IRON AGE ACROPOLIS EXCAVATION
DACIAN FORTRESS AND SETTLEMENT
Racos, Southern Transylvania, Romania
JULY 07 – AUGUST 10, 2013

Half way between the medieval city of Sighisoara (the real Dracula’s birth place and an UNESCO Heritage Site) and Brasov (and the nearby Bram Stocker’s Bran Castle), a very elaborate system of Dacian strongholds, civilian settlements and religious centers has been located in the Racos de Jos area. The complexity of the region has only been understood in the last few years when the excavations of the great temple complex at Augustin have been finalized. The extent of the site, its relationships to the other Dacian sites (including ours), the quality and quantity of the material finds proved that we are dealing with one of the greatest La Tene (Late Iron Age) Dacian settlements in South-East Europe.

The site we are currently excavating is on a hill facing the Augustin Temple Complex and most likely associated with it. The test trenches excavated the past two years have exposed a rich and complex fortified center, destroyed by Emperor Trajan’s legions during the Daco-Roman wars (102-106AD). The magnitude of the destruction level testifies to the importance of the site both to the Dacian and the Romans.

In 2012, our excavation has uncovered the gate system of the acropolis. During the 2013 season, we will explore the acropolis and surrounding terraces in order to identify the urban and military Dacian fabric. We will also conduct phosphate and pit surveys to locate the associated necropolis. Considering the extraordinarily rich and varied archaeological material recovered last five years, the 2013 excavation offers exceptional promise.

Duration: 5 weeks (2 weeks minimum stay)
Costs: US$385. It includes:
- Excavation registration taxes and fees
- A spot in the camping area
- Excavation tools, fire wood, stove, pots and pans, etc.
- Lectures

For information and application procedure: www.archaeotek.org
Or contact us at archaeology@archaeotek.org
Excavation: Piatra Detunata – Durduia, Racos Commune, Brasov County, Romania
Period: Iron Age (Dacian - LaTene, Hallstatt), Middle Bronze Age (Wietenberg)
Field period: July 07 – August 10, 2013

Description:

The area of the upper Olt River basin between Racos and Augustin, about 12 km in length (jud. Brasov, Romania), has been archaeologically explored since 1983 by professors F. Costea (Brasov County Museum), I. Glodariu (“Babeş - Bolyai” University, Cluj Napoca) and V. Sarbu (Braila Museum) and a team of specialists, students and volunteers. The region has yielded a very complex pattern of settlements, rivaling the Sarmizegetusa Regia Dacian capital complex. Military structures have been identified at Tipia Racosului and Tipia Augustinului. Several other settlements of various sizes have been surveyed on every hill top in the region. The most important feature of the area was the heavily fortified religious and military center of Tipia Ormenisului.

Our site of Piatra Detunata – Durduia (com. Racos, jud. Brasov, Romania) has been excavated since 2003. It is situated approximately 4 km from the religious/military center from Tipia Ormenisului. The late LaTene site is composed of a series of fortified civilian settlements, in very close proximity to one another, spread over a complex and contrasted landscape. In 2009-2011, we uncovered and excavated several rich Bronze Age votive shacks, pointing to the presence of a temple complex nearby. In 2011-2012, we have located the gate structure of the acropolis and a rich Early Iron Age (Hallstatt) presence.

Our 2013 objectives are two fold. First, now that the gate structure has been confirmed, we will continue to excavate the other terraces of the acropolis in order to understand the urban fabric and logic of the settlement. In parallel, we will conduct a large scale geochemical (phosphate) and test pit survey to locate the necropolis of the two settlements.

Objectives:

1. Integrate the civilian settlements of Piatra Detunata – Durduia in the large scale Dacian late La Tene occupation of the upper Olt River basin
2. Establish the relationship between the civilian settlements and the religious/military center from Tipia Ormenisului
3. Map the civilian settlements from Piatra Detunata – Durduia
   a. Define the stratigraphy
   b. Establish the different occupation stages of the area (ranging from the MBA – Wietenberg Culture – to LIA – LaTene Culture; there is also sporadic evidence of Neolithic and Eneolithic presence) and their extent in space and time
4. Now that the gate complex has been identified, the urban logic of the acropolis structures will be explored
5. Locate the necropolis associated with the two major settlements through systematic soil geochemical (phosphate) and test pit survey
6. investigate the question of the processes of Roman occupation and the nature of the Dacian Wars as it is illustrated by the abundance and variety of artifacts present in the late LaTene phase (Piatra Detunata – Durduia site is one of the very few Dacian sites that hasn’t been evacuated and emptied before the Roman invasion)

**Specialized skills taught to students/volunteers:**

Several lectures will be offered to our volunteers, ranging from local history and archaeology to material culture typologies and architecture, and several guided tours to local archaeological sites. Students will be taught the proper use of various field tools. Explanations will be provided for every step of the excavation, on stratigraphy, field finds and archaeological complexes. We expect our volunteers to be intellectually involved in the archaeological process and thus interacting with the research staff.

**Skill sets taught during the project:**

**Excavation:** proper use of all excavating tools, proper excavation techniques as they are implemented in different environments for different purposes, profile management, stratigraphic column extraction for microstratigraphic analysis, sampling, artifact and sample packaging, recording, drawing.

**Survey techniques as they apply to:** GPS topographic survey, archaeological survey, soil and phosphate survey.

**Laboratory:** phosphate analysis, flotation, artifact processing, GIS mapping.

**Research team:**

1. **Scientific Director:** Prof. Florea Costea (Expert Archaeologist, Brasov County Museum – Romania)
2. **Field Director:** Prof. Andre Gonciar (Director, Archeological Techniques and Research Center, ArchaeoTek – Canada)
3. **Field Assistants:** Alexander Brown (Field Director, ArchaeoTek-Canada), Kaleigh Kenney (Trench Director, ArchaeoTek-Canada)
4. **Research team:**
   a. Prof. Valeriu Sirbu (Adjunct Director, Braila Museum – Romania)
   b. Prof. Radu Stefanescu (Director, Brasov County Museum – Romania)
   c. Prof. Lucica O. Savu (Museum Specialist, Brasov County Museum – Romania)
   d. Prof. Angelica Balos (Archaeological Specialist, Dacian and Roman Civilization Museum – Romania)

**Bibliography:**

Costea, Florea, Repertoriul arheologic al județului Brașov. 1996. 
Maxim, Zoia. Neo-Eneoliticul din Transilvania. Date arheologice și matematico-statistice. 1999

Field reports (mostly in Romanian) can be found on http://www.cimec.ro/scripts/ARH/RAn/sel.asp (use “Comuna” for Alegeti criteriu field and “Racosu de Jos” for Alegeti termenii de selectie field). For more excavation details regarding specific local sites in our study area, see following articles: