

Post Roman Stone Accessions Assessment

Site code: ONE94

Undated

Author: Richenda Goffin



Museum of London Archaeology
© **Museum of London Archaeology**
Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf
Road, London N1 7ED
tel 0207 410 2200 fax 0207 410 2201 email
mola@mola.org.uk



The table below quantifies the stone accessions from Poultry which are of medieval, post-medieval, or an unknown date. Some of the material may, upon further examination, prove to be of Roman date.

Area	Quern	Other	Total
Evaluation	9	9 (4)	18
Area 1	9	34 (19)	43
Area 2	9	3 (0)	12
Area 3	28	16 (2)	1
Area 5	0	1 (0)	3
Area 8	1	2 (0)	44
Area 9	16	14 (3)	30
Area 10	58	27 (5)	85
Area 11	7	20 (11)	27
Area 7/12	5	4 (0)	9
TOTAL	142	130	272

Table: Post-Roman and undated stone accessions from Poultry

Notes: The numbers shown in brackets in column 3 indicate accessions of an architectural nature (fragments of mouldings, stone coffins, and grave slabs) which have been assessed by the worked stone specialist.

Evaluation

Shaft 1 produced fragments of greensand moulding, <414 - 416> [1001] and some quern fragments.

In shaft 3 a possible hone was recovered from <429> [1421], and stone inlay <578> from [1417], although the latter may be Roman. All of the material from Shaft 4 was Roman in date.

Area 1

A total of 34 stone accessions were recovered from Area 1, and 11 of these were architectural mouldings (see the worked stone assessment). Five fragments of mortars were collected, <305> [479], <344> [779], <349><350> [1709], and <483> from [1802], and one hone was recovered from <428> [1983].

Area 2

Apart from quern fragments, the stone accessions from this part of the excavation consisted of a hone fragment from <632> [2380] and two possible inlay fragments <624> [2211], <654> [2297], both possibly residual Roman.

Area 8

The majority of fragments from this area were quernstones, although a small quantity was hones and moulding fragments. The following hones were identified, although it is not yet certain whether they are Roman or Post-Roman:

<1881> [7021]
 <1884> [7511] ?hone
 <5953> [8057] ?hone
 <2759> [9206]
 <4202> [9364]

Area 9

As in Area 8, many of the fragments were quernstones. Two hones were identified, <686> [2844] and <755> [3023], although once again it is not certain whether they are Roman or post-Roman. Small quantities of marble and inlay were also recovered, but these are probably Roman in date. Object <6399> [3491] was a chalk object not yet identified.

Area 10

A total of 58 Rhineland quern fragments were found in this area. In addition the following hone stones were identified:

<5445> [11301] ?Hone
<2583> [11593]
<2877> [11678]
<4228> [12481]
<3596> [12834]
<5422> [12885] ?Hone
<4113> [12914] ?Hone

The most interesting fragment was found in context [11716], a context containing Roman finds, and is <2713>, a decorated chalk fragment - possibly carved with a rudimentary face. A fragment of shale bracelet was recovered from [11589] <5830> after environmental sieving, but it is possible that it is residual. There were several pieces of marble, probably inlay, but these may be Roman.

Area 11

In addition to moulding fragments from context [16007], the following honestones were recovered:

<2781> [16418]
<5887> [16502]
<4552> [16890]

Object <4401> from context [16652] was a fragment of reworked stone, possibly a gaming counter - but may be either Roman or medieval.

Area 12

Apart from the querns 3 honestones were recovered:

<5323> [18021]
<4809> [18081]
<6324> [18225]

The quernstones

A total of 142 accessioned quernstones of possible post-Roman date were recovered from all areas. They ranged in size from substantial pieces of domestic grinding querns to very small fragments, some of which were recovered from environmental sieving. The majority of them were made from Mayen lavastone, although a very few were from British sources. The vast majority of the querns recovered at Poultry came from 1st-century deposits, and it is possible that many of the querns listed here will prove to be residual Roman artefacts. A separate quernstone assessment can be found elsewhere in the Assessment. Those quernstones which do prove to be post-Roman in date may also be analysed as part of the research into the major assemblage of Roman quernstones.

The potential of the material

Saxon/early medieval

1. The identification and study of late Saxon quernstone fragments, as opposed to redeposited Roman querns within post-Roman contexts, may contribute to a greater understanding of commerce and contact between London and the Rhinelands at this time. The assemblage from Poultry should also be discussed in relation to the comparable querns from other sites in London, such as Bull Wharf, Guildhall, and 72-5 Cheapside. Examination of wear patterns may indicate how much they were used and in what way, and this may be compared to the Roman querns.
2. The petrology of the honestones may help to further identify trade and distribution links in the late Saxon/early medieval period, and should be compared with fragments from other sites in the City and made from Blue Phyllite and Norwegian Ragstone (Pritchard, 1992, p 155).
3. The stone assemblage may contribute to a better understanding of the material culture of the Late Saxon/early medieval settlement. In particular domestic artefacts such as mortars may provide evidence for activities which were being undertaken by the occupants who lived and worked in the clay and timber buildings.
4. Stone artefacts which can be associated with industrial activities such as metalworking and leatherworking should be examined in detail, and it is also possible that some of the honestones may be used for other than domestic purposes.
5. Analysis of the spatial distribution of the stone artefacts may help in the interpretation of stratigraphic/land-use data and the activities which were taking place.
6. Is there any evidence of shale artefacts attributed to this period?

Medieval

7. Analysis of the spatial distribution of the stone artefacts may help in the interpretation of stratigraphic/land-use data and the activities taking place over time.

Post-medieval

8. Study of fragments of the post-medieval coffins and grave slabs from the post-Fire cemetery at St Benet Sherehog may provide additional information on the individuals buried there, and their status (see worked stone assessment 5.9).

Revised research aims

Saxon/early medieval

1. Analysis of the spatial distribution of the stone artefacts may help in the identification of buildings and open areas, and the activities taking place within them over time.
2. Can any of the honestones be associated with industrial areas for metalworking?
3. Can the hones be considered in the light of other types of artefactual material from good groups such as pits?
4. Does the petrology of the hones indicate trade links with other countries such as Norway, or is the material being transported from a fairly local area? Is there much variety in petrological types, and how does the assemblage compare with other towns such as Thetford and Lincoln? Is there any evidence for imported fragments being unfinished, perhaps suggesting that local workshops could produce the finished tools?

5. No stone spindlewhorls were recovered - what does this suggest, in view of the fact that weaving artefacts such as pinbeaters were found. Are they being made from other material types during this period? Is weaving rather than spinning being done?
6. How does the Saxon/early medieval stone assemblage compare with groups from other sites in the area such as Guildhall and 72-5 Cheapside?
7. Do any of the hones show evidence of being originally Roman and re-used in the early medieval period, as has been found with Roman marbles from other sites in the area?
8. What size range do the hones show, and do the wear patterns give any indication of the way the blades were sharpened? Are any of the hones perforated?
9. Is it possible to differentiate between the Saxon/medieval querns from the site and Roman ones in terms of typology, evidence of use, tooling marks, and petrology? How does the post-Roman quern assemblage from Poultry compare with querns from other sites in the City?
10. What evidence is there for the use of oolitic limestone during this period? If present, is it freshly quarried or re-used from the Roman period?
11. Is there any evidence for shale artefacts during this period? What is the likelihood of residuality from Roman contexts? <5830>

Medieval

12. Can stone artefacts from medieval graves aid in the dating of burials and the identification of personages buried? What type of stone was used and how does this compare with other cemeteries in the City and beyond? What was the type of decoration and calligraphy used for <3383>? Can the carving be ascribed to a particular school? See <561> <562> <563> <3356> <3383> <3365> <3367>
14. Can any of the stone artefacts be associated with the internal features of the medieval church phases? Object <342> from context [880] for example is an octagonal stone jar, which may represent a specialised container.
15. How do the mortar fragments fit into the existing typology of this type of artefact? Are they of interest for their petrology, and if so, what does this indicate about trade links and distribution? Accessions <305> <344> <349> <350> <483>

Post-medieval

16. Can stone artefacts from medieval graves aid in the dating of burials and the identification of personages buried? What type of stone was used and how does this compare with other cemeteries in the City and beyond?
17. What kind of fitting does the elaborately moulded alabaster fragment <547> originate from? Is it part of a high status burial fitting?

Bibliography

Pritchard, F. 1991 'Small finds' in Vince, A. (ed) *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London: II Finds and Environmental Evidence* pages 153-165.