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# Prehistoric carved stones, discovered on lot 1 (Alba Iulia), site 2, of the A10 Sebeş Alba – Turda highway

Sabin Adrian LUCA\*

## Abstract

*Mesolithic or Neolithic? Massive stone heads were discovered on the preventive archaeological research in Alba Iulia, A10 highway, Sebeş-Alba – Turda, sector 1, site 2 (2017 campaign). Aspects regarding the nowadays geographical characteristics of the investigated area (but also older ones, using historic topographic maps), data regarding the general chronology of the site and cultural framings of the archaeological features are being discussed. The article mentions similar stone heads or stone sculptural elements discovered in other archaeological sites, connecting this information with the radio-carbon data.*

**Keywords:** *prehistory, carved/polished stone art pieces, preventive research*

## General description of the researched area

The works for the preventive research of the duct of this highway sector (Alba Iulia, Sebeş-Alba – Turda, sector 1, site 2, 2017 campaign) led to discovery of parts from several prehistoric sites (early Neolithic – Starčevo-Criş culture, Eneolithic – Petreşti culture and early bronze)<sup>1</sup>.

Site 2 was identified in the floodplain of the Mureş and Ampoi rivers, in the immediate vicinity of the latter. It is located approximately 300 m to the E from the European road E18 and near the Alba Iulia – Teiuş double railway.

The A10, Sebeş – Turda highway is located on the corridor (depression) of the same name, mostly in the Mureş meadow, in the interfluvium between Mureş and its affluents. The depression is oriented NNW-SSE, extending to the SW with the tectonic depression area, called the Orăştie corridor. The contact of the depression with the mountain is made through structural platforms associated with piedmont accumulations caused by the waters descending from the slopes, having the appearance of smooth platforms (interfluviums) separated by deep valleys<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The research team consisted of: S.A. Luca – site manager and researchers – archaeologists: A. Georgescu, V. Palaghie, Gh. Natea, L. Coltofean and Fl. Perianu – the one who translated this article.

<sup>2</sup> D. Ghinea, *Enciclopedia geografică a României A-G* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996).

The Mureş river delimits to the NE and SSE the Alba Iulia – Turda corridor from the Transylvanian Plateau through its geomorphological unit called Târnavelor Plateau. In turn, the Alba Iulia – Turda corridor separates within the Carpathian Mountains the Apuseni branch from the Southern Carpathians (Cindrel – Şureanu Mountains)<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to the general geographical features of today, in this case is also important a foray into the older geography of the area where the site is located. Very useful in the context are the historical topographic maps, including the *Josephine topographic map (Josephinische Landesaufnahme)* – 1763-1787, the *Franciscan topographic map (Franzsiszeische Landesaufnahme)* – 1806-1869 and the *Shooting Plan of the Romanian Army* – after 1918. The Josephine topographic map is highlighted, which has the advantage of presenting, for Transylvania and – implicitly – for the area considered here, the previous situation of the ample systematization, regularization and dam works from the XVIIIth century and from the following ones. The confrontation of this old cartographic material with current topographic maps and satellite photographs presents us with very different picture from what can be seen today<sup>4</sup>. According to these maps, in the area of the site flowed in ancient times the Ampoi (as today, by the way), and upstream it made a wide loop to the NW.

### ***Description of the archaeologically researched area***

The area of the future A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, identified as site 2 (km 15+150 – 15+000), is located on the territory of Alba Iulia, in the floodplain of the rivers Ampoi and Mureş. Although the territory of the current municipality is dotted with numerous archaeological discoveries covering chronologically almost the entire interval between the Neolithic and the contemporary period<sup>5</sup>, none has been reported so far in the area where the current site 2 is located. The archaeological potential of this point was signaled only after the archaeological diagnostic works in 2015<sup>6</sup>. On this occasion, inside the surveys were discovered archaeological features belonging to the Neolithic period.

The general objective of our research was to discharge the archaeological load of the area between km 15+150 and 15+000 of sector 1 (site 2), declared by the

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<sup>3</sup> *Geografia României, Carpații românești și Depresiunea Transilvaniei*, vol. III (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1987), 623.

<sup>4</sup> <http://mapire.eu>.

<sup>5</sup> V. Moga , H. Ciugudean, *Repertoriul arheologic al județului Alba* (Alba Iulia: Muzeul Național al Unirii din Alba Iulia, 1995), 29-47.

<sup>6</sup> G.V. Bounegru et al., *Raport parțial de diagnostic arheologic „Construirea Autostrăzii Sebeş – Turda, lot 1, km. 0+000 – 17+000, jud. Alba”* (Alba Iulia: Muzeul Național al Unirii din Alba Iulia, 2015). We must thank to the staff of the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia – one of the strongest in Romania in terms of preventive research – for all the support given to our research team.

research team of the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia as inhabited in prehistory.

In order to establish the general stratigraphy of site 2 on lot 1 of the Sebeş – Turda highway, but also its exact limits on the targeted surface, 8 longitudinal sections were drawn (distributed at relatively equal distances along the declared site length). The width was 1,30 m. Their depth varied between 2,00 m and 0,70 m to the sterile soil from an archaeological point of view. In some cases, their maximum depth exceeded 2 m due to the appearance of deep archaeological features. Alluvial sands and gravels were found under the archaeological features. These sections allowed the observation of a stratigraphy, somewhat uneven, due – in part – to the fact that the area is in the floodplain of Ampoi and Mureş. Works to regulate the watercourse in the area were carried out in the XVIIIth century, but also in the later ones. So even in the XXIth century these works continue as many times as needed. It was also possible to observe some level curves, today much level, and a fall of the slope towards the Mureş river (towards E and NE).

The stratigraphic observations made during the execution of the mentioned sections led to the delimitation on the prehistoric site, on a distance of approximately 150 m, along the highway duct, along the entire width of the expropriation corridor.

The Neo-Eneolithic cultures like Starčevo-Criş and Petreşti discovered here do not represent settlement center, but the edge of some settlements. I noticed – on most of the researched site – a former arm of the river –, narrow (in plan e, the central-eastern part has no archaeological features and is filled with fine sand, which is deposited in areas of rivers with extreme water smooth, a surface can also be seen – in the central area – which seems to represent a puddle). So, the areas without white archaeological features, from plan 3, were not inhabited, they being – in prehistory – covered by waters. The current duct of the river has its current shape (plan 2) from the time of *Josephine* and subsequent regularization of running water in the area.

*The general stratigraphy* of the researched area is as follows in the western area of the site:

- 0 – 0,30/0,35 m – arable, yellow-brown vegetal layer with pebbles;
- 0,30/0,35 – 0,60 m – brown-yellowish clayey layer, with pebbles;
- 0,60 – 0,80/0,85 m – compact brown-gray layer, with ceramic pigment, rarely pebbles, culture layer;
- 0,80/0,85 – 1,00 m – black-gray clayey layer, with ceramic pigments, coal, ceramic fragments in secondary position (rolled); layer affected heavy flooding;
- 1,00 – 1,25 m – brown layer, clayey, with reddish spots, at the base with calcareous concretions;
- 1,25 m – yellow, sandy soil, with calcareous concretions, sterile from an archaeological point of view.

In the eastern area:



- 0/0,30 – 0,35 m – arable, brown-yellowish vegetal layer with pebbles;
- 0,35 – 0,70 m – brown-greyish, clayey layer with ceramic pigments;
- 0,70 – 0,90 m – brown layer, with yellow pigments;
- 0,90 m – yellow layer, with calcareous concretions, sterile from an archaeological point of view.

***Brief description of the archaeological material. Chronological and cultural framing in prehistoric cultures revealed through research***

The recovered archaeological material is relatively numerous. It consists, for the most part, of ceramic, osteological and lithic material. Almost 240 archaeological features were researched, most of the belonging to the Early Bronze Age. For the Early Neolithic period, represented by the Starčevo-Criș culture (a dwelling), the pottery is made of a paste with a lot of chaff, mixed with fine sand. Burning is good, and the pottery is – for the most part – exfoliated. The decoration is poor. The ornamentation techniques are: impressions made with nail, neat pinches, organized barbotine, plastic applications, simple or alveolar belt, segments with belts or protrusions. The shapes of the ceramic material indicate different variants of bowls or globular pots<sup>7</sup>.

The Eneolithic period is represented by Petrești culture. The material recovered from the research consists in ceramic (quite fragmentary), osteological and lithic material. The ceramic materials has color variations, from yellowish-brown, brown, brick-like, gray and black. The firing is good, the degreaser used is the sand with a small or larger grain. Fine pottery appears in a small proportion. The shapes of the ceramic material indicate variants of bowls or supply vessels. A house, but also a series of supply and household pits, shows us some of the characteristics of the era<sup>8</sup>.

Osteological material consists mainly of large and medium animal bones. The lithic material consists of fragmentary grinders or sandstones.

On the flat place between the two dwellings, without any archaeological feature nearby, in the fine sand mentioned above, the two pieces described in this article were discovered. Unfortunately, they stayed in the running water for a very long time, which benefited from the excessive smoothing of the features of the heads. However, we will see further that their analogies are sufficient and clear.

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<sup>7</sup> More details will be given by colleagues who will publish in detail the batch of archaeological materials.

<sup>8</sup> More details will be given by colleagues who will publish in detail the batch of archaeological materials.

The early bronze age<sup>9</sup> is found in a larger proportion in the researched area. The archaeological material in the researched area consists of ceramics, osteological and lithic material. The ceramic material is mostly brown, greyish-brown and black. The decoration applied on the vessels is relatively small, from horizontally arranged strips filled with simple, incised lines, to elongated protrusion, etc. Highlight the handles drawn in the band or the tubular ones starting from the edge of the vessel. We must emphasize the fact that we are on the edge of a large early bronze age settlement that was researched on the nearby hill and which received, in our project, the name of site 1.

### ***Description of the discovered stone pieces***

Totally unexpected was the discovery, near these discoveries and in the area with fine sand, former course of a river arm, of two sculptural pieces, very affected by the erosion of running water and contact with moving sand. Despite all this erosion, their message is edifying.

Piece 1 (photo 3-7). The prehistoric sculpture depicts the upper body (from the waist up) of a human character. Its height is 0,60 m, its width is 0,39 m and its thickness is 0,38 m. The top of the statue's head is triangular and is 0,26 m long and 0,24 wide. The bottom has the same shape.

As can be seen from the illustration, the face of the represented character is triangular (photo 3C-4 – front exposure, 5-6 – radiant light). In the radiant light (photo 5) you can see very well the eyes, the mouth and other details of the face. It is also seen – at the same exposure – that this part of the body is slightly to one side.

The left hand and the ear on the same side are well highlighted (photo 4). So is the evidence for the right side (photo 3C, 5).

Also, the top of the head seems to be better highlighted, as if it had an additional cover (hat type?) (Photo 3A-C; 4-7).

Finally, in photo 7 (radial light) you can see the back of the piece that seems to have a hairy tail (a continuous rise that starts from under the hair cover and is notched, from place to place, with perpendicular incisions, as and when hair tying would be exemplified).

Analogs for the piece can be found at:

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<sup>9</sup> Some ideas about the bronze age in the area: I. Andrițoiu, „Civilizația tracilor din sud-vestul Transilvaniei în epoca bronzului,” *Bibliotheca Thracologica* 2 (1992); H. Ciugudean, „Epoca timpurie a bronzului în centrul și sud-vestul Transilvaniei,” *Bibliotheca Thracologica* 13 (1996); H. Ciugudean, „Cercetări privind epoca bronzului și prima vârstă a fierului în Transilvania,” *Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis* 7 (1997); H. Ciugudean, „The Early and Middle Bronze Age in the Carpathian Basin,” *Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis* 8 (1998); C.I. Popa, R. Totoianu, „Noi opinii privitoare la evoluția culturală a bronzului târziu în zona centrală și sud-vest transilvăneană (I. Sinteze și evoluții culturale),” în C.I. Popa, R. Totoianu, *Aspecte ale epocii bronzului în Transilvania (între vechile și noile cercetări)*, Bibliotheca Musei Sabesiensis 1 (Alba Iulia, Altip, 2010), 171-291.

1. At Gura Baciului many such pieces were discovered, especially anthropomorphic<sup>10</sup>. To see them all, I chose the synthesis book of Gh. Lazarovici and Z. Maxim where those of N. Vlassa are also published, discovered in the early years of the archaeological research here. After all the typological-stylistic observations of the archaeological materials, but also of the stratigraphy here, the stone heads appear in the first horizon and colonization of the Starčevo-Criș culture and, later, in the third horizon<sup>11</sup>.

2. Cristian III – sanctuary<sup>12</sup>. The anthropomorphic piece in the sanctuary was – until now – relatively unique. That is why it had to be looked at more closely. At this moment we find several pieces of the ”anthropomorphic torso,, type, which leads us to think of defining a new sculptural type in the range initiated by the Mesolithic and taken further by the Early Neolithic people. In the E corner, in association with the round hearth, there is a menhir statue made of a large river boulder with flagrant anthropomorphic features. As you can easily see, it is about the rendering, with the necessary details, of a human character, with the head well highlighted and the body covered with small holes intentionally arranged towards the neck, the sides themselves and polished parts that accentuate either specific features of the head or upper limbs. We notice the thorough polishing of the sides, but also of the pedestal part. This last polishing seems to have been done to ensure the stability of the piece a thought that leads us to the possibility of exposing it on a pedestal. In the middle of the piece – on both sides of it – is an alveolar, as well as a recess for grinding (?). The anthropomorphic characteristics of the piece are more than obvious.

If we see the general physiognomic attitude of the piece published on this occasion we can think about the assimilation of the triangular mask of the early vincians (?) in the art of inherited stone heads, but also the assimilation of new meanings of synthesizing facial features of newcomers. So, the piece published now is a main one, in case there was a sanctuary here, as on Miercurea III.

3. On the Danube, in Clisură, near Svinița<sup>13</sup>, a stone head extremely similar to the one published now was discovered by chance. The discovery was made at Pietra Ilișovei, Ilișova or Elișova where there are also Starčevo-Criș archaeological

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<sup>10</sup> Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, „Gura Baciului. Monografie arheologică, ” *Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis* 11 (1995), 179-181, pl. VIII, IX – especially the piece at the top; XVIII – right, down, the most representative.

<sup>11</sup> Lazarovici, Maxim, „Gura Baciului. Monografie arheologică,” 180.

<sup>12</sup> S.A. Luca, A. Georgescu, A. Tudorie, Fl. Marțiș, *Cristian III. Realități cronologice și culturale preistorice dovedite prin cercetările preventive* (Suceava: Editura Karl A. Romstorfer, 2017), 37-50, plan 8, plan 9 – right piece, p. 213, photo 243.

<sup>13</sup> Gh. Lazarovici, I. Dragomir, „O nouă sculptură neolitică descoperită în Clisură,” *Banatica* 12 / 1 (1993), 9-19.

materials<sup>14</sup>. On the same page we find that at the kilometer 1004 are Lepenski Vir type discoveries<sup>15</sup>.

Piece 2 (photo 8-11). The prehistoric sculpture has a very schematic „head” (photo 8), with a flat, rectangular, pedestal (photo 11) and the general shape above (photo 3) slightly oval. The length of the sculptural piece is 0,62 m; width is 0,54 m and thickness is 0,25 m. The top of the piece is quadrilateral and has a length of 0,60 m and a width of 0,20 m. The pedestal is, in turn, quadrilateral and has an alveolar hollow in the middle (photo 11).

We must also mention some characteristics typical for the piece and – implicitly – unique. On the side considered by us „face” is a round alveolar, little obvious today. Much better preserved is the alveolus in the middle of the quadrilateral pedestal (photo 11), but also the two alveoli kept on the opposite side of the face (photo 10 – in the middle of the piece, perpendicular to its bottom).

We can also mention two notches/wide cuts in the middle of the sides of the piece (stylized ears? – photo 8/A, C).

Analogies for this piece are discovered in Cristian III – sanctuary<sup>16</sup>. In the W area of the feature, towards its middle, in its lateral part, there is a menhir statue, with anthropomorphic characteristics. Unlike the first, the obviously anthropomorphic one, with the number 1, the sides are much worse preserved, as well as one of the „faces”. The side that sat on the pedestal and a „face” are very well preserved. Its essential features, are highlighted both by the „hollowed” alveoli on the surface of the stone, and by their „highlighting” by the polishing process. The central alveolus appears again, both on the front and on the back of the sculpture. Piece number 2 in the current publication is – in our opinion – also anthropomorphic (we must note the almost identical shape of the two pieces proposed for comparison). Discoveries of this type are due to my colleague M. Ciută, at Limba, in an early vincian site<sup>17</sup>.

Other analogies for this type of stone heads can be found in Lepenski Vir. A piece of this kind was found in dwelling 24<sup>18</sup>. It is dated, relatively, in the Ie layer and absolutely at 5,100-4,690 calBC<sup>19</sup>. Feature with this number is considered a sanctuary and reaches – as time – a very new chronological moment for the

<sup>14</sup> S.A. Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc – repertoriu*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Alba Iulia: Altip, 2010), 239, point 1c.

<sup>15</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 239, point 1a.

<sup>16</sup> Luca, Georgescu, Tudorie, Marțiș, *Cristian III*, 37-50, plan 8, plan 9 – left piece, p. 214, photo 244, p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks in this way for the information of my colleague.

<sup>18</sup> *Lepenski Vir. Guide* (Belgrad, 1979), 7-8, 14, 15.

<sup>19</sup> D. Srejović, *Lepenski Vir. Menschenbilder einer früher europäischer Kultur* (Köln: von Zabern, 1981); Lazarovici, Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului și epocii cuprului din România. I Neoliticul* (Iași: Trinitas, 2006), 44, fig. 1.46.

Lepenski Vir-Schela Cladovei type culture, contemporary with Cristian III – Starčevo-Criș III, the earliest.

Another stone head of the same type (Lepenski Vir) discovered in Cristian I<sup>20</sup> or others from older discoveries<sup>21</sup> was discovered in Transylvania.

***Some conclusions. Old Mesolithic horizon, with heads and other stone sculptural elements***

This horizon (the oldest, purely Mesolithic) – well represented at Lepenski Vir – is not present *in situ* at this time – in Transylvania.

However, we have more and more radiocarbon data showing that the Mesolithic often came here and – sometimes – lived in sites that will be colonized later, by Neolithic people, as is the case of the site from Tărtăria-Gura Luncii (table I – (7633±96 and 7502±112 BP)). At Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă (7420±50 BP)<sup>22</sup> shows the presence of the Mesolithic.

In Banat, at Foeni, a Mesolithic date was also obtained (7.510±60 BP)<sup>23</sup>.

In all these rivers there will be, in the early Neolithic stage, also dwellings due to the first or second wave of Starčevo-Criș colonization.

***Horizon I with discoveries of stone statuary heads in Transylvania***

The existence of these radiocarbon data demonstrates that the carriers of Mesolithic cultures, fishermen, gatherers – open, in certain geographical places, the places that will be used for living and economic exploitation by the Neolithic people. Maybe the Mesolithic people have already a similar way of exploiting the habitat? Hard to say! Or do the Neolithic people have a similar way of exploiting the nest, in very early stages, a similar economic behavior?

This horizon – associated with stone heads – is at Gura Baciului at 7.140±45 calBP<sup>24</sup> and at Cristian I at 7.080±30; 6.910±30 și 6.890±40 BP<sup>25</sup>.

No other sculptural pieces were found in other settlements of the period. These are: Miercurea Sibiului-Petriș (7131±34; 7050±33 BP<sup>26</sup>; 7050±70; 7010±40;

<sup>20</sup> S.A. Luca (ed.), *Viața trăită sub zei. Situl Starčevo-Criș I de la Cristian I, județul Sibiu, România*, (Suceava: Editura Karl A. Romstrofer, 2015), 151, fig. 92.

<sup>21</sup> Luca (ed.), *Viața trăită sub zei*, 150-151, notes 168-170.

<sup>22</sup> M. Gligor, *Așezarea neolitică și eneolitică de la Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă în lumina noilor cercetări* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2009), pl. CLXXX.

<sup>23</sup> B. Weninger, L. Clare, F. Gerritsen, B. Horejs, R. Krauß, J. Linstädter, R. Özbal, E.J. Rohling, „Neolithisation of the Aegean and Southeast Europe during the 6600-6000 calBC period of Rapid Climate Change,” *DocPrae* 41 (2014), 2-32, Fig. 4 (Romania).

<sup>24</sup> Gh. Lazarovici, „The Anzabegovo-Gura Baciului axis and the first stage of the Neolithization Process in Southern-Central Europe and the Balkans,” *Homage to Milutin Garašanin*, eds. N. Tasič, C. Grozdanov (Belgrade, 2006), 138, Fig. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Luca (ed.), *Viața trăită sub zei*, 220.

6920±70 BP)<sup>27</sup>, Ocna Sibiului-*Triguri*, (7.120±60 BP<sup>28</sup>), Șeușa-*La cărarea morii* (7.070±60 BP)<sup>29</sup>, Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii* (7007±38 BP – tabel I<sup>30</sup>) or Alba Iulia-*Lumea Nouă* (6850±40 BP) are part of the first and second colonization of this early colonization.

In Muntenia, at the same time, in la Măgura-*Boldul lui Moș Ivănuș* (7.110±40; 7.031±29 BP)<sup>31</sup>, Lepenski Vir stone pieces are not reported, also in Banat, at Foeni (7.080±50 BP)<sup>32</sup>.

In a word, we find that this early Neolithic colonization cannot be, chronologically before 7,200 BP.

Table I. Absolute chronological data at Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii*<sup>33</sup>.

Laboratory/ sample	Dating BP	Dating calBC	Culture	Material	Tărtăria- <i>Gura Luncii</i> , stratigraphic data
RoAMS 1381.75	6329±66	2σ (95,4% probability): 5475 (93.3%) 5207 5161 (0.5%) 5152 5146 (0.5%) 5138 5128 (0.4%) 5121 5094 (0.7%) 5081	Vinča, phase A <sub>2-3</sub>	Coal	SI, □28-29, C <sub>53</sub> , ▼-1,85 m
RoAMS 1392.75	7007±38	2σ (95,4%): 5981 (95.4%) 5798	Starčevo- Criș, phase IB	Animal bone	SI, □27, ▼- 1,85 m

<sup>26</sup> P. Biagi, „The Middle Neolithic and Chalcolithic Chipped Stone Assemblages of Transylvania: their Exploitation, Manufactured and Trans-Carpathian Trade,” *Archäologie in Eurasien* 31 (2012), 253-272, Table I.

<sup>27</sup> S.A. Luca, D. Diaconescu, C.I. Suci, „Cercetările arheologice de la Miercurea Sibiului-Petriș (județul Sibiu, România). Nivelul Starčevo-Criș în campaniile de cercetare din anii 1997-2005,” *Brukenenthal. Acta Musei* 3 / 1 (2008), 8-10; Luca (ed.), *Viața trăită sub zei*, 222.

<sup>28</sup> Lazarovici, *The Anzabegovo-Gura Baciului*, 111-159, Table 5; Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, „The Role of Salt in the Beginning of the Neolithisation Process in the southern Part of Central Europe and the Balkans,” *Apulum* 54 1 (2017), 63, fig. 7; Luca (ed.), *Viața trăită sub zei*, 223.

<sup>29</sup> M. Ciută, *Cercetări arheologice la Șeușa-La cărarea morii* (Alba Iulia, Ed. Altip, 2009), 76.

<sup>30</sup> S.A. Luca, G.T. Rustoiu, Fl. Perianu, S. Chideșa, T.B. Sava, D. Păceșilă, O. Gaza, I. Stanciu, G. Sava, B. Ștefan, „Săpătura sistematică din anul 2019 în situl arheologic de la Tărtăria-Gura Luncii (jud. Alba, România). Datarea radiocarbon a stratigrafiei zonei de nord-vest,” *Apulum* (2020), under print.

<sup>31</sup> A. Bălășescu, „Arheozoologia neo-eneoliticului de pe Valea Teleormanului,” *Biblioteca Muzeului Național. Seria Cercetări Pluridisciplinare XIV* (2014), fig. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Lazarovici, *The Anzabegovo-Gura Baciului*, 111-159, fig. 36.

<sup>33</sup> S.A. Luca, G.T. Rustoiu, Fl. Perianu, S. Chideșa, T.B. Sava, D. Păceșilă, O. Gaza, I. Stanciu, G. Sava, B. Ștefan, „Săpătura sistematică din anul 2019 în situl arheologic de la Tărtăria-Gura Luncii,” table IV (under print).

		<b>Mezolithic</b>			
RoAMS 1386.75	7502±112	2σ (95,4%): 6590 (89.8%) 6202 6194 (0.8%) 6181 6174 (4.4%) 6100	Mezolithi c	Coal	SI, □25, ▼- 1,85 m
RoAMS 1380.75	7633±96	2σ (95,4%): 6655 (91.3%) 6337 6315 (4.1%) 6256	Mezolithi c	Coal	SI, □30, ▼- 1,95 m

The stratigraphy from Tărtăria shows us that there are sites in which these connections and relations between Neolithic and Mesolithic are found in several times (Table I).

### ***Horizon II with discoveries of stone statuary heads in Transylvania***

*In situ* this type of pieces are found in the discoveries from Cristian I<sup>34</sup>, Gura Baciului<sup>35</sup> (for stage I of colonization) and Cristian III<sup>36</sup> (stage III or IV of colonization) or sau Limba<sup>37</sup>, all belonging to the Starčevo-Criș culture but also the discoveries from the border of Alba Iulia municipality which are the subject of this article (A10 highway).

Older are the discoveries from the well-known site of Lepenski Vir<sup>38</sup> or those from Danube<sup>39</sup>.

### ***General data. Reports on the first discoveries of stone statuary pieces***

Stone pieces of this type are associated – so far – with Mesolithic civilization, already established (for example Lepenski Vir-Schela Cladovei). We can find analogies in the way of making the alveolations arranged in the central area of our pieces but also in anthropomorphism (anthropomorphization) at Lepenski Vir<sup>40</sup>, Cuina Turcului<sup>41</sup>, Velesnica<sup>42</sup>, Padina II<sup>43</sup>, Alibeg<sup>44</sup>, Schela Cladovei<sup>45</sup>, Răzvrata<sup>46</sup>,

<sup>34</sup> S.A. Luca, *Viața trăită sub zei*.

<sup>35</sup> Lazarovici, Maxim, *Gura Baciului. Monografie arheologică*.

<sup>36</sup> Luca, Georgescu, Tudorie, Marțiș, *Cristian III*.

<sup>37</sup> We also thank to the researcher Marius M. Ciută for allowing us to remember the context and the pieces discovered. The report first appeared in: S.A. Luca, A. Tudorie, A. Georgescu, Fl. Marțiș, A. Luca, „New Details about the Sanctuary belonging to the Third Phase of Starčevo-Criș Culture from Cristian III Site (Sibiu County),” *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* XV (2016), 47-94.

<sup>38</sup> D. Srejović, *Europe's First Monumental Sculpture: new discoveries at Lepenski Vir* (New York, 1972).

<sup>39</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*; A. Boroneanț, „Aspecte ale tranziției de la Mezolitic la Neolitic timpuriu în zona Porților de Fier,” *Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica* no. LIII (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega 2012).

<sup>40</sup> D. Srejović, *Europe's First Monumental Sculpture*; 1979 *Lepenski Vir. Guide* (Belgrad, 1979), 7-8, 14, 15 (dwelling 24).

<sup>41</sup> Lazarovici, Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului*, 39, fig. I.39; Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 98 – with bibliography; Boroneanț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, fig. 38/1.

Veterani-*Terasă*<sup>47</sup> și Ostrovu Banului<sup>48</sup>. We mention however – that these pieces can also be ritual grinders (used for flouring very small quantities of seeds), their alveolar being much more obvious than the menhir pieces from Cristian III<sup>49</sup>, Limba<sup>50</sup> or Alba Iulia, A10 highway.

From the older signals to the synthesis already mentioned so many times<sup>51</sup>, it is observed in the caves on the N side of the Danube, researched over time (the shelter under the Cuina Turcului rock<sup>52</sup>, caves Climente I și Climente II<sup>53</sup>, cave Veterani<sup>54</sup>) but also and the surface sites (Alibeg<sup>55</sup>, Veterani-*Terasă*<sup>56</sup>, Răzvrată<sup>57</sup>, Icoana<sup>58</sup>, Ostrovul Banului<sup>59</sup>, Schela Cladovei<sup>60</sup>, Ostrovul Corbului<sup>61</sup>) the fact that archaeologists consider the two epoch totally different as time and cultural perspective, even if the stratigraphic observations are – often – formal. Moreover, there are – as the author states in the catalog of early neolithic sites – similarities and links between Mesolithic and early Neolithic<sup>62</sup> that show that *they are know each other*. The same goes for the <sup>14</sup>C data, taken after C. Bonsall where it is clear

<sup>42</sup> D. Antonović, *Stone tools from Lepenski Vir* (2008), fig. 6/8; 8.

<sup>43</sup> B. Jovanović, „Micro-regions of the Lepenski-Vir culture. Padina in the Upper Gorge and Hajdučka Vodenica in the Lower Gorge of the Danube,” *DocPrae* (1968), fig. IV/10; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, fig. 38/5.

<sup>44</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc – repertoriu*, 80; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, fig. 38/3.

<sup>45</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, fig. 38/4;

<sup>46</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, fig. 38/6-8.

<sup>47</sup> Lazarovici, Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului*, 39, fig. I.40; Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 98.

<sup>48</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, fig. 82.

<sup>49</sup> Luca, Georgescu, Tudorie, Marțiș, *Cristian III*, plan 9, p. 215-217.

<sup>50</sup> New discoveries by M.M. Ciută.

<sup>51</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*.

<sup>52</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 98; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 63-97.

<sup>53</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 96-97; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 98-106.

<sup>54</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 97-98; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 107-113.

<sup>55</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 80; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 53-62.

<sup>56</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 98; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 107-113.

<sup>57</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 184; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 114-119.

<sup>58</sup> Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul Românesc*, 184; Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 120-136.

<sup>59</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 137-162.

<sup>60</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 169-182.

<sup>61</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 183-193.

<sup>62</sup> Boroneaț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 200-223.



that the dating indicates contemporary times – Mesolithic/Neolithic – until, at least, in phase III of the Starčevo-Criș culture, if not until the vincian over colonization<sup>63</sup>.

Such pieces were discovered in the Neolithic settlement at Gura Baciului<sup>64</sup>, which raised questions about the relative chronology of pieces of this type (Mesolithic or Neolithic?). The same question marks can no longer be asked, after which, in clear stratigraphic and cultural framing conditions, the stone pieces (funeral stars/menhirs) from Cristian III are Starčevo-Criș and another not very early phase: III!

Also the stratigraphy of the settlement from Lepenski Vir which has a phase of transformation towards the early neolithic, I-II (6300-5900 BC)<sup>65</sup>. In dwelling 54 from Lepenski Vir<sup>66</sup> – for example – is good quality Starčevo-Criș pottery<sup>67</sup>.

These data show – as expected – that there is a strong migration (at least to the north) at the end of Lepenski Vir II. Thi happens around 6300 BC. It is also seen in Lepenski Vir that the coming of the Neolithic did not lead to the disappearance of the previous epoch, the Mezolithic one. Moreover, some mesolithic traditions – such as menhir statues or the construction of dwellings – survive until the arrival of the bearers of the Vinča culture.

All these observations show a very interesting thing, which boils down, at this moment, to the statement that there is a „cooperation”, if not – even – a „coexistence” between the elements of older civilization, the Mesolithic one and newcomers, Neolithic population which seem to have problems with natural environment adapting. Perhaps this explains the fact that in the rituals – but also in the sanctuaries – from phases I-III of the Starčevo-Criș culture they are assimilated, between the cult elements and the sculpted menhir statues of Mesolithic tradition.

These – the menhir statues – are concentrated in the Danube, where the beautiful and enigmatic Lepenski Vir culture<sup>68</sup> (also called Schela Cladovei in Romania<sup>69</sup>) develops, but they spread – along with the Starčevo-Criș IB phase (or A?). The

<sup>63</sup> Boroneanț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 224-226.

<sup>64</sup> N. Vlăsa, „Cea mai veche fază a complexului cultural Starčevo-Criș în România,” în *Neoliticul Transilvaniei. Studii, articole, note in Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis* 3 (1976), 231-251, fig. 38-39, 43.

<sup>65</sup> D. Borić, „Adaptations and Transformations of the Danube Gorges Foragers (c. 13.000-5.500 BC). An Overview,” *Beginnings - New Research in the Appearance of the Neolithic between Northwest Anatolia and the Carpathian Basin*, ed. Raiko Krauß (Rahden: Leidorf 2011), 157-203, (6200/6300-6000/5950 calBC).

<sup>66</sup> Borić, *Adaptations and Transformations*, 157-203, (6200/6300-6000/5950 calBC), Fig. 14.

<sup>67</sup> Borić, *Adaptations and Transformations*, 157-203, (6200/6300-6000/5950 calBC), 176; Fig. 13.

<sup>68</sup> Srejšević, *Europe's First Monumental Sculpture*.

<sup>69</sup> Excavations by V. Boroneanț. Boroneanț, *Aspecte ale tranziției*, 169-182.

stratigraphic data of the sanctuary from Cristian I<sup>70</sup> or of the discoveries from Gura Baciului clearly show that this mixing begins now, as time<sup>71</sup>.

Recently, two other sites with such discoveries have been discovered in the Mureş Valley, in layers included in phase III of the Starčevo-Criş culture.

At Limba-*Bordane*, during preventive excavations, such a sanctuary/dwelling with two pieces of stone similar to those discussed appeared. They were mentioned in a recent article<sup>72</sup>.

At Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii*, an *in situ* layer was discovered that could be included in the third phase of the Starčevo-Criş culture<sup>73</sup> and a stone piece of this type – in a secondary position, it is true. We also have a stone piece made in a similar way discovered in feature 53 from Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii* (2019 campaign)<sup>74</sup>. At the bottom of the archaeological feature, two pieces were discovered – in the obviously main position: a disc made of river stone<sup>75</sup>. The role of the archaeological feature is obviously ritualic. The disc is made by grinding a river stone and expressive, because it has traces of intentional processes of „marking”. On the left side can see two recesses, intentionally practiced, *the eyes of a creature*, and on the back you can see several incisions, arranged, seemingly meaningless, signs difficult to interpret today.

Considering the above observation, but also the chronological and cultural framing of the Starčevo-Criş III site from Cristian III<sup>76</sup>.

Along with the Starčevo-Criş III phase, mixtures inherent with phase A of the Vinča culture, newly arrived in north of the Danube, may intervene in certain stratigraphies. This can be seen both in Table I of this paper.

The influence of the old Mesolithic heritage is attenuated more and more, up to the chronological horizon Starčevo-Criş III, as shown by the sanctuaries from Cristian III, Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii* and Limba. We believe that with the Vinča culture this symbiosis perishes definitively, the Neolithic population imposing their own way of life.

A piece of stone – a mask<sup>77</sup> – was discovered in Moldova. It is related, rather, to a piece – made of clay, this time from Zăuan<sup>78</sup> and reflects the custom of ritual masking.

<sup>70</sup> Luca, *Viața trăită sub zei*.

<sup>71</sup> Vlăsa, *Cea mai veche fază a complexului cultural Starčevo-Criş în România*; Lazarovici, Maxim, *Gura Baciului. Monografie arheologică*.

<sup>72</sup> M.M. Ciută.

<sup>73</sup> S.A. Luca, *Tărtăria REDIVIVA* (Alba Iulia, Editura Altip; Sibiu: Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, 2016), leyer V, p. 28, 125-127, 146, 201, 234, 237-238.

<sup>74</sup> S.A. Luca, G.T. Rustoiu, Fl. Perianu, S. Chideșa, T.B. Sava, D. Păceșilă, O. Gaza, I. Stanciu, G. Sava, B. Ștefan, „Săpătura sistematică din anul 2019 în situl arheologic de la Tărtăria-Gura Luncii,” under print.

<sup>75</sup> Luca, Georgescu, Tudorie, Marțiș, *Cristian III*, photo 18.

<sup>76</sup> Luca, Georgescu, Tudorie, Marțiș, *Cristian III*, 19-235.

<sup>77</sup> E. Popușoi, *Trestiana. Monografie arheologică* (Bârlad: Editura Sfera, 2005), fig. 40/1 layer I.

### **Conclusion**

Now we see that Transylvania is connected by direct discoveries to the final part – at least – of the Lepenski Vir culture, with the appearance of the early Neolithic in the form of two, if not three, chronological and cultural horizons (waves of colonization).

Mesolithic hunter and gatherers circulate even before Neolithic colonization and are found by radiocarbon evidence – for the time being – often, even in the great later Neolithic settlements.

### **Note**

If Serbian researchers, for example, are very proud of the artistic, sculptural pieces of the Lepenski Vir culture, we, Romanians are afraid to promote them in the great academic synthesis. The last case is that of a beautiful art album, published in two volumes, under the aegis of the highest Romanian academic and research forum<sup>79</sup>, in which is no prehistoric art from chapter I. Popular art<sup>80</sup> to II. Art on the Romanian territory from the beginning to the VIth<sup>81</sup> century. In this chapter is also a reference to the Mesolithic, which draws our attention to: „After an artistically poor Mesolithic...”<sup>82</sup>, this article, but also the works of other colleagues from Europe or around the world do not still make sense!

## **Illustration list**

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Plan 3. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Full disclosure of the inhabited area. Archaeological features.

### **Photos**

Photo 1. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, sit 2. Orthophotomap. The red arrow shows us the location of the site.

Photo 2. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Image from the excavation.

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<sup>78</sup> E. Lakó, „Piese de cult din aşezarea neolitică de la Zăuan,” *Acta Musei Porolissensis* I (1977), 41-46, 44, fig. 3/1.

<sup>79</sup> R. Teodorescu, M. Porumb (eds.), *Arta din România. Din preistorie în contemporaneitate*, vol. I-II (Bucureşti – Cluj-Napoca, Editura Academiei Române; Editura Mega, 2018)

<sup>80</sup> Teodorescu, Porumb (eds.), *Arta din România*, 19-57.

<sup>81</sup> R. Teodorescu, M. Porumb (eds.), *Arta din România*, 61-83.

<sup>82</sup> R. Teodorescu, M. Porumb (eds.), *Arta din România*, 62.

Photo 3. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1 (photo: Fl. Perianu).

Photo 4. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1 (photo: Fl. Perianu).

Photo 5. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1. Front view (photo: Al. Olănescu).

Photo 6. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1. Side-right view (photo: Al. Olănescu).

Photo 7. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1. Back view (photo: Al. Olănescu).

Photo 8. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 2 (photo: Fl. Perianu).

Photo 9. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 2 (photo: Fl. Perianu).

Photo 10. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 2. The opposite side of the face (photo: Al. Olănescu).

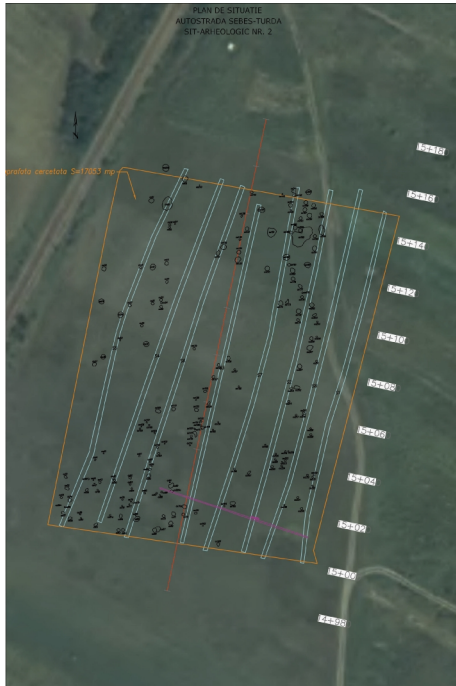
Photo 11. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 2. The pedestal of the piece (photo: Al. Olănescu).

## Table

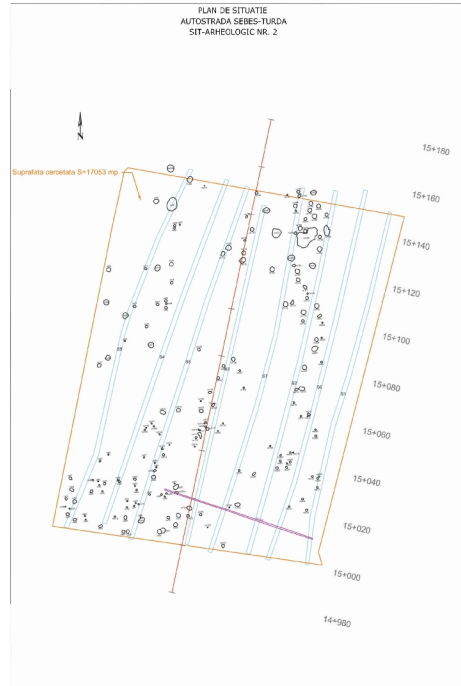
Table I. Absolute chronological data at Tărtăria-*Gura Luncii*.



Plan 1. A10, Sebeş – Turda highway, sector 1, site 2. Josephine map. The red arrow shows us the location of the site.



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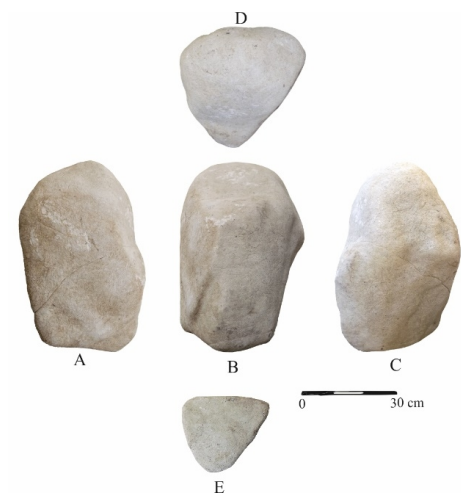


Photo 3. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1 (photo: Fl. Perianu).

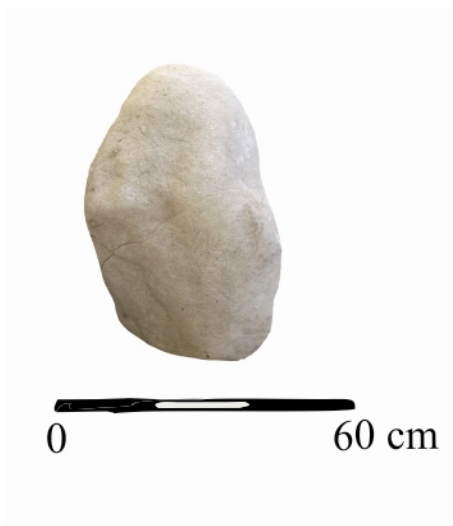


Photo 4. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1 (photo: Fl. Perianu).



Photo 5. A10 highway, Sebeş – Turda, sector 1, site 2. Stone head number 1. Front view (photo: Al. Olănescu).