REFLECTIONS ON THE SETTLEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE POIENEȘTI-LUCAȘEUCA CULTURE

Abstract: We shall discuss herein the Poienești-Lucașeuca culture settlements. To date, in central and northern Moldavia there were identified approximately 200 archaeological sites, deemed Poienești-Lucașeuca type settlements. Approximately 40% were systematically excavated or examined by sondages, the other being known only by field research. Within the settlements investigated by archaeological excavations there were found several archaeological features: houses, fire installations, pits, “workshops”, outbuildings, cult pits and features.

Keywords: the East-Carpathian forest steppe, the recent pre-Roman Iron Age, the Poienești-Lucașeuca culture, habitat sites.

It is known that by the end of the 3rd century BC, in the area between the Eastern Carpathians and the Dniester there occurred a series of ethnic-cultural and socio-economic changes having as result the establishment of the Poienești-Lucașeuca culture in the east-Carpathian forest steppe. According to the information supplied by written sources, this period is characterised by the advance in respective region of certain populations known as the Bastarnae, with their three branches – the Peucini, Sidoni and Atmoni – the Scirii and the Galattii. The “homeland” of these tribes seems to be northern Central Europe.

Since the study of the Poienești-Lucașeuca culture settlements is still an imperative issue for the research of the Middle and Late La Tène periods in the east-Carpathian region, we proposed to analyse herein this category of sites.

Firstly, we noted there are no exhaustively researched Poienești-Lucașeuca settlements. Views on the issue are few and also inconclusive since said culture did not benefit, in the recent years, of any special attention.

We mention that the archaeological investigations carried out in

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3 PSEUDO-SKYMYNOS v. 797; STRABON II, 5, 30, VII, 3, 15; TITUS LIVIUS XL, 57, 2; POLIBIU, XXVI, 9, 1.

4 TITUS LIVIUS XL, 57, 2; the Olbian decree to the honour of Protogenes.

5 BABEȘ 1993, 158-162; IARMULSCHI 2013, 29.
the central and northern regions of Moldavia yielded approximately 200 archaeological sites deemed habitat sites⁸ (Fig. 1). Amongst, in only approximately 40% of the sites, systematic excavations or archaeological sondages were conducted.

The Poieniști-Lucașeaua settlements are, without exception, open settlements. In seven cases – Arșura, Mășcațu, Moșna, Poiana Mănăstirii, Rudi¹⁴ Trebujeni Potârca and Victoria¹⁵ – they lay within the perimeter of 12 houses there were built not far from one. archaeological features were identified, in the other five cases being recovered only potshards specific to the Poieniști-Lucașeaua culture.

With few exceptions, the settlements lay just nearby water sources, a fact common to the entire historical period. Topographically, they are located either on the smooth slope of certain valleys descending to water sources or in places on the first or second river terraces (Fig. 2; 3). Moreover, there are cases when the habitat sites lay on high relief (Fig. 4).

The size issue of these site categories seems to be rather complicated. This is due to the fact that relevant data on the settlement' surface may be obtained only upon their complete research and not by sondages or field walks, which provide incomplete information. Regrettfully, neither the geomagnetic exploration is more precise, especially when the sites include several cultural levels. This is the case, for instance, of the site at Brănești – Marignea de Vest, where the Poieniști-Lucașeaua settlement overlaps a Cucuteni-Tripolie culture site⁹ (Fig. 5).

As previously mentioned, until present no settlement was fully researched, so that data on habitat site sizes are few. From available data, it was assumed their surface could vary between 1-3 ha (Ghelăiești, Lucașeuca II; Brănești – Marignea de Vest)¹⁰ and 8-10 ha (Botoșana, Lunca Ciurei)¹¹. Another aspect which we wish to discuss herein is represented by settlement groups. Noticeably, (Fig. 1) the area between the Bârlad and the Prut was rather densely inhabited. Several settlement clusters may be evidenced on the Siret and its tributary, the Moldova. Another compact site group is delimited on the middle Prut course. In the area comprised between the Răut and Botna there is another site cluster. Lastly, another compact group of settlements is delimited on the middle Dniester.

⁸ We note that potshards specific to the Poieniști-Lucașeaua culture were found also outside the area of the said cultural group. We mention to this effect the settlements at Morești, Mureș county (HOREĐT 1979, 35-52; BABEȘ 1993, 207, Taf. 46/11-14; BERECKI 2008), Satu-Nou, Constanța county (IRMIA/CONOVIĆ 1989, 122, Fig. 15/3; 171/1; 19/10; 24/1-11; 29/1-6; CONOVIĆ 1992, 3-12; BABEȘ 1993, 229, Taf. 52/1-14); Seușa, Alba county (FERENCZ/CIUTĂ 2005, 239-254) and Novoselskoe II (БРУЯКО 2005, 239-254) and Păunescu/Sâdurschi/Chirica 2009, 346, Pusc. 5/7, 6/4.9.
¹⁰ POMAHOBCKAJ 1963, 28-29.
¹¹ FLORESCU/MELENEȚ 1968, 129-134.
¹⁴ NICULIȚĂ/MAȚVEE/POTĂNGĂ 1999, 299-300.305.
¹⁵ PĂUNESCU/SÂDURSCHI/CHIRICA 2009, 56.
¹⁶ FLORESCU/MELENEȚ 1968, 129-134.
¹⁸ MEYER et alii 2016, 313.
¹⁹ BABEȘ 1993, 22-199; PELOPOB 1960, 19; MEYER et alii 2016, 312.
²⁰ TEODOR 1969, 34; BABEȘ 1993, 22.
site is different, mostly determined by the scale of the investigations. Most of them were examined in the sites at Botoșana, Lozna Hlibicioc (9 houses), Goroșovo (7 houses), Lucașeuca II (7 houses), Lunca Ciurei (7 houses) and Orheiul Vechi (6 houses).

The archaeological research determined that over the 2nd – 1st centuries BC, in central and northern Moldavia, two house types were used: 1) surface houses; 2) sunken houses. Commonly, in the same settlement both types co-existed. There are cases though, when in a site, only one type of houses was found. Thus, at Kruglik only surface houses were identified, while at Orheiul Vechi and Sokol only sunken buildings were found.

Based on preliminary notes, it was established a numerical ratio of 37 surface houses to 82 sunken houses. This ratio is approximate as long as already conducted excavations in some of the Poienesti-Lucașeuca settlements remain unpublished and until a larger number of archaeological sites are researched.

Surface houses. As mentioned, of the 119 houses excavated, 37 are surface habitation features. Their shape, more or less precise, was established in 21 cases. They were rectangular or quasi-rectangular. For instance, we mention H. 5 at Lunca Ciurei (Fig. 8/2). Its shape was quasi-rectangular, it had 4.5x3 m sides and NNE-SSW orientation. House no. 2 at Dolhești Mari was rectangular flat, with the sides sized 4.85 x 3.9 m (Fig. 8/5) and oriented NNE-SSW.

Taking into account the sizes of the surface houses, three categories may be delimited: small, average and large. In the first category, which is most numerous, are included the habitation features with a surface varying from 6 to 11 sqm – feature B at Borosești, H. 12 at Botoșana (Fig.). The surface habitation features in the category of those average occupy a surface varying from 12 sqm – H. 8 at Botoșana (Fig. 8/3) up to 32 sqm – H. 3 at Lucașeuca II (Fig. 9/1). Large surface houses are rarely recorded. The surface of these features oscillates from 32.8 sqm – H. 2 at Kruglik (Fig. 9/3) to 48 sqm – H. 3 at Kruglik (Fig. 8/6).

The rooms' set-up is relatively uniform, in most cases these are single-room spaces. To date, only a single house with two rooms is known – H. 2 at Kruglik (Fig. 9/3).

Heating systems were present for certain in 15 of the 37 surface houses. They are usually represented by hearths. Only H. 3 at Lucașeuca II and H. 3 at Kruglik were provided with kilns. As yet, there are only two cases, both in the settlement at Kruglik (H. 1 and 2) (Fig. 9/2-3), where inside the same house there were identified two heating installations. Regularly, hearths were set in one of the house corners. Thus, of the 13 surface houses where hearths were identified with certainty, four lay in the north-eastern corner and only one in the northern, north-western, western and eastern corners, in the other cases on one of the sides – yet never on the southern side – or in the middle of the habitation feature (Fig. 8/2-4; 9/2-3). In terms of the kilns, we mention that in H. 3 in the site at Lucașeuca II (Fig. 9/1) it was set nearby the western side of the feature, and in H. 3 at Kruglik (Fig. 8/6) the kiln was built in the middle of the house.

Thus, we may conclude that commonly, the fire installation within surface houses occupied the peripheral area of the feature, often one of its corners, and rarely near one of the sides. We believe this was only natural as such planning allowed maximum use of the house surface, which was anyhow small.

Noticeable, almost half of the fire installations lay in the northern side of the houses. On the other hand, there are no cases when they were set on the southern side or the southern corner of the house. Hence, we may assume that access into the surface house was made from the southern side. This seems rather logical, since it protected the house against cold winds, whose predominant direction was from the north or east.

Of the 15 surface houses with the place where the hearth or kiln lay was identified with precision, only H. 8 at Botoșana (Fig. 8/4) had a pit dug nearby the hearth. It most likely was designed to deposit the ash.

The floor of the surface houses, was not, usually, specially made, consisting of battered clay. In some cases though, it was carefully worked. This is the case of H. 3 at Kruglik (Fig. 8/6), where the floor was made of a 4-5 cm thick-clay coating layer, formed, very likely subsequent to repetitive treatments. Moreover, it is not excluded that while in use, the houses' floors were covered with planks or hides.

It is very difficult to assess how the walls and roofs of the surface houses were built. They were likely placed on the ground, supported by a timber frame stuck in the ground over which was applied a layer of clay coating mixed with straws or other perishable materials. Traces of postholes, representing the timber frame of the house were identified in H. no. 1-3 from the settlement at Kruglik (Fig. 8/6; 9/2-3) and in H. 3 in the site at Lucașeuca II (Fig. 9/1).

Regarding the roof of such buildings, we agree with T. Arnăut's views, according to which surface houses had a gabled roof. It was supported on the sides by wall plates set in the upper side of the walls, while the rafter tie was bolstered by a girdle supported at its turn by the row of the central posts. The rafters were made of beams bolstered on...
a ridge and wall plates set one beside the other. Over this structure were placed thatches, reed or other perishable materials attached to the roof’s timber framework.

An important issue of such building types is the appreciation of their purpose – habitation/dwelling features or buildings designed for household activities. In the scholarly literature, the view according to which the lack of heating installations inside most surface houses indicates they were used for household needs is well-established. However, for the given period, portable hearths are well known. Therefore, the absence of the hearths is no relevant indication for the separation between the dwelling/habitation features and household appendages. Furthermore, the ethnographic research has shown that many of these buildings, lacking the heating installation, might have been used as temporary shelter until the proper house was built, or that they were inhabited only during the summer. The insofar small number of such feature types impedes any generalisation on their purpose.

**Sunken houses.** The basic criterion delimiting this house type is the depth of their floors. Thus, ethnographically, two sunken house variants may be delimited: huts and half-huts. Since archaeologically it is difficult to accurately separate among these two variants, we shall further use the term of sunken houses. Usually, the depth of their floors varies between 0.5 and 0.8 m from the ancient surface level – feature 1 at Orheiul Vechi, the half-hut 2 at Goroșovo – and in some cases between 0.2 and 0.45 m – feature D at Ghelăiești, H. 11 at Lozna Hlibicioc. (Fig. 10/6). Since foundations were required, we may not exclude the possibility that in the latter case, such features were in fact surface houses. According to some scholars, these are the cases when the use of the term “sunken featured buildings” is much more appropriate.

When the land was sloping, for horizontal floors, the depth of the house varied much from one edge to another. This is the case for instance of H. 1 at Lunca Ciurei, whose depth varies between 0.3 to 0.75 m from the ancient surface level (Fig. 9/5). We also mention H. 4 at Rudi, whose floor on the southern side lay at 0.5 m deep, while the northern at 0.24 m from the ancient surface level.

Based on the observations made until now, it was established that sunken houses had, from the point of view of their layout, a large variety of forms. Thus, H. 1 at Lunca Ciurei (Fig. 9/5) was rectangular with well outlined corners and sides of 5x3.75 m. House no. 3 at Dolhestii Mari (Fig. 9/6) was also rectangular with the sides of 2.9x2 m. In the Poienesti-Lucașeaua culture environment there are also rectangular sunken houses with rounded corners. For instance, we mention feature no. 4 at Orheiul Vechi. It was rectangular with rounded corners, while the sides were sized 4.4x3.6 m. There are also flat oval houses too. For instance H. 2 at Lucașeaua II (Fig. 9/4) was oval with 4.4x3.1 m sides.

Notably, the sizes of such features were not large, usually varying from 12 to 24 sqm. There are though also cases when they were even smaller in surface. Thus, H. A in the settlement at Ghelăiești was sided 3x2.5 m, and the half-hut 1 at Botoșana (Fig. 9/7) occupied a surface of ca. 9 sqm.

In 35 of the sunken houses fire installations were clearly delimited – either hearths or kilns. Regularly, they were represented by hearths. In most cases, the fire installations were placed in one of the corners of the house – six in the western corner, four in the north-western corner, two in either the north corner or the north-eastern corner and once in the southern and south-eastern corner. In 12 cases they were placed on one of the sides – four on the western side, two on the south-western and northern side and once on the southern, south-eastern, eastern and north-eastern side (Fig. 9/5-6: 10/1-2.4). Within the same context, we specify that in seven cases the fire installations were discovered in the middle of the houses (Fig. 9/7). Thus, alike in surface houses, fire installations commonly occupied the peripheral area of the sunken buildings, which was somewhat natural as such planning allowed the maximum use of the house surface.

In six cases – half-huts 1.3-4.9 at Goroșovo and H. 6 at Lucașeaua II and H. 1 at Roșiori Dulcești – nearby the fire installations were identified pits (Fig. 10/2-5). Some, likely, served to deposit the ash.

The identification of the access inside the houses is very difficult, since in most cases, any such traces are impossible to identify. Nevertheless, in the present, there are certain data which partially resolve this issue. Thus, on the southern and eastern side of feature no. 53 at Orheiul Vechi (Fig. 10/7) an entry step with a maximum height of 0.25 m was identified. Similar circumstances were recorded in the case of the half-hut no. 4 at Botoșana (Fig. 10/1), where the access niche lay on the eastern side of the structure. The half-hut no. 3 in the settlement at Goroșovo (Fig. 10/2) was provided on the western side with an access threshold sized 1.4x1.2 m.

Very rarely within the sunken houses were identified pits, whose functionality, likely, was that of food storages. We shall detail such features below.

In general, traces of the furniture playing the role of beds or tables could not be identified. Sometimes though, within some dwelling/habitation features were reported larger steps, which possibly, were used as furniture. Thus, the half-hut no. 7 at Goroșovo was provided on the southern...
and south-western side with a bench sized 2.6x1.3 m². Similar circumstances were identified in half-hut no. 1 from the same site. In this case, the half-oval feature sized 1.6x0.8 m was identified on the south-western side of the house. It likely served as bed or table.

Usually, the floor of the sunken-featured buildings was simple, made of battered clay. There is only one case, to date, namely feature D/SIV in the site at Borosesthi, where the floor was slightly burnt. We do not exclude the possibility that when used, the floor was covered with planks or hides.

Similarly to the surface houses, it is difficult to identify how walls and roofs were built. Hence, we may hypothetically outline three categories of sunken houses: 1) features where within the pit perimeter, post prints were identified, supporting the walls and roof; 2) buildings with a single post supporting the roof; 3) houses without such pits.

The first category is characterised by the fact that the walls were supported by timber posts whose traces were delimited within the pit perimeter. For instance, H. 2 in the settlement at Lucașeuca II (Fig. 9/4). There were uncovered six postholes, with a diameter varying from 0.2 to 0.5 m, grouped as three on the eastern and western sides of the house.

The second category of buildings is characterised by the presence of a single posthole. For instance, feature no. 53 in the site at Orheiul Vechi (Fig. 10/7), in the middle of which was discovered a posthole with a depth of 0.1 m from floor level.

Lastly, the last category of buildings, which is most numerous, is characterised by the lack of postholes, the walls and roofs being supported, likely, on timber skids set on the edge of the house pit.

Since such buildings were sunken, usually, by at most 1 m from the ancient surface level, we may assume their walls were built, alike the surface houses, of a timber frame, coated with a clay layer. The roof, of which details regarding its construction are unknown, was likely, gabled and made of timber, thatch, reed and other perishable materials.

Similarly to the surface houses, an issue still debated in the scholarly literature, is represented by the function of the sunken buildings. We join the view expressed by some of the German and Polish scholars arguing that they might have fulfilled multiple functions – that of a dwelling, for cooking, storage purposes, as waving space etc. Several finds support such an approach. For instance, H. 3 at Sokol was provided, near the eastern side, with a 1.8x1.2 m sized flat oval pit. It was in fact, the entrance to a cellar-type structure, sized 2.8x2.25 m and 1.25 m deep.

That in some cases waving was performed in the sunken buildings is suggested by the find of precisely 24 spindle weights in H. 4 at Lucașeuca II. It is worth mentioning that some ancient authors, namely Pliny, report that the Germans practiced weaving “…in pits and below the ground”.

**Household appendages.** Within the houses and nearby were discovered various household appendages. They are represented by – kilns, hearths, outbuildings and pits. We shall analyse each of them below.

**Kilns.** Such fire installations were discovered in both houses – H. 1 at Lucașeuca II (Fig. 11/1), H. 3 in the site at Kruglik (Fig. 8/6) and outside them – the settlement at Lucașeuca II. Depending on the material used for their construction, two types were distinguished:

The first type is represented by kilns made of clay and vegetal materials. They were sunken into the ground by 0.15–0.2 m and were rectangular with rounded corners. Such structures were recorded in the settlement at Lucașeuca II and Ghelăiești.

The second type includes kilns made of a stone bed with the dome bound with clay mixed with potshards, pebbles and perishable materials. Such fire installations were discovered in H. 3 in the site at Kruglik (Fig. 8/6) and H. 6 at Lucașeuca II.

The presence of fire installations within houses or nearby seem to indicate they were used for cooking or bread baking. It is possible that the kilns discovered outside the habitation features had been provided with timber structures, whose traces did not survive.

**Hearth.** Houses were usually heated by hearths, which in only exceptional cases – H. 1 and H. 2 at Kruglik (Fig. 9/2-3) – appear double placed at the centre or near one of the house walls. As mentioned in the description of the habitation features, there is a choice for placing them in the north-east and north-west corners of the rooms. We specify that hearths and their remains were also discovered outside the houses.

When they lay outside the habitation features, they were built near the houses. For instance, outdoor hearths were found near H. 3 and H. 5 at Rudi. Similar circumstances were recorded in the settlement at Botoșana. There, such fire installations were found near H. 11 and the half-huts 13 and 15. A case somewhat special was noted in the site at Gorosovo, where six outdoor hearths were investigated with only one situated near a habitation feature, the other being found around some pits.

Based on the material used in arranging the hearths, we delimited two types:

1. Hearth made of stone material. Usually, they appear as fired stone clusters with a surface of ca. 1 sqm – H. 1 at Kruglik (Fig. 9/2), the half-hut no. 1 at Botoșana (Fig. 11/1), and 2) hearths – H. 1 at Lucașeuca II (Fig. 8/6) and H. 6 at Lucașeuca II.
In the Poienești-Lucașeuca settlements were features, it is possible. In our view, features are household buildings, which most often are similar in shape and sizes with the houses. Possibly, this is why some of them were deemed habitation features. An eloquent example to this effect is represented by several surface "houses" in the settlement at Cucorăni (Fig. 11/7-8), measuring at most 4 sqm. In our view, features with such a surface were not habitable, hence their inclusion in the outbuildings category.

Likely, most outbuildings were small surface buildings, reason for which only a few were identified archaeologically. Moreover, as supposed, in the case of some sunken features dating to the Roman period from Germany, it is possible that those sunken more into the ground and of a smaller surface, had been used as cellars. For instance, we may mention H. A in the settlement at Ghelăiaști, sunken by 1.3 m from the ancient surface level and surfaced only 7 sqm.

We wish to mention that in the Poienești-Lucașeuca culture environment there are outbuildings with a very large surface. To this effect we mention the surface feature no. 2 in the settlement at Orheiul Vechi, covering a surface of ca. 12x10 m and oriented on a SSE-NNW direction. The archaeological remains of the building consist of stone clusters, potshards and animal bones. It is difficult to establish the functionality of this feature with certainty, yet given the large number of clusters identified (approximately 30), one may suppose it served as an outbuilding storing the household goods.

Another structure, likely made for food storage, is feature no. 1 in the same site (Fig. 10/8). It is a sunken irregular flat building, composed of two rooms linked by an approximately 1.2 m wide space. The shape of the rooms resembled a rectangular with rounded sides, each with a surface of ca. 12 sqm. At floor level, there were identified 5 pits (two and respectively three). The pits were flat circular, their diameter varying between 1.1 and 1.8 m, while their depth was comprised between 1.1-1.35 m.

Another outbuilding possibly used to store household goods is represented by feature no. 3 in the site at Sokol. It was discovered nearby H. 6 at Botoșana – or directly on the ground. They, when well preserved, represented a burnt earth lens with remains of firing traces around.

Since such features were recorded within both the houses and around them, we assume they were used for cooking and room heating as well.

Outbuildings. They are household buildings, which most often are similar in shape and sizes with the houses. Possibly, this is why some of them were deemed habitation features. An eloquent example to this effect is represented by several surface "houses" in the settlement at Cucorăni (Fig. 11/7-8), measuring at most 4 sqm. In our view, features with such a surface were not habitable, hence their inclusion in the outbuildings category.

As showed, in the majority of the cases, the purpose of the outbuildings was to store the household goods, as further evidenced by the extant food storage pits within such buildings.

Pits. In the Poienești-Lucașeuca settlements were discovered a large number of pits differentiating by a range of peculiarities in shape, sizes and nature of the inventory. Such features were recorded both inside the houses of the settlements at Borniș, Botoșana, Orheiul Vechi, Sokol etc. as well as just nearby like in the sites at Ghelăiaști, Goroșovo, Orheiul Vechi, Rudi etc.

Most pits are flat circular or oval – pit A/SII at Borosești, feature no. 9 in the site at Orheiul Vechi. Both shapes are found in the same archaeological sites. Admittedly, at Sokol almost all pits are circularly-shaped, whilst in the settlement at Goroșovo predominate those oval. Such features were dug in the sterile layer, deepening in the earth down to 2 m from the ancient surface level – pit A/SI in the site at Borosești, pit no. 3 at Goroșovo, feature no. 31 at Orheiul Vechi.

Analysing pit shapes from profile, the following variants may be distinguished:

1. Cylindrical pits – pit C/SIII at Borosești, pit no. 2 at Ulmu.
2. Conical, with bevelled walls narrowing slightly to the bottom – feature no. 29 at Orheiul Vechi, pit no. 5 in the settlement at Sokol.
4. Pits with a niche in the lower part, towards the bottom – pit no. 28 at Rudi, pit no. 9a at Sokol.
5. Sandglass pits, wide by the mouth, necked by the middle and then again broad by the bottom – feature D/SII at Borosești, feature no. 6 in the settlement at Orheiul Vechi.

The bottom of such features was commonly horizontal, sometimes slightly sloping thus increasing pit depths on certain parts. Cases when pit bottoms are concave, like pit 3 at Brânești or were provided with a step – the pit in H. 8 at Sokol are extremely rare. Some had their bottoms and walls burnt for improved storage of the goods deposited there.

As yet, there is little archaeological evidence regarding
how they were covered. It is possible that some features, like for instance, pit no.1 at Gorošovo, had been provided with a lid, possibly with timber structures, standing on one or several posts. Taking into account the information in Tacitus, who reported that the Germanic tribes covered their storage pits with waste to prevent them for freezing and also hide them from the attacking enemies, we believe that the bearers of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca culture acted in the same manner.

In terms of their purpose, it was assumed that most were originally used to store food reserves. Any subsequent damage turned them into deposits of domestic waste. Evidence to this effect is given by the potsherds, object fragments and animal bones discovered there. Moreover, it was argued that some pits fulfilled a ritual function or that they were excavated in order to extract clay for domestic necessities, being later transformed into pits where waste was deposited.

**Production-designed features.** Within some of the settlements, although few, there were identified remains suggesting that there existed “workshops”. Thus, in the settlement at Brănești was investigated a feature related to pottery production. In the same train of thoughts, we mention that though clay recipients are the most found archaeological material, customary in every site, until present this feature is unique.

The archaeological feature represented a rectangular surface building sized 4.2x4 m. Inside, a kiln was discovered at 0.3-0.4 m deep, which in the upper part exhibited clusters of clay coating with wattle prints, its surface being strongly slagged. The sunken part was a pit, flat oval, sized 1.3x1.1 m. The walls of the feature were vertical, so that in cross-section the pit was rectangularly-shaped. The kiln bottom, located at 0.8 m deep, was almost horizontal and had an approximate diameter of 1.35 m. (Fig. 11/4). Inside, ten strongly slagged and deformed pots were found. According to the excavator, the maker did not succeed to maintain the necessary temperature for the pottery firing, hence the pots became unusable.

Another economical activity that the bearers of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca culture practiced was metal working. Traces of such occupations were recorded in the settlements at Borniș and Ulmu. The feature unveiled in the site at Borniș represented a sunken building, inside which the prints of a kiln were identified on the north-western wall. It was excavated in the sterile and had the dome preserved on a portion of approximately 0.25 m. The kiln mouth was flanked by two stones which perfectly closed it. On its grate were identified a few burnt stones, iron slag, ash and remains of burnt earth collapsed from the dome (Fig. 11/3). Based on all its peculiarities, this kiln for iron ore reduction is part of the Glienick kilns, specific to the Jastorf culture from the Brandenburg region.

In the settlement at Ulmu was identified a sunken structure, rectangular in shape and sized 3.5x3.4 m. On the eastern side of the building a step, raised by ca. 0.5 m above the floor, was found. On this threshold were identified the prints of a kiln pit. The kiln was flat oval and deepened into the ground by 0.45 m. The floor was horizontal and strongly burnt, its diameter being of 0.74 m. The kiln dome did not survive (Fig. 11/2). Given the small objects found there, namely firstly the blowing tube, clay-made, we believe that the kiln discovered in this complex was used for iron ore reduction.

The presence of such buildings undoubtedly records, in our view, the relatively high level of economic development which the bearers of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca culture had reached.

**Cult features.** As noted in the scholarly literature, the cult places of the “Germanic” populations during the pre-Roman Iron Age are archaeologically difficult to confirm, as the temple concept was unknown to these tribes. Hence, the presence of cult features within the Poieniști-Lucașeuca type settlements or just nearby them may only be supposed and not conclusively proven.

A first building, which seems to have been used for cult purposes is that discovered in the settlement at Gorošovo. The feature, rectangular in shape and sized 0.7x0.9 m was built of stone material – the edges were made of larger stones (0.2x0.3 m), while the middle of small stones, from amongst which were retrieved also a few potsherds. The excavator supposed that the building played the role of an altar where religious rituals were carried out.

Another feature, which seems to evidence the extant sacred space in the Poieniști-Lucașeuca type settlements, was researched in the site at Orheiul Vechi. The feature was a flat circular pit, with a sandglass-shaped cross-section. The mouth diameter was of 1.4x1.5 m and that of the bottom – 1.5x1.6 m. The pit depth was of 3 m from the current surface level. In the upper part, down to 2 m deep, the pit was filled with a dark earth without impurities, while lower, followed successive layers of clay and ash in association with charcoal. In the filling earth were discovered a sandstone strickle, a spindle weight, a polisher, potshards, clay slag pieces and animal bones. The pit bottom was covered with a thick ash layer, onto which lay a red deer antler. According to the filling of the feature, but especially the red deer horn, an animal, who, in fact, is the symbol of fecundity, of ritual growth and rebirth, it was assumed this features had ritual

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128 J. Teodor 1999, 32.
130 CHARALABIDIS 1995, 181; BABEȘ 1993, 106; TACITUS, XVI, 3.
131 SIMEK 2009, 35-41; RUBEL 2011, 95, note 11.
133 IARMULSCHI 2010, 163, nota 6.
135 RUBEL 2011, 95.
136 IARMULSCHI 2010, 163.
137 ROMANOVSKAJA 1987, 210; IARMULSCHI 2010, 163.
as the information in some classical authors as well. Orosius, for instance, describes the behaviour of the Cimbri subsequent to the battle at Arausio (105 BC). According to the ancient historian and theologian, they threw away the gold and silver into the river, destroyed the armours, h ung the war prisoners and drowned the horses. The Roman historian Tacitus reported on the human sacrifices with the Semnones, who are the noblest among the Suebi.

Therefore, based on the archaeological finds and narrative sources, we believe that the spiritual manifestations of the “Germanic” peoples in general, and those of the bearers of the Poienesti-Lucașeuca culture, in peculiar were rather complex and of a varied nature.

Funerary features. Funerary features were found in two settlements – Lozna Hlibicioc and Orheiul Vechi. In the first case only the find is mentioned, while on the second, the grave at Orheiul Vechi, there is more information. It is a cremation grave with the charred bones placed in an urn. The urn is in fact a pot, partially preserved, made of fine fabric. It was covered by a bowl made of the same fabric. Inside the urn, beside the charred bones, was also discovered a brooch similar to variant B after Kostzewski.

While several specialists have argued that the key resemblances extant between the settlements of the culture discussed herein and those of the Getae (the 6th – 3rd centuries BC) are a substantial argument in favour of a genetic relation between these two cultures, one must specify that the settlements of the Poienesti-Lucașeuca culture have also perfect parallels with the habitat sites ascribed to the Jastorf and Przeworsk cultures in the north of Central Europe. To this effect, and in order to avoid declarative statements, we mention a few – Datyni, Gemarkung Kölln, Glinitz and Poznań-Nowe Miasto, Pst. 278. The emergence and origin of the Poienesti-Lucașeuca culture shall be discussed though in another article.

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Fig. 1. Distribution of the Poienesti-Lucașeuca culture settlements (after MEYER et alii. 2016).
Fig. 2. Topographical location of the settlements of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca culture: 1. The settlement at Orheiul Vechi; 2. The site at Brănești – Marginea de Vest (source: geoportal.md).

Fig. 3. Topographical location of the settlements of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca culture: 1. The settlement at Ulmu; 2. The site at Ivancea – Sub Pădure (source: geoportal.md).

Fig. 4. Topographical location of the settlements of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca culture: 1. The settlement at Mășcăuți; 2. The site at Poliana Mănăstirii – Între Șanțuri (1. Source: geoportal.md; 2. after BERZOVAN 2016).
Fig. 5. The settlement at Brânești – Marginea de Vest. Orthophoto of the site surface and anchoring of the geomagnetic exploration results (after MEYER et alii 2016).

Fig. 6. The settlement at Botoșana. Excavations plan (after BABEȘ 1993).
Fig. 7. The site at Lozna Hlibicioc. Excavations plan (after TEODOR 1992).
Fig. 8. Poienesti-Lucașeucu type houses: 1-2. (H. 3 and H. 5 at Lunca Ciurei); 3-4. (H. 8 and H. 12 at Botoșana); 5. (H. 2 at Dolheștii Mari); 6. (H. 3 at Kruglik). 1-2. (after TEODOR 1987); 3-4. (after TEODOR 1980); 5. (after ANDRONIC 1994); 6. (after ПАЧКОВА 1977).
Fig. 9. Poienest-Luceștca type houses: 1.4. (H. 3 and H. 2 at Lucașeuca II); 2-3. (H. 1-2 at Kruglik); 5. (H. 1 at Lunca Ciurei); 6. (H. 3 at Dolhești Mari); 7. (half-hut 1 at Botoșa). 1.4 (after ФЕДОРОВ 1960); 2-3. (after BABEȘ 1993); 5. (after TEODOR 1987); 6. (after ANDRONIC 1994); 7. (after TEODOR 1980).
Fig. 10. Houses and outbuildings of Poienesti-Lucașeuca type: 1. (half-hut 4 at Botoșana); 2-5. (half-hut 3-4.1.9 at Goroșovo); 6. (H. 11 at Lozna Hlibicioc); 7-8. (Feature 53 and feature 1 at Orheiul Vechi). 1. (after TEODOR 1980); 2-5. (after ПА ЧКОВА 1983); 6. (after TEODOR 1990); 7-8. (after ТКА ЧУК 1991).
Fig. 11. Houses, outbuildings and Poinești-Lucașeauca type “workshops”: 1. (H. 1 at Lucașeauca II); 2. (the “Workshop” at Ulmu); 3. (the “Workshop” at Borniș); 4. ("Workshop" at Brănești); 5. (H. 7 at Lunca Ciurei); 6. (the pit from Ulmu); 7-8. (H. 15 and H. 11 at Cucorâni). 1. (after ФЕДОРОВ 1960); 2.6. (after ROMANOVSKAJA 1987); 3. (after TEODOR 1984); 4. (after ПОМАНОВСКАЯ 1965); 5. (after TEODOR 1987); 7-8 (after TEODOR 1975).