

NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS AT VORGIUM – CARHAIX PLOUGUER

Rob interviews Clement Perrichot, Director of the Vorgium Museum, Carhaix Plouguer

Rob: I am standing in the middle of Carhaix, in a dusty building site with Clement Perrichot of the Vorgium archaeological site in Carhaix.

Clement: Hello

Rob: Tell us a little bit about this building site that we've got here

Clement: Yes, today we are on an archaeological site, so it is going to be a construction site in autumn, beforehand archaeologists come here to see what's underneath the future construction site, so we see a lot of structures here, archaeological structures. The dig began in May, and is going to last until the middle of July.

Rob: And this is going to be a health centre, I understand.

Clement: Uh huh

Rob: And what have they uncovered here on this site?

Clement: It is a Gallo Roman neighbourhood, so we know since the 18th century that Carhaix is a Roman foundation and its name is Vorgium, like the museum today.

Rob: Of Course.

Clement: It's very well constructed. There is a lot of structures, small structures.

Rob: Yes

Clement: With roads. Big roads, big huge road in the middle of the dig and also small roads that goes to the north and the south and the main road is western – eastern direction

Rob: The main feature here we're standing just by, what was one of the main entrances into the city of Vorgium. Am I right?

Clement: Yes. It's the entrance, the eastern entrance of the city. We know it's an important entrance for the city because its wall is bordered by the Roman aqueduct

Rob: Oh Yes:

Clement: So we know it was a majestic entrance to the city, you have like 12 – 15 metres high aqueduct on your left when you came into the city and you had also on your right, huge necropolis, the main necropolis of the city. So, we know it was like a



very important area of the city but it's really in the north of the city, it's not the centre of the city, the centre is a little bit south west from here.

Rob: The archaeologists have been able to interpret what they've found. What kind of area was it, in fact, when it was a part of the Roman.....

Clement: So for the archaeologists of INRAP.....

Rob: You'd better explain what INRAP is

Clement: Yes, So INRAP...

Rob: I N R A P, Inrap

Clement: Yes, Is French word is Institute national de recherches archéologiques préventives. So they are in charge of preventative diggings everywhere in France.

Rob: The important thing to remember is that this site has been uncovered today, for us to visit it, but soon it will be destroyed.

Clement: Exactly

Rob: It's hard to accept

Clement: It's hard to accept, but as Carhaix nowadays is built on the Roman City, we'd have to destroy all of Carhaix and rebuild the Roman city as it was. It's not a bad idea but I think a lot of people would disagree! (Laughs)

Rob: Tell us a little bit about this road. You told me earlier that they were particularly concerned about getting rid of waste material. Tell us about the construction of this road.

Clement: Yes, so we are standing right next to the road, and a little bit further we can see a hole in the ground and the hole is in the middle of the entrance 8 streets of this part of the city. Archaeologists made this hole to see how many levels of construction the road had and by that they can determine for how long it was used. And if it was very important or not, because the most used street parts were really taken care of, they had a lot of reworking, a lot of restoration of the street and stuff like that, and here, where the archaeologist is standing, they found 5 to 6 levels, different levels of construction.

Rob: Wow

Clement: That indicates it was built in the 1st century before Christ, when the city was founded, so it was one of the first streets of Vorgium, and it was in use until the 3rd or 4th century AD

Rob: And it saw a lot of traffic?

Clement: Yeah, a lot of traffic. If you look closely you can see the traces of old chariots.

Rob: Really!

Clement: Yes, you have some small lines that indicate that it was very, very fairly used.

Rob: And, also they had a gutter?

Clement: Yes, yes, they had gutter on each side of the road, so it forms the sanitation of the city. So it's very important on all the main roads of the city of Vorgium you had those kind of equipments. We have it also in the museum garden.

Rob: Well, let's talk about that a little bit, because unfortunately this will soon be covered but people can still come and see how the Roman city was by coming to the Vorgium Museum.

Clement: Yes

Rob: What will they see there? What will be different?

Clement: The Vorgium museum is located in the south of the Roman city, so it's a different kind of neighbourhood. Here on this dig that we can see today, only today because it's an open day organised by INRAP, it's mostly workshops, small building. Maybe the workingclass population of the city was here in the northern neighbourhoods. In the southern neighbourhoods where the museum is today it was mostly huge buildings, maybe the richer population lived there. So, you have different kinds of buildings. They were well decorated, also equipped with the heating system of the Romans called hypocaust. They also had wells and a small fountain and also small like chapels, stuff like that in their houses. So we can see it in Vorgium, you can see the structures, the walls that were restored, after the dig that was organised, also by INRAP, on the site of Vorgium, the museum, but 20 years ago. And the public can also have access to augmented reality, which is on a tablet.

Rob: Virtual Reality?

Clement: We say 'augmented reality' because it's not virtual. Virtual Reality is with like with a mask

Rob: Right, ok.

Clement: Augmented reality is with an application on a tablet that uses the camera of the tablet and offers to see the 3D model of the houses, so you can see how tall it was, how it was decorated, what was the colours....



Rob: OK. So, this is Vorgium which is open to the public most days, and it's free I understand?

Clement: Yeah, it's free. You can also participate to guided tours, which are between 3 and 4 euros.

Rob: Now, Clement Perrichot, are there any projects in the future that will be visible?

Clement: Yeah there is an archaeological site, open to the public also every summer, Vorgium organise guided tour of this site so it's called Goasseac'h(?) It's in the south of the city, so it's a huge funerary monument, which dates back to the neolithic period, so it's 7 thousand years from us. The city of Vorgium is only 2 thousand years from us.

Rob: This is going to be open to the public in the summer?

Clement: Yeah, you have to check information on our web site, which is Vorgium.BZH. So it's not free. The guided tours are organised from Vorgium it's also 3 to 4 (fifteen?) euros. But you also have one special day on 20th August, which is free and a lot of animation on the site. It's like an open day as well. Like we do today on this site.

Rob: OK, well that's brilliant. Clement Perrichot, thank you indeed for your time.

Clement: Thank you.