

Samples of replaced organic materials from Christchurch X-17 Anglo-Saxon cemetery

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The samples were removed from iron objects and submitted for possible identification. They were examined under reflected light and some were checked in the scanning electron microscope. Many of the samples displayed no recognisable structure, and the material represented was not identifiable, even though they had been described as wood, bone, grass, etc in the field.

The results are listed below. The sample number is given first, then grave number, A.M.L. number, origin, material, and finally identification.

Samples associated with shields

1	1.3	802892	Iron shield boss	Wood- Alder
2	1.3	802893	Iron shield boss	Wood- Unidentified
9	5.5	802900	Boss. Next to rivet	Wood- Unidentified
10	5.5	802901	Boss. Outer surface	Wood- Unidentified
12	5.5	802903	Double rivet	Wood- Alder
13	5.5	802904	Double rivet	Unidentified material
14	5.5	802905	Double rivet	Unidentified material
15	5.5	802906	Single rivet	Wood- Unidentified
20	8.3	802911	Wood from rivet	Wood- Unidentified
21	9.3	802912	Wood from rivet	Wood- Probably <u>Acer</u> sp.
22	9.3	802913	Wood from rivet	Wood- Unidentified
29	14.3	802920	Shield boss	Wood- Alder
30	14.3	802921	Shield handle	Wood- Alder
35	23.1	802926	Rivets	Wood- Unidentified
37	23.1	802928	From shield boss	Wood- Possibly Alder
47	28.2	802938	Shield boss, around rivet	Bottle broken in transit
48	28.2	802939	Strap handle of shield	Wood- Oak
49	29.1	802940	Exterior shield boss	Wood- Probably Oak
50	29.1	802941	Shield boss	Wood- Alder
52	29.1	802943	Shield surface on rivet	Wood- Probably Hazel/Alder

Samples associated with shields (Cont'd)

53	29.1	802944	Shield surface on rivet	Wood- Alder
54	29.1	802945	Shield surface on rivet	Wood- Alder
55	29.1	802946	Exterior of rivet	Wood- Possibly Oak

Samples associated with "handles"

23	10.1	802914		Possibly wood- Unidentified
25	13.1	802916		Probably wood- Unidentified
27	14.2	802918		Wood- Hazel
32	18.2	802923		Unidentified material
33	21.1	802924		Unidentified material
36	23.1	802927		Wood- Possibly Alder
42	25.1	802933		Probably wood- Unidentified
43	26.1	802934		Resembles bone
44	27.1	802935		Probably wood- Unidentified
51	29.1	802942		Wood- Probably Alder
56	29.2	802947		Unidentified material

Samples from spear sockets

4	2.2	802895		Wood- Hazel
18	5.1	802909		Wood- Hazel
19	8.1	802910		Wood- Probably Hazel/Alder
26	14.1	802917		Wood- Possibly Maple/cf. Sloe (<i>Prunus</i> sp)
31	18.1	802922		Wood- Possibly Hazel
38	23.3	802929		Wood- Possibly Ash
39	23.4	802930		Wood- Ash
46	28.1	802937		Wood- Hazel

Samples from knife handles

3	1.1	802894		Material unidentified
5	2.1	802896		Material unidentified
6	4.1	802897		Unidentified material

Samples from knife handles (Cont'd)

16	5.8	802907		Wood- Alder/Spindle (<u>Euonymus</u>)
17	5.5	802908		Unidentified material

Other samples

7	4.2	802898	Buckle	Possibly wood- Unidentified
11	5.3	802902	Buckle	Wood- Hazel/Spindle
8	4.()	802899	Triangular object	Wood- Unidentified
24	11.1	802915		Possibly wood- Unidentified
28	14.3	802919	Disc	Wood- Alder
34	21.2	802925	From ferrule	Wood- Hazel
40	24.1	802931	From back of blade	Wood- Possibly Hazel
41	24.1	802932	Blade surface	Unidentified material
45	28.8	802936	From exterior socket strap	Resembles hollow stem-Unidentified

Comments

Most of the samples associated with shields were Alder (Alnus sp.), with a few fragments of Oak (Quercus sp.) and one possible example of Maple (Acer sp.). Anglo-Saxon shields from three sites have previously been identified as Alder (Little Chester, Derby¹; Blackpatch, Wilts²; Foxhill, Wanborough²) and two examples (Rodmead Down, Wilts²; Mucking, Essex³) have been tentatively identified as Oak. Further samples from Mucking⁴ and Sewerby, Yorks⁵ were probably Willow (Salix sp.).

Samples 49-55, from grave 29.1, are of particular interest if they are from the same shield. Two types of wood (Alder and ?Oak) are present. This is reminiscent of the earlier Roman shield from Doncaster⁶ which was apparently of three-ply construction utilising Alder and Oak.

Most of the spear shafts seem to have been made from Hazel (Corylus sp.) or Ash (Fraxinus excelsior L.).

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References

1. Keepax, C.A. 1977 Biological remains from Little Chester, Derby. Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report No. 2249
2. Stansfield, E. 1979 Anglo-Saxon shields, a technical contribution (a study of twenty-four shield bosses in Devizes Museum). Durham University dissertation
3. Keepax, C.A. 1974 Botanical identifications; Mucking, Thurrock, Essex. Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report No. 1699
4. Keepax, C.A. 1975 Wood identification; Mucking, Thurrock, Essex. Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report No. 1651
5. Keepax, C.A. 1978 Organic materials preserved by proximity to metal artefacts, Sewerby. Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report No. 2601
6. Buckland, P. 1978 A First-Century Shield from Doncaster, Yorkshire. Britannia IX 247-269