

DISTRIBUTION OF
IROQUOIAN DISCOIDAL CLAY BEADS

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ABSTRACT

Following an extensive search of the literature involving 147 Iroquois sites, representing the whole of Iroquoia, seeking information on the distribution of discoidal clay beads, the author concludes that these beads are a St. Lawrence Iroquoian trait. It is shown that they originate in the late prehistoric era and persist into the protohistoric period. On Huron/Petun sites they are frequently in association with St. Lawrence Iroquoian pottery and sometimes with European material. It is concluded that the external distribution of these St. Lawrence Iroquoian beads, restricted as they are to the Huron/Petun area, supports further the hypothesis that the St. Lawrence Iroquoians were destroyed by the Huron/Petun.

INTRODUCTION

During the analysis of the archaeological material from the Dawson site in 1965, two discoidal clay beads whose edges were decorated with transversely incised finger-nail impressions were observed in the McCord Collection (Pendergast 1972:131). Although discoidal clay beads occurred in the Roebuck (Wintemberg 1936:63), Crystal Rock (Pendergast 1962:31), Payne (Pendergast 1963:8) and Waupoos (Pendergast 1964:71, 87) site samples, the beads in the Dawson sample were the first encountered with the edges 'milled' or 'crenelated.'

These discoidal beads are fired clay in which there is little or no temper. The upper and lower surfaces, which may be smooth or bumpy, are usually flat or slightly convex. The hole may be the result of a pointed object having been passed through the wet clay from one or both sides before firing. Or it may be the result of the clay having been moulded around a twig or reed which would be burned out when the bead was fired. Frequently the diameter of a bead is four or five times its thickness, although beads do occur with other proportions. Most beads are red or reddish-brown in colour. These beads are not perforated potsherd discs.

At that time a search of the literature seeking information on the provenance and incidence of discoidal clay beads with milled edges revealed that Wintemberg alone (1936:63) had remarked upon their existence. Unfortunately his observation simply stated that they occurred "at a site in Victoria county." Having encountered Huron coronet pipes and Huron pottery in the Dawson site sample (Pendergast 1972:119, 198), the occurrence of discoidal clay beads with milled edges in Victoria county was interpreted as yet another trait of the Trent River Southern Huron being present on the Dawson site (Pendergast 1972:280).

Since 1965 the accumulation of data on St. Lawrence Iroquoian sites has revealed that discoidal clay beads occur on nine of the 16 sites on which data is available. However discoidal clay beads with milled edges occurred on only two of these sites: Summerstown Station, nine beads (Pendergast 1968:4), and Dawson, four beads (Pendergast 1972:280). Recently during the analysis of the Gogo collection from the large Glenbrook St. Lawrence Iroquoian village in

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partial fulfillment of a contract with the National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 107 discoidal clay beads were recorded. Forty-three of these were decorated with milled edges. This abrupt and major increase in the incidence of both these bead types rekindled interest and led to a search of the literature, the results of which are summarized in Table 1; the full data are given in Table. 2.

It should be clear that this is a research paper written to generate and disseminate data. It seeks to set out and substantiate a hypothesis regarding the diagnostic value of certain clay beads found on some Iroquoian sites which, as far as can be ascertained, has not been developed previously. This compilation of the bead data, although inherently of limited scope, may help those who are attempting to understand the Iroquoians by means of archaeological data and techniques. The paper does not seek to elucidate the Huron conquest of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians in a definitive manner, although the data may be reviewed in that context too. Neither is it intended to suggest that the Iroquoians used pierced discoidal clay pieces exclusively as beads although in my opinion that identification is the most likely at this time.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF IROQUOIAN DISCOIDAL CLAY BEADS

Iroquoian Group	Sites Sampled	Discoidal Milled	Beads Undec	Total
St. Lawrence	16	56	122	178
Huron/Petun	30	1	73	74
Neutral	5	--	--	--
Middleport	10	--	--	--
Uren	1	--	--	--
Pickering	9	--	1 ¹	1
Glen Meyer	3	--	1 ¹	1
Mohawk	1	--	--	--
Onondaga	10	--	--	--
Oneida	13	--	--	--
Cayuga	8	--	--	--
Seneca	9	--	1 ¹	1
Oak Hill	8	--	--	--
Chance	11	--	--	--
Owasco	7	--	--	--
Erie	3	--	--	--
		--		
Total	144	57	198	255

¹These figures may be based on an erroneous interpretation of the literature.

TABLE 2

PROVENANCE OF IROQUOIAN DISCOIDAL CLAY BEADS

Serial	Site	Incidence		Reference
		Milled	Undec	
<u>St. Lawrence Iroquoian</u>				
1	Dawson	4	1	Pendergast 1972 b:131, 280
2	Glenbrook	43	64	Pendergast n.d.a.
3	Crystal Rock	-	1	Pendergast 1962:31
4	McIvor	-	7	Wright pers. comm.
5	Summerstown ¹	9	10	Pendergast 1968:4
6	Roebuck	-	25	Wintenberg 1936:63
7	Beckstead	-	-	Pendergast 1966a:63-76
8	Salem	-	8	Pendergast 1966a:31
9	Grays Creek	-	3	Pendergast 1966a:57
10	MacDougald	-	-	Pendergast 1969:29-53
11	Sugarbush	-	3	Pendergast 1974:32
12	Putnam	-	-	Skinner 1921:134, 162
13	Berry	-	-	Pendergast 1966b:26-53
14	Buisson ²	-	-	Girouard 1967, 1975
15	Stewart	-	-	Pendergast n.d. b
16	Durfee	-	-	Harrington 1920:337
	Total	56	122	
<u>Huron/Petun</u>				
17	Downsview	-	-	Emerson 1954:101-123
18	Black Creek	-	-	Emerson 1954:123-142
19	McKenzie ³	-	-	Emerson 1954:142-164
20	Aurora	-	-	Emerson 1954:165-185
21	Hardrock	-	-	Emerson 1954:185-203
22	Benson	-	-	Emerson 1954:203-229
23	Benson	-	-	Ramsden 1977
24	Benson	-	6	Pendergast n.d. c
25	Payne	-	1	Pendergast 1963:8
26	Payne	-	-	Emerson 1966
27	Waupoos	-	1	Pendergast 1964:71, 87
28	Lite	-	-	Pendergast 1972a:28
29	Dougall	-	31	Wright 1972:9
30	Copeland	-	-	Channen and Clarke 1965:15
31	McDonald	-	-	Warnica 1963:24-28
32	Sidey-Mackay	-	1	Wintenberg 1946:169
33	Draper	1 ⁴	15	Pearce 1978:8
34	Jackes	-	-	Noble 1974

Table 2 continued:

Serial	Site	Incidence		Reference
		Milled	Undec	
35	Second Lake	-	1	O'Brien 1976:46
36	Ihonatiria	-	-	O'Brien 1976:25
37	BfGx-3	-	-	O'Brien 1976:27
38	BeGx-11	-	-	O'Brien 1976:32
39	Deshambault ⁵	-	-	Latta 1977:309-332
40	Farlain Lake ⁶	-	-	Latta 1976:81, 344
41	Charlebois	-	10	Latta 1976:113, 370
42	Cedar Point	-	-	Latta 1976:387-409
43	Robitaille ⁷	-	-	Latta 1976:447
44	Sopher	-	7	Noble 1968:197
45	Orr Lake	-	-	McGuire 1961:6
46	Beswetherick	-	-	Channen and Clark 1963a:9
47	Ellsmere-Morrison	-	-	Channen and Clark 1963b:5
48	Wallace	-	-	Donaldson 1966:6-9
49	Ball	-	-	Knight 1978:53
	Total	1	73	
<u>Neutral</u>				
50	Moyer	-	-	Wagner et al 1973
51	Donovan	-	-	Ridley 1961:49
52	Sealey	-	-	Ridley 1961:49
53	Walker	-	-	Ridley 1961:49
54	Daniels	-	-	Ridley 1961:49
<u>Middleport</u>				
55	Risebrough	-	-	Kapches 1974
56	Nodwell	-	-	Wright 1966:59-64; Wright 1974
57	Middleport	-	-	Wintenberg 1948:21
58	Pound	-	-	Wright 1966:59-64
59	Inverhuron	-	-	Wright 1966:59-64
60	Robb	-	-	Wright 1966:59-64
61	Milroy	-	-	Wright 1966:59-64
62	Kienuka	-	-	Wright 1966:59-64
63	Webb	-	-	Harper 1952; Wright 1966:59-64
64	Lawson	-	-	Wintenberg 1939:33
<u>Uren</u>				
65	Uren	-	-	Wintenberg 1928:33
<u>Pickering</u>				
66	Boys	-	-	Ridley 1958
67	Boys	-	1?	Reid 1975:24

Table 2 continued:

Serial	Site	Incidence		Reference
		Milled	Undec	
68	Bennett	-	-	Wright and Anderson 1969
69	Richardson	-	-	Pearce 1977:12
70	East Sugar Island	-	-	Pearce 1977:65
71	Serpent Mounds	-	-	Pearce 1977:70
72	Breeze	-	-	Pearce 1977:76
73	Barrie	-	-	Ridley 1958
74	Miller	-	-	Kenyon 1968:31; Wright 1966
<u>Glen Meyer</u>				
75	Reid	-	-	Wright 1978:25
76	Van Besien	-	1?	Noble 1975:23
77	Porteous	-	-	Noble and Kenyon 1972
<u>Mohawk</u>				
78	Garoga	-	-	Ritchie 1965:317; Ritchie and Funk 1973:327-328
<u>Onondaga</u>				
79	Cemetery	-	-	Tuck 1969:285; 1971:141
80	Nursery	-	-	Tuck 1969:290; 1971:146
81	Barnes	-	-	Tuck 1969:294-315; 1971:149; Bradley 1976:29
82	McNab	-	-	Tuck 1971:161; Bradley 1976:29
83	Atwell Fort	-	-	Tuck 1969:322-328; 1971:165
84	Temperence House	-	-	Tuck 1969:317-325; 1971:162; Bradley 1976:29
85	Chase	-	-	Tuck 1969:333; 1971:172; Bradley 1976:29; La France 1977:40
86	Quirk	-	-	Tuck 1969:335; 1971:173; Bradley 1976:30
87	Pompey Center	-	-	Tuck 1969:336; 1971:175; Bradley 1976:30
88	Indian Hill	-	-	Tuck 1969:339-347; 1971:177; Bradley 1976:32
<u>Oneida</u>				
89	Olcott	-	-	Pratt 1976:100, 239; Pratt 1963:56-92
90	Buyea	-	-	Pratt 1976:96, 239; Wemple 1977, Whitney 1977
91	Upper Hogan	-	-	Bennett and Cole 1974
92	Cameron	-	-	Pratt 1976:121, 239; Bennett and Clark 1978
93	Tuttle	-	-	Pratt 1976:95, 239
94	Moon	-	-	Pratt 1976:98, 239
95	Goff	-	-	Pratt 1976:99, 239
96	Vaillancourt ^a	-	-	Pratt 1961; 1976:117, 239

Table 2 continued:

Serial	Site	Incidence		Reference
		Milled	Undec	
97	Diable	-	-	Pratt 1976:118, 239
98	Bach	-	-	Pratt 1976:118, 239
99	Beecher	-	-	Pratt 1976:124, 239
100	Thurston	-	-	Pratt 1976:128, 239
101	Marshall	-	-	Pratt 1976:136, 239
<u>Cayuga</u>				
102	Locke	-	-	Skinner 1921:43, 74
103	Great Gully	-	-	Skinner 1921:44, 74
104	Flemming	-	-	Skinner 1921:51, 74
105	Aurora	-	-	Skinner 1921:46, 74
106	Parkers ⁹	-	-	Skinner 1921:47, 74
107	Scipioville	-	-	Skinner 1921:52, 74
108	Venice Centre	-	-	Skinner 1921:53, 74
109	Great Gully	-	-	Skinner 1921:55, 74
<u>Seneca</u>				
110	Hummel	-	-	Hayes 1963:32-33
111	Rogers	-	-	Hayes 1963:32-33
112	Andrews	-	-	Hayes 1963:32-33
113	Can 29-3	-	-	Hayes 1963:32-33
114	Fletcher	-	-	Hayes 1963:32-33
115	Factory Hollow	-	1?	Parker 1919:20
116	Richmond Mills	-	-	Parker 1920:203
117	Kleis	-	-	White 1967
118	Dutch Hollow	-	-	Ritchie 1954:36
<u>Oak Hill</u>				
119	Dewandalaer	-	-	Lenig 1965:19, 43
120	El Rancho	-	-	Lenig 1965:22, 43
121	Oak Hill 2	-	-	Lenig 1965:24, 43
122	Weaver Lake	-	-	Lenig 1965:34, 43
123	Galligan	-	-	Lenig 1965:33-43
124	Furnace Brook	-	-	Tuck 1971:48; Tuck 1969:130
125	Howlett Hill	-	-	Tuck 1971:77; Tuck 1969:176
126	Kelso	-	-	Tuck 1971:71; Tuck 1969:144-161
<u>Chance</u>				
127	Getman	-	-	Ritchie 1965:313; Ritchie and Funk 1973:311-312
128	Schoff	-	-	Tuck 1971:94; Tuck 1969:185-203
129	Bloody Hill	-	-	Tuck 1971:104; Tuck 1969:204-235

Table 2 continued:

Serial	Site	Incidence		Reference
		Milled	Undec	
130	Keough	-	-	Tuck 1971:119; Tuck 1969:236-245
131	Christopher	-	-	Tuck 1971:122; Tuck 1969:246-249
132	Burke	-	-	Tuck 1971:125; Tuck 1969:264
133	Dewongo Island	-	-	Ritchie 1952:14, 31
134	Chance	-	-	Ritchie 1952:14, 31
135	Second Woods	-	-	Ritchie 1952:14, 31
136	Kingston	-	-	Ritchie 1952:14, 31
137	Carley 2	-	-	LaFrance 1976:1-24
<u>Owasco</u>				
138	Roundtop	-	-	Ritchie and Funk 1973:193
139	Maxon-Derby	-	-	Ritchie 1965:281; Ritchie and Funk 1973:212
140	Sackett ¹⁰	-	-	Ritchie 1965:288; Ritchie and Funk 1973:225
141	Bates	-	-	Ritchie 1965:284; Ritchie and Funk 1973:239
142	Nahrwold	-	-	Ritchie and Funk 1973:287
143	Chamberlain	-	-	Tuck 1971:23; Tuck 1969:45-64
144	Cabin	-	-	Tuck 1971:34; Tuck 1969:65-89
<u>Erie</u>				
145	Silverheels	-	-	Harrington 1920:207
146	Double Wall Fort	-	-	Harrington 1920:237
147	Ripley	-	-	Parker 1920:246; 1907

¹ Summerstown Station site.² Point-aux-Buisson site³ Also called Woodbridge.⁴ Short transverse lines cut the horizontal and vertical surfaces on one side covering approximately one-quarter of the circumference.⁵ Also called Quesnel.⁶ Also called McFarlain Lake.⁷ Also Called Thunder Bay No. 1.⁸ Also called Bigford.⁹ Also called Cato.¹⁰ Also called Canandaigua.

DISCUSSION

The earliest records of the Iroquoians do not describe their use of clay beads. Cartier (Biggar 1924:158, 159, 252), Champlain (Biggar 1929:134), Sagard (Wrong 1939:144-146), Lescarbot (Grant 1914:157) and Lafitau (Fenton and Moore 1977:42-45) all describe the use of white and dark shell beads for personal adornment. Some of these are discoidal in shape. Commencing with Champlain all refer to these beads as *wampum*. Although it is clear from the earliest records that great value was placed on these beads, Cartier (Biggar 1924:158) remarks that they

are "The most precious article they possess in the world," their use as personal ornaments contrasts sharply with their later use as currency and state symbols (Morgan 1901:51). It seems unlikely that discoidal clay beads were held in the same esteem. Nevertheless an awareness of how the Iroquoians used beads for personal adornment will suggest how beads were used generally and, by extrapolation, how discoidal clay beads may have been used.

Cartier (Biggar 1924:158) notes that the Indians have "... the same use (for) them as gold and silver with us." Florio's (1580:51) translation of Cartier's account explains that they "wear them aboute their neckes, even as we do them of golde." Hakluyt (1600, Volume 8 :233-234) states that they "weare them about their necks, even as we doe chains of gold and silver." Hakluyt (1600, Volume 8:233-265) describes how on Carrier's third voyage at Stadacona the chief, Agona, placed on his (Cartier's) head "a piece of tanned leather of a yellow skin edged about with *Esnoguy* (white shell beads) . . . which was upon his head in steade of a crowne" The chief also "tooke from his wrists two bracelets of *Esnoguy*, and put them upon the Captaines (Cartier's) arms." Biggar (1924:252) repeats the Hakluyt text verbatim.

Champlain (Biggar 1929:134-135) explains that Huron women "are laden with quantities of wampum both necklaces and chains which they allow to hang in front of their robes and attached to their belts, and also with bracelets and ear-rings . . . sometimes they fasten to it (their hair) plates a foot square covered with the same wampum which hang behind." He states "I can assure you that at dances I have attended, I have seen girls that had more than twelve pounds of wampum on them." Champlain's illustrations of Huron female dress are reproduced in Fig. 1.

Sagard (Wrong 1939:144) describes the use of beads by the Huron as follows: "If they (the women) have painted ornaments and wampum they do not forget them Their wampum is strung in different ways, some of it to make necklaces three or four fingers in breadth, made like a horses girth (suringle?) with all its threads covered up and inserted in the pieces of shell. The circumference of these necklaces is about three and a half feet or more, and the women put many of them on their necks, according to their means and wealth. Then they have others, strung like rosaries, fastened to their ears and hanging down, and chains of the same wampum of which the individual pieces as big as walnuts, which they fasten to both hips, and these are arranged in front in a slant over their thighs or girdle they wear. And I have seen other women who also wore bracelets on their arms and great plates in front over the stomach, with others being circular in shape and (square) like a teasel for carding wool hanging from their hair-plaits." Sagard also describes Huron men's dress (Wrong 1939:145) but does not indicate that they used beads. Men presented the girl they wished to marry with "some necklace, bracelet, or ear-ring made of wampum" (Wrong 1939:122). Newborn children had their ears pierced and the mother "suspends from it wampum beads or other trifles and also hangs them round the childs neck however small it may be" (Wrong 1939:127). Sagard makes it clear that the wampum beads he describes "consist of the ribs of those large sea-shells called *vignols* like periwinkles, which they cut into a thousand pieces, then polish them on sand-stone, pierce a hole in them and make necklaces and bracelets of them . . ." (Wrong 1939:146).

Lescarbot (Grant 1914:157-158) repeats Sagard's description on how wampum is manufactured from "great sea-conches called *vignols*" and explains that it is used to make "collars, scarves, and bracelets." He goes on to note that "The women who deck themselves with such things and have chains going a dozen times about their necks, and hanging down upon their breasts, and about their wrists, and above the elbow. They also hang long strings of them at their ears, which come down as low as their shoulders. No men wear them, save only some young lovers."

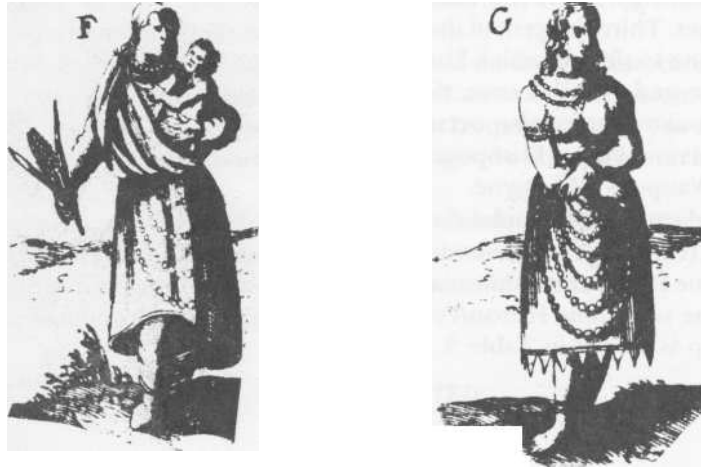


Fig. 1. Champlain's illustration of Huron female dress: "On this page may be seen how the women are dressed, as is shown in F, and the girls going to the dance in G (Biggar 1929:135).

Lafitau (Fenton and Moore 1977:42-45) also describes the use of wampum for personal adornment. A young Iroquois male would use "a little piece of white wampum" to hold the tufts in which his hair was arranged. In his perforated ears he would wear "wampum beads an inch thick, strung on ribbons which hang down to the chest. Some of them make themselves a sort of diadem of a small collar of wampum or marten skin band which, after encircling their heads, floats pleasingly down their backs and over their shoulders The Iroquois women have their ears pierced like the men's, in three places, but the openings are smaller. They put wampum or red stone pendants cut like arrowheads in them or little tubes of wampum, made like Holland pipe stems." Lafitau goes on to describe the use of wampum by Indians other than the Iroquois and provides considerably more information on the use of wampum (Fenton and Moore 1977:308-312) but it is not germane to this paper.

The Jesuits record the use of wampum necklaces and bracelets by the Huron in their Relations (Thwaites 1896-1901, Volume 15:155) without adding new details. .

In summary the earliest records contain Cartier's observations on the St. Lawrence Iroquoians regarding the use of beads by males but he does not mention their use by women. Champlain and Sagard on the other hand do not mention the use of beads by Huron men but describes their use in large numbers by the Huron women. Lescarbot indicates that, with the exception of some young lovers, men did not wear beads. Lafitau suggests that beads were worn by both men and women.

Looking again at the archaeological distribution of discoidal clay beads among the 147 Iroquoian site records examined one finds that, aside from the three questionable specimens noted, they only occur on St. Lawrence Iroquoian and Huron/Petun sites. By far the largest concentration, 178 or 70 percent of the 255 beads in the sample, occur on St. Lawrence Iroquoian sites. Fifty-six percent of the sixteen St. Lawrence Iroquoian sites on which data is available contain discoidal *clay* beads. *They occur on five of the six sites in the Summerston Village Cluster commencing with the Salem site, circa A.D. 1400. They occur on all three of the*

later Prescott Village Cluster sites on which data is available: McIvor, Roebuck and Crystal Rock. The largest concentration of these beads occur on the late sites; Dawson (5), Glenbrook (107), Summerstown Station (19) and Roebuck (25).

By comparison only 74 of the 255 discoidal clay beads, or 30 percent, occur on the Huron/Petun sites. Thirty percent of the Huron/Petun sites examined have these beads. They occur on five of the 15 sites on which European material has been found. With the exception of the Second Lake and Dougall sites, discoidal clay beads only occur on sites on which St. Lawrence Iroquoian pottery also occurs; i.e., Benson, Sidey-Mackay, Charlebois, Draper, Sopher, Waupoos and Payne. European material has been found on all of these except Second Lake, Draper, Waupoos and Payne.

These data indicate that discoidal clay beads occur earlier on St. Lawrence Iroquoian sites than they do on Huron/Petun sites and continue through to protohistoric times, e.g. Dawson. On five of the nine Huron/Petun sites on which these beads occur European goods also occur. On seven of these same nine Huron/Petun sites, St. Lawrence Iroquoian pottery also occurs. This relationship is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
DISCOIDAL CLAY BEADS
ON HURON/PETUN SITES

Site	St. Lawrence' Pottery	European' Material	Discoidal Beads
Charlebois	x	x	10
Dougall	-	x	31
Benson	x	x	6
Sopher	x	x	7
Sidey-Mackay	x	x	1
Draper	x	-	16
Waupoos	x	-	1
Payne	x	-	1
Second Lake	-	-	1

1 'x' indicates presence

The presence of St. Lawrence Iroquoian pottery on late prehistoric and protohistoric Huron/Petun sites has been observed before (Boyle 1891:25; Laidlaw 1891:76; Wintenberg 1946:154-182; Emerson 1954; Pendergast 1963:13; Wright 1966:71, 76). Wright (1972:90) has astutely attributed the origin of this pottery to be that produced by St. Lawrence Iroquoian women who, having been captured by the Huron/Petun, followed the Iroquoian practice of living as adopted kin with their captors. These captive women must have also continued to make their characteristic St. Lawrence Iroquois discoidal clay beads. In this manner both St. Lawrence Iroquoian pottery and discoidal clay beads were introduced into Huron/Petun villages where St. Lawrence Iroquoian women were held captive during the war which resulted in their elimination as a distinct Iroquoian group.

CONCLUSIONS

Iroquois discoidal clay beads were originated by the prehistoric St. Lawrence Iroquois, circa A.D. 1400, and their use persisted into the protohistoric era. During the latter part of this period a variant with milled edges came into use.

The occurrence of undecorated discoidal clay beads on late prehistoric and protohistoric Huron/Petun sites suggests the presence of St. Lawrence Iroquoian women. This is particularly likely to be the case when St. Lawrence Iroquoian pottery is also present. The reason why more discoidal clay beads with milled edges do not appear on late Huron/Petun sites is not understood at this time.

The archaeological distribution of discoidal clay beads on Huron/Petun sites supports Wright's hypothesis regarding the state of war which existed between the Huron/Petun and the St. Lawrence Iroquoians that led to the elimination of the latter.

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