



THE
EXPERIENCE
OF WORSHIP
IN LATE MEDIEVAL
CATHEDRAL AND
PARISH CHURCH

INCENSE BOAT AND SPOON



Photo :Sally Harper

The St Teilo incense boat and spoon

Description

Circular boat with central hinge and matching spoon, both made from native hardwoods, gilded with gold foil, and varnished to finish. (The cost of forming these items from precious metal would have been prohibitive.) Incense containers were traditionally in the shape of a boat (hence *navettum* or *navicula*), and were an essential adjunct to the censer or thurible. The boat was used to store the crushed incense grains prior to loading them (often with the aid of a matching spoon) into the censer for burning.

Measurements

Boat: Height: 105mm; Diameter: 102mm;
Spoon: Length: 145mm; Diameter of bowl: 30mm.

Model

No single model was used, though images of several extant late medieval boats with hinged lids were examined, including Italian, Spanish and English examples, all made from precious metals (e.g. silver, copper-gilt). Among them is the silver Ramsey incense boat of c.1350 (Victoria and Albert Museum Museum M.269-1923), found with the Ramsey censer (M.268-1923) in the bed of Whittlesea Mere, Huntingdonshire.

Craftsperson

Phil Neal, Sculpture and Woodturning, Welbeck (<http://www.sculptor.co.in/>)

Bibliography

Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted: The Experience of Worship in Cathedral and Parish Church, ed. Sally Harper, Paul Barnwell and Magnus Williamson (forthcoming, 2014).

Note compiled by Sally Harper