

## **Assessment of a Quern from Horncastle, Lincolnshire (SGH05)**

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Eleven fragments from a stone rotary quern from an excavation at Sellwood Gardens, Horncastle, excavated by Lindsey Archaeological Services was submitted for identification and assessment.

### **Description**

The fragments (total weight 2760gm) all come from the upper stone of a Niedermendig Lava quern. The stone is extremely friable, probably due to chemical weathering during burial. Consequently, the original surface has flaked away, removing tool marks and other details.

The upper surface has a flange around the edge approx 40mm wide within which the surface forms a shallow cone, retaining the grain and feeding it into a central hole (missing). The lower surface also has a conical surface, on which the grain was ground and then forced by gravity out of the quern where it could be collected as flour.

### **Assessment**

Niedermendig lava querns were imported into Lincolnshire from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the 4<sup>th</sup> century and then again in the mid Saxon period onwards into the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological context suggests that this particular quern is of Roman date.

The quern is sufficiently complete for a reconstruction drawing to be made. This would, for example, allow the precise shape and size of the quern to be compared with others. Dr D F Williams, of Southampton University, has been undertaking petrological analysis of Niedermendig lava objects, and source rocks, in order to determine whether or not different quarries at the source might be identifiable. Neither study would, however, add much useful knowledge to the archaeology of the Sellwood Gardens site and it is recommended that the object is retained for potential future study.

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