



## Warp Weighted Loom Weights By Baroness Kaleeb the Green Eyed

Warp weight loom weights are another simple tool, which is necessary in the weaving process. The weights hang suspended in pairs under the loom. The front and back pairs of weights should be about the same weight. Loom weights can be made from many different materials, rocks or soap stone, and fired or unfired clay have all been found.

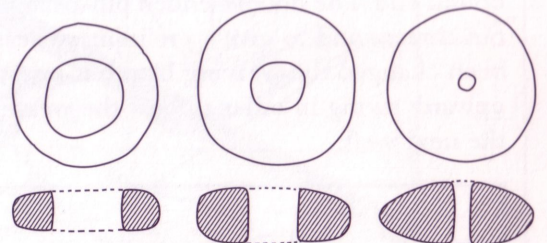
Some warp weighted loom weights have been found with stamps, leaves or other markings impressed in the clay. Archeologists have been unable to figure out what those markings represent. They have considered that the markings indicate weight, maker or ownership. But for every theory they put forth, an example that does not match the pattern can be found. I like the theory that loom weights were marked at trading centers, however the weights at Nettleton Top put a shadow of doubt on the theory as that “settlement is in the middle of nowhere.” (Leahy, p.71.) A lot of loom weights are crudely made or improperly fired, so why put a maker's mark on them. Loom weights are so simple to make that many were made at home. I have decorated my loom weights with a ring and dot motif, commonly found throughout the Anglo-Saxon era. Hopefully that will make the weights unique enough that another weaver will not pilfer them.

Loom weights are rarely found in later Saxon sites, indicating that a different loom was probably used. The warp weight loom is the only loom which uses weights of this style. Loom weights are made from whatever type of clay was local. I have done a similar practice. I dug around in my garage until I found a bag of clay given to me by a friend many years ago. I would have dug in my yard for clay, however it was frozen.

Loom weights from Grimstone End, (Rogers, p.30)

Archeologists have found a number of unfired clay weights. They look like blobs of non-matching clay on the floor of a building. Experiments have led archeologists to the conclusion that it is possible to weave with unfired loom weights, they tend to lose about 1/8 of their weight in the process of weaving. Weighing loom weights is a bit problematic, as most of the finds are incomplete. An estimate is made if more than 50% of a weight is found.

Loom weights come in three basic shapes. The first is annular “where the thickness of the ring is less than one-third of the diameter of the weight.” (Rogers, p.30.) This is the earliest style, by the 6th century the intermediate style had come into favor. It is “where the thickness of the ring is equal to or larger than the diameter of the hole.” (Rogers, p.30.) By the 8th century the bun shaped weight was popular. It has the smallest hole to diameter measurement. The weights found at Birka cover a wide range 150g– 1900g. The largest concentration of weights is in the 400g-800g range. The diameter of the weights is concentrated in the 80mm-180mm range with 12% decorated. The weights from Hedeby are more uniform in shape with the majority being in the 300g-600g range. The diameter of those weights are 90mm-120mm, with 30% being decorated. Archeologists use the theory that small weights indicate linen or delicate cloth was woven. They use a similar circular argument with needle sizes, where one proves the other. I do not have enough weaving experience to dispute these statements, however I would think that different numbers of warp threads could be attached to the loom weights to distribute weight more evenly, just as several weights could be tied together if a heavier weight was needed. I have made a few different



Warp weighted loom weight shapes; annular, intermediate and bun shaped (Rogers, p.30)

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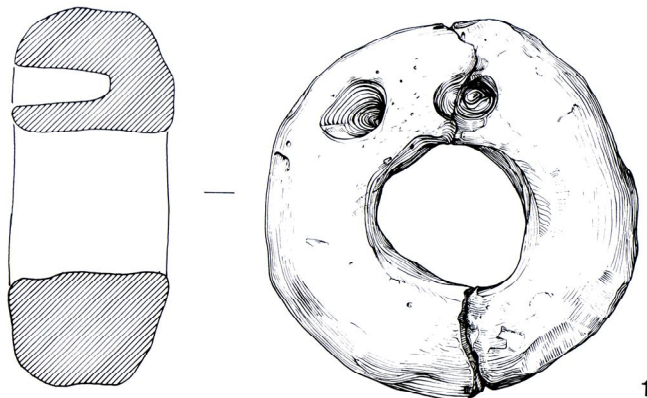
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[http://www.sheshen-eceni.co.uk/anglo\\_saxon.html](http://www.sheshen-eceni.co.uk/anglo_saxon.html) Website with pictures from West Stow

<http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/upload/application/pdf/f51d6748/Anna%20N%C3%B8rg%C3%A5rd.pdf>  
This is a very interesting web site about making some sail cloth on a warp weighted loom. It is done by a museum



Warp weighted loom weight found at Mucking (Hamerow, p. 219.)