

## ROMANIAN ASTRONOMICAL JOURNAL CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS ACTIVITY

M. BIRLAN<sup>1</sup>, D. BEȘLIU-IONESCU<sup>1</sup>, L. DUMITRU<sup>1</sup>, S. MARIN<sup>1</sup>, A. POP<sup>1, 2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Astronomical Institute of Romanian Academy,  
Str. Cuțitul de Argint 5, 040557 Bucharest, Romania*

<sup>2</sup>*Cluj-Napoca Observatory,  
Strada Cireșilor, nr 19, Cluj-Napoca, 400487, Romania*

*Abstract.* In 1990, the initiative of publishing an academic journal devoted to astronomy and astrophysics was agreed by the Romanian Academy. The Romanian Astronomical Journal is now 35 years old. This journal is now quoted into the Web of Science and indexed by various international databases.

*Key words:* astronomy, publishing, data, scientometry.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern Romanian astronomical tradition started at the end of XIX century. In 1908 Bucharest Astronomical Observatory was born by the initiative of Spiru Haret, brilliant mathematician in celestial mechanics and astronomy (Stavinschi, 1999; Stavinschi and Mioc, 2008; Marin, 2017, 2024).

Various publications and astronomical reports were issued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as: “Studii și cercetări de Astronomie și Seismologie” (Editura R.S.R., 1956-1963), “Studii și cercetări de Astronomie” (Editura R.S.R., 1964-1974), “Topics in Astronomy Astrophysics and Space Science”, (ICEFIZ, 1985-1987).

Romanian Astronomical Journal’s first volume (RoAJ)\* was formally published in 1991. It was created under the auspices of the Romanian Academy and is managed by the Astronomical Institute of the Romanian Academy (A.I.R.A.)<sup>†</sup>. Its scientific expertise is coordinated by the Romanian National Committee for Astronomy (C.N.R.A.)<sup>‡</sup>. The journal effectively consolidated the national efforts to present original scientific work in a dedicated, peer-reviewed periodical (Figure 1).

The primary missions of the RoAJ is: i) to serve as the main venue for Romanian researchers to publish their findings and ii) to provide an international platform for scientific exchange within the broader European astronomical community and beyond. The journal publishes contributions primarily in English, ensuring accessi-

\*<https://www.astro.ro/~roaj>

†<https://www.astro.ro>

‡[www.astro.ro:8080/cnra](http://www.astro.ro:8080/cnra)

bility to a global readership, and serendipitously in French (Capitaine, 2018).



Fig. 1 – Front webpage of Romanian Astronomical Journal.

## 2. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The RoAJ adheres to rigorous academic standards and covers a comprehensive range of topics within the fields of astronomy and astrophysics. Its scope reflects the research activities conducted at the Astronomical Institute and its collaborating national and international institutions.

The main subjects addressed in the journal include:

- **Celestial Mechanics:** Covering the dynamics of solar system bodies, orbital analysis, and astrodynamics, an area where Romanian astronomy has historically maintained a strong presence;
- **Astrometry:** Reference systems, geodynamics, artificial satellites, and planetary exploration: covering a wide variety of solar system body exploration based on the investigation of their physical properties;
- **Stellar Astrophysics:** Research into the structure, evolution, atmosphere, and

classification of stars, including observational and theoretical studies of variable stars;

- Solar Physics and Heliosphere: Studies focusing on the Sun's activity, solar-terrestrial relationships, space weather, and phenomena within the heliosphere;
- Extragalactic Astronomy and Cosmology: Contributions related to the properties and evolution of galaxies, large-scale structure of the universe, and theoretical cosmology;
- Astronomy in Culture: The journal also welcomes papers on the history of astronomy and the cultural aspects of astronomy, connecting the scientific discipline with its heritage.

The RoAJ publishes several types of contributions, such as original full length research papers, review articles and book reviews, brief reports and news regarding workshops and conferences organized by Romanian astronomers.

The original research articles and review articles are published just after the careful report proposed by an experienced referee. The process of referring could take between 30 and 60 days.

By embracing this wide scientific mandate, the Romanian Astronomical Journal ensures its relevance to a significant part of astronomical topics, facilitating the dissemination of both theoretical and observational results.

### 3. PUBLICATION DETAILS AND GOVERNANCE

The Romanian Astronomical Journal is owned by the Romanian Academy. The publication of the hard-copy editions (ISSN 1220-5168) is handled by the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy (Editura Academiei Române). The management and online distribution are the responsibility of AIRA. The Editorial Board and Membership are validated by the Romanian National Committee for Astronomy.

The journal appears in two regular printed issues per year. Since 2012, the RoAJ introduced an electronic version (eISSN 2285-3758), which is often supplemented by a third electronic-only issue, particularly for special proceedings or thematic collections, demonstrating a commitment to adapting to modern scientific publishing trends.

A key feature of the RoAJ is its commitment to Open Access. The online version of the journal, which is the version indexed by major international databases, is freely distributed by AIRA. This policy ensures that the research published is accessible to scientists and the public worldwide without subscription barriers, significantly enhancing the visibility and citation potential of the published articles.

The journal maintains a comprehensive digital archive on its dedicated web-page, providing tables of contents and abstracts for older print volumes (1991–2011) and making all articles published from 2012 onward fully available online, concurrent with the activation of the dedicated online ISSN.

Since 2023, RoAJ has also included Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) for each published paper. The introduction of DOI significantly enhanced the journal's visibility and discoverability by providing a permanent, stable link for every article.

The editorial board of RoAJ had experienced different and distinct periods from the perspective of its composition. It started with a team of two: the honorary member academician Constantin Drambă and a chief editor Professor dr. Árpád Pál, from 1991 to 1996. In 1996 a secretary was added to the member list in the person of dr. Magda Cârșmaru. After the passing of the academician Constantin Drambă, in 1997, editorial board maintained two positions into the editorial board – the editor-in-chief and the secretary (1996 – 2001). In 2001, Professor dr. Árpád Pál has been promoted to honorary member and the editorial board has changed to dr. Vasile Mioc (editor-in-chief) and dr. Petre Popescu (secretary). The honorary member position was given up in 2006 following the passing of Dr. Pál. For a brief period of time (2012-2013) the editorial board was composed of dr. Vasile Mioc and dr. Cristiana Dumitrache.

Starting 2014 the editorial board was composed of dr. Cristiana Dumitrache as editor-in-chief and dr. Nedelia Popescu as secretary, until 2020. During this period the third, online, issue has been systematically introduced, and the procedure for RoAJ's indexing by Web of Science was completed.

Starting with 2021, dr. Mirel Birlan has become editor-in-chief, and the secretary position transitioned to two persons: dr. Diana Beșliu-Ionescu and dr. Mark Rushton. In November 2024 dr. Mark Rushton was replaced by dr. Liliana Dumitru.

During RoAJ's existence there were supplementary issues with guest editors such as: dr. Georgeta Mariș, dr. Jean-Paul Zahn, dr. Magda Stavischi, dr. Helen Rovithis-Livaniou.

These somewhat distinct periods of leadership highlight the structural adjustments made over the decades, with the main scope of maintaining the journal's continued vitality and academic rigor.

#### 4. SCIENTOMETRY AND INDEXING

The quality and relevance of the RoAJ are underscored by its inclusion in several major international indexing services. This inclusion is vital for an academic journal, as it confirms adherence to scholarly standards, peer review, and ethical publishing practices.

From 2011, the Romanian Astronomical Journal is indexed in Clarivate Ana-

lytics (Web of Science – ESCI). In 2022, the journal has achieved a ranking in the Q4 Quartile within the Astronomy & Astrophysics category. The statistics as of December 9, 2025 count 250 items (Figure 2). The scientometric factors (as of December 9, 2025) are: H-index=8, Impact Factor (IF) = 0.3 (in 2024), Average Impact Factor (AIF) = 0.2 (time interval 2020-2024). Journal Citation Indicator (JCI) = 0.08 (time interval 2020-2024), Q4 quatile rank (82/84 IF and 80/84 JCI). During the last three years 45% of articles have Romanian first-authors while 55% are published by authors from other counties as first-author.

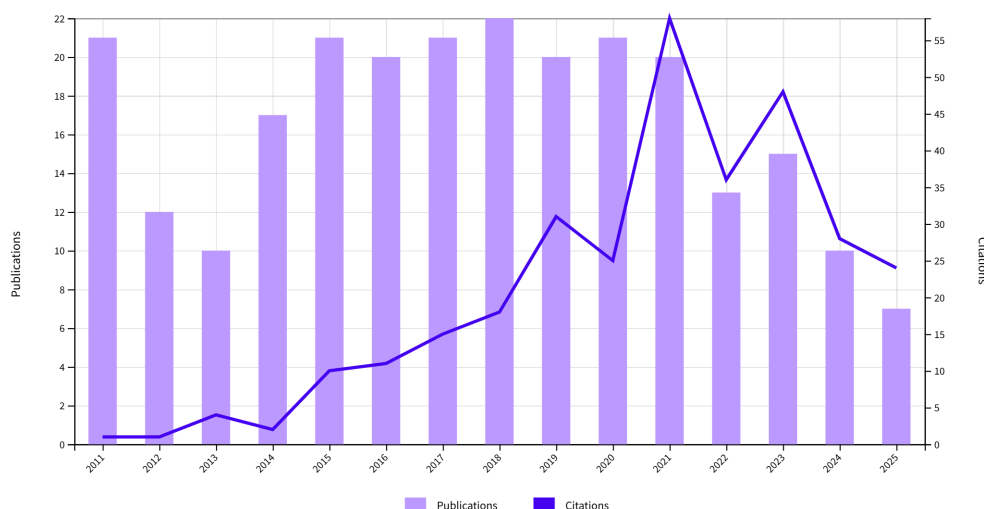


Fig. 2 – Publication and citation per year as of December 9, 2025 (source Clarivate Analytics).

The journal is also indexed in Scopus, one of the largest abstract and citation databases, where it maintains an SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) and an H-Index reflective of its niche in the field. In 2024 the quotation of RoAJ was Scimago Journal SJR= 0.121, thus ranking the journal in the Q4 quartile.

RoAJ is also recorded into the NASA Astrophysics Data System (ADS). This is critical for any astronomy journal, as this database is the primary search tool used by astronomers globally.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The Romanian Astronomical Journal fulfills a unique and essential role in the national and regional scientific landscape (Dumitrache *et al.*, 2021).

As the primary peer-reviewed journal of the Romanian Academy in the field of astronomy and astrophysics, the Romanian Astronomical Journal provides a stable

and respected platform for Romanian astronomers, mathematicians, physicists, and researchers from related fields. It facilitates the completion of doctoral studies, the promotion of junior researchers, and the fulfillment of publication criteria required by national funding bodies and universities. By maintaining high editorial standards, it helps domestic research attain international visibility.

Rooted in the Romanian Academy, the journal has fostered international collaboration. The editorial board includes members from various countries, and it regularly publishes articles from authors affiliated with foreign institutions. This cross-pollination of ideas and methodologies enriches the content and ensures the journal remains aligned with global research frontiers.

Romanian Astronomical Journal moves towards a strong open-access digital format and its continuous efforts to enhance its indexing in leading citation databases position it for continued growth. By focusing on niche areas of established Romanian strength, such as Celestial Mechanics, Dynamical Astronomy alongside cutting-edge fields like Exoplanets and artificial satellites dynamics, the journal is set to maintain its status as a reliable and important publication source for astronomical science in the region.

*Acknowledgements.* We acknowledge support of the Romanian Academy and the Romanian Academy Publishing House.

#### REFERENCES

- Capitaine, N.: 2018, Magda Stavinschi et les “Journées Systemes de reference spatio-temporels”. *Romanian Astronomical Journal* **28**(1), 5.
- Dumitrache, C., Birlan, M., Popescu, N.A., Besliu-Ionescu, D.: 2021, RoAJ in 30 years of existence. *Romanian Astronomical Journal* **31**(1), 3.
- Marin, S.: 2017, Laying the Foundations of Contemporary Romanian Astronomy. *Romanian Astronomical Journal* **27**(2), 107.
- Marin, S.: 2024, Bucharest Astronomical Observatory in the Blaze of World War II. *Romanian Astronomical Journal* **34**(3), 137.
- Stavinschi, M., Mioc, V.: 2008, Romanian Modern Astronomy at Centenary. *Romanian Astronomical Journal* **18**, 281.
- Stavinschi, M.: 1999, The Romanian Astronomy on the Eve of the 21st Century. *Romanian Astronomical Journal* **9**(2), 197.

*Received on 16 December 2025*