I. WESTERN LANGUEDOC

1. ENSÉRUNE. NISSAN (HÉRAULT)

The Oppidum of Ensérune is situated at the top of a height which dominates the Languedocian Plain between the lower reaches of the Rivers Orb and Aude, about 9 km. south-east of the modern Béziers and less than 3 km. to the north of the small town of Nissan. The Oppidum is something less than 15 km. in a straight line from the present coast-line and the area is today still strewn with marshes, such as the Vendres, Capestang, and Montady Marshes. This last, at the very foot of Ensérune, was already dried up in the Middle Ages. The strategic situation of Ensérune would be hard to improve, all the more so for its being impossible to avoid. Both the route nationale and the railway pass its foot today, and in antiquity first the Via Heraclea and later the Via Domitiana, which connected Italy with Spain, must have come this way.

The name by which the town is now known is derived, as Jannoray has already shown, from the Latin form Anseduna. Its present spelling Ensérune must be regarded as a French corruption of the Occitanian name, which I think can be restored, with due regard to Languedocian phonetics, as Enserona, or even Anserona. I am thus enabled to draw attention to a probable kinship between this place-name and that of Anseresa, corresponding to a pre-Roman oppidum near Solsona, excavated by Serra Vilarò.

The Ensérune site first attracted public notice in the middle of the 19th century, when some finds were made there, so that it was referred to on more than one occasion. In 1909 Rouzaud, known already for his explorations at Montlaurès, in a reconnaissance of Ensérune discovered the first cremations to the west of the Oppidum. His findings came in useful at the beginning of 1915 when systematic excavation of the deposits was begun by an amateur, F. Mouret, who began with the necropolis indicated by Rouzaud. The work lasted till 1924 and 335 interments were found. In 1922 the Direction des Beaux Arts began to acquire the site, and in

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1 Jannoray, Ensérune, p. 42.
2 In Languedocian the name of the place is pronounced "Enseruno" or "Anseruno", which is why the spelling I have proposed seems preferable to the form Enseruna which has been suggested to me. The termination I propose has the advantage of falling into line with the numerous place-names ending in -ona so frequent on both sides of the Pyrenees.
1929 the Abbé Sigal launched a systematic exploration of the habitation area which lasted till 1945. On the Abbé's death in 1945, the work was continued by Jannoray, Gallet de Santerre, and Giry. The exploration of the Necropolis was extended, stratigraphic sondages were made, a search was carried out for the line of the town wall, and so on.\(^3\)

In the Enserune deposit, three successive occupation phases have been distinguished. The most ancient corresponds to a huddle of huts, with objects which can be dated to the first half of the 6th century, and some hand-made pottery possibly to the end of the 7th. The second occupation level already corresponds to a preconceived city plan. The transformation of the area was brought about during the last quarter of the 5th century and remained effective throughout the 4th and the first three quarters of the 3rd. The last phase of Enserune was from the end of the 3rd century to the year 30 A.D. It was a direct continuation of the previous phase, with similar urban ideas, but on a notably grander scale. These last two phases were separated by a moment of destruction, which can be assigned approximately to the year 225.\(^4\)

In the Enserune excavations one or perhaps two scarabs have been found.\(^5\)

Bibliography\(^6\)


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\(^3\) Jannoray, Enserune, pp. 42 ff.

\(^4\) Jannoray, Enserune, pp. 267 ff.

\(^5\) We have two different records from distinct sources, which may however refer to the same piece. The first rests on oral testimony from M. Claustres to M. Solier, who has confirmed it to me, the second on information gathered by Mlle. Guiraud from M. Gondard, which she has also passed on to us. In our present state of knowledge it is impossible to clear up the question whether these records both refer to the same scarab or to two different ones. In view of these doubts I have chosen to separate the data we have on the hypothesis that there may be two pieces concerned, my Nos. 01.01 and 01.02, but I must insist that this is not proved.

\(^6\) The bibliography of Enserune is most extensive, but the publication of Jannoray's monograph in 1955 excuses me from quoting earlier works.