8. The Daub and Fired Clay and Briquetage

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8.1 Daub and Fired Clay

8.1.1 Introduction

A total of 85 samples of daub were recovered from 75 contexts comprising 703 fragments, weighing 2595g. The majority of material was found in Trench 1 with smaller quantities from trenches 3 and 7, and single samples only from trenches 3, 4 and 6. The material was found in a variety of features predominantly pits and postholes in Trench 1 and 3 and layers relating to the defences in trenches 3, 6 and 7. On the basis of ceramic phasing most of the contexts contain Iron Age material with most assigned to the Early Iron Age and a few to the Middle Iron Age.

Sample sizes ranged from 1 to 92 fragments or 1g to 355g. Individual fragment size ranged from 1 to 64g, but the whole collection is dominated by small fragments, with the average fragment size for each sample being less than 10g in over 80% of the cases. Compared to other hillfort sites this is a very low density of material with an unusually small fragment size dominating the collection. As a result the information gleaned from the material is very limited. All the material was worn and eroded to varying degrees and generally preservation was poor.

8.1.2 Fabrics

Two fabrics were identified and were designated types E and F (being based on the nearest equivalent types identified at Danebury and Danebury Environs sites (Poole 1984, Cunliffe and Poole 1991, Cunliffe and Poole 2000). This does not imply that they derive from the same sources as the Danebury material, merely that similar raw materials were available in both areas. Daub fabrics can vary considerably throughout a single structure and it is unlikely that the small fragments examined reflect the full extent of variation within the fabric and the larger size range of inclusions must inevitably be missing.

Fabric F

Identified in 59 samples and amounted to 572 fragments weighing 2061g with an average fragment size of 3.6g. It was fired to various shades of red, reddish-yellow, brown and grey and intermediate between these, with reddish-yellow/yellowish-red being the most common. It was rarely laminated or streaked with pale brown/cream laminations indicative of poor mixing of the clay on occasions. The clay matrix contained fairly high densities of silt and fine-medium sized sand, predominantly quartz, with occasional mica and some unidentified dark or reddish grains. Other inclusions (invariably forming less than 5% of the fabric) are rare though occasionally small rounded chalk grit up to 3mm and angular flint mostly 1 to 7mm, rarely up to 20mm occurred. In one or two samples organic temper and unwedged clay pellets up to 5mm were also noted. Most of the daub was of low porosity, coherent but fairly soft and often powdery.

Fabric E

Identified in 25 samples and consisted of 128 fragments weighing 522g, with an average fragment size of 4g. The material was fired to reddish yellow and yellowish-red and to a lesser extent shades of red, brown, and grey. The basic matrix was very

similar to fabric F but calcareous in character. Also distinguishing it from fabric F was the addition of inclusions forming between 10% and 40% of the fabric. This was generally rounded chalk grit mostly coarse sand size up to 5mm, less commonly up to 8mm and occasionally angular flint/chert flakes 1-8mm. Carbonized flecks and unwedged clay pellets were rare occurrences.

The two fabrics are clearly similar in origin with E having the addition of coarser inclusions. It is likely that the daub was made from locally available clay, most probably from the clay with flints in the vicinity of the site. Samples of this material had not been retained so it is not possible to compare the natural clay with the daub fabrics. It is likely that the sand element was naturally occurring in the clay and not an added inclusion, though this is possible. The added inclusions of chalk and flint would have been readily to hand in the settlement, but may have been incorporated by mixing the clay with a proportion of soil, which would account for the calcareous and silty elements in the daub.

Table 8.1: Quantification of daub by fabric and form

Form	**No. of Samples**	**Fabric E**		**Fabric F**		**Total**		**Percent**
		frags	weight	frags	weight	frags	weight	
Wall	4	0	0	228	832g	228	832g	32%
Oven	4	3	66g	61	158g	64	224g	9%
St.Disc	1	1	20g	0	0	1	20g	1%
TOB	2	0	0	9	186g	9	186g	7%
Furnace debris	4	0	0	11	52g	11	52g	2%
Vessel	3	0	0	4	32g	4	32g	1%
Utilised	22	29	232g	72	463g	101	695g	27%
Unid	43	95	204g	187	338g	282	542g	21%
Total	**83**	**128**	**522g**	**572**	**2061g**	**700**	**2583g**	**100%**

Wall = oven wall
St. Disc = straw-impressed disc
TOB = triangular oven brick

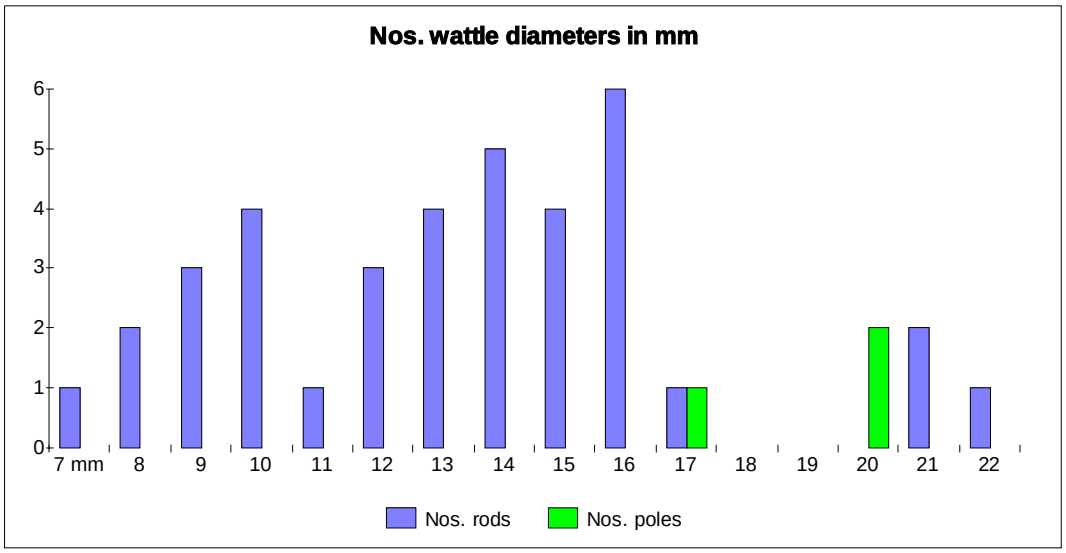
8.1.3 Forms and Use

The quantities of structural daub are summarized by fabric and form in Table 8.1. A high proportion of the material is effectively unidentified with regards to form and use (over three quarters of actual samples or nearly 50% by weight); most of the other identifications are tentative apart from the wall daub and triangular oven brick.

Oven Wall Most of this material was found in two contexts from within pit [1341], fills (1703) and (1712) and were the largest individual samples encountered. Only a proportion of fragments retained the diagnostic characteristics, but it was clear all the material in these two samples derived from the same source. The fragments were characterised by the grooves of wattle impressions, apparently interwoven, most probably being the horizontal rods, though a few vertical poles were also identified. The wattle sizes are shown in Table 8.2. The outer surface was variable in character, but tended to be irregular and undulating with grooves and depressions from smoothing with the fingers. The fragments are generally between 15 and 30mm thick. Based on the associations of this material at other Iron Age sites, especially Danebury (Cunliffe &

Poole 1991), Suddern Farm and Houghton Down (Cunliffe & Poole 2000) this material is considered to be derived from oven walls, which had a supporting woven framework, rather than house walls.

Table 8.2: Wattle sizes in wall daub



Oven Two samples were identified as general oven material probably being part of the lower walls: they each had a possible wattle impression and were probably from a thicker area of wall than the fragments with interwoven wattle impressions. Two further samples with two parallel surfaces forming a flat slab 16 mm and 12 mm thick may have been fragments of oven plate or cover, though none of the diagnostic perforations typical of these were in evidence.

Oven Bricks Two fragments of triangular oven bricks were identified. Both were small corner fragments, well rounded, but only one survived sufficiently to have the distinctive perforation in evidence across the corner. No accurate indication of size could be obtained, apart from an estimate of thickness in the perforated fragment of c.80mm. The evidence for considering these objects to be some sort of oven furniture rather than loomweights has been argued in detail elsewhere (Poole 1995, 2000).

Oven and Furnace Waste Included in this category are four samples of vitrified or vesicular fragments, largely worn and amorphous in shape, which may have derived from furnace lining or some sort of slaggy waste or refired clay. Some vessel fragments with similar vitrified, vesicular or bloated characteristics are probably refired pottery rather than crucible. Neither the waste material nor the vessels had any genuine slag adhering.

Straw Impressed Discs Another distinctive form of unknown purpose, but possibly best regarded as some sort of waste material arising from the use or construction of ovens are straw impressed discs. There was only one potential identification of this in the form of an irregular lump covered with fine organic impressions, possibly grass stems and measuring 35mm x >34mm x 25mm.

Unidentified This has been divided into two groups: utilised material and entirely amorphous material.

Samples designated as utilised had evidence of some sort of deliberately shaped surface, in most cases just a flat surface, more rarely curving and varying from even to irregular, sometimes pitted with organic impressions. Occasionally two surfaces might be in evidence at an angle to each other or joined in a curve. A few had worn grooves, which may have been poorly preserved wattle impressions. This material almost certainly derives from ovens or hearths, but has retained no diagnostic characteristics and cannot be assigned to a particular part of the oven structure.

The material without clear evidence of utilisation, except in respect of it being fired, consisted of small amorphous fragments, a high proportion well worn and rounded. A very few samples exhibited some form of organic impressions, but some of these were very fine and may have been the result of roots. The origin of this material is likely to be the same as the more identifiable fragments, namely ovens or hearths, but had been left on the surface longer suffering more wear and breakage.

8.1.4 Discussion

The dominating trait of this collection of daub and fired clay is its anonymous character resulting largely from the severely eroded nature of the fragments recovered. This is unusual for a hillfort site, where usually there are at least some fairly large well-preserved deposits placed in the pits (probably part of the process of special deposits). There is no material that could really be allocated to this class, except perhaps the samples of wall daub from pit [1341], fills (1703) and (1712) as these are in distinct contrast to the other paltry samples. Even the material that can be assigned some tentative designation of form is little different from the unidentified material.

It would appear that most of the collection was in effect accidentally incorporated within the archaeological deposits, having been literally kicked around the settlement and trampled before it became incorporated in the fills of the cut features or the material used to construct the rampart. One might have expected much of the material to derive from small features such as postholes, gullies or quarries. However the majority of the features producing daub were the pits, but the nature of the daub would suggest that it was incorporated in the fill layers accidentally prior to the material being placed in the pits. This may be a significant factor in the interpretation of the layers within the pits if all artefacts are of similar character.

Daub and fired clay tends to be much more fragile than other ceramics, having been heated to a much lower degree. The material from Segsbury is more comparable to that examined by the writer from Iron Age/Roman small rural settlements at Irby and Halewood in the Wirral, where 80% of the material was similarly amorphous in character and incorporated in general occupation and soil layers. Without the protection of being deliberately placed in a position, where it will not be subsequently disturbed, it degrades very rapidly. It therefore seems likely that the material was subjected to wear and breakage prior to its fortuitous deposition within the pits. The same factors apply to rampart layers, some of which may represent deposits obtained from within the hillfort during phases of refurbishing the fortifications.

8.2 Briquetage

Three small sherds of briquetage weighing 12g were identified in three separate contexts all associated with the defences, two in Trench 7 and one in Trench 3. Two

fabrics were identified. One was very porous with a large quantity of voids from organic temper mixed into the clay (equivalent to X1 in the Danebury series) and the other was tempered with fragments of shell 1-7mm in size (possibly fossil shell) and equivalent to X4 at Danebury. The fragments were too small to assign a form, though one had a simple rounded rim.

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