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Press release
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The chariot graves of Attichy

An Inrap team has just excavated a Gallic cemetery in Attichy in the Oise. This excavation, curated by the Regional Archaeological Service (Drac Picardie), prior to the exploitation of a quarry of aggregates, has above all brought to light the graves of two eminent Celtic personages.

The cemetery

On a terrace dominating the River Aisne, the cemetery consists of eleven graves over an area of about 1,300 m². Twelve persons were buried here: six adults, five children, plus the incinerated remains of another person. The graves are orientated East-West. The bodies are placed on their backs, their arms along the body, facing east. Only one individual, in a foetal position, head to the south, faces north. The practice of burial is here predominant.. The cemetery of Attichy dates from about 250 BC, a turning point usually characterised by the abandon of burials for incinerations. This change in funerary practices followed a different rhythm depending on the regions. The Attichy cemetery, with its late abandon of burials, seems to belong to the Aise-Marne cultural group.

Grave goods

The deceased were accompanied by finery and clothing accessories: bracelets, fibulae, belt rings, made of bronze, iron or lignite. The men left for the afterlife as warriors, with their weapons, sword or lance. Toilet items, tools (razor, pair of shears, knife), ceramic recipients, pieces of meat for consumption and liquids were also present. Different social classes can be identified through the grave goods. The highest ranks of this society are in two chariot graves and a grave with a circular enclosure. The last-named is that of a young child.

Chariot graves

During certain periods, the Celts buried their nobles lying on a chariot. Untouched until now the Attichy chariot graves were those of two armed men. Surrounded by ceramic pots, these two men lie on the chassis of their chariot, between two iron-rimmed wheels, with pork or mutton offerings. These chariots are not ceremonial vehicles as their axles show signs of repair. In one of the tombs the horse-bits are placed flat in a ditch. These graves were probably covered with an earth mound, which has since disappeared.

Another chariot grave, today disappeared, was found in Attichy during the 19th century. Dating from the 3rd century BC, those now brought to light are more recent than those of Vasseny and Bucy-le-Long in the Aisne (5th – 4th century BC), but, can be linked with those found in Roissy-en-France during the construction of part of the airport.



Inrap

With more than 2 000 collaborators and researchers Inrap is the largest French archaeological organization and one of the foremost in Europe. A public research establishment, it carries out most of the archaeological evaluations and excavations in France, in partnership with private and public developers: i.e. more than 2,000 sites a year in mainland France and in the overseas departments.

Its missions include the scientific exploitation of results and the diffusion of archaeological knowledge to the public at large.

Developer: **Eiffage Travaux Publics**

Curation: **Regional Archaeological Service (DRAC Picardie)**

Archaeological research: **Inrap**

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