

SURVEYING SOUFFLENHEIM

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In 2001 archaeologists surveyed the village of Soufflenheim and its surroundings (Figure 2). They were able to determine the original location of the village and earliest years inhabited. A second major survey was performed on the outskirts of the village to the southeast. Also studied were “Geiswell”, “Oben am Brunnen”, and “Hecklen” to the south, and “Haguenau Schirrheinerweg” to the southwest (Madeleine Châtelet, *Prospection de Soufflenheim Et Dans Ses Environs*, 2001, p.6-8).



Figure 2: Location map of sites and surveyed areas as part of the operation. The sectors surveyed by Francois Sigrist the past twenty years have been delineated by dotted lines. Original settlement: Small black circle on the eastern side of the village.

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EARLIEST SETTLEMENTS

The earliest settlement in Soufflenheim, from at least the 8th Century, was about 200 yards east of the present church, between the "rue de la Gare", the "rue des Charrons" and the "rue de Rountzenheim". Figures 3 and 4 show the two earliest settlements, the original core areas.

The original location of the village is the small dark gray area to the east. It was separated from the second oldest core area, around the church, by a creek, now filled up (Châtelet, Prospection de Soufflenheim, 2001, pp.11-14).

According to archaeologist Madeleine Châtelet:

"The prospecting covered the core of the ancient village and the main part of the outskirts (fig.3). In this area, a little less than half of the plots of land could be examined, the other plots could not be prospected most of them having no vegetable or other garden. The coherent spreading of the vestiges enables an historic interpretation.

The oldest vestiges found on the present site of the village can be dated back to the 8th Century. They are light colored potteries whose technological characteristics (usually common "paste") and morphological characteristics (spherical shapes, outstanding rims, frequently decorated with the help of a toothed wheel) permit to integrate them into the "Nord 4" phase of the regional chronology (Châtelet, 1997). There was no trace of ceramics which could be clearly attributed to the 7th Century (phase "Nord 2 & 3). No traces of a Roman or an earlier occupation could be testified either. The spreading of the ceramics during large chronological phases showed a progressive expansion of the occupied space.

The first distinctive phase covers the Carolingian Age from the 8th to the 10th Century (fig.3), represented by ceramics of light colored paste. For that period two cores of occupation could be isolated.

The first, in the East, revealed mainly materials from the 8th and the first half of the 9th Century and is only slightly spread out. It is located below the terrace and limited by the "rue de la Gare", the "rue des Charrons" and the "rue de Rountzenheim". The movables are abundant and include, besides the ceramics, quite an important amount of scoria [iron slag].

The second core centered on the present church stretches along the edge of the terrace and partly on its side with remnants as far as its lower end. Four streets are concerned: the "Grand'Rue", the "rue de Schirrheim", the "Mont de l'Eglise" and the "rue Ziech". Most of the removed material dates from the

9th/10th Century, therefore slightly later than that of the first core. Nevertheless the joint presence of ceramics in the 8th Century confirms the contemporaneousness of the occupation of both areas.

The space between them could only be studied partly, as some of it having been filled up, and the other plots having no vegetable gardens. Nevertheless, no light colored paste ceramics were found in the prospected grounds. That space, previously occupied by a small river nowadays filled up (the "rue du Fossé and the plots of dwellings located more to the South between the "rue du Patronage" and the "rue de la Gare" being a trace of it), was most probably a dividing line between the two settlements.

According to the remnants that could be found, these settlements were mainly agricultural as were most of them in that period. The only specific but quite common activity, since its presence could be attested in numerous contemporaneous rural settlements, is metallurgy. No incontestable trace of any ceramic production at that time could be found.

The second phase of settlement from the 10th until the 16th Century could be proved by the grey potter's wheel shaped ceramics (fig.4). Taking up the two original cores, it is marked by the expansion of the occupied space and reaches – at least in its final phase - the boundaries of the ancient core of the present time village. A sharper chronological differentiation could not be carried out, because of the limited number of ceramics. Nevertheless it could be revealing as to the possible fluctuations that marked the occupation of the sites at that period.

The presence of potters in the village attested by texts of the 14th Century onwards (Nabholz-Kartaschoff, 1973 : 103) could be confirmed archeologically only at Number 47A in the "Grand'Rue" where a stoneware kiln was found during work (see below).

Other signs establishing the production of grey ceramics and light colored paste ceramics in Soufflenheim could not be found; no scraps discarded after firing could be identified amongst the few finds during the construction works and reported to us, nothing can be interpreted as being the remainders of a pottery activity. However it must be said that when the houses were built very few excavations were observed. Furthermore, the ceramics retained in the soil are very often greatly smashed into fragments which makes the identification of firing defects difficult; the same can be said for the Carolingian period.

So, if the prospecting enabled to establish the origin of the village and its primitive expansion, it was unable to provide any decisive elements concerning the ancientness of its pottery activity. Only a systematic supervision of the works will enable to localize possible kilns and adjoining structures.

At 47A Grand Rue a 15th/16th Century kiln was found in 1980 when a new house was built. A neighbor, Bernard Meyer, stated that it was 3 meters long and made of earth and an assembling of posts and branches filled with firing scraps. These potteries were very homogeneous, formed solely of Haguenovian type of stoneware. According to Y. Henigfeld (2000b), they date from the 2nd half of the 15th Century, and were cups and tumblers, with most of them showing deformations. No notes or photographs of the structure have been made but the material has been partly preserved by Bernard Meyer (49 Grand'Rue). An inventory was made at the time by R. Schellmanns who also annotated them" (Châtelet, Prospection de Soufflenheim, 2001, pp. 11, 14).

Light Colored Paste Ceramic (8th-10th Century)

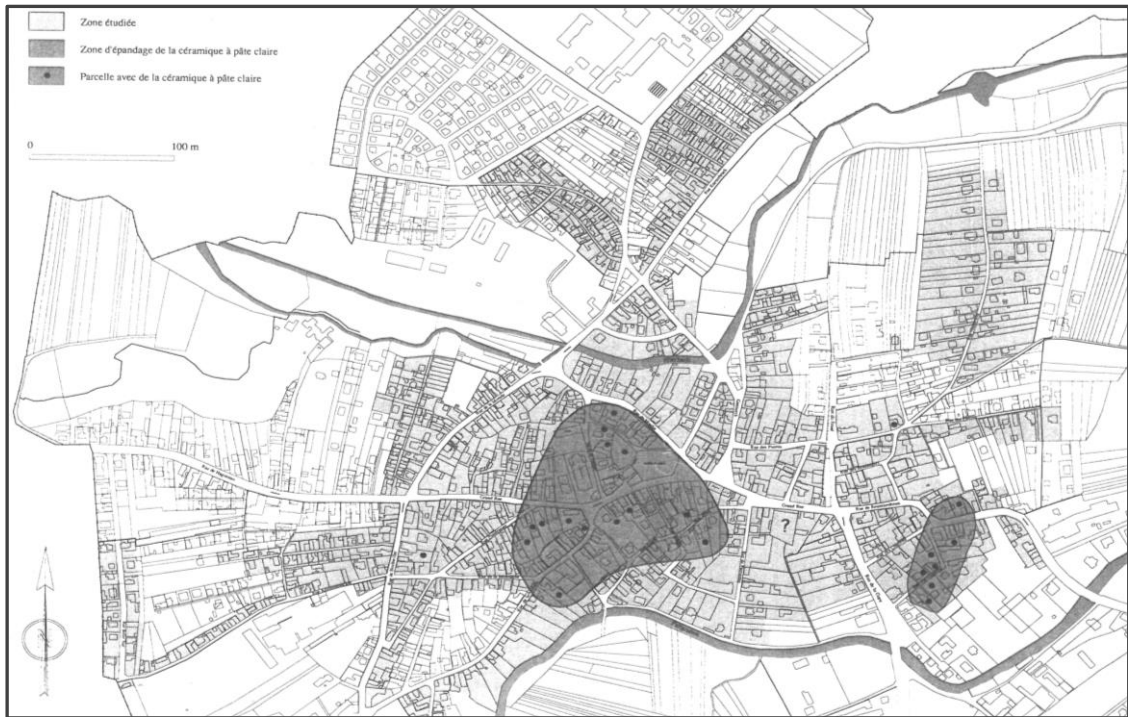


Figure 3: Disposition of the light colored ceramic paste in Soufflenheim (drawing on a map from Baur). Light Gray: The studied area • Medium Gray: Spreading area of light colored paste ceramic • Dark Gray With Black Dots: Parcel of land with light colored paste ceramic (Châtelet, Prospection de Soufflenheim, 2001, p.13). Original settlement: Small dark gray area.

Gray Ceramic (10th-16th Century)

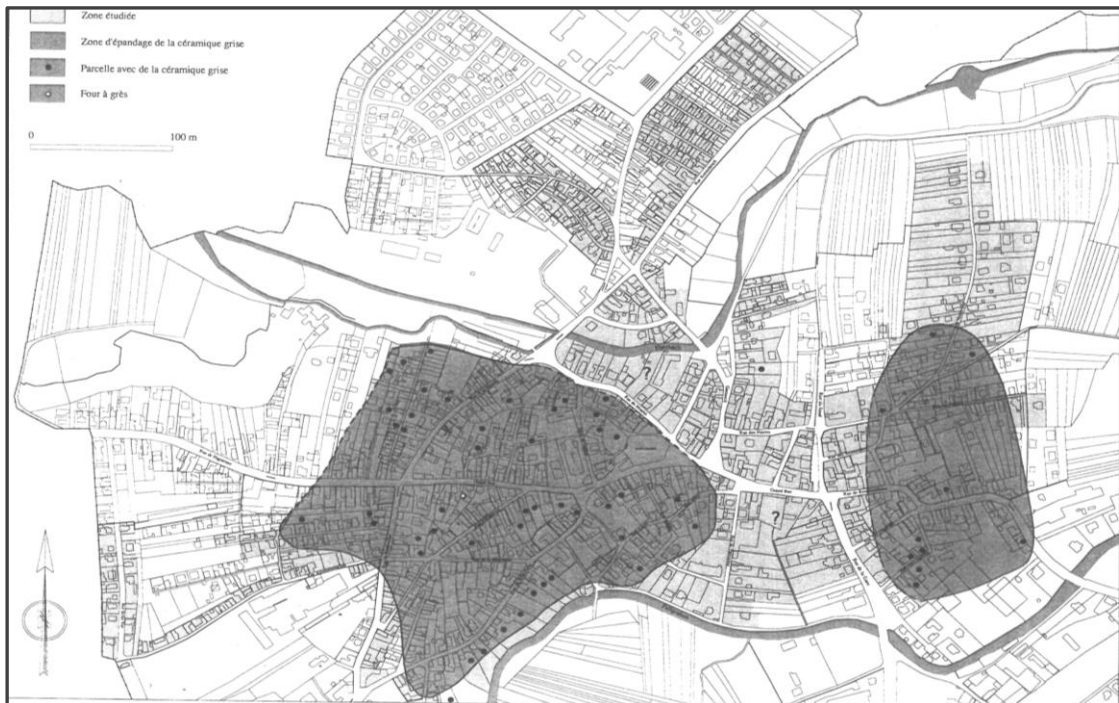


Figure 4: Disposition of the gray ceramic in Soufflenheim (drawing on a map from Baur). Light Gray: The studied area • Medium Gray: Spreading area of gray ceramic • Dark Gray With Black Dots: Parcel of land with gray ceramic • Gray With White Dot: Kiln (Châtelet, Prospection de Soufflenheim, 2001, p.14). Original settlement: Small dark gray area to the east.

OUTSKIRTS OF SOUFFLENHEIM

A second survey was conducted on the outskirts of Soufflenheim to the southeast, about 400 yards from the church and 100 yards south of the Fallgraben River. There were not enough artifacts in any location to indicate the presence of a site, so Soufflenheim could not have originated in the surveyed area.

According to Châtelet: "The second area was chosen because of the mention in this place of a burial mound on a major state map in 1885. The burial mound had not been located to date and it was also important to check whether a proto habitat in relation to the mound existed nearby. The surveyed area south of Soufflenheim concerned 17 fields numbered 1 to 17, divided between non-tilled plots in pasture or occupied by orchards (Fig 5). The artifacts found on these parcels were primarily light colored paste ceramic and turned gray ceramic. However, the density was very uneven, and too weak to suggest the presence of a site (Fig 6). Its dating ranges principally between the 8th century and the modern age. Only a few of the fragments have been attributed to the 7th century. In addition, two Gallo-Roman shards of a certain size and a few shards not turned, probably from the protohistoric era, were also discovered. These pieces likely mark the presence, not far from the surveyed sector, of sites from these two eras. These settlements, however, have not been located. The burial mound, mentioned on the 1886 map, has not been found" (Châtelet, *Prospection de Soufflenheim*, 2001, pp. 6, 15).

Of additional interest are the names of the 17 fields surveyed, which match the names of fields mentioned in inventories and contracts. Figure 5 shows the location of the fields. Figure 6 identifies each field with a number, which corresponds to a name listed in the report as follows:

- Field 1: Localities Benzenbuhl and Suttén
- Field 2: Place called Suttén
- Field 3: Place called Suttén
- Field 4: Place called Suttén
- Field 5: Localities Weidhecke and Werb
- Field 6: Place called Werb
- Field 7: Place called Weidhecke
- Field 8: Place called Kirtenfeld
- Field 9: Place called Suttén
- Field 10: Place called Birnbauemel
- Field 11: Place called Langenthal
- Field 12: Place called Birnbauemel
- Field 13: Place called Werb
- Field 14: Place called Werb
- Field 15: Place called Werb
- Field 16: Place called Segelkreuz
- Field 17: Place called Sessenheimer Pfad

(Châtelet, *Prospection de Soufflenheim*, 2001, pp.15,18,19)

Village of Soufflenheim

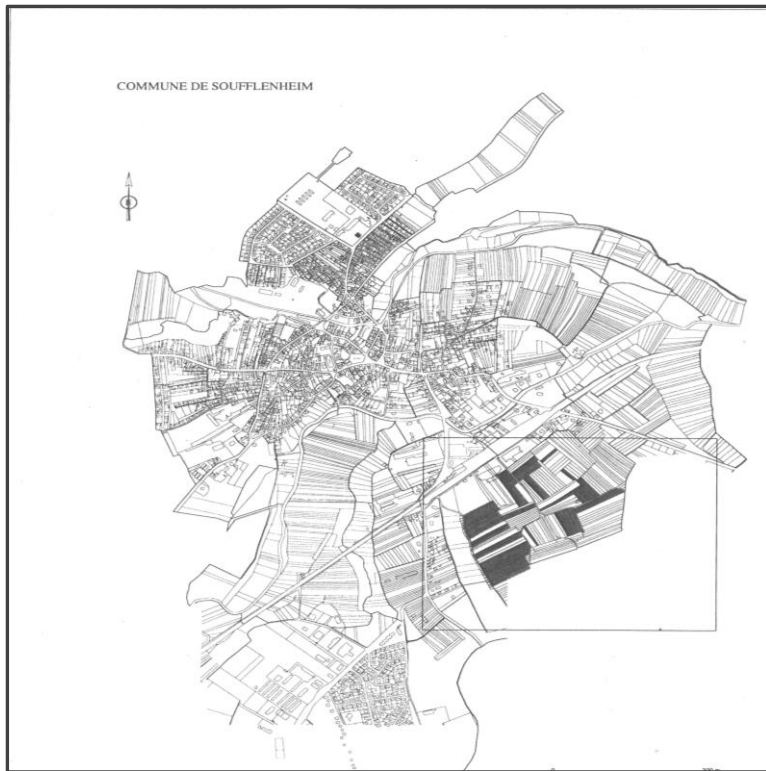


Figure 5: Plan of the town of Soufflenheim with the surveyed plots (gray) (according to the plan prepared by Company Baur). No figures for fields 15 to 17, situated further south, outside the mapped area (Châtelet, Prospection de Soufflenheim, 2001, p.16).

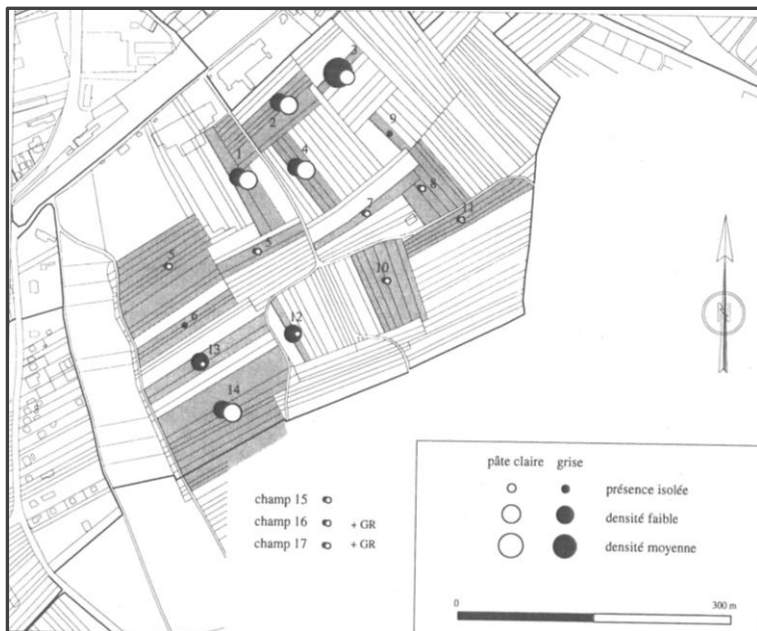


Figure 6: Distribution of light colored ceramic paste and gray ceramics on the surveyed plots (according to the plan prepared by Company Baur). In the location shown in Figure 5. (Châtelet, Prospection de Soufflenheim, 2001, p. 17).

HAGUENAU SCHIRRHEINERWEG, GEISWELL, OBEN AM BRUNNEN, HECKLEN

The sites "Haguenau Schirrheinerweg", "Geiswell", "Oben am Brunnen", and "Hecklen" are within the borders of Soufflenheim, and were also studied in 2001. According to Châtelet (Prospection de Soufflenheim 2001, pp. 20-27):

"Haguenau Schirrheinerweg" is the site of a Roman tiliary [tile production] located on the edge of the terrace. A significant amount of tile fragments and terracotta plaques was found. The fragmentation of the material attests to the advanced destruction of the site. It was not possible to date the material as no ceramics were found.

"Geiswell" is located at the northern limit of the Forest of Soufflenheim on the edge of an ancient channel, marked on the ground by a slight depression and a higher concentration of gravel. The ceramic fragments found prove that the site was a habitat of the early middle age with various crafts and agricultural occupations. However, there is no evidence of a pottery activity.

"Oben am Brunnen" is 300 yards east of "Geiswell" and with the same activities. It is a medieval site with three different settlements in space and time: the first in the 7th/8th Century, the second in the same place but in the 10th/11th century and the third in the 14th/15th century.

"Hecklen" is mostly located in the forest, and is also a habitat of the early middle age. Due to the big storm of 1999, an important amount of material of light colored paste exclusively could be found. Since no trace of fire could be detected the existence of a kiln could not be confirmed.

New surveys will have to be undertaken mainly on the "Geiswell" and the "Hecklen" sites.