

*Salt springs and mobility: natural invariants and human variables
in archaeological sequences from Eastern Romania*

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Two Romanian projects (Ethnosol and EthnosolRo) managed to delimit the areas with constant use of salt water springs during the last century. The employment of spatial parameters taken from the ethnographic time and applied to the archaeological time highlighted the phenomenon of population mobility driven by the need of the human communities from Eastern Romania to provide the basic requirements of salt, for all the past archaeological eras. The frequency of salt-related mobility is a function of the distance between the human community and the supply source. For the communities near these sources, the frequency is very high, but the quantities procured are very small. As the distance increases, the frequency decreases, but the quantities increase in a converse fashion. There are essential differences in terms of mobility direction: while in the case of brine the human communities travel to the salt water springs, for ignigenous salt the producers from the Carpathian or Subcarpathian areas travel considerable distances, mainly to acquire grains. The magnitude of the mobility during the archaeological time depends on the human habitat concentration during different periods. The existence of ethnographic models for areas supplied by the salt water springs opens new possibilities for assessing the invisible past, particularly the phenomenon of mobility, an issue especially difficult to ascertain only on the basis of the archaeological evidence.