Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 213/88

# THE SLAGS AND RESIDUES FROM BEVERLEY FRIARY, N HUMBERSIDE.

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Summary

Examination of the slags from the Friary site indicated that the diagnostic slags were intrusive background material, and that the non-diagnostic material was accidentally generated on the site.

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# The Slags and Residues from Beverley Friary, N Humberside (Site Code 1986/BLY)

## Introduction

The occupation of the Friary Site is divided into three broad phases. Earliest is the PreFriary occupation (-1100AD), evidenced by gullies, pits and an overlying plough soil. This is followed by the building, occupation, dissolution and destruction of the Friary buildings (1100-1540's) and finally, by the post-dissolution occupation of the site. A total of only 1.2kg of slag and other residues was recovered from the site and it is examined in relation to these phases.

## "Slag" Morphology

The slags were divided into two main groups; firstly, the diagnostic slags, ie those that derived from iron working, which included smithing slag and a hearth bottom and secondly, the non-diagnostic slags which were not necessarily generated by iron working but by other processes, and in this case were more likely to have been produced accidentally. These included cinder, fuel ash slag and hearth lining.

## Pre-Friary Phase

There was no absolute dating evidence in the Pre-Friary phase contexts. The slag that occurred was mostly cinder and/or fuel ash slag, except for two small lumps of smithing slag and a fragment of hearth lining recovered from the Pre-Friary agricultural soil (Context 958). This slag cannot be dated morphologically. The cinder and fuel ash slags were probably generated under high temperature oxidising conditions, causing reactions to occur between siliceous and ferruginous material. Their association with burnt daub and charcoal suggests destruction of a wattle and daub building by fire.

## Friary Construction, Occupation and Destruction

(Contexts 50-100 and 2000-3000). There was no evidence in the excavated area of ironworking activity during the building of the Friary. It is expected that some on-site smithing would have been practiced to manufacture constructional ironwork. It is presumed that this took place elsewhere.

The slags derived from these contexts were associated either with the cloister garden or with a domestic hearth, probably a warming room. The material from the cloister was varied and included a piece of flowed slag that could have been smelting tap slag (Context 65). This material was considered to be intrusive. The slag from the hearth was either cinder or cindery/smithing slag. The hearth also contained quantities of burnt bone and two "burnt" iron objects. It is therefore probable that this slag was also accidentally generated during the burning of "domestic" refuse.

During the dissolution the buildings were taken down and the lead melted down (and presumably cast into ingots). Three lead melting hearths were identified along with lead dribbles and splashes (cf Tintern Abbey, Courtney 1982). Slag would not have been generated by this process, but some leaded cinder was identified. There was no evidence for iron smithing during the destruction of the friary in the area excavated.

**Post-Dissolution Phase**

Small quantities of the material already described were recovered from these contexts. It was all residual and there was no evidence for later iron working on or near the site.

**Conclusions**

The evidence of industrial activity is negative, except for the reclamation of the lead at the dissolution. There was no evidence for ironworking in the areas excavated prior to, during or after the friary. [It might have been expected to identify constructional iron working activity]. This evidence can be contrasted with that from two other Beverley sites, Lurk Lane (McDonnell 1987a) and Eastgate (McDonnell 1987b), both of which indicated nearby iron smithing activity.

**References**

Courtney P 1982 "A non-ferrous industrial comples at Tintern Abbey" J.H.M.S. Vol 16 no 1 p22-23.

McDonnell G 1987a The slag from Lurk Lane, Beverley, N. Humberside. A.M.L. Report 38/87

McDonnell G 1987b The ironworking residues from Eastgate, Beverley, N. Humberside. A.M.L. Report 182/87

## Appendix 1

### Beverley Friary Slag Listing (wt in gms)

CONT - Context Number
SMITH - weight of Smithing Slag
CIN - " " Cinder
SSCIN - " " Smithing Slag/Cinder
C-FAS - " " Cinder/Fuel Ash Slag
HL - " " Hearth Lining
FE - " " Iron Lump

| CONT | SMITH | CIN | SSCIN | C-FAS | HL | FE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 142 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 0 |
| 59 | 0 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 65 | 121 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 134 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 289 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 634 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 674 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 893 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 931 | 94 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 958 | 17 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 1027 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1121 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1161 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1186 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 1188 | 0 | 15 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1206 | 13 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| 1212 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 1216 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 2009 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 2036 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 64 | 0 | 229 |
| 2046 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3006 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3051 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3110 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| ** Total ** | 534 | 250 | 87 | 87 | 22 | 229 |