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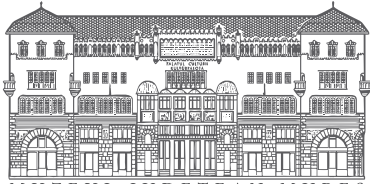
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# NOTES ON THE MITHRAIC RELIEF FROM OZD (MAGYARÓZD, MUREŞ COUNTY)

Csaba SZABÓ\* – Szilamér-Péter PÁNCZÉL\*\*

*The Mithraic relief from Ozd (Magyarózd, Mureş County, RO) was first published in the 1960s by A. Zrínyi, almost a decade after the publication of Vermaseren's paradigmatic Mithraic catalogue. Moving beyond the previously brief, catalogue-style summaries, the present study offers a detailed analysis of the iconographic features of the fragmentary relief, explores the diversity of Mithraic iconography and local expressions of religious glocalisation, and provides an in-depth examination of the topographical and social significance of the findspot, with particular attention to the characteristics of Mithras' rural cult in nearby military settlements.*

**Keywords:** Mithras, relief, Roman, Dacia, rural religion

**Cuvinte cheie:** Mithras, relief, roman, Dacia, religiozitate rurală

## INTRODUCTION

The Mithraic relief from Ozd has been well known in the literature since the 1960s. The medium-sized relief (Fig. 1), first published in 1967 by A. Zrínyi, has appeared in numerous studies focusing on epigraphy, Roman provincial archaeology and religious studies.<sup>1</sup> Previous scholarship generally referred to the object only marginally, most often in the form of short descriptions in catalogues, while neglecting the context of the discovery. In the present study, we undertake an examination of two specific aspects of the find: its topographical and iconographical characteristics. The place of discovery lies in a peripheral, rural region of the province of Dacia, distant from urban and military centres as well as from the main commercial and economic arteries of the province. The topo-

graphical features of this area shed light on the problematics of Mithras' rural cult.

Scholarly literature has often associated the cult of Mithras with urban, commercial, and military contexts,<sup>2</sup> however, in several provinces, including Dacia, we know a number of finds that point to the specific rural forms of the deity's cult. Nevertheless, the investigation of this phenomenon cannot be detached from the role of cities and military stations, whose influence may also have been significant in the case of the Ozd relief. At the same time, the relief's distinctive iconographical programme constitutes an excellent example of religious appropriation and the manifestation of religious glocalism. In this paper, we focus on the methodological challenges of these two characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> ZRINYI 1965; ZRINYI 1967; RUSSU 1968, 91; IDR III/4, 131; AE 1988, 964; CLAUSS 1992, 199; BĂLUȚĂ 1994, 24–25; LAZĂR 1995, 80, G; PIOARIU 2001, 30; SICOE 2004, 289, no. Ib 2; MAN 2010, 105, no. 6, pl. 5/2; SZABÓ 2013, 59, 66, no. 28, 69, A32; SICOE 2014, 166, cat. no. 56, fig. 26.

<sup>2</sup> GORDON 2009.



Fig. 1. The Mithraic relief from Ozd (Photo by A. Henn).

### THE ROMAN SITE AT OZD AND THE CONTEXT OF DISCOVERY

The relief was first mentioned by A. Zrínyi in a lecture delivered in 1964, a brief excerpt of which was published the following year.<sup>3</sup> In this initial note, the author did not discuss the circumstances of discovery, recording the place of discovery only as Ozd.<sup>4</sup> Ioan I. Russu was similarly succinct, merely noting the appearance of a new relief in 1968 without further comments.<sup>5</sup>

A. Zrínyi published the relief in detail in 1967, providing the following account of its discovery: during ploughing in May 1964, a tractor driver, György Ballai, brought to light a marble bas-relief in the outskirts of Ozd. The follow-up field survey established that the relief had

been brought to the surface near a well known as *Fântâna de pe Dealul Coşului* (*Kosárhelyi kút*) (Fig. 2).<sup>6</sup> During this survey no building traces, or associated ceramic material were identified at the findspot (Fig. 4–5).<sup>7</sup>

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Balázs Orbán noted that Roman structural remains, bricks and coins, had come to light at the site of the Pekry–Radák Castle and the Reformed Church in Ozd (Fig. 2). On this basis, he hypothesised the presence of a Roman building, possibly a fort (*castrum*).<sup>8</sup> From this point on until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the scholars referred to the site based on the information provided by B. Orbán.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ZRINYI 1965, 431.

<sup>4</sup> At that time, it belonged to the District of Ludaş / Ludas in the Regiunea Mureş–Autonomă Maghiară / Maros-Magyar Autonom Tartomány, today it is part of Mureş County.

<sup>5</sup> RUSSU 1968, 91.

<sup>6</sup> The relief is part of the Archaeology Collection of the Mureş County Museum and has the inventory number 4875.

<sup>7</sup> We wish to express our gratitude to our colleague Zsolt Bíró for his assistance in re-identifying the location of the well.

<sup>8</sup> ORBÁN 1871, 60.

<sup>9</sup> GOOS 1876, 98; HERPEY–CSERNI 1901, 549, no. 47; MARȚIAN 1909, 341, no. 533; MARȚIAN 1920, 29, no. 491.



Fig. 2. The findspot and the reference points in the village of Ozd.

Dumitru Protase mentions, for the first time, two Roman brick fragments bearing the stamp of the *C(ohors) I VB(iorum)* auxiliary unit<sup>10</sup> in a cartouche: one discovered in 1951 on the terrace behind the castle and donated to the Museum in Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhey, Mureş County, RO),<sup>11</sup> and the other from the collection of the elementary school in Ozd.<sup>12</sup> Based on the *CIVB* stamps, it cannot be excluded that the *Cohors I Vbiorum* was stationed for a period (e.g. in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) at Ozd, in the area of the

castle and/or the Reformed Church, as already proposed by B. Orbán. The possibility that the stamped ceramic building material arrived as dispatch material cannot be entirely ruled out; however, given that the distance between Odorheiu Secuiesc (Székelyudvarhely, Harghita County, RO) and Ozd exceeds 100 km, this scenario appears unlikely.

Nicolae Vlăsa reports that the private collection of a school teacher from Ozd contained a female terracotta head of an Egyptian deity (possibly Isis?) and a silver denarius of Antoninus Pius.<sup>13</sup>

In the introduction of the 1967 publication, A. Zrínyi notes that the terrace of the Ozd stream yielded evidence of ancient settlements disturbed by intensive agricultural activity.<sup>14</sup> Numerous pottery fragments dating from the Roman period were collected there, and a Roman millstone was recorded in the private collection of the writer István Horváth (Fig. 2).<sup>15</sup>

Relying on the testimony of I. Horváth and on the 19<sup>th</sup> century hypothesis, A. Zrínyi proposed that a Roman settlement, possibly a

<sup>10</sup> The presence of *CIVB* military stamps has led to the assumption that the auxiliary fort of Odorheiu Secuiesc was garrisoned by the *Cohors I Vbiorum*. During the reign of Hadrian, it appears among the troops in Dacia Inferior, while later, beginning around 136/138 AD, it is attested in diplomas for Dacia Superior. Since its garrison during the Trajanic and Hadrianic periods is unknown, it has been assumed that the unit was already stationed at Odorheiu Secuiesc. It is possible that the border between the two provinces was adjusted during the reign of Antoninus Pius, and from that moment the area of Odorheiu Secuiesc belonged to Dacia Superior (MATEI-POPESCU-ȚENEA 2016, 12).

<sup>11</sup> The find could not be located in the Archaeology Collection of the Mureş County Museum, no inventory number is given and no illustrations are available in the publications.

<sup>12</sup> PROTASE 1962, 507, note 21; PROTASE 1973, 325, no. 7; VLĂSA 1965, 25, no. 9; MOGA 1970, 142; IDR III/4, 132.

<sup>13</sup> VLĂSA 1965, 25, no. 9.

<sup>14</sup> ZRINYI 1967, 63.

<sup>15</sup> István Horváth (1909–1977) was a Hungarian poet, novelist, and short story writer from Transylvania.

fortlet (*burgus*) existed at the site of the castle (Fig. 2).<sup>16</sup> In reconstructing the circumstances of the discovery, A. Zrínyi relied on the scattered material evidence from the outskirts of the settlement, and contemporary scholarly views regarding the social composition of Mithraic communities. On these grounds, he suggested that the relief had been erected by a soldier. At the same time, he interpreted the presence of the relief as evidence for a nearby *mithraeum*, although no architectural traces of such a sanctuary were identified either at the time of discovery or subsequently.

East from the village, in the area known as *Teleac (Telek)* (Fig. 2), Roman finds are mentioned, among others.<sup>17</sup> On the Eastern periphery of the village, in the areas known as *Lotul domnișoarei (Kisasszonyláb)* and *Vale (Völgy)* (Fig. 2) traces of a Roman settlement were identified after the recovery of scattered material from the surface, during excavations made in 1965.<sup>18</sup> This might be the same site that A. Zrínyi mentioned as the one located on the terrace of the stream crossing the village.<sup>19</sup>

The archaeological collection of I. Horváth was later donated to the Mureș County Museum, and besides finds from other periods, it consists of a large group of Roman ceramic finds dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, of which *turribulum* (inv. no. 7527/74–76), *mortarium* (inv. no. 7548/1) fragments, a gaming counter (inv. no. 7538/126), two ceramic spindle whorls (inv. no. 7520/72–73) and a *tegula* fragment (inv. no. 7536/107) should be noted.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the exact findspot of the material was not always recorded by the collector, but he sometimes mentioned it in his village monography.<sup>21</sup>

In the last 50 years the dataset about the site has not been considerably enriched with new

input,<sup>22</sup> so the site is mentioned in most of the publications as a rural settlement in the interior of the province.<sup>23</sup>

The different Roman sites mentioned in literature along the Ozd stream, stretching approximately 2.5 km, may belong to the same settlement which extended from the castle to the well at *Dealul Coșului (Kosárhely)*, where the Mithras relief was discovered (Fig. 2, 4–5).

If the relief indeed derives from an *in situ* ancient context rather than representing reused material (*spolia*) or a secondary deposition, the Roman settlement at Ozd occupied an important position along a secondary route running between the Mureș Valley and the Târnava Mică Valley, connecting Potaissa (ro. Turda, hu. Torda, Cluj County, RO) or Apulum (ro. Alba Iulia, hu. Gyulafehérvár, Alba County, RO) with the eastern frontier zone of the province.<sup>24</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> Military Survey of Transylvania from the 18<sup>th</sup> century the main road between Turda (Potaissa) and the Târnava region did run through the Ozd valley (Fig. 3). In many cases, the Roman roads were still in use at that time, which could explain the discovery of a more than 6 m long and at least 1 m (?) wide paved road (pathway) in the eastern part of the village, in the area called *Kendereskert*, in 1937.<sup>25</sup>

This region – corresponding to the eastern part of Dacia Superior can be interpreted as a hinterland situated between the urban and legionary centres of Apulum and Potaissa, and the frontier installations and military *vici* of the province. The economic significance of this zone is illustrated by the auxiliary forts and associated settlements at Războieni (Székelyföldvár, Alba County, RO) and Cristești (Maroskeresztúr,

<sup>16</sup> ZRINYI 1967, 63.

<sup>17</sup> LAZĂR 1995, 80, B; POPA 2002, 138–139, no. 453. 3.

<sup>18</sup> POPESCU 1966a, 710, 712, no. 22; POPESCU 1966b, 386–387, no. 22; VASILIEV–ZRINYI 1974, 89, note 3; LAZĂR 1995, 80, C; POPA 2002, 138–139, no. 453. 2.

<sup>19</sup> ZRINYI 1967, 63.

<sup>20</sup> In the collections of the Mureș County Museum the material was probably mixed up with the finds discovered during the 1965 excavations.

<sup>21</sup> HORVÁTH 1971, 9–17.

<sup>22</sup> Valeriu Lazăr mentions a silver denarius of Commodus without listing its source (LAZĂR 1995, 80, G) and some authors take it for granted (POPA 2001, 208, no. 446).

<sup>23</sup> TUDOR 1968, 175; POPA 1976, 15, 24; IDR III/4, 99, no. 54; CHIRILĂ ET AL. 1980a, 25, no. 35; CHIRILĂ ET AL. 1980b, 27, no. 35; LAZĂR 1995, 80, G; POPA 2001, 175, 191, 208, no. 446; POPA 2002, 138–139, no. 453. 1; BĂRBULESCU 2005, 114, fig. D6; GUDEA 2008, 97, no. 77; BĂRBULESCU ET AL. 2021, 316.

<sup>24</sup> For the possible Roman road network in the region, see: BĂRBULESCU 2005, 114, fig. D6; FODOREAN 2006, 272–274.

<sup>25</sup> HORVÁTH 1971, 12.



Fig. 3. The village and the main road between Potaissa (ro. Turda, hu. Torda, Cluj County, RO) and Mediaş (Medgyes, Sibiu County, RO) on the 1<sup>st</sup> Military Survey of Transylvania.

Mureş County, RO) located approximately at a one-day marching distance from Ozd. While these sites lie directly within the Mureş Valley, Ozd is situated south of it, in a more secluded location, a circumstance that may strengthen the hypothesis of a secondary, internal communication line within the province, connecting the two valleys. Gabriel Sicoe interpreted both the settlement and the relief as belonging to the *territorium* of Apulum.<sup>26</sup>

The isolated nature of the findspot and the lack of urban indicators suggest a rural context, contributing to the growing body of evidence for the non-urban presence of the Mithraic cult in Roman Dacia. Several reliefs and altars from the province are generally assumed to have originated in rural sanctuaries, although dependable documentation of their archaeological contexts exists only in a limited number of cases (Dragu (Drág, Sălaj County, RO), Ceanu Mic (Pusztacsán, Cluj County, RO), Boian (Alsóbajom, Sibiu County, RO), Săcădate (Oltszakadát, Sibiu County, RO), Decea (Marosdécse, Alba County, RO), Lopadea Nouă (Magyarlapád, Alba County, RO), Oarda de Sus (Felsőváradya, Alba County, RO), Bumbăști (Gorj County, RO), Botoșești Paia (Dolj County, RO), the caves of Veteranii (Mehedinți County, RO) and Traian (Mehedinți County, RO)).<sup>27</sup> In this respect, the *mithraeum* discovered in 1888 at Decea, located



Fig. 4. The well at Dealul Coșului (Kosárhely).

approximately 43 km west of Ozd, midway between Apulum and the site, is of particular relevance.<sup>28</sup>

Mithraic sanctuaries established in rural settings along internal communication routes are by no means exceptional within the wider

<sup>26</sup> SICOE 2014, 166.

<sup>27</sup> SICOE 2014, 283; SZABÓ 2018; SZABÓ 2021.

<sup>28</sup> TAKÁCS 1987; RUSU-PESCARU-ALICU 2000, 78; SICOE 2014, 168, cat. no. 59–61; SZABÓ 2021, 59.



Fig. 5. The fields next to the well at *Dealul Coşului* (*Kosárhely*).

imperial context. In Pannonia, numerous sanctuaries are attested along the Amber Road between Poetovio (sl. Ptuj, de. Pettan, SL) and Carnuntum (de. Niederösterreich, A), while others are known from the territories of Savaria (Szombathely, de. Steinamange, Vas County, HU), Scarbantia (Sopron, Győr-Moson-Sopron County, HU), Carnuntum, and Aquincum (Budapest, Pest County, HU) (e.g. Budaörs (de. Wudersch, Pest County, HU), Fertőrákos (de. Kroisbach, Győr-Moson-Sopron County, HU), Stixneusiedl (Pusztasomorrja, Niederösterreich, A), Potzneusiedl (Lajtfalu, Burgenland, A), Eisenstadt (Kismarton, Burgenland, A)).<sup>29</sup> A comparable pattern is observable in the interior of Dalmatia, where *spelaeum* sanctuaries occur far from urban centres and Roman cities.<sup>30</sup>

Rural Mithraic sanctuaries, often located at some distance from urban sites, yet maintaining constant connection with them, are typically

associated with small communities, presumably comprising only a limited number of initiates, and were likely founded as private sanctuaries by veterans and merchants settled in the countryside. Nevertheless, the construction of these sanctuaries, the production of their reliefs, and the human agents involved remained closely tied to urban environments. As such, they represent compelling examples of the urban dependence of peripheral religious communication strategies and sustainability, as well as of the dynamics encapsulated by the concepts of “urban religion” and *citification*.<sup>31</sup>

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE RELIEF

The relief measures 30.8 × 46.5 × 3.2 cm, and belongs to the group of small, single-register, rectangular reliefs, which are particularly characteristic for the province of Dacia and the

<sup>29</sup> KREMER 2024, 68, fig. 1; DOBOSI-KISS 2025, 64, fig. 1.

<sup>30</sup> SILNOVIĆ 2024; 2026.

<sup>31</sup> RÜPKE-URCIUOLI 2023.

so-called Sarmizegetusa workshop.<sup>32</sup> The size of the relief is larger than the so-called miniature or portable relics belonging to the subject matter of personal religiosity,<sup>33</sup> but smaller than the central reliefs (*signum*, *Kultbild*), of which we know numerous examples from the province of Dacia.<sup>34</sup> The exact function and role of these medium-sized reliefs is partly explained by the inscription field and partly by the rarely preserved archaeological context. The *ex voto* inscriptions interpret the relief as an objectified memory of a religious act (sacrifice, initiation, some activity requiring active participation in the Mithraic liturgy), while in the case of the smaller reliefs of the Circo Maximo *mithraeum*, Santo Stefano Rotondo *mithraeum* and the Walbrook *mithraeum*<sup>35</sup> we see that these were not the central reliefs of the sanctuary, but *ex voto* reliefs placed on the walls of the sanctuary. Their exact number, arrangement, and the occasion of their dedication are unknown and cannot be reconstructed, they varied from sanctuary to sanctuary and depended greatly on their size, the number of members of the community and their financial capabilities. The unique quantity of reliefs found in the *mithraeum* of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa indicates an intentional deposition and not the inventory of the sanctuary, so their contextual interpretation raises further questions, such as the possibility of a provincial workshop, from which the Ozd relief may even originate.<sup>36</sup>

The relief is fragmentarily preserved and all corners are missing. The rectangular single-registered relief is framed by a thin 2 cm border at the top and a wider (6 cm) border at the bottom which is also used as an inscription field. The right corner of the inscription field, which could have contained 4 or 5 letters, is missing. While I. I. Russu incorrectly read the inscription as *Victorinus* (sic!) and thought he saw the letter

R in the name on the relief,<sup>37</sup> G. Sicoe classified it as one of the missing letters and resolved the inscription in the form of *Ex voto po(suit) Victo[r---]*.<sup>38</sup> The inscription shall be read as:<sup>39</sup>

*Ex • voto • po(suit) • Victo[rinus]*

The inscription is presumably a dedication of a slave or freedman, of which we know several examples from the province of Dacia.<sup>40</sup> The fragmentary and short inscription does not reveal the social status of the dedicant, which makes it difficult to attribute a civil or military character to him.

The relief depicts the fundamental scenes of the so-called Mithraic myth, employing those iconographic motifs that are sufficient to convey the cult's most essential and universal message. The central figure of the relief is Mithras, represented as a hieratically enlarged figure. Clad in an Oriental costume and a billowing, wind-swept *chlamys*, the god appears in a frontal position. With his right hand he is about to plunge a disproportionately large, rudimentarily rendered dagger into the neck of the bull collapsed beneath his knees. He forces the bull's mouth open with his left hand, while he presses down one of the animal's hooves with his right foot. On the surface of Mithras' *chlamys*, a superficially carved and barely visible raven is represented. The Phrygian cap of Mithras is scarcely visible; however, it was certainly carved on the relief. A stalk of wheat emerges from the tip of the bull's tail, serving as a symbol of rebirth. The bull's genitals are attacked by a barely visible scorpion, while the snake and the dog are depicted as leaping toward the bull's neck in anticipation of the wound. The tauroctony scene was flanked by four figures, two on the left and two on the right; however, only three of these are preserved, and only in fragmentary form. In the upper left corner, a bust is visible – presumably representing Sol, the Sun god, although

<sup>32</sup> For analogies see: SICOE 2014, cat. no. 6, fig. 35; cat. no. 62, fig. 37; cat. no. 69, fig. 38; cat. no. 82, fig. 40; cat. no. 83, fig. 41; cat. no. 85, fig. 42; cat. no. 87, fig. 44; cat. no. 88, fig. 45; cat. no. 101, fig. 29; cat. no. 178, fig. 32; cat. no. 204, fig. 57; cat. no. 208, fig. 68.

<sup>33</sup> GORDON 2004.

<sup>34</sup> SZABÓ 2013; SICOE 2014, cat. no. 195, fig. 33.

<sup>35</sup> CIMRM 437, 810; LISSI-CARRONA 1986.

<sup>36</sup> SICOE 2004; SZABÓ 2024.

<sup>37</sup> IDR III/4, 131.

<sup>38</sup> SICOE 2014, 167.

<sup>39</sup> This version was suggested already in the first publication (ZRINYI 1967, 64).

<sup>40</sup> To name a few: CIMRM 1937, 1941, 1942, 1944, 1954, 2004, 2028, 2032, 2064, 2120, 2135, 2155; IDR III/4, 87; IDR III/5, 720; SICOE 2014, 41–42.

the head is missing. Below it Cautopates, one of Mithras' torchbearers is depicted with his legs crossed, wearing an Eastern costume and a Phrygian cap. Unlike the canonical iconography, the torchbearer holds two downward-pointing torches, a feature that is particularly characteristic of Dacian Mithraic iconography and stands out even among imperial parallels.<sup>41</sup> On the right side of the tauroctony, the fragmentarily preserved figure of Cautes is visible, likewise holding two torches: the one on the right raised, the one on the left lowered. The head of the torchbearer and the bust of Luna, the Moon goddess, most likely belonged to the now-lost upper fragment of the relief. Beyond the Dacian peculiarity of the double torches, a distinctive feature of the relief is the inversion of the two torchbearers. Whereas in conventional tauroctony reliefs Cautes appears on the left and Cautopates on the right, in the Ozd relief their positions are reversed. However, this inversion can be coherently integrated into the Hellenistic astrological framework of the cult and aligns with the contemporary astrological interpretation developed by Roger Beck.<sup>42</sup> According to Beck, Cautes signifies north / northern / northward movement, while Cautopates denotes south / southern / southward movement; alternatively, Cautes corresponds to the *Anabibazon*, the ascending node, and Cautopates to the *Katabibazon*, the descending node.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, according to Porphyry,<sup>44</sup> Cautes represents the ascent from the earthly realm through the planetary spheres to the sphere of the fixed stars, whereas Cautopates signifies the descent in the opposite direction.<sup>45</sup> Although the widespread, provincial diffusion of Beck's astrological interpretation – often referred to as “star talk” – cannot reasonably be assumed for every individual Mithraic community, the astrological dimension of the cult has by now emerged as a matter of broad scholarly consensus. At the same time, regional artistic solutions should not be understood merely as the result of

workshop-specific traditions or the self-directed autonomy of artistic individualism. Rather, they are to be interpreted as glocal manifestations of the continuous and dynamic transformation of the universal Mithraic myth, which took shape in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, simultaneously accommodating both the universalising message of the founding cult community and the interpretative frameworks of local Mithraic groups.<sup>46</sup>

### MATERIAL AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE OBJECT

While G. Sicoe argued that the Ozd relief was not carved from Bucova (Bukova, Caraş-Severin County, RO) marble but rather from material originating from another Dacian quarry,<sup>47</sup> based on the petrographic analysis of the relief Harald W. Müller and his team identified the stone as Bucova marble.<sup>48</sup> This strengthens the previous hypothesis, based solely on stylistic comparison, that the relief was produced either in the Sarmizegetusa workshop or by one of the itinerant provincial craftsmen associated with that centre.<sup>49</sup>

Relying on stylistic criteria – most notably the outward position of Cautes' hands and the presumed absence of Mithras' Phrygian cap – G. Sicoe dated the relief to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD,<sup>50</sup> however, no precise or secure chronological indicators are available. The absence of the Phrygian cap cannot be demonstrated with certainty due to the fragmentary state of the relief, while comparative material complicates its significance as a dating criterion. The tauroctony attributed to Kriton from Ostia (IT), dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, depicts Mithras without a cap, as does a single-register relief from the Banat region,<sup>51</sup> which G. Sicoe himself also assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD – despite the clear presence of the Phrygian cap

<sup>41</sup> HINNELLS 1976, 44–45.

<sup>42</sup> BECK 2006.

<sup>43</sup> BECK 2006, 207.

<sup>44</sup> PORPHYRIOS, *De antro nympharum* 6.

<sup>45</sup> BECK 2006, 208–209.

<sup>46</sup> SZABÓ 2026.

<sup>47</sup> SICOE 2014, 57, 69, cat. no. 255.

<sup>48</sup> MÜLLER ET AL. 2012, 70, 111.

<sup>49</sup> SICOE 2014, 130.

<sup>50</sup> SICOE 2014, 116.

<sup>51</sup> SICOE 2014, cat. no. 204, fig. 57.

in that example. These cases indicate that the headgear was not an obligatory iconographic element.

More broadly, the chronological framework for the emergence and development of the Mithraic cult in Roman Dacia remains extremely limited. To date, the only Mithraic sanctuary in the province that has been systematically excavated using modern archaeological methods, and with due attention to stratigraphy and dating evidence, has not yet been fully published. Preliminary reports suggest that the sanctuary was in use from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Antonine period) until the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>52</sup> The epigraphic evidence from the province supports a similar trajectory, indicating the spread of the cult during the post-Hadrianic period and a probable gradual decline after the reign of Severus Alexander. In the absence of reliable contexts and independent chronological markers, however, no more precise dating can be proposed for the relief.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The relief from Ozd represents a typical example within the Mithraic material of the

province of Dacia: the sanctuary associated with the relief is unknown, and neither the context nor the exact circumstances of its discovery are documented. This characteristic is typical of a significant portion of the Mithraic material from the province, which complicates the interpretation, dating, and contextualisation of the finds. The particular significance of the Ozd relief lies in the topography of its findspot and in its iconographic features. The object is associated with a Roman settlement located in the interior of Dacia Superior, between Apulum and Potaissa and the fortifications of the eastern *limes*, presumably situated along a secondary transportation route. This circumstance highlights the province-wide importance of urban centres and Mithraic communities (in this case also Sarmizegetusa), as well as the rural forms of manifestation of the cult. Similarly to other isolated finds (such as the relief from Dragu),<sup>53</sup> the iconography of the relief, draws attention to the religious autonomy of individuals and small communities and to the flexibility of the visual representations of the Mithraic myth, a phenomenon identified in contemporary religious studies and the archaeology of religion as glocalism.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> MCCARTY ET AL. 2019; MCCARTY ET AL. 2020.

<sup>53</sup> SZABÓ 2012.

<sup>54</sup> SZABÓ 2026.

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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 Porolissensis, 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, <a href="https://journalofromanarchaeology.com/">https://journalofromanarchaeology.com/</a>
<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>	Vydavateľstvo 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.