# *Lieux de Mémoire*, Central Places, and the Sanctuary of Ribemont-sur-Ancre: A Preliminary Look

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### Introduction

This paper seeks to address the following questions: Can we establish that meaningful relationships existed between some Gallo-Roman sanctuaries and the Iron Age *lieux de mémoire* ('places of memory') over which they were founded if the sites experienced periods of abandonment? If so, could we then view their histories as continuous? Previously, scholars have allowed continuity of place in these cases, but generally denied that any substantive relationship existed between the two epochs. Further, the modern definition of continuity does not allow sites with significant interruptions of occupation or activity to be described as having a 'continuous' history. However, in this paper, I will propose that we consider continuity differently. I believe that continuity may also be demonstrated by the enduring significance that places of memory possessed for local communities, a significance that attracted the foundation of new central places, and could be appropriated at sites' reoccupation. Through the appropriation of places of memory, newly founded central places were linked to past epochs of sites' histories, and granted legitimacy to define contemporary identities by their antiquity.

   In order to present this alternative notion of continuity, I will outline a theoretical framework that uses the concepts of central places and *lieux de mémoire* to model the progression of sites from their initial states, through their periods of abandonment, and into their later histories. I believe that by reconsidering continuity within the framework of these concepts, we will gain a better understanding of how these sites were perceived and experienced in antiquity, and may wish to revise how we define continuity to better suit ancient perspectives.

   The initial section of this paper will be devoted to the theoretical aspects of the topic. It will define places of memory and central places, and present the theoretical framework. The second section will illustrate the theoretical considerations using the case study of Ribemont-sur-Ancre, the well-known Gallo-Roman sanctuary founded upon a place of memory from the La Tène B2/C1 period (late third century B.C.). The case study will address: the creation of the place of memory at Ribemont, and the activity of its initial epoch; what it came to mean to the local community over its period of abandonment; and how the site's significance was appropriated at the foundation of the Gallo-Roman sanctuary in the early Roman period. Discussion of Ribemont will conclude with an illustration of how the site's history may be modelled using the study's theoretical framework, and brief summary of the sanctuary's subsequent development. The final section of the paper before the conclusion will briefly address three comparative examples –

Gournay-sur-Aronde, Nitry, and Mirebeau-sur-Bèze – to illustrate how the theoretical framework may be applied to other sanctuaries for future studies.

While addressing only one case study in detail in this paper, I believe that the framework presented here may be applied to many other Gallo-Roman sanctuaries founded upon places of memory in Gaul and Britain. Hopefully, the parallels and interactions between the concepts of *lieux de mémoire* and central places discussed here will encourage further integration of the concepts in future considerations.

## Scholarly Context

This paper developed in the context of Manuel Fernández-Götz's (2012; 2014) work on identity and *lieux de mémoire* in Gaul, and Nico Roymans' and other Vrije University scholars' work on central place theory. Pierre Nouvel and Philippe Barral (forthcoming) have also presented a discussion of places of memory in central eastern Gaul, which relates to the ideas explored here, particularly concerning the tie between places of memory and central places. They consider the various types of places of memory over which sanctuaries were founded in the region, and the nature of the connections between the two. Cosmopoulos (2014) has also examined the appropriation of *lieux de mémoire* for new sanctuary foundations, although in the context of early Greek sanctuaries founded upon Mycenaean places of memory.

## Defining Lieux de Mémoire and Central Places

The concept of *lieux de mémoire* originated with the historian Pierre Nora's work in the social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s (encapsulated in a 1989 essay). It has been used with various meanings, and often imprecisely thereafter, particularly when adapted for use in various disciplines. An explicit definition of places of memory for archaeology has not yet been articulated, although Fernández-Götz uses the term consistently, and addresses its meaning at various points in his recent works (2012; 2014: 83–84, 171). The definition presented here adapts Nora's concept, and synthesizes Fernández-Götz's comments.

Places of memory were locales charged with meaning, associated with the origins of communities, where their social memory could be anchored. Together, they defined a 'landscape of memory', a broad physical area dotted by meaningful sites from the past, which were tied to the identities of local communities. (My phrase, 'landscape of memory', is an extension of Fernández-Götz's (2014: 93, 102–105) concept of a 'landscape of ancestors'.) Places of memory provided sites where communities could gather to remember their past, and articulate and reinforce their group identity through assembly and ritual practice (Poux 2012: 157–159; Fernández-Götz 2014: 83–84). Ritual practice took place under the direction of community leaders who had the opportunity at each performance to appropriate, revise, and reinvent memory to suit themselves (Bell 1992: 16–20; Assmann 2006: 306–13; Fernández-Götz 2014: 63, 83–84, 171–173). In this way, community leaders could use places of memory to construct a past that reflected the contemporary social order, and perpetuated it for the future. However, memory and the rituals of remembering also changed naturally over time, through processes of the select preservation of memory and forgetting. Like social memory, identity in pre-Roman Gaul was multifaceted and mutable, and intimately tied to the social order. Fernández-Götz (2014: 41–71) explores the problem in some detail.

Like places of memory, the term 'central places' has been applied and defined variously

over time. Gerritsen and Roymans (2006: 255) have provided a detailed definition of central places for use in the context of Roman archaeology, which is incorporated in the following definition. Central places served as points of aggregation for the population of a predominantly rural landscape (Fernández-Götz 2014: 161, 169–175). They played a key role in promoting communities' group identity, social awareness, and cohesion, and at these sites, the hierarchies of communities could be reinforced through ritual practice and other activities (Gerritsen and Roymans 2006: 255; Fichtl 2007: 283–285; Fernández-Götz 2014: 171). Central places were both independent sites within the rural landscape (Ribemont-sur-Ancre), and locales within and in association with *oppida*, and open settlements (Gournay-sur-Aronde, Manching, Acy-Romance). They were instrumental in the appearance and strengthening of local and *civitas* identities. Each *civitas* would have had multiple central places, some located centrally within territories, and others on borders and liminal sites (Chilly, Fesques, Saint-Maur). Together, they facilitated the establishment and maintenance of bounded territories, and the cohesion of the communities within them (Poux 2012; Fernández-Götz 2014: 56, 171).

As has probably become evident, the concepts of places of memory and central places share a number of commonalities in their definitions, and interact and overlap with one another considerably. In fact, I believe that places of memory were simply unoccupied and inactive central places, which remained significant to local communities over long periods of time, through memory of their past importance and communities' identification with the sites. When places of memory were reoccupied, they became central places once more, existing subsequently as both places of memory and central places simultaneously.

The model below (Fig. 1) illustrates a site's progress from central place to place of memory, and back again. A site is classed as a central place during the initial period of its history, because it is occupied and active in the creation of a community, the establishment of collective identity, and is central to the social, political, and ritual life of a particular group. Upon its abandonment, activity ceases, and the central place becomes a place of memory, an inactive feature in the landscape, but still important and tied to the identity of the local community. Over time, the
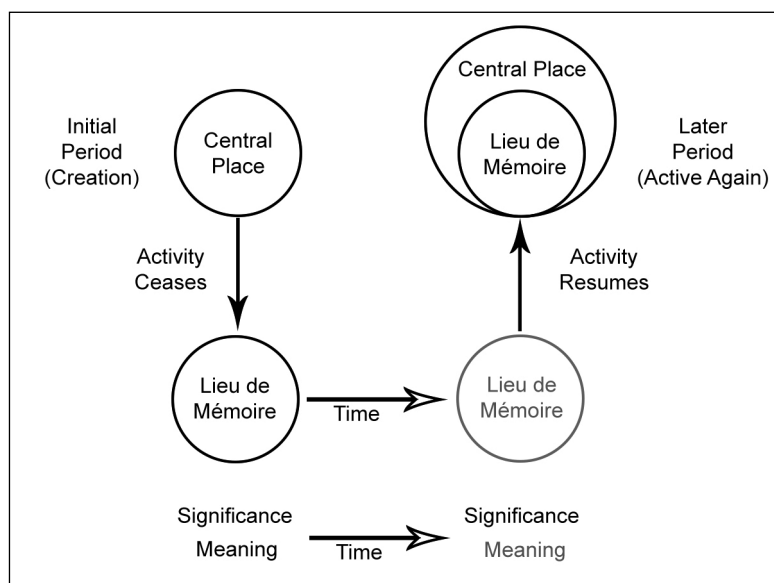


*Figure 1: The Relationship between* lieux de mémoire *and central places.*

meaning of the place of memory to this community changes, either shifting naturally according to the community's needs and interests, and processes of forgetting and selective memory; or its meaning may be revised and redefined intentionally by particular parties for their own purposes. Despite the change in its meaning, the place of memory remains significant to the local community, because it is connected to the community's past (and sometimes its origins), and still serves as an important part of local identity. Later, the site is reoccupied and activity resumes. At this time, the significance of the place of memory is appropriated, and the site becomes a central place anew. The site then exists simultaneously as a central place and place of memory, its significance and antiquity granting the site legitimacy to define communal identity in the present and future. To illustrate this theoretical progression concretely, I will now present the case study of the sanctuary of Ribemont-sur-Ancre.

## *The Creation of the Place of Memory at Ribemont*

The history of Ribemont-sur-Ancre began in the third century B.C., with the construction of a circular and quadrangular enclosure on the site of the later sanctuary. The prevailing interpretation of the enclosures, proposed by Brunaux, is that they make up a two-part monument, constructed by the victors of a major battle that took place in the valley below the site. According to Brunaux, the monument was in use from *c.* 250 to 220 B.C. during which the victors erected its structures, and carried out a complex ritual treatment of the dead. Brunaux believes that the circular enclosure facilitated the funeral treatment of the victors' fallen comrades, and the subsequent commemorative banquet, and that the quadrangular enclosure facilitated the ritual treatment of the vanquished warriors and their weapons, through which they were offered to the gods (Brunaux *et al.* 1999; 2009).

However, Fercoq du Leslay has indicated that the ceramic material dates the circular enclosure to the La Tène B2 period (early third century B.C.), and has suggested that the circular enclosure predates the quadrangular enclosure by thirty to forty years (Brunaux *et al.* 2001; Brunaux *et al.* 2002; Haack *et al.* 2015: 26; G. Fercoq du Leslay 2015, pers. comm., 27 July and 25 November). A subsequent reassessment of the two enclosures individually has revealed distinct differences in their construction and finds, which mark the enclosures as discrete facilities that should be considered separately. The circular enclosure seems to have been established on the site in order to host a funerary treatment of high status warriors, accompanying weapon dedication, and a communal banquet, as Brunaux has proposed (Brunaux *et al.* 1999; 2009; Brunaux 2004). However, the evidence that the enclosure presents a unique example of the practice of 'sky-burial', otherwise attested only in literary accounts, is less certain. Instead, the circular enclosure seems to be closely comparable to the cult installation at the aristocratic habitat of Montmartin (Enclosure 56) both in its architectural design and the activities it hosted (Brunaux and Méniel 1997). Given that the circular enclosure predates the quadrangular enclosure by a few decades, it seems likely to have been constructed by local aristocratic warriors, following the death of a number of their comrades in battle, to provide them a funerary treatment.

The quadrangular enclosure does seem to have been a commemorative monument and ritual space, as Brunaux argues. However, the differences between the treatment given to the warriors within the enclosure, and that given to the warriors from the mass grave outside of it, should be addressed, because they are relevant to the interpretation of the monument, and identification of the warriors from each area. Further, the shape of the quadrangular enclosure, the altars at its corners, and the sacred grove at its centre indicate that it was designed as a sacred installation,
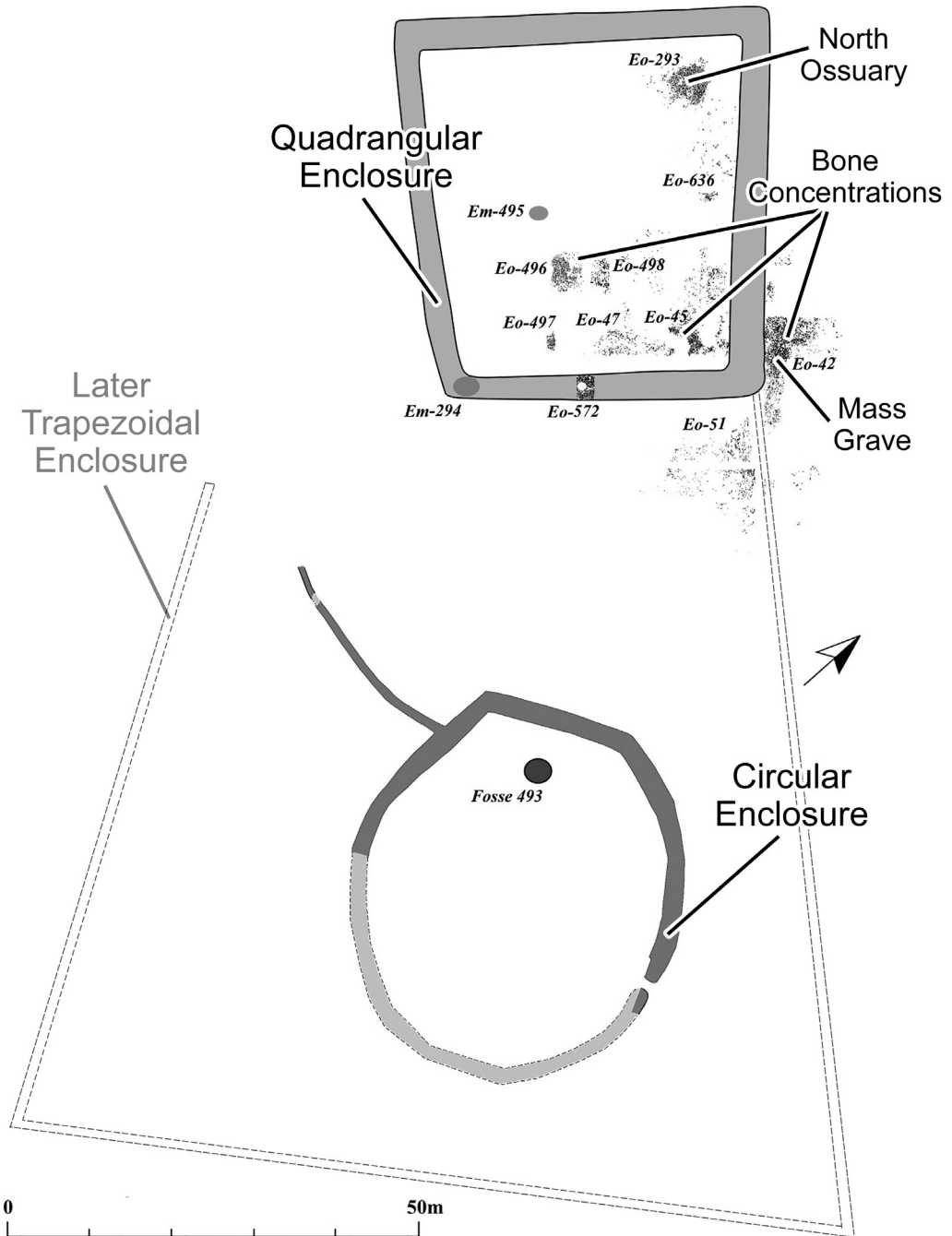
*Figure 2: The La Tène enclosures at Ribemont (illustration: G. Fercoq du Leslay, Conseil Départemental de la Somme).*
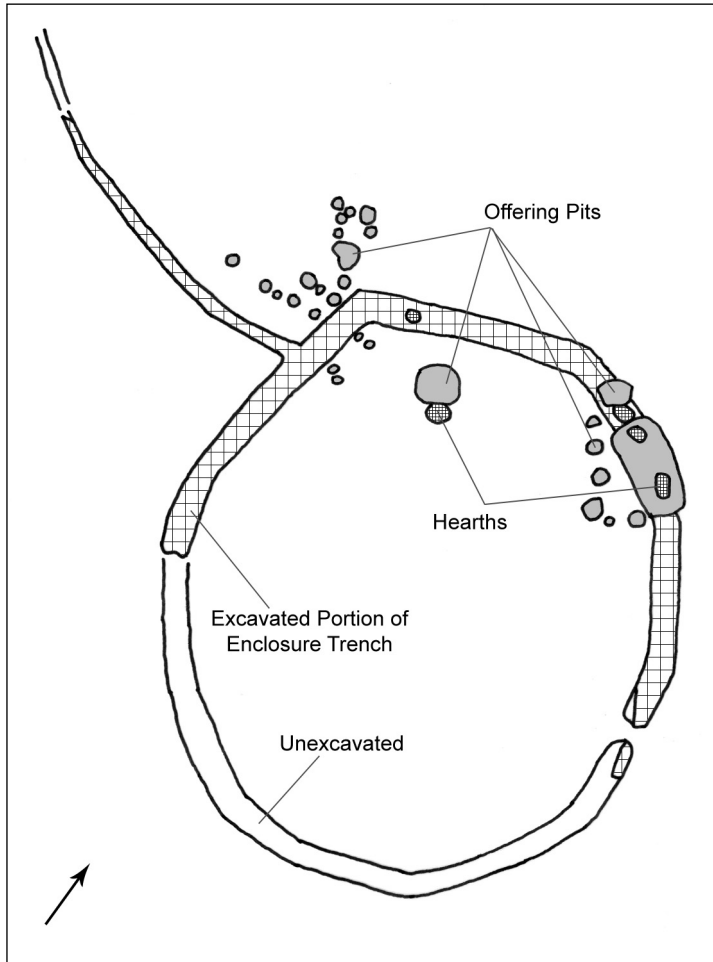
which could even be defined as an early sanctuary. The evidence and reasoning behind these interpretations will be outlined in brief below, and developed further in a subsequent paper.

Whilst a detailed exploration of the initial phase of Ribemont's history is not the purpose of this paper, the original meaning of the two enclosures is relevant to understanding what the place of memory meant to the local community, and why its significance persisted over such a long period of abandonment. Consequently, it seems worthwhile to address the site's initial epoch in some detail, before examining its subsequent history.

The circular enclosure consisted of a roughly circular trench, likely serving as a foundation for a robust palisade wall with a narrow entry on its east side, creating an interior area that may have been partially paved with sandstone blocks (Fig. 3) (Brunaux *et al.* 1999; 2009; G. Fercoq du Leslay 2015, pers. comm., 27 July). All of the material related to this structure comes from the enclosure trench, of which only the northern half has been excavated to date. It has provided ceramics, fragments of flint, sandstone, and painted wattle-and-daub, and the long bones of at least thirty men, accompanied by weapons and military equipment (Brunaux

*et al.* 2001: 35). Analysis of the bones has suggested that these men were high status warriors, as they were tall, robust, and free of significant pathology. Ricard and Brunaux (2009) describe them as 'professionals of war'. The weapons and equipment have been attributed to the men. However, there is only one sword and nine sheaths in the assemblage, and they are of rather mediocre quality, inconsistent with the equipment we would expect to accompany the interment of high status warriors (Ricard 2014: 216; G. Fercoq du Leslay 2015, pers. comm., 27 July)

Inside the enclosure, on the northwest side, is a cylindrical pit with an attached hearth. Its fill has provided animal bones and ceramics primarily, but also flint, wattle-and-daub, and rare pieces of metal and fragments of human bones. The latter items suggest that the fill of the cylindrical pit is contemporary with that of the enclosure trench. The animal bones come from swine, sheep, and cattle, with a preponderance of cattle, and display marks of butchering, suggesting that the meat was consumed. The ceramics are mostly (85%) high walled vases of *situlae* or *cistes* type (cylindrical vessels used to transport food or drink), connected with banqueting practice (Brunaux *et al.* 2001: 35–37; 2002: 24–38).

Brunaux has proposed that the men from the circular enclosure are the fallen from the victors' camp who were exposed within the palisaded enclosure in a 'sky burial'. In his reconstruction, their bodies were laid in state, with their weapons, on a sandstone pavement inside the circular enclosure, and left for carnivorous birds, which would consume their flesh. In the second stage, when the bodies were clean of their flesh, the long bones were collected for a token burial of only select remains. A funerary banquet concluded the proceedings, the palisade was demolished, and the ceramics, bones, weapons, and pavement were deposited in the enclosure trench and cylindrical pit (Brunaux 2004: 118–124; Brunaux *et al.* 2009: 25–26).

Whilst we may be sure that the bodies were exposed for the initial stage of the ritual, the evidence for a 'sky burial' is less conclusive. The bones consist almost exclusively (95.6%) of long bones and coaxals, display evidence of weathering, and bear the marks of animal mastication, all signs of exposure (Craig *et al.* 2005: 166; Ricard 2014: 261). However, instead of extensive peck-marks from carnivorous birds, the mastication marks on the bones are quite modest, displaying limited gnawing by rodents, and the marks of a carnivore's teeth on a single *humerus*. They are not necessarily from birds at all (Brunaux 2004: 118–124; Brunaux *et al.* 2009: 25–26; Ricard 2014: 213).

The most notable aspect of the funerary treatment given to these individuals is the systematic ritual beating to which they were subjected, which manifests in parallel blows, perpendicular to the length of the bones (Ricard 2014: 119–120). The significance of this ritual is uncertain, but compares to the treatment of bones on other sites, including the cult installation at Montmartin, the sanctuary of Gournay, and the cult site of Mormont. At Montmartin and Gournay, corpses were ritually dismembered: cervical vertebrae separated from skulls using multiple blows, skulls separated into multiple pieces, and cranial bones separated from long and large bones (Brunaux *et al.* 1985: 152–161; Brunaux and Méniel 1997: 237). Brunaux and Méniel (1997: 236–238) indicate that the treatment of the bones at Montmartin and Gournay likely represents a ritual practice, perhaps even human sacrifice, rather than a funerary ritual. However, as we will see with the quadrangular enclosure, it is often difficult to differentiate between which activities constitute funerary ritual, and which sacrificial. The site of Mormont has provided similar evidence: a femur bearing multiple parallel blows, comparable to those seen at Ribemont, and the head of a young woman with blows on the axis and atlas bones, similar to those seen at Montmartin and Gournay (Brunetti *et al*. 2014: 44–48). The human remains at Mormont have been tentatively identified as human sacrifices, given their frequent deposition in combination

with animal remains and other dedications, and the signs of butchering and burning on the bones, suggesting the possible consumption of human meat (Brunetti *et al.* 2014: 44–50).

Also striking are the parallels between the circular enclosure at Ribemont and the cult installation at Montmartin (Enclosure 56), in the nature of their construction and finds. Like Ribemont, Enclosure 56 at Montmartin featured a robust palisade wall, with decorated wattle-and-daub walls, and a narrow entry (Brunaux and Méniel 1997: 116–122). The cylindrical pit and hearth inside the enclosure at Montmartin is closely comparable with the pit and hearth at Ribemont, only slightly smaller in dimensions (Brunaux *et al.* 2003: 61–62). Ceramics, human and animal bones, weaponry, and numerous well-preserved fragments of wattle-and-daub have been found in the enclosure trench and cylindrical pit. The animal bones come from swine, sheep, and cattle primarily, with a high percentage of pork, an assemblage consistent with habitat remains, and sanctuaries where animal sacrifices were followed by consumption (Brunaux and Méniel 1997: 231–232). Ceramics found in the cylindrical pit include banqueting vessels, and date the pit to the La Tène C1 period, roughly contemporary with the circular enclosure at Ribemont (Brunaux and Méniel 1997: 189–190). Thus, it seems that communal banqueting and the ritual treatment of human remains were practiced at Montmartin, as at Ribemont, within an enclosure of very similar design.

The quadrangular enclosure ('sacred enclosure') (Fig. 2) consisted of a trench enclosing at least two sunken altars at its interior corners (possibly originally four), and other ossuaries both within and outside of the enclosure, most notably the mass grave (discussed below). The interior seems to have facilitated the ritual processing of several hundred bodies. In the first stage, the bodies of warriors, horses, and weapons were arranged and left to decay until only the bones and ligaments remained. In the second stage, some of the human and horse long bones, and fragments of limbs, were selected from these remains, and used to build cubic frames for the sunken altars within the enclosure. Other bones were broken, cut, and crushed into smaller pieces, and thrown into the altars to be cremated (Cadoux 1984; Fercoq du Leslay 1996; Brunaux *et al.* 1999; 2009).

Brunaux has interpreted this activity as reflecting a thorough destruction of the enemy warriors' remains, and offering to the gods, by the victors of the battle. However, Krausse (2006: 364) has questioned whether it is reasonable to imagine that the victors constructed such a complex facility to so meticulously destroy their enemies. He argues that the exposure of the bodies, their subsequent dismemberment and cremation, and the dedication of weapons speak as much to funeral treatments as human sacrifice. Given that the individuals from the circular enclosure are no longer identified as the dead from the victors' camp, we might seek these men in the ossuaries of the quadrangular enclosure. Perhaps the ritual treatment performed within the quadrangular enclosure was a funeral treatment for the victors' fallen comrades.

Immediately outside of the quadrangular enclosure is a special deposit, a mass grave ('*charnier*') containing the remains of at least 114 robust males in their prime, and their weapons. These men are most assuredly enemy warriors, as all of the skeletons are headless, and significant portion of the cervical vertebrae (21.7%) bear blade marks associated with severing the head (Lejars 1998; Ricard 2014). Otherwise, the skeletons were found largely intact, with large portions of the bodies preserved – in marked contrast with the other bone assemblages from the site, all of which are dominated by long and large bones (Ricard 2014: 260–261). These corpses represent battlefield remains, collected and deposited *en masse* with their weapons, and left to decay (Ricard 2014: 200). They did not receive secondary treatment like the bodies within the enclosure. The deposit directly parallels that at Moeuvres, which is of comparable dimensions,

and likewise contained hundreds of headless skeletons (Salomon 1913). Both seem to be ritual dedications of enemy corpses to the gods, and may also have served as displays of the victors' prowess, and expressions of dominance.

To review, the circular enclosure seems to have been a cult installation, similar to Enclosure 56 at Montmartin, which hosted the ritual treatment of high status warriors, weapon dedication, and a communal banquet. The quadrangular enclosure, constructed a few decades later, seems to have been a commemorative monument and sacred space, constructed by the victors of a major battle in order to host the ritual treatment of the dead, and to provide a lasting memorial of the victory. The remains from inside the enclosure represent the traces of a ritual through which enemy warriors were dedicated to the gods, or a funerary treatment given to the victors' fallen comrades. The headless skeletons in the mass grave outside the enclosure may be identified as enemy warriors, and the deposit as a ritual dedication of their weapons and remains and possible trophy.

Whilst the circular enclosure was demolished shortly after its construction, and the quadrangular enclosure was abandoned after its initial phase, they continued to mark the land with a permanent memorial, and inscribed the sanctity of the place in the memory of the local communities. Over time, the area of the circular enclosure became a ritual gathering place, continuing to host communal banquets and to receive dedications sporadically in the second and first centuries B.C. A number of pits (Fig. 3), containing cremated animal bones and banqueting vessels, and hearths found along the edge of the circular enclosure attest to this activity (Brunaux *et al.* 2001; 2002). In this way, the banqueting practice originally carried out within the circular enclosure was perpetuated, although it is doubtful that the enclosure's original use was directly remembered (Brunaux *et al.* 2001: 35; 2009: 25). These gatherings may have been a form of ancestor worship, directed at the illustrious progenitors of the community, as the site would have been associated with the establishment of the community's territorial claim – secured through battle, and commemorated by the monumental installation. The site also served as a sacred gathering place, of the sort that Fernández-Götz (2014: 171) describes, where group cohesion and communal identity could be reinforced.

The site seems to have experienced an increase in activity during the conquest epoch, continuing to the end of the first century B.C., as the ceramics, animal bones, and coins dating to the period suggest. The construction of a trapezoidal enclosure, which encompassed the circular enclosure area and connected it to the quadrangular enclosure, also seems to date to this period (Brunaux *et al.* 2009: 25; Haack *et al.* 2015: 26). It represents a formalization of the existing gathering place by establishing its boundaries. Some weapon and equipment dedications, found in the later Gallo-Roman fill layers, are also dated to this period based on their typology (Viand *et al.* 2008).

This sporadic but continued activity, from the site's abandonment until its reoccupation, demonstrates that it remained significant to the local community throughout its long abandonment. The site served as a gathering place – associated with the origins of the community, its claim on the land, and its heroized ancestors and progenitors. Around the time of the Gallic Wars, when activity increased, the site may have proven particularly attractive, because it represented the bellicose ideology of the northern Gauls. The local community may have viewed their illustrious ancestors as idealized models, and as the community's protectors.
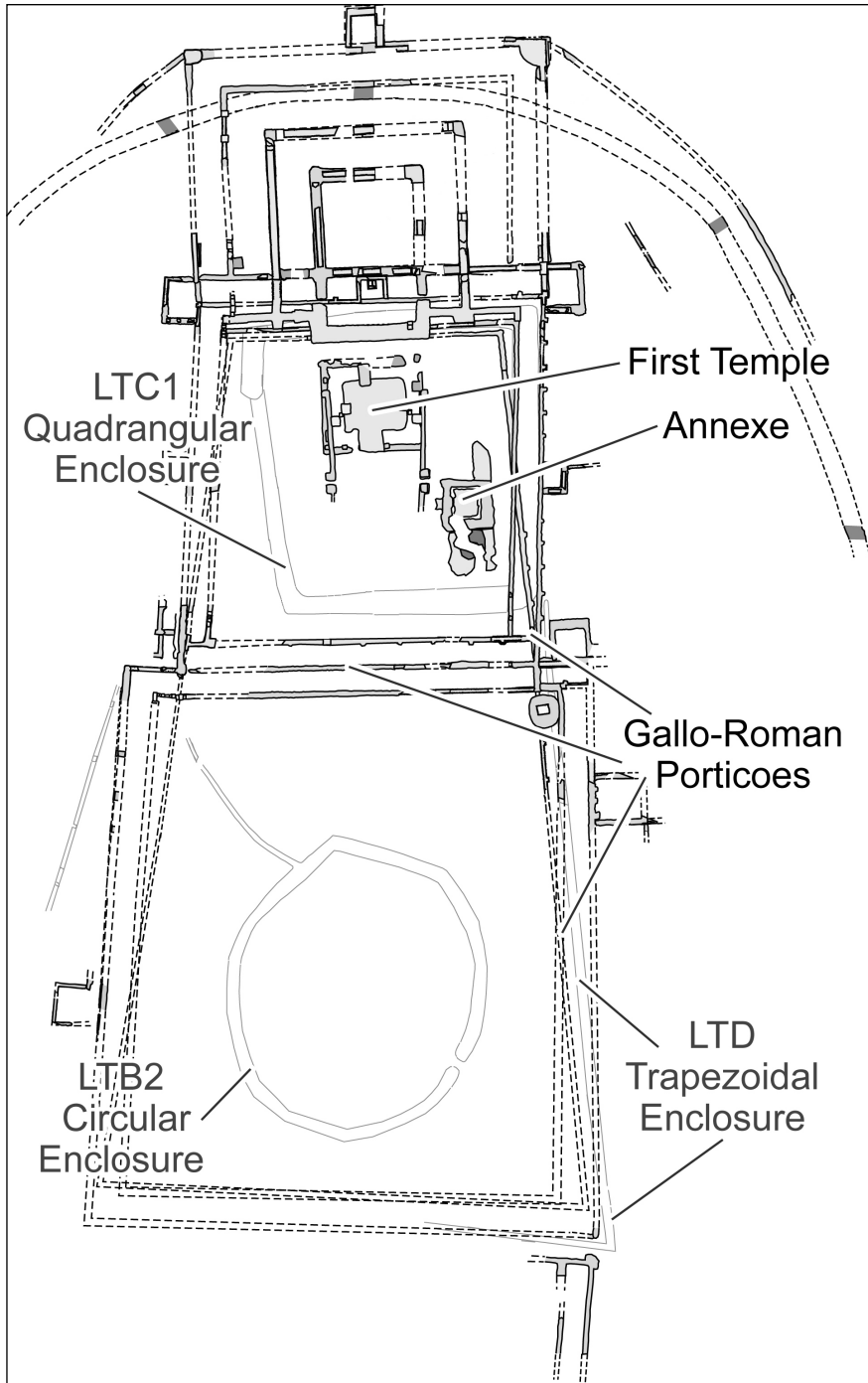
*Figure 4: The La Tène and Roman enclosures at Ribemont (illustration: G. Fercoq du Leslay, Conseil Départemental de la Somme).*

## The Early Roman Transformation of Ribemont-sur-Ancre

The transformation of Ribemont-sur-Ancre from monument and sacred site to sanctuary took place in the last quarter of the first century B.C., and early first century A.D. At that time, the remains of the La Tène structures and objects on the ground were cleared and ceremonially buried; the terrain was levelled; and the new Gallo-Roman sanctuary was built over the same spot (Brunaux *et al.* 1999; 2009). The establishment of the Gallo-Roman sanctuary marked a key transition point, and the beginning of a new phase in the site's history. Worship in a new tradition was instituted at a sacred site from the distant past, a sacred site whose significance had persisted in the memory of the local community for two hundred years. The foundation of the Gallo-Roman sanctuary incorporated the ancient site into the Gallo-Roman sacred landscape.

The new Gallo-Roman sanctuary, composed of a *fanum* temple and later annexe, was constructed over the exact location of the quadrangular enclosure, its porticoes delimiting a *temenos* nearly identical to the enclosure's outline (Fig. 4). Additional porticoes, which followed the lines of the first century B.C. trapezoidal enclosure, were built to define a communal gathering place for the new sanctuary, enclosing the same area that had been used for this purpose for over two hundred years. Through this layout, the new sanctuary preserved the same division of space as the La Tène installations. This division of space remained the same for the entire history of the sanctuary until its abandonment *c.* A.D. 350. We might compare this preservation of the original layout and functions of spaces with that of the sanctuary of Mirebeau-sur-Bèze, discussed in the next section, which maintained two adjoining areas, a sacred enclosure and a public gathering space, throughout its 450 year history (Barral and Joly 2011).

To conclude the discussion of Ribemont-sur-Ancre, I would like to outline how the theory of a central place's progression into a place of memory and back again applies to Ribemont's history. The place of memory originated in the La Tène B2 period, as a funerary and banqueting enclosure, and subsequently, a LTC1 commemorative monument, celebrating a major victory and marking the establishment of the group's territorial claim. The sanctity of the place was permanently inscribed in the memory of the local community, and it continued to serve as a
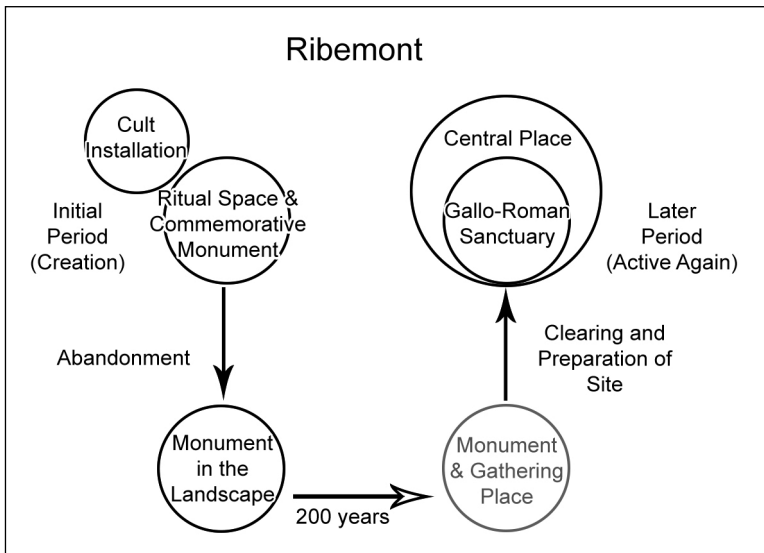


*Figure 5: The theoretical model applied to Ribemont-sur-Ancre.*

ritual gathering place during its 200-year abandonment. A significant connection with the site's Iron Age past still existed at the reoccupation of the site and foundation of the first Gallo-Roman sanctuary, as the site was a nexus within the landscape of memory, tied to the local community.

At this key transition point, a new central place was established on an ancient sacred site, and worship in the new Roman tradition was inaugurated. The new sanctuary had legitimacy to define identity in the present, and for the future, through its connection with the past. The site took its place in the Gallo-Roman religious landscape, initially as a central place of modest scale, but it quickly developed into a leading central place of the *civitas Ambianorum*.

## Further Applications of the Theoretical Model

The model presented in this paper allows us to take a long-term view of sites' histories without the disjunction imposed by conventional notions of continuity. We are thus able to view interruptions of sites' activity and occupation as natural parts of their progression through their various epochs. Likewise, sites' transitions from central places to places of memory, and back, represent naturally occurring changes in their status, and in the functions that they played for the communities connected to them.

Ribemont is a rare example, in our knowledge of its early epoch, and the sporadic activity that continued over its long abandonment. In most cases, there is no direct connection to trace between sites' earlier and later epochs. However, it was sites' significance to the communities around them, and their connection to the past and communal identity that mattered. Continuity with past epochs could be established at sites' reoccupation through the appropriation of the significance of the place of memory, and the 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm 1983: 1–3; Fernández-Götz 2014: 173; Rieckhoff 2015: 361).

A close parallel to Ribemont is the sanctuary of Gournay-sur-Aronde, which is of comparable antiquity, and also experienced a period abandonment followed by an appropriation of the site's significance. The sanctuary was originally founded at the beginning of the third century B.C. (*c*. 280–260 B.C.) beside an existing cult installation of the late fourth century, a structured deposit of vases within an earthen mound (and possible place of memory) (Brunaux *et al.* 2003: 15). The sanctuary remained active for almost two centuries without interruption, from the LTC1 to LTD1 periods (300/250 B.C. – 100/50 B.C.), as the votive deposits attest. During this time, the sanctuary evolved from a quadrangular trench, enclosing pits and upright posts, through two iterations of a roofed structure covering the central pit (incipient temple). The enclosure trench developed from a simple trench-and-berm to a palisaded enclosure, which likely featured a monumental gate. The scale and nature of the offerings (1,459 weapons and equipment and 2,500 animal bones from the enclosure trench alone) have revealed that Gournay was an important warrior sanctuary and gathering place serving the communities of the region (Brunaux *et al.* 1985). The site was abandoned at the beginning of the first century B.C. for 50–70 years, at that time transforming into a place of memory (Fig. 6).

The greatest interest Gournay poses for the present paper is the nature of the sanctuary's appropriation when the site was reoccupied in the second half of the first century B.C. At that time, an *oppidum* was founded next to and incorporating the ancient sanctuary, and a new temple was constructed over its predecessor in the sanctuary. Thus, at the foundation of a new central place, the *oppidum*, which was to serve as a key central place for the Bellovaci, the existing place of memory, an abandoned sanctuary, was appropriated, granting the *oppidum* a connection to the tribe's history, identity, and perhaps also to the warrior tradition of northern Gaul. The
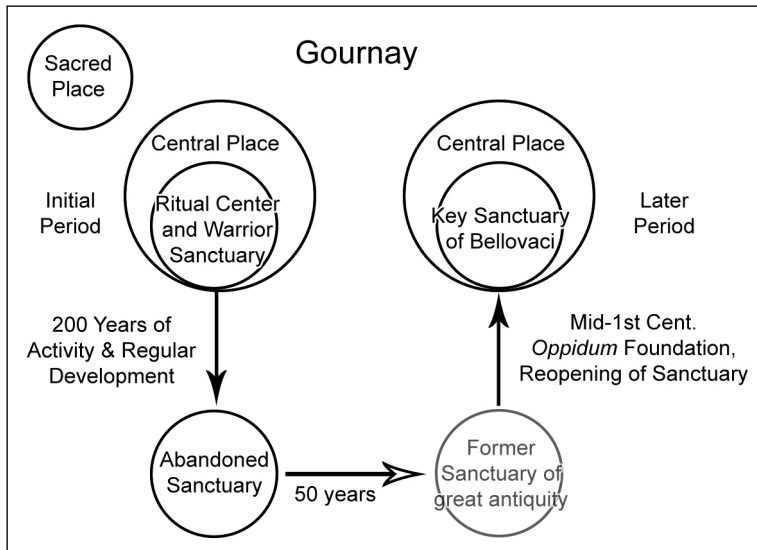
*Figure 6: The theoretical model applied to Gournay-sur-Aronde.*

re-foundation of the sanctuary, with the construction of a new temple and reestablishment of worship, provided the Bellovaci with a central sanctuary where they could enact their religious, social, and political identity through assembly and ritual practice. As Fichtl (2003: 108) comments, the choice was natural to found the new central place for the Bellovaci upon the existing sacred site. The temple itself reprised the function of its two predecessors, enclosing the central pit that had been the focal point of the sanctuary from its foundation. It was significantly more elaborate than the previous two structures, with a stone foundation for the *cella*, and a peripheral gallery that defined a plan very close to that of a *fanum*. After a brief occupation, through the Augustan period, the site was abandoned again, and became a place of memory once more. In the fourth century A.D., the sanctuary went through the cycle of place of memory to central place a final time when it was reoccupied and a *fanum* was constructed over the old temple site (Brunaux *et al.* 1985).

Sanctuaries founded over places of memory were not always the resumption of worship at a former sacred site, as is the case for Ribemont and Gournay. In some cases, sites' earlier activities were not related to the sanctuaries they became (e.g. sanctuaries founded over *tumuli* or *necropoleis*). Nonetheless, other types of places of memory were no less significant to local communities, nor less attractive for the foundation of new central places (Poux 2012: 162). It was their significance to the surrounding local and supra-local communities, and their connection with the past that was important, not their specific nature in earlier epochs.

The rural sanctuary of Nitry (Fig. 7) provides one example. It was founded *c*. 150 B.C. immediately beside a quadrangular funerary enclosure, and partially overlaying a *necropolis*. It was also located in proximity to a Bronze Age *tumulus*, and other La Tène funerary monuments. Nitry remained an active community sanctuary until the end of the first century A.D. when dedications at the sanctuary ceased. Despite being continually occupied, the sanctuary seems to have experienced a transition similar to that seen at Ribemont and Gournay over the course of the first century A.D. At this time, it was brought into the Gallo-Roman religious landscape by a 'modernisation' of the sanctuary. The *cella* temple and annexe building were rebuilt in masonry, the *temenos* enclosure in stone, and a cult statue was placed within the temple. A gallery was
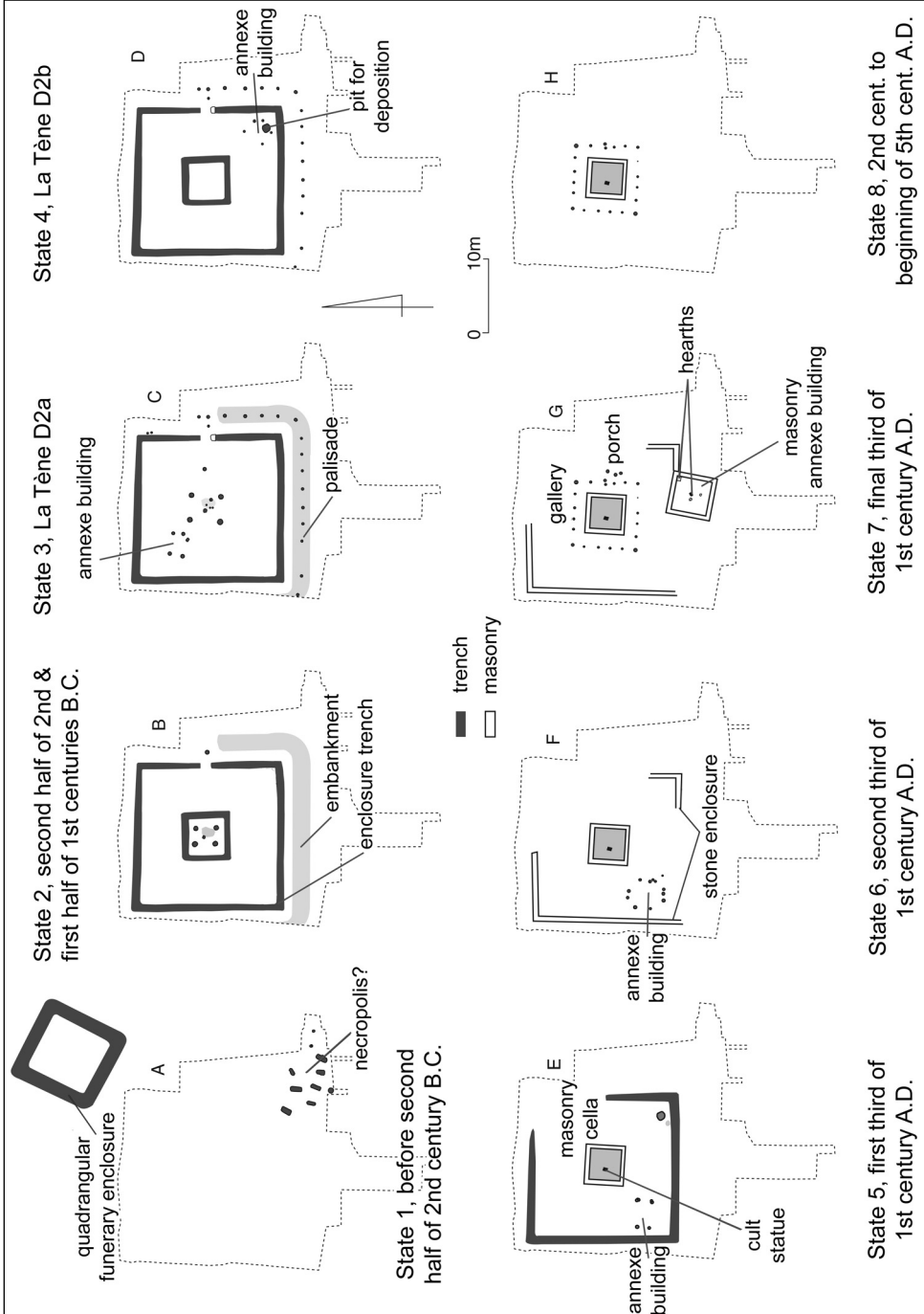
*Figure 7: Phases of the sanctuary at Nitry (after Nouvel and Barral forthcoming, fig. 2).*

also added, a Mediterranean architectural feature representing a minimal, essentially cosmetic, modification (Nouvel 2011). All of these changes were modest, and the sanctuary's organization and essential forms did not change throughout its history. Like Gournay, the sanctuary at Nitry seems to have become a place of memory after the first century A.D., and it remained unoccupied until the third and fourth centuries, when coins and other mobilia were offered again briefly.

A limited number of sanctuaries have histories of continuous occupation and activity, and would seem to not fit the model of sites' progression proposed in this study. However, I would argue that whilst these sites remain central places throughout their histories, they still experience transitions when they become places of memory as well as central places. The transitions usually occur in the first century A.D., and are typically characterized by monumentalization of the sanctuary, through reconstruction in stone and masonry, the addition of Mediterranean architectural features, and the construction of *fana* (Rieckhoff 2015: 361). Thereby these sanctuaries take their place in the Gallo-Roman religious landscape, but most only persist into the first and second centuries A.D. before they are abandoned permanently (*e.g.* Vendeuil-Caply, abandoned *c.* A.D. 70; Fesques, *c.* A.D. 100; and Mirebeau-sur-Bèze, *c.* A.D. 150). A rare few do survive into the third and fourth centuries, like Ribemont, which was not abandoned until *c.* A.D. 350.

The sanctuary of Mirebeau-sur-Bèze, in central east France, is an example of this type. Occupied continuously from *c.* 300 B.C. – A.D. 150, the site seems to have gradually passed into its status as a place of memory, although there were two marked breaks in its history when we might say that it transformed decisively. The first occurred in the first half of the first century B.C. (between States 2 and 3) (Fig. 8) when the site experienced a brief hiatus of occupation, preceded by a decline in offerings. This period was followed by a modification of the sanctuary's enclosures, and possibly a monumentalization of its temple as well. In the first half of the first century A.D., the sanctuary structures were reconstructed on dry stone foundations and tiles were used for their roofs, reflecting a limited amount of Roman architectural influence. The second significant break occurred in the second half of the first century A.D. (between States 4 and 5/6), when the entire sanctuary was rebuilt in stone, and the first *fanum* was constructed. Subsequently (State 6), a portico was built to enclose the *temenos*. It overlay the first *fanum*, and required the construction of a second.

Yet the sanctuary did not experience fundamental revisions of its function or organization. The public gathering area established at its foundation continued to serve this purpose throughout the sanctuary's history, and the portico constructed in the Roman period only slightly modified the outline of the original oblong enclosure trench (State 1). As Rieckhoff describes it, 'Indigenous actors held on to the idea and function of the spaces, but not to the precise forms of architecture and sacrificial ritual.' (2015: 359 translated).

Notably, Barral and Joly (2011: 554) comment that a hiatus, like that seen at Mirebeau, is to be expected in the history of a sanctuary with such a long period of continuity. They view it as part of a global pattern that does not interrupt continuity, particularly given the relationships that may exist between sites' earlier and later states. Their comment recalls the initial proposal of this paper, namely that periods of abandonment do not necessarily interrupt sites' continuity, and that sites' later epochs may be tied with earlier ones through the appropriation of memory. Perhaps, then, we may view Ribemont's history as seamless from the third century B.C. through the fourth century A.D., as it transitioned through various states and statuses, and past epochs were integrated into contemporary expressions of identity, first at the establishment of the Gallo-Roman sanctuary, and later when the sanctuary was monumentalized in the second century A.D.
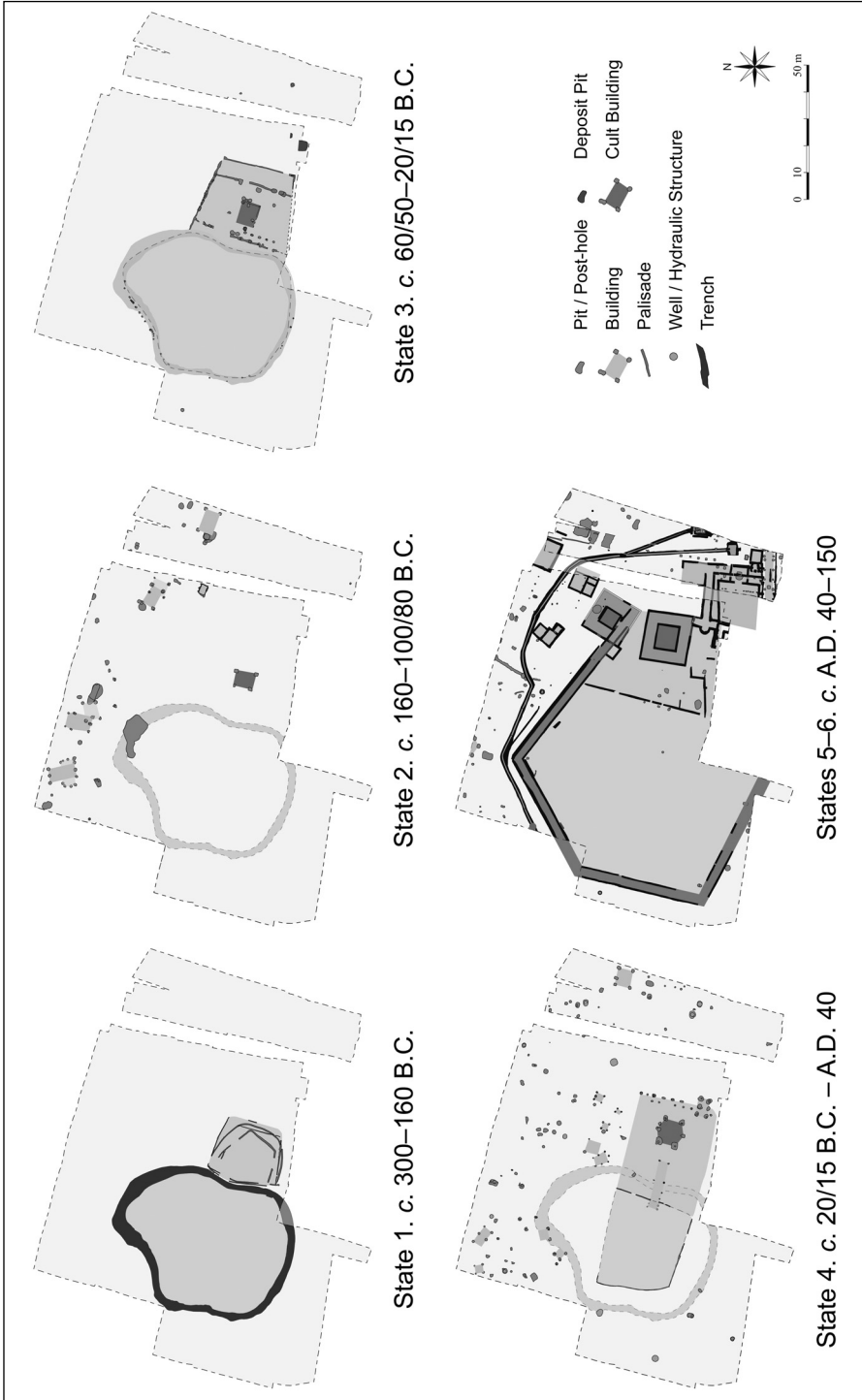
State 3. *c.* 60/50–20/15 B.C.

State 2. *c.* 160–100/80 B.C.

State 1. *c.* 300–160 B.C.

States 5–6. *c.* A.D. 40–150

State 4. *c.* 20/15 B.C. – A.D. 40

Pit / Post-hole          Deposit Pit

Building                 Cult Building

Palisade

Well / Hydraulic Structure

Trench

*Figure 8: Phases of the sanctuary at Mirebeau-sur-Bèze (after Barral and Joly 2011, fig. 4).*

## Conclusion

The early Roman period in Gaul (latter half of the first century B.C. and early first century A.D.) was a time of significant social upheaval, and profound transformation of religious identity. It saw the widespread foundation of new sanctuaries, and the construction of numerous Gallo-Roman temples. However, on the local level and in the rural areas of Gaul, change could be quite slow, and there seems to have been considerably more continuity of religious identity than was previously believed. Rieckhoff (2015: 361) describes the transformation as a situational phenomenon, which involved the gradual assumption of Roman characteristics over at least three generations. Local communities, like the community around Ribemont, still possessed ties to their past through Iron Age places of memory. They remained significant to these communities, and the foundation of sanctuaries upon them seems to have been part of a 'will to remember' (Nora 1989: 19).

Nouvel and Barral (forthcoming) describe how certain sites, which had been central to local communities in the La Tène period, continued to be important in the Roman period, and were preserved in the Gallo-Roman sanctuaries founded over them. To Nouvel and Barral, this process was the conservation of an ancient site, central to the identity of the local community, rather than commemoration of a site that had previously been of importance. Nouvel (2015, pers. comm., 21 September) describes this as, essentially, memory of the communal and social activities that took place at the La Tène site that survived the abandonment of the site, and attracted the foundation of a sanctuary in the Roman period. Cosmopoulos (2014) describes a similar process at the eighth century foundation of the cult of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis over Megaron B, a place of memory from the Mycenaean period. He indicates, 'The choice, then, of that particular location for the eighth-century cult was the result of a deliberate process of preserving the cultural memory of earlier religious activity' (Cosmopoulos 2014: 423).

The proposals of these authors are similar to the argument made in this paper: that memory of sites' significance survived among local communities over long periods of abandonment, and that this significance could be appropriated in later epochs at the foundation of central places. I believe that the reoccupation of the site at Ribemont, and establishment of a Gallo-Roman sanctuary over the Gallic sacred site and gathering place, should be viewed as an intentional act of recalling and preserving a sacred site from the past, and incorporating it into a new expression of religious identity.

The example of Ribemont shows that the changes that followed the Roman conquest did not entirely transform the religious identity of the communities of Gaul. A number of Gallo-Roman sanctuaries were founded over Iron Age places of memory that remained significant in the Roman period. After Ribemont's initial transformation from communal gathering place to sanctuary, it developed rapidly into an important central place where the local and regional communities of the *civitas Ambianorum* could define their identity. It was the sole gathering place for the dispersed rural population associated with the numerous villae in the surrounding landscape (Brunaux *et al.* 2009: 21–23).

Ribemont entered the second phase of its Gallo-Roman history in the second century A.D. when a monumental Gallo-Roman temple replaced the first temple. A significant settlement had developed around the sanctuary, and a theatre and baths were constructed southeast of the sanctuary, reflecting the site's role in both sacred and secular life. In accordance with the revised notions of continuity presented in this paper, I would argue that this phase is part of a long continuous history from the third century B.C. But, I do allow that the sanctuary became

a central place of a different scale than it was in the early Roman period, both literally, and in its role in defining religious identity in provincial Gaul.

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# *TRAC 2015*

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THEORETICAL ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

which took place at

The University of Leicester
27–29 March 2015

edited by

Matthew J. Mandich, Thomas J. Derrick, Sergio Gonzalez Sanchez,
Giacomo Savani, and Eleonora Zampieri

*Front cover: Antiquarian illustration of a mosaic pavement discovered in Leicester* c.*1675,
depicting Cyparissus and the stag. Used by kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries of
London.*

# Contents

# Preface
## The 25th Anniversary

TRAC began in 1991 at the University of Newcastle with over 90 delegates from the UK, USA, the Netherlands, and Germany. Over the course of two days, 18 papers were given in a single-session format, and fruitful debate and discussion ensured that what was originally conceived as a one-off event became a regular series. From the outset TRAC was unorthodox, radical, and highly critical, yet distinctly inclusive and egalitarian. Several participants of those early conferences now hold prominent academic positions at universities across the USA, UK, and Europe. When TRAC began, the conference founder Eleanor Scott noted a "fierce resistance" to theory in Roman archaeology. However, over the past 25 years TRAC has continued to fight against this, contributing to the progressive integration of theory into the wider field. During this time TRAC has grown in both size and scope, and has now become a truly international operation, with conferences held across the UK, as well as abroad in Amsterdam, Ann Arbor, Frankfurt, and Rome. The TRAC Standing Committee continues to work for the promotion of theory in Roman archaeology, ensuring continuity between annual conferences and *TRAC Proceedings* publications, but also developing new initiatives that continue to honour the aims, objectives, and spirit of TRAC's earliest years while adapting to current challenges and fighting off theoretical stagnation.

In recent years TRAC has undergone significant changes, and as the field of Roman archaeology continues to progress in new directions, it is hoped that TRAC will always be able to adjust, improve, and evolve. Major new initiatives have been promised in the past few years, and these have been steadily materialising. From expanding TRAC's role through a new publication series and additional events, including TRAC Workshops, to making the most of new technologies and social media, TRAC's future success lies within its community, which continues to strengthen. Leveraging this community to lead Roman archaeology into new theoretical directions, and to fuel TRAC's organisational engines is perhaps our biggest challenge, but one that we are eager to take on as we move forward into this exciting and progressive era. As we celebrate and reflect on the past 25 years of TRAC it is our hope that the next 25 years will continue to stimulate the growth and success of TRAC as a conference, publication outlet, and community.

❦

The twenty-fifth Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (TRAC) was held at the University of Leicester between the 27th and 29th of March, 2015. This is the third time that the School of Archaeology and Ancient History has hosted this event (1996, 2003), and given the involvement of both staff and students with TRAC over the years it proved to be an ideal venue for the anniversary celebrations. The conference drew over 180 delegates of 17 nationalities from a variety of universities, museums, and research institutions in the UK, Europe, and North America with the goal of contributing to the progressive integration of theory into the wider field of

Roman archaeology. Over the course of the conference, delegates were provided with a total of 13 themed sessions and a 'Lightning Round' (a new addition to the standard format) to attend. Session topics were wide ranging in period, geographical location, and theoretical approach, featuring papers from UK and international delegates (from postgraduates to professors). Session topics ranged from public architecture to small finds (sponsored by the Roman Finds Group), Roman magic to military forts, and environmental archaeology (sponsored by the Association for Environmental Archaeology) to historical fiction as archaeological technique.

The conference format was largely traditional, featuring opening proceedings with a keynote address presented by Dr Andrew Gardner (UCL). This keynote paper, titled 'Debating Roman Imperialism: Critique, Construct, Repeat?' is the opening paper in the volume and aptly reflects on the current state and future directions of theoretical discourse in the field of Roman archaeology, as well as TRAC's role in this process. The subsequent selection of papers was taken from a variety of sessions presented at the conference, with topics wide ranging in both geographic and thematic scope and period.

Because of this diversity, the volume is not broken into specific sections, however, papers with similar themes have been grouped accordingly, allowing the text to flow and be read as a whole.

The first group of papers focuses on concepts of landscapes, death, magic, and memory. Stuart McKie discusses the role of creativity in the writing of lead curse tablets, while Alessandro Quercia and Melania Cazzulo present new work on non-normative burial practices in northern Italy. The next three papers are primarily concerned with the heuristic benefits of conceptualizing landscapes: Chiara Botturi considers the potential for funerary monuments and markers to reconstruct lost topographical relationships; David S. Rose analyses the relationships between Iron-Age sanctuaries as *lieux de mémoire* in Roman landscapes; and Nicky Garland presents a framework for understanding the relationship between finds in the landscape, and agency and identity in Late Iron-Age to early Roman-Britain. The next two papers discuss the deliberate burial of metal objects and the potential social and ritual meanings that this process may have entailed. Alessandra Esposito discusses the so called 'priestly regalia' deposits from Roman Britain and the meaning of their spatial distribution, and Siân Thomas presents evidence for the manipulation of memory through the use and deposition of Roman brooch types in Cornwall.

The second group of papers shares a focus on the societal construction of public and private spaces and boundaries. The first two papers within this group use architectural remains and sociological approaches to examine specific religious, political, and bodily practices within distinct communities. Sadi Maréchal focuses on the multifarious public and private functions that baths and bathing could play in Late Antique North African society, while David Walsh takes a socio-archaeological approach to investigating the composition and devotion of Mithraic congregations and the evolution of Mithraism in the Tetrarchic period. The next two papers take more classical approaches to examine concepts of space, boundaries, and gender in, respectively, Late Antique and Republican Rome. Maria Kneafsey uses iconographic and literary evidence to better understand the meaning behind Late Antique representations of the *adventus*, with a specific focus on the City's boundaries; Amy Russell then considers the role of gender in structuring public spaces in Republican Rome, particularly in the Forum Romanum, with a specific emphasis on rediscovering often-ignored female experiences.

The final two papers take innovative and interdisciplinary approaches in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the Roman world. Brittany Thomas provides insights into the processes behind Roman imperial public statue commission developed from interviews with a modern sculptor involved with royal commissions, and Matthew J. Mandich discusses the theory

of urban scaling and how it may be used in a Roman context to answer questions concerning the demographic and economic growth and decline of both the City and Empire of Rome over the *longue durée*.

The success of the conference and production of the volume is due to the support and involvement of many individuals and organisations. Financial support for the conference was provided by the School of Archaeology and Ancient History Business Group (UoL), the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Law (UoL). In addition, bursaries were provided to postgraduate speakers (both international and UK based) by Barbican Research Associates and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies; helping to broaden both student and international participation. Many thanks go to the numerous student volunteers, university support staff, and departmental administrators (especially Sharon North and Selina Thraves) for ensuring the smooth running of the conference. Particular thanks also go to Prof. David Mattingly, Prof. Lin Foxhall, and Dr Neil Christie for their involvement. For the conference excursions, our thanks go to the staff at the Harborough Museum, especially Wendy Scott and Helen Sharp, for the talk and tour around the Hallaton Hoard, and to Prof. Jeremy Taylor for his tour of the Iron-Age hill fort at Burrough Hill. Special thanks are also due to the TRAC standing committee for their guidance and support, from the initial bid for the conference through to the publication of this volume.

The editorial committee would like to thank our peer reviewers from the TRAC Advisory Panel and the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester, Oxbow Books for the publication of this volume, Val Lamb for the typesetting of the volume, and the Society of Antiquaries of London for the permission to use the antiquarian illustration of the Cyparissus mosaic found in Leicester as a cover image. Finally, the editors would like to thank all of the session organisers, chairs, speakers, and delegates that attended TRAC 2015 and contributed to such a successful conference.

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