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Eric Gailledrat

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New Perspectives about *Emporia* in the Western Mediterranean: Greeks, Etruscans and Native Populations at the Mouth of the Lez (Hérault, France) during the Sixth-Fifth Centuries BC.

Eric Gailledrat

Archéologie des Sociétés Méditerranéennes, UMR 5140, Univ. Montpellier 3, CNRS, MCC,
F-34000, Montpellier, France

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Email: eric.gailledrat@cnrs.fr

Abstract

Excavations conducted over the past 30 years at the ancient site of Lattara (Lattes) near Montpellier (Hérault, France) have revealed an exceptional record documenting a protohistoric port of trade founded at the turn of the sixth-fifth centuries BC and located at the mouth of the river Lez. Lattara was firmly linked to the sphere of influence of the Greek city Massalia, as attested by the nature and the intensity of the exchange carried out in this area during the Iron Age. On a regional scale, a process of lagoon shoreline occupation beginning during the Final Bronze Age, which was marked by the appearance and disappearance of several sites, culminates with the foundation of Lattara. This process bears witness to several different settlement patterns, which must in part be linked to the demands exerted by the Mediterranean world. Comparing the recently acquired data with the evidence gained from several isolated discoveries and rescue excavations conducted in the surroundings of Lattara enables us to re-evaluate the debate surrounding the nature and function of the site. The data also help us to re-assess the question of relations between the colonial and indigenous worlds. The complexity of the varying forms of contact between different peoples, as well as the dialectic between choice and constraints, are highlighted in order to provide a coherent pattern of evolution where the physical environment — characterised by the existence of lagoons — plays a decisive role. The emergence of interfacing sites indicates a form of specialisation, linked to the full access to Mediterranean trading and exchange. The type and the function of such site occupations, which are pioneering structures in terms of indigenous Iron Age models, can be explained accurately together with the question of what meaning should be given here to the Greek notion of ‘emporion’.

Keywords: Languedoc, Iron Age, Greek, Etruscan, *Lattara*, *Massalia*, *emporion*

Introduction

The northwestern Mediterranean area during the Iron Age offers an ideal research field for studying cultural interaction between indigenous and classical civilisations of the Mediterranean involved in the process of colonisation. Within this vast territory, the Gulf of Lion and the bordering areas stand out, thanks to their favourable geographical location at the crossroads of several major communication channels. The first of these is the Rhone Valley, opening towards continental Europe and the Celtic world. The second opens up a link between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea via the Aude and Garonne Valleys (Figure 1).

In terms of cultural relations and migration, which generally affect the Mediterranean from the Archaic period onwards, the colonisation of the far western Mediterranean coastline shows the ambiguity that surrounds the terms ‘colonists’, ‘colonisation’ and ‘colonialism’, as highlighted by several scholars (Hodos 2009; Dietler 2010). This is due to the frequently idiosyncratic interaction between the indigenous, Phoenician and Greek worlds, from the south of Spain to southern France. These encounters are characterised by ‘closeness’ or even an ‘embedding’ of different peoples, as a consequence of a process motivated mainly by economic goals. This interaction sometimes leads to interbreeding or hybridisation, a situation that does not coincide with a restrictive definition of colonialism, in this case synonymous with intrusion, pressure or coercion inflicted on the indigenous populations.

Alongside the settlements that correspond to the Greek model of the *apoikia*, which typically led to the creation of foreign enclaves on indigenous land, there is a whole group of settlements whose identity and status raise a number of questions. These sites, which are inherently centred on trade and exchange, could be described neutrally as trading posts but truly reflect the Greek model of the *emporion* (Bresson and Rouillard 1993; Gras 1995), first and foremost as meeting places more or less directly involving indigenous partners.

Emporia are associated with an activity regularly and continually carried out by professional traders, and from the sixth century BC there is a dense ‘network of *emporia*’ (Gras 1995) in the regions between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, whose structure can be evaluated through a number of well-documented examples, such as *Lattara*, upon which this study focuses.

The initiative dominating the foundation of these settlements and the reality of their function are two issues lying at the heart of the problem. The role these *emporia* played

within the political, administrative and social mechanisms that were gradually implemented from the seventh and sixth centuries BC onwards in this region, seems to be a fundamental issue. These *emporion* are in fact essential elements of an unequal economic system where, in southern Gaul, the distribution of wine (Etruscan, then Greek) and the implements linked to its consumption play a decisive role (Dietler 2007). The *emporion* are equally important because of the temporary or permanent presence of non-native people (such as sailors, traders, artisans and many others), whether they are isolated individuals or larger groups living alongside or being integrated into a fundamentally indigenous environment. There is then an ‘intrusive’ side, linked not only to the phenomenon of ethnic mixing, but also to the existence of other processes widely affecting the indigenous population. Therefore, ‘colonialism’ should, in this instance, be understood as: ‘... the projects and practices of control organised within the interactions between societies linked in asymmetrical relations of power and the processes of social and cultural transformation resulting from these practices’ (Dietler 2010: 18).

In southern Gaul, apart from several rare and often perplexing objects imported from the Mediterranean dated to the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century BC, it is not until the second half of the seventh century BC that we can see clear evidence of contacts between indigenous, Greek, Etruscan and, to a lesser degree, Phoenician people. This documentation remains relatively scarce, but attests to direct contacts just several decades before the Greeks from Phocaea settled in this area around 600 BC with the foundation of *Massalia* (Marseille). This foundation marks the beginning of a new era, but does not signify a rupture. Yet the northwestern Mediterranean regions, and moreover the area between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, did not wait until then to join long-distance exchange networks, which were already in existence during the Bronze Age (Coffyn 1985). The intermittent contacts from the seventh century BC laid the foundations of Greco-Etruscan *emporion* that emerged over the course of the following century. The indigenous aristocracy thus played a dominant role as the privileged interlocutors of the navigators landing on the shores of the Gulf of Lion (Verger and Pernet 2013).

Massalia on one side and *Emporion* (Ampurias) on the other mark the limits of what Strabo (4.1.6) described as the ‘Galactic Gulf’, which was a particularly dynamic area during the Late Bronze Age IIIb (tenth-ninth centuries BC) and the beginning of the first Iron Age (750-575 BC). During the sixth-fifth centuries BC, *Massalia* turned to the west and to the Languedoc rather than to Provence (Bats 1992; Py 1995). In a context of economic and probably population increase, *Massalia* prompts or steers the creation of number of *emporion*.

Pre-existing indigenous sites or new foundations are integrated into this network, and show the progressive and rapid establishment of a particularly dense coastal network exploiting a geographic zone defined as being on the fringes of indigenous territories. This zone is characterised by the presence of ponds and lagoons (Figure 1), and as such corresponds to intermediary areas lying between land and water (Gailledrat 2014).

From east to west, Arles, the *Théliné* mentioned by the Latin poet Avienus (689-91), is undoubtedly the focus of the Massalian commercial domain extending to western Languedoc. Farther south, the Greeks regularly visited various littoral trading posts such as Pech Maho (Sigean), or Agde where an *emporion* was in operation before the re-foundation at the end of the fifth century BC, transforming it into a proper Greek colony (*Agathé*) dependent on *Massalia*. During the last third of the sixth century BC, Arles, Espeyran (St-Gilles-du-Gard) and probably Le Cailar became the first links in this string of settlements. These three sites are more or less equidistant and point to identical choices in terms of location, marking out the access to the fluvial valleys leading towards the nearest hinterlands, and in the case of *Théliné*, to the Rhone Valley (Bats 1992; Py 1995; Gailledrat 2014).

This expansionist logic expresses itself more through a rapport with indigenous trading partners than through territorial takeover. These foundations nevertheless represent a real will to control the area around the Rhône Valley. At the beginning of the fifth century BC, *Lattara*, located at the mouth of the Lez next to Pérols Lake (Figure 1b), is added to these settlements (Figure 1c). *Lattara* is currently the best-known site in this area (Janin and Py 2008; Py 2009) but a number of questions still remain. They relate to the conditions surrounding its foundation on a thin strip of land surrounded by a lagoon, in a rather unlikely and inhospitable area. Questions also arise over its status within a network involving indigenous power and the Greek city *Massalia*, which exerts real commercial dominance over this area from the second half of the fifth century BC onwards.

Recent discoveries in the area of *Lattara* reveal a more complex situation than was at first understood. The previous definition of this settlement as an *emporion*, or rather more cautiously as a simple ‘trading post’ (Janin and Py 2008: 203), needs to be clarified. More generally speaking, the image of a continuous and gradual intermingling of indigenous and colonial worlds suggestive of a ‘Mediterraneanisation’ (Hodos 2009: 223) must be put into perspective. Although both acceptance and rejection have been discussed by most researchers through the study of material culture (Dietler 2010; Py 2012), the spatial dimension of these phenomena, which here is dependant on a specific natural environment, can be highlighted in order to clarify these ideas. The nature and function of these sites within the network of

cultural contact and exchange is in fact a key element for discussion, and a closer look at the area where the Lez meets the sea could contribute to our understanding of these sites.

Pérois Lake and the Mouth of the Lez at the Beginning of the Iron Age

The Late Bronze Age and in particular the LBA IIIb period is associated with an increase in the number of sites, indicating a growth in the population as well as an increased pressure on arable land resources. Most scholars (Py 2012; Garcia 2014) draw a parallel between the short periods of occupation that have been observed on most settlements and the concept of an unfulfilled sedentism and an agro-pastoral economy founded on transhumance together with the continuous exploitation of new lands. Although it has been recognised that there are subtle regional differences, we have an image of a primitive economy at the heart of a relatively classless society. The cemeteries that date to this period should indicate this, bearing no traces of ostentation normally distinguishing different social classes.

Whilst this lacklustre and rather ‘primitivist’ vision of Late Bronze Age societies must be qualified (Gailledrat 2014), the beginnings of the early Iron Age are associated with a great deal of mutation that is visible in the first place through a noticeable evolution in the material culture, especially the pottery styles. These changes are accompanied by clearer signs of a more developed hierarchical organisation that can be seen through the development of funerary practises. Some people distinguish themselves by placing funerary goods in their tombs, which are either opulent or carry a strong symbolic value and, for a limited fringe of society, these goods include some of the first Mediterranean imports. At the same time, the emergence of the ironworking industry also seems to be linked to these new cultural contacts with the Mediterranean. Despite the fact that the settlements of this period remain little known, the network of cemeteries enables us to build an image of a densely populated area.

Dating to the LBA IIIb, there is a concentration of sites clustered together on the northern shores of Mauguio Lake (Dedet and Py 1985), together with somewhat sporadic discoveries from the neighbouring site of Lattes, on the edge of the Pérois Lake (Figure 2). These are ‘minor’ settlements, due to their very limited size, ranging from several hundred to several thousand sq m. These sites are not necessarily contemporary with one another and they seem to have been occupied for a relatively short time. Nevertheless, they do indicate the relatively continuous occupation of this area between the Late Bronze and the first Iron Age. The available chronological data, however, indicate that most of the Iron Age levels date to the very beginning of the sixth century BC, thus supporting the hypothesis of settlement abandonment over the course of the eighth and seventh centuries BC.

Some of the data puts this observation into perspective. Life at the beginning of the seventh century BC is well represented on the sites at Port Ariane, La Cougourlude (Lattes) and more generally, various sites in the *Montpellierais* (Figure 3)¹, which casts doubt on the idea of a generalised demographic downturn. The largest agglomeration during this period is *Sextantio* (Castelnau-le-Lez), which was occupied from the LBA IIIb onwards, and during the first and the second Iron Ages, apparently without interruption (Vial 2003: 134-48). This settlement was founded on the Lez, some ten km from the sea. It extends over several hectares and clearly represents a central place around which a number of plain settlements of varying sizes were established. This suggests the existence of a real hierarchical structure, pointing towards indigenous control over this littoral and pre-littoral zone.

This is a phenomenon that can be observed throughout the south of France at the beginning of the Iron Age, a time when we see a consistent decline in the human population near the coast. Rather than being indicative of an actual population decline, this can be explained by changes in settlement patterns. What emerges from all this is the development of structured agglomerations, prominent sites invariably located inland. The distance kept between the coast and these settlements is remarkably regular, measuring generally from between 10–20 or even 30 km. This could indicate that the coastline may have coincided with the borders of political territories and foreshadows what we can observe, from the sixth century BC onwards, through the increasing number of *oppida*.

This retreat from the coast may seem paradoxical, as signs of cultural interchange with the Mediterranean are most tangible during this period and the potential presented by this quickly results in a power issue within the indigenous communities. Hence, there are two different trends that can be weighed against one another: on the one hand, there is a certain amount of rejection of these somewhat insalubrious areas, and even mistrust of a place that during the Archaic Period may have been associated with dangers linked to piracy. On the other hand, the existing links between the terrestrial and maritime domains begin to materialise. Therefore, there is an increase in the number of favoured coastal areas, which seem to have attracted the first reconnaissance and trading of the Archaic period.

The archaeological documentation for this period remains rather fragmentary for the area we are interested in here, but the islet of Maguelone, located opposite the mouth of the Lez, which was occupied during the LBA IIIb and at the beginning of the first Iron Age, may have served as a landmark on the maritime route along the coast of the Languedoc. During the eighth-seventh centuries BC, densely occupied areas appeared every 40-50 km along the coast, with relatively atypical indigenous settlements established on the seashore.

Nevertheless, the traces of occupation identified in Maguelone during the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age remain difficult to characterise and there is not yet any direct evidence of interchanges with Mediterranean cultures.

Change and Continuity During the Sixth Century BC

After an apparent decline during the earliest phase of the Iron Age, new lagoon occupations emerged at the beginning of the sixth century BC (Figure 4). Just two generations later, however, towards the middle of the century, the small settlements recorded in this area (Forton, La Rallongue) were once again abandoned, whilst contacts with the Mediterranean world multiplied.

The coastline, however, was not deserted, indeed quite the opposite: in La Cougourlude, evidence of a large native agglomeration was brought to light, which stands in stark contrast to the modest pre-existing villages of this area. At the beginning of the Iron Age, the site was still fairly small and can therefore be compared to the settlements mentioned previously. Although it was small at that particular time, it developed quickly during the last third of the sixth century BC and covered an area of 10 hectares (Py 2009: 19-21).

La Cougourlude is located on the Lironde, a small coastal river near the Lez, in the vicinity of the Pérols Lake and just 1.5 km from *Lattara*. During the second half of the sixth century BC, the indigenous nature of this settlement — protected by an imposing ditch and perhaps an earth embankment — is apparent in the architecture. The settlement was made up of post-hole structures or pit-house constructions, and revealed a material facies dominated by local, non-wheel-thrown pottery, similar to finds discovered at other sites in the Languedoc. The only aspect distinguishing it from its regional counterparts are the numerous imports from the Mediterranean, especially wine amphorae, which clearly indicate an economic function, linked to the redistribution of these products.

This settlement existed before the foundation of *Lattara* and was in close contact with the latter for several years before it underwent an important recession during the second quarter of the fifth century BC. Even so, it is during this same period that *Lattara* suffers an apparent full-scale destruction and a radical change related to the style of its material culture, favouring imports from *Massalia* instead of Etruria. The chronological concordance between the near full abandonment of the village at La Cougourlude and the profound changes affecting *Lattara*, implies that the ‘re-foundation’ of the latter was accompanied by a massive displacement of the community previously settled on the banks of the Lironde, as a result of two factors: indigenous initiative and Greek intervention.

For several decades, La Cougourlude seems to have been used as a coastal interface site, conducting trade with the Mediterranean world and acting as a privileged go-between, linked in one way or another to the *oppidum* of *Sextantio*, which must be considered as a major regional site. A partnership between port and *oppidum* thus emerges, and seems to be the indigenous peoples' approach to strengthening what was until then a poorly structured system, as a response to the increase in Greco-Etruscan trade. As already noted above, the centre of power (*Sextantio*) remained inland at the heart of a territory extending to the sea. At the same time, on the fringes of this territory, the foundation of a new and atypical site (La Cougourlude) manifests itself as the indigenous population's determination to drive towards the Mediterranean.

By the end of the sixth century BC, when La Cougourlude is fully developed, evidence of contacts and diverse imports suggests that the territory around the Lez Valley had open relations with the Mediterranean, with the widespread import of amphorae (Greek and Etruscan), which stands in contrast to what we see in the hinterland settlements, where Etruscan products are largely predominant (Dedet and Py 2006). Such a situation can be regarded as particularly unusual at the beginning of the fifth century BC. Indeed, at a time when imports into *Lattara* are mostly made up of Etruscan products and when the question of the identification of a real Tyrrhenian trading post at the mouth of the Lez has been raised (Py 1995; Lebeaupin *et al.* 2006; Py 2009), La Cougourlude was clearly welcoming merchandise that originated in other places, particularly from the Greek world, even if an upsurge in Etruscan imports may be observed during the interval between 500-475 BC. Indeed, La Cougourlude does not appear to be a mere consumer of products acquired at a neighbouring harbour (*Lattara*), but it keeps its earlier function as a link between the Mediterranean and the hinterland, perhaps emerging as the main place for meeting and exchange. *Lattara* would thus only be a landmark for Mediterranean navigators, mainly acting as a harbour and a transit point for merchandise rather than being a true *emporion*.

The real *emporion* at around 500 BC would seem to be at La Cougourlude, an indigenous site located on solid ground rather than in a small area between land and water like *Lattara*, or in other words situated on a portion of land with a different status, fully controlled by the local people. This is not so very far removed from structures known in other Mediterranean areas, and applies to the Phoenician settlements on the Sicilian coast referred to by Thucydides (6.2): 'the peninsulae and small islands off the coast [...] that they used as a commercial base with the native people.' In this way, it is only when La Cougourlude is

abandoned that *Lattara* seems to acquire other functions, thus truly inheriting *emporion* status at the gates of the Montpellier area.

By contrast with the native communities intent on establishing distance from the maritime environment, which generally led to geographic distancing or the exploitation of a particularly suitable topography, the very structure of La Cougoulude represents a place that is open and accessible. For reasons still unknown, a lowland site was preferred to the nearby hilly area of Pérols, at the foot of which the Lironde River flows. The site nonetheless sits behind the lagoon and nearby the river, thus benefiting from some protection, however minimal, provided by the ditch mentioned previously. From *Sextantio* to *Lattara*, different ‘spaces’ begin to take shape, which correspond to a string of outlying zones.

Settlements and Sanctuaries

Located on the right bank of the Lironde near La Courgoulude, several traces of occupation have also been brought to light immediately to the south on the left bank: the Mas de Causse, located at the foot of the Pérols hill (Figure 5), which borders the area near *Lattara* to the east and overlooks the lake farther to the south. This same area has yielded a series of exceptional remains that point to the presence of a sanctuary dating from the Archaic period onwards.

Discovered beneath an enclosure forming a terrace built during the second Iron Age (end of the fifth or fourth century BC?) and interpreted as ritual in nature, came an important hoard of metallic objects, including a series of more than three hundred small bronze discs with pearl patterns around the rim, most of which were perforated (Figure 5). This collection is thought to have been imported from Etruria during the sixth century BC. Although some of the objects discovered were interpreted as small cups belonging to perfume-burners (*thymiateria*), it seems more likely that they were miniature offerings. They were copied on a regional scale at a later time as smaller reproductions of the Etruscan bronze basins imported during the same period. At Mas de Causse, however, these objects are associated with other metallic artefacts, such as rings, bracelets and *fibulae*, some of which date to the middle of the fifth century BC. This deposit in a secondary deposition was carried downslope by a process of colluviation and then abandoned. Bearing this in mind, the hoard of finds must have come from the demolition of various structures that overlooked the slopes of the Pérols hillock.

Furthermore, it is striking to observe that a rectilinear ditch, with a northwest/southeast orientation, divides the site of Mas de Causse into two halves (Figure 5). This partition is materialised by a number of ditches and other occupation features that are much more concentrated to the west than to the east. A ‘free’ space of several hundred sq m seems to

exist at the foot of the hill, just beside the presumed sanctuary. This observation enables us to propose a distinct use of this sector as well as perhaps to identify an enclosure that may have been used as a *temenos*. In any case, it is interesting that the terrace is orientated in exactly the same direction as the ditch, which was dug at some point during the sixth century BC and filled in during the second half of the fourth century BC.

We presume that a sanctuary existed in this sector from at least the middle of the sixth century BC and contained offerings until quite late during the following century. The place was used over an extended period of time, not just when an indigenous community was present in the neighbouring settlement of La Cougourlude, and Mediterranean traders established themselves at the mouth of the Lez, but well after this native community left for the new *Lattara*. The importance of the place was kept alive, and the more recently built terrace conserved its sacred character. It is clearly difficult to define the ‘identity’ of this original sanctuary, but would it even make sense to do so since this place appears to be situated at the juncture of two united worlds, with the natives on one side, and Greeks and Etruscans on the other? In any case, its location is significant and points towards a function similar to that of a ‘sanctuary of borders’.

We have considered that before 475 BC, a large part of the proposed economic transactions took place outside the walls of *Lattara*. As a result, we can imagine that the sanctuary of the Mas de Causse and its surroundings, at the gateway of the indigenous agglomeration of La Cougourlude, may have played a decisive role. The enclosure located at the foot of the hill could have represented a meeting place for exchange and other transactions; the delimited area may have been viewed as neutral ground outside the limits of the local village and may have been considered as sacred, given the proximity of the sanctuary.

Although there are still many uncertainties, there is a truly *emporion*-like pattern here, which has been seen elsewhere around the Mediterranean, where economic, religious and probably political systems merge together (Rouillard 2000). The sanctuary appears to be an essential component of the *emporion*, in the same way that it is involved in a land appropriation scheme. From a geographic point of view, the relief of the Pérols hill indicates a ‘limit’ to the east of *Lattara* and is a remarkable feature in the landscape. The sanctuary was built on the western slope, which is visible from the mouth of the Lez and the lagoon, and must have been clearly visible at the time it was erected.

In this respect, other discoveries made in the surroundings of *Lattara* enable us to define this notion of ‘space’. First of all, the discovery of a deposit containing Etruscan bronze bowls

at the Domaine de Soriech (Lattes) (Figure 6a), on the Pérols hill, some several hundred metres from the Mas de Causse and to the northeast of La Cougourlude, appears to be votive or funerary in nature, and dates to the sixth century BC.

Similarly, an unusual grave from the second half of the sixth century BC was discovered at La Céreirède (Lattes), about 2 km north of *Lattara*. This was a cremation burial situated on the edge of an ancient pathway along the course of the Lez on the way to *Sextantio*, and is characterised by its isolated location, as well as the singular nature of the funerary deposit, which contains an Etruscan amphora used as an urn for the cremated remains, accompanied by an iron dagger, a bronze cup and a *strigil* (body scraping tool) (Figure 6b). This burial practice, using Etruscan amphorae, is reminiscent of the contemporary cemeteries and isolated burials in western Languedoc or Spain, such as in St-Antoine (Castelnau-de-Guers), Corno Lauzo (Pouzols-Minervois) or La Granja Soley (Santa Perpètua de Mogoda, Spain), often interpreted as being graves of high-status people as well as territorial markers.

The discovery of La Céreirède appears to define one or several occupied spaces, and may define the northernmost limit of a piece of land conceded to the Etruscans (and other Mediterranean peoples?), by indigenous powers at around 500 BC. There is 1.5 km-2 km radius around *Lattara*, created by the tomb of La Céreirède, the ‘deposit’ of Soriech and maybe the funerary remains of the Chemin de Saint-Pierre (Figure 7). This consistent pattern is part of a double logic of integration and exclusion that shows the complexity of the relations between the different co-existing communities.

***Lattara*: Between Indigenous Powers and Massalian Influence**

Another illustration of this complexity, which also shows that the native aristocracy played a role in the definition of the relations with Mediterranean navigators, is provided by the discovery of a statue of a warrior dated to around 500 BC, found in a secondary context in a third century BC building (Py and Dietler 2003; Janin and Py 2008) (Figure 8). This statue, which could originally have been part of a group of sculpted pieces on display in a public space (probably a sanctuary), shows clear Mediterranean influences. The iconography, however, is indigenous, with strong references to the western Languedoc and the Iberian world. The Italic influence, highlighted elsewhere (Py and Dietler 2003), seems to be less visible, and in any case is not sufficient to consider that this is an Etruscan object related to the first settlement in *Lattara*.

Considering the context and the typology of the weapons and clothes depicted, this statue can certainly be dated to the beginning of the fifth century BC and would have been visible to *Lattara* during this period. This in turn supports the hypothesis of an indigenous presence within what appears to have been a fundamentally Mediterranean, or even exclusively Tyrrhenian enclave. The date of the statue, however, leaves room for another interpretation. Although the typological data of the objects depicted hardly leaves any doubt as to its date (around 500 BC), we cannot rule out a date closer to 475 BC. The suggestion that the sculpture may have been caught up in the destruction of the Etruscan trading post by the Greeks (Janin and Py 2008: 69) must therefore be treated with caution. We may also suggest the idea that the statue was contemporary with the rebuilding of the settlement, after a sudden and apparently dramatic event. In other words, we may have evidence for the repossession of *Lattara* by the native people, intensified by the creation of a lavish work of art depicting heroic characters.

Moreover, we presume that this new settlement, built with the benevolence and the cooperation of the Greeks of *Massalia*, was associated with the evolution of the site's functions. The notion of space, established earlier on, must inevitably have evolved with these new developments as the lagoon shores and mouth of the Lez seem then to have been fully included and defined as belonging to the indigenous sphere. The site of *Lattara* seems to have embraced from then on most, if not all, of the functions associated with an *emporion* under native control.

The evolution of the site of Mas de Causse provides us with several elements for further reflection. At the foot of the Pérols hill, the construction of a terrace partially overlying the remains of a pre-existing sanctuary may have formed a boundary between two distinct areas, one sacred, the other profane. This terrace is unevenly preserved (Figure 9a-b), and it has not been possible to reconstruct the upper levels, even less so to identify the possible features or structures within: were there buildings associated with worship, a simple altar or even votive ditches? Whatever the case may be, this is an unusual construction for southern Gaul, and its location and monumental nature imply that its purpose was not of a profane nature.

In order to find satisfactory parallels we must turn to the Mediterranean, and more particularly the Greek world, where we may find terraces that served as a podium sheltering a place of worship. Documentation from the western Phocaeen region remains scarce and is limited to the existence of a terrace built in the fifth century BC outside the walls of *Emporion* (Ampurias) and later included within the perimeter of the city. New cult buildings dedicated to Asklepíos or Sérapis (Santos and Sourisseau 2011: 251-52) were then constructed on the

upper part of the terrace during the second-first centuries BC (Figure 9c). It is important to add that this monument was initially located outside the walls and operated as a peri-urban place of worship, linking Greek and native communities, which is precisely the function suggested for the Mas de Causse sanctuary.

The metrology used in the construction of Mas de Causse raises a number of questions. The dimensions observed here enable us to reconstruct a monument that employed the same mensuration as was used in *Massalia*, *Emporion*, Ullastret (Puig de Sant Andreu, Spain) or La Picola (Santa Pola, Spain), in other words in Greek settlements or indigenous sites with privileged links to the Phocaeen world. This unit of measurement is the *orguia*, a unit of 6 feet. However, its real value is difficult to gauge and it is even more difficult to determine whether it is Greek or not (Tréziny 1989). According to the two proposed reconstructions, the value of this foot would be somewhere around 29.5 cm (the average ‘Phocaeen foot’ varies between 29.5cm and 30cm), or 27.7 cm. In either case, the Mas de Causse terrace appears to follow an exact architectural convention with a foreign influence (Figure 9b). At the very least, it implies the input of exogenous Phocaeen skills, which is consistent with the fact that *Massalia* played a major role in the life of the port of *Lattara* at the time. What is the significance of this structure? It appears that the original sanctuary must have been of a sufficient enough importance for the inhabitants of *Lattara* to renew it as they did. It thus became a durable feature in the landscape, although we cannot determine whether it played an equally important role compared with what was envisaged during the sixth century BC.

Between Colonisers and Natives: *Lattara* during the Fifth Century BC

Although *Lattara* appears to trade openly with *Massalia* during the second Iron Age, as well as being under the commercial influence of the Phocaeen city, the origins of the town still raise questions, especially in relation to what extent the Etruscans played a role. The hypothesis of a Tyrrhenian foundation has been suggested (Py *et al.* 2006; Janin and Py 2008; Py 2009), based on the existence of some data concerning the early phases, which can currently be observed at two locations of the site, one to the south (zone 27) and the other to the east (zone 1) (Figure 10).

Around 500 BC, a considerable urban planning programme was implemented, suggesting an *ex-nihilo* foundation. The place is nonetheless frequented, or even occupied, as early as the sixth century BC, as shown by the residual Etruscan material attributed to this period, including fragments of amphorae (type 1 or 3A) and various *kantharos* in *bucchero nero*, i.e. a distinctive drinking cup on a high stem and with high handles in a distinctive shiny

black Etruscan ceramic ware. Does this represent a first settlement, or a simple natural landing place located in front of La Cougourlude? It is still too early to be sure, but a rampart was built around 500 BC on what appears to be a peninsula bordered to the east and the west by two branches of the Lez, forming a headland in the lagoon. The houses built inside this enclosure are quite unlike any of the types of houses in southern Gaul. As much by their construction techniques as their regular layouts, these buildings testify to rather sudden innovation. Houses with several rooms are built adjoining each other and display a perfectly regular layout. The walls are constructed with mud-brick or cob-built on a stone foundation, covered with an earth rendering and then lime washed (Figure 11a).

The ceramics found in the southern part of the site (zone 27) include not just important quantities of Etruscan wine amphorae, but also domestic ware made up of tableware in *bucchero nero* and wheel-thrown cooking wares (Figure 11b). These vessels display *graffiti* in the Etruscan language, which leaves little doubt as to the identity of the inhabitants in this area. These observations confirm the presence of a trading community from southern Etruria, with close and exclusive links with the city (probably *Caere*) that produced the amphorae found there.

Does the fact that the Etruscans had an anchoring point in the Languedoc equate with the foundation of a truly Etruscan settlement? The current data do not yet enable us to confirm if *Lattara* was a more open *emporion* with a 'simple' Tyrrhenian area near the port at the beginning of the fifth century BC. This is nevertheless a possibility, given the most recent discoveries in another area of the site (zone 1): here, in a highly 'Mediterranean' architectural context, we find a significant variety of pottery (Etruscan, Greek and other amphorae, with Attic ceramics instead of *bucchero nero*), but important differences exist relating to the percentages of non-wheel-thrown pottery and Etruscan cooking ware, suggesting a more native facies (Figure 11c).

In any case, the second quarter of the fifth century BC is a period of disruption, during which the Greek monopoly takes hold in Provence and in the eastern Languedoc. It is of course tempting to link the breakdown in *Lattara* with this disruption, within the context of more widespread tension in the Mediterranean. Towards 475 BC, *Lattara* seems to suffer extensive destruction, with traces of fire on one side of the site (zone 27), and signs of a sudden abandonment on the other (zone 1). All this seems to take place before the reorganisation of the urban space accompanied by a significant change in the type of finds, which from then on are essentially of native origin and imported from *Massalia*.

All of this evidence points towards an eviction of the Etruscan settlers through ‘renewed Massalian control’ of the site (Py *et al.* 2006: 601). And yet we have seen that other evidence must be taken into account, namely the native re-appropriation of the site and a change in function as the main regional interface with the Mediterranean. The conditions surrounding this re-foundation during the second quarter of the fifth century BC are themselves meaningful, as they call for a comparison between the information gained from the excavation of the two zones mentioned above, which have exposed the levels that date to this period.

In general, in the southern area (zone 27), this phase is characterised by a distinctly native facies. The existence of structures built using wattle and daub or cob is consistent with the architectural traditions still used in this part of Languedoc at that time. The tableware is also of native tradition. The dishes are generally handmade rather than wheel-thrown, along with some finer ceramics, mostly pale-coloured vases made in the Massalian tradition (Figure 12d). The carefully thought-out town planning, which dominates the previous phase, suddenly gives way to a looser and unstable structure, with crudely built constructions; including houses annex buildings and enclosures, and only simple repairs on the rampart.

As such, for over more than half a century, until 425 BC, this construction period conveys a ‘common’ image of a native village at the beginning of the second Iron Age, maintaining regular contact with the Greek world, in particular with *Massalia*. On the eastern part of the site (zone 1), recently acquired evidence enables us to substantiate this pattern. During this same interval between 475-450 BC, the situation observed on the eastern side appears to be relatively similar, inasmuch as we can only make out a loose framework materialised mostly by post-hole structures that were rebuilt several times over. Among the constructions identified are small annex buildings, enclosures and cattle shelters. There are, however, a number of less basic structures alongside these, particularly in the central part of the excavated zone, where a house with a double apsidal layout and cob walls partially built on massive stone foundations was discovered (Figure 12a).

On one side there is a modest-sized house (with a surface area of slightly more than 20 sq m), divided into two rooms, with a hearth; on the other side there are annex buildings and areas of open-air activity. In this particular case, the layout is relatively easy to understand and illustrates an already known phenomenon where, prior to the organisation of an urban structure consisting of adjoining houses grouped together in blocks, a rather looser urban structure prevails with the juxtaposition of independent functional premises that were probably used as family homes. This seems to be a coherent image of the developing period

of a new indigenous agglomeration predating the urbanisation phase of *Lattara*, which occurred between the middle and the third quarter of the fifth century BC.

The chronological and cultural context is nonetheless distinctive, as this new occupation of *Lattara* involves fairly active involvement of non-native people, in this case the Greeks from *Massalia*. In detail, this zone, and in particular the double apsidal house described above, raise some questions. This domestic building has yielded what is to date a unique object discovered from southern Gaul within a native context: a Greek votive female *protome* (Figure 12c). This votive Ionian style terracotta should be compared with the seated feminine figures discovered in *Massalia* (Tréziny 2000; Santos and Sourisseau 2011: 239). The context of this discovery is even more ambiguous in that the pottery associated with this phase is again dominated by native hand-made tableware, but at the same time includes a number of plain black Attic ceramics or pale-coloured Massalian ceramics that contrast with what has been recorded in the southern area (Figure 12b).

It is thus reasonable to question the identity of the inhabitants of this house or of the community itself, and the suggestion that a mixed family settled here cannot be ruled out. We must be careful not to over interpret the differences observed, which may be the result of many things, but at the very least *Lattara* presents diverse archaeological facies, indicating different trends in consumption practices from one area to another. The idea of a Greek presence in a fundamentally native context would not be surprising in itself, but it remains to be established. Fine ware, and especially Attic pottery, remains limited to drinking vessels, presenting an indigenous facies characterised by limited borrowing from the Greek world (Dietler 2010).

Although the apsidal buildings exist as much in Greek as in native contexts (Garcia and Tréziny 2010), it seems difficult to suggest that there was a resurgence of an Archaic Greek architectural style during the middle of the fifth century BC, with a potentially familiar urban landscape for both the Greeks and the native people (Garcia and Tréziny 2010). Nonetheless, the idea of a temporary settlement, perhaps consisting of a mixed Greek/indigenous family at the heart of the Lattes community, needs to be considered.

The transient nature of this phase is important, and even more so because important changes took place here several years later, towards the middle of the fifth century BC, when a real urban network was beginning to emerge. It is represented by the construction of buildings made of mud-brick and cob walls built on stone foundations (Figure 13a), evidence for the first major reorganisation of the town, giving it that structure and style that it adopts throughout the second Iron Age (see Figure 10, above). The progressive nature of this

urbanisation process as well as its native influences, have been noted on several occasions (Janin and Py 2008; Py 2009).

The changes observed on this same part of the site, however, not only take place early on but also demonstrate that particular care was taken in constructing these buildings. Furthermore, around 450 BC, the existence of houses with several rooms is still a foreign concept in the indigenous world of Eastern Languedoc. During the same period, this zone presents once again a distinct archaeological facies in relation to those recorded at the southern end (Figure 13b-c). Whether it is pottery (with more Greek-type ware, including Attic pottery), or the animal species or types of plants consumed, these differences are even more distinct than during the previous phase, once again giving the impression that the population living here had a specific lifestyle and specific traditions. Can this be explained in ethnic terms? It is possible, but it would be just as appropriate to suggest simple social or economic differences from one area to another, as the native population of *Lattara* was not necessarily consistent in terms of its activities or lifestyles, and therefore the ability of acquiring imported goods may not have been the same from one group to another.

Whilst a potters workshop seems to have been constructed in the western part of this zone, in the middle of the neighbourhood there is a distinctive room that presents a very original internal layout, organised around a central hearth with a platform decorated with incised or stamped geometric patterns typical of native contexts in the eastern Languedoc. Around the hearth we observe a series of small storage pits for jars and amphorae that were laid out symmetrically. This organisation is incompatible with the idea of a simple living area and suggests that this was a sort of storage area where samples of products for sale could have been exhibited. This concept is not necessarily alien to native practices, but is also similar to that of the *deigma* — ‘sale based on a sample’ — that was carried out in Greece in the context of *emporía*. The term also indicates where this type of transaction was carried out: ‘... the *deigma* enabled contracts to be agreed upon in the best conditions so the delivery could be conducted in a number of transit-ports, where valid documents were presented and the price of the merchandise was paid’ (Bresson 2007: 104).

The practice is even more plausible in the Languedoc during the fifth century BC, when we look at the well-known lead tablets from Ampurias and Pech Maho. This set of tablets suggests the existence of a codified and controlled exchange system, as does, to a greater extent, the discovery of a thin strip of lead, which was meant to be engraved and was found precisely in this room at *Lattara*. Writing, therefore, is indirectly present and should logically have been part of managing the transactions that must have taken place here. Furthermore, the

existence of lead tablets inscribed for commercial purposes has been confirmed at *Lattara* later, dating to the third quarter of the fifth century BC.

The facies that appear to be more ‘Mediterranean’ than anything else, and the importance of the economic functions lend a little more credence to the suggestion that this was the settlement of a distinct cultural group with an activity centred on trade and crafts. This brings us to the core of our study of the *emporion* as a place of meeting, exchange and ethnic mixing.

Conclusion

The mouth of the Lez is a complex zone with a particularly solid archaeological record. It yields both a synchronic and diachronic vision of the cultural, social and economic processes between the end of the Bronze Age and the Roman conquest. Putting *Lattara* into perspective within its surrounding environment provides a coherent pattern illustrating a model of exchange and colonial interaction on a broader scale in this part of the Mediterranean, which is demonstrated by the appearance of specialised coastal sites.

The first Iron Age is a key period during which a whole set of phenomena occurs and is illustrated here particularly with the concept of a progressive structuring of the coastal area. This process involves Gallic, Etruscan and Greek elements in keeping with a dialectic marked by converging interests, or in other words a dynamic in which the native world does not play a passive role in relation to entreaties from the Mediterranean colonial world. Although this is intrusive and in many ways destabilising for the indigenous economy and society, it is itself subjected to various restrictions reflected in the structure and even in the geography of the littoral settlements, at the forefront of which is *Lattara*.

At the beginning of the Iron Age, the first tangible traces of direct contacts with the Mediterranean world begin to emerge. Specific settlement geography characterises the eighth-seventh centuries BC, with a relatively dense network throughout the indigenous territory and probable hierarchic systems with the major sites at the top, such as the oppidum of *Sextantio*. Although Mediterranean sailors frequented the coastline, it is only sparsely occupied during this period, which could be a sign of rejection by the native populations. Moreover, sites positioned towards the Mediterranean are rare or even non-existent, with at most several minor settlements taking advantage of the environment’s potential. Nonetheless, we sense that this area at the mouth of the Lez was regularly frequented and that the island of Maguelone acted as both a landmark and a seasonal landing place. In this case, the island may not have been a structured and permanent habitat, but could have played a role similar to that of many

beaches and river mouths used during the Archaic period as a place of exchange at the limits of a terrestrial and maritime area, or in other words at the border of native and Mediterranean worlds.

During the sixth century BC, the coastline is once again exploited, and an *emporion*-based system is established involving diverse players generating economic and political stakes. This re-appropriation is accounted for by the indigenous world, whose power structures evolve considerably at that time. In the region that interests us here, this is portrayed through the formalisation of a place clearly devoted to encouraging developing trade (La Cougourlude/Mas de Causse), serving as an *emporion* linked to the *oppidum* of *Sextantio*. Nearby, the mouth of the Lez is already used as a natural landing place and already shelters a settlement not yet identified with certainty. In any event, the place was inhabited at the turn of the sixth-fifth centuries BC by an inherently Mediterranean community or at least by one that is partially Etruscan. At that time, *Lattara* was a fortified settlement of several hectares that operated in partnership with La Cougourlude, implying that the communities present were still relatively separate, but not compartmentalised with Mediterranean traders on one side and native people on the other.

The fact that a settlement was built at the mouth of the main river of this area may seem both natural and favourable, but the narrow sandbar it sits upon raises questions surrounding the reasons of such a choice. On the one hand, this peninsula provides opportunities in terms of defence, although this concern was deemed to be superfluous by the native peoples who settled at La Cougourlude on their own lands. However, it nonetheless likely remained a major concern for the Mediterranean traders who settled here. On the other hand, the very confined and potentially insalubrious aspect of this area suggests that some kind of restriction may have been in operation. In other words, local powers only granted a small section of territory in what appears to be an outlying zone.

The respective areas belonging to the two worlds are thus clearly demarcated, as is the space devoted to meeting and the sanctuary area at Mas de Causse located at the gates of the La Cougourlude settlement. For reasons unknown, this situation evolved towards 475 BC, when *Lattara* was destroyed, then rebuilt, and the population already settled at La Cougourlude took possession of the place. Major change follows and the community appears to be rather mixed from the outset. Greek and indigenous populations lived alongside each other, but it is important to stress that this was a small settlement involving several individuals, or several families, rather than a real Hellenic establishment.

The foreign population was accepted here and integrated into the indigenous community, both groups appearing to share this initiative. The site was rapidly transformed from a location where the Mediterranean merchant was accepted into a key part of native territory, which acted as both an entrance and exit for products exchanged with the Mediterranean. Indeed, the construction process itself and the weight of the Gallic influence imply that the site was fundamentally placed under native control. Even so, the archaeological record indicates rapid economic dependency on *Massalia*, suggesting that other power relations could have appeared in the colonial network.

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About the Author

Eric Gailledrat is a researcher in the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) located in Montpellier. Former member of the 'Casa de Velázquez' (Madrid, Spain), his work in Spain and in southern France deals with the relations between native and colonial societies in the western Mediterranean during the first millennium BC. He has led various excavations, including those of La Fonteta (Guardamar del Segura, Spain), Pech Maho (Sigean, France) and *Lattara* (Lattes, France).

Endnotes

(1) Between the Mediterranean and the Cévennes mountains, the *Montpelliérais* is a 35-40 km wide region around the city of Montpellier, limited on the west by the valley of the Hérault, on the southwest by the Étang de Thau and to the east by the Camargue, a vast area of ponds and lagoons (see Fig. 1).

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Captions

Figure 1: Location of Montpellier (a), map of the Gulf of Lion with the main Iron Age sites (b) and view of the lake of Pérols (c) (© E. Gailledrat, CNRS/ASM) (c).

Figure 2: The region of Montpellier during the Late Bronze Age IIIb (1100-800/750 BC)

Figure 3: The region of Montpellier during the early Iron Age I (750-575 BC)

Figure 4: The region of Montpellier during the recent Iron Age I (575-475 BC)

Figure 5: The site of Mas de Causse. Plan of the Iron Age structures (© Oxford Archeology) at the foot of the Pérols hill (© E. Gailledrat) and location of the deposit of metallic objects (© L. Damelet, CNRS/CCJ).

Figure 6: Etruscan basins in bronze from the domain of Soriech (a); Objects from the grave of La Céreirède (b) (© L. Damelet, CNRS/CCJ)

Figure 7: Palaeotopography of the sector of *Lattara* during the sixth-fifth centuries BC (after Bagan *et al.* 2010, completed)

Figure 8: The statue of the ‘warrior of Lattes’. Front (a) and reverse side (b) (© L. Damelet, CNRS/CCJ)

Figure 9: The terrace of Mas de Causse (a) (© Oxford Archaeology); suggested restitution of the plan and the measurements used (b); the terrace at *Emporion* (Ampurias) (c) (© MAC-Empúries)

Figure 10: The site of St-Sauveur at Lattes, ancient *Lattara*. Aerial view (a) (© L. Damelet, CNRS/CCJ) and overall plan indicating the zones where the foundation levels have been reached (b).

Figure 11: The Etruscan buildings in zone 27 at *Lattara* (500-475 BC) (a) (© UFRAL). Pottery facies of zones 27 and 1 (b-c).

Figure 12: Zone 1 at *Lattara* (475-450 BC) (a); *Koré* in *terracotta* (c) (© UFRAL); Pottery facies of zones 1 and 27 (b-d).

Figure 13: Zone 1 at *Lattara* (around 450 BC) (a); Pottery facies of zones 1 and 27 (b-c).



Fig. 1

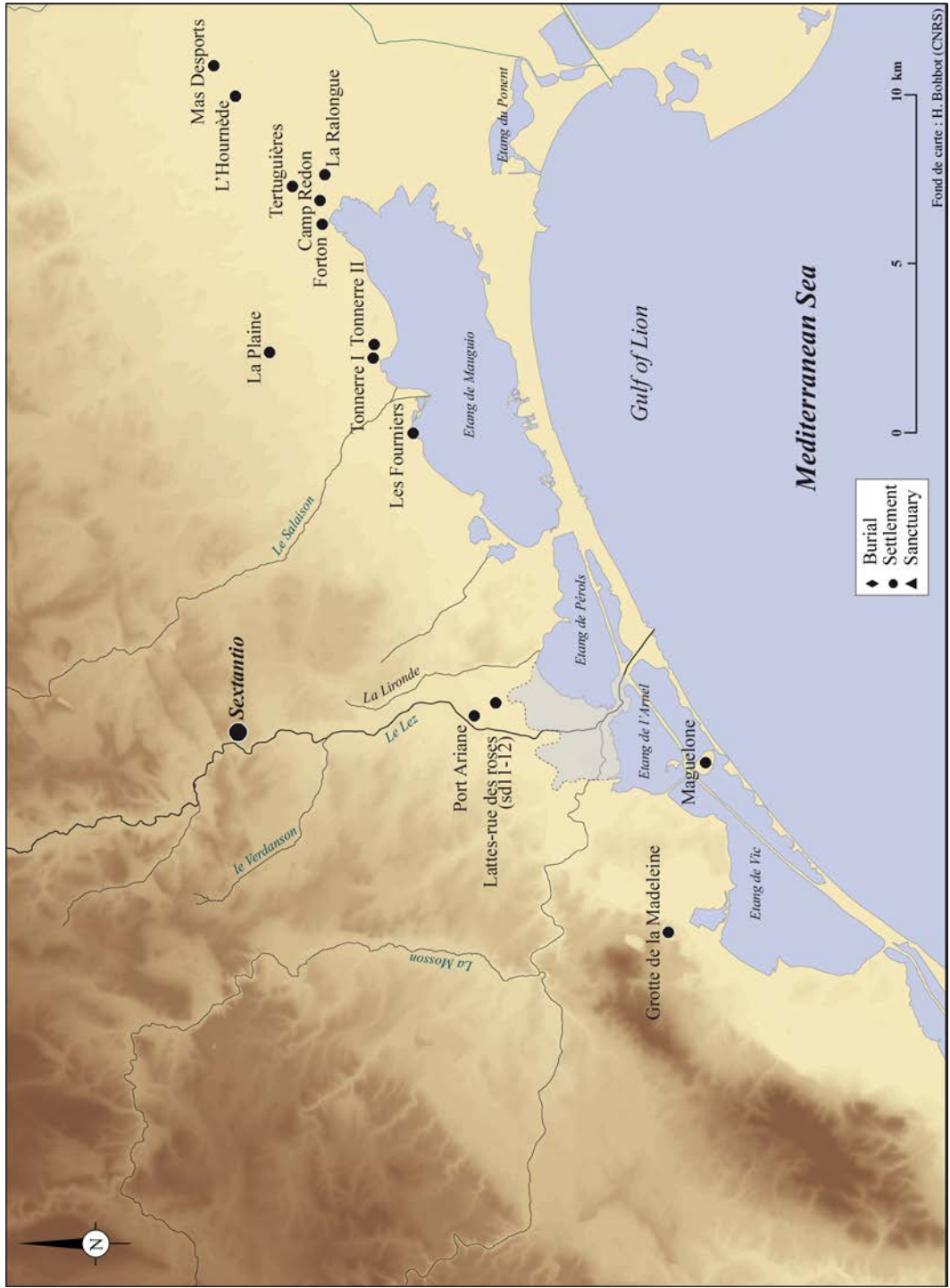


Fig. 2

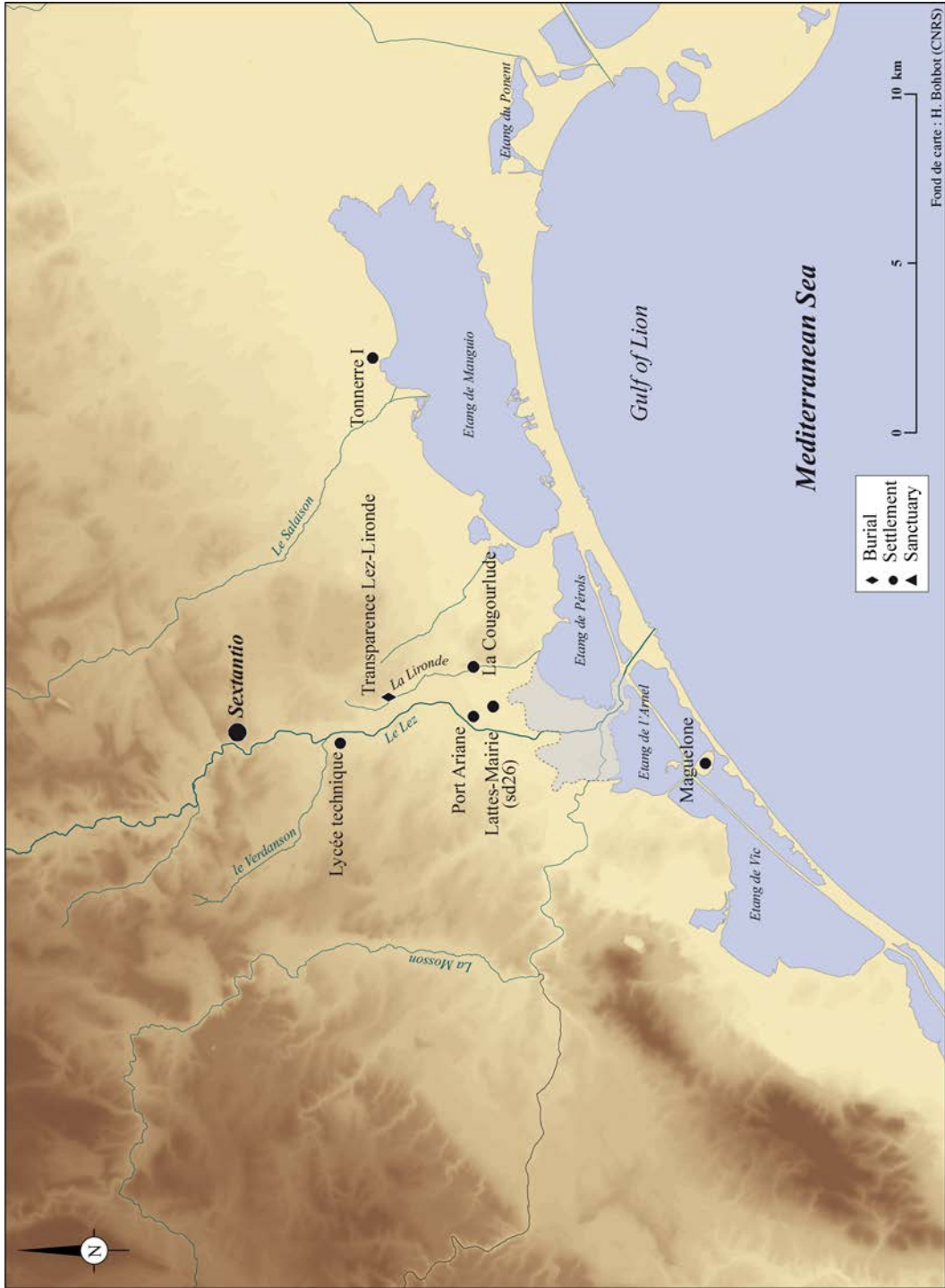


Fig. 3

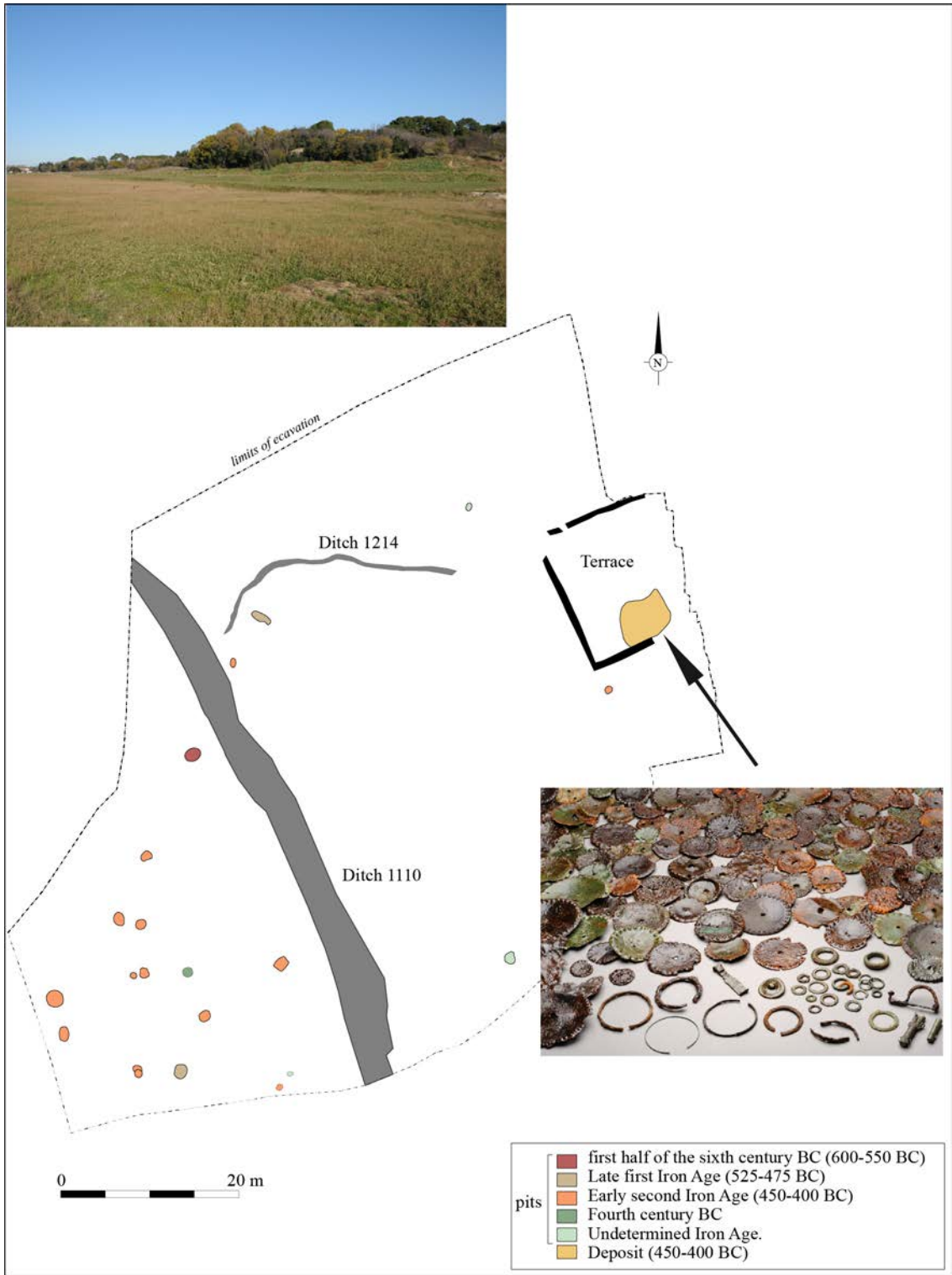


Fig. 5



a



b

Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

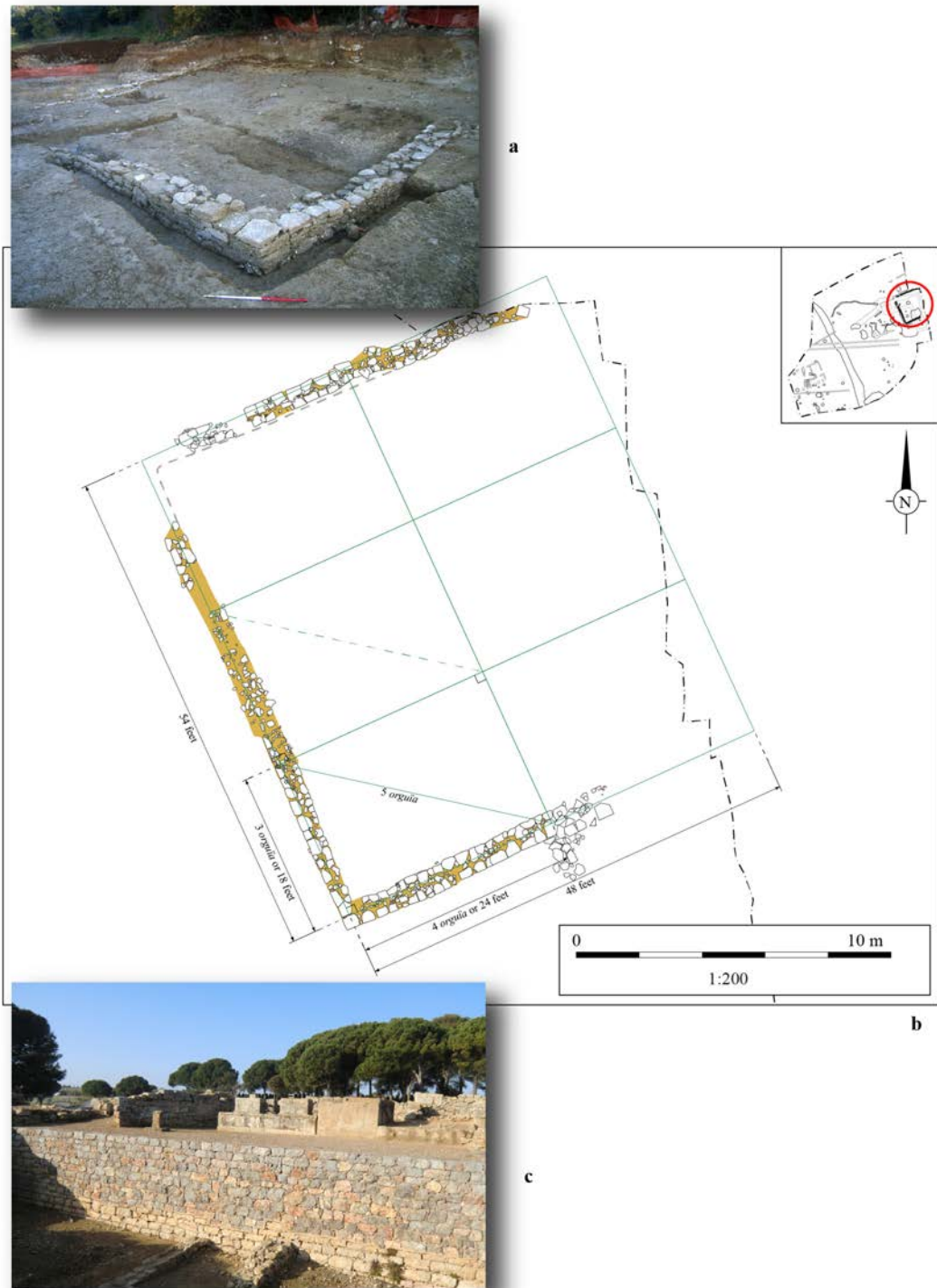


Fig. 9

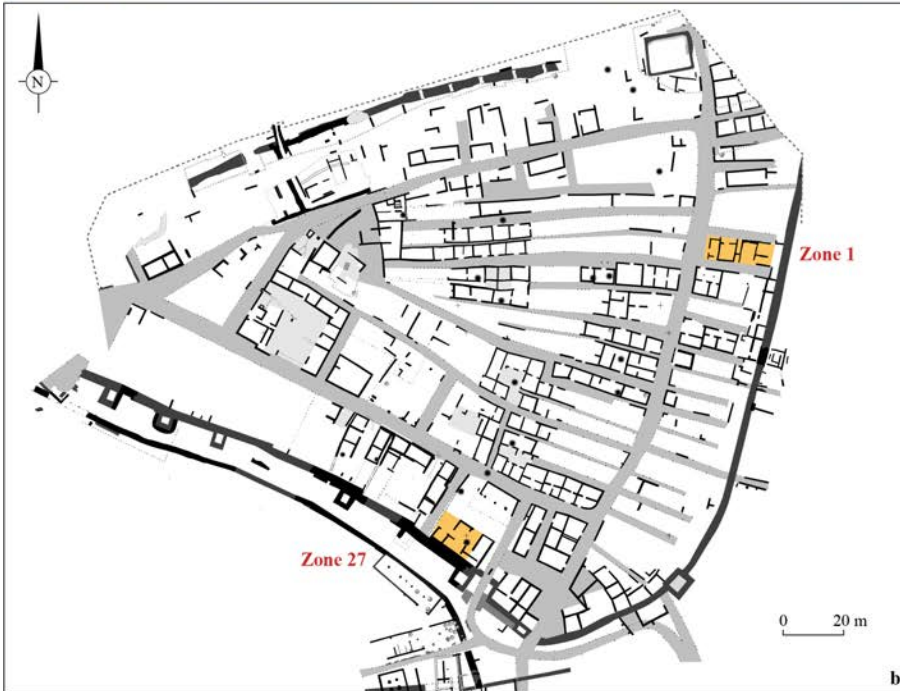


Fig. 10

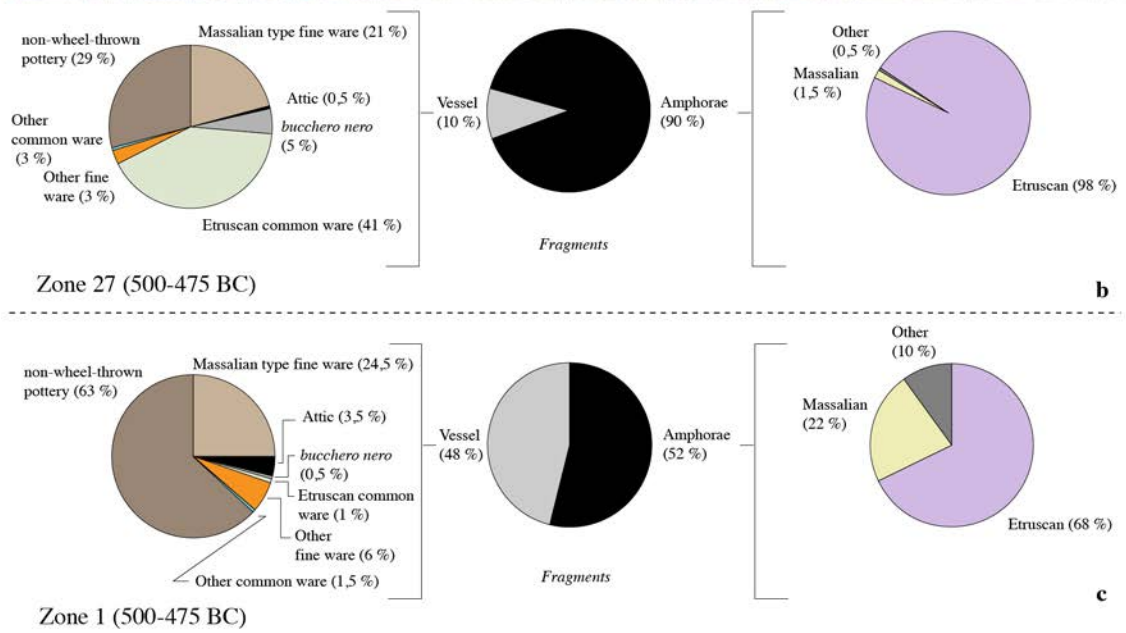


Fig. 11

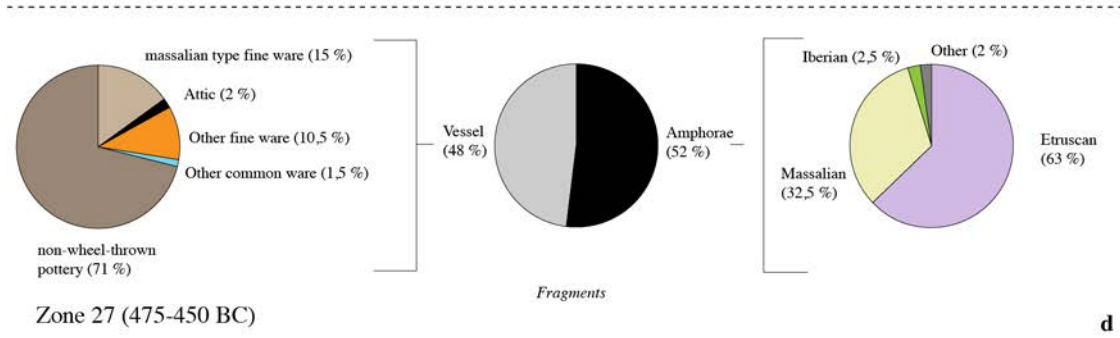
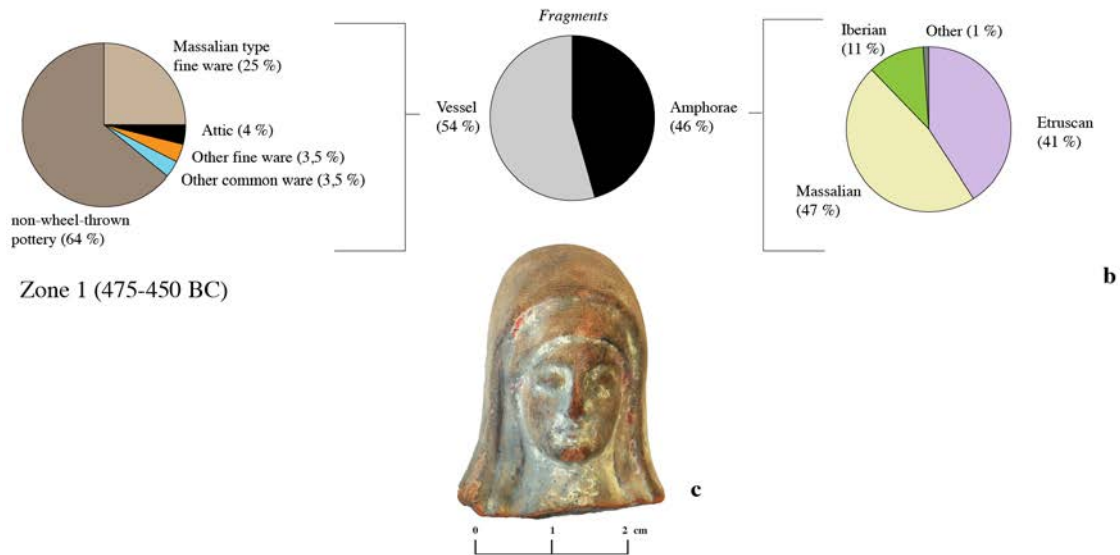
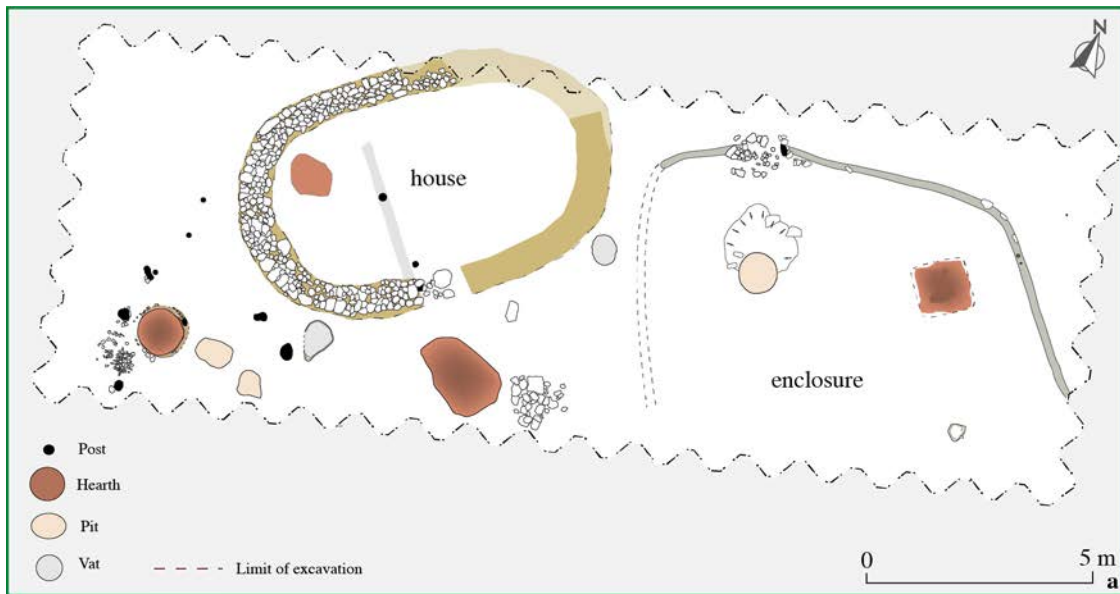


Fig. 12

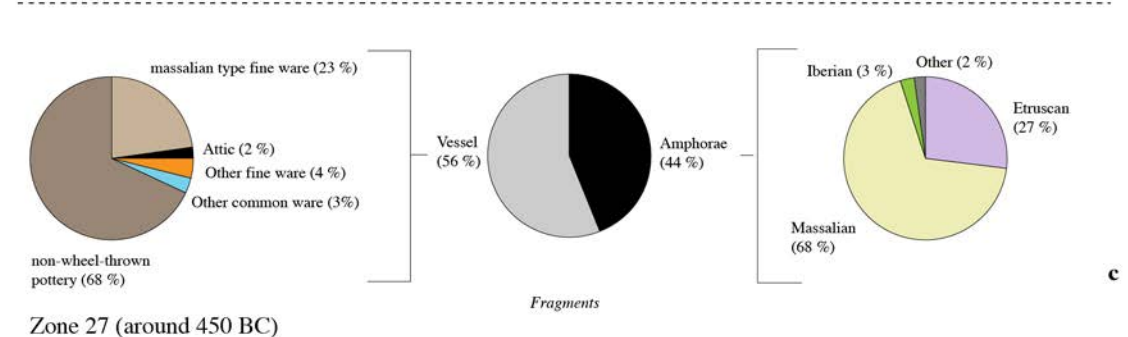
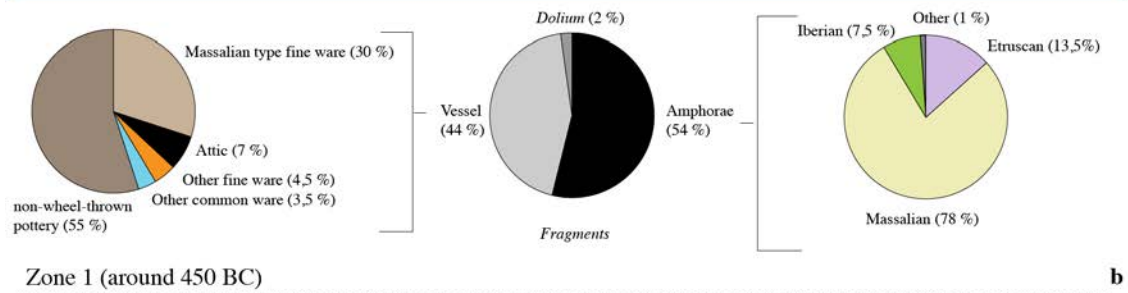
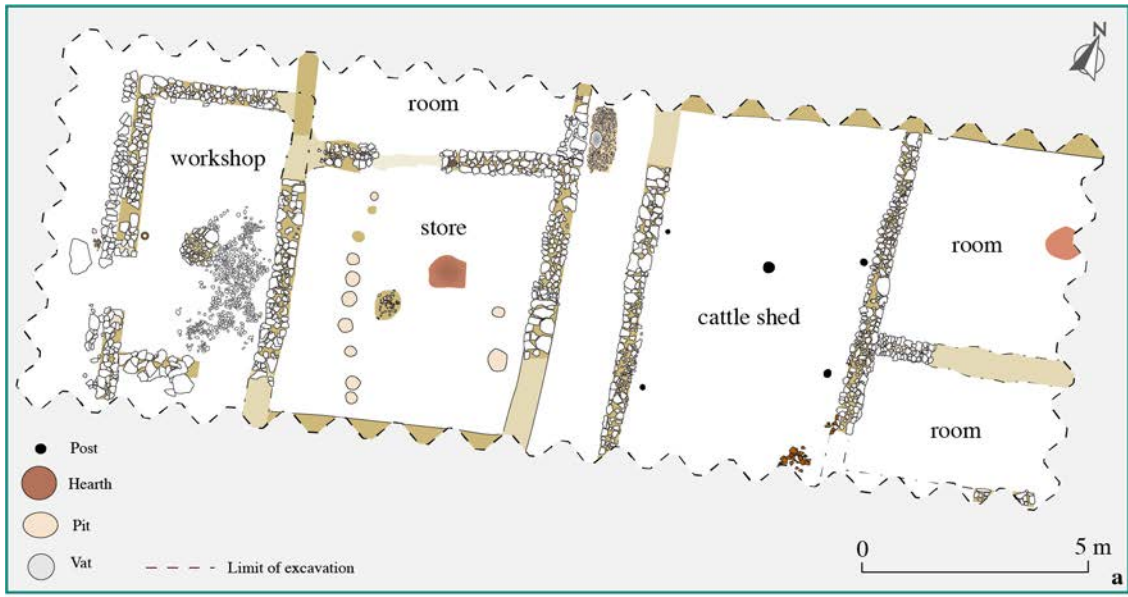


Fig. 13