



# The funerary archaeology at Sainte-Croix-en-Plaine

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**The archaeological site of Sainte-Croix-en-Plaine**, located 11 km south of Colmar, is one of the largest cemeteries ever excavated in the Alsace region. It was used for more than 700 years, from the Late Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age, or from approximately 1100 BC to 400 BC.

Local scholars have long been fascinated with **the archaeological examination of burials** from the protohistoric period. Numerous barrows were excavated throughout the region in the 19th century, though the majority only partially. At that time, excavators focused on the central areas of the barrows because that was where the richest burials were presumed to be located. Limited attention was paid to the archaeological context of the finds and their immediate surroundings. The records compiled at the time therefore rarely allow us to identify the funerary rites but rather refer to the goods found in the graves.



Aerial view of the Sainte-Croix-en-Plaine circular ditches taken in 1976.  
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**The methods and goals of modern archaeology** allow us to take a more holistic approach to the funerary practices. Between 1979 and 2005 numerous archaeological surveys and several excavation campaigns were carried out at Sainte-Croix-en-Plaine and aerial photographs were also taken. Some 60 circular structures attest to barrows that were originally present at the site but have since been stripped away