



Prof. dr. Gheorghe Lazarovici în expoziția *Sanctuarul neolitic de la Parța*
(Muzeul Național al Banatului, Timișoara)

FOR PROFESSOR GHEORGHE LAZAROVICI Summa cum Laude

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Sodalis Honoris Causa Musarum Sedis Napocensis., et
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Professor Ghiță Lazarovici has made an indelible mark, as a leading south-east European archaeologist, a notable scholar, a leader of men, a practical archaeologist, a creative academic, a teacher and administrator; and a congenial personality of Falstaffian proportions. I think I may claim for him the traditional Romanian epithet of *Om Mare*. He has gained the respect of the teams under his leadership, both young and old. His published work, including at least eight books and over 200 articles, is too extensive to summarise here.

Prof. Lazarovici's CV documents the diligent contribution which he has made. It is predicated on his original fieldwork and excavation; and that of his colleagues, especially for me in the jointly evolved methodology of the Highland Zone Ethnoarchaeology Project. He has made a particular contribution to our knowledge of the Neolithic, especially in regard to the Vinča Culture in the Banat and its ritual content. His legacy continues in his students. He was my effective and congenial Fieldwork Collaborator for more decades than I care to remember.

Prof. Lazarovici is also well-known and respected internationally. He has made major contributions to conferences and symposia. In his cosmopolitan spirit he has shown himself open to new ideas in international collaboration. He extended his support to our fieldwork and researches in Romania since at least the 1970s. When we were not in tents in the Carpathians, he frequently welcomed me into the hospitality of his home in Cluj and of his enduringly supportive wife Magda.

Without this collaboration and friendship I would probably have achieved much less in Romania. Our collaboration was international, and reciprocal. Indeed several of our Romanian colleagues were welcomed back to the UK under the auspices of the British Academy. It is worth

mentioning, and pondering as a matter of record, that a certain indulgence was accorded by the Romanian State to our scientific activities, especially to me as foreigner for whatever motive, during a questionable epoch.

Our archaeological fieldwork was to a great extent privileged, eg. when working within frontier zones, at Palaeolithic sites such as Erbiceni or Ripiceni in the frontier zone on the river Prut, or within the Danube Gorges. Diplomacy is an essential component of Archaeology, which is the Universal Subject; and *oameni mari* such as Gh. Lazarovici are the Universal Men who facilitate this diplomacy, and help to sustain the standards of other *oameni de știință*.

We supplemented conventional archaeological excavation with flotation for carbonised plant remains ^{1}, and undertook borings in peat cores to obtain the palynological spectra which would inform us about past environments. One promising deposit lay in a shallow pond, but we were capable of boring under some centimetres of water. The villagers assembled on the margin to watch. After a while small white flakes began to appear in the core, with a crunching sound. "Ah, yes" they said "that will be the German soldiers."

We sought for the first time the original sources for the archaeological obsidian, not by sitting in the office, but more arduously in the landscapes of Harghita and the volcanic region of Tokay. Nearly all the claimed sources in Romania were

¹ Our application of flotation technology using the equipment transported across Europe was among the very first in south-eastern Europe. It was applied by me in collaboration with Prof. Hadrian Daicoviciu at the excavation of the small Dacian houses at Grădiștea Muncelului {appropriately named *Terasa cu Grâu*: Dacia XXV, 1981.} When Hadrian passed away, Ghiță and I poured a libation of wine for him, in the Roman fashion, at the entrance to the fortifications at Grădiștea.

not obsidians, and the obsidians we collected were sourced by their identifying trace elements, using neutron activation analysis in the Harwell nuclear reactor, confirming the accepted speculations to be unfounded.

In the course of our fieldwork Gh. Lazarovici and myself transcended the literalist classification of material remains and pottery, to explore the more challenging themes of behaviour, in the context of long-term processes of change. Working to collect first-hand data in difficult field conditions required almost military standards of logistics. Ghiță Lazarovici proved to be adept at such organisation.

The subject matter of the **Highland Zone Ethno-archaeology Project** was defined as **Comparative Ethno-archaeology**, which is the study of the material outcome of behaviour in process of formation, and indeed of destruction, within all its relationships of environment, economy, technology and the bio-social perspective. It is “*Comparative*” because the most outwardly trivial sites can acquire significance by comparison.

We evolved our own field methods and refined them into a *modus operandi* standing above and

We also studied behaviour and its outcomes in the Romanian village, which sometimes conserves and reflects ancient modes of behaviour which were once much more widespread across Europe. We sought to divert archaeology from its preoccupation with the well-intentioned classification of artefacts, and to place it in the long-term context of evolutionary behaviour and environmental change.

The interpretation of decaying and abandoned sites, and the careful interrogation of their previous occupants, became a form of experiment unique in the archaeological context, transcending even experimental reconstruction. By moving reciprocally between past and present we opened an intellectual route to the study of prehistoric behaviour, and placed it in the context of catchment and environment. This was truly landscape archaeology before its time.

We tested and refined our *modus operandi* in the field, and evolved a recording methodology to ensure that relevant factors [2] were not forgotten. This is best expressed in our Site Report, or SITREP, as attached. It has to be re-formatted for its functionality to be appreciated. A multitude



Typically geometric old Banat chilim, a Dowry from the family of Professor Gh. Lazarovici. Gifted to the author.

beyond Ethnography or ‘Ethnohistory’; or indeed since they deal with behaviour, in part beyond Archaeology.

We sought to understand the exploitation of the Highland Zone and the exigencies of seasonality {including transhumance} by extending our recording in participation with its practitioners, the *păcurari* among the stâne of the Carpathians. From these men every day we learned something new.

of on-site features were meticulously planned at a scale usually of 1:200. We recorded the surrounding catchment, and the complex hierarchies of sites. We noted the behaviour and relationships of

² As recorded on the SITREPs: such as Siting, Altitude, Location [Slope / Spur / Saddle / Hollow / Crest / Summit] and Orientation, Aspect, Gradient, Environment, Water, Soil, Vegetation, Resources, Intervisibility, Access, Winds, or Microclimate

men and animals, and of their predators, which it was sometimes a pleasure to encounter.

Lazarovici went on to develop our methods in his own work. I admired in particular the way he displayed and re-interpreted the Neolithic material in the museums of the Banat so as to reflect the achievements of the new Ethnoarchaeology.

Ghiță ensured that Comparative Ethnoarchaeology took its taught place in university courses in Romania. He evolved his own methods for the statistical recording of excavated artefacts, and he

always welcomed the opportunities opened up by information technology. Above all he was open, critical and receptive to every new idea.

As a true friend Ghiță is for me as boldly-defined as the geometric designs on the chilims of his native Banat. He conforms to the established Romanian category of *oameni mari*, larger than life and master of a whole range of abilities. It is fitting that they should receive here the recognition they deserve.

**SPECIMEN SITE REPORT: as evolved for the
HIGHLAND ZONE ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT**

SITE NAME / NICKNAME > < SITE ID

OBSERVER > < DATE

SITE ALTITUDE: metres > < MAP REFERENCE

The important parameter of Altitude was recorded by accurate altimeter readings.

SITE LOCATION > [Essential details, Village, Compass Bearings] <Sketch Y/N?

{ FORMATTED SPACE FOR NOTES }

SITE TOPOGRAPHY: < Notes Overleaf – Y/N?

Siting: [Slope / Spur / Saddle / Hollow / Crest / Summit]

Orientation, Aspect, Gradient, Environment, Water, Soil, Vegetation, Resources, Intervisibility, Access, Winds, Microclimate.

{ FORMATTED SPACE FOR NOTES }

PHOTOS Y/N? < Sketch – Y/N?

ON-SITE DESCRIPTION: < 1: 200 PLAN #?

Dimensions, Structures, Deposit, Aspect, Ecology, Finds, Materials, Preservation &c.

{ FORMATTED SPACE FOR NOTES }

SPECIAL REMARKS: [REFER to PHOTOS / DRAWINGS / NOTES]

What sampled or left; Bag Nos.; Special interest; Location of material.

{ FORMATTED SPACE FOR NOTES }

• **R** = Rare: **UNK** = Unknown: **L** = Localised: + = Present: ++ = Relatively abundant: – = Absent

• < = less than: > = more than: ± = Approximately: <-> = Associated with

• Φ = Photograph [REFER to FILM #]

Classificatory Boxes { *designed to be visible in the base of a pile of Sitreps.* }

SITREP #					
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[Assigned to eg., PUBLICATION/ EXCAVATION / LOSS-INFO etc]

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NB. The Sitrep is printed onto the LEFT half of an A3 SHEET in LANDSCAPE format. This is then folded back on the right.

Giving three blank A4 surfaces for sketches and notes.