

ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN *POLIS* AND *CHORA*. CASE STUDY FROM ALBESTI

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Abstract: This paper brings forth the latest literary, epigraphical and archaeological information regarding the rural territory of Callatis during the period of autonomy. We discuss ancient topographic nomenclature, archaeological sites of interest and the Greek character and function of the fortified site of Albesti. The economic relationships between the polis and the *chora* are analyzed from the point of view of amphorae imports from centers with relevant representations at Callatis such as: Heraklea Pontica, Thasos, Sinope and Rhodos. Pottery typology and onomastic help in establishing the involvement of the colony in the diffusion of products. Chronological disparities between Callatis and its territory could be an indication of the colony's political and economic situation at a specific date in time and could reflect the degree of interdependence between the city and its *chora*.

Relationships between colonies and their *chora* are not new in the research literature. Studies focused on what *chora* meant, the character of the colony in relationship with the territory, the date of the establishment of the rural territory, type of settlements, how the territory was expanded and how it was exploited, mode of communication or defense strategies etc. (Pippidi 1967, p. 46-48, 149-150, 157-158, 173-175, 197-198; Iliescu 1970, p. 87-98; Suceveanu 1972, p. 89-101-especially p. 98-100); Avram, Nistor 1982, p. 365-376; Guldager, Bilde and Stolba, 2006, *passim*). Without focusing on the limits of the rural territory, several studies cataloged settlements in the southern and south eastern Dobrogea where Greek items were found, giving also an idea on the routes these items took to arrive to those locations (Gramatopol, Poenaru-Bordea 1969, p. 127-282 - especially p. 150-153 and 260-267; Irimia 1973, p. 7-71; Irimia 1983, p. 69-148; Rădulescu *et alii* 1985, p. 55-74; Avram 1988, p. 287-313; Avram 1991; Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 155-175). Special studies on the limits of the Callatian territory were published by Alexandru Avram in 1991, 1999, and 2006 (Avram 1991, p. 103-138; Avram 1999, p. 11-22; Avram 2006, p. 59-80).

Our recent reports focused on identifying chronological steps in the relationships between Callatis and its territory based on the stamped amphora material from the fortified settlement at Albești. These stamped amphora fragments could be an indication of the political and economic situation in the colony at a particular moment in time, or it might indicate the degree of dependency between the colony and its *chora*.

Multiple primary sources give us information about the Callatian territory:

Literary sources: Memnon, Fr. 13 [21] referring to the Tomis war, *περὶ Τόμειος τοῦ ἐμπορίου*, and Diodor of Sicily (*Bibl. hist.*, XX, 25.1) referring to the relocation of 1,000 Callatian citizens to the Bosphoran kingdom after the siege conducted by Lysimach. From the first source we learn that the Callatian territory bordered to the north the territory of Tomis. The second source talks about the fact that the populations in the territory practiced agriculture (Pippidi 1975, p. 68)

under the Greek form of colonization known as “*cleruchy*” (Diodor, XX, 25, 1: τὴν χώραν κατεκληρούχησεν, in FHDP I, p. 194).

Epigraphic sources: The term *chora* appears in Callatian inscriptions: ISM III 106, a monument in honor of a *strategos* or *frouarchos* whose duty was to protect the territory. The inscription is dated middle of 3rd century BC, during probably the war for Tomis. This inscription was found 2 kilometers south west of Limanu, a settlement located near Mangalia (Callatis). Another inscription (ISM III 26), a decree dated middle of 1st century BC, talks about the hard times (*καιροί*) that fell on the colony and the destruction of the rural territory (*τᾶς χώρας γεγονυίας διὰ τοὺς καιρούς*)¹. Another inscription, this time from Dionysopolis (Banev, Dimitrov 1982 [1985], p. 34-37; IGB V 5011; Avram 1999, p. 12-14), mentions the borders between this colony and Callatis. The border was in existence during the reign of the Odrysian king Cotys, son of Rhoemetalces (12-19 AD), whom, at one point, became eponym *basileus* of Callatis (ISM III 44).

The border between Callatis and Dionysopolis begins at *Καρβατις*, either a toponym other than Callatis, either a river or a lake, which could have been used as a natural border (Avram 1999, p. 13; see also Oppermann 2000, p. 139) and more likely than not, located away from the coastal area. From *Καρβατις*, the border went north of *Akrai* (or *Tirizis*) and reached the sea shore at *Nymphaion*. To the south, the border between Callatis and Dionysopolis follows a common line. In a period, previous to the decree mentioned above, it is possible that the southern border went as far as Cape Şabla (*Καρῶν λιμὴν*). *Nymphaion* settlement must have been located way south, between *Akrai* and *Karon limen* and it could have been the most southern point in the territory at the end of the 1st century BC due to the dissolution of the polis of *Bizone* and its territory. To the north, the territory of Callatis reach lake Techirgiol and to the west followed the line delineated by the following settlements: Comana - Cotu Vaii - Albesti - Coaroan - Tvardica - Goricane (Fig. 1) (Avram 1991, p. 135, fig. 4).

Pliny the Elder, a literary source from the 1st century AD, mentions several *topoi* located in the territory of Callatis (*Nat.Hist.* IV, 11 (18), 44). *Heraclea*, between Callatis and Bizone, currently unidentified (Buzoianu 2001, p. 205, n. 46) on the ground, and a few other fortified settlements (*oppida*) belonging to the “ploughing Scythians” (*Scytae aroteres*): *Aphrodisias*, *Libistos*, *Zygere*, *Rhocobae*, *Eumenia*, *Parthenopolis* and *Gerania*. From this list of settlements mentioned by Pliny the Elder, only *Parthenopolis* and *Aphrodisias* were also mentioned by other sources (first by Eutropius, VI, 10, and the second by Theophanes Confessor and the *Horothesia* of Dionysopolis).

A. Avram advanced the hypothesis that *Gerania* “could have been an old megarian toponym reused by the Heracleean colonists who founded Callatis” (Avram 1999, p. 15, n. 62). From M. Irimia (1980, p. 72, n. 50) we acknowledge N. Gostar opinion according to which the settlements attributed to the *Scytae aroteres* and mentioned by Pliny could have been Macedonian colonies (Gostar 1977. In the same opinion Parthenopolis is located in Albești!). Pliny the Elder’s text is not very clear where those settlements were located. *Totum eum tractum* could refer to a region that stretched from Dionysopolis to the south and to the north somewhere between Tomis and Callatis. R. Vulpe presumed that *Parthenopolis*, *Aphrodisias*, *Eumenia* (and *Heraclea*) were located somewhere between Tomis and Cape Caliacra (Vulpe 1938, p. 63). According the R. Vulpe other settlements belonging to the *Scytae aroteres* were located “further inland from the sea”, therefore the word *aroteres* is used to describe the residents, implying agriculture activities. In our view, these settlements did not have to be located further inland. In addition, Pliny the Elder could have been describing a reality ulterior to the one considered Pseudo-Skymnos and Strabo. Or maybe, all

¹ These difficult circumstances are probably due to Burebista's actions.

these settlements were located further inland, exactly because their inhabitants were described as the “ploughing Scythians”. In Pliny’s text, the Scythian agricultural settlements are somehow mentioned in a parenthesis, because the author is mainly concerned with describing the cities located on the seashore: *in ora a Dionysopoli est Odessus Milesiorum* (IV 11 (18), 45). If we consider this hypothesis, then it is obvious why they are absent from Strabo’s text and therefore we agree with A. Avram’s theory (Avram 1989, p. 81) that the above mentioned toponyms are settlements belonging to the Getae, Scythians and Crobyse populations that came under the influence of Callatis and were transformed into forts. A toponym that implies a fort or *pyrgos* is *Stratonis Turris*, likely located at Cape Tuzla (Buzoianu 2001, p. 205, n. 49)

The description of a “port” or “harbor” contained in the name of the settlement *Καρῶν λιμὴν* places this settlement on the seashore, somewhere south of Callatis (Buzoianu 2001, p. 206, n. 50-51), according to Pomponius Mela and Arrian. We are not referring here to the *limitatio* landmarks of Callatian territory, from 2nd century AD, where other toponyms also appear².

Callatian territory has the following archaeological points of interest:

- Along the seashore (from north to the south): Tuzla, Costinești, Schitu, 23 August, Limanu, 2 Mai, Vama Veche, Cape Șabla.
- On the west line: end of Lake Techirghiol, Comana, Cotu Văii, Coroana, Tvardica, Goricane.
- In the interior, towards the western limits: Moșneni, Dulcești, Pecineaga, Arsa, Albești.

All these settlements and archaeological points of interest have been clearly dated between the 4th-2nd (1st) centuries BC. The earliest archaeological material was discovered at Cape Șabla (Vulpe 1935, p. 188; Vulpe 1938, p. 12; Oppermann 2000, p. 140). In all the settlements, most of the archaeological material consists of: pottery, whole and fragments, most are stamped amphorae and stamped handles, together with everyday type of pottery (bowls, kantharoi, plates, lekytoi, lamps), gray pottery made on the wheel and finally, handmade pottery of local origin.

Several archaeological sites have been determined to have had special designation (Fig. 1):

- At Pecineaga, 1 kilometer SE from the settlement and 200 meters south from the Karachioi mound, in a small settlement of about 0.5 ha, on observed the remains of 4 to 5 houses with foundations made from large blocks of stones (Irimia 1980, p. 102). The houses were built away from each other.
- At Techirghiol-Urluia, a vaulted tomb with several funerary chambers, attributed to the Scythians (Tafrali 1930, p. 56-59; Irimia 1983, p. 72, n. 26).
- At Schitu, above the Pescărie gulley, approximately 500 m north of Costinești, a deposit of amphorae fragments (Vulpe 1934, p. 209).
- At Tuzla Far and at 2 km south of the lighthouse, the eroded shoreline exposed remains of buildings, roof tiles and ceramic fragments (Slobozianu 1959, p. 735-740; Chiriac, Honcu 2015, p. 233-247).
- At Tuzla Mare, fragments of foundations, at a location where clay was extracted (Boroneanț 1977, p. 322).

² *Amlaidina* located at 23 August (ISM III 237), Κώμη Κε (...) (ISM III 51), Ουαλ(...), κώμη Ἀσβολοδεινῶν, Σάρδεις or κώμη Σάρδεων, ...μυλη and Π[...] (see ISM III 51-55).

- East edge of village Schitu, V. Canarache observed remnants of harbor constructions made of stone (Canarache 1957, p. 378, 380). North of this port, another location contained a significant amount of ceramic fragments, predominantly amphorae.

Recent field surveys in the Callatian territory focused on the NW area of the city, and on the SW near the lake Mangalia and Hagieni pond (Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 155-175). During those surveys, archaeologists observed several tumuli, most of them leveled off. Among those tumuli, the only one that was systematically researched was the Documaci mound, build above a funerary complex dated in the Hellenistic period (3rd century BC) (Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 164, n. 20-21). Traces of Hellenistic dwellings have appeared on the shores of Lake Mangalia, on a small promontory (Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 164, no. 11). At Arsa, 400 m north of the contemporary village archaeologists have located a Greek-Roman settlement (3rd century BC-4th century AD) (Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 167-168, no. 20). Another Hellenistic settlement with new ceramic fragments was located at the intersection of the Mangalia-Albești highway with the Arsa county road. A Hellenistic settlement was also identified south of contemporary village of Hagieni (Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 169, no. 30).

Approximately 2 km NW of Hagieni, at point Cascaia, in a natural amphitheater on the south shore of Lake Mangalia, researchers have identified a fortified settlement of Albești type (Ionescu, Georgescu 1997, p. 169-170; see also Buzoianu and Bărbulescu 2008, p. 80-81). The site was terraced in antiquity. The fortification is visible on the SE corner³ (Fig. 2/1) of the settlement and the north wall was traced about 10 m (the width of the wall on the south side is 1.20 m and on the east side 1.60 m). The wall was built of two paraments of massive limestones without *emplecton*. The site was dated 4th-3rd BC. To the south and west, on an area of about 70 x 70m, massive limestone blocks can be seen. (Fig. 2/2) The area could not be researched, being afforested. To the east, on the edge of the naturally carved trench, one can see an access path arranged in the natural rock, probably the road to the south of Lake Mangalia (Alexandru 2016, p. 394-395).

Another fortified settlement was located 5 km south of Albești (Fig. 3), in the contemporary village of Coroana (Buzoianu, Bărbulescu 2008, p. 82). The wall of the settlement had a width of 1.40 m and surrounded an area with the dimensions of 50 m by 50 m. This wall was built of large pieces of stone on the exterior and small stones in the interior. The ceramic material places this site in the 3rd-2nd centuries BC (Buzoianu, Bărbulescu 2011, p. 459-468).

Next, we will focus on the *frurion* (*φρουρίον*) at Albești. The reason the settlement was established seems to have been to protect and defend the rural territory by controlling one of the roads that led to the city. The settlement's relationship with the *chora* and the presence of Greek goods, do not exclude the possibility that Albești was an *emporion*, a place where trade took place, or a local market type of site (Buzoianu, Bărbulescu 2008, p. 29, n. 16-17). The description A. Bresson gives to a local *emporion*: "dans ses *emporia* (...) s'effectuait le contact entre l'arrière-pays, souvent "barbare", et les intermédiaires grecs" seem to fit Albești settlement (Bresson 1993, p. 217. For the possible existence of some local *emporia* in the Lower Danube area, see Irimia 2007, p. 137-225). In its physical form, the Albești *frouirion*, follows the plan of farms known under

³ The corner of the wall is on the edge of a naturally carved trench. Here is also the place of the springs that feed Lake Mangalia; it also seems to have been the water supply of the city of Callatis in the Roman era. It is not excluded that a *nymphaeum* is set up in this place.

the name *pyrgos* (πύργος), and therefore were used as both defensive and agricultural sites. However, a close look at the buildings, their interior design, the use of space in the settlement and the archaeological material, leads us to believe that the economic-commercial character of the settlement came first, while the military-defensive character was secondary. The closeness to Callatis, together with the style of buildings and enclosures, the near urban character of the settlement, the overwhelming presence of Greek materials lead us to believe that Albești was a callatian establishment. The site can be dated 4th-3rd centuries BC. The first enclosure and the Greek archeological materials coincide with the first steps to organize the *chora* taken by Callatis in the middle of the 4th century BC during the economic development of the colony (Buzoianu, Bărbulescu 2008, p. 141-142, n. 134-135). The events at the end of the 4th century BC, especially the long siege conducted by Lysimachus, without doubt affected Callatis' rural territory. We are wondering whether the fort built at Albești, during the second phase of the settlement, which has obvious strategical features, wasn't built by Macedonian kings looking to control the rural territory and the main road reaching Callatis and the cities south of this colony. If this is true, then we can also explain other settlements of this type that came into being in a relative small space in the callatian territory.

Next, will move our focus on the Greek archaeological materials found at Albești, with special emphasis on the import amphorae.

Materials that originate from Heraclea Pontica are present at Albești throughout their existence from the first quarter of the 4th century BC until the first quarter of the 3rd century BCE (possibly to the third quarter of the 3rd century BC). The huge quantities of Heraclea Pontica materials and the names recorded on pottery stamps, are a clear indication of the Callatis's role in the creation of the Albești settlement are, at the same time, a evidence close relationships between the colony and its metropolis. If we compare Heraclea Pontica stamped materials with the ones discovered at Satu Nou-*Valea lui Voicu* (Conovici, Irimia 1991, p. 140-143)⁴ we notice that the ones from Albești are dated earlier (stamps with two names from periods A and B are present at Albești but not at Satu Nou) (for the chronology of the stamps of Heraclea Pontica, see Brashinskij 1980, p. 38-41; Brajinskii 1984, p. 3-20; Kac 2003, p. 261-278).

Imports from Thasos arrive at Albești during the middle of 4th century BC, close to the same date as the Thasos imports found at Callatis (At Callatis earliest exemplaries belong to the F1 group - 360-350 BCE, after Garlan 1999). The best represented chronological sequences are 294-282 BC and 272-259 BC and coincident with periods the top of the Thasos commerce at Callatis.⁵ Stamps found both in Callatis and Albești came via city-settlement, the ones only found at Albești must have arrived there through other intermediaries, mainly wine traders that established relationships directly with local populations.⁶

When it comes to quantity, Sinope imports are at the top of the list. They arrived at Albești as early as the last 3 decades of the 4th century BCE. There are two significant differences between

⁴ Imports from Heraclea at Satu Nou are placed in the C period (the authors of the article quoted do not seem to take into account for this period and the last quarter of the 4th century BC). Except for that Γέρων, the other names from Satu Nou are known in Albești.

⁵ For to the thasian imports at Callatis, see Avram 1996, p. 68-71, table VIII and IX. The highest values after Garlan's chronology are recorded at Callatis between 294-275 BC (120 exemplaries); 274-256 BC (168 exemplaries) and 255-240 BC (108 exemplaries); see Buzoianu 2016, p. 251-252.

⁶ We have in view the *eponyms* Νικίας, Ἀρότης (from 4th century BCE) and Φιλιστίδης, of the last chronological group present at Albești.

Albești and Callatis when comparing the frequency of *astynomoi* (Buzoianu, Bărbulescu 2008, p. 155): a) the presence at Albești of rare names and very rare or they don't appear at all at Callatis and b) the other way around, names found frequently at Callatis but very seldom at Albești.

In addition, there are also differences when it comes to chronology. At Callatis, the best represented is group IV Conovici (V Garlan, respectively⁷), while this group is poorly represented at Albești. On the other hand, group VI (especially group VI D at Garlan), is poorly represented at Callatis, while at Albești, this group is the most numerous.

The Rhodian imports are a very homogeneous group. According to Finkielsztejn 2001, they belong to periods Ib - Iic (270-199 BC), with the observation that none of the samples are earlier or contemporary with the Koroni complex, and none belong to the *pergamic* group.⁸ First *eponyms* from Albești, Ib period, are dated after 260 BC⁹, with a maximum presence after the middle to the last decade of the 3rd century BC, respectively periods IC (246-235 BC) and Iib (219-210 BC). It is significant that the Rhodian stamps are absent at the end of the 3rd century and the first decades of the 2nd century BC. The absence at Albești of Sinopean *astynoms* from VIE subgroup coincides with the absence of Rhodian *eponyms* from period III. Those absences indicate that the end of the Albești fortified settlement can be placed at the end of the 3rd century BCE, near the time where the settlement of Satu Nou also ceased to exist (See Avram 2010, p. 169-176, comparison Albești /Satu Nou).

The names documented on the Rhodian stamps are well known throughout the west-pontic region (see the situation registered at Lazarov 1977, p. 1-47). The names from period Ib and the majority from period IIa (cca 234-220 BC) prove that the materials came to Albești via Callatis. On the other hand (with one exception, the eponym *Πολύχαρμος*), none of the *eponyms* from period Ic (246-235 BC) are documented at Callatis. Also, the *eponyms* from period Iib and beginning of period Iic (cca 214-209 BC between *Πολυκράτης* and *Εύφράνης*) they are absent at Callatis but present at Albești.

Quantitatively and chronologically, the Rhodian imports from Albești and Satu Nou are very similar. Most names from Satu Nou period I, are also present at Albești (Buzoianu, Bărbulescu 2008, p. 155-162; Irimia, Conovici 1991, p. 160-167; Avram 2010, p. 169-176). Differences are documented later, both when it comes to eponyms and producers. Since some of names are represented by 2-3 samples, a plausible explanation is that the materials arrived via different routes.

Ceramic materials from Cnidos, Cos, Paros, Tauric Chersonesos are present in few numbers. They prove a strong and diversified economic life during the 3rd century BC.

Moreover, ceramic materials that came from established centers and are well documented, are also good indicators for describing the relationships between the colony and its territory (*polis* and *chora*). Imports from Heraclea Pontica and Thasos came to Albești via Callatis during the second part of the 4th century and the beginning of the 3rd century BC. After Lysimachus' death (281 BC) or during a political vacuum around this time, the rural territory became more autonomous. During this time, the settlements in the territory found themselves in the position of

⁷ For Sinope, see Conovici 1998 and Garlan 2004. After the Garlan 2004 chronology, group V fall between 275-254 BC and group VI, approximately 253-185 BCE (group VI D: aproximatly 216-203 BCE).

⁸ The Rhodian *eponyms* from Koroni occupies the interval approximately 267-265 BCE (different from 273-271 BCE at Grace). The date of the Pergam complex was changed from 210/205 – 175 BCE at 188/5 – 163/1 BCE at Finkielsztejn 2001.

⁹ These are *Αρίσταρχος* and *Τίμαρχος*. At Finkielsztejn 2001, p. 188, table 17, the *eponyms* from period Ib between *Ἐπίχαρμος* (approximately 260 BCE) and *Φιλόδαμος* are placed in alphabetical order.

searching for economic partners without assistance from Callatis. The best proof of this situation is the fact that after the war for Tomis (middle of 3rd century BCE, 256/5-254 BC), while Callatis struggles (Pippidi 1967, p. 52; Pippidi 1975, p. 125; Avram 1999, p. 32-38), Abești seems to be untouched and thriving economically (Oppermann 2004, p. 165). During this time, the settlement expands in size and more likely gains in population. The largest amounts of archaeological materials come from the 3rd century BC. The difference in number of Sinope imports between Callatis and Abești supports the theory that the territory developed sometimes independently from the city.¹⁰ When Sinope imports are high at Abești and Bizone (Banev *et alii* 1982, p. 29-33), they are lower at Callatis. It's worth mentioning that Bizone comes second, after Callatis, regarding trade with Sinope. We are not implying that Sinope expanded commercially to the southern Dobrogea.¹¹ What we assume is that Callatis went through an economic crisis after the middle of the 3rd century¹² while Bizone took the center stage as commercial port in southern Dobrogea during this time period.

The settlement at Abești ceased to exist at the end of 3rd century BC, probably last decade of this century. Satu Nou-Valea lui Voicu settlement ended at the same time too, maybe during a *bastarn* attack, dated the second to last decade of the 3rd century BC (Conovici 1992, p. 3-13). *Bastarn* pottery from this period was found at Satu Nou, but not at Abești. Therefore, we cannot assume Abești's fate was the same (or only) as the one encountered by the residents of Satu Nou. The 3rd century BC documents the presence of Scythians in Dobrogea. It is possible that the establishment of Scythian kingdoms in this area meant the end of Abești settlement. It is worth noting that the end of the 3rd century BCE also documents the first epigraphic mention of Dobrogea as *Scythia* (Σκυθία), in the well-known histrian decree for Agathocles, the son of Antiphylos. In the same decree, the two Histria protectors on the left of the Danube - King Rhemaxos and his son Phrad[mon], are increasingly recognize a Scythian ethnicity (Russu 1967 p. 136-138; Cojocaru 2004, p. 384-389. From a rich bibliography on Scythians, we selected here: Pippidi 1984, p. 151-157; Irimia 2000-2001, p. 299-317. See, however, recently Petolescu 2017, p. 383-386, wich proposes completing Phrad[egis], a name certified in geto-dacien anthroponymy).

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¹⁰ See above.

¹¹ One of the explanations provided by the authors of the article cited at n. 54.

¹² And politically, after this date, Callatis will no longer have a dominant role in the area; see Avram 1999, p. 32-34.

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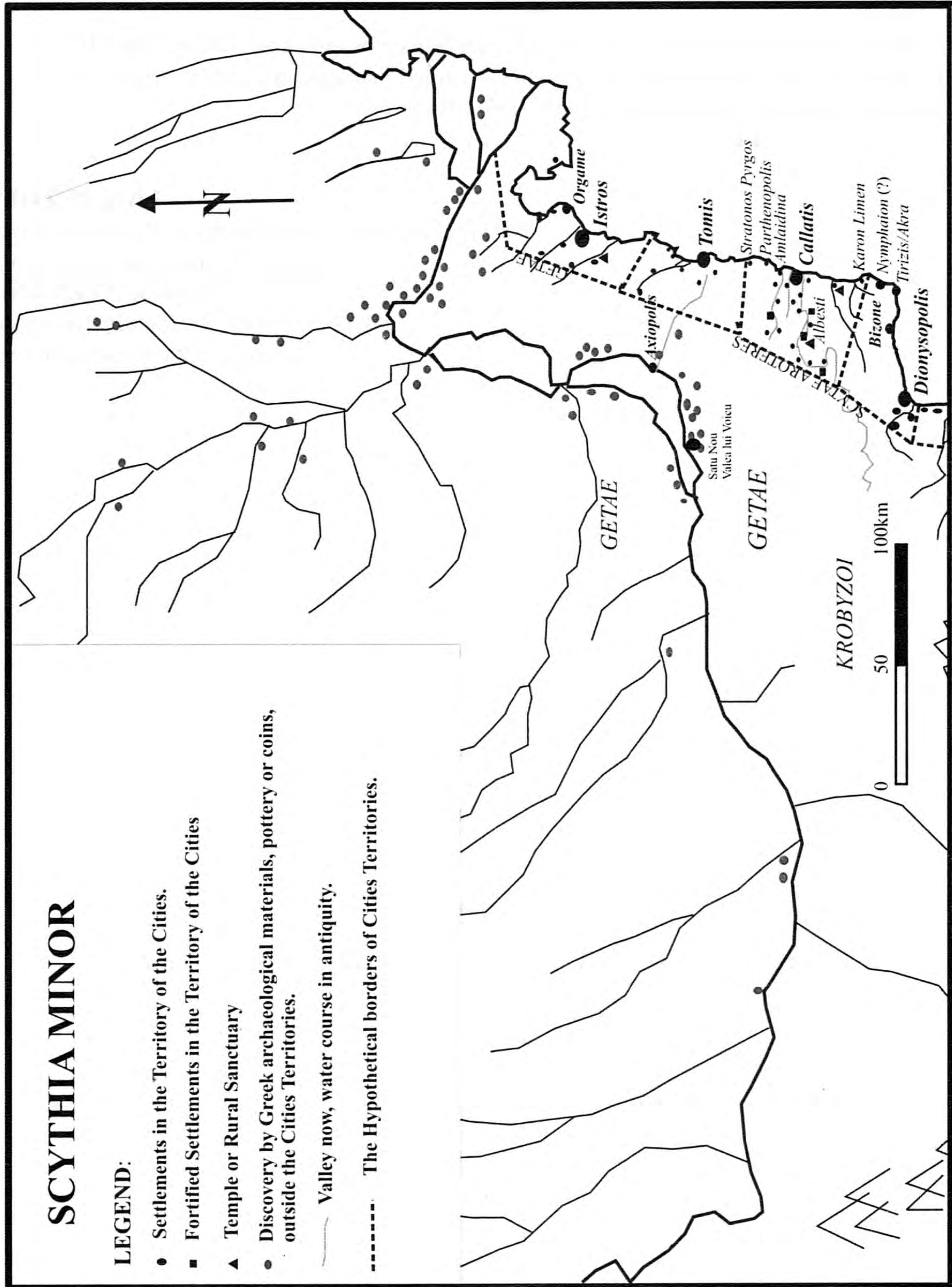


Fig. 1. Scythia Minor and Cities Territories (N. Alexandru).

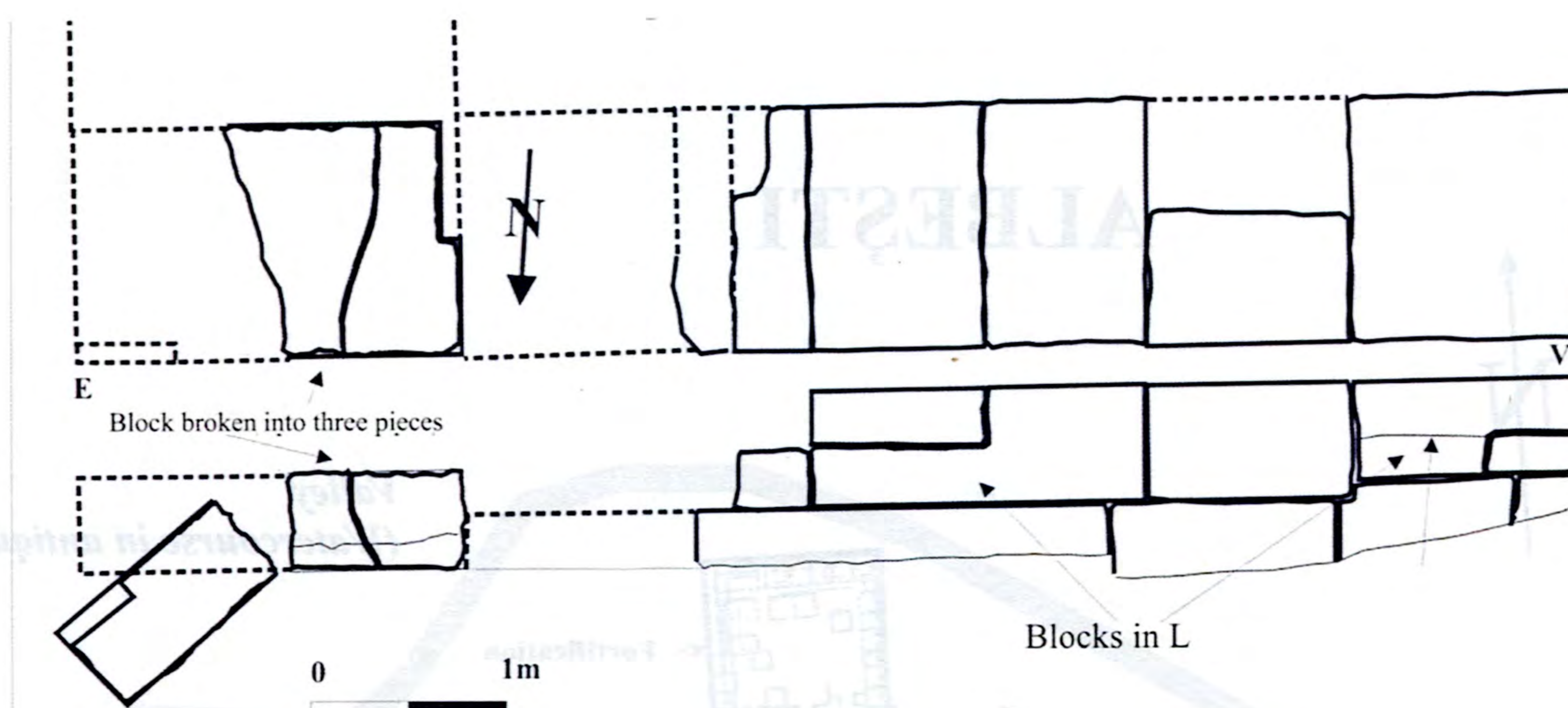


Fig. 2.1. Hagieni, NE corner, plan and front of wall.
Source: Alexandru 2016, p. 399.



Fig. 2.2. Hagieni, photo fortification.

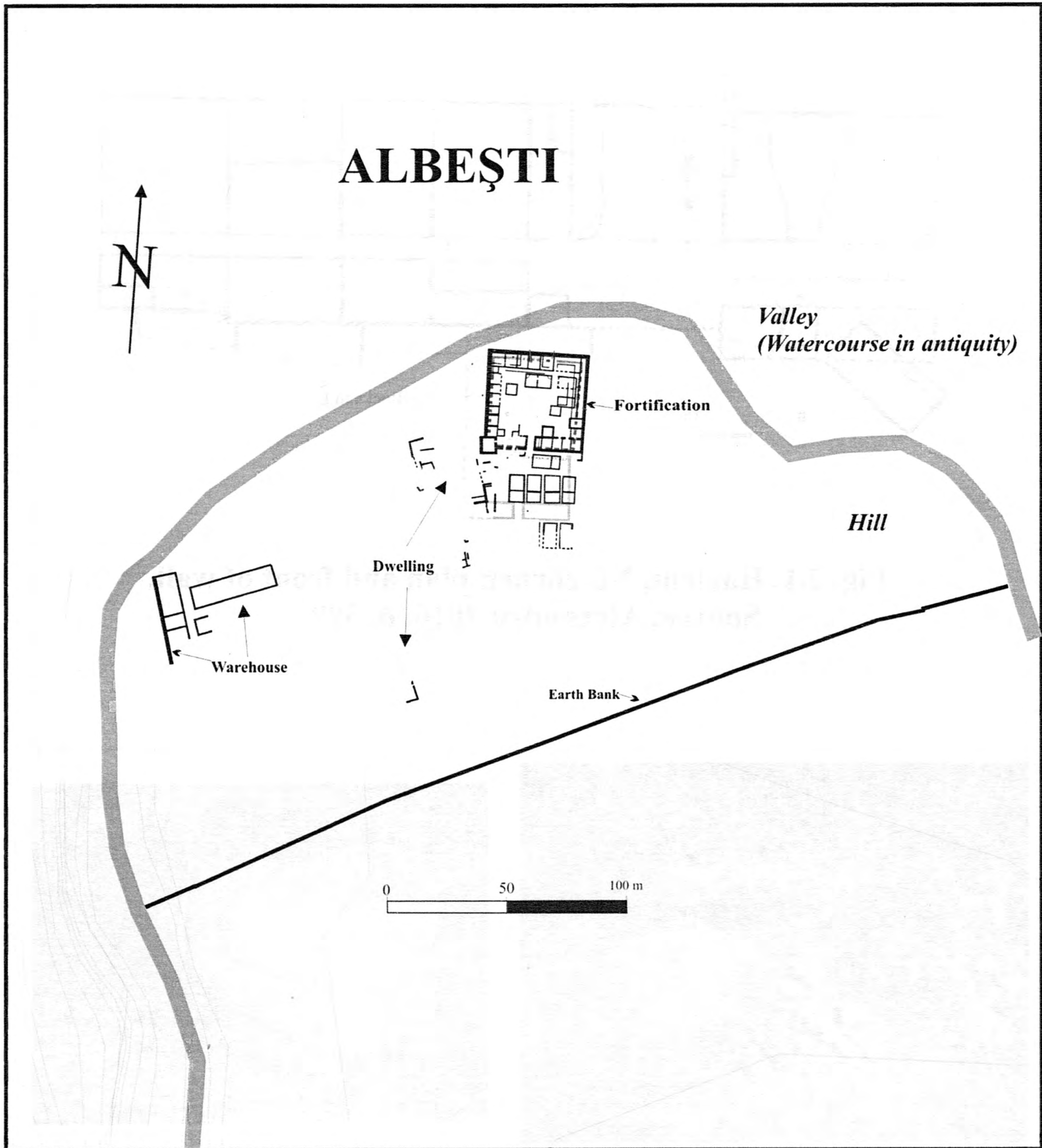


Fig. 3. The plan of Albești.