

FIGURINE

Unique ID: BERK-7F09EE

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

An incomplete cast copper alloy Roman figurine of Mercury. The figurine is very good condition with many of the facial features clear. Mercury is depicted standing with one foot slightly in front of the other. The head of the figurine has a moulded nose and small indentations for eyes. The mouth has suffered damaged but can be discerned. Hair is visible on the brow beneath a winged cap while hair also appears on either side of the head and on the top. The back of the head appears plain so would indicate the cap. On the body of the figurine the genitals are depicted but there are no other body features (such as chest muscles) defined. Mercury's right arm is bent and held in front of his body at chest height; the hand is held in a C-shape indicating that the figurine probably held a caduceus, a winged staff held by messengers and heralds. The left arm is bent at the elbow and the palm is held out flat in front of the waist. Mercury is often depicted holding a purse but no trace of an object remains. The left knee is slightly bent and left foot is behind the right; overall the figurine leans slightly backwards. On either side of each ankle is a small projection intended to be wings. The reverse of the figurine has defined buttocks but no other detail.

The figurine does not stand up on its own and there is no evidence for any supports or attachments. It is possible that the missing caduceus could have acted as a counter-balance. The figurine has a mid-green smooth patina and is in very good condition.

Representations of Mercury are known throughout the Empire; he was the messenger of Jupiter, and was also the patron of travellers and merchants. Other figurines of Mercury are known from England, such as Wickenby, Lincolnshire (LIN-3A2272), Urchfont, Wiltshire (WILT-564501), Lavenham, Suffolk (ESS-BC68F7) and the Isle of Wight (IOW-80A331).

This example probably dates from the first to second century AD.

Find of note status

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

Class: Mercury

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN

Period from: ROMAN

Period to: ROMAN

Date from: Circa AD 43

Date to: Circa AD 409

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1
Height: 100.8 mm
Width: 35.9 mm
Thickness: 12 mm
Weight: 111.1 g

Personal details

Found by: This information is restricted for your login.
Recorded by: Miss Anni Byard
Identified by: Miss Anni Byard

Other reference numbers

Other reference: OXPAS2017.282

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy
Manufacture method: Cast
Decoration style: Figurative
Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [South East](#) (European Region)
County or Unitary authority: [Oxfordshire](#) (County)
District: [South Oxfordshire](#) (District)
To be known as: Crowmarsh

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: From finder
Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector
General landuse: Cultivated land

Woodward, A. and Leach, P., 1993 [The Uley Shrines: excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9](#) London: English Heritage Archaeological Report no. 17