

Manching

A typical ‘Celtic’ Oppidum?

General information on Manching

Manching is a settlement in South Germany, Bavaria. The settlement existed from around 3rd Century BC till the mid 1st Century BC. It was capitol to the people known as the Vindelici, and although we have limited information on them, they appear to have been Artisans in this settlement though. (Ellis 2003) Strabo describes their region of influence and their neighbouring peoples and their areas of influence., allowing us to make the logical conclusion that Manching was indeed apart of the Vindelici. (Strab.4.3) The site of Manching is located next to two rivers, the Paar and the Danube. By having access to these rivers the Vindelici could travel up and down the continent and have interact with other peoples of the region. (Collis 1984)



A replication of how the centre of the Oppidum of Manching may have looked like.

Urbanism or Proto Urbanism?

Manching as a site was alike to many other Oppidum of it's time. It traded and produced its own products which it traded and sold to others, and it held multiple industries. The key one was iron, due to all the evidence that has been found. But the population is also a dispute among scholars. Without specifying the time within the La Tene period it is hard to actually understand the numbers of those who resided in the oppidum. At the beginning of the 3rd Century BC there may well have been less people present as the community was smaller and could be where we get numbers of 1-2,000 residents. (Wells 1984) However, as the site expanded further into the La Tene period and the site began to flourish even more. (Collis 1984 and Ellis 2003) This leads us to believe that the population would have grown and be estimated to have been from 5-10,000 residents. (Gerhard 1976) Manching was definitely a somewhat unique case across all the other sites in Europe. However there are sites such as Lyon. Overall Manching as a site is holds many common attributes but was definitely a proto-urban site by the 2nd Century but soon declined by the end of the 1st Century, due to Roman influence.

Burials

There is very little on the burials of Manching. Overall there has been a the idea that those within the settlement cremated their dead and that could explain why there is so little presence. (Wells 1984) It could have simply been they did cremate the dead but there would surely be some evidence? The Parisii cremated and buried their dead but on this site we have no evidence. There is evidence of a child, a young boy, being placed in a ditch by the Eastern Gate of the site. Most likely for decoration or another reason unknown and a further two human skulls for decoration on the entrance. (Ralston 2006) Human skeleton ‘warriors’ where found with their weapons but this could have simply been from war. (Filip 1977) Overall the treatment of the dead at Manching is all up to speculation.

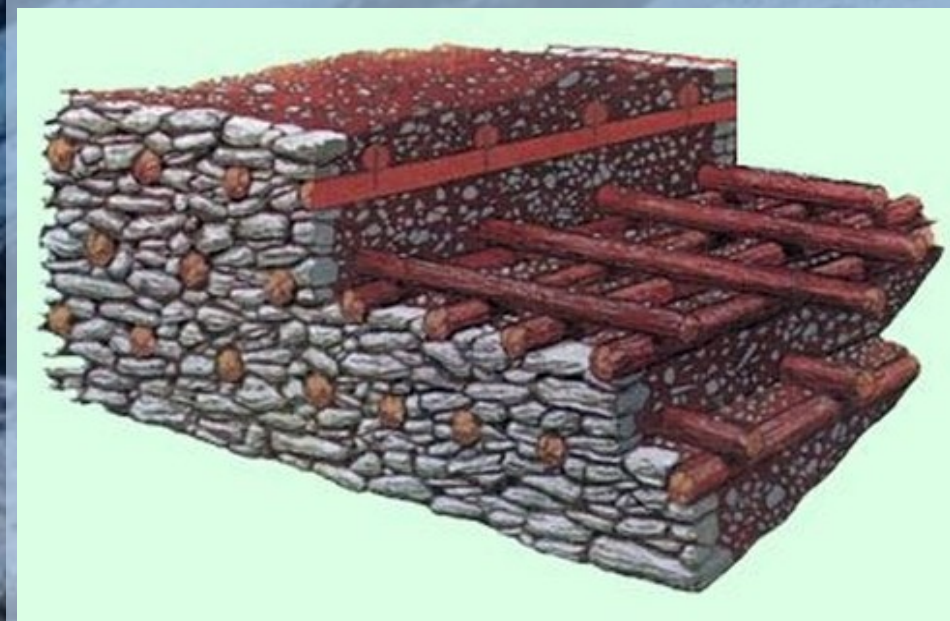
The structure of the Oppidum

The street layout of Manching is a very simple and planned grid structure. There is evidence of the site being sectioned into living areas, fields and to what we can presume are ‘factories’. (Gerhard 1976) The buildings that resided in Manching are predominately square and wooden. There is evidence showing that there was two types of buildings commonly placed, into specific sectors. The square and smaller constructions are found around what can be presumed to be the living quarters of Manching. (Büchensenschütz 1991) Then there is evidence for the industrial element of the populace where there is long rectangular buildings. (Büchensenschütz 1991)) These buildings where common with other sites, some built slightly differently but all aligning through a common design. Manching was also divided by long palisades, which would present a clear division between housing, farming and the industries within the site. Showing that the layout of the site was with clear intention. But overall held many key characteristics to other ‘Celtic’ Oppidum in Europe.



The size of the Iron Age Oppidum compared to it's modern day counterpart.

The Wall of Manching



How the inside of the *Murus gallicus* looks like when being constructed.

it ing for the amount of nails that would have been required as this feat would not have been easy. Some sites moved from their original location to higher grounds, yet Manching stays where it is, something less commonly seen from Iron Age people sites. (Büchensenschütz 1991) This would have been so they could have maintained control over the river, most likely. (Collis 1984) The Wall however is in the design of the *Murus gallicus* and is written about by Caesar in his campaigns. (Caes.Gal.7.23.) So for this style of wall this far East shows that there a relation to the rest of the ‘Celtic’ world. Its height is disputed but typically ranges from 5-7m tall. (Filip 1977 and Ellis 2003) The Eastern gate at Manching, is not anything uncommon, it would have been made with the wall around latter half of the 2nd Century but shows that there was a flow of ‘traffic’ that would have come in and out to trade or reside within as locals.



Depiction of the Eastern gate discovered at Manching, to allow entry in and out of the settlement.

Production and trade

The Vindelici residing at Manching where a population of production and trade. This can be seen by the fact that the Vindelici even had their own mint, which was found through the clay moulds in archaeological finds. (Filip 1977 and Ellis 2003) The production was carried out in the ‘industrial’ section which was filled with multiple avenues of local production, there is the comparison to Gerzat in the level of industry. (Green 1995) The production of clay was carried out within Manching, however the clay was imported from another settlement. (Collis 1984) Through archaeological finds there where 34 wine Amphorae found. (Wells 1984) The key industry was the iron and bronze industry, where there is large sums of iron products that have been found at Manching, varying from arrowheads to spears and swords. (Filip 1977 & Green 1995) Iron belt chains were also found at the site along with brooches. (Filip 1977) This was a common feature as there is evidence for these finds at Belginium and brooches exist all around the ‘Celtic’ world. There is also evidence of iron tools such as hammers found at the site. (Wells 1984) Iron is shown to exist mostly through the site especially within the ‘factories’ however, nobody talks of any mines nearby. So it may have been imported but for the sheer level that was available it must have been within the area. There is evidence that there was a large amount of metal items being recycled or kept around. (Seivers 2002) This could have been due failures in work or plunder. But there is no real reason as to why there would be such as collection. The production of Glasswork was also shown within Manching, through the remains of glass deposits. (Filip 1977) Glasswork although intricate was also common among the Iron Age and can be seen in burial sites across Europe. (Gerhard 1976) There was also evidence textiles, especially clothing. (Wells 1984) There is also evidence for agriculture and woodwork within Manching. Evidence has been found that shows that there was tools for woodwork. (Büchensenschütz 1991) Xenophon mentions somewhere that the Celts are skilled at crafts, a stereotype, but seems proven in this case. The ‘green belt’ of Manching could have also been an area for markets and trading. (Collis 1984) However, it could have also been used for agriculture, as there has been evidence for livestock and agriculture tools. (Büchensenschütz 1991) Manching as a site was fairly normal compared other Oppidum of its time. It may have been more diverse in what it offered as it held industries in all craft types which may have not been as readily available to other sites, especially when looking at the availability of minerals but none the less the site holds all the same traits as any other.



Gold coin hoard found at Manching.

Conclusion

Manching is a ‘typical’ site to begin with. As it began to grow and thrive as a oppidum there is clear evidence that it had become a proto-urban site which was a capitol for trade. This does mean that at the peak of Manching’s time it was not quite the average site, for trade capitols encompass huge amounts of wealth and influence. However, the site still obtains a large sense of typically ‘Celticity’ , through craft, trade and a permanent populace. The biggest differences being only the location and the later stage of a wall, making the site as large as it is. Aside from that Manching is a typical Oppidum and a centre of artisans, known as the Vindelici.

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