

## **TREASURE ACT 1996**

### **SILVER ANNULAR BROOCH FROM PONTYBEREM COMMUNITY, CARMARTHENSHIRE [Treasure ref. no. 21.04]**

#### ***Introduction***

In September 2020 Rafal Pacholec of Mława, Poland discovered a brooch in Pontyberem Community, Carmarthenshire. The brooch was reported to H. M Coroner for Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and deposited with Adam Gwilt, National Museum Cardiff on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 where is retained for reporting by the Department of History & Archaeology.

#### ***Circumstances and context of discovery***

The brooch was found with the aid of a metal detector on land under pasture, at a depth of approximately 7 inches. Full details of the findspot (NGR) and addresses of finders and landowners are provided on the Treasure Receipt form for this object.

#### ***Description***

The reported object is a silver annular stirrup brooch. The circular frame is decorated with continuous transverse incised bands or ridges, present on both faces but more pronounced on one side and with some traces of black niello. The dagger-like pin is unrestricted and moves freely around the frame. The pin attaches to the frame with a wrap-around head decorated with two parallel grooves. A stirrup at the junction of the pin shaft and head has two corresponding arms, each tapering to a point at the tip. The stirrup is curved to mirror the internal diameter shape of the frame. The pin shaft is faceted longitudinally and lozenge-shaped in cross-section. Two facets on one side are decorated with faint opposing zig-zag pattern whilst the facets on the other side of the pin are plain.

#### ***Measurements***

Frame diameter 23.3 mm

Frame thickness: 1.7mm

Overall pin length: 26.2 mm

Maximum pin shaft thickness: 2.2 mm

Stirrup width: 4.4 mm

Weight: 3.8g

The object has not undergone any cleaning or conservation.

#### ***Metal Content***

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

#### ***Summary and conclusions***

Annular brooches, often of circular or ring form were popular between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The style and form of this brooch, with its circular frame, niello decoration and stirrured pin, is consistent with examples from Wales dated to the thirteenth- and fourteenth century, such as from Llanfaes, Anglesey (Redknap 1994, no.21), Crickhowell (ibid, no. 22)

and Abergavenny (ibid, no. 23). Other similar examples in silver, recorded as treasure finds include from Cardigan Community (TAR 2016, no. 15.35), Llanhennock Community, Monmouthshire (TAR 2016, no.16.31) and Penllyn Community, Vale of Glamorgan (Redknap, 2021). Silver brooches with less pronounced stirrups, but with similar niello decoration and zigzag patterning on the pin were found at Cilcain Community, Flintshire (TAR 2017, no 17.11) and Montgomery Community (TAR 2019, no. 19.21).

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

Carmarthenshire Museum Service is interested in acquiring this item.

### ***Bibliography***

Redknap, M. 1994 'Some medieval brooches, pendants and moulds from Wales: a short survey', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* CXLIII, 92-138.

Redknap, M. 2021. *Silver Brooch from Penllyn Community, Vale of Glamorgan* [Treasure Case 19.40].

TAR 2016, *Treasure Annual Report 2015* (British Museum, London).

TAR 2017, *Treasure Annual Report 2017* (British Museum, London)

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24<sup>th</sup> February 2022

T21.04

