

SPATULA

Unique ID: SWYOR-7A17E5

Object type certainty: Probably

Workflow status: Published

A fragment of a probable Roman (AD 100 - 300) copper-alloy object, possibly a razor or wax spatula handle. The object is very worn and is incomplete but appears to be anthropomorphic and is probably a stylised bust of Minerva.

The sinuous object is very worn. It is broadly S shaped, bulbous in the middle, and projecting downwards at the end of the S. The bulbous area represents the head and helmet of Minerva. The top curve is divided into two strands, the outer one being thinner and a pointed oval in cross-section. The gap between the two is narrow, and has some casting flange remaining. The outer edge of the outer top curve is interesting because it has a rounded groove along its length, making the top of the letter S U-shaped in cross section. The top end of the S may be an abraded break. This curved element can be interpreted as the crest on Minerva's helmet, curving down to the back of her neck. The groove in the upper face is distinctive and can be paralleled on KENT-AE9C22.

At the bottom end of the S, a circle of different patination on the left face (Minerva's back) could indicate a fixing point. The base is probable an abraded break. The object is 38.5mm long, 16.8mm wide and 9.3mm thick. 12.6g. It has a patchy brown and dusty green patina, and is very worn.

The quality of the metal, the wear and the patination are all similar to those seen on other Iron Age or Roman objects from this area. The groove on the outer edge is an unusual feature and makes it probable that this object is a figurine of Minerva. An alternative but less convincing interpretation is that the object is similar to the profile of a cosmetic mortar, and this object is possibly the terminal of a mortar, but it does not match any of the shapes in Jackson 2010. Other possibilities are part of an Iron Age brooch or a linch pin terminal.

KENT-AE9C22 is a good parallel for a spatula handle of very similar shape. The discussion is useful. It says: "Over twenty examples of such figural spatula handles have been recorded on this database to date, many of these have been discussed by Worrell (2008, 356-357). Their style varies, as do those illustrated by Feugere (1985), attributable to different workshops copying the overall prototype. Feugere (2004,33) notes that the dating for these objects is a work in progress, though it is clear that each type was not necessarily used at the same time. The symbol of Minerva, Goddess of wisdom, is appropriate for such objects and thus more securely associate them with writing tools rather than other object types, such as a knife terminal. Feugere also notes that it is likely that a British workshop existed to cater to the demand in the province (2004. 33), which may explain the slightly more stylised look of many British examples."

Find of note status

This is a find of note and has been designated: Potential for inclusion in Britannia

Class: Feugère type A5

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN

Period from: ROMAN

Period to: ROMAN

Date from: Circa AD 100

Date to: Circa AD 300

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 38.5 mm

Width: 16.8 mm

Thickness: 9.3 mm

Weight: 12.6 g

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Wednesday 18th July 2018 - Wednesday 18th July 2018

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: PAS form number 3236

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy

Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [Yorkshire and the Humber](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [Wakefield](#) (Metropolitan District)

District: [Wakefield](#) (Metropolitan District)

Parish or ward: [Thorpe Audlin](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SE4716

Four figure Latitude: 53.63841451

Four figure longitude: -1.29062144

1:25K map: SE4716

1:10K map: SE41NE

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

finds.org.uk