

# SPINDLE WHORL

**Unique ID:** WREX-55AF7A

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

An incomplete spindle whorl, made from a very worn and fragmentary medieval lead papal bulla of Pope Clement V (1305 to 1314).

The obverse bears the legend CLE / [MEN]S / [:PP] V within a beaded border. The reverse depicts the faces of St Peter and St Paul below the inscription SPASP[E] (SPA = Sanctus Paulus, SPE = Sanctus Petrus), all of which are surrounded by the remains of a beaded border. St. Paul is seen on the left looking right, with a long pointed beard and short grooved hair, St. Peter is now missing. A squashed hole is visible on the perimeter at 12 o'clock with a partial hole visible at 6 o'clock; these would have been for the attachment cord.

The object has clearly been re-used since it has a large circular hole (diameter 12.9mm) cut in the centre, suggesting it may have been re-used either as a spindle whorl or as a weight. Standley (2016, 285) notes three examples of papal bulla that have been used in this way. One of Pope Innocent VI (1317-1362) from Shropshire (Standley 2016, pg 288 Fig 8). One of the antipope John XXIII (1410-1415) from North Yorkshire and one from Dunkeld, Scotland of Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254).

The larger part of this object was recovered in 2018 and initially recorded on the PAS Database. In early August 2019, the smaller fragment of the same object was recovered from the same location, allowing a more complete photograph to be presented of the object.

**Measurements:** Diameter: 39.4mm; thickness: 6.5mm; internal diameter of central hole: 12.1mm; weight: 32.3g

## Notes:

Papal bullae were used as seals on official papal documents sent out from Rome (during the schism, Avignon) as a means of authentication. Tim Pestell has stated on other bulla records: "Papal bulls came as two basic types, according to the contents of the document: Tituli, or "Letters of Grace", essentially granted or confirmed rights, conferred benefices or promulgated statutes. They generally had their lead bullae attached with cords of silk. Mandamenta, or "Letters of Justice" were mandates that conveyed papal orders, prohibitions or injunctions, and had their bullae attached by hemp threads". They may have also had a secondary use as an amulet.

Pope Clement V is remembered for "suppressing the order of the Knights Templar and allowing the execution of many of its members, and as the Pope who moved the Curia from Rome to Avignon, ushering in the period known as the Avignon Papacy" (Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Clement\\_V](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Clement_V)).

**Class:** Clement V **Evidence of reuse:** Circular hole cut at the centre.

## Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

## Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL

Period from: MEDIEVAL

Period to: MEDIEVAL

Date from: Exactly AD 1305

Date to: Exactly AD 1314

## Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Thickness: 6.5 mm

Weight: 32.3 g

Diameter: 39.4 mm

## Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Monday 18th June 2018 - Saturday 8th June 2019

## Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

## Other reference numbers

Other reference: NWales PAS 170918/1 / 230311SD2

## Materials and construction

Primary material: Lead

Decoration style: Figurative

Completeness: Incomplete

## Spatial metadata

Region: [Wales](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [Flintshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

District: [Flintshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

To be known as: Mostyn

## Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: From finder

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

## Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

Discovery circumstances: Found while metal detecting.

Standley, E.R., 2016 [\*Spinning Yarns: The Archaeological Evidence for Hand Spinning and its Social Implications, c ad 1200-1500\*](#) Leeds: Maney Publishing on behalf of The Society for Medieval Archaeology 288 , Fig 8

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