

CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION AND TRAINING: THE ARA FIELD SCHOOLS

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Abstract: The field schools organized by the Association ARA starting with 2007 aim to attack subjects and entire fields rarely visited or absent altogether from the Romanian professional landscape, such as the study and protection of architectural-archaeological structures, the conservation of rural vernacular heritage, the social and economic connections of heritage research and conservation. The field schools which took place at Covasna – Cetatea Zânelor (Co. Covasna), Roșia Montană (Co. Alba) and Nufăru (Co. Tulcea) provided the participants with the possibility to come into contact with heritage sequences which are illustrative for the mentioned themes and to experience direct action strategies for the understanding and rescue of these particular categories of vestiges.

Rezumat: Școlile de vară organizate de Asociația ARA începând cu anul 2007 urmăresc abordarea unor subiecte și arii disciplinare prea puțin vizitate sau chiar absente din peisajul profesional românesc, cum ar fi studierea și protejarea structurilor arhitectural-arheologice, conservarea patrimoniului vernacular rural, conexiunile sociale și economice ale cercetării și conservării patrimoniului. Școlile de vară desfășurate în siturile de la Covasna – Cetatea Zânelor (jud. Covasna), Roșia Montană (jud. Alba) și Nufăru (jud. Tulcea) au oferit participanților posibilitatea să ia contact direct cu secvențe de patrimoniu ilustrative pentru temele menționate, și să experimenteze diferite căi de acțiune pentru cunoașterea și salvarea acestor categorii aparte de vestigii.

For the past six years the association *ARA – Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology*¹ has been running an education and training programme for undergraduate and graduate students in archaeology and architecture that is addressing issues related to the research and conservation of archaeological sites and historic architecture. The programme, consisting of field schools, reflects ARA's mission to contribute to the advancement of the research and conservation field through focused interdisciplinary action, with a view to the social role of conservation.

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¹ Established in 2006 by a number of specialists in the field of historic architecture, archaeology and heritage gathered around the organizing team of the annual symposium “Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology” (hence the name of the new organisation), hosted by the Institute of Archaeology of the Romanian Academy since 2000. More at www.simpara.ro.

Purpose and methods

The subjects chosen for each school address critical issues not sufficiently engaged with by the Romanian professional milieu, such as the relation architecture – archaeology in the research and conservation of vestiges of built structures, or the meeting of the empirical and traditional approach with the contemporary scientific approach to the study, protection and conservation of built structures. Not least, the schools investigate the complexity of social connections and meanings of conservation, and also the pertaining social responsibility.²

As educational and formative actions, the ARA field schools respond to pressing necessities derived from the nearly generalised lack of appropriate instruments to approach the above mentioned issues, both in the national higher education curricula³ and in most of the few alternative programmes.⁴

Adding to the general issues, each of the ARA field schools has to respond to a series of specific matters depending on the site in question and on other particular factors. These issues include the condition of remote sites open to systematic research, but also exposed to threats posed by an aggressive environment in the case of *Cetatea Zânelor* Dacian stronghold; the condition of archaeological sites overlapped by present day inhabited settlements in the case of the Byzantine fortress at *Nufăru*; the artificial conflict between conservation and development in the case of the *Roșia Montană* mining landscape.

² In line with the Faro Convention, especially art. 12, 13.

³ For a recent overview of the situation of education and training for built heritage in Romania, v. Raportul Comisiei Prezidențiale 2009, Chapter II, pp. 277-300; specifically on the formation for the common area of architecture and archaeology, v. M. Mărgineanu Cârstoiu, *Formarea specialiștilor din domeniul arhitectură-arheologie* in *Ibidem*, II, 4, pp. 296-300.

⁴ Of these few initiatives one needs to mention the Built Heritage Conservation Training Programme at the Bánffy Castle in Bonțida, run by the Transylvania Trust with the support of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation, aimed at providing professional training in the various crafts of traditional building, or the Țibănești Blacksmiths School, organised by the Pro Patrimonio Foundation with the support of Les Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France, growing consistent social links to the host community. The more recent Summer University for Restoration of Monuments and Sites held in Bucium by RPER – Rencontres du Patrimoine Europe-Roumanie focuses on the theoretical and practical training of future architects in dealing with vernacular architecture. None of these programmes is addressing the archaeological built heritage.