

BOOK FITTING

Unique ID: SWYOR-D9A074

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

A gilded and enamelled medieval copper-alloy book clasp of Howsam type A.10.1, with Limoges-style enamelling dating it to c.1150-1300 AD. The clasp would have been attached to a strap on a book cover, and would have fitted over a peg on the opposite cover.

The object is sub-rectangular, tapering to a point at the closed end. Terminating the closed end is a narrow projection which is pierced from side to side. In the triangular area at this end of the plate is a hole, now worn into an oval shape. This triangular area is decorated with diagonal grooves which were originally gilded.

The main body of the plate is a square panel. It has a border of small squares delineated by grooves (ladder pattern) which contain gilding. The square panel has enamelled decoration; in the centre is a red dot, surrounded by a dark blue border, within a lozenge shape of light blue enamel. The edge of the lozenge is bare metal. The lozenge is within the square panel which also has a reserved bare metal border. The corners of the square panel are filled with a red dot in the centre of each edge of the lozenge, with a band of light blue enamel around, and then dark blue enamel.

The other end of the plate is a rectangular panel. Two dome-headed copper-alloy rivets attach the backplate behind this area. The front is decorated with longitudinal grooves running from the open end to a transverse band of ladder pattern which runs along the edge of the square panel; these grooves retain gilding. The end of the front plate is broken and probably continued further. The backplate is a plain sheet of copper alloy. It is also as big as the rectangular area of the front plate and seems to be complete. There are traces of gilding on the back of the front plate. The bare metal has a light green patina.

The fine quality of this piece is directly comparable to a number of Limoges-style enamelled pieces which are often associated with religious artefacts: parts of processional crosses, reliquaries, crucifixes and chalices. It is highly likely that this clasp was from a religious book, either a bible, or more likely 'book of hours' or personal prayer book. Another similar Limoges-style book clasp can be seen at HESH-7ACEC5; another Limoges mount, circular but with a similar decorative scheme, is SWYOR-515DF1. They were probably made in Limoges, in the late 12th or 13th century.

A very similar example was recovered from Fountains Abbey, which is believed to be 12th century in date. It, and this example, are illustrated in Howsam (2016, 82-83, fig. 2-31 (this object)).

Find of note status

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

Class: clasp **Sub class:** Howsam type A.10

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL

Period from: MEDIEVAL

Period to: MEDIEVAL

Date from: Circa AD 1150

Date to: Circa AD 1300

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 33.33 mm

Width: 16.5 mm

Thickness: 4.23 mm

Weight: 4.9 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Saturday 9th October 2010

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: PAS form number 1278

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy

Completeness: Incomplete

Surface Treatment: Multiple

Spatial metadata

Region: [Yorkshire and the Humber](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [York](#) (Unitary Authority)

District: [York](#) (Unitary Authority)

Parish or ward: [Fulford](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SE6147

Four figure Latitude: 53.915565

Four figure longitude: -1.072786

1:25K map: SE6147

1:10K map: SE64NW

Grid reference source: From a paper map

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

General landuse: Cultivated land

Howsam, C.L., 2016 [*Book Fastenings and Furnishings: An archaeology of late Medieval books*](#)
Sheffield: Unpublished PhD Thesis 82-83 , 2-31

finds.org.uk