

BEAD

Unique ID: HESH-BA07B7

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Awaiting validation

Fragment of a dark blue glass melon bead of Roman date (50-200 AD). The bead has been broken in half and 50% survives; it is irregular in plan and cross section. Originally it would probably have been sub-oval shape in plan with a central hole. The central hole is ridged by vertical striations and has an internal diameter of 11.4mm. The outer edge of the bead has regular lentoid shaped ridges formed by regular grooves like depressions. The bead has been broken relatively recently as the edges are crisp and unabraded, the matrix of the glass shows frequent small bubbles. There are also two dark brown seams which run through the glass - these maybe deliberate decoration - although are somewhat irregular. The exact function for these beads is somewhat elusive. The smaller beads were probably used in a similar manner to other beads as a form of personal adornment, although the larger faience and glass melon beads may have been impractical to wear, particularly around the neck. An alternative function is that they were used as decoration for horse harness and the heavy abrasion especially at the perforations may support this proposition. Nina Crummy writes: "These beads [=melon beads] are found in 1st and 2nd century contexts and seem, on the evidence from our catalogue, to have been introduced into this country at the conquest. There is some slight indication that the smaller the bead the earlier it is. Most are made from turquoise frit, which often decays to white." Crummy publishes only one example made from dark blue glass (fig.32, no. 524). (Crummy 1983, 30+32).

The fragment measures 27.1mm diameter, 16.3mm width, 17.4mm high and is 8.1mm thick; it weighs 8.1 grams.

Class: Melon

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN

Subperiod from: Early

Period from: ROMAN

Date from: Circa AD 50

Date to: Circa AD 200

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Height: 17.4 mm

Width: 16.3 mm

Thickness: 8.1 mm

Weight: 8.1 g

Diameter: 27.1 mm

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: SHRMS: 00716

Materials and construction

Primary material: Glass

Decoration style: Geometric

Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

Region: [West Midlands](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [County of Herefordshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

District: [County of Herefordshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

Parish or ward: [Leintwardine](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: SO4075

Four figure Latitude: 52.36974574

Four figure longitude: -2.88267796

1:25K map: SO4075

1:10K map: SO47NW

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Crummy, N., 1983 [Colchester Archaeological Report 2: The Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester, 1971-9](#) Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd