

Beneath our Feet: Metal detectorist finds, declared as Treasure Trove and allocated to Elgin Museum by the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR), January 2023

TT 225.22 (.1 - .13) An assemblage of finds from near Spynie Palace.

Spynie Palace was a major residence of the Bishops of Moray between the 13th and late 17th Centuries. These items from the hinterland of the Scheduled Monument area of the Palace have great significance in contributing to our understanding of the dates and nature of activity of life in the Palace and that of the surrounding habitants.

- 1. Lead weight** of sub-rectangular form with a single elongated piercing at one end and slightly flatted at the other. Probably a fishing net sinker or weight. Later Medieval or perhaps early Post Medieval date.
- 2. Copper alloy double-loop oval buckle frame**, with two detached fragments of the pin (not displayed). Mid-16th to mid-17th Century date.
- 3. Circular lead counter or weight** with brown patination. No decoration is visible. Difficult to date but probably Post Medieval. Possible uses: a trade weight or gaming counter. Weight: 7.27g
- 4. Billon Plack** (Eightpenny groat) of James VI, minted in Edinburgh. Stewartby Type 2. The obverse has a crowned shield bearing a lion rampant with the legend JACOB 6 D G R SCO (James VI, by the Grace of God, King of Scotland). The reverse has a crowned thistle and the legend OPPID(um) EDINB(urg)h) (The town of Edinburgh). Placks were made from an alloy of silver and copper called billon. This coin was minted between 1583 and 1590, prior to James VI's accession to the English throne in 1603.
- 5. Billon Plack** (Eightpenny groat) of James VI, minted in Edinburgh. Stewartby Type 3. The coin has lost a portion of its surface which corresponds with the crowns atop both the crest on the obverse and the thistle on the reverse. Though this may simply reflect damage, the sharp angles of the edges suggest the possibility that the section was removed deliberately with a blade or snips, and may therefore represent a purposeful removal of the symbol of kingship on a coin lacking a portrait.
- 6. Medieval silver cut halfpenny of Henry III** (1216-1272), dating to 1248 AD (class 3B). The coin is very worn, but the obverse preserves the lower portion of the portrait. The obverse legend reads '(HENRI)CUS [...] (RE)X' [...]. The reverse has a long cross and the surviving fragment of legend reads 'RIC[...] N [...]'. The moneyer was therefore Ricardus and the mint either London or Canterbury.

7. Lead shot, which has been well-cast and not fired. There is a small mark which is potentially where the casting sprue has been filed off. The size and weight suggest that was probably a pistol shot, 18th or 19th Century.

8. Copper alloy two-pence (turner) coin of either Charles I or Charles II. Very worn obverse has crown and the initials C R. The reverse bears a thistle and the legend 'NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSET' ('no-one provokes me with impunity').

9. Rim fragment from a copper alloy vessel with a riveted repair. Cast copper alloy vessels were commonly used for food preparation and serving and could also have been used in industrial processes. Wide date range between circa 1200 and 1700 AD is proposed.

10. A copper alloy cup-weight from a nested set of weights with a fleur-de-lys stamp on the inside of the base. The French 'trose ounce' was the accepted standard, and the fleur-de-lys stamped on this weight was a verification mark to show it met this standard. Weight: 3.24g, equivalent to 0.1 oz, and so possibly the smallest in a set of nested cup weights.

11. Cast copper alloy foot from a tripod vessel, perhaps a ewer, skilnet, pipkin or a small cauldron, perhaps intended to represent an animal hoof. Date range of circa 1400 - 1700 suggested. This size of this foot suggests a small originating vessel. Compare with People and Place case: A Fertile Land 18. Bronze ewer from Elgin High Street; another known from Urquhart Priory.

12. A very worn copper alloy Scottish sixpence, or 'bawbee' of Charles II, minted between 1677 and 1679. The reverse retains traces of the image of the crowned thistle, originally surrounded by the legend 'NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSET' ('nobody provokes me with impunity').

13. A cast copper alloy foot from a tripod vessel (see item .11). This example is larger and more robust, probably originating from a concordantly larger vessel. Same broad date range of circa 1400 -1700 AD proposed.

14. TT 226/22 A small, copper alloy seal matrix, found near Spynie Palace. Conical form with a circular die face. The handle finishes in a flat trefoil terminal with the upper loop broken. The central motif comprises an engraved thistle with two leaves inside an engraved, circular border but with no legend. Matrices of this form probably date to the 17th Century.

15. TT 227/22 Blade fragment of a Bronze Age narrow copper-alloy axe head or chisel, found near Archiestown, broken in antiquity. Perhaps used as a small chisel or wedge. Probably earlier-middle Bronze Age, 1600 -1100 BC.

Descriptions are taken from Treasure Trove Unit (TTU) reports.

These Treasure Trove objects were acquired with support from National Fund for Acquisitions (NFA). Many thanks to those metal detectorists who report their finds to TTU and to NFA for their funding support: <https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/our-services/national-fund-for-acquisitions/>