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What's in a Wall? Considerations on the Role of Open Settlements in Late La Tène Gaul

Tom Moore and Côme Ponroy

Abstract

Despite significant expansion in research on oppida and the impact of development-led archaeology, there continues to be a perceived fundamental division between 'enclosed' sites and open settlements when looking at the emergence of 'urbanism' in the Late La Tène in Gaul. This emphasis on enclosure as an indicator of the status of Late La Tène sites has recently been questioned, ensuring that there needs to be a careful examination of whether the presence or absence of enclosure provides a meaningful reflection of the chronology, role and status of such sites. This paper seeks to re-examine the phenomenon of unenclosed agglomerations in Late La Tène Gaul through the examination of two regions which have seen recent research. Exploring how such sites are classified and understood as part of the broader changes in Late La Tène society and settlement patterns, this paper questions whether current approaches are in danger of restricting our understanding of the meaning and implications of 'enclosure' at oppida and within society. It suggests that a tendency to prioritise enclosed sites may limit our appreciation of the nature of broader social change in the Late La Tène.

Introduction

It has been 20 years since Greg Woolf's (1993) seminal paper challenged archaeologists to rethink the debate over Late La Tène *oppida*, and nearly 30 years since John Collis's (1984) major assessment of the phenomenon. Since these studies, research on these monuments has significantly expanded with major projects on key sites and regions, including intensive research at Bibracte (Dhennequin et al. 2008); in the Auvergne and Allier (Collis et al. 2000; Lallemand 2009; Poux 2012); Picardy and Aisne Valley (Haselgrove 1996; Brun et al. 2000); the Berry (Augier & Krausz 2012; Buchsenschutz et al. 2009; Ralston 1988), and across eastern and central France (Barral & Nouvel 2012). Much of this work has been underpinned by increasing data from development led archaeology (archéologie préventive) (e.g. Barral & Nouvel 2012; Billoin et al. 2009; Krausz 2009). Studies elsewhere in Europe are also providing a more nuanced appreciation of the phenomenon with which to compare developments in Gaul (e.g. Salač 2012; Wendling 2013). Developments in the archaeology of the Late La Tène have been matched by greater understanding of the nature and context of an earlier, Late Hallstatt proto-urban phase through examination of the hinterlands of enclosed

sites (known as *fürstensitze*) at Bourges, Mont Lassois and the Heuneburg (Ralston 2010; Brun and Chaume 2013; Fernandez-Götz and Krause 2013).

Despite the availability of an increasing data set, it is questionable whether Woolf's conclusions have had the influence one might have anticipated. There continues to be a division in attempts at defining urbanism and a rather muted discussion over the definition of *oppida* as a group of monuments (Collis 2012). One significant aspect of existing approaches to Late La Tène *oppida* continues to be a division between 'enclosed' sites (often deemed a defining characteristic of *oppida*: e.g. Buchsenschutz & Ralston 2012: 34, 358–360) (Fig. 13.1) and open settlements. However, the emphasis placed on enclosure as a fundamental indicator of the status and role of Late La Tène sites has been questioned (e.g. Kaenel 2006; Salač 2012) ensuring that there needs to be a careful examination of whether the presence or absence of enclosure provides a meaningful reflection of the chronology, role and status of such sites. This paper seeks to re-examine one facet of this debate: the phenomenon of unenclosed agglomerations in Late La Tène Gaul. Building on recent research, examination of two regions will explore how such sites are classified and understood as part of the broader changes in Late La Tène society and settlement patterns. We will question whether current approaches are in danger of restricting our understanding of the meaning and implication of 'enclosure' at *oppida* and within Late La Tène society. This paper does not seek to directly assess whether *oppida* or agglomerated settlements should be classified as 'urban', partly as this has already been discussed elsewhere (Fichtl 2013), but suggests that a focus on attempting to define sites as urban may limit our appreciation of the process behind the development of these sites and under-estimates the significance of unenclosed complexes in the wider landscape. It suggests that a tendency to prioritise enclosed sites and give pre-eminence to enclosure as a process, whilst implicitly regarding unenclosed sites as secondary, may limit our appreciation of the nature of social organisation in the Late La Tène.

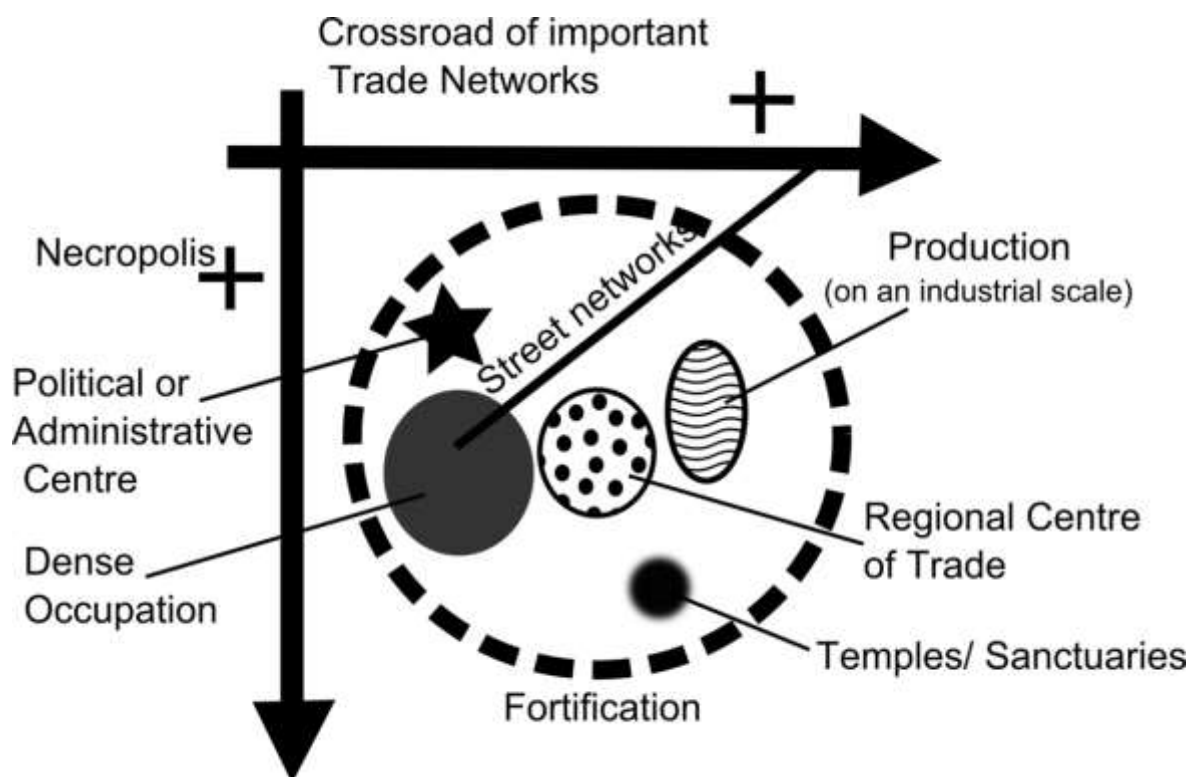


Fig. 13.1: Model of *oppida* characteristics as defined by Buchsenschutz and Ralston after Galinié (2012)

Late La Tène open settlements

Since excavations at Basel, Switzerland in the 1930s, a group of unenclosed sites have been recognised as fundamental to the changes which took place in settlement patterns in the Late La Tène (Collis 1984: 77, 189–190; Kaenel 2006: 31; Salač 2012). However, it was only with the development of more systematic approaches to La Tène settlement patterns from the 1970/80s that the discovery and assessment of lowland sites significantly increased, revealing the complexity and size of some major unenclosed settlements, most notably at Aulnat (Auvergne), Roanne, Feurs and Poncins (Loire), Acy-Romance (Aisne Valley), Saumeray (Eure-et-Loir) and Levroux (Indre). At Levroux, an open settlement at Les Arènes was demonstrated to have emerged on the plain in La Tène C2 with an apparent later shift to an enclosed *oppidum* on the nearby hilltop, with the succeeding Roman town encompassing both areas (Fig. 13.2; Audouze & Buchsenschutz 1992; Buchsenschutz *et al.* 2009; Collis *et al.* 2000: 76; Kaenel, 2006: 32). Research at Aulnat and Levroux, in particular, suggested that these settlements appeared to be situated on route-ways and had greater levels of artisanal activity (e.g. glass manufacture) than contemporary rural settlements. Further investigations have identified seemingly similar sites further afield in central Europe, at Němčice, Berching-Pollanten and Roseldorf, indicating that this phenomenon was not restricted to Gaul but much of the area traditionally characterised as that covered by the '*Civilisation des Oppida*' (Collis 1984: 77; Kaenel 2006: 31; Salač 2012; Fichtl 2013).

Chronological evidence from these sites indicated that they emerged between the 3rd and 2nd century BC, *prior* to the appearance of enclosed *oppida* (Barral 2011: 209; Collis *et al.* 2000). As such, they are normally regarded as village type settlements and the first appearance of specialised communities before the development of proto-urban centres in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. For some, it was clear that these open settlements were the precursors to enclosed *oppida* either in the same location (as at Manching) or, as at Aulnat, representing communities which relocated to enclosed *oppida* at Corent, and later Gergovie (Collis 1984).

The sequence from Levroux has been regarded as potentially applicable across the rest of France (Audouze & Buchsenschutz 1992: 238; Buchsenschutz *et al.* 1998; Buchsenschutz & Ralston 2012; Collis 1984: 78; Collis *et al.* 2000: 81; Fichtl 2005a). This can be summarised as: after the demise of Late Hallstatt hilltop sites, lowland open settlements developed in La Tène C, this preceded the later La Tène D move to hilltop locations with the development of enclosed '*oppida*', which was usually followed by a subsequent move to lowland locations associated with the construction of a Roman town. The enclosed *oppida* have generally been perceived as the dominant foci for political and economic activities, usually regarded as the central places of proto-states or tribal entities (e.g. Buchsenschutz & Ralston 2012; Fichtl 2005a: 120–134). The discoveries at Aulnat and Levroux, alongside recognition elsewhere at sites like Manching, ensured that the development and role of open settlements has been regarded as part of a longer trajectory in the Late La Tène towards more complex and centralised societies (Audouze & Buchsenschutz 1992; Bintliff 1984, 171–174; Collis 1984: 77–85). The role of open, agglomerated settlements within the development of *oppida* has thus been crucial to discussion of urban development in Iron Age Europe. Understanding the nature, date and role of these sites, and the environs of *oppida* more generally, has, therefore, fundamental implications for models of urbanisation and social change at the end of the Iron Age (Kaenel 2006).

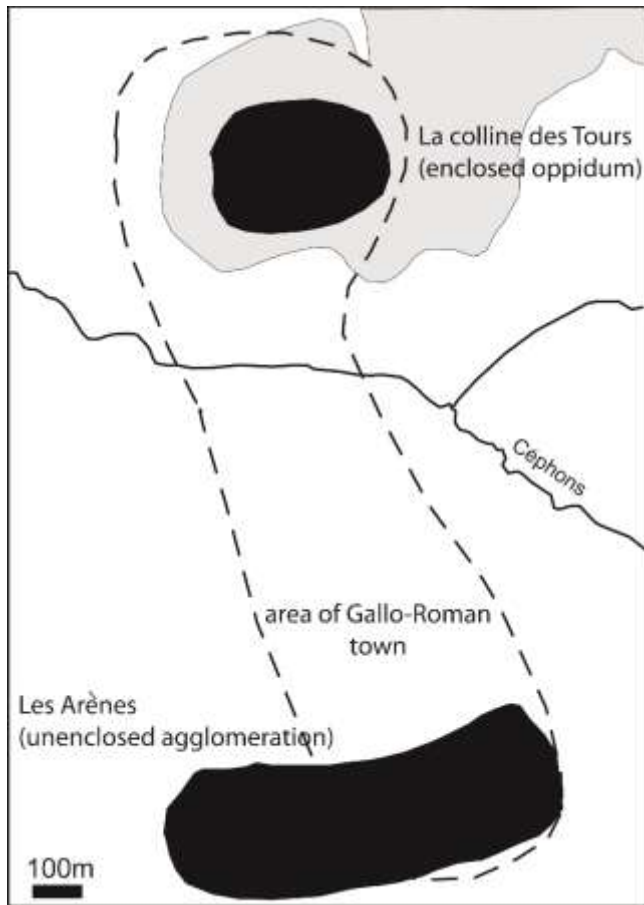


Fig. 13.2: Model of open to enclosed at Levroux (authors after Collis *et al.* 2000)

New perspectives and recent developments

The model of enclosed *oppida* as the top of a settlement hierarchy which developed subsequent to an earlier phase of unenclosed agglomerations, whilst widely applied across France was recognised to have problems at a relatively early stage. S. Fichtl (2005a: 174–175) recognised that his more generally applied model of enclosed *oppida* as the central places (or *civitas* capitals) of Late La Tène proto-states may not fully apply to the Loire region (Fig. 13.3). Here he realised that the open settlements of Roanne, Feurs and Goincet should be regarded in similar terms of importance to the three ‘enclosed *oppida*’ within the gorges of the Loire (Joeuvres; Le-Crêt-Châtelard and Essalois) when reconstructing regional centres. It has also been recognised for some time that in a number of cases Late La Tène open agglomerations may not have always been abandoned in favour of an upland, enclosed *oppidum*, with some potentially overlapping with fortified sites, as at Basel (Collis 1984: 77; Kaenel 2006: 32) and even possibly Levroux (Collis *et al.* 2000, fig. 3). More recently, M. Poux (2012: 252–253) has also suggested that, before the open settlement was gradually abandoned, most probably in favour of the *oppidum*, occupation at Corent may have overlapped with the unenclosed site at Aulnat-Gandaillat (Fig. 13.4; Collis *et al.* 2000; although this remains contested). Detailed survey of central-eastern France has indicated some sites followed the sequence attested to above (a shift to upland site from a lowland agglomeration: Nouvel 2011), but also provided evidence that certain geographical areas had contemporary hilltop and lowland sites (Barral & Nouvel 2012; Nouvel 2011). This is leading to a recognition that the Levroux sequence may not fit all sites (Fichtl 2013; Moore *et al.* 2013). Elsewhere, the establishment of a dichotomy between the status of enclosed ‘*oppida*’ and unenclosed agglomerations has also been questioned (Barral & Nouvel 2012; Kaenel 2006).

The number of Late La Tène agglomerated settlements has steadily increased in recent years, partly due to the increase in *archéologie préventive*. This has led to the identification of a range of new agglomerations, for example in central-eastern France (Barral 2011; Barral & Nouvel 2012), whilst in other cases it allows for a better understanding of already recognised agglomerations, such as Roanne (see below; Lavendhomme and Guichard 1997). Elsewhere, research projects in the environs of particular *oppida* are revealing new elements to this phenomenon which may suggest alternative sequences for some agglomerations (see below; Moore *et al.* 2013). Meanwhile, research on the Late Hallstatt has demonstrated the existence of unenclosed sites from an earlier phase, most notably at Bourges and Bragny (e.g. Ralston 2010), potentially focused on craft activity, that date earlier than the emergence of sites such as Levroux. Some of these appear to have had comparable status to the enclosed *Fürstentum* and indicate a more complex picture of proto-urbanism at this time than previous models suggested (Brun & Chaume 2013; Ralston 2010). This recognition of the complex roles of unenclosed settlements has been matched by research further afield in Central Europe with more detailed examination of the large unenclosed sites at Roseldorf and Némčice (Salač 2012). These large unenclosed complexes (up to c. 50 ha) have been shown to have fulfilled the roles of *oppida* without substantial enclosure structures, despite possible palisades at some examples. This has led some to challenge the previous models of development and which may have implications beyond Central Europe.

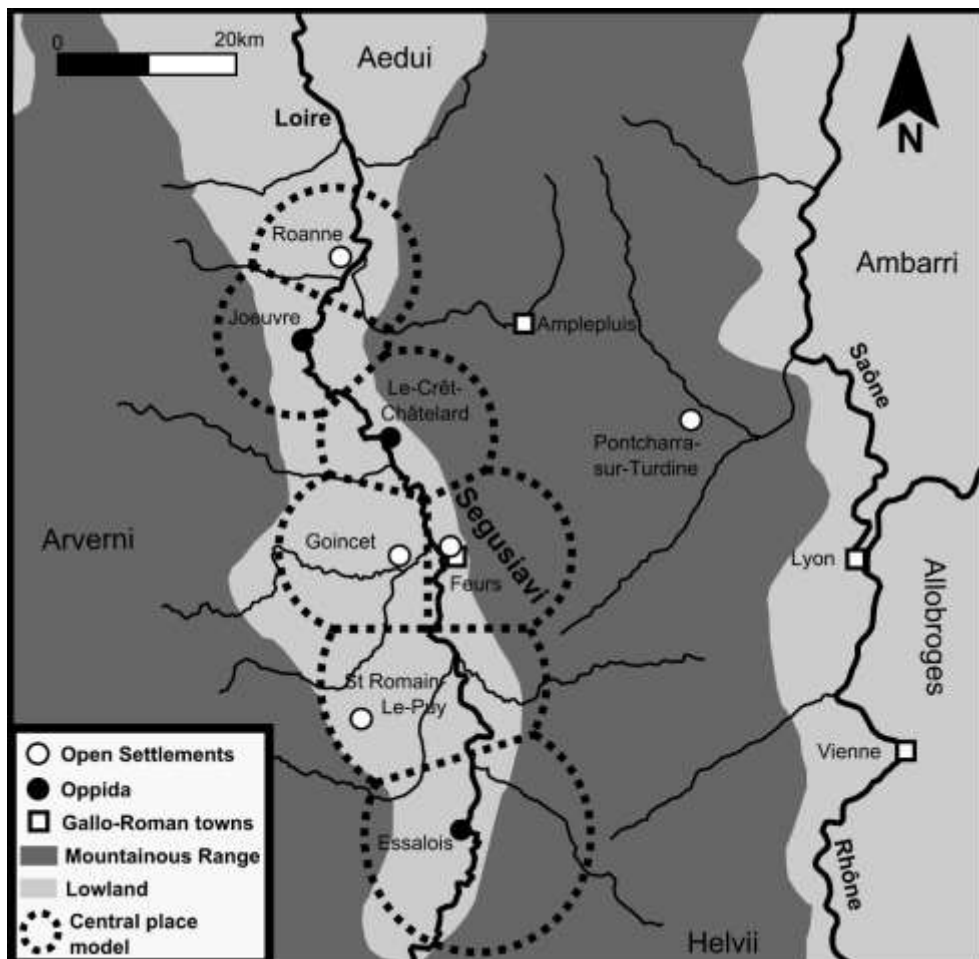


Fig. 13.3: Model of 'oppida' and open settlements in the Upper Loire valley (after Fichtl 2005a)

Current problems and issues

Despite increasing recognition of the complexity within the *oppida* phenomenon some significant issues remain in our approach to unenclosed agglomerations and *oppida* in general. Perhaps most significant is the way in which we classify and define sites. Following Henri Galiné's model, a recent overview by Olivier Buchsenschutz and Ian Ralston (2012) argued that *oppida* could be defined by a number of characteristics (Fig. 13.1: enclosure; political activity; dense occupation; ritual roles). There is something of a danger of circular argument here: that *oppida* are defined by certain characteristics and that these are also, therefore, our definitions for urbanism and social status. Such an approach focuses less on examining the roles of such sites in a broader social context but more on the physical evidence at one particular moment in time. This is in danger of underplaying the dynamic development of sites and the different roles sites of relatively similar form might have in their respective socio-cultural landscapes (Wendling 2013: 461).

One fundamental factor subsequently dominates discussion: the role of enclosure. Often used to define *oppida* as a type of settlement (and phenomenon), and as a signifier of status and urbanism, this prioritising of fortifications has often led to a concurrent automatic 'downgrading' of open settlements (e.g. Fichtl 2005a: 176) or the establishment of a dichotomy regarding the process behind their formation between the 'top-down' imposition of *oppida* versus a 'bottom-up' development of open agglomerations (see Buchsenschutz & Ralston 2012: 347).

At the same time, by focusing on enclosure as a characteristic of *oppida* there is a danger of regarding the act of enclosure as representing the same expression of social processes (see Fichtl 2013). Although the scale of such enclosure may undoubtedly stress the amount of labour involved and the potential status of the community (or its 'elites') (Ralston 2010: 71), enclosure was not the only way in which Iron Age societies throughout Europe expressed status, with many communities expressing it in other forms of display or deliberately downplaying such distinctions through settlement architecture (e.g. Sharples 2007). In addition, the nature of enclosure took very different forms across Later Iron Age Europe, signifying different stimuli for enclosure and social relations and functions, as seen in the different form and roles of earthworks around British '*oppida*' (Moore 2012). A lack of enclosure need not, therefore, signify a site or its inhabitants' lack of status. By seeing enclosure as an expression of status, there is a danger in regarding all enclosure as part of a uniform development in settlement form, and one resulting from the same social processes, rather than reflecting certain moments in a site and its community's development and biography. Assessment of the *oppidum* of Manching demonstrates that the process of enclosure was a relatively late addition to the settlement, one which many would argue had already achieved 'urban' status (Wendling 2013: 477). The reasons for enclosure represented, therefore, more complex processes than a mere reflection of the site's status and urban character. The possibility that enclosed *oppida* and open settlements may have been the result of similar social processes but articulated in different expressions should, therefore, feature in future discussion.

Prioritising enclosure as part of the complexity and urban nature of *oppida* may say more about the roots of La Tène archaeology than the role of these sites. A practical and philosophical Roman emphasis on the importance of walls in defining a city (Vitruvius *De Architectura* I.5.1–8; Varro *De Lingua Latina* V.143) and their social and symbolic significance, usually associated with the concept of *pomerium*, have perhaps overly influenced Late Iron Age views on the importance of walls as a characteristic of urbanism (e.g. Fichtl 2005b; 2013). The emphasis on regarding walls as defining *oppida* (and cities in general) is one emphasised by archaeologists, but is not one that Caesar appears to have been especially concerned with when he identified a number of sites as '*oppida*' which show little evidence for being enclosed, for example, Chalon-sur-Saône and Geneva (Billion *et al.* 2009; Salač 2012: 333).

An additional question is raised by the role of open sites. The early dating for a number of sites and apparent evidence of artisanal activity has led to this being perceived as their prime role. Other models for the Late La Tène have, however, tended to regard enclosed *oppida* as the central foci for production and exchange (Fichtl 2005a: 107–142). Salač (2012: 328), however, has emphasised for Central Europe, that a focus on only seeing enclosed *oppida* as

the focus for production, exchange and social status ignores the equally significant (contemporary) role of unenclosed sites. Many unenclosed sites in Gaul too have significant levels of imports and evidence for production which compare with enclosed sites. There is also evidence that many unenclosed sites had a prime role as foci for sanctuaries. In some instances, for example at Acy Romance, the presence of sanctuaries may indicate it was these sites that had a prime role as regional centres, rather than nearby enclosed *oppida*. Elsewhere, the sanctuary at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy, may also have acted as a catalyst for the emergence of the settlement which then coalesced in to an urban centre (Brunaux *et al.* 1980). To what extent was a ritual role fundamental to their development or their roles distinctive from enclosed *oppida*? At present there has been little systematic comparison between the roles of unenclosed sites and enclosed *oppida* in those areas where the two were clearly contemporary.

Despite the significance of research at Aulnat, Levroux and Acy-Romance and impact of developer-led archaeology in uncovering new sites it is surprising that the majority of research on Late La Tène urbanism continues to focus on the upland sites. This has much to do with our research focus (Salač 2012: 330) but is also partly due to the presence of later Roman and Medieval urban centres on top of many of such sites, making them generally less well preserved. This means that many of the features that are regarded as characteristic of '*oppida*' (and often considered as evidence of urbanism), such as planned layouts and different sectors of activity, are often harder to recognise from the piecemeal excavations at sites like Basel and Roanne. This may also explain a confusion and uncertainty over the scale of these settlements, frequently perhaps underestimating their scale. At Roanne, for example, claims of occupation covering 3 ha can now be revised upwards, to nearer 15 ha. This may also have led to an underestimation of the number of unenclosed agglomerations that existed in the latest La Tène (La Tène D2), and thus contemporary with the heyday of some *oppida*, because of the confusion of their material in amongst the earliest phases of early Roman towns (Barral & Nouvel 2012: 142). There is something, therefore, of an irony that many open settlements are less well understood because, in many ways, they were more successful in later periods than many of their upland counterparts, often because of their placement on natural route-ways. This may even suggest that some enclosed sites were the anomaly, rather than unenclosed centres.

Approaches to *oppida* have, therefore, been undermined by a relatively narrow approach to defining sites and in judging their urban character (Collis 2012). In order to explore to what extent such an approach has underestimated the complexity of settlement forms and nature of sites beyond enclosed *oppida* we will examine a number of unenclosed agglomerations. Of course, in assessing unenclosed agglomerations in such a way, there is danger that we are perpetuating a division between enclosed and unenclosed sites. Describing and defining sites by the presence or absence of fortifications puts us in danger of perpetuating the problem, whilst agglomeration implies a less well defined and coherent entity. This paper does not attempt to present a new model for unenclosed agglomerations or define these as a distinct set of sites (cf. Salač 2012). Indeed, as we shall see below, many unenclosed sites had different trajectories and roles; it is potentially misleading to see these as necessarily part of a unified phenomenon. We will argue instead that unenclosed sites need to be seen in the context of regional landscape development. This echoes the long-held recognition by the likes of John Collis (1984: 84, 2012) that only by a better understanding of the settlement patterns from which *oppida* emerged, and their contemporary settlement landscapes, can we understand the role of both open and enclosed sites, and the social systems in to which they were embedded.

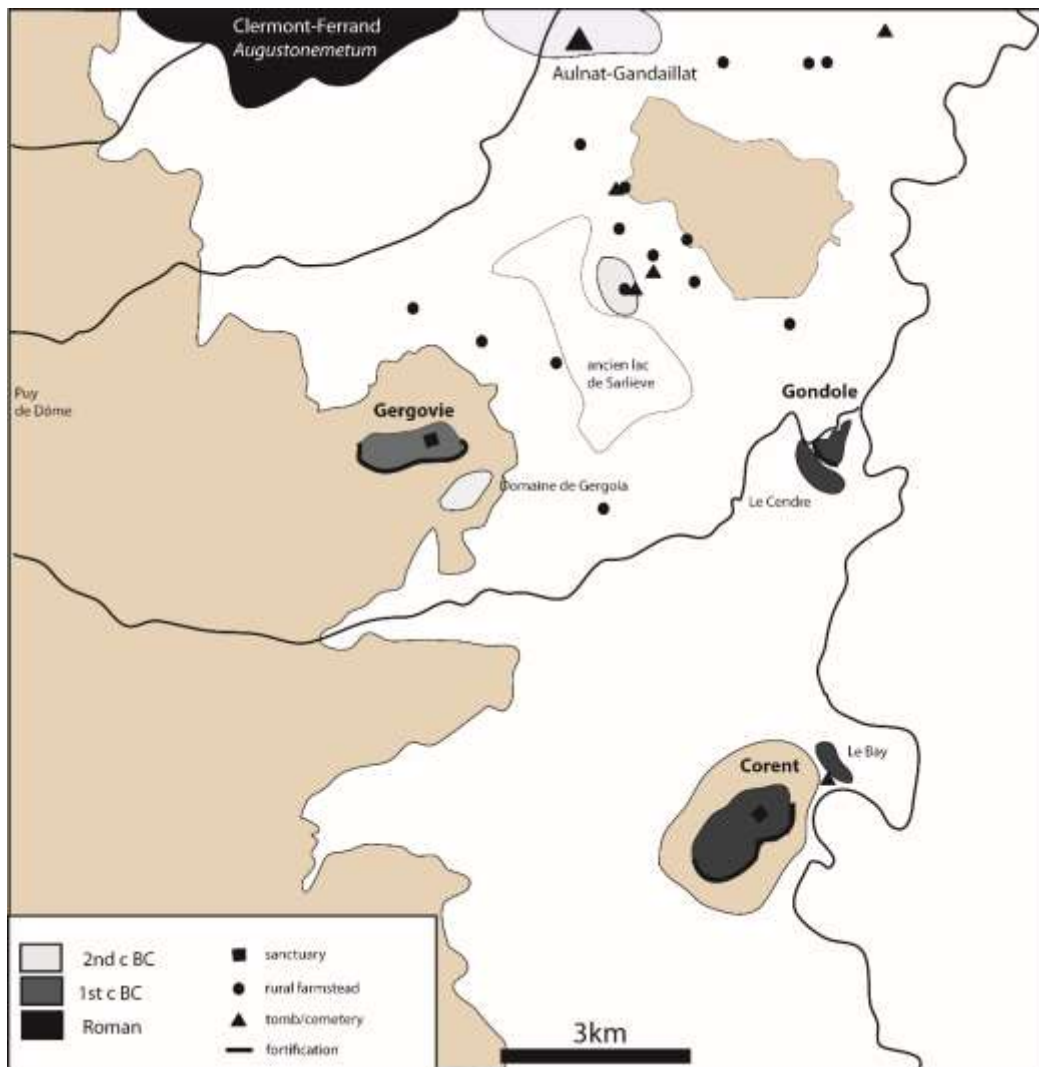


Fig. 13.4: Sequence of settlement patterns in the Auvergne (after Poux 2012)

Case Studies

The increasingly complex picture of the place of open settlements in the development of *oppida* can be emphasised by two case studies which reveal alternative patterns of development. Based on recent fieldwork, alongside a reassessment of settlements which have figured prominently in these debates, these show the complex roles of open settlements in socio-political dynamics.

Bibracte and Sources de l'Yonne

The large enclosed *oppidum* at Bibracte (Mont Beuvray) is recognised as one of the best-studied *oppida* in Europe and often used as a type-site in discussion of the role and implications of this phenomenon. The last 20 years in particular have witnessed a major advance in understanding the nature of activity on Mont Beuvray, from its emergence in the 2nd century BC to its heyday in the late 1st century BC (Dhennequin *et al.* 2008). However, despite its fundamental role in discussion of *oppida*, the place of Bibracte in relation to the wider settlement patterns remains less well

understood and it has been notably absent from many broader discussions over the dynamics of settlement change (e.g. Collis *et al.* 2000; Kaenel 2006).

Recent research in the environs of Bibracte is starting to change this picture. Building on an earlier survey project within the adjacent Arroux Valley (Buchsenschutz & Richard 1996; Creighton *et al.* 2008), research has included systematic survey of the immediate landscape around Bibracte and is being built on by continued surface survey in the region (Nouvel 2012). One of the most striking results from this work has been the identification of a focus of occupation (indicated by ceramic finds, particularly Dressel 1 amphorae) covering an area around the Sources de l'Yonne (henceforth: SDY), approximately 3 km to the northwest of Bibracte itself (Figs 13.5 & 13.6; Haupt *et al.* 2007; Moore *et al.* 2013). The spread of material covers a large area of approximately 120 ha, forming a horse-shoe of activity around the source of the river Yonne. Additional topographic survey and LiDAR have revealed the presence of large-scale terracing, extending along the slopes around the source. Subsequent excavations of areas of this complex revealed intensive occupation, including drainage systems, buildings and material culture similar to those on Bibracte. Evidence from both excavation and surface survey indicates occupation began in La Tène D2a (90/80–50 BC) or, more likely, in D2b (50–30 BC), with intense occupation continuing into the Augustan period (30 BC–AD 15). Occupation appears to have largely ceased at the end of the Augustan era, reflecting the situation at Bibracte (Moore *et al.* 2013: 509–510).

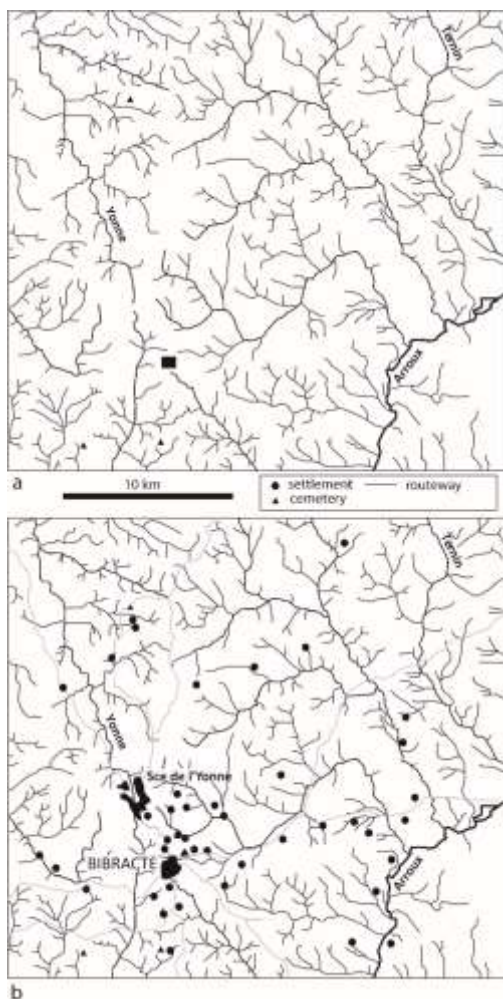


Fig. 13.5: The Bibracte and Sources de l'Yonne environs (a) La Tène D1a and (b) D2 settlement patterns in the Bibracte Environs (after Barral & Nouvel 2012)

The evidence from SDY indicates a settlement contemporary with the heyday of Bibracte and one which followed its trajectory. Much of the evidence from SDY is remarkably similar to that from Bibracte itself, with terraces of the same construction and chronology to those at Bibracte: comparable drainage structures and similar forms of architecture. Whilst there is some craft working evidence from the site, there is little to suggest it necessarily acted as a poorer, artisanal neighbour to the *oppidum* and it is notable how similar the material from the two sites is. SDY presents an alternative to those unenclosed agglomerations which were precursors to enclosed *oppida*, representing instead an apparent 'suburb' to the enclosed settlement. Unenclosed sites contemporary with enclosed *oppida* are rare but not entirely unknown in Gaul. Notable examples have been recognised in the vicinity of Avrolles, Tonnerre and Les Granges in Burgundy (Barral & Nouvel 2012; Nouvel 2011: 209); and the smaller site of Le Bay, just below the *oppidum* of Corent in the Auvergne (Poux 2012: 45). Meanwhile at some major *oppida* such as Besançon a clear distinction is made between the enclosed 'citadel' and a related lower settlement (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 1.38), with a somewhat similar placing of certain activities immediately outside the rampart at Gondole in the Auvergne (Deberge *et al.* 2009: 58–70). In a quite different context, it is notable that the intensive recent research around Bourges has demonstrated that major Late Hallstatt centres could also have contemporary artisanal unenclosed 'suburbs' which were of some status (Ralston 2010).

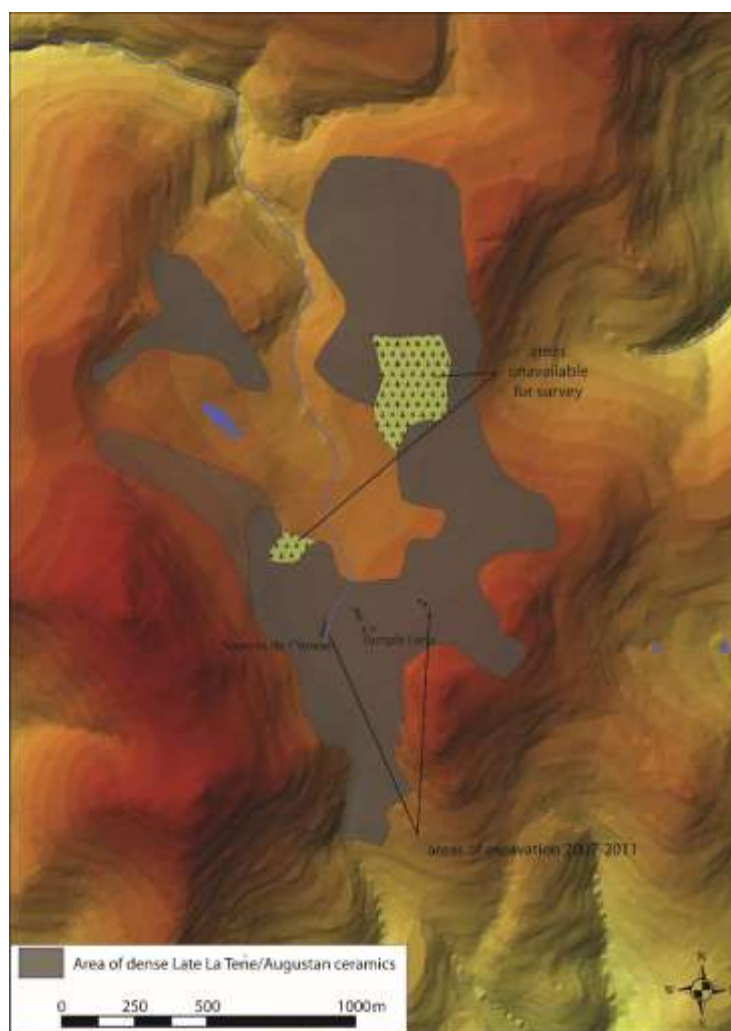


Fig. 13.6: Plan of extent of Sources des l'Yonne agglomerations as identified from Dressel 1 and other ceramic finds (after original plan by Ines Klenner)

Covering approximately 120 ha, SDY is on a different scale to other Late La Tène 'suburbs', and agglomerations in general. Alongside its scale, its location some way from the *oppidum* makes the label 'suburb' somewhat problematic. Such a location and the material evidence from the complex mean that we need to be cautious in assuming it merely played the role of lower-status, artisanal neighbour. In so doing, SDY raises a broader issue of what we mean by 'suburb' which may have different functions and relationships to enclosed *oppida*. Preconceived ideas that these sites represented industrial '*faubourg*' similar to those associated settlements of modern towns, may underestimate the evident status some such sites possessed. Current evidence from SDY (the date for the construction of the terraces and consistent dating across the complex), also implies that it may have been a planned imposition – perhaps more so than Bibracte itself – probably in the mid-1st century BC. The reasons for such an imposition are potentially complex (see Moore *et al.* 2013: 507), but underlying these is clear evidence that SDY developed alongside an intensification at Bibracte itself. Salač (2012: 335) has seen 'suburbanisation' as a precursor to the eventual decline of urban centres. It is notable that Bibracte and SDY follow a similar pattern. The complex expanded leading to the creation of a large satellite to accommodate the people and industry required to sustain this centre. The complex was, however, perhaps unsustainable, leading to its relatively short length of occupation. Whilst Bibracte and SDY were clearly terminated partly by a political decision to move to Autun, was this also the likely outcome of an unsustainable large complex? SDY thus follows a trajectory of the *oppidum* and may have been an essential part of the complex, despite its existence beyond the walls.

Roanne, Feurs and the gorges of the Loire

The situation in the Loire *département*, often regarded as the territory of the *Segusiavi* 'tribe', presents a range of somewhat different issues (Fig. 13.3). Until the 1960s, there was no evidence for Iron Age occupation under the modern towns of Roanne, Feurs or Poncins explaining why attention was only given to the enclosed sites of Joeuvres (Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice) and Le-Crêt-Châtelard (Saint-Marcel-de-Félines) located in the gorge of the Loire. Since then, *archéologie préventive* has contributed new evidence regarding the rise of proto-urban forms in this region. This work confirmed the importance of these open settlements in the 2nd and early 1st century BC in regards to trade and production. It also reaffirmed the date of the earliest occupation levels as La Tène C2, contemporary with the date usually associated with the emergence of such agglomerations in Gaul.

For the last ten years Roanne has been a significant component of the debate over open settlements and has primarily been used as a counter example to the Levroux model (Collis *et al.* 2000: 75; Fichtl 2005a: 174–177; Kaenel 2006: 31). Excavations provided evidence for continued occupation from La Tène C2 to the 1st and 2nd century AD (Lavendhomme & Guichard 1997: 48). The lack of a clear hiatus indicates that the emergence of the nearby *oppidum* of Joeuvre did not have any major impact on the trajectory of the open settlement. Evidence from recent rescue projects has since confirmed the absence of a hiatus but has also contributed to the discovery of new areas of activity leading to a reconsideration of the size of the settlement (now c. 10–15 ha) (Bocquet 2005; Le Barrier & Lavendhomme 1999; Le Nézet-Célestin 2005; Monnoyeur & Thévenin 2003; Thévenin 2001).

The southern settlement of Feurs, by contrast, provides evidence of a rapid decline around the second quarter of the 1st century BC, reflected in the near total absence of La Tène D2 material (Vaginay & Guichard 1988). This decline coincided, chronologically at least, with the rise of the nearby *oppidum* of Le-Crêt-Châtelard (Vaginay 1986; Lavendhomme 1997a: 208–209). The hiatus during this period has been interpreted as a consequence of *oppida* emergence (Collis 2012; Collis *et al.* 2000: 81), seemingly reinforcing the accepted model. However, a closer study of the landscape indicates there was no significant disruption of the settlement pattern in the Plaine du Forez (Lavendhomme 1997c), whilst Late La Tène rural settlements have yet to be identified around Le-Crêt-Châtelard despite various field walking projects and evidence of occupation in the area from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. It is also worth noting the distance between Le-Crêt-Châtelard and Feurs (18 km), compared to that with between Feurs and the open settlement of Goincet (Poncins) (only 5 km). Goincet, located on the left bank of the Loire, immediately

opposite Feurs, also emerged in La Tène C2. However, there is no evidence of Late Iron Age hiatus or decline at the latter, despite the contemporary emergence of Le-Crêt-Châtelard (Lavendhomme 1997b; Peyvel & Pionnier 1975; Vaginay & Valette 1982). The evidence from the sanctuary excavated at Cleppé, located between Feurs and Goincet also suggests that both settlements may have formed one socio-cultural landscape as it seems to have played the role of a meeting place and quickly went out of use in La Tène D2b when Feurs was abandoned (Fig. 13.7 and Poux 2004: 523–524). If the emergence of Le-Crêt-Châtelard had a major impact on the trajectory of Feurs, it seems logical that it should also have had a similar effect on Goincet. Due to its uninterrupted occupation, the potential rise of Goincet, in addition to possible settlement dispersion, should therefore also perhaps feature in the discussion over the possible reason for Feurs' decline in La Tène D2. Explaining this decline solely in relation to the emergence of Le-Crêt-Châtelard is in danger of assuming that only hill-top, enclosed sites were responsible for the disruption of local settlement patterns.

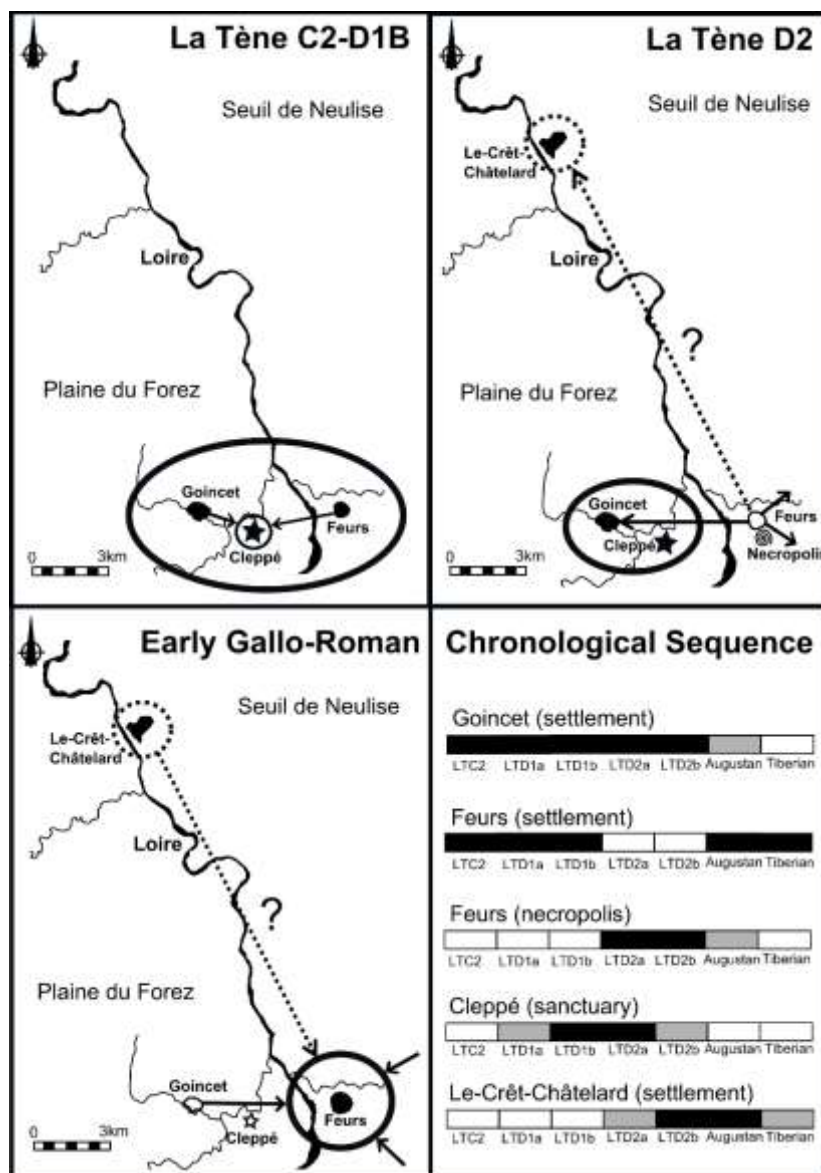


Fig. 13.7: The settlement dynamic in the Segusiavi region (authors)

The discovery of a large cemetery of La Tène D2 date at Feurs, although only partially excavated (Valette 1999: 80–82), reinforces this possibility. This discovery has usually been associated with the potential for sporadic activity in the vicinity (Collis *et al.* 2000: 75), but the size of the cemetery and the exceptional and highly visible character of some of the monumentalised burial enclosures weakens such an argument. Despite the probable abandonment of the settlement, the site appears to have retained a symbolic status for a displaced or dispersed population who appear to have wished to continue to be associated with their previous home in death, if not in life. The potential for such behaviour has to be taken into account and seems unlikely to be related to the populace at the *oppidum* considering the significant distance and difficult terrain between the two sites.

When Feurs became the *civitas* capital in the Late Augustan period, Goincet was rapidly abandoned whilst Le-Crêt-Châtelard continued to witness activity, despite a relative decline (Dumoulin 2008: 125–131; Peyvel & Pionnier 1974). No clear relationship can, therefore, be established between Feurs and Le-Crêt-Châtelard, whereas it seems apparent that the trajectories of both Feurs and Goincet were intrinsically linked. Despite a few recent rescue archaeology projects at Poncins, the data set remains insufficient to establish the trajectory of the settlement as a whole, despite evidence which points towards an increase of activity in La Tène D2 (Jacquet *et al.* 2006: 73–75). The tendency to focus only on the fortified sites is thus in danger of continuing to undermine our ability to understand settlement dynamics as a whole.

By comparison, analysis of the chronological sequence of settlements within in the Auvergne indicates that the status, and the trajectories, of the various settlements also changed over time and that this may have had more to do with regional political developments than an evolutionary process related to their morphological differences (Poux 2012: 249–270). The settlement dynamic of this part of the Auvergne witnessed a similar pattern of relocation in La Tène D2 to that of the Plaine du Forez, despite the significant differences in settlement form between the two regions. The significant rupture of the settlement dynamic in Feurs may, therefore, also be a reflection of internal social and political dynamics, rather than the consequence of a natural process of urbanisation.

The importance of localised political changes in influencing the trajectories of regional settlement patterns may be supported by evidence from Classical sources. A passage from Pliny and a Roman milestone inscription confirm that the *Segusiavi* held the status of *civitas libera* (most probably due to the key position of this particular region in relation to trade networks) something awarded to only 14 of the 60, known, Iron Age social entities (Valette 1999: 25). The choice of location for the new *Segusiavi* capital would, therefore, have been of a particular significance in the establishment of Roman rule under the Augustan administration. Regarding the choice of a lowland location for this new capital as merely driven by conceptions of classical Roman urbanism (e.g. Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 1.4–7) potentially underestimates the social and political realities of this crucial period of transition. It is worth noting that the classical texts indicate this period was one of potential significant turbulence (Tacitus, *Annals* III.40–46; Woolf 1998: 21); forming a strong alliance with the communities in power would have been essential to keep the order of the *Pax Romana*. A very common practice to ensure the allegiance of the local leaders was to either strengthen an existing alliance or to place a different faction in power that would have everything to lose in rebelling. Knowing that the *Segusiavi* participated in the rebellion of 52BC alongside the *Aedui* (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* VI.64.4 and VII.75.2), the decision of the Roman authorities to relocate the social-centre to Feurs may indicate the possible return of a powerful household or community to the detriment of the new order that took over in La Tène D2. The settlement at Feurs would have remained strong in living memory making a powerful statement about the changing political order. If such a possibility has to remain hypothetical, the potential for the existence of such processes related to the rise or fall of different factions should be factored in to the way we understand ruptures in settlement dynamics.

The evidence from Roanne, despite continued occupation, reinforces this possibility of settlement changes as the consequences of localised political processes rather than a broader progress towards centralisation. Rescue excavations in the 1970s and 1980s of the northeastern part of the unenclosed settlement revealed the presence of

relatively thick (0.2 m), levelling layer in three different sectors (Lavendhomme & Guichard 1997: 40–41). The presence of this layer provided a clear chronological break and marked a rapid reorganisation of the orientation and nature of occupation at the settlement in the La Tène D1/D2 transition (80/70 BC). Unlike Feurs, Roanne was not abandoned and has evidence of La Tène D2 occupation, despite significant disturbance by later Gallo-Roman phases (Lavendhomme & Guichard 1997: 47–48). However, there was clearly a major change in occupation, with potential cultural, social and political associations, which took place at the same time as developments at Feurs.

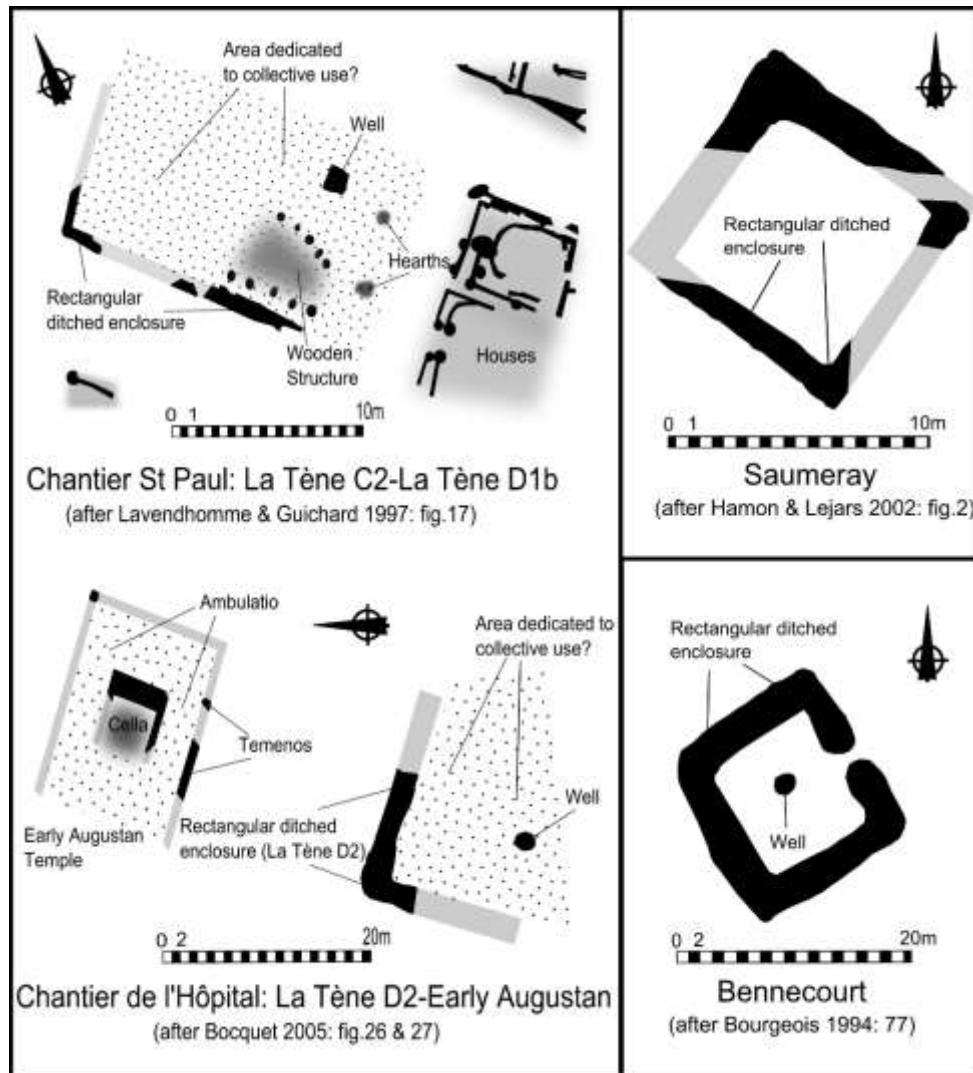


Fig. 13.8: Comparison of evidence from the Roanne 'sanctuaries' (authors)

In order to determine the implications of such a rupture it is necessary to reinterpret the nature of the activity at the western end of the settlement. At the Chantier St Paul a well and various pits containing unusual deposits were enclosed by a rectangular ditch (Fig. 13.8). The collective use of this area has been hinted at (Lavendhomme & Guichard 1997: 63–65, 183, 190), but no clear characterisation regarding the nature of activity occurring within this enclosure has been formally given. The nature of the finds from this area, including multiple cattle skulls; a significant assemblage of Dressel 1 amphorae; disarticulated human remains with cut marks; the remains of a bronze cauldron or a deliberately broken *umbo*; alongside a large ceramic assemblage, mainly dedicated to drinking and collective feasting. Combined, this suggests activities other than the 'domestic' may have taken place here. M. Poux has stressed the need to be cautious when attempting to distinguish between collective/private and ritual/profane activity areas and the danger of falling into simplistic dichotomies (Poux 2004: 148). The close presence of domestic

activity near this ditched enclosure has perhaps led to the overlooking of its alternative role, despite the fact it is morphologically comparable to sanctuaries elsewhere, such as those at Saumeray or Bennecourt (Bourgeois 1999; Hamon *et al.* 2002). The abandonment of this potentially sacred space and the re-orientation of houses and streets in this particular district should, therefore, be regarded as a significantly symbolically charged act, rather than the natural consequence of urban evolution.

The importance of this rupture becomes particularly evident when incorporating the very recent discovery of another rectangular ditched enclosure adjacent to an Augustan *fanum* at the eastern end of the settlement. The presence, and the remarkably similar orientation, of this Gallo-Roman temple convinced Sylvie Bocquet that the ditched enclosure, accompanied again by a central well with multiple phases of structured deposition, should be characterized as a sanctuary, or at the very least as an area dedicated to collective feasting (Bocquet 2005). However, what is potentially most significant is the chronological sequence of this enclosure for it emerged in early La Tène D2 before being abandoned for the new *fanum* in the Augustan period. The eastern sanctuary was therefore erected when the western one was abandoned. At Acy-Romance it is increasingly becoming apparent that it was the presence of multiple sanctuaries, and their associated open area dedicated to collective use, which heavily influenced the organization of the settlement (Lambot & Méniel 2000). By contrast, at Roanne it appears that the sanctuaries emerged as a consequence of an orchestrated re-planning of the urban structure, rather than the opposite. This raises significant questions; it is often argued that the sacred nature of the space associated with such structures led to their long periods of use. If this was the case, to abandon or erect a sanctuary would have required a strong central authority which also enabled the reorientation of streets and houses. This perhaps implies profound changes in the ruling élite.

The evidence across this region, therefore, appears to point towards a radical shift in the La Tène D1/D2 transition. Whether it was social, political or religious, it profoundly changed settlement dynamics and urban planning. These major disruptions were not, however, expressed in a uniform manner but, in this region at least, differed depending on the locality. The phenomenon of *oppida* emergence appears to have had no direct consequences on the trajectory of open settlements, yet these agglomerations also dramatically evolved around the same period. The origin of social and political change may be rooted in similar patterns but could be articulated in very different ways, resulting in different consequences. Rather than approaching the issue from an urbanisation perspective, it may be more productive to work in the context of social processes. Rather than seeing *oppida* as the catalyst for change, it may be wiser to focus on the broader social processes which drove these developments, with *oppida* (or enclosure) merely a particular tool in the hands of communities or socio-political factions.

Conclusions

This brief assessment of Late La Tène unenclosed agglomerations in two distinct areas has emphasised the diverse histories of this group of sites. Evidence from many of these sites implies that they cannot be seen in simple terms either as earlier precursors to enclosed *oppida* or as secondary settlements. Despite the increasing awareness of the greater existence of unenclosed agglomerations and their potentially complex trajectories (seen for example in central-eastern France: Barral & Nouvel 2012), a lack of detailed assessment of some of the new sites uncovered and continued concentration on a handful of examples to support existing models, continues to mean that the place of these sites within broader settlement patterns remains poorly understood.

Close analysis of the settlement dynamics in regions such as that in the *Segusiavi* landscape emphasises both the complex roles unenclosed sites may have had and the significance of their complex sequence of developments. The significant ruptures during the La Tène D1/ D2 transition and the various fluctuations which occurred in lowland settlements cannot be related purely to the emergence of enclosed *oppida*. By concentrating solely on the process of

enclosure, we are in danger of underestimating the complexity of cultural and social changes at this time. The settlement dynamic of the *Segusiavi* region potentially reinforces Vladimir Salač's observations on the major unenclosed settlements of Central Europe with a recognition that these could be as economically and socially significant as contemporary enclosed sites. The phenomenon of *oppida* emergence, therefore, may not have always been a process of centralisation but a phenomenon emerging due to very different, regionalised social and cultural processes. Using a framework based on morphological differences may, therefore, prove unhelpful.

Elsewhere, we should be careful not to necessarily dismiss other agglomerations found near enclosed *oppida*, such as Sources des l'Yonne, as mere 'suburbs' implying a lesser status to their enclosed partners and predominantly industrial role. In so doing, we are in danger of projecting modern concepts of urban planning which are not necessarily apparent at these complexes. For some, as SDY, there is little to necessarily suggest a secondary role; instead it may have been complimentary, fulfilling ritual functions or demarcating a separate social group, but one intimately linked to the centre at Bibracte. Elsewhere, other unenclosed settlements in the vicinity of enclosed *oppida* show a longer, more organic development (as at Levroux and Roanne), where the enclosed *oppidum* might be seen as a short term element in settlement patterns.

These sites are part of a broader recognition of the more complex trajectories for both open agglomerations and enclosed sites from the Late Hallstatt and Late La Tène (e.g. Fernández-Götz & Krausse 2013; Poux 2012; Ralston 2010). Such developments potentially undermine the implicit model of evolution in settlement forms and indicate that the application of a universal model of Late La Tène urban development (even at a supra-regional scale) is problematic. Like enclosed *oppida*, unenclosed settlements can longer be regarded as a coherent type of settlements which acted only as precursors to enclosed *oppida* but had a variety of trajectories. This regionality has been widely emphasised in studies of enclosed sites and regional settlement patterns in Britain and was clearly a facet of the Iron Age in France and it should not be regarded as surprise that the role of *oppida* and their social context was also varied even within relatively local areas of Gaul.

The developments in both case study areas were part of broader phases of rupture and re-organisation of settlement across the late 2nd and 1st century BC (e.g. Barral & Nouvel 2012; Collis *et al.* 2000; Haselgrove & Guichard 2013; Poux 2012). Much of this can be regarded less as a sequence of evolution and instead a reaction to localised social changes. Some of these may have related to local political dynamics: the establishment of enclosed *oppida* demonstrating a new ruler or social order. The apparent reorganisation of Roanne might signify something along these lines; Feurs, Goincet, Roanne and Joeuvre may mark a complex network of sites fulfilling complementary functions, operating within the localised dynamics of elite power demonstrated by the shifting of power between unenclosed sites in the Plaine du Forez. At SDY the large agglomeration might contrastingly be seen within Collis' (2012) vision of a 'monopolistic' *oppidum*: part of a broader Bibracte complex that served as a major regional and super-regional centre which dominated politically, one that was not subject to the same shifting dynamics. Combined, this evidence emphasises a dynamic picture of enclosure and reorganisation of settlement taking place across the Late La Tène, but one which was played out in different ways. This may reflect the fluid political dynamic of Late La Tène society apparent in the classical sources, such as Caesar, and stressed more recently for example in the coinage evidence (e.g. Creighton 2000). Rather than stable tribal entities, the settlement record reflects the ebb and flow of power and control over smaller social groups rising and falling in the turbulent world of the 1st century BC (cf. Moore 2011). Whether sites like Roanne and some other unenclosed agglomerations held the same status as enclosed *oppida* or not, as Collis (1984) suggested some time ago, understanding the role of both can only be achieved through systematic assessments of the broader landscape context of these sites.

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