# **AMPULLA**

Unique ID: MAS-D100029

Object type certainty: Certain Workflow status: Published

An incomplete, flask shaped ampulla made of lead dating to the late Medieval period, around AD 1350 to 1500. These objects are believed to have been used to transport holy liquid from pilgrim sites. The ampulla, found in the River Wear, has a rounded body that extends upwards into the neck and diverges outwards towards the top. One handle on the side of the neck is intact and the remains of a second handle is visible on the other side of the neck. The obverse side of the ampulla is rounded and there are no visible decorations remaining. A relief decoration of a small equal-armed cross within a circle is visible under raking light on the reverse, flat side of the body of the object. These are normally associated with Christian cross symbology.

#### **Notes:**

Holy water bottles made of lead were often brought from pilgrimage places as a souvenir. There is some suggestion that they were used in agricultural blessing ceremonies with the contents sprinkled on the ground during prayers and then the ampulla discarded, alternatively they were buried with their contents (Anderson 2010,182-203).

The object is being conserved/researched at Durham University as part of the <u>Durham River Wear Assemblage Project</u>

Class: Religion or Ritual Sub class: Religious or Ritual Container

#### **Subsequent actions**

Current location of find: Durham University

Subsequent action after recording: Submitted as wreck to the Receiver of Wreck

#### Chronology

Broad period: MEDIEVAL Period from: MEDIEVAL Period to: MEDIEVAL

#### **Dimensions and weight**

Quantity: 1 Length: 56 mm Width: 22 mm Weight: 64 q

### **Discovery dates**

Date(s) of discovery: Thursday 15th September 2016

#### Personal details

Found by: This information is restricted for your login.

#### Other reference numbers

Museum accession number: B.3399

#### **Materials and construction**

Primary material: Lead Alloy Completeness: Incomplete

## **Spatial metadata**

County or Unitary authority: <a href="County Durham">County Durham</a> (Unitary Authority)

## **Spatial coordinates**

4 Figure: NZ2742

Four figure Latitude: 54.77219974 Four figure longitude: -1.58182606

1:25K map: NZ2742 1:10K map: NZ24SE

Display four figure position on What3Words

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1 metre square.

# **Discovery metadata**

Method of discovery: Diving

Current location: Durham University

Anderson, W, 2010. Blessing the Fields? A Study of Late-medieval Ampullae from England and

Wales. Routledge Oxford: Medieval Archaeology, 182-203,