BARBARIC CITIES
EXAMINING THE PRESTIGE CONSUMER SOCIETY THAT CREATED THE OPPIDA

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In the second and first centuries B.C.E. large urban centers called Oppida appeared on the Gaulish landscape in what is now France and southern Germany. The populations of these urban centers were quite large, with over 10,000 people inhabiting the Oppidum at Manching (present-day Bavaria). This was a restart of the earliest non-Mediterranean urbanization trend in Europe. Plenty of research has been done on these Oppida, mainly focusing on the purpose of these urban centers. However, scholars have paid little attention to what caused Oppida to appear in the first place. To determine why the Oppida emerged, one must look at the elites of the society to find out why they wanted to create such centralized population centers.[1] Since the Gaulish elite relied on a prestige economy, meaning that they consumed high-end products in a manner such as to maintain their status within the society, the Oppidum was a centralized economic center primarily used to increase the prestige-based power of the elites. Therefore, one can look for a desire to create the Oppida in the consumer society of the elite Gauls. By recreating this consumer society, the cause of the Oppida can become clear, since a hierarchal society like that of the Gauls was changed from the top down. Certain attributes made an elite Gaul, such as wealth, reputation and generosity, which led to more armed

[1] Elites are the highest positioned people in a society. It is these people who run the society and maintain its functionality. This is usually used as an archeological term to refer to the people with the best material culture.

followers. These attributes fueled the consumer society of the elite Gauls. As a result, there were certain characteristics of the Oppida that helped enhance the attributes so desired by the elite.

The scholars who study the Oppida rely heavily on the archeological site at Manching in Bavaria, on the southern bank of the Danube. The Manching site, inhabited around 200-20 B.C.E., contains the most complete excavation of an Oppidum. It is also one of the oldest of these sites. As a result, Manching has the most information and evidence regarding the Oppida and is the case study of choice for those who write about them. This article is no different and will rely heavily on the evidence from Manching for archeological evidence related directly to the Oppida.

Most scholars who work on the Oppida are archeologists and some of them find that the purpose, if not the causality, of the Oppida can be discerned. One of the best known of these scholars is Peter Wells, who argues that the Oppida's purpose was mainly economic.[2] His theory states that the Oppida became centralized mass production centers that were largely self-sustaining, but were still fueled by the surrounding rural settlements. In this theory the elites are not dictators, but members of an oligarchy that needed showy displays of wealth to maintain their power. These were warriors who were turning to economics to increase their own image and wealth to obtain more followers, especially other warriors. However, the big problem for Wells is tracking the trade with the Mediterranean where many of the perishable prestige goods came from. For these elite Gauls many of the goods were long lasting. This makes proving the economic importance of the Oppida easy as the mass production facilities and products remain. Yet the idea that they were major trading hubs requires the tracking of outside goods, like wine from the Mediterranean. Since most of these goods left no remnant, not even in pots, a lot of the evidence is theoretically based on understanding Gaulish elite culture and classical literary sources. Wells does not seem to treat these sources as serious and therefore leaves holes in his theory. In addition, he offers no reason for the Gauls to want to build such economic centers, just that these centers existed.

Even though economics played a big part in the Oppida, some archeologists believe that the Oppida were primarily political

[2] P.S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

statements in a society undergoing tremendous changes. Archeologists, such as Olivier Büchsenschütz, point to the massive walls surrounding the Oppida and the impressive goods found in elite graves that point to a political purpose to the Oppida.[3] He spends all his time supporting this purpose and does not address what was changing in Gaulish society to make it more centralized, and why they wanted to build the Oppida to display and focus their power. His arguments are focused on making his claim on the purpose of the Oppida more believable than other theories. Büchsenschütz states that the walls of the Oppida, which can encase miles of land, were purely symbolic, meant to show the builder's control and ownership of the land. He argues that the prestige goods found in the graves of the elites reveal a command of craftsmen who made these items to increase the prestige of the owner. Büchsenschütz creates a people who were obsessed with the symbols of power as a means to rule. For him, the symbolic nature of the Oppida is more important than the functional purpose of the Oppida. Like the other archeologists, Büchsenschütz and people who agree with him are focused on their version of the purpose of the Oppida rather than what caused them.

The major functional purpose for the Oppida has been agreed upon by all of the archeologists. This purpose is economic. This is not the centralized and top to bottom economy described by Wells, but a local and importing economy that had targets at various levels of Gaulish society. It is through this very basic and functional purpose that the cause for the Oppida can be found. However, to work out this cause the nature of the culture in which this economy functioned must be revealed, especially at the elite level. The elite level of society set the economic trends and possessed the political power to create the large walls and structures of the Oppida. The macro level of the problem has been the focus of so much intensity that this more minute investigation has never really occurred. The scholars mentioned in this article would probably argue that this task is the work of the historian. Yet, there have not been many historians who have tackled any part of Gaulish culture. The historian needs to use a combination of archeological data and classical texts to uncover the causality of the Oppida. This article is

[3] O. Büchsenschütz, *Towns, Villages and Countryside of Celtic Europe* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).

an attempt to find this causality through the consumer society of the elite Gauls.

Gaul had an urban trend before in the early Iron Age (around 650-450 B.C.E.) in what is known as the Halstatt period; large hill-forts were made in high defensible areas.[4] These hill-forts had an international economic purpose. They were generally made to facilitate trade with the Mediterranean. The elites that ruled these hill-forts defined their power by the display of imported goods from the Mediterranean. Many Mediterranean pots and tools, such as wine strainers, were found in Halstatt grave sites. It appears from the abundance of these foreign goods that the prestige of the Halstatt ruling classes was based on their ability to procure these foreign goods. The hill-forts were simply tools with which the Halstatt elite obtained these much desired products. However, this earlier urbanization movement did not last. The hill-forts were abandoned or destroyed at the end of the Halstatt era. The La Tene era began with the Celts once again as a completely rural people.

Eventually the Oppida were formed in the second and first centuries B.C.E. However, the Oppida served as a different means to gain power for the elites of Gaulish society. Unlike the Halstatt period, the graves at the Oppida did not have a preponderance of Mediterranean goods held inside. Instead, locally produced and finely made goods were found in the elite graves. This was a society that did not need permanent foreign symbols to function in an urban setting. Perishable goods, especially wine, became the important foreign goods desired by the elites. The Oppida, as central economic points, could fill the role as a trade depot for the foreign goods. Yet, due to the large number and fine quality of the objects found in the graves, it is safe to say that the elites that ran the Oppida still needed more permanent ostentatious displays to maintain their power. The permanent displays simply shifted from mostly foreign to mostly local goods. The Oppida did have massive production facilities, something that was absent from the Halstatt hill-forts. These production facilities created the local prestige goods that the Gaulish elite craved so much. The Oppida were basically expanded hill-forts

[4] Archeologists like to divide up material cultures found by labeling them after the first site where the type of material was found. Therefore the Celtic culture from 800-450 B.C.E is called the Halstatt period, after the site in Halstatt Austria. The later Iron Age from 400-50 B.C.E. is called the La Tene period, after the site of La Tene in Switzerland.

able to produce locally and import as well. They were centralized economic centers as well as centralized symbolic centers. As the Oppida could only be created with the support of these locally minded elites, the main cause of the Oppida was local.

With this concept in mind, the attempt must be made to recreate the elite Gallic society that made the Oppida. By deciphering the role certain elite characteristics played in Gaulish society, the motive for creating the Oppida and their unique characteristics can be uncovered. The Celts, including the Gauls, did not generally have a strong central government uniting their people. Instead, society was run by an aristocratic warrior class. While the archaeological record does not have much to suggest whether there were kings or not, the literary record seems to completely agree that Gaulish society was ruled by oligarchies. Throughout his commentaries on the Gallic War, Caesar stressed the resistance of the warrior elite to attempts at kingship. Caesar recounts the story of Orgetorix of the Helvetii, who attempted to seize complete control of the Helvetii before they migrated out of what is now Switzerland.[5] When his plan was discovered, the other nobles attempted to capture Orgetorix, put him on trial and burn him alive. Orgetorix assembled all his men and prepared to go to war against his fellow tribesmen. However, Orgetorix died before the trial could take place or a civil war could occur.[6] The story of Orgetorix is typical of what happened to most of the Gaulish nobles who strived for kingship.

One would think that such an elite based system comprised of violent warriors would not be able to centralize power enough to create urban centers like the Oppida. However, as the story of Orgetorix shows, a system of combined governance existed. The other Helvetian elites wanted to put Orgetorix on trial rather than fight a costly civil war. This meant that there were systems in place to deal with strife between the touchy Gaulish elites. The story also shows the combined power of the elites that placed them as a true oligarchy, rather than a feudal system. It is through the combined effort of the Helvetian aristocracy that the entire tribe was able to

[5] At this time (around 58 B.C.E.) the Helvetii were preparing to leave their homeland in a mass migration, leaving nothing and no one behind. Caesar, *The Gallic War,* trans. H.J. Edwards (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1.2-5.

[6] Ibid., 1.4.

migrate as a whole and burn down their villages behind them so they would not want to return after the migration began.[7] The Helvetians were not a unique tribe, but a common example of a Gaulish tribe and its leadership. The story of Orgetorix was repeated several times with different players, but a similar story line. An overambitious warrior attempts to seize control and is defeated by the social system already in place. This system also kept the Gaulish civilization in a tribal state, leaving each tribe to its own devices. Yet, it was the tribes themselves that would be organized to make individual Oppida. It is known that the Gauls were led by tribal oligarchies, but why would these tribal oligarchies want to build the massive Oppida? The answer must come from the desires of the individual warrior aristocrat and his means of achieving power.

Individual desires became incredibly important symbols of status amongst the oligarchic elites. Since they could not overpower their brethren politically or militarily, the attempt was made to overpower them symbolically. Therefore, they wanted a tool with which they could centralize and increase their capacity to symbolically dominate other oligarchs. That tool would be the Oppida. However, they did not want to arouse suspicion by making this tool alone. Instead, it appears that the Gaulish elites combined their resources to build an Oppida, giving specific groups greater power, rather than specific individuals. Caesar noticed this trend when talking about the ruling governments in the Oppida. When he described the rulers of the Gaulish cities of Bibracte, Lutetia and others, he never mentioned a single ruler.[8] Instead, he described a council or a senate that ruled and that elected a single leader in times of extreme crisis, then returned to an oligarchy once the crisis was over.

Gaulish elites maintained their status through a combination of charisma and violence. A Gallic warrior had to show his importance and prove his competence in battle and leadership. This was not a system that guaranteed power to its elites. The elites had to earn that power. Thus the status of a particular warrior was based upon his wealth, reputation, generosity and the number of followers he maintained. Each of the attributes that represented the power of the Gaulish elite can be connected to the desire to create an urban center

[7] Ibid., 1.5.

[8] Bibracte, Caesar, 7.55 Lutetia, Ibid., 7.57.

like the Oppida. The Oppida was not only a flashy jewel in the rule of the men who built the city, but it maintained each of the attributes necessary for a Gallic warrior to achieve phenomenal power, without threatening his fellow elites as they also participated in the Oppida. This allowed the Gaulish elites to have a centralized urban center while remaining their fractious selves.

Probably the easiest of the attributes of Gaulish power that can be tracked is wealth, since wealth leaves a clear archeological remnant. Throughout the Celtic archeological record, displays of wealth have remained constant in elite graves. In the earlier Halstatt period, much of the wealth displayed by the elite was objects imported from the Mediterranean. Princely Halstatt graves, such as the one found at Baden-Württemberg, contain tremendous amounts of finely made native medallions and benches, but also contain a large amount of Mediterranean goods for prestigious display. The grave at Baden-Württemberg contained a large bronze cauldron of Greek manufacture and a drinking sup and ladle to accompany the cauldron.[9] It is clear that the Greek cauldrons was a particular sign of wealth in the Halstatt period directly related to the man's ability to trade with the Mediterranean and get such items.

However, by the time of the La Tene period, when the Oppida were built, the signs of wealth changed from Mediterranean products to mainly locally made prestige goods. Trade seemed less important than war and local wealth. Still, as is seen with the feasts, Mediterranean goods continued to play some role in maintaining elite prestige. This role was just different than the non-perishable Mediterranean goods imported in the Halstatt period. The La Tene graves of elites are characterized by iron weapons including swords, shields, spears, helmets and sometimes a shirt of chain mail.[10] Many finely made weapons have been found in sites all over Celtic Europe. In Britain, south of York, a very finely made sword was found in a chariot grave, while in Dobova, in the former

[9] S. Moscati, O., H. Frey, V. Kruta, B. Raftery, and M. Szabó, *The Celts* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 110.

[10] These specific items have been found at both Manching, discussed in G. Lange, *Die menschlichen Skelettreste aus dem Oppidum von Manching* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983), and at Kelheim, discussed in P.S. Wells, *Settlement, Economy, and Cultural Change at the End of the European Iron Age: Excavations at Kelheim in Bavaria, 1987-1991* (Ann Arbor: International Monographs in Prehistory, 1993).

Yugoslavia, a similar sword of similar make was also found.[11] This continuity of grave items not only proves that this form symbolism was common to Celtic culture; it was an important designation of an elite. The weapon itself is just as important as its craftsmanship. There were plain weapons found at Oppida sites, but the fine weapons are always found in elite graves.

Also included in the elite graves are locally made personal items, such as jewelry made from gold, silver or glass, pottery and grooming items, such as combs and mirrors.[12] Since all of these items were made locally, the elites of Gaulish society needed easy access to craftsmen and supplies. The Oppida could fill both roles as a center for trade and a center for receiving raw materials. The relatively large population of an Oppidum can also mean increased production in the prestige goods that the Gaulish elite so craved. As the wealth of the elites increased as a result of the Oppida, so did the power of all of the elites involved in creating an Oppidum.

Aside from goods found in graves, other forms of prestigious wealth have been found at the Oppida. Some of the most common of these prestige goods are high value coins. Both silver and gold coins have been found at the majority of Oppida sites.[13] These types of coins were not used in wide circulation as their value was too high for the average purchase of goods. These coins were for show, to provide an example of the control of the precious metals the elites maintained. In fact, aside from their symbolic purpose, the coins would be valuable for the precious metals from which they were made. Coins were perfect to serve as portable symbols of wealth, due to the small size of most ancient coins. The Oppida could provide the large scale minting facilities to create large hoards of coins. In fact, many of the coins that were minted by the Gauls had the name of the tribe or person who sponsored the coins written on them. This writing was a great piece of wealth-based propaganda. By showing that one could mint coins, a man was showing that he had tremendous wealth and the ability to control and use that wealth.

[11] Chariot Grave: Moscati, et al., 588-9. Sword, ibid., 474.

[12] These goods have been found at almost all of the Celtic sites containing elite graves.

[13] The majority of coins examined were high end silver and gold coins. See D.F. Allen and D. Nash, *The Coins of the Ancient Celts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980).

Coins were also a good way to keep one's reputation active in the Gaulish religious world as well. A peculiar facet of the Celtic religion was the deposits. Deposits were pit in religious sites, where objects of value, possessions of a defeated enemy and items of sacrifice were left as gifts to the gods. A number of these ritual deposit pits held large numbers of high-end coins that were minted in the Oppida.

A prime example of this type of deposition was found in Irsching, Bavaria.[14] Over one thousand gold coins of the Vindelici tribe were found in the pit, along with black pottery fragments.[15] This hoard is a large sum no matter what age in history. By depositing the large hoards to the gods, the Vindelici, specifically their leaders, were using their wealth to increase their spiritual as well as political power. The gods appreciated the enormous amount of wealth and the people at the ceremony saw the enormous wealth that the oligarchs could claim for the gods.

All of these prestige forms of wealth were not necessarily economic in nature. Trade and commerce were not the intentions of the Gaulish elite when it came to prestige consumption. This wealth was for display and the power that display entailed. The wealth was worn in the form of jewelry or torcs, which were finely decorated chokers, made of gold, or carried in the form of coinage. Everywhere the Gaulish aristocrat would go, his or her wealth would be on display. The people would be constantly reminded as to why these elites were in power and what they were able to bring. It was the material from which the object was made and the detail of the craftsmanship that made these objects valuable. The more wealth that could be hoarded the better. In this non-economic way, the Oppida were incredibly important as they could add to the wealth of the elite dramatically.

Wealth could only go so far, another key aspect of the power of a Gaulish aristocrat was his reputation. As the vast majority of Gaulish society was illiterate, symbols and the impression these symbols left on visitors and fellows alike were incredibly important. Usually the symbols used to enhance the reputation of a Gaul in the La Tene period were based on violence. The Gauls would keep and preserve the heads of their enemies as a sign of their military

[14] Moscati et al., 533.
[15] Ibid.

prowess. Poseidonius, who lived among the Gauls for a time, is quoted by Diodorus as having observed this practice.[16] Severed heads were also found at a number of sites hammered into the architecture.[17]

This practice symbolized violent power and the right to use that power, which was limited to the warrior elite and their dependents.[18] However, if some of the Gaulish elites added to this violent symbol with a potent political symbol, the number of people under their banner would skyrocket. This is where the Oppida could come in, as symbols of political success and power. In this manner the Oppidum itself was the consumer product used by the elites to increase symbolic power.

The Oppida were generally surrounded by monumental walls that would encompass a very large area of land; the walls at Manching, for example, enclose 380ha or around 940 acres.[19] Since the walls generally cover a large area, it would have been impossible for the populations of the Oppida to defend their entire wall. The walls were also quite large and finely made. Caesar described the Murus Gallicus walls as composed of interlacing wooden poles linked with iron spikes and filled with gravel. The outer face was made out of stone with a wooden palisade and the top and back was covered with an earthen ramp.[20]

This type of wall could stand up well against siege equipment, but the length of the walls made it unlikely to be manned. However, there was a method to this madness. The walls were a symbol to increase the reputation of those who built them. Not only would the walls demark the territory of the Oppidum, they spoke volumes about the power of the people who had such a large and

[16] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, trans., C.H. Oldfather, Vol. III (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 5.29.

[17] S. Piggott, *The Druids* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 50-51.

[18] The Gauls and the Celts in general practiced a form of client patron relationship. The elites would attract men to their cause through the attributes described earlier. Once the men were dedicated to the elite's cause, they would fight to the death for him. In return the elite Gaul would share his wealth and care for his dependents, including food and shelter.

[19] B. Arnold and D.B. Gibson, *Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 54.

[20] Caesar, 7.23.

sophisticated wall built. People then spread the word about the abilities of the rulers who were able to build such a wall.

The most important of these people were the dependents, which increased the physical military power of the oligarchs funding the Oppidum. Also important were the craftsmen who would flock to the Oppidum from the rural areas and make the goods so desired by the elites. The large number of people that came to the Oppidum needed supplies of their own to support themselves. Therefore, people came to fulfill the basic needs of the population and a lower level market economy was also created.

Basically, this was consumerism on a massive scale. By using resources to build these monumental walls, the Gaulish elites were spending to increase their political, productive and military capital. An Oppidum was a perfect tool with which one could collect the resources and manpower to build a Murus Gallicus wall. Thus, by spending the enormous amounts to build the wall, both in manpower and resources, the Gaulish elites were using the impressive local economic power of the Oppida to increase their reputations, which was integral in the Gaulish maintenance of power.

The reputation of a Gaulish aristocrat was not merely based on personal symbols, but more communal symbols as well. The Gaulish elite were expected to be able to provide for their people and a failure of abundance meant a failure of leadership. As a result, the elites had to show that they were capable of maintaining a measure of prosperity to the people under their leadership. They could also use symbols of abundance to show that they were better than the other oligarchs in a region. The abundance provided by the elite was usually demonstrated in a feast. The feast played a very important role in all of Celtic culture and had an important ritualized component to it. The entire community was usually invited to the feast and was seated according to rank, reaffirming the power of the oligarchs. Meat was kept in central cauldrons and people got access to the meat according to rank. The most desirable part of the meat was given to the best warrior in attendance affirming his prestige over that of his peers. Imported wine from the Mediterranean was served in abundance to show the wide reach of procurement that was available to the host of the feast. Wine was the major prestige good that the La Tene era Celts imported from the Mediterranean. This product was so desired that Diodorus described some Mediterranean merchants as being able to trade an amphora of wine

for a slave.[21] As the wine was used as a symbol of prestige in the ability to procure and use tremendous amounts of a foreign good, the symbolic value of an amphora of wine could well be worth a slave. Basically, the feast was an important show of generosity to symbolize the abundance the host could bring to his community and his followers.

A great example of the importance of the feast to the Gaulish elite can be found in the story of Lovernius.[22] Lovernius needed to raise support as his family was losing power, due to the disgrace of his father. To regain the support, Lovernius threw a huge feast that Athenaeus described as being "a mile square with jars of expensive drink and plentiful food".[23] The feast lasted for days and throughout the feast Lovernius distributed high-end coins to his visitors. The feast of Lovernius served a very important purpose. It helped to build the power of Lovernius as a Gaulish noble through the attribute of generosity. Lovernius was gaining power and followers by throwing his lavish feast. The rumor of his generosity spread through the bards and his reputation also increased as a result.

Feasts were expensive as well as large and the centralized and large amount of resources the Oppida created was perfect for the feasting tradition. Meats and other ingredients could be imported from the hinterlands, while the many tools needed to make the feasts could be manufactured in the shops of the Oppida. Oppida were also natural trading centers. This meant the much desired Mediterranean wine could be imported at larger quantities. The trading routes themselves could be monopolized as the Mediterranean merchants would be attracted to the centralized commerce of the Oppida. Otherwise, the merchants would have to trek through a rural grid to make a profit. Rulers of an Oppidum therefore had more access to wine than their rural counterparts. The trading center of an Oppidum could also open opportunities for local products like salted pork. At the Oppidum at Kelheim around three hundred pig and three hundred cow remains were found in a very small area.[24] Most of the bones were from animals slaughtered

[21] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 5.26.

[22] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, trans., Charles Burton Gulick, Vol. III (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 4.152

[23] Ibid.

[24] Wells, *Settlement, Economy, and Cultural Change*, 61.

at a young age.[25] This implies that animals were imported in large numbers, which serves as a local example of the economic importance of the Oppida in relation to the feasts. Massive production and importation meant large and more lavish feasts.

Probably the most important attributes of Gaulish aristocrats were the dependents. The more dependents a warrior had, the more powerful he was. This aspect was much less symbolic and much more realistic. The dependents were the soldiers, bodyguards, companions and heralds of a warrior. They were the critical human resource that confirmed the power of the lead warrior. In return for this service, the lead warrior would feed, shelter, and pay his dependents. If a warrior wanted more dependents, he needed consistent access to more resources, which could be provided by an Oppidum. The massive production and importation facilities of the Oppida meant that the aristocratic warriors in charge could each maintain a small army of dependents. Not only could they support many dependents, but these dependents would have good access to craftsmen for weapons and armor.

Fortunately the dependents left a substantial archeological record as well as classical descriptions of their purpose. Probably the best classical descriptions come from Caesar, who witnessed these warrior and dependent forces arrayed against him. From his accounts it is clear that the client-patron relationship of the dependent system was a deep and powerful bond. Caesar described this bond by saying, "the rule of these men is that in life they enjoy all the benefits with the comrades to whose friendship they have committed themselves, while if any violent fate befalls their fellows, they either endure the same misfortune along with them or take their own lives".[26] These were brothers in combat whose loyalty extended unto death. Caesar even stated that in earlier times dependents would follow their masters in death at the master's funeral.[27] Such loyal followers were gained through the previously discussed displays of wealth, competence and generosity. As the Oppida helped to increase all of these attributes, it was useful in gaining dependents, which were the desired results of displaying these attributes.

[25] Ibid., 62.
[26] Caesar, 3.22.
[27]Ibid., 6.19.

Not only would it be wise for a Gaulish warrior aristocrat to recruit as many of these dependents as possible, but to allow them to equip themselves as best as possible. Through the archeological evidence, it is clear that the Oppida provided the means with which the dependents could equip themselves properly at a higher rate. At the Oppidum at Kelheim, evidence of massive iron manufacture has been found in the form of iron slag, the leftovers from metalworking.[28] This slag indicates that iron manufacturing was taking place within the Oppidum.[29] Along with the slag, iron tools of all types, ranging from nails to keys were found in the Kelheim Oppidum.[30] All of this relates to the dependents because a massive manufacturing center, like the one found at Kelheim, would be needed to create the equipment needed for the dependents. In fact, plainly made weapons and fibulae are found in all of the Oppida. Kelheim is no exception, with at least seven different types of mass produced iron fibulae found at the site.[31] People who could afford better clothing than the average tunic worn by the common man wore the fibulae, which were a type of cloths pin used to hold up cloaks or robes. However, the plain iron fibulae found do not match the finely made bronze fibulae of the elite Gauls. Instead, these are plain fibulae that were used by a lower class that was trying to imitate the elites. Since these fibulae tend also to be found with plain weapons, it is clear that the dependents were using the centralized and massive economy of the Oppida to imitate their patrons. This was very desirable for the aristocrats, as they had followers who were equipped well when a conflict arose.

With the evidence of the dependents, it seems that at the lower levels of society, the Oppida had a market economy. Bronze coins found at Oppida sites suggest a lower end coinage more useful for circulation than the valuable gold and silver coins.[32] The large amounts of everyday tools that are found at these sites, such as nails, hammers and saws, also support this concept of a central market economy at the Oppida. Remnants of cereal crops grown

[28] C. Blair, "Iron Production at Kelheim" in Wells, *Settlement, Economy, and Cultural,* 66-76.

[29] Blair, 74.

[30] Wells, 46-51.

[31] Ibid., 46.

[32] Moscati et al., 454.

inside the walls of the Oppida, such as the one at Kelheim, and the evidence of meat production reveal a supply economy at the basic level as well.[33] While Caesar seemed to say that the lower classes of Gaulish society were nearly slaves, the archeological evidence that is available, coupled with the elite's need to impress the population with their competence, points to a semi-free, rather than enslaved populace.[34] However, aside from these glimpses, there is little other evidence regarding the average Gaul. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to recreate most aspects of the lower levels of Gaulish society. On the other hand, the suggestion of a lower level market economy at the Oppida reveals a centralized trend that expanded beyond the prestige economy of the elite Gauls. It is very likely that the elites who had the Oppida built did not intend to create such a market economy. Rather it appeared as a side effect of the elite's desire to maximize their own power. The more the prestige production increased, the more the lower level economy thrived as a result of the production. This economy was further fueled by the dependents' needs and desires to imitate their patrons.

The economy of the elite Gauls was not a market economy. The market economy that did emerge was unintended by the elite Gauls who created the Oppida. Instead, it was a prestige goods economy that supplied the elite's need for symbolism that helped to maintain their power. As this was a competition amongst equals that did not seem to ever have a clear winner, conglomerates were made to pull massive resources together to form a centralizing tool that increased the symbolic capital of each member. As both the article and rituals of consumption contributed to the symbolic power of the oligarchs, they needed a tool that could produce large amounts of varied products. The tool was the Oppida. As an urban and economic center, the Oppida could gather together the manpower and resources to fulfill and enhance everything that was needed for the proper attributes of a Gaulish leader. All of the Gaulish elites involved saw their wealth, reputation, including generosity and the number of dependents, increase at a phenomenal rate. The Oppida became central urban centers with a lower level market economy, which in turn would support the elite prestige economy. However,

[33] Wells, 57-60.
[34] Caesar, 6.13.

the main driving force behind the Oppida was the elite and their constant need to increase their symbolic power.