

## A Roman military harness pendant from Wellingborough

by

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A Roman harness pendant was found by the late Mr Bill Shovlin, a local metal-detector user, in November 1998 (Fig 1). It came from a field on the north-west outskirts of Wellingborough (NGR SP 865694), west of Wellingborough Grange, an area that has previously produced Roman sherds, though nothing of a military nature. The findspot is just 6km from the Roman town of Irchester where a first century military presence has long been suspected (Upex 2008, 35–36). The pendant was brought to Northampton Museum (E 2074), then passed to Roy Friendship-Taylor, who kindly provided a drawing, before it was returned to the finder in May 1999. Its present whereabouts is unknown.

The pendant is readily identifiable as being an item from Roman cavalry horse-harness (Bishop 1988). Bishop's type 1, the 'trifid pendant', is a common 1st century form, dating from the Claudian period onwards, with 28 examples listed from Great Britain. There are a range of variations and the Wellingborough find most closely resembles sub-type 1m with two others recorded, one from Yorkshire and the other from north-west Africa (Bishop, 1988, 96 and 142, fig 43; 146, table 6).

The cast copper-alloy pendant (53mm high by 43mm wide) was found complete and in good condition. The outer face was originally silvered and traces of this were identified (D E Friendship-Taylor *pers comm*). It is decorated with an incised motif, once niello filled, showing a stylised palmette set above a line of scrolls. Below, there is a tear-shaped perforation on either side which gives the two side arms a swag-like appearance. Each side arm has a small trifid terminal on the lower edge and the central arm continues down to a prominent acorn-like terminal. A pierced suspension lug for an attachment hinge is set above and at right angles to the body of the pendant.

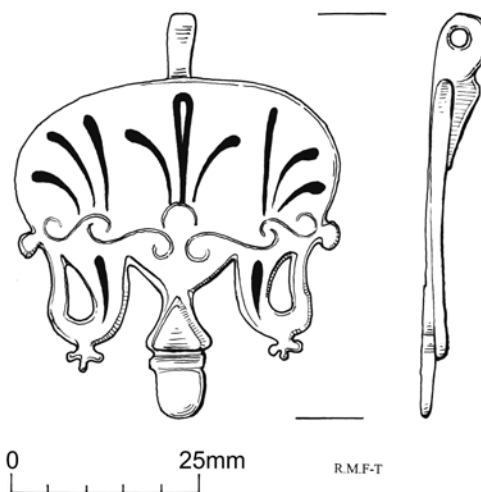


Fig 1: Roman military pendant from Wellingborough

### Bibliography

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