

K173 Condition Report

Conservation Started: 25/04/2013

Conservation Finished: 25/04/2013

Conservator: Cymbeline Storey

Time Taken: 2.5 hours

Including digital photography, report, conservation and packing.

Dimensions: (L) 24mm (W) 5mm (D) 6mm (Th) 1mm

Weight before: 1.64g

Weight after: 1.38g

Catalogue number: 614

Digital photography:

Taken with a Canon EOS digital camera under daylight or bulbs and Keyence VHX-1000 3D digital microscope with LED and/or fibre optic lights, 20-200x 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

Gently curved section of undecorated silver gilt strip attached to a flat, rectangular section of ungilded silver by means of a flat-headed rivet with a hammered shaft and flattened, blunt tip.

The front of the silver gilt piece is convex and gilded and the back is concave and ungilded; the fragment is c-sectioned. The long edges are finished and the short ends are breaks. The ungilded rectangular silver piece has one round fastening hole with a rivet in situ. Only the head of the rivet is gilded.

Associated Objects: TBC

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

~30% of the front and ~60% of the back is covered with unremarkable soil. The front has moderate to heavy tarnish (probably from burial) and general old-looking abrasions and dents.

The two pieces of metal are attached by means of a rivet with a flat, gilded head. The rivet is surrounded by soil and sticks up proud of the surface. The end of the rivet cannot be seen on the back because of soil. The two fragments are attached by soil as well; the plain, rectangular silver piece is immobile. Soil fills the small gap between the two pieces.

Both long edges are finished and both short ends are old-looking breaks.

The rectangular piece of silver attached to the back appears to be ungilded and heavily tarnished (from burial). Soil removal will be necessary to describe and assess the condition of this piece.

Treatment: Carried out using a Meiji stereo microscope

Purpose: Study

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 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.

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 decision was taken to excavate soil from in between the two metal pieces to see what, if anything, was inside and to measure the gap between the plates. The entire surface of the object can now be seen.

The front has widespread tarnish (probably from burial) and many scratches and dents, most of which look old and some of which are quite pronounced.

The rectangular, flat, ungilded silver piece is attached by means of a single rivet. The rivet is ungilded apart from the head and has a hammered shaft and a flattened, blunt tip. The rivet does not appear to be in danger of falling out and the two pieces are attached securely, though both pieces are mobile and can be adjusted. A piece of Plastazote was placed between the plated to prevent them from rubbing together.

When the head of the rivet is flush with the top surface of the silver gilt piece and the rectangular silver piece is flush with the bottom of the rivet there is a gap of ~2.5mm between the pieces. The diameter of the rivet shaft is 1.5mm and the thickness of the silver plate is 1mm.

Soil removal from the back of the silver gilt piece revealed many distinct, old-looking scratches and dents.

There is a trace of gilding on the edge of the rectangular silver piece, presumably a mistake from manufacture. Could this suggest that the pieces were attached before gilding was applied?

Key Features:

- Curved section of c-sectioned, undecorated silver gilt strip
- Attached to an ungilded, flat, rectangular piece of silver by means of a rivet through a round fastening hole
- Rivet has hammered shaft, flat, gilded head and a blunt tip

Samples:

1. soil
2. soil from in between the two pieces

*Update 19/11/15: Box containing joined C section K23, K81 and K418 also has 'K173' written on box however fragment not inside – Lizzie Miller