

AMPULLA

Unique ID: BH-E9FA6A

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Awaiting validation

An incomplete lead-alloy pilgrim's ampulla of Medieval date (c. AD 1300-1500). The body is circular with a short rectangular neck. The neck flares at the mouth and has a rounded rim that is thickened and mis-shapen. The mouth, once open, is compressed shut so that the hollow interior is not visible. One surviving sub-rectangular attachment loop projects on one side of the neck but is bent out of shape. The opposing handle that would have projected from the opposite side of the neck is missing, leaving just a scar where the arms attached.

The body of the ampulla is decorated in relief on the obverse with a crown defined by a triple-ribbed arc from which projects three finials with pointed central stems and rounded arches either side. The field below the arch is cross-hatched. The reverse of the body is decorated in relief with an oval field with a raised border. The centre of this features angled lines. At the centre is a plain lozenge-shaped field containing what is possibly the letter 'C'.

The surfaces of the object are generally very worn and abraded, with scuffs and scratches across all the surfaces. The metal has light yellowish-grey patination with several patches of light grey across the body.

The ampulla measures 44mm in length, 33mm in width and 29mm thick. It weighs 39.72 grams.

Ampullae were an important pilgrim souvenir known to have been in use from the late 12th century and were designed to contain a dose of thaumaturgic water, which would have been given to pilgrims at holy shrines and wells. The water would be taken as a cure to illness or disability, or worn as a talisman. The popularity of ampulla dwindled in the early 14th century, giving way to pilgrim badges, though it is believed that their use continued to the end of the 15th century.

Notes:

Recorded remotely with information and images provided by the finder.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL

Period from: MEDIEVAL

Period to: MEDIEVAL

Date from: Circa AD 1200

Date to: Circa AD 1500

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 44 mm

Width: 33 mm
Thickness: 29 mm
Weight: 39.72 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Saturday 3rd April 2021 - Saturday 3rd April 2021

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Materials and construction

Primary material: Lead Alloy
Manufacture method: Cast
Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [South East](#) (European Region)
County or Unitary authority: [Oxfordshire](#) (County)
District: [South Oxfordshire](#) (District)
Parish or ward: [Brightwell Baldwin](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SU6494
Four figure Latitude: 51.64116976
Four figure longitude: -1.07653409
1:25K map: SU6494
1:10K map: SU69SW
Grid reference source: From finder
Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector
General landuse: Cultivated land