

SOURCING TWO ADENA STONE TUBE PIPES FROM PIG POINT (18AN50)

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The excavated fragments of two different Adena style stone tube pipes (Figures 1 and 2) from the Pig Point site continued a string of surprising discoveries at this rich locality which seem to indicate some sort of connection with the mound-building cultures of the Midwest. Previous finds have included a Hopewell style spear point made of Flint Ridge chalcidony quarried in eastern Ohio (Figure 3), and a rolled copper bead (Figure 4) made in the Adena style (Matt McKnight, personal communication, 2011). Less unequivocal, but still intriguing, were a number of recovered artifacts such as fossil sharks teeth, marginella beads, drilled canines, a platform pipe fragment (Figures 5 and 6), and a prismatic blade fragment, which would not be out of place if they were excavated in Ohio contexts from roughly 500 B.C. to A.D. 500.

The tube pipes from Pig Point are made of what is variously called “pipestone,” “flint-clay,” or “fire-clay.” This material is composed mainly of kaolinite and other plastic clay minerals. The presence of hematite in the Minnesota varieties produces the red color known as “catlinite,” famous for its heavy exploitation by Native American groups, especially for pipes. When freshly quarried, all pipestone is soft and easily worked, but after exposure to air it hardens quite significantly.

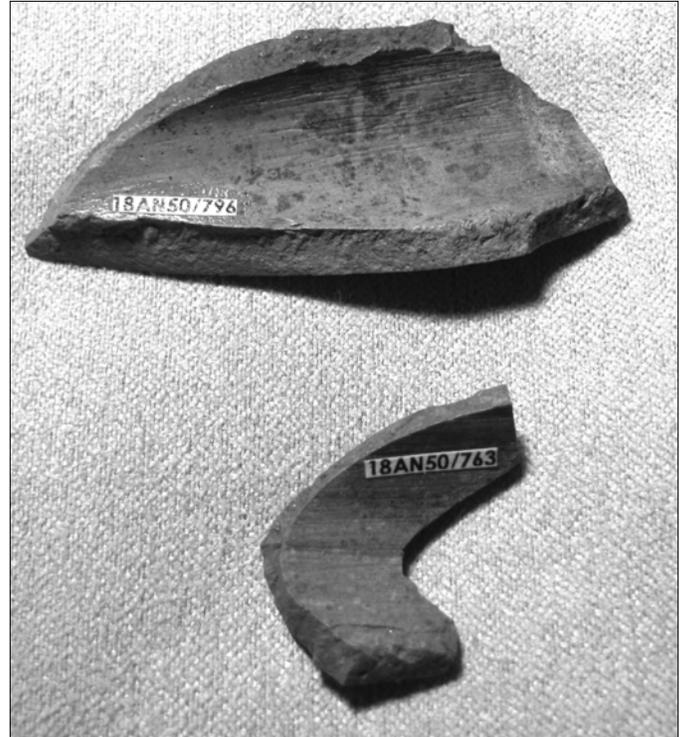


FIGURE 2. Interior of Adena tube pipes from Pig Point showing tool marks.



FIGURE 1. Exterior of Adena tube pipes from Pig Point (longer specimen is 2.1 inches).

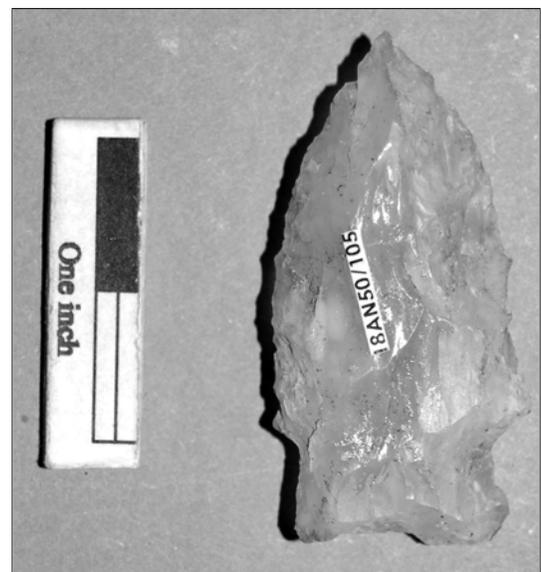


FIGURE 3. Hopewell point from Pig Point made of Flint Ridge (Ohio) chalcidony.



FIGURE 4. Adena copper bead (0.25 inches) from Pig Point.



FIGURE 5. Examples of fossil shark teeth, drilled canines, and marginella beads from Pig Point (larger shark tooth is 1.75 inches).

Recently, through the kindness of Dr. Tom Emerson and Dr. Sarah Wisseman of the Illinois State Archaeological Survey and the University of Illinois, the original quarry source of the Pig Point stone pipes was determined through compositional analysis. These researchers have been conducting a multi-year study to characterize pipestone quarries in the Midwest, ranging from Minnesota to Missouri to Ohio, using X-ray diffraction and infrared spectroscopy. Their demonstrable success in



FIGURE 6. Stone platform pipe fragment (1.25 inches) from Pig Point.

tying hundreds of pipes and effigies to their original quarry sources is an impressive accomplishment.

Despite being visually distinct from each other, both pipe fragments from Pig Point turned out to be clear matches with the Fuert Hill Quarry in the Scioto Valley about 5 miles north of what is today Portsmouth, Ohio (see Figure 7). This quarry is located across the Scioto River from the Hopewellian Tremper Mound and Earthworks, a locality famous for its large number of killed platform effigy pipes. Interestingly, most of these platform pipes were ultimately determined to have been made of Illinois pipestone. Obviously, complex trading and social relationships are at work here, as is the case with the earlier Adena tube pipes from Pig Point and elsewhere.

Over a half century ago, excavations on the banks of the Rhode River produced Adena stone tube pipes (and beads) virtually identical to those found at Pig Point seven miles away (see Figure 8). These came from a ritual context known as the West River Adena site (18AN19) which has long been known as part of the Delmarva Adena Complex extending across the Eastern Shore to Delaware (Ford 1976). The presence of these objects in an apparently domestic context at Pig Point will undoubtedly be the subject of much future contemplation. Over many decades, explanations of the Delmarva Adena phenomenon have ranged from simple trade of objects into local systems, through Midwestern trading parties physically seeking Atlantic shell and fossil teeth, to the actual physical migration of Midwestern groups.

Since the Scioto River Valley is a nucleus of Adena/Hopewell activity, the fact that the Pig Point pipes originated there is not a surprising result. Nonetheless, the

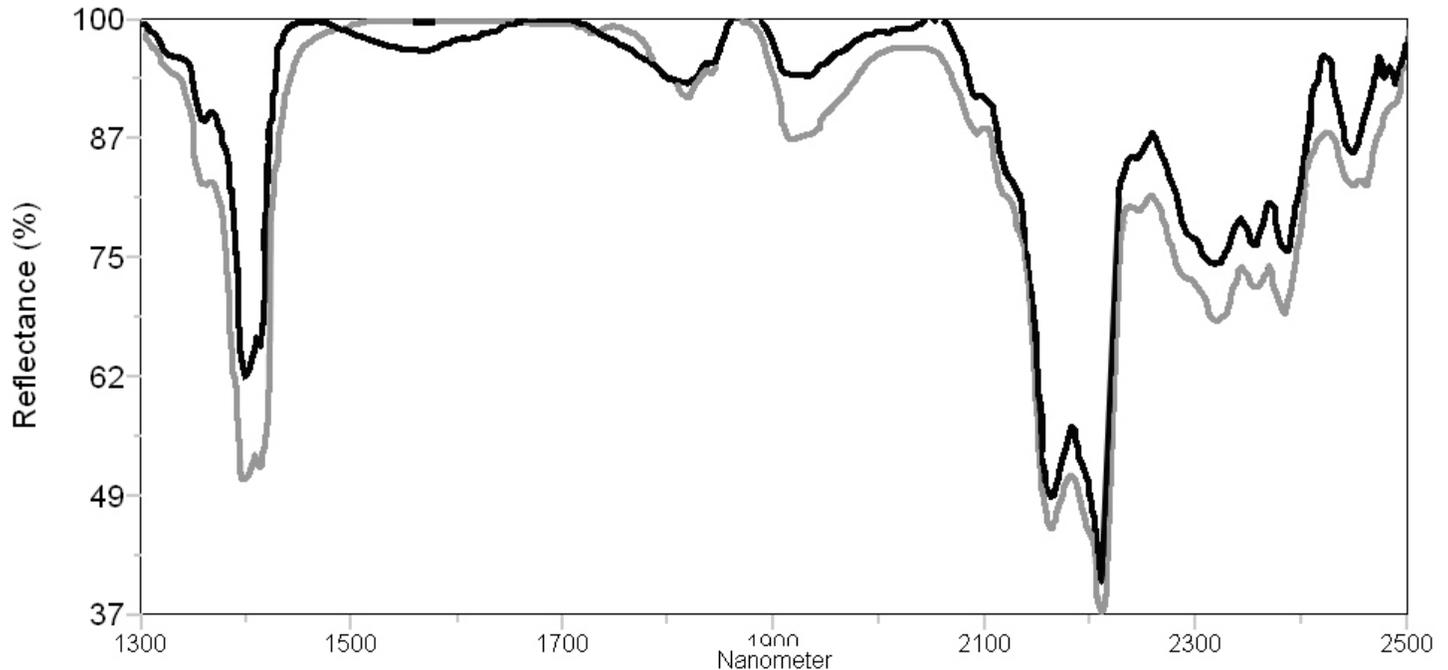


FIGURE 7. Chemical signature of Fuert Hill Quarry pipestone (gray) and Pig Point stone tube pipe (black).



FIGURE 8. Stone tube pipes from the West River Adena site.

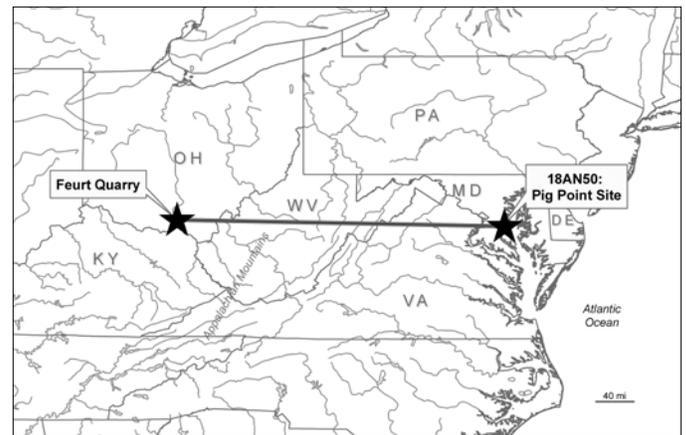


FIGURE 9. Map showing the relative location of the Pig Point site to the Fuert Hill Quarry.

confirmation that some of these exotic objects originated at a specific quarry nearly 400 miles (and a mountain range) away from their eventual deposition on the Patuxent River in Anne Arundel County (Figure 9), is still an exciting discovery.

References Cited

- Ford, T. Latimer, Jr.
1975 Adena Sites on Chesapeake Bay. *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 4:63-89.

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