

Candle box from 500 years ago found in melting glacier in Norway

June 8 2021, by Bob Yirka



The box as it was found on the Lendbreen ice. Credit: [Secrets of the Ice Facebook page](#).

A team of archaeologists with the Glacier Archaeology Program in Innlandet have discovered a candle box in the Lendbreen glacier in

Norway's Breheimen National Park. The team has been posting its findings on their [Facebook page](#).

The find was one of hundreds the team has reported as they scour the edges of the melting glacier. Prior to finding the candle box, the team found objects such as spears, horse snowshoes, walking sticks, dog leashes, mittens, and in one case, the remains of a pet dog. Some of the items have been dated as far back as 1,000 years ago. The candle box drew attention right away because at first discovery, it was not known what was inside. Opening and testing showed it to hold a beeswax candle and that it was from a time between 1475 and 1635, making it between 386 and 546 years old. The box was constructed from pine wood.

Candle boxes were common in the area during that time. Farmers would drive their cattle to summer pastures (a practice called seterbruk) through the Lendbreen pass, down to where food for the livestock was more plentiful. From spring to fall, the farmer and his wife would live in their summer pasture home. The farmer (or a hand) would tend to the livestock and his wife would make [dairy products](#). At night, their sole source of light would be from a candle made of beeswax. The candles were expensive, so were cared for as a precious commodity. A single candle would be placed in a box to protect it from the elements during travel, which could have been on horseback in some cases, and in other cases, on foot.

The archaeologists describe the candle box as being in excellent condition, having been preserved in the ice for hundreds of years. Its lid was still firmly in place, and once opened, the beeswax and wick appeared ready for use. It is not known how the candle box and its contents wound up in the glacier, but it appears likely something interrupted one couple's seterbruk, leaving their belongings to be buried in the snow falling on a glacier.



Credit: [Secrets of the Ice Facebook page](#).

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