AMPULLA

Unique ID: LVPL-C015E2

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Awaiting validation

Cast lead ampulla dating to the Medieval period, (1100-1500). The bowl is semi-circular and the neck is rectangular in cross-section. The mouth of the object is closed but has been damaged. The handles which would have connected the neck of the object to the body have broken away with just a small protrusion remaining on one side. One surface of the ampulla is decorated with a cross-hatch design above which is a worn crown. Some possible cross hatching is visible on the opposite face however the design is too worn to identify. Above the worn cross-hatching on one side is a large oval hole where some of the neck is missing. It has a light white patina.

Brian Spencer, formerly Senior Keeper at the Museum of London, who made a life-time study of ampullae, has written: 'Ampullae or miniature phials were an important kind of souvenir. Generally flask-shaped, but with a narrow, flattish section, they were designed to contain a dose of the thaumaturgic water that was dispensed to pilgrims at many shrines and holy wells. Ampullae were made of tin or lead or tin-lead alloy and were provided with a pair of handles or loops so that they could be suspended from a cord or chain around the wearer's neck. Coming into use in the last quarter of the twelfth century, they were, in England, almost the only kind of pilgrim souvenir to be had during the thirteenth century. They were nevertheless available at a number of shrines, and thanks to returning pilgrims or to local entrepreneurs, probably featured as secondary relics in virtually every thirteenth-century English parish church.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL Date from: Circa AD 1150 Date to: Circa AD 1250

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 48.82 mm Width: 30.48 mm Thickness: 7.66 mm Weight: 30.3 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Tuesday 1st November 2011

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: North West (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: Cheshire East (Unitary Authority)

District: Cheshire East (Unitary Authority)

To be known as: Gawsworth

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: Generated from computer mapping software Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

Discovery circumstances: Found while metal detecting

General landuse: Cultivated land

Specific landuse: Character undetermined