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Excavations and Interventions in and around Cramond Roman Fort and Annexe, 1976 to 1990

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14. THE SHALE BANGLE FRAGMENTS
Fraser Hunter

Five bangles and one roughout came from the Hoy excavations (Illus 42). Four are lathe-turned bangles of Kimmeridge shale, the main production centre being on the Dorset coast. This is the same area where Black Burnished 1 pottery and other material (such as stone items of Purbeck marble) were produced, and they probably came north with the trading contacts which brought BB1 to

Table 8 Summary of Cramond chipped stone assemblage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Chert</th>
<th>Flint</th>
<th>Agate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flake</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform core remnant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar core remnant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodule</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pronounced on one); interior carinated from lathe turning. Grey laminar character indicates it is Kimmeridge shale. Internal diam: 55–60mm (22% survives); L: 41mm; W: 6mm; H: 6mm. Cramond Road I (Site 2); Illus 42c.

▶ CR/85/261
Lathe-turned bangle fragment with rounded D-section; near-flat interior with bevel from core removal. Well-finished. Grey oil shale. Internal diam: 60–65mm (28% survives); L: 55.5mm; W: 5.2mm; H: 6.1mm. Cramond Road I (Site 2), area west of road, from stony feature spread. Illus 42d.

▶ CR/88/365
Probable bangle fragment, faces spalled off and inner edge lost. Triangular fragment of dark material the northern frontier. Kimmeridge products are well-represented in Scotland, comprising at least 20–30% of Scottish bangle finds (Hunter 2014: 153). The fifth bangle is probably a cannel coal, which could have a more local source. The final item is a disc-shaped roughout, perhaps for a counter or ring, and also most likely of cannel coal. This is the first evidence for on-site working, which is attested at other Roman military sites (ibid: 159). Similar black shiny jewellery has been recovered from other excavations at Cramond, with three further bangles and a ring-pendant known (ibid: 164).

Bangles are the most common black jewellery item found on Scottish Roman sites. The large diameter of two of them fits the wider Scottish pattern: bangles from northern military sites tend to be larger than average, indicating they were worn by soldiers (Hunter 2014: 153). The other two are smaller and are more likely female ornaments.

14.1 Catalogue

▶ CR/84/2
Lathe-turned shale bangle fragment; exterior rounded; narrow facets on the faces (more

Illus 42 Shale bangle fragments: (a) CR/88/365; (b) CR/2/90; (c) CR/84/2; (d) CR/84/172; (e) CR/85/261. Illustration by Alan Braby

D-sectioned lathe-turned bangle fragment, with bevel on internal face from core removal. Damage to one edge; some use-wear. Grey oil shale. Internal diam: 70–75mm (11% survives); L: 27.5mm; W: 7mm; H: 9.7mm. Cramond Road I (Site 2), area west of road, from stony feature spread. Illus 42e.

▶ CR/88/365
Probable bangle fragment, faces spalled off and inner edge lost. Triangular fragment of dark material
with conchoidal fracture, probably cannel coal; the surviving outer section is sloping and well finished, with no tool traces but some wear marks. L: 31mm; W: 13.5mm; H: 6mm. External diam: 90–95mm (giving an estimated internal diam around 60mm). Cramond Road II (Site 3), Trench 4. Illus 42a.

▶ CR/2/90
Shale bangle fragment, split horizontally but preserving just over half the narrow section with rounded top and exterior; a slight facet on the near-flat interior indicates it was lathe-turned. Its grey, laminar character is consistent with Kimmeridge shale. Internal diam: 70–75mm (10% preserved); L: 23mm; W: 5mm; H: 6mm (originally c 9mm). Cramond Road II (Site 3); Extn NW, from soil and cobble mix below stone drain and kerb of road 2. Illus 42b.

▶ CR/83/217
Discoidal prepared roughout, broken in half. Faces naturally flat, one with abrasion scars; around half the circumference survives; in places it is natural, elsewhere it has been flaked to shape. Tapering in section. Size suggests use as a counter or, perhaps, finger ring. Probably cannel coal. Diam: 32mm; W: 20mm; H: 8mm. Cramond Road I (Site 2).

There are also four finds not located within the archive, listed in Charlie Hoy’s finds registers just as ‘jet’ (Site 1: Cramond Tower East, 80/CT/437; Site 2: Cramond Road I, CR/83/446, CR/83/612, CR/83/708). In the absence of any further description, they could be misidentifications of other material, but if nondescript they may well have been working debris. Their absence is tantalising and frustrating.