



THE BEAD FORUM

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EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY GLASS BEADS FROM THE TATHAM MOUND, CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA

The Tatham Mound (8-Ci-203) is an aboriginal sand burial mound located in eastern Citrus County, Florida. Since early 1985, personnel from the Florida State Museum have been conducting excavations at the site. The top stratum of the mound has yielded a large assemblage of early 16th-century European trade material, including iron and silver objects and beads of silver, gold, and glass. The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe the glass beads from the mound.

Table 1 lists the glass beads by type, with classification based on the system devised by Smith and Good (1982). The number of beads recovered is listed for each type, along with a short description and notes. Of the 55 beads recovered, 24 are varieties of Nueva Cadiz Plain (both faceted and unfaceted), nine are varieties of faceted chevrons, nine are small olive-shaped opaque blue beads, six are spherical wound transparent green beads, five are spherical wound navy blue (almost opaque) beads, and one is spherical, but too patinated (or possibly burned) to determine color.

The presence of Nueva Cadiz and faceted chevron varieties indicates that the beads date from the period AD 1500-1560 (Smith and Good 1982:11). This would suggest contact with the expeditions of Panfilo de Narvaez (1528) and/or Hernando de Soto (1539), both of whom are believed to have passed through this area. Two other sites in this part of Florida have produced very similar

assemblages of glass beads. These are the Weeki Wachee and Ruth Smith mounds (Mitchem and others 1985). The probability that all three sites represent contact with the same expedition is strengthened by the fact that three of the Nueva Cadiz varieties (IIA1d, IIC2a, and IIC2b) and one of the faceted chevron varieties (IVC2d) from Tatham were previously known in North America only from the Weeki Wachee and Ruth Smith mounds (Mitchem and others 1983:204; Smith and Good 1982:48-50).

The presence of the spherical beads is surprising, as they are uncommon in sites of this time period (Smith and Good 1982:11). However, their apparent rarity may be due to inadequate samples, because there are very few complete, carefully excavated bead assemblages from early sites in the southeastern United States.

Excavation will continue in the fall of 1986. This work should add to our knowledge of beads from early Spanish contact sites in Florida and adjacent areas.

TABLE 1. GLASS BEADS FROM THE TATHAM MOUND

| Class. | No. | Description | Notes | Provenience |
|-------------------|-----|--|-------------------------|---|
| IIA1d (No. 36) | 3 | Short, tubular, translucent dark navy blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain | Burial no. 31 (F.S. 99); F.S. 100; Burial no. 48 (F.S. 127) |
| IIA1e (No. 37) | 1 | Short, tubular, transparent cobalt blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain | Burial no. 31 (F.S. 99) |
| IIA2a (No. 40) | 1 | Turquoise blue/ thin white/trans- lucent navy blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain | Burial no. 17 (F.S. 94) |
| IIA2e (No. 44) | 1 | Translucent navy blue/thin white/ translucent navy blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain | Burial no. 48 (F.S. 127) |
| IIA2g (No. 46) | 5 | Cobalt blue/thin white/translucent medium blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain | F.S. 64 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| IIC2- (Unique) | 1 | Turquoise blue/ thin white/ translucent purple | Nueva Cadiz Plain, Faceted | F.S. 90 |
| IIC2a(1) (No. 50) | 1 | Turquoise blue/ thin white/trans- parent medium blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain, Faceted | F.S. 90 |
| IIC2a(2) (No.50) | 1 | Turquoise blue/ thin white/navy blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain, Faceted | Burial no. 17 (F.S. 94) |
| IIC2b (No.51) | 1 | Turquoise blue/ thin white/color- less | Nueva Cadiz Plain, Faceted | F.S. 100 |
| IIC2g (No.56) | 9 | Cobalt blue/thin white/translucent light blue | Nueva Cadiz Plain, Faceted | Burial no. 27 (F.S. 93) |
| IVC2a (No.79) | 2 | Blue/white/red/ white/translucent green/white/ translucent green | Faceted Chevron | F.S. 64 |
| IVC2d (No.82) | 7 | Cobalt blue/white/ red/white/trans- parent medium blue/ white/transparent medium blue | Faceted Chevron | Burial no. 60 (F.S. 140) |
| VID1h (No.108) | 10 | Olive-shaped, opaque medium blue | | F.S. 64; Burial no. 31 (F.S. 99); F.S. 147 |
| ---- | 5 | Spherical, navy blue | | Burial no. 2 (F.S. 58) |
| ---- | 1 | Spherical (burned or patinated) | | Burial no. 2 (F.S. 58) |
| ---- | 6 | Spherical, trans- parent green | | F.S. 64; Burial no. 48 (F.S. 127) |

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SUMMARY OF HURON BEAD SEQUENCE, AD 1590-1650

The Huron confederacy consisted of four distinct Indian nations which occupied a small geographical area adjacent to the southeastern corner of Georgian Bay in what is now south-central Ontario.

Each nation within the confederacy was responsible for its own commercial relations and would act independently from decisions made by the confederacy. As a consequence, each of the four nations, represented by twenty-two contemporary villages, acquired trade goods from European traders at roughly the same time; i.e., between 1590-1600 (the start of formalized trading into Huronia) and around 1649 (the destruction of the Huron confederacy by the Iroquois).

Of 26 samples from village and burial sites in Huron country, only 15 contained more than 30 glass beads. The sequence, showing approximate date ranges, and the three to five most popular Kidd (1970) varieties and their frequency at each site or group of sites, is as follows:

Ball Village (1590-1600): 10, Ia5; 7, IIa31; 2, IIa10; 1, frit-cored bead; 1, IIg4.