ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

3641

SERIES/No CONTRACTOR

AUTHOR Martin Bell March 1982

TITLE Land molluscs from St. Oswald's Site, Gloucester

AML Report 3641

LAND MOLLUSCS FROM ST. OSWALD'S SITE, GLOUCESTER

By

Martin Bell.

In 1975 the City Excavation Unit of Gloucester under the direction of Carolyn Heighway carried out the excavation of a Roman tilery at St. Oswald's Priory. During the excavation a small collection of molluscs was made. It was requested that these be identified to establish whether they were species used for food. They proved (Table 1) to be almost entirely land molluscs, the exception being a few fragments of mussel (Mytilus edulis), from one of the latest tile dumps (layer 202). All the molluscs were collected by hand so there is obviously a bias towards the larger specimens recognizable to the naked eye. For this reason the collection will be unrepresentative of the fauna as a whole and is thus of very limited value in establishing contemporary ecological conditions.

The contexts from which the molluscs come include the following: loam post-tilery (RA); latest tile dumps (RT); destruction of building 1 (R18); Medieval burials; loam disturbed in Medieval period (G).

The species present were as follows:

Helix aspersa. The most numerous species, the common garden snail which is abundant in all garden and waste ground contexts. A Roman introduction to Britain which can be eaten, though there is no evidence that it was in this case.

Trichia striolata. A species commonly found in gardens and damp waste places.

Cepaea spp. Tolerent of a wide variety of habitats.

Oxychilus draparnaudi. Characteristic of gardens, probably a Roman or later introduction to Britain.

Cochlicopa lubrica. Occurs in a variety of damp places.

All in all these are species which we would expect to find in an urban garden or waste ground context but more than this we cannot say on the basis of hand collected specimens.

	RA	RT	R 18	Med. burials	G	Other contexts	Unstrat
Trichia striolata							24
Oxychilus draparnaudi							1
Cochlicopa lubrica	1						
Cepaea nemoralis	2	2	3				
Cepaea hortensis	1	1	1		1		
Cepaea spp.				+			
Helix aspersa	6	5	7	1	5	5	30
MARINE MOLLUSCS							
Mytilus edulis		+					

Table 1 : Molluscs from St. Oswald's site, Gloucester.

\+ Indicates presence of non apical (Gastropod) or hinge teeth (bivalve) fragments.