

TREASURE ACT 1996
SILVER GILT RING FROM LAMPHEY COMMUNITY, PEMBROKESHIRE
[Treasure ref. no. 15.08]

A silver gilt finger ring was found at Lamphey Community, Pembrokeshire, by Mr P. Jenkins of Haverfordwest, while metal detecting on 12 October 2013. The Treasure receipt form was signed by the depositor on 28 April 2015 and the ring was deposited with the Department of History & Archaeology, National Museum Cardiff. The item has been retained by the Department on behalf of H. M. Coroner for Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire, for reporting.

Circumstances and context of discovery

The ring was found by Mr Jenkins on pasture land, at a depth of about 5" (13cm). A full grid reference for the findspot and name and address of finder and landowner are provided on the Treasure Receipt form for this item.

Description

Silver gilt fede ('faith') ring with external inscription on a plain central band, separated by a deep grooves from a 'beaded' border made up of parallel grooves. The bezel takes the form of a solid casting, raised and narrower than the band width of the ring.

The inscription reads: **jaspar : melchior : baltazar** : in a mixture of upper and lower case crude black letter script. Triple dots separate words, and the last name is separated from the bezel by an engraved meander with dots.

The inside of the hoop is plain.

Internal hoop diameter 17.9mm; external hoop diameter 22.5mm; band width 6.5mm; band thickness 2mm; weight 6.62g. The ring has not undergone any cleaning or conservation.

Metal Content

To judge from its colour and weight and visual comparison with other silver dress accessories in the collections of the Department of History & Archaeology, the alloy is well in excess of 10% silver.

Conclusions

The form of the ring is similar to that of some fourteenth/fifteenth-century gold decorative rings. The legend invokes the names of the magi, or Three Kings, supposed to be especially effective against falling sickness and fever. Fifteenth-century variations include *Jasper.melchior.baltasar, in god is ar* (Dalton 1912, no. 885), *IaspparBalta*/sar Melchior*

(ibid, no. 888). Another example was exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries in March 1864 (Proc Soc Ant 1864, 362).

The letter 'h', 'l' and 'e' forms are used commonly between the 1350s-1480s, the capital A with angled left stroke in the fourteenth century.

It is my opinion that as an object which has at least 10 per cent by weight precious metal, and which may be at least 300 years old, this ring is treasure under Section 1 (1) (a) of the Treasure Act 1996.

Tenby Museum wishes to acquire this item, if it is declared to be treasure.

References

Dalton, O. M. 1912, *Catalogue of the Finger Rings. Early Christian, Byzantine, Teutonic, Medieval and Later*, Franks Bequest, London.

Oman, C. C. 1912, *Catalogue of Rings. Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Metalwork* (London).

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