

AN ELEVENTH CENTURY FLANGED MOUNT FROM CHALTON, HAMPSHIRE

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The mount which forms the subject of this note was found in 1993 on the edge of the village pond at Chalton by Mr Nigel Budden. The object belongs to an extensive series of copper alloy mounts found throughout England and, to an uncertain extent, on the near continent. Their largely Anglo-Scandinavian decoration points to a date range beginning in the first half of the eleventh century and perhaps extending up to, but not apparently beyond, the end of the century. The main characteristic of this class of mount is the prominent flange on the reverse of the lower side. A mount of this series was found during excavations in Winchester and retains a looping iron strap on the reverse, supported by the flange (Biddle *et al.* 1990, no. 4270). Using this and other evidence Robinson (1992) has proposed that such mounts were attached to the junction of stirrup and suspension strap partly to provide a protection against wear of the leather strap. The precise mechanism by which these objects were mounted remains unclear but most do retain the remains of a looping iron strap on the reverse or traces of its former presence.

These mounts have been divided into two distinct groups (Williams 1995) on the basis of both

form and decoration. The Chalton mount belongs to the more prolific Group A in which some fifteen or so basic types have been distinguished (Williams, forthcoming). The particular type to which the Chalton mount belongs is characterised by bearing a human face. All have a similar basic pentagonal shape with an apex loop for fixing.

At the time of writing sixteen examples of flanged mounts of this particular type have been recorded, scattered throughout England from Kent to Devon to Norfolk and all seem to be in private possession. A number of these mounts, in particular the East Anglian examples, are debased copies. The Chalton mount is of the finest quality and shares this distinction with an example from Deal, Kent. Two other, slightly less fine, examples come from St Cross, Winchester and Cricklade, Glos.

The Chalton mount has lost part of its apex loop and presently measures 30 mm wide by 33.5 mm high. On its reverse, just above the flange, survive traces of an iron strap. The form of the Chalton mount is typical of this type; the face has an open-eyed, staring aspect and the eyes are framed by areas of interlace ending in scrolls while the chin protrudes below the flange. To the right of the nose survives a small patch of niello with a sinuous inlay of silver wire. Punched lines for keying show that this inlay would originally have continued along the whole of the interlace, extending above the eyes and around the apex loop. Inlay, similarly positioned, can be seen on the Deal mount, on one unprovenanced example and possibly on a fourth, from Hants. In common with other types of Group A mounts the lower fixing holes penetrate either the flange (as in this case) or the face of the mount.

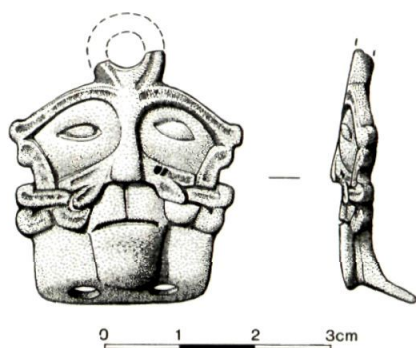


Fig. 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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