In service of continuity.
Ethno-archaeology in Serbia

Aleksandar Palavestra
Reducing all ethnographic examples in the Serbian archeology to various issues of continuity (as we shall see, based on different theoretical foundations) had a result that ethnoarcheology was considered unnecessary.
Genealogy of continuity

(Pseudoarchaeology)
D. Tucakov
D. Jankovic (National continuity)
(Ideal-type cont.)

(Transmission of cultural traditions)
V. Miljevic
M. Gavranovic

M. Gribic

A. Jovanovic

Z. Srejovic (Metaphysical continuity)

A. Deramovici

(Meteogene-Greek continuity)

M. Vasic

V. Cakkanovic

Childe

Boas

Kossinna

Virchow

("Volkseele")

Herder

CULTURE HISTORY

Furtwangler

Winckelmann

GERMAN CLASSICAL STUDIES

Timmson

Timmson Humbold

(Darwin

Lubbock

EVOLUTIONISM

Darwinian archaeology
Veselin Čajkanović, historian of religion, classical philologist and ethnologist, in his works on Slavic religion and ancient Balkan traces in Serbian folk customs, was close to Frazer and his comparative history of religion, mythology and magic.
For more explicit evolutionist approach, characteristic of Darwinian archeology, argues Marko Porčić in his most recent works.

Am I betraying Binford?

It is somewhat paradoxical that the Darwinian archeology in a certain way follows the culture-historical idea of continuity through the transmission of traditions and ideas.
Miloje Vasić made an universal model for the interpretation of the Balkan past from his obsessive Philhellenism.
Vasić’s thesis about the direct influence of Greece and the Aegean on the Central Balkans reached a peak in his idea that prehistoric Vinča is in fact an Ionian colony of the sixth century BC.
On the southern, eastern and northern coast of the Balkan peninsula, to which Aegean sailors came with their ships, and over these shores to the hinterland, the specific cultural heritage of the Aegean was passed ...
Vasić describes many aspects of material and spiritual culture in Serbia, including the different folk traditions with the Greek influence.

Vasić explains the occurrence of ritual trance of *rusalje* in eastern Serbia, by the cult of Dionysus, which was a manifestation of the "Aegean-Greek" continuity.
Vasić’s loyal students Dragoslav Srejović and Aleksandrina Cermanović-Kuzmanović, in their early works, continued this line of Vasić’s quest for continuity of ancient elements in the material culture and folklore in the Balkans, especially for the survivals of Greek cults and Hellenic heritage.
Dragoslav Srejović shall develop and expand the idea of spiritual continuity in his later works. Continuity of the spirit, which pervades successive culture in the Balkans through the prehistoric, and historic periods, Srejović hardly sees as a process, but as a separate entity that is a metaphysical connection to the soil, as an abstract bearer of culture.

Metaphysical continuity of spirit Srejović recognizes in the Central Balkans since the Mesolithic Lepenski Vir, Starčevo and Vinča Neolithic communities, through Bronze age Vatin, to Dardanians, Triballoi and the Moesoi of the Iron Age.
Aleksandar Jovanović also inherited the genealogical thread of Vasić’s “Aegean continuity”. In his studies of ancient iconography and religion, Jovanović moved freely through the epochs, diachronically linking the Vlach customs, naive art of the twentieth century, folk traditions, Roman cults, and prehistoric spiritual layers.

Jovanović in somewhat hermetic style points to the distant and inexplicable connection between contemporary folk elements and ancient myths.

Miloje Vasić has set good foundations and constructive methodological approaches.
Ethnic continuity

- “Sharply defined archaeological culture provinces are consistent at all times with certain peoples or tribes.” (1911)

Janković

- In archeology it is simple to determine the ethnic area, provided that the data on culture is known

Kossinna
Foreign influences are reflected only in the form of ceramic, but not in essence. Despite the western and eastern influence, the national spirit has preserved the traditional Serbian pottery, while accepting some aspects of foreign pottery manufacture.
**Pseudoscientific continuity**

The analysis of epic poems reveals ancient knowledge of calendar of the Serbs. In some verses (...) a description of a funeral known from Bronze Age is preserved. Such and the similar examples indicate the long lasting continuity.

- **Dragan Jacanović**, who recognizes the Serbs as the indigenous population in the Balkans, at least from the Early Neolithic period, is thus adjacent to the same line of interpretation of permanence in the Balkans: the idea of long-term national continuity.
Milutin Garašanin followed a completely different line of Culture historical archeology and interpretation of continuity. While establishing a clear distinction between cultural and ethnic continuity, he points to a certain preconditions that are necessary in order to talk about the continuity in archaeology (geographic units, chronological connections between phenomena that are studied, the reliability of the archaeological context, etc.). Cultural continuity can exist without ethnic continuity, and vice versa!
Garašanin’s thoughtful theoretical and methodological caution was respected only nominally, but there was a strong tendency to accept the continuity as something self-evident.

An abundance of compelling and often seductive ethnographic material was presented only as self-explanatory illustration of long term continuity, rather than to serve as data for formulating and testing the ethnoarchaeological hypotheses.

On the other hand, the same, just the reverse method was used in ethnography, where certain elements of folk culture (for example in costume) were being explained as “the ancient Balkan substrate”.
The blocked path

- All paths that could lead to ethnoarchaeology, were clogged with different conceptions of the idea of continuity.
- Continuity was considered as something that is self-evident.
- The real value of ethnoarchaeology, as the method that can overcome the static archaeological record and establish insight into the dynamics of the past, has not been recognized.
Bright future

- Papers presented at this symposium, however, encourage me in the belief that better days are coming for the Serbian ethnoarchaeology.