Chapter 18

Stone, Metal, Wood and Worked Bone Finds from the 1926 Expedition

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Stone Objects

A number of stone objects of various types were recovered by Calver’s team. These finds included a large quantity of architectural pieces briefly discussed here—these will be studied and published at a future date. Other than these, a number of finds fall into the categories of architectural sculpture and these are discussed below in Chapter 25. Other stone objects include tools, vessels—mainly basins and mortars, stone moulds (presented here but discussed again below in Chapter 24), a brazier and mangonel projectiles.

Whetstones

Five very small whetstones are among the finds of 1926; two were recovered in chamber F, two in chamber K and one of unknown location. Whetstones were used to sharpen and hone the blades of knives, swords, axes, perhaps arrow and spearheads, and various building, carpentry and farm tools such as chisels, planes, sickles etc., and would have been commonplace in a castle, in the kitchen and forge, in any building areas, in the gardens and probably in the knights’ quarters as part of a knight’s paraphernalia. Their presence in these two chambers is appropriate for the location of workshops here, or in the close vicinity. Dean suggested that the annex adjacent to chamber F was the castle workshop. This is where Calver recovered: “blooms of iron, a crucible, various tools, hammers, chisels, fragments of chainmail, pieces of a basinet, a bit of a visor of a great helm . . ., scales of body defences (jazarans), upwards of forty bits of armor . . . heads of arrows, darts, lances, spikes, all lying in a bed of charcoal.”1 In Chamber K two mould stones were found, suggesting that perhaps this vault also served as a workshop.

These whetstones are flat and generally rectangular in form (bar-shaped), modified to varying degrees by usage; they were made of a variety of stone types such as sandstone and schist, and were of varying grades from coarse stones to those with to finer grit, for use on different blades and for different stages of sharpening and honing.

Plate 18.1a Bar-shaped whetstone of dark grey micaaceous sandstone with one end broken off. Dimensions: 7.2 by 1.8 by 0.6 cm. Present location: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Plate 18.1b Narrowing bar-shaped whetstone of dark greenish grey sandstone. Dimensions: 7.5 by 12 by 0.6 cm. Present location: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Plate 18.1c Bar-shaped whetstone of pale buff limestone, partly broken, with grinding marks. Dimensions: 5.3 by 2.0 by 0.6 cm. Present location: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Plate 18.1d Bar-shaped whetstone of blackish micaaceous sandstone with good polish on most surfaces. Dimensions: 3.7 by 1.3 by 1 cm. Present location: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

1 Dean, 1927, p. 22.
Plate 18.1e Coarse, bar-shaped whetstone of dark grey-green schist with deep grinding marks. Dimensions: 5.2 by 1.8 by 1 cm. Present location: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Mould Stones
Of the more remarkable finds made by the American expedition are two mould stones of fine limestone incised with beautiful renditions of a number of heraldic designs and insignia. Both of these stones were recovered in chamber K. Calver referred to them with understandable enthusiasm:

The real prizes from Chamber K were two marble matrices—or dies—designed, no doubt, for embossing fine leather used on the equipment of the Teutonic knight, or upon the trappings of their steeds. The smaller of the two matrices has two fish incised on one of its three sides, while upon the other two sides are incised border designs, all wrought in an excellent manner. The larger matrix has upon its face an incised heraldic eagle, and a large Fleur de Lis, while upon one edge there is a border design incised. Upon the opposite edge of the eagle matrix are incised, within circles, a Fleur de Lis, a cinquefoil, one six-pointed and one eight-pointed star... Both matrices are in perfect condition, and still fit to perform the work for which they were made. The fish are, of course, a survival of a very early Christian emblem, while the eagle is doubtless the insignia of knightly occupants of the castle.\(^2\)

These stones were certainly among the most important finds from the excavations and have generated later discussions regarding their possible use. Helmut Nickel, former curator of the Arms and Armor Department at the Metropolitan Museum, wrote a paper in which he proposed that they were intended for stamping heraldic charges on wet gesso on a shield to form decoration, in this case on the shield of the Grand Master himself.\(^3\) Andrea Wähning has now raised another possibility for their use.\(^4\)

2 Calver’s Report, August, 1926, pp. 3–4. Dean followed Calver’s proposal, writing that the stones: “...served evidently as moulds into which softened material, e.g., leather, could be pressed.” See Dean, 1927, p. 32.
4 See below, Chapter 25.

Plates 18.2a–c Larger mould stone (Stone A), well-preserved. This trapezoid block has curved ends and is rectangular in section. On one of the broad faces is a diapered shield with an eagle and a large fleur-de-lis. On the second broad face is a large fleur-de-lis, a large seven-pointed star in a circle and a smaller one of six points, both poorly preserved. On one of the rectangular sides are four roundels, one with an eight-pointed star with large dots between each arm and a dotted border, one with a similar, six-pointed star, one with a five-petalled flower with a dotted border and one with a fleur-de-lis with four dots in the background and a similar border. On the other is a broad band of diamond-shapes between dotted borders. Dimensions: 29.8 by 18.1 by 7.6 cm. Present location: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Plates 18.3a–d Small mould stone (Stone B), well-preserved. The rectangular block is triangular in section, of fine limestone, slightly chipped at the edges. On one of the broad faces are two finely incised fish, facing away from each other. On the second broad face are three curved bands of floriated motifs and on the third a band of palmettes. On one of the small triangular sides are two triangular designs with floriated decorations within them. Dimensions: 22.5 by 10.2 by