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Internationale archäologische Fachtagung

Zwischen profan und sakral

Siedlungen und Deponierungen
zwischen Balkan und Altai
in der Mittel- und Spätbronzezeit

Chișinău

4. - 7. November / 2025

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Chișinău 2025

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DIENSTAG / 4. NOVEMBER 2025

NATIONALMUSEUM FÜR GESCHICHTE DER MOLDOVA



<https://meet.google.com/fzt-jwyu-btg>

16:30-17:00

Registrierung

17:00-17:45

Grußworte und Einführung

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Regionalreferentin, Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung

HUBERT KNIRSCH

Botschafter der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Republik Moldova



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Präsident des Humboldt-Clubs der Moldova

PROF. DR. EUGEN SAVA

Nationalmuseum für Geschichte der Moldova

PROF. DR. ELKE KAISER

Freie Universität Berlin

17:45-18:30

Führung durch das Nationalmuseum für Geschichte der Moldova

18:30

Empfang



MITTWOCH / 5. NOVEMBER 2025

NATIONALMUSEUM FÜR GESCHICHTE DER MOLDOVA



<https://meet.google.com/fzt-jwyu-btg>

9:00-11:00

Diskussionsleitung: **DR. VALERII KAVRUK**

DR. MAGDA PIENIAŻEK

Man, environment, settlement: Northern Pontic Steppe in the Late Bronze Age

PROF. DR. ELKE KAISER, PROF. DR. EUGEN SAVA

Siedlungsarchäologische Forschungen im Süden der Moldova

DR. MARIANA SÎRBU, EUGENIU MISTREANU M.A., LIVIA ERMURACHI M.A.

Stone structures from the Taraclia-Gaidabul settlement (Late Bronze Age, Sabatinovka culture)

PETAR ZIDAROV M.A., DR. VANYA PETROVA, DR. NADEZHDA TODOROVA

Are there Bronze Age zol'niki in Bulgaria? The evidence from Orlovets near Veliko Turnovo in context

11:00-11:30

Kaffeepause

11:30-13:00

Diskussionsleitung: **DR. VASILE DIACONU**

DR. VICTOR SAVA

Settlement dynamics in the Lower Mureş Region during the 2nd millennium BC

DR. TIBOR-TAMÁS DARÓCZI

Sacred as the performative action of living in settlements and resilience by hoarding in the Middle Bronze Age Eastern Carpathian Basin

DR. BOTOND REZI

The bronze hoards from Ațintiș and the phenomenon of multiple hoarding in the Carpathian Basin

13:00-14:00

Mittagessen

14:00-16:00

Diskussionsleitung: **Prof. Dr. Blagoje Govedarica**

Dr. Valerii Kavruk

Salt, settlement and hoarding in the Balkan-Ponic-Carpathian zone throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Ages

PD Dr. Nikolaus Boroffka, Dr. Marian Neagoe, Oana Neagoe M.A.

Șișești – Ein spätbronzezeitlicher Hortfund aus Südrumänien. Lokale Männer und fremde Frauen?

Dr. Yuri Chernienko

The horizons of the Late Bronze Age of the settlement Strumok III

Eugeniu Mistreanu M.A.

Curved flint sickle knives from around the Carpathians in the Middle and Late Bronze Age

16:00-16:30

Kaffeepause

16:30-18:30

Diskussionsleitung: **PD Dr. Nikolaus Boroffka**

Dr. Vasile Diaconu

In the shadow of the Carpathian Mountains. Middle and Late Bronze Age settlements and secrets revealed through multidisciplinary approaches

Prof. Dr. Anja Hellmuth Kramberger

Neue Untersuchungen zu den sog. Satellitensiedlungen im Umfeld der Gradina Monkodonja – Fallstudie Gradina Monbrodo

Dr. Neculai Bolohan

Microregional approach of the Bronze Age in the East Carpathian area

Dr. József Puskás

Late Bronze Age hoarding practices in Southeast Transylvania

18:30-19:00

Abschlussdiskussion des ersten Tages

19:30

Abendessen



DONNERSTAG / 6. NOVEMBER 2025

NATIONALMUSEUM FÜR GESCHICHTE DER MOLDOVA



<https://meet.google.com/fzt-jwyu-btg>

9:00-11:00

Diskussionsleitung: **DR. DENIS TOPAL**

PROF. DR. DR. H.C. JONI APAKIDZE, PROF. DR. DR. H.C. MULT. SVEND HANSEN (ONLINE)

Die mittel- und spätbronzezeitlichen Siedlungen und Depots in Westgeorgien

DR. TUDOR SOROCEANU, DR. BERNHARD HEEB (ONLINE)

Das Bronzedepot von Cehei-Pustă („Moigrad I“). Neue Ergebnisse zu einem alten Fund

DR. ANASTASIIA KOROKHINA (ONLINE)

(Not) looking for easy ways: Ceramics of the final period of the Late Bronze Age in eastern Ukraine and the problems of its systematisation

DR. RUBEN WEHRHEIM

Rethinking architecture: A study of Bronze Age building remains in the Pannonian Basin

11:00-11:30

Kaffeepause

11:30-13:00

Diskussionsleitung: **PROF. DR. ELKE KAISER**

DR. SOPHIA HRISTEVA, DR. BOGDAN ATHANASSOV, PROF. DR. ERNST PERNICKA

A 12th-11th century BCE socketed axe from Chaia Cave, Rhodope Mountains, South Bulgaria: an unusual deposition in turbulent times

MARIAN LIE M.A., PD DR. ALEXANDRA GĂVAN, PROF. DR. TOBIAS L. KIENLIN

Living together or apart? The Bronze Age tell and extended settlement at Toboliu

PD DR. FLORIN GOGÂLTAN

Bronzezeitliche Kulthöhlen in Siebenbürgen

13:00-14:00

Mittagessen

14:00-15:30

Diskussionsleitung: **PROF. DR. TOBIAS KIENLIN**

DR. DENIS TOPAL

The Late Bronze – Early Iron Age hoarding practices along the Danube, Prut, and Dniester rivers

DR. MIHAIL BĂȚ, DR. AUREL ZANOCI

Connectivity or continuity at the turn of the Ages? An example based on the settlement finds from Middle Dniester Basin at the end of the 2nd millennium BC

PROF. DR. BLAGOJE GOVEDARICA, DR. IGOR MANZURA

Seelenloch und Seelenbegleiter

15.30-16:00

Abschlussdiskussion der Ergebnisse der Tagung

17:00

Abendessen



FREITAG / 7. NOVEMBER 2025

Abreise



Man, environment, settlement: Northern Pontic Steppe in the Late Bronze Age

MAGDA PIENIAŻEK

Nowhere is an understanding of the principles of interaction between humans and their environment more crucial than in the steppe, where the availability of important resources was restricted. The management of limited building materials, subsistence strategies, and settlement patterns adapted to specific climatic conditions were among the most significant elements of the Late Bronze Age culture in southern Ukraine. The presentation will focus on the Sabatinovka and Belozerkha cultures.

The northern Pontic steppe is not uniform, but is in fact divided into diverse ecological zones, ranging from semi-desert to fertile forest-steppe. The availability of raw materials such as stone, timber and clay varied considerably from the Crimea in the south to the northern part of the steppe. The extent and form of their architectural application were determined by economic strategies, social organization and climatic fluctuations. Analysis reveals that the Sabatinovka period was marked by a dramatic increase in settlement activity, characterized by the construction of large, multi-room stone buildings which suggest a transition to a more sedentary way of life. The construction of these buildings required considerable planning and labor, suggesting the involvement of socially privileged groups in the process of sedentarisation. Nevertheless, evidence from likely seasonal settlements indicates the continued presence of mobile or semi-mobile components, particularly in the southern, drier steppe. In contrast, the Belozerkha period shows a significant decline in settlement density, architectural elaboration and economic diversity, suggesting a return to more mobile and less complex subsistence strategies. The spatial concentration of sites along major rivers highlights their importance for communication, exchange, and the local economy. Overall, the archaeological record reflects a society in transition, influenced by environmental conditions and resource availability, as well as social differentiation, but also demonstrating great creativity in the management of available resources.



Siedlungsarchäologische Forschungen im Süden der Moldova

ELKE KAISER, EUGEN SAVA

Zwischen 2016 und 2019 haben E. Sava, Nationalmuseum für Geschichte der Moldova, Chişinău, und E. Kaiser, Institut für Prähistorische Archäologie an der Freien Universität Berlin, ein Projekt geleitet, das von der AvH-Stiftung gefördert wurde. Dabei wurden Siedlungsplätze der späten Bronzezeit im Süden der Republik Moldova systematisch dokumentiert. Zwei nahe beieinander gelegene Fundplätze – Cazaclia und Taraclia-Gaidabul – ergaben dabei interessante Funde und Befunde, so dass hier intensivere feldarchäologische Untersuchungen durchgeführt worden sind. Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeiten werden im Vortrag vorgestellt. Die Zusammenarbeit von Archäologie, Anthropologie, Archäozoologie, Archäobotanik, Geographie sowie eine Serie an Radiokarbondatierungen ermöglichen nun ein neues Verständnis der Siedlungsweise während des Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni-Kulturkomplexes im Süden der Moldova. Gleichzeitig ergeben sich neue Erkenntnisse für die späte Bronzezeit zwischen Karpaten und Dnipro.



Stone structures from the Taraclia-Gaidabul settlement (Late Bronze Age, Sabatinovka culture)

MARIANA SÎRBU, EUGENIU MISTREANU, LIVIA ERMURACHI

The communities of the Sabatinovka culture (late 17th century - 12th century BC) inhabited the steppe zone stretching between the northwestern coast of the Sea of Azov and the southeastern region of the Black Sea, including the Crimean and Taman peninsulas.

Stone constructions are more characteristic of the eastern area of the Sabatinovka culture, being predominantly discovered in settlements excavated in the region between the Bug and Dnieper rivers (Sabatinivka, Vološskoe, Peresadivka, Voronovka II), in the Crimean Peninsula (Kirovo, Bay Kijat) and in the Taman Peninsula (Bagay 1, Balka Lisovitskovo IV), while only rarely attested in the Prut-Dniester region (Bolgrad). Similar constructions are also known from Coslogeni culture settlements south of the Danube (Duran Kulak). Between 2016 and 2019, archaeological excavations were conducted at the Taraclia-Gaidabul settlement, covering a total area of 700 m². These investigations, carried out within the framework of a Moldovan-German project implemented by the National Museum of History of Moldova (Chișinău) in collaboration with the Institute of Prehistory, Free University of Berlin, included both archaeological and interdisciplinary research. A large portion of an “ash lens” and its adjacent area was explored, within which several archaeological features were documented, most notably the stone structures. Nine stone structures were uncovered at the Taraclia-Gaidabul settlement. Given their poor state of preservation, as well as the incomplete exploration of the “ash lens”, their purpose cannot be determined with certainty. Only two of them (no. 5 and no. 9) can be reliably attributed to constructions. Nevertheless, the results obtained from the study of these complexes allow us to include the Taraclia-Gaidabul site among the Sabatinovka settlements with stone-built structures, thereby extending the known distribution area of such constructions.

Research carried out within the Subprogram 180101 “The historical-archaeological museum heritage: systematization and scientific-cultural valorization” at the National Museum of History of Moldova.



Are there Bronze Age *zolniki* in Bulgaria? The evidence from Orlovets near Veliko Turnovo in context

PETAR ZIDAROV, VANYA PETROVA, NADEZHDA TODOROVA

Archaeological research related to the construction of a gas pipeline in the Papaz Chesma locality near the village of Orlovets near Veliko Tarnovo, revealed several overlapping habitation areas dating to the Early and Final Chalcolithic, Late Bronze, and Early Iron Ages. Of particular interest is a dugout feature measuring 7.5×5.0×1.8 m, containing in its upper part a light-coloured ashy sediment. The high concentration of charcoal, pottery, animal bones, and interesting finds, suggesting deliberate deposition, allow comparisons to the so-called ash-mounds (*zolniki*), better known so far from Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, and Southern Russia. The ceramic repertoire is diverse and bears the characteristics of two different styles – on the one hand, pottery with incised and “Furchenstich” decoration, and on the other, plain monochrome vessels with shapes characteristic of the Coslogeni culture. The small finds include a bronze razor and a needle, ceramic spindle whorls and cart wheel models, a flint arrowhead, and flint blades with denticulated retouching. Of particular interest are some finds made of worked bone, such as a socketed arrowhead with incised decoration, and several tool types designed for working hide and leather. Some of them were practically unknown south of the Danube, but they find excellent parallels from the Carpathians to the northern Pontic steppes, and preliminary data from excavations at other sites in NE Bulgaria suggest that they are not isolated. This allows us to assume that their presence probably indicates the development of hide processing and trade as a new economic sector, most likely arising under external influence during the Late Bronze Age.



Settlement dynamics in the Lower Mureş Region during the 2nd millennium BC

VICTOR SAVA

The Lower Mureş Region is a distinct geographical area in the southeastern part of the Carpathian Basin. It stretches from where the Mureş River exits the mountain corridor to its confluence with the Tisa. Systematic field surveys conducted over the last 15 years in an area of cca. 2200 km² have led to the identification of 100 settlements that date back to the 2nd millennium BC. This makes the Lower Mureş Region one of the most thoroughly investigated microregions in the Eastern Carpathian Basin.

This presentation reflects a synthesis of data on Middle Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age settlements. Their geographic setting, size of the inhabited areas, fortification systems, average distance between contemporary settlements, and internal organisation are discussed. Starting from this data set, an overall picture regarding the diachronic evolution of Lower Mureş Region settlements can be outlined. The status of Middle Bronze Age tell and tell like settlements within the Lower Mureş Region settlement network is examined, as well as the position of Late Bronze Age megaforts as central sites for a catchment area.



Sacred as the performative action of living in settlements and resilience by hoarding in the Middle Bronze Age Eastern Carpathian Basin

TIBOR-TAMÁS DARÓCZI

In the context of Middle Bronze Age settlements and hoarding in the Eastern Carpathian Basin, “sacred” as performative action can be defined as the deliberate enactment of social and symbolic practices that transform ordinary spaces and objects, such as settlements and hoards, into arenas of heightened meaning, where acts of deposition, accumulation, and display serve to articulate, negotiate, and reinforce collective identities, social hierarchies, and cosmological beliefs. These performative actions are not merely ritualised gestures and utterances but are dynamic processes that mark emotionally and socially significant events, embedding the sacred within the fabric of daily life and material culture.

Sacred performative actions permeated everyday activities, blurring the boundaries between the mundane and the extraordinary. Through these embodied practices, communities continually re-inscribed cosmological order and social cohesion, ensuring that the sacred was a lived, recurring reality rather than a distant abstraction. The enactment of sacred rituals functioned as a resilience strategy, enabling communities to adapt to environmental, social, and existential challenges. Ritualised responses to death, seasonal change, or ecological uncertainty provided frameworks for coping with loss, negotiating change, and reinforcing collective identity. The performative nature of the sacred thus became a dynamic resource for resilience, allowing communities to navigate instability while maintaining social and cosmological balance. These actions are central to the negotiation of identity, memory, and power within prehistoric communities of the Eastern Carpathian Basin.



The Bronze hoards from Ațintiș and the phenomenon of multiple hoarding in the Carpathian Basin

BOTOND REZI

In the autumn of 2025, in a forested slope near the village of Ațintiș, a unique hoarding assemblage was discovered by metal detectorists, consisting of five separate bronze hoards buried in a relatively straight line, at a distance of approximately 400 meters. The structure and typological composition of the hoards point towards a chronological simultaneity, thus a deliberate and mindful premeditation can be assumed behind their concealment.

Due to the lack of well documented instances the Romanian prehistoric research recorded so far only two sites, each with two separate hoards. Hence, the importance of the site from Ațintiș should be emphasized. But, the phenomenon of multiple hoarding is a common occurrence during the European metal ages. The structure and mainly the character of these finds has altered over time, thus their significance and function may be distinctly defined.

Based on the newly discovered assemblages from Ațintiș and on several well documented examples from Europe, the paper tries to offer an introspect into the phenomenon of multiple hoarding from the eastern fringes of the Carpathian Basin.



Salt, settlement and hoarding in the Balkan-Pontic-Carpathian zone throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Ages

VALERII KAVRUK

The evidence of salt exploitation during the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) and Late Bronze Age (LBA) in the Balkan-Pontic-Carpathian zone (BPC) shows the tip of the iceberg of what it was. Hopefully, some of its essential aspects can be revealed if evidence regarding the contexts and factors of salt production, use, and supply are cross-correlated. This paper first cross-correlates salt sources and MBA and LBA evidence of salt production available in the BPC. Then, it integrates these variables into the spatial and temporal dynamics of lifestyles, subsistence strategies, crafts, technologies, social complexity, exchange and cultural diversity and interplay in Southeast and Central-East Europe throughout the MBA and LBA, as these are revealed through the study of settlements and hoards. These cross-correlations suggest the following working hypotheses. Salt production during MBA and LBA in BPC was much more extensive than can be deduced from its direct evidence. Salt was increasingly necessary to support the more and more complex food production and consumption, leather production and use, metallurgy, trade, etc. Technological progress in mining, woodworking, and transportation facilitated the development of salt production and supply. Throughout the MBA and LBA, salt production in BPC increased in terms of both complexity and scale. The component regions of the BPC zone complemented each other in terms of food, salt and metal resources, and were well interconnected by water and land routes. During the MBA and LBA, salt and salted products appear to have been increasingly transported along these routes. All these appear to have contributed to the accumulation of wealth and power in local elites who controlled salt production and circulation. This is evidenced by clusters of high-status and wealthy sites and hoards in salt-rich areas and in key locations along the 'salt routes'. The elites who ruled the salt-receiving areas were the greatest beneficiaries of this system. This is particularly evident in the Pannonian Basin, which exhibits the highest concentration of rich, high-status MBA and LBA settlements and hoards in the entire BPC zone.



Șișești – Ein spätbronzezeitlicher Hortfund aus Südrumänien. Lokale Männer und fremde Frauen?

NIKOLAUS BOROFFKA, MARIAN NEAGOE, OANA NEAGOE

Ein neuer Hortfund aus Șișești, Rumänien, kann in die Frühe Urnenfelderzeit datiert werden. Der für den Raum mittelgroße Hort enthält Bronze- und Goldfunde. Die Zusammensetzung des Fundes besteht aus Schmuck, Werkzeug und Waffen. Eine kleine Auswahl an Fundstücken wird vorgestellt und durch Typenkartierungen in einen europäischen Kontext gestellt. Dabei zeigt sich ein Unterschied zwischen eher lokalen Werkzeugen und Waffen (nur aus Bronze), und Schmuckelementen (aus Bronze und Gold), deren Fundkonzentrationen vorherrschend in weit entfernten Gebieten liegen.

In diesem Beitrag soll von den Waffen die Lanzenspitze, von den Werkzeugen die lanzettförmigen Sägeblätter und von dem Schmuck die Violinbogenfibel mit glattem Bügel (Peschiera Typ) vorgestellt werden. Einige hiervon zeigen eine recht begrenzte lokale Verbreitung. Diese liegen im zentralen und südlichen Rumänien, sowie dem westlich angrenzenden Gebiet im ehemaligen Jugoslawiens. Andere haben dagegen Schwerpunkte deutlich ausserhalb des regionalen Kontextes, vor allem im zentralen Mitteleuropa, in Italien und Griechenland. Da insbesondere die Werkzeuge und Waffen eher lokale Bezüge aufweisen, dagegen die Schmuck- und Trachtbestandteile eher entfernte Analogien aufweisen, könnte dies so interpretiert werden, dass in dem Hort einheimische männliche Attribute mit fremden, traditionell weiblich konnotiertem Schmuck verbunden sind.



The horizons of the Late Bronze Age of the settlement Strumok III

YURI CHERNIENKO

In 1993 the settlement of the Late Bronze Age and first centuries AD Strumok III on the left bank of Nerushai River (now Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi district of Odessa region) was excavated on an area of 332 m² by the Danube-Dniester (Rescue) expedition of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine led by A. Dzigovsky. The approximate area of the site is 20 hectares. In the eastern part of the site with the low saturated cultural layer no archaeological objects were found, but a few materials of the Sabatynivka culture were obtained (see, for example: Сапожникова, Секерская, Черниенко 1996, 69-71). In the central part of the settlement 3 semi-dugouts built without using stone (2 – with the pits in the floors) with the fills saturated with archaeozoological and archaeological materials of the early stage of the Bilozersk culture, the pits and the entrance corridor to the completely destroyed chamber of the fourth semi-dugout of the LBA were partially excavated. 2 hearths were explored in 2 dwellings. The parts of about 1800 molded vessels (pots, bowls, cups, handles, tare, brazier etc.) and lids, as a rule, made of denser dough with smaller admixtures than those of the Sabatynivka vessels, the tools of labor, the fragment of the clay “bread” of the Bilozersk culture etc. were found. At least 15 fragments of the bodies out of more than 1700 fragments of the upper and/or middle parts of the Bilozersk vessels from the site (less than 1%) have single rollers. With a fairly high degree of probability, only 1 of 60 diagnostic fragments of the upper parts of the Bilozersk conditionally kitchen vessels can be considered part of the bank. Pots and tureens predominate. The parts of the narrow-necked vat, winebowl etc. have no analogies in the Sabatynivka culture.



Curved flint sickle knives from around the Carpathians in the Middle and Late Bronze Age

EUGENIU MISTREANU

The subject of the presentation is the curved flint knives from the Middle and Early Bronze Age sites in the Carpathian area, with an emphasis on a batch of pieces collected from the territory of the locality of Coteala, Briceni district, Republic of Moldova, belonging to the National Museum of History of Moldova. The assemblage is composed of 6 complete flint items of grey colour with white inclusions, one of smaller yellowish-grey size and one fragment of greyish-black flint. The objects we approach, based on their characteristics, are attributed to the Komariv culture (Komarov, Komarów), widespread in the upper and middle part of the Prut-Dniester interfluve, reaching the Precarpathian region, occupying western Ukraine, part of eastern Poland, northern Moldova and northeastern Romania. The occurrence of curved flint knives constitutes a rarity, being rather an exception for Middle and Late Bronze cultures of the Carpathian and outer-Carpathian area. Our preliminary observations will focus on their distribution, origin of raw materials, functionality as well as the cultural setting of this type of object. In addition to the description of the artefacts, several analogies to this assemblage group of pieces are presented. It is believed that the origin of these types of artifacts, originally from other rocks, is from the southern area of the Carpathian Mountains. The curved flint knife is a tool with distinct characteristics, different from other similarly shaped pieces made from other rocks. We believe that a distinction must be made between curved stone knives and flint sickle knives, because from a morphological, utility, and general function point of view, the opportunities, increased efficiency, and diversity of maneuvers offered by flint pieces are clearly visible, which take precedence over those made from many other rocks.

Research carried out within the Subprogram 180101 "The historical-archaeological museum heritage: systematization and scientific-cultural valorization" at the National Museum of History of Moldova.



In the shadow of the Carpathian Mountains. Middle and Late Bronze Age settlements and secrets revealed through multidisciplinary approaches

VASILE DIACONU

Recent researches conducted in the sub-Carpathian area of eastern Romania (especially in Neamț County) has provided valuable information about the topography and structure of some of the settlements specific to the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Thanks to geophysical investigations and LiDAR scans, we know now essential details about the structure of the sites, their state of preservation, and the anthropogenic features within them.

The most important results were obtained for several fortified sites located in forested areas, where LiDAR measurements provided important clues about the layout of the defensive systems. In several cases, intrusive research was also carried out, which allowed for the cultural attribution of these sites, all of which are specific to the Middle Bronze Age.

For the Late Bronze Age, geophysical investigations were carried out for three settlements specific to the Noua culture, but the results were not spectacular. Instead, it was observed that intensive agriculture had destroyed many of the anthropogenic structures in these settlements.

Also part of the multidisciplinary approach is a series of absolute data, which provide certain chronological landmarks for the Middle and Late Bronze Age sites.



Neue Untersuchungen zu den sog. Satellitensiedlungen im Umfeld der Gradina Monkodonja – Fallstudie Gradina Monbrodo

ANJA HELLMUTH KRAMBERGER

Der Vortrag behandelt Untersuchungen zu den sog. Satellitensiedlungen im Umfeld der Gradina Monkodonja bei Rovinj, der bislang am besten erforschten befestigten Höhensiedlung an der Westküste Istriens. Die Gradina von Monkodonja war zwischen ca. 1850/1750 und 1500/1450 v. Chr., in der entwickelten Früh- und beginnenden Mittelbronzezeit, besiedelt und zeichnet sich durch eine klare innere Gliederung mit Akropolis, Ober- und Unterstadt sowie zentralisierten Speicherbereichen und verschiedenen Aktivitätszonen aus. Sie gilt als bedeutendes Zentrum für die umliegenden Gradinen, deren Datierung jedoch bislang überwiegend auf Oberflächenfunden basierte. Im Rahmen eines kroatisch-koreanischen Projekts (2016-2018) wurden drei küstennahe Höhensiedlungen untersucht: Monbrodo, Monvi und Muja. Besonders Monbrodo, rund 5 km von Monkodonja entfernt, erbrachte mächtige Siedlungsschichten mit Keramik, die eindeutig in die späte Früh- und Mittelbronzezeit weisen – also zur gleichen Zeit besiedelt war wie die Gradina Monkodonja. Anders als in Monkodonja war der Platz jedoch auch in späteren Epochen bis in die Römerzeit bewohnt. Seine Lage unmittelbar am Meer deutet auf eine mögliche Hafenfunktion bzw. auf einen wichtigen Umschlagplatz im Seeverkehr hin. Monvi und Muja waren ebenfalls zeitgleich mit Monkodonja bewohnt, besaßen jedoch weniger stark ausgebaute Befestigungen, was auf unterschiedliche Funktionen schließen lässt. Die Untersuchungen zeigen, dass in der Region Rovinj im 18.-16./15. Jahrhundert v. Chr. eine größere Anzahl an Höhensiedlungen gleichzeitig existierten – was bereits seit langem in der Forschung vermutet worden war, aber bisher nur auf Oberflächenfunden beruhte und nun über neue Ausgrabungen bestätigt werden konnte. Besonders Monbrodo unterscheidet sich dabei weder im Fundmaterial noch in der Größe wesentlich von Monkodonja und ist daher womöglich weniger als „Satellit“, sondern vielmehr als eigenständiges Zentrum zu verstehen. Dies könnte somit Rückschlüsse auf die (relativ geringe) Größe der Territorien mutmaßlicher Zentralsiedlungen liefern.



Microregional approach of the Bronze Age in the East Carpathian area

NECULAI BOLOHAN

The Eastern Carpathian area is an environment that allows mobility on two axes represented by the N-S corridor, generally along the Siret River and on the E-W axis, between the Prut River basin and the foothills of the Eastern Carpathians. If at a macroregional level, apparently, the knowledge of the Bronze Age seems to have no more secrets, at a microregional level we are still looking for the light of knowledge at the end of the tunnel. It is true that after 2000 there was a particular interest in researching the Bronze Age east of the Carpathians (see the results of the research at Costișa, Silișteea, Adâncata the scientifically promising archaeological contexts at Poduri or Lunca, etc.). To these results are added several monographic attempts dedicated to the regional approach – the East Carpathian depressions, the Suceava Plateau, the Jijia Valley or some themes dedicated to the analysis in a cultural-historical or updated reading key of archaeological materiality. There remain open themes such as the development of knowledge of the Early Bronze period, nor does the Late Bronze Age seems to come out of the “ash of the ashes”. At the same time, the methodological packages specific to the different analyzed themes seem to remain in the deducibile realm! Some recent personal experiences that required numerous archaeological field investigations in the micro-regions of the Cracău-Bistrița Depression, more frequent descents into research laboratories, the attempt to find the keys to building the specialized text facilitated different ways of approach. Thus, the need for critical knowledge of the state of knowledge has the role of accommodating the background of the theme and searching for remaining challenges; The use or construction of a clearly expressed analysis mechanism open horizons that go beyond the description of materiality; The identification of different types of stresses and the responses that individuals and communities have designed; The possibility of identifying the territorialization of communities and its effects; Establishing and using criteria that allow the various types of immediate or remote communication. These principles were used during the various stages of field research and when we had the possibility of *loosening the ground*.



Late Bronze Age hoarding practices in Southeast Transylvania

JÓZSEF PUSKÁS

Even though numerous metal discoveries from the Late Bronze Age have been identified in the study area, many of them were recovered by non-specialists, making it impossible to reconstruct their provenance context. In some cases, fortunate circumstances allowed for the recovery of intact hoards.

In this presentation, I will focus on three different hoards for which the context is either well documented or can be reconstructed. These deposits originate from three distinct types of sites: an open settlement, a natural environment without traces of settlement, and a fortified settlement. Where possible, I will discuss the relationship between settlement features and the placement of the hoards, identifying specific areas within the settlements.

An important issue concerns the chronology of these hoards. As we will see, there is a brief period at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age during which not only hoards but also metal objects in general are absent. Evidence of local metal production appears only from the Reinecke Br D phase (c. 1300 cal BC) onward, but not earlier, even though the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in the region may be placed around the Reinecke Br B period (1600/1550 cal BC). From around 1300 cal BC onward, there is also evidence of western influences, which may indicate both the spread of bronze metallurgy and the adoption of deposition practices.



Die mittel- und spätbronzezeitlichen Siedlungen und Depots in Westgeorgien

JONI APAKIDZE, SVEND HANSEN

In Westgeorgien wurden zahlreiche Siedlungen aus der mittleren und späten Bronzezeit entdeckt. Hier wird die Tellsiedlung Tabakoni vorgestellt, die zwischen 2011 und 2017 im Rahmen einer Institutspartnerschaft der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung zwischen der Eurasien-Abteilung des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts und dem Archäologischen Institut der Staatlichen Universität Sokhumi in Tiflis ausgegraben wurde. Die Siedlung befindet sich im Dorf Didinedzi in der Munizipalität Zugdidi. Ausgrabungen haben die Existenz einer mächtigen Kulturschicht aus der mittleren Bronzezeit bestätigt. Auch Schichten aus der späten Bronzezeit und der Antike wurden hier gefunden. Die 14C-Datierungen zeigen, dass Tabakoni bereits am Ende des 3. Jahrhunderts v. Chr., etwa im 21./20. Jahrhundert v. Chr., bewohnt war. Im Rahmen des DFG-Projekts „Die bronze- und früheisenzeitlichen Hortfunde der Kolchis-Kultur in West- und Zentralkaukasien“ haben wir die bronzezeitlichen Horte im Westen Georgiens untersucht. Insgesamt wurden über 220 Bronzehorte in rund 40 Museen in Georgien katalogisiert und eingehend untersucht. Einige der bedeutendsten Schätze werden hier vorgestellt. Es handelt sich um die Horte aus Ureki, Kvishari, Kalvata und Ochkhomuri. Nach unserer neuen Datierung gehört der Hort von Ureki an den Anfang der Mittelbronzezeit, Der Hort von Kvishari gehört zur ersten Hälfte des 2. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. Die neue Datierung des Kalvata Hortes liegt im 13. bis 12. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Typische kolchische Hortfunde der Spätbronzezeit enthalten in der Regel bronzene Äxte, Hacken, Hellebardenklingen und Barren unterschiedlicher Größe, selten auch Hellebardenäxte, Lanzenspitzen, Pfeilspitzen usw. Die Kalvata- und Ochkhomuri-Horte sind typische Horte der spätbronzezeitlichen Kolchis-Kultur.



Das Bronzedept von Cehei-Pustă („Moigrad I“). Neue Ergebnisse zu einem alten Fund

TUDOR SOROCEANU, BERNHARD HEEB

Kurz vor dem Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges erwarb das Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Berlin eine angeblich in Moigrad gefundene Bronzeentdeckung. Die Bronzen – zwei Becken vom Typ B1, drei Tassen, drei Tüllenbeile und zwei Fragmente davon, drei Lanzenspitzen, zwei Gußkuchen, ca. 30 Armringe und je ein Tüllenmeißel, Knauf/Tülle, Sägeblatt und ein flacher Ring – wurden erst über 20 Jahren später von I. Nestors veröffentlicht. Somit erlangten sie in kurzer Zeit eine breite Bekanntheit und eine feste Stellung in der Forschung. Diese Publikation erfolgte in unbegreiflicher Eile und leidet unter vielen methodischen und konkreten Mängeln. P. Prohászka hat darüber hinaus Urkunden entdeckt und im Jahr 2016 veröffentlicht, die auf den richtigen Fundort (Cehei-Pustă) und Fundverhältnisse (ausgeackert) hinweisen. Auf dieser Weise entstand die Notwendigkeit einer neuen Edition, in der die alten Fehler korrigiert und die neuen Erkenntnisse zur Geltung kommen sollten, um dem heutigen Fachmann eine zuverlässige Publikation dieser Bronzen zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Unsere Ergebnisse können wie folgt zusammengefaßt werden:

1. Veröffentlichungsverbundene Mängel wurden behoben und eine richtige Dokumentation (Zeichnungen mit Querschnitten, Photographien, Gewichte usw.) wurde bereitgestellt.

2. Es wurde auf die technischen Mängel hingewiesen, u. a. auf die Unrichtigkeit des Terminus „Schlacke“; die von I. Nestor beantragten Analysen wurden erstmals publiziert.

3. Die interpretatorischen Mängel von I. Nestor wurden diskutiert und es wurden neue Deutungswege angeboten. Die Nestorsche Schlußfolgerung, die bereits auf der ersten Seite seiner Veröffentlichung zu finden ist („eine eilig verlassene Bronzegießerei“) wurde mit Argumenten abgelehnt und eine neue, komplexere Interpretation des Fundes präsentiert. Damit erhält unsere Entdeckung neue wissenschaftliche Konturen und einen neuen Platz in der heutigen Forschung.



(Not) looking for easy ways: Ceramics of the final period of the Late Bronze Age in eastern Ukraine and the problems of its systematisation

ANASTASIIA KOROKHINA

From the onset of the Late Bronze Age, the territories between the Dnipro and the Siverskyi Donets were culturally integrated into what E. Chernykh defined as the Asiatic Metallurgical and Cultural Province. At the transition from the Bronze to the Early Iron Age – which Ukrainian scholars distinguish as a separate final stage of the Bronze Age (12th-10th centuries BC) – profound changes occurred in the character of intercultural connections and in the structure of cultural formations in the region. With the intensification of cultural and, presumably, demographic diffusion, new syncretic communities emerged, often displaying features of a “cultural continuum” in their material culture.

Since pottery is the most informative source for investigating these processes, the author proposes certain refinements in the methods used to analyze its technology and morphology. A case study devoted to the archaeometric analysis of ceramics from the cultural groups of the forest-steppe zone of Eastern Ukraine (Post-Zrubna, Bondarykha, and the Studenok type) demonstrates the potential of applying modern methodological approaches (in particular, the *chaine opératoire*) to reconstruct cultural-genetic processes.

It is also demonstrated how, with the aid of modern computational techniques, it is possible to construct detailed classifications of the ‘paradigmatic’ type – that is, based on identifying patterns in combinations of traits – as an alternative to intuitive hierarchical classifications. This approach enables not only more precise description but also a deeper explanation of the inherent morphological structures of the phenomena under study and their variability.



Rethinking architecture: a study of Bronze Age building remains in the Pannonian Basin

RUBEN WEHRHEIM

This talk presents a fundamental re-evaluation of the barely analysed Bronze Age building remains in the Pannonian Basin. Despite their immense potential for reconstructing prehistoric societies, these architectural remains have so far been given only marginal treatment in scientific literature.

To close this research gap, a comprehensive catalogue of the buildings was first compiled. Based on this, a detailed analysis was carried out, using quantitative statistical methods such as Multiple Correspondence Analysis. It was shown that the choice of building forms was significantly influenced by the locally available building materials. The study also proves that architecture can be a direct reflection of social processes. For example, parallels in the construction of the Hatvan and Otomani settlements point to close cultural relations. At the same time, the significant increase in certain constructions correlates with phases of social upheaval and migration. It is also shown that massive mud-brick buildings were probably much more common than the poor preservation of the finds and the previous focus on post-hole constructions would suggest.

The results demonstrate the great potential of architectural analysis as a complex but extremely valuable tool for the study of prehistoric societies. The talk will show how the buildings represent a meaningful record of social and cultural processes in the Bronze Age of the Pannonian Basin and thus enable new, innovative approaches to interpretation that go beyond purely archaeological finds.



A 12th-11th century BCE socketed axe from Chaia Cave, Rhodope Mountains, South Bulgaria: an unusual deposition in turbulent times

SOPHIA HRISTEVA, BOGDAN ATHANASSOV, ERNST PERNICKA

In 2023, a socketed axe was discovered during regular excavations in Chaia cave in the Central Rhodope Mountains, approximately 90 km north of the Aegean coast. This is the southernmost example of Valentin Dergachev's Type "Banat" and Oliver Dietrich's Type C3f, which are mostly common in hoards to the east and west of the Iron Gates in the Middle and Lower Danube regions. The ceramic material and a ¹⁴C sample from the cave suggest a date in the 12th or 11th century BCE, which is supported also by the shape of the axe.

A casting defect in the axe's loop, and a bronze object fragment stuck in its shaft, suggest that the axe from Chaia was probably never used as a tool or weapon. It therefore seems that it was ritually deposited in the cave. The presence of a fireplace and a rich pottery repertoire from the 12th and 11th centuries BCE is insufficient to indicate a settlement occupation or cult function for the cave.

The Chaia cave evidence is important, because it is not typical of the previous Late Bronze Age. The more or less formal end of this period in the Eastern Balkans is marked by the abandonment of almost all settlements in the first years or decades of the 12th century BCE. New sites from the beginning of the Early Iron Age have lighter architecture, but show continuity in ceramic shapes and decoration. Metal objects also indicate a gradual transition from the 13th to the 12th century BCE.

In our paper, we contextualise the Chaia cave data within the broader picture of the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age, including processes such as the spread of fluted pottery from the Danube to southern Bulgaria and Anatolia (Troy VIIb), the circulation of metal objects southwards, as evidenced by the Kozmandere hoard on the northern shores of the Marmara Sea.



Living together or apart? The Bronze Age tell and extended settlement at Toboliu

MARIAN ADRIAN LIE, ALEXANDRA GĂVAN, TOBIAS KIENLIN

Bronze Age tells in the Carpathian Basin flourished roughly between 2300/2200 and 1500/1450 BC. These sites have traditionally been viewed as fortified centers or elite residences, surrounded by agrarian settlements that provided subsistence and labor. However, recent interdisciplinary work complicates this theoretical model. Outer settlements frequently reveal dense architecture, diverse household inventories, and evidence of economic activities. Were tells truly elite enclaves? Or did they function as focal nodes within broader, more integrated settlement systems? Toboliu (Bihor County, Romania) represents one of the largest and most promising examples for addressing these questions. The tell itself rises approximately four meters above the surrounding plain, with stratigraphy dated mainly to the nineteenth through sixteenth centuries BC. Non-invasive survey, magnetometry, core drilling, aerial imagery, and surface collection, has revealed a surrounding outer settlement covering more than 120 hectares, encircled by two concentric ditches. The project seeks to refine the chronology of the tell, ditches, and outer settlement, to investigate household practices on- and off-tell, and to evaluate whether spatial and economic differences reflect hierarchy, specialization, or integration.



Bronzezeitliche Kulthöhlen in Siebenbürgen

FLORIN GOGÂLTAN

Die moderne archäologische Erforschung von Höhlen hat das Paradigma ihrer Nutzung als mehr oder weniger temporäre Unterkünfte von Menschen, die auf der Suche nach einem sicheren Zuhause waren, grundlegend verändert. Dunkelheit, niedrige Temperaturen, verursacht durch übermäßige Feuchtigkeit und starke Luftströmungen, sowie die uralte Furcht vor dem Unbekannten machten jedoch eine dauerhafte Besiedlung solcher Räume unmöglich. Dennoch fehlen archäologische Funde nicht.

Für diejenigen, die Höhlen systematisch erforschen – in Ländern mit reichen Karstsystemen –, werden Gefäße, Metallobjekte oder menschliche Überreste, die in Räumen fern des natürlichen Lichts oder an schwer zugänglichen Orten entdeckt wurden, in der Regel kultischen Praktiken zugeschrieben. Selbst Forscherinnen und Forscher ohne direkte Erfahrung auf diesem Gebiet integrieren angesichts solcher Evidenzen die rituelle Bedeutung von Höhlen in das spirituelle und religiöse Leben vergangener wie auch gegenwärtiger Gemeinschaften.

In diesem Vortrag präsentiere ich die interdisziplinären Forschungen, die ich gemeinsam mit meinen Kolleginnen und Kollegen kürzlich in der Höhle *Izbucul Topliței de Vida* durchgeführt habe. Sie befindet sich im Dorf Luncasprrie, Gemeinde Dobrești, Kreis Bihor, im Einzugsgebiet des Vida-Tals im Pădurea-Craiului-Gebirge. Dort wurden bisher zehn Gräber *in situ* untersucht, die mit einem reichen funerären Inventar verbunden sind. Der Raum, in dem die Verstorbenen niedergelegt wurden, das Bestattungsritual, Spuren von Gewalt sowie pathologische Befunde veranlassen uns, diese Entdeckungen symbolischen Praktiken zuzuordnen, die mit der Kommunikation mit den Gottheiten der Erde/des Dunkels und des Wassers in Verbindung stehen. Darüber hinaus werde ich das Bild der rituellen Deponierungen in den siebenburgischen Höhlen durch weitere aussagekräftige Beispiele aus der Bronzezeit ergänzen.



The Late Bronze – Early Iron Age hoarding practices along the Danube, Prut, and Dniester rivers

DENIS TOPAL

The territory between the Danube, Prut and Dniester rivers represents a crucial case study in this debate. Although the earliest Moldavian hoards date back to the Eneolithic, the practice largely disappears in the Early and Middle Bronze Age, when mortuary traditions dominate. Only from the Late Bronze Age onward does hoarding re-emerge as a widespread social practice. In the 1970s, 11 Late Bronze Age hoards were catalogued from the region; today, more than 40 are known, comprising over 700 artefacts, a corpus that provides a unique opportunity to revisit questions of cultural practice, social communication, and technological change. This presentation addresses three interrelated dimensions of the phenomenon. First, the composition and structure of the hoards are examined as patterned cultural expressions. Assemblages rarely represent random accumulations; instead, they embody deliberate “deposit models”, such as sets of ornaments, tool series, or mixed collections that reflect social roles and life cycles. Second, the chemical composition of artefacts provides a powerful tool for tracing technological recipes and chronological shifts. Comparative analyses reveal evolving alloying practices, such as the increased use of lead and silver in HaB-period ornaments. Third, the broader cultural significance of the hoards is evaluated through their spatial distribution and cultural affiliations. The final of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron age in the Carpathian-Dniester region witnessed a dramatic reorientation of cultural vectors, shifting from Eastern steppe traditions toward the Middle Danube and Central European horizons.

Research carried out within the Subprogram 180101 “The historical-archaeological museum heritage: systematization and scientific-cultural valorization” at the National Museum of History of Moldova.



Connectivity or continuity at the turn of the Ages? An example based on the settlements finds from Middle Dniester Basin at the end of the 2nd millennium BC

MIHAIL BĂȚ, AUREL ZANOCI

At the end of the 2nd millennium BC, cultural manifestations in the Middle Dniester basin marked the beginning of a phenomenon specific to the Iron Age in Southeast Europe. The emergence of Holercani-Hansca horizon in this region does not seem to follow a habitation specific to the late Bronze Age. The extreme rarity of finds from the previous period, in our case the Noua culture, characterizes the overall picture of what is happening in the archaeology of the problem. However, a series of discoveries force us to reconsider the scenario proposed above. A relevant situation in this regard comes from the Cobîlea site (Șoldănești district). Located on the eastern edge of the cluster of Early Iron Age sites, the settlement at Cobîlea seems to mark the western limit of the spread of Noua-type sites in this region. In other cases, bronze artefacts were discovered, well anchored in the Late Bronze Age chronology (e.g. crescent-shaped pendant, *Ösennadel* and *Rollenkopfnadel* hairpins). The similarities confirm the existence of connections with western cultural environments. It should also be noted that some of these “foreign goods” have been found in the context of pits deposit in settlements. Recent radiocarbon data obtained from these settlements (Saharna Mare / “Dealul Mănăstirii” and Saharna “Țiglău”, Rezina district) have confirmed that the earliest habitation can be dated to the second half of the 12th century BC. Looking at the overall situation in the Middle Dniester basin at the turn of the two millennia, we consider that the succession of cultural phenomena in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age is characterized by episodes of overlap and contemporaneity. At the same time, in our presentation we will also bring the example of the Hansca microregion, where the Early Iron Age habitation was preceded by a consistent level of Late Bronze Age discoveries.

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Seelenloch und Seelenträger im weiteren Kreis der Urnenfelder Kultur

BLAGOJE GOVEDARICA, IGOR MANZURA

Der Vortrag untersucht einige Aspekte religiöser Überzeugungen im Zusammenhang mit der imaginären Reise der Seele Verstorbener ins Jenseits, die sich am deutlichsten in Bestattungsritualen ausdrücken. Zahlreiche Beispiele für „Seelenlöcher“ in den Wänden megalithischer Gräber sind seit langem bekannt, und die Praxis, solche Öffnungen für den ungehinderten Übergang der Seele Verstorbener zu lassen, findet sich in verschiedenen Teilen der Welt. Von besonderem Interesse sind die Bräuche der Urnenfelderkultur mit Einäscherungen. Die Einäscherung wird üblicherweise als ein Akt der Reinigung angesehen, der die Seele für den Übergang ins Jenseits befreit.

In einigen Kulturen dieses Kreises (z. B. in der Lausitzer Kultur) wurden auch Urnen mit runde Öffnungen gefunden, die Forscher bereits im 19. Jahrhundert „Seelenlöcher“ nannten. Dieser Kulturkreis ist mit der Entstehung einer komplexeren Kunst der Seelenreise in den Himmel verbunden: rituelle, in Gräbern platzierte Streitwagen, die wir heute als „Seelenträger“ bezeichnen. Im Wesentlichen handelt es sich dabei um Gefäße für die reisende Seele, meist in Form eines Vogels auf drei oder vier Rädern. Gezogen werden sie von Watvögeln, meist Enten, die in der Mythologie als göttliche Wesen mit gleichem Zugang zu Himmel, Erde und Wasser verehrt werden.

Vorläufer dieses Brauchs ist der berühmte Dupljaja-Wagen (15.-13. Jahrhundert v. Chr.), der früher fälschlicherweise als „Himmelswagen des Apollo“ bezeichnet wurde. In der Spätbronzezeit und Früheisenzeit wurden solche Wagen in den Gräbern wohlhabender Menschen in einem riesigen Gebiet von Dänemark bis Italien gefunden. Es ist daher klar, dass das Privileg, diese „Seelenträger“ zu nutzen, um der Seele des Verstorbenen eine sichere Reise ins Jenseits zu ermöglichen, nur den einflussreichsten Mitgliedern der Gemeinschaft vorbehalten war. Den unteren sozialen Schichten genügten eine einfache Urne und ein kleines „Seelenloch“.

Research carried out within the Subprogram 180101 “The historical-archaeological museum heritage: systematization and scientific-cultural valorization” at the National Museum of History of Moldova.

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