

62. CURRENT RESEARCH ON BEADS AND PENDANTS FROM SAN LUIS DE TALIMALI MISSION, FLORIDA, by Jeffrey M. Mitchem (1991, 18:8-11)

The mission and town of San Luis de Talimali was the Franciscan capital of the Apalachee Province in Florida during the late 17th century. Established in 1656, the site consisted of a large Apalachee Indian village, a Spanish fort, a settlement of Spanish colonists, and a mission church complex (Vernon 1989:1-3). It was destroyed and abandoned in 1704, following raids by British soldiers and Creek Indians (Boyd, Smith, and Griffin 1951:12-19; Hann 1988:264).

The site is located in present-day Tallahassee, and is owned by the State of Florida. An ongoing program of excavation and public interpretation has yielded large numbers of beads and pendants from various contexts, and the site presents a unique opportunity for learning about beads and pendants worn by different segments of the population.

Since 1988, fieldwork has been concentrated in the Spanish village area. Two large trash pits were excavated, and both contained many beads, pendants, and other items of personal adornment. Only one of these features has been analyzed so far, but the results allow some preliminary interpretations to be made.

Among the more than 25,000 artifacts from this pit were over 1,400 items of personal adornment, primarily beads and pendants. This assemblage is valuable for several reasons. First, diagnostic Spanish ceramics from the feature indicate that the pit and its contents date from the late 17th century or after. Second, the location of the feature in the Spanish village suggests that the refuse includes personal adornment items worn by Spanish settlers, as opposed to Apalachee Indians. Third, the diversity and nature of the artifacts suggest that the feature may have been the trash pit of a high-ranking Spanish family. And fourth, some of the rings and jewelry indicate that a Spanish woman (or possibly a *mestiza*, a woman of mixed Spanish and Indian descent) may have been one of the residents of the associated house (McEwan 1990).

The majority of the glass beads are seed beads, and many of these were probably sewn on clothes or other articles. A large proportion of the beads are cornaline d'Aleppo types, consisting of a brick red outer layer over a pale green or blue core. This is interesting because while seed beads are abundant from other areas of the site, cornaline d'Aleppo beads are very rare. This may indicate that these beads were reserved for Spanish use rather than as trade goods for the Apalachees.

A wide variety of glass necklace beads were present in the pit. A few of these may have been rosary beads, but most were probably merely used for decorative purposes. Most of the bead types have been noted from other parts of the site, but the Spanish village has yielded the greatest variety of beads composed of more than one layer, or with striped or faceted surfaces.

In addition to the beads, a number of pendants were encountered. Five of these were teardrop-shaped pendants of glass, and were probably worn as earrings. Earrings of this type were in fashion in Spain during the 17th century (Muller 1972:138). The rest of the pendants were made of lapidary materials, such as jet and rock crystal. It is significant that items made of these materials are virtually absent in the aboriginal areas of the San Luis site.

At least seven of the jet objects were parts of *higa* pendants, distinctive clenched fist-shaped amulets which were very popular among Spaniards, and are still worn by some Latin peoples today. According to Spanish beliefs, jet had protective powers against the evil eye, and *higa* amulets were used for this purpose (Francis 1979:55; Hildburgh 1906:460-461; Muller 1972:24).

Bead and pendant assemblages from the Apalachee council house, the *convento*, and a small portion of the cemetery inside the church have been analyzed, and they differ significantly from the Spanish village assemblage (Mitchem 1990; Smith 1990). As mentioned before, one difference is in the proportion of glass beads of compound or complex construction, such as the cornaline d'Aleppo type. The Spanish village contains both larger numbers and more varieties of these beads.

Items of jet and rock crystal are also more abundant in the Spanish village area. Only one bead of each material was recovered from areas outside the Spanish village, and neither material was recovered from the limited cemetery excavations.

The tremendous diversity and sheer number of artifacts from the trash pit suggest that the Spanish residents who used the feature were quite affluent. Included in the fill were many broken majolica vessels, as well as a number of silver items. In contemporary Spanish-colonial sites such as St. Augustine, Florida, the assemblage would be interpreted as representing a high-status occupation.

The types of personal-adornment artifacts from the feature suggest that a Spanish woman or *mestiza* was a nearby resident. This inference is based on the small size of several jet and metal finger rings, and the fact that the wearing of rings, jewels, and precious stones was generally considered effeminate by Spaniards at this time (Muller 1972:28).

All of these interpretations must be considered provisional, however, because the differences in personal adornment assemblages from different parts of San Luis could be due to functional differences, such as those from a domestic area versus a cemetery area, or a domestic area versus a public building such as the Apalachee council house. However, initial impressions of the ornate assemblage from the second trash pit in the Spanish village do not appear to contradict the interpretations based on the first feature.

The best opportunity to check interpretations of ethnicity and gender will come with planned excavations in the cemetery beneath the church floor. This research will provide samples from individuals whose sex and ethnic affiliation can be identified. The results can then be compared and combined with data from other mission sites in the Southeast to develop conclusions about the use and function of items of personal adornment among both Spaniards and American Indians at the missions.

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63. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON BEADS AND PENDANTS FROM THE APALACHEE VILLAGE AT SAN LUIS DE TALIMALI MISSION, FLORIDA, by Jeffrey M. Mitchem (1993, 22:21-24)

In a previous issue of *The Bead Forum*, I summarized the results of research on items of personal adornment excavated from the presumed settlement of Spanish colonists at the San Luis de Talimali mission site in Tallahassee, Florida (Mitchem 1991c). This mission and town site was the late 17th-century Franciscan capital of the Apalachee Province in northern Florida. Officially established in 1656, the site was occupied until 1704, when it was abandoned due to the threat of imminent attack by British soldiers and their Creek allies (Boyd, Smith, and Griffin 1951:12-19; Hann 1988:264).

San Luis is of special interest to archaeologists because several ethnic groups resided at the site and historical research has yielded many documents pertaining to religious and secular activities there. The State of Florida, with substantial support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, has maintained an ongoing program of archaeological and historical research at the site. Previous excavations have taken place in the fort area, the mission church complex, the Apalachee council house, and the Spanish settlement (McEwan 1991a, 1991b).

In 1992, excavations were conducted in the area presumed to be the Apalachee village. Although analysis of the recovered beads and pendants is not complete, some preliminary observations can be made. One surprise was that the total number of beads recovered was relatively small—only a few hundred. It should be noted, however, that additional beads will be recovered from flotation samples yet to be sorted. Of the personal adornment items examined so far, six pendants and one bead are of cut quartz crystal. I had previously suggested (Mitchem 1991b:312) that jet and crystal items were probably reserved for Spanish use at San Luis, but this hypothesis was shown to be incorrect, at least in terms of crystal.