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Michel Feugère

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Michel Py, Anagia. Les oppida de la Vaunage et la cité gauloise des Castels à Nages (Gard). Collection "Mondes anciens". Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée – PULM, Montpellier 2015. € 29.00. ISBN 978-2-36781-171-0. 360 pages.

This new book of Michel Py, a pioneer scholar of South-Gaulish Iron Ages, is an important milestone in the archaeology of the Nîmes territory, the land of the *Volcae Arecomici* and, in general, pre-Roman settlement history and land use. Its focal point is *Anagia*, the now famous *oppidum* of Nages, where the author indeed started to practice archaeological excavations in the late 1960s. A major site of southern France, Nages already benefitted of a detailed publication (M. Py, L'oppidum des Castels à Nages [Gard]: fouilles 1958–1974. Suppl. Gallia 35 [Paris 1978]) and of course of several articles, mostly earlier. As very few excavation campaigns were devoted to the site after this monograph, was there any need for an update, a mere way to display the local data according to modern standards? Michel Py's answer is both rich and complex: together with a complete reappraisal of Nages, he brings the site into perspective with the copious exploration of nearby sites such as Nîmes, Ambrussum, Le Caylar or even Lattes. This regional approach was already the subject of Michel Py's first PhD (Les oppida de Vaunage [Gard], fouilles 1958–1968. Thèse de 3e Cycle [Montpellier 1972]), still unpublished, although largely used in the author's state thesis (M. Py, Culture, économie et société protohistoriques dans la région nimoise. Coll. École Française Rome 131 [Rome, Paris 1990]).

The book is addressing a larger public than the usual core of specialists, yet it makes no compromise with the technical approach and scientific discussion of the topics involved. The first pages emphasise the exceptional situation of the local *oppida*, all placed on the edges of a natural depression offering convenient agricultural abilities. The six Late Bronze Age, Early and Late Iron Age settlements around the Vaunage plain dominated the fruitful landscape below, yet they allowed the inhabitants to draw advantage from the natural resources available on the hills behind them: fruit picking, herding pasture, and various mineral goods could always be obtained from the surroundings.

In South Gaul, early settlement choices often illustrate alternating waves between hill and plain preferences. By studying the hill sites mostly, Michel Py certainly chose to focus on one part of the history only, yet this choice was far from senseless: where hill settlements often select a remarkable relief (and often the same one throughout different periods), plain settlements can concern many different locations. These are therefore difficult to discover and will not form a continuous chronological chain in a region, where hill settlements tend to be occupied during longer and more obvious phases. At certain periods, a stone rampart is an important part of the local identity, which makes the settlement easy to locate and also more stable through centuries. There are also periods where a centralised settlement can co-exist with other structures spread in the countryside: night or shepherd shelters, so-called 'annexes', temporary structures devoted to a seasonal and / or exceptional activity, etc. Landscape occupation is obviously a complex matter and Py does not ignore it. His ambition, during these last 40 years of research, was to build the core of a reference model based on thorough and accurate excavations of major settlements, which he perfectly accomplished.

The hilltop settlement may begin during the Neolithic in some cases, but the Late Bronze Age marks a clear densification of the local population (pp. 11–26). Three sites around the Vaunage mark this increasing land occupation of the area: Roque de Viou, La Font du Coucou (with the nearby Bergerie Hermet settlement) and the Roc de Gachonne. The three of them were apparently created during the Bronze final IIIb and therefore date back to the 9th to 8th centuries BC. These three sites (on each of them, we only know a few houses, not always forming the core of a village)

mark a population increase and at least the wish to share a space, and most probably, from this time onwards, a kind of collective organisation. Yet houses must have been rather lightly built; their remains still illustrate a prehistoric way of life, tightly linked to the natural resources of agriculture and farming.

In the course of this traditional way of life, the innovation came from the sea with the earliest imports from Greece and Etruria, as underlined by Michel Py from the 1960s onwards. There is no doubt, according to his analysis of the period, that the earliest pottery sherds, in a complete rupture with the taste and appearance of local wares, were accompanied by Mediterranean merchants (pp. 40–43). These contacts brought many new concepts with them and the local societies were not long before reflecting them in their culture. The precise time of the meeting, the 7th century BC, is little documented in the Vaunage itself, but the period is also marked by the earliest iron, which deeply transforms the human impact on land (pp. 44–46). Iron tools are now more efficient, especially for harvesting, and life is probably a little easier than before. This was indeed the right time for discovering new models and foreign ideas. The site of La Liquière at Calvisson, excavated in 1967–1974, remains the best known of these Early Iron Age villages (c. 610–500 BC; pp. 27–54). Their aspect may have been close to the one of the preceding period, but novelty was on its way, clearly showing an opening of local minds towards a wider environment.

During this period, change therefore first concerns technology (iron, earliest wheeled pottery) and taste (earliest wine imports from Etruria), while the earliest signs of a magic / religious activity appear on several of the sites. Changes were obviously reinforced shortly after the foundation of Marseilles (c. 600 BC), when Greek imports progressively replaced the first Etruscan goods. South Gaul was obviously a market which was heavily competed between Greeks and Etruscans. The proportion of Mediterranean imports on the Vaunage settlements of this time (La Liquière, La Font du Coucou II) regularly grows up through time; the continuity with the following phase is illustrated on the neighbouring settlement of Mauressip. Just as previously, 'isolated' documents spread on the nearby plain suggest an agricultural exploitation of the land, while such documents in the south-eastern corner of the Vaunage probably relate to an unknown settlement in this area (p. 62 map).

Indeed, the social impact of these Mediterranean influences seems to have been a long process. Signs accumulate, but their articulation remains a complex issue. The most obvious change is the gradual increase of imports within the material culture, which, during the 5th century BC, shows a concomitant increase of ceramics, jewels and other artefacts imported from various cultural areas. The local culture therefore exists within a network of influences, ranging from Celtic, Iberian and Mediterranean; no doubt, all of these are brought by ethnic visitors who display different languages, tastes and ideas. This movement seems to collapse in the 4th century BC, with a pauperisation of local actors and probably a demographic decrease. It seems that the external influences finally destroyed the local cultures and placed them in front of a dramatic alternative: thoroughly transform, or disappear. Local cultures were unarmed in front of powerful external influences. In order to survive, they had to adopt the winner's model, the city-state and its local power.

The earliest signs of this evolution are already visible in the 5th century BC Mauressip houses, all built in stone and carefully arranged (for the first time) along street and places (p. 69). In the second half of the 4th century BC, this early structure meets a public building with the erection of a hill-top rectangular tower, no doubt a symbol of the community's power on its territory (p. 77). After some difficult times, the settlement retrieves its attractiveness in the 2nd century BC and then recovers the tower with a carefully arranged wall-facing, in large stones cut according to an Hellenistic technique. From then onwards, the city power is expressed by public constructions which

proudly display the local identity. And a stone rampart, the earliest here, is built around the Roque de Viou *oppidum* in the third quarter of the 4th century BC.

The Vaunage plain is by no way the earliest place where stone ramparts appear in Languedoc (i. e. the territory between the Pyrenees and the Rhone valley). Further East, the Marduel *oppidum* gets one at the end of the 6th century, shortly before *Lattara* (c. 500) and significantly earlier than Nîmes itself, the capital of the *Volcae Arecomici* (early 4th century). This means that cultural novelty took some time to reach every part of the territory, and the Vaunage was not on the major routes for that. But once the new model was established, it was difficult for anyone to ignore it. And the nearby *oppidum* of Nages 2 ancient, around 275 BC, built itself a huge and impressive stone rampart, of which the towers were visible, no doubt, from many points of the plain. So the prestige of the city was clearly displayed to everyone, not only to the inhabitants but also to visitors and travellers.

Nages' origins are a kind of mystery, as Py states in detail (pp. 125–130): did the earliest inhabitants move from the nearby Roque de Viou *oppidum*, where the latest phase dates from c. 300/290? Indeed the oldest documents from Nages can be dated from the same period. But at Nages, the early 3rd century BC does not show any trace of street, nor houses; only a stone rampart 'enceinte 1', enclosing a wide area on the top of the hill, could be associated with it. Furthermore, why abandon a quite recent *oppidum* (the Roque de Viou rampart was only c. 50 years old around 300) to settle down on the nearby hill? Was there a period with two co-existing sites? Was the 'enceinte 1' aimed at protecting the people building the coming town? A simpler interpretation makes this orphan rampart a protection wall for the 'enceinte 2', associated with Nages 2 ancient. In this perspective, Nages 1 never existed as an early town, its rampart being only part of the impressive defence system of the first Nages town, Nages 2 ancient.

It should be underlined here that a physical proximity is never mentioned as a hint for explaining settlement moves in the other cases of the Vaunage, where moving from an *oppidum* to another seems to be a normal way of exploiting a territory through centuries. There is, in fact, no strong reason to associate the end of Roque de Viou with the beginnings of Nages, even if the two walls are only c. 160 m apart.

Breaking with the earlier sites, Nages shows a carefully planned and organised plan, which remains an exceptional case even after nearly half a century of *oppidum* excavations in the area. Just like in a Greek city, the drawing of the street and quarters seems to have been drawn and applied by a central authority. This applies to the early urbanism of Nages 2 ancient, with long stripes of houses (c. 4.70 m) separated by a wide street (5 m), but also for the second urbanism, which similarly affects all the site, or so it seems. At Nages 2 recent, c. 175 BC, the street width was divided by two (c. 2.50 m) and the houses could therefore use a larger surface (c. 7–9 m width). Yet this theoretical plan was variously applied because some structures were not to be affected. The change nevertheless illustrated the wish for a wider space, no doubt needed by a flourishing community with increasing population.

Even if reality did not always fit with theory, the existence of such a planned urbanism is a real novelty in the area. Other cases like the Greek colony at *Olbia* (Var) in the Provence, or *Lattara* (Lattes, Hérault) in Languedoc, illustrate the idea of a regulated urbanism in the region. Even if it seems here difficult not to mention the name of Hippodamos of Milet, the numerous differences between the Greek model and its indigenous reception shows at Nages the work of some architects, perhaps massaliot engineers or some architects working in the in Marseilles circles. However, this phenomenon illustrates the impact of Mediterranean influence on the local societies of South-

ern Gaul and the deep transformations which occurred, as a consequence, in the highest spheres of indigenous societies.

A large part of the book (pp. 241–326) is devoted to the aspects of 'Celtic culture' in Nages but will not be discussed here. Just as urbanism, material culture reflects changes in the local way of life, not only through techniques and sources of the goods, but also through their functions and uses. The last three centuries BC see dramatic changes which equally appear in architecture, social forms and artefacts: South Gaul was, before all, a market for external cultures practising extensive production, and therefore international trade. If the local cultures were deeply affected, then transformed by such imports, this was not theorised before the Roman period, when a layer of good conscience was added to economic interest. Michel Py was always a searcher, not only to carefully analyse the Iron Age transformations through the archaeological finds, but also to explain the theoretical background of these moments throughout ages. This is why his pages on pottery, small finds, trade and culture in the Vaunage are worth being read with great concern.

Altogether, this volume owns synthetic qualities which are rarely attained in books written by mere archaeologists. Expecting an equal level on field observation, site and finds documentation, analysis and historical reading of half a century of research is, indeed, asking a lot of a single person. Not many excavators have shown both accuracy in the management of field data and enough historical vista to risk such an expert work. Michel Py is probably one of the very few present archaeologists to have this talent, skilfully displayed in this new masterwork.

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Sylvie Barrier, La romanisation en question. Vaisselle céramique et processus d'acculturation à la fin de l'âge du Fer en Gaule interne. Collection Bibracte 25. Centre archéologique européen, Glux-en-Glenne 2014. € 35,00. ISBN 978-2-909668-82-6. 318 Seiten, 182 Abbildungen.

Bei der vorliegenden Publikation von Sylvie Barrier handelt es sich um die Druckfassung ihrer 2012 an der Université François-Rabelais Tours eingereichten Dissertation. In deren Mittelpunkt steht mit der spätlatènezeitlich-frührömischen Feinkeramik eine Materialgruppe, die zwischen dem 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr. und der Mitte des 1. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. unter mediterranem Einfluss technische, formale wie funktionale Veränderungen erfährt und so eine Vielzahl von Ansatzpunkten für die Untersuchung des Prozesses der Romanisation bietet. Chronologisch umfasst die Studie den Zeitraum zwischen LT C2 / D1a und der tiberisch-claudischen Epoche; geographisch betrachtet steht Zentralgallien im Mittelpunkt. Die punktuelle Einbeziehung von Fundkomplexen aus Ost- und Zentral-Westgallien ermöglicht jedoch auch Rückschlüsse auf die Entwicklung in Regionen mit einer gegenüber den mediterranen Impulsgebern peripheren Lage. Anhand der Feinkeramik werden von S. Barrier exogene Einflüsse zunächst quantifiziert, hinsichtlich ihrer Qualität beurteilt und mit sozio-ökonomischen Hintergründen bzw. Daten anderer Materialgruppen verschnitten. Auf diese Weise gelangt die Autorin zu einer Modellierung des anhand der keramischen Funde fassbaren Akkulturationsprozesses. Im Gegensatz zu anderen Keramikstudien zielt die vorliegende Arbeit auf einen überregionalen Vergleich ab, möchte nicht nur regionale Entwicklungen skizzieren, sondern diese zu einem größeren Gesamtbild zusammenfügen und die impulsgebenden Mechanismen isolieren. Der mit diesem Anspruch verbundenen methodischen Herausforderung trägt die Autorin durch einen statistischen Forschungsansatz und eine formalisierte Materialauf-