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LATE IRON AGE ARCHAEOLOGY IN ROMANIA AND THE POLITICS OF THE PAST*

CĂTĂLIN NICOLAE POPA**

Keywords: archaeology, nationalism, Late Iron Age, Dacians

Abstract: The paper approaches the topic of nationalism in relation to the Late Iron Age archaeology of Romania. It is argued that nationalist agendas have played a significant role in the development of Late Iron Age scholarly work since the beginnings of the discipline in the 19th century and particularly after the start of the 20th century. This phenomenon took extreme forms during Nicolae Ceaușescu's national-communist regime and continues today, albeit, with reduced intensity. For illustrative purposes, four main ideas are discussed in connection to Late Iron Age Romanian archaeology: the assumed unity of the Late Iron Age inhabitants, referred to as Dacians; the Dacians as ancestors of modern Romanians; the issue of ethnic labelling in Late Iron Age archaeology; and finally the implicit superiority of the Dacians. Although the relationship between nationalism and archaeology should not be condemned intrinsically, in the case of Romania such a link is problematic because of three factors: the belief in the scientific character of the discipline; the lack of theoretical discussions on ethnicity; and the archaeologists' denial of political responsibility for their research. This strategy has led most Late Iron Age scholars to retreat to the "ivory tower" of positivist research, allowing for a large number of non-academic publications about the Dacians to flood the internet and bookshops.

Cuvinte-cheie: arheologie, naționalism, epoca târzie a fierului, daci

Rezumat: Articolul abordează tema naționalismului cu referință la arheologia de epoca târzie a fierului din România. Pe parcursul textului este susținută ideea că, încă din secolul al XIX-lea și în special după începutul secolului al XX-lea, ideile de tentă naționalistă au jucat un rol important în dezvoltarea arheologiei epocii fierului. Fenomenul a căpătat dimensiuni extreme în perioada regimului ceaușist și continuă până astăzi într-o formă mult atenuată. Patru idei principale sunt discutate pentru a ilustra impactul ideologiei naționaliste asupra arheologiei epocii târzii a fierului din România: prezumția de unitate a locuitorilor din epoca târzie a fierului, adeseori numiți daci; dacii ca strămoși ai românilor; problema atribuirii etnice a materialului arheologic; și nu în ultimul rând, caracterul superior al dacilor. Deși relația dintre naționalism și arheologie nu trebuie să fie obligatoriu criticată, în cazul României această legătură este problematică din cauza următorilor trei factori: arheologia este concepută ca având un caracter pur științific; lipsa discuțiilor teoretice cu privire la etnicitate; refuzul arheologilor de a accepta responsabilitatea politică aferentă cercetării pe care o conduc. Această strategie a determinat majoritatea arheologilor care s-au ocupat de cercetarea epocii târzii a fierului să se retragă în „turnul de fildeș” al cercetării de natură pozitivistă, făcând astfel loc numeroaselor publicații non-academice, cu referire la daci, care inundă astăzi internetul și librăriile.

21st century Romanians have a great affinity with two past populations: the Romans and the Dacians. These two peoples are considered the ancestors of today's nation. However, it is the latter that were chosen to represent a golden age, since it is the Dacian past alone, dating back to the Late Iron Age, that was able to provide the unique character that Romanian nationalists were seeking and at the same time legitimated the 20th century borders of the country.

* Parts of this paper have already been published in C.N. Popa, Ó Riagáin 2012 and C.N. Popa 2013. Much of the text also formed a chapter of my PhD thesis, defended in 2014 at the University of Cambridge.

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This paper deals with the relationship between nationalism and archaeology in the context of Late Iron Age research in Romania. The first section explores the development of the discipline throughout the 20th century and the role politics played in this process. The second section analyses Late Iron Age archaeology in Romania after the 1970s and today using many direct quotations from academic papers. The focus is on four main ideas that have been introduced through the interplay of politics and archaeology: the assumed unity of the Dacians, the Dacians as ancestors of modern Romanians, the issue of ethnic labelling in Iron Age archaeology and finally the implicit superiority of the Dacians. The problems faced by archaeologists, as a result of the propagation of these ideas, are presented in the third section, while the fourth section is aimed at analysing the impact of the Dacian archaeological discourse on the broader Romanian population. Finally, the fifth section represents a discussion of whether scholars should attempt to produce a demythicized past, one without national heroes, and gives ideas of how Romanian archaeology as a discipline could move further in such a direction.

Nationalism and Archaeology

Theoretical discussions in the 1980s have given rise to the idea that archaeological writings are not as objective as we would want them to be¹. Even though the object of our work, the material record, is usually very tangible and ‘solid’, its interpretation represents a very subjective matter. We do not dig the past, we construct it. Many factors influence what we see as a proper explanation of the archaeological data and one of the most dangerous seems to be nationalism. Starting with the 1990s, more and more authors have begun to acknowledge that in many cases there is a very strong relationship between archaeology and nationalism². Scholars have brought to light many examples where archaeology was one of the fundamental elements in the construction of national ideas³ or where it was used to support various political agendas⁴. Romania is also a country where nationalism has had a great impact on the development of archaeology, especially on the research of the Late Iron Age. Moreover, political influence has determined that archaeological interpretation of the evidence was used to create an ancestral link between two nations (one “real” and one “invented”)⁵ situated two thousand years apart.

1. THE BIRTH OF ROMANIA AND ROMANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Romanian archaeology appeared as a discipline in the second part of the 19th century, after the creation of the first Romanian state (1859), the establishment of the National Museum of Antiquities (1864) and the foundation of the two Universities of Iași (1860) and Bucharest (1864)⁶. Alexandru Odobescu introduced the first course of archaeology at the University of Bucharest in 1874 and played an important role in the development of archaeological research in the country while the state was in a process of becoming. Like the rest of the Balkans, the archaeologists of Romania looked primarily towards the German speaking countries (i.e. Austria, Germany) for training and education⁷, thus importing the general principles which are still very

¹ Hodder 1982; Hodder 1986; Miller, Tilley 1984; Shanks, Tilley 1987; Shanks, Tilley 1989a; Shanks, Tilley 1989b.

² e.g. Kohl, Fawcett 1995b; Schmidt, Patterson 1995; Díaz-Andreu, Champion 1996; Graves-Brown, Jones, Gamble 1996; Meskell 1998; Hamilakis 2007; Kohl, Kozelsky, Ben-Yehuda 2007.

³ Some examples are for Denmark: Kristiansen 1993; Macedonia: Brown 1994; Greece: Hamilakis 1996; Hamilakis 2007; Albania: Gori 2012; France: Olivier 2012.

⁴ Kohl, Fawcett 1995a.

⁵ The word “real” is not entirely accurate; imagined, *sensu* Anderson 1991, would be more exact. However, I chose to use “real” in order to contrast it to the “invented” pre-historic nation.

⁶ The National Museum of Antiquities was created based on the earlier Museum of National History and Antiquities, founded in 1834 (Păunescu, Casan-Franga, Diaconu 1984). For this reason, some trace the beginning of Romanian archaeology back to the first half of the 19th century (see Suceveanu 2004; A. Vulpe 2004).

⁷ Kaiser 1995, p. 107-108.

much in use today⁸, such as: the strong focus on typology; the stress on cultural groups which are perceived as living entities with active agency; the natural evolution of one cultural group to another in parallel with technological advancements; the direct link between material culture, culture groups and ethnicity⁹. These ideas are easily identified when one looks at the works of one of the central figures in Romanian archaeology, Vasile Pârvan, especially his fundamental monograph, *Getica*¹⁰.

The birth of Romanian archaeology needs to be put into its historical context in order to understand its development since it is directly linked to the establishment of the modern Romanian state. In the second part of the 19th century, Romania was struggling to define itself as a political entity after the unification of two of the original medieval states, Walachia and Moldova, took place in 1859, by taking advantage of the favourable international situation. However, the newly appeared political structure was still under Turkish suzerainty; independence was only achieved after the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-1878 and recognised internationally in 1881. Finally, in 1918, following the First World War, four other provinces, inhabited partly by ethnic Romanians¹¹, were annexed by Romania to form one of the largest countries in Europe at that point, *România Mare*¹². This process of unification of several small provinces over a mere 60 years required an ideological as well as a political effort, since the parts had historically been divided at least since medieval times. It was thus necessary to create a common history for all the new Romanian citizens¹³; and the best way to do so was to find a historical precedent for such a large political structure.

Archaeology lent itself to this task. Even though common ethnicity represents the main element that defines the European nations, a nation without a past is a contradiction in terms¹⁴; hence there was a need to add longevity to the element of ethnicity; to construct a 'genealogy'. Archaeology is undoubtedly situated in the best position for this task due to its access to material evidence. Taking this into account, it is no surprise that material culture was given ethnic affiliations, thus creating 'nations in the past'. Lockyear noticed that in the case of Romania it was necessary to dig deep in time to find roots for the modern state¹⁵, while for other European countries the medieval past served this purpose. Yet even within Europe the solutions were not chronologically fixed solely in the Middle Ages. In the Italy of d'Azeglio, the focus was both on the free medieval comuni and the Renaissance cities, but also on the Bronze-Iron Age transition. In the politics of the Italian past, there was a struggle between stressing multiple regionalism (e.g. the Etruscans) and the prominence of one region (e.g. the Latins or Romans), complicated by papal politics¹⁶. In France, the politics of the past oscillated between Gallic (pre-Roman) and Frankish (Early Medieval) reconstructions¹⁷. Two English speaking countries at the limits of Europe, Ireland and Malta, have sought legitimation in a prehistoric political past, safely located before British colonisation¹⁸. The common factor is the search for a tangible distinctiveness. In Western and Central Europe, this does gravitate towards the medieval period of Arthur and Charlemagne, but lands at the boundaries of the Mediterranean offer other opportunities. Imagined

⁸ The perpetuation of these principles from pre-World War I and inter-war Germany has been possible due to the master-disciple relation that has dominated Romanian archaeology academia from its beginnings until today, Dragoman 2009, p. 192-194, 197-198.

⁹ It should be mentioned that following the Second World War the link between material culture and ethnicity has been much problematized in the German speaking countries, e.g. Eggers 1950; Eggers 1959; for more recent ideas see Brather 2002; Brather 2004.

¹⁰ Pârvan 1926.

¹¹ The four provinces were Transylvania, Banat, Bucovina and Bessarabia and had previously been part of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires.

¹² Hitchins 1992. The term *România Mare* basically means Big/Great Romania, as it is the point of maximum territorial expansion of the Romanian state (larger than contemporary Romania). Additionally, it is also the name of a present ultranationalist political party which has had a great deal of influence in Romania after the fall of communism in 1989, although most of its power has recently faded away.

¹³ The situation is comparable to that of Italy in the second part of the 19th century, which made one of the main contributors to the formation of the Italian state, Massimo d'Azeglio, supposedly say the famous words: "We have made Italy. Now we have to make Italians." ("*L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani.*"), Hobsbawm 1992, p. 4.

¹⁴ Hobsbawm 1992, p. 3; Rowlands 1994, p. 133.

¹⁵ Lockyear 2004.

¹⁶ Stoddart in prep.

¹⁷ Demoule 1999; Olivier 1999.

¹⁸ Stoddart 2013.

communities¹⁹ thus seek ancient entities which they can define as indigenous, or if this search proves fruitless, entities which can be locked into a heroic migration from outside.

In the case of Romania, the obvious candidate was the Late Iron Age, when the local inhabitants, generally called Geto-Dacians²⁰ by scholars, are supposed to have created a political structure that spanned the entire territory of modern Romania, and even beyond its borders. This state was intrinsically assumed to have been ethnically homogenous. Hence, the Geto-Dacians achieved the status of ancestors of the Romanian people and archaeology came to provide the material evidence which illustrated the might of the Geto-Dacian *neam*²¹.

By the time Vasile Pârvan finished his monograph, only eight years after the establishment of *România Mare*, much of the groundwork, relating to the study of the Geto-Dacians, had already been undertaken by people like Odobescu and Tocilescu²². Even before that, Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu, an important Romanian scholar, had already published *The critical history of the Romanians (Istoria critică a Românilor)*²³ in which the link between the Dacians and the Romanians was already mentioned, although the essential component was considered to be Roman. Nevertheless, the idea of the supposed superiority of the Geto-Dacians had sometimes already taken an extreme form, going so far as to suggest that the cradle of all human civilization lay in the Carpathian Basin with the Romanians' ancestors²⁴. But it was only after the publication of Pârvan's *Getica* that the national discourse in archaeology was clearly set up and the stress on the importance of the Geto-Dacians started to take shape²⁵, creating a situation that characterised much of the research from the period between the two world wars, and especially after the 1960s²⁶.

These circumstances changed after the Second World War, with the installation of a communist regime in Romania. The new government was interested in stressing the links with the large neighbour to the East, the USSR, which was supporting the communist party leaders ideologically and militarily. Consequently, it became pivotal to express the importance of the Slavs throughout history and their close relations with the Romanians' ancestors, pushing the discourse about the unique roots of the Romanians into the background, although far from extinguishing it²⁷. This shift in topic was also accompanied by an apparent ideological transformation, since a veneer of Marxist-Leninist discourse flooded the whole spectrum of archaeological writing²⁸.

With the 1960s, came yet another important ideological shift. In this period Nicolae Ceauşescu became the head of communist Romania and his intention was to break away from the strict control of the Soviets. Hence, the regime diminished its control of academia to a degree, at least during the initial years of Ceauşescu's rule²⁹, and started to encourage nationalist writings in all disciplines, including archaeology. The change in ideology allowed for the inter-war nationalist ideas to resurface and augment in strength³⁰. This meant that priority was given to the research which, in a more direct or indirect manner, illustrated the greatness of the Romanian nation and its people. Therefore, a more radical version of the contemporary French

¹⁹ *sensu* Anderson 1991.

²⁰ The name was created by modern scholars through the combination of the Greek term Getae and the Latin term Dacian, used in the antique texts to refer broadly to the population occupying the Northern part of the Lower Danube and the river mouth. However, some authors prefer to use simply Getae while others refer to Dacians.

²¹ D. Gheorghiu, Schuster 2002, p. 289-290. The term *neam*, along with *popor* are preferred by Romanian archaeologists when talking about populations of the past. They basically refer to an ethnic group, a nation (Neumann 2005).

²² Tocilescu 1877.

²³ Haşdeu 1984 [1873-1874].

²⁴ Densuşianu 1986 [1913].

²⁵ Lica 2006. Pârvan's *Getica* was highly appreciated at an international level. Following its completion, he was invited to hold a series of lecture at the University of Cambridge, in St. John's College (D. Gheorghiu, Schuster 2002, p. 192). The lectures were later published in both English (Pârvan 1928) and Romanian (Pârvan 1937), and re-published numerous times afterwards (Pârvan 1956; 1957; 1958; 1967; 2002).

²⁶ D. Gheorghiu, Schuster 2002, p. 293-298; Dragoman, Oanţă-Marghitu 2006, p. 60-62. During the period before the Second World War the main emphasis was on the Roman ancestry rather than on the Dacian one.

²⁷ E.g. C. Daicoviciu, Ferenczi 1951. Some themes from the period before the Second World War, such as the continuity of the indigenous Late Iron Age population from the Carpathian Basin and their Romanization following the Roman conquest, continued to be highly present also after the installation of the communist regime in Romania (see Matei-Popescu 2007, p. 272-276).

²⁸ Matei-Popescu 2007, p. 288; Dragoman 2009, p. 192.

²⁹ Dragoman, Oanţă-Marghitu 2006, p. 62-64.

³⁰ Matei-Popescu 2007, p. 284.

‘archéologie nationale’³¹ took shape, which prompted the focus of archaeological research in areas that had the potential to illustrate the unique character of Romania and its glorious past.

Throughout this period, the Geto-Dacian legacy of Pârvan was carried on and expanded particularly through the writings of Ion Horațiu Crișan, Constantin and Hadrian Daicoviciu. Crișan and the father and son Daicoviciu, together with their students from the Babeș-Bolyai University, the History Museum and the Institute of Archaeology from Cluj-Napoca, carried out the archaeological investigations of the main Late Iron Age settlements from Transylvania and Banat. This included the supposed capital of the Dacian Kingdom, Sarmizegetusa Regia. The three scholars produced a plethora of books and articles that cemented the nationalist Geto-Dacian discourse in archaeology³². A similar role was played by archaeologists from the University of Bucharest, Institute of Archaeology from Bucharest and Institute of Thracology. Leading scholars from the three key institutions of the country’s capital, influenced Romanian archaeological practice by promoting a comparable discourse to that of Constantin and Hadrian Daicoviciu³³.

As the regime and top party members became aware of the unique potential of the Dacian ancestorhood, under their guidance, the Thracomaniac/Dacomaniac movement was born. Its adepts considered the Dacians the only, or at least the most important element that led to the ethnogenesis of the Romanians³⁴. The birth of this movement may be connected to Ceaușescu’s visit to Iran in 1971, when he attended the 2500 year celebrations of the Persian Empire in Persepolis. At this point he may have become interested in providing a comparably grandiose narrative of the past for Romania. An important role in revealing the potential of the Dacians to the communist leader was played by the pseudo-official historians of the Romanian Communist Party, Mircea Mușat and Ion Ardeleanu³⁵, as well as by the activity of exiled regime collaborator Iosif Constantin Drăgan. Through their writings³⁶ and close relations with the regime, the Thracomaniac views were more or less established as state doctrine. Nonetheless, few scholars embraced the idea of the Dacians as the only ancestors. Some archaeologists attempted to resist the party orders to stress the importance of the Dacians and retreated to a positivistic discourse, similar to what was happening in Serbia during the same period³⁷. However, such an attitude only helped to sustain and naturalize the dominant discourse³⁸. The result was thus a gain in importance of the many writings which did reflect the ideas of the regime³⁹. The peak of the Thracomaniac phenomenon was reached in 1980, when, following the Iranian model that Ceaușescu witnessed, celebrations were held for the 2050th anniversary since the birth of the first Romanian state – that of the Geto-Dacian king Burebista⁴⁰.

³¹ Fleury-Ilett 1996.

³² E.g. C. Daicoviciu 1938; C. Daicoviciu 1941; C. Daicoviciu, Ferenczi 1951; C. Daicoviciu, H. Daicoviciu 1960; H. Daicoviciu 1968; H. Daicoviciu 1972; Crișan 1968; Crișan 1977a; Crișan 1977b.

³³ E.g. D. Berciu 1966; R. Vulpe 1976; A. Vulpe 1976. Although their ideas were rarely contradictory, the Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca based archaeologists were in a competition that echoes until today.

³⁴ The topic of Romanian ethnogenesis has been overall of great interest to Romanian archaeologists throughout the 20th century see Babeș 1990; Măgureanu 2007. Generally, before the Second World War, despite a great deal of importance being given to the Dacians, the Roman heritage was considered primordial. However, during the Thracomaniac movement, the Latin component was reduced to a minimum, a trend that is perpetuated today in some popular publications (see section 4 below).

³⁵ See Constantiniu 2007.

³⁶ I.C. Drăgan 1976; Mușat, Ardeleanu 1983.

³⁷ Babić 2002.

³⁸ Tilley 1998, p. 318.

³⁹ E.g. Fruchter, Mihăilescu 1972; Scorpan 1972; Crișan 1977b; D. Berciu *et alii* 1980, p. 198; Mărghitan 1983; Gostar, Lica 1984; D. Berciu 1986a; D. Berciu 1986b; A. Vulpe, Zahariade 1987. While some authors genuinely believed what they were writing, many of them were over-emphasising the grandeur and importance of the Dacians just to please certain Communist Party officials and allow their research to get published. It comes then as no surprise that after 1989 some of these scholars began to analyse critically the work that had been done in the period before, including their own, cf. Lica 2006.

⁴⁰ The year was fixed by the Romanian Communist Party as archaeology could not provide a fixed date. The choice of 1980 may be related to the fact that approximately at the same time Bulgaria was celebrating 1300 years from the settling of the Proto-Bulgarians (Bulgars) in the territory of today’s Bulgaria and the establishment of their first state, that of Asparuh, in 681 AD (Babeș 2008, p. 9).

2. LATE IRON AGE ARCHAEOLOGY FROM THE 1970S UNTIL TODAY

Even though the communist regime of Romania came crashing down in 1989, the idea of the united Dacian ancestors did not decline because no break can be seen in the way archaeology was practiced and written. Indeed, while the Thracomaniac ideas were largely abandoned, most people continued to work within the same nationalist framework as in the two previous decades, although most Romanian researchers were retreating by now to the 'ivory tower' of objectivism/positivism⁴¹.

Archaeology in Romania today is very much dependent on that of the communist period. Most archaeology courses in Romanian universities still rely heavily on the publications from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s that provide the bibliographical basis for current students. While this situation is determined to a degree by the poor supply of academic material, it led to current archaeological works following broadly in the footsteps of previous authors, especially in terms of style of writing and questions that are being asked.

A series of recurrent ideas were introduced at that time about the Geto-Dacians. They were propagated through numerous contemporary publications and appear, less clearly and with less intensity, in more recent volumes and articles, dated after the year 2000. Each of these points is discussed in this section with examples. The quotations are not employed for discourse analysis⁴². They are rather chosen purely for illustrative purposes from what I consider to be some of the most widely used texts on the topic.

1. The Unity of the Geto-Dacians

The first point relates to the existence of the Geto-Dacians as one united *neam* or *popor*. The reality of this 'Late Iron Age nation' was rarely questioned⁴³.

"The historical conditions themselves were favourable and even demanded the unification of the Daco-Getians..." ("*Condițiile istorice înseși erau favorabile și chiar reclamau unificarea daco-geților...*")⁴⁴.

Their cultural, political, religious unity (or of any other kind) was stressed over and over again by several authors.

"All these elements which prove the political and economic force reached by the Getic tribes do not break *the unity of the Geto-Dacian civilisation (sic!)*" ("*Toate aceste elemente ce dovedesc forța politică și economică la care ajunseseră triburile geților nu rup unitatea civilizației geto-dace (sic!).*")⁴⁵.

"We are thus seeing an evolved society, which has a remarkable unity in the way it expresses its civilisation and culture. To this fact the political unification also contributed..." ("*Ni se înfățișează astfel, o societate evoluată, cu forme de exprimare a civilizației și culturii de o remarcabilă unitate. La aceasta a contribuit și faptul unității politice...*")⁴⁶.

"The unity and specificity of this culture was often emphasised in specialised works and backed up by numerous studies..." ("*Unitatea și specificitatea aceste culturi a fost deseori evidențiată în lucrările de specialitate și întărită în numeroasele studii...*")⁴⁷.

"After the unification of all the Geto-Dacians by Burebista..." ("*După unirea tuturor daco-geților realizată de Burebista...*")⁴⁸.

⁴¹ The situation was similar to the one from Asturia and Léon after the fall of Franco (Marín Suárez, González Álvarez, Alonso González 2012).

⁴² See Imhof 2002; Schade 2005; Sarasin 2007; Koch 2009.

⁴³ This phenomenon of taking the existence of the Geto-Dacians as a given reflects again the views from the end of the 19th century when the Romanian state, and with it Romanian archaeology, was formed. In that period, Ioan Rațiu, one of the leaders of the movement for the emancipation of the Romanians from Transylvania, which was at that time under Austro-Hungarian rule, spoke a phrase that remained a symbol for the Romanian national idea: "The existence of a people is not discussed, it is declared!" ("*Existența unui popor nu se discută, ci se afirmă!*").

⁴⁴ Glodariu *et alii* 1996, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Turcu 1979, p. 191.

⁴⁶ Gostar, Lica 1984, p. 161.

⁴⁷ Ursachi 1995, p. 280.

⁴⁸ G. Gheorghiu 2005, p. 220.

Nowadays most researchers understand that umbrella names Geto-Dacian, Getae or Dacian are primarily a modern invention. Yet, although some have pointed out that such terms are loaded with nationalist ideology⁴⁹, they are often dismissed as harmless convention⁵⁰.

“The natives, who we conventionally call Dacians, although in the written sources they appear with this name only in the 1st century BC, dominate Maramureș, to the North, and Banat, to the South.” (“*Indigenii, pe care îi denumim convențional daci, deși în izvoarele scrise ei apar cu acest nume abia în sec. I a. Chr., domină Maramureșul, în nord, și în Banat, în sud.*”)⁵¹.

It is hard to find a generalizing rule for when an author uses Geto-Dacian, Getae or Dacian. Nevertheless if one considers the geographical spread, it is possible to observe that overall the term Dacian is preferred for finds from within the Carpathian Arch⁵², while Getae is usually utilised when speaking about what lies to the South and East⁵³, although there are exceptions⁵⁴; Geto-Dacians can be employed in any of the two situations and remains the name which is used most often⁵⁵. Apart from geography, there are also changes in terminology according to the period being discussed. Between the 5th and the 3rd century BC, some researchers talk about a Getic civilization⁵⁶, and hence a Getic ethnicity, which is seen as naturally evolving from the Babadag culture of the Hallstatt period, as Niculescu accurately pointed out⁵⁷. On the other hand, from the 3rd century to the end of the 1st century BC, a time seen as belonging to a different evolutionary stage, the finds are characterised as belonging to the Geto-Dacian *neam*, even though the first ancient use of the term Dacian only appears in the 1st century BC, in the writings of Caesar. With the 1st century AD there is yet another change, because at this point the name changes just to Dacian; furthermore, the territory itself takes the name of Dacia. Last but not least, the Iron Age inhabitants undergo one more evolutionary ‘upgrade’ as they integrate Roman civilization and culture, thus becoming Daco-Romans. However, some of them were named Free Dacians instead (*daci liberi*), as they occupied territories situated outside the Roman province of Dacia⁵⁸.

2. The Geto-Dacians as ancestors of Romanians

The second element that has often been repeated in Romanian La Tène archaeology is that the Geto-Dacians, who were sometimes described as having their origins as far back as the Bronze Age or even the Neolithic⁵⁹, represent “our ancestors”, hence the ancestors of modern Romanians.

“Apart from the inventory of the Geto-Dacian settlements which show cultural unity, the same unity is expressed by the spiritual life of *our ancestors* (my emphasis) through the sanctuaries that were discovered, through the unity of the ornamentation of ceramic vessels made either by hand or wheel thrown.” (“*Pe lângă inventarul așezărilor geto-dacice care prezintă o unitate de cultură, aceeași unitate ne-o exprimă și viața spirituală a strămoșilor noștri prin sanctuarele descoperite, prin unitatea ornamentării vaselor de lut realizate fie cu mâna fie la roată.*”)⁶⁰.

The link between the Geto-Dacian ‘nation’ and the Romanian one was perceived as being so intrinsic that the need to study them became an obvious, natural fact.

“The importance of knowing and, thus, studying the history of the Geto-Dacians has not been in a long time a thing that needs a serious argument in order to be considered a truly scientific problem.”

⁴⁹ Niculescu 2002.

⁵⁰ Cf. A. Vulpe 1998.

⁵¹ Sîrbu 2006a, p. 195.

⁵² E.g. I. Berciu, A. Popa 1971; Macrea, Glodariu 1976; Glodariu 1989; Florea, Vaida, Suci 2000; G. Gheorghiu 2005.

⁵³ E.g. Sîrbu 1996; Șerbănescu *et alii* 2010; Opaț 2013.

⁵⁴ E.g. Ursachi 1995.

⁵⁵ E.g. Căpitanu, Ursachi 1972; Babeș 1979; 1999; Gostar, Lica 1984; Preda 1986; D. Ciugudean and H. Ciugudean 1993; Pescaru, Ferencz 2004; Măndescu 2006.

⁵⁶ Sîrbu 2006b.

⁵⁷ Niculescu 2004.

⁵⁸ The term Free Dacians has been criticised briefly for its meaningless character by several authors (Diaconu 1998, p. 650-651; Matei-Popescu 2007, p. 283-284).

⁵⁹ Turcu 1979, p. 190; Glodariu *et alii* 1996, p. 24; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1999, p. 19.

⁶⁰ Turcu 1979, p. 192.

(“Înseamnă că cunoașterea și, deci, a studierii istoriei geto-dacilor nu mai este, de multă vreme, o chestiune ce se cere serios argumentată, pentru a fi socotită cu adevărat o problemă științifică.”)⁶¹.

In some instances, they were depicted almost as martyrs who sacrificed themselves, when they were conquered by the Romans, in order for the Romanian people to be born. This basically represents a generalisation at an ethnic level of the fate of the last Geto-Dacian king, Decebalus, who supposedly committed suicide instead of letting himself be captured. The death of one nation is the birth of a new and better one.

“After the Roman conquest [of the Dacians] the complex ethno-cultural symbiosis with the grand Roman civilisation started. The result of this deep entanglement, on all the spheres of both material and spiritual life, was the appearance of a people which would write a glorious and grand destiny in this part of Europe [the Romanians].” (“În urma cuceririi romane a început complexa simbioză etno-culturală cu grandioasa civilizație romană. Rezultatul acestei adinci întrepătrunderi pe toate planurile vieții materiale și spirituale a fost apariția unui nou popor care va înscrie un glorios și măreț destin istoric în această parte a Europei.”)⁶².

“The conquest of Sarmizegetusa and the death of the hero king [Decebalus] marked the Roman victory and the end of two wars, that were as long as they were difficult, and which brutally ended the rise of a wonderful civilisation through its own strength. Seen from the perspective of the time that passed since then, the victory of the Roman armies actually meant the end of the history of a people but also the beginning of the history of a new one, of the people born from the mix of the defeated with the winners, of the people which today speak Romanian in this territory.” (“Cucerirea Sarmizegetusei și dispariția din viață a regelui erau a consfințit victoria romană la capătul a două războaie pe cât de lungi, pe atât de grele, care au curmat brutal ascensiunea în formă proprie a unei strălucitoare civilizații. Privită din perspectiva vremii scurse de atunci, biruința oștilor romane a însemnat de fapt sfârșitul istoriei unui popor dar și începutul istoriei altuia noi, a poporului zămislit din amestecul învingătorii, a poporului care astăzi vorbește românește în acest teritoriu.”)⁶³.

After the year 2000, direct reference to the Geto-Dacians as ancestors seems to have disappeared in the archaeological literature. This reflects, in most cases, a real, conscious, emotional distancing of the scholars from the focus of their research. However, in some instances, it can be argued that the authors simply do not express their thoughts openly anymore as they have come to acknowledge that it is not ‘good practice’ to talk about your subject of study as your nation’s ancestors. From time to time, less censored views are still expressed, usually coming from scholars of the older generation.

“Tocilescu used all the literary, numismatic and archaeological information available at the time about the Getae and Dacians, as well as the acquisitions of modern historiography, achieving the first historically adequate image and the first really scientific instrument about *our ancestors* [the Geto-Dacians] (my emphasis)...” (“Tocilescu a pus la contribuție toate informațiile literare, epigrafice, numismatice și arheologice disponibile la acea vreme despre geți și daci, precum și achizițiile istoriografiei moderne, dând prima imagine adecvată istoric și primul instrument cu adevărat științific despre strămoșii noștri...”)⁶⁴.

3. Ethnic labelling

Romanian archaeological research after the 1970s has had a great affinity with ethnic identification, a preoccupation that is still strong in today’s publications⁶⁵. Despite a number of recent ‘rebellious’ voices⁶⁶, the common opinion remains that archaeology is a discipline that provides an objective history of the Romanians in which the actors are *neamuri* or archaeological cultures. As one understands from the ‘official

⁶¹ Gostar and Lica 1984, p. 10.

⁶² A. Vulpe, Zahariade 1987, p. 221.

⁶³ Glodariu *et alii* 1996, p. 43-44.

⁶⁴ Lica 2006, p. 1016.

⁶⁵ It should be stated, however, that Iron Age researchers from the entire European continent have had, and often still have an unhealthy obsession with ethnicity and ethnic names (C.N. Popa, Stoddart 2014, p. 328-331).

⁶⁶ Babeș 1990; Strobel 1998; Niculescu 2002; Niculescu 2004; Dragoman, Oanță-Marghitu 2006.

history of Romanian people⁶⁷, the job of the researchers is to identify those groups of people that contributed to the birth of the Romanians and to study them in relation to the other ethnic groups with whom they came in contact⁶⁸.

The indicator used to establish ethnicity is material culture. When it comes to the Late Iron Age, as soon as an object is taken out of the ground it receives an ethnic label (e.g. Geto-Dacian, Celtic, Thracian, Greek, Roman, Scythian, Sarmatian etc.). These labels are then deployed when referring to different archaeological features (e.g. house, grave, temple), sites (e.g. settlement, fortification, cemetery) and ultimately all aspects of human life (e.g. society, religion, culture). Consequently almost anything can be described as Geto-Dacian. A brief survey of mainstream archaeological literature on the Late Iron Age of Romania resulted in the following terms which are strongly associated with the epithet Getic/Dacian or Geto-Dacian (e.g. Dacian cup, Geto-Dacian priests, Geto-Dacian civilization, Dacian life etc.): archaeological discoveries (*descoperiri arheologice*), culture (*cultură*), material culture (*cultură materială*), pottery (*ceramică*), including individual types such as fruit-bowl (*fructieră*), cup (*ceașcă*), plate (*farfurie*), bowl (*bol*) etc., vessels (*vase*), gold (*aur*), silver (*argint*), treasure/hoard (*tezaur*), jewellery (*podoabe*), fibula (*fibulă*), house (*casă*), sanctuary (*sanctuar*), burial (*mormânt*), wall (*zid*), settlement (*așezare*), fortress/fortification (*fortăreață/fortificație*), citadel (*cetate*), military architecture (*arhitectura militară*), vestiges (*vestigii*), [stratigraphic] level (*nivel*), traces (*urme*), art (*artă*), centre (*centru*), political structure (*structură politică*), state (*stat*), kingdom (*regat*), royal institution (*regalitatea*), tribes (*triburi*), communities (*comunități*), aristocracy (*aristocrație*), warrior (*războinic*), priests (*preoți*), traders (*negustori*), [iron or silver] smiths (*argintari/fierari*), artisans (*artizani*), agriculturist (*agricultor*), civilisation (*civilizație*), society (*societate*), family (*familie*), period (*perioadă*), époque (*epocă*), territory (*teritoriu*), earth (*pământ*), habitat (*habitat*), environment (*mediu*), ethnic space (*spațiu etnic*), world (*lume*), beliefs (*credințe*), religion (*religie*), mythology (*mitologie*), life (*viața*), [human] representations (*reprezentări umane*), character (*caracter*), agriculture (*agricultură*) and ploughing (*arat*).

Because practically everything can be ethnically labelled as Geto-Dacian it is no surprise that some settlement monographs have chapters entitled “Ethnic Affiliation” (“*Apartenența etnică*”)⁶⁹ in which it is argued that there is no doubt that the inhabitants were Geto-Dacians:

“The ethnic belonging to the Geto-Dacians [of the previously enumerated pottery forms] not only cannot be denied by anyone, but it represents an irrefutable ethnic marker which we can use to easily infer who the owners of the material culture were in the context in which they are found.” (“*Apartenența etnică la geto-daci [a formelor ceramic enumerate] nu numai că nu poate fi contestată de nimeni, formele, ca atare, constituie un reper etnic de netăgăduit, pe baza lor putem ușor dezvălui cine sunt purtătorii culturii materiale în contextul în care se găsesc.*”)⁷⁰.

The use of ethnic labels for individual objects or entire communities remains very popular in the archaeological literature of the 21st century:

“The ethnicity of the inhabitants was undoubtedly Getic...” (“*În privința etnicității locuitorilor, aceștia erau indubitabili geți...*”)⁷¹.

“The many ceramic vessels discovered in the settlement and in the graves, at least 100 items, are characteristic of the Geto-Dacian pottery of the 5th-3rd c. BC.”⁷².

The last quoted work deserves attention as it reflects a situation which is characteristic of most archaeological works being written at present. After the preceding fragment, the authors stated on the following page that, in some instances, it is difficult to give an ethnic affiliation.

⁶⁷ Pascu, Theodorescu 2001; Protase, Suceveanu 2001; Petrescu-Dîmbovița, A. Vulpe 2001.

⁶⁸ Niculescu 2004.

⁶⁹ Ursachi 1995, p. 280-282.

⁷⁰ Ursachi 1995, p. 280.

⁷¹ Măndescu 2006, p. 116.

⁷² Sîrbu, Cavruc, Buzea 2008, p. 204. The original publication is in English and thus no translation was required.

“Of course, in the absence of written sources it is very difficult to identify the ethnical origin of certain archaeological vestiges, since their characteristics make them “opaque” (sic!) and cannot provide such information.”⁷³.

The last statement shows that the authors are indeed aware of the problems associated with ethnic labelling in archaeological interpretations. Written sources have traditionally been preferred when naming past people, as the information provided by the Greek and Roman writers is usually regarded as solid ground for inferring ethnic allegiance⁷⁴. In the absence of such a source, the authors are reluctant to employ ethnic names. For this reason, Sîrbu and his colleagues go on to add that:

“... we only wish to specify that when we use the terms of “Getae”, “Dacian” or “Geto-Dacian” (the last being a modern collocation), we refer to the Northern-Thracian population from the inter-Carpathian area, that was archaeologically attested through vestiges similar to those found in the Lower Danube Region, where the written sources place the Getae.”⁷⁵.

The authors are aware that, at least at a basic level, direct ethnic interpretations cannot be done, although similarities in terms of material culture forms can be pointed out. While they are attempting to be more critical, it is obvious that they are struggling with the tradition of ethnic labelling. For this reason the Getae, Dacian and Geto-Dacian labels are defined by referring to the population from a specific geographical area. However, another label is employed to determine which exact population they are talking about, namely the Northern-Thracian one.

In a similar example, Bondoc argues that:

“There is no doubt that the swords are of Celtic origin, but this does not automatically mean that their owners... were Celts” (“*Nu încapе îndoială că spadele sunt obiecte de origine celtică, dar aceasta nu înseamnă în mod automat că posesorii lor ... ar fi fost celți.*”)⁷⁶. This illustrates that the link between material culture and ethnicity is slowly being eroded. On the other hand, the divorce between artefacts and ethnicity is proving to be more problematic in the case of the Dacians, since the same author adds further down on the same page that:

“As for the curved knives of the *sica* type, in general the form and type are rather common with the Thracians, Dacians and Getae” (“*Pentru pumnalele cu lama curbă de tip sica, în general forma și tipul sunt destul de commune tracilor, dacilor și geților.*”)⁷⁷.

Therefore, although hidden behind a positivist discourse, Romanian archaeology still retains an acute affinity for the Dacians. This shows how difficult it is to get away from the traditional research framework in which past populations and material culture forms are assigned ethnic names; nonetheless there are attempts to do so.

4. The superiority of the Geto-Dacians

The final major idea that repeatedly appeared in Romanian publications about the Late Iron Age is that of the superiority of the Geto-Dacians over the other *neamuri*⁷⁸. Their civilization, material or spiritual, was in numerous cases depicted as more advanced than that of the neighbouring populations, be they of Celtic, Sarmatian, Scythian, or Germanic origin. Only the Greeks and Romans were seen as having a higher level of development, but their knowledge was rapidly absorbed by the swift learning Geto-Dacians.

“Historiography and archaeology has shown, especially after Vasile Pârvan, the links between Dacia and the Mediterranean civilisations, links which were expressed especially through the adoption of “imports” (sic!) of various types to the exigency of the Dacian civilisation and spirituality, but also the

⁷³ Sîrbu, Cavruc, Buzea 2008, p. 205.

⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the written sources referring to the Dacians and Getae have been critically reanalysed lately (see Petre 2004; Dana 2008). Moreover, recent studies have also signalled the difficulties in linking Dacian ethnicity with ethnonyms from Roman epigraphic texts, particularly in the case of military diplomas (Dana, Matei-Popescu 2009, p. 246-248).

⁷⁵ Sîrbu, Cavruc, Buzea 2008, p. 206.

⁷⁶ Bondoc 2008, p. 147.

⁷⁷ Bondoc 2008, p. 147.

⁷⁸ This idea is a corollary, a direct implication of the Geto-Dacians being perceived as ancestors.

contribution of the Thraco-Dacians to the Mediterranean civilisations. The conclusion that one can take is that Dacia imposed itself on the general context of the time, starting with the great king Burebista.” (*“Istoriografia și arheologia au luminat, mai cu seamă de la Vasile Pârvan încoace, legăturile Daciei cu marile civilizații mediteraneene, legături exprimate, în special, sub forma adaptării „importurilor” (sic!) de cele mai diferite naturi la exigențele civilizației și spiritualității dacice, dar și a aportului traco-dac la civilizațiile mediteraneene. Concluzia care se degajă este că Dacia s-a impus în contextul general al epocii, începând cu marele rege Burebista.”*)⁷⁹.

Almost everything that the Geto-Dacians did was unique, extraordinary; it revealed their ingenious character. It showed that they were true masters of their trade.

“The few technological and typological observations show that the Geto-Dacians artisans were craftsmen that *put their mind to good use* (sic!) so as to find and apply the most advantageous options that they had to achieve the highly difficult task of rendering human appearance...” (*“Cele câteva constatări de natură tehnologică și tipologică denotă faptul că artizanii geto-daci erau meseriași ce și-au pus mintea la contribuție (sic!) în a afla și aplica cele mai avantajoase posibilități de care dispuneau pentru realizarea de mare dificultate care era redarea înfățișării umane...”*)⁸⁰.

“Overall, the Geto-Dacian agriculture appears as one of the peak moments of agricultural activity on the territory of Romania...” (*“În ansamblu, agricultura geto-dacilor apare ca unul din momentele de vârf ale evoluției ocupației agricole desfășurată pe teritoriul României...”*)⁸¹.

Some archaeologists described the civilisation, the power, the skill, the riches and the fame of the Geto-Dacians as being so great that they dominated much of Europe. Many of their neighbours, especially the Romans, looked with envy towards them, making plans to conquer them and therefore destroy this grandiose society⁸². The quintessence of the Geto-Dacian spirit is embodied in their kings, Burebista and especially Decebalus, both of whom represent true heroes.

“From his predecessors, Diurpaneus inherited the throne of a rich country, in full development, towards which the Roman emperors had been looking for a long time. The king understood that in a confrontation of such proportions, as the inevitable one with imperial Rome was likely to be, the bravery and love for freedom of his people would not be enough...” (*“De la predecesorii săi, Diurpaneus a moștenit tronul unei țări bogate, în plină dezvoltare, asupra căreia privirile împăraților romani erau aținite de multă vreme. Regele a înțeles că într-o confruntare de asemenea proporții, cum se anunța cea inevitabilă cu Roma imperială, nu vor fi suficiente doar vitejia și dragoastea de liberate a poporului său...”*)⁸³.

“The millennia-long history of the Geto-Dacians, ethnically and culturally individualised from the rest of the Thracian people of Eastern Europe, contributed to the universal cultural heritage with one of the most original and vigorous civilisations which had its attributes and virtues pointed out by contemporary and later writers. With its entire existence taking place in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic region, its ancestral territory, the Geto-Dacian people gave to the antique world an example of firm will when it came to resistance against the attempts at oppression by the greatest powers of antiquity.” (*“Milenara istorie a geto-dacilor, ca popor individualizat etnic și cultural de restul masei trace în răsăritul Europei, a oferit patrimoniului culturii universale una din cele mai originale și viguroase civilizații ale cărei trăsături și virtuți au fost relevate de contemporani și de posteritate. Desfășurându-și întreaga existență în spațiul carpato-danubiano-pontic, vatra sa străveche de locuire, poporul geto-dac s-a impus lumii antice ca un*

⁷⁹ Gostar, Lica 1984, p. 23.

⁸⁰ Mărghitan 1999, p. 251.

⁸¹ Moraru 1999, p. 397.

⁸² This is a reflection of one of the characteristics of Romanian society as identified by Verdery 1992 and Mitu 1997, that of trying to place the blame for anything negative on the outside, on the other. The neighbouring nations are perceived as trying to destroy the well-being of Romanian society which, without their implication, would otherwise flourish. Of course, when writing about Romanian ancestors, the situation can only be described in a similar manner. Such a way of seeing one's neighbours and the past is undoubtedly not unique to the Romanians.

⁸³ Glodariu *et alii* 1996, p. 37.

exemplu de voință fermă pe planul rezistenței încercărilor de subjugare venite din partea celor mai mari puteri din antichitate.”)⁸⁴.

Nowadays, ideas of the greatness of the Geto-Dacians are sporadic in academic publications, reflecting a more critical approach, although occasional passages indicate that such views can still be encountered.

“As the level of development of the Dacian civilisation was by no means lower than that of the Celts, on the contrary we could say that in some regards it was even superior...” (“*Cum nivelul de dezvoltare al civilizației dacice nu este cu nimic mai prejos decât al celei celtice, dimpotrivă am putea spune că în unele domenii chiar a depășit-o...*”)⁸⁵.

The perpetuation of such ideas is made possible by the still ever-present thought that past cultures and people were in a process of evolution from an uncivilized, chaotic and barbarian condition, to a civilized, orderly and literate society⁸⁶. The latter case was represented par excellence by classical Greece and Rome. Based on how many characteristic prehistoric people shared with the Greek and Roman counterparts, one could estimate their level of civilization. The Geto-Dacians, unlike their Celtic, Sarmatian, Scythian or German neighbours, are conceived as being very close to the Mediterranean world, for which reason they are thought as being on a higher evolutionary stage.

Discussion

It is noticeable that phrases with nationalistic connotations usually appear in the introduction or conclusion of archaeological papers and volumes. For the period before the fall of communism, the inclusion of such language in the introduction and conclusion may have been a way to ensure that the research received approval for publication from government authorities, given the high degree of control imposed by the totalitarian regime. Much of the main body of the texts was usually engulfed in a culture-historical – positivist attitude which was used, along with the obsessive repetition of words like “scientific”, to give the illusion of objectivity, both to the readers and especially to the authors themselves⁸⁷. This last observation still stands true for most of today’s archaeological literature of Romania.

In many of the books and articles published after the year 2000, the nationalist voice is undoubtedly much quieter. Some authors⁸⁸ give the impression of being reluctant to make ethnic correlations. They attempt to clarify their language and to point out, in some instances, that ethnic inferences are not as direct as we would think. There are also a small, but growing, number of authors who show an understanding of the issues inherent to Romanian Late Iron Age research and who manage to bypass these difficulties through their work⁸⁹. Nevertheless, despite being substantially improved, many Late Iron Age studies still reflect, to a degree, some of the nationalistic ideas related to an archaeology of the united ancestors, especially when there is a wish to interpret the material and put the results within the wider context. Moreover, the ethnic labelling of material culture remains generalised.

However, in no manner can it be sustained that Romanian archaeologists are today investigating the Late Iron Age with clear nationalistic aims and thoughts in their minds. Such an affirmation would be entirely false! If one tries to position it using Gramsch’s principles⁹⁰, Romanian archaeology is situated nowadays in the stage where researchers are implicitly working within a certain ideological frame of reference, producing ideologically coloured interpretations. Therefore scholars are not directly, overtly politicizing their research. Instead the situation has reached a point where the nationalistic discourse is so subtle, so embedded in everyday archaeological practice and writing, that it becomes invisible to the authors and academic readers of that environment. Nonetheless this does not make the phenomenon any less real.

⁸⁴ A. Vulpe, Zahariade 1987, p. 220-221.

⁸⁵ G. Gheorghiu 2005, p. 221.

⁸⁶ For a discussion of this idea, see Wailes and Zoll 1995, p. 23-25; Kristiansen 1996.

⁸⁷ Dragoman 2009.

⁸⁸ E.g. Bondoc 2008; Sîrbu, Cavruc, Buzea 2008.

⁸⁹ E.g. A. Drăgan 2012; Egri 2014a; Egri 2014b; C.N. Popa 2014; Egri and Berecki 2015.

⁹⁰ Gramsch 1999, p. 122.

Finally, although in the last couple of years there has been a push towards providing European uniting narratives of the past, Late Iron Age archaeology from Romania, like that from the entire European continent, has rarely followed this trend. It is no surprise that in the current political environment, when an unprecedented political organisation, the European Union, seeks to legitimise its existence and cultural diversity model, archaeology is called upon once more to provide historical precedents and links across the whole continent⁹¹. In the 1990s there were attempts to employ the Iron Age for this purpose, most notably the 1991 Venice exhibition on ‘Celtic’ Europe, followed by a luxuriously illustrated catalogue⁹², but this chronological period was soon abandoned in favour of other ones that lend themselves better to the task. Nowadays it is the (E)Neolithic and the Bronze Age which seem to be most responsive to the Europeanisation discourse, which stands true also for Romanian archaeology⁹³. Nonetheless the ‘rush’ for European funding characterises the full spectrum of archaeological research.

3. THE MAIN ISSUES OF LATE IRON AGE ROMANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

It has been pointed out by more than one author that one should not condemn the connection between nationalism and archaeology *per se*; one should not conceive it as necessarily being negative⁹⁴. This is always a historically grown issue, since what was once nationalist can develop into the established practice. Additionally, some researchers have argued that there is a natural, almost intrinsic relationship between archaeology and nationalism⁹⁵. Therefore the obvious question becomes: is there a problem with the Late Iron Age archaeology of Romania?

The most obvious issue is that related to the projected ‘scientific’, objective character of the discipline. Many Romanian researchers would claim that they are entirely detached from their research and are thus producing purely objective knowledge. This is hard to concede since it is still tacitly accepted that the Late Iron Age people whom archaeologists excavate and write about represent the ancestors of their entire nation, which makes it difficult not to get personally involved with the data and thus produce a biased account of the past. Hence, a first issue is that most Romanian academics do not accept and do not acknowledge their subjectivity.

An immediate post-processual objection might be that no archaeology is objective⁹⁶. This is undoubtedly true. However, much of the Romanian academic literature is not produced within the post-processual theoretical framework, but rather within the culture-historical perspective⁹⁷ and the issue of objectivity is one major distinction between these two approaches. Romanian archaeology is characterised by a quasi-total lack of archaeological theory which leaves antiquated cultural-historical ideas unchallenged⁹⁸. Therefore, unlike in ‘post-processualism’⁹⁹, there is little acknowledgement for the ideas

⁹¹ Kristiansen 1996; Gramsch 2000; Gramsch 2005; Mante 2007, p. 195-217; Ó Ríagáin, C.N. Popa 2012, p. 6-7; Hølleland 2012.

⁹² Moscati, Arslan, Vitali 1991; see also the ideas of Dietler 1994.

⁹³ Hølleland 2008; see examples from Romania in Dragoman, Oanță-Marghitu 2014, p. 334-336, 343. The latter authors, however, chose to generalize the Europeanist trend for the entire archaeological research environment of Romania.

⁹⁴ See Hamilakis 1996, p. 977; Gramsch 1999, p. 117. Nonetheless, there are numerous examples, some of them classic (e.g. Kossinna 1926), where nationalistic influenced archaeology has been used by political powers to justify unacceptable actions; multiple examples can be found in Kohl, Fawcett 1995a; Diaz-Andreu, Champion 1996; Fleury-Ilett 1996.

⁹⁵ Kohl, Fawcett 1995a, p. 3; Hamilakis 1996 seems to support more or less a similar idea, although slightly nuanced.

⁹⁶ Hodder 1982; Hodder 1986; Miller, Tilley 1984; Shanks, Tilley 1987; Shanks, Tilley 1989a; Shanks, Tilley 1989b.

⁹⁷ Trigger 2006.

⁹⁸ Anghelina 2001; Anghelina 2003; Niculescu 2012.

⁹⁹ I used apostrophes because I personally think that there are very few researchers who can be labelled as post-processual archaeologists. Generally people seem to just keep in mind the theoretical guidelines and critique of post-processualism while using whatever methods seems to better fit with the data they are dealing with, cf. Hegmon 2003.

that objectivity is unattainable and that all writings are strongly influenced by the authors' views and by the context in which knowledge is produced. Instead a sense of a single objective truth is retained. Late Iron Age archaeology in Romania is written with the belief that scholars are the holders of real, 'scientific', objective knowledge¹⁰⁰. What is written is thought to represent an accurate depiction of what society was like at that time. Any errors that occur are a product either of logical mistakes within the interpretative framework or of insufficient data.

A second problem is that although ethnic terms are very present in archaeological papers, ethnicity itself is rarely defined. Since all scholars employ terms like Getae, Dacian, Geto-Dacian, Thracian, Celt and many more, it is necessary to make it clear how the authors perceive ethnic entities in general and how these can be reflected in the archaeological material.

Graves-Brown and Jones¹⁰¹ persuasively argue that in the Eastern European schools of thought ethnicity is perceived in a different way than in Western Europe. They think that much greater emphasis has been placed in countries like Romania on the internal integrity and historical continuity of the ethnic unit. The essence of the ethnos is conceived as being composed of very real cultural and linguistic components which constitute the nucleus of a group's identity; this means that ethnicity is not perceived as a dynamic 'we'/'they' construct with numerous nuances and multi-layered entanglements, but rather as an objective reality. Finally, ethnic identity is considered to be distinct from socio-cultural and economic circumstances.

The paragraph above sums up in an adequate manner how ethnicity is understood by Romanians, in general, and archaeologists, in particular¹⁰², and thus gives an idea of why material culture is considered to be such a direct signal of ethnicity, and why the Geto-Dacians are seen as being part of a natural ethnic unity. Since cultural components are one of the main ethnic binders, and in the culture-historical approach material remains are considered to reflect cultural traits directly, artefacts become cultural and thus ethnic flags. In other words pots, houses, walls, sanctuaries can all be identified as being Geto-Dacian by observing their typological, and inherently cultural, characteristics.

Building on the view of ethnicity suggested by Graves-Brown and Jones, it is easy to understand why the terms Getae and the Dacians, mentioned by the Greek and Roman authors, can be naturally put together to give the name of one people, the Geto-Dacians. This has to do with a fragment, well known to Romanian La Tène archaeologists, left to us by Strabo (*Geography*, VII. 3.13) which states that "The language of the Daci is the same as that of the Getae". Since the linguistic component also represents one of the core elements which determines an ethnicity, and the information given to us by Strabo is thought of as accurate or at least reflecting an approximate reality, it is only 'natural' to think that the Getae and the Dacians were actually part of the same *neam*, the Geto-Dacians.

The third and final issue with how La Tène research is practiced today in Romania is that the political implications of this type of writing and of archaeology in general are not recognised¹⁰³. Considering that one is writing about a 'real' ethnic group, a 'nation', from two thousand years ago, which is believed to represent practically the Late Iron Age equivalent of the Romanians, any knowledge that is produced can have political reverberations today and thus can be easily employed by political actors. The archaeological discourse of deep seated millennial ethnicity is especially susceptible to exploitation by extreme nationalistic movements, as it was the case with the Romanian Legionary movement from the inter-war period. Also members of *Partidul România Mare* (Great Romania Party), a party which had a radical nationalistic, even xenophobic doctrine¹⁰⁴, and which has occupied seats in the Romanian and EU

¹⁰⁰ Dragoman 2009.

¹⁰¹ Graves-Brown, Jones 1996, p. 8.

¹⁰² Reading these lines, some Late Iron Age Romanian authors could argue that they would not theorize ethnicity in such a way. Their objection may well be entirely grounded, but ethnicity is seldom directly discussed in archaeological papers. Yet the way ethnic labels are used in Late Iron Age publications as well as their abundance, suggests that the intrinsic, non-discursive ideas of ethnicity that are deployed correspond to Graves-Brown and Jones's description.

¹⁰³ Dragoman, Oanță-Marghitu 2014, p. 327-328.

¹⁰⁴ Their discourse is orientated mainly against the Hungarian minority from Transylvania.

parliament after 1989, occasionally brought the Geto-Dacians, the Romanian's mighty ancestors, into their arguments in order to give justification to their views. Therefore there is an urgent need for archaeologists to state their political goals. As mentioned by Kristiansen¹⁰⁵, we need to set the political agenda for our work or others will do it for us.

4. FROM ARCHAEOLOGY TO MYTHOLOGY. THE ANCESTORS BEYOND ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The reason for the current state of archaeological writing, but at the same time its effect, lies in the huge success of what can be called the 'Dacianisation' of the Romanians. The work of archaeologists, starting from Pârvan, has had a great deal of influence on society, on the common, non-academic Romanian citizen who never, or rarely, came in contact with raw archaeological material. With the deliberate intervention of the state and with the help of museums and national education, the inhabitants of Romania were literally transformed into descendants of the Dacians as this quotation from a 5th-form history text book shows:

"The Getae and the Dacians are the same people. They [...] broadly occupied the current territory of our country, which in antiquity was named Dacia. The Geto-Dacians are ancestors of the Romanian people." (*"Geții și dacii constituiau același popor. Ei [...] ocupau în linii mari actualul teritoriu al țării noastre, care în antichitate se numea Dacia. Geto-dacii sunt strămoși ai poporului român."*)¹⁰⁶.

The Dacian discourse also spilled over into other disciplines. In an important geography atlas from the 1980s, an introductory section entitled "The unity between the land and the Romanian people" (*"Unitatea dintre pământul și poporul român"*) starts with:

"The Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic region has been inhabited since the earliest of times, since the dawn of history, by the tribes of the Getae and of the Dacians, which formed one single people." (*"Spațiul carpato-danubiano-pontic a fost locuit din cele mai vechi timpuri, din zorile istoriei, de triburile geților și ale dacilor, care alcătuiau un singur popor."*)¹⁰⁷.

The modern Romanian citizens have entirely incorporated the Dacian ancestorhood into their identity. Many people are at this point keen on hearing and reading about their ancestors. This interest stems from the heroic image of the Dacians that citizens get by going through the educational system and by coming in contact with cultural institutions, especially museums. The current positivist archaeology, despite operating within an intrinsic nationalist framework, cannot provide them with the knowledge they want.

It is possible to observe that a sort of mystic aura has been formed around the Geto-Dacians and their civilization. This aura is determined by a series of concepts, which may be named altogether "the Geto-Dacian myth", and which represent a much exaggerated reading of the work of archaeologists who have generally ignored and in some cases encouraged their propagation. This myth thus represents the outcome of the popular reinterpretation of loosely presented and interpreted archaeological results. Some of the main ideas of this myth could be summarised as:

1. The Geto-Dacians were the holders of very advanced knowledge. This knowledge was brought to them by Zalmolxis, the Geto-Dacian supreme god, and by Deceneu, a high priest, from the Egyptians and the Greeks. The evidence for this knowledge can be observed in the massive religious monuments from Sarmizegetusa Regia, the capital of the Dacian Kingdom. Some of those structures, such as the "andesite sun" or the large circular temple, still have some of that hidden knowledge within them which we cannot understand anymore.

2. Burebista and Decebal were heroes of the Geto-Dacian nation, bringing together all the qualities of legendary leaders. Through his qualities, and that of his people, Burebista built an empire that spread across much of Eastern and Central Europe.

¹⁰⁵ Kristiansen 1993, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Băluțoiu, Vlad 1999, p. 77.

¹⁰⁷ Badea, Gâșteanu, Velcea 1983, p. 27.

3. The wealth of the Geto-Dacians was unimaginable and it was obtained by exploiting the Carpathian Mountains, extremely rich in gold and silver. Many of the Geto-Dacian treasures are still hidden in the Orăștie Mountains, the region near the capital Sarmizegetusa Regia¹⁰⁸.

4. The Geto-Dacians represented an incredible military force in ancient times; all the people defended their land with unprecedented bravery using their specific curved weapons, the *sica/falx*.

5. The Geto-Dacians represented a model for bravery and righteousness. An episode that is often used to depict their superior nature is the one when, under the rule of king Burebista and at the indications of the high priest Deceneu, the Geto-Dacians cut down all the vineyards so that they would not be tempted anymore by wine.

This myth came out of a void of knowledge about the Dacians that is now being filled by a wave of non-academic publications that enjoy a great deal of popularity. Numerous books¹⁰⁹ and magazines (e.g. Dacia Magazin) have thus appeared, in which authors lacking archaeological training discuss different aspects of the Dacians. Even the Romanian Orthodox Church has integrated the Late Iron Age ancestors into some theological volumes¹¹⁰. Most of these writers continue the discourse from the 1980s and propagate the ideas from the Ceaușescu era, leading to the creation of this mythical aura around the Dacians. These publications are often backed up by organizations, such as Dacia Revival International Society or Dacia Nemuritoare, that have wealthy financial contributors. Some of them also hold symposia, such as the yearly International Dacology Congress, where Dacian enthusiasts present their ideas.

As a more recent development, Dacian re-enactment groups have appeared, recreating the Dacian dress, crafts and especially fighting technique¹¹¹. While the wish to inform people about the past behind such groups may be genuine, the way the information is presented and the facets of society that are depicted, only serves to further glorify the Dacian ancestors. Furthermore, due to the need to give an entertaining, ‘authentic’ performance, gross liberties are taken in nearly all aspects¹¹².

The flourishing of re-enactment groups and of publications like those outlined above has been possible due to two main factors. The first one has to do with state propaganda. The Geto-Dacian heritage was advertised by the state in order to shape the ideal Romanian citizen and to increase national solidarity. The process started from the end of the 19th century, became highly accentuated during Ceaușescu’s regime and even continues today. Its success has been ensured through the establishment of the official national history of the Romanian people which is illustrated in the history textbooks used in primary and secondary schools¹¹³. Additionally, the Romanian Academy has published between 2001 and 2013 the so-called treatise of The History of the Romanians¹¹⁴, in ten volumes, the first three referring to prehistory¹¹⁵, antiquity and late-antiquity¹¹⁶. The massive books were the result of the collaboration of an impressive number of archaeologists and historians. Although several scholars have spoken against some of the ideas

¹⁰⁸ Because of this myth, the region around Sarmizegetusa Regia has become a magnet for treasure hunters. If one visits the site it is easy to observe the hundreds of holes made by the gold-searching opportunists. It should be mentioned that the thieves sometime have succeeded in finding important treasures, as it is the case with the golden bracelets, which were recovered by the Romanian state from the black market (Ciută, Rustoiu 2007).

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Săvescu 2002; Oltean 2007; Pănculescu 2008; Crainicu 2009.

¹¹⁰ E.g. Vlăducă 2012, p. 16-49.

¹¹¹ The largest Dacian re-enactment group is Terra Dacica Aeterna (<http://terradacica.ro/>).

¹¹² For a discussion on re-enactment groups, see Samida 2012; Samida 2014.

¹¹³ Even though in the last couple of years alternative history manuals were introduced in schools, these still follow the general lines of an official Romanian history as they need to be approved by the Ministry of Education. Nonetheless, the situation can be said to have improved slightly from the years before.

¹¹⁴ The project of compiling the massive volumes started already in the 1980s, at the height of the Thracomanic movement. While alterations were made following the fall of communism, the concept remained the same and many of the original texts were kept. One should also remark the choice of the title; it implies that the history of the Romanians starts with the Palaeolithic since this is the first period discussed in the volumes. Previous editions of such treatise were published during the 1960s, e.g. C. Daicoviciu *et alii* 1960.

¹¹⁵ Pascu, Theodorescu 2001; Protase, Suceveanu 2001; Petrescu-Dîmbovița, A. Vulpe 2001.

¹¹⁶ Babeș 2008, p. 11.

presented in the first volumes, as well as against the overtly nationalist discourse that is employed¹¹⁷, they currently represent one of the main textbooks for university¹¹⁸.

The second factor that has allowed the flourishing of popular literature on the Geto-Dacians, as suggested by Dragoman¹¹⁹, is linked to the retreat of archaeologists to ‘the ivory tower of science’. As mentioned earlier, the overemphasis on description instead of interpretation was thought to be an efficient way to resist the nationalist pressure during the Ceaușescu regime, but one of its effects was the opening of an enormous gap between archaeologists and the general public. However, nowadays, the general Romanian public has already incorporated the idea of their Geto-Dacian ancestry into their view of the world. Many people are very interested in finding out more about what they perceive as being their national ancestral heritage. The ‘scientific’ archaeological papers and books, with their descriptive style, are naturally unappealing to the public. Consequently, magazines and organisations, usually established by non-archaeologists, have appeared in order to satisfy the Romanians’ thirst for the past, stirred up, but unquenched by scholars.

5. CONCLUSION. LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND

The position of the Geto-Dacians appears thus to be extremely well established both in the Late Iron Age archaeology and in Romanian society in general. The ancestors are present everywhere: in the land¹²⁰, in the objects found in the ground, in the language, in the emotions and especially in the blood¹²¹. The past seems to have taken an extremely firm grip and shaking it off will not prove to be easy, even if anyone is willing to try.

In recent years, there have been people starting to point out the myths present within Romanian history¹²² and their manipulative impact on targeted archaeological interpretations¹²³. The overall reaction of much of Romanian academia and the general public has been sceptical at best. On some occasions, fierce responses from the readers are obtained when such publications are aimed at the general public. This was the case with an article by Petre¹²⁴, professor of Ancient History at the University of Bucharest, where she argued against the ancestral relationship established between the Romanians and the Dacians and against the opinions expressed in two documentaries of non-archaeologists which enjoyed a wide degree of attention in the press and especially over the internet¹²⁵. Petre was denigrated for expressing her opinion by part of the media and even declared by some commentators a national traitor¹²⁶.

¹¹⁷ Niculescu 2004; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2006; Preda 2007.

¹¹⁸ When, in a personal discussion, this problem was raised with an influential Late Iron Age archaeologist of Romania the answer received was that, although everyone is aware that the volumes contain many errors and that the discourse is nationalistic, there is currently nothing better that can be given to the students to read.

¹¹⁹ Dragoman 2009, p. 197.

¹²⁰ See Hofmann in press for a discussion on the transfer of modern land units in the past.

¹²¹ A song that was very popular in the 1990s and is still listened to by many people, both young and old, has as one of the first lines: “I feel within my body the long-haired comati Dacians” (“*Simt în trup pletoșii daci comati*”) (Pasărea Colibri – Vinovații fără vină).

¹²² Boia 2000; Boia 2001. For recent a non-academic approach of the topic see Alexe 2015.

¹²³ E.g. Teleagă 2014.

¹²⁴ Petre 2012. In her earlier work, Petre had argued for a non-heroic view of the Dacians as seen through the written sources, Petre 2004.

¹²⁵ In the two documentaries, named “The Dacians. Unsettling Truths” (“*Dacii. Adevăruri tulburătoare*”) and “The Dacians. New Revelations” (“*Dacii. Noi dezvăluiri*”), the basic Thracomaniac idea from communist times is perpetuated. It is argued that the Dacians are the sole ancestors of Romanians and that their society and achievements are the pillars of much of the European civilization. Numerous non-archaeologists appear in the two films, including journalists and current or former university professors, thus constructing a convincing illusion of a scientifically based argument (<http://adevaruldespredaci.ro/dacii-adevaruri-tulburatoare/> and <http://adevaruldespredaci.ro/dacii-noi-dezvaluiri-documentar-iunie-2012-hd/>).

¹²⁶ It is interesting to note that Petre was one the few academics to denounce officially the ideas expressed in the two documentaries. Only a few other archaeologists considered it worthwhile to contradict the opinions from the two

Similar situations have developed following some of the articles of Diaconescu, a lecturer at the same University of Bucharest. In one of his papers, he argued that the current image created around one of the Wallachian medieval princes, and national hero of Romania, Vlad Țepeș, was pure invention and that the documents show a much plainer, unheroic picture¹²⁷. The article generated an enormous amount of response from the readers, most of them expressing extreme discontent at its publication¹²⁸. The reactions against Diaconescu were so hostile that the editor considered it necessary to publish in the following number of the magazine a small article defending the university lecturer's opinion¹²⁹. These examples beautifully reflect, in my opinion, what people think about the past and what they want to read about it¹³⁰.

Since Romanians are used to hearing about their heroic ancestors, be they from medieval times or from the Late Iron Age, and the archaeology of Romania is funded almost exclusively by the state, using public money, one cannot help to wonder whether there is any viable solution at this stage. Considering that scholars should answer the needs of society, if the ancestors are taken out of the archaeological interpretation would they still be accomplishing their goal? Would it not just lead to publications like *Dacia Magazine* becoming even more popular? The question of what the next step should be is very much an open one, lacking an easy and straight answer.

Nonetheless, there is potential for the situation to improve. One of the possible solutions is to allow the development of a new generation of archaeologists by providing adequate funding to higher education institutions. This would give the opportunity for university libraries to purchase more recent publications, thus enabling students to become familiar with today's archaeological literature and become acquainted with alternative discourses. Another requirement is to internationalise the teaching staff. Vacant university positions should be advertised internationally and often given to people from outside the country, so as to break the monopoly that Romanians have over how and what archaeology undergraduates and graduates are taught¹³¹. Additionally, the national education curriculum should give departments and professors the freedom to select how and what they want to teach.

Last but not least, archaeologists need to become more introspective before they can decide on the next step¹³². Researchers should enunciate the theoretical framework in which they operate and be aware of the preconceptions with which they work. Simply importing concepts from Western scholars is, however, not the answer, since it would be naïve to think that Western archaeology is the holder of truth and objectivity¹³³. Nonetheless, in order to situate oneself, it is necessary to explore the diversity of archaeological approaches¹³⁴ and understand how knowledge is created¹³⁵. Also, scholars have to be conscious of the intricate relationship between the subject and the object of research, as well as the fundamental role played by the social context of the researcher¹³⁶. At the end of this process, archaeologists

films despite their wide popularity (e.g. http://adevarul.ro/locale/cluj-napoca/istoricul-ioan-piso-despre-dacii---adevaruri-tulburatoare-2012-sunt-bazaconii-comunistoide-fascistoide-apar-periodic-peisajul-subcultural-1_50aeb34a7c42d5a6639f4b7d/index.html).

¹²⁷ Diaconescu 2010b. He continued attacking the mythological created aura around Vlad Țepeș and other medieval Romanian heroes in a radio show (http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/actualitate/articol/filmele-istorice-romanesti-sunt-pline-minciuni).

¹²⁸ Unfortunately, the webpage holding the article and the comments has been deleted.

¹²⁹ Nahoi 2010.

¹³⁰ A following article from the same magazine and by the same author, which analysed the deeds of another Romanian medieval hero prince, Stephan the Great, generated a similar reaction from the public (Diaconescu 2010a).

¹³¹ Such a solution has been adopted at the University of Vienna, where the dean of the Historisch-Kulturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät is now a former professor from Berlin. Additionally, a recently advertised professorship from the Institut für Urgeschichte und Historische Archäologie has been given to a British archaeologist. In numerous other world universities, this is common practice.

¹³² Gramsch 1999; 2000.

¹³³ Doing so would contradict the post-processual ideas, which sustain that there is no truth and that archaeology is ultimately subjective (Hamilakis 2007, p. 13). Additionally, it would encourage a colonialist relationship between the West and Romania.

¹³⁴ Bintliff 2011, p. 8.

¹³⁵ Latour 1999, p. 24-79.

¹³⁶ Jenkins 2003; Shanks and Tilley 1987, p. 29-60.

will become more aware of the role they play and thus more capable of deciding on the future direction of their research and the impact it can have on the broader public.

Personal reflection

In the context of my arguments for subjectivism in archaeological writing, I consider it necessary to reflect on my own personal background, which influenced the opinions stated in this paper.

I am a Romanian citizen and have lived within the country for the first twenty two years of my life, which means that I was raised with the concept of the Geto-Dacians as my mighty ancestors both in the family and school environment.

I am aware that my academic background, as an undergraduate student in Romania, followed by a masters and PhD at the University of Cambridge and a Postdoctoral position at the Freie Universität Berlin, certainly contributed to my perception of nationalism within Romanian archaeology as somewhat stronger than Romanian colleagues who have rarely had the opportunity to step outside the system. Moreover, because of my current political views, which can be defined as centre-left and pro-European Union, I could also be inclined to overemphasise the presence of the nationalistic discourse.

Finally, it is imperative for the reader to be aware that, even though I intended to go through a broad spectrum of Late Iron Age Romanian archaeology, the chosen quotes also reflect my interests. Additionally, only a very limited number of organisations, magazines and websites which promote a nationalistic view of the past were mentioned.

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ABRÉVIATIONS

- AA – Archäologischer Anzeiger. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Darmstadt, München, Tübingen–Berlin
- ABSA – The Annual of the British School at Athens, Athens
- ActaArchCarp – Acta Archaeologica Carpatica, Kraków
- ActaArchHung – Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
- Acta Classica – Acta Classica. Journal of the Classical Association of South Africa, Pretoria
- ActaHistHung – Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
- ActaMN – Acta Musei Napocensis. Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca
- ActaMP – Acta Musei Porolissensis. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă, Zalău
- ActaTS – Acta Terrae Septemcastrens. Institutul pentru Cercetarea Patrimoniului Cultural Transilvănean în Context European, Sibiu
- AÉ – L'Année Épigraphique, Paris
- Aegean Studies – Aegean Studies. Aegeus - Society for Aegean Prehistory, Athens
- AEM – Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn, Wien
- Aevum – Aevum. Rassegna di Scienze Storiche Linguistiche e Filologiche. Vita e Pensiero – Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore
- Agria – Agria. Az Egri Múzeum Évkönyve – Annales Musei Agriensis. Dobó István Vármúzeum, Eger
- AHA – Acta Historiae Artium. Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
- AHB – The Ancient History Bulletin (digital version only: <http://ancienthistorybulletin.org/>)
- AHR – The American Historical Review, Bloomington
- AIIA (Cluj-Napoca) – Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie, Cluj-Napoca
- AInf – Archäologische Informationen, Mitteilungen zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte, Bonn
- AISC – Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice, Cluj-Napoca
- AJA – American Journal of Archaeology, Boston
- AJN – American Journal of Numismatics. American Numismatic Society, New York
- AJPh – American Journal of Philology, Baltimore
- AM – Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung, Athen
- Am. J. Phys. Anthropol. – American Journal of Physical Anthropology. Journal of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, ([http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1096-8644](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1096-8644))
- American Anthropologist – American Anthropologist. Journal of the American Anthropological Association, ([http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1548-1433](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1548-1433))
- American Antiquity – American Antiquity. Society for American Archaeology, Washington
- ANarch – Archäologisches Nachrichtenblatt, Berlin
- AnB (S.N.) – Analele Banatului (Serie Nouă), Muzeul Banatului, Timișoara
- AnSt – Anatolian Studies. British Institute at Ankara, Ankara
- Antaeus – Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
- Anthropology Today – Anthropology Today. Royal Anthropological Institute, London
- Antiquity – Antiquity. A Review of World Archaeology, Durham, UK
- AntOr – Antiguo Oriente: Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios de Historia del Antiguo Oriente. Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina Santa María de los Buenos Aires
- AO – Arhivele Olteniei, Craiova
- AO Moskow – Arheologičeski Otkritja, Moskva
- Apulum – Acta Musei Apulensis. Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia
- ArchA⁵ – Archaeologia Aeliana, Fifth Series. Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle
- Archaeol. Rev. Camb. – Archaeological Review from Cambridge. University of Cambridge, Cambridge
- Archaeologia – Altum castrum online. Mátyás király Múzeum, Visegrád
- Archeometriai Műhely – Archeometriai Műhely a Magyar Régészeti és Művészettörténeti Társulat interdiszciplináris kutatásokkal foglalkozó vitaülés-sorozata, Budapest
- ArchÉrt – Archeológiai Értesítő, Budapest

- ArchHung – *Archaeologia Hungarica, Acta Archaeologica Musei Nationalis Hungarici*, Budapest
- ArchKorr – *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt*, Mainz
- ArchPolski – *Archeologia Polski*, Wrocław – Warszawa
- ArchRozhledy – *Archeologické Rozhledy*, Praha
- ArhMed – *Arheologia Medievală*. Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița
- ArhMold – *Arheologia Moldovei*. Academia Română, Institutul de Arheologie, Iași
- ArhVestnik – *Arheološki vestnik*, Ljubljana
- AȘUI – *Analele Științifice ale Universității “Al. I. Cuza” din Iași*, Iași
- Athenaeum – *Studi di Letteratura e Storia dell’Antichità* pubblicati sotto gli auspici dell’Università di Pavia, Pavia
- AVANS – *Archeologické Vyskumy a Nálezy na Slovensku*, Nitra
- Banatica – *Banatica*. Muzeul Banatului Montan, Reșița
- BARBrSer – *British Archaeological Reports, International Series*, Oxford
- BARIntSer – *British Archaeological Reports, British Series*, Oxford
- BayVgBl – *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter*. Kommission für bayerische Landesgeschichte bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Verbindung mit dem Bayerischen Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und der Archäologische Staatssammlung, München
- BCH – *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, Athènes–Paris
- BÉ – *Bulletin Épigraphique*, Paris
- BerRGK – *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, Frankfurt am Main
- BIAUL – *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology (University of London)*, London
- BIDR – *Bulletino dell’Istituto di Diritto Romano*, Roma
- BJb – *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn*, Bonn
- BMN – *Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis*, Cluj-Napoca
- Britannia – *Britannia. Journal of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies*, Cambridge
- BSNAF – *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France*, Paris
- BSNR – *Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române*, București
- BUFM – *Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas*, Wilkau-Haßlau - Langenweißbach
- Byzantina (Thessalonic) – *BYZANTINA. Annual Review of the "Byzantine Research Centre"*, Thessalonic
- Byzantinoslavica – *Byzantinoslavica. Revue internationale des Études Byzantines*, Slovanský ústav Akademie věd ČR, Praha
- C&M – *Classica et Mediaevalia: Danish Journal of Philology and History*, Aarhus
- Caiete ARA – *Caiete ARA. Arhitectură, Restaurare, Arheologie*. Asociația ARA, București
- CCA. Campania – *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România*, București
- Chiron – *Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, München
- CICSA – *Centrul de Istorie Comparată a Societăților Antice*, Universitatea București, București
- CIL – *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin
- CN – *Cercetări Numismatice*. Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, București
- ComArchHung – *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae*, Budapest
- CQ – *The Classical Quaterly*, The Classical Association, Cambridge
- CRAI – *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Paris
- Crisia – *Crisia*. Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, Oradea
- CSCA – *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*. University of California, Los Angeles
- Current Anthropology – *Current Anthropology*. University of California, Merced
- CW – *Classical World*. Temple University, Philadelphia
- Dacia – *Dacia. Fouilles et recherches archéologiques en Roumanie*, București
- Dacia N.S. – *Dacia (Nouvelle Série)*. *Revue d’archéologie et d’histoire ancienne*. Académie Roumaine. Institut d’archéologie « V. Pârvan », București
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- Dolgozatok Cluj – Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségárából, Kolozsvár
 Dolgozatok Szeged – Dolgozatok a M. Kir. Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Intézetéből, Szeged
- EJA – European Journal of Archaeology. European Association of Archaeologists (<http://e-a-a.org/eja.htm>)
- Elbinger Jahrbuch – Elbinger Jahrbuch. Zeitschrift der Elbinger Altertumsgesellschaft und der städtischen Sammlungen zu Elbing, Elbing (1920-1941)
- EphemNap – Ephemeris Napocensis. Academia Română, Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei, Cluj-Napoca
- ÉPRO – Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain, Leiden
- Études Celtiques – Études Celtiques, Paris
- Evol Anthropol – Evolutionary Anthropology. Duke University, Durham NC
- FBW – Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart
- FHDR I-II – H. Mihăescu, G. Ștefan, R. Hîncu, V. Iliescu, V.C. Popescu (eds.), *Fontes ad historiam Dacoromaniae pertinentes*, I-II, București, 1964–1970
- File de Istorie – File de Istorie. Muzeul Județean Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița
- FontesArchPosn – Fontes Archaeologici Posnanienses, Poznan
- FrühMitAltSt – Frühmittelalterliche Studien. Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster, Münster
- Germania – Germania. Anzeiger der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Frankfurt am Main
- Glasnik SAD – Glasnik Srpskog Arheološkog Društva, Belgrad
- H-Soz-u-Kult – Kommunikation und Fachinformation für die Geschichtswissenschaften (<http://www.hsozkult.de/>)
- HambBeitrA – Hamburger Beiträge zur Archäologie. Universität Hamburg, Hamburg
- HCT – A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, K.J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1945-1981.
- Hermes – Hermes. Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart
- Historia – Historia. Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart
- HistoriaBuc – Historia, București (<http://www.historia.ro/revista#>)
- HOMÉ – A miskolci Hermann Ottó Múzeum évkönyve, Miskolc
- Homo – HOMO. Journal of Comparative Human Biology. Australasian Society for Human Biology, Elsevier Press (<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/homo/>)
- HZ – Historische Zeitschrift, Akademie Verlag GmbH, Berlin
- IDR – *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*
- IDRE – C.C. Petolescu, *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire de la Dacie*, I-II, București, 1996-2000
- IG – *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin
- IGLR – E. Popescu, *Inscriptiile grecești și latine din secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România*, București, 1976
- Il Mar Nero – Il mar nero : annali di archeologia e storia, Roma
- ILD – C.C. Petolescu, *Inscriptii Latine din Dacia*, București, 2005
- ILS – H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Berlin, I (1892), II (1902), III (1916)
- Int J Osteoarchaeol – International Journal of Osteoarchaeology
- Istros – Istros, Muzeul Brăilei, Brăila
- JAMÉ – A Jós András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza
- J.Archaeol.Sci – Journal of Archaeological Sciences, London – New York
- JDAI – Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin
- JEA – Journal of European Archaeology, former name of EJA
- JHS – Journal of Hellenic Studies, London
- J. Hum. Evol. – Journal of Human Evolution, Elsevier Press (<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-human-evolution/>)
- JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies. The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago
- JRA – Journal of Roman Archaeology, Portsmouth, Rhode Island

- JRA SS – Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series, Portsmouth, Rhode Island
 JRGZM – Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz, Mainz
 JRS – Journal of Roman Studies, London
 Klio – Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Berlin
 KölnJb – Kölner Jahrbuch. Römisch-Germanisches Museum Köln, Köln
 Közlemények – Közlemények az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem-és Régiségtárából, Kolozsvár
 Kuhn-Archiv – Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Landwirtschaftliches Institut, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Landwirtschaftliches Institut, Halle
 Lethes – Lethes. Cadernos Culturais do Limia, Centro Cultural Popular do Limia, Ourense
 LSJ – H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press (9th edition), 1940.
 Lucentum – Lucentum. Universidad de Alicante, Alicante
 Lumea veche – Lumea Veche, Revistă de umanioare, București
 MAGW – Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien, Wien
 MAInstUngAk – Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest
 Marisia – Marisia. Muzeul Județean Mureș, Târgu Mureș
 MASP – Materiali po Arheologii Severnogo Pričernomorja, Odesa
 MatArch – Materiały Archeologiczne, Kraków
 MatArchNovHuty – Materiały Archeologiczne Nowej Huty, Nova Huta
 Materiały Starożytne – Materiały Starożytne i Wczesnosredniowieczne, Warszawa
 MCA – Materiale și cercetări arheologice. Academia Română, Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București
 MCV – Mélanges de la Casa Velázquez. Casa de Velázquez, Madrid
 MFME – A Móra Ferenc Múzeum évkönyve. Móra Ferenc Múzeum, Szeged
 ML – R. Meiggs, D.M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC*, Oxford, OUP, 1969
 Mnemosyne – Mnemosyne, A Journal in Classical Studies, Brill, Leiden
 MSROA – Materiały i Sprawozdania Rzeszowskiego Ośrodka Archeologicznego, Rzeszów
 Mus.Afr. – Museum Africum. West African Classical Association, University of Ibadan – Department of Classics, Ibadan
 Nor.Arch.Rev – Norwegian Archaeological Review, Taylor & Francis
 NumZ – Numismatische Zeitschrift. Österreichische Numismatische Gesellschaft, Wien
 OMNI. Revue internationale de numismatique – OMNI. Revue internationale de numismatique, L'association OMNI (Objets et Monnaies Non Identifiés) – <http://www.identification-numismatique.com/> (<http://www.wikimoned.com/omni/>)
 Palaeontologia Electronica – Palaeontological Association, England
 Pallas – Pallas. Revue d'Études Antiques. Université de Toulouse le Mirail, Toulouse
 PamArch – Památky Archeologické, Praha
 PAPHs – Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Society. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
 PBF – Prähistorische Bronzefunde. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Seminar für Vor- und Frühgeschichte der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a. M., Abteilung für Ur- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie des Historischen Seminars der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität, Münster
 Peuce – Peuce. Studii și Note de Istorie Veche și Arheologie. Muzeul Delta Dunării / Institutul de Cercetări Eco-Muzeale „Simion Gavrilă”, Tulcea
 Peuce S.N. – Peuce, serie nouă. Studii și Cercetări de Istorie și Arheologie. Institutul de Cercetări Eco-Muzeale „Simion Gavrilă”, Tulcea
 Phoenix – Phoenix. Classical Association of Canada, Trinity College, Toronto, Ontario
 PIR² – *Prosopographia Imperii Romani, saec. I-III*, ed. II, Berlin-Leipzig
 PLRE – *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 3 vol., 1971, 1980, 1992

- PME – H. Devijver, *Prosopographia militiarum equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum*, 5 vol., Louvain, 1976–1993
- Pomorania Antiqua – Pomorania Antiqua, Gdańsk
- Pontica – Pontica. Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța
- Prace i Materiały – Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi, Łódź
- Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society – Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
- PV – Přehled Výzkumů, Brno
- PZ – Praehistorische Zeitschrift. Freie Universität, Institut für Prähistorische Archäologie, Berlin
- RadVM – Rad Vojvodjanskih Muzeja, Novi Sad
- Raport ... – Raport, Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa. National Heritage Board, Warszawa
- RE – Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaften, Stuttgart, 1893 –
- REA – Revue des Études Anciennes. Maison de l'Archéologie, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, Pessac
- RechsArch – Recherches Archeologiques, Kraków
- RégFüz – Régészeti Füzetek. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Történeti Múzeum, Budapest
- RESEE – Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes. Academia Română, Institutul de Studii Sud-Est Europeene, București.
- RevBistr – Revista Bistriței. Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița
- RevMédVét – Revue de Médecine Vétérinaire. Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse, Toulouse
- RFE/RL East European Perspectives – Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty
- RH – Revue Historique. Presses universitaires de France, Paris
- RhM – Rheinisches Museum. Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, Universität zu Köln, Köln
- RI S.N. – Revista Istorică. Academia Română, Institutul de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga”, București
- RIC – *Roman Imperial Coinage*, London
- RM – Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung, Rom
- RMD – M.M. Roxan, P. Holder, *Roman Military Diplomas*, 5 vol., London, 1978–2006
- RocznMuzGórnyBytom – Rocznik Muzeum Górnośląskiego w Bytomiu, Bytom
- RRH – Revue roumaine d'histoire. Academia Română, București
- RRHA – Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, Série Beaux-Arts. Academia Română, Institutul de Istoria Artei „G. Oprescu”, București
- RRSE – Revista Română de Studii Eurasiatice. Centrul de Studii Eurasiatice, Constanța
- SAA – Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica. Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza”, Iași
- Sargeția – Acta Musei Devensis. Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane, Deva
- Sautuola – Sautuola. Instituto de Prehistoria y Arqueología “Sautuola”, Santander
- SCIM – Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Medie. Academia Română, Institutul de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga”, București
- SCIV(A) – Studii și cercetări de istorie vecie (și arheologie). Academia Română, Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București
- SCN – Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică. Academia Română, Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București
- Scripta Mediterranea – Scripta Mediterranea. Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto
- SHA – *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*
- SIB – Studii de Istorie a Banatului. Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, Timișoara
- SlovArch – Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra
- SMIM – Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie. Academia Română, Institutul de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga”, București
- Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei – Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei, Kaposvár
- SpisyArch – Spisy Archeologického Ústavu v Brně, Brno
- SprawArch – Sprawozdania Archeologiczne, Kraków
- ŚSA – Śląskie Sprawozdania Archeologiczne, Wrocław
- StComSatuMare – Studii și Comunicări. Muzeul Județean Satu Mare, Satu Mare
- ŠtudZvesti AÚ SAV – Študijné Zvesti. Archeologického Ústavu Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, Nitra

- Syria – Syria. Revue d'Art Oriental et d'Archéologi., Institut français du Proche-Orient, Paris
- Talanta – Talanta. Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society, Amsterdam
- Thraco-Dacica – Thraco-Dacica. Academia Română, Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București
- Tibiscum – Tibiscum. Studii și comunicări de etnografie-istorie. Muzeul Caransebeș, Caransebeș
- TIR – *Tabula Imperii Romani*
- Transilvania – Transilvania. Centrul Cultural Interetnic Transilvania, Sibiu
- Transylvanian Review – Transylvanian Review. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Cluj-Napoca
- Ub. I – *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen I* (eds.: F. Zimmermann, C. Werner), Hermannstadt, 1892.
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