

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE PROXIMITY OF DRĂGUȘENI VILLAGE (SUCEAVA COUNTY) IN THE LETTERS SENT BY DIMITRIE DRĂGUȘANU TO VASILE CIUREA

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**Rezumat:** Arheologia interbelică românească a fost tributară activității entuziaste a amatorilor. Puținele instituții de specialitate nu puteau acoperi întreg teritoriul țării și erau subfinanțate. Această situație este valabilă și pentru regiunea orașului Fălticeni, unde funcționa un muzeu regional complex încă din 1914. Vasile Ciurea, directorul acestuia, colabora cu numeroși intelectuali din regiune pentru a identifica situri arheologice și a recupera obiecte valoroase pentru instituția pe care o conducea. Unul dintre acești colaboratori a fost Dimitrie Drăgușanu, învățător la Drăgușeni. La Galeria oamenilor de seamă din Fălticeni, în fondul Vasile Ciurea se găsesc cinci cărți poștale trimise acestuia – către Dimitrie Drăgușanu. Ele conțin informații cu privire la cercetările de la Drăgușeni – Cetățuia, întreprinse de cei doi intelectuali, dar și de Vladimir și Hortensia Dumitrescu, precum și despre alte situri arheologice din regiune.

**Résumé:** Entre les deux guerres mondiales, l'archéologie roumaine a dû beaucoup à l'activité enthousiaste des amateurs. Les institutions de spécialité peu nombreuses n'étaient pas capables de couvrir tout le territoire du pays et, en plus, elles étaient sous financées. Ce contexte est valable aussi pour la région de la ville de Fălticeni, où fonctionnait un musée régional complexe de 1914. Vasile Ciurea, le directeur de ce musée, était en relation avec de nombreux intellectuels de la région pour identifier des sites archéologiques et pour récupérer des objets de grande valeur pour l'institution qu'il dirigeait. Parmi ces collaborateurs se retrouve Dimitrie Drăgușanu, instituteur dans le village de Drăgușeni. Galeria oamenilor de seamă de Fălticeni possède cinq cartes postales envoyées par Dimitrie Drăgușanu à Vasile Ciurea. Les cartes postales renferment des informations concernant les recherches de Drăgușeni – Cetățuia, recherches réalisées par les deux intellectuels mentionnés, mais aussi par Vladimir et Hortensia Dumitrescu, et aussi des informations sur d'autres sites archéologiques de la région.

**Abstract:** The Romanian interwar archaeology was an activity dependent of some enthusiastic amateurs. A few specialized institutions could not cover the whole country and were underfunded. This situation was specific for the Falticeni region, where a regional and a complex museum existed since 1914. Vasile Ciurea, its director, worked with many intellectuals in the region to identify archaeological sites and recover the valuable objects for the institution he led. One of these employees was Dimitrie Drăgușanu, a teacher from Drăgușeni. In one of the collections of „Gallery of notable people” can be found five postcards sent by Dimitrie Drăgușanu to Vasile Ciurea. They contain information on investigations from Drăgușeni - Citadel, undertaken by both intellectuals, but also by Vladimir and Hortensia Dumitrescu, and about other archaeological sites in the region.

**Keywords:** *Fălticeni, archaeology, museum, Vasile Ciurea, Dimitrie Drăgușanu, postcard, Drăgușeni, Vladimir Dumitrescu, Cristești, pottery, mounds.*

The Romanian archaeological research after the First World War had much to thank to the activity of the amateurs, since the few institutions of the profile confronted financial problems and the impossibility to cover the whole country. It is the time of the enthusiastic search for beautiful objects, but also of the first museums. Although blamed for lack of professionalism, the amateur archaeologists of this time have not been or have hardly been exceeded, in terms of dedications, by today's professionals.

Could things look different in Fălticeni, a town which gave to the Romanian culture so many intellectuals? Certainly not. Vasile Ciurea's initiative to organize a complex museum here, although regarded with scepticism by so many, had, among other things, the purpose of bringing together the interest of the intellectuals of the region, who found in the display of the archaeological, ethnographical or biological treasures they already had, the highest reward of their effort.

One of the closest collaborators of Vasile Ciurea and Vladimir Dumitrescu was Dimitrie Drăgușanu, a teacher from Drăgușeni, later inspector, who, together with his brother, Ștefan Drăgușanu, a physician from Liteni, were among the constant contributors of the museum<sup>1</sup>. A group of five postal cards from the archives of the *Galeria oamenilor de seamă* from Fălticeni, sent by Dimitrie Drăgușanu to Vasile Ciurea, improves our image regarding the work of these two archaeologists<sup>2</sup>.

The first information about the archaeological research undertaken in the area of the Drăgușeni village was published by Vasile Ciurea in 1931. He claims to have first visited the *Cetățuia* site in the summer of 1920, being led there by George Cardaș, who was at the time teacher in Broșteni<sup>3</sup>, later teacher at the University of Bucharest, himself a friend of the Museum. Nevertheless, the first of the postcards sent to Vasile Ciurea by Drăgușanu that speaks about this site is dated "1<sup>st</sup> February 920"<sup>4</sup>.

Moreover, the text refers to a previous visit of Vasile Ciurea at Drăgușeni – *Cetățuie*, maybe in 1919, during which he recovered at least one vessel. Drăgușanu wishes to clarify a misunderstanding and specifies that in the matter of his own discoveries "all the potsherds are from the same pot, except one, which I suspect to be from the vase you found when you have been to Drăgușeni"<sup>5</sup>. Although the exact place of the discoveries is not indicated, from the other postcards we understand that

<sup>1</sup> V. Ciurea, *Muzeul Fălticeniilor. Două decenii de muncă 1914-1934. Istoricul și activitatea lui*, Fălticeni, 1934, p. 130-137.

<sup>2</sup> We would like to thank to Mister Adrian Cocârță, curator at *Galeria oamenilor de seamă Fălticeni*, for allowing us to use the mentioned postcards, without which the writing of the present paper could not have been possible.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Preistoria. Viața omului primitiv în vechiul ținut al Sucevei (Baia de azi) V*, în *Natura*, 10, 1931, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Galeria oamenilor de seamă*, fond Vasile Ciurea, nr. 736.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

at that time no other archaeological sites apart from *Cetățuia* have been found at Drăgușeni, and we also know that most of the artefacts from the collection of the Drăgușanu brothers originated in this place. We believe that, if the fragments from the two vases intermingled, they must have been dug out by the two from the same place, but we cannot say if that happened the same day, or Drăgușanu came to the same spot later. From the postcard we find out clearly only that Vasile Ciurea had been to Drăgușeni before the summer of 1920, with Dimitrie Drăgușanu or George Cardaș, very probably at *Cetățuia*, the date being other than the one published in the text of the article about the prehistoric discoveries from the Baia county.

In the same text Dimitrie Drăgușanu expresses his impatience to start archaeological research in spring in places that have been indicated by a certain Nastasă Crețu from Broșteni<sup>6</sup>.

The second postcard, dated “Drăgușeni 6 November 1920”<sup>7</sup>, suggests that Ciurea advised Drăgușanu to glue the vase recovered previously, which he did not succeed, because after the adhesive dried out, the potsherds came apart. Dimitrie Drăgușanu also says that, apart from the vase mentioned, he had found, probably in the same place, zoomorphic representations, one whole and two fragments, anthropomorphic representations, two inferior halves and one whole, one flint tool and other objects.

The teacher from Drăgușeni announces the discovery of three other prehistorical sites: Iorcani, com. Tătăruși - *La vișini*, Oniceni, com Forăști – *Oniceni* (probably in the perimeter of the village), visited by Drăgușanu; the cave *La curțile smeilor* from Tătăruși, he had not seen yet, because the cold weather had come. Regarding the ways used to procure these archaeological materials, the text leaves no doubt, as Drăgușanu writes that from the first two sites recovered “few potsherds and flints, because the land froze and I cannot dig anymore”.

The site mentioned at Iorcani – *La vișini*, is unknown to the specialists, in the village area being mapped only two mounds<sup>8</sup>. The information on the existence of an archaeological site in the village Oniceni was later used by Ciurea, who wrote that in this location have been found some prehistoric traces<sup>9</sup>.

At the end of the letter we can find an important piece of information: at that time Dimitrie Drăgușanu wanted to organize a museum at Drăgușeni and needed to consult Vasile Ciurea and ask his help in solving different problems like choosing a suitable adhesive to glue the pottery.

In another postcard from April 10<sup>th</sup> 1921, Dimitrie Drăgușanu expresses his opinion that if Vasile Ciurea wishes to conduct more diggings at *Cetățuia* he should come in the week after Pulm Sunday, when he could be helped by the students coming home at Drăgușeni for the holidays<sup>10</sup>. From this invitation we understand that

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> Galeria oamenilor de seamă, fond Vasile Ciurea, nr. 737.

<sup>8</sup> V. Chirica, M. Tanasachi, *Repertoriul arheologic al județului Iași*, vol. II, Iași, 1985, p. 397-400.

<sup>9</sup> V. Ciurea, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Galeria oamenilor de seamă, fond Vasile Ciurea, nr. 738.

the diggings from the previous years have been undertaken in the same place. The same passionate collaborator of the Museum says that he did not make any diggings at *Cetățuia* in the spring of 1921, because he used his spare time to search other sites. He adds that the presence of human remains has not been confirmed at *Bâtca smeilor* from Tătăruși, probably the same with the one mentioned in the previous letter under the name *La curțile smeilor*, because was nothing more than “a simple cave – more likely a gangway, where a wolf could hardly enter”.

Another postcard sent to Vasile Ciurea is dated a year later, February 26<sup>th</sup> 1922, in Boroaia, where Dimitrie Drăgușanu had moved meanwhile, possibly for reasons related to his job<sup>11</sup>. The author of the letter expresses his regrets that he can no longer offer information on *Cetățuia*, since he left the village. We understand from the text that other diggings took place at Drăgușeni – *Cetățuia* between Aprilie 1921 and February 1922.

We find out that the land where the diggings took place, belonged to the village and was rented for a sum of money, for which was handed a receipt. Two paid workers also took part in the diggings. Drăgușanu promises to bring to Vasile Ciurea the two receipts, although he did not yet have the one for the payment of the workers. The money was probably given by the Fălticeni Museum and Vasile Ciurea needed the receipts to account for it.

At the end of the letter, Drăgușanu declares that he would wish that diggings took place in the summer of 1922 at Drăgușeni at the mounds in the forest when, being on leave, he would return in his village. He probably refers to the two mounds Ciurea said had been found by Drăgușanu in the garden of P. Vasiliu, on the road to the village Uda, com. Tătăruși, 1 km away from *Cetățuia*, in the fall of 1920. From the text published by Ciurea in 1931 we understand that Drăgușanu cut through one of them, but also that new research had been made, that he promises to publish another time, which never happened<sup>12</sup>.

The last postcard from the group is dated 21<sup>th</sup> August (postdate August 25<sup>th</sup> 1926)<sup>13</sup>. The text makes interesting observations on the research made by Vladimir and Hortensia Dumitrescu at Drăgușeni – *Cetățuia*, where they came invited by Dimitrie Drăgușanu<sup>14</sup>. In the postcard he informs Vasile Ciurea that Vladimir Dumitrescu left Drăgușeni on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and that “in the digging in the coast he found beautiful idols and many painted vessels”, which was confirmed by the article published later<sup>15</sup>. Apparently Dimitrie Drăgușanu did not participate directly at the diggings organize by Hortensia and Vladimir Dumitrescu, although the two archaeologists found out about the site from him.

<sup>11</sup> Galeria oamenilor de seamă, fond Vasile Ciurea, nr. 739.

<sup>12</sup> V. Ciurea, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Galeria oamenilor de seamă, fond Vasile Ciurea, nr. 371.

<sup>14</sup> Vl. Dumitrescu, *Une nouvelle station a céramique peinte dans le Nord-Ouest de la Moldavie*, în *Dacia*, III-IV (1927-1930), 1933, p. 115; Idem, *Oameni și cioburi*, Călărași, 1993, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, *op. cit.*, 1933, p. 115-149.

The last part of the letter is dedicated to an invitation that Drăgușanu makes to Vasile Ciurea to visit the archaeological site from Cristești, whose owner, Sturza, was about to leave from his mansion on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August. Obviously, taking into account the postal date from the postcard, the letter arrived too late. From the article published by Vladimir Dumitrescu we know that he would have liked very much to research the site from Cristești, and not the one from Drăgușeni, because the state of conservation of the ceramic material, but that was impossible, because the owner did not approve of this<sup>16</sup>.

Later, Vasile Ciurea visited the site and presented it in his papers<sup>17</sup>, and Vladimir Dumitrescu mentioned the materials from the Drăgușanu collection in an article published on the occasion of other systematic and surface research, made in the Baia county in September 1933<sup>18</sup>.

Probably after Dimitrie Drăgușanu left Drăgușeni, he abandoned the ambitious project of founding a museum in his village, but his efforts were not in vain. The papers published by Vladimir Dumitrescu and Vasile Ciurea made the site from the *Cetățuia* hill known to the international archaeological community. Most of the objects from the Drăgușanu brothers collection was donated to the Fălticeni Museum some time before 1934<sup>19</sup>. In the years that followed the founding of the communist collective farms the site was significantly destroyed by the Soviet type tractors. Even so, the settlement continued to be an important landmark for the research of the Cucuteni civilisation, new diggings being undertaken by Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc in 1989.

### Postcards:

Nr. 736.

1 Fevr. 920

Domnule profesor,

Am primit scrisoarea D<sup>v</sup>. Duminică am căutat să mă întâlnesc cu D<sup>v</sup>. dar erați foarte ocupat. Nu știu ce au spus băieții, dar toate hârburile sunt din aceeași oală, afară de un singur hârb, care bănuiesc a fi din vasul ce l'ați găsit D<sup>v</sup>. când ați fost la Drăgușeni. Eu singur am reconstituit oala și am văzut că lipsește numai ceva din fund și ceva din gură. Cred că săptămâna aceasta am să vii pe la Fălticeni și voi căuta să mă întâlnesc cu D<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> V. Ciurea, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 20-21.

<sup>18</sup> Vl. Dumitrescu, *Funde im Bezirk Baia (Moldau)*, Dacia, IX-X (1941-1944), 1945, p. 521-530.

<sup>19</sup> V. Ciurea, *op. cit.*, 1934, p. 94; *Idem, op. cit.*, 1931, p. 19-20.

La vești noi vă pot spune că abea aștept primăvara să încep cercetările în locuri ce mi-au fost spuse de Nastasă Crețu din Broșteni și nădăjduesc a descoperi frumoase lucruri.

Vă salut,  
D<sup>tru</sup> Drăgușanu

Nr. 737

Drăgușeni, 6 Noemvrie 920

Stimate Domnule profesor,

Am ascultat sfatul D<sup>v</sup> și am încercat să lipesc oala. După ce se usucă, se desprinde, așa că n'am putut face nimic. E păcat să nu se poată avea un asemenea vas și drept să vă spun, ar fi păcat și de munca mea. Două săptămâni am stat de am potrivit hârburile.

În afară de această oală, am mai găsit idoli: un bou întreg, un cap de bou, două picioare de om și un trup de om cu cap, precum și capul unui animal(?). Am mai găsit o bombă de silex și diferite.

Am descoperit încă 3 localități preistorice: 1. „La vișini” Iorcani-Tătăruși, 2. „Oniceni” Oniceni-Forăști. Din aceste două am adus puține hârburi și silexuri, căci a înghețat și nu mai pot săpa. 3. După spusa oamenilor, tot așa de interesantă, dacă nu mai mult, ar fi peștera „La curțile smeilor” Tătăruși – în pădure. Acolo însă n'am fost. A venit frigul prea curând.

Dle profesor, ca unul ce vreau cu orice chip să întemeieze muzeu în Drăgușeni, n'am uitat promisiunea D<sup>v</sup>. Joi vin în Fălticeni. Poate veți fi găsit și ceva de lipit.

Cu deosebită stimă,  
D. Drăgușanu

Nr. 738

10 Aprilie 1921

Domnule Ciurea,

Dacă voiți a mai săpa la „Cetățuia” puteți să veniți în săptămâna de după Florii, când sunt și normalişti în sat cari ar putea lucra.

În primăvara aceasta eu n'am mai săpat deloc, căci am fost ocupat cu altele și timpul liber, puțin cât l'am avut, l'am întrebuințat cu cercetări în alte părți.

Astfel, m'am convins că la „Bâtea smeilor” dela Tătăruși, despre care vorbește atât legendele din popor nu e nimic. O mică peșteră, - mai mult un gang unde abea ar putea pătrunde un lup. Încolo nici o urmă, nici un alt semn.

Dacă puteți veni, mi-ați face plăcere.

Vă salut,  
D. Drăgușanu

Nr. 739

Boroaea, 26 II 922

Domnule profesor,

Vă mulțumesc pentru urările ce-mi trimiteți. Acum când am părăsit Drăgușeni, puține informații vă mai pot da relativ la „Cetățuie”. Am la mine chitanța de plată a pământului închiriat dela obștie, pe care vă voi aduce-o. Chitanța de la cei doi oameni cari au săpat n’o am. Cred că o voi aduce-o și aceia. La vară, voi fi la Drăgușeni. Aș dori să se facă ceva săpături la movilele din pădure.

D<sup>voastră</sup> ce noutăți mai aveți? Când vii la Fălticeni, voi veni pe la D<sup>v</sup> să vă aduc chitanțele.

Vă salut

D. Drăgușanu - Boroaea

Nr. 371

21 August

Drăgușeni

Stimate Domnule Profesor,

Abia azi ajungând acasă am găsit scrisoarea D<sup>voastră</sup> și vă rog să mă iertați că nu m-am ținut de cuvânt așa cum făgăduisem. D<sup>l</sup> Dumitrescu a plecat la 15, în ziua nunții fratelui meu și de atunci și până azi am fost tot călător. În săpătura din coastă a găsit idoli de o frumusețe și multe vase pictate. Am închipuit și eu ceva din cele săpate acolo prin băieții ce săpau.

Dacă dispuneți de timp, vă rog veniți pentru Cristești, căci D<sup>l</sup> Sturza pleacă la 25 Aug. Eu comunic lui Trițescu că sosiți Marți. Rog telefonați-mi pentru cazul când nu puteți veni.

Vă salut,

D. Drăgușanu