

THE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT FROM GĂLĂȚUI „MOVILA BERZEI”

Abstract: În punctul Movila Berzei (Sat Gălățui, com. Al. Odobescu) se află o importantă stațiune arheologică aparținând perioadei neolitice. Aceasta este situată la capătul podului spre Bogata, peste lacul Gălățui, pe terasa înaltă a malului estic, în imediata apropiere a Movilei Berzei (pe unele hărți Movila Verde sau Movila Coteț), de care este despărțită printr-o vale (Fig. 1.) Stratigrafia așezării neolitice era următoarea: strat Bolintineanu (Gălățui „Movila Berzei” I, mil. VI a. Chr.); strat pământ negru steril arheologic (Gălățui „Movila Berzei” II); strat Boian cu două niveluri de locuire (Gălățui „Movila Berzei”, nivelurile Boian-Giulești III/1 și III/2 /mil. VI-V a. Chr.); straturile de cultură ale populațiilor eneolitice Gumelnița și Cernavodă („transferate” sub forma unui drum peste lacul Gălățui). Tentativele de organizare a teritoriului unei așezări s-au materializat și prin dispunerea locuințelor, tratarea anumitor zone ca spații cu destinație specială, sau cu alte funcții, fapt ce ar putea reflecta existența unui anumit tip de ierarhizare. Cercetările din stațiunea arheologică de la Gălățui „Movila Berzei” au arătat un grad mai mare de ocupare a terenului pentru comunitățile Boian-Giulești din ultima etapă. Astfel, așezarea Giulești din prima etapă (III/1) are o suprafață de 50 x 60 m, față de așezarea din etapa finală (III/2), care ocupă o suprafață de 100 x 80 m. (Fig.2/b, c), cu observația stratigrafică a descoperirii materialelor Boian-Giulești, doar în locuințe și imediata apropiere a acestora. Așezarea de la Gălățui (nivelul III/2) are câteva elemente sigure de organizare a spațiului. Cercetările arheologice au pus în evidență diferențe între locuințele din momentul pătrunderii primelor comunități și etapa finală Boian-Giulești. Astfel, în prima etapă au fost cercetate bordeie și colibe. În primul nivel de locuire Boian-Giulești (III/1) au fost interceptate unsprezece colibe marcate prin aglomerări masive de fragmente ceramice, oase, bulgări mici de chirpici, resturi de vetre și chiar unelte și așchii de silex. Aceste concentrări de materiale arheologice au fost surprinse de secțiuni cu dimensiuni între 2,45 m și 4,14 m. Două din aceste aglomerări de materiale dispuse în zona de nord a așezării erau acoperite de un strat subțire de cenușă fină, probabil provenit de la arderea acoperișului din materiale ușoare de origine vegetală. Probabil această colibă a servit drept structură de locuință câteva sezoane, după care a fost abandonată. La majoritatea locuințelor (Boian-Giulești III/1) se constată un nivel de abandon, marcat prin material ceramic, osteologic, chirpici și urme de ardere.

Keywords: neolithic, habitat, dwellings.

At *Movila Berzei* (Gălățui village, Al. Odobescu commune) there is an important archaeological site of Neolithic age. It is located towards the end of the bridge to Bogata, over Gălățui lake, on the higher terrace of the eastern bank, in the immediate proximity of *Movila Berzei* (also known on some of the maps as *Movila Verde* or *Movila Coteț*) and separated by it only by a valley (Fig. 1.).

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During the 1979-1983 pioneering age, the stratigraphy of the site was established and several habitation complexes were observed.

I. Stratigraphy

The settlement from „Movila Berzei”, on the bank of Gălățui lake, has several layers of Neolithic habitation. It is probable – as suggested by the Gumelnița and Cernavodă pottery fragments uncovered in the soil employed the heighten the road level – that Eneolithic layers existed as well. The stratigraphy of the site, suggested by the research in the '70-'80-ies and completed during the early first decade of this millennium is as follows:

- Bolinteanu layer (Gălățui „Movila Berzei” I, VI millennium BC.);
- Layer of black soil, archaeologically sterile (Gălățui „Movila Berzei” II);
- Boian layer with two habitation horizons (Gălățui „Movila Berzei”, Boian-Giulești III/1 and respectively III/2 /. VI-V mil. BC);
- Eneolithic cultural layers Gumelnița and Cernavodă („transformed” into a road over the Gălățui lake).

The spreading area and the stratigraphy of the excavated sites indicate **successive population migrations** rather than a development within the Boian-Giulești settlements. All sites belonging to the first penetration stage have a single habitation horizon. The only sites with more than a cultural layer are those from Ciulnița and Gălățui „Movila Berzei” (layers III/1 and III/2) for Muntenia, Isaccea „Suhat” for the eastern limit and Piatra-Sat „Vadul Codrii” for the western limit of the spreading area¹.

II. Habitat

The penetration vectors of the first Boian-Giulești communities, together with scarce and often seasonal habitations (the site comprised a few dwellings, located in the near proximity of a water source) are important arguments for a semi-sedentary habitat (Gălățui „Movila Berzei”, Boian-Giulești III/1 layer).

The real sedentary settlements are known only during the second phase when for some sites, ditches were noted, probably to delineate the area of the settlement. Such a ditch, marking the area of the site on the upper terrace of the Gălățui lake, was observed in the last habitation layer from Gălățui „Movila Berzei”(layer III/2). The small size of the ditch (0,75 m deep and 1,10-1,35 m wide) and its location on the western side along a valley, rule out a defense function, pleading more for a ritual perimeter of the settlement.

The attempts of organizing the territory of a settlement materialized in the location of the habitations and also in the creation of areas with a special destination or some other functions, perhaps reflecting a certain sort of hierarchy. The excavations at Gălățui „Movila Berzei” revealed a higher degree of occupation for the Boian-Giulești community from the latest layer. During the stage Giulești

¹ So far no absolute chronological dating was performed, only the typological criteria was employed.

settlement (III/1) occupied an area of 50 x 60 m whereas during the final stage (III/2) it stretched over 100 x 80 m (noting that Boian-Giulești finds only occurred inside houses and around them)². The systematic research of the III/2 Boian-Giulești Gălățui „Movila Berzei” layer allowed us to make a few preliminary conclusions: while many of the garbage pits were found close to one end of the site, the houses occurred mainly towards the interior. There are a few safe elements in what spatial organization is concerned. The Boian-Giulești dwellings reflect more or less a certain mode of spatial organization (Fig.II /1,3). Archaeological excavations showed the differences between the dwellings from the penetration stage and the final Boian-Giulești one. Thus, for the first stage we excavated **sunken-huts** and **huts**³.

A number of eleven huts occurred in the first Boian-Giulești (III/1) layer, as massive agglomerations of pottery fragments, bones, small sized daub pieces, hearth fragments and even flint tools and flakes. These concentrations, as caught in our sections, showed sizes ranging from 2,45 m to 4,14 m. Two of these agglomerations, situated in the northern area, were covered by a thin layer of ashes, probably resulted from the burning of the roof, made of light vegetal materials. One of the excavated huts (c1/2000) showed pole holes with diameters ranging from 6 cm to 9 cm, a large quantity of daub, both fired and unfired, clay fragments, pot sherds, hearth fragments. This hut probably served as a habitation place for a few seasons and was eventually abandoned. Most of the habitations in this particular (III/1) Boian-Giulești layer show traces of abandonment, materialized through pottery, bones and traces of burning⁴. Inside the largest sunken hut belonging to the first layer we found a triangular anthropomorphic protoma. The sides were marked with a series of excised equilateral triangles, eyes were figured as two horizontal lines. Nose was outlines, mouth was represented as a deep vertical incision, similar to a vulvar slit.

In this first stage remains of **surface dwellings** are only isolate occurrences.

There are a lot more dwellings during the next stage. They reflect the sedentarization process undertook by the Boian-Giulești communities. The identified types were **sunken huts** and **surface dwellings**. The size of the sunken huts is bigger than for the previous stage and they were lived in for a longer period of time⁵.

At this stage of research for the Giulești communities, the everyday occupations included animal raising, plant cultivation, hunting, pottery making, stone, bone and antler tool manufacturing. Although there is a small increase in the number of chisels and axes for the sites belonging to the final phase, we cannot

² M. Neagu, *Gălățui-Movila Berzei in Boian civilization in Romania*, Călărași, 1999, p.22.

³ E. Comșa, *History communities Boian culture*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 13-14.

⁴ M. Neagu, *Boian-Giulești Communities in the Danube Valley*, Istros X, Brăila, 2000, p. 30; Idem, *Middle Neolithic Age in the Lower Danube Region wits special Consideration on the Center of Muntenia*, Călărași, 2003, p. 93.

⁵ Idem, *Boian-Giulești Communities in the Danube Valley*, p. 31.

clearly delineate a differentiation between the two Giulești phases, at least at this stage of the research.

Between 1999-2001 it was possible to find the limits of the Bolintineanu sites (the earliest so far)⁶, Boian-Giulești I and II, and in 2008-2009 the Boian cemetery was found. Various types of dwellings such as the sunken-hut, the hut or surface dwellings were identified. The Bolintineanu layer overlapped by the first Boian-Giulești layer belong to the upper Neolithic, whereas the last Boian-Giulești layer could be considered as Eneolithic.



Fig. 1. The Neolithic settlement Gălățui-Movila Berzei.

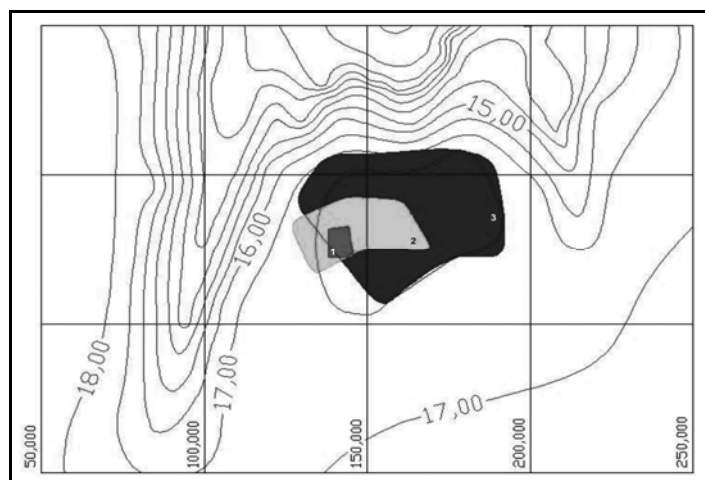


Fig. 2. 1. Sanctuary Boian-Giulești (III/1); 2. Bolintineanu settlement; 3. Boian-Giulești settlement.

⁶ *Ibidem.*