

Le système portuaire de Marseille à l'époque romaine

The harbour system of Marseille (France) during the Roman period

Xavier Corré (Aix Marseille Univ, Musée d'Histoire de Marseille, CNRS, CCJ, Aix-en-Provence, France)

Marie Pawlowicz (Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, CCJ, Aix-en-Provence, France)



Location of Marseille on the French Mediterranean coast.
(Google Earth capture)



Map of the roman Narbonensis province.

Red color : *Massilia* and its territory during the Early Roman Empire period.

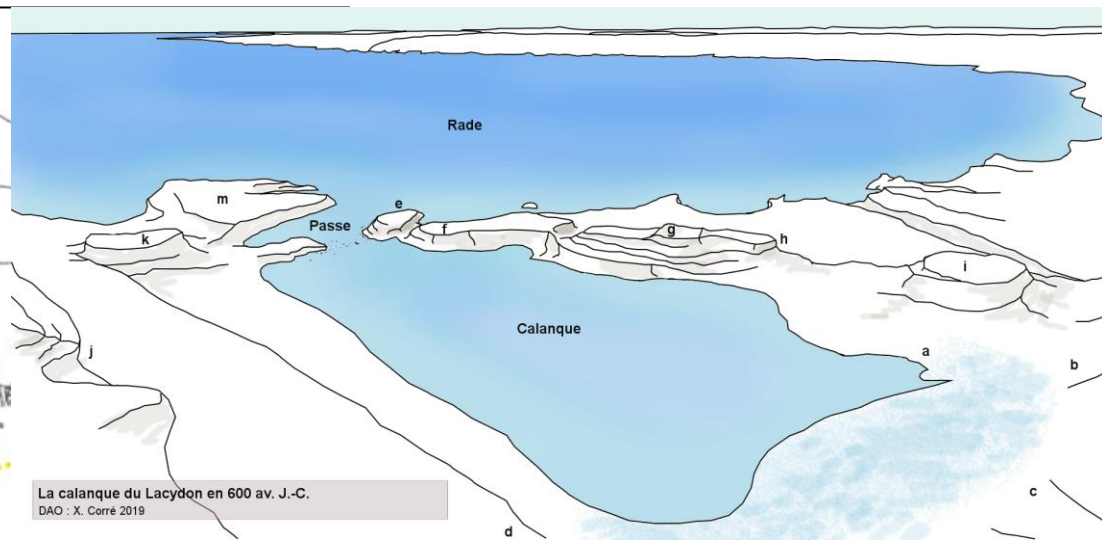
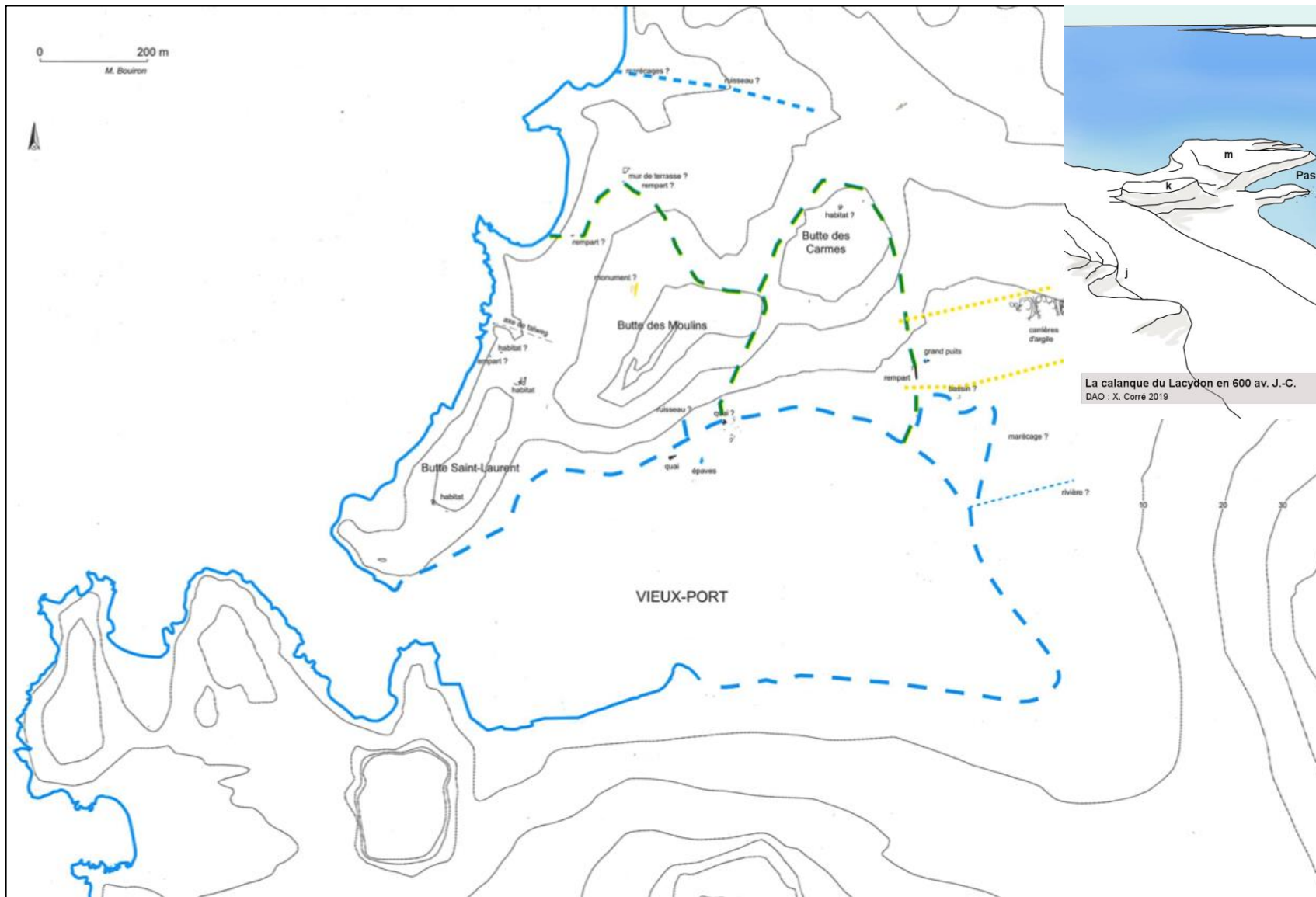


Map of the roman Narbonensis province.

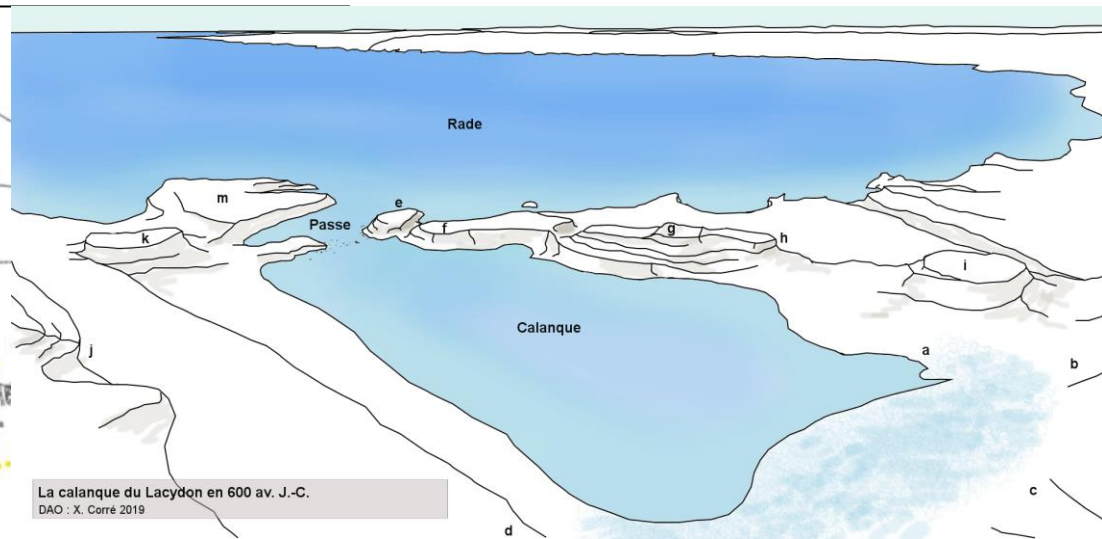
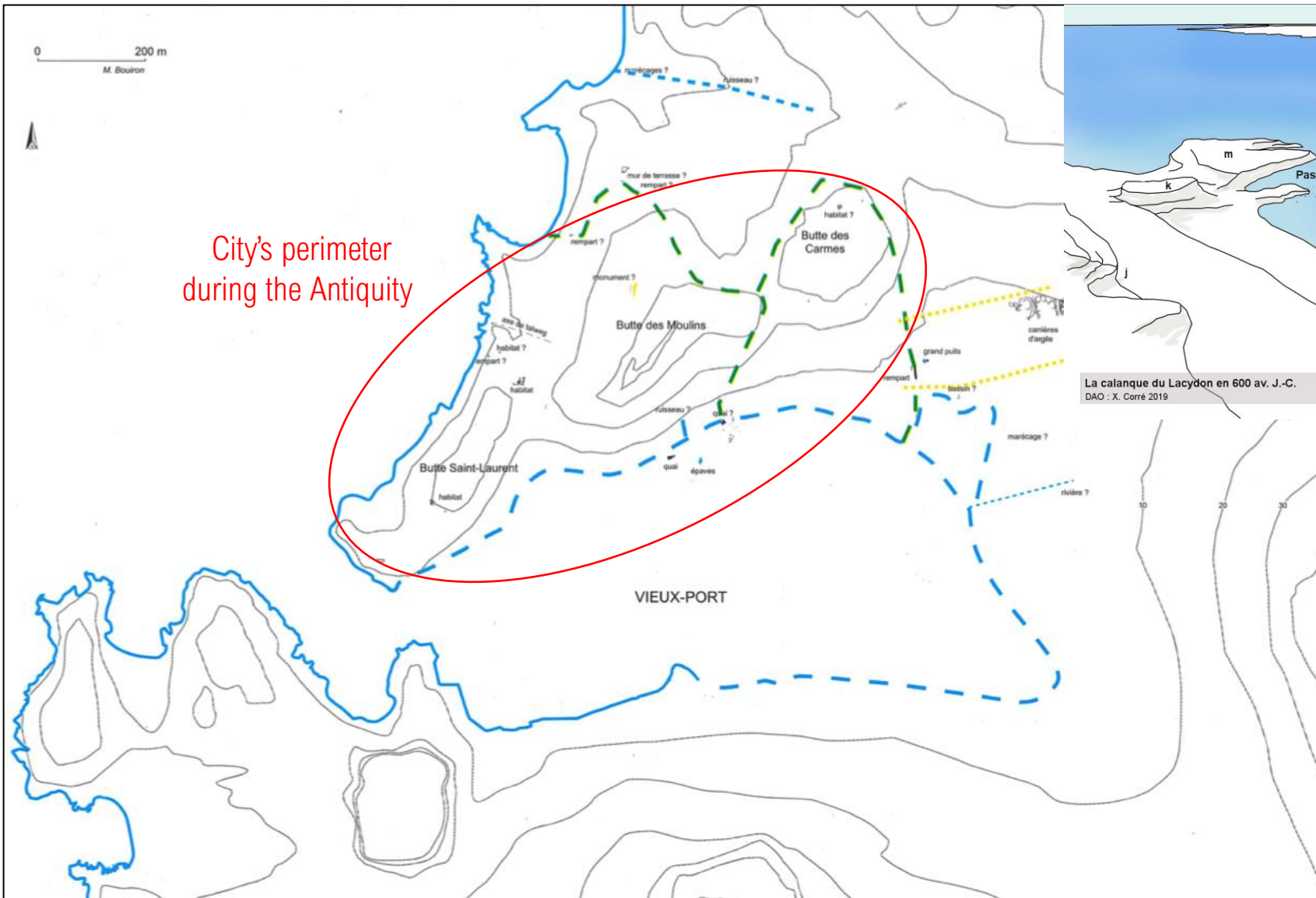
Red color : *Massilia* and its territory during the Early Roman Empire period.



Plan and satellite view of the actual Vieux-Port
(M. Bouiron, 2001, in : *Marseille, trames et paysages urbains de Gyptis au roi René*, p. 405. and Google Earth capture)

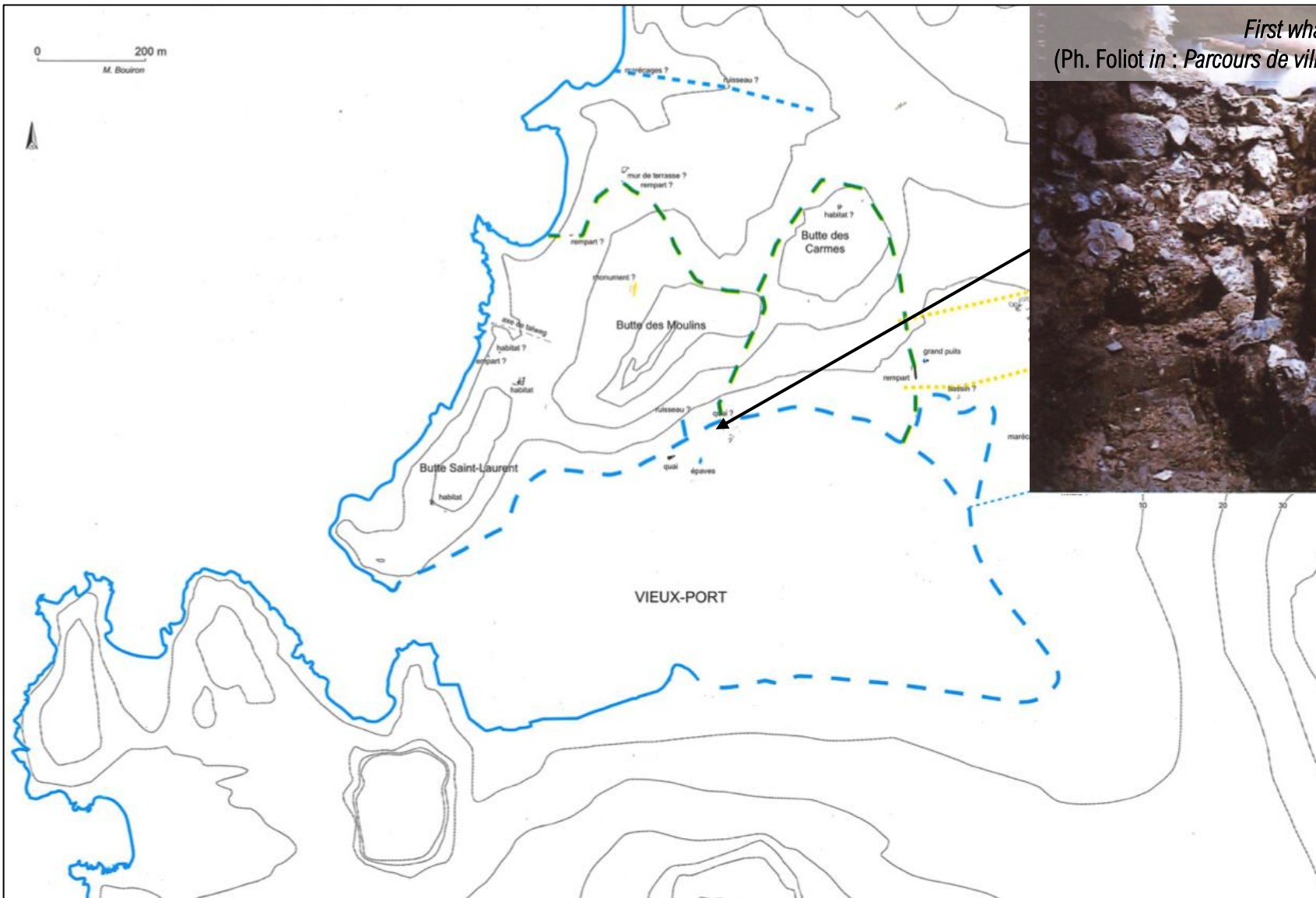


Map of the narrow natural bay, called Lacydon, during the archaic period (600 - 480 BC).
 (M. Bouiron, 2001, in : *Marseille, trames et paysages urbains de Gyptis au roi René*, p. 406)



- naturally enclosed space
- easily secured

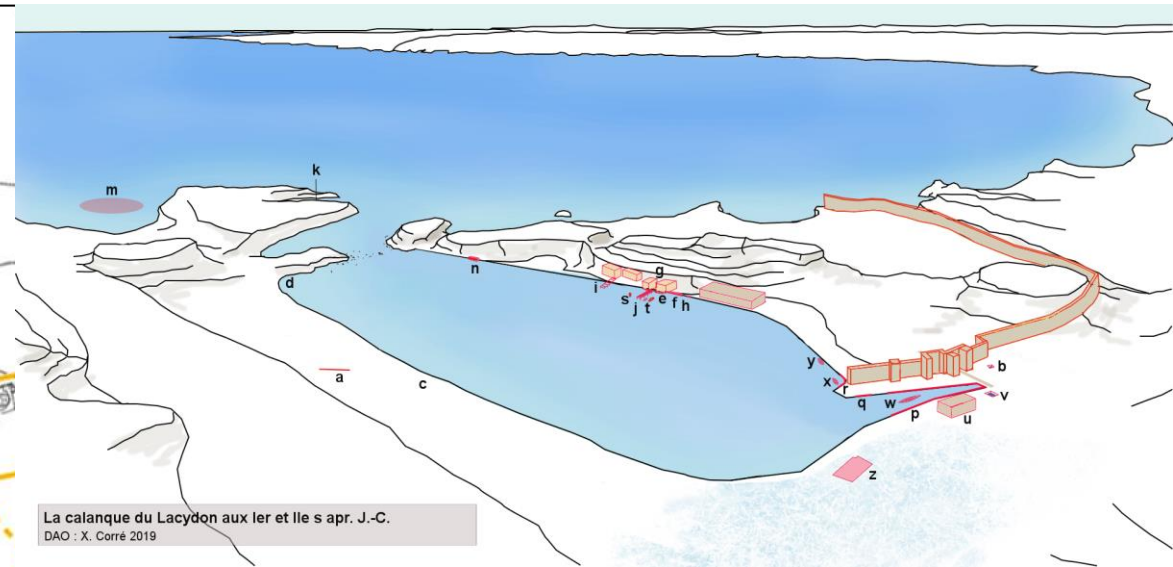
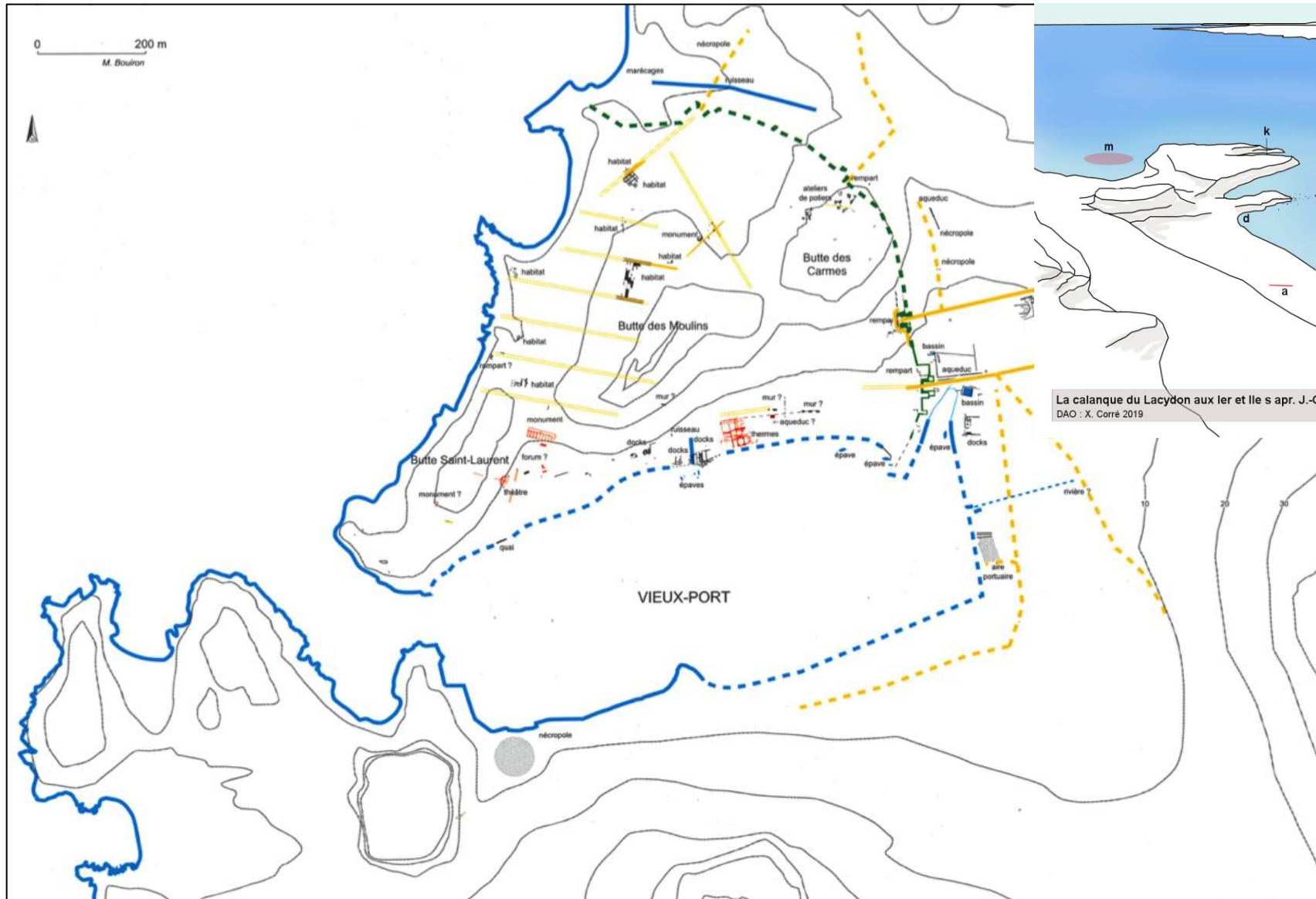
Map of the narrow natural bay, called Lacydon, during the archaic period (600 - 480 BC).
 (M. Bouiron, 2001, in : *Marseille, trames et paysages urbains de Gyptis au roi René*, p. 406)



First wharf, 600 BC. Villeneuve-Bargemon excavations
 (Ph. Foliot in : *Parcours de ville. Marseille : 10 ans d'archéologie, 2600 ans d'histoire*, 1999, p. 21)



Map of the narrow natural bay, called Lacydon, during the archaic period (600 - 480 BC).
 (M. Bouiron, 2001, in : *Marseille, trames et paysages urbains de Gyptis au roi René*, p. 406)

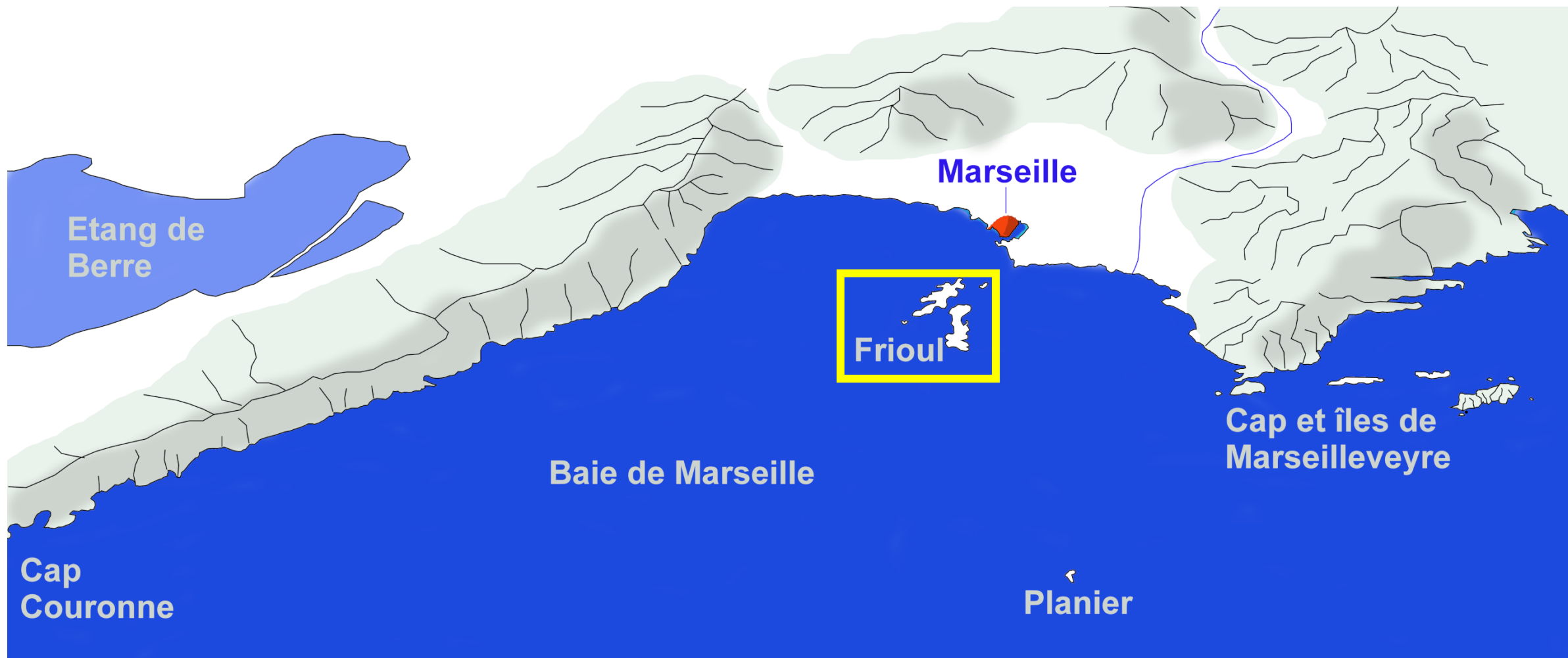


Roman period :

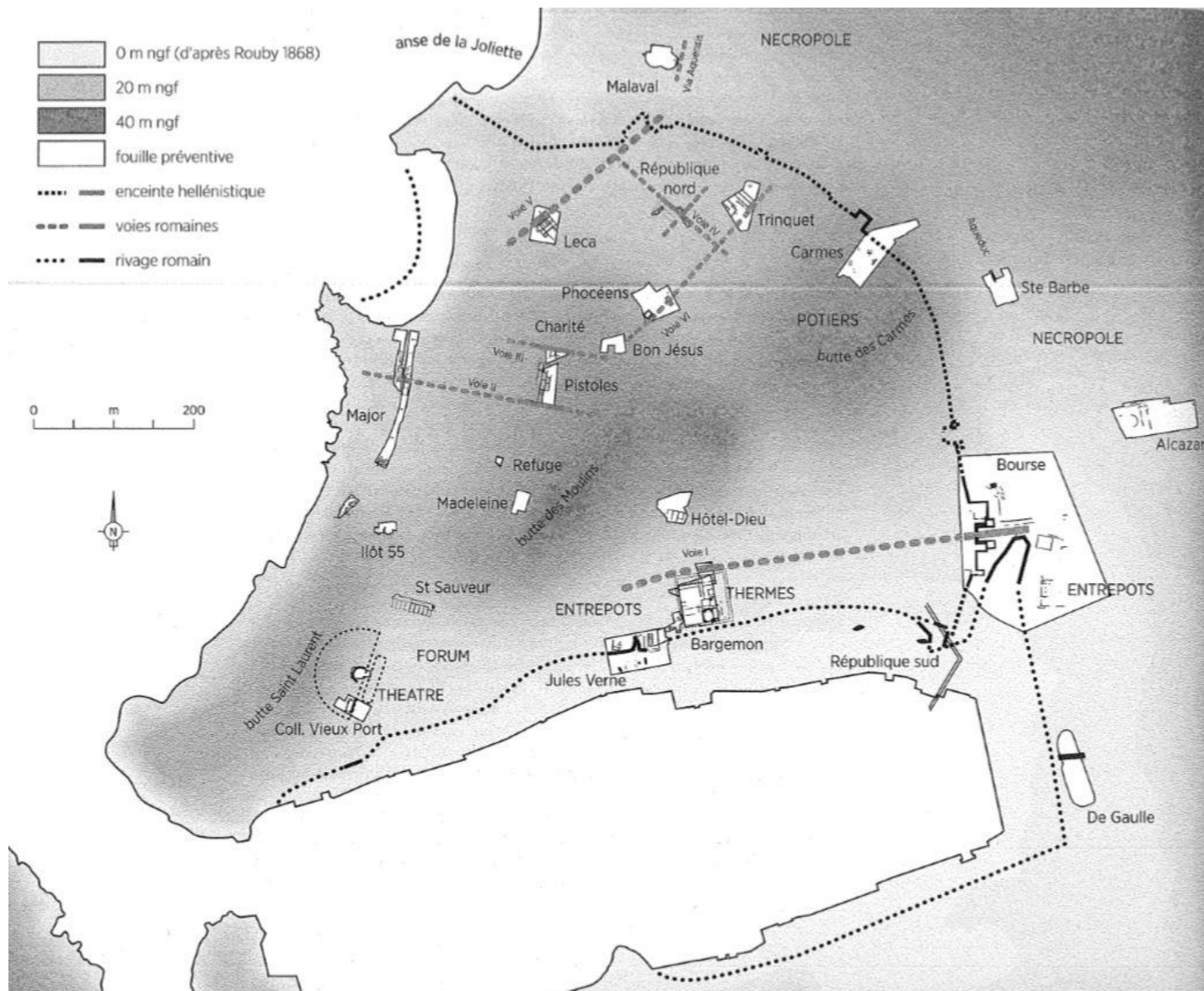
- port infrastructures with commercial functions
- transformation of the landscape and the shoreline

Map of the harbour during the roman period (1st – 4th c. AD).

(M. Bouiron, 2001, in : *Marseille, trames et paysages urbains de Gyptis au roi René*, p. 409)

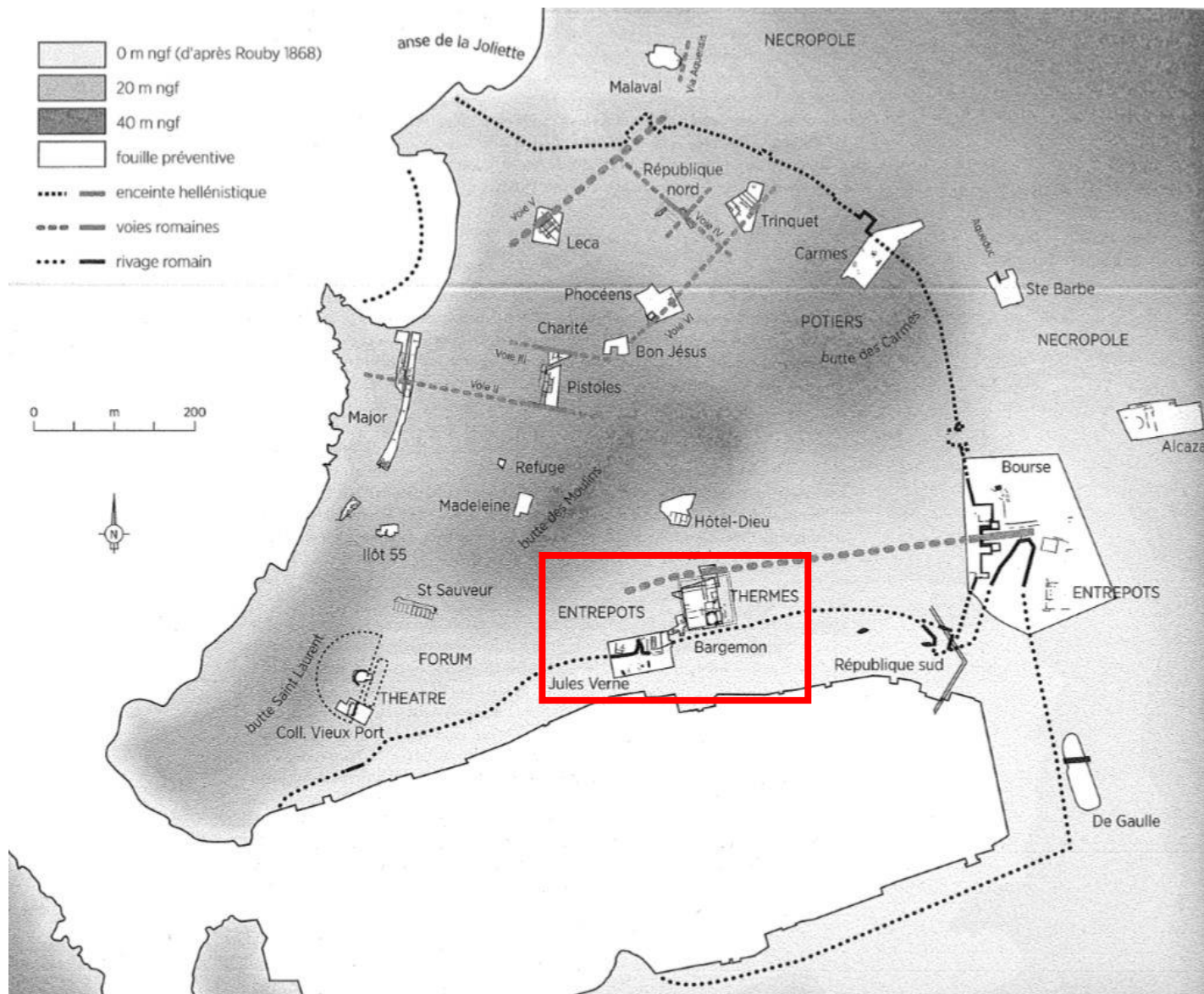


Marseille bay (DAO X. Corré, 2019)



Localisation of Marseille's roman archaeological sites

(Ph. Mellinand et al., *Topographie urbaine de Marseille romaine : à la lumière des fouilles récentes*, 2011, p. 260)

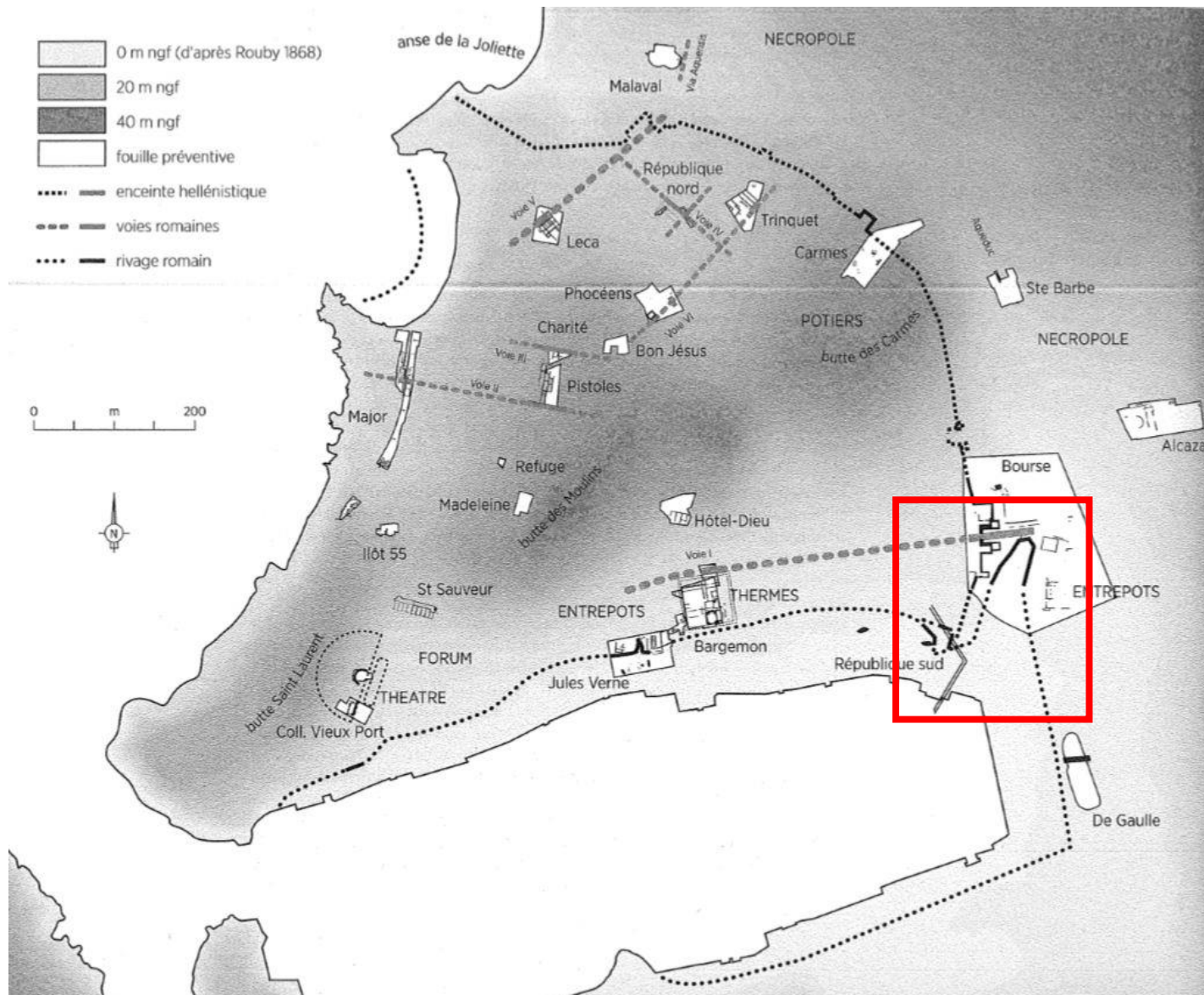


« North shore sector »

- Musée des docks 1947-1948 / 1985-1986
- Place Jules-Verne 1992-1993
- Place Villeneuve-Bargemon 1996-1997
- Espace Bargemon 2002-2003

Localisation of Marseille's roman archaeological sites

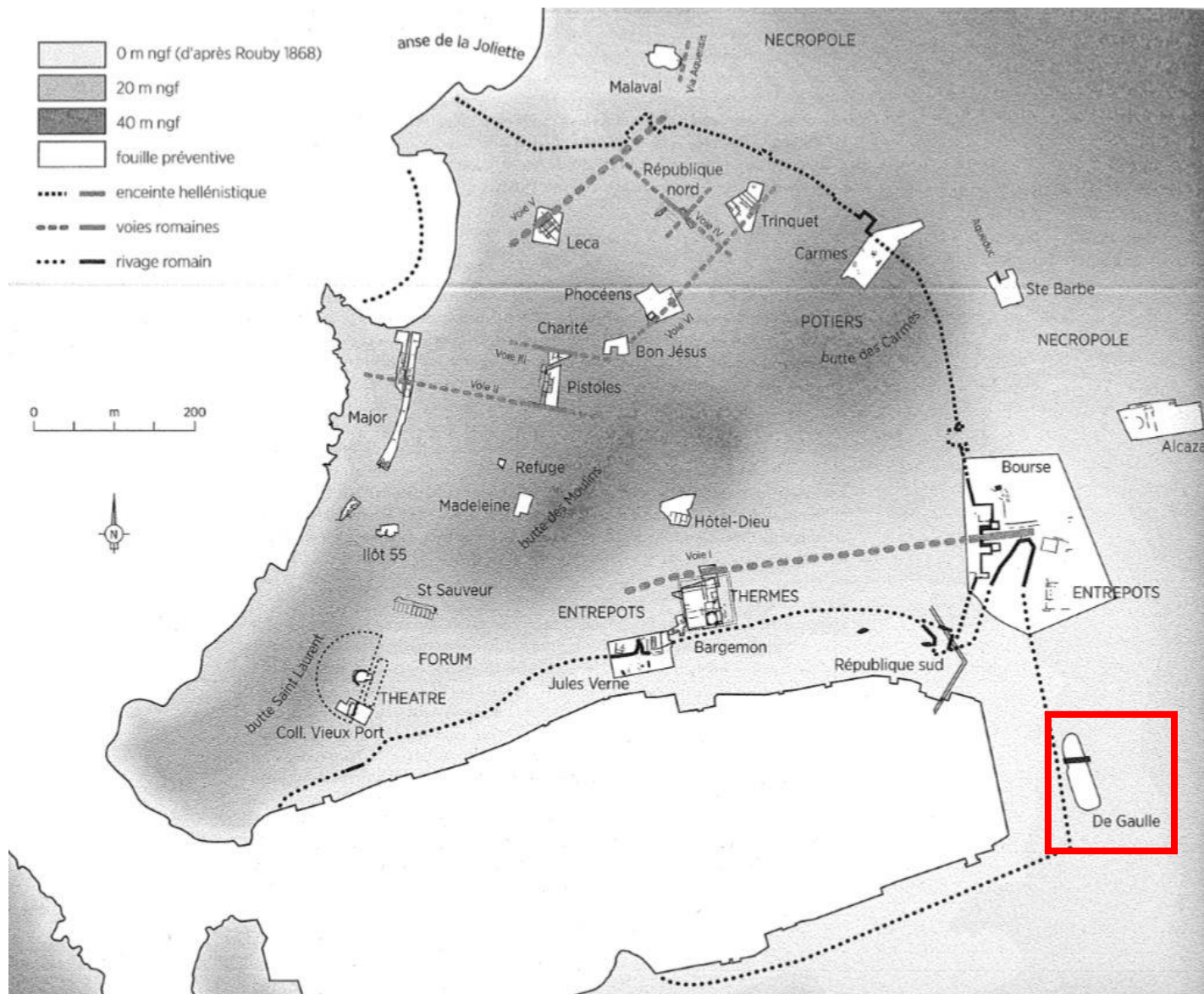
(Ph. Mellinand *et al.*, *Topographie urbaine de Marseille romaine : à la lumière des fouilles récentes*, 2011, p. 260)



« Northeast shore sector »

- Fouilles de la Samaritaine 1864
- Site de la Bourse 1967-1984
- Surverse Vieux-Port / République 2004-2006
- 23 quai Rive Neuve 2006

Localisation of Marseille's roman archaeological sites
 (Ph. Mellinand et al., *Topographie urbaine de Marseille romaine : à la lumière des fouilles récentes*, 2011, p. 260)



« Cove's bottom sector »

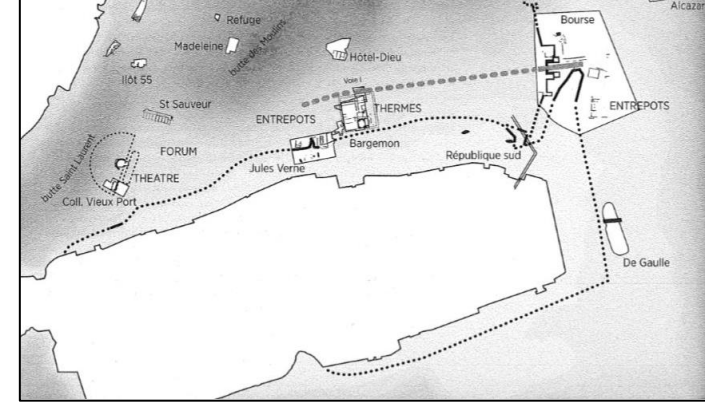
- Place Général de Gaule 1992-1993

Localisation of Marseille's roman archaeological sites

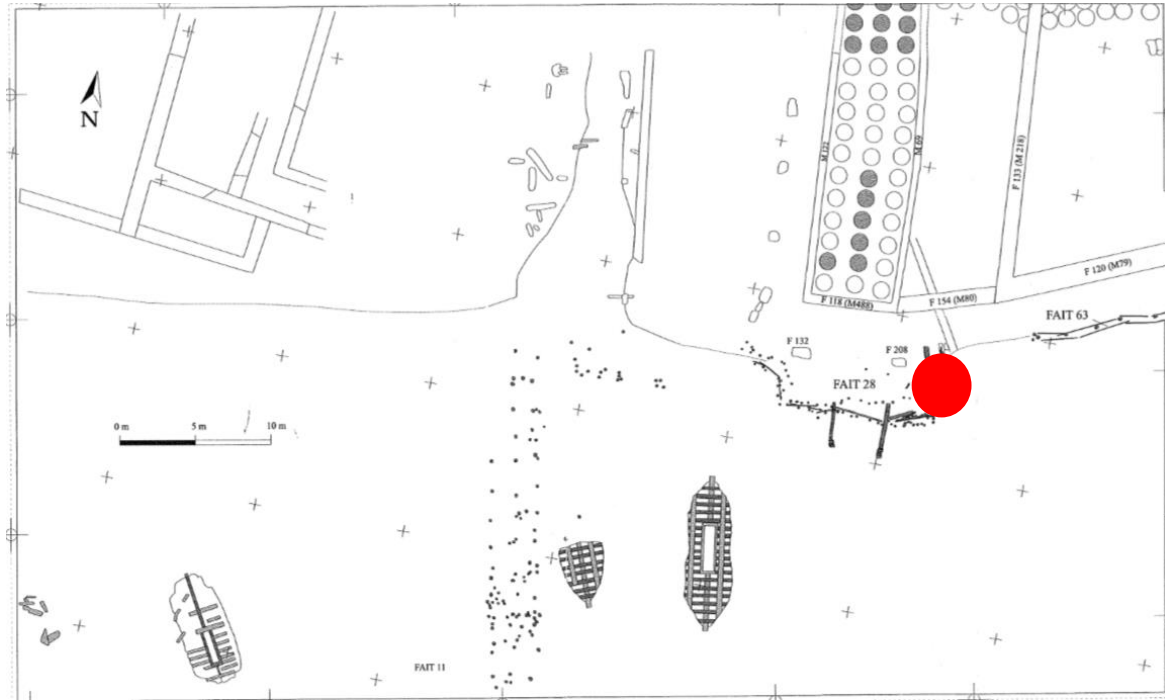
(Ph. Mellinand et al., *Topographie urbaine de Marseille romaine : à la lumière des fouilles récentes*, 2011, p. 260)

The harbour system of Marseille during the Roman period

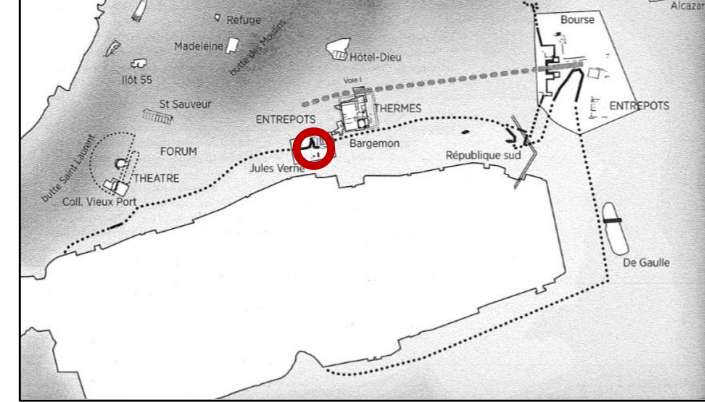
Julio-Claudian Era



Julio-Claudian Era



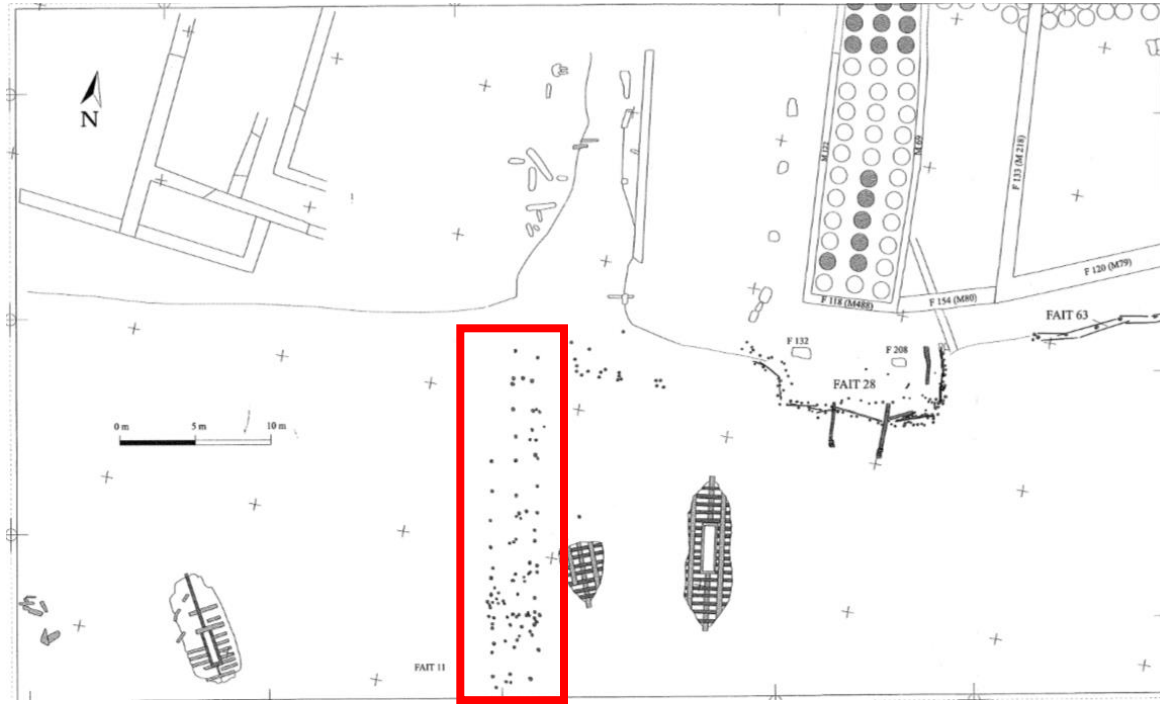
Plan of the roman port infrastructures found on the « Jules-Verne » site
(C. Louail et D. Delpaillo, 2004)



Dredging trace
(M. Derain / AFAN)

The harbour system of Marseille during the Roman period

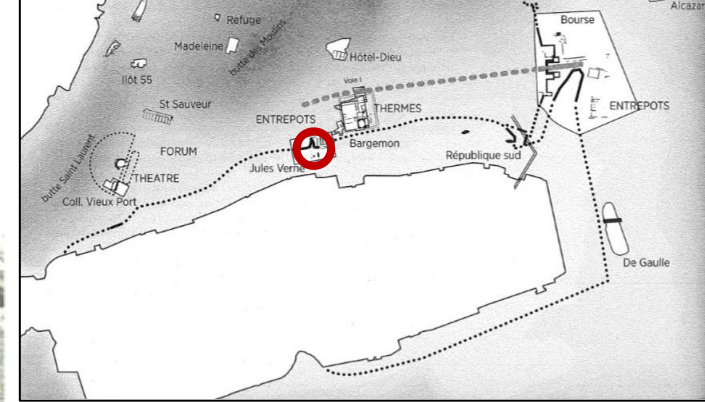
Julio-Claudian Era



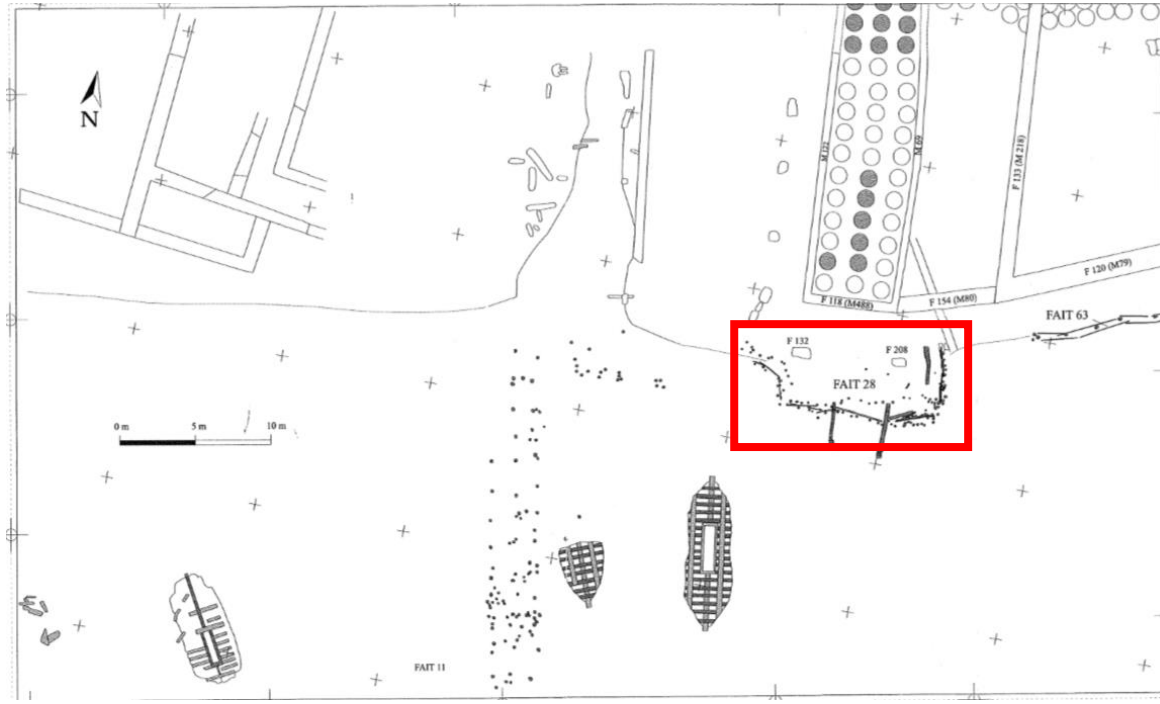
Plan of the roman port infrastructures found on the « Jules-Verne » site (C. Louail et D. Delpaillo, 2004)



Support piles of the wooden landing stage. Jules-Verne excavations (M. Derain /AFAN)



Julio-Claudian Era



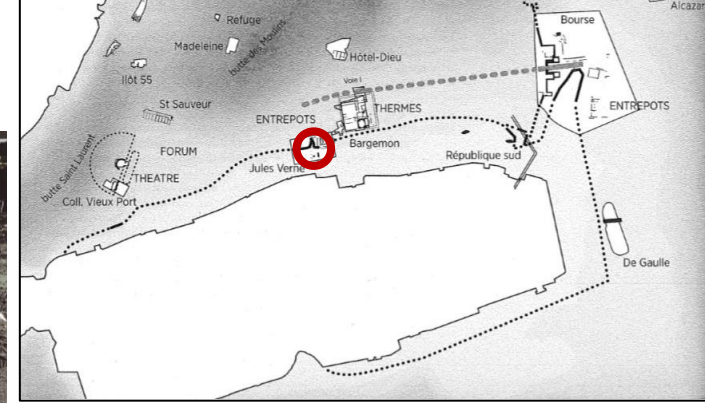
Plan of the roman port infrastructures found on the « Jules-Verne » site (C. Louail et D. Delpaillo, 2004)



Quay F28. Jules-Verne excavations (Ph. Foliot, 1999)



Quay F28. Jules-Verne excavations (M. Derain / AFAN)



Fragment of ship's hull used as wooden plank of the quay cofferdam (M. Derain / AFAN)

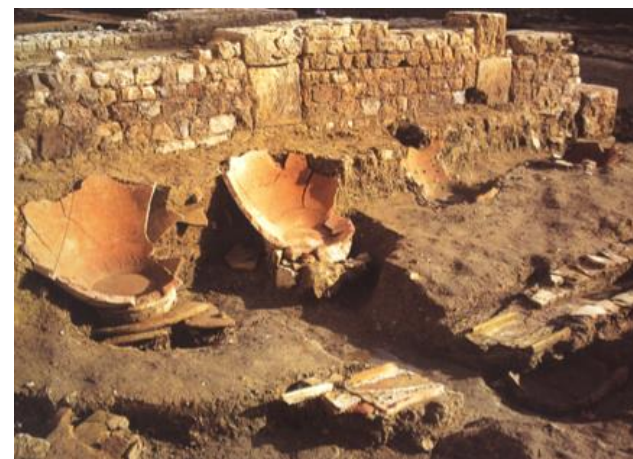
Julio-Claudian Era



Plan of the roman port infrastructures found on the « Jules-Verne » site
(C. Louail et D. Delpaillo, 2004)



Quay F28. Jules-Verne excavations
(Ph. Foliot, 1999)



Horrea with dolia. Jules-Verne excavations
(in : *Parcours de ville. Marseille*, 1999, p. 51)

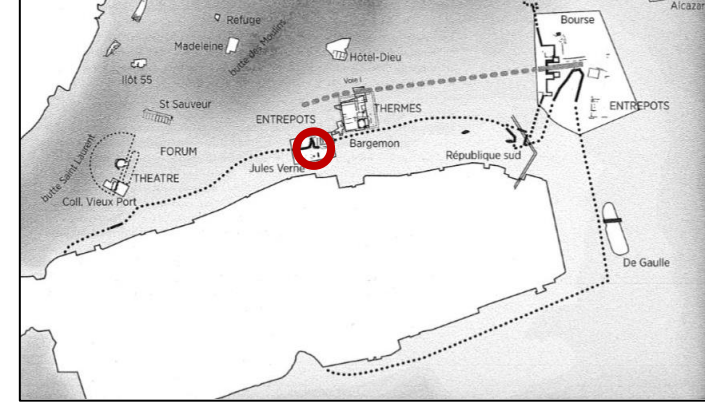


Stamp on *dolium* lid
(Ph. Foliot et Chr. Durand, 1999)

Julio-Claudian Era

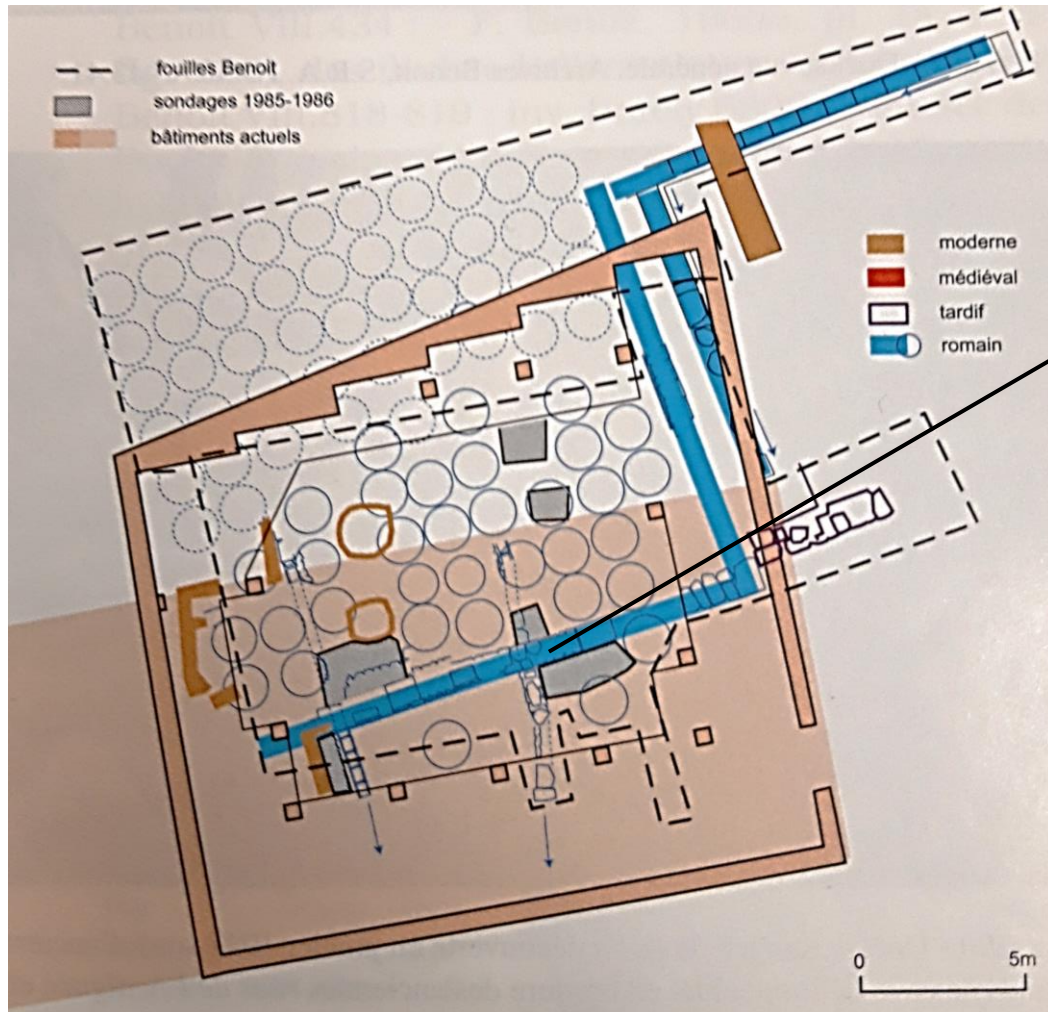


Plan of the roman port infrastructures found on the « Jules-Verne » site
(C. Louail et D. Delpaillo, 2004)



Roman wharf made with limestone and Pozzolan foundation.
Jules-Verne excavations
(M. Derain, 1999)

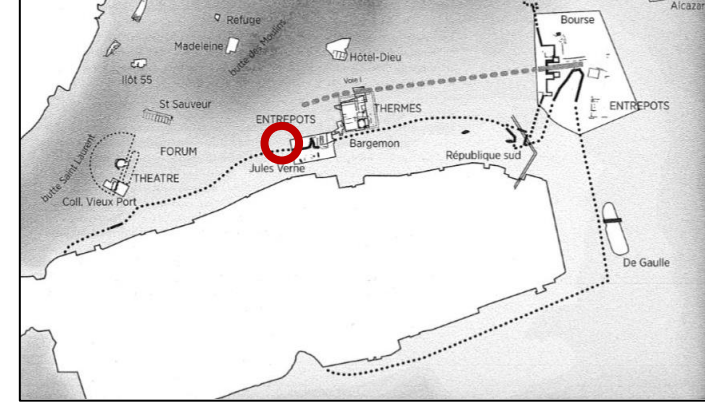
Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



Plan of the Roman Docks base on results of recents surveys (1986)
(Drawing H. Tréziny, 2005)

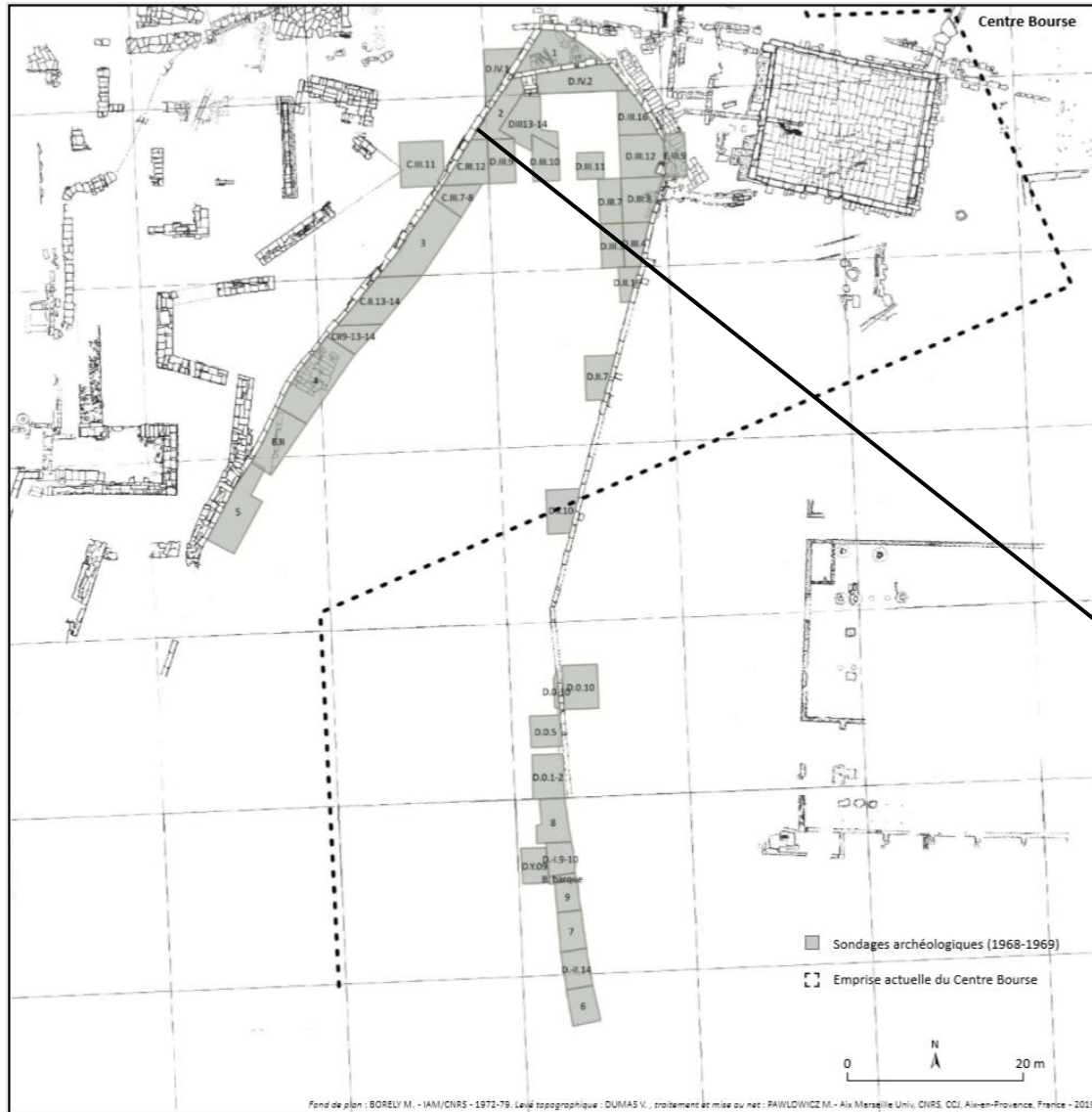
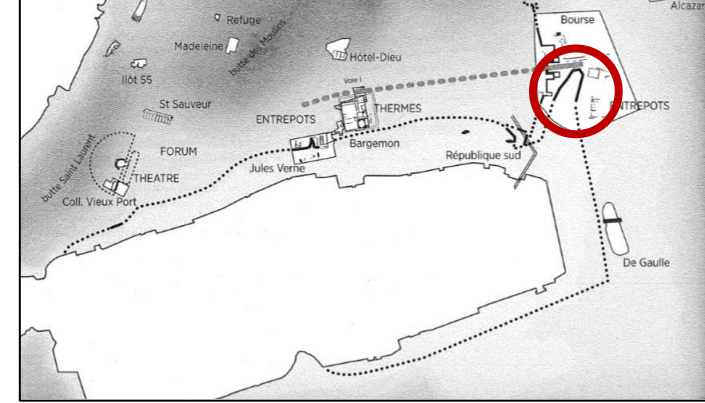


South wall of the Roman Docks
(F. Benoit's archives – SRA PACA n°37.1.3.12)



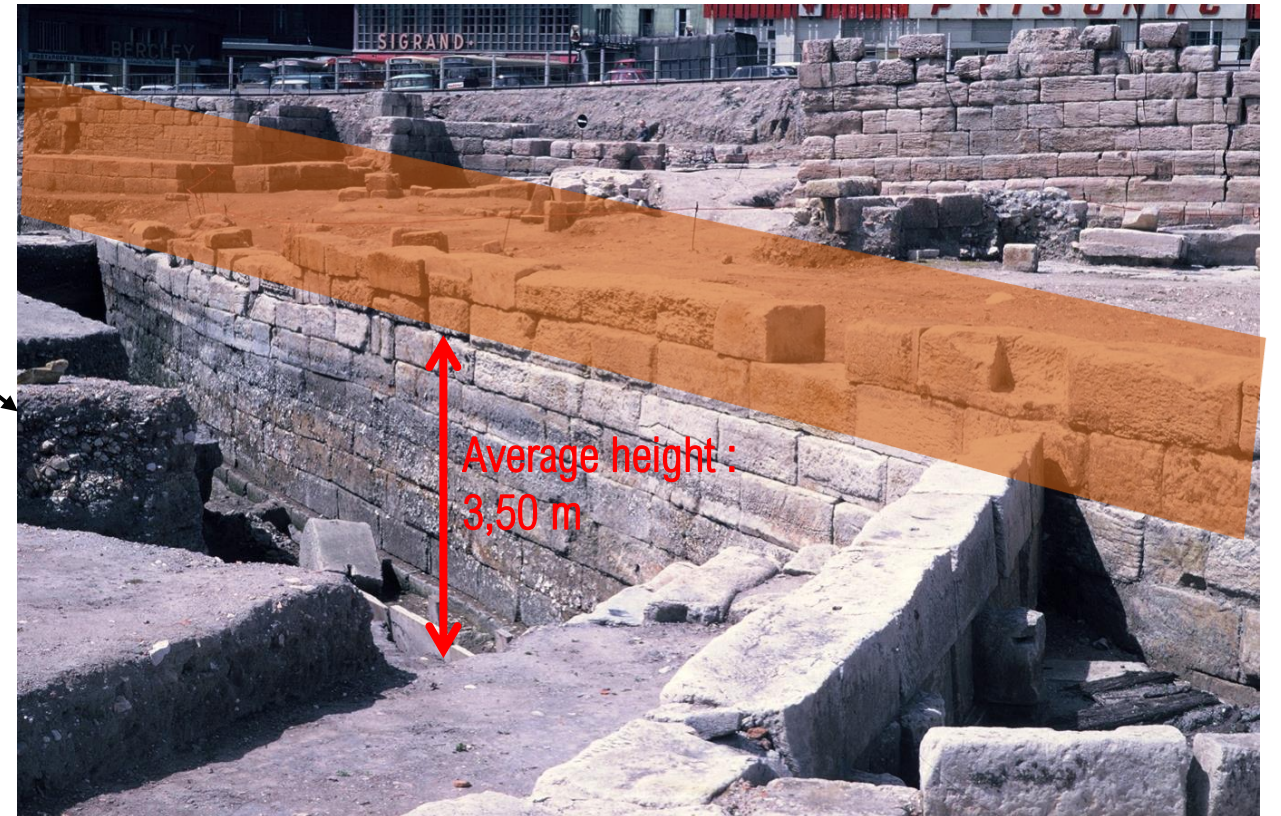
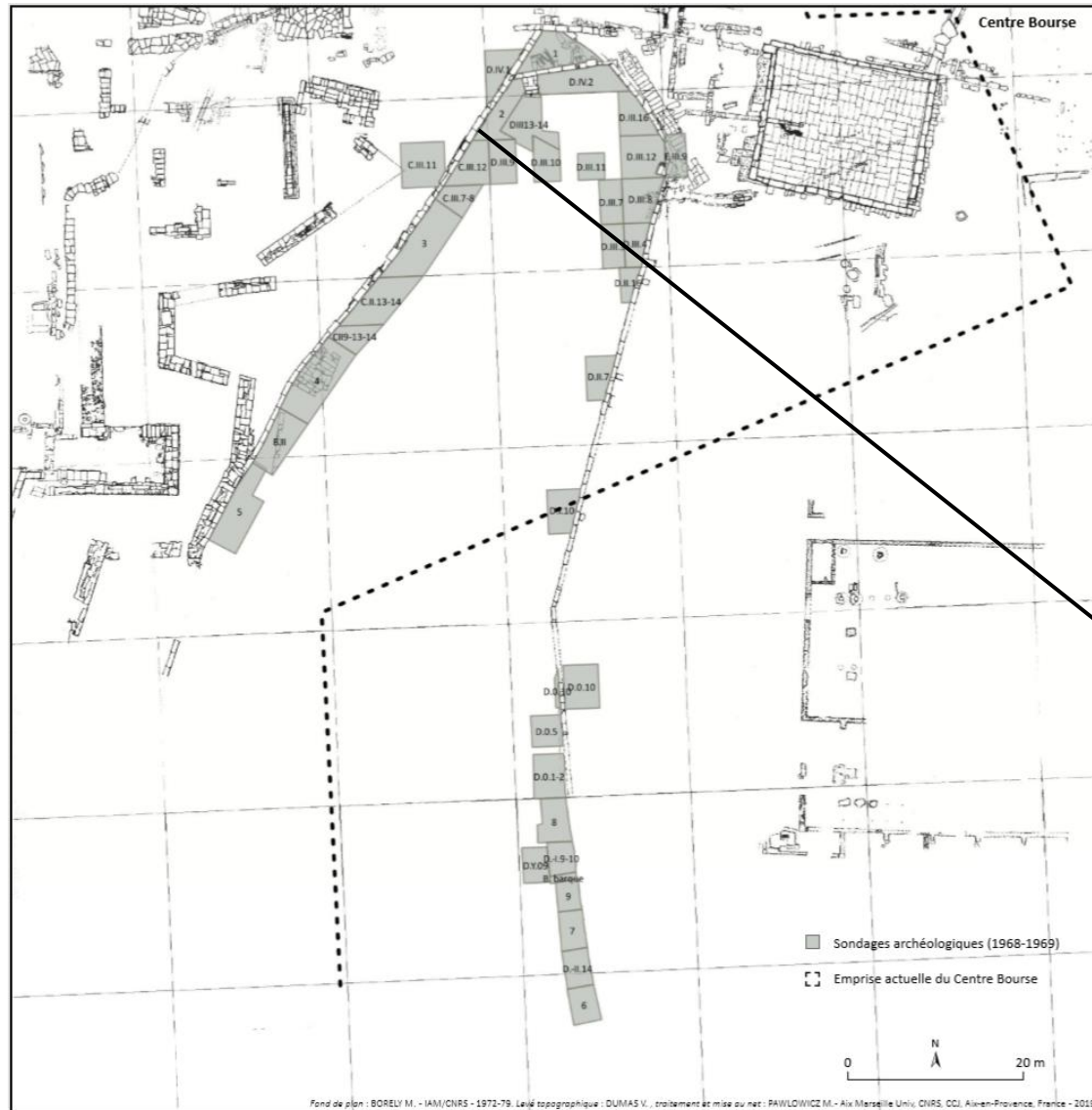
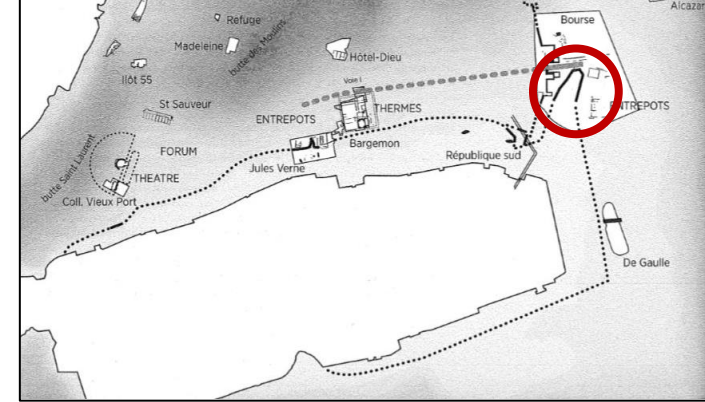
Dolia presented in the Museum “des Docks romains” de Marseille

Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



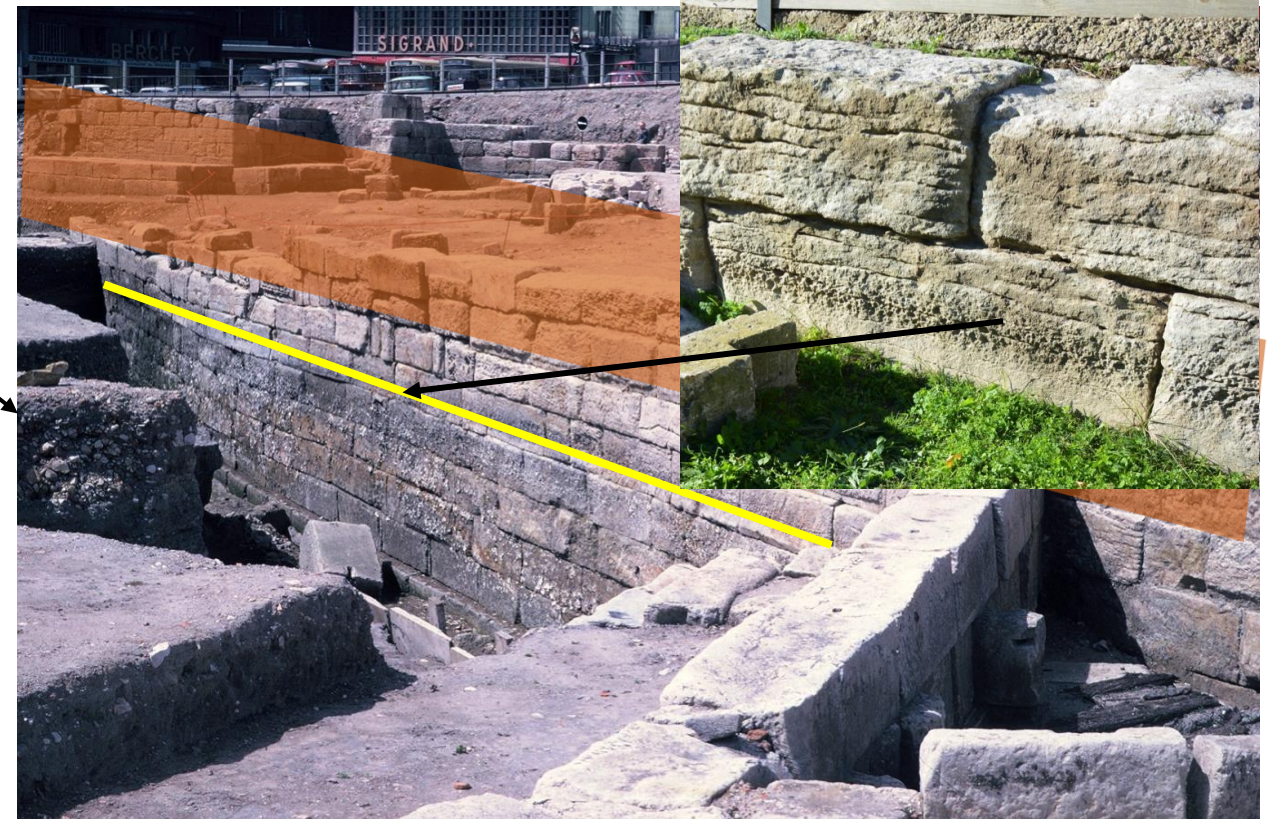
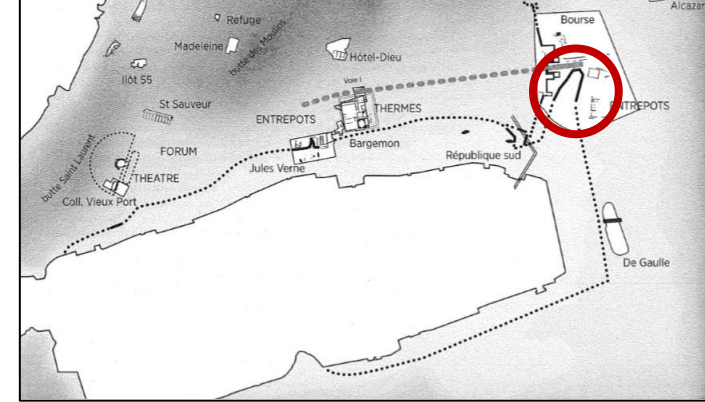
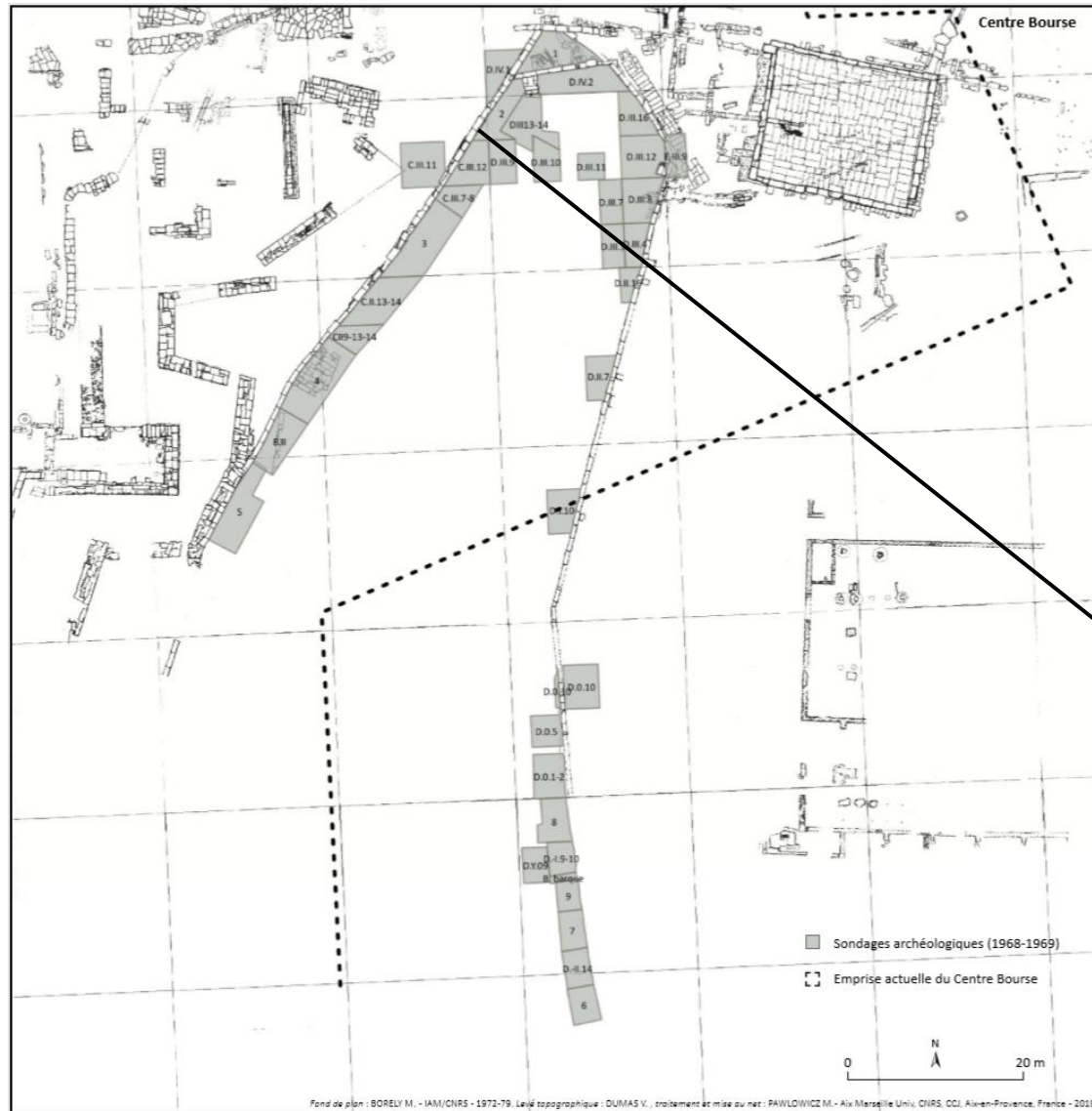
West quay (© Antoine Chenet, CNRS-CCJ, 1968)

Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



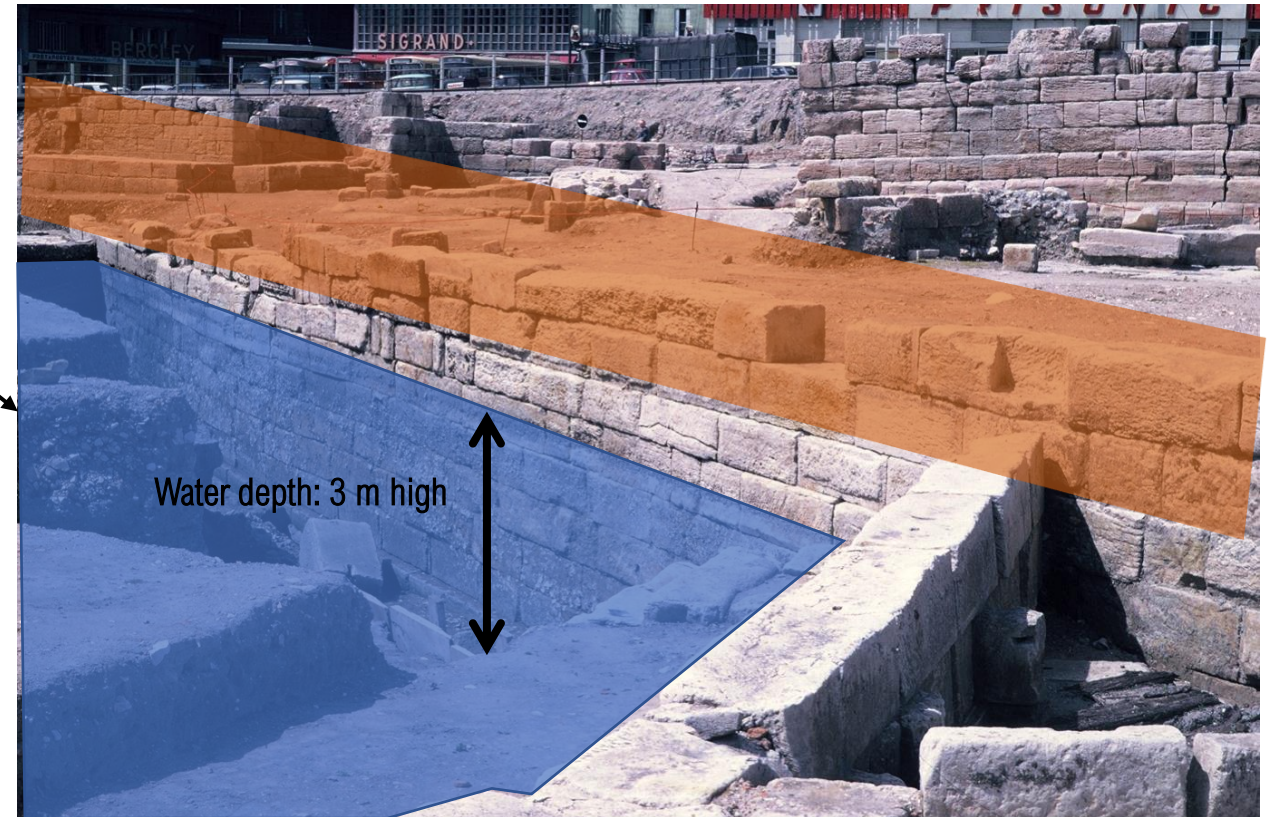
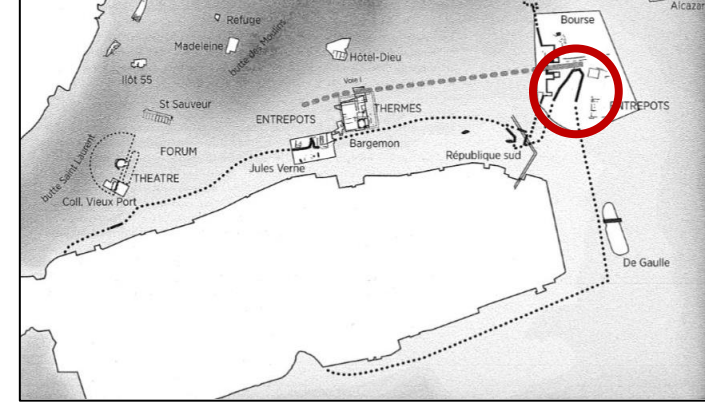
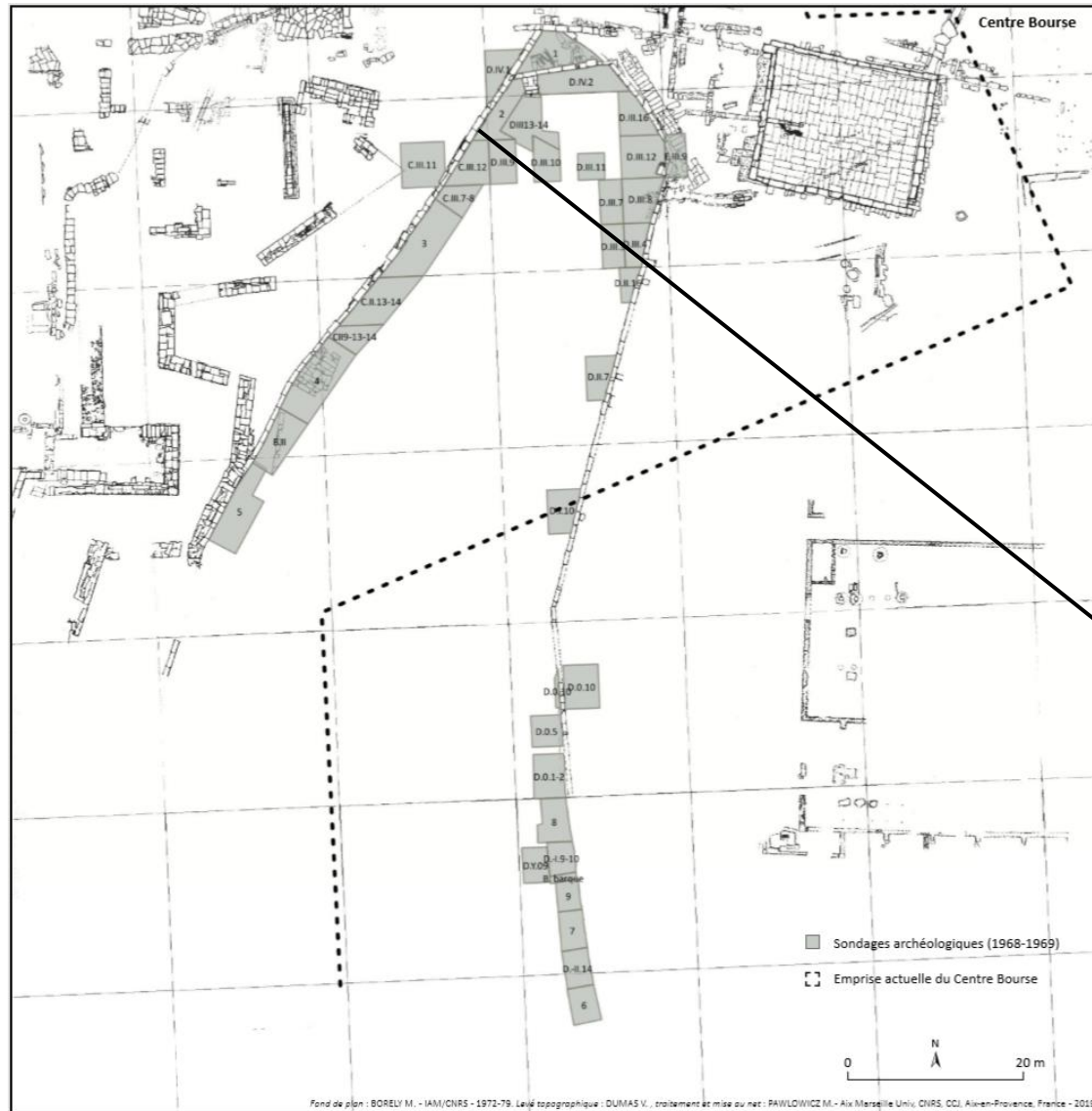
West quay (© Antoine Chenet, CNRS-CCJ, 1968)

Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



West quay (© Antoine Chenet, CNRS-CCJ, 1968)

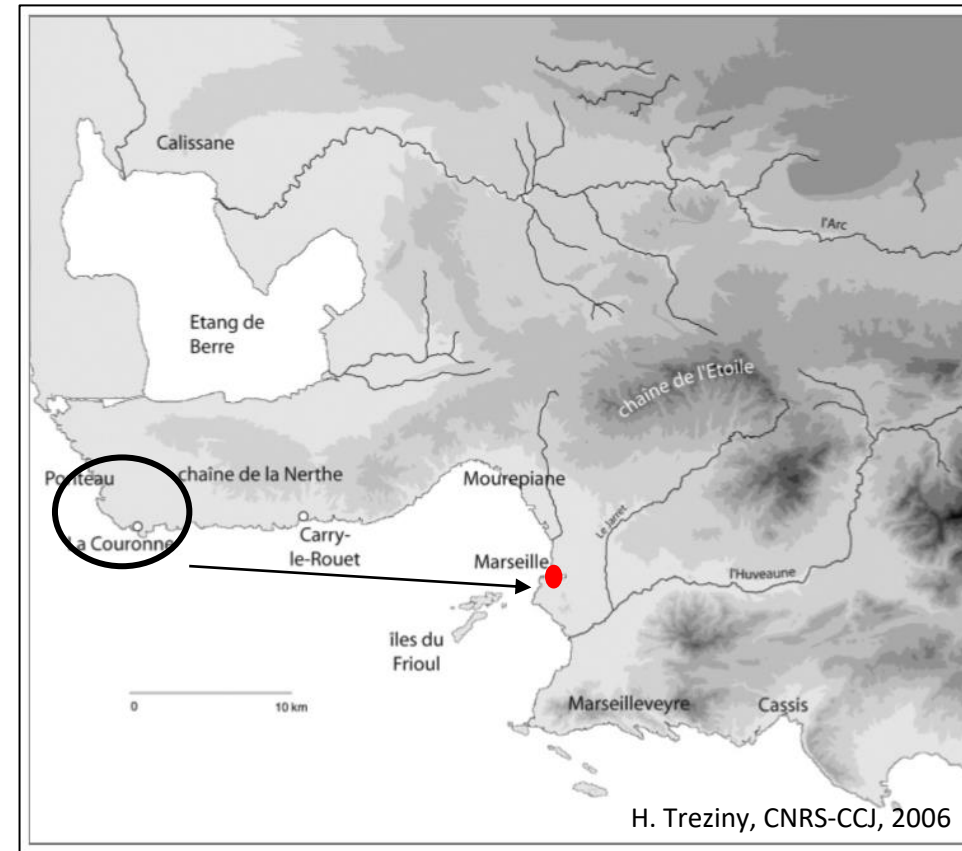
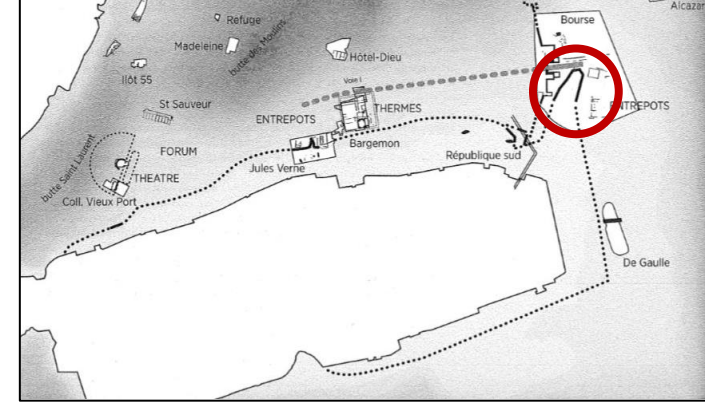
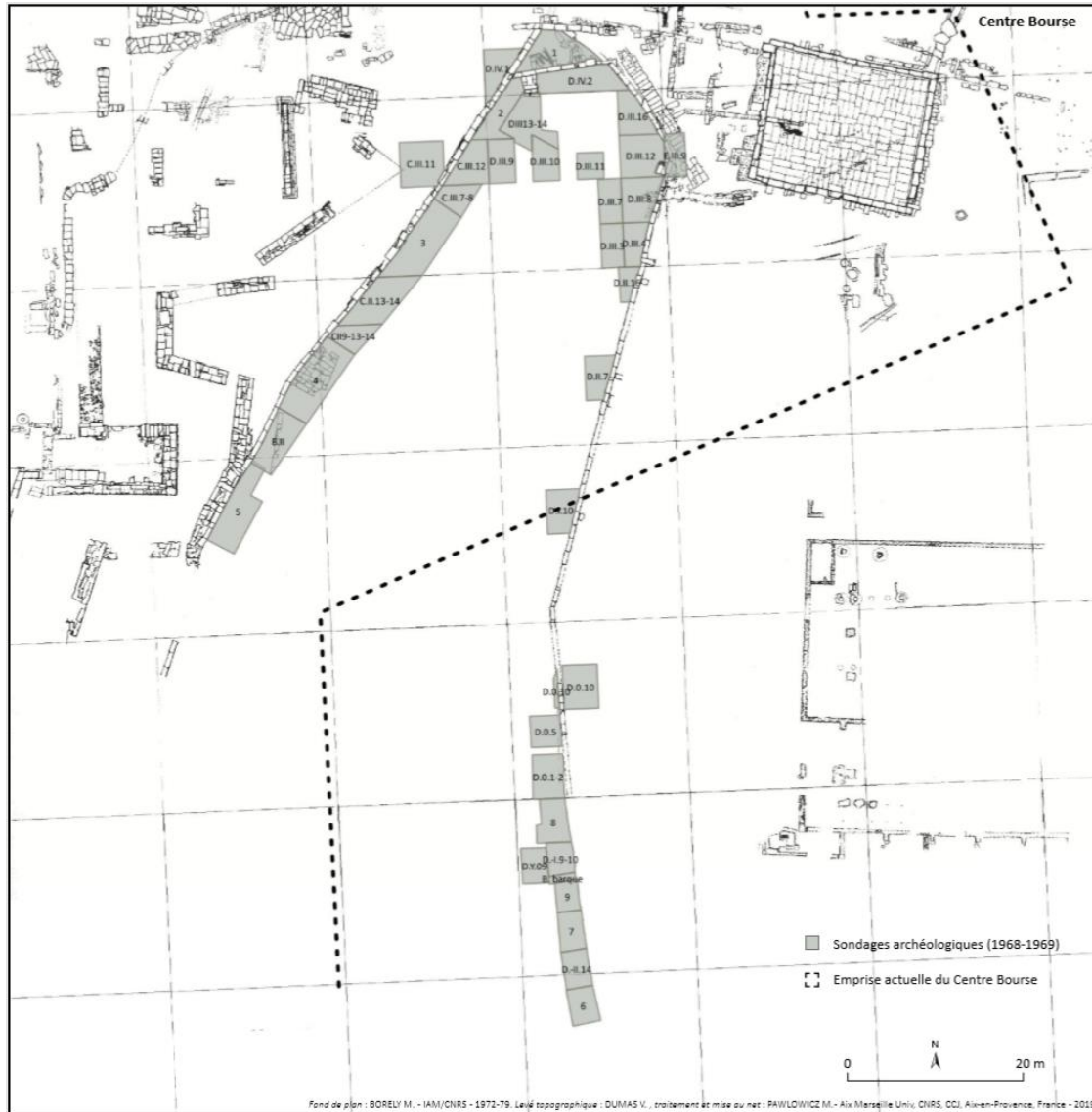
Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



West quay (© Antoine Chenet, CNRS-CCJ, 1968)

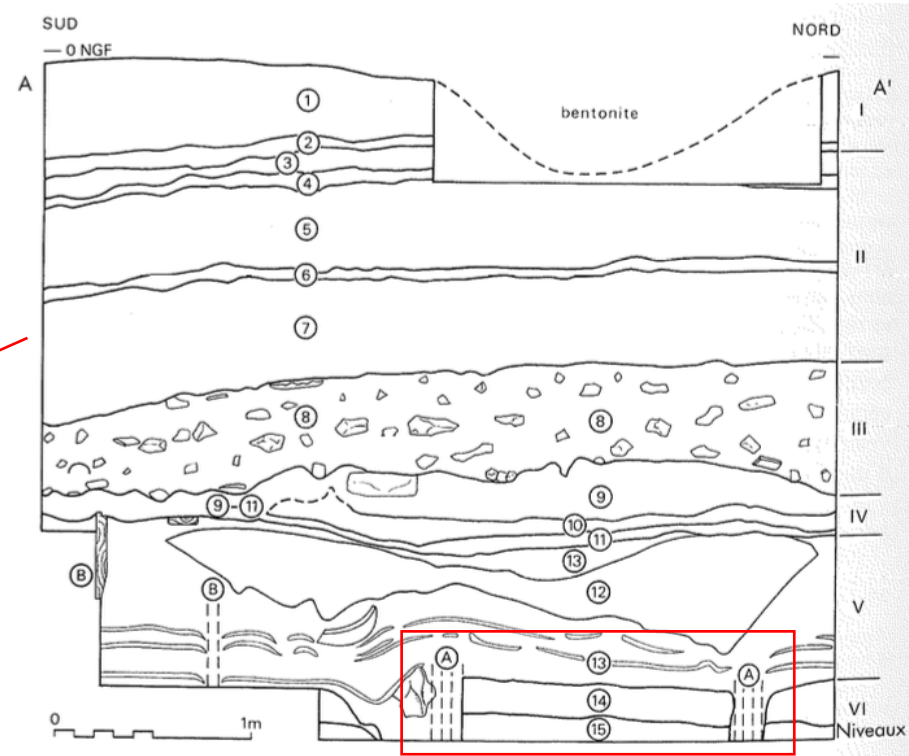
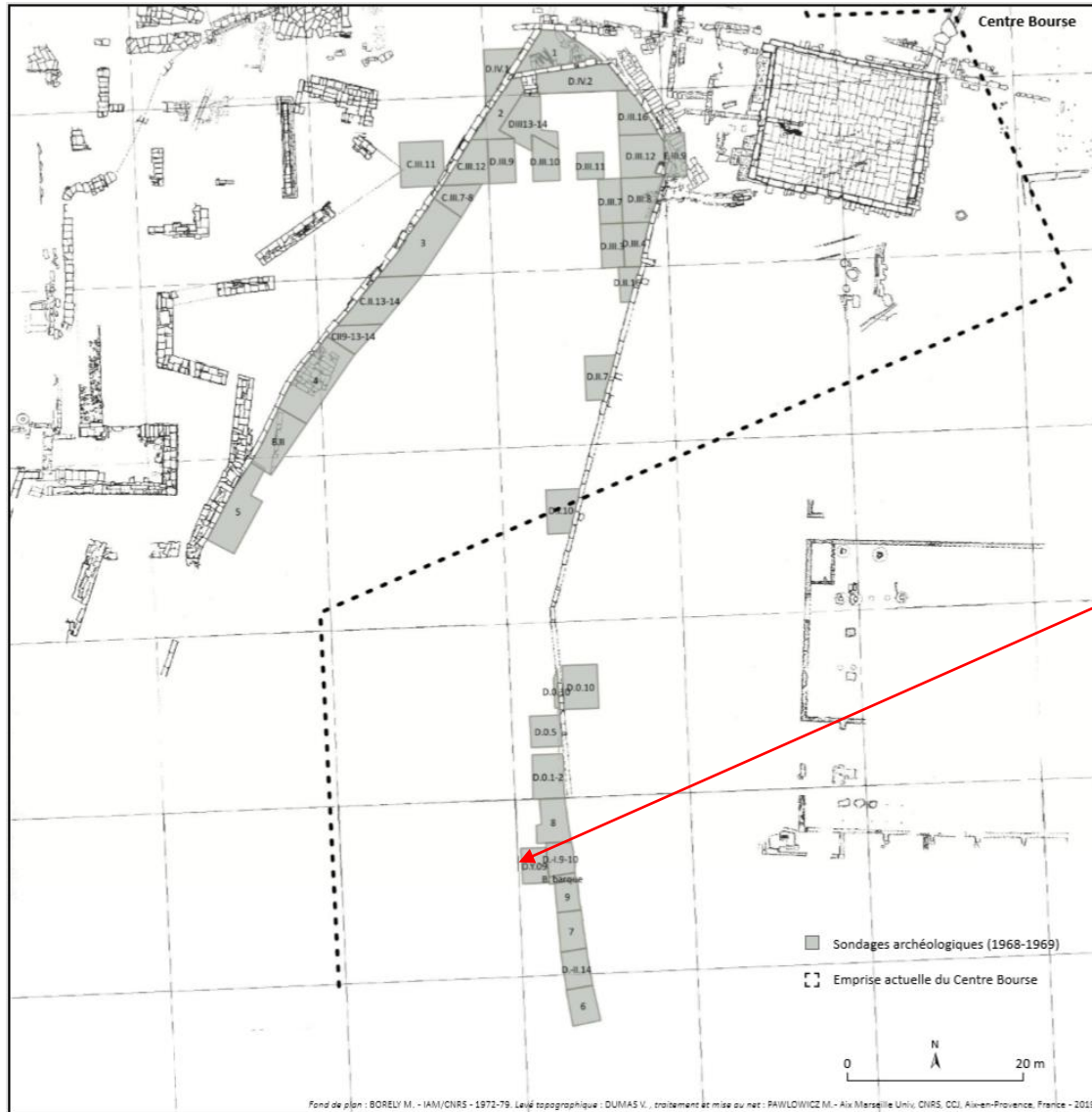
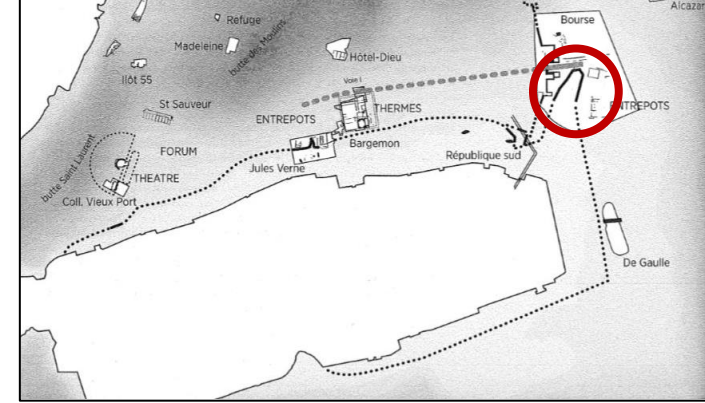
The harbour system of Marseille during the Roman period

Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



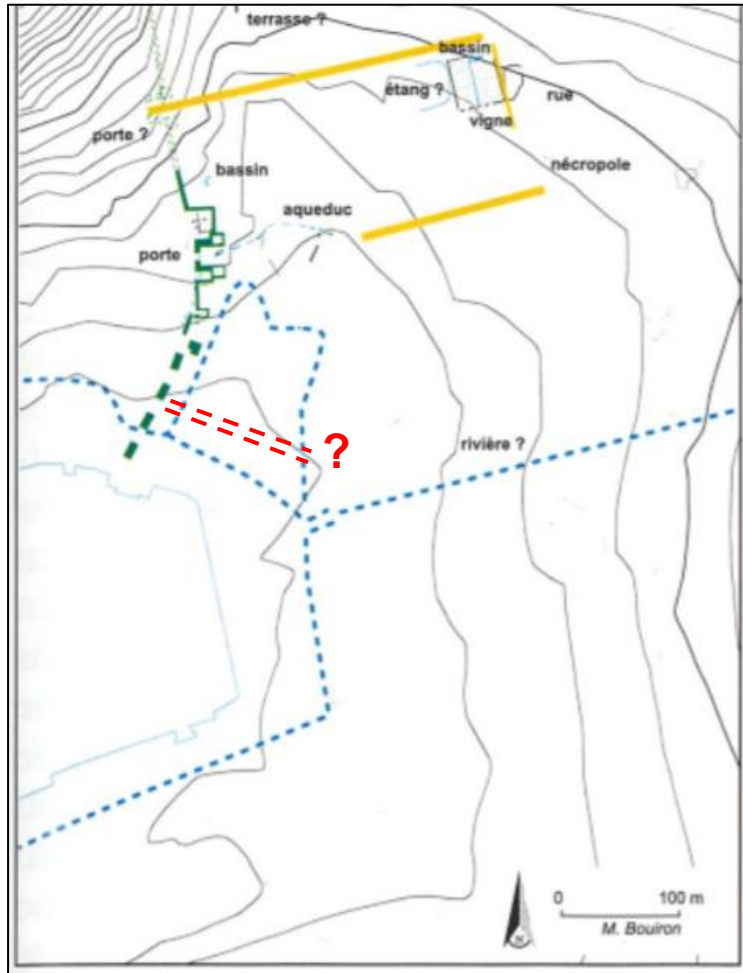
The harbour system of Marseille during the Roman period

Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC

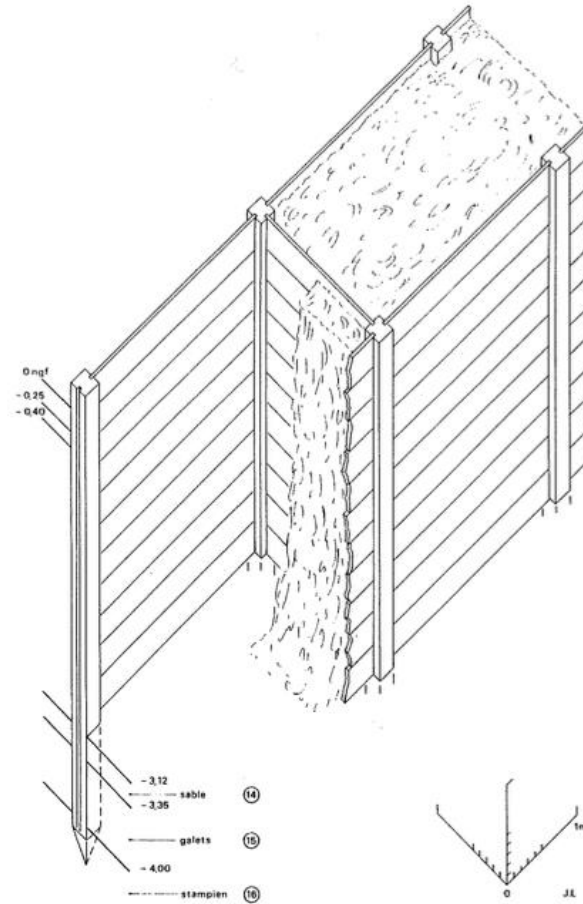


South-North section, survey DY 09
(R. Guéry, 1992 and 1998)

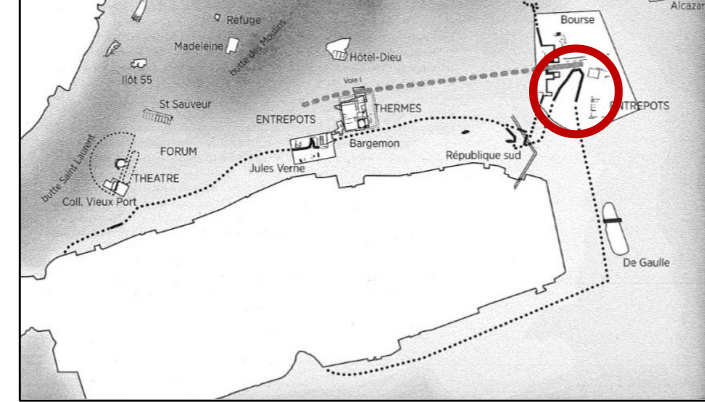
Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



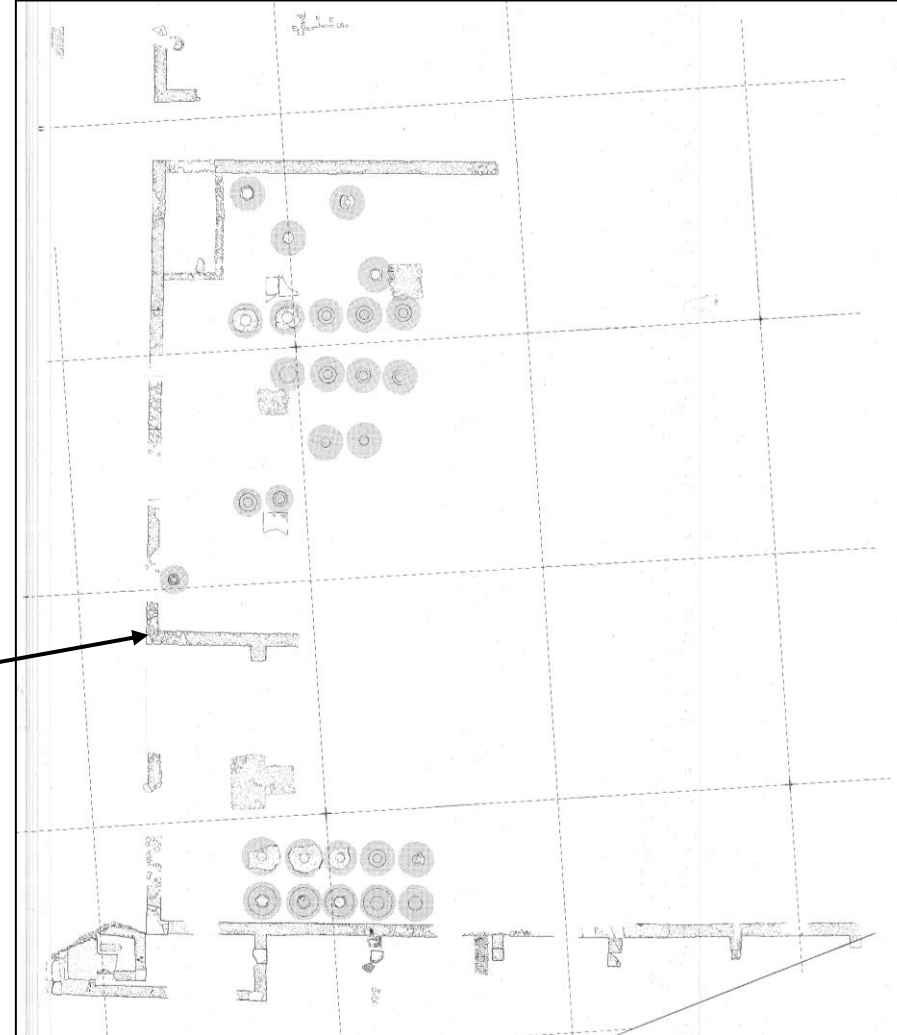
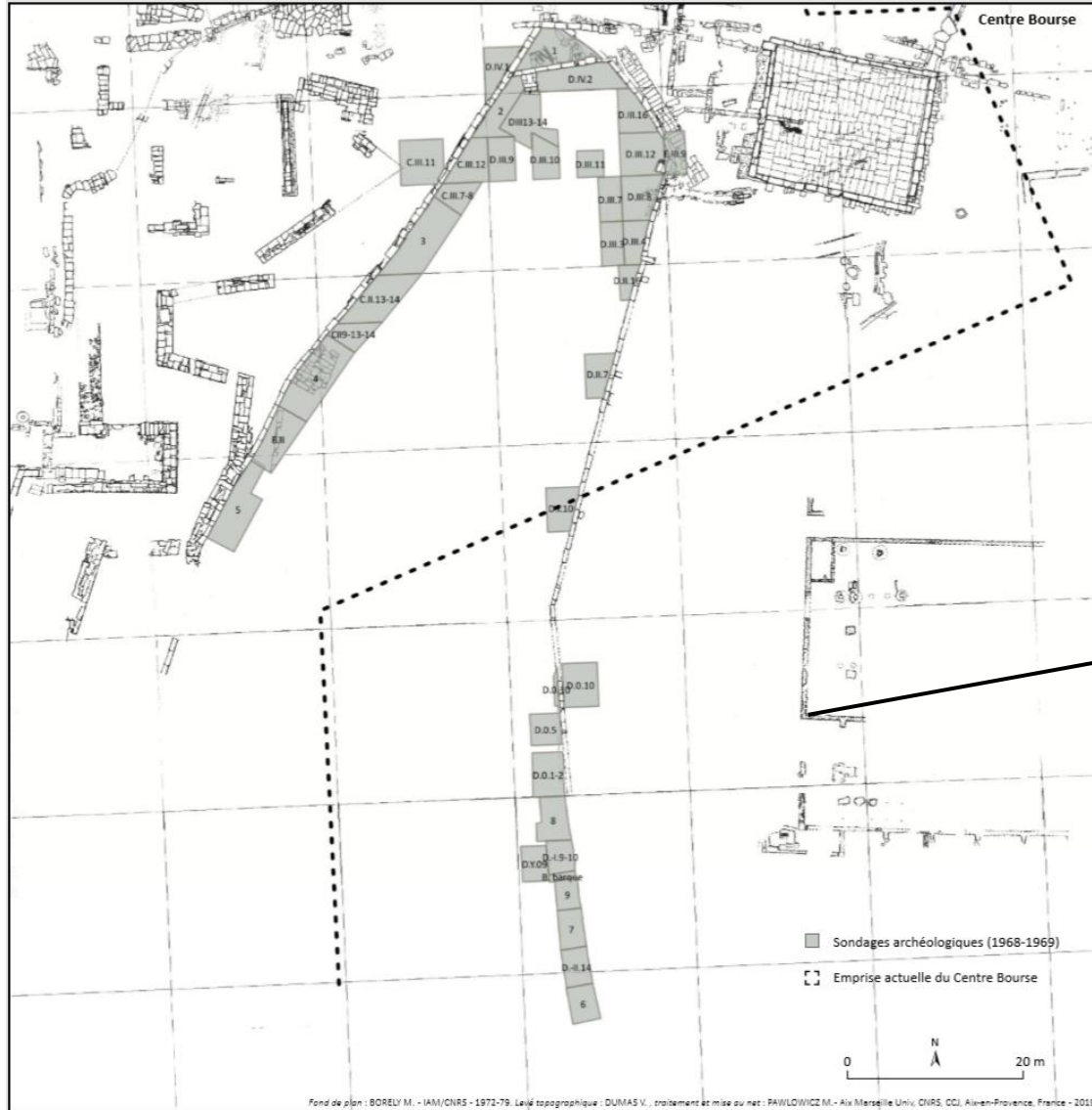
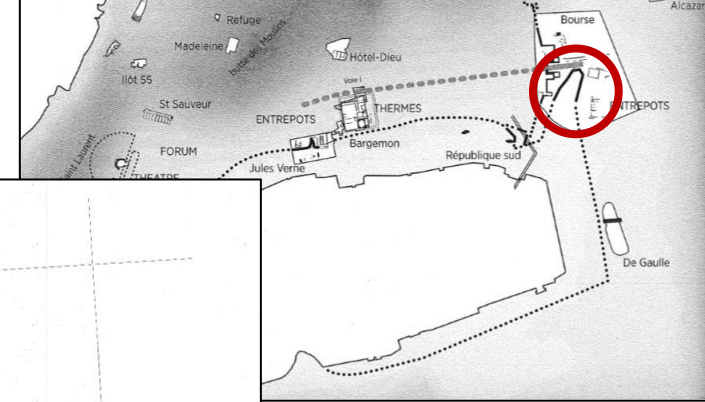
Restitution of the paleo-rivage of the north-est port sector – Hellénistic period (M. Bouiron, 2001)



Axonometry from restitution of the cofferdam (R. Guéry, 1992)

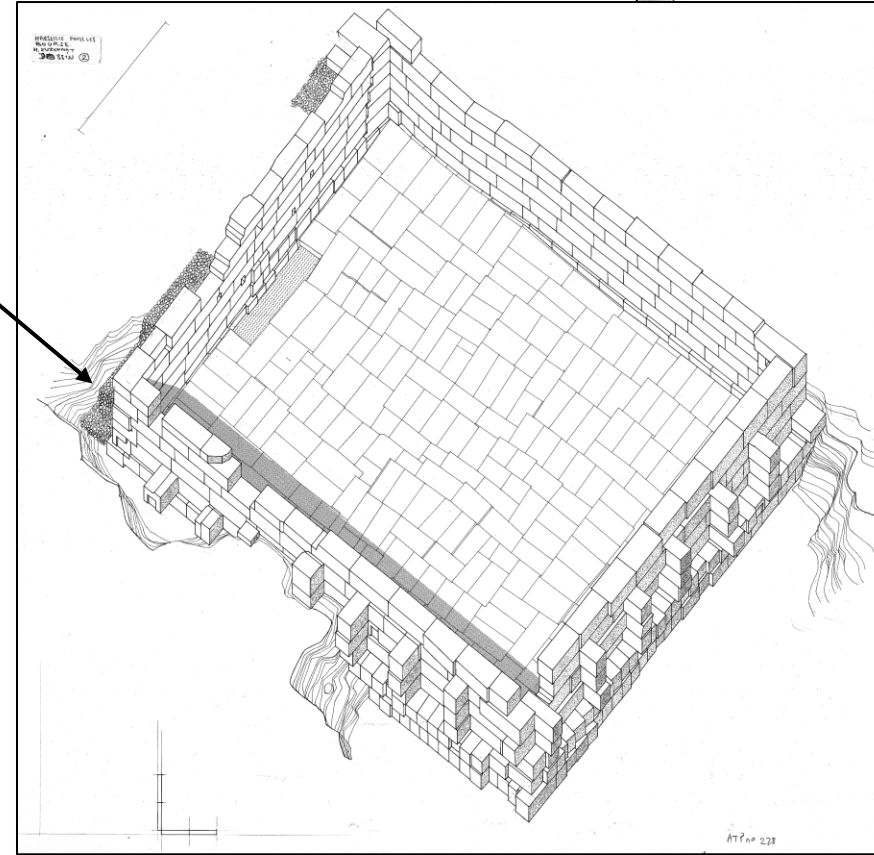
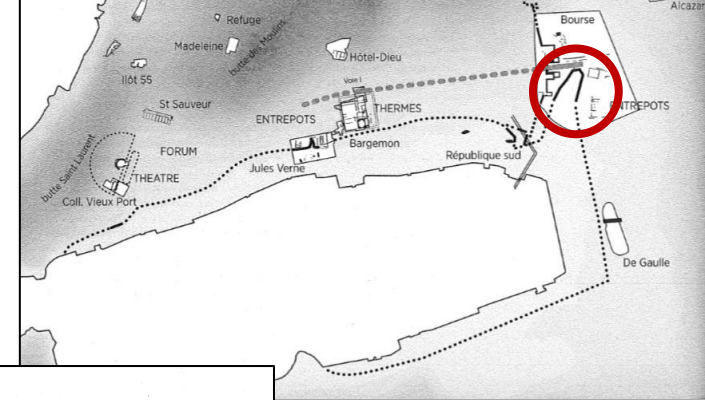
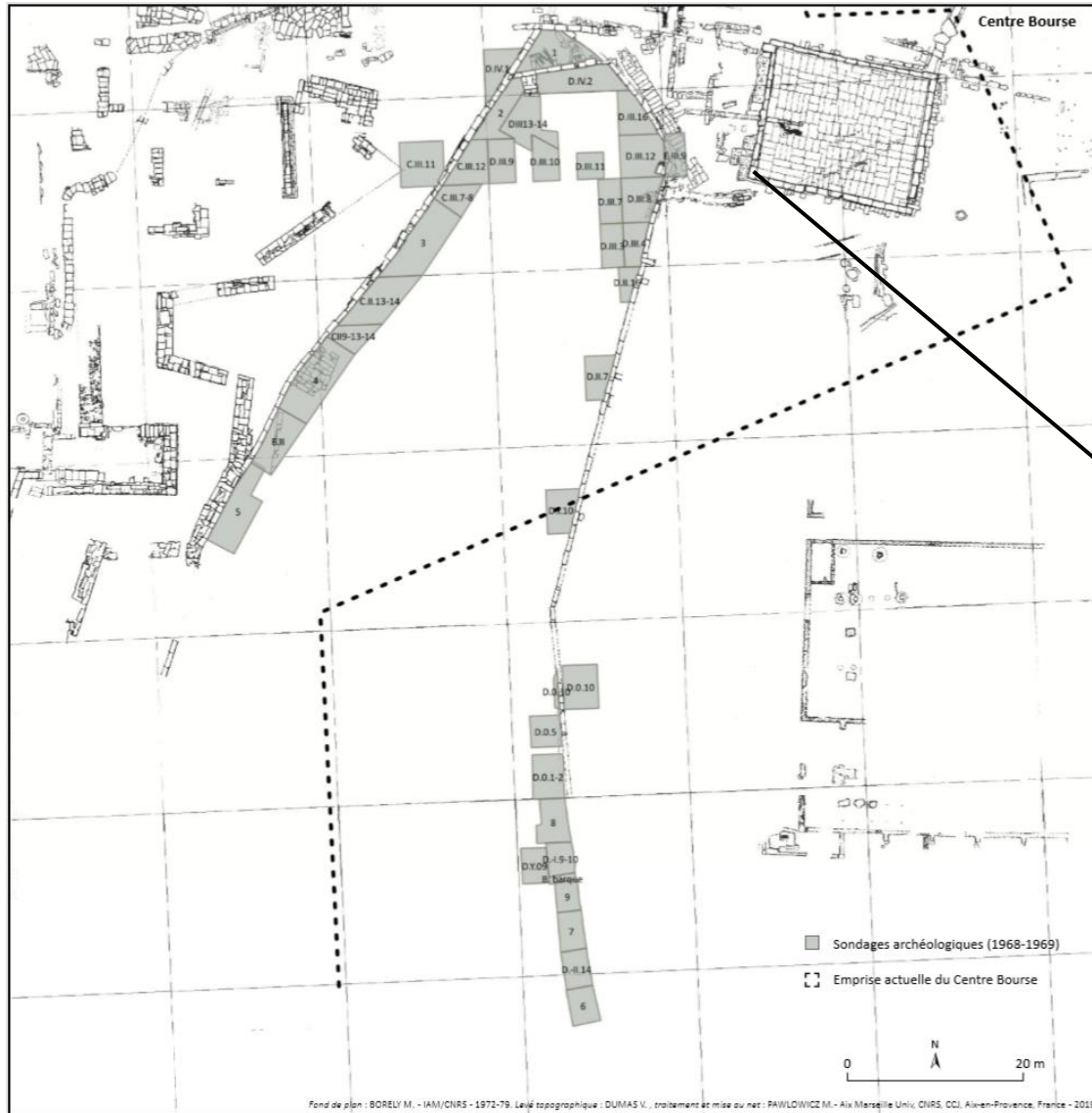


Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



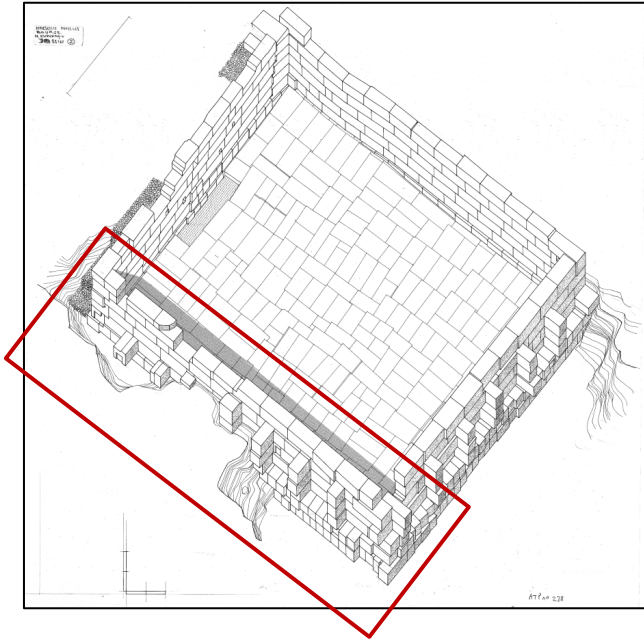
Plan of the docks with dolia of the "la Bourse" site
CCJ archives – ATP n°42)

Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC

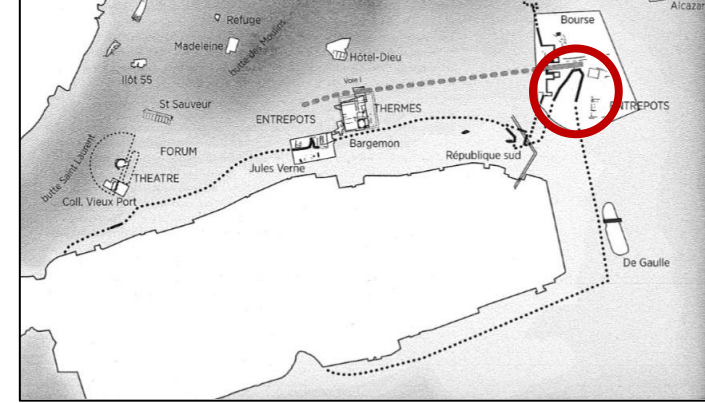


Axonometry of the freshwater basin
CCJ archives – ATP n° 228-2)

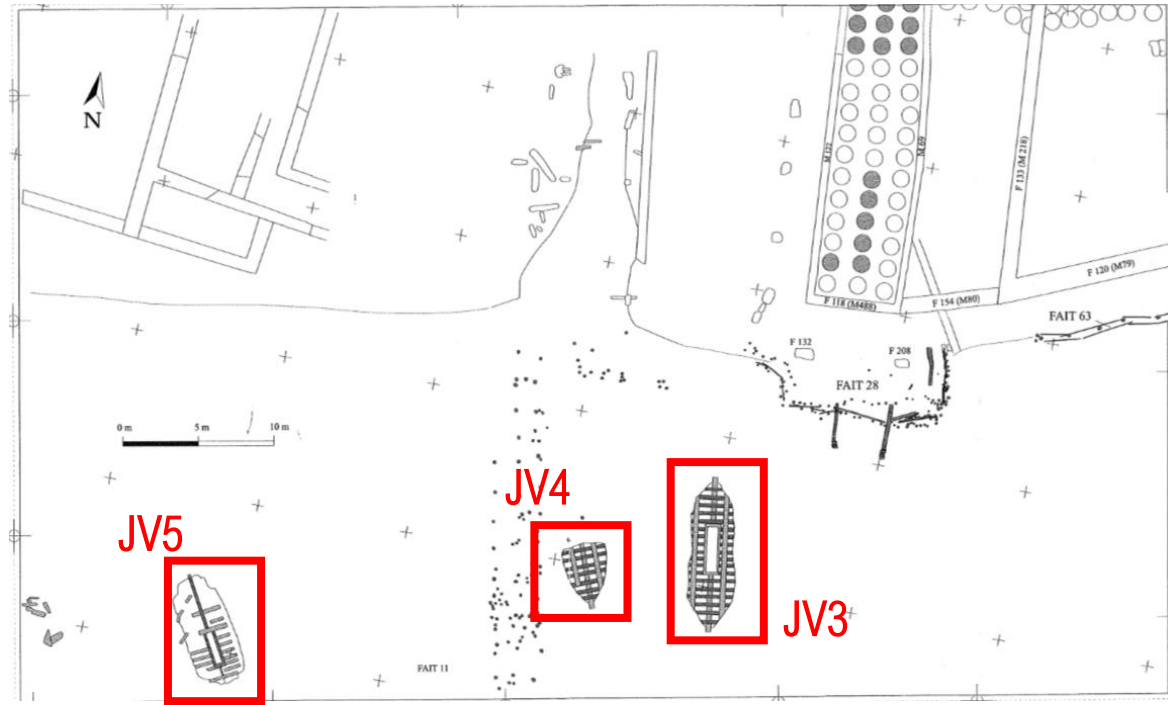
Flavian Era – 2nd c. BC



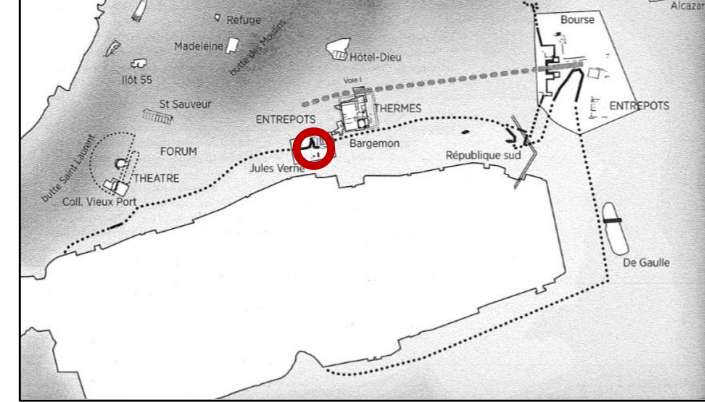
Cofferdam system of the freshwater bassin
(© Antoine Chenet, CNRS-CCJ, 1972)



3rd – 5th c. BC

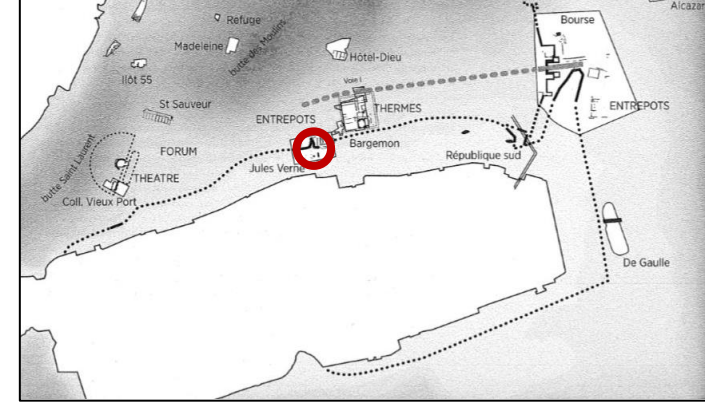


Plan of the roman port infrastructures found on the « Jules-Verne » site
(C. Louail et D. Delpaillo, 2004)



JV3 wreck (M. Derain)

3rd – 5th c. BC

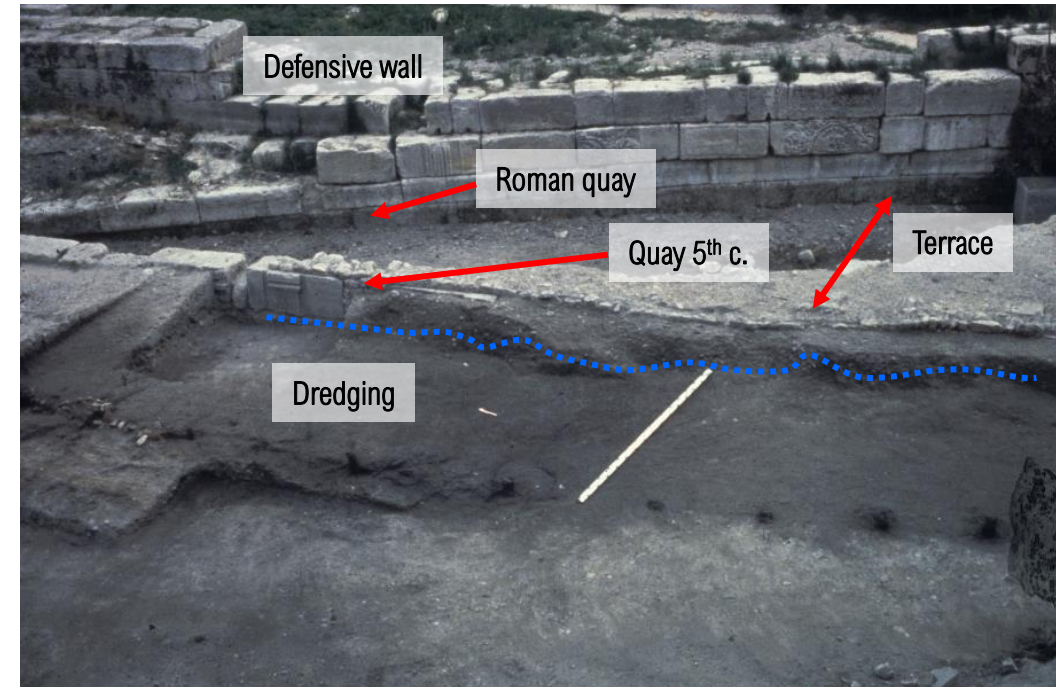
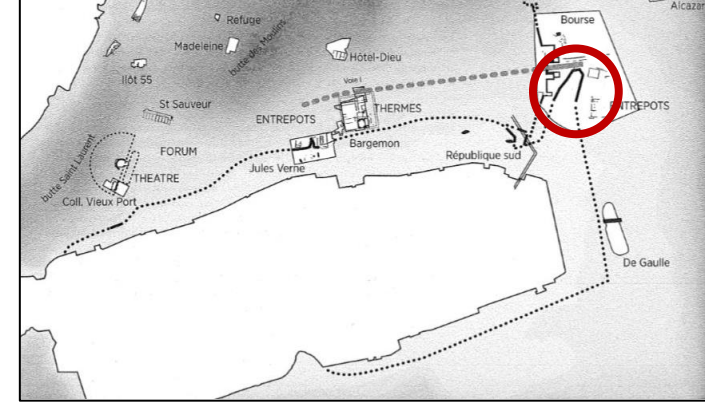


(New model restitution of the wreck JV3 made by R. Roman and P. Pomey, 2011-2013)

3rd – 5th c. BC



Plan of the « Harbour horn » and the roman remains around
(According to the plan of M. Borély, CNRS-IAM, made between 1972 and 1979)



Excavation of the late quay of the 5th century
(M. Bonifay, 1980)

To conclude

- different types of port infrastructures, mainly related to maritime trade
- a large restructuring phase at the end of the 1st century AD (Rome's decision and funding ?)
- the different techniques recommended by Vitruvius are represented
- a concern for harbour maintenance that is very important

Perspectives ...

An aerial reconstruction of the Roman harbor system of Marseille. The city is built on a peninsula, densely packed with buildings featuring red-tiled roofs. A prominent circular structure, likely a theater or amphitheater, is visible near the top of the city. The harbor is a large, irregularly shaped body of water with several smaller inlets and a long pier extending into the sea. Numerous small boats are scattered throughout the harbor. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green fields, trees, and some rocky terrain. In the background, a large body of water, possibly the Mediterranean Sea, stretches to the horizon under a blue sky with a few clouds. The overall style is that of a detailed architectural reconstruction.

Thanks for your attention !

© J.-C. Golvin

The harbour system of Marseille during the Roman period