MARSEILLE BEFORE ROME

A. T. HODGE: *Ancient Greek France*. Pp. viii + 312, 131 figs. London: Duckworth, 1998. Cased, frs. 45.00. ISBN: 0-7156-2796-1.

The subject of this readable and well-informed volume is the history of the Greek presence in the south of France from colonization to Marseille's loss of independence during the Caesarian Civil War. Marseille is inevitably the focus of much of the book, although Phocaean colonization has a chapter to itself, as do traces of Greek activity west of the Rhône, those on the Côte d'Azur, and relations with the peoples of the interior. The organization of the book is in parts historical, in parts topographic, and much of it consists of summaries of what is known of the many excavated sites that bear on his story.

Hodge has attempted the notoriously difficult task of addressing two audiences, one academic, the other popular. Academics will find in his copious notes reference to over two decades of important work, above all the essential volumes *Études Massaliètes* (Université de Provence at Aix), and articles published in the *Revue Archéologique de la Narbonnaise* and its supplements. Until recently the only full-length synthesis on ancient Marseille was Monique Clavel-Lévêque's *Marseille Grecque. La dynamique d'un impérialisme marchand* (Marseille, 1977), itself a problematic work more because of its assessment of ancient trade than its Marxist orientation. More recent overviews in French may be found in the exhibition catalogue, *Voyage en Massalie, 100 ans d'archéologie en Gaule du Sud* (Marseille, 1990) and now A. Hennary, A. Hesnard, H. Treziny, *Marseille grecque: 600–49 av. J-C.—la cité phocéenne* (Paris, 1999), the latter of which was not of course available to H.

Popular audiences will find a lively retelling of the various foundation myths, a series of photographs depicting key sites in modern times, jokey footnotes and illustrations, and a profusion of colourful anecdotes and descriptions of places, all recounted in an engaging conversational register. Both audiences will be struck by the frequent professions of autopsy. H. really has been tireless in visiting even the least spectacular sites from the Pyrenees to the Italian border, and even ventured to Turkey to see the site of Phocaea and to make enquiries in Ankara. But the bulk of the research for this was done in Provence, and H. acknowledges his debt to numerous colleagues at the Centre Camille Jullian in Aix. The result is clearly a labour of love, as well as a product of a rare geographical sensitivity.

Yet H. did not always find autopsy easy. One severe difficulty is the profusion of Roman material overlying various sites, Marseille included. The massive amounts of energy devoted in recent years to the Bourse site at Marseille, and to the ongoing projects at Glanum and Lattes, to name just the most prominent instances, has revealed more and more about the Roman phases of these centres without having contributed as much to the understanding of earlier periods, the walls of Marseille being the principal exception. As H. himself admits, it can be difficult to imagine away these later structures, and the Roman period 'was after all Massilia's Golden Age'.

Another difficulty derives directly from the book's double audience. Much of the most important work on Marseille has come from studies of container amphorae, among them those of Bats and Bertucchi, and of ceramics more generally. H. recognizes that this material and disputes over its interpretation are very difficult to communicate in a nontechnical manner, and so to a large extent ignores it. Undoubtedly the right decision for the wider audience, this is a major handicap for this book from a scholarly point of view and means that students of colonization

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interested in the Massiliot case will need to go directly to *Études Massaliètes* and the other French works noted above. Something similar applies to the discussion of relations between Greeks and the interior, a matter of intense current interest to prehistorians. Again, H. spares his popular audience the prestige-goods' economies, the down-the-line trade, the interaction spheres, and the ethnography of alcohol. References in the notes to the work of Dietler and many others show H. is well aware of these debates, and that the decision not to engage with them is a deliberate one. Here, H. perhaps underestimates the tolerance and interest of popular audiences for such detail: Barry Cunliffe's *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians. Spheres of Interaction* (London, 1988) covers some of the same ground in a narrative that is equally exciting but sacrifices less of the results of current research. Much the same could be said of the current debates on the nature of Greek colonization, and on the palaeoeconomy and settlement history of the late Iron Age in Mediterranean France. Very occasionally the decision to go with traditional wisdom does have a further detrimental impact on H.'s interpretation. Chapters IV and V, for instance, follow historical sources in stressing constant tension between Greek and Etruscans, and conversely early good relations between Massiliots and the surrounding populations. Yet, as H.'s account of the archaeology of Marseille and especially St Blaise reveals (e.g. pp. 118, 143–4), there seems good evidence for amicable relations between some Etruscans and some Greeks, and also for less comfortable ones with some natives. The political history of Marseille, if it could be written, would without doubt be more complex than either foundation myths or popularizing narrative demand. And the foundation myths themselves must be read rather differently after Carol Dougherty's *The Poetics of Colonization: from City to Text in Archaic Greece* (New York and Oxford, 1993).

But if H.'s professional audience will feel disappointed at times by H.'s decision to put the needs of popularizing his subject ahead of their interests, they will benefit in other respects enormously from his painstaking work. Chapter III, on navigation, is a gripping introduction to the complexities of tides and winds in the north-west corner of the Mediterranean. The discussion of exploration in Chapter VIII is also extremely good, and H. is a cautious and thoughtful commentator on many sites. He also knows not to overvalue the subject of his study. If he begins with 'Massalia, the Oldest City in Western Europe', he concludes by comparing it to Dawson City in the Klondike, and wondering whether both modern scholars and Greek writers have over-rated its significance. This reader was left with the strong impression that archaeological rather than historical researches were most likely to lead to a new appraisal, and that any adequate one must be grounded in as profound an understanding of the geography of the southern French littoral as H. displays in this work.

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SOURCES FOR ALEXANDER

A. B. Bosworth, E. J. Baynham (edd.): *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*. Pp. viii + 370. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Cased, £35. ISBN: 0-19-815287-6.

This important collection, the record of a conference held in Newcastle, New South Wales, in 1997, faces up to a central question in Alexander research, the problem of

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