FIELD MUSEUM STUDIES WORKSHOP
EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY
AND TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

SIBIU, TRANSYLVANIA , ROMANIA
JUNE 14 - JULY 4, 2015

Our field museum studies/museology workshop is designed to offer our participants the possibility to explore and experience aspects of the evolution of traditional crafts and technologies through their theoretical, traditional, ethnographic and practical dimensions. The integration of experimental archaeology and traditional crafts within a museum environment allows us to probe the anthropological facets of the various objects, their socio-cultural and economic dimensions as well as the integration of the various elements into the public sphere, with the adjacent questions of conservation, restoration, preservation and presentation. For this purpose, we will focus on two transformational pyrotechnologies, metal and ceramics, and architectural woodwork, looking not only at questions of materials and materiality, but also the philosophy and magic of transformation in traditional communities, the transference of both materials and object in terms of identity and use, and eventually the problems of public interface and information transfer.

As such, our workshop takes place in the heart of the largest open air ethnographic museum in Europe, the ASTRA National Museum in Sibiu (Transylvania, Romania). With its aim to preserve traditional, medieval houses and shops, together with all the associated ancient household and village crafts, the ASTRA Museum is uniquely qualified to experience the evolution and persistence of traditional crafts from the Late Iron Age, through the Roman conquest and occupation, all the way to the end of the Middle Ages.

DURATION: 3 weeks
COST: US$1475; it includes:

- Project registration fee, taxes, museum access, and most gear and materials
- Housing in double/triple occupancy rooms in the ASTRA Ethnographic Museum guesthouse
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner, Monday-Friday

MAXIMUM 8 participants

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.archaeotek-archaeology.org

CONTACT US: archaeology@archaeotek.org

Field Museum Studies Workshop
Experimental Archaeology and Traditional Crafts
Experiencing the Daco-Roman Synthesis

Sibiu, Transylvania, Romania
June 14-July 4, 2015

More Information and application procedure:

www.archaeotek-archaeology.org
archaeology@archaeotek.org

PROJECT CONTEXT

Our field museum studies/museology workshop is designed to offer our participants the possibility to explore and experience aspects of the evolution of traditional crafts and technologies through their theoretical, traditional, ethnographic and practical dimensions. The integration of experimental archaeology and traditional crafts within a museum environment allows us to probe the anthropological facets of the various objects, their socio-cultural and economic dimensions and the integration of the various elements into the public sphere, with the adjacent questions of conservation, restoration, preservation and presentation. For this purpose, we will focus on two transformational pyrotechnologies, metal and ceramics, and architectural woodwork, looking not only at questions of materials and materiality, but also the philosophy and magic of transformation in traditional communities, the transference of both materials and object in terms of both identity and use, and eventually the problems of public interface and information transfer.

As such, our workshop takes place in the heart of the largest open air ethnographic museum in Europe, the ASTRA National Museum in Sibiu (Transylvania, Romania). With its aim to preserve traditional, medieval houses and shops, together with all the associated ancient household and village crafts, the ASTRA Museum is uniquely qualified to experience the evolution and persistence of traditional crafts from the Late Iron Age, through the Roman conquest and occupation, all the way to the end of the Middle Ages.

Our starting point is the synthesis between Dacia and Rome, from the conquest in 102/106 until the Aurelian retreat in 271/275. The rise of the Dacian Provinces sustained the Roman Empire for another two centuries.

The Dacian people are the most immortalized in Roman imperial statuary. Transylvanian gold has kept Roman economy out of bankruptcy at the same time as the Da-cian auxiliaries have manned the Imperial armies to the point of having at least one emperor of Dacian origin, Maximinus Thrax. This synthesis has survived through various waves of migrations, as well as politi-cal and cultural changes, growing and adapting, gener-ating a dynamic and vibrant material culture, still taught by master craftsmen.

Our workshop aims at bringing this synthesis to life. It is both a museum studies and archaeological program that is meant to be both experimental and ex-periential. Surrounded by the medieval houses and shops of the ASTRA Ethnographic Museum, we bring together archaeologists, museologists and craftsmen in order to recreate actual objects found in excavations, using Late Iron Age, Imperial Roman and medieval techniques and technologies. At the same time, all our participants will experience life in its traditional forms, working the ovens and the forges, building Late Iron Age workshops and houses, making ceramics using different technologies and learning all about architec-tural wood work. Students and participants will make the intellectual and phenomenological journey from the academic, to the experimental and to the experiential, in the fields of pyrotechnologies, domestic crafts, and finally traditional, medieval building techniques and architecture. As a result of the immersion in a museum ethnographic environment, our participants will explore as well questions of conservation, restoration and presentation of ethnographic and historical ceramic, metal and wooden artifacts and architecture.







PROJECT OVERVIEW

The pyrotechnology section of the workshop deals with technologies that employ fire as a means to transform matter. Our focus is twofold: ceramics and metal. The ceramic manufacturing aspect of the pyrotechnology section will take the participants through all the stages of pottery making. We will experiment with different types of surface treatment and various ways to apply heat. For the purpose of firing the pottery, we will experiment with three distinct environments: a ceramic firing pit, a Dacian/Roman oven and a medieval oven. By the end of the workshop, we will be eating and drinking out of our own vessels, using our own utensils, all of them Late Iron Age and medieval style!

Concurrently, we will look at different prehistoric and medieval wood construction techniques and how they relate to the choice of wood for the various architectural elements in terms of shape, properties and optimal longevity. The Astra Ethnographic Museum has hundreds of original traditional medieval buildings reconstructed on site for us to explore and study.

At the same time, Sibiu – the 2007 European Cultural Capital – offers an extraordinary plethora of venues for cultural, historical and architectural adventures. The Red City, nicknamed after its massive medieval brick fortifications (that have never been conquered), is in the heart of Saxon Transylvania with its beautiful fortified churches, featuring the oldest museum in the world – the Brukenthal Museum – and its magnificent art collections, a very lively medieval downtown and easy access to many historical and natural monuments.



MUSEOLOGY COURSE CURRICULUM
Archaeologic and Ethnographic Objects

CERAMICS:

Archaeologic and Ethnographic Ceramics:

The ceramic module of our workshop aims at familiarizing our participants with the various aspect of the traditional process of manufacturing ceramic objects. This includes the preparation of the clay, various techniques of object making ranging from manual modeling to slow wheel to fast wheel, firing and ulterior uses. This module addresses the evolution of ceramics from archaeological environments to ethnographic ceramic objects, looking at manufacturing techniques, decoration and uses.

People began to use ceramics a very long time ago, first as a replacement for wood and stone vessels, basketry, etc., but also for artistic/ritual purposes (i.e. the Mesolithic Venus figurines). Burned or just dried, ceramic is mostly referred ethnographically and archaeologically as the result of the specific transformation process of clay resulting in pottery.

The technology of preparing the clay, combined with the art of shaping (and glazing) it, together with the type of firing (with or without oxygen) determine the main features of a ceramic object. Having the necessary knowledge to recognize and predict these characteristics also means being able to classify ceramics and addressing questions of conservation and restoration.

The inorganic nature of the material makes it highly durable. However deterioration may easily occur in ceramics. Vulnerability to mechanical degradation as a result of original technological deficiencies, crystallization of soluble salts (deposited during burial in the case of archaeological artefacts) and other various physical forces can damage ceramic objects. In this instance, conservation processes would involve desalination treatments, while restoration interventions may aim at consolidation or assemblage of the broken fragments, or retouching the painted surfaces. This course aims to introduce you to the materials and techniques used for the conservation and restoration of ceramic objects.

METAL:

The discovery of metal has generated a continuous evolution of human social, cultural, economic, political and even spiritual life. The metal module of our workshop examines both archaeological and ethnographic objects and will focus on variations of blacksmithing techniques and technologies as well as the differentiation of the various objects along conceptual and presentational lines, such as tools vs. instruments, weapons or jewelry.

Metal working dates back to Prehistoric times. At the beginning, craftsmen had worked only malleable cold materials, followed by several forms of casting. It is much later that blacksmithing appeared, where metal was soften by intense heating and hammered into shape. Obtaining the wanted shape out of a durable material was a great step in the evolution of humanity.

Modern investigation methods allow us to study the complex development of metallurgical knowledge, to determine the technologies of alloys involved, to follow the traditional craft of blacksmiths and many others. Understanding the properties of each metal compound in an alloy also gives us an overview on the behavior of the finite object.

Although it is true that metals are resistant inorganic materials, their stability in moist condition is strongly influenced according to the rate of the specific elements present in the alloy. One of the most frequent degradations which metals are susceptible to is corrosion. In many cases, conservation and restoration aim to stop this degradation process, to clean corrosion products and finally to coat the metal object with a protective layer. This course will focus on offering you the general tools to distinguish between basic alloys, the common technics of mechanical cleansing, metal stabilization methods and other techniques to further preserve the metal artefacts.

WOOD:

Traditional Construction Techniques and Technologies

In conjunction with clay and stone, wood has been the main material used in traditional construction. This module of the workshop explores the various ethnographic techniques of wooden house building. It will address the different qualities of various types of wood and their uses in traditional construction. We will observe the manufacture of architectural wood elements and their assemblage, looking at interlocking beams, roof building, and fences. This will provide the theoretical background to more practical, hands on applications.

Wood is one of the earliest materials used by prehistoric humans (Homo Faber) for making tools. Wood was, and still is, also used worldwide as basic support in traditional architectural structures and ethnographic objects. However, wood is an organic material, highly vulnerable to organic, chemical, physical and mechanical damage.

Preserving different wood objects requires a great amount of experience, including the capacity to distinguish different wood essences and understanding of their properties, identifying the specific agents of deterioration and wood borers, degradation mechanisms and so on. Avoiding or blocking harmful factors is then combined with the application of various conservation methods aiming at stabilizing the object (i.e. mitigating current damaging processes) and to enhance its durability. Treatments depend on the types of objects (archaeological or ethnographic, movable or immovable), and the locative aspects (indoor vs. outdoor, humid vs. dry environment, etc.).

For public access to cultural wooden goods through exhibitions, restoration and/or preservation is required. This is intended for facilitating information transfer, allowing the public easy access to the appreciation of the wooden object, its manufacture and use. Today, many techniques and restoration materials are available, but choosing the best one is not always easy, especially considering the ethical implications. This course is going to introduce you to the main aspects of this field, offering you some insights into the professional approach.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnold, Dean E., 1985. *Ceramic Theory and Social Process*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Arwidsson, Greta, and Gösta Berg, 1999. *The Mästermyr Find: A Viking Age Tool Chest from Gotland*. Reprint. Lompoc, CA: Larson Publishing Company.

Boorstein, James, 1993. "Practical Issues and Solutions in the Conservation and Replication of Historic Woodwork". *The Interior's Handbook for Historic Buildings*, Vol. 2. Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, pp. 315-322.

Brandon, Raphael, and Arthur J. Brandon, 2005. *Masterpieces of Medieval Open Timber Roofs*. Dover.

Ciugudean, D., 2001. Workshops and manufacturing techniques at Apulum (2nd and 3rd century AD). *British International Series*, 937:61-72.

Gerelowitz, Michael N., 1988. "Iron Production in Prehistoric Europe". *Journal of Metals* 40(6):52-53.

Giles, Melanie, 2007. "Making metal and forging relations: ironworking in the British Iron Age". *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 26(4):395-413.

Grauber, Wolfram, 1992. *Encyclopedia of Wood Joints*. Taunton Press.

Hosek, Jiri, Henry Cleere, and Lubomir Mihok (eds.), 2011. *The Archaeometallurgy of Iron. Recent Developments in Archaeological and Scientific Research*. Prague: Institute of Archaeology of the ASCR.

Mathieu J. R. (ed.), 2002. *Experimental Archaeology: Replicating Past Objects, Behaviors, and Processes* 1-11. Oxford: Archaeopress. BAR International Series 1023.

McDaniel, Randy, 1998. *A Blaksmithing Primer. A Course in Basic and Intermediate Blaksmithing*. Sinking Spring: Dragonfly Enterprises.

Ratiu, A., 2009. Pottery kilns from north-western Transylvania from the 2nd to the 4th centuries. In O., Tentea, and I.C. Opris (eds.), *Near and Beyond the Roman Frontiers*. Bucharest: Center for Roman Military Studies, 5, pp. 165-186.

Rice, Prudence M., 1987. *Pottery Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rye, Owen S., 1981. *Ceramic Technology*. Manuals on Archaeology 4, Washington, D.C.

Rossi, L., 1971. *Trajan's Column and the Dacian Wars*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Swerger, Klaus, 1997. *Wood and Wood Joints: Building Traditions of Europe and Japan*. Birkhauser.