

# THE DIE AND DIOIS MUSEEUM



Please leave this booklet at the  
reception desk at the end  
of you visit

*Die and the Diois over time*

A BOOKLET TO BROWSE ABOUT INSIDE THE MUSEUM







# Preamble

The idea of creating a museum in Die dates back to 1883. It followed up the discovery of a monetary treasure trove dated from the Wars of Religion that the town-hall decided to exhibit on the premises. In the next decades, the collections were gradually enriched with local and farther archaeological discoveries. In 1949 the decision was made to accommodate the museum in part of Senator Joseph Reynaud's old mansion dated from the 18th century.



**"The Treasure of Ausson", coins dated from the Wars of Religion.**

In 1967 the town-officials purchased Doctor Jean-Denis Long's private collections. He was an archeology buff who had gathered a large amount of remains all over the Diois, significantly enhancing the museum-collections.

The museum has never stopped expanding thanks to gifts and local archaeological excavations, offering the visitors a thorough view of the Diois history from the prehistoric times until now, as is condensed in this booklet.



*This page is for you !*  
*(annotations, drawings)*





# The Prehistoric times in the Diois



In the Die region, some traces testify to the presence of human groups since the Palaeolithic Age. (-100 000) But the occupation of the territory took place between the end of the last glaciation and the Neolithic Age. A time span of profound changes occurred in France around -6000. Indeed, Neolithic populations progressively began cultivating the soil and breeding their own herds : it is the emergence of farming and breeding. The move from a hand-to-mouth lifestyle to a production economy caused important social and cultural changes, i.e. the population settlements and the rise of an elite within the native populations.

## The standing stone or menhir

The most emblematic item of this period is a **menhir** about 4 meters high, the reproduction of which in actual size stands in the museum-hall. It was found during the enlargement works in the Die Jaillance wine cellar in the early 90s. It belongs to the Mid Neolithic Age (-4500 to -3500) according to the dated engraving style on its surface. It used to be surrounded by 3 smaller, 1m high menhirs which must be linked to a **cromlech**, the name given to Neolithic stone-circles.



## The "Arnaud hole" cave

An exhibition space is dedicated to the reconstruction in reduced size of the "**Arnaud hole**" cave located at Saint-Nazaire-le-Désert. The latter presents traces of occupation dating back to the "Chasséen" culture around -4000. At that time the populations had taken advantage of the darkness and cool temperature of the cave in order to turn it into a pantry and practise some activities. Those were especially related to food-processing such as corn-roasting found in the charred trails of a fire, corn-grinding into flour by using a millstone or the fermented content of a coarse terracotta jar...

## The polished axes

The technique of polishing had been invented in the Neolithic Age and provided a more impact-resistant blade than a sharpened flint flake. The **polished axe** is the farmers' tool. It was used to clear brushwood and dig the ground, setting the stage for the seedlings. The blade featured a wooden handle or one made of animal elements, or a combination of the two.

The ones exhibited in the display case seem to have had a more symbolic function. Their shape makes them too fragile to have been used as a farmer's tools. The used material, jadeite, a rare green stone found in the Italian Piedmont, stresses trade connections across the Alps.



This set could rather be correlated to a social marker, a ritual deposit or the realisation of a masterpiece, attesting to a perfect know-how.

Neolithic Age		Bronze Age	
Agriculture, breeding, stone polishing, settling process			
-6000	-4000 Menhir The "Arnaud Hole" cave	-2500	-850 Gandus settlement Charens Treasure

# Housing and daily living in the Bronze Age



At the end of the Neolithic Age populations began to work metal, especially copper. It mirrors the start of a transition time called Chalcolithic (from the Greek “khalkos” meaning “copper”). It went on until around -2500 in Europe when tin was added to molten copper. More pliable and resistant than copper, this alloy generated bronze. Its properties helped to create lots of objects like tools, weapons, jewellery etc... Molten metal was poured into stone or terracotta moulds.

## The multipurposes of bronze

Bronze was used in the making of very many objects, from which the most conspicuous are the bronze axes. From among the ones exhibited in the museum, we notice an improvement in their handles with edges for the latest, side-wings and finally sockets.



Typical discoveries all over Europe during the Bronze Age are based on digging out “treasures”. They correspond to the deposit of many bronze objects at the same place. They have been regarded as foundry workers' deposits. Either a stock of objects to be molten again or ritual deposits like the offerings of symbolic bronze objects to be molten again or ritual deposits like the offerings of symbolic bronze objects being part of a rite.

In the Diois one of those “treasures” has been found in Charens. It contains, among other things, a **belt buckle** whose decorations are unique and plenty of round-shaped objects. The wheel-shape is to be seen along the whole Alpine range. The Bronze Age invented the wheel, thus revolutionising the means of transport. Its shape may also have had a highly symbolic significance.

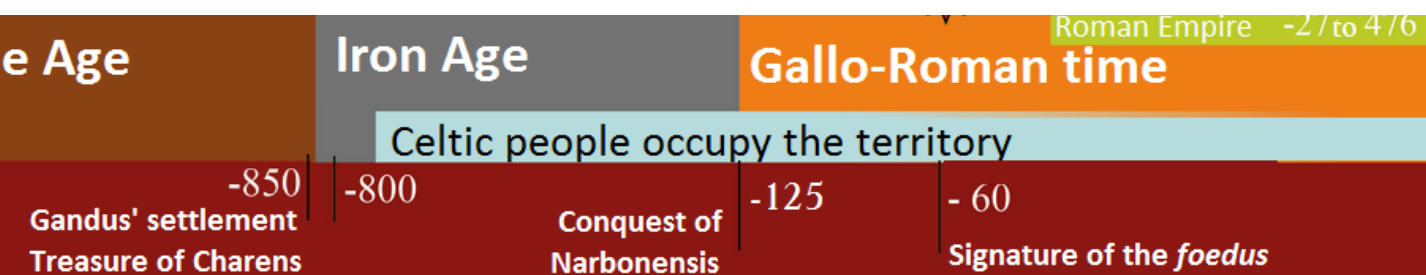


## Housing and ways of live

Beside this technical revolution, many social changes initiated during the Neolithic Age had occurred. Settling and getting together in some kinds of “villages”, agriculture, cattle-breeding and the emergence of an elite. This can be seen in the village of Glandus, an occupied site of the late Bronze Age sitting on a slope whose ground had been leveled. Located below highlands, it was a perfect place for cattle to graze in summer. Close to a river, a prerequisite to water the plantations, this hamlet used to shelter a population of farming breeders. Its position offered a wide view over the valley, which ensured the control of the most accessible pathways. This type of settlement were existing in other places in the Diois like Marignac.

One of the hamlet-houses has been preserved as it withstood a fire. It gives us an insight into the building techniques : wooden wattle walls covered with raw earth and clay roofing above armfuls of reeds.

The furniture has also been preserved, for instance flat-bottomed terracotta jugs, an innovation of the Bronze Age, which implies the invention of the table and other objects such as spinning wheel for **wool and needles**.



# The Vocontii tribe in the Iron Age



The Iron Age is the second stage of Protohistory between 800 BC and the 1st century AD. At that time people were perfecting their metal kilns so as to reach temperatures over 15,000°C, which enabled them to use iron in making weapons and tools. That era is also related to the emergence of the urban phenomenon : cities were rising, so was trade and some activities were getting more specialized. Society was progressively based on social classes, with an elite able to summon the population around collective projects like the planning of streets or the erection of public buildings.

## The Vocontii tribe

Among the different Celtic peoples inhabiting Gaul, the Vocontii tribe settled in a large territory including the Vercors in the North, the foothills of Mount Ventoux in the South and Embrun in the East. Their territory spread over 5 current departments (Drôme, Isère, Hautes-Alpes, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Vaucluse).

Located on a strategic point, the Drôme Valley controlled the network of the Gallic trails next called the Roman roads. They were connecting Italy and the Mediterranean with the Plain of the Pô River through Mont Genève Pass and the Durance Valley. This “Italian highway” made the transalpine exchanges easier.



## Funerary practice

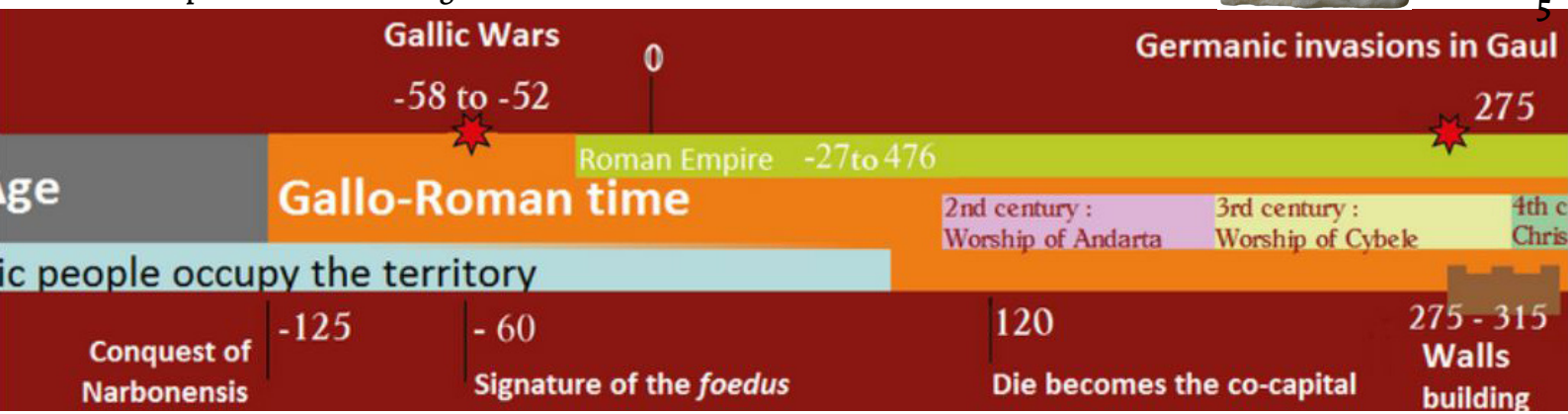
However, very few objects of that period have been brought out in the Diois. The plain fact burial grounds from the early Iron Age have not been discovered might be explained by the funerary ritual of bodies' exhibition in the open air. But with no archaeological proof, it claims to be no more than an hypothesis. Among the rare burial relics are **two iron swords**.



They used to lie close to bodies, probably warrior's, buried with their weapons. One of them had been intentionally bent, possibly in the context of a funerary ritual when the dead man's belongings were symbolically put to death.

## Goddess Andarta

At that time Die was an important religious centre with a sanctuary dedicated to Goddess Andarta, the Great Bear. She gave her name to the city. Die is the contraction of *Dea Augusta Vocontiorum*, the August Goddess of the Vocontii tribe. A **bust statuette** found in Luc-en-Diois could be the only representation of the goddess. She is hooded with a bear's head.





# The roman conquest and the Romanization of the Vocontii tribe



At the end of the 2nd century BC Rome defeated Carthage, conquered Greece and Spain, and became the leading power along the Western Mediterranean shores. To the appeal of Marseille, its ally, Rome gained a foothold on the Gallic coast. Between 125 and 120 BC Rome took over a new province stretching from the Pyrenees to the Alps : the Narbonnensis. The conquered people, included the Vocontii, gradually adopted the conquerors' customs and habits.

In order to ensure their control on the Alpine road, the Romans signed a foedus with the Vocontii between 69 and 61 BC. It was a treaty acknowledging that the latter were submitted to Rome while granting them a certain autonomy. The Vocontii-Voconces in french- provided the Roman army with a battalion of horsemen. For example, they were sent to Scotland in the 1st century AD.

Quite unusually, the Vocontii area had two capitals, first Vaison-la-Romaine and Luc-en-Diois. Later on in the 2nd century, Die was to replace Luc-en-Diois before becoming the only Vocontii's capital after the splitting of the territory into four parts.

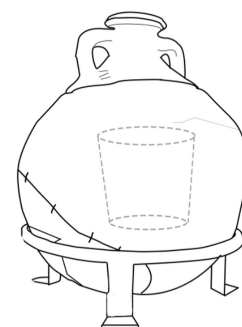
## The evolution of the funerary practices



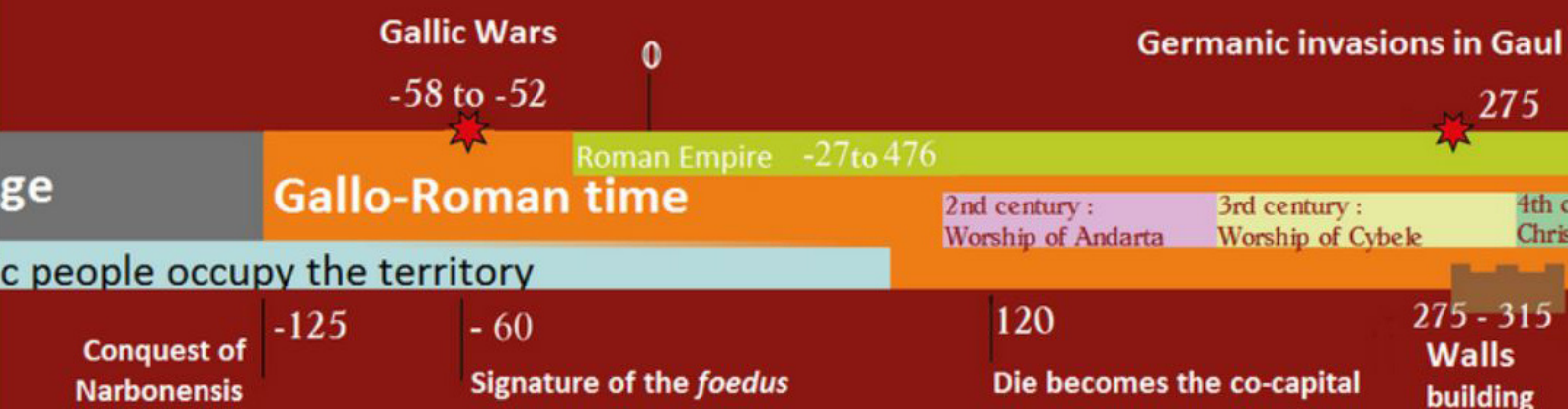
The progressive Romanization of the Vocontii was particularly visible in the changes made in the funeral rites. The cremation practise that was so far unknown by the Celtic traditions had gradually spread in the Diois. As the Romans did not believe in bodies' reincarnation, they mainly resorted to the cremation of the deceased on a pyre. This is evidenced by three **lead funerary urns**, brought to light during the works under the Die secondary school-gymnasium in 1981. They dated from the 3rd century AD. A local specific feature, they were laid in an **amphora containing Baetica oil** from Andalucia. The upper part of the amphora was beheaded so that the urns could fit in.

Those urns were containing ashes, charred bones and many offerings surrounding the deceased on the pyre such as food remnants, ceramic tableware, coins, furniture, shoes and funerary bed nails.

During memorial ceremonies a banquet was scheduled and the family of the deceased made him or her take part in it while pouring some wine from a patera, a bronze container. This liquid offering must have seeped into the ground and reached the neck of the amphora. Then it must have trickled through the hole pierced in the urn-center and finally moistened the ashes of the deceased.



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# The Gallo-Roman Vocontii



## Ceramic productions

Lots of ceramic shards have been found during archaeological excavations in the Diois. A distinction is made between three ancient techniques :



- **The Campanian ceramic** : Produced in Italy during the 2nd century BC, it was sparingly spread in Southern Gaul in the next century. It is recognizable by its black glaze and sometimes associated with vegetal patterns. The baking mode is inherited from the Greeks by using a kiln saturated with smoke. This process enables the carbon to be absorbed by the ceramic, hence its colour. This ceramic has been locally copied.

- **The Sigillated ceramic** : Appearing in the 1st century BC in Arezzo (Italy) it began to spread over Southern Gaul in -25. Its name comes from its stamped patterns in relief. *Sigillum* means seal in Latin. It is baked in a tube-shaped kiln contriving to separate the smoke from the baking chamber. Its bright red colour is due to its stoneware glaze.



Those two techniques provide high quality ceramics exported to Gaul and scoring great success among the populations. For the archaeologists it is a good marker of "Romanization".



- **The Kaolin ceramic or China clay ceramic** : This ceramic is typical of the Vocontii. It was born in the 1st century BC. It is mostly found in the Drôme Valley and Vaucluse. It is made of white clay containing kaolin, a raw material used later in the manufacturing of earthenware and porcelain. It gives a waterproof, highly heat-resistant, charcoal grey-blue ceramic for everyday use.

• **The rython with a ram head** : This is a terracotta drinking vessel representing a ram at its bottom-end.

This animal has been widely depicted in the Diois where sheep-raising has been corroborated since the Neolithic Age. For example awls are made of sheep-bones. A lot of archaeological objects preserved in the Die Museum show rams especially on taurobolic altars, testifying to its local importance.



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# The Gallo-Roman Vocontii



## The funerary monuments

Sculpted in stone-blocks of limestone, sandstone or marble, the funerary monuments are marked out by the diversity of their shapes whether they are pediments steles, altars or funerary banners, and their inscriptions. They were erected in necropolises out of the sacred boundaries of the city, the *poemorium*, because it was forbidden to bury the dead inside the city. Their epitaphs written in a standardised lettering recalled the memory of the deceased and the pediment showed the location of their graves on the ground..

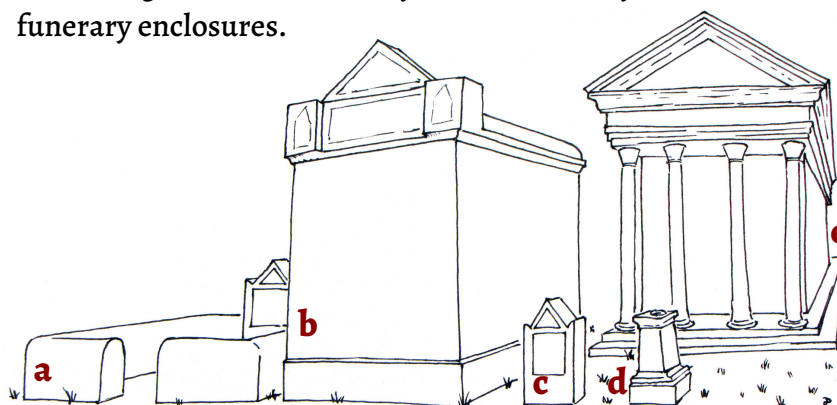
- **The pediment steles** : This type of monuments seems to be used in Die between the 1st and the 3rd century AD. The pediments on top of the steles symbolise temple reminding the passer-by of the sanctity of the graves. The epitaph was drafted in a standardized way. First, we can read the invocation to the Manes, the household-Gods, according to a stock-phrase widely used in the Narbonnensis since the 80s in an abbreviated form : D M (*Deis Manibus*).

Then comes the name of the deceased followed by the dedicator's name, the one who financed the stele and his relationship to the deceased. It could be a master, a wife, husband, parents, a son or daughter, an heir... or a Laniste, a gladiator's owner as found on the exhibited steles.

- **The funerary enclosures** : Some epitaphs are carved into stone-blocks taking the shape of a banners whose treatment leads us to believe that they were probably part of the lintel above funerary monuments of larger dimensions. Some clues to several Diois remains allow us to integrate some inscriptions within monuments with no roofing and surrounded by four walls. they are called funerary enclosures.



The drawings of the Silvanus' stele  
Secutor (gladiator), found in Die  
By courtesy of Zoé Gartiser.



Drawing depicting the diversity of the funerary monuments in Roman necropolises

- a. Funerary enclosure
- b. Monumental enclosure
- c. Pediment stele
- d. Funerary altar
- e. Mausoleum-temple

By courtesy of JP / Museum of Die.

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# The Gallo-Roman Vocontii



## The altars and worship of divinities

At the Roman and Gallo-Roman time religion was closely related to the daily life and tied to the political sphere. The worshipped divinities were to be integrated by Rome to the official Pantheon. Beside the Roman gods, divinities from the conquered territories had been added over the centuries. Some examples are visible in Die like the local goddess Andarta, Isis from Egypt or Cybele, a Phrygian native in today's Turkey. Their names are written in their honour on altars, for instance in the style of *ex votos*, i.e. "to fulfill a wish".

The opposite is also true. Native populations from the Roman provinces progressively considered Roman divinities as their own. They likened them to the preexisting divinities as is the case for Mercury among the Gauls. This god seemed to share the same attributes and functions as a very much venerated god for the Celts. Beside Mercury, we find altars in Die erected for divinities like Vulcan, the god of metalworkers and craftsmen or Silvanus, the god of holy woods.

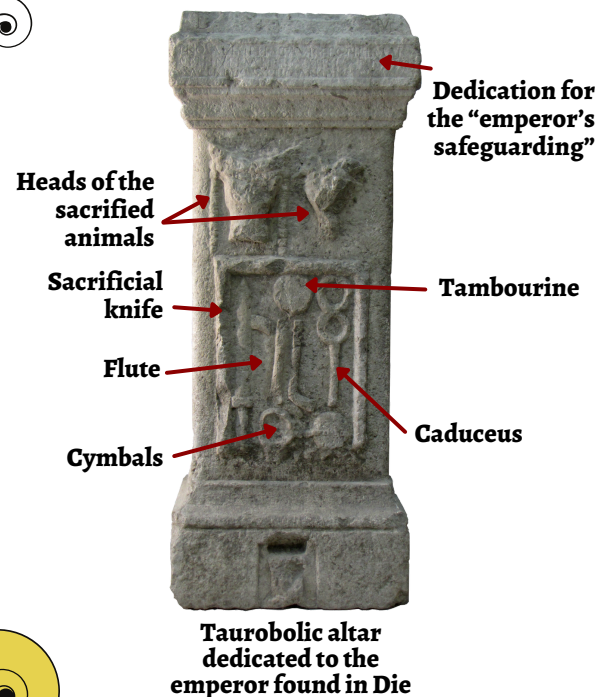


Altar for Andarta found in Die

### The worship of Cybele born in Phrygia :

The worship of the God's Great Mother had been spreading in the Roman world since the 3rd century BC. It reached the Diois territory at the end of the 2nd century AD. The Goddess of wild nature, the city-protector, Cybele was honoured in the course of countless ceremonies and celebrations when priests were carrying out taurobolia (a bull's sacrifice), and sometimes a taurobolia (a bull's sacrifice) and a criobolia at times (a ram's sacrifice). This sacrifice was commemorated with the making of a taurobolic altar. Seven of them have been found in Die, ranking the city third among the religious centers of Gaul dedicated to Cybele, after Lectoure and Lyon.

**A local specificity :** Die is the only city whose taurobolic altars show the bull and the ram's heads side by side !



# The Gallo-Roman Vocontii



## Architecture

Most of the Gallo-Roman stone remains found in the Diois are architectural elements. A column base made of marble from the Cycladic islands, Corinthian capitals of limestone and columns of Turkish or Corsican granite stand side by side in the museum, suggesting the way monuments may have appeared in the ancient city of Die.

Although none of them has yet been found standing except for the walls, various archaeological digs have enabled us to highlight the foundations of characteristic structures in the Roman urban planning such as roads, houses or thermal baths.

**A domus mosaic in Die :** In 1915, a mosaic was discovered in a cellar of the Place de la République. It used to adorn the floor of a domus once. This type of residence was reserved for the upper classes.

This mosaic represents a scene based on a Greco-Roman mythological scene : the Flight of Phrixus and Helle. Threatened with death by their stepmother Ino, the brother and sister are running away, helped by Zeus or Hermes who sends them Chrysomallos, a ram with a golden fleece. On the way Helle unfortunately falls into the sea and drowns. We can see her hand jutting out above the water at the bottom left-hand corner of the mosaic.



## Statuary

Very many fragments of seriously damaged marble statues have been found out as reused materials in the walls. Those statues made of precious material may have adorned private villas or public buildings, pointing out the wealth of the city.



Among those fragments, a **female bust** features a cavity instead of a head which is not due to a missing piece of the statue but to its making.

Indeed, private individual's statues were not sculpted in one piece : the body, arms and head were made separately. The sponsor would choose a standard position of the body from among the suggestions of a catalogue. Ditto for the arms and hand-held things. They were chosen from among a variety generally corresponding with a type of profession. The only original element of the statue is the head which was custom-made and sculpted just like the depicted subject. A specialised craftsman was required for its achievement.

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# The advent of Christ and the fall of the Roman Empire



## The influence of oriental worship

At the end of the Roman Empire the extensive popularity of ritual practices from the East, like the ones related to the worship of Cybele, Isis, Mithra and christianity led to changes in the cultural and social fields within the Gallo-Roman area. These evolutions are noticeable in the Diois through the resumption of burials progressively replacing the Roman practice of bodies' incineration.



Thus, in the ancient necropolis discovered in Die along the road to Romeyer cinerary urn made room for **sarcophagi**. They were made of reused tiles, complying with a typical process of the late Roman Empire, and spreading far and wide at the end of the 3rd century.

## The development of Christianity

Among the cults from the East, christianity had been significantly expanding until it became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century. The first Councils slowly defined a set of dogmas. The first know bishop in Die must have attended the council of Nicaea in today's Turkey in 325 as the only representative of Gaul.

In Die the Christian influence is particularly outstanding in the biblical iconography of 4th century **marble sarcophagi fragments**. Scenes from the New and the Old Testaments, *The Woman of Canaan at Christ's feet*, *The Two Blind people recovering their sight*, *Eve's birth from Adam's Rib* are depicted on bas-reliefs.



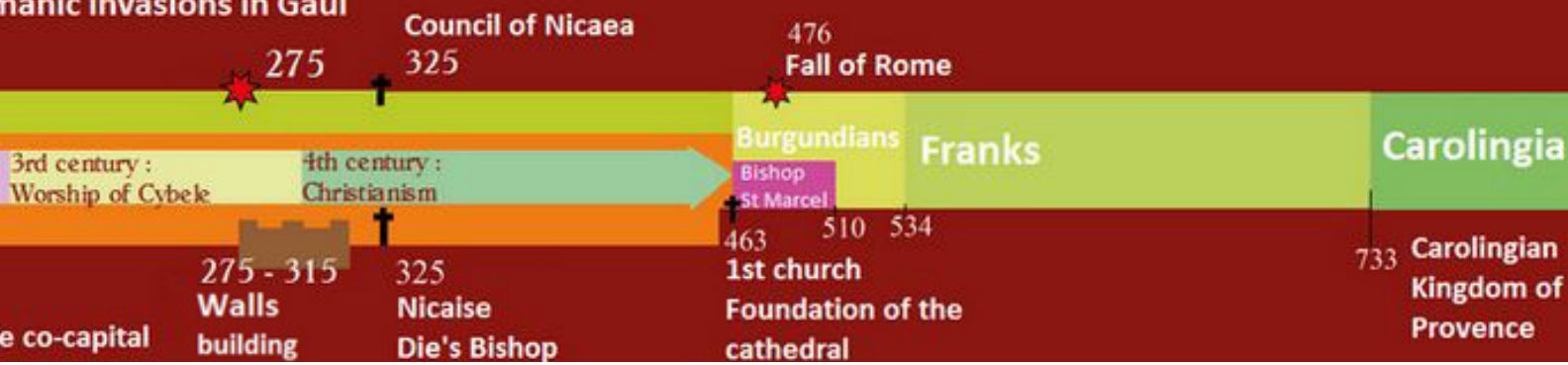
## The building of the walls

From the 3rd century AD onwards barbarian people invaded the territories of the Roman Empire already weakened by some internal tensions. The increasing insecurity in Gaul led to the building of the walls in Die surrounding the city over almost 2 km. In addition to the prestige it was giving to the city, its dissuasive effect aimed to discourage potential plunderers. Many stones-blocks from ancient monuments have been reused for the construction of about 50 towers and 8-meter-high walls.

Two main entrances have been made, Saint Pierre's Gate and Saint Marcel's in which the remains of a monumental Roman arch from the 2nd century were integrated.



## Barbarian invasions in Gaul



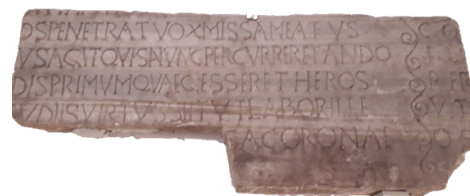
# Die, an episcopal lordship in the Middle Ages



In 463 the arrival of the Burgundians in Die underlined the declining Roman influence until it tapered off in 476. This was the year Romulus Augustule, the last Western Roman Emperor, abdicated in the face of Odoacre, a barbarian chief who conquered Rome. After the Burgundian occupation the city fell under the Frankish domination, when Clovis's sons took hold of the Burgundian territory in the 6th century.

## The bishop's figure in the Early Middle Ages

Whereas the pillars of the Western Roman Empire were progressively crumbling down, the bishop's rule inherited from the Roman institutions acquired great importance. His personality concentrated the religious and judicial powers at the same time, together with his administrative authority over the diocese.



In the fifth century in Die a bishop made a tremendous impression, it was Saint Marcel whose life was reported by a successor of his, Bishop Vulfin in the Carolingian period.

A **cipolin plate** exhibited in one of the Gallo-Roman lapidary rooms is engraved with a Latin text mentioning a "hero", which is deemed to be the Bishop Saint Marcel's epitaph in 510. Cipolin is some kind of greyish-green marble.

The city of Die boasted very many churches at that time. The episcopal group with the cathedral first dedicated to the Apostles, the baptistery inaugurated by Saint Marcel and a third church in the heart of town.

Saint Pierre's Basilica was located out of the walls in a rather funerary context.

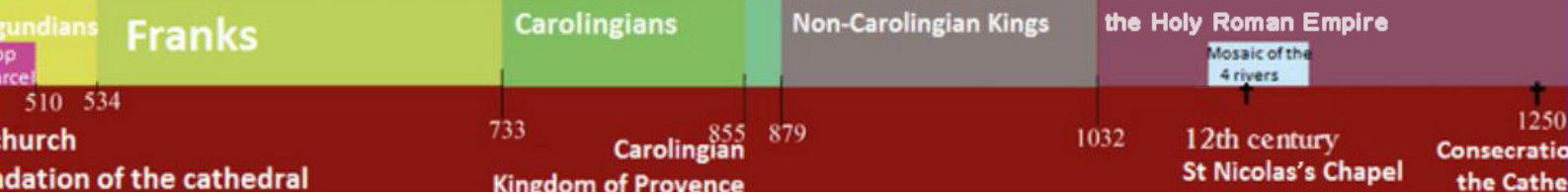


Dating from that time the sculpted fragments of **pillars** and **chancel screen tablets** are preserved in the museum. They are also called altar screen tablets. The chancel is a kind of fence separating the choir from the nave. The choir was housing the members of the clergy and the nave the laymen.



## Many conflicts throughout the Middle Ages

The political power of the bishops in Die further increased during the 12th century when they became counts and lords of the city under the feudal system. The conflicts multiplied with the local population. After one of the revolt the bishops had to deal with the bourgeois who imposed on them a Charter of Liberties in 1218. In 1222 Bishop Humbert was murdered at the cathedral-gate. Starting in the second half of the 13th century a feudal war pitted them against the Counts of Valence.





# Die, an episcopal lordship in the Middle Ages



From 1032 onwards the Kingdom of Burgundy Die was part of joined the Holy Roman Empire, complying with the Frankish dynasties' rule to divide the kingdom, so that every son may inherit a part of the territory. It was not until the 15th century that the region was tied to the kingdom of France. At the time the Diois became part of the Dauphiné. It means that the province was directed by a "dauphin", the king's eldest son, from the late Middle Ages until Modern Times. At the juncture the Bishop of Die paid homage to the future King Louis XI in 1450.

## The medieval obiit

"Obiit" means "he/she disappeared" in latin. This phrase is scrolled on plates generally made of stone and found in churches. They used to serve as reminders for the church-servants having to commemorate a deceased person who had made a donation to the church in his/her life-time. **Sister Umberta's obiit** reminds us that she gave Saint Marcel's Abbey the right to collect "taxes" from two localities.



## The development of the romanesque art

In the 11th and 12th centuries the Romanesque period brought changes in the conception of the churches with a great deal of carved decorations in line with the architecture. Above all, the sculpture was symbolic. It was based on the Christian dogma whereby nothing and no one can do anything better than God Himself, the creator of all. Accordingly, the sculptors did not aim to reproduce reality. Thus, if for example, the main character's hand is disproportionately sculpted on the **capital showing Daniel between two lions**, it is meant to highlight the importance of his gesture expressing his faith.



For the understanding of the lay people – most of them could not read or write – the sculptors often referred to plants, animals and mythological creatures symbolically holding evil or virtuous attributes. In this respect a good number of **Romanesque capitals** in the museum are decorated with monsters like underwater dragons, leonine figures (with a lion's head) etc.



## The "claps" of Luc-en-Diois, a chaotic heap of boulders and its consequences

Die is a flourishing city until 1443, when a violent earthquake brought about the collapse of a mountainside near Luc-en-Diois. This rocky collapse named the "claps" (from the Occitan "clapas" meaning "pile of stones") blocked the road, undermined trade exchanges and caused an impoverishment of the city. Die and the region ran into debt, especially as they were regularly ransomed by the French armies going to wage war in Italy in the 15th and early 16th centuries.

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# The Wars of Religion



As of the 16th century a great deal of the Die inhabitants endorsed the concepts of the Protestant Reform. Conflicts broke out between Catholics and Protestants until the enactment of the Edict of Nantes in 1598. The following years turned out to be peaceful as shown by the Protestant Academy's seal. They were ruling in Die between 1602 and 1684 until Louis XIV repealed the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The persecutions committed against the the Protestants forced a large number of them to go into exile or convert to Catholicism. This period of serious trouble went on until 1787, the year Louis XVI enacted the Edict of Versailles known as "the Edict of Tolerance".

## The conversion of part of the population to Protestantism

Among the families from Die who had converted to Protestantism, the **Faure de Vercors Family** was quite influential. Belonging to the Bourgeois in the 14th century they were awarded a title of nobility before the Wars of Religion. Above their house a moulded plate pictured the family's **coat of arms**. That one was surmounted by a canon regular's hat, as many of the Faure de Vercors family-members had performed this prestigious duty within the cathedral. But the hat had then been hammered away probably when the family embraced the Protestant faith.



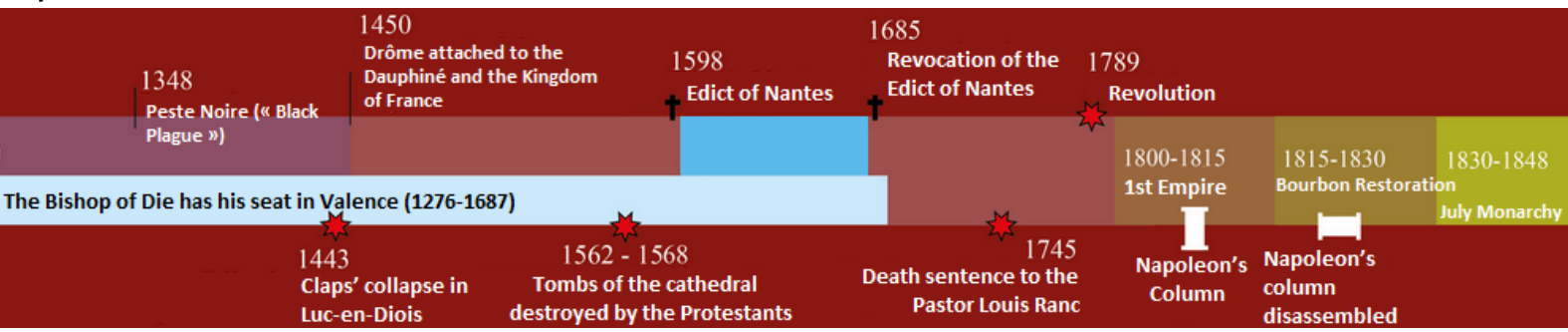
**Powder horn made of deer antler**, picturing a "lansquenet".

Lansquenets were mercenary infantrymen known for their cruelty, employed by the Protestants and the Catholics to swell their army ranks.

## The reactions of the Catholics

After the implementation of the Edict of Fontainebleau repealing the Edict of Nantes, a clampdown against Protestants had been enforced by king Louis XIV. He had sent "dragoons" -ill-disciplined military persecutors- to Protestant households with the implied permission to abuse the inhabitants, destroy or steal their possessions until forced recantation. An order of March 31. 1698 signed by Louis XIV mentioned that those "dragonnades" had happened in Saillans. Apart from the soldiers' cruelty against the populations, other measures had been taken to force the Protestants to convert, especially the abduction of young girls for them to be re-educated in Catholic convents.

The Protestant ministers were not spared, even the ones caught holding a clandestine religious meeting were sentenced to death. It is the case of young minister Louis Ranc judged by the Parliament of Grenoble and executed by hanging in Die in 1745. Songs were written to commemorate his martyrdom.





# The Diois after the Revolution



## The revolution and Empire

The Revolution was rather moderate in Die. Even the ones who, at the worst time when Terror was taking its toll, had been pointed at as “suspects” and sometimes jailed, finally safely return to their previous life.

Under the 1st Empire a statue to the glory of Napoleon had been erected in the town above the granite columns from the Roman times. Disassembled during the Bourbon Restoration, rebuilt under Napoleon III and pulled down under the 3rd Republic, the column had been cut into pieces and embedded into the basement foundations of the girls’ school, today’s town-hall. The **eagle** beside the Emperor is still visible behind one of the museum-display cases.



## The municipal life in the 19th and 20th century

Raging political conflicts that used to shake the town were reflected through the caricatures of politicians treated with irony. For example the Town-Council of Die is changed into a group of donkeys trained by Félix Germain, mayor from 1878 to 1885. **Léon Archimbaud**, a Member of Parliament (député in french) from 1919 to 1940 is represented as a wine jug. It is a pun based on the connection with the phrase “pot de vin” also meaning a “**bribe**”...

## Bears in the Vercors ?

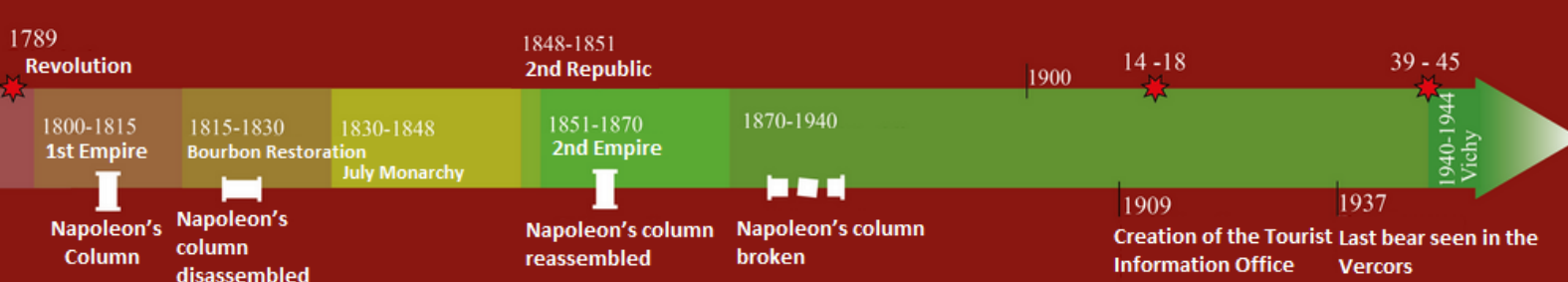
Bears were present over a long time in the Vercors as evidenced by the local place-names such as “le rang de l’ours” in Autrans, meaning “the bear’s rank”, or “le pas de l’ours” in Saint Nizier-du-Moucherotte meaning “the bear’s step” etc... The Gallic goddess Andarta, the Great Bear, gives actual evidence of a form of worship for this animal by the ancient populations.



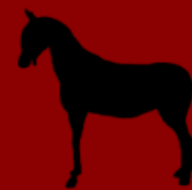
But from now on, bears are an extinct species. The last reliable observation of a wild bear in the area made by Julien-Daniel Arnaud dates back to 1937 in Saint-Martin-en-Vercors. The **bearskin** preserved in the museum belongs to a bear killed in the Diois in 1897.

## The Resistance in the Diois

The Resistance was organized in Die from June 1942 onwards. The Resistants used to hold secret meetings, issue leaflets and listen to the BBC informative programmes linked to the Allied Forces. Young people fleeing the Compulsory Work Service in Germany (“STO” in French) were hosted and accommodated on local farms. On July 21st 1944 **German gliders** landed in the Vercors- the framework of one of them is on display in the museum-garden. Meanwhile Die was occupied by the Germans backed up by the militia. Camille Buffardel the deputy mayor and Resistance Head, who was staying on “to serve the population”, was shot by the militia in Place Saint-Pierre.



# Die in the 19th and 20th century : agricultural and local activities



The 19th and 20th century in the Diois are represented in the museum by plenty of exhibits related to traditional farming, craftsmanship and tourism.

## The preeminence of agriculture

Agriculture remained the predominant activity in Die. The land was even tilled inside the very walls. Most cultivations were based on growing cereal crops like wheat, oats and rye. Ploughs, grain-sorters, and **winnowing machinery-implements** for separating the chaff from the grain-stress the prominence of agriculture even before mechanization started.



Above all, sheep-farming and the transhumance linked to it are strong markers of the local identity. The transhumance is the seasonal move to higher summer-pastures. It is celebrated nowadays during the transhumance feast when sheep are parading in the streets along with shepherds, their panniered mules and dogs. Sheep are not only raised for meat, but also for milk and wool.

## The importance of the vineyard

Vine growing dates back to Antiquity. Pliny describes a syrupy white wine made by the Voconces in his *histoire Naturelle*. (Natural history) Vine growing continued over the centuries, becoming prominent in the 19th and 20th century. Some tools in relation to this activity are preserved in the museum, like **gouyous**, the name given to the knives used for pruning the vines. The muscatel grape is used to produce the Clairette, the famous local sparkling wine. Some **old bottles** of it are exhibited in one of the Museum displays-cases.



## Textile production

Wool was not the only raw material used by the local textile craftsmen. The sericulture, i.e. silkworm-breeding imported from China and the cocoon harvest were expanding in the Diois from the 13th century onwards. Magnaneries (silk farms) were mostly located in the Saint-Marcel district. Among the tools related to silkworm-breeding we find an incubator and a "**débaveleuse**" in the museum. The latter answered the purpose of unwinding the silk thread of the cocoons.



## The development of tourism

It was not until the 20th century that tourism was flourishing in Die. In 1909, "a syndicat d'initiatives" the ancestor of the Tourist Office, was set up. It was promoting the region owing to the issue of a pink-coloured monthly newspaper : "*Le Diois pittoresque*". **Postcards** and tourist-guides of that time illustrate the early 20th century traveller's interest in local life.

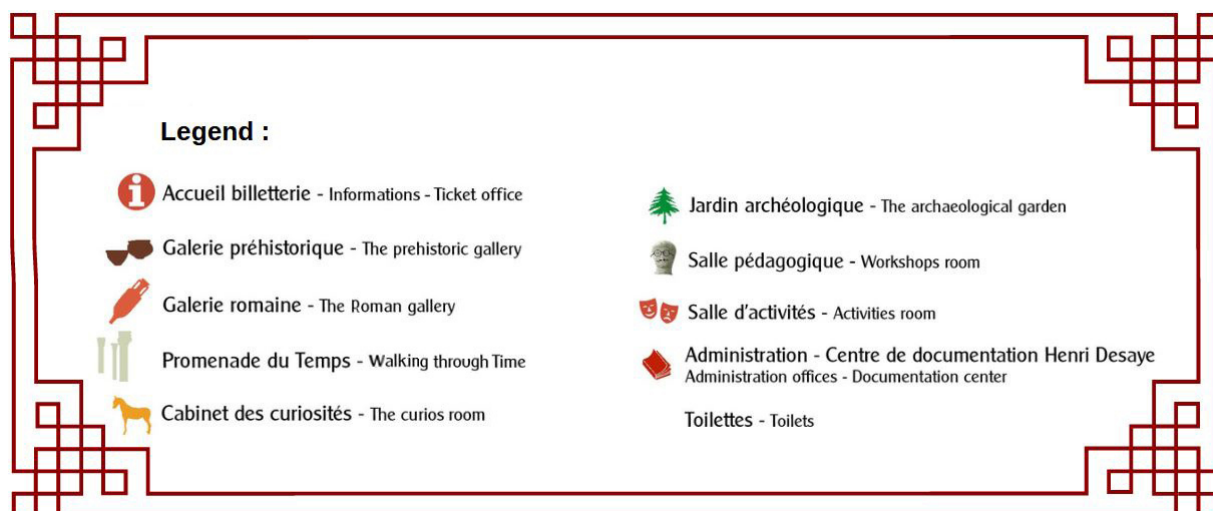
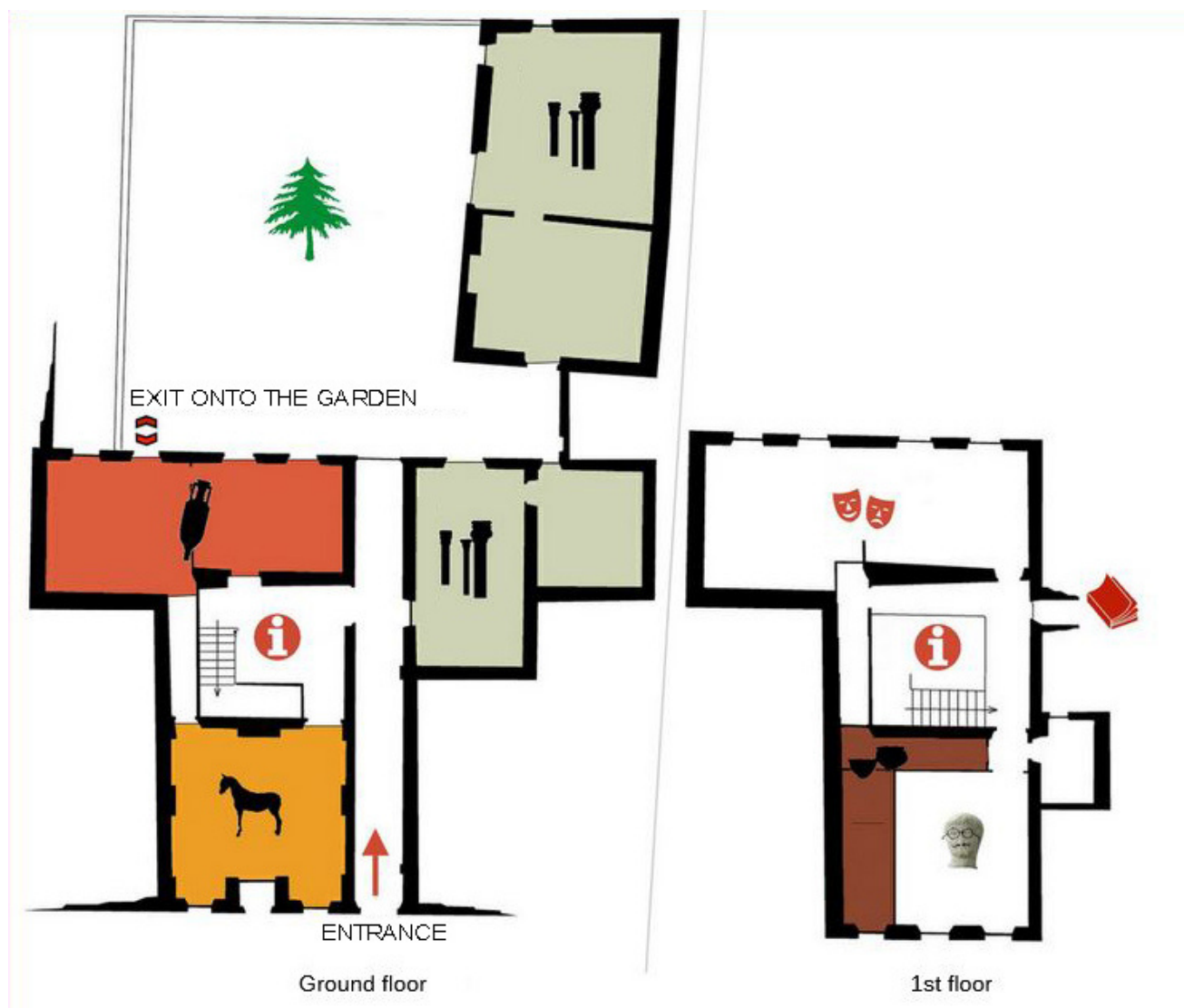
Threshing with a thresher, Die 1900-1910, Coll. Rolland





# Notes

# Museum map



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