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One and a Half Century of Archaeology on the Lower Mureș*

Peter Hügel, George Pascu Hurezan, Florin Mărginean, Victor Sava

Abstract: The present study analyzes the archaeological research in the area of Arad from the middle of the nineteenth century until present day. As elsewhere in Europe, the early days of archaeology in Arad were marked by enthusiast amateurs like S. Márki, K. Torma, L. Dömötör, I. Haller, F. Juhász, and J. Záray. M. Roska's excavations in Pecica "Șanțul Mare" opened new perspectives for the technique of archaeological excavations. Despite the fact that Roska set new standards in the archaeology of the Carpathian Basin, his research methodology remained unique. The era of the numerous systematic researches, test trenches, excavations, and field research, started with D. Popescu's work in Vârșand. New road infrastructure works (2008–2011) led to large-scale preventive researches on sites such as Șagu "Site A1_1", Pecica "Site 14", and Pecica "Site 12", "Site 13".

Keywords: Arad County, Museum Arad, Lower Mureș/Maros, archaeology, research.

It is difficult to establish when interest in antique vestiges started. The fact that Roman building materials were reused in the masonry of monasteries built during the 12th and 13th centuries on the Mureș Valley indicates a very pragmatic approach to the vestiges of classical antiquity which, though in ruin, were still standing. The question one still cannot answer is, where such building materials were taken from: the ruins in the close proximity of medieval edifices or those in Micia and Apulum, thus transported over dozens of kilometers. At any rate, the use of ancient monuments as sources of building materials, a habit perpetuated until the Modern Age, proves the lack of historical consideration towards them. The situation involves a paradox: on the one hand, monasteries preserved the spiritual legacy of Classical Antiquity and on the other hand they disregarded its material heritage. There is, nevertheless, proof that even since the 10th–11th centuries treasure hunters searched Roman sites for valuable objects (including *terra sigillata* fragments) that they later sold to monastic establishments. The situation is documented for Western Europe¹.

The earliest "archaeological excavations", clearly attested, were performed by curious and enterprising locals from Pâncota. Around 1847, they searched the ruins on Dealul Cetății in Pâncota (the site is also known as "Cetatea turcească" or "La mănăstire"). Though they uncovered ancient walls and even tombs, excavations were abandoned since none of the thought-for objects were found, i.e. items with high intrinsic value, such as those made of gold. The chance of finding a treasure consisting of several thousands of republican coins in Bârsa, in 1862, determined the archaeological dilettantes to return to the site of Pâncota for new excavations, in 1862–1863².

The first professional field research has been undertaken by a specialist in Roman antiquities – Fl. Rómer³ –, delegated by the National Museum of Antiquities in Budapest to identify antiquities in the Lower Mureș area. In 1868, he was in Bulci. During the same year, Al. Mocioni started the renovation and extension works of the local castle, that he had just bought. It is unclear if the Roman materials that Rómer later mentioned as coming from Bulci, were discovered during excavations for the foundation of the castle's northern wing or during archaeological excavations performed on the site of "Cetate" or "La Mănăstire" located just 200 m North–West of the castle⁴.

* The present paper is the revisited and up-to-date version of Hügel's text – Hügel 1999. English translation: Ana M. Gruia.

¹ We owe this piece of information to Prof. Dr. Sigmar von Schnurbein.

² Barbu *et al.* 1999, 73, Pâncota, pt. 1; Barbu *et al.* 1999, 34, Bârsa, pt. 1.

³ Rómer Floris (1815–1889), clergyman and teacher from Bratislava, later active in Győr and Budapest, became member of the Hungarian Academy of Science. Before being delegated to Bulci, he had earned a reputation among the Hungarian Academia by publishing an art–archaeological guide in 1865–1866 (Rómer 1865; Rómer 1866); according to IDR III/1, 23.

⁴ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 37, Bulci, pt. 2–4.

Rómer continued his field research in the area of Arad during subsequent years as well. Thus, in 1870 he was in Pecica, where, together with J. Hampel, he performed the first measurements of the site called “Șanțul Mare”. The brief data noted on that occasion was taken over in I. Parecz’s monograph overview; he stated that “the mound between Semlac and Pecica, that seems to have fulfilled military functions, was surrounded by ditches and is very high”⁵. Probably based on Rómer and Hampel’s findings, the Historical Monuments Commission in Budapest delegated the topographer engineer P. Molnár in order to produce a topographical sketch of the “fortification” in “Șanțul Mare” (1872)⁶.

Already in 1862–1863 groups of intellectuals from Arad were debating on the opportunity of founding a society supervising the discovery, preservation, and valorization of historical vestiges⁷. Nonetheless, the society was not founded. While in Deva G. Téglás established the Society for the History and Archaeology of Hunyad County (1870)⁸ and in Timișoara the Society for History and Archaeology (SHA) was founded on Zs. Ormós’s initiative (1872)⁹, the elite of Arad was still under the strong impression of the 1848/1849 Revolution. The pious approach to such events, collecting data and relics related to them, were fashionable attitudes. While in neighboring cities, museum collections *per se* were established, in Arad people gathered objects for a reliquary that was rather a worship place than a museum¹⁰. On the long run, “The Revolution Complex” marked the development of the Hungarian intellectual elite in the city; later on, Romanian intellectuals responded with a cult for the Union Movements and events related to December 1st 1918.

Following the indications of the Ministry of Culture and Public Instruction from Budapest, on the enrichment of didactic materials, the high schools from Arad and Lipova established their own collections of antiquities. Data is available on such collections created by the high school in Lipova and the Royal High School of Arad. They mostly consisted of coins and medals, but also other relics of the Revolution. In 1876, professor I. Kövesdi arranged the objects, part of the collection in Arad, chronologically and placed them on display in the high school library. There were ca. 270 objects, mostly coins and medals, some of antique origin. The impact on the public opinion was significant. As a first result, Grof B. Török donated “225 books and 25 very old objects” to the high school in question¹¹.

Meanwhile, between 1873 and 1877, priest F. Varga and the Benedictine monk I. Miletz, both members of the SHA Timișoara (the latter was even custodian of the collection and editor in chief of the society’s periodical) supervised each summer the town planning works performed in Păulișul Nou, thus saving a significant Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeological material that entered the collection of the SHA museum (since 1877). In 1877 Varga financed, from his own resources, archaeological test excavations in the area of the cemetery in Păulișul Nou¹².

In Arad, even if the prefect officially encouraged his son, A. Török, to gather data on the area’s distant past, field research faced problems¹³. It was only in 1881 that the “Kölcsey”¹⁴ cultural society was founded, reuniting the most significant intellectuals from Arad. The association aimed at giving impetus to Arad’s cultural life¹⁵. S. Márki, a history teacher, was elected head of the society’s history department¹⁶. In the spring of 1882 he took over the antiquity collection of the Royal High School, writing its first inventory register¹⁷. Subsequently, he addressed the SHA Timișoara a request of including historical and archaeological studies regarding Arad county in their published

⁵ Parecz 1871, 77.

⁶ Dörner 1978, 16.

⁷ Móré Heitel 2006, 11.

⁸ IDR I, 59, no. 38.

⁹ Medeleț, Toma 1997, 13.

¹⁰ Petranu 1922, 26.

¹¹ For this first registry of the antiquity collection of the royal high school in Arad, see: Barbu *et al.* 2000; Barbu *et al.* 2002.

¹² Medeleț, Toma 1997, 18, 19, 21, 83.

¹³ Márki, *Jegyzetek*, 1.

¹⁴ F. Kölcsey (1790–1838) was a Hungarian writer, active during the Enlightenment. The Society functioned between 1881 and 1949; it was re-established in 1990; see also Kiss 1968, 148, no. 2.

¹⁵ Petranu 1922, 121.

¹⁶ Márki Sándor (1853–1925) graduated high school in Oradea and the university in Budapest (history – geography, 1872–1876). He was secondary school teacher in Arad (1877–1886), then professor at the universities in Cluj (1892–1912) and Szeged (1919–1925). Since 1892 he was corresponding member, and since 1912 full member of the Hungarian Academy of Science; Barbu *et al.* 2002, 295.

¹⁷ Márki, *Jegyzetek*.

bulletin (*TRÉT*). In the summer of 1882, Márki accompanied K. Torma in his research of earthen ramparts and Roman remains in the area of Chesinţ, Neudorf, Cladova, Păuliş,¹⁸ and Sâmbăteni¹⁹. The issue of Roman vestiges from Banat entered the attention of the SHA Timișoara that actively supported Torma's project: already in 1881, he started to identify the roads and road stops mentioned on *Tabula Peutingeriana* in eastern Banat. During subsequent years, I. Pontelly continued to research and map earth ramparts between Timișoara and Mureş, also noting the earth fortification located east of Frumuşeni, from where he collected "Turkish pottery shards" in 1884²⁰. In the same year, Márki published an article on "the Avar ring in Sântana" in the annual of the "Kölcsey" society and presented an erroneous historical interpretation of the site "Cetatea Veche" that was widely accepted until the middle of the subsequent century²¹. In the same article, Márki mentioned the tell "Dâmbul Popilor/Papokhalma/ Holumb" located 4.65 km North–West of the fortification; "in a recently-excavated ditch" he discovered "one burnt soil fragment" and eight pottery fragments (inventory of the High School in Arad no. 141–149); one must mention the fact that Márki believed that the Copper Age tell was an advanced bastion of the Avar ring in "Cetatea Veche"²².

During his field trips, Márki was accompanied by the enthusiastic drawing teacher of the State Royal High School in Arad, L. Dömötör, who was, for two decades, the main, if not the only promoter of field archaeological research in Arad.

The museum, historical, and archaeological movement in Timișoara continued to polarize the efforts of both specialists and amateurs of antiquities from Banat. Thus, nine members from the County of Arad were part of the Museum Society of History and Archaeology in Southern Hungary (MSHA), established in 1884 through the merge between the SHA and the Museum Association²³.

Between 1883 and 1885, the interest of the public opinion from Arad was again focused on discoveries from Pâncota – "Cetatea Turcească". The new excavations, in which dilettantes again played an important role, also involved Márki who offered the first archaeological–historical description of the site to note Neolithic items, the earth fortification built on a timber grate, the basilica, the monastery and the Turkish fortification²⁴. Two altars were also discovered during the last interventions²⁵. The significance of the site for the area of Zarand was out of the ordinary, since the archdeaconry of Pâncota was also mentioned since 1332, enclave of the bishopric in Eger, strategically placed between the dioceses of Oradea and Cenad²⁶, besides the medieval fortification and the monastery there²⁷ attested by written sources.

In the spring of 1888, workers laboring on the embankment of the rail road between Arad and Oradea discovered a gold treasure weighing ca. 0.5 kg by canton "Cetatea Veche", ca. 4 km south of Sântana²⁸. "Rescue excavations", that A. Török immediately started, led to the discovery of two tombs lacking inventory. The treasure, dated to the end of the Bronze Age²⁹, ended up in Vienna from where it never returned to Arad, despite L. Dömötör's repeated letters³⁰. Using the interest raised by the spectacular discovery, Dömötör requested sub-prefect P. Ormós to approve and provide the financial support for archaeological excavations on the pasture near the cemetery in Păulişul Nou; his request was granted³¹. The size and results of this research remain unknown. The collection of "archaeological

¹⁸ In 1882, the "Kölcsey" Society was informed of the chance discovery in Păulişul Nou of certain archaeological finds, in the vineyards owned by Boros Beni and Karossy Ferenc; Archive of the Ancient History Department, Museum Complex Arad (AAHD), I, no. 1.

¹⁹ Medeleţ, Toma 1997, 30, 31.

²⁰ Medeleţ, Toma 1997, 31, 33, 35.

²¹ Márki 1882; Márki 1884.

²² Márki 1882, 115–118.

²³ Medeleţ, Toma 1997, 34.

²⁴ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 73, Pâncota, pt. 1.

²⁵ Móri Heitel 2006, 44.

²⁶ Móri Heitel 2006, 9.

²⁷ Rusu, Hurezan 1999, 64–66; Rusu, Hurezan 2000, 185–194.

²⁸ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 90, Sântana, pt. 4.

²⁹ Dörner 1960, 471–479; Mozsolics 1973, 208, pl. 104–105.

³⁰ AAHD, I, no. 4 and 8.

³¹ AAHD, I, no. 3 and 7.

objects” of the “Kölcsy” society continued to grow, with new items discovered during Dömötör’s field research or acquired through donations and acquisitions³².

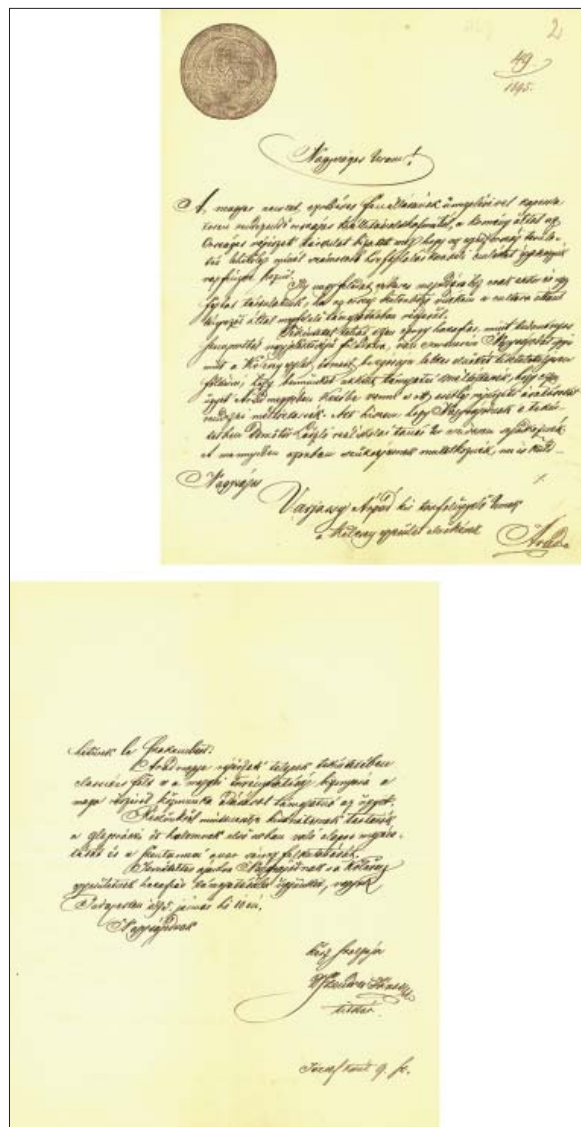


Fig. 1. Address of the Archaeological Society in Budapest to the Kölcsy Cultural Society, advising for the beginning of archaeological excavations in Sântana.

The official opening (27.11.1889) of the “Museum Palace” in Timișoara³³ determined the leadership of the “Kölcsy” society to intensify their efforts of organizing a museum in Arad. A board of directors was appointed in 1891 to take all necessary steps towards the opening of a city museum that was to include items illustrating the medieval and modern history of Arad, with special focus on the relics of the 1848/49 Revolution³⁴. Dömötör tried to convince the society’s members, the board of directors and local authorities that “archaeological objects” had to be included in the future museum. The suggestion was turned down under the pretext that there were too few objects in the archaeological collection to gain them a place in the future museum³⁵. In these conditions, Dömötör increased his efforts of obtaining new items. Already in the spring of 1892, he appealed to the leaders of the fiscal domains in order that the five mounds inside the administrative borders of the village of

³² 37 silver coins, discovered near Ineu, were bought in 1888 (AAHD, I, no. 5). In the same year, lawyer E. Heeger donated 59 antique silver and bronze coins (AAHD, I, no. 6) and I. Navay (Mako) transferred to the society items discovered during the channeling works of river Er, including some Gothic silver fibulae (AAHD, I, no. 7a).

³³ Medeleț, Toma 1997, 46.

³⁴ Lanevski 1993, 3.

³⁵ AAHD, I, no. 9 and 9b.

Glogovăț (Vladimirescu) be leased to the “Kölcsey” society³⁶. The initiative was also supported by the Archeological Society in Budapest³⁷. Due to bureaucratic complications and the lack of funding, the archaeological excavations could not begin.

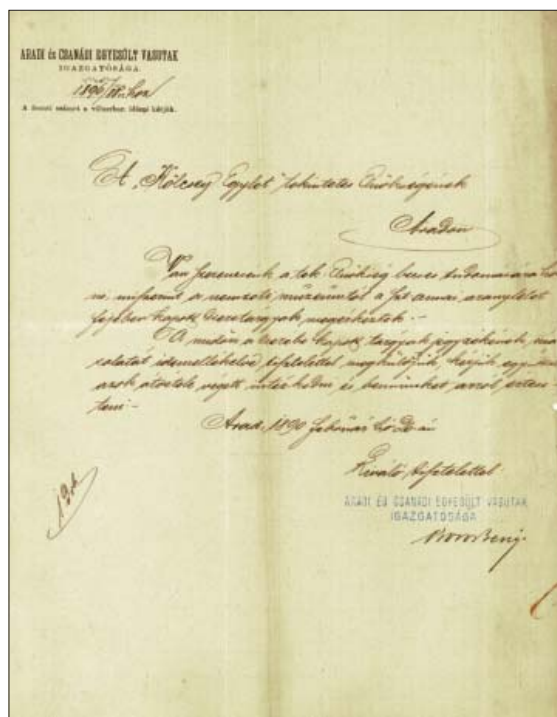


Fig. 2. Request of the Hungarian National Museum to the management of rail roads regarding the acquisition of the treasure discovered in 1888 in Sântana “Cetatea Veche”.

Meanwhile, the “Museum of 1848–1849 Relics” was fully refurbished. The exhibition extended over the entire second floor of the State Theater in Arad and was ready for the opening on October 6th 1892, but the official opening was organized only on March 15th 1893³⁸.

Disappointed by the exclusion of the archaeological collection from this exhibition, Dömötör turned to teaching, during subsequent years, and only went on field trips from time to time. S. Márki, who had become a professor at the University in Cluj, published his ample monograph on the county and city of Arad³⁹. The section dedicated to ancient history is not very extended and betrays the split between the author’s wide general historical culture and his limited understanding of archaeological field discoveries.

In 1896, professor B. Pósta⁴⁰, from the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Budapest, performed an archaeological test trench in Curtici, where he cut through a Copper Age settlement, part of the Bodrogkeresztúr culture, overlapping another settlement, dated to the Middle Bronze Age and the First Iron Age⁴¹.

The General Inspectorate of Museums and Libraries was created in Budapest, in 1897, as a specialized organism inside the Ministry of Culture and Public Instruction⁴². The inspectorate was able to provide subventions to museums which, once accepted, were under the state’s nominal control⁴³.

³⁶ AAHD, I, no. 9a.

³⁷ AAHD, I, no. 8a.

³⁸ Lanevski 1993, 4.

³⁹ Márki 1892; Márki 1895.

⁴⁰ Pósta Béla (1862–1919) worked as a clerk at the MNMB and later became university professor in Cluj, director of the numismatics and archaeology collection of the Museum of Transylvania, founder and leader of the periodical entitled *Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából. Travaux de la section numismatique et archéologique du Musée National de Transylvanie, Cluj, I (1910) – X (1919)*. In 1913, he was appointed inspector for Transylvania, Banat, and the Plain of the General Inspectorate of Museum and Libraries, Budapest; see Petranu 1922, 178 no. 1.

⁴¹ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 49, Curtici, pt. 2.

⁴² Petranu 1922, 177, no. 1; Medeleț, Toma 1997, 61, no. 493; also according to Opriș 1994, 21–22.

⁴³ Medeleț, Toma 1997, 61; Petranu 1922, 177, no. 1.

The new institution expressed an interest in the site of Pecica “Șanțul Mare”, indicating its readiness to grant certain funds for research. The inspectorate’s attitude was at least partly due to L. Dömötör’s initiatives; already in 1895, he managed to attract the attention of the Archaeological Society in Budapest towards the need of archaeological excavations in Pecica, Glogovăț “Cinci Movile” and Sântana “Cetatea Veche”⁴⁴.

In the spring of 1898, Fl. Rómer and J. Hampel were again in Pecica, planning, together with L. Dömötör, how to organize future excavations⁴⁵. With the financial aid of 300 Fl.⁴⁶, L. Dömötör initiated, already in September of the same year, the first archaeological campaign in “Șanțul Mare”. The campaign lasted 11 days, during which the 6–11 workers excavated a ditch measuring 6 m in length and 4 m in depth. The results of this campaign remain largely unknown. L. Dömötör only wrote a brief report he then handed to the “Kölcsey” society, at the insistence of V. Fraknói⁴⁷. The report indicates that inhumation tombs, devoid of inventory, were found in the upper layer, while the lower layers contained numerous clay pots, and items made of bone, bronze, and iron. 170 items were discovered in all⁴⁸.

L. Dömötör performed three other excavation campaigns at “Șanțul Mare”: in 1900 (17 days), 1901 (18 days), and 1902 (12 days). During the last two, he was assisted by school master I. Haller from Pecica. In the absence of general ground plans and detailed reports, the four trenches excavated during these campaigns cannot be localized precisely. The list of discovered items also eludes clarity⁴⁹. The old inventory books only mention the year of discovery, not the place. During the same period, L. Dömötör also performed test trenches in Peregul German (1898)⁵⁰, Arad “Gai” (1899)⁵¹, Felnac, and Păuliș (1900)⁵². On the latter, only financial reports are available. A number of items can be certainly attributed to finds made in Pecica during the 1900–1902 campaigns: several Bronze Age jugs, 5 molds for casting bronze weapons, a few Dacian jug-shape pots and “fruit bowls”, as well as three coins: one Republican Denarius from the 1st century A.D., one brass *scyphate* coin minted under John II Komnenos, and one Hungarian coin dated to the 12th–13th centuries⁵³. The over 1000 items, discovered during these excavations, formed the nucleus of the archaeological exhibition of the museum in Arad that opened in 1903, shortly before L. Dömötör’s death (August 1903)⁵⁴.

L. Dömötör’s activity (1850–1903) must be evaluated with caution. His incontestable merits consisted in gathering materials for the exhibition of “archaeological artifacts”, that he initiated and founded. He also managed to attract the attention of the scientific world towards the important site in Pecica “Șanțul Mare”. In the context of Arad, his activity stands out through the fact that he succeeded in surpassing the “Revolution Complex”, thus proving that the area’s prehistoric and ancient history deserved full attention. From a technical and scientific perspective, his excavations never surpassed the dilettante stage. The easiness with which he treated the archaeological material attracted criticism during his lifetime from both, specialists and the administrative bodies, that objected to his not inventoring items and his only too brief (or completely absent) publication of excavation results.

After Dömötör’s passing away, his former collaborator, school master I. Haller, continued excavating in “Șanțul Mare” on his own. During the 1904 campaign, he discovered “the remains of the very old cemetery”, from where he recovered “pots and bronze objects”. The location of Haller’s excavation remains unclear, just like his understanding of the “very old cemetery”.

Some of the items discovered by Dömötör and deposited inside the school in Pecica were transferred to Arad, while the objects found by Haller remained in his personal collection⁵⁵.

⁴⁴ AAHD, I, no. 8a.

⁴⁵ Dörner 1978, 16.

⁴⁶ AAHD, I, no. 10.

⁴⁷ AAHD, I, no. 10, 10a and 11.

⁴⁸ Dörner 1978, 17–19.

⁴⁹ Dörner 1978, 19–22.

⁵⁰ AAHD, I, no. 10a.

⁵¹ AAHD, I, no. 13.

⁵² AAHD, I, no. 13.

⁵³ Dörner 1978, 20–21.

⁵⁴ Dörner 1978, 22.

⁵⁵ AAHD, I, no. 18 and no. 24a.



Fig. 3. The 1898 excavations in Pecica “Șanțul Mare”.

In 1904, the “Kölcsey” society requested a subvention of 600 Fl in order to buy Dömötör’s collection and for Haller to continue excavations in “Șanțul Mare”. The inspectorate, represented by V. Fraknói, refused to grant the subvention and pointed out that Haller was not authorized to continue the excavations⁵⁶. In such conditions, the archaeology collection acquired a single new item in 1905. During the same year S. Márki returned to Arad and Timișoara, visiting the museums there. On August 19th 1905, I. Berkeszi, the custodian of the museum in Timișoara, was in Firiteaz, attempting to obtain the gold treasure discovered there. But the destination of that treasure had already been established – The National Museum of Antiquities in Budapest – and the attempt to acquire at least duplicates for the museum in Timișoara remained unfruitful. Berkeszi went on to Satu Mare (village of Secusigiu), where he, together with F. Milleker, performed several test trenches in the fortified settlement located between Munar and Sânpetru German. The bronze and gold items deposit, discovered on that occasion, was sent to the museum in Vârșeț⁵⁷. During subsequent summers (until 1909), Berkeszi visited the sites between Satu Mare and Sânpetru German, and school master Peter Philip from Satu Mare proved to be a trustworthy collaborator of the museum in Timișoara by recovering a number of stray finds and delivering them to the museum⁵⁸. In 1906, after field walking around Lipova, Berkeszi reached Arad, where he asked questions about Dömötör’s collection that the latter’s widow was still trying to sell. Berkeszi bought several objects, dated to the Bronze Age and the Second Iron Age. The place of discovery of these items is uncertain even if the Museum of Banat inventory catalog indicates that they were found in Felnac⁵⁹.

Meanwhile, the museum in Arad bought the inventory of several 11th–12th century tombs discovered by chance in Felnac and Pecica (1907)⁶⁰ and in 1909 it finally managed to buy what was left of L. Dömötör and I. Haller’s collections⁶¹.

In 1910, M. Roska was appointed⁶² to take up again the excavations in Pecica “Șanțul Mare”. The professor from Cluj mainly followed two objectives: to clarify the site’s stratigraphy and chronology

⁵⁶ AAHD, I, no. 20 and 21.

⁵⁷ Medeleț, Toma 1997, 79; Barbu *et al.* 1999, 55, Firiteaz, pt. 2; 68, Munar, pt. 2, 3.

⁵⁸ Medeleț, Toma 1997, 85, 88.

⁵⁹ Medeleț, Toma 1997, 84.

⁶⁰ AAHD, I, no. 23.

⁶¹ AAHD, I, no. 26.

⁶² Roska Márton (1880–1961) had already excavated in Periam in 1909; Medeleț, Toma 1997, 91.

and to instruct a delegate of the museum in Arad in the technique of archaeological excavation⁶³. Roska was only able to work for 9 days, due to very limited funding available, but during this interval he excavated a section measuring 7 m in length and over 4 m in depth⁶⁴. He thus managed to define the intense Bronze Age habitation to which he attributed 16 layers. Among them, 8 contained elements identical to those discovered the previous year in Periam and the subsequent 8 layers illustrated a post-Periam development⁶⁵. Surprisingly, he never mentioned Dacian materials, though three Dacian jar-pots entered the collection of the museum in Arad from his excavations in 1910⁶⁶.

F. Juhász⁶⁷ was the delegate of the museum in Arad and during the subsequent year he was the leader of the campaigns in “Șanțul Mare”⁶⁸ and Arad “Gai”. He published a brief report (extending over no more than 10 lines) on the excavations in Pecica while only the list of expenses was preserved from his excavations in Gai⁶⁹. It is obvious that Roska only reached the first of the two set objectives.

In the end of year 1911, the archaeological collection of the museum in Arad included 1,751 items of which 679 were recorded after excavations in 1910–1911⁷⁰.

The Palace of Culture in Arad was festively inaugurated on October 24th and 25th 1913. The impressive edifice, built according to the plans of an architect from Arad, L. Szántay, hosted the city’s philharmonic orchestra, library and museum. The permanent exhibition included the following sections: archaeology, relics of the 1848/1849 Revolution, ethnography, natural sciences and fine arts⁷¹.

A. Varjassy was appointed president of the new institution; he was president of the “Kölcsey” society, founder of the first museum in Arad (after lengthy efforts), and the man to whom the building of the Palace of Culture itself was largely due⁷². M. Roska was also interested in the job⁷³.

Also in 1913, J. Zárny performed excavations somewhere between the train station in Bujac and the road to Pecica (in the archaeological area Gai I)⁷⁴. The results of these excavations remained unknown.

The archaeological collection of the museum continued to grow, especially through acquisition;⁷⁵ thus, in 1917 it reached 2,795 items whose accounting value was of 3,951.5 K. The beginning of the first world war determined the transfer of the numismatic collection to the city hall treasury⁷⁶ and then to Budapest, together with the most valuable paintings of the European art collection⁷⁷.

In 1920, the Palace of Culture entered the patronage of the Museum Inspectorate in Transylvania, dr. L. Nichi being appointed as director⁷⁸. During the first budget year, i.e. 1921, the Romanian state allocated 10,000 lei to the palace and the sum was used in the refurbishing of the ethnographic and national art sections. At the request of the Romanian authorities, R. Xenopol, the widow of the reputed historian, donated 2,200 volumes to the city library, while other 1,567 volumes she donated to the Ministry of Labor⁷⁹. It was only in 1923 that Al. Tzigara-Samurçaș, general inspector of museums, signed the documents assuming the archaeological collection, according to the last 1917 inventory.

After more than a decade, M. Roska took up again excavations in Pecica, in the summer of 1923. After that campaign, he was able to define the Aeneolithic layer that preceded the Bronze Age habitation on the site. Doctor J. Schweitzer, who accompanied Roska during the excavations and continued

⁶³ Dörner 1978, 23.

⁶⁴ Dörner 1978, 23.

⁶⁵ Roska 1912; Barbu *et al.* 1999, 74–76, Pecica, pt. 2.

⁶⁶ Dörner 1978, 24.

⁶⁷ Ferenc Juhász was a numismatist. He donated his collection of coins to the museum in 1908 (AAHD, I, no. 24) and in gratitude the “Kölcsey” society delegated him to take part in the research in Pecica.

⁶⁸ Dörner 1978, 24.

⁶⁹ AAHD, I, no. 31.

⁷⁰ Dörner 1978, 24.

⁷¹ Lanevski 1993, 7.

⁷² Lanevski 1993, 7.

⁷³ AAHD, I, no. 33.

⁷⁴ AAHD, II, no. 10.

⁷⁵ The numismatics collection of the State Royal High School was bought in 1913 (AAHD, I, no. 34), though the “Kölcsey” society attempted to obtain it since 1900 (AAHD, I, no. 12). 300 coins from the medieval treasure discovered near Ineu were also acquired in 1913 (AAHD, I, no. 35).

⁷⁶ AAHD, I, no. 39.

⁷⁷ Petranu 1922, 122.

⁷⁸ Dr. Lazăr Nichi was director of the Palace of Culture between 1921 and 1944; Kiss 1968, 152; Șerban 2010.

⁷⁹ Petranu 1922, 122.

them after the first left, published a brief report of the 1923 excavations in local newspapers. We are thus informed of the excavation of a 14 × 3 m section in the South–Western area of the site⁸⁰.

During the subsequent year, Roska continued excavations inside the sections outlined in 1923 and 1911. The results of this campaign were published just briefly⁸¹. In 1953, M. Roska sent the entire documentation of the 1923/24 campaigns to the museum in Arad. It contains section plans and profiles, but not a general ground plan of the entire site⁸².

Between 1925 and 1929, Roska performed research in Crişul Alb Valley, in the areas of Moneasa (1925)⁸³ and Gurahonţ (1925–1929)⁸⁴. These were rather field walks, accompanied by small test excavations that led to the discovery of the extremely controversial lithic material. During this research, performed with funds allocated from the budgets of the city and county of Arad, Roska was visited every year by L. Nichi, director of the Palace of Culture, and by librarian I. Langa.

Extending the area of his field walks to the plain region of the county, in 1929, Roska discovered the Bronze Age settlement from Socodor “Gāvājdia” where he performed test trenches during the following year. He was accompanied by N. Covaciu, the new librarian of the Palace of Culture⁸⁵. The results of this research remained unpublished, except for the description of the site itself⁸⁶ and of several more important items⁸⁷. The archaeological material is preserved in the collections of the Museum Arad and the Institute of Archaeology and Art History Cluj-Napoca. During the same period, Roska performed a few test trenches in Vărşand “Movila dintre vii”⁸⁸, that led to the discovery of archaeological materials typical to the Otomani culture and necropolises dated to the 4th century A.D. and the 11th–13th century A.D.

Among the significant events of the third decade, one can mention V. G. Childe’s visit in Pecica (1927). The well-known archaeologist and historian of the European Neolithic and Bronze Age took this research trip in preparation of his ample synthesis work *The Danube in Prehistory* published in 1929⁸⁹.

During the following decade, archaeological research in the area of Arad did not progress due to lack of funding and of specialists in field working for the museum in Arad⁹⁰. The archaeological collection, whose inventory catalogues were translated into Romanian in 1936⁹¹, only grew during this period through donations and certain acquisitions. Thus, in 1930, the Institute of Classical Studies in Cluj donated to the Palace of Culture a significant pottery lot discovered in Otomani⁹² and three years later, the city halls of Chereleş and Chişineu Criş sent to the museum medieval pottery and some mammoth bones discovered by chance in the area of these respective settlements⁹³. Among the few acquisitions, one can mention the 130 Roman Republican coins from the treasure of Satu Nou, bought in 1932⁹⁴ and the treasure, consisting of 1,432 medieval coins, discovered in Pecica, bought in 1941⁹⁵. The gold treasure, discovered by chance in 1938, in Pecica, was nevertheless bought by the National Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest⁹⁶.

Excavations planned for Sâmbăteni, Cladova (1933), Pecica (1935)⁹⁷, Sântana and Glogovăţ (1942)⁹⁸ could not be performed due to the above mentioned reasons.

⁸⁰ J. Schweitzer, *Aradi Közlöny*, dated 2.10.1923. L. Berczi also took part in the excavations and the allocated funds were of 5000 Lei (AAHD, I, no. 43 and 44).

⁸¹ Roska 1924, 314–315.

⁸² Dörner 1978, 28, fig. 13.

⁸³ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 67, Moneasa, pt. 2–3.

⁸⁴ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 58, Gurahonţ, pt. 1, 4–10; 102–103, Valea Mare, pt. 1–2; 112, Zimbru, pt. 1, 2.

⁸⁵ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 93–94, Socodor, pt. 1, 2.

⁸⁶ Roska 1941, 57; Roska 1941, 271, pt. 194.

⁸⁷ Gogăltan 1999, Fig.1–8.

⁸⁸ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 104, Vărşand, pt. 2.

⁸⁹ Childe 1929.

⁹⁰ During the inter-war period, the Palace of Culture had 4 permanent employees: one director, one librarian-museographer, one administrative secretary and one doorman; Kiss 1968, 152.

⁹¹ AAHD, I, no. 63.

⁹² AAHD, I, no. 54.

⁹³ AAHD, I, no. 58.

⁹⁴ AAHD, I, no. 55.

⁹⁵ AAHD, I, no. 64.

⁹⁶ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 76–77, Pecica, pt. 3.

⁹⁷ O. Floca told N. Covaciu that D. Popescu wished to perform a test trench in Pecica (AAHD, I, no. 61).

⁹⁸ C. Daicoviciu suggested that N. Covaciu should test the “Avar ring” in Sântana and the five mounds in Glogovăţ. The excavations were planned to start on September 1st 1942, but the minimum funding of 30, 000 Lei were not obtained (AAHD, I, no. 65).

It was only in the summer of 1943 that D. Popescu obtained the necessary funds required by new excavations in Pecica “Șanțul Mare”. The six sections opened on that occasion generally confirmed M. Roska’s previous observations. D. Popescu nevertheless managed to define one settlement layer from the second Iron Age and another from “the time of barbarian invasions”⁹⁹. During the same campaign, D. Popescu performed a test trench on the spot called “Livada lui Onea”, in the administrative territory of the village of Semlac, ca. 2 km west of “Șanțul Mare”. The resulted archaeological material was transported to the National Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest¹⁰⁰.

In 1944 N. Covaciu became director of the Palace of Culture and, despite the hardships of that period, he succeeded in publishing a monograph brochure focusing on the ancient history of the area of Arad¹⁰¹. The paper was in fact the abstract of chapters dedicated to ancient history in S. Márki’s monograph (that Covaciu otherwise strongly criticized), to which the author added the description of Socodor’s 1930 excavations in Vârșand.

In 1947, M. Moga performed a test trench in the site of Satu Mare “Die Weingärten”, attributed to the Cornești–Crvenka group. The materials discovered on that occasion are preserved in the collections of the Museum of Banat¹⁰². According to one of E. Dörner’s sketches of the excavation in “Fântâna Vacilor”, one can conclude that Moga also performed test excavations on this latter archaeological site, probably also around 1947, though no data is available on the discoveries made there.

After the total instauration of the communist regime, archaeological research in the area of the Lower Mureș was revived by the same D. Popescu who, in 1948–1949, excavated¹⁰³ in Socodor “Găvăjdia” Păuliș, Vârșand “Viezuriște” and “Movila dintre vii”, and Frumușeni “Dealul Caprei”¹⁰⁴. In 1948, through two sections excavated in Socodor “Găvăjdia”, D. Popescu identified five layers belonging to the Cornești–Crvenka group¹⁰⁵, and four inhumation tombs dated to the 6th century A.D.¹⁰⁶ In Vârșand, in 1949, the same archaeologist tested the site “Viezuriște” through two sections. The results of these test sections materialized through the discovery of a tell dated to the Late Neolithic, that included four archaeological layers¹⁰⁷. During the same year, D. Popescu also performed test excavations in “Movila dintre vii” and attributed the five archaeological layers to the Otomani culture, establishing the fact that this site was contemporaneous to the one in Socodor “Găvăjdia”¹⁰⁸.

Re-organizing the museum started in 1951. It was separated from the library and thus became an institution with its own budget. The exhibition area was extended and refurbished, but the most important change consisted in the employment of qualified personnel for each of the museum’s sections¹⁰⁹. E. Dörner was appointed assistant for the ancient history section.

During the sixth decade, archaeological research only consisted of rescue excavations coordinated by M. Rusu (from the Archaeological Institute in Cluj) and E. Dörner in Sântana “Gară” (1954)¹¹⁰ and Șiclău “Gropoai” (1959)¹¹¹. In 1957 and 1958, E. Dörner and N. Kiss supervised town planning works in Zădăreni that disturbed a Sarmathian necropolis and a Late Bronze Age settlement. No effective archaeological excavations were performed.

Museum goods in private collections were inventoried and nationalized between 1953 and 1954. On that occasion, “Minerva from Bulci” entered the collection of the museum. The ancient history permanent exhibition was reopened to the public in 1955¹¹².

In 1955 teacher F. Kovács from Dorbanți and several amateurs from the same village performed test trenches in Macea “Topila”. One could mention the fact that the local Common Agricultural Household

⁹⁹ Dörner 1978, 28–29

¹⁰⁰ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 92, Semlac, pt. 1.

¹⁰¹ Covaciu 1944.

¹⁰² We thank Dr. Florin Gogăltan for this piece of information.

¹⁰³ For the 1948 excavations, the City Hall of Arad allocated the sum of 30, 000 Lei (AAHD, I, no. 69).

¹⁰⁴ Barbu *et al.* 1999, 56, Frumușeni, pt. 2, 5; 71, Păuliș, pt. 3; 94, Socodor, pt. 2; 103–104, Vârșand, pt. 1, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Popescu 1956, fig. 3; Gogăltan 1999, 51–60.

¹⁰⁶ Popescu 1956, 40–45.

¹⁰⁷ Popescu 1956, 51–65.

¹⁰⁸ Popescu 1956, 80.

¹⁰⁹ Kiss 1968, 153.

¹¹⁰ Dörner 1974.

¹¹¹ Rusu, Dörner 1962.

¹¹² Kiss 1968, 153.

funded the test excavation on the basis of a written authorization issued by the museum in Sfântul Gheorghe, without noticing the County Museum Arad. The excavated material, together with a sketch of the excavation and a signed statement, were sent to the museum in Sfântul Gheorghe. On the basis of the archaeological material from this site, donated by various collectors including Gh. Miloi, one can note that the most significant settlement belonged to the Late Neolithic, while other fragments, dated to the Bronze Age and the 11th–12th centuries A.D. were collected from the surface of the tell¹¹³.

Systematic research started in the seventh decade and the priority topics were Dacian and Dacian–Roman civilization. In Pecica “Șanțul Mare”, a team coordinated by I. H. Crișan¹¹⁴ worked during four campaigns (1960–1962, 1964) towards the stated objective of valorizing mainly the Dacian habitation there¹¹⁵. In the same time, I. H. Crișan and E. Dörner also performed a test trench in Arad “Ceala” (1962). The 1962 test excavations in Arad “Ceala” lead to the discovery of half-dugout dwellings and a pottery kiln dated to the 4th century A.D.¹¹⁶, while E. Dörner’s 1964 rescue excavations uncovered, among various artifacts dated to the 3rd century A.D., a 10th century tomb¹¹⁷.



Fig. 4. Drawing a profile of the settlement in Arad “Ceala”, 1962.

In 1963, when excavations in Pecica were interrupted, E. Dörner accompanied M. Rusu and I. Ordentlich during their campaign in Sântana “Cetatea Veche”. The Late Bronze Age fortification was tested through two sections and two squares. On that occasion, the archaeologists noted a Late Bronze Age layer which included Tiszápolgár pottery fragments and a First Iron Age layer. The latter included the three fortified precincts¹¹⁸.

During the excavations in Sântana “Cetatea Veche”, S. Dumitrașcu performed test trenches in the tell of Sântana “Holomb”. In the culture layer measuring 2.2 m in thickness he noted 5 habitation layers, all part of the Tiszápolgár culture, while the vegetal layer included Neolithic, Bodrogresztúr and Bronze Age pottery fragments¹¹⁹.

Also during 1963, E. Dörner coordinated a rescue excavation in the city of Arad, the neighborhood of Grădiște, that led to the discovery of five pits that contained archaeological material dated to the 3rd–4th centuries A.D.¹²⁰ During the same year L. Mărghitan discovered four tombs dated to the 10th–11th centuries during a single archaeological campaign in Șeitin “Gropoai”¹²¹.

¹¹³ Sava 2009.

¹¹⁴ The following took part in the excavations: E. Dörner (who worked on the medieval material), N. Kiss, Șt. Ferenczi, Fl. Medeleț, V. Lucian, Dr. I. Roth, Dr. M. Pop, Dr. E. Crișan; the Bronze Age material was given to T. Soroceanu for analysis; Crișan 1978, 7.

¹¹⁵ Crișan 1978, 7.

¹¹⁶ Crișan 1968, 241–245.

¹¹⁷ Dörner 1970, 447–449, fig. 4, 5, 6/2–5.

¹¹⁸ Rusu *et al.* 1996; Rusu *et al.* 1999.

¹¹⁹ Dumitrașcu 1975.

¹²⁰ Dörner 1970, 445–446, fig. 2.

¹²¹ Mărghitan 1965.

During 1965, I. H. Crişan, together with E. Dörner, initiated researches in several points of the county. The first was the site in Temeşesti “La patru gomile”, researched between September 8th and 14th. The archaeological material recovered from the two sections and three squares, covering a total surface of 268 m², belongs to the Early Bronze Age, i.e. the Şoimuş Group¹²².

The site in Cicir “Gropoiaie” was tested during two campaigns, in 1965 and 1968 respectively. The settlement included three habitation layers (3rd–2nd centuries B.C., 2nd–3rd centuries A.D. and 16th–17th centuries A.D.). Sixteen partially dugout dwellings were discovered, among which three dated to the 2nd–3rd century A.D. and numerous pits with different functions¹²³.

Besides these four sites, researched in I. H. Crişan’s company in 1965, E. Dörner performed other two small test trenches around the settlement of Pecica. Thus, during a week (October 9th–14th), he set one trench in “Sălaşul Donat” and another in “Şanţul Mic”. The profile of the section in “Sălaşul Donat” confirmed previous surface finds. A ca. 1 meter thick layer belonging to the First Iron Age (Basarabi Culture) was discovered above the archaeological sterile and under another, thinner layer of ca. 0.25 m, dated to the 11th–13th centuries A.D. The section performed on the site of “Şanţul Mic” revealed the fact that the main archaeological layer could be dated to the 11th–13th centuries and included several fragments dated to the First Iron Age and the 2nd–4th centuries A.D.

Between 1966 and 1967, K. Horedt coordinated a project aimed at clarifying the situation of earthen ramparts in the area of Arad. The excavations performed by V. Boroneanţ and E. Dörner in Covăsânţ “Desanu” and “Fănaţe” did not lead to the envisaged clarifications. The archaeologists sectioned a system consisting of four consecutive ramparts and five ditches, with a total width of 56 m; the filling of the ditches contained pottery fragments dated to the 3rd–4th centuries A.D. but the dating of the entire system remained uncertain¹²⁴.

The most significant research in Sânpetru German took place in 1963 and 1965 on the site called “Fântâna Vacilor”. Besides the two Sarmathian tombs and another, whose cultural traits could not be identified, due to the lack of inventory, the excavations also led to the identification of two habitation layers, one typical to the Bodrogkeresztúr culture and another characteristic to the Baden culture¹²⁵.



Fig. 5. The excavation in Sânpetru German “Fântâna Vacilor”, 1963.

Research in Pecica “Cărămidăria C.A.P. Ogorul” developed over two consecutive years, in 1967–1968. The stratigraphy of the site included the following: a layer of modern humus between 0–0.25 m, a layer of black–grey soil from the 2nd–3rd centuries A.D. between –0.25–0.50 m, a layer of black, strongly pigmented soil, dated to the Middle Bronze Age, Mureş culture, between –0.50–1.45 m, while the final layer consisted of yellow–clayish soil that represents the archaeological sterile. Besides

¹²² Gogăltan, Apai 2005.

¹²³ Crişan 1968, 246–249.

¹²⁴ Dörner, Boroneanţ 1968, 7–18.

¹²⁵ Dörner 1970, 451–455, fig. 9, 10, 11/1–5.

artifacts dated to the above mentioned eras, several pottery fragments were also identified, part of the Hunyadhalom/*Scheibenhenkel* horizon (Middle Copper Age)¹²⁶.



Fig. 6. The excavation in Sânpetru German “Fântâna Vacilor”, 1963.



Fig. 7. The excavation in Sânpetru German “Fântâna Vacilor”, 1963.

Besides these excavations, E. Dörner continued to go on field walks and to perform restricted test trenches, focusing on the issue of “Dacian–Sarmathian cohabitation”. He thus researched the sites in Dorobanți (1961, 1970) and Arad Ceala (in fact Gai I, 1964). The results were partially published, mainly in synthesis works.

Between 1961 and 1968, the river Crişul Alb separated the “areas of competence” of the museums in Oradea and Arad. The first financed the excavations in Şimand “Grozdoaie” (M. Rusu, N. Chidioşan), in 1961/62, those in Berindia (I. Ordentlich, S. Dumitraşcu, 1966/67), Groşeni (N. Chidioşan) and Moroda (S. Dumitraşcu), the latter two in 1967, and the test trench through the earthen rampart in Archiş (S. Dumitraşcu), in 1967.

The seventh decade of the twentieth century saw the beginning of restoration works on the fortification of Şoimoş, one of the best preserved such monuments in the Mureş Valley. On that occasion R. Heitel, N. Puşcaşu, and Fl. Medeleţ performed several archaeological test excavations, but the results remained unpublished. Later on, both restoration works and archaeological excavations were abandoned.

¹²⁶ Sava 2010.



Fig. 8. The excavation in Pecica “Cărămidăria C.A.P. Ogorul”, 1967.



Fig. 9. The excavation in Pecica “Cărămidăria C.A.P. Ogorul”, 1967.

Researches performed during the 70s were different from those of the previous decades through both in size and diversity of historical eras envisaged. Excavations in Conop “Hotărel” (1972)¹²⁷ and Zăbrani (1973–1975)¹²⁸, coordinated by V. Boroneanț, accompanied by E. Dörner, valorized elements of the Paleolithic and 2nd–4th A.D. centuries habitats in the Lower Mureș. Two habitation layers, dated to the Upper Paleolithic, were noted inside the two sections excavated in “Hotărel” that measured 4 × 1 m each¹²⁹.

Remains of the Middle Paleolithic, Upper Paleolithic, and Epipaleolithic were thus identified and research on the spots of “Dealul Pietrii”¹³⁰ and “Peste Hotar” (Pârneavă), which included layers of the Aurignacian culture, the First Iron Age, the 2nd–4th centuries A.D., and the 12th–13th centuries¹³¹.

One test excavation was also performed during this period, in 1975, in Chesinț “Cetate”. There were two squares, measuring 5 × 1 m and 2 × 2 m. Traces of a Neolithic settlement part of the Vinča culture were found under the medieval layer of the 14th–15th centuries A.D. that confirmed the existence of a fortification there.

¹²⁷ Boroneanț 1979.

¹²⁸ Boroneanț 1979.

¹²⁹ Boroneanț 1979, 110.

¹³⁰ Stoia 1975, 305; Boroneanț 1979, 111–114.

¹³¹ Stoia 1975, 305; Boroneanț 1979, 114.

In 1970/71, O. Greffner performed several archaeological test trenches inside the fortification of Șiria. The results were just partially published in a monograph written for the general public¹³².



Fig. 10. The excavation in Felnac “Complexul Zootehnic”, 1975.

M. Zdroba and M. Barbu’s campaigns in Vărădia de Mureș (1971–1974)¹³³ and Felnac “Complexul Zootehnic” (1975–1977) revealed new data on the Dacian civilization¹³⁴. An interest in the systematic research of the vestiges in Bulci was only expressed during the second half of the 20th century. In 1976, Șt. Ferenczi and M. Barbu initiated research in Bulci “Cetate”, later continued until 1989¹³⁵. The partially published results of their discoveries are insufficient for a correct interpretation of on-site situations¹³⁶. In 1979, E. Dörner and M. Barbu performed one test excavation inside the settlement of the Free Dacians in Sântana “Livezi”¹³⁷. Medieval archaeology was granted special interest. Already in 1969, M. Zdroba and M. Barbu started researching the church in Vladimirescu. Work continued there until 1971 and was taken up again, though during a single campaign, in 1983¹³⁸. The voievodal church in Hălmațiu “Vârful” was researched in 1973/74 by a collective led by R. Popa¹³⁹, while, between 1975 and 1980, M. Zdroba and M. Barbu excavated the earth fortification in Vladimirescu “La Cetate”¹⁴⁰. In 1976, V. Boroneanț started systematic research in Cladova “Dealul Carierei”¹⁴¹. The last archaeological campaign in Cladova was organized in 2003, and the entire material is currently prepared for publication in a monograph of the entire site.

Research of the eighth decade revealed a number of complex sites with successive habitation layers from the Paleolithic or the Neolithic until the Middle Ages. In order for such research to be continued, larger research collectives had to be formed, with members covering all the above mentioned historical eras.

Systematic researches in Cladova “Dealul Carierei”, Bulci “Cetate”, and those in Săvârșin “Cetățeaua”, started in 1980, were continued and granted priority during the 80s and 90s of the 20th century¹⁴². Test trenches were also performed in Chișineu-Criș (M. Barbu, E. Ivanoff–1977), Frumușeni (M. Rusu, P. Hurezan, M. Barbu–1981), Arad “Bujac” (M. Zdroba–1981)¹⁴³, Zărand (P. Hurezan, M. Barbu–1982),

¹³² Greffner 1976, 23–29.

¹³³ Barbu 1978.

¹³⁴ Zdroba, Barbu 1976.

¹³⁵ Between 1981 and 1984, P. Hurezan was member of the team working there.

¹³⁶ Ferenczi, Barbu 1978; Ferenczi, Barbu 1979.

¹³⁷ Barbu, Dörner 1980.

¹³⁸ P. Hurezan was part of the collective in 1983.

¹³⁹ The team consisted of D. Căpățână, V. Eskenassy, and M. Barbu.

¹⁴⁰ Zdroba, Barbu 1976; Barbu, Zdroba 1977; Barbu, Zdroba 1978; Barbu, Zdroba 1979; Barbu, Zdroba 1980.

¹⁴¹ Boroneanț 1978, 141, pl. 6/2; Boroneanț 1980; Boroneanț 1982; Boroneanț, Hurezan 1987; Boroneanț, Hurezan 1987a; Iliescu 1987; Boroneanț, Hurezan 1993; Hurezan 1996; Hügel 1996; Barbu *et al.* 1999, 55, Cladova, pt. 1/b; Hügel *et al.* 2004, 97, 99. P. Hurezan (since 1980), P. Hügel (since 1991), and Florin Mărginean (2003) were also part of the scientific team.

¹⁴² Barbu, Hurezan 1982, 51, pl. I; Pădureanu 1982, 37–38; Barbu *et al.* 1999, 107, Săvârșin, pt. 1. P. Hurezan (1980–1986, 2006), P. Hügel (1990–1997, 2006), Valeriu Sârbu (since 2006), Cristina Bodo (since 2006), and Victor Sava (since 2007) were also part of the collective.

¹⁴³ Zdroba 1982.

Feniş “Iovuțești” (M. Babru, P. Hurezan–1981)¹⁴⁴, Pecica–Forgaci (S. A. Luca–1989), Pecica “Hăblău” (R. Heitel și colab.–1994), and Semeac “Livada lui Onea” (Fl. Gogâltan–1994).

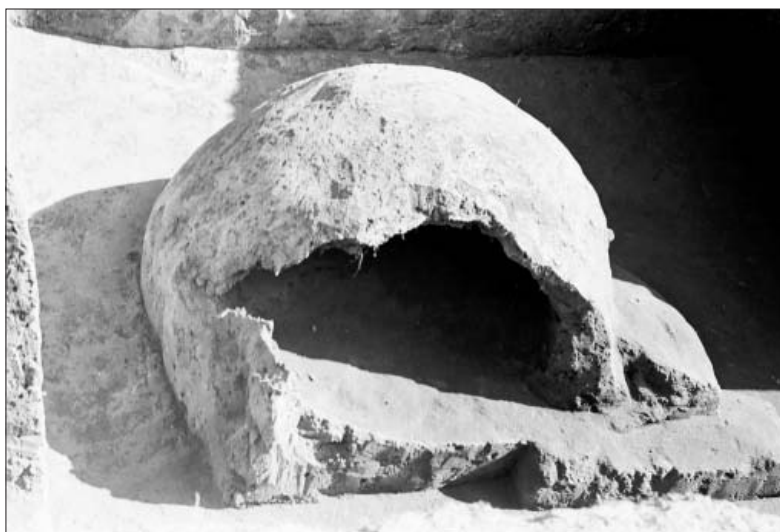


Fig. 11. The excavation in Felnac “Complexul Zootehnic”, 1975, medieval kiln (11th–12th centuries A.D.).



Fig. 12. The excavation in Felnac “Complexul Zootehnic”, 1975.

The rescue excavation in Chișineu–Criș “Stația de pompare” confirmed the previous discoveries, the fact that the most ancient archaeological layer can be dated to the First Iron Age, the second between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., while traces of dwellings from the 3rd–4th and 9th–11th centuries A.D. were also discovered sporadically.

In 1989, S. A. Luca, accompanied by M. Barbu, researched the settlement in Feniș “Anele”. The site, almost completely researched through 9 sections, led to the identification of one of the earliest Neolithic sites on the territory of the county of Arad. The three ground-level dwellings were attributed to the Starcevo–Criș Culture, phase II¹⁴⁵.

Also in 1989, S. A. Luca was on site in Pecica “Forgaci”. The test trench led to the identification of an interesting site of the Bodrogkeresztúr culture. Its significance consists of the identification of two successive habitation layers of the same culture and the fact that archaeological materials connecting the above mentioned cultural horizon and the Tiszápolgár culture were found¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁴ Chirilă *et al.* 1987.

¹⁴⁵ Luca, Barbu 1994.

¹⁴⁶ Luca 1990; Luca 1993.



Fig. 13. The excavation in Vladimirescu “La Cetate”, 1975.



Fig. 14. The excavation in Săvârșin “Cetățea”, 1990s.



Fig. 15. The excavation in Săvârșin “Cetățea”, 1990s.

Fl. Gogâltan's test excavation in Semlac "Livada lui Onea" aimed at verifying the site's stratigraphy. The first layer under the vegetal stratum belonged to a 12th–13th century habitation, while the rest of the layers belonged to the Early Bronze Age; the site can be easily compared to the one in Periam¹⁴⁷.

The site in Pâncota "Cetatea Turcească" was forgotten during the 20th century and all intention of systematic research was abandoned. Starting with 1999, the archaeological research of medieval habitation in the area of the former counties of Arad and Zarand entered a new phase. At A. A. Rusu's initiative (Institute for Archaeology and Art History Cluj-Napoca), supported by G. P. Hurezan, at that time director of the County Museum, an ample project of topographic mapping of medieval fortifications and ecclesiastic buildings in the county of Arad was initiated. The results of this research were printed in two volumes (in 1999 and 2000)¹⁴⁸. On that occasion, the site in Pâncota received an exact topographical survey. Starting with 2000, research in Pâncota was reinitiated under the coordination of D. Marcu-Istrate (archaeologist) and S. Móre Heitel (art historian). During the five campaigns performed, with interruptions, until 2006 (2000, 2002, 2004–2006), the team uncovered the foundations of the former monastic and later on arch-diaconal church in Pâncota. The results of each campaign were published in the *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice* (Chronicle of Archaeological Research) and presented during several conferences. The entire material discovered on these occasions is preserved in the storage rooms of the Museum Arad. A volume, focusing on the vestiges of the abbey in Pâncota, was also published in 2006¹⁴⁹, recording the situation prior to the archaeological investigations started in 2000.



Fig. 16. The excavation in Pâncota "Cetatea Turcească", 2006.

Two decades later, in 2001, systematic archaeological research was reinitiated on the site of "Fântâna Turcului" in Frumușeni, by a collective consisting of: A. A. Rusu, G. P. Hurezan, P. Hügel, F. Mărginean (archaeologists) and I. Burnichioiu (art historian). During nine campaigns, they discovered the vestiges of the ancient Benedictine monastery of Bizere¹⁵⁰. The mosaic discovered there in 2003 and the architectural elements opened a new page in the (art) history of the Lower Mureș Valley during the Middle Ages¹⁵¹. The first archaeological reserve in the county of Arad was opened there in 2008.

The same collective, including A. A. Rusu, G. P. Hurezan, P. Hügel and F. Mărginean, started research on another significant site to the history of the county of Zarand, in Tauț "Cetatea Turcească" or "La Cetate". The printed volume entitled *Biserici medievale în județul Arad* (Medieval Churches in the County of Arad) was the preamble of the first systematic archaeological researched in Tauț. The first on-site investigations and an initial topographical survey of the site were performed in 1999¹⁵².

¹⁴⁷ Soroceanu 1991, 99.

¹⁴⁸ Rusu, Hurezan 1999; Rusu, Hurezan 2000.

¹⁴⁹ Móre Heitel 2006.

¹⁵⁰ Rusu, Burnichioiu 2011.

¹⁵¹ Burnichioiu, Rusu 2006.

¹⁵² Rusu, Hurezan 2000, 142, fig. 22.

Thus, the team observed a system of ramparts, doubled and even tripled on certain sectors (on the Eastern side), surrounding a central area. On the same occasion, the above mentioned noted the traces of pits dug by treasure hunters. The subsequent seven archaeological campaigns led to the uncovering of a complicated building complex, oriented E–W, that once belonged to a medieval church, built during successive stages throughout the Middle Ages. The ecclesiastical building overlapped an older medieval cemetery. The interventions following the initial building stage of the first church in Tauţ, archaeologically identified, led to the conclusion that during a period of almost four centuries the edifice underwent modifications at relatively short intervals. The planimetric development – turning a Romanic brick church into an ample Gothic edifice – attested archaeologically, is the first gain of archaeological research in Tauţ. Through similar archaeological observations, one could note that the church was abandoned after the middle of the 16th century; the Turkish presence in the area was one of the main causes for this. A community settled on the site shortly after the church was abandoned and built an actual settlement inside and around the church¹⁵³.



Fig. 17. The conserved Medieval mosaic from Frumuşeni “The Monastery of Bizere” (2009).



Fig. 18. Medieval mosaic discovered in Frumuşeni “The Monastery of Bizere” (2003).

The accidental discovery of several tombs with rich inventory on the site “Lutărie” in Nădlac attracted the interest of specialists and made them start preventive research on the site. The objects discovered accidentally were taken to the museum in Arad where they were recorded, preserved and stored. During three years, starting with 2004, the Mayorality of Nădlac financed preventive research of the site, in order to clarify the characteristics and chronology of these tombs. Thus, a collective

¹⁵³ Mărginean, Rusu 2010; Sarkadi 2010, 915–934.

consisting of P. Hügel (scientific coordinator), F. Mărginean (CMA), and P. Huszarik (history teacher at the “J. G. Tajovsky” High School in Nădlac) discovered 12 more tombs, besides the initial three. Following methodic–contextual analysis, the chronological spread of artifacts discovered inside the tombs does not exceed one century, i.e. can be dated between the second half of the 10th century and the beginning of the subsequent one¹⁵⁴.

Archaeological research was performed, in the autumn of 2004, in Chelmac “La Cetate” or “În Prund la Cetate”. Research was possible through the collaboration between the Museum of Mountain Banat and the Museum Arad, part of the research project entitled “Medieval Churches and Monasteries from Banat”, coordinated by D. Țeicu¹⁵⁵. Even if the research consisted of test excavations, only two trenches being performed, the results proved to be rather interesting as for the identified archaeological contexts and recovered archaeological material. The results of this research somehow compensate the lack of written sources on the existence of a monastery and then a fortification, probably of the bastionary type, during the Middle Ages. There is little data on the fortification during the Ottoman period as well, but through archaeology the team identified traces of houses made of timber beams connected with soil, both inside and outside the fortification¹⁵⁶. To the present state of research, one can presume that once the Ottomans occupied this area, located on the border of the Principality of Transylvania, a garrison or a group of people from other provinces of the Empire was settled there¹⁵⁷.

In 2005, the site in Bulci entered again the archaeologists’ area of interest and was given a new topographical survey, through the project “Medieval Churches and Monasteries from Banat”¹⁵⁸.

The need to publish an archaeological monograph work of the site Săvârșin “Cetățuie” determined specialists to take up again systematic excavations in 2006. The main objective was to control the plateau and the various terraces surrounding it. The research led to the discovery of the Dacian habitation and, on the plateau, of a significant Coțofeni habitation layer¹⁵⁹.



Fig. 19. The excavation in Săvârșin “Cetățeaua”, 2008.

During recent years, various preventive excavations were determined by city extension and town planning works. Such a research took place West of the village of Vladimirescu, near the site of a

¹⁵⁴ Mărginean, Huszarik 2007.

¹⁵⁵ Țeicu 2007.

¹⁵⁶ The case is somewhat similar to that of Tauț (Arad County), a settlement located on the Northern slope of Zarand Mountains, with the exception that the latter was established both inside and outside the ruins of a Medieval parish church, archaeologically researched in 2002.

¹⁵⁷ Țeicu, Mărginean 2008.

¹⁵⁸ Țeicu 2007, 72–73.

¹⁵⁹ Hügel *et al.* 2007; Hügel *et al.* 2008, 273; Hügel *et al.* 2009, 192; Hügel *et al.* 2010, 169–170.

former farm, when, in autumn of 2006, two Celtic tombs with rich inventories were discovered during works for house foundations¹⁶⁰.

Two preventive researches were performed in 2008 under the coordination of specialists from the museum in Arad, one in Căprioara “Peștera lui Sinesie” and another in “Parcul copiilor” in Arad.



Fig. 20. The rescue excavation in Sântana “Cetatea Veche”, part of the rampart of the third fortification, 2009.

The ample excavation works, determined by road and energy infrastructure projects, led to the discovery of dozens of new sites and the taking up of research on the site of Sântana – “Cetatea Veche”¹⁶¹. The archaeological research in Sântana “Cetatea Veche”¹⁶², undertaken in 2009, aimed at establishing the stratigraphy of the site, researching the fortification system, recovering all data and archaeological contexts identified in the area about to be affected by the introduction of the magistral gas pipeline. Three sections were established and excavated. Section S01 initially measured 80 × 4 m, but was extending during research to 6.50 m. S02 was initially the same size as S03: 10 × 1.5 m. Through this excavation the third fortification system was dated to the end of the Bronze Age (HA1), while 2011 excavations confirmed the existence of a Baden-type settlement inside the fortification¹⁶³.

Preventive excavations performed in 2010, along the future section of the Arad–Timișoara highway, led to the research of an important settlement, dated to the end of the Bronze Age. The site Șagu “A1_1” is located 200 m South from the mid distance between Șagu and Cruceni. The settlement measures 530 m in length and ca. 450 m in width, thus one can state that the prehistoric settlement covers an area of ca. 238.500 m² (23.85 ha). 321 archaeological complexes were discovered, among which the team researched 306 Bronze Age complexes (B2–C, BD, and HA1), 14 complexes dated to the 3rd–5th centuries A.D. and one from the contemporary period. On the basis of discoveries made there, one can note that the settlement started during stage B2–C and developed throughout the Late Bronze Age, reaching its peak during stage HA1¹⁶⁴.

One year later, in 2011, a significant necropolis, contemporary to the settlement in Șagu, was discovered along the future Arad–Nădlac highway. This new discovery is situated 3.5 km NNE from the center of Pecica. 41 tombs were identified inside the perimeter of the future highway, out of which, 27 were inhumation burials and 14 cremation burials. Almost all bodies were crouched and the tombs displayed very rich funerary inventories. Small cups and large pots were usually identified in the areas near to the feet and hips of the bodies. Cases in which animal parts are found close to the feet of the bodies are quite frequent. Apart from these, a great number of tombs included quite rich funerary inventories consisting of hair pins, bracelets, appliqués, bronze daggers or axes, while amber beads were found in one tomb. Based on the funerary inventory of these graves one can assess the fact that

¹⁶⁰ The research team included Peter Hügel, George P. Hurezan, Florin Mărginean and Zsuzsanna Kopeczny.

¹⁶¹ Gogăltan, Sava 2010.

¹⁶² Hügel *et al.* 2010a; Gogăltan, Sava 2010.

¹⁶³ Gogăltan *et al.* 2012.

¹⁶⁴ Sava *et al.* 2011.

the inhumation tombs belong to the Late Bronze Age, chronological stage I (Bronze B2–C). The urns of the cremation burials contained artifacts deposited as funerary inventory. This enabled archaeologists to find a large quantity of small bronze artifacts such as rings or bracelets, simple or in the shape of multiple spirals. Small cups were also documented in some of the urns. The fact that some of the urns were actually big pots is worth mentioning, but there are cases in which the urns were small bowls. Based on the funerary inventory and the types of vessels used as cinerary urns one can date the cremation graves to the Late Bronze Age, stages II–III (Bronze D – Ha A₁).



Fig. 21. The rescue excavation in Şagu “Site A1_1”, complex 81, 2010.



Fig. 22. The rescue excavation in Şagu “Site A1_1”, complex 198, 2010.

One knows from older excavations that pottery kilns were identified on the territory of the present town of Pecica¹⁶⁵. Corroborated with the latest discoveries on the Nădlac – Arad highway section, Lot 2, one can presume that this was a pottery production center consisting of a network of small workshops spread on the high plain, North of the river Mureş. Nine such pottery kilns were identified and documented (site 16/Lot 2 with one kiln, site 15/Lot 2 with two kilns, site 13/Lot 2 with two kilns, site

¹⁶⁵ Blăjan, Dörner 1978.

12/Lot 2 with three kilns, and site 4R/Lot 1 with one kiln). Data thus obtained offers new information on the pottery production technology, i.e. on pottery firing. Though one knows little on how this craft was organized, it seems that it was rather specialized even since the 11th–12th centuries, a fact attested by clusters of kilns discovered over a restricted area around the present-day city of Pecica. For the area under discussion, specialists have estimated a period of demographic growth, due to good climate conditions and the lack of major conflicts. The most populated areas were those located near water flows, such as the area under discussion¹⁶⁶. Apparently isolated, the discoveries around the city of Pecica, that can be dated to the 11th–12th centuries, provide a new perspective on firing techniques of early medieval pottery. It is possible that these workshops produced pottery for the micro-region of the Lower Mureş Valley¹⁶⁷. Archaeological test trenches have revealed a culture layer containing several ceramic fragments (rims, mainly from small cauldrons, but also from pot or cup-type vessels), typical to the Early Medieval or Arpadian Era, that can be dated to the 11th–12th centuries¹⁶⁸.

Overall, the development of archaeological research in the area of Arad underwent several important stages. The early stage is marked by L. Dömötör's activity who aimed at collecting the material necessary to organizing an archaeological exhibition; his goal was fulfilled in 1903 and Dömötör can be considered the founder of this exhibition. From the point of view of his working methods, Dömötör can nevertheless be considered a precursor of scientific field research. The second stage, that of archaeological excavations *per se*, was inaugurated by M. Roska through his 1910 campaign in Pecica. During the subsequent half a century, all excavations in the area were coordinated by specialists from the university centers of Cluj (M. Roska, M. Rusu, I. H. Crişan) and Bucharest (D. Popescu).



Fig. 23. The rescue excavation in Pecica “Site S 12”, 2011.



Fig. 24. Pottery kiln, Pecica “Site 12”, 2011.

¹⁶⁶ Blazovich 1996.

¹⁶⁷ Takács 1986; Blăjan, Dörner 1978; Crişan 2002.

¹⁶⁸ Vágner 2002.

The third stage saw archaeologists from Arad playing a part in archaeological research. The first to break with the dilettantism of his predecessors from before the First World War and the inter-war period was E. Dörner (1925–1993), followed by N. Kiss (1928–1997). Dörner established the ancient history department of the museum and reorganized both the exhibition and the storage rooms. His field research, involving several faithful collaborators¹⁶⁹, allowed for the mapping of a large number of new sites.

The period of systematic excavations performed by specialists working for the museum only started in the eighth decade of the 20th century. One must note the activity of M. Zdroba (1941–1989) and M. Barbu (1944–2004), accompanied by G. P. Hurezan (since 1981) and P. Hügel (since 1990). The new generation of museum specialists, F. Mărginean (starting with 2004) and V. Sava (since 2007), redefines the mechanisms of archaeological research in Arad and coordinate in the same time preventive excavations required by the large infrastructure works of their time.

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¹⁶⁹ Among them one needs to mention school master A. Hamerák (Sânpetru German), Dr. Z. Kasa (Dorobanți), Eng. Gh. Miloi (Arad) and Prof. E. D. Pădureanu (Arad).

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