



43^e AFEAF international conference
(Association Française pour l'Étude de l'Âge du Fer)
Le Puy-en-Velay (30 may – 2 june 2019)
Fortified places in the Iron Age of Europe

Dates and location:

The conference will take place in the conference room of the County Hall at Le Puy en Velay (Haute Loire) from 30th May to 2nd June 2019.

Subject of the conference

No AFEAF conference has dealt with the subject of fortified places at the European scale since the 1982 meeting at Bavay and Mons which focused on the fortifications of the Iron Age.

This topic, which has long been central to protohistoric archaeology in Europe, has seen considerable development in its methodological underpinnings since the early days of the discipline during the nineteenth century.

Since the early excavations on the major sites of the Gallic War, undertaken with the encouragement of Napoleon III, by way of the inventory exercises across Europe that began early in the twentieth century - such as the work of the *Commission des Enceintes* of the *Société Préhistorique Française* in France or the start of the surveys of the Royal Commissions on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Britain before the First World War and the systematic collection of information on *Ringwälle* in Germany - through to the development of applied rescue archaeology which offers fresh insights on them, understanding of these sites and of the ways of approaching their study have been fundamentally transformed.

This transformation has been underpinned by the deployment of integrated multidisciplinary approaches combining different non-destructive methods (geophysics, lidar, remote sensing) with limited sampling programmes and major area excavations.

Over the last few years, it has been possible to note the development of a number of research programmes which are designed to investigate the characteristics of fortifications as well as of the wider record of settlements, either regionally or at the national scale. As a result of these projects, archaeologists now have access to new high-quality data on sites of this kind across Europe.

If, until relatively recent times, work was primarily directed at the defensive systems of such sites, nowadays extensive area excavations allow much better understanding to be gained on their chronological development, on the layouts of both their intramural and extramural sectors and on the range of functions of sites.

At a wider scale, advances in archaeology also permit a new vision of these sites by integrating them into previously-incomplete networks of settlement.

In light of the significant upgrading of the information available on fortified places over the last few years, and the changes this has brought to views as to their roles, it now seems an appropriate time to take stock. The chronological framework for the conference has deliberately been extended to allow consideration of

key issues through time from the Late Bronze Age until the local impact of Romanisation.

This extended timescale has the major advantage of allowing consideration of the occupation of sites over approximately a millennium, enabling the characterization of the trajectories of fortified sites, including the patterns of their occupation or abandonment and of their changing functions.

In geographical terms, the aim is to extend beyond the limits of major cultural provinces with their individual chronological schemes, with a view to integrating wider European data extending from the Carpathians to Britain and Ireland and from the south coast of the Baltic to the Mediterranean.

Several themes will be tackled during the conference. The intention is to include both regional syntheses as well as more specific contributions.

Theme 1: *The architecture, typology, topographical settings and functions of defensive systems*

Since the initial phase of research on fortified sites, their defences have often been their best-studied elements, whether in terms of their architecture or of their setting in the landscape.

New data on these features now allow better understanding of the techniques and practical knowledge deployed in their construction, of the modifications they underwent through time, and of the variations required to fit them to the configuration of the terrain etc.

Such factors permit the testing and/or the refinement of current typologies whether these are underpinned by technical or chronological considerations.

It is anticipated that speakers will also address new ideas on the means deployed in the construction of fortifications and of the routes through them as well as reflecting on their functions (e.g. military dimensions, symbolism, prestige...).

Theme 2: *The internal organisation, immediate environment and functions of fortified places*

Over recent decades, major area excavations have taken place both within and outside the defensive circuits.

It is frequently possible nowadays precisely to identify the spatial organisation of different fortified sites and of their immediate surroundings (including the nature of external settlement, whether separate entity or suburb, location of cemeteries...)

Under this heading, the character of identifiable activities (including military, economic, political, ritual etc) within these places can be assessed.

The outcome of all such considerations should be to lead to a wider consideration of the nature and functions of fortified sites.

Theme 3: *The spatial and chronological patterning of fortified places*

The development of both rescue archaeology and of micro-regional research projects has allowed patterns of contemporary occupation of fortified sites and of the links amongst them to be discerned.

This information, helped by the use of geographical information systems, enables a better understanding to be gained of the relations between sites and their landscapes and environments.

There will be the opportunity to consider how fortified sites fit into the territorial arrangements or economic practices of Iron Age societies, as well as to identify ritual landscapes.

The outcomes of considering both the spatial arrangements and the chronological evolution of sites should ultimately be discussed in relation to other archaeological and historical systems, such as climate, socio-economic change, the significance of historical events etc....

Offers of papers or posters should be forwarded to the secretariat of the conference by 1st October 2018. They should include the affiliation and real and electronic addresses of the author(s). The title should be accompanied by an abstract of 200-250 words in French and in either English or German suitable to be included in the initial publication of abstracts.

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Publication of the conference volume: this is scheduled for Ascension Day (13th May) 2021 in the series *Actes du colloque de 'AFEAF*. Papers must be submitted by 1st October 2019.

Field visit

The field trip will focus on visits to upland sites in eastern Velay, including the Camp d'Antoune at Salettes and Le Suc du Largier at Lafarre. Other major sites to be visited on the excursion include the protohistoric and medieval remains at Polignac as well as the upper town at Le Puy en Velay.

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