



ROMANIA
1 DECEMBRIE 1918
UNIVERSITY OF ALBA IULIA



International Conference

CROSS-SCIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Interdisciplinarity as a pathway to understanding the past

In memoriam Gheorghe Lazarovici (1941-2025)



Neolithic sanctuary from Parța

Alba Iulia
4th-5th of Decembre 2025



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"1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia

"Iuliu Paul" Institute of Systemic Archaeology

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First edition



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(1941-2025)*

"1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia
"Iuliu Paul" Institute of Systemic Archaeology
4th – 5th of Decembre 2025

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PROGRAM



ALBA IULIA CITADEL WITH ORTHODOX AND CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Thursday, December 4th

09.00 – 10.00 *Registration of participants* (Apor Palace, first floor)

10.00 – 11.00 **(Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Opening ceremony**

11.00 – 11.20 *Coffee break*

11.20 – 12.40 **(Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Oral presentations**

Investigation of sites and structures

Chair: Constantin PREOTEASA

11.20-11.40 Cornelia-Magda LAZAROVICI, Zoia MAXIM

Iclod – Pământul Vlădiciei. The fate of an archaeological site

11.40-12.00 Toma-Andrei BUCUROIU

Documenting the Romanian rock art: the potential of digital recording methods



12.00-12.20 Dan Leopold CIOBOTARU, Raiko KRAUSS

Habitational patterns of the Early Neolithic in the Lower Banat. Interdisciplinary approach

12.20-12.40 Silviu GRIDAN, Carsten MISCHKA, Gheorghe LAZAROVICI †

On the border of cultures – Research on Neolithic and Copper Age settlements in Rupea, Braşov County

12.40-13.00 Cosmin SUCIU, Anamaria TUDORIE

The archaeological site of Miercurea Sibiului – Valea Gârbovei

13.30 – 14.30 *Lunch at the University Restaurant*

15.00 – 17.20 (Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Oral presentations

Investigation of sites and structures

Chairs: Octavian ROGOZEA and Carsten MISCHKA

15.00-15.20 Carsten MISCHKA, Doris MISCHKA, Adela KOVÁCS

From hamlets to megaliths. Gradiometer survey of Cucuteni settlements in Botoşani County

15.20-15.40 Adela KOVÁCS, Doris MISCHKA, Carsten MISCHKA, Constantin APARASCHIVEI, Alexandru NECHIFOR

Excavation, perspectives and outcomes from the Cucuteni A3 site at Stăuceni – Holm, Stăuceni commune, Botoşani County (Romania)

15.40-16.00 Constantin PREOTEASA, Carsten MISCHKA, Doris MISCHKA

Particularities of the Cucuteni habitat reflected by geophysical surveys

16.00 – 16.20 Coffee break

16.20-16.40 Marc FRÎNCU, Octavian ROGOZEA, Maitane URRUTIA-APARICIO, Leonard DOROGOSTAIKY, Petru URDEA

The provocative ridge mounds of Țării Beiuşului. An archaeoastronomical approach

16.40-17.00 Máté STIBRÁNYI, Zsombor KLEMBALA

Understanding heritage below ground. Experiences of GPR surveys at fortified Medieval churches

17.00-17.20 Ileana BURNICHIOIU

Outcomes of multidisciplinary approaches to built heritage archaeology in Transylvania

18.00 – 20.00 Dinner at the University Restaurant

09.00 – 11.00 (Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Oral presentations

09.00-09.40 Ioan Alexandru BĂRBAT, Raluca KOGĂLNICEANU, Claudiu PURDEA, Cristinel PLANTOS, Costin-Daniel ȚUȚUIANU, Ana FETCU, Călin Achim ȘUTEU, Monica MĂRGĂRIT, Marius BREAZU, Andrei Mihai MELINCIANU
An interdisciplinary approach to a 5th and 6th centuries AD cemetery in southern Transylvania (Șura Mică – Str. Fabricii, Sibiu County, Romania)

Material culture studies

Chairs: Marius-Mihai CIUTĂ and Adina BORONEANȚ

Ceramic and bone



09.40-10.00 Anca GEORGESCU

Early Neolithic Pottery in the Danube Gorges (Iron Gates) – A review of interdisciplinary approaches

10.00-10.20 Adela KOVÁCS, Alexandru NECHIFOR, Doris MISCHKA, Carsten MISCHKA, Constantin APARASCHIVEI

Ceramic small finds from the Cucuteni A3 site at Stăuceni – Holm, Stăuceni commune, Botoșani County (Romania)

10.20-10.40 Octavian-Cristian ROGOZEA, Bogdan Alin CRAIOVAN

3rd–2nd century BC pottery from the Timiș Plain (Moșnița Plain) and the Timișoara Plain. A quantitative study of La Tène pottery fragments. Case study: pottery discovered at the sites of Moșnița Veche – 16/Dealul Sălaș, Dumbrăvița – 3, Dumbrăvița – 5, and Giarmata Vii – 2

10.40-11.00 Adina BORONEANȚ, Monica MĂRGĂRIT

The bone spoons of the Early Neolithic. Technological and functional considerations

11.00 – 11.20 Coffee break

11.20 – 13.20 (Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Oral presentations

Figurines

11.20-11.40 Marius-Mihai CIUȚĂ, Anamaria TUDORIE

New data on the first horizon of neolithization in Transylvania, from the perspective of the anthropomorphic figurines discovered at Limba – Oarda de Jos and Șeușa – La cărarea morii



11.40-12.00 Dan BUZEA, Marius-Mihai CIUȚĂ

The Early Neolithic in southeastern Transylvania in light of the most recent discoveries

12.00-12.20 Alina GHEORGHE

Female representations in anthropomorphic sculpture from the Neolithic settlement of Zorlențu Mare



12.20-12.40 Marco MERLINI

Celestial codes on Tărtăria tablets: Gheorghe Lazarovici's legacy on a proto-writing from Neolithic constellations

Metal



12.40-13.00 Vasile IARMULSCHI, Nicolae BATOG

Chronological and regional characteristics of the brooch type Kostrzewski H

13.00-13.20 Alexander RUBEL, Ioan IAȚCU

A Roman Spatha from the Siret River at Bacău. An extremely rare discovery in a complex historical context

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch at the University Restaurant

15.00 – 17.20 (Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Oral presentations

Applied sciences

Restoration-conservation, archaeobotany, zooarchaeology

Chair: Mihai GLIGOR

15.00-15.20 Ștefan LIPOT, Beatrice CIUȚĂ

When restoration-conservation meets archaeobotany: reconstructing the functionality of a Neolithic storage vessel from the middle Mureș basin: Limba – Șesu Orzii site (Alba County)



15.20-15.40 Mihaela GOLEA

New data on the plant economy of the fifth millennium BC at the southeastern part of Romania

15.40-16.00 Cristian OPREAN

Particularities of the spiritual life of the neolithic communities from Parța (Timiș County) through the prism of zooarchaeological data

16.00-16.20 Xenia POP

Archaeozoology and funerary practices. Case studies from the Early and Middle Eneolithic

16.20 – 16.40 Coffee break

16.40 – 17.40 (Apor Palace, Senate Hall, first floor) – Oral presentations

Applied Sciences

Radiocarbon dating, bioarchaeology

Judiciary archaeology

Chair: Cristian OPREAN

16.40-17.00 Marian-Bogdan CONDURĂȚEANU, Mihai GLIGOR

The 14C measurement precision of the IntCal20 calibration curve from 10,000 BP to 0 BP



17.00-17.20 Florin GOGÂLTAN, Andrea E. DEMJÉN, Szilard S. GÁL, Viorel T. LASCU, Bogdan P. ONAC, Ioana N. MELEG

***Human remains from the Early Bronze Age in the Izbucul Topliței de Vida Cave
(Pădurea Craiului Mountains, Romania)***

17.20-17.40 Claudiu PURDEA

***Stolen archaeological artefacts and cybercrime: online trafficking of cultural
heritage***

18.00 – 20.00 Dinner at the University Restaurant



ABSTRACTS

(In the order of presentations)



"1 DECEMBRIE 1918" UNIVERSITY
ALBA IULIA

1.

Iclod – Pământul Vlădiciei. The fate of an archaeological site

Cornelia-Magda LAZAROVICI

Institute of Archaeology, Iași, Romania

Zoia MAXIM

Independent researcher, Romania

The Iclod site, with archaeological traces from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, has been archaeologically investigated through over 20 systematic research campaigns, led by Gheorghe Lazarovici (1973-2001, 2009, 2012) and then by Zoia Maxim (2002, 2005).

Among the discoveries here, those related to the Zau culture (phases III and IV; settlement and necropolis; 5000 - 4550 BC), initially attributed to the Iclod group, stand out. The most modern methods were used to research the Neolithic site (prospecting, area of occurrence of raw materials, complex analyses for ceramics, statistical-mathematical processing, dating by AMS). Many articles have been published on the Neolithic discoveries, even a small monograph. Papers have been presented at various national and international symposia, illustrating the complexity of the site and the results obtained.

The Neolithic site, with several stages of evolution, includes several areas: Iclod A, near Someșul Mic, where 40 tombs were discovered; in Iclod B and D, the fortified settlement with three defensive ditches and four palisades was attested (also confirmed by magnetic prospecting carried out by Carsten Mischka in 2002, 2008 and 2012), with numerous residential complexes; in Iclod B, 69 tombs were discovered; in Iclod C, south of the railway and area B, towards Someșul Mic, several Neolithic complexes and pre-feudal tombs with inventory were identified.

The Neolithic settlement at Iclod – *Pământul Vlădiciei*, as well as the necropolis, the largest in Transylvania from this period, were included in the List of Historical Monuments in Cluj County [CJ-I-s-A-07079,(RAN:58151.02.01); CJ-I-s-A-07081, (RAN: 58151.05.01; RAN: 58151.05.02; RAN: 58151.05.03)], but this fact did not protect them from a fateful destiny.

The development of the current community requires the expansion of various constructions on the land on the outskirts of the locality, but these must be done in compliance with the legislation, which should be taken into account by both local authorities (Iclod City Hall, which offered Gheorghe Lazarovici countless diplomas and the status of honorary citizen), and central authorities, respectively the preservation of an area of 500 meters in the case of sites on the List of Historical Monuments.

When we refer to the central ones, we have in mind the Cluj County Directorate for Culture, the National Museum of Transylvania History and the Ministry of Culture. In addition to these, we also refer to various archaeologists, who carry out archaeological clearances (2015-2017, M. Gligor in the area of Cemetery A, giving permission for the construction of a fish pond, transformed into the exploitation of sand from Someș!; 2021, P. Pupeză, excavations in the site's protection area, as well as in the area of the palisades reported by the 2008-2012 surveys, giving permission for the construction of a parking lot for trucks!).

The result of all these excavations and the approval of the constructions by the archaeologists and then by the Cluj Directorate of Culture led to the destruction of the emblematic site. An unwritten rule that is respected is to also appeal to those who made the discoveries and who knows the investigated site best, at least out of politeness.

Is this how we protect the most important sites from our prehistory?

2.

Documenting the Romanian rock art: the potential of digital recording methods

Toma-Andrei BUCUROIU

“Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania

Nowadays, the documentation process of rock art in various countries, such as France, Spain, the U.S.A., and the U.K., consists entirely of digital methods. This is particularly useful for instances in which the sites are not easily accessible, therefore making it difficult for one to carry all the tools needed for contact tracing. This is also true for the locations where rock art is found in Romania's territory, often on mountain peaks or in secluded areas that are inaccessible by car. Sadly, the potential of digital recording techniques has not yet been fully exploited by researchers studying Romanian rock art, although significant progress has been made in the right direction. This article aims to explore the potential of modern digital techniques, such as 3D modelling, digital vector tracing, and the use of DStretch, in the context of Romanian rock art. The objective is to create a framework for the recording and documentation processes that would serve as a guide for current and future researchers working with rock art, as well as other related fields.

3.

Habitational patterns of the Early Neolithic in the Lower Banat. Interdisciplinary approach

Dan Leopold CIOBOTARU
National Museum of Banat, Timișoara, Romania

Raiko KRAUSS
“Eberhard Karls” Universität, Tübingen, Germany –
Institute for Pre- and Protohistory and Medieval Archaeology

The early Neolithic period in Banat was one of the research topics addressed by Professor Gheorghe Lazarovici throughout his entire career. His last book was dedicated to the development of this subject. The purpose of our presentation is to introduce the current state of research on Early Neolithic settlements of the Banat plain, located in the western part of the region, where we have carried out research projects dedicated to this subject in recent decades.

The archaeological excavations benefited from the contribution of interdisciplinary teams analyzing the environment and the inventory resulting from research, which reveal survival strategies adapted to the technologies specific to the period, but also in accordance with the geographical and climatic particularities faced by these communities.

The way in which the first farmers entered the territory and developed in the local environment is among the concerns of the specialists involved and is reflected in the hypotheses that are formulated. The moment and manner in which these communities reached the north of the Danube and spread across the area between the Tisza river and the highlands of eastern Banat are revealed by these interdisciplinary studies, which correlate with the southern regions of origin, but also with the penetration of the Early Neolithic bearers into neighbouring areas.

4.

On the border of cultures.

Research on Neolithic and Copper Age settlements in Rupea, Braşov County

Silviu GRIDAN

ArheoVest Association, Timişoara, Romania

Carsten MISCHKA

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (UFG-FAU), Germany

Gheorghe LAZAROVICI †

For a long time, extensive field collections in the whole area of the commune of Rupea, Braşov County have been conducted by S. Gridan. Their results show a detailed picture of the settlement dynamic for this area from Middle Palaeolithic up to modern times. With the headwaters of Olt and Mureş in just some kilometres distance, this region is the geographical link between the cultures in southern and middle Europe. But even more: In the second half of the fifth Millenium BC the cultural complexes of Transylvania, represented by the Petreşti Culture faces directly the Ariuşd-Culture, part of the big Cucuteni-Trypillia-Complex - sometimes with sites within sight just on two sides of the same valley. To sharpen the view on this phenomenon S. Gridan and Gh. Lazarovici conducted test excavations on different sites and organized two joint campaigns with C. Mischka from UFG-FAU, which provided gradiometer plots of five settlements.

5.

The archaeological site of Miercurea Sibiului – Valea Gârbovei

Cosmin SUCIU

Global Service Operation Manager for Production IT, Timisoara, Romania

Anamaria TUDORIE

“Lucian Blaga” University, Sibiu, Romania

The archaeological site at Miercurea Sibiului – *Valea Gârbovei* is located to the north of Miercurea Sibiului, near the Gârbova riverbed, which is a tributary of the Secaş River. This area, characterized by gentle slopes and periodic sedimentation, was long considered a floodplain with no known archaeological potential until 2011. During diagnostic investigations for the A1 highway, Hallstatt materials were identified in a control section that intersected a Gáva culture pit (Complex C14). Preventive excavations carried out in 2012 (Authorization no. 29/2012) revealed a settlement with cultural layers spanning from the Early Neolithic to the Iron Age and the medieval period (late 11th – early 12th centuries AD). The research, commissioned by the Romanian National Company of Motorways and National Roads, was financed by Impregilo S.p.A. Milan – Sibiu Branch and documented habitation structures belonging to the Starčevo-Criş, Gáva, and early Basarabi prehistoric cultures, as well as to medieval times. This provides significant data on the long-term occupation and geomorphological evolution of the Gârbova valley. We will present the site, complexes, the results of absolute chronology, materials belonging to the Early Neolithic and a preliminary statistical analysis of the Early Neolithic pottery.

6.

From hamlets to megasites.

Gradiometer survey of Cucuteni settlements in Botoşani County

Carsten MISCHKA

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-
Nürnberg (UFG-FAU), Germany

Doris MISCHKA

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-
Nürnberg (UFG-FAU), Germany

Adela KOVÁCS

Botoşani County Museum, Romania

Since 2017, joint Teams from UFG-FAU and Botoşani History Museum until now have conducted gradiometer-surveys at 18 Cucuteni sites in Botoşani County. The results show the gradual change of habitation pattern, but also the always constant features over these 800 years of Cucuteni Period. Circular settlement patterns concur with linear arrangements, always under the limits given by the topography, while the internal hierarchy, derived from the distribution of house sizes seem to be very stable. So called “megastructures” are a constant element, while only the very last stage of Cucuteni B2 seems to lead also to “megasites”, which were unknown until now from this area of the Cucuteni-Trypillia-Complex and bring up more questions for future investigations.

7.

Excavation, perspectives and outcomes from the Cucuteni A3 site at Stăuceni – Holm, Stăuceni commune, Botoșani County (Romania)

Adela KOVÁCS

Botoșani County Museum, Romania

Doris MISCHKA

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-
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Carsten MISCHKA

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Constantin APARASCHIVEI

National Museum of Bukovina, Suceava, Romania

Alexandru NECHIFOR

Botoșani County Museum, Romania

Stăuceni – *Holm* site from Stăuceni commune, Botoșani County is a Cucuteni A3 settlement where investigations were made in August 2023 and August 2024 by Botoșani County Museum, along with an international team from Friedrich-Alexander Universität from Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany and colleagues from National Museum of Bukovina from Suceava, along with master students from Cluj-Napoca and Iași History Faculties. According to geomagnetic research, it can be estimated that the settlement area is covering 5.3 hectares. The settlement at Stăuceni – *Holm* is strongly affected by the agricultural works that systematically erode the surface of the prehistoric dwellings.

The archaeological research of 2023 actually represents the continuation of the non-invasive and interdisciplinary investigations in the area, in order to understand and reconstruct as correctly as possible the characteristics of Neolithic dwellings. During 2023 excavation campaign, it was investigated one of the corners of a dwelling type structure and its inventory. During the most recent campaign, in

2024, the excavations were extended with two new trenches, in order to check the full extent of the building. After the removal of the top soil, several data related to the construction system and methods for building the floors and walls were collected. For documentation all the available technical tools were used, such as total station for individual and collective finds, drone photos for the terrain model and 3D reconstructions of the floor system and traces of beams. In this presentation we show also the inventory resulted during the excavations inside and outside the building structure excavated during 2023 and 2024 campaigns. Very few adobe fragments could be attributed to the walls. The ceramic material and artifacts discovered on the floor of the building were retrieved with total station measurement. After cleaning the burnt clay platforms, they began to be dismantled in the mirror, each piece being turned so that the beams that formed the floor of the building could be reassembled. The *in situ* trace of the beams has become extremely visible, with the wooden imprints preserved in their original form of split trunks.

After clearing the beam impressions, a new magnetometer geophysical analysis was performed to identify other possible anomalies within the trenches. On the edge of the adobe platform traces, strong anomalies were observed. A foundation ditch surrounding the outer edge of the building, as well as several pits, were thus identified. The trench varies in depth, not having an equal bottom, instead as a result of its sectioning, in several points, it was observed that it does not exceed 0.50 meters, having a bedrock bottom. Several postholes were dug from the lowest level of the foundation trench to support the walls. The deepest pits were identified in the central area of the building, where the pillars were doubled to support the roof ridge. Inside several postholes, the charred mark of an oak wooden post was identified and reused daub from other buildings, in order to fix the poles.

8.

Particularities of the Cucuteni habitat reflected by geophysical surveys

Constantin PREOTEASA

Neamț National Museum Complex, Piatra Neamț, Romania –
Cucuteni Culture International Research Centre

Carsten MISCHKA

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (UFG-FAU), Germany

Doris MISCHKA

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (UFG-FAU), Germany

Interdisciplinary non-invasive archaeological research – especially geophysical surveys – conducted in recent years has revealed surprising facts about the habitat of the Precucuteni-Cucuteni cultural complex. The new information presents a reality that often differs from that postulated on the basis of older archaeological excavations. Thus, although it was long believed that contemporary settlements were located at shorter or longer distances from each other and that few of them were delimited by ditches and / or palisades, and that the delimited space included all the buildings in order to protect them, recent large-scale or even exhaustive geophysical surveys show that there were adjacent contemporary settlements, that most of them were delimited by ditches and / or palisades (whose role could be both practical and symbolic), and that beyond these, habitation could be even more consistent than in the delimited space.

9.

***The provocative ridge mounds of Țării Beiușului.
An archaeoastronomical approach***

Marc FRÎNCU

West University, Timișoara, Romania

Octavian ROGOZEA

West University, Timișoara, Romania –

Institute of Advanced Environmental Research

Maitane URRUTIA-APARICIO

Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias and Universidad de La Laguna, Spain

West University, Timișoara, Romania

Leonard DOROGOSTAIKY

West University, Timișoara, Romania –

Institute of Advanced Environmental Research (volunteer)

Petru URDEA

West University, Timișoara, Romania

Public LIDAR images of the counties of Alba, Arad, Bihor and Hunedoara allowed the visualization of possible unknown archaeological sites, including a large number of circular anthropogenic mounds located on the crests of hills and mountains in these counties.

Our attention was particularly drawn to the groups, about 90 of them with an estimated number of mounds of about 1000, from the Beiuș Depression (Country).

Mentioned sporadically in a few short articles dedicated to some subjects or other themes and some researched decades ago with inconclusive results, they present an agglomeration in this microregion compared to the neighboring ones, in our opinion being a characteristic feature.

The construction of these groups of mounds without practical use, possible tumulus necropolises, is a testimony to the spiritual concerns of the inhabitants of this area and the effort of these communities to very likely perform rituals on a regular basis.

The natural questions we ask ourselves are whether these rituals have a connection with solar cycles, whether the time and place where the construction and rituals take place is linked to the sunrise/sunset behind positive or negative relief markers.

The goal of our research is to verify whether this correspondence exists using geographical, astronomical and computer science methods and applications in this case, but also to build a methodology usable in archaeology in order to verify possible connections with astronomical phenomena in other similar situations of tumulus necropolises in other regions.

10.

Understanding heritage below ground. Experiences of GPR surveys at fortified medieval churches

Máté STIBRÁNYI

Munifex Ltd., Szenendre, Hungary

Zsombor KLEMBALA

Munifex Ltd., Szenendre, Hungary

GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) method is a powerful tool to locate wall features and heritage elements underground, but due to low awareness and availability it is rarely used for heritage tasks around Europe. Its use is limited mainly for scientific purposes, even though it is suitable as a helpful tool for heritage restoration and conservation projects as well.

Lately we had the opportunity to survey several heritage sites in Romania to help understanding the underlying heritage elements, adding information to already known features. We can use these case studies to represent the practical use of this method, the opportunities and the hindrances it carries. We believe that with the right knowledge and suitable use, the GPR method as a non-invasive and fast approach can be a helpful tool to enhance our understanding of heritage below ground for a wide range of researchers and heritage experts alike.

11.

Outcomes of multidisciplinary approaches to built heritage archaeology in Transylvania

Ileana BURNICHIOIU

“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, Romania

This paper presents an argument in favor of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity in the study of Transylvania's built heritage within the context of restoration projects. It has two aims:

1. to present the advantages and results of such approaches for a series of case studies (monuments) from the Middle Ages and the modern period, produced over the past decade; and
2. to outline a research methodology derived from these case studies, one that is appropriate for contemporary architectural archaeology and consistent with conservation and restoration ethics.

12.

An interdisciplinary approach to a 5th and 6th centuries AD cemetery in southern Transylvania (Șura Mică – Str. Fabricii, Sibiu County, Romania)

Ioan Alexandru BĂRBAT

“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, Romania –
“Iuliu Paul” Institute of Systemic Archaeology

Raluca KOGĂLNICEANU

“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, Romania –
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Claudiu PURDEA

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Cristinel PLANTOS

“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, Romania –
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Costin-Daniel ȚUȚUIANU

The Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilisation, Deva, Romania

Ana FETCU

Independent researcher, Romania

Călin Achim ȘUTEU

“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Monica MĂRGĂRIT

“Valahia” University, Târgoviște, Romania

Marius BREAZU

National Center for Cartography, Bucharest, Romania

Andrei Mihai MELINCIANU

Independent researcher, Romania

During a rescue archaeological investigation conducted within the built-up area of the Șura Mică settlement (Sibiu County, Romania) in the summer and autumn of 2024, seven inhumation graves were identified. The investigated features, located in the south-southeastern part of the site on Fabricii Street, on the outskirts of the settlement in a low-lying area, were outlined as rectangular pits with rounded corners. The excavation of the grave pits led to the identification of a small cemetery, characteristic of a Gepidic community.

The anthropological analysis indicated that the skeletal remains belong to three adults and four non-adults, with the age at death ranging from 4.5 to over 50 years old. The non-adults include three children, aged between 4.5-7 years (Feat. 9/G1, Feat. 24/G6, Feat. 25/G7) and one adolescent (Feat. 16/G3). The adult group is represented by one individual of male sex (Feat. 23/G5) and two of female sex.

The small number of graves discovered, despite the generous area investigated (approximately 1.5 hectares), could indicate an incipient cemetery, characteristic of Gepidic groups who were just entering the Transylvanian space. This hypothesis is also supported by the funerary inventory: the discovered fibulae allow the graves to be dated to the period between the 5th and the 6th century AD.

13.

Early Neolithic Pottery in the Danube Gorges (Iron Gates) – A review of interdisciplinary approaches

Anca GEORGESCU

“Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania

The works on the Danube riverbanks in Romania and Serbia carried out between the early 1960s and the 1980s, triggered by the construction of the hydroelectric power stations Iron Gates I and II, allowed extensive archeological research on both banks, with a particular focus on the site locations that were to be flooded once the construction of the two dams was completed.

These changes opened a new chapter in the 60 years of research on archaeological materials found (lithics, faunal and botanical remains, pottery, etc.). Initially, the Early Neolithic pottery recovered has been classified by type, paste, color, and decoration (mid-1960s to mid-1980s). The shift in pottery analysis began in the 1990s, bringing new insights into the function and utility of the vessels.

Recent approaches to pottery analysis combine interdisciplinary studies (*e.g.*, modern chemical and physical analysis on paste/pigment composition together with fresh ¹⁴C dates) to refine and widen our perception of the origin and development of patterns in ceramic production during the Early Neolithic period.

14.

***Ceramic small finds from the Cucuteni A3 site at Stăuceni – Holm,
Stăuceni commune, Botoșani County (Romania)***

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Stăuceni – *Holm* site from Stăuceni commune, Botoșani County is a Cucuteni A3 settlement where investigations were made in August 2023 and August 2024 by Botoșani County Museum, along with an international team from Friedrich-Alexander Universität from Erlangen- Nürnberg, Germany and colleagues from National Museum of Bukovina from Suceava, along with master students from Cluj-Napoca and Iași History Faculties.

During 2023 excavation campaign it was investigated one of the corners of a dwelling type structure and its inventory. During the most recent campaign, in 2024, the excavations were extended with two new trenches, in order to check the full extent of the building.

There were several stages of collecting the artefacts: first stage was the survey when systematic collection was made, and the second one, from the excavation trenches.

For documentation of the small finds and ceramic ones, were used all the available technical tools, like total station, both for individual and collective finds. After the excavation, the ceramic material was taken to the Botoșani County Museum where it was cleaned and processed. In this presentation we show the inventory resulted during the excavations inside and outside the building structure excavated during 2023 and 2024 campaigns. We distinguished several types of ceramic artefacts: vessels (complete or restorable), small furniture fragments, ladles and spoons, clay cones, ceramic pendants. There are also some coarse ceramic trays and possibly some storage vessels. Some of the most interesting types of artefacts are the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. The anthropomorphic figurines were discovered, for now, only from the surveys. Zoomorphic representations are covering the ronde-bosse figurines and the zoomorphic protomas. One object with bull horns and facial details could have been a scepter, being hollow in the inside.

The investigations at this site are not yet finished, so we cannot draw the final conclusions related to the small ceramic finds, but for now we know that the items discovered so far are very interesting and have analogies with objects from several Cucuteni A3 sites (*Scânteia – Dealul Bodești; Trușești – Țuguiea; Ruginoasa – Dealul Drăghici; Cucuteni – Cetățuie*).

15.

3rd–2nd century BC pottery from the Timiș Plain (Moșnița Plain) and the Timișoara Plain. A quantitative study of La Tène pottery fragments. Case study: pottery discovered at the sites of Moșnița Veche – 16/Dealul Sălaș, Dumbrăvița – 3, Dumbrăvița – 5, and Giarmata Vii – 2

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The present study focuses on a collection of 1,691 ceramic fragments resulting from preventive archaeological excavations carried out in four sites located in the Western Plain of Romania, specifically in the Timiș and Moșnița Plains. The sites include Moșnița Veche - 16/Dealul Sălaș (Moșnița Plain), and Giarmata Vii – 2, Dumbrăvița – 3, and Dumbrăvița – 5 (Timișoara Plain). All fragments originate from settlement contexts, including 18 refuse pits and 7 sunken or semi-sunken dwellings.

The analyzed assemblage includes all identified ceramic fabric types: coarse, semi-fine, and fine ware. Distribution by site shows a predominance of material from Dumbrăvița – 5 (49.79%), followed by Dumbrăvița – 3 (20.99%), Moșnița Veche – 16 (14.78%), and Giarmata Vii – 2 (14.43%).

A total of 19 variables were considered in the analysis — 17 qualitative (*e.g.*, vessel part, fabric, modeling technique, surface treatments, firing type, morphological and decorative elements) and 2 continuous quantitative (fragment thickness and rim or base diameter). Additionally, fragment weight was compared to quantity for a more accurate representation of fabric distribution.

The results highlight both common features across the sites — likely influenced by shared environmental conditions — and subtle differences reflecting the particularities of each settlement. These patterns contribute to a broader understanding of ceramic production and consumption in the region.

16.

The bone spoons of the Early Neolithic. Technological and functional considerations

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Among the specific tool types of the Early Neolithic, bone spoons are to be found at most sites of the Starcevo-Criș culture. They consist of a handle, of varying lengths and sections, which continues with a wider part forming the receptacle with a deeper or shallower concavity and varied morphologies (circular, elliptical or trapezoidal). We present here the spoons from two Early Neolithic sites in SW Romania: Schela Cladovei and Cârcea. The specimens with well-preserved surfaces were analyzed using a Keyence VHX-XI digital microscope with different types of lenses and lighting options (coaxial light – which helps identify surface wear (surface flattening, micro-scratches), similar to metallographic microscopes, and Optical Shadow Effect Mode – to identify, especially in 3D images, changes in the volume of worn surfaces), at magnifications ranging from 20× to 500×. We were able to make 3D reconstructions of the topography of different wear areas or of the marks resulting from the handling/functionality of the parts.

17.

New data on the first horizon of neolithization in Transylvania, from the perspective of the anthropomorphic figurines discovered at Limba – Oarda de Jos and Șeușa – La cărarea morii

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Recent preventive excavations carried out in connection with the construction of the A10 Motorway (Sebeș–Turda) have revealed new insights into the material culture of the earliest bearers of the Neolithic package north of the Danube, particularly in the middle Mureș Valley (Transylvania). A type of anthropomorphic female figurine discovered at Limba – *Oarda de Jos*, through its specific morphology and unique manufacturing technology (paste preparation, firing, surface treatment), demonstrates affiliation with archetypes identifiable in the earliest Neolithic horizons of Thessaly (Nea Nikomedeia), the Iskar Valley (WRPP groups), and the Vardar-Morava corridor (Anzabegovo, Divostin). The analysis of anthropomorphic figurines specific to the first Neolithic settlements in Transylvania (Gura Baciului, Șeușa – *La Cărarea Morii*, Cristian, Ocna Sibiului) further confirms the oldness, the origin, and the pathways of evolution and development of this phenomenon.

The female figurines characterized by steatopygia, extremely narrow waists, widely extended arms, and prominently rendered breasts demonstrate a pronounced conservatism — a traditional component in the depiction of the human figure. The elements visible through direct visual observation are enriched by details obtained through 3D scanning (Sketchfab) and microscopic analysis of the pieces, which further complete the dataset concerning their manufacturing process. The fragmentary figurines from Limba – *Oarda de Jos* and Șeușa – *La Cărarea Morii* enhance previous knowledge regarding the anthropomorphic figurines associated with the first Neolithic horizon in the middle Mureș Valley (southwestern Transylvania).

18.

The Early Neolithic in southeastern Transylvania in light of the most recent discoveries

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Twenty-eight years after the inventory of finds belonging to the late phases of the Starčevo–Criș culture in the Brașov Depression (1997), the authors of the present paper bring new contributions regarding this cultural and chronological horizon of the Early Neolithic. These additions stem from recent preventive archaeological excavations carried out in the hinterland of the town of Sfântu Gheorghe, as well as from the archaeological repertory of Alba County, published by Bordi Zsigmond (2005).

The evidence provided by the archaeological site at *Bedehaza*, including its counterpart located on the western bank of the Olt River: *Hosszú*, allows for a more precise assessment of the place and role of the Starčevo-Criș communities in the Neolithisation of the depression area along the Carpathian Bend. It also sheds light on the cultural and chronological synchronisms, the routes followed by these communities, and, not least, on the material expressions of their spiritual life. The anthropomorphic figurine from Bedehaza-Hosszú is analyzed in a comparative perspective with those from Leț-Várhegy.

19.

Female representations in anthropomorphic sculpture from the Neolithic settlement of Zorlențu Mare

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The image of the woman as a representation of the human being appears among the remains of the European Paleolithic in the form of the famous Venus statuettes. This type of female figurine is believed to represent images of the mother goddess, symbols of fertility and fecundity. These symbols continue to be present in Neolithic art as well, with female figurines now also considered representations of goddesses of hunting or agriculture. In general, the image of women in prehistoric art reflects representations related to religious beliefs and symbols and not to everyday reality. So, another approach to studying prehistoric female representations would be to research the role of women as an integral part of the human community of which they were part.

In the Banat region there have been numerous archaeological discoveries dating back to Prehistory and which have brought to light a variety of female figurines. This also includes the anthropomorphic statuettes from Vinča discovered in the Banat mountain area, at Zorlențu Mare. The large number of female figurines discovered shows the importance that women had in the community of which they were a part. The Vinčentian anthropomorphic plastic suggests magical-religious manifestations, but it is also the expression of the artistic inclinations of the ancient communities.

20.

Celestial codes on Tărtăria tablets: Gheorghe Lazarovici's legacy on a proto-writing from Neolithic constellations

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Over several decades, archaeologist Gheorghe Lazarovici assembled an extensive corpus of engraved and painted signs and symbols from Neolithic and Copper Age sites across the Danubian region. In the last period of his life, he advanced the thesis that these motifs constitute a coherent repertory of a sacred proto-writing system rooted in systematic astral observation and encoding celestial concepts within ritual frameworks.

These astral archetypes, he argued, crystallized into a predominantly logographic sacred script recognized as the Danube Script. Among Lazarovici's enduring contributions is the establishment of this script as one of the earliest known notation systems *partly* based on astronomical signs.

This article examines, tests and assesses his hypothesis that the incised motifs on the rounded Tărtăria tablet represent constellations closely aligned with the sacred signs of a Neolithic proto-writing system, devised to articulate an Astronomical Farmer's Calendar anchored to the vernal point.

21.

Chronological and regional characteristics of the brooch type Kostrzewski H

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This lecture will examine various aspects of Kostrzewski H fibulae. Unfortunately, such pieces have not been sufficiently evaluated in the specialist literature of Central and Southeastern Europe. The reinterpretation of these fibulae, their evaluation, and the documentation of existing analogies made it possible to determine their chronological framework and origin. The analysis of these fibulae thus proves the existence of supraregional connectivity between Central and Southeast Europe in the Late Iron Age.

22.

A Roman spatha from the Siret River at Bacău. An extremely rare discovery in a complex historical context

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On the outskirts of Bacău, an excavator operator unearthed a Roman sword that raises several questions. No Roman swords have been found in the entire region of Moldavia to date. Due to its typological classification, this sword (Straubing-Nydam type Spatha) dates back to the end of the 2nd century AD. The total length and extreme narrowing of the blade already indicate the "Nydam" trend/variant, which appeared at the end of the 2nd century, but there are also some strongly narrowed blades in the earlier "Newstead" trend/variant. Since the shape of the bone guard is similar to the handles from the early imperial period, this piece can still be dated to the 2nd century AD.

In our presentation, we will try to place this spatha in a historical context and analyze the relations between the Roman Empire and Romanian Moldavia based on different categories of discoveries. What seems likely for the northwestern Barbaricum (as shown, among others, by H. U. Voß, A. Rau, and X. Pauli Jensen) is reflected in recent discoveries in northeastern Romania, Moldavia, and, in particular, Ukraine: the Marcomannic Wars threw the Roman world order into a deep crisis. The "hinterland" of the barbarian world was engulfed in chaos. New actors such as the Costoboci and Vandals appeared, the complex ethnogenesis of the "Goths" was about to begin, the old alliances and contacts between barbarian groups far from the Limes became obsolete, and relations beyond the Limes underwent a complete restructuring. This is where the "Traveling Things" research project comes in, which is preparing new volumes in the series "Corpus der römischen Funde im europäischen Barbaricum" (Corpus of Roman Finds in European Barbaricum).

The research activities were supported by a grant from the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, under project number PN-IV-P1-PCE-2023-1124.

23.

When restoration-conservation meets archaeobotany: reconstructing the functionality of a Neolithic storage vessel from the Middle Mureş Basin: Limba – Şesu Orzii site (Alba County)

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This presentation combines restoration-conservation science and archaeobotany in the study of a Middle Neolithic storage vessel discovered at the Limba – Şesu Orzii site (Alba County), in the Middle Mureş Basin. The collaboration between a ceramic restorer and an archaeobotanist aimed to investigate how restoration contributes to understanding vessel functionality and prehistoric storage practices.

The vessel, recovered from a well-documented domestic context, was selected for complete restoration to allow volumetric reconstruction and the evaluation of its capacity and morphology. The process involved cleaning, consolidation, and reassembly of ceramic fragments, carefully documented through drawings and photographs to ensure accuracy and reproducibility. These steps provided the basis for further functional interpretation.

Experimental tests simulated cereal storage under variable environmental conditions, focusing on permeability, sealing, and vessel stability. The results, correlated with archaeobotanical data, suggest that specific morphological and technological characteristics of Middle Neolithic pottery were deliberately adapted for the long-term preservation of plant resources.

By integrating restoration outcomes with archaeobotanical analysis, this study highlights how interdisciplinary collaboration can transform material reconstruction into a tool for interpreting prehistoric storage and resource management strategies. The Limba – Şesu Orzii case offers valuable insight into the technological and economic behaviors of early farming communities in the Middle Mureş Basin.

24.

New data on the plant economy of the fifth millennium BC at the southeastern part of Romania

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The fifth millennium BC marks a significant period in southeastern Romania, distinguished by the material culture from the archaeological complexes of Boian-Maritsa and Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI. These two archaeological complexes, with their local manifestations (Boian and Gumelnița, respectively), brought forth an intricate settlement system, rich plant and animal husbandry, and an extensive communication pathways with local and regional communities. Even though this period is well known from the archaeobotanical point of view, most of them are based on mass finds that normally does not identify a complex plant utilisation beyond the food preferences. As such, new data gathered from different archaeological sites and features can open a new plain field of interpretation regarding plant husbandry. In this study we will reconstruct the plant preferences along the fifth millennium BC by integrating both longstanding and new archaeobotanical information, from old and new archaeological excavations.

This work is based on my PhD thesis titled *The Exploitation of Vegetal Resources During the Gumelnița culture on the Territory of Romania*.

25.

Particularities of the spiritual life of the neolithic communities from Parța (Timiș County) through the prism of zooarchaeological data

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The faunal material that is the subject of this archaeozoological project comes from archaeological research on a Neo-Eneolithic settlement located on the border of Parța village (Timiș County). The settlement represents one of the most important Neolithic settlements in northern Banat, and is believed to have been one of the region's major settlements in the late Neolithic period. The numerous archaeological research campaigns have determined numerous data related to the spiritual life of the prehistoric communities in Parța, highlighted by the research of the two sanctuaries and the observations about ritual practices outside the shrines (house altars, ritual deposits, etc.). In most cases, these communities expressed in various ritual forms their veneration and gratitude to the gods, using animals or parts of them to perform these rituals. In this paper we want to address those issues related to the usage of animals (or animal parts) in ritual practices, insisting on the identified taxa and the distribution of animal remains in ritual complexes, continuing with the interpretation of the data obtained. Finally, we want to discuss possible hypotheses related to ritual practices, argued by paleofaunal data.

26.

Archaeozoology and funerary practices. Case studies from the Early and Middle Eneolithic

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The Tiszapolgár and Bodrogkeresztúr cultures are two of the most representative cultural communities that developed during the Eneolithic period. The distribution area includes eastern Hungary and Slovakia, northern Serbia, northwestern and western Romania. Although chronologically the Tiszapolgár culture (Early Eneolithic) and the Bodrogkeresztúr culture (Middle Eneolithic) succeed each other, there are some common elements such as the almost overlapping areas of distribution, pottery typology and those of copper, gold and lithics, the ornaments and last but not least, the funerary practices.

The present paper aims to present the results of the archaeozoological investigation of several Tiszapolgár and Bodrogkeresztúr necropolises in order to identify the common elements as well as the differentiated ones, existing within the funerary rites. The analyzed graves showed several differentiated aspects regarding the animal offerings within, and here we refer to the preference for certain animal species, the culling ages of the animals, the estimated sex of the individuals, the distribution of the remains, and last but not least, the frequencies of domestic and wild species present in the necropolises. Notable differences were also found in the case of the artefacts made of hard animal materials.

27.

The ^{14}C measurement precision of the IntCal20 calibration curve from 10,000 BP to 0 BP

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Radiocarbon determinations have become nowadays common place in all archaeology papers. They are used to confirm or refute timelines derived from classical methods, so much so their resulted chronologies are deemed “absolute” in comparison to all the other “relative” ones. The science that backs them up is more than seven decades old and archaeologists use it with the ease one drives a car without any prior knowledge of the mechanics that make it work.

In this paper we establish an universal indicator of the precision of this time measurement tool, the average σ_1/σ_2 yearly probability, calculated by the division of the σ_1 , respectively the σ_2 probabilities to the total number of σ_1 , respectively σ_2 calibrated years associated to them, for the IntCal20 calibration curve and analyze its variation from 10000 BP to 0 BP.

28.

***Human remains from the Early Bronze Age in the Izbulcul Topliței de Vida Cave
(Pădurea Craiului Mountains, Romania)***

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Recent archaeological investigations (2021–2022, 2025) in the Izbulcul Topliței de Vida Cave, located in the Pădurea Craiului Mountains (northwestern Romania), were carried out within two interdisciplinary projects focused on reconstructing human and faunal dynamics in Transylvanian caves during the Late Pleistocene and Holocene (led by Dr. habil I.N. Meleg).

The cave is extremely difficult to access and can be entered only during dry periods. After a 60 m-long passage that is almost completely flooded, one reaches the “Hall of Tombs,” a chamber approximately 40 m long and 6 m wide.

Archaeological contexts identified on the cave floor contain accumulations of human and animal bones, along with complete and fragmentary ceramic vessels,

charred cereal grains, gold and copper artefacts, and ornaments made of animal teeth. Bioarchaeological analyses have revealed the remains of around 30 individuals—19 adults (including at least four females and four males) and 11 children. Evidence of trauma, pathological conditions, and epigenetic traits has been documented. Analyses of ancient DNA are ongoing. Radiocarbon ages (over 20 AMS determinations) securely date the assemblage to between 2600 and 2200 BC.

During the excavations, ten individuals were documented *in situ*. Most skulls, large bones, and grave goods were found in secondary positions, suggesting that the deceased were originally laid directly on the cave floor and that their remains were subsequently disturbed by natural agents (water flows, animal activity) and possibly human interventions. The bodies appear to have been placed in a variety of positions—extended or flexed—without consistent orientation, but generally along east–west or south–north axes, with several deviations.

The funerary context, combined with evidence of violence, disease, and specific ritual behaviour, indicates symbolic practices likely associated with communication with chthonic and aquatic deities—divinities of the earth, darkness, and water. Together, these findings reveal a complex system of mortuary practices and spiritual beliefs during the Early Bronze Age in the Carpathian region. This study underscores the cultural sophistication of these communities and significantly advances our understanding of their ritual landscapes and cosmological frameworks.

29.

Stolen archaeological artefacts and cybercrime: online trafficking of cultural heritage

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Investigating stolen archaeological artefacts is a complex field, traditionally associated with on-site examinations aimed at uncovering evidence of illicit activity, such as artefact thefts or clandestine excavations. In the digital era, however, specialists have increasingly focused on cybercrime-related investigations, particularly monitoring the online sale of artefacts through international auction platforms, as a distinct line of research.

The results of such digital investigations have facilitated the recovery and repatriation of stolen cultural objects from archaeological sites across several countries, including Egypt, Italy, Greece, France, Germany, Turkey, Cyprus, and Bulgaria. Consequently, younger Romanian researchers have naturally devoted themselves to this emerging area of study.

Following the thefts of gold and coin treasures from Sarmizegetusa Regia, the collaboration between the Romanian judicial authorities and Dr. Barbara Deppert-Lippitz † enabled not only the recovery of spectacular items (Dacian bracelets, pseudo-Lysimachus coins, Koson emissions) but also the integration of the specialists she collaborated with into an international monitoring system for unique artefacts, within which provenance can be verified beyond doubt.

This presentation will discuss the findings obtained from surveying the online market for Koson coin emissions, the methodological and practical limitations inherent to such research, and the role that Romanian state institutions should play in supporting these efforts.

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