

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 221/87

TECHNOLOGICAL MATERIAL FROM OLD
PLACE, SLEAFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE.

Michael Heyworth

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Summary

A variety of materials were examined which related to technological processes carried out in the Iron Age and Roman phases of the settlement. The majority of the evidence suggested the smithing of iron was being undertaken in the general area.

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The finds submitted (AM Lab No 871589) represented a wide range of material which related to technological processes on the Iron Age/Roman settlement site at Old Place, Sleaford.

The finds were largely recovered from Medieval contexts (see Appendix), but they are thought to relate to the Iron Age and Roman periods. The activities represented by the finds are therefore likely to have been carried out in these periods.

The majority of the material related to the smithing of iron, though the small quantity, less than 2kg, of smithing slag represents a background spread of material in the general area as is usually the case on sites of this date. There were also small quantities of hearth lining, hearth bottom, and general ferruginous concretions which are all likely to be associated with the iron working process. In addition, a number of fragments of 'coke' and charcoal were found, which may have been remains of the fuel used in the smith's hearth.

Two fragments of tap slag were found in the Medieval layers. Tap slag is only found in association with iron smelting, never with smithing (McDonnell 1983: 81). It is the molten slag that was released from the furnace during smelting and cooled outside the furnace. It is coarsely vesicular, particularly near the upper cooling surface. However the tiny quantity found here does not necessarily imply iron smelting was being carried out on the site, it more likely that the fragments were being used as hardcore and may have been imported to the site for that reason.

Small amounts of fired clay, fuel ash slag and calcareous ash deposits were also found which relate to high temperature activities, though not necessarily iron-working.

Three of the items examined were corroded iron objects, probably nails.

Reference

McDonnell, G. 1983 "Tap Slags and Hearth Bottoms or, How to identify Slags" Current Archaeology No.86, 81-3.

Appendix

Context	Period	Object No.	Description
7	Medieval	83	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	92	Fuel ash slag
7	Medieval	96	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	101	Smithing slag
12	Medieval	111	Fuel ash slag
10	Roman	146	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	147	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	152	Iron object - nail?
7	Medieval	153	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	155	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	156	Smithing slag
7	medieval	159	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	166	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	167	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	168	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	171	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	175	Coke
8	Modern	182	Coke
7	Medieval	186	Smithing slag
7	Medieval	187	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	195	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	196	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	198	Tap slag
48	Medieval	199	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	201	Fired clay
48	Medieval	203	Coke
48	Medieval	204	Fuel ash slag
48	Medieval	205	Bone
48	Medieval	206	Fuel ash slag
48	Medieval	207	Stone
48	Medieval	209	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	210	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	211	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	212	Coke
48	Medieval	213	Coke
48	Medieval	215	Coke
48	Medieval	216	Pottery
48	Medieval	218	Coke
48	Medieval	219	Fired clay
50	Medieval	225	Fuel ash slag
50	Medieval	229	Coke
50	Medieval	230	Stone
50	Medieval	231	Smithing slag
50	Medieval	232	Coke
50	Medieval	234	Coke
50	Medieval	236	Coke
50	Medieval	237	Coke
50	Medieval	239	Coke
50	Medieval	243	Hearth lining
50	Medieval	244	Fuel ash slag
50	Medieval	247	Smithing slag
48	Medieval	251	Coal
50	Medieval	256	Fuel ash slag
50	Medieval	258	Smithing slag

50	Medieval	265	Iron object - nail?
90	Medieval	266	Ferruginous concretion
24	Roman	272	Hearth bottom
54	Roman	283	Fuel ash slag
54	Medieval	286	Fired clay
114	Roman	322	Fired clay
128		324	Smithing slag
125	Medieval	327	Smithing slag
618	Roman	1186	Smithing slag
300	Medieval	1166	Smithing slag
386	Medieval	1171	Smithing slag
386	Medieval	1172	Smithing slag
128		1353	Fuel ash slag
63	Roman	1355	Smithing slag
536	Roman	1383	Fuel ash slag
8	Medieval	1431	Smithing slag
212	Iron Age	1439	Smithing slag
300	Medieval	1490	Tap slag
332	Medieval	1580	Calcareous ash/tufa
332	Medieval	1581	Calcareous ash/tufa
300	Medieval	1745	Smithing slag
63	Roman	1958	Smithing slag
209	Roman	1978	Smithing slag
10	Medieval	1983	Smithing slag
12	Medieval	1984	Smithing slag
124	Iron Age		Fired clay - loomweight?
138	Iron Age		Ferruginous concretion
232	Iron Age		Charcoal from hearth
232	Iron Age		Fired clay
254			Iron object - nail?