RING

Unique ID: LIN-54A031

Object type certainty: Certain Workflow status: Published

Cast copper alloy zoomorphic ring, perhaps a vessel or harness attachment.

The object has an oval hoop with a three-dimensional moulding of an eagle eating a fish cast integrally to the top.

The hoop measures 5.92mm wide by 2.67mm thick, and is roughly rectangular in cross-section, though each corner is slightly curved rather than angled. The external perimeter of the hoop measures 27.60mm by 23.32mm. The external face of the hoop is decorated with circa four transverse grooves at either side at the top, and a medial groove down the centre flanked on either side by a row of diagonal grooves that form a chevron. On the left hand side of the bird the diagonal grooves point downwards and continue in this format on the other side so that they point up towards the right wing of the bird on the right hand side. The internal face of the hoop is undecorated. The hoop has some wear at the base, particularly on the front edge, suggesting that it was fastened at this point perhaps with a strap, resulting in the excess wear in this area.

The eagle is shown in three dimension, and is quite large and heavy in comparison to the hoop. The bird is shown sitting on the top of the hoop with its wings folded. In plan the back of the bird is triangular and highly decorative. The wings are split down the centre by a pair of grooves containing five circles. The terminal of this groove is divided by an incised chevron which contains two and a half further circles. This terminal decoration defines the tail of the bird. Each wing is divided into five rectangular panels set diagonally defining the feathers and markings of the wings. The panels on the left wing are notably more cramped towards the tail end than they are on the right hand wing, presumably showing a blunder during the addition of the fine detail. Each panel is decorated with a row of punched chevrons that have a thicker left arm than right. There are three punched circles decorating the back of the neck at the angle created by the meeting of the wings.

The underside of the bird has a deep moulded groove at either side defining the underside of the wings. There are also two curved lines on the chest.

The birds neck is thick and short in keeping with the life-like representation of an eagle or osprey. There is a deep concave hole at either side of the head depicting the eyes. The depth of the hole suggests that the eyes may once have contained enamel. The neck of the bird is decorated with a row of incised lines although most of these have been worn away.

The head is roughly rectangular in cross-section and has a ridge to either side at the top that slightly overhands the eyes. The top of the ridges are decorated with circa four diagonal grooves. The top of the head is flat, trapezoid and plan and decorated with an incised perimeter on either side. There is a small concave dot at the back of the top of the head.

The eagle has a curved beak and his mouth is open and grasping the head of the fish that he holds in his talons. The feet of the bird are two moulded extensions that project from a two moulded collars on the underside. The talons are represented by deeply incised lines.

The tail of the fish is held by the eagles talons, and the head by its beak. The fish is oval in cross-section and in plan, and has a small fin facing outwards at the bottom. The gills and eyes are depicted by incised curves and circles respectively.

The object has a dark-green patina with patches of a reddish-brown surface. The object is quite worn and some of the fine detail is feint or missing. There is a small break across the hoop on the left hand side at the top.

The talons of the bird extend down towards the centre of the hoop such that it could not have been worn as a finger ring or as a mount on a pole or staff.

At the time of writing three other similar zoomorphic hoops were known to the author, from Edlington and Wispington Parish in Lincolnshire (LIN-BE7512), from Claxby-by-Alford in Lincolnshire (Ambrose, 1978, p83 pl II), and from Harkstead in Suffolk (SF8204). All three depict a bird sitting on the top of a large hoop, though in the case of the Claxby-by-Alford and Edlington with Wispington hoop of the bird was a sitting duck rather than an eagle.

The two duck-hoops depict the bird in a naturalistic manner and have deep sockets for the eyes, though in both cases the suspected settings are missing. The wings are shown by incised lines, yet the body position is such that the bird does not interfer with the hoop opening unlike the Eagle on the Gate Burton hoop. The Claxby-by-Alford hoop showed wear at the base, whereas the Edlington hoop shows distinctive wear on the upper left hand edge of the hoop as if it has been rubbing against something solid.

The degree of wear on the base of the hoop indicates that the object was strapped down onto something else, and that the wear is a result of the strap rubbing against the metal. The wear on the shoulder of the Edlington hoop is more difficult to explain, although again it was probably strapped down and rested next to another object at the shoulder.

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 Subperiod from: Early Period from: ROMAN Subperiod to: Late Period to: ROMAN Date from: Circa AD 43

Date to: Circa AD 410

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy Manufacture method: Cast

Spatial metadata

Region: East Midlands (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: Lincolnshire (County)

District: <u>West Lindsey</u> (District) To be known as: near Gate Burton

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: Centred on village (which isn't a parish) Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector General landuse: Cultivated land

Ambrose, T., 1978 A Celtic Duck-Ring from Claxby-by-Alford Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire

History and Archaeology,