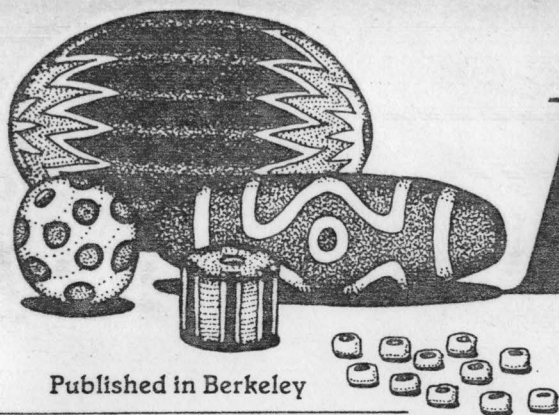


The Northern California Bead Society



Bulletin

Volume IV, No. 2

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Marisa Maier, Editor

Published in Berkeley

PROGRAM NOTES

The program for December will consist of our traditional Christmas Party, when we will take the opportunity to socialize and indulge in some seasonal cheer. As with previous parties, we will hold an auction. (Members and friends are encouraged to call President Norman Brown, 525-8142, to make donations of beads, beaded jewelry or other items of interest). Other surprises are in store. This meeting will take place at the usual location, but at an earlier date than usual. The party starts at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9th.

In January, we are scheduling Si Frazier to speak to us on the subject of *Tourmeline*; though, without being too enigmatic, we may have a surprise in store for that occasion! Watch your Program Announcement for fuller information.

Some of the other programs we are currently arranging will cover such topics as: metal beads, Japanese beads, garnet, cloisonne, and others.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Since the last bulletin we have had two Board Meetings.

From the meeting of September 30. The treasurer reported that our balance, after current expenses, stood at \$1534.00. It was moved, seconded and passed that we pay the \$84.00 printer's bill for the N.C.B.S. "handouts" that were produced by Jamey to advertise the Society. Ann reported that the Publishing Committee is aiming for November 15 as a possible date for publication of the Rosary Bead book reprint. Jamey reported on the production of the bulletin; he had prepared an extensive written report which was read and approved. The programs for November and December were discussed; possibilities for January through March were also mentioned.

From our meeting of October 28. The treasurer reported a balance of \$1600. The motion that we pay rent for the next quarter was passed. The motion was also approved that we pay Dr. Liu \$200 for his travel expenses and the October program. A motion was also passed that Jamey may tell Jan Francis that the Society will pay up to \$200 for her combined travel expenses and honorarium. A gem mining film for the November program was discussed, as was the

(Continued on page 2)

was used in a very restricted manner, today it is common to find fancy clothing completely covered with beads. In addition, the techniques used to work the beads have changed to a degree, and loom-woven beadwork is more common than in previous times. Also, the concept of ensemble components has been added. Jo Allyn showed many slides taken at powwows and festivals of men and women in fancy dress. A male dancer's costume commonly consists of a matched set of belt, suspender, headband, cuffs, armbands, anklets and moccasins.

One of the most commonly found beaded items today is the medallion. In earlier times, medallions were created as intrinsic parts on clothing. During the 1920's and 1930's Indian women began to produce separate medallions as a relatively simple, but very aesthetically pleasing, method of creating craft items for sale.

As with her previous talk, Jo Allyn presented a substantial amount of information on Indian culture accompanied by slides of very beautiful examples. We thank her.

Jamey D. Allen

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The Writings of Peter Francis

In earlier issues of this bulletin we have announced that Peter Francis, who gave a very popular talk last November, would be returning to speak to us again soon. As it happens, Peter will not return to the U.S. for almost another year. However, because he is a serious and prolific writer, he has submitted several papers for publication in our bulletin.

Beginning with this issue, the column formerly called **The Bead Question** will magically become **The Bead Identifier**. In his unique and whimsical way, Peter will pose questions of interest concerning beads and will proceed to answer them. We will also be serializing two longer articles which will have never before been published, except in this bulletin and the newsletter of the Los Angeles Bead Society. Peter Francis is probably the world's first syndicated Bead Columnist!

BEAD NOMENCLATURE: THE SOURCES AND SOME PROPOSED CRITERIA Part One: The Sources of Bead Nomenclature

The Problem

Nomenclature, the naming of objects or classes of objects, is a basic need of scientific investigation. As it is well known that beads have not been studied on the scale they deserve, it comes as no surprise to discover that the nomenclature of beads is in a somewhat haphazard state. The importance of a systematic and universal nomenclature for beads is self-evident. Unless collectors, researchers and others interested in the subject can refer confidently to any particular bead with its own well-understood name, study on the subject will remain stymied.

The only real attempt at a systematic nomenclature of beads was made by Hoarace Beck more than fifty years ago. While there is very little to fault Beck concerning the nomencla-

ture he used, such a period of time, during which nearly all of the literature of beads has been published and during which we have witnessed a veritable explosion in the archaeological and ethnographic sciences, has naturally caused his nomenclature to be less than comprehensive when describing beads in the 1980s.

The aim of this paper is two-fold. First, we shall explore the various sources which exist for bead nomenclature. As there are several original sources from which bead names have been taken, an understanding of them should help us decide on a course of action by which we can recognize the nomenclature of beads in a standard manner, thereby clearing away some of the confusion which exists in this field.

First Considerations

Before entering into a discussion of bead name sources, there are two considerations that ought to be kept in mind as we work toward the naming of beads.

First, we must remember that the world does not revolve around California. You know that, of course, but it is sometimes easy to forget that all bead activity does not take place on the American West Coast. That it is fairly easy to forget this is really a compliment to the energy, activity, and great enthusiasm for beads found in the American Far West.

The second consideration concerns the use of language in general. Language is not static, constant and unvarying. Rather, it is in a state of constant flux, for it is a living, growing thing. As we name beads, we are adding to the vocabulary storehouse of the English language. As we do so, we should remember that just as language is subject to change, so is any sub-set of language. Bead nomenclature is just one such sub-set. We must expect that it, too, would be ever-changing, with old names being replaced by new ones, in the same manner as the English language itself is constantly being transformed through new use.

Primary Sources of Bead Nomenclature

There are two sources of bead nomenclature which may be considered primary. Their primacy comes from their long establishment.

Beads which are named from primary sources usually retain their names against "challenges" from any secondary source.

Shape of the Bead

The first of the primary sources is simply the naming of a bead from the obvious suggestion arising from its shape. There are really two types of this nomenclature. The one derives names of beads from the geometric shapes of the bead or its resemblance to some common object. Thus, **tube beads**, **cone beads**, and **barrel beads**, and, when understood, **bicones**, **hexagonal tubes**, and **drop pendants**, all derive their names from this simple source.

This is not to say that there is no room for confusion here. The simplest of all bead shapes, the round bead with flattened poles, is most often and most correctly called an **oblate**. Other writers, however, prefer to use names such as **globular**, **spheroid**, **spheroidal**, or even just **round bead**.

The other set of beads are named because they are in the image of a life form or manufactured object. **Arrowhead pendants**, **elephant beads**, **fly pendants**, and **dice beads** are immediately recognizable from their names. Of course, care must be taken, especially in the cases of beads which are only symbolically representative of the life form it copies. A mistaken name will naturally be the result of a mistaken identification.

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As an example, a pendant in the form of a short hanging cylinder with a ball on one end, which in turn has a flat platform at the bottom, is well known from ancient Egypt. This pendant is almost universally called a **lotus pod pendant**, even though it does not really resemble the torus of a lotus. However, Merrillees (1968) has pointed out that the pendant much more resembles an opium pod. Since it is known that the ancient Egyptians were familiar with opium, it would seem that this bead has been misnamed and should be called an **opium pod bead**.

Tradition

The other primary source for bead nomenclature is the pool of names which has been established and used for a fair amount of time. Traditional names are always a potent force in the nomenclature of any class of objects. It is no less so in the case of beads.

Virtually all we have to point to as a traditional source of bead nomenclature is Beck's **C & N of B & P** (1928). I have not been able to determine if Beck coined or merely recorded the majority of terms he presented in that paper. Certainly some terms had been established before Beck wrote; others he devised to name beads which had not been published.

Many terms in common use are to be found in Beck's paper: **spacer**, **tabular**, **wedge beads**, **segmented tube**, and **chevron**, to name only a few. Some of these terms have never been challenged, perhaps in part because little work has been done on certain beads. For example, **feather diaper bead** is rather inelegant and not really descriptive, but the term has never been replaced, possible due to the uniqueness of the beads.

On the other hand, challenges have arisen because of a perceived need to change the name of a bead. Gustavus Eisen tried to attach the name **lotus bead** to what everyone else in the West calls a **melon bead**, but no one paid attention. Unfortunately, the same bead is called by Indian investigators the **amalaka fruit bead**, as that is the local fruit most closely replicated by the beads (Indian gooseberry; *Emblca officinalis* Gaertn.).

Another example of the strength of tradition, particularly Beck's influence, is the attempt by van der Sleen to rename **twisted squares** as **pentagon beads** (as each face is a pentagon). This attempt also failed.

There are times when researchers wish, however, that even the traditional names would filter through. I recently read an excavation report from India in which, as closely as I could make out (there was no co-ordination between illustrations and text), **cornerless cubes** were called **biconical rectangulars**.

Secondary Sources for Bead Nomenclature

The secondary sources for bead nomenclature are so classified because they have neither the advantage of immediate identification with a geometric shape or life object nor the established authority of tradition. These secondary sources have been called upon to name beads which have come to attention in the last half century or so. Sometimes they are beads which were undiscovered or unnoticed in Beck's day; at other times they are new beads. Among the five secondary sources considered here, there is often considerable overlap in the names of bead terms. This is a source of confusion. As we shall see, there is even considerable confusion within each category over the names of certain beads.

Nomenclature Derived from Trade Terms

Beads and bead materials have been trade objects since man first began to barter with his not-so-immediate neighbor. In time, commerce took on a life of its own, and a merchant class developed specifically to deal with trade. Very often these merchants wanted to conceal both the origin and the destination of their wares. This was especially true in the case of beads, and this may account for some of the enigmatic names that have been given to some beads from this source. In many cases, as they rarely even spoke the same language, names given to beads by the manufacturer would mean nothing to the customer. In many other cases, manufacturers do not name beads; they number them. Therefore, the middle-men are often assigned the task of naming beads.

A number of trade terms does not even originate with the importer, but springs up in the secondary market, which in turn blends into the collectors' arena. Furthermore, terms are still being coined for beads from this source, as any examination of catalogues from wholesalers will confirm.

A number of bead names especially well-known to Americans come from this source. They include **cornaline d'Allepo**, **poney bead**, **E bead**, **crow bead**, **Russian blue**, **Hubble bead** and **Hudson's Bay bead**. Even within this short list there are several problems of nomenclature. How often does one find two people who agree exactly on the division between **crow**, **poney** and **E beads**? The terms **cornaline d'Allepo** and **Hudson's Bay beads** refer to the same bead. Unfortunately, confusion does not stop here. Take the case of the **Hubble bead**. What would that name mean to a Czech researcher (where the bead was made) or to an Egyptian (where the beads were traded, though certainly not from the Hubble Trading Post)?

Local Names for Beads

The ultimate customer may name a bead, especially if it has cultural, religious or monetary significance. There are some people who consider it important enough to name **each different kind of bead**. In some cases, the local word is taken directly into the English nomenclature, especially if the bead was locally made. In this way **talhakim**, **gashi**, **rikiki**, **adjagba**, **akosu**, and **bodom** have come to be used in English to name particular beads. In other cases, the translated name will become established, as with **the beads of the water**.

The use of local names can, of course, present as many problems as the plethora of trade names. Probably the most bothersome of all bead names are those for the short drawn hexagonal tubes with the twelve corners ground to facets. These beads come in at least two series: the older, of dark translucent blue and larger size; the newer, smaller, usually paler, and nearly always with a white or light opaque-blue core.

The beads of the older series have at least two local names which have survived, even though

the beads were imports. In Zimbabwe they were called **ambassador beads** because they were worn by envoys between tribes; in America they came to be called **chieftan beads** by the natives, not because they were worn only by the chief, but because they were the most important of all beads. Van der Sleen, who visited Africa, applied the term **ambassador bead** to the newer series as well. This is legitimate as long as older/newer is specified. However, this is not just a case of choosing between two local names, for most Americans actually call these beads **Russian blues** not because anyone thinks they were made in Russia, but because it is assumed that the Russians introduced the beads to the fur trade in Alaska. Now, which of these names for these beads is to be preferred? This is the type of question we shall try to answer when we develop our criteria for bead nomenclature.

Beads Named by thier Discoverers

Perhaps because they are not natural objects beads are not named for their discoverers, as flowers, stars or diseases might be. When someone finds or publishes a bead for the first time, he or she has the opportunity to name it. In some cases, beads have been named after the place where they were first found, adopting an accepted practice from archaeology. Such a bead is the **Nuzi bead**, so named because, despite its wide distribution, it was first found at Nuzi, though it is unclear if Starr (1939) actually so named the bead.

For a bead to be named this way it must be totally unknown (unpublished). Since relatively few beads are totally unknown, few people have the chance to name a new bead as van riet Lowe had with the Mapugubwe **garden roller beads** from Zimbabwe. One case in which many new beads were found all at once was when the Indus Valley (Harappan) Civilization came to light in India in the 1920s. **Steatite paste micro beads**, **cogwheel beads**, **burnt steatite**, **steatite faience**, and **painted steatite**, are all beads and bead processes that had to be named by Beck, Sana Ullah, and others working with the material coming from the sites. If a discoverer has attached an appropriate name to a bead, the chances are good

that the term will remain as part of the accepted nomenclature.

Beads Named by Collectors

Collectors are constantly undergoing a process similar to that of the discovery of a new bead. In some cases a bead may be published, illustrated, and even fairly well-known, but never given a name nor one that has endured. The terms **squiggle** and **Nueva Cadiz beads** apparently come to use from collectors, the first naming the bead after its decoration and the second from the site where it was first recognized.

Because of the lack of a recognized nomenclature, collectors in some cases have "private" names for beads which mean nothing to others or to any but a very few. Collectors are also known to try to "improve" upon the names for some beads. A conspicuous example is the unhappiness over the term **seed bead**, as can be seen from the various attempts to replace the name with **micro bead**, **pound bead**, **sand bead**, and **bead-work bead**. As yet none has overtaken the older term.

Beads Named by the Manufacturer

Though one might at first think this to be an important source for bead nomenclature, it is actually used less frequently than one might suppose. We have already noted that the manufacturers and customers often did not speak the same language and code numbers replaced names for much stock-keeping during recent centuries. However, whenever the manufacturer's name for a bead is known, it has a good claim to become the accepted name for that bead.

Indeed, when we look at the store of terms in use by the Italian (and to a lesser extent, the Czech) bead industry to name beads, we find a treasure-house for those interested in bead nomenclature. All too often these names are not being used, though some of them have been adopted into the common pool of bead nomenclature. We all know the term **millefiori**, but many other valid and useful names from the Italian are much less employed and totally unknown to many. This is unfortunate, as we lose terms such as **lamp bead**, or **macca**; there is considerable confusion as to what **rocaille** means; we confuse

others by using **chevron** rather than **rosetta**; and we have apparently completely overlooked an important class of beads because the term **paternoster bead** as used by the (Venetian) bead-makers has been badly misunderstood.

Peter Francis

THE BEAD IDENTIFIER

I: Goldstone Glass

Dear B.I. — Does the presence of goldstone glass on a bead automatically mean that the bead was made in Venice? Is there any way to date beads from the use of goldstone? B. Trader, Spacer, Arizona

Dear Beady — The answers to your questions are: not at all, and not easily. As negative as that sounds, there is some data to be derived from the use of goldstone (or aventurine) glass. The process was invented by a scion of the famous Venetian glassmaking family, the Miotti, by 1788. Its use cannot precede that date.

However, as a raw material, goldstone chunks were exported, and thus beads made in other countries could be decorated with it as well. Moreover, the Chinese, Bohemians and Japanese all learned to make the material themselves. It is said (and seems to be true) that non-Venetian goldstone is inferior, having dark streaks arising from the improper settling of the tiny suspended copper granules.

Several people have tried to devise a rule of thumb for the dating of beads with goldstone. Morazzoni and Pasquato, in their history of the Venetian bead industry, suggested a date of 1875 for the beginning of goldstone's extensive use on beads. Van der Spleen pushed the date back to 1850. In the British Museum is a sample "book" which was once part of the Slade collection, and there is a sample case of Venetian beads produced around 1804 (the book is incorrectly ascribed 1704). There are only a few beads with goldstone in this sample. It is obvious that its use grew during the 19th century. In more recent times, especially, it seems that all too often the bright goldstone is dabbed to try to make up for an otherwise sloppily-made bead.

—P.F.

The Northern California Bead Society



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PROGRAM NOTES

The next meeting of The Bead Society will take place on February 17th at 8:00 pm and will feature a program unlike any others presented in the past. It has usually been our practice to arrange for a topic which covers some specific aspect of bead study or collecting. We will diverge from this tradition by presenting **Martin and Lucie**, who will give an illustrated talk on their experiences in designing, producing and marketing beautiful, much sought after, bead-work and jewelry. In our technological and mass produced age, it is somewhat comforting to know that handmade work, demanding painstaking skill and hours of labor, is still produced by artists who take pride in their work for people who admire the unique. We feel that members will enjoy this presentation and will quickly become fans of Martin and Lucia and their works.

Our meeting for March, also taking place on the 17th of the month, will feature our own Si Frazier giving an illustrated lecture on the subject of **Garnet**, a most popular bead material. The Bead Society is truly fortunate to have someone of Si's knowledge and interest who is also willing to make the preparations for thorough and informative talks. This will be the third such program that Si and Ann Frazier have offered us this year.

There will be three remaining programs, after March, in our 1980-1981 fiscal year. Briefly mentioned, these will be: April, Jan Francis (of the L.A. Bead Society) on metals used in beads; May, Fumiko Ukai (of our group) on Japanese beads; June, the Annual Workshop/Bead Trade, with a slide show by Jamey Allen.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The N.C.B.S. Executive Committee met at the Fraziers' on November 25, 1980, at 8:00 pm. Present were Norman, Joan, Dorothy, Laura, Helen, Si and Ann; Jamey was on the way.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as corrected; the correction involved the amount of deposit on the publication project and the quarterly rent at the Senior Center.

Treasurer's report. A printed report covering July 1 — Nov. 25, 1980, was presented. It also gave us a new membership list. Si moved for its acceptance; the motion was seconded and passed. We commend Joan for her very nice job on this Treasurer's report and roster of members.

(Continued on page 2)

BEAD NOMENCLATURE: THE SOURCES AND SOME PROPOSED CRITERIA Part Two

by Peter Francis, Jr.

In order for bead research to progress in an orderly fashion, we need to agree on criteria for the naming of beads. None of the sciences could have progressed as far as they have without a standard way of naming objects. Think, for instance, of botanists describing plants with a nomenclature system similar to that used for beads!

It is possible to describe beads by a sort of "scientific shorthand notation." If a bead is described by its provenience, method of manufacture, shape and decoration, it can be identified readily by any initiate. If one were to discuss a late Rome pressed cane eye bead or a wound Venetian oblate with goldstone scallops, the beads would be pictured by a knowledgeable person, but such "names" are really mere descriptions and far too clumsy for common use. We really do not gain anything by substituting small blue-on-white drawn hexagonal tubes with faceted corners for chieftan, ambassador or Russian blue bead.

Since beads cannot be classified into real "families," as can the specimens from nature, nor can they be as easily catalogued as stamps or identified as coins, beads need a nomenclature system of their own. There is, however, little chance of a convenient shorthand classification system for beads which could generate names for all of them. We shall have to build on what we have, choosing the names with wisdom and foresight.

The following criteria are those which have been selected as being the most necessary to consider when choosing names for beads. They are offered as suggestions, in the hopes of stimulating debate and thought and, perhaps, ultimately helping toward a standard bead nomenclature.

Universality

We have already discussed the necessity of choosing names for beads which are not entirely local in character but, instead, widely understood by any English-speaking bead researcher. There are people interested in beads working in Britain, South Africa, India and other countries who are completely mystified by terms used for beads which have a purely local currency. Americans must share considerable blame for this, I fear.

When choosing bead names it is not unwise to remember that the name may well have to be translated into other languages. This does not mean that every bead term must be directly translatable into French, Arabic, German and Japanese, but it does serve as a further warning against faddy or gimmicky names.

Precisely because of its non-universality, the trade is probably the weakest source from which to derive bead nomenclature. Thus, **ambassador** or **chieftan** are to be preferred over **Russian blue**. The choice between the two remaining candidates (both from native names) probably should go to the more widely employed or the more evocative. On this basis, I would opt for **ambassador bead**, although it can hardly be considered a universal name.

Uniqueness

It is obvious that we must avoid naming different beads by the same name. There is no end to confusion as to what an **aggrey bead** is. It has been described as being yellow, red, and different shades of blue, identified with chevron and other imported glass beads, with native (West African) beads, and with natural materials. It is altogether possible that **aggrey** does not indicate one particular bead, but a group of beads with special significance, similar to the Brittany use of gouged **pateranneau**. There is nothing wrong with this; the confusion would have come later when various travelers said "that and that alone is the **aggrey bead**."

A different problem arises when the same bead type receives several different names from different sources. We have cited examples

already. Another conspicuous case is the Venetian decoration in which spots of colors are combined into floral sprays. The decoration was called *arabesque* by van der Sleen, *wedding cake*, *fancy* and *fantasy* by others.

Precision

Any name chosen for a bead must describe that bead and leave no confusion. An important class of beads that violates this rule is the one most often called in America *cornaline d'Alleppe*. Perhaps the name is in honor of the ancient glass center in Syria, although it is not certain that beads were made there and, much less, red coated beads resembling carnelians. The term has been widely used to refer to virtually any red-coated bead. However, not all of these beads are alike, and it has been brought to my attention (by Jamey Allen) that the earlier series of opaque brick-red over green cores does not in the least resemble carnelian.

This family of beads is large. Most are drawn, but many are also wound. Some are thick wound cylinders (*ox-eye beads*), while others have exterior decorations of eyes or floral sprays. Some Americans also call these beads *Hudson's Bay beads* and divide them into early (green-cored) or late (white-cored) varieties.

However, the confusion does not end here. If these beads were seen by a researcher from India, he would call the older series *Indian reds* and recognize the white cored ones as completely different, albeit Indian made. Further to the East, the same beads would be called *muti-salah*, though it is recognized that they are the same as *Indian reds*. There exists a situation in which you might give the bead to four different investigators and have them give it four different names. Moreover, all of the names would be inappropriate, particularly if the bead had been made in Venice or Jablonec.

We obviously need a single term to call this class of beads, plus further adjectives to distinguish among the types. If we were to select one name, for example, *Alleppe* for all red-coated beads, then we could differentiate the beads according to provenience, core and age. We could

then refer to *opaque green-cored Indian Alleppe* or *late Venetian Alleppe* with no problem. We would, of course, have to first agree on the name of the family.

Other examples of confusion from the lack of precision can be cited. Recently there has been confusion over the term *squiggle*. It is a useful term, but it must be recognized that the term refers to a design, not a bead, and can be employed on many different types of beads. An even more familiar and oft misapplied term is *millefiori*, when it is being used to describe beads which have no "flowers" in the decoration. We should consider other names available to us to classify these beads, such as *mosaic bead* or *cane-decorated bead*.

Descriptiveness

Ideally, a bead name would be a single word describing type of bead. This is not always possible, because many beads share the same characteristics. When choosing a name for a bead, we must remember its chief characteristics.

Color is never a good criterion for bead nomenclature. We have already rejected the use of *Russian blue* because of its confusing and provincial nature. We would do well to reject it as well on the grounds that not all of these beads are blue, as some are green, clear or even red.

The name *Vaseline bead* was coined to describe short hexagonal bicones of glass with conical perforations. The term was coined because most (though not all) of these beads are a pale green and reminded someone of the color of a petroleum jelly bottle. Now we know that these beads were made in Bohemia around 1860 by a special process which has been called "mandrel pressing," and with this information we can name the beads more satisfactorily. As carnelian-imitating oblates were also made this way in the 1890s, we can refer to these two series as *early- and late-mandrel pressed beads*.

When considering a descriptive term for use in bead nomenclature, we should pick the term with the most information, the one most descriptive of the bead. The way in which a bead is made is often the most important fact about that bead,

particularly if it is made of glass. In some cases special manufacturing processes alone are enough to identify a bead.

A Last Note

This paper by no means clears up the confusion that surrounds bead nomenclature. Nor was it meant to. Rather, its purpose was to bring attention to some of the problems inherent in naming beads, to stimulate debate and consideration, and to encourage the use of more accurate and comprehensible bead terms.

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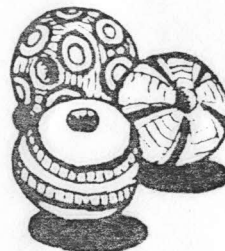


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