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MEDIAEVAL HONESTONES AND STONE MORTARS FROM THE 1970-76 EXCAVATIONS AT CASTLE RISING, NORFOLK.

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Summary

Identification of Mediaeval honestones and stone mortars. Thirteen of the honestones were of Norwegian Ragstone originating from central southern Norway; one was of chert, probably from the local Cretaceous; and another was made from a quartz-mica sandstone of unknown provenance. There were three mortars. One probably of Lincolnshire Limestone, another probably of Purbeck marble, while the third was of a fine-grained limestone of unknown provenance.

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MEDIAEVAL HONESTONES AND STONE MORTARS FROM THE 1970-76 EXCAVATIONS AT CASTLE RISING, NORFOLK

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HONESTONES

1) A.M. Lab. 887520 CR71.12 (6) (19)

Thick fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 11.5cm long, both ends broken.

2) A.M. Lab. 887521 CR71.19 (16) (67)

Fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, roughly lozenge-shaped in section and quite worn, 8.2cm long, one end broken.

3) A.M. Lab. 887522 CR71.12 (51) (71)

Thin silver-grey mica-schist honestone, roughly rectangular in section and narrowing towards one end where there is part of a hole intended for suspension, 6.1cm long.

4) A.M. Lab. 887523 CR73.38 (66) (139)

Small fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 5cm long, both ends broken.

5) A.M. Lab. 887525 CR76.65 (4) (483)

Small fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, square in section, 4.7cm long, one end broken.

6) A.M. Lab. 887526 CR76.67 (29) (533)

A silver-grey mica-schist honestone, lozenge-shaped in section, 13cm long.

7) A.M. Lab. 887527 CR76.67 (17) (535)

Thin fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 9cm long, both ends broken and probably split down the middle.

8) A.M. Lab. 887529 CR75.55 (34) (574)

Fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 6.8cm long, broken at both ends.

9) A.M. Lab. 887530 CR75.55 (1) (575)

Fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 7.3cm long, broken at both ends.

10) A.M. Lab. 887531 CR76.62 (25) (576)

A thinnish blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 10.8cm long. On one of the flat surfaces is a narrow shallow longitudinal groove, probably used for point or 'needle' sharpening (cf. Mann, 1982, 27-29).

11) A.M. Lab. 887532 CR76.62 (25) (577)

Fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 10.8cm long, one end broken.

12) A.M. Lab. 887533 CR76.62 (22) (585)

Thin fragment of a blue-grey mica-schist honestone, rectangular in section, 7.9cm long, one end broken.

13) A.M. Lab. 887534 CR75/76 u/s (586)

Fragment of a silver-grey mica-schist honestone, lozenge-shaped in section, 8.7cm long, both ends broken.

A detailed macroscopic examination of the mica-schist hones was made, together with selective thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope. This showed that the rock is principally made up of quartz, muscovite, calcite, chlorite and iron ore, with a well-marked foliation. It can be identified as Norwegian Ragstone of Ellis's Type 1A (1), and almost certainly originates from

Eidsborge, Telemark, in central southern Norway (1969). The two common facies of Norwegian Ragstone are both represented at Castle Rising, the blue-grey 'Hardstein' schist and the 'Blautstein', which is more of a silver-grey colour. Norwegian Ragstone is found in some numbers on many sites of the late Saxon and early Mediaeval period in England (Moore, 1978; 1983).

14) A.M. Lab. 887524 CR75.53 (1) (320)

Small yellowish ?honestone of chert, squarish in section, 5.2cm long. Quite possibly obtained from the local Cretaceous formations.

15) A.M. Lab. 887528 CR75.52 (8) (573)

Fragment of a dark grey quartz-mica sandstone honestone, rectangular in section, 5.3cm long, and with part of a narrow longitudinal groove on one surface, similar to no. 10 above, one end broken. Provenance unknown.

STONE MORTARS

1) A.M. Lab. 887517 CR76.53 (191) (551)

Fragment of the rim of a mortar made from a oolitic shelly limestone. Probably Lincolnshire Limestone.

2) A.M. Lab. 887518 CR76.67 (33) (532)

Part of the body of a mortar made from a shelly limestone. In thin section the rock can be seen to contain fossil fragments and much recrystallized calcite. Probably Purbeck marble.

3) A.M. Lab. 887519 CR76.67 (40) (542)

Part of the flat base of a mortar made from a fine-grained limestone containing some recrystallized calcite. Provenance unknown.

References

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