FIGURINE

Unique ID: NCL-2C40A4

Object type certainty: Certain Workflow status: Published

A copper-alloy Roman figurine dating to the first to third centuries AD. The figurine is that of a naked Cupid in a flying pose. His features are well-rendered with eyes, nose and slightly-parted mouth clearly visible. Cupid's hair is shoulder length and hangs in six ringlets, with ribbed and grooved decoration indicating the direction of the individual strands. A distinctive topknot of hair, comprising a similiarly ribbed and grooved disc, surmounted by a spherical moulding, decorates his forehead. Around his neck is an arc of incised dots, perhaps representing a necklace of some sort. His right arm is outstretched upwards. The hand of the right arm is clenched into a fist, forming a circular slot in which remnants of lead solder remain. This indicates that originally the figurine held another object (perhaps a dove), now lost. The gaze of the Cupid is positioned so that it would have fixed on this lost object. The left arm is positioned downwards and the Cupid's palm is flat and outstretched. The figurine has small wings which are decorated with vertical and diagonal incised lines, representing feathers. The left leg is forward of the right leg suggesting movement. The left foot is missing. The figurine measures 77mm in length and from arm to arm measures approximately 70mm in width. The body has a maximum thickness of 13mm. The figurine weighs 85.4 grams.

The Cupid is similar to examples from Kirby Thore (Green 1978, 62), Corbridge (Green 1978, 58) and Moresby (Green 1978, 65) suggesting that this type of figurine was particularly popular on the northern frontier. Emma Durham notes in her survey of figurines from Roman Britain (Durham 2012, 4.4.1) that these examples form a group which 'differ somewhat from the slightly chubby, shorter and more common version of Cupid seen elsewhere and suggest the presence of a workshop located somewhere in the north. This might account for the higher numbers on military sites, although whether they were being produced to satisfy a demand or appear more often due to increased availability one cannot tell.'

Hiller (2002, 462-463) discusses some very similar examples from Heitersheim, Germany in an article on the type. She notes that they copy an Hellenistic type and were widely produced in Roman Gaul and elsewhere. They are often found in pairs, and frequently hold torches, but can hold other things.

Ref: Hiller, H. 2002. 'Römische Statuettenpaare fackeltragender Eroten in hellenistischer Tradition'. In: A. Giumia-Mair (ed.). *I bronzi antichi: produzione e tecnologia*. Montagnac: editions Monique mergoil, 462-477

Notes:

SF 4412. Seen 5.6.18

Find of note status

This has been noted as an interesting find by the recorder.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN Period from: ROMAN Period to: ROMAN Date from: AD 90 Date to: Circa AD 300

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1 Length: 77 mm Width: 70 mm Thickness: 13 mm Weight: 85.4 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Wednesday 1st January 1986 - Tuesday 1st January 2002

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: Box 17, Bag 4

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy Manufacture method: Cast Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: North East (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: Darlington (Unitary Authority)

District: <u>Darlington</u> (Unitary Authority) Parish or ward: <u>Piercebridge</u> (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: NZ2115

Four figure Latitude: 54.529849 Four figure longitude: -1.677018

1:25K map: NZ2115 1:10K map: NZ21NW Grid reference source: From finder

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Other chance find

Discovery circumstances: While diving in the River Tees

General landuse: Open fresh water Specific landuse: Running water

Green, M.J., 1978 Corpus of Small Cult Objects From The Military Areas of Roman Britain Oxford:

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