



CULTURE



LE DÉPARTEMENT

EXHIBIT VISITOR'S GUIDE

GAULS

8 CENTURIES OF HISTORY IN THE VAR (-800-50 BC)



ARCHEOLOGICAL
EXHIBITION

**ABBAYE
DE LA CELLE**
(LA CELLE ABBEY)

**April 20 >
August 25,
2019**

FREE ENTRANCE
Place des Ormeaux
La Celle

From Tuesday to Sunday
(closed on Mondays
and on May 1st)

10:30am-12:30pm /
1:30pm-5:30pm



ABBAYE DE
LA CELLE

EVERYWHERE, FOR EVERYONE, THE VAR, YOUR EVERYDAY PARTNER

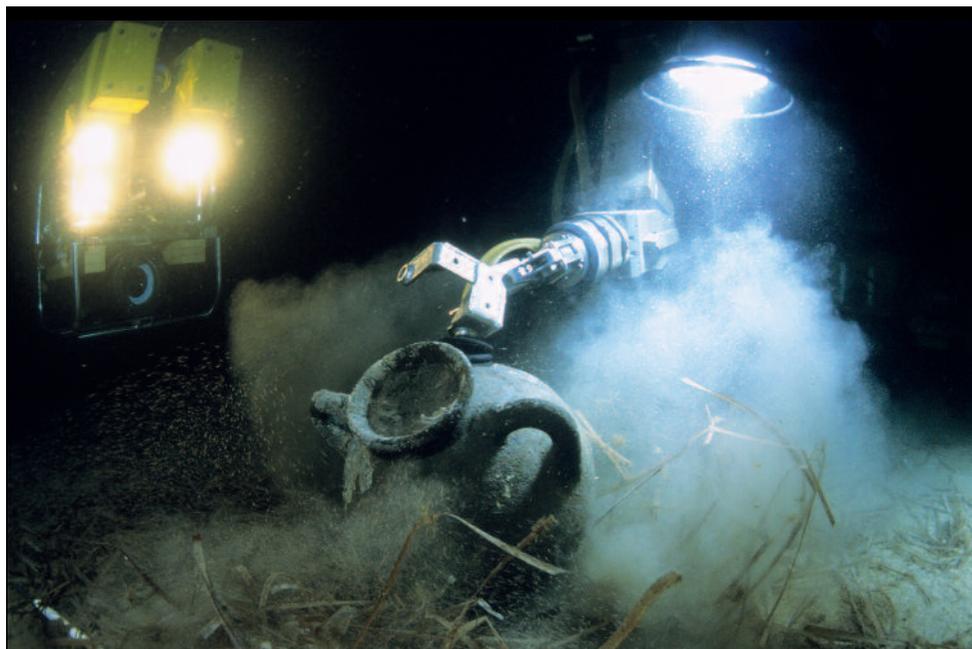
The exhibition is devoted to the Iron Age in the department of the Var. This era developed through trade between the various peoples of the Mediterranean basin. The exhibits retrace these diverse influences. The founding of the city of Massalia (Marseille) by the Greeks contributed enormously to the spread of goods throughout the Var from the coast. During these eight centuries of History, Provence experienced huge changes – trade increased, artisanal and agricultural changes began to specialise and both road and defensive infrastructure developed.

The collections on display show a complex Gallic civilization both warlike (statues, weapons, fortified high-rise dwellings) and very influenced by the Mediterranean peoples. The Var was at that time occupied by Celto Ligurians.

The Gauls of the Var: The Iron Age

The Iron Age corresponds to the second half of Protohistory – the chronological period from 800 BC to the 1st century BC, followed by the Bronze Age and ending with the Roman conquest of Gaul around 50 BC. Beyond this often controversial dating, the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age was in fact a slow progression, reflected by the changes in indigenous societies.

▼ *Etruscan amphora from the 5th century BC Grand Ribaud shipwreck near Hyères
Archeological excavation Luc Long/Drassm and Comex, photo Frédéric Bassemayousse.*



◀ *Bronze sword found at Flayosc*
(© Musées de Marseille) cliché David Giancatarina

In the South of France this dating differs somewhat, since the real turning point between the Bronze and the Iron Ages took place with the development of trade between the different peoples of the Mediterranean. Thus, the founding of the city of Massalia (Marseille) by the Greeks who arrived in 600 BC from the city of Phocaea was a major factor in the distribution of Greek and Etruscan goods throughout the Var.

The Iron Age gets its name from the important use of ferrous metallurgy. The period is traditionally divided into two parts:

- The first Iron Age (800 to 450/400 BC) also known as the Hallstatt period (named after a major archaeological site of this period, in Austria)
- The second Iron Age (450 – 400 BC at the time of the change of era) or period of La Tène (named after a settlement and burial site (necropolis) of exceptional wealth located in Switzerland)

In Europe, the passage from the first to the second Iron Age is demonstrated from an archaeological point of view by the disappearance of tumulus burial mounds in the Var from the 5th to the 6th century BC. Common practice throughout the Var, the abandonment of this funeral mode reflects the demise of local princes and the emergence of a more egalitarian warrior aristocracy. Other changes occur during the second Iron

Age, notably the creation of strongholds and trading posts.

Thus, in the south of France, the 4th century BC saw the construction of several maritime fortresses along the coast: Olbia (Hyères), Tauroeis (Six-Fours-les-Plages), offshoots from the Phocaeen city of Massalia. They guaranteed the economic dynamism of Marseille, despite the warmongering pressure of the indigenous peoples.

On this subject, the Greek author Strabon wrote that the Massaliotes "seeing themselves surrounded by Barbarians, built these different places: they wanted to keep their enemies at bay and ensure that they at least had free access by sea, as the land was in the hands of their enemies."

(Geography IV,1,9)

As a result of this situation, the Phocaeen city turned towards sources of supply other than those offered by the Celts (Cereals from Sicily and North Africa, Iberian Mining resources...). This political instability threatening trade will end with the Roman Conquest.

During these eight centuries, the territories of Provence and the Languedoc were largely restructured: exchanges with the peoples of the Mediterranean and Europe increased, artisanal and agricultural activities started to specialise, and road and defensive infrastructure developed.



A mosaic of peoples

Gaul is the name given in Antiquity to the regions between the Rhine, the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees and the Atlantic. It corresponds approximately to a territory which includes France, the current Luxembourg and Belgium, as well as part of the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. It seems to have been populated mainly by Celts. The name "Gaul" passed in Antiquity as a synonym of "Celtic" and the name is mentioned for the first time by the Greek author Herodotus, around 450BC. The Gauls are thus the inhabitants of Gaul and modern usage is to call them Celts of Gaul.

Protohistoric Provence was home to peoples whom ancient writers call "Celtoligurians" or "Celtoligyens", from the historian Timaeus of Sicily (3rd century BC). This denotes an ancestry mixing Celtic and Ligurian populations. Mixed in certain coastal areas with Greeks,



▲ *Warrior bust in chainmail found at Fox-Amphoux*
(© Musées de Marseille) cliché David Giancattarina

these Celtoligurians were organised in a federation of ten sectors, whose oppidum (fortified settlement) of Entremont, north of Aix-en-Provence was the capital.

During the Iron Age, the territories corresponding to present-day Var were progressively occupied by peoples where writing was integral to the culture, like the Greeks and Romans, while the indigenous populations such as the Gauls, Celts and Ligurians, wrote little.

Celtic society in Gaul was dominated by family groups. Settled in villages, these tribes were governed by aristocratic leaders of varying standing, as evidenced by the luxurious Mediterranean contents of tombs in Vix (Burgundy) and Lavau (Champagne-Ardenne). These two exceptional discoveries reveal the existence of ruling princely castes from the 6th century BC, whose territories were linked with the trade networks of the Mediterranean basin.

The indigenous peoples of the second Iron Age are well known through the ancient writers of Strabon and Pliny the Elder. The latter draws a very detailed list of the names of the peoples established in the Var after the Roman Conquest.

- The Camactulici (Toulon area)
- The Tritolli (Saint Maximin Basin)
- The Suelteri (The Maures mountain range)
- The Verucini (Draguignan region)
- The Oxubii (The Esterel mountain range)
- The Ligauni (Fayence Basin)

If the number and location of these Celto-Ligurian peoples remain hypothetical, their territorial limits are even more so. However, they are believed to have been partially taken up by the Roman cities and then by the Medieval Bishoprics.



▲ *Bronze greaves of a Greek warrior found at Aups (cl. C. Durand, CCJ - CNRS)*

A third of the names of current Var communes, mainly in the hinterland, have a Ligurian linguistic origin, dating back to the start of the Iron Age (Aups, Barjols, Ginasservis, Plan d'Aups, Thoro-net...).

Religion and Cults

The Gallic religion is essentially naturalistic, as evidenced by the archaeology of places of worship in forests (Gallic hinterland of Marseille), rocks (La Peiro de l'Autar at Cuers), springs (Chatillon-sur-Seine – Vix region) or fountains (Mont Cavalier in Nimes, Glanum gorge in Saint-Remy-de-Provence).

These landscaped areas formed sanctuaries that sometimes became dwelling places protected by the Gods. In this context, a city could take the name of a god like Toulon, (which comes from the name of the Divinity of the spring Telo) Nimes, (which comes from Nemausus

the city of the god Nem) or Glanum (the city of the god Glan in the Alpilles).

At these places of worship were found little known offerings such as the deposit of objects, (coins, tokens, metal wheels and ceramic miniatures...) of food (cereals, meat), the practice of libations (the ritual pouring of liquids or grains), the deposit of weapons (often broken) or even sacrifices of animals or humans.

During the Iron Age, for most of the pre-Roman peoples in the south of France (Gauls, Ligurians, Iberians...), the gods were not represented. It was statues of warriors who were the object of heroic cults as evidenced by the sculptures discovered at Entremont (Aix-en-Provence), Roquepertuse (Velaux), Fox-Amphoux (Var) or Nîmes.

Religious syncretism (The combining of different beliefs) operated with Greco-Roman polytheism (the belief or worship of more than one god) at the end of the Iron Age. Thus "The Gallic Wars" written during the Roman Conquest by Julius Caesar, gives us the names of some gods and describes the very enigmatic organisation of the Gallic clergy, whose beliefs were passed on by word of mouth.

"Among the gods, they most worship Mercury. There are numerous images of him: they declare him to be the inventor of all arts, the guide for every road and journey, and they deem him to have the greatest influence for all money-making and traffic. After him they set Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva. Of these deities they have almost the same idea as all other nations: Apollo drives away diseases,

▼ *Arcs-sur-Argens, grave goods from the 6th century BC (cl. C. Durand, CCJ - CNRS) (détail).*





◀ Correns, Les Cannebières, silver obol from Marseilles (cl. C. Durand, CCJ -CNRS)

Minerva supplies the first principles of arts and crafts, Jupiter holds the empire of heaven, Mars controls wars.” (Julius Caesar, The Gallic Wars, VI,17).

Economy and Trade

The Iron Age is a period of economic change, enriched by exchanges with the Mediterranean world. Most of the food comes from agriculture and livestock. Agricultural techniques improve (crop rotation and fertilisation), the cultivation of cereals diversifies (wheat, barley, millet, oats). The raising of pigs, cattle, sheep and goats is an important part of the subsistence economy. Agricultural production covers the needs of rural populations as well as the supply of local markets.

Products imported from the Mediterranean basin are essentially prestige goods reserved for the elite (wine, ceremonial dishes) From the 2nd century BC there was much expansion of trade, in particular the importation of Italian wine. Financial transactions were facilitated by the coinage which spread throughout Gaul.

Dwellings/ Habitat

Archaeological traces of habitat at the start of the Iron Age are rare in the Var. The majority of the population inhabited higher areas, even

though some lowland habitats have been identified (scattered farms and seasonal dwellings).

Called oppida by Julius Caesar in The Gallic Wars, these habitats on higher ground, which are fortified sites, developed from the 7th century BC. During the 6th century BC their numbers increased considerably. In the Var they increased from thirty sites at the end of the 6th century BC to more than 200 in the 2nd century BC. The earliest example of a fortified rampart with towers in the Var dates from the end of the 5th century (Mount-Garou at Ollioules).

During the second Iron Age, especially at the end of the 3rd century BC and particularly in the second century BC, the oppidum became the main form of habitat. These high sites range from the size of a hamlet to an important group of dwellings such as Courtine in Ollioules or Castellas at Sollies-Toucas. These fortified sites set at high altitudes with imposing stone walls and occasional monumental porches, have many urban characteristics inspired by building in the



▲ Solliès-Toucas, Castellàs oppidum (@MCC - DRAC SRA PACA - Christian Hussy)

Italian style (streets, groups of homes, open areas and public buildings...).

Material Culture

During the Iron Age, material culture is essentially defined by a major technological advance: The use of iron metallurgy which spread to Europe from the Orient and which gave rise to new modes of artisanal and agricultural production and raising animals.

The development of agriculture corresponded with the arrival of iron work. Thus, the replacement of wooden elements by metal parts made it possible to increase agricultural production (plough share...). The development of trade among the Mediterranean peoples, combined with new consumption patterns, favoured the rise of locally produced ceramics. However, production evolved slowly, and similar modelling techniques were used through-

out the Iron Age. The progressive use of the potter's wheel and changes in cooking methods resulted in more elaborate ceramics, mixing regional and Mediterranean traditions.

Often crafted from perishable materials, many artisanal products have been lost to archaeologists. Indeed, the ancient texts mention the talent of the Gallic peoples in the crafts of weaving, leather or wood, but few are the testimonies that have reached us. As a result, ceramics and metal remain the main materials that make it possible to identify the different ways of life of these peoples.