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**Charcoal from two samples associated with a medieval oven
from a site at Appleton-le-Moors, N. Yorkshire**

by

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Summary

Two samples of deposits associated with a medieval oven at a site at Appleton-le-Moors, N. Yorkshire have been examined for their content of charred plant remains. Traces of charcoal were present in one, and moderate amounts in the other. Oak, and some other, tentatively identified trees were identified. No other plant remains were present and the material offers little information concerning the use of the oven.

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Introduction and methods

Two samples of sediment sealed beneath a thick stone paving of the latest phase of a medieval oven at Appleton-le-Moors were submitted for analysis of charcoal and other plant remains. The material was described in the laboratory and the whole of each sample soaked in water and washed to 300 µm following the methodology of Kenward *et al.* (1980). A 'washover' for less dense material was taken from the samples and the two fractions dried in an oven. Both washovers and residues were then examined under the binocular microscope.

Results

Sample 1: 'soil and charcoal from base at W end' (weight: 1.00 kg)

Somewhat varicoloured (mid brown to mid grey-brown to mid yellow-brown, crumbly (working plastic when wet), sandy clay silt with stones to 30 mm and a little charcoal.

The residue consisted mainly of angular to subangular stones (mostly fine-grained oolite) to 50 mm, with a little micaceous sandstone, and modest amounts of sand-grade sediment (mainly undisaggregated clay, with ooliths and quartz sand). The washover comprised trace amounts (<1 g in total weight) of charcoal to 10 mm, of which some could be identified as oak (*Quercus*) and some as willow/poplar/aspens (*Salix/Populus*).

Sample 2: 'soil and charcoal sealed under centre of oven' (weight 1.62 kg)

Dark grey-brown, crumbly (working plastic), sandy silty clay with abundant charcoal.

The residue was of angular to subangular fine-grained oolite to 30 mm with a trace of rounded brick/tile to 10 mm and large amounts of sand, mostly quartz. The washover, which made up about 30% by volume of the combined washover and residue, was mostly charcoal to 15 mm (but mainly <5 mm).

Fragments identified as oak were present, together with tentatively identified ash (*Fraxinus*) and willow/poplar/aspens. The wood had come from trunk or branch wood and much of it was difficult to handle or identify, being either very crumbly or 'glassy' and coal-like. Also present were at least five snail shells of *Cecilioides acicula*, a species likely to have burrowed into the sediment post-depositionally.

Archive

The residues, charcoal and all paper and electronic archives relating to the work described here are currently stored at the EAU, York.

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Reference

Kenward, H. K., Hall, A. R. and Jones, A. K. G. (1980). A tested set of techniques for the extraction of plant and animal macrofossils from waterlogged archaeological deposits. *Science and Archaeology* **22**, 3-15.