

K1168 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 10/10/2012

Conservation Finished: 11/10/2012

Conservator: Cymbeline Storey

Time Taken: 8 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 58mm (W) 18mm (D) 16mm (Th.) 1.5mm

Weight before: 9.64g

Weight after: 9.38g

Catalogue number: 571

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: None noted.

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

Bent silver strip with niello inlay in linear design and a gilded border (3.0-3.5mm wide) that contains 6 empty fastening holes. The strip is square at one end and tapers to a point at the other end. At the square end the width is 14mm and at the tapered end the width is 3mm. The pointed end, the square end and the top of the gilded border are finished. The other edge (bottom of the ungilded area) is slightly bevelled and is a clean/neat break. The body (ungilded silver with niello inlay) has three empty fastening holes.

Associated Objects: TBC

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

Silver strip with niello inlay in linear design and gilded border. The strip is slightly convex, has a slightly bevelled edge (bottom of ungilded body area) and bent into an asymmetrical U shape. About 40% of the front of the strip is covered with compact, sandy soil, with the thickest accumulation inside the U bend. There is a small amount of plant matter in the soil.

Much of the niello is intact and configured in a linear design (zigzags and straight lines). Some of the niello inside the U bend has become detached as a result of the physical damage to the object and is suspended in the surrounding soil. This is very vulnerable and will require consolidation to prevent loss. Some of the niello is missing; the channels in these areas are filled with soil.

All of the ungolded silver, front and back, is tarnished. The tarnish on the front is a consistent dark grey colour. The tarnish on the back is moderate, with dark and light patches. The gilded border has light, patchy tarnish.

The gilded border has 6 round fastening holes, five of which are empty apart from soil. One border fastening hole has the remains of a rivet/pin (domed, gilded head only; shaft is missing) in situ. The body of the object (ungilded silver/niello area) has three round fastening holes, two of which are empty apart from soil. One body fastening hole has the remains of a rivet/pin (domed, gilded head only; shaft is missing) in situ. There is a lip of raised metal surrounding the fastening holes on the back of the strip, suggesting that they were punched from the front. One of the fastening holes in the border and one in the body are ripped.

There are two distinct tears in the border of the strip.

On the break edge (along the ungolded area) shiny silver is visible; it is unclear if this is an old or recent break.

The back of the object is ~30% covered with patches of soil and features a number of old-looking scratches that look like filing/working marks, including some parallel, regularly spaced marks with a ribbed appearance.

There is general surface abrasion and some distinct scratches/dents on all areas of the object.

Treatment: Carried out using a Meiji stereo microscope

Purpose: Study / Analysis

Aim: Partial cleaning / Stabilisation

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 granular soil on the front 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. Some of the soil on the back was reduced so that the back of the fastening holes could be seen.

As a result of the physical damage to the object (bend) an area of niello had been pushed out of its channels and was suspended in the surrounding soil. It was loose and very vulnerable to detachment through handling or transportation. To prevent its detachment and potential loss these areas were consolidated with Paraloid B72 (ethyl methacrylate copolymer) 10% w/v in acetone was applied with a small paint brush as much soil as possible was removed from the surrounding area with a thorn.

Corrosion products were left in situ; corrosion was not active and can be further cleaned or stabilised at a later date.

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.

8/3/2016- K. Fuller

Item was cleaned further- dirt surrounding niello decoration material was not disturbed so as to protect from further damage.

Post-Conservation Condition/Findings:

Cleaning revealed the surface of the object, which is in fairly good condition. Much of the niello is intact, though inside the U bend it has popped out of its channels. Much of the niello inside the bend required consolidation to prevent loss. See 'K1168 Treatment Details' for location of consolidated areas.

Soil was removed from around the fastening holes so that they could be better seen. Some soil still remains on the back of the strip.

There are two sharp, distinct cuts in the gilded border that look as if they might have been caused by a blade.

Some areas of silver are covered with a thin layer of light-coloured material (possible silver chloride corrosion).

There is a strip of plain silver in between the square end of the strip and the start of the niello decoration. This area has a slightly rough finish, suggesting that it was not intended to be seen. Similarly, there are a number of parallel scratches (possible filing marks) on the bevelled edge, suggesting that it was not intended to be seen.

Key Features:

- Silver strip with linear design niello inlay
- Silver gilt border with 6 empty fastening holes
- Body of object (as opposed to border) contains 3 empty fastening holes
- Strip is bent into asymmetrical U shape and has a bevelled edge
- Square at one end and tapered to a point at the other end
- Possible cut (knife mark) in border

Samples:

1. soil - front
2. soil - back **ADDED TO SAMPLE 1**
3. niello fragment