

Section 50 Non-ceramic activity artefacts – overview and conclusions

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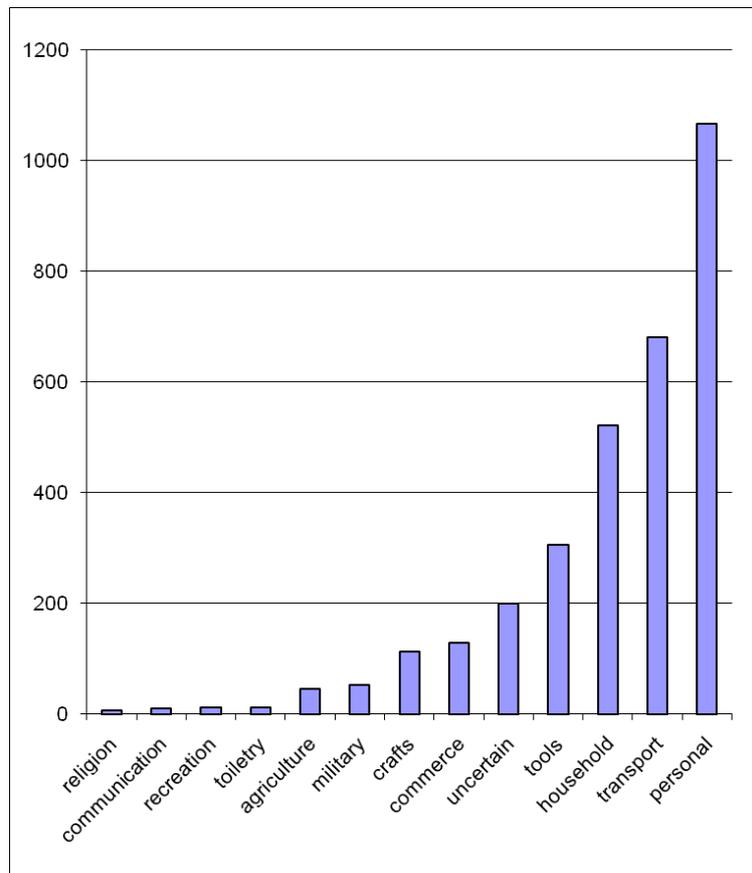
Overview

This section attempts to extend discussion of the non-ceramic artefact assemblage beyond that of dating evidence alone and to examine the function of objects and how their presence and pattern of deposition may contribute to understanding the nature of occupation. The discussion will follow the structure of the non-ceramic artefact catalogue by examining each of the functional groups in turn, considering changes in the assemblage both by phase and pattern of distribution. The documentary evidence of the medieval period permits comparison between expected patterns and those actually encountered, enabling further exploration of the reasons for any discrepancies. Before exploring each functional category some preliminary comments regarding the nature of the archaeological record and the processes of deposition are necessary.

It is evident that any explanation of the patterns we may perceive in the archaeological record must be tempered by a host of considerations. Foremost is the inherent nature of the record itself. With the exception of a catastrophic end to a site's occupation, objects generally enter the record by one of four means, purposeful deposit, as in the case of hoards or ritual deposition such as burials or votive offerings; abandonment of *in situ* structural remains including both building fabric and services; accidental loss, unnoticed or irretrievable by the owner; discard of damaged or unwanted, possibly unfashionable, items. The latter means generally account for the majority of the recovered artefact assemblage, and hence what survives tends to be objects of a more mundane, and less costly, nature. The record is further affected by the preservation conditions of a specific site and durability of the material from which the object is manufactured. Organic objects or components, for example wood and textiles, are particularly affected as the majority of sites excavated do not possess the necessary conditions to ensure their preservation. These are basic constraints of all archaeological study, but they are not the only factors which must be taken into consideration.

The trends in availability and cost of the materials used in the production of objects will be reflected in the quantities of items recovered, the more costly the material the greater the care bestowed. The ability to recycle expensive material will also adversely affect the frequency of occurrence within the record. Prevailing economic and social conditions of the period under investigation can influence the pattern of deposition in two contrasting ways. If times are unsettled, and trade patterns disrupted, greater care may be bestowed on items and hence fewer will be discarded. Conversely, valued objects might be purposely deposited for safekeeping and subsequent retrieval, for whatever reasons, made impossible. Periods of general prosperity may be reflected by a higher discard rate, with the dictates of fashion playing a greater role in the deposition pattern. Obviously the last two factors will also be affected by the status and wealth of a site's occupants, and the prevailing living standards and structure of the society of the period.

The length and intensity of occupation, in particular on rural sites where comparatively shallow deposits are frequently encountered, will adversely affect the survival of evidence of earlier use. Periods of disturbance, in the form of construction or robbing of structures, will result in a greater quantity of residual material within deposits, thereby masking activity-related distribution patterns. The reasons and methods of abandonment, and the proximity of any relocation, can further obscure patterns of use. A planned departure may be mirrored in the record by discard of goods accrued over years, either damaged or unwanted in the new location. However this is counterbalanced by the removal of portable and perhaps valued items. A gradual decline might result in evidence of abandoned structures and their fittings, but once again any pattern discerned must take into account the robbing of structures for reusable materials and whether any subsequent occupation occurred in close proximity to the excavated area.



50.01 Bar chart showing numbers of types of non-ceramic activity artefacts (Baker)

Category 3 Household utensils and furniture

41.01/105-143; 41.02/144-157; 41.03/158-165; 41.04/166-168; 41.05/169-172;
41.06/173-175; 41.07/176-179, 181-197; 41.08/180

The artefacts from this category can be subdivided into two groups, utensils and vessels connected with the preparation and consumption of food, and furnishings. The quantities of furnishing remains were limited in comparison to the former group. Their scarcity may be attributable not only to their perishable nature, but their portability.

The site of a royal manor might be expected to yield evidence of fine-quality furnishings. The King however owned a large number of estates, the majority of which, in addition to providing income, would have served as convenient short-stay stopping places on his tour of the country. This medieval propensity for wayfaring is well known and numerous accounts exist of the size of retinues and the number of carts that accompanied travellers. In addition to provisions, these baggage trains carried a wide range of personal possessions, including household furnishings (Salzman 1926, 266–82; Moorhouse 1983, 69). Many of the royal manors may have only been occupied by royal retinue for a few days each year and therefore the majority of furnishings encountered on these sites are more likely to reflect the social status of the permanent residents rather than the infrequently-visiting royal household. Any fine-quality furnishings that may have accompanied the royal visitors would have attracted a greater degree of care and hence be less likely to enter the archaeological record. The single exception to this generalisation is the probable Limoges candlestick [41.08]. The enamelled devices on this object suggest it was specially commissioned and it was undoubtedly highly prized. Its find spot, on the edge of a stone-lined drain CF11 (T13 F537) in S27, and its bent stem are suggestive of accidental loss and would appear to indicate that its resting spot was inaccessible.

Vessels and utensils for preparation and consumption of food and drink were more prevalent, but these were in the main of late medieval and post-medieval date. This was particularly so in the case of the vessel glass assemblage where 95% of the sherds recovered were of 16th- to 18th-century dates.

The paucity of medieval vessel glass is not particularly surprising given the fragile nature of these vessels and the propensity of potash glass to decay. The quantities of 16th- to 18th-century drinking vessels and wine bottles not only reflect the improved quality, and perhaps availability, of the glass, but attest to a minimum of post-depositional disturbance.

Non-ceramic objects associated with the preparation, as opposed to consumption, of food were limited in numbers. Only one of the quern fragments recovered was of possible medieval date, but due to the lengthy period over which Rhenish lava continued to be imported, this is not a certainty. The lack of querns supports the documentary evidence of 1212 indicating the presence of a windmill on manorial land. Mortars were slightly more numerous and the majority of fragments recovered were of Purbeck marble. Most of these were recovered from deposits of phase 5.6 and later indicating the end date for their use; this accords well with evidence from other sites, which suggests that the main period of exploitation of this stone for mortar production was during the 13th to 14th centuries.

The increasing frequency of occurrence of metal vessels over time, with the majority from deposits of phase 6.1 and later, not only reflects the general trend over the site, but is indicative of greater availability in the later medieval period. Additionally, in the case of cast copper-alloy vessels, the increasing use of leaded bronzes may also have resulted in a greater frequency in the need for repair (Brownsword 1991, 103).

Little in the way of distribution patterns could be seen in the furniture fittings and lighting, perhaps due to the limited quantities recovered. The greatest concentration, consisting of one candleholder, a casket hinge, and three bone strips from a casket or box, occurred in the destruction deposits (Period 7) of S63.

Concentrations were noted, however, in cooking and eating utensils. The evidence from the medieval period is limited to mortars and metal vessels. The greatest concentration of metal vessel fragments was in the area of S28 with

four cast copper-alloy sherds from deposits within the building and a further four examples, both cast and sheet copper alloy plus one lead alloy, from the surrounding area and adjacent structures (S27, S29, and S30). This concentration, in combination with the prevalence of sooted ceramic cooking vessels, is indicative of the use of this building as a kitchen.

The sole concentration of mortars was found in the fills of a drain CF11 (T13 F1258) and its sump (T13 F1086) in the final phase of S27. As S28 is immediately adjacent to S27, and continued in use in the succeeding phases, it is probable that the mortar fragments originated from this building. A complementary concentration of dripping pans was also noted within the same fills [Slowikowski 58 and 58.05].

There is a striking concentration of glass drinking vessels and wine bottles in the area of S16, and a sizeable proportion would appear to be of 17th-century date. Finds of mid-17th-century spoons were also concentrated in the same area. This suggests that S16 may have remained in some form of domestic use into this phase.

Category 4 Crafts and industry

42.01/198-208; 42.02/209-216; 42.03/217-234

Evidence for several different crafts was recovered. The largest assemblage was associated with metalworking, although evidence existed, on a smaller scale, for wood, leather, stone, and textile working. None of this however indicated intensive working, rather it was suggestive of small-scale craft and domestic activity.

Finds of metalworking tools prior to phase 6.1 were limited to a total of six possible punches whereas fifteen punches and chisels and a pair of pincers were found in deposits of phase 6.1 to Period 7. A similar, but more marked, pattern was found in wood, stone, and leather-working tools. Textile-working implements were also more common in the latest phases although this is more a reflection on the introduction date of the most numerous class of find in this group, thimbles.

This pattern is common to all the non-ceramic objects reflecting the lengthy occupation and the nature of abandonment of the site itself. The care bestowed upon the objects, due to the cost of iron which is the main component of these tools, and their portable nature also must be considered when analysing the reasons for this pattern. It is tempting to suggest that some of the increase in the numbers of tools recovered, in particular masonry wedges and chisels, may relate to robbing of derelict buildings.

Craft by-products, as opposed to portable tools and finished goods, are perhaps more useful in indicating the phase during which these activities were carried out. Due to the preservation conditions at La Grava this evidence is limited to metalworking debris. Offcuts occurred fairly evenly throughout phase 5.1 to Period 7, admittedly in limited numbers. Slags of iron and non-ferrous run-off and miscasts were recovered. The bulk of the ferrous slag (5155g) was recovered from deposits of phases 5.1 to 5.3. None was found in phases 5.4 to 5.6, while an increase in recovery was noted in phase 6.1 to Period 7 (3470.5g). Lead waste exhibited a similar pattern, 1425g recovered from phases 5.1 to 5.3, 36g from phases 5.4 to 5.6, and in phase 6.1 to Period 7, 1944g. Quantities of copper-alloy slag, miscasts and run-off were never sizeable, the greatest weight (257g) occurring in phases 5.1 to 5.3, but the same pattern was detectable.

Increased construction activity in phases 5.1–5.3 may account for the quantity of ferrous slag and lead waste, in that the production of various building fittings and caulking may have been necessary. Fewer structures were erected between phases 5.4 and 5.6, while phase 6.1 and later saw the abandonment and robbing of structures. The latter activity could explain the increase in lead by-products as caulking and roofing lead were melted down to be reused. An additional factor to be considered is that as robbing occurred by-products from earlier phases may have been uncovered.

The greatest concentration of tools occurred in S16, and to a lesser extent, S63. These were all from destruction deposits of the two final phases and are more likely to reflect either the use of these structures for storage, rather than occupation, or purposeful robbing of building materials. The small concentration of textile working implements in S16 (two tenterhooks, two thimbles, and a needle) may bear witness to activities carried out during its use as domestic quarters in phase 6.1.

Despite the absence of tools, offcuts, or bar iron being found directly associated with S18, the concentration of by-products in and around this building undoubtedly points to metalworking (lead and iron) activity taking place during phase 5.1. This structure was short-lived and was replaced by S86 and S23 which yielded further signs of metalworking in the form of slags, ingots, bar iron, and a punch. These later finds were in the main from destruction deposits and it seems probable that they originated from the underlying layers of S18.

Finds of lead offcuts and waste were associated with a variety of structures and may reflect on the spot repairs to structural fittings. Certainly the large mass of melted lead (1340g) found in S43 (T30 L152) would appear to indicate this.

Category 5 Multi-purpose tools

43.04/235–247; 43.05/248–256; 43.06/257–266; 43.07/267–276; 43.08/277–285

As with preceding categories a marked increase was noted in the numbers of finds from this category recovered from deposits of phase 6.2 and Period 7. Of those knives which were both phased and of identifiable form, 76% were from phase 6.2 and Period 7; likewise with shears (83%), scissors (81%), and whetstones (53%). Some of this may be attributed to greater availability/popularity in the later medieval period, but this disposal pattern may also reflect discard of unwanted or damaged items prior to abandonment of the structure.

Removing the bolstered knives from the equation, the concentration becomes much less marked although still present [50.02]. Twelve structures yielded three or more unbolstered knives. Eight were domestic buildings while four served as stables or byres. The higher proportion of finds within domestic structures presumably reflects the preparation and consumption of food. All the knives recovered from kitchen S28 had whittle as opposed to scale tangs, perhaps indicating their more robust nature and utilitarian use.

S	Function	Structure type	whittle	scale	folding	blades	Total
16	Chamber block/chapel	Domestic	4	1	1	3	9
63	Manor house	Domestic	2	6		3	11
27	Latrine block	Service	3	3		1	7
30	Gatehouse	Gatehouse		2		2	5
38	Agricultural	Agricultural	1	4			5
54	Prior's lodgings	Service	1	2		3	6

23	Bakehouse/smokehouse	Service	1	3		1	5
28	Prior's kitchen	Service/kitchen	3			1	4
41	House/byre	Agricultural		4		1	5
40	Agricultural	Agricultural	1	1	1		3
56	House	Domestic	1	1		1	3
59	Dairy	Domestic	1		1	1	3
	Totals	Total	18	27	3	17	66

50.02 Table of concentrations of un-bolstered knives by Structure

Knives were overwhelmingly concentrated within or in the environs of **S16** and **S63**. However, of the classifiable examples associated with structures (91 in total), 37% possessed a bolster indicating a 16th-century date at the earliest. Of these 50% were found within, or in destruction deposits of, **S16** and 41% in **S63**. Only three bolstered knives were found in other structures, two associated with **S19** and one in destruction deposits of barn **S35**. This restricted distribution would appear to indicate that **S16** and **S63** were in use in the later half of phase 6.1 and into phase 6.2.

Finds of shears and scissors were almost totally restricted to domestic structures, only one pair of shears being recovered from a byre (Sf 2506 T30 L377 P6.2 **S38D**). Likewise kitchens **S28** and **S43** produced no shears or scissors. Once again the greatest concentrations were found in **S16** and **S63**. **S16** yielded six pairs of scissors and two shears and **S63** the converse, five pairs of shears and three scissors. This may be explained by the fact that scissors, although in common use in the 13th and 14th centuries, were not popular in the late medieval period. They did not regain their popularity until sometime in the 16th century at which point **S63** was going out of use. The greater number of scissors recovered from **S16** again indicates its continued use into the 16th and 17th centuries.

Finds of hones were more common in domestic buildings (ten in total), only three barns (**S35**, **S38**, and **S40**) producing one each and a byre (**S41**) yielding two. The majority of domestic structures yielded between one and two hones, but **S16** yielded eight. This concentration may reflect this structure's final stage of use, serving as both a domestic and agricultural building as all the hones were from destruction deposits of Period 7.

Norwegian ragstone was almost exclusively used for hones in the medieval period at La Grava; only one hone of quartz sandstone was recovered from a deposit of phase 5.5. Hones of Pennant sandstone only occurred in structures which were in use in phase 6.2 and later.

Category 6 Commerce and trade

44.03/286-299, 304-305

The bulk of this category consisted of coins and jettons. There was a sizeable increase in the number of coins recovered from deposits of phase 6.2 and Period 7 but this is largely due to the assemblage of 17th-century coinage, of which the majority was farthings of Charles I and James I (40 in total). The licence to manufacture these farthing tokens was finally revoked in 1644, after considerable problems with forgery, purchase rate, and rechanging (Peck 1970, 45-9). The quantities recovered argue against occasional loss and suggest purposeful discard of non-legal tender. The number of coins recovered and their date range by phase is presented in [50.03] with residual and intrusive coins noted in brackets. It can be seen from this that, excluding the 17th-century

coins, the assemblage was small. Hence any conclusions drawn must be treated with caution.

Period	Roman	1100–1199	1200–1299	1300–1399	1400–1499	1500–1599	1600–1699	1700–1799	Total
2									
3									
4									
5.1									
5.2	1 [R]	1							2
5.3	3 [R]								3
5.4		1	1	1					3
5.5	1 [R]		1				1 [I]		3
5.6			1	2					3
6.1	1 [R]			3 [R]			1 [I]	1 [I]	6
6.2	1 [R]			2 [R]	1 [R]		8		12
7	2 [R]		1 [R]	3 [R]	1 [R]		39	2	48
Total	9	2	4	11	2	0	49	3	80

50.03 Coinage recovered by phase and date range. Of the 83 coins recovered, three medieval coins were unstratified and are not included here

As was noted in the introduction periods of ground disturbance may be indicated by a greater number of residual objects within a deposit or phase. The converse, the typological date range of the artefact corresponding to the phase range, may indicate little in the way of this type of activity. This would appear to be the case at La Grava, the major phases of construction, phases 5.2 and 5.3, producing more residual coins, while phases 5.4 to 5.6, when little in the way of construction, especially within the central complex, was undertaken, yielded more coins corresponding to the phase date range. Phase 6.1 and Period 7 witnessed a marked increase in residual coins and it is during this phase that robbing of abandoned structures was taking place.

There is a complete absence of coinage dating from the Saxon period to the mid-12th century. Only five coins dating from the late 12th to mid-13th centuries were recovered, while numbers of coins steadily increased from the mid-13th century, reaching their peak between the mid-14th and early 15th centuries. No coins dating between the second quarter of the 15th and the end of the 16th centuries were recovered. This pattern would appear to reflect the intensity, and perhaps wealth, of occupation. However, this increase also coincides with an increase in the amount of coinage in circulation, in particular during the reign of Edward III, which accounted for seven of the coins recovered. The absence of coins dating between c 1420 and c 1600 coincides with the decline in the intensity of occupation and, perhaps fortunes, of the site.

The pattern of loss of jettons would, overall, appear to be occasional, accidental loss, with one example occurring in each phase from 5.3 to 5.5. Although phase 6.1 showed a marked increase in numbers (twelve), nine of these were found in a pile on top of a partially robbed-out wall of S16. As there was no reason to hoard these objects, being of no monetary value, and no metal fittings from a purse or box were found to account for their proximity, the nature of the positioning remains a curiosity. These jettons may have been inserted into the fabric of the wall or they may have been encountered, in more dispersed positions, during the robbing of the wall. If the latter occurred perhaps the jettons were gathered together in the mistaken, but short-lived, belief that they were of value. Phase 6.2 and Period 7 produced a total of ten jettons, seven of which were of 17th-century date.

The recovery of the remaining commercial items, scales and weights, was almost totally restricted to deposits of phase 6.1 to Period 7 and this is more likely to reflect discard rather than accidental loss. These items are not suggestive of a high degree of commerce, their presence more indicative of the keeping of household accounts. Although to a degree La Grava may have been self-sufficient, there certainly was expenditure on purchased items as evidenced by the presence of Purbeck marble mortars and Norwegian ragstone hones.

The coin weights support Salzman's statement (1926, 241) that the standard of commercial morality was low. Certainly forgeries, not to mention fraudulent weights and measures, were rife. The presence of two cloth seals, although these examples were of post-medieval date, may echo the fact that a high proportion of any household's expenditure was devoted to the purchase of textile (Dyer 1989, 78). The need for such seals is again a reflection on the lack of commercial honesty.

It is by no means uncommon to recover foreign coinage (eg Sf 243, Sf 956) from medieval sites as there was a high level of commercial interaction with the continent. More interesting perhaps is the presence of both French jettons [44.03/300-301] and a coin weight [44.03/289]; their dating, in terms of La Grava Priory phasing (5.4 and 5.5) coinciding with documentary evidence for at least seven royal visits.

Although occasional finds of single medieval coins and jettons occurred in structures external to the central complex, and probably represent accidental loss, any concentrations of commercial items were restricted to buildings within the central area, in particular S16, S17, S54, and S63.

Prior to phase 6.1 there is little evidence to suggest any commercial activity taking place in S16. From phase 6.1 to Period 7 evidence becomes more plentiful (balance, jettons, and coinage). Only three of the jettons from this building are of late 16th to 17th-century date. The majority (eleven in total) were of medieval date and although not recovered from deposits of this phase, due to the modifications carried out on this building during phase 6.1 in combination with the shallowness of deposits, their presence could suggest that accounting may have been carried out in this building in earlier phases.

S17 produced a smaller concentration of jettons from phases prior to 6.1 and, after its replacement by S63 in phase 6.1 a concentration of commercial items appears in this later structure. Following S63's demise, finds associated with commerce were concentrated in S16. The coin weight [44.03/289] and jetton (Sf 1350) recovered from S54 may best be explained by this building's proximity to S16, S17, and S63.

Category 7 Written communication 44.05/306-313

Throughout the 'Dark Ages' and the early medieval period writing was used to legitimise both power and position in society and ownership. Literacy was by no means widespread and in general was restricted to royal and monastic households, estate owners, and the bureaucracy that sustained them. Certainly by the mid-13th century estate management was on the basis of writing. It is not surprising therefore that evidence of literacy was recovered from such an establishment as La Grava, with both royal and monastic connections. The limited quantity of evidence however, ten objects in total, might be explained by the fact that the administrative officials, stewards, chamberlains, and auditors, spent much of their time travelling from household to household (Miller and Hatcher 1978, 190-91). Parallels for the bone and lead writing implements centre

on the 13th and 14th centuries, but certainly lead-ruled lines came into use at the end of the 11th century, becoming the norm during the 12th century (Biddle and Brown 1990, 737).

Clanchy (1979, 28) argues that the period from 1066 to 1307 saw the use of writing becoming the norm for government business and titles to property. He illustrates the growing dependency on, and the proliferation of, documents by the case of Master David of London who, in 1170, required eleven royal documents and two ministerial letters to safeguard his pension (Clanchy 1979, 29–30). The presence of two papal bull seals at La Grava may relate to this growing reliance on documentation. Although it is impossible to say what documents these seals accompanied, it is tempting to see a connection between the seal of Alexander IV [44.05/309] and the bull of 11 June 1254 concerning the appointment of conservators to the Church of Pewsei and mentioning the Prior of La Grava. As Clanchy has illustrated one document will generate the need for others and a corresponding communication, informing the prior of his appointment, will undoubtedly have been sent.

Book clasps do not usually appear in the archaeological record until late in the medieval period (Moorhouse 1971, 59) and La Grava is true to form in that all three examples came from deposits of the late 16th and 17th centuries. Their presence may be related to more widespread literacy in the 16th century and the greater availability of books during this period.

The find spots of objects associated with writing were restricted to domestic buildings, the majority from the inner complex of buildings. The recovery of the papal bull seal [44.05/310] from a construction trench of S28 provides a *terminus post quem* for the erection of this building, while the retrieval of a second bull [44.05/309], this from S19, might suggest that documents may have been stored in this building. Two styli were associated with S56, in the outer complex, and it is possible that this building may have been the domestic quarters for an administrator or bailiff.

Category 8 Recreational purposes

45.02/1–10; 45.04/314–321

Recreational activities, including gaming and music, are represented by a small assemblage of ten objects plus numerous clay pipes from late contexts. Games of skill, usually played for money, are attested to in medieval illustrations (Salzman 1926, 102–4) and indications of their presence at La Grava, in the form of dice and a possible tableman, are perhaps suggestive of a degree of surplus wealth. All the gaming pieces were recovered from 16th- and 17th-century deposits and therefore are likely to postdate the period when the site served a religious role. Brown (1990, 698) does indicate however that the throw of dice may have been used to decide which virtue should be practised for the day, and were not necessarily evidence of gaming.

The presence of tuning pegs may also indicate a level of wealth as Salzman comments that ‘every noble kept a number of minstrels who played during mealtimes and accompanied him on his journeys’ (1926, 180). This image is certainly not out of place when one considers that at least seven royal visits are recorded between 1308 and 1310.

No concentration of recreation objects was apparent, perhaps largely due to the limited numbers recovered. It may be noteworthy however that the tuning pegs were found within destruction deposits of S17, thought to be a hall, and in S56, possibly the domestic quarters of an administrator or bailiff (see above).

Category 9 Animal trappings and transportation

46.02/322-327; 46.03/328-336; 46.04/337-344; 46.05/345-351; 46.06/352-356; 46.07/357-365; 46.10/366-377

The horse played a vital role in medieval society, being the sole means, besides foot, of land transport. Items associated with the horse are fairly well represented in the assemblage [50.04]. The plated spurs, harness bosses, and enamelled pendant [46.05/346], with its probable royal connections, are outwardly the more obvious indicators of status and wealth. The more plentiful but less eye-catching evidence of horseshoes, however, should not be disregarded. Although there is no means of differentiating between riding and draught shoes of the medieval period (Clark 1995, 2), their occurrence in combination with spurs and harness fittings indicates the presence, if not numbers, of riding horses.

Period	Horseshoes	Shoeing nails	Bits	Harness fittings	Spurs/rowels	Total
5.2	1	12				13
5.3	5	25		1	1	32
5.4	14	60	1	1	4	80
5.5	7	11		1		19
5.6	12	38		1	5	56
6.1	21	87		2	3	113
6.2	31	70	6	4	9	120
7	94	40	10	8	9	161
Total	185	343	17	18	36	594

50.04 Table giving occurrences of transport equipment by phase

The initial purchase of a riding horse ranged between £3 and £10, as Clark comments, equating to six months to one year's wages of a skilled London craftsman (1995, 8-9). Added expense was incurred in feed, shoes, harness, and spurs. Cart or pack horses, although less of an initial outlay, 10s to 20s each, still created a drain on resources with their keep. Dyer notes that for most laymen the marshalsea or stable department cost about one tenth of the total annual expenditure (1989, 71). Costs of course differed dependent upon the size and mobility of the household; a large, mobile house perhaps keeping between 30 to 50 horses per day, a more sedentary establishment between four to eight horses per day. Monastic or clerical households had less need to travel and it is thought were unlikely to keep riding horses, hiring them when necessary (Dyer 1989, 71). The latter certainly may have been true in the early part of La Grava's history with very little in the way of evidence of horses, cart or riding, surviving. It is worthy of mention that a survey, conducted in 1155, for the Constable of England commented upon the run down condition of the Royal Manor of Leighton. Indeed, the Extent for 1155 lists six oxen only, but notes the stock which should be present, including two affers (farm horses) and seven non-draught animals. However, as the documents do not state the exact location of the manor at this time, care must be exercised in equating these descriptions with the present site. The absence of horse-related equipment prior to phase 5.2 might equally be explained by the manor's existence in another location, not being sited in the area presently under study until post 1146.

The situation appears to have altered by phase 5.4 where the evidence, although not substantial, indicates the presence of horse, whether permanently stabled or visiting. Certainly by this phase a possible stable block or barracks S30 was extant. This coincides with documentary evidence for at least seven royal visits in the first half of the 14th century. The enamelled harness pendant [46.05/346]

may provide tangible evidence of one such visit. [50.04] indicates a continuing presence of horse-related objects throughout the remaining phases, these incidences could be potentially increased if some of the buckles, likely to have been used on harness and spurs (see catalogue, Personal adornment and dress [48]) were included. The increase in quantities in the final phases of the site may be accounted for by occurrence of both medieval and post-medieval forms in these deposits. This is likely to have resulted from robbing or post-occupation disturbance.

Although the number of shoes is sizeable, two factors must be taken into consideration; the fragmentary condition of most of the assemblage, 57.5% surviving as portions of heels or branches only, and the short lifespan of the shoes themselves (Clark 1995, 1, 9). These factors suggest that the permanently-stabled horse population may never have been substantial, but its existence does serve to suggest a degree of wealth within the establishment.

Thirty-two percent of the registered artefacts associated with transportation were recovered from topsoil deposits overlying areas of agricultural activity, including barns, stables, byres, and fields, as opposed to living quarters. Typologically, the finds from these deposits were of early to late medieval date, with a limited quantity of post-medieval and modern forms. This area appears to have been mainly used as pasture at the close of occupation, and remained so until living memory. Objects of 17th- and 18th-century date found within the central complex of buildings were in the main restricted to demolition and overlying deposits of S63 and S16.

Category 10 Agriculture and horticulture

47.01/378-387

Although La Grava undeniably had a religious function during the 13th century, it would at the same time have been the focus of a farming enterprise. In the later half of the medieval period, when its religious function had diminished, its primary role was that of farming. The artefactual evidence for this activity however is rather limited. Although Bailiff Accounts for 1341-2 indicate a mixed farming economy with seven ploughs and teams of oxen available at any one time, no artefactual evidence for even one plough was recovered. La Grava is not remarkable for this absence; finds of plough components are a rarity from most medieval sites (Goodall 1980a, 63-4).

This situation may be due to a number of factors. Wood formed the major component in these tools and the prevailing conditions of preservation on most sites are such that surviving intact tools are a rarity. Iron although not a large component of agricultural tools was an important one and therefore the quantity of discarded items would be expected to reflect the accessibility of the processed ore; fewer discarded iron objects recovered from early medieval deposits, increasing numbers from the 14th/15th century onwards.

Objects of a purely organic nature, such as flails, did not survive at La Grava. However tools which possessed an iron component were recovered, although in limited numbers [47.01]. Hand tools, although no less important, represent less financial outlay. Hence they are potentially more likely to be present in the archaeological record, although, for the reasons outlined above, in smaller quantities in the earlier medieval period. Langdon (1988, 96) has listed the complete set of hand tools utilised by the medieval farmer, compiled from contemporary sources. From preparation of the soil to threshing and winnowing the tools identified in [50.05] were needed.

Activity	Tools
Ground clearance and preparation	Axe, hatchet, shovel, spade, fork, mattock, hoe, pickaxe, mallet
Seeding	Seedlip or cloth bag
Weeding	Weeding hook and stick, spud, tongs?
Haymaking	Scythe, rake, and fork
Harvesting	Sickle or reaping hook, scythes, fork, rake
Threshing, winnowing	Flail, winnowing sheet, sieves, riddle

50.05 Table of agricultural activities and tools

Six of the hand tool types used by the medieval farmer are present but, as predicted, few from the early medieval period [50.06]. Weeding hooks are comparatively well represented in the early phases, contrary to the impression given in documentary sources which suggest that weeding was a relatively neglected activity (Langdon 1988, 99). No weeding hooks were recovered from later deposits.

Excavated tools							
Phase	axe	spade	fork	weeding hook	rake	sickle	Total
5.2				1			1
5.3							0
5.4				1	2		3
5.5					3		3
5.6					4		4
6.1		1		1	6		8
6.2	1				8		9
7	1		4		11	2	18
Total	2	1	4	3	34	2	46

50.06 Table of occurrences of agricultural hand tools by phase

Increasing numbers of rake prongs are evident in the succeeding phases of 5.5 to 6.1 but are not suggestive of large quantities of tools, although it should be noted that the majority of medieval rakes may have been entirely composed of wood. Spades are poorly represented perhaps for a similar reason, the iron shoe being a small component of the whole. It is not until the post-medieval period that hand tools become comparatively more abundant perhaps mirroring the greater affordability of iron.

Agricultural hand tools, although present, are poorly represented. A variety of reasons for this have been suggested, including the largely organic component of many of the tools and the cost of iron, but further contributory factors can be suggested. A well-run farming enterprise will ensure proper maintenance of all its assets, bestowing care upon the tools necessary for its continued productivity. During much of the medieval period tenants were obligated to provide services, in the form of agricultural labour, to the landholder and it may be that in many cases they were expected to bring their own tools with them (Langdon 1988, 96).

There is no marked distribution pattern of agricultural tools in phases 5.2 to 5.6, perhaps due to the limited quantities recovered. Two of the weeding hooks recovered were in the area of gardens, suggesting more care was bestowed upon areas close to domestic buildings. Find spots in the later phases were more concentrated, recovery being in the vicinity of S16 and S63. This not only reflects the contraction in the number of buildings in use but suggests that S16 may have had both a domestic (see above) and agricultural use in its latest phases.

Category 11 Military and hunting equipment

47.02/388-397, 399-403; 47.03/404-412

Salzman commented that war in the middle ages was part of the normal conditions of life and could be viewed as the profession of the upper classes (1926, 186). With the exception of 'engines of war', many of the artefacts associated with such a 'profession' can and do have alternative uses, especially when found within the context of a royal manor. An obvious example is arrows, equally useful in felling human and animal prey. Although a correlation between arrowhead forms and use is likely to have existed, certain types having sufficient penetrative powers to pierce body armour, rigid rules were unlikely to have applied; preferences of individual archers and the circumstances of use need to be taken into consideration (Borg 1991, 79). Considering La Grava's status as a royal manor, it is likely that some of the arrowheads recovered were used in hunting. Although this pursuit may have supplemented the table fare, its primary purpose was entertainment. As Dyer comments, hunting parties provided the aristocracy with their principal diversion (1989, 61). Weaponry was also a necessity in the course of travel, not only to guard against attack by wild beasts but, as Salzman notes, by 'wilder men' (1926, 271). Weaponry is likely to have been owned chiefly by the well to do (Margeson 1993, 235) and its presence in the archaeological record serves as a further indicator of status.

Phase	Arrows	Chain-mail	Chapes	Quillion	Fish hook	Fishing weights	Total
5.1						1	1
5.2							0
5.3	1		1			1	3
5.4	3		2	1		1	7
5.5					1		1
5.6	3					2	5
6.1	5	1			1	6	13
6.2	7	1		1	2	4	15
7	4		1			2	7
Total	23	2	4	2	4	17	52

50.07 Table of occurrences of weaponry and hunting implements by phase

Fish was an important element in the medieval diet not least due to the restriction imposed by the church on the eating of meat. The consumption of fresh water fish from ponds in particular symbolised high status (Grant 1988, 170). The finds of fish hooks and line and stone net weights or sinkers from, in the main, phase 5.3 onwards indicates the exploitation of this food source, possibly from both the adjacent Ouzel and Cocklake stream and following its construction, the fishpond.

The find spots of arrowheads within a domestic setting are likely to represent accidental loss, suggested by the dispersed pattern of most the assemblage, or, in the case of the two concentrations noted in S29 and S23, storage.

Category 12 Personal adornment and dress

48.01/413-432; 48.02/433-464; 48.03/465-476; 48.04/477-485; 48.05/486-497; 48.06/498-508; 48.07/509-529; 48.08/530-534

This group of artefacts has perhaps the greatest potential to provide an insight into the wealth and status of the inhabitants of La Grava. In particular, jewellery

items, not all of which performed a functional role, might be expected to be more expressive of an individual's taste and a conspicuous means of status display. Paradoxically it is for these very reasons that this class of artefact is most affected by the nature of the archaeological record and its inherent problems of survival; the more valuable an item, both in terms of cost and personal significance, the more care will be bestowed upon its possession (Margeson 1993, 233). Hence what survives tends to be objects of more mundane, and less costly, nature.

Examining the occurrence of this category as a whole by phase, having removed the residual assemblage of Roman and Saxon objects, it is evident that few items of jewellery, as opposed to fasteners, are present in any phase and that none occur prior to phase 5.3 [50.08]. This absence in earlier phases may be due to the fact that brooches do not seem to have been worn to any great extent during the 12th century (Hinton 1982, 16). The examples recovered in later phases are not in precious metals, which might be expected from a royal manor, and the majority are very functional in appearance. These are more likely to represent the possessions of the permanent household rather than those of visiting aristocracy.

Object	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	6.1	6.2	7	Total
brooch			1				4	1	2	8
beads						1	2	1	2	6
ear ring								1		1
bracelet								1		1
buckle		3	1	8	2	4	11	33	48	110
buckleplate	1		1	1	2		4	2	2	13
strap end			1	1		3	1	3	6	15
strap mount		1	1	1		3	10	5	8	29
strap loop					1	1			2	4
pins	1	1	2	6	3	3	57	392	189	654
lace tag					2		16	74	44	136
clasps								6	12	18
button		1				1	2	9	9	22
braid trimming								1		1
pattens								1	4	5
shoe iron								3	1	4
Purse frame							1			1
tweezers				1					1	2
comb							2	3	7	12
Total	2	6	7	18	10	16	110	536	337	1047

50.08 Table of occurrences of personal adornment and toiletry by phase

Beaded necklaces do not appear to have been favoured as a means of personal adornment throughout much of the medieval period and this is reflected in their infrequent appearance in the medieval deposits at La Grava. The wearing of rosaries, however, was fashionable and it is likely that three of the beads recovered, from deposits of phases 5.6 to 6.2 [48.01/424-426], were originally components of rosaries.

Strap fittings are equally infrequent in the 12th century at La Grava and certainly excavated parallels for the three buckles recovered from deposits of phase 5.2 suggest that, if not intrusive, these were deposited at the very end of this phase. The one item which appears to sit happily within the 12th century is the rather fine serpent-headed bone pin [48.02/435], phase 5.1; see [3]. The recovery rate of strap fittings in the later medieval period not only reflects the general increase in diversity of forms available and the prevailing fashions of the time, but also perhaps the improved economic fortune of the manor as a

whole. Certainly two of the more ornate strap-ends [48.07/515–516] tend to suggest an element of wealth or fashionability in the late 14th/early 15th century.

Finds of pins and lace-tags increase markedly in the last two phases of La Grava's occupation. This is due to both the prevailing clothing fashion which, in the 16th and 17th centuries necessitated numerous laces to attach the separate sleeves and bodices, and pins to secure the ruffs, pleats, and folded head-dresses, but also mass-production processes utilised in their manufacture. Although buttons were in everyday use from as early as the 13th century (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 272), the majority of the examples at La Grava are either of long-lived, or post-medieval, forms and the increasing number of these from late deposits perhaps mirrors the advent of more rigid tailoring.

Category 13 Toilet, surgical, or pharmaceutical instruments 48.08/535–539

Although it is evident from toiletry assemblages from London and Norwich that a diverse range of implements were in use from the 13th century onwards, testifying that the shape of eyebrows, hairline, and beard, and cleanliness of nails, teeth, and ears were of concern during the medieval period (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 377; Margeson 1993, 63–4), this diversity is absent at La Grava. Only two forms of toiletry items, tweezers and combs, were present, and certainly the former in very small quantities. This seeming disinterest in cosmetic appearance may be understandable with regard to the 13th century when the site functioned as a priory, with only brethren resident. However, it is surprising in the context of the 14th century given its status as a royal manor, with documented visits from the king. These visits were perhaps not all that frequent or lengthy which may account for the sparsity of toiletry items recovered.

Combs, although more plentiful in the archaeological record, are restricted to deposits of phase 6.1 to Period 7, with none occurring in the previous six phases. Considering that the styling of hair was a medieval preoccupation, it is surprising to find no combs attributable to this phase. It may be noteworthy that all the combs of mid-15th century and later date recovered from La Grava were of bone or ivory. Pritchard has commented on the relative paucity of combs from deposits of medieval date in London and convincingly argues that wood was the favoured material for manufacture of combs (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 366). If this was a prevailing preference throughout England during these years then, given the conditions of preservation at La Grava, it is unsurprising that no combs of medieval date survive.

The dispersed nature of the find spots for personal adornment and toiletry items in phases 5.1–5.6 appears to reflect occasional accidental loss in the course of carrying out daily activities. Unsurprisingly find spots mirror the early development, expansion, and finally contraction of the manor's buildings. Find spots in phase 5.2 are limited to extant structures, all of domestic or service nature in the inner complex. In phases 5.3–5.5 find spots remain dispersed but over an increasing area, reflecting expansion of the manor, with items recovered not only from domestic and service buildings, but also gateways and agricultural/stabling structures. The latter type of building produced in the main buckles and strap fittings which could have been in use on spurs and harness. In phase 5.6 a generally dispersed pattern continues, but with a slight focus in S17, S19, and S27 in the inner complex. Phase 6.1 witnessed concentrations of find spots within the inner complex, largely in buildings of a domestic/service nature. A limited number of items do originate from the outer,

agricultural structures in this phase, but as most of these buildings are disused by this time, they are likely to reflect the pattern of loss from the preceding phase. In phase 6.2 and Period 7 find spots are overwhelmingly concentrated in the areas of S16 and adjacent, but now disused, S63. This not only reflects that S16 is the only structure which remained in use in phase 6.2, but indicates it may have retained a domicillary role in this phase.

Category 14 Religious beliefs

49.01/541-543

Ten objects, excluding building fabric remains, can be associated with religious practices [49.01/541-543; 50.09]. Despite the majority deriving from deposits postdating the period when La Grava had a religious role, several of these items may originally have been connected with the 13th-century priory. The papal bull seals [44.05/309-310] although more related to administrative matters rather than purely religious, do give added weight to the documentary evidence for the 13th-century priory. The probable crucifix plaque [49.01/542], possibly of late 12th/13th-century Limoges manufacture, directly attests to worship, whether by the brethren or later residents, while the chalice [49.01/543] could conceivably have accompanied one of the interred priors. Hanging lamps, such as [41.01/109], primarily provided lighting, but it has been noted that they are particularly common finds at religious sites. Although the amber bead [48.01/426] cannot definitively be ascribed a religious function, likely uses include part of a casket/reliquary or ornate rosary.

Period	Hanging lamp	Papal bull seal	Crucifix plaque	rosary (?) beads	scourge	ampulla	chalice	Total
5.3	1	1						2
5.4								0
5.5								0
5.6			1	1				2
6.1		1		1				2
6.2				1	1	1		3
7							1	1
Total	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	10

50.09 Table of occurrence of religion-related artefacts by phase

The smaller rosary beads [48.01/424-425] and ampulla [49.01/540], although attesting to personal religious belief, are perhaps more reflective of the conventional piety of the later medieval period. Rosaries, in addition to being an aid to prayer, had become a fashionable accessory by this time. Pilgrimages, instead of being a purely religious or penitential exercise had become, by the 14th century as Spencer describes, 'something of a social occasion that combined an element of tourism with religion' (1990, 7).

The small quantity of artefacts related to religious practices and beliefs might at first glance be surprising on the site of a priory. La Grava, however, was first and foremost the focus of a farming enterprise. Documentary evidence indicates it functioned as a priory in the main only during the 13th century, never becoming, nor ever intended to become, a fully developed monastic establishment but remaining a farm or grange complex with a chapel and living quarters for the brethren. In this context it could be argued that a sumptuous display of religious furnishings might not be expected. Additionally, the majority of ecclesiastical objects, for example crosses, reliquaries, and church plate, were portable and frequently costly items. They would therefore have attracted a greater degree of care. This combined with the fact that the chapel sustained a

change of use in the last two phases of the site's occupation may go some way towards explaining the limited quantities of portable religious-oriented objects. Evidence did survive however for a well-appointed chapel, including painted plaster walls, grisaille window glass, and good quality masonry.

Find spots were restricted to the main complex of buildings. S16, which served as a chapel in phases 5.3–5.5, yielded a hanging lamp, the possible reliquary bead, and a single rosary bead, while the crucifix plaque derived from deposits associated with adjacent S17. S19 also produced a slight concentration consisting of a papal bull seal, a rosary bead, and the scourge.

Conclusions

The site of La Grava has a lengthy, albeit interrupted history of occupation spanning the earlier prehistoric to post-medieval periods. The evidence for Roman activity is limited and residual in nature and while it may indicate activity in the vicinity, it may also be attributable to the Saxon propensity to collect such items as amulets (White 1990, 126). Although the ceramic and structural evidence indicate *in situ* Saxon occupation, the majority of the non-ceramic artefacts dating to this period were redeposited.

It appears, purely on the basis of the non-ceramic artefactual evidence, that little activity occurred in the mid- to late 11th to early 12th centuries (phases 4.1–4.3), the assemblage consisting of six timber nails (five incomplete), a single copper-alloy tack and an intrusive late medieval shoeing nail. Evidence for occupation continues to be limited in the early to late 12th century (phase 5.1) and, removing residual elements, comprises a padlock bolt, whetstone, fishing weight, bone pin, buckle plate, fragments of iron and lead, lead offcuts, bar iron, and quantities of industrial debris, including iron smithing and lead waste. This paucity of evidence may be indicative of the expense of metalwork, although more worked bone, for example combs and dress pins, might be expected in deposits of early to mid-12th century date. Although of restricted range the objects hint at the existence of a building and a limited amount of craft activity. The limited metalworking, iron and lead, may relate to construction activity on the site, perhaps producing building fittings and lead caulking. As previously mentioned the Extent of 1155 does indicate the run down state of the Royal Manor of Leighton, and if the manor was located at the present site, this may go some way towards explaining this paucity. Subsequent intensive and lengthy occupation may also have removed some of the evidence for this earlier activity.

The situation alters in phase 5.2, when evidence, although still not plentiful, exists for structures, in the form of hinges and a key, horticulture, and crafts, for example weaving, alongside personal accessories such as buckles. The activity appears to be confined to the central complex. Quantities of finds increase marginally in phase 5.3 and indicate a similar range of activities being carried out but over a greater extent of the site. Additionally evidence for the presence of horses exists and perhaps a suggestion of household accounting is indicated by the find of an Anglo-Gallic jetton. La Grava's religious role is corroborated by the papal bull seal.

An increase in the quantity of discarded objects characterises phases 5.4–5.6, and may therefore indicate the improving economic fortunes of the site's inhabitants. Status indicators, such as weaponry and the stabling of horses, have an increased presence within the artefact record. Higher-quality personal accessories, such as the St Christopher strap-end, exist along with evidence of household furnishings and imported items, such as Purbeck marble mortars. Commerce is indicated by greater numbers of jettons, coinage, and a French

coin weight. Without documentary evidence La Grava's royal connections could not be argued with certainty. The assemblage for the 14th century however, does indicate a level of wealth, and visits of royal personages could be argued in relation to the heraldic harness pendant and Limoges candlestick. Still present in the record, however, is evidence of domestic crafts, such as sewing and perhaps weaving, and horticulture and/or agriculture. Metalworking does not seem to have been undertaken to any degree during these phases.

The admixture of medieval and post-medieval assemblages is a feature of later phases probably due to the shallow nature of deposits and the dismantling and robbing of disused structures. The marked concentration of late/post-medieval assemblage within and adjacent to S16 and S63 mirrors the contraction in settlement size during the last phases of occupation of the excavated area. The comparatively large size of this transitional assemblage, 55% of the total, reflects a combination of factors, including increasing availability and affordability of goods, such as iron and window glass, mass production of standardised items such as pins and lace-tags, and greater durability of soda, as opposed to potash, glass. This increase in the frequency of occurrence of finds is perhaps more reflective of a generally higher standard of living during this period, and cheaper production methods, rather than increased personal wealth of the inhabitants. Although documentary evidence suggests that the manor house is relocated in the late 16th century to an adjacent, but unexcavated field, the artefactual evidence indicates continued use of S16, for both domestic and perhaps agricultural purposes, at least into the mid-17th century. The absence of subsequent occupation of the site, and its later use as pasture, ensured the preservation of the final deposition pattern.