

decolonization. I believe that decolonizing is at the core of all of our work” (p. 58).

The strength of the edited collection lies in its meticulous curation of voices and beadwork that present Flatland beadworking on its own terms, framing it rightfully as leading-edge. Though I appreciated the authors’ honesty and intentionality in the scope and locality of the work, the Flatlands, the book left me wanting for a more comprehensive collection that engages with beadworking across diverse Indigenous communities. However, this limitation in scope creates space for other Indigenous editors and authors to take up similar methods in future research. Readers looking to supplement this book with others on Native beading could consider *Painful Beauty: Tlingit Women, Beadwork, and the Art of Resistance* by Megan A. Smetzer. While those gripped by the brilliance of contemporary Indigenous art could also pair it with Jeffrey Gibson’s *An Indigenous Present*.

Bead Talk ultimately affords beads and Indigenous Peoples the agency to transport us into textured relations with Land (prairie, plains, and flatlands), Indigenous knowledge systems, and community. This book is an essential read and citation for scholars interested in the intersections of current beadwork, Indigenous Studies, and Art or Visual Studies. Moreover, the book is certain to gain an audience via word of mouth in Indigenous culture and education committees, beading circles, and intergenerational art collectives that exist within and across Tribal and First Nations communities.

[Editor’s Note: A version of this review also appeared in the *K’wen ‘Inish-Ha* tribal newspaper for the Coquille Indian Tribe on the Oregon Coast.]

REFERENCES CITED

Smetzer, Megan A.

2021 *Painful Beauty: Tlingit Women, Beadwork, and the Art of Resistance*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Gibson, Jeffrey (ed.)

2023 *An Indigenous Present*. Delmonico Books, New York.

Ashley Cordes
Assistant Professor of Indigenous Media
Environmental Studies Program and
Data Science Department
University of Oregon
acordes@uoregon.edu

Glass Trade Beads in California

Clement W. Meighan and Elliot H. Blair (ed.). BAR Publishing, Oxford. 2024. 107 pp. Black & white and color illustrations. £38.00 (paper)

Anyone with even a passing familiarity with the archaeology of colonial California has undoubtedly seen reference to Clement Meighan’s glass bead type collection. Meighan began his work on the project some 75 years ago, drawing on the extensive archaeological and ethnographic collections at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (what was then known as the Robert H. Lowie Museum) at the University of California, Berkeley. With periodic updates and expansions, Meighan eventually included beads from nearly all corners of the state, identifying some 440 different bead types. These included beads of essentially all known manufacturing techniques—drawn, wound, blown, mold-pressed, and Prosser-molded—not to mention a wide range of colors and finishes. Yet, Meighan passed away in 1997 without ever publishing his typology. And for most archaeologists and bead researchers—especially those who came of age in the new millennium—his bead project has existed primarily in the realm of shadow and rumor, taking on an almost mythical status. Many knew of it, but few had seen the actual manuscript. That is, until now.

With the blessing of Joan Meighan (Clement’s widow, herself now deceased), Elliot Blair has put in countless hours of work to bring this important manuscript to press. Indeed, there will be great satisfaction among archaeologists and scholars of a certain age in simply—finally—having a physical copy to reference. This is especially important for the ability to decode early publications that relied on Meighan’s typology to present bead findings. That said, the world of bead research has in many ways passed Meighan by. Meighan was a self-professed “splitter” and organized the beads in his type collection primarily by color, shape, and size. Today, however, most bead researchers use the typology developed by Kenneth Kidd and Martha Ann Kidd, and refined by Karlis Karklins (2012), that instead relies on manufacturing technique for the first order classification (hereafter Kidd/Karklins). While Blair identifies some areas where Meighan’s system does capture potentially meaningful variation missed by the Kidd/Karklins system, few if any archaeologists are likely to adopt Meighan’s typology wholesale. Similarly, significant time has elapsed since Meighan wrote the explanatory text that accompanies his typology. While it is interesting as a window into the history of California bead research, more recent studies have

rendered Meighan's interpretations of certain topics—such as his discussion of the origins of the various beads brought to the region—outdated and factually incorrect.

But this project goes much further than simply publishing Meighan's system and accompanying text. As the editor, Blair makes use of extensive footnoting to point out where current understandings conflict with Meighan's original text, providing a range of references to more recent archaeological studies from both academia and cultural resource management. While Blair relies on footnotes for most of his edits, he does offer a substantive introductory chapter that situates Meighan's work both historically and in the context of contemporary bead research. For the uninitiated, this chapter alone offers a useful introduction to California glass bead studies. Particularly useful here is his short discussion of likely manufacturing centers, which included not only Venice, but also France, Bohemia, and perhaps even China.

Blair is also credited as a coauthor on Chapter 6, which presents Meighan's original descriptive typology with key updates including each bead's corresponding placement in the Kidd/Karklins system. Though Blair does not exhaustively expand Meighan's tabulation of the geographic distribution for each bead type, the textual descriptions for many beads contain additional information about manufacturing location and dating, drawn from Blair's extensive research on the glass beads of colonial North America. Especially important in this chapter are two concordance tables. Table 5, for example, organizes Meighan's types by Kidd/Karklins type in a clearly legible manner. The other, Table 6, is presented according to Meighan's type numbers but also includes each bead's corresponding Kidd/Karklins type along with information on manufacturing method, construction, color, opacity, and size. Taken together, these tables are nothing short of a Rosetta Stone for the early historical archaeology of California.

It is also worth reiterating that nearly all of the beads in the type collection were collected from Native Californian ancestral sites. Perhaps ironically given Meighan's vocal opposition to repatriation, the published volume is sensitive to this fact and to the contemporary cultural and political contexts in which these beads exist. As Blair explains in his introduction, many of the beads in Meighan's type collection lack robust provenience information, and given the history of California archaeology it is likely that at least some were originally associated with burials. Accordingly, Blair consulted with representatives of multiple Native Californian communities, who asked that photographs of

the physical beads not be included. Instead, the volume contains color plates with composite drawings of all 440 of Meighan's original bead types, showing each one along both axes. These drawings are a necessary compromise and the utility of the illustrations is not diminished in any meaningful way—especially given the long reliance of bead researchers on the drawings presented in the Kidd/Karklins typology.

Overall, the publication of Meighan's *Glass Trade Beads of California* will be immensely satisfying for a subset of archaeologists and other bead researchers who have waited for this volume in some cases for decades. But the final version of the book is more than simply the long-overdue printing of Meighan's original typology. Blair has done a commendable job of maintaining the flavor of the original while simultaneously offering updates that will greatly enhance the impact of this publication. By contextualizing Meighan's original work within the current state of the art of bead studies, Blair has positioned this volume to help breathe life into older collections and to bring broader awareness to the fascinating range of glass beads that circulated across the complex social interactions between Native communities and various newcomers in colonial California.

REFERENCES CITED

Karklins, Karlis

- 2012 Guide to the Description and Classification of Glass Beads Found in the Americas. *BEADS: Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers* 24:62-90.

Lee M. Panich
Professor and Chair
Department of Anthropology
Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, California
lpanich@scu.edu

The Elemental Analysis of Glass Beads: Technology, Chronology and Exchange.

Laure Dussubieux and Heather Walder (eds.). Studies in Archaeological Sciences 8. Leuven University Press, Leuven. 2022. 392 pp., 81 figs. ISBN: 9789462703384, 9789461664662, 9789461664655. 80 € (hardback); free (PDF).