

Toward the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, the export of all Jablonec goods, including seed beads, was taken over by export houses. The majority of these houses specialized in the export of certain goods. Some, on the other hand, dealt only with chosen markets. In the second half of this century, Jablonex became the sole exporter of Bohemian beads. Jablonex works with customers in all parts of the world. Jablonex is determined not only to keep the good name of Bohemian beads but also to improve it.

The exhibition “Beads in Czechoslovakia” which was held in 1988 in Jablonec nad Nisou in the local museum showed that seed beads have always been useful and popular in the life of man. The exhibition “Beads in the Culture of Nations” held in St. Petersburg at the Museum of Ethnography of the Nations of the former USSR revealed how man combines fantasy and skill to create beauty from tiny beads.

Ed. note: The above article is a slightly abbreviated translation of the “*Cheshkiy biser*” section of the exhibition catalogue *Biser v kulture narodov mira* (Beads in the Culture of the Peoples of the World), ed. by N. Sosnina and V. Chvalina, 1990, pp. 11-12 (see *Bead Forum* No. 19, p. 15).

## 8. LONDON CORRESPONDENCE, by Gloria Dale (1986, 8:4-7)

The report of the SBR dinner and subsequent informal meeting in Long Beach, California, was of interest (*Bead Forum* 7:1). As a member who lives a continent away from most other members I should like to comment on certain conclusions that were reached.

The present form of the SBR newsletter strikes me as satisfactory as it is for the moment. It is nicely printed on good quality paper. Photographs, if of very good quality, would be welcomed although clear, detailed drawings of beads are often more useful. Good color photography must be very expensive.

The Committee is correct in stating that what is needed is more original research but it is vital that the material included is well-researched and accurate if it is to be useful to scholars.

Archaeologists have long been concerned with the problem of a standardized system of bead nomenclature. Of course, Beck made a considerable contribution to this subject. Johan Callmer, in “Trade Beads and Bead Trade in Scandinavia ca. 800-1000 A.D.,” 1977, attempted another system which is cumbersome and too complicated.

There are built-in problems in trying to give an exact description of a type of bead—to get agreement on terminology is nigh impossible. Even a basic globular bead is referred to as “spherical” or “round.” If there were a limited number of perfect shapes the situation would be different, but in my collection of over 40,000 beads I find that there are numerous variations of biconical, barrel, cylindrical, faceted, disc, etc., beads. It would be impossible to name all of these shapes accurately and coding them, e.g. IXb1c, as Beck does is not practical.

What bead researchers need are documented material and excavation reports with detailed drawings of all the types of beads found in that particular site with an accurate description pertaining to material, size, color, type of perforation, and parallels for dating purposes. What you call the shape is unimportant and I should be sorry to see the limited membership of the SBR spending its energy on semantics.

As for color, there are color charts that one can already refer to. However, color is subjective and there can be varying opinions as to whether a piece of glass is bluish-green or greenish-blue.

Too many errors are made in identifying bead material. This is really the work of a mineralogist and/or gemologist. Excavation reports often contain misinformation because those cataloging the materials are not familiar with a variety of materials.

A case in point is to be found in the Jericho report, volume I, where Early Bronze Age-Middle Bronze Age disc beads are described as orange and red glass. Glass beads dating from the mid- to late 3rd millennium would indeed be a dramatic find as the first glass artifacts are dated by Donald Harden to circa 1500 B.C. I strongly suspect that these disc beads are transparent reddish-orange carnelian. Unfortunately the Jericho material has been dispersed and it has been difficult to track these beads down.

A mineralogist told me that in order to give exact information on the nature of a stone (bead) it is necessary to take a slice of it to be examined under a microscope. It is often difficult to judge a stone once it has been transformed into an artifact. There is also confusion about the names of stones. Chalcedony, agate, and carnelian are often used interchangeably and this causes confusion.

Dr. Schienerl’s article on “Cornerless Cube Stone Beads in Egypt and Palestine” (*Bead Forum* 7:8-9) is evidence of the problem of material identification. Without seeing the green stone beads to which he refers it is impossible to ascertain what the stone is. However, I am familiar with beads of this type which are associated with the “heart” pendants (Islamic

amulets of the Mekkawi shape—known as *Thlhatana* in Hausa) and long faceted beads. I have such a necklace of large green cornerless beads from Persia as well as smaller examples from Syro-Palestine. If one studies photographs of ethnic peoples it is clear that the size and weight of bead adornment is no hindrance. I have been advised that these cornerless cube beads are bloodstone, a type of hematite. I've also seen more recent examples in moss agate. They may have been manufactured in Cambay or Germany or in both places. Cornerless cube beads are also made of lapis lazuli and date to the 3rd millennium in the Middle East.

It is valid to associate them with protective amulets and beads. I found that all the beads and pendants worn by the Bedouin in the Middle East have magical significance, usually to ward off the evil eye or to promote fertility.

The articles on the Arkell Collection that *Ornament* will be publishing deal with the magical properties of beads and with the Egyptian dealers who provided Arkell with many of the beads in his collection. One such dealer was G. Hindi who was convinced that all stone beads were made in Cambay. Having carefully examined the Arkell beads, I am certain that many of the carnelian beads are of considerable antiquity and were either kept as heirlooms or traded in the distant past.

Dr. Schienerl is probably not very familiar with ancient beads from the Middle East as he states that “no other material [except for agate?] seems to have been used for cornerless cube beads.”

I have in my collection cornerless cube beads of various stone materials as yet unidentified, a splendid string of rock crystal cornerless cubes, and a beautifully cut string of small Hellenistic carnelian cornerless cubes. These were often used on Hellenistic gold chains and there is such an example in the Nicosia Museum in Cyprus. I also have amber and jet cornerless cube beads. This was a very popular shape and was copied in glass as early as 900 B.C.

I would like to encourage SBR members to base their research on source material that is documented and on excavation reports. We will gain the respect of the archaeological world only if our published reports are accurate and well researched. Once the SBR has gained this recognition we may be able to have a positive influence on the study of this subject.

P.S. I have decided to give all my bead correspondence and research papers to the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, England. The material, which deals primarily with ancient beads, should be cataloged by the end of April. Mr. Peter Parr, Head of the Department of Archaeology, assures

me that those involved in bead research will be welcome to use the papers. Interested persons should contact Mr. Parr directly.

## 9. RUSSIAN TRADE BEADS MADE IN IRKUTSK, SIBERIA, by Glenn Farris (1992, 21:2-3)

At the Alaska Anthropological Association meetings held in Fairbanks on March 27-28, 1992, Dr. Oleg Bychkov, Science Director at the State Unified Museum of Irkutsk (Siberia), gave an impromptu presentation on Russian trade beads. Apparently, Irkutsk had a glass factory which began production about 1782 and lasted until the 1820s. This factory was established by a famous natural scientist who had come to Siberia to do a study of the various minerals present. His name was Finns-Erik Lachsmann. An Academic of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Science, Lachsmann had been trained by a leading Russian scientist of the day, Academic M.V. Lomonosov, who had himself established a glassmaking factory in St. Petersburg which made fine glass beads.

Lachsmann discovered a source of “clay salts” (*ghuzir*) in the vicinity of Lake Baikal. This material was substituted for potash in the making of glass at the factory he established midway between the deposit and Irkutsk (about 47 km from either one). About this time the governor of Irkutsk was a man named Jacob Klichka who was originally from Bohemia and was undoubtedly familiar with the value of glass beads. Glass “seed” beads were the first item of production. The problem was the relatively low quality of the glass due to the presence of carbonate salts. This gave the beads a milky appearance. In archaeological contexts, the clay would often be washed out and leave a pockmarked appearance of the beads, especially if they were in acidic soil. The basic color of these beads was a light blue, although some were also milky white.

Until 1790, a fur-trading company owned by Shelikov got virtually all the beads. One of his managers at the factory was Alexander Baranov who later became the manager of the Russian-American Company in Alaska. There are two letters from Shelikov in 1792 directing company agents to use beads to pay for furs. City business records show beads being manufactured, but only up until 1801. Even so, the factory continued in production beyond that time. Many records were destroyed in a fire in 1879, which is part of the reason why the archival material is not complete. It is possible that the glass factory was actually owned by the Russian American Company (the successor to the Shelikov Company, still under Shelikov's control). This company gained an exclusive charter in 1799 from the Tsar to hunt fur-bearing animals in the North Pacific.