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QUERN STONES AND HONESTONES FROM THE 1985 EXCAVATIONS AT THE SAXON SITE AT JUBILEE HALL, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

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Summary

Identification of a number of quern fragments of a nepheline-tephrite rock from the Mayen-Niedermendig area of the Eifel Hils of Germany, a region well-known in both Roman and Saxon times for supplying quernstones and millstones. Parts of a quernstone found at the site from a more local source seem to have come from the Hythe Beds of Kent. Also present were a number of honestones of different composition: Kentish Rag, quartz-mica-schist, glauconitic sandstone, calcareous sandstone, ?Pennant sandstone and ?New Red sandstone.

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QUERNSTONES AND HONESTONES FROM THE 1985 EXCAVATIONS AT THE SAXON SITE AT JUBLIEE HALL, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

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Lava Querns

279-24 (seven fragments)

107-20 (two fragments)

52 (five fragments)

171-22 (six fragments)

167 (three fragments)

39-31 (two fragments)

191-23 (two fragments)

285-25 (two fragments)

168-30

169-21

206-47

The above comprise various fragments of a grey, fairly coarse vesicular lava, containing conspicuous dark phenocrysts of pyroxene. A small sample was thin sectioned and studied under the petrological microscope. This revealed that the most prominent minerals are frequent grains of green and colourless clinopyroxene, mainly augite, set in a groundmass of small lath-shaped crystals

of andesine/labradorite felspar, opacite, leucite and some xenomorphic nepheline. The composition of the rock is particularly distinctive and it can be classified as a nepheline-tephrite. This type of rock is found in the lavas of the Mayen-Niedermendig area of the Eifel Hills of Germany, a region well-known in both Roman and Saxon times for supplying quernstones and millstones (Parkhouse, 1976; Kars, 1980; Peacock, 1980). The Jubilee Hall lava quernstones undoubtedly originate from this part of Germany.

Grey Limestone

285

279

284

277 (two fragments)

154-48

56-49

284

?Quernstone fragments of a grey limestone. Thin sectioning shows a granular mosaic of calcite grains with organic fragments, glauconite and quartz occur as scattered grains. A glauconitic limestone, probably from the Hythe Beds of Kent (Smart et al, 1966).

Glauconitic Sandstone

284

Small fragment of a dark grey ?quernstone of glauconitic sandstone. Origin unknown.

Oolitic Limestone

277

Small dark grey fragment of oolitic limestone. Jurassic origin.

Kentish Rag

285

39-28

287-29

Three shaped honestones of light grey sandy limestone. Thin sectioning shows a matrix of platy calcite crystals with abundant similarily-sized angular quartz grains, 0.10-0.20mm across, some glauconite and microfossiliferous grit. This stone is probably Kentish Rag from the Hythe Beds (Lower Greensand), and was widely used in the Roman and later periods as a sharpening stone (Moore, 1983; Rhodes, 1986). In his classification of Saxon and Medieval honestones, Ellis (1969) placed this stone in his Type IVB.

Quartz-Mica-Schist

53

Long lightish grey fragment of a quartz-mica-schist ?honestone, perhaps belonging to Ellis' Type 1. Origin unknown.

Flint/Chert

107 Burnt flint pebble.

179 Small rounded fragment of flint/chert.

166 Small flake of flint/chert.

Possibly obtained from the local river gravels.

Hard Chalk

284

? Pennant Sandstone

44

45-32

Dark grey, medium-grained sandstone containing quartz and micaceous grits. Possibly Pennant Sandstone from the Bristol and South Wales region. Parts of ? honestones.

? New Red Sandstone

132

Small fragment of ? New Red Sandstone. Probably an erratic.

Calcareous Sandstone

191-50

Shaped honestone made of a well-bedded calcareous sandstone, light grey in colour, composed of angular or subangular quartz grains set in a matrix of platy calcite. Origin unknown.

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