UKRAINIAN-ROMANIAN STAGES
FOR STUDENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

Abstract. Cross-border cooperation between institutions of higher education is one of the goals of modern education, an important component of didactic and research activities. Over the past 30 years, such an initiative has been implemented several times during archaeological practices for students of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University and «Ștefan cel Mare» University of Suceava. During this time, four student exchanges took place. The main practice bases in 1993 were the settlements of Chornivka in Ukraine and Târgu Frumos in Romania, in 1994 – the settlements of Revne and Siret, and in 2006 and 2007 – the Khotyn fortress and the settlement of Fetești – La Schit. The periods of joint practice lasted for 10 days, were related to the solution of certain organizational issues and allowed to realize a number of important educational goals.

Keywords: archaeological research, archaeological practice, student exchange, cross-border cooperation, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, «Ștefan cel Mare» University of Suceava.
роботи – один із найефективніших шляхів співпраці, в т.ч. подолання історіографічних суперечок. За останні 30 років така ініціатива кілька разів була реалізована під час проведення археологічних практик для студентів Чернівецького національного університету імені Юрія Федьковича та Сучавського університету «Штефан чел Маре». За цей час відбулося чотири обміни студентами. Основними базами практик у 1993 р. були поселення Чорнівка в Україні та Тиргу Фрумос в Румунії, у 1994 р. – города Ревне та Сірет, а в 2006 і 2007 роках – Хотинська фортеця і поселення Фетешть – Ла Скіт. Серед цих пам’яток найкрахтішою вибором для міжуніверситетської археологічної практики стала Хотинська фортеця, яка має великий потенціал для транснаціональної наукової та культурної співпраці. Період спільної практики тривав по 10 днів та був пов’язаний з вирішенням низки організаційних питань: транспортного та фінансового забезпечення, проживання та харчування, забезпечення побутових умов. Найважливішою частиною практики була діяльність на місцях розкопок: в Румунії – на поселеннях енеоліту й доби раннього заліза, а в Україні – на середньовічних і ранньомодерних пам’ятках. Програма завжди була подібною як для румунських, так і для українських студентів. Результатом спільного етапу археологічної практики стало досягнення важливих цілей: можливість вивчати археологічні старожитності іншої країни та порівнювати їх з тією, які вже відомі студентам і викладачам із власних університетів та музеїв; краще розуміння минулого регіону академічними громадами різних країн; поширення знань і запозичення досвіду; налагодження доброзичливого спілкування на людському рівні. Польова робота чергувалася з навчальними поїздками до музеїв Чернівців, Кам’яниця-Подільського, Львова, а також Кукутені, Сучави, Ясс і монастирів Північної Молдови.

Ключові слова: археологічні дослідження, археологічна практика, обмін студентами, транскордонна співпраця, Чернівецький національний університет імені Юрія Федьковича, Сучавський університет «Штефан чел Маре».

Interuniversity cross-border cooperation is one of the goals of modern teaching, in the absence of which didactic and research activities become an isolated and useless approach. Those initiatives are based on common landmarks between the educational institutions, among them being neighbourhood, cultural, religious, ethnic identity or just common historic experiences.

The subject of this article is the archaeological practical research for students organised by Chernivtsi and Suceava Universities in the past 30 years. On these archaeological diggings students and teachers from both institutions have worked and studied together, for the benefit of both parts. The paper was mainly wrote based on information offered by Liubomyr Mykhailyna, Serhii Pyvovarov, Nicolae Ursulescu, Ştefan Purici, Florin Pintescu, Dumitru Boghian, Mircea Ignat, Ihor Voznyi, Vasyl Balukh, Constantin Emil Ursu, Senica Țurcanu, to whom we would like to express our gratitude, as well on the personal experiences of the authors. To this information we added some short notes on Chernivtsi and Suceava students’ activities on the archaeological campaigns that we have found on the field reports or books. And finally, we would like to mention a paper that was dedicated precisely to the first archaeological campaigns that were organised by the two universities, that was published the very next year. Also, our material wishes to analyse the solutions found by the two universities for accomplishing the common goal, regarding the means of transportation, meals, accommodation, but, most of all, to underline the scientific and educational results of this cooperation.

The founding of the Franz-Josef University in 1875 by the Austro-Hungarian Empire marks the beginning of the university level teaching in Bukovyna. It was a German language institution, where young people of different origins could become more educated. After Bukovyna became a part of Romania in 1918, Chernivtsi University became an institution with Romanian as teaching language and was named after Ferdinand, the king of Romania and then, since 1933, after the king Carol II. A new period in the history of the university teaching in Bukovyna became after World War II, when the province itself was divided by the Soviet-Romanian border. Chernivtsi University became a Ukrainian academic institution within the borders of the Soviet Union. After the Ukrainian state gain its independence, the institution was named after the writer Yuriy Fedkovych, since 2000 receiving also the status of national university. In the southern part of the province the university teaching was resumed in 1963, with the foundation of the Pedagogical Institute for 3 years, which gradually developed into the nowadays university, having as patron the Moldavian prince Ştefan cel Mare. The two universities that we see today consider themselves,
from different reasons and in different degrees, heirs of the Austrian academic institution, founded more than 100 years ago in Chernivtsi and share many values and objectives.

Nevertheless, starting from the Communist Era, under the direct influence of different national ideologies, the archaeological research from Suceava and Chernivtsi universities evolved in different directions, although, many times, had as objects of study the same prehistoric and historic realities. Those approaches could have been found, also, on the didactic agenda of the two institutions. The Romanian Revolution of 1989 and the Independence of the Ukrainian Republic in 1991, had, as one of many consequences, a more relax relation between the two states and created the frame for a better collaboration between the two academic forums, including the area of archaeology and closed the gap between the historiographical approaches.

From legal point of view, the two universities signed a series of successive protocols, which represented the main documents for all the activities organized in common since 1991 up to now. To it, annual programs of collaboration had been added, where the specific activities were included, among them the stages of archaeological practice.

The didactic personnel that was active in the field of archaeology after 1991 felt the need to overcome the historiographical controversies developed in the Communist Era and to build a common scientific current. The two sides believed that one of the most efficient ways to work together was to organize research activities in common. The academic research was, as it is now, connected with the teaching field and was carried out with students and for them. Consequently, the best way to cooperate scientific and didactic, was to organize stages for archaeological practice together, this activity being so similar and flexible, that could be done at the same time. But to implement this project was far more complicated than proposing it, as the research of both sides was undermined by the necessity to adapt to the needs of the other. But the didactic gains were greater than the sacrifices.

Although this collaboration sought to be permanent, in reality only four student exchanges took place on the archaeological field schools organized by the two institutions, in the years 1993, 1994, 2006 and 2007. Another bad side of this initiative was that universities didn’t intended to make a common research project, because the scientific goals of teachers were different, but rather to include students from the other institution into the on-going activities that they had. So, especially during the 1990s, Chernivtsi University was interested to investigate sites form the Middle Ages, while Suceava University was more preoccupied with the study of Prehistory. As a consequence, the stages for the archaeological practice took place in 1993 at the medieval site of Chornivka – Selyshche in Ukraine and in the prehistoric settlement from Târgu Frumos – Baza Pătule in Romania. This model was repeated in 1994, the Ukrainian digging site being the one from Revne – Horodyszcze, and on the Romanian side, the fortified Iron Age settlement from Siret – Dealul Ruina. Twelve years later, in the years 2006 and 2007, when the collaboration was resumed, the things didn’t change much, the Ukrainian site where the Romanian students worked alongside the ones from Chernivtsi was Khotyn Fortress. Meanwhile, the Romanian digging site where the Ukrainian students participated was Fetești – La Schit.

From all the archaeological sites that were investigated in common by the two universities, Khotyn Fortress was, no doubt, the most suitable choice for the interacademic archaeological practice. The history of this fortification that was occupied in different ages by Kyivan Rus, Halych Principality, Poland, Moldova, Ottoman Empire, Russia, Romania, Soviet Union, Ukraine, offers a tremendous potential for scientific and cultural transnational activities. On the other hand, the most complex interuniversity collaboration took place, even if it was for a short period of time, at Târgu Frumos – Baza Pătule, where students from three universities worked together: Iași, Suceava and Chernivtsi.

The academics that were in charge with these archaeological diggings, from didactic and scientific point of view were, as it follows: at Chornivka in 1993 – Serhii Pyvovarov, Ihor Voznyi, Vasyl Balukh (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University) and Mircea Ignat («Ștefan cel Mare» University of Suceava), at Târgu Frumos in 1993 – Nicolae Ursulescu («Alexandru Ioan Cuza» University of Iași), Dumitru Boghian («Ștefan cel Mare» University of Suceava) and Liubomyr Mykhailyna (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University), at Revne in 1994 – Liubomyr Mykhailyna (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University) and Dumitru Boghian («Ștefan cel Mare» University of Suceava), at Siret in 1994 – Mircea Ignat («Ștefan cel Mare» University of Suceava) and Serhii Pyvovarov (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University), at Khotyn in 2006 – Liubomyr Mykhailyna, Serhii Pyvovarov, Mykola
Ilkiv, Oleksandr Rusnak (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University) and Dumitru Boghian (Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava), at Fetești in 2006 – Sorin Ignătescu (Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava) and Antonii Moisei (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University), at Khotyn in 2007 – Liubomyr Mykhailyna, Serhii Pyvovarov, Mykola Ilkiv, Oleksandr Rusnak (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University) and Sorin Ignătescu (Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava), at Suceava in 2007 – Sorin Ignătescu (Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava) and Antonii Moisei (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University).

The two universities decided that activities should cover a period of ten days, starting on Monday, during which, simultaneous, students from Chernivtsi should have come to Suceava and those from Suceava, to Chernivtsi. For instance, that period was, from 8 to 19 of July in 1993 or from 3 to 13 in 2006. This rule was broke only in 2007, when the two activities took place one after another, students from Suceava working on the Khotyn digging site between 18 and 28 of June, and the Ukrainian ones in Suceava between 28 of June and 8 of July. In fact, from the 10 days reserved for the archaeological field activities, at least one, the Sunday form the end of the first week, was kept for resting. From the other nine days, at least one or two were used for scientific research trips, because most of students were travelling for the first time in the neighbouring country and they were anxious to visit its most famous historical objectives.

At Târgu Frumos in 1993, the stage of archaeological practice for students did not cover, in fact, more than three days, and in Suceava, in 2007, all ten days were converted in documentation trips. The historical objectives visited in Ukraine were, mostly, the old cities and history museums from Chernivtsi, Kamianets-Podilskyi and Lviv, but also the fortresses from Kamianets-Podilskyi and Khotyn, that all had an important contribution to the history of Moldova. From Romania, the Archaeological Museum from Cucuteni, the history Museums from Suceava and Iași have been on the list, but also, as expected, the painted monasteries from the Nord of Moldova.

Only in 1993 the number of students that participated was of 14. The following years that number was reduced to 10. We think that it should be said here that students from Ukraine that were travelling to Romania during these practice stages were generally one year younger than the Romanian ones due to the fact that the preuniversity Ukrainian teaching system had only 11 years and not 12 as in Romania. We don’t want to underline here the age gap, but rather the increase responsibility that the Ukrainian teachers had to face.

Organizing the students exchange meant that some transportation problems had to be solved. To cross from one country to the other, the custom from Siret – Porubne was chosen, since it is situated on the road that links the cities of Chernivtsi and Suceava. In this matter the two universities were helped in the most consistent way by the Romanian Consulate in Chernivtsi and the Ukrainian Consulate in Suceava that have approved and facilitated the crossing of the frontier by students, based on the invitations received from the partner institution. When the two groups crossed the border simultaneous, the cars did not cross as well, but took their own students to the border and waited for the ones from the other side. Special approvals were needed to cross the border on foot, because, at that time, Siret – Porubne point was destined only for cars.

Even in the financial area flexibility and ingenuity was needed. Since universities were allowed to support financially only their own students, the two parties agreed that they should get the money, only to offer them to teachers to finance the practice activities of their fellow students from the other country. Sometimes, students were given the money, and they bought food and other useful stuff on their own, as things happened in Khotyn in 2006 and 2007, in Fetești in 2006 and Suceava in 2007. Other times, in Chornivka in 1993, in Siret in 1994 and in Revne in 1994, they did not get the money itself, but teachers used the money to prepare hot meals, which meant an extra effort. Moreover, in 2007 at Khotyn, Romanian students received money from Chernivtsi University and lunch at a restaurant in the vicinity of the fortress, from the archaeological expedition. Needless to say, that the amount of money, although equal, was not equitable, because most products were chipper in Ukraine and more expensive in Romania.

Getting back to the meals themselves, we would like to point out that when the food was cooked by the organizing university, it contains traditional dishes, some of them unknown to students from the other country. So, most of Suceava students ate buckwheat dishes for the first time during the archaeological practice stage, because it is quite uncommon in Romania, and they generally disliked it. On the other side, students from Chernivtsi have discovered Romanian mititei, unknown to Ukraine, which were widely appreciated. As for the drinks, we can also say that challenges appeared for both sides. On one hand,
students from Suceava had the opportunity to taste kvas, a non-alcoholic or low alcoholic drink, quite popular in Ukraine, not well received by the Romanians.

Unfortunately, the housing conditions were poor on both sides. The resemblances were, in that area, very significant, both universities asking for assistance, when needed, from the schools and colleges, to accommodate students. When the archaeological diggings were organized in the cities, the conditions were better as in Târgu Frumos in 1993, Siret in 1994 and Khotyn in 2006 and 2007. Students lived in the dormitories of the local high schools: Technical College «Lațcu Vodă» in Siret, Special Professional School in Târgu Frumos and Technical College in Khotyn. Those institutions provided students, based on conventions with the universities, free accommodation, in the rooms where their own students lived during the academic year. But the water program was very different from one city to the next. In Târgu Frumos the cold water was running all the time, but the hot water was available only in the evening and morning. In Siret, the hot water was completely unavailable and in Khotyn the cold water consumption was restricted, but the waters of the Dnister and several wells nearby were always available. The Ukrainian students lived in Khotyn in 2006 and 2007 in tents, inside the fortress walls, while the Romanians – at the local high school. The archaeological campaign of Chornivka from 1992 also accommodated students in tents. Apart from some discomfort, that solution had, in fact, some advantages, such as the short distance that students had to cover to the digging site. In the case of the other archaeological diggings housing was provided in the local schools as at Revne in 1994 and Fetești in 2006. Since the acquaintance of the other was an important part of the interuniversity cooperation, those campaigns where students were accommodated in the same place have contributed in a more effective way to creating long term relationships. In the first days of these stages, we should add, when students participated in study trips, they were accommodated in the university rooms, with far better conditions.

The most important part of the common stages of archaeological practice was the activity carried out at the diggings sites. The program was always similar for the Romanian and also for the Ukrainian students, the working hours being in the first part of the day, in a six hours block, that was not respected only if the weather was unfriendly. Only in Khotyn the schedule was different. The three or four hours in the morning were followed by a launch break until the afternoon, when the digging resumed. Because the distance to the dormitory of Khotyn Technical College was quite important, Romanian students spent the launch breaks in the fortress, this time being, in fact, the most suitable for interaction with their Ukrainian colleagues.

In order to have a much more effective collaboration between the two sides it would have been necessary for students to work together, but that didn’t always happen. At Târgu Frumos and Chornivka in 1993, at Revne in 1994 and Fetești in 2006 this goal was accomplished, but at Siret in 1994 and at Khotyn in 2006 and 2007, the students from the two universities worked in different sectors, which minimized the interaction, so necessary to an efficient collaboration. In the case of the Siret digging, students from Suceava University worked in the trench II, meanwhile students from Chernivtsi University in trench III. Nevertheless, the two trenches were parallel and the distance between them was only 3.5 meters, which means students were close to each other. Analysing the situation at Khotyn, from the campaigns that took place in the years 2006 and 2007, we would like to point out that students from Suceava worked in the room from the first level of the entrance tour of the medieval fortress and the space close to it in the lower courtyard, an isolated area of the fortification. However, Ukrainian students worked closely in the same yard.

The communication between students was always difficult, since they spoke different languages. Rarely the dialogue could take place directly, without interpreters. From that perspective, students of Ukrainian origin from Suceava University and those of Romanian origin from Chernivtsi University had a very important role in the communication between the two parts. Although the time spent in the neighbouring country was short, students manifested a real interest in learning the language of their colleagues, so this activity was a beginning in this direction also.

As we have pointed earlier, the interaction between students took place mostly in the free time, even if the villages and towns where the sites were located didn’t offer too many possibilities for spending the hours after work. These opportunities were not lost by the young people from the two countries, which had the possibility to learn directly new things about the culture, hobbies and aspirations of their colleagues. Maybe Khotyn Fortress was again different from that perspective, being a touristic objective, since it provided means of entertainment for visitors, from which students took advantage too: riding horses,
photos with actors impersonating historical figures etc. Apart from all this swimming in the waters of Dniester was a great opportunity in the hot days of summer.

Working at the sites offered always great possibilities to learn how the other archaeological school did all the practical activities. The tools that archaeology uses are rarely proper to this discipline, being, mostly, borrowed from other scientific or technical areas. If the ones use to remove the topsoil, disturbed by the agricultural activities, were always pickaxes, spades and shovels, for the detail works the Ukrainians did not use other tools, as the Romanian school did, focusing more on details. But the surfaces chosen by the Ukrainian archaeological teams were better adapted and flexible in relation to the objectives that were excavated, as the medieval archaeology usually is. This technique, very suitable for Khotyn, an archaeological site with medieval and modern layers was also adapted to Revne and Chornivka, sites from the beginning of the Middle Age, the discovery of complexes being more important than the trenches. We must also point out that the Ukrainian University was using metal detectors as a way to prospect the trenches that were under investigation, in order to save all the metal objects that could have been lost by mistake. This approach was at that time unknown to the Romanian side.

Regarding the process of recording the data, both sides manifested a similar care and responsibility, as expected, the drawings, photos, journals etc. being common parts of the documents collected by all the archaeological teams that worked on the sites investigated in those years by Suceava and Chernivtsi universities. Moreover, in the campaigns from the years 1993 and 1994 Romanian archaeologists were still using old cameras of Soviet origin, as their Ukrainian counterparts. Another similar aspect of the work undertaken by students and teachers on the archaeological diggings organized by the two universities was that they collected the archaeological evidence with great care and responsibility, all the artefacts and ecofacts being prepared for further analysis that were to take place in the laboratories.

We also feel obliged to mention a peculiar feature of the Ukrainian archaeological sites investigated in these campaigns. They were destined not only for research, but also for touristic valorisation. Especially Khotyn Fortress happen to be that kind of archaeological monument, which had some important consequences for the investigation, only some of the layers being fully excavated. Suceava students were, alongside Ukrainian ones, involved in the cleaning of some of the sectors of the fortification, which, due to its size, needed a constant and expensive care. Consequently, in 2007, students worked in the Turkish Mosque, a monument that, affected by countless wars, was finally destroyed by an explosion in the middle of the XXth century.

No doubt, for students, the most important gain from the common stage of archaeological practice was the opportunity to study habitation complexes and artefacts from the other country and compare them with the ones that they have already studied at their own university and local museums. The activities to which they were able to participate proved, once more, that prehistoric civilizations, remains of the lives of the people, spread over vast areas that do not overlap exactly the existing contemporary states. Despite the progress made by the East Europe archaeology in the past few years, still exist ages from the prehistory of the lands between the Carpathians and the Dniester River that we know very little. The border between Romania and Ukraine is a barrier for the information regarding new discoveries to spread and only the cross-border cooperation can solve this problem.

The Ukrainian research, which aims at excavating larger areas in shorter time, proved to be more effective in identifying the prehistoric and historic civilizations that existed in Chernivtsi region, offering the Romanian school some possible answers regarding the habitation of Suceava County in some less known ages. For instance, the research carried out at Revne and Chornivka, where students and teachers from Suceava also participated, helped the archaeologists from Romania to understand better the realities from Chernivtsi region before the Moldavian state, that could be valid also for Suceava County. Also, the opportunity to participate at the research in Khotyn allowed them to learn more about the Moldavian state from the time of Ștefan cel Mare. The study trips to Lviv and Kamianets-Podilskyi had their role in adding important knowledge regarding the contacts of Moldova with Medieval Poland. The city of Chernivtsi, on the other hand, with its old monuments, where the Moldavian and Romanian history had not been forgotten, permitted students to enlarge their historical horizon.

The Romanian prehistoric diggings campaigns, where Ukrainian students participated became important landmarks in their education. The first phases of the Cucuteni-Trypillia civilization on the Ukrainian territory are difficult to understand without a profound knowledge of the reality form Romania,
taking into account its origin. The archaeological diggings at Târgu Frumos and Fetești, where students from Ukraine had the chance to study directly preserved remains of that civilization, had a significant role in building a more complete and true image about it. The archaeological research in Siret, where the fortified settlement from the beginning of the Iron Age was investigated, represented also, for students from the other country, an extraordinary possibility to compare the realities from the Middle Prut area with the ones from Romania, both belonging to the cultural complex Gâva-Holihrady. For Ukrainian students visiting Suceava Fortress meant, surely, the opportunity to compare it with the one from Khotyn, but also with that from Kamianets-Podilskyi, situated close to Chernivtsi region, and place them in the context of the Moldo-Polonian relations during the Middle Ages. The study trips organized for Ukrainian students that were directed towards archaeological and historical objectives from Romania helped them form a modern vision regarding the valorisation of the archaeological discoveries, because they could visit Archaeological Museum Cucuteni or Suceava Fortress, real examples in this field.

In recent years, cross-border cooperation has continued, but on a smaller scale and in other forms. In particular, from June 16 to 29, 2019, students of the Faculty of History, Political Science and International Relations of Chernivtsi University participated in the archaeological research of the ancient site of Histria as a part of the Eurocentrica Association project «Support for the research conducted at the City of Histria in 2019». Program coordinator of Eurocentrica Association and co-field director of the Histria Multiscalar Archaeological Project was archaeologist Liviu lancu. Students demonstrated good theoretical knowledge and practical skills in archaeology and displayed interest and seriousness in accomplishing the tasks they were entrusted with, being thus able to help the research team and acquire new skills at the same time. The contribution given by students was welcome and highly appreciated by the representatives of the main institutions involved in the excavations – Vasile Parvan Institute of Archeology of the Romanian Academy and the University of Texas. On August 1-5, 2022, a student of Chernivtsi University also took part in an archaeological camp organized by the Rotary Club Cetatea Neamțului Târgu-Neamț.

In conclusion, apart from the problems that they caused and financial, bureaucratic difficulties, the stages for archaeological practice, organized in common by Chernivtsi and Suceava universities manage to achieve some important objectives: a better understanding of the prehistoric and historic monuments by the academic community from the other country, a contribution to the progress of research on both sides, the knowledge spreading across the border and, at a human level, a decrease in suspicion and mistrust, generated in the Communist Era.
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