The Gauls: overview of their architecture

List of known words :

Ambios: enclosure

Attegia: Hut

Bona: Town, foundation

Buta: dwelling

Cagios: Hedge

Celicnon: Banquet hall

Cladia: Trench

Cleta: lattice

Dunon: Fortified enclosure

Duoricos: gantry

Duron: Market

Rate: Wall

Treba: dwelling, settlement

Uercaria: cultivated land

Nemeton: sanctuary

Cantalon: monument

The houses are built of wood and woven wicker branches covered with mud (mainly clay and straw), with a roof covered with branches and straw boots for the simple ones or with a roof covered with tiles for the more elaborate. Most of the houses didn't have any form of windows. Hypotheticaly, it has a opening in the upper part of the front wall or they simply used a fire to light up the home. The fire smoke is easily evacuate through the roof and contribute to remove the bugs.

The tiles are attested since the end of Hallstatt but it seems they became common during the 2nd century BC, probably because of the new urbanisation impulse with the spread of the oppida everywhere in Europe. In the archeological findings, it is possible to see an increase of the weight of the houses during the oppidum period, suggesting higher buildings. Here a model of a house during the last century BC in the region of Franches-Comté.
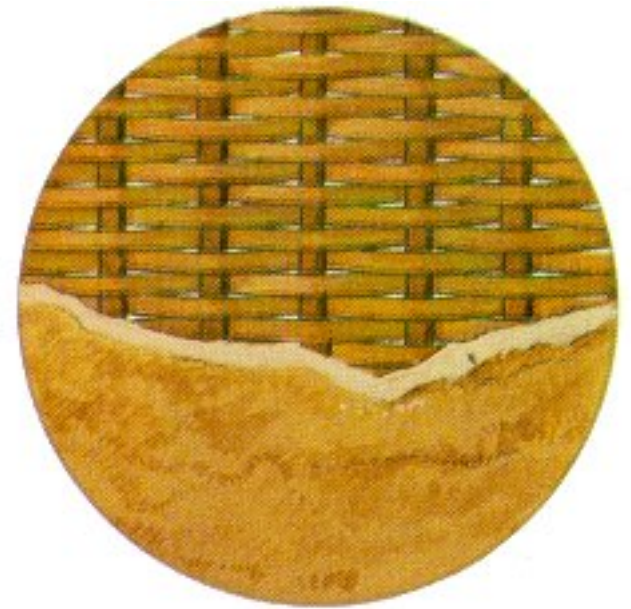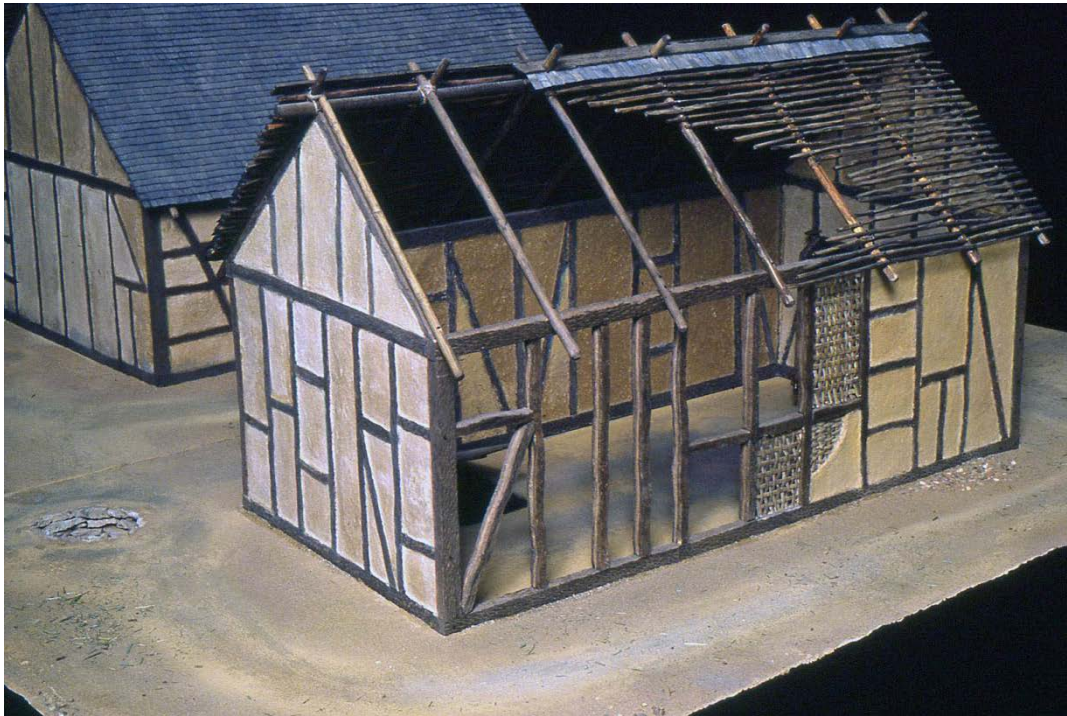
Gros plan d'un mur de claies et de torchis

There is also another way to build the foundation of the buildings during La Tène. They used logs fixated by a notch at each ends. Probably with a bit of clay to isolate the interstice between the logs. Hypotheticaly it was a method preferentially used for larger/longer buildings or/and to increase the durability of some specifics buildings.

Re-enactment of a fortified hilltop settlement between the 3rd and 1st century BC, in the national parc of Hunsrück-Hochwald, close to the Hillfort of Otzenhausen built by the Treveri. There are houses, barns and small granaries on stilts.

In the number 1, a couple of buildings illustrated from the findings in the region of Weimar. There are a long shed for animals, two houses, a farm with two stakes at the entrance and various shelters. In number 2, a pavilion and the fortified bridge inspired from a finding in Biskupin.

In the number 3, an Irish hillfort, something that shouldn't be used to describe any gallic populations in the mainland.

In the number 4, an illustration of a shelter or a cellar with an underground foundation from Bibracte, last century BC.

In the number 5, a building with a single-pitched roof affixed against the wall inside the oppidum of Taradeau.
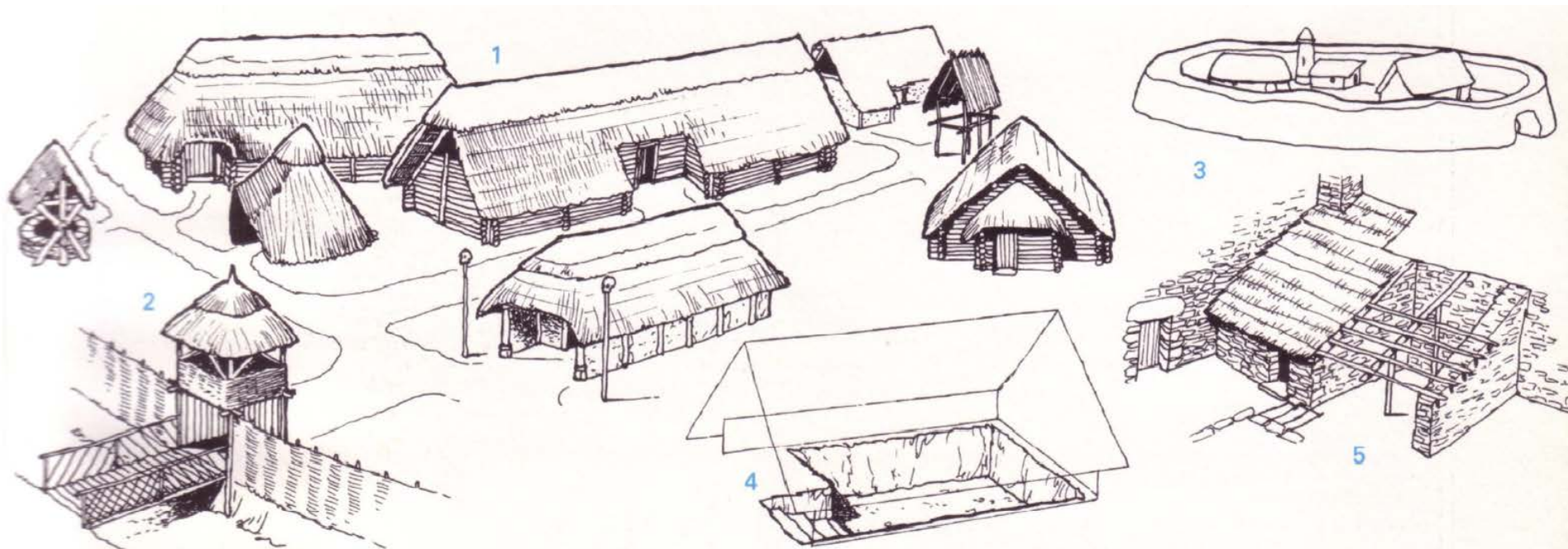
This contryside habitat is organized around a quadrangular ditch enclosure about 60 m wide and comprising a dozen buildings of different sizes and functions.

Hypothetical reconstruction of a barn in Couesmes, 1st century BC.
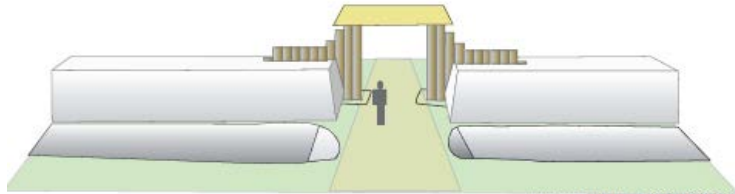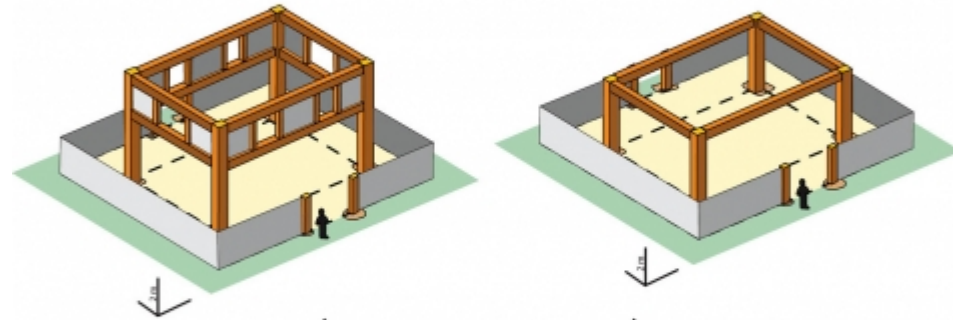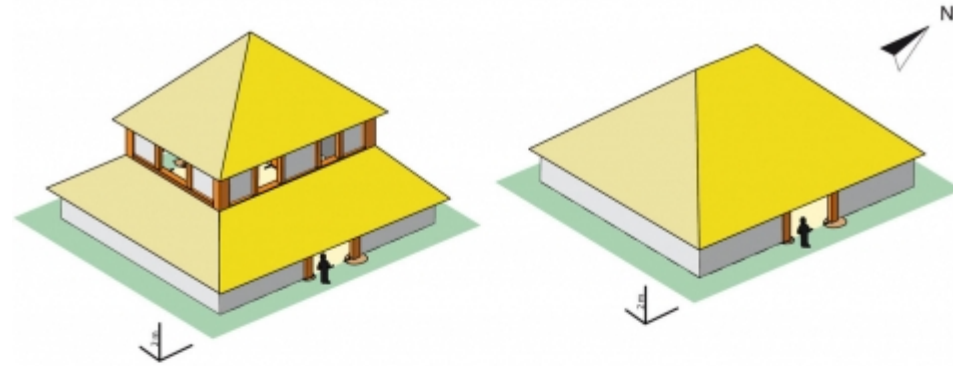

La Tesserie / J.-M. Laruaz / SADIL / CG37 2010
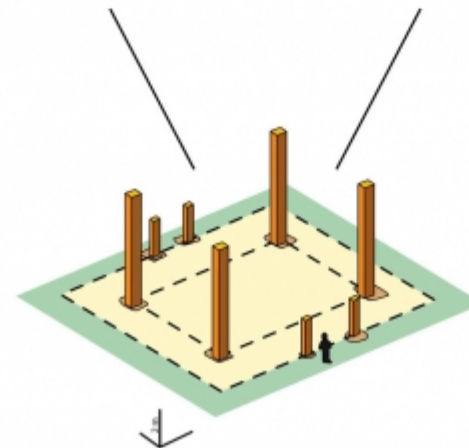
Fig. 123 : Proposition de restitution du porche d'entrée.

La Tesserie / Gilfer Valor / SADIL / CG37 2010

Proposition 1

Proposition 2

La Tesserie / J.-M. Laruaz / SADIL / CG37 2010

Presentation of Gallic furniture and objects. 1) grinding wheel. 2) oven. 3) basin of terracotta. 4) large ceramic vase. 5) beverage jug. 6) iron pot for cooking. 7) decorated bucket in wood and bronze. 8) Iron andirons. 9) braided wicker hive. 10) containers for dairies production.

Presentation of Gallic tools.

Outils agricoles

Les outils utilisés par les Celtes ainsi que quelques réalisations d'objets.

Carpentry and wood working.

Heuneburg reconstruction model, a fortified site of the end of Hallstatt. Around 500 BC, reconstruction after the first destruction. One of the oldest *murus gallicus* known.

Artistic representation of the second destruction of Heuneburg around 480 BC during the La Tène transition.
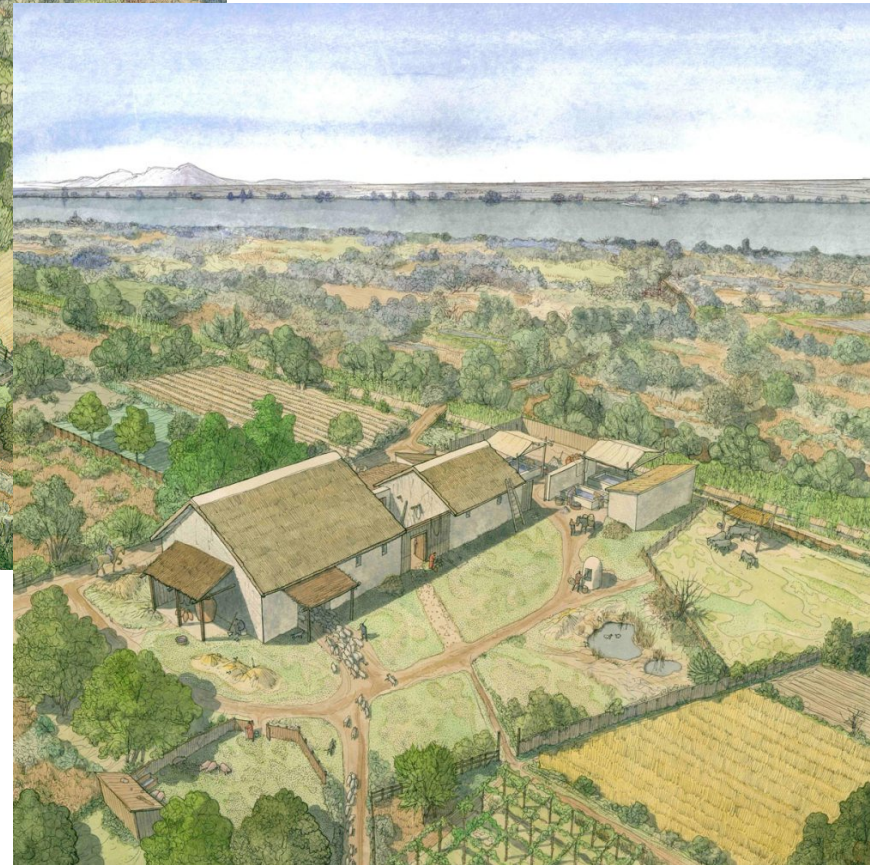
Artistic representation of the Parisii village during the first quarter of the second century BC.

Artistic representation of countryside habitats in Camargue, 1st century AD.

Representation of a shop during the 1st century BC in Auvergne.

© Gergovie P 31 - Luccisano, Rodriguez et Ansar - Gallia Vetvs 2016

Fortress of Paule, in Armorica, 1st century BC. Very long occupation of the site with a evolution from a fortified farm to a fortified settlement of a similar size than an oppidum.

Evolution of the settlement of Paule. 450 BC.

Evolution of the settlement of Paule. 300 BC.

Evolution of the settlement of Paule. 170 BC.

Evolution of the settlement of Paule. 50 BC.

Fortified farm of Batilly-en-Gâtinais, 2nd century BC. An aristocratic rural settlement consisting of two nested pens. The main enclosure covers an area of 1.8 ha.

Fortified farm of Batilly-en-Gâtinais, 2nd century BC. Entrance.

Fortified farm of Batilly-en-Gâtinais, 2nd century BC. This building was destroyed by fire, allowing good conservation of the clayed wall. The negatives of some poles were thus completely filled with mud. This mud revealed traces of white, blue and red paint and its shape confirmed that the posts were squared.

The Port (Geneva), developments around 80 BC. In the background, the port is reconstituted with wooden pontoons and reinforcements of banks (stones and palisades). The boats represented are drawn on the basis of wrecks of "Celtic" tradition found in Lake Neuchâtel; they have a flat bottom and a mast; a long oar serves as a rudder. In the foreground, a wooden statue represents a heroic warrior or a deity. This statue has been dated by the dendro-chronology after 100 BC. The figure is dressed in a short tunic with a hood or perhaps a helmet; he wears a gold torque around his neck; on his right flank, a sword in his scabbard. The divinity - the deified hero - is the subject of devotions; on the barrel are hung the remains (spears, shields, sacrificed heads) of defeated enemy warriors. Testifying to these practices, about twenty skeletons of adults and children, whose skulls bore blows, were discovered during the excavations of the old port. At the foot of the statue, a Gaulish chief makes an offering of weapons that are ritually broken before being placed at the foot of the deity. These rites are well attested in Celtic Europe, especially on the site of La Tène, at the eastern end of Lake Neuchâtel.
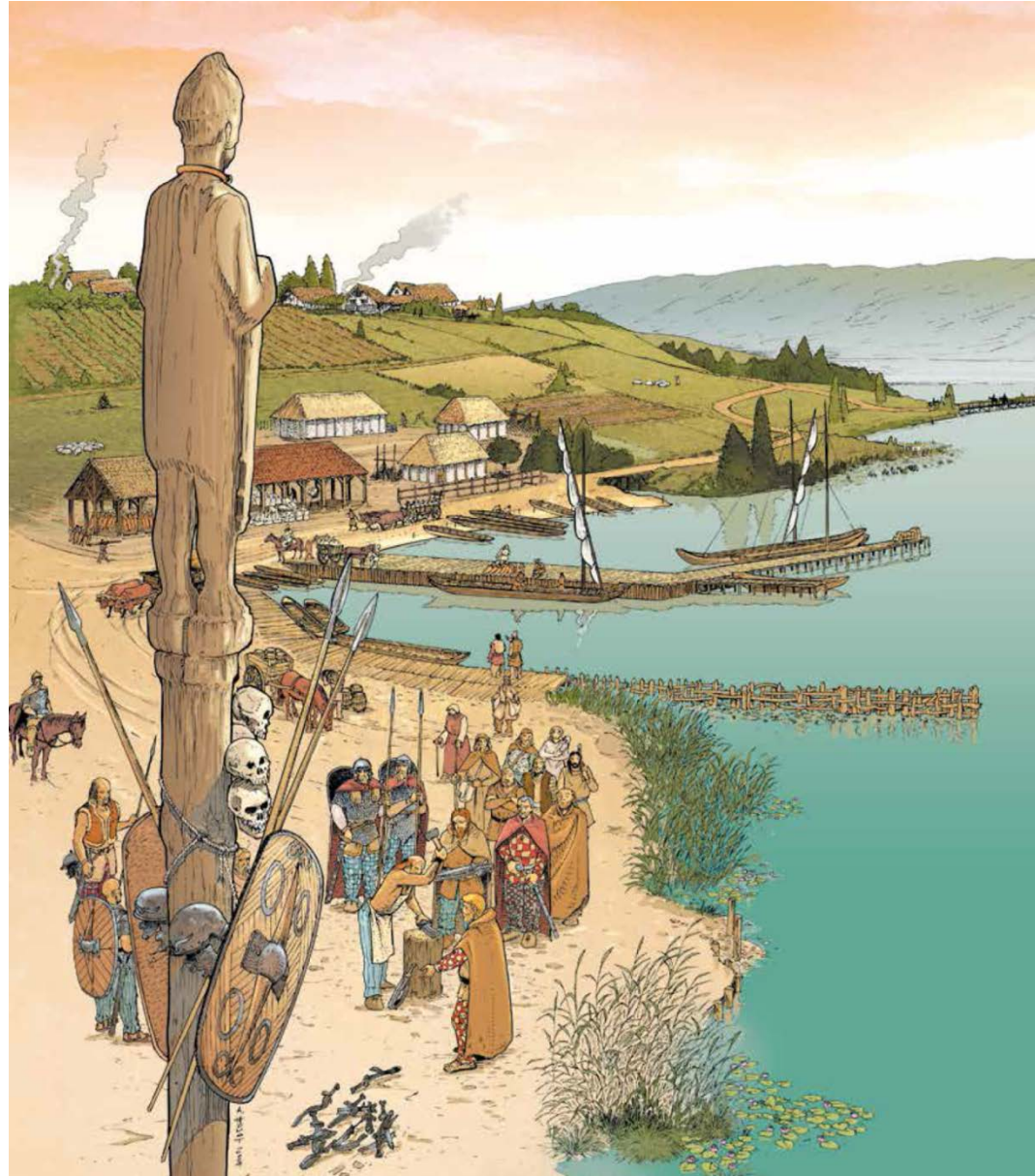
Inside an allobroge city, around 100 BC. The view plunges into a lively neighborhood, near a monumental gateway. The rampart is a representative of the type murus gallicus, with a horizontal wood frame and a dry stone facing; the door is surmounted by an imposing construction. The scene takes place at the turn of the 2nd to 1st century BC. The presence of some Roman soldiers is explained by the fact that the territory of the Allobroges was, at that time, already integrated into the Roman province of Narbonnaise. The soldiers contemplate the work of the potters: assembly of the containers in the lathe, sale of crockery; the first coinages are already in existence, so the purchase of the containers is made in hard cash. Some amphoras indicate the presence of wine imported from southern Italy (Campania). The stalls, well stocked, line up along a portico "Roman style"; although the use of tiles is attested in the Province from the 2nd century BC, in Lyon in particular, the walls of the houses are in wattle and shingle roofing. This evocation could also apply to any Gallic urban agglomeration in the beginning of a process of romanization.
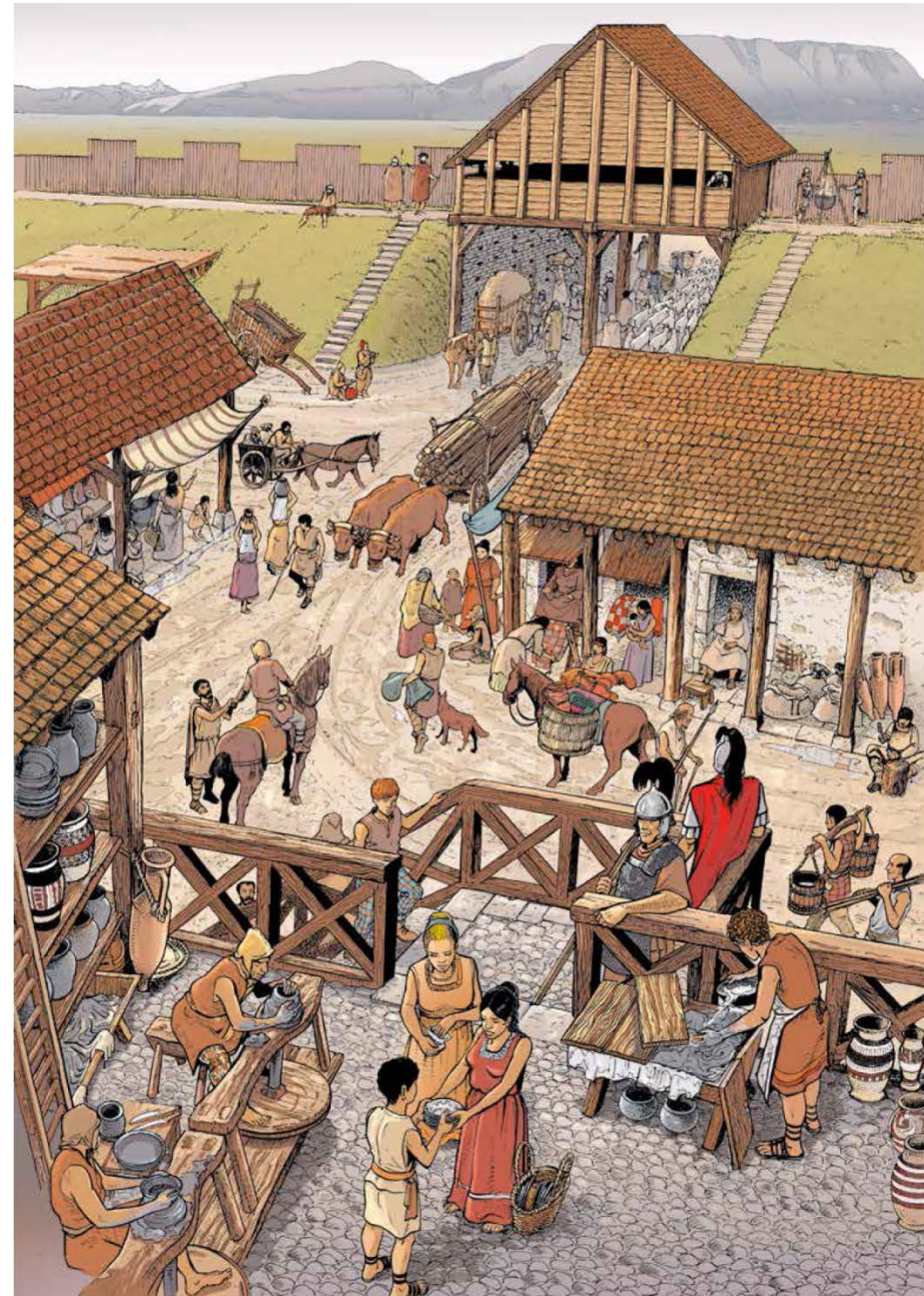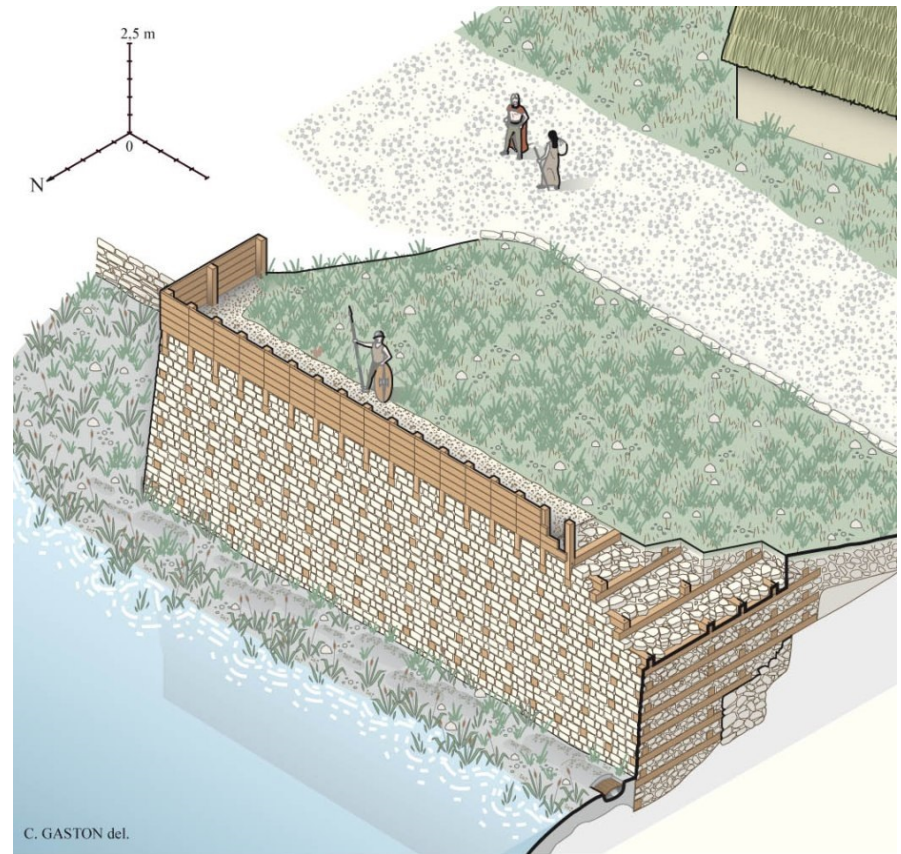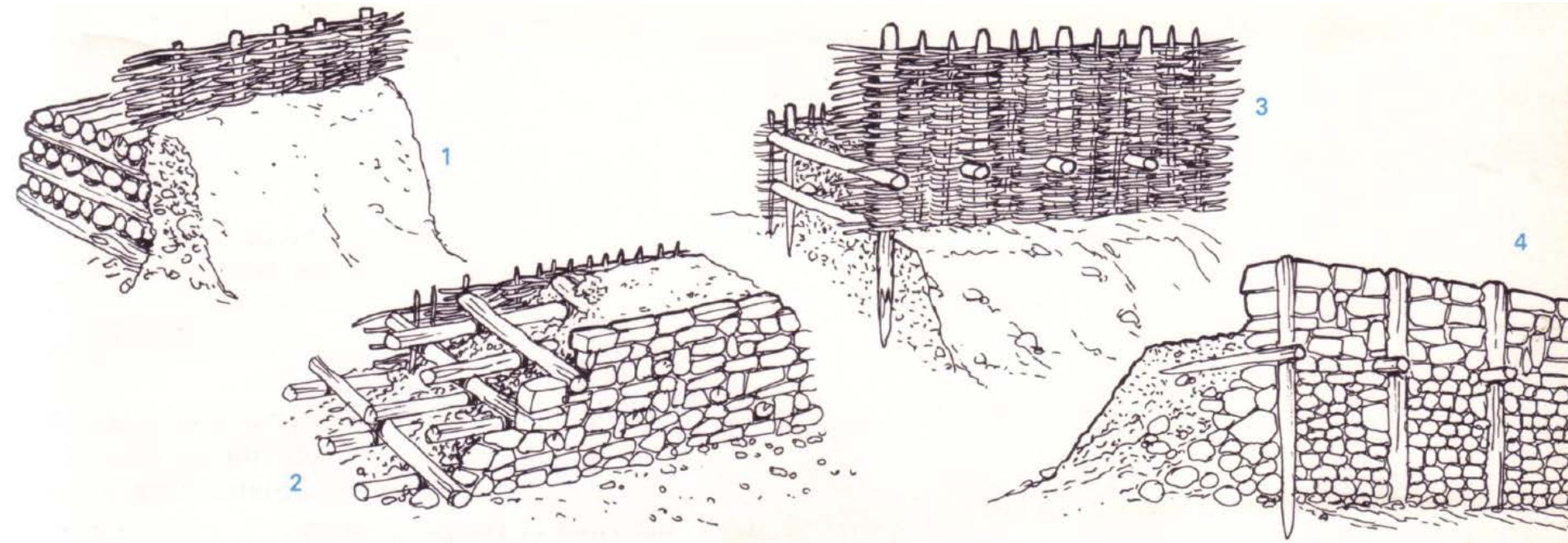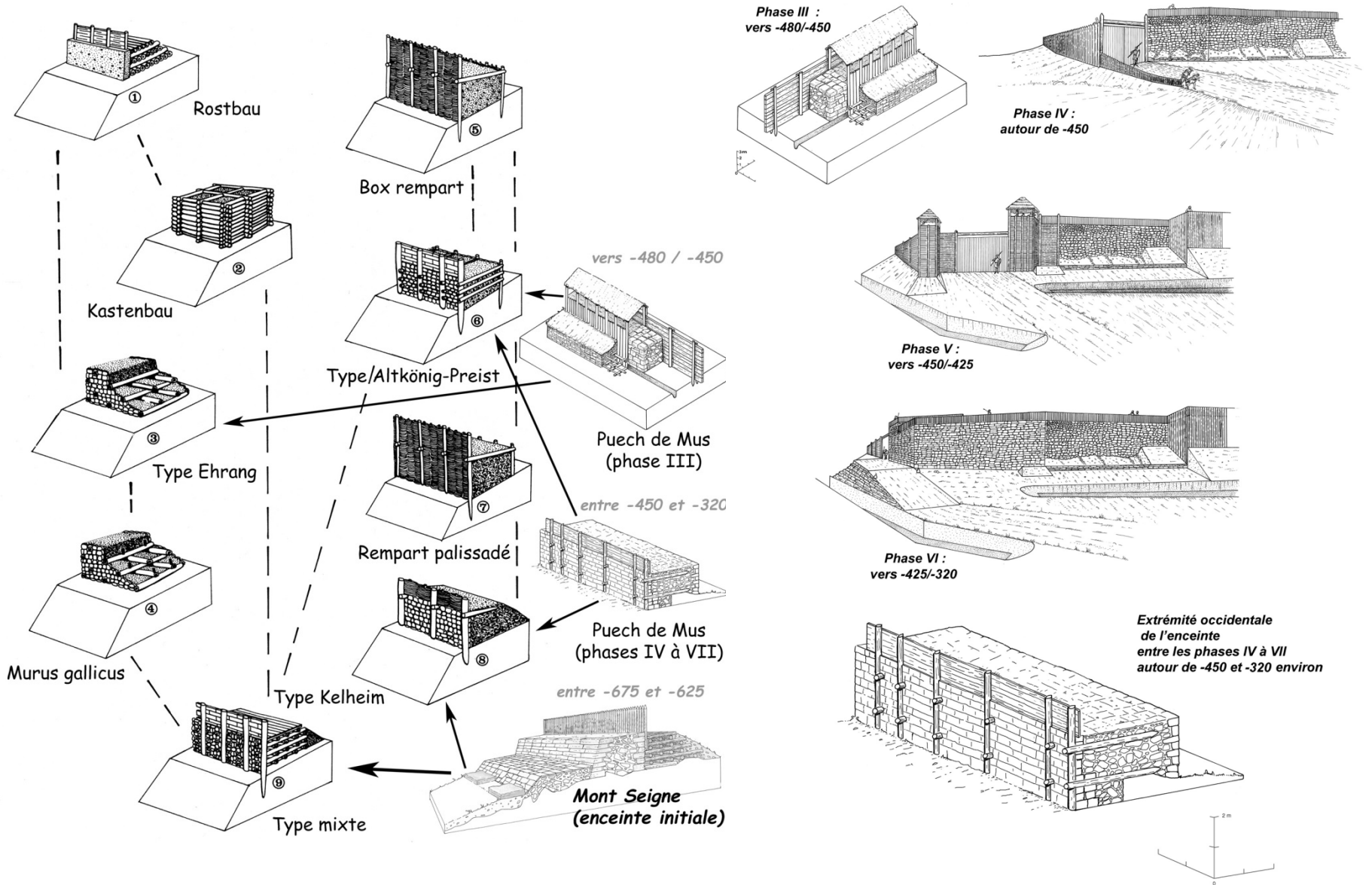
Illustration of the *murus gallicus* described by Caesar.

2,5 m

N

C. GASTON del.

Smaller fortifications:

1) interlocking beams to consolidate a bank.
2) Fortified wall filled of earth and stones in a similar way of a traditional murus gallicus.
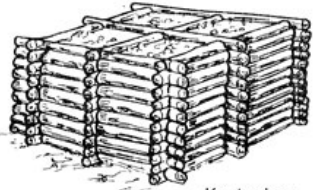3) Wooden weirs and parapet.
4) Stone wall with wooden poles.

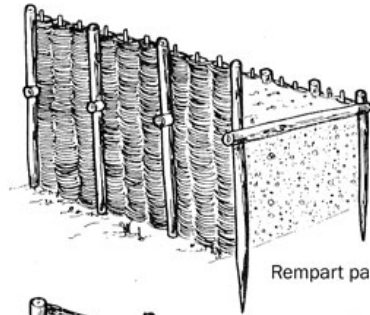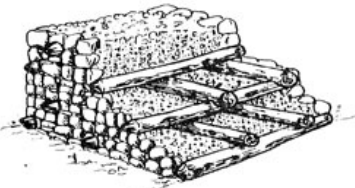Fortifications, alternative classification based on the study of the early La Tène site of Puech de Mus

Rostbau ①

Kastenbau ②

Type Ehrang ③

Murus gallicus ④

Box rempart ⑤

Type/Altkönig-Preist ⑥

Rempart palissadé ⑦

Type Kelheim ⑧

Type mixte ⑨

vers −480 / −450

Puech de Mus (phase III)

entre −450 et −320

Puech de Mus (phases IV à VII)

entre −675 et −625

Mont Seigne (enceinte initiale)

Phase III : vers −480/−450

Phase IV : autour de −450

Phase V : vers −450/−425

Phase VI : vers −425/−320

Extrémité occidentale de l'enceinte entre les phases IV à VII autour de −450 et −320 environ
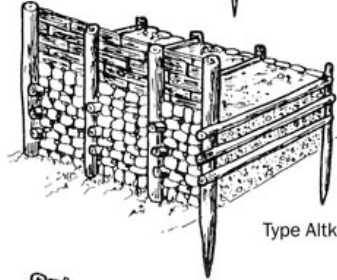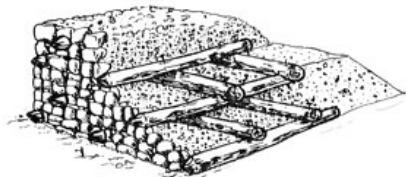
Summary of the main types found during La Tène

Kastenbau

Rempart palissadé
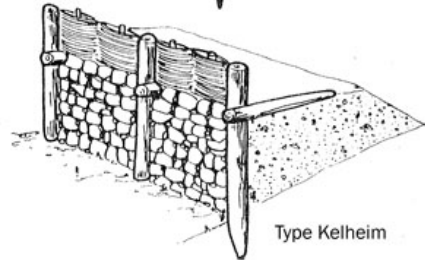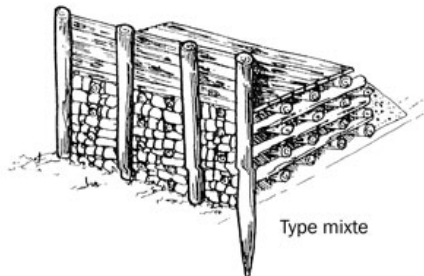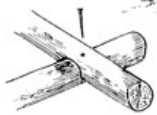
Type Ehrang

Type Altkönig-Preist

Murus gallicus

Type Kelheim

Type mixte

Artistic interpretation of an entrance, a gate between two murus gallicus.

Sanctuary of Gournay sur Aronde. 3rd century BC. This sanctuary includes first a sacred enclosure, that is a 250m² area that men carefully carved out to make it the god's property. It is a rectangle with rounded off corners. The entrance on the eastern side opened on the rising sun at the summer solstice. The enclosure was realized by a wall made of wattle and daub as well as by two ditches one outside the wall and the other inside the enclosure. These installations had a symbolic value, marking the separation between the divine and secular worlds. The access to the sanctuary had been conceived as an entrance lock whereby to pass from the secular world to the realm of the gods. A porch was erected as early as the 3rd century. It must have been a sizeable structure built on eight posts and breaching the two ditches. This porch may have included a second storey and housed weapons, chariot parts, human and bovine crania such as were found in the ditches. At the centre of the enclosure was a hollow altar, that is a pit dug 2 meters deep straight into the earth. Oval in shape, this 3x4m pit was the prime means of communication with the divinity and it may be surmised that it was used by the gods of the underworld. Very soon the altar got covered along with the ambulatory zone by a two sided roof. The site was used for a long time, filled with new victims and new weapons.
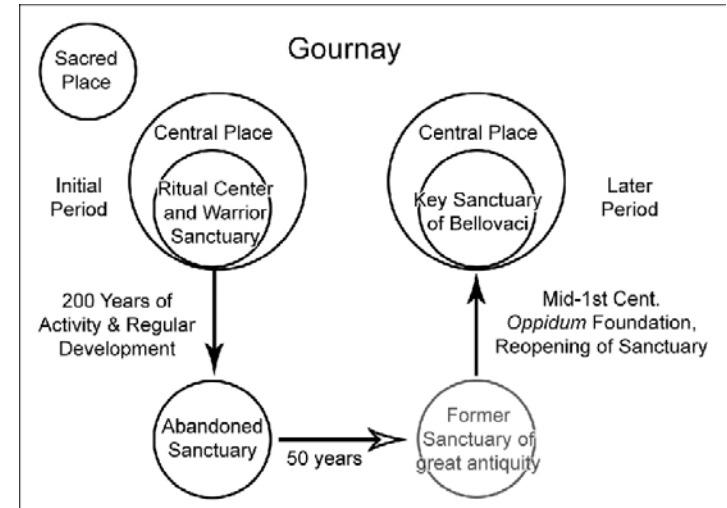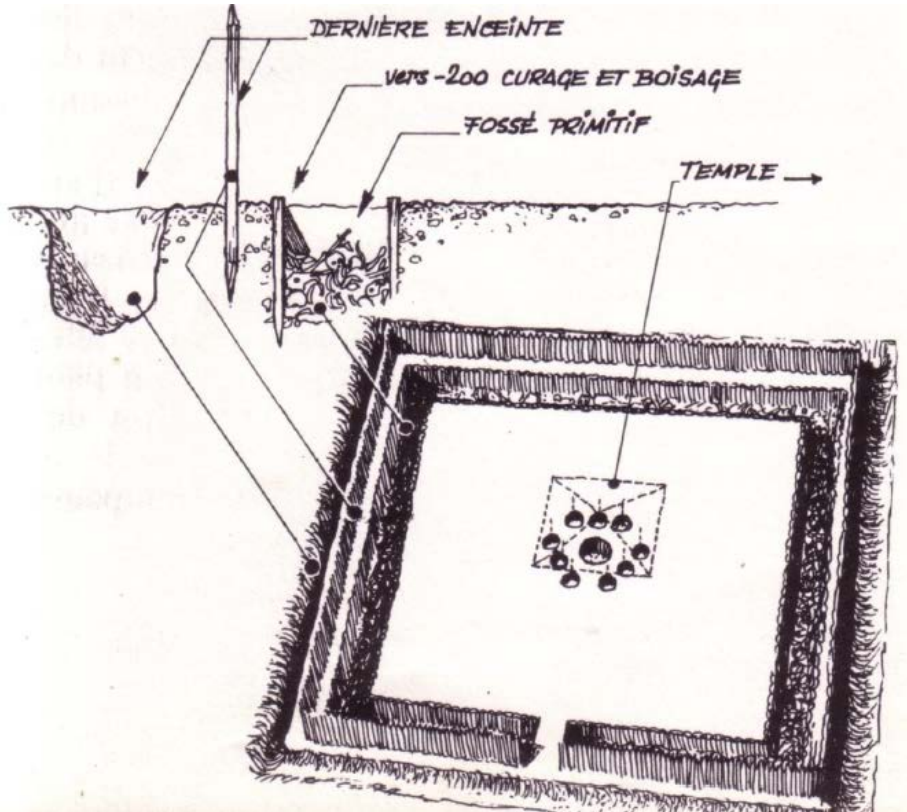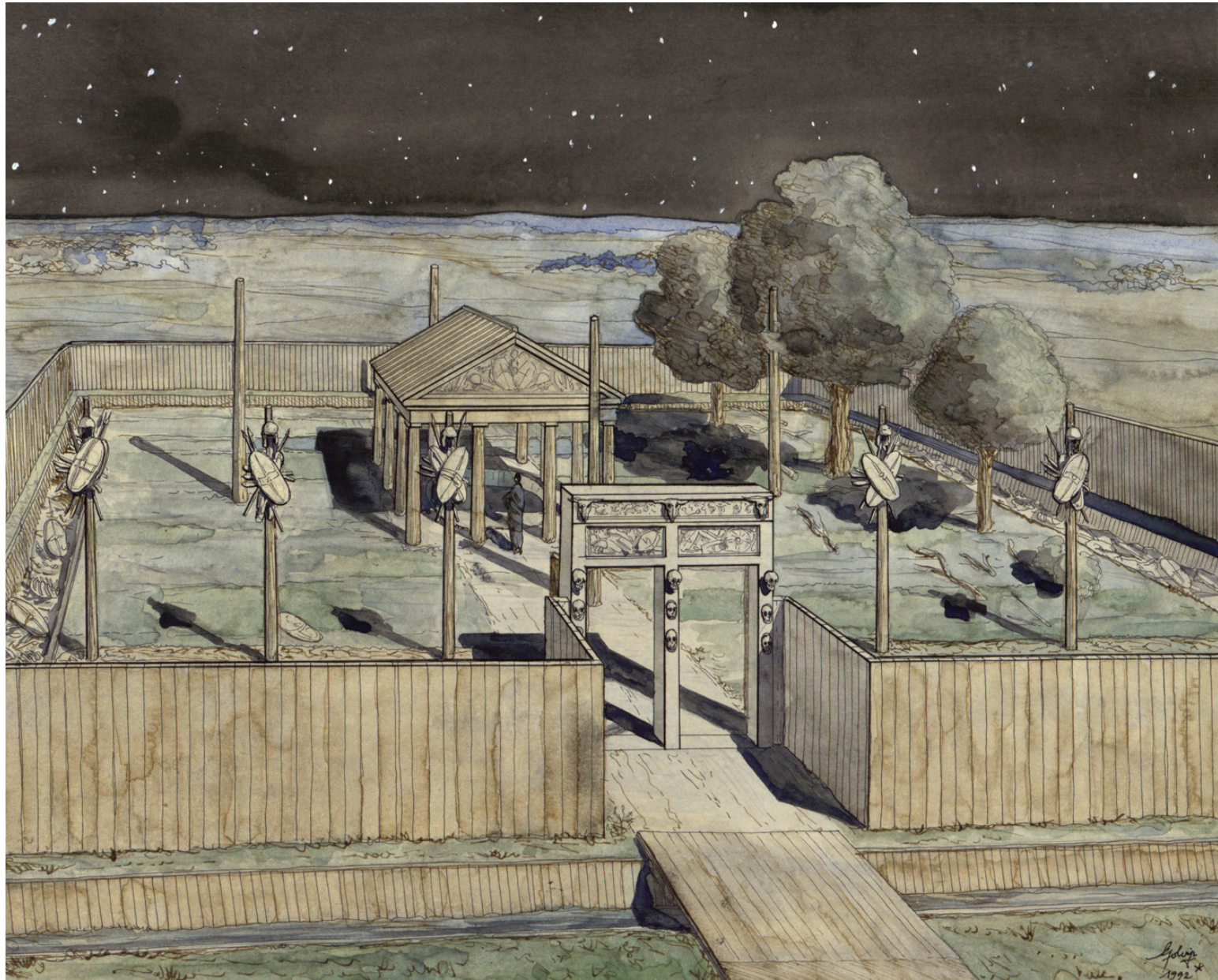
Artistic representation of the sanctuary of Gournay sur Aronde

Restitution du site de Gournay-sur-Aronde - Oise

Artistic representation of the sanctuary of Gournay sur Aronde

Sanctuary of Ribemont sur Acre, between 250 and 220 BC. The quadrangular enclosure of 40 m2 was originally erected on a wooded mound which later became a sacred wood where the deity resided and human beings were not allowed. Around 20,000 metal pieces and human skeletons in pieces with no skulls, belonging to about 150 individuals, were excavated in this enclosure. According to Brunaux, these remains are undoubtedly those of enemy warriors killed in action. While the skulls were kept by the victors as proof of their bravery - which is why they are missing from the 'mass grave' - the rest of the corpses together with their weapons and jewels were brought to the sanctuary as an offering to the war deity. Three 'charnel houses', i.e. cavities hollowed in the ground filled to the top with human and horse bones, were unearthed in the north-east, north-west and south-west corners of the enclosure. These concave altars are understood as offering wells dedicated to the war deity dwelling in the enclosed sacred wood.
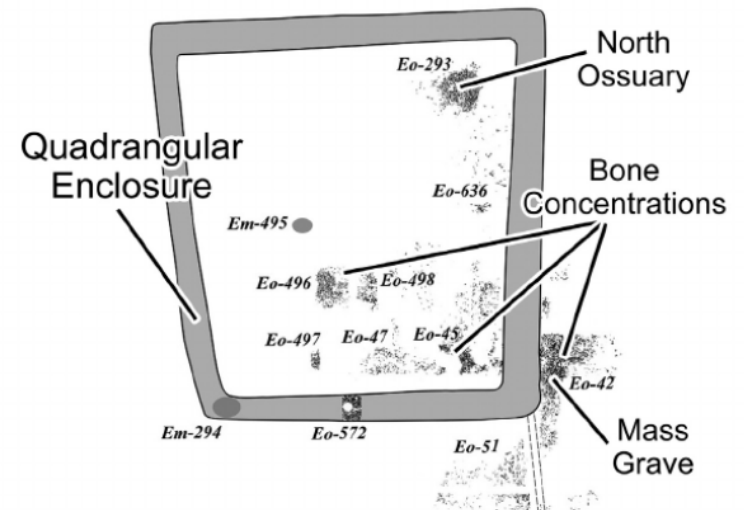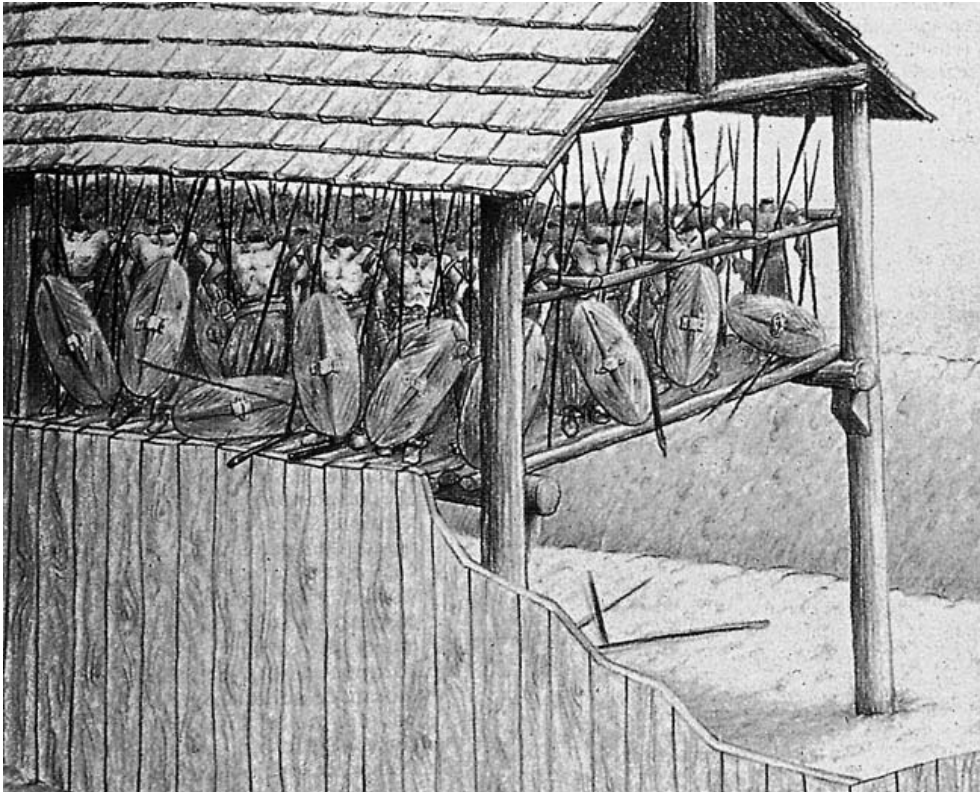
Small sanctuary or sacred place in Puech du Caylar, 3rd century BC. Artistic representation.
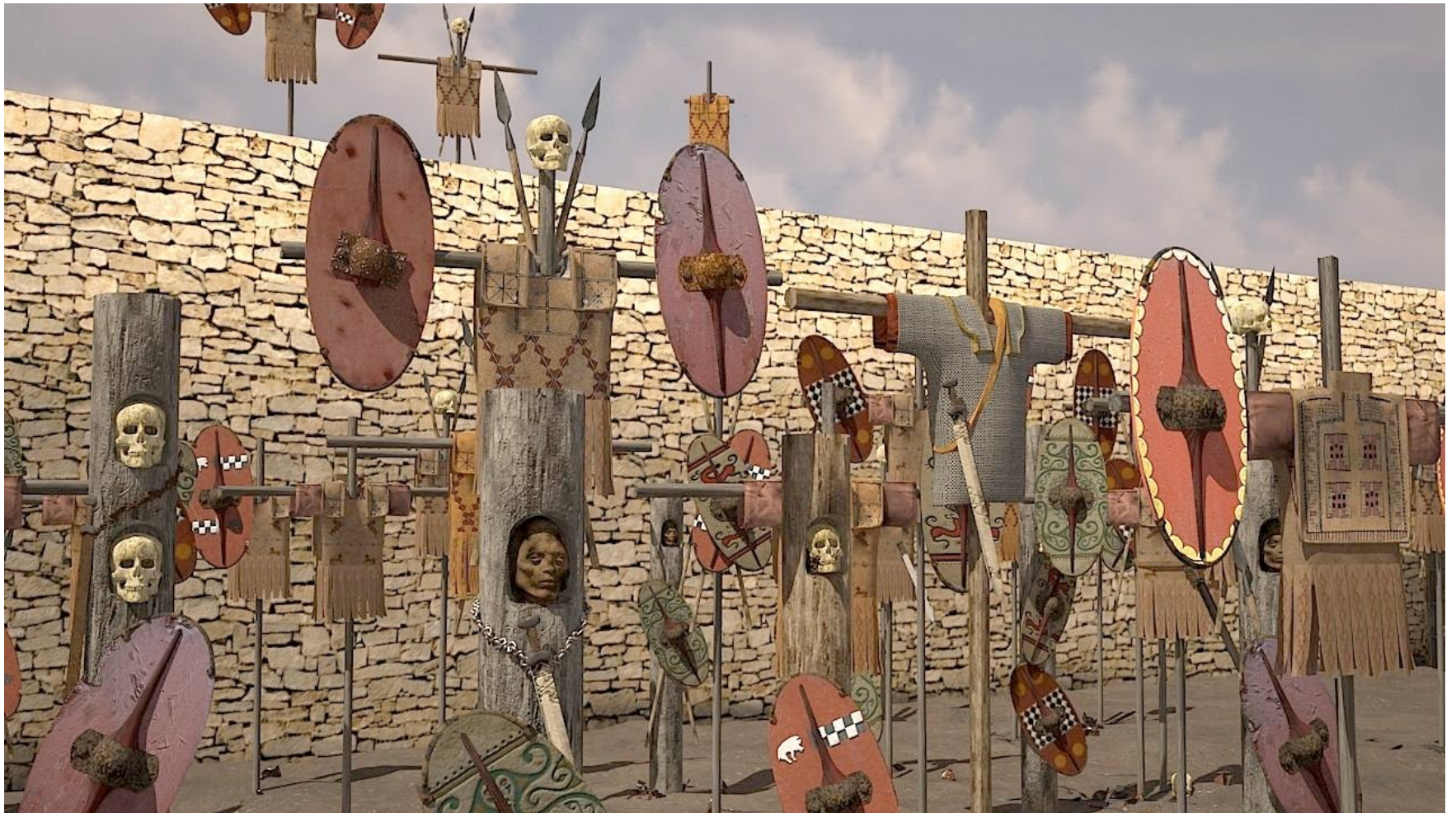
Sanctuary of Roquepertuse, sacrifices dated between the 3rd and 2nd century BC, statues dated around 600 BC.

Restitution du site de Roquepertuse - Bouches-du-Rhône

Corent. 1st century oppidum, probably an old capital of the Arverni. A huge sanctuary, a market place and a hemicycle theater-like building were found on the site.
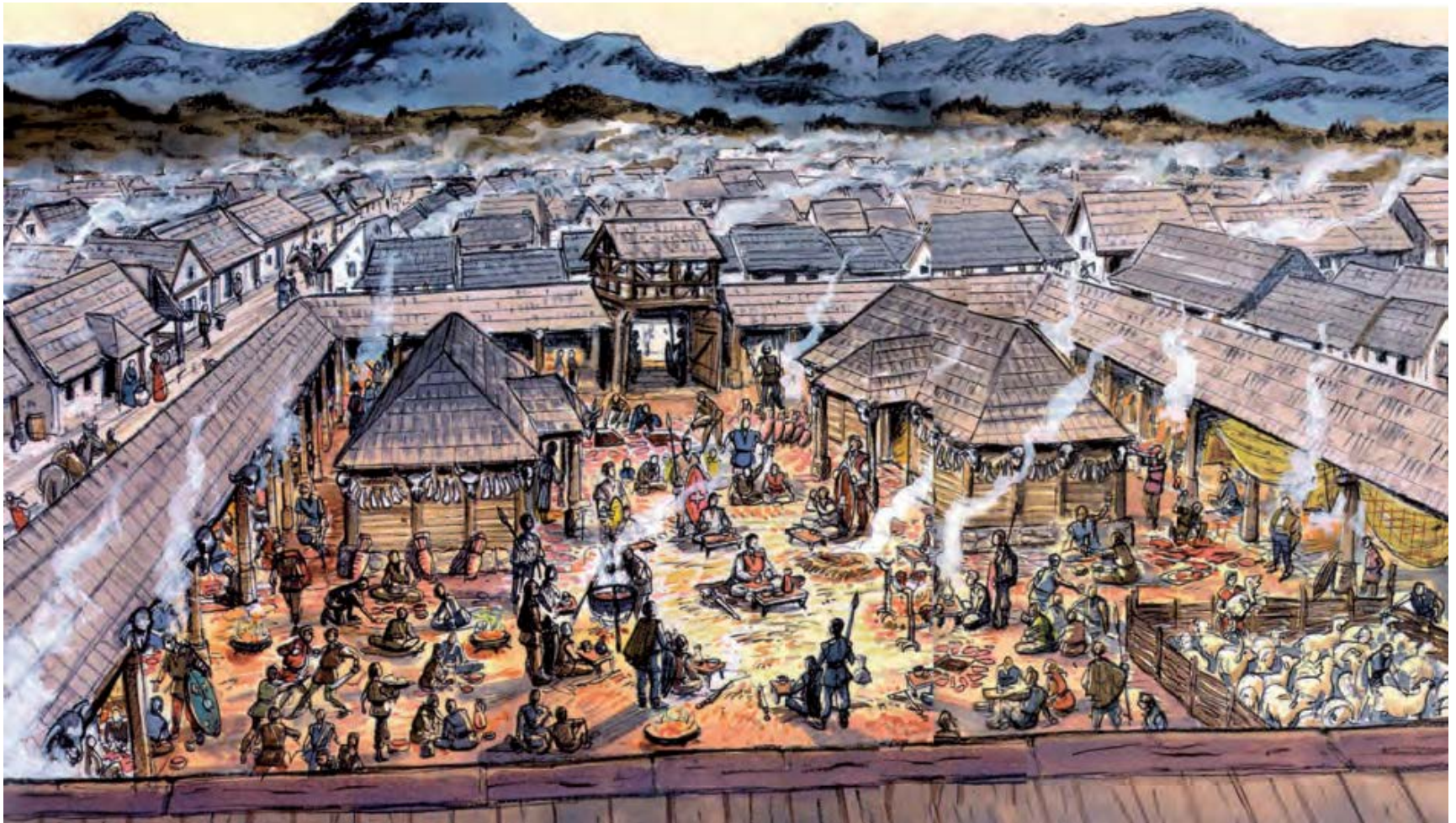
Artistic representation of Corent, in the sanctuary.

The sanctuary of Corent

The sanctuary of Corent

Sacrifice animal

L'atelier monétaire

Préparation des banquets

The sanctuary of Corent

The sanctuary of Corent

The sanctuary of Corent

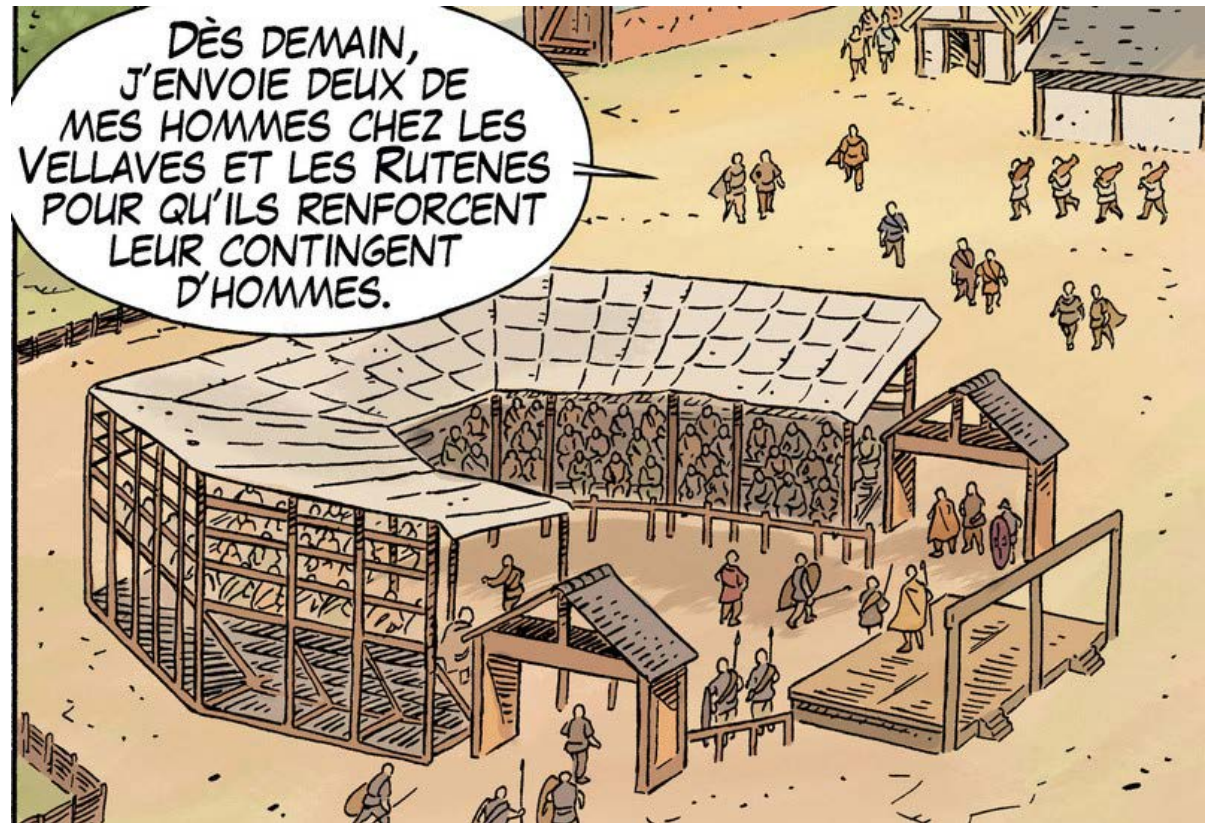# Crossroads in front of the sanctuary

The hemicycle building

The hemicycle building

Proposal of a political use of the hemicycle in Corent

A habitation of Corent

A market place

The market place has bronze working and wood working shops, a tavern and a butchery

Boucherie

Taverne

Atelier du bronzier

Atelier du menuisier