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“CUCUTENI FOR THE IIIRD MILLENNIUM” FOUNDATION

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In 1998, Dr. Romeo Dumitrescu, a lover of art and a passionate collector, put the foundation of a nongovernmental organization, having as main objective the financial support of the archeological research of the Cucuteni civilization and the popularization of the splendors of this Aeneolithic culture which, along the 120 years that passed since its discovery, fascinates more and more the scientific world and those in love with history and beauty.

This way “Cucuteni for the IIIrd Millennium” Foundation was born led by Romeo and Emilia Dumitrescu – up to this moment the only private organization from Romania which offers financial support for the research of the Neolithic and Aeneolithic periods, with special attention to the Moldavia. In the climate of political, economic and social transition from Romania after 1989 appeared, for many of the archaeologists studying the Neolithic and Aeneolithic periods, the impossibility of continuing their field research out of financial reasons. The appearance of “Cucuteni for the IIIrd Millennium” Foundation and its energetic intervention for the promotion of the research dedicated to the Cucutenian period represented a real “life buoy” for the existing archaeological sites as well as for the opening of new points of investigation.

A first problem was represented by the protection of archaeological sites, as the change in the regime of the property, as well as the uncertainty in the transition from one form of property to another, prevented, in some cases, the access of the archaeologists to the research of the sites. The solution was the acquisition by the Foundation of some pieces of land of archaeological interest and their transformation in archaeological reservations for the purpose of their research. The first step was done with the important site from Poduri – *Dealul Ghindaru* (Bacău County), the only *tell* type site from the entire area of the Cucuteni-Tripolie cultural complex, step that allowed the resuming of the research there after a stagnation of four years. The following step was the acquisition of the site from Isaiia – *Balta Popii* (Răducăneni, Iași County) which offered exceptional findings from the Precucuteni period, as well as of the site from Crețești, (Vaslui County), dating from Cucuteni A period.

In all these sites, the Foundation sustained financially the field research, as well as the activity of cleaning, conserving and restoring of the material resulted from the excavation. Besides this, the Foundation, alone or in collaboration with other institutions, was involved in the printing of some books, catalogues, folders whose aim was to bring to the attention of the specialists and of the large public the results of the research of the archaeological sites¹. Recently, the Foundation became co-editor of the *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica* publication, together with the Interdisciplinary Center of Archaeohistorical Studies and with the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology from the “Al. I. Cuza” University, sustaining financially the publication.

The Foundation participated, with pieces from its own collection, at a series of exhibitions: București (2000, 2004), Piatra Neamț (2001, 2003, 2005), Brașov (2001), Sf. Gheorghe (2001), Călărași (2004), Ploiești (2004), Bacău (2005), Târgoviște (2005). The Foundation also received in concession, in 2004, the building of the old school from Poduri (Bacău County) where it would organize the Museum of the archaeological site from Dealu Ghindaru. An important project of the Foundation is the organization, in the following years, of a “Museum of the Cucuteni-Tripolie Culture and Civilization”. In order to enhance the museum value of the discovered pieces, the Foundation formed a team of restorers, intending to develop more this activity.

The “Cucuteni for the IIIrd Millennium” Foundation has a series of collaborations with scientific institutions from Romania and from abroad among which are the following: the Archaeological Institute from Iași, the National Museum of Romania’s History, Lakehead University from Ontario (Canada) – for DNA studies on Neolithic and Medieval skeletons, the Interdisciplinary Center of Archaeohistorical Studies and the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology from the “Al. I. Cuza” University of

¹* Executive Secretary of the “Cucuteni for the IIIrd Millennium” Foundation.

Dan Monah, Dragomir Popovici, *O lume regăsită. Satul cucutenian de la Poduri*, București, 2000, 16 p.; Gh. Dumitroaia, Dan Monah (eds.), *Artă eneolitică. Cucuteni*, Editura “Constantin Matasă”, Piatra Neamț, 2002, 91 p.; Mădălin Cornel Văleanu, *Omul și mediul natural în neo-eneoliticul din Moldova*, Iași, 2003, 285 p.; idem, *Așezări neo-eneolitice din Moldova*, Iași, 2003, 232 p. + 120 pl.; Dan Monah et alii, *Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru. O Troie în Subcarpații Moldovei*, Piatra Neamț, 2003, 248 p.; N. Ursulescu, Sorin Ignătescu, *Pretești-Haltă. O așezare cucuteniană pe valea Șomuzului Mare*, Iași, 157 p.; Fundația „Cucuteni pentru Mileniul III”, *Cultura Cucuteni. Magia ceramicii*, București, 2004, 40 p.

Iași, the Neamț County Museum Complex with its International Center for the Research of Precucuteni Culture. The collaboration with archaeologists from the Republic of Moldavia and from Ukraine for the study in common of the Cucuteni-Tripolie civilization is also important for the Foundation.

In collaboration with the National Centre of Cinematography and with “Imago Design” firm, the Foundation made, in 2004, the documentary “Adam’s Nephews”, which starts from the idea that the Biblical flood would be the cause of the sudden disappearance of the Cucuteni civilization.

From the point of view of its organization, the Foundation has a team of more than ten researchers in the field of archaeology (doctors, candidates for a doctor’s degree, students in the final year) which activates both at Bucharest and at the Iași branch having as a main preoccupation the study of the Cucuteni civilization. This way, the Foundation is also involved in the formation of the future specialists in the research of the Neolithic and Aeneolithic periods, supporting the research activity of the young candidates for a doctor’s degree and students. The desire is to stimulate the research of the Cucuteni culture, considering the fact that up to this moment less than 5% of the total number of known cucutenian settlements was researched. With the same purpose, the Foundation sustained financially the participation of its members, especially of the young researchers, at various international scientific manifestations (in Belgium, France, Ukraine).

For its activity in the short period elapsed since its setting up, the Foundation and its members received appreciation and distinctions. Thus, in 2002, the president of the Foundation, Dr. Romeo Dumitrescu, received from the Ministry of Culture and Cults the distinction for the protection of patrimony. In November 2003, *Ford Motor Company* gave the IIIrd prize for the protection of the environment and patrimony to the University Assistant Vasile Cotiugă, collaborator of the Foundation, for his project of experimental archaeology at Cucuteni. In 2004, the Ministry of Culture and Cults gave to Dr. Romeo Dumitrescu the Excellency Diploma and the president of Romania – the Cultural Merit Order, commander’s degree.

From the Foundation’s programs and projects for the near future we mention:

- the starting of the “European Romania” editorial project, consisting in the elaboration of 10 volumes dedicated to the art from Neolithic up to the present moment;

- carrying on with the presentation of archaeological

exhibitions with Cucutenian theme both in the country (Târgoviște, Piatra Neamț, Sibiu, Brașov, Tulcea, Timișoara) and abroad (at British Museum, Vatican and Beijing);

- the organization of the Museum of the site from Poduri (Bacău County);
- carrying on with the archaeological experiments from Cucuteni and Vădastra, with special attention for the explanation of the way in which the Neolithic houses burned;
- the making of a documentary on the archaeological experiment from Cucuteni in 2004-2005;
- the enlarging and the specializing of the restoration group of the Foundation;
- the participation of some of the members of the Foundation at the International Congress of Pre- and Protohistorical Sciences at Lisabona (2006);
- the publication of specialized books and journals;
- to start the formalities for the opening, at Bucharest, of the National Museum of the Cucuteni Culture and Civilization;
- the opening, at Moinești, of a museum of religions (Noah's Ark), a construction having the shape of a ship, having 108 m in length, 50 m in height and 10 m in width.

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