

## SOUFFLENHEIM EXCAVATION ROEDERN SUBDIVISION

Alsace, Bas-Rhin, France

Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History  
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In 1999, in the Roedern area of Soufflenheim near the border with Sessenheim, archaeologists unearthed a hatchet and two bracelets from the Late Bronze Age and two bronze rings. Excerpts from the *Roedern Subdivision Archaeological Assessment Report* by Francoise Jeudy and Francoise Schneikert.



Soufflenheim, Roedern subdivision. General view of the survey. Photo F. Schneikert, Afan, 1999

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

“The expansion of the Roedern housing tract in the town of Soufflenheim led to an archaeological assessment operation carried out in the town of Soufflenheim prior to the creation of a subdivision and covered a plot of 3.4 ha.

Five bronze objects and ten excavated structures have been unearthed.

The bronze objects consist of an ax with fins and grip ring, two bracelets with decorations ribbed in relief, and two large oval rings with striated decorations. The ax and bracelets are dated Bronze final IIIb because they have typical elements. The dating of the two large rings are not known.

The movables collected in the various excavated structures shows that they are not associated with the ax, bracelets and rings. These structures were attributed to the Hallstatt period and are certainly related to a habitat partially destroyed by erosion.

The archaeological operation carried out in the town of Soufflenheim is characterized by the discovery of the five bronze objects and especially by the presence of a type of ring unknown for the moment.” (Jeuzy and Schneikert, 1999, p. 7)



Soufflenheim, Roedern subdivision. A Bronze axe with fins and gripping rings, two bracelets with ribbed decoration and two large oval rings decorated with transverse striations. Photo F. Schneikert, Afan, 1999

### Archaeological Context (Figure 3)

In the town of Soufflenheim, archaeological information has been identified on the Alsace Archaeological Map. Thus, near the project, within a radius of 700 m, a tumor necropolis is reported at the locality "Obermattwald" (3AH) and a tumulus (1AH) at the northern end of the housing estate. Roman times is represented by abundant finds of ceramics, tiles and iron slag at the locality "Eisenbaeche" (10AH), as well as by a fibula (7AH). An ancient sighting reports, to the north of the town, a funeral pyre in a fitted pit (5AH) which, according to the author, would be an ancient structure. A Carolingian occupation is attested twice: several layers belonging to this period were observed Place de l'Église (4AH), and a Carolingian settlement area is located near the forest house, to the south of the town (2AH).

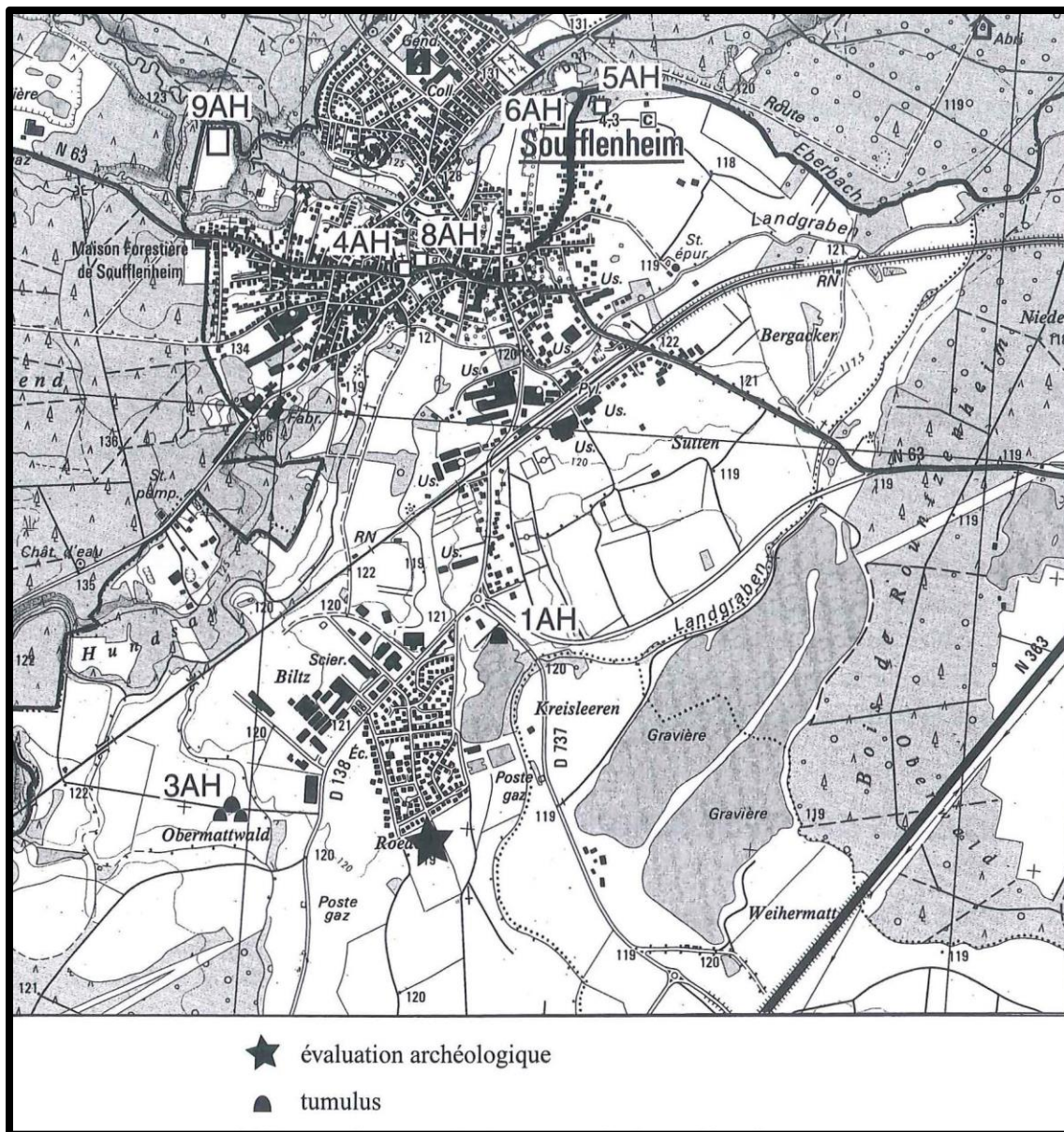


Fig. 3. Soufflenheim, Roedern subdivision. Alsace Archaeological Map, Strasbourg SRA.

- 1 AH: tumulus having yielded a protohistoric oenochoe [wine jug]
- 2 AH: Carolingian settlement area in the south-east of the town, ground prospecting (not on the map)
- 3 AH: set of tumulus [burial mounds]
- 4 AH: Carolingian period layers
- 5 AH: funeral pyre in a converted pit, ancient times?
- 6 AH: ancient way crossing the village
- 7 AH: fibula from the Roman period (not located)
- 8 AH: old church and its enclosed cemetery
- 9 AH: castle
- 10 AH: abundant find of ceramic, tegulae and iron slag, High Empire? South of the village? (not localized)"

## The Operation

The extension of the Roedern subdivision is located south of the village of Soufflenheim and south of the current housing development east of D138. The land is just in front of the access to the golf course where a tumulus belonging to the tumular necropolis 3AH is being studied. The land is relatively flat.

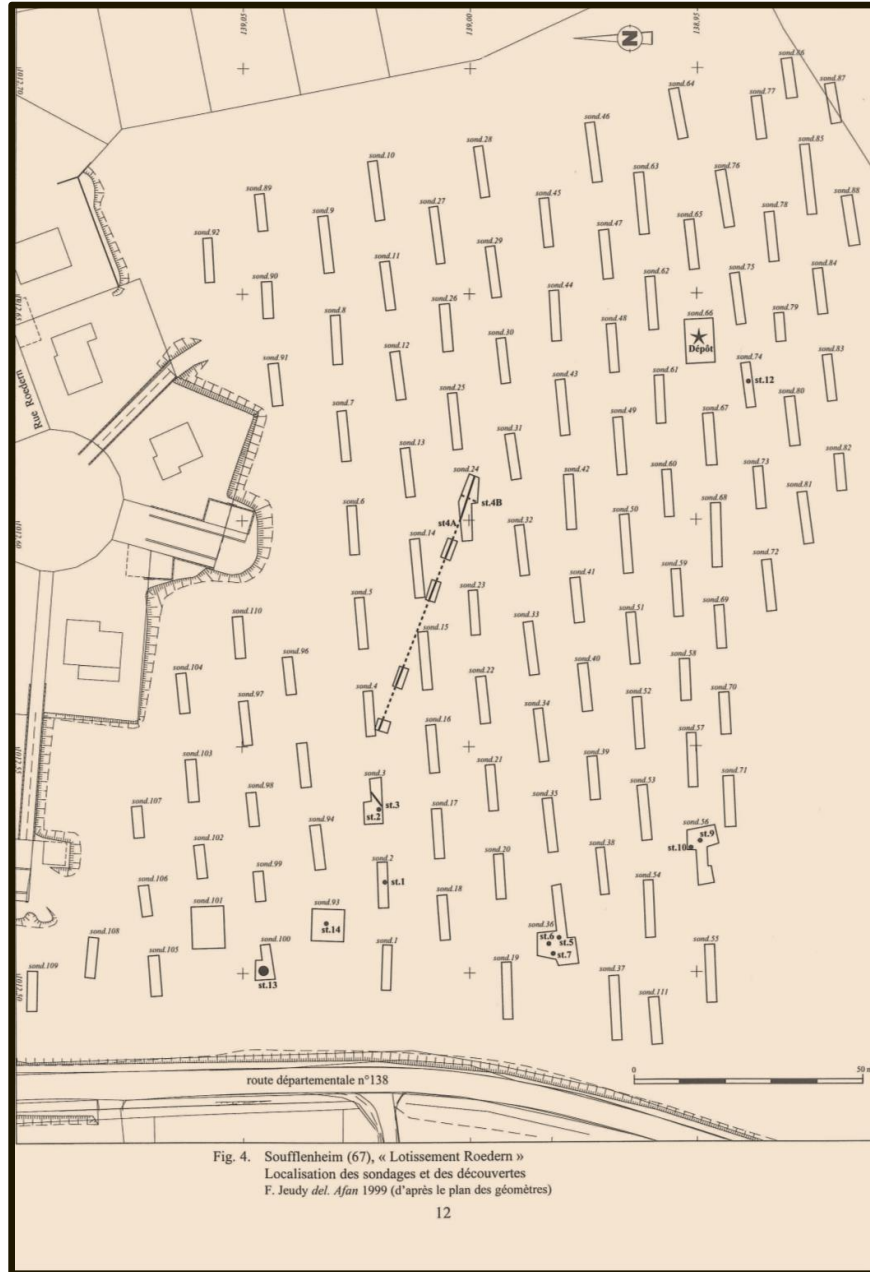


Fig.4 Soufflenheim, Roedern Subivision. Location of the survey trenches and discoveries.  
 F. Jeudy del Afan 1999 (according to the plans of the surveyors)

The surveys were carried out with a backhoe with a smooth bucket with a width of 2 m by successive flat passes, with a spacing of 10 m between each boring (fig. 4). The space between lines is generally 10 m.

The average length of the boreholes is around 10 m with a depth varying with the nature of the terrain. We opened around 6.5% of the surface to be probed.” (Jeudy and Schneikert, 1999, pp. 9-12)

## RESULTS

“The diagnostic operation revealed a deposit of bronze objects, excavated structures such as pits or post holes, and ditches. Five bronze objects were discovered in hole 66 (fig. 3 and 4). They were caught by the bucket of the excavator. No trace of digging was found. The condition of these objects is good, but were scratched by the excavator bucket.

The grasping ring and finned ax is a common late Bronze IIIb type and is found frequently in the Middle Rhine, Saar and Lorraine deposits. The two bracelets are related to the Hombourg type by the decoration of transverse ribs in relief. They are numerous in the deposits in the regions mentioned above. Two sites in the Bas-Rhin have delivered this type of bracelet. The two large oval rings appear to be a more original type, no comparison has been found.” (Jeudy and Schneikert with Jean-François Piningre, 1999, p. 16)

## CONCLUSION

“This archaeological diagnostic operation led to the discovery of a deposit of 5 objects in bronze attributed to Final Bronze IIIb, of 10 excavated structures linked to an eroded habitat dated Hallstatt and two undated ditches. The Late Bronze IIIb deposit is interesting because it contains a totally unknown type of ring for now. Further bibliographical research is therefore necessary in order to confirm if we are in the presence of an original discovery. No other structure or trace occupation of this period was uncovered.

Despite occasional surveys having produced Hallstattian structures, no further discovery was made. The remains are poor in movables and diffuse, they are undoubtedly linked to a partially eroded occupation. The ditches did not yield any movables that would have allowed dating, but they are probably modern and have contributed to the remediation of the land.” (Jeudy and Schneikert, 1999, p. 21)

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## Sources

Jeudy Françoise and Schneikert, Françoise *Soufflenheim, Lotissement Roedern, Rapport d'évaluation archéologique*, 1999, 26 Pages. Strasbourg: Service régional de l'archéologie d'Alsace, AFAN.

Piningre, Jean-François *Soufflenheim, Lotissement Roedern, Rapport d'évaluation archéologique*, 1999, 26 Pages. Strasbourg: Service régional de l'archéologie d'Alsace, AFAN.