

# A MEDIEVAL BRIDLE-BOSS FROM WOODBOROUGH PARK FARM, WOODBOROUGH, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

by

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An elaborately-decorated bronze disc (Plate 1) was found fortuitously by Mr R. Robson (of Woodborough Park Farm) while harrowing the field immediately east of Fox Wood, centred at National Grid Reference SK617484 (no more precise location can be given as the disc was unearthed by the end of a tine). It is an ornamental boss from the bridle-bit of a horse-harness. It is domed by up to 11mm, and

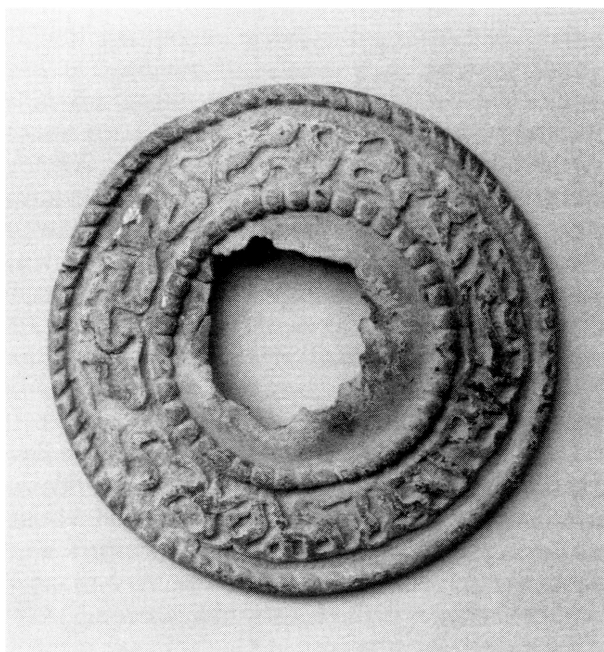


Plate 1. Woodborough Park Farm: bronze bridle-boss, 82mm in diameter overall.

although slightly buckled and cracked (perhaps largely due to the means of its discovery), the details of its cast decoration are well preserved. Concentric raised cables, each 3mm wide, one forming the perimeter, the second 48mm in diameter, flank a 14mm-wide zone occupied by a raised strand of interlace of varying complexity and of no obvious significance. The interlace appears debased, as though created by somebody to whom this form of decoration was a lost art, and its tortuous style, resembling wriggling worms, can best be termed 'vermicular'. Much of the central zone is missing, broken away crudely (in part at least by its recent unfortunate experience), but its surviving portion lacks decoration, is much thinner (less than 1mm) than the remainder (up to 4mm), and bears some iron-staining. The latter doubtless derives from the iron mouth-piece of the bit, the end of which would have been attached to the centre of the boss.

In general terms, this bridle-boss may be compared to examples from London, said to have embellished elaborate curb-bits that were introduced in the 15th century (Ward-Perkins 1940, 77-9, 85, Fig. 22).

At the time of writing (October 1997), the boss remains in the hands of the finder, who kindly allowed the writer to examine and photograph it, through the good offices of Mr C. Cox.

## REFERENCE

Ward-Perkins J.B., 1940. *Medieval Catalogue* (London Museum).