

Small Finds Report on Pilgrim Souvenir
MEL/13 TP7 Context 2
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Medieval lead-alloy (pewter) pilgrim souvenir, brooch or badge, incomplete with two recent breaks along the bottom edge and several cracks, circular in form with openwork figures from the crucifixion extant in the centre. The surviving scene consists of the head, right arm, torso and legs with bent knees of the crucified Christ and one surviving vertical and arm of the cross. Above Christ's head on the left side of the cross there is a pellet surrounded by rays representing the sun; presumably the moon is missing from the other side of the cross. These were stock symbols for the sorrow of all creation at the crucifixion. To the left of Christ, attached to his arm and the rim of the souvenir, there remains a head, nimbus and part of a body, most likely of the Virgin Mary. Presumably the figure of St John is missing on the right of Christ (c.f. Spencer 1998: 168, nos.187a, 188, 189a). A less likely but alternative scene would be that of St Paul on the left and St Peter on the right (c.f. German example in Spencer 1998: 264, no.263a).

A border encircles the scene on the flattened edge of the rim consisting of two lines between which decoration is crisply cast: vegetal scrolls curl around the left-hand side, and on the right-hand side, starting at the top, an inscription reads +IE?S (the S is on its side), possibly the beginning of IESUS (Jesus). The rest of the inscription, if there is one, is obscured by encrusted soil.

Part of a vertical seam is visible on the reverse and the remains of an integral pin for attachment survives at the top, while two stubs of the integral clasp survives at the bottom. Just possibly the stubs at the bottom might have been a suspension ring to hold a bell (c.f. Spencer 1998: 176–8, nos. 197, 198a). The souvenir may have been associated with a shrine with a rood or perhaps even a True Cross relic (see discussion in Spencer 1998: 165–70), but there is no parallel in Spencer 1998 to point to its origin. Given the uncertainty over its associated shrine and the relatively high quality of its casting, this pilgrim souvenir is noted as being unusual and interesting. Dates to the 14th-15th century.

Outer diameter: 36 mm
Maximum length: 50 mm
Depth: 4 mm

Reference

Spencer, B. 1998. *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*. Medieval Finds from Excavations in London: 7. Museum of London. London: The Stationery Office.