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Inrap
Institut national
de recherches
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Hunter-gatherers in Paris

A team of prehistorians from the Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (Inrap) has discovered traces of some of the last prehistoric hunter-gatherers, in the 15th *arrondissement* of Paris. The 5,000 m² excavation, curated by the Regional Archaeology Service (Drac Île-de-France), is located on Henry-Farman Street on the site of a future waste separation centre.

Today, the River Seine is 250m from the site, but 10,000 years ago one of its branches flowed under the nearby heliport. Located on the left bank, this is the first Mesolithic (9,000-5,000 BC) site excavated in Paris. Its location on the river bank has contributed to the good conservation of the prehistoric human occupation, which was buried under an accumulation of alluvial silt deposits.

9,000 years ago

Mesolithic nomadic hunter-gatherers set up specialized hunting camps on this river bank on several occasions. They left behind knapped flint artefacts and bone fragments of the animals they probably ate on site. These remnants, along with a hearth, suggest that these were temporary camps occupied for a few days to several weeks.

The hunter-gatherers used flint scrapers and flakes at this site for butchery and to scrape skin to make clothing or hut coverings, but the abundant flint waste show that their main activity was increasing their supply of arrowheads. They used resin to haft these minuscule points with geometric forms, characteristic of this period, to wooden arrow shafts.

While most of these tools were made from flint nodules found in the alluvial deposits of the Seine, sandstone from the Tertiary outcrops at Meudon or Clamart were also brought to the site in the form of blocks or preforms to produce prismatic tools. Though the precise function of these tools is unknown, they could be related to the production of flint arrowheads or their wooden shafts.

In a temperate zone where forests replaced glacial steppes, and red deer and wild boar succeeded reindeer and mammoths, the bow and arrow, which appeared around 12,000 years ago, was the preferred weapon of Mesolithic hunters. And it is during this period that lithic tools became progressively microlithic.

Much later...

Fragments of polished stone axes and potsherds, decorated or plain, indicate that the banks of the Seine were occupied much later during the Middle Neolithic (4200-3500 BC), the Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (2500-1500 BC), and the First Iron Age (Hallstatt culture, 800-500 BC). During these periods, the land was cleared and worked to create agricultural plots on the periphery of villages.

Inrap

With nearly 2000 collaborators and researchers, Inrap is the largest archaeological research structure in France and one of the most important in Europe. This national public research institution undertakes the majority of archaeological evaluations and excavations in partnership with private and public developers, a total of nearly 2,500 sites per year in mainland France and its overseas territories.

The Greater Paris SYCTOM

The Paris SYCTOM treats 2.47 million tons of household waste produced by the 5.6 million inhabitants living in 85 local towns. To accomplish its public service mission, this organisation has several energy and material recycling centres distributed across its territory. In the 15th *arrondissement* of Paris, it will build the first waste sorting centre in Paris, which will treat 15,000 tons of recyclable materials per year from the 14th and 15th *arrondissements*, produced by 350,000 inhabitants.

Developer **The Greater Paris SYCTOM**
Curation **Regional Archaeology Service (Île-de-France)**
Archaeological Research **Inrap**
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