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 Durham River Wear Assemblage Project

Class: Religion or Ritual **Sub class:** Religous 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 g

Discovery dates

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

marinefinds.org.uk

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: County Durham (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 ,

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