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Inrap⁺

Press release
22 June 2012

A rich Antique *villa* revealed by the excavation of the ZAC of Ussol in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence



In advance of construction work at the ZAC of Ussol by the city of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence (13 Habitat), a preventive excavation, prescribed by the State (Drac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur), is being conducted at a site at which an Antique *villa* was discovered during a diagnostic operation. This work is currently being realized by a team of Inrap archaeologists. The exhaustive scientific study of the site, which covers two hectares, has allowed the exact plan of the buildings to be determined, and their chronology and function to be clarified.

A rich Antique residence

The remains discovered belong to an Antique *villa*, and more specifically to the residential part of the buildings. The buildings appear to have been constructed in the 2nd century AD, transformed in the 3rd century and definitively abandoned in the 5th century.

The excavation is currently uncovering rooms heated by a hypocaust system (floor heating), basins and tiled spaces, all indicating that one of the wings of the building was devoted to thermal baths.

Numerous decorated elements are also present, including painted plasters (Pompeian white and red) and marble facing.

Outside of this rich residence, the archaeologists have found small elongated pits, regularly distributed in neighboring parcels: they are the material remains of an Antique vineyard that probably belonged to the residence.

A mausoleum erected in honor of the owner

A funerary monument, leveled in the 6th century, was identified very near the *villa*. This square-shaped mausoleum has an unusual form and contains two stone masonry coffins with vats faced with marble. They were pillaged in the past and in one of them the archaeologists found only scattered human bones. The mausoleum probably served as a memorial to the owner of the *villa*.

This operation began in early June 2012 and will last five months. The Inrap archaeologists are currently using mechanical excavators to strip off the surface in order to reveal the plan of the buildings.

In addition to the many decorative elements, the archaeologists are finding many other types of artifacts, including pottery, coins, glassware, small metal objects and two pieces of sculptures: a marble feline (lion, sphinx or griffin) and the bronze wing of an eagle or a *Victoire*.

“Open house”, Sunday 24 June

As part of the *Journées nationales de l'archéologie*, Inrap researchers will present the excavation and artifacts currently being studied to the public.

Practical information

Open to the public on 24 June from 10:00 to 12:00 and 15:00 to 18:00.

Access: avenue André et Denis Pellissier (route d'Orgon), Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Free entrance.

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 public research institution undertakes the majority of archaeological evaluations and excavations in partnership with private and public developers, equalling a total of more than 2500 sites per year in mainland France and its overseas territories. Its missions also include the scientific exploitation of the results and the diffusion of archaeological knowledge to the public.

Developer **13 Habitat-ville de Saint-Rémy-de-Provence**

Curation **Service régional de l'archéologie (Drac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur)**

Archaeological research **Inrap**

Site director **Philippe Mellinand, Inrap**

Contact

Mahaut Tyrrell

Media communication

Inrap, Media relations and partnerships

01 40 08 80 24 – mahaut.tyrrell@inrap.fr

Cécile Martinez

Cultural development and communication

Inrap Méditerranée

06 87 01 62 86 – cecile.martinez@inrap.fr