

FIGURINE

Unique ID: NMS-8B3A40

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

Material: Garnet

Height: 20mm, width: 17mm, weight: 14.5g

Condition: Fracture on the dome of the head with several cracks and small chips. Chipped at the neck on the right. The short neck is polished with a shallow line engraved at the front. This was probably already cut down from a longer neck in Antiquity when it was most likely inserted into a bust made of another precious material.

Description: A miniature head of Socrates. He is shown bearded, with a bald pate and with long hair at the back. He has a round face with characteristically prominent cheekbones and brow, and with a short stubby nose. These features appear already in the earliest depictions of Socrates (type A and type B) in the 4th century BC (see P. Zanker, *Die Maske des Sokrates. Das Bild des Intellektuellen in der antiken Kunst* (Munich 1995); I. Scheibler, *Rezeptionsphasen des jüngeren Sokratesporträts in der Kaiserzeit*, *JdI* 119 (2004) 179-258; I. Scheibler, *Zum ältesten Bildnis des Sokrates*, *MüJb* 40 (1989) 7-33).

This version of Socrates, however, is more loosely based on the two types - composite characteristics are the commonest form of the depiction in Roman times (see also J. Lang, *Mit Wissen geschmückt? Überlegungen zur bildlichen Rezeption griechischer Dichter und Denker in der römischen Lebenswelt am Beispiel kleinformatiger Bildwerke* (Cologne, forthcoming 2012) chapter 2.2.2). The shape of the head is rounder, three lines are incised on the forehead. The ears are not covered by the long sinuous hair at the back. The carefully engraved curly beard comes to a point under the chin and on both sides of the face and the ends of the beard hair curl into little loops. The sideburns are short with only a small wave and the upper lip is obscured under the short, almost straight moustache. The lower lip is turned slightly down at the ends and shows the mouth slightly open. The upper lids are arched high and the irises are drilled at the top of the eye.

Portraits of philosophers were a popular subject on engraved gems (intaglios and cameos) made from precious and semi-precious stones (see also C. Wagner and J. Boardman *A Collection of Classical and Eastern Intaglios, Rings and Cameos* (Oxford, 2003) 96).

Date: 1st century BC -1st century AD.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Undergoing further examination at a museum

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN

Period from: ROMAN

Period to: ROMAN
Date from: Circa 100 BC
Date to: Circa AD 100

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1
Height: 20 mm
Width: 17 mm
Weight: 14.5 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Thursday 1st January 1970 - Wednesday 30th December 1970

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

SMR reference number: 57873

Materials and construction

Primary material: Gem
Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [Eastern](#) (European Region)
County or Unitary authority: [Cambridgeshire](#) (County)
District: [Huntingdonshire](#) (District)
To be known as: Brampton

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: Centred on parish
Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Wagner, C. and Boardman, J., 2003 [A Collection of Classical and Eastern Intaglios, Rings and Cameos](#) Oxford: Archaeopress 96