

K1098 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 04/09/2012

Conservation Finished: 05/09/2012

Conservator: Cymbeline Storey

Time Taken: 7 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 14mm (W) 8.5mm (D) 2mm

Weight before: 10.52g

Weight after: 0.92g

X-ray: L128, L132

Catalogue number: 569

Digital photography:

Taken with a Nikon Coolpix 4500 digital camera, under daylight or bulbs and Meiji Techno RZ Stereo microscope with an Infinity 1 camera (with analyses capture software) and fibre optic lights, 7-75x magnification. Taken before and after.

Annotation on any of the storage bags or boxes: Unstrat spoil heap

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

Fragment of silver plate with linear niello inlay in straight and angled channels and a wide (6mm) gilded border with at least one partial, empty fastening hole. The top (gilded border) edge is finished; all other edges are breaks.

Associated Objects: TBC

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

The fragment is embedded in a large soil block; only the front surface and one edge are visible. The fragment appears to be slightly bent. The body of the fragment is plain, ungilded silver that has tarnished to a consistent, dark grey colour. In this area there are niello channels. Some of the niello appears to be missing, with soil filling the channel. Some of the niello is in situ and has a rough texture. It is not flush with the surface but slightly raised. The gilded border has moderate dark tarnish and abrasion.

The top (gilded) border is finished; all other edges are breaks that look old and are covered with soil. There is at least one partial, empty fastening hole in the gilded border. The fragment has general surface abrasion. The back is not currently visible.

The soil block consists of compact, sandy soil with at least two large stone inclusions, some plant matter, and a few unknown black inclusions. It is unclear at this stage if there are any

other fragments of metal embedded in the soil. As such, the soil block will be excavated to ensure that no parts of the object are overlooked.

Treatment: Carried out using a Meiji stereo microscope

Purpose: Study / Analysis

Aim: Partial cleaning

Materials: Soft natural/synthetic brushes, thorn in pin vice/holder, IMS on metals, 50:50 water/IMS on metals, cotton wool swabs, cocktail stick, Paraloid B72

The fragment was removed from the soil block by moistening the surrounding soil with IMS and picking away at it using a cocktail stick and thorn secured in a pin vice.

Once released from the soil block, the granular soil on the front and edges was mechanically removed or reduced where possible using a fine thorn tip secured in a pin vice and a small pure bristle brush. IMS or water was used to soften the soil to facilitate removal. Loose particles of soil were then removed with a small swab of IMS.

The soil block was thoroughly excavated and separated into its constituent parts (soil, plant matter, inclusions, and stones).

The paper K number was adhered to the back with HMG brand Paraloid B72 (ethyl methacrylate copolymer) from the tube, applied with a cocktail stick.

A storage box padded with white polyethylene foam was made for housing the object. A strip of Tyvek (spun bound polyethylene fibres) was used as a cushion for the object and to help lift it out of the foam.

Post-Conservation Condition/Findings:

No additional fragments of metal were discovered in the soil block, though there were a number of unknown crystalline, black inclusions (possibly charcoal?). These were retained in a sample vial. Also in the soil was one fragment of possible niello, several stones, and some plant matter.

The fragment is missing about half of its niello. The channels also have a somewhat unusual shape - they seem to bow in the middle and taper slightly toward the end. It may be that the narrower ends of these channels are the result of deformation of the metal as a perpendicular channel was carved afterward.

Soil was excavated from part of one of the empty niello channels to see if any tool marks were visible in the channel. There appears to be a possible keying mark in the channel. The channel is V-shaped.

There appear to be two partial, empty fastening holes in the gilded border. The fragment has many dents and scratches.

Key Features:

- Silver plate fragment
- Gilded border with two partial, empty fastening holes
- Niello inlay in geometric pattern
- Granular silver visible on break edges

Samples:

1. soil
2. plant matter in soil
3. stone inclusions in soil **DISPOSED**
4. unknown black inclusions in soil (charcoal?) **DISPOSED**
5. silver fragment in soil **DISPOSED**
6. unknown circular black object in soil
7. possible niello found in soil
8. niello from middle diagonal channel