

K1000 – Gold and Garnet Decorated Plate



Before treatment



After Treatment

Conservation started 16.9.10 (DM)

Conservation finished: 18.9.10

Time: 8.5 hrs

Conservators initials: DLM

Dimensions: (L) 25mm; (W) 30mm; (D) 7mm – bent and covered in soil before treatment.

Mass: 5.16g with soil before treatment

Weight after treatment: 4.54g

Number of garnets: 2, raised round cabochons

Catalogue number: 473

Description

Rectangular gold plate with two raised round cabochon stones, presumably garnets; embellished with elaborate filigree applied decoration. It is unknown at present if the curvature on the lower part is due to past accidental deformation or is part of the original shape of the object.

A double row of filigree runs around the borders of the entire perimeter of the object; the outer filigree line is finer than the inner one. Different sizes filigree are also applied on the surface of the main body, forming a densely patterned, fine grained background and larger grained one, of winding wires forming a relief pattern raised from the finer background. It has been suggested that these wires may be forming the image of a face, where the garnets are the eyes and the nose and grimacing mouth are suggested in the pattern of the thicker wire. A rivet hole has been exposed on the top right corner.

After cleaning four rivet holes (one at each corner) were revealed. The back of the object is undecorated, but the surface is uneven as the thin gold backing is bearing the impressions of the filigree wires on the front side.

Condition

Viewed under 7.5 magnification

Front and back are heavily soiled; it is unknown whether the object originally had a flat shape, but the current, post-excavation shape is one of a bent, half "S", with a bent top left corner. The lower edge seems to be fractured/torn, but the other three edges appear neat, with the exception of localised undulation.

At the back, the gold surface is slightly tarnished (red and green), but not damaged. The round cabochon stones seem well set within their raised walls, and a backing foil is visible behind them.

At present the object is stable and can be handled for the purpose of conservation. A new packaging consisting of a crystal box and plastazote was created today (DM).

Treatment

After discussion with D. Cane it was established that the gold and garnets should be cleaned to a level suitable for analysis; due to the particularly interesting decoration it was also decided to clean the entire surface of the object in order to reveal it.

This should be carried out using the tips of thorns and lightly damp cotton wool swabs. The thorns were used to dislodge the compact soil, a puffer and soft natural brushes were used to remove the loose soil and cotton swabs lightly moistened with IMS were used to finish the gold surface. The garnets were cleaned using a lightly moistened cotton swab with filtered water (pH neutral).

Tarnishing of a black & reddish colour was exposed during cleaning on the lower area of the object, as well as on the top left corner and the back. Cleaning also revealed that some of the finer filigree detail has partially detached from the gold base and is at risk of damage if not handled with care