

K1192 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 29/08/2012

Conservation Finished: 29/08/2012

Conservator: Cymbeline Storey

Time Taken: 4 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 28mm (W) 14mm (D) 4mm

Weight before: 2.77g

Weight after: 2.72g

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

Fragment of slightly curved silver strip with niello inlay decoration in a geometric design on one side. The top border is 3.5mm wide, solid/undecorated silver gilt containing one intact fastening hole with a dome-headed, blunt-tipped pin in situ. The silver area is divided by niello channels into triangles and 5-sided, 'tooth-like' pieces. The fragment is slightly convex when viewed from the front. The longest edge is the top (gilt) edge; the bottom and left sides are break edges; the right side appears to be finished and is a plain flange with (apparently) two torn, empty fastening holes.

Associated Objects: TBC

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

Front: Soil covers ~80 of the surface. It has no remarkable features and it is generally a thin layer. It is also fills channels where niello is missing. There is general surface abrasion and one pronounced, old-looking scratch in the gilt border area. The gilt border has patchy grey tarnish and the ungilt areas have tarnished to a consistent, dark grey colour. Some areas of the front appear to have a light-coloured film on the surface (perhaps silver chloride corrosion?). There is a small cut/nick in the gilt border.

The niello inlay is in a geometric pattern of straight and angled lines. Some of the niello is missing; the channels contain soil. In some places the niello juts proud of the surface; it might be vulnerable.

Back: ~90% covered with soil that is thick in some places. It contains a rootlet and a shiny black inclusion (identity unknown). The back is unguilt and heavily tarnished to a consistent dark grey colour. The back of the pin is visible. It is bent, has a roughly straight shaft and a blunt tip (possibly broken). There is a piece of silver in the soil next to the pin that might be the broken-off tip of this pin (TBC). There is a protruding lip of metal around the fastening hole, suggesting that the hole was punched from the front.

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, cotton wool swabs, cocktail stick

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.

A small amount of soil was removed from the back around the pin and the metal fragment to allow them to be seen and measured. Some soil was excavated from an empty niello channel on the front to see the sides and bottom of the channel for research purposes.

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.

JULY 2013: Removed soil from back and empty channels on front using thorn in pin vice, IMS, brushes and swabs.

Post-Conservation Condition/Findings:

Cleaning the front revealed a silver surface largely covered with a thin, light-coloured film thought to be silver chloride corrosion (TBC). There is a hole in the body of the object as well as the border. The body hole has what appears to be the remnant of a silver pin inside it. On the reverse a fragment of silver protrudes from this hole, but it is so short that it doesn't seem as if it would serve a purpose. The fragment in this hole might be a fragment of the in-situ pin that has broken off and become lodged in the hole.

Both of the pin fragments appear to be stable in their holes; no consolidant was introduced. However, the object should be handled with care to avoid moving or dislodging these pieces.

Most of the niello is in situ, though some of it protrudes out of the channels. It appears to be stable, however.

Cleaning of break edges showed that a square-shaped tool was used to excavate the channels.

The flange on the right side of the object appears to be plain silver and features two torn/incomplete and empty fastening holes.

The curved shape of this fragment makes it unusual; to date, the remainder of pieces of this strip are straight. Further investigation is needed to determine how these pieces fit together.

Key Features:

- Slightly curved silver strip with gilt border and niello inlay
- Niello in geometric design; channels have square cross-section
- One dome-headed, blunt-tipped pin in situ

Samples:

1. soil - front and break edges
2. rootlet in soil - back **DISPOSED**
3. shiny black inclusion in soil - back **DISPOSED**
4. soil - back **ADDED TO SAMPLE 1**
5. tiny niello fragment from area of broken/disrupted niello on front
6. soil - back (from second conservation, July 2013)