

Assessment of the Fired Clay from Barrow Road, Barton-upon-Humber (BHBR07)

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A small collection of fired clay from an archaeological intervention carried out by Lindsey Archaeological Services was submitted for identification and assessment. The material could be divided into three groups, one of which consists of annular loomweights of early to mid Anglo-Saxon date whilst the other two are probably daub.

Description

Fired Clay

Twenty-four fragments of fired clay were recorded, weighing in total 304 gm.

Fabric

The fired clay could be divided visually into three fabric groups, samples of which have been extracted to a fabric series.

Fabric 1 has few visible inclusions.

Fabric 2 is soft and sandy.

Fabric 3 is similar to fabric 2 but contains burnt-out organic inclusions.

Form

Four fragments of annular loom weight were identified two of these are large enough to be reconstructed and two are small spalls, only identified through their similarity in fabric to the other two pieces.

One piece has a flattish surface (actually slightly concave on the surviving fragment) and has a wattle impression on the back.

Other pieces have flat surfaces but no evidence for daub. Nevertheless, they are quite likely to be daub.

The majority of the pieces (14 fragments), however, have no form characteristics.

Assessment

The loom weights are evidence for the practicing of weaving using a vertical loom in the early Anglo-Saxon period. Such looms seem to have been part of the household although surplus cloth was probably traded.

Date

Annular loomweights were introduced in the 5th century and occur in early to mid Anglo-Saxon deposits. Those found at Flixborough, occupied from the later 7th century onwards, are bun-shaped and this provides a likely terminus ante quem for the Barton pieces. The remaining fired clay cannot be dated and, given its difference in composition to the loom weights, might well be of a different date.

Further Work

The two most complete loom weights should be illustrated. Samples of these loom weights and the largest piece of fired clay (fabric 2) should be thin sectioned and their chemical composition determined using Inductively-coupled Plasma Spectroscopy to establish the source of the clay used and for comparison with analyses of other fired clay objects from Barton upon Humber and Flixborough.

Retention

All of the material should be retained for future re-examination and sampling. They require no special storage conditions.

Appendix 1

Action	Context	REFNO	class	Description	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
	118		FCLAY		FCLAY	2	SURFACE	BS	1	1	4
	503		FCLAY	CONCAVE SURFACE, POSSIBLE WATTLE IMPRESSION 18 DIA	FCLAY	2	DAUB?	BS	1	1	9
TS, ICPS; FAB 2	504		FCLAY	ONE POSSIBLE SURFACE	FCLAY	2	FCLAY	BS	4	4	67
	507		FCLAY		FCLAY	1?	FCLAY	BS	1	1	1
FAB 4	607		FCLAY	GRASS IMPRESSIONS	FCLAY	4	FCLAY	BS	1	1	2
	720		FCLAY		FCLAY	2	SURFACES	BS	3	3	42
DR, TS, ICPS	903	14	FCLAY		FCLAY	1	ANNULAR LOOMWEIGHT	PART	1	1	57
DR, TS, ICPS; FAB 1	905	13	FCLAY		FCLAY	1	ANNULAR LOOMWEIGHT	PART	1	1	90
	909		FCLAY		FCLAY	2	FCLAY	BS	1	1	1
	921		FCLAY		FCLAY	1	ANNULAR LOOMWEIGHT	FRAG	2	2	13
	923		FCLAY		FCLAY	2	FCLAY	BS	1	1	1
	927		FCLAY		FCLAY	2	FCLAY	BS	1	1	3
	1006		FCLAY	SMOOTH CONVEX SURFACE	FCLAY	2	SURFACE	BS	1	1	2
	1014	8	FCLAY		FCLAY	2	FCLAY	BS	3	1	1
FAB 3	1017		FCLAY		FCLAY	3	FCLAY	BS	1	1	9
	1112		FCLAY		FCLAY	1?	FCLAY	BS	1	1	2

Notes: DR = line drawing required; TS = Thin section required; ICPS = Chemical analysis (inductively coupled plasma spectroscopy) required; FAB = extracted for site-based fabric collection.

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