

Assessment of some finds from Grantham, Lincolnshire (GSGR02)

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Two objects from a watching brief carried out at 51/51 George Street, Grantham, by Pre-Construct Archaeology Lincoln, site code GSGR02, were submitted for identification and assessment.

Description

Bone or Ivory

Context 8. A complete bone or ivory double-pointed tool. The object has a square-sectioned shaft but has been worked to points at both ends. The whole surface of the tool is polished from use.

Tools of this kind are known as pin-beaters or thread-pickers and are supposed to have been used with a warp-weighted loom in order to tap down the weft at regular intervals to ensure that the finished cloth has no gaps between the weft threads.

In southern England there are examples of these pin-beaters from late Anglo-Saxon contexts Pritchard 1984 but in the Danelaw they are rare or absent in Anglo-Scandinavian levels, suggesting that a new form of weaving technology was introduced in the late 9th century, presumably by Viking incomers. This tool, therefore, is likely to be of early to mid Anglo-Saxon date, i.e. later 5th to mid 9th centuries.

Glass

Context 26. A single fragment of dark green bottle glass, from the neck of a tall, free-blown wine bottle. Such bottles first appeared in the mid 18th century and from the middle of the 19th century onwards were increasingly replaced by mould-blown bottles.

Assessment

The pin-beater from context 8 should be illustrated for publication. The identify of the material it is made from should be established by submission to a specialist. Most examples are made from the wall of a long bone from a species such as cattle or horse but this piece, to my non-specialist eye, seems to be too thick for such an origin.

Bibliography

Pritchard, F. A. (1984) "Late Saxon Textiles from the City of London." *Medieval Archaeol*, XXVIII, 46-76.