*Interregional Educational Project North Africa - South-Eastern Europe, shared history, shared heritage. Exchange of experience and good practices in ancient heritage valorisation*

**Financed by UNESCO – Project of Participation (2021)**

**Geographical coverage:** *North Africa and South-Eastern Europe*

**Place of implementation:** Bucharest, Romania

* *Romanian National Commission for UNESCO*
* *Department for Ancient History, Archaeology and Art History, University of Bucharest*
* *Centre Régional Francophone de Recherches Avancées en Sciences Sociales (le CEREFREA), University of Bucharest*

**Commencement date:** 1 *March, 2021*

**Termination date:** *20 December 2021*

**Working language(s): English, French**

**Description of the project:**

Even if apparently distanced societies, for several historical periods Northern Africa and Eastern Europe were associated with the same cultural reality, as part of some of the major historical cultures that encompassed most if not all regions around the Mediterranean Sea. From Tunisia and Algeria to the Black Sea in ancient and medieval times people, goods and ideas circulated and created the great cultural universe of the ancient Greek cities, the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, with the entire rich and nuanced cultural heritage that we enjoy today. Great Roman structures, like the Bulla Regia temple complex or El Jem Amphitheatre in Tunisia, Histria, Argamum, Tomis Greek and Roman ancient cities in Romania are just some of the better known examples illustrating the common historical and cultural heritage of North Africa and South-Eastern Europe. The urban developments in the Roman period in South-East Europe in late 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD, notably in Dobrudja, are linked with the Severii, a dynasty that had its roots in the provinces of Northern Africa.

The Greek and Roman presence in ancient times around the Mediterranean Sea ensured a direct connection in cultural and economic terms between such geographically distant societies, creating strong material and non-material cultural links, a fact that is frequently omitted in research, as well as in education and in the public awareness. In that respect, the two cases, namely the Lower Danube and Proconsular Africa Roman provinces, are very relevant and they represent a fertile topic for future cooperation in education, heritage valorization and development of a more open academic curricula in both regions.

The project aims to ensure an exchange of specialists, academics and students from Tunisia and Romania, who shall offer conferences, seminars and workshops for students and researchers, in order to improve knowledge and awareness regarding various aspects of our common cultural heritage. University professors and researchers from Tunisia, specialized in North African archaeology, ancient heritage conservation, ancient art and architecture shall spend a total of 6 weeks in residence as senior fellows at the University of Bucharest, offering conferences and coordinating seminaries on topics regarding the ancient archaeological heritage of North Africa. The fellowship program also includes visits to some of the most important Greek, Roman and Byzantine sites at the Black Sea, for an exchange of experience and good practices in research and heritage conservation.

In exchange, a field study visit for a group of Romanian university professors, researchers and students shall be organized to some of the most important ancient sites in North Africa. The Romanian academics shall also moderate workshops regarding the Greek, Roman and Byzantine heritage in Romania for students in North-African universities.

The program for 2021 is envisioned as a pilot-project, involving two representative universities in Romania and Tunisia: the University of Bucharest and the University of Sousse. For the following years the intention is to extend the program, including other universities from both regions, in order to forge better scientific, educational and cultural cooperation in the field of management, research, and public use of the shared ancient heritage.

1. Objectives of the project:

* An exchange of information and experience in teaching and researching the common ancient heritage in North Africa and South-East Europe (Greek, Roman and Byzantine).
* Facilitating contacts and scientific cooperation between specialists in the research and management of the ancient heritage in North Africa and South-East Europe.
* An exchange of good practices in ancient heritage conservation (from legislation to in-the-field management of ancient sites, the logistics of curatorship and the development of modern museums, training of young specialists, public awareness campaigning).

1. Expected results:

* Two intensive seminaries (10-14 days) concerning the ancient and early medieval North African heritage (the Greek, Roman and Byzantine periods), offered by university professors and researchers from Tunisian universities for the students at the University of Bucharest.
* Three workshops in universities in Tunisia offered by Romanian researchers, concerning the ancient heritage in South-Eastern Europe (ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine).
* A publication reuniting studies of the participants to the project, on the topic of the shared ancient heritage.
* A memorandum of understanding between the University of Bucharest and the University of Sousse, fostering future cooperation and exchanges in the field of archaeological heritage research and valorisation.

1. Public dissemination:

* The seminaries and workshops shall be video and/or audio recorded and selections shall be published on the site of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO.
* A collection of studies referring to the ancient cultural heritage in Romania and Tunisia, and focusing on a comparative perspective on the practices of cultural heritage management shall be published by the University of Bucharest Press, and will be distributed to academic and public libraries in various European and North African countries and also to the UNESCO Library.
* A document related to the training of experts in the field of archaeological heritage, with a set of recommendations for the decision-makers in both regions concerning the relation between the management of ancient cultural heritage, the training of experts, and the public use of History.

**(b) Provide also the following elements of information:**

**Seminars and training courses**:

Proposed workshops:

* + Ancient heritage sites at the Black Sea and Low Danube
  + Cultural and economic links between the Low Danube region and North Africa in ancient times.
  + Ancient cultural heritage management and studies in Romania.

Approximate number of beneficiaries: 30

Intended audience (women, men, students, girls/boys, others):

* + Students at the University of Sousse, women and men
  + Faculty members at the University of Sousse, women and men

Programme: May 2021 – 6/7 days

Purpose of the seminars/training:

* Creating an opportunity for Tunisian students, archaeologists and historians to familiarize themselves with the ancient Roman heritage in Romania.
* Creating an opportunity for Romanian archaeologists and historians to familiarize themselves with the ancient Roman heritage in Tunisia.
* Encouraging co-operation among Romanian and Tunisian specialists in archaeology and heritage management, including establishing joined research teams on specific research topics.

Moderators (selection criteria):

* Faculty members of the University of Bucharest (Romania)
* Researches and publications in the field of ancient archaeology and heritage in Romania and the general Lower Danube region
* At least half of the team of 6 members should be woman.

**Study grants and fellowships**

Discipline taught/offered:

* + - The Roman Limes in North Africa
    - Trade and circulation of people in the Roman World
    - Conservation and heritage management practices for ancient sites in North Africa.

Date and duration:

March/April 2021 – 4 weeks fellowship; 15 days intensive seminaries, including 4 days visit on ancient sites

October 2021 – 2 weeks fellowship; 5 days intensive seminary; 2 days visit on ancient sites

Number of beneficiaries (men, women, young people):

* + Fellows: 3 faculty members from the University of Sousse
  + Audience: min. 30 students and faculty members, woman and men, from the University of Bucharest

Selection criteria of the fellows:

* + Faculty members of the University of Sousse (Tunisia)
  + Researches and publications in the field of ancient archaeology and heritage of North Africa.
  + At least 1 fellow of 3 should be a woman.

Aims:

* Inclusion of topics regarding the ancient heritage of North Africa in the archaeology and history curricula at the University of Bucharest.
* Creating an opportunity for Tunisian archaeologists and historians to familiarize themselves with the ancient Greek and Roman heritage in the region of the Lower Danube.
* Encouraging co-operation among Romanian and Tunisian specialist in archaeology and heritage management, including establishing joined research teams.

**Publications:**

A collection of comparative studies regarding the cultural heritage management of ancient sites in Romania and Tunisia

**40 C/5 activity to which this project relates**:

3 – 38 : “UNESCO will inspire new ways of conceptualizing education and learning, their contribution to societal development, and modalities for international cooperation in the area.”

3-40: “UNESCO with its worldwide networks and global reach is well placed to enhance international and regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing among all its Member States. Going forward, UNESCO will give increased attention to ensuring the universal relevance of its education programme.”

7-66 – “In the coming years, UNESCO will generate initiatives and mobilize energies, ideas and commitments to forge a new understanding of peace and sustainable development through culture. At the multilateral level, the Organization will capitalize on recent achievements in promoting culture as a driver and enabler of peace and sustainable development, as a human-centered approach to development, yielding sustainable, inclusive and equitable outcomes, can only be achieved with a strong culture component.”

7-72 – “In advancing dialogue, “learning to live together” and inclusiveness, UNESCO will promote the role of shared or cross-border cultural heritage and initiatives to build bridges among nations and communities.”