

HARVEST, PROCESSING AND STORAGE: PLANT MACROFOSSIL ANALYSIS OF A “CLASSICAL” VILLA FROM BELGIC GAUL

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Discovered in 2007 during developer-funded excavations in Bailleul (located in the territory of the Menapiens, a province of Belgic Gaul in what is now northern France), the “Villa des Collines” is a huge rural Roman settlement organised on a ‘classic’ axial plan. Plant macrofossil studies were undertaken on remains collected from the site, the aim being to investigate the agricultural organisation of the villa. The study revealed a very diverse agricultural economy, characteristic of Roman production in Belgic Gaul. The analysis determined that the complete *chaîne opératoire* in terms of crop processing was undertaken on-site, specifically within the *pars rustica* of the villa, allowing a clear scheme of the spatial organization of the villa to be established. Winnowing, coarse and fine sieving, pounding and storage areas have been identified. In addition, analysis has demonstrated that fodder crops were also present and used at the site. In summary, this detailed plant macrofossil analysis of remains from the “Villa des Collines” shows us an ideal and complete rural Roman settlement of Belgic Gaul and the full range of economic agricultural activities of its inhabitants.

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