11 Iron Age societies at work

Towns, kinship and territory in historical analogy

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The last centuries BC were a period of profound changes across numerous regions of temperate Europe, witnessing the development of the fortified towns known as *oppida* and an expansion of socio-political networks and economic activities. In this paper, our aim is threefold: 1) summarize some current debates on Iron Age societal structures, 2) discuss the different levels of aggregation of Late Iron Age societies and their structuring through assemblies and central places and 3) introduce the historical example of the medieval "town and land" (*villa y tierra*) communities—administrative entities composed by different kinship groups—as a possible analogy that can help improve our understanding of the interconnections between kinship groups, towns and the rural world. Rather than providing clear answers or proofs for theoretical models, we have conceived this paper as a "food for thought" piece. The use of historical sources has been at the heart of Carole Crumley's work for many years (e.g. Crumley, 1974). While we will never be completely sure about "how Iron Age societies worked" (or did not, to paraphrase the title of Hill's 2006 paper), we should continue the endeavor of proposing new models based on an interdisciplinary approach.

Social models and analogies in Iron Age studies

Social models for Iron Age societies have been heavily debated in recent decades (cf. for example Collis, 1994, 2011; Hill, 2006, 2011; Karl, 2017). The traditional notion of a rather homogeneous "Celtic" society characterized as a "triangle" with elites at the top of the social pyramid has been questioned (Hill, 1989, 2006), with new models emphasizing the diversity of Iron Age societies and the variations that existed across time and space (Ruiz-Zapatero and Fernández-Götz, 2009; Sastre, 2002; Thurston, 2009). Particularly since the 1990s, dissatisfaction with the traditional "triangular" hierarchical model has led to the development of alternative ways of understanding Iron Age communities. An influential example is J. D. Hill's (2006, 2011) notion of "rectangular" and "trapezoidal" societies, in which there would have been little social distance between the members and

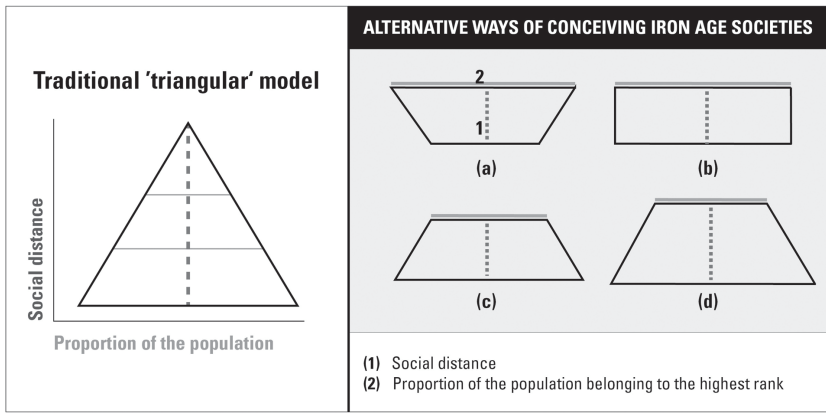

Figure 11.1 Traditional "triangular" model of social organization and alternative ways of conceiving Iron Age societies (Fernández-Götz, based on Hill, 2006).

where a significant proportion of the total population would be part of the highest scale.

In some cases, however, the recent emphasis in scholarly literature on "flat" social hierarchies in the Iron Age seems to risk throwing the baby out with the bathwater, by replacing a monolithic model of "triangular" hierarchical warrior societies with another equally simplistic and static in which there was little or no social differentiation before the Roman conquest. Rather than favoring one conceptual model over the other based on theoretical *a prioris*, what we need are more contextual studies that dialectically consider the regional and temporal variability in social formations, since different types of communities with a variety of social configurations, settlement and burial patterns, ideologies, etc. would have coexisted and interacted. There was no uniform Iron Age society, but several Iron Age societies subject to change over time. The sixth century BC "princely seats" (*Fürstensitze*), for example, had much more marked social inequalities and a higher degree of centralization than their contemporary counterparts in the Soria uplands or the British Pennines.

Moreover, it has become increasingly evident that, at a European scale, there is no linear evolution from more decentralized and egalitarian forms to others that were more centralized and hierarchical. Instead, some highly hierarchical societies that could correspond with a sort of "triangular" model such as those of the Late Hallstatt *Fürstensitze* experienced episodes of crisis or even collapse that were followed by a return to more heterarchical and decentralized patterns. While the specific triggers of those episodes are not always very clear, it seems that at least part of them were related to strategies aimed to counteract the excessive development of social inequalities

and centralization, along the lines of Pierre Clastres's (1989) famous work on "societies against the state." The results can often be conceptualized within the framework of "devolved societies" as expressed, among other authors, by Michael Mann (2012).[1]

Crumley's work on heterarchy, defined as "the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways" (Crumley, 1995a:3), has been among the most renewing additions to debates on societal formations. The recognition that Iron Age societies were not necessarily—at least not always—intrinsically hierarchical and that there are other ways of conceptualizing power relations has allowed the development of more complex and varied interpretations. It must be noted, nevertheless, that in some cases the term "heterarchical" is used incorrectly as the opposite to "hierarchical," but heterarchical social relationships also exist within highly hierarchical societies.

Two key issues that underlie—implicitly or explicitly—many discussions on Iron Age societies are the scale of analysis and the sources of analogies. For the former, a number of studies have adopted macro-models based on Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems theory (1974; see also Kümmel, 2001), including Susan Frankenstein and Michael Rowlands' (1978) famous article on "prestige good economy" in the Late Hallstatt period, Patrice Brun's (1987) monograph on the interactions between the Mediterranean and Central Europe in the Early Iron Age and Colin Haselgrove's (1987) paper on the Roman impact on Belgic Gaul. Other authors have focused instead on small-scale "household economy" models (e.g. Hill, 1995 for Iron Age Wessex). Both approaches (macro and micro) are complementary as they focus on different scales of analysis. However, models of Iron Age economies that try to bridge the gap between the macro and the micro are more rare, but necessary in order to understand the integration of different levels of socio-political organization. A multi-scalar approach, as proposed by Carole Crumley, can be a useful avenue for research. In this sense, Raimund Karl's (2015) social network model for the procurement of labor allows us to link micro- and macro-economic models. As he stated:

> The combination of a micro-economic basis of households, families and neighbourhoods and the macroeconomic superstructure of lord-retainer relationships connecting the various microeconomic units allowed to procure the labour necessary for small local as well as for large and extremely labour-intensive tasks. (2015:34)

Fundamental to his proposal is the acknowledgment of both "egalitarian" (neighborly support) and "hierarchical" networks operating simultaneously.

Karl's model is mostly derived from Irish and Welsh Early Medieval written sources. This leads us to consider the role of analogies and their

selection. All archaeological interpretation is to some extent based on analogy, either consciously and explicitly or unconsciously and implicitly (Gramsch, 2000; Ickerodt, 2010). To name two examples related to the Late Hallstatt period, Frankenstein's and Rowlands' (1978) model heavily relied on the Kongo kingdom (a historic-era entity in west-central Africa) as an analogy, whereas Chris Gosden's (1985) critique of their paper made extensive use of Irish and British historic and linguistic sources. Wolfgang Kimmig's (1969) influential interpretation of the *Fürstensitze* society was largely based on a "feudal" model, while Manfred Eggert's criticisms of his work favored the use of African examples. In fact, in Iron Age studies, a certain divide can be observed between scholars who turn to ancient and medieval written sources (from descriptions of the Homeric society to medieval texts from Ireland) as their main source of inspiration (e.g. Karl, 2006) and those that favor the use of ethnographic references from outside Europe (e.g. Eggert, 1988; more recently for example, Davies, 2018). Whereas the former often emphasize the advantage of the supposed closeness of their references (in the case of Early Medieval sources from Ireland and Britain on the argument of linguistic similarities and alleged ties between "Celtic" societies), the latter frequently condemn this perception as "ethnocentric" and advocate that non-European examples can provide a more refreshing perspective. However, both approaches should be seen as potentially complementary.

Late Iron Age networks: aggregations, assemblies and towns

How did Iron Age societies work? In line with the heterogeneity of social formations discussed above, there is no general answer to this question. There are, nonetheless, certain commonalities or at least aspects that would have been shared by most Late Iron Age communities. Among them, we can cite the existence of different layers of socio-political aggregation. Quoting Hill (2011:253): "Individuals, households and communities might have potentially been simultaneously members of different larger entities, different networks of sustained relationships (potentially of different kinds) to differing degrees." In the case of first century BC Gaul, for example, written sources—in particular Caesar—describe the existence of five main levels of social aggregation in an ascending order: 1) households; 2) extended family groups or clans; 3) sub-ethnic communities such as the four *pagi* of the Helvetii; 4) ethnic communities (*civitates*) such as the Aedui, Arverni, or Treveri which have been traditionally defined as tribal polities; and 5) finally macro-categories such as the Belgae or the Aquitanians (see references and discussion in Fernández-Götz, 2014a; Fichtl, 2012; Roymans, 1990; Verger, 2009). All these different levels existed at the same time, but their importance in everyday life varied considerably according to the circumstances. For example, while households and extended families might have played the most important role in daily life, at particular times of the year or in specific circumstances, such as a war scenario, other higher levels of social aggregations could have become activated and more prominent.

The existence of these different levels of social aggregation was obviously not exclusive to ancient Gaul and structures of a similar nature are also found in other regions, for example in Late Iron Age northern Iberia with nested entities such as *Astures* and *Cantabri* (comparable to Gallic *civitates* discussed above), *Zoelae* and *Orgenomesci* (similar to the pre-Roman *pagi*) and *Desonci* and *Pembeli* (clans or extended families; cf. Torres-Martínez, 2011:372). In addition to the socio-political layers mentioned above, we also need to take into account the existence of transversal elements such as different political factions (sometimes within the same family groups), other types of social identity such as gender and age groups, complex clientship networks at different scales, rules of honor governing social relations or religious mediators like the druids.

Irrespective of their meaning in the classical world, in the context of pre-Roman Gaul the best definition of *pagi* and *civitates* is that suggested by Gerritsen and Roymans (2006), for whom they were "politicized ethnic identities," i.e. ethnic groupings functioning as political communities. They were primarily *Personenverbände*, i.e. groups of people with

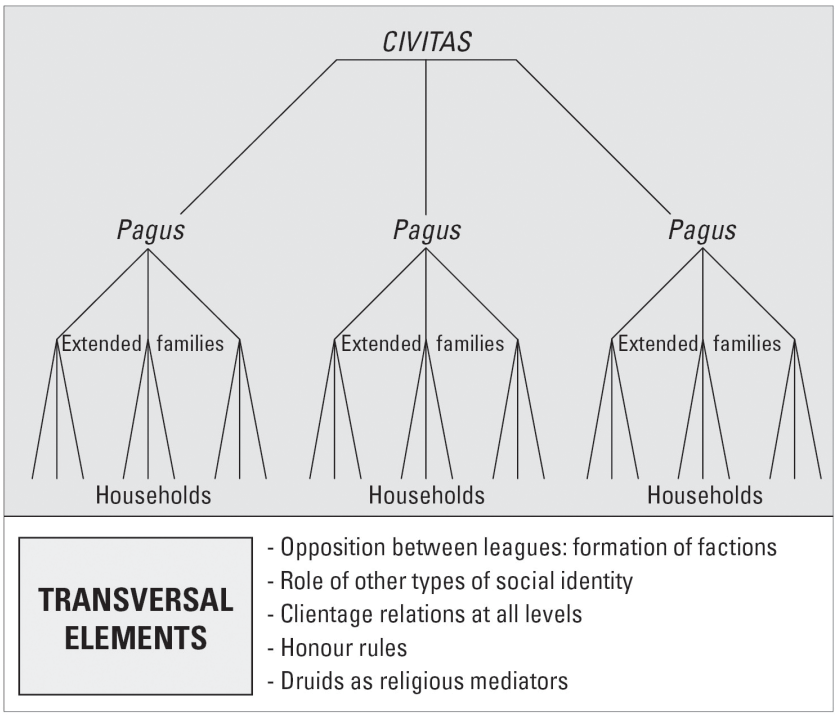

Figure 11.2 Top: simplified schema depicting the socio-political structure of Late Iron Age Gaul. Bottom: transversal elements fundamental for an understanding of Gallic societies (Fernández-Götz, based on Roymans, 1990 and Verger, 2009).

a common identity based on fictive kinship ties and the belief of descent from a common ancestor, the "founding hero" or "father of the people" (*Teutates*, from **teutā-* meaning tribe, people, see Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio, 2011). Thus, two of the three names of Helvetian *pagi* known to us consist of a personal name and a *genus* suffix: *Verbigenus* and *Toygeni*. These were probably the names of the founding heroes who gave their name to each of the respective groups, similar to the 12 tribes of Israel who bore the names of the sons of Jacob (Fernández-Götz, 2013a). And there are indications that a similar ideological system also operated, although on a smaller scale, for the extended family groups, as we have a number of inscriptions from Roman times providing names of such entities, for example *Gesationes* (derived from *Gesatus*), *Arvagastae* (from *Arvagast*) and *Albiahenae* (from *Albius*) (Bauchhenss, 2007:272; Roymans, 1990:18). These names could refer to the mythical or real founders of the respective extended family groups, which would imply that each group worshipped its own "founding hero."

The Gallic *pagi* and *civitates* had their own ethnonyms, went to war or sued for peace, exchanged hostages, had political and military leaders, as well as political institutions such as the public assembly, the senate and sometimes also monarchy. A language of kinship—real or imaginary—seems to have been frequently used to express social relations; thus, the Ambarri were considered to be of the same blood as the Aedui (*consanguinei*), the Roman Senate gave the Aedui the title of *fratres consanguineosque* and the Remi considered the Suessiones *fratres consanguineosque suos* (Caesar, *BG* I, 11, 4; I, 33, 2; II, 3, 5). As stated by Roymans (1990:27): "Kinship on the tribal and supra-tribal levels was, in fact, an idiom used to express political and/or ceremonial relations. Kinship acted as a metaphor; its actual content lay elsewhere."

The organization of communal issues—such as regulating access to, and exploitation of, resources, as well as other matters concerning aspects such as collective defense or the administration of justice—would be dealt with primarily by holding assemblies and councils at various levels (*BG* VI, 20, 3). This would involve from regional meetings to others that could encompass an entire *civitas*—as mentioned by Caesar for example for the Treveri and the Aedui (*BG* V, 56; VII, 33)—or even a confederation of them such as the case with the *concilium commune Belgarum* or general assembly of all the Belgic peoples (cf. Fernández-Götz, 2014a:41–79). Public assemblies are known from scattered references from Gaul to Iberia, acting as important mechanisms of collective governance similar to the medieval Scandinavian *Things* (Sanmark et al., 2015–2016; in this volume, Thurston) or the Irish *Óenaig* (Gleeson, 2015). In an eminently rural world frequently characterized by transport difficulties, people would take advantage of these multitudinous encounters to deal with religious, social, economic and political matters at the same time (Alberro, 2006; Ligt and Neeve, 1988). These assemblies would represent an opportunity to meet

each other, exchange goods and information, establish closer social ties, arrange marriages and attend religious ceremonies. Thus they helped to reaffirm the social order, power relations and the sense of belonging to a wider community. These would be the prime social arenas for the negotiation of power, the moment for taking important collective decisions such as establishing new laws, electing leaders or declaring a war (Fernández-Götz, 2013b). As stated by González Ruibal (2012:250): "Institutions such as senates, assemblies, councils, feasts, ritual specialists and magistrates not only helped to reproduce a ranked system, but also limited the agency of the aristocratic classes, redistributed social power and buttressed collective identity."

For the Late Iron Age, the archaeological discovery of public spaces (very often associated with sanctuaries) and certain mentions in the written sources both in Gaul and Iberia allow to propose that at least some of the general assemblies and council meetings took place within the large fortified settlements know as *oppida*. These sites emerged in wide parts of temperate Europe in the centuries immediately prior to the Roman conquest, from the late third century BC in central-northern Iberia (Ruiz-Zapatero, 2011) and predominantly from the late second century BC in Gaul and Central Europe (Fichtl, 2005). The *oppida* were not a homogeneous settlement category as they present differences in size (from around ten to several hundred or even more than 1,000 hectares), chronology (from one or two generations to long settlement histories) and functions (from veritable production hubs to sites with little evidence of interior occupation). Nevertheless, the majority of them have traits that allow us to classify them as "towns" or "cities," for example hosting a significant permanent population of several hundred or even several thousand inhabitants, constituting centers of production and trade and representing the scene for political assemblies and religious ceremonies. Large public spaces such as those excavated at Titelberg (Metzler et al., 2016) and Corent (Poux and Demierre, 2016) testify to the latter aspect.

Moreover, *oppida* were generally built in places that already had a long life story, with some of them serving as ritual gathering places for dispersed communities before their development into major settlements (Fernández-Götz, 2014b; Metzler et al., 2006). Among the main features of the *oppida* are the existence of different neighborhoods and of large unbuilt spaces within the perimeter of the walls. Even those sites with a significant internal occupation and population (e.g. Manching, Bibracte, Corent, Titelberg and Ulaca) present large open areas within the fortified space and some authors have classified the *oppida* within the so-called "low-density urbanism" model (Moore, 2017). This characteristic, which is not overly dissimilar to the picture offered by many medieval and later cities, highlights the role of "urban empty spaces" (Smith, 2008) as arenas of social negotiation and services. Given their recurring role as a principal

Figure 11.3 Corent: excavation of the main public structures in the center of the *oppidum*, with public square, sanctuary, assembly building and market place (after Poux, 2014).

element of the *oppida*, these large open areas appear to have played a fundamental role in the negotiation of control of people and resources. Michael Garfield Smith's (1972) term "rurban" encapsulates the idea of the domination of many Iron Age agglomerations by unbuilt space, often more similar to farm landscapes than to our traditional notions of urban

quarters. In fact, in many agglomerations the basic settlement units were enclosed farmsteads, which indicates a transfer of rural settlement patterns into a more confined space. In other words, this represented a kind of "translocated landscape" with extended households clustered together and occasionally also performing artisanal and commercial functions. This phenomenon suggests the nucleation of part of the rural population and a concentration of activities that were previously dispersed more widely in the landscape.

The interrelations between the urban and rural realms must have been intense and diversified, since in particular the former cannot be understood without the latter. In any case, despite the development of a number of towns, the Late Iron Age remained a fundamentally rural world, where the vast majority of the population lived scattered across the countryside (Buchsenschutz, 2006; Cowley et al., forthcoming). The *oppida* would have acted as nodal points for exchange and interaction, with the "empty spaces" contained within their walls serving a variety of economic and social purposes, from areas for agriculture and cattle breeding to places for political assembly and refuge for the rural population in case of danger. The importance of the *oppida* as Late Iron Age towns, therefore, goes far beyond the number of people that lived

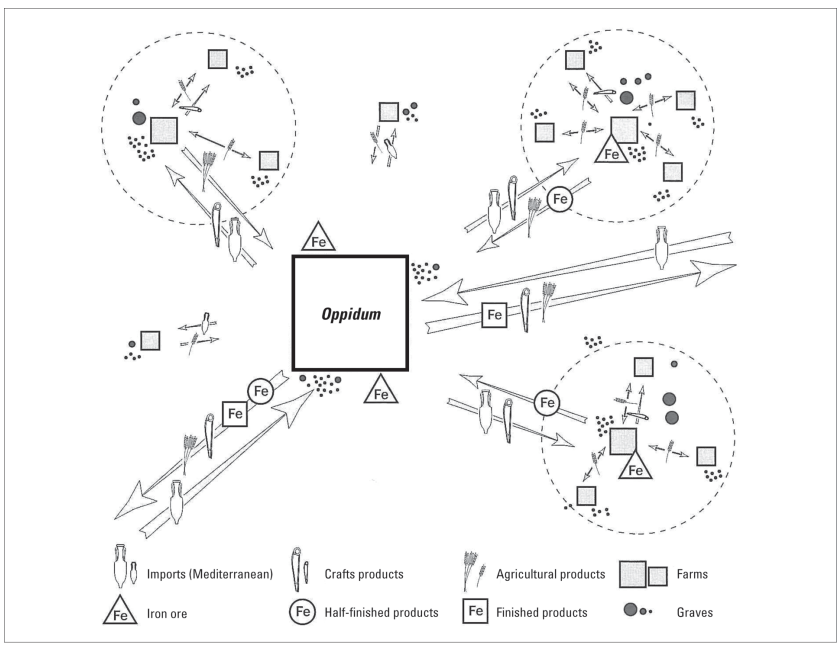

Figure 11.4 Theoretical diagram of relations between the *oppidum* and its surrounding rural territory, based on the data of the Titelberg area (after Fichtl, 2005, based on Metzler, 1995).

permanently within their walled perimeters. The *oppida* acted as central places for the wider rural hinterland and served as elements of identification and focal points for the creation of collective identities through the activities and performances that were carried out at them. But at the same time, there is ample evidence suggesting that members of the social elite often continued to live, at least during large parts of the year, in the countryside rather than within the fortified *oppida* (Adam and Fichtl, 2014; Alberro, 2006; Metzler, 1995:535). As was also the case during later historical periods, much of the economic, political and social power remained firmly anchored in the rural world (Crumley, 1995b:28).

As stated above, the *oppida* were places of congregation for the inhabitants of wider territories, with spaces for people to gather and perform a variety of social activities. The mechanisms regulating the flow of relationships between the inhabitants of rural and urban settlements might have been based on the existence of transversal social entities supported by real or fictive relationships, in which kinship, family and lineage could regulate interactions, social and administrative organization and territorial planning. It is very possible, for example, that some extended families had residences both within and outside the *oppida*, with their basis of power and subsistence remaining in the countryside while at the same time participating—regularly or periodically—at the social and productive activities carried out in the nascent urban centers. For the Early Iron Age, it has been proposed that the different neighborhoods of the large exterior settlement at the Heuneburg could have served as residential quarters of different kinship groups. The latter would have come together during the process of synoecism that led to the creation of the agglomeration, but still tried to establish a distinction among each other by means of an elaborate system of banks and ditches (Fernández-Götz and Krausse, 2013; Kurz, 2010).

The best evidence for tracing kinship relationships and lineages in the Iron Age comes from the cemeteries. Although the archaeological record is often open to multiple interpretations, in some cases it has been convincingly argued that certain groupings of graves within cemeteries are representing different lineages. During the time of the *oppida*, graves are generally scarce in temperate Europe, but in those regions for which we have an extensive funerary record some examples show the existence of ancestor worship over generations or even centuries (Fernández-Götz, 2014a:183–201; Metzler, 2006). An example is the necropolis of Wederath in the Hunsrück (Western Germany), where the spatial distribution of the La Tène funerary enclosures makes it possible to distinguish five large groupings of burials in the Iron Age cemetery, each of them with its own history and evolution, which could mainly be reflecting different family groups (Cordie, 2006; Verger, 2009:63). Some of them appear to be organized around older barrows, which would perhaps have been considered the funerary monuments of the ancestors who founded the lineages.

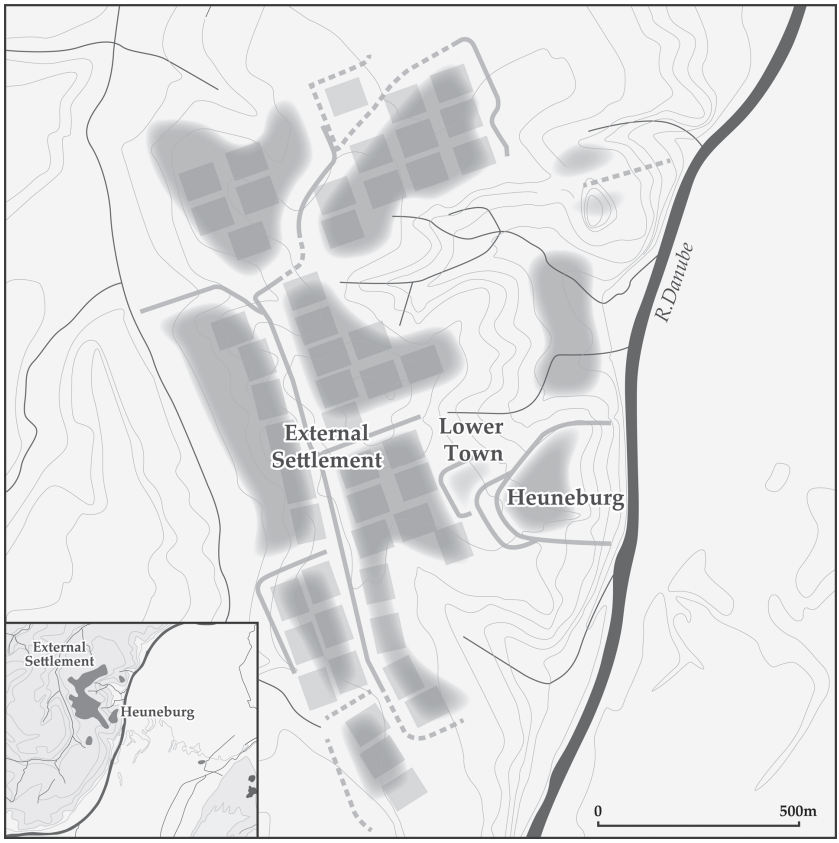

Figure 11.5 Plan of the Heuneburg agglomeration in the early sixth century BC, with division of the exterior settlement in different neighborhoods (after Fernández-Götz and Ralston, 2017).

The "town and land" community of medieval Soria: a useful analogy for Late Iron Age societies?

Having reached this point, we think that a look at the "town and land" (*villa y tierra*) community of medieval Soria can provide some interesting elements of reflection about how Late Iron Age societies *could have* worked—at least partially. While we are not proposing at any point to make a direct comparison, nor to extrapolate the medieval model in a literal way to the Iron Age, we think that it can serve as an example that expands our corpus of known analogies beyond the traditionally employed medieval insular information and therefore has some inspirational value. While the Irish sources can still be a useful analogy for certain aspects, although never a direct "window" into the Iron Age (Jackson, 1964), the

lack in them of urban centers represents a limitation for comparisons with the *oppida* societies.

The "town and land" (*villa y tierra*) communities were administrative entities that arose between the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD in central Spain as a type of socio-political and spatial organization of the lands conquered by Castile as part of the so-called *Reconquista* (Spanish and Portuguese for "reconquest") process of Muslim territories. More than 60 examples of "town and land" communities have been documented with varying sizes of territories and polynuclear structures in which people and spaces were grouped into *collaciones* (singular: *collación*). *Collaciones* were extended family structures with certain rural and urban territories attributed to them; they made up the land (*tierra*) and they all had their own meeting space in the town (*villa*). Each "town and land" community had a different number of *collaciones* depending on how many family groups they comprised, the size of the land and their subsistence mobility needs. To give an example, the "town and land" community of Burgos comprised 14 *collaciones*, Sepúlveda 15, Ávila 19, Segovia 34 and Soria 35.

In terms of scale, the "town and land" communities are probably comparable to the *pagi* of ancient Gaul, with the *collaciones* being similar to Iron Age extended family groups or clans. This was a system of kinship relationships based on cross-sectional organizational structures. The mechanisms regulating the interactions between the *collaciones* of a "town and land" community can best be explained following a heterarchical network model, although they were simultaneously part of a wider hierarchical system established by the Castilian crown.

In this paper we will focus on the Soria "town and land" community, which has an extensive bibliography (e.g. Asenjo, 1999, 2012; Martínez Díez, 1983:147–197) and has been previously used as an analogy for explaining the social model of Bronze Age communities (Asenjo and Galán, 2001). Soria was the third largest "town and land" community, with an area of around 3,000 square kilometers, more than 300 villages and 35 *collaciones* under its jurisdiction (Martínez Díez, 2006:9). King Alfonso I, the Battler, conceded rights to the town of Soria in 1120 in which the municipal model was established. The main aim of this was to repopulate the land and reorganize the existing population. Because of that, this form of organization was the result of the agreement between the kinship groups that populated the territory before and the representatives of the Castilian monarchy. The *collaciones* structured the political, social and religious life of both rural and urban nuclei. Each *collación* comprised a kinship group united by real or imaginary blood ties or specific pacts or agreements (Asenjo, 1999:132–135, 2012) and possessed a series of villages, generally between six and eight, spread across the land. The distribution of the population in the territory of each of the *collaciones* combined different land uses, soil qualities and resources, in such a way as to guarantee the subsistence of the family groups.

Each *collación* had its own "neighborhood" in the town, whose material reflection was a small collection of houses, a parish church for their patron saint and a cemetery (Asenjo, 1999:46–49; Asenjo and Galán, 2001:322). The town of Soria was the meeting place for the members of the family group and the place where the different *collaciones* got together. It was the space for socialization, where weddings, funerals and religious festivals were held and the council took its decisions. During the St John's Day festival, at the summer solstice, the inhabitants of the land of Soria went to the town, where they set up their residences for a short period (Asenjo, 1999:49). They erected tents or built houses of perishable materials, bringing their flocks and herds and other goods with them. This annual meeting was where family and social ties were strengthened, making it a propitious time to trade, discuss business, make pacts and arrange marriages. The material appearance of the town of Soria was that of a walled enclosure with a perimeter of some 4,000 meters that surrounded the 35 neighborhoods (one for each *collación*), each with its parish church and cemetery. The enclosure of Soria comprised an area of more than 100 hectares, with enough open space to accommodate all the inhabitants of the land, goods and animals (Asenjo, 2012). The town was, therefore, the symbolic center, the nucleus of the social and religious authority, where the remains of the ancestors lay and power was in the hands of mayors and judges elected from the ranks of the *collaciones* and the rural knights.

Each *collación* resolved its problems within its own structure, as the basis of the political, social and religious life of the extended family group. However, matters that concerned the "town and land" community as a whole—such as defense—came under the jurisdiction of the higher body, the council. The council was a political and administrative institution made up of the highest-status members of the *collaciones*. It was, therefore, an assembly of the kinship hierarchies (Asenjo, 1999:45). The council had nineteen members, eighteen mayors and a judge chosen from among the members of the 35 *collaciones*. The functions of these mayors consisted of catching wrongdoers and imparting justice, while the judge enjoyed executive powers that gave him the authority to call a council meeting, direct the militias and collect taxes. There was also a wide variety of official posts, with the occupants ensuring the efficient functioning of the community; they included an executioner, public scribes, investigators and messengers (Asenjo, 2012).

The people's mobility between the town and the different locations of the land was a key subsistence strategy. According to Asenjo (1999:49),

> the inhabitants of the Land of Soria were closely linked to the town, as they maintained strong family and social links within the framework of the *collación*, while they lived in their villages, where they bred their livestock and planted their crops.

Over time, there was a progressive loss of this mobility on the part of the inhabitants of the town and the land, due to the permanent establishment of the population in the villages of the land. Consequently, this caused a rupture in the links between the town and the land, resulting in jurisdictional disputes between the parish clerics in the town of Soria and those of the tithe-paying villages, as the inhabitants of the villages refused to pay the tithes of the town churches. This conflict led Alfonso X, the Wise, to order a population census in 1270 in order to control and facilitate the distribution of tithes and the collection of other taxes (Asenjo, 1999:46–50).

The 1270 census was a fiscal document designed to record the number of taxpayers. Therefore, the key element it embodied was the degree of population mobility. Based on the latter, it was possible to see a person's degree of integration in the *collación* and the extent of the ties with the town and the village. Three types of tithe were recorded: first, the residents who had been settled in the same place for several generations; second, the inhabitants who did not live in the same location for the whole year; and finally, the so-called *atemplantes* or *acomendados* were individuals who had considerable freedom of movement, even between the *collaciones*. This last figure broke with the rigid kinship structure and fostered the uprooting of families to the benefit of powerful lords (Asenjo, 1999:50–53, 74). Moreover, women were present in the census in all three categories, but were generally linked to the references regarding sedentariness, near to the land and immovable goods; guarantees of kinship and its interests (Asenjo, 1999:139–140). Finally, the main power groups profiled in this social framework were the lords and the rural knights (Asenjo, 1999, 2012). The lords were older males, the main representatives of the family groups that comprised what were perceived as natural hierarchies. Their social position was clear in the 1256 jurisdiction, given the large number of times they were mentioned, as well as the complexity of their titles. The lords boasted a series of rights inherent to their status as proprietors and titles, such as the "*sennores del ganado*" (lords of the livestock), the "*sennor de las gallinas*" (lord of the hens) or "*de las aveias*" (of the bees). The power of the lords was not only over the resources, but also over the people, as is reflected in the judicial status they established with the "*iugueros*" (ploughmen), who maintained a relationship of profound dependency with the lords through agreements to carry out certain tasks.

Conclusion

What can be inferred from the "town and land" model for our understanding of Late Iron Age societies? There are obviously some important differences that need to be taken into account, including the fact that the medieval example formed part of a large state structure (the Castilian kingdom) and related to a powerful church organization. There is also no direct continuity between the medieval kinship groups and their Late Iron Age counterparts

in the region of Soria, as they were separated by more than 1,000 years and numerous historical events—including the Roman rule, the Muslim period and the Christian *Reconquista*. Nevertheless, using the "town and land" model just as an analogy and not a direct comparison can lead to some useful reflections that help us to conceptualize the interrelationships between urban and rural areas and the simultaneous structuring of social groups around principles of kinship and territoriality.

The organization of the territory between different *collaciones*, each of them with different properties in both the rural and urban spheres, would resemble a complex mosaic in which different kinship groups organized their subsistence and communal activities in a non-linear, heterarchical way. Despite being part of a hierarchical state system, they were nonetheless granted a notable degree of autonomy, at least in the initial stages. These forms of both hierarchical and non-hierarchical networks of personal and inter-personal relationships were embedded in a complex system of urban-rural interactions. It is tempting to see some possible resemblances with Late Iron Age social organization in a context of emerging urbanization.

The seasonal meeting of the members of the *collaciones* in the town for celebrations such as the St John's Day festival, with its simultaneously religious, political and economic components, can be seen as a parallel to the periodically held collective gatherings at the *oppida*. People that spent most of the year in their countryside residences went to the fortified centers for some days or weeks in order to take part in wider communal events, as a way of reaffirming their identity as a group but also as members of a wider socio-political entity. Going a step further, at an ideological level, we can see certain resemblances between the veneration of the patron saints of the individual *collaciones* and the pre-Christian worship of the "founding heroes" of extended kinship groups. From a functional and even material perspective, there are similarities between the structure of the *oppida* of temperate Europe and the town of Soria. Both were the focal points of the territories they governed and both were political, administrative and religious centers. They were the communities' key meeting and trading places, had areas where the inhabitants of the rural environment could gather and were the seats of the main government organs such as councils and assemblies. In the medieval example, we saw how each extended family group (*collación*) was represented in the town by a neighborhood. The urban structure of many *oppida*—both in Gaul, Central Europe and Iberia—was made up of agglomerations of houses forming neighborhoods. These agglomerations may have corresponded to some type of relationship between their inhabitants, beyond that of a simple neighborhood, perhaps sometimes indicating kinship ties between their members in a way similar to the medieval *collaciones*. The appropriation of space by the builders and the dependent relationships that would have been established between the different domestic units could have been linked to some kind of real or imagined kinship ties.

To sum up, while we are not proposing that the "town and land" model can serve as a one to one parallel for Late Iron Age *oppida* societies, we think it can constitute a useful analogy that helps inspire new ways of reflecting on the evidence. While there are surely many other appropriate historical and ethnographical analogies, we hope to have at least provided some "food for thought" for the difficult but fascinating task of understanding Iron Age societies.

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Note

1 Further general processes were "*devolutions*"—movement back toward rank and egalitarian societies—and a *cyclical* process of movement around these structures, failing to reach permanent stratification and state structures. In fact, human beings devoted a considerable part of their cultural and organizational capacities to ensure that further evolution did *not* occur (Mann, 2012 :39).

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