

Report on the metalworking remains  
at Farranablake East, Co. Galway  
(16E0165)

Paul Rondelez

Macroom, Co. Cork

16 October 2017

## Introduction

During the excavation of three slots through an Early Medieval ringfort ditch a single piece of slag was recovered (Taylor 2016). This slag was retrieved from a middle fill of the ditch and is the waste from secondary iron working.

## Description of the residues

The piece, which is broken in two fragments, is an elongated lump of rather dense slag (Fig. 1). It measures 98 by 59 by 34mm and weighs 186g. Both the upper and lower surfaces are smooth and are coloured grey to reddish grey. There are some smaller rusty patches on the lower side and a larger one on the upper side. The fracture shows frequent globular air bubbles as well as a rather large piece of stoney material. There are no visible inclusions of fuel.

Radiocarbon analysis of an animal bone retrieved from the middle fill of the same ditch, but from a different sectioned returned a date of Cal. AD 671-778 (2 Sigma) confirming that the ringfort is Early Medieval in date.

## Interpretation

The piece is identified as most likely a small smithing hearth cake and as such the result of secondary ironworking. Due to the limited amount of material, no further conclusions can be reached.

## Bibliography

Taylor K. 2016 *Farranablake East, Athenry, Co. Galway. A Preliminary Archaeological Excavation Report for West of Ireland Alzheimer Foundation. 16E0165*. Unpublished Preliminary Excavation Report, Thames Valley Archaeological Services (Ireland) Ltd.

## Catalogue

Cut	Fill	Feature type	Description of material	Weight (g)
3	77	Ditch	Broken, elongated Smithing Hearth Cake, some smaller rusty patches on the lower side and a larger one on the upper side	186

Figures



*Fig. 1. Fragmented Smithing Hearth Cake, Ditch C. 3*