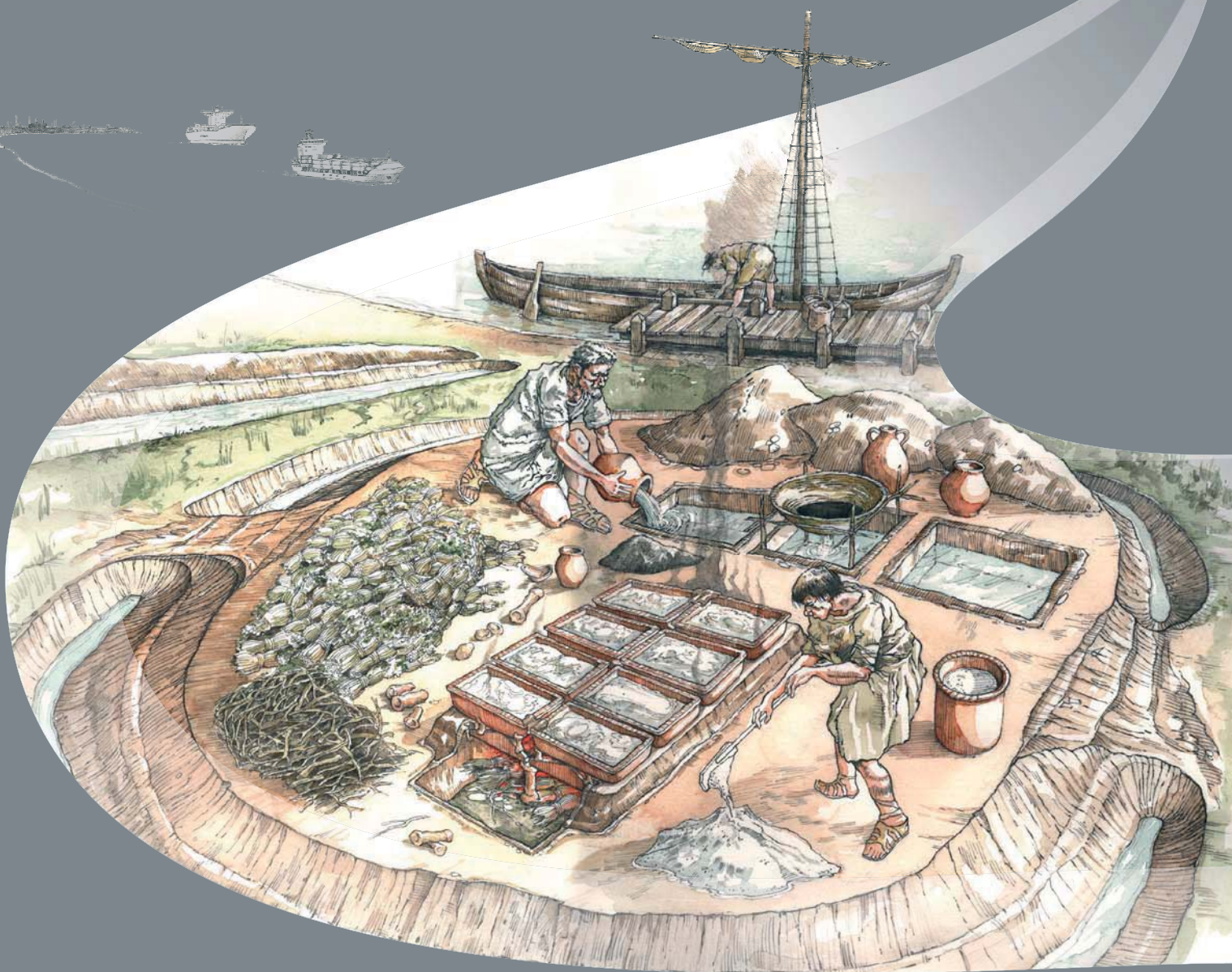


LONDON GATEWAY

IRON AGE AND ROMAN SALT MAKING IN THE THAMES ESTUARY

EXCAVATION AT STANFORD WHARF
NATURE RESERVE, ESSEX



SPECIALIST REPORT 17

MARINE SHELL

BY REBECCA NICHOLSON

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Marine Shell

by Rebecca Nicholson

For a Roman site situated in the Thames Estuary, a remarkably small amount of marine shell was recovered, no doubt a reflection of the non-domestic nature of the site. Apart from a small collection of hand collected oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) valves and a few mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) (Table 17.1), marine shells were confined to layer 4793 and hearth/pit 4813.

A 32L sample (sample 410) from layer 4793 (the equivalent to geoarchaeological layer G5), wet sieved to 0.5mm as part of the flotation process, produced 105g of marine shell, largely comprising very fragmentary remains of cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*), mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) and periwinkles (*Littorina litorea*), as well as at least ten tellin valves (*Tellina* spp.) and two oyster shell fragments.

An 8L sample (sample 4103) from hearth/pit 4813 produced only 10g of shell, despite being described on site as “shell-rich”. Shells included periwinkle (*Littorina litorea*) as well as fragments of cockle (*Cerastoderma* cf. *edule*) and mussel (cf. *Mytilus edulis*).

Marine Shell Table

TABLE 17.1: MARINE SHELL FROM STANFORD WHARF NATURE RESERVE

Context	Sample No	No.valves/ gastropods	Weight g	Species	No. Left valve	No. Right valve	Comments
4255		17	286	oyster	8	5	Large valves, variable shapes. No parasites, few measurable
4255		2	2	tellin			
1309		9	136	oyster	5	4	Both large and small valves present. One valve exhibits extensive holes from parasite boring
4294		2	45	oyster	1	1	Large shells, no parasite damage. Measureable
4294		1	2	Unidentified			Bivalve: large Tellinidae
1378	6627	1	14	oyster	1		
1378	6627	1	1	mussel			2 frags
4240		1	6	oyster		1	Measurable
5795		2	38	oyster	2		Fair condition; no parasites; large. Edge damage may relate to opening
5795		3	5	cockle			
5795		1	1	mussel			Frag.
4298		1	46	oyster	2		Fair condition, no parasites
4268		1	10	oyster		1	Fair condition, slightly pitted external surface
7056		1	7	oyster			fragment
5795	1254	2	12	oyster			fragments
5449		1	6	unidentified			Bivalve fragment
4441	4035	2	5	mussel			
4225	4005	5	4	Bivalves			fragmentary
5999	1309		2	bivalve			Small frags, incl. oyster
4409	4109		1	bivalve			Small fragments
5795	1254		6	mussel			Crushed fragments
6627	1378		0.5	indeterminate			fragments
2076	2021	1	1	bivalve			Fragments; incl. Tellinidae

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