

**„ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA” UNIVERSITY OF IASI
FACULTY OF HISTORY**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORIES AND PRACTICES
REFLECTED IN THE RESEARCH
OF CUCUTENI CULTURE**

DOCTORAL THESIS

- ABSTRACT-

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:

Prof. univ. dr. Nicolae URSULESCU

CANDIDATE:

Drd. Loredana-Ştefania SOLCAN

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We hereby inform you that on.....**09.2012**, hours, in hall of „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, miss Loredana-Ștefania Solcan will defend, in public session, the PhD thesis ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORIES AND PRACTICES REFLECTED IN THE RESEARCH OF CUCUTENI CULTURE.

The evaluation comission has the following members:

President: Prof. univ. dr. Ion Lucrețiu Bîrliba, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

Scientific coordinator: Prof. univ. dr. Nicolae Ursulescu, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

Referents: Prof. univ. dr. Attila László, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași
Prof. univ. dr. Gheorghe Lazarovici, „Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu
C.P. I dr. Dan Monah, Archaeological Institute of Iasi

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INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The introductory chapter of our thesis presents several aspects that guided and were an incentive in our approach. It stems from the conviction that an analytical study regarding the approach towards understanding the Cucuteni culture, that takes into consideration not only the achievements, but also the setbacks of used methodology in researching this culture, can prove to be useful, as during the timeline spent since the discovery of the eponym settlement, a certain relative stiffening of the methodological and theoretical apparatus used in interpreting data can be observed, with serious consequences on the historical discourse regarding the above mentioned culture.

Our thesis aims at offering a perspective on the stage of archaeological research development of the Cucuteni culture, based on professional studies published until the present moment; therefore, our approach is dedicated to the history of archaeology.

At the international level, the earliest histories of archaeology were mere chronicles of archaeological investigations, designed to explain by whom and in which conditions the most interesting finds were made. Nowadays, the history of archaeology is viewed, primarily, as a history of ideas and the type of perspective on historical past. Secondly, it represents a history of research methods, using certain ideas and responds to certain interrogations, and only subsequently the history of archaeology is a history of the findings in itself. Therefore, it is considered that historiographical works with a clear impact on research development are the ones that deal, in detail, with the origin and evolution of archaeological ideas and their placement into an historical context, being universally accepted the fact that a critical historiography is a sign of discipline's maturity and inherently necessary to its development.

At the national level, the majority of studies concerning with the past of Romanian archaeology deal only with certain stages in the discipline history, focusing on evolution of certain institutions or the activity of certain researchers. These studies, although precious and valuable, are punctual approaches, as there is a low span of interest regarding the history of Romanian archaeology in the professional literature. Only since 1989, possibly due to the opening of Romanian archaeology towards the Western world, as well as to liberalization of scientific discourse, the number of critical studies regarding the history of research began to multiply. An important breakthrough was made by Mircea Angheliniu, who offered a critical outlook on the past and present of the Romanian archaeology. Within this context, our intention is to study thoroughly and continue a research pattern less valued in Romanian professional literature, but popular in the Western scientific literature.

Our thesis does not have as an axis the realization of a simple research history of Cucuteni culture, but tries to analyze the studies concerning the Cucuteni complex, while emphasizing and underlining the orientation vectors that guided the evolution of concepts and ideas of field practices, as well as the interpretation of the archaeological material. We also wanted to identify the thematic and methodological priorities of research on Cucuteni culture and to analyze the way in which the interpretation discourse was constructed, taking into consideration both the general theoretical framework used on the international level, as well as the pattern and national ideology, respectively their influence on thesis presented in the professional literature. We believe that including our approach into a larger context, that of international archaeological discourse, is important as it provides, in some situations, the necessary momentum to revise the Romanian archaeological research. We have also tried to understand the national frame, because, in some cases, even though it is influenced by research ideas promoted in the Western Europe and American space, the Romanian archaeological research experienced a relatively different evolution than its Western counterpart.

We tried to reach our proposed goals through analyzing the professional literature dedicated to Cucuteni culture, based on the published materials since the not so distant discovery of its eponym settlement to the present day. There are studies published by Romanian researchers, but we also included a series of works regarding Cucuteni, published by researchers from different mediums.

In realizing our theme, we considered to be essential the study of theoretical studies, that outline the general directions in archaeological discourse. Unfortunately, the national professional literature shares a limited number of such studies, therefore, this part of our research dealt more with Western European and North American literature.

Generally, the professional literature can be discerned into two approaches used in writing the history of archaeology: internalist and externalist. Within the internalist approach, archaeology is viewed as being

independent from the social-political context in which it is practiced, the focus being on those personalities, discoveries and scientific advancements that contributed to the development of science and the attempt to identify the changes in the understanding, within the archaeology discourse, of a certain specific problem. The externalist approach views the historical interpretations as being heavily influenced by the social, political and economic context in which the research is made. Bearing in mind these observations, our thesis tried to combine these two types of approaches, as its main goal is to analyze the way in which ideas and interpretative patterns concerning Cucuteni culture evolved, but also, we tried to take into account the social and cultural context in which these ideas have been promoted, as it is known that each point of view is the product of its own time.

Regarding the thesis structure, we chose to use, in our attempt, a series of chronological criteria. The structure followed the main stages of the archaeological research, each with its preferences for certain general themes or specific research subjects, that concerned the scientific community. The structure of our analysis considered the development of archaeology on international level, the specific stages of Romanian archaeology development, as well as the particular development stages in the research of Cucuteni culture. Depending on those coordinates, the international context and the promoted ideas regarding the international archaeological discourse, the national level and the general reception of ideas were analyzed, with special focus on Cucuteni culture research, as we believe that we can trace and identify easier the potential influences, both international and national, that marked the Cucuteni culture research.

The introductory considerations draws to a close with a series of terminological explanations, where we emphasized on the term *theory* and *practice*. Without launching into extensive details on different definitions of archaeological theory, we underlined the fact that it establishes the research objectives, directly influencing the research methods and techniques, constructing and imposing the guiding lines between which the archaeological proofs are to be interpreted, thus reflecting the way in which archaeological results and discoveries are interpreted. We have also underlined the fact that, in 1989, B. Trigger differentiated three general levels specific for the archaeological theory, commented and completed later by I. Hodder. These are: the inferior level, the medium level, the high level; we used this classification in our attempt to identify the different levels of theory presented in professional literature dedicated to Cucuteni culture.

We offered an equivalence for the term *practice* – archaeological method, namely the way in which the archaeological research is being made. Method can contain a wider range of manifestations, determining all aspects of archaeological research, starting with discovering the sites and documentation, excavation, with all its specific issues, and ending with analyses made after the closing of the excavation. This is the main reason in choosing the term *method*, as it represents the practical modality in reaching the goals specified within the theoretical framework and, as L. Ellis stated, these two notions don't exclude one another, but rather exert a close inter-dependency.

Not in the least, we have established the spatial limits of our attempt, our intention being to trace the way in which this cultural unity was researched on Romanian territory. We limited ourselves to the present Romanian territory and we didn't researched the Trypillian area, not because it doesn't represent an useful and interesting aspect to research, but rather because it exceeds our information possibilities, mainly due to the linguistic barrier.

CHAPTER I. BEGINNING OF PREHISTORICAL RESEARCH

I.1. Beginning of prehistorical archaeological research on international level. Basic concepts

The first chapter of the thesis followed the way in which prehistoric archaeology shaped as a science and its first steps made in the nineteenth century. The ideas promoted in Scandinavia, as well as those from the French and English space were investigated.

Although the prehistoric archaeology developed in Scandinavia, which set the basis for the three epochs system, influenced the research in some countries from Western and Northern Europe, it was largely ignored by early archaeological efforts from France and England, more concerned with paleolithic period and older humanity. The fact that led to acknowledging the older humanity was the discovery of human artifacts in the same context in which extinct animal species were discovered as well. These discoveries led to the inconsistency of short chronology and archaeology could embrace a theoretical evolutionary base. The explanations were designed as a parallel with biological evolution, societies following the same pattern changing and evolving during time towards new forms, according to rational rules, still undetermined. Just as the biological evolutionism could explain the transition from inferior life forms to superior ones and finally to human specie, the cultural evolutionism could indicate the fact that simpler societies evolved into more complex ones or just disappeared.

Slowly, the historians studying prehistory realized that the unilinear evolution can't explain the archaeological realities, therefore, even from the nineteenth century on, alternative explanations were searched, with concepts such as migration of cultural diffusion being proposed. The difference between the evolutionist and diffusionist visions laid in interpreting the common features of prehistoric societies not as indicators for reaching a certain stage on the evolutionary ladder, but as proof of existence of a number of cultural centers from which major innovations irradiated. As a consequence, there was a belief that civilization started from a creative center, from where it spread, unilaterally, towards the surrounding areas.

I.2. First stages of prehistoric research at the national level

I.2.1. The „discovery” of prehistory

At the national level, the nineteenth century was marked by the effort to create a national state, which oriented the focus of Romanian archaeology towards investigating the material remains belonging to Greek-Roman Antiquity, in an attempt to reinforce, through hard evidence, the written sources regarding the event considered to be the point zero in the existence of the Romanian nation: the conquest of Dacia by the Roman Empire. Regarding the periods prior to the Antiquity, these were largely ignored, being considered remains of barbarian population. Still, an increase in the number of antiquities collectors is clear, the interest for artifacts from Antiquity, especially from Roman origin, led to destruction of some prehistoric remains.

The importance of Dacians in the historical scenarios was promoted, the first such attempt belonging to Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu. His program was continued by Cezar Bolliac, who realized that not only the Roman ancient remains hold an important value.

Towards the end of the century, an effort of recovering the gap between the Romanian archaeology and the Western one was made, through the contributions of Alexandru Odobescu and Grigore Tocilescu; we presented the main outlines of their activity. As they were working in a time when prehistory was still viewed as marginal by the scientific community, their interest towards it remained limited.

In the course of this subchapter we also documented those regions that until 1918 remained outside the national state boundaries, Transylvania and Bukovina.

I.2.2. The protection of archaeological patrimony. Legislative and institutional projects

Nineteenth century marked the moment of awakening in terms of the importance of archaeological discoveries, a series of legislative and institutional measures being put into effect, namely the Organic Regulation, as well as the *Regulation on exploring and acquiring ancient objects* (10th of April 1874), completed and enhanced through the *Law for conservating and restoring of historical monuments* (1892), which, together with *Law for discovering of monuments and objects* and *Regulation for its enforcement* (1893), will form the legal basis for protecting the national cultural patrimony. These laws were completed by the founding of the *Committee for Public Monuments* (1892), which will play a decisive role in protecting the patrimony in the following decades.

An important role was held by the founding of the *Museum of Natural History and Antiquities* (1834), but only the separation of the Museum of Natural History from National Museum for Antiquities (1864) would lead to

institutional development though a clear legal status, the newly founded museum coordinating the archaeological activity. In the same context, the founding of *Natural History Museum* from Iași (4th of February 1834), that included numerous and valuable archaeological and numismatics remains is also suggestive.

In the development of archaeological studies the founding of Universities in Iași and București also proved to be important. Also, in the promotion, protection and research of the historical and archaeological monuments, the Romanian Academic Society, later (1879) played a crucial role, and the archaeological discoveries prompted the interest of members of Society of Medical Physicians and Naturalists from Iași and, starting in 1888, the Scientific and Literary Society from Iași, organized weekly debates in which archaeology and anthropology related themes were discussed.

1.3. Researching Cucuteni remains in the nineteenth century

1.3.1. Short state of research. Settlements, personalities, institutions

The settlement from Cucuteni was discovered in 1884, by Th. Burada and was excavated in the following years by N. Beldiceanu, D. Butculescu, Gr. Buțureanu and G. Diamandi, personalities that manifested a great interest in other sites with painted pottery. The amateur archaeologists from Iași would make, until the end of nineteenth century, forays in other Cucuteni settlements (Preutești, Rădășeni, Siret, Dolhasca, Dolhești, Valea Glodului, Știrbăț, Baia, Basarabi, Lespezi, Ichimeni, Sârca, Belcești, Răfăila, Volovăț etc.), proving the existence of this ancient civilization throughout the whole territory of Moldavia and Bukovina.

For the Ariușd area, the nineteenth century marked the discovery of important sites with painted pottery. The settlement from Ariușd was signaled by B. Orbán as early as 1869, but only at the end of nineteenth century, due mainly to J. Teutsch activity, its remains came to be known better. Since 1898, he visited many settlements on the Olt valley, making, in some of them, small forays. An important contribution for the prehistory from the intra-carpathian area came from I. Marțian, who discovered many archaeological sites in Transylvania. We can state that the research of transylvanian prehistory is indebted also to amateur archaeologists, as they were the ones to identify new sites with painted pottery.

Generally, it can be affirmed that, in the nineteenth century, the investigations were made by amateur archaeologists, while the exceptional character of the findings assuring a clear impact within the international archaeological community. Still, during this period, the Cucuteni culture research was characterized mainly by enthusiasm and dilettantism, the field research being far from the needed standards, even for that epoch.

Although the investigation results had an important influence both at the national and international level, slowly, the researches made in the Cucuteni culture area decreased, with new sites discoveries becoming less and less frequent.

1.3.2. First studies on Cucuteni at the national and international level

This part of the thesis aims at analyzing the ideas regarding the discoveries attributed to Cucuteni culture, as they are presented in the main publications of the time. We tried to consider the opinions presented in these studies through the lens of time, as we thought that it is unavoidable to neglect the initial stages of archaeological research and also the theoretical guiding lines of the period. Within this context, we didn't wanted to realize a critique of the works or ideas, but merely to underline the contribution of those first studies to the subsequent development of research. In our analysis, we embraced the chronological vision, trying to follow the way in which the ideas evolved in that period. In the first phase, we have analyzed the works of N. Beldiceanu, and then we focused on those belonging to Gr. Buțureanu and G. Diamandi. Also here we have analyzed the works of C. V. Gheorghiu, I. Nădejde and V. Lateș.

It became obvious that this first stage is characterized by a series of achievements such as the correct chronological placement of discoveries within the neolithic period, the identifying of main features of sustenance economy, plant cultivation and raising animals, as well as the correct interpretation of burned clay platforms as remains of incinerated households.

The fact that although enthusiastic Romanian amateurs tried, in course of their investigations, to respect certain stratigraphical principles, the differences between Cucuteni deposited strata and evolving phases of the culture remained unobserved, their studies being destined to present, sometimes from a subjective stance, the conditions in which the remains of Cucuteni civilization were identified.

CHAPTER II. PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE FIRST HALF OF TWENTIETH CENTURY

II.1. Crystallization of cultural-historical discourse in the international archaeology

At the edge of nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the prehistoric archaeology entered a new stage. The interest for the historical and ethnical problems determined the archaeologists to pay closer attention to geographical distribution of different types of objects and artifact complexes, in an attempt to attribute them to different historical groups. Therefore, the archaeologists of the twentieth century began to describe and analyze the changes in the archaeological material in terms of appearance and dynamic of different cultural groups. The approach based on defining archaeological cultures and the attempts to define their origin as reflected in diffusion and migration forms, developed in Western Europe and began to view the cultural evolution as a natural or necessary process, trying to explain the archaeological evidence with greater attention for detail compared to the past approaches.

The cultural-historical approach emphasizes the data, facts and classification. The researchers efforts pointed, mainly, towards defining and establishing the cultural development from each area, objectives that could be reached through the use of sites stratigraphy, the series procedures, and analogies from dating contexts. Explanations for cultural transformations being made after a diffusionist pattern. Therefore, the main goal of cultural-historical approach is to answer the questions *when* and *where* the past culture evolved, which is only possible based on archaeological data. Due to the attempts to establish the origin and evolution of cultures a relation between typology, stratigraphy and chorology was made, the three pillars on which the theoretical specific supra-structure was constructed. We believe it is important to closely examine the term of archaeological culture, which has a pivotal role in studying the prehistoric periods and, although applied in different ways for different periods, it represents the key concept of prehistoric archaeology. The whole potential was demonstrated by Vere Gordon Childe in 1925, this term being the main instrument used in the systematization of prehistoric archaeology.

The main advantage of the concept relies in the fact that allowed prehistory to depart from the over simplified evolutionary basis and realize the complexity of historical relations present in the archaeological dossier. In a relatively short period of time, G. Childe's approach was adopted both in Europe and America. Worldwide, the sites were grouped in order to form cultures, being explored the temporal and geographical relations, as well as the historical relations between the cultures. The prehistoric historians interest focused on studying the development of individual cultures and also on cultural sequences. In a short span of time, cultures tended to be viewed in terms of a characteristic list, with a very important role being played by the pottery inventory.

It is considered that, at the theoretical level, the greatest failure of the cultural-historical theory relies in the inability to provide explanations for the dynamic of archaeological cultures. Changes are seen as a result of diffusion or migration, the modifications observed in the archaeological material specific for a certain community are generally explained as a result of those processes.

In order to complete the general picture of the theoretical tendencies available in that time across the continent, we have presented a few information regarding Eastern Europe. If prior to the 1917 Revolution, the Russian archaeology was connected to the situation on the rest of the continent, the situation changed in the following period, when Nikolai Marr introduced in the Soviet archaeology the academic structure, as well as the marxist ideology, the historical materialism becoming the key point of Soviet archaeology. In the archaeological practice within this area, the auto-isolation from the western literature was imposed, with the notable exception represented by V.G. Childe's works.

As a conclusion, we can state that, in the first half of the twentieth century, the European and Soviet archaeology chose different pathways, with few reciprocal influences. The Soviet archaeology aimed, mainly, at constructing economic, social and cultural explanations, valuing the national potential of cultural transformation, while the Western archaeology was concerned especially with documenting, classifying and ordering the archaeological data, putting together cultural chronologies and debating the migration and diffusion theories.

II. 2. Beginning of scientific research of Cucuteni culture. H. Schmidt and Fr. László activity

The beginning of twentieth century brought about new investigations within the Cucuteni area. The professional literature considers that H. Schmidt activity at Cucuteni and Fr. László at Ariuşd, marks a new

stage in Cucuteni culture investigation. We agree with this statement, as the implication on the way in which the future research were made will prove to be more profound, this signaling also the moment when the scientific basis for researching prehistory were established.

II.2.1. Hubert Schmidt – method, interpretation and implications

1909 remains as a hallmark date in the Cucuteni culture research, being the year when H. Schmidt, in collaboration with G. Bersu, initiated systematical and ample research in the eponym settlement of Cucuteni, although the exhaustive campaign results will be published only in 1932.

A first aspect worth noting is his excavation method. He tried to open as many sections and cassettes, which allowed him, due to the stratigraphical observations, to determine the succession from Cetățuia deposits, where the German archaeologist distinguished two main phases, called Cucuteni A and B. The periodization established by H. Schmidt was completed and expanded later, once the research developed, so as to correspond to the new data and remain accurate to this day, with the inherent amendments and completions.

The excavation technique employed by H. Schmidt at Cucuteni would become a standard for the prehistory research between the two world wars, although it had numerous setbacks, as it will become obvious later on. His system implied discarding an important amount of archaeological information, less attention towards the households complexes, and his knowledge objectives focused on recovering the information obtained from artifacts, a special role being played by the data interpretation offered by the pottery inventory.

The 1932 monograph holds a great interest not only for the way in which the archaeological material was processed and typologically and stylistically ordered based on the stratigraphical realities, but also for its attempt to integrate the Cucuteni culture within the global flux of academic knowledge at the time. It is also obvious his apprehension towards the cultural-historical principles, for example, the main causes of changes observed in the material culture of neolithic population from Cucuteni are almost exclusively attributed to migration or diffusion phenomena.

H. Schmidt research method, as well as his research goals didn't favoured an interdisciplinary approach of the material, although in the monograph there are other contributions from specialists in different fields.

II.2.2. Ferencz László – a research pattern

The first decade of twentieth century is also marked by Ferenc László's activity, with his first systematic excavations in the settlement of Ariușd. The archaeological investigations were preceded by a topographic research of the area, including a plan at the 1: 1000 scale; the settlement was divided in longitudinal and latitudinal lines, allowing the topographical registration of complexes and discoveries. The researches were initiated through a foray designed to reveal data on the surface of the site, but also on the stratigraphical conditions of the site. Fr. László opened surfaces of great dimensions, focusing more on uncovering the archaeological objectives (houses, hearths, holes, etc.), but also paid attention to the observations of stratigraphical conditions, while for a better recording of the complexes, the settlement was divided into small squares of 1mp.

Fr. László focused on reconstituting the way of life specific for the prehistoric communities (habitation, sustenance features, etc.), promoting, for the first time in the Central-Eastern European space, the interdisciplinary studies, being one of the main supporters of a paleo-ethnological approach. In order to achieve his objectives, the researcher analyzed samples of organic and inorganic materials, especially preserved for the interdisciplinary analyses.

Fr. László also introduced new methods in the study of material cultures, especially the pottery study. In his last article, written in 1924, he presented a typological-statistic analysis for Ariușd pottery, in comparison with the pottery from Olteni. His considerations on the functionality and modus operandi of different ceramic types are quite interesting, as well as his observations regarding the relation between different types of wares and the prehistoric communities way of life.

Through the type of excavation put into practice, but also through the nuanced interpretation, Fr. László stands out from the vast majority of his contemporary archaeologists, his applied investigation methods representing a real research pattern.

II.3. Romanian archaeology school formation

The end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century brought about major changes in European archaeology and Romanian research was part of this paradigm shift. Although at the national level, the prehistory research crystallized slower than the international movement, the departure from the amateurish ways of research would be realized by V. Pârvan and his collaborator I. Andrieșescu's activity. In this subchapter we analyzed the contributions made by these researchers to the development of prehistory study and the conditions in which a new generation of archaeologists deeply concerned with prehistoric issues (among which the Cucuteni discoveries played an important role) developed.

II.3.1. Vasile Pârvan and Ioan Andrieșescu's contribution

Under the influence of Romanian amateur archaeologists, the period prior to the beginning of twentieth century was strongly marked by collecting artifacts belonging to classical epoch, with special focus on the Romanity idea; this state of facts changed in the first decades of twentieth century, when, due mainly to V. Pârvan's activity, the role played by Dacian civilization in the ethnogenesis was re-evaluated, while the Romanian culture began to value more and more the autochthonous idea and origin, the Getae-Dacian origin, of Romanian nation. Vasile Pârvan is a „product” of German school of archaeology, with studies made at Jena, Berlin and Breslau and his activity would profoundly influence the entire archaeological research in Romania. For the prehistoric period, his greatest achievement is represented by the creation of a research program for the prehistoric settlements and entrusting the excavation coordination to his younger collaborators: Vl. Dumitrescu, H. Dumitrescu, V. Christescu, I. Nestor, D. Popescu, Gh. Ștefan, R. Vulpe and Ec. Dumăreanu-Vulpe. Thus, V. Pârvan represents a cardinal position as he introduced research programs and major researchers, profoundly concerned with prehistoric issues and laid the foundations of organizational structure necessary for field research, also coordinating the entire archaeological activity.

Another important personality in the prehistory research in the first half of twentieth century was I. Andrieșescu, considered by some specialists as the founding father of this discipline. With a degree in history at the University from Iași, I. Andrieșescu studied further at Berlin and Vienna, but also benefited from numerous study stages in many European countries, a fact that influenced his activity. The start of his career took place with the strong support from V. Pârvan, the latter recommending him as the chief of prehistoric archaeological Section from the National Museum for Antiquities (1915), followed by a short academic stint at the University from Iași (1918-1919).

In order to assess his contribution to prehistoric archaeological development, we have analyzed the ideas presented in a well-known series of works: *Contribution to Dacia before Romans* (1912), *A few considerations and initial recommendations regarding the ancient History and the additional sciences* (1920), *From Prehistory to the Middle Age. Guiding opinions and historical and archaeological deeds* (1924).

Pârvan - Andrieșescu collaboration opened a new horizon on the investigation of numerous prehistoric settlements, while through the formation and promotion of young researchers, the research of the period could develop and enhance.

II.3.2. New generation of archaeologists between the two world wars and the field research

In the first half of twentieth century, the relation between the Romanian and German archaeology increasingly tightens, especially through the activity of German researchers in the sites located on Romanian territory, but also through the scholarships obtained by Romanian specialists in the German academic space, which led to the implementation of study principles belonging to the German cultural-historical school.

In this subchapter, we tried to underline the activity of specialists in prehistoric studies, formed under the guidance of V. Pârvan and I. Andrieșescu. Ion Nestor was one of the few archaeologists concerned with the theoretical aspects, presenting the research principles that the prehistoric studies would had to follow, as it is obvious in his studies *New tendencies in Romanian historiography* and *The Bronze sword from Boiu*. Another disciple of V. Pârvan was Vladimir Dumitrescu, the first Romanian to conduct systematic research in the Cucuteni area. Together with his wife, Hortensia Dumitrescu – one of the first woman archaeologists from Romania – he greatly contributed to the development of knowledge of Cucuteni culture.

An important contribution for the study of Cucuteni complex belonged to Radu Vulpe, his greatest achievement being the investigations made at the Izvoare settlement; our study also focused on other specialists such as Emil Coliu, Constantin Cihodaru or Meluța Miroslav-Marin.

Under V. Pârvan coordination, his disciples began excavating important archaeological settlements which later became key sites in understanding prehistory on the Romanian territory. As a result, the archaeological information in the first half of twentieth century increases, while the systematic researches, even on smaller areas, multiply even further.

Besides the specialists activity, Cucuteni culture research owes a great deal to many passionate amateurs; among these, the figures of priest Constantin Matasă and of Vasile Ciurea, who manifested an interest in the institutional initiatives, alongside the field research.

II.4. The research of the Cucuteni culture

II.4.1 Field investigation and research method

In this subchapter we haven't tried to offer an inventory of researched Cucuteni culture settlements, but mostly to present few general considerations, which can reflect the evolution of field research, focussing on few key sites. We have also followed the excavation methods practiced in the epoch by specialists and by amateur archaeologists.

An increase in the number of people interested in Cucuteni culture is to be observed for the mentioned period. A great number of amateur archaeologists discover and signal new sites, collect objects and sometimes even conduct small forays. Still, a major change in the archaeological investigations procedures is obvious starting with the third decade of the century. From this moment on, even if the amateur archaeologists provide interesting data about Cucuteni, the landscape of professional activity dedicated to Neolithic Moldavia became to be associated overwhelmingly by Vasile Pârvan's disciples, due to initiation of ample and numerous researches in the Cucuteni sites.

The investigations made by amateur archaeologists are characterised by less professionalism, the main focus being on recovering the objects and, in some cases, their expository destiny. In the same time, there are numerous scientific forays, with a clear plan and with well-defined research objectives, such as those made by Vl. and H. Dumitrescu. In this context we can state that the first decades of the twentieth century marks a transitional phase from the amateur researches to those made by specialists. If, at the end of nineteenth century, the researchers regarding the sites with painted pottery are investigated mainly by antiquarians, in the following decades, the professionalization of some researchers in the prehistoric discipline became possible.

In regards to archaeological research, they increase manifolds, triggering an increase in the volume and quality of archaeological information. The field research expand and become professional, institutional. Systematic researches are made at Ruginoasa, Bonțești, Drăgușeni, Calu, Izvoare, Traian or Bodești.

The volume of archaeological can be partially explained by the devising of an archaeological campaign. Before, an archaeological investigation was seen as an investigation lasting a few days in a certain site. Despite the short available time, the uncovered surface was generally large. This can be explained through the excavation technique used at the time, with a major focus on the stratigraphy, but careless to the information provided by the archaeological complexes. H. Schimidt excavation technique was considered as ideal for the Romanian archaeologists and was promptly adopted, along with the periodization system and stylistic classification of pottery elaborated by the German archaeologist for the Cucuteni culture.

As a general outlook regarding the field research, we have observed that investigating different geographical areas had an irregular character, the probable cause being the small number of archaeologists and the low professionalism of specialized institutions.

In Transylvania, after the untimely death of Fr. László, the researches experiences decrease in intensity, without being totally abandoned. Although the surface researches, forays, and systematic excavations were scarce, the activity of H. Schroller at *Bod-Movila Popii* settlement is notable. Also for Transylvanian area, an important contribution was made by M. Roska, who realized an index of Transylvanian prehistoric settlements (1942), with special interest to Arieșd settlements.

To conclude, we can state that the first half of the twentieth century introduced a spectacular evolution of investigations concerning Cucuteni culture, especially for the third decade.

II.4.2. Research directions

In this subchapter, we tried to offer a few general considerations on the research themes and subjects concerning the scientific community at that time, as are reflected in the works regarding the Cucuteni culture. The great number of studies on this matter, published especially between the two world wars burdened our task, therefore we chose to emphasize on the main problems.

The major scientific themes were related to periodization and chronological placing of the findings. These attempts were based, mainly, on the stratigraphical and typological methods, as well as on analogies made with other discoveries from clear contexts. The painted pottery was an important criteria of interpretation. Theoretically, even if all types of artifacts should have been considered, in reality the pottery was a pivotal mark in defining the cultural areas and establishing the chronological sequences. Also, the outstanding strictness employed in the interpretation of archaeological material from Cucuteni represented the base on which the first theories on the culture's evolution were devised, with later completions and confirmations provided by subsequent research.

Archaeologists were also concerned with determining the absolute chronology of the remains. For a closer connection they used a report to the areas where there was a known historical chronology. The chronological landmarks were fixed with the help of comparative method, with traces in the Middle East space and Aegean basin. The first researcher that offered a viable theory was H. Schmidt. He made a great step forward, placing the origin of Cucuteni culture around 2500 AD, even at the beginning of third millennium. On the contrary, the placing of Cucuteni culture within the Bronze Age prompted disagreement, even at the time, through the review of I. Nestor of the settlement monograph. Still, Schmidt's point of view gathered supporters, among them Vl. Dumitrescu, who later recanted his view, due to the new discoveries and interpretations.

As an overlook on the studies published in the first half of twentieth century, we can affirm that the major problems of archaeology in general and Cucuteni culture in particular, were the establishment of cultural sequences, periodization, dating the discoveries, using tools such as typologies, analogies and stratigraphy. Probably due to the research methods used in the epoch, Schmidt methods were readily adopted by Romanian archaeologists, while the pattern proposed by Fr. László, more nuanced to details existing in the excavation didn't reached the same popularity. Therefore, a series of other aspects regarding the life of prehistoric communities were considered peripheral, compared to the interest in the above mentioned issues; the archaeologist task was to realize the formal differences between the artifacts and the delimitation of different cultural units, in other words an archaeological approach that was mostly descriptive and ordered. Although the Romanian archaeologists engaged in research of Cucuteni culture were especially pointed towards the establishing an accurate stratigraphy of the sites and enhancing the periodization proposed by H. Schimdt, on the relative and absolute chronological issues, a certain amount of attention was directed towards the analysis of some aspects in the life of Cucuteni creators. Some researchers understood the necessity of reconstituting the prehistoric life.

In the analyzed timeline, the cultural-historical program was dominant and the works regarding Cucuteni culture published at the time don't stray from this tendency.

The cultural-historical norms and the strong descriptive character are obvious also in the excavations reports. Their form is exemplary, starting with the description of stratigraphy to the detailed presentation of the discovered artifacts and the attempts to attribute them to a cultural horizon. Such reports are viable working instruments even today, signaling to the scientific community the discoveries, allowing also the detailed knowledge of the material, without subjective distortion from the author.

CHAPTER III. PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE SECOND HALF OF TWENTIETH CENTURY

III.1. Diversification of theoretical systems in the international archaeological discourse after the Second World War

The archaeology after the Second World War represents a blend of concepts that sprang from the historical evolution of each region, social, economic and political particular conditions, that led to profound changes in the discipline.

For a clearer understanding of the aspects exhibited by international archaeology in the post-war decades, we concentrated, firstly on the theoretical archaeology in English – with regards to the British and American space – and then on the archaeology from the former U.S.S.R. and finally we described the main features of the archaeology on the rest of the continent, trying to trace down the potential „connections” between different schools of archaeology. Also, we treated the countries from the former Soviet block as separated entities.

III.1.1. The American *New Archaeology*

The cultural-historical approach has proven its insufficiency in understanding the way in which the archaeological cultures functioned and changed; many archaeologists criticized also the fact that many types of artifacts, especially those considered unimportant for defining the archaeological cultures, weren't examined in close detail.

During the 60s an approach called *New Archaeology* started to crystallize. Culture was seen as a process that can be interpreted independently from its components. Processual archaeology defined culture as an “extra-somatic mean of humans to adapt to the environment”, respectively a system made up of distinct elements that determines the functionality and adaptation. Three functional domains of material culture were distinguished: technical, social-technical, ideo-technical. Culture was a specific structure, with inter-connected elements and changing one of them could lead to a chain reaction and finally to changes in the whole system.

As a result, the main goal of archaeology becomes the reconstitution of the extra-somatic processes and defining their relations with the causal archaeological phenomena. At the base of the processualist system was to be found “Hawkes ladder”, so that the way in which the attempt to build the interpretative discourse starts from the premise that the archaeological material allows the easier extraction of data regarding technical processes, and, then, the economic, social-political and religious.

III.1.2. British Post-processualism

The period after 1980 experienced new ways of approaching archaeological data. In contrast with New Archaeology of the 1960 and 1970, also called processualist archaeology, the following theories were labelled as being post-processualist. They appear also as a reaction towards the processualist approaches, marking a complex and diverse phenomenon in which I. Hodder played an important role.

In its earliest formulation, the post-processualist archaeology tries to emphasize the complexity of individual human behaviour, following its identification in the manifesting of material culture. From the point of view of the interpretative process, post-processualism relies on the subjectivity and contextualization that marks the archaeologist activity, a fact that makes an objective approach nearly impossible. The reasoning determined its promoters to assume the same situation for the archaeological data, as material culture is viewed as a result of ideology, therefore Hawkes ladder was virtually reversed.

III.1.3. Archaeology in U.S.S.R.

During the post-war period, the main focus of Soviet archaeology was placed on the investigations of Russian people's origins, while the dependent „archaeologies” were directed towards Slavic studies. The result of this mixture between political ideology in researching the past, reached a high peak with Stalin's thesis at the end of 50s regarding the forming period of Slavic people.

Post-stalinist period is marked by a relative liberalization of life in general, respectively of Soviet archaeology. Although this period was described as a crisis period, it experienced an increase in the complexity and diversity in interpreting the archaeological data. The Western professional literature began to circulate more also in the U.S.S.R. and many connections were made with researchers from other regions.

B. Trigger underlined the fact that the archaeology in the U.S.S.R. developed following the same research stages as its Western or American counterparts. The Soviet archaeologists were attracted firstly to the social-political explanatory features of material culture, and secondly by the need to describe and chronologically order the archaeological material.

III.1. 4. Archaeology in Western, Central and East-Central Europe

Unlike England, U.S.A. and Russia, the situation was different in the continental Europe. We analyzed a few regions with rich prehistoric archaeological tradition, such as France and Germany, but also the states formerly under the political influence of U.S.S.R.

In contrast to the British area, where the theoretical issues dominated the archaeological research during post-war period, in France it had a lower influence on the archaeology horizon. Also, the French archaeology is marked by the deep interest especially for the paleolithic period, a direct consequence of the abundant material discovered. In Germany, the archaeological research is divided between East and West. As a result of different political regimes – RDG (“socialist”) and RFG (“capitalist”), the German archaeology was also divided in two: In Western Germany, the cultural-historical paradigm continued to function as the dominant philosophy, while in the Eastern Germany, the researchers had to adopt a Marxist view on prehistory, although in practice, many archaeologists continued to share the cultural-historical paradigm.

At the end of the Second World War, some countries, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, U.S.S.R., Romania, Italy received new borders and Europe was divided into two ideological blocks: U.S.S.R. and its satellite states on one hand, and the Western democratic states, on the other. For those under Soviet influence, marxism was imposed as the official ideology of state in all research fields, professional literature stating that the Soviet model obstructed the archaeological “progress”. I. Hodder considers that forcing such an interpretation on Eastern archaeology relies more on an empirical approach. Archaeologists retreated to the cultural-historical safe ground, using the mandatory marxist expressions for introductions and conclusions in their works. Many researchers rejected the external pressure imposed on their work and concentrated more on what was considered benign – chronology and empirical documentation. The political authority on academic medium made it difficult for Eastern researchers to maintain contacts with their Western counterparts, while the access to Western professional literature was limited.

III.2. Romanian archaeology situation in post-war decades

In this subchapter we made a short overview of Romanian archaeology in the post-war decades, with special focus on the specific aspects of archaeology, the institutional changes that influenced the prehistoric research, forming specialist, the limitations imposed by the political regime, as well as the interpretation of the discovered archaeological materials.

III.2.1. Archaeological research: between repression and benefits

The period of first post-war year was marked by beginning of purging the former intellectual elite. A “quantitative” (based on class criteria) and “qualitative” (based on ideological criteria) restructuring took place, accompanied by the first measures of cultural reconfiguration. The repression had many shapes, from pursue by Securitate to arrest and condemnations.

We shortly presented the case of R. Vulpe, who was abusively moved away, in 1945, from the prehistoric archaeology chair within the Letters and Philosophy Faculty of the University from Iași, as well as the case of I. Nestor who was publicly denounced in March 1959, of Meluței Miroslav-Marin, who was forced to exile in Italy in 1948, also the case of A. Nițu, who was “purged” from the History Faculty in 1951 and arrested, then detained in “administrative arrest” until 1953, then arrested again in 1959 and liberated in 1964, and of Vl. Dumitrescu, who was detained between 1952-1954 and passed through 10 communist prisons and the famous Chanell.

At the other extreme, a series of benefits and privileges were to be gained for those who approved the political regime. Generally, the intellectuals had some undeniable benefits, which were classified, in the professional literature into two categories: financial and other types of benefits. We presented a part of the financial benefits that some archaeologists received and offered details on the “privilege” of travelling abroad for some of archaeologists.

III.2.2. Institutional transformations

The post-war decades brought about transformations at the institutional level that influenced the archaeological research. 1948 was the year of transformation of the old Romanian Academy into the Academy of Popular Republic of Romania, which led, among other effects, to the coordination of the entire archaeological research under one scientific assembly.

Also in 1948, a new period started for the National Museum of Antiquities. On the First of April 1948, the museum was included in the Ministry of Arts budget, later being incorporated into the Academy of Popular Republic of Romania. On the fifth of June 1956, the National Museum of Antiquities was transformed into the first Archaeological Institute in the country, becoming an annex of the new institution, its collection being open to the public until 1971, when following a political decision all valuable exhibits were transferred to the newly founded History Museum of Socialist Republic of Romania. The archaeological institute, organized after the Soviet model, would control for decades, the Romanian archaeological activity.

Aside this institution, that covered the whole national territory, a great importance was assigned to the specialists collectives from the History and Archaeology Institutes from Iași and Cluj-Napoca Universities and major provincial museums.

III. 2. 3. Field research and interpreting archaeological data

The studied period in this chapter is characterized by the increasing of field archaeological research, with consistent state support. We consider that, from this point of view, the new regime positively influenced the practical side of archaeology, through opening of large sites, situation that led to the increase of archaeological information. Some excavations were re-started and others were opened, on much bigger scale, designed to document periods and regions less known up until that point. Starting with 1949, large collectives were created, probably after the Soviet model, with the express purpose of investigating specific geographical regions and thematic, therefore extended areas were researched and ample excavations were effected. It was decided that some of the researched sites would be uncovered in their entirety, in order to document the construction components of the households, as well as the general layout of the settlements, in the hope that certain conclusions regarding the social-economic organization and demographical issues will be drawn.

In the 70s and 80s, the ample collectives were abandoned as well as the large excavations, leading way for a practice suggestively called by Dan Monah „one man, one rucksack, one trench”. In contrast with the Romanian situation, in the most part of Europe at the time, the basis for interdisciplinary investigative approaches were laid, through the founding of complex collectives with the purpose of constructing a more complex historical discourse on the studied populations. The generous state budgets were accompanied by the ideological pressure on researchers, along with certain norms for publication. In the initial phase of communist regime, the research activity was under strong influence from the dogmatic stalinism, illustrated by M. Roller, who controled the historiographical discourse between 1948-1955, perpetrating the ideological themes of the new power.

In the 60s frequent contacts were permitted with other countries. An easier flow of scientific information followed, especially through the scholarships. Especially the German influence, quasi-permanent as a result of the large number of specialists studying in RFG, determined the continuity of cultural-historical tendency.

In this context, the professional studies consisted mainly in excavation reports, repertoires, monographs and typological studies based on artifact categories, the end result being summed up in chronological and cultural ordering, which were considered as archaeological objectives.

III.2.4. A potential change: interdisciplinary researches

One of the conditions for a revolutionary change in the archaeological research was the increase in the interdisciplinary studies. Related sciences such as archeo-zoology, paleo-botany, anthropology, geography or the exact sciences can, theoretically to redefine the cultural-historical ideas, respectively the particular of the site. Although there were attempts in the prior period, the second half of twentieth century marked the high point of interdisciplinary research.

Generally, at first there were only scattered attempts of collaboration between archaeologists and other scientists with few institutional initiatives, but, slowly, the valuable resources offered by the above

mentioned sciences (especially the archeo-zoology and paleo-botany) began to be appreciated, along with the radiocarbon method of dating.

With the advent of archaeological evolution and amplification of archaeological research, the interdisciplinary studies within the discipline changed, as many specific interrogations arise, questions that can be answered as such. Approaching interdisciplinary research depends also on the investigation course of different sites, the exhaustive or ample research being accompanied by studies from the related sciences. By constant use of related sciences in order to complete the archaeological discourse two major vectors of research manifest: a more complex approach of the traditional archaeological material and completion of documentation, through the use of paleo-medium and paleo-economy. In the next subchapter, we analyzed the result of related sciences, with special focus on Cucuteni culture. The development of interdisciplinary studies led to a widening of archaeological topic, as M. Anghelinu observed, but it was more a result of the practice than of the profound application of theory.

III.3. The research of the Cucuteni culture

The changes and transformations that affected the Romanian archaeology in the post-war period, at the research methods and interpretative level, also affected Cucuteni culture. With the fifth decade of last century, a new stage begins also for the research of Cucuteni culture.

III.3.1. Field research and research method

The field research proved to be interesting for the political medium. For Cucuteni, this meant identification of new archaeological sites and sufficient funding for exhaustive excavations, in a short amount of time.

The large excavations opened in the 50s-60s adopted a new method of research, consisting in uncovering large surfaces from the sites, with close attention to the inhabited complexes and aspects related to the planimetry and to the materials that could be interdisciplinary analyzed (archeo-zoological, paleo-botanical, soil samples for palynological and pedological analyses).

In the 70s and 80s, although the large excavations were abandoned, researches on smaller scale were still made. The logistic was generally inadequate and the efforts made by the specialists, based on palynology, the determination of vegetal macro-remains, as well as radiocarbon data, were completed by archeo-zoological and anthropological analyses. Attempts were made to develop a laboratory research infrastructure, in order to analyze pottery technology and pigmentation. Unfortunately, due to the institutional weak framework, this interpretative approach, based on considerations that would include the natural paleo-environment, explaining the dynamic and demography of Cucuteni culture, the origins of their social or spiritual life, failed to offer adequate answers. In regards to Transylvania, the investigations experienced a decrease compared to the prior decades, with one important moment – the restarting of researches at Ariuşd and at the site from Malnaş-Băi.

As a conclusion, in terms of research method, the post-war decades were marked by the exhaustive uncovering of the archaeological sites, the focus being not only on the discovered artifacts, but also on aspects related to the planimetry of the settlements. A higher importance is assigned to the interdisciplinary researches and collaboration with specialists from different fields of knowledge, but this was not considered as a usual practice. In the decades following the Second World War, the enhancement of excavating methods and material base contributed to the increase manifolds of the researched sites, while the interdisciplinary interventions led to the diversification of answers for the multiple issues raised by the Cucuteni culture.

III. 3.2. Research directions

In this subchapter, we tried to follow the interrogations concerning the researchers, as well as the way in which the archaeological data were used to explain certain questions, through the analysis of the above mentioned themes and research directions in this period.

We first analyzed the modality in which the discoveries were treated in the monographs and synthesis studies. A clear effort was made towards establishing chronological and cultural sequences, with the discovered pottery artifacts being of great importance. The discourse preserved the main cultural-historical norms, to which interdisciplinary studies were joined and in some cases, due to the political pressure, the marxist considerations, mainly in the annexes of the works.

For the Hăbășești and Izvoare sites monographies, for example, the absence of Western theoretical approaches was predictable, while for the other synthesis we would have expected to find at least traces of such theories. Not even the principles of cultural ecology presented in this space by Al. Bolomey didn't had a major impact on the studies, with very timid exceptions. On the other hand, the descriptive character and the attention in establishing the chronological succession and the minutely described stratigraphical data protected the researchers from expressing ideas and theories favourable to the political regime discourse.

We concentrated on articles published in different periodicals, which offered information on potential „preferred” subjects. Most of them focused on the chronological and cultural placement and description of archaeological materials. Many articles deal with different categories of artifacts. These can be organized in two main types: one that analyzes typologies, series and discoveries and a more slender one that tried to see the humans beyond the artifacts. Generally the method used for analyzing the material was the typological one. For Cucuteni culture, the typology was based on external factors, from its stratigraphical position and analogies, with the aim of creating a cultural-historical context. The internal characteristics of the archaeological data (technology, usage, etc.) that could help in constructing conclusions centered more on the prehistoric every day life, were largely ignored.

We also observed an enrichment of studies based on determinations made by different related sciences. Although the variety of interdisciplinary studies, especially after 1970 – after the appearance of the American *New Archaeology* – could have indicated the fact that most of the researchers became familiar with the ideas inherent to this new trend and although is hard to invoke its direct influence, we believe that the progress in Cucuteni culture research in the second half of twentieth century owes more to the development of researching methods and it is not a direct consequence of archaeological theory or the contact with new theoretical ideas, even if some Romanian researchers had access to studies published abroad.

In a period when in Western Europe and America, the archaeological research was concerned with theoretical debates and tried to understand the prehistoric societies, in our space, due to the political pressure and formation of archaeologists, most of the studies remained mostly descriptive. We asked ourselves if the political and scientific isolation represented the main reason for the „delay” of Romanian archaeology in acquiring concepts and theories promoted in the British-American space. Maybe the answer to this problem lies within the local „intellectual” tradition. The generation of specialists activating in Romania during the processualist and post-processualist movements knew German, Russian and occasionally French, therefore it is possible that most of ideas from English speaking world couldn't reach and become popular in the Romanian scientific community.

CHAPTER IV. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH - CENTURY AND THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY - FIRST CENTURY

IV. 1. Current trends in international archaeology

In this chapter we have discussed the situation that characterized archaeological research in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, when the political map of Europe has undergone significant changes.

In the matter of the research directions in western European continent, they have continued on the same lines as in the past decades. The main objective was to develop the research, many discussions still revolving around theoretical debates. An interesting aspect of the period is pointed out by the fact that, in the late 80s and early 90s, the postprocesualist trend started to be criticized, considered to be relativist, idealist and romanticist and displaying no clear method in regards to the possibility of integration of the materialistic side within the symbolic and interpretative pattern.

Fundamental changes in archeology will be made in the countries that were under Soviet influence. The conditions that emerged after the fall of the Iron Curtain led the former communist countries to be influenced by western trends. Thus, in some cases, a number of previously unknown concepts and methods of research have been incorporated, in most cases without a critical approach, adding very little to the inherited traditions. Some critical views on this situation pointed out that if archaeologists don't abandon their own lines of research, trying to imitate Western trends, the influence of the Anglo-American archeology over the European one can have positive results, since the European researchers can learn from the mistakes made by their Anglo-American colleagues.

The Iron Curtain is considered to be "the dividing line" between Eastern and Western archeology, the former being concerned with methodological issues, and the latter being dominated by theory. However, after 1990, serious efforts were made for the rapprochement between the two. An initiative in this direction was the founding of European Association of Archaeologists.

IV. 2. An overview of contemporary Romanian archeology

As in other European countries, the last decade of the twentieth century brought about profound changes for Romania and for Romanian archaeology, the period after 1990 being marked by significant changes at institutional, programmatic and financial levels.

In the context of institutional organizations and reorganizations (the founding of specialized Institutes within the Romanian Academy and of new research units within different universities) we have also discussed the financial matters. If before 1989 funds were distributed exclusively through state agencies, thereafter research funding became available through a variety of forms. Direct budgetary resources remain scarce, scientists being forced to provide necessary funds for research from various sources, ranging from access specialized programs in financing scientific projects, to sponsorship from the private sector.

Also, Romanian archeology has experienced a new situation regarding communication. The political changes that followed the 1989 Revolution led to an opening towards international archaeology. The cooperation between Romanian archaeologists and the international scientific community, in terms of conferences and inter-academic exchange, increased, ensuring and increasing the visibility of research, but joint projects and cooperation in terms of field research did not experienced the same momentum as other countries located behind the Iron Curtain.

Although the opening to the West increased and the circulation of ideas and works is simpler, a decrease in systematic excavations made from funds allocated by the state was recorded. This situation is valid not only for Romanian archaeology, but for most of the countries that have experienced communist regimes until 1989. Many states have found the solution in rescue or preventive excavations determined by major infrastructure investments.

Regarding the archaeological discourse, it can be said that after 1990 the cultural-historical theoretical approaches were not abandoned, being also accompanied by the conservation of research methods and excavation techniques. Although after 1990 the opportunities for documentation in other countries have increased and the access to information was easier, it seems that Romanian archeology remains largely outside the international debates, focused on the interpretation of archaeological evidence. A partial

explanation for this situation can be found in the drastic decrease of budgetary resources allocated to the archaeological research and to library facilities.

IV.3. The research of the Cucuteni culture

IV.3.1. Institutional initiatives

In the post-communist period, the research of the Cucuteni culture follows the general direction of archaeological research, with a novelty represented by the founding of institutions exclusively dedicated to the study of this civilization. It is worth noting that institutions were founded under the patronage of the state and private initiatives. In this context, we have mentioned the activity of the *Cucuteni for the Third Millennium* Foundation and that of the International Center for the Research of Cucuteni Culture. We have also discussed the founding of the first museum dedicated to the Cucuteni civilization, followed by the opening of a section dedicated exclusively to Cucuteni culture within the Museum of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University.

We have noted the fact that, if by 1990 there were organized valuable thematic exhibitions only at the national level, the changes that have occurred consequently, led to a multiplication of this kind of activity beyond national borders, which culminated in 2007-2010, when there were organized nine international exhibitions.

IV. 3. 2. Field investigations and research method

Regarding the research of Cucuteni culture, since 1989 a decrease can be observed in the number of systematic archaeological excavations, although the continuity was obvious, implying financial difficulties, in the investigations in some important sites. Instead, the number of rescue excavations increased and this trend continues. After 1989, a major attention has been paid to the investigation of the archaeological sites that were used as sources of salt exploitation.

During this period, researchers have been concerned with the up-dating of investigations and were increasingly requesting the help of professionals from other fields. Even so, due to financial limitations, it was not possible to put together complex teams, that could participate in field research, interdisciplinary collaboration being realized mainly, in the laboratory.

IV.3.3. Research directions

After 1989 there was an "explosion" in the number of works concerning Cucuteni culture. At this stage, the research of Cucuteni boasts an impressive number of monographs, site syntheses, collective volume and articles. From this point of view we can state that, indeed, the circulation of scientific information has reached a new level.

Most monographs published after 1989 refer to excavations carried out decades ago. In some cases, the refinement of older data led to interesting information, but these have an isolated character. In most cases, the conservation of primary data does not allow a reassessment under modern methodologies.

We found out that the discourse specific to the general works remains dominated by the characteristics of the cultural-historical approach, with emphasis on defining the artifacts typology, their description and classification. However, there are some exceptions that prove a certain familiarity with some current international trends, but unfortunately, these are not sufficiently exploited, some ideas remaining unproven. In other cases, although it starts with an idea that could provide interesting information, the lack of suitable methods leads to questionable results, while the ideas are not properly sustained and reasoned in a satisfactory manner.

Also, in terms of publications on Cucuteni culture, we could not observe a preference for including the archaeological discourse in a specific theoretical framework. Although there are some ideas and, in some cases, researchers seem to know the basic ideas of the different theoretical trends, they refuse, for some reason, to explicitly include such considerations in their work.

Instead, we have observed an enrichment of archaeological discourse due primarily to interdisciplinary studies. However, the way in which results are interpreted is unsatisfactory. Financial and institutional limits and the limited access to international literature represented barriers that obstructed the integrated study of the results offered by interdisciplinary research and, in most cases, they acted as an annex as part of larger studies (although the importance of interdisciplinary studies is recognized and appreciated, and these kind of studies cannot be ignored - especially in terms of quantity). Still, due to the

gradual disappearance of the mentioned limits and to the a wider access to Western research models and amid increased academic competitions, the old research methods are gradually outmoded and integrated approaches are promoted.

Unlike previous decades, the paleo-environmental reconstruction of the prehistoric settlement, the identification of various economic activities through traseological analysis, the determination of the degree of specialization of different crafts practiced within society, the definition of different strategies of interaction of human communities with the environment, could lead, in the future, to a nuanced picture of everyday life, which could provide nuanced knowledge on issues of intra-and extra social and economic organization.

Also, the knowledge of the natural environment and the particular of each settlement, in conjunction with field research undertaken in their hinterland, can offer access to information on the territorial organization of the Cucuteni settlements. Such initiatives can highlight important issues regarding the development of human communities in certain areas or historical periods, leading ultimately to the understanding of the socio-historical phenomena. However, the attempts made in this direction were not relevant, perhaps due to the lack of a clear methodological direction to guide the construction of an informational base necessary for constructing the analytical discourse.

Another research direction which benefits from a lively interest in recent years is related to the investigation of various aspects of social life of Cucuteni communities. Familiarity with social theories and the knowledge of how they contribute to the reconstruction of the prehistoric communities determines that these problems are increasingly present in the archaeological topic. These initiatives are still in an initial stage therefore the actual volume of data does not allow elaboration of general character conclusions. In the same framework, respectively highlighting the way of life of prehistoric humans, the increasingly frequent ethno-archaeological attempts are to be included. Ethno-archeology provides a deeper understanding of human behavior and of cultural traits underlying archaeological data. Also, the spirituality of the Cucuteni communities begins to take shape, through the familiarity of archaeologists with working techniques and data from the history of religions.

In the last decade more extensive attempts to investigate daily life using experimental archeology are to be observed. Therefore, there were some attempts to reconstruct the operational chains of polished stone tools and ceramics production, to obtain salt from brine, and to build a typical Cucuteni house, in order to elucidate the causes that led to their incineration. Multiplying this type of study, which brings the archaeologists closer to researching the technological skills of the prehistoric man, can only provide a better understanding of the real position of technology in the social life of certain communities.

In conclusion, we must emphasize the fact that the more diverse research topics that require specific interdisciplinary analysis, supported by the attempt to create an institutional framework, objectified in the founding of some research laboratories.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research of the Cucuteni culture, as the entire Romanian archeology, as well as the one practiced in other former communist countries, was characterized by works with a strong empirical nature. From this point of view, the studies are dominated by a preference for description against interpretation, excellence in the technical field, the marginalization of the theoretical concerns, lack of debate and imposed and self-imposed isolation from international trends.

Thus, in our opinion, most of the works regarding the Cucuteni culture, lies within the three levels of theory defined in the introduction of our thesis, on the first level, exemplified by the use of concepts specific to culture-historical paradigm, focusing on the achievement of typological seriation, identification and defining the specificities of archaeological cultures and the setting of the chronological systems. However, in recent decades there were observed several attempts that outline a level of middle theory, an important role in this respect is played by the interest in the "archeology salt", which constantly called ethnographic data in order to explain the archaeological phenomena. Into the same framework fall the more numerous attempts to reconstruct specific aspects of human behavior using experimental archeology. These two directions in archaeological research are, however, shy beginnings in this respect, because they are not yet coherent systems that could provide the required extensive explanatory capacity.

Unfortunately, we could not distinguish solid efforts to renovate high level theory, still caught in a culture-historical vision that explains changes in human behavior, visible in the archaeological record, mainly on the old foundations of diffusionism and population movements.

In this thesis we tried to see what is the state of knowledge regarding the Cucuteni culture and we wanted to find at least a partial answer to the question: What do we know today about the so-called Cucuteni culture? A quick response can be summarized in the observation that in the years that have passed since the discovery of the eponymous settlement, archaeological research had some progresses, managing to outline some features of the Cucuteni communities. However, from a general perspective, we have to accept that we know very little about the daily life of the Cucuteni communities.

From this point of view, it is considered that the major sectors of the economy are defined by farming and animal husbandry, plus other economic activities, such as hunting and gathering, as well as producing artifacts, which include, of course, various crafts. If direct archaeological evidence is documenting their existence, we know relatively little about the way in which these activities were performed.

However, in recent years this picture begun to take shape more and more, mainly by appealing to various interdisciplinary studies. If initially it was thought that the tools reflect the best the economic development reached by a community now, this information is supplemented by a series of data coming from the field of other sciences. Although it is not our intention to detail every economic sector, we emphasize only the fact that currently, agriculture and animal husbandry, and also hunting and gathering, are documented by the analysis of plant remains and archaeozoological determinations, plus few pollen analysis. From a quantitative perspective, in the study of the Cucuteni culture archaeozoological analysis prevails. Through such studies we have the opportunity to know the economy of the Cucuteni communities (the species of animals bred and hunted), and also some informations about the settlements environment. However, the interpretation of the archaeozoological data should take into account not only the results of the archaeozoological analysis, but also the paleoenvironmental conditions and the physiological characteristics of the animals. Only in this way we can have a more complete picture, close to the real situation. The results obtained through archaeozoological analysis are complemented by those obtained by paleobotany. They are based on the plant remains and carpological determinations, while palynological and anthracological analysis are scarce, although their importance is widely recognized. Thus, although we can provide a fairly comprehensive vegetational profile, the informative potential of these studies is far from being exploited to the true value. Based on analyzes it could be mentioned the species of cultivated plants and their features, and some of the wild flora features, but just as with archaeozoological studies the conclusions should take into account the morphological analysis of relief features, soil analysis and the issues related to plant ecology and, of course, last but not least, the data provided by the eloquent archaeological artifacts.

Also, experimental archeology projects and other analyzes aimed at the establishment of the functionality of artifacts helped to "humanize" archeology and permitted a glimpse at the peoples beyond artifacts. Thus, information regarding various crafts are increasingly better known through experimental archeology, but also through ethnoarchaeology. They contribute to the identification of uses of various

artifacts and highlight their role in the economic life of the calcolithic communities. Also, modern infrastructure allows not only the exploration of archaeological sites by non-destructive methods, but also enables further analysis to elucidate certain aspects which are not fully known today - technology of ceramic production and decoration, the reconstitution of the method of production and use of various types of tools; the widespread use of geological, pedological, mineralogical, sedimentological analyzes will allow the development of a human micro-geomorphology of a place of activity, focusing on how human factors act as agents of landscape modification.

The above mentioned aspects contribute not only to the establishment of the economy but also to the knowledge of a settlement environment. In this context, we should mention the fact that in recent years, ethnoarchaeological studies have begun to complete the data provided by archaeological excavations. They covered the knowledge of the hinterland of some cucutenian settlements, but were focused on the knowledge of salt exploitation and the use of brine by prehistoric people. Thus, a differentiation according to specific hinterland is just at the beginning. This approach can give us in the future, a more accurate picture of how humans interact with the environment.

If in the literature devoted to the Cucuteni culture are relatively many materials that addresses a number of issues related to the sphere of economy, the studies dedicated to the social aspects are relatively scarce in terms of quantity. It is considered that important information about the various aspects of social life are provided by the study of funeral rites and rituals, and probably, the lack of these categories of archaeological evidence has led to a reduced interest in this issue. However, in the absence of these direct archaeological evidence, it is known that the analysis of the location and size of the settlements and that of the settlement spatial organization can provide interesting information regarding this issue. Although these ideas have been addressed in some studies of lesser or greater extent, unfortunately, we could not identify the influence of certain theoretical ideas nor the pursuit of a clear methodology, which can lead to coherent conclusion. In this context, for this level of knowledge, the information is limited to a number of assumptions, which in many cases are not substantiated or proven.

In the case of the "cucutenian" beliefs and spirituality, in the absence of the funerary data, some light on this theme is given by a number of artifacts interpreted as sacred objects, although their exact significance is unknown. A possible source of knowledge for these aspects is cultural anthropology. A more accurate picture of the spiritual life is given by the interpretations of the anthropomorphic figurines. Through the history of religions it is known, at least partially, the "religious" behavior, as it is reflected by figurative art. So, by using a speech enriched with ethnographic data and informations from the history of religions, the social and religious aspects of life begin to take shape. In the international literature, these issues were given increased interest by processualist thinking, in which the components of prehistoric civilizations were conceived as closely interconnected and determined by economic practices and technical progress; with the advent of postprocessualist thinking, the ideological dimension is given a leading role in the interpretation of archaeological evidence. Although we do not particularly advocate the adoption of one or other of these theoretical models, we believe that the critical use of certain concepts can enrich the interpretative discourse of Romanian archeology. In this context, we consider worthy to note the important contribution that anthropology plays in the completion of archaeological data, regardless of the theoretical paradigm used.

In conclusion, we can say that interdisciplinarity brings a topical enrichment and a development of the archaeological questioning, being indispensable to any scientific approach, but a necessary condition consists in the integration of interdisciplinary studies and the interpretation of their results in a complex manner. Using a single method will not provide an adequate image of the old society, such a scope requiring the concerted use of all interdisciplinary means available, which may, in the future, a deeper understanding of the economic, social and religious structures that are behind archaeological artifacts and features.

Summarizing the previous ideas and placing them on "Hawkes' ladder" we can say that, in terms of the Cucuteni communities, the economy and technology are better known, because these aspects leave a direct testimony through the archaeological materials, but much less can be said about society and ideology. Thus, we can say that in the interpretation and analysis of materials, today we are still in the lower part of "Hawkes' ladder", although in other geographically areas there have been theoretical and methodological advances, towards the knowledge of the upper steps. For this reason we believe that the research of Cucuteni culture must take a step forward, evolving naturally towards an interpretive discourse oriented towards the understanding of the specific of this Calcolithic culture.

Given the issues raised, we believe that a "humanization" of archeology is necessary; the archaeological interest must expand and encompass a wider range of research topics. Thus, if the physical remains of settlements (architecture, artifacts) are tangible elements available to the archaeologist, the ultimate goal of archaeological research should be to reconstitute the intangible elements. Rethinking and reconsidering the research issues should take into account the fact that archeology is not a field of inquiry oriented exclusively towards the researcher, but it should address a wider "public". Research of the prehistoric period should be about people and for people, this approach being also able to open new sources of funding.

It is a difficult task to speculate how Romanian archeology will develop. Some trends visible today will likely continue in the coming years. Freedom to travel and to undertake documentation internships to high standards is a great benefit of the entire scientific community. Also, the "digital revolution" will continue, and with it the development of new techniques in other sciences applicable to archaeological materials and, if there is anything to be learned from the history of archeology, is that change is inevitable.

From the point of view of archaeological theory, we believe that change should not be expected but sought. In the current context, the international archaeological community is increasingly concerned with defining, in the most comprehensive manner, its own identity, interests, responsibilities and modes of action, Romanian archeology can not make discordant note. We do not militate especially for direct adoption of existing models, but we consider necessary the creation of a current of reflective thinking in Romanian archeology which, starting from both internal achievements and external discussions, allows the creation of a distinct theoretical platform in accordance with its own realities.

One aspect that could change the view of archeology regards the interdisciplinary studies. They do not only require the incorporation of detailed results obtained from specialists in other disciplines; an interdisciplinary project should revolve around questions posed by archaeologists, the interdisciplinary program regarding a question raised by archeology, but which can not be solved in terms of its internal means, cooperation with other disciplines being necessary. In the end we insisted on other issues raised by the relationship between archeology and the related sciences, underlining that an interdisciplinary approach does not only consists in the power of the expert, but it takes an archaeologist to provide a general framework for the research activity, to help interpret the results and provide final data. Integration of interdisciplinary analysis in archaeological discourse is, in our view, an issue in the investigation of the complex Cucuteni civilization, its resolution being able to lead in the future to a change of attitude on the questions to which archaeologists wish to find an answer.

In this context we would like to emphasize the need to encourage the theoretical, methodological and even historiographical studies because, in our opinion, under the impact of more frequent criticisms regarding the theoretical and methodological rigidity of the archaeological written production, new research topics may develop and new investigative techniques may be adopted and developed. This attitude begins to take shape more and more in recent years, but should be continued on a larger scale, in a critical manner, through continuous review of disciplinary history.

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