

SERNEELS Vincent

L'archéologie de l'industrie du fer

The archaeology of iron industry

Recent research on ancient iron industry has taken important new directions in Europe and especially in Switzerland. New data are available, new techniques are applied and new questions are discussed. Slags and other metallurgical remains provide important informations on the history of technology. Their study permits greater understanding of an industrial activity essential to the economy of ancient societies. A global approach is proposed for the study of metallurgical waste products in their archaeological context: the waste products are quantified and registered in the field; a classification is established, based on manual and visual examination; finally, representative samples are analysed in the laboratory. In this manner, the remains are interpreted from a technological point of view in their original production line and, to a certain extent, the importance of the activity can be estimated as well. On a regional scale, systematic study gradually reveals the organisation of this industry and its development in the course of time.

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