BOOK REVIEWS

The Beads of St. Catherines Island.

Elliot H. Blair, Lorann S.A. Pendleton, and Peter Francis, Jr. *American Museum of Natural History Anthropological Papers*, Number 89. Anthropology Division, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, NY 10024-5192. 2009. 312 pp., 17 B&W figs., 15 color figs., 12 color plates. ISSN 0065-9452. $40.00 (paper cover).

This volume has been long-awaited by researchers working in the southeastern United States, particularly those investigating late 16th- and 17th-century Spanish Franciscan missions among various indigenous groups. In itself, this volume (fifth in a series concerning the archaeology of St. Catherines Island, Georgia) is a helpful blend of historical bead research (the late Peter Francis, Jr.) and archaeological treatment (Elliot H. Blair, Lorann S.A. Pendleton, David Hurst Thomas, and Eric Powell). A contribution by Thomas (Chapter 3) sets the bead study within the larger context of long-term archaeological investigations on St. Catherines Island. It specifically focuses on the site identified as Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, a mission to a Muskhogean indigenous group, the Guales, native to the Georgia coast. St. Catherines Island is located in the middle Georgia coast, within the area called the Georgia Bight, an area stretching from southern South Carolina to northeast Florida.

Native peoples along the coasts were the first to have episodic, then sustained contact with Europeans. Between the late 15th century and the late 16th century, it is possible that undocumented contacts between Spanish and French explorers, traders, and slave raiders occurred. After 1565 and the establishment of St. Augustine, Jesuit missioners operated along the lower Atlantic coast. Thus the origin of trade or gift items such as beads cannot be ascribed solely to Spanish activities. The missions of *La Florida* were the earliest Franciscan missions in North America. Although other missions systems are better known, such as those of California and Texas, the Franciscan mission effort began in 1573 and ended after two hundred years of escalating international conflict. Indigenous groups brought into this system experienced extreme cultural pressures, waves of epidemics and population decline, and a position of diminished power in controlling their own affairs. Over one hundred installations related to mission activities are known from documentary accounts, but archaeological sites that can be confidently identified as specific missions are relatively few.

Mission Santa Catalina de Guale was established perhaps as early as 1587, more confidently by 1595. It was destroyed in 1597, in the Guale Rebellion, re-established in 1604, and abandoned after 1680. The bead assemblage – nearly 70,000 specimens – is drawn largely from excavations within the footprints of two successive mission churches. In the missions of Spanish Florida, burial of members of the congregations was made beneath the church floors. On St. Catherines Island, where two churches are present, it is possible to discriminate earlier burials from later burials in some cases. Thus, this study may offer some indication of temporal placement for particular bead types. In 1972, Mary Elizabeth Good noted, "Instead of the beads dating the site, quite often the site dates the beads, especially when confirming historical documentation is available" (Good 1972:93). In this case, this relatively well-documented mission site provides an opportunity to characterize early to middle Mission-period bead assemblages.

It is clear that bead assemblages from late 16th-century mission sites differ from those of the early to mid-16th-century entradas. The expeditions of Allyón (1526), Narváez (1528), De Soto (1539-1543), and contacts with French explorers and colonists (after 1562) brought a variety of glass beads into circulation in the lower Southeast during the 16th century. Most typical of the earliest contacts are the seven-layered chevron beads and various types and sizes of Nueva Cadiz beads. The St. Catherines assemblage contains a single small Nueva Cadiz bead and three halved five-layer chevron beads.

The Beads of St. Catherines Island is a remarkable monograph, combining as it does archaeological data and historical and cultural research. It is divided into four parts, each with a number of chapters addressing various topics. A "Personal Preface" by Pendleton and Blair provides an explicit description of the bead assemblage, the archaeological contexts, analysis methodology, problems encountered, and how those problems were resolved. Part I (Beads in Society) sets the stage for what follows by presenting an introduction to bead research (Chapter 1, Pendleton and

Francis). Chapter 2 (Francis) introduces the reader to the significance of beads in Spanish-colonial activities.

Part II (The St. Catherines Island Bead Assemblage) presents the archaeological collections. Bead types and varieties recovered from the site are described in Chapter 4 (Blair, Pendleton, and Powell) and each type is illustrated in twelve appended color plates. The authors consider drawn beads, the majority of the collection, as well as wound, molded, segmented, and blown glass beads. They also include non-glass beads: amber, metal, stone, jet, and crystal. This section is particularly helpful to archaeological researchers trying to identify bead types and organize bead data. The authors use the simple/compound/complex approach in describing 123 different types of glass beads. They provide standardized color ranges and also include Kidd and Kidd descriptors.

Part III (Bead Manufacture and Origins) is largely the work of Peter Francis and is the culmination of research and writing over many years. This section includes historical information detailing the organization, methodology, and techniques of bead manufacture. These chapters are at once a primer on bead manufacture, finishing techniques, and national origin amassed over a lifetime of travel and inquiry. Individual chapters consider Venice (Chapters 6 and 7), the Netherlands and France (Chapter 8), China (Chapter 9), Spain (Chapter 10), and Bohemia (Chapter 11). Many of these chapters are drawn from Francis' publications that have appeared in limited circulation from his Center for Bead Research. Brought together and updated, these chapters help the reader understand the regulations, politics, and distribution of bead production. It seems clear from these chapters that the bead assemblages found in Mission-period sites were drawn from many more national sources than originally suspected.

Part IV (Conclusions) returns to the archaeological assemblage. Blair traces the indigenous development of bead manufacture in pre-Mission-period times (ca. 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1580) and then considers the Old World beads introduced during the Mission period. In this presentation, the specific contexts and their bead assemblages are developed. Blair discusses the temporally diagnostic beads – a group of seven bead types that appear to have dependable date ranges. He also considers the role of beads at Mission Santa Catalina de Guale from the perspective of economic, religious, and personal usage. He comments on the possibility of delimiting status from the presence of beads, the number, variety, and complexity of beads, and the location within the church of burials with beads. Concluding this part of the monograph, Peter Francis assesses the significance of the bead assemblage from St. Catherines Island in historical context.

For those of us who work with archaeological collections in the southeastern United States, the type/variety system has been a deeply ingrained tool for making sense of lithics and ceramics. Glass beads, however, have not proved readily adaptable to such a typological system. John M. Goggin, whose unpublished manuscript has guided many of us, made an early attempt to create a bead typology. My experience with Peter Francis, however, indicated that he was skeptical of archaeologists' grasp of bead terminology, origins, and technological complexity. He thought us naïve and unschooled in the lengthier research of bead scholarship. He was not particularly happy about our attempts at typology. Archaeologists will find that Francis had strong feelings about various names in common usage by archaeologists and that he has proposed other names, more consistent with bead scholarship or priority of usage. For example, Cornaline d'Aleppo (green heart), Seven Oaks Gilded Molded (Gilded Incised), Florida Cut Crystal (Cut Crystal), Ichetucknee Plain (Early Blue), and for simple medium-to-small drawn beads containing numerous, apparently intentional, bubbles (bubble-glass beads).

Several assumptions that archaeologists have maintained over the years have been explored, e.g., that Venice was the major source of beads in Spanish Florida and that these beads represent "rosary beads." Francis' research has indicated that France may be the source of many of the early drawn glass beads such as the Early Blue type and those that would be categorized as "bubble glass." He also suggests that the origin of cut-crystal, jet, and gilded-incised beads is most likely Spain. Although he had originally thought India to be the source of cut-crystal beads, he subsequently concluded that the poor quality of the crystal indicated a source other than India. The later five-layered chevrons most likely were made in the Netherlands. Although many of the 16th-century compound beads such as the seven-layered chevrons and Nueva Cadiz types are likely of Venetian origin, Francis believes that as beads became a critical component of exploration, trade, and colonization, other European countries became centers of bead production, eclipsing Venice's domination.

The careful excavation of beads in situ, as reported by Blair and Pendleton, indicates that there is little direct evidence of rosaries. Gilded-incised beads, often assumed to be rosary beads because of their greater value, were not found in arrangements that suggested a rosary. In fact, most of the beads recovered appeared to be items of personal adornment located around the neck, wrists, and ankles. Even seed beads may not be assumed to be for adorning clothing since most of them were found in relationship to human remains that suggested necklaces and bracelets.

The Beads of St. Catherines Island represents an ambitious undertaking. Given the sheer number of beads

in the assemblage, it has required considerable time to identify, measure, classify, and quantify the beads from various site contexts all the while maintaining provenience control. As Blair and Pendleton reveal in their preface, there were successes and there were changes in approach. This monograph succeeds because of the thorough consideration of the many archaeological and historical facets presented by such an assemblage of artifacts: context, origin, economic value, social usage, and personal meaning. I believe it will be much valued in the future as a resource and as a standard for presenting archaeological bead data.

The volume may be purchased in paper form or it can be downloaded as a free pdf file from the library website of the American Museum of Natural History at http://digitallibrary.amnh.org/dspace/handle/2246/5956.

REFERENCES CITED

Good, Mary Elizabeth

1972 Guebert Site: An 18th Century, Historic Kaskaskia Indian Village in Randolph County, Illinois. *Central States Archaeological Societies, Memoir* 2.

Rochelle A. Marrinan
Associate Professor of Anthropology
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-7772
E-mail: rmarrinan@fsu.edu

Editor's note: It should be pointed out that AMNH bead types 27-32 (pp. 39-40, 241-244) are not Kidd type If (tubular beads modified by grinding) but IIf (rounded beads modified by grinding).

Zulu Beadwork: Talk with Beads.

Hlengiwe Dube. Africa Direct, Inc., 2300 Krameria Street, Denver, CO 80207. 2009. 112 pp., 114 color figs. ISBN 978-0-9816267-0-3. $35.00 (paper cover).

The reputation of Hlengiwe Dube as an active collector of contemporary and early KwaZulu-Natal beadwork is well established in South Africa. This is her first book, published abroad as the result of losing a decade-long struggle to interest local publishers in the subject of beadwork, the primary means of aesthetic expression of southern African women. Publications on beadwork of the region are relatively sparse, and those that include indigenous knowledge systems and authentic voices are rare. The role of the American publisher, Africa Direct, must be acknowledged in validating the art of Zulu beadwork.

The significance of this small publication is that it is a unique narrative and an authentic voice of a contemporary observer, who skillfully negotiates both the traditionalist and the modern realms of KwaZulu-Natal culture. The meaning and symbolic use of materials, color, style, and form in beaded adornment has long been a subject of fascination for outsiders – from the earliest colonial records of 17th-century travellers at the Cape to later visitors to Port Natal (Durban).

Today, this fascination has been seized upon by the tourist industry resulting in the mass production and sale of "beaded love letters" with accompanying explanations of their meaning.

In reality, the majority of southern Africa's diverse population would not openly part with intensely private meanings of their beaded items of adornment, worn possibly as "love tokens" or to effect the prescribed treatment of a diviner or appease ancestral spirits. It is in this area that Hlengiwe's book is strongest, for the light it throws on the stylistic variations of beadwork design across space and through time in the locus of a Zulu-speaking community. Dube extends the legacy of her maternal grandmother, MaDlamini Tatata Dube, who was well known as a valuable source of knowledge to the founders of the African Art Centre in Durban. She was called upon in the 1970s, when Hlengi was a little girl, to provide both examples of her own work and background information on pieces she collected. Hlengi acted as an interpreter for her *Gogo* (grandmother) who could speak only isiZulu, and consequently her own vocation was born.

The meaning conveyed in northern Nguni beaded adornment continues to be complex and can be imagined as a visual language. Personal messages are expressed metaphorically through the use of color and design that change frequently with the whims of fashion, but remain within certain stylistic cannons that identify work from specific regions in KwaZulu-Natal, such as Msinga or Eshowe. This is the central concern of Dube's book and she expands on this theme in twelve chapters and it is further emphasized by the subtitle she has chosen, *Talk with Beads*.

Given the significance of *Zulu Beadwork: Talk with Beads*, and the fact that there is a paucity of information from