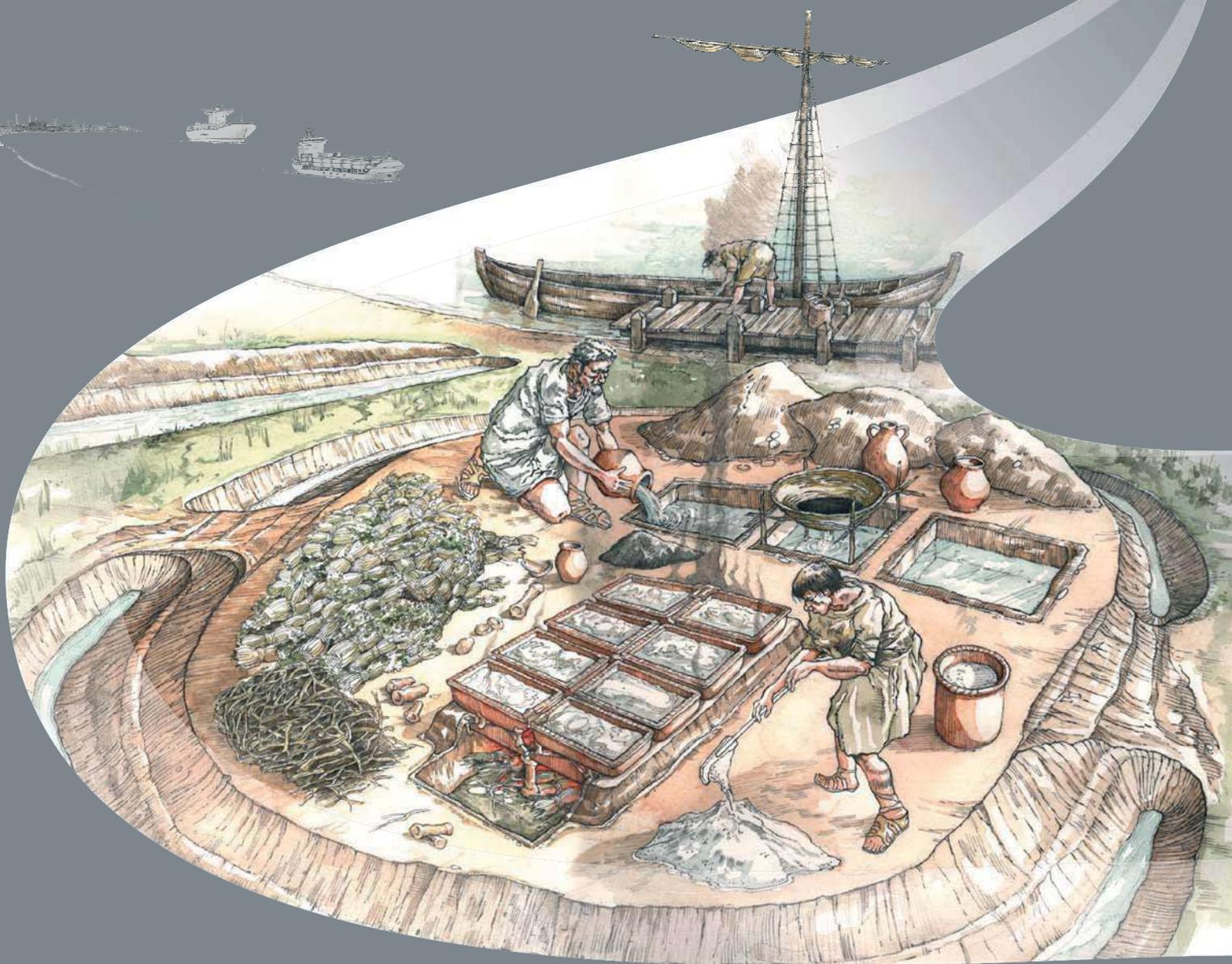


LONDON GATEWAY

IRON AGE AND ROMAN SALT MAKING IN THE THAMES ESTUARY

EXCAVATION AT STANFORD WHARF
NATURE RESERVE, ESSEX



SPECIALIST REPORT 1

EARLIER PREHISTORIC POTTERY

BY DAVID MULLIN AND LISA BROWN

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Earlier Prehistoric Pottery

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Introduction

A total of 41 sherds weighing 249g and representing a maximum of seven vessels of earlier prehistoric pottery were recovered from six contexts. The very low average sherd weight of 6g indicates the fragmentary condition of this group.

Neolithic

Seven sherds (35g) of flint tempered pottery (fabric FQ1) were recovered from context 1454, an occupation layer. This included a simple, out-turned flat-topped rim, which probably represents fragments of an undecorated bowl of early Neolithic date (Fig. 1.1, no. 1). This material is almost certainly residual within this deposit.

Late Bronze Age

The late Bronze Age fabrics are characterised by the occurrence of frequent, well-sorted crushed flint. Two main fabrics were apparent: finely crushed flint less than 6mm (FQ2 and FQ3), and a coarser variety up to 10mm (FQ4), although several more sandy fabrics were also classified. Vessels appear to be relatively large (up to 30cm diameter) straight-sided jars, although the fragmentary nature of the assemblage makes estimating vessel size, and numbers, difficult.

The single coarse flint tempered vessel recovered from alluvial clay 6672 comprised five sherds (143g) belonging to a flat base (Fig. 1.1, no.2). A total of 21 sherds (28g) recovered from alluvial clay 2002 included a simple flat-topped T-shaped rim, possibly from a bowl (Fig. 1.1, no. 3). Its fabric, FM1, is a fine micaceous sandy clay with very small, sparse white flint, less than 3mm. Context 4193 yielded a single body sherd (4g) in a glauconitic sandy ware with ill-assorted flint and lumps of powdery iron oxide. This may be of late Bronze Age or slightly earlier date. Context 4112 produced a single small body sherd each in fabrics FG1 and FQ2. A range of

three fabrics (FQ2, FQ3 and FG1) was represented by five sherds (22g) of pottery from context 4788, again all of them body sherds.

Discussion

Although the Neolithic pottery is likely to be residual, it is significant as pottery of this date is rare from the immediate area. During excavations at Mucking North Ring (Bond 1988), small amounts of Neolithic bowl were recovered, the main assemblage **comprising** late Neolithic Grooved Ware from a **group** of pits. Flint tempered Neolithic bowl pottery was also recovered from the Orsett causewayed enclosure (Hedges and Buckley 1978). The Late Bronze Age material fits in well with the assemblage from the North and South Rings at Mucking, where fabrics were dominated by flint inclusions (Bond 1988). The small numbers of vessels from London Gateway, and their fragmentary state, means that comparison with the large assemblage from Mucking is not possible, beyond noting the similarities in fabrics and suggesting that activity on both sites may have been contemporary.

References

Bond, D, 1988 *Excavation at the North Ring, Mucking, Essex: A late Bronze Age enclosure*, East Anglian Archaeology **43**, Chelmsford

Hedges, J and Buckley, D, 1978 Excavations at a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, Orsett, Essex, 1975, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **44**, 219-308

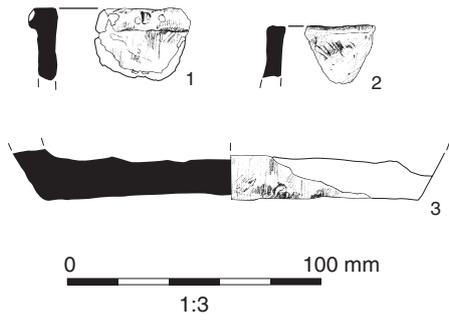


Figure 1.1: Earlier prehistoric pottery

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