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A DINGHOF AT SCHILTIGHEIM ARCHAEOLOGY ON ALL FLOORS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

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Press Relation

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Direction régionale
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1. Exhibition Project

This exhibition is part of a series traditionally devoted by the Archaeological Museum to “recent excavations” in Alsace. It centres on the results of the preventive excavation carried out by the *Archéologie Alsace* team under the direction of Elise Arnold at N° 37a rue d'Adelshoffen in Schiltigheim in 2018. For the first time, work has focused more broadly on human settlement in this community adjoining Strasbourg, from prehistory to the present day.

For four weeks during 2018, the *Archéologie Alsace* team, led by Élise Arnold, carried out a preventive archaeological dig at N° 37a rue d'Adelshoffen, in Schiltigheim.

This excavation was prompted by the presence of Neolithic remains identified on the site during the survey conducted a year earlier, in connection with a redevelopment project, and by the conjectured presence of a *Dinghof*.

The results of this excavation presented in the exhibition mark a turning point in our historical knowledge of the town of Schiltigheim, located on a loess terrace dominating the plains of the Bruche and the Rhine just north of Strasbourg. Records of archaeological finds made in the town until now were incomplete, imprecise and out of date, with the exception of two excavations undertaken in 1995 (IUT Pasteur) and in 2006 (Espace Européen de l'Entreprise). The former excavations had identified Neolithic and Protohistoric settlements and ancient necropolises (probably Merovingian and Carolingian), as well as the presence of two Roman roads beneath the present-day route du General de Gaulle (old road leading from Strasbourg to Brumath) and route de Bischwiller (old road leading from Strasbourg to Lauterbourg). These remains are in large part exhibited in the Strasbourg Museum's permanent layout and will be given pride of place during the exhibition, in the Museum's rooms.

The up-to-date techniques used in the recent archaeological excavations at 37a rue d'Adelshoffen complete and clarify our knowledge on occupation of the Schiltigheim area. They provide hitherto unpublished documentation on these periods, in particular through the discovery of an important settlement in the early Neolithic (5300-5000 BC), by the excavation of a remarkable silo from the Final Bronze Age (approx. 1000-950 BC) and by the discovery of a Merovingian settlement (6th-7th century), probably linked to the necropolis excavated nearby in the rue de Haguenau in 1905.

They also made it possible to ascertain the presence of a *Dinghof* on this site, through the investigation of a half-timbered house still visible today, together with an exploration of the terrain. These latest results make it possible to lay the first milestones in archaeological knowledge of this *Dinghof* and other domanial institutions that were so important in country life in medieval Alsace.

Exhibition Curators : Mathilde Villette, Curator of the Musée Archéologique; Élise Arnold, regional archaeologist, Middle Ages, *Archéologie Alsace* Operations Manager.

2. What was a *Dinghof*?

The term *Dinghof* is a combination of *Ding* (assembly) *Hof* (courtyard, farmhouse). It was therefore a place used for the meetings of a representative assembly. In Alsace and the rest of the Germanic world, this place was the domanial manor. The mode of organization of medieval rural society brought together a set of tenures on the basis of a shared system, i.e. land leased by a manorial lord to peasants (tenants) for farming purposes.

A *Meier* or *Dinghofmeier* (steward), appointed by the lord from among the tenants, was responsible for organizing and administering the domain, holding meetings, dispensing justice and collecting the rent due to the owner of the land being farmed. Depending on their size, the unvarying core of these *Dinghöfe* consisted of several buildings containing a dwelling, stable, barn, hayloft, cellar and at times even a dungeon. The *Meier* might possibly live there, but this was not always the case.

Dinghöfe were major institutions in the Alsatian countryside and there were several hundred of them. Each manor held a set of tenures, from half a dozen to as many as forty. These were inherited, but could also be transferred.

3. The Adelshoffen *Dinghof*

The archives regularly confirm the existence and continuity of this *Dinghof* from at least the 12th century to the early 19th century.

The presence of this institution in Adelshoffen is mentioned for the first time in a charter of 1163, which confirms that it belonged to the Chapter House of Saint-Thomas in Strasbourg. The *Dinghof* was to remain the property of the Chapter until 1827, when it was sold to private individuals.

The organization of this domain is known to us by a "customary" of 1522. This was a compendium of rules and customs governing a locality or a jurisdiction. Precise information is provided on the number of tenants – 19 in this case – and the quantity of grain to be delivered to the Chapter granary at Strasbourg.

It is however the *terrier* of 1683, a register of landed property, containing descriptions of the lands and taxable properties depending on a manorial lord, which describes the different plots of the village of Adelshoffen. It even specifies the dimensions of the *Dinghof* plot and the name of its *Meier*, which at the beginning of the 20th century enabled the scholar Pierre Georges to identify its site. Located at the end of a cul de sac connected to the former main street of the hamlet – now the rue d'Adelshoffen – the *Dinghof* is still distinguished today by the presence of a courtyard and a half-timbered house.

At the end of the 17th century, there were four domanial manors in Schiltigheim, including the subject of this exhibition, the Adelshoffen *Dinghof*.

4. Rare Data on the Medieval Period

The excavation revealed the existence of numerous cellars dating from the 14th and 15th centuries. One exception, not abandoned until the 16th century, was certainly intended for collective use.

Unusual features of these cellars have been brought to light, such as a set of stairs dug into the loess, the steps no doubt originally reinforced with wooden planks. Such well-preserved remains are extremely rare and provide a great deal of information on storage methods in rural areas in the medieval period.

More broadly, our knowledge of the medieval rural world is still largely incomplete, whereas it was already from the 12th century that villages of this period began to form the nucleus of the historic towns that we still know today. Very often, the medieval period is perceived through the vestiges of fortresses or religious buildings. This approach leaves aside a whole branch of history that only archaeology is able to reveal (its action however very often limited by present-day urbanization). The excavation of 37a rue d'Adelshoffen is thus a counter-example providing valuable information about the organization of these historic villages.

The archaeological investigation (also known as "building archaeology") of the half-timbered house, at 37a rue d'Adelshoffen, coupled with dating by dendrochronology (study of tree rings), indicate that the house was built in the late 17th century and that its westward extension dates from 1752. These features corroborate information found in the archives dating the house to around 1683. It was on the instructions of the *Meier* of the *Dinghof*, Claus Dietrich, its later extension by Johann Georg Rhein having been carried out in 1752. The latter detail is confirmed by the inscription still visible on one of the corner posts of the house.

There is nothing today to suggest that a house already existed on this site, but the exceptional discovery of a number of cellars from the 15th and 16th centuries (theoretically intended for collective use) seems to confirm the presence of a *Dinghof* on this site from medieval times.

5. Cultural Events

Guided tours

Exchange of Views

Sunday 8 October at 3 p.m.

Duration: 1h 30m / Access: museum admission ticket

Here we offer you a unique chance to discover the exhibition – an exchange of views between the archaeologist who investigated the *Dinghof* building and the Museum Curator who is also the Curator of the Exhibition.

By Lucie Jeanneret, building archaeologist at *Archéologie Alsace*, and Mathilde Villette, Curator of the Strasbourg Archaeological Museum.

Discovering the Exhibition

Sunday 18 February at 3 p.m.

Duration: 1 hour / Access: museum admission ticket

A guided tour to help you discover the exhibition.

More at: www.musees.strasbourg.eu

6. Visitor Information

Musée Archéologique de Strasbourg

Palais Rohan / 2, place du Château, Strasbourg

Opening: weekdays from 10am to 1pm and from 2pm to 6pm. Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

tel. +33 (0)3 68 98 50 00

Groups: more at www.musees.strasbourg.eu/groupe-tarifs-reservations

Admission €7.50 (reduced €3.50)

Admission free:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
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| - Carte Culture card holders | - employment seekers |
| - Atout Voir card holders | - social assistance beneficiaries |
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3 day pass: €20, reduced rate: €12 (access to all Strasbourg museums and temporary exhibitions)

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Un Dinghof à Schiltigheim. L'archéologie à tous les étages

Musée Archéologique
15 septembre 2023 au 24 juin 2024
LISTE DES VISUELS TÉLÉCHARGEABLES SUR LE SITE
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1. Vue de la façade ouest de la maison du Dinghof en 2009.
© Région Grand Est – Inventaire général / Claude Menninger



4. La maison du Dinghof d'Adelshoffen (Schiltigheim)
et les caves au moment de la fouille en 2018
(Elise Arnold © Archéologie Alsace)



2. La maison du Dinghof d'Adelshoffen (Schiltigheim)
au moment de la fouille en 2018
(Elise Arnold © Archéologie Alsace)



5. Vue de la fouille en cours au 37a rue d'Adelshoffen,
avec la maison du Dinghof, hiver 2018
(Elise Arnold © Archéologie Alsace)



3. Ensemble de poteries médiévales
mises au jour au cours de la fouille
(Musées de la ville de Strasbourg, M. Bertola)



6. Ensemble de poteries de l'âge du Bronze
mises au jour au cours de la fouille
(Musées de la ville de Strasbourg, M. Bertola)