

## **Assessment of Fired Clay, Glass and Stone Artefacts from the Fordington to Skendleby Pipeline, Lincolnshire (FSPL-07)**

### ***Alan Vince***

A glass bead, a stone spindle whorl and fragments of fired clay from an archaeological investigation at Lodge Farm, Skendleby, on the line of the Fordington to Skendleby Pipeline, were submitted to the author for identification and assessment.

### **Description**

#### **Fired Clay**

Three fragments of fired clay were recovered from context 106. All were examined at x20 magnification and have slightly differing fabrics. However, they all contain rounded, polished quartz grains, rounded red iron ore pellets, and have a micaceous silty groundmass. In addition, two of the fragments contain burnt-out organic matter, including in one case wood chips up to 20mm long and 10mm wide.

Apart from the organic material, the characteristics of these clay fragments are typical of lower Cretaceous clays in the southwestern part of the Lincolnshire Wolds and the clay could have been obtained either from a Lower Cretaceous deposit such as those which outcrop on the fringes of the chalk upland or from a boulder clay, which outcrops extensively in the lower ground to the south and west of Skendleby.

One of the fragments appears to be a squeezed lump of clay with a finger/thumb impression and convex surface. Such material is commonly found on salt-extraction sites on the Lincolnshire siltland and Lindsey marshes where it appears to be part of the extraction process which used ceramic containers to hold the concentrated brine. The use of such containers seem to have ceased in the later Roman period.

#### **Glass**

A small glass bead was recovered from context 106. The bead is made from an opaque, vesicular dark red glass. The bead is 11mm in diameter and 5mm thick. The central hole at x20 magnification is seen to have a dark matt metallic coating perhaps evidence for the use of a metallic tool to produce the hole.

#### **Stone**

A chalk spindle whorl, 45mm diameter and 20 mm tall, was recovered in two pieces from context 106. The identity of the rock as chalk was confirmed at x20 magnification where numerous microfossils were visible. The whorl appears to have been made on a lathe and

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has four lathe-cut grooves, two on either side of the girth. It has a symmetrical profile (unlike those of Anglo-Scandinavian date, which are often different in profile on either side of the girth).

Two fragments of rock from the same deposit are basic igneous erratics. Both have hackly faces suggesting that they were shattered from larger pebbles and one has part of the original weathered cortex. Neither appears to have been used and similar rocks are present in boulder clay over much of the Wolds.

### **Assessment**

Context 106 produced finds of various dates, the latest of which are early Anglo-Saxon potsherds. It is therefore likely that these objects are of early Anglo-Saxon date or earlier. The similarity of one of the fired clay pieces to salt-extraction fragments may be illusory but if it were to be associated with salt extraction then presumably it would have arrived on the site along with salt and/or other commodities from the coast and would be of early Roman date. Fragments of briquetage have been found on Iron Age and early Roman sites in southern England well inland (e.g. Danebury camp, 30 miles north of Southampton, Morris 1994) and therefore its discovery on inland sites in Lincolnshire should not be a surprise. Nevertheless, larger samples of fired clay, and the chemical analysis of such clay to look for elevated sodium levels, would be required to settle the matter.

### **Further Work**

The association of the bead and spindle whorl with an early Anglo-Saxon context is of interest and both should be drawn for future record.

### **Retention**

All the finds come from a stratified archaeological context and should therefore be retained for possible future re-examination or further study.

### **Bibliography**

Morris, E. L. (1994) "Production and distribution of pottery and salt in Iron Age Britain: a Review." *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 60, 371-393

*Appendix 1*

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Object	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Part	Action	Description	diameter	TH
106	GLAS	GLAS	OPAQUE RED VESICULAR	BEAD	2	1	0.5	BS	DR		11	5
106	STONE	STONE	BASIC IGNEOUS	GEO	2	2	100	BS		TWO CRACKED PEBBLE FRAGMENTS, ONE WITH TRACES OF ORIGINAL CORTEX	0	
106	STONE	STONE	CHALK	SPWH	2	1	23	BS	DR	LATHE TURNED WITH FOUR GROOVES;SYMETRICAL PROFILE AROUND GIRTH	45	20
106	FCLAY	FCLAY	SILTY MICACEOUS;S GSQ; S RED FE;M ORGANICS, INC CHARCOAL <10MM;OXID	-	3	3	17	BS				

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