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Examination of Technological Material from Abbots Worthy, Hampshire

Paul Wilthew
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The material examined (AM 852759) comprised over 50 samples from the Anglo-Saxon site at Abbots Worthy which were regarded as being of possible technological significance. The individual samples were very small and the total weight of material was only about 1.5kg. Identifications of each sample are given in the appendix below.

A large majority of the samples were fuel ash slag, which is the result of a reaction at high temperature between ash and silica-rich material such as sand or clay. It is often associated with high temperature technological processes such as metalworking, but it can be formed in any sufficiently hot fire, and there was no evidence that the fuel ash slag from this site was connected with any technological activity.

A few pieces of coal, most of which had been burnt resulting in coke, were present but there was no evidence to link them, or the burnt clay or the ferruginous concretion, with any technological activity.

The only samples which could be connected with metalworking were the dribbles of lead-tin alloy, which may have been waste from casting pewter, and the iron slag. The former does not, in itself, prove that pewter was being worked on or near the site since it could also have been a melted (perhaps accidentally) pewter object or simply dribbles of solder. The iron slag was almost certainly all iron smithing slag which is the slag that collects in a blacksmith's hearth although one sample could not be positively identified. The presence of such a small quantity of iron smithing slag, although it was probably produced in the vicinity of the site, does not enable any conclusions about the nature of ironworking on or near the site to be drawn.

Appendix - Identification of each sample

Sample No.	Identification
7344	Iron smithing slag
7485 521	Iron smithing slag
7497 582	Iron smithing slag
7498	Iron smithing slag
7497 442	Iron smithing slag
7526 445	Iron smithing slag
7628 1052	Iron (?smithing) slag
7557 960	Fuel ash slag
7412 936	Fuel ash slag
7724 1174	Fuel ash slag
7420 943	Fuel ash slag
7448 956	Fuel ash slag
7488 955	Fuel ash slag
7391 903	Fuel ash slag
7519 1110	Fuel ash slag
7519 1111	Fuel ash slag
7520 1121	?Fuel ash slag
7486 1109	Fuel ash slag
7543 1168	Fuel ash slag
7542 1160	Fuel ash slag
7349 829	Fuel ash slag
7398 915	Fuel ash slag
7375 930	Fuel ash slag
7378 890	Fuel ash slag
7408 904	Fuel ash slag
7414 937	Fuel ash slag
7448 954	Dribbles of lead-tin alloy
7448 929	All three samples were coal
7469 953	Fuel ash slag
7484 1166	Fuel ash slag
7484 1167	Fuel ash slag
7486 1108	Fuel ash slag
7598 1187	Fuel ash slag
7391 902	Fuel ash slag
7390 908	Fuel ash slag
7515 1159	Fuel ash slag
7515 1158	Fuel ash slag
7718 1176	Fuel ash slag
7700 1102	Fuel ash slag
7712 1173	Fuel ash slag
7700 1103	Fuel ash slag
7624 1107	Fuel ash slag
7643 1172	Fuel ash slag
7681 1101	Fuel ash slag

Sample No.	Identification
7722 1175	Fuel ash slag
7810 1178	Ferruginous concretion
7828 1163	Fuel ash slag
7833 1191	Fuel ash slag
7507 1185	Fired clay
7507 1186	Fuel ash slag
7512 998	Fuel ash slag
7442 948	Coal, possibly also includes fuel ash slag
7422 940	Fuel ash slag
7420 943	Coal
7370 925	Coal or fuel ash slag
7340 908	Iron smithing slag
7345 893	Fuel ash slag
7341 902	Fuel ash slag