It is rare when one finds a fine argument that rescue archaeology is indeed nothing else but good old archaeology in the real sense of the word. The excavations at Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă come to prove that there should not be any reason for the two "types" of archaeology to be considered different in achieving their goals. The author does not content himself only with the typology and the chronological features. It is perhaps one of the most important parts of the volume, as it allows the author to establish the chronological links among the features and attribute them to various cultures and phases, based mostly on the pottery analysis. Culturally, the archaeological material was attributed to the Vinča, Lumea Nouă, Turdaş, Foeni and Petreşti cultural groups, with imports and influences from the Herpaly and Preluca. It is remarkable that while analysing the "material culture" the anthropological evidence brings no convincing arguments for either of the proposed scenarios. After having revised several cases from prehistoric Europe, the author tends to settle upon the possibility of having at Lumea Nouă a ritual centre such as the one from Herxheim. Another suggestion is that of having the Foeni group give a special funerary treatment to the human remains, especially to the skulls. But, neither of the suggestions resolves the cause of death of these individuals (no NMI is given, only age and sex determinations). We would also like to add that there are ways of causing violent death that do not leave marks on the skeletons and thus, this explanation should not be easily dismissed. A succession of 10 radiocarbon dates (7 on human remains from the multiple burial, three on charcoal; 8 among all were suggested as correct) pin the Foeni habitation of the site around 5800–5700 BP. It would be interesting though, given the location of the site on the Mureş river – to have some stable isotope analyses on the human remains, thus establishing both the type of diet the prehistoric community might have had and also, whether fish consumption has not introduced a fresh-reservoir effect on the 14C. The following chapter studies the interferences and the links between the human communities documented on the site and those of the Vinča, Pişcolt, Lumea Nouă, Herpaly, Foeni, Preluca and Petreşti. Obviously, at the centre of this analysis is the Lumea Nouă cultural group and its own manifestations. All considerations and links with other cultural groups were made based mainly on the painted pottery of the above mentioned cultures/cultural groups since "painting [...] is the only decoration technique that individualizes the pottery artifacts" for the Lumea Nouă group (p. 157), establishing "the first classification of a typological and stylistical manner of the painted pottery, [...] over a geographical area dominated by similar shapes and decoration techniques" (p. 178). This is seen by the author as the main achievement of the volume. To this, we might add the importance of the discussions over the origin of the Petreşti culture and its relationship with the Foeni group.

The volume modestly presents its conclusions as only "state of the research" results. But it also brings forth a solid base for a future re-appraisal of the Transylvanian Eneolithic, from various angles of the research, offering firm ground for interesting future studies, if we are only to mention the funerary aspect and the pottery analysis. The graphics of the volume is impeccable, with remarkable black-and-white and colored photos and field plans, easily accessible while reading, given their location at the end of the text part of the book. Understanding the illustrations is a little bit hampered by the fact that the text explanation of the respective plate needs to be looked for in the List of Plates.

Adina Boroneanţ


În cele două volume, deosebit de consistente, este tratată o temă ce a constituit, de-a lungul timpului, subiectul unor discuţii controverse între specialiştii epocii bronzei în general, dar mai ales între cei preocupaţi de Epoca Bronzului din Bazinul Carpatic, inclusiv zonele alăturate.