

1 THE EXCAVATIONS

The National Service for Excavations and the many volunteers are working hard after the discovery of Roman relics during the digging of a canal.

The excavations squares can be seen by the visitors. The topsoils were delicately removed one by one.

Some extraordinary relics are extricated. Their state of preservation is in fact amazing. But what is it all actually about? A city? A temple? A harbor? A crafts village?

2 THE BARGE AND ITS RESTORATION

After its discovery, the barge has been removed and redrawn by the archeologists. Then, it has been dismantled and preserved in water to avoid the wood to dry and crack. The restoration, following a precise procedure, permitted to replace the water by wax. When the museum and the showcase with air conditioning were ready to accommodate the ships, the restorers could rebuild the barge and the dugout canoe.

3 THESE OBJECTS COULD FOOL EVERYONE!

Look out! Are we able with these swords, this necklace (torque), and these axes to date the site? No!

Indeed, their discovery shows us only the passage of the Neolithic Age (from 5000 BC to 1800 BC) to the Bronze Age (from 1800 BC to 650 BC) and to the Iron Age (from 450 BC to 50 BC).

4 TYPES OF ANALYSIS

The **ceramology** is the study of ceramics and pottery. The ceramics established the precise chronology because of their different evolution.

The form and the decorations we find on the ceramics are compared with a reference table. It makes it possible to date them and to discover their origins.

The **carpology** studies samples of soil we find during the excavations. When we put them through different sieves, we can find more information on the agriculture, the vegetation and if we are lucky we can also find some leftovers from the past.

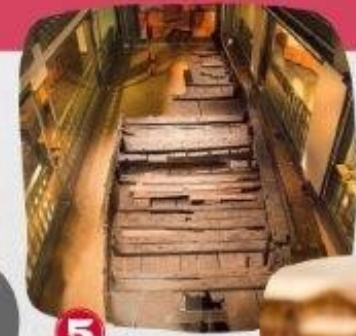
Even the small remains can give us information about the different animals: the height, their work, their cause of death. This type of analysis is called **archeozoology**.

The **stratigraphy** studies rock layers and layering through the Time. It helps us to date and to understand the excavations.

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Act 1 The Time castaways



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5 THE FOSSILS

The fossils are archeological items which provide archeologists precious information.

- The currency gives us information about the occupation of a site: from the 1st century to the 3rd century AD but also about the politics and the trade.
- The fibulae with spring mechanisms disappear from the 1st century AD to be replaced by hinge fibulae.
- The impressive number of oxen remains but also the discovery of shoes and pieces of leather make it possible to consider the presence of a tannery and a cobbler's.
- The ceramics show us that the town had a settlement.

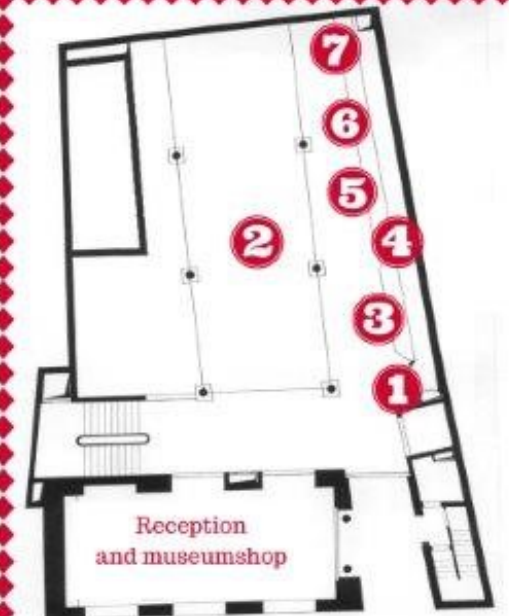
6 IMAGINE POMMEROEUL !

The town of Pommeroeul was occupied between the 1st and the 2nd century AD. It was well situated at the crossing of a river (The Haine) and a Roman roadway linking Bavay to Zeeland. It enabled the meeting of wagons and boats.

The towns were used as a trade square for farmers from surrounding areas (villae) and craftsmen from the cities (vici).

7 THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BARGE.

The Gallo-Romans used different tools (an axe, an adze, a sledgehammer, a hammer, a saw, etc) to make the pieces of a boat (stumps, planks, bilges, etc) thanks to different assembly techniques and the caulking (that avoids water to get into the boat)



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Act 2 A river trip

1 THE BARGE

The barge was used for the goods transport during the Antiquity in Gaul.

This type of Celtic boat is suited to the sailing because it was used until the 19th century in some parts of Europe.

It's less known and very different from the Mediterranean boats. Our copy (12.7 meter long) should actually measure from 18 to 26 meters long and 3 meters in width.

A treasure, a treasure!

Our barge is designated as a "treasure" of the Movable Cultural Heritage of the French Community.



2 THE DUGOUT CANOE AND THE FISHING

The wooden dugout is well preserved. It was built from one piece of tree trunk. It's the reason why it's monoxyle (mono= one and xylos= the wood)

It was used on the rivers and streams to fish and to move people.

The Gallo-Romans used the weighted fishing nets, in Pommeroeul, archeologists even found the skull of a beaver as well as "a wooden fish crate".

3 PAY ATTENTION TO THE BOATHOOKS!

During their operation, the boatmen broke a lot of boathooks and poles. The heavy hinges can be in the shape of a hook or a dot, sometimes it can be both. These metal pieces haven't changed much through time. They were used as a docking and undocking aid.



7 THE OBJECT OF THE MONTH

An archeological object can be "mysterious" for many reasons...because it isn't used nowadays like it was in the past, because we found it damaged or because we know it under a different appearance.

Each month the Gallo-Roman Space introduces the public to ancient and special items. The public has the possibility to learn more about their function, their composition, the circumstances of their discovery, their story and their restoration.

You will find more information on the site (www.egr.be) and on social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

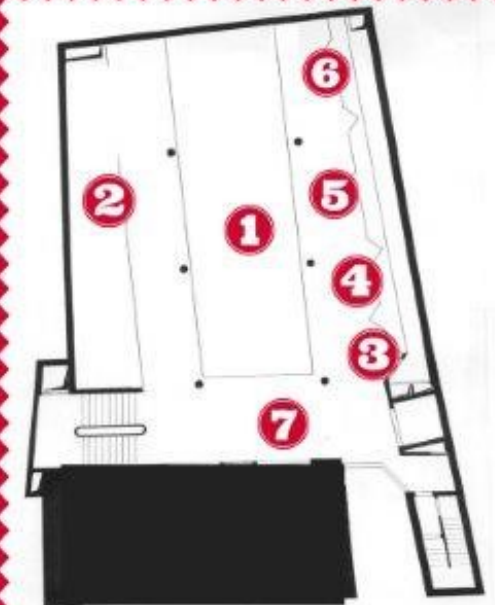
RUFUS' TRAVEL

The young Rufus, a ferryman's apprentice, leaves Pommeroeul to go on his first trip.

He has a lot to learn. Abacius, a wise ferryman, takes Rufus on his barge and together they sail to the harbour of Tournai. A strange man (who seems very rich) asks them to get on board, of course they agree.

Finally, they arrive in Tournai. Rufus follows his way and sails to Zeeland while Abactus goes back to Pommeroeul. The strange traveller asks to follow Rufus...

Together, they go down the Escaut and finally arrive in the estuary of Colijnsplaat where the traffic is very heavy. After their visit to the Goddess Nehalennia, the protector of boatmen and merchants, they look for a bigger barge to face the dangers of the estuary and take their shipment to Cologne.



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Act 3 The boatman, the innkeeper and the cobbler

1 THE ROAD TRANSPORT

After the Roman Conquest, the roads were improved and developed in a more organised road network.

We can see along the roads some horse riders, some pedestrians, small flocks, some carts, wagons pulled by bullocks, horses, donkeys, mules...

Take a look at the hipposandal, a device that protected the hoof of a horse.

The wagon is composed of heavy wheels, reinforced by iron pieces.

There are also small pieces of metal that were used to fix the leather straps or simply to decorate them. They have different symbolic meanings (fertility, prosperity, security...)

3 4 THE CRAFTSMEN

The **potter** usually shapes the ceramics on a wheel. Then they are polished and decorated. The ceramic objects were essential for cooking food. Romans also used earthenware pots to transport and store goods but also to light them up (see the oil lamp).

The **blacksmith** works by heating pieces of wrought iron or steel to shape different tools. He uses the lost-wax casting method. The soft wax is fashioned into the desired stirrup shape then is put into clay and sand. The whole is heated up to make the wax smelt. Finally, the bronze is melted and put in the mould. The craftsman breaks then the mould and discovers his work.

The **tanning** was relegated to the outskirts of town because of the bad smells. The skins are soaked in water to be cleaned and softened during 3 to 6 days. Then the skins are soaked into urine to remove the hair from the skin. For several months, they are put in a mixture of barks. After the cleaning, the leather can be used to make clothes, bags, shoes, etc.

5 TOOLS USED FOR THE TRADE

To trade, it's vital to have goods to sell but also money and scales, of course. Scales are the symbol of Mercury, the God of trade. They are used to weight cereals, fish, medicinal plants and many other things.

On the coins, we find the profile of a person, often an Emperor, and also its value.

7 THE KITCHEN AND THE INN

In the Gallo-Roman highest status, the kitchen is equipped with a hob but the most of the time, the roman houses only have a fireplace.

The food is cooked in a cauldron or on a grid placed above the fire (the focus).

The oven (furnus) is used to bake bread. The kitchen counts several other utensils like the dolium, the millstone, the mortar, the knives, the pestle.

The dishes we found are mostly made of earthenware or of metal but there are also dishes made of wood or glass.

8 THE CLOTHES AND OTHER SET OF JEWELS.

The fibulae

The fibulae are the ancestors of our safety pins. There are different types of fibulae: with a spring or with a hinge. They can be round or flat.

The most luxurious fibulae are made of precious metal and represent animals or different symbols (mythological, solar, protective...)

The jewellery

Among all the jewellery we can find rings, necklaces and armbands.

The Romans put on make up with a spatula, combed their hair and used hair pins.

9 10 11 THE HOUSE

The furniture

The Gallo-Romans used chests, beds, stools, tables or benches. The richer had wicker chairs, chairs, drapery, carpets, cupboards...

The keys

The archeologists found different roman keys. The most recognizable lock was the warded lock. The ancestor of the modern locks works thanks to the turning of the key: it's why we called it a warded lock key.

12 THE ROMAN VILLA

The excavations in Meslin-L-Evêque gave us the opportunity to reproduce the plan of an ancient villa.

There are two parts:

The pars rustica

This part of the house has a farming and an artisanal function.

The pars urbana

It's the residential part of the house. There is the main building, the thermae, the imposing entrance porch and a yard of 100 meters.



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