

# ARCHAEOLOGY, MEDIA AND DOMINANT IDEOLOGY IN TODAY'S ROMANIA\*

Alexandru Dragoman\*\*

**Keywords:** archaeology, tells, Copper Age, written press, dominant ideology, Romania.

**Abstract:** In the present paper I focus on the results of the collaboration between journalists and archaeologists, taking as case studies two Copper Age tells. I will examine how journalists and archaeologists build upon the remote past an ideological discourse confirming and legitimizing liberal capitalism. I will argue that for the sake of the “visibility” offered by the written press, the archaeologists directly or indirectly confer a “scientific”, “objective” aura to the dominant ideology.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** arheologie, tell-uri, epoca cuprului, presa scrisă, ideologie dominantă, România.

**Rezumat:** În articolul de față, luând ca studii de caz două tell-uri din epoca cuprului, mi-am îndreptat atenția asupra rezultatelor colaborării dintre jurnaliști și arheologi. Voi arăta cum jurnaliștii și arheologii construiesc despre trecutul îndepărtat un discurs ideologic ce confirmă și legitimează capitalismul liberal. Susțin că de dragul “vizibilității” oferite de presa scrisă, arheologii conferă direct sau indirect o aură „științifică”, „obiectivă” ideologiei dominante.

## Introduction: on the dominant ideology

Should I define in a single phrase the dominant ideology in today's Romania, namely liberal capitalism, I would choose the impertinent remark of Jacques Séguéla, the publicity man close to the French president Nicolas Sarkozy – “Si, à 50 ans, on n'a pas une Rolex, c'est qu'on a raté sa vie”.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, people's lives are evaluated and classified according to the purchasing power they attain and the objects they have access to due to it; human beings are identified with the objects they can afford consuming or not. Or, to use Jean Baudrillard's words, through the mechanisms of the industry of seduction, “Tout le destin du sujet passe dans l'objet”<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1). Everything is transformed into and consumed as commodity: the resources of any kind, the ideas, the subjectivity, sexuality, the human body itself.

As Ovidiu Țichindeleanu has noted, the factors that after the political changes in 1989 made it easier to impose liberal capitalism in the Eastern European countries are anticommunism, eurocentrism and capitalocentrism.<sup>3</sup> A decisive role in this process was played by the cultural elite. The anticommunist discourse of the latter had/has a repressive function: the Marxian critical thought was delegitimized by its mechanical association with communism, and, implicitly, with totalitarianism. Meanwhile, as Țichindeleanu puts it, the “intimate colonization” took place, namely “the import of the rhetorics and products of the cultural industry of the winners of the Cold War”.<sup>4</sup> Next to anticommunism, eurocentrism and capitalocentrism contributed to inculcating the idea that the only existing alternative to totalitarianism is liberal capitalism: concealing the issues of social inequality and discrimination in the West, we are told that the unique model to follow is that of the Western civilization, as the meaning of the word “civilization” is equated to the West; at the same time, we are told that the only alternative to state property is capitalism, falsely equated to democracy.<sup>5</sup>

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\*\* Alexandru Dragoman: Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Mandonnet, Vigogne 2009, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Baudrillard 1983, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Țichindeleanu 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.