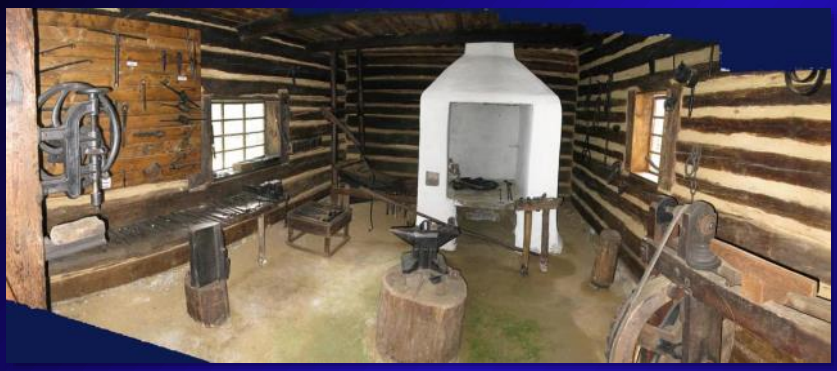
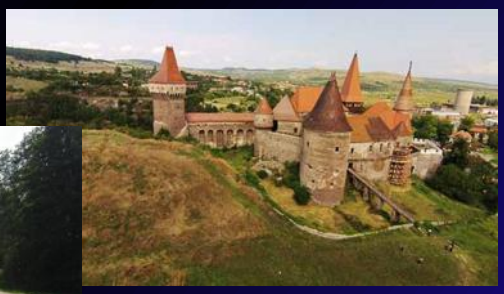
MUSEUM FIELD STUDIES WORKSHOP
EXPERIMENTAL ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY
AND TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

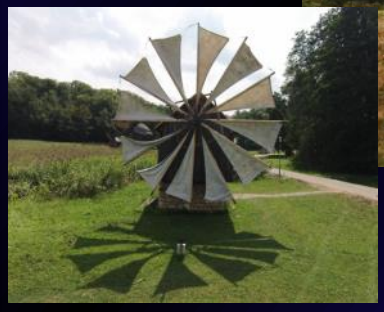


RAPOLT, TRANSYLVANIA , ROMANIA
JUNE 4 - JULY 1, 2017

Our Museum Field Studies Workshop is designed as a combination of experimental ethnoarcheology and immersion into traditional crafts, aiming at generating an interactive public platform. The workshop will offer participants the opportunity 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, coupled with several in-depth incursions into diverse museum environments, will allow us to explore the anthropological facets of objects, their socio-cultural and economic dimensions, and the integration of their various elements into the public sphere, with the adjacent questions of conservation, restoration, preservation, and presentation. Our core experimental modules will focus on two transformational pyrotechnologies, metal and ceramics; and several aspect of woodwork, from architectural to practical and decorative. To complement these activities, several other forms of traditional craft will be explored, such as leatherwork, bone carving, flint knapping, and decorative arts such as painting. We will examine questions of materials and materiality, but also the philosophy and magic of transformation in traditional communities, the transference of materials and objects in terms of identity and use, and eventually the problems of public interface and communication.

The final aim of the workshop is to generate a day-long exhibit, conceptualized by our participants under staff supervision, using local resources and within a specific environment with a set of fixed parameters. The exhibit will create an interface through which the public will be exposed to the immersion process our participants experienced. Both experiences and participants will be incorporated into an interactive display as fully integrated parts of the biography of the various artifacts with which they engaged.





DURATION: 4 weeks
COST: US$1695 per session; it includes:

- Project registration fee, taxes, museum access, and most gear and materials
- Housing in double/triple occupancy rooms for the duration of the project
- Breakfast and dinner, Monday-Friday

MAXIMUM 12 participants

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY, GO TO:
www.archaeotek-archaeology.org
OR CONTACT US: archaeology@archaeotek.org

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EXPERIMENTAL ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY AND TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

RAPOLT, TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA

June 4 - July 1, 2017

More Information and application procedure:

www.archaeotek-archaeology.org

archaeology@archaeotek.org

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our field museum studies/museology workshop is designed to offer our participants the opportunity to explore and experience aspects of the evolution of traditional crafts and technologies through their theoretical, traditional, ethnographic and practical dimensions. It brings together experimental ethnoarcheology and immersion into traditional crafts, aiming at generating an interactive public platform. The workshop will offer participants the opportunity 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, coupled with several in-depth incursions into diverse museum environments, will allow us to explore the anthropological facets of objects, their socio-cultural and economic dimensions, and the integration of their various elements into the public sphere, with the adjacent questions of conservation, restoration, preservation, and presentation. We will examine questions of materials and materiality, 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.

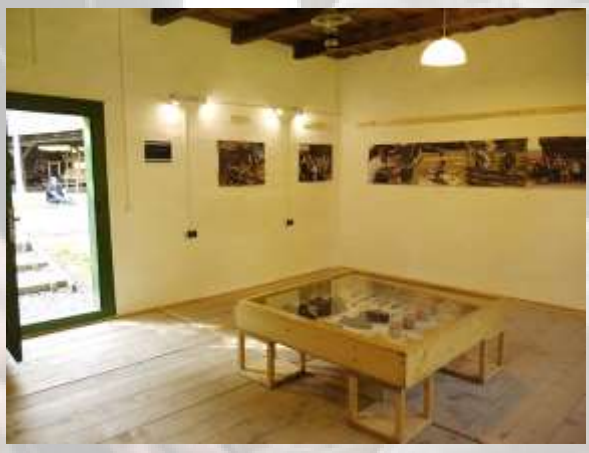
OVERVIEW

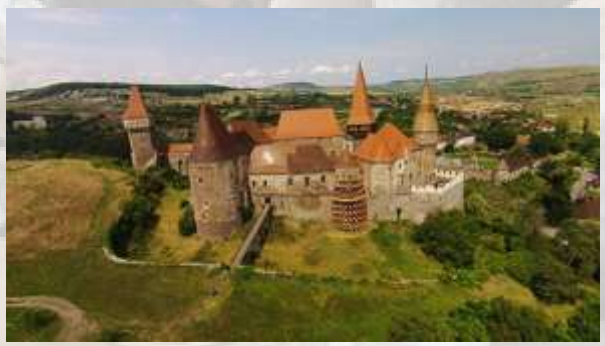
Our participants will explore in detail the open-air ASTRA ethnographic museum in Sibiu, both its exhibits and behind-the-scenes laboratories and deposits; the Dacian and Roman Civilizations Museum in Deva, and possibly the Corvin Castle Museum in Hunedoara. Time/ scheduling permitting, our participants will also spend a day fully immersed in a Daco-Roman reenactment festival, where they will experience the dynamic interaction between a living exhibit and the public.

The workshop is both a museum studies and archaeological program that is meant to be both experimental and experiential. For the purpose of this project, 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, making ceramics using different technologies and learning about architectural, practical and decorative wood work. Our participants will make the intellectual and phenomenological journey from the academic, to the experimental and to the experiential.

Our core experimental modules will focus on two transformational pyrotechnologies, metal and ceramics; and several aspect of woodwork, ranging from architectural to practical and decorative.

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 various 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 - time permitting - experiment with three distinct environments: a ceramic firing pit, a Dacian/Roman oven and a medieval oven. By the end of the workshop, we might be eating and drinking out of our own vessels, using our own utensils, all of them Late Iron Age, Roman and medieval style! To complement these activities, several other forms of traditional craft will be explored, such as leatherwork, bone carving, flint knapping, and decorative arts such as painting on different media.





GOALS

The final aim of the workshop is to generate a day-long exhibit, conceptualized by our participants under staff supervision, using local resources and within a specific environment with a set of fixed parameters. The exhibit will create an interface through which the public will be exposed to the immersion process our participants experienced. Both experiences and participants will be incorporated into an interactive display as fully integrated parts of the biography of the various artifacts with which they engaged.

Our participants will therefore spend four weeks creating and conceptualizing a platform for this and its associated public interface. The exhibit will be an ultimate synthesis of their museum experience, highlighting the process of artifact creation and providing artifact biographies. Our participants will also be integrated into the presentation as living embodiments of the experienced artifacts, illustrating their path of discovery and immersion into historical culture and processes. As such, they will interact with several categories of individuals, ranging from journalists to local visitors and, possibly, a school group. The entire process should result in a fully active participatory museum learning experience. As part of the final exhibit, the participants will maintain a blog of their experiences as well as creating a short documentary of about 5 minutes presenting their path of discovery through the various core modules.

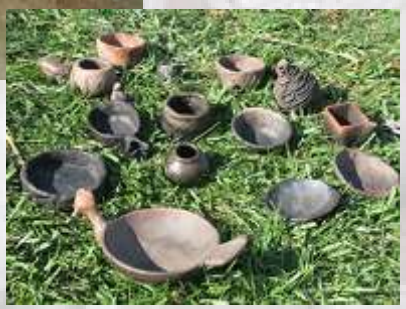
CORE MODULES – TRADITIONAL CRAFTS / EXPERIMENTAL ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY

CERAMICS:

Archaeological and Ethnographic Ceramics:

The ceramics module of our workshop aims to familiarize our participants with the various aspects of the traditional process of manufacturing ceramic objects. This includes the preparation of the clay, techniques of object making ranging from manual modeling to slow and fast wheel forming, firing, and ulterior uses. This module addresses the evolution of ceramics from cultural products to archaeological artifacts and ethnographic objects, and explores manufacturing techniques, styles of decoration, and uses.

People began to use ceramics first as a replacement for basketry and wood and stone vessels, and for artistic and ritual purposes (i.e. the Mesolithic Venus figurines). Burned or dried, ceramic is mostly referred to 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 and the type of firing (with or without oxygen), together determine the main features of a ceramic object. The knowledge necessary to recognize and predict these characteristics also enables the classification of ceramics and addresses 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 artifacts), and other physical forces can damage ceramic objects. In this instance, conservation processes frequently involve desalination treatments, while restoration interventions may aim at consolidation or assemblage of broken fragments and the retouching of painted surfaces.

METAL:

Transformative Approaches and Socio-Cultural Artifact Integration

The discovery of metal has propelled the 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 various objects along conceptual and presentational lines, such as tools vs. instruments, weapons, or jewelry.

Metal working dates back to Prehistoric times. Early craftsmen worked only malleable cold materials, and eventually developed several forms of casting. Forging techniques appeared much later, whereby metal was softened by intense heat and hammered into shape. The ability to obtain a desired shape from a durable material was a significant step in the evolution of human technology.

Modern investigation methods allow us to study the complex development of metallurgical knowledge, to determine the technologies of alloys involved, and to recreate the traditional craft of blacksmiths and many other tradesmen. Understanding the properties of each metal compound in an alloy also gives us insight into the behavior of the final object.

Although it is true that metals are resistant inorganic materials, their stability in moist conditions is strongly influenced according to the rate of the specific elements present in the alloy. One of the most frequent degradations to which metals are susceptible is corrosion. In many cases, conservation and restoration efforts aim to halt this degenerative process, to remove corrosion products, and finally to coat the metal object with a protective layer to prevent further damage.

WOOD:

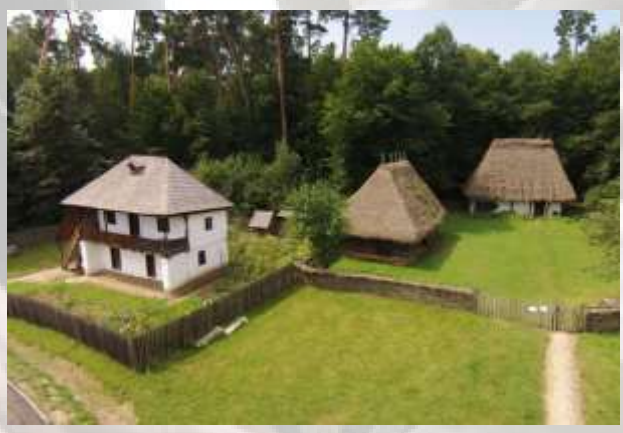
Traditional Techniques and Technologies

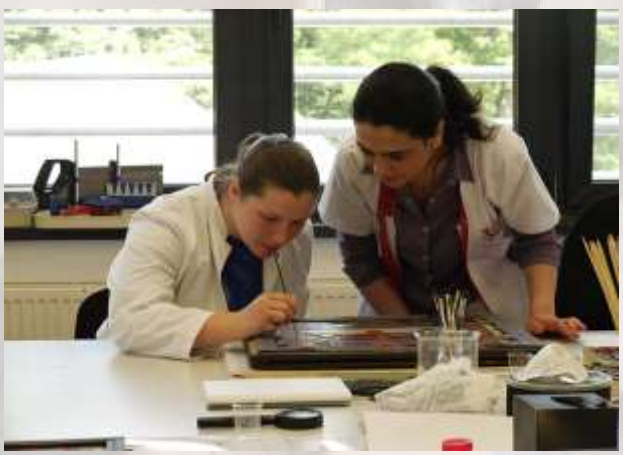
In conjunction with clay and stone, wood is the primary material used in traditional construction. This module of the workshop explores the various techniques of wooden house building. It will address the different qualities of various types of wood and their uses in traditional construction. We will observe the manufacture of architectural wood elements and their assemblage, looking at interlocking beams, roofs, and fences. This will provide a theoretical background for more practical, hands-on activities.

Wood was 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. However, wood is an organic material, highly vulnerable to organic, chemical, physical, and mechanical damage.

Preserving different wooden objects requires a great amount of experience, including the capacity to distinguish different wood essences and an understanding of their properties, the ability to identify specific agents of deterioration such as wood borers, and the various degradation mechanisms. Strategies for avoiding or blocking harmful factors are then combined with the application of various conservation methods which aim to stabilize the object (i.e. mitigating ongoing damaging processes) and to enhance its durability. Treatment depends on the type of object (archaeological or ethnographic, movable or immovable), and the locative aspects (indoor vs. outdoor, humid vs. dry environment, etc.).

For public access to wooden artifacts through exhibitions, restoration and/or preservation is required. This is intended to facilitate information transfer, allowing the public access to the wooden object and illustrating its manufacture and use. Today, many techniques and restoration materials are available, but choosing the best one is not always easy, especially considering the potential ethical implications.





TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1:

Day 1: Day trip to Sibiu, which will comprise an extensive tour of the ASTRA open air ethnographic museum, followed by a set of assignments in the museum, aiming to document specific aspects of the various displays

Days 2-5: Core workshop modules (wood, metal, or ceramic) – the participants will be divided into groups of 3-4 individuals; each group will spend 4 days on each of the three core modules as follows:

Metal:

Morning – core activity: forge and various aspects of pyrotransformation of iron

Afternoon – secondary activity: chain mail history, concepts, techniques and practice

Wood:

Morning – core activity: exploration of several aspects of traditional wood construction

Afternoon – wood carving, basket weaving, or similar

Clay:

Morning – kick wheel pottery manufacturing

Afternoon – handmade pottery

Week 2:

Day 1:Day trip to the ASTRA Museum, behind the scenes: we will visit in relative detail the various conservation and restoration labs and some of their deposits; the rest of the day will be devoted to the completion of the assignments from Week 1

Days 2-5: Core workshop modules (wood, metal, or ceramic)

Week 3:

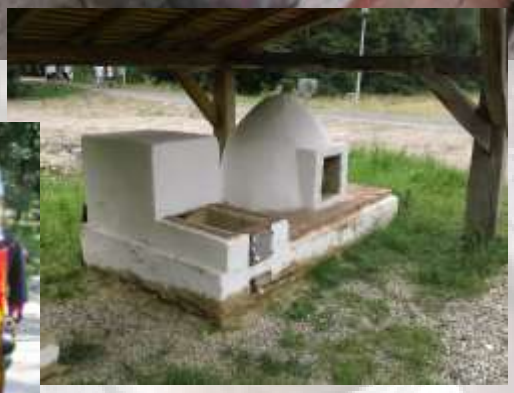
Day 1: Day trip to the Dacian and Roman Civilization Museum in Deva and, time permitting, to the Corvin Castle Museum in Hunedoara

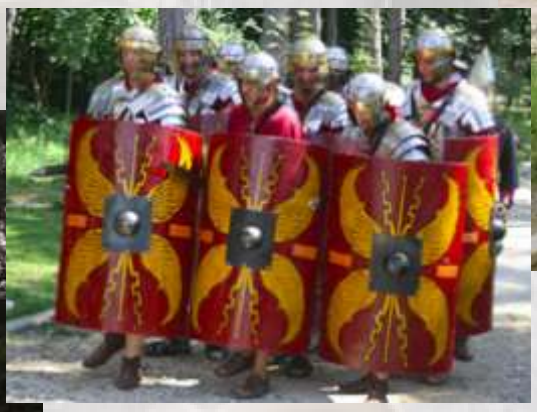
Days 2-5: Core workshop modules (wood, metal, or ceramics)

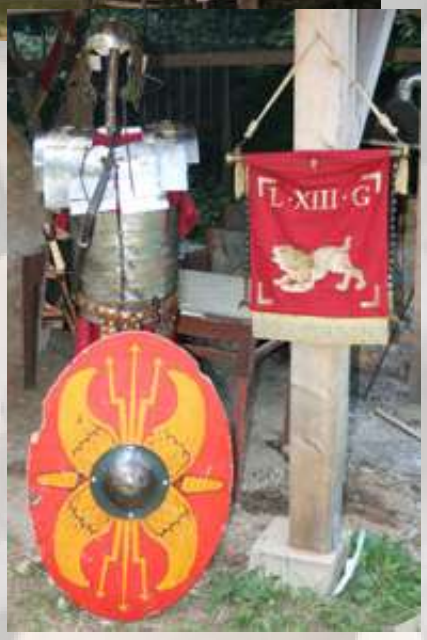
Week 4 is dedicated to secondary traditional and/or experimental modules, such as egg painting, glass painting, flint knapping, leatherwork, or bone carving. Time will be spent firing the pottery made during the core ceramic module. All remaining time will be devoted to the creation of the final exhibit.

Time permitting, one Saturday will be spent visiting a Daco-Roman reenactment festival.

There will be 2-3 afternoon or evening lectures every week as well as, time permitting, presentation of several related documentaries and/or movies. The schedule may be adjusted as needed based on weather, availability, or module imperatives.







RESEARCH TEAM

1. Project Director: Kaleigh Kenney (Laboratory Director and Archaeology Specialist, Archaeological Techniques and Research Center; ArchaeoTek-Canada)
2. Crafts/Experimental Archaeology Director: Dr. Marius Barbu (Expert Archaeologist and Master Blacksmith; Dacian and Roman Civilization Museum, Deva, Romania)
3. Program Director: Andre Gonciar (Expert Archaeologist and Blacksmith; Director, ArchaeoTek-Canada)
4. Project Coordinator: Angelica Balos (Archaeology Specialist and Expert Historical Reenactor, Romanian Ministry of Culture-Hunedoara.)

We will also be working closely with several Romanian master artisans, experimental archaeologists, and Daco-Roman reenactors .

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