

Sign of ancient Egyptian glassmaking found

June 17 2005

QANTIR-PIRAMESES, Egypt, June 17 (UPI) -- Scientists say they have found the first conclusive evidence of a glass factory in ancient Egypt.

They believe their find offers new insights into production techniques for a commodity so highly prized that nobles used it interchangeably with gemstones, the Washington Post said Friday.

Analyzing glass and clay fragments at Qantir-Piramesses in the eastern Nile Delta, researchers described a two-step process in which factories melted crushed quartz to form "semifinished" glass. The glass then was re-melted and colored to make "ingots" for shipment to artisans elsewhere. Another melting formed the glass into inlays, ornaments and other objects.

"For years, there was no direct evidence of the production of glass," said archaeologist Thilo Rehren of University College in London. "Somebody was making it, but the only thing we had were museums full of glass objects."

Rehren reports on his first visit to Qantir and subsequent excavations in this week's edition of the journal *Science*.

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Citation: Sign of ancient Egyptian glassmaking found (2005, June 17) retrieved 1 April 2023

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