

Spur Fragment from Doune Castle

Tamlin Barton

Spur fragment. DE01. Context 11, stay pit.
Dimensions 93mm x 12mm x 7mm.

Corroded iron fragment of slender spur side, deeply curved rising to a figure-8 terminal. The fragment has a triangular shaped section and there are traces of non-ferrous plating, probably tin. A series of parallel vertical lines (decoration?) are just visible through corrosion on the neck end of the spur side.

Spurs with curved sides like the above example became increasingly popular after the 12th century as did figure-8/single loop terminals which replaced earlier riveted terminals. In form the fragment closely resembles a number of examples found in London dating from 1340 to 1460 (numbers 333, 335, 341, 348 and 351 in Ellis & Egan, 138-145). These spurs all have steep sides which would have plunged below the wearers ankles and figure-8 loop terminals. The spurs have rowels (spiked wheels) rather than pricks (single spikes), so it seems likely that this was also the form of the Doune Spur. The figure-8 loops would have been fixed to two leather straps, one running under the foot and another around the front connected by small hook attachments or directly to long buckles. Tinning iron spurs was common and helped reduce corrosion from damp, an obvious problem around the boot area.

Bibliography

- Ellis, B M A, Egan, G 1995 'Spurs and spur fittings' in Clark, J (ed) 1995 *The Medieval Horse And Its Equipment c.1150-c.1450*, 124-156. Medieval Finds from Excavations in London: 5. Boydell Press.
- Ellis, B M A 2002 *Prick Spurs 700-1700* The Finds Research Group AD700-1700: Datasheet 30.
- Holdsworth, P (ed) 1987 *Excavations in the Medieval Burgh of Perth 1979-1981*. Soc Ant Scot Mon 5. Edinburgh.



Spur, cleaned and conserved

