeological Science, Elsevier, e-Journal
<i>JdI</i>	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin
<i>JMS</i>	Journal of Mithraic Studies
<i>Journal of Applied Geophysics</i>	Journal of Applied Geophysics, Amsterdam
<i>JRA</i>	Journal of Roman Archaeology, Cambridge University Press, https://journalofromanarchaeology.com/
<i>JRMS</i>	Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies, Association for Roman Military Equipment Studies
<i>LUPA</i>	
<i>Lustra</i>	Lustra, Internationale Halbjahresschrift für Fragen des Klassischen Altertums, Göttingen
<i>MAGW</i>	Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien, Wien
<i>Marisia</i>	Marisia (V–XXXV): Studii și Materiale, Târgu Mureș
<i>Marisia-AHP</i>	Marisia: Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium (2019–), Târgu Mureș
<i>MBV</i>	Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, München
<i>MCA</i>	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice, Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București
<i>MIMK</i>	Molnár István Múzeum Kiadványai, Székelykeresztúr
<i>MNL DL</i>	Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Diplomatikai Levéltár
<i>NIMB</i>	Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research Section B: Beam Interactions with Materials and Atoms, Elsevier, e-Journal
<i>OJA</i>	Oxford Journal of Archaeology, Oxford
<i>Opitz Archaeologica</i>	Opitz Archaeologica, Martin Opitz Kiadó, Budapest
<i>Páztortúz</i>	Páztortúz (1921–1944), Kolozsvár
<i>PAT</i>	Patrimonium Archaeologicum Transylvanicum, Cluj-Napoca

<i>PBF</i>	Prähistorische Bronzefunde, München, Stuttgart
<i>Peabody Museum Bulletins</i>	Peabody Museum Bulletins, Harvard University Series
<i>PPS</i>	Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society, London
<i>Pril. Inst. arheol. Zagrebu</i>	Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu, Zagreb
<i>PZ</i>	Prähistorische Zeitschrift, Berlin
<i>Quat.Int.</i>	Quaternary International, International Union for Quaternary Research, Elsevier, e-Journal
<i>Radiocarbon</i>	Radiocarbon, Cambridge University Press
<i>ReiCretActa</i>	Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta, Tongeren
<i>Religion</i>	Religion, e-Journal
<i>RevBis</i>	Revista Bistriței, Complexului Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița
<i>RevMuz</i>	Revista Muzeelor Institutul Național pentru Cercetare și Formare Culturală, București
<i>RMM – MIA</i>	Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de artă, Institutul Național al Patrimoniului, București
<i>SaalbJb</i>	Saalburg-Jahrbuch. Bericht des Saalburg-Museums
<i>SAO</i>	Studien zur Archäologie in Ostmitteleuropa, Berlin
<i>Sargetia (N. S.)</i>	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, deva
<i>Sbor. FFUK Historica</i>	Sborník Filozofickej fakulty Univerzity Komenského, Historica, Bratislava
<i>SCIV(A)</i>	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie 1974–), București
<i>SlovArch</i>	Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra
<i>StCom Satu Mare</i>	Studii și comunicări Satu Mare, Muzeul Județean Satu Mare
<i>StudPreist</i>	Studii de preistorie, Asociația Română de Arheologie (ARA), București
<i>Székelyföld</i>	Székelyföld, Kulturális folyóirat, Csíkszereda
<i>Terra Sebus</i>	Terra Sebus, Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Muzeul Municipal „Ioan Raica”, Sebeș
<i>Thraco-Dacica</i>	Thraco-Dacica, Institutul de Tracologie, București
<i>Tisicum</i>	Tisicum – A Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Múzeumok Évkönyve, Szolnok
<i>UPA</i>	Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie, Bonn
<i>VAH</i>	Varia Archaeologica Hungarica, Budapest
<i>VMMK</i>	A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei, Veszprém
<i>V PU</i>	Vydavetel'stvo Prešovskej univerzity, Prešov
<i>WorldArch</i>	World Archaeology, Taylor & Francis, e-Journal
<i>Xantener Berichte</i>	Xantener Berichte. Grabung–Forschung–Präsentation, Mainz

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 atelierile 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.