

Assessment of Finds from Land to the north of the Railway, Torksey, Lincolnshire (LNRT07)

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A small collection of finds from an excavation on land to the north of the railway, Torksey, Lincolnshire, undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) Ltd was submitted to the authors for identification and assessment (Site Code: LNRT07). The finds include what is probably part of the superstructure of an Anglo-Scandinavian pottery kiln; a stone which might have been used as a former in pottery production; a Mayen lava quern fragment and an iron rove used in boat construction.

Description

Fired Clay

Seven fragments of fired clay from context 327 were submitted. One has a probable wattle impression (of which it was impossible to measure the diameter), combined with a convex surface, indicating that it comes from a domed structure, such as a pottery kiln (for which there is other evidence from the site, in the form of wasters). A second fragment has the impression of a larger piece of timber, c.50mm diameter. The fabric of the fired clay contains quartz sand temper but is coarser in texture than that of Torksey ware.

Iron

Three iron objects were recovered:

- a) Context 207. A modern circular-cross-sectioned nail which radiography indicates has non-ferrous plating (e.g. zinc).
- b) Context 536. A corroded handmade nail with a circular head. The 4mm square-sectioned shank is bent at right angles c.30mm from the head indicating that it had not been removed from the wood before burial but is broken c.6mm from this bend.
- c) Context 532. A corroded rove, 39mm long. Details of the head and washer are unclear either in the hand or in xray and further detail could be recovered through investigative cleaning.

Stone

Two stone objects were recovered.

- a) Unstratified. A roughly rectangular slab of calcite mudstone of which one side has been trimmed to a curve. Given the presence of pottery waste on the site it is possible that this is a tool used for forming the shoulders of jars. Calcite mudstone

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occurs locally in the Rhaetic and Lower Lias but the unmodified edges indicate that this was formed from a detrital pebble and could therefore have been made using a pebble from a local gravel outcrop.

- b) Context 420. A fragment of Mayen lava quern stone (rock type confirmed at x20 magnification). The fragment has no definite original edges but is consistent in size to quernstones of Roman and Anglo-Saxon to Medieval date.

Assessment

All of the submitted finds are consistent with an Anglo-Scandinavian date apart from the nail from context 207, which is probably modern.

Further Work

The two fragments of fired clay with wood impressions should be drawn and the fabric of the fired clay established using thin section and chemical analysis, to determine whether the clay could have been from the same clay source as that used for the Torksey ware from Kilns 1 to 7, each of which has been sampled and characterised using ICPS (Inductively-Coupled Plasma Spectroscopy).

The details of the iron rove should be established by investigative cleaning and the cleaned object should then be illustrated and the description here modified.

The possible potter's tool should be illustrated.

Costings

Table 1

Task	Description	Cost	VAT
1	TS analysis of fired clay	£26.00	£4.55
2	ICPS analysis of fired clay	£52.00	£9.10
3	Investigative cleaning of iron rove	Not costed	
4	Modification of report following results of task 4	£26.00	£4.55
5	Illustration of iron rove	£20.00	£3.50
6	Illustration of stone tool	£20.00	£3.50
Total		£118.00	£20.65

Retention and storage

All the finds should be retained. The fired clay and stone are stable and require no special storage conditions whilst the iron has been assessed and x-rayed by the Lincoln Conservation Laboratory and packaged for archive storage.

Appendix 1

Context	class	Description	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Diam
327	FCLAY	ONE CONVEX CURVED SURFACE AND ONE POSS WATTLE	FCLAY		KILN STRUCTURE	PART	6	0	78		0
327	FCLAY	50 DIA POST	FCLAY		KILN STRUCTURE	PART	1	1	81		0
207	IRON	MODERN ZINC COATED OR NON-FERROUS PLATED NAIL WITH CIRCULAR SECTION	IRON		NAIL	PART?	1	1	8	HEADLESS	4
536	IRON	STRAIGHT FOR 30, THEN END BENT; CIRCULAR HEAD 15 DIA	IRON		NAIL	PART	1	1	8		0
532	IRON		IRON		ROVE	WHOLE	1	1	28		0
U/S	STONE	PART OF AN 80 DIA WORN CURVE; POTTERS TOOL	STONE		FORMER	PART	1	1	14		0
420	STONE	MAYEN QUERN STONE	STONE	MAYEN	QUERN	PART	1	1	96		0