

CORRESPONDENCE

A PORCELAIN BATON

Three years ago I published an account of two objects of porcelain acquired by the Ohio State Museum, in a periodical of that institution known as *MUSEUM ECHOES* (for June and October, 1933). Inasmuch as their origin has not yet been cleared up, I should like to see them again put on display in *AMERICAN ANTIQUITY*. One is illustrated in Figure 13. It is eleven and three-quarters inches long; the cross section is oval, with diameters of one and one-quarter and one and one-half inches. It is hollow, the hole being also oval in cross section with diameters of about three-eighths and five-eighths inches. Professor Watts, of the Department of Ceramics of Ohio State University, describes this specimen as follows:

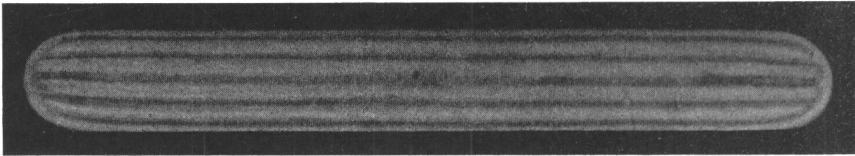


FIG. 13

"It is a nearly vitreous earthenware body covered with a light blue cobalt glaze, probably matured with the body at about 1300 degrees centigrade. Made in two parts and pressed together with a clay slip joint."

The surface of the specimen is ridged, or fluted, in relief of about three-sixteenths of an inch. The other specimen is similar in all respects to this one.

Both pieces were found near the village of Garrettsville, Portage County, in northern Ohio. The one illustrated was first described by M. C. Read in *Archaeology of Ohio* (Western Reserve Historical Society, Tracts 73-84, Vol. III, p. 118). According to Read, it was plowed up in a field "... at a place where several 'Indian relics' had previously been found."

In certain early French records concerning the region of the Great Lakes, there are references to the use of objects apparently similar to these, by the whites and the Indians, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These objects were called "porcelain sticks," and were used as presents, or as credentials of speakers at important councils.

In two volumes of the *Jesuit Relations* (Vol. 11, p. 257; and Vol. 40, p. 205), the French word which has been translated into English as "stick," is *baston*, or the modern *baton*. But both of these references indicate that the objects described were small enough to be enclosed in the hand or worn in the ear.

The following appears in the record of a council of Cadillac with the Ottawa

Indians at Detroit in 1707 (See Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol. 33, p. 349): "Monsieur de la Mothe, with three sticks of porcelain, speaks to the Outtavois; this porcelain represents the black robe (a Jesuit), as if it were present at the council. . . ." That the term "porcelain" did not necessarily refer to "shell" in the French of New France is indicated by the use of both terms in an inventory of Cadillac's property at Detroit in 1711, in which there is an item of "1 white shell with two divisions of blue porcelain" (Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol. 33, p. 524. The original is not given). Note here that the porcelain is described as blue, which is the color of the two specimens under discussion.

All efforts to find some explanation for these two objects other than that suggested in the above quotations has failed. Two visits to the village of Garettsville failed to discover anyone who knew exactly where they were found, and there is no record of any local pioneer pottery manufactories where such things might have been made. The writer saw a fragment of another specimen in the Paine collection at Springfield, Illinois, a couple of years ago. It was identical with those herein described except for the short diameter of the cross section: about one-quarter of an inch less. It was marked "Ohio," and there is no mention of it in the Paine catalogue. C. B. Moore (*Certain Aboriginal Remains of the Northwest Florida Coast*, p. 241) describes an object somewhat similar to these from Ohio, taken from a mound in Florida. It was eleven inches long and two and one-half inches in diameter, with a rounded enlargement at both ends. The material was impure kaolin. It was not fluted or grooved, but showed ". . . traces of decoration in low relief."

The following authorities have been notified of the details concerning these porcelain objects from Ohio: M. Georges Haumont, Manufacture National de Sevres, France; Dr. Georges Henri Ridiere, Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle, Musee D'Ethnographie, Palais du Trocadero, Paris, France; M. Andre Joubin, Rue Berryer 11, Paris (VIII*), France; Mr. R. W. Hemphill, Colonial Sign and Insulator Co., Akron, Ohio; and Mr. F. W. Butler, Akron Porcelain Co., Akron, Ohio. The Manufacture National de Sevres was founded in 1738, but M. Haumont knows of no records of the manufacture of porcelain objects for use in New France. Archaeologists in the northeastern part of the United States, and other students who might have information on the subject, have also been notified.

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UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ON LUDLOW CAVE

Ludlow Cave is in the extreme northwestern corner of South Dakota, far outside the hitherto recorded range of northern Plains ceramic horizons. In 1931, through the courtesy of the excavator, Mr. W. H. Over, I had the oppor-