

Report on the metalworking remains at Lackaneen 3, Co. Cork (E004932)

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Description and interpretation of the material

During excavations ahead of infrastructure works at Lackaneen 3, Co. Cork, a small amount of metalworking waste (21g) was recovered from a single feature. Figure-of-eight-shaped pit 1 was 0.62m, 0.38m wide and 0.12m deep and its single fill (52) consisted of loose dark greyish black sandy silt. Radiocarbon analysis on two pieces of oak charcoal from that fill returned dates spanning the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

This feature contained small fragments of iron-rich slag, some with flow structure, a small fragment of heat-affected clay and multiple pieces of flake hammerscale.

Flow structure on iron slag is characteristic for waste from smelting operation but is also frequently observed in smithing assemblages. Hammerscale is the typical waste from smithing activities with flake hammerscale deriving from the hammering of the iron and globular hammerscale originating from forge welding activities. The heat-affected clay might represent a fragment of a clay tuyere, a type of bellows protector frequently encountered in early and late medieval Irish smithing assemblages.

The occurrence of hammerscale indicates that pit 1 was the setting of smithing activities while the small amount of waste material suggests that this was probably only carried out once and then most likely for repair or shaping of an object rather than manufacture. This activity took place in either the 5th or 6th century AD.

Catalogue

| Cut | Fill | Sample | Feature | Description | Weight g |
|-----|------|--------|---------|---|-------------|
| 1 | 52 | 1 | Pit | Five small pieces of rather light iron-rich slag, two with slight flow structure. | 14 |
| 1 | 52 | 1 | Pit | Small fragment of heat-affected clay | 1 |
| 1 | 52 | 2 | Pit | Five small pieces of rather light iron-rich slag, one with flow structure. | 5 |
| 1 | 52 | 2 | Pit | Multiple pieces of flake hammerscale | 2 |