

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 59/87

THE IDENTIFICATION OF WOOD FROM
ARTEFACTS EXCAVATED BY THE D.U.A.
AT LONDON SITES: TRIG LANE, UPPER
THAMES ST., E.C.4. (1974).

R M O Gale

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Summary

Wood from nine items including four medieval and post-medieval patterns was examined and identified using comparative anatomical methods. Species including Fagus, Quercus Suber and Salix or Populus were used in the production of the patterns. The remaining woods were Quercus and Fagus.

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Introduction

Wood samples from 4 medieval and post-medieval patterns and 5 other items were prepared and examined. The latter were waterlogged and thin sections orientated in transverse, tangential longitudinal and radial longitudinal planes were taken with a razor blade and mounted in glycerine on microscope slides. The patterns had been conserved with PEG and were therefore dry. These were moistened with 90% alcohol before sectioning. The sections were examined using a light microscope and the cellular structure compared with named reference material.

Results

- Con 2311 AN 2466 - Similar in structure to Quercus sp, oak.
Con 414 AN 3276 medieval barrel - Quercus sp.
Con 3016 AN 3311 post medieval shoe/patte_n, leather and wood - several fragments composed of a corky material possibly from the bark of Quercus suber, cork oak.
Con 386 AN 147 - Fagus sp, beech.
Con 2417 AN 1937 - 3 frags Quercus sp.
Con 464 AN 725 - single large block of timber with central hole - Fagus sp.
Con 368 AN 2093 medieval patte_n - family Salicaceae which includes Salix sp, willow and Populus sp, poplar. These genera cannot be separated by the wood anatomy alone.
Con 368 AN 2097 - medieval patte_n - condition very deteriorated, 2 frags - family Salicaceae.
Con 368 AN 2057 patte_n - structure very collapsed - probably Fagus sp.

Conclusion

The woods represented on this site are all native to Britain with the exception of Quercus suber. The suberised cork cells occurring in the bark of this Mediterranean species of oak make an extremely waterproof and lightweight material which has been widely used throughout history.