

Textile

Elisabeth Crowfoot

WILTM.S.810011. SF 2043 (Lab. no. 826280.)

One fragment textile, length 1.3, width 0.9 cm, preserved by contact with fragment of copper alloy stud. Flax, warp S, weft probably Z-spun, 4-hole tablet-weave, 12 twists preserved, both edges broken away; weft count 8 on 5 mm, c.16 per cm; twists in chevrons (tablets threaded alternately left and right), no pattern or colour change visible. Probably part of a belt or strap.

Tablet-weave is the favourite band technique from Anglo-Saxon to late medieval times, used for belts, straps, seal-tags and ties for documents, and decorative braids sewn to garments and vestments. Different varieties of pattern can be produced by the way the tablets are threaded and turned, by the use of different colours in the warp, and by the addition of brocading or embroidery. The bands are extremely strong and durable, particularly those in the basic 4-hole technique used here.

Finds published from medieval sites include belt fragments from Felixstowe, Suffolk; Bramble Bottom, Sussex (13th century) (1); Northampton, Northolt Manor, Middlesex, and Oxford (14th century) (2); and seal-tags and bands from Scotland (12th-14th century) (3).

- 1 Crowfoot, E. "A medieval tablet woven braid from a buckle found at Felixstowe", Suffolk Inst. Archaeol. XXV, 2. (1951) 202-4.
Crowfoot, E. "A thirteenth century bronze buckle with attached braid from Bramble Bottom, near Eastbourne", Ant. Journ. XXXIV, 3, 4 (1954) 234-5.
 - 2 Crowfoot, E. in J.W.G. Hurst "The kitchen area of Northolt Manor, Middlesex" Med. Arch. V. (1961) 292.
Crowfoot, E. "Textiles" in B. Durham, "Archaeological Investigations in St. Aldates, Oxford", Oxoniana, XLII (1977) 154-5.
 - 3 Henshall, A.S. "Five tablet-woven seal tags", Archaeol. Journ. CXXI (1965) 154-162.
- Crowfoot, E. "Textiles" in J.H. Williams, St. Peter Street Northampton, Excavations 1973-1976 (1979) 306.