

## ON A DEPICTION OF JUPITER AND JUNO FROM GORJ COUNTY MUSEUM<sup>1</sup>

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**Rezumat:** *Lucrarea de față aduce în discuție o statueta din marmură care înfățișează cuplul Iupiter și Junona stând pe tron. Piesa, despre care se știe doar că provine de la Săcelu, a fost descoperită la finele secolului al XIX-lea în condiții neprecizate și face parte din patrimoniul Muzeului Județean Gorj. Marmura din care este realizată statueta, care pare a fi din cariera de la Bucova, unele detalii stilistice, dar și tipul iconografic redat trimit spre un atelier, cel mai probabil, din zona Ulpiei Traiana Sarmizegetusa. În ciuda numeroaselor statui ale lui Iupiter Verospi, statuete care redau cuplul așezat, sunt foarte puține la nivelul Daciei romane. De fapt mai este cunoscută doar o singură statueta care reprezintă cele două divinități în această ipostază, descoperită la Techereu, jud. Hunedoara, și care aparține colecției Muzeului Civilizației Dacice și Romane din Deva.*

**Abstract:** *The present paper brings into discussion a marble statuette depicting the couple Jupiter and Juno sitting on the throne. It is known only that the piece comes from Săcelu and that it has been discovered at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in uncertain circumstances. It now belongs to the patrimony of the Gorj County Museum. The marble that the statuette was made from, which seems to be from the Bucova quarry, some stylistic details, but also the rendered iconographic type indicate, probably, a workshop from the area of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Despite the multiple statues of Jupiter Verospi, there are very few statuettes rendering the seated couple. In fact, there is only one item representing the two deities in this position, discovered at Techereu, Hunedoara County, from the collection of the Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilisation, Deva.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *Iupiter Verospi, Junona Verospi, Dacia romană, artă provincială.*

**Key-words:** *Jupiter Verospi, Juno Verospi, Roman Dacia, provincial art.*

The archaeological collection of the Gorj County Museum contains some Roman marble monuments. Among the items from the old fund of the museum, there is a marble statuette depicting a sitting couple<sup>2</sup> (Pl. I/1-4), found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The discovery conditions are unknown, the artefact being registered much later, with the inventory number 12.498, as coming from Săcelu, Gorj County<sup>3</sup>. In his work dedicated to Northern Oltenia during the Roman Age, Vasile Marinoiu mentions the piece for the first time as a funerary item, placed among the finds from Săcelu – *Gru*i (the known place of the necropolis)<sup>4</sup>.

The object is fragmentary: the characters are headless, with missing superior members and visible older and newer scratches all over the surface. The dimensions of the monument are 30.3 × 22.4 × 12 cm.

The male personage is rendered semi-nude, with the *chymation* draped around the waist and legs until the ankles, in the left side of the depiction. A fold of the garment covers his left shoulder and its end descends on the left thigh. The left foot is a bit withdrawn compared to the plan of the right one, determining the folds of the cloak to align parallel and obliquely. These were represented through slightly deep channels. The muscles are correctly and visibly rendered, as well as the fingers from the right foot.

The feminine character appears in the right side, dressed in a *chiton* bound with a belt under the chest and represented through vertical parallel channels. She wears a *chymation* on top, which

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was presented at the Conference "Oltenia. Interferențe culturale", 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Craiova, 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> of October 2016.

<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 2012, I have studied the statuette and took pictures of it, through the kindness of Mr. Dumitru Hortopan, the director of the Gorj County Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Marinoiu, 2012, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Marinoiu, 2004, p. 181, p. 248, pl. XCIV.

covers her back and left hand, coming under the right hand (today broken) and covering her lower part from the waist down to the mid calf. As observed in the lateral side of the composition, she rests her hand on the superficially finished arm of the throne, now partially destroyed.

At the feet of the two characters and in between them, standing on the pedestal, an eagle is depicted very schematically, with spread wings and raised head, turned to the right.

The throne is simple, with high profile and undecorated arms. The heads of the characters weren't attached to its back, but worked in *ronde-bosse*. In the lower side of the throne, the larger part of the pedestal is preserved, on which a simple frame had been traced.

The statuette depicts the couple Jupiter and Juno sitting on the throne, according to a well known iconographic pattern – the *Verospi* type<sup>5</sup>.

Showing high attention to details, the sculptor correctly captured the anatomical features and the proportions of the human body. Alongside the dynamism generated by the relaxed position of the legs, they give a general harmony to the composition. However, the item is just a product of the so-called popular provincial style, in which the elements/components seem rather ornamental than material. The muscularity is rendered well, with prominent pectorals and voluminous deltoids and biceps. But these details lose their organicity and are just set in the right place, proving only the artisan's fair knowledge of the model. The treating manner of the garments accentuates the decorative character, the folds being transformed by the craftsman in shallow grooves with straight duct, almost mathematically measured.

As far as my knowledge goes, the only similar statuette (of the couple standing on the throne) from Dacia is the one discovered at Techereu, Hunedoara County<sup>6</sup>. The item depicts the couple Jupiter and Juno *Verospi*. The piece was briefly published, in a note of no more than a few rows, by Téglás Gábor<sup>7</sup>, then it was mentioned in a repertory of Hunedoara County<sup>8</sup>, but, just like the monument from Săcelu, it didn't become popular in the following studies dedicated to Jupiter *Verospi* or the Capitoline Triad<sup>9</sup>. The statuette, with the current dimensions of 65 × 40 × 24 cm, is made of quartzitic sandstone. The piece is a chance finding. It belongs to the collection of the Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilisation from Deva, without inventory number.

The head of Jupiter and the mass of the sceptre, together with the left hand and the pedestal with the feet of the gods, were lost since the discovery until nowadays (Pl. II/9). Juno wears a long *chiton* bound with a belt under the chest and a *chymation* on top. Jupiter is semi-nude, with a fold of the *chymation* on the left shoulder. The deities' gowns are outlined in the same manner, wrapping the feet and taking folds in "V" shape. A globular object hangs from Jupiter's garment. The god has his dedicated features: the *fulmen* is in the right hand, held on the knee, and the sceptre, now broken, in the left hand.

The throne's back is finished, having two outface sinusoidal waves in the upper part. Two rosettes with acuminate petals, framed by a square with rounded edge, decorate the sides of the throne. In fact, it is all about ornamenting the sides of the throne with an "X" shaped element<sup>10</sup>, as we see at other Jupiter *Verospi* statues<sup>11</sup>.

The piece ought to be made in a workshop from Ampelum, where other Jupiter *Verospi* statues were also produced<sup>12</sup>. As a matter of fact, the sedimentary rocks (the quartzitic sandstone, the raw material the statuette was made of) originate from the Stănița – Almașu Mare – Zlatna

<sup>5</sup> LIMC V.1, 1990, s.v. *Iuppiter*, Appendice: *La Triada Capitolina*, pp. 465-467, cat. nos 478-518 (A. Constantini); LIMC V.1, 1990, s.v. *Iuno*, pp. 826-826, cat. nos 57-73 (E. La Rocca).

<sup>6</sup> Téglás, 1890, pp. 130-132; Kuun *et al.*, 1902, pp. 172-173 (I am grateful to my colleagues, dr. Cristina Bodó and dr. Imola Boda, for translating these notes from Hungarian).

<sup>7</sup> Téglás, 1890, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Kuun *et al.*, 1902, p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> Nicolae, 2011; Ota, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Isac, 1974, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> Isac, 1974, p. 75, nos 6, 7, pl. I/1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ota, 2013, p. 69, fig. 57.

region<sup>13</sup>. However, I did not observe any stylistic features coincident with other artefacts supposedly made in the Ampelum area.

Regarding the chronology, these two statuettes, as well as other handcrafted items, are difficult to date. Dan Isac dated more than half of the statues of Jupiter *Verospi* which he had studied to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries<sup>14</sup> and Alexandru Diaconescu bewares of proposing chronological frames for this kind of monuments<sup>15</sup>.

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Concerning the two deities' cults in Dacia, especially of Jupiter, the interest of the researchers was kept awake by the hundreds of epigraphic dedications and figurative representations<sup>16</sup>, among which the statues of Jupiter *tronans*, characteristic for intra-Carpathian Dacia, especially the centres of Apulum, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Micia or Ampelum, were distinguished<sup>17</sup>. It is believed that in Roman Oltenia this type of statue is not met<sup>18</sup>. However, a fragment of a marble statue depicting a human foot, draped in a garment, and a headless eagle next to it comes from Sucidava<sup>19</sup>. The fragment was attributed to a statue representing Jupiter *Verospi*<sup>20</sup>. The piece is too fragmentary to precisely determine the iconographic type, but it cannot be ruled out that it might be the first statue representing Jupiter seated on the throne known in Southern Dacia.

In addition, the small stone reliefs depicting Jupiter and Juno standing (together or themselves) are known, following the same iconographic pattern: Jupiter, standing, with the *chymation* draped around the waist and legs and a pleat over the left arm and shoulder, holding the sceptre in one hand and the *patera* in the other, led to an altar, and Juno, standing as well, with a border of the garment covering her head, with the sceptre in one hand and the *patera* in the other. A plaque from Lower Dacia<sup>21</sup> and one from Apulum<sup>22</sup> belong to this category. A relief from Romula shows a distinct iconography – the couple Jupiter and Juno in a three-horse carriage. In this context, I also mention a small fragmentary statuary group, with inscription, discovered at Apulum<sup>23</sup>.

The stone votive plates representing Jupiter, by himself or with other gods, are not so many<sup>24</sup>. The bas-relief from Drobeta<sup>25</sup> is a particular case, depicting Jupiter in the classic Roman approach as Jupiter *tronans*.

The stone statuettes depict Jupiter standing, very often in the *Fulminans* posture<sup>26</sup>. Their number is not great, but they outnumber the marble votive reliefs or the bronze statuettes. Jupiter is rendered in bronze in few cases at Potaisa<sup>27</sup>, Drobeta<sup>28</sup> and Salcia (Mehedinți County)<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Wollman, 1996, pp. 259-260, pl. LXXXIV; Ota, 2013, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> Isac, 1974, pp. 70-78, cat. nos 1, 4, 6, 8, 10-12, 15, 17, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Diaconescu, 2005, pp. 156, 159, 165, cat. nos 24, 25, 29, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Bărbulescu, 2003, p. 177.

<sup>17</sup> Isac, 1974; Diaconescu, 2005; Ota, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Isac, 1974, p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Tudor, 1941-1944, p. 411, no. 5, fig. 5; Bordenache, 1969, p. 78, no. 151, tav. LXIV; Nicolae, 2011, p. 296.

<sup>20</sup> Tudor, 1941-1944, p. 411; Nicolae, 2011, p. 296.

<sup>21</sup> Tudor, 1941-1944, p. 415, no. 15, fig. 10/3; Bordenache, 1969, p. 78, no. 152, pl. 65; Nicolae, 2011, p. 295, fig. 1 (for the first piece, the authors believe that it could be even the Capitoline Triad).

<sup>22</sup> Băluță, 1976, p. 132, fig. 2/2; Nicolae, 2011, pp. 295-296; Ota, 2013, p. 69, fig. 58.

<sup>23</sup> IDR III/5.1, 190.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., a plaque fragment depicting Jupiter was discovered at Sucidava, with the inscription DOMNI I... inscribed on the top edge (Tudor, 1966, p. 600, no. 19; Petolescu, 1974, p. 596, no. 3, fig. 1/2; Petolescu, 1976, p. 288; IDR II, 192), another relief rendering Jupiter was found in the *mithraeum* from Slăveni (Petolescu, 1976a, p. 462, no. 8; Petolescu, 1976b, p. 263, no. 8), or a plaque illustrating Jupiter and Mercury from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (Alicu *et al.*, 1979, p. 79, no. 52, pl. XII; Băltăc *et al.*, 2015, p. 78, no. 55).

<sup>25</sup> Tudor, 1947; Bordenache, 1969, pp. 81-82, no. 161, tav. LXIX; Petolescu, 1976, pp. 295-296; Tudor, 1977; IDR II, 20; Bondoc, 2004, pp. 38-39, no. 41; Nicolae, 2011, p. 296.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., a limestone statuette (medium size) from Apulum (Ota, 2007, pp. 255-256; Ota, 2013, p. 68), another one from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (Alicu *et al.*, 1979, p. 78, no. 47, pl. XIII), or two marble statuettes from Drobeta (Tudor, 1978, p. 377,

Juno's renderings are extremely rare. Except the three reliefs mentioned above, another few fragments of plaques and statuettes depict her. For instance, two plaques, one from Romula<sup>30</sup> and another one from Sucidava<sup>31</sup>, figure the goddess following the same pattern. Two heads from Juno's statuettes are also known from Romula<sup>32</sup> and Sucidava<sup>33</sup>.

Recently, a number of clay statuettes of a male and female couple from Apulum, Potaissa, Porolissum and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa have been rediscussed<sup>34</sup>, the author concluding that the depicted pair is Jupiter and Juno<sup>35</sup>. They are clay statuettes rendering a female in the left and a male in the right side, both sitting. Only the character's busts are visible, the lower half of the statuette rendering the throne. The pair has been interpreted as Jupiter and Juno, Dis Pater and Proserpina, Domnus and Domna, Aesculapius and Hygia, or even Penates or local Dacian deities<sup>36</sup>.

Jupiter sitting on the throne often appears in the South-Carpathian glyptic art<sup>37</sup> (especially at Romula, where a centre of producing engraved gems activated<sup>38</sup>). Still, Mihai Bărbulescu believes that one cannot compare the renderings of deities in different raw materials (stone, metal, clay) and the images of the engraved stones, because the reasons that generate each one and the models are not similar<sup>39</sup>. Thus, the devotional beliefs cannot be established starting from the depiction of a gem<sup>40</sup>. The obverse of the coin usually represents the iconographic model in glyptic art, especially because the engravers have at their disposal a large category of images, but also due to the adequate dimensions of the picture, the scale-down of the representation being no longer necessary<sup>41</sup>.

Synthesizing the situation in Dacia, there is a major difference, remarked on other occasions<sup>42</sup>, regarding the manifestations of the cult of Jupiter, but also that of Juno, inside and outside the Carpathian arch, both epigraphically and iconographically. The main issue is the lack of representations of Jupiter *Verospis* in Southern Dacia, while there are many statues of this kind in the north. Jupiter is rendered here in the form of statuettes. Juno appears with the same frequency everywhere. There are very few monuments that figure her in the whole of Dacia.

Looking around, in Pannonia, the number of statues and statuettes depicting Jupiter *Verospis* is significant<sup>43</sup>. There are known some statuettes rendering Jupiter and Juno *Verospis* at Savaria<sup>44</sup> and Aquincum<sup>45</sup>, for instance. In Aquincum, the couple is depicted standing<sup>46</sup>, too. Descending the Danube, the situation is getting different. The number of the statues representing Jupiter *Verospis* is very low. Just two statues are known in Upper Moesia, one from Pontes<sup>47</sup> and another one from

fig. 115/3; Davidescu, 1980, p. 149, figs b and c). The heads from the statuettes depicting Jupiter standing are more common than other parts (e.g., Bondoc, 2004, pp. 19, 24, nos 16, 26; Bondoc, Gudea, 2009, p. 145, no. 35, pl. X/35).

<sup>27</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu, Pop, 2000, pp. 21-26, cat. no(s) 1, 3, 4, pl. 1/1, 2/3, 3/4; Bărbulescu, 2009, pp. 249-254, figs 1-5, 7-8; Bărbulescu, 2015, pp. 118-124, figs 145-158, cat. nos 63-65.

<sup>28</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu, Pop, 2000, pp. 23-24, cat. no. 2, pl. 1/2; Bărbulescu, 2009, pp. 252-253, fig. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu, Pop, 2000, pp. 26-27, cat. no. 5, pl. 3/5; Bărbulescu, 2009, pp. 254-255, fig. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Petolescu, Chițu, 1974, p. 61, no. 1; Tătulea, 1994, p. 112, fig. 30/3; Bondoc, Dincă, 2002, p. 34, no. 48, fig. 48.

<sup>31</sup> Toropu, Tătulea, 1987, p. 162, fig. XXXV/2.

<sup>32</sup> Petolescu *et al.*, 1975, p. 690, no. 3, fig. 2/3.

<sup>33</sup> Tudor, 1941-1944, p. 410, fig. 3/1; Bordenache, 1969, p. 76, no. 145, tav. LXII; Băltăc *et al.*, 2015, p. 79, no. 56.

<sup>34</sup> Ota, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Ota, 2017, p. 347.

<sup>36</sup> Ota, 2017, pp. 343-346 with the entire discussion for the hypothesis on the identification of the two characters.

<sup>37</sup> Gramatopol, 2011, pp. 110-112, nos. 82-101; Filip, 2013-2014 with all the references on the subject.

<sup>38</sup> Gramatopol, 2011, p. 69.

<sup>39</sup> Bărbulescu, 2003, pp. 160-161.

<sup>40</sup> Bărbulescu, 2003, p. 158.

<sup>41</sup> Gramatopol, 2011, pp. 72-73.

<sup>42</sup> Isac, 1974, p. 67; Ota, 2013, p. 73.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. Carnuntum, see Kremer, 2004, pp. 45-51; 55-76, cat. nos. 1, 3-11, Taf. 1-4, 9-31.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/monument.php?id=10009>.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/monument.php?id=10486>.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/monument.php?id=9792>; <http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/monument.php?id=10690>.

<sup>47</sup> Tomović, 1992, pp. 106-107, no. 137, fig. 37.3.

Transdierna<sup>48</sup>. Jupiter's head from Romuliana must have been also from a statue depicting the god on the throne<sup>49</sup>. A statuette figuring a sitting couple comes from Viminacium<sup>50</sup>. It is difficult to firmly decide who the characters are in the absence of some certain features (the protome on the pedestal is much too damaged to certainly say which animal it depicts). Either Jupiter and Juno, or Dis Pater and Proserpina could be depicted. A bronze statuette from Naissus, rendering Jupiter on the throne, adds to the stone sculptures<sup>51</sup>.

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The presence of a votive monument, especially one depicting the image of the supreme gods of the official pantheon, in the necropolis of Săcelu is quite unusual. However, the statuette has been found at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and recorded much later<sup>52</sup>, and so there is the possibility that precious data regarding the exact find spot were lost in the meantime<sup>53</sup>.

Likewise, it is difficult to believe that such an artefact is a local product<sup>54</sup>. The marble from which it is made is similar to the one from the Bucova quarry (granulation, grey veins), but no samples were analyzed so far. Some stylistic details remind of the artistic centre from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa: the oblique folds made by the garments of the two gods over the feet are similar to the ones on a statue depicting Jupiter *Verospi*<sup>55</sup> and the "V" shaped plies under the belt of Juno are figured in the same manner as in case of a character's *chiton* (a goddess as well), on a relief<sup>56</sup>. Taking all these into consideration, I tend to believe that the statuette is an item produced in a workshop from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The circumstances in which it arrived at Săcelu (if indeed it came from there) can only be speculated.

There is a fact that the statuette integrates in the artistic-religious current of the intra-Carpathian Dacia, compared to the western provinces<sup>57</sup>. However, it is very important especially because of the paucity of stone statuettes depicting Jupiter and Juno *Verospi* in Roman Dacia, but also because there are not so many monuments rendering the couple in other iconographical patterns.

<sup>48</sup> Tomović, 1992, p. 107, no. 138, fig. 45.1-4.

<sup>49</sup> Tomović, 1992, pp. 105-106, no. 135, fig. 17.3.

<sup>50</sup> Tomović, 1992, p. 120, no. 209, fig. 47.6-7.

<sup>51</sup> Srejšević, Cermanović-Kuzmanović, 1987, pp. 58-59; Tomović, 1992, fig. 47.2.

<sup>52</sup> Marinoiu, 2012, p. 109.

<sup>53</sup> Some of the monuments that have travelled in the interwar period, in unknown circumstances, from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa to Gheorghe Tătăărăscu's mansion from Poiana, Gorj County, are in the patrimony of the museum from Târgu-Jiu (see the annotation from IDR III/2, 289; Marinoiu, 2000, pp. 39-43). It should not be ruled out the possibility that the statuette has journeyed in its own turn, reached the old collection of the museum and the information was lost. But of course, this is just a supposition. The only document to be taken into account is the register of inventory.

<sup>54</sup> Vasile Marinoiu believes that the stone monuments from Săcelu (a sarcophagus, a funerary stela, two funerary copings, a votive altar and the statuette that I have presented above) "prove the existence of a stone quarry in this area (Săcelu), therefore of some lapidary craftsmen who knew well this art"; see Marinoiu, 2004, pp.181 (no. 1, notes 6-5 67) and 190; Bondoc, 2004, p. 43, no. 49.

<sup>55</sup> Isac, 1974, pp. 75-76, pl. III/5; Alicu *et al.*, 1979, p. 79, no. 49, pl. XIII.

<sup>56</sup> Alicu *et al.*, 1979, pp. 131-132, no. 315, pl. LIV.

<sup>57</sup> Isac, 1974, p. 78.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- AAASH – Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest.
- AE – Archaeologiai Értesítő a Magyar régészeti, művészettörténeti és éremtani társulat tudományos folyóirata. Budapest.
- ActaMN – Acta Musei Napocensis, Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.
- Apulum – Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis. Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia.
- BAR IS – British Archaeological Reports (International Series). Oxford.
- CA – Cercetări arheologice, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, București.
- Dacia – Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie. Nouvelle série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne. București.
- IDR II – Gr. Florescu, C.C. Petolescu, Inscriptiile Daciei Romane, vol. II. Oltenia și Muntenia, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București, 1977.
- IDR III/2 – I.I. Russu, I. Piso, V. Wollmann, Inscriptiile Daciei Romane, vol. III. Dacia superior 2. Ulpia Traiana Dacica (Sarmizegetusa), Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București, 1980.
- IDR III/5 – I. Piso, Inscriptions d'Apulum (Inscriptions de la Dacie Romaine) III/5 = Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, I-II, Ed. Frères Bocard, Paris 2001.
- LIMC – Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae. Vol. V: Herakles - Kenchrias (1990).
- Litua – Litua. Studii și cercetări, Muzeul Județean Gorj „Alexandru Ștefulescu”, Târgu Jiu.
- Oltenia – Oltenia. Studii și Comunicări. Arheologie-Istorie. Muzeul Olteniei. Craiova.
- Peuce – Peuce, Institutului de Cercetari Eco-Muzeale, Tulcea.

Pontica – Pontica. Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie. Constanța.

RIR – Revista istorică română. Institutul de Istorie Națională din București.

RM – Revista Muzeelor, București.

SCIV(A) – Studii și cercetări de istoria veche. București (din 1974, Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie).

### **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Pl. I. 1-4. The statuette from Săcelu (photos Ioan Alexandru Bărbat and Oana Tutilă).

Pl. II. 5-8. The statuette from Techereu (photo Oana Tutilă); 9. Drawing of the discovery (after Téglás 1890).





**Pl. I.** 1-4. The statuette from Săcelu (photos Ioan Alexandru Bărbat and Oana Tutilă).



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