

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE MEROVINGIAN POTTERY FROM PRODUCTIONS CENTRES IN THE MOSAN VALLEY

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In the northwest of Europe, at the roots of the Middle Age, was the Merovingian period, which remains almost unknown because of the lack of explicit textual evidence. Hopefully, various archaeological documents provide a corpus of rich subjects to study. Thanks to the ceramic of this period, some information can be collected to reconstruct the economical, social and cultural history.

Along the mosan valley, region that would become important with the Carolingian dynasty, some cities took in many craftman's activities. In two of them, Maastricht and Huy, potter's kilns have been found and excavated but, up until now, there are still many aspects unknown about the manufacturing techniques of the merovingian pottery.

The aim of the present study is to distinguish and characterize the productions from the two centres, Huy and Maastricht, concerning the manufacturing techniques and clay used by the merovingians potters. This would then allow to redraw the distribution of this pottery in the mosan valley at the beginning of the middle age.

In this view, besides the archaeological approach, mosan pottery was analyzed by means of different analytical techniques. Representative samples of productions were chosen to realize thin sections for petrographic observations in order to obtain information about mineralogical characteristics. The same samples were then analysed by PIXE to define their chemical composition.