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CALL FOR PAPERS

XVth AGER Conference

Saverne, France, Château des Rohan et Musée archéologique de la ville

28-30 September and 1st October 2022

Villages and Hamlets in Gaul and neighbouring areas between the La Tène period and the end of the Roman period (3rd century BC - 6th century AD)

And

Current research on archaeology and history of rural Roman Gaul

Conference website (information, registration...):

<https://ager-xv.sciencesconf.org/>

1. Introduction

The AGER association was created in February 1991 to promote research in the field of rural archaeology and history of Roman Gaul, to enhance its image and to stimulate research in this field. To this end, it organises a Conference every two years, the proceedings of which are published. It has a blog which provides a means of spreading information and scientific news, as well as a collaborative space for archaeologists and historians working on the rural world of the Roman period in Gaul.

Link to the blog: <https://ager.hypotheses.org/>

In 2018, the General Assembly of the AGER association held in Dijon proposed to hold the 2022 Conference on the overall theme of “Villages and hamlets in the Roman period”, a decision that was ratified by its management in 2020. The last seven Conferences show the usual themes retained by the AGER association:

- The forms of Gallo-Roman rural habitat. Terminologies and typologies confronted to archaeological realities (2008).
- Rural landscapes and territories in the cities of the Roman West. *Gallia and Hispania* (2010).
- Consumption in the countryside of Roman Gaul (2012).
- Producing, transforming and storing in the Roman Gaulish countryside (2014).
- The exploitation of maritime resources in Antiquity. Productive activities and territorial organization (2016).
- Tools and movable equipment of agropastoral activities in Gaul (2018).
- Experimentation in archaeology (2021).

The XVth AGER Conference, which will take place in Saverne on 28th, 29th, 30th September and 1th October 2022, will deal with the theme “Villages and Hamlets in Gaul and neighbouring areas between the La Tène period and the end of the Roman period (3rd century BC - 6th century AD)”.

This meeting will address a thematic not yet widely addressed for the Roman period in Gaul and it will complement the elements and approaches developed in the framework of the AGER VII Conference: “The forms of Gallo-Roman rural habitat. Terminologies and typologies confronted to archaeological realities”.

Since the Antibes meeting in 2016, a session of the Conference has been devoted to current research on the rural world in Gaul in the Roman period. The AGER XVth Conference in Saverne will devote half a day to papers and posters presenting recent discoveries and research work.

Finally, this meeting will be the first AGER Conference to be held in Alsace. This region offers a rich archaeological context with well-recognised villages and hamlets methodically studied (Meyer and Nüsslein 2014; Nüsslein *et al.* 2020). In addition, the city of Saverne has a museum that houses collections from these sites, including the *Wasserwald* at Haegen which was interpreted as a hamlet as early as the 1980s.

2. Problems and objectives for the main theme of the Conference

Recent works shows the great diversity of settlement types that occupied the countryside of Roman Gaul (Reddé 2017, 2018). The vast majority of these settlements seems to correspond to so-called 'isolated' habitats. From the *villa* to the small farm, they are therefore perceived as ubiquitous settlement models. Agglomerations, whatever their size and the number of houses or functional units aggregated, only rarely appear in the bibliography in the traditional rural habitat system. However, clustered settlements are an integral part of the rural settlement pattern as they play many roles in the functioning of the territories. In this case, it refers to agglomerations with a marked commercial or craft status (towns, villages, etc.). Some of them could then polarise and energise the network of peripheral settlements. However, there are also grouped settlements of a different status that do not fall into the previous category: villages and farming hamlets.

For the Roman period, the existence of this type of settlement has been mentioned at least since the 19th century. Beginning of the 1980s, Ph. Leveau emphasised its existence. He diverge with the generally accepted idea according to which Rome wanted to raise all settlements to the rank of town and that the Gallic villages could not persist (Leveau 1983). At the same time, F. Pétry's work concerning the Vosges, between Saverne and Sarrebourg,

showed the existence of these agglomerated settlements not fitting into the conventional typologies (Pétry 1982). Beginning of the 1990s, Michel Mangin, in the conclusion of the Bliesbruck-Reinheim/Bitche Conference on so-called 'secondary' settlements, expressed the wish that “specialists in the countryside should include the 'rural villages' in their problematic”(Petit, Mangin 1994, 294). In the 2010s, the debate on the existence of villages with an agropastoral function in the countryside of Roman Gaul is resurfacing (Favory 2012; Monteil 2014). Outside the French borders, in Great Britain (Smith et al. 2016) or in the Netherlands for example (Roymans, Derks 2011), the existence of villages and hamlets is recognised and accepted as several of them were documented and published.

A recent review of the issue has proposed to define a village or hamlet in the Roman period as a grouped settlement, composed of farmsteads close to each other or scattered over a limited area, which is almost exclusively oriented towards agropastoral activities, without excluding other more punctual activities (Nüsslein *et al.* 2018). This distinguishes them from other grouped settlements, such as roadside settlements, artisanal settlements, settlements with an extractive function, or urban settlements, both large and small, which have strong commercial, political or religious functions.

Although the existence of villages and hamlets is not in doubt, they remain poorly known in Gaul. Several examples are attested but are scarce in the literature. The reasons why archaeologists and historians have so far been little confronted with this category of settlement obviously raise questions. Is the village a very marginal phenomenon? Is it a type of settlement that only develops in specific areas? Is this scarcity not rather linked to the state of research? Is this difficulty to identify them as grouped settlements related to the size of the excavation windows? To the tenuous nature of the remains of these sites? Or to the fact that archaeologists have not yet explored this lead in an attempt to interpret some sites that do not have the morphology of an “isolated habitat”? The question of their identification and archaeological characterisation obviously poses a problem. The recent study of villages and hamlets in the Alsace plain has shown, for example, that this type of habitat can be difficult to recognize on account to the tenuous nature of the remains and the size of the excavation windows (Nüsslein *et al.* 2020).

Therefore, the first objective of this Conference will be to define the criteria for recognising this type of habitat. The presence of grouped rural settlements everywhere is not necessarily self-evident. It is essential, before tackling other issues, to resolve the question of their identification and archaeological characterization, and to establish the interpretation of the sites discovered. Also, it could be necessary to revise sites excavated earlier. During the Conference, it will therefore be appropriate to compare examples and different cases studies in order to try to establish a framework and to define criteria or indicators that enable a site to be identified as a village, or hamlet. What are the types of remains that allow them to be recognised? Under what conditions? With what methods? Also, we could ask to what extent this type of site is recognisable by field walking and aerial prospection or with another non-invasive method of investigation. These aspects will also be investigated: what is the general form of the habitats? How are they organised? What are their equipment? Are there similar forms or only regional types? The presentations made during the Conference will provide an overview of the morphologies and internal organisation that villages and hamlets can adopt. Although we invite the speakers to present sites from Gaul and neighbouring areas (Germania, Brittany, Hispania, Italy, etc.), the Conference is also open to presentations concerning settlements located in more distant regions (North Africa or the Near East, for example).

Concerning their characterisation, if the villages and hamlets are mainly oriented towards agro-pastoral activities, the nature of production and its organisation are still little known. Are they similar or different from isolated settlements in the same region? Are there particular agro-pastoral facilities? Are there different activities within a same site or are there a complementarity between farms? Talks will therefore address the question of agro-pastoral equipment, tools and bioarchaeological data.

The second objective of this Conference will be to make an inventory of grouped rural habitats, to map them in order to identify the areas in which they are developing and to measure the spread of this habitat type. Within the regions in which hamlets and villages develop, it will also be interesting to try to understand their role in the settlement and the agro-pastoral production system. What is their relationship with other settlements? Are there areas where agriculture is based solely on agglomerated settlements? Did they play a major role in the conquest or development of areas during the Roman period? Speakers should therefore take care to contextualise the site(s) they are presenting in order to understand the spatial environment (from a geographical and settlement point of view) of the settlement(s) in question. While presentations on several sites are recommended, a talk dealing with one site in particular is possible. The author(s) should ensure that the site in question is compared with the regional context. The aim is also to find out more about the social and agrarian structure of the countryside in which these habitats are integrated.

The spatial and environmental aspects are also decisive in trying to understand the emergence of villages and hamlets in certain areas. Is there an environmental determinism linked to the quality of the soil, for example? Are there particular cultural features that explain the presence of this type of settlement in certain regions? Could the establishment of villages and hamlets be the result of the will of a power or a particular land structure?

These questions are related to the third objective of the Conference, which is devoted to the problem of the origin and evolution of the village and the hamlet. From one area to another, and even within the same one, the dynamics of the evolution and emergence of villages and hamlets can be different. Are these settlement forms directly inherited from the La Tène period? What are the differences between an “open agglomeration” or village of the La Tène period and a village, or hamlet, in the Roman period? Are they the result of a gradual aggregation of farms, opportunistic and chosen, or of a previously established plan? Did they exist throughout the Roman period? Are there differences in their appearance and dynamics between regions? Is their emergence in certain areas only linked to the dynamics that generally lead to the appearance of grouped settlements at the end of Antiquity? What happens to the ancient villages and hamlets after the Roman period? If the Roman period is the main focus of the subject, the chronology chosen, from the 3rd century BC to the 6th century AD, is vast in order to fully understand the phenomenon of appearance, evolution and abandonment of this type of settlement, before, during and after the Roman period. It should be noted, however, that the aim of the Conference is not to focus on the question of the emergence of villages in the Middle Ages.

Ultimately, the aim of this Conference is to lay the foundations for the study of villages and hamlets in Gaul. Many questions arise concerning this type of habitat, which must be taken into consideration in the approach to the ancient rural landscape. It is also to expand on the diversified panorama of the habitat's forms and on our better understanding of the diversity of the settlement and production's systems.

3. “Current Research” session

The morning of the 1stOctober will be devoted to current research. The talks will focus on recent researches devoted to the archaeology and/or history of rural Roman Gaul and neighbouring regions. Emphasis will be placed on synthesis works, remarkable recent discoveries, methodological approaches and interdisciplinary research projects.

4. Proposals for talks and posters

Talks (20 min for the main theme, 15 min for the “Current Research” session) and posters (A0 or A1) may be presented in English or French (posters will not be presented orally). Proposals for the main theme of the Conference and for the “Current Research” morning session must be sent **before 12 December 2021**. These proposals will be validated by the Scientific Committee.

Proposals must include:

- the title (in French and English)
- the contact details of the authors with their affiliation(s) and full contact details
- 5 keywords (in French and English)
- an abstract of 5000 characters maximum for the talks, 3000 characters maximum for the posters (in French and/or English)

The text document should be provided in .odt or .doc format, with the prefix JA_ (“Current Research”) or TH_ (main theme) preceding the name of the author. Please do not use styles.

Address for submission of proposals: agerXV@gmx.com

5. Publication of the proceedings

Papers and posters on the main theme of the Conference will be published. However, the modalities are not yet fully determined.

6. Organisation of the Conference

The conference will start on the morning of Wednesday 28 September 2022. The 28th, 29th and 30thSeptember will be devoted to the main theme of the Conference. A visit to the archaeological museum of Saverne is planned during these three days. The morning of the 1stOctober will be dedicated to the “Current Research” session. An outing to the museum of the Sarrebourg and a visit to an archaeological site are planned for the afternoon of the 1stOctober.

Registration for the conference will be open in spring 2022.

7. Organising Committee

Brkojewitsch Gaël	Metz Métropole, UMR 7299
Kuchler Philippe	Archéologie Alsace, UMR 7044
Meyer Nicolas	Inrap
Nüsslein Antonin	Ministère de la Culture, UMR7044

8. Scientific Committee

Brkojewitsch Gaël	Metz Métropole, UMR 7299
Georges-Leroy Muriel	Ministère de la Culture, UMR 6249
Favory François	Université de Franche-Comté, UMR 6249
Ferdière Alain	Université de Tours, UMR 7324
Flotté Pascal	Archéologie Alsace, UMR 7044
Leveau Philippe	Université Aix-Marseille, UMR 7299
Malrain François	Inrap, UMR 8215
Meyer Nicolas	Inrap
Monteil Martial	Université de Nantes, UMR 6566
Nouvel Pierre	Université de Bourgogne, UMR 6298
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Peytreman Edith	Inrap, UMR 6273
Raynaud Claude	CNRS, UMR 5140
Trément Frédéric	Université Clermont Auvergne, EA 1001

9. Institutional partners

- Archéologie Alsace : <https://www.archeologie.alsace/>
- Direction régionale des affaires culturelles – Région Grand Est : <https://www.culture.gouv.fr/Regions/Drac-Grand-Est>
- INRAP : <https://www.inrap.fr/>
- UMR 7044 – Archimède : <https://archimede.unistra.fr/>
- Ville de Sarrebourg : <https://www.sarrebourg.fr/>
- Ville de Saverne : <https://www.saverne.fr/>

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