

## EDITORIAL

Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was the peak period of Romanian Palaeolithic research. Initiated and driven by the energetic personality of Constantin Nicolaescu Ploșor, Palaeolithic studies saw a development yet unparalleled in the research history of this particular field. But the true merit of C. S. Nicolaescu-Ploșor was to have gathered around him a group of young enthusiastic researchers, who continued his initial work and greatly contributed to the progress of the Romanian Palaeolithic studies, within a wider European perspective.

**Maria Bitiri** was at the time one of those young enthusiasts, and the only Romanian female professional at the time to devote her career to the study of the Palaeolithic.

Her archaeological activity started at the Palaeolithic sites in the Ceahlău-Bicaz area under the coordination of C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor. Later on, she conducted substantial research in north-western Romania (Oaş and Maramureș), as well as Moldova and Oltenia. She was the director of important archaeological projects at Boinești, Remetea-Șomoș I, II, Călinești I-IV, Bușag, Perii Vadului, Corlasca, Piatra Neamț, Tg. Neamț, Serbești, Rădăuți, Miorcani, Crasnaleuca, Buda-Dealul Viei, Lespezi, Mitoc-Valea Izvorului, Bardos-Bicaz-Chei, Poiana-Udești, Dolhasca Dealul Viei, and Cioarei Boroșteni Cave.

Student of the well-known Leningrad (Sankt Petersburg) Palaeolithic specialist P. I. Borisovski, Maria Bitiri had a long and fulfilling professional life, touching on many aspects of prehistoric archaeology. She remained always attached to her first true love though, the study of the Romanian Palaeolithic. Nevertheless, her excavations reflect the entire prehistoric chronological sequence, from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age.

Her professional interests ranged over a large area of subjects such as occupation and combustion structures, lithic complexes with *à cran* points and their link to the Kostenki-Avdeevo culture, bifacial implements, the reinterpretation of the Oriental Gravettian on the territory of Romania, raw material manipulation by prehistoric humans, the cave art from Cuciulat, etc..

The present volume was born from the acknowledgement of her entire professional work, as a tribute to Maria Bitiri's work and life, to be presented on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wished to gather contributions from those who found a starting point for their own career in Maria Bitiri's research, those who work/worked in institutions that supported her research years ago and equally, contributions illustrating new directions in the European prehistoric research.

The twenty-nine contributions presented by 91 fellow archaeologists include a broad, interdisciplinary range of studies in prehistoric archaeology, reflecting both Maria Bitiri's interests in lithic studies and wider approaches to present-day directions in archaeology.

Geographically, most contributions are set in Romania and south-eastern, eastern and central Europe. Chronologically, the papers extend from the Palaeolithic to the post-Dacian period, but more than half of them concern the European Palaeolithic.

We are grateful to all the contributors for their work, their endless patience, their help and their understanding during the period while we completed the editing. It is rejoicing to see that so many of us were able to mobilize in such a short time.

Each paper was submitted to a double reviewing. We would like to also thank our colleagues from various disciplines who accepted to anonymously review the contributions. Their hard and serious work significantly improved the overall content of the volume.

The present *Festschrift* is the first *Supplementum*, a new series launched by *Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice* of the Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest.

Contributors and editors of this volume, as well as fellow colleagues in the *Tabula Gratulatoria* section join together in congratulating Maria Bitiri on all of her life-long achievements.

Bucharest, December 2021

The Editors