ANK Rpot 4200

438

Site: Feltwell Bath-House

County: Norfolk

Period: Roman

Geology: Degraded chalk escarpment on fen-edge

Director: ~~C. Green~~ (publication of site is being completed by D. Gurney)
E. Greenfield.

Feltwell Bath House

Eight small samples were received for examination, all in a completely dried out and partly disaggregated state. The excavator described their locations as follows:

Soil Sample No	FW No	AM Lab No	Context
1	187	620944	Soil in contact with underside of sword
2	267	620945	Sample from base of fill 55 of posthole 33
3	314	620946	Profile. North side of Trench B. No 1. -6" (ploughsoil)
4	315	620947	As 3. No 2. -12" O.G.S.
5	316	620948	As 3. No 3. -15" Chalky surface.
6	317	620949	Grid 8. East side profile. No 1. -5" (ploughsoil)
7	318	620950	As 6. No 2. -10" Occupation silt.
8	319	620951	As 6. No 3. -17" O.G.S.

The exact positions of the two profiles were not recorded.

The samples all had a matrix of brown to greyish-brown (10YR 5/2-5/3: re-moistened) loam with variable quantities of small chalk fragments and small rounded and sub-angular flints. Sample 1 included some iron corrosion products.

The samples were disaggregated by soaking in hot water and washed out over a 0.5mm mesh sieve. Material retained was dried and sorted under a binocular microscope at low power. Molluscs and other macrofossils from these samples are listed in Table 1.

Discussion

The two 'profiles' provide two sets of samples from the modern ploughsoil (3 and 6) and two from the Roman soil surface buried beneath demolition rubble (4 and 8). The sparse land mollusc assemblages from samples 4 and 8 are numerically dominated by shells of the open-country snails Pupilla muscorum, Vallonia costata, Vallonia excentrica and Trichia hispida. Snails characteristic of shaded conditions are extremely rare. There are a few shells of Succinea, a genus including marsh and wet grassland taxa. Taken together these snail assemblages indicate open, predominantly dry conditions apparently with some locally damp areas, though it

Soil sample no.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bithynia tentaculata (Linné)	a.	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Pomatias elegans (Müller)	b.	+	2	1	3	1	1	1	2
Carychium tridentatum (Risso)		-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Succinea sp		-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1
Cochlicopa sp		1	5	1	8	2	-	5	1
Vertigo pygmaea (Draparnaud)		-	-	-	3	-	-	5	-
Vertigo sp		-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Pupilla muscorum (Linné)		3	2	1	12	4	5	2	8
Vallonia costata (Müller)		-	3	-	-	1	-	6	11
Vallonia pulchella (Müller)		-	-	-	-	cf.1	cf.1	4	-
Vallonia excentrica Sterki		1	-	-	5	2	4	1	8
Vallonia sp		9	6	3	6	4	4	8	25
Nesovitrea hammonis (Ström)		-	-	-	1	3	-	4	-
Oxychilus sp		-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limacidae		-	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
Cecilioides acicula (Müller)		15	9	-	-	2	-	1	-
Clausiliidae	b.	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
Candidula intersecta (Poiret)		-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Candidula sp		-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Helicella itala (Linné)		-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trichia hispida (Linné)		6	14	6	30	19	9	22	17
Trichia striolata (Pfeiffer)		-	cf.1	-	2	-	-	4	cf.3
Trichia sp		2	6	-	13	3	8	22	9
Cepaea/Arianta sp		-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Helix aspersa (Müller)		-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Sphaeriidae	c.	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Indeterminate	b.	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
Mytilus edulis (frags)		-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Small mammal bone		+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mammal bone fragments		++	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charcoal fragments	d.	++	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Triticum sp	e.	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indeterminate cereal	e.	3+fr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bromus mollis/secalinus	e.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sample weight (kg)		0.45	0.5	0.1	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.2

Table 1: Mollusca and other plant and animal macrofossils from the Feltwell Bath-House samples.

Notes: a. Operculum fragments. b. Very abraded apices (also P. elegans operculum frags
c. Small fragment of hinge d. Twiggy and mature wood. e. Carbonised caryopses.

must be emphasised that the samples are small and are not necessarily fully representative of the local molluscan fauna. Samples 3 and 6 from the modern ploughsoil produced small snail assemblages containing a similar range of species, but including the alien snail Candidula intersecta. These profiles also included samples from the chalk surface (5) and from deposits accumulated on a gravelled surface (7), both of which produced small snail assemblages with a high proportion of open-country taxa.

Sample 2, from post-hole 33 was the only sample containing significant numbers of shells of snails requiring shade (Oxychilus sp., Carychium tridentatum, Clausiliidae) although open-country snails are also present. Since the origin of the fill is uncertain interpretation is difficult, but it seems possible that the composition of the snail fauna was affected by shading by the building of which post-hole 33 was a part.

Sample 1, from soil directly beneath a sword, produced very few snails (apart from probably intrusive shells of Cecilioides acicula) but unlike all other samples from the site contained relatively large quantities of bone fragments, charcoal and carbonised caryopses of Triticum sp (indeterminate wheat) and a weed grass Bromus mollis or B. secalinus. This appears to indicate some disposal of domestic food refuse.