

CERCUL DE ISTORIE VECHE ȘI ARHEOLOGIE
Universitatea "1 Decembrie 1918" Alba Iulia

"BEYOND THE VEIL"

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE ON
"SPIRITUALITY IN PREHISTORY"



3 - 5 Aprilie 2009

Universitatea "1 Decembrie 1918" • Amfiteatrul Avram Iancu (A8) • corpul B

Parteneri:

Facultatea de Istorie și Filologie • Institutul de Arheologie Sistemică • Muzeul Național al Unirii Alba Iulia

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 2 APRIL 2009

Guest's arrival

FRIDAY, 3 APRIL 2009

9³⁰ - 10⁰⁰

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

(Avram Iancu Amphitheatre – A8)

10⁰⁰ - 11⁰⁰

**VISIT TO *APOR PALLACE* & THE ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPOSITION
*NEOLITHIC POTTERY – A HISTORY LESSON***

11⁰⁰ – 13³⁰

Presentation of the paper's – 1ST Part

Moderator: Otis Norman Crandell; Daniel Marius Tentiş

Alexandru Bărbat („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The spiritual life at Starčevo-Criş communities. The altars from south-west of Transilvania.

Goce Naumov (Institute for History of Art and Archaeology, University of Skopje, Republic of Macedonia)

Do(mystify)cation of the Dead: Neolithic burials inside houses and vessels within Republic of Macedonia.

Liviu Dumitraşcu („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

Marine shell ornaments (Spondylus) – prestige goods in funeral practices in Neolithic.

Zviad Sherazadishvili (Tbilisi State University, Georgia)

Rituals of burring in kurgans in South Caucasus.

Dimitri Narimanishvili (Tbilisi State University, Georgia)

Burial on the cart in the South of Caucasus.

Tomasz Michalik (Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Poland)

“Death of the body a life for human?”. Treating the body as an expression of the rite of passage.

Mădălina Voicu (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Cremation. The urns.

13³⁰ - 15⁰⁰

Lunch

15⁰⁰ – 17³⁰

Presentation of the paper's – 2ND Part

Sebastian David („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The Smith status in Prehistory. Rituals and beliefs.

Stępniewska Dąbrowka (Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Poland)

A sacred place and concept of landscape. A case of Gzin

Jozsef Nagy (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Iași, Romania)

A ritual pit from Vlaha “Pad”

Daniel Marius Tentiș („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The Cult Areas from the Dacian Fortress and Settlement of Piatra Craivii.

Cătălin Borangic („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The magical - religious significance of weapons. The case of curved weapons.

Otis Norman Crandell (Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, România)

From Neandethals to Satan and Coca-Cola. Persistence of the Prehistoric Beast-Man Diety.

18³⁰ - 20⁰⁰

Festive dinner

Pub 13

SATURDAY, 4 APRIL

10⁰⁰

VISIT TO THE DACIEN FORTIFICATION FROM ORĂȘTIE MOUNTAINS

SUNDAY, 5 APRIL

9⁰⁰ - 11⁰⁰

*VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
ALBA IULIA*

Alexandru Bărbat („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The spiritual life at Starčevo-Criș communities. The altars from south-west of Transylvania

The main purpose of this presentation, is to bring some new data about an aspect of the spiritual life in early neolithic time. It is about of some special finds, named altars by the neolithicians.

The archaeologists advance three theories concerning these altars. One of these theories says that the altars represents just an lighting source; the second opinion asserts that this kind of finds are in reality objects utilized in some cult practices; the third one, says that the altars represent together an object used both in cult practices and for the lighting.

Z. Maxim, an archaeologist specialized in neolithic time, made a data base for the altars from Romania territory. This data base, help us to include the altars discoveries into an informatic system.

In early neolithic the people from the cultural complex Starčevo-Criș utilized in some rituals practices this kind of altars. The repertoire of this finds in south-west of Transylvania it's a very short one. The main localities with this kind of discoveries are: Limba-„Bordane”, Orăștie-„Dealul Pemilor X8” and Șeușa-„La cărarea morii”.

We have just a few artifacts in a certain stratigraphical position, the other pieces being from surface researches.

The cronology of the altars in early neolithic in south-west of Transylvania begins with the phases I B-C and ends with the phase III B, after the stage of investigations.

We hope this presentation will bring some contribution for the study of altars from the cultural complex Starčevo-Criș.

Goce Naumov (Institute for History of Art and Archaeology, University of Skopje, Republic of Macedonia)

Do(mystify)cation of the Dead: Neolithic burials inside houses and vessels within Republic of Macedonia

The practice of burials inside dwelling was far common tradition in prehistory. During the Neolithic this practice was profoundly developed on few cognitive levels reflected in several types of burying the deceased. The first and main place chosen for such activity is house itself, but of more importance is the position of the deceased in specific area of the house. Placing the dead near the threshold, hearth, oven or at the back of the dwelling, gives the archaeologists more opportunities to get closer to the exact context of the burial. Regarding the facts that in most of the dwellings certain age or sex of deceased outnumbered the others, allows the statistical data to take important part in resolving the ritual or practical background to burials of this kind. But, beside this practice of intramural inhumation in so called fetus position, there are examples of burying infants and adults in vessels with or without cremation, which can also contribute for the understanding of the death in the terms of domestic cults and religion.

These specific rites within the Neolithic communities from Republic of Macedonia, as well as those all over the Balkans, were incorporated in more complex relation of deceased with material culture. A number of ceramic models, vessels and figurines were included in cognitive processes associated with the corporeal principles, but also with concepts of hybridity between human body and dwellings.

Liviu Dumitraşcu (,1st December 1918" University Alba Iulia, Romania)

Marine shell ornaments (Spondylus) – prestige goods in funeral practices in Neolithic.

Spondylus shell – type of marine bivalve shell with long spines on the exterior, the Mediterranean is the only possible source of the living shellfish.

Distribution of Spondylus gaederopus findings on prehistoric sites is remarkable and encompasses the whole Europe except west Mediterranean and north Europe. Rings and buttons and beads cut

from the marine shell, *Spondylus*, are among the most distinctive exchange items of Neolithic Europe. From sources on the coast of the Mediterranean, these highly valued objects were widely distributed across central Europe, where are known approximately two hundred sites with *spondylus* findings ranging from early Neolithic to later Eneolithic.

Zviad Sherazadishvili (Tbilisi State University, Georgia)

Rituals of burring in kurgans in South Caucasus.

1. In south Caucasus, the tradition of burring in kurgans appears in the second half of the third millennium B.C. and exists until the middle of the second millennium B.C. In general, all kurgans have embankment on burring halls. Kurgans with burring hall are divided into two groups with and without hole. Burring hall was built with wooden pillars or stones. Some kurgans have special stone paved roads.

2. The most obvious example of burial ritual in kurgan is Zurtaketi # 6 barrow. Its diameter is 100 m, height of embankment is 8 m. it has burring hall was built on the ground with stones, and it has special entrance dromos and a special stone paved road.

It is important that barrow embankment still have original form, which has four big steps.

3. Embankment of barrow with steps is close to, of Middle East temples ziggurats. Special paved roads are similar to pyramid's "rising roads" in Egypt.

4. On special stone paved roads, by the help of cart with bulls, deceased brought in barrow, which was already covered.

5. In barrow of Zurtaketi # 6 we can see all necessary rituals, which were held at that period. Architecture of kurgan, burial traditions, funereal materials are very similar to Middle East civilizations, this shows us close relations between Caucasus and Middle East.

Dimitri Narimanishvili (Tbilisi State University, Georgia)

Burial on the cart in the South of Caucasus.

The burial ritual on a cart in the south of Caucasus exists only in III-II millennium B.C. Such rituals confirmed only in Bedeni, Trialeti, and

Bareti cultures. In the XIII century B.C., burial ritual on cart does not exist. In some Bedeni and Trialeti kurgans, the deceased laid on the big wooden cart, but in the XIII century B.C. we see only details of the cart with the deceased on it. Nowadays, depending on the existing facts, we can say that, in the south of Caucasus, deceased was buried only on the disposal four-wheeled cart.

We can imagine the burial ritual in Kurgans like this: the great kurgans were made in the period of “tribal chiefs” or “kings” living. After death, plural remains were putted on the four-wheeled which richly decorated and was set to oxen; funeral train went on ritual road, to the burial hall. The ritual road abuts the kurgan on eastern part, where at the end of the road exists long dromos. After the burial, dromos used to be closed up and the surface of kurgan was covered by obsidian. The ritual road and the deceased were oriented on the east, where from the sun is rising.

Burial in kurgan, according to mythological imagines was identified to burial in mountain or in a cave. Mountain, accordingly kurgan, or artificial mountain is personifications of “axis mundi.”

Burial of deceased in a cart seems to be very mysterious ritual, which aimed to the rebirth of the tribal chief or king.

Tomasz Michalik (Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Poland)

“Death of the body a life for human?”. Treating the body as an expression of the rite of passage.

Human life and culture are many penetrating, inseparable spheres. The researches of those spheres are to reach future cultural means. The research perspective has an impact on the final results. The cremation phenomenon and it's cultural role was a subject of many studies and applications of various ways of expressing the problem. In the context of these changes I would like to present cognitive possibilities of some aspects of religious and mental sphere of people utilizing the cemetery in Kietrz coming from the II period of the Bronze Age. The specific form of burial witch was created there connecting the elements of inhumation (mound with the coffin) and cremation (burn remains in

the coffin) stimulates a reflection about the death rituals. Treatment of the human body being changed and destructed (burnt) is especially interesting. It seems to be the main task to express the mental changes. Using the van Gennep idea of the ritual of transition as the source and calling back to the dual –magical manner of viewing the world I would like to look at the role of the burnt of the human body and on the function of the objects. Viewing archeological sources not only as material objects can make us understand the past world not only in the aspects of human activity but mainly in the aspect of human rationality. Magical thinking (often in the archeological consideration as not available for the explorer) is the base to understand human from the past. The results which ensue from these deliberations can be a voice in discussion over the process of popularization the cremation in the Central Europe in the bronze age

Mădălina Voicu (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Cremation. The urns.

In the Bronze Age between fire and the after life there was a strong connection that has been reflected in the way people buried their deceased.

Concerning the spirituality of the Bronze Age communities in the Romanian territory, it is to mention the major gradual change regarding the religious beliefs. As a result of this change there was the spreading of the cremation at a higher range, revealing the relation between the material cover, the corpse and it's other side, the spirit. From another point of view, this practice could have had a purely utilitarian interpretation, the body being burnt for hygiene reasons.

The urns were the permanent or temporary locations for the souls of the deceased. A very interesting custom, connected with the cremation funerary rite, was to make a hole into the wall of the urns, the so-called “window of the soul” through which the spirit of the dead could wonder in and out the grave. There are found in the Monteoru and Garla Mare cultures.

Regarding the necessity of having a rest in an object made of resistant material was identified on wide areas, not only of Europe but worldwide.

Sebastian David („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The Smith status in Prehistory. Rituals and beliefs.

Starting with the use of metals appeared a new type of specialists, those who possessed the knowledge to transform the raw material to precious goods. Because of this skill, the smith was often regarded like a son, messenger or collaborator of Gods and also they had a special social status in community.

The image of the smiths was surrounded in time by many legends and myths encumbered with taboos, magical potencies and religious rites.

Even if technical, archaeological, philological factors discourage the work in this problem, I tried to pencil the image of the prehistoric smiths making calls to anthropological and history of religious beliefs perspective.

Key words: Bronze Age, mining, metallurgy, rituals, Gods, myth, copper, iron, kiln, Smith.

Stępniewska Dąbrówka (Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Poland)

A sacred place and concept of landscape. A case of Gzin.

Gzin is a place situated in semicircle of lower Vistula in North Poland. The stronghold of the Lausitz Culture dated to the Early Iron Age existed there. The site is very well known as traces of cannibalism were discovered there (according to archaeological interpretation). The nearest archaeological analogy is another fortified settlement at Lossow in Germany. Can we interpret such archaeological sites as sacred site, sacred place, where some ritual practices, connected with cannibalism, took place? Depends of theoretical perspectives the interpretation of the site, its meaning and role within the Late Bronze /Early Iron Age society might be different. So we do not need to understand human bones noticed there as relics of cannibalism only. I will try to explore this problem using such theoretical approaches like the archaeology of landscapes within the framework of phenomenology of landscape.

Jozsef Nagy (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Iași, Romania)

A ritual pit from Vlaha “Pad”

The site “Pad” is located on the high terrace of Finișel Creek, south-west from Vlaha village (Cluj County). The research at the site began in the summer of 2004 and was preceded by a surface walk. The test excavations aimed to identify the site’s perimeter and to establish its stratigraphy. During the campaign of 2005, 10 large areas have been unearthed, covering the space between the previous sections, an overall area of approximately 1 ha. During the third excavation campaign a surface of 5,764 m² was researched, representing 73% of the site’s entire extension, which is affected by the construction of the Borș-Brașov Motorway. In total 1296 features were entirely investigated, out of which 289 belong to a 6th century A.D. necropolis, the others are different features from the prehistoric habitation illustrated by two opened settlements. The earliest community settled down in the IInd and IIIrd phases of the Late Bronze Age (Br. D-Ha A Central European). After approximately 300-400 years the terrace will be inhabited by a community contemporary with those of the second level of habitation from Teleac and Mediaș. Based on pottery it can be dated to the second period of the Early Iron Age (Ha B₂).

Studying the ceramic material from Vlaha “Pad” we managed to distinguish a prehistoric feature that is different in its shape and content from the other features. The feature CX0375, had a rectangular shape and contained ceramic fragments, animal bones, stones, and restorable pottery fragments: two mugs with high handle, two bowls with small knobs on the body, another bowl with oblique channelling inside the rim, a deep bowl, three pot fragments, a cup and a miniature recipient. Analyzing the content and the display of the feature, we can consider that it, as a ritual pit, related probably to a “banquette” and can be dated to the end of the first Iron Age (Ha D Central European).

Daniel Marius Tentiș („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The Cult Areas from the Dacian Fortress and Settlement of Piatra Craivii.

This presentation refers to the areas presumed to be considerable cult areas from the Dacian Fortress and Settlement of Piatra Craivii, situated in the Southeastern Transylvania, in the subdivision called Trăscău of Apuseni Mountains.

Chronologically we are talking about the La Tène period (2nd century BC – 1st century AD) when in Transylvania is taking place the birth of the Dacian kingdom with his capital in Orăştie mountains. This period is characterized by a series of transformations in the civil, military and religious: multiplying the dacian settlements, the emergence of monumental fortifications on the heights and of imposing religious spaces in which religious ceremonies were held. These sanctuaries were circular or rectangular shape.

At the dacian Center of Piatra Craivii are known until now three such of buildings. Two of them were already investigated and the third one is ongoing research.

Cătălin Borangic („1st December 1918” University Alba Iulia, Romania)

The magical - religious significance of weapons. The case of curved weapons.

The origins of the relationship between weapons and spirituality get lost in the mists of times, and can be searched for even before weapons became weapons. Simple tools, that prehistoric man used in his daily life, the weapons keep a lasting duality that changes substantially only when the military use is individualised within the communities.

The sickle, the primary source of inspiration for the curved weapons, associated in the primordial myths with time, but also with change and rebirth, becomes an attribute of Death, under the more effective shape of the scythe, a signification kept until present days.

The religious changes that are taking place in the North Thracian world, somewhere around the first century B.C., are very complex and have in the centre two elites, an aristocratic one and a warrior one,

both of them using curved weapons. The military qualities of both, visible throughout the Thracians' history, but high-lighted mostly in the two wars between the Dacians and the Romans, along with their faith in immortality, have deeply marked the history of this warrior people, not only through their own view, but also through the view of their contemporaries and followers, offering an image from which an unique spirituality results and in which the part of the curved weapons is far from being small.

Otis Norman Crandell (Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, România)

From Neandethals to Satan and Coca-Cola. Persistence of the Prehistoric Beast-Man Diety.

Each year as Christmas approaches and jolly fat men with big white beards dressed in red smile at children from the television, at the shopping mall and from numerous advertisements, few people realise the long and profound history of Santa Claus. From the prehistoric bear man of Lappland, Japan and Korean, to the Mediaeval wild man of German and England, the 18th century travelling merrymaker of Nova Scotia and Trinidad, and both Christian saint and demon, variations of this character appear throughout history around the globe. The modern cultural character of Santa is one of the oldest remanant of prehistoric spiritualism to have persisted and thrived until the present. This presentation will give a brief overview of the evolution of this character.