

K1259 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 04/02/2013

Conservation Finished: 05/02/2013

Conservator: Ciarán Lavelle

Time Taken: 5 Hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L). 53mm; (W). 8mm; (H). 5mm; (Th. sheet) <0.5mm

Weight before: 3.80g

Weight after: 2.12g

Catalogue number: 337

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, during and after.

Annotation on any of the storage bags or boxes: K1259 SSH09, 1971, (1001) N10, 348 (in a triangle/object number), 5/8/09. Fragile – handle with care. X-ray: L39, L63.

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

Gold, sheet-metal hilt-plate with a flanged edge; misshapen and torn open on one side and at one tip.

Associated Objects: None known at present.

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

The object is a long and thin hilt plate that is warped slightly but retaining the majority of its shape. The piece appears to be made up of two sheets of gold, one top layer and one bottom later that extends downwards at the edges of the interior hilt hole for the blade, they are of equal width, and are at an approximate 90° angle to each other. The object is covered in a moderate layer of loose and compact soil. The interior is filled completely with soil.

There are two break edges visible on one side of the object, one is on the lower sheet and approximately half way along the hilt handle hole in the centre of the object; this may be the original join. The other tear is on the top sheet and is also approximately half way along and on the opposite side from the other break edge. The corners of the inner edge is curved, although this has been compressed causing the edge to become pointed, and the outer corners are curved and then flattened off.

Treatment: Carried out using a Meiji stereo microscope

Purpose: Display / Study / Analysis

Aim: Total 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/back 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.

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.

Post-Conservation Condition/Findings:

The object has a polished metal finish with no decorative finishes visible on the surface. The two sheets of gold are warped and misshapen along the length of it with nicks and tears visible at the edges. The object seems to have been compressed inwardly on both sides. There are holes and cracks visible on the edge between the top and lower sheets. There are nicks, scratches and indentations visible across the entire surface; including what appears to be an incised line which can be seen along the centre of the lower sheet, this line is only visible over approximately 70% of the sheet and may be the result of a clamping mechanism to hold the gold in place on the object.

The outer ends of the object have suffered damage; one side has been compressed inward and has resulted in cracking at the edges between the two plates, but appears stable. The opposite end is intact and in its original position but is loose as there is a break edge along the width of the top sheet and then between the top and lower sheet running along the curve of the corner to the opposite the original break. The top sheet has a tear half way along the width again and this has resulted in the creation of a flap of gold that is very flexible, fragile, in danger of breaking off, of catching on packing materials, etc.

There are two break edges opposite each other approximately half way along the length. One can be seen on the top sheet and one on the bottom sheet. The break edge on the bottom sheet is at the original join, so is not technically a break. Of the two separate ends at this breaking point one is lifted on one side, causing a tear at the join between the top and lower sheet.

The surface of the object is covered in an un-uniformed layer of tarnish and some corrosion products. The gold is orange red with blackened areas in appearance in places as well as having nicks and scratches visible on the surfaces. The corrosion products and tarnish were left in situ as they do not obscure any decorative or informative surfaces and removal may result in further damage to the surface.

Key Features:

- Hilt plate with a warped and misshapen surface.
- Hilt plate contains no bosses and/or rivet holes.
- Impression of a line around the outside of the lower sheet.

- Three breaks/tears visible, one on each side approximately half way along hilt handle hole and one at the outer corner.

Analysis Undertaken:

XRF analysis of the object was performed. See document 'KXXX XRF Report'.

Samples:

Sample 1 – Soil from exterior surface of the object.

Sample 2 – Soil from interior surface of the object.

References: