

HA/P

TITLE A TECHNICAL NOTE on
 The cleaning of freshly excavated wall plaster fragments from Maison Dieu,
 Faversham, Kent.

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ABSTRACT This report describes the method of cleaning freshly excavated wall
 plaster fragments from Maison Dieu, Faversham, Kent.

KEYWORDS Wall plaster, paint, cleaning, conservation, repair. Laboratory
 Report AML.

This report is Level III

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STAGES IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER ALTERATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE ORIGINAL TEXT.

Introduction

The wall plaster fragments from Maison Dieu, Kent were excavated by a Central Excavation Unit team in 1977 under the direction of Mr George Smith. The plaster fragments consisted in the main of 3 distinct layers, (i) a buff granular support, (ii) a white plaster ground, (iii) a paint layer. Careful examination under a binocular microscope revealed that the decorative lines generally of red pigment were applied on to the plaster surfaces by brush strokes. Several fragments were extremely friable to handle and only a few joins were found.

Surface dirt covered most of the fragments and it was therefore decided to remove this layer in order to clarify the design.

Several test solutions were applied in inconspicuous places and the following method of cleaning was chosen to be the most effective.

Cleaning of the decorative wall plaster fragments

A solution of ammonium acetate (Appendix 1a) was applied to the surface by gently rolling cotton wool swabs, held on wooden sticks, moistened in the solution. The colour was not fugitive to this solution.

The surfaces were then rinsed with cotton wool swabs moistened in acetone and allowed to dry,

The joins were stuck with a solution of polyvinyl alcohol. Appendix 1(a).

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Appendix 1

a. Ammonium Acetate. A solution of Acetic Acid in Ammonia mixed together until a neutral PH reading is reached. For cleaning low fired ceramics, plaster etc with a brush and removed with acetone.

b. Polyvinyl Alcohol. For impregnating or joining objects where a change in tone would be undesirable ie unbaked clay or painted objects.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

MATERIAL WALL PLASTER

SITE: MASON, D.E. (DATE: 7/5/78)

SHEET: 1

AM No	X-Ray No	Photo No	Description and Report	Ref No
772650			1 small frag with (1) paint layer (2) white ground (3) buff granular support. - friable.	246.
778466			1 frag. with (1) // painted lines (2) white ground (3) buff granular support - friable.	457.
778467			large frag. with (1) // painted lines (red) (2) white ground (3) buff granular support - friable condition	348
778468			1 frag. with (1) // painted lines (dark red) (2) white ground (3) buff granular support - friable condition.	348
778469			1 frag with (1) // painted lines (dark red) (2) white ground (3) buff granular support. - friable condition.	345
778470			1 frag with (1) // painted lines (dark red) (2) white ground (3) buff granular support - friable condition.	280
778471			1 frag. with (1) curved painted lines (dark red) (2) white ground (3) buff support - friable condition	348.
778472			1 frag. with (1) dark red painted lines (2) white ground (3) buff support - friable condition	268
778473			3 large frags + 3 small frags all have (1) dark red painted lines (2) white ground (3) buff granular support - friable.	268.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

MATERIAL WALL PLASTER

SITE: MASON, IND (DATE: 9/3/82)

SHEET: 2

AM No	X-Ray No	Photo No	Description and Report	Ref No
778474			2 large frags + 2 small frags all with painted surfaces (dark red/red) @ white ground @ buff granular support. 2 small frags possible join on side - friable	268
778475			1 large frag + 3 small frags with dark red painted lines. @ white ground @ buff granular support - friable condition no joins	133
778476			2 large + 3 small frags - faded red painted surfaces (hairline cracks) @ white ground @ buff granular support (friable) No joins.	348
778477			1 large frag @ dark red painted surface and distinctive painted line (finger like color)? @ white ground @ buff granular support	378
778478			1 frag @ dark red // painted lines @ white ground @ buff granular support - friable condition.	461
778479			3 large frags + 1 small @ red painted surfaces. @ white ground @ buff granular support friable condition. <u>1 join</u>	1096.
778480			1 small curved frag with @ red painted line @ white ground @ buff colored support friable condition.	1096
778481			2 large frags (one of which is broken into 2) 1. bin (fresh break) with @ dark red painted lines @ white ground @ buff granular support - friable condition.	457

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

MATERIAL WALL PLASTER.

SITE: MASON, DEU..... (DATE: 7/3/78)

SHEET: ...3.....

AM No	X-Ray No	Photo No	Description and Report	Ref No
778482			1 small frag (dark red painted line on white ground on buff support. friable condition.	