

Community Structure, Economy and Sharing Strategies in the Chalcolithic Settlement of Hăbășești, Romania

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Abstract. *This study considers a broader analysis conducted at the community level at Hăbășești. The community is presented as a social institution made up of interactions beyond the household level. The spatial configuration of the settlement, different aspects of the dwellings, the distribution of activities at the settlement level and possibly the social structures associated with the dwellings are discussed here.*

Rezumat. *Studiul de față are în vedere o analiză mai amplă realizată la nivelul comunității de la Hăbășești. Comunitatea este prezentată ca o instituție socială formată din interacțiuni dincolo de nivelul gospodăriei. Sunt luate în discuție configurarea spațială a așezării, diferite aspecte ale locuințelor, repartiția activităților la nivelul așezării și eventual structurile sociale asociate locuințelor.*

Keywords: community, economic strategies, social structures, Hăbășești.

Introduction

This study provides a broad analysis conducted at the settlement level at Hăbășești. The community is presented as a social institution made up of interactions beyond the household level. More precisely, the community is the main unit where the socialization of individuals manifests itself, the place where social skills and the reproduction of culture were learned and applied². The research considers that the main forms of interaction in a community were living in the settlement as well as the activities carried out. The dwelling and the settlements are used as working tools, arguing that living together in the same settlement implies some kind of affiliation or social recognition. The group was spatially limited inside the dwelling and the settlement, just as the ditches or palisades represented the physical boundary of the settlement³.

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² MARCUS 2000, 232; TRIPKOVIĆ, 2013, 11.

³ TRIPKOVIĆ 2013, 11–12.

The organization of space in Cucuteni communities is a matter of interest. The social order in a community was based on the spatial configuration of the settlement and the use of remaining space. In daily practice, these two elements largely determine the behavioural mode of individuals, and through their behaviour, how to reconstruct and create the social order. It has been assumed that settlements with a certain spatial organization are preconceived in one way or another. The spatial organization of a settlement is considered the result of the cumulative effects and the decisions taken by the individual builders and the occupants of the buildings. In a discussion on the Neolithic in central Anatolia, B. Düring considers the nuclear family the ideal place for social reproduction and economic development, while for other cultures individual families were included in larger social units⁴.

Site description

The settlement is situated on a hill with the west-east orientation and the surface of about 1.5 ha, with good natural defensive system provided by the abrupt slopes, situated in the north-northeast side of the village and two complementary ditches, arranged almost in parallel, situated on the western side of the plateau. The settlement was dated to the stage Cucuteni A3. The archaeological researches carried out down led to the discovery of 44 dwellings, of several annexes and of 85 pits and two exterior ditches⁵.

Methodology and analysis criteria

In the present study, we extend the analysis at the settlement level, starting from the three components of the household, *the social*, *the material* and *the behaviour* (Table 1). The data used in this study were provided by the monograph of the settlement from Hăbășești. We considered a series of criteria such as the size and orientation of the houses, the activities identified in the dwellings and their distribution in the settlement, etc. in order to identify the economic relations developed in the community. This starts from the analysis of the inventory associated with each dwelling. Important in this study is also the estimation of the population. At the household level, it can provide useful information in addressing the family structure and strategies for accumulating power, prestige and wealth. At the community level, it can offer a series of answers related to issues such as adaptation to the local environment, division of labour and specialization as well as levels of social complexity⁶.

⁴ DÜRING 2006, 38, 46; BOGHIAN 2004, 56.

⁵ DUMITRESCU *et al.* 1954, 501–504; LAZAROVICI, LAZAROVICI, ȚURCANU 2009, 119–121.

⁶ SCHELACH 2006, 331.

Table 1. Household components discussed for the settlement of Hăbăşeşti

Dw.	Social component					Material component								Behavioural component						
	Area (m²)	Nr. of ch.	Combustion structures			Tools					Ceramic	Figurines		Platform		Domestic activities		Ritual	Annex/pits	
			H	O	EH	F	S	B	Cl.	Co.			A	Z	yes	no	G			D
1	135	1	?	?	1	x					x	x	x	x					1/2	
2	60/80	1				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					0/4	
3	60	2	2				x				x			x		2			2/4	
4	84	1							x		x			x					1/1	
5	72/54	1									x				x					
6	66	1	1	1		x	x				x		x	x		1	1	x	0/2	
7	40/48	1	2	1							x	?			x		2		0/2	
8	49?	2		2	1						x			x					0/5	
9	28,6	1	1	1							x			x						
10	60/84	1	2	1			x				x		x	x						
11	50	1		3			x				x		x	x		1			1/3	
12	49,5	1	1	1		x	x				x		x	x				x	0/1	
13	38,25	1	1								x			x			1		0/2	
14	70	2	1								x	x	x	x		1		x	0/4	
15	150	2	1	1			x				x	x		x				x	2/4	
16	38,5	1	1	1		x	x				x	x	x	x		1		x	0/1	
17	32,5	1	1								x			x		2			0/1	
18	58,5	1	2	1							x			x						
19		1					x		x		x	x	x			x		x	0/1	
20	31/46,7	1	1								x				?				0/1	
21	60/70	1		1		x	x		x		x			x					3/2	
22	42,8	1	1	1		x	x		x			x	x		x	2	3		0/2	
23	70	1	1			x	x		x		x	x	x	x					1/2	
24	62	1	1						x		x			x		1		x		
25/25'	40/44	1	3	1	?						x			x		1	2			
26	26	2?	2								x			x		3			0/1	
27	60?	2	1		1		x				x					2		x	0/3	
28	49	1	1			x	x					x	x	x		1		x	0/3	
29	24	1	1								x	x		x		3		x	0/1	
30	45/60	2	2	2							x		x	x						
31	60	1	1	1							x			x						
32	75	2	1								x			x		5			2/2	
33	26,25	1	4								x			x		?				
34	55,25	1	1				x	x		x	x	x	x	x				x	2/4	
35	54	1		1										x			1	x	0/4	
36	32,5	1	2	1							x	x		x		4	1		0/1	
37		1	1								x			x		2	1		0/3	
38	35	1	1	1							x			x		2			1/2	
40	41,25	1	2	1	1					x	x			x		2			0/3	
41	18,5	1	2	1							x			x						
42	28	1									x			x					2/1	
43	35/40	1	1	1							x			x		3	3		0/3	
44	50/55	2	2			x	x				x			x					3/3	
H – hearth; O – oven; EH – external hearth; F – flint tools; S – Stone tools; B – bone tools; Cl. – clay objects; Co. – Copper objects; A – Anthropomorphic figurines; Z – Zoomorphic figurines; G – Grinding; D – Deposits; R – Ritual or objects associated with rituals;																				

With respect to the size of the dwellings, Chapman holds that it is important since it is a key factor in organizing and implementing the activities inside and outside the houses. Also, analysing the size of the houses in the Vinča area, he made an estimate of the size of the households, proposing a limit of 50 m² between the nuclear family and the extended family. The limit was set based on a number of dwellings from eight multi-layered sites, where trends in social changes were caught⁷.

Site structure and community organization

At the settlement level, the problem of the size of the respective community is raised. Although several methods are available for estimating the population in a settlement, largely starting from the formula developed by Naroll, we consider it appropriate in the present study to apply Brown's formula. It is largely based on establishing a conversion constant (Naroll proposes a constant of 10m²/individual; Porcic of 7m²/individual; Brown of 6 m²/individual), estimating the average size of the household and the number of dwellings in the settlement⁸. We only consider the dwellings for which the dimensions are mentioned.

With respect to the settlement's community, it sought to preserve its coherence, hence to establish relations that will not lead to the appearance of extreme differences between the households. The protection mechanism is usually reduced to establishing norms and rules that regulate and maintain aspects of interest to the community. This is manifested by a control of the construction activities, by the control of the shape, size or orientation of the houses, the solidarity in constructions or the cooperation in daily activities. Therefore, it is not excluded the establishment of rules to implement the works of community interest in order to strengthen the community cohesion⁹. The uniformity and the community sense finally attest to the existence of structures that acted above the household level¹⁰. There is also a collective identity marked by the existence of artificial boundaries within the settlement, in the form of defensive systems, which varied according to the effort invested, but also to the practical and cultural preferences of the community¹¹. However, a series of geophysical investigations carried out in the settlement from Războieni-*Dealul Mare*¹² has identified the evolution of the settlement beyond the defensive system. When discussing the case from Divostin, the grouping of the houses in rows is made by the kinship or by a certain type of organization. It is considered that house grouping is an important element in the

⁷ CHAPMAN 1981, 61; TRIPKOVIĆ 2007, 37.

⁸ BROWN 1987, 1–49; PORČIĆ, 2016, 172.

⁹ BOGUKI 1999, 206–218; TRIPKOVIĆ 2007, 14.

¹⁰ WHITLE 199, 105.

¹¹ TRIPKOVIĆ 2014, 138,148.

¹² ASĂNDULESEI 2017; BALAUR 2016, 109–117.

social organization, but there is little information attesting the interaction between relatives, economic cooperation and the dynamics of housing construction. Such habitation dynamics tell us nothing but the fact that relatives lived together as neighbours¹³.

Regarding the delimitation of the settlement space, at Hăbășești two defensive ditches were identified, on the western part of the plateau, arranged in parallel, with a wide open mouth and a narrow bottom (Figure 1). The exterior ditch was 121 m long, with a maximum width of 7.10 m and its depth of 2.60 m. The inner ditch, had a length of 123 m, the opening at the mouth of about 6 m, and a depth of 2,30 m, had bifurcations at both ends, with lengths not exceeding 3 m, without specifying whether they were completed by other constructions. Because there is no clear stratigraphic information on these ditches, they were considered to have been built as a unitary structure, most likely with a defensive role. In a new study it was stated that the inner trench would have been built as a consequence of population growth and therefore as a consecration of the community, therefore the two ditches would have

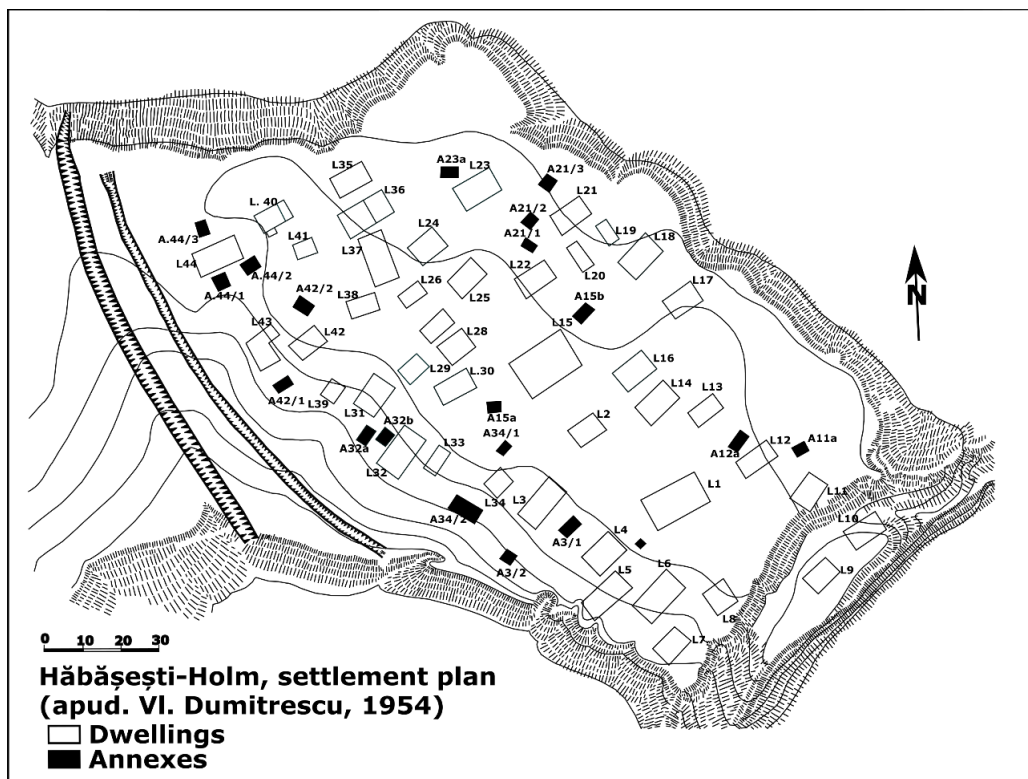


Figure 1. Hăbășești-Holm, settlement plan (ap. Vl. Dumitrescu, 1954)

¹³ TRIPKOVIĆ 2014, 138,151.

played a rather symbolic role¹⁴. It was stated that the construction of these trenches involved numerous people and therefore the presence of a person to lead this activity is needed, so it is possible to speak of a certain degree of community organization and the existence of a coordinating leader¹⁵.

There have been long debates on the development and the evolution of the settlement plan. The author of the research supports the arrangement of dwellings in two or three approximately circular groups (Figure 1), the first group arranged around structure 1 (dwellings 1–14), and the second group, tangent to the first, arranged around structure 15 (dwellings 15–34, 39). A third group (dwellings 35–38, 40–44), smaller, consisted of dwellings grouped around structure 14. The author of the research from Hăbășești assumes that the placement of the houses in a circle is due to the need to close the space for habitation and to strengthen it¹⁶. A new analysis of the stratigraphy from the settlement led to the identification of two occupational levels, at intervals of time that cannot be specified. Therefore, most likely, the houses were built in successive moments, and the entire layout of the settlement endures major changes¹⁷.

According to the information provided by D. Popovici¹⁸ the first level from Hăbășești had at least 29 dwellings (1–4, 6–8, 10–15, 20–22, 25–28, 35, 37–39, 42–44) arranged in two sectors (Figure 2). Between the two sectors, in a central position was dwelling 15. South of structure 15, the dwellings appear to be grouped around structure 1. Taking into account their orientation, we can rather say that they were arranged in three rows, first one formed by the structures 3, 4, 6 and 7, the second one by dwellings 2, 1 and 8 the central row, and the third one made of dwellings 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. The second group of dwellings (20–22, 25–28, 35, 37–39, 42–44), with a more disordered organization, was located north of structure 15. These include a more compact group of housing 25–28, oriented relatively WSW–ENE, probably a related group.

Analysing the same plan, the second level had 24 dwellings (4–5, 9–10, 15–19, 23–25, 27, 29–34, 36–37, 40–41, 44), the majority grouped to the north of dwelling 15 (Figure 2). The case of dwellings 4, 5, 9 and 10 in the southern sector is noted. The structures associated with this level had the orientation of SW–NE (dwellings 4, 5, 9, 18, 25, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36,), WSW–ENE (dwellings 10, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 27, 29, 30, 40, 41, 44) and NNW–SSE (dwellings 19, 37).

The dwellings 4, 10, 15, 25, 27, 37 and 44 are associated with both levels of habitation from Hăbășești¹⁹. Is worth mentioning dwelling 15, built on the same place, with a central position

¹⁴ POPOVICI 2003, 307; BEM 2001, 62–63; DUMITRESCU *et al.* 1954.

¹⁵ DUMITRESCU *et al.* 1954, 220.

¹⁶ DUMITRESCU *et al.* 1954, 499.

¹⁷ POPOVICI 2008, 29–30.

¹⁸ POPOVICI, 2008, fig. 3.

¹⁹ POPOVICI 2008, fig 3.

in the settlement, with a possible ritual, which we will talk about later, that may support the possibility that this structure belongs to a chief. Also noticeable is dwelling 44, which in the first stage has two rooms, one with a platform and the other without, both with a fireplace. In the next level a platform is made in the room that did not have one initially, and in the other room the fireplace was restored²⁰.

The next step was to discuss the inventory associated with each dwelling in the settlement (Figure 3). The presence of flint tools was reported in ten structures, grouped five in the southern sector (dwellings 1, 2, 6, 12, 16), three in the NE sector (dwellings 21, 22, 23), and in two cases isolated, dwelling 44 near the defensive system and dwelling 28 near the structure 15. Stone tools were identified in 15 structures, eight dwellings in the southern sector (2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16), four dwellings in the NE sector (19, 21, 22, 23), two structures located at WNW from dwelling 15 (27, 28), and two isolated dwellings (34 and 44). The presence of bone tools was noticed only in dwelling 2. Copper objects are present in three dwellings, two in the southern sector (dwellings 2, 34) and one in the northern sector



Figure 2. Hăbășești-Holm, settlement plan I phase and II second phase

²⁰ DUMITRESCU *et al.*, 1954, 74–81.

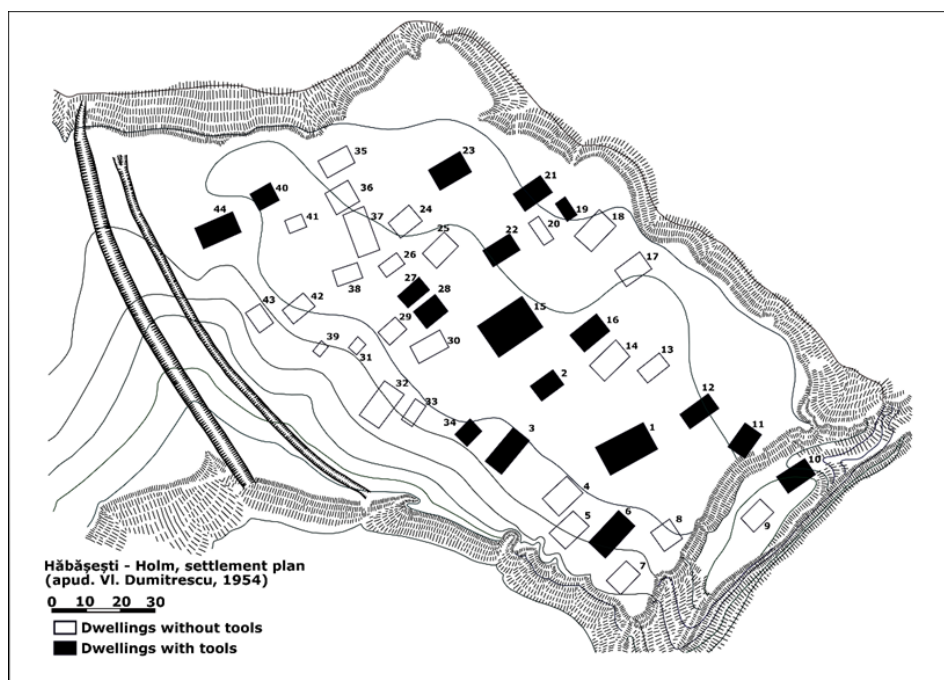


Figure 3. Hăbășești-Holm, settlement plan, dwellings with tools

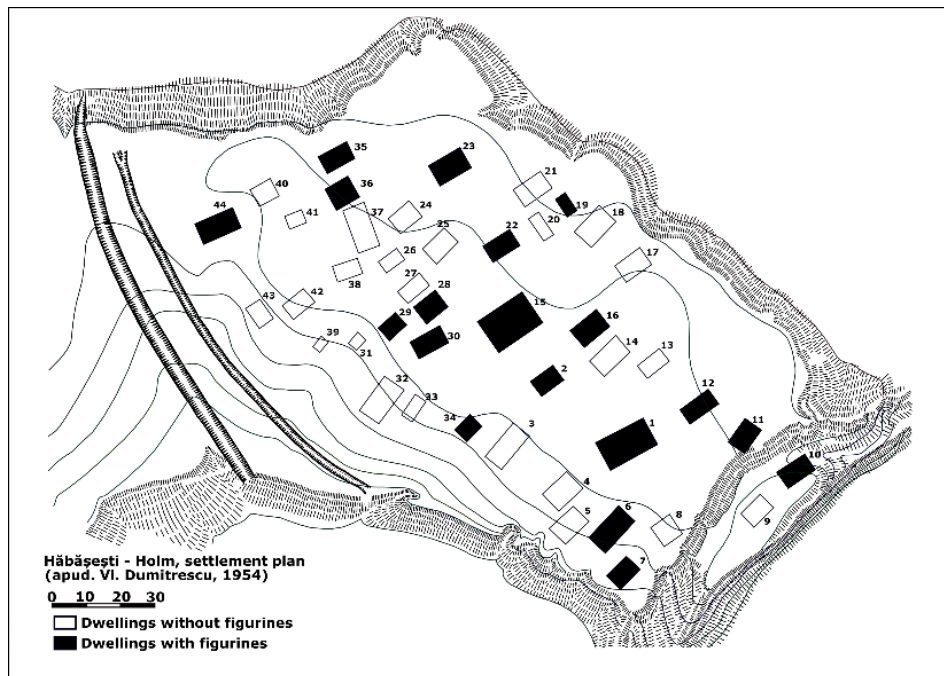


Figure 4. Hăbășești-Holm, settlement plan, dwellings with figurines

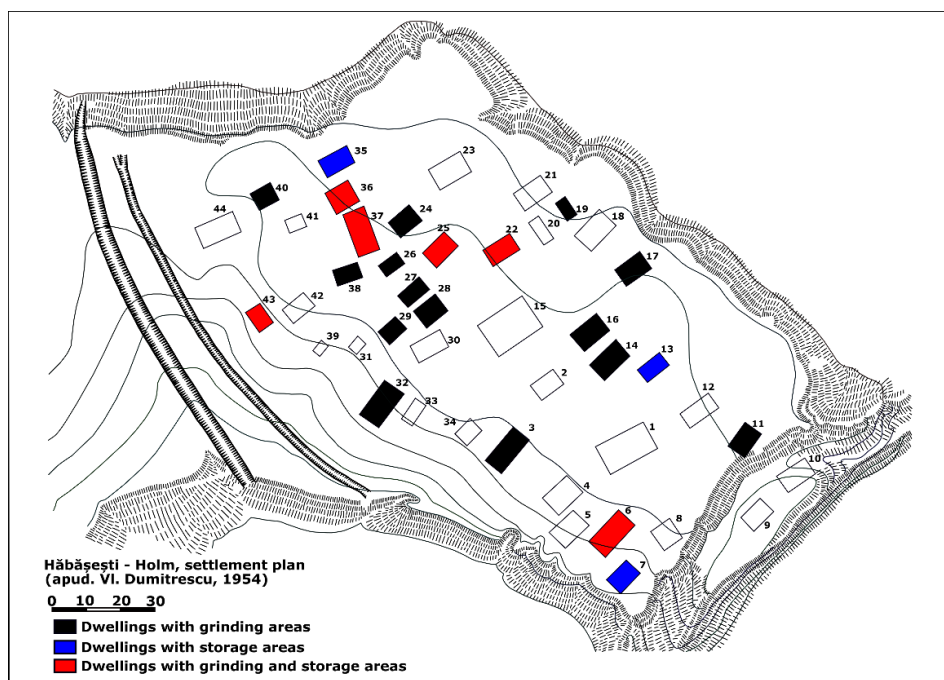


Figure 5. Hăbăşeşti-Holm, settlement plan, dwellings with grinding and storage areas

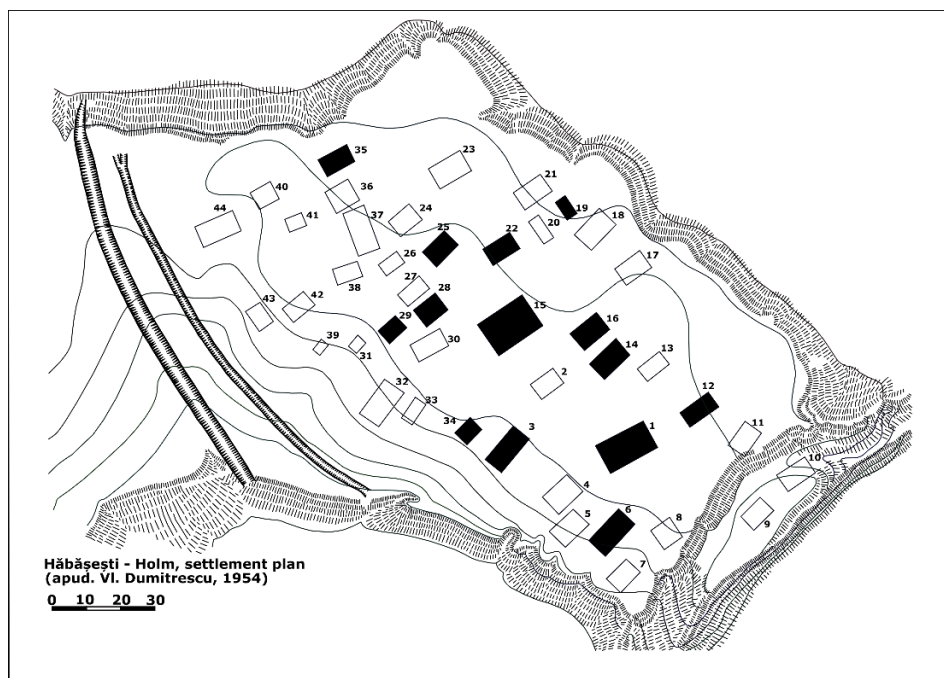


Figure 6. Hăbăşeşti-Holm, settlement plan, dwellings with ritual deposits and/or objects associated with ritual activities

(dwelling 40). In eight structures, clay objects are present (dwellings 2, 4, 12, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25/25'). Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations were found in 19 houses (Figure 4). Dwellings 1, 2, 16, 22, 23, 28, 34 had both types of figurines in inventory, dwellings 7, 15, 29, 35 and 36 had only anthropomorphic figurines, and dwellings 6, 10, 11, 12, 30 only zoomorphic representations. The only structure with a more complex inventory is dwelling 2. In houses 6, 16, 28 and 44 there was an association between flint and stone tools, and in dwellings 12, 21, 22, and 23, an association between flint, stone and clay objects. Following the analysis of the inventory of the houses, a grouped arrangement was found in two, three or four structures, mostly in the eastern half of the settlement, except for dwellings 44, 34, 15 and 6. The possibility that only certain families have been responsible for carrying out these activities is not excluded.

The most common domestic activities attested at Hăbășești are grinding and storage (Figure 5). Grinding activities were identified in about 22 dwellings, and storage areas identified in nine dwellings (Table 1; Figure 5). Regarding the carrying out of the grinding activities, we notice the existence of a compact group in the western half of the settlement (dwellings 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 43), and more scattered in the eastern half (dwellings 1, 3, 6, 16, 14, 17, 19). From the western sector in the case of dwellings 22, 25, 36, 37, and 43 there is an association between grinding and storage areas. The rest of the houses only have grinding facilities. In the eastern sector, such an association is found in dwelling 6, and in the case of dwellings 7 and 13, there is evidence to support the existence of storage areas.

In 14 houses rituals or objects associated with rituals are attested (Figure 6). Possible rituals have been identified for dwellings 1 and 15. In the pit no.1, before the construction of dwelling 1, a small deposit was found consisting of nine blades of flint, some in a fragmentary state. In the dwelling 15, towards the NNE of the oven a broken vessel was discovered, in the mouth of which was a well-worked stone chisel. In two cases, the presence of some idols is attested. In other cases we can talk about the presence of some objects that might be involved in certain rituals. In four structures it is mentioned the presence of flat *en violon* type idols. Thereby, in dwelling 6 a trojan-type *en violon* idol was discovered with strings of dots and holes, in dwelling 19, at the top of the pit a flat *en violon* type idol, in dwelling 28 a plat *en violon* type figurine, discovered in pit 57, in dwelling 34, a plat *en violon* type figurine, discovered in pit 62, and in dwelling 35, another trojan-type *en violon* figurine. In two dwellings (14 and 16) anthropomorphic idols were discovered. Also, in three dwellings (12, 22, 25) small cones of burnt clay were discovered²¹.

A more complicated problem is related to the presence of the workshops, the information available being very few. In a pit outside the dwelling 8 a red prismatic pencil was discovered,

²¹ DUMITRESCU *et al.* 1954, 20–91.

most probably, according to the author, being used in the decoration of ceramics. Also in the inventory of the pit 36, associated with the dwelling 14, a series of burned figurines in a rudimentary state, were discovered, which could suggest a possible specialization in the modelling of the figurines by the occupants of this dwelling. An area dedicated to flint processing was documented in the ENE corner of dwelling 22, where a lot of strongly calcined flint flakes were discovered coming from a large bulge shattered by fire. Inside dwelling 27, in the ENE sector, there was a possible sharpening of bone objects, attested by the presence of a broken stone in two, placed on a frame of burnt clay, with slightly raised edges²².

In the case of 13 dwellings, one can speak of the existence of annexes (Figure 1). Of these, the structures 1, 4, 11, 12, 23, 38 have a single annex, the dwellings 3, 15, 32, 34, 42 each two annexes and the dwellings 21 and 44 each 3 annexes. However, there is little information about the activities carried out within them. A particular case is the situation documented in Annex 15A where the remains of a large oven were discovered, most likely used by the entire community. Also, similar fire installations were discovered in another two annexes, 21 A3 and 44 A3. As for the pits, most dwellings are associated with at least one pit. The only dwellings that do not have such complexes are 5, 18, 24, 25, 30, 31, 33, 41. Dwellings 6, 21, 22, 23, 31, 38 are associated with 2 pits, dwellings 11, 13, 27, 28, 37, 40, 43, 44 with three pits, dwelling 1, 2, 3, 14, 15, 34, 35, with four pits and dwelling 8 with five pits.

Discussions and conclusions

The sphere of social structures of a community (the management of the common space, the position of each individual and of each family within the group, the degree of solidarity of the group) is marked by the diversity of constructions, both due to objective reasons (raw materials available, quality, quantity), and subjective (the will and the capacity of an individual to allocate a certain amount of resources for the construction of the house, the labour force involved and the quality and experience of the builders)²³.

From a social point of view, the compact stratum was made up of the members of the settlement. As consumers and producers, they were the basis of the settlement economy. Following the analysis of the size of the dwellings, in Hăbășești their average area was about 57 m². Based on the three formulas of population estimation, in Hăbășești we can speak of a number of 228 to 380 individuals. Small houses are assigned to nuclear families, and large ones to extended families²⁴. Starting from Chapman's theory, in Hăbășești there were 19

²² DUMITRESCU *et al.* 1954, 20–176.

²³ URSULESCU 2008, 212.

²⁴ GIMBUTAS 1991, 330.

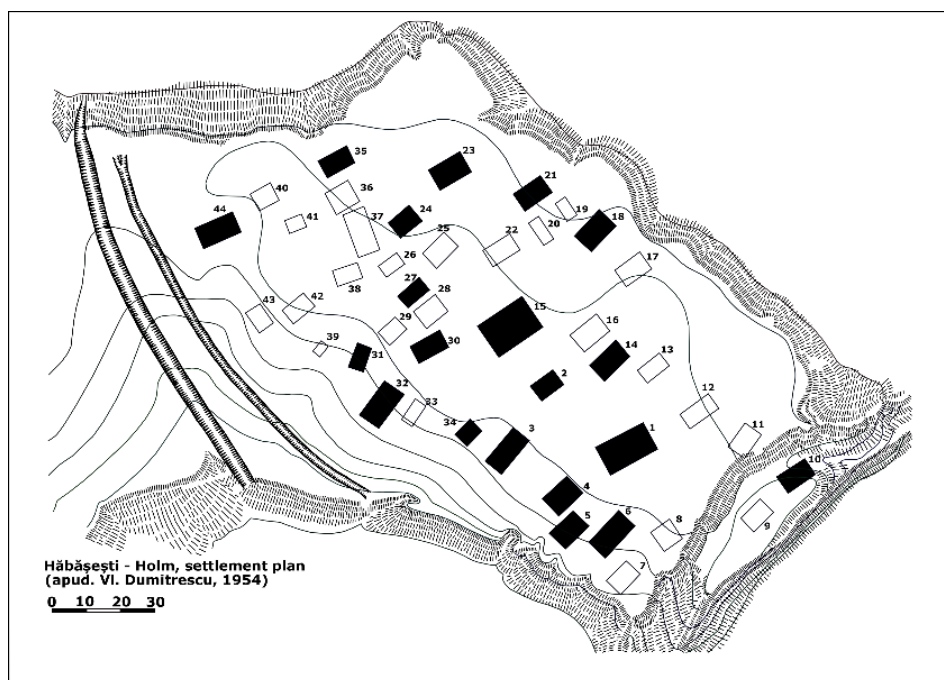
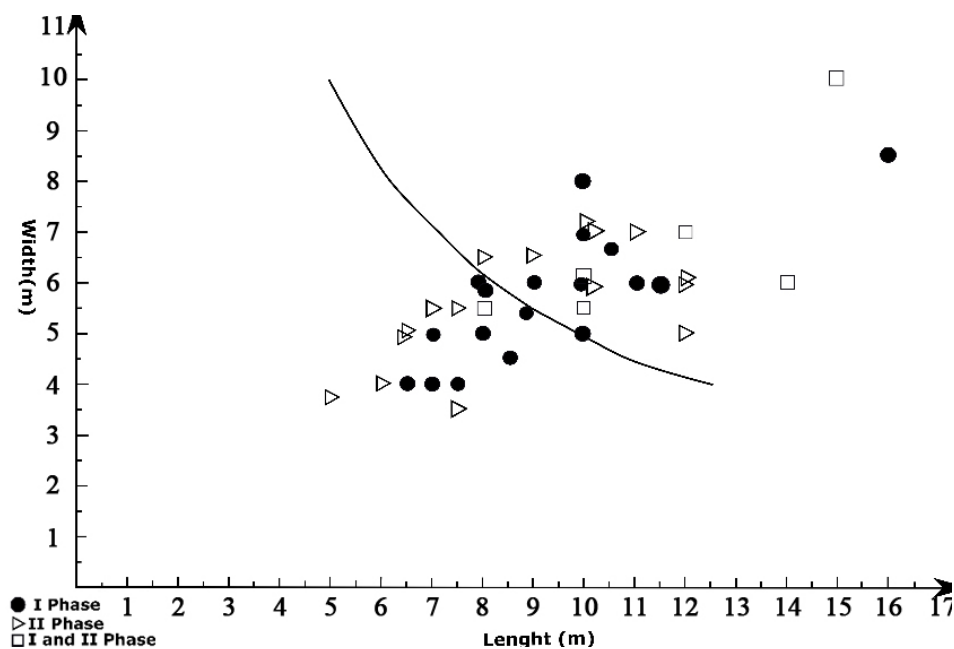


Figure 7. top – Dimensions of households (ap. CHAPMAN 1981, 61);
bottom – Hăbășești-Holm, settlement plan, dwellings with dimensions over 50 m²

dwellings under 50m² and 25 dwellings with areas over 50m² (Figure 7). The homes considered belonging to both levels are also discussed here. If we accept this hypothesis, in the two levels from Hăbășești a balance is found between nuclear families and extended families.

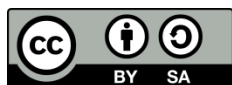
Also, the clearest activities documented in Hăbășești refer to grinding and storage. Based on the inventory we can say that some houses were involved in carrying out heavier activities, and in other cases easier activities (grinding, storage, etc.). The possibility that certain dwellings have been exclusively involved in grinding and storage activities is not excluded, and therefore involved in exchange relations with the other dwellings. Exceptions are dwelling 6, associated with grinding, storage, and stone and flint tools, dwellings 16, 28, and 29, where grinders are encountered, and stone and flint tools, and dwelling 22, associated with grinding activities, stone tools, flint and clay objects, as well as a possible flint processing workshop.

In conclusion, we can talk in Hăbășești about the existence of a closed community, involved, particularly in activities that ensured the survival of individuals, with collaboration between the households. The unitary character of the community is also reinforced by the uniformity in the plan of the dwellings, materials and methods of construction, the existence of works of community character, etc. A collaboration between households and the presence of exterior hearths associated with dwellings 1, 8, 27 and 40, as well as the existence of the large oven in Annex 15A, positioned somewhat centrally, are indications of a common interaction between individuals. If I consider dwellings 8, 14 22 and 27 as workshops, then they were somewhat scattered inside the settlement, probably different families doing different activities.

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