

Abstract of the habilitation thesis

NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN THE RESEARCH OF THE EARLY PREHISTORY OF THE IRON GATES REGION

The present habilitation thesis aims to present the main results obtained by the candidate in the years that followed the defence of her PhD thesis (from august 2010 until January 2017). The present thesis has been structured according to the requirements and norms of the present day legislation on the matter.

The work is structured on three major chapters (according to CNADTCU's guidelines) : a brief review of the major scientific and academic achievements for the period of the past 6 years (also split into two main research themes – *Recent research into the Early Prehistory of the Iron Gates* and *Interdisciplinary research regarding the Neo-Eneolithic of Romania*), future directions in the academic and professional career (including a possible doctoral component), and finally, the bibliographic references quoted in the text of part one and two.

The **Introduction** summarizes the academic and scientific activity of the candidate within the “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, the Romanian Academy: academic publications; archaeological excavations at Schela Cladovei in the Iron Gates Gorge; rescue excavations in and around Bucharest; rescue excavations on the large infrastructure projects of the Romanian government (e.g. motorways); participation at international and national conferences; tutoring the younger generation of archaeologists.

The following subchapter (**The absolute chronology of the Iron Gates Mesolithic and Early Neolithic – a new image**) was drafted based on a series of seven papers published in indexed international publication, all seven making reference to new AMS ¹⁴C dates for the Iron Gates region. Based on these dates, and considering also some previous ones published for the sites of Vlasac, Padina și Ajmana, a new absolute chronology has been proposed for the sites in the gorge, refining the chronology of Bonsall 2008 and Borić 2011.

The subchapter *The Early Prehistory of the Iron Gates from the Final Pleistocene to the Mid-Holocene (15 000- 8000 cal BP) – a climatic approach* summarizes the results of three co-authored papers, published in peer-reviewed publications. They bring into discussion the correlation between the global proxy data and the rapid climate changes (RCC) at a regional scale, by their association with archaeologically documented events from the Near East and south-east Europe, and thus bringing new data on the dynamics of occupations in the area of the Iron Gates.

Funerary practices in the Early Prehistory of the Iron Gates – a chronological resetting brings new information regarding the earlier excavations (such as the unpublished burials from Schela Cladovei), re-opening the discussion on the temporal and spatial patterns of the funerary phenomenon in the light of new top-technology studies: stable isotopes, DNA, AMS ¹⁴C .

The subchapter on *Prehistoric diet (Mesolithic and Early Neolithic) – recent research* includes both the results obtained regarding the diet of the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic communities in the Iron Gates area obtained through C and N stable isotopes, and the newest information regarding the introduction of domestic plants in the diet of these communities 400 years earlier than previously assumed. This latter is an on-going research through an international program.

The last subchapter - *A multidisciplinary approach of the Neo-Eneolithic in Romania* - combines several line of research that I was interested in and pursued during the past years. The first one concerns the publication of the old excavations – such as the results of the archaeological excavations undertaken by Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu at the Early Neolithic site of Grumăzești or those of Hortensia Dumitrescu at Bălănești. I was equally interested in retrieving the archaeological information from unpublished manuscripts – especially as some of the archaeological collections are gone and thus the data can no longer be retrieved – such as Alexandra Bolomey’s unfinished and unpublished manuscript on the faunal remains from Cuina Turcului rockshelter.

A third line of research here was the publication of original – but very specific papers – on a series of archaeological materials (pottery, bone, antler, flint –both in the iron gates and other areas of interest) or investigation methods (XRF applications in sourcing prehistoric obsidian).

The last part of the thesis – *future directions in the academic and professional career*- explains the plans for the future development of my career. It presents potential project I would like to develop, on-going research themes that I would like to continue as well as the main coordinates of the field research I would like to undertake in the near and more remote future.

As a potential PhD supervisor I present my strategy for recruiting well trained motivated students. I also propose a sketch of possible future courses that I would like to teach within the doctoral school of the “Vasile Parvan” institute of Archaeology, courses that would adapt to the diverse interests of the participating PhD students. Such training would include not only a theoretical approach but a field component too.

The bibliographical references necessary for the drafting of the habilitation thesis form the last part of the present work.