BEAD COLOR SYMBOLISM AND COLONIALISM IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY DURING THE LATE 17TH CENTURY

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Scholarship has long recognized the significance of glass beads in post-Columbian North America. For Northeastern Native Americans, beads were relationally entangled within sociopolitical relationships and the spiritual world. In the Mohawk Valley of eastern New York state, bead types and colors have been useful temporal markers, but their social and spiritual significance has received less attention. This paper seeks to address the metaphysical significance of glass beads from the Veeder (Fda-2) site, a late 17th-century Mohawk village in eastern New York state. Through the interpretation of color symbolism, the Veeder bead assemblage can be contextualized alongside multi-scalar phenomena such as colonialism, disease, warfare, and the large-scale emigration of Catholic Mohawks. Indeed, the selection of specific bead colors can shed light on the villages' inhabitants state of being and provide a way to further understand the intersection of colonialism and Native American interactions.

INTRODUCTION

Beads of varying materials have been significant throughout both the pre-Columbian and the historic periods as items of production, exchange, adornment, and ritualistic practices. As Blair, Pendleton, and Francis (2009:2) note, "Beads reflect behaviors that influenced people's lives: the economic, the technological, the social, and the ideational." Regarding historic glass beads, archaeological research in North America has focused on answering questions of provenience, manufacturing techniques, and exchange networks, due to the wide geographic distribution of beads and their deep temporality, as well as their entanglement in both political and spiritual spheres (Hamell 1992; Kidd and Kidd 1970; Turgeon 2004:20). Perhaps the most prominent focus of bead research in North America has centered on refining bead typologies and diachronic trends in manufacturing techniques. This long history of research has identified significant changes in bead size, shape, color, and manufacturing techniques, making them sensitive temporal markers and ideal for the seriation of archaeological sites (e.g., Bradley 1983; Fitzgerald 1983; Kent 1983; Kenyon and Fitzgerald 1986; Kenyon and Kenyon 1983; Little 2010; Marcoux 2012; Moreau 1997; Smith 1983). More recently, bead research has incorporated archaeometric methods to address place of manufacture and date, while others have investigated their intersection with ritual, identity, and colonial relationships (e.g., Blair 2015, 2017; Dussubieux and Karklins 2016; Panich 2014; Ross 1997; Turgeon 2004).

In the Mohawk Valley of eastern New York state, historic glass bead types and colors have been used as diachronic markers, yet the reasons for these preferences are not well understood. This article takes a nuanced approach to bead research by historically situating diachronic changes in glass bead color in the Mohawk Valley alongside colonial entanglements that included conflict, population decline, and religious influence. I draw on archaeological research and ethnohistoric accounts of Mohawk (and Haudenosaunee [Iroquois] more broadly) spirituality and color symbolism to contextualize these shifts in the middle to late 17th century. I argue that the Mohawk demonstrated a high degree of agency in their selection of particular beads to reflect the spiritual state of the communities due to broad historic events occurring in Iroquoia and the Northeast. Specifically, I suggest the consumption of black glass beads at the Veeder site (commonly referred to as Caughnawaga; ca. 1679-1693) was an active representation of mourning as a result of depopulation of the Mohawk people following the emigration of Catholic Mohawks to Quebec, as well as conflict with the French and long-term disease-driven population decline. Through this analysis it is possible to link colonial entanglements with the consumption of black glass beads by the Veeder inhabitants.

HAUDENOSAUNEE SPIRITUALITY, COLOR SYMBOLISM, AND ADORNMENT

For the Haudenosaunee, the spiritual world was entwined with and affected all aspects of life (Brandão

1997:2). The Haudenosaunee origin story offers insights into their beliefs and how they understood their physical, social, and spiritual worlds. The story reveals essential characteristics of Haudenosaunee gender roles, clan structure, and political organization. Sky Woman, the central character, represents the role of Haudenosaunee women as the source of life, sustenance, and mother to men who shaped the physical world (Snow 2008:5). Her twin sons, Sapling and Flint, represent family living arrangements and village and tribal moiety division, as well as the opposition of good and evil (Snow 2008:5). The various spiritual ideas discussed in the origin story were enacted through ritualistic ceremonies and imbued and connected tangible materials with ideological beliefs. This notion is evident in the multitude of ceremonies performed, such as the Green Corn, Maple, and Berry festivals (Morgan 1962). Additionally, directionality, such as the cardinal directions and clockwise or counterclockwise movement, was imbued with meaning and was embedded throughout Haudenosaunee practices (Hamell 1983:6). Furthermore, community movement and village relocation were not only a result of the exhaustion of subsistence materials, but may also have been affected by a sense of spiritual pollution (Engelbrecht 2003:104). According to various scholars (Engelbrecht 2003:104; Hamell 1987; Herrick 1995:67), the Haudenosaunee believed that if an ancestor was neglected or offended, their animate ghost could cause "ghost sickness" or illnesses and other problems for the living. For example, illness may have been caused by an imbalance in the spiritual world, one's family, clan, or community, or one's body and spirit (Engelbrecht 2003:47-48).

Indeed, almost all objects, natural or human-made, had the potential to contain spiritual power or have a connection to the spirit world. Colors and objects, often inseparably linked, were believed to embody specific spiritual meanings and powers (Hamell 1992; Miller and Hamell 1986:323). The connection between the body, adornment, and color was actively expressed through tattoos, clothing, and ornaments. Johannes Megapolensis, a Dutch pastor in New Netherland, noted that the Mohawk strung wampum into belts that were worn around the neck or body. Individual strands formed earrings (Snow et al. 1996:44). However, according to Snow (2008:92), trade with the Dutch changed the clothing of the Mohawk, who no longer depended on deer, substituting cloth for hides. Furthermore, as broadcloths replaced deer hides, glass beads and silver brooches began to replace shell beads (Snow 2008:92). Men's leggings, breechcloths, shirts, and moccasins were originally decorated with dyed quills and moose hair, later with beads and other trade goods (Snow 2008:92). Women wore leggings from the knees down, long skirts, and long overblouses which were also adorned. Men painted their faces: blue connoted health and well-being, black represented the imbalance of war or mourning, while red signaled life or violent death (Snow 2008:93). Considering the intertwined spiritual and physical worlds of the Mohawk, adornments could have been used to represent and express the spiritual state of both the individual and the group. The material and, importantly, the color of adornments could have been used to signal a specific spiritual state.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOR

For the Haudenosaunee, ritualistic and spiritually significant objects had a specific symbolic association that was conveyed by the object's color (Miller and Hamell 1986:323). Drawing on the linguistic research of Berlin and Kay (1969), Miller and Hamell (1986) argue that Iroquoian groups divided basic color conceptions and their subsequent symbolic links into three categories: white, black, and red. George Hamell, who has conducted the most research on color symbolism of Northeastern Indigenous groups, describes the three colors as representing the "states-of-being" of its participants. According to Hamell (1992:456), "color is a semantically organizing principle of ritual states-of-being and of ritual material culture," meaning that white, black, and red, as well as combinations of these colors, represented specific physical and spiritual states of individuals and groups. To the Haudenosaunee, different, but related hues of each of the three basic colors were associated with the same symbolic meanings as one of the main colors. Hues ranging from sky blue to white and nearly white were interchangeable in most spiritual and ritual contexts (Hamell 1992:460; Miller and Hamell 1986:324). The same interchangeable conception was true for black and red; dark colors such as dark blues and purples, as well as different but bright hues of red, embodied the same meaning as their black and red counterparts.

Ritual was used to maintain one state of being or transform it into another, at least temporarily (Hamell 1992:456). For the Haudenosaunee, white, black, and red organized ritual into three contrastive and complementary spiritual states: social, asocial, and anti-social (Hamell 1992:456). Although the Haudenosaunee categorized colors into three main groups, others, such as yellow, may also have had spiritual significance. White, blue, bright or reflective substances, and sources of light were the most potent, all connoting the same symbolic meaning, such as life, knowledge, harmony, and positive states of physical, social, and spiritual well-being (Hamell 1983, 1992; Turgeon 2004:34).

Red connoted the animate aspects of life and was symbolically linked to fire and the animate (blood) and

the emotive states of life, as well as the antisocial and war (Hamell 1992). According to Turgeon (2004:34), "red was the colour of antisocial states-of-being, animacy and war, although it could have positive connotations, if consecrated to socially constructive purposes, or negative ones if consecrated to socially destructive functions." Blood, certain pigments, stones, native copper, berries, fruit, red willows, and red cedars were imbued with the symbolic and inherent qualities of red (Hamell 1992).

Black, dark blues, and indigo represented the converse of all symbolic meanings of whiteness and was associated with the absence of light, well-being, harmony, and the purposiveness of mind and knowledge (Hamell 1992). Additionally, it connoted the absence of animacy, as well as death and mourning (Hamell 1992). Turgeon (2004:34) succinctly described the symbolic meaning as "black expressed asocial state-of-being, negative aspects of life and, ultimately, death."

BEAD RESEARCH IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY

In the Mohawk Valley, glass beads have predominantly served as temporal markers. Although the manufacture, shipment, or trade dates of the beads have not been fully researched, Donald Rumrill (1991) has conducted the most extensive work on the subject. Using artifacts such as kaolin pipes, firearm components, and Jesuit rings to date archaeological sites, he used these relative dates to establish a chronological sequence for glass beads in the region (Figure 1). Rumrill (1991:5) validated his chronology by finding congruence between his dates and those obtained by Dean Snow (1995) through AMS dating of various materials. Rumrill has attributed beads in the Mohawk Valley to 12 phases; the first starting in 1560 and the last ending in 1785. While Rumrill's phases are largely chronologically accurate, his designations are categorized by either manufacturing technique, color, or general time period (e.g., Black Seed Bead Period, Blue Bead Period, and Early Historic Period). This approach is useful in tracking diachronic trends, but is not conducive for contextualizing the consumption of glass beads by Mohawk communities. If color was the defining attribute in bead choice for the Mohawk, bead shape or manufacturing technique are less useful for understanding changes in bead frequency and historically contextualizing Mohawk agency in bead selection (Hamell 1992:459).

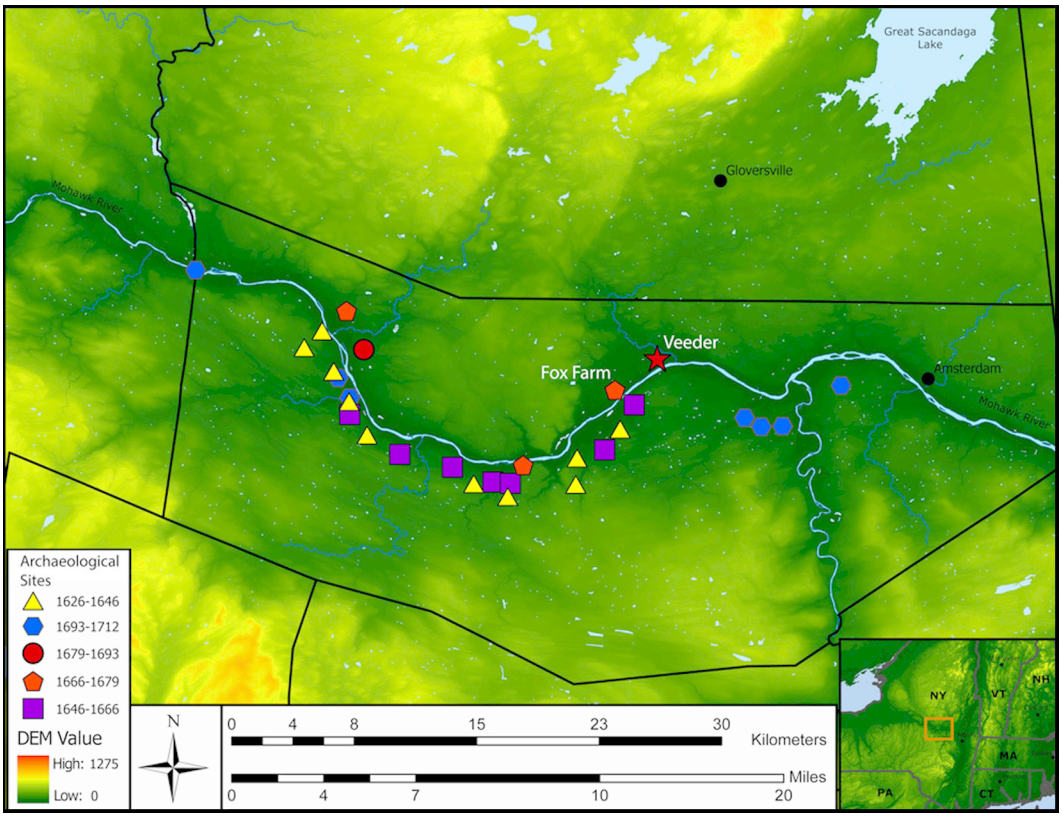

Figure 1. Location of Mohawk sites by temporal period, Montgomery County, New York (all images by author).

RECATEGORIZING BY COLOR

As previously stated, Rumrill's bead chronology is the only comprehensive analysis of beads for the Mohawk Valley. Due to a lack of time and the unavailability of many of the collections used by Rumrill, his chronology and analysis of bead assemblages is employed here. To better understand bead colors in the region, I recategorized the horizons defined by Rumrill (1991) by the three colors recognized by the Mohawk (black, white/blue, and red), as well as a few colors that fall outside this main color scheme (Table 1). The bead horizons were chosen to test if there was in fact no color preference during particular phases and to contextualize the Veeder site bead assemblage and the 1679-1693 period. I applied the same process to Douglas Clark's (2019) analysis of Oneida bead assemblages. Six temporal periods were chosen, spanning 1635-1725, to establish a comparative dataset (Table 2). Although this process is somewhat subjective, it is necessary to understand the decisions of the consumers (i.e., Mohawk and Oneida) and not the European distributors.

Generally, there appears to be a preference for white/blue beads during the early 17th century, though there was a significant shift to red beads between 1667-1682 (Figure 2). The timing of this change corresponds with an increase in hostilities between the Mohawk and the French and the re-introduction of Catholic missions and Jesuits in Mohawk villages. The red bead period abruptly ends ca. 1679 when hostilities between the French and Mohawks erupt once again. It also corresponds with the expulsion of Catholic Jesuits from Mohawk villages and a significant emigration of Catholic Mohawk converts to Quebec. These shifts are different than those observed among the Oneida, who preferred red beads between 1655 and 1696 (Figure 3). It is interesting that the Oneida bead assemblage deviates from that of the Mohawks as the Oneida were the closest to the Mohawk, both geographically and politically (Snow 2008). It is plausible that the difference is a result of the depopulation of Mohawk communities, something that was not experienced by the Oneida. It appears the various colonial entanglements of the mid- to late-17th century impacted disparate Haudenosaunee populations in different ways. The Mohawk village of Caughnawaga provides insight on how bead colors reflect the historical impact of conflict and depopulation in the Mohawk Valley.

Table 1. Mohawk Bead Color Frequency by Period.

Color	1630-1646	1646-1659	1659-1666	1667-1682	1682-1693	1694-1712
Black	8.25%	2.52%	0.00%	9.96%	86.69%	84.21%
Green	4.31%	0.00%	19.61%	0.37%	1.32%	0.00%
Red	17.12%	48.18%	27.45%	82.16%	6.19%	0.00%
While/Blue	68.72%	49.02%	52.94%	6.77%	5.80%	15.79%
Yellow	1.60%	0.28%	0.00%	0.74%	0.00%	0.00%
Total beads	836	357	51	815	759	38

Table 2. Oneida Bead Color Frequency by Period.

Color	1635-1655	1650-1660	1655-1670	1665-1677	1685-1696	1696-1725
Black	10.51%	7.42%	22.51%	15.56%	25.42%	25.58%
Green	1.95%	1.57%	10.73%	0.26%	1.33%	6.20%
Red	12.65%	13.48%	38.18%	78.11%	55.58%	14.73%
White/Blue	70.82%	72.41%	25.74%	5.45%	16.41%	49.61%
Yellow	3.31%	4.39%	2.75%	0.53%	1.18%	0.78%
Other	0.78%	0.73%	0.09%	0.10%	0.07%	3.10%
Total beads	514	956	1053	3047	1353	127

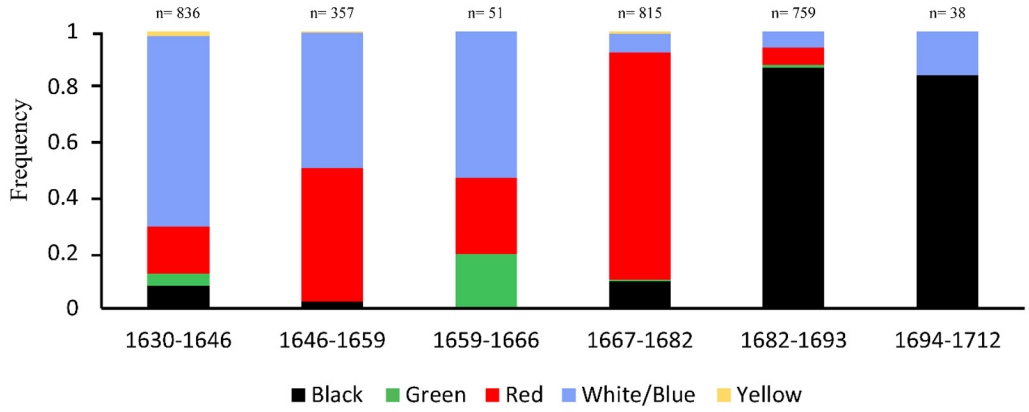

Figure 2. Frequency of Mohawk bead colors by time period.

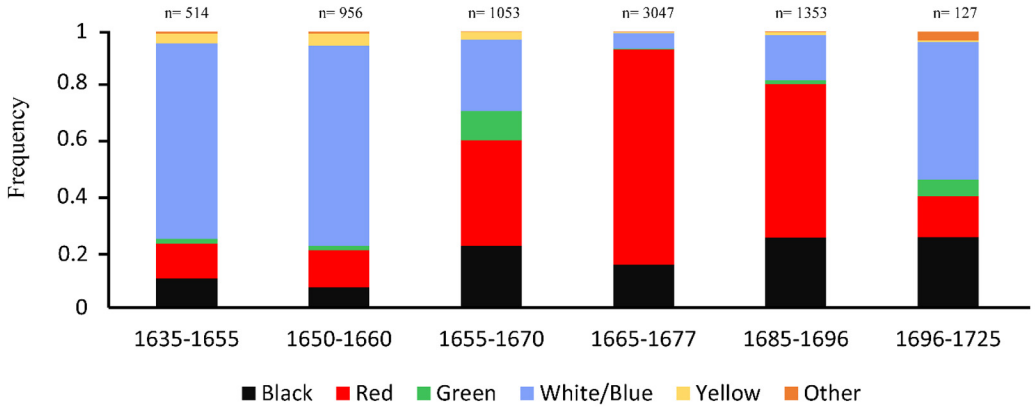

Figure 3. Frequency of Oneida bead colors by time period.

THE VEEDER SITE

Research on the Veeder site is surprisingly limited, considering that it is the only fully excavated Mohawk village. Thomas Grassmann (1969:638-647) directed the excavation and devoted only nine pages of his lengthy book, *The Mohawk Indians and Their Valley*, to this site. His book focuses on the history of the Mohawks during the historic period and utilizes historic documents, but did not incorporate the archaeological data in his synthesis. Most of his discussion about the excavations details the size and shape of the stockade and the longhouses.

Dean Snow conducted the most extensive research on the Mohawks and Caughnawaga (Snow 1995, 1996; Snow and Starna 1989). Snow, along with William Starna, focused on determining the population size of Mohawk villages (Snow and Starna 1989; Starna 1980). Snow (1995:443) and Starna (1980:380) found that the Veeder site was crucial in establishing a ratio to determine population numbers at Mohawk sites during the late 17th century. They proposed a ratio of 1 person per 20^{m2} with a possible 10% error.

Snow (1995:431-443) gives a brief overview of the site, discussing past research and excavations, provides information about Kateri Tekakwitha (the first North American Indigenous person to be canonized as a saint), demographics, the artifact assemblage, and gives an analytical summary. He determined the Veeder site dates to 1679-1693, when the site was abandoned after being burned by the French (Snow 1991). Snow (1995:443) bases the *terminus post quem* of the Veeder site on the presence of HG kaolin pipes and the large amount of small, round, black beads (Figure 4). He suggests that the actual Caughnawaga site, where Jesuits resided and Kateri Tekakwitha was baptized, was a different location known as the Fox Farm site, a village occupied between 1667-1682 (Snow 1995:431-432). Snow indicates that after Catholic Mohawks and French Jesuits returned to Canada, the remaining non-Catholics moved to the Veeder site (Snow

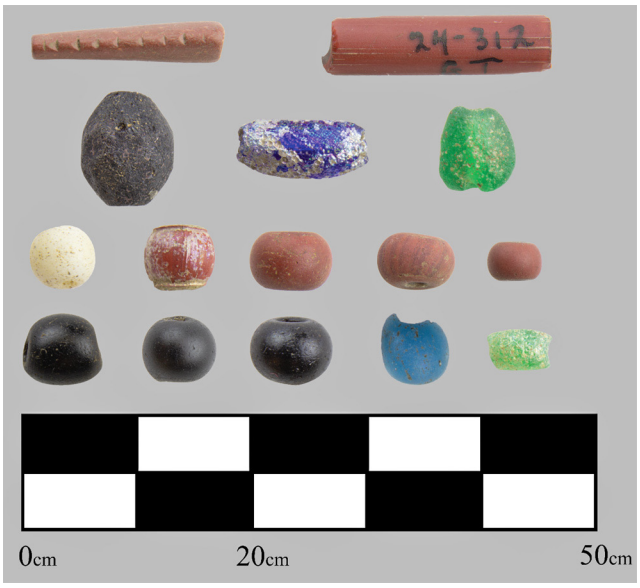

Figure 4. A sample of beads from the Veeder site.

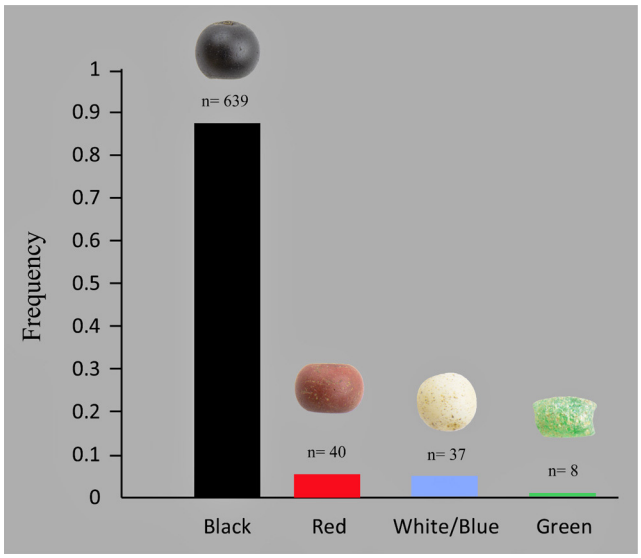

Figure 5. Frequency of bead colors from the Veeder site.

1995:431, 443). He also states that by 1679, Mohawks lived in standardized longhouses of three to four hearths, no longer expanding or contracting to accommodate families, due to their fragmented society (Snow 1995:443).

In addition to Snow, Rumrill (1985, 1991) has analyzed part of the artifact assemblage from the site, focusing on the beads and pipe stems. He briefly discusses the Veeder site, which he dates to 1679-1693, and falls within his "pea-size black bead period" (Rumrill 1991:35-36). As shown in Figure 5, the Veeder assemblage contains a total of 724 beads (Rumrill 1991), with the majority being black (88.26%), followed by red (5.52%), white/blue (5.11%), and green (1.10%). This is a dramatic shift from the previous phase (1667-1682) where red beads comprised approximately 82% and black beads represented 10% of all bead assemblages (n=819). To understand this dramatic shift in bead color, I contextualize the symbolic meaning of color within a historic framework and link the selection of black beads by the Veeder population with dramatic population loss through disease and warfare.

BEADS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Population Loss Through Epidemics and Warfare

"The horrendous losses of the middle seventeenth century... threw the Iroquois into a convulsion of unending retribution against real and imagined enemies. Traditional enemies faced the rage of warriors seeking revenge for the constant loss of friends and family members" (Snow 2008:110). The Haudenosaunee in general, but particularly the Mohawk, suffered extraordinary population loss due to disease and warfare. Between 1630-1690, the Mohawk population decreased from 7740 to 1000 (Snow 2008:110). By 1700, the Mohawk population had dwindled to 620 individuals. No other tribe experienced as heavy a population loss as the Mohawks.

Although population decline for the Mohawks was a gradual process, specific years saw especially large losses. The Mohawk were afflicted by disease in the years 1634, 1636, 1646-1647, 1660, 1662-1663, 1672, 1679, and 1690 (Brandão 1997:151). Specific data on the number of Mohawks killed in warfare is not available; however, during the years 1603 and 1701, between 1738 and 2065 Haudenosaunee were killed and 3791-4157 were captured (Brandão 1997: Table F.1). Interestingly, only a few years after two-thirds of the Mohawk population moved to Canada in 1667, six raids took place, resulting in 730-930 Haudenosaunee captured and 300-600 killed (Brandão 1997: Table F.1). Although these data are representative of all the nations, the victims were likely predominately Mohawk, due to their poor relationship with the French at the time. It is possible the raids were a result of population loss, causing the Mohawks to seek revenge and bolster their population by obtaining captives.

The population loss had a profound effect on the Mohawk way of life. Haudenosaunee villages became increasingly populated by mourning survivors and adopted captives. The dramatic decrease in population wreaked havoc on the

traditional clan segments, resulting in the standardization of longhouse size with only 3-4 hearths (Snow 2008:111). This was a break from traditional longhouses that expanded and contracted based on the size of a clan segment.

Population loss not only affected intra-village settlement, but inter-village settlement as well. Epidemic disease and warfare caused a decrease in the number of villages, forcing village populations to merge. The Mohawk population shrank from 7740 to 2830 in a matter of months during the smallpox epidemic of 1634 (Snow 2008:100). The epidemic caused the Mohawk to almost immediately abandon their four villages, establishing three new, smaller villages (Snow 2008:100). Similarly, around 1679, the Mohawk again were forced to decrease the number of villages from three to two, though the departure of Catholic Mohawks was the cause, not disease (Snow 1995:429). Snow (1995:429) proposes that it was around this time the Fox Farm site (1667-1679) was abandoned, and the remaining non-Catholic Mohawks moved to the Veeder site. He also suggests that the non-Catholic residents of the White Orchard site, the upper castle, remained until 1689, when the Lipe site began to be constructed (Snow 1995:429). The Schenck site, the middle castle, was abandoned and the inhabitants moved to the White Orchard site or the Veeder site or both (Snow 1995:429). A smaller satellite hamlet may have been occupied, supporting no more than 100 people, but this site has yet to be located (Snow 1995:431). The decrease in Mohawk villages can be interpreted as a small-scale coalescence of the Mohawk. The intricate and intertwined political, ecological, social, and spiritual aspects of Mohawk life would certainly have been affected.

While distinct groups may not have moved into a singular region, the separate Mohawk clan segments were forced to combine. Matrilineal blood lines and extended families would have been brought together and intra-site marriages would have been more difficult.

Conflict

Unlike the Dutch and French, the English did not restrict trade with the Mohawk. The trade of guns between the Mohawk and British gave the Mohawk an exceptional advantage over other tribes and subsequently increased their political power within the League of the Haudenosaunee. The Mohawk remained close to the English, which led to a French attack, under the command of the Marquis de Tracy, which destroyed the Mohawk villages in 1666. The Mohawk learned there was a limit to British protection and signed a treaty with the French following the attack. As a result, the Mohawk lost some political power and also accepted Jesuit missionaries into the valley (Snow 2008:119). Regardless of their treaty with the French, the Mohawk maintained close ties to the English, both for economic and political reasons, as well as their belief in honoring the alliance forged with the British.

Following the end of King Philip's War, fought between the British and New England Native Americans, all other Native nations were deemed children of the Haudenosaunee (Snow 2008:124). This agreement would be called the Covenant Chain, binding the English and the Haudenosaunee going forward and allowing the English to claim hegemony over all the Indian nations construed as subordinate to the Haudenosaunee (Snow 2008:124).

In 1688, James II, who replaced Charles II after his death in 1685, was deposed and William and Mary assumed the throne (Snow 2008:126). In the same year as their accession to the throne, William and Mary declared war on France. The war was called King William's War in North America. While many of the French Jesuit and pro-French Catholic Mohawks had left the valley roughly ten years earlier, the new conflict enabled both sides to release pent-up anger.

This residual anger and new war led the New York Haudenosaunee to attack and raze the French settlement at Lachine Rapids in 1689 (Snow 2008:126). The French and their native allies retaliated in 1690, burning Schenectady, New York, and in 1693, aided by the Caughnawaga Mohawks who fled to Canada, attacked the Mohawk villages (Snow 2008:126). King William's War ended in 1697, but the Haudenosaunee and the French continued to fight on (Snow 2008:127).

Catholicism in the Mohawk Valley

Beginning in the 1640s, French Jesuits attempted to convert the Mohawk. However, Jesuits were no longer allowed in Mohawk territory after the epidemic of 1646, which they believed was the result of a small black box left by Father Isaac Jogues. The Mohawks believed he had cursed them and upon his return from a brief trip to Canada he was killed (Grassmann 1969:119; Snow 2008:114). Not until 1666-1667 were Jesuits allowed back into Mohawk territory, following peace between the Mohawk and the French. Two missions were set up, one in the most western village and the other in the most eastern one. However, tension between Catholic and traditional Mohawks increased, resulting in roughly two-thirds of the population moving to Canada in 1679 (Snow 2008:124). Notably, many of the inhabitants of the Fox Farm site (also called Caughnawaga) fled to a settlement at Laprairie, south of Montreal, and would establish a village slightly to the west, also named Caughnawaga. By 1673, there were more

Mohawks at La Prairie than in the Mohawk Valley (Snow 2008:122). The last Jesuit left Mohawk territory in 1684.

While the schism between Catholic and traditional Mohawks is well documented, it has not been discussed or examined through material culture. Surely a group that places high value or strong spiritual significance in both color and objects would express their beliefs with objects, specifically beads, clothing, and powerful spiritual items. Likewise, Catholicism imbues many objects with ritualistic and spiritual significance. Jesuits, as well as Catholic Mohawks, would have had rosaries, rings, crucifixes, and other religious paraphernalia. It is likely that objects expressing spiritual beliefs have been excavated but not interpreted through this lens. An analysis of adornment items is often difficult, as determining their meaning requires fine data collection and many of the items that would have connoted meaning are perishable and do not survive in the archaeological record. However, beads, used for adornment both daily and ceremonially, do.

Beads and Mourning

Historic accounts note red, blue, and white as connoting positive aspects of life such as well-being and harmony. It is therefore reasonable or plausible that black – the dialectic color of white – would have been prominently used to represent the anti-social or lack of well-being. Mourning among the Mohawk was a social process, outwardly expressed through color symbolism. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume their state of being (mourning) would have continued to be expressed by adornment throughout the year-long mourning process. Upon the death of an individual, particularly an important individual, clan and moiety members from different villages would provide the dead with the things they would need in the afterlife, such as wampum or glass beads, clothing, and furs (Brandão 2003:83; Snow 2008:105-106). Some family members would paint their faces or whole bodies black (Engelbrecht 2003:66; Snow 1996:116). Furthermore, according to Hamell (1983), black beads could be used as a countercharm, identified with evil, death, or the intended victim, and were reserved to the deceased's mourning kinsmen.

DISCUSSION

I argue that the use of black beads by the Mohawk ca. 1679-1693 was an expression of their dramatic population loss due to epidemics and political and religious conflict (Figure 6). The possible use and symbolic meaning of black beads at the Veeder site becomes clearer when Hamell's analysis is combined with Snow's (1994:431-432) assertion that Catholic Mohawks had already left the valley, thus making it unlikely that black beads were used in rosaries.

It is apparent that black beads at the Veeder site would have been used and understood in a "traditional" framework. If the semantic meaning of blackness and darkness – connoting death, mourning, and the absence of well-being and harmony – was embedded in black beads by the inhabitants at the Veeder site, their state of being can be interpreted as negative, anti-social, and mourning.

While the Mohawk were using similar items between 1667-1679 and 1679-1693, there was a distinct change in the historic glass bead assemblages of the Fox Farm (1667-1679) and the Veeder site (1679-1693). As Snow (1995:429, 431) notes, the non-Catholic population at the Fox Farm site moved to the Veeder site when Catholic Mohawks emigrated to Canada. The dramatic change from red beads, which have been used to define the 1667-1682 period, to black beads (1682-1693) (Rumrill 1991:31, 35) can be interpreted as a result of the coalescence of the Mohawk. As previously discussed, color was an important aspect of Mohawk culture and was intertwined with almost all aspects of life. The depopulation, warfare, and epidemics that led to the coalescence in the Mohawk Valley are likely the same factors that led to the change in bead color. Simply put, the interpretation of bead color change, when incorporated with other lines of evidence, may be a way to better understand the fission and fusion or coalescence that occurred in the Mohawk Valley, specifically between 1667-1679 and 1679-1693.

Johnson (2000:125) discusses the use of colored paint or cloth tied around the head by the Narragansetts during the Pequot War to mark themselves as English allies. He argues that this practice may be an adaptation of the Native practice of symbolizing group identity. This notion may be applicable to the color of the beads among the Mohawks, where specific bead colors signify a connection to or a membership in a specific group, i.e., Catholic or non-Catholic and/or, like the Narragansetts, pro-British or anti-British. However, the color symbolism of beads is likely linked to the spiritual state of the Mohawk and not their political relationship with the British. When the symbolic meaning of colors in Mohawk culture is taken into consideration, it becomes apparent that bead color during the 1679-1693 period could not be related to their relationship with the British. During the black bead period (1682-1693), the Mohawk had a strong relationship with the British, considering the British to be their brothers against the French. For the Mohawk, black is not a color of peace, well-being, hope, or even war; it is an anti-social or negative color, typically associated with death and mourning.

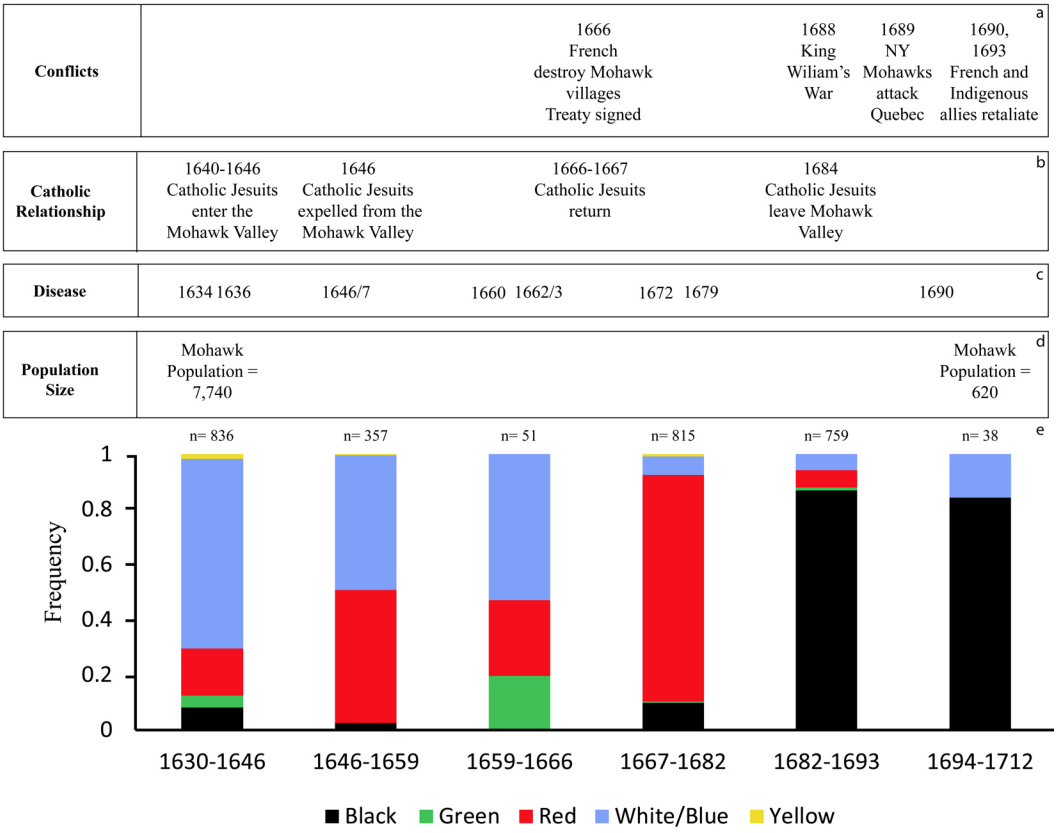

Figure 6. Bead color frequency by time period in the Mohawk Valley (e) related to a) Mohawk and European conflicts in the Northeast; b) Jesuit occupation in the Mohawk Valley; c) epidemics that affected the Mohawk; and d) change in population size of the Mohawk between 1630 and 1712.

CONCLUSION

Objects of adornment are a unique class of artifacts that have the potential to provide important and insightful information that enables archaeologists to engage with past peoples' inward and outward expression. While investigating the manufacturing process and source of glass beads and their temporal placement continues to be an important avenue of research in exploring past exchange networks and political relationships, there must also be an attempt to understand how beads were used as expressions of status, identity, and spirituality. For the Haudenosaunee, materiality and color were entwined and possessed the power to alter the spiritual and physical world. The preponderance of black glass beads among the Mohawk between ca. 1682 and 1693 was likely a result of their dramatic population decline and reflects the emotional and spiritual state of the remaining communities. As the data from the Mohawk Valley indicate, there was a dramatic shift from the use of red beads to black. This change did not occur among the Oneida who, although closely linked to the Mohawk, did not experience population decline at the magnitude of the Mohawk. Moreover, the Oneida did not have to grapple with the emotional burden caused by years of intra-societal conflict and the willful emigration of community members. By examining the multiscalar entanglements of politics, religion, and materiality, it is possible to contextualize the meaningful use of objects by past populations.

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