

Reviews

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Early Sixteenth Century Glass Beads in the Spanish Colonial Trade.

MARVIN T. SMITH and MARY ELIZABETH GOOD

Cottonlandia Museum Publications, Greenwood, MS, 1982. x + 64 pp., 9 figs. (4 color). \$9.50 paper.

Until this beautifully illustrated and scholarly work appeared in print, very little had been written on the analysis of Spanish trade beads. What had been done was limited (though certainly learned), notably to a 19-page article on three bead types by Charles Fairbanks (1968, *Early Spanish Colonial Beads, Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers*, 2 [1]:3-21), (which was based on a manuscript by the late John M. Goggin); a popular article based on the Fairbanks study by Robert Liu (1978, *Identification, Bead Journal*, 3[3-4]:77); and Marvin Smith's (1977, *The Chevron Trade Bead in North America, The Bead Journal*, 3(2):15-17). Smith and Good's 1982 study is of a comprehensive nature ranging from bead manufacturing to classification, geographic distribution, and objectives for future research.

The study commences by describing the nature of the data which consists of thousands (actual counts not made) of beads in the Jones-Avent bead collection on loan to Cottonlandia Museum. The collection comes principally from archaeological sites in Peru while a few are known to come from Bolivia. Precise provenience is not known nor was

any information on context recorded. The collection was made by four unidentified importers over an unspecified number of years. The collection gets its name from its assemblers L. B. Jones and Carrie Avent. Some groups of beads, which are not identified, the authors state are known to have come from specific regions or sites, viz: Peru's South Coast (Nazca region), North Central Peru (Cajamarca, Moche Valley, and Trujillo), South Central-Eastern Peru (Cuzco region), the Central Coast (Chancay district), an area somewhere in the vicinity and north of Lima, and the site of Tiahuanaco in Bolivia.

In addition to beads in the Jones-Avent collection, the authors note that they illustrate a few beads from other (unidentified) private collections. Just which beads they are is not given in the text nor are the sites or areas identified from which any of the beads illustrated come. The authors note that three (identified) bead-import dealers assured them that they had good representation of the types of beads coming from Peru.

While some of the foregoing sounds somewhat negative, it is not intended as a criticism of the authors who obviously were working with the best information they had on what appears to this reviewer to be the results of clandestine digging by the ubiquitous "huaqueros" whose looting is notorious in South America.

Smith and Good provide a very informative historical synopsis quoting relevant statements regarding the beads given or traded to the Indians by early Spanish explorers and conquistadors.

These references are all to islands in the Caribbean (specifically San Salvador and Cuba) to Mexico, and to Hernando De Soto's expedition west of the Mississippi. There appears to be nothing more known from early documents in *South America* other than that Pizarro possibly used beads in giving "presents of trifling value," "some trinkets which had a real value in the eyes of a princess," and "some cheap but showy ornaments of glass" (p. 8). The glass beads described in the early documents are small green and yellow, blue, green, clear, blue cut, twisted (Nueva Cadiz Twisted, as originally suggested by Fairbanks), Margaritas "which have within them many patterns of diverse colors" [various translations—possibly the chevron bead suggest the authors (p. 8)], and "glass corals."

The authors illustrate 129 bead categories, illustrated full size in what appears to be remarkably uniformly accurate color rendition of the original transparencies. While these categories show a far greater range than the earliest records suggest, the most common early beads may be those described above.

In their chapter "Dating the Peruvian Beads," the authors note that glass beads may have reached the Indians of Peru well before the conquest of Peru (1532) since, for example, Spanish contact began as early as 1501 in Colombia and beads associated with that contact may have reached Peru through aboriginal trade (p. 10). To that trade, this reviewer would suggest, may have been added some trade goods carried by refugees from the Spanish conquest of Colombia which began in 1510 and was complete by the 1530s. The authors conclude their chapter on dating saying "The majority of archaeological data for the type [*sic* types?] of beads described in this report suggests a date range of late fifteenth century through the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century" (p. 11). They base their argument on the dying out of the [long tubular] Nueva Cadiz beads after 1560 in southeastern United States and because they believe that in North America "... the long tubular beads of the sixteenth century were replaced by mostly spherical beads of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and this style, in turn, was re-

placed by tubular beads during the middle of the seventeenth century, much in the manner that ladies' hem lines change today" (p. 11). (Parenthetically, this reviewer suggests that the word "early" was probably intended to precede "sixteenth" and the sentence should have begun "... the long tubular beads of the early sixteenth century. . . ." The word "early" should also be inserted before "... seventeenth century. . . ."). Whereas the authors probably have data to support their view that long tubular beads may have been the vogue in the early sixteenth century in southeastern United States, there is no evidence to support that view in the Northeast where glass beads have not been recovered from that time period. The rest of the authors' statement, however, holds true for the Northeast (Charles F. Wray and Harry L. Schoff, 1953, *A Preliminary Report in the Seneca Sequence in Western New York, 1550-1687*, *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, 23[2]:53-63; Charles F. Wray, 1973, *Manual for Seneca Archaeology and Slide Set*, Cultures Primitive, Rochester; Peter P. Pratt, 1961, *Oneida Iroquois Glass Trade Bead Sequence*, Fort Stanwix Museum, Rome; Peter P. Pratt, n.d., *Glass Trade Beads among the Five Nationals Iroquois*, Ms.).

In a later chapter entitled "Observations" the authors state the time range for the Peruvian/Bolivian collections more specifically as being A.D. 1500-1560 and remark that "Perhaps surprisingly, no spherical or barrel-shaped turquoise blue cane beads were seen [in their study collections]. This type is the most common bead in North America, from Florida to New York, during the period 1560-1620 and occurs on up to about 1800." Once again the authors probably have sound evidence to support this being the case for the Southeast, but it does not apply to the Northeast. The largest collections in the Northeast come from Seneca sites. Using those sites for reference, we see that from 1550 to 1575 "Glass beads were very rare; the few they received were pea sized, round and oval shaped, blue, green and a few with red and black stripes on red or green" (Wray and Schoff, 1953, p. 54). To these can be added the presence of seven probable Nueva Cadiz plain beads which were recorded subsequent to the Wray

and Schoff 1953 publication and which are noted in Smith and Good's Table II (p. 48) for the Adams and Tram sites and on p. 52. Between 1575 and 1590 Wray and Schoff (1953, p. 55) record that "a few polychrome and a very few tubular red, blue and white glass cane beads were becoming available." From 1590 to 1616 there was "... a great increase in the glass beads available." The bead types are numerous and for the most part are of the round polychrome variety. This was the time of the "star" [chevron] and "Flusheye" beads, the characteristic beads of this period (Wray and Schoff, 1953, p. 56). One possible heirloom, probable Nueva Cadiz Plain bead has also been recovered from this period at the Dutch Hollow Site. Finally, on the 1615-1630 Seneca sites "... [glass] beads were numerous and predominantly of the polychrome cane variety; tubular glass beads were increasing in numbers" (Wray and Schoff, 1953, p. 52). It was during the last period that an additional probable Nueva Cadiz plain bead was recovered at the Warren site (p. 52). From the foregoing it is evident that the "spherical or barrel-shaped turquoise blue cane beads" were *not* "the most common bead in North America, from Florida to New York, during the period 1560-1620 . . ." (p. 52). Indeed, as Wray (1973, p. 18) notes, (in a publication cited by the authors), during the entire period of 1550 to 1625 polychrome glass bead varieties were dominant. This view is supported by this reviewer's research on the Five-Nations Iroquois as a whole (Pratt, n.d.).

Further, as related to dating their beads, in their chapter on "Observations" the authors compare this Peruvian/Bolivian data to two sites in the Northeast Susquehannock component of ca. A.D. 1550-1600 the Funk site in Pennsylvania and the Oneida Iroquois Cameron site of ca. A.D. 1570-1600 showing bead construction category percentage differences as between tumbled vs. untumbled beads and single layer vs. multi-layer beads. The Peruvian/Bolivian collection is seen to be distinctively different from the northeastern United States sites. This difference is considered by the authors to reflect a temporal difference between the sites. The authors observe "... whether this

[distinctive difference] indicates only a temporal difference or a difference in manufacturing tradition (i.e. Spanish industry vs. Italian industry) cannot be determined at this time (p. 56). This reviewer feels it desirable to point out here that one must be cautious about making temporal comparisons of data that may be not strictly comparable. It is not just a question of a possible Spanish industry tradition vs. an Italian industry tradition. There were more than two nations with glass bead making industries in operation throughout the entire period under discussion (cf. Kenneth E. Kidd, 1979, *Glass Bead-making from the Middle Ages to the Early 19th Century, History and Archaeology*, 30, Parks Canada, Ottawa) as the authors are well aware. As they themselves note in their chapter entitled "Where Were These Beads Manufactured?," quoting Alice Frothingham (1964, *Spanish Glass*, Thomas Yoseloff, New York) "... Venice imported cargoes of barilla from Alicante for the Murano glasshouses, while 16th or 17th century glass blowers working in the manner of the Venetians in Flanders, England, and France recognized its superiority over all other kinds." The authors further note the possibility that the Spanish may have been trading beads made in Venice which, as they observe, was the principal glass bead exporter during the sixteenth century. On the other hand, they note that the beads may have been made elsewhere (pp. 12, 14). It seems that the distinction between Spanish and Italian industries may have been an oversight and that the "i.e." should have read "e.g.". In any event, different traditions were likely involved as may be judged from the foregoing discussion, thereby distinguishing southeastern from northeastern United States bead sequences, which the authors had thought were basically the same. Since they are not, it is likely that the South American sequence(s) are not the same as those in the Northeast, but might be expected to be closer to the southern United States where there was much more Spanish influence.

Despite the possibility, acknowledged by the authors, that there are questions as to the origins of the beads, the authors provide excellent data (Chapter V) supporting glassmaking of the highest

quality in Spain from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The authors go on to note that unfortunately no beads dating to the sixteenth century have been located in Spanish museum collections and that excavation of Spanish glasshouses will be the key to the origins of the South American beads.

There is a very good summary in the chapter "Glass Bead Manufacturing Methods" which is nicely tied into the manufacture of the South American beads studied. Particular attention was focused on the manufacture of Nueva Cadiz beads and chevron beads. The authors suggest that the Nueva Cadiz beads were made by blowing a bubble of glass into a square mold and then drawing from that bubble. Experiments at the Corning Museum of Glass under the direction of Paul Perrot and Robert Brill, however, have shown that a gather of molten glass was marvered square and then drawn to make such beads (p. 17). Since the experiment proved successful, it might have been one way that the beads were manufactured and the authors' suggested technique might have been another. That the Corning technique would have resulted in a square perforation in the bead, as Smith and Good believe would have been the case, would likely have been something that Perrot and Brill would have called to Goggin or Fairbanks' attention. This is especially so since a glass bead with a square hole would be probably unique in the history of glass bead making—a novelty, indeed. After discussion with Messrs. Perrot and Brill and prior to the Corning experimentation, Fairbanks indicated that he was much concerned about the shape of the holes and remarked "... The fact that the holes show no distortion strongly supports the view that this was probably the method of manufacture . . ." (Fairbanks, 1968, p. 6).

The authors note that their bead classification "borrows heavily from numerous other classification schemes (Lyle M. Stone, 1974, Fort Michilimackinac, 1715–1781, *Publications of the Museum, Michigan State University, Anthropology Series*, No. 2 Lansing; Fairbanks, 1968; Mary Elizabeth Good, 1972, Guebert Site, *Central States Archaeological Society, Memoir 2*, Wood River) . . ." The classification is a logical one which consists of several levels, viz:

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First, the beads are divided into "groups" according to methods of manufacture ("drawn cane," "wire wound," "blown," and "crumb").

Cane beads are then divided into:

- a) "classes" according to cross section ("molded," "twisted," etc.);
- b) "series" according to [surface] finish ("tumbled," "untumbled," and "faceted")
- c) "types" according to construction ("simple," "compound," "complex," and "composite")
- d) "varieties" basically according to color and shape. Wire wound beads are divided into two "series" viz:
 1. "modified" shaped while the glass is still plastic
 2. unmodified

Blown beads are classified on the basis of the one such bead found which was of compound construction. Similarly, only one crumb bead was in the collections and it was not further classified as to its "class," "series," or "type." All groups of beads are then described as to their reflected color and their "diaphaneity" color (the color seen as the bead is held between the eye and the light source) using the Munsell Book of Color in addition to the Inter-Society Color Council—National Bureau of Standards Color Name Charts illustrated with Centroid Colors (ISSC-NBS). The beads were also described as to being transparent, translucent, or opaque.

The method of classification used is therefore very detailed in addition to being logical. The presentation of two color systems was interesting in pointing up the weakness in the ISSC-NBS system since all colors seen in the bead collection were not present in that system. The authors pointed out the latter system may be of more practical value because it is more readily available and less costly than the Munsell system. Where the authors' classification has some particular weakness is in the formulation of "types." In the mind of the reviewer, "types" are consistently recurring clustering of attributes which have spatial and temporal significance. Since there are no statistical

data to back up these "types" (i.e., no counts or measurements were taken) and the temporal and spatial data are so weak, we are left with detailed bead descriptions but really no new "types."

In conclusion, Smith and Good have given us the fullest information yet available on Spanish colonial trade beads. They are to be especially commended for their prodigious work in providing meticulous descriptions and exquisitely color illustrations of the range of beads known to them to come predominantly from the sixteenth century and for tying these, wherever possible, to historic sources. They are also to be highly praised for making such exemplary use of data which appears to be the spoils of looting sites—data which might have been spurned by some other less imaginative and constructive researchers, notably for want of specific provenience and context. This work, then, is, without question, a hallmark in New World bead research.

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The Development and Application of a Chronology for American Glass.

RONALD WILLIAM DEISS

Midwestern Archaeological Research Center,
Illinois State University, Normal, 1981.
vii + 155 pp., 29 Figs. \$10.00, paper.

The first 90 pages of this book consist of a discussion of American glass production, divided into three chapters, 1608–1799, 1800–1899, 1900–present. Deiss discusses early American factories, general stylistic trends, and manufacturing techniques for bottles, tableglass, and window glass. This section is illustrated by line drawings of tech-

nical processes and glass products. The second part of the book, consisting of about 50 pages, deals with glass material recovered from two sites in Illinois. In this section Deiss discusses the frequency of datable attributes and glassware products at these sites.

I found this book difficult to review. Deiss has gone off in so many different directions at once—providing insights into glass manufacturing processes, developing a sound basis for dating glass, developing a classification for glass artifacts, describing the history of the American glass industry, developing an analytical procedure for studying glass artifacts from archaeological contexts, leading the way to new research questions, investigating and interpreting lifeways, relating glass styles to other "folk patterns"—that I was never sure what he really intended to do. The tone of the work suggests that Deiss believes it has wide applicability, but the actual content negates this. Elements of each one of his stated aims are touched upon, but the coverage is sporadic, superficial, unfocused and often irrelevant. There are also fundamental conflicts within his stated aims. Chronologies are useful tools to place artifacts or assemblages within a certain time period but do not, in themselves, contribute to "the interpretation and understanding of the cultural patterns and lifeways" (p. 128). Before he could begin to look at the activities taking place at the two sites he discusses, Deiss had to organize the glassware into functional categories. Nor does developing a chronology necessarily provide insight into the glass industry (p. 128). One uses changes in technology to help develop a chronology and to support the dates one gives, but the resulting information on the glass industry is very hit-or-miss. Understanding the glass industry is tangential to most archaeological questions and is really only necessary if one is digging a glass factory site. Finally, how can one delineate exchange networks and consumption patterns using only American glass?

The difficulties in determining the focus of this book are augmented by innumerable examples of misplaced modifiers, badly constructed sentences, *non sequiturs*, false cause and effect, and errors of fact and interpretation. For example, Deiss says