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**The urbanization of the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire :  
a juridical and functional approach to town life in Roman Gaul,  
Germania inferior and Britain**

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## CHAPTER 5: THE SECONDARY AGGLOMERATIONS OF GAUL

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have seen how the self-governing cities of the north-western provinces differed in terms of status, monumentality, and size. On the map below - which shows all the self-governing cities of the Roman Empire - we can observe that the number and density of self-governing cities in the north-western provinces are significantly lower than in other areas of the Roman Empire (e.g. Greece, Asia Minor, Tunisia, and Italy).<sup>602</sup> On average, the cities were also farther apart. As previously discussed in chapter 2, this peculiarity has its roots in the Iron Age, when centralized communities developed in parallel and independently from the city-states of the Mediterranean world. In chapter 2 we saw how archaeological evidence attests that at least in some areas of temperate Europe (such as central Gaul), these communities could control a very wide territory which was organized around a main centre (e.g. the Aedui and their capital Bibracte or the Bituriges Cubi and Avaricum). It is against this background that the Roman administrative boundaries were established, along with the self-governing cities.



**Figure 95: The self-governing cities of the Roman Empire.**

Nevertheless, this map does not reflect the complete settlement system of these provinces. Rather, it shows the distribution of only those cities that had served as the ‘official’ political and administrative centres in Roman times. In the 1980s Bekker-Nielsen, when analysing the

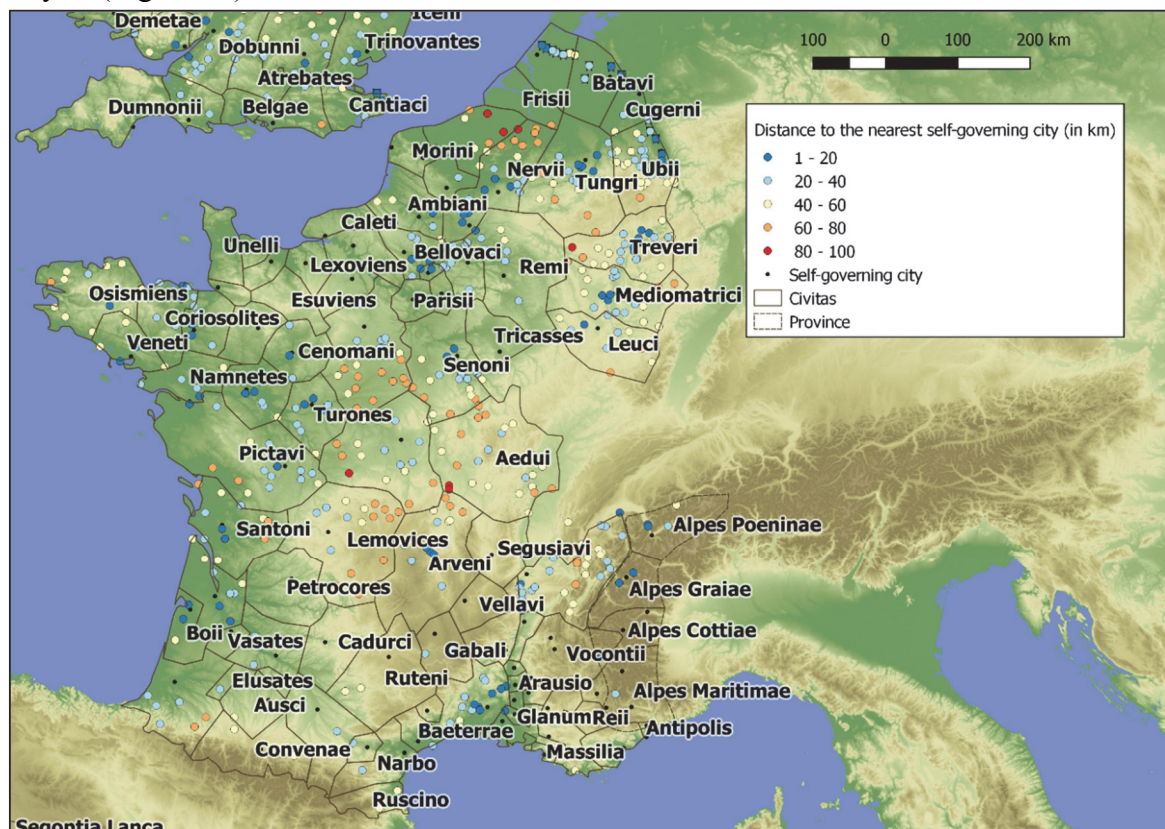
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<sup>602</sup> This map is based on the data collected by the ‘An Empire of 2000 cities project’ (retrieved: 08/02/2018).

distribution of ‘official’ cities in the north-western provinces, was startled by their low numbers and scattered distribution (in comparison with other parts of the Roman Empire). He thus wondered whether such a loose urban network could have hampered the ability of these cities to create a functional, efficient and spatially integrated urban system.<sup>603</sup> Quite rightly, he observed that many capital cities lie well beyond daily-access journey times and could be neither efficient nor functional markets for much of the community living within their territory. However, Bekker-Nielsen was looking only at the ‘official cities’, those that were the seat of local government.

In this chapter, we will bring into the picture, along with the already discussed self-governing cities, the other settlements that were likely to have performed ‘urban’ functions. *Failing to do so would* ultimately hinder our understanding of the whole urban network of these provinces.

By including these settlements in the study, we will finally be able to grasp the complexity and efficiency that provincial and regional urban system(s) could reach, In fact, many of the gaps in the map in Figure 95 would be filled, if we included the secondary agglomerations in our analysis (Figure 96).



**Figure 96:** This map shows how far a secondary agglomeration lies from the closest self-governing cities (black dot). Red dots represent agglomerations that lie distant from them; blue dots those which lie closer to them.

The map above shows how different the picture is if we add in the secondary agglomerations. It also shows how distant secondary agglomerations could lie from the closest self-governing cities. In those areas where red dots are preponderant, self-governing cities lie quite far apart

<sup>603</sup> Bekker-Nielsen 1989.



from each other (100-200 km) and in between them, we can identify a significant number of secondary agglomerations. There is not always a direct relationship between the inter-distance of self-governing cities and secondary settlements and their level of monumentality and prosperity. For example, ‘red dots’ (i.e. secondary agglomerations that lie distant from a self-governing city) can be large and monumental in some areas (for example in the region corresponding to the *civitates* of the Pictones and Bituriges Cubi, which are populated by some of the largest and richest secondary agglomerations of Roman Gaul) and can be small and lack any sign of monumentality elsewhere (for example in north-eastern Belgica or in Germania Inferior).

The same is true for their size. The map below (Figure 97) shows exactly this: while in Germania Inferior most secondary agglomerations did not reach 10 ha, in the *civitates* of the Pictones and Bituriges Cubi many agglomerations exceeded that threshold and many covered between 40 and 80 ha.

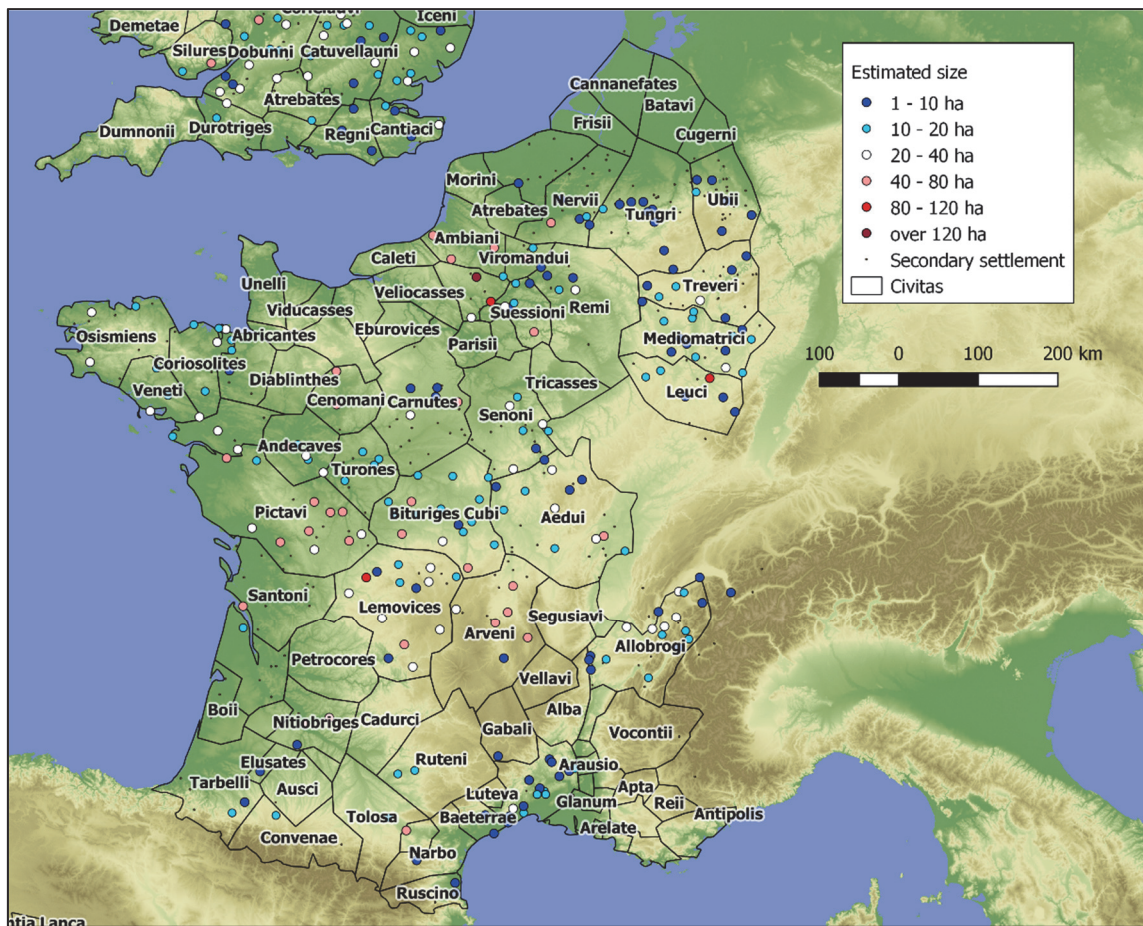


Figure 97: The estimated size of the secondary agglomerations in Gaul and Germania Inferior.

It should be clear by now that the complexities entailed in the analysis of the settlement system of the north-western provinces do not allow for general statements or explanations. Case studies, on the other hand, provide in-depth insights into the various densities and distributions of settlements. Eight case studies have been selected for their relevance in terms of socio-

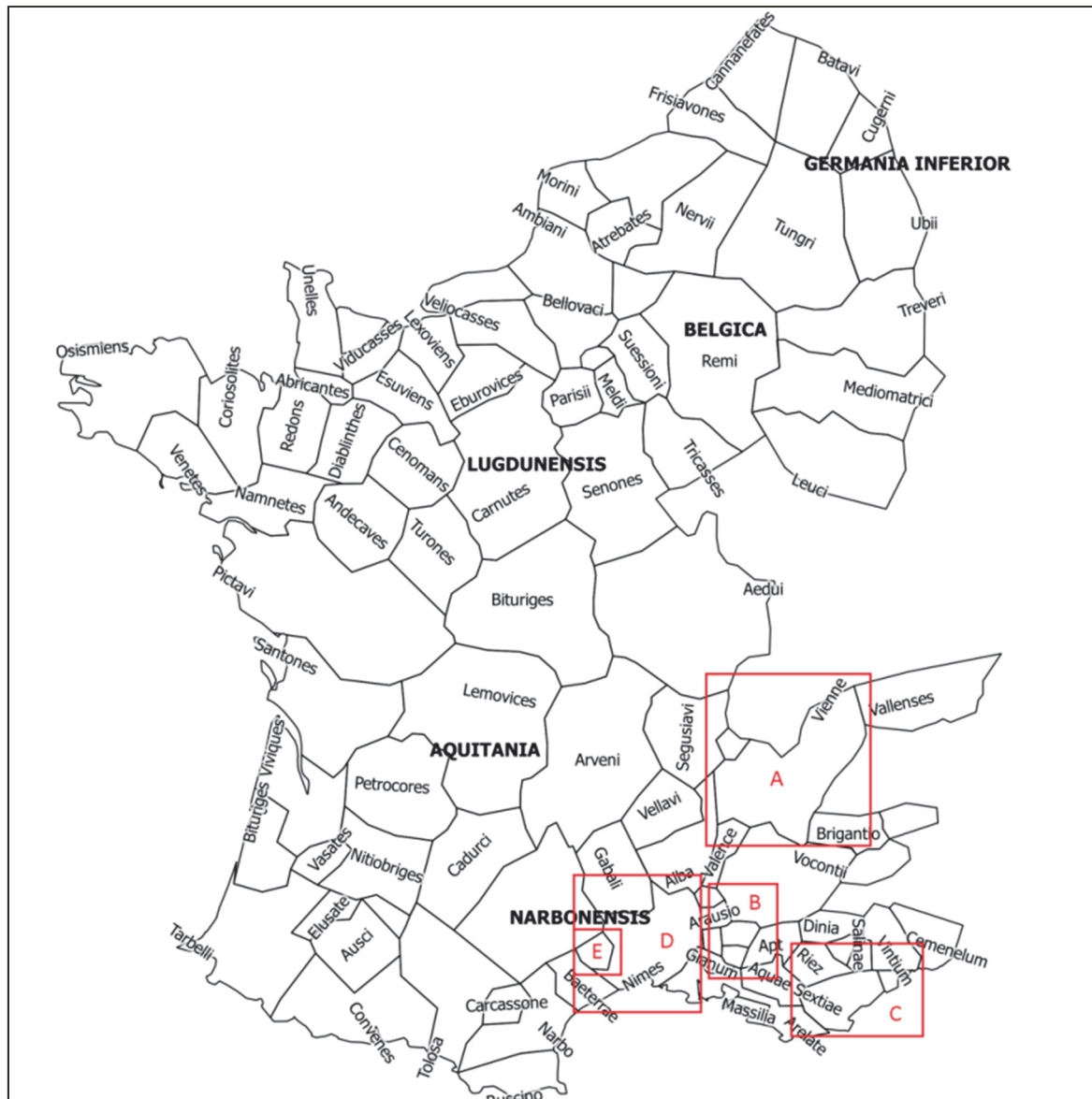
cultural and economic attributes to showcase the multiple types of settlement systems and urban forms which existed in terms of physical and spatial configuration (Figure 98).



Figure 98: The areas selected for the analysis of the settlement system in the North-Western provinces.

## 5.1 The distribution of secondary agglomerations in Narbonensis

The extreme diversity in climate, topography, soil, distribution of resources, juridical and administrative status and population concentration in Narbonensis makes it impossible to determine one type of settlement system. Thus comparative settlement study will be attempted; five research-areas have been selected.



**Figure 99: The case studies selected for the analysis of settlement hierarchies in Narbonensis.**

- A. The *civitas* of the Allobroges, which extended from the Rhône River to Lake Geneva (modern France and Switzerland). Its capital was Vienne, one of the richest cities in Roman Gaul and which controlled a vast territory of over 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>.
- B. The department of the Vaucluse, which was bordered by the Rhône to the west and the river Durance to the south. This area of *c.* 3567 km<sup>2</sup> is mountainous on a significant proportion of its eastern half and in Roman times it was fragmented into a multitude of colonies (Apta, Arausio, Avennio, Cabellio, Carpentorate, and Vasio).
- C. South-eastern Gaul (Fréjus, Antibes, Vence, Briançonnet), which is characterized by a wide variety of contrasting landforms and landscapes (coastal areas, mountain glacial landscapes, plains).
- D. Nîmes and its large territory, in modern Languedoc-Roussillon, one of the best-studied communities of southern Gaul.



E. The city of Luteva and its small territory, strategically located between the southern plains and lower hills, and the southern slopes of the Massif Central.

### 5.1.1 The *civitas* of the Allobroges (Vienne)

The colony of Vienne (which extended over c. 130 ha) controlled one of the largest *civitates* in southern Gaul. Given how close it lies to Lyon (it was quite exceptional in the north-western provinces that two such large cities could develop so close to each other) it is clear that its port benefited from the proximity to Lyon, the capital of the Gaulish provinces. The huge warehouses lined along the Rhône indicate that this city was an important hub on the Rhône River. It was a key strategic economic crossroad between the Mediterranean Sea, the Alps, and the rest of the Gaulish and Germanic provinces and along the supply lines that were vital for the success of military campaigns and for sustaining the permanent forts stationed at the *limes*. It probably functioned as a sort of ‘satellite’ port for Lyon, and some of the traffic was deliberately diverted there to avoid the congestion of the capital.

As we can see on the map below, agglomerations were concentrated either in the eastern portion of the *civitas* territory (particularly along the river Rhône and the road connecting Vienne to the colony of Valence) or in its western half, along important transalpine axes.<sup>604</sup> Aoste, Genève, and Grenoble, which would become self-governing cities in the Late Empire, were established at the frontiers with other provinces (Raetia and Alpes Graiae). Châteauneuf and Gilly, in the valley of the Isère, were positioned at the entrance of the valley that leads to the Petit-Saint-Bernard Pass.<sup>605</sup> These two different groups of agglomerations differed not only in their location but also in terms of morphology, size, and functions.

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<sup>604</sup> Most settlements lay on important alpine and transalpine axes of communication (e.g. Grenoble, Annecy, and Genève). As Torricelli pointed out, this is one of the long-lasting characteristics of the urbanization of the Alps: ‘*Contrairement aux apparences, les Alpes ont aussi été, très tôt, le berceau d'un type particulier de ville et de vie urbaine, qui, bien qu'en valorisant les ressources locales, était étroitement liée à la circulation transalpine. Si l'on voulait identifier le 'trait spécifique' de la ville dans les Alpes, on prendrait en premier lieu des fonctions étroitement liées à la traversée du massif, comme la transition, le passage ou le carrefour*’ (Torricelli 2002 : 26-27).

<sup>605</sup> The economic development of the Alps is shaped by three main factors: the mass and the altitude of the peaks, and the large glacial valleys that penetrate these masses and that allow for communication between Gaul, Germany and Italy. The plains and hills that develop in the periphery, therefore, are in opposition to the inner mountain valleys (Leveau 2003: 44). The existence of a frontier meant that customs duties needed to be collected. J. France (2003) looked at this lucrative activity in his study on the ‘*quadragesima Galliarum*’ and highlighted the profits that the Alpine tribes could make from this practice. G. Walser 1989: 92 drew attention to the importance of professional associations (*collegia*) dedicated to transport, like the one of the ‘*corpus mercatorum Cisalpinorum et Transalpinorum*’, whose members are recorded in the Alpine provinces and in the cities of Lyon, Milan, Avenches, and Augst (Leveau 2003: 45). Also see France 2001.



**Figure 100: The agglomerations of the *civitas* of the Allobroges.**

As we can see from Figure 101, the agglomerations closer to the capital Vienne were much smaller and closer to each other than their counterparts in the east. On average, they occupied areas of around 10 ha, whilst those in the east were significantly larger. At least five covered c. 20-30 ha (Genève, Annecy, Aoste, Albens, and Grenoble), others measured 10-20 ha (Aix-les-Bains, Annemasse, Faverges, and Gilly-sur-Isère). Figure 102 shows that settlements lying in the western part of the *civitas* were not only larger, but they also featured a larger number of public monuments (which was still quite modest compared to other *civitates* in Aquitania or Belgica). The most common monuments were religious buildings (temples and sanctuaries), followed by elements related to the management of water like aqueducts and baths, the latter occasionally being invested with a cultural role, for example in spa towns like Aix-les-Bains. These agglomerations displayed a large number of urban elements. For example, the agglomeration of Annecy had a public square (80x64 m<sup>2</sup>) surrounded by porticoes and shops, public baths, a theatre (whose *cavea* was probably built in wood and could host c. 1000 people), a *basilica* (which is only known through an inscription<sup>606</sup>), an unidentified public building (possibly a *palaestra*), a *horologium*<sup>607</sup>, a number of altars and at least 50 wells (private and public).<sup>608</sup> They also stand out for the diversity of economic activities in which their inhabitants were involved.

<sup>606</sup> CIL XII, 2533.

<sup>607</sup> Offered by a magistrate (CIL XII, 2522).

<sup>608</sup> Also known through inscriptions (CIL XII 2525; CIL XII 2526; CIL XII 2529-2531).



Figure 101: The size of the agglomerations in the *civitas* of the Allobroges.

Artisanal quarters are attested in Aoste, Grenoble, and Annecy, along with luxurious *domus* (Aoste, Annecy, and Grenoble) and more humble dwellings. Imported marble (e.g. Carrara marble) and precious stone were used in private and public buildings. Rémy and Jospin tried to reconstruct the society of one these agglomerations - Aoste - by looking at its epigraphic record. The picture they gained was that of a dynamic and thriving community<sup>609</sup> with a number of independent artisans engaging in different activities: glassmakers, potters<sup>610</sup>, plumbers and so on. Several businesses, such as the one set up by the Atisii, transcended the regional sphere, and their mortars were exported to other provinces in the West. While the traces of metalwork (furnaces and *scoriae*) are more ambiguous, the presence of ten iron bars suggests that semi-finished goods were traded.

<sup>609</sup> Rémy and Jospin 1998.

<sup>610</sup> A division of labour is attested for potters. For example a man called Macer decorated vases's molds, Noster (I, n° 28) was an artisan-potter, etc. (Rémy and Jospin 1998: 82).



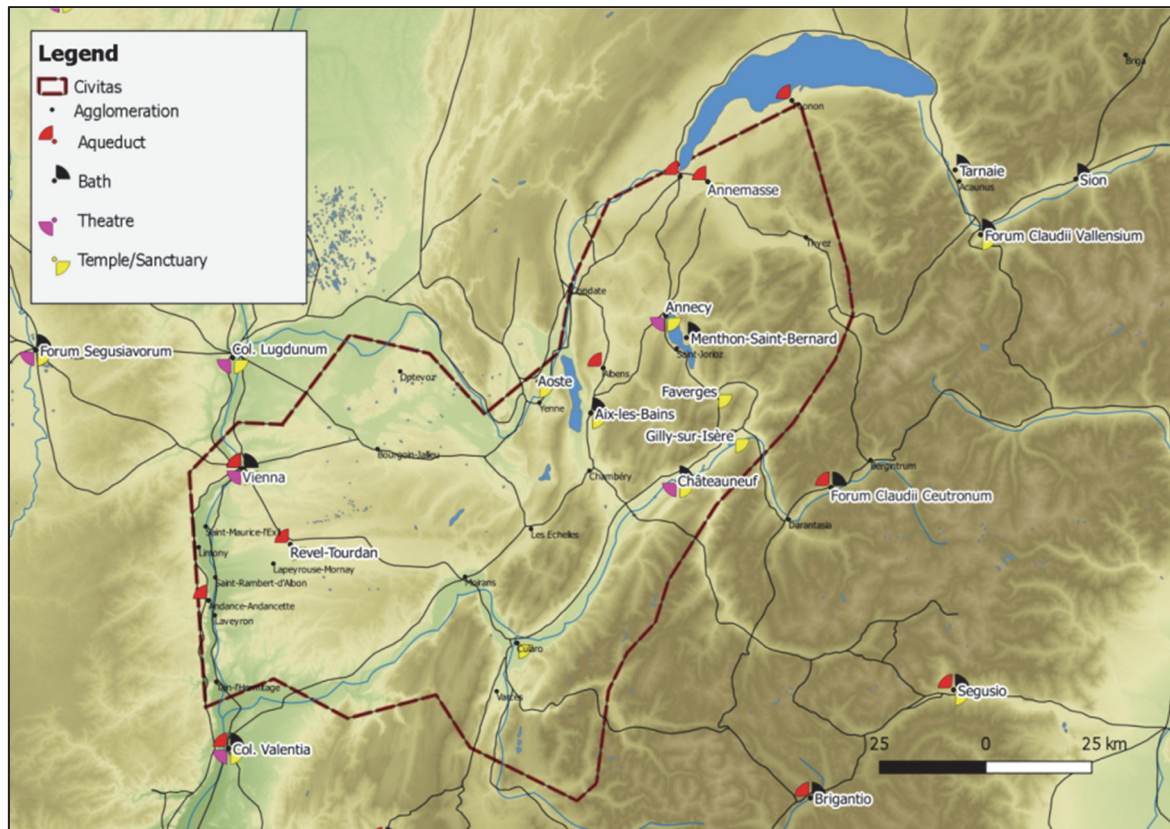


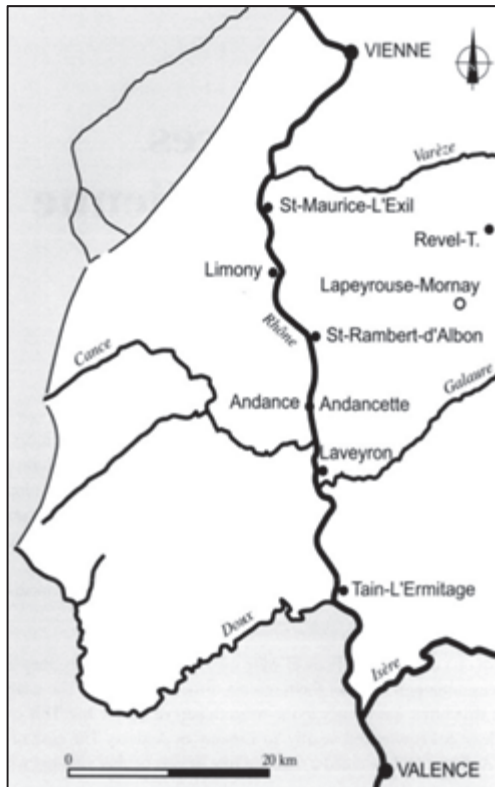
Figure 102: The monumentality of the agglomerations in the *civitas* of the Allobroges.

On the other hand, in the east, agglomerations did not show as many signs of monumentality (except for the aqueduct and the sanctuary located beyond the edge of the settlement at Andance-Andacette). According to Béal, this pattern could be the consequence of the strong presence of villas (acknowledged at least near Limony or Andace). However, around ten villas were also established around Annecy, so this argument is weak. Their lack of infrastructures can be better explained by the fact that none was needed since amenities could be found in the colonies of Vienne and Valence, which were not very far away. A few considerations about their spatial configuration can be made, too. If we look at the map below (Figure 103), we see that the majority lie along the road Vienne-Valence, at a distance of about 5-10 km from each other.<sup>611</sup> These settlements are quite poorly understood. They present signs of economic activities (e.g. potters) and *necropoleis*.<sup>612</sup> Most of these agglomerations developed on only one side of the river, but they might also have some small (and possibly overstated) ‘*suburbia*’ on the other side. This is the case of Andance-Andacette, a small settlement of 4-5 ha which is

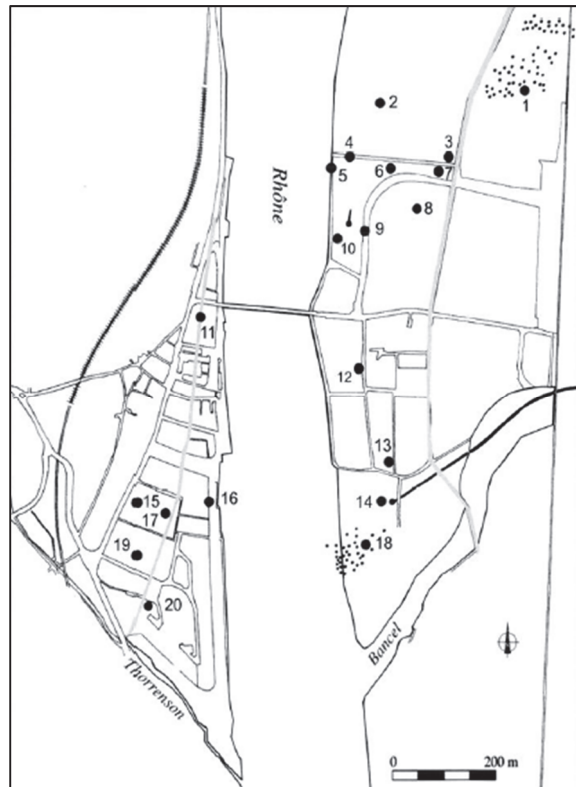
<sup>611</sup> Traditionally, in the bibliography, they are referred to as ‘*mansio*’ (see for example Béal 2005 and Leveau 1993b). As for the Roman agglomerations of modern Belgium - which are too often referred to as *mansio* or *statio* in the literature - there are not effective proofs of their being such.

<sup>612</sup> The quality of the evidence concerning this region is poor. Little is known about the layout of most of these settlements (often calculated based on the location of the *necropoleis*). Some settlements have been successfully identified with the route stations mentioned in ancient itineraries (e.g. Tain = Tegna, Leveyron = Ursoli). Other times their identification is more problematic. For example, the agglomeration named ‘Figlinae’, mentioned in the Tabula Peutingeriana (II, 1) and in the Ravenna Cosmography (IV, 26) remains to be located. It was the first station on the route that linked Vienne to Valence, (17 *milia* south of Vienne and 16 north of Tain). The toponymal ‘*figalinae*’ recalls the production of pottery, and it is believed to have been located in the area of Saint-Rambert-d’Albon. The map shows only sites that are archaeologically attested.

often taken as an example for these so-called *sites doubles* (or *villes-doubles*) characteristic of the Rhône Valley.



**Figure 103: The agglomerations south of Vienne (Béal 2005: 16).**



**Figure 104: The site of Andance-Andancette and the location of archaeological remains (Béal 2005: 20).**

For example, Andance-Andancette (Figure 104) lies on the right bank of the Rhône, but two *necropoleis* and a pottery workshop (possibly part of an artisanal quarter?) are attested on the left bank.<sup>613</sup> These two groups of agglomerations also differ in ‘juridical’ terms. In fact, if we look at the map below, we see that the agglomerations known to have been ‘*vici*’ lie in the west, especially on routes of supra-provincial importance (Figure 105). They are all at least 50 km distant from Vienne.<sup>614</sup> It is possible that given how large the territory of the *civitas* was, in very distant regions subordinated administrative centres were needed (not to mention that a cultural factor is also predominant here since, as Tarpin observed, the epigraphy in this area ‘*est marquée par un formulaire italien et par une onomastique de type latin*’.<sup>615</sup>

<sup>613</sup> Other examples are: Tain-l'Hermitage (26), Tournon (07), Valence (26), Granges-lès-Valence (07), Bourg-Saint-Andéol (07), and Pierrelatte (26) (Béal and Odier 1999). Béal criticizes this tradition and believes these sites are overemphasized since most of them, he writes, must have been only settlements for river crossing.

<sup>614</sup> Except for the enigmatic ‘*vicus Rep[entinus] ?*’ which remains to be located, but could be placed around Reventin-Vaugris, which lies 10 km south of Vienne. The *vicus* of Turedonnum (Revel-Tourdan), which lies around 20 km east of Vienne, is not epigraphically attested; it is known only from the Tabula Peutingeriana. The inscriptions always mention ‘*vicani*’, and not directly the ‘*vici*’ R.A.N., t. 38-39, 2005-2006: 7-13. (Leveau and Rémy 2005).

<sup>615</sup> Tarpin 2002a: 265. Gascou, in the I.L.N. volume on Vienne, argues that each *vicus* may have had a college of priests (Gascou 2004: 52).

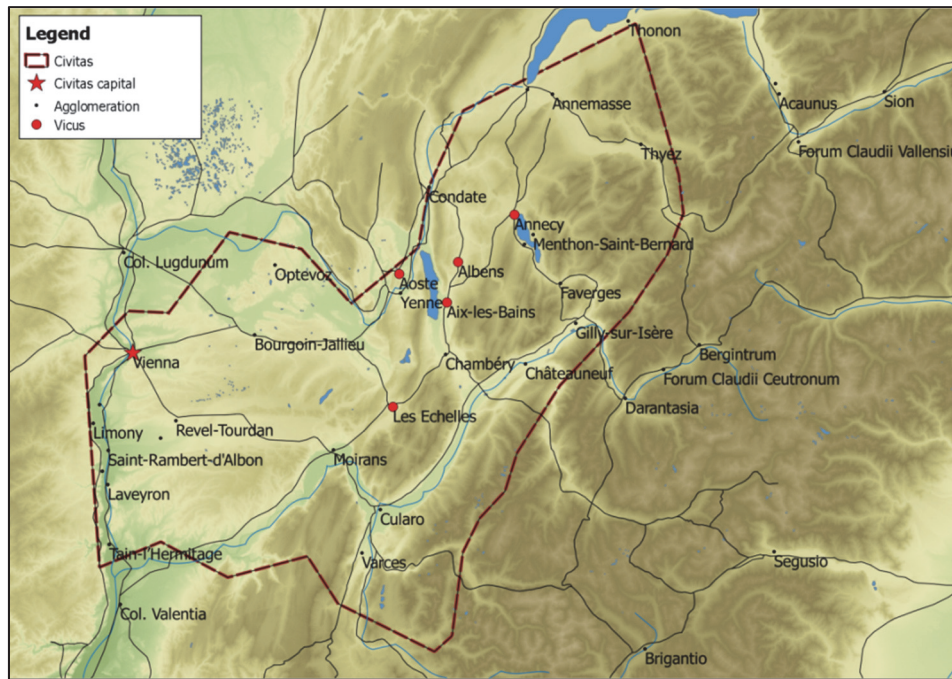


Figure 105: The *vici* of the *civitas* of the Allobroges.



Figure 106: The 'arc of Campanus' (Leveau *et al.* 2007: 281).

As mentioned above, one common element shared by the agglomerations of this *civitas* is that often members of the regional elite and sub-elite were buried there.<sup>616</sup> At times, their *necropoleis* were more monumentalized than the agglomeration itself. The agglomeration of

<sup>616</sup> Similarly, in the territory of Arles, the *libertus* Marcus Frontonius Euporus (CIL XII 982 = ILS 6986) *sevir Augustalis* at Aquae Sextiae and patron of the *navicularii* in Arles was buried in the obscure settlement of Arnagine (Saint-Gabriel, Tarascon, Bouches-du-Rhône).

Aix-les-Bains, which lay on the beautiful shores of the largest natural lake of glacial origin in France, Lake Bourget, was a popular spa town.<sup>617</sup> This site is known to us through its large number of inscriptions (which also passed on to us its name and status: '*vicani Aquenses*') and the remains of a thermal complex, in addition to two other outstanding monuments, the '*arc de Campanus*' (Figure 106) and the '*temple de Diane*'. Only recently, a critical architectonic re-evaluation of the evidence revealed that these two monuments were not public buildings belonging to the civic centre of this ancient town, but funerary monuments.<sup>618</sup>

Does this mean that in light of this new evidence, what has for long been seen as a 'true town' should now be declassified to a lower rank or lose its character of 'urbanity'? Certainly not. As Leveau observed, these monuments were symbols of '*urbanitas*', the image of a 'civilized world' in opposition to the '*ferocitas*', the indomitability of rural space.<sup>619</sup> This is perhaps a key to the reading of the relationship between the municipal and local elites in these agglomerations. Members of the elite were not only buried there, but, as Février observed in an influential article, they also invested in their development, namely through euergetic acts.<sup>620</sup> Tarpin observed that '*certaines grandes familles ont leur mausolée à proximité de l'un ou l'autre vicus*'.<sup>621</sup> The arch of Campanus, for example, belonged to the family of the Pompeii, one of the two of the most prominent families known in Aix. Of course, this city was not like any other city, in the sense that it was, given its beautiful location and its character as a thermal city, visited by the nobility devoted to their *otium*.<sup>622</sup> However, this was not exceptional. Rémy, who studied the distribution of inscriptions in this *civitas* concluded that the majority of the inscriptions came from secondary agglomerations (36.7%), 31.1% from the capital (Vienne) and 32.2% from the countryside. Among those found in secondary agglomerations or immediate surroundings, almost a half (44.6%) were recovered in the *vici* of Genève (22), Annecy (9), Aoste (7), Albens (5), Aix-les-Bains (4) and in the agglomerations of Seyssel (3), Briord (2) and Châteauneuf (1). Local and municipal magistrates were also buried in smaller

<sup>617</sup> Also mentioned in ancient sources, see Pliny Hist. Nat. XXXI, III, 5-8 or XXI, II, 2.

<sup>618</sup> Leveau *et al.* 2007. Scholars had favoured a funerary character, mostly based on an architectural analysis (e.g. Prieur 1977). However, it was hard to break with the tradition that saw them as belonging to the monumental centres of a town since funeral arches, in the Western provinces, are quite unusual.

<sup>619</sup> Different scholars had raised questions because they thought these were funerary monuments. However, this idea was rejected since it seemed impossible that funerary monuments could be located in the middle of a city. Other examples of elite graves in civic centres come from Ephesos, Mantica, and Argos. For a discussion of the so-called *tombeau-temple* see Gros 2001: 444-454.

<sup>620</sup> Février 1981. Many examples come from this *civitas*, especially from the Alpine region: Albens (Caius Sennius Sabinus, CIL XII 2993 and 2994), Genève (Lucius Iulius Brocchus Valerius Bassus, magistrate of Nyon CIL XII 2606 = ILS 7004), Briord (Camullia Attica). Other examples come from the nearby *civitates*, such as the one of the Vocontii (Alabons or Alarant). His conclusions have been too often simplistically translated into the elite investing money in these settlements only because their reserve of workforce (workers in their nearby villas) was living there.

<sup>621</sup> Tarpin 2002a: 266.

<sup>622</sup> See Riez (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), an obscure agglomeration known for its spa where a dedication to Faustina proves it had links with the imperial family. Other examples come from Aquae Griselidae (Chastagnol 1992: no 38; Bérard 1997: 222-223) and Balaruc-les-Bains (between Montpellier and Béziers); all these places, however small, were visited by the elite.



sites, like the settlement of Limony,<sup>623</sup> where in the mid-1st century AD Apronia Clodilla commemorated her parents.<sup>624</sup>

Only a minority of burials concerned territorial magistrates, while most of them held municipal or religious offices in Vienne.<sup>625</sup> This has led Février to believe that the highest ranks of municipal offices were spending most of their time in the countryside and went to the capital only when required.<sup>626</sup> This pattern contrasts with that of the nearby *civitas* of Nîmes, where the evidence of public or religious buildings being erected by benefactors in secondary agglomerations is much more limited.<sup>627</sup>

In some cases the quality of the evidence allows us to trace the influence of the elite on the development of the settlement system back to the pre-Roman period. The *vicus* and the territory of Revel-Tourdane (Turedonnum), 20 km southeast of Vienne, have recently been the object of study.<sup>628</sup> From 140-130 BC, in the eastern area of this agglomeration (on the site of Champ-Martin), a densely occupied open settlement developed which extended over more than 10 ha. Evidence of aristocratic presence - whose nature is still not completely understood, it might belong to an aristocratic residence - is attested, along with ritual activities (banquets). On the site, there is also evidence of animal butchery and storage facilities. While the agglomeration was developing, a few kilometres away - on the lower terraces and plains (in a transitional area between loamy and wet soil) - several rural establishments started to appear. In Roman times, on the site of Champ-Martin, a large and monumental sanctuary was built on top of the old structures; two temples were established in the central area of the agglomeration while a further

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<sup>623</sup> This settlement is also little understood. The road '*est formée d'un conglomérat de cailloux et de terre argileuse d'une extrême dureté*' (Collange 1924 : 103 and fig. p. 102). Structures (such as walls and pavements), small finds, and traces of a road 6 m wide are attested. Only the edges are known (based on the location of *necropolis*). Possibly, the whole central part was occupied.

<sup>624</sup> Her father, Eutropus was an epicurean doctor and *sevir* of the *civitas*; given his title, his daughter must have belonged to a wealthy family. This practice is not uncommon for the Western provinces. In Tain two inscriptions recalling magistrates have also been found (CIL, XII, 1782 and ILN, V, 1, n. 303 = CIL, XII, 1793).

<sup>625</sup> According to some scholars (Van der Wielen 1999: 39; Tarpin 2002a: 88-95), after the revolt of the chief of the Allobroges Catugnatus in 61 BC, the region of Aoste was confiscated and given to those families that had been loyal to Rome, e.g. the Iulii, Pompeii, Valerii, and possibly the Attii.

The idea that land was concentrated into the hands of a few, extremely powerful families shines through Rémy's analysis of the occurrences of family names. In 25.5 % of cases the name appears only once; in 41.9 % it belongs to 12 families: the Iulii are the most common (30 occurrences; 689 in Narbonensis) and hint at the important impact of Caesar and Augustus in the history of southern Gaul. Then come the Valerii (15 occurrences), the Pompeii (12 occurrences), the Attii (6 occurrences), the Coelii (6 occurrences), the Cassii (5 occurrences), the Marii (5 occurrences), the Sennii (5 occurrences), the Apronii (4 occurrences), the Tincii (4 occurrences), the Titii (4 occurrences) and the Vibrii (4 occurrences) (Rémy 1998: 93).

<sup>626</sup> '*Il est donc clair qu'une bonne partie des notables des couches supérieures de la cité avaient choisi, dès les Julio-Claudiens (cinq inscriptions à Grenoble, deux à Aoste, neuf à Genève...) et pendant toute la période (inscriptions à Aix-les-Bains, Aoste, Genève, Grenoble...), d'établir leur résidence principale dans les agglomérations urbaines secondaires et non dans la capitale. Ils ne devaient se rendre à Vienne que pour leurs affaires ou celles de la cité. [...] Une telle répartition géographique des inscriptions confirme, si besoin était, le lien très étroit des élites municipales avec la terre qui devait constituer la base de leur patrimoine. Comme le notait le regretté P. -A. Février "on voit nettement que dans le vécu d'un magistrat ou d'un sévir, charges à la ville et séjour rural sont les deux faces d'une même réalité". Pour ces notables, leur domaine campagnard, qui n'était sans doute pas toujours de très grandes dimensions, était le lieu de otium, où ils prenaient le temps de se cultiver, de rencontrer leurs amis et où ils finissaient leur vie. Comme le prouve le fait que ces inscriptions sont presque toutes des épitaphes*' (Rémy 1998 : 87-89).

<sup>627</sup> Christol 2003. At Balaruc-les-Bains, in a spa town at the eastern edge of the *civitas* of Nîmes, a Roman *equus* offered an aqueduct to the local community.

<sup>628</sup> Varennes 2010a and 2010b.

one was erected c. 300 m to the east. With time, its territory appears to become more and more hierarchically structured: rural establishments increase in number and a dense network of villas tend to polarize the rural landscape.

### 5.1.2 The agglomerations in Vaucluse (Apta, Arausio, Avennio, Cabellio, Carpentorate and Vasio)

Regrettably, the quality of the evidence regarding the Vaucluse area is not as good as one may have desired.<sup>629</sup> Nonetheless, a few considerations about the settlement system of this region will be made. The area was occupied by the veteran colony of Arausio and five other colonies, which all lay c. 25 km from each other. Despite their high juridical status, those settlements which lie in the eastern and mountainous part were actually quite small (for example Apt extended over only 6-10 ha and Cabellio over 14 ha). Overall, however, it was a rich and densely inhabited area. In the 1st century BC the exploitation of land became more intensive; colonial and indigenous communities created a large number of new farms and rural exploitations. The small number of protohistoric sites (which usually date to after the 2nd century BC) contrasts with the multitude of sites dating to the High Empire. Rural exploitations increased everywhere in Lower Provence. A large surplus was derived from specialized cultures, like those of oil and wine, through the introduction of new tools like the watermill (e.g. the Barbegal Mill), but also through the exploitations of mines (Lubéron<sup>630</sup>) or the production of tiles (Rustrel, Puy-Loubier). Most people attested from epigraphy were members of the elite and landowners. Their *cognomina* appear to have had a Celtic origin, which might suggest continuity between a pre-Roman aristocracy and the later owners of villas.

This leads to the conclusion that the rural space began to be organized as early as the 1st to 2nd centuries BC, when scattered small rural establishments started to grow.<sup>631</sup>

In Roman times (Figure 107), the landscape of this region consists of:

1. Self-governing cities (i.e. *coloniae*).
2. Hill-top settlements: most of the old '*oppida*' were still occupied during the High Empire, although they lost their role of political and socio-economic centres.
3. Rural settlements and dispersed settlements: no secondary agglomerations with 'urban' feature are known to have existed in this area. Broise retained only ten rural agglomerations, all ranging between c. 4-10 ha. The majority of them lie on the plain and often along a road. Some of them - the settlements known only from the Itineraria, e.g. Cypresseta and Ad Letoce (both on the *via Agrippa*) or Ad Fines (on the *via Domitia*) - are often referred to by scholars as *mansiones* (although there are no archaeological proofs and sometimes their location remains uncertain).

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<sup>629</sup> See for example the lamentable state of knowledge of the territory of Orange denounced in the '*Carte archéologique de la Gaule 84/3. Orange et sa région*' (Roumégous 2009).

<sup>630</sup> Cfr. Bachimon 2004: 39 for the natural resources of Lubéron.

<sup>631</sup> Haeussler 2008.

If we look at Table 7, we also see that they rarely displayed any signs of wealth (e.g. mosaics, marble, architectural elements, hypocausts or painted plaster), although several have produced a number of inscriptions.

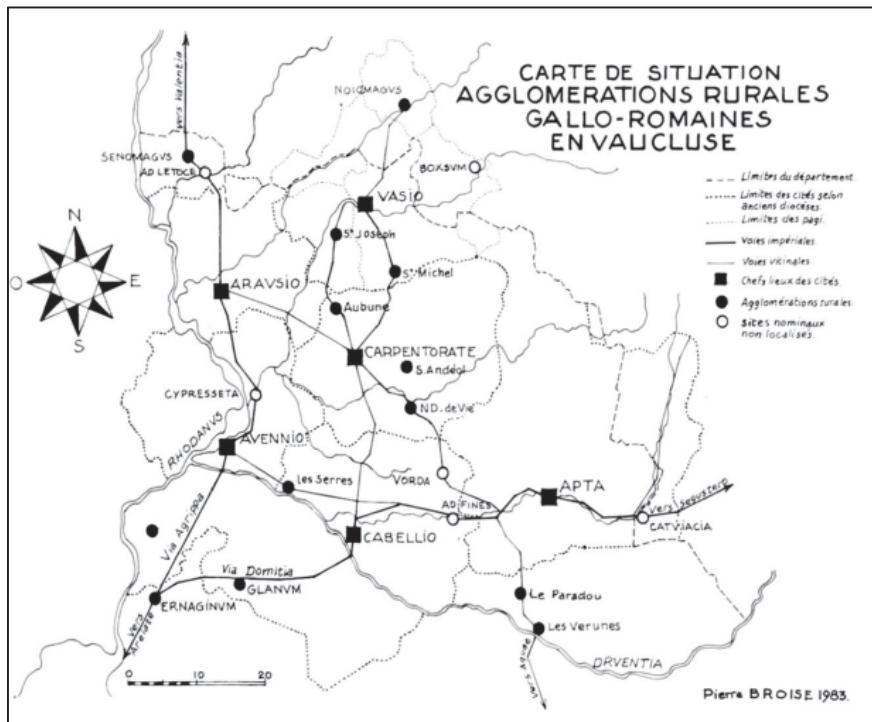


Figure 107: The agglomerations in Vaucluse (Broise 1984: 268).

4. Farms and other rural sites, whose number kept increasing after the 2nd to 1st centuries BC. Villas were important nodes in the settlement system of this area. The number of villas is quite high. In the territory of Orange, for example, out of 115 rural establishments, 68 are villas.<sup>632</sup> As has been mentioned above, this area was very productive. Fields were covered with vineyards and cereals; probably olives were grown too and animal husbandry was practised. Any evidence of the presence of an agglomeration is very scarce. An inscription mentions a '*pagus Minervius*'; however, the structures and number of tiles found in the proximity of the site do not allow us to establish whether they belong to a settlement, a villa or another type of occupation. The site of Saint-Pierre-de-Sénos has also been identified as the site of a potential town-like agglomeration because of the high concentration of domestic pottery, mosaics, architectural elements, burials and steles recovered. However, it remains very poorly understood, and, again, it is difficult to determine its nature. In the territory of Orange, no traces of public monuments (including temples or sanctuaries) have been found. However, findings of statues and shrines show that some religious activity was present in the countryside.

<sup>632</sup> Mostly known through surveys; excavation data are very rare (Roumégous 2009). Traces of artisanal production have also been found. Namely, two tileries, one pottery workshop, two metal workshops, two glassmakers, and possibly one workshop that made statues. Their chronology cannot be precisely established.

**TABLEAU D'AGGLOMERATIONS RURALES G-R. EN VAUCLUSE**

| Communes   | Lieux dits            | Superficies en hectares | Eléments somptuaires       | Inscriptions locales et voisines | Oppida proches                | Voies proches          | Saints patrons       | Noms latins | Civitates ou pagi       |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| BEAUMES    | Aubune                | 10                      |                            | 5 (+1)                           | Durban à 600m                 | de Carpentras à Vaison | Notre Dame d'Aubune  | *ALBVNA     | MEMINI                  |
| CADENET    | Les Verunes           | 8                       |                            | 7 (+5)                           | Castellar à 1.300m            | d'Aix au Pont Julien   | Notre Dame des Anges | LANOVALVS?  | AQVAE DEXIVATES         |
| CAUMONT    | Les Serres            | 6                       | mosaïques marbres fresques | 2                                | Bonpas à 1.200m               | Camin Roumies          | Saint Symphorien     | MACHO?      | CABELLIO CAVARES        |
| LOURMARIN  | Le Paradou            | 4                       | marbres fresques           | 6                                | Château Sarrazin              | d'Aix au Pont Julien   |                      |             | AQVAE DEXIVATES         |
| MALAUCENE  | S <sup>t</sup> Michel | 7                       | fresques                   | (7)                              | Clairier à 900m               | de Carpentras à Vaison | Saint Michel         |             | VOCONTII P. VASIONENSIS |
| MAZAN      | S <sup>t</sup> Andéol | 4                       |                            | 3                                | Notre Dame des Anges à 2.750m | Centuriations          | Saint Andéol         |             | MEMINI                  |
| SEGURET    | S <sup>t</sup> Joseph | 5                       |                            | 2                                | Aubusson?                     | de Carpentras à Vaison | Saint Joseph         | DEOB...     | VOCONTII P. DEOBENSIS   |
| VENASQUE   | ND. de Vie            | ?                       |                            | 4 (+9)                           | Vénasque                      | de Carpentras à Gordes | Notre Dame de Vie    | VICVS       | MEMINI                  |
| BEAUMETTES |                       |                         |                            |                                  |                               | Via Domitia            |                      | AD FINES    | CAVARES VULGIENTES      |
| BOLLENE    |                       |                         |                            |                                  |                               | Via Agrippae           |                      | ADLETOCE    | TRICASTINI              |
| SORGUES    |                       |                         |                            |                                  |                               | Via Agrippae           |                      | CYPRESSETA  | CAVARES                 |

**Table 7: The rural agglomerations in Vaucluse (Broise 1984: 271).**

We can conclude that the settlement pattern of this region resembles that of the rural settlements located between Vienne and Valence, along the Rhône.

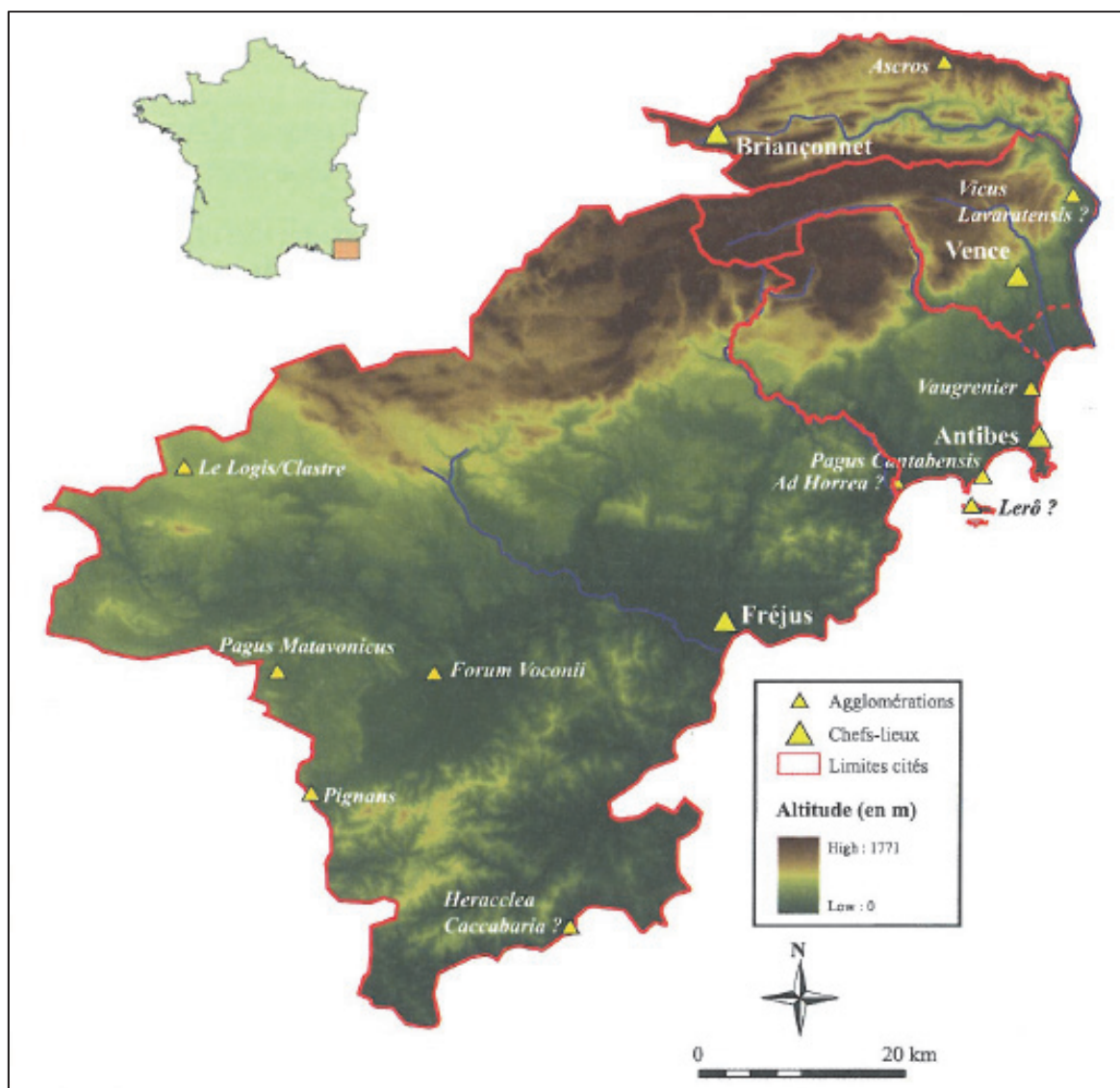
### **5.1.3 The agglomerations in south-eastern Gaul (Fréjus, Antibes, Vence, Briançonnet)**

This region of study corresponds to part of Provence. It includes two different geographical districts (Figure 108). In the north-east, we find the Alps of Provence and the Maritime Alps. To the southwest, in Lower Provence, we find a series of well-marked limestone ranges (the Massif des Maures in the south and limestone ridges in the north) running from east to west, and separated by relatively broad lowland basins.<sup>633</sup> This is a region full of contrasts, with a Mediterranean facade, a mountainous and pre-Alpine landscape and a hinterland characterized by lowland basins and hilly landscapes.<sup>634</sup> This contrast becomes even stronger in the *civitates* of Antipolis and Vence, which lie only 20 km from the sea shore, but where mountains can be as high as 1778 m.

<sup>633</sup> Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division 1942; Bertonecello 2002; 2005; Bertonecello *et al.* 2012.

<sup>634</sup> Lautier and Rothé 2010: 114, 243, 700; Morabito 2010: 54, 139, 173; Arnaud and Gazenbeek eds 2002.





**Figure 108: The geography of the *civitates* of Fréjus, Antibes, Vence, and Briançonnet (Bertoncello and Lautier 2013: 196).**

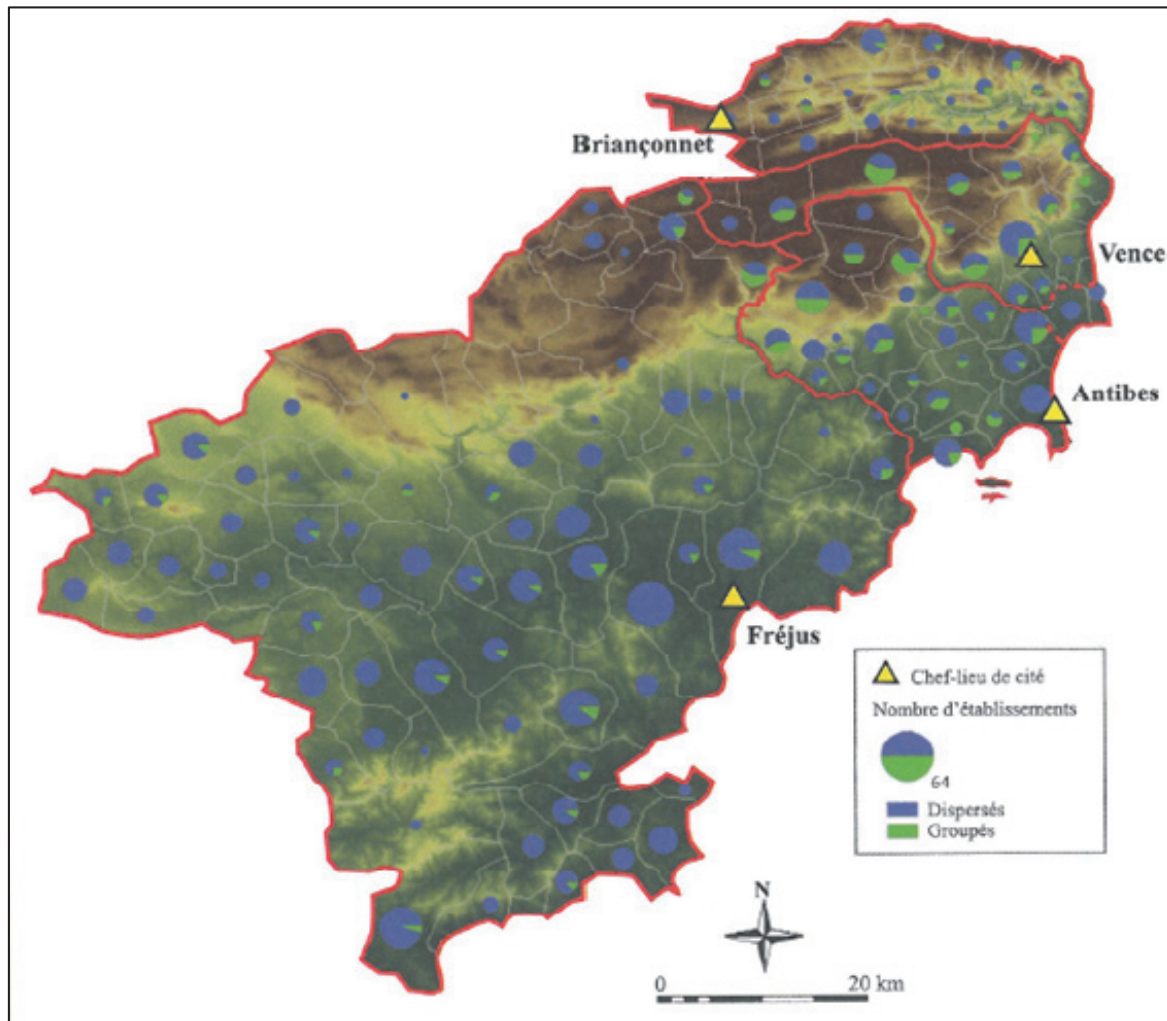
Everywhere in this region, which has been very well researched, the dispersed settlements are predominant. However, we can see a stark contrast between the *civitas* of Fréjus (Lower Provence) and those of Antibes, Vence and Briançonnet (Alpes-Maritimes). During the High Empire, in the latter group the nucleated settlements were around 23-39% of all settlements, whilst in the *civitas* of Fréjus they did not exceed 6%. Similarly, in the Alpes-Maritime, there were fewer villas than there were in the territory of Fréjus (Figure 109).

If we look at Figure 110, the pattern becomes even clearer: two different models of land occupation were in place, one based on a dense network of villas (Fréjus), and another characteristic of the Alpes-Maritimes (Antibes, Vence and Briançonnet), where nuclear agglomerations had as much space as dispersed sites and villas. These nuclear agglomerations also displayed a number of mausoleums (e.g. Encourdoules, Vaugrenier or Carros) which are linked with the presence of the elite.<sup>635</sup> They were mostly created during the Late Iron Age

<sup>635</sup> For the epigraphic record of the Alpes Maritimes (Arnaud 2000).

(56%) and, in this pre-Alpine area, they mostly take the form of hill-top sites, especially so in the *civitates* of Antibes and Vence.

On the other hand, the *civitas* of Fréjus has, on average, fewer nucleated settlements, and they mostly lie in the plain. Its landscape resembles more closely the rest of Provence, which is similarly dominated by dispersed settlements. Villas are numerous and occupy the top of the settlement hierarchy (if we exclude the capital Fréjus). Only in the area of the Massif of the Maures do we have a more mixed landscape inherited from the Late Iron Age, consisting of (small) dispersed and grouped settlements.<sup>636</sup>

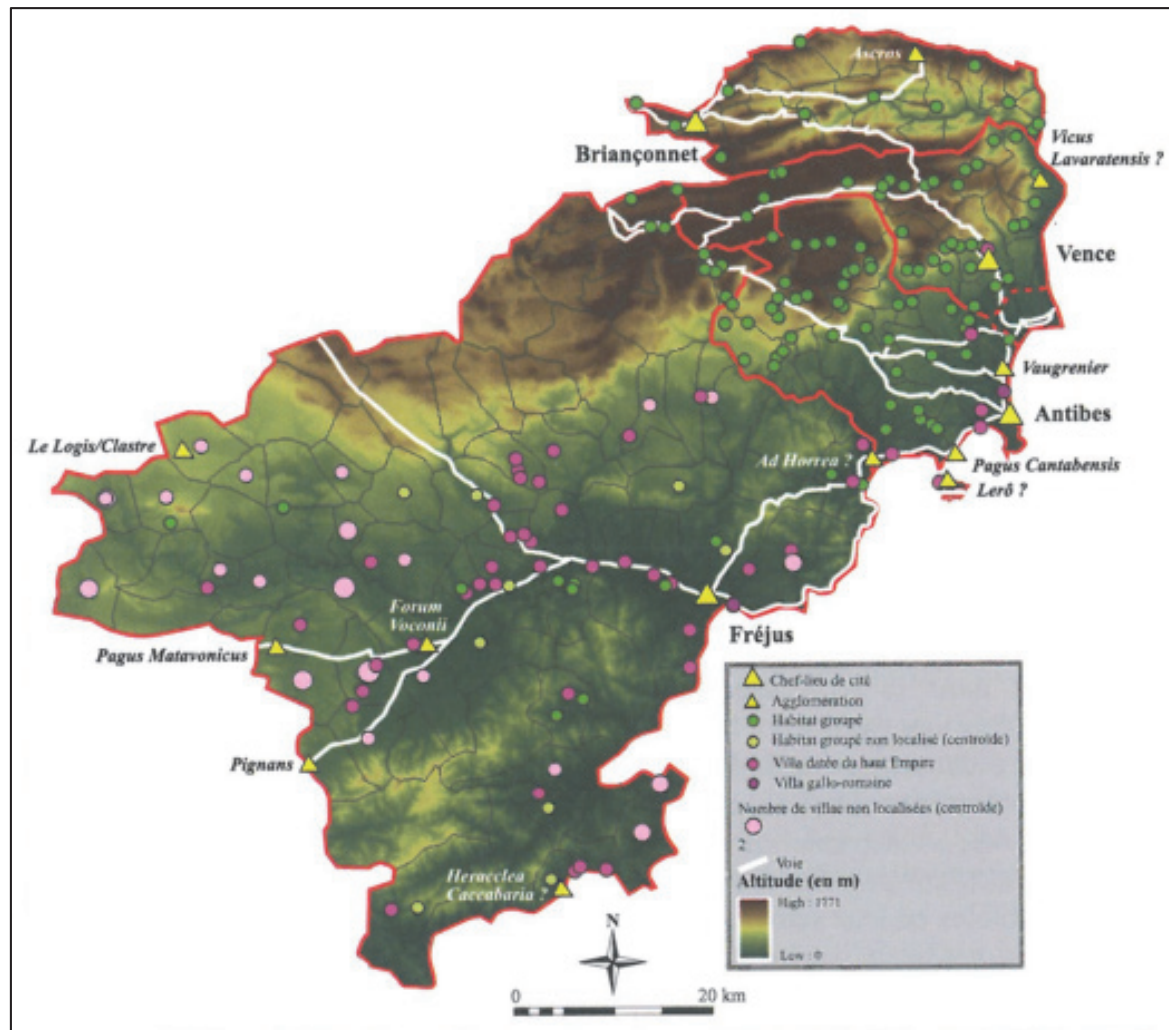


**Figure 109: The proportion of nucleated agglomerations (green) and dispersed ones (blue) in south-eastern Gaul (Bertoncello and Lautier 2013: 205).**

According to Bertoncello and Lautier, this dichotomy does not have an historical explanation (for example the fact that Fréjus was a veteran colony and land was distributed in allotments), but rather a geographical one: the *civitas* of Fréjus is more similar to the others in Provence, with a Mediterranean climate and a rolling landscape very suitable for agriculture. The others, on the other hand, are characterized by a much more elevated and fragmented landscape. In

<sup>636</sup> Bertoncello 2005. This duality has also been seen by Leveau in the territory of Caesarea (Mauretania): the greater the distance from the city, villas become fewer while smaller rural settlements increase in number (Leveau 1984: 483-485).

this pre-alpine climate and landscape, the economy was more reliant on husbandry (in particular sheep, but also pigs).<sup>637</sup>



**Figure 110: The distribution of different types of settlements in south-eastern Gaul. Pink dots (villas) are concentrated in the western part of the case-study area, which corresponds to the territory of Fréjus; to the east, the nucleated settlements (green dots) are predominant (Bertoncello and Lautier 2013: 207).**

#### 5.1.4 The *civitas* of Nîmes

As we have seen in chapter 2, in Eastern Languedoc a hierarchized settlement system was already in place before the arrival of the Romans. It is on top of this ‘hybrid’ landscape - quite difficult for us to decode - populated with Greek colonies and native settlements that the new Roman implantations were imposed.<sup>638</sup> The Roman settlement system adapted to what was already a well-organized mix of Greek outposts (concentrated along the coastline) and

<sup>637</sup> Bertoncello 2005.

<sup>638</sup> Favory *et al.* 2009. This network was formed essentially by old-established *oppida*, most of which dated from the first Iron Age and were hillforts: Nemausus, Mauressip, Sextantio, Villevielle were founded between 7th and 5th centuries BC. Others, such as Nages and Ambrussum, dated to the 3rd century BC. Several were located in a strategic position and had access to and control of rivers; others controlled the access to the sea and had a commercial function, such as Lattara, Virinnæ, and Espeyran-Rhodonausia.



indigenous occupations. As recently suggested, ‘this network of *oppida* formed a relatively tight-knit network of agglomerations of varying dates, sizes and probably statuses. [...] Before the Roman conquest, the network of *oppida* was evenly spaced, with the estimated size of territories ranging from 75 to 150 square km.’<sup>639</sup> They were evenly spread out: *c.* 8-14 km from their nearest neighbour.<sup>640</sup> At the top of the hierarchy lies the capital Nemausus (30 ha):<sup>641</sup> it was followed by several agglomerations that measured around one-third to two-thirds of its size (10-20 ha) (Mauressip, Viellevielle, Lattara, Nages, Sextantio).<sup>642</sup> In the lowest rank, we find the *oppida* that were smaller than 5 ha (e.g. Ambrussum, Espeyran Rhodanousia, Virinnae).

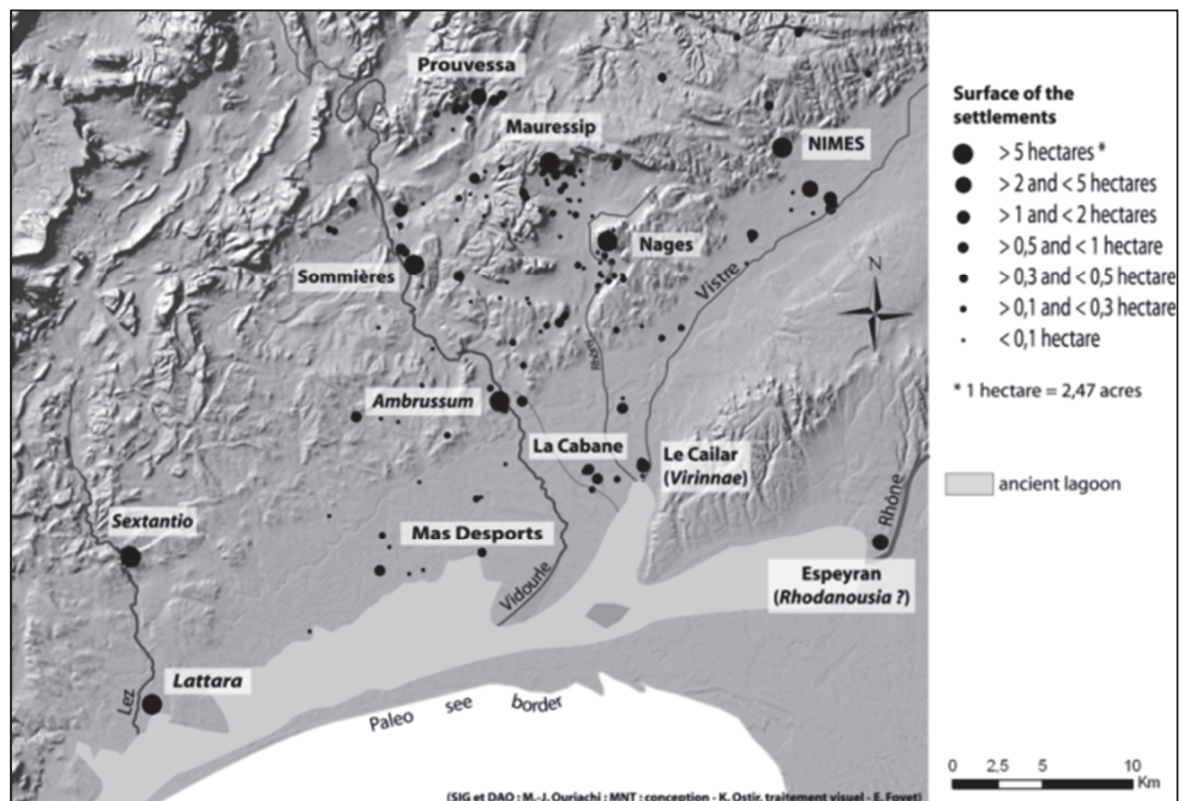


Figure 111: The settlement system in Eastern Languedoc in the 1st century BC (Favory *et al.* 2009: 162).

From the 2nd century BC, the number of dispersed settlements started to increase. Their number continued to grow until the 2nd century AD, when the smallest isolated establishments began to disappear. In spatial terms, as we can see from Figure 111, the distribution of these small establishments is closely associated with the existing *oppida* (which appear to be growing in size), as they were generally set up at their foot or in the nearby lowland, marking the

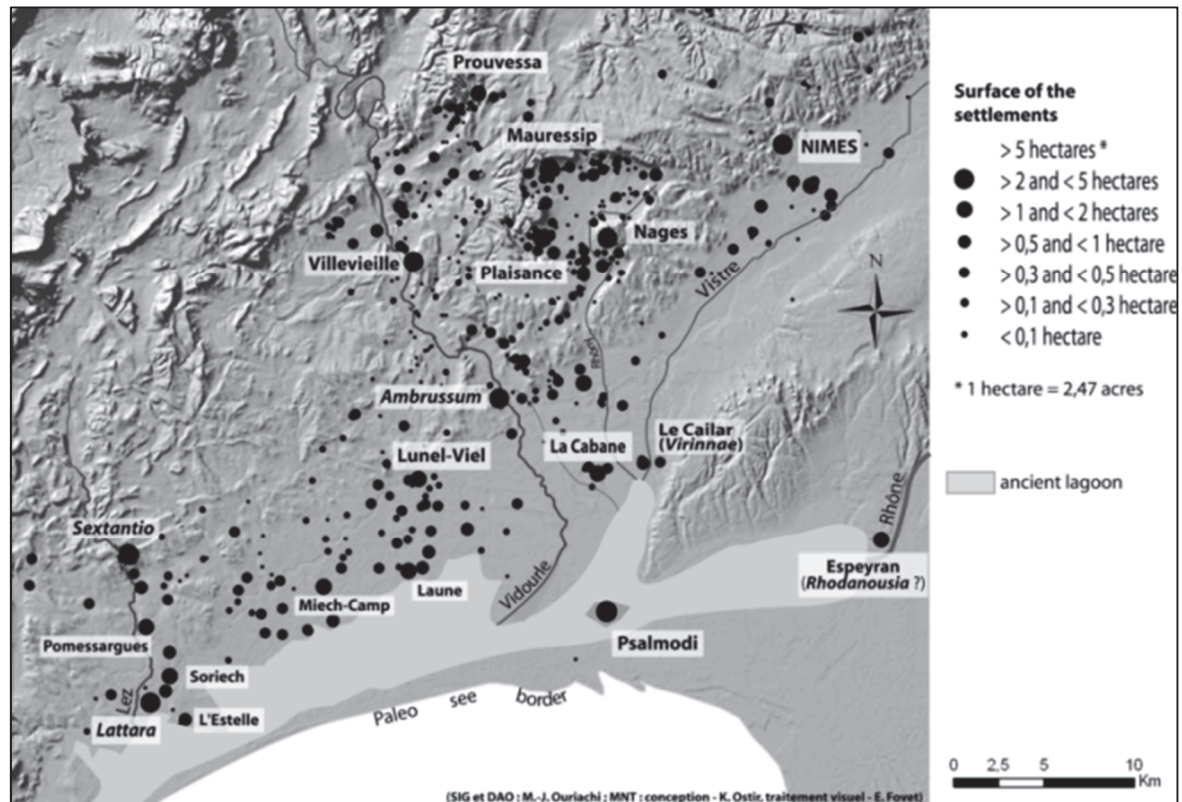
<sup>639</sup> Favory *et al.* 2009: 157. Also see Py 1990: 180, Fig. 77; Fiches 2002: 74.

<sup>640</sup> (2-3 hours' walking distance). Py 1990: 180, Fig. 77; Fiches 2002: 74. The only exceptions being the short distance of just 5 km between Mauressip and Nages, which were in competition for the territory (Nuninger 2002: 219-222).

<sup>641</sup> Monteil 1999: 327.

<sup>642</sup> During the project, Durand-Dastès *et al.* 1998 concluded that most of the villas were established around the mid-1st century AD, but more often in Flavian times. A significant proportion developed on top of the indigenous farms, especially in the areas around the Rhône or on the coastal plains. Around the end of the 2nd and beginning of the 3rd century AD the smallest sites would be abandoned, but the larger exploitations, like villas, would endure until Medieval times and would remain poles within the network, as villages.

geographical outreach of the *oppida* into the surrounding area.<sup>643</sup> This pattern is consistent with the model of rural occupation we have just described for case studies B and C (Vaucluse and south-eastern Gaul), but also for other regions of Gaul that will be introduced later, like Berry and Yonne.<sup>644</sup> In Caesarian-Triumviral times, along with the increase of settlements, we start to see the effects of centuriation on the territory.<sup>645</sup> Its role in structuring the settlement system, the road system, the division of land and the position of individual dwellings is incontrovertible. For example, the agglomeration of Lunel-Viel, founded in mid-1st century AD, was located at the crossroads of a secondary *decumanus* with a line parallel to the *cardines*.<sup>646</sup>



**Figure 112: The settlement system in Eastern Languedoc in 1st century AD (Favory *et al.* 2009: 165).**

These changes occurred gradually, and it was perhaps in mid-1st century AD that we see a radical increase in new foundations, whose arrangement superseded the one inherited from the Late Iron Age and, at the same time, changed it into something new (Figure 112). Nucleated settlements of protohistoric origin continued to exist and were flanked by other forms of settlements, including villas. Some of the newer settlements were created near those of

<sup>643</sup> Py 1990: 750-751. The important role played by the *oppida* during the 2nd to 1st centuries BC in the spread of rural establishment was also observed by the scholars who worked on the Archæomedes project. The agglomerations, in fact, boosted the productivity of the rural landscape by fostering the agricultural exploitations of (yet) unoccupied land (Durand-Dastès *et al.* 1998).

<sup>644</sup> We see peaks in foundations elsewhere: 51% in Berry and 44% in Yonne (Gandini *et al.* eds 2008; Favory *et al.* 2008).

<sup>645</sup> Favory *et al.* 2009.

<sup>646</sup> The influence of centuriation is also recorded around Lattara, see Favory *et al.* 2009 for more details. Also see Raynaud ed. 2007: 88.

protohistorical origin while others were set in areas that had not yet been occupied, notably the lowlands, creating *de facto* competition with the old *oppida* (and in fact, in the 2nd century AD a number of *oppida* were abandoned, e.g. Ambrussum, Mauressip) (Figure 113).

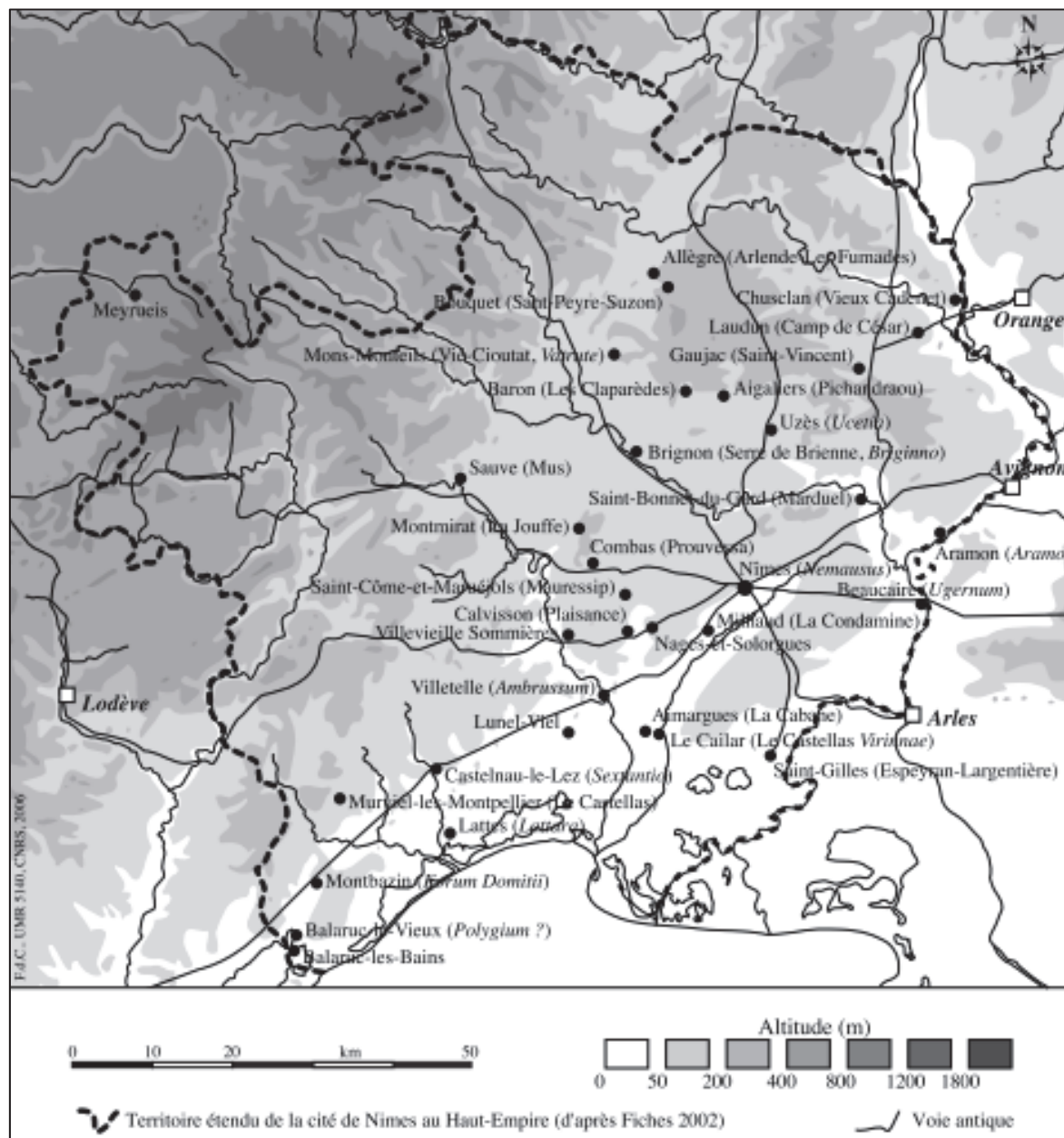


Figure 113: The agglomerations in the territory of Nîmes (Garmy 2012b: 256).

Centres arose at Lunel-Viel and Miech Camp, and a port settlement grew at La Piscine. A similar densification and hierarchization occurred in the Combas area, to the north, which until then had been only sparsely populated with only one sizeable settlement.<sup>647</sup> However, this burst of settlements was fragile and ephemeral, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Eastern Languedoc was indeed one of the most prolific regions of southern Gaul in terms of number of foundations. However, it was also the one with the highest rate of abandonment during the 2nd

<sup>647</sup> The Archæodyn programme has revealed foundation rates of 65% in Haute-Provence, 60% in Limagne and 41% in the Argens Valley and the Massif des Maures.



century AD. Claude Raynaud's research has shown that the greatest contribution to the 1st-century-AD peak came from small dwellings and outbuildings. Their disappearance did not jeopardize the broad settlement system since (large) villas and enduring farmsteads ensured an uninterrupted occupation of the countryside.

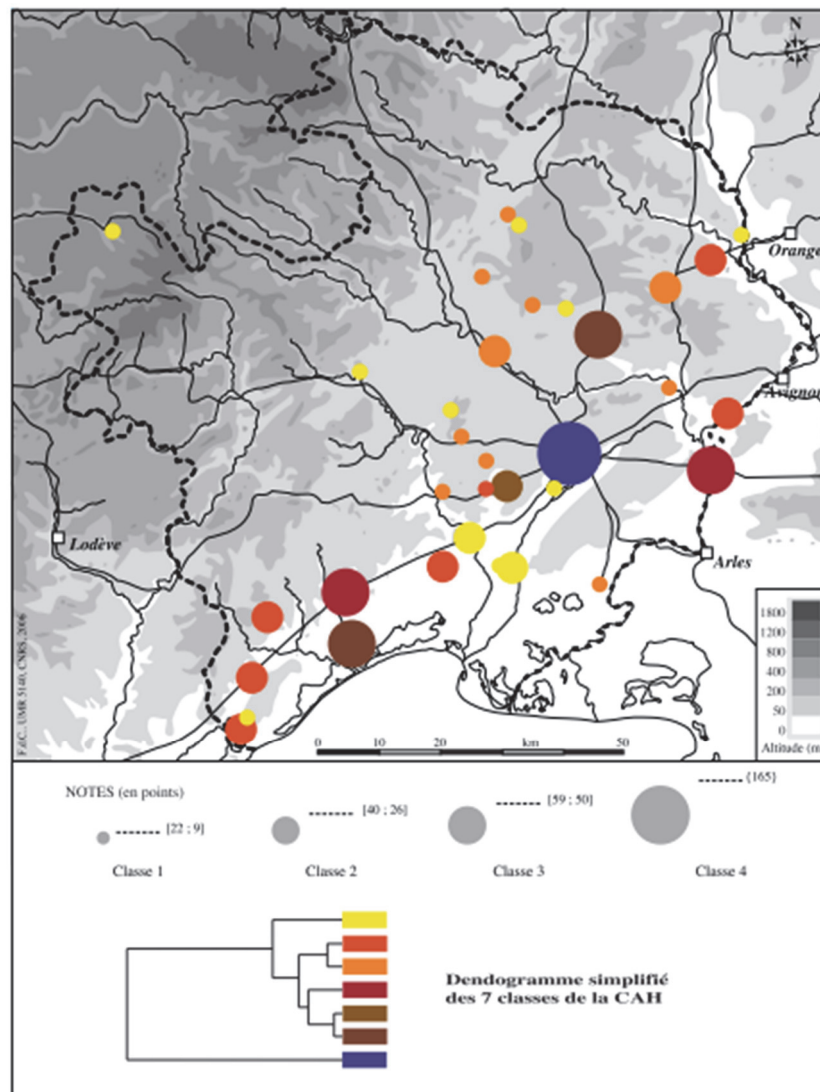


Figure 114: Hierarchical classification of the agglomerations of Nîmes (Garmy 2012: 294).

The settlement system was polarized around agglomerations among which, as mentioned above, several could have a pre-Roman origin and were soon reached by a Mediterranean influence. Evidence can be traced in the changes that affected the architecture of elite housing (for example in Lattara Italic-style houses were built with a central courtyard from the 3rd century BC, but the same is attested for Ambrussum, Sextantio, Villevieille etc.).<sup>648</sup> The agglomerations at the top of the hierarchy often had a public area (e.g. the porticated square and the baths in Ambrassum), although the street grid is missing in the oldest ones. In these agglomerations along with the elite there were inhabitants of more modest dwellings, which attest a certain degree of social diversity. Some of these settlements were, however, short lived.

<sup>648</sup> However, even the elite's *domus* displayed a mixture of Roman and more indigenous traditions.

Some scholars believe that this decline is associated with the fact that these *oppida* were ‘attributed’ to Nîmes and lost their autonomy.

The agglomerations in the *civitas* of Nîmes were not homogeneously distributed. They mostly concentrate in the plain (below 200 m above sea level), and especially in its southern portion, close to the Domitian road and to the river Rhône. While Nîmes is one of the largest capitals of Gaul (130 ha), its secondary agglomerations are on average quite small and struggled to reach 20 ha (the largest were Lattara and Muressip, which both measured 18 ha). Other agglomerations ranged between 15 to 12 ha (e.g. Villevieille-Sommieres, Sextantio, Nages), while still others measured 7 ha or less (e.g. Ambrussum)<sup>649</sup>. Pierre Garmy looked at the settlement hierarchy of this *civitas*, using both quantitative and qualitative criteria along with indicators of socio-economic value (e.g. aqueduct, urban plan, toponym, the number of inscriptions, the number of public monuments and so on).<sup>650</sup> He distinguished six different classes. The normal trend is that at the top of the hierarchy lie those that have a longer history (they are occupied from protohistory); the most recent ones, on the other hand, were abandoned sooner.

The settlement system in Roman times appears to be dominated by the capital, Nîmes, which was five times larger than the other agglomerations (the relationships had changed since pre-Roman times, when it used to be at most two or three times larger). The increasing force of attraction of Nîmes on its territory can be perceived also through the analysis of the epigraphic record. In fact, in the 1st century AD, inscriptions celebrating members of the most influential family of the *civitas* (namely the Antonii, the Pompeii, and the Valerii) are found in a variety of small agglomerations, such as Lattara, Ambrussum, Brigno, Alès, Uzès, Gaujac, and Laudun. In the 2nd century AD, however, they are massively concentrated in Nîmes. A few are found in settlements like Lattara, Laudun, Beaucaire-Ugernum, and Espeyran-Rhodonousia, attesting a major shift eastwards, towards the capital or towards the coast.<sup>651</sup>

The displacing of the pre-existing elites to the capital city was the result of locational choices made by the wealthy, one of a series of selections relating to the maximization of opportunity and security, for themselves and for their capital. In Nîmes, the extremely wealthy could both lobby the highest governmental officials and be courted and supported by a large cadre of cultural, financial and political intermediaries. The massive concentration of money power drawn to Nîmes and the ‘geographical dimension’ of this phenomenon (which could be interpreted within the city-countryside and core-periphery paradigms) would, therefore,

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<sup>649</sup> In the late 2nd century AD some ancient *oppida* were abandoned (e.g. Ambrussum, Muressip, Lattara) and by the 3rd century AD Sextantio was abandoned, too, along with other agglomerations that were founded in the 1st century AD (e.g. Villevieille, Prouvesa etc.) (Favory *et al.* 2009).

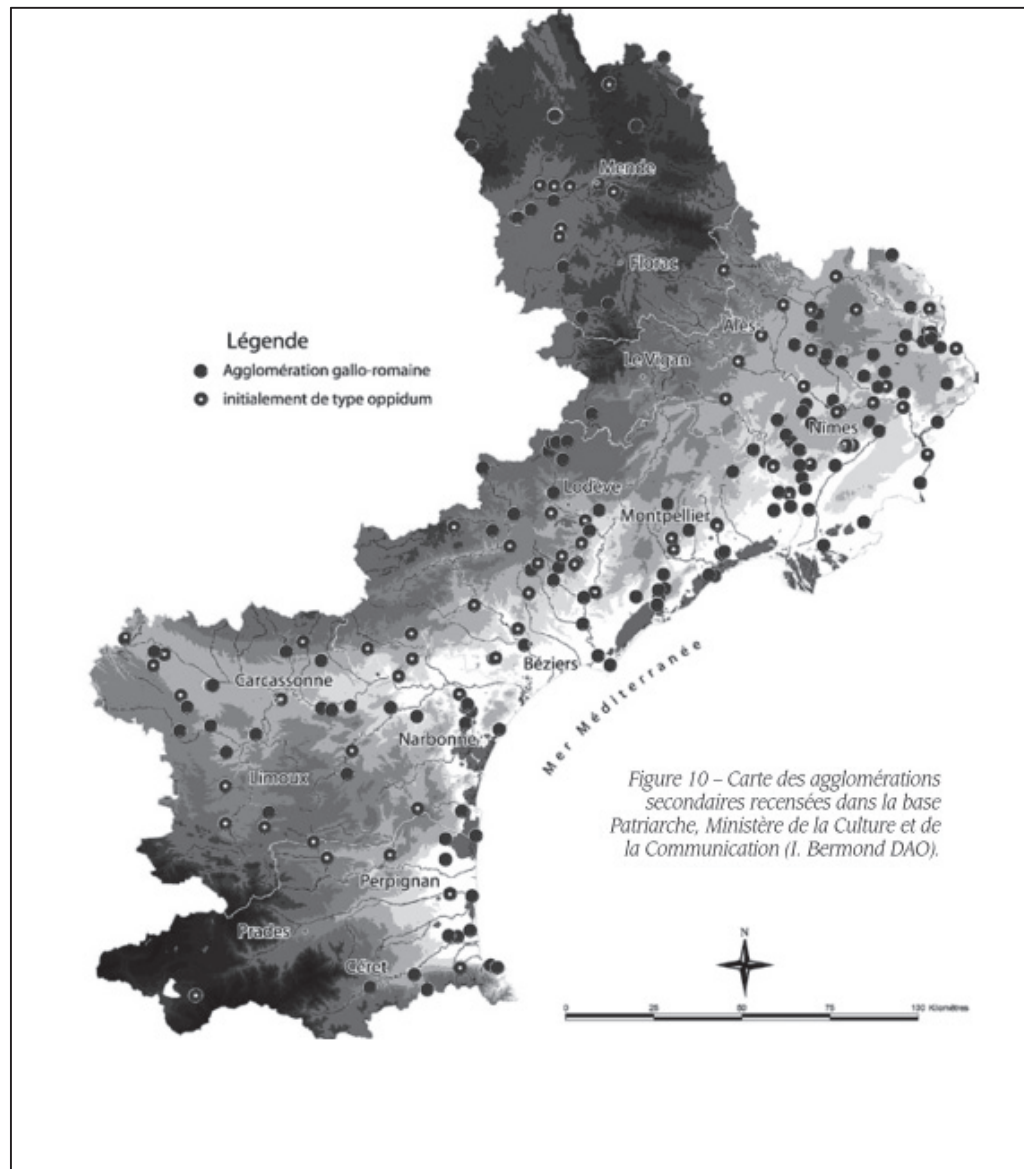
<sup>650</sup> He then performed a hierarchical cluster analysis and compared the results of this multivariate statistical analysis with the size. He found out that size is a discrete proxy for hierarchy since there was a correlation of 0.89. This means that in 62% of cases the two analyses have classified sites in the same way, in 35% of cases there was a difference of one class and only in 3% of the cases was it larger.

<sup>651</sup> See the published thesis: Ouriachi 2009. The considerable drawing power of Nîmes has been detrimental to several ‘urban’ elements of secondary agglomerations (e.g. morphology and functions). In fact, several seem to have declined in terms of monumentality and socio-economic dynamism. The connection with their rural estates was maintained as the location of the foliage-decorated tombstones shows (Favory *et al.* 2009: 175, Fig. 11)



increase the size and political influence of the elites, while at the same time raising the level of competitiveness of the political career in Nîmes.

In a city where so many individuals from all social classes found it convenient to relocate, the likelihood of political career advancements diminished. For example, within the clan of the Valerii (more than 400 members recorded in Narbonensis and more than 100 in the only *civitas* of Nîmes), no one appears to have been able to reach the equestrian or senatorial rank.<sup>652</sup>



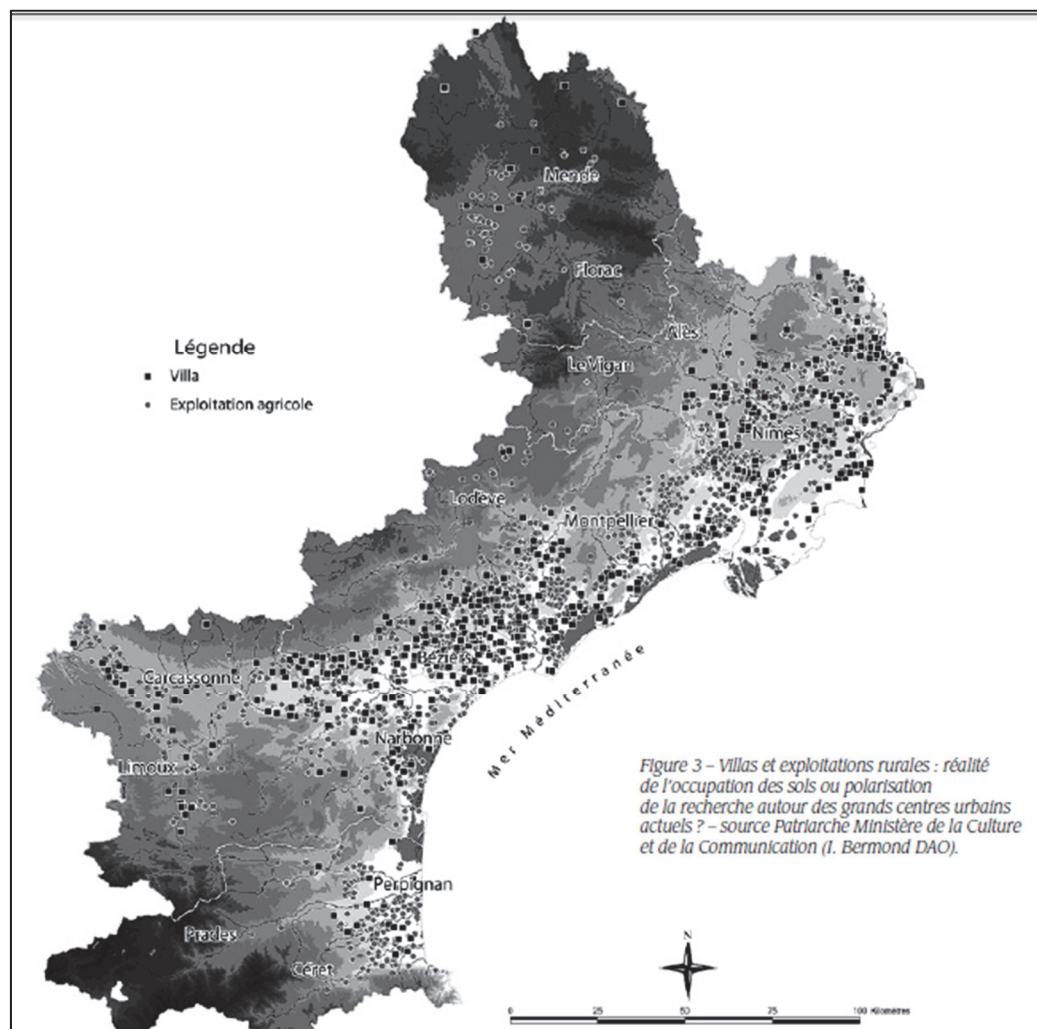
**Figure 115: The agglomerations of Languedoc-Roussillon (black dots) and the surviving oppida (white dots) (Bermond *et al.* 2012: 94).**

In western Languedoc and Roussillon, the network of agglomerations was significantly less dense than in the territory of Nîmes, and villas were a central component of the settlement system (Figure 116). Pellecuer was able to look at the evolution of the agglomeration of Mèze (in the basin de Thau), whose territory slowly became occupied by newly established villas.<sup>653</sup>

<sup>652</sup> Christol 1992. Also see Ouriachi 2009, in particular chapter 2.3 'Une société composite'.

<sup>653</sup> Pellecuer 2005.

In the Iron Age, this agglomeration lay *c.* 15 km away from the *massaliote* foundation of Agde and appeared to be an important regional pole of population, with no direct competitors in a range of 10 km (Figure 117 A). A large number of Massalian sherds and archaeological finds were detected in a semicircular area (*c.* 400 ha), which suggests this was the area intensively exploited by the settlement for its own subsistence (crop cultivations). Five kilometres away from the settlement there was a second sphere of influence. It was more extensively exploited, possibly to complement the activities performed near the agglomeration. A few installations were probably used in the land furthest away.



**Figure 116: The rural settlement of Languedoc-Roussillon. Villas (large squares) and other establishments (small squares). (Bermond *et al.* 2012: 98)**

In Roman times, this space was filled up with villas and smaller rural establishments, which were perhaps part of their domains (Figure 117 B). These villas possibly had some small ancillary installations and satellites with complementary functions (for example, sites on the coast served as quays). While it is possible that this growth in number of settlements did not necessarily come at the expense of Mèze, it is obvious that beyond the first inner semicircle new large exploitations appeared, and it is unlikely that these new structures depended on this agglomeration, as was probably the case during the Iron Age. The existence of independent

quays that served the most important villas directly suggests in fact the latter were independent and managed alone the flux of goods that went in and out.<sup>654</sup> Finally, although we cannot say the agglomeration lost its role as a central place, we may have doubts about its relevance. In fact, the agglomeration and the largest villas may have fulfilled similar roles - and therefore be at the same rank within the settlement hierarchy and be poles of equal importance.<sup>655</sup>

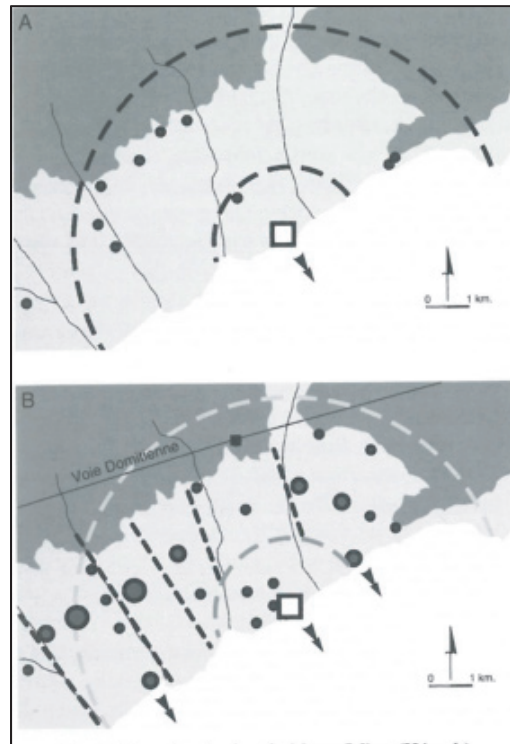


Figure 117: The agglomeration of Mèze, Hérault (Pellecuer 2005: 103).

### 5.1.5 The *civitas* of Luteva

The city of Luteva controlled a territory of *c.* 800 square km.<sup>656</sup> The settlement system of this region appears to have been very different from that of nearby Nîmes. While it was based on rural agglomerations, this time the centrality of the capital Lodève (Luteva) appears to have been minimal. In fact, this *civitas* capital measured only 7 ha, and up to now, no public buildings are known. Its influence on the other agglomerations (which were more or less the same size) appears to have been very weak as well.<sup>657</sup> The territory of this *civitas* is characterized by two contrasting types of landscape: the plain in the south (less than 300 m above sea level) and the plateau of Larzac on the southern edge of the Massif Central (*c.* 800 m above sea level). The transition between these two different regions is quite brutal and makes

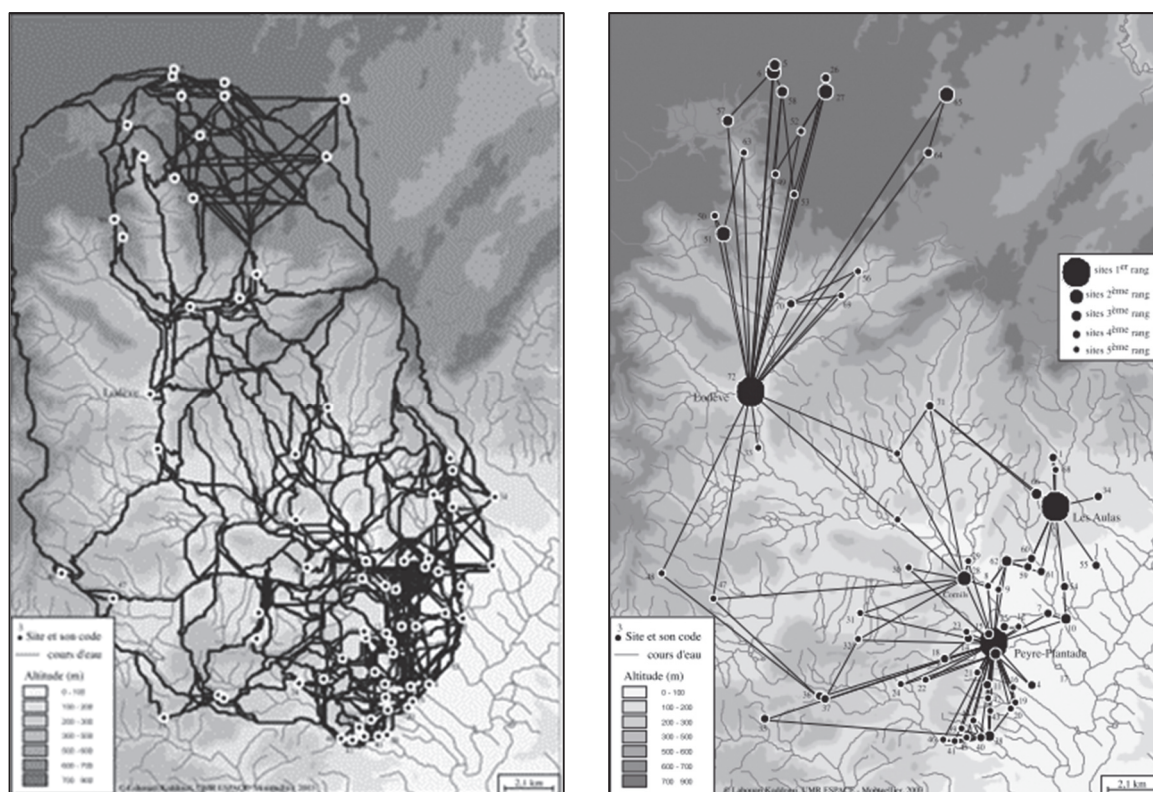
<sup>654</sup> Similarly to what Morley 1996 observed for Campania, villas were integrated in a competitive, dendritic market system. They did not necessarily rely on *intermediary trading* centres (e.g. villages, nucleated settlements). Some landowners were wealthy enough to take care of their own distribution to urban markets in the country of production and even to other countries (Bintliff 2002: 229).

<sup>655</sup> Pellecuer 2005. Also read Ouzoulis 2012.

<sup>656</sup> Garmy and Schneider 1998.

<sup>657</sup> Perhaps it became a colony: CIL XII, 4247: C(olonia ?) Claudia Luteva (see Garmy *et al.* 2004: 7; Gasco 1995).

communication hard. If we look at the spatial layout of the sites, we see how influential geography was.



**Figure 118: Left - analysis of the potential paths, the centrality of the city of Lodève is debatable, while the one of Les Aulas appears to be higher than previously thought. Right - ranks and areas of influence of the agglomerations within this civitas (Garmy 2012b: 241 and 246).**

During the High Empire, sites concentrated in two different sectors i. the sites located on the plateau, hard to access, ii. those on the plain, with the city of Lodève in an intermediary position (at an average distance of 6 hours' walk from the other sites). Given how difficult to access this city was and the alternative potential paths (Figure 118 left), the idea that Lodève played a strategic part in the trade of La Graufesenque pottery appears fragile. The agglomeration of Les Aulas, which could be reached by different paths and hosted workshops (possibly branches of those at La Graufesenque), is a potential alternative. An analysis of centrality performed on these sites demonstrated that within the *civitas* four sites were able to become regional centres with their own areas of influence: Lodève, Peyre Plantade, Les Aulas (rank 1), and Cornils (rank 2) (Figure 118 right). On the plateau, on the other hand, individual sites appear to be more autonomous and not hierarchically organized like the ones on the plain.

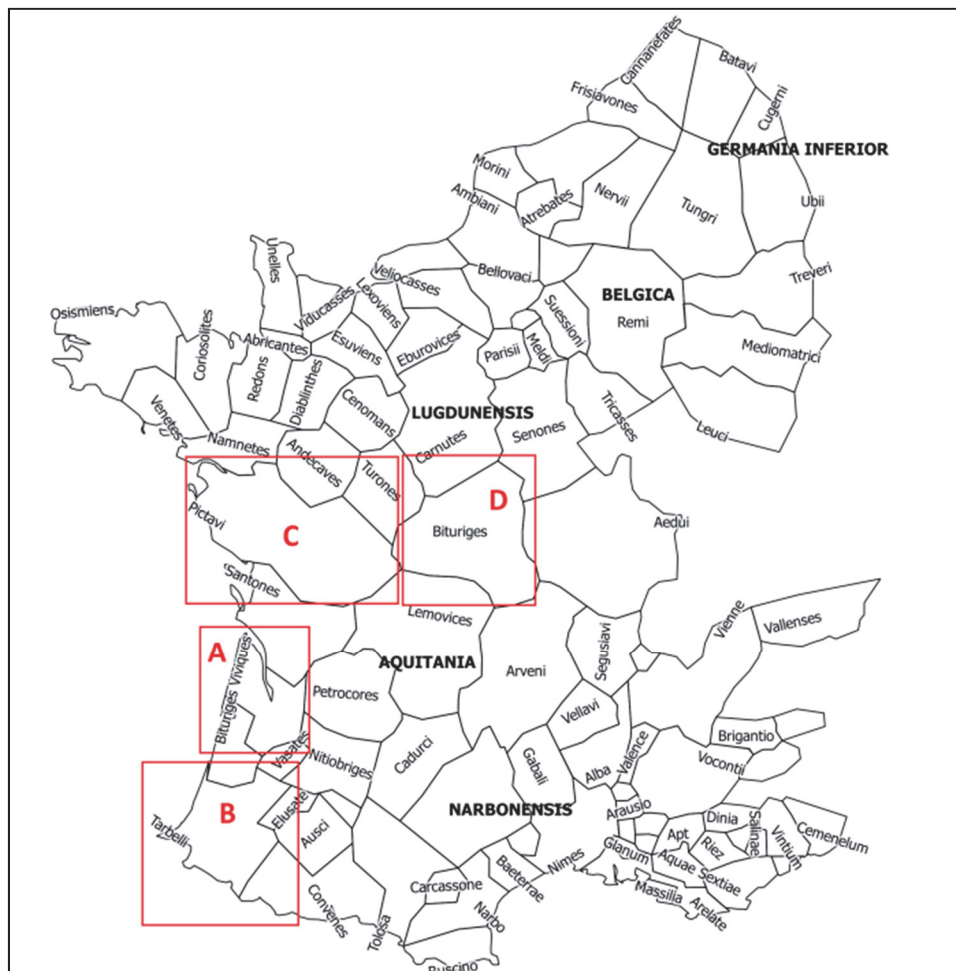
The influence of the agglomeration of Les Aulas, for example, is calculated to mostly reach as far as 1-hour's walking distance and a maximum of 3.30 hours. These agglomerations were modest and had a rural character (they were small and did not have any public buildings). However, they were a point of reference for the countryside. Peyre Planade, in mid-1st century AD, had a number of cellars aligned along the main road, which must be linked to the presence of viticulture, which was probably practised along with other activities (cultivation of fruits, olives, cereals and so on). Quite clearly, these agglomerations were not making much profit



from these activities, as the lack of luxury items suggests. We can conclude that we are faced with a multipolar system, not very hierarchized, with a strong dichotomy between north and south and between the plain and the plateau which is based on rural agglomerations. However, the system was well integrated and was sustained thanks to a variety of resources. In Medieval times the sites in the north would be abandoned and the level of integration would decrease.

## 5.2 The distribution of secondary agglomerations in Aquitania

Given the regional diversification in Aquitania in terms of geography, demography, history, and socio-economic aspects, a number of case studies will be presented.



**Figure 119: Case studies selected for the analysis of settlement systems in Aquitania.**

- Case study A: The Gironde and the area that stretched from the Gironde southward, in a region characterized by a low landscape, lagoons, sandy dunes and marshy wetland.
- Case study B: The western Pyrenees, a peripheral area whose settlement pattern was highly influenced by topography: i. the Landes, on the west, a sandy country lying behind the barrier of coastal dunes and covering a very large proportion of the area, and the low-lying inland country which was covered with swamps and lakes; ii. to the east a stony plateau with radiating valleys covered with villas and temporary indigenous structures.

- Case study C: The *civitas* of the Pictones, a *civitas* that, in its eastern half, has some of the largest and most monumentalized secondary agglomerations of Gaul.
- Case D: The *civitas* of the Bituriges Cubi, with large and rich agglomerations as monumentalized as those of the Pictones, and for which we also have information on its pre-Roman network.

### 5.2.1 The Gironde

This case-study area includes portions of three different *civitates* with their respective *civitas* capitals: the one of the Bituriges Vivisci (Bordeaux), the Vasati (Bazas) and the Boiati (Biganos or possibly Andernos<sup>658</sup>).

The itineraries recall a significant number of agglomerations (Figure 120); however, those archaeologically attested are much fewer. Part of the problem lies in the poor evidence available, but also in the fact that these agglomerations had a rural character and, on average, were modest, little structured, and did not have any signs of monumentality. They were sparsely inhabited and left few traces.

Five roads left from Bordeaux. Two went towards Spain: one stretching along the coast and one running slightly more in the hinterland; they re-joined in Dax. Another ran northwards, towards Saintes, and another north-east, towards Périgueux. The last one headed southeast, towards Bazas. Only two sites are attested archaeologically along the two roads that go to Spain. A few structures were found in Segosa and Losa.<sup>659</sup>

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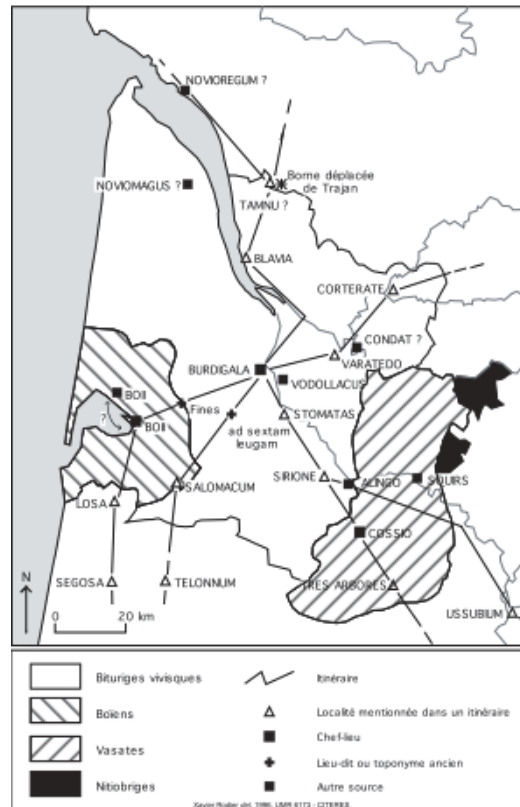
<sup>658</sup> In the High Empire we have evidence of the existence of the *civitas* of the Boiati. It is named in a funerary inscription found in Bordeaux (CIL XIII 615), which mentions Saturninus, *civis Boias*, who died at the age of 37. The *Notitia Galliarum* mentions a *civitas*, the *civitas* Boatium, that scholars often identify with the Roman one, despite the lack of hard evidence. Most probably this *civitas* was annexed to the territory of Bordeaux in Late Antiquity. The size of its territory is unknown.

Boios seems to have been a ‘phantom city’ in the sense that it is known only by a few literary sources, but we have no certainty about its real location. The city is mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary (456, 4): it is the first stop on the road travelling from Bordeaux to Dax. Archaeological excavations have been undertaken on the exact spot where the Itinerary indicated, but no archaeological evidence has been found.

The city is often identified by scholars as corresponding to modern day Biganos (which is the location we are using in this work). However, it has been suggested that it was located at the modern Bois-de-Lamothe, the small agglomeration excavated by Peyneau that seems to have been continuously occupied from the 1st to the 4th centuries AD. In its first phase, only a few small farms and rudimental structures, in addition to a cremation *necropoleis*, were found. Later three new buildings built in hard materials, a residential building and, perhaps, a public monument surrounded by a *porticus* were built. A small *fanum* was found south of the agglomeration measuring 3.60 x 3.60 m. All these structures date to the High Empire; most coins date from the second half of the 2nd century to the mid-4th century (from Hadrian to Arcadius), and the pottery dates to the 1st to 4th centuries. Ferdière ed. 2004 dedicates two chapters to this city and mentions it in his introduction, too; also see Jouannet 1829: 199.

A last possibility is that the capital was located at Andernos, which was perhaps a seat of a bishopric (CIL XIII 11036, V AD) (Thierry 1999; Maurin 2003).

<sup>659</sup> Losa (Sanguinet) is an extremely interesting site within the *civitas* of the Boiati, on the route that connected Bordeaux to Dax. It was located where the river Gourgue was crossed. The area was marshy: Roman engineers had to build artificial dry passages using the techniques of the ‘*pontes longos*’ (Tacitus, *Annales*, I, 63, 4-5). The site is now partially submerged. According to Rorison, its high percentage of imported pottery (70%) corresponds to its commercial function. It has yielded a high number of small finds (pottery shreds, coins, jewelry). Houses were built mainly in wood. In the 3rd century AD the site was moved eastward because of the rise in the lake level. Garmy 2012b: 217; Rorison 2001: 106-107; and Bost *et al.* eds 2004.



**Figure 120: The agglomerations in the Gironde known from ancient sources (Garmy 2012b: 216).**

In the latter, we know that pitch was manufactured and a temple was erected. On the road to Saintes the agglomeration of Blavia is supposed to have played a strategic role; however, no significant evidence has ever been found.<sup>660</sup> The site of Tannum in the neighbouring *civitas* of the Santones was not far. It covered up to 50 ha and had a temple, a theatre, an aqueduct, baths and a *horreum*.<sup>661</sup> On the road towards Périgueux we know of the existence of the *stationes* of Varatedo (Vayes)<sup>662</sup> and Corterate (Coutras),<sup>663</sup> of which we know very little further. The site of Condatis, on the other hand, remains to be located (possibly, it lay not far from Libourne,

<sup>660</sup> Blavia (Blaye) was an agglomeration in the *civitas* of the Bituriges Vivisci, on the right bank of the Garonne, and on an important road that went from Bordeaux to Saintes. This road station is mentioned on both the Antonine Itinerary and Tabula Peutingeriana. The site is very little understood but was of strategic importance for reaching the large cities in the north of Aquitaine, such as Saintes and Poitiers. The road north of Blaye is known for its *miliares* (milestones) (for example one was found at the site of Saint-Ciers-sur-Gironde). In the Late Empire it becomes a military site, particularly strategic for defending Bordeaux. A fortress hosted the '*milites Garronenses*', and Ausone calls it '*Blavia militaris*'. Until the First World War it kept a military role.

<sup>661</sup> Tannum (Barzan-Talmont) was an agglomeration within the *civitas* of the Santones located on the right bank of the river Gironde, on a major road that connected Saintes to Bordeaux. It was, perhaps, the harbour of the city of Saintes. The Roman agglomeration lasted between 1st and 3rd centuries; it was preceded by a rich Iron Age phase (Tranoy 2010: 122). Aerial photography revealed it was a scattered settlement. There is evidence of marble. An altar bears the name of an euerget, a man - possibly from Lyon or Spain - who is also known from an inscription from Niort (ILTG 153).

<sup>662</sup> Site in the *civitas* of the Bituriges Vivisci, located on the place where the main road crosses the river Dordogne. The site has produced many small finds, stretching from Iron Age up to the Roman period. Pottery production end 1st century AD, regional scale (Garmy 2012b: 218).

<sup>663</sup> Corterate (Coutras). Site in the *civitas* of the Bituriges Vivisci, at the confluence of the rivers Dronne and Isle. There is evidence of occupation from Iron Age up to Merovingian times. It lay on the road to Limoges.

but it is not certain<sup>664</sup>). The road to Bazas is known from the Itinerarium Burdigalese (which dates to AD 312-460), which in part complicates things. One of these road stations was probably under the modern Isle-Saint-Georges (*Stomata?*), possibly on the island in the river Garonne. There is evidence of a few houses and workshops.<sup>665</sup> Another one was probably Alingo (Langon), which also has yielded little evidence.<sup>666</sup>

If we look at the distribution of public buildings in this region (Figure 121), we see that most agglomerations do not present any significant signs of prestige and wealth. The only exceptions are Brion, the largest of them (10-15 ha), and Sanguenet, which have theatres. Their monumentality, however, is quite poor when compared to one of the other secondary agglomerations, such as the already mentioned Talmont.<sup>667</sup> This agglomeration was part of the *civitas* of the Santones located on the right bank of the river Gironde, on a major road that connected Saintes to Bordeaux. It was, perhaps, the harbour of the city of Saintes.

Garmy has attempted a reconstruction of the settlement hierarchy of this region, to which he adds - as a point of comparison - the agglomeration of Talmont.<sup>668</sup> Using various criteria and analysing the data collected by performing a hierarchical ascending cluster analysis, he was able to distinguish three different classes of agglomerations:

- Rank 1: Bordeaux
- Rank 2a: other *civitas* capitals, such as Biganos-Andernos and Bazas, both lying at quite a distance from Bordeaux.
- Rank 2b: Brion and Talmont, secondary agglomerations, far from the field of attraction of capitals and possibly capital of *pagi* themselves (not enough evidence to confirm it).
- Rank 3: a monolithic and undistinctive mass of agglomerations (partly due to the poor evidence we have, and partly due to the fact that they were small and little structured). Their role as road *stationes* appears to be implicit given their mention in the ancient itineraries. We can imagine that in some cases they functioned as marketplaces and artisanal centres.

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<sup>664</sup> Garmy 2012b: 219.

<sup>665</sup> Rorison 2001: 104.

<sup>666</sup> Garmy 2012b: 221.

<sup>667</sup> Evidence of marble. The Roman agglomeration lasted between the 1st and 3rd centuries; it was preceded by a rich Laténian phase (Tranoy 2010: 122). Aerial photography revealed it was a scattered settlement. An altar bears the name of the benefactor, a man (possibly from Lyon or Spain, who is also known from an inscription from Niort (ILTG 153).

<sup>668</sup> Garmy 2012b.



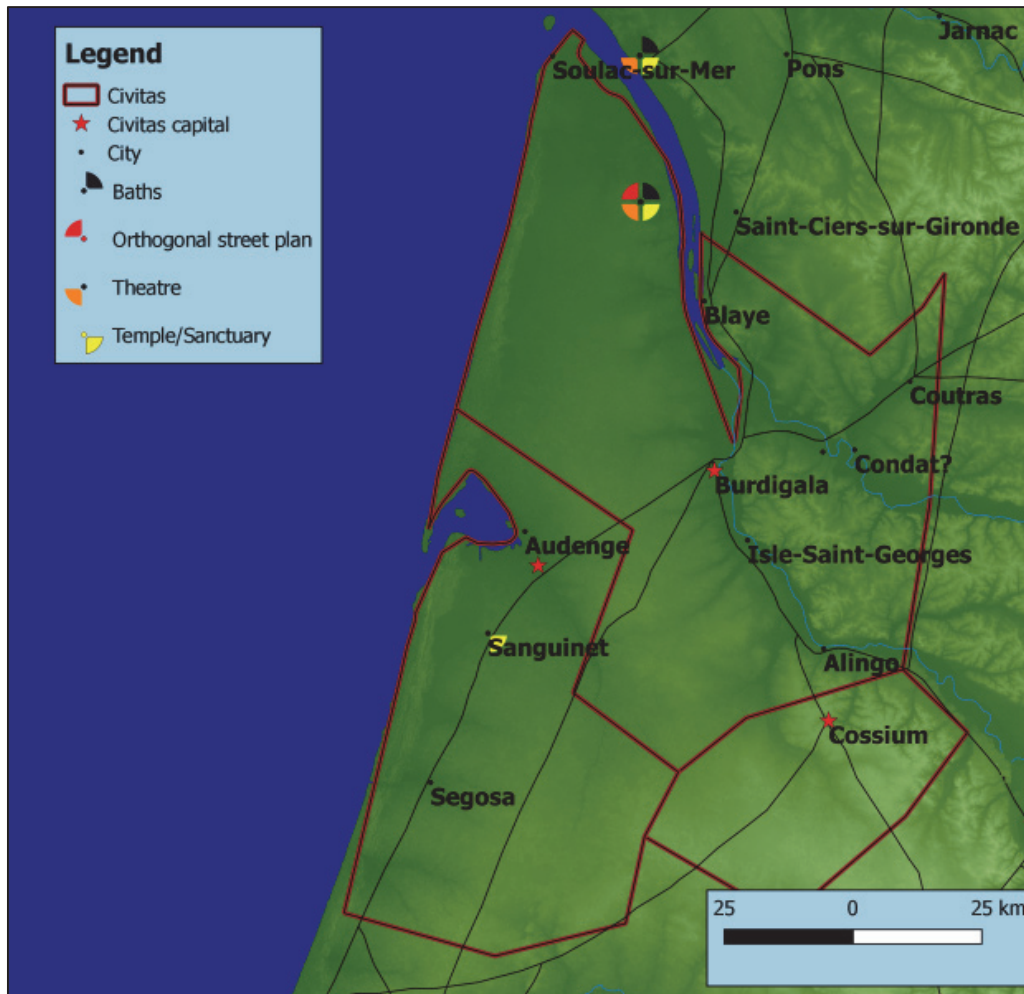


Figure 121: The public buildings in the Gironde.

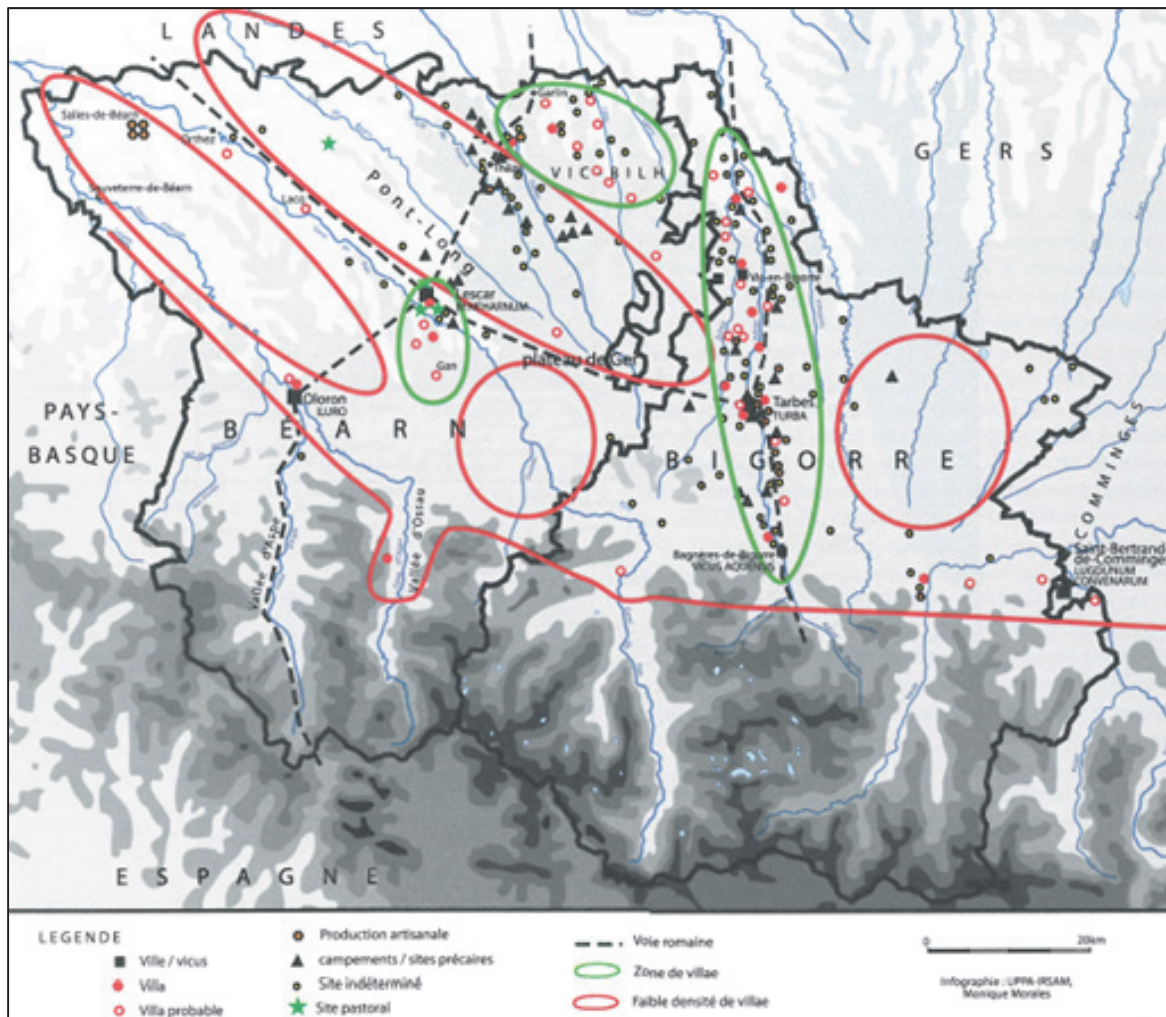
Thus, here the settlement system is polarized around a few agglomerations. Bordeaux (100 ha), which was at the top of the settlement hierarchy, had a massive force of attraction. The only settlement that appears to become a substantial pole is Brion (almost ten times smaller). The roads on which these agglomerations (or road stations) developed would become central in the Late Empire (as the number of milestones confirms); however, in the High Empire much of the trade operated through the Garonne and the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>669</sup>

### 5.2.2 The western Pyrenees

The western Pyrenees is a region offering extremely varied environments, with its sandy dunes and wet country in the west, and a stony plateau in the east. The higher parts are dry and sterile, affording only pasture, but in the lower country, steep slopes are wooded, and gentler slopes and valley bottoms lie amidst arable fields. The western Pyrenees are characterized by a settlement system with roots in protohistoric times. The economy of this region is partly based on agriculture, seasonal pastoralism, and transhumance.

<sup>669</sup> Cfr. East Anglia (Gurney 1995).

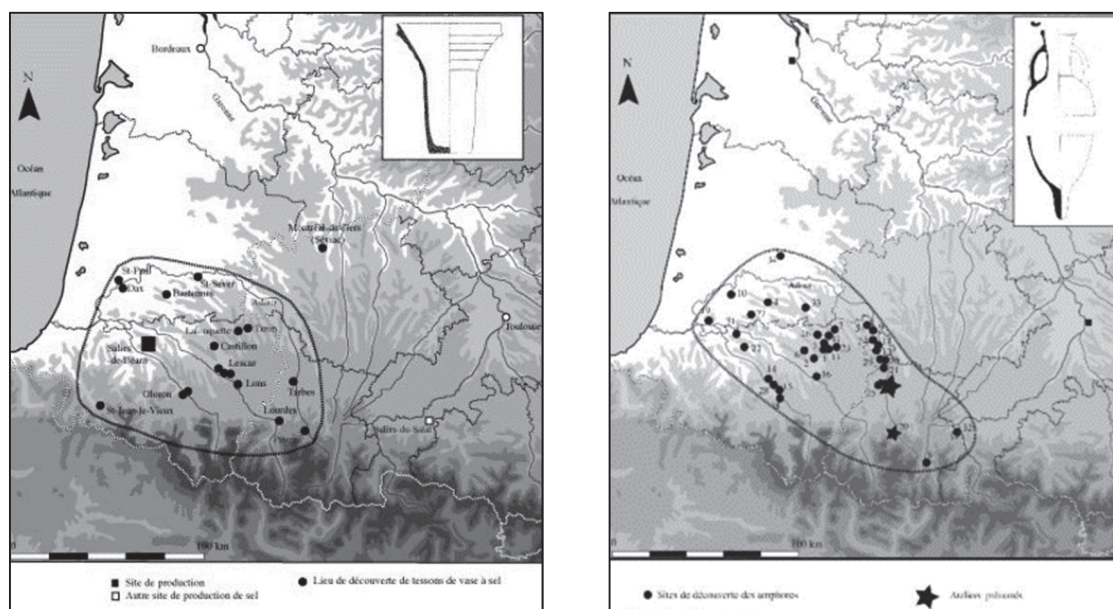
The precarious and temporary installations established in the foothills consisted of simple buildings built of perishable materials, at times enclosed in dry stone walls, covered with a light lean-to roof and paved with cobblestones. No tiles, bricks, or mortar were used to build the elevation. These sites were short lived and left few traces on the ground. The rudimentary hearths (built in half an hour or so), allow us to recognize them. As mentioned above, this peculiar form of occupation began in protohistoric times (middle - final Bronze Age) and persisted in Roman times (from Augustus to the 4th or 5th centuries AD). Most of these temporary camps can be found in the area north of Lescar and south of the Landes of Gascony.



**Figure 122: The main rural establishments in part of the *civitas* of the Tarbelli. Red circles: non-villa landscape. Green circles: landscape filled with villas (red dots) and temporary structures (black triangles) (Réchin *et al.* 2013: 225).**

From quite early on (c. AD 10-15), villas started to appear (Figure 122). They co-existed with the indigenous establishments and probably engaged not only in agriculture but also in animal husbandry, which was a key economic resource. This suggests that there was no real opposition between a 'romanized' countryside and a peripheral indigenous one; rather it is more likely that these two systems not only co-existed but also worked in synergy. Basic artisanal objects also continued to be produced according to the protohistoric tradition. For example, in Roman times pottery was still handmade and reached only a regional distribution. Wheel-made pottery was almost absent and can be found only in villas or in agglomerations, such as Lescar. This is

a striking feature for a region belonging to Roman Gaul, where the quantity of handmade pottery significantly decreases everywhere from the reign of Augustus and Tiberius onwards and disappears in most regions. There were, of course, several exceptions: for example, some mountainous areas in western Narbonensis (e.g. Montagne Noire). Other exceptions belonged to the periphery of the Empire, far from Mediterranean influences, such as some regions in Germania Inferior and northern Belgica<sup>670</sup> or Dacia.<sup>671</sup> However, even closer analogies can be found in the nearby area of north-western Spain (e.g. The Basque Country and High Aragon<sup>672</sup>).



**Figure 123: Left: the distribution of the salt from Salies-de-Béarn (Réchin 2014: 380). Right: the distribution of wine from Bigorre (Réchin 2014: 380 and 385).**

The handmade pottery produced in the western Pyrenees was quite conservative in its shape as well.<sup>673</sup> Potters were clearly not professionals; rather, they were men (or maybe women) who devoted only a short period of the year to this activity: seasonal workers aiming at satisfying a basic need. In the High Empire, this pottery had a maximum distribution radius of 30-80 km (Figure 124). Ethnographic studies show that this type of distribution is compatible with a direct sale from the producer (potter's family) to the customer, with no intermediate traders.<sup>674</sup> Other economic activities had protohistoric roots and a short-range distribution, e.g. the salt production from Salies-de-Béarn<sup>675</sup> (Figure 123, right), the iron industry,<sup>676</sup> and the wine production from Bigorre (Figure 123, left). In addition, religion, language, and culture bear much evidence of continuity, as the onomastic and linguistic studies hint at (there is a close link with south of the Pyrenees).<sup>677</sup>

<sup>670</sup> Handmade pottery counts for c. 86% in the sandy region of the Flandre (Stuurman 1968; Van Es 1968; Van Tent 1987; Vermeulen 1992).

<sup>671</sup> Up to 45 % in the countryside (Negru 2003; Réchin 2008b: 145-148).

<sup>672</sup> Réchin 2015: 67.

<sup>673</sup> Several types have an Iron Age origin. At least for what concerns the types 'Béarnese' and 'Landais'.

<sup>674</sup> Andreau 2010 : 169.

<sup>675</sup> Saule 2006 : 13-14.

<sup>676</sup> Especially in Bigorre and Saint-Paul-lès-Dax (Réchin *et al.* 2000 ; Fabre *et al.* 2001 : 130-131 and 136-137).

<sup>677</sup> Fabre 1992.



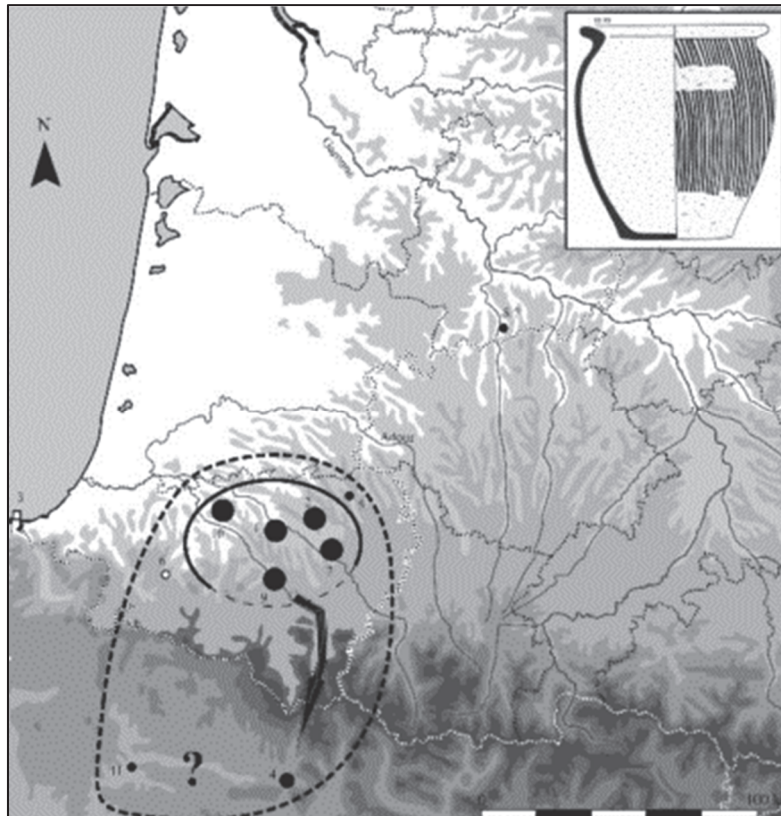


Figure 124: The distribution of handmade pottery (Réchin 2014: 387).

It is in this context, where Iron Age '*oppida*' had been extremely small and very close to each other, that new foundations (alien to the preceding culture) were established. Secondary agglomerations like Lescar and Oloron measured between 10-15 ha, and most agglomerations were even smaller. Their establishment was quite early (as the findings of Augustan coins and the embryonic city centres show), and public infrastructures and buildings often date to the foundation phase. They start declining quite early on, when public investment and investment by the local elite weakened. However, at the same time, we see private buildings being enlarged and becoming more and more luxurious, while modest buildings started to disappear. Here, as in the western part of the *civitas* of the Allobroges, the most common public building within the agglomerations is the bath. In both regions, the priority seemed to be control of specific lines of communication (Figure 125).<sup>678</sup> The care that was taken to build roads in compliance with the criteria typical of the early imperial period also suggests this priority.<sup>679</sup>

<sup>678</sup> Baths can also be quite large, given the size of the city. For example the one at Oloron was enlarged.

<sup>679</sup> One of the characteristics of the roads in these small agglomerations is that they are often very large. For example at Lescar they measure between 18 and 20 m; at Oloron 15-18 m. A few explanations have been given: 1) the roads were used by the animal herds, which would give these settlements a very rural character; 2) more likely, they were built in a way that promoted drainage, given that in south of Aquitania the landscape was marked by numerous volatile streams and water management was essential.

The small size of these agglomerations can be explained by the fact that the surplus they could gain from their territory was undoubtedly modest (as the pottery manufacture shows).<sup>680</sup>

The small number, size and monumentality of these settlements are not a consequence of low-quality evidence. The limited number of technological innovations, together with a form of occupation of the land, should not be mistaken for signs of resistance. These cultural and economic landscapes were a rational choice of the community to adapt to the landscape's physical and social dimensions. This translated into an extensive (and not-intensive) management and exploitation of the land.<sup>681</sup>

Their relationship to the road system, we have seen, is central to the development of the nucleated agglomerations.

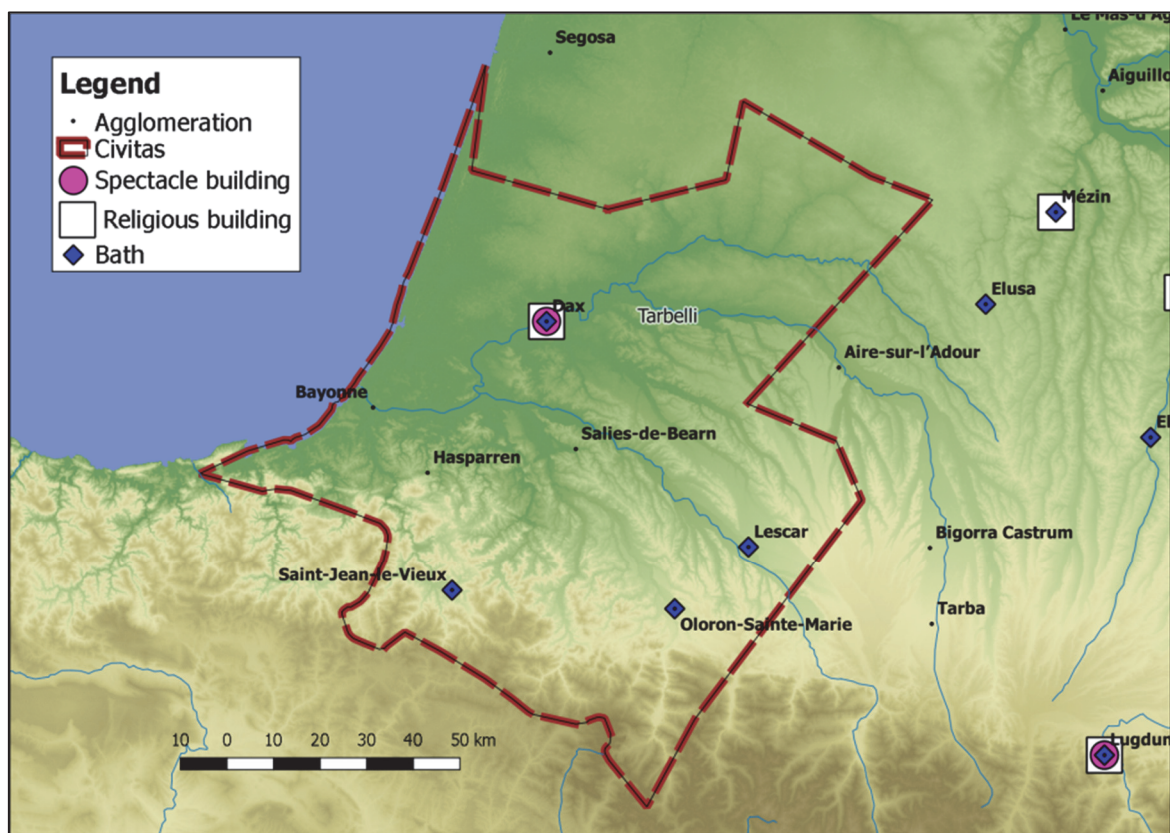


Figure 125: The public buildings within the *civitas* of the Tarbelli.

The settlement system is nonetheless coherent and solid, also thanks to well-distributed agglomerations and large villas which were particularly long lived. As in the case of the territory of Béziers, there appears to have been nothing in between the few agglomerations (*'vitrine de romanité'*) and the temporary camps except for villas, which might have played an important role in the spatial structure. Their presence at the foot of the mountains and their close relationships to the indigenous temporary camps, among which they were pursuing agro-

<sup>680</sup> To the north of Lescar, for example, there was the large, marshy plateau of Pont-Long (extended over 18,000 km<sup>2</sup>) which had not been parceled, nor drained or permanently occupied as the plain of Gave to the south was. The analysis of carbonized archaeological remains and palynological research show that the landscape was dominated by forests and pastures.

<sup>681</sup> Leveau and Palet 2010; Mitterauer 1992.



pastoral activities, show how well integrated into the system they were and how plains and mountains interacted effectively.<sup>682</sup> Agglomerations established at the foot of the mountains functioned as a bridge between two different spaces; they were '*physiquement à la charnière de deux univers*': the mountains in the south, with their pastoralism and natural resources, and the plain in the north, rich, fertile, and easier to access.<sup>683</sup> The concept of economic integration founded on the systematic exploitation of available resources was recognized as a sign of civilization in the Greek and Hellenistic worlds (and non-Hellenistic ones, like the Punic culture); it later became part of the Roman culture as well. Agglomerations (and villas) in this region were not alien to the mountains and shared the same values and resources, although the scale of their economy (compared for example to small individual farms) was much larger and more open to trade.<sup>684</sup>

### 5.2.3 The *civitas* of the Pictones

The Pictones were a tribe inhabiting a region of western Gaul, a land that lay on the Bay of Biscay, on the south bank of the Loire. This ancient people started to mint coins from the end of the 2nd century BC. They are known for having helped Julius Caesar in naval battles and particularly with the naval victory over the Veneti. The Romans, who depended on their shipbuilding skills for their fleet on the Loire, rewarded their loyalty by letting them control a part of the territory that belonged to the Veneti.

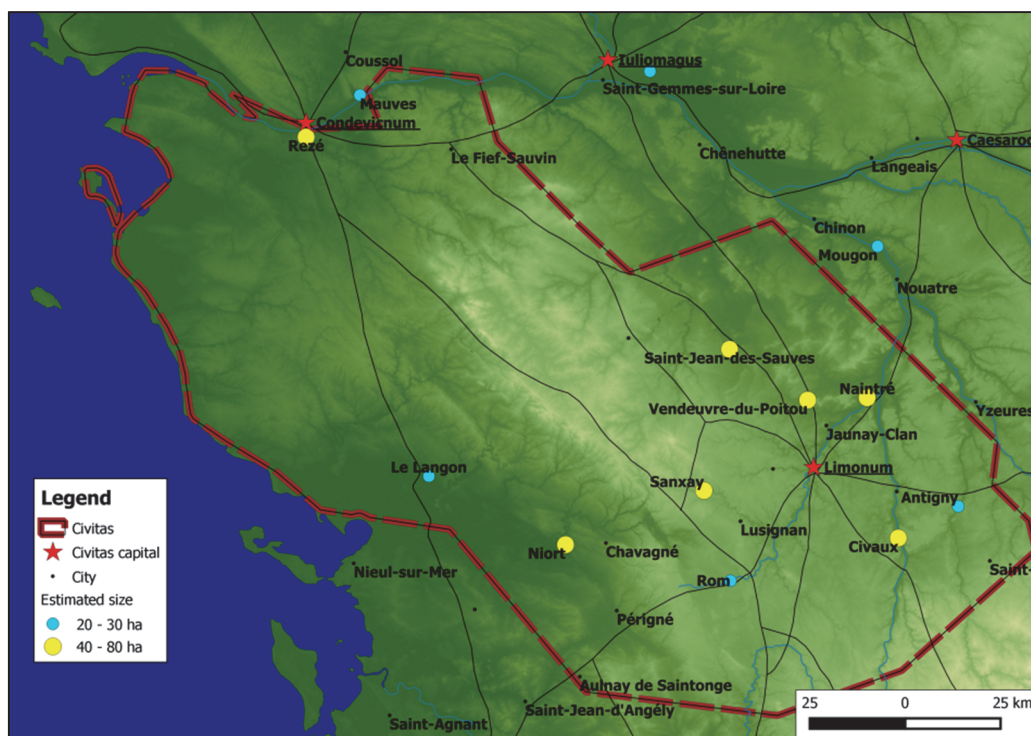


Figure 126: The distribution and size of the agglomerations within the *civitas* of the Pictones.

<sup>682</sup> Horden and Purcell 2000; Leveau and Palet 2010.

<sup>683</sup> Sablayrolles, 2005: 141, writing about the eastern Pyrenees and the agglomeration of Lugdunum Convenarum.

<sup>684</sup> Leveau and Palet 2010; Sablayrolles 2005: 141: also see Sablayrolles 2006.

If we look at the distribution of the agglomerations within this *civitas* (Figure 126), we see a strong contrast between its western part, which had fewer agglomerations, and its eastern one where, on the other hand, there were many more and where they were also much larger. This contrast surely has a geographical explanation. The west is characterized by inhospitable regions. The estuary of the Loire, especially to the north, was wet and marshy. South of the Loire, the old rocks of ancient Armorica reappear and form a plateau dissected by streams into hill masses. The central zone is a belt of granitic rocks, flanked to the north-west and southwest by alternate beds of softer schists and slates. The soils of the granite are sandy and infertile, making it a difficult and inhospitable country for the farmer. It is therefore sparsely populated. To the south-west, we find the last fringes of the Massif Armorican: the ‘*Bocage vendéen*’. This region is crossed by numerous rivers which enter the Loire estuary, but its agricultural potential is not particularly high.<sup>685</sup>

On the contrary, to the east, the Vendean plain is a rich and fertile land; this area of cereal cultivation contrasts with the meadows and enclosed fields of the adjoining upland. In the east, a dense network of large agglomerations existed, including the *civitas*-capital Limonum (Poitiers). Agglomerations developed around every 30 km, and the landscape was occupied by a large number of rural establishments, including numerous villas. The agglomerations were not only of considerable size (40-80 ha);<sup>686</sup> they also exhibited clear signs of planning (orthogonal street grid organized around a central square) and monuments (Figure 127 and Figure 128).

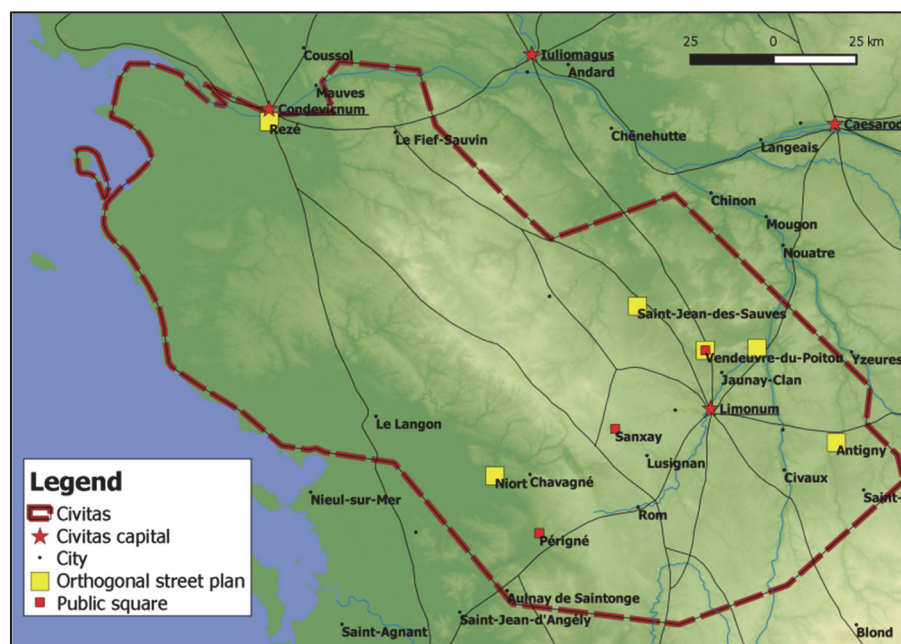


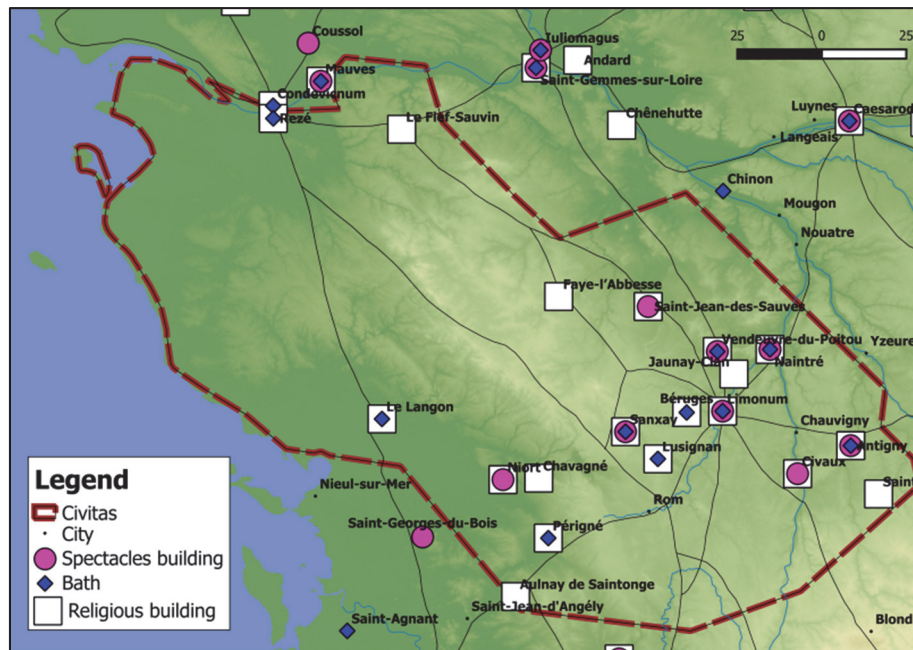
Figure 127: Street grids and public squares in the agglomerations of the Pictones.

The most common monuments are religious buildings, which can often be found in association with other buildings, such as theatres and baths. These sanctuaries could reach a considerable

<sup>685</sup> Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division 1942

<sup>686</sup> The sizes of these sites are probably on the high side since they are mostly known through aerial photography and their boundaries are difficult to delineate precisely.

size and display opulent wealth (e.g. Sanxay, Antigny, Vendreuve),<sup>687</sup> others were much more modest.



**Figure 128: The public buildings in the agglomerations of the Pictones.**

The distribution of these sanctuaries followed the same pattern as that for agglomerations and villas. They were all established during the 1st century AD, some of them as early as Augustan times (e.g. Vendreuve), and often have traces of reconstructions dating to the 2nd century AD (Vieux-Poitiers, and possibly Vendreuve). Several were abandoned in the 3rd century AD, or possibly already at the end of the 2nd century AD (e.g. Sanxay, Antigny, Vendreuve).

The agglomeration of modern Naintré-Vieux-Poitier extended over 65 ha, on the right bank of the river Clain, three kilometres away from its confluence with the river Vienne. In its urban centre, a Gallo-Latin inscription records its ancient name, Briga. The first phase (i.e. western quarter) dated back to the first half the 2nd century BC. Back then, it was probably already a religious centre, and it was around this area that the Roman agglomeration developed. The agglomeration gradually expanded, as we can see from the different orientations of the street grid. Aerial photography shows quite clearly the layout of this site, and on close inspection, we can distinguish *insulae* of different dimensions with shops aligned along the roads, houses, temples, and a craftsmen's quarter with potters' stalls and ovens. Some quarters appear to have been more densely inhabited than others, and, peripheral to the agglomerations, we can find monumental areas, such as the one to the south. On the east side, another monumental area includes a sanctuary, a theatre (which could host c. 10,000 people) and other undefined public buildings. According to Cécile Merel, who is responsible for this site, the town counted c. 4000 inhabitants.

<sup>687</sup> Vieux-Poitiers and Vendreuve have monuments decorated with imported stone from Africa, but mostly from Greece.

#### 5.2.4 The *civitas* of the Bituriges Cubi

The *Champagne berrichonne* (Berry) is a relatively level plain lying some 150-200 m above sea level and, generally speaking, is a country of rich loamy soils and prosperous agriculture. The upper valleys of the Indre, Cher, Allier, and Loire lead south into the Massif Central. Mineral resources are scattered almost everywhere within the *civitas*, and this allows us to investigate whether they were exploited everywhere with the same intensity.<sup>688</sup> The capital, Bourges, is located close to the ‘geometrical centre’ of France and its central position on the open limestone route north-east /south-west across the middle of France accounts for its early prominence. As in the case of the neighbouring western part of the *civitas* of the Pictones, the territory of this *civitas* was polarized around a number of agglomerations which were quite regularly distributed (c. every 30 km).<sup>689</sup>

A settlement hierarchy distribution had already developed during the Iron Age (Figure 129). The capital was Bourges (60 ha), and all other *oppida* were c. 30 ha. Some *oppida* were quite old, such as Levroux and Saint-Marcel (Mediolanum), which started to import Republican *amphorae* from quite early on. In the countryside, we find smaller establishments along with aristocratic residences. The analysis of the *tumuli* in the Berry and the identification of small, medium and large *necropoleis* suggest a regular and homogenous distribution of this type of burials, which in turn reflects a homogenous social hierarchy and population distribution.<sup>690</sup> The persistence of groups of elite burials during the early Roman period is a clear sign of the power of certain aristocratic families over the countryside and the isolated farms. The picture is one of a pre-Roman regular network of hierarchically organized settlements whose general shape appears unchanged in Roman times, although some arrangements undoubtedly took place. The analysis of the settlements and burials also shows the continuity of wealth and power that would continue to be displayed both in settlements and in the countryside. In fact, elite burials endured in Roman times, and the local aristocracy was gradually integrated into the Roman political system, holding magistracies and gaining access to Roman citizenship.<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Overall, metallurgic activities were intensively practised in three areas of the *civitas*, where they did not interfere with agricultural activities. These are i. north of Bourges, close to the forest of Allogny; ii. South-east of the *civitas* (close to the forest of Tronçais), iii. Argentomagus, which we will discuss.

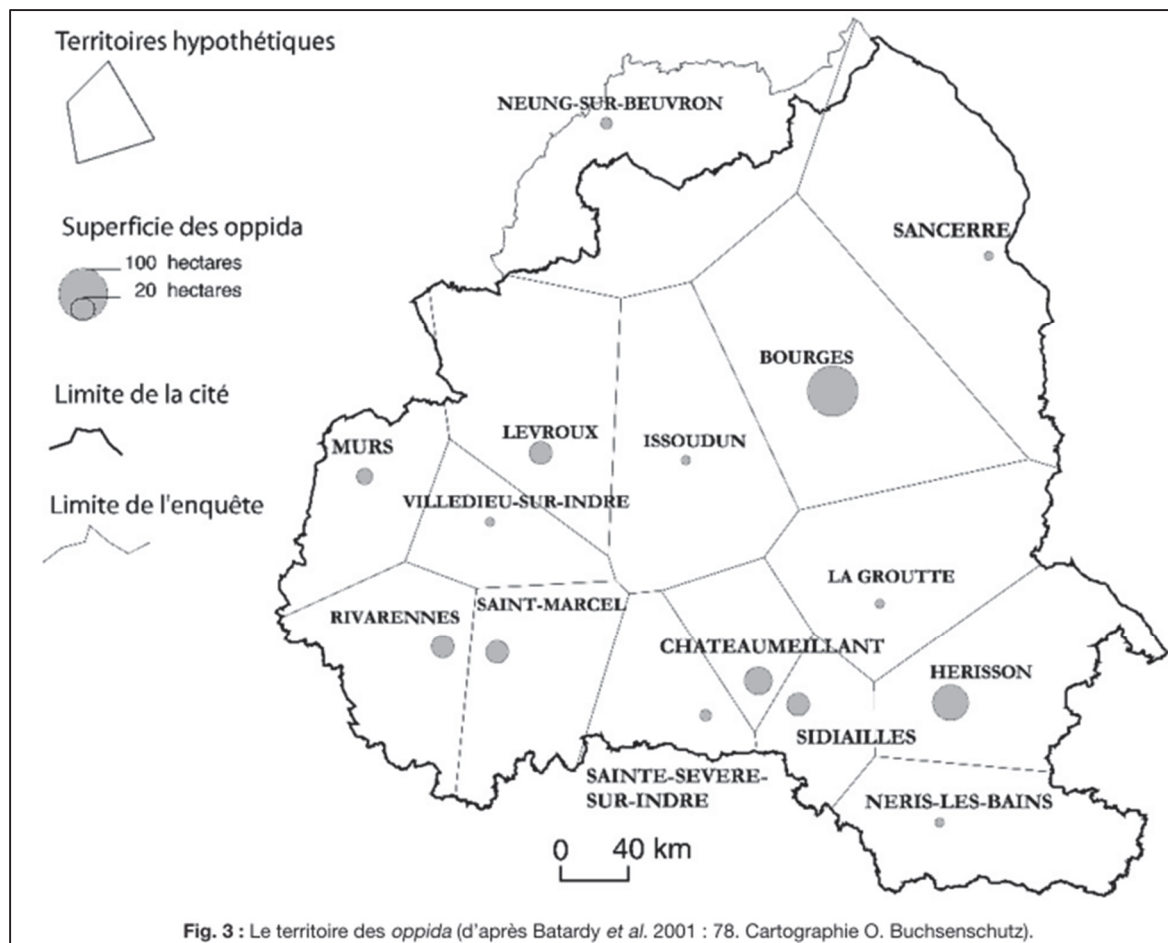
Ancient sources attest that mineral extraction and transformation were practised from pre-Roman times up to at least Late Antiquity (Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, VII, 22; Ptolemy, *Geography*, IV, 2, 2; *Notitia Dignitatum*, Occ. 9, 31).

<sup>689</sup> There were slightly fewer in the northern and western parts.

<sup>690</sup> Similar to the ones enclosed by a *muris gallicus*, i.e. a masonry wall, at Luan and Meunet-Planches (Buchsenschutz *et al* 2013).

<sup>691</sup> See Blanc and Lamoine 2013, which address the subject of *elite continuity in Roman times*. When looking at the epigraphic record from the *civitas* of the Lemovices, which lies south of the *civitas* of the Bituriges, they observed that a *family* (i.e. the *Licinii*) could have been politically active for several generations (from the 1st century AD until mid-2nd century AD).





**Figure 129: The *oppida* of the Bituriges Cubi (Batardy 2004: 256)**

As said earlier, the largest Roman agglomerations are often preceded by *oppida*. Examples include Bourges, Saint-Marcel, Nérès-les-Bains, and Châteaumeillant. Other pre-Roman sites were abandoned (e.g. Rivannes, Saint-Severe, Sidalles Herisson) in favour of sites in a better position with regards to the road system. Several of these agglomerations lay on major roads, such as the ones of Saint Ambroix (Bourges-Argenton-sur-Creuse, at the junction of three roads coming from Châteaumeillant, Gièvres and Levroux), Gièvres (Bourges-Tours), Allichamps-Bruère (Bourges-Nérès, at the junction with a minor road connecting to Châteaumeillant), and Saint-Satur (on the route Bourges-Auxerre, at the crossing of the river Loire).

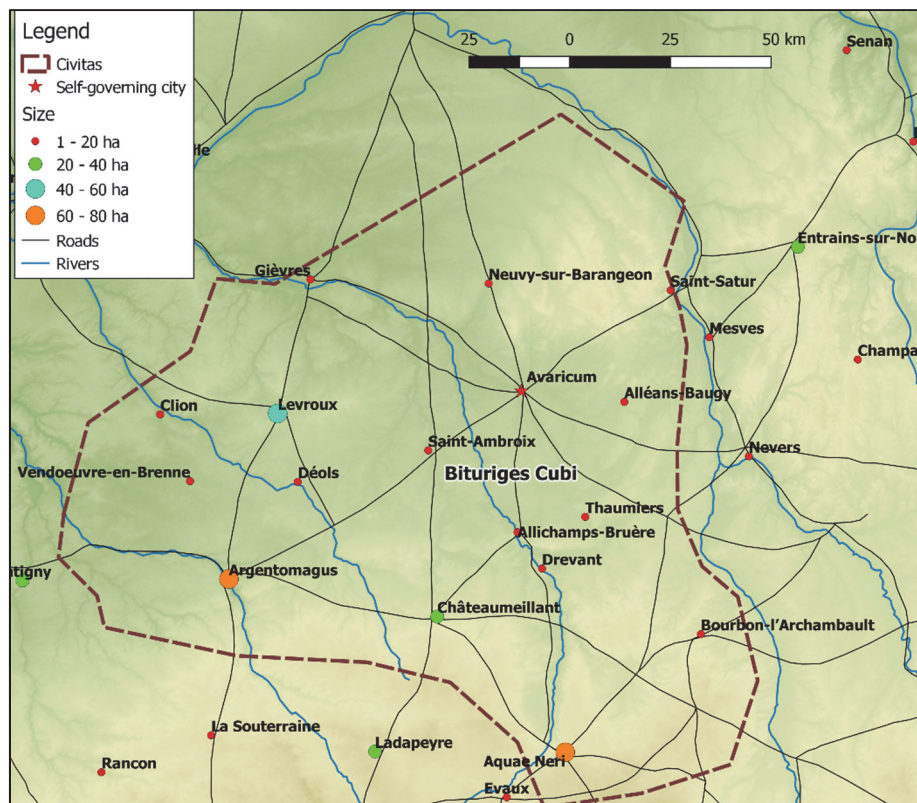


Figure 130: The settlement system of the *civitas* of the Bituriges (2nd century AD).

With a few exceptions, notably Saint-Marcel (Argentomagus), we know very little about them. A few of them are known only through literary sources or inscriptions (e.g. Favigny and Venedouevres-en-Brenne). For others, we have data only on their monuments. Given the lamentable state of the evidence, it is hard to generalize about the presence or absence of ‘urban’ features, such as public buildings, and it is even a tougher task to make assumptions about their layout.<sup>692</sup> The settlement hierarchy consists of i. the capital Bourges (100 ha); ii. the agglomerations of Argenton-Saint-Marcel (84 km to the west, 70 ha) and Nèris-les-Bains (90 km to the south, 80 ha). The agglomeration of Argenton-Saint-Marcel is quite well understood since it has been the object of excavations for many years. A sanctuary, monumental fountain, theatre, amphitheatre, and baths have all been excavated, and they clearly show how opulent this settlement was (Figure 131). iii. the agglomerations of Levroux (60 ha), Châteaumeillant (24 ha) and Drevant (20 ha), iv. other settlements, even when they were smaller than 20 ha, fulfilled various central-place functions (e.g. economic, religious), and several displayed signs of monumentality (such as temples, baths, and spectacle buildings).

Small and medium-sized agglomerations provide clear evidence of a thriving and dynamic society. For example, the site of Saint Ambroix (ancient Ernodurum), 26 km southeast of Bourges, is known from aerial photography, which revealed a number of buildings aligned to the main road. At least seven villas lie just outside the agglomeration. This site is famous for the large number of inscriptions recovered (of which 44 are funerary steles) cut into the stone from Ambrault, a site 18 km south-west of the city. Given how little we know about the

<sup>692</sup> Bellet *et al.* eds 1999: 15.

settlement (the presence of an inhabited area is clear, but no structures have yet been excavated), the inscriptions can help us to shed some light on what was happening on this site and who was living in it. On the steles, a number of local trades are represented (an armourer, a corn merchant, multiple weavers, a pottery merchant, a goldsmith etc.). Their homogeneity of style and the fact that some of them are unfinished suggest they were probably produced locally.<sup>693</sup> Two larger-than-life-size statues were wearing the *toga*. They were maybe part of a funerary monument or perhaps they were displayed in the public square or in the so-called *basilica*. The presence of a storehouse and an inscription of a grain merchant suggest the agglomeration might have been a marketplace for cereals cultivated in the adjacent countryside.

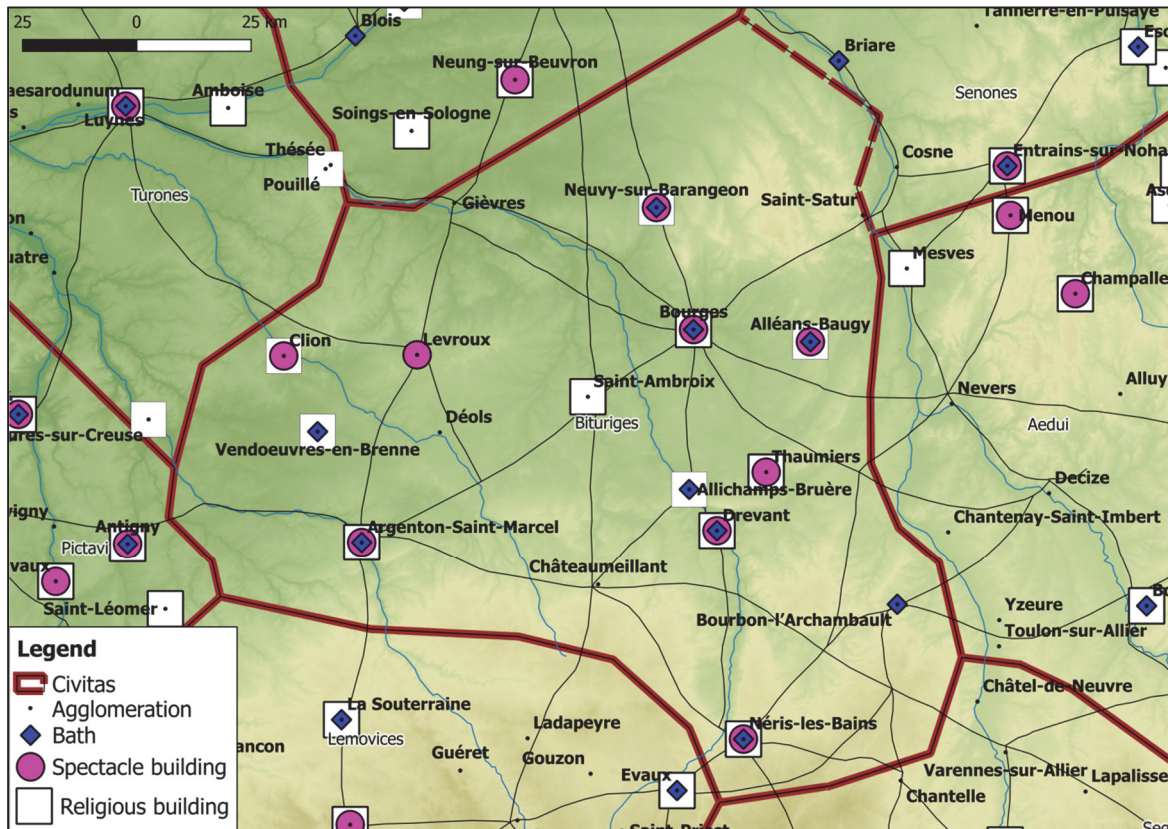


Figure 131: The monuments within the agglomerations of the Bituriges Cubi.

Artisanal activities were central in these agglomerations. In Gièvre, which is also poorly understood, there are traces of pottery production and weaving. For Bruère-Allichamps we have available only dated archaeological reports: they attest the presence of quarrying and stone production, pottery manufacture and metalworking. Here too, inscriptions can enlighten us a bit more about the different activities that occupied the inhabitants of this agglomeration: we know of a carpenter, a cobbler, and a scribe. At the site of Saint-Satur, on the border with the *civitas* of the Aedui, a pottery kiln, and possibly metalwork are attested, too, together with a boat, which was carrying a cargo of building stone coming from a site nearby. This site too is poorly known. However, it seems to have been densely inhabited, at least in its northern section. Small finds include small sculptures, coins, and imported terracotta; fragments of mosaics were found, too. At Alléans-Baugy the epigraphic evidence also included fine

<sup>693</sup> Leday 1980: 294-310.



inscriptions and steles reproducing local trades (a saddler, a textile dyer, a woodcutter etc.). Archaeological evidence also indicates that this place had many economic functions, as there is evidence of different workshops (pottery, metalworking, masonry and food processing).

The territory of the Bituriges is rich in resources, and a series of very fine studies have shown how these were exploited in the various sub-regions.<sup>694</sup> As mentioned above, fertile land and mineral resources are present over the whole territory. However, as observed in an influential article by Gandini, Dumasy and Laüt, we can distinguish different '*paysages économiques*'.<sup>695</sup> In the Champagne Berrichonne (the area between Déols and Saint-Ambroix), metallurgic activity is almost absent, except in very small districts (Figure 132). On the other hand, we see a very high density of rural establishments, some of which can be quite large (villas). This high density of rural sites points to a very intensive agricultural exploitation, whilst metal extraction and transformation remained marginal.

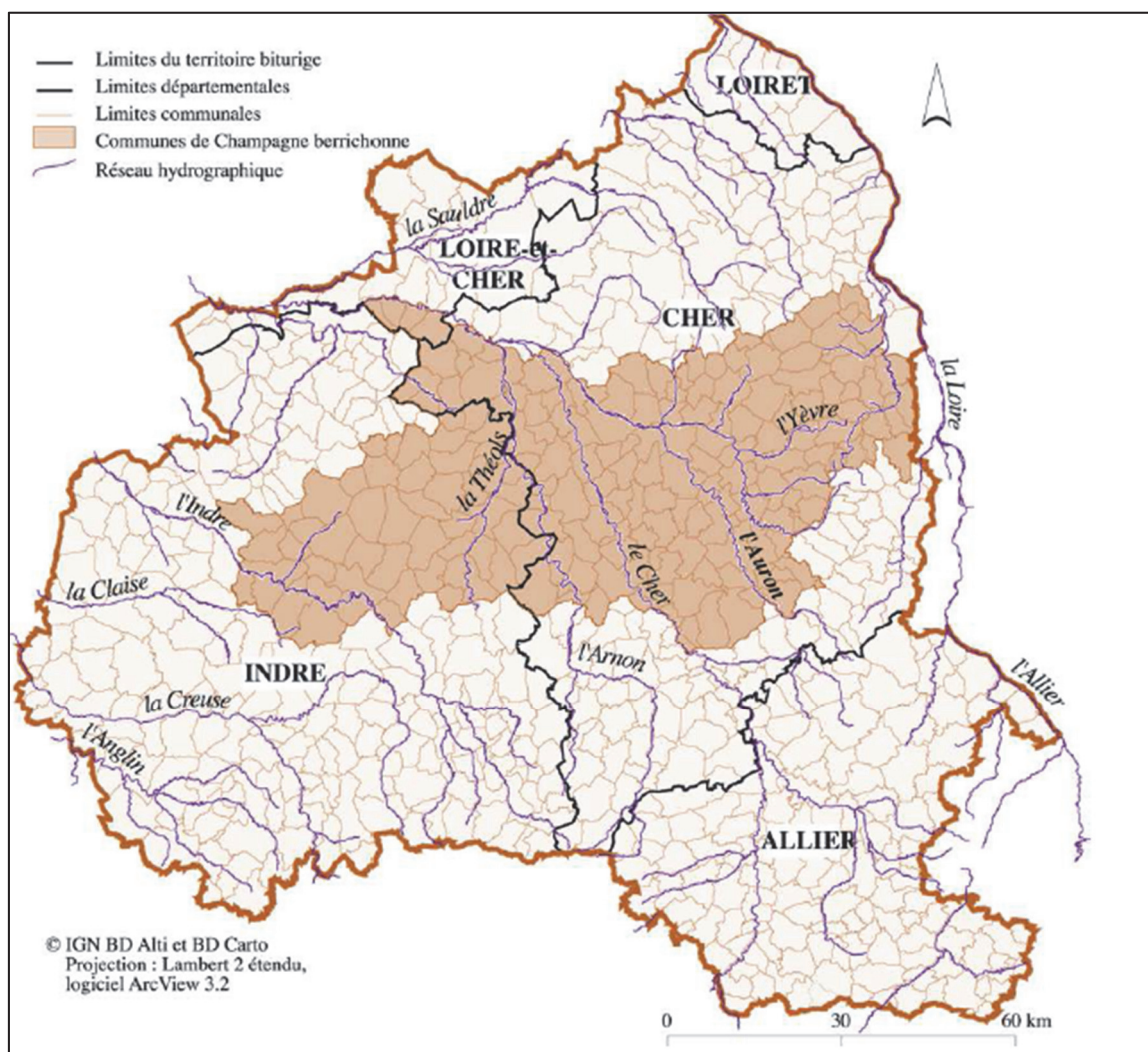


Figure 132: The Champagne Berrichonne (Maussion 2004: 399).

<sup>694</sup> Dieudonné-Glad 1996; Dumasy 1994; Gandini and Maussion 2003; Maussion 2003; and Gandini 2006.

<sup>695</sup> Gandini *et al.* 2013.



Clearly, the community inhabiting this region (or the elite who controlled it) elected agro-pastoral activities as the main source of profit, and the presence of numerous farms dating to the Iron Age suggests that this decision was taken quite early on, before the Roman conquest. The annexation of this *civitas* into the wider circuit of the Roman Empire did not change the way in which this economic space was exploited and managed, but merely its scale. During the 1st century AD (maybe in the second half - end of 1st century AD) the spread of viticulture (suitable varieties were found to be the *vitis silvestris*, a single specimen of *vitis vinifera* was found in the *necropoleis* of Faverdines) allowed the Bituriges to reap the benefits of this lucrative trade.<sup>696</sup> The number of rural establishments started to increase, together with the size of the settlements where these primary resources were exchanged (as the presence of a grain merchant proves) and products of farming were further processed (textile production, food processing etc.).

The area of Argentomagus ('Silver Market'), on the Mersans plateau, was occupied at least from the Neolithic Age. Since the end of the Iron Age (c. 2nd century BC), workshops for iron-working could be found near rural establishments and metal workshops. In Roman times, workshops for the reduction of ores are present in almost 40% of the rural establishments, as well as in the city. The nearby presence of extensive forests supplied fuel for this kind of activity and the limited agricultural potential of land probably fostered this choice. Nonetheless, this specialization did not mean that agro-pastoral activities were neglected. In fact, they can be found everywhere in the region and their co-existence with metallurgic activities suggests that these two fields were complementary. Iron bars were often transformed into semi-finished products in villas or farms. Probably the owners of these farms and villas had control over the workshops (and the forests), and even if the number of villas is smaller than in Champagne, they are no less opulent. The agglomerations and the countryside appear to have been complementary, and both fell under the influence of landowners (who invested in them through many euergetic acts); partly this will not change in Late Antiquity, since it is the large exploitations that will survive, while small ones disappear.<sup>697</sup>

The spatial configuration of this *civitas* was polarized around agglomerations, on the one hand, and road stations, on the other. These two elements of the landscape, in turn, seem to have polarized the rural settlements around them. Holmgren and Leday observed this trend and noticed '*couronnes*' of rural establishments (e.g. villas, farms) around urban settlements. In addition, evidence coming from the excavations related to construction of the motorway A 71 also highlighted this tendency.<sup>698</sup> In her Ph.D. thesis, Anne Maussion has re-investigated this relationship by means of GIS. She drew a circle of 5 km radius around the agglomerations and road stations within this *civitas*.<sup>699</sup> Her results show that out of 763 rural establishments, 156

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<sup>696</sup> See new archaeological discoveries (pips, pruning-knives), iconographical documentation and the presence of regional *amphorae*. Dumasy *et al.* 2011 looked at the current state of knowledge about this subject and also explored the idea that the *vitis biturica* mentioned by Columella, Pliny the Elder and Isidore of Seville might have been born here, in the *civitas* of the Bituriges Cubi, and not in the area of Bordeaux, *civitas*-capital of the Bituriges Vivisci.

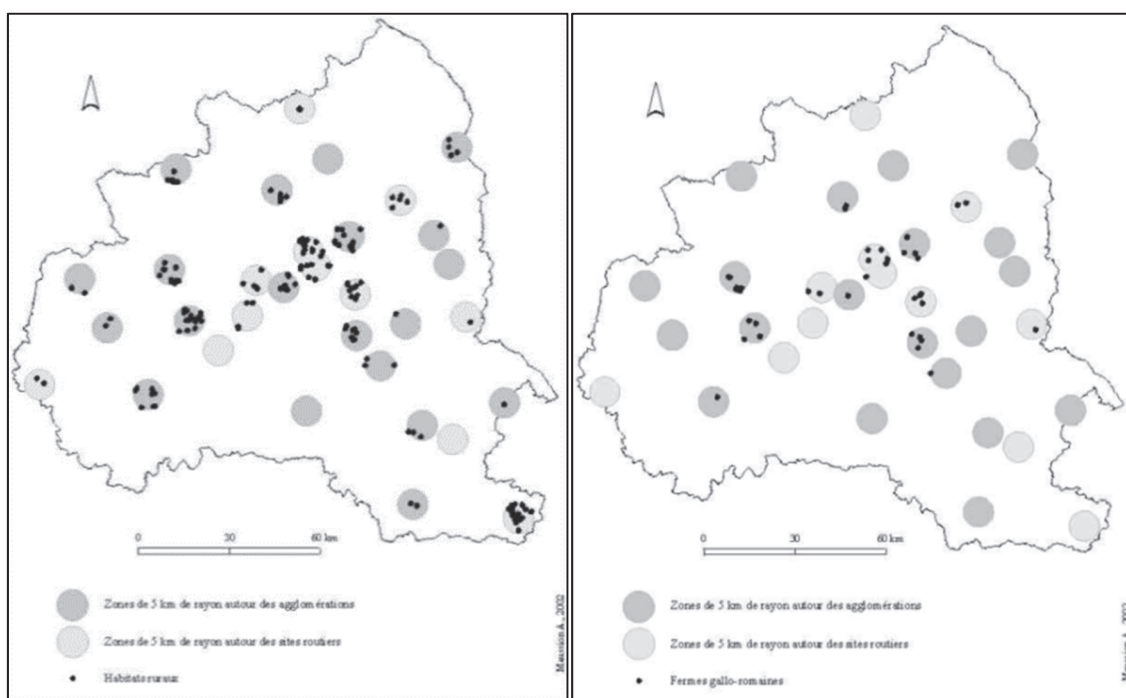
<sup>697</sup> For example, we have evidence of one family, which had a close relationship with the agglomeration of Nérès-le-Bains for multiple generations.

<sup>698</sup> Further evidence in favour of this conclusion came during construction of the motorway A 71, when the countryside around Bruère-Allichamps was investigated (Ferdrière and Rialland 1994).

<sup>699</sup> Maussion 2003.

(22%) were located at less than 5 kilometres from an urban or town-like settlement (Figure 133, left). In particular, a dense ‘*couronne*’ can be seen in the proximity of Bourges, Levrourx, Déols, Saint-Marcel, Saint-Ambroix, and Bruère-Allichamps.<sup>700</sup>

For farms and villas, the correlation was even stronger (Figure 133, centre and right): 38% of the farms<sup>701</sup> and 27% of villas were situated within a radius of 5 km from an urban or town-like settlement. However, this correlation is surprisingly weak. A possible explanation is that a radius of 5 km is likely to be too small for measuring the catchment area of nodes within the marketing of rural surplus. A radius of 15 km (i.e. a 2-3 hours’ walk) would suit better and would also result in a higher correlation.<sup>702</sup>



**Figure 133: Rural sites situated within a radius of 5 km from an agglomeration or road station. Left: the totality of rural establishments (Mausson 2003: 162). Right: isolated farms (Mausson 2003: 163).**

In the case of isolated farms - especially when built of perishable material - it is more hazardous to determine whether they were contemporary to the agglomerations and therefore to validate the correlation between the two form of settlements. On the other hand, we know villas were contemporary to the agglomerations, and therefore we can deduce they had been established in their vicinity because they were attracted by them. This relationship demonstrated the strong interactions between the two.

<sup>700</sup> So far, none have been found around Neuvy-sur-Barangeon, Châteaumeillant, and Nérondes. A similar phenomenon was recognized by Hodder and Hassall in Britain.

<sup>701</sup> Out of the 38 farms, 23 were close to an agglomeration (particularly dense around Bourges, Bruère-Allichamps, Déols and Levrourx) and 15 to road stations.

<sup>702</sup> Bintliff 2002.

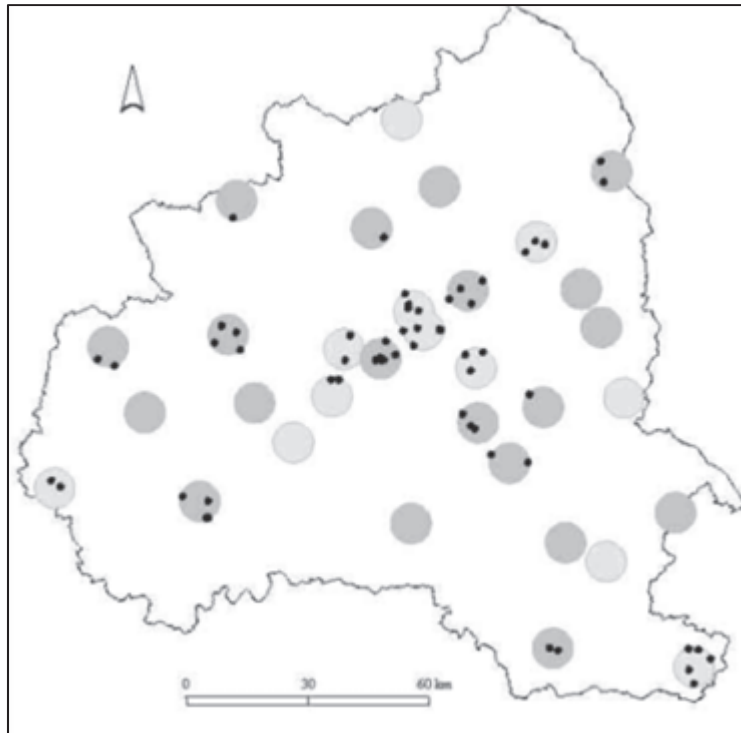


Figure 134: Villas situated in a radius of 5 km from an agglomeration or road station (Maussion 2003: 164).

### 5.2.5 The distribution of secondary agglomerations in Belgica

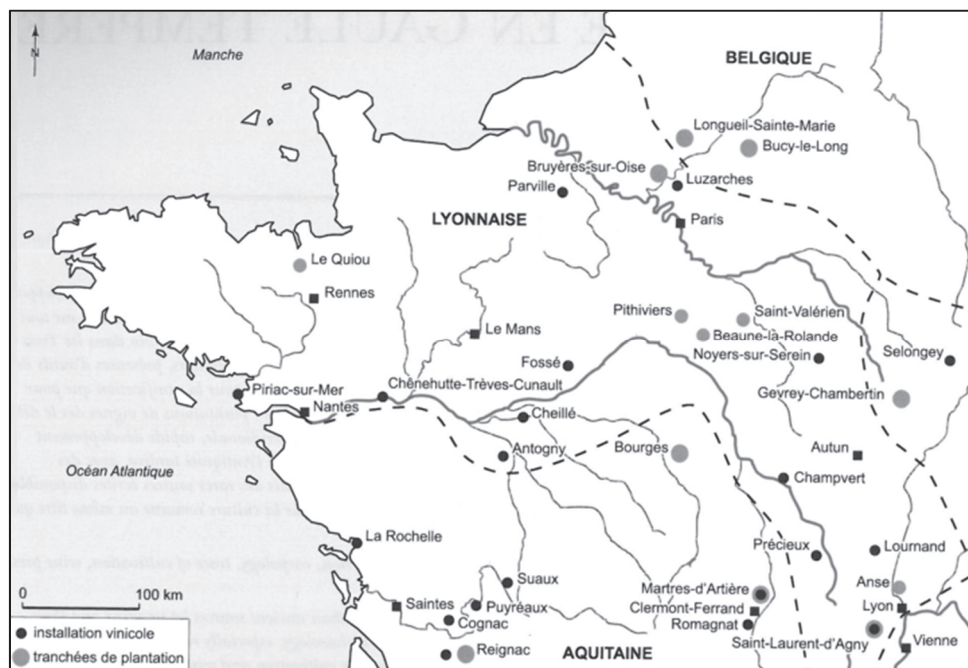
So far, we have seen that medium-sized to large agglomerations (over 40 ha) usually develop quite far (over 50 km) from the *civitas* capital. At least, this was the case in the *civitates* of the Allobroges, Pictones, and Bituriges Cubi (and of other *civitates* of central Gaul, such as the Lemovices, Aedui, Senones, Carnutes etc.). On the other hand, in western Belgica, middle-sized to large secondary agglomerations and capitals coexisted at a relatively short distance (c. 20-30 km). This region covers part of the Paris Basin, which consists of a wide chalk upland (200 m above sea level) divided into separate blocks of country by the river valleys. The landscape is flat and monotonous; for the most part, the chalk is covered by lime or clay-with-flints soil, which is very fertile and can be easily cultivated. In the northwest, the landscape becomes more undulating; surface streams are more numerous, and it is covered by extended forests.<sup>703</sup>

As early as the 5th century BC, the north of Gaul was rich in farms. However, this land was hit by a new wave of intensive land use at the end of the 2nd and beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. This practice had a huge impact on the landscape, and traces of those changes can still be seen after 2000 years in the form of ditches visible through aerial photography. Over time, in fact, we can witness an increase in ditches (farms). Moreover, the settlement pattern became more dispersed, shifting from the use of longer-lived collective *necropoleis* to small ones, which have a more ‘familial’ character. Malrain François closely analysed these ditches and concluded that they show clear signs of a hierarchized society: aristocratic farms had wider

<sup>703</sup> Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division 1942.

ditches (several meters wide), and within them - together with the owner's residence - there were some other smaller annexes (possibly for the subordinates and for storing goods). Graves also show signs of hierarchy.<sup>704</sup> As we said, before the Romans' arrival agriculture in Gaul was already flourishing.<sup>705</sup> In Roman times, it continued to expand: vineyards and wine presses were introduced in temperate Gaul and perhaps the edict of Domitian - which abandoned the plantings of any new vineyards in Italy and ordered the uprooting of half of the vineyards in the provinces - aimed at halting its diffusion (Figure 135).

Here, villas started to appear quite late (mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, more often early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, and only the last phases are built of hard materials).<sup>706</sup>



**Figure 135: Viticulture in temperate Gaul. Black dots: wine-making establishments; grey dots: traces of plantation (Brun 2011: 2).**

In Roman times, this case-study area included five different *civitates*: the Ambiani, Viromandui, Bellovaci, Silvanecti, and Suessones. Picardy, on average, was very rich in villas, some of which could be very extensive (10 ha), although they most commonly measured around 2 ha. Within these *civitates*, a dense network of secondary agglomerations started to develop in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, growing perhaps with some delay compared to their *civitas*-capitals (Figure 136).<sup>707</sup>

<sup>704</sup> Malrain and Maréchal 2008.

<sup>705</sup> Ferdière *et al.* eds 2006 ; Trément 2010.

<sup>706</sup> Agache et Bréart 1975; Agache 1978. However, overall, villas in Gaul started to appear quite late and never date to just after the time of the conquest. In Narbonensis, they were also introduced quite late (end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, first half 1<sup>st</sup> century AD); in the territory of Nîmes, they appear in mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD, but they mostly date to Flavian times (Durand-Dastès *et al.* 1998). Thus, it would be wrong to look at villas to date cultural changes. If they reflected cultural changes, we would expect them to have been introduced much earlier in Narbonensis than in the Three Gauls, which is not the case (villas might be more properly used as indicator of incorporation into the Roman Empire in cases where they were introduced all of a sudden, as might be the case for the Campi Decumates .Trément 2010).

<sup>707</sup> Pichon 2013.





Figure 136: The agglomerations of western Belgica.

Several of these agglomerations had a pre-Roman occupation (e.g. Vermand, Saint-Martin-Longueau, and Vendueil-Caply), and they all were thriving in Flavian times. The high density of middle-large agglomerations, and the high productivity of the land, was complemented by the presence of significant commercial exchange stimulated by the river Oise and the terrestrial routes, for example the one that connected Senlis to Soissons.

Others appear to be founded *ex nihilo* (although caution is required because future research might invalidate this last assertion), with the exception of Saint-Laurent-Blangy, Vermand, and a few more agglomerations which were established near pre-existing sanctuaries (e.g. Ribemont-sur-Ancre and Eu ‘Bois l’Abbé’).<sup>708</sup> At the same time, secondary agglomerations were also starting to grow although their ‘*parure monumentale*’ remained very limited at least until the Flavians.<sup>709</sup> These agglomerations had a street grid and a central square (Figure 137).

<sup>708</sup> Pichon 2009.

<sup>709</sup> Pichon 2009. For the chronological monumentalization of this area see Pichon 2009; and Pichon 2015.

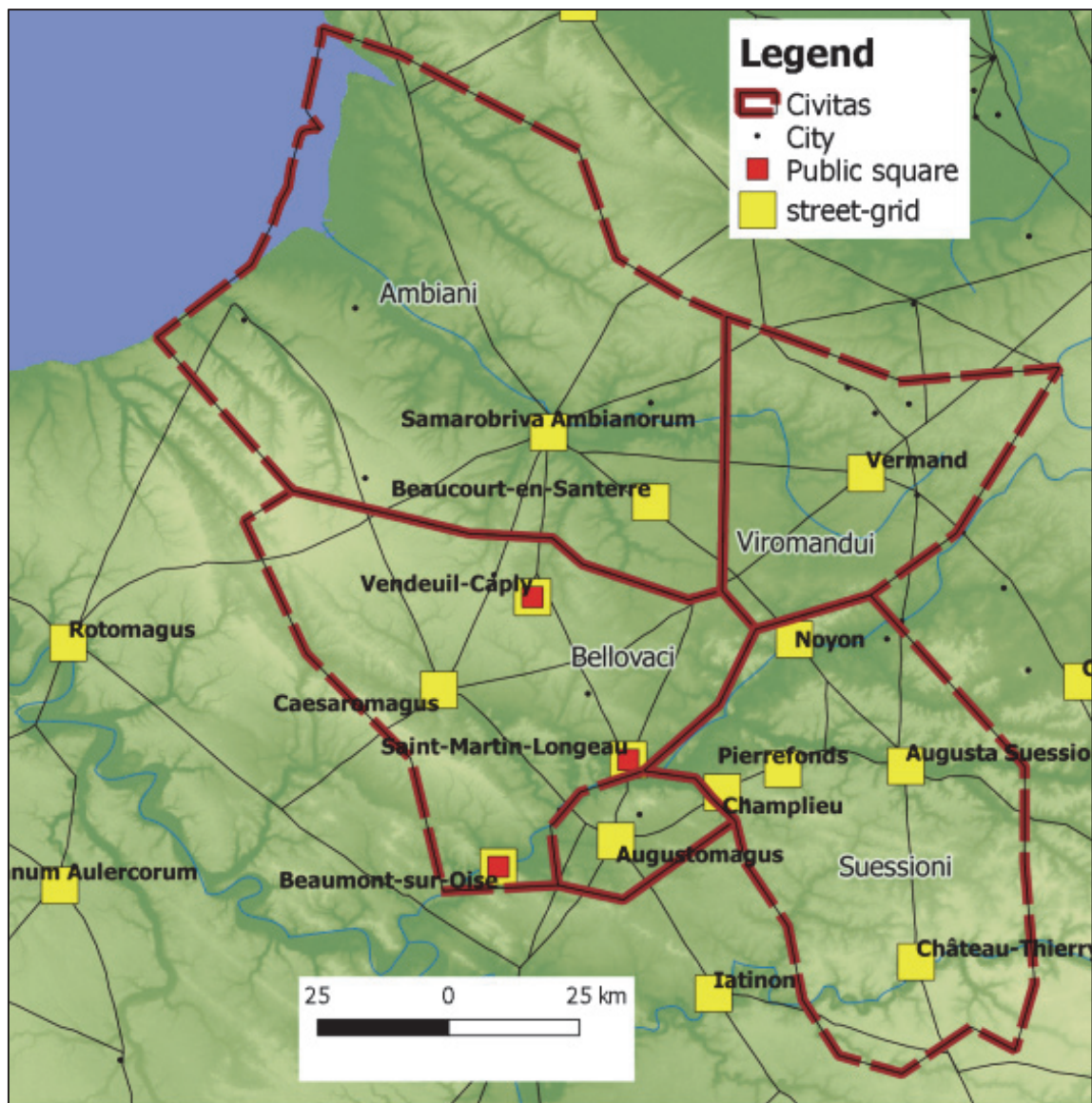


Figure 137: Street grids and *fora* in the agglomerations of western Belgica.

Several were not only extensive and quite populated; during the 2nd century AD they were also equipped with monumental buildings either within the cities or in their immediate surroundings (Figure 138). For example, Ribemont-sur-Ancre and Eu (Ambiani), Beaumont-sur-Oise and Vendeuil-Caply (Bellovaci), Orrouy (Suessones). All of these secondary agglomerations had numerous dwellings and spaces for artisanal production. For example, pottery production, which was the most common activity on these sites, covered a regional market at least at the end of the 2nd century AD. Several other secondary agglomerations have specialized workshops for the working of iron (Beaumont-sur-Oise and Château-Thierry), bronze (Saint-Martin-Longueau and Venduil-Caply) or textiles (Ribemont-sur-Ancre and Saint-Martin-Longueau). However, several of these centre places did more than just supply the local and regional demand for pottery and iron tools. In fact, temples, baths and spectacle buildings (in particular theatres) were among the most common monuments that can be found in several of these settlements. Two *basilica*-like buildings have also been found, one at Eu and one at Vendeuil-Caply.





Figure 138: The monuments in the agglomerations of north-western Belgium.

Archaeological remains belonging to a public building have been identified at Hermes and Saint-Martin-Longueau; they may belong to a *basilica* or a *horreum*. Interestingly, in the High Empire the capital of the *civitas* of the Bellovaci, Beauvais, covered a surface of c. 60 ha, whilst the secondary agglomeration of Saint-Martin-Longueau grew to become 100 ha and Vendeuil-Caply, with its 130 ha, was almost twice as large.<sup>710</sup> Vendeuil-Caply possessed a temple, two theatres, public baths and a forum. Its first occupation goes back to the end of the reign of Augustus.<sup>711</sup> During this early phase, buildings were built with wood and clay, and only after being destroyed by a fire in Claudian times were they rebuilt with stone foundations and wattle

<sup>710</sup> The estimated surface area should be taken as an order of magnitude because we, unfortunately, lack precise data on the density of the agglomeration of these sites and whether the entire surface was actually occupied. It cannot be excluded that this centre was less densely inhabited compared to the capital.

<sup>711</sup> Underneath the temple some remains (very few) dating to the Iron Age have been found.

and daub walls, at times decorated with wall paintings.<sup>712</sup> Its importance and prosperity have been linked to its geographical position: it lay just a few kilometres away from the border with the *civitas* of the Ambiani and not far from the road that connected Beauvais to Amiens. Its location might also have given the agglomeration the function of rural market for artisans and merchants who worked in the countryside.<sup>713</sup>

‘Bois l’Abbé’ (Briga) is a well-excavated site. It had one of the largest theatres of the province. To the north of the monumental centre, there was a quarter which was organized around *insulae* and streets (with orientation north-south/east-west), with some adjustments to the topography. The *insulae* were quite irregular (they could be rectangular or trapezoidal). The first houses were built in the third quarter of the 1st century AD and, at the beginning, they appeared to have had a very simple layout consisting of just one room, at most two. Over time, they increased in size and complexity (they acquired corridors, galleries, porticoes etc.) and became more regularly aligned with the roads. In their last phase, around the 3rd century AD, some of these *insulae* hosted very large dwellings (150 to 300 m<sup>2</sup>), which possibly had more than one floor in their central part. Although there were signs of social hierarchy, there seem to be few traces of private baths or heating systems. Moreover, dwellings were built in wattle and daub, and the use of hard material was kept to a minimum. Archaeological surveys and the analysis of the ancient remains have proved the existence of a network of small and isolated rural establishments separated by an average distance of 500-600 m, with small *necropoleis*.<sup>714</sup> Some indirect traces of artisanal activities have also been found, like tools or material debris, but no workshops have yet been excavated.

Large villas were less numerous and quite modest. They had few signs of luxury (mosaics, etc.), and only the villa of Trente, on the river of the Bresle, has given evidence of hypocausts and possibly baths. Some villas show a late phase in hard materials, as often happens in the Somme:<sup>715</sup> a central building with a gallery on the facade. These villas, however, are a minority, and most are more modest, with few architectural elements. Overall these agglomerations appear to have had multiple ‘urban’ functions. They provided services, and they might have had administrative functions (if the *basilica*-like buildings were built for such purposes). Religious and entertaining functions are attested by the presence of religious buildings, baths, and spectacle buildings (in Vermand the sacred area extended over 15 ha). The public square may have hosted a market; workshops and artisanal activities are also attested. At Beaumont-sur-Oise, for example, we have traces of production of domestic pottery and food processing but also iron production, reducing, smelting, and forging. Very recently, in Vermand (rue Charles de Gaulle) five kilns for domestic local pottery were found.<sup>716</sup> Glass working is also attested. Again, these agglomerations were linked to the products coming from the countryside, as they certainly had a role in the transformation and distribution of agricultural goods (the silos found in the agglomeration of Nizy - which lies very close to this area - might be evidence). At Thiverny there was a quarry, at Beuvraignes a large workshop for pottery. Bone

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<sup>712</sup> Piton and Dufour 1984.

<sup>713</sup> Pichon 2009.

<sup>714</sup> Mantel *et al.* 2006.

<sup>715</sup> Agache 1978.

<sup>716</sup> URL: [http://www.inrap.fr/sites/inrap.fr/files/atoms/files/cp\\_vermand\\_ok.pdf](http://www.inrap.fr/sites/inrap.fr/files/atoms/files/cp_vermand_ok.pdf).



work is attested in Vermand and Saint-Martin-Longueau, and the few weights found hint at some textile work.

### 5.3 An overview of the settlement systems within the Gaulish provinces

This chapter began by discussing why some of the earlier attempts to analyse the overall settlement system of the north-western provinces have failed to grasp its complexity and its high level of connectedness. This was due to the fact that the scope of these studies was confined to the analysis of the ‘official cities’. However, the evidence shows that the self-governing cities were only a small fraction of the total number of agglomerations that made up the whole settlement system (they counted only around 25%). The long-lived narrative about how the north-western provinces were under-urbanized and economically under-developed, held back by a dysfunctional system of central places unable to serve the majority of the rural communities, still persists, but the evidence (when thoroughly analysed), suggests the opposite.<sup>717</sup>

Only when - as has been done in this work - we go beyond the mere juridical definition of ‘city’ and we redefine it to include all settlements that were likely to have fulfilled ‘urban’ functions, can we hope to understand the settlement system (and hierarchy) of these provinces in a meaningful way. If we do not take such places into account, we cannot hope to achieve a satisfactory understanding of the settlement system or of the role played by self-governing cities in that system.

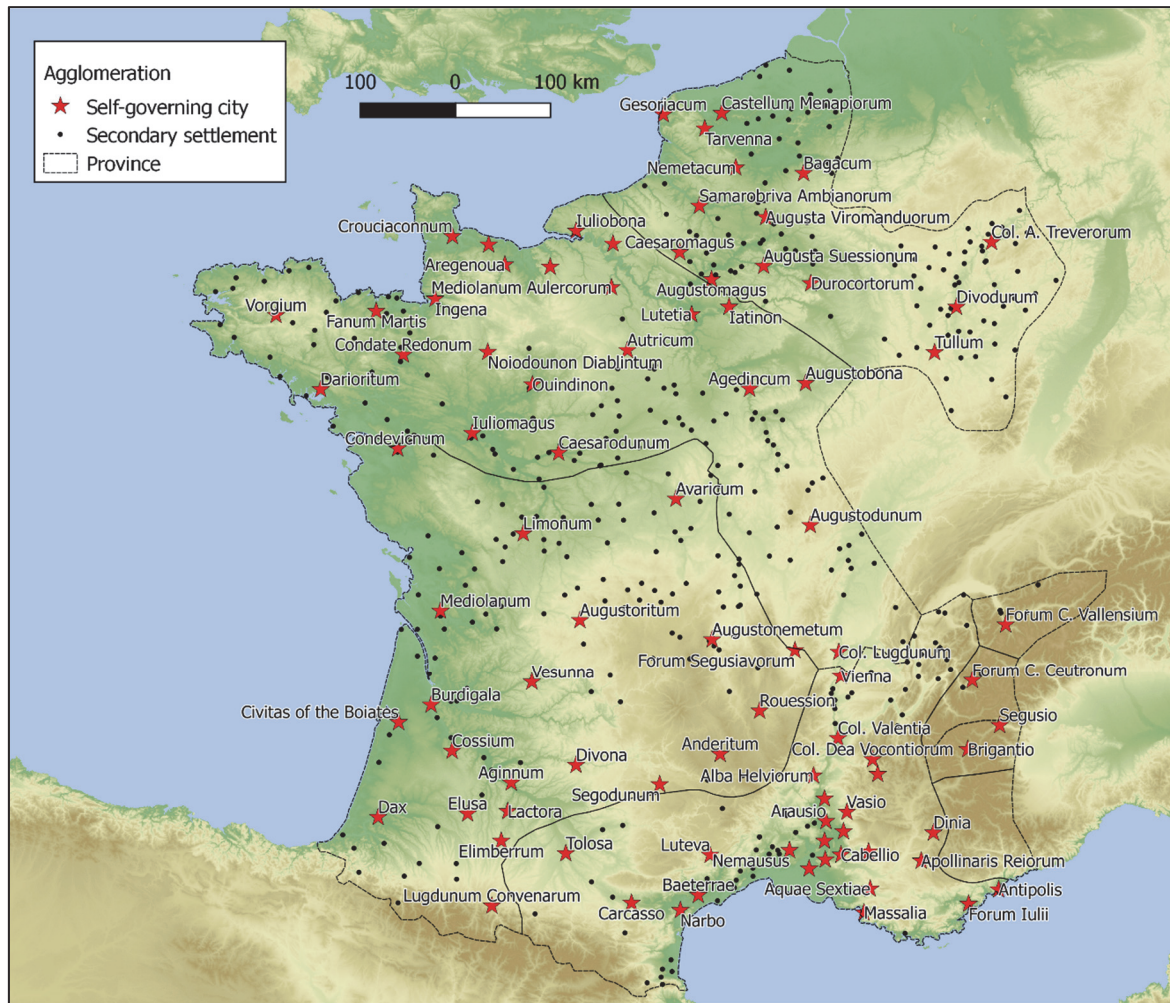
In fact, as Table 8 shows, the vast majority of the settlements of the north-western provinces belonged to the category of ‘secondary settlements’ (*c.* 75%).

| Province        | Self-governing cities | Secondary agglomerations | Total number of agglomerations attested |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Aquitania       | 21                    | 108                      | +129                                    |
| Lugdunensis     | 23                    | 120                      | +143                                    |
| Belgica         | 14                    | 112                      | +126                                    |
| Narbonensis     | 26                    | 60                       | +86                                     |
| Alpes Poeninae  | 1                     | 4                        | +5                                      |
| Alpes Graiae    | 1                     | 2                        | +3                                      |
| Alpes Cottiae   | 2                     | 0                        | +2                                      |
| Alpes Maritimae | 9                     | 2                        | +11                                     |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>97</b>             | <b>+408</b>              | <b>+505</b>                             |

**Table 8: The number and type of settlements in the Gaulish provinces and western Alps.**

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<sup>717</sup> Still present in Hanson 2016.



**Figure 139: Map showing the self-governing cities and secondary agglomerations of Gaul and Western Alps.**

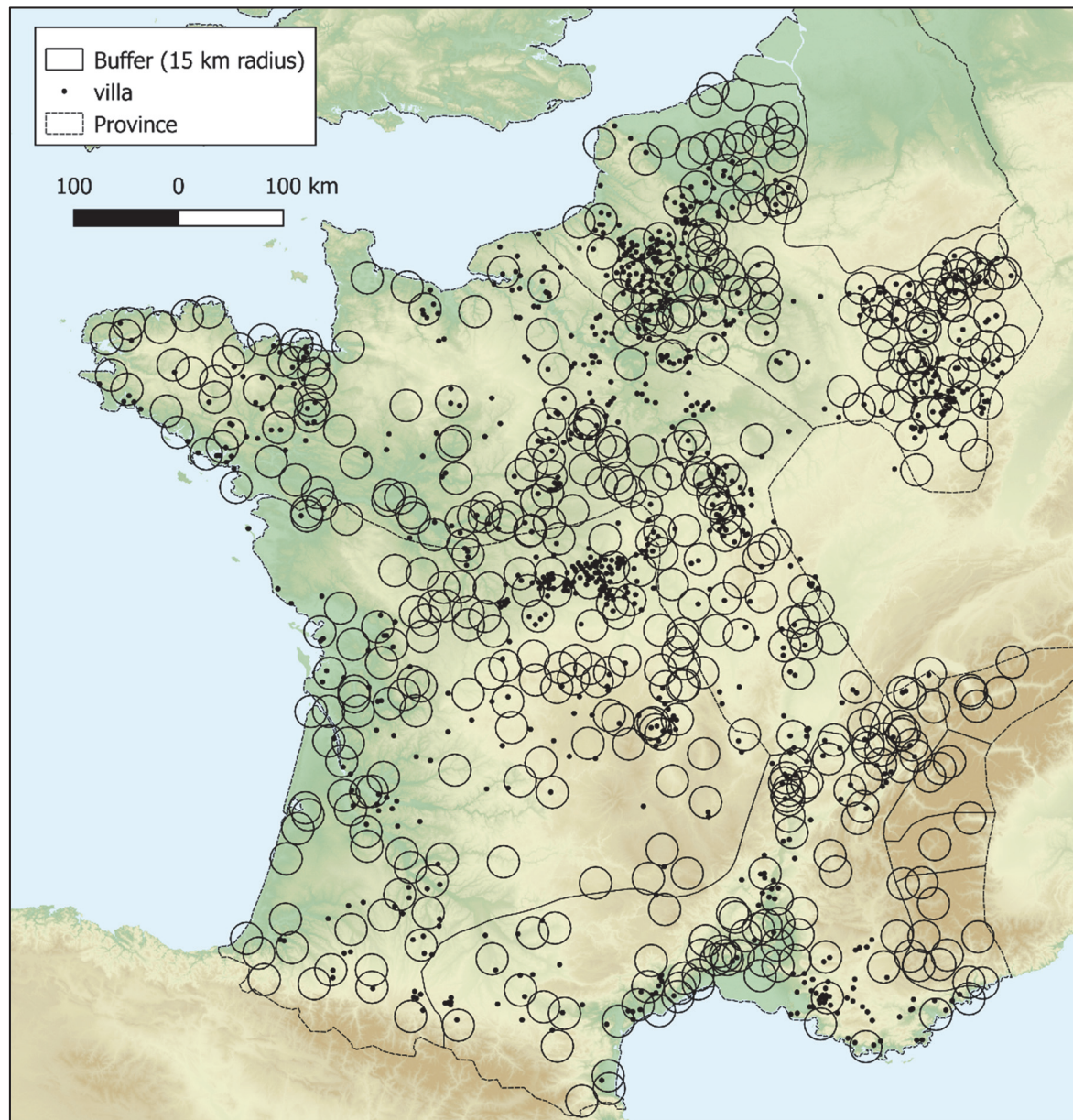
Figure 139 shows how unequal was the distribution of settlements. The map is certainly biased by the quality, quantity, and consistency of the available archaeological evidence in the secondary literature. For example, several parts of the present-day administrative region of ‘Centre-Val de Loire’ (for example the departments in its northern section, such as the region of Eure-et-Loir), the Loire-Atlantique, or that strip of land left empty that goes from Dieppe (Seine-Maritime) to Troyes (Aube), are perhaps under-represented.<sup>718</sup> Nonetheless, some significant patterns can still be discerned. One of the most basic factors affecting settlement patterns, in general, is the physical geography of the land. France is a country highly favoured by nature from the point of view of agricultural production, and, if pastoral pursuits and forestry are included, there is hardly a corner of the country left unproductive.<sup>719</sup>

However, some regions are more fertile than others, and this seems to have had a substantial effect on their demography, economy, and therefore on the distribution of secondary

<sup>718</sup> However, in this area *villae* are well attested. It is thus possible that, as was the case for several regions in Narbonensis (e.g. *civitas* of Fréjus and western Languedoc), villas were the prevalent and pivotal *type* of settlement pattern.

<sup>719</sup> Naval handbooks, France: vol. 3, 101.

settlements. If we draw hypothetical urban ‘buffers’ of 15 km radius around each self-governing city and secondary settlement (as shown in Figure 140), it becomes clear that a significant proportion of the rural population was living within reach of an ‘urban’ or ‘town-like’ settlement and was able to obtain goods and services from local centres. These interactions were critical for regional economic development and for the social, economic, and political integration of these provinces.



**Figure 140: Map showing how the majority of villas fall within the 15 km radius of either self-governing cities and secondary agglomerations.**

Overall, the evidence argues in favour of a correlation between the density of agglomerations (i.e. the areas with overlapping buffers) and favourable land. For example, a large number of settlements developed in correspondence with some of the most important wheatlands of Gaul, that is north and east of Paris and on the alluvial terraces of the Seine and its tributaries. Other areas of high yield were Languedoc, middle Rhône, lower Charente region (in northern



Aquitaine), and the upper valleys of the Mayenne and the Sarthe. These were all areas which, in Roman times, stood out for the high density of secondary settlements (cf. Figure 97). Uplands regions (such the Massif Central or the foothills of the Alps or the Pyrenees) and areas with poor, acidic soils more suitable for a pastoral economy (for example Normandy and the Massif Armorican) appear to be less settled. High mountain regions and wetlands (such as the Landes in France, the coastal area Belgium and the Netherlands) were even less suitable for agricultural purposes and were among the least densely inhabited areas of all.

Thus, while it does not come as a surprise that the distribution of settlements overall is similar to that of villa estates (the greatest producers of agricultural surplus in Roman times), some additional considerations are in order. Given how thin and acidic the soils of Brittany were, and how dispersed the distribution of villas was, this region appears to be surprisingly rich in agglomerations. On its much-indented coast, there were at least 14 coastal agglomerations and ports. These sites not only supplied sea-going ships with fresh water by means of ingenious pumping engines (e.g. Alet), but their small harbours also offered shelter for boats and housed *horrea* (storehouses), where goods could be stored either for redistributions around the region or to be re-loaded on other ships heading to more distant destinations. The importance of maritime transport in this region is crucial to understanding its settlement system. However, the stark contrast between Brittany and nearby Normandy makes one wonder whether the differences were actual or a product of a research bias (i.e. Brittany has been better researched and published).

The establishment of villas does not depend only on the productivity of the land. In fact, their adoption is always the result of specific choices made by the members of the elite, who may or may not have been keen to adopt any elements of Roman culture. A case study of the *civitas* of the Tarbelli was presented earlier in this chapter. There, at the foothills of the Pyrenees, the economy had been characterized by an extensive (i.e. not-intensive) management and exploitation of the land since pre-Roman times. Some land which could have potentially sustained a 'villa-estate economy' (for example the area between the villa of Lalouquette and Lescar<sup>720</sup>) was left void of such structures, almost certainly as a consequence of cultural factors rather than of economic and ecological ones. On the other hand, in the *civitas* of Fréjus (Provence), villas were a central component of the settlement system. Whether their predominance over nucleated settlements was due to historical and political legacies (Fréjus was a veteran colony and its land had been distributed in allotments) or to geography - as Bertoncello and Lautier have suggested (the landscape was characterized by low hills and plains, highly suitable for agriculture) - is still open to debate.<sup>721</sup> The main point is that different economic and political processes unfolded in diverse ecological settings and in landscapes inhabited by people with different cultural traditions. As a consequence, a variety of distinctive regional settlement patterns, societies, and landscapes emerged.

In addition, not all the secondary agglomerations which we have discussed in this chapter were alike in terms of morphology or functions performed. While they all shared some basic, common elements (for example they all had substantial evidence of dwellings and

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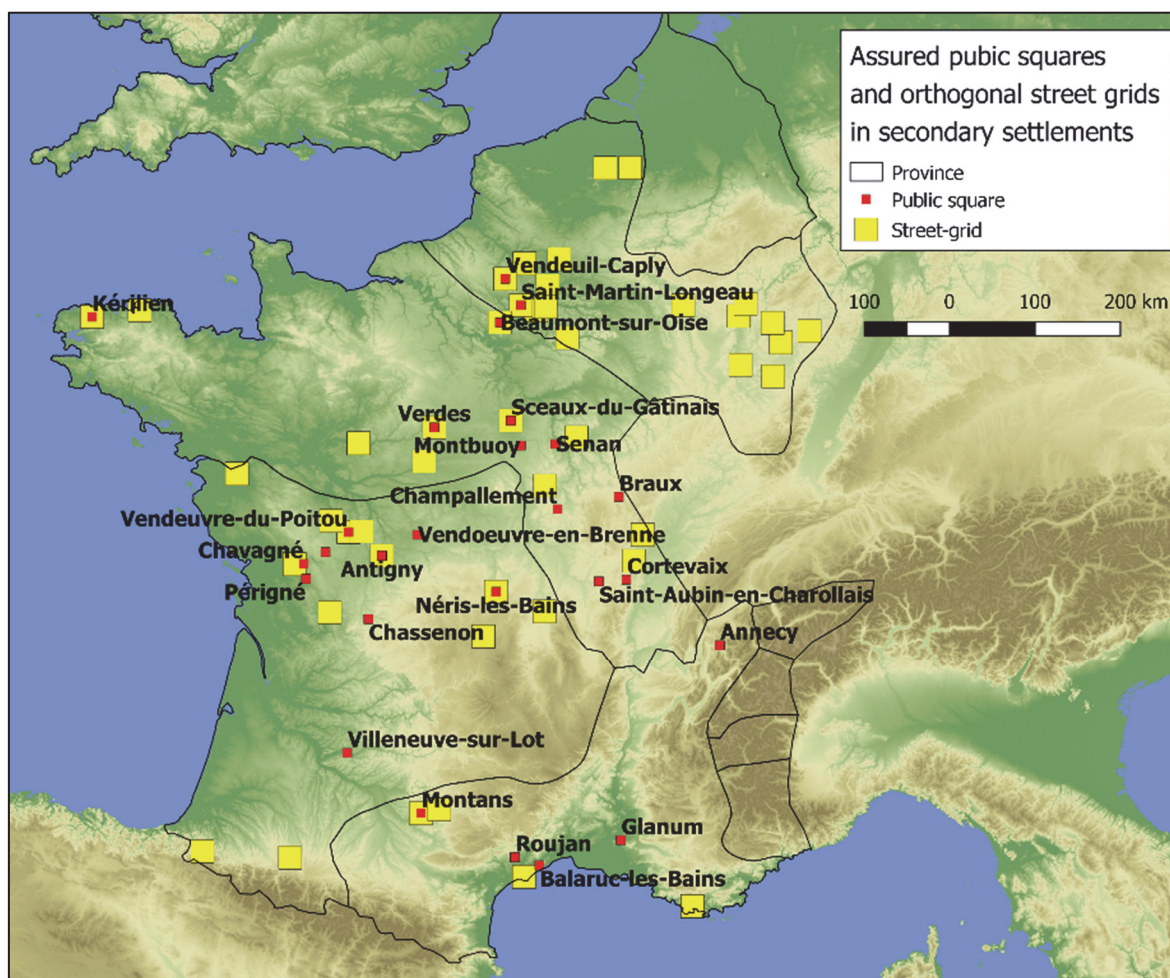
<sup>720</sup> Réchin 2014.

<sup>721</sup> Bertoncello and Lautier 2013.



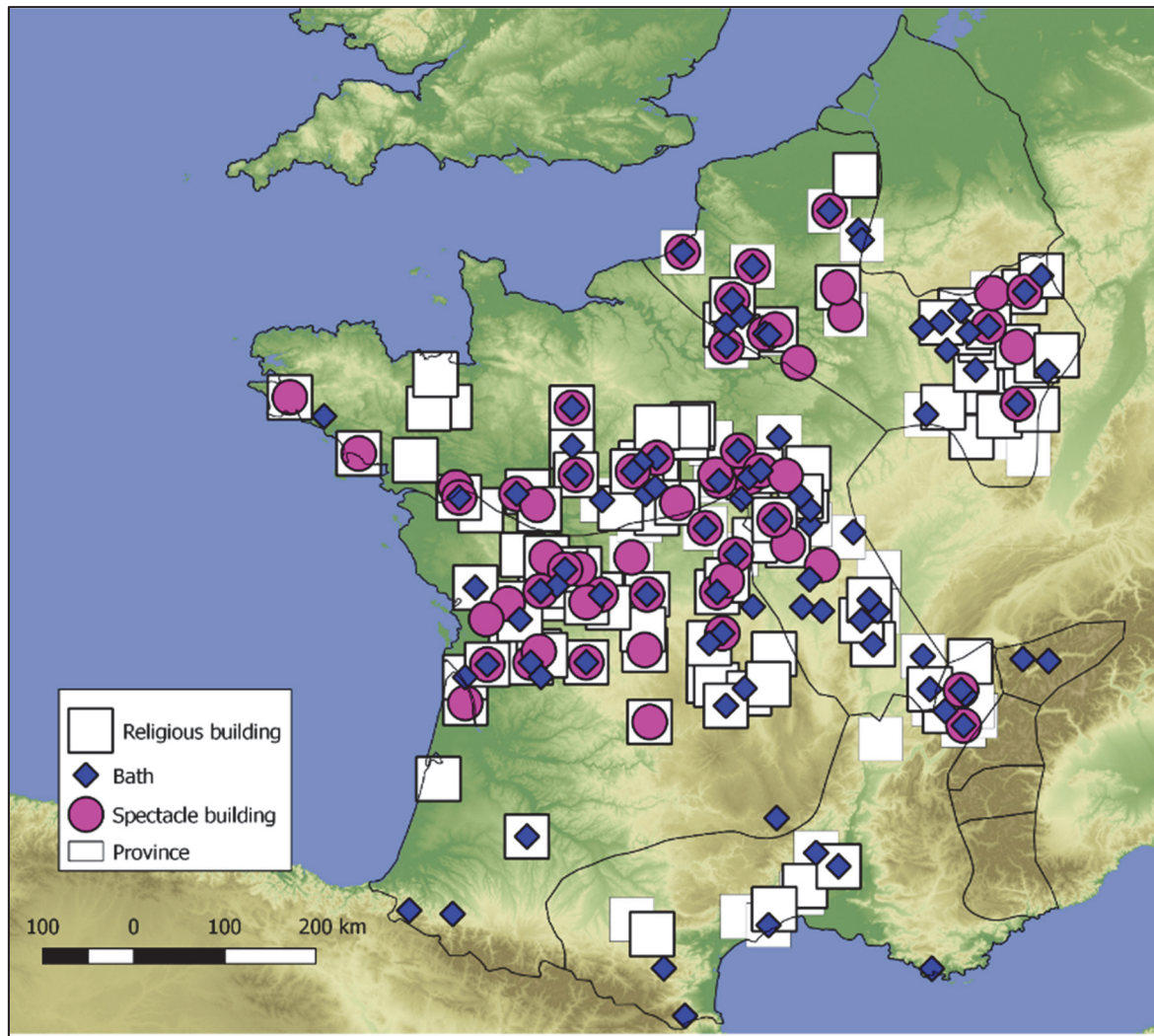
manufacturing/commercial structures), only a minority of them stood out for their highly complex and heterogeneous socioeconomic stratification (i.e. they were inhabited by the elite and presented a complex division of labour where many different trades and employments coexisted). Similarly, only a minority had important elements typical of an ‘urban’ townscape, for example an orthogonal planned street grid (which suggests some sort of deliberate planning), separate areas devoted to the public, private, and religious space (for example, a central, public square), or provided a large variety of services (as evidenced by the buildings and including, for example, those related to the religious and recreational spheres).

If we compare Figure 141 and Figure 142, we observe that those settlements that fulfilled all the above-mentioned requirements - and can, therefore, be considered ‘town-like’ - were geographically clustered in central Gaul, Gallia Belgica, and the north-eastern part of the *civitas* of the Allobroges.



**Figure 141: The layout of secondary agglomerations and the distribution of the ascertained public squares and street grids.**

The fact that these ‘town-like’ agglomerations often display a monumental architecture (intended to convey civic pride and prestige) indicates strong elite connections with rural areas. This durable and robust relationship is likely to have its roots in the polycentric past that already characterized the pre-Roman settlement pattern in these regions.



**Figure 142: The monumentality of secondary settlements in Gaul. Distribution of the ascertained i. religious buildings (temples and sanctuaries), ii. spectacle buildings, iii. baths.**

This observation is confirmed by the fact that central Gaul and Belgica are the only areas where remains of *basilicae* have been discovered in secondary agglomerations, and perhaps also by the fact that the only inscriptions which mention a *basilica* in a secondary settlement were found at Vendeuve-du-Poitou, Vendoeuvre-en-Brenne, and possibly Annecy (Figure 143). This pattern suggests that not only the dispersion of the elite within the territory of the whole *civitas* was maintained (unlike what had occurred in the *civitas* of Nemausus), but also that this dispersion was showcased (at least on a symbolic level) by buildings that had a political connotation.



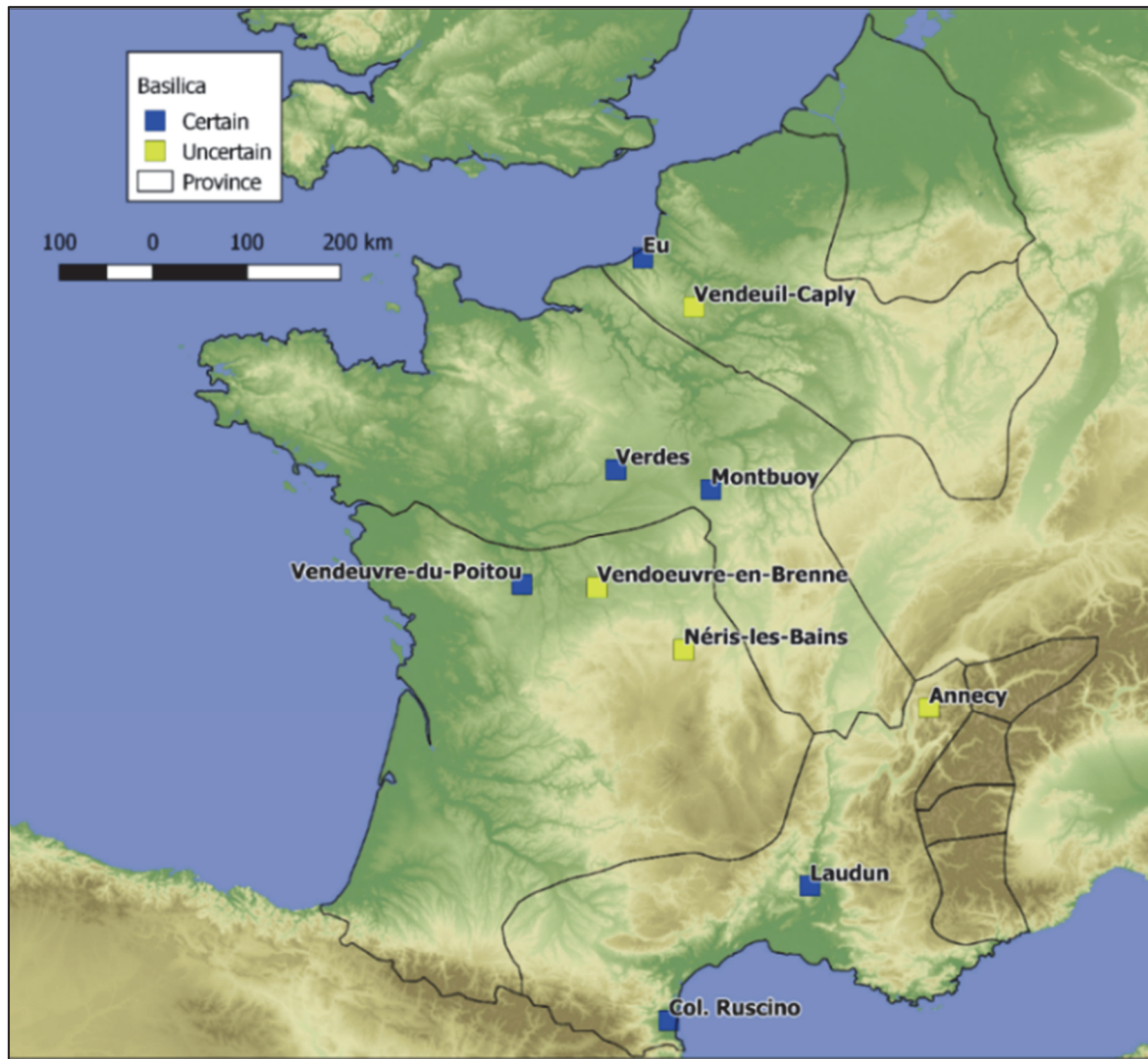
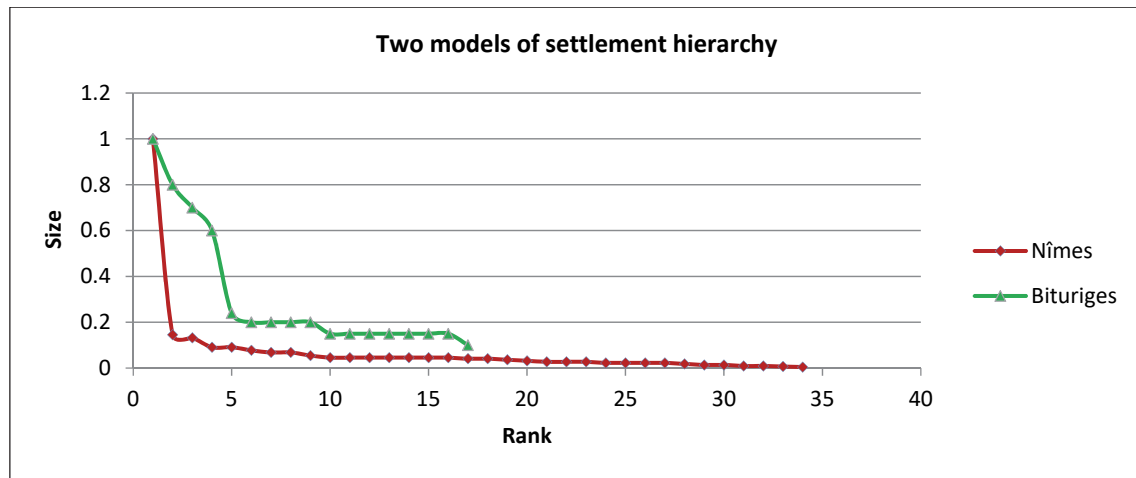


Figure 143: The *basilicae* in the secondary agglomerations.

As a final step, we can raise our analysis to a more theoretical level. When looking at inter-city interactions, we can either inspect the horizontal frame of their relationships, which is indicated by their spacing and their location, or the vertical relationship which is mirrored by the hierarchy, that is to say by the differences in size that exists between them. We will engage only with the latter approach because the first one is highly dependent on region-specific factors relating to ecology, topography etc. obstructing any attempt to make generalizations. The evidence we have reviewed for Gaul suggests that - on a general and abstract level - at least two different models of settlement hierarchy could exist alongside each other. In some regions we encounter a multi-layered settlement system comprising a variety of higher-order and lower-order centres (e.g. the *civitas* of the Bituriges Cubi) (Figure 144 and Figure 145). On the top of the settlement hierarchy would lie the administrative capital - headquarters of civic and political institutions and possibly the city where the members of the elite who aspired to hold civic magistratures had to reside (or at least own a house<sup>722</sup>). A second order of settlements consisted of ‘town-like’ secondary agglomerations which provided a smaller

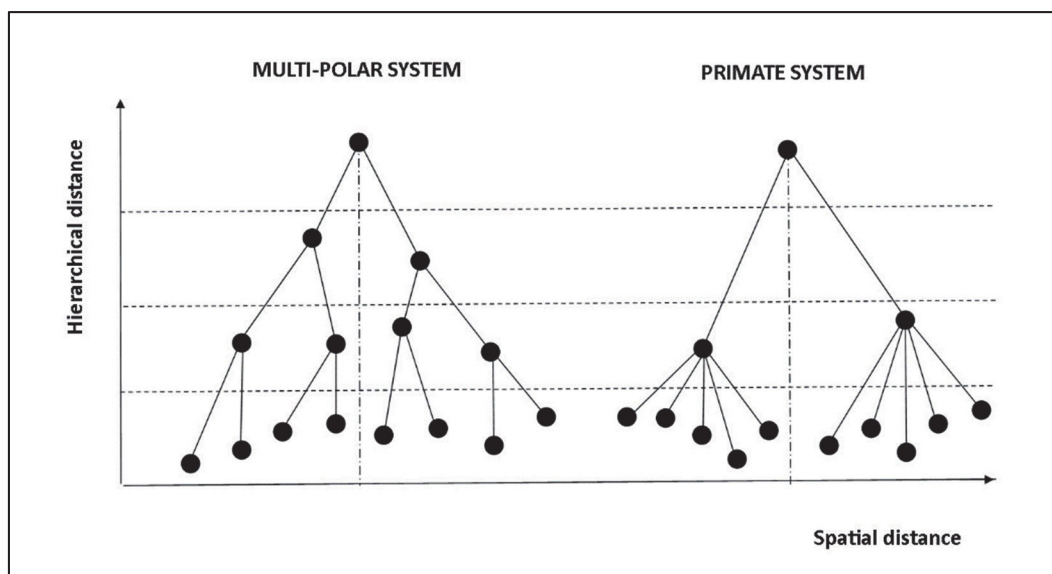
<sup>722</sup> Cfr. Footnote 486.

number of services compared to the capital, but still had extensive and (at times) more specialized functions.



**Figure 144: Two different models of settlement hierarchy. In order to make the comparison between the two series of value meaningful, they have been normalized (that is standardized) and constrained between [0, 1]).**

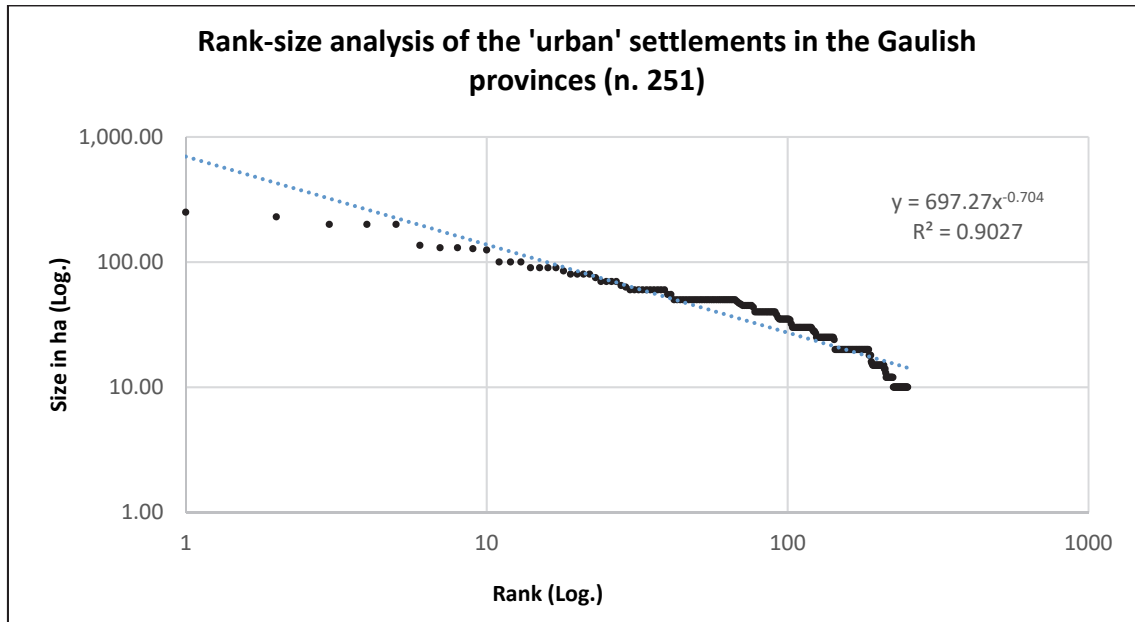
They could, for example, be home to important religious sanctuaries and festivals that have a supra-regional reputation, offer communal baths, or - as in the case of Argentomagus or Aquae Neri - have a well-developed and thriving mining-metallurgic industry. From a theoretical point of view one would expect to find an inversely proportional relationship between their spatial distance and hierarchical distance, but in reality such a spatial regularity, like the one envisaged by Christaller's central-place theory, could occur only on a flat and isotropic surface where population and resources were evenly distributed, transportation costs were equal in all directions and directly proportional to distance, consumers all had similar purchasing power and there was a perfect competition between sellers.



**Figure 145: Two ideal-types of settlement hierarchy.**



A second type of settlement system (primate system) is characterized by a very large capital and very small settlements with almost no intermediate urban settlements (e.g. *civitas* of Nemausus). Geography alone cannot explain this pattern which occurs in areas very different in terms of climate, topography, soil and accessibility. Thus, it is much more likely that, again, the pre-Roman settlement pattern and its subsequent evolution were major factors in determining what model of settlement would be produced.



**Figure 146: Rank-size analysis of the whole "urban" system of Gaul.**

The graph above shows that the rank-size analysis, when applied to all the 'urban' agglomerations known in the Gaulish provinces (i.e. 251 settlements which were either self-governing cities or displayed town-like features), has a similar result to when it is applied to the self-governing cities only. In particular, we observe that the overall shape of the 'urban' network of Gaul does not appear to be consistent with the hypothesis of a hierarchical system dominated by a single city. On the contrary, the data indicates that the urban system of Gaul consisted of a combination of various regional hierarchies, each controlled by a different 'regional capital'.

Analysing the "urban" system of Gaul as a whole, we can conclude that almost 90% of the settlements were small or medium-sized cities (10-60 ha). Such cities and "town-like" settlements could be sustained by the agricultural resources located in the catchment area of 15 km. Only around 7% of all settlements were large cities with an estimated size of >60 ha (e.g. Bourges, Soissons, Clermont-Ferrand). The relatively few cities which belonged to this category laid along the main urban and transport corridors and were nodal points within the urban system. These unusually large centres attracted the wealthiest members of the regional elite (and their money). It is worth noting that most of these cities had probably access to sufficient resources within their area of influence (which may have been coincident with their administrative territory, in the case of self-governing cities). Finally, only 3% of the urban network consisted of very large cities (>100 ha). These were most likely dependent on resources generated outside their catchment area.

