

**Barrelet, James**

1953 *La Verrerie en France*. Librairie Larousse, Paris.

**Bescherelle, Louis Nicolas**

1856 *Dictionnaire National ou Dictionnaire Universel de la Langue Française*. 2 vols. Chez Garnier Frères, Paris.

**Bovis Bead Co.**

n.d. Bead Sample Card from Société générale pour l'Industrie de la Verroterie S.A., Lyon-Bron, France.

**Fleming, Charles and J. Tibbin**

1860 *Grand Dictionnaire Français-Anglais et Anglais-Français*. 2 vols. Librairie de Firmin Didot Freres, Fils, et Cie, Paris.

**Francis, Peter, Jr.**

1979 The Czech Bead Story. *World of Beads Monograph Series 2*.

**Grand Larousse de la langue française**

1977 7 vols. Librairie Larousse, Paris.

**Huget, Edmond**

1965 *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française du Seizieme Siecle*. Didier, Paris.

**Kidd, Kenneth E.**

1979 Glass Bead-Making from the Middle Ages to the Early 19th Century. *History and Archaeology* 30.

**Sleen, W.G.N. van der**

1975 *A Handbook on Beads*. Liberty Cap Books, York, PA.

**Sprague, Roderick**

1983 Tile Bead Manufacturing. In "Proceedings of the 1982 Glass Trade Bead Conference," edited by Charles F. Hayes III. *Rochester Museum and Science Center, Research Records* 16:167-172.

## 20. WHAT'S A RANGO?, by Peter Francis, Jr. (1992, 21:8-11)

This note is submitted in hopes that someone can shed light on the beads called "Range" or "Arango." Exactly what sort of beads are they? Where does the name originate and how did it come to be so widespread, only to disappear later?

Both editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary* list "Arango," though not "Range." The entries are identical:

**arango**, Pl. -oes "A species of beads made of rough carnelian... formerly imported from Bombay for re-

exportation to Africa. McCulloch Dist. Comm. 1844. 1715 London Gaz mmmmmcccxxiv/3 Arangoes, Ostridge Feathers, Beads (Murray and others 1933:424; Simpson and Weiner 1989:600).

The references cited by the *OED* are not the first uses in English. The earliest I have found is in papers of the East India Company. Robert Bower, Henry Bolton, and Humphrey Pirom wrote to "the Commanders of Subsequent Ships" from St. Augustine's Bay, Madagascar (Malagasy) on 15 May 1644: "Beefe may be bought on the other side of the river for 10 rangoes a beefe, or 8 rangoes and 20 samma sammas" (Foster 1913:182). Foster (1913:182, n. 1) appended a footnote: "Sarnisamy is Malagasy for some kind of bead; while rango (long) probably indicates the long beads which were in special demand. Lockyer (1706) mentions 'beads and rangos' among articles suitable for sale at the Cape [of Good Hope]." *Arrangoes* is also reported to be used currently in "Gambian English" for carnelian (Opper and Opper 1989:7).

There are actually two mysteries here. "Samma samma" (however spelled) is a bead Burton (1860:392) described in East Africa: "Samsam (Ar.) sàmè-sàmè (Kis.)... are the various names for the small coral bead, a scarlet enamelled upon a white ground;" that is, a cornaline d'Aleppo or "white heart." As white hearts were not available in 1644, what beads were called this name then? The older "green hearts?" I do not know; that is the subject for another inquiry.

But, on to Rango. I first assumed it was a local name for a long bead, and since long carnelians were much in demand in Madagascar in those days, I thought that was it. But where does this word come from? It could not be Arabic, nor is it found in Malay (related to the Malagasy language). It is not in any Portuguese dictionary I have consulted. In Spanish (and Italian) it means rank, degree, station, quality, class, etc. French has *rang* and *rangée*, meaning file of things put in a row. In Hindi and probably Gujarati *rañg* is "color." On what basis Foster interpreted the word as "long" and how it was derived remains to be learned.

At one point I thought I had found a hint in West Africa. Ibn Battuta about 1350 told his readers that travelers there need only some salt, some perfume or incense, and beads. The French translation reads: "*des ornements au colifichets de verre, que l'on appelle nazhim, ou rangée*" (Defrémery and Sanguinetti 1922:394), or "ornaments and baubles of glass, which are called *nazhim*, or *rangée*." *Nazhim* is an Arabic word for bead, but *Rangée* is not in the Arabic text. *Rangée* is French; the translators must have used it to say "string of beads" in an unconventional way; this use does not appear in Robert's (1966) or Littrés (1961) dictionaries. Ibn Battuta never heard of Rangoes.

But the word was known in the region later. Joseph Corry, who traded in what is now Sierra Leone in 1805-1806, and was at least partly responsible for the abolition of slavery and the founding of the Sierra Leone colony, listed goods for trade in the area. He gives us “barter prices now established throughout the Windward Coast; but it is to be observed, they are subject to fluctuation from locality of situation and other circumstances” (Corry 1807:57-58). The list consists of 36 items ranging from types of cloth to tobacco and rum. They were valued in iron “bars,” which he said were then worth a gold (presumably U.S.) dollar. The list mentions these goods in this order (Corry 1807:58):

1000 arangoes	30 bars
1 bunch of point beads	1
1 bunch of mock coral	1
Red pecado 3 lb, for	1
Seed beads, ditto	1

As the list groups similar things (cloth, weapons, beads, hardware, and miscellaneous [salt, a hat, tobacco, and rum]) together, I assume that the above are all beads of some sort. Note the high price for the arangoes.

The last source I have is from the intrepid Mungo Park's journal of his fateful expedition of 1805. He listed goods in Sansanding (in modern Mali), the final place he was reported alive. His list included 27 items, 15 of which were beads. Everything was valued in cowries, which were priced from 6,000 to 12,000 per dollar. The beads on the list were (Park 1815:160-161):

	Value in Cowries
Amber No. 1	1000
Ditto No. 2	800
Ditto No. 3	400
Amber No. 4	160
Ditto No. 5	80
Ditto No. 6	60
Coral No. 4 each stone	60
Black points, per bead	20
Red garnets, per string	40
White, ditto, per string	40
Blue agates, per string	100
Round rock coral, per bead	5
Long ditto, per bead	5
Short arrangoes, per bead	40
Gold beads, per bead	10

It would be interesting to try to work out what each of these beads was; some can be guessed at fairly well. In any case, it is clear that even short arrangoes were relatively

valuable. The word was defined in an explanatory section, written by an editor (Park 1815:LXXXII) as: “Arrangoes, a large kind of bead.”

Rango and Arango (Arrango) are no doubt the same bead. They were valuable and traded widely in Africa. We have notices from Malagasy, the Cape of Good Hope, Mali, and Sierra Leone dating from 1644 to 1805-1806. They were large, relatively expensive carnelians, but whether the word referred to all carnelians, just one style, or to different styles in different circumstances, we cannot be sure. Its etymology remains unknown.

These questions have been raised because references to Rangoes crossed my path. I would appreciate hearing from anyone with comments, other references, or ideas, directly or through *The Bead Forum* or, better yet, both.

## References Cited

### Burton, Richard F.

1860 *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*. Vol. 2 (reprint). Horizon Press, New York.

### Corry, Joseph

1807 *Observations upon the Windward Coast of Africa*. 1968 reprint. Frank Cass, London.

### Defrémery, C. and B.R. Sanguinetti

1922 *Voyages d'Ibn Batouttah*. Tome 4. L'Imprimerie National, Paris.

### Foster, William

1913 *The English Factories in India 1642-1648*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

### Littré, Émile

1961 *Dictionnaire de la langue Française*. Hachette, Paris.

### Murray, James A. et al.

1933 *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Vol. 1. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

### Opper, Marie-José and Howard Opper

1989 Diakhite: A Study of the Beads from an 18th-19th-Century Burial Site in Senegal, West Africa. *Beads* 1:5-20.

### Park, Mungo

1815 *The Journal of a Mission to the Interior of Africa, in the Year 1805*. John Murray, London.

**Robert, Paul**

1966 *Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue Française*. Société de Nouveau Littre le Robert, Paris.

**Simpson, J.A. and E.S.C. Weiner**

1989 *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

**21. ROMANCING THE HIDDEN BEAD, Peter Francis, Jr. (1992, 21:12-15)**

The uses of beads are legion. One which has not been examined has implications for researchers and for those who use beads. It has only rarely been reported, and the sources are difficult to access, so I shall quote most of them at some length.

Quarm (1989:47-48), in an unpublished "long paper" (a sort of bachelor's thesis) at the University of Ghana, Legon, reported the results of an extensive survey conducted by him and his classmates from different ethnic groups in Ghana. In his section on the uses of beads he stated (I have made a few minor corrections):

The rattling of beads is said to arouse sexual interest, especially in men. An informant at Ahwanease of an advanced age told me that the feeling of it is sufficient to awaken an impotent penis (name withheld for courtesy). Whereas it serves as an invitation to sex (or *twe draa* as the Akan call it) in bed it is considered as a plaything for the men. This was mainly expressed by informants above forty years [in age]. The young men and women appeared to be quite ignorant of that experience. This notion of bead use is, however, common in all the areas I visited.

... In the Asante, Akim, Nzima and Aowin areas, I learned that one can swear on oath by one's wife's waist beads. Bead are held sacred and it is believed to bring bad [luck] if one gives a false statement or evidence. This sacredness stems from the fact that some beads are believed to possess some productive influence on the women's fertility potential and this could be impaired in the case of falsehood. [A shrine attendant and a queen mother told me] that the telling of the kind and colours of beads a married woman wears by [to?] a man is tantamount to adultery and the person can be sued for damages.

The erotic use of beads worn around the waist and under the skirts of women is (or was) widespread among several groups in Ghana. The "bead dance" of the Laobe of Senegal appears to have such connotations (Oppen and

Oppen 1989:5), and the private erotic use of beads has been confirmed for Senegal and Mali by Marie-José Oppen (1992: pers. comm.).

A similar account was given by El-Tunisi (El-Tounsny 1851:334-335) when discussing beads in Wadai, now part of Chad. El-Tunisi lived in Wadai in 1811-1812. The following is my translation from the French by Perron:

These two types of beads are employed by the Fors as a hidden ornament, that is to say... in a sort of girdle worn next to the skin. The intention of this type of adornment is to excite the voluptuous emotions of the men, who are provoked and excited by the hint of the light rattling of the girdles at the time of amorous contact. When one meets a woman alone and wants to entice her, he touches the girdle and makes the beads rattle. If the woman appears to accept the provocation and does not distance herself immediately, he will take her hand and they will come to terms. If the woman repels him, he will go on his way.

What proves that the Fors do not wear these girdles of beads in order to hear the rattling by accident, is that the first turn is very solidly fixed to the loins, whereas the others are mobile and almost floating.

The beads which El-Tunisi just discussed were the *mangoûr* and the *rougâd-el-fâqah*. The *mangoûr* were yellow and green furnace-wound beads made in Hebron in the West Bank, which have more recently been recycled by Hausa traders who ground their ends flat and now sell them as "Kano Beads" (Francis 1990a:23-26). It is not clear what sort of beads the *rougâd-el-fâqah* were. El-Tunisi described them as smoother and more beautiful than the *mangoûr*. They were also more expensive and worn by the wealthier Fors (El-Tounsny 1851:334).

El-Tunisi also discussed a bead called *khaddoûr*. These he said were long and white, red or blue (El-Tounsny 1851:339). They were little esteemed and worn by the poor and servants. The word *khaddur* in Arabic means hidden. El-Tunisi had also discussed them in Darfur, in modern Sudan, where he lived from the age of 14 (1803 to 1811) before moving on to Wadai and then home to Tunisia. While he does not specify their use, he hints at it:

Around the loins and against the skin, the Fors wear different sorts of beads. Among the rich women the beads are the size of a nut, and are called *rougâd-el-fâqah* (the sleep of tranquility); among the women of medium means, it is the *mangour*, and among the poor women, the *harich* or the *khaddoûr*. These beads are made in Syria (El-Tounsny 1845:210).