

CAT No. 76 – Silver Gilt Pommel

K98, K242, K291(x4), K301, K807, K831, K964, K1384, K1385, K1445, K1483, K1087(x2), K1623, K1629, K1631, K1640, K1641, K1642, K1649, K5014, K5065(x2)

Condition Report

Conservation Started: 18.09.2014

Conservation Finished: 19.09.2014, 18/08/2015

Conservator: Rachel Altpeter, Kayleigh Fuller

Time Taken: 11hrs, 6 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: L. re-joined body fragment 48mm (est. original L. 80mm); W. body 20.5mm; W. rivet-housing 17.5mm; H. 27mm; Th. edge 1.5mm

Weight before: n/a- see individual records

K98+K831+K964+K5065 (2.18g)

K807 (8.25g)

K1623+K1631+K1642+K1640+K1649+K1641+K1629 (26.97g)

Weight after: 37.40g

Digital photography:

Taken with a Canon EOS 1100D digital camera. Taken before and after. Details taken with Keyence VHX-1000 3D digital microscope.

Annotation on any of the storage bags or boxes:

The organic inner casing is stored separately from the actual object.

Description: Visual and microscopic examination using Meiji stereo microscope 7-75x magnification

The pommel cap consists of a silver and silver gilt shell which is decorated on the back, sides and top with knot pattern. On the back the middle triangular area is inlaid with niello, while on the front a gold plate is attached to the silver frame, decorated with gold filigree and a raised circle decoration in the centre, which is inlaid with garnets and blue glass. On the top centre a garnet is backed with a silver foil with a checkerboard pattern relief which on the inside was pressed directly into the organic core. Two round pin caps (K242 and K 1087a and b) are associated with the object but do not join directly.

From the inside some organic material has been recovered, one piece is the core of the top of the pommel cap (K291a) which is made of beeswax (science report on FTIR analysis by the British Museum; x-ray showed no differences in density which indicates one material only). This piece also shows the indentation of the foil backing for the top garnet (see figure 1). The other organic material is an unidentified piece from the inside of K242, where there are also still traces left attached to the metal.



Figure 1

Top of the organic core of the pommel cap showing the indentation of the backing foil

Associated Objects:

Possibly a suite with hilt-collar pair **188**, and hilt-guard pair **409**

Pre-Conservation Condition: Visual and microscopic examination using Meiji stereo microscope 7-75x magnification

The fragments had been largely cleaned, and K291c already consisted of two previously joined fragments. Apart from K291d all the fragments were individually labelled. K291a has probably been partially stabilised at some point with a transparent polymer.

The garnet on top and the one in the centre of the circular decoration are cracked and the backing foil of the top garnet is detached. Most of the fragments are distorted to some extent, particularly one side of K301 which is bent backwards and the wire filigree on K1384 and K1385. The silver is largely tarnished and also shows patches of green corrosion, mainly on K1385. The niello inlay is strongly corroded with crystalline material on the surface. In the side pieces there are cut out forms similar to the space for the top garnet, presumably for further garnet, glass or gold plate inlays which are now lost.



Figure 2

The pommel cap and associated organic material before reassembly (K291d not pictured)

Treatment: Carried out using a Meiji stereo microscope

Purpose: Study / Analysis

Aim: Total cleaning/ Re-assembly/ Exhibition

Materials: natural thorn, IMS and cotton wool swabs for cleaning, Paraloid B72 (ethyl methacrylate copolymer) 15% w/v in acetone for applying backing and 20% w/v in acetone for direct joins, Reemay Polyester netting 30gsm, black Plastazote (polyethylene foam), scalpel for cutting Plastazote.

The fragments were further cleaned using a natural thorn and IMS, apart from the inside of K242 where organic material was still attached and the inward oriented side of the loose backing foil.

The metal pieces were joined using 35% W/V Paraloid B72 in Acetone and as necessary, a backing of nylon tissue over the join on the inside.

A mount was made of black Plastazote on which the middle element, the pin caps and the loose backing foil sit in their relating position. On which side the pin caps belong is unknown, so their position was estimated.

10/08/2015- K. Fuller

Other fragments have been added to the assemblage so catalogue numbers

K291, K98, K301, K807, K831, K1384, K1385, K242, K1087, K1483, K1623, K1629, K1631, K1640, K1641, K1642, K1649, K5014, K5065+K964

The joined object was remounted and the additional fragments housed with the item on a custom made mount. All fragments are now displayed together.

Post-Conservation Condition/Findings:

The loose backing foil was found to be silver unlike other examined backing foils for garnets in the hoard which were gold or gilded. It can also be noted, that the garnet was not set against a structural metal support with the foil in between, but that the foil was directly in contact with the organic core.

The niello inlay is more strongly corroded than on other objects of the hoard as noted on the report on niello objects and has not been treated in any way during this reassembly so further analysis and examination can be carried out.

Key Features:

- Pommel cap
- Gold filigree
- Garnet
- Blue roman glass
- Niello inlay
- Silver backing foil for garnet
- Knot pattern

Samples:

See individual fragment records for further detail

Analysis: