

# A NEW VARIETY OF FRIT-CORE BEAD FROM JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA

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*The inventory of frit-core beads continues to grow with the finding of a new variation of Type 9 at Jamestown (1607-ca. 1699) in eastern Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. It is decorated with four golden yellow and four raised white stripes.*

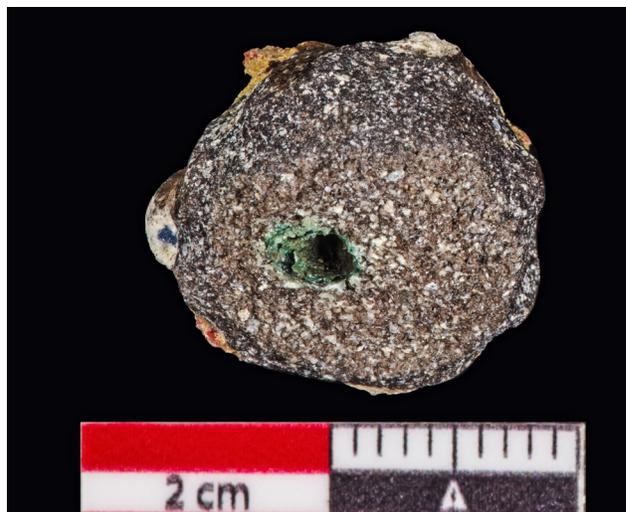
A newly identified frit-core bead (Figures 1-3) from Jamestown, Virginia, represents a variation of the recently described Type 9 (Karklins 2020). The bead is dark navy blue, almost black, with distinct flecks of blue, white, and grey visible with magnification. The core consists of what appears to be crushed quartz fused in a brown matrix (Figure 4). Decoration consists of eight raised longitudinal stripes of alternating white and golden yellow. With magnification, brick-red inclusions can be seen in the yellow. The previously described Type 9 variety only has four white stripes alternating with four low lobes. The Jamestown bead was originally oval in shape, but broke at an oblique angle to the perforation. The remaining section has a maximum length of 13.0 mm and a diameter of 13.5 mm excluding the raised decoration and 15.3 mm including it. The perforation is 2.4 mm in diameter and exhibits a distinct green stain suggesting it was originally strung on either a copper-alloy wire or link.



**Figure 1.** End view of the Jamestown bead (all photos by Charles Durfor, courtesy of Jamestown Rediscovery/Preservation Virginia).



**Figure 2.** Side view of the Jamestown bead.



**Figure 3.** The broken end showing the speckled nature of the core material.

The only other frit-core bead (Type 4A; Figure 5) found at Jamestown was excavated from a tightly dated well dug in 1608 and filled in a distinct episode in 1610 (Derry 2019:41), helping to expand the known date range of frit-core beads



Figure 4. Closeup of the core components.

to include the early 17th century (Karklins 2016). The new specimen, on the other hand, was recovered from a plowzone layer within the boundary of the original 1607 palisade of James Fort, near the west bulwark. In addition to plowing, this area of the fort was disturbed by the construction of Confederate Fort Pocahontas in 1861. Many 17th-century artifacts were displaced from their original contexts during the construction of the earthworks, but features preserved in deeper layers still revealed evidence of the earliest years of the first permanent English settlement in the Americas.



Figure 5. The Type 4A frit-core bead from Jamestown.

#### REFERENCES CITED

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