

FINGER RING

Unique ID: NMS-0B5BB1

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

Silver circular disc, probably a bezel from a finger ring. The disc features a diademed head engraved in intaglio facing to the right. Encircling this is the retrograde and somewhat garbled legend ANTONI VIVAS IN DEO. Several of the letters are back-to-front but the meaning is relatively clear.

The formula VIVAS IN DEO is a Christian one, the translation of this inscription being 'Antonius, may you live in God'. The fact that the letters are retrograde and engraved in intaglio would have made the bezel suited for use as a signet.

Two strikingly similar silver bezels (both 10mm in diameter) with inscriptions including *Vivas* (but not *In Deo*) are known from Silchester, one with a male bust and the inscription IVL BELLATOR VIVAS, the other with a female bust and the inscription VIVAS. Both inscriptions were retrograde and thus, like this specimen, intended to be read in impression (Henig, M. *A Corpus of engraved gemstones from British sites*, BAR British Series 8 (2007), 186, nos. 786 & 787). A gold ring, most likely a betrothal gift, from Brancaster has two confronted busts with the legend VIVAS IN DEO; here the inscription is normal and so intended to be read on the metal (Henig, M. *A Corpus of engraved gemstones from British sites*, BAR British Series 8 (2007), 186-7, nos. 790).

This signet, given its overt Christian content probably belongs to the 4th or very early 5th century after Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312. Like the Brancaster ring, it constitutes evidence for Christianity in Late Roman Norfolk.

Inscription: ANTONI VIVAS IN DEO

Subsequent actions

Current location of find: Norfolk Museums Service

Subsequent action after recording: Acquired by museum after being declared Treasure

Treasure details

Treasure case tracking number: 2013T126

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN

Period from: ROMAN

Period to: ROMAN

Date from: Circa AD 312

Date to: Circa AD 410

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Weight: 0.46 g
Diameter: 11 mm

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Friday 1st February 2013 - Thursday 28th February 2013

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

SMR reference number: 30879
Other reference: JT032013
Treasure case number: 2013T126

Materials and construction

Primary material: Silver
Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [Eastern](#) (European Region)
County or Unitary authority: [Norfolk](#) (County)
District: [King's Lynn and West Norfolk](#) (District)
To be known as: Near Swaffham

Spatial coordinates

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector
Current location: Norfolk Museums Service