

„BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA
Faculty of History and Philosophy
DOCTORAL SCHOOL „HISTORY. CIVILIZATION. CULTURE”

PHD THESESIS
SUMMARY

Scientific coordinator:

Prof. Dr. Sorin NEMETI

PhD student:

Ioana TEȘCAN (COVA)

Cluj – Napoca

2025

„BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA
Faculty of History and Philosophy
DOCTORAL SCHOOL „HISTORY. CIVILIZATION. CULTURE”

**THE PRESERVATION OF MOBILE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN
ROMANIAN MUSEUMS. HISTORY, EVOLUTION, CURRENT APPROACHES.**

Scientific coordinator:

Prof. Dr. Sorin NEMETI

PhD student:

Ioana TEȘCAN (COVA)

Cluj – Napoca

2025

Summary

The subject of my PhD theses originated from my professional experience, having had a strong experience in the field of preventive conservation and the restoration of cultural objects. The conservation of mobile cultural heritage is one of the main activities carried out within museums. Nevertheless, this activity should be connected with the current practical and theoretical approaches in the field of caring for mobile archaeological collections in Romanian museums. The systematic and selective collecting of cultural objects has, as expected, a long-standing tradition in various cultural mediums. Therefore, in the final chapter of my doctoral thesis, I analyzed, based on case studies, aspects and realities related to the current challenges and approaches in the field of preventive conservation and restoration of mobile archaeological objects.

The main focus of my doctoral thesis is the development of archaeological collections in Romanian museums, corroborated with the history of their preservation and valorification. Therefore, within the four chapters of my thesis, I focused on the contextualization of how cultural collections of objects were formed in relation to archaeological research and their individualization upon becoming part of the museum patrimony, emphasizing, in particular, the conservation and restoration that the objects undertook. By analyzing case studies, I aimed at rendering the journey the archaeological finds undertook from the moment of their discovery during archaeological researches, corroborated with the necessity for preservation and valorization; their conservation, however, must take into account the specific burial conditions and recovery approaches, as well as museum conservation requires. At the same time, my thesis aimed at underlining the characteristics of archaeological objects in comparison to other types of cultural objects from museum collections. Archaeological researches and the later preservation of archaeological objects within museum collection require a coherent legislative context. In recent decades, the legislative context underwent continuous necessary updates not only on the international but also at a national level. At the same time, the growing current demands for the valorification of cultural objects can generate additional challenges in the management of archaeological objects.

Preventive conservation and restoration, specific scientific museum fields, have had a challenging development up to the present day. Caring for archaeological mobile heritage in public museums in Romania is, inevitably, connected to the development of international preventive conservation. However, a collection management system (particularly a collections risk

management), is, sometimes, difficult to carry out. The management of archaeological collections involves not only preventive conservation measures when it comes to their storage and museum display, but also digital preservation.

In Chapter I of my thesis, I summarized the context in which the first eclectic collections, cabinets of curiosities, and private and public collections were formed, as well as the emergence of public museums, primarily in Europe. The first public, modern museums (i.e. systematically organized collections open to the general public), were established in the 17th century. The following century, when progress and science were emphasized upon, numerous public museums were established, marking the transition from private collections and cabinets of curiosities to the world's first museum institutions. Over time, both public and private museums became more and more accessible, opening their doors to visitors. The first half of the 20th century was a time when numerous museums were organized, with increasingly diverse collections and with highly varied agendas. Unavoidably, the two World Wars, and the political situation during the interwar period and after 1945, had an unanticipated impact on the existing museum. As a result of these new realities, the profile and types of collections from certain museums change during the interwar period or following the end of the Second World War, becoming more in line with the new political doctrines. During the second half of the 20th century the number of museums increases and their collections become more and more diverse, eventually leading to the emergence of what we now refer to as mega-museums—institutions that house a vast cultural heritage while placing equal emphasis on educational and interactive components.

This is the time when private collection and, later, public museums, also began to be established in Romania, influenced, in part, by trends coming from Western Europe. One such example is the founding of the Society of the Transylvanian Museum in Cluj, in the autumn of 1859, which later became the National Museum of Transylvanian History, following a complex timeline. An increasing number of public museums are being established in Romania, founded on diverse criteria and housing various types of collections of objects. After 1900, an even greater number of museums were established in the country, with increasingly diverse collection, while, following the establishment of the communist regime, both the fate and the number of museums in Romania underwent significant changes. Another inevitable shift in the museum network occurred after the events of December 1989.

In the second Chapter, I aimed at summarizing the contexts and the necessity of organizing legislative frameworks for national and international museum networks, as well as presenting the establishment of the first international forums and committees for the preservation of museum collections, along with their multiple aspects and challenges. The preservation of mobile archaeological heritage in Romanian public museums is an aspect closely connected with the developments in the museum field, internationally. I also included, within this chapter, an analysis of the necessities for museums to become more clearly defined, following the second world war. Therefore, the essential activities carried out within museums are more clearly defined, organizational guidelines are established and specialized terminologies are being more precisely articulated. The international regulations emerged as a response to common issues faced by museums and public collections alike, in various countries. This led to the establishment of general standards regarding the approaches to conservation, preservation, and the valorization of museum cultural objects. In Romania, the legislative context has evolved over time, most of the time in alignment with the social demands of each historical period.

In the 3rd Chapter I focused on analyzing the ways in which the perception of the roles of conservators and restorers, as careers of cultural objects, has evolved over time, so much so that today we can rightfully speak of these professionals as true researchers of heritage. The history of the professions of conservator and restorer within the Romanian legislative context is essential for understanding the development of conservation and restoration practices in contemporary museums and the challenges they face. Equally important are the distinct activities of preventive conservation and restoration. The final two subchapters in Chapter III focus on case studies regarding the conservation and restoration field carried out at the History Museum of Cluj-Napoca.

In the final chapter of my thesis, I focused on presenting three groups of mobile cultural objects from the collections of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, that were discovered in different archaeological contexts. The three groups of objects are: 1) cultural objects from the Egyptian collection, 2) archaeological textiles and 3) the decorated disc from Piatra Roșie. The Egyptian collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History was established in the second half of the 19th century, when the museum was the recipient of multiple donations of Egyptian artifacts, the collection expanding later with other objects. The group of archaeological textiles presented in the chapter are objects discovered during archaeological researches conducted over a short period of time, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The

decorated disc from Piatra Roșie was discovered at the Dacian fortress in the Orăștie Mountains during archaeological excavations conducted in 1949.

The comparative aspects that I analyzed in the thesis focused on the ways these types of objects were managed immediately after their excavation from burial mediums, namely the curative conservation and restoration interventions they underwent, as well as the subsequent valorification aspects. These aspects must be taken into account in relation to the specific historical contexts of the periods of time during which the archaeological research was conducted and after which the objects become part of museum collections. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, when the objects presented in the case studies become part of collections, the museums were a slightly different context than today's. On the one hand, the political and ideological milieu were unlike the present ones, while, on the other hand, the museum environment had its limits, mostly regarding human resources and the limitations of professional expertise in the field. These essential aspects to the preservation of museum objects, are reflected both in the way the objects under discussion were inventoried in the museum's accession registry but also in the way the objects themselves were stored, conserved and restored. The complex history of the History Museum has also left its mark on the way its collections have been preserved and validated over time.

Most of the objects from the collections discussed in this thesis were conserved over the years, some more than a hundred years ago, others several decades ago. This aspect must be taken into consideration when discussing a modern collection management. Therefore, conservation and restoration interventions on some of these objects are increasingly challenging and differ significantly from the restoration of objects recovered directly from archaeological excavations.

The challenges of long-term preservation of mobile archaeological heritage, be it of organic or anorganic nature, along with all its implications (collection management, preventive conservation, curative conservation and restoration interventions, research, scientific and display valorification, information dissemination, etc.) sum up both the past preservation activities and future strategies, solutions, and approaches. The interdisciplinarity between the conservation, restoration, archaeology, and museology fields must be translated into realistic strategies for preserving mobile archaeological heritage, that can be applied to preventive conservation measures, to restoration activities, and to different types of valorification. The preservation of mobile archaeological heritage cannot exist without access to the actual cultural objects and to the

information regarding their provenance, nor without interpretation, accessibility, communication, documentation, and museum-based valorification.

Selective bibliography

Primary sources

Colecția Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Colecția de Istorie a Muzeului, C1.

Colecția Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Colecția de Istorie Veche, v.

Colecția Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Colecția Medievală și Premodernă, F.

Secondary sources

Periodical collections

Acta Mvsei Napocensis

Acta Mvsei Napocensis Historica

Advances in Archaeological Practices

Buletinul Centrului de Restaurare Conservare

Caietele Restaurării

ISIS

Materiale de Istorie si Muzeografie

Revista Monumentelor Istorice

Revista Muzeelor

RESTITUTIO

Studies in Conservation

News in Conservation

Books

Alicu, Dorin, *File risipite, file regăsite, 1974-2004, De, cu și despre Dorina Alicu*, ed. Napoca Star, Cluj-Napoca, 2005

Borș, Corina, *Protejarea patrimoniului arheologic din România. Despre situri și monumente arheologice din perspectiva evoluției cadrului legislativ în context european*, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Mega, 2014.

Caple, Chris, *Conservation Skills: Judgement, Method and Decision Making*, ed. Routledge, London, 2000.

Hendre Biro, Doina (red.) *Batthyaneum. Descoperirile arheologice din Catedrala Romano-Catolică din Alba Iulia (1907-1914) publicate în 1918 de Pósta Béla. Valorificarea unui inventar uitat*, ed. Bibliotecii naționale a României, București, 2013.

Opriș, Ioan, *Istoria Muzeelor din România*, ed. Museion, București, 1994.

Opriș, Ioan, *Ocrotirea Patrimoniului Cultural*, ed. Meridiane, București, 1986.

Pedeli, Corrado, Pulga, Stefano, *Conservation Practices on Archaeological Excavations: Principles and Methods*, Getty Publications, 2014.

Powell, Brent A., *Collection Care: An Illustrated Handbook for the Care and Handling of Cultural Objects*, ed. Rowman & Littlefield, London, 2016.

Szczepanowska 2013: Szczepanowska, Hanna M., *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Key Principles and Approaches*, Routledge, London, 2013.

Tzigara-Samurcaș, Alexandru, *Muzeografia românească*, București, 1936.

Vasile, Alis, *Muzeul de la cabinet de curiozități, la instituționalizare. Evoluția reglementărilor legislative și administrative din domeniul muzeal*, ed. Pro Universitaria, București, 2022.

Vincze, Zoltán, , *A Kolozsvári régészeti iskola a Pósta Béla korszakban (1899-1919)*, Kolozsvár, 2014.

Studies in collective volumes

Ashley-Smith, Jonathan, „The Basis of Conservation Ethics”, în Alison Richmond, Alison Bracker (eds.), *Conservation – Principles, Dilemmas and Uncomfortable Truths*, Victoria & Albert Museum London, 2009, pp. 6-24.

Chetrari, Mihaela, Guttman, Márta, Magó, Andrea Beatrix, Troșan, Laura, „Cercetarea, investigarea și restaurarea unor textile arheologice de secol XVI XVII”, în *Florica Zaharia 70* (Axinte *et al.* eds.), Suceava, 2024, pp. 211-237.

Daicoviu, Hadrian (ed.), *Muzeul de Istorie din Cluj*, ed. Meridiane, București 1967.

Edson, Gary, „Ethics for Museums”, în Edson Gary (ed.), *Museum Ethics: Theory and Practice*, Routledge, 1997, pp. 3-17.

Florea, Gelu, Cristescu, Cătălin, „Artă, identitate și imaginar” în *Când viața cotidiană antică devine patrimoniu UNESCO – Incursiuni dacice în spațiul virtual*, Neamțu, Florea (coord.), Cluj-Napoca, 2016, pp.141-163.

Mitu, Melinda, Comșa, Daniela, „150 de ani de activitate muzeală la Cluj”, Muntean, Ovidiu, Ciongradi, Carmen, (coord), *Un secol și jumătate de activitate muzeală la Cluj, (1859-2009). Catalog aniversar*. Ed. Mega, Cluj, 2009.

Mitu, Melinda, „Establishment of the Egyptian Collection of the History Museum in Cluj (second half of the 19th Century – early 20th Century)” în Beu-Dachin Eugenia, Nemti Irina (eds.) *Gods and Mortals in Ancient Egypt. The Egyptian Collection*, Cluj-Napoca 2022, pp. 11-22.

Articles in periodicals

Ardos, Anna Mária, Mirel, Maria, „Preocupări ale Muzeului Ardelean pentru conservarea și restaurarea bunurilor muzeale”, în *Acta Musei Napocensis*, XX, 1983, pp. 725-724.

Ardos, Anna Mária, Mirel, Maria, Glodariu, Eugenia, „Muzeul Județean de Istorie din Cluj-Napoca la a 125-a aniversare”, în *Acta Musei Napocensis*, XXI, 1984, pp.673-690.

Boroș, Doina, „Technical Data Concerning the Mummy and its Accessories in the Collection of the National History Museum of Transylvania, in Cluj-Napoca (Romania)”, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, 37-38, 2000-2001, 2003, 373-374.

Boroș, Doina, Vajda, Catalin, „Reconstituirea unei bonete din secolul al XVI-lea aparținând Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei” în *Acta Musei Napocensis* 37-38-II, 2000-2001, pp. 375-380.

Bran, Delia, „45 de ani de conservare și restaurare în România – o privire în trecutul domeniului”, în *Revista Muzeelor* nr. 1/2020, pp. 152-158.

Bunta, Magdalena, „Tezaurul de la Cetatea de Baltă (sec. XVI) ” în *Acta Musei Napocensis* XIII, 1975, pp. 219-235.

Cova, Ioana, „Remedial Conservation of Mummified Birds, Animals and Human Remains from the Egyptian Collection of the National History Museum in Cluj-Napoca”, în *Acta Musei Napocensis* 59/II, 2022, pp. 205-216.

Dollery, Diane, „A methodology of preventive conservation for a large, expanding and mixed archaeological collection”, in *Studies in Conservation*, 39:supl. 2, 1994, pp. 69-72.

Guttman, Márta-Júlia, „Conservarea-restaurarea patrimoniului la Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei din Cluj – Istorie și Perspective”, în *Revista Muzeelor* nr.1/2021, pp. 113-120.

Iacob, Cristina Celia, „Evoluția legislației românești în domeniul protejării patrimoniului cultural național, în Buletinul Muzeului Științei și Tehnicii „Ștefan Procopiu” Iași”, an V, nr. 5, 2011, Iași, pp. 29-38.

Koródi, József, „Restaurarea și conservarea obiectelor de metal la Muzeul de Istorie Cluj” în *Revista Muzeelor*, 1/3, 1966, pp. 50-59.

Koródi, József, „Restaurarea și conservarea unui scut dacic”, în *Acta Musei Napocensis* IV, 1967, pp. 513-524.

Opriș, Ioan, „Sistemul de conservare – restaurare a patrimoniului cultural din România – realizări, strategii, opțiuni – la patru decenii de la constituirea sa”, în *Caietele Restaurării*, 2015, pp 266-291.

Sreterhaug, Roar, E. Peacock, Elizabeth, „Archaeological collections - alternative storage strategies”, în *Studies in Conservation*, 41:supl, 1996, pp. 153-156.

Vasile, Alis, „Muzeele în proiectul Codului Patrimoniului Cultural”, în *Revista Muzeelor*, nr.1/2022, pp. 23-39.

Vasile, Alis, „Statutul specialiștilor din muzee – între formare și reglementare” în *Revista Muzeelor*, nr1/2017, pp. 93-96.

Articles in online publications

Comes, Radu, Neamțu, Călin, Grec, Cătălin, Buna, Zsolt Levente, Găzdac, Cristi, Suci, Liliana, *Digital Reconstruction of Fragmented Cultural Heritage Assets: The Case Study of the Dacian Embossed Disk from Piatra Roșie*, în *Applied Sciences*, 2022, 12, 8131, accesat ianuarie 2025, <https://doi.org/10.3390/app12168131>

Meister, Nicolette B., *A guide to the Preventive Care of Archaeological Collections*, in *Advances in Archaeological Practices* 2019, pp 1-7, accesat iunie 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2019.7>

Collection and exhibition catalogues

Alicu, Dorin, Mihaiu, Ligia, *Restaurarea știință și artă. Al IV-lea Salon de Restaurare-Conservare*. Ianuarie-martie 2009, Catalog de expoziție, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.

Alicu, Dorin (coord.) *Antichități egiptene în colecțiile din România*, Catalog de expoziție, Cluj-Napoca, 1988.

Beu-Dachin, Eugenia, Nemti, Irina (eds.) *Gods and Mortals in Ancient Egypt. The Egyptian Collection*, Cluj-Napoca, 2022.

Neamțu, Călin, Florea, Gelu (coord.) *Când viața cotidiană antică devine patrimoniu UNESCO – Incursiuni dacice în spațiul virtual* Catalog de expoziție, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.

Guidelines and official documents

Decretul nr 90 din 5 februarie 1990.

Hotărârea nr. 1546 din 18 decembrie 2003 pentru aprobarea Normelor de conservare și restaurare a bunurilor culturale mobile clasate

ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, ICOM, 2017

Legea Muzeelor și Colecțiilor Publice nr. 311 din 3 iulie 2013, republicată în Monitorul Oficial nr. 207 din 24 martie 2014

Legea nr. 182 din 25 octombrie 2000, privind protejarea patrimoniului cultural național mobil republicată în Monitorul Oficial nr. 259 din 9 aprilie 2014

Legea nr. 63 din 30 octombrie 1974 privind Ocrotirea patrimoniului cultural național al Republicii Socialiste România, publicat în Buletinul Oficial nr. 137 din 2 noiembrie 1974.

Norma privind autorizarea laboratoarelor și a atelierelor de conservare și restaurare din 20.02.2004, parte a Hotărîrii 216/2004

Normele privind reglementarea activității de restaurare a bunurilor istorice, artistice, științifice, tehnice și de istorie naturală care fac parte din patrimoniul cultural național, din 1982

Electronical resources

<https://icom.museum>

www.canada.ca

www.cimec.ro

www.cultura.ro/unesco

www.ecco-eu.org

www.ghidulmuzeelor.cimec.ro

www.iccrom.org

www.icom-cc.org

www.icomos.org

www.iiconservation.org

www.mnit.ro