

## Foreword

The second international, annual conference of the LOEWE project “Research on Prehistoric Conflict – Bronze Age Hillforts between Taunus and Carpathian Mountains” took place on October 9–13, 2017 in Alba Iulia in Transylvania (Romania), with the theme “Bronze Age Fortresses in Europe”.<sup>1</sup> It was attended by some 80 participants, who came from ten countries around the Mediterranean, from Israel in the East to Greece, Slovenia and Italy as far as Spain in the West. The conference venue was in one of the core regions of the LOEWE project: the Carpathian Basin. Namely, located a short distance from Alba Iulia is the large fortified, hilltop settlement of Teleac, situated high above the left bank of the Mureş River. During the past three years excavations were conducted there by the LOEWE project in cooperation with the Muzeul National al Unirii Alba Iulia (Dr. Horia Ciugudean). Thus, the conference was arranged in cooperation with this Museum as well.

The second international LOEWE conference was host to renowned scholars, all engaged in studies on the relationships between the Mediterranean sphere and Central Europe in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC and the various influences that spread from Mediterranean cultures that built defensive structures: The oldest Bronze Age protective walls and fortified cities in the Levant and in Israel were constructed as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. Now recent archaeological datings and excavations have led to the need to re-evaluate interconnections between Europe and the South and to expand examination of and studies on the eastern Mediter-

anean, the Adria and Spain. A further focal point was on issues and results of scientific research concerned with the reconstruction of ancient landscapes and the use of natural resources located in the surroundings of fortified settlements.

These branches of research are associated with our fieldwork in Transylvania and Banat, as well as our other projects in the Carpathian Basin. Thereby the line of inquiry pertains foremost to the influence of Bronze Age settlement activities upon different landscapes, in particular the construction of fortified settlements and forts. It investigates the extent to which changes in the economic basis, use-systems and the exploitation of resources exerted an effect upon habitation. Therefore, the aim of archaeobotanical and geomorphological investigations was to thematise the kinds and intensity of resource usage and its relation to fortifications. A further question concerned the extent to which the construction of fortified settlements was responsible for great upheavals in the natural vegetation and forest cover, such as in the Central German Mountains in Hesse. Or – by contrast – whether rampart-construction should possibly be understood as a reaction to changes in forest development.

The timespan involved in the individual contributions to the conference ranges from the Early Bronze Age strongholds in the Levant to the Early Iron Age. According to the datings gained from research until now, the fortress at Teleac was established during the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC. At approx. 920 BC a larger section of the fortification walls and part of the settlement in Teleac were destroyed. The settlement, however, continued to be occupied at first. Therefore, the fortress can be assigned to the younger and later Urnfield Culture, according to Central European terminology. In Greece this period in time is designated ‘Early Iron Age’, in view of the many finds made of iron objects that were found there. Numerous iron objects were noted in Teleac, too.

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<sup>1</sup> The first international LOEWE conference “Bronze Age Hillforts between the Taunus and Carpathian Mountains” was held on December 7–9, 2016 in Frankfurt/Main. See S. Hansen/R. Krause (eds.), *Bronzezeitliche Burgen zwischen Taunus und Karpaten/Bronze Age Hillforts between Taunus and Carpathian Mountains*. Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie 319, *Prähistorische Konfliktforschung* 2 (Bonn 2018).

And it is here that we arrive at the time of the nascence of early Greek epics, which likely acquired their literary form in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The “Ilias” is not a great work on history, but rather a description of the rage of Achilles, upon his defamation by the commander Agamemnon. This was the cause for even further battles and many slain victims. In her book “*Der Krieg des Achilleus*” (Berlin 2009), Caroline Alexander clearly illuminates the multifaceted structure of the Ilias epic and its main characters. This epic is still an important source for research on conflict in prehistoric times, because it describes a complicated war situation, which was perceived as paradigmatic already in ancient times.

The LOEWE project “Prehistoric Conflict Research – Bronze Age Fortifications between Taunus and Carpathian Mountains” is set within the framework of the Hesse Excellence Initiative. One of its major endeavours is to maintain consistent and diligent advancement in research on Bronze Age fortresses in Central Europe. For this, the second annual conference contributed towards establishing a European network of archaeologists, who can work together on the study of fortresses and on the preservation of these outstanding defensive structures. Ideally, research and conservation should be achieved on a European level.

Svend Hansen und Rüdiger Krause  
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Information and program:

[www.uni-frankfurt.de/praehistorische\\_Konfliktforschung](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/praehistorische_Konfliktforschung) under “Events”  
(conference program is accessible as PDF)

Excavations carried out in 2016–2018 in the Central German Mountains in Hesse and in Romania as part of the LOEWE project can be accessed in the homepage:

[www.uni-frankfurt.de/praehistorische\\_Konfliktforschung](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/praehistorische_Konfliktforschung) under “Highlights”