ANK Report 2521

Icklingham : Fruits and seeds

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8TTE 783

Macroscopic plant remains were recovered from 2.5 litre soil samples by flotation, collecting the flot in a 250 micron mesh sieve. Most of the fruits and seeds recovered are carbonised, but a few mineralised fruitstones and seeds were retrieved from the non-floating fraction of samples 14, 23 and 24. Uncarbonised seeds which do not show clear signs of impregnation with mineral salts are assumed to be modern contaminants and are not listed in Table

Crop plants

1. Wheats (Triticum spp.)

Spelt-type caryopses, relatively broad and flat with blunt apices and near parallel sides predominate in these samples (Fig a-c) and the presence of spelt is confirmed by the glume base from context 0677 (Fig. 1). Possible emmer-type grains and bread wheat-type grains (Figs. d-e) are also present, but since spelt caryopses are often very variable in morphology the possibility that these grains are extreme examples of spelt cannot be excluded and these specimens have therefore, not been identified to species. Context 0641 produced a germinated wheat grain (Fig. f)

2. Barley Hordeum sp.

Only six-row hulled barley has definitely been identified; a typical twisted grain from a lateral spikelet is illustrated (Fig. g). A germinated barley grain came from context O639 (Fig. h).

3. Rye Secale cereale

A poorly-preserved grain from context O660 is tentatively identified as rye. It has a large embryo scar, very blunt apex and triangular cross-section. (Fig. i).

4. Mineralised fruitstones and seeds

Preservation of seeds by impregnation with insoluble salts almost always causes distortion and partial or total loss of endocarps and testas, thus making identification difficult. On the basis of general size and shape the specimens from O660 and O662 are tentatively identified as apple and cherry (Fig j.k). The elder seeds from O663 are much better preserved.

Discussion -

Although several of the deeper deposits on the site were wet when examined the soil was in general sufficiently porous to have allowed free diffusion of oxygen with consequent decay of organic materials. Only carbonised and mineralised seeds have survived.

Carbonised cereals including spelt and barley, often associated with carbonised seeds of common arable weeds, were present in small numbers in most deposits examined. Wheat grains were present in nine samples, and barley in three; samples from the Roman sites at Scole (Jones 1977, 219) and Spong Hill (Murphy, forthcoming) have also produced more grains of wheat than of barley. The probable presence of rye is interesting, since this crop is generally uncommon in Roman deposits, and apparently only became economically important during the Saxon period. Deposits of this type probably represent small-scale domestic losses of cereals.

The mineralised Prunus fruitstone, Malus-type seed and carbonised hazel-nut shell reflect the consumption of fruits and nuts.

Jones, A. (1977)

VIII Botanical Evidence. in Rogerson, A. Excavations at Scole, 1973. East Anglian Archaeological Report 5, 97-223.

	Context No.			0031	0035	0534
	Sample No.			1	2	22
	Site phase					
	Cereal indet.	ca	Unidentified cereal	· 1	1	640
Carbonised weed seeds etc. Inuits chair, cereal grains	Triticum sp.	ca	Wheat	Nation of the second	special	1
	Triticum spelta-type	ca	Spelt-type wheat	BOUR .	kenti	8.404
	Hordeum sp.	ca	Barley	1 <i>01</i> 0	\$500	152
б р	Hordeum vulgare L.	ca	Six-row hulled barley		5173-	6.002
0 0	c.f. Secale cereale L.	ca	Rye ?	1403	-	trucki
Carbonised weed seeds etc. Inuits chair, cereal grains	Triticum <u>spelta</u> L.	gb	Spelt D	6m20+	8.773	ionia
	Prunus sp.	fs	Cherry?	Acres 1	Easte	6.000
C. ITUITS CDAIL,	Malus-type	S	Apple?	****	-2307	***
đ	Sambucus nigra L.	S	Elder	PATA		1,27.00
••		caUnidentified cereal1caWheat-ta-typecaSpelt-type wheat-caBarley-reL.caSix-row hulled barleyerealeL.caRye ?taL.gbSpelt PaL.gbSpelt PaL.sElderaL.sElderaL.sBlack medick?sp.sClover?-nuDock-volvulusL.nuBlack bindweed-anasRibwort plantaineL.frGoosegrassfrBedstraw-asElder				
	Raphanus raphanistrum L.	ຮງ່	Wild radish	5/73 0	61 2	1
'n	<u>Malva</u> cf. <u>sylvestris</u> L.	nu	Mallow	1	617P	in st
etc.	c.f. <u>Medicago</u> <u>1upulina</u> L.	s	Black medick?	1013	ana ka	8208
n	cf. <u>Trifolium</u> sp.	s	Clover?	#110	E-10	
0 0 0	Leguminosae indet.	s	Unidentified vetch	572 672	1000 C	1
თ ო	Rumex sp.	nu	Dock	92 73	1	1228
e e e	Polygonum convolvulus L.	nu.	Black bindweed	ipan La	1	
3	Corylus avellana L. n.fr	ag	Hazel	**	-	
s S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S	<u>Plantago</u> <u>lanceolata</u> L.	S	Ribwort plantain			-
r u o	<u>Galium</u> aparine L.	fr	Goosegrass	46.19	1	
Carboi	Galium sp.	fr	Bedstraw	C 114	****	No.
	Sambucus nigra	ន	Elder		gina	1
	Gramineae indet.	ca	Grasses	6114) 6114		-
	Indet.		Unidentified.	areast	2	1

Table

: Fruits, seeds etc. from Icklingham (IKLO63)

nutlet Abbreviations: caryopsis nu ca fruit nutshell fr n frag fragment seed \mathbf{S} siliqua joint fs fruitstone sj *Germinated grain gb glume base* indet.indeterminate

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Icklingham: Land snails

的目标的复数形式

1 kg. soil samples were taken from the plough-wash deposit and underlying soil profile, and molluscs were extracted using the method described by Evans (1972, 44). The taxa identified are listed in Table : in addition samples 5 and 6 produced scraps of mussel and oyster shell.

Sample No.	5	6	7	8΄
Interpretation	Plough-wash	Al horizon	в	horizon
Cecilioides acicula(Muller)	66	34	38	28
Cochlicopa sp.	4 NG	1	44 7 1	509
Helicella itala(L)	3	1	1	2
Helicidae indet.(immature)	kan	-	\$5.03	1
Pupilla muscorum (L.)	rada	1	فنتتو	
<u>Vallonia</u> excentrica Sterki	6	6000 -	600 .	*21
Vallonia sp.	8			p.cm

Table : Land snails from the plough-wash and buried soil

The snail assemblages from the archaeological features were not examined in detail, but they consisted of much the same species: relatively large numbers of <u>Cecilioides</u>, with <u>Helicella</u>, <u>Pupilla</u> and <u>Vallonia</u> and occasional specimens of <u>Cepaea</u>, <u>Punctum</u> <u>pygmaeum</u> (Draparnaud) and Cochlicopa.

Discussion

All deposits examined contained very few shells apart from intrusive specimens of <u>C.acicula</u>; this is probably a consequence of poor preservation conditions. Although these soils are at present quite calcareous, they need not have been continuously so throughout their history. Any cessation of ploughing would have cut off the supply of calcium carbonate from the plough-wash passing through the deposits and decalcification of these freely draining soils could rapidly have occurred, with accompanying destruction of most shells. Resumption of ploughing and the accumulation of calcareous plough-wash at the top of the deposits could then have permitted re-calcification.

Only very limited conclusions may be drawn from the surviving shells. Open-country species clearly predominate and the local environment remained open and shade-free during the formation of these deposits. The abundant amphibian bones from the archaeological features suggest that suitable habitats for freshwater and marsh snails were available within the site and the absence of such species must therefore be a result of unsuitable preservation conditions.