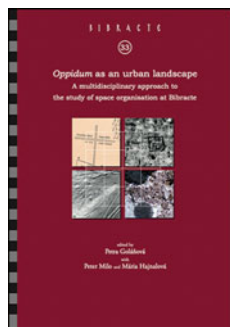


ANTIQUITY 2024 Vol. 98 (401): 1448–1449
<https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2024.117>

PETRA GOLÁŇOVÁ (ed.). 2023. *Oppidum as an urban landscape: a multidisciplinary approach to the study of space organisation at Bibracte* (Bibracte 33). Glux-en-Glenne: Bibracte; 978-2-490601-14-1 paperback €45.



The oppidum Bibracte, which Caesar mentions as the main town of the Aedui, is situated on Mount Beuvray in Burgundy, France. The site has been archaeologically investigated since the nineteenth century and is considered an important reference point for European oppida research. The main part of this book consists of the results of two recent research activities carried out by the Masaryk University, Brno, Czechia, in co-operation with the Centre archéologique européen, Bibracte, from 2019–2022 and from 2011–2021. The first dealt with undeveloped areas within the oppidum, and the second involved large-scale geophysical prospections. In the Introduction, the editor Petra Goláňová offers a brief overview to the

term and current discussions on oppida, and especially addresses undeveloped or open squares within these settlements. She then presents the structure of the volume, which is divided into five parts.

The first part, ‘Empty spaces in context’, also written by Goláňová, discusses the appearance of open spaces before and during the Iron Age; then the assumed functions for these spaces in Late Iron Age settlements are brought up, which can be distinguished between the areas of agricultural and public use. This is followed by part two, ‘Bibracte: a case study’, in which Goláňová highlights the state of research in Bibracte before turning specifically to the questions of urbanisation. Bibracte plays a crucial role in the urbanisation debate because it has been archaeologically investigated since 1864 onwards and, above all, the past 40 years of modern excavations have expanded our knowledge enormously.

Part three is a comprehensive contribution on geophysical prospection. It covers 130 pages and is written by Peter Milo, Petra Goláňová, Tomáš Tencer and Michal Vágner. Particularly interesting is the comparison of the results of magnetometry with those of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and the adaptation to the excavated structures. By combining the methods, some new undeveloped areas can be discussed. In stark contrast, the subsequent contribution by Jana Mazáčková on the analysis of lidar data seems, with only a few pages, extremely cursory and unambitious.

Part four deals with the open or empty spaces in Bibracte and their targeted excavation in 2019–2020. Goláňová remains the main author for the archaeology side and is assisted by Jan Kysela in presenting the finds in their contexts. This is followed by the brief chapters by Peter Barta and Mária Hajnalová on radiocarbon dating and Piotr Moska on Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating and a wide range of samples and dates from the Mesolithic to the Middle Ages are discussed. The next two contributions are on geochemistry (by Jan Petřík and Lobomír Prokeš) and geoarchaeology (Lenka Lisá, Sahar Poledník Mohammadi, Hana Grison, Jan Rohovec, Pavel Lisý and Aleš Bajer). Unfortunately, the results did not

provide the hoped-for clear answers regarding the use of the open spaces, although some insights into the geology of Mont Beuvray were gained that will help in the development of future methods. The palaeobotanical section includes contributions by Hajnalová and Romana Kočárová on plant remains, Hajnalová, Eva Jamrichová and Libor Petr on palynology, Ākos Petř on phytoliths and Markéta Fránková on diatoms. In contrast to previous archaeobotanical investigations, the main problem was dating the individual layers of the open areas. The last chapter in part four is a short contribution by Patrik Flammer on palaeoparasites. The results of this study show that the investigated open areas did not contain the filling of latrines or cess pits. At this part of the book, one would have expected further archaeozoological results, which would, for example, address the question of public use of the open spaces such as celebrating/eating/performing rituals, but also slaughtering/roasting/skinning, but is left wanting.

Part five ‘Oppidum as an urban landscape’ is a synthesis of the aforementioned chapters. In the first section, Hajnalová and Goláňová discuss and summarise the results from the archaeological excavations and the subsequent natural scientific analyses. Here, methodological questions, such as the search for cultural layers and the dating of the individual layers, again play a major role. The next section is a diachronic overview of the biography of the Mont Beuvray site by Goláňová. The fact that this encompassed not just the oppidum Bibracte is also made clear by the scientific dating mentioned above, which covers an enormous span of time. At the end, in the chapter ‘Bibracte as an urban landscape’, Goláňová outlines the new state of research and introduces a typology of urban open spaces at Bibracte (fig. 316). After embedding these new results in a wider context, she sets out future research questions and draws attention to the area surrounding the oppidum.

Untypically for this series, the volume is written entirely in English, which gives hope for an even wider dissemination of the results. It has an astonishing number of 319 mostly coloured illustrations and an extensive 41-page bibliography. This book impressively shows how archaeological work should happen: answers to certain research questions—in this case, the meaning of empty spaces in the oppidum—are sought using multidisciplinary approaches. Despite the numerous international contributors, it is clear that Petra Goláňová is the one who is mainly responsible for this must-read for settlement archaeologists. Even though the title was long held by Manching in Germany, today Bibracte must certainly be considered as the best-investigated oppidum.

KATJA WINGER
Heinrich Schliemann-Gedenkstätte
Schliemannstadt Neubukow, Germany
✉ winger@neubukow.de