

IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR GHEROGHE CORNELIU LAZAROVICI (1941-2025)

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Professor Gheorghe Lazarovici was one of the preeminent figures in the study of Romanian, but also European prehistory, whose work has left a remarkable impact on the understanding of the Neolithic and Eneolithic cultures.

His rigorous approach and remarkable capacity for synthesis transformed the way archaeologists “see” cultural sequences, technological traditions, and symbolic systems of the prehistoric societies.

Born in 13.09.1941, in Milcoveni, Banat region, Gheorghe Lazarovici graduated History at the University of Cluj in 1968,

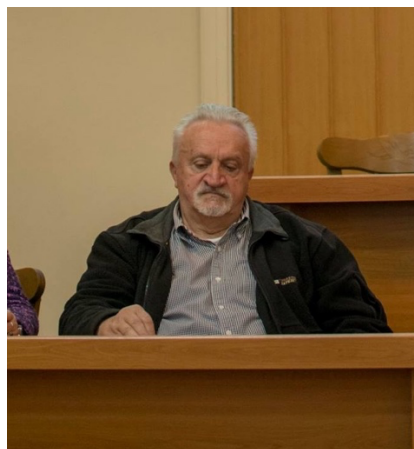
where he later became one of the important names of the academic community, at the Museum of History of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca, institution where he also held the position of General Director, between 1994 and 1997.

In over more than five decades of research, he combined fieldwork, laboratory analysis, and theoretical interpretation by connecting the descriptive traditions of prehistoric archaeology with the modern, interdisciplinary frameworks of cultural anthropology, archaeometry, and environmental archaeology.

Professor Lazarovici’s scientific contributions are vast, encompassing excavations (among which we mention here just a few of them: Bucovăț, Pața, Zorlențu Mare, Gornea, Iclod, Țaga, Balta Sărată, Cheile Turzii), typological studies, and interpretive syntheses that shaped the chronological and cultural frameworks of early farming societies in the Carpathian Basin and the Balkans.

His work on the Starčevo–Criș culture established a model for understanding the spread of Neolithic communities into Banat and the Transylvanian Basin and the dynamic relationships between the South-Eastern Europe and Anatolia, cultural spheres and a chronological system, adapted from the one used in former Yugoslavia.

His research on the Vinča and Turdaș cultures, where he combined detailed ceramic analysis with architectural and symbolic studies, was also of high importance for the academic community. His interdisciplinary approach, through



integrating archaeometric data and typological seriation is, nowadays, extremely common for the prehistoric studies. Throughout his career, Professor Lazarovici published hundreds of articles, excavation reports, volumes, and monographs, some of them co-authored with his wife and scientific collaborator, Professor Magda Lazarovici. Their volume: *Arhitectura neoliticului și epocii cuprului din România*, received” The Vasile Pârvan Award” from the Romanian Academy in 2006 for their contribution to the understanding of prehistoric societies in Romania, particularly through the analysis of architecture specific to the Neolithic and Eneolithic periods.

Gheorghe Lazarovici was also a dedicated teacher and mentor. Generations of students remember his ability to connect detailed archaeological data with broader questions about human adaptation, religion, and cultural interaction, many of this information being shared not in the classroom, as expected, but in a more colloquial manner, on the archeological sites he was coordinating. He was a Ph.D. supervisor at the *Lucian Blaga* University of Sibiu and many of his former students now hold positions in museums, cultural institutes or universities, continuing the path that he initiated.

Professor Lazarovici was also involved in joint research projects with scholars from Serbia, Hungary, Germany, France, Italy, the United States or China.

His early interest in pottery technology and production systems, ideas that he developed in a series of studies, remains today of reference point. Moreover, his engagement with computer-based data analysis and typological seriations (including early statistical tools such as the *Zeus*) illustrates his interest in methodological innovation.

Professor Gheorghe Lazarovici’s personality combined scientific rigor with kindness and those who worked with him recall his patience in discussion and his generosity in sharing information.

His passing in 2025 marks the end of an era for Romanian and European prehistoric archaeology, but his publications will continue to inspire. Through his numerous field projects, published works, and the community of scholars he created, Professor Lazarovici will remain present.