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Occupying the Provençal Hinterland: An analysis of the Iron Age oppida in mainland Provence

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Olivier VÉDY



Cover image: The exterior walls of Piégu (Rougiers), as seen from the east.

*Photographed by the Archaeological Centre of the Var (Centre Archéologique du Var, or CAV) in 1998, sourced from Eligis Culture
(https://www.culture.eligis-web.com/?search_hash=1657baa9cc63c9)*

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An analysis of the Iron Age oppida in mainland Provence

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Final draft

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ABSTRACT

The Iron Age hillfort phenomenon, or the 'oppidum' as it is referred to in mainland Europe, represents an important shift in the spatial and political dynamics in the areas where they can be found but despite the archaeological research going as far back as the 19th century, there still exist debates surrounding their function and what role they ultimately played in the socioeconomic dynamics of the people constructing and inhabiting them. In southern France we find them scattered across a frontier connecting the Ligurian and Celtic people to the Etruscans and to the Eastern Mediterranean through the Greek settlers who, after the foundation of Massalia around 600 B.C, form a permanent presence greatly influencing the material repertoire of the indigenous populace. Through the interactions between the occupants of the oppida with their local surroundings as well as with foreign cultures, and through the analysis of these monumental structures, it can be seen that the military function can be put into question and that the symbolic value may have been a more important factor to their builders.

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Occupying the Provençal hinterland: An analysis of the Iron Age oppida in mainland Provence

Introduction

During my researching of the subject, I have come to find that the existence of Iron Age hillforts in the predominately Celtic world can best be described as paradoxical. The phenomenon, considered emblematic of the Iron Age, has led to the presence of monumental ruins covering the regions stretching from British Isles to the Carpathian Basin, and yet there is arguably no aspect of any European Iron Age civilisation that remains more ambiguous. Sites that have been labelled as ‘oppida’ show great differences in regards to how they were seemingly used, where they were constructed and even in morphology with diverse construction methods and varying degrees of size and grandeur. Sites like Manching in Germany cover hundreds of hectares of flatland with a rounded enclosure (Moore et al., 2023), while others like České Lhotice in Bohemia cover only a few dozen hectares on a small hill (Danielisová, 2008). This is without mentioning the wide chronological range during which such sites were occupied and subsequently abandoned, only to be reoccupied at later dates. The differences between the many oppida are indeed so great that questions have been raised on whether or not many of these sites even belong to the same phenomenon (Gardes, 2017). It is indeed a great irony that the most notable and impressive structures see the least amount of consensus regarding its role in the societies that constructed them. More surprising still is that the region featuring the densest amount of Late Iron Age oppida (fig. 1) has only lately been the subject of discussions that favour not only the material remains but also a theoretical approach when interpreting the phenomenon. This region, known as Provence, found in the south-east of France, has been the subject of archaeological research for some time, but few sites have been able to benefit from new approaches that both processualists and post-processualists have made introduced. More recently however, authors such as P. Gardes (2006; 2017a; 2017b) and O. Buchsenschutz (2014), among others, have taken a more theoretical approach to the interpretation of oppida in general, but fewer have done so in Provence specifically, which has ultimately inspired me to write on this subject.



Fig. 1. Map of France showing the concentration of hillforts during the Second Iron Age.

Taken from Couderc & Vallée, 2022, p.14

If we accept that the many differences between every site is dependent on both geographical (meaning physical) factors and cultural (meaning social) factors, then there are few regions that are as diverse and complex as the southern French coast, particularly the eastern coastal and alpine region. Between the Rhone delta and Maritime Alps lies Provence, which housed during the Iron Age a multicultural interface, directly connecting the Greek and Italian world to the indigenous Gallic peoples, and although major sites like Massalia and Entremont have seen thorough analyses (André & Charrière, 1998; Sinner, 2018), the same cannot be said about the sites found within the hinterland. As I will discuss later on, it houses an impressive number of oppida, and a more detailed level of study in such areas may provide crucial information about the culture and dynamics of indigenous populations, as well as their relations with foreign settlements. Although the function of the oppidum is unclear, its importance to the concerning period should not be underestimated, which is why I believe the study of Gallic civilisation through the lens of these oppida to be greatly relevant. But all of this begs the question: What was the significance of the oppidum in Provence during the Iron Age? Through the study of a multitude of sites in the region, what can be said about their morphology? What was their function? And how does this illustrate the socioeconomic dynamics of a peripheral region? Due to the diversity in structure and the material found, we may expect these sites to have multiple purposes, potentially fulfilling new needs of local communities, possibly as a result of new challenges and pressure due to changes that occur during or before the Iron Age. In this paper I will attempt to tackle these questions through the study and critique of previous theoretical analyses and discussions, additionally I will analyse the material finds and sites of the region, creating a small database of a specified area to interpret the oppidum while

having a better understanding of the indigenous material culture. Before I will give an analysis of the region's oppida and archaeological data, I will firstly provide the historiographical context of the discourse surrounding the phenomenon and, to an extent, the Iron Age in general. This retrospective will be followed by a critical review of both the past and current rhetoric concerning the subject, followed by a clarification of the definition I will use to conduct my analyses. It would be appropriate to begin the analysis of the region and its many Iron Age sites only after discussing the theoretical discourse, the subsequent chapter will thusly concern the region itself and its geomorphological characteristics, followed by a chronological overview of region's archaeological research and past. Subsequently, the available data and the nature of said data will be listed, using this, I expect to interpret the presence and nature of the oppida as well as their relation to the spatial dynamics in the region in the following chapter. In said chapter the Provençal oppida will be analysed and compared with similar sites through an intra and interregional lens.

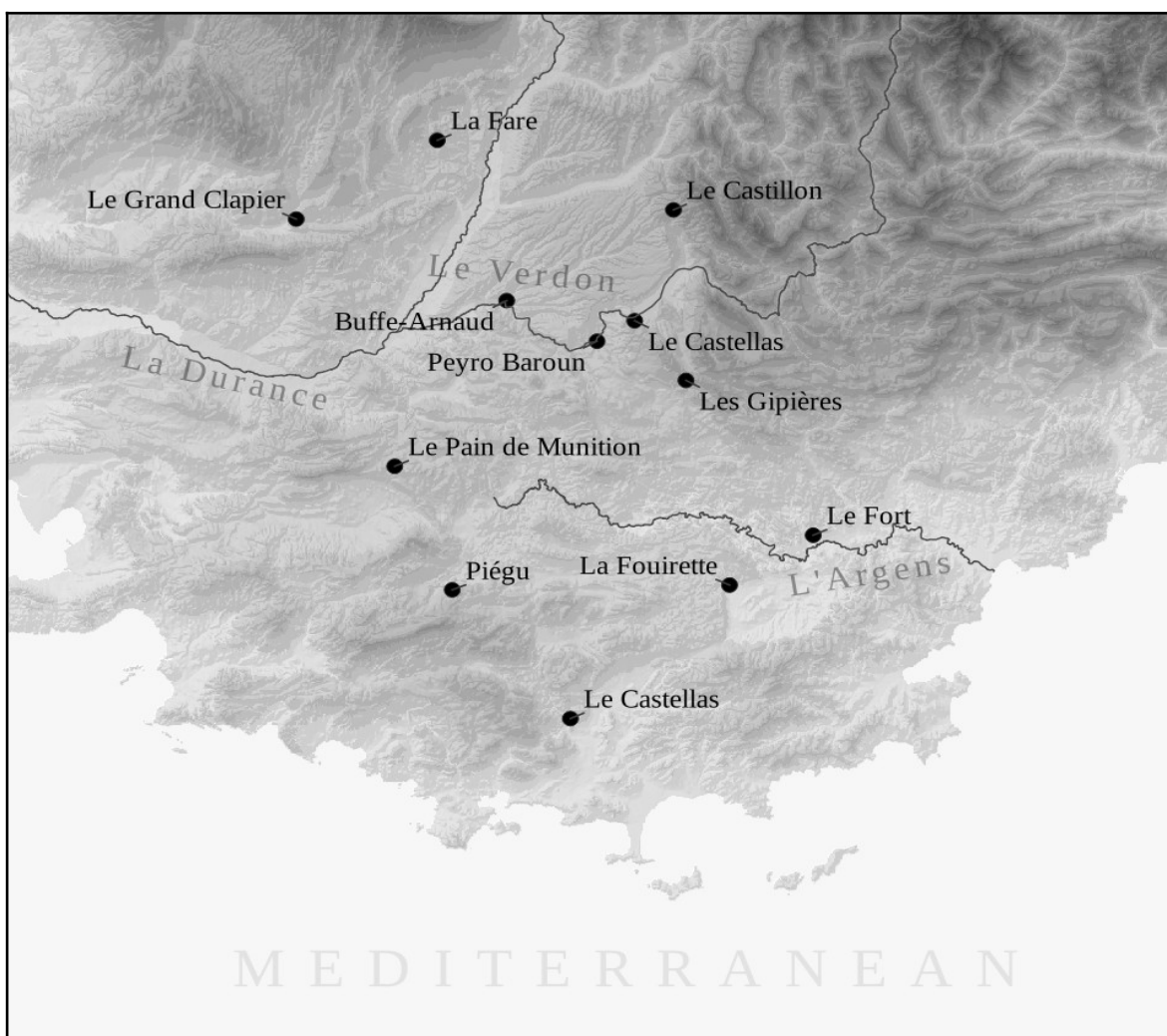


Fig. 2.
Map of the main sites mentioned in this paper.

Created by author.

I – The ‘Oppidum Culture’: A retrospective

This first chapter will be dedicated to contextualizing our current knowledge and the discourse surrounding the oppidum phenomenon, and to an extent, the Iron Age in general. Starting with the more generalized foundational works by authors such as Christian J. Thomsen (1788 – 1865) and Joseph Déchelette (1862 – 1914), all the way to the works of contemporary archaeologists like Philippe Gardes and Vladimir Salač. I will follow this up with a clarification regarding the definition of the term ‘oppidum’.

I.1. The historiographical context

To more novice members of the contemporary archaeological community where the collection of material data often precedes the stages of abductive analysis, it may be surprising to some to learn that the initial hypotheses regarding the chronological division of late prehistory were based off scarcely any physical finds (Heizer, 1962, p. 259). In truth, the ‘three-age system’ introduced by Christian J. Thomsen in his 1836 “Nordisk Oldkyndighed” (Thomsen, 1836) was an already existing theory proposed most famously by Lucretius in the 1st century B.C. The difference with Thomsen’s hypothesis being that the latter based it off of museum as well as his own collections of artefacts, backing up his ideas with at least some amount of material evidence. This would in turn give it an increased sense of legitimacy (Heizer, 1962). This purely typological analysis of archaeological material is how the theoretical framework amongst archaeologists can broadly be characterised until the latter half of the 20th century and this is no exception in Joseph Déchelette’s manuals on prehistoric archaeology.

The “Manuel d’Archéologie Préhistorique, Celtique et Gallo-Romaine” was published between 1908 and 1914 in two volumes consisting of six parts in total, herein was written a synthesis of the period spanning from the Palaeolithic to the Gallo-Roman period. It was and has remained a key work in the field of archaeology both in and outside of France, featuring an extremely detailed rundown on the knowledge of the time concerning french prehistory. Being a product of its time, it does see a heavy reliance on typology as a method of identification of cultures and civilisations. This is not to undermine the importance or usefulness of his works, and in some chapters there is no shortage of interpretation found amidst the catalogues of artefacts, but it illustrates the theoretical framework that caused Déchelette to write about the oppida as an identifier of the “Celtic” culture (Déchelette, 1914, p. 942), rather than the result of a specific socioeconomic climate or a particular process of urban development. Despite this somewhat two-dimensional understanding of the oppidum, the study concerning them was not new and had seemingly improved, as previous 19th century authors tended to analyse such sites through the lens of, or at least with great influence from, ancient textual sources. Whereas Léon Fallue writes in 1855 “Un oppidum gaulois n'affectait donc pas d'autre forme que celle du terrain qu'il occupa.” (“A Gallic oppidum thusly affected no other terrain but that which it

occupied.”) (Fallue, 1855, p. 445), and bases a significant part of his analysis on the writings of Julius Caesar, we see Déchelette present a more nuanced image of the oppidum capable of existing in a multitude of forms not just dependent on the morphology of the hilltop. The increase in the number of discovered sites and the increased care and investment for archaeological research around the turn of the 1900s is certainly evident, but it is not until the 1970s that an institutionalized organisation for archaeological research is created following the renewed interest in ancient architecture during the post-war period. We thusly see in 1973 the creation of the “Association pour les Fouilles Archéologiques Nationales”, predecessor to INRAP established in 2001 (Institut National des Recherches Archéologiques Préventives, 2016).

More sites of often more variable scale have been excavated or prospected in more recent times due to the creation of this institutionalized organisation with which to conduct formal research with, it has additionally allowed for a systematic approach to data collection. This brings us to today where a sizeable catalogue of Iron Age sites in France has since been established, which has in turn made the study of the period and its phenomena a more accessible endeavour.

Despite the advances the archaeological community has seen, the current intellectual landscape, specifically in France, has seen a certain level of criticism particularly from their anglophone peers in regards to their current theoretical paradigm which has created a rift between the two nation’s schools of thought.

I.2. The discourse concerning the oppidum

Where France saw the institutionalisation of its archaeological agencies, the anglophone communities saw the rise of a new school of thought which sought to move away from the overly typological approach from the academics preceding them. New archaeology, or processual archaeology, sought to focus on a more anthropological perspective as a reaction to traditional archaeology (Johnson, 2010, p. 42), it has since its inception defined the theoretical framework in English speaking countries, particularly in the United States and Great Britain. In the 1980s these scientific communities saw the advent of another school of thought which could broadly be characterised by its rejection of the notion of scientific objectivity (Johnson, 2010, p. 134), in favour of a more socially relative approach, focusing often on the individual during the interpretation of data. However influential these approaches may have been, it can be said that they have made little to no impact in French academia, where the old theoretical method of analysis through typology still remains the most dominant approach. The reasoning behind this evokes a complex discussion about European history, identity and state policy (Coudart, 1999), a discussion too long for me to unpack here, but pointing out this rift is essential when attempting to understand the current discourse surrounding the study of the Iron Age in France, let alone French archaeology in general.

Although I find it arguable that the negative effect of such a conservative paradigm has been to some extent exaggerated, since there has been a shift in attention from the study of grave sites to the socioeconomic dynamics of the oppida (Bagan, 2007; Py, 1984; Salač, 1993). There is no doubt that the reliance on the ‘old

school' approach has left its mark in the French archaeological community, something which can be seen as well in the aforementioned studies. This shift in focus, which has moved archaeologists away from the concerns regarding the establishing of a chronology through monuments physically separate from the oppida, has been particularly evident in recent years. Authors like Olivier Buchsenschutz in "*Citadelles celtiques: défense, prestige et opportunisme*" (2014) and Claude Salicis in "*Dévotion indigène et cultes Préromains: Hypothèse d'interprétation de certaines structures de sommet dans les Alpes-Maritimes*" (2007), amongst others (Deyber, 2013; Gardes, 2017; Moret, 2017), have moved away from the purely materialistic approach, whilst not abandoning it, and have been analysing the role of the oppida through spatial dynamics and 'systems'. In Ghislain Bagan's 2007 publication, the association between different sites and the analysis of social relations through the spatial repartition, closely follows M. Johnson's understanding of the processual school of thought, with the "emphasis on systems" (Johnson, 2010, p. 46) being evidently present in Bagan's work. So although Anick Coudart (1999) claims that post-processualism has made no impact amongst French archaeologists, the same could not be said about processualism which has seeped into the discourse surrounding, amongst other subjects, the Iron Age and its oppida.

I.3. Defining the oppidum

Considering this paper relates specifically to the oppidum rather than the Iron Age in general, I want to take the opportunity to properly define what I am talking about when referring to the term. From a glance it may seem to refer to a specific type of structure present in a particular area of Europe which saw its rise during the second Iron Age, between the 5th and 1st century B.C. But as one delves deeper into the subject, one might notice that the term 'oppidum' is rarely defined the same way twice: Déchelette, like all early 20th and 19th century scholars, bases his definition off of Caesar's descriptions, which defines the oppidum as a fortified city or town (Déchelette, 1914, p. 947). However, this initial definition has the unfortunate side effect of dealing with the same bias with which Caesar wrote of his experience in Gaul, and as it turned out, sites labelled as oppida sometimes did not match his own definition (Gardes, 2017). As P. Moret stated in his 2017 article: "le terme oppidum regroupe des établissements de nature très diverse" ("*The term oppidum refers to settlements of a very diverse nature*") (p. 174), this diversity has seemingly prevented scholars from creating a consensus regarding the definition, and to add on to the confusion, we see the use of a vast array of terms referring to a multitude of attributes or concepts sometimes only vaguely associated with the oppida themselves. Like the 'castella' Déchelette mentions (Déchelette, 1914, p. 947) which refer to fortified outposts, a description which in some contexts could match that of the oppidum. Additionally terms like 'muris gallicus', 'urbes', 'hillfort', and even 'civitas' are sometimes used interchangeably with oppidum, so all in all, I believe it to be important to specify what I am referring to when using the term.

My use of the word will be in a regional context, meaning I will base it on the characteristics which define the oppidum in said region. Sites like Manching have shown that the oppida do not limit themselves to

hilltops or similarly strategic emplacements, in the case of Provence, there is no evidence for sites of this nature to be placed on low lying land, meaning in this case, the 'oppidum' refers to a walled 'enceinte' located on strategically advantageous terrain, be they mountaintops, hilltops or cliffs. The most ambiguous aspect of the oppidum is in truth not its morphology but its function, being that the oppidum as a 'city' is presumptuous of its role and importance in Iron Age society, I believe it is most appropriate to characterise the oppidum using the more general term 'settlement', be it a permanent settlement or not. As a result we will consider the oppidum and the castella to be part of the same phenomenon despite Déchelette's choice to separate the two concepts. We will also ignore the association many authors create between the La Tène culture and the oppida, data I will elaborate upon in a later chapter has shown that the phenomenon precedes the emergence of the aforementioned culture, I separate these concepts from one another also to avoid the presumption of the occupants' identities, and to distance my analysis from the culture-history framework in favour for a socioeconomic perspective. Finally, the definition will not concern the chronological period after the conquest of Gaul, as the spatial and socioeconomic dynamics see a dramatic shift due to the Roman presence, despite the continued existence of some oppida. The particular characteristics of the oppida will be tackled in a case by case basis in chapter III, but to summarize: When referring to the oppida, I will be referring to the fortified structures found in the area between north-east Iberia, Gaul, southern Germany, Bohemia and the Pannonian Basin, constructed starting from the 7th century B.C to the conquest of Gaul. Using the Provençal region as reference, these structures exist on naturally strategic advantageous locations and can exist in a great variety of shapes and sizes with their purpose varying from site to site.

So with this clearer definition of the oppidum, we can more easily analyse the particularities of the phenomenon in a specific region, the next step will be to define this region, and understand its characteristics which have cause the indigenous population to adapt the way it did to its environment. This is especially interesting in our case, because as we will see, the region of Provence sets itself apart both due to its geology, ecology and archaeological context.

II – Provence: An exceptionally diverse landscape in Gaul

II.1. Establishing our research area

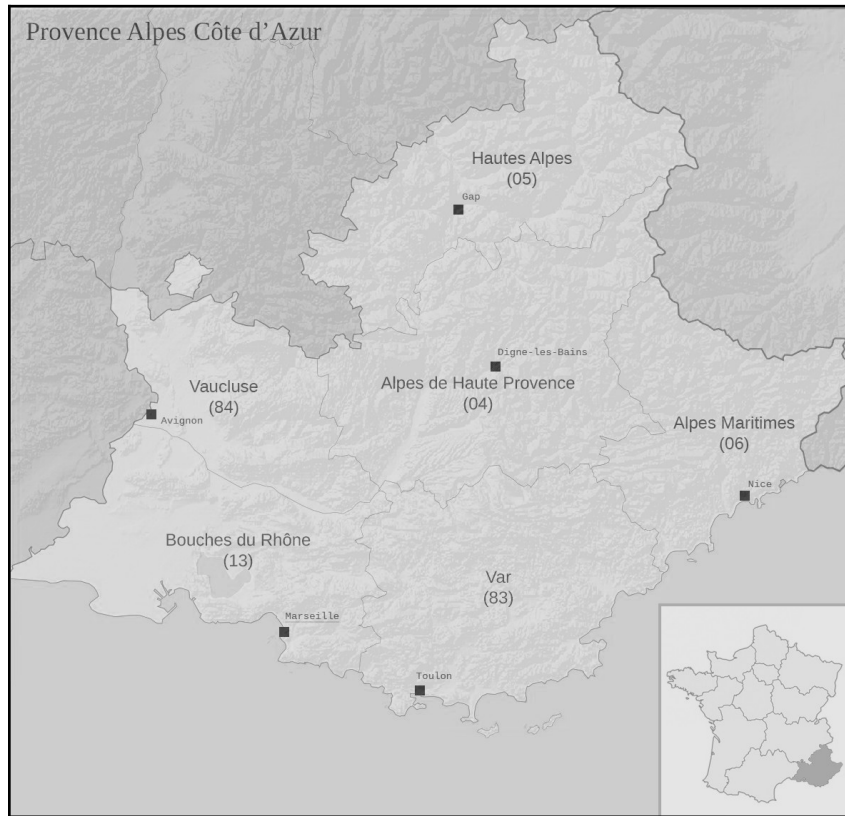


Fig. 3. Administrative map of the region of Provence Alpes Côte-d'Azur with its local capitals.

Image created by author.

Our research area concerns a particular area found in the south-eastern corner of mainland France, part of the oriental side of the linguistic and cultural region of Languedoc. It is found within the administrative region of Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur or PACA, which is composed of six departments: Les Bouches du Rhône (13), Le Vaucluse (84), Le Var (83), Les Alpes Maritimes (06), Les Alpes de Haute Provence (04) and Les Hautes Alpes (05) (fig. 3). As the name implies, the region features multiple spaces that transcend the administrative borders or the department. The Côte d'Azur, a term introduced in 1887 by the poet Stéphen Liégeard (Liégeard, 1887), refers to the Mediterranean coast between Marseille and Liguria, although it sees no concrete definition and is often used today to refer to the Varois and Maralpine coasts, specifically between the cities of Toulon and Menton. The Alps in PACA cover a significant portion of the region, with only a small part being located below an altitude of 500 meters, particularly in the Rhone valley and in the Argens valley. Amongst these three terms, Provence is the only space which is defined by a historical cultural identity, because of this it is found to be overlapping with the previously mentioned spaces, covering the Côte d'Azur entirely, and the Alps for a significant part (fig. 4).

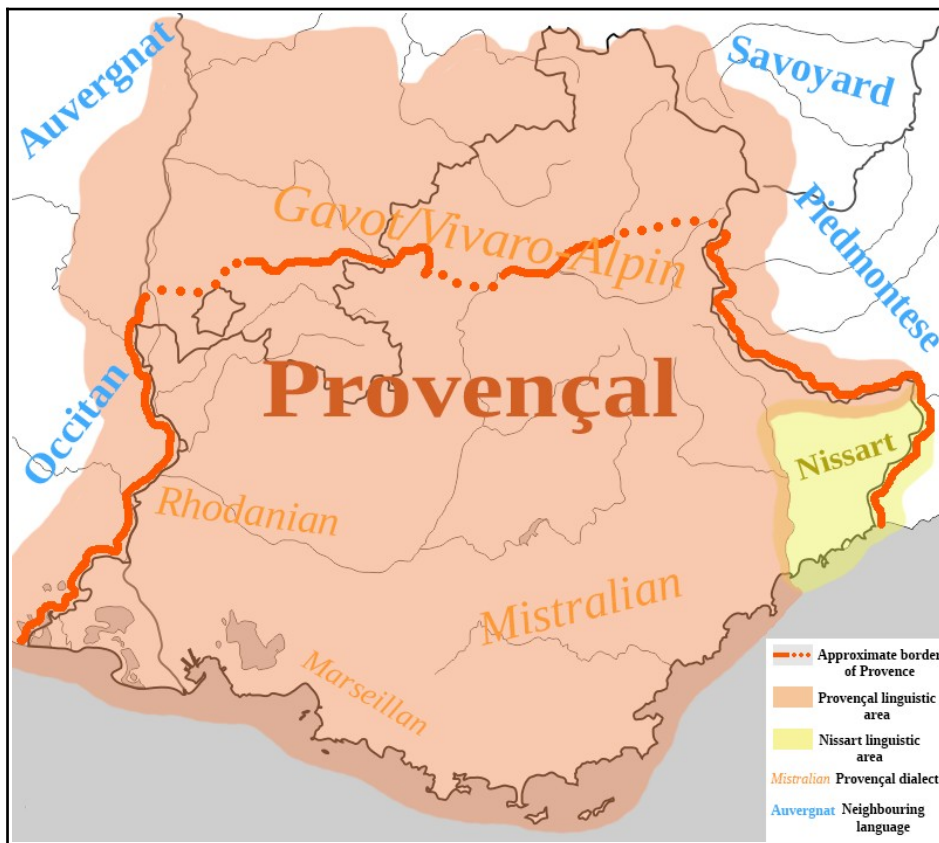


Fig. 4. Linguistic map of Provence and its cultural borders.

Created by author.

Based on information from Pagni, 2020.

On a national scale, the region of Provence is considered to be a part of the Languedoc, a geo-linguistic term referring to the Occitan linguistic group, with Languedoc being a portmanteau of ‘*Langue*’ (‘Language’) and ‘*d’Oc*’, short for ‘*d’Occitanie*’ (‘from Occitania’). On a regional scale, Provence houses a multitude of regional dialects (fig. 4).

The geographic limits of Provence do not have any official borders, but the poet Frédéric Mistral (1830 – 1914), a major figure and promoter of Occitan language and culture, has offered a definition of its borders in his 1878 Provençal to French dictionary “*Lou Tresor dóu Felibrige*”. His definition for ‘*Prouvenço*’ states the following:

“La Provence, pays de France borné à l’orient par les Alpes, au midi par la Méditerranée, à l’occident par le Rhône et au nord par une ligne qui peut aller d’Embrun à Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux. Nice et Monaco en font partie et Aix en est la capitale.”

“Provence, a territory in France limited in the East by the Alps, in the South by the Mediterranean sea, in the West by the Rhone and in the North by a frontier that can extend from Embrun to Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux. Nice and Monaco are part of it and Aix (Aix-en-Provence) is its capital.” (p. 658)

Due to its liminal nature, the PACA region houses a multitude of different landscapes and geological formations which have affected and defined the way people have settled the land. This contrast does not limit itself to the dichotomy between the Alps and the Mediterranean coast, as along the latter alone we see a great number of geological formations through which it can be divided. Broadly speaking however, Provence can be categorized into two geological spaces: the 'crystalline Provence' and 'limestone Provence', the former housing the Tanneron (or Estérel) massif, the Maures massif and the Permian basin which separates it from the northern limestone formations (Crevola & Pupin, 1994). This area, as the name suggests, is defined by its geological makeup consisting of metamorphic and volcanic rock formations. The latter covers the rest of Provence, in the West this limestone landscape manifests itself through a row of massifs, in the centre it has led to the formation of deep limestone basins and plateaus and in the East we see a prealpine formation of tightly packed mountain chains that form the 'arch of Castellane'.

This karstic landscape in the Varois department can best be illustrated by areas like the plateau of Canjuers which sees the presence of many chasms and avens (Nicod, 2004). A better known marker of this limestone landscape is the Verdon river and its canyon located North and West to Canjuers, this river takes its source at Allos some 60 kilometres from where it starts to dig into the limestone to form what is now known as the Verdon canyons, which can be divided into three sections: The high canyons which spans from the municipality of Rougon to Aiguines, the middle canyons, between Baudinard-sur-Verdon and Quinson, and the low canyons, which spans from Quinson to Gréoux-les-Bains where after 10 kilometres it joins the Durance river. These canyons also mark the border between the departments of the Var and Alpes de Haute-Provence and form the centre of a regional natural park. The Verdon river is only a tributary of the Durance river who, starting from Sisteron approximately 50 kilometres as the crow flies, forms a wide river valley covering what is referred to as the 'Moyenne Durance'. This valley separates through a seismic fault the mostly Cretaceous Luberon Massif to the West from the Oligocene plateau of Valensole to the East (Cushing et al., 2008). The final major geological formation within the concerned area is the previously mentioned arch of Castellane and Digne, a subalpine limestone formation bordering the Lower Provençal basins and plateaus as well as the Valensole formation (Jorda et al., 1992), this area is mostly marked by a tight row of mountain chains that form what is called the 'préalpes' (pre-Alps).

Our interest lies specifically in the formerly mentioned areas of Provence. My reasoning behind this choice is based not only on the area's interesting geography but also its perceived interest in archaeology, because compared to the littoral regions it has received less attention. Additionally it concerns a population less influenced by Greek colonial settlements, thus possibly representing indigenous strategies in a more authentic manner. The area which I have chosen to study can thusly be defined as area encompassing the Varois limestone basins and plateaus that follow the Argens river, the area surrounding the Verdon canyons as well as the region surrounding the plateau of Valensole (fig. 5).

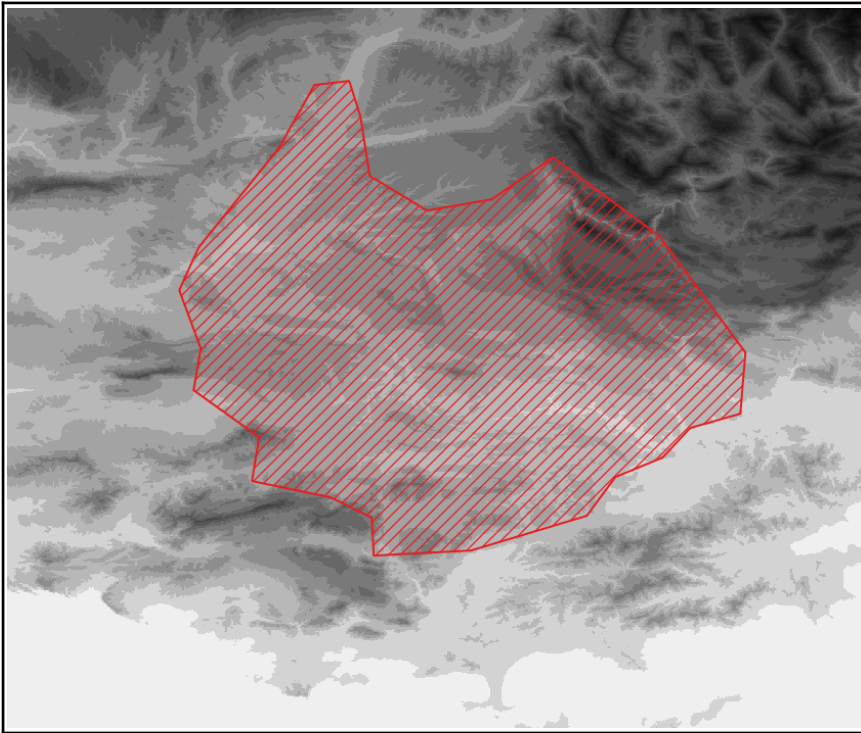


Fig. 5
Map with the approximate
borders of the area of interest.

Image created by author.

II.2. A Celtic or Ligurian landscape?

As I have eluded to previously, research in the area of central Provence away from the Mediterranean coast has usually taken a back seat, though this is of course not without reason. Much of the archaeological understanding of the Second Iron Age in Provence, the period largely associated with the oppida, has been through the lens of the economic relations between Greek colonists and indigenous populations, we can argue that much more is known about the sites of Massalia (Marseille), Antipolis (Antibes), Olbia (Hyères) and Nikaea (Nice), than is known about the people whose coasts are occupied by these Greek colonial settlements. We could for example compare the research done between sites like Massalia and Saint-Blaise, with the latter usually being researched through the lens of the former (Rolland, 1949). But considering the reliability of the Greek archaeological record in comparison with that of their indigenous neighbours this would make sense, after all, the dating of oppida is made significantly easier when one finds Massalian pottery than if one were to only find indigenous ceramics as I will later discuss further. Another neighbouring region which has been subject to study before the 19th century is to the North in the Alps in the Ubaye valley some 60 kilometres to the Verdon canyons. It has seen excavations during the latter half of the 19th century (Bourvéau-Ravoux, 2011, p. 8), more relevant to the Iron Age however, it served as the major source for artefacts for figures like Dr. Antoine Ollivier and Saint-Marcel Eysseric. Members of the ‘Scientific and Literary Society of the Alps of High Provence’ (*Société scientifique et littéraire des Alpes de Haute-Provence*) after its founding in 1878, Dr. Ollivier and Eysseric were curators of a significant number of Bronze and Iron Age artefacts found within and around the Ubaye valley and these artefacts often originated

from funerary contexts (Bourvéau-Ravoux, 2011, p. 6). There are two reasons for why I have chosen to bring this up, it firstly illustrates the implied scarcity of oppida in the Alpine regions meaning our frame of reference may only be based on the coastal region, but it is furthermore representative of an issue surrounding archaeological research which is seen also in our area of interest, that is the lack of context for many finds as well as the problem of clandestine excavations, much of the research done before the latter half of the 20th century was indeed conducted mostly by locals without the methodology allowing for proper interpretation (Mercuri, 2015, p. 53).

Considering our analysis of mainland Provence relies mostly on better known coastal sites, what do we know? Without getting too distracted by the topic of Greek and Italic colonisation, I argue it to be appropriate to briefly contextualise their role in the socioeconomic dynamics of the Iron Age in southern France, particularly our region of Provence. An early Greek presence in the lower Rhone valley can be attested on the site of Saint-Blaise located in the Rhone delta, the Dorian ceramics predate the foundation of Massalia around 600 B.C possibly by 80 years (Rolland, 1943). Alongside these Greek ceramics we find what could be interpreted as Etruscan pottery (Bouloumié, 1976) which illustrates the fact that a foreign presence can be attested even during the early stages of the Iron Age. The foundation of Massalia marks not the start of a permanent Greek presence but rather an intensification of it as we subsequently see the establishment of other Phocaean colonies along the southern French coast which coincides with the diminishing influence of the Etruscans (Rolland, 1949, p. 91). It would seem that during this time the indigenous presence on the coast was minimal, this is seen especially in the Huveaune valley and on sites like Marseillevéyre, both located east to Marseille, where the intensity of a Ligurian presence had been exaggerated (Bouffier et al., 2015).

I refer to the indigenous population as ‘Ligurians’, but upon studying this subject one might come across a multitude of names sometimes used interchangeably: Gauls, Ligurians, Celts, Salyes, Segobriges, before moving forward, I will briefly clarify what each term means as I believe it to be important to know what cultural identities we are talking about when analysing the oppida in Provence, knowing they can be a source of confusion and ambiguity. Amongst these names the term ‘Gaul’ is the most straightforward, being a term used to refer to the inhabitants of a geographic region corresponding roughly to France and parts of its neighbouring countries, namely Belgium and Switzerland, what concerns us more are the two terms ‘Celtic’ and ‘Ligurian’ and the relationship between these two names. Both terms refer to an ethnic identity, with the Celts occupying much of Central and Western Europe while the Ligurians are said to exist around the Ligurian Sea and parts of Provence, a strong association exists between the Celts and both the Hallstatt and La Tène culture although these are not interchangeable. According to Garcia (2006), the distinction is made according to the Greek settlers through their spatial significance, the first, ‘Keltike’, being a geographic term, the second, ‘Liguria’, being a term referring to “the area frequented as a place of exchanges and confrontation.” (p. 73). Here the sociocultural dynamics are presented as being far more homogenous than heterogeneous, this may also explain the common use of the term ‘Celto-Ligurian’ particularly in Provence,

although it is argued that it could simply be a general denomination for Gauls living North of Massalia (Garcia, 2006, p. 70). Lastly the Salyes and Segobriges are confederations of people, much less cultural entities than they are political, with the latter occupying the region around Marseille before the arrival of the Greeks, and the former occupying a vast territory said to extend from the Durance to the Rhone river (Bats, 2019) and with their capital being Entremont. According to this understanding of the ethnic repartition of the Gallic peoples, it would be most appropriate to refer to the people occupying the oppida in Provence as being Celto-Ligurians, but as we will see, this can not be measured directly through the material culture.

II.3. The Iron Age in Provence

Before analysing the oppida themselves I believe it is important to give a brief overview of the Iron Age in Provence so that it will be easier to place the phenomenon in its proper social, cultural and political context. Due to their relevance in our analysis, I will place an emphasis on the changes seen in the material culture as well as in the architectural practices related to non-fortified structures.

The changes we see in Provence over the course of the Iron Age from the 8th to 2nd century B.C. can generally be described as phases prompted by fluctuating sources of cultural influence. According to Garcia & Vital (2006), and spoken in very general terms, these sources either originate from Occitania to the west and south-west in the form of the 'Languedocian' styles, or from continental Europe to the north and the north-east. Meanwhile we intermittently see the development of local 'Provençal' styles. The final phases of the Bronze Age see the rising influence of the continental sphere in Provence, on the other hand in the Rhone valley a Languedocian influence is maintained as can be seen through the presence of Mailhacian ceramics, this style subsequently develops during the first phases of the Iron Age into the "Suspendian" style under Etruscan and Greek influence (p. 75). The latter seemingly has little consequence on the developments in mainland Provence where a continental influence persists, though a break can be identified between a Provençal style and an alpine style, a break which bleeds into the remaining phases of the period up until the Roman conquest of Gaul (p. 75). The Second Iron Age sees, instead of the development of a style shaped by the fluxes of foreign influence, changes made on a smaller scale and seemingly changing independently from the political developments of the time. Indeed the emergence of the Salyen confederation seemingly does not affect the stylistic divide between western and eastern Provence (Verdin, 1998, p. 32).

Much less can be said about how these stylistic changes have affected the architectural practices of Iron Age peoples as, aside from the oppida, very little remains from this period. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the preferred use of organic materials or because this accurately reflects the cultural landscape, but the locations of both funerary and dwelling structures may be suggestive of the lifestyle of Provençal peoples of that time. Concerning funerary structures the most notable to be found during the Iron Age in Provence exist in the form of tumuli, initially housing non cremated inhumations until that tradition is slowly supplanted by the practice of cremation during the Second Iron Age (~450 B.C. and onwards) (Dedet, 2004). However this

form of burial remains exclusive within the society of its builders (Bérato, 2018, p. 351). Dwellings, on the other hand, show no sign of following any particular architectural practices adherent to a specific culture or, in some cases, a clear subsistence strategy (p. 359). The majority of non fortified grouped settlements can be found along the Argens river, with a particular concentration being located in the Permian basin (p. 403). Over the course of the Iron Age the patterns of settlement construction follow no straightforward urban development, rather we witness multiple phases of abandonment of non fortified settlements often in favour of perched oppida. This is true during the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., a period to which very few settlements have been attributed, yet it is preceded at the start of the Iron Age by a phase marking the relative proliferation of non fortified grouped settlements (Bérato et al., 1995, p. 60) even when the Iron Age habitat can still be characterised as heterogeneous by this time. Following this intermediary period however, we see an increase in the number of open and grouped settlements, though a general lack of architectural cohesion persists (p. 61-63). Structures relating to the religious expression of Iron Age people in Provence are also rare, as religious practices can be attested more often in the form of material offerings found in isolated depots (Bérato, 2018, p. 330). It is understood that the religious beliefs of the inhabitants can be characterised as the veneration of a sacred landscape, this may explain the lack of man-made religious structures during much of the Iron Age as there simply existed no need to construct them (Arcelin et al., 1992, p. 185). During the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. however, we see the advent of sculptures representing the public expression of cultural practices, these exist most famously in the form of statues depicting seated warriors often holding the decapitated heads of its enemies (p. 201).

I justify the brevity of this overview due to my belief that the cultural and socioeconomic conditions of the Iron Age can further be understood through the oppida. I therefore dedicate the next chapter entirely to this phenomenon as it exists in our selected region.

III – The Provençal oppida

III.1. The Collection of data

It should be understood that this phenomenon, whilst spread over a greater part of Western and Central Europe, has shown many differences in structure morphology and building methodology. Besides potential factors like those related to social and economic differences, a major contributor to this structural diversity is in no doubt the local geography which has forced people to adapt their architectural strategies according to their immediate surroundings. Both these strategies and differing geological conditions have subsequently lead to different conditions of preservation, in the case of Provence, such conditions can be seen as favourable in some instances as the landscape can be defined as relatively dry and precipitous. The consequence is that much of the debris remains visible making structures far more obvious particularly on satellite imagery (fig. 6), though exceptions do exist. These geological and biological conditions that make such sites easier to detect may also work against its preservation, as the aforementioned conditions make the landscape more prone to frost-wedging and mass-movement processes. The oppidum of La Forteresse in Bagnols-en-Forêt for instance likely housed a greater number of dwellings that have disappeared due to it being located on an elevated plateau, whose cliffs have certainly been subjected to erosive processes since its final inhabitants have abandoned it (Desirat, 1979). Another important factor to consider is the intense rate at which the landscape has changed. During the latter two centuries much of the pine forests have reclaimed many of the hills that were previously bare as they housed open terraces intended for olive production, the gradual return of these pine forests has both reduced the visibility of such sites as well as increased the degree of floralturbation. Le Fort of Taradeau, which has proven to be an important site both in size and in activity, illustrates how these forests obscure such sites as it was only properly identified and subsequently researched after a forest fire cleared the hill on which it is located, which had made its outer walls more prominent (Brun & Congès, 1993). The advantage of sites like Le Fort is that, once discovered, they are easy to identify as being an oppidum, the excavations conducted subsequently serve not to answer this question in particular, which can not be said for sites whose ruins do not lend credence to the idea of them belonging to a prehistoric past. Specific geological processes may resemble the rings of walls one may see on some oppida, but more frustrating are the countless anthropogenic formations located on elevated terrain that may unintentionally mimic the shapes and structures of their prehistoric counterparts, such formations can often be attributed to the stone enclosures used by shepherds, although they could very well be the ruins of a more modern structure. These conditions make it impossible to reliably identify protohistoric structures without properly excavating or prospecting the premises.

Furthermore the accessibility to the archaeological data collected remains limited due to the great risk of clandestine excavations, institutions like the Service Régionale de l'Archéologie (Regional Service of Archaeology, or SRA) have made documents like reports far more exclusive. Protocol dictates that the regional, departmental and municipal archives should be provided with a copy of the reports made during archaeological operations, alongside the property owner and the team of archaeologists. I have found, however, that this is in many instances not the case, this could be due to the poor preservation of archives or poor management, but it has made the collection of data on many occasions a bigger challenge than the interpretation of information.

III.2. The oppida of Provence

Fig. 6.

Satellite imagery of the oppidum of Chamay, located in the municipality of Comps-sur-Artuby (Var).

Google Maps, satellite imagery of Chamay, retrieved June 5, 2023, from <https://www.google.com/maps/place/@43.6925841,6.4987202,381m>

The central structure is made obvious by the remaining vestiges, a third external wall can be seen to the south. While its presence is known, it has not been subjected to any excavation.



There exists no shortage of oppida in our area of interest, around the Permian basin and the Maures massif alone 73 fortified settlements have been identified out of 150 discovered sites during survey operations lead by Berato et al. (1995) which is already a significant amount when taking into consideration the fact that the Alpes Maritimes houses 303 'celto-ligurian camps' according to Chéveneau (1966). It is important to approach these claims critically however, Chéveneau himself admits there is little to no data that can be used to date these camps, and some of his criteria used to determine what can constitute as a celto-ligurian camp can be limiting and, as we will see, simply do not apply to some of the sites we will discuss. Therefore it should be considered that a great number of camps do not fit our research as chronologically they may be too heterogeneous.

For our purposes I have selected a number of sites which have either been excavated, confirmed to be oppida or highly likely are due to them fitting the characteristics one may expect from contemporary oppida, such elements may include specific architectural techniques which can be documented or textual based evidence.

The following list shortly presents these sites, with the nature of the research conducted, period of occupation and other key features.

Le Castellon (Bodard & Bretaudeau, 1989; Zerubia, 1976), located on the municipality of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie approximately 3 kilometers to the north of the village, is one of the larger and more evident oppida in the area, being colloquially referred to as “*Le camp des Ligures*” (“The camp of the Ligurians”). It finds itself dominating a hill at the foot of the Montdenier mountain chain located to its east where it overlooks the plains and valleys of the eastern Valensole plateau. It features three main walls forming a circular shape with multiple layers of fortifications, the largest of which enclose a space of 320m² (Pierre & Georges, 1989, p. 27). The first two areas the outer walls create are further divided themselves. The site has been studied twice, both times superficially, first by R. Zerubia in 1976 and a second time by P. Bodard and G. Bretaudeau in 1988, both operations garnered no material finds and the dating of the site was seemingly done by its close association to surrounding archaeological findings (Zerubia, 1976, p. 175). In both publications it is said that the site would have favoured an occupation dating from the Neolithic to the Iron Age.

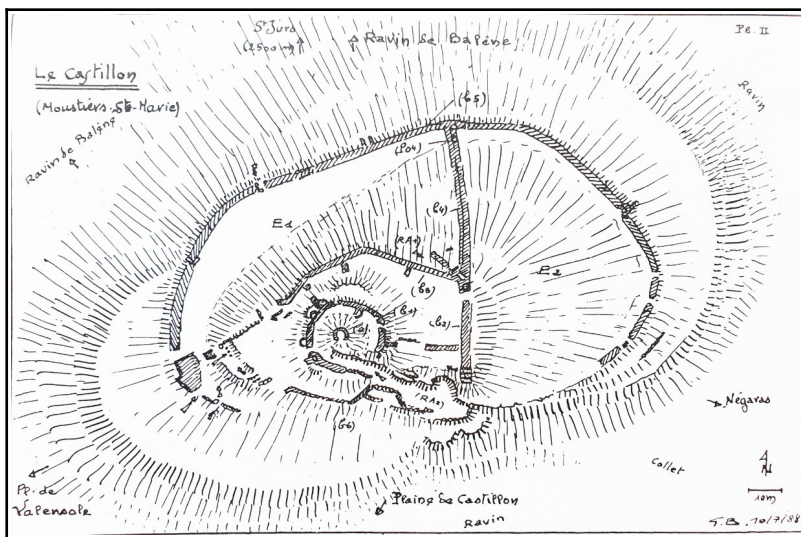


Fig. 6. Drawing of Le Castellon as seen from above.

Taken from Bodard & Bretaudeau, 1989, p.31

Clearly visible are the main spaces created by multiple rings of walls, with an additional wall dividing the oppidum in the centre.

Bufte-Arnaud (Garcia, 1993; Garcia et al., 1995) is an oppidum located in the municipality of Saint-Martin-de-Brômes, it finds itself on the north side of the Verdon river and the west side of the lower gorges while overlooking the Colostre river which, from the north-east, flows into the Verdon on the right side of the oppidum. Unlike Le Castellon, Bufte-Arnaud was extensively excavated between 1992 and 1993 after construction work threatened the site’s premises. The excavations conducted allowed for the detailed analysis of the site’s architecture: amongst the structures found within the walls were two blocks of houses, a porch tower and the walls which were built in a manner uncommonly found in Provence, but common in Occitania (Garcia, 1993). Additionally the site housed a great number of artefacts and layers pointing to the presence of a grouped habitat going back to the 6th century (Garcia et al., 1995).

Les Gipières (Boyer, 1954) represents a small and possibly temporary settlement located to the north-west of the municipality of Aups. Its location on a small hilltop flanked by the Cugulons and Espiguières mountain chains to its west and east respectively gives it a wide view over the plains of Aups and Moissac to the south. A two month excavation project took place in 1954 during which seven trenches were excavated, four of which were dug following the wall of which there exist two, one which encircles the hilltop and is contemporary with the artefacts, and another which was seemingly built during later period as it yielded no archaeological material. The range of material found point to a small scale indigenous community with the most noteworthy finds consisting of Bell Beaker ceramics and microliths, the latter would make the community contemporary with that of Croix-Solliès in Salernes located some 4 kilometres south of Les Gipières according to R. Boyer (1954, p. 21). Boyer furthermore states that the group occupying Les Gipières should be considered as a small part of a larger community, one that existed most likely before the Second Iron Age, although exact dates can not be given with the acquired data.

Le Pain de Munition (Giraud, 2000) is a large circular oppidum made up of three main walls forming somewhat of a spiral, or “heliceiform”, shape (p. 8) covering some 8km². It is located north of the municipality of Pourrières on a hill standing on a karstic plateau above the valley wherein the village is located and has been recognized since the late 19th century under the name “Annonae Munitio”. It features three enclosed spaces with the habitat being located in the centre. In terms of material the few ceramics, which is the only type of material found, would reflect only a small population that occupied the site during the latter half of the 2nd century (p. 31). The towers which are attached to the second wall, and the technique used to construct the outermost defences indicate that the oppidum was built progressively over time and not in one instance. M. Giraud points out the discrepancy between the oppidum’s monumentality and the possibly small population size and suggests the community may have benefited from an effective and large social system that would have allowed the occupants to construct such large walls.

Piégu (Baudillon, 1950; Bérato, 2018), located south to the village of Rougiers, is a small oppidum researched in 1950 through surveys. The structure, which is a single wall controlling the only access to a small part of the cliff projecting northward forming a plateau, is 3 meters wide and 60 meters long featuring a single tower. During the 1950 survey no archaeological material was found, P. Baudillon refers to the structure as “of Neolithic or Celto-Ligurian origin” (p. 1). Indeed based on the data acquired during a 1980 excavation concerning an Early Medieval structure, which has later been interpreted by J. Bérato (2018), the structure belongs to the Second Iron Age.

La Fouirette (Boyer, 1967), located in the municipality of Le Luc west of the village, is a rectangular oppidum covering an area of approximately 3km² that occupies the cliffs above the Permian basin. It was excavated in 1967 during which two surveys were done inside of the premises, here the most notable finds were the few remains of an adult skeleton and ceramics that were of indigenous origin. Furthermore the architecture of La Fouirette stands out with it being a rare example of the ‘*murus gallicus*’ technique being employed. The oppidum additionally features three towers, each placed next to a gate, these features are

indicative of complex architectural practices found in other Iron Age oppida, but we see here a dense concentration of such features in a relatively small space in opposition to the sometimes colossal oppida found elsewhere.

Le Fort de Taradeau (Brun & Congès, 1993) is one of the larger oppida in the area also bordering the Permian Basin on the municipality of Taradeau east to the village, it is of a quadrangular shape covering a surface of approximately 9.5km². Research started after 1969 when a forest fire made the site far more accessible and susceptible to clandestine excavations, though its presence was known previously at least since 1905 (p. 45). It subsequently was excavated from 1970 to 1976, where five phases of occupation were identified from the end of the 3rd century to the Flavian period, alongside an additional phase that concerned negligible visits between the Gallo-Roman and Medieval period (p. 78). Following the exterior walls are small square spaces that according to surveys saw only brief phases of occupation. The artefacts found range from local ceramics to imported Greco-Roman as well as later Gallo-Roman vessels. Le Fort, in both its location, chronological placement and monumentality, represents a clear example of a well developed Late Iron Age settlement that must have played an important role in the local area, as it occupies the liminal space between the coastal region and the hinterland, both of which could be accessed directly through the valleys of the Argens river flowing below.

Les Eouvières (Bérato, 2018) is the name given to a hill overlooking the village of Baudinard-sur-Verdon to the west and the valley of Sainte-Croix, with the Verdon flowing to its north as it enters the Middle Gorges (fig. 8). It has seen no formal excavation though it has been photographed by C. Gaëtan and surveyed by C. Lagrand, with the latter publishing his findings in 1960 which have subsequently been interpreted by J. Bérato in his 2018 publication “La Société Varoise à l’Âge du Fer” (“Varois society in the Iron Age”). Its structure is somewhat apparent on satellite imagery (fig. 8), it features a minimum of three walls, two exterior ones that defend its southern flank from where it can be accessed, and one large wall featuring the debris of five towers. Additionally multiple habitats have been identified during prospections.



Fig. 8. Aerial photography of “Le Castellat” as seen from the north-east, located on the municipality of Baudinard-sur-Verdon (Var).

Photographed by C. Gaëtan in 1982, image sourced from Eligis Culture (https://www.culture.eligis-web.com/?search_hash=16485ffd545b01)

Its three walls are visible on the left side along with the interior wall’s supposed towers to the bottom (Bérato, 2018).

Le Grand Clapier (Boissinot & Peyric, 2005), located north of the village of Céreste, is an oppidum that, through the placement of its eastern wall, occupies a promontory flanked by the Calavon river to its left and the Enchrême river to the south. The oppidum is recognized mainly for its monumental wall which is flanked on the outside by a minimum of eleven towers. More surprising however, is the sharp contrast between the structure's scale and number of material found, with a total of 111 ceramic sherds and 6 metal objects. The ceramics, with the only imported ones being Etruscan, furthermore delineate the site's age, with Boissinot & Peyric suggesting it belongs to the Early Iron Age (6th-5th century) (p. 26). Le Grand Clapier's defensive capability has also been put into question, so its massive walls may in fact have been built as a monument rather than an actual defensive measure.

Peyro-Baroun (Borgard, 1987), which is located on the right flank of the Verdon river on the municipality of Artignosc-sur-Verdon, which lies approximately 3 kilometres to the south west of Baudinard, is a small oppidum with walls to its right blocking off a relatively small promontory which overlooks the Middle Gorges of the Verdon. Research was conducted in 1987 due to the site's fragility, here a single invasive survey was done wherein three archaeological layers were discovered (p. 2). Within these layers a large concentration of ceramic sherds were found, with only a small minority being imported. Many of the sherds represented a dated repertoire though this could be expected in later periods (p. 9), because of this the site's chronology was put around the 3rd century.

Le Castellans de Solliès (Bérato, Michel, et al., 1995; Excoffon, 2007; Lioult, 1978) is a large oppidum dominating the valley of the Avène river which represents the south-western part of the Permian Basin, located on the municipalities of Solliès-Pont and Solliès-Toucas. It occupies a space of approximately 5ha² and is recognizable due to its 15 quadrangular towers (Bérato, Michel, et al., 1995). It has seen two phases of excavation, one from 1973 to 1978 and one from 2004 to 2007. In terms of artefacts it has yielded a great amount of ceramics both of Italic and Marseillan origin alongside an indigenous repertoire (Excoffon, 2007; Lioult, 1978), the structures found within the oppidum walls point to the existence of artisan activity but notable too is the existence of a possible public space north of the southern entrance (Excoffon, 2007). Like Le Fort in Taradeau, it must have represented an important site given its location, something which can additionally be gleaned from its architecture.

These 11 sites represent different parts of what we can consider to be the hinterland, which I have qualified as the area which, due to its geographic conditions, can be considered separate from the Mediterranean coast. Whereas the coast and the Rhone can be considered as spaces where the interaction, whether economic, social or political, between different cultural groups are prolific, the hinterland distinguishes itself by a limited degree of integration into these spaces of interaction. And as I will explain in the next subchapter, some areas and the sites located within may be considered as largely separate. Le Fort, Le Castellans de Solliès and Le Pain de Munition, on the other hand, find themselves in a more transitory area. One where influence from foreign cultures and settlements certainly must have played a larger role, but where an indigenous identity persists even after a permanent foreign presence implants itself into the region. Such is

the case with Le Fort of Taradeau, although whether or not it thrived after initial Roman conquests is hard to say (Brun & Congès, 1993, p. 152), but a possible continued indigenous presence could at least be some indication of success. These oppida cover a period spanning from the 6th century to the latter half of the 1st (fig. 9) with an intermediary phase lasting from around the 4th and 3rd century characterised by a general abandonment of such oppida (Patriarche, 2006, p. 34).

I have very briefly presented these oppida which, in the grand scheme of things, represent only a small portion of protohistoric sites in the region and it would be an understatement to say that these were the only oppida that mattered. But considering that these oppida (excluding Les Eouvières) represent the very small number of sites that have seen proper research, even when the data is still incomplete, it should be enough to speculate and hypothesise about the practices and strategies of the local populations in regards to the construction of these oppida. Knowing that the oppida themselves represent the most recognizable aspect of the peoples who built them, and taking into consideration their size and the effort put into building them, the next logical step is to attempt to understand the activities of its inhabitants. So what can be said about the activities of the oppida's inhabitants through the analysis of their material culture?

Table 1. General* overview of the listed sites. (MNV = Minimum number of vessels)

Created by author

*To view the extensive table listing the department, municipality, oppidum morphology, non-ceramic artefacts and excavation reports refer to appendix A

| Site | Morphology | Ceramic artefacts | Wall construction | Notable architectural features | Chronology (B.C.) | Approximate surface area |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Buffe Arnaud | Summital | 15.645 Sherds (1.136 MNV) | Double sided wall with stone filling | Of note is the gate-tower forming the southern entrance, built in a way unique to the area where two walls create a corridor flanking the entrance. It is potentially of religious value as well. | 6 th to early 1 st century B.C | 15.000m ² |
| La Fouirette | Barred promontory | 1 Sherd | Features the ‘Murus Gallicus’ technique | Features three entrances with an associated tower, it is also the only oppidum built according to the ‘Murus Gallicus’ technique in the region. | Possibly during Second Iron Age (Unconfirmed) | 4.000m ² |
| Le Castellas de Solliès | Summital Quadrangular | 1.058 Sherds (86 MNV) | Double sided wall, earlier fortifications feature a simple wall. Occasional presence of clay plaster. | Features a flanked entrance to the south-west. Multiple groups of dwellings were found within the centre of the oppidum. | 6 th to 1 st century B.C. with phase of abandonment during 4 th and 3 rd century | 50.000m ² |
| Les Eouvières | Summital Circular | - | Double sided wall | Features five towers and the vestiges of dwellings. | Early Iron Age to latter half of 1 st Century B.C. | 30.000m ² |
| Le Castillon | Summital Circular | - | - | - | Possibly during Second Iron Age (Unconfirmed) | 9.000m ² |
| Le Fort | Summital Pentagonal | 7.090 Sherds (440 MNV) | Double sided wall connected with clay | Features organised urban planning. | 3 rd century B.C to 1 st century A.D | 9.500m ² |
| Le Grand Clapier | Barred promontory | 111 Sherds | Double sided wall | Features at least twelve towers with the possibility of there being sixteen in total. | 6 th to 5 th century B.C | 70.000m ² |
| Le Pain de Munition | Summital Circular | 209 Sherds | Double sided wall | Three towers have been identified with only one possibly being hollow. | 2 nd to 1 st century B.C | 8.000m ² |
| Les Gipières | Summital | 55 Sherds | Double sided wall | - | Early Iron Age | 3.500m ² |
| Peyro Baroun | Barred promontory | 269 Sherds | Double sided wall | Features one tower. | 3 rd to 2 nd century B.C | 25.000m ² |
| Piégu | Barred promontory | - | Double sided wall | Features at least one tower. The wall of a house is also preserved under the rubble of the wall. | Possibly during Second Iron Age (Unconfirmed) | 23.500m ² |

Chronological Ranges of 11 Provençal Oppida

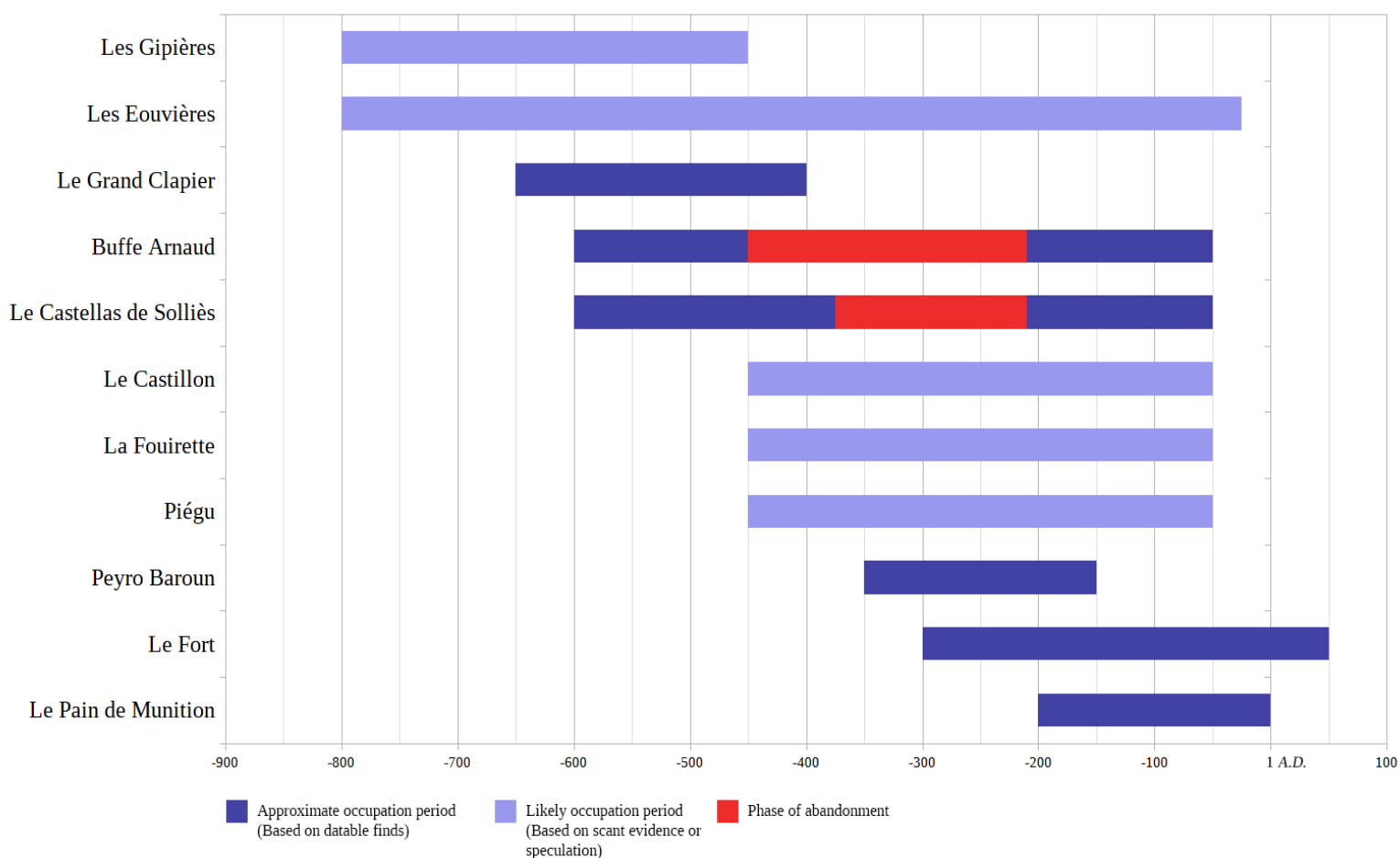


Fig. 9. Graph showing the phases of occupation for the listed sites.

Created by author.

Two phases can be identified with this collection of sites: A first phase starting around the 6th century B.C. and a second starting around the 2nd century B.C., with a phase of abandonment around 400 B.C.

III.3. The material finds of the oppida

Out of the sites listed previously, only three have seen extensive excavations, those being Le Fort de Taradeau, Buffe-Arnaud and Le Castellas de Solliès. As a result they have yielded the most sizeable catalogues of artefacts through which more accurate interpretations can be made. For our purposes the most relevant aspects of these artefacts will be their social and economic significance, since socially they may imply the persistence of local identity through the continuous production of certain vessels, and economically it may show to what degree a community participated in trade with foreign entities. Both of

these aspects ultimately illustrate how such a community interacts with its surroundings. What follows will be a presentation of these three sites' material findings from which we may attempt to create some preliminary interpretations.

Le Fort de Taradeau: The excavations at Le Fort de Taradeau yielded approximately 7.090 ceramic sherds, from which a minimum of 440 vessels could be identified (Brun & Congès, 1993, p. 102). Of these vessels, 398 belong to household wares, with only 35 belonging to containers and 7 from periods proceeding the abandonment of the oppidum. The dishes can be divided into two groups: Wheel-turned ceramics and hand-modelled ceramics, the former of which represent some 99 vessels, with 56 Campanian, 12 Italic, 30 Massalian and 1 Iberian vessel. These dishes represent imported ceramics, as opposed to the 299 modelled vessels which are of local origin. Of the small catalogue of bronze artefacts five are of relevance in our case, those being one type 21b or *Alesian* type fibula and four type 5a29 or *Neuheim* type fibulae (Feugère, 1985). Other bronze and metallic finds represent less interpretable finds such as cutlery, fish hooks and nails (Brun & Congès, 1993, pp. 146–149).

We see in the oppidum of Le Fort an overwhelmingly local repertoire with three quarters of its vessels having been produced locally, while the imported ceramics indicate a bias towards vessels of Italic origin, rather than a Massalian one. This may seem somewhat surprising considering the site's relatively late chronology and the economic landscape of the time. Yet its closest access to the sea, in modern day Fréjus, was supposedly under Celto-Ligurian control (Aubenas, 1881, p. 21) meaning that Greek products may not have been as accessible to the inhabitants as one may assume based on its geographic position.

Le Castellans de Solliès: The site of Le Castellans yielded 1.058 sherds representing a minimum of 86 vessels. Much like Le Fort, a majority of the sherds belong to hand-modelled vessels (663 total), although the number of vessels these sherds may represent is much smaller, only mounting up to 11 vessels minimum (Patriarche, 2006, p. 41). This relatively small number does not necessarily represent the material reality of this oppidum as 204 sherds go uncategorised representing a minimum of 52 vessels, the minimum amount of hand-modelled vessels could simply be the result of the poor preservation of artefacts in the site's soils. A larger portion of the ceramic finds belong to amphorae with 13 vessels being identified from 137 sherds, only 4 wheel-turned vessels were identified based on 54 sherds (Excoffon, 2007, p. 41). The metallic finds are far more limited, with a lock, knife and ten nails representing the totality of all metal artefacts.

The difference between the number of sherds and the minimum amount of identified vessels means we are less free to make assertions about the repertoire of Le Castellans. We do see a consistent bias towards locally produced ceramics compared to their imported counterparts, though if we were to count the amphorae as being imported too then this may not be the case. The answer probably lies in the number of non-categorised vessels and their sherds, as we should keep in mind that the majority of vessels go unidentified (67%). Should the number of imported vessels be greater than that of the locally produced ceramics however, it would then be indicative of Le Castellans de Solliès having closer ties to the coast which would,

geographically speaking, not be illogical as the oppidum is located only 12 kilometres from the coast and from the site of Olbia.

Bufte Arnaud: A total of 15.645 ceramic sherds were found on the site of Bufte Arnaud, 10.012 of which belong to dishes forming a minimum of 1.136 vessels, 2.816 sherds belong to doliae, another 2.660 pieces are fragments of adobe (Garcia et al., 1995, pp. 125–135). Less than 1% of the sherds are those of imported vessels with these few artefacts being of Massalian origin. Bufte Arnaud furthermore yielded 65 non ceramic artefacts of which 25 are iron and 20 are bronze artefacts, another 16 are stone and amber artefacts and 4 are of terracotta. These items cover a wide range of uses with military artefacts such as a spear point, personal artefacts like a bracelet fragment, or domestic tools like a pruning hook (Garcia et al., 1995, pp. 135–136).

Bufte Arnaud, being located much farther to the north than Le Fort and Le Castellias, seemingly represents a separation from a Massalian sphere of product dissemination. However, a greater distance does not necessarily explain its almost exclusively local repertoire by itself. The oppidum is located some 70 kilometres from the coast yet is easily accessible through the Durance river valley, greatly facilitating travel from Bufte Arnaud to the Salyen capital of Entremont. In a sense, through this river valley, the site may have served as a northern point of entry into the hinterland as much as that may have been the case for Le Fort to the south. We should as a result be careful not to attribute its local repertoire purely to its geographical placement, though it may be a factor, its unique facies may be the result of a specific socioeconomic context yet unknown. One interpretation proposed by Garcia et al. (1995), as stated in the title of his publication (“*Un témoignage de la chute de la Confédération salyenne?*” or “A testimony of the fall of the Salyen Confederation?”) suggests that the material homogeneity could be attributed to the historical events surrounding the Roman conquest of the Salyens, the clearest evidence for which being the military gear found within the site (Garcia et al., 1995, p. 139). However the latter interpretation does not explain why this phenomenon is present in other sites similarly distant from Greek (and later Roman) settlements. Peyro-Baroun, despite its small size and possibly brief occupation period, has yielded 269 ceramic sherds, with a similar bias towards local wares as that of the previously mentioned sites, with 260 sherds belonging to locally produced modelled vessels (97%) (Borgard, 1987, pp. 5–6). Another relatively isolated oppidum, Le Grand Clapier, features 111 sherds, only 5 of which may have belonged to imports, with the other 106 being from modelled vessels (96%) (Boissinot & Peyric, 2005, p. 24). Not only do we see an overwhelmingly greater amount of locally produced vessels in many of these oppida, but the few imported vessels that are present are more often of Italic origin, rather than Massalian. This is especially surprising with oppida like Le Pain de Munition, one of the closest sites to Massalia. Despite its proximity to the city, out of the 209 sherds that were found only one is potentially of Massalian origin, with 49 sherds having been identified as Campanian A. Another 74 vessels were modelled.

These figures ultimately illustrate the limited reach that Massalian products had into the mainland outside of the Aix basin, this has been pointed out by F. Verdin (1998) who places this divide around the Sainte-Victoire massif, west of where Le Pain de Munition can be found (p. 32). It should also be said that the circulation of

imported ceramics and the apparent break between the trade routes of eastern and western Provence seemingly had little to no effect on other aspects of the inhabitant's identity, it stands instead as evidence for the poor integration of mainland Provence into the trade networks of the west, something which the establishment of the Salyen confederation visibly has had no effect on.

These ceramic finds not only indicate the extent of meridional trade flow into mainland Provence, but also the industries present within the territory. But with the absence of any clearly identifiable workshop in or around the previously mentioned sites, we are confronted with the challenge of determining the exact origin of these modelled vessels and their economic implications through theoretical means. If we accept that Massalian vessels served as a luxury item, we should as a consequence be careful not to minimise the status locally produced ceramics may have had, nor should we determine the status of the oppidum itself based on its access to foreign ceramic wares. Without the identification of a workshop, the question of whether these local ceramics were produced by an artisan or by non-specialised individuals remains (Marty, 2010). The answer to this question could be particularly interesting when trying to understand the internal dynamics of oppida like Buffe Arnaud, where the status of the vessel's creator would have implications for the site's socioeconomic structure, considering the high concentration of stocking vases present within the gate-tower (Garcia et al., 1995, p. 121). This tower, having yielded two possibly decapitated heads, may have been a symbolic space as much as it was social, should this be case then the vases being produced by non-artisans may be indicative of their participation with such practices. Without any proper leads however, such theories can be nothing more than speculation.

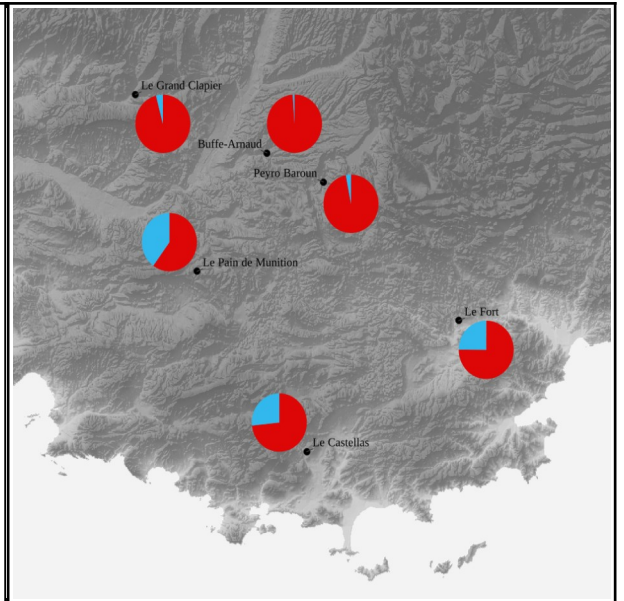
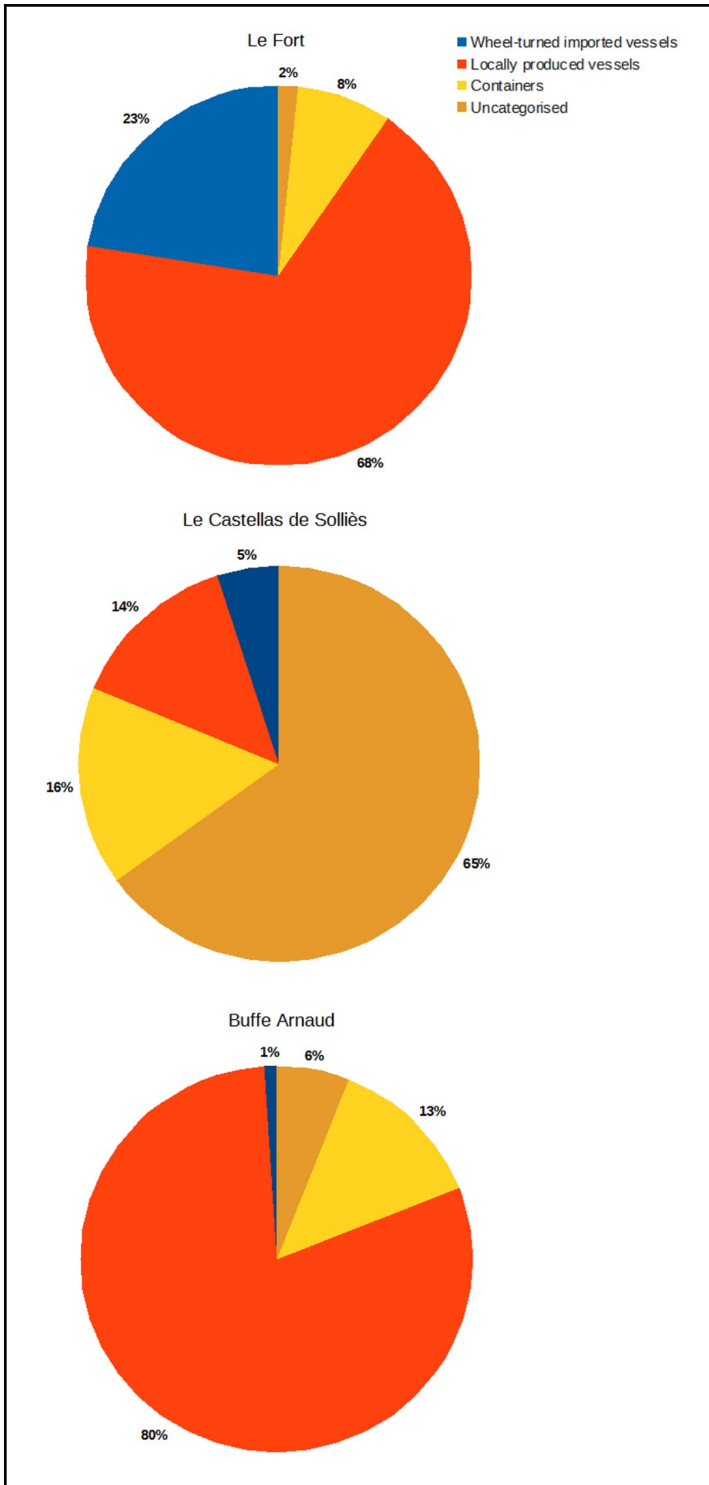


Fig. 10. (left) Charts illustrating the percentages of ceramic vessels found at the sites of Le Fort, Le Castellas de Solliès and Buffe Arnaud. In all three sites the modelled vessels greatly outnumber the imported vessels, this difference is less pronounced in Le Castellas de Solliès possibly due to the percentage of vessels that go uncategorised.

Fig. 11. (right) Map showing the quantity of imported and local ceramic vessels per site, a clear pattern can be established between a site's proximity to the coast and the amount of imported vessels it yields. The amount of imports at Le Grand Clapier, Buffe Arnaud and Peyro Baroun are almost non-existent. For all sites an indigenous industry is evident, with seemingly limited integration into foreign trade networks.

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IV – Understanding the spatial dynamics through the oppida's monumentality

IV.1. An intraregional analysis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there exists an impressive diversity in morphology and architectural techniques reflected in the studied oppida. This plurality in form and structure limits itself not only to the sites that are chronologically different but exists also on oppida contemporary to one another. If we were to take three oppida: Le Fort, Le Castellans de Solliès and Le Pain de Munition, all of which are thought to have been occupied at least during the 2nd century B.C., ignoring the artefacts the sites yielded and looking at structural morphology alone, we can see great differences amongst the three. Out of these oppida one stands out the most in terms of morphology, that being the site of Le Pain de Munition. Its almost spiral shape is far more reminiscent of the more isolated round oppida like Les Eouvières and Le Castillon in Moustiers, these shapes should be taken into consideration when analysing their purpose since they may affect aspects like urban planning, can we interpret these non polygonal oppida differently purely based on such factors? Le Pain de Munition has been hypothesised to be occupied by only a small group of people as the reduced occupation surface of 650m², which is approximately 12 times smaller than the site's total surface area, suggests (Giraud, 2000, p. 32). Could this also possibly be the case for Les Eouvières and Le Castillon? Especially since the structure of Le Castillon and Le Pain de Munition visibly share some similarities, particularly with the occupation area potentially being located in the centre (or 'core'). Unfortunately these sites do not offer enough data to answer these questions with enough confidence, but if the large enclosures of Le Castillon are to be interpreted according to Bodard and Bretaudeau (1989, p. 28), where the scale of the oppidum is explained through the use of animal enclosures, then such a hypothesis would not be without reason. It may also explain why the largest oppida which have also yielded the most amount of information (Buffe-Arnaud, Le Castellans de Solliès, Le Fort) and could be interpreted as important centres either economically or politically, exist usually in the form of quadrangular or similarly polygonal structures.

So far I have named two types of oppida, the first being the polygonal and quadrangular fortifications, relatively more organized and in the case of our area, often of greater importance in terms of found material. The second are the summital oppida, more rounded due to them following the shape of the summit they occupy, these sites sometimes feature multiple rings of walls. Another common type is the 'cap barré' (or 'éperon barré'), oppida whose defences rely heavily on the terrain they occupy with multiple sides being inaccessible due to cliffs or generally steep terrain, one or two walls usually block off the only easy point of entry. Examples of this type include Peyro-Baroun, Piégu, Le Grand Clapier and La Fouirette, such oppida demonstrate before anything the economical approach to oppidum building, whether this is due to the cost of

the construction having to be compensated for or due to efficacy is hard to say, but the former would certainly have implications on the economic dynamics and capacity of the people building the oppida.

Many theories exist regarding the function of these kinds of sites, but few truly take into account the diversity in form, this is something P. Gardes (2017) mentions, the search of many scholars to find a precise definition of what constitutes an oppidum has led to the overgeneralisation which has seemingly done little but remove nuance from the discussions surrounding the Iron Age hillforts. What we see in these more remote regions is an increase in heterogeneity rather than the establishment of clear trends, in terms of building techniques we see both the 'Murus-Gallicus' on sites like La Fouirette (Boyer, 1967, p. 5) alongside the more common technique of cyclopean masonry seen clearly at Le Pain de Muntion (Giraud, 2000, p. 31), other sites seemingly use no technique at all like at Les Gipières though their poor state of conservation may attribute to difficulties in identifying the employed techniques (Boyer, 1954, p. 22). Amongst the list of functions an oppidum may have, one thing which becomes clear when comparing the different Provençal sites is that we can not speak of the oppidum purely being a monument of war, P. Moret points this out in his 2017 article "À quoi servaient les oppida gaulois?" ("What were the Gallic oppida used for?"), suggesting that the oppida are not strictly 'tools of war' but also monuments of prestige, structures delineating status. But as we see on sites like Le Grand Clapier these two functions may potentially be mutually exclusive. The massive stone wall at Le Grand Clapier, while of impressive size, is structurally incongruent with a possible defensive purpose (Boissinot & Peyric, 2005, p. 29). In all accounts, and when following the interpretations of P. Boissinot and D. Peyric (2005), the fortifications of Le Grand Clapier resemble the imitations of an actual defensive structure rather than a real attempt at creating a structure capable of properly defending the site. As a result, we may be more inclined to view Le Grand Clapier as a manifestation of political power or a symbolic monument.

The symbolism behind Late Iron Age architecture has been the subject of debate before in the past. Authors like C. Salicis, who has in their 2007 article also categorized the oppida by their morphology (though here it concerns sites of the Maritime Alps), has attempted to interpret the oppida through a cultural lens, particularly attributing circular structures to the religious beliefs of those who constructed them (p. 16). Architectural practices bearing a religious meaning are not unheard of for similar and contemporary sites. Entremont, considered the capital of the Salyen confederation which grouped many of the peoples inhabiting our region (like the Verrucini in Taradeau (Brun & Congès, 1993)) serves as a great example of the relationship that can exist between religious practices and the oppida, illustrated through their political power and the public spaces they house. This concept could be seen in our case, the walls of Le Grand Clapier could have existed only to communicate the power of those living behind these imposing structures. Following this interpretation of Le Grand Clapier's architecture, we may be able to categorise the oppida further into two groups: Functional oppida, meaning those built explicitly for defensive purposes, and symbolic oppida, sites whose walls and fortifications were built to communicate power, a tradition possibly born from the mark the functional oppida could have left on the region's inhabitants. If this concept of purely symbolic oppida is

true, then a much more direct link between structure and identity for the Celto-Ligurians can be established. But of course we should consider that these are not mutually exclusive, and sites like Le Grand Clapier may be victims of poor preservation meaning that interpretations will always be made with missing evidence, but better preserved sites like La Fouirette may be able to lend credence to this line of thinking. Covering a very small surface when compared to other oppida, it features three entrances each guarded by a tower, a number too great to offer any effective defence according to R. Boyer (1967).

We should also take into consideration the non-fortified habitats found during the Second Iron Age as they reflect the dynamics of the hinterland. A great challenge exists in trying to qualify the relationship between an oppidum and the isolated habitats that surrounds it, as no data regarding such sites seem consistent (Bérato, Borréani, et al., 1995, p. 50), meaning that analyses will represent very anecdotal contexts. The only area with consistent occupations outside of an oppidum is the Permian basin where a multitude of dwellings found on the plains are in proximity to one another (p. 51) whilst also being observable by multiple oppida, the largest one being Le Fort. Other areas see far more sporadic occupation patterns leading us to imagine a greater reliance on fortified settlements, this may be the case for Buffe Arnaud as the Valensole plateau sees only a small number of settlements during the Iron Age (Garcia & Mocci, 1996, 1999). If the finds at Buffe Arnaud (Garcia et al., 1995, p. 138) and the nature of oppida like Les Gipières and Peyro Baroun are anything to go by, then we can imagine that these more northern and isolated areas simply stood true to an agro-pastoral economy that favoured a less sedentary lifestyle.

Even with such a great amount of oppida present in our area, the interpretations we can make are too often limited due to lacking physical evidence, which is why I believe it to be greatly beneficial to compliment this evidence with information found on sites outside of our region.

IV.2. An interregional analysis

We benefit from a greater frame of reference when looking outward from our research area, many studies find themselves forced to work from a Phocaeen or Italic perspective, one which subsequently ignores indigenous originality and innovation for the most part. This is to be expected due to the greater amount of data received from coastal sites like Massalia (Marseille), Olbia (Hyères), Nikaea (Nice) and Sofia-Antipolis (Antibes). The problem with these perspectives is that we lose sight of what we can consider indigenous economic and cultural systems. The materials imported from both the Greeks and the Etruscans attest to the role they played in the development of the indigenous economy, but it remains far more difficult to measure what effect this had on the culture and social dynamics themselves. To formulate this problem as a question: Can indigenous identity be measured only through material originality, which is to say non-imported artefacts? We have seen in chapter III how some sites clearly indicated a rigid local identity through their ceramic repertoire, but in truth the question of indigenous identity can hardly be approached through material data alone, with such an approach we only truly point out the level of colonial influence in their economies.

In our region of central Provence, well understood sites either reflect the participation in a colonial economy, as may be the case with Le Fort and Le Castellans de Solliès, a separation from a colonial economy, as is the case with Buffe Arnaud, or communities living in autocracies, as is the case of the sites of Bayonne and La Forteresse (Desirat, 1979, 1985), two sites located on the municipality of Bagnols-en-Forêt and contemporaries of the three formerly mentioned oppida. Despite their autocratic economy, Bayonne and La Forteresse have yielded colonial coinage, meaning that the agents of economic influence may be harder to identify than previously thought.

It is also imperative to mention that our oppida do not exist in a vacuum with their colonial neighbours, more research has been conducted in the adjacent Maritime Alps, C. Salicis (2007) as well as R. Chéveneau (1966) have both indicated the relevance of the oppida in their region, these oppida could be used as a point of reference and comparison. An interesting indication of their cultural proximity could be the site of Le Moulinet, located on the municipality of Le Broc, it features a structural morphology almost identical to that of Le Castellon. The site features a central stone circle and a larger enclosure located between what I would refer to as the 'citadel' and the external walls, this intermediary space is curiously divided into two sections, this feature is most striking and directly comparable to what we see in Le Castellon at Moustiers. Such a specific structure may point to a very specific purpose be it practical or cultural, when writing about Le Castellon, P. Bodard and G. Bretaudeau (1989) suggest it may have been for the division of animal herds. Without additional material data however, not much more can be done other than theorising on their potential function.



Fig.12.
Aerial photography of 'Le Moulinet'
located west of the village of Le
Broc.

Taken from Salicis, 2007, p.19

IV.3. Interpreting Iron Age spatial dynamics in Provence

How can we ultimately relate the structural morphology of these oppida to the spatial dynamics and organisation in our relatively isolated region? I believe it is possible to glean enough from the monumental oppida to form somewhat concrete ideas and hypotheses regarding these themes. The scale of many oppida alone should imply a certain level of social and economic organisation (Py, 1984), with cases like Le Pain de Muniton, even smaller communities had the ability to build such large fortifications, one would hardly believe that this could be the work of such a small group, not only would it have been a herculean task but the construction of its three towers would have required a good level of architectural knowledge. Considering the possible symbolic status of the oppida, and the effort required to construct them, it would be reasonable to interpret such a site as belonging to a powerful elite, or at least one at the centre of a broader community. Better understood sites like Le Fort and Le Castellans de Solliès present a clearer picture, we see more calculated urban planning, all with single spaced habitats often aligned, as is the case at Buffe-Arnaud (Garcia et al., 1995). These oppida housed larger communities occupying the frontiers of colonial influence, this is reflected through the amount of imported vessels found at these particular sites. For Buffe-Arnaud the situation has proven to be somewhat different, as stated by Garcia et al. (1995, p. 138) who has theorized that the oppidum's later phases of occupation reflect a state of crisis which has led to the site yielding only a small amount of imported vessels. It would not be out of the question however to assume that such a site simply benefited more from a local economy rather than an interregional one. Smaller sites like the oppidum of Bayonne (Desirat, 1985) and La Forteresse (Desirat, 1979), have yielded an almost completely indigenous repertoire with no imported material, subsequently the sites have been interpreted as being completely autocratic. Whether or not these two particular sites represent an exception of the rule is difficult to say, but it speaks to the isolated nature of settlements found within the hinterland.

In terms of chronology we can, based off of these sites, gather enough information to possibly interpret the trends of occupation in the region. The sites of Le Fort, Le Castellans de Solliès, Buffe-Arnaud, Le Pain de Muniton amongst others, see phases of occupation usually starting from the 2nd century B.C., some sites like Le Castellans de Solliès and Bayonne see such phases much earlier during the 6th or 5th century. What is interesting is the gap we often see during the 3rd century, few sites like Peyro-Baroun may have been occupied during this time, but this says little considering it is described as a temporary site (Borgard, 1987, p. 10). Authors like G. Bagan (2007) will describe the 4th and 3rd centuries as a golden age for the oppida (p. 18) due to the disappearance of many rural settlements in favour of perched sites, if the 4th and 3rd centuries represented a time of crisis in Southern Gaul this would make sense, but we do not see this in our region. Instead, we see the rapid development of the oppida after this given period, and the sites that have been interpreted to face difficulties do so only starting from around the 1st century B.C., such is the case at La Courtine, an oppidum located near the coast on the municipality of Ollioules, who after a Roman victory in 123 B.C. is given to the Phocaeans, or Buffe-Arnaud, whose material identity stops being influenced by southern settlements entirely after the 2nd century B.C. (Garcia et al., 1995, p. 139), this being interpreted by Garcia et al. as the consequences of a siege possibly taking place during the campaigns of Caius Sextius

Calvinus during his war against the Salyens (p. 139). This apparent 'gap' in what is supposed to be a golden age for the oppida could be interpreted in a few ways: It is possible that our specific region was spared from whatever crisis forced the many rural settlements to regroup around the oppida, but it could also simply be the case that the events causing this crisis to occur hit this region later and that the consequences were only visible at a later time, this being around the start of the 2nd century. Another possibility is that the evidence presented does not constitute enough data for us to make any assumptions regarding the importance of the oppida in the region, but with large sites being few and far between, the evidence yielded from sites like Le Fort and Le Castellas de Solliès should not be ignored as a point of reference for the time being when attempting to understand the indigenous peoples in the Provençal hinterland. The trends we see fit better with the urban model described by V. Salač (Guichard, 2017), this model was proposed for the urban developments in Central Europe, but it would follow those we see on the sites in our region, with oppida seeing their maximum extent starting from the 2nd century B.C.

Conclusion

In writing this thesis I have sought out to better understand the phenomenon of the oppida in the Provençal mainland and to interpret their function and significance in the Celto-Ligurian societies. And while we have seen that the available data remains limited and are for many sites insufficient to make any confident assertions, I believe that enough information has been gathered to form a solid understanding of how this phenomenon may have shaped the region during this period.

The oppida exist in many shapes and sizes, but in terms of the material data they offer, there exists a solid level of homogeneity, we have seen that the ceramics found in multiple directly reflect their proximity to the closest sphere of cultural influence. Despite the fact that sites found closer to the coast feature a greater number of imported ceramics than their inland counterparts, a local ceramic industry remains dominant indicating that the oppida are reflections of indigenous expression. An expression fulfilling local needs as can be seen by the variety in site morphology. And while this variety may muddle conceptions of an oppidum having a specific purpose, enough sites indicate the symbolic nature the oppida had. This symbolic nature is seemingly present in every oppidum despite its perceived purpose, while in some cases this symbolism might have been the structure's only purpose as with Le Grand Clapier, in others it would have come secondary to its defensive capabilities. But in any regard the oppida were symbols of power to its inhabitants and the surrounding population. In this sense the construction of oppida can be interpreted as a consequence of social change, an idea supported by the 'gap' found in the 4th and 3rd century. This period sees the abandonment of many oppida (as can be seen in figure 9), likely attributable to geopolitical or social instability. If many oppida prioritised the symbolism of their architecture over their utility, then their abandonment during unstable times can be expected, but this creates a new paradox: If in the face of uncertainties, the oppida,

perceived as perched and fortified positions, are abandoned, then can we speak of any 'military function' at all? Are the oppida entirely symbolic and emerge only in times of stability as an expression of the elite's or a community's power? I do not seek to answer these questions in this paper, but they ultimately relate to how the oppida illustrate the social and economic dynamics of the areas they occupy.

Based on what we have seen thus far, the oppidum in the hinterlands of Provence can ultimately be interpreted as a monumental expression of power most likely dominating its direct surroundings and serving as a bastion of indigenous cultural expression. Of course these conclusions concern our region specifically and we should be careful to attribute these characteristics to the oppida of neighbouring regions, but a better understanding of one area facilitates that of another. I believe that an even better understanding of this phenomenon, particularly in Provence, lie in the interregional analyses between our region and that of the Maritime Alps, as the similarities I have noticed may mean that the knowledge acquired in both areas may be mutually beneficial. This is without mentioning the importance of continuing the research of new sites within Provence itself.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: General overview of the relevant sites

Figure 1: The density of Late Iron Age hillforts in France

Figure 2: Main sites mentioned in this paper

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Figure 5: Map of the studied area

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Figure 7: Drawing of Le Castellon of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

Figure 8: Aerial photography of Les Eouvières

Figure 9: Graph showing the occupation phases of 10 different oppida

Figure 10: Charts of Le Fort, Buffe Arnaud and Le Castellans de Solliès indicating the amount of vessels by type

Figure 11: Map of the sites having yielded ceramics accompanied by charts indicating the disparities between local and imported vessels

Figure 12: Aerial photography of Le Moulinet of Le Broc

Appendix

Complete table listing the 11 oppida listed in chapter III.2.

| | Les Gipières | Le Pain de Munition | Le Grand Clapier | Le Fort | Le Castillon | Les Eouvières | Le Castellat | La Fouirette | Buffe Arnaud | Site name |
|--|---------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| | Var | Alpes-de-Haute-Provence | Alpes-de-Haute-Provence | Var | Alpes-de-Haute-Provence | Var | Var | Var | Alpes-de-Haute-Provence | Department |
| | Aups | Céreste | Taradeau | Taradeau | Moustiers-Sainte-Marie | Baudinard-sur-Verdon | Solliès Pont/Solliès Tourcas | Le Luc | Saint-Martin-de-Brômes | Municipality |
| | Summital | Barred promontory | Summital Pentagonal | Summital Circular | Summital Circular | Summital Circular | Summital Quadrangular | Barred promontory | Summital | Morphology |
| | Early Iron Age | 6th to 5th century B.C | 3rd century B.C | 3rd century B.C | Possibly during Second Iron Age (Unconfirmed) | Early Iron Age latter half of 1st Century B.C. | Possibly during Second Iron Age during 4th and 3rd century | Possibly during Second Iron Age (Unconfirmed) | 6th to early 1st century B.C | Chronology (B.C.) |
| | 3.500m ² | 70.000m ² | 9.500m ² | 30.000m ² | 9.000m ² | 30.000m ² | 50.000m ² | 4.000m ² | 15.000m ² | Approximate surface area |
| | Summital | Barred promontory | Summital Pentagonal | Summital Circular | Summital Circular | Summital Circular | Summital Quadrangular | Barred promontory | Summital | Morphology |
| | Double sided wall | Double sided wall | Double sided wall connected with clay | Double sided wall | Double sided wall | Double sided wall | Double sided wall. Occasional presence of clay plaster. | Features the 'Murus Gallicus' technique | Double sided wall with stone filling | Wall construction |
| | - | Features at least twelve towers with the possibility of only one possibly there being hollow. | Three towers have been identified with only one possibly there being hollow. | 7.090 Sherds, 440 Vessels | Features five towers and the vestiges of dwellings. | Features three entrances with an associated tower, to the south-west it is also the only oppidum built according to the 'Murus Gallicus' technique in the region. | Features a flanked entrance to the south-west it is also the only oppidum built according to the 'Murus Gallicus' technique in the region. | Features three entrances with an associated tower, where two walls create a corridor flanking the entrance. It is potentially of religious value as the well. | Of note is the southern gate-tower built in a way unique to the area where two walls create a corridor flanking the entrance. It is potentially of religious value as the well. | |
| | 55 Sherds | 111 Sherds | 209 Sherds | 1 Lead, 9 Bronze and 16 Iron objects | 1.058 Sherds, 86 Vessels | - | 1 Bronze and 11 Iron objects | 1 Sherd | 15.645 Sherds, 1.136 Vessels | Ceramic artefacts |
| | - | 6 Iron objects | 50 Lithics objects | - | - | - | - | - | 20 Bronze and Iron objects | 25 Metallurgical artefacts |
| | 8 Lithic objects | - | Brun & Congès, 1993; Excoffon, 2007 | 50 Lithics objects | - | - | - | - | 16 Lithic or amber objects | Lithic artefacts |
| | Boyer, 1954 | Giraud, 2000 | Boissinot & Peyric, 2005 | Bodard & Bretaudeau, 1989- | Lioult, 1978; Patriarche, 2006 | Boyer, 1967 | Garcia, 1993 | | | Excavation reports |

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| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Var | Var |
| Rougiers | Artignosc-sur-Verdon |
| Barred promontory | Barred promontory |
| Possibly during Second Iron Age 3rd to 2nd (Unconfirmed) century B.C | |
| 23.500m ² | 25.000m ² |
| Barred promontory | Barred promontory |
| Double sided wall | Double sided wall |
| Features at least one tower. The wall of a house is also preserved under the rubble of the wall. | |
| - | 269 Sherds |
| - | - |
| - | 1 Lithic object |

Baudillon, 1950 Borgard, 1987