

K137 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 31/10/2012

Conservation Finished: 31/10/2012

Conservator: Cymbeline Storey

Time Taken: 5.5 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 48mm (W) 11mm (D) 6mm

Weight before: 5.13g

Weight after: 4.92g

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: Written on box: 24/7/09 (unstrat)

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

Silver fragment with 90-degree angle edge; L sectioned. All edges apart from the 90-degree bent edge and the slightly curved edge are breaks. In the middle of the fragment there is a truncated protrusion. To one side of this protrusion is an area of recessed plain/undecorated/ungilded silver, possibly the base of a panel that once existed in this area. There is a channel with niello inlay along the edge and the truncated protrusion.

Associated Objects: TBC

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

The fragment is roughly L-sectioned with a 90-degree bend. All edges are breaks apart from this 90-degree angled edge and the slightly curved edge. The breaks are covered with soil and look old, apart from one small area of a break edge (adjacent to the truncated protrusion) that looks fresh and might be recent.

The side of the object is plain, undecorated silver with a thin later of green corrosion products on the surface. The top edge has a channel containing niello inlay, though the decorative scheme is unclear. Soil covers ~60% of the exterior surface and obscures surface decoration. There are patches of green corrosion product on all sides; they look inactive. The silver is heavily tarnished to a dark grey colour and has general surface abrasion.

There is a thick deposit of dark brown and white organic material on the back that has a slightly glossy, resinous appearance. It is reminiscent of the residue found inside boss K1536. There is

one patch of soil at one end that has no remarkable features or inclusions. The back is ungilded and heavily tarnished to a dark grey colour. The surface texture is rough and unfinished.

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 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. A small amount of soil on the back around break edges was removed to facilitate locating joins with other fragments.

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:

Soil removal from exterior has revealed the surface decoration and enabled confirmation that niello is present. The niello is clearly raised in the channel and appears to have never been intended to be flush with the top of the channel. About 50% of the niello is present. In areas of missing niello no distinguishing tool marks or keying of the channel can be seen. The niello inlay design could be described as leaf-shaped areas of ungilded silver surrounded by niello on either side.

There are bumps of waxy, purple silver chloride corrosion on all sides, most notably the plain/undecorated side and the top.

There is a thin layer of green corrosion product covering ~75% of the plain/undecorated side and ~40% of the recessed plain silver area. It appears to be stable and was left in situ.

The exterior surface has many abrasions and dents, most of which look old but a few of which might be recent.

A great deal of organic material - brown and white resinous substance - is present on the back of the object; take care when handling object to prevent detachment of this material. It has been left in situ for future study/analysis.

Key Features:

- Fragment of silver gilt with 90-degree edge; boxy construction
- Border has niello inlay in an unusual pattern; 'leaf'-shaped silver with niello around it
- Possible organic material (white & brown deposits) on the underside

Samples:

1. soil - front
2. soil - back **ADDED TO SAMPLE 1**
3. possible organic material found in object's packaging
4. niello fragment