

This paper argues that Phocaeen colonists founded the city of Massalia *ca.* 575/550 BCE, in all likelihood after the establishment of the colony of Alalia in Corsica. Based upon the elementary observation that neither the high (*ca.* 600 BCE) nor the low (*ca.* 545 BCE) dating for Massalia's foundation is tenable, this thesis redimensions the early history of Massalia and explains why the city was not as prominent in the West as standard modern accounts would imply. It thereby identifies fundamental methodological issues regarding *Quellenforschung* and the relationship of literary sources to material culture in the study of Archaic Greece.

Proponents for the low dating (Vickers and Gill 1994: 58) explain the foundation of Massalia as due to the Persian conquest of the *metropolis* of Phocaea in Asia Minor *ca.* 545 BCE. Aside from explicit testimony not of the highest quality (Amm. 15.9.7; Gell. 10.16.3-4; Sen. *Cons. Helv.* 7.8; Paus. 10.8.6; cf. Isocr. *Archidam.* 84; Aristox. fr. 23), they point to the testimony of Thucydides regarding a battle fought between Phocaeans and Carthaginians in the western half of the Mediterranean at the time of the Samian tyrant Polycrates (1.13.6; Vickers 1984: 208-211; cf. Luraghi 2000: 236-237). Moreover, the dating of the ceramic sequences poses no obstacle to this interpretation. But the very absence of any mention of Massalia from the Herodotean account of the Persian conquest of Phocaea (Hdt. 1.162-167) renders the explanation suspect, as does the fact that the sources to provide it are clearly of a later date and less value than those propounding the high dating (Raviola 2000: 63-67). But the high dating is likewise indefensible. Its proponents argue that the archaeological evidence confirms the historical sources (Morel 2006: 364-366; Villard 1992: 163-170; Villard 1969: 76-81). But the dating of that evidence is in fact dependent upon the literary sources. Those sources, in turn, are of doubtful value. It would appear that the various witnesses all derive from an initial report in which Timaeus of Tauromenium claimed that Massalia had been founded 120 years before the battle of Salamis (Ps.-Scymn. 209-214 [= *FGrHist* 566 F71]; Hier. *Chron.* s.a. 598 [Helm 99]; Euseb. *Chron.* s.a. 594 vers. arm. [Karst 187]; Solin. 2.52). It is essential to recognize both this and the fact that the figure of "120" is not an empirical figure. Rather, it is notional and means "a long time", or is reconstructed on the basis of genealogical reckoning. Neither the low nor the high dating has a solid evidentiary basis.

From reports of the *Constitution of the Massalites*, it would appear that Aristotle did no more than specify that Massalia had been founded prior to the Persian conquest of Phocaea (Harpocr. *Lex.* 199.3-7). It is universally assumed that Massalia was established prior to Alalia (Osborne 1996: 124), but no evidence explicitly supports this assumption. If we instead assume that Massalia was founded after Alalia's foundation *ca.* 565 BCE, then many problems disappear: the choice of Alalia as the principal destination of the Phocaeans fleeing the Persian conquest, the relative obscurity enveloping Massalia in the sixth and fifth centuries, and the presence at Massalia of that cult image of Artemis associated with the Ephesian temple reconstructed by Croesus (Romano 1980: 238).