

## PROFESSOR MICHAEL MEYER – Doctor Honoris Causa of the „Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University



On Thursday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of June an important event took place in the „Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University – meaningful for both our institution and the entire academic environment of the country. The teachers of the University, in the presence of the deputy director of the German Embassy in the Republic of Moldova, Florian Seitz, together with the representatives of the country’s main profile institutions in the archaeological field (State University of Moldova, National Museum of History of Moldova, the Institute of the Cultural Heritage, National Archaeological Agency and the High School of Anthropology) marked the bestowment of the Doctor Honoris

Causa title to the distinguished Professor Michael Meyer, deputy director of the Institute of Prehistoric Anthropology of the Freie Universität Berlin, Director of Excellency Cluster Topoi.

The bestowment of such distinctions departs from the basic principle according to which an academic institution asserts and builds its value through its people, through the personalities it recognizes and values, through the models it promotes and which in time become fundamental role models for generations. Professor Michael Meyer is of utmost certainty a distinguished model and a personality of reference, to whom we thank for accepting this distinction.

The name of Professor Meyer has been for a longer time already one of reference in the European academic environment, deemed to be one of the best researchers and experts regarding Barbarian Europe of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC and the Roman civilization. As a director of the Excellency Cluster Topoi, he was the key person in the conceptualization, development and later in the coordination (ongoing) of the highly valuable and prestigious project of interdisciplinary studies “The Formation and Transformation of the Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations”. Beyond his efforts, over years, Professor Meyer knew how to gather together - around the most modern and advanced ideas – high-quality specialists from widely varied fields and from the most



prestigious university centres, whose efforts were combined to prove the value of interdisciplinary studies, as well as the huge potential of extending the knowledge about ancient civilizations based on these types of approaches.

Professor Michael Meyer has an excellent scientific and academic carrier. He studied Prehistory, Geography, European Ethnology and Classical Archaeology at the prestigious universities from Marburg/Lahn, Heidelberg and at the Institute of Archaeology from London. In 1990 he completed his PhD at the University of Marburg, afterwards he was hired as an associated researcher at the Institute of Archaeological Researches from Hesse with the headquarters in Büdingen, where for a period of four years he asserted himself as a researcher of great perspective and in 1994 he received the position of associate at the Department of Prehistory and Early History of Humboldt-Universität from Berlin. It is within this oasis of high-value archaeological studies that, in 2005, he elaborated and defended his Habilitation thesis. The profundity of the research promoted him, immediately after the defense, to the position of Privatdozentur at Humboldt-Universität from Berlin, where he was offered the course of Prehistory and Early History, in parallel with the position of head of division for *Archaeological Services* at the State Office for Preservation of Monuments from Brandenburg and State Archaeological Museum from Wünsdorf. The erudition deepen and polished over years, the farsightedness and profoundness of ideas, combined with the use of the newest interdisciplinary methods of research and



with an enormous capacity of work would in only two years transform him in a Universitätsprofessor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the Free University of Berlin – Institute of Prehistoric Archaeology, but also into the deputy director of the of the Institute, position still held today.

What is even more surprising is that behind this big and sober Professor with a brilliant carrier, scholar with many accomplishments and appreciations, with an extremely prestigious status and very appreciated by the academic environment, we shall have no shadow of bombastic, vanity or authoritarianism. On the contrary, in front of us is shaping the image of an exceptionally modest, open and cooperating person, with a very special intellectual diligence, receptive and always ready to step in with support and help. A profound thinker and a sensitive person; a subtle and refined intellectual with whom it one can discuss any subject from any field; a pleasant and responsive communicator, who knows both how to hear and to listen, to enter into the substance of the message and to split the thread in four. Any action he carries out, be it a research or a didactic activity, is characterized by high standards and rigour, but which are remarkably blended with tolerance and indulgence, while the diplomacy with which he treats any person is simply disarming. Equally disarming was his attitude of a classy intellectual towards those who assisted at the awarding of the honourable distinction. With an almost adolescent easiness, though in an extremely exquisite manner, the Professor Meyer delivered his speech in the sweet language we have inherited from Creanga and Eminescu, putting, for a while, on hold the entire auditorium.



A separate aspect in Professor Michael Meyer's activity is determined by the initiation and development, in 2014, of a fruitful Moldo-German collaboration. For our university it has been a branch which gave many opportunities to the students and professors through the collaboration agreement concluded between Institut für Prähistorische Archäologie, Freie Universität Berlin and Faculty of History and Geography of UPSC "Ion Creanga". Based on this agreement, there were organized public conferences, documentation and research visits at the Freie Universität Berlin for the students and professors from UPSC, including within the program Erasmus Plus. In the Republic of Moldova, there were organized yearly study-excavations with the participation of students from Moldova and Germany (with the funding sustained by Freie Universität Berlin). During the field research & excavations were used modern methods of research, including the non-invasive ones, some of them were used for the first time in the Republic of Moldova for certain types of sites: for the first time there were applied geomagnetic prospections at 2 sites of Poienesti-Lucaseuca type; for the first time were applied geographical prospections on this type of sites where soil samples have been collected; for the first time, there was made a comparative chemical and physical analysis of the archaeological vestiges discovered; for the first time there were collected samples of seeds from the sites of Poienesti-Lucaseuca type, which will be analysed including through the method of radiocarbon. In the meanwhile, a site scientific seminar has been organized (Butuceni, 2016) dedicated to the Iron Age in the Central and Eastern Europe, where professors from 5 states participated and following the



seminar it was issued the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Plural journal – Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age in Central and South-eastern European Barbaricum, ARC Publishing House, 2017. With the plenary support of Professor Meyer, there were drawn up joint presentations for international conferences and articles in specialized journals have been published. As part of the

Humboldt programs, has been developed the project of organizing an important international conference in Chisinau, a project supported by the Foundation in 2018. Over 30 specialists from 12 European countries have gathered in Chisinau. Currently, work is in progress over the publication of a volume regarding this conference, which we hope to be one of reference for the subjects discussed in the autumn of last year.

We can easily ascertain that in only a few years we managed to register an important number of accomplishments – which gain importance in the light of perspectives that were opened for the researchers of the Ion Creanga University, namely for the multitude of doors opened by the Professor Meyer for the youth who chose to tie up their fate to science and research.

Based on the above mentioned, recognizing the exceptional results acquired over years and the remarkable contributions to the development of Ion Creanga University, the Senate decided to award Professor Meyer the honourable degree of Doctor Honoris Causa, entering his name in the golden list of personalities who marked the history of Ion Creanga State Pedagogical University. It is the public gratitude our university brings today to the Professor Meyer.

**Vivat Professore!**

**Octavian Munteanu**