FINGER RING

Unique ID: SUR-3A55D1

Object type certainty: Certain
Workflow status: Published

A solid gold ring, weighing 7g, with a plain unadorned bezel. The hoop has a flattened plano-convex profile with pronounced ridged borders and measures 5.3mm wide at its narrow point and 10.6 around the bezel. The external diameter of the hoop is 20.1mm, the internal diameter is 17.1 and it varies in thickness from 1.3mm to 2.3mm. The unengraved oval bezel measures 10.4mm by 9.6mm and is set flush with the shoulders of the ring. At the rear of the bezel on either side at the widest point are small recesses measuring 2mm wide. These may have been fixings for a capsule or other mount.

An engraved inscription inside the band is picked out in black niello or other pigment and reads "tout ma vie" (French for "all my life"). The individual words are separated by small crosses. The shoulders of the ring are engraved with a letter T or Tau cross surrounded by a field of droplets. These were picked out in the same black pigment as survives on the inscription; the finder reported that some of this pigment was lost when he initially cleaned the ring although traces remain.

Notes:

On the basis of known comparanda, the decoration on the ring's shoulders can be interpreted as a Tau cross and the tears or blood of Christ. Jewellery depicting the tears or blood of Christ, and the Five Wounds of Christ, were popular motifs for the expression of piety in Late Medieval Europe.

This ring may have once had a mount or other detachable setting on the bezel providing a function as a mourning or reliquary ring. This may be suggested by the two recesses on either side of the bezel, the lack of engraving on the bezel and the devotional engravings and motto. An alternate suggestion for this lack of engraving is that the ring comprises a jeweller's blank for a signet ring, which had not been engraved at the time of loss.

For other examples of rings with similar engraved droplets on the shoulders see NARC-6CC178 (2012T711) and with similar motifs of tau crosses and droplets see SOM-C1BEF1 (2009 T416). The specific motto is known from one other gold medieval ring on the PAS database, ESS-E194C5 (2008T505).

The ring consists of over 10% precious metal and is over 300 years old at the time of finding and as such qualifies as potential Treasure under the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996.

Find of note status

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

Inscription: tout ma vie

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder after being disclaimed as Treasure

Treasure details

Treasure case tracking number: 2018T446

Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL
Period from: MEDIEVAL
Period to: POST MEDIEVAL
Date from: Circa AD 1450
Date to: Circa AD 1550

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1
Width: 10.6 mm
Thickness: 2.3 mm
Weight: 7 g
Diameter: 20.1 mm

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Sunday 10th June 2018

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Treasure case number: 2018T446

Materials and construction

Primary material: Gold
Completeness: Complete
Surface Treatment: Inlaid with niello

Spatial metadata

Region: South East (European Region)
County or Unitary authority: Hampshire (County)
District: New Forest (District)
Parish or ward: Ringwood (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SU1500

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Four figure Latitude: 50.79936945
Four figure longitude: -1.78852212
1:25K map: SU1500
1:10K map: SU10SE
Grid reference source: From finder
Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector
General landuse: Cultivated land

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