

Assessment of the Clay Tobacco Pipes from Stamford, Lincolnshire (BARS03)

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The clay tobacco pipes from an archaeological watching brief carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincolnshire) at Stamford, Lincolnshire, (Site Code BARS03) were submitted to the author for identification and assessment.

The pipes include one late 17th-century bowl but are otherwise a coherent collection of 18th/19th-century date.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Seven fragments of clay tobacco pipe were submitted. All were bowls, suggesting some selection in recovery and that mouthpieces and marked stem fragments may have been missed alongside the plain stem fragments.

The pipes were made in a fine off-white pipeclay with only sparse quartz grains up to 0.1mm across visible under x20 magnification. This suggests that the pipes were made either from a ball clay or from the most local Jurassic Estuarine Beds, which were exploited for pipeclay extensively at Northampton.

The earliest example dates from the middle of the 17th century, c.1640-60, as is a spurred bowl from context 102/103.

Five bowls of a form approximating to Atkinson and Oswald's London type 25. Two of these had raised makers marks on either side of the heel. These consist of a capital I on one side and no mark on the other. One bowl, from context 108, definitely had no marks on either side and one had a "C" on one side whilst the other side did not survive. In London, this form was produced from c.1720 onwards without much typological change. At Lincoln, by contrast, it seems that the form was not used until somewhat later (Mann 1977 Nos. 152-155). A mid to late 18th-century date is likely.

A small spurred bowl from context 108 had been heavily burnt after breakage and was covered in a slaggy deposit. This might have taken place in a domestic fire with the 'slag' being fuel ash slag and is not necessarily evidence either for metallurgy or pipe production. Bowls of this form were manufactured from the late 18th century onwards.

Assessment

Most of these pipes could be of similar date, and if they are in fact contemporary then this would point to a late 18th-century date. Presumably, they are associated with either the demolition of the town wall or subsequent rubbish dumping on the site. Further work could be carried out on the collection,

identify the makers of the marked pipes and comparing this collection with those from earlier excavations in the town. It is therefore recommended that the collection is retained in an archaeological repository for future study.

Appendix One. Catalogue

Context	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Part	Use	Condition
102/103	AO25 - HEELED;MARKED 'I' ON ONE SIDE;PLAIN ON OTHER	1	1	17	BOWL		
102/103	AO15? SPURRED;MILLED AROUND RIM	1	1	11	BOWL		
104	AO25 - HEELED	1	1	15	BOWL	V SLIGHT SOOTING AROUND BOWL RIM	FE-STAINED
108	SMALL SPURRED BOWL;RAISED SQUARE INSIDE BOWL	1	1	9	BOWL		SLAGGED
108	AO25 - HEELED;SPLAYED HEEL	1	1	11	BOWL		
108	AO25 - HEELED;MARKED 'C' ON ONE SIDE;BROKEN ON OTHER	1	1	12	BOWL		
108	AO25 - HEELED;MARKED 'I' ON ONE SIDE;PLAIN ON OTHER	1	1	15	BOWL		