

Note on an ingot mould from St. Pancras', Canterbury.

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The object submitted for examination (AM 792749) was the end part of an ingot mould, made of fired clay. Its present length was 40 mm and it was roughly rectangular in cross-section, measuring 25 x 35 mm with the ingot shape cut into one of the broader faces. The groove was about 12 mm wide and 10 mm deep with slightly sloping sides and a rounded bottom. Its end was cut square, not rounded.

The clay fabric was oxidised fired except on the surface which was reduced. The most intense reduction was around the ingot shape itself while the underside of the mould was only slightly reduced. The mould was probably made and fired under oxidising conditions but the reduced surface is an indicator that it was used in reducing conditions which are necessary in metal casting to prevent oxidation of the metal.

X-ray fluorescence analysis of the surface within the groove detected traces of copper, zinc and lead in addition to the elements in the clay fabric. This suggests that the mould was used for casting leaded brass.

Ingot moulds are known in a variety of stones as well as fired clay. They become relatively common in England in the late Saxon period. Examples are known from York, Lincoln, Chester, Oxford (Jope 1958), Southampton (Addyman and Hill 1969), Thetford and Whitby (Wilson 1976).

All measurements are approximate.

References

- Addyman, P.V. and Hill, D.H. (1969) Saxon Southampton: a review of the evidence
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- Jope, E.M. (1958) The Clarendon Hotel, Oxford Part I: The site.
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- Wilson, D.M. (1976) Craft and industry. In The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England. ed. D.M. Wilson.