

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-archeologice, 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-archeologie* 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 Patrimoni 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.



Fig. 1. Cetatea Zânelor, Covasna: emergency protection of the fortification wall of terrace 2 (2006).

Based on a consideration of the specific needs of each site and of ARA's own experience and expertise, the objectives of the educational programme may comprise: understanding the basics of architecture research in archaeological environment; the experimental validation and development of research hypotheses on archaeological architecture; maintenance and conservation of built structures in archaeological environment; better understanding and testing of intervention principles and criteria, such as the compatibility, authenticity or re-treatability; rescue by research and documentation; practical conservation; social responsibility.

The activities of each school are divided in two directions: theoretical interrogation through lectures, presentations of case studies and debate, and practical application by hands-on action. The theoretical modules are sustained by ARA's guests, researchers, higher education staff and professionals in the field and by ARA's professional staff. The practical works are coordinated by specialists and master craftsmen with experience in heritage conservation.

Each school plan is intensive, demanding a strong physical and intellectual engagement. Where the working spaces allow it, actions are open to the public.

Field Schools

Cetatea Zânelor. The first two schools,⁵ in 2007 and 2008, took place in the Dacian site of Cetatea Zânelor

⁵ Developed and run in partnership with the National Museum for the History of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, with financial

(Fairies' Fortress),⁶ Co. Covasna. Here the instruments of experimental archaeology were employed for a double aim, theoretical and practical: to enrich the knowledge and understanding of Dacian archaeological architecture, and especially the fortification building techniques, and also to better identify and respond to the problems implied by the protection of the unearthed vestiges.

The practical activity (Fig. 1-2) consisted of building several sequences of Dacian fortifications, a tract of a palisade-wall, a plain palisade, a terrace wall, all following hypotheses resulted from recent archaeological and architectural research at the site.⁷ Among the results one can mention testing the viability of some reconstruction hypotheses for a simple curtain type (wooden framework with earth and rubble filling, erected over massive stone socle); understanding the process of building a Dacian wall, from ground preparation down to the techniques and details, together with the traces it leaves on the ground; confronting the available knowledge on this type of structure with its actual construction process; better assessing the possibilities of conservation for this type

support from Mrs. Nicoleta Pădure. More on these schools at www.simpara.ro/Cetatea-Zanelor---Covasna-2007-193.htm and www.simpara.ro/Tabara-de-arheologie-experimental-a-Covasna-II--129.htm (accessed January 2013).

⁶ The archaeological research is coordinated by Dr. Viorica Crișan of the National Museum for the History of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca and the architectural research by Dr. Monica Mărgineanu Cârstoiu, of the "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest. An overview of research results at Crișan, Sîrbu, Popescu 2003; Crișan, Sîrbu 2010.

⁷ Mărgineanu Cârstoiu *et alii* 2003, Mărgineanu Cârstoiu, Bălici, Apostol 2003.



Fig. 2. *Cetatea Zânelor*, Covasna: a. The palisade wall. Experimental reconstruction. 2007 ARA Field School (July 2007); b. Two variations on the palisade theme, under construction (July 2008); c. The simple wattle-palisade under construction; d. The simple wattle-palisade at the end of the 2008 ARA Field School.

of structure by monitoring its behaviour under specific environmental conditions. Temporary conservation measures had been implemented before the start of the field school programme, in the junction area of 2nd and 3rd terraces.

Roşia Montană. Starting with 2009 a series of field schools⁸ take place in Roşia Montană, an outstanding mining landscape with numerous significant

archaeological and architectural features, located in Romania's Western Carpathians, and currently under threat from contemporary open-cast mining.⁹ The design and scope of ARA's actions in this site are triggered and conditioned by the great danger it is facing.

The practical activities (Fig. 3-5) comprise the documentation of architectural heritage by measured drawings, photographs and condition surveys, but also by means of state-of-the-art technology (3d laser scanning). The schools include a hands-on module consisting of conservation works with traditional materials and techniques applied to historic built structures – houses, community buildings, churches – belonging to the valuable vernacular architectural heritage of the site, which had previously made the object of documentation and planning.

⁸ Organized with the participation of the Historic Environment Service of Shropshire Council, UK (2011), EKG Baukultur, Vienna-Berlin (2011, 2012), with the constant support of the Unitarian Parish of Roşia Montană and with financial support from the Romanian Order of Architects, through the Architecture Tax Fund (2009, 2010, 2011).

⁹ An overview of the situation of cultural heritage, with a selective bibliography on this topic in this volume, pp. 205-227.

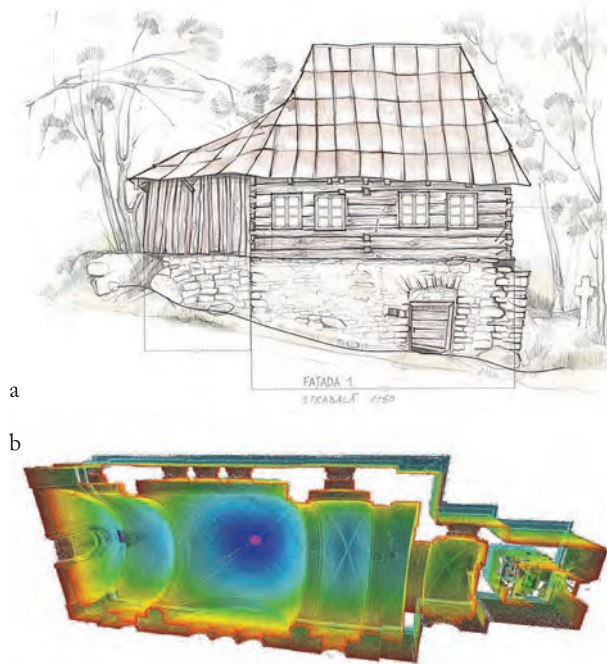


Fig. 3. *Roșia Montană*, Alba: a. Architectural survey by means of measured hand drawings - traditional house in the mining and agro-pastoral neighbourhood of Țarina (house no. 1248, survey Alexandru Șerban Bălan, Alexandru Ioan Mănecan, Dana Ninulescu); b. Architectural survey with modern technology - 3d laser scan (Roman Catholic church, EKG Baukultur, Vienna-Berlin); 2011 ARA Field School.

The schools question the relation of traditional knowledge, practices, techniques and materials with the contemporary professional thought and action, aiming at a balance between these two terms, harnessing the best of each. The scope of investigation and action ranges from architectural detail to whole construction, to townscape and to the wider landscape of the site.

The theoretical debate is enriched by theme tours and study trips designed to explore this complex site and discover still existing traditional practices and places of vernacular building, such as lime burning or shingle making.

The actions are complemented by film screenings on professional subjects and by other special events, all open to the public.

So far the results include the documentation of over 50 built structures representative for the 18th to early-20th century historic architecture of the site and the publication of two volumes of architecture documents (architecture surveys)¹⁰ presenting some of the most

¹⁰ Documente de arhitectură I 2010; Documente de arhitectură II 2012 (presentation and preview here: <http://www.simpara.ro/GB/UK-510.htm>, accessed January 2013).



Fig. 4. *Roșia Montană*, Alba: a. Open-air theory and practice lecture in the Unitarian parish yard (2009); b. Practical conservation work in the Unitarian parish house - cleaning masonry joints (2010); c. Practical conservation work at the Unitarian church - repointing (2011).



Fig. 5. *Roşia Montană*, Alba: a, b. The Unitarian parish house with emergency propping (2007) and after completion of exterior restoration (2010); c, d. Miner's house with inappropriate cement rendering (2009) and during facade restoration, with reconstruction of moulded sills employing traditional techniques and materials (2011).

important buildings such as the former Administrative Palace, the former Maternity Ward, all seven historic churches belonging to the five denominations of the site, the main historic reservoirs belonging to the hydro-technical systems of traditional mining. A series of completed and on-going conservation works adds to the results, applied to several structures, such as traditional miners' dwellings, town houses and country houses, the Unitarian Church and its parish house. The results were presented in several exhibitions¹¹ on view in *Roşia Montană* and itinerated to Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest.

¹¹ An exhibition presenting the whole field school programme, "Şcolile de vară ARA" [ARA Summer Schools], was on display at the 11th ARA Symposium, 2010 – see www.simpara.ro/GB/UK-223.htm (accessed January 2013);

In the case of *Roşia Montană*, ARA worked closely with local partners with the aim of contributing to the regeneration of this community by means of heritage action.

Nufăru. The latest field school¹² initiated by ARA is located in the Byzantine site at *Nufăru*,¹³ Co. Tulcea, on the southwestern edge of the Danube Delta. It is an archaeological site entirely overlapped by the current village, a site where excavations are conducted with the aims of systematic research, but with the instruments and methods of preventive archaeology, a site where each new

other exhibitions were presented at the Romanian Order of Architects, the Romanian Union of Architects and other public exhibition places in Bucharest and other cities.

¹² Developed and run in partnership with the "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology of the Romanian Academy and the National Museum of History.

¹³ The archaeological site is coordinated by Dr. Oana Damian of the "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology. An overview of research results at Damian, Andonie, Vasile 2003, Damian *et alii* 2010.



Fig. 6. *Nufăru*, Tulcea: the landing area facing the Danube. a. The situation prior to the conservation works (2010); b. The archaeological area at the end of the intervention (2012); c, d. Consolidation of masonry by cleaning the joints and re-filling with mortar; e. the main tract of wall after completion of works (photo: M. Vasile).

excavation is negotiated with private or public owners when they decide to start new construction work.

The field school focused on one of the largest excavation areas, where research is on-going for several years revealing the structures of a riverbank landing area along the fortification wall, one of the few points where there is a chance to make the archaeological layer accessible for visitors. The theoretical and practical works (Fig. 6) addressed problems with wider relevance for archaeological sites and particularly for those of Dobrudja, namely the conservation of mortar bound masonry of ruined structures exposed to local climate, the relation of excavated levels to original floor levels of archaeological built structures, or the interpretation and presentation of fragmentary vestiges.



The field school programme is going to continue with further actions.

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