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The Greeks West of the Rhone (F). Genesis, Evolution and End of a Greek Area

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ABSTRACT

Researches of the last fifty years in the western South of France brought new evidences about the pre-colonial phase, the discovery of the Greek city of Béziers (Béziers I) – one of the two *Rhòde* of the sources –, considerable advances on the Greek Agde (*Agàthe*) and on native sites. They shed light on why and how Greek colonization took root and, thereafter, on a different colonial functioning than envisaged before, in which the Dorian component – seemingly extended to the *Rhòde* of Iberia – preceded the Phocæan one and counterbalanced the Marseille's role for several centuries.

Key-words:

Agde, Béziers, bronze objects, colonization, Dorians, Empòrion, Ionians, Iron Age, Marseille, Phocæans, Rhòde, Sicily, trade

In memory of Christian Olive, my husband and partner in research, who worked so hard to recover the past of this region, and notably of Béziers and Agde. Without his essential contribution to this article, that he helped to argue, it could not have been written.

Introduction

According to ancient texts, all several centuries more recent than the city's beginning, ancient historians claimed that Agde (*Agàthe*) was a 'city of Marseille',¹ with an uncertain foundation date, while the Hérault river was the border between the Massalian domain and that of the Greek city of *Empòrion*.² The western natives were seen as turned towards Iberia and it was assumed they developed an 'Ibero-Languedocian civilisation'.³ (Figure 1)

In the 1970s, the native necropolis of Agde-Le Peyrou (7th century BC) revealed the oldest Greek vases of southern France, along with one from another necropolis of the same area.⁴ In his researches into the city of Agde, André Nickels thought he found a more or less coeval native settlement, where – in his opinion – Phocaeans (rather than Massalians) came to live in the second half of the 6th century in order to get the goods of the Hérault valley, considered as essential for Greek business.⁵

The native sites of La Monédière (Bessan) and Mont-Joui (Florensac) controlled this valley coveted by Greeks. With the abandonment first of Mont-Joui (*c.* 475 BC) and then of La Monédière (*c.* 400 BC), the Greeks finally seized it.⁶ According to A. Nickels, the elimination of the surrounding Agde natives allowed colonial settlement. From then on, the city could annex the lands of these native sites.⁷

¹ Pseudo-Scymnos 208; Strabo 4.1, 5–6; Pomponius Mela 2.5.80; Plin. HN 3.5; Ptolemy 2.10.2; Steph. Byz. *Ethnics*, s.v. *Agàthe*; Vibius Sequester 49.

² For an overview of hypotheses concerning Agde before the research which started in the last quarter of the 20th century, and is still partially going on, see: Picheire 1960/1978; Jully *et al.* 1978, Jully 1983.

³ Following the discovery of the Iberians, this concept was set up in France especially from the 1950s, developed in the 1960–1970s and is still defended. With earlier bibliography: Jully 1983; Py 1993/2012; Gailledrat 1997; Ibères; Garcia 1993a-b, 1995b, 2000, 2004/2014. About the perplexities it arouses: Ugolini 1993a, 2005, 2016; Ropiot 2005; Gomez 2010; Ugolini and Olive 2012b.

⁴ Agde-Le Peyrou: Nickels *et al.* 1981; Nickels 1989a. Mailhac-Grand Bassin I: Louis, Taffanel and Taffanel 1958; F. Mazière in *Odyssée gauloise*: 60–62.

⁵ Nickels 1982, 1985, 1995. The settlement linked to this necropolis is not far from it, but not below Greek Agde, as we have known for a long time (Ugolini 2001a and, most recently, Ugolini and Pardies 2018). More or less a century elapsed between the necropolis' abandonment and the Agde's foundation. There is therefore no link between the two.

⁶ Mont-Joui: Nickels 1987. La Monédière: Nickels 1989b.

⁷ About the Agde *chôra*, Benoit 1978 and Nickels 1981 assumed a narrow belt of plots around the city. Clavel-Lévêque 1982, 1999 and Garcia 1995a believed in an early and wide development on both banks of Hérault. Gomez 2010 confirmed a small area of land close to the city in the early phase and demonstrated its expansion from 150 BC on, mainly on the left bank of the Hérault.

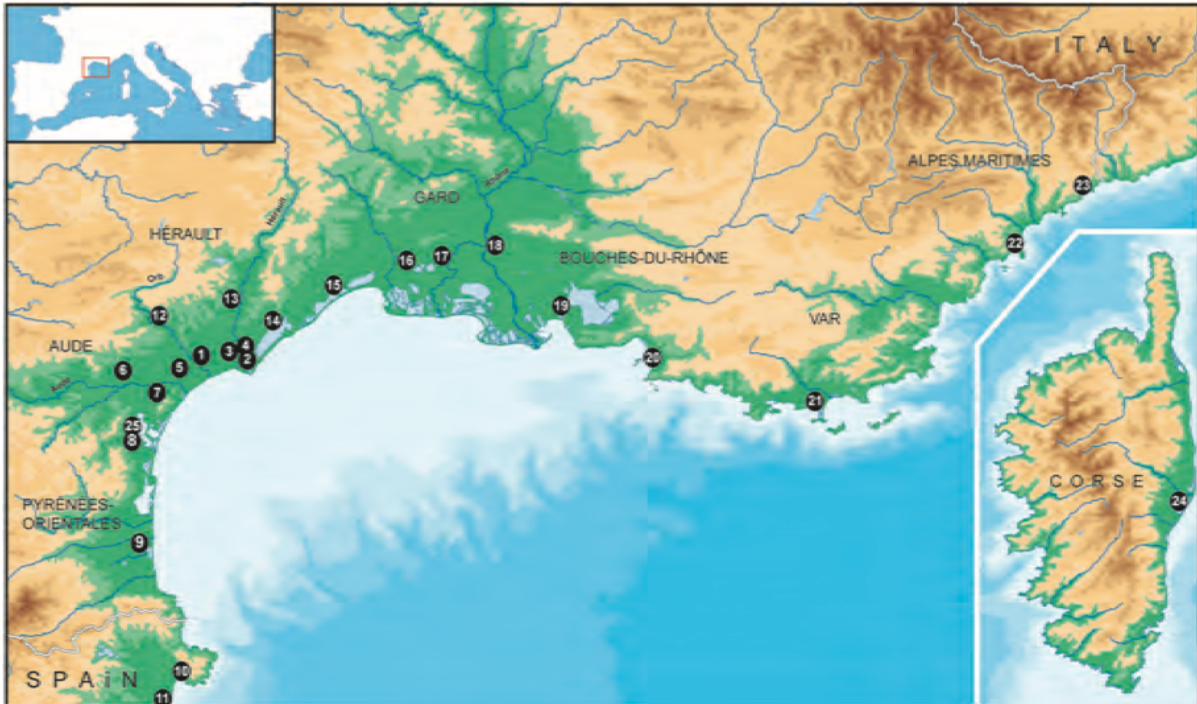


Figure 1. Map of mentioned sites. (Map D. Ugolini).

1: Béziers/*Rhône*; 2: Agde/*Agâthe*; 3: Bessan/*La Monédière*; 4: Florensac/*Mont-Joui*; 5: Nissan-lez-Enserune/*Enserune*; 6: Mailhac/*Le Cayla*; 7: Narbonne/*Montlaurès*; 8: Sigean/*Pech Maho*; 9: Perpignan/*Ruscino*; 10: Roses/*Rhône*; 11: Empuries/*Empòrion*; 12: Murviel-lès-Béziers/*Mus*; 13: Pézenas/*Saint-Julien and Saint-Siméon*; 14: Mèze/*Les Pénitents and La Conque*; 15: Lattes/*Lattara and La Cougourlude*; 16: Le Caillar; 17: Saint-Gilles/*L'Argentière d'Espeyran (Rhodanousia?)*; 18: Arles/*Theline/Arelate (Rhodanousia?)*; 19: Saint-Mitre-Les-Remparts/*Saint-Blaise*; 20: Marseille/*Massalia*; 21: Hyères/*Olbìa*; 22: Antibes/*Antipolis*; 23: Nice/*Nikaia*; 24: Aléria/*Alalia*; 25: Peyriac-de-mer/*Le Moulin*.

Béziers, a still practically unknown site, was in the ‘Ibero-Languedocian’ area and did not enter the scenario on colonisation. Close to Ensérune (Nissan-lez-Enserune), considered to be the main indigenous site of the western zone, Béziers was of lower value.⁸

Agde was therefore a little border town collecting what the Hérault valley could produce or convey for Marseille’s profit. The trading role of its port was recognised as its cultural influence in this valley, but none toward the west, where it was admitted – from south of the Pyrenees to the Hérault river – lay the hegemony of the small and remote Greek colony *Empòrion*, justifying the rising of the ‘Ibero-Languedocian civilisation’ through the introduction of peninsular stimuli.⁹

Even without other information and leaving aside the chronological mix due to attributing the facts reported by the sources to very old times whereas they are much more recent, the weakness of the scheme is apparent, but for a long time, having nothing else to put into perspective, it represented the historical discourse.

⁸ Béziers: Clavel 1970. Ensérune: Jannoray 1955.

⁹ Nickels 1976, 1983; July 1983; Py 1993/2012; Garcia 1993a-b, 1995b, 2000, 2004/2014; Gailledrat 1997; *Ibères...*

Archaeological researches in the western area over the past fifty years have been fruitful and allow now a different approach, more detailed than before, of events having shaped this country at the time of Greek presence.

Four more or less recent achievements are fundamental. The first and decisive contribution, changing the previous order of things, is the identification of the Greek settlement of Béziers (Beziers I).¹⁰ The second concerns the progress of research concerning Agde/*Agàthe*: its chronology, highlights and times without evidence, cultural links, productive activity and a new assessment of its rural economy.¹¹ The third is a more in-depth approach to native sites of the Béziers I area, where two are of importance economically on its eastern side: Mount-Joui, where a new methodical exploration has boosted our knowledge, and La Monédière, facing Mont-Joui, long known, but with new excavations.¹² The fourth is the research on bronze objects from the first Iron Age found in this area and, particularly, in their relation to Sicily and Greece, enlightening the pre-colonial and colonial phases.¹³

The important improvement in our knowledge-database invites us to review it in depth, insofar as textual and archaeological documentation arouses new questions and perspectives on the Greeks and their spread, on the role of Marseille, on the role of Ionians and Dorians, on the evolution of the indigenous world and, as a whole, on the History of the ‘Midi’ before the turn of the era.

Textual sources

The Greek colonisation of the northwestern Mediterranean is more recent than in southern Italy and Sicily. The coasts of northwestern Africa, southern Spain, western Sicily and Sardinia were punctuated by the settlements of the Phoenicians, who managed the main metal mines, the access to those far-off, good lands too and who dominated the southwestern sea routes. Greeks trying to settle in the second half of the 7th century BC headed towards the Black Sea, Cyrenaica, and the northwestern Mediterranean coast. The last one was free to the north of Phoenician (in Iberia) and Etruscan (in Italy) domains. The search for metal was surely a strong motivation,¹⁴ and perhaps even the main one, because tin is rare throughout the Greek world and necessary for bronze alloying. Explorations before colonisation laid the groundwork.

¹⁰ Ugolini *et al.* 1991; Ugolini and Olive 2006b, 2013 (eds); Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012.

¹¹ Nickels and Marchand 1976; Nickels 1981, 1982, 1985, 1995; Garcia and Marchand 1995; Ugolini 2000, 2001a-b-c, 2002a-b, 2008a-b-c, 2012a, 2017; Bermond and Gomez 2001; Bénézet 2002; Ropiot 2003; *Archéologie en Pays d'Agde*; Ugolini and Olive 2004, 2009, 2012b; Gomez, Pardies and Cros 2006; Bérard-Azzouz and Ugolini 2008; Gomez 2000a, 2002, 2010, 2013; Ugolini, Arcelin and Bats 2010; Pardies, Ugolini and Dana 2016; Ugolini and Pardies 2018. The odd return of Dedet and Schwaller 2018: 15–19 to A. Nickels's point of view is not justified by any argument.

¹² Mont-Joui: Nickels 1987; Gomez 2000a, 2010. La Monédière: Nickels 1989b; Olive 2001; Gomez 2010; Beylier 2014. Other sites: Lugand and Bermond 2001 (eds); Dellong 2003; Ournac, Passelac and Rancoule 2009; Ugolini and Olive 2013 (eds). About the relationship between Greeks and natives, and how our perception has changed through the progress of research's: Nickels 1976, 1983, 1989a; Gomez 2010; Ugolini 2001b-c, 2010a, 2012a; Ugolini and Olive 2012b.

¹³ Verger 2000, 2003, 2006, 2016, in *Odyssée gauloise*: 30–34, 196–203; Guilaine *et al.* 2017.

¹⁴ As envisaged for a very long time: e.g. Jullian 1909; Morel 2002; Mele 2002.

In this context, some sources report the navigational priority of the Rhodians toward the far west and their founding, there, of the colony of *Rhòde*. These texts are laconic and belated. It is difficult to draw concrete and sure information. Faced with this obstacle, the exegesis relegated the Rhodians to the field of legend, or in a retrospective construction, either local (from the supposed native names of the main river and cities: Rhone, Rhode, *Rhodanousia*),¹⁵ or from the Hellenistic time (when Rhodians dominated the Aegean Sea).¹⁶

Today, new elements give body to what is not a mere legend. Earlier it was problematic to defend it, in the absence of more explicit texts and also lacking an archaeological support, vainly sought in Iberian *Rhòde*.¹⁷

To return to the sources to set them above archaeology is a well-known danger, confronted as we are with the circular reading of historians and the conclusions they drew. But, while taking into account the warnings¹⁸ and without dismissing the texts, avoiding over-interpreting them, our focusing on the archaeology is unavoidable. So, the following article presents the current state of research which we have been working on for a long time, especially from the point of view of material culture,¹⁹ and about which we are gradually trying to clarify the framework.

• c. 100 BC, Pseudo-Skymnos 201–209:

Ἐπειτα παραθαλάττιοι κάτω Λίγυες ἔχονται καὶ πόλεις Ἑλληνίδες, ἃς Μασσαλιῶται Φωκαεῖς ἀπόκισαν· πρώτη μὲν Ἐμπόριον, Ῥόδη δὲ δευτέρα· ταύτην δὲ πρὶν ναῶν κρατοῦντες ἔκτισαν Ῥόδιοι. Μεθ' οὗς ἐλθόντες εἰς Ἰβηρίαν οἱ Μασσαλίαν κτίσαντες ἔσχον Φωκαεῖς Ἀγάθην Ῥοδανουσίαν τε, Ῥοδανὸς ἦν μέγας ποταμὸς παρρεῖ, Μασσαλία δ' ἐστ' ἐχομένη, πόλις μεγίστη, Φωκαέων ἀποικία. Ἐν τῇ Λιγυστικῇ δὲ ταύτην ἔκτισαν πρὸ τῆς μάχης τῆς ἐν Σαλαμίῃ γενομένης ἔτεσιν πρότερον, ὥς φασιν, ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι. Τίμαιος οὕτως ἱστορεῖ δὲ τὴν κτίσιν. Εἶπεν μετὰ ταύτην Ταυροεῖς καὶ πλησίον πόλις Ὀλβία κἀντίπολις αὐτῶν ἐσχάτη.

‘Afterwards, along the coast, meet Ligurians and Greek cities which Massalian Phocaeans colonised; the first Empòrion, the second Rhòde; this one was formerly founded by Rhodians masters of the sea. After them, the Phocaeans who founded Marseille, went to Iberia and took possession of Agathe and Rhodanousia, with the great Rhone river running alongside. After this one, Marseille, a very large city, a colony of Phocaeans. They founded it in Liguria, it is said a hundred and twenty years before the Salamis Battle. So Timaeus relates the foundation. After this one, follow Tauroeis and the neighbouring Olbia and Antipolis, the last one.’ (transl. D. Ugolini).

This passage distinguishes between *Empòrion*, a colony of Massalian Phocaeans, and *Rhòde*, a former Rhodian foundation. It is not clear if Pseudo-Skymnos considers that the latter was ‘re-colonised’ by Massalian Phocaeans, while the geographical context is muddled because the two sides of the Pyrenees are not distinctly separated. So, while indicating

¹⁵ Villard 1960: 73; Pena 2006: 48.

¹⁶ Sources about *Rhòde* and Rhodians were studied by defenders and detractors of their western involvement. Most recently see Pena 2006, preferring the hypothesis of a late fake tradition (with references).

¹⁷ Maluquer de Motes 1974 believed in the former presence of Rhodians (and in their foundation of Iberian *Rhòde*, still nearly unknown from the archaeological point of view), confirmed – in his opinion – through the Rhodian vases of Marseille and Saint-Blaise, whose origin is no longer so sure: Bouloumié 1992: 175–180.

¹⁸ Morel 1990.

¹⁹ The diversity in domestic vessels between Marseille and Béziers I has long been emphasised (Ugolini *et al.* 1991) and is more and more evident (Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012; Ugolini 2016). But, as Morel 1995 pointed out, it is still delicate to establish if Greek cities of the same origin would not have evolved differently according to other factors.

that Marseille founded colonies along the Ligurian coast, that is to say normally north of the Pyrenees, the Geographer quotes *Empòrion* and *Rhòde*, which are not on the Ligurian coast. Does he really refer to Iberian *Rhòde*? Does he not condense information on two different cities with the same name, the one still well located in his time and the other along the Ligurian coast, quoted by his sources but of which he was ignorant of its location? He could have believed that the two cities were the same one he knew, close to *Empòrion*, and group the information into this single one.

If this is not the case, then the question arises of its potential re-foundation. In the Greek world, re-foundations are not unusual and cover very varied realities, having in common a break after a destruction and/or a more or less long abandonment before the moving in of new inhabitants and, usually, a change of toponym.²⁰ This is not what is observed, the fourth-century Iberian settlement being not superimposed on any other and the city having no other known name.

Next, Pseudo-Skymnos goes on with *Agàthe* and *Rhodanousìa* on a Ligurian coast seemingly located in an enlarged Iberia delimited by the Rhone. We know where *Agàthe* was, but not where *Rhodanousìa* was and Pseudo-Skymnos locates it just alongside the Rhone. Here it is no more a matter of colonies or foundations but of cities ‘held’ or ‘annexed’ by Massalians, and the passage clearly indicates that this happened after the leaving of the Rhodians.²¹ There is therefore a contradiction with the preceding sentence, probably due to information that Pseudo-Skymnos draws out of his sources, without managing to understand them completely.

- At the beginning of the 1st century AD, Strabo 3.4.8; 4.1.5; 14.2.10:

3.4.8: Ἐνταῦθα δ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ Ῥόδος, πολίχνην Ἐμποριτῶν, τινὲς δὲ κτίσμα Ῥόδιων φασί...

‘Rhòdos is also there, a small town of Emporitans, but it is said to be a foundation of Rhodians ...’ (transl. D. Ugolini)

4.1.5: ὕστερον μὲντοι ταῖς ἀνδραγαθίαις ἴσχυσαν προσλαβεῖν τινα τῶν πέριξ πεδίων ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς δυνάμεως ἀφ' ἧς καὶ τὰς πόλεις ἔκτισαν, ἐπιτειχίσματα τὰς μὲν κατὰ τὴν Ἰβηρίαν τοῖς Ἰβηροῖν, οἷς καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ τῆς Ἐφεσσίας Ἀρτέμιδος παρέδοσαν τὰ πάτρια ὥστε ἑλληνιστὶ θύειν, τὴν δὲ Ῥόην ... Ἀγάθην τοῖς περὶ τὸν ποταμὸν οἰκοῦσι τὸν Ῥόδανὸν βαρβάρους, τὸ δὲ Ταυροέντιον καὶ τὴν Ὀλβίαν καὶ Ἀντίπολιν καὶ Νίκαιαν τῶ τῶν Σαλίων ἔθνεϊ καὶ τοῖς Λίγυσι τοῖς τὰς Ἄλπεις οἰκοῦσιν·

‘Despite this, by their value they [Massalians] were later powerful enough to take some plains of their surroundings through this force that also allowed them to found cities, which were bastions, the ones in Iberia against Iberians, to whom they transmitted their ancestral worship of Ephesian Artemis and the practice of sacrifice offerings according to the Greek rite, Rhòde and Agàthe against Barbarians living alongside (or ‘in the area of’) the Rhone, Tauroention, Olbia, Antipolis and Nikaia against the ethnos of Salyans and the Ligurians inhabiting the Alps.’ (transl. D. Ugolini)

14.2.10: Ἱστοροῦσι δὲ καὶ ταῦτα περὶ Ῥόδιων, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἀφ' οὗ χρόνου συνώκησαν τὴν νῦν πόλιν εὐτύχουν κατὰ θάλατταν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ τῆς Ὀλυμκῆς θέσεως συχνοῖς ἔτεσιν ἔπλεον πόρρω τῆς οἰκείας ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ἀφ' οὗ καὶ μέχρι Ἰβηρίας ἔπλευσαν, κάκει μὲν τὴν Ῥόδον ἔκτισαν, ἣν ὕστερον Μασσαλιῶται κατέσχον

‘About Rhodians it is said that not only they thrived on sea after their common foundation of the current city but that, long before the institution of the Olympic Games, they sailed away from their homeland for the sal-

²⁰ Tréziny 2005 gives many examples.

²¹ Nickels *et al.* 1981: 99–103, understand also in these terms this passage about Agde.

vation of men; afterwards they sailed as far as Iberia and there they founded *Rhòde*, later occupied by Massalians.’ (transl. D. Ugolini).

Strabo quotes the Rhodians in Iberia before the Olympic Games and the tradition of their founding of *Rhòde* (or *Rhòdos*),²² later passed either to Emporitans (3.4.8) or to Massalians (14.2.10). Even if Emporitans were of the same strain as Massalians, to write that *Rhòde* was theirs (or that they held it) is not the same thing as to consider that the Massalians held it. Clearly, Strabo echoes two different versions.

The Geographer describes an unclear situation about the Massalian defensive system (4.1.5). Marseille founded cities as bastions (or strongholds). Those in Iberia against Iberians are not named, while *Rhòe* and *Agàthe* are associated as against Barbarians living alongside (or in the area of) the Rhone. Some editors corrected *Rhòe* into *Rhodanousia*, equating it with a city close to the Rhone,²³ which was used for the proposal of the identification of *Rhodanousia* with L’Argentièrre d’Espèyran (Saint-Gilles-du-Gard).²⁴ But it remains unclear how Agde, distant more than 140km from the Rhone (and 90km by sea) and more than 180km from Iberian *Rhòde* (and 130km by sea), could have fulfilled this function, even by the shorter sea route (e.g., in the case of a protection concerning only the trade by sea). Entrusting the defence of the immense space west of the Rhone to these two sites, so far from each other (whether joining Agde with Iberian *Rhòde* or *Rhodanousia* close to Rhone, or neither of the two) seems largely inadequate and does not have an obvious strategic direction, especially with regard to the eastern system, where several settlements are quoted. Moreover, the description follows a geographical order from southwest to east and *Rhòe* is quoted before Agde. Strabo clearly refers to a city west of Agde (or only to this one if *Rhòe* and *Agàthe* form together its name) and therefore not close to the Rhone.

So, the best correction for *Rhòe* seems to be *Rhòde*, which has the advantage of being minor, easy and likely. And this *Rhòde* was to the west of *Agàthe* and seemingly nearby.

- At the end of the 1st century BC, Livy (34.8.4 and 34.9.4) relates the Roman intervention following the Iberian rebellion and evokes *Rhoda*, where natives had taken refuge, seemingly heavily punished by Cato (195 BC).

There is nothing to say about these slightly obscure passages except that great severity of Roman actions is surprising if *Rhòde* was Massalian. It had chosen the cause of rebel natives, that was unacceptable for Rome, but the repressive measure was terrible: the city was not only destroyed but also abandoned. So there was no clemency, even for Greeks, and the site was simply wiped off the map.

This detail did not elicit much comment,²⁵ but the alliance with Marseille should have dictated a more moderate sentence. Is this an indication that these Greeks were not from Marseille? Was Marseille indifferent to the fate of these Rhodians? Did Cato punish them because he did not have to respect the alliance between Rome and Marseille?²⁶

²² Lasserre 1966: 67, 197, supposes a Rhodian source (Timosthenes of Rhodes?) for this passage.

²³ E.g., Lasserre 1966: 128, accepts this correction. According to Thollard 2009: 231–233, *Rhòe* is a qualifier of Agde, whose name would have been *Rhòe Agathè*, translated as ‘Agde at the (beautiful) river’. Bats 2012 seems to join this hypothesis by retaining that *Rhòe* and ‘Agathè’ form together the name of Agde, but anyway he adds *Rhodanousia* because it is quoted after Agde by Pseudo-Skymnos.

²⁴ Barruol and Py 1978. According to Pena 2006: 47–48 and Puig and Martin 2006: 612, *Rhòe* is the Iberian *Rhòde*.

²⁵ The anti-Roman behaviour being unlikely for a Massalian colony, Pena 2006: 51, supposes that *Rhòde* was no longer a Greek city.

²⁶ About the political weight of the Roman *fides*: Freyburger 2009.

- In the first half of the 1st century AD, in Pomponius Mela 2.6.89, *Rhoda* is simply located at the feet of Pyrenees.
- In the third quarter of the 1st century AD, Pliny HN, 3.32–33:

... *Narbo Martius, Decumanorum colonia, XII M pas. a mari distans. Flumina : Arauris, Liria. Oppida de cetero rara, praeiacentibus stagnis : Agatha quondam Massiliensium, et regio Volcarum Tectosagum : atque ubi Rhoda Rhodiorum fuit : unde dictus multo Galliarum fertilissimum Rhodanus amnis, ...*

‘...Narbo Martius, colony of the 10th legion, distant 12000 steps from the sea. Rivers: Arauris, Liria. Oppida rare for the rest, on banks of lagoons: Agatha formerly of Massalians, and the area of Volcae Tectosagii: where also was formerly *Rhoda* of Rhodians: who gave their name to Rhone the richest river of Gaul...’ (transl. D. Ugolini).

Rhoda was a Rhodian foundation and, apparently, an old one since it is linked to the Rhone’s name. It can not be either Iberian *Rhône* or *Rhodanousia* alongside the Rhone. Pliny was familiar with the ‘Narbonnaise’, where he held the office of *procurator*, and it is inconceivable he was wrong in locating *Rhoda* in the Tectosage country rather than in the Arecomic one, as it was suggested.²⁷ Moreover, he quotes an old and missing city: L’Argentièrre d’Espeyran was still there in his time and Arles too, as seemingly Le Cailar,²⁸ and they are all too recent for having given the name to the Rhone.

It remains clear that Pliny locates *Rhoda* close to Agde and, therefore, neither alongside the Rhone nor beyond the Pyrenees, but in between – as stated Strabo with *Rhône*.

- In the 2nd century AD, Ptolemy 2.6.19 locates *Rhodìpolis* after *Empòrion* and this is undoubtedly the Iberian *Rhône*.
- At the end of the 4th century AD, Saint Jerome (Commentary on the Epistle to Galatians 2) and, at the beginning of the 7th century, Isidorus of Seville (Origins, 13.21.29) echoed the Rhodian foundation of *Rhoda* giving its name to the Rhone.
- In the 6th century AD, Stephanus Byzantinus (Ethnics) knows two cities with similar names: *Rhône* in Iberia and the ‘Indiket’ *Rhodòe*.

Indiketes being the natives surrounding *Empòrion* and *Rhône*, *Rhône* and *Rhodòe* could be the same place at two different historical times, but one of the two was possibly not to the South of the Pyrenees, but in an Iberia expanded to the north whose boundary would be the

²⁷ The location is a mistake according to Barruol and Py 1978: 97, note 8, because they think the *Rhoda* of Pliny is *Rhodanousia*, which they identify with L’Argentièrre d’Espeyran. This identification is rejected by Thollard 2009: 232–233. Pena 2006: 42, is astonished that Pliny does not know where *Rhoda* (the Iberian *Rhône* in his opinion) lay. About the Tectosages, on the main settlement (Toulouse) and the probable confederation and area, see: Milcent 2015. About the little tribes, perhaps integrated into the Tectosage domain: Ugolini and Olive 2003b.

²⁸ The identification of *Rhodanousia* with Arles is accepted by a large number of scholars, especially before Barruol and Py 1978. According to Arcelin 1995 and P. Arcelin in Rothé and Heijmans 2008 (eds): 110–111, *Rhodanousia* is Arles’s toponym during the first Greek phase (540/530–500 BC); *Thélinè* replaced it at the time of the ‘re-foundation’ (*apoikia*, beginning of the 5th century BC); *Arelate* is the name of the Gallic city from the 4th century BC on. According to Pena 2006: 48, *Rhodanousia* did not exist and is part of the fake Rhodian tradition. Roure 2010 wonders if *Rhodanousia* could not be below Le Cailar; about phases of this site: Py and Roure 2002.

Rhone, as in Pseudo-Skymnos' work (see above).²⁹ However, we have to keep in mind that the Indiket *Rhodòe* could also be a city of India and therefore would have nothing to do in our context.³⁰ This author also knows *Rhodanousìa* as a 'city of Marseille', without locating it.

So, the presence of Rhodians is conveyed by a small number of belated sources, with a confusion of places, due to the different point in time they merged together, so it is not surprising that these authors did not always know which *Rhòde* was quoted in their own sources. The modern attempts at identification of these places from the primary sources produced no working results. Eratosthenes (3rd century BC) is regularly deployed, but his work was not the only one. Attempts to date the various historical scenarios in our sources have not been really fruitful because the general tendency is to apply to a remote time what is often much more recent. Only archaeology gives us a chance to obtain new evidence, allowing the debate to progress.

Fundamentally, the Rhodians and their settlement on the spot did not have success among scholars precisely because it lacked an archaeological attachment, vainly sought in the only known site perpetuating their memory. Today we know that Rhodians reached the French coast not necessarily before the first Olympic Games³¹ but at least before Marseille's foundation and that, at this moment, they touched the western area. There is where the first *Rhòde* is located, that of Pliny and – most likely – one of the two quoted by Strabo and Pseudo-Skymnos. The oldest city can not be the Iberian one, which is too late to have been founded by eastern Rhodians or from Sicily. But nothing prevents it resulting from an initiative of local Dorians, long settled in this far west. Furthermore, *Rhodanousìa* is clearly located close to/alongside the Rhone. The sites possibly identified with it (L'Argentière d'Espeyran, Arles, Le Cailar) seem too late for having given their name to the Rhone. This belated chronology would however not preclude that it was another Dorian settlement, wherever the city was located.

In the end, there remains the possibility of turning to Béziers I. Its solid archeological record show it was an old Greek foundation easily corresponding to the first *Rhòde*.³²

It is ultimately what emerges from the sources establishing a Rhodian presence 'before' and a Phocaeen-Massalian one 'after' in the area between the Rhone and south of the Pyrenees. That is to say in a location where all textual and toponymic proofs linked to Rhodians are concentrated, where the main city was Beziers I during over three centuries (c. 625–300 BC), where

²⁹ About the northern limit of Iberia reaching as far as the Rhone: Cruz Andreotti 2002; Cruz Andreotti, Roux and Moret 2006 (eds). According to Ebel 1976, ch. V, the romanisation of Transalpine Gaul began before its creation, started from Spain after the end of Second Punic War and concerned primarily the area between the Pyrenees and the Rhone. This to say that our sources knew precisely this situation.

³⁰ Bouiron 2014: 786.

³¹ Morel 1993–1994: 335–339, highlights Mediterranean imports since the Bronze Age. Guilaine and Verger 2008, emphasise the Orientalizing aspect of pieces earlier than the 7th century. Verger *et al.* 2007: 162–163, take into account the possibility of contacts at this stage according to Bronze Age Hallstattian artefacts found in Sicily. A fragment of a turned (?) vase from the 8th century (Ugolini and Olive 2013 (eds), Cazouls-lès-Béziers, La Roumanine) has perhaps to be added to this list.

³² Bouiron 2014 (346–349, 971, Tabl. XXXVIII) supposes that *Baitarra* in Stephanus Byzantinus's *Ethnics* could derive from a *Batetàra* or *Baisiàra* that Theopompus (4th century BC) (directly or indirectly one of the Byzantinus' sources), could have quoted in his *Philippics*, possibly from Pytheas of Marseille. If this were true, the current toponym would go back to the Greek phase, precluding the possibility that Béziers I bore the name of *Rhòde*. But M. Bouiron's hypothesis, exclusively built on other hypotheses, is really too conjectural. It is easier to think that the current name is of Gallic origin, insofar as Béziers I is the *Betarra* of Gallic coins, set-up as early as c. 200 BC and separated from the Greek city by an abandonment of about a century. Texts with a city's name close to the current one (*Besara*, *Baiterra*, *Betarra*, *Baeterrae*, *Biterris* etc.): Ugolini 2012b.

Iberian *Rhòde* – in a way – possibly prolonged it (c. 350–195 BC) and where was also *Rhodanousia*. With all caution required, it is not unlikely that Beziers I was the first *Rhòde* and the sources, despite their shortcomings, provide a coherent framework with what archaeology is now providing us with.

Pliny adduces the main groundwork: 1) Rhodians reached southern France; 2) before other Greeks since the name of the main river derives from them; 3) they founded *Rhòde* not far from Agde, where the Tectosages were in Roman times; 4) the city no longer existed in his time. Other authors complete the picture: 5) Pseudo-Skymnos evoking two historical scenarios with, first, Rhodians founding *Rhòde* in a context not allowing us to really decide on its location, then Massalians annexing or refounding it; 6) Strabo relays the former Rhodian presence and calls *Rhòe* – seemingly *Rhòde* – a city west of and near Agde; 7) Avienus (*Ora Maritima*, 576–596), quoting *Besara*, in all likelihood the abandoned *Rhòde* located – ‘according to an ancient tradition’ – where Beziers is with its cities, the first of which was ‘of an ancient beauty (or prosperity)’.³³

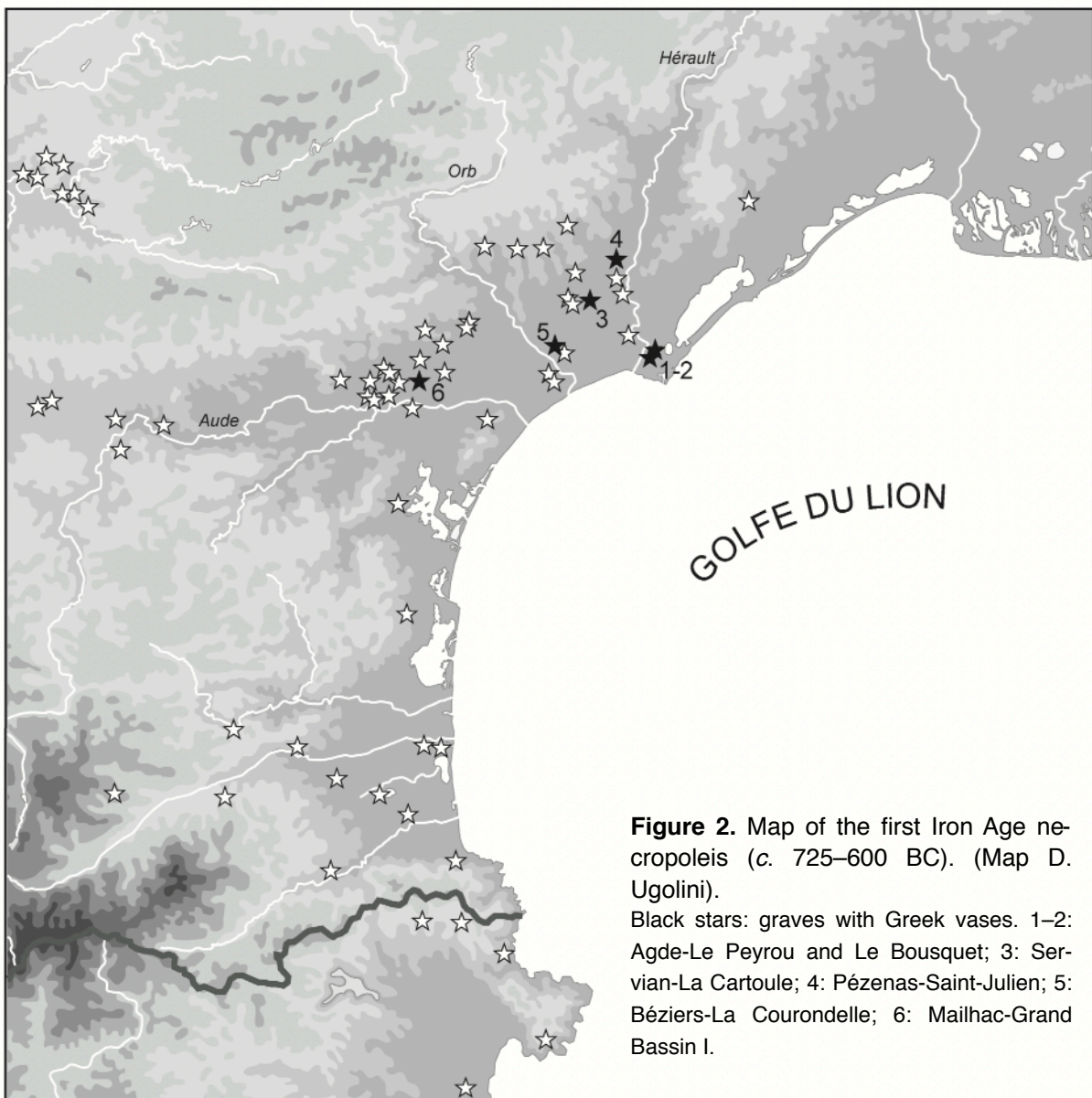


Figure 2. Map of the first Iron Age necropoleis (c. 725–600 BC). (Map D. Ugolini).

Black stars: graves with Greek vases. 1–2: Agde-Le Peyrou and Le Bousquet; 3: Servian-La Cartoule; 4: Pézenas-Saint-Julien; 5: Béziers-La Courondelle; 6: Mailhac-Grand Bassin I.

³³ Avienus calls it *Besara* but it is not a problem because this is, lightly modified, the name of Gallic *Betarra* built on the ruins of Béziers I, still very evident on arrival of the new inhabitants.

In extending the reasoning, Avienus's passage about Arles (*Ora Maritima*, 687–691) calls our attention: its name was *Theline* 'when the Greek inhabited it'.

He is the only author passing this toponym on, now hellenised into '*Thélinè*' and usually translated as 'the nourishing' but which, it seems, has not been the object of thorough etymological research. There is no need to do this here but it is useful to highlight that this name is curiously close to that of the Telchines, mythical and sometimes malicious spirits of metallurgy (three of which bore the names of gold, silver and bronze). Sons of the sea, they brought up Poseidon, forged his trident (Callim. Hymns 4.30–31) and were considered as the first inhabitants of the Rhodes island (Diod. Sic. 5.35) – also known as 'Telchinie' from their name (Strabo 14.453; 10.472). They were regarded as the first artists to make statues of gods and a Telchinian Apollo at Lindos, Telchinian Hera and Nymphs at Ialysos, and a Telchinian Hera or Athena at Camiros (Diod. Sic. 5.55) are known.

We can also take into account the Telinians (inhabiting Telos island, near Rhodes), involved with Cretans and Lindians in Gela's foundation, since Gelo, tyrant of Gela and Syracuse, declared his origin from there by Telines, his ancestor (Hdt. 7.153).

Does the name *Theline* also lead back – in one way or another – to Dorians?

The canvas sketched above through written sources is now concretely illustrated by a considerable structure of archaeological and historical convergences.

Archaeological and historical evidence

650–600 BC: first contacts, first exchanges

The oldest Greek vases found in southern France date from the third quarter of the 7th century and have been discovered not around Marseille, as would be expected, but in native necropoleis between the Hérault and Aude rivers. Some others are a little later³⁴ (Figure 2).

Many buried deposits of bronze objects (called 'Launacian' since it was at Launac where was found the first) are dated between 650 and 550 BC³⁵ (Figure 3). They seem to mark out routes from Spain, north-west and north-east and reaching the coast in the area of the necropoleis.

A barter activity is therefore sure where, in the course of events, Béziers *I/Rhône* was founded: bronze in exchange for Greek vases and doubtless other things, among which probably copper³⁶ and even iron, as pointed out in a Homeric passage and as a Greek iron knife in a

³⁴ To vases known until 1990 (see note 4), have to be added those found in the necropoleis of Agde-Le Bousquet (Mazière and Gomez 2001; F. Mazière in *Odyssée gauloise*: 50–51) and Béziers-La Courondelle (Buffat, Evrard and Ropiot 2007; V. Ropiot in *Odyssée gauloise*: 51–52). A little later, the vase from the necropolis of Servian-La Cartoule (Espérou, Nickels and Roques 1980). Some graves of the Pézenas-Saint-Julien necropolis are now dated c. 625–600 BC: B. Dedet and G. Marchand in *Odyssée gauloise*: 63. This date goes back to the earlier chosen: c. 600 according to Giry 1965 and Llinas and Robert 1971; c. 610–590 according to Nickels 1990. One of these graves (T. 189) shows a Greek stamnos and an Etruscan kantharos. Such an assemblage is not necessarily very earlier than 600. Anyway it would be essential to know whether the Greek vase is a colonial product or not. In Dedet *et al.* 2012, fig. 6, the grave bears the number '11'.

³⁵ *Odyssée gauloise*: 100–107; Guilaine *et al.* 2017.

³⁶ Analyses of plano-convex ingots of Launacian deposits open up the probability of Aegean copper imports (B. Mille and G. Artioli in Guilaine *et al.* 2017: 156–158) boosting the idea of early traffic between this area and the eastern Greek world.

grave of Agde-Le Peyrou could highlight.³⁷ And Greeks were not the only ones to come to this country: Phoenicians did this too, at least from the time of Ibiza's foundation.³⁸

Nothing like this is observed around Marseille: no necropoleis with Greek vases and very rare and small bronze deposits. In other words, Marseille's foundation does not fit into a clear dynamic as in the case of Béziers I. The obvious features are its port location, not directly



Figure 3. Map of Launacian and peripheral deposits. Their number varies according to publications and some are poorly documented. This image tries a synthesis (after *Odysée gauloise*: fig. p. 106 and p. 173; Guilaine *et al.* 2017: 111–122 and fig. 3; Ugolini and Olive 2013 (eds): 479 (Artenac/Grotte du Pontil)). (Map D. Ugolini).

1: Launac; 2: Montbazin; 3: around Montpellier; 4: La Boissière; 5: Patu-de-Vacquières (Vacquières); 6: La Cadière-et- Cambou; 7: Loupian; 8: Rochelongue (Agde); 9: Montloubat (Cers); 10: Vias; 11: Butarès (Péret); 12: Roque-Courbe (Saint- Saturnin); 13: Croix de Mus (Murviel-lès-Béziers); 14: Bellevue (Quarante); 15: Vielmur/Briatexte; 16: Rieux Minervois; 17: Carcassonne; 18: Les Justices (Leuc); 19: Auriac (Carcassonne); 20: Notre-Dame-de-Marceille (Limoux); 21: Castellas (Espérasa); 22: Grotte de la Chapelle (Axat); 23: Clapassès (Sougraigne); 24: Teixouns (Pollestres); 25: Sainte-Raphine (Durban-Corbières); 26: Roc-Coumbach (Durban-Corbières); 27: Villeneuve (Rouffiac-des-Corbières); 28: Artenac or Grotte du Pontil (Saint-Pons-de-Thomières); 29: Grotte de l'Herm (L'Herm); 30: Le Peyré (Sabarat); 31: Les Arz (Uchentein); 32: Montagne des Cordes (Fontvieille); 33: Berre-L'Étang; 34: Around Limoux; 35: Albi.

³⁷ Odyssey, 1.180–186: a Greek navigates 'toward men of another language' (located in *Thempse: Temesa* in Italy? elsewhere?) with a cargo of iron to exchange for bronze. Iron knife from Agde-Le Peyrou, T. 202: Nickels 1989a: 280, 337. Verger 2010: 306, fig. 9, identifies a Greek piece (similar to those found in Sicily, notably in Gela's Bitalemi sanctuary) that he links to hospitality practices.

³⁸ Guilaine and Rancoule 1996; Ugolini 2005, 2015.

connected with the Rhone, which was still the great way towards the hinterland, and – in the chronological framework – its oldest imported vases, dated *c.* 600–575 BC, added to those – a little older or more or less coeval – of Saint-Blaise (Saint-Mitre-les-Remparts).³⁹

The chronological and geographical gaps between the western coast, the first affected by Greek imports, and the eastern one, where Marseille (the oldest Greek colony in historiography) is located, are therefore troublesome. This embarrassment explains the attempts to minimise them as much as possible, either through Saint-Blaise and other intermediate sites by an Etruscan mediation, possibly pre-Phocaeian and long-considered,⁴⁰ or an Etrusco-Phocaeian network operating from the last years of the 7th century onwards.⁴¹

Some Launacian and Hallstattian bronze objects, typical of the first Iron Age western deposits and necropoleis, arrived especially in Sicily and Greece, where they were discovered in sanctuaries and graves. Maps of possible comparisons show two main origins: west of the Rhone (between Montpellier and Narbonne and along the Aude-Garonne valley) and north of the Alps (Switzerland, southwestern Germany, central-eastern France). Coeval bronze objects from the Adriatic coast, the Balkans and Anatolia were also found in the same Greek contexts. These origins are explained through contacts with natives when Greeks were exploring new lands to the north of the known world, where only Heracles had gone before.⁴²

The Greeks found bronze resources and a collection of metal products was introduced. Following the first navigations, the foundation of colonies in those remote countries gave – according to Stéphane Verger – new borders to the Greek world and delimited its centre between Selinous (till then the most western point) and the Corinthian Isthmus. There, recurrent votive practices are encountered including northwestern and northeastern objects of a recently enlarged Mediterranean Greek area.

These offerings, often female, conveyed perhaps the Hyperborean myth and the protection of exceptional women of the far north in southern countries and in the sanctuaries of female deities. They could have been sent by indigenous Iron Age women having a central position in their communities at the end of the Hallstatt D1 phase.

It is very interesting that the cities affected by these votive gifts were Dorian/Peloponnesian (Corinth, Corcyra, Megara Hyblaia, Selinous, Gela) and the main metropolises (Corinth, Megara, Rhodes island) had more or less direct links with the origin's areas of these bronze artefacts.

Ionians enjoy the support of Herodotus (4.152: the journey toward Iberia of the Samian Colaios; 1.163: Phocaeans at Tartessos) for their western adventures and have been put at the

³⁹ Two bronze deposits of Provence: Lachenal 2012; B. Vigié in *Odyssée gauloise*: 173–174; Guilaine *et al.* 2017, fig. 3 do not take into account the one of Berre-L'Étang. Oldest vases of Marseille: Hermary, Hesnard and Tréziny 1999 (eds); Rothé and Tréziny 2005 (eds). Oldest vases of Saint-Blaise: from the last years of the 7th century according to Bouloumié 1992 and S. Verger in *Odyssée gauloise*: 30; from *c.* 600 according to Sourisseau 1997, II: 337–363. A Protocorinthian cup was found in Antibes (unknown to Mercuri 2015): thanks to J.-C. Sourisseau for this information.

⁴⁰ E.g. Rolland 1949. Etruscans were introduced into the oldest traffic toward southern France through the hypothesis of Etruscan copies for vases of Agde-Le Peyrou (Gras 2000). Even if it were true, it would not untangle the issue of the conveyor.

⁴¹ S. Verger in *Odyssée gauloise*: 30 and J.-C. Sourisseau in *Odyssée gauloise*: 204–207. However, S. Verger in *Odyssée gauloise*: 33–34, 196–203, supposes another origin for the oldest network and indicates Sicily. The analysis of an Archaic cup of Saint-Blaise seems to show a Sicilian import (Guilaine *et al.* 2017: 360). Some of the oldest Greek vases found along the French coast, notably at Saint-Blaise, often qualified as 'Rhodian' (bird, rosettes or banded bowls), a term to use with caution, were exported to Sicily in significant quantities (Cook and Dupont 2001, ch. 6).

⁴² Verger 2006, 2010. About Heracles in Dorian Sicily: Giangiulio 1983.

centre of the question. Oddly, no place has been assigned to Dorians,⁴³ while Marseille and Provence are involved only tardily and very marginally in the phenomenon. It is perhaps surprising, but it is a fact and the western area story perfectly accounts for this.

The protagonists were anyway Greeks, but the bronze offerings highlight the far west. Either gifts from emerging indigenous women or simply metal from faraway,⁴⁴ they show at once where and when occurred the contact between Greeks and natives. They symbolise what the settlers of Béziers I/Rhône found most valuable in their new homeland, the origin and source of wealth, bronze, so hard to get in the Greek world. They also powerfully show the dynamic driving the foundation of Béziers I/Rhône, a Greek city long being of importance,⁴⁵ whose location was not chosen at random. This is a main historical item: minimise it or somehow transfer it to Marseille is meaningless given what we now know of the Greek city of Béziers.

Around 625–600 BC: the foundation of Béziers I/Rhône

Around 625–600, the Béziers hills received the first Greek inhabitants, as especially shown by the imposing fortification recently uncovered on the Saint-Jacques hill.⁴⁶ Others founded Marseille seemingly a little later (c. 600). These two came from different mother cities. About Marseille, sources refer to Phocaea, while about Béziers I only the cultural East Mediterranean origin of the colonists is undoubted through archaeological material.

Very briefly, why is Béziers I a Greek city rather than a native site more developed or more important than others?

The answer is ‘everything’.⁴⁷ In whatever regard, Béziers I distinguishes itself through chronology, urban plan, constructions, houses, size, scale and duration of land exploitation, products, exports, imports, consumption, way of life, religious practices, internal and external

⁴³ It is to be noted that, e.g., Ionian but also Rhodian graffiti from the first half of the 6th century were found in southern Iberia: de Hoz 2010: 283–284, 361–372; Dominguez Monedero 2010: 60–61.

⁴⁴ According to Tarditi 2016, bronze objects of the Bitalemi sanctuary – and especially fragments – are simply ‘metal’ illustrations of the accumulation of such material centralised in Gela and, as bronze can be recycled, offerings to a goddess could symbolise the cycle of life.

⁴⁵ It is therefore impossible to follow Verger 2016, asserting that the Rhodian presence had no consequences nor historical weight.

⁴⁶ The location, frequented at the end of Bronze Age IIIB, maybe inhabited during the Bronze/Iron Age Transition and abandoned at the end of the 8th century, was now free. The founding date of the Greek city has varied depending on the progress of research: c. 500 (Ugolini *et al.* 1991); c. 600–575 (Ugolini and Olive 2006b); c. 600 (Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012 (eds), Macario 2017 (ed)); now c. 625–600 according to the excavations at ‘les Halles’ (in 1986, on Saint-Nazaire hill, unpublished, under study by É. Gomez and D. Ugolini) and chiefly at the Saint-Jacques hill (2017–2018, under the direction of É. Gomez). Thanks to J.-C. Sourisseau and L. de Barbarin who agreed to examine the Greek pottery from the last excavation.

⁴⁷ ‘L’identification d’une fondation antique requiert, en règle générale, un travail préalable à la fois considérable et délicat’: Guilhambet and Ménard 2005: 6. This work has been done, and continues to be, in every possible direction and arguments are presented as they go on.

dynamics and so on.⁴⁸

Its Greek identity is therefore ensured, although some aspects have to be clarified because not yet touched by excavation, but not its status. Béziers I was not merely a trading post/*emporion* similar to those now flourishing everywhere throughout the coast:⁴⁹ it had the characteristics of a colony, but the term's use (in strict meaning) requires the texts's confirmation and, as its name was more or less lost after its abandonment, to recover it in the available sources was easy, but not to prove it. Today, the archaeological record is sufficient to allow the toponymic proposal, which will still not answer all the questions. Indeed, we will always miss a text with the foundation's story-telling and the founder's name, that is to say the elements making a colony indisputable for historians, though often apocryphal. Therefore, this for a long time unnamed Greek city does not appear as such even in recent works and, when the site is on a map, it can be located on the bank of the Aude river,⁵⁰ that does not help.

Béziers I/Rhône and Marseille/Massalia

Béziers I and Marseille are the oldest cities of France and if there is one whose locational logic makes total sense, this is Béziers I. Bronze played a main role, the Greeks having found the possibility of obtaining it either locally, or from Brittany, or from the Massif Central and from Spain, through very old continental networks.⁵¹ Béziers I quickly exploited the situation centralizing the trade and causing the vanishing of Launacian deposits (c. 550 BC).⁵²

The locations of Béziers I and Marseille were chosen for specific, different and probably concerted purposes, and the two cities had links between them.

- Béziers I, a little inland, had the characteristics of a colony as described by textual sources: a high position easy to defend; fertile land for farming; water on site; a waterway on the Orb river; close by lay the Vendres lagoon maybe navigable at that time; near the sea; far enough from marshy and unhealthy areas; a crossroads to remote resources access; a few politically unstructured surrounding natives.

⁴⁸ Pottery production: Ugolini and Olive 1988; Gomez 2000b-c; Ratsimba 2002, 2005, 2006; Olive, Ugolini and Ratsimba 2009; Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012; Ugolini 2016; Macario 2017 (ed). Trade: Ugolini and Olive 1990, 1995, 2003a, 2004, 2006a, 2012a; Olive and Ugolini 2012a; Ugolini *et al.* 1991; Rondi-Costanzo 1997; Rondi-Costanzo and Ugolini 2000; Gomez 2000b-c, 2010; Ugolini 1993b, 2002b, 2006, 2008a, 2013; Bénézet 2005; Ratsimba 2005; de Chazelles and Ugolini 2015 (eds). Urban planning, constructions, 'pastas house': Olive and Ugolini 1997; Ugolini and Olive 2006b, 2012a; de Chazelles 2010; Ugolini 2010b; Macario 2017 (ed). Surface of inhabited area: Ugolini and Olive 2006b, 2012a. Land/*chôra*: Ugolini and Olive 2009, 2013 (eds). Consumption, way of life: Ugolini 1993b; Ugolini *et al.* 1991; Olive and Ugolini 1997; Ugolini and Olive 2012a; Macario 2017 (ed). Weaving: de Chazelles 2000. Practices of worship: Gomez and Ugolini 2006; Ugolini 2010b; Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012; Macario 2017 (ed); artefacts under study (new fragments of terracotta altars, articulated doll, antefix, miniature vases, terracotta sheet of architectural cladding).

⁴⁹ General approach and discussion: Ugolini 2010a.

⁵⁰ E.g., Garcia, Gruat and Verdin 2007: fig. 1; Bats 2012: fig. 2; Garcia 2004/2014: fig. p. 11.

⁵¹ The Cabrières' copper mine is commonly proposed, but the operating traces are so far insignificant (P. Ambert and M. Laroche in *Odyssée gauloise*: 96–99) ; as for the Monts d'Orb's mines, these are now discussed too (Guilaine *et al.* 2017, fig. 19). Long-distance sourcing has to be taken into account.

⁵² Verger 2003 explains this cessation using through several arguments, extending the field of discussion to many regions. But, in southern France, Béziers I (and Marseille too?) having drained the metal, what was exceptional enough to be chosen to honor distant deities at the beginning, became usual some decades later and less significant in this perspective.

So, the city enjoyed its own crossroads – a significant source of income and likely the main one, its fertile land – an important factor in the aristocratic conception of the Greek citizen, and its complementarity with Marseille in trade.⁵³

- Marseille arose in a spectacular place between sea and mountain which is a kind of amphitheater. Born as a port, the best, the largest and the most important of this coast, this apparently remained its *raison d'être*. Its land was covered by olives and vines, but the country was inappropriate for cereals, as quoted by Strabo (4.1.5).⁵⁴

So, the city enjoyed its excellent port position, its merchant fleet, its proximity to the Rhone route toward the hinterland and, during three centuries, its complementarity with Béziers I.

The economic value the two cities derived from their respective locations is sure and there is no evidence that the one depended on the other. Instead, we can believe in some form of alliance (of *sympoliteia* type?), with common rules at least for organizing their trade.

New dynamics between Greeks and natives in the Béziers I area (6th century)

Béziers I and Marseille were settled in a more or less peaceful manner, doubtless after negotiations with the natives, who agreed, as we learn at least for Marseille from its edifying foundation story (Justin 43.3–4). The arrival of foreigners had still an impact on the natives, their lifestyle, social organisation and settlements.

In the Béziers I area, the sites leave slopes and plains, preferring hills in control of crossing points. They were often fortified and sometimes newly constructed in stone or adobe, replacing earth and wood, most frequently with open plans as before.⁵⁵ The necropoleis, sometimes in use from the end of the Bronze Age, vanished gradually: those remaining were rare, or new, or relatively far from Béziers I, or they were isolated graves. They show a higher number of men buried with weapons, reflecting the importance of soldiers/warriors and the insecurity generated by the Greek presence.⁵⁶

The native sites appear in series, wherever and whenever required for circulation on land and access to the sea (Figure 4). Almost all the oldest ones were created a few decades later than

⁵³ Olive and Ugolini 2012b.

⁵⁴ About Marseille, the term *chôra* covers so many facets among scholars that it is difficult to recognise the relevant details. Vineyards around the city are attested from the 3rd century BC (summary in Bouffier and Garcia 2014 (eds)) and from the 4th century (online: <https://www.inrap.fr/marseille-avant-massalia-la-premiere-architecture-de-terre-neolithique-en-france-4847>), but no farm – so it seems – has yet been found.

⁵⁵ E.g., La Monédière (Nickels 1989b, Beylier 2014); Montlaurès (Narbonne, Aude: de Chazelles and Ugolini 2015 (eds)); Cayla II (Mailhac, Aude: Gailledrat, Taffanel and Taffanel 2002). A precocious islet plan in the Aude area: Pech Maho (Sigeau, Aude: Gailledrat and Solier 2004 (eds)).

⁵⁶ According to A. Beylier in *Odyssée gauloise*: 351–355, weapons in native graves do not necessarily designate warriors. Conflicts against Greeks seem to him unlikely because of the taste of natives for imports. So, weapons would express above all the social status of deceased males. He admits however disputes between natives for access to imported wares. Now, in one way or another, weapons gained importance because of the Greek presence. The men so kitted out for hereafter were soldiers/warriors (or becoming so when too young deceased, hence the symbolic side of weapons) rather than priests or having had other functions in their community. The native southern mercenaries, known at least from the battle of Himera (480 BC) according to Herodotus, have to be taken into account, as well as technical progress in iron working, especially evident in weapons for warriors (Bataille, Kaurin and Marion 2015), about whom sources do not yet tell, during the 6th century, in whatever war they were enrolled.



Figure 4. Map of sixth-century BC sites between the lower Aude valley and the Montpellier area. (Data on Géorelief 34 map). Star with red point: existing site in the first half of the century; question- mark in the second half of the century; question- mark outside of the star: uncertain location. Routes may have had various outlines: they are drawn as an indication.

Béziers I.⁵⁷ The first points under control were the coastal road (the mythical Heracleian road), the Aude-Garonne valley toward the Atlantic, the Massif Central and the mouth of the Loire river, and the paths of the Orb, Hérault and Peyne (tributary of Hérault) valleys, giving also access to the Massif Central.

In this system, the central position of Béziers I and of the Orb valley, opening onto the others, is evident. The importance of the low Hérault valley is clear from Mont-Joui and La Monédière, controlling the river crossing on the coastal road, the paths connecting hinterland to coast on both river banks and the maritime access. So, there was a key point of the network's organisation under native control.

The other sites were set up in the second half/last quarter of the 6th century.

Once the land use pattern was completed, all main passage points had a site (Figure 4). The closest ones to Béziers I form a circle around the city, at a fairly great distance (11km for Ensérune, 20–25km for the others) to oversee the Greek settlement and far enough away to have time to react if needed. Some may have been directly under the city's control (small forts – *phouria* –? small settlements?), and Mus (Murviel-lès-Béziers), in the Orb valley, is a good candidate according to its archaeological record.⁵⁸

The staggered emergence of sites materialises, one way or another, the preliminary negotiations between Greeks and natives and draws out the movement along prime routes, as shows the arrival – between the last years of the 7th century and the first quarter of the 6th century – of remarkable pieces in the hinterland, such as the Corinthian crater of Puisserguier-La Prade⁵⁹ and others in the Pézenas-Saint Julien necropolis.

Unfortunately, the majority of these sites are almost unknown and their interpretation is still open. It would also be necessary to clarify the western border of the Béziers I area, but it is still premature to approach this topic.

Béziers I shows a sharp demographic increase, mostly noticeable in the second half of the 6th century, through the fast expansion of its inhabited area, a possible consequence of the Persian attacks on East Greek cities pushing many people to flee away. This movement, as we know, affected Marseille, *Empòrion* and *Alalia* (Corsica) and justify the foundation of *Hyélé* (Velia, I). But this detour via the Phocaeian circles is not indispensable: the lure of profit could have sufficed to drive more and more people toward Béziers I.

A century after its beginning, Béziers I/*Rhône* was already a great city, very active, with a functioning landscape.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Malvieu (Saint-Pons-de-Thomières), existing from the end of the Bronze Age: Gorgues 2009. Cayla II (Mailhac): Gailledrat, Taffanel and Taffanel 2002. Ensérune (Nissan-lez-Ensérune): Jannoray 1955; Dubosse 2007; Olive and Ugolini 2013a. Puech Pus (Cessenon-sur-Orb): Mazière and Gatorze 1999. La Monédière: Nickels 1989a. Mont-Joui: Nickels 1987; Gomez 2000a; 2010: 169–208. Non-located site linked to the graves older than the sixth century of the Saint-Julien necropolis (Pézenas; about the necropolis: Giry 1965; Llinas and Robert 1971; Nickels 1990; Dedet *et al.* 2012). La Cougourlude (Lattes): Daveau and Py 2015.

⁵⁸ Mazière 1998.

⁵⁹ Ugolini 1997.

⁶⁰ The *chôra*, daring to use the term, covered several hundreds of square kilometers (staying halfway between Béziers and the other sites and excluding them, even those perhaps having been part of it). Some sixty rural sites are located, with a chronology corresponding to Béziers I: Ugolini and Olive 2009; Olive and Ugolini 2013b. Often destroyed by ploughing and delivering only artefacts and sometimes tenuous built traces, not all are farms: three very degraded farms (Ugolini and Olive 1998; Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012 (eds), s.v. Les Fangasses; s.v. Mercorent), a vineyard (Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012 (eds), s.v. La Courondelle), a cultivated field (Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012 (eds), s.v. Rue Kléber), pits near a farm (Ugolini and Olive 2013 (eds), s.v. Lespignan, Camp Redoun), agrarian ditches (Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012 (eds), s.v. Le Garissou; s.v. La Courondelle), a path and a potter's oven for pithoi production (Olive, Ugolini and Ratsimba 2009) were excavated.

During the 6th century, the natives had a main role in the structure of trade, but, to assess its organisation, our information is only good enough next to the Hérault river, where La Monédière and Mont-Joui managed exchange.

- Mont-Joui had a curious structure (Figure 5). Fortified by two heart-shaped ditches with two powerfully protected accesses, the southern gate opens onto paths running along both banks of a stream (Rec de Bragues) flowing toward the Bagnas lagoon, on the edge of which was an incineration grave (isolated?: third quarter of the 6th century). A third path heads towards the mouth of the Hérault. The western gate opens onto the Hérault and a linking ford with La Monédière. Almost destroyed by ploughing, the internal organisation of the site is unknown, but the site covered 4.5ha, that is to say quite a large size.⁶¹

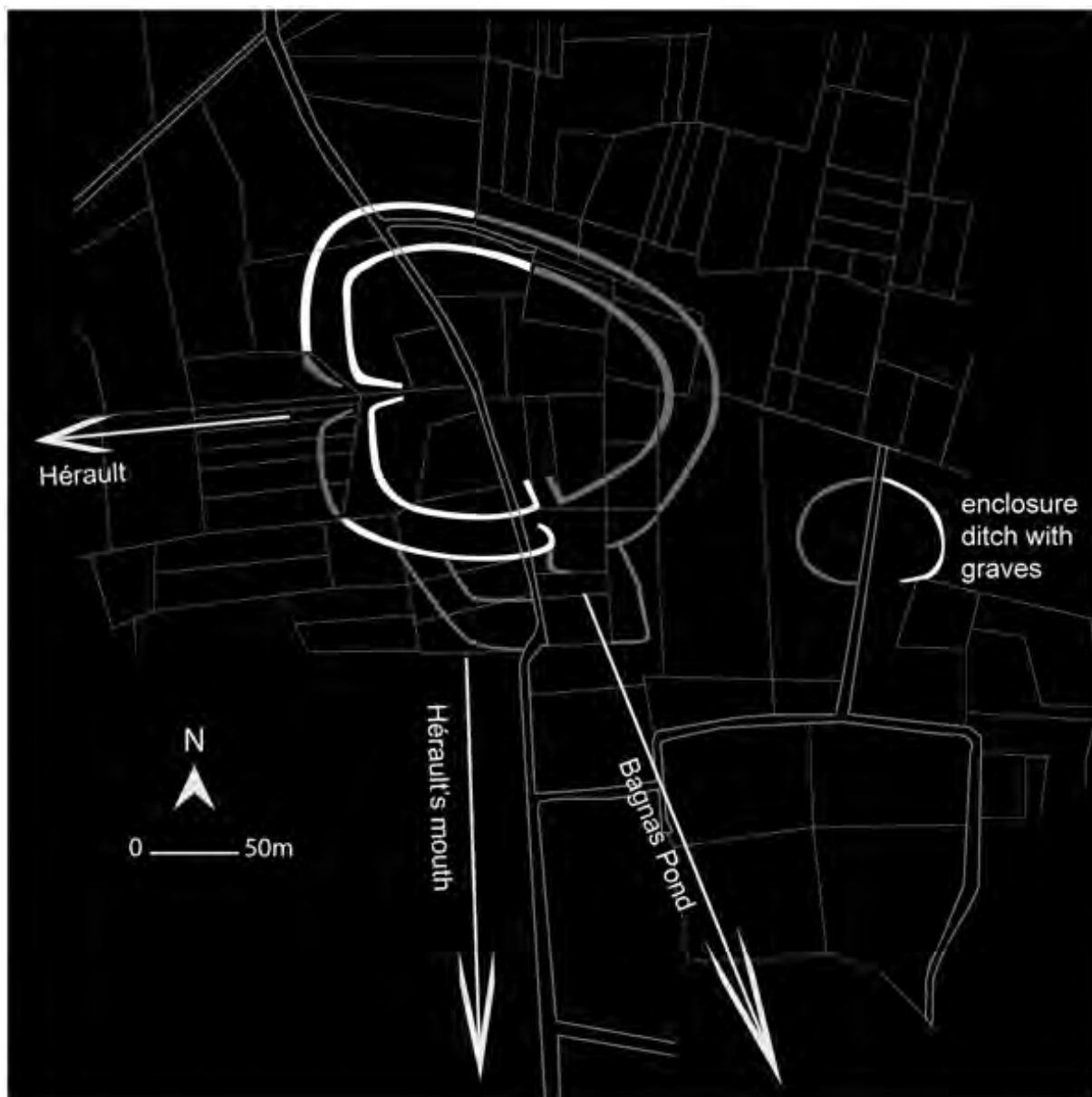


Figure 5. Plan of Mont-Joui. (Cartography É. Gomez).

⁶¹ Grave: Rouquette and Michel 1976. A sixth-century belt clip was found nearby (from another destroyed grave?): Feugère 1986. About Mont-Joui and surroundings: Gomez 2000a and 2010.

The look and importance of the fortification, the smaller circular ditch enclosure nearby, whose function could not be elucidated but in which were burials (a place of worship?), a chain of about sixty small rural sites with linked graves, also marking the paths out, the southern grave (or little necropolis?), all form an original complex without comparison in southern France (Figure 6). It was undoubtedly a main site, perhaps a centre of power.⁶² In front of a ford, it certainly took advantage from the river crossing along the ‘Heracleian road’ and the conveyance of goods and people.

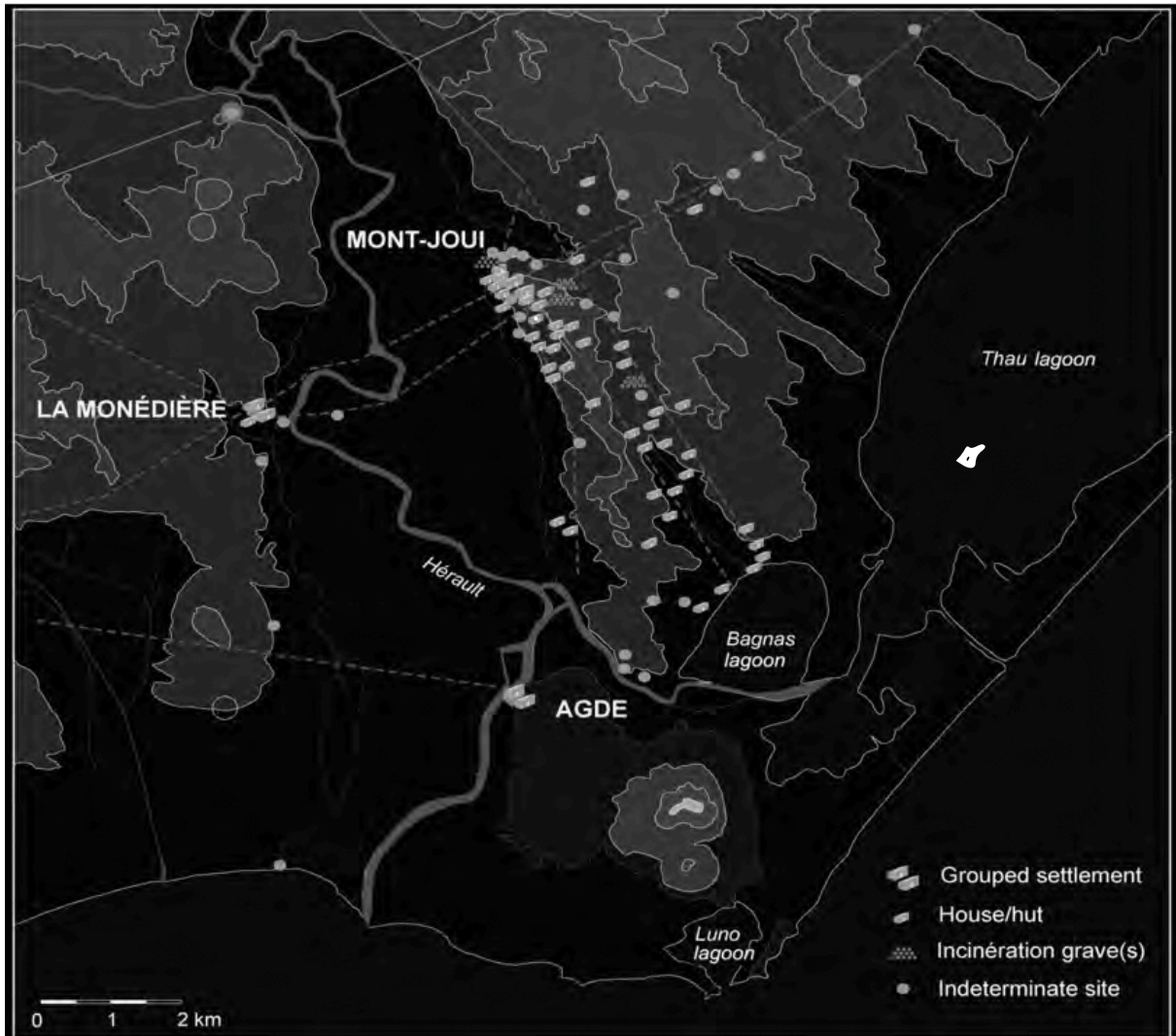


Figure 6. Map of the area of Mont-Joui and La Monédière between the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th centuries. (Cartography É. Gomez).

Its link with the Bagnas lagoon shows that this watery locality was of interest. The surrounding fields are fertile and, amongst these rural sites, some were certainly farms, but others may have been worked as part of salt-production points. No archaeological evidence supports this, but there have been some in historical times and salt has always been a lucrative trade. To control such a resource gave considerable weight, including in the exchanges with Greeks.⁶³

⁶² Of *Fürstensitz* type? About the definition of an aristocratic site and this term’s ambiguities: Schönfelder 2007.

⁶³ Salt exploitation, here envisaged by Gomez 2010: 291–292, 330, 344, 353, is also assumed for Saint-Blaise: Bouloumié 1984.

• On the other side of the river, La Monédière was also fortified. Recent excavations brought to light a semicircular ditch delimiting the flat hilltop, later replaced by another one of quadrangular plan with a gate to the west. A path led there and the nearest site is Béziers I. Inside the ditches, the built-up area, subdivided into four phases, is loose but dense, covering 3 or 4ha.⁶⁴ La Monédière had no surrounding good fields, nor peripheral rural sites (Figure 6),⁶⁵ and no known craft activities. Therefore, we can assume that its livelihood relied on trade. This situation was a good deal, but such a dependence weakened the site in the long run, as shown by its subsequent evolution.

Mont-Joui and La Monédière were closely linked to Béziers I, as proved by their archaeological material,⁶⁶ and surely also to each other. Their features suggests different roles strengthened by proximity and their position face to face. The natives, formerly scattered in the low Hérault valley, had to regroup into these two sites, where the relationship between them and the newcomers was structured.

The imported wares at La Monédière, notably amphoras, exceeds the usual level of consumption and have been correlated with trade. The site was probably an *emporion*.⁶⁷ Mont-Joui was also well supplied, but its structure allows us to consider it as a power centre surely related, in one way or another, to La Monédière.

It is easy to believe that the two sites watched over, and participated in, the transactions on the river. They form an original whole showing the working effect of the Greek enclave on its eastern side. In all likelihood, Mont-Joui represents the native authority at the margins of the Béziers I area and La Monédière may well materialise the boundary of the area granted by the natives at the time of the Greek settlement,⁶⁸ where the exchange was practiced in a reciprocally controlled framework. It is obvious indeed that merchant ships sailing up the Hérault loaded or unloaded there. In other words, the natives managed the traffic because there the goods were grouped and sorted, the batches packed, the convoys formed and moved. Doubtless, they earned an income and had the first choice of goods. Agreements certainly organised

⁶⁴ About fortifications: Beylier 2014; surface area: Olive 2001; phases: Nickels 1989b (Phase I: 600/575–550, without preserved building traces but other archaeological material; phase II: 550–500, with apsidal houses; phase III: 500–475, with rectangular houses; phase IV: 475–400, without preserved buildings but abundant archaeological finds).

⁶⁵ The case is unusual because, between the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th centuries, native settlements often show some rural sites around them: Mauné 1998 (ed). Gomez 2010: 326–329, highlights the poverty of these soils, in addition flooded.

⁶⁶ For the time being, Béziers I is the unique proven producer of turned pottery working in the long-term west of the Rhone and potters were at work at least from the beginning of the 6th century on. This is to say seemingly before those of Marseille. In addition to already published workshops, in 2014 were discovered the remains of a possible potter's oven and local pottery dated *c.* 600; another well preserved potter's oven is dated *c.* 400 BC (Macario 2017 (ed): 123–133). Other destroyed potter's ovens and local pottery from the beginning of the 6th century were found on the Saint-Jacques hill (thanks to É. Gomez for this information). Unfortunately, vases and terracotta objects of Béziers I are commonly confused either with Massalian or other Greek ones, or mixed with 'Ibero-Languedocian' ones. So they rarely appear as such in publications despite their large number. Of course, they have first to be known and identified. This item is of importance. E.g., in attributing to Marseille the Béziers I vases, this gives a role to Marseille it did not have while depriving Béziers I of the one it had. Historically, this misidentification produces obvious inappropriate results. According to our own observations (C. Olive, D. Ugo lini, É. Gomez), the pottery of Béziers I represents the very large majority at La Monédière and Mont-Joui.

⁶⁷ This is a very controversial term and the subject of numerous studies. The settlements so qualified have different characteristics according to geography and chronology. For La Monédière, the term is used here unpretentiously, in the meaning of wharf/embankment and place of exchange forming part of the economic system of a Greek city. Gomez 2010: 333 sees it as a *phourion* of Béziers I. It is not impossible, one function does not necessarily exclude the other.

⁶⁸ As Gomez 2010 pointed out.

the transactions, but the system was inconvenient for the Greeks who inevitably wanted a greater freedom of action and profit.⁶⁹

The creation of the river port of Agde/Agàthe

The need of a good port under Greek control motivated the foundation of *Agàthe*, in the last quarter/end of the 6th century,⁷⁰ at the time of the great development of the Greek trade dynamics.

The settlement was small (c. 2ha at the beginning), developed little (c. 3 or 3,5ha by the 4th century) and always kept an austere, almost ‘poor’, way of life which could be due to its port function, goods mostly passing in transit. A Greek foundation from the beginning – as shown through fortifications, buildings, plan and domestic vessels – its aim was to promote maritime traffic. Pottery attests, for more than two centuries, its link with Béziers I. Massalian ships regularly stopped there, unloaded quantities of wares, especially amphoras, and loaded other goods such as bronze, agricultural and manufactured products etc.

Why, therefore, does *Agàthe* stand on the left bank of the Hérault and not on the right one closer to Béziers I?

Many reasons may be cited: the Hérault’s current and navigability; the basaltic height putting the site out of the flood zone and elevating it slightly; the fortress protected an area with maritime access and navigation on the river from attacks maybe feared especially from east. Lastly, it is no coincidence that it stands to the south of Mount-Joui, that is to say nearby and in the activity area of this so special site. The settlement could even be seen as the expression of the Greek will to go beyond the limits initially defined for Greek space through the imposition of a direct control on the native authorities.

Agde’s port freed Béziers I from native supervision, in short-circuiting the bridgeheads of La Monédière and Mont-Joui, ships stopping downstream. They were housed, the transactions were free, the goods were conveyed towards Béziers I by a direct fluvial/maritime or land route and convoys toward the east could leave from Agde.

The new situation surely slighted the natives. Ships still went up the river, but first they stopped, or passed, in front of Agde, now regulating the traffic. There they were allowed to go further and/ or were loaded/unloaded in what interested the Greeks. One way or another, the natives were, if not totally deprived of the business control, at least largely limited. Moreover, in

⁶⁹ The defence of trading interests, combined with risks due to the inflow of people, pushed the Greek cities to exercise an increasing control over *empòria* and ports, a phenomenon well known at the end of the Archaic period (Dominguez Monedero 2007: 168–172).

⁷⁰ When A. Nickels was working, Béziers I was unknown and he lacked a keypoint in any reasoning about the process of colonisation. His dating proposal for Agde’s colonial foundation (c. 400 BC), following – in his opinion – an earlier Phocaeen settlement amongst the natives, was based, on the one hand, on La Monédière’s abandonment and, on the other hand, on Agde’s urban development over the course of the 4th century (Nickels 1995). In fact, at that time, Agde had been occupied for over a century. A colonial foundation in an already inhabited site is unlikely, while the city’s development following La Monédière’s abandonment makes sense. The archaeological record is now developed enough for dating Agde’s foundation at the end of the 6th century by the Greeks of Béziers I and its re-foundation or annexation by Marseille at the middle of the 2nd century BC, when it had been more or less abandoned for at least a century and when there was nothing to prevent Marseille from taking it over (Ugolini and Olive 2012b; Ugolini 2017; Ugolini and Pardies 2018). As recalled above, the return of Detet and Schwaller 2018 to the past is baseless.

the case of salt production, Agde was now well located to exploit it and Mont-Joui lost (or feared to lose) an important resource.⁷¹

All this necessarily caused discord that could account for the destruction ending La Monédière/phase II (c. 500 BC): a quelled rebellion followed by new agreements giving more flexibility to the natives?

Greeks, Natives, Iberians, Punics (end of the 6th-beginning of the 5th centuries)

At the end of the 6th century and, mostly, at the beginning of the 5th century BC, Iberian wares grew significantly. During the 20th century this evidence motivated the introduction of the ‘Ibero-Languedocian civilisation’, portraying a mix of Greek and Iberian influences on the native background under the influence of *Empòrion*.

This sudden abundance arouses questions. In itself, ships arriving in the port of Agde with Iberian goods is something normal. The problem lies in the quantity, since they tend to replace the Greek ones. So, it should be admitted that Béziers I and Marseille – whose economic activities were growing – saw their market slide towards *Empòrion*, and that competitive issues between Greek cities were emerging.

Nonetheless at Agde and Béziers I, Iberian amphoras are well documented, as in Marseille, but it is the Greek and Etruscan ones which are in the majority, testifying unequivocally to the strength of the eastern network. In fact, Iberian products affected mostly the native sites, notably in the Aude area, but also – and largely – at La Monédière, while Mont-Joui resisted this wave.⁷²

So we have reasonable grounds to ask if *Empòrion*’s trade has been overstated. The city had a port but no indication of a merchant fleet. Its economic role was important on the spot, but to estimate its great weight so far away, through goods that were not its own, nor mostly Greek,⁷³ is a tricky argument to support. On the one hand, the idea of Massalian ships loading Iberian wares at *Empòrion* for their distribution along our coast to the detriment of Marseille and Béziers I would only make sense in the case of uncontrolled traffic by private companies. But would it have been allowed to happen? On the other hand, it seems likely that Iberian, Punic and also Attic goods were transported by Punic ships because – after a period of crisis – this time saw the renewal of Punic activities in Iberia, even in its north-east and even in *Empòrion*.⁷⁴

Punic people are often confined to the southern Mediterranean and allowing space for their commercial traffic in the Mediterranean north-west is unusual. Nevertheless, they were one of the main trading forces of the time and frequented all ports, Greek and non-Greek, as confirmed by written sources as well as by archaeology.

Punic mediation could explain the sharp increase in Iberian wares among natives, since the creation of Agde’s port meant for them an evident loss of authority and income. The natives could react by turning to Punic commerce, perhaps thanks to the pacifying liberalities granted by the Greeks after the destruction of La Monédière/phase II (c. 500 BC). In support, we can

⁷¹ Salt exploitation around Agde and especially at the Bagnas lagoon is sure at least from the Middle Age: cf. Aris 1987, who envisaged it also for the Greek city.

⁷² Marseille: Sourisseau 1997, vol. I, doc. 67–70. La Monédière: Nickels 1989b, fig. 50,6. Mont-Joui: Gomez 2000a, 2010. Other sites: Ugolini and Olive 2004, 2006a; Mazière 2004; Gailledrat, Taffanel and Taffanel 2002; Gailledrat and Solier 2004 (eds); de Chazelles and Ugolini 2015 (eds).

⁷³ Except for Attic pottery whose distribution along the French western coast is traditionally attributed to it: e.g. Jully 1983; Dubosse 2007. *Contra*: e.g. Ugolini and Olive 1995.

⁷⁴ Greek imports, increasing at this time, are always promoted, but doubtless the Punic ones were also increasing and they were the majority: cf. Sanmarti and Asensio 2005, fig. 3.

recall the fact that Punic visitors came sufficiently enough to this coast to recruit mercenaries, notably for a war in Sicily (Hdt. 7.165). This ended with Carthage's defeat at Himera (480 BC), but this far-off event does not concern the 'Midi', except that – coincidentally – many sites suffered destruction and sometimes abandonment at this time,⁷⁵ while Greek cities were not affected.

La Monédière/phase III clearly stopped around 475 BC, without let us knowing if there was a previous destruction. It is also unknown if Mont-Joui was first destroyed but its abandonment is undoubted. Moreover, its case is particular: it resisted the wave of Iberian imports, but paid nonetheless, while La Monédière recovered. It is worth wondering whether the Greeks did not take advantage of this troubled moment to eliminate this problematic site.

The causes of these destructions are not unanimously explained. In the case of Lattes/*Lattara*, where Etruscan residents are assumed, the destruction has been explained as a consequence of the battle of Cumae (474 BC), where the Etruscans lost their fleet and consequently a large part of their trading power, forcing them to abandon Lattes, which passed into the Massalian monopoly. However an interpretation including all coeval destructions, concerning sites where no Etruscan resident was present, seems more suitable. If the phenomenon is a consequence of the battle of Himera (480 BC), a wider perspective is possible, allowing other reasons for these events, as it might have been precisely the growing closeness between the natives and the Carthaginians which risked compromising the relationships between the Greeks and the natives.⁷⁶

After all, the important thing is that Iberian products had won a market and that the natives of the French coast had enough contacts with the Carthaginians to be recruited into their army. This issue could not leave either Béziers I or Marseille indifferent and the fact is that after these destructions Greek trade acquired a monopoly at least as far as the left bank of the Aude river⁷⁷ and that the map of inhabited sites was redrawn.

From the beginning of the 5th to the middle of the 4th centuries

Starting from 475–450 BC, the weakening of native settlements is clear. The Hérault valley is emptying, particularly on the left bank where Mont-Joui disappears, as well as others. Some rare sites appear more or less at this time on the coastal road (e.g. Mèze-Les Pénitents),⁷⁸ while others go through a crisis resolved at *c.* 400 BC (e.g., Ensérune, Montlaurès, Cayla III...). The state of La Monédière is poorly documented, but artefacts of phase IV cover the second half of the 5th century: so, the site was rebuilt and it was again in the Greek fold.⁷⁹

During the 5th century, Béziers I shows a strong development covering 35 or 40ha fully built-up, making it – by far – the largest site west of the Rhone. Its central place on the coastal axis

⁷⁵ Mailhac-Cayla II: Gailledrat, Taffanel and Taffanel 2002. Montlaurès: de Chazelles and Ugolini 2015 (eds). Ensérune: Jannoray 1955; Olive and Ugolini 2013a. Magalas-Montfo: Olive 2002, 2013. Lattes: Lebeaupin *et al.* 2008; and so many others, also in Provence. The phenomenon seems to have been stronger and more generalised in the western area.

⁷⁶ Concerning the Lattes hypothesis: Py *et al.* 2006. Other hypothesis and sites: Ugolini 2005; Ugolini and Olive 2003a, 2004, 2006a, 2012b. A coin from Gela dated *c.* 475 BC was found at Montlaurès (Paris 2014: 85), probably in the rubble of destruction: a mercenary who came back from Sicily with a souvenir?

⁷⁷ On approaching the Pyrenees, the 'Iberian' monopoly is evident (Mazière 2004). Little information is available concerning the lower Aude valley during the 5th-4th centuries but there was a buffer zone between the Greek and 'Ibero-Punic' spheres (Ugolini 1993a, 2005, 2015; Ugolini and Olive 1990, 2004; de Chazelles and Ugolini 2015 (eds)).

⁷⁸ Rouquette and Ugolini 1997.

⁷⁹ Levels are destroyed by ploughing but archaeological finds are abundant: Nickels 1989b.

is even more evident. Craftsmen and merchants were working unremittingly and exchanges with the north are particularly clear.⁸⁰ Agde, having no longer Mont-Joui behind it –that is to say no more natives– saw its complementarity with Béziers I even stronger. So, the Greek weight along the coastal strip had strengthened, at least between the Thau lagoon and the left bank of the Aude river.

Other changes occur in the course of the 4th century (Figure 7).

La Monédière is abandoned (c. 400 BC), no doubt following a conflict between its inhabitants and the Greeks, as has been envisaged for a long time.

On the Hérault's right bank, 5km to the north of La Monédière, Le Fort-Cessero (Saint-Thibéry) appears at the beginning of this century. According to some available data,⁸¹ it is difficult to see it as a place of exchange standing in for La Monédière. In fact, at the time its basaltic environment was exploited for the trade in millstones.⁸² Therefore, the transportation of heavy objects had to be facilitated, by river and by land as well. The quarries' needs were surely one of the motivations for changing the layout of the coastal road, which –since La Monédière's abandonment– had no longer any reason for crossing the river at its height, with the advantage of a shorter and direct path to Béziers I, while preserving the sea access and setting up an easier path for convoys heading to the east. It is also necessary to take into account, that in Roman times the site was a step on the Via Domitia when crossing the Hérault, where a road started towards the Massif Central, as indicated by itineraries (Vicarello cups, Tabula Peutingeriana, Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem). This function of a relay was certainly effective as soon as the coastal road was modified. Its presence seems also to have led to the creation of new sites and routes to the hinterland, while causing the abandonment of others, at least since the middle of the 4th century when the Hérault valley was emptying also on the right bank.

This change removed Agde further from the coastal road, but did not hamper its relationship with Béziers I nor produce economic difficulties since, on the contrary, the port was prosperous and the city was being extended.

Data on the 4th century are poor for the majority of sites, but those developing now seem located in the west: Ensérune, controlling both paths toward the Atlantic starting from Béziers on the Aude-Garonne axis (the one south of the site – the coastal road – and the other to the north, near Montady); Montlaurès; Mailhac-Cayla III; Pech Maho; Le Moulin (Peyriac-de-mer) and so on.

So, the communication pattern was further reduced, with the permanence or creation of some sites on the most frequented roads, while others had been left behind. Everything was best for the Greeks whose place looks further strengthened, adjacent to natives who were not making any fuss.

The fall of Béziers I/Rhône and its consequences

The Greek situation start to deteriorate at c. 350 BC. Béziers I was fast depopulating; its economy was regressing (imports and productions were contracting); the unturned indigenous pottery was increasing in response to the decrease of local turned vases; La Tène gray ware

⁸⁰ Especially by exporting coral in exchange for bronze (Ugolini *et al.* 1991; Rondi-Costanzo 1997; Rondi-Costanzo and Ugolini 2000; Ugolini 2006, 2013). Coral branches have been found recently in levels of the beginning of the 6th century (thanks to É. Gomez for this information). So this trade started very early. See also: Frère and Morin 2006 (eds); Verger 2010; Gomez de Soto and Pautreau 2013.

⁸¹ Ropiot, Mazière and Besombes-Vailhé 2016.

⁸² Reille 1995, 2000.

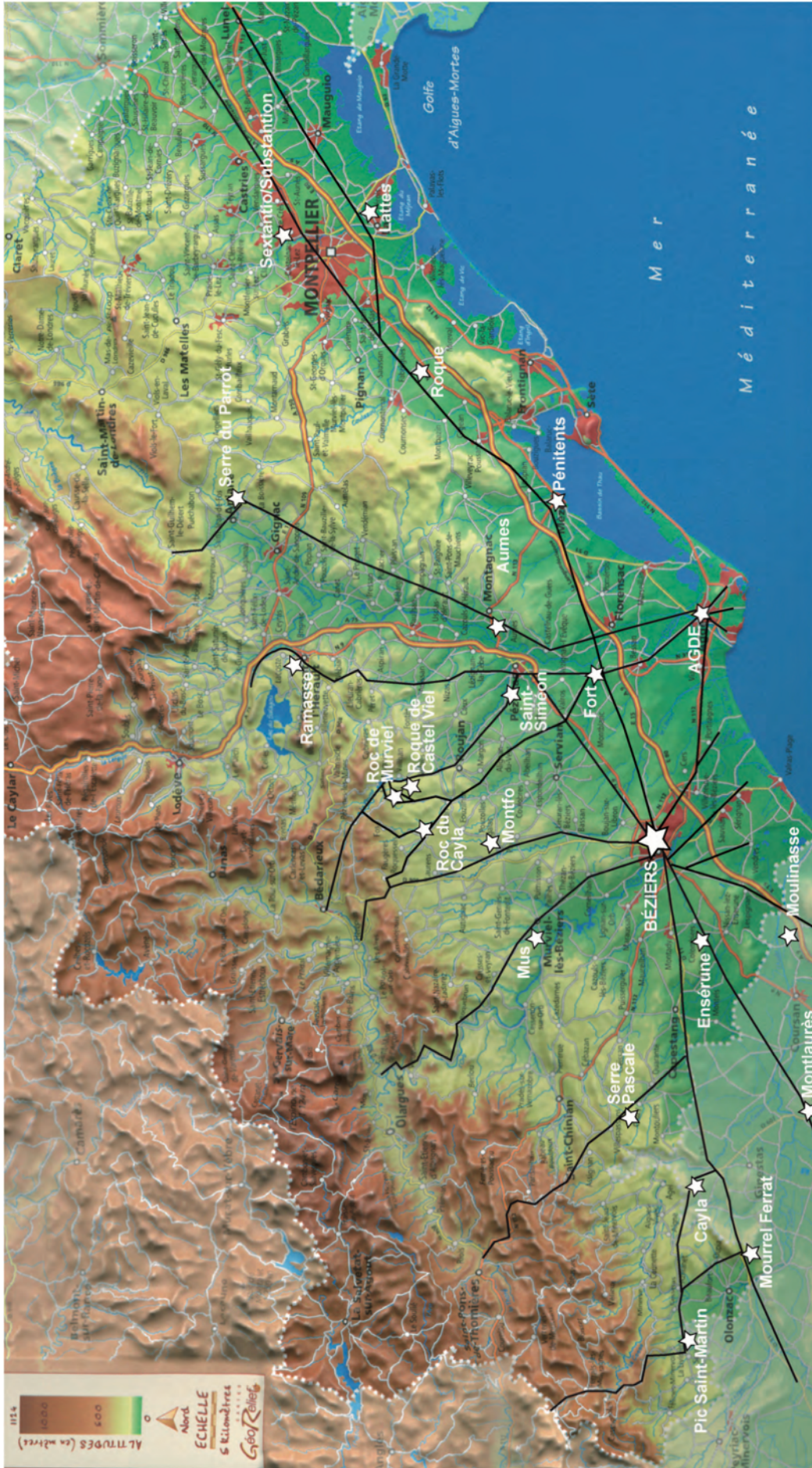


Figure 7. Map of the fourth-century BC sites. (Data on Géorelief 34 map) Routes may have had various outlines: they are drawn as an indication.

was more and more present. Events moved quickly, and Béziers I was abandoned at *c.* 300 BC or soon after.

Agde was also going through a strong crisis in an increasingly deserted environment, the native sites disappearing the one after the other, until we reach the situation observed at *c.* 250 BC, when it was also almost empty and no longer functional (Figure 8). There was therefore a large space more or less empty – so to speak – between Ensérune and Lattes.

The fall of the Béziers I system caused therefore a general crisis. After the break-up, Marseille could have taken over, but that was not the case. Clearly, there was no longer any interest in this area, nor any economic opportunity, and nothing was moving for a long time.

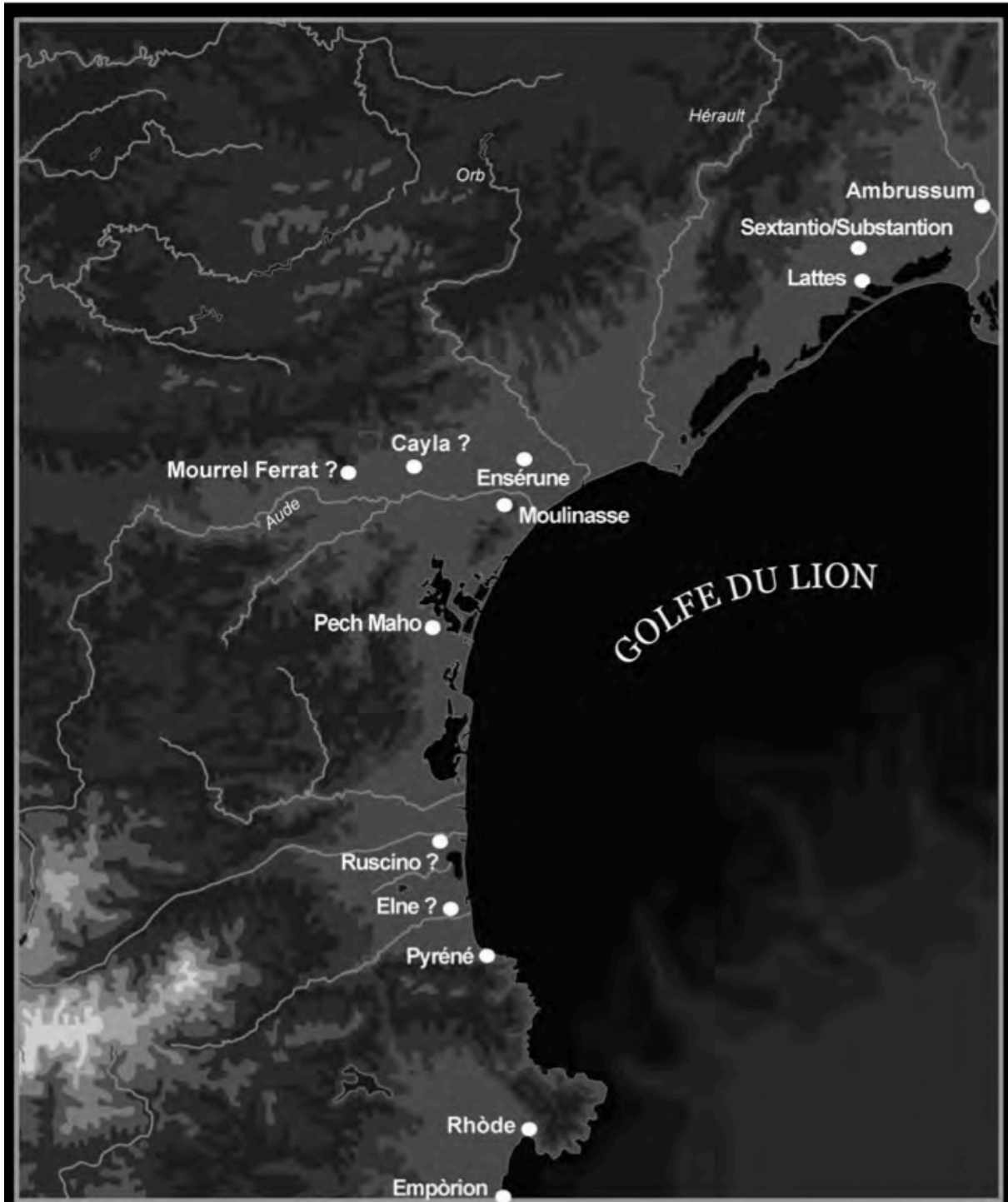


Figure 8. Map of the existing sites at *c.* 250 BC. (Map D. Ugolini). With question-mark: uncertain existence at this time.

About what happened, we can only argue from some few clues. In the success of the Rhodian network, land roads had been fundamental. During the 3rd century, the surviving sites of this area are all in the west. This shows that the Aude-Garonne valley was still frequented and it is possible that Béziers I had no longer free access to it. On the other hand, from the second half of the 4th century on, La Tène artefacts were progressing and this cultural component was emphasised at Ensérune, where the necropolis shows much evidences, both ceramic and metallic, of a strong La Tène evolution.⁸³ Undoubtedly, this site contributed to the decline of Béziers I by interposing itself between the latter and the routes toward the north-west when other paths had already been abandoned and when there were no more alternatives.

So, the link between coast and continent may have concerned other partners and the arrival of new groups is conceivable in the context of historical events, such as the ‘Celtic Migrations’.⁸⁴ Ensérune would be a good example. But, at the same time, the increasing scarcity of Mediterranean imports into the hinterland, precisely when the Central European La Tène populations were expanding, reveals a drop of contacts between south and north.⁸⁵ It can be added to our file of evidence, that Greek imports of the 3rd century came from Iberia, where *Rhône* was producing vases abundantly represented especially at Pech Maho and Ensérune, that is to say in the main sites still active. This working network affected –as it seems– rather weakly the Roussillon area (to the north of Pyrenees), more distinctly the Aude area but left out the area east of the Orb river.

Now, it is known that, especially in the second half of the 3rd century, after the loss of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica at the end of the First Punic War and in the aftermath, Carthage was more and more present in Iberia. The Greek cities of the north-east –if they had not already done so– redirected themselves now clearly (notably by coinages) to this pre-eminent force. So, the network operating toward our country could be Punic and there is no impediment that it conveyed Iberian, Punic, Greek and even Italic goods all together. In this framework, *Rhône* and *Empòrion* played an economic and cultural role of importance, as the native copies of their coins seems to show, perhaps in the context of mining operations at the margins of the Aude-Garonne valley/Massif Central, and through a network from which, according to monetary circulation, Marseille was more or less excluded.⁸⁶

Therefore, we may think that Béziers I/*Rhône* could no longer rely on natives settled –always or recently– along the previously open roads, perhaps because these groups built a relationship with the Punic sphere and/or because Mediterranean products were of much less interest to these peoples, especially in the hinterland. This double impasse, doubtless with other imperceptible causes, may have driven the collapse of the Béziers I economy and the departure of its inhabitants to look for new opportunities.

From Béziers (Rhône 1) to Roses (Rhône 2)?

The foundation of Iberian *Rhône* is attributed to Rhodians or to Massalians, based on just a few texts (see above), and this includes the interpretation of an hegemonic role attributed to Marseille, but as we have seen, there are real differences both between our sources and scho-

⁸³ As pointed out by Jannoray 1955. Other funerary contexts: Schwaller and Marchand 1993; Schwaller *et al.* 1995, 2001; Jallet *et al.* 1998.

⁸⁴ About this period and the La Tène or ‘Celtic’ world: Buschsenschutz, Gruel and Lejars 2012.

⁸⁵ Adam 2007.

⁸⁶ Garcia-Bellido 1993: 123. See also Rancoule 2013.

lars. For its part, from 375–350 BC,⁸⁷ archaeology highlights artefacts (notably Massalian amphoras) testifying to contacts with the Greeks of the French coast to a much more important degree than in *Empòrion*, which is the main archaeological argument supporting the Massalian foundation.

However, the parallel between the slowdown of Béziers I during the second half of the 4th century and the coeval rise of Iberian *Rhòde* is striking. It is difficult to believe it is in fortuitous, that at the same time Béziers I/*Rhòde* was weakening, Marseille was facing up to the hostility of natives, Arles was changing drastically because of the arrival of natives (or of a new ‘Celtic’ group) replacing the Greek inhabitants and the toponym (becoming *Arelate*), *Olbia* (Hyères) was founded around 325 BC, as perhaps was *Antipolis* (Antibes) and others.⁸⁸ So, the Greek network was encountering difficulties, leading to a major reorganisation, which could justify the foundation of Iberian *Rhòde* as of other settlements in a series along the eastern French coast.

These several foundations over a relatively short time imply a large number of displaced people and the question of where they came from must be asked.

Should we think that a part of Béziers I’s inhabitants had transferred to Iberian *Rhòde*? As its thousands of people have not vanished, some may have moved either to Marseille or to other newly founded sites, such as might have happened to those from Arles. Others may have looked for alternatives in Iberia, either because there was a working trade network to be linked to, or with the idea of setting up their own network toward the Aude-Garonne valley and being able to extend in all directions, while keeping the desired complementarity with Marseille.

Whatever the conditions, Iberian *Rhòde* stands in a place without interest for agricultural purposes but in the best port position of the bay of *Empòrion* and it is also ideally located for trans-Pyrenean pathways, as it was emphasised. This shows the aim: not a development based on land possession but on trade.

If a group of Rhodians from Béziers I settled in the new city, the abandonment of the first *Rhòde* finds a strong complementary meaning, the existence of two cities bearing the same name becomes obvious, and the date of the Iberian foundation is easy to explain, without excluding some Massalians in the colonial group.

In the monograph publication of the site, the foundation is explained as due to Marseille’s will to recover the Indiketes’ market when *Empòrion* took its independence and, relying on the chronology of A. Nickels, *Agàthe* would have been part of the Massalian repositioning plan. The proposal encounters some difficulties.

- As recalled above, Agde was founded at the end of the 6th century and therefore it does not enter this dynamic.

- About *Empòrion*: if it was a Massalian foundation and not really a Phocaeon one, it was freed from Marseille very early, according to its coinage, starting at the end of the 6th century or soon after,⁸⁹ this is to say more or less at the same time as that of Marseille. The first Empo-

⁸⁷ Before this timeline, the site provides only slight traces of a native frequenting, beginning, at the earliest, at the end of the 5th century: Puig and Martin 2006 (eds): 612.

⁸⁸ Only the founding date of *Olbia* is fixed: Bats 1988. For the other eastern cities uncertainty remains: Mercuri 2015.

⁸⁹ Ripollès and Chevillon 2013.

ritan coins with an ethnonym, affirming more clearly its independence, go back to the second half/end of the 5th century⁹⁰ and are much earlier than the foundation of *Rhòde*.

- *Rhòde*'s coinage begins at the turn of the 4th to the 3rd century, with silver drachmas in an atypical weight, drawn – as it has been suggested – from the Massalian obols and demonstrating its attachment to Marseille, an option which is not unanimously accepted.⁹¹ Moreover, these coins owe nothing to Marseille from the point of view of imagery.

Coins being an excellent propaganda medium, the choice of symbols supporting the city's image was not left to chance. The rose seen from below is not identical to the profile rose on coins of the city of *Rhòde*, founded a century earlier on its eponymous island, but it may state a relationship, enhanced through the smaller bronze divisions minted with a profile rose stylistically very close to that of the Rhodes island coins.⁹² The obverse of the Iberian *Rhòde*'s coins shows a goddess' head stylistically close to Arethusa on Syracusan coins – a prototype imitated by many cities, including Marseille and *Empòrion*. It may introduce an additional connection with Dorian Sicily, still highlighted by the Poseidonian trident behind the goddess' head on some series.⁹³

Furthermore, the coinage started exactly when Béziers I was definitively abandoned, enabling the new *Rhòde* to become independent. For this city, in a way continuing a cultural heritage, it was also a strong signal that when coinage began really to spread in the north-west, it acquired a truly economic and political meaning.⁹⁴

- The fast development of *Rhòde*'s pottery production is ascribed to Massalian antecedents but, especially for its beginning, it finds relevant echoes in Béziers I's vases. In fact, the classes produced as early as the 4th century are: 1) the 'pâtes claires' (clear clay pottery) having parallels in Marseille, but also and perhaps mostly in Béziers I; 2) the monochrome gray ware, a typical class of Béziers I while Marseille had not been producing it for a long time.⁹⁵ For the black-glazed vases, which Béziers I did not produce, appearing at the beginning of the 3rd century,⁹⁶ the influence of Massalian pseudo-Attic is invoked. But this class is represented

⁹⁰ Villaronga 2000; Campo 2002.

⁹¹ Villaronga 2000; Campo 2006. Garcia-Bellido 2013: 120, does not believe in this dependence.

⁹² Maluquer de Motes 1966 questioned the meaning of this similitude and now Garcia-Bellido 2013: 120, does not exclude that this coinage has something to do with Rhodians.

⁹³ These iconographic links with Sicily led Manganaro 1969 to suppose a Rhodian sea route between Iberian *Rhòde*, Sicily and Rhodes island. About the trident, forged for Poseidon by the Telchines of the Rhodes island, see above. Iberian *Rhòde*'s coins with trident: Campo 2006, fig. 14.1, no. 10–13.

⁹⁴ Did Béziers I/*Rhòde* not mint coins because it was dependent on another city? It is easier to see it as a pragmatic choice in an area almost without any monetary system until the end of the 3rd century or – more generally – the 2nd century, since coinage-creation was not an obligation for a free Greek city, at least before the Hellenistic period. Occasional, periodic, late, limited series (such as those of Marseille, *Empòrion* and Iberian *Rhòde*) are common and some cities had no personal currency: e.g., Dorian Sparta long refused even the principle of it: Christien 2014.

⁹⁵ The shapes and types of *Rhòde*'s vases (in Puig and Martin 2006 (eds)) may be compared to those of Béziers I (Ugolini, Olive and Gomez 2012) and Marseille (in Rothé and Tréziny 2005 (eds)). Puig 2015: 411, brings now the *Rhòde*'s gray ware closer to Catalan's coastal gray production (COT-CAT of Dicocer) by colour and some shapes.

⁹⁶ Puig 2015: 396, is envisaging the production's beginning from the last quarter of the 4th century. But the absence of these vases at Le Moulin (Peyriac-de-mer), destroyed c. 300 BC, could oppose such a timeline (as pointed out by M. Py, in Dicocer²: 1218). We can add also Béziers I and Agde, where these vases are absent during the last quarter of the 4th century. So, their production did not start before 300.

at *Rhône* only by six fragments, perhaps already local.⁹⁷ The Massalian workshops having stopped their activity before the end of the 4th century, were the potters transferred to *Rhône* without supplying the Marseille area?⁹⁸

- The toponym *Rhône* has not aroused curiosity and does not enter the reasoning of historians. It leaves us nevertheless puzzled. How do we explain that Marseille chose or accepted such a characteristic name for another metropolis?

- Within the chronological framework, the foundation/annexation of *Rhône* by Marseille could have occurred either before 300 or after the destruction by Cato (195 BC).

In support of the first period, the one assumed in the site publication, Massalian goods are put forward. Now, they are more abundant than elsewhere in Iberia, but never the majority.⁹⁹ The quick Massalian loss of interest for the Iberian market would explain it. But, why should we believe that Marseille founded a colony to recover a market and turned its back on it as soon as it began to be successful?

As for the second period, after its destruction the city was abandoned until the middle of the 2nd century AD.¹⁰⁰ In the meantime, the port may have worked as a staging-post under *Empòrion*'s¹⁰¹ or Marseille's control. However, the historical context implies Roman interference in the management of the network, and – potentially – a late initiative from Marseille could have been part of its domain's enlargement, also shown in Agde from the middle of the 2nd century BC on (see below). However, *Rhône* was neither an active city nor a true market place and, if we have to see this encouragement to Marseille as a largesse granted by the Republic to its ally, it would be of very little interest.

Ultimately, it is difficult to believe that there was – at any time – a strong Greek circuit. The Massalian ships perhaps frequented this port, but they never represented the main trading force. The number of Punic products, always higher than that of Greek ones, leans toward the fast, and perhaps even immediate, affiliation of *Rhône* to the Punic network, as already proposed¹⁰² and confirmed by archaeological material as well as by the coins, even at *Empòrion*.¹⁰³

In the end, the difficulties in supporting the western Greek trade network toward the continent caused the collapse of Béziers I/*Rhône* and could well justify the transfer of its trading activities to Iberian *Rhône* with a part of its inhabitants, under cover of a non-Greek but flourishing network accepting this contribution.

⁹⁷ Puig and Martin 2006 (eds): 255–259; Puig 2015. M. Py, in *Dicocer²*: 1217–1218 (as well as in the current online version, s.v. *Roses*, accessed September 20, 2017), is seeing only a relationship with Attic vases and Italian 'Petites estampilles'.

⁹⁸ The distribution of these black-glazed vases concerns mainly the lower Aude-Garonne valley, Lattes being the most eastern site with relatively numerous imports. In the Rhodanian delta and Provence, evidence seems very rare (e.g. *Olbia*, with only a few fragments: Bats 1988: 107).

⁹⁹ Massalian amphoras, rare at the beginning (375–350: 4% facing 73% of Iberian, 9% of Punic and 13% of indeterminate ones), are then increasing (350–325/300: 19% facing 32% of Iberian, 24% of Punic and 25% of indeterminate ones) and later decreasing (325/300–200: 10% facing 35% of Iberian, 37% of Punic, 3% of Greco-Italic and 13% of indeterminate ones). Other Massalian products are always very discreet: A.M. Puig, in Puig and Martin 2006 (eds): 563–574.

¹⁰⁰ Puig and Martin 2006 (eds): 176–178.

¹⁰¹ Puig and Martin 2006 (eds): 620.

¹⁰² Principal-Ponce 1998: 182–183.

¹⁰³ Villaronga 2000: 35–40. Garcia-Bellido 2013: 127, recalls that the last *Rhône* coins were minted on Sardinian coins from the First Punic War.

So, for over 150 years, the Iberian settlement was a good choice for Rhodians, but the affair ended badly and sounded the death knell of the Rhodian/Dorian entity in the north-western Mediterranean.

The Ionian-Roman phase: Agàthe ‘pòlis of Marseille’

The Greek presence along the western French coast is not over with, following the end of the ‘Rhodian saga’, but it takes a long time before it comes to light again because between 275–250 and 150 BC occupation traces are non-existent in Agde. Ships could still stop in the meanwhile, but did not – or little – deposit material in this almost empty area.

Starting from *c.* 150 BC, in the aftermath of events involving Rome, its ally Marseille was gradually at the head of an enlarged domain whose outlines the written sources do not fully specify, but – in any case – Agde was reactivated.¹⁰⁴ This revival explains that our sources, coeval or more recent, relate – now rightly – that *Agàthe* was a ‘city of Marseille’.

This time, the political framework is linked to Marseille, but also strongly managed by the Roman power. Moreover, shortly later the Roman colony of Narbonne was founded (118 BC) and Agde’s port was surely operating with it, according to the old alliance between Marseille and Rome.¹⁰⁵

Agde saw an intense period of activity, lasting about a century. Its *chôra* covered now both the southern banks of the Hérault river and, to the north, exclusively the left one.¹⁰⁶ Many farms have been located and some of them have been partially excavated: they produced wine, had potter’s ovens – especially for amphoras, testifying to trading activities of importance. These amphoras were of an Italic model and, at present, the oldest from workshops outside of Italy.¹⁰⁷

In the port goods passed in transit for farms of this area and – perhaps mainly – for Narbonne, having not yet its own port, and for the Roman villas quickly arising after the colony’s foundation. From the sea or river, some pieces are of exceptional quality, such as the bronze statue of the famous ‘Ephèbe’ or ‘Alexandre d’Agde’, whose chronology is much discussed (original from the end of the 4th century, copy or even pastiche from the 2nd century BC?),¹⁰⁸ those of the two children¹⁰⁹ and many other works of art.

This last phase of *Agàthe* began to see decline in the second half of the 1st century BC, as the probable consequence of Marseille’s role in the dispute between Caesar and Pompey and its

¹⁰⁴ After 154 BC, Marseille took possession of Oxybian and Deciate lands (Polybius, 33.8.12) surrounding *Antipolis* and *Nikaia*; after 125–123 BC, of the Salyan littoral east of the city (Strabo 4.1.5); in 102 BC due to Marius, the *Fossae Marianae* canal (Strabo 4.1.8). Strabo seems even to consider that Marseille had to wait for the Romans to dominate a large domain. Nothing is said about the western area precisely at this time, but textual and archaeological sources testify to the Massalian takeover on Agde, which likely occurred in the middle of the 2nd century BC.

¹⁰⁵ Ugolini 2001b-c; Bérard-Azzouz and Ugolini 2008; Ugolini and Olive 2012b.

¹⁰⁶ Gomez 2010: 348–531, fig. 194–195, 270–271.

¹⁰⁷ Gomez 2002; 2010: 350–411; 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Most recently: *De l’éphèbe à Alexandre*.

¹⁰⁹ Most recently: Mille *et al.* 2012.

fall under Caesar's siege (49 BC). Agde was then little by little abandoned and did not become a city of the 'Narbonnaise'.¹¹⁰

Among other possible but imperceptible reasons, two are obvious: 1) after the fall, Marseille was deprived of its possessions and Agde was no longer under its protection; 2) Agde's port lost gradually all interest from the opening up of that of Narbonne (Strabo 4.1.6; Diod. Sic. 5.38.5) and the following concentration of maritime traffic.¹¹¹

Deprived of its reason for being and Greek in a world henceforth Roman, Agde was emptying in a few decades and its land was attributed to the Roman colony of Béziers, either at the time of its foundation (36 BC), or in the course of the 1st century AD.¹¹²

Conclusion

From the coastal exploration of the 7th century BC – and perhaps before – until the change of era, the Greek ups and downs in the north-western Mediterranean are now becoming more detailed.

The Ionian presence has always been known through the textual sources discussing the journey of the Samian Colaïos, the Phocaeans at Tartessos¹¹³ and the Phocaean and Massalian cities. That of the Dorians, very old but whose traces are lost from the beginning of the 2nd century BC, has gone more or less unnoticed. Recent research is showing that, in fact, it had a decisive impact in the earliest Mediterranean exchanges and, from then on, in the creation of cities, of which the main and oldest one was Béziers I, in all likelihood the first western *Rhône*.

The beginnings show the opening of the natives to Mediterranean merchants and the possibilities of exchange reciprocally offered, whose importance is especially evidenced – from Selinous to Corinth – through bronze objects of this coast found in the sanctuaries and graves of Dorian cities. The phenomenon gives credibility to the Rhodian component confusedly related by written sources, and which the modern exegesis did not take seriously.

The Greek settlement of Béziers occurs in this framework, without sources helping us to see more clearly how.

This forgotten *Rhône* – which relies today on a solid record – had to be born from opportunities seized by Rhodian adventurers and merchants¹¹⁴ rather than from an initiative planned in

¹¹⁰ Rare and weak traces during the first half of the 1st century AD (Ugolini 2001a-b, 2002a, 2008b) and a few graves (Olive, Raynaud and Schwaller 1980).

¹¹¹ Ugolini 2001b, 2002a, 2008b-c; Bérard-Azzouz and Ugolini 2008. Researches in progress in Narbonne's port increasingly highlight the complexity of its system in this lagoonal area: Sanchez and Jézégou 2011 (eds).

¹¹² Clavel-Lévêque 1982, 1999 (cadastral plan Béziers A: 1st century AD). Pérez 1990 (partly already from Caesarean time: cadastral plan Béziers E). On successive occasions between the Caesarean period and the course of the 1st century AD (Gomez 2010: 531).

¹¹³ The Phocaean electron coin lost at the middle of the 6th century at El Carambolo (Sevilla), Olmos 1995: 42–43, supports Phocaean presence in southern Iberia. Very rare, this coin had two parallels in Etruria but none in southern France. Now, a Phocaean coin close to these but in silver has been found at Béziers: Pellé, Vidal and Petitot 2015.

¹¹⁴ About the preference given in Sicily to the generic term 'Rhodians' rather than 'Dorians' cf. Malkin 2011: 72–80.

Sicily or on the other side of the Mediterranean.¹¹⁵ Links, including political ones, are to be taken into account either with Rhodes island or – more likely – with Dorian colonies of Sicily, where Gela and Selinous attract our attention.¹¹⁶

These conditions – blurred for us and, we may think, already from the last two centuries BC because the ‘Rhodian saga’ was over when the preserved texts were written – could explain the weak impact of Dorians and the vague information which is transmitted about them. At this time (2nd century BC-1st century AD), Béziers I/*Rhòde* was long abandoned (c. 300 BC) and the Gallic *Betarra* was already on the spot (c. 200 BC), Agde was in Marseille’s sphere (from c. 150 BC) and Iberian *Rhòde* already destroyed (195 BC). So, the greatest and most important Greek city of this coast was Marseille.

This situation caused uncertainties and promoted mistakes in the reading of the primary sources. Should we take into consideration the possibility that – in a way – Marseille and Phocaeans absorbed historically all the activities of all the Greeks of the north-western coast, without distinction of periods and with the forgetfulness of the other ethnic group?

At the other end of the historiographic chain, the hypothesis of a fake tradition concocted on the Rhodes island at the time of its hegemony over the Aegean Sea explains – perhaps – what was propagated through the legend of the Rhodian exploration of the far north-west at the beginning of the millennium and the foundation, there, of *Rhòde*, but not how the little Iberian *Rhòde* could have contributed to the Rhodian grandeur. And, if this foundation was the work of Marseille, it is even less clear what would have pushed the mother city to magnify the Rhodian power by adopting such a toponym and the city itself to adopt such a clear iconographic code in its coinage.

It is more logical to think that those who made these choices had an excellent reason to do so: they were not from Marseille, but from the *Rhòde* of Béziers. This reason may also explain why they helped the rebels and why the revolt of 197–195 BC was harshly repressed: these Rhodians were not under the protection of Marseille. They had other interests than those defended by Marseille, which followed Rome, and could even have believed it would benefit from their elimination.

Whatever the context and the protagonists, the oldest Greek city west of the Rhone is, for now, Béziers I and it is likely to have been older than Marseille.

From then on, one way or another and surely without a real and fixed border but instead a buffer zone in between, the Rhodanian delta divided the coastal strip into two large areas of activities and influences – as evidenced by the archaeological material – having each one a main city, whose inhabitants could have counted – perhaps in inverse proportions – Ionians and Do-

¹¹⁵ The complex relationship between a first settlement, many being an *empòrion*, and the often succeeding colony (*apoikia*) has been studied according to various concepts, including that of ‘human and resources mobility’ (Giangiulio 1996), which seems adapted to our contexts. See also the working mechanisms in Italy: Esposito 2012: 97–121. The current tendency is to prefer the term of ‘diasporas’, in the plural, rather than ‘colonisation’ in view of the very different situations observed in the Greek world (Martinez-Sève 2012 (ed)), where the mixture of colonial groups was a constant, in Marseille as elsewhere (Tréziny 2005: 57). And all this with the addition, in our countries, of Etruscans, Phoenicians-Carthaginians, Iberians and natives: in short, people from all horizons...

¹¹⁶ The origin from Sicily of the vases of the Agde-Le Peyrou necropolis was envisaged by Nickels 1989a, while Gras 2000 leaned on Etruscan copies. Now, the Launacian objects found in Sicily have to be taken into account to specify their production.

rians, as some rare Massalian documents seemingly in Dorian dialect could show.¹¹⁷ And, during the 7th–5th centuries, the dynamics between Greeks and natives centred on Béziers I could attest – with all cautions – to a colonial scenario operating similar to that observed in Italy, especially in Dorian Sicily, while we do not have the same evidence for Marseille, perhaps so far at this time.

No conflict of interest or war between the two cities is reported and nothing suggests the supremacy of the one over the other. They evolved in different human and geographical environments with different aims, the one focusing on land and the other on sea, but in a common profit through a continuous relationship within a ‘colonial network’,¹¹⁸ mixed in this case, maybe through *sympoliteia*.

Anyway and whatever the organisation, the general feeling is that the two cities supported each other in a working system for three centuries. The relationship surely changed with the foundation of Iberian *Rhòde* and its involvement in a non-Greek circuit.

All in all, it is not surprising that Dorians do not stand out clearly in the north-western story. On the one hand, the virtual lack of inscriptions in our Greek cities allows the Dorian dialect to appear only exceptionally and the proposal of a Dorian reading of the ΝΙΚΙΑ and ΙΩΝ·Σ stamps on Iberian *Rhòde*’s vases to be received coldly.¹¹⁹

So, the linguistic argument is hopeless since our written documents are rare and not explicit enough. Moreover, in the long run, the mix of ethnic groups had to blur the vernacular differences, or the Ionian dialect imposed itself. The coins in Ionian dialect of Iberian *Rhòde* would be an example, as also on some coins of Rhodes island, but the contrary is shown by the Dorian legend on Massalian coins.¹²⁰

Furthermore, to use the oldest imports of a colony to define the origin of settlers is hazardous, since direct arrivals from production centres or mother cities are unlikely on our coast, at the margins of the main Mediterranean networks. So, we find – from *c.* 600 until the third quarter of the 6th century – ‘Ionian’ and ‘Corinthian’ products in little quantities while Etruscan ones, mostly amphoras, are abundant. We have to take into account the fact that ships, wherever they came from, made a stopover in Etruscan ports where was unloaded a (large?) part of the cargo, then necessarily replaced with another, which was Etruscan. This one was arriving to our shores, showing the ‘end of a journey’ or ‘what was left’ or ‘what was last loaded’. And, on the whole, our Greek sites are poor in Archaic Greek imports when compared with any southern Mediterranean site, Greek or not.

In the end, the Rhodian legend turns out to be a genuine historical movement, somewhat blurred, but of importance. The Rhodians were really the first Greeks to explore the north-western Mediterranean coast, as sources claim, and gave rise to the exchange dynamic driving the

¹¹⁷ On a Massalian pithos, found in a Hellenistic context of Saint-Blaise but perhaps from the 6th century, appears an inscription incised before cooking, twice repeated, with a digamma (?): ΜΡΡΕΣΙΚΟΣ (Bertucchi 1992: 195–196: the word was brought closer to μυρετσικός and translated as ‘(perfumed) wine’); a digamma on amphoric Massalian stamps of the 5th or the 4th centuries (Bertucchi 1992: 156, fig. 78, no. 284); coin series of the 5th century with inscription ΜΑΣΣΑΛΙΟΤΑΝ instead of ΜΑΣΣΑΛΙΟΤΩΝ (Richard and Chevillon 2005; Chevillon 2014).

¹¹⁸ Morel 1997.

¹¹⁹ Duran 1999 proposed this reading through comparisons with texts especially from Sicily. Pena 2006: 45, rejects it because the relationship with Sicily for the genitive ΝΙΚΙΑ, (leading M. Duran to suppose Sicilian immigrants to *Rhòde*) seems to her irrelevant; because she sees a point and not a miniaturised omicron in the small circular sign of ΙΩΝ·Σ; because the genitive ΙΩΝΟΣ is correct in Ionian Attic. However, the link with Dorians and Sicily is much more likely now than it was before.

¹²⁰ ΙΕΛΥΣΙΩΝ instead of ΙΑΛΥΣΙΩΝ: Head 1897, p. 226, n^o 1, pl. XXXV, 1. Massalian coins: see note 118.

foundation of colonies. So, Ionians were not alone: Dorians were there earlier and stayed for over four centuries, before leaving or melting into the Massalian component of the ‘Midi’ from the beginning of the 2nd century BC onwards.

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