

## SOUFFLENHEIM, A LOOK BACK INTO THE PAST

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*Soufflenheim, ein Rückblick in die Vergangenheit* (Soufflenheim, A Look Back Into the Past), written in German, is from the book *Soufflenheim, A Town in Search of its History*, pages 211-257.

Translated from German to English with DeepL Translator by Michael J. Nuwer, February 2024. More writings by Michael Nuwer can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/view/nuwerfamilyhistory/home>

*Soufflenheim, Une cité à la recherche de son histoire*, by Lucien Sittler, honorary archivist of the city of Colmar, Marc Elchinger, and Fritz Geissert, in conjunction with the Societe D'Histoire et D'Archeologie du Reid Nord, published by Valblor, Strasbourg, 296 pages, 1987.



View of Soufflenheim from the bridge over the Fallgraben, Jacques Gachot, 1953, Courtesy of Marc Elchinger

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### Note:

*Soufflenheim, ein Rückblick in die Vergangenheit* has much in common with *Soufflenheim, Une cité à la recherche de son histoire*. However, each has their own photographs, and information in the French version can differ from that in the German, an example of which is below in BOLD:

### Example of differences between French and German text.

From the French	From the German
<p>The village has formed itself in the first centuries of the Middle Ages, at a time when the Merovingian and Carolingian kings ruled the new born France, as its name can prove, probably around the VIIIth century.</p> <p><b>The historians indeed admit that the places whose name ends in “heim” are older than those whose names end in “bach, feld, dorf, haus, hof” and who formed themselves in the IXth and Xth centuries.</b></p> <p>What does the name Soufflenheim mean? It will be written from the XIIth century in different ways: Sufelnhem, Suvellheim, Suoflenhem, or Sauflenheim. It has been thought that the root could be the Celtic “sawell” which means burning oven and could apply to the old Soufflenheim potteries (1). It could so mark a continuity in</p>	<p>From the VI century to the VIII century, numerous villages were formed, often on the same sites as the previous ones. This was also the case for Sufflenheim, which was founded in the VIII century at the latest. century at the latest.</p> <p><b>Historians assume that the villages on heim auf - ingen are the older ones, and that the villages on: - bach, - feld, - dorf, - haus or -hof were formed later.</b> All the villages were small, consisting of a few farms with only a small population, which gradually increased.</p> <p>One would like to know what the name Sufflenheim means. Later, from the XII. Century, Sufelnheim, Suvelnheim, Suoflenheim also written Sauflenheim. Does the name come from the land, from a stream, from a person, the first owner? It can also be linked to the Suffel stream, which flows 30 km further south, Sufela in the Middle Ages, but the meaning of the name is not known</p>

settlement and life, this industry of baked clay having been exerted without interruption

here either. There is another interpretation: Heim: house, residence, settlement, home. **In the Franconian-influenced language area, this "heim" has become an "um": Süfflum.** Suvelnheim = home near the "Sawelln", i.e. near the furnaces.

## Soufflenheim, A Look Back Into the Past

Blessed by nature with riches and beauty, Alsace has been famous for centuries as a land of highly developed culture. But it is also admired for the creativity and achievements of its hard-working population. Agriculture and viticulture, the numerous industrial enterprises, the fruitful initiatives in the economic and intellectual fields and, last but not least, artistic creation have given the country its importance.

Sufflenheim, located in the north of Alsace, 30 km from Strasbourg and 15 km from Hagenau, is one of these villages famous for its artistic creations. For many centuries, it has been home to a pottery industry that has attracted the attention of the Alsatian population and an interested European public.

### I - TO PREHISTORIC TIMES.

The Sufflenheim pottery trade is due to the occurrence of layers of loam or clay in the Hagenau forest. This material is easy to mold and is also fireproof. These very important properties were already recognized by prehistoric man, who began to use these clays to make vessels.

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In distant geological times, millions of years ago, the streams of the Northern Vosges carried these materials and deposited them in thick banks covered by pebbles and sands. The Hagenau Forest was formed on the latter.

In the Neolithic period (around 5000-2000 BC), the first people settled in the area, on the edge of the dry terrace overlooking the wet Rhine lowlands. We have to imagine that dense forests, through which the streams meandered, stretched out everywhere; that these first people had to work very hard to survive. They built low huts covered with leaves and branches, kept domestic animals and devoted themselves to primitive agriculture. They sought out the better soils, not the damp lowlands, and used the forest for the necessary firewood and timber, as well as for grazing cattle. A first small community developed. However, it is not known where these people came from or which ethnic group they belonged to.

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Gradually, the lives of these people improved, especially during the Bronze Age, 2000 or 1800 years before Christ. They became acquainted with metals, first copper and then a compound of copper and tin called bronze, which was harder and much easier to use than soft copper. However, these metals were not found in our region, but came from distant lands. The settlers or new arrivals also devoted themselves

to agriculture, both in cleared areas in the forest and in the Rhine lowlands, although less so in the Ried, as it was too often flooded. The forest was also used in particular for fattening acorns for the herds of pigs.



Hagenau Historical Museum. Middle Bronze Age burial  
(1550-1200 BC). Hagenau Forest, canton of Kurzgeland, mound 7, burial II

Here, in the dry sandy soil, the dead also found their burial places, in tumuli, which can be found in large numbers in the vicinity of Sufflenheim.

In the last century, these burial mounds were investigated by an eminent archaeologist, Xavier NESSEL, mayor of Hagenau. He carried out numerous excavations and made rich finds: bones, axes, knives and other utensils, especially pottery in large numbers, in various shapes and sizes. These are kept in the Hagenau Museum.

At the beginning of our century, the Strasbourg archaeologist F.A. SCHAFFER studied these finds in detail and published a large-scale work with numerous illustrations: "Les tertres funéraires préhistoriques dans la forêt de Hagenau, Tome I" and "Les tumulus de l'Age de Bronze" (Hagenau 1926), which he followed up in 1930 with a second volume "Les tumulus de l'Age de Fer".

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In this work of great scientific value, he showed that these tumuli, small mounds of earth about 20 meters long and wide, are usually grouped in clusters of 20, 30 or more, especially near Sufflenheim. They testify that this place on the higher terrace was already settled in early times, where the Brumbach joins the Eberbach and where the Rhine lowlands are dominated. The "Kürzgeländ" plot near Sufflenheim contains 98 tumuli, while the "Weissensee - Oberfeld" plot contains 63. These are real necropolises, to which one can add those of the Donarberg. The name Donar-berg means that the mountain was dedicated to the Germanic deity Donar.

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Numerous clay dishes (mostly shards), which were added to the dead as offerings, were uncovered. The material used came from the clay pits near the village. These are still exploited by potters today. The original inhabitants of the area recognized the value of these clay deposits and used them to make vessels, cups, plates and platters. What is particularly striking, emphasized Mr. SCHAEFFER, is the beauty of the shapes and the diversity of the vessels, despite the limited technical means of those people. They are decorated with incised notches and strings and indicate great skill in their manufacture and a real sense of art. They bear witness to the well-developed civilization of these people, who lived here three or four thousand years ago in the peace of work.



Haguenau Historical Museum. Early Bronze Age burial  
(1800-1550 BC). Haguenau forest, canton of Donauberg, mound 12, burial I

As indicated by the tools and weapons found, these clay vessels date from the Bronze Age - from the second millennium BC - and it can therefore be said that the Sufflenheim pottery is the oldest and most authentic craft industry in Alsace.

Not much is known about the tribes that inhabited Alsace at that time. Professor J.J. HATT, curator of the Archaeological Museum of Strasbourg, calls them the "Protocelts". Around 1600 or 1500 BC, they came from the Swabian plateau and established settlements in the Haguenau forest. They devoted themselves less to agriculture than to animal husbandry and had an original culture. Agreeing with Mr. SCHAEFFER's statement, Professor HATT also notes the existence of an important pottery industry with elegant and noble forms.

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Towards the end of the Bronze Age, there were ethnic changes, often of a violent nature, but little is known about them. New groups of people, also of Celtic descent, came from Würtemberg or Bavaria and invaded Alsace. Around 800 BC, they possessed iron weapons and tools, marking the beginning of the Iron Age. While the previous population mainly farmed livestock, the new arrivals were more interested in agriculture. They also lived on the edge of the higher terrace. Their graves contain iron objects, bracelets,



fibulae, belt plates and poles, as well as various types of clay vessels, but less beautiful and less decorated than those of the Bronze Age. However, they show the continuity of settlement in the Sufflenheim area, as well as the continued existence of the pottery industry, which knew how to use the clay to make dishes and jugs.

In Roman times, in the last century BC, the area continued to be inhabited by Celts, who were joined by elements of the Germanic tribes. The main town was Brocamagus (Brumath). In the first centuries of the Christian era, the pottery of the Sufflenheim region was less popular, the Romans brought their artistic creations from Italy. New potteries were established in Alsace, in Heiligenberg, especially for the production of red sigillata pieces. However, the simple earthenware from Sufflenheim continued to be used by the long-established population. At the same time, brick and baking stone kilns were established near today's Schirrhof kiln. A Roman road from Brumath to the important station of Saletio (Seltz) passed through Sufflenheim.

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The Roman period came to an end at the beginning of the 5th century with the violent invasions of Germanic peoples: the Alemanni and, in the north of Alsace, the Franks. At various times, they crossed the Rhine and, after a century of unrest, insecurity and destruction, settled in the country. The Gallo-Roman population was for the most part destroyed or expelled. Whether the village of Sufflenheim survived is questionable. The Alemanni colonized most of Alsace as far as the Hagenau Forest, while the Franks came from the north, settled in the Weissenburg region and advanced as far as the Sufflenheim area. The two influences can still be seen in the language today.

From the VI century to the VIII century, numerous villages were formed, often on the same sites as the previous ones. This was also the case for Sufflenheim, which was founded in the VIII century at the latest. Historians assume that the villages on heim auf - ingen are the older ones, and that the villages on: - bach, - feld, - dorf, - haus or -hof were formed later. All the villages were small, consisting of a few farms with only a small population, which gradually increased. One would like to know what the name Sufflenheim means. Later, from the XII. Century, Sufelnheim, Suvelnheim, Suoflenheim also written Sauflenheim. Does the name come from the land, from a stream, from a person, the first owner? It can also be linked to the Suffel stream, which flows 30 km further south, Sufela in the Middle Ages, but the meaning of the name is not known here either. There is another interpretation: Heim: house, residence, settlement, home. In the Franconian-influenced language area, this "heim" has become an "um": Süfflum. Suvelnheim = home near the "Sawelln", i.e. near the furnaces.

## II - THE GRANGIA OF NEUBURG ABBEY.

Sufflenheim is only mentioned from the XIIth Century. In 1147, a bull from Pope Eugene III confirmed various properties in the area to the Cistercian Abbey of Neuburg, including the "Grangia de Suvelnheim".

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The Cistercian order was founded by St. Bernard at the beginning of the XIIth century. Century into being. Its originality consisted in the foundation of monasteries that cultivated large areas of land, called granges, where agriculture was of great importance as the monks carried out large-scale clearings. The order's first settlement in Alsace was Lützel in the extreme south of the country in the Alsatian Jura, close to the Swiss border. From here, members of the order moved to northern Alsace, appointed by Count

Reinhold von Lützelburg (near Zabern) and Frederick the One-Eyed of Hohenstaufen, Duke of Alsace and Swabia, who provided the monks with large tracts of land.

In 1133, the two princes founded Neuburg Abbey on the western edge of the Hagenau Forest, which they endowed with large donations. Here the monks built granges, provided with financial and legal rights, large farms with barns and stables, surrounded by fields, forests, meadows and pastures. Under their supervision, lay brothers cultivated the land, cleared vast tracts of land, which they converted into fields and provided the abbey with the fruits necessary for life through this flourishing agriculture (1). In this way, the Sufflenheim area was greatly supported by the Neuburg monks. Houses were gradually added to the Grangia; the village, which was of little importance at the beginning, grew more and more. Sufflenheim thus owes its upswing to the Cistercians of Neuburg.



Seal from 1362, Neuburg Abbey / Seal of Neuburg, "Jean-Abbé 1356  
Seal Museum (La Petite-Pierre).

After the confirmation of the abbey's goods by Pope Eugene III (2) in 1147, they were again confirmed by Pope Alexander III (1177); his bull states that the goods of Neuburg consisted of fields, meadows, waters, forests, cultivated and uncultivated pastures (3). Shortly afterwards, in 1208, Pope Innocent III reconfirmed this property of the abbey and repeated the decrees of his predecessors. The Grangia of Sufflenheim is mentioned each time (4). More important are the decrees and confirmations of the emperors, especially that of Frederick I Barbarossa. The document of 1156 confirms the ownership of the abbey and also mentions the "curia de Suvelnheim" (5).

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But a change in these decrees brought serious disadvantages to the abbey and also to Sufflenheim. An exact date is not known, but it is to be placed in the fifties of the XIIth century. There is only a "notitia" of the monks, not an official document: the donation of Count Reinhold von Lützelburg, which had been approved by the Duke of Alsace and Swabia, was modified by the Emperor. They had granted the

abbey "the third tree", i.e. the third part of the Hagenau forest. It is not clear whether the count had this right of disposal, as it stemmed from an inheritance. Emperor Frederick I of Hohenstaufen annulled the donation, thus securing possession of the entire forest and giving the abbey the farm of Selhofen (near Rothbach in the Northern Vosges) in return. The monks had to comply with the imperial order; the Notitia painfully notes this and only states the loss "propria quad habuimus... apud Suhvelnheim ac in Sacra Silva a Reinholdo comite...in foresto cum aliis bonis tertiam arborem..." This loss also affected Sufflenheim, where, however, the important farm, the Grangia of the monastery, continued to exist(6).

Another document, from Emperor Frederick I from 1158, grants the abbey the right to graze in the Holy Forest as well as the right to firewood (7). However, it makes no mention of the "third tree" of the forest.

Later, the emperors continued to confirm the abbey's ownership in the form always stated, for example in 1196, Emperor Henry VI, the son of Rothbart (8), in 1209, Otto IV (9), and in 1219, Frederick II, who took the abbey under his special protection and confirmed the right to graze in the forest and the right to firewood in addition to the ownership of the property (10). The abbey's ownership of Sufflenheim is always mentioned in these documents.

Abbé Grandidier, the great ecclesiastical historian of the end of the XVIIIth century, adds that the document of 1219 contains the following sentence, which is important for Sufflenheim: "after we (i.e. the Emperor) claimed this court, we took it according to our custom. He adds that the document of 1219 contains the important sentence for Sufflenheim: "After we (i.e. the emperor) claimed this court, we built it according to our custom, with the consent of the brothers of Neuburg and according to the will of the abbot (11). However, ownership of the Grangia passed to the emperor and it was divided between the two. The origin of the later imperial village of Sufflenheim can be traced back to this document.

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In 1291, King Rudolf of Habsburg reconfirmed the abbey's estates, including the Sufflenheim estate (12). In the XVIth century (1356) Emperor Charles IV did the same: among the estates is the Sufflenheim farm, "Curtem Sufflenheim cum juribus et appendiciis suis" (13).

Earlier, in 1215, the Abbot of Neuburg acquired two marshes known as the large and small "Hundelouwe". Brother Hartung, the cellar master, and Brother Rudolf "Magister", master of the court, examined the marshes and found them to be useful; they acquired them from "Lampertus de Suovilheim" (14).

A mill in Sufflenheim is mentioned in 1338 (15): the abbot of Neuburg had a pond built near the village with the permission of the ruler, Ludwig the Bavarian, which again demonstrates the sovereignty of the emperor.

Furthermore, in 1245 Selz Abbey sold the tithes of the farmers of the village of Sufflenheim to the Neuburg abbot (16).

Thus the abbot of Neuburg possessed property and rights under the sovereignty of the ruler in Sufflenheim (17). However, we do not know the details of these. The register that contained a copy of all the deeds, seen by Abbé Grandidier before the French Revolution, no longer exists. Either it perished at that time, or later when the Strasbourg library burned down during the German bombardment of the city in 1870, as L. PFLEGER assumes (1). Grandidier writes that folios 29 and 30 contain everything concerning the goods of the Abbey of Neubourg, which it owned in the village of Suvelnheim (concerne les biens que possède l'église de Neubourg dans le village appelé Suvelnheim).

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From the second half of the XVIth century onwards, as L. PFLEGER (1) writes, the abbey began to decline, particularly as a result of the plundering by the "English" in 1365 and again in 1375.



Emperor Sigmund confirmed the abbey's estates in 1417, but without listing the various farms in detail. Later (when?) the Grangia of Sufflenheim was probably leased, as was often the case for ecclesiastical estates. Grandidier states, but without referring to documents, that the abbey kept the farm in Sufflenheim for several centuries. He wrote this before the French Revolution (he died in 1787), and therefore still had a good knowledge of the situation. But a few years later, this revolution brought about the downfall of Neuburg: the buildings were destroyed and the important Cistercian settlement disappeared from the face of the earth.

### III - THE RICH VILLAGE OF SUFFLENHEIM.

Next to the Grangia of Neuburg Abbey was the village of Sufflenheim, which is only mentioned from the XIIIth century onwards. But, as the name testifies, it existed for a long time, but probably only as a modest community.

In 1245, the village is mentioned by its farmers (16). The document mentions the tithe, the customary tax that people had to pay to the church and the parish priest. As no precise details were given, this tax had existed for a long time, which presupposes the existence of a church, or at least a chapel.

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Shortly afterwards (1251), the young King Conrad IV certified that for the peace of mind of his deceased father (Emperor Frederick II, who had died in 1250), he exempted Neuburg Abbey from its levy, an annual interest that they had to pay for fields between the castle (castrum) of Sufflenheim and the forest and between the Brumbach and the Eberbach, and he forbade his Schultheiss of Hagenau to interfere with the abbey's ownership of these fields (18).

The document uses the word "castrum" but nowhere is there any mention of a fortification in Sufflenheim. Had the ruler started to build a castle? The document from 1219 mentioned above suggests this, where the word "aedificavimus", we (i.e. the emperor) have built, is found. In any case, the village had come into the possession of the ruler. Later documents attest to the fact that at the beginning of the XIIIth century, the sovereignty of the village had passed to the Empire and the Abbot of Neuburg only retained the use of his Grangia with fields and meadows. However, no further mention is made of a castle or fortification in Sufflenheim, as the Hohenstaufen dynasty collapsed and the Great Interregnum, the period without an emperor, began (1250-1273).

Subsequently, King Rudolf of Habsburg (1273-1293) endeavoured to collect estates and he established the imperial bailiwick of Hagenau, an organization on which, in the following times, besides the ten Alsatian imperial cities, forty villages in the surroundings of Hagenau depended: the imperial villages, including Sufflenheim (22).

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In 1331, King Louis the Bavarian decided that the citizens of Hagenau should release the two villages of Mommenheim and Sufflenheim, which had come in pledge to the Strasbourg knight Petermann von Duntzenheim, from this pledge; in future they would belong to the imperial sheriff's office of Hagenau and could no longer be pledged. In the following year, 1334, this knight declared that he was giving up all rights to the heathen villages and releasing the "Gebürschafft" of Sufflenheim from all claims on his part (19). This farming community was the parish of Sufflenheim.

In 1370, the then imperial bailiff Wenzel, son of Emperor Charles IV, promised that ten imperial villages, including Sufflenheim, would remain in the care of Hagenau and the mayor's office of Hagenau for as long as he held the imperial bailiwick (20).

Shortly afterwards, in 1372, Emperor Charles IV recommended that, by imperial decree, these villages should remain dependent on the care of Hagenau for all eternity and could not be pledged or lent in any way (21).

In the XVth century, we get to know the organization of the imperial bailiffs better. The villages depended on the Reichslandvogtei, also called Pflege Hagenau, directly from the Reichsschultheiss, who presided over the Reichsgericht of Hagenau; his court formed the Appelhof for the Reichsdörfer.

The Reichsschultheiss, who was directly subordinate to the Reichslandvogt, had councillors at his side, according to the regulations of 1527. A Zinsmeister was in charge of finance. He collected the taxes and interest, administered the levies collected in cash or in kind, took part in the administration of the Holy Forest and drew up the budget with income and expenditure. The forester and forester supervised the felling according to the established forest regulations, punished transgressions and forest crimes and kept an eye on the game population (22).

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The inhabitants of the imperial villages had to swear an oath of obedience and loyalty, similar to the citizens of Hagenau. For this purpose, the villagers of Sufflenheim had to go to Neuburg, which was more than 20 km away. This is a remnant of the former dependence on the abbey. Every time a new Reichslandvogt took office, the people of Sufflenheim owed this oath, either to the Reichslandvogt himself or to a Unterlandvogt.

The villages, at least the most important ones, had a court with a mayor. This was the case for Sufflenheim, while smaller villages in the area had to make use of the Sufflenheim court for their affairs.

The court was made up of seven aldermen drawn from the citizenry (perhaps the origin of the name Schoefter?), who were each appointed by co-optation. The Schultheiss presided over the hearings; he also supervised the appointments. The Schultheiss had to swear to act in the best interests of the realm and the village and to administer good justice (23).

Above the village court was the arcade court of Hagenau, which was presided over by the Reichsschultheiss; it served as a court of appeal for the village courts.

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The Schultheiss of Sufflenheim had to ensure public order, to supervise the work of the troops and to administer justice in court. Details are given for the year 1560: Heinrich SCHLIPPER has been appointed; he must undertake to keep a horse at his own expense, as well as a rifle, armor, spear and everything that belongs to a good armament. He swears obedience to the Reichsschultheiss, the Zinsmeister and the councillors of the Reichslandvogtei, promises to perform his office faithfully, to administer equal justice to all, and to protect the villagers in their rights and freedoms. Together with the forester and the foresters, he must also work in the forest and punish forest crimes and poaching. As remuneration, he receives 25 Rhenish guilders, 5 cubits of cloth and 6 cubits of fodder cloth for a winter coat. For the horse he receives 30 sacks of oats and 200 waves of straw. He has a quarter of the fines for poachers. He also has grazing rights for 4 pigs and the use of 10 meadows. Later, in 1600, he receives 40 guilders; the other privileges remain in place (24).

In addition to the Schultheiss, there was another village authority, the Heimburger, a kind of mayor, an institution that existed in most village communities in Alsace. For Sufflenheim, the Schultheiss court judges and three "Heimburgers of the village and parish of Sufflenheim" are mentioned in 1476 (25). The

Heimburger, with or without deputies, was elected annually by the inhabitants. He represented the interests of the community, had to administer its property and assets, make the accounts of income and expenditure, collect taxes and duties and represent the community to the outside world.

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There is no information as to when this organization of Schultheiss and Heimbürgers came into existence. As the Reichslandvogtei was established by Rudolf of Habsburg at the end of the XIIIth century, the various organizations were created shortly afterwards, at the beginning of the XIVth century. These institutions existed for several centuries with the same administrative facilities. In 1447, it is stated that the mayor and the court of Sufflenheim had to deal with the morality and disease police : if an inhabitant was suspected of having leprosy, they had to inform the Hagenauer Zinsmeister, who, accompanied by the Scherer-meister, examined the person concerned : if he was found to be "unclean", the court had to exclude him from the community (26).

The Schultheiss was responsible for maintaining public order and good morals. In 1616 (27), the then imperial bailiff, Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg, ordered the Schultheiss to report to him on any disorder and circumstances that arose.

The mayor of Sufflenheim complained about the lavish banquets at weddings and baptisms, especially about the excesses on the eve of weddings with drinking, singing, dancing, swearing, blasphemy and quarrels in the taverns. The document mentions a "Sauffelnheim order", but this could not be found. The Schultheiss also complained about the negligence of the work on the fronts: "When the bells ring for the fronts", some come straight away, but others are not in a hurry and come "over an hour later".

At this time, just a few years before the disastrous Thirty Years' War, the material situation of the peasants was good, they were able to indulge in feasting and feasting, and were not so particular about fulfilling their duties to the lordship, which suggests that the regime was not very harsh.

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What were the financial obligations of the citizens of Sufflenheim for "des riches pflegede zu der Stadt hagenau gehörig"? The information on taxes and duties can be found in the "Zinsmeisters Büchel von den Gefällen", for the years 1454-1456 (28).

According to this register (folios 12-15), Sufflenheim paid taxes called "wynacht bette", 14 pounds (28a) and the "Entebette" 10 pounds. There was then a body tax, "Schultheissen Wynacht lipbette geheissen", which amounted to 2 pounds, 10 shillings and 6 pfennigs. Another tax was the "Forstzinse" for gardens and meadows: 3 Schilling and 8 Pfennig. A special tax was levied on the stove-makers who paid the "Zinsmeister" 3 pounds annually for the earth and firewood required, as mentioned for example in 1576.

The register for the year 1500 gives the same information, especially for the Christmas tax and the harvest tax. The body tax concerns 116 citizens. Another document from the Hagenau town archives lists 126 paying citizens in 1476. If one counts 5 members for each citizen's family, the total population of Sufflenheim at that time amounted to 600 to 650 inhabitants. To these must be added a certain number of servants and maids, as well as assistants in the potteries, whose number is not given (perhaps a hundred), so that the total population of Sufflenheim for the XVth and XVIth centuries can be calculated at around 700 people. A rather high number compared to other imperial villages, which have significantly lower numbers. Mommenheim: 33 - Ohlungen: 30 - Batzendorf: 24 - Niederschaeffolsheim: 23 citizens. Thus Sufflenheim can be described as a large village until the XVIIth century.

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Other taxes levied on the inhabitants of the village were the Carnival hens, 118 in 1576, a forestry fee on Weiher, on the "Hundthuss", which was inhabited by the foresters, and 3 sacks of fruit from the mill.

The inhabitants had to carry out corvée work, as was customary in all Alsatian villages, and especially for the imperial villages, which found protection and help in Hagenau in times of danger. The people of Sufflenheim had to "crown" with horses and carts for the lords and officials of the imperial bailiwick (ordinance of 1527), for example making and driving wood, working 18 man-mats for them and providing fruit and wine carts. For example, it is stated that 80 people from Sufflenheim were given food for cutting wood; in 1536, 75 wagons and 250 people from Sufflenheim were needed to load and unload wood. However, the number of days required for the work is not given.

The register of 1454 also lists the fines imposed on the inhabitants of the imperial villages and collected by the master of the interest; for quarrels and disputes, for cattle offenses, for letting cattle graze in forbidden parts of the forest ("überlouff der swine im Forste"), for timber offenses, for unauthorized clay extraction or taking the earth from another potter.

Sometimes disputes arose between Sufflenheim and Hagenau, for example, in 1496, the then imperial bailiff Elector Philip of the Palatinate wrote to the lower bailiff Jacob von Fleckenstein that he was negotiating with the town of Hagenau about the dispute concerning grazing rights and firewood, which was dividing the town and the villages; he demanded that the town release the prisoners, return the horses and conclude a settlement between the two parties.

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On another occasion, a dispute arose between the inhabitants of Sufflenheim and the Niedheimer von Wasenburg family (1606-1608) over a district with a pond in the Sufflenheim ban, which the villages had plundered while the Niedheimers had rights there. Burial slabs of the Niedheimers were placed in the Olberg chapel.

#### **IV - THE POTTERS OF SUFFLENHEIM.**

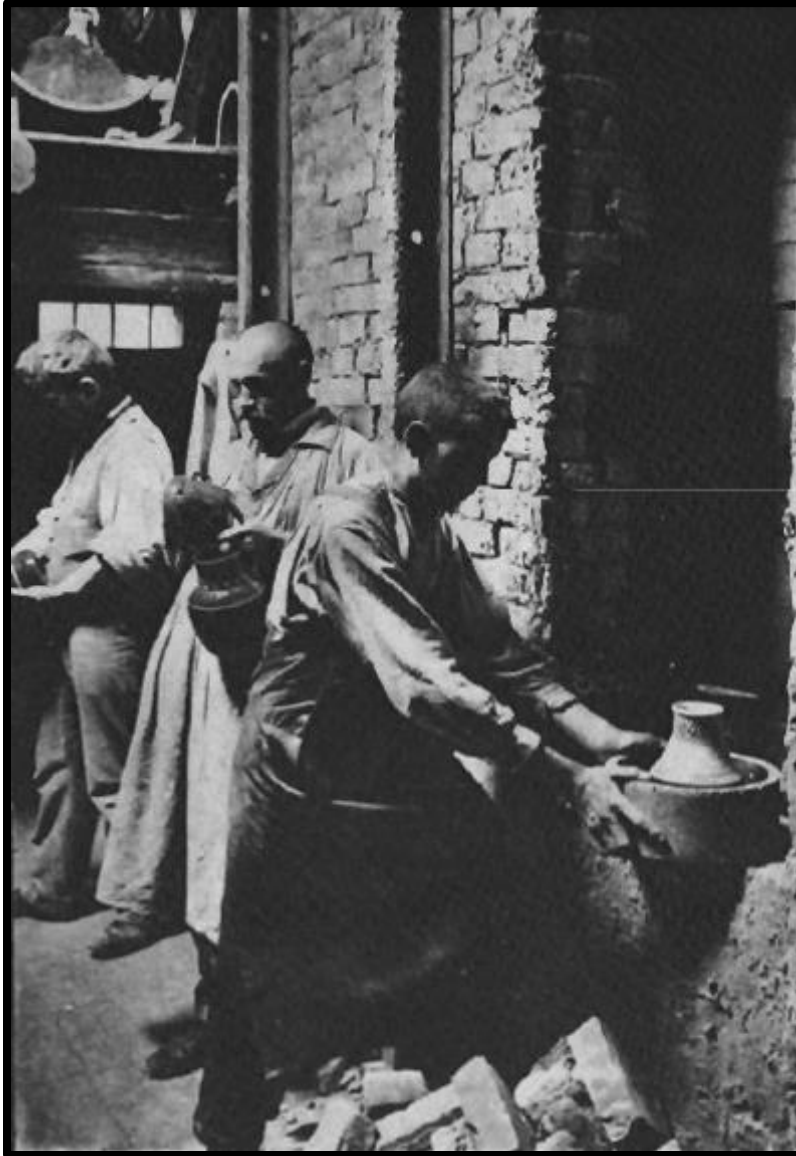
During the Middle Ages, the Sufflenheim potteries continued to manufacture and sell their products throughout the country. Their activity was only slowed down or even interrupted by the many wars that often ravaged Alsace. For a long time, however, the documents remain silent about the trade; it is only from the XVth century onwards that we get some information.

Let us recall, echoing a very old tradition, the legend according to which Emperor Frederick I, Barbarossa, who built the imperial palace in Hagenau, gave the young town its status (1164) and enjoyed hunting in the Hagenau forest, gave the potters of Sufflenheim the right to dig clay free of charge in the Hagenau forest, which they needed for their trade. The legend is told in two ways : while hunting in the forest, the emperor (or his son) was attacked by a wild boar and was in mortal danger ; a potter who was working nearby rushed over and saved the prince. In gratitude, he gave the Sufflenheim potters the specified right. A second version tells that the potters gave the emperor a nativity scene with numerous figures made of clay. In return, he granted them the right to dig clay free of charge. A document is said to have been kept in the town hall of Sufflenheim, but it was destroyed when the building burned down during the Thirty Years' War. However, the tradition of the right to take pottery earth free of charge remained alive.

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What do the documents say? In 1435, a settlement was reached between Count Palatine Ludwig, imperial bailiff from 1437-1449, and the town of Hagenau: the potters of Hagenau and Sufflenheim could use the pieces of felled trees, waste wood and all wood that was not used for construction purposes for

their trade. The potters, known as "Schiisseldreher", thus possessed this pre-existing right, which was held by the people of the Grangia of Neuburg Abbey.

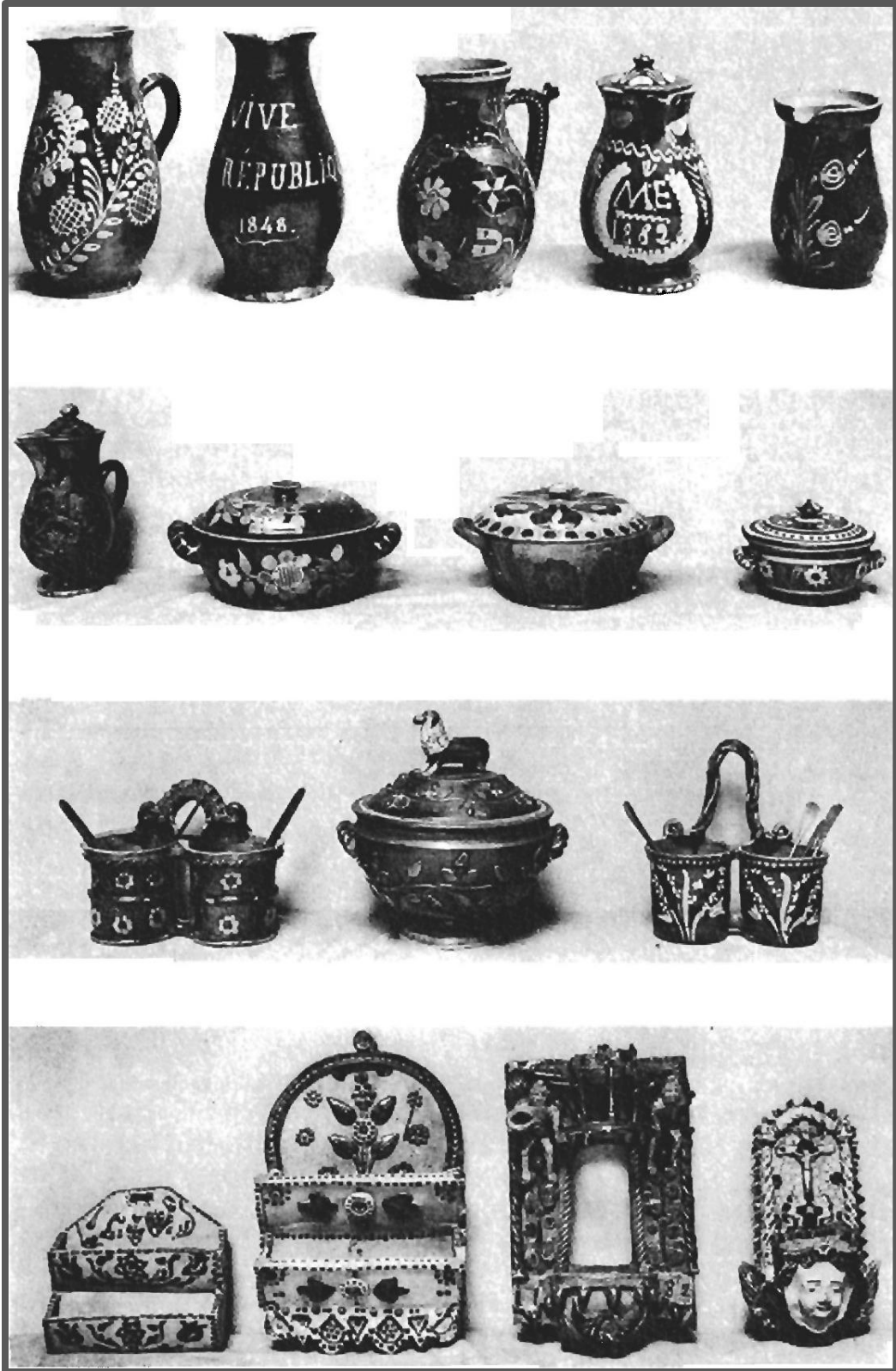


Potter Ph. Elchinger installing the kiln (1880)

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In 1454, the potters of Sufflenheim owed the bailiwick of Hagenau 3 pounds as a tax for the extraction of potter's earth ("3 liber habent mir die Hafner von Sufelnheim geben von der Erden zu graben und von Holz reth"). This sum had to be paid annually; in 1576, for example, the clerk of the master of the interest register noted in his register: "Von Gruben zu Suffelnheim, bestendigt: von Hafner zu Suffelnheim zu Grubgeld empfangen 2 lieber, 10 Schilling". The stove makers had the clay free of charge, but had to pay a tax for the removal.

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Ceramic from Soufflenheim (19th century)



In the last centuries of the Middle Ages, the trades in Alsace had their own organization, the guilds. This was also the case for the stove-makers of Sufflenheim, but we do not know the date of their foundation, it is probably in the XIIIth century. In 1442, the city of Strasbourg sent a letter to the "Antwerck gemeintlich der Hafener zu Sufelnheim". The word "gemeintlich" means the entirety of the Hafner, i.e. their association, guild or brotherhood. Strasbourg writes that the stove-makers of Sufflenheim have changed the size of their ware, which is "of old", and that the town wants Sufflenheim to return to the old format, as it was before: "make the ware of the port in the sizes it was forty years ago". The harbour owners had also increased their prices, so Strasbourg said that this increase was not justified and that they should return to their previous prices. The trade should send three of its members to Strasbourg to negotiate these matters and bring them to a good end. At that time, the stove makers' trade was well organized to be able to discuss with the Strasbourg municipality on an equal footing.

At this time, there was a large association of all the potters in this region, between Strasbourg and Ravensvurg (north of Lake Constance), which therefore included the potters of Alsace and a large part of southern Germany. Their annual meetings took place in Breisach. However, it has not been possible to determine whether the Sufflenheim potters belonged to this association, but it can be assumed that they did.

In the following years, the Sufflenheim stove-making trade continued, but the Thirty Years' War, from 1618-1648, almost brought it to an end. In 1622, Sufflenheim was plundered by the troops of General Ernst von Mansfeld, the parish hall went up in flames and all the documents were burnt. A little later (1632), the Swedes invaded Alsace and the country suffered terribly. In the following years, which became a general theater of war, all parties of the warring powers lived here in the most cruel way. The soldiers plundered, burned and killed the population, who suffered terribly from famine and epidemics. We do not learn anything specific about Sufflenheim, but the village fared no better than hundreds of other villages.

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In 1648, after the Peace of Westphalia, Sufflenheim and most of the land came under the French crown. The wars of King Louis XIV continued to bring difficult times with troop crossings, requisitions and plundering. Gradually, only at the beginning of the XVIII. It was not until the beginning of the XVIIIth century that peaceful times returned and the potters were able to resume their trade.

In 1682, the High Royal Council of Alsace (Conseil Souverain d'Alsace) confirmed the order of the stove makers in Alsace between Strasbourg and Basel, but only repeated the decrees that Emperor Ferdinand II had given in 1622. These were based on older regulations that were no longer observed due to the long period of war. In 1688, nine harvesters from Sufflenheim were subjected to the old taxation for the removal of alumina. Between 1696 and 1701, these nine potters had difficulties with the administration because they had collected earth without paying the tax. As nine potters were cited each time, it can be assumed that only this small number of potters existed at that time due to the war.

The regulations of the brotherhood (known as the Confrerie) between Strasbourg and Basel were confirmed again in 1725 and 1740 in 43 articles: only registered potters could produce and sell pottery items, while foreign potters were only allowed to sell their products at fairs. The Sufflenheim potters probably belonged to this brotherhood, which came to an end with the French Revolution.

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## V - CHURCH AND PARISH.

The oldest mentions date back to the XIII and XIV centuries. The tithe is mentioned in 1245, but the beginnings of the parish go back much further. It is not known whether there was a chapel in the Grangia of Neuburg Abbey; in any case, it is very likely that the beginnings of the parish are to be found here.

Around 1350, "Ludovicus rector ecclesie Suvelnheim", who accepted citizenship in Hagenau, as well as "Arnoldus sacerdos vice plebanus" are mentioned. A rector is the parish priest of an already important parish, who usually has a "plebanus" or "lieutenant priest" at his disposal, the clergyman for the people, as the name indicates, while the rector, who enjoys the main benefices, is not always present.

In 1371, the parish is mentioned again as well as the plebanus and also a "primissarius", the early sacristan who reads the first mass. In the XVth century, Emperor Sigismund levied the so-called royal tithe from the parishes (1419); "conrat SCHILLING, Kirchherr und Erzpriester zu Sufelnheim" and the early sacristan are mentioned. These details indicate a large parish with several clergymen. It initially depended on the Beinheim archipresbyterate, then (1454) it belonged to the "Unter-Hagenau" rural chapter of the diocese of Strasbourg. In 1486, there was also a chaplaincy of St. Wendel, the popular and much invoked shepherd saint and protector of domestic animals. The chaplain is mentioned again in 1492, as is an altar to the saint.

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The tithe belonged to the ruler Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg bestowed one third on several members of the family. Reinbold, Gross and Hüffel (as well as a third of the tithes of Sessenheim, Runtzenheim and Dalhunden). In 1540, Emperor Ferdinand confirmed this property to the members of the Hüffel family.

The Reformation did not find its way into Sufflenheim, as the House of Habsburg, owner of the imperial bailiwick, was a defender of Catholicism. The right of patronage (the right to appoint the parish priest) belonged to the Abbot of Surburg and came to the Chapter of Hagenau in 1758. After the terrible Thirty Years' War and its destruction, the religious situation had to be restored and the parishes rebuilt.

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In 1660, the vicarage had to be repaired and this led to a conflict between the parish and the tithing lords who, as the collectors of the tithes, had to maintain the religious buildings. At that time, the tithe was divided between the parish priest and the nobles of Hüffel and Steinkallenfels. In 1662, the Sufflenheim church owned 22 acres of land and the vicarage included a house, barn and stables.

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The "visitation report" of the diocese of Strasbourg dates from 1666. It mentions Mary as the patron saint (which is a mistake, however) because the church had a Marian altar and a rosary brotherhood. Grandidier reports that the Archangel Michael was the patron saint of the church, although he is only mentioned as such from 1758 onwards (to this day, St. Michael is the patron saint of the church and he also appears on the coat of arms of the village). The church had three altars: the high altar, dedicated to St. Michael, the altar of St. Mary and the altar of St. Wendelin. However, we do not know the appearance of the church, its architectural style and other decorations. There are also no documents about any restoration of the church after the wars of the XVIIth century.



Way of the Cross (1880), Paul Messmer

The report from 1666, twenty years after the end of the Thirty Years' War, states that the parish had only 30 souls, a rather modest number, but one which testifies to the heavy losses caused by the war. The situation was no better for other villages. Beinheim and Leutenheim together had 59 souls. The parish had no priest, it was served by a priest "Pater Societatis e Missione Beinheimensi".

The turbulent period of the French Revolution and the persecution of priests who had refused to swear allegiance to the constitution saw the exile of the parish priest Ign. Lempfried, who only returned after religious pacification and was replaced in 1818 by Franz Thannberger, who came from Blotzheim in Sundgau. Under his leadership, the present church was built over a period of six years from 1825 onwards and was solemnly consecrated on October 2, 1831.

There were no longer any documents relating to the demolition of the old church or the construction of the new church. Having died in 1837, the venerable, long-serving priest is buried next to the church entrance.



Way of the Cross - Odile mountain, Léon Elchinger

## VI - SUFFLENHEIM FROM THE XVIIITH CENTURY ONWARDS.

As previously reported, Sufflenheim suffered greatly during the vicious Thirty Years' War. The troops of General von Mansfeld plundered the village in November 1621 and again in May 1622, when Sufflenheim, along with other villages, went up in flames. A letter from the Reichslandvogtei Hagenau to the Habsburg government (1624) states that it is impossible to collect the taxes as the villages have been completely ruined by the war.

The years from 1632 onwards were the most unfortunate for the Alsatian rural population and certainly also for Sufflenheim. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 brought a major political change; the imperial bailiwick, together with the imperial villages, was granted to the French crown and the French king appointed a French imperial bailiff.

Alsace was badly affected by the long years of war. As the bishop's visitation report of 1666 states, Sufflenheim had only 40 inhabitants. In 1658, the ban was re-examined to determine the property of the citizens; shortly afterwards (1662), an assessment determined 60 farms, which were probably in poor condition. The wounds inflicted by the war were slow to heal. At that time, the ban comprised 511 fields and 291 meadows, 169 of which were communal estates.

But the region was once again plagued by warlike events, first the Dutch War (1673-78), which led to the burning of the town of Hagenau by French troops (1677), then the war of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697); in 1694, the troops of the imperial general, Prince Louis of Baden, invaded northern Alsace and plundered the villages along the Rhine, looting livestock and supplies and advancing as far as Brumath. The War of the Spanish Succession at the beginning of the XVIII. In 1702, the Margrave of Baden advanced as far as the Moder and established his headquarters in Bischweiler. Once again, the villages had to suffer greatly from the passage of troops and requisitions. In 1705-1706, the fortress of Fort-Louis, founded by Vauban on the orders of the French king, was besieged by imperial troops, who lay in the Sufflenheim area during the winter, taking cattle and supplies from the farmers until the French marshal Villars recaptured the area. There were no battles at Sufflenheim, but the population suffered greatly from the outrages of the armies and the constant threat of war.

As a result of these events, the economic situation was once again thrown into disarray and the ban of Sufflenheim had to be renewed in 1685. The population had increased only slightly; in 1693 there were 60 families and 200 communicants, and the village had around 400 inhabitants. The XVIII. Century then brought a long period of peace and allowed the village to recover well. In the sixties, after the Thirty Years' War, the government and lords in the surrounding countries had already issued and subsequently renewed calls for immigrants. Numerous people, especially from southern Germany, responded to the call and actively helped to rebuild the village. Agriculture developed again and trade and commerce made rapid progress.

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When a necessary renewal of the ban was carried out in 1722, Sufflenheim had 189 houses, which may have amounted to a population of around 1000 souls. Fifty years later, in 1778, 180 Catholic families and 800 communicants were counted. The increase in population continued, and by 1800 the number of inhabitants had risen to 1547. In the XIX century, this increase continued at an accelerated rate to reach 3000 in the middle of the century.

However, there were more bad days in the course of the War of the Austrian Succession. Under the command of Prince Charles of Lorraine, the Pandurs or Redcoats invaded northern Alsace in July 1774, followed by the Austrian troops under the command of General Bärenklau, who besieged Fort-Louis and plundered the villages near the Rhine, including Sufflenheim. Charles of Lorraine took up his headquarters in Hagenau and his units advanced towards Zabern. The French army, under the command of Marshals de Noailles and Belle-Isle, took the offensive and forced the Austrians to retreat through the Hagenau forest. They hurriedly threw up earth ramparts in front of Sufflenheim. The French attacked again and, on August 23, a fierce battle ensued. The Austrians suffered heavy losses (two thousand dead) and had to retreat. Another battle took place during the night; the French troops under Marshal Belle-Isle inflicted heavy losses on their opponents (1200 dead). The Austrians hastily retreated via Fort-Louis and crossed the Rhine at Beinheim and Selz. But the Pandurs had inflicted heavy damage on the Alsatian population and left the worst possible memory.

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The wars at the time of the French Revolution once again brought great difficulties to northern Alsace. Time and again, troops passed through and the people had to supply them with provisions, wagons and horses. As a result, they suffered severe hardship.

The French Revolution also brought about an administrative change with the creation of departments, districts and cantons. In 1790, Sufflenheim belonged to the canton of Fort-Louis. However, this canton was dissolved a few years later (1800) and the villages were incorporated into the canton of Bischweiler.

In the XIXth century, Sufflenheim grew rapidly and became the largest village in Alsace. On the eve of the French Revolution, there were 200 families, which corresponded to a population of 1000 to 1200 inhabitants, but in 1812, the number had reached 2000; in 1851, 3000. This figure rose to almost 4000 at the beginning of the XXth century. Around 1900, the number of houses amounted to 695.

In economic terms, the population devoted itself to agriculture and trade in the last century. Statistics from 1866 show 1017 farmers, 450 people in trade and industry and 174 people in the food industry. Agriculture and animal husbandry fed a large part of the population, who managed medium-sized and numerous small farms. Land ownership was very fragmented. At the end of the century, there were 865 ha. fields and 387 ha. The livestock amounted to 120 horses, 476 cattle and 318 pigs.

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Church choir "Caecilia" (1923)





Gymnastics club "Aloisia" (1923)

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At this time, new businesses were added to the old stove-making trade, particularly for refractory products and brickworks, where a certain number of workers found their livelihood. The majority of families lived modestly and wages were low. There were no sickness or pension funds. The pottery industry continued to give Sufflenheim a good reputation far and wide and employed many people; it still consisted of family businesses.

In the course of time, other charitable buildings were erected which adorned the village. A girls' school is mentioned in 1790; there was also a schoolmaster at that time, so there was also a boys' school. A new boys' school was built between 1869 and 1871. A new town hall was built in 1828. The old church stood on a small elevation surrounded by a cemetery (which was probably originally fortified). The new church was built between 1825 and 1831 and the old cemetery was replaced by a new one in 1874.

For a long time, connections to the outside world were poor. Since the construction of the Strasbourg-Hagenau railroad line (1855), mail and passenger transportation to Bischweiler was carried out by horse-drawn vehicles. The distribution of industrial products, especially pottery, was also carried out by horse-drawn carts. After the Strasbourg-Lauterburg railroad line was built in 1876, it went to nearby railroad stations such as Sessenheim. It was not until 1894 that the Rastatt-Hagenau line was built, which brought a station to Sufflenheim (1895).

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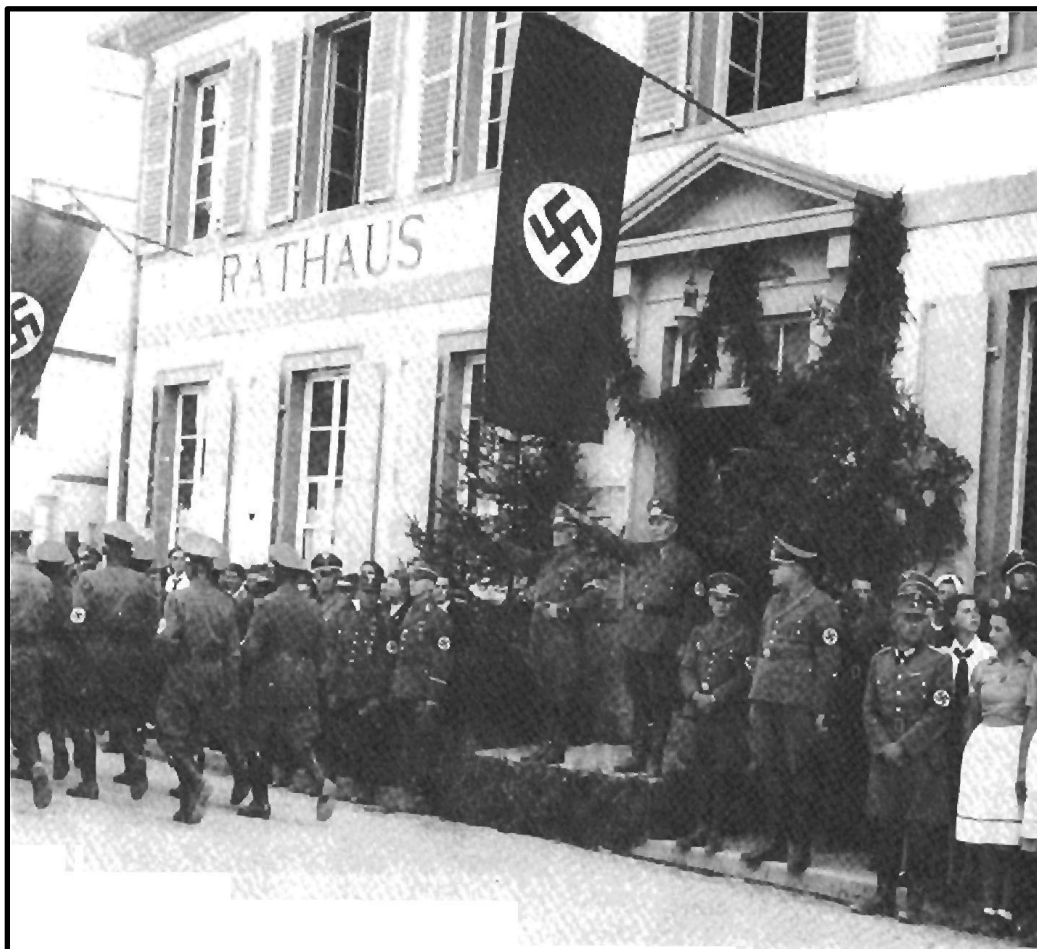
Political events affected Sufflenheim, as they did the whole country. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-75 led to the annexation of Alsace to the German Empire. The First World War claimed the lives of many of the village's young people. After the German defeat, Sufflenheim returned to France in November 1918. But the peace was short-lived. Very soon the war spirit developed again in Germany; France felt threatened and had to build the Maginot Line with its numerous fortifications along the Rhine (1930). The Second World

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In September, the population was evacuated. With heavy hearts, the inhabitants of Sufflenheim had to leave their homes, farms and businesses. They were sent to the department of Haute-Vienne in the southwest of France, where they were poorly housed and hoped to return home soon. However, this did not come as expected or desired. After the unfortunate campaign, Hitler's Germany annexed Alsace in July 1940 without any right or treaty. Sufflenheim had suffered severely from bridge demolitions, a certain number of houses were damaged or even destroyed. The returning inhabitants of Sufflenheim found their village in a sad state.

War broke out in 1939 and Sufflenheim suffered greatly.

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Soufflenheim occupied in 1942

For several years, the people endured the harsh Nazi dictatorship. But then, in the winter of 1944-1945, when the defeated German troops had abandoned France in a hurry, Soufflenheim became part of the front line. The Germans defended northern Alsace against the invading Americans. And so it was that the fighting in the Soufflenheim area was long and vicious; the village suffered from heavy shelling, so that part of the population left their homeland for a second time and found shelter in the department of Haute-Saone, in the Vesoul area. It was not until March 17, 1945 that Soufflenheim was liberated by the offensive of the 1st French Army under General De Lattre De Tassigny by General Guillaume. But the destruction and damage was significant; 50% of the houses, as well as the church, were bombed. When the population was able to return in May, they had great difficulty in rebuilding and repairing the damage. The village was cited in the French army order and awarded the War Cross 1939-1945.



Soufflenheim liberated (March 17, 1945)

The work was again very actively tackled, not only for the reconstruction, but for the whole economic life. New conditions soon emerged and there were numerous and significant changes in agriculture and trade. The newly emerging industry attracted a large workforce and the number of workers increased sharply. Agriculture, on the other hand, declined sharply; in the sixties, only 15 farms remained. The refractory

factories employed almost 400 people and other industries such as shoe factories, a sawmill and wood processing expanded. The age-old pottery industry with its family businesses was able to survive despite some difficulties.

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## VII - SUFFLENHEIM POTTER, YESTERDAY AND TODAY.

In the old days, pottery was the great specialty of Sufflenheim and gave the village its reputation. However, not many early testimonies have been preserved. From the XVIII. Several vessels preserved in the Alsace Museum in Strasbourg date from the XVIIIth century; from 1773, 1782, 1790, 1799, as well as beautiful pieces from the XIXth century (1825, 1831, 1833, etc.).

The importance of the trade was highlighted above all by a major lawsuit brought by the municipality against the town of Hagenau and the state over the extraction of clay from the Hagenau forest and the potters' right to do so. During and after the French Revolution, they exercised this right in a so-called "wild" manner, extracting clay at will and free of charge, without asking for rights. Now, however, the town of Hagenau and the state, as owners of the forest, objected to this practice. The potters then demanded official recognition of their centuries-old use. The process began in 1831 and lasted twelve years. An initial ruling by the Strasbourg court in 1833 granted the Hafner the right to exploit the forest's clay pits free of charge. The state and the town of Hagenau opposed this and demanded that the potters prove their "immemorial possession (=possession immémoriale=) established since time immemorial" by means of deeds and legal titles or expert opinions (1835).

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In reality, there were no documents. The old tradition, which referred to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, could not be used as evidence. But the community of Sufflenheim called witnesses, namely older people from the village and neighboring communities. Six elderly people between the ages of 79 and 86 testified in court that the stove makers had always fetched the clay for free in the days of their fathers and grandfathers, thus confirming that the stove maker's right dated back to before 1700 and certainly existed before that, i.e. long before the introduction of the "Code Civil" (1804). Thus, on July 1, 1843, the court handed down its judgment confirming the first judgment of 1833: officially, the Hafner were granted the right to extract clay from the pits of the Hagenau forest free of charge. Since then, no further objections have been raised.

In the course of the XIXth century, the pottery industry in Sufflenheim took off. In 1837 there were 55 workshops, in 1872 there were still 43, employing around 600 people. In 1891, the number had reached 50 again; all were family businesses dedicated to a real craft.

Pottery was sold at the markets and fairs in Alsace on the one hand and by itinerant traders throughout the country and beyond in Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria, Lorraine and further east in France as well as in Upper Alsace and Switzerland on the other. The "Gschirrmann" with his two-wheeled cart was popular everywhere. Others traveled further into the country with horse-drawn carts. The products were mainly intended for the kitchen - pots, bowls, jugs, platters and tureens (for sauerkraut or baked coffee), plates and cups, cake tins for Kugelhopf in particular; some were round, others shaped like figures, often symbolic, star, fish, lamb, doll and others.

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Decoration with grinding horn.

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The simple pottery products were brown and yellow or yellow-grey in color, especially milk pots and various jugs, all covered with glaze. Plates and bowls were decorated with drawings and decorative patterns, with plant motifs and flowers, more or less stylized, also with animals such as roosters, birds, fish and rabbits. In addition to the kitchenware intended for everyday use, there were already large numbers of flower vases decorated with patterns, as well as the usual reddish-brown flower pots. Early on, articles of simple folk art were added, especially of a religious nature, holy water pots, Christ on the cross, small statues of saints. The skilled potter was able to produce not only very popular but also quite original ceramic items.

In general, the potters continued to use the old motifs; new patterns and shapes were also added, the colors changed and enriched. The original colors, especially brown-red, remained predominant, but the potters introduced new ornaments in yellow, blue or green. Black or black-brown made it possible to achieve stronger contrasts. In general, the colors became more intense and friendlier. On the whole, however, the Sufflenheim stove-makers continued to be practitioners of a lively folk art and thus enriched Alsatian folklore. This is still the case today |

Towards the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century, however, the pottery trade suffered severe setbacks due to the emergence of kitchen utensils in cast iron, enamel and aluminum. This resulted in a real decline. Before the First World War (1914), only around 30 businesses remained and the number continued to fall after 1920; by 1930 there were only 20 pottery workshops left.

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After the Second World War, and especially after 1960, the trade experienced a new upswing due to its artistic character. A wide public, both French and international, became interested again in the beautiful Sufflenheim pottery, and in the kitchen utensils required by a refined gastronomy, platters and tureens, but also in decorative pieces: ashtrays, flower vases, fruit bowls, objects of various kinds to decorate the home, which, as "souvenirs d'Alsace", interest and delight numerous tourists. Today, Sufflenheim pottery is highly appreciated by a large number of customers.

Art ceramics deserve a special place. Various realizations of the XIXth century show the attempts to use fired clay for works of art. A holy water font in the Alsace Museum in Strasbourg bears the date 1782. A crucifixion of Christ from 1818 can be found on a grave in the Sufflenheim cemetery. A Christ on the Olberg and the apostles in natural size (from the chapel of the old cemetery) date from the first years of the XIXth century. The small museum in Sufflenheim has a collection of statues and statuettes dating from 1823, 1838 and 1866, in particular the Virgin Mary with the dead Christ on her lap. The walls of the present cemetery are decorated with relief panels depicting the fourteen stations of Christ's Passion, the work of Paul MESSNER in 1885, who also built and painted the much-appreciated cemetery chapel.

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Towards the end of the century, a talented young ceramist, Leon ELCHINGER, began to develop a fruitful artistic activity. In 1892, he decorated the façade of the School of Applied Arts in Strasbourg; in 1895, he created a large wall fountain for the Museum of Bern. His works met with great approval and success at exhibitions, for example in New York (1895), Paris (1900) and Turin (1902). Friendly with CH. SPINDLER and other Alsatian artists, especially the sculptor RINGEL d'ILLZACH, L. ELCHINGER took an active part in the upswing of artistic life in Alsace from 1900 onwards.

Between 1920 and 1930, Sufflenheim ceramics produced several memorials to the dead of the First World War, which were decorated with large multicolored bas-reliefs, namely the Pieta at St. Nicholas' Cemetery in Hagenau, the resurrected Christ in Niederbronn and Christ on the cross in Richtolsheim. Other ceramic creations included statues of Christ, the Nativity, the Mother and Child, and statues of saints. Statuettes of Alsatian women in traditional costume and groups of young Alsatians can also be cited as fine examples of artistic ceramics.

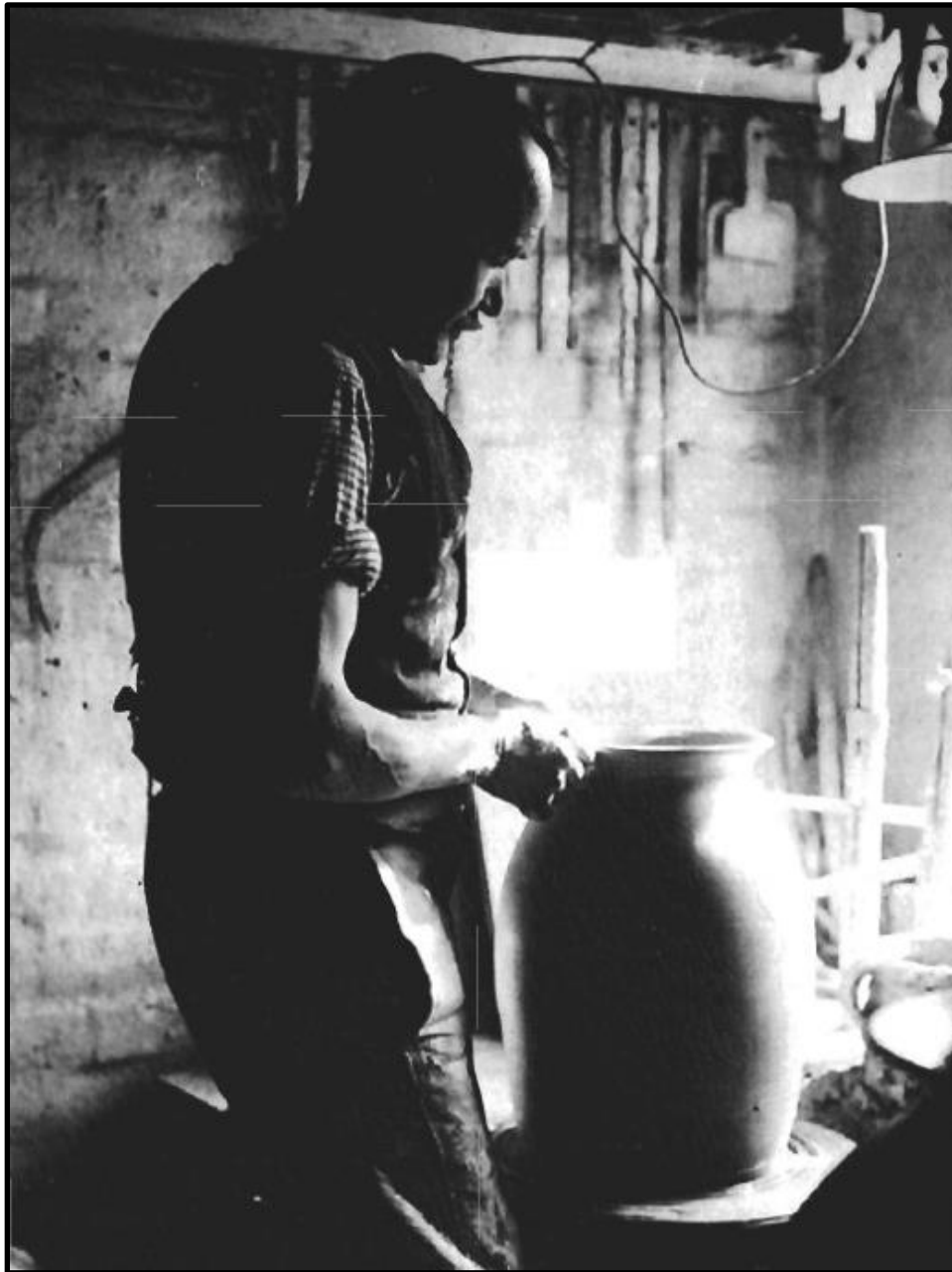
In the old cemetery near the church in Sufflenheim there is a large-scale depiction of the Last Supper, with life-size figures, based on the famous painting by Leonardo DA VINCI, which was created in the studio of L. ELCHINGER (1932).

The masterpiece of this artistic ceramics remains the monumental Stations of the Cross on the Odilienberg, very expressive and original, carried by deep religious feeling, a technically outstanding achievement by L. ELCHINGER (1933-35). The Stations of the Cross in the Basilica of Notre-Dame de Lourdes in Nancy, by the same master (1936-37), should also be mentioned. A crucifixion group at the



southern exit of Sufflenheim (1937) concludes the work of L. ELCHINGER, whose realizations are unique in France. He died in 1942, his son Fernand continued the art-ceramics business, while another son was elevated to the episcopal see of Strasbourg.

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The turner on his disc.

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In this diverse way, the Sufflenheim potters carry on traditional but also innovative work in their family businesses, creating products of good taste and beauty that find favor and carry the reputation of Sufflenheim ceramics as true folk art all over the world.

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