



YOUTH VISION FOR SOCIETY ASSOCIATION

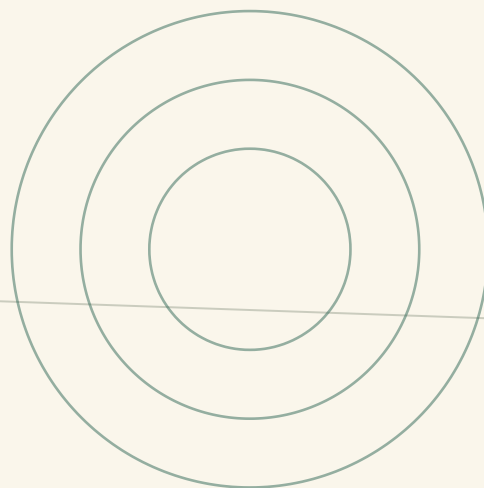
DOBRORIGINI

VIRTUAL MUSEUM



Dobrogea, beyond the map.
A museum built step by step.

*“Dobrogea should not only be visited.
It should be read, understood and kept alive.”*



Initiative overview

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What you will find in this presentation

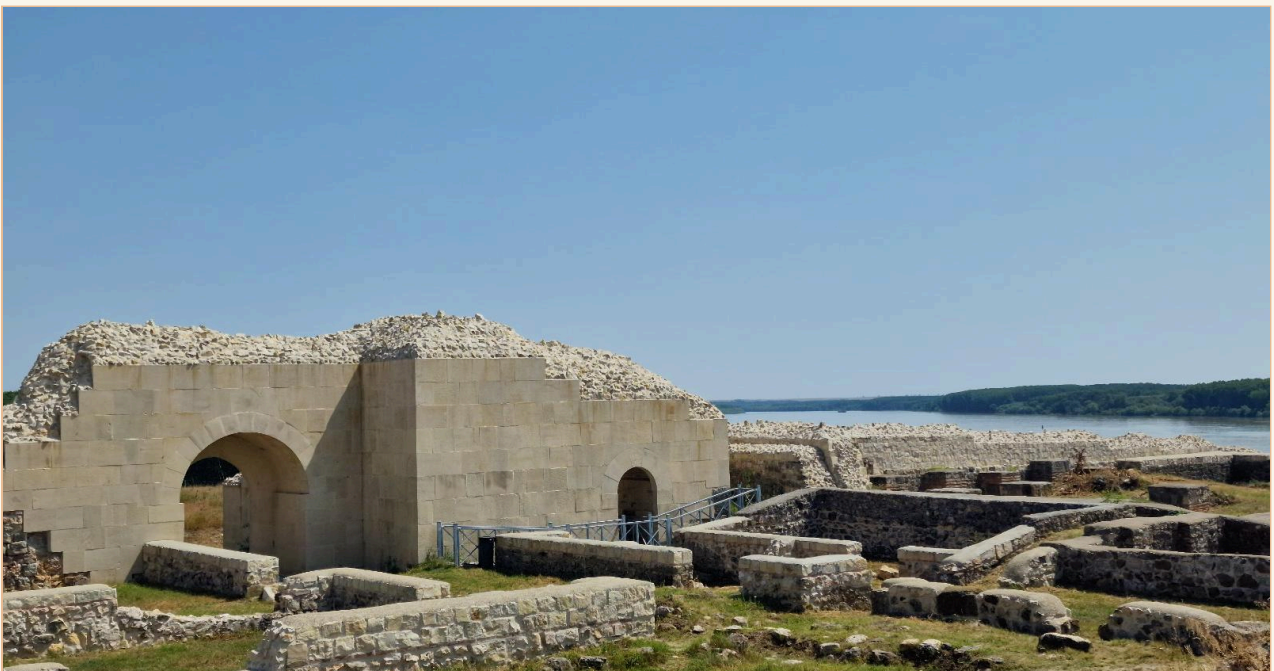
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About Dobrorigini

“Some regions can be contained within a map. Dobrogea is not one of them.”

Here, history can be read in fortresses, ports, villages, houses, cemeteries, roads, waters, rituals, flavours and landscapes. Tangible, intangible and natural heritage do not exist in separate compartments; together, they shape the identity of a region formed through encounters between civilisations, communities, religions and ways of life.

Yet much of the information about Dobrogea remains scattered across museums, archives, studies, articles, institutional websites, tourism materials and people’s memories. The best-known landmarks dominate the public image, while important places, histories and cultural resources remain difficult to discover or are presented without meaningful connections between them.



Dobrorigini begins with a simple need: Dobrogea needs a digital space that connects information, explains the relationships between its elements and offers the public a coherent, accessible and engaging exploration experience.

Dobrorigini is a digital heritage interpretation initiative dedicated to Dobrogea.

It does not merely seek to digitise or publish information, images and landmarks online, but to transform them into an intelligible cultural journey. Resources are researched, selected, contextualised and connected through texts, collections, maps and thematic routes.

Interpretation explains not only what we see, but why it matters, how places, communities, historical periods and landscapes are connected, and how they contribute to the region's identity.

The initiative continues the direction opened by “The Danube Route – Dobrorigini”, while moving beyond the promotion of routes and landmarks towards the creation of a broader digital cultural infrastructure. The virtual museum will be neither a list of attractions nor an exhaustive inventory, but an editorial and curatorial framework in which content can be explored in depth and expanded gradually.

Unlike general-interest platforms, Dobrorigini explores the region in depth: it asks not only “what can we visit?”, but also “what does this place mean, and how does it connect to the story of Dobrogea?”.



Photo: Alina Verban

The initiative at a glance

Type	Virtual museum and cultural-educational platform dedicated to the heritage of Dobrogea
Status	Independent initiative under gradual development
Access	Free and online, accessible both remotely and while exploring the region
Languages	Romanian and English, developed in stages
Initiator	Bogdan Bola
Development and administration	Bogdan Bola and the Youth Vision for Society Association; the museum component is coordinated by YVS

What does a virtual museum actually mean?

For Dobrorigini, a “virtual museum” does not mean recreating an exhibition hall online. It means using the digital environment to create an experience that physical space cannot provide in the same way: navigating between distant places, overlaying multiple historical periods, connecting built heritage with landscape and community memory, and accessing maps, images, documents and thematic routes.

The platform will follow a clear museum and editorial logic. Content will be organised into collections, heritage profiles and narrative pathways, allowing users to explore freely without being left alone in a mere accumulation of data. Each item will answer not only “what is it?”, but also “why does it matter?”, “what is it connected to?” and “what does it tell us about Dobrogea?”.

How the museum will work

Users will be able to enter Dobrogea through several gateways: themes, places, maps, routes or curated stories.

- 1 Thematic collections** — Editorial groupings that bring together places, objects, practices and historical contexts around a shared theme.
- 2 Heritage profiles** — Well-researched and accessible presentations of sites, buildings, cultural landscapes, communities, traditions and other relevant resources.
- 3 Interactive maps** — Multiple thematic maps tailored to the collections: fortresses and archaeological sites, protected areas, Danube heritage, rural architecture and more.
- 4 Cultural routes** — Pathways that connect landmarks and can be used both for online exploration and as a starting point for visits in the field.
- 5 Digital archive** — Images, documents, maps, recordings and other resources organised, contextualised and published in compliance with usage rights.
- 6 Bilingual content** — Texts in Romanian and English, developed gradually for local, national and international audiences.

An experience built through connections, not accumulation

An archaeological site can be explored through history, geography, architecture, everyday life and its relationship with the landscape. A rural house can open conversations about materials, crafts, adaptation to climate, family life and the transformation of villages. A wetland can be read simultaneously as natural heritage, economic space, community memory and fragile territory. This ability to bring different layers into dialogue lies at the heart of the museum.



Izvoarele village, Canlia commune

Thematic collections and maps

The final structure will be determined as the content is inventoried and tested editorially. At this stage, the collections below are examples of possible directions rather than a closed list. The museum must remain clear enough for the public and flexible enough to incorporate the region's complexity over time.

Layers of History

Greek, Roman, Romano-Byzantine and medieval archaeology; fortresses, settlements, roads and ports

The Built Landscape of Dobrogea

rural and urban architecture, homesteads, places of worship, infrastructure, industrial and technical heritage

Between the Danube and the Sea

Danube and maritime heritage, fishing, navigation, ports, lighthouses and communities formed around the waters

Living Landscapes

protected natural areas, geology, biodiversity, and the relationship between people, resources and the transformation of the territory

Communities and Identities

ethnic and religious diversity, mobility, local memory, cultural practices and forms of belonging

Crafts, Food and Everyday Life

techniques, objects, gestures, recipes, occupations and knowledge passed down between generations

Not one map, but several ways of reading the territory

The mapping component will be developed in close connection with the structure of the collections. A map of fortresses does not answer the same questions as a map of protected natural areas or one of rural heritage. Dobrorigini will therefore use distinct thematic maps, with filters and layers tailored to the content.

- locating landmarks and opening their profiles directly from the map;
- filtering by period, type of heritage, locality or theme;
- visualising the relationships between heritage, landforms, waters, infrastructure and settlements;
- creating or recommending thematic cultural routes;
- updating the platform progressively, without requiring it to be “complete” from its first version.



Where we begin

“The museum does not start from scratch. It brings existing research and content back into circulation within a new structure, and then expands them.”

The first foundation is “The Danube Route – Dobrorigini”, a project that explored the heritage of Danube communities and developed cultural routes for places such as Topalu, Ghindărești, Lipnița and Ostrov. The materials, articles and observations produced at the time can be revised, expanded and integrated into the museum’s new collections.

This foundation will be complemented by new articles written by Bogdan Bola, desk and online research, fieldwork, photographs, maps and other resources identified along the way. Content will be selected according to its relevance, the quality of its sources, usage rights and its capacity to explain an important connection for understanding Dobrogea.

1

Research

sources, fieldwork,
archives, observation

2

Selection

relevance, rigour, rights

3

Interpretation

context, connections,
accessible language

4

Integration

collections, profiles, maps
and routes

Editorial principles

- rigour without inaccessible language;
- context, not mere descriptions;
- a clear distinction between verified information, interpretation and testimony;
- respect for communities and for the region’s cultural diversity;
- responsible publication of images, documents and data;
- expandable content that can be corrected and supplemented transparently.

Phased development

Dobrorigini is conceived as a long-term cultural infrastructure. We will not attempt to encompass the entire region in a single launch. Each phase must produce a useful, publishable version that can be expanded without rebuilding the project from the ground up.

PHASE I

Building the museum's foundations

We are building the foundation.

Defining the information architecture, curatorial and editorial principles, inventorying existing content and building the core technical structure. The first version will prioritise clarity, navigation and an initial body of Romanian-language content.

Outcome: a functional platform and a coherent publishing method.

PHASE II

The first collections and maps

We expand without losing coherence.

Integrating materials from “The Danube Route”, publishing new articles and profiles, and developing the first thematic collections and associated maps. English-language content will be introduced progressively, beginning with the essential pages.

Outcome: a museum that can be explored thematically and geographically.

PHASE III

Educational and multimedia expansion

We expand without losing coherence.

Developing cultural routes, resources for teachers and pupils, downloadable materials and accessible multimedia formats. The collections will be expanded through research and specialist partnerships.

Outcome: a resource that can be used in education, cultural mediation and field exploration.

PHASE IV

Collaborative archive and local contributions

We expand without losing coherence.

Creating a framework through which communities, institutions and archive holders can submit images, documents, testimonies and other resources. This phase requires clear rules for selection, verification, moderation, attribution and rights management.

Outcome: a museum that not only speaks about communities, but gives them a role in shaping public memory.

Who we are building for

Dobrorigini addresses the general public, but is designed so that the same content can be used in different contexts. Accessibility does not mean simplifying information, but organising it into levels and formats that allow each user to enter the subject at the right point.

Residents of Dobrogea

to rediscover local heritage, strengthen a sense of belonging and increase the visibility of lesser-known resources.

School pupils, students and teachers

for lessons, projects, research, interdisciplinary topics and place-based learning.

Institutions, NGOs and public authorities

for cultural promotion, education, documentation, local strategies and the development of joint projects.

Curious audiences and cultural tourists

to explore the region beyond the usual routes and plan more informed visits.

Researchers and specialists

as a point of reference, a space for dissemination and a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration.

The diaspora and international audiences

for English-language access to a complex, multicultural and insufficiently known European region.



“Intended impact: a more informed and emotionally engaged relationship with heritage. The museum aims not only to generate online visits, but to change the way Dobrogea is perceived: from a tourist backdrop into a living, fragile cultural territory that deserves to be understood.”

Who is building Dobrorigini

Dobrorigini is a joint initiative with distinct and complementary roles. Bogdan Bola remains the project's initiator and one of its principal contributors to research and content. The Youth Vision for Society Association coordinates the museum component and administers the platform, building the editorial, technical and organisational framework required for its long-term development.

Bogdan Bola	initiator; research, documentation and content development
Cristina Stîngu	project coordination, research and development of the museum concept
Bianca Șerban	maps, GIS and territorial analysis
Alexandra Barbu	field coordination and local liaison for the collaborative archive phase
Iliea Omer	communications and adapting messages for diverse audiences
Iustin Tița	online research and digital documentation

An expandable team, just like the museum

As the project advances, the team will be expanded to include historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, architects, biologists, natural heritage specialists, museum professionals, web developers, translators, teachers and cultural mediators. Interdisciplinarity is not an add-on: Dobrogea's complexity requires perspectives that validate and complement one another.

Collaborations will be developed according to each collection and phase, in order to maintain a balance between scholarly rigour, local knowledge, audience experience and the project's real capacity for implementation.



Partnerships and support

“A platform built gradually can grow through clearly defined contributions, not only through a single large budget.”

Dobrorigini is open to collaboration with museums, libraries, archives, universities, schools, cultural and environmental organisations, local authorities, independent specialists, companies and sponsors interested in heritage, education and the development of Dobrogea. Every partnership must make a clear contribution and respect the museum’s editorial independence.

A partner may contribute through

- scholarly expertise, verification and expansion of content;
- access to archives, collections, images, documents or databases;
- field research, local documentation and facilitating relationships with communities;
- web development, GIS, digital accessibility, translation and design;
- support for a collection, a thematic map or a cultural route;
- funding, sponsorship or in-kind contributions for the development phases.

What sponsorship can accelerate

Technology	platform development, GIS maps, hosting and maintenance
Content	research, writing, translation, editing and validation
Documentation	travel, photography, digitisation and usage rights
Education	resources for schools, guides and workshops
Archive	scanning, cataloguing, digital preservation
Public access	communications, mobile optimisation, accessibility

Forms of recognition and visibility for partners and sponsors will be established transparently, in proportion to their contribution, without turning the museum into an advertising product. The quality of the cultural experience and public trust will remain the priority.



10 — A MUSEUM THAT GROWS WITH THE REGION

“Dobrorigini does not promise to exhaust Dobrogea. It promises to research it and tell its story patiently.”

The virtual museum will begin with a clear structure and with resources that we can document and publish responsibly. It will grow through new collections, maps, routes, educational resources, archives and collaborations. Each phase will add depth without losing the coherence of the whole.

The project stands at the intersection of research, education, digital culture and local development. It highlights both established heritage and the places, voices and connections that are often absent from general representations of the region. Through free access and bilingual content, users will be able to engage with Dobrogea even from a distance; through maps and routes, the platform will also be able to accompany them in the field.

Dobrorigini becomes not only a space for information, but an open infrastructure for understanding, interpreting and passing on the heritage of Dobrogea.

An initiative developed by Bogdan Bola and the Youth Vision for Society Association

yvs.ro

For partnerships and support for future phases, please contact us through YVS's public channels.