



# From defence catchment area to hinterland

## Bordeaux during the Hundred Years War

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Buoyed by a favourable political and economic tide, Bordeaux asserted itself in the late Middle Ages as the capital of Anglo-Gascon Aquitaine. To impart substance to its dreams of city-statehood, it intensified the construction of its hinterland and tightened its hold on it. This heightened dominance, which took on multiple forms, brought areas under its tutelage. Historians examining modes of polarisation and the resulting formation of spaces may have recourse to a number of indicators of the process of territorialisation. In an earlier study I was able to gauge the relevance of grape-growing and wine-making as an approach to Bordeaux's centrality<sup>1</sup>; by asserting the city's economic and legal tutelage over a wide hinterland, it is a form of agency that fully accounts for the reach of Bordeaux's influence notably through consolidation of the administrative network.

The present study takes up this same perspective of appraising Bordeaux's hinterland but adopts a fresh indicator – the defensive criterion. The main corpus of sources, Bordeaux's municipal debates in the early decades of the 15th century, paints a picture of the defensive catchment area in a major phase of extension at a time when hostilities in the Hundred Years War were intensifying in Guyenne and the chief town had to ensure the defence of the duchy and at the same time become a strongpoint. In their war effort, the jurats of Bordeaux had all at once to assemble armed forces, conduct military operations, multiply negotiations and diplomatic initiatives and consolidate alliances. All these actions were recounted in the municipal registers and contributed to the construction of a defensive system. Reconstructing the components and spatial dynamics of this system and mapping it is a way for historians to measure the territorialisation it gave rise to and its part in the construction of Bordeaux's hinterland.

Fig. 1. Reconstituted plan of Bordeaux in the late 15th century. The city walls or *enceinte de reunion* were built beginning in 1302; partly completed by the late 14th century, they were subject to much development again in the 15th century to adapt them to artillery using gunpowder. The walls encompassed all of the urbanised area that then covered 146 ha. Photo from: *Atlas historique de Bordeaux*, Ed. S. Lavaud, Bordeaux, 2009, t. 2, p. 150, cartography E. Jean-Courret.



<sup>1</sup> S. Lavaud, *Bordeaux from Its Vineyards to Its Hinterland: A Regional Capital in the Late Middle Ages*, [in:] *The Urban Logistic Network: Cities, Transport and Distribution in Europe from the Middle Ages to Modern Times*, Ed. G. Favero, M.-W. Seruys, M. Sugiura, London 2019.



<sup>2</sup> *Atlas historique de Bordeaux*, Ed. S. Lavaud, Bordeaux 2009.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Baggio, *De l'effort de guerre assumé à l'émancipation affirmée : l'apogée de l'autonomie de la commune de Bordeaux (1406-1409)*, Master I supervised by S. Lavaud, université de Bordeaux III 2006 ; *idem*, *Une ville forte face à son destin : la mise en défense de Bordeaux à la fin du Moyen Âge (1406-1422)*, Master II, supervised by S. Lavaud, Université de Bordeaux III 2007; V. Haure, *Jurade en guerre. La ville de Bordeaux à la fin de la guerre de Cent ans*, Master II dissertation, supervised by S. Lavaud, Université de Bordeaux III 2011.

<sup>4</sup> G. Ferrand, *Communautés et insécurité en Rouergue à la fin du Moyen Âge*, PhD thesis supervised by M. Mousnier, Université de Toulouse II 2009.

<sup>5</sup> J.-L. Abbé, V. Challet, *Du territoire à la viguerie: espaces construits et espaces vécus à Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert à la fin du Moyen Âge*, "Annales du Midi" Vol. 4 (2007).

How much relevance can be attributed to this defensive criterion? Is it a criterion of centrality, a decisive and permanent agent of polarisation of the area under Bordeaux's sway? What does it reveal about the chief town's hold over its hinterland? Does the defence catchment area fit in with divisions of the area along other lines?

This enquiry into the forms of territorialisation of Bordeaux is part of a re-reading of the city's history with the recent renewal of data and knowledge reflected in particular by the publication of the historical atlas of Bordeaux, the 49th volume in the collection of the *Atlas historique des villes de France*<sup>2</sup>. While the approach in the Atlas is confined to the making of the city *intra muros*, other studies have looked more at Bordeaux's hold over its hinterland. Three MA dissertations I have supervised have focused on the chief town's war effort during the Hundred Years War and enabled me to set out markers for this current thinking on the defence catchment area<sup>3</sup>.

### What is meant by defence catchment area?

#### The concept defined

The term has been little explored as yet by medievalists and calls for definition before it can be handled. We shall be drawing on two approaches. One was suggested by Guilhem Ferrand for the towns of the Rouergue in the late Middle Ages and has a narrow focus on the surrounding area<sup>4</sup>. The defence catchment area of a central place is defined as the area surrounding it, ordered from a military perspective. It brings together those who are militarily protected and supported by this fortified central place and those who, in some way or other, contribute to the defensive system it has initiated and impelled. But we shall also take into account the broader meaning adopted by Jean-Loup Abbé and Vincent Challet with regard to Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert and for whom the defence catchment area is the area of relations entered into for defensive purposes among neighbouring or more remote communities<sup>5</sup>. The combination of the two scales is the most appropriate way to account for the case of Bordeaux, for which the term defence catchment area might be even more appropriate here as it is congruent with the water catchment area of its drainage basin. Bordeaux's hold there as chief town was not uniform but organised by differing degrees of polarisation. The establishment of the defence catchment area, while it rests upon and is laid out alongside other forms of domination of space, also led to an ordering of space with a reshuffling of territories and a new ranking among the communities in contact. It thereby produced a territory, with its nodes, its networks, its boundaries, its own dynamics and its reach. As such, the defensive criterion is an entirely relevant way of envisioning the hinterland of a central place.

### Bordeaux as a case study

Historians have but a few sources for tracing the war effort of the chief town of Guyenne during the Hundred Years War. Of the most direct ones, the borough sources, only two registers of debates and an excerpt from the accounts for the year 1442, all written in medieval Gascon, were saved from the fire at the city records office in 1862. The registers, published further to the fire, cover the first two decades of the 15th century but even then only with interruptions. The first runs from 1406 to 1409 and the second from 1414 to 1416 and then from 1420 to 1422<sup>6</sup>. Although they allow a piecemeal approach only, they do provide insight into a decisive period for the formation of the defence catchment area. In the early years of the 15th century, while Henry IV of Lancaster was still insecure after his recent seizing of power (1399), French pressure on the duchy built up. In 1404–1405, the Constable of Albret was making headway in the Charentes area while on the Limousin and Périgord front the Count of Armagnac captured many fortresses in Guyenne. As the high point to this attempt at encirclement by the Valois, Charles VI sent his own brother, the Duke of Orleans, to lay hands on the gateways to the estuary: Lesparre, Bourq and Blaye. Abandoned by the king- duke, the city of Bordeaux had to ensure its own and the duchy's defence. This challenge led it to strengthen its defence catchment area and to bolster relations entered into previously with the towns of English allegiance. At Christmas 1406 it won a naval battle against the French squadron under Admiral Clignet de Brabant besieging Bourq. It was a minor feat of arms but a great victory for Bordeaux and its river fleet. Not only did the Duke of Orleans have to lift the siege of Bourq as of mid-January 1407, but free movement along the river was resumed. Bordeaux gained in prestige and influence. Regionally, its rank as chief town of the duchy was confirmed. Within the city itself, the mobilisation of all the inhabitants, especially the burgesses, with all the corporation at their head, ending in a collective victory, bolstered the feeling of belonging and the sense of pride<sup>7</sup>.

Agincourt (1415) and above all Henry V's establishment of the double monarchy further to the Treaty of Troyes (1420) brought about a period of stability in Guyenne which Bordeaux made the most of to take back the French strongpoints – in 1420–1421, it took part in the sieges of Rions, Saint-Macaire and Budos – and ensured better control of its defence catchment area, before, the advantage swung back to the French and their allies in the 1440s. Accordingly, although the window provided by the registers of municipal debates is brief, it corresponds to a phase of maximum expansion and strength of Bordeaux's defence catchment area. Conversely, we know virtually nothing of its origins and it can at most be inferred that the military events of the second half of the 14th century and also the brief (1362–1372) but prestigious spell of the principality of the Black Prince, put down

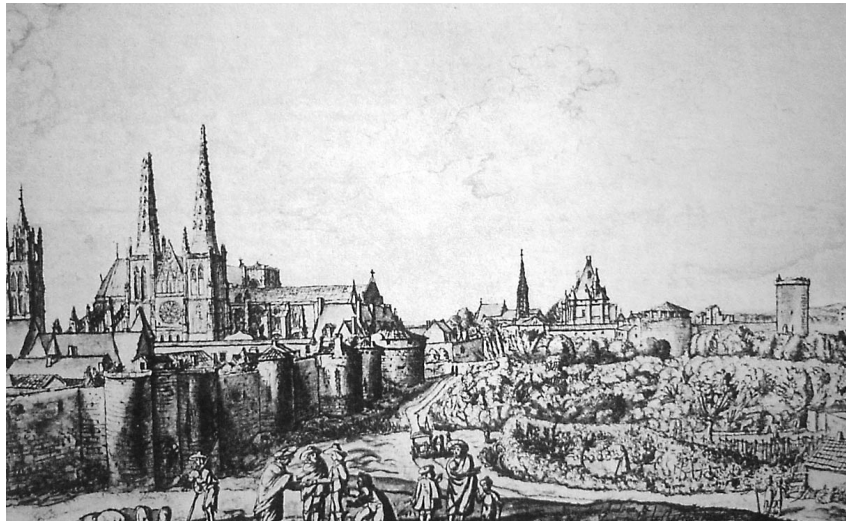


<sup>6</sup> *Registres de la jurade-Délibérations de 1406 à 1409*, Vol. 3, Bordeaux, 1873. *Registres de la jurade-Délibérations de 1414 à 1416 et de 1420 à 1422*, Vol. 4, Bordeaux 1883.

<sup>7</sup> S. Lavaud, *La flotte communale au service de l'effort de guerre. Le cas de Bordeaux pendant la guerre de Cent ans*, [in:] *Gens de mer. Ports et cités aux époques ancienne, médiévale et moderne*, Ed. E. Guerber, G. Le Bouëdec, PUR, Rennes, 2013, p. 55–71.



Fig. 2. *Templum divi Andrea & / castellum fari vulgo le Chasteau du A*, western stretch of the city wall, drawn by Hermann van der Hem. It duplicates on the western front the ancient wall that protected the cathedral quarter. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Kartensammlung Globenmuseum, *Atlas Blaeu*, 05: 31 [31], f° 9. Photo: Austrian National Library Vienna, Picture Archive



its first markers. Evidence of this was the formation of the league of cities in 1379, setting Bordeaux at the head of a confederation of eight other localities (Blaye, Bourg, Cadillac, Rions, Saint-Macaire, Libourne, Saint-Émilion, Castillon) in a mutual defence agreement.

The registers speak of decisions taken on almost a day-to-day basis by the corporation made up of the 12 jurats, the under-mayor and the mayor. Recent historiography on social practices involving the written record has shown how sources of this kind were part of the communication of the municipal leaders designed to tell of the quality of their governance and their keen defence of the city and its privileges<sup>8</sup>. As such, these debates had performative power: the council was bound to apply the values it professed and the standards it defended in order to underpin the legitimacy of its action, its moral foundation even, especially when the city was in danger. In order to observe the practice of the jurats of Bordeaux, references to the war effort have been reviewed exhaustively. They provide information about the jurade's actions and strategy as well as its positioning and frame of mind. The jurade, at the same time as it acted not ineffectively in the urgency of military events, also managed to seize the opportunities to strengthen its claims to autonomy, consolidate its rank of chief town and extend its hold over its hinterland. In wartime as in peacetime, in the city as in the duchy, it was in the name of 'good government' that it exerted its dominance and demanded the unswerving loyalty of its own burgesses and the burgesses of the allied cities. The defence catchment area was also the area of allegiance to the Anglo-Gascon cause, a space of loyalty and mutual support of which Bordeaux intended to be the central nexus.

The formation of a defence catchment area was the outcome of a host of actions that cannot readily be assigned to a hierarchy and a typology without running the risk of erasing their diversity and complexity. Their identification must take account of both direct



<sup>8</sup> See especially the contribution to the Tenth International Conference on Urban History by: L. Gaudreault, *Le registre de délibérations comme outil de représentation de l'identité urbaine et lieu de dialogue entre autorité communale et pouvoir royal* (Brignoles, 1387-1391), Tenth International Conference on Urban History, Ghent, 1-4 September 2010, forthcoming.

factual data – such as military support provided by the jurade to a besieged allied strongpoint or the negotiation of a truce – and more disparate and secondary information – such as war taxation or resupply. Schematically the information about the defence catchment area can nonetheless be compiled into three main categories:

- military expedition, whether a defensive action, especially aid provided to an ally in difficulty or an offensive venture; these include operations on the rivers and at sea;
- diplomatic and intelligence operations: epistolary relations or contacts through messengers with the actors in the conflict, preparation of military actions, mediation and negotiation of peaces or truces, actions to ascertain the duchy’s military state of preparedness;
- mobilisation and outfitting: recruitment of men at arms and auxiliaries, supply of weapons and munitions; “economic warfare”: procurement, legal and commercial measures against enemy lands, war finances and taxation.

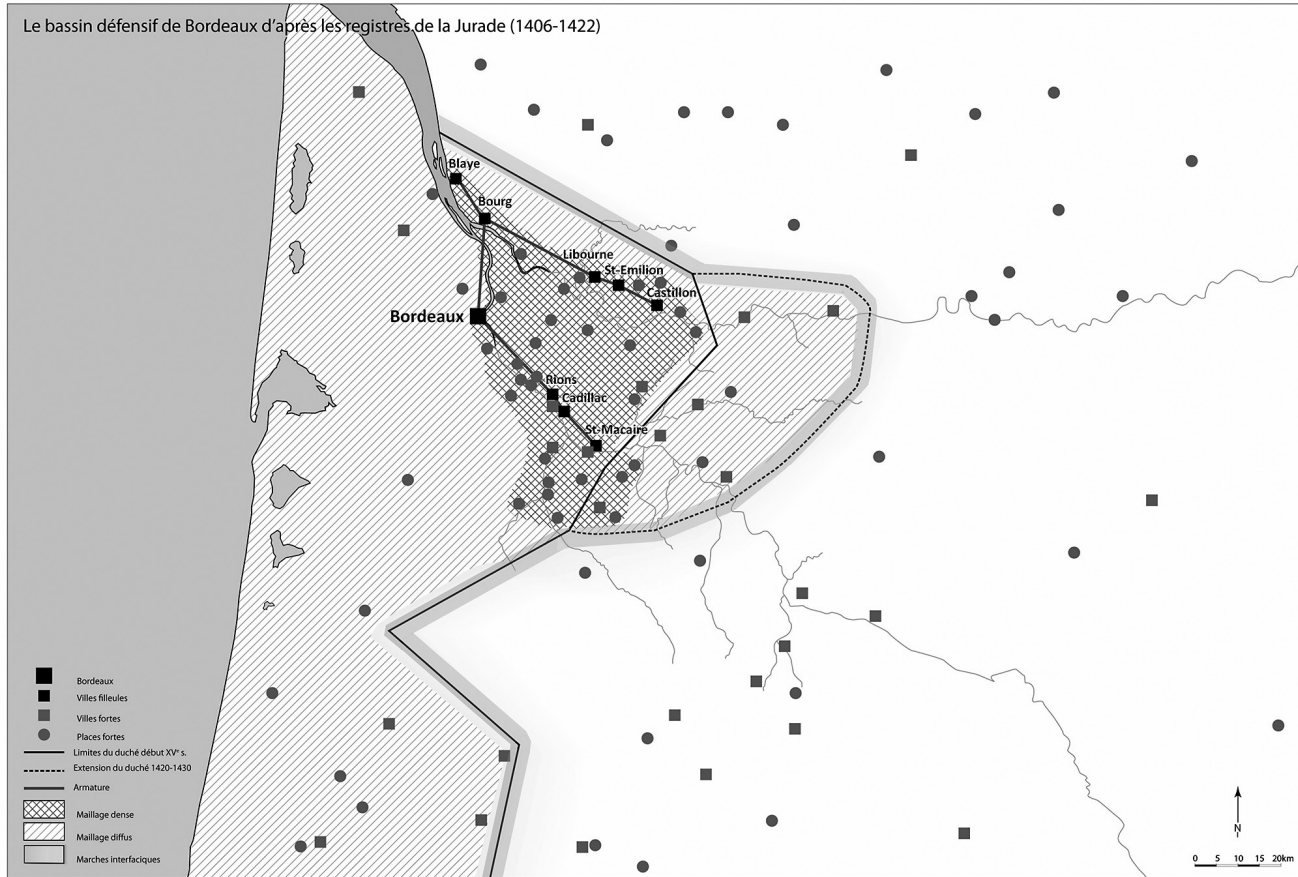
Despite variability from one year to another, these decisions about the war effort (1187 occurrences for 3512 decisions taken at 696 meetings) make up about one in three of the debates of the municipal councillors. Although provisions for the defence of Bordeaux have been omitted from our typology, it should be recalled that the fortification of the central place was fully part of the package: only a city protected by stout and well-armed walls could assert itself as the hinge-pin of a defensive system [Fig. 1–2].

The defence measures taken for the suburbs have likewise been left aside. This vast jurisdiction that the jurade built up over three centuries (approximately from 1250 to 1550) was a response to political rationales: to make it the basis and statement of the borough’s power, hence its marked expansionist character, even in wartime – as with the purchase of the County of Ornon in 1406 although the city’s finances were weakened by the aid provided to Bourg and Blaye besieged by the Duke of Orleans. Apart from the payment of the *droit de bian*, for the protection provided to them by the borough by giving them refuge in the shelter of its ramparts, the inhabitants of the suburbs do not seem to have been subject to military charges and the city does not seem to have established any particular defensive procedures there<sup>9</sup>. Wrongly so, because the routiers of Rodrigo de Villandrando and the troops of the lord of Albret in 1438, then the forces of the lord of Orval during the Battle of Blanquefort (*Male Jornade*), 1 November 1450, were deployed there, infiltrating its vineyards right up to the city.

Beyond this central core, there remain the places cited in a military debate; they have been mapped out to define Bordeaux’s defence catchment area.



<sup>9</sup> A command of Edward III of 1 November 1354 (*Livre des Bouillons*, No. 62, p. 329) speaks of the right of the mayor and jurats to have the inhabitants of the county of Ornon mount the watch in the town and have them maintain ditches, walls and bridges. The municipal registers also mention requisitioning of carts and oxen, but those are the only requirements mentioned as regards involving the suburbs in the war effort.



Map 1. Bordeaux's defensive catchment area (V. Haure, S. Lavaud)

### What was the geographical organisation of Bordeaux's defence catchment area like? How did it fit in with the other territories of the hinterland?

#### An area articulated around its rivers and cities

The scatter of points mapped [Map 1] depicts quite a wide but unevenly covered area that is more or less congruent with the Duchy of Guyenne. In the early 15th century, the duchy, pincered between the French forces and their allies, had lost a lot of ground and was reduced to a broad area around Bordeaux extended by the Landes – itself reduced to a coastal strip including the lands of Dax and Saint-Sever – as far as the lands of Labourd that were still under allegiance to the king-duke. All around were “rebel” lands: the Saintonge, to the north and the *Labrit* – the land of Albret – surrounding the Entre-deux-Mers to the east and the Bazadais to the south, were closely controlled by tenants of the king of France and engendered a war of strongpoints on the borders.

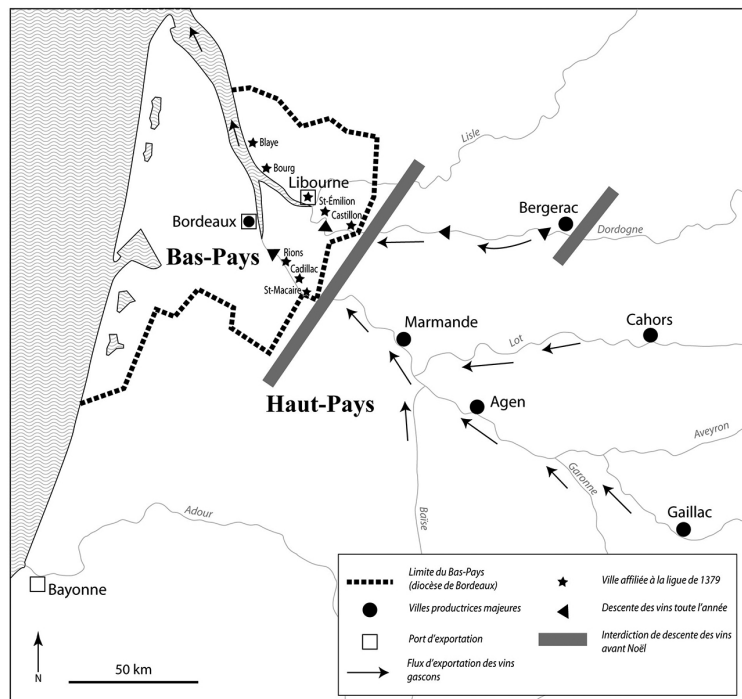
Bordeaux maintained relations with all these peripheral areas under abeyance to France: men, weapons, supplies, intelligence... everything moved around even in times of open conflict. The jurats of Bordeaux knew the towns and strongpoints that were of military value: Soubise, Montendre, Montguyon, Barbezieux, Puynormand to the north, Dax, Saint-Sever, Saint-Cric, Eauze... to the south; they knew them because they were disputed or because the authority they depended on asked for them to be included in a truce, or because they had complained to the jurats of exactions, had appealed for aid, and so on. They made up an area that was known to the jurats – beyond them, their knowledge was very sporadic. While they did not belong to the Bordeaux defence catchment area, their western edges formed its marches. This contact zone was the main front line, where the war of strongpoints was most active; its boundaries were similar to those of the duchy – save in its southern part – and just as shifting.

Within this catchment area, the map shows three separate and hierarchised spatial structures:

- an armature of towns along the two rivers, the Garonne and Dordogne, within a radius of about 60 km around Bordeaux. These towns, especially the affiliates (*filieules*) of Bordeaux (league of 1379), and the river routes they controlled, were eminently strategic for the chief town: as gateways on the river, they barred the advance of enemy troops or served as staging posts and footholds for operations to win back territory;
- a close-knit scarp; this zone, extending and consolidating the central armature, was the focus of most military actions by the jurade and its main area of intervention. In the *Entre-deux-Mers*, as in the Bazadais or Médoc, Bordeaux rested its control of the surrounding countryside (*plat-pays*) on towns and also on strongpoints. These were held by local nobles who regularly provided their support for the jurade's military expeditions or formed a reserve of captains for the town.
- a loosely-knit “soft underbelly” where Bordeaux's military authority was only piecemeal and its interventions sporadic; this was true of all the borderlands of the duchy but it was principally the case of the Landes where the network of strongpoints was very loose and left major gaps for enemy *chevauchées*. This meant the region was a flaw in the defensive system that the French managed to exploit: in 1438 it was by way of the Landes that de Villandrando's routiers invested the suburbs of Bordeaux; in 1450 the lord of Orval's troops followed the same path.

Two major features emerge from this geography of Bordeaux's defence catchment area; first the primacy of towns as the main nodes, with rural castles being merely staging points for controlling the *plat-pays*. This observation might seem obvious enough if it did not sanction a major phenomenon of the Hundred Years War: towns became the main actors in the conflict and, in the process of con-

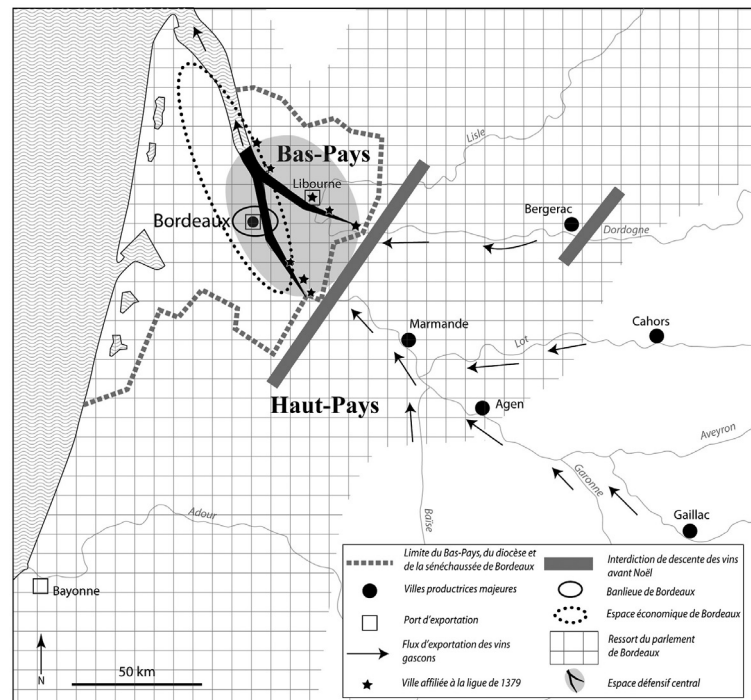
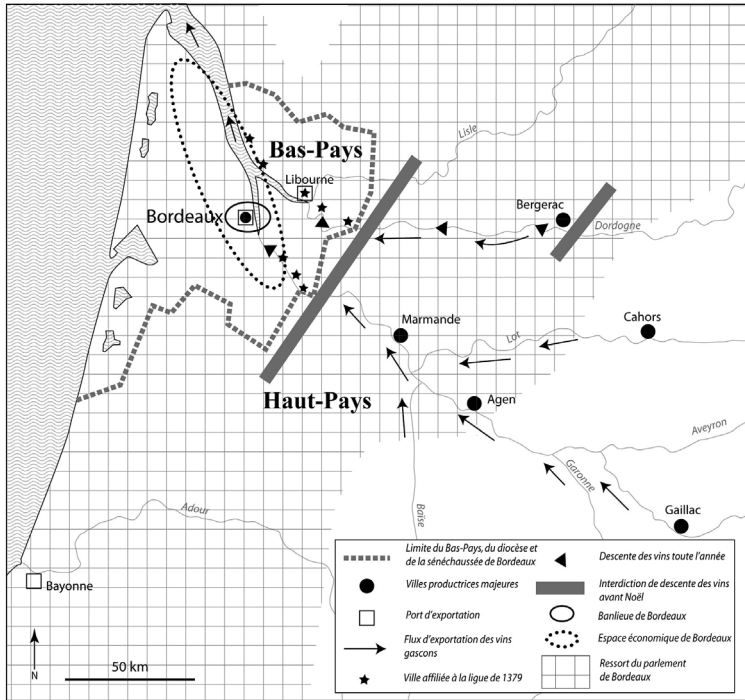




Map 2. Bordeaux's wine supply catchment area (S. Lavaud)

structuring their defence areas, it was first on other towns that they relied. Sharing the same values and the same methods, their joint action was all the more efficient and effective. In this way, Bordeaux articulated its defensive system around a string of towns with its eight *filles* forming the vanguard. The very great majority of these towns lay along the rivers. The rivers – and this is the second observation – formed the backbone of Bordeaux's defence catchment area. Being vital for Bordeaux – and not just in military matters – the two rivers and the Garonne especially ensured the connection both with England and with the allied strongpoints and provided the means of action. Being far faster than overland routes, they enabled communications and made it possible to move men and equipment – even Bordeaux's great bombard – and so support a siege or conduct an offensive. It is understandable that, to keep control of the river, Bordeaux maintained a borough fleet with both a defensive function – to ensure security on the river for both the town and its immediate *plat-pays* – and an offensive function – engaging military operations for the defence or reconquest of the duchy. Its victory at the siege of Bourg in 1406 meant that the borough's river fleet could control the estuary, at least momentarily.





Map 3. Bordeaux's hinterland in the Middle Ages. Nesting and co-spatiality (S. Lavaud)

Map 4. Bordeaux and its hinterland. The vectors of domination (S. Lavaud)

### Interspatialities

Analysis of grape-growing and wine-making as a way of approaching the central position of Bordeaux led me to produce a map of its hinterland that I compared with maps of other categories of space dominated by the duchy's chief town.

Positioned as a transit port for the supply of wine for the overseas commerce with England, Bordeaux was at the head of a very extensive vine-wine catchment area, reaching to the edges of the Pyrenees in the south and of the Massif central to the east [Map 2]. The drainage network – the rivers and their tributaries – formed the structure and the towns the central nodes. The system implemented by Bordeaux, notably by way of its famed privileges, meant this catchment area was organised into three separate spaces:

- a central core, corresponding to Bordeaux and its suburban vineyard; this was the largest vineyard in medieval Aquitaine, both in terms of value and surface area. Being burgesses' property made it a privileged area: its output had priority on both the local and export markets. The grape-growing criterion, here particularly intense and akin to a criterion of centrality contributing to the definition of the city, was combined with the other means of domination to form the basis of Bordeaux's area of influence;

- an area that was largely under sway corresponding to the *Bas-Pays*, limited to the diocese of Bordeaux, which like Bordeaux, benefitted from the privilege of wines being brought downstream year round. The legal unity that it gave rise to bolstered the feeling of belonging to one and the same spatial entity. Even so, Bordeaux placed only the central area of the diocese under its economic tutelage with the vineyard as its vanguard; the borderlands and above all the Dordogne route escaped its control. Accordingly, its power of control had to be ensured through other agents;
- a zone that was under constraint: the *Haut-Pays*, upstream from the diocese, prevented from sending its wines downriver before the feast of Saint-Martin and then Christmas. This protectionism of the Bordeaux growers ensured them control over a vast hinterland, that no other factor could have allowed it, particularly because from the beginnings of the conflict, the *Haut-Pays* became “rebellious” much of it shifting to French allegiance.

This territorialisation engaged in by Bordeaux over grape-growing and wine-making rested on other spaces of domination, thereby generating situations of interspatiality in the form of nesting [Map 3]: the vineyard included within the jurisdiction of the suburb, the area of economic influence included within the *Bas-Pays*, or of co-spatiality: the *Bas-Pays* included within the diocese, becoming the senechalcy of Bordeaux after the French reconquest; the *Haut-Pays* encompassed within the Généralité de Guyenne (1523), itself adjacent to the jurisdiction of the Bordeaux Parlement. It was this embedding of territories that enabled Bordeaux to be a ‘co-spatiality switching mechanism’, to accumulate the control functions and perpetuate its status as chief town at the head of a hinterland tailored for it.

In what way did the defensive criterion help it in this? What does the comparison of defence catchment area and hinterland reveal [Map 4]?

The first overall observation when they are compared is that co-spatiality is only partial between the two entities and their interleaving is only apparent in their central spaces. The peripheral zones under tutelage do not overlap: the grape-growing *Haut-Pays* was under the enemy yoke, thereby legitimating the economic sanction of privileges that became a weapon officialised by the king-duke in 1373. The Landes escaped Bordeaux’s economic hold and that probably contributed to the weakness of its military tutelage. Conversely, in the central armature formed by the rivers and the towns, the two vectors of influence were indeed juxtaposed. Admittedly the extent and nodes of control were not entirely alike: Bordeaux’s area of economic influence developed ribbon-like along the Garonne not extending more than 20 km or so upstream and 40 km or so downstream. Its defensive system covered a larger area, relying on the two rivers and on the whole of the urban network, while extending farther inland

by way of strongpoints. This zone where Bordeaux's forms of domination were compounded corresponded approximately to this mixed entity that was formed by the *Bas-Pays* and the diocese, and then the seneschalcy after the French reconquest. The chief town, for which this space under its tutelage was vital, successfully used all its means of action – ecclesiastical, political and military parameters offsetting the voids left by the economic hold – to assert its framing power and ensure its unity. The sources of this cohesion were the same defence of the Anglo-Gascon cause, the same desire to derive substantial profit from the viticultural manna protected by the privileges of Bordeaux and the same 'sacred way', the river route, the link that made relations and trade feasible.

**The defensive criterion applied to other urban cases:  
What comparisons can be made?**

**The opening-up of the defensive space**

Few historians have invested this field of research that requires military history to be combined with the history of geographical space. And when they have, it has been on a different scale from that of cities: on the scale of the region or the political entity, as in Germain Butaud's thesis on the Comtat-Venaissin<sup>10</sup> or Jean-Luc Fray's thesis on the market towns of Lorraine<sup>11</sup>; on the scale of village communities, as Vincent Chalet was able to summarize for the South of France during the Hundred Years War<sup>12</sup>. The Haut-Quercy and Rouergue, neighbouring regions that have been the subject of two fairly recent theses<sup>13</sup>, provide interesting cases for comparison with the Bordeaux area: the same long Franco-English conflict, the same involvement on the Aquitaine front albeit in opposing camps. Both studies address war from the point of view of communities – urban communities only for Quercy, primarily rural communities but urban ones too for Rouergue. While the former deals with the defensive system of towns in their hinterland, it does not offer a spatial reading or a cartography, except for the study of circulation of intelligence and information. The latter, though, tackles the question of defensive space head-on and itemises the ordering and the territorialisation effected by the central place.

In both Rouergue and Quercy, the towns were implicated in the conflict at the request of the king of France who wanted them to be part of his military set-up. It was for them to ensure security in their hinterlands by pursuing Anglo-Gascon detachments or routiers there. Concentrating instead on their own defences, the towns shunned this mission preferring to trust in the seneschal. The separate negotiations they conducted with the companies divided the defence of the province even further. It was only at the enjoiner of the seneschal and the councillors of Cahors that the communities consented in

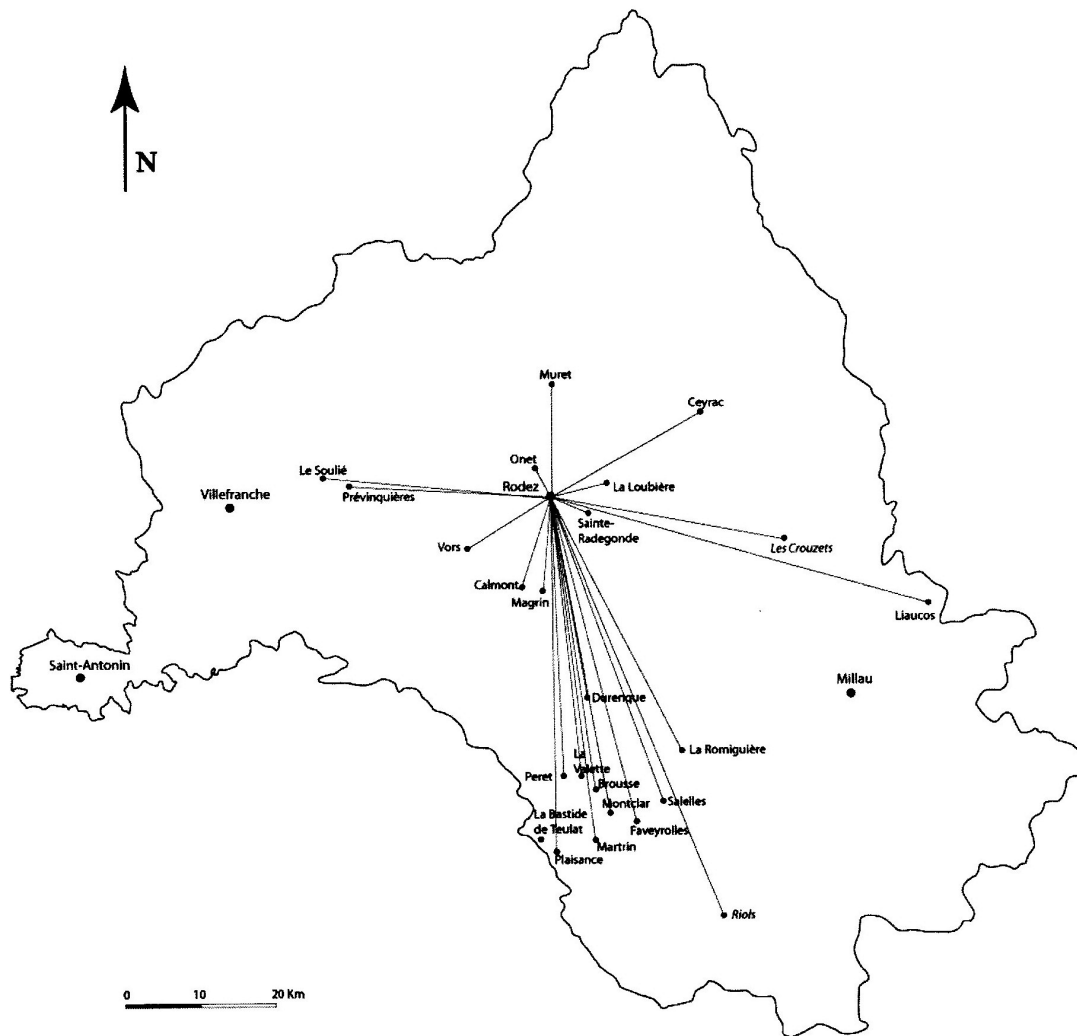


<sup>10</sup> G. Butaud, *Guerre et vie publique en Comtat-Venaissin et à Avignon (vers 1350-vers 1450)*, PhD thesis supervised by M. Zerner, Université de Nice, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> J.-L. Fray, *Villes et bourgs de Lorraine. Réseaux urbains et centralité au Moyen Âge*, Clermont-Ferrand, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> V. Challet, *Villages en guerre les communautés de défense dans le Midi pendant la guerre de Cent ans*, "Archéologie du Midi médiéval" Vol. 25 (2007).

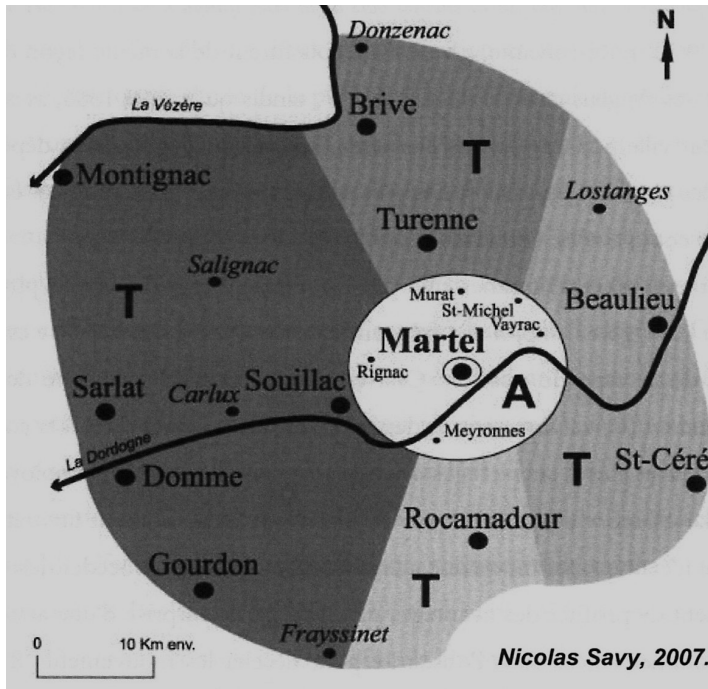
<sup>13</sup> G. Ferrand, *op. cit.*; N. Savy, *Les villes du Quercy en guerre. La défense des villes et des bourgs du Haut-Quercy pendant la guerre de Cent ans*, PhD thesis, supervised by J. Theurot, Université de Franche-Comté 2009;



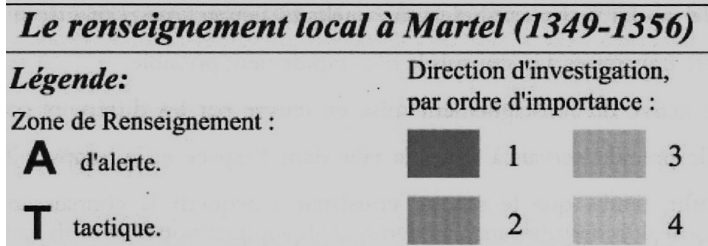
Map 5. The territorial catchment area of aid for the lances supplied to the City of Rodez in 1445. Photo from: G. Ferrand, *Communautés et insécurité en Rouergue à la fin du Moyen Âge*, PhD thesis supervised by M. Mousnier, Université de Toulouse II 2009, p. 358

1346 to an agreement on mutual support. Even so, the conduct of the war remained the domain of royal officers who, in their endeavour to pacify the *plat-pays*, used the men and capital supplied by the council, who saw solely to the fortification of their own town. Accordingly there were few defensive catchment areas of any size, but rather community spaces: legal jurisdictions, areas for food-production and other uses, and so on, often referred to as “pays” and to which the war added a defensive dimension. Only a few agglomerations of higher standing saw their influence spread wider, not without running up against or encroaching on peripheral territories at the cost of much strain and conflict. For example, Villefranche-de-Rouergue, a bastide founded in the middle of the 13th century, that at the same time as it undertook the reconstruction of its walls in the 1340s set to ordering the space around it; with the support of the seneschal of Rouergue, it secured the demolition or control of castles that fitted in poorly if at all with its defensive system<sup>14</sup>. Rodez, as another example, took advantage of the stationing of Lances (royal troops billeted on and paid by communities) in 1445 to consolidate its territorial hold [Map 5]. The collection of the land tax (*taille*) that it organised throughout

<sup>14</sup> Similar instances of destruction of places that could not be defended or forming a threat for an urban community are found for the Comtat-Venaissin, especially at Carpentras; see G. Butaud, *op. cit.*, p. 457.



Map 6. Local intelligence at Martel, 1349-1356. From: N. Savy, *Les villes du Quercy en guerre. La défense des villes et des bourgs du Haut-Quercy pendant la guerre de Cent ans*, PhD thesis, supervised by J. Theurot, Université de Franche-Comté 2009, p. 292



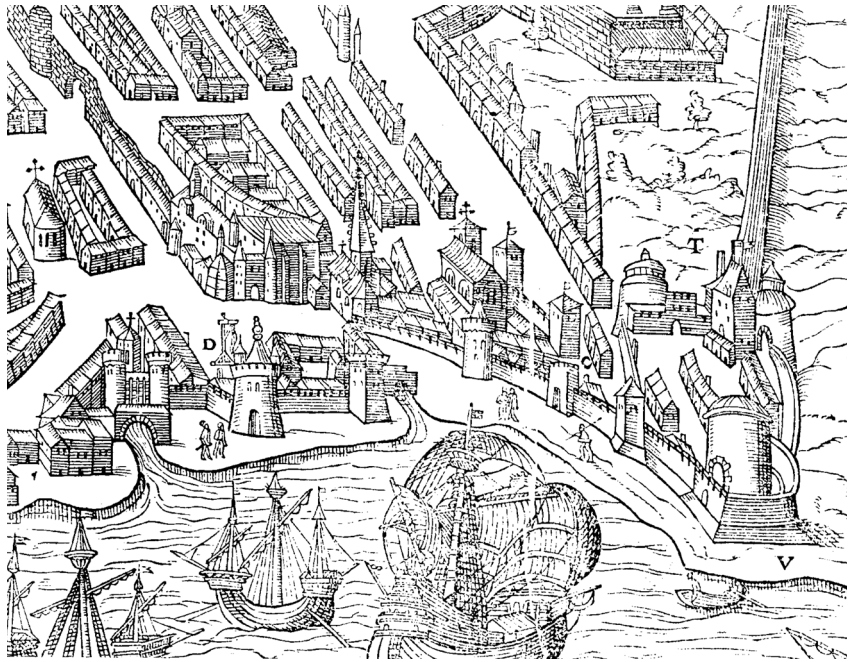
Rouergue and the Haute-Marche, by the decisions of the Three-Estates, for compensation of the five lances assigned to it, enabled it to exercise greater sway over the communities subject to contribution and so fortify its defence catchment area.

Another dimension of the defensive space is that of the collection and sharing of intelligence. Nicolas Savy explored this, especially for Martel (Lot), identifying two types of search for intelligence locally: first tactical intelligence yielding knowledge of the regional situation so it could be anticipated locally; at Martel [Map 6], the zone covered by investigations was quite extensive, especially in its western part (up to 60 km or so) as it was the most threatened by Anglo-Gascon troops. A second intelligence action was the raising of the alert when the town faced an imminent danger: the consuls sent spies “out of the town” tasked with collecting intelligence that might help with defence. Their search area was then limited to the town’s immediate hinterland.

These were all ways of understanding and representing the defensive space and reviewing its different scales and actors. Although the perspectives developed for Rouergue and Quercy are promising



Fig. 3. A. du Pinet, Detail from the *Vif portrait de l'acité de Bourdeaux*, Château Trompette, by 1564 Château Trompette was built at the north-east corner of the city walls by King Charles VII after the French conquest, beginning in 1454. Supplemented by a series of military engineering works in the south of Gascony and downstream from Bordeaux, it was intended with the fort du Hâ to cut off the city from its English ally and to oversee the population that was recalcitrant to French domination. Photo: BNF, imprimé G16



and illustrate the range of possibilities, it is a pity they have not been set against other types of territories; but the limited extent of their defensive space, often just the neighbouring territory, attests in itself to the overall weakness of the sway and the area of influence of these towns, even for central places of the province like Cahors, Rodez and Millau. And the fact is that what these approaches show in their comparison with Bordeaux, more than any similarities in the modes of territorialisation, is above all how singular the chief town was.

### **Bordeaux, a singular case?**

The hinterland of Bordeaux has no equivalent regionally and one would probably have to seek among other large cities in the Middle Ages of western Europe – chief towns of principalities would probably be the most relevant level – to find something comparable. The polarisation of this vast space under its tutelage was the outcome of deliberate construction over at least two centuries by the jurade which, barely had it been formed, set about this process of territorialisation: formation of the suburbs, establishment of wine privileges, and so on. The outbreak of conflict was a real opportunity for the borough: in exchange for its role in the defence of the duchy, it secured an autonomy of action worthy of Italian or Flemish city-states. Its hinterland was cut out to match its ambitions and its capacity for action while its forms of domination constrained regional territorial dynamics over the long term; this was the case of viticultural geography and of the still “single-headed” urban network.

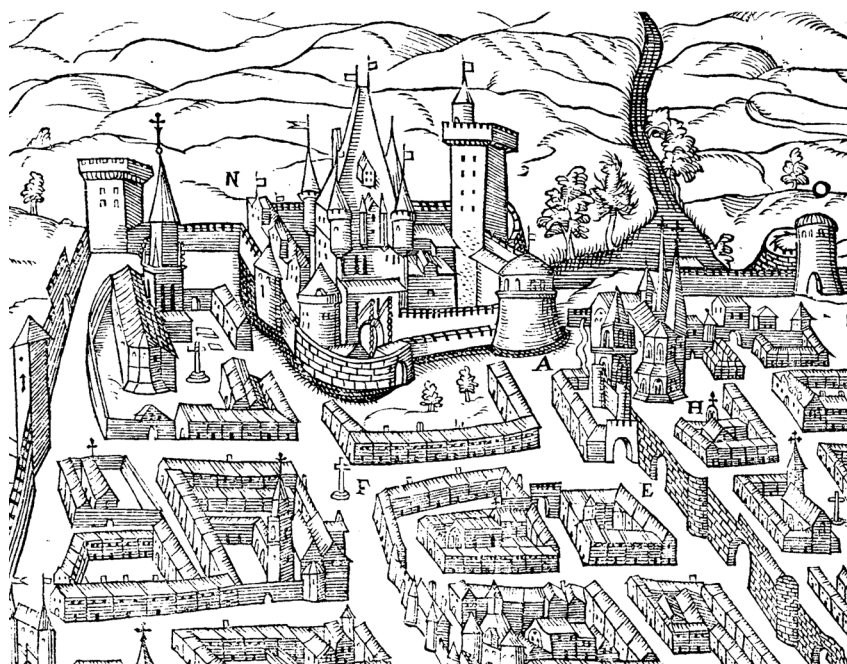


Fig. 4. A. du Pinet, Detail from the *Vif portrait de la cité de Bourdeaux*, Fort du Hâ, by 1564. The fort du Hâ is contemporaneous with château Trompette and like it designed to ensure the defence of the city on its western front and control its land routes. But it was also the residence of the king and his representative, as attested on the plan by its great size. Photo: BNF, imprimé G16

The defensive criterion was indeed a decisive agent in the polarisation of the space dominated by Bordeaux. While it did not have a true hinterland effect like the viticultural criterion that encompassed an entire drainage basin, it did contribute to more closely knitting Bordeaux's area of influence over the Bas-Pays. It also consecrated Bordeaux's status as a central location, both as a strongpoint and as a military power. The French conquest and the change of allegiance led to the king taking back military prerogatives. The two fortresses he built there (château Trompette, Fig. 3–5, and the fort du Hâ, Fig. 4–6) are marks of the monarch's recovery of *regalia*: while they reinforced the city's defensive capacities before the bastion developments of the 16th century transformed it into a fortified town, they also served the purpose of overseeing it so as to subject it. The jurade, in these times of royal peace, no longer had the opportunity or the aptitude to exert its military sway over its area of influence. Even so, the ties it had formed in this way remained through other forms of domination, especially administrative and judicial forms.

Ultimately this study is a call for further exploration of this defensive criterion in enquiries into the making of territories. Beyond the heuristic and cognitive virtues of comparison that its development might bring, it is also a way to return to the city, because it seems limiting, when working on the making of towns, to confine ourselves to what goes on within their walls. To question the centrality, the area of domination, the modes of polarisation of a city is to give oneself keys with which to better interpret the formation of urban space, in terms of its material structures and the ideology and politics underpinning



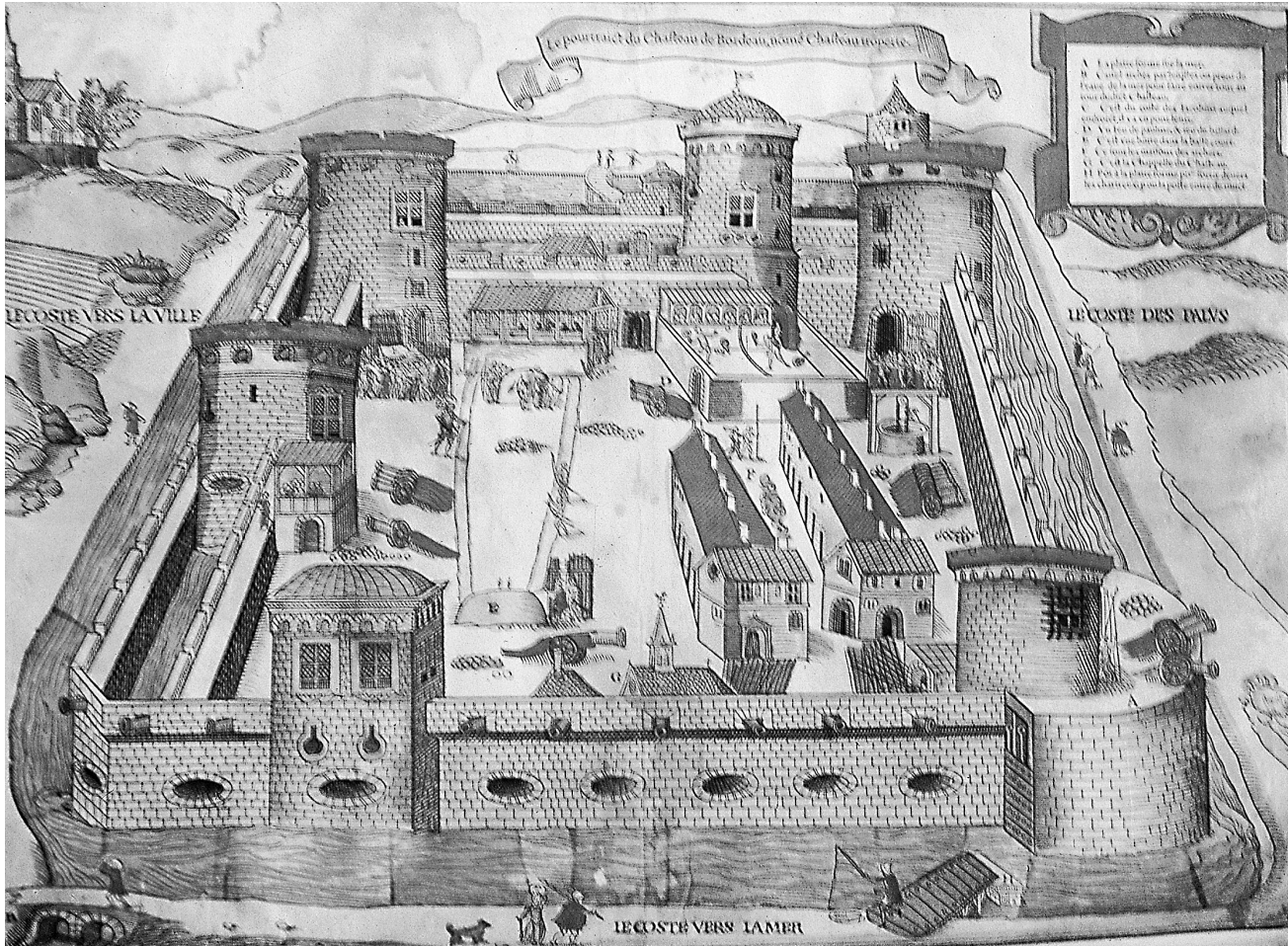


Fig. 5. *Le pourtrait du Chateau de Bordeaux, nomé Chateau tropette*, anonymous, mid-16th century; perspective view with the north to the right. Photo: Archivio di Stato, Turin, *Atlas Architettura Militare*, Vol. 1, f° 22



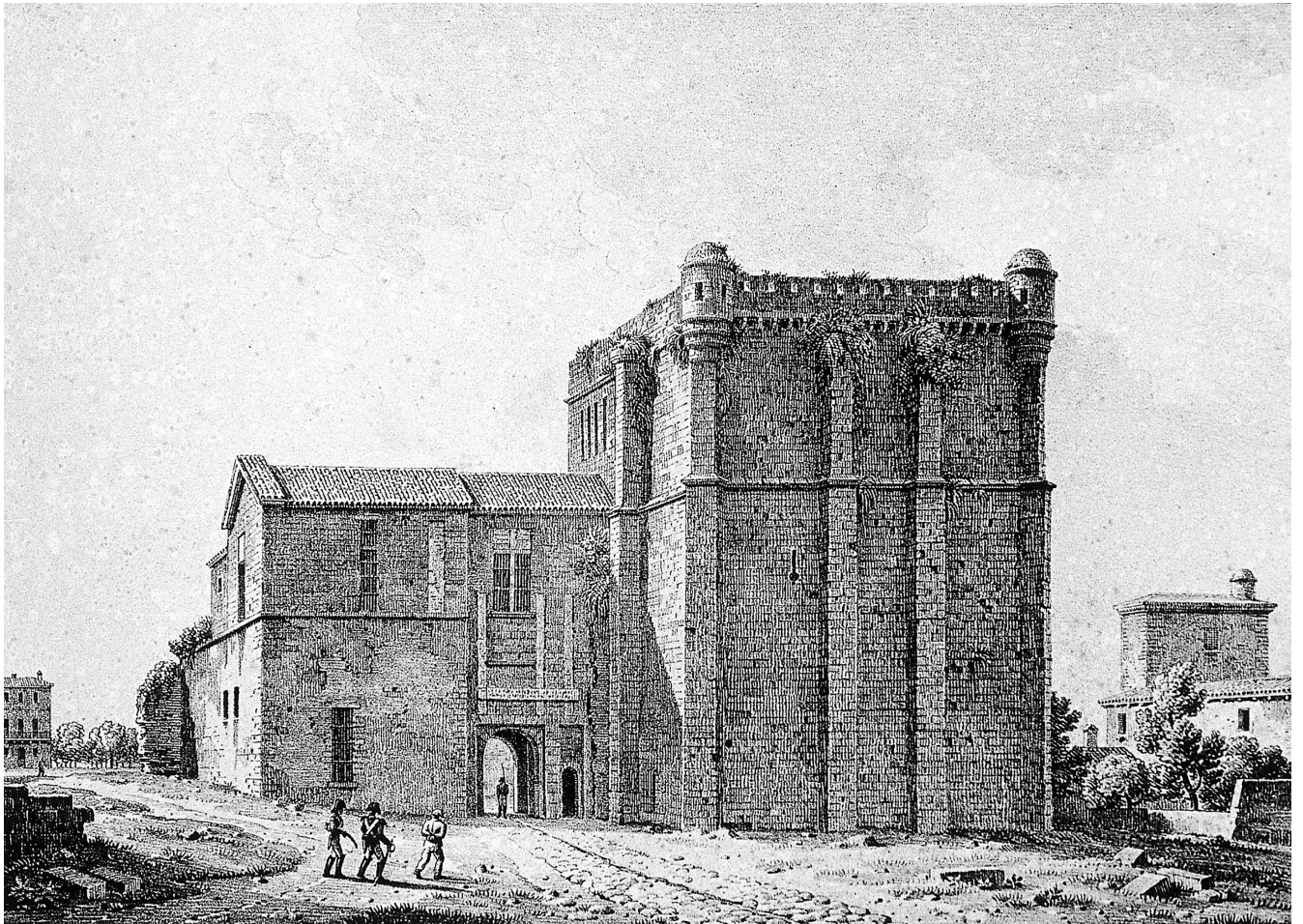


Fig. 6. View of the keep of the fort du Hâ, lithograph Bourgeois, 1817. Photo: Archives Municipales Bordeaux, III-S, No. 30

it. Thus, for instance, the great *enceinte de réunion* built by Bordeaux in the 14th century only really becomes meaningful when measured against the borough's territorial ambitions. Urban historians must be mindful to look beyond the walls and to let their view encompass the surrounding countryside, the *plat-pays* without which the city could not live and develop.

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**Słowa kluczowe**

Bordeaux, wojna stuletnia, zaplecze obronne, defence catchment

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**Keywords**

Bordeaux, Hundred Years War, defence catchment, hinterland

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### Summary

#### **SANDRINE LAVAUD (Bordeaux Montaigne University) / From defence catchment area to hinterland. Bordeaux during the Hundred Years War**

Buoyed by a favourable political and economic tide, Bordeaux asserted itself in the late Middle Ages as the capital of Anglo-Gascon Aquitaine. To impart substance to its dreams of city-statehood, it intensified the construction of its hinterland and tightened its hold on it. This heightened dominance, which took on multiple forms, brought areas under its tutelage. Historians examining modes of polarisation and the resulting formation of spaces may have recourse to a number of indicators of the process of territorialisation. In an earlier study I was able to gauge the relevance of grape-growing and wine-making as an approach to Bordeaux's centrality. The present study takes up this same perspective of appraising Bordeaux's hinterland but adopts a fresh indicator – the defensive criterion. The main corpus of sources, Bordeaux's municipal debates in the early decades of the 15th century, paints a picture of the defensive catchment area in a major phase of extension at a time when hostilities in the Hundred Years War were intensifying in Guyenne and the chief town had to ensure the defence of the duchy and at the same time become a strongpoint. In their war effort, the jurats of Bordeaux had all at once to assemble armed forces, conduct military operations, multiply negotiations and diplomatic initiatives and consolidate alliances. All these actions were recounted in the municipal registers and contributed to the construction of a defensive system. Reconstructing the components and spatial dynamics of this system and mapping it is a way for historians to measure the territorialisation it gave rise to and its part in the construction of Bordeaux's hinterland.