K1334 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 11/10/2012
Conservation Finished: 12/10/2012
Conservator: Cymbeline Storey & Deborah Magnoler
Time Taken: 6.5 hours
Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 13mm (W) 10mm (D) 4mm (Th.) 2.5mm
Weight before: 1.28g
Weight after: 1.2g

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

Roughly rectangular fragment of silver fitting with raised, boxy border containing niello inlay and a central recessed panel of plain silver. There is one round fastening hole in the recessed panel area that has the partial remains of a pin in situ.

Associated Objects: TBC

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

The fragment is bent, though roughly flat and square. Two edges of the fragment are old-looking breaks that are covered with soil. The front is 90% covered with soil that has no remarkable features apart from a small amount of plant matter. Almost all of the surface is covered with a thick layer of soil that obscures surface detail. Visible metal is ungilded and tarnished to a grey colour. Gilding can be seen on one edge. There appears to be silver chloride corrosion on all surfaces.

The recessed area looks plain/undecorated, but one round fastening hole is visible.

The back is 90% covered with soil that has no remarkable features. Visible metal is tarnished to a grey colour. There are several areas of green corrosion product on the surface; it looks inactive. The severely corroded (green) remains of a pin can be seen inside the fastening hole. There is an additional convex dent near the fastening hole on the back.

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 granular soil on the front, back and sides 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.

26/07/13: the little remaining soil on the surface of the object was removed using the same method and materials as on the first stage of conservation. There were no new findings to report. DM

Post-Conservation Condition/Findings:

The inlay style is the same as that seen on K94, i.e. an inverse design with a zigzag of ungilded silver in the centre and niello on either side. The niello protrudes out of the channel creating a slightly domed effect (see photographs). Some of the niello is missing. All of it is pitted and rough in appearance. There are substantial deposits of light-coloured, waxy silver chloride corrosion on the silver and the niello.

In the centre of the fragment there is a recessed area of plain silver. The soil was reduced in this area in an attempt to uncover any surface decoration in this panel, but there is none. This area contains one round fastening hole that contains the corroded remains of a pin (only visible from the back). There is also a deep, intentional straight scratch (possibly a mark made by the manufacturer of the object) near the fastening hole. There is a trace of gilding on one side along with patchy, dark tarnish.

Looking at the back of the fragment, there are break edges pointing upward, suggesting that this fragment originally had additional walls extending downward (a boxy, 90-degree corner-type construction; see K94 or K529 for examples).

All of the break edges look old.

Key Features:

- Flat, roughly rectangular silver fragment with raised border with niello inlay
- Inverse niello design – silver zigzag in centre of channel with niello on either side

- Plain, recessed central area with a fastening hole and maker's mark (straight line)
- Remains of pin in fastening hole, central area (only visible from back)

Samples:

1. soil
2. plant matter in soil DISPOSED
3. niello fragment