

MOUNT

Unique ID: LEIC-0A4CB4

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

Early Medieval (Scandinavian) gilded copper-alloy object, 74mm high (top to bottom) and 8mm thick. The object consists of a rectangular base which has three protrusions emerging from its upper side. The two outer ones are in the form of a beast's head and neck. Each one is identical and has a long neck decorated with incised lines to form a mane with a solid incised border running along the lower edge and down around the rectangular base of the object. They have a raised rounded collar at their necks which lie just behind upward-pointing rounded ears. The ears are decorated with a three-sided interlace pattern (triskele); in front of this pattern lies a raised rounded eye. The beasts also have beard-like pointed protrusions emerging from their chins and upward-turning snouts with small circular nostrils. The heads are decorated on both sides and have an unusual rectangular recess running along the top of their heads. The central protrusion is sub-rectangular and reminiscent of a Scandinavian memorial stone. It has an upper trefoil shaped terminal which has a central rivet hole and the lower sub rectangular plate, which also has a centrally placed rivet hole near its base, has a semi-circular nick out of each of its sides near the base. The whole of this area is decorated with interlace contained within a solid incised border. Below this, in the centre of the object, is a stylised human head with large rounded eyes, large eyebrows and an exaggerated moustache. This design only appears on one side and it has a rivet hole under each side of the moustache. Below in the centre of the object is a large circular hole which has traces of iron corrosion all around it. There are two further rivets in the central upper section, one at the top and one near the bottom. The whole design is picked out in gilding and the undecorated parts are heavily gilded in places. The left head (as shown) is very heavily gilded around its chin, face and especially in the rectangular slot at the top of its head. This suggests the entire object was heavily gilded originally.

This object has been published in Geake (Medieval Archaeology vol 49, 2005, 335; fig. 4).

Notes:

Photos updated after object was conserved for display in 'Vikings in the East Midlands' at Nottingham University 2018.

There are no known parallels for this object, if anyone has an idea what it is please contact us!

A new possible interpretation has just been published by Dr Rena Maguire see here for more details.

<https://emidsvikings.ac.uk/blog/blazing-saddles-a-mysterious-viking-object-from-leicestershire-part-1/>

Find of note status

This is a find of note and has been designated: National importance

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

Subperiod from: Late

Period from: EARLY MEDIEVAL

Subperiod to: Late

Period to: EARLY MEDIEVAL

Ascribed Culture: Viking style

Date from: Circa AD 850

Date to: Circa AD 1050

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 74 mm

Thickness: 8 mm

Weight: 177 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Saturday 10th April 2004

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy

Secondary material: Gold

Manufacture method: Cast

Completeness: Uncertain

Spatial metadata

Region: [East Midlands](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [Leicestershire](#) (County)

District: [Blaby](#) (District)

Parish or ward: [Wigston Parva](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SP4690

Four figure Latitude: 52.50596318

Four figure longitude: -1.32371804

1:25K map: SP4690

1:10K map: SP49SE

Grid reference source: Generated from computer mapping software
Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

General landuse: Cultivated land

Specific landuse: Character undetermined

finds.org.uk