

J. E. Mann, *Early Medieval Finds from Flaxengate*. The Archaeology of Lincoln 14/1. Council for British Archaeology, London 1982. 68 pages, 47 figures.

The author catalogues in a workmanlike and clear fashion the objects of antler, bone, stone, horn, ivory, amber and jet from a sequence of 9th–12th century timber buildings excavated by the Lincoln Archaeological Trust at Flaxengate. It cannot really be judged except as part of the series which together make up the total report on the site. Of the categories dealt with, 430 objects are catalogued and a high proportion of them illustrated with line drawings. The volume is noteworthy for its discussion of the objects of bone and antler – especially combs and other more enigmatic objects, including offcuts, which are part of the bread-and-butter of excavating in early medieval urban sites in northern and north-western Europe. A succinct account of the whetstones includes figures, period by period, of imported Norwegian rag examples compared with those of native derivation and unprovenanced phyllite.

The author is conscious at all times of the difficulty of drawing general conclusions about the organisation and location of craft and industrial activity in the town as a whole from the evidence of one site. She raises the interesting possibility (p. 45) that comb-makers may only have been intermittently resident at Flaxengate – they may have been itinerants. The limitations of the volume, however, make following all the argument difficult – pottery, so important for identifying trade connections, is not discussed here neither is the metalworking stated to be so important on site. The reader should refer to the other reports in the series of which this is a worthy volume.

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