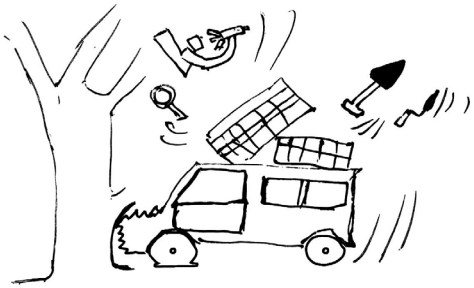
ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY of IAȘI



Connecting finds, people and lanscapes. Unifying visions on the distant past

- colloquy-

Programme

Iași, 26th of April 2013

Faculty of Biology
CNCS TE 172 Project

Arheoinvest Platform
Laboratory for Theoretical Archaeology and Methodology in Archaeology (ATMA)

Programme overview

25th April: arrival of participants

26th April:
9.00 - 9.30 - Opening of the colloquy
9.30 - 13.00 - Presentations of communications
13.00 - 15.00 - Lunch break
15.00 - 17.30 - Presentations of communications
17.30 - 18.00 - Conclusions

27th April:
Departure of participants

Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlement pattern in Moldavia (Romania). Current issues and perspectives

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Despite a long tradition of studies on the Moldavian Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures, the analysis of human communities' territorial behaviour remains underexploited. This work combines concepts used in landscape archaeology with the potentiality of a Geographic Information System (GIS) in order to mobilise archaeological artefacts in a large-scale setting and multiple thematic scopes. This paper aims to compare spatial and temporal distributions of archaeological evidence in several parts of Moldavia. Applying integrated approaches through spatial analysis, its purpose is to explore natural, economic and social phenomena involved in territorial trajectory during Later Prehistory (6000-3500 BC). In the chronological framework of the Starčevo-Criș, Linear Pottery, Precucuteni and Cucuteni cultures, different types of spatial analysis are computed in order to underline the territorial control and supply strategies in Moldavia, an area well-known for the density of its fortified settlements, its extremely rich soils and the abundance of salt springs.

Modelling mobility in Cucuteni culture. GIS based analysis to explore regional landscapes

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Significant progresses have appeared, since the early 90's, in analytical use of GIS in archaeology, especial regarding the utilisation of above mentioned tool for understanding of past social landscape. A major research direction of this efforts, often with substantial results, has been visibility studies (viewshed analysis), but archaeologists have paid less attention to how GIS can facilitate the study of another important socio-spatial component, movement.

This paper presents the GIS application of cost surface analysis combined with viewshed analysis as a feasible technique for modelling past movement and applies this approach to the Chalcolithic settlements, belonging to Cucuteni culture, from Bahluieț river watershed.

The analysis emphasizes understandings of the role of regional connections and settlements territoriality and can also stimulate new directions for future research, more accurate, based on detailed aerial and terrestrial non-destructive prospections.

Towards the understanding of the environmental influence on recorded settlement network during the Chalcolithic in NE Romania.

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The Chalcolithic period in NE Romania is largely covered by the Cucuteni culture. Until present, due to the archaeological investigations policies, the focus has been mainly placed on the excavation of large cucutenian settlements, which yielded spectacular finds. Under these circumstances, the approach to the various issues raised by the characterization of the Cucuteni inhabitation is generated within rigid, static conceptual frameworks, with report only to the external, formal characteristics of the settlements, with a general evident tendency to use them in an independent manner from each other. Within these circumstances, in the absence of a plurality of points of view, several „myths" concerning the evolution of the Chalcolithic landscape occupation have found their way within the archaeological record.

Within our presentation, we wish to analyse some of the axioms concerning the impact of climate on prehistoric human inhabitation in NE Romania, starting from the results of our interdisciplinary research, oriented towards the reconstruction of the evolution of the paleo-landscape and we highlight the dangers of constructing a conclusive discourse based only on the interpretation of the variations within the archaeological record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: work supported by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation through CNCSIS – TE project code 172/2010.

New high-resolution pollen record from Hautes-Fagnes, Belgium

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Peat bogs are true vegetation archives, due to the fact that pollen preserves well in an acidic and anaerobic environment. Aside from these conditions, deposition is also very important: pollen grains need to be incorporated in the sediments that will preserve the chronology of their deposition, which will progressively accumulate in time. Thus, the reconstruction of *palaeovegetation* and of palaeoclimate is possible. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of spores and pollen grains found in such anaerobic environments allows the evaluation of the human activities influence on the *palaeoenvironment*.

We present here the results of pollen analysis of one sequence of about 60 cm length, originating from sediments of Hautes-Fagnes peat bogs. The 49 pollen spectra reflect the local vegetation evolution and also the evolution of the forestry surroundings. The results of these investigations are correlated to the results of other studies previously carried out in the area. Aspects regarding the human activity are also highlighted.

Aspects regarding a Roman / Merovingian paved road, at present covered by a layer of peat that can reach 1 m thickness in some places, are also debated in the present paper. Its background and performance have been the subject of many studies, many guesses being given.

Integrating ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology towards a holistic approach of the prehistoric potter's craft

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The pottery uncovered through various archaeological methods was, for almost two centuries, and still is a crucial element of investigating the human past. The archaeological ceramics were used especially as a means of defining, spatially and chronologically, different archaeological cultures (guide fossil); ceramic studies are for the most part descriptive and statistical with a special focus on defining the shapes and decoration patterns. However, new types of information can be obtained by experimentation and by the study of the material culture and human behaviour in ethnographic contexts. Adding the "how?" and "why?" questions to the classical "where?" and "when?" could provide a fruitful way of understanding the prehistoric potter's craft as a whole, both in terms of means of production (raw materials, technology) and modes of production (learning patterns, organization, distribution, etc.). To put it otherwise, only by a contextual analysis of the potter's craft, which implies integrating archaeological, archaeometrical, ethnoarchaeological and experimental studies, one can hope to really understand the human behaviour that generated this important category of material culture.

Technological features of Cucuteni pottery from Eastern Romania

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Cucuteni pottery samples coming from different archaeological sites located in Eastern Romania have been characterized from the physical–chemical, mineralogical and morphological points of view. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM), X-ray diffraction (XRD) and magnetic measurements have been carried out on the ceramic samples with the aim of outlining the technological features.

The results showed low variability in microstructural features and firing conditions suggesting the existence of a well-controlled and standardized technology.

Current approaches in local archaeology. Between taxonomies and hidden histories of the artefacts

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The local archaeological research indicates that has reached another moment of theoretical and methodological reconsideration. In the context mentioned a keen interest is manifested for shifting from the use and abuse of taxonomies to arrange artefacts toward the gradual finding of the hidden histories of the artefacts. In recent years this fact has been boosted by the emergence of institutions or research centres aimed at identifying a language and methods of multidisciplinary investigation in order to facilitate this task.

In what follows the contributor has proposed to formulate some questions and answers on the avatars of these investigations and some of the first results obtained by carrying out this type of analysis of artefacts. For achieving this approach was made a database consisting of a group of a few selected ceramic shards belonging to Bronze Age archaeological sites in Moldova (Monteoru and Costişa archaeological cultures). This attempt of multiple analysis may be an example of best practice that seeks for balance and predicted results, yet.

Connecting people, raw material, technology and landscapes. Flint and bone artefacts from the Precucuteni culture

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For more than half a century, artefact oriented archaeology is no longer a typological intrinsic field but a pluri- and interdisciplinary research that has as a main goal an integrated vision of the prehistoric artefacts. In this integrated vision the artefacts are seen as a result of various determinant interrelated elements as human behaviour, technological know-how, social and economic needs and constraints, geographic determinism and many others.

This study focuses on the on the choices that prehistoric communities made in terms of raw material selection, technology, quantity and quality of both flint and bone artefacts and the impact that geographic, economic and social factors had on these choices. As a case study were selected the Precucuteni communities (Early Chalcolithic) from Romania, Republic of Moldavia and Ukraine. The data resulted from the technological research and from the raw material analysis (both petrographical and archaeozoological) were corroborated and extrapolated in order to obtain an overview of the relationships that might develop between human's choice of raw material - technology -landscape.

Study on a VIth century p. Chr. buckle plate through non-invasive techniques

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The paper presents a set of analyses on a VIth century p. Chr. buckle plate from Ibida (Tulcea, Romania) through optical microscopy (OM), electronic microscopy coupled with X-ray dispersion (SEM-EDX) and micro-FTIR. The analyses were carried out both on the metallic core as well as on the surface compounds with the identification of the type of alloy and corrosion products. These information led to the establishment of the degree of preservation of the artefact, area of origin of the raw material as well as the production technology of the alloy, which allowed for the evaluation of social and economical changes through time.

Iași, 26th of April

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