The urbanization of the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire : a juridical and functional approach to town life in Roman Gaul, Germania inferior and Britain

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CHAPTER 2: THE DAWN OF URBANISM

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the development of urbanism in the north-western provinces. In the first section, we will review the meaning of the term 'urbanization', the process through which a part of the population engaged in secondary or tertiary economic activities (artisanal, commerce, services) gather at a particular site and develop ways of life that differ from those performed in the countryside.[79] We will also look at how new archaeological evidence has changed our perspective on the emergence of this phenomenon in north-western Europe. In fact, from the 19th century until not so long ago, scholars thought that the emergence of urbanism in this region started in the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, with the so-called 'civilization of *oppida*', often considered to mark the beginnings of urbanism and proto-state communities in Europe.[80] This phenomenon was also accompanied by another novelty, that is the appearance of coinage and writing, which suggested an increased social complexity and the existence of state authority. Nowadays scholars, thanks to new evidence, agree that several centres with 'urban' features (implied by their size, density of population and structure of occupations, zonation) of temperate Europe began to appear much earlier than previously thought, that is between the end of the 7th and the 5th centuries BC, at least in the area stretching from Závist in Bohemia to the Heuneburg in Southern Germany and Bourges in Central France.[81] In our study area, the watershed is the 4th century BC, when we see (except in Germania Inferior and the Western alpine provinces) an increasing number of people living side by side in nucleated settlements. However, the evidence in our area of study also suggests that a further increase in settlement hierarchy gives rise, from *c*. 2nd century BC – to a new category of settlements (so-called *oppida* and/or polyfocal complexes) in both Gaul and Britain.[82] They could be very extensive, densely packed and be occupied for many generations. They could also control very large agricultural hinterlands - which in fact appear to be devoid of contemporary nucleated settlements.

After looking at how the character of Greco-Roman urbanism has had a huge impact on archaeologists' and historians' understanding of what is 'urban', creating faulty assumptions

[79] The complexities involved in the study of urbanism have already been introduced in chapter 1. In the second part of this section we will nonetheless return to the issue because it is important to be aware of the many misunderstandings and prejudices that bedevil this field of study. The challenge of looking at this phenomenon on such a large scale is bound to suffer from disparities in quantity and quality of investigations, chronologies and vocabularies. Variation in assemblages, settlement patterns (e.g. hillforts and lowland sites), and quality of the evidence which is the result of the unevenness in the scale, nature and distribution of fieldwork requires scholars to be cautious when interpreting the evidence (Millett 1995).

[80] Fernández-Götz *et al.* eds 2014. Also see Déchelette 1914; Collis 1984; see also Guichard *et al*. eds 2000; Sievers and Schönfelder eds. 2012; Wells 1984; Collis 1980 and 1984; Fichtl 2002; Moore *et al.* 2013; Kaenel 2006; Brun *et al.* 2000: 83.

[81] Fernández-Götz *et al.* eds. 2014. See also Augier *et al.* 2012; Chaume and Mordant 2011; Krausse ed. 2008; Krausse 2010; Milcent 2007. Thus, urbanism in Temperate Europe was characterised since its dawn by important discontinuities and gaps both in terms of temporal and spatial distribution.

[82] These terms are ultimately equivalent, in the sense that often the earliest examples of *oppida* show a polyfocal character.

that have long undermined the study of the development of urbanism, we will look at the most recent discoveries that forced us to change our views on the subject. Thus, we will see that the emergence of urbanism cannot be simply explained with a core-periphery or diffusionist model (as in the case of other phenomena, i.e. orientalizing art, literacy and coinage, which all spread from south to north).[83] The latter is based on the idea that the creation of the Iron Age centres in temperate Europe and the hierarchization of the society in temperate Europe were triggered by long-distance trade (a strong emphasis was placed on the exchange of prestige goods) with Mediterranean societies.[84]

This idea came under criticism as early as the 1980s because of the emphasis put on the causative nature of this process and the disregard of the possibility of an internal process of evolution.[85] It was also observed that societies in the Mediterranean and temperate Europe were more likely to have developed in parallel rather than in sequence.[86] The evidence we now have at our disposal confirms that this model does not stand up to scrutiny.[87] For example, triangular fired-clay loom weights appeared first in Britain and in the Low Countries around the middle of the 1st millennium BC and spread to northern France only later, from *c.* 250 BC.[88] Similarly, long-handled bone or antler 'weaving' combs which were in use in Britain from the later Bronze Age are found sporadically in Picardy and in the Netherlands only from *c*. 500 BC onwards.[89] Finally, the earliest examples of rotary querns known came from eastern Iberia and southern Britain and date to the 5th century BC. They appear to have reached northern France only later, in the 3rd century BC or even early 2nd century BC.[90] It is unclear whether they spread from Iberia to Britain, vice versa, or if they were independently invented in each region.

[83] Bintliff 1984a; and 1984b. It remains a thorny problem to define the extent to which external influence can account for introducing the idea of city or nucleated settlements (which, *per se*, could be spread in multiple ways). However, it would be certainly fallacious to believe that indigenous communities were only passive recipients of this process. In Gaul and Britain, already from the 4th century BC, economic changes (e.g. a 'rural expansion', i.e. an optimization and increase in *agricultural* production) possibly driven by environmental changes and intensified by an increasing social awareness and *complexity,* had already prepared the grounds for the development of substantial central places (Buchsenschutz *et al.* 2012).

[84] Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978); Rowlands (1984).

[85] Bintliff 1984a,;1984b; 2016.

[86] It is possible that, as an over-reaction to the diffusionist paradigm, scholars have radicalized the discourse by arguing that the nature and process of urbanization in Western Europe was independent and substantially different from that of the Mediterranean (Collis 2014; Pion 2010; Kaenel 2006). For example, Collis writes that they should be seen as 'two distinct zones evolving in parallel with one another. In the south there is the development of the "city-state" and in the north what I have termed the "tribal state", until in the Roman period the two fuse to form the *civitates* as the basic administrative building block of the provinces in Gaul and southern Britain' (Collis 2014: 15; see also Collis 2000). Leaving aside the problem of using the word 'tribal' in this context (to which we will come back later on), this idea also does not adequately take into account the territorial states (*ethnos*) that developed in the Mediterranean world, e.g. the kingdom of Macedonia, and Sparta and, in Italy, the Etruscans. As we will soon see, very large political entities at this time are quite exceptional, but they are not particular to one region.

[87] Here we will offer a few examples, for more details see Webley 2015.

[88] Gautier and Annaert 2006: 39; Malrain and Pinard 2006; Wilhelmi 1987.

[89] Malrain and Pinard 2006; Tuohy 1999.

[90] Wefers 2011.

We will also see how recent evidence underlines the importance of socio-economic changes which occurred between the 4th and the 3rd centuries BC, a period that several scholars have often seen as 'transitional', squeezed between the time of the *Fürstensitze* and ostentatious elite burials (4th to 5th centuries BC) and that of the *oppida* (2nd to 1st centuries BC).[91] These two centuries were extremely important for the changes they brought to Celtic societies and for their effect on the geopolitics of the Mediterranean world. They coincide with the so-called 'Celtic expansionism', that is, with the incursions of the Celts in Italy and later in the Balkans and Anatolia. During the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, Celts were also hired to serve in foreign armies, including those of Philip II of Macedon (382-336 BC), Alexander the Great (336-323 BC), or in the Carthaginian army; they were also employed in Tarentum and Syracuse.[92]

All these changes, together with a demographic increase, climatic improvement, and rural expansion had an impact on societies, facilitating the expansion of agricultural settlements into previously thinly settled areas, and it is likely that the introduction of the systematic use of the iron-tipped plough and rotary querns helped, too.[93] As Champion recently observed, a developing agriculture and craft specialization could have led to more complex relationships in the acquisition and distribution of commodities, which in turn would have provided new opportunities for accumulating wealth and status to those at the head of these processes.[94] In both Gaul and Britain we see signs of an increased centralization of societies.[95] In southern and central England, communities began to concentrate in highly densely inhabited hillforts ('developed hillforts').[96] In France, on the other hand, we witness first the creation of 'special' places which are chosen as central places and that may evolve into the site of an ancient sanctuary.

2.1 The process of urbanization

2.1.1 Iron Age '*oppida*': terminology and problematics

In chapter 1 we discussed how difficult it is to give a clear definition of the word 'city' and how ancient words such as *'oppidum'* or *'vicus'* are often characterized by semantic inconsistency. For example, Caesar often employs the word '*oppidum*' to indicate a prestigious and fortified indigenous site (e.g. Bibracte, Alesia, Gergovia) while the word *'vicus'* usually indicates a less exceptional or undefended site; however, ambiguities and problematic passages

[91] Buchsenschutz *et al.* 2012: 295.

[92] Livy, XXX, 21, 3-4; Diodorus Siculus XV, 70; Xenophon, Hellenica, II, I, 20/32. This is how we can explain the presence of Macedonian and Punic coins in Gaul.

[93] Haselgrove and McCullagh 2000: 188.

[94] Champion 2016: 155-156.

[95] Here, centralization is intended as the process through which control over the economy is increasingly held in the hands of the elite or a ruling class.

[96] Crellin *et al.* 2016; Haselgrove and Moore eds 2007: 24.

warn us against drawing any hasty conclusions.[97] As we have concluded in chapter 1, the word *'oppidum'* is very vague and designates a 'settlement' that was a central place to a community, even of a certain amplitude, both in Italy and abroad. Titus Livius records that the Celts founded an *oppidum*, Aquileia, and his passage has been interpreted as proof that the Celts - already in the 2nd century BC - had a clear political idea of urban centres.[98]

Archaeologists and historians have applied the term *'oppidum'* indiscriminately by assigning it to all kind of fortified hilltops, even when they were very unlikely to have been political centres of any communities.[99] The origins and dynamics of this phenomenon - also because of the conceptual and terminological problems mentioned above - are still a matter of debate. Far from mitigating the controversy, the multiplied evidence we have seems to complicate our understanding: fortified *oppida*, large agglomerations in plains, sanctuaries, feasting enclosures, aristocratic residences, they all demonstrate a great variability in settlement structures and patterns (see Figure 2).[100]

During the 1980s a number of important excavations were carried out in France, some of which revolutionized our view of pre-Roman temperate Europe. We have already mentioned the excavations at Bibracte, but a further major discovery concerned the sites of Aulnat in Auvergne and Levroux in Berry. Further remarkable excavations have brought additional contributions in the last 25 years.[101] These discoveries led to the disclosure of a new category of unwalled, relatively large inhabited sites (occupying areas of up to 30 ha). These central places could also be characterized by public spaces (roads, squares, sanctuaries) and other functional 'urban' features that we will examine more in detail below.

In the last 30 years, this field of study has made significant progress and numerous international conferences and meetings have increased the quantity and the quality of the evidence at our

[97] Nouvel 2010. The term *oppidum* - we should not forget – has been used to designate the earliest cities in Italy south of the Alps (Tarpin 1999). For the pitfalls of using these terms see Buchsenschutz 1984. See also Fichtl 2002; Peyre 1979; Tarpin 2008: 15-18.

[98] In Pliny's work the conquest of the tribe's *oppidum* entails its submission. This concept is important when looking at the process of annexation of conquered land by the Romans: it would take more time to conquer those areas that did not have definite and large communities or developed, central *oppida* (e.g. Aquitania, Wales and North England).

[99] This issue has already been raised by Woolf 1993, who pointed out how the term *oppida* could not be seen as a coherent category of settlements due to the large variability between sites. Given the very broad meaning of the word '*oppidum*' (which is usually reserved to upland sites occupied during the last two centuries BC), modern scholars adopted a new vocabulary, with which we will soon be acquainted. In the British literature the archaeological jargon distinguishes between 'hillforts' (unpretentious upland sites that show little evidence of occupation), central places that show more sites of occupation and sophistication ('developed hillforts') and '*oppida*' or 'polyfocal complexes', which usually date to the Late Iron Age and *where the elite presence is strong. The word* 'polyfocal complexes' should be preferred over '*oppidum*' because it is more inclusive (e.g. it may refer to lowland sites).

[100] Poux 2014. In Gallia Belgica, if we were to use Dehn's definition of *oppida* - that is sites larger than 5 ha - around 50 *'oppida'* could be found and they could be dated in conjectural terms to the end of the Iron Age. Most of them are located on the tops of hills or at the bottoms of valleys (Dehn 1961).

[101] Some of the major discoveries of sites on the plain are: Argenton sur Creuse (Indre et Loire), Verdun sur les Doubs (Saône et Loire), Feurs et Roanne (Loire), Besancon and Macon. Also excavations of pre-Roman levels of Roman towns have beencarried out, such as Sens, Auxerre, Tonnerre, Avallon, Dijon and Mirebeau.

disposal. However, there are still some obstacles which make it difficult to reach a general interpretation. We lack, for both Gaul and Britain, a thorough corpus of the whole of these sites (regardless of whether they had walls or not, or they were located upland or lowland). The qualitative and quantitative heterogeneity of the archaeological information present means that not all places can be understood to the same level of accuracy, including from one epoch to another. The few quantifiable data do not always allow for meaningful statistical analysis, and it is difficult to define an area of study to work on. Other biases are linked to the geomorphology of the sites: while few sites are found on the plateau or the sides of the hills, those lying on the plain are likely to be overrepresented. The difficulty also lies in assessing the contemporaneity of sites, some of which were probably used only for a short time (one or two generations, i.e. 25-50 years) and then abandoned. The reason behind these shifts is not always clear, although they follow the millenary tradition of the population living in these temperate and wet areas.[102]

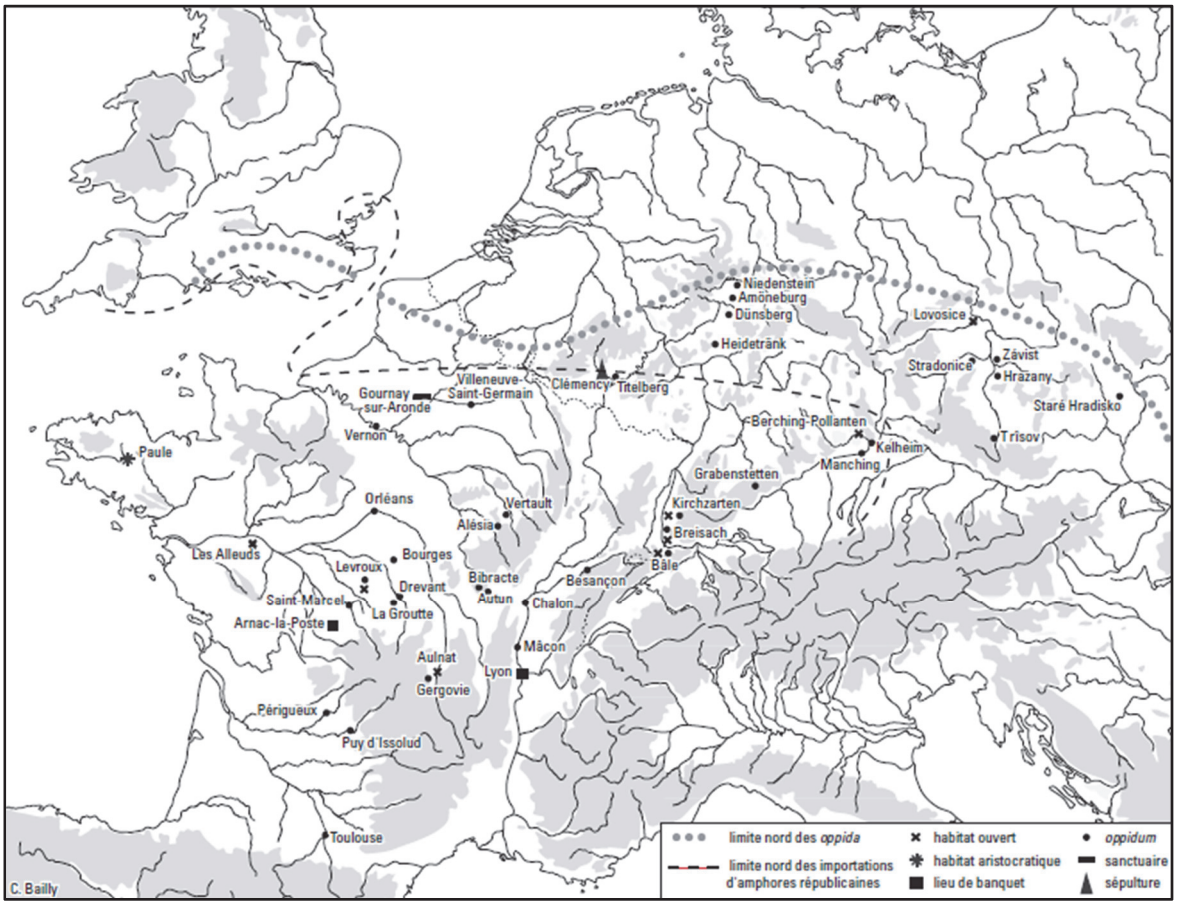

Figure 2: Map showing the large variety of pre-Roman sites in temperate Europe (Buchsenschutz 2004: 339).

Further issues developed from the absence of dialogue between Roman archaeologists and protohistorians and the absence of careful valuation of the meaning that protohistorians give to the concept of the city. Concerning this last point, Matthieu Poux warns us against three main

[102] Brun *et al.* 2000: 84-86.

prejudices that continue to be held by scholars (both classicists and protohistorians) and have a negative effect on the study of this subject:[103]

1. Overestimation of the importance of stone and 'hard material' used for fortifications and/or public buildings. Apart from the largest cities and especially Rome, earthen and wooden constructions remained the dominant forms across the Mediterranean until the 1st century BC. Recent excavations in the Latin colony of Norba Latina provide an interesting example: its cyclopean walls dominate the Latium plain and enclose an agglomeration of 40 ha.[104] However, within the walls, the residential areas were entirely built of perishable materials. This raises a question: how different was a Gaulish (or British) *oppidum* from an Italian *oppidum* of the 2nd century BC?[105]

2. Overestimation of the importance of fortifications. Some fortified sites are called *'oppida'* even though no archaeological record has ever been found within the enclosure (e.g. Swiss Mont Vully). On the other hand, large, unfortified, lowland agglomerations with an undeniably very dense occupation, such as Acy-Romance and Levroux in Gaul or Gussage le Saints in Britain, and many others, are classified as 'open settlements' (a category of sites which is still not well understood and might be more common than previously thought; their subordinate character is often implied but seldom fully explored) even though, on the basis of their demography and material wealth, they remain often unmatched on a regional scale.[106]

3. Different conceptions of 'urbanism' exist, such as 'nomadic urbanism' (where cities last only a few generations) and 'multipolar towns' or 'multifocal settlements' (the cohabitation of competing and complementary centres, often lowland settlements associated with a hillfort). According to Poux, in central France (see Figure 3), from the 3rd century BC we see the appearance of the large polyfocal lowland agglomeration of Aulnat. Whereas the site shows some 'urban' features traditionally assigned to *oppida* (a size of more than 150 ha, significant demography, plot organization, and coexistence of a great number of specialized crafts), the lack of ramparts and the existence of burials inside the settlement preclude identification as a traditional 'city' (according to Classical norms). Poux makes an interesting case when he suggests that during the last third of the 2nd century BC, this agglomeration may have coexisted with the religious site on the plateau of Corent, located about 12 km to the south.[107] There, the leaders displayed war and hunting trophies and organized legendary feasts and coin distributions (described by literary sources and attested by the several tons of animal bones, fragments of italic wine *amphorae* and hundreds of coins, the major part of which seem to have been struck on site).[108]

[103] Poux 2014; Moore and Ponroy 2014.
[104] Quilici Gigli 2003.
[105] Similarly, recent evidence suggest that Mediterranean cities showed large variability in terms of size, layout (e.g. presence of zonation, elite residences, and meeting place) and economic activities (e.g. agriculture, trade, and crafts) (Morgan and Coulton 1997).
[106] Fichtl 2013a; and Moore and Ponroy 2014.
[107] Poux 2012.
[108] See Tchernia 1986; Fichtl 2013b; Loughton 2009.

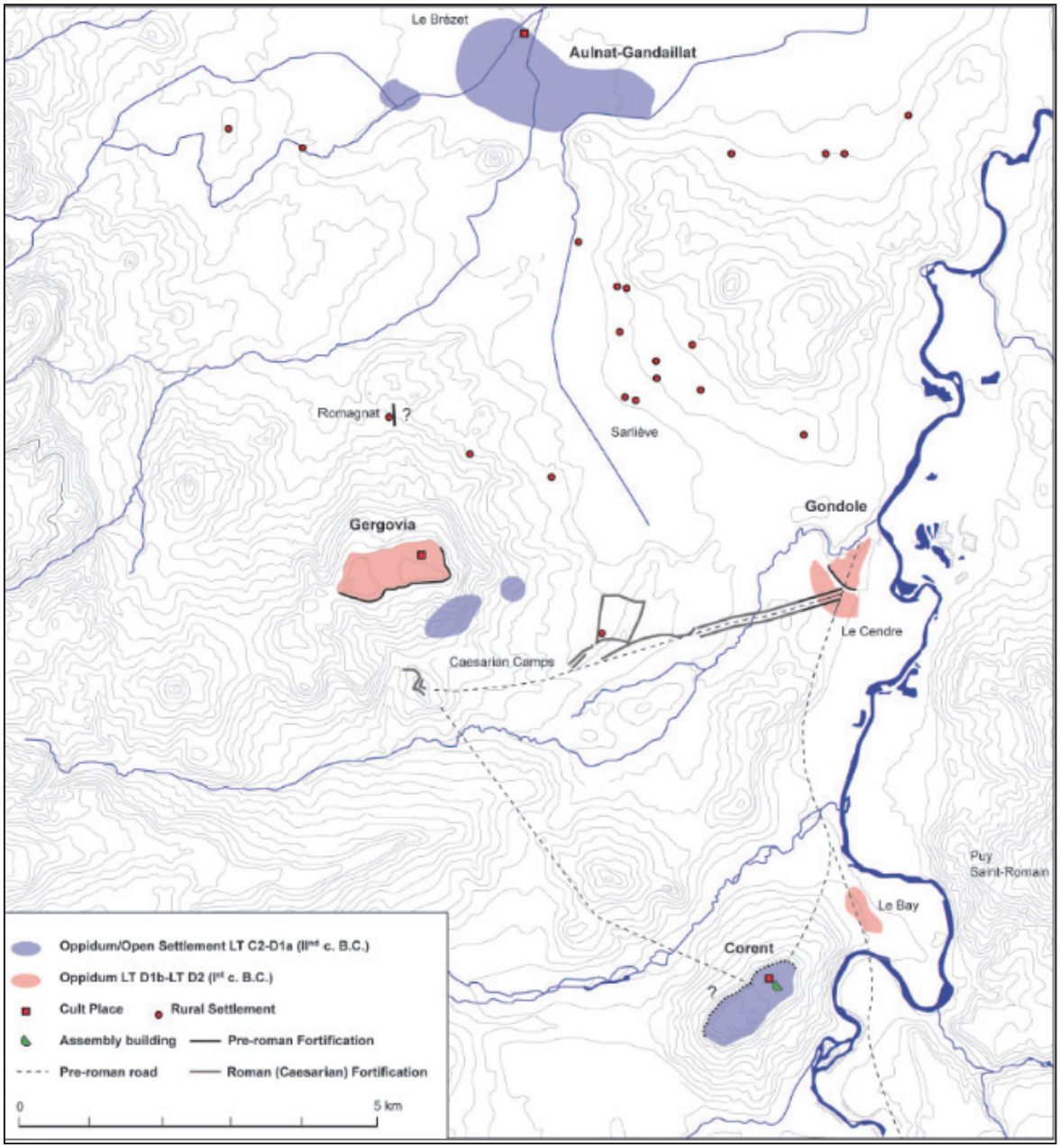

Figure 3: The polyfocal complex of Aulnat/Corent (Poux 2014: 164).

Although the chronology of these sites is not well understood and it is difficult to prove/disprove whether these sites were inhabited simultaneously, it is becoming clear that many early sites had a polyfocal character. In Britain, polyfocal complexes such as Gussage le Saints and the early phases of other *oppida* are characterized by activities dispersed over a wide area within an earthwork.[109] The site of Camulodunum (*c*. 5 km south-west of the Roman colony of Colchester), which was defended by a system of earthworks or dykes (Figure 4), for example, was a complex site with multiple foci which consisted of a number of dykes, enclosures, and other foci dispersed over a fairly large area (*c*. 28 km).[110] In particular, it had two main centres of activity: i. Gosbecks, the site of a large, defended enclosure (known as

[109] Bryant 2007: 70; Haselgrove and Millett 1997: 285.
[110] Radford and Gascoyne 2013: 46; Hawkes and Crummy 1995; Rogers 2008; Millett 1990; Garland 2014.

'Cunobelin's farmstead') and ii. Sheepen, a site where the predominant activities appeared to have been trading and manufacturing. As in Corent, at this site, we find traces of ritually smashed pottery. However, in this case, they are found in a funerary context, suggesting the presence of the elite practice of entertaining and distributing wine to the rest of the community (here, as part of a burial ceremony).[111]

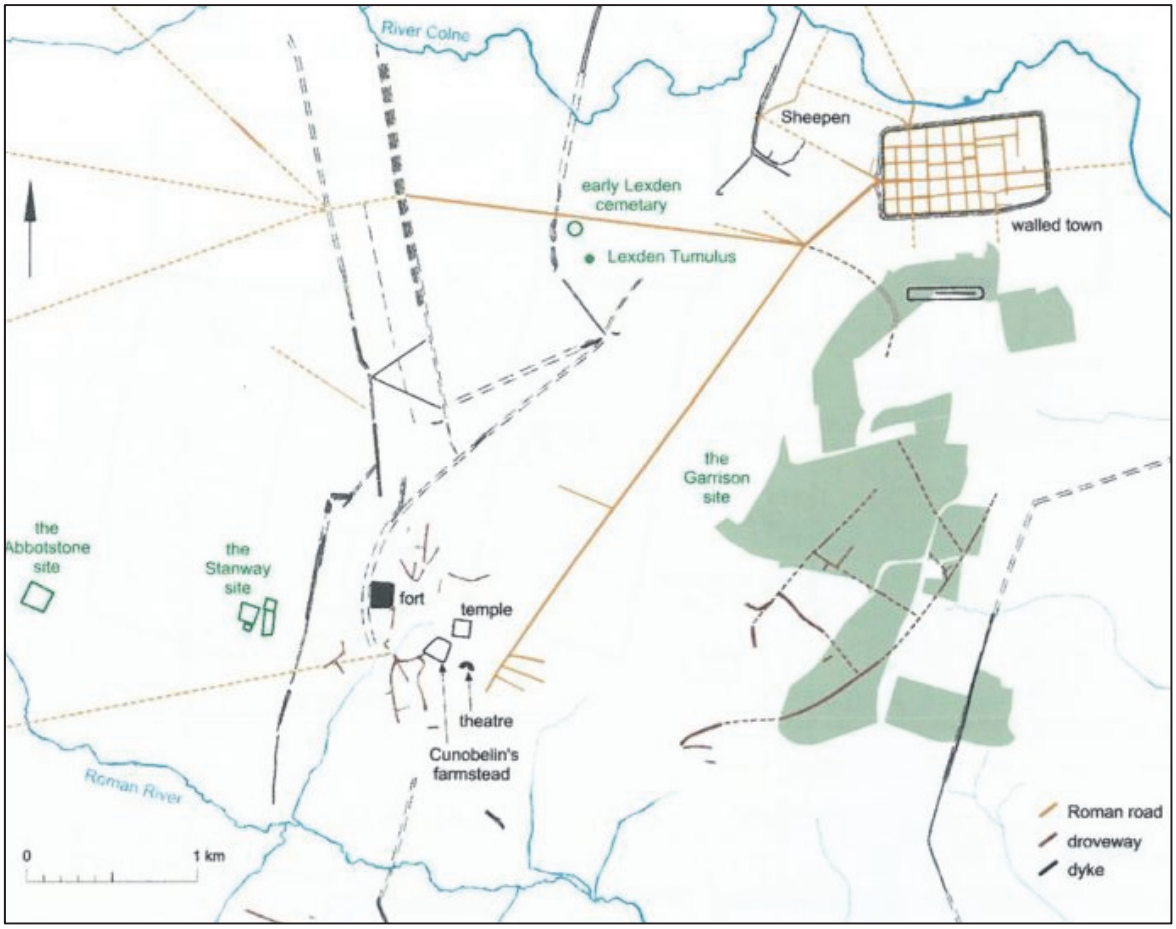

Figure 4: The polyfocal site of Camulodunum (Fulford 2015: 61).

2.1.2 The process of urbanization

The distinguished Camille Jullian never believed that pre-Roman *oppida* could be seen as cities[112]. It was Dechelette, who excavated the site of Bibracte at the beginning of the 20th century, who first recognized the urban character these sites presented.[113] Later, in 1939, the German scholar Werner also argued in favour of a 'Celtic town'.[114] Nevertheless, most scholars, including Braudel, kept looking at *oppida* as villages.[115] In 1980, in an influential

[111] Willis 2007: 121. Smashed pottery is found also in other Late Iron Age sites of Britain, e.g. Stanway (Camulodunum) and Verulamium.

[112] For a thorough historical analysis of the semantic meaning of the term *'oppidum'* as applied by archaeologists and historians see the significant contribution of Lukas 2014 'A Historical-Semantic Approach to the Concept of "Oppidum"'.

[113] Déchelette 1914.

[114] Werner 1939.

[115] See one of Greg Woolf's sub-headings: 'A world of villages' (Woolf 1998).

chapter which was eloquently titled *'Les antecedents: y a-t-il une ville protohistoric?'* Goudineau and Kruta concluded that cities never existed in the protohistorical period.[116] Only a few years later, following the important international excavations carried out from 1984 onwards at Mont-Beuvray and at other sites such as Corent and Moulay, a new series of studies and conferences sanctioned the idea that (at least some) *oppida* might have had 'urban' features.[117]

As we have mentioned in chapter 1, the problem is that many scholars like to make general statements, saying either all *oppida* were towns or none were. In reality, it is more likely that some actually presented 'urban' aspects, while others probably did not. This goes back to the issue of the imprecision of the word '*oppidum*'. If by the term 'city' we mean the Classical or Medieval city, then we can easily exclude that what was called by early historians and archaeologists *'oppidum'* could ever be classified as such (see above the arguments by Poux).[118] However, if we follow a functional definition of city – i.e. 'cities owe their existence to the presence of an array of social and economic activities not related to the rural sphere which demands a concentration of people within a relatively small area' - then the definition might well fit at least some of the *oppida*. For example, the large *oppida* of north-eastern and central Gaul (e.g. Bibracte, Villeneuve-Saint-Germain), which were central places (from juridical, political and religious points of view) of an articulated regional network, would fall into this category.

In this sense, the excavations carried out at the site of Manching (Germany) were a real watershed for protohistorian studies. Scholars were forced to reconsider at least partially their views. In the north-western provinces, a similarly important moment was the discovery of the site of Bibracte, whose walled area extended over 197 ha, and, even though it was not all densely occupied, it had public spaces (streets, roads, and sanctuaries), public infrastructures, and an inhabited area where different economic activities were performed (e.g. crafts and trade) (Figure 5).

The discovery of this and other sites, such as Alesia and Gergovia and other large, fortified, perched settlements discovered all over continental Europe, scattered from the British Isles to Slovakia, will encourage the scenario of the *'*civilization of *oppida'*. Thus, the idea of proto-urbanism gained momentum.

Now, whether some of these *oppida* could be called cities is a secondary matter. It is more important for us to understand how and why they developed in the first place. We have already introduced the debate that began in the 1970s on whether they emerged because of exogenous or endogenous factors. Until then, both French and British scholarship took it as a given that urbanism in north-western Europe was introduced by the Romans. This traditional view was based on a severe lack of data and on preconceptions that supported and promoted the idea of colonization. It was also reinforced by the further emphasis put, during the post-war period, on

[116] Goudineau and Kruta 1980.
[117] Bintliff 1984a; Bintliff 1984b; Collis 1984; Guichard *et al.* eds 2000; Fichtl 2002; Buchsenschutz 2004; Kaenel 2006;
[118] Brun *et al.* 2000: 83.

the ‘concept of stages of human development and general theorizing about influencing social transformations’ as well as by the introduction of neo-evolutionary paradigms.[119] Nowadays, we are re-shaping our view of the genesis of ancient urbanism in temperate Europe. We have anticipated above that town-like places developed long before the emergence of the *oppida* in the 2nd century BC (between the 7th and the 5th centuries BC). More and more evidence indicates that in a few areas of Temperate Europe, several of the so-called *Fürstensitze* of the Late Hallstatt and Early La Téne periods (7th to 5th centuries BC) performed some ‘urban’ functions, but the genesis of this phenomenon is still not completely understood, and it is still matter of debate.[120]

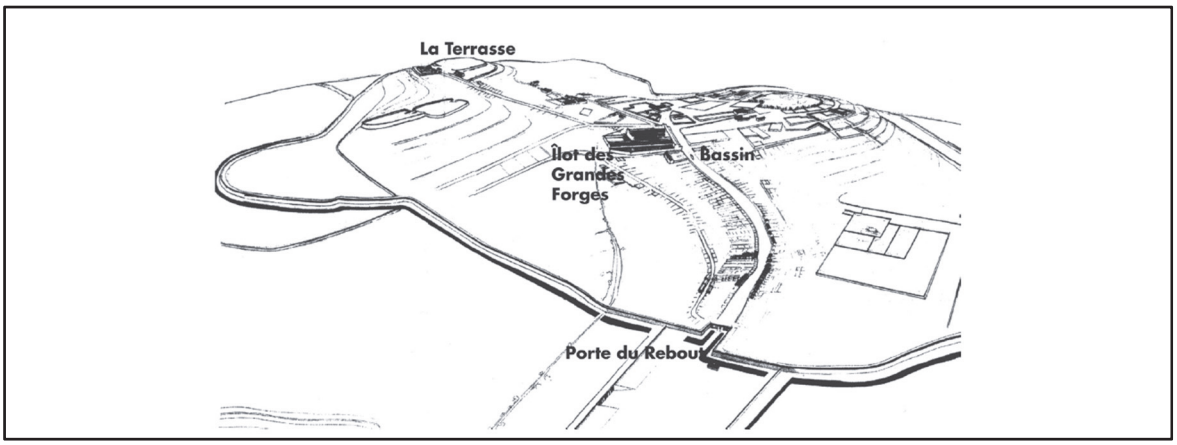

Figure 5: Reconstruction of the *oppidum* of Bibracte (Fernández-Götz *et al.* 2014b: 5).

As mentioned above, by the 1970s a number of voices were being raised against the diffusionist model and a more endogenous theory of urban development was being floated.[121] However, the discourse has radicalized, and some scholars support the idea that Mediterranean and Temperate Europe urban development substantially differed from one another and gave rise to two different urban models. For example, Buchsenschutz writes that the *oppida* of Gaul were characterized by very specific topographic choices (e.g. dominant positions in the landscape) for both defensive and religious reasons (Bibracte, Donnersberg), a gigantic and prestigious wall (significantly larger than Roman ones, and which are very rare in Gaul, as we will discuss in ch. 4), and monumental gates. On the other hand, he claims, Roman urbanism privileged lowland, strategic areas (e.g. along terrestrial or fluvial/maritime routes) and took the form of elite-dominated cities. Pion adds that the urban ‘model’ of the ‘oppida’ lasted until 25 BC and

[119] Bintliff 1984a: 21. For a more thorough discussion see Bintliff 1984b.

[120] Also see Collectif 1985; Audouze and Buchsenschutz 1989; Guichard *et al.* eds 2000; Collectif 2007. However, the Late La Tène *oppida*, as Fernández-Götz *et al.* 2014b notes, have a much wider geographical distribution and often cover a larger surface area compared to the Late Hallstatt/Early La Tène *Fürstensitze*. Moreover, while the appearance of the *oppida* was certainly accompanied by an internal evolution of the societies of temperate Europe, which became increasingly hierarchical, it is possible that this process accelerated in its final stages thanks to the commercial contacts with the Mediterranean.

[121] Bintliff 1984b. More recently Buchsenschutz 2000; Pion 2010; and Nouvel 2010: XX.

fell under Roman political and ideological pressure, which was incompatible with the previous 'Celtic' ideology.[122]

Nonetheless, as Kaenel states, it is true that there is no need to bring the Romans (or the Mediterranean world) into the picture or any other *Deus ex machina* (such as the Cimbri and Teutones for Gaul, or Belgic migrants for Britain) to explain the origin of urbanization in temperate Europe.[123] The creation of the *oppida* is, in fact, more likely to be the result of a political decision, as it was for the foundation of the cities in the Mediterranean world. Their appearance should not be associated with catastrophic events that would have forced Iron Age communities to protect themselves against their enemies or, in case of Britain, against foreign invasions.

The idea, which held away in the 19th and part of the 20th centuries, that urbanism was adopted because of migrations or invasion from the continent, has also been largely rejected.[124] Regular cross-Channel relationships might be part of the explanation, but in such a long-term, prolonged process other factors must have played an important role (e.g. climate, long-term socio-economic, political, cultural changes, etc.).[125] We need to remember that the most important changes in agriculture date to the 3rd century, and not to the time of the so-called migrations (2nd century BC). As Millett pointed out, many developments previously associated with population movements, e.g. that of Belgae to Britain mentioned by Caesar, should not be a prime cause of change in the Later Pre-Roman Iron Age. No doubt some movement of people might have taken place, but how significant was it? Probably those relationships were based on kinship (*parentela*) and should not be over-estimated.[126]

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[122] Buchsenschutz 2000 'Les oppida celtiques, un phénomène original d'urbanisation'.; Pion 2010 'Oppida et urbanisation en Gaule du Nord avant la Conquête: des faits aux modèles et des modèles à l'Histoire'.

[123] Kaenel 2006: 15; Brun *et al.* 2000 According to the authors, the emergence of these new sites is not related to historical events (such as the invasion of the Cimbri and Teutoni or the conquest of Caesar), which only slightly influenced a local phenomenon. A network of large settlements, nodes of various and concentrated activities starts to develop throughout Continental Europe.

[124] A more recent reference to migrations can be found in Pion 1990: 254, where it is suggested that the development of the first, large open agglomerations in the Aisne Valley (i.e. Condé-sur-Suippe, *Villeneuve-Saint-Germain,* and Pommier) could be explained by the movement of an already hierarchically structured group of Celts from Italy.

[125] Moore 2016. "In British Iron Age studies, as in prehistoric studies as a whole, the early to mid 20th century was an era of culture-historical narratives in which invasions or migrations of people from the Continent played a dominant role.' (Cunliffe 2005 p. 3-20). […] The "invasion hypothesis" underwent sustained critique from the 1960s onwards, notably by Hodson and Clark, who demolished the slender evidence base for most of the supposed folk movements (Hodson 1964, Clark 1966). […] New theoretical perspectives developed in the 1960s and 70s placed more emphasis on the internal workings of social systems. This went in parallel with increased interest in issues such as settlement forms, agriculture and the environment, for which the relevance of overseas contacts was less obvious. There have even been some suggestions that Iron Age communities either side of the Channel could have shared a common culture. Cunliffe (2001) and Henderson (2007) outline an Atlantic Iron Age incorporating maritime western Britain, Ireland, western France and northwest Iberia, defined mainly by comparisons of settlement forms, cross-regional connectivity throughout the period is implied by the sharing of new technologies and artefact types.' (Webley 2015: 123-124). Also see Champion 2016.

[126] Millett 1990: 9. This argument is valid also for other British communities which have the same name as their Gaulish counterparts, e.g. Parisi, see Halkon and Starley 2011; Anthoons 2007.

As Cunliffe very recently pointed out:

> The obsession with 'invaders' is easy to understand. British history as taught in schools spoke of successive waves of invaders from the Continent covering swats of the British Isles: Normans, Danes, Saxons, Romans. It was not unreasonable to back-project this model into the depths of prehistory. Also taught were the glories of empire - of the Roman empire, and of the British empire following proudly in its wake. Primitive people were conquered by superior cultures introducing new religious beliefs, new technologies, and new forms of government, all producing beneficial change. In the mood of high Victorian imperialism, in which leaders like Lord Raglan could believe that natives don't invent things, it was not unnatural to interpret the changes identifiable in the archaeological record as the direct consequence of new people moving in to set up their ascendancy over indigenous populations.[127]

In order to test the old concept of 'cultural diffusionism', which links the movement of ideas and values to the movement of people, we need to wait until DNA studies will finally be able to give us more insights into this matter.

Indeed the development of the *oppida*, as he rightly argued, went far beyond the economic function that the open settlements may have had. Concluding, Fernández-Götz writes, 'in general terms, the main processes that motivated and led to the development of the *oppida* of temperate Europe were the following: 1) the intensification of productive and commercial activities; 2) demographic growth and a resurgence of social hierarchisation; 3) increase in the "social density", i.e. the frequency of communications and interactions between individual persons and groups; and 4) the large-scale establishment and/or reinforcement of political-religious integration and structuring of the territory. Evidently not all these elements were necessarily present in all cases or to the same extent.'[128]
The multifunctionality of these sites reflects the complexity of the reasons behind their development. As well as being the place where the elite and their subjects relocated from the surrounding countryside and defended their surplus and wealth, they became instrumental for political purposes and for strengthening their power. Individual aspirations are bound to have caused tensions and conflicts among the members of the same communities (affecting intra-group relationships and enhancing social complexity) as well as with the neighbouring ones, hence the complex system of dykes and defensive circuits. The materialization of religious beliefs and practices (such as the distribution of food and especially beverages) are likely to have also played a key role in establishing and maintaining these new social relationships, as well as in re-enforcing inter- and intra-group competition and providing a place for individuals to bond through meetings and assemblies.[129] These centres were not, in their earliest stage,

[127] Cunliffe 2012: 32.

[128] Fernández-Götz 2014a: 384; Bintliff 2016.

[129] Many *oppida*, in their earliest phases, show traces of religious activity. This is the case of the *oppida* within the *civitas* of the Bellovaci (Fichtl 2013a), of the site of Corent (Poux 2012) and Bibracte (Fleischer and Rieckhoff 2002). They usually date to the 4th to 3rd centuries BC. In southern Gaul this is true for different sites, such as Nemausus, Entremont, and Glanum (Garcia 2003; and 2006). Around half a dozen of the *oppida* of the Treveri were also in use in the 6th or 5th century. Fernández-Götz 2014a: 379-380 concludes that 'the use of a place for cultic purposes and holding assemblies would have been the cause, and not the consequence, of the development of oppida at these sites'. He also emphasizes the political and religious importance of *oppida*. He observed that long before the appearance of the *oppida* there was already a tendency for the population and the economic and trading activities to concentrate in open settlements. Thus, he concludes, the primary functions of the *oppida* were

densely occupied; nonetheless, they were to play a crucial role in the appearance of a social hierarchy within communities and, on a larger scale, in the emergence of social and political centralized entities. This phenomenon is not dissimilar to what happened in Southern Europe, where early Greek towns grew up around elite groups, who marked their identity by vesting with religious meanings the place where they resided, which was thus under the protection of a deity. Similarly, the elite either attempted to integrate the pre-existing rural sanctuaries by re-enacting rural processions or they simply tried to suppress them or gradually reduce their importance.[130]

2.2 The development of urbanism in southern Gaul

Southern Gaul, during the final Bronze Age, experienced a long phase of demographic growth mirrored by an increase in the number of settlements between 0.1 to 30 ha but which - on average - covered only *c*. one hectare.[131] Some of these settlements seem to be bigger than average and required significant medium- or long-term investments (e.g. Baou-Roux and Saint Blaise in Provence or Roque de Viou and La Liquière in Languedoc). However, while we see lots of changes in the 7th century BC - mostly the introduction of iron and an increase in agricultural production - we do not witness urbanization, which was a later development.[132] For example, in Languedoc most settlements were small and ephemeral (*c*. 60-70%). The landscape was not very structured, and sites, whether small and short lived, nucleated, or sanctuaries were irregularly distributed across the landscape, with no catchment-area restrictions in place. The nature of most sites, which were only temporarily (seasonally) occupied, suggests they were occupied by self-sufficient, agro-pastoral communities.

2.2.1 The foundation of Marseille

In the 6th century BC, the indigenous communities of southern Gaul were already part of the Mediterranean exchange circuit, with the Etruscans as their intermediary.[133] In 600 BC, the Greek colony of Massalia was founded, and, at the same time we see gradually emerge a new, entrepreneurial attitude among the indigenous community towards agriculture, which enables them to create a surplus and to accumulate wealth.

The settlement patterns changed accordingly, and nucleated and durably occupied nucleated settlements increased in number, whilst the number of temporary sites diminished.[134] In Languedoc, we also see that the indigenous people preferred to settle in locations and microhabitats that maximized both accessibility and agricultural potential, e.g. along the coast, rivers, and in the plain. The first significant indigenous centres developed in the region close to Marseille and in the Lower Rhône (especially in the internal sea of Étang de Berre, see the

not defensive, artisanal, commercial, etc. - which he thinks were largely a secondary effect - but rather political and religious.

[130] Snodgrass 1980.

[131] Garcia 2002: 88; Lagrand 1968 for Provence; and Py 2012 for territory around *Nîmes*.

[132] Garcia 2002.

[133] Imported luxury goods, at this early stage, are commonly found in funerary contexts (Py 1990: 517-525).

[134] From 70% to 55% in Languedoc.

foundations of Tamaris and Sainte-Blaise[135]). Other *oppida* developed along the major rivers discharging into the Mediterranean Sea (e.g. Montlaurès, Béziers, Bassan, Lattes, Nîmes, Mauressip, Arles etc.).[136] Their surface areas ranged between 0.5-15 ha. A developing hierarchization of sites can be observed: *oppida*, rural or pastoral sites, fortified hamlet or isolated farms that often lasted no longer than one generation, e.g. in the territory around Nîmes. These sites do not seem to diminish the role of central place of the *oppida*; on the contrary, they reveal how dynamic these communities had become, as well as how sophisticated was the control and influence over their countryside territories exercised by these centres.

Figure 6: Main agglomerations in Southern Gaul (Garcia 2002: 97).

According to Garcia, the appearance of these more permanent settlements is a direct consequence of the foundation of Marseille. This first encounter, he writes, was followed by a process of socio-economic transformation that would finally take the form of proto-states led by 'big men.[137] However, this idea does not take into account the fact that, as Py rightly observed, already in 8th to 7th centuries BC, several (although not many) important centres had developed, in some cases from pre-existing sanctuaries.[138] Nonetheless, while it is not

[135] Trément 1999: 113-117.

[136] For example, George de Loup, which develops at the site of the confluence between the rivers *Rhône* and *Saône*, will extend at the end of the 6th century BC to over 25 ha.

[137] Garcia 2004.

[138] Py 2012 (this book is reviewed in Buchsenschutz 1993); and Garcia 2003. For the Three Gauls see Fichtl *et al.* eds 2000. The importance of the role of sanctuaries for the general development of sites (focal points at the moment of the site's foundation and they maintain their significance despite the constant transformations of the settlement that followed) comes up repeatedly in the edited book Fernández-Götz *et al.* eds 2014.

necessarily true that Massalia had triggered this process of settlement nucleation, it is very likely that its presence accelerated this process.

Massalia's colonies (e.g. Agde) were all small trading posts concentrated along the sea coasts. Marseille was primarily a commercial power which had created a monopoly that stretched from Agde to the territory of the Ligures. Many settlements – whether their own foundations or indigenous centres (e.g. Lattes, Espeyran), were economically dependent on Marseille and tied to it by commercial agreements, which we know from the inscribed lead tablets. Its prominence is reflected in the distribution of Massilian coinage, which, until the mid-2nd century BC, was the only one to be found in southern France.[139]

In short, Socio-economic changes that took place in this region between the 6th and 5th centuries BC transformed the economy of southern Gaul, moving it beyond subsistence level. In the two centuries that followed, already established agglomerations and new foundations would accumulate enough surplus to grow larger and become more sophisticated.

2.2.2 Urban concentration (4th to 2nd centuries BC)

During this phase, we witness three major changes: i. the crystallization of the settlement system; ii. a new preference in the selection of building materials; iii. The appearance of rationally planned and structured agglomerations. In this period very large sites start to develop at the expense of smaller *oppida*, rural sites and temporary sites which are abandoned. New, larger, central places located in strategic places - such as at the foot of hills or mouths of rivers – whose economy is based on agriculture and trade, attract the indigenous population. We can distinguish two type of settlements: i. the larger sites (over 10 ha) which are lie *c*. 20-50 km from each other, which is more or less equivalent to one day's journey;[140] ii. smaller, indigenous agglomerations that cover no more than 5 ha which are distributed in a quite dense pattern. The growing importance of sites like Béziers, Lattes, Nîmes, Arles and other Greek agglomerations like Emporion, Agathe or Massalia at the expense of other smaller sites reflects the development of a new and more centralized way of managing a more defined territory.

In this period we also see the appearance of structures made of hard materials, e.g. quadrangular houses with foundations of hard materials and buildings of stone and bricks, including in modest settlements such as Clos Barthès.[141] Moreover, settlements seem to re-organize themselves internally by organizing into *insulae*, with a densely built city centre, and they began to be rationally planned and structured (e.g. Lattes, Nages).[142] Roads - even small ones

[139] Clavel-Lévêque 1989: 11.

[140] Garcia 2002; Garcia 2004.

[141] Nuninger 2002: 208; Garcia 2004. In this first phase we see appearing to the left of the *Rhône* the following sites: Ruscino, Naguère, Illiberis, Pech-Maho (Sigean), Le Moulin, Albas, Carcassonne, the *oppidum* of Cros (Caunes), Montlaurès, Mailhac, the *oppidum* of Moulinasse (Salles d'Aude), the *oppidum* of d'Ensérune at Nissan, Montfau (Megalas), *Béziers*. A little before 500 BC the first sedentary sites are founded in the valley of the *Hérault* and *Lodévois,* Agde, Bessan, Florensac or Saint-Simeon (Pézenas), Lattes. To the right of the river *Rhône* we see the following sites: Espeyran, Le Cailar, Arles, Saint-Blaise, Tamaris (Martigues), *oppidum* of Castellan, *oppidum* of Baou (Saint-Marcel), and Vaison.

[142] Garcia 2004: 79.

- and public spaces were kept empty, which is a clear sign that there was some sort of authority that would enforce urban rules. Unfortunately, we do not know enough to determine the nature of this authority, but it is clear that, through the erection of defensive walls, these agglomerations (e.g. Roquecourbe, Ambrussum, and Nages) were affirming their status and independence as well as defending themselves against potential aggressors. These walls were often built in a typically Hellenistic fashion (e.g. Mauressip) which suggests that the contacts between indigenous communities and Greek colonies might have gone beyond the scope of trade agreements and perhaps included military alliances.[143]

According to Garcia, the forms of pre-Roman settlements of southern Gaul conceptually differ from the Classical city since they reflect a different political and religious idea. In the Greek cities, he argues, urbanism developed starting from the public spaces, which are usually located in the historical or geographical centre of the city or in a topographically eminent position. The settlements of southern Gaul, on the other hand, privilege another type of spatial logic, that is, circulation. The main streets are never axial but often parallel to the walls, creating a sort of *'périphérique intérieur'*. This type of route can often be found in the protohistoric sites of the Midi, from the Hérault to East Provence, both on the coastline and in the interior. The cases of Lattes, Nages, l'Ile de Martigues and Entremont are the most representative, but we can also see it in other places such as Notre-Dame-de-Pitié, Baou-Roux and Saint-Pierre-les-Martigues. The public buildings (when they extst) show a direct influence of the Classical societies, but they are not located at the head of a road. Instead, we find them along the road itself. They usually have an oblong shape, surrounded by a *porticus* (e.g. the *fana* of Nages and Roque-de-Viou).[144]

From the 2nd century BC, the settlement system became more polarized: old, as well as new foundations, are likely to have increased their territory of influence and continued to flourish. These included Nîmes, Glanon, and Enaginnum as well as older centres such as Arles (over 30 ha) and Lattes (25-30 ha). In the agglomerations, many sculptural elements were added, public space was embellished and monumentalized in Late Hellenistic style, and domus were also built.

2.2.3 The Romans and the construction of a province

In 154 BC, the Roman armies first entered southern Gaul to provide assistance to Rome's ally, Antipolis, against the Ligures who, according to Polybius, were threatening its colonies of Nicaea and Antibes.[145] The Romans took the opportunity to take over southern France: between 125-118 BC they conquered southern Gaul and established the province of Gallia Transpadana, later called Narbonensis. This region, however, was far from being pacified.[146] The indigenous agglomerations in southern Gaul were growing in size and power and began to form alliances

[143] Nuninger 2002: 262.

[144] Garcia 2005: 80.

[145] From the 2nd century BC, the indigenous communities had become more and more hostile towards Massalia. This is very clear from ancient sources: Cicero, Pro L. Flaccus, 63, cit. note 5; Justin, 43. 3, cit. note 27; *Polybius*, Hist., 33, 8-10 ; Silius Italicus, Punica, XV, 162-178 ; Livy, Nart. Hist. XXXVII, 54, 21-22, cit. note 10.

[146] Polybius 33.7-11.

against Greek and Roman imperialism.[147] Such clashes left their marks in the signs of the destruction that many indigenous *oppida* suffered between 125 and 100 BC (e.g. Entremont, Saint-Blaise, Baou-Roux etc.).[148]

During this period of instability, Rome founded the Roman colony of Narbo (118 BC) and further Roman contingents were stationed at Arles, Aix, and Toulouse. The existing settlement system had to be at least partially dismantled in order to accommodate the new Roman creations that were scattered along the most important axes of the province (i.e. the coastal route and the Rhône axis). At Narbo, the programme of centralization was also instrumental in efficiently boosting farming and extractive metallurgy. Development accelerated in the colony's surrounding area as well as, indirectly, in the whole region. As a result, new, significantly large, and increasingly wealthy villages which acted as marketplaces would develop along the major Roman roads (e.g. via Domitia, via Aquitania), which became well-trodden routes travelled by merchants (e.g. La Lagaste and Bram).[149] Thanks to the increasing contacts and level of exchanges with Narbo and through it with Italy, older indigenous centres prospered and became important commercial centres, such as Ruscino, Aumes, and Ensérune.[150]

At the end of the 2nd century BC to the 1st century BC, two different monetary circuits - separated by the river Hérault (Agde) - reflect the areas of influence of Massilia (to the east, which remained unsurpassed) and of Rome (to the west), although here Roman coins circulated along with those of Massilia and other regional issues. To the west, the Iberian influence was visible in the coinage, largely originating from the Greek colony of Emporion in Catalonia (Spain) which at that time was a cultural *melting pot.* The presence of Iberians is documented

[147] From 125 BC a series of rebellions unfold, in order: the rebellions of the *Salluvii*, Vocontii, and Ligures in 125 BC, of the Allobroges and Arverni in 122-121 BC, of the Volcae *Tectosages* and Toulouse in 106-104 BC, of the *Salluvii* in 90 BC, of the Volcae and Vocontii in 77-72 BC, and the Allobroges in 66 and 62-61 BC. The region also suffered the incursion of the Germanic tribes of the *Cimbri* and the Teutones in *c*. 105 BC.

[148] It cannot be excluded that these clashes were also rooted in the growing polarization of the settlement system, which could be itself the result of conflicts between individual centres or confederated communities. For example, a clash between the people of the *oppidum* of *Roque de Viou (who then relocate to Nages) and those of the oppidum of* Mauressip has been envisaged by Nuninger 2002: 227-226.

[149] Bram would later be called *vicus* Eburomagus (AE 1969-1970, 388; Tabula Peuntingeriana I, 2 A-B) or Hebromagus (Itin. Burdigal. 551, 7). In the 1st century BC the settlement measured *c*. 15 ha. It lay at the crossroads of the Roman road from Narbonne to Toulouse and of the road that linked to the Montagne Noire and Ariège. The settlement grew larger in Augustan times, when all the Via Aquitania (which was 30 m wide) was flanked by numerous shops and workshops. Originally it was probably created by the movement of people *from the surrounding rural area who saw its potential to become* a regional import redistribution centre (i.e. most of the redistributed the goods were received from Narbonne). The resources it depended on came from the plain of Lauragais, which is notoriously very rich. Moreover, nearby metals were extracted. Its surrounding area was organized in a *cadastre* (Passelac 2002).

[150] This was a mining centre which between mid-2nd century BC until mid-1st century BC grew to cover *c.* 20 ha. In the second half of the 1st century BC it was suddenly abandoned, most likely because of a political intervention. It is difficult to say whether (and if so, to what extent) the immigration from Italy of traders, entrepreneurs and middlemen had contributed to this settlement's fortune.

from the beginning of the city's existence.[151] Thus, in western Languedoc, Italian traders had gradually increased their control over trade at the expenses of the Greek colony, which, however, did not leave the scene.[152] Whilst Massilian coinage still dominated the coinage pool in Provence and Lattes, in eastern Languedoc's hinterland the currency minted by Nîmes became particularly prominent.

Overall, archaeology indicates that at this time the landscape was highly fragmented with small, autonomous, independent settlements (e.g. Ambrussum, Mauressip, Nîmes, Lattes etc.) which lay relatively close to one another (*c*. 20 km), had city walls, and issued their own coins (at least in the 2nd century BC). They did not only trade with Greek and Roman foundations, but they also joined forces against them (and possibly against each other as well). Literary texts report the names of several of these entities which, in the absence of any positive evidence and in view of the above, it would be far-reaching to assume were 'ethnic' realities.[153] In fact, they are more likely to have formed, like the Samnites in Italy, a confederation consisting of various peoples and cities.[154] Such an alliance system was certainly in place during times of conflict, although it is possible that also in more peaceful times collaborations regarding the maintenance of defensive architectures or diplomatic relations with other powers were maintained. The map in Figure 7 shows the likely location of these entities which, given their nature, never had fixed borders.

Figure 7: Possible reconstruction of the territory of main ethnic groups in pre-Roman southern Gaul (Nuninger 2002: 12).

[151] Tang 2005: 17. The presence of Iberians at Ampurias is indicated by epigraphic and funerary evidence (Almagro 1952: 63-83; Sanmarti-Grego 1993). The presence of the Iberian culture in south-western Gaul dates back to the 6th BC and the presence of Iberian merchants and traders from the 2nd BC is well attested by the inscriptions on *instrumenta domestica (such as writing tablets, pottery, etc.)* (Jud *et al.* 2012; Benquet 2007).
[152] Clavel-Lévêque 1989: 13.
[153] A good review of this topic can be found in Py 2012: 311-314; and Nuninger 2002: 249-260.
[154] David 1994: 254.

The confederation of the Salluvii (Salyes), for example, might have occupied the region between the river Rhône and Antibes, the Cavares the area of the lower Rhône Valley, and the Volcae the region that stretched from the river Rhône to Toulouse.[155] From a few confederated groups mentioned in the literary sources, in Roman times we will arrive at a fragmented territory divided into twenty-three *civitates* (Figure 8). How did that happen? For what reasons?

A first real re-organization of the province into *civitates* was undertaken under Caesar and the second triumvirate and a second one in Augustan times. The first phase, which lasted from late 2nd century BC until the time of Caesar, was characterized by the presence of many small settlements, which Christol refers to as *'républiques villageoises'*.[156] It is very likely that this landscape reflected the old fragmented system with a multiplicity of independent communities lying underneath the confederate supra-structure which was maintained by Rome. We have hints of this fragmented scenario from ancient literary, numismatic, and epigraphic sources.[157] The list of Pliny, and its mention of the 75 *oppida Latina* established (it is now generally agreed that their establishment should be dated to the time when Caesar granted the *ius Latii* to the whole province of Narbonensis and among them to small communities of eastern Languedoc that would later be annexed to the *civitas* of Nîmes), offers us a view of a province with a multiplicity of local powers, which are also partly attested by their coin emissions. In this period, for example, Mauressip and Nîmes still appear to have been equally wealthy and important. Unfortunately, we still know little about Caesar's organization of the province, so it will be easier for us to concentrate on the second phase of the re-organization of the province, which results in the map of the *civitates* that we show in Figure 8.

The map in Figure 8 represents the *civitates* that survived into Augustan times and shows the *civitates* that existed during the High Empire. They are likely to be the result of a second phase of the organization of the province ordered by Augustus (sometime between 27-15 BC), and it is characterized by the re-grouping of the cities into larger *civitates* (this trend would go on until Diocletian times when the size of administrative units drastically decreases[158]). For example, during Augustus' reign, 43 out of the 75 *oppida* lost their autonomy and were integrated into neighbouring communities. Mauressip, for example, is one of the famous victims of such an administrative re-organization, which meant that 19 *oppida ignobilia* and 24 *adtributa* mentioned by Pliny lost their autonomy and were annexed to the territory of Nîmes.[159] The reason why Nîmes was preferred above the rest is unclear; however, this sudden change can be explained only by the direct intervention of Rome.

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[155] If it were correct that the word 'Volcae' derived from the Latin '*vulgus' (common people, people), then we could say* with confidence *but without certainty that these entities might not have had any* notions of national *identity (*Moret 2002: 83).

[156] Christol 2007: 34.

[157] For a study of Ptolemy's place names of Gallia Narbonensis, see de Hoz 2005. For example, the city of the Caenicenses was, according to Pliny, an *oppidum latino*. A fragment of the *cadastre A d'Orange* confirms its presence and locates it south of the Alpilles.

[158] Beaujard 2006.

[159] Christol 1994. Among all these Latin *oppida* were probably the communities that were controlled by Massalia and to which Caesar gave freedom.

Figure 8: The *civitates* of Gaul Narbonensis (Garcia 2002: 99).

Now, let us look more closely at the map of the *civitates* that we know existed from the time of Augustus.[160] It clearly shows that the *civitates* of Narbonensis dramatically differed in size. The *civitates* are large in Provence, Languedoc and the sub-alpine regions. On the other hand, *civitates* are smaller when they are located along the most strategic waterway of the region, the Rhône axis. These include Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon, Apt, and the Tricastini with their capital Saint-Paul as well as three veteran colonies (Arles, Orange, and Valence).[161] Similarly, Narbonne, Béziers, Lodève, Carcassonne, and Ruscino are sandwiched between the two large *civitates* of the Volcae Tectosages (Toulouse) and the Volcae Arecomici (Nîmes). All of these small *civitates* are in fact Latin colonies, except for the two cities which had sided against Rome during the Second Punic War, i.e. Narbonne and Béziers. Given that the establishment of a Roman veteran colony may have involved the expulsion of the indigenous population from

[160] It is difficult to date certain decisions concerning the re-organization of provinces. We will specify the date or the author of a particular measure only when evidence give us a hint. Otherwise it will be left undefined. Here we have no interest in looking at what happens in later periods, so we will discuss the problem of those self-governing cities that might have lost their independence in the High Empire, namely Ruscino, Glanum and Carcassone, in a later chapter.

[161] Leveau 2000, possibly a Roman creation since they are mentioned very late in the sources (e.g. Livy, Strabo, Cicero and Caesar).

their land, which could be confiscated and redistributed to the discharged soldiers, the colony system's punitive implications should not be neglected.[162]

The area of the protohistoric confederation of the Salluvii, which had opposed Rome at least twice (in 125 and 90 BC), disappeared from the map: its territory was divided into at least three different *civitates*: the Roman colonies of Fréjus, Arles, and Aix.[163] It is possible that some other indigenous confederations kept their (vast) lands although they had also resisted the Romans, e.g. the *civitates* of the Alps, the Vocontii (Vaison) and the Allobroges (Vienne). We also know that Marseille, having sided with Pompey against Caesar did not disappear: its territory was indeed diminished, but it kept its autonomy and its status of *civitas foederata*. Can we explain such different treatments, or should we just file them in the category of whim and chance? Part of the explanation must be Roman pragmatism. Both Caesar and Augustus had an interest in pacifying the area and making it suitable for veterans to settle in. They both needed to find a solution for veterans while increasing their clientele. Strategic and political decisions were therefore always in their minds when they set out to re-organize this province, and we can still see the mark they left on its map.

We can, therefore, conclude that, in the case of Narbonensis, the Romans had a strong impact on the administrative structures of the territory. Security enhancement was especially required at strategic points within the transport system (which were fundamental for military supplies, both in case of possible emergencies or military disputes with communities living across the border). Therefore, the Romans created multiple veteran colonies - i.e. inhabited by discharged soldiers whose presence could help to pacify the region or at least serve as a deterrent against future rebellions - in places that were strategically important: i. along the *isthmus gallicus (*Narbonne and Béziers), which connected Gaul with the Pyrenees (important for their mineral resources); ii. along the coastal route (Arles, Aix, Fréjus); iii. the Rhône River (Orange and Valence).[164] The Romans did not only establish new agglomerations (*fora*, colonies etc.), but most importantly changed the spatial logic of the territory. This will become clearer when we look more closely at the case studies from Narbonensis, For example, whilst in pre-Roman times the indigenous confederations used to include rivers, they are used by the Romans as borders between different *civitates.*[165]

2.3 The development of urbanism in the rest of Gaul and Germania Inferior

2.3.1 The Late Iron Age

Given the difficulties that prevent us from establishing precise chronologies of all sites, we will be forced to discuss the development of urbanism in the rest of Gaul and Germania Inferior with a certain degree of approximation. In order to take a closer look at the dynamics of this process, let us see how the urbanization process is understood south-east of the Paris Basin, in

[162] Mattingly 2006a: 261-262.
[163] Verdin 1998.
[164] The valley of the *Hérault*, for example, was divided into three different *civitates* (*Béziers*, Lodève, and *Nîmes*).
[165] Garcia 2004: 183.

north-eastern France, one of the best-studied regions in north-western Europe.[166] Then we will turn to different phases of the process of urbanization of the north-western provinces, on the basis of Nouvel's work.[167]

Evidence from the Aisne Valley in north-eastern France indicates that from 400 to 250 BC there was a drop in types of settlements, and only a few burials are found. The landscape here appears to be dominated by a dispersed occupation, although archaeological evidence suggests a structured division of land ownership, possibly associated with kinship.[168] This settlement pattern contrasts with the high level of nucleation of contemporary communities settled in the 'developed hillforts' of south-central Britain (see later in this chapter). From the 2nd century BC onwards, large, fortified and often polyfocal complexes (so-called *oppida*) begin to emerge in the region along with a number of other smaller settlements and rural establishments (both *oppida* and smaller forms of settlements appear to have been used with continuity for up to 50 years. Only from the 1st century BC onwards do they begin to be more long lived).[169] This event does not seem to have had a direct impact on the rest of the landscape: nearby sites are not abandoned nor do they increase in number. The main four agglomerations in the Aisne Valley that potentially performed 'urban' functions were Condé-sur-Suippe/Variscout, Saint-Thomas, Villeneuve-Saint-Germain, and Pommiers. It has been calculated that Villeneuve-Saint-Germain had a minimum of 4000 inhabitants (Manching's population is believed to have been at least 5000).[170] In all of them, there are intensive traces of metallurgic activity (iron, bronze, precious stones and coin mints) and long-distance trade is attested (e.g. imports of wine from Italy). None of these sites was preceded by villages, which leads us to conclude that we are not confronted with a case of gradual synoecism or a transition from a small to a large settlement. Thus, the settlement pattern drastically changes from a dispersed settlement pattern to a more hierarchical system, with several centres inhabited by more than 1000 people. The significant changes that took place in the Aisne Valley and in other Gaulish *oppida* are visible in the archaeological record from the end of the 2nd century BC.[171] The larger and more developed *oppida* could concentrate commercial, economic, religious and possibly political functions and displayed a functional and social differentiation of space.

Increased social stratification is also attested by the appearance of a large spectrum of agglomerations and hierarchical disparities between settlements. A very interesting case involves the so-called aristocratic farms which might have started developing as early as the 5th century BC, although they are likely to have increased in size and become more common

[166] Brun *et al.* 2000.

[167] Nouvel 2010.

[168] Buchsenschutz *et al.* 2012.

[169] In total 66 establishments are attested (4 *oppida*, 37 cemeteries, 25 undetermined sites) Brun *et al*. 2000: 84. These create problems of interpretation of the landscape: were these settlements used contemporaneously or not? Is what we see in Auvergne really a polyfocal site or were those three sites occupied in different times?

[170] Brun *et al.* 2000: 85; Boessneck e*t al.* 1971.

[171] Obviously this process was not at the same stage everywhere. Later on in this chapter, when we will look at regional differences, we will have the chance to discuss how the introduction of urbanism and state formation was more advanced in the eastern and central *civitates* of Belgic Gaul compared to western Gaul, the territory of the Roman *civitates* of the Morini, Eburones and Menapi and Britannia.

between the 3rd and the 2nd centuries BC. The one excavated in Paule (Brittany) is the most notable example of this category of settlement.[172] What was originally a simple, isolated farm gradually grew into a small *oppidum* placed under the control of an aristocratic family, whose members were buried in a rich *necropolis* close by. The Iron Age settlement would endure until Roman times, when it would be replaced by the nearby city of Vorgium. Until then, it certainly functioned as an important central place, although it never reached the dimensions of some of the *oppida* in western France. Within the defensive walls, crops and other natural resources were stored and economic activities (e.g. metalworking, food-processing etc.) performed.

Figure 9: A reconstruction of the fortified farm and its settlement at Paule.[173]

2.3.2 The *oppidum*

Now we will briefly look at the morphology, size, and functions of the so-called *oppida* located in Gaul and dating to the Late Iron Age. Here I present an example of such a site - the *oppidum* of Titelberg - although many others are well researched (e.g. Bibracte, Corent, Pommiers, Villeneuve-Saint-Germain, Ribemont-Sur-Ancre, Sens etc). The *oppidum* of Titelberg was the site of a large Iron Age settlement in the extreme south-west of Luxembourg. This thriving central place has been identified as the possible capital of the Treveri. This site provides substantial evidence of several 'urban' functions long before the Roman conquest.

- Morphology:

The Titelberg plateau covers an area of some 50 ha, though the densely inhabited area covers only around 30 ha (Figure 10). The urban plan seems to have been regularly planned, and even at later times road alignments would conform to the original scheme. Roads, palisades, but also houses and workshops share a strong resemblance to those found in the countryside, and all

[172] Menez 2009; Buchsenschutz *et al.* 2012: 299 wrote: '*Le plus bel exemple de cette catégorie est l'habitat de Paule (Côtes-d'Armor) qui perdure au même emplacement du Ve siècle av. J.-C. jusqu'à la conquête romaine. Le qualificatif d'« aristocratique » se justifie par la construction à plusieurs reprises d'une véritable fortification autour de l'habitat, par la présence de très grands bâtiments construits sur des plans réguliers, par la découverte de plusieurs sculptures, dont l'une représente un joueur de lyre, et d'un nombre d'amphores à vin exceptionnel en Bretagne. Simple ferme au départ, l'habitat de Paule présente selon les phases une dominante militaire ou agricole, avant le éveloppement d'un quartier artisanal et de grosses structures de stockage au IIe siècle av. J.-C., époque où il atteint les dimensions d'un petit oppidum*'.

[173] http://kreizyarcheo.bzh/sites-archeologiques/sites-caracteristiques/camp-de-saint-symphorien [last accessed: 15-11-2017].

follow a more or less orthogonal plan.[174] Paraphrasing Alphonse Allais, they might be called *'campagne à la ville'*. Unlike the *oppidum* of Paule, this settlement was under the control of multiple families.

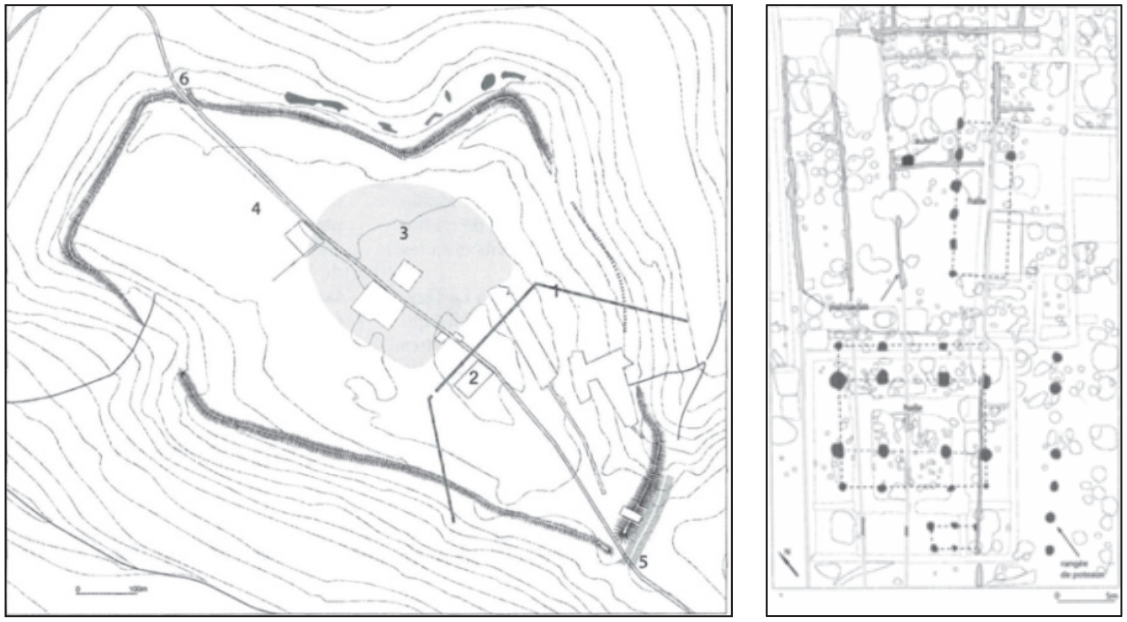

Figure 10: Left: Plan of the Titelberg plateau: 1: Rampart enclosing the public space; 2: Excavation of the monumental centre; 3: Inhabited centre; 4: Military (?) Roman area (Metzler *et al.* 2006 : 200); 5: Oriental gate; 6: Occidental gate. Right: Monumental centre of Titelberg (Metzler *et al.* 2006 : 205).

A religious and political area was separated from the rest of the settlement by a rampart: the area enclosed, located in the south-east extremity of the plateau, the highest point, extended over 10 ha. Within its walls, three features can be distinguished. The oldest structure (150-75 BC) on the plateau, an enclosure within which lay a rectangular aisle at least 60 m long that ran parallel to the main street which crossed the city from west to east (which resembled a processional route, like the one that cut through pre-Roman Chichester).[175] It was monumental and resembled, according to Metzer, the temporary voting facility (*saepta*) which can be found in Italian *fora*. This building seems not to be a *unicum* in Gaul (similar structures have been found in Villeneuve-Saint-Germain). Over time this hypothesis, which originally was criticized as being unrealistic, has gained more endorsements. It is also supported by Caesar, who recounts that Indutiomarus - a leading aristocrat of the Treveri – 'proclaims an armed council (this according to the custom of the Gauls in the commencement of war) at which, by a common law, all the youth could assemble in arms, whoever of them comes last is killed in the sight of the whole assembly after being racked with every torture.[176] Around 75 BC, a monumental, open-air, three-nave and almost squared building was added in the most elevated

[174] Buchsenschutz 2000.

[175] Garland 2011.

[176] Caesar, V, 56. For an analysis of the ancient sources dealing with the political reunions of the Gauls (1st century BC – 1st century AD) see García Riaza and Lamoine 2008.

point of the plateau. Its function is still enigmatic. It may have been a religious or a civic building (similar to the *basilica* found in Bibracte which dated to mid-1st century BC). At the end of the 1st century BC, the capital of the Treveri was moved to Trier. The plateau of Titelberg was abandoned until, in Tiberian times, a mysterious, open-air building was built that would later be converted into a temple.

- Function:

Several of the largest *oppida* had centralized commercial, economic, religious and possibly political functions.

1. Political-administrative function: this is possibly the most difficult function to attest.[177] Archaeologically speaking, the most exemplary cases of public squares thought to be the political and administrative focus of pre-Roman cultures are the ones from Titelberg, Villeneuve-Saint-Germain, Bibracte and the three-nave building found at the site of Gournay-sur-Aronde.[178]

2. Economic function: in the settlement on the Titelberg an increased social and economic complexity is attested by the different levels of activities and crafts undertaken on site (metalworking, glass working, potteries, bone production and textile industry). Its economic function remained important throughout Roman times since Pliny recalls that this region exported wool to Rome in his time. In several *oppida*, their economic function is also attested by the presence of a specialized industrial area (e.g. Corent, Bibracte and Moulay).[179] Some workshops regularly produced semi-standardized artefacts meant to be consumed elsewhere. Within the *oppida* different activities are performed, including agriculture: small farms, or at least small buildings that combine a residential area with other annexed spaces and structures, in particular granaries, are found.[180]

3. The religious function of certain sites is attested by the existence of religious buildings where imported ceramic was in use, for example during religious festivals.[181] For some scholars, the religious function was extremely important and played a major role in the

[177] See Tarpin 2008 for the political function of *oppida* in the 2nd century BC (however, he is especially interested in Italian developments. He concludes that some *oppida* have this function and others do not, such as Felsina). Also Peyre 1979, looking at Cisalpina, concludes that Aquileia was meant to become a political centre (*oppidum condere*) of the invading Celts. His assumption is grounded on the fact that when an *oppidum* of northern Italy was captured by the Romans, all the people belonging to that community were automatically subjected.

[178] Fernández-Götz 2012; Metzler *et al.* 2006. A good overview of pre-Roman public spaces can be found in Fichtl and Bouet 2012 'Places publiques et lieux de rassemblement à la fin de l'âge du Fer dans le monde celtique'. Also see Szabó *et al*. 2007.

[179] For Levroux see Berranger and Fluzin 2009. For Bibracte the bibliography is particularly abundant, see for example Meylan 2003.

[180] Buchsenschutz 2004: 347.

[181] As has been suggested for several Iron Age settlements in Britain (e.g. Chichester), the two opposed entrances may indicate their use during ceremonies and ritual processions.

development of urbanism in the north-western provinces, as we will see later in this chapter.[182]

- Size

The size of the walled area is never indicative of the size of the settlement within (when there is a settlement).

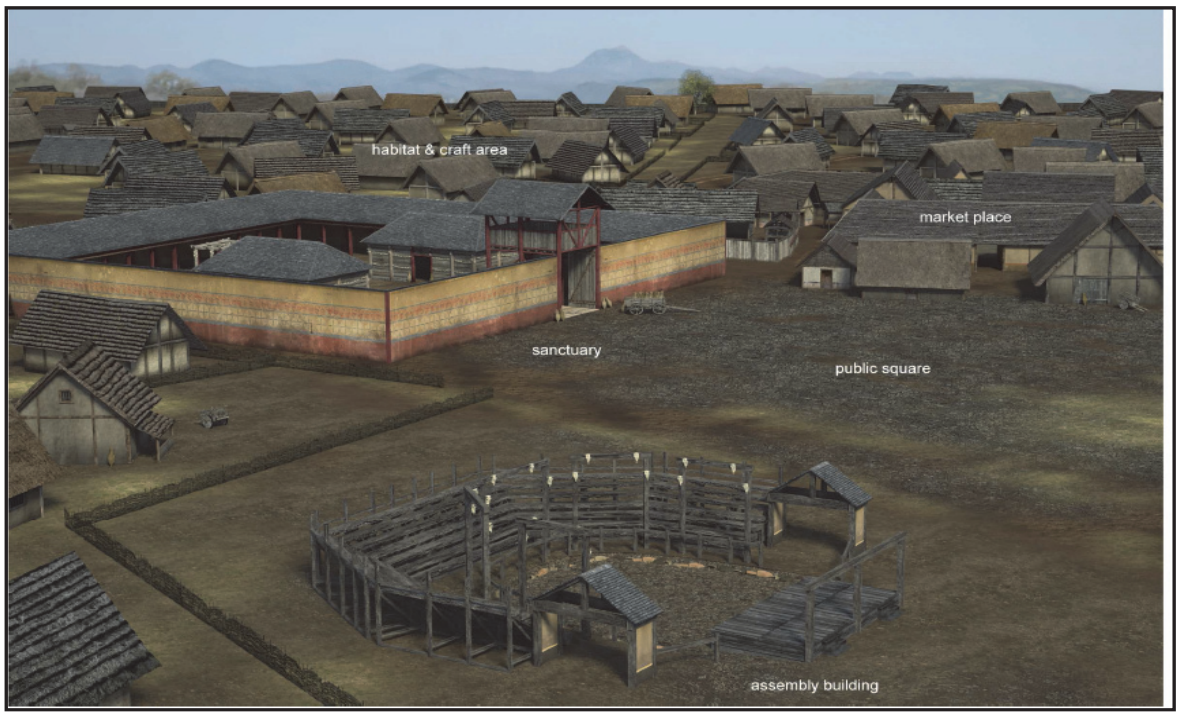

Figure 11: A reconstruction of the monumental centre of the *oppidum* of Corent (Poux 2014: 163).

2.3.3 Regional differences in character and distribution of Late Iron Age *oppida*

We have already mentioned that the process of urbanization developed at different paces in different parts of the study area. In this section, we will look in detail at the regional differences in the character and distribution of Late Iron Age *oppida*. In the map below (Figure 12), we observe a sharp contrast between western Gaul and the northern part of the future Germania Inferior (the *civitates* of the Morini, Eburones and Menapi) and central/north-eastern France.

The *oppida* in the west of Gaul were fewer and smaller. Moreover, in rare cases they present no traces of a long-term occupation. They also lacked collective spaces dedicated to public or religious functions. Their monetary emissions were fewer and had a reduced circulation. A contrast can also be seen when looking at the distribution of imported Italian *amphorae*: whilst several hundred sherds are found in the eastern and central *oppida*, only a few dozens are found in the west, and mostly in rural, religious or funerary contexts.

[182] see Fichtl *et al*. eds 2000 'Le rôle des sanctuaires dans le processus d'urbanisation'; Creighton 2006; Brunaux ed. 1991; Brunaux 1996; Brunaux and Méniel 1997; Lejars 1991. Similar arguments can be found for Britain in Rogers 2008.

The map in Figure 12 shows the lack of *oppida* in Germania Inferior. For a long time, scholars have interpreted this phenomenon as a sign that the society living in this area did not experience any major changes until the Romans came along. Lately, it has been shown that crucial economic and structural changes occurred in pre-Roman times.[183]

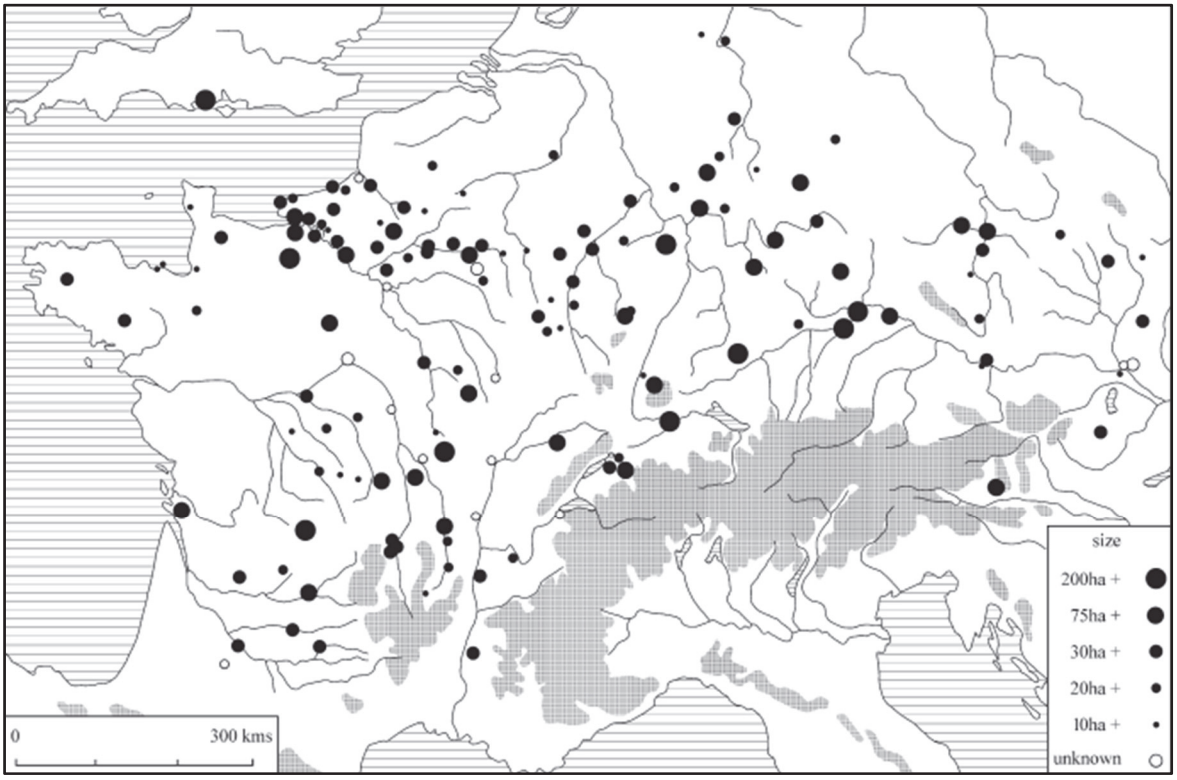

Figure 12: The distribution and size of Late Iron Age *oppida* in temperate Europe (Collis 2014: 20).

Starting from the 2nd century BC, the settlement pattern that up until then was characterized by dispersed farmsteads gradually changes (Figure 13). Individual farmsteads are longer lived, and they cluster together in small, nucleated and at times enclosed settlements (however, single-phase, isolated farmsteads remained in use).[184] Many of these settlements were continuously inhabited throughout the course of the 1st century BC and into the Roman period.

Roymans and Gerritsen, whilst admitting that it is possible that the groups to the west and directly north of the Lower Rhine region had a more egalitarian and less centralized society, also have stressed the crucial role of cult places in the growth of social and political complexity. They have also seen the cult as a factor in promoting social cohesion and self-consciousness,

[183] For a discussion of continuity in terms of economics see Van Dijk *et al*. 2013 who argue for in favour of a smooth transition in terms of surplus production between pre-Roman and Roman times.

[184] This trend towards nucleation possibly intensified during the 1st century BC. The case of the settlement of Weert-Laarderweg is exemplary: at least 40 plans of houses of the Alphen-Ekeren type dating between 50 BC and AD 250 were clustered in an enclosure that dated to the 2nd century BC (Gerritsen 2003).

especially in the Dutch Lower Rhine region.[185] Archaeological evidence of cult places, possibly functioning as central places, combined with literary sources (e.g. Tacitus writes that the political meeting place of the Batavian elite was located in a sacred forest[186]) points to the appearance of politicized ethnic identities in the last two centuries BC in parts of the Lower Rhine region, although that is not expressed in the form of *oppida,* and in fact the Batavi were a late creation.

Figure 13: The nucleated, multi-phase farmsteads (a) from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD at Weert, situated within (b) a 2nd-century-BC enclosure (Gerritsen *et al.* 2006: 263).

[185] Gerritsen *et al.* 2006. The best-known example comes from a site located on the river Meuse, close to the modern villages of Kessel and Lith. The site (either a Late Iron Age settlement or poly-focal site consisting of a number of smaller settlements) stretches over *c*. two kilometres. Its extraordinary character is attested by the quantity of pottery and animal bones, dating to the Late Iron Age, found on the site. Large quantities of pottery, animal and human bones, and high-status metalwork were retrieved from the river bed. It is very likely that they were deposited intentionally as part of a cultural practice (Roymans 2004: chapter 7).

[186] Tacitus, Hist. 4.14.

It is difficult to make general assumptions about the level of centralization of pre-Roman societies by looking at the distribution of *oppida* around the landscape, but some interesting observations can be made. For example, the distribution of the largest number of *oppida* coincides with the areas where a social-political cohesion that allowed the formation of proto-states is attested by literary sources. Figure 14 shows which communities are known - mostly from ancient literary sources - to have been hegemonic in Gaul before the arrival of Caesar.[187] If we compare it with the map of the distribution of the *oppida* (Figure 12), we see that the two maps overlap.[188]

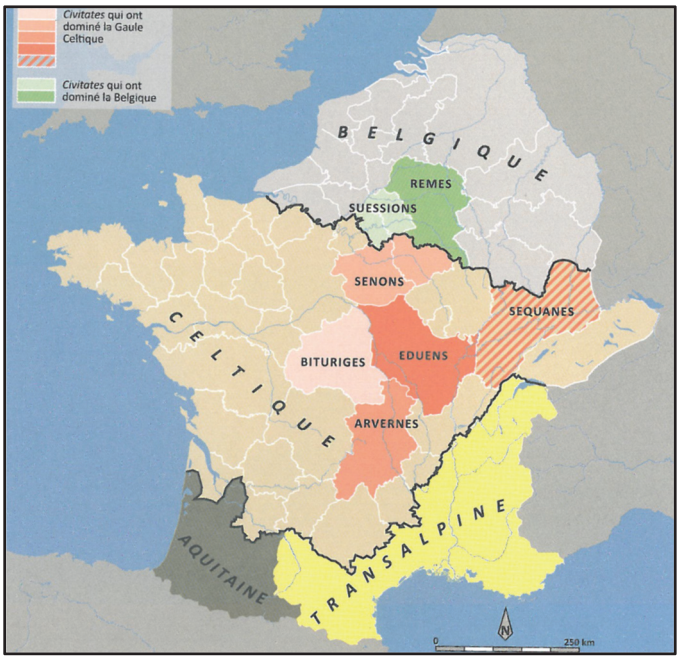

Figure 14: The hegemonic communities during the Late Iron Age in Gaul (Fichtl 2004: 10).

It is legitimate to ask why centralized communities appear to be concentrated in central, north-eastern France and they do not appear to be randomly distributed. As was said earlier, urbanization is only one of a number of changes that affected many aspects of society in north-western Europe in the 2nd century BC. We have already discussed how this phenomenon cannot be explained as the result of a mere imitative process. However, it cannot be ruled out that communities living near new-born centralized entities, which were able to control a vast territory through a dense network of settlements could - as a reaction - either centralize their own community or enter into confederations in order to become more capable of defending the integrity of their territory.[189] This concept is known in archaeology as 'peer-polity interaction', and it was developed by Colin Renfrew and John Cherry, who tried to explain cultural change

[187] Verger 2003: 336-337.

[188] Except for southern-western Belgica (e.g. Bellovaci etc.)

[189] Recent evidence suggest that something of the kind is likely to have happened to the indigenous communities of Scotland which, as a reaction to the construction of the Hadrian Wall, had reunited in the north in larger social groups (e.g. the Maeatae and the Picti) (Hodgson 2013).

(e.g. increasing social complexity) as a result of the interactions (such as competition, including warfare, and competitive emulation) between polities of equal scale and power.[190]

All of the communities that we know to have been hegemonic reached an elevated socio-political complexity that is reflected in the archaeological evidence in the complex network of *oppida* that characterized the territory under their control. This supports the 'political' interpretation of the word '*oppida*' as delineated by Peyre when he analysed the *oppida* of northern Italy (Cisalpina). For example, in the Berry, where the powerful community of the Bituriges Cubi lived, the *oppida* were numerous (according to Latin sources, there were twenty).[191] Similarly, the territory of the Remi and Suessones is characterized by a network of *oppida* that included smaller central places and rural agglomerations (which lasted for only 30-50 years), organized around their capitals.

2.3.4 The process of 'centralization'

Centralization may be defined as the process through which control over the economy is increasingly held in the hands of the elite or a ruling class. As Nicodemus wrote, 'this includes centralized decision making concerning the production and allocation of resources as well as the development of formal mobilization systems which structure the upward flow of goods and labour via tribute, taxation, or similar institutions.'[192] We have just mentioned how several ancient sources describe the existence of powerful people in the Three Gauls. Indeed, unlike southern Gaul, where the settlement system was polarized around equally large and powerful settlements which were part of confederations and alliances, in the Three Gauls we do have more concrete evidence of larger, more stable and hierarchically organized communities. A few (e.g. Aedui, Arverni, and Bituriges Cubi[193]) could compete in size with equally exceptionally large political units scattered around the Mediterranean world, i.e. the Macedonian kingdom, the Etrurian civilization etc. However, their cohesion and their social and 'political' organization - unlike those of their Mediterranean counterparts - are not clearly described in the ancient sources. Let us look more closely at some of the most advanced settlement patterns known to have existed in Gaul, i.e. the territory of the community of the Bellovaci, the Leuci and Mediomatrici.

Fichtl observed that the territory of the Bellovaci was divided into four different regions, and each of them was organized around a central *oppidum*. Three out of the four central *oppida* (Bailleu-sur-Therain, Gournay-sur-Aronde, and Vendeuil-Caply) were established on the sites of ancient sanctuaries, all of which had been founded long before the development of the

[190] Renfrew and Cherry 1986.

[191] On the Berry see: Batardy *et al.* 2001, where the network at the end of La Tene includes a larger *oppidum* (Avaricum = 60 ha) and other intermediate centres that measure an average of 30 ha. Also see Saligny *et al*. 2008; Buchsenschutz *et al*. 2013; Poirier 2007.

[192] Nicodemus 2014: 1.

[193] For a more detailed discussion of the Iron Age settlement system of the Bituriges see chapter 5.

oppida themselves (towards the end of the 4th to the beginning of the 3rd century BC) (Figure 15).[194]

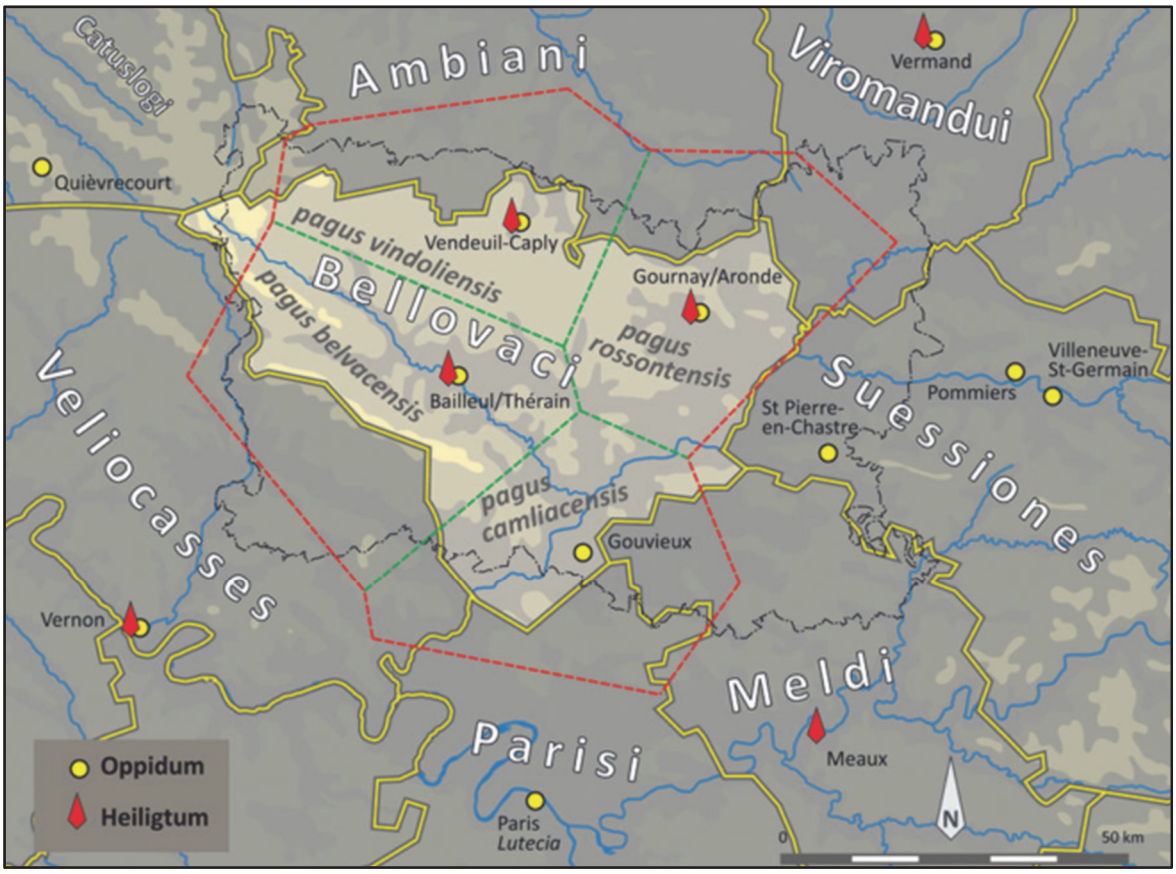

Figure 15: The territorial organization of the *civitas* of the Bellovaci (Fichtl 2013a: 296).

Like the *civitas* of the Bellovaci, those of the Leuci and Mediomatrici appear to have been polycentric from the beginning of their existence. In fact, they were more clearly organized around two main *oppida* (interpreted as the capitals). Their complex settlement system included large, intermediary and smaller settlements. The capital cities can be distinguished from secondary sites by their larger size, a greater variety of economic activities performed on site (e.g. glass-working), religious and political functions and the presence of a mint. Large, intermediary, and small central places - regardless of their sizes - were encircled by stone defensive walls which have been interpreted as a sign of internal territorial cohesion (they all belonged to the community), as well as prestige (Figure 16).[195] Intermediary sites (hillforts and open settlement sites) had a prominent economic function attested by the presence of metalworking activities, ceramic workshops and storage facilities. They often lie on the main roads. At the bottom of the pyramidal system of these two neighbouring *civitates* we find smaller fortifications equally distant from the border, which controlled the access to the *civitas*

[194] On the site of Gouvrieux, on the other hand, no sanctuaries or sacred areas have yet been found. Later on, on these sites, four *oppida* will be established: and this division persisted at least until Merovingian times, when they are reflected in the Merovingian *pagi* (*pagus belvacensis*, *pagus vindoliensis*, *pagus rossontentis* and *pagus camliacensis*) (Roblin 1969; 1978). Also Fichtl 2006; Fichtl 2013a; and Lejars 1991. On the important role of sanctuaries in the foundation of Greek cities see Snodgrass 1980; Polignac 1995.

[195] See Fernández-Götz 2014b.

and, according to Féliu, may also have been used for the purposes of customs collection[196]. The countryside was scattered with aristocratic residences and more modest farms.

Thus, we can conclude that in the first half of the 1st century BC these two *civitates* appear to be two political entities with precise and defined boundaries controlled through a dense network of sites strongly interconnected to each other.

It is in this early, multi-polar, organization of the territory and the dispersion of the ruling elite - who would still come together in the capital place to join assemblies when required - that we find the origins of the wealthy and monumentalized Roman 'secondary agglomerations', a specific and unique element of the Gaulish provinces and which are missing, for example, in Roman Britain.[197] The pre-Roman settlement pattern and social-political organization of these territories can explain why several agglomerations of these *civitates* could host prestigious urban elements which had political connotations at that time (such as the *basilicae* or naved buildings). Their presence does not mean they were self-governing cities, but rather that the whole *civitas* (and the whole *civitas'* elite) acknowledged the political stature of the elites settled there. It might also be possible, but we might be going a step too far in speculating, that the close connections and alliances between aristocratic families and their strong connection to their region of provenance explain the presence of the institutions of *vici* there. These were nothing more than an instrument of the elite to institutionalize their relationship with the land they owned, controlled, or had on influence on.

The emergence of these relatively large communities in Gaul is the result of economic developments gathering force from the 4th century BC.[198] Agriculture was fostered with new effective tools: crafts were becoming more specialized (e.g. long-bladed sickles and flour presses) and iron tools were more advanced compared to, for example, those of Roman Italy.[199] A significant trend towards specialization is attested by the introduction of vineyards and fruit trees in Central Gaul (e.g. in the territory of the Bituriges).[200] After the conquest of Narbonensis (end of the 2 nd century BC) it is possible that new animal species were imported, possibly from Italy (e.g. cattle and horses larger in size and more resistant). Cereal growing became more and more systematic, and storage structures became more common (they were often built on a raised floor - most probably controlled by guards - or took the form of silos). An increase in agricultural production along with rural expansion is attested by the burgeoning number of structures and storage pits (e.g. Champagne) for the storage of the products. Thus, as will be shown in more detail in later chapters, often the Roman conquest did not result in drastic changes in the countryside (and often beneath Roman villas lie older, indigenous farms).

[196] See Féliu 2008; and Féliu 2014.

[197] Such a complex and at the same coherent political and social system will be crystallized in Roman times in the *civitates* of the Bellovaci (north-western Gaul), Bituriges Cubi (central Gaul) and the Allobrogenes (southern Gaul). We will look at the settlement pattern of these three case studies in more detail in chapter 5. In Britain secondary agglomerations were numerous; however, only rarely did they show any signs of grandeur.

[198] Trément 2002.

[199] Wertime 1980.

[200] Dumasy *et al.* 2011.

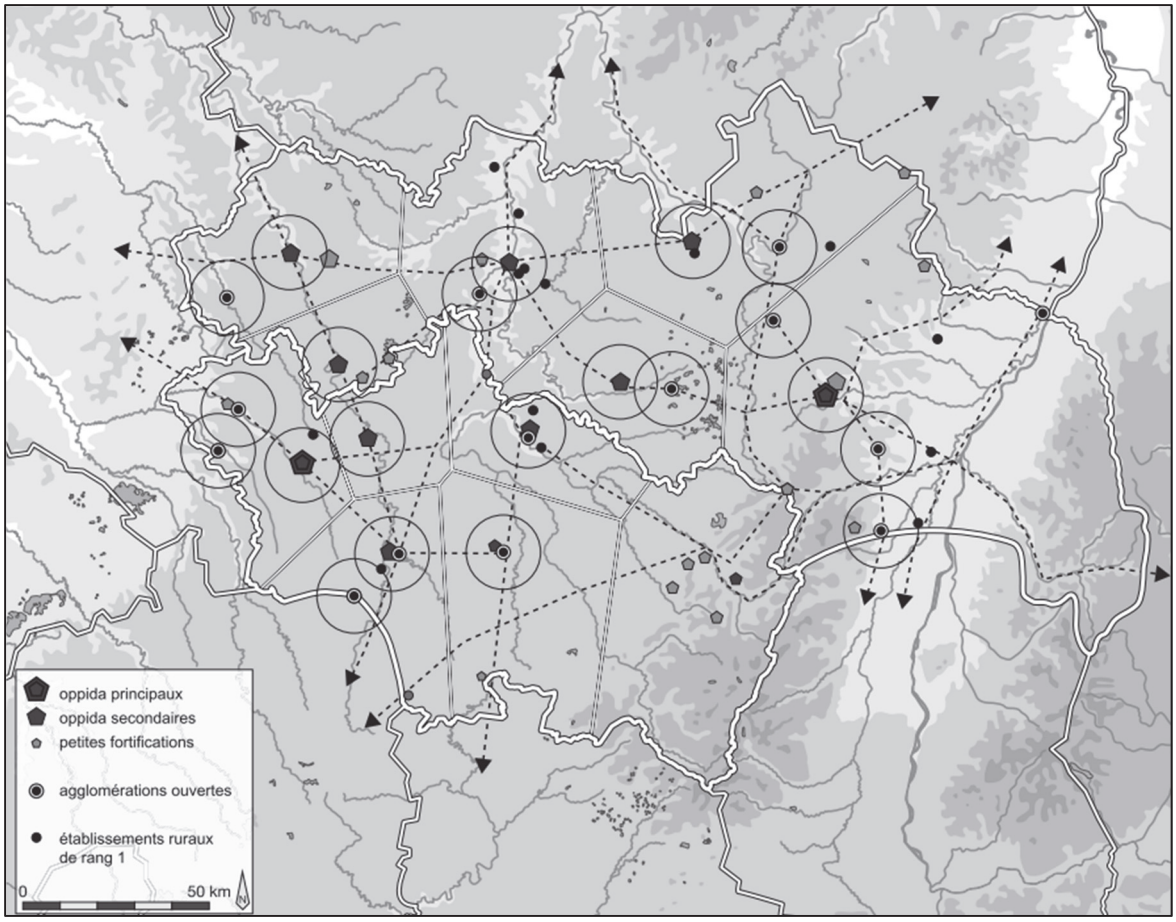

Figure 16: The pyramidal settlement system of the *civitates* of the Leuci and Mediomatrici. The picture shows the main routes and the *oppida*'s and agglomerations' theoretical territories (Féliu 2014: 237).

As observed by Trément, this process gave rise, in the 2nd century BC, to the dichotomy *oppidum*-farm (a prelude to the dichotomy city-countryside), which at this time becomes more discernible in the archaeological record, at least in areas such as central and north-eastern Gaul.[201] From this period onwards, in fact, we see agricultural surplus gradually being moved from the isolated farms or rural villages to the *oppida*, where it was hoarded.[202] The surplus in food resources - a precondition for urbanism - allowed a larger percentage of the population to settle in larger settlements where they could engage in activities other than farming. Whilst these socio-economic changes are not yet completely understood, the research on the *'Historie de l'agriculture en Gaule'* has definitely proved that when Gaul entered the Roman Empire, it already enjoyed an expanding, flourishing economy.[203]

[201] Trément 2010.

[202] It is perhaps not a coincidence that one of the possible etymologies of the Latin word '*oppidum*' was 'hoarding of wealth' (Isidorus, *Etymologiae* 15, De aedificiis et agris).

[203] Ferdière *et al.* eds 2006.

2.4. The development of urbanism in Britain

2.4.1 The British Iron Age

Recent research has demonstrated that Britain and the near continent had continuous contacts from the end of the Ice Age onwards, thus dispelling the myth of 'British isolation' during the Iron Age opposed to the closeness observed during the Bronze Age. The argument for a distinctive British Iron Age society and way of dwelling has been dismissed too, and it has given way to the notion of an 'Atlantic zone' comprising the British Isles, Armorica, the western coast of France, and the north-western Iberian Peninsula based on archaeology, linguistics and genetics.

As Webley explains in a recent article, the myth of 'British isolation' during the first millennium BC was based on a number of biases and prejudices. For example, the disproportionate attention paid to the distribution of fine, decorated objects overshadowed the fact that communities on both sides of the Channel shared a number of objects and technical tools (e.g. domestic artefacts for daily use, pottery, triangular clay loom weights and bone weaving combs).[204] For a long time, roundhouses were seen as a distinctive, British phenomenon, in contrast to continental rectangular longhouses.[205] However, roundhouses comparable to those excavated in the British Islands and dating to the Bronze and Iron Ages have been excavated in northern France since the 1970s. For example, during an excavation in the Cotentin Peninsula, a group of roundhouses[206] which share features similar to those found in southwest Britain from around 500 BC onwards were uncovered.[207] The discovery of further roundhouses at more than 30 sites in northern France dating from the mid-2nd millennium BC to the end of the Iron Age,[208] suggests that this dwelling tradition was more widespread than previously thought. It is now clear that it extended from north-western Iberia to the French coasts of Armorica, Normandy, and Picardy although the predominant type remained the classic rectangular houses.

Funerary practices have also been taken as indicative of the distinctiveness of this island. Until very recently, excarnation - i.e. flesh removal through sub-aerial exposure - was thought to be the most common form of burial rite in Britain.[209] However, recent archaeological and histological analyses suggest that excarnation is not the only explanation for the large number of disarticulated bones found in the archaeological record. In fact, as Sharples and more recently Booth and Madgwick have argued, they might be consistent with the deliberate reopening of Iron Age burials, a practice well attested on the near Continent, too.[210] Thus, quoting Webley, we could say that 'the variety of connections that can now be identified moves

[204] Leman-Delerive 1984; Hurtrelle *et al*. 1990; Blancquaert and Bostyn 1998; Champion 1975; Wilhelmi 1987; Fitzpatrick 2001.
[205] Harding 2009; Albessard 2011.
[206] Lefort 2008, 2011.
[207] Arbousse Bastide 2000; Henderson 2007.
[208] e.g. Dechezleprêtre and Ginoux 2005.
[209] Cunliffe 2012: 251 still writes that excarnation is the norm.
[210] Sharples 2010; Booth and Madgwick 2016; Webley 2015; Diepeveen-Jansen 2001.

us on from seeing contact merely in terms of exchange or emulation between high-status individuals or schools of metalworkers. A wider range of interactions can be envisaged, that may have involved various different sectors of society.'[211]

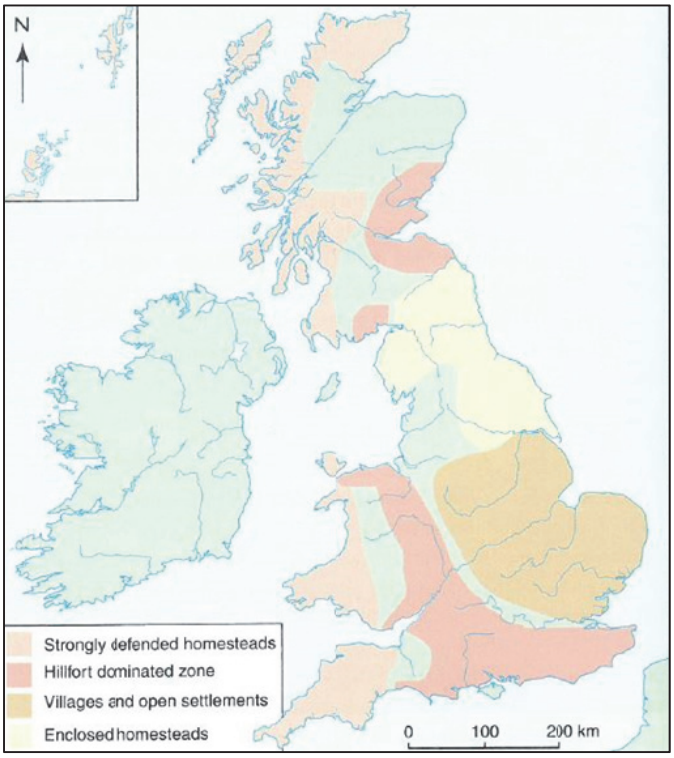

Figure 17: Regional differences in settlement patterns in Iron Age Britain (Cunliffe 2012: 304).

Towards the conclusion of the previous section, we lingered on the wave of socio-economic changes that swept through Gaul from *c*. the 4th century BC. As in Gaul, in Britain the 4th century BC appears to be a crucial moment of breakthrough that affected many aspects of society, including settlement pattern, economy, and technical innovations and so on. The whole island did not experience these developments all at the same time.[212] However, in many regions, the volume of artefacts dating to this period increased greatly in scale. Products became more and more standardized and production became increasingly concentrated in the hands of specialized producers.[213] The production of iron also increased: bars of standardized size and weight - so-called currency bars - were introduced, and important centres for iron smelting developed (e.g. in Yorkshire).

Hilltops enclosed by a system of defensive banks and ditches (so-called hillforts) first appeared in Britain and north-western Continental Europe during the Late Bronze Age (9th to 8th centuries). This period coincides with the moment when 'the established system for the

[211] Webley 2015: 137.

[212] This process had begun in the 1st century BC in some regions; in others it will start later (Eastern England, Hertfordshire, Essex etc.). The temporal trends and the high regional variability will be discussed later in this chapter.

[213] Morris 1994; and 1996. E.g. pottery production (especially in the case of fine wares) and quern production: the latter was probably carried out by specialized workers, possibly at the major quarry sites.

negotiation of social relations by the exchange, use, display and deposition of bronzes ceased, to be replaced by a very different type of society.'[214] As in the case of Gaul, few hillfort interiors have been excavated, so that our understanding of these settlements is regrettably poor. Despite their large variability, they are thought to have acted 'as foci for and symbols of the communities that lived in and around them', perhaps a symbolic space appointed for social gatherings and rituals.[215]

However, until *c*. 400 BC, most have little or no evidence of permanent occupation even though their defences kept being renovated (e.g. Maiden Castle, Danebury).[216] Unlike the so-called *Fürstensitze* or 'princely sites' of central France and southwest Germany dating to the 6th to 5th centuries BC, there is little evidence that they were elite residences or centres of coercive power.

Around the 4th to 5th centuries BC we also witness the crystallisation of specific settlement patterns, which would endure until the arrival of the Romans (Fig 18). As we can see from

Figure 17, the hillfort-dominated zone covers an area thinly scattered with smaller settlements that stretches from the south coast to north Wales and from the Solway to the Firth of Tay. To the east, stretching from the Thames to roughly the Humber estuary, the settlement pattern is dominated by villages and open settlements, while north of the Humber enclosed homesteads prevail. To the west, the landscape is characterized by strongly defended homesteads for single-family groups and extended families, corresponding to the later rounds in Cornwall, raths in western Wales, brochs and duns in Scotland.[217]

From the 4th century BC, in Sussex, several early hillforts passed out of use and were abandoned in favour of other more densely occupied hillforts, the so-called 'developed hillforts'. These were maintained (often enlarged and provided with additional defences, e.g. Maiden Castle, Yarnbury Castle, Cadbury Castle) and had two opposing gates (see Figure 18).[218]

These enlarged and strongly re-fortified hillforts most probably could sustain themselves by controlling a larger portion of territory, and in Wessex they appear to be distributed more regularly across the landscape. Some indication of competing *'polities'* comes from areas where the concentration of hillforts was already high, notably Wessex. For example, the hillfort of Danebury, in eastern Hampshire, was equipped with stronger defences in the 3rd century BC, after it was hit by a fire, whilst four neighbouring sites were essentially abandoned. Similarly, Maiden Castle emerges as a central place while neighbouring sites become deserted. Their construction required concerted effort coordinated by an authority. The hillforts were meant to represent the social unity of the group as well as having the more practical task of protecting the community's food and goods from enemies and animals. Once completed, the

[214] Champion 2010.

[215] Webley 2015: 133; Schulze-Forster 2007; Lambrick and Robinson eds. 2009.

[216] The continuous occupation of hillforts is still matter of debate. For example Hill 1996 argues in favour of a seasonal occupation of hillforts, including Danebury.

[217] Cunliffe 2012: 303-306.

[218] Cunliffe 1984; Fitzpatrick *et al*. 2008; Barrett *et al.* 2000.

defences still required maintenance and, therefore, communal labour and commitment. However, competing communities are not the only explanations behind the emergence of these centres, which could just be the result of the nucleation of a scattered population (synoecism).

Figure 18: Aerial photography of Yarnbury Castle, Wiltshire (Payne 2006: 9).

The Wessex settlement pattern is better understood than many others in Britain and is worth close examination. There, from the 4th BC onwards, the landscape begins to be densely filled with settlements. One of the most enigmatic types of enclosures that populate the landscapes is the so-called banjo enclosure (Figure 19). This small (generally less than 100 m in diameter and measuring *c.* 0.2-0.6 ha) and roughly circular enclosure was first recognized by Perry.[219] It is characterized by a narrow, elongated entrance consisting of two antennae-like, parallel ditches (thus banjo shaped).

The current resurgence of some illuminating works (e.g. by Moore and Lang) has sparked interesting discussions.[220] The distribution of these sites is weighted towards south-central England. In particular, they have been recorded in the 'upland' areas of southern Britain, that is, the Cotswolds, Dorset, southern Wiltshire, and Hampshire.[221] Unfortunately, as noticed by Lang, they probably still remain under-represented in the archaeological record (of the only 140 known, only 16 have been excavated) and, regrettably, they have been rarely studied in their wider landscape, even if they are often part of larger complexes of enclosures, tracks, or field systems.

[219] Perry 1972.
[220] Moore 2012; Lang 2016.
[221] Hingley 1984; Winton 2003; Moore 2006; Lang 2008.

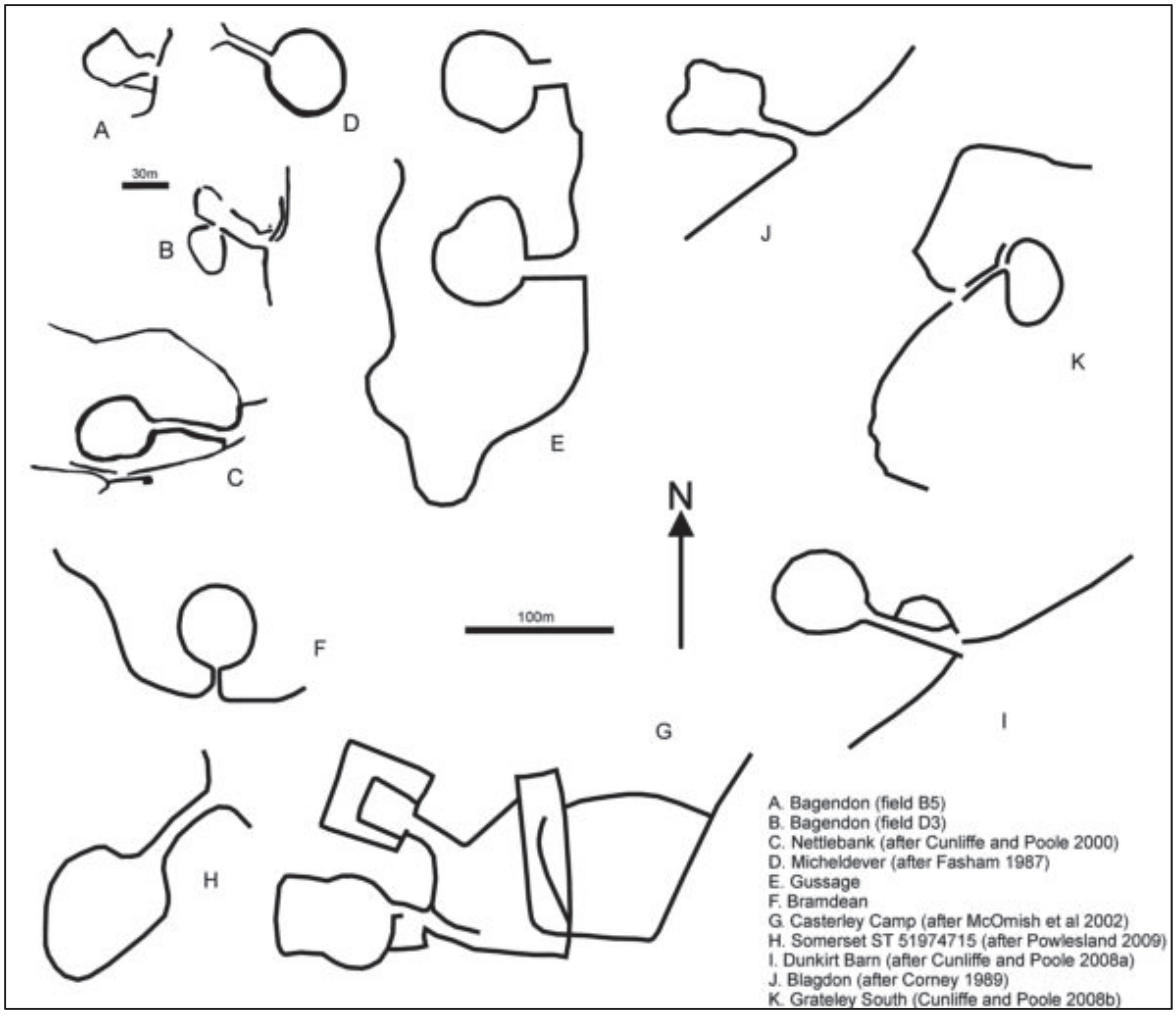

Figure 19: Examples of banjo enclosures (Moore 2012: 404).

Another impediment to their full understanding arises from the fact that their chronology is not always clear, and it is difficult to assess their length of occupation.[222] Evidence that they were permanently occupied is ambiguous in southern England, although similar structures appear to have been permanently occupied in West Wales (e.g. Woodside Camp, Dan-y-Coed).[223]

The location of many Wessex banjo enclosures within field systems has suggested that they formed an integral part of agro-pastoral practices in the Late Iron Age. Their small size distinguishes them from indigenous farmsteads, while their peculiar entrance has often been seen as practical for corralling and dividing livestock and, more generally speaking, for animal husbandry.[224] Their large variety in size, form, entrances' shape and length hints at

[222] Their chronology is complicated: the sites show limited use; abandonment is represented by ditches that were left to silt naturally or were filled in within a very short space of time. In some cases banjo enclosures were occupied relatively long term (e.g. Micheldever Wood); at others they were quickly closed and either a new site was constructed in a different form (eg, Owslebury) or the site was abandoned and later served an entirely different purpose (eg, Nettlebank Copse).

[223] Lang 2016; Williams and Mytum 1998; Fitzpatrick *et al*. 2008.

[224] Perry 1972: 71; Papworth 2008: 268. At Nettlebank there is evidence of seasonal husbandry (Cunliffe and Poole 2000: 134). The geophysical surveys undertaken at Bagendon indicate that much of the complex may have been relatively empty and 'the presence of the bank on the external side of the ditch which defined a driveway

multifunctional sites.[225] As well as being considered sites for funnelling stock, the presence of numerous weeds within their enclosures indicates that several could have been used for storage and food processing.[226]

The appearance of banjo enclosures in Britain during the 4th century BC represents just one of a number of changes to patterns of settlement, and, as Lang pointed out, 'these sites are potentially representative of the shift towards more complex settlement landscapes, which are best identified through nucleated settlements, rural establishments and linear dyke systems integrating settlement and funerary landscapes'. They also mark a time when 'there is a far greater emphasis on the enclosure of space and location'.[227] Around the same period, and particularly from the 3rd century BC, we see increasing signs of violence, and warfare appears to be endemic in south-central Britain, or at least this is what the strategic walls (e.g. the forward projecting hornworks and multiple ditches at Maiden Castle), the evidence of fires and the sling stones found nearby at Danebury, and the traces of traumatic wounds consistent with physical violence revealed on skeletal remains from Dorset and Hampshire suggest.[228]

2.4.2 The 'developed hillforts'

As mentioned above, from the 4th century onwards in Britain several hillforts developed into quite large, increasingly structured and densely packed settlements. They began to be occupied for relatively long periods of time[229] and appear to be the product of social groups with considerable coordinated communal investment of labour and resources, who controlled quite a large agricultural hinterland, as the fact that it is devoid of contemporary settlements suggests.[230] Within their defences, storage facilities and domestic activities are regularly present in large numbers. Craft activities, however, are less often represented, and evidence that they were elite residences is still lacking. They appear to be rural villages, very different from the *Fürstensitze* of central France and south-west Germany and also from the polyfocal complexes that will develop during the 2nd century BC.

In Gaul, we have seen that the first *oppida* appeared on the sites of earlier sanctuaries. However, in Britain, things are different. In Britain, religion was not expressed through monumental architecture. Evidence of temples, shrines, but also images of deities are still lacking, whilst the prevailing religious practice attested was the intentional deposition or breakage of ritual

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that allowed the collection and corralling of livestock is often present, and here as well is used to argue for such a role' (Moore 2012: 409). Also see Stead 1968: 88.

[225] Cunliffe and Poole 2000: 134.

[226] Their function is a matter of debate (see Perry 1972; Hingley 1984; Lang 2008: 324-6; Lang 2016; Webley 2015). It has also been put forward that the ditch entrances held symbolic meaning and that they could relate to ceremonial pathways or high-status entrances.

[227] Lang 2016: 355. More on this topic in: Bowden and McOmish 1987; Collis 1996; 2006; Hingley 1990; Thomas 1997.

[228] Davis 2013; Cunliffe 2012.

[229] Although this point is still a matter of discussion.

[230] Cunliffe 2012.

objects.[231] Religious activity was embedded in daily life; hence deposits are often found not only in relation to landscape features (such as rivers or high places) but also in connection with structures for daily use (such as enclosure ditches, post-holes etc.).[232] From the layout of houses, farms and forts and their entrance orientations, for example, we can glimpse a cosmological influence.[233]

One of the best-researched 'developed hills' is Ham Hill (Figure 20). It measured 88 ha (Titelberg, mentioned earlier in the chapter, covered *c*. 50 ha). At intervals, its defence consisted of up to three lines of bank and ditch.[234] Its earliest phase was characterized by field boundaries 'which form a coaxial system that sweeps across the plateau area.'[235] In a later phase, the hillfort was provided with opposed entrances on the main road between the two entrances dividing the hillfort in two. It was densely settled with roundhouses, enclosures, and grain storage pits. Further minor roads radiate from the main road, and a number of enclosures respect the orientation.

The excavations have revealed material assemblage mainly associated with domestic waste: e.g. pottery, animal bone, burnt stones, baked clay (possibly daub or loom weights), and sling stones (possibly used in the grinding of cereals).[236] These small finds suggest this was a large, rural village, where the population practised subsistence agriculture and farming and was mostly engaged with domestic activities. In fact, 'the paucity of slag or other metalworking debris would suggest that iron production was not prevalent, if at all present at Ham Hill during the Iron Age, particularly in light of its comparatively common occurrence on farmsteads and smaller forts that imply fairly widespread low-level metalworking practices.'[237]

Another well-documented 'developed hillfort' is Danebury, in Hampshire. Whilst its size is quite unremarkable (the built-up area extended only within the inner rampart, which enclosed a total of 5.3 ha), the density of the settlement evidence and of the assemblages of artefacts and ecofacts was so great that the idea of excavating the whole site had to be abandoned.[238] A sudden increase in the intensity of occupation is attested at Danebury starting from *c*. 270 BC.

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[231] Joy 2011. Evidence of shrines is ambiguous, and all the potential specimens of Iron Age shrines identified present significant interpretational problems (e.g. the possible altar found in the middle of Danebury). Classical authors refer to the importance of natural features and sacred 'groves'.

[232] Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2008: perhaps the most convincing example comes from Cadbury Castle where a small rectangular structure with a porch is interpreted as a shrine (Downes 1997; Barrett *et al.* 2000). Other possible examples include the small enclosure at Uley West Hill that preceded the Roman temple (Woodward and Leach 1993), and, less certainly, there are hints of a predecessor to the Romano-Celtic temple at Maiden Castle (Drury 1980). There is also a building in the Harlyn Bay cemetery (Whimster 1977). There have been doubts about the so-called temple excavated by Grimes at Heathrow. At both Frilford and Woodeaton there were pre-Roman deposits, unusual structures, burials and votive objects, but no definitive evidence for Late Iron Age shrines or temples. At Hayling Island (Hampshire), a rectangular enclosure with a circular inner structure and votive depositions of coinage and metalwork has been interpreted as a possible shrine (King and Soffe 2001).

[233] Only from the 3rd century BC in Danebury (Sharples 2014). Also see Oswald 1997; Hill 1989.

[234] Sharples 2014; Forde-Johnston 1976: 93.

[235] Sharples 2014.

[236] Brittain *et al.* 2013; Adkins and Adkins 1992.

[237] Slater *et al*. 2011: 95. Also see Fitzpatrick *et al*. 2008: 141.

[238] Sharples 2014.

According to Davis, it indicates that households were moving into the hillfort from the surrounding farmsteads.[239] In its earliest phase, the majority of roundhouses concentrated in the peripheral areas of the hillfort, directly behind the ramparts (Figure 21).[240] The centre of the hillfort was, on the other hand, filled with storage structures, i.e. four-post granaries and other storage enclosures. In this early period, the density of occupation was low and each roundhouse appeared to be an independent household *c.* 10-15 m apart from the others.[241] Houses had different designs and sizes, ranging from a diameter of 4.7 meters up to 10 meters, and the entrances did not follow any particular orientation.

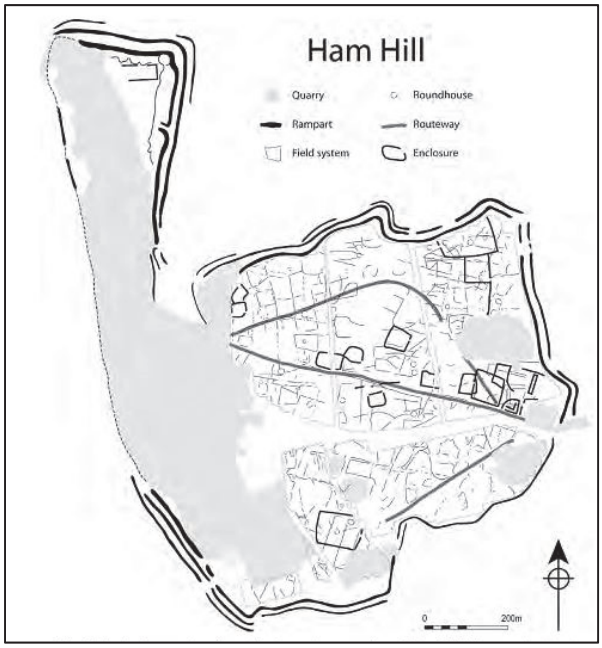

Figure 20: Ham Hill, Somerset (Sharples 2014: 225).

During the course of the 3rd century BC, occupation increased and the hillfort was almost completely filled with roundhouses well aligned with the road system. All houses shared a similar shape and size, and they were predominantly oriented towards east or south-east (indicating not only the equal social status of the inhabitants but also the existence of communal architectural rules).

As at Ham Hill, the limited evidence for craft activities within this hillfort is striking, especially if we consider that they are attested in nearby rural enclosures (e.g. Winnall Down).[242] Traces of zoning in domestic activities are present. Different activities were confined to particular areas: for example, spinning and weaving were concentrated in the north-east[243].

As mentioned above, there are several important aspects that distinguish hillforts from the *Fürstensitze* and the polyfocal sites or *oppida* that would develop in Gaul and shortly thereafter

[239] Davis 2013.

[240] This layout vaguely resembles that of the hillforts of Eastern Spain (e.g. Puig Castellar, Els Vilar etc.).

[241] As Sharples 2014 notes, it is likely that the households were linked together by a web of relationships and mutual obligations rather than being completely independent units.

[242] Fasham 1985.

[243] See Osgood 1995: Figure 100.

in Britain (Figure 22). First of all, their hinterlands are much smaller. Moreover, whilst their immediate surroundings might well have been under their direct control, Hill's argument that nearby rural settlements were not dependent on the hillforts - since they were equipped with their own storage facilities - is plausible, and it is becoming widely accepted.[244] Their economic basis was a mixed agricultural and pastoralist economy; trade and specialist production were essentially missing.[245] Houses were homogenous, and there is no trace of elite residences.[246] As mentioned above, the religious practices of pre-Roman Britain did not focus on architectural structures. Thus we cannot exclude that people living in the surrounding area visited the hillforts on the occasion of religious festivals. These would have left few traces, except perhaps large numbers of animal bones, which would be difficult to interpret.[247]

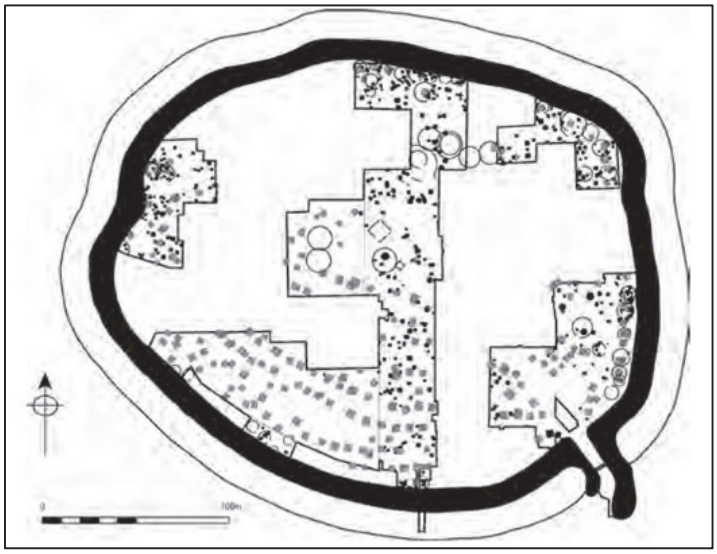

Figure 21: Danebury, after Cunliffe 1995 (Sharples 2014: 227).

We can conclude that 'developed hillforts' were exemplary of increased settlement stability and investment in communal labour and resources. Intensified agriculture provided the inhabitants of these large villages with enough resources to be distributed throughout the whole year. Social cohesion among the inhabitants of the hillfort is conveyed by the construction of large and often complex hillfort defences, while inter-regional competition between different communities is indicated by the emphasis on the display of power that aimed at discouraging potential rivals.[248] Evidence of warfare at this time is quite rare and largely problematic.[249] One example is the evidence of a punitive massacre at the site of Fin Cop in Derbyshire.[250] At least

[244] Hill 1996. This weakens the hypothesis that neighbouring villages had to pay a tribute to the hillfort and that the latter was responsible for redistributing the goods, as has been argued by Cunliffe.
[245] Sharples 2014 *contra* Cunliffe 1984.
[246] Marchant 1989; Sharples 2010; Stopford 1987 *contra* Cunliffe 1995 and Cunliffe 2003.
[247] At Danebury, a cluster of unusual buildings, possibly shrines, located in the middle of the hill suggested they might have been used for religious activities near the centre of the hill (Sharples 2010: 196 and 204-205).
[248] Lambrick and Robinson eds 2009:. 342-343 and 358-361.
[249] See chapter 7 in Harding 2012 for an overview and for a more detailed discussion of singular cases.
[250] Waddington 2011; Waddington *et al.* 2012

nine skeletons, belonging to women and children, found in the ditches, suggested a punitive massacre occurred *c*. 440-390 BC. The skeletal analysis showed evidence of interrupted growth, which may be a result of dietary stress, i.e. famine. Nonetheless, the Iron Age societies of this period do not appear to have been strongly hierarchical as is often supposed (i.e. chiefdoms).

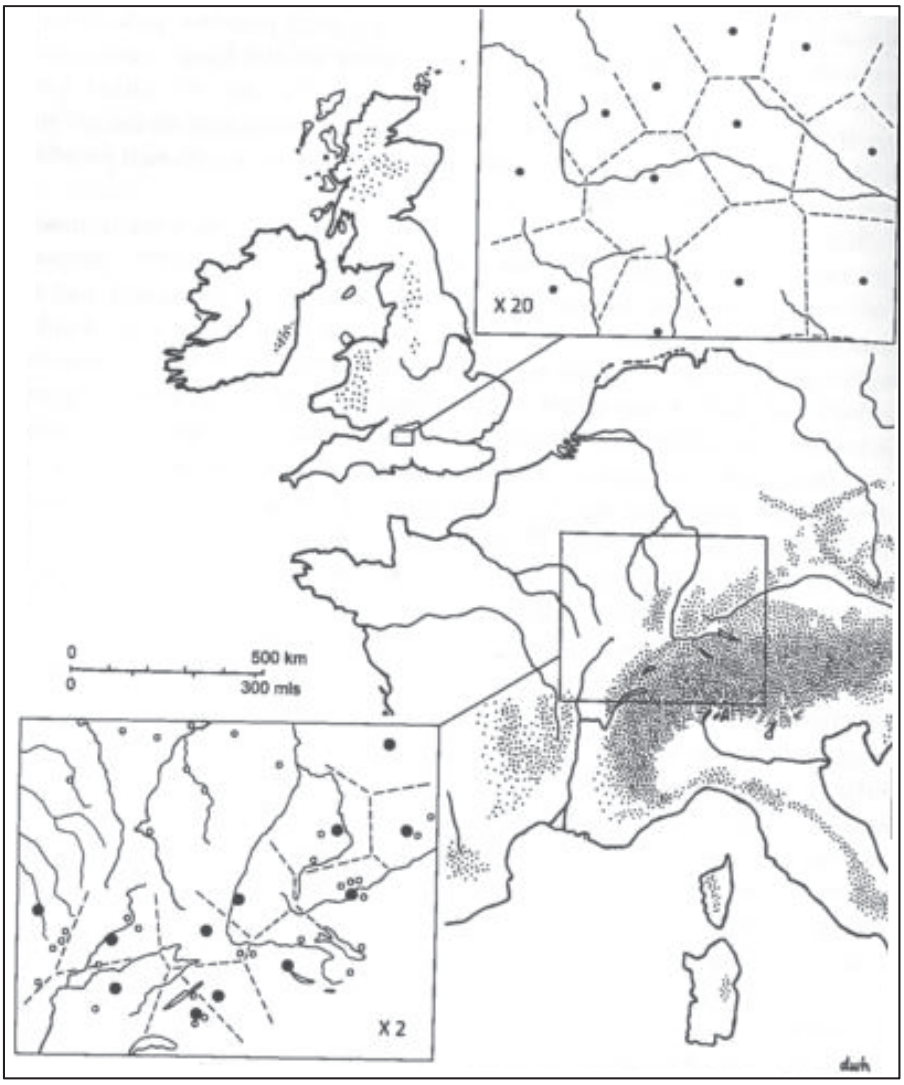

Figure 22: Hillfort territories in North Wiltshire compared to *Fürstensitze* territories in west-central Europe (Harding 2012: 122).

These hillforts fell into disuse during the 1st century BC, not long before (or perhaps contemporaneously) we see the appearance of *oppida* and polyfocal complexes. For example, Danebury was largely abandoned by 70 BC. In the Thames Valley Alfred's Castle, Uffington, Segsbury, Rams Hill, Castle Hill, and Taplow appear to be devoid of any significant activity, while at this time other foci started to develop. They were separated by much larger distances, some lying on valley floors (notably Salmonsbury, Dykes Hills and Grims Ditch).[251] From their spatial distribution and the distribution of coins some of them issued, we can presume that they

[251] However, they were not completely abandoned, e.g. At Castle Hill a few sherds dating after 100 BC were found, and it remained a focus of burials (Lambrick and Robinson eds 2009: 361).

controlled a much larger territory compared to previous hillforts. These centres, because of their morphology, are often referred to as 'polyfocal complexes' or *'oppida'*.[252] However, these two definitions essentially overlap, and their importance is strictly related to the increased social complexity that produced them.

2.4.3 The polyfocal complexes

During the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, the process of increasing social hierarchy, political centralization and nucleation became more and more visible in the archaeological record, especially in southern and eastern Britain. As in Gaul, these centuries were an important moment of increased political cohesion and centralization of the landscape. Starting from 150 BC, we see the emergence of larger social structures, which are difficult to define (they are often referred to as *'polities'*, tribal confederations etc.). As in Gaul, we find important central places whose structures and archaeological assemblages suggest a higher degree of social complexity and social differentiation, as well as an increased number of economic activities compared to previous hillforts. This political process caused disruptions to the settlement system. In fact, interestingly enough (and counterintuitively), this process of 'centralization' corresponds to a less 'nucleated' phase of the settlement pattern: in fact, these new sites, which will replace the old 'developed hillforts' have a more strongly dispersed character while also showing significant evidence of high-status occupation and far-reaching connections.[253] The presence of items (coins, pottery etc.) of an exotic nature suggests that these complexes were 'integrated into wider economic and social systems than the immediate landscape'.[254] They were also characterized by large enclosed areas, rich finds of pre-Roman coins, traces of metalwork and iron smelting (for example at Silchester and Gussage All Saints there is evidence of the production of horse harnesses), rich burials, and Roman imports.[255] Feasting and drinking appear to have become major activities in the society. For example, at Stanway (the place of an elite burial at Camulodunum), there is evidence of broken pottery found either in burials or in the surrounding enclosure ditches, suggesting in the latter case that feasting and rituals were also performed at communal events, as was the case in Gaul.[256]

Their spatial distribution (Figure 23) suggests they were regional centres with a much larger hinterland compared to the earlier 'developed hillforts'.

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[252] British scholars also refer to them as 'territorial *oppida*'. In the case of polyfocal complexes the emphasis is placed on the fact they are embedded in multiple ditch systems, including a banjo enclosure in the case of Bagendon, or linear ditches at Gussage Hill, and the presence of the elite is attested. Polyfocal sites (Haselgrove 2000: 107) were first recognized by Mark Corney, who referred to them as 'multiple ditch complexes', and he deemed them akin to the *oppida* (Corney 1989: 125; and Corney 1991a).

[253] For example, at Gussage All Saints and at the double banjo complex nearby, a relatively rich assemblage of Late Iron Age brooches and chariot fittings and moulds - possibly produced on site - have been recovered (Corney 1991b: 242; and Spratling 1979: 144). Imports, such as a considerable number of coins and Dressel 1 *amphorae* have also been discovered

[254] Moore 2012: 411.

[255] Corney 1989: 112. Verlamion was an elite burial place; rare cremation burials, sometimes in barrows, might also suggest the presence of individuals with higher status and more wealth than the rest of the society. They are attested at Gussage, Blagdon and possibly Bagendon.

[256] Newman 2007; Crummy *et al.* eds 2007 : 72.

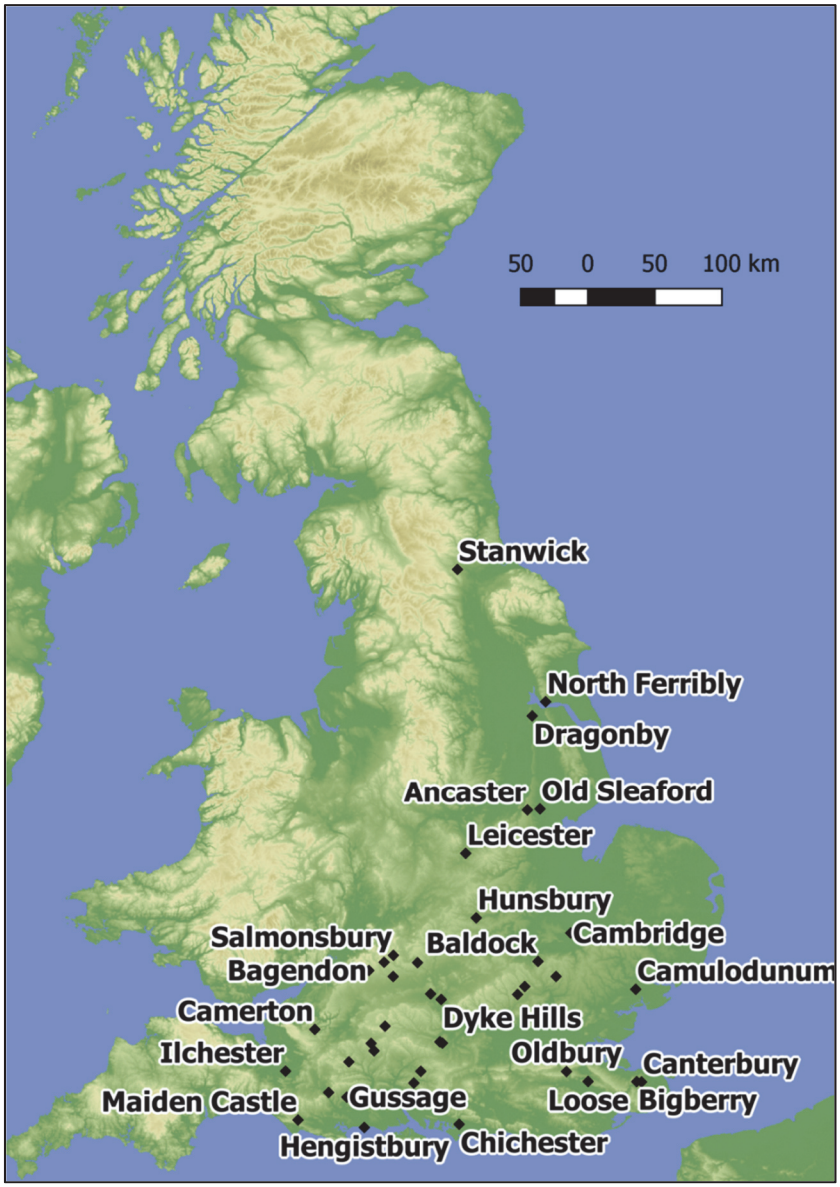

Figure 23: The distribution of oppida and polyfocal complexes in Britain (after Millett 1990 and Moore 2012).

The variability among them in terms of size, layout, and topography makes it hard to define what these settlements really were and what they represented.[257] The paucity of evidence of dense occupation (unlike the 'developed hillforts') suggests they were not significant permanent settlements. They were rather 'scattered elite and lower status residential compounds separated by agricultural areas (field systems) and interspersed by discrete designated zones of varying function (agriculture, ritual activity, burial, metalworking, coin production).'[258] Thus, we can say that these sites take the shape of dispersed settlements (Figure 24 to Figure 26).

[257] See Garland 2014; and Bryant 2007. As an example, compare Calleva Atrebatum, a relatively small enclosed settlement (32 ha) with the least extensive dykes and highly structured around a street grid, and Grims Ditch, a major dyke system (Fulford and Timby 2000) and the case of Bagendon, which will be described below.

[258] Garland 2014: 108; also see Haselgrove 1995: 86; Haselgrove 2000: 105: Haselgrove and Millett 1997: 286.

These central places fulfilled different functions: they housed the elites, they had industrial quarters and were used for social and ritual gatherings and funerary spaces.

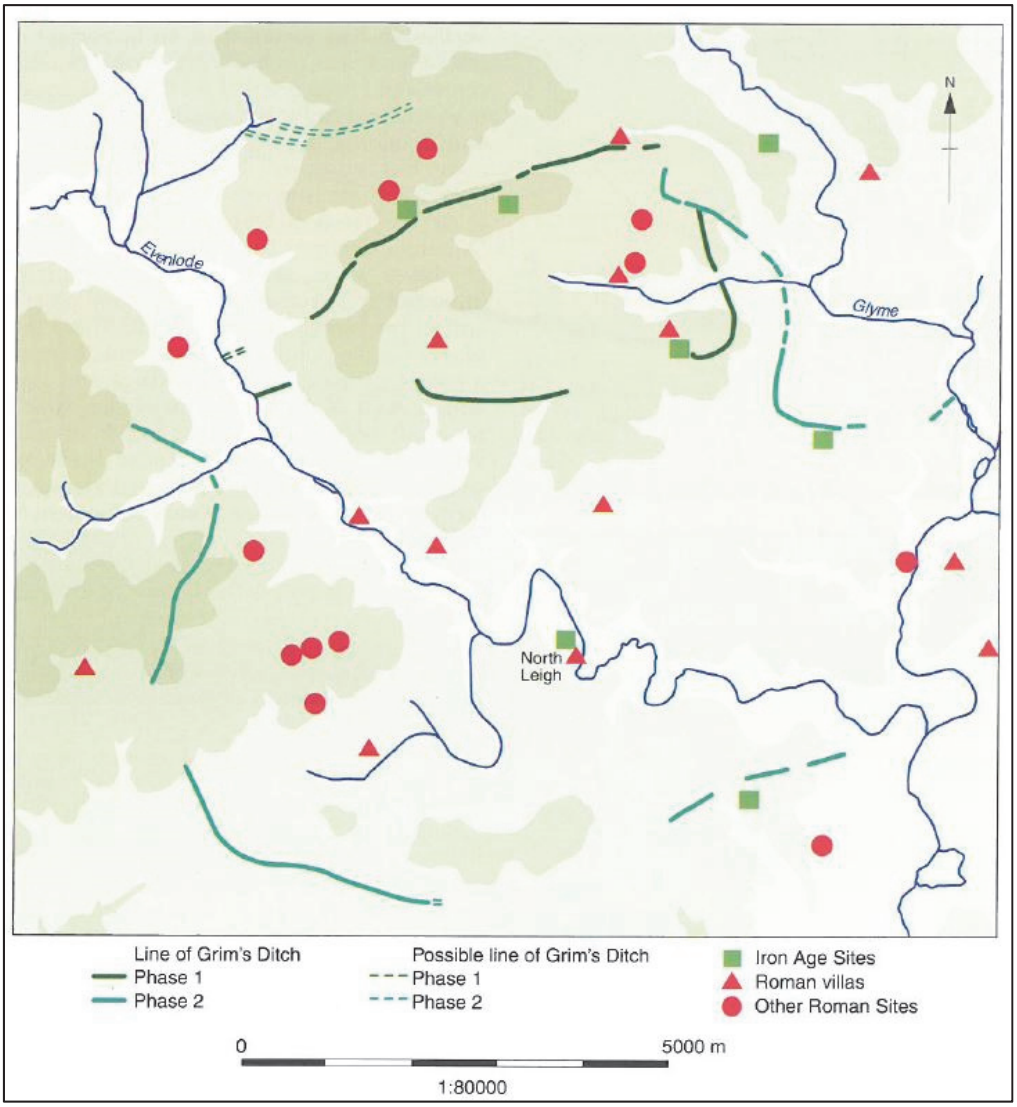

Figure 24: The polyfocal sites of Grim's Ditch (Lambrick and Robinson eds. 2009: 367).

Bagendon, lying 3 km north of the Roman city of Corinium, is one impressive example (Figure 25).[259] An extensive dyke system enclosed an area of between 80 and 200 ha. However, the occupation was quite limited and activities were dispersed over a large area instead of being concentrated in a single centre. The presence of metalwork and two banjo enclosures suggests industrial activity and husbandry may have been practised, along with agriculture. Due to the apparent high-status nature of the finds this site has been regarded as the residence of the elite. This idea is reinforced by the presence of rare cremation burials, sometimes in barrows - which suggest 'the presence of individuals who marked themselves out differently within the community.'[260]

[259] Moore 2012: 411. The Bagendon Project, directed by Tom Moore, has recently been engaged in different geophysical surveys and excavations at this site.
[260] Moore 2012: 41.

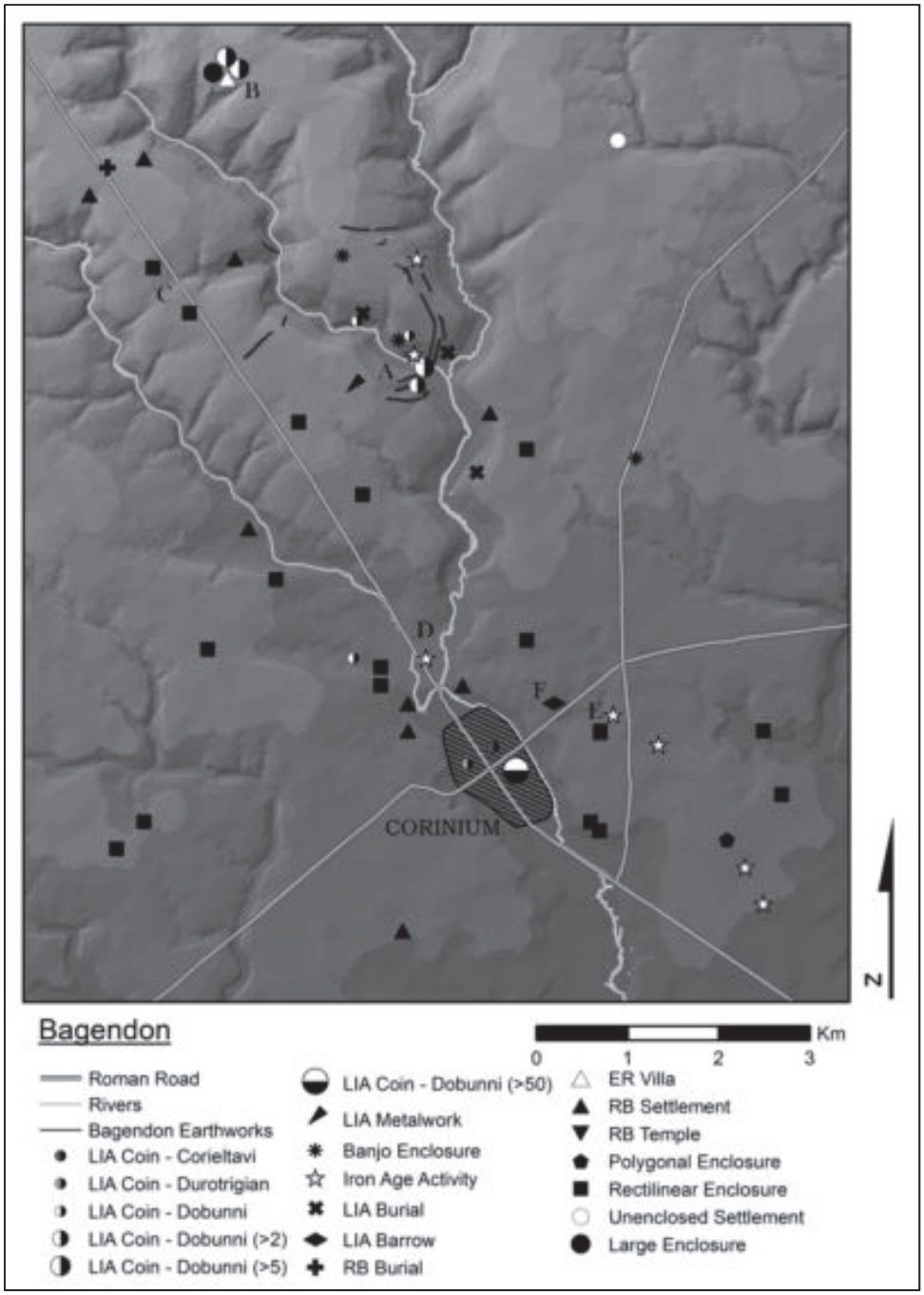

Figure 25: The polyfocal site of Bagendon (Moore 2012: 393).

Most of these sites show signs of continuity in Roman times. For example, several developed into *civitas* capitals (e.g. Calleva Atrebatum, Verulamium, Camulodum, Noviomagus Reginorum, Venta Belgarum, Durovernum Cantiacorum, and Ratae Corieltauvorum).[261] Others developed into secondary agglomerations (e.g. Salmonsbury, Abingdon, Baldock, Ancaster, etc.). Others, like Stanwick, were completely abandoned. In other cases, they

[261] Bidwell 2015: 118. Leicester, during the Late Iron Age the area on the west side of the river Soar was occupied by 'a significant settlement of high status' (Morris *et al.* 2011: 15)

continued to exist as sites of high-status rural settlements and, in the 1st century AD, would be occupied by Roman villas (e.g. Bagendon, Grims Ditch[262]).

The question of why these settlements followed different trajectories has not found an answer yet. Ultimately, the Roman authorities (as they did in Gaul and in Germania Inferior) could decide to promote the elite of certain communities at the expense of others or to punish them altogether. For example, we know from Tacitus that the Trinovantes (among the most powerful community of southern Britain at the time of the Roman conquest) had been severely punished by Rome. Camulodunum (whose name means 'the Fortress of Camulos', God of War) was re-founded as a veteran colony. The Trinovantes had been dreadfully humiliated during the process and 'the bitterest animosity was felt against the veterans; who, fresh from their settlement in the colony of Camulodunum, were acting as though they had received a free gift of the entire country, driving the natives from their homes, ejecting them from their lands, - they styled them "captives" and "slaves".'[263] Our understanding of what the foundation of a Roman colony would have entailed on juridical and social levels is regrettably poor.[264] For example, it is still a matter of debate whether it is possible that the Trinovantes were really illegally deprived of their freedom and left at the mercy of the veterans, as the text suggests.[265] Usually, either the *incolae* were ejected from part of their former land (only very rarely and under certain circumstances could they receive any compensation for the eviction[266]), or even more commonly (this was the normal solution), they were allowed to stay in the colony alongside the *cives* and retained their individual rights.[267]

Clearly, Rome's hand fell heavily upon the Trinovantes, but what about the other communities? Usually, the survival of a polyfocal complex and its development into a *civitas* capital has been interpreted as a sign of its pre-existing importance or that its elite were held in very high regard by Rome. However, as Moore very wisely pointed out, it would be naive to believe that those complexes that were abandoned were necessarily sub-centres or satellites of more important settlements.[268] As in the case of Gaul, the Roman administrative boundaries and settlement foci may or may not reflect the pre-existing, indigenous substrata.

As in Gaul, this change in settlement pattern reflects a change in the social structure. As was the case for Gaul, it has often been explained by exogenous factors, such as Caesar's invasion of Britain or an increased relationship between south-east England and northern France supposedly begun around the mid-2nd century BC. The imports of Italian wine *amphorae*,

[262] Bagendon: Moore 2012; Grim's Ditch: Booth 1999: 47.

[263] *'[...] Acerrimo in veteranos odio. Quippe in coloniam Camulodunum recens deducti quasi cunctam regionem muneri accepissent,[1] pellebant domibus, exturbabant agris, captivos, servos appellando*' (Tacitus, Annales, 14, XXXI).

[264] However, among all type of foundations (colonies, *municipia* etc.), Roman colonies are the ones for which we possess the most evidence.

[265] The text, in fact, suggests that what happened to the Trinovantes was illegal. Tacitus assumes they had the right to stay on the land they had tended.

[266] Sic. Flacc. *cond. agr.,* Th. 125.14-17 (the text also says that only land for assignations was taken).

[267] Recent studies that look from a juridical perspective at the relationship between Romans (*cives*) and indigenous people (*incolae*) can be found in Gagliardi 2006; Gagliardi 2011; and Gagliardi 2015.

[268] Moore 2012: 412.

Armorican pottery and coins, 'Gallo-Belgic' gold coins have all been used as evidence. However, a more visible exchange does not necessarily imply an increase in the total exchange.[269] What is of real interest is not a supposed increase in imports or contacts with continental Europe, but the emergence of a small elite which, on the basis of the burial evidence from Stanwick and Colchester, consisted of close family groups.

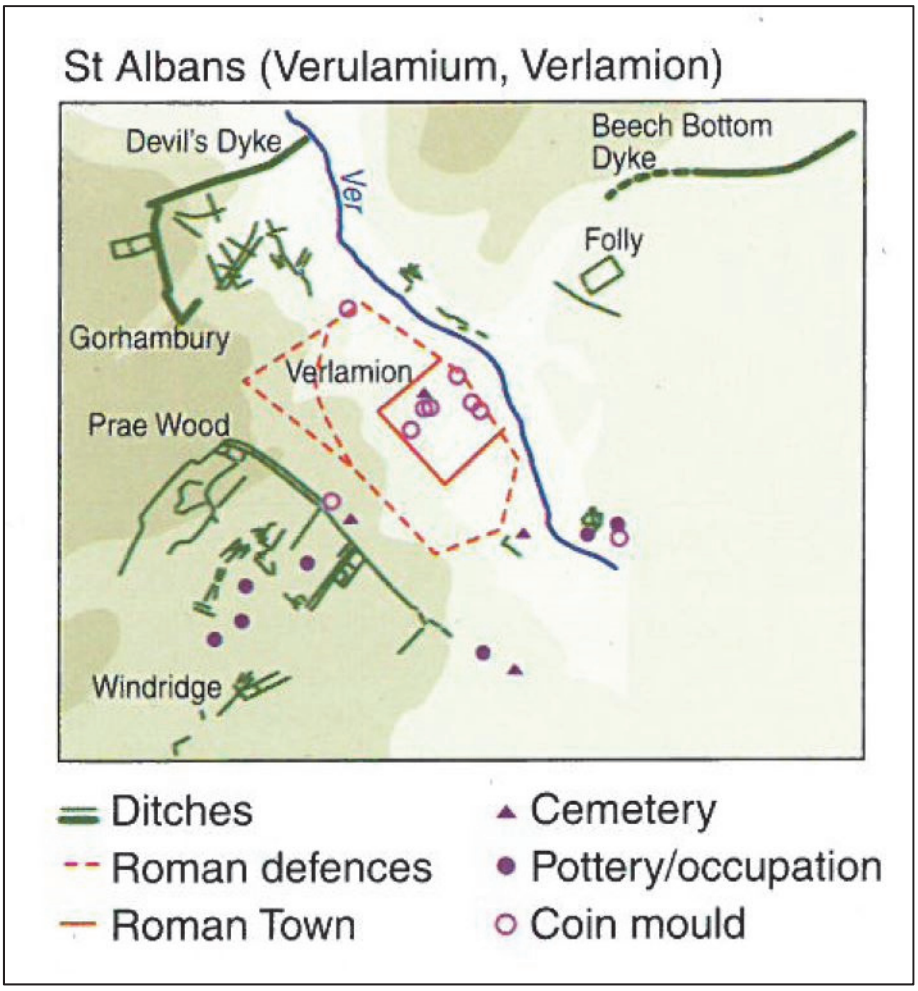

Figure 26: Verlamion (St. Albans) (Lambrick and Robinson 2009 eds: 366).

As Nicodemus writes:

> The development of hereditary inequality is a pre-condition for the emergence of centralized polities. While no groups are entirely egalitarian, the shift from achieved to ascribed status has important ramifications for sustained and increasingly asymmetric socio-economic differentiation that characterizes more complex social formations. Vertical transmission of wealth and status within lineages may lead to institutionalization of these distinctions, with permanent elite and commoner kin groups emerging.[270]

Due to a number of factors, such as a rural expansion, demographic increase, and technological innovations that began in the 4th century BC, people started to concentrate in densely packed

[269] As Webley highlights, the numbers of imports actually found in Britain are modest and the cross-Channel exchange was not a new phenomenon (Webley 2015).
[270] Nicodemus 2014: 9.

settlements. In the long run, new opportunities for the accumulation of wealth and status were created, most likely in association with tensions and competition between neighbours. The development of social hierarchies within centralized communities will not be reached until a few centuries later (1st century BC), with the emergence of polyfocal complexes *(oppida)*, whose political nature still eludes us, but nonetheless indicate that power was concentrated in a determinate place and was held in the hands of a minority.[271] The fact that several of these emerging elites developed increasing ties with the Roman rulership has been convincingly argued by Creighton.[272] The formation of these *'polities'* is probably associated with the abandonment of the 'developed hillforts' at the beginning of the 1st century BC and the foundation of new high-status places such as Stanwick (80-70 BC) and slightly later (late 1st century BC) Camulodunum, Verlamion, Silchester, Bagendon, Chichester etc.

The territory of these *'polities'* remains uncertain, and the distribution of coins cannot be used as a definitive argument. We cannot rule out the idea that the re-definition of these *'polities'* was a consequence of a decision by Rome. We have seen how in southern Gaul the impact of the Romans on the territory had been huge, for example in determining the predominance of Nîmes, an *oppidum* like many others, which suddenly came into control of a huge territory. However, as Champion recently wrote, it is important to keep in mind that:

> the distributions of the regional series of coins in southern and eastern England, formerly attributed to such tribes and thought to mark their territories (Williams 2003, 2008), are much more complex, revealing patterns at a variety of scales and making such attribution very problematic (Leins 2008). Like the nature of political authority, the nature of political groupings in the LIA has become much more difficult to discern, and almost certainly much more varied; at the very least, projecting post-conquest structures back into prehistory is unwise.[273]

2.4.4 Regional differences in character and distribution of polyfocal complexes and *oppida*

When looking at a map of Britain, we see that a line running south-west/north-east virtually divides it into two. This traditional geographical division of Britain into a Highland and a Lowland Zone is certainly a simplification of a much more complex reality, but it is a useful tool when trying to understand British settlement patterns (Figure 27).

[271] Champion 2016: 155-156.

[272] Creighton 2006.

[273] Champion 2016: 154. Ancient scholars have based their assumptions not only on ancient sources. Coinage has also often been used as an instrument for identifying pre-Roman communities. As Moore observes: 'no coins have tribe names inscribed on them; the only potential exceptions are those inscribed ECEN, although whether this is a tribe (Iceni) or personal name, as seems more likely, is open to question […]. However, recent surveys indicate that the distribution of types represents more complex distributions, sometimes overlapping, which do not represent a coherent entity but fragmented sets of social networks […]. Many have argued too that Late Iron Age coinage was used as part of fluid individual allegiances […] and, as such, its distribution does not reflect tribal identity but an individual's power base […]' (Moore 2011: 350).

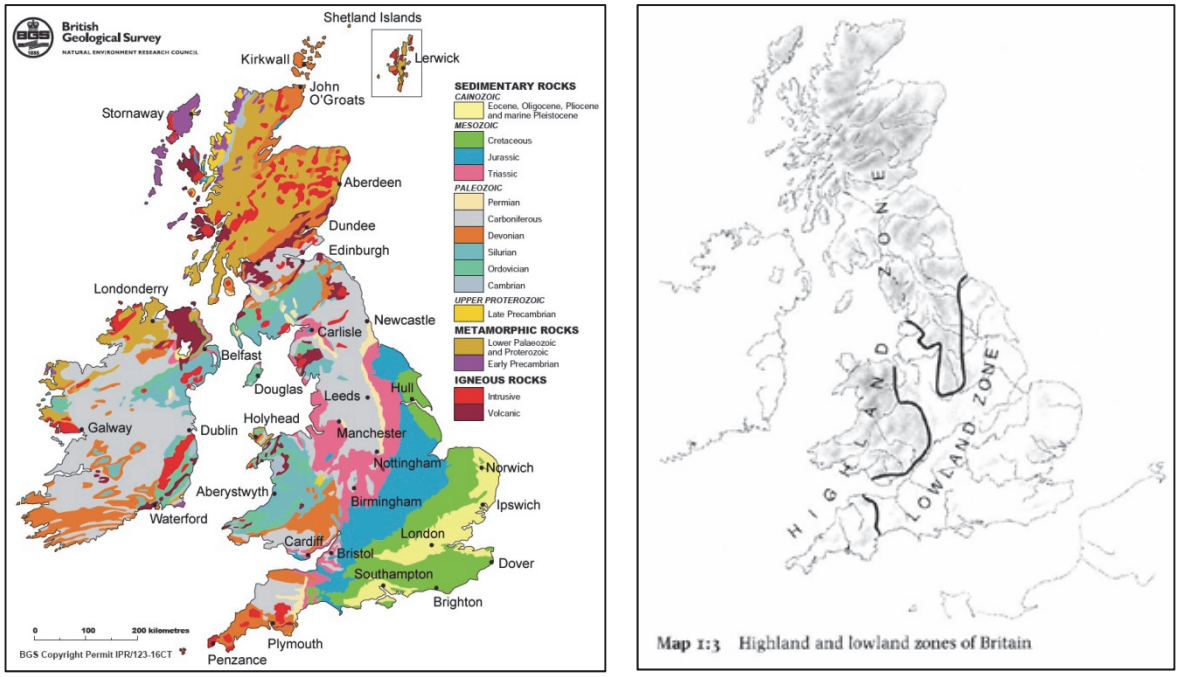

Figure 27: Left: Geology of Britain (British Geology Survey). Right: the Highland and Lowland Zones (Jones and Mattingly 2002: 3).

So far we have been mainly concerned with south-central England, which lies in the Lowland Zone. This region is characterized mostly by limestones, chalks, and other sedimentary rocks. It is also covered by abundant alluvium, and it is reasonably well drained. Generally speaking, it provides the best arable land on the island (notable exceptions are the Wash, the Fens, the Weald, part of the South Downs, the Somerset Levels, and the estuary of the Humber River). On the other hand, in the Highland Zone, i.e. the western and northern parts of Britain (which include Wales, Cornwall, northern England and Scotland) most of the older, harder, volcanic and metamorphic rocks are concentrated. This region can be covered with high relief (Scotland), moorland (Cornwall, Wales) or thick beds of peat and is on average less fertile and its climate is more severe.[274] These two regions differ not only in terms of rock types and soils, but also in terms of hydrology. The broad river valleys are concentrated in the east (e.g. Thames, Nene, Trent, Ouse etc.), whilst those in the west - with some notable exceptions (e.g. Severn/Avon, Dee etc.) - are smaller and less penetrative, and this has a direct impact on the communication and settlement systems.[275]

We have already introduced the landscape settlement pattern of south-central England (Figure 28). We said it was intensively farmed and densely settled with hillforts, enclosed and unenclosed settlements, and banjo enclosures. Even marginal areas, such as the Somerset 'Lake Villages', were efficiently exploited. One of the best examples is the village of Glastonbury which, in its final phases, comprised 15 houses. They were built in a swampy area of open

[274] Wacher 2000.
[275] Jones and Mattingly 2002.

water, reeds, and fenwood on an artificial island of timber, stone, and clay.[276] In the south-west of England dispersed settlements and small open settlements were the prevailing form of settlement. In Cornwall the majority of Iron Age sites are enclosed settlements known as 'rounds', most of which date to Roman times. Open settlements and hillforts were also present, as attested by the excavation carried out at Threemilestone. This village comprised a planned layout of approximately ten houses, whilst in the neighbouring area several rounds have been found, one of which was excavated and was possibly contemporary with the unenclosed settlement.[277] As recently observed, 'geophysical surveys and aerial photographs have shown that rounds were often embedded in field systems and were presumably farms',[278], although several of the excavated rounds also have attested extensive metalworking activity. Hillforts in Cornwall rarely show evidence of permanent occupation (with possibly some exceptions, such as Killibury), and they do not show traces of domestic activity.

In Wales, pre-Roman settlements are difficult and at times impossible to date precisely due to the conservatism of artefacts and to the low resolution of radio-carbon dating.[279] Whilst we do not see the presence of large nucleated settlements, several become increasingly long lived and develop complex histories, with a number of roundhouses being rebuilt on the same spot suggesting that the occupation could last for several centuries.[280] However, unlike in Wessex, we do not observe the emergence of 'developed hillforts', although some sites were enlarged during the Middle Iron Age (450-100 BC). This implies that the communities were smaller and controlled smaller territories, although they were able to express inheritance rights or physical rights of access to land, maybe obtained through lineage.[281]

As in Wales, in the north-west region (i.e. Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Merseyside) we experience serious issues in dating the archaeological evidence. However, well-dated pollen data suggest that in the Iron Age there was widespread clearance activity and an increase in cereal cultivation. As Brennand observed: '[...] few hilltop sites can be securely dated to the Iron Age in the northern part of the region. Until recently no hillforts had produced evidence for continued occupation during the Late Iron Age or at the time of the Roman conquest (Matthews 20002a), although there is artefactual evidence from Mellor for a re-occupation in the later 1st century AD."[282] The predominant recorded settlement sites within the uplands are simple enclosures, with a substantial bank, external ditch and a single entrance.

[276] Other evidence for the exploitation of wetlands comes from the Avon levels, e.g. Hallen, Northwick, Oldbury. Increased coastal activity is attested around Poole and Christchurch Harbours, but these primarily relied on trade and exchange (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2008).
[277] Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2008; Schweiso 1974.
[278] Fitzpatrick *et al*. 2008: 129.
[279] In northern Wales some regions remained aceramic throughout the Iron Age. Waddington 2013 when talking about north-western Wales writes that for many areas she could rely on the presence of artefacts which can be placed within typological sequences, as in Wessex.
[280] In north-western Wales, see the sites of Caér Mynydd I, Bryn Eryr, Meillionydd, Erw Wen, Moel y Gerddi and Crawcwellt West (Waddington 2013).
[281] Brück 2007: 29-30.
[282] Brennand Ed. 2006: 52.

Within the enclosures are typically one or more circular roundhouses, and these are usually in the centre of the enclosure away from the outer bank.

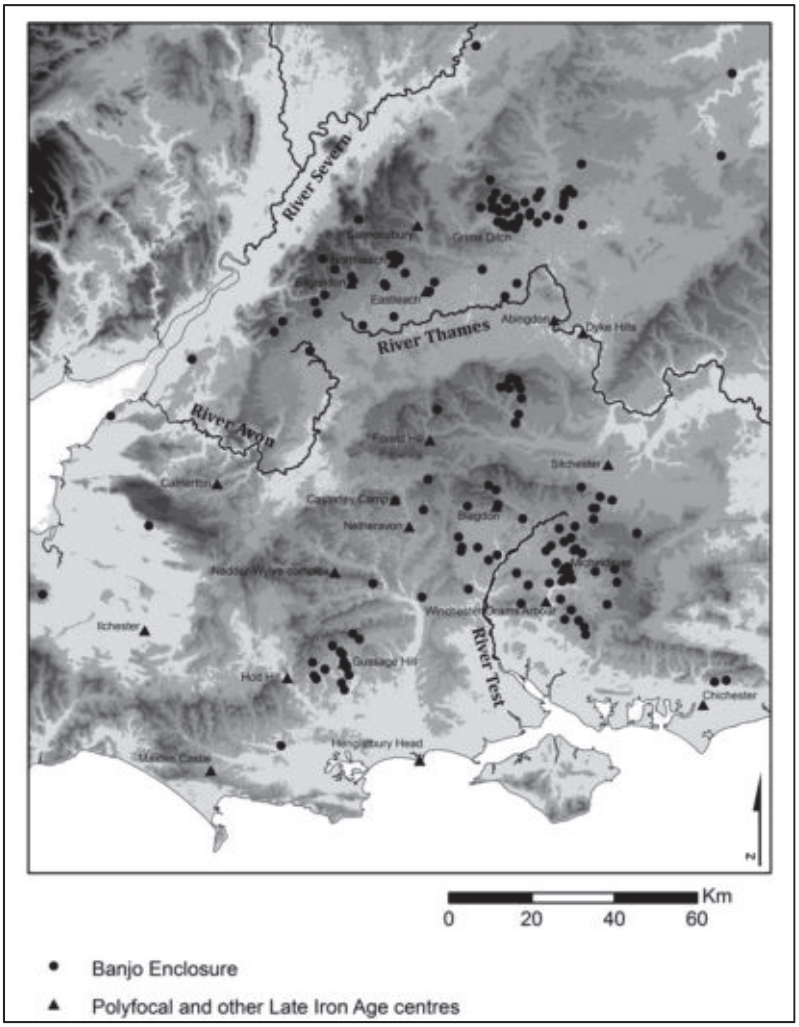

Figure 28: Distribution of polyfocal sites and banjo enclosures in south-central England (Moore 2012: 396).

In the north-east, the work by Richard Tipping has suggested that in that region an increase in agriculture dated to the Late Iron Age. Therefore, it preceded the Roman conquest (an opinion now echoed by McCarthy[283]). In Cleveland and east Durham the evidence suggests a tendency towards rectilinear enclosed settlements. Rectilinear enclosures (*c*. 0.25-1 ha) appear to predominate, but unenclosed settlements are also known, such as at South Shields.[284] In the North Pennines the archaeological evidence has shown that simple settlements tended to be small in scale, with only a few houses, often surrounded by an enclosure.

The only site with significant Roman imports is Stanwick. This is an extremely interesting settlement. Archaeologists were able to distinguish different fortified farms within the same earthworks, which likely belonged to the same family group.[285] Its discovery gives a taste of

[283] Tipping 1997; McCarthy 1995; McCarthy 1997.
[284] Hodgson *et al.* 2001.
[285] Haselgrove 2015.

just how large the spectrum of settlements - ranging from unenclosed settlements to 'enclosures within enclosures' - could be. Above (ch. 2.3.4) we have examined how from the 2nd century BC in Gaul we see the appearance of settlement systems in which two types of sites were dominant: *oppida* and farms (which would be a prelude to the dichotomy city-countryside). However, like the Gaulish aristocratic farms, the site of Stanwick is proof of how blurred the line between '*oppida'* (or nucleated settlement) and 'countryside' could be at this point in history, when different stages of 'enclosed countryside' can be found. Roman imports, including Samian and Gallo-Belgic *amphora* and wares, were reaching Stanwick in significant quantities in the Pre-Roman Late Iron Age. In the nearby sites imported ceramics are very rare (but they are present in smaller proportions at Catcote[286] and Thorpe Thewles[287]), suggesting these did not enter wider circulation.[288] Ceramics have also indirectly provided evidence for another traded good: salt. Briquetage has been found at Stanwick and Kilton Thorpe amongst other sites[289]. Kilton Thorpe has also produced coarse pottery pillars related to the process of salt production. This suggests a local salt industry, probably close to the later salt industries around the mouth of the Tees, perhaps at Coatham. Despite their weight, there is evidence that querns might also have been traded, and important sites such as Stanwick have produced a range of quern stones from different sources, though in other areas, such as Teesdale, analysis has shown that most beehive querns were derived from local sources of stone. Although pottery is not widespread, the North-East is not entirely aceramic, and fewer than 10% of sites have no pottery at all.[290] This is in contrast to areas west of the Pennines, where pottery is typically absent.

In the East Midlands, the 1st century BC saw the beginning of a period of population growth and expansion into previously under-exploited areas. A wide variety of settlement forms are represented. Although many hillforts had fallen out of use, there is evidence for Late Iron Age activity at Burrough Hill, Crow Hill and Hunsbury (the latter a rare example of a 'developed hillfort'). Smaller defended sites also remain well attested. Whilst the majority of settlements were small farmsteads, an increasing number of large nucleated settlements appear active at this time, particularly in Northamptonshire (e.g. Wilby Way, Crick, Duston, and Twywell) and Leicestershire (e.g. Enderby and Humberstone). In addition, May charts the emergence of a series of 'centres' in northern Lincolnshire, including Ludford, Owmby, Ulceby, Old Sleaford, Old Winteringham, Dragonby and Kirmington. The exact nature of these sites is unclear, although Dragonby (like the Late Iron Age centre at Leicester) has been compared to southern British *oppida* sites. The main difference between these sites and other large settlements appears to be their consumption of metalwork such as coins and brooches, suggesting these sites may have been enmeshed in social networks which gave them access to a wider range of prestige goods. Only Old Sleaford has produced evidence of specialist functions (coin production). Northern Lincolnshire sites such as Dragonby, Owmby, South Ferriby, Kirmington, Nettleton Top and Ludford became centres of metalwork consumption: pre-

[286] Long 1988.
[287] Heslop 1987.
[288] Evans 1995.
[289] Willis 1999; and Willis 2016.
[290] Willis 1999: 85-66.

conquest brooches1 and horse-gear also appear at these sites in large quantities, and there is evidence of brooch production at Owmby. The frequent occurrence of martial miniatures at these centres (including Nettleton Top, Kirmington, Old Sleaford, Dragonby, Ludford, Old Winteringham and Owmby) suggests the emergence of distinctive local votive practices as nucleated settlements developed.