7.1 Assessment of Soil Micromorphology

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Introduction

7.1.1 One sample was taken specifically for soil micromorphology, with accompanying soil chemistry samples, from a buried soil beneath possible Early Bronze Age barrow mound material. A further series of monoliths suitable for pollen and soil micromorphology were also taken. The assessment of the value of soil micromorphology is based on the sampled contexts and question posed of them, and not of the material itself *per se*.

Methodology

7.1.2 Samples were taken from sealed contexts during excavation, either in kubiena tins (foil containers) or soil monoliths, to ensure that undisturbed samples were taken. Where samples have been taken in long soil monoliths (in excess of 0.2m) then undisturbed sample can be cut from these after suitable pedological/ sedimetological description has been made and any subsampling for pollen or other analyses.

Provenance

7.1.3 Samples include Bronze Age to Saxon contexts (**Table 43**).

Table 43: Provenance details for Soil Micromorphology samples

Sample/ ref no	Phase	Contexts	Description
W83	EBA		Denuded barrow mound
W84	EBA		Denuded barrow mound
E1	Iron Age	C1499	Basal layer of storage pit
A1 – A3, A1a - A5a	Iron Age	C624, C625, C626, C679, C678, C628	Deep irregular pit complex in west of site
X1 – X4	RB	C143, C916	Above and below road metalling 155
Y1 – Y4	RB	C838	Above road metalling 839
Z1 – Z6	RB	C121, C122	Above road metalling
B1- B5	Saxon	C1360 +	Cemetery
C1 – C3	Saxon		Ditch fills in cemetery
F1 – F6		C1483, C1500-C1507	Ditch fills
G1, G2	Saxon	C632, C631	Sunken-featured building 'floor'
C140	Saxon	C1538	Sunken-featured building
M1 – M11	Saxon	C1178, C1083, C1079, C1171, C1174, C1175, C1176, C1177	Fills of grave C7
Q	Saxon		Former old land surface through which graves were cut

Conservation

7.1.4 Undisturbed soil samples are not suitable for long term storage and samples should be stored in dark and dry cool to cold/ refrigerated, but not freezing, conditions before sampling. Samples for soil micromorphology become stable and suitable for long term storage and archive curation once impregnated blocks have dried. The slides are normally retained by the specialist but the remaining blocks are retained in the archive.

Comparative Material

7.1.5 Information from buried soils has been demonstrated to provide long site histories or prior and immediately post burial (e.g. Macphail 1986; 1995). Trample deposits are well known for their anthropogenic indicators recovered from deposits (e.g. Potterne, Macphail in Lawson 2000; Courty *et al*. 1989).

Potential for other work

7.1.6 A number of sampled contexts provide the potential to examine the on site lived-in environment and of site based activities (**Table 44**). The context of most of these samples is restricted to site-based, rather than wider landscape, interpretation. Only the buried soils beneath the barrow mounds and that sealed by the road have the potential of providing both on-site and wider environmental context. Where samples have been selected, small samples for soil chemistry, where available, should be analysed in conjunction with any soil micromorphology.

Table 44: Summary of Soil Micromorphology sample potential

Sample/ group	Description	Potential	Pollen
Prehistoric landscape			
E1	Basal layer of storage pit	Localised activity on site	To be sampled for pollen at 2cm contiguous intervals to enable a) assessment and b) analysis if required.
Pre-Saxon landscape			
1 of X1-4	Soil beneath road metalling C155	Pre-road landscape and activity	
Q	?former land surface through which graves were cut	Pre-Saxon landscape and land-use	
1 of M1-11	Turf in grave	Pre-Saxon landscape and land-use	To be sampled for pollen at 2cm contiguous intervals to enable a) assessment and b) analysis if required
83	Top of OLS under barrow	Pre-Saxon landscape and land-use	To be sampled for pollen at 2cm contiguous intervals to enable a) assessment and b) analysis if required
84	OLS under barrow	Pre-Saxon landscape and land-use	To be sampled for pollen at 2cm contiguous intervals to enable a) assessment and b) analysis if required
Saxon landscape and activity			
G1 or G2	Floor of sunken-featured building	Activity on site	

7.1.7 A selection of stratified undisturbed samples, therefore, have the potential of providing information about the wider landscape (buried soils), and specifically of activities on site. The latter include the soil horizon in the sunken-featured building and the storage pit. They may also contribute to a consideration of activity associated with funerary practices (i.e. turves in graves and the potential denuded barrow material). Analysis can provide detailed information about specific features,

pits and activities on the site scale, and about activities associated with the wider land-use and landscape.

Bibiography

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