

Conservation Assessment of finds from Easby Abbey EAD11

For John Buglass

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York Archaeological Trust Conservation Laboratory report 2012/07

Conservation Assessment

Introduction

Two iron artefacts were delivered to the York Archaeological Trust Conservation Laboratory for assessment.

Aims and objectives

This report aims to meet the requirements of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) to produce a stable site archive. This has involved X-radiography and an assessment of the condition, stability and packaging of the finds. Standard YAT procedures were followed: the two recorded finds were X-rayed and assessed, the assessment of each find is presented in the table in the Appendix.

The condition of the material is summarised and indicators of unusual preservation are noted. The potential of the assemblage for further analysis and research is discussed, and recommendations made for investigative conservation and long term storage.

Procedures

The iron finds were X-rayed using standard YAT procedures and equipment. One half sheet of film was used, and the plate was given a reference number in the YAT conservation laboratory series (X7922). The X-ray number was written on each recorded find bag. Each image on the radiograph was labelled with its recorded finds number. The plate was packaged in an archival paper pocket.

Both finds were examined under a binocular microscope at x20 magnification. The material identifications were checked and observations made about the condition and stability of the finds.

Condition assessment summary

Iron

The iron objects were in a fair condition. Both have overlying crusts which are cracked and have areas of active corrosion present, whilst the X-ray images show metal present in both cores but with some degree of mineralisation. Fragments of mineral preserved organic matter (wood) were noted in the crusts of both objects.

Statement of potential

Indicators of preservation

There were no indicators of specific preservation or burial environments, although fragments of mineral preserved organic material were present in the crusts of both objects. The corrosion products present suggest well-aerated deposits.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further work are highlighted in bold in the tables together with estimates of cost.

Further investigative conservation

The head of sf28 could be investigated if the context warranted it

Packing and long-term storage

Packaging on arrival at the lab

The finds were individually placed in grip-top finds bags. They did not have any physical protection and were not in a desiccated environment.

Long-term storage

Foam inserts have been placed in the bags to offer some physical protection and the bags have been placed in a sealed container with silica gel to provide a desiccated storage environment. The finds should be stored in a desiccated environment at less than 15%RH to stabilise and prevent further active corrosion. The desiccated environment will need to be maintained.

Resource requirements

Investigative conservation and report	£140.00 + VAT
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Appendix

Table 1 Conservation assessment – Iron

X-ray	RF	Context	Assessment
7922	27		<p>Labelled 'Iron ?Bolt/Nail Head' The surface of the object is obscured by a crust of soil and orange and brown corrosion products . In fair condition; the crust is cracked and split and has evidence of active corrosion present. There are fragments of mineral persevered organic matter (wood) in the crust. The X-ray shows the object to have a dense metal core in the shaft and to one side of the broad head, the others side being more mineralised.</p> <p>Recommendations: no further action.</p>
7922	28		<p>Labelled 'Iron obj' Bulbous crust of soil and orange corrosion products present over one end and half way along shaft. Elsewhere this crust has flaked off revealing cracked and damaged corrosion surfaces with signs of active corrosion visible. There are fragments of mineral preserved organic material (wood) within the crust. X-ray shows a patchy metal core present along the shaft which is more mineralised towards the bent end. Where the shaft bends it appears to be encased by another piece of iron.</p> <p>Recommendation: investigate bent end if required (estimated time 3-4hrs)</p>