

comparative basis. This is not the first time that such aspirations have been proposed; how many times has it actually been achieved?

Variations of this socio-historical approach to archaeological material culture have been conducted elsewhere—for example the publication of 35% of cesspit complexes excavated between 1968–1996 in Deventer, Dordrecht, Nijmegen and Tiel (Bartels 1999; reviewed in *Medieval Ceramics* 22–23, 1998–99, 177–79). These however lack statistical data, and were but a sample. Constrained by time and the problem orientation of the research, material excavated since 1989 was not included in the Duisburg study. Nor was it possible in this study to assimilate the available archival information for Duisburg (one of the many proposals for the future that are cited), in the manner demonstrated by Reichmann (1988) for the Krefeld–Linn cellar group. This shortcoming is readily acknowledged by the author, and his interpretation of each assemblage and its socio-economic status is based on the archaeological evidence alone. The reader is consequently left uncertain about the reasons for some popular fashions failing to appear within the waste of certain households. Generalisations may hold true (and the statistics here are extremely interesting). For example, the period c 1575–1625 in particular witnessed a dramatic transformation in the composition of the ceramic assemblages, with the introduction of sophisticated earthenware for table use, to satisfy a discrete consumer niche and changes in dining habits. Dutch faience, oriental porcelain and English exports accounted for 46% of the pottery consumed in Duisburg during the second half of the 18th century (Staffordshire wares accounting for 20%), while for the same period in the hinterland Dutch faience increases, Chinese porcelain starts to appear, and English finewares are marginally represented. However, the micro-histories of individual assemblages offer a myriad of explanations, social trajectories and tempos, and these have yet to be addressed.

The end product is an extremely useful characterisation of regional ceramic consumption in the Duisburg area and assessment of the role that pottery has played – be it functional, socio-behavioural and economic – over a 400-year time span. The volume is well-produced and illustrated, notwithstanding a few typographical errors that are a by-product of the production process. Gaimster has admirably illustrated the potential of systematic, painstaking analysis of such late urban assemblages. The illustrations provide a useful source for comparative material, and Appendices facilitate cross-referencing of forms, features and sites (though use of ware codes rather than short names entails some work by the reader).

The comment on page 43 that it is a pilot study, is telling, given the implications for as yet unpublished assemblages and the introductory comments made on pages 20–24.

We should be extremely grateful to the author for persevering to ensure that this version of his doctoral research has appeared in English in BAR (not the first time this solution has been found: see Brown 2000, 99). This reviewer agrees with the author's own self-justification in his foreword (page 15) – that it makes a timely contribution to the fast-emerging discipline of European historical archaeology and material culture studies. As an illuminating study of patterns and potential in the Lower Rhineland, it sets a benchmark against which any future progress towards a true historical archaeology of pottery supply and demand in this region can be measured.

Mark Redknap

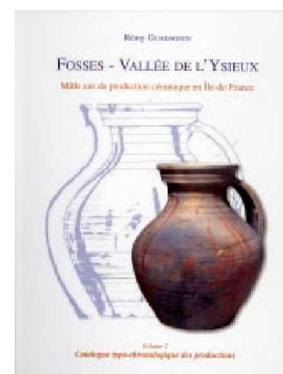
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Rémy Guadagnin

Fosses – Vallée de L'Ysieux: mille ans de production céramique en Île-de-France . Volume 2 . Catalogue typochronologique des productions
2007. Publications du CRAHM . Caen, 2007
735 pages, 478 figures including colour plates

The sight of the huge volume brought back fond memories of my visit to the excavations at Fosses in August 1995. I'd met Remy Guadagnin in Paris in the morning and he took me out to see the site, where we arrived in time for lunch. I don't recall ever being more warmly welcomed at an excavation, and I still have on view a large photograph of a pile of in situ whiteware pots that was sent to me afterwards. My French has hardly improved since then, making a



thorough review of this mammoth work somewhat tricky, but the illustrations speak for themselves, and the general gist is easy to discern.

This is the second of a two-volume set, the first of which deals with the structural and stratigraphic evidence, while this considers the pottery. What pottery it is too! The kilns at Fosses are located almost 30 kilometres due north of Paris, on a tributary of the River Oise, where there seem to be good supplies of white-firing clay. The nature of that clay is explored in the introduction, as soon as page seven, on which there are tables setting out the chemical composition of various clay samples. Location and methodology are also considered in this opening chapter, and it is refreshing to see photographs of personnel trying to find sherd fits. The caption 'De gigantesques puzzles ...' says it all. The following five chapters discuss the pottery produced at Fosses in chronological order: 'Le haut Moyen Âge', 'Le Moyen Âge classique', 'Le bas Moyen Âge', 'La Renaissance' and 'L'Ancien Régime'. As the title says, a thousand years of pottery-making, that takes us through most of the traditions we are familiar with. Tenth century glazed, red-painted and plain whitewares, developed into a wider variety of forms in the twelfth century, including lamps, mortars and horns. Forms of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries included curfews and dripping pans among the range of jugs, jars and bowls, while the fifteenth century saw the introduction of cups and socket-handled pipkins. As in many other places, the sixteenth century brought changes, with two-handled tripod cooking pots, chafing dishes and fuming pots all making an appearance. The first section in the chapter on the pottery of 'L'Ancien Régime' is entitled 'Stagnation, puis restructuration ...' and this period is characterised by a simplification of products and a narrowing in the range of forms. The overall story may be easily told (although, with apologies, oversimplified here), but the telling of it in this volume is a masterpiece of technique and attention to detail.

For one thing, the illustrations are superb. The line drawings are clearly presented, and there are hundreds of them, depicting vessel forms, the forms of component parts and techniques and motifs of decoration. Figure 161, for example, shows the methods of decorating a pot with red slip, which is actually shown as red and is all the more effective for it. Such an unsparing approach to depicting every detail is terrific, and this is carried into the photographs, which are all excellent. They range from groups of vessels to close-ups of finger-prints in the surface of impressed clay. There are also plates of manuscript illuminations and other artworks where pottery has been represented. I imagine most of us would use this volume as a reference catalogue, and it will certainly be easy to do so. The pottery of each period is summarised in charts that illustrate the evolution of the main forms, a 'panorama synthétique' that acts as a quick look-up guide. Within each period

there is an introductory section discussing the background to pottery-making at the time. The products of specific kilns are then presented in separate sections, sub-divided by vessel type. L'atelier 10.21, for instance, in Chapter Two, contains the following headings in the first section: 'Les données chronologiques', 'Les tendances générales de la production est leur évolution', 'Les pâtes' ('The fabrics') and 'Les décors peints'. The following section on the earliest sequence of production for the kiln considers vessel groups and other elements: 'Les oules', 'Les cruches', 'Les pichets', 'Les formes ouvertes', 'Les formes rares et les décors exceptionnels', 'Col atypique glaçuré' and 'Décors plastiques exceptionnels'. It is very easy to find your way around and to understand what is going on, especially when the illustrations are so well integrated with the text. This is more than a catalogue, however. It goes deeply into the composition of the assemblage, exploring particular idiosyncrasies among the pots, seeking to understand and illustrate specific techniques of manufacture and decoration, and pondering the wider issues that affected pottery-making. The overall aim seems to be to gain a close understanding of not just what the potters of Fosses produced at different times, but also how and why. This is really good archaeology.

The final chapter considers the distribution of the pottery in the Île-de-France and Picardy. This is mainly comprised of an inventory of sites, rather than an extended discussion of quantitative evidence, and that might be the next stage in the huge task of putting the products of Fosses into context. That, perhaps, is not a job that will be completed by Remy Guadagnin. He and his team have obviously worked hard to produce this extensive, thoroughly comprehensive and fabulously well presented book. It will be up to others now to use this to identify the products of Fosses on different sites in the region, and perhaps further afield. There is no doubt this was very well-made pottery, and it may well have been taken considerable distances. I recommend this book not only as a very useful work of reference, but also as a demonstration of how to research and publish a huge kiln assemblage. The team at Fosses, I remember, were fond of Kenneth Branagh's film *Henry V*. This glorious enterprise too, is a fine illustration of leading by example.

Andreas Heege (editor)

Topferofen – pottery kilns – fours de potiers: die Erforschung fruhmittelalterlicher bis neuzeitlicher Topferofen (6–20 Jh) in Belgien, den Niederlanden, Deutschland, Osterreich und der Schweiz

Basler Hefte zur Archäologie Volume 4

432 pages, 545 illustrations (line and black and white photographs), accompanying CD with images of 1795 pottery kilns, €60

When Andreas Heege emailed me to tell me that there was a new book on the pottery kilns of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland about to be