SAXON QUERNSTONES/MILLSTONES FROM TAMWORTH

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Lava Querns

Q 12A (F180)

Q 12B (F184)

Q 12C (F150)

Q 12D (F104)

Q 12E (F105)

Q 12F (F265)

Q 12G (F273)

The above comprise various fragments of a grey, fairly coarse vesicular lava, containing conspicuous dark phenocrysts of pyroxene. A sample of Q 12D (F104) 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 Tamworth lava quernstones undoubtedly originate from this part of Germany, as previously suggested by visual inspection (Rahtz and Sheridan, 1971).

The remaining fragments of quernstones or millstones can be divided into two distinctive petrographic groups, one of Keuper sandstones and the other of Coal Measures sandstones.[1] It should be noted that none of these fragments are of Millstone Grit mentioned in previous publications (e.g. Rahtz and Sheridan, 1971; Wilson, 1976).

Keuper Sandstone

Q3 (F150) (Exhibit on display at Castle Museum, Tamworth)

Q4 (F150)

Q7 (F150)

Q13 (F150)

Q16

Q15 (F150)

Q17 (F150)

BII (F150)

Moderately hard, medium to coarse-grained reddish or greyish-buff felspathic sandstone. This type of rock can be found in the Keuper Sandstones of the Midlands area. A fairly local source to Tamworth for this material is therefore quite possible (1" series Geological Survey Sheet 154).

Coal Measures Sandstone

Q2 (F150)

Q5 (150)

Q6 (F150)

Q8 (150)

Q9 (F150)

Q10 (F150)

Q11 (F150)

Q14 (F183)

Q18 (F111)

Q20 (F150)

Q21 (F106)

Q22 (F111)

Fairly hard, medium-grained greyish well-cemented sandstone with visible inclusions of green chlorite and or mudstone. This type of rock can be found in the Carboniferous Coal Measures areas of the Midlands. A fairly local source to Tamworth for this material is again quite possible (1" series Geological Survey Sheet 154).

[1]I should like to thank Dr. R.W. Sanderson of the Petrographic Department of the Institute of Geological Sciences for his valuable help in the identification of this material.

References

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