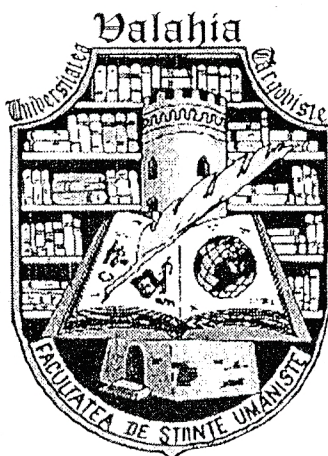


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L'Université „Valahia“ Târgoviște  
Faculté de Sciences Humaines

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# SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE RESTORING OF A LARGE HERBIVORE SCAPULA (*BOS/BISON?*) DISCOVERED IN THE EPIGRAVETTIAN II LAYER FROM POIANA CIREȘULUI, PIATRA NEAMȚ

*Daniela Iamandi\**

Although the piece was discovered during the 2003 field campaign, the conservation and the restoration treatments were initiated only two years later, when it was entrusted to us by the National Museum "The Princiar Court" of Târgoviște.

Due to the unfit measures of sampling and preservation, the scapula (45 cm long, with 3mm thick brittle terminal areas) presented a critical state of degradation, as follows:

- a serious dehydration, which caused numerous breaks along the osseous fiber and recent fractures (up to 9 fragments);
- deposits of carbonates and silicates, reaching up to 2-3 mm in thickness;

Taking into account the poor general state of the piece, all intervention was made under extreme precautions, in order to reach an optimum of its preservation. Consolidating and restoring the scapula pursued the following steps:

## 1) The re-hydration

The advanced dehydration state of the piece was a serious obstacle against the development of the required treatment processes. In order to avoid a sudden re-hydration, the fragments and the base of the scapula were wrapped in a textile material, repeatedly wetted with increasing amounts of distilled water. The water was gradually absorbed into the osseous tissue, causing some of the breaks to close up.

## 2) The cleansing

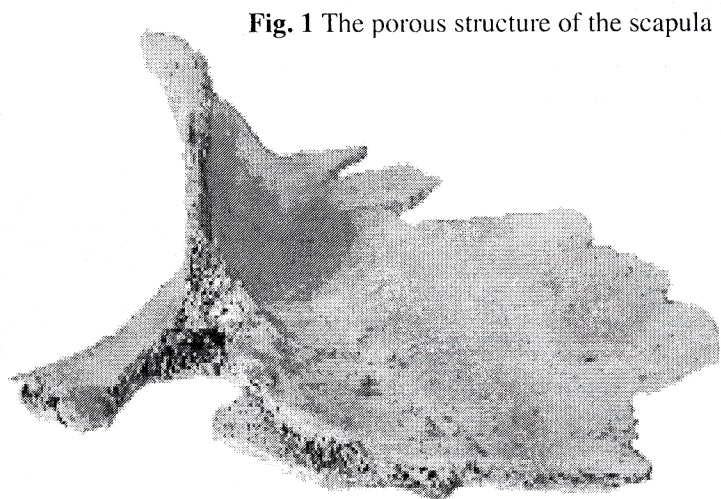
The removal of the carbonates and silicates deposits required the immersion of the scapula in a solution with 5% phosphoric acid concentration and also the mechanical intervention through local abrasion.

## 3) The drying

After the neutralizing baths, the fragments were immersed in ethyl-methyl-acetone ( $\text{CH}_3\text{-COCH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ) in order to eliminate the water from the compact areas and to facilitate the strengthening process. The drying was completed by ventilation in a chimney hood at 10°C.

## 4) The strengthening

Due to its porous structure (Fig. 1), the scapula needed a consolidation in order to increase the mechanical resistance in the alleged fragile areas. The available option was the complete immersion of the scapula in a solution of ethyl-methyl-acetone and 10% varnish, followed by a second drying process.



**Fig. 1** The porous structure of the scapula

\* daniela\_iamandi@yahoo.com ; Universitatea „Valahia” din Târgoviște, Facultatea de Științe Umaniste, Catedra de Istorie, str. Lt. Stancu Ion, nr. 34 - 36, Târgoviște, 130105, Dâmbovița

### 5) The reattachment of the fragments

Once the structure was stable, the next stage was reattaching the fragments to the base of the scapula (Fig. 2).

The adhesive solution had to be not only a resilient but also a reversible one, since the thickness of the fragments which varied from 3 to 10 mm and their different weights induced the need for subsequent corrections of the adherent areas. The product that met these requirements successfully was the polyvinyl acetate.

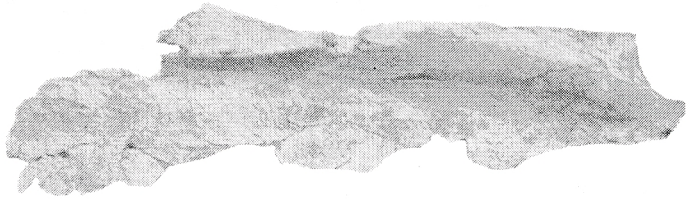


Fig. 2 The scapula after reattaching the fragments

### 6) The filling

At this point, there were still some inconveniences related to the general state of the piece, as well as to its external appearance. Unfortunately, there was no secure identification of the species the scapula belonged to, so the reconstitution of the missing parts could not be made after a replica. Instead, the filling followed dimensional criteria, namely it stopped when reaching the edge of the widest part of the piece.

The filling stage lasted a long time and used a mixing between both coarse- and fine-grained bone powder and a synthetic-polymer adhesive (Codez 100). The last one has a coagulation time of 12 hours, is completely transparent and also reversible.

First, the filling was made in the exfoliated reattached areas, where the adhesive solution did not cover all the breaks (Fig. 3). Then, the finishing final stage implied the use of pink modeling wax in taking impressions from the areas close to the missing ones, in order to preserve the closest thickness values (Fig. 4, A, B). After the wax hardened, the filled areas were submitted to mechanical abrasion, so that the whole surface smoothed and reached a homogeneous color and structure, analogous to the original (Fig. 4, C).

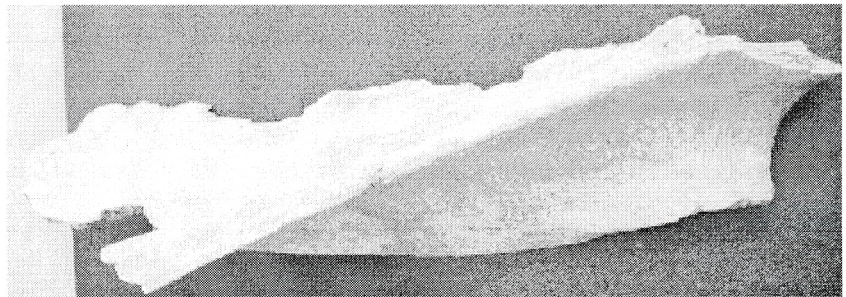


Fig. 3 The scapula after filling the breaks between the reattached fragments

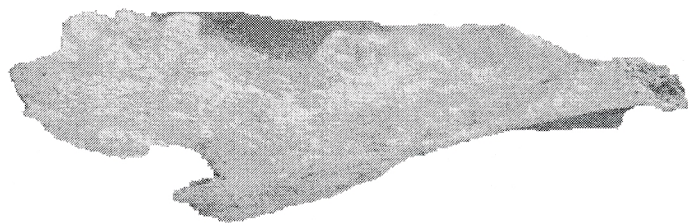
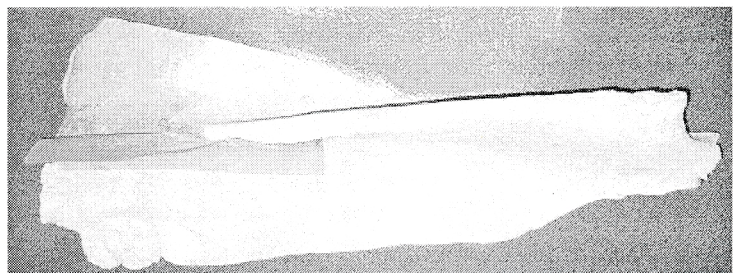
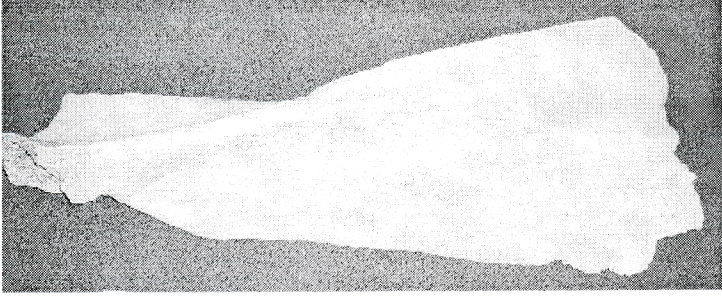


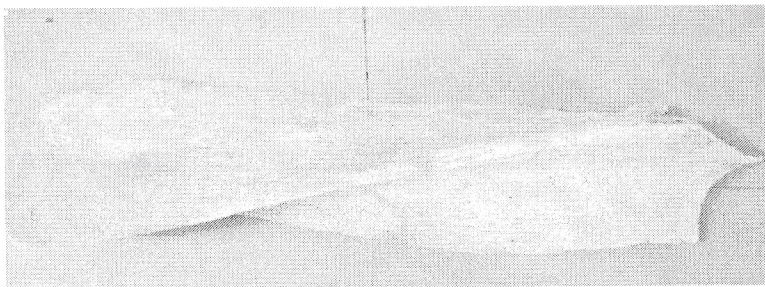
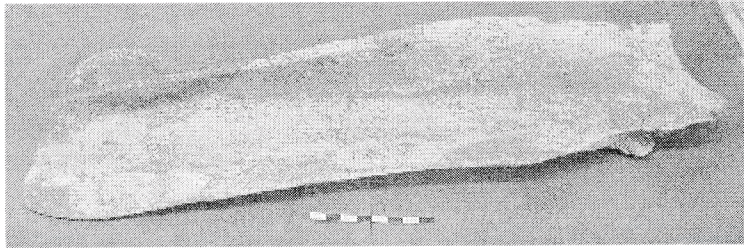
Fig. 4 The filling stages A, B





**Fig. 4, A**

**Fig. 4, B**



**Fig. 4** The filling stage C

Although still incomplete, waiting for a precise identification of the species it belongs to and also for a final restructuring process that will bring it closer to its actual shape and size, the scapula reached a good general state, fit for displaying and studying. We argue that all organic remains discovered during archeological excavations should undertake similar procedures of restoring and preservation before being stored or displayed, so that the inherent degradation due to their age shouldn't increase up to becoming irreparable.