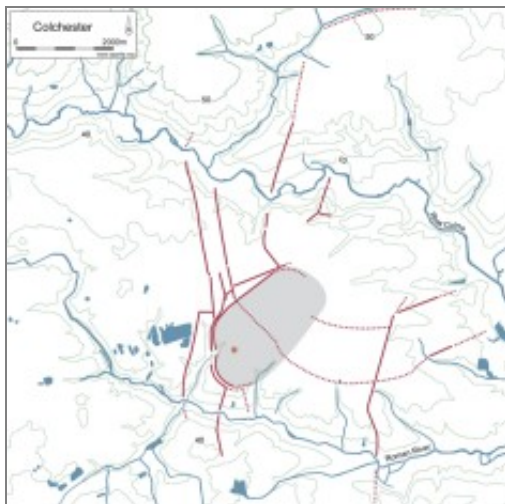


IMPRIMER

FERMER

Oppida

PREMIÈRES VILLES AU NORD DES ALPES



Colchester

Colchester, or Camulodunum, is the location of the capital of Cunobelin, ruler of the Catuvellauni from 10 AD until just before the Roman conquest, and considered by the Romans as High-King (Britannorum Rex) of the south-eastern region of Britain. The site is unusually large: 2000-4000ha (depending on interpretations), a complex of dykes being concentrated within a sub-rectangular block of land defined to the south by the Roman river, to the east and north by the Colne river and to the west by the outermost of the earthworks. Other associated earthworks extend beyond these limits to the north and south. The full extent of the original earthworks is uncertain. Generally considered a very late Iron Age development, possibly coinciding with the beginning of Cunobelin's reign or somewhat earlier (50–25 BC), the earthworks are multi-

period constructions, and arguments have been advanced for a period of Iron Age occupation beginning in the first half of the 1st century BC (Rodwell 1976). The earliest dating evidence for the occupation comes from the Lexden cemetery, providing a date of c.25 BC. Rodwell (1976, 339-59) proposes six major phases of development overall for the earthworks, whilst Hawkes and Crummy (1995) prefer a four phase system, including post-Boudiccan, Roman construction of the linear outer defences.

A primary occupation site is generally proposed for the location of Gosbecks Farm (Cheshunt Field) (Hawkes and Hull 1947; Rodwell 1976, Cunliffe 2005). This area is defined by a distinct curvilinear earthwork to the east and north-east. Defences to the east may have been destroyed by later Roman developments. A possible enclosure area of 350ha is proposed (Rodwell 1976). A Roman temple complex is present within this area, established on a site with evidence of a pre-Roman sanctuary, as is a theatre and a Roman auxiliary fort.

Hawkes proposed (in Hawkes, Crummy 1995) that the Gosbecks site represents an original Trinovantian occupation, replaced after the ascendancy of Cunobelin (Catevellauni) by a new occupation centre at Sheepen, and later re-incorporated into the royal lands. This view is however contested by Crummy (in the same publication), who argues that the whole Camulodunum site was a Catuvellanian colony in Trinovantian land from the outset. He proposes that the Gosbecks site represents the seat of royal power, explaining the concentration of Roman structures in the post-conquest era.

The second occupation area - within the overall enclosure - is identified at Sheepen, enclosed to the east and south-east by a single dyke (with a later addition), and has been examined by excavation - principally in 1931-9 by Hawkes (Hawkes and Hull 1947) and in 1970 by Niblett (Niblett 1985). This internal enclosure is estimated at 37ha. The occupation is characterised by circular and sub-rectangular huts, pits, ditches, the debris from a mint and considerable quantities of imported pottery. This site is presumed by some to be the locus of occupation at the time of Cunobelin, although probably inhabited prior to this date (Haselgrove 1987), and may incorporate an elite dwelling. An alternative view is that this site had a predominantly industrial function, whilst Gosbecks was primarily agricultural.

The site was conquered in 43AD when it was visited by Claudius in person (Hawkes and Hull 1947) and a legionary fortress was constructed. A Roman town or colonia was established in 48-9 AD. In 60/61 AD, Boudicca, queen of the neighbouring Iceni, led a major revolt in which the colonia was destroyed, to be closely followed by Verulamium and London. The town was re-built after the quelling of this rebellion and remained known by its pre-conquest name of Camulodunum.

- Localisation Google Earth (Colchester)
- Localisation Google Earth (tous les oppida)

SITUATION ADMINISTRATIVE

Nom usuel :	Colchester	Département :	Essex
Commune :	Colchester	Région :	East
Lieu-dit :	Sheepen, Gosbecks Farm, Lexden	Pays :	Royaume-Uni
Nom antique :	<i>Camulodunum</i>	Civitas :	Catuvellauni/Trinovantes

TOPOGRAPHIE ET REMPARTS

Superficie :	2000 ha	Architecture de rempart :	
Topographie :	Enceinte de plaine	1 - Talus massif	
Nb de phases du rempart :	6 ?		
Nb de portes connues :	-		
Nb de portes fouillées :	-		

OCCUPATION INTERNE DE L'OPPIDUM

Atelier monétaire | Zone cultuelle / Sanctuaire | Zone d'habitat | Zone artisanale

ENVIRONNEMENT DE L'OPPIDUM

Nécropole | Tombe aristocratique | Faubourg

CHRONOLOGIE DU SITE

Chronologie relative :	Occupation du site :
Augustéen	Haut-Empire
Chronologie absolue :	-

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GESTION ET MISE EN VALEUR

L'oppidum de Colchester se situe dans un territoire riche en vestiges préhistoriques, celtiques, romains et médiévaux. Il est donc difficile à percevoir et les quelques traces de fortification conservées se situent principalement sur des terrains privés. Le site est classé Monument Historique par « English Heritage » depuis les années 1980.

Les vestiges du territoire de Colchester sont le plus souvent fouillés par le « Colchester Archaeological

Trust », une structure locale fondée en 1963 et actuellement présidée par Philip Crummy.

Pour en savoir plus, contacter le Colchester Archaeological Trust – 12 Lexden Road – Colchester – CO3 3NF / tel : +44 (0)1206 541051
Internet : <http://www.catuk.org/>

Sur place, le « Gosbecks archaeological Park » occupe les zones publiques. Les vestiges y sont difficilement lisibles, mais des panneaux aident à percevoir quelques structures celtiques (temple et habitats) et romaines (théâtre). La signalisation a été réalisée par les services du Musée de Colchester.
Internet : <http://www.camulos.com/virtual/guidee.htm#gosbecks>

À proximité, le musée du château de Colchester occupe un des plus grands châteaux normands d'Angleterre. Il présente une très riche collection d'objets celtes et romains, au sein d'une collection à la chronologie encore plus large, et reçoit près de 180 000 visiteurs par an, dont beaucoup de scolaires. Le service pédagogique du musée leur propose des visites guidées et des ateliers adaptés élaborés en collaboration avec le corps enseignant. Le musée prête également aux classes des mallettes pédagogiques.
Le musée est ouvert toute l'année du lundi au dimanche.

Pour en savoir plus, contactez le service des musées de Colchester et Ipswich :
Museums@colchester.gov.uk / tel : +44 (0)1206 282931
Internet : <http://www.colchestermuseums.org.uk>

(Camille Daval – ArchéoMédia, février 2008)

PHOTOTHEQUE

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Pip Stephenson / Colin Haselgrove