LUNULA

Unique ID: DUR-A24C08

Object type certainty: Certain Workflow status: Published

The lunula is in two parts and nearly complete, only missing one of the circular terminals. The object is made of gold and so the precious metal content is more than 10%.

The lunula is semi-circular in plan although both parts have been folded. There is one part which does not have a terminal and it is this section which is less folded making the semi-circular shape more obvious. The widest section of the lunula is where the two pieces have broken apart and then the object tapers towards the terminals. The section which still has a circular terminal is more severely folded and there is a break in the object from the inner edge. The two sides are folded underneath themselves and there is also a folding which creates an acute angle. The lunula then flattens before turning so that the back of the terminal faces forward.

There is a border of five lines which run along the inner and outer edges of the object. From the inner most line there are a series of inwardly radiating lines which create small triangles on the border. As the object tapers towards the terminals there is more detailing which runs across the width of the object. The geometric design is maintained is lateral linear incisions interspersed with near perpendicular lines which create small triangles.

Finds of Bronze Age lunulae are very rare from Britain although they are a slightly more common find in Ireland. Examples from Britain are known from the West of the country, there are three in the National Museum of Scotland (X.FE.1, X.FE.3 and X.FE.4) which are from Western Scotland and one (X.FE.2) which was found in Northern Scotland. These lunulae are similar to this example in their decoration although the lunula from Morayshire (X.FE.2) has more rectangular terminals. There are also several Irish examples in the British Museum such as the Blessington lunula (WG.31) which again show the rounded terminals and the geometric incised decoration.

There is a lunula terminal recorded on the PAS database which is now in the Tullie House Museum in Carlisle (LANCUM-449151). This example has a more rectangular terminal similar to the example in the National Museum of Scotland and again fits the more western distribution of objects of this type. The findspot of the lunula from East Yorkshire is extremely unusual.

Taylor (1970) has created three classes of lunula and this example is likely to be the provincial type similar to one from Wales in the British Museum (1869,0619.1). The provincial type of lunula is made of slightly thicker foil and is narrower than the classical type of which the Blessington lunula is an example.

Curatorial Report for 2012 T811 by Gillian Varndell., British Museum

Description

The greater part of a lunula in two pieces. The more complete (a) has a small, oval terminal which is missing from the other piece (b). The two portions are very crumpled and folded and it is difficult to tell whether any of the central part is missing.

(a): the oval terminal has a slender stem; this is the more damaged portion of the lunula being both

crumpled and folded; it is also twisted at the horn tip. Weight: 40.39g.

(b): is less distorted and has a maximum surviving width of c 58mm. The thickness at the edge is c 0.2mm and averages at c 0.55mm centrally. Weight: 36.29g.

The total weight is 76.68g.

The horns are decorated, each bearing a panel of alternate plain and decorated zones of engraved geometric motifs. The edges of the whole are each outlined by five unevenly spaced engraved lines with a row of dentate decoration forming the inmost motif. The five lines reduce to three at the horn and to one at the horn tip.

The decoration of the horns is orientated across the width and comprises single rows of dentate motif ($^{\circ}$) alternating with multiple engraved lines (-) and plain zones (P) following this regime: $^{-^{\circ}}$ $^{-^{\circ}}$ $^{-^{\circ}}$ $^{-^{\circ}}$

Identification

Lunulae are flat gold crescentic ornaments with spatulate terminals. According to Needham (2000) they may largely overlap primary Bell Beaker goldwork, c 2400-2000BC.

In Taylor's classification of lunulae (Classical, Unaccomplished and Provincial; Taylor 1970), the Thwing example falls within the Provincial group in terms of width, thickness and decoration. Classical lunulae are found chiefly in Ireland with three from Cornwall and two attributed to Scotland (Eogan 1994); Unaccomplished lunulae are exclusively Irish finds, while Provincial lunulae have been found in the highland zones of Britain and the western area of the European continent. An occurrence in East Yorkshire is thus outside the expected distribution.

As the items are gold and datable to the Early Bronze Age they qualify as Treasure under the terms of the Treasure Act 1996.

References

Eogan, G. 1994. The Accomplished Art: gold and gold-working in Britain and Ireland during the Bronze Age. Oxford Monograph 42.

Needham, S. 2000. 'The Development of Embossed Goldwork in Bronze Age Europe', *Antiquaries Journal*, 80, 27-66.

Taylor, J. 1980. Bronze Age Goldwork of the British Isles. Cambridge University Press.

Gillian Varndell. 26.03.2013

Curator, Department of Prehistory and Europe

Notes:

This object is more than 300 years old and the precious metal content (in this case, gold) is more than 10% therefore this object qualifies as treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act.

Subsequent actions

Current location of find: British Museum

Subsequent action after recording: Acquired by museum after being declared Treasure

Treasure details

Treasure case tracking number: 2012T811

Chronology

Broad period: BRONZE AGE Period from: BRONZE AGE Period to: BRONZE AGE Date from: Circa 2400 BC Date to: Circa 2000 BC

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Sunday 28th October 2012

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Treasure case number: 2012T811

Materials and construction

Primary material: Gold Completeness: Complete

Spatial metadata

Region: Yorkshire and the Humber (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: <u>East Riding of Yorkshire</u> (Unitary Authority)

District: **East Riding of Yorkshire** (Unitary Authority)

Parish or ward: Thwing (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: TA0670

Four figure Latitude: 54.114957 Four figure longitude: -0.379907

1:25K map: TA0670 1:10K map: TA07SE Grid reference source: From a paper map Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector Current location: British Museum

Taylor, J.J., 1970 *Lunulae Reconsidered* London: Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society