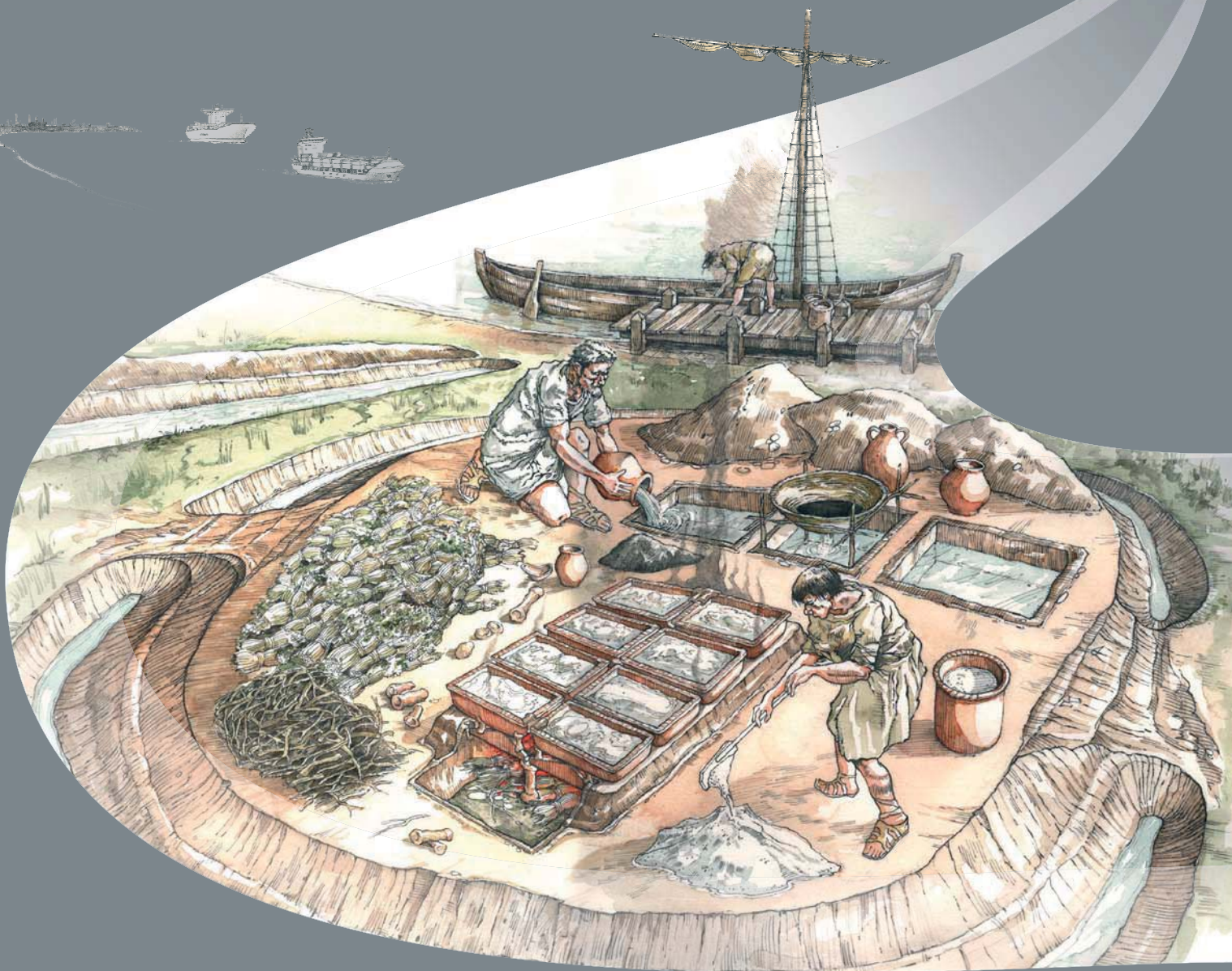


# LONDON GATEWAY

## 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

## Specialist Report 17

### 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/<br>gastropods | Weight g | Species       | No. Left<br>valve | No. Right<br>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  |

This is one of 26 specialist reports  
within a digital volume that supports the findings  
presented in  
*London Gateway:*  
*Iron Age and Roman salt making in the Thames Estuary*  
(ISBN 978-0-904220-71-1)

The digital volume can be accessed here:  
<http://library.thehumanjourney.net/909>



**DP WORLD**  
London Gateway



ISBN 978-0-904220-71-1



9 780904 220711 >