

The Port of Cosa and Economic Romanization in Gaul and the Danube Valley

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The pioneering excavations at the Port of Cosa by Anna Marguerite McCann and her team uncovered important parts of that facility and confirmed the roles of the port and the Sestius family as longstanding, major contributors to the economic Romanization of Gaul and of the Danube valley as far east as Manching. The publication of the port in 1987 marked a milestone in our knowledge of Roman trade. Evidence of an economic connection between Cosa and Gaul had been published as early as 1956, when study of finds from Frank Brown's excavations on the hill of Cosa revealed an unusually large number of Sestius amphora stamps datable on the basis of Athenian Agora contexts to the late second and early first centuries B.C. At the same time, coincidentally, the upper Grand Congloue wreck off Marseilles, explored in 1952 and filled with hundreds of Sestius amphoras, seemed logically to be one of the ships that took wine from Cosa to Gaul. There, we know from Cicero (*Rep.* 3.16), Rome had practiced protectionism as early as 129 B.C. McCann's excavations of the harbor facilities at the port of Cosa support Cicero's statement. Like the port (and the hill) of Cosa, Gaul is full of stamps of the Sestii, the powerful Roman family whose properties at Cosa, mentioned by Cicero (*Att.* 15.27.1), produced wine and garum sent chiefly to Gaul, but also to the Danube valley, and as far east as the Aegean.

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