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16th-century Locket found by 3-year old on Display at the British Museum

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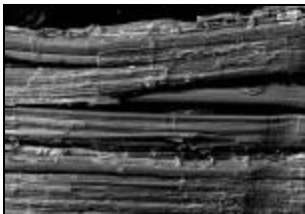


DISCOVERIES

16th-century Locket found by 3-year old on Display at the British Museum



On Sunday May 17th, 2009, three-year-old James Hyatt, his father and grandfather were exploring a field in Hockley, Essex. James went first, using his grandfather's metal detector. After five minutes of scanning, "It went beep, beep, beep. Then we dug into the mud. There was gold there," James, now four, said. "We didn't have a map. Only pirates use treasure maps," he stated. After digging down eight inches into the soil, they pulled out an engraved locket which



turned out to be reliquary from the early 1500s. The British Museum acquired it for £70,000 (\$110,000) and the sum was split between the Hyatt family and the owner of the land on which the locket was found.

Now on display in the British Museum's Medieval Europe gallery, the diamond-shaped pendant is engraved on the front with the image of a female saint, probably Saint Helena, mother of Constantine, holding the cross. On the reverse is a shower of blood droplets falling from four r four incisions and a cut heart, all symbolizing the five wounds of Christ. The back panel slides out along grooves cut into the sides. Inside was a small relic, a few, locally-grown flax fibers. Inscribed on three sides of the of the pendant are inscribed the names of the Three Wise Men — Iaspar (Caspar), Melcior (Melchior), Baltasar (Balthazar) — in a lovely Lombardic script, with the fourth side adorned with a floral tendril. The small pendant (1 x 1.3 inches) was once colored with enamel.



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