

Studies

ANCIENT HISTORY

ALALIA AND THE AFTERMATH

Abstract: The battle at Alalia mentioned by Herodotos has long been at the centre of debate with regards to a potential ‘Carthaginian Blockade’ of the Straits of Gibraltar, perhaps preventing the Phokaian Greeks from entering the Atlantic and its coastal markets. There are further ancient sources which directly or indirectly give clues to Alalia, its circumstances and its aftermath. The battle may have had an impact on the Phokaian Greeks’ freedom of movement in that they chose not to attempt to sail through the Straits of Gibraltar, all the more as the northern markets could be reached via inland routes along the streams that, albeit with some expensive overland transport in between, connected the Mediterranean with the Atlantic. Their concentration around the mouth of the Rhône facilitated the Greek trade in e.g. tin from the north, without the need to engage the Carthaginians, if the latter indeed controlled maritime traffic to and from the Mediterranean at the Straits. Although they may have retreated from Alalia, and the Carthaginians, as before, controlled the seas west of Empùries, the Phokaian Greeks did not withdraw from the Tyrrhenian Sea or the western Mediterranean altogether, but remained influential and prosperous in the area, even if Massalia experienced a period of economic decline. As such, the result of the battle at Alalia, regardless of whether it was a Greek victory or defeat, had little impact on the balance of power in the western Mediterranean around the middle of the first millennium BCE.

Keywords: *Alalia; Herodotos; Phokaian Greeks; Carthaginian Blockade; Ancient Maritime Trade*

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Similar to *Alésia*, *Alalia* (modern day Aléria on Corsica) was foremost an ancient settlement. Better known than the names of these two places are however the battles that were fought at them and with which they were associated – both became known as important events in history. At Alesia Vercingetorix was subdued by Julius Caesar¹, while at Alalia, though the Greek colonists from Phokaia achieved a Cadmeian victory, they lost two-thirds of their fleet and retreated to Southern Italy²; some opine that Carthage may have seized the moment to bar the Strait of Gibraltar for Greek maritime traffic³, as well as prevent any further attempts at Greek colonisation of the Western Mediterranean⁴.

THE BATTLE OF ALALIA IN THE SOURCES

The key primary source for the Battle at Alalia is Herodotos, who described that the settlement had been founded, perhaps based on a misunderstanding, around 565 BCE⁵. Twenty years later the Persian General

¹ CAESAR, *De Bello Gallico*, VII, 89.

² HERODOTOS I, 165-7.

³ HENNIG 1944, 134, 161; CARPENTER 1966, 51; ALONSO-NÚÑEZ 1987, 244-45; CASSON 1991, 75; CUNLIFFE 2001b, 56; ROLLER 2006, 14.

⁴ SHIPLEY 2011, 89, 197.

⁵ Cf. HERODOTOS I, 165, 167.

Harpagos laid siege to the city of Phokaia, upon which a majority of the population fled to Alalia. After these new-arrivals had lived alongside the former colonists for around five years (causing considerable annoyance with their neighbours on the eastern coast of Corsica), the Carthaginians and Etruscans attacked, each with a force of sixty ships. Although the Phokaians came out of the battle victorious, they fled yet again, initially to Rhegion (Reggio Calabria) and subsequently to Oinotria in lower Italy, where they founded a new settlement which they named Hyële, later known as Elea, and Velia in the Roman Period. As for the reasons why a flight from Alalia was necessary after the colony had already been in existence for over twenty years, or as to why the Phokaians chose to retreat to Rhegion and then Elea, rather than to settle further northwest where there were already some other Phokaian, or at least Greek, settlements along the coast, Herodotos is silent. Among the causes could be that there were no further Greek settlements on Corsica⁶ and Alalia was therefore deep in hostile territory – why they moved southeast rather than northwest is however unclear. It is also possible however (despite a considerable tendency of disbelief towards the notion) that the realisation that they had misunderstood the oracle a quarter of a century earlier⁷ was sufficient to convince the last doubters that settling on Corsica had been a bad idea from the start. Yet another possibility is that the story about the reinterpretation of the oracle was in itself a means to plausibly argue for the sudden abandonment of Alalia to attentive listeners like Herodotos, while at the same time holding on to the claim of unlikely victory⁸.

Thukydidēs⁹ too, namely, speaks only of a Phokaian victory in a battle at sea against the Carthaginians. Although he merely reports that the battle took place around the time of the founding of Massalia, and mentions nothing of misunderstood oracles, Etruscans or Alalia and Elea, in a passage of text in which he speaks of great (Greek) naval powers of the past (i.e. before the Athenians and over a century before his own time), it is possible that Thukydidēs does indeed mean the famous battle at Alalia – if it should not suddenly turn out that Carthage had already unsuccessfully attempted to disrupt the Greek colonisation of Southern Gaul, decades before Alalia.

Another short, indirect reference is also to be found in Strabo who cites Antiochos of Syracuse¹⁰, who, in turn, does also not mention Alalia, though he does state that the Phokaians founded Elea after Harpagos' capture of the home-city of Phokaia, but only after having sailed first to Corsica and Massalia, whence they were however driven away¹¹. As the extract in Strabo primarily serves the purpose

⁶ SHIPLEY 2011, 94.

⁷ HERODOTOS I, 165-7.

⁸ See GRAS 1972, 698 who, whoever the victors, sees at least positive effects for the Phokaians, but also SACHS 2014, 133 who pleads much more for a Greek defeat at Alalia.

⁹ I, 13 – and see HERMARY/HESNARD/TRÉZINY 1999, 40 regarding interpretation of this text-passage.

¹⁰ *Geographica* VI, 1, 1.

¹¹ Depending on the translation consulted, they were „driven thence“ (HAMILTON 1854), „zurückgewiesen“ (FORBIGER 1858), „beaten off“ (JONES 1932) or „driven away“ (ROLLER 2014), whereby it is not ultimately clear (except in Jones) whether this means only from Corsica or also from Massalia.

of being a description of the south Italian Coast, the lack of a mention of the Battle at Alalia is not necessarily relevant. Strabo nevertheless says comparatively little about Corsica, which shares two chapters in book five of his *Geographica* with Sardinia¹², amongst other things however that one can see the islands of Elba, Corsica and Sardinia from the hilltop at Poplonion, and that Corsican slaves were purportedly of particularly low quality.

Michel Gras¹³ lists further primary sources with potential relevance, on the one hand Pompey Trogus, handed down by Justin, on the other Pausanias. According to the epitome in Justin¹⁴, Pompey Trogus mentions a naval battle, maybe near Sardinia, in which the Carthaginians lost most of their troops, after having long been successful in Sicily. In Pompey Trogus' second extract in Justin there is talk of a war that broke out because of the theft of a couple of fishing boats, as well as a negotiated peace between the Massaliots and the Carthaginians¹⁵. Gras believes that both text-passages in Justin could relate to the Battle of Alalia, despite there being solely mention of Sardinia rather than Corsica; he argues that Justin's summary contains a collage of (incomplete) data and that the naming of Sardinia refers rather to the Sardinian Sea, thus the starting point from which the Carthaginians disembarked into the battle – hence that the Carthaginians departed from one of their Sardinian harbours and crossed the sea over to Corsica to engage in naval warfare with the Greeks (or indeed Massaliots) there¹⁶. This is interesting, although it is in contradiction with Herodotos who does not mention Massalia in connection with Alalia, and it is moreover hard to fathom that such a maritime power as Carthage was, it would be able to suffer the demise of the majority of its ships, or rather that its navy consisted of a mere sixty vessels, even more so as the Etruscans too, could themselves contribute sixty ships to the battle – though perhaps this text-passage should be taken with the same caution and viewed in context of the collage of fragmentary information as proposed by Gras.

Supplementary to the above is the information gleaned from Pausanias¹⁷ who, in his description of Delphi mentions two votive statues (one of Athena Pronoia, the other a bronze Apollo) donated by the Massaliots following a victory celebrated against the Carthaginians. Pausanias does not state whether both commemorative gifts were commissioned for a victory at the same battle, however does note that Massalia was a Phokaian colony which was founded by refugees when their home-city of Phokaia had been attacked by the Persians – and that by defeating the Carthaginians in a (or more than one) naval battle they were able to consolidate their territory in the Golfe du Lion. Considering the Phokaian retreat as described in Herodotos, the assumption appears likely that Pausanias' source was Thukydidēs¹⁸, or, that the Phokaians and Carthaginians had clashed already before Alalia, around the founding date of Massalia, and the Phokaians (or rather Massaliots) came out

¹² *Geographica*, V, 2, 7-8.

¹³ GRAS 1987, 162ff.

¹⁴ XVIII, 7, 1.

¹⁵ XLIII, 5, 2.

¹⁶ GRAS 1987, 164.

¹⁷ *Hellados Periegesis* X, 8, 6, X, 18, 7.

¹⁸ I, 13.

of the battle victorious at this earlier point in time as well. An alternative interpretation of Pausanias X, 8, 6, namely that the foundation date of Marseilles is to be placed later in the sixth century BCE, i.e. around the time of the battle at Alalia or Harpagos' siege of Phokaia respectively, can be ruled out with considerable certainty thanks to the archaeological material unearthed at Marseilles dated at least back to the beginning of the sixth century BCE¹⁹.

THE AFTERMATH: THEORIES, THE TIN TRADE AND OTHER FACTORS

The Battle of Alalia and the Phokaian-Greek retreat may have meant the definitive cessation of Greek business relations with Tartessos, even if, or despite the fact Arganthonios was already dead before that time – Herodotos' words on the topic allow space for interpretation. What can be said against it is however that Alalia by no means meant the end of the Greeks in the western Mediterranean, as e.g. Massalia and the other Greek towns and settlements along the coast of Southern Gaul continued to flourish. It is however possible that the Massaliots, with Cadiz in close vicinity to Tartessos, and the Phoenician-Carthaginian hegemony in the south-western Mediterranean, did not venture further south or west than their²⁰ colony Emporion²¹ and instead concentrated on the business opportunities further north along the river banks, or on monitoring and control of the traffic north- and southwards of those same inland trade routes.

On the other hand, once again with referral to a much-cited passage within book three of Herodotos: [...] *it cannot be disputed that tin and amber do come to us from what one might call the edges of the earth*²². Although Herodotos claims that he knows nothing of the existence of Tin Islands or of a sea in the northwest, it does seem out of the question for him that the Greeks, at the time of his writing at least, obtained their tin (and their amber) from anywhere else than that faraway place. Therefore, around a century after Alalia and a century before Pytheas an established tin-route must have been in existence from northern Europe all the way to Greece – for Herodotos this appears to have been fact and common sense.

Considering the matter that there were other sources of tin available in the Mediterranean, among which Galicia and Elba, perhaps Sardinia²³, and maybe even Tartessos²⁴, it begs the question as to why it was so crystal-clear to Herodotos that the tin that arrived to Greece in the fifth century BCE did not come from a Mediterranean, but from a (north?)western

¹⁹ GRAHAM 1982, 140.

²⁰ PSEUDO-SKYLAX' *Periplus*, 4 – but see SACHS 2014, 102-4, DOMINGUEZ-MONEDERO 2013, 24 and LIVY XXVI, 19, XXXIV, 9 for colonisation directly from Phokaia rather than via Massalia.

²¹ AUBET/TURTON 2005, 193: „modern criticism has shown that no Greek colonies existed south of Emporion“.

²² III, 115; translated by de A. Sélincourt 1954. Various translations are in pretty close agreement with regards to Herodotos' convictions: „Freilich kommt dass Zinn [...]“ (Lange 1885), “[T]in and amber certainly come to us [...]” (Macaulay 1890), “All we know is that our tin [...]” (Godley 1920).

²³ PENHALLURICK 1986, 79-80, 95, and Reusser, pers. comm. SE Provincia, Zürich 26.05.2016

²⁴ See current discussion regarding Tarshish and its (im)possible identification with Tartessos in Ezekiel 27, 12, 1st Book of Kings 10.21-22 and 2nd Book of Chronicles 9.20-21 in AUBET 2001, 45, but also KOCH 2010 188,198-99; KOCH 2013, 126.

European source instead. Given the detailed stories he tells about Arganthonios as well as Kolaïos of Samos' fairytale silver haul²⁵, it should be clear that Herodotos cannot have meant Tartessos, which (in his view) after all, was silver-territory. Were the Mediterranean or Iberian sources of tin out of reach for the Greeks a) because they did not exist or not at that particular point in time or b) because they were dominated by other powers in the area; the hypothetical sources on Elba and Sardinia by the Etruscans, and the Galician mines by Cadiz and the Phoenicians/Carthaginians, if a Greek vessel would at all have been able to succeed in passing through the Pillars of Herakles in the first place? In the case of an available and exploitable tin resource on the islands within the Tyrrhenian Sea, one must naturally take the more or less attested Greek-Etruscan trade relations²⁶ into consideration. In the Mediterranean however, tin was a rather rare commodity²⁷ and one may speculate about the probability of the Etruscans' willingness to trade tin with the Greeks, of all people, if indeed the Etruscans were in possession of tin, capable of acquiring it from the mines and if their deposits on the islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea were at all able to satisfy the Greek demand. The same can be said of the Phoenicians/Carthaginians and their resources in Galicia or further away – though a slight difference could be, again keeping Herodotos' words in mind, that both tin and amber may have found their way to Greece from the distant northwest passing through Phoenician and Carthaginian hands, if it did not or not exclusively travel along land and river routes²⁸ via Massalia to the Greeks of Herodotos' day. The rather peculiar fact that Herodotos merely mentions Massalia 'in passing'²⁹, without elaborating at all about the geostrategic relevance or general importance of the colony, although he does elsewhere acknowledge the historical significance of Phokaia and the Phokaïans³⁰, is also quite interesting. Nevertheless, we can reach some first, interim conclusions from the historical sources and modern theories:

1. Tin came to Greece (according to Herodotos) from the far (north)west (which was unknown to him).
2. As Herodotos knew Tartessos and thus a large part of southwestern Iberia quite well and was able to describe it in some detail, although he appears to have never actually been there³¹, the (north)western tin specified by Herodotos probably neither originated from Tartessos nor from Iberia.
3. Because the Phoenicians/Carthaginians had access to the Galician (and if existent potentially Tartessian) tin, the Greeks however received their tin from further away, it is less likely that the Phoenicians/Carthaginians were the suppliers of the Greeks.
4. After their victory (tantamount to a defeat) at Alalia, the Phokaïans retreated partly to Hyële/Elea/Velia in the east, presumably partly to Massalia and possibly other Emporiae or Greek settlements around the Golfe du Lion and environs.

²⁵ I, 163, IV, 152.

²⁶ See e.g. LONG/MIRO/VOLPE 1992, 229-230.

²⁷ PENHALLURICK 1986, 79.

²⁸ *Inter alia* HENNIG 1944, 162, RIVET 1988, 131; BOTERMANN 2005, 69.

²⁹ V, 9.

³⁰ I, 163-168, VI, 11-17.

³¹ See ALONSO-NÚÑEZ 1987, 247-48, also concerning HERODOTOS IV, 192.

If we consult later sources specific to the ancient tin trade (and assume that the methods described are applicable some centuries retroactively), point 3 above becomes somewhat clearer. Once again Strabo delivers the famous anecdote about the Phoenician captain who ran his ship aground so as to not reveal the location of the tin islands to the Romans³²; in the same passage he narrates about the appearance and life of the inhabitants of the tin isles, their merchandise, the geographic location of the tin islands, that is to say not in Britain but north of Galicia and the Iberian Peninsula, and finally reveals a valuable detail, namely that only the Phoenicians were able to exploit the markets of the tin islands, which they did from Cadiz as hub – which makes sense if the Kassiterides are supposed to have lain in close vicinity to Iberia. In this case it would make perfect sense to consider the tin isles as a Galician, rather than a British source of the metal. Pomponius Mela too sees the Kassiterides before (Celt)Iberia³³.

Diodorus Siculus initially confirms this point of view; he treats the tin islands, and Britain, as a source of tin, in two distinctive, separate sections³⁴ – in his description of the Kassiterides in 5.38.4 of his *Bibliotheca Historica*, a small cross-reference to Britain has however found its way into the narrative, as he recounts that from there, too, tin is transported thence (although Diodorus had in the prior, separate passage in 5.22.2 already mentioned transportation of tin onto the British island of Ictis³⁵), via the land route and on horseback through Gaul to Massalia and Narbo. Notable things to point out in this respect however would on the one hand be the fact that both Strabo and Diodorus wrote some time after the fall of Carthage, and on the other, that much less produce can be transported on horseback than cargo inside the belly of a ship, even if river going ships are much narrower than ships designed for open sea³⁶. Nevertheless, if we should be so bold to completely reject the formerly widely (though not universally) recognised, but meanwhile rather doubtful³⁷ theory that the Kassiterides should have been Britannic islands, and rely instead on the later sources who place them further south near Iberia (even if there is no amber available there), one could be inclined to believe that it was indeed the Phoenicians, or Carthaginians respectively, who controlled the tin deposits and trade in (and on the islands close to) Iberia, while the Greeks, because the Straits of Gibraltar were closed to them, were forced to rely on sources further afield in Britannia and on the transportation of the metal via land and river routes across Gaul through to Massalia.

A little caveat to the above assertion appears in the Elder Pliny (as well as, again, Herodotos³⁸) who wrote: *plumbum album ex Cassiteride insula primus adportavit Midacritus*³⁹. Roller considers the name Midacritus to be

³² III, 5, 11.

³³ *De Chorographia*, III, 47.

³⁴ 5.22.1-2 for Britannia, 5.38.4 for the Kassiterides which he sees in Iberia, north of Lusitania.

³⁵ Cf. also the Elder PLINY IV, 41.

³⁶ Jézégou, pers. comm. excursion Port-La-Nautique 13.05.2016.

³⁷ Cf. e.g. CARPENTER 1966, 202; Henderson (ed.) 1989, 638 (commentary in Loeb's PLINY, VII, 197), with PENHALLURICK 1980, 121, and see also ROLLER 2006, 1.

³⁸ As above (nr 22), III, 115.

³⁹ *Historia Naturalis* VII, 197; (loosely translated) Tin (white lead?) from

Greek, specifically Ionian, namely Midakritos⁴⁰, which, if Pliny can be so interpreted, would be in direct contradiction with Strabo and would confirm Herodotos' claim in that the Kassiterides were a source (if indeed there were not more than one known as such⁴¹) of tin exploited by Greeks – insofar Midakritos did not purchase the tin from (Punic) middlemen, which however within the context of his mention within Pliny would seem rather unlikely⁴², or if Midakritos' expedition took place long before the battle at Alalia and a potential blockade of the Straits of Gibraltar around 540 BCE; or, in turn, because Midakritos finally, is, after all, not a historical, but rather an as yet unknown, mythical figure, similar perhaps to Daedalus, Cadmos the founder of Thebes, the (Homeric) Cyclope, Toxius Son of Uranus or Sol Son of Okeanos, who too are all listed by Pliny in his catalogue of extraordinary accomplishments in *Historia Naturalis*, VII, 191-215? The fact that Pliny mentions the name Midacritus almost in passing could be a potential indicator for this – while he identifies others with titles such as 'son of...' or '... the Phoenician' much more specifically – as if there would be no doubt whatsoever among his readers about who exactly this Midakritos or Midacritus actually was. On the other hand Pliny is the single remaining historical source who mentions him.

A further event finally, without direct Greek participation, which may have had an impact on the hegemony of the Carthaginians in the western Mediterranean and accessibility of the Atlantic outside the Straits, was the first Roman-Carthaginian treaty, discussed by Polybios⁴³, dated to approx. 508-07 BCE, 28 years before Xerxes' conquest of Greece⁴⁴. The treaty e.g. records how far west the Romans were entitled to sail, namely not further than a cape to the north of Carthage, which meant virtually the whole of the western Mediterranean, save the Tyhrranian Sea. Polybios moreover notes that the Carthaginians considered Lybia and Sardinia their property, Sicily partly, and the Romans were allowed to (under supervision) trade in the Carthaginian territories in Lybia, Sardinia and Sicily⁴⁵, like everybody else. The west was also restricted to Rome's allies, while Corsica, which is not mentioned in the treaty at all, was presumably considered to be Etruscan territory by both sides thirty years after

the Kassiterides was first brought by Midacritus.

⁴⁰ ROLLER 2006, 12, but cf. Müllenhoff, cited by HENNIG 1944, 56 for an alternative and perhaps somewhat unorthodox theory concerning a deviation of the name Midacritus from Melikartes/Melqart – presupposing that Pliny (or his source) did not know Melqart; and according to BOSCH-GIMPERA 1944, 53-54; HERMARY, HESNARD/TRÉZINY 1999, 91 finally he could have originated from Massalia itself.

⁴¹ Cf. PSEUDO-SKYLAX' Periplus, 21 and commentary in SHIPLEY 2011, 106 for a reference to so-called Elektrides, hence 'amber-islands', in the Mediterranean, nearby Illyria – obviously not the primary source of amber, rather a stopover, center of trade or a market, possible therefore that there were several of them.

⁴² *Historia Naturalis*, VII, 191-215 is a catalogue of extraordinary achievements, inventions or actions and the names, some mythical, of those first responsible for them (according to Pliny or his sources, respectively); e.g. the Spartans invented slavery (VII, 200), Minos was the first to be victorious in a naval battle with a fleet (VII, 209), and Prometheus the first to slaughter an ox (VII, 210); Midakritos hence would not have appeared in Pliny's list if his accomplishment had not been remarkable in one way or another. See also ROLLER 2006, 13.

⁴³ *Historiae*, III, 22-23.

⁴⁴ *Historiae*, III, 22.

⁴⁵ *Historiae*, III, 23.

Alalia anyway. Although the position of the Massaliotes and the western Greeks is also lacking from the treaty, it should be quite evident that the vehemence with which Carthage laid claim to its perceived territorial possessions vis-à-vis the Romans, was equally valid for any other Mediterranean party. If the Etruscans, who had, even if only in temporary alliance with Carthage expelled the Phokaians from Corsica merely thirty years earlier, were still in loose confederation with the Carthaginians, all who remained of the maritime powers at the time were the western Greeks, who may well have been recognised in their Sicilian regions and the area around the Golfe du Lion – but thus should kindly stay out of the western Punic affairs. Cook's views here are interesting, who wrote that the seas west of the Strait of Messina, after the mass flight of refugees after the fall of Phokaia "seem to have been infested by Phocaeans for five years until their losses [...] off Alalia put a check to their aggressiveness."⁴⁶ Absolutely conceivable is too, that even if, as Herodotos describes, somewhat less than half of the total population of Phokaia (who moreover had initially attempted to convince the Chians to sell them one of the islands in Chios' territory – the Chians however rejected the offer as they feared the Phokaians would take over trading activity in the region and force Chios out of the market⁴⁷) fled westward, these many people at once needed to be fed in a short period of time, and by what better method than the Phokaians doing what they do best, playing out one of their chief skills at sea (i.e. piracy)⁴⁸? The obvious side-effect of this however was that they therein caused considerable irritation to the Punic-Etruscan sphere of influence and trade, and the Phokaians therefore needed to be put back into their place by a punitive expedition which restored the status quo *before* the arrival of the masses at Alalia⁴⁹. It is quite feasible that the Phokaians retreated not only to Elea, but also to Massalia, or rather that Massalia, as suggested by Pompey Trogus in Justin⁵⁰ and by Pausanias⁵¹, was involved in the issue from the start, but either unwilling or unable⁵² to accommodate the entire body of Phokaiian refugees, and these were therefore partly referred to the recently established colony at Alalia. After the renewed exodus from Alalia, they were then redistributed onto Rhegium, Elea, Massalia and perhaps other Phokaiian-Greek settlements and foundations on the shores of southern Gaul, Italy and north-eastern Iberia⁵³. Of these, initially, particularly Massalia prospered – because of the alternative merchant-route up the Rhône into the north?

THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND CONCLUSIONS

The theory as to whether the Greeks of the western Mediterranean were barred from passing the Straits of Gibraltar is based to a certain degree on the hypothetical economic decline to which the excavations and distribution

⁴⁶ COOK 1982, 214.

⁴⁷ HERODOTOS I, 165.

⁴⁸ See GRAS 1972, 703 or also HERODOTOS VI, 17.

⁴⁹ SACHS 2014, 133.

⁵⁰ XLIII, 5, 2.

⁵¹ *Hellados Periegesis* X, 8, 6, X, 18, 7.

⁵² BOSCH-GIMPERA 1944, 54-55; GRAHAM 1982, 140 point out that similar to Phokaia itself, the Phokaiian colonies in the west possessed little in surrounding local territory (chora) and were therefore all the more dependent on the sea; see also maps in HERMARY/HESNARD/TRÉZINY 1999, 26.

⁵³ See also MIERSE 1994, 791; DOMINGUEZ-MONEDERO 2013, 2.

ceramics point, which indicate a potential decrease in trading activity in Massalia at the start of the fifth century BCE on the one hand, and a reduction of Massaliote products, as well as Greek (mostly Attic) luxury pottery imports arriving at the Hallstatt-Oppida west of the Rhône on the other⁵⁴. In Massalia itself the number of Attic fine tableware reduces dramatically around 500 BCE, while it had been imported in very large numbers a mere fifty years earlier – evidently the Oppida of southern Gaul (e.g. Substantion, Bessan, Pech-Maho, Béziers, Montlaurés and particularly Ensérune) had been furnished with Attic pottery provided by Massalia⁵⁵. Already shortly after the fall of Phokaia moreover, the supply of eastern Greek ceramics effectively appears to grind to a complete halt⁵⁶. At the same time however, the number of Attic imports greatly increase further west in Emporion (modern Ampurias, or Catalanian, Empùries)⁵⁷.

While Massalia thus may have experienced a period of economic downturn during the fifth century BCE and trading activity with the Gallic chiefdoms in the surrounding territories similarly declined quite noticeably, the same could not be said for Greek wares in the western Mediterranean in general, insofar one can assume that these were distributed by western Greek sailors and tradesmen, at least to a large extent. Although the amount of Ionic imports runs dry almost completely shortly after the Persian siege of Phokaia, Attic imports remain at an almost unchanged high until into the middle of the fourth century BCE⁵⁸. The peak was reached between 430 and 370 in Malaga, and Athenian wares scattered deep into the Iberian hinterland, as far as Huelva, outside the Mediterranean. The impetus for this flourishing trade appears to have been Emporion, this in great contrast to Massalia⁵⁹, even despite the fact that during the foundation period of Emporion most merchandise actually originated from Massalia. Considering the massive increase in Attic wares, presumably directly from Athens (or at best via Sicily) rather than through Massalia, it is conceivable that Emporion itself became a major trading hub⁶⁰, stepping outside of the initial shadow of Massalia. Somewhat later at the start of the fourth century BCE moreover, Athenian motives begin to appear on the coinage from Emporion, which may indicate direct trading contacts⁶¹.

Rumours of Phokaiian or Massaliote colonies such as Maenace (or Hemeroscopeion) further southwest, which have kept scholarship busy until late into the last century⁶² mostly because of mention thereof within Avienus⁶³, Pseudo-Skymnos⁶⁴ and Strabo⁶⁵, have as yet not yet been able to be archaeologically substantiated, may have arisen due to oral 'Hellenisations' ('Greek-sounding' pronunciations) of

⁵⁴ GRAHAM 1982, 141; HERMARY/HESNARD/TRÉZINY 1999, 91.

⁵⁵ VILLARD 1960, 119-21.

⁵⁶ SCHMITT 1963, 284.

⁵⁷ VILLARD 1960, 114-19.

⁵⁸ LOWE 2009, 40; DOMINGUEZ-MONEDERO, 2006, 466-467.

⁵⁹ LOWE 2009, 40.

⁶⁰ MIERSE 1994, 795; SACHS 2014, 129.

⁶¹ SACHS, 2014, 128-129.

⁶² See e.g. SCHULTEN 1936, 295ff., contradicting views in GRAHAM 1982, 139; COOK 1982, 214 in the same volume; VILLARD 1960, 118-119 (Héméroscopeion), as well as MURPHY 1977, 62; LOMBARDO 2002, 76

⁶³ *Ora Maritima* 427-430.

⁶⁴ *Periegesis ad Nicomedem regem*, 147.

⁶⁵ III, 4, 2.

other, perhaps Phoenician toponyms⁶⁶, and meanwhile the consensus does not point to the existence (at least verifiable) of Greek settlements further west of Emporion⁶⁷.

In the end, it begs the question, in the case of a (impossibly provable) Carthaginian blockade of the Heraklean Pillars, what may have been the main drive of the Greeks to pass the Straits of Gibraltar at all – specifically factoring out Pytheas' expedition, the exact nature (perhaps scientific – though Ellmers argues that Pytheas was a merchant⁶⁸) and itinerary of which are as yet still not securely known anyway⁶⁹ – if we consider that a corridor to the north, albeit a long and strenuous (and expensive⁷⁰) voyage across land and along river routes, was already available. Even more so, as along the Atlantic route lay powerful Cadiz, where Greeks were quite possibly not the most welcome travellers, certainly after Alalia. Apart from the lower cost of transport compared to overland, the chief stimulus for voyages outside of the Pillars, at least *before* Alalia, seems to have been the commercial exchange with Tartessos, whose king Arganthonios (note the resemblance of the royal name with the main commodity brought back thence by Kolaios of Samos⁷¹) entertained excellent relations with the Phokaians⁷². At the time of the foundation of Alalia this very Arganthonios was already dead⁷³ and a half century later Tartessos had potentially already been destroyed or annexed by Carthage⁷⁴. Nevertheless, Greek produce was still being received in former Tartessian territory, though it was not (longer) necessary to circumnavigate the Iberian Peninsula for it to arrive there. Around the end of the fifth century BCE it can be observed that trade and distribution of Greek, particularly Attic wares between Emporion to Huelva and Cadiz re-intensifies, for which foremost however Iberian elites and new overland routes across the Iberian Peninsula appear to be responsible⁷⁵. With potential trading networks along the inner-European streams (Aude/Garonne, Rhône [Saône, Seine], Loire⁷⁶, Rhine) towards the north as well as to the west on the Iberian Peninsula, there was no longer a necessity (though, again, only if we factor out the cost of overland travel⁷⁷) to take on the burden of the perilous journey through the Pillars of Herakles⁷⁸, even

if the Phokaians had explored the Atlantic coast to a certain distance (Ophioussa?) already in the past⁷⁹; the geographical knowledge of the Atlantic coast beyond the Iberian Peninsula past Cadiz appears, at least by the Greeks (or rather Greek armchair geographers and the like, whose writings have been passed down to us) and until the advent of Roman conquest, to have vanished from memory⁸⁰.

The possible consequences of the battle at Alalia can thus be summarised as follows:

1. In the aftermath of the perceived Carthaginian victory at Alalia on Corsica, the Greeks withdrew to Rhegion, Elea, Massalia, Emporion and presumably other (Phokaian) settlements in the western Mediterranean and for the time being concentrated their efforts on the trade with the tribes of southern Gaul, later with local Iberian populations.
2. The Carthaginians (as before and after the fall of Tartessos) most probably kept the Mediterranean to the southwest of Emporion under their control.

Whether, as has been speculated by many, Greek merchants from the Hellenic settlements in the western Mediterranean were excluded from trade in the Atlantic due to a 'Carthaginian blockade', cannot be elicited beyond doubt. Whether the Greeks would have had an interest in venturing outside the Straits of Gibraltar even without such a blockade and despite the virtual eradication of their once most important trading partners Tartessos, while valuable commodities and merchandise far in the northwest could also be reached via the land routes, is similarly unclear (though, again, Ellmers⁸¹ argues convincingly that direct shipping via the sea versus partial overland transport carries a massive difference in cost) – the contradicting evidence within the sources with regards to the geographical location of the Kassiterides, could perhaps somewhat satisfactorily be explained by the existence of multiple islands, or archipelagos, both or all known as so-called 'tin islands'. The Battle of Alalia was certainly a notable event of historical significance and worthy of direct or indirect mention by various ancient writers – what it probably did not have however, was a meaningful or lasting impact on the existing balance of power and trade routes in the western Mediterranean, nor did it likely have any apparent far-reaching consequences on the mobility of the western Greeks, which was probably already restricted to a certain degree at the time – they were simply no longer represented on the island of Corsica, similar to about twenty-five years earlier. Nor however did the Phokaian-Greek withdrawal from Corsica narrow their enormous social, cultural and historical influence in the world of the western Mediterranean and beyond.

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- ⁶⁶ NIEMEYER/WARNING TREUMANN 1980, 185-89; AUBET/TURTON 2005, 196.
- ⁶⁷ See however recently ROLLER 2015, 37, 222 regarding Hemeroskopeion.
- ⁶⁸ ELLMERS 2010, 373.
- ⁶⁹ Horst ROSEMAN 1994, 3ff., CUNLIFFE 2001b, 56-58, and see BOSCH-GIMPERA 1944, 58 for the theory of „occasional blockade-running“.
- ⁷⁰ ELLMERS 2010, 368, 370.
- ⁷¹ Herodotos IV, 152.
- ⁷² Herodotos I, 163.
- ⁷³ Herodotos I, 165.
- ⁷⁴ SCHULTEN, 1936, 304; BOSCH-GIMPERA 1944, 56; and see Avienus 85, 270, Pliny IV, 120 and even Cicero *De Senectute* 69, as well as AUBET 2001, 206 and GONZALEZ DE CANALES CERISOLA, 2014, 568 for later confusion of the ancient sources between Tartessos and Cadiz/Gadir.
- ⁷⁵ DOMINGUEZ-MONEDERO 2006, 467-472.
- ⁷⁶ See Strabo IV, 2, 1, CUNLIFFE 2001a, 335; HORST ROSEMAN 1994, 66; and especially ROLLER 2015, 33, 38 for a very bold theory or interpretation regarding colonisation of Massaliote merchants in an existing Gallic trading port named Korbilon (Nantes?) at the mouth of the Loire. Nevertheless (Strabo calls Korbilon a ἐμπόριος), the extract may point to concrete, direct Massaliote contacts with dwellers on the Atlantic coast (and perhaps even a presence of these in Massalia itself), at least since the 2nd century BCE.
- ⁷⁷ ELLMERS 2010, 368, 370.
- ⁷⁸ See e.g. AVIENUS 117-129, 380-389, 406-415.
- ⁷⁹ MURPHY 1977, 54-55; ROLLER 2006, 14, 27.
- ⁸⁰ GONZALEZ DE CANALES CERISOLA 1994, 563-564.
- ⁸¹ ELLMERS 2010, 368, 370.

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