

Assessment of a stone object from Matley Primary School, Orton Brimbles, Peterborough (MPSO 07)

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A single stone from the fill of a prehistoric ditch in Evaluation Trench 1 (context 106) was submitted for identification and assessment.

Description

Stone

The stone is a rectangular block with a single, slightly concave, possibly worked face. The block has conchoidal faces with sharp angles between them and appears to be a hard crystalline rock, probably of acid igneous origin and derived from the Charnwood Forest area.

The worked face has rough pecking and has been worn. All faces are coated with an orange-brown iron-rich material, probable natural iron-panning.

Assessment

If the stone has indeed been worked and utilised, then it was presumably a saddle quern. However, the hardness of the rock and the smoothness of the fractured surfaces would not make it a very suitable material for a quern. The alternative interpretation is that the stone is of fluvio-glacial origin and has been broken by ice transportation and freeze-thaw from a larger, rounded boulder of which the pecked, worn surface is the only surviving part.

Retention

It is possible that future studies might be carried out on the surface to establish the nature of any micro-wear. The stone should therefore be retained.