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Sailors and landmen in the *emporion* of southern Gaul

Eric Gailledrat

1. At the boundaries of the Mediterranean area

For several decades, the *emporion* seems to have been a key element in discourse on the means of contact in the Mediterranean during the first millennium BC. In fact, the economic dimension of the dynamics linked to the colonial phenomenon has been widely emphasised, in order to underline the increasing interaction between the Phoenicians, Greeks and even Etruscans on one side and the various indigenous populations around the Mediterranean basin on the other.

Because of its polysemic aspect (Bresson, Rouillard 1993), the Greek term “*emporion*” has become a convenient tool for understanding an intrinsically complex situation: ‘[...] the reality of the *emporion* may not be Greek, but the perception of the *emporion* is Greek’ (Rouillard 1995: 101). However, the characterisation of this geographical and chronological diversity has run up against the uneven nature of the archaeological information. This emphasises the need for specific approaches to these locations, which are synonymous with interfaces between "classical" and "indigenous" cultures, both of which are "Mediterranean".

In comparison with other regions, the north-western part of the Mediterranean seems not to have been affected by these contacts until later. While various material indicators show episodic relations between Gaul and the Mediterranean from the late Bronze age IIIb (10th - 9th century BC) or even earlier (Guilaine, Verger 2008), more tangible proof of sustained contacts between indigenous societies and Mediterranean sailors does not appear until the end of the 7th century BC. This directly announces the foundation of colonies, on the initiative of Greeks originating from the city of *Phokaia* (Phocaea), in Asia Minor. Subsequently, *Massalia* (Marseille) was founded around 600 BC, followed shortly afterwards by *Emporion* (Empúries) on the north-east coast of Catalonia, and *Alalia* (Aléria) in Corsica (Fig. 1).

The ancient sources relating to the southern coast of France do not mention any *emporion* until Strabo uses the term to describe both *Narbô* (Narbonne), "the greatest emporion of all those in the region", and *Arélaté* (Arles) (Strabo IV.1.6). On the other hand, several "coastal trading posts" have been revealed by archaeology, sites whose differences have revealed structures and mechanisms which have allowed us to gain some insights into the *emporion*'s reality (Gailledrat 2014).

A look at the geography of the Gallic coast will probably shed some light on the "how" and "why" of this region's integration into Mediterranean networks, even before the proliferation of *emporion* which characterizes the end of the archaic period (Gras 1993: 110). This coastal area is not homogeneous from the Alps to the Pyrenees: in fact, it is characterised by a succession of distinct environments from which two large complexes emerge, located on either side of the river Rhone. It contains a succession of varied geographical entities, micro-regions potentially united by the Mediterranean area's "connectivity" (Horden, Purcell 2000). To the west of Provence's rocky and jagged coastline lie the flat landscapes and lagoons of Languedoc, interspersed with a few hilly areas which have always served as visual navigation aids. The Rhone valley, a major route into the Celtic continent, as well as the Aude valley – extended by that of the Garonne – which constitutes a direct link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, have played a determining role in the historical geography of these regions.

2. Continuity and ruptures in the early Iron Age (8th–7th century BC)

From east to west, the beginning of the Iron Age saw the assertion of more marked regional entities than previously and the indigenous communities displayed at this moment an increased social hierarchy (Gailledrat 2015). Evidence of direct relationships with the Greek, Phoenician and even Etruscan worlds multiplied in the second half of the 7th century BC between western Provence and Roussillon. However, this phenomenon is clearest of all in western Languedoc: in tombs of a very narrow section of the population, the grave goods contained various objects imported from the Mediterranean world, such as fine ware drinking cups, roasting skewers and iron knives; in other words, objects related to the consumption of wine and meat which directly evoke the dining practices of the Greek aristocracies in the archaic period and should have been markers of hospitality/feasting practices involving “foreigners” and native partners (Verger 2013).

There were numerous reasons for these navigations; they cannot be summarised as simple exploratory ventures in the faraway, and so-called unknown, West.¹ Although this trend directly heralded the Phocaeen colonisation process of the following century (so much so that they can be explicitly seen as "precolonial" reconnaissance by the Phocaeans themselves) (Bats 1998), it is also evidence of ventures characteristic of the archaic period. This was the *prexis*, a form of "aristocratic trade" carried out by persons capable of materially preparing distant expeditions which could potentially generate a large profit. This was a form of trade which, although not quite the opposite of that of the *emporion*, was at least distinct from it (Mele 1979).

The importance of western Languedoc mentioned above is confirmed by the geography of the contact with the Phoenicians established in Andalusia and the Balearic Islands. There are a few rare ceramic imports here and there, but local imitations of Phoenician vases are regularly observed amongst the grave goods of the richest tombs in the Languedoc necropolises. Traces of this contact do not extend north of the Hérault valley, which is to say the maximum extension of the cultural group ("*Grand Basin I*"), mainly extended during the 8th-7th centuries BC in the lower and middle valley of the Aude². This is a strong argument which allows us to link the geography of sea journeys in the archaic period with a well-defined logic, one centred on the possibilities actually offered by this or that zone, as well as on the existence of indigenous societies sufficiently well-structured to constitute regular intermediaries and partners.

2.1. Conflicting trends

In the Gulf of Lion, whilst traces of Phoenician trade disappear at the beginning of the 6th century BC, we witness both the settlement of the Phocaeen Greeks, with the city of *Massalia* as their major centre, and the development of intense trading activity involving the Etruscans. As partners or competitors, Greeks and Tyrrhenians are then continually present on a number of sites on the Gallic coastline. From that moment onward, these sites appear to be essentially dedicated to trade activities and show us some fundamental aspects of the *emporion*.

We then have the impression of a regular process which had –at least– begun by the 7th century BC and which, supported by the existence of previously established social links and assorted mutual economic interests, became part of continuous closer connections between

¹ Rather than "discovering" the far western Mediterranean, the Phocaeans seem to have followed older maritime routes. At the end of the Bronze Age, the Gulf of Lion was an essential landmark on a route linked to the long-distance circulation of objects and raw materials coming from the Atlantic regions and spreading to the eastern Mediterranean (Coffyn 1985).

² According to the eponymous necropolis of Mailhac (Aude).

the Mediterranean and the continental worlds. Evidently, among the needs which the development of trade made essential for the various partners, that of the “material” conditions for the meeting seems to have been crucial.

Outside the Rhone region, Provence appears to have been an unattractive prospect in the 7th century BC and was, in fact, little affected by these operations. Languedoc, on the other hand, although densely populated and very dynamic, curiously only contains a few coastal settlements dating from this precise period. This gives us the previously discussed image of very limited relationships, both in space and in time. However, this interpretation is problematic: indeed, this sparse occupation of the coastline contrasts not only with the situation observed in the Late Bronze Age IIIb, but it appears above all to be paradoxical, insofar as it is observed at precisely the time when, overall, concrete indicators of contact with the Mediterranean sphere are increasing.

While these Mediterranean imports are definitely present at some sites near the coast³, they are also found quite far inland, especially in necropolises of the main indigenous settlements. These are fairly consistently located at a distance of 20 to 30 km from the sea.⁴ The centres of power or “central places” seem to be linked to the control of land communication routes and to territories with rich potential rather than to proximity to the coast, even though this was synonymous with new opportunities and wealth.

Moreover, the few known coastal sites are not only modest in size but also respond to a settlement logic which itself reveals a desire for distancing. Indeed, they regularly make use of the specific geography of the Languedoc coast, namely lagoon areas partially accessible from the sea through the offshore bar. Rather than the shore itself, it was the areas behind these lagoons which were preferred. In other words, these settlements are located on the margins of the actual land (the indigenous domain, strictly speaking) and in contact with an intermediate space between land and water, a “no man's land” which guaranteed a certain distance from the sea; in other words, from the domain of the Mediterranean sailors.

Should these signs be interpreted as genuine mistrust of the coast, as a result of the existence of a new danger which could simply be that of piracy, “a systemic epiphenomenon of connectivity, suppressed by powerful states only for brief intervals in Mediterranean history” (Horden, Purcell 2000: 387)? In a manner of speaking, piracy is virtually inseparable from maritime activity (in the broad sense of the term) in the Mediterranean during the archaic period. It was then an activity which, if not “normal”, was at least common. The Phoenicians practised it (Homer, *The Odyssey*: XV.433), as did the Phocaeans⁵ and the Etruscans (Gras 1985), further emphasising the fundamental opposition between “sailors” and “landsmen” (Jully 1978). During the archaic period, this piracy apparently constituted an alternative or a complement to distant expeditions, traces of which can be seen here.

This observation of a certain retreat into the interior by indigenous communities, balanced against the nature of contacts desired by the indigenous aristocracies, reveals complex phenomena, which resulted in a dual process of attraction to and repulsion from the coast. The relationship between exogenous “requests” and indigenous “responses” must therefore be considered here in terms of a dialectic and not merely as a subjugation to colonial practices. This logic applies to the 8th–7th centuries BC and it also applies to the 6th century BC, the period when the already known mechanisms of the *emporion* were consolidated.

³ Necropolis of Bellevue (Canet-en-Roussillon), L'Agredo (Roquefort-de-Corbières), Peyrou and Bousquet (Agde).

⁴ La Courondelle (Béziers), Grand Bassin I (Mailhac), Carsac (Carcassonne).

⁵ “For the Phocaeans, constrained by the narrowness and aridity of the soil, worked the sea more assiduously than the land, subsisted on fishing, trade and even, most often, on piracy, which was at that time held in honour” (Justin XLIII.3–4).

2.2. Maritime routes and networks

The rarity of coastal settlements at the beginning of the early Iron Age is undeniable. However, it must be weighed against the existence of several zones which, at least in the 7th century BC, attracted Mediterranean sailors. These zones were centred on the mouths of certain rivers, from the north-east of Catalonia down to the lower Rhone Valley: the mouths of the Têt, the Aude, the Hérault and the Lez all fall into this category and feature the specific characteristic of being fairly regularly spaced. There is about forty kilometres between⁶ each of them, suggesting that they could be used as regular stops along a maritime route used by coastal shipping (Gailledrat 2014: 78–80).

This hypothesis makes it possible to qualify the hitherto very fleeting image of these archaic navigations. Clearly, the "exploratory" phases must be placed further back in time, since these shores were already well known to Mediterranean sailors in the 7th century BC and the terms of their encounters with the indigenous world seem, at least in part, to already have been standardised. Although docking could easily take place at various points along the coast, with the ships simply drawn up onto the beach, and although the river mouths must have all been favoured, because of the possibilities offered by the corresponding valleys where the main part of the indigenous population was concentrated, sailors and landsmen obviously ensured that there were stable (and safe?) meeting points, the selection of which was not random.

Initially these points did not necessarily have to be associated with fixed settlements: the local populations and foreign merchants only had to know "where" and "when" the meeting could take place, according to the rhythm of the seasons and favourable conditions for sailing. Thus, Greeks or Phoenicians were able to dock on the beaches and establish simple camps intended for short or longer stays, a situation which Homer portrayed perfectly when referring to Phoenician merchants who mostly, moreover, indulged in piracy: "*They stayed in the country a whole year, and acquired a ship's full of cargo in trade*" (Homer, *The Odyssey*: XV.433).

All these observations encourage us to consider that the logic which led to both the formalisation of sites oriented towards trade, and the acceptance of rules and practices common to the various populations in contact, was part of a long process, exceeding the few decades which precede Greek colonial settlement on the shores of southern France.

3. Indigenous dynamics

At the turn of the 7th-6th centuries BC, the appearance of open sites on the Mediterranean which support the logic of the *emporion* is clearly linked to the existence of an Etrusco-Phocaeen colonial network from which a structured trade oriented towards the indigenous markets of the Gallic coast should have been developed. However, descriptions of the 8th-7th centuries BC history show us a dynamic indigenous world, as well as a depth of "precolonial" relationships, in which *prexis* is definitely not sufficient to explain the nature of the trade taking place. The *emporos* (the merchant), whether Greek or Phoenician, seems to have been present at an early date, and the idea of a structural rupture at the beginning of the 6th century BC must be strongly qualified: the change in economic mechanisms went hand in hand with changes in the social and political contexts, such that the *emporion* appears to have been more a change in pre-existing structures, adapted to new challenges, rather than a new creation.

The gradual appropriation of the coast by indigenous societies –who were fundamentally looking inland– reached a new stage in the 6th century BC, as is illustrated by the multiplication of fortified settlements or "*oppida*". However, this seemingly continuous trend must also be qualified in the sense that most of these new settlements, located more or less

⁶ The equivalent of one day's sailing.

close to the sea, were in fact almost never established on the coast itself. In other words, they were often a few kilometres inland and none of them were directly accessible from the sea. Very few were able to function as landing stages directly accessible from the lagoon filled coastline characteristic of the coast between the Rhone and the Pyrenees (Fig. 2).

From Provence to Roussillon, two trends emerged. On the one hand, *oppida* multiplied; this seems to indicate something of an explosion in some forms of power and exacerbated competition for access to Mediterranean routes. On the other hand, some large centres emerged; these were to play a major political role between the first and second Iron Ages. This was particularly the case west of the Rhône where the *oppida* of Nîmes, *Narô* (?)/Montlaurès (Narbonne) and *Ruscino* (Perpignan) were at the head of extensive networks, associated with vast territories bordered by the sea. These *oppida*, like others, located at a greater or lesser distance from the coast, imply the existence of interface sites, staging posts adapted to the necessities of the Mediterranean trade which was then in full development.

3.1. On both sides of the Rhône

Once again, the situation was quite different on each side of the Rhone. The coast east of Marseille was engaged in the coastal trade of Etruscan and Greek products, although this trade seems to be much less intense than in Languedoc. This situation persisted into the Second Iron Age whilst the expansion of Marseille was accompanied by a strategy of colony foundation in Provence between the end of the 5th and the second half of the 4th centuries BC (Bats 2004), called *epiteichismata* by Strabo (IV.1.9). These constituted coastal control points whose commercial function seemed secondary: *Tauroeis* (Six-Fours-les-Plages), *Olbia* (Hyères), and *Nikaia* (Nice), while the case of *Antipolis* (Antibes) is more difficult to characterise at the moment (Bats 1992; Bats 2012) (Fig. 1).

On the other hand, in the area around *Massalia*, from the start of the 6th century BC a particular dynamic provides evidence for the first Phocaeen *emporion*. The small settlements of Tamaris and L'Arquet (Martigues) are notable for their coastal position and appear to have been maritime staging posts on the route leading to the large pond of "Etang de Berre", in other words the key to the Rhone valley (Fig. 2). The St-Blaise oppidum (St-Mitre-les-Remparts) appears to have been a relatively atypical major site, although its location between land and sea directly evokes the indigenous settlement patterns of the early Iron Age. Occupied since the turn of the 7th–6th centuries BC, this relatively large settlement (about 5 ha) had become a particularly active place of trade open to the Greco-Etruscan *emporion* (Gateau *et al.* 1986: 286–305). The fundamentally indigenous nature of the site is not contradicted either by the abundance of imports or by the early introduction of Mediterranean construction techniques, and it should be seen as a site enjoying special links with *Massalia*.

With St-Blaise, the system which was installed around the Etang de Berre was rapidly enhanced throughout the 6th century BC through the creation of new settlements, namely Le Castellon (Istres), then St-Pierre-les-Martigues (Martigues), followed in the 5th century BC by that of L'Île (Martigues) (Fig. 2). These testify to the desire to control access to the Etang de Berre, proof of complex relationships between *Massalia* and its Gallic neighbours, with political logics which unfortunately largely escape us.

3.2. The emporia of the Rhone delta

However, it was to the west, outside of this first circle, that Massalian activity was to be concentrated. The Phocaeans are recognised as being the Greeks who, by definition, used *emporion* (Aristotle, *Ap. Athaeneum* XIII.576). The first few decades of *Massalia's* life were largely based around this activity, especially since the city had only one *chôra*, which was

limited and not very fertile. Its commercial expansion really took shape from the middle of the 6th century BC, when its vineyard was sufficiently developed to allow for exportable surpluses. After having been involved in spreading Etruscan wine throughout southern Gaul, loading it as freight in Tyrrhenian coastal ports such as Gravisca or Pyrgi, *Massalia* exported its own wine amphorae in huge amounts. These quickly took the place of Etruscan products on the Gallic or Ibero-Languedocian markets (Bats 1998).

From then on, a real commercial policy was put in place, based on a series of trading posts established in the Rhone delta from the middle to the end of the 6th century BC: first of all, *Théliné* (Arles) on the Rhone⁷, then Espeyran (St-Gilles-du-Gard) and Le Cailar (Fig. 2), formerly located on the edge of the lagoon which was practically an inland sea at this point. The nature of these settlements (colonial foundations or indigenous sites which had welcomed Greek merchants?) is still difficult to define, beyond noting their privileged links to *Massalia*.⁸ Although Espeyran and Le Cailar are as yet only known through limited excavations (Barruol, Py 1978; Py, Roure 2002), Arles, on the other hand (Arcelin 1995 and 2008), offers a glimpse into the possible reality of these *emporion* so to speak equidistant. They show evidence of identical choices in terms of geographical settlement, controlling the entire low Rhone region and the river valleys leading to the hinterland of eastern Languedoc.

Arles was the first convenient point to offload on the Rhone river and is located on the margins of a vast intermediate space between land and sea, marked by the marshy areas of the Camargue. During the years 540/530 BC, a Mediterranean habitat was apparently superimposed onto a pre-existing indigenous settlement. The material then changed radically, with a Greek-style tableware being generally used, whilst the commercial vocation of the site is indicated by the high numbers of amphorae, mostly from *Massalia*. In the 5th century BC the site was extended considerably, reaching an area of 30 to 40 ha. The urban framework reveals the use of precise measurements, with regular blocks established according to an orthonormal plan indicative of the direct intervention of Greek surveyors (Fig. 3). The architecture itself reveals the existence of techniques (such as lime plaster) which were unknown in the indigenous world. Whilst this extension suggests an important demographic reinforcement (the arrival of new Greek colonists?), there are significant differences from an area to another, visible from the materials, which suggest the presence of indigenous people, or even the existence of an already mixed population (Arcelin 2008: 111).

Rather than a colonial foundation, the logical sequence prevailing here seems to be that of the *emporion*, with a change in scale resulting from the economic importance of the site linked to its particularly advantageous geographical situation. Whilst the initiative appears to be Greek, it was only made possible by the acceptance of the native partner. In other words, this type of site illustrates this situation where a portion of land on the margins of indigenous territory becomes a "concession" in which the presence of a foreign community is tolerated and where cohabitation can occur all the more if it is a continuation of pre-existing regular contact.

4. Between the Etruscans and the Greeks, the case of *Lattara*

⁷ "Arelate used to be called *Théliné* when the Greeks lived there" (Avienus, *Ora Maritima*: 689–691).

⁸ Historical sources also point to a *Rhoda* or *Rhodanousia* somewhere in the Rhone delta, mentioned by the Pseudo-Scymnos (208), Strabo (IV.1.5) and Pliny the Elder (III.34), for which there would have also been a *Heraklea* at the mouth of the same river. For the time being, the identification of these toponyms remains uncertain. None of these towns are explicitly referred to as an "*emporion*" but the poverty of the sources mentioned does not allow them to be ruled out of the suggested plan.

The site of *Lattara* (Lattes)⁹ occupies an advantageous position at the mouth of the River Lez, in a lagoon area on the margins of a territory of which the *Sextantio oppidum* (Castelnau-le-Lez), was the major hub (Fig. 2). It was located about ten kilometres into the hinterland and had been continuously occupied from the Late Bronze Age IIIb. The lower Lez Valley is one of the few points on the coastline mentioned earlier which, at the beginning of the early Iron Age, were characterised by a higher density of human occupation and by the existence of more or less explicit material traces of direct contact with the Mediterranean world.

The abundant information available for *Lattara* shows the importance of the privileged economic relationship enjoyed by the site with *Massalia* between the beginning of the 4th and the end of the 2nd century BC, to the point that the Phocaean city seems to have had a monopoly over this port (Janin, Py 2008; Py 2009). *De facto*, the existence of a coastal trading post so consistently visited by the Greeks of Marseille, situated at the western end of the vast geographical complex that is the Lower Rhone region, is an example of the commercial hold mentioned above, of which Arles was the centrepiece. However, the history of *Lattara* is much richer, both because of the major role played by the Etruscans during the early stages of the site's life and because of its insertion into a complex system of interaction between Greeks, Etruscans and indigenous people (Gailledrat 2015).

The settlement, located on a small peninsula jutting out into the lakes and bordering the river Lez (Fig. 4), occupied an area of about 3.5 ha in the Iron Age (Bagan *et al.* 2010) (Fig. 5). All available surface was built on and the site was protected from the start by a rampart. At present, the oldest known levels of occupation date from around 500 BC and are clearly linked to the local settlement of an Etruscan community (Lebeaupin 2014) (Fig. 6). Nevertheless, there are several indicators that from the 6th century BC a smaller settlement would have existed in the same place which, in this case, may have been enlarged and reworked at the beginning of the following century (Py 2009: 50).

In any event, in the 6th century BC this region of the lower Lez Valley was already fully integrated into Mediterranean trade networks. Just 1 km to the east of *Lattara*, the site of La Cougourlude/Mas de Causse (Daveau *et al.* 2015) has been inhabited since the Late Bronze Age IIIb: during this period, and at the beginning of the first Iron Age, there was a loose, not necessarily continuous occupation, similar to that seen in other small lagoon settlements known in this area. However, in the second quarter of the 6th century BC these small sites were disappearing, whilst La Cougourlude experienced significant development — a sign that populations were regrouping on this site. Sustained economic activity is particularly attested by the presence of numerous Etruscan, then Greek, imports, to which were quickly added those coming from Marseille. The volume of imports, as well as the large amount of wheel-thrown pottery, is in marked contrast to the features observed in the other indigenous sites in eastern Languedoc.

La Cougourlude reached the height of its development at the beginning of the 5th century BC, covering an estimated area of 17 ha. This is the time of the supposed founding of *Lattara*. At that time, the site at the mouth of the Lez was, however, just a small Etruscan enclave, backed onto the vast indigenous conurbation of La Cougourlude. The latter appears to have then been operating not only as an *emporion* open to various forms of Mediterranean trade but also as a true coastal bridgehead for the *Sextantio oppidum*, located 10 km inland.

The special character of the place is accentuated by the presence of a religious complex located immediately to the south (Mas de Causse), on the side of the hill which dominates the lakes. Thus, the hypothesis of an emporic sanctuary was developed, perhaps set up in the 6th century BC, visible from *Lattara* and even from the sea. A vast enclosure defined by a ditch is

⁹ The subject of methodical excavations conducted since 1984, the site of Lattes/St-Sauveur, ancient *Lattara*, has delivered first-rate information making it a key element in understanding the modes of contact between Greeks and indigenous peoples in the western Mediterranean (Py 1995; Janin, Py 2008; Py 2009).

located at the foot of this hill (Fig. 7) and could have functioned as a specialised space on the edge of the proper habitat, an open place dedicated to meeting and trade which is reminiscent of patterns attested elsewhere (Gailledrat 2014: 186–97).

The settlement of La Cougourlude was basically an indigenous site whilst *Lattara* seems rather to have been a support base occupied by Mediterranean merchants working in the zone, on a meagre portion of land granted by the indigenous power. At the mouth of the Lez river, whether a permanent settlement had already existed or whether the site had only served as a natural landing stage, the fact is, in the 6th century BC, the Gallic population abandoned this site in favour of another (La Cougourlude) which, although admittedly located in the immediate vicinity of the ponds, was actually established on dry land protected from major flood risks (Daveau *et al.* 2015: 88–89) and not on the strip of sand surrounded by water on which the Etruscans had chosen (or were forced?) to settle. The indigenous staging post on the Mediterranean was therefore established not on the coastline but behind the lagoon interface. We thus once again encounter the already mentioned concept of distancing, linked to the peculiarities of the Languedoc coastline and to the obviously special status of these intermediate spaces.

The situation changed at the end of the first quarter of the 5th century BC. *Lattara* was suddenly abandoned following a violent event which resulted in a widespread fire (Fig. 6). The site was re-established but architecture and materials testify to the indigenous character of this new settlement. At the same time, the site of La Cougourlude was quickly abandoned. The hypothesis of a displacement of the Gallic population towards *Lattara* goes hand in hand with that of an eviction of the Etruscan component installed in the area, processes which seem to have largely benefited the Greeks of Marseille, whose products were then suddenly in the majority amongst the imports (Py 2009).

In fact, it was only then that *Lattara* seemed to actually take over the emporic functions previously allocated to La Cougourlude. After a short transition period (Gailledrat, Vacheret 2016), a new urban planning programme was launched, using techniques (mud-brick on stone basement) and organisational schemes which were not yet common at that time in eastern Languedoc. In this context, the regular presence of Greeks is strongly sensed, particularly through inscriptions on ceramics, and the differences observed from one neighbourhood to another suggest that distinct social or ethnic groups were coexisting (Gailledrat 2014: 246–50; Gailledrat 2015).

It seems obvious that the Greeks of *Massalia* played an active role in the reconfiguration of the trading post, possibly even in the eviction of the Etruscans who were more competitors than partners. Here, as elsewhere, the impression given is that of co-operation between Greeks and the indigenous population, resulting from common interests; the one providing technical skills, the others the necessary land and labour, whilst common rules, with the *emporion* as a framework, were inevitably established and accepted (Rouillard 2000; Gailledrat 2014). This structural development from a dual structure (La Cougourlude/*Lattara*) towards a single site constituted a final, additional degree of integration, inasmuch as it was synonymous with a greater physical proximity between colonists and the native population. Although there is nothing to suggest that La Cougourlude was "closed" to foreign merchants, the hypothesis of a "neutral" extramural space, as well as the strictly Etruscan character of the old levels of *Lattara*, show that a distance was still being maintained between the different communities then in contact.

5. Agde: from the *emporion* to the colony of *Massalia*

The attractiveness of the mouth of the Hérault river for Mediterranean sailors, already evident in the 7th century BC, increased at the beginning of the next century. In the 6th century BC, a

settlement existed on the site of the present town of Agde (Hérault).¹⁰ Little is known about the old levels of the site but the available data show that it was then largely open to Mediterranean trade (Garcia, Marchand 1995). At the same time, the early appearance of regional production of grey-monochrome ware, inspired by models from Eastern Greece ("Aeolian grey ware"), clearly reflects the settling of Greek potters in the area –the origin of the development of mixed or indigenous workshops (Nickels 1983).

Indeed, it is not unreasonable to think that Phocaeans had been present at the mouth of the Hérault since the archaic period. This would coincide perfectly with their settlement logic which, from Marseille to Empúries, aimed to embrace all the Gulf of Lion (Gailledrat 2010 and 2014). It is nevertheless difficult to define the nature of this first settlement: the oldest levels of Agde-town must date from the first half of the 6th century BC and only show post-hole constructions. However, the use of mud-brick on stone basement quickly appears, including for the construction of the first fortification encircling the settlement (Nickels 1995), which demonstrates the early assimilation of Mediterranean techniques and designs. In fact, the uncertainty concerns not so much whether the Greeks were present in Agde at that time but the manner of their first settling, as it is difficult to detect the foundation of a colony in the *stricto sensu* of the term. The most likely situation, however, is that of an indigenous *emporion* which was open to Mediterranean traders, which definitively established and fixed one of the main meeting points of the early Iron Age. Once again, it was at the mouth of a river and behind a lagoon area (which has today mostly disappeared).

Whatever the reality, there was a break at the end of the 5th century BC, marked by a radical reorganisation of the site, which then occupied an area of around 4 ha and had an orthogonal urban pattern associated with a cadastral plan of the peri-urban space (Nickels 1981). Simultaneously, the material show major changes, not so much in the modes of supply (amphorae from *Massalia* had predominated in Agde and central Languedoc since the end of the 6th century BC) as in consumption practices. Hitherto still present in significant proportions, indigenous non-wheel-thrown pottery abruptly declined, whilst the majority of tableware were cream-ware pottery from *Massalia*. The features of Agde are therefore strongly similar to those seen in *Massalia* or Arles at the same time.

This moment is recognised as being that of the foundation of the Massalian colony of *Agathé* (or *Agathé Tyché*) described by ancient literary sources.¹¹ The reasons for this development of the Massalian network and the forms of settlement are subject to debate. Clearly, *Massalia* was then seeking to consolidate its grip on the Gulf of Lion, without necessarily antagonising or engaging in conflict with the indigenous populations. Although Agde became a Greek territory and the city had a *chôra*, that is, a territory of its own both economy and politically, the idea of a military conquest suggested by Strabo¹² must be weighed against that of a peaceful agreement and a territorial concession, made possible by long-standing ties woven with the local elites. Whatever the case, if *Agathé* cannot be regarded as an *emporion*, then we are seeing a reorganisation of commercial and perhaps political networks on a regional scale, in which competition between indigenous elites must have played a decisive role.

6. The coast and the rivers

¹⁰ Occupation at the beginning of the first Iron Age is presently only known through the necropolis of Le Peyrou (Agde), dated to the 7th century BC (Nickels *et al.* 1989). The exact location of the corresponding settlement remains uncertain.

¹¹ Pseudo-Scymnos (208), Strabo (IV.1.5) and Pliny the Elder (III.34),

¹² The reference made by Strabo (IV.1.5) to the massalian "military strength" as the origin of the foundation of several towns including *Agathé* is not explicit on this point.

The complexity of trade networks linked to the practice of *emporion* meant that sites and communities situated more inland were also involved, in an area no longer limited to that of the "intermediate areas" favoured during the archaic period but one which fully involved the indigenous lands.

In fact, the situation of Agde in the 6th–5th centuries BC cannot be appreciated without taking into account the site of La Monédière (Bessan), located about 6 km upstream on the river Hérault. This fortified site, with an area of about 4 ha, is recognised as being an indigenous staging post located at the intersection of several important land routes.

At the end of the 6th century BC the material culture of the site changed appreciably, revealing the considerable importance acquired by wheel-thrown ceramics to the detriment of indigenous hand-made pottery, whether tableware (mostly grey-monochrome ware) or cooking ware. This very "Mediterranean" feature, combined with the observation of quite sudden architectural changes, made it possible to propose an attempted Phocaean settlement, though not long-lasting (Nickels 1983; Nickels 1989). In view of recently updated information¹³, the image that is now accepted is that of an indigenous site occupied since around 600 BC, an integrated part of the trade networks with the Mediterranean, which experienced increasing economic activity until its abandonment in the last quarter of the 5th century BC. Various arguments make it possible to distinguish a regular non-indigenous presence (Greek as well as possibly Etruscan) in a context which, at least from the end of the 6th century BC, was similar to that of a mixed site.

At that time, La Monédière must be considered an *emporion*, inevitably linked, on the one hand, to the inland *oppidum* of St-Siméon (Pézenas) which appeared to be this region's chief town, and on the other to Agde, a coastal interface site with which a complementary relationship was established.¹⁴

Regardless, La Monédière was peacefully abandoned at the end of the 5th century BC. The fortification was dismantled and rituals largely inspired by the Mediterranean world seem to have accompanied this particular moment, revealing more profound changes on a regional level. On the one hand, the Massalian colony of *Agathé* was founded during this exact time period. On the other hand, the important *oppidum* established at Béziers, on the river Orb, experienced an unprecedented phase of extension, accompanied by a change in materials with obvious Greek influences (Ugolini *et al.* 1991; Ugolini, Olive 2006).¹⁵ Béziers appeared, for several decades, to be an *emporion* comparable to the one at Arles. One has to consider that the site benefited from its geographical position at the confluence of the western route leading on one side to the middle valley of the Aude, to the Narbonne region (*Narbonnais*) on the other, maybe taking over (and increasing) the role of staging post previously played by La Monédière (Gailledrat 2014: 159–61).

7. The lower valley of the Aude river

In the 6th century BC, this region of the lower and middle valley of the Aude still appeared to be the epicentre of a homogeneous, dynamic cultural group ("Grand Bassin II" facies) encompassing western Languedoc. This coherence is usually considered to be a reflection of an ethnic reality: the Elisyces people, mentioned by ancient sources, whose chief town may

¹³ Unpublished excavations 2014 (A. Beylier, E. Gailledrat dir.).

¹⁴ Did Agde and La Monédière share the same emporic functions, or was Agde only a landing stage? In any case, it seems difficult to consider Agde as a simple Mediterranean enclave, reproducing in some way the previously mentioned pattern of Etruscan *Lattara*/La Cougourlude.

¹⁵ The hypothesis of a true Greek colony championed by the excavators must be rejected, particularly for the period prior to the second half of the 5th century BC, during which Béziers was no more —and no less— than a major *oppidum* of the Ibero-Languedocian zone.

have been the city of *Narô* (or *Narbô*), identified as the *oppidum* of Montlaurès (Narbonne) (Barruol 1973).

The area around the mouth of the Aude has also undergone profound changes since the first millennium BC, synonymous with a reduction of the lagoon originally present in this area. It is possible that the *oppidum* of Montlaurès was accessible by small boats ascending the river *Atax* (Aude) during the Iron Age.¹⁶ That the site was directly accessible to ships navigating along the coasts has, however, been ruled out. It is thus necessary to render a system based on offloading points established on the lagoon interface which communicated with the sea, using small boats (such as the *akatia* mentioned on the Pech Maho lead tablet?) able to ensure the transport of goods. From this perspective, the presence of small coastal settlements must be considered with, from North to South, La Moulinasse (Salle d'Aude) (6th-5th centuries BC), Le Moulin (Peyriac-de-Mer) (4th century BC) and finally Pech Maho (Sigean) (6th-3rd centuries BC) (Fig. 2).

Pech Maho is undoubtedly the best known of these settlements, if only because of the commercial letter (lead tablet) written in ancient Ionian Greek discovered on the site, dating from the 5th century BC (Lejeune *et al.* 1988; Decourt 2000). This small settlement, used as a landing stage, was founded in the second quarter of the 6th century BC and was violently destroyed at the end of the 3rd century BC. Located at the mouth of the La Berre river, on the edge of the lagoon (Fig. 8), Pech Maho occupied a strategic position on the southern borders of the *Narô* territory, on an obligatory north-south land crossing point. The site, with an area of only 1.5 ha within the city walls, is endowed with a powerful fortification and is notable for the importance of the economic activities linked to it. From the 6th century BC, Pech Maho reveals high levels of importations as well as numerous traces of metalworking activity (Gailledrat, Solier 2004). In the 3rd century BC, the site appears to have been a combination of numerous forges and warehouses (Fig. 9) and other specialised buildings, including several public, civil and religious buildings. The settlement functioned as a place of power, as evidenced by the ostentatious character of the fortification, as well as a vast architectural complex located at the centre of the habitat, comparable to the aristocratic residences of Ullastret and Pontós in Iberian Catalonia.

The foundation of Pech Maho was not an accident. It appears to have been the result of a voluntary undertaking dictated by the wishes of a local power wanting to equip itself with the tools necessary for developing and controlling trade. It must have been linked to the simultaneous emergence of the Montlaurès *oppidum*, which then established itself as a major site at a regional level. Pech Maho, which was at once a maritime staging post, trading centre and fortress, also contributed strongly to marking the boundary between two distinct commercial areas: namely those of *Emporion* and *Massalia*. The pre-eminence of *Massalia*'s trade in eastern and central Languedoc did not extend to western regions and it is possible that the absence of any colonial settlement in this strategic area at the mouth of the Aude stemmed more from a rejection on the part of the indigenous world than from a reasoned choice on the part of the Phocaeans and, *a fortiori*, of the Etruscans.

The concept of co-operation between Mediterranean and indigenous partners for the creation of this trading post is nevertheless obvious. After a short phase characterised by loose structures associated with a first rampart, an ambitious construction programme was launched towards 540 BC, which resulted in regular urbanisation based on adobe buildings with stone basement. The perfectly controlled nature of the construction, as well as the designs implemented, are all the more remarkable for their suddenness and precocity, suggesting the contribution of Mediterranean skills, probably Greek, on a site whose nature remained basically indigenous (Gailledrat 2010a).

¹⁶ This is at least suggested by Strabo's text, which states that "from *Narbo* traffic goes inland for a short distance by the *Atax* River" (Strabo IV.1.14).

Pech Maho also produced a large number of archaic stelae (Fig. 10) which bear witness to the existence of sacred places on the site, whilst rites associated with fortification persisted from the 6th to the end of the 3rd centuries BC. Several naval representations on these stelae are suggestive of dedications, perhaps from sailors who visited the site, whilst there is evidence of monumental public buildings of Mediterranean inspiration from the second half of the 5th century BC. Obviously, the site had a religious and symbolic dimension in addition to its economic functions.

The picture which emerges is that of a commercial, artisanal and religious complex leaving little room for domestic spaces. There were persons of authority on site whose job was to control trade, manage the warehouses and at least a part of the artisanal production, by gathering a certain number of craftsmen around them, especially metalworkers. In short, this image is indeed that of an *emporion*, a specialised place where trade took place, where goods and people from different backgrounds met for a specific purpose and within a well-defined framework, under the aegis of a civil authority and under religious protection, guaranteeing the security of goods, persons and transactions.

8. Conclusions

Through the various scenarios mentioned above, it seems that the south of France allows us an accurate glimpse into a number of situations peculiar to the *emporion* and, more generally, to the ways in which "sailors" and "landsmen" met. Beyond the formal distinction "colonists"/"indigenous", these two terms have been used not only to distinguish these two components, but also to highlight a geographical dimension which here, perhaps more than anywhere else, is essential to understanding the different behaviours of the partners involved. With the concepts of choice and coercion as a guiding principle, it seems that *emporia* as we perceive them from the 6th century BC onward are part of a contact dynamic formed from Mediterranean proposals and indigenous responses, with a dialectic originating in the mechanisms of the "precolonial" era. The perceptible changes between the first and second Iron Age results from both socio-economic transformations particular to the indigenous communities and from those of the colonial networks, here synonymous with the growing economic influence of the Greek city of *Massalia*.

The *emporion* is a place of meeting, a place of trade and transfer not only of goods but also of ideas or techniques. The fundamental economic dimension is particularly visible in the nature and volume of imported goods. This criterion, however, is not sufficient and, as the example of Pech Maho shows, it is essential to look at the actual structure of these settlements. Although difficult to demonstrate, the particular importance of storage structures, artisanal areas, and public buildings and spaces—especially religious ones—will probably highlight the specificity of any particular site.

Sites such as St-Blaise, Agde, La Monédière and Pech Maho also testify to the particularly early adoption of construction techniques and urban plans borrowed from the Mediterranean world. The suddenness of these innovations has been underlined, by minimising the concepts of influence and experimentation, but by allowing a glimpse of effective co-operation, synonymous with voluntary enterprises. In other words, some sites show us that Greeks (or Etruscans) and indigenous peoples clearly made a joint decision to create institutionalised meeting points on the coast at this or that position, and it is mainly here that we can find *emporia*. A fine reading of the stratigraphy also makes it possible to say that these are mostly *ex nihilo* foundations and not older indigenous settlements whose status and functions changed in parallel with a "Mediterraneanisation" of material and architecture. The oldest occupancy levels of these same sites correspond to rather short phases, which suggest

temporary installations preceding the implementation of larger construction projects, but they in no way predict the identity of the people then present.

As well as the diversity of situations observed between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, the proximity of the Greeks and the indigenous people has been highlighted several times, allowing us to suggest another of the essential characteristics of the *emporion*. However, it is still difficult to characterise the diversity of certain sites in detail, whether this represents simple cohabitation or true ethnic diversity. The linear and continuous character of this interpenetration must also be put into perspective as phases of merging and distancing have succeeded one another and the different settlements mentioned above are themselves indicative of different functions. The examples of *Lattara* /La Cougourlude or Agde thus show us the complexity of the situations and the impossibility of suggesting just a single interpretation of a site.

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Fig. 1: Map of the North-Western Mediterranean with location of the main sites mentioned in the text, and location of Phocaeans settlements in the coast of Catalonia and Southern France (© E. Gailledrat)



Fig. 2: Map of the Gulf of Lion region with location of the main settlements of the Iron Age (© E. Gailledrat)

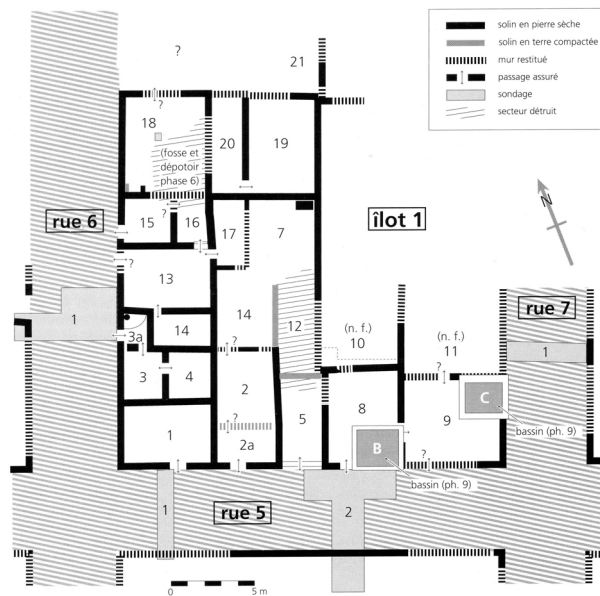


Fig. 3: Arles. Plan of the excavation of the Jardin d'Hiver (architectural state of the 4th-3rd centuries BC) (after Arcelin 1995: 330, fig. 3).

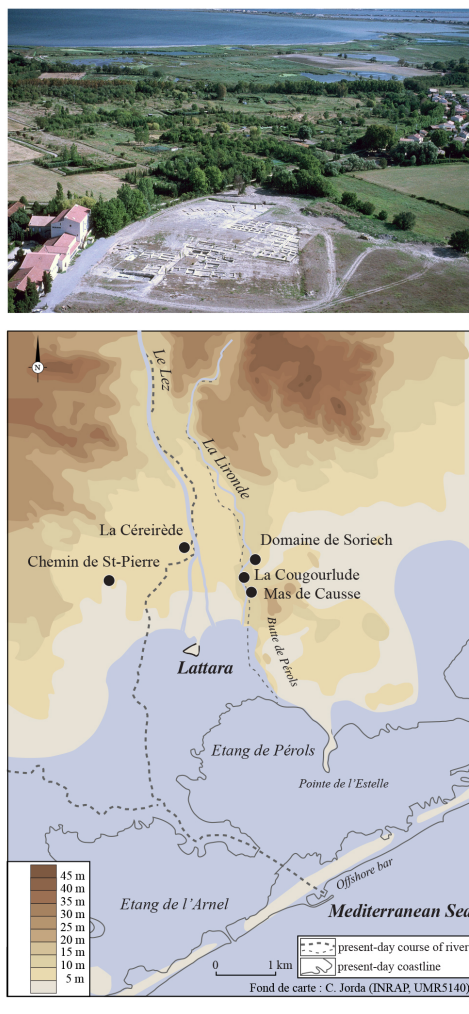


Fig. 4: Aerial view of the site of Lattara and its surrounding area, from the North (a) and palaeotopography of the sector of Lattara during the 6th-5th centuries BC (b) (after Bagan et al. 2010, completed)



Fig. 5: General plan of Lattara, with indication (zone 1 and 27) where the oldest levels (beginning of the 5th century BC) were reached by the excavation (© CNRS-UMR5140)



a



b

Fig. 6: Level of destruction of the Etruscan buildings in zone 1 (a) and 27 (b) at Lattara (475 BC) (© CNRS-UMR5140).

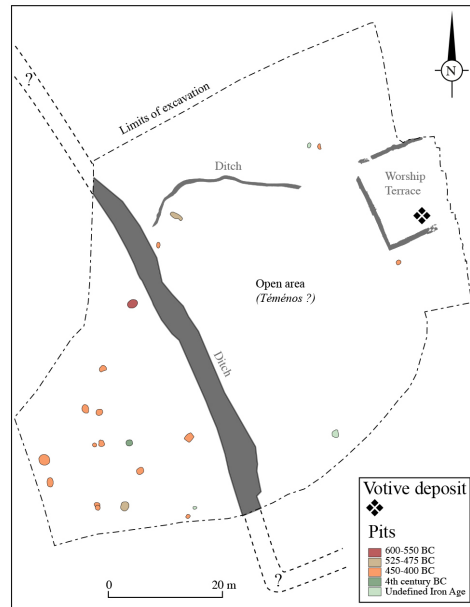


Fig. 7: The site of Mas de Causse at the foot of the PérOLS hill. Plan of the Iron Age structures (© Oxford Archeology)



Fig. 8: Aerial view of Pech Maho, alongside the river La Berre (© CNRS-UMR5140)



Fig. 9: Pech Maho. Level of destruction of a warehouse containing amphorae and dolia (225-200 BC) (© E. Gailledrat)



Fig. 10: Pech Maho. Votive stelae (6th century BC?) (© E. Gailledrat)