

K1531 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 19/02/2013

Conservation Finished: 19/02/2013

Conservator: Cymbeline Storey

Time Taken: 2.5 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 18mm (W) 7mm (D) 3.5mm

Weight before: 1.03g

Weight after: 1.03g

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

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

Silver fragment with 90-degree angle edge; L sectioned. There is a channel with niello inlay along the edge. The decorative scheme is an 'inverted zigzag' with a silver zigzag line with niello on either side of it. On one side of the fragment (plain, ungilded silver) are numerous tiny, triangular dents arranged in two rows. They are regular and may be tool marks from manufacture or deliberate keying marks.

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. One edge apart from this 90-degree angled edge is finished. The breaks look old.

One side of the object has numerous regular, triangular indentations. They look either deliberate or are evidence of some tool used during manufacture of the object. There are two rows of marks.

The top edge has a channel containing niello inlay. Some of the niello is missing. There is a thin layer of soil on the back and break edges. Ungilded silver areas are heavily tarnished to a dark grey colour.

The silver has heavy, dark grey to black tarnish and general surface abrasion. There are several specks of green corrosion product on the surface with the triangular marks.

The back is ungilded and has a slightly rough/unfinished texture. There are a few patches of soil on the back as well as some whitish, waxy material (corrosion or remnants of some fixing agent?)

Treatment: Carried out using a Meiji stereo microscope

Purpose: Study / Analysis

Aim: Total 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 exterior and break 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. No soil was removed from the back.

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 more detail of the surface decoration and triangular marks.

Ungilded silver areas have patchy tarnish ranging in colour from light grey to black. There are patches of green corrosion product on the side with the triangular dents.

The object has many old-looking surface scratches and dents. The niello inlay has an 'inverse zigzag' design, with a raised lip of silver in a zigzag configuration with niello inlaid on either side of it.

The niello is slightly raised in the channel; some of it is missing. The bottom of empty channels has a rough texture. No distinguishing tool marks or keying of the channel can be seen.

Soil has been removed from the triangular indentations, showing that they are shallow and are spaced apart somewhat regularly. It is unknown if they are deliberate marks or tool marks from manufacture; this is something that warrants further investigation.

Break edges have been cleaned to facilitate finding joins with other fragments. All breaks look old.

Key Features:

- Fragment of silver gilt with 90-degree edge; boxy construction
- Border has niello inlay in a zigzag design
- Numerous small triangular indentations

Samples: None