

2) One such rod was found at Fustat, as reported both by Pinder-Wilson and Scanlon, and myself.

Mrs. Spaer may well have identified a somewhat different bead, made by a similar but not precisely same method. That suggests a different beadmaking location, since all beads found at Fustat were apparently made with rods, not wedge-shaped slices of glass. Where that might have been is certainly worth investigating.

We also need more data on the distribution of the beads. Spaer has indicated that they may be relatively widespread. However, if she has worked entirely from publications, it may have been difficult to identify these beads and distinguish them from those decorated with trailed lines later combed into herringbone patterns. What is needed is firsthand investigation of the reported beads.

#### **24. NOTES ON SOME *FORUM* ARTICLES, by Peter Francis, Jr. (1995, 26:4-7)**

This note was originally to have been for Ellen FitzSimmons, whose article on Tairona “tinklers” caught my eye. However, I have since accumulated other data of interest and am presenting them here as well.

#### **Re: “Pre-Columbian Tairona Tinklers” (*Bead Forum* 23:11-14)**

I was surprised to read that Caribbean and South American scholars refer to these shells as “tinklers” or “whistles.” Had they looked a little further north, they would have had a completely different view of them.

*Oliva* shells like those illustrated are present in numerous Mexican museums, especially in the Maya sections, always strung as necklaces. Collections that come to mind include the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico, the Mérida Regional Museum of Archaeology, the museum at La Bolom Institute in San Cristóbal de las Casas, and the Chiapas Regional Museum in Tuxtla Gutiérrez.

Nor are these stringings arbitrary. Numerous examples of these shells being worn exist on statuary. I shall cite one spectacular example: a life-size hollow clay figure from the Late Classical (ca. A.D. 600-900) site of El Zapotel in Veracruz. The female figure wears an enormous collar consisting of up to eight rows of what are probably *Marginella* shells. Around her waist is a row of large shells with the spires sticking out; they are likely to be *Olivas*.

Safer and Gill (1982:153-155) discuss the use of *Oliva* shells in conjunction with the Zapotec god Xipe Totec, the

god of rain. They report the finding of rattles made of these shells and the use of the shells mounted on sticks which are hit on the ground to make noise during the rain ceremony of the Otomi.

*Oliva* shells are also depicted in the painted manuscripts often collectively known as codices. The ones involved come from the Zapotec-Mixtec tradition. The Codex Borgia (lam. 64) is a production that antedates the conquest. Codex Vaticanus 3738 and its cruder non-native copy, Codex Rios, both show the wearing of *Oliva* shells by common people of the time (Códice Rios 1900:lam. 57v, 59r, 60r).

An even more sophisticated development is the elaborate carving of *Oliva* shells to resemble human faces. One example is in the Chiapas Regional Museum and another, recovered from the sacred cenote at Chichen Itza, is in the Mérida Regional Museum. The large ellipsoidal perforation on the dorsal side is incorporated as a mouth. Incidentally, this perforation is created by sawing. Ms. FitzSimmons might enjoy reading Francis (1989) where more detailed experiments are actually illustrated.

#### **Re: “A Note from 1878 on Glass Beadmaking” (*Bead Forum* 24:5-6)**

So as not to disappoint Rick Sprague, I shall offer a comment on his note concerning the production of beads “by twisting glass threads spirally....” The description sounds like what is known as the Venetian variety of “satin glass,” as opposed to the Bohemian variety. The beads themselves must have been expensive. They are rarely seen; there is only one in the Center’s collection (Francis 1988:Color Pl. D 16).

The largest group of them that I know of are on a sample card in the Glass Museum of Murano, a slide of which was kindly donated to the Center by Peter Pratt. They fill most of the card on slide no. 4 (B2, 101-250), which is helpfully marked *Vetro alla Lucérna* (lamp glass). There also appear to be a few on the Giacomuzzi cards (ca. 1852-1870) in The Bead Museum in Prescott, Arizona.

#### **Re: “The Illicit Bead Trade in Gao” (*Bead Forum* 24:6-10)**

Thanks very much to Timothy Insoll for his article calling attention to the destruction of the archaeological site of Gao, Mali. Similar devastating practices have been documented all around the world (Francis 1987). While Insoll is no doubt correct that many beads looted from Gao are sold in Mauritania, many of them end up in the hands of Western, especially American, collectors. He would be shocked by the

size and extent of bead assemblages held in dealer's stocks and private collections, all gleefully represented as having been "excavated" from Jenné, Timbuktu, or wherever.

Society members should make it a priority to educate themselves and others about this terrible situation. While there is some demand within West Africa itself, the real money and the real incentive come from outside. The halting of demand from the rich nations for these antiquities would go far in slowing the looting Insoll describes.

### **Re: A Query Concerning a Mayan Practice (*Bead Forum* 1:8)**

And now to answer one of my own questions. In the very first issue of *The Bead Forum* (1:8), I asked for references to a practice described in a popular journal of the Maya tying a bead to the hair of babies to dangle between their eyes to make them cross-eyed. Peter Pratt (*Bead Forum* 2:8) sent quotations from Coe and Morely. Coe (1966:144) said the parents hung small beads on the noses of the children (not easily envisioned), and Morely (1956:163) said they used little balls of resin dangling from the ends of the children's hair. Now there were three different accounts and no original source.

I now believe I have found one. Fray Diego Landa was one of a handful of Spanish clerics generally empathetic to the native peoples of the Americas. His mission was in the Yucatan where Maya culture still furnished. His *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatán* is a work of sympathetic, careful observation on all aspects of post-classic Maya culture. He wrote: "It was held as a grace to be cross-eyed, and this was artificially brought about by the mothers, who in infancy suspended a small plaster from the hair down between the eyebrows and reaching the eyes; this constantly binding, they finally became cross-eyed" (Gates 1978:33). I also consulted a Spanish edition and the word in question is *pegotillo*, the diminutive of *pegote* which is sticking-plaster.

Sadly, no beads were involved and, even more sadly, they were not attached to the nose; Morely clearly had a better idea of the practice. Maybe this information only pleases me, but I *have* been wondering about it for a dozen years.

### **References Cited**

#### **Codex Borgia**

- 1976 *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Cod. Borg. Messicano 1)* (commentary by Karl A. Nowtony). Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz.

#### **Codex Vaticanus 3738**

- 1979 *Codices Selecti LXV*. Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz.

#### **Códice Rios**

- 1900 *Il manoscritto messicano vaticano 3738, detto il Codice Rios*. Stabilimento Danesi.

#### **Francis, Peter, Jr.**

- 1987 The Endangered Bead. *Ornament* 11(1):64-73.  
1988 The Glass Trade Beads of Europe: Their Manufacture, Their History, and Their Identification. *The World of Beads Monograph Series* 8, Lapis Route, Lake Placid.  
1989 The Manufacture of Beads from Shell. In "Proceedings of the 1986 Shell Bead Conference," edited by Charles F. Hayes III. *Rochester Museum and Science Center, Research Records* 20:25-35.

#### **Gates, William (tsl.)**

- 1978 *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest*. Dover, New York.

#### **Safer, Jane F. and Frances M. Gill**

- 1982 *Spirals from the Sea: An Anthropological Look at Shells*. Clarkson N. Potter, New York.

### **25. SOME NOTES ON ARTICLES IN *BEADS*, by Peter Francis, Jr. (1996, 28:10-12)**

First of all, congratulations to Karlis Karklins for continuing to make *Beads* the single best source of information on international bead research. The following are additions to two of my own articles in that journal concerning beads in the Middle East and one which Karlis reprinted for our benefit.

#### **"Beads of the Early Islamic Period," *Beads* 1**

The mystery of the bead wasters pictured in Plate IIA and discussed as part of the Fouqi Collection on pp. 29-30 is now solved. In the storerooms of the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam is material known to have been found at Fustat. It is very like the wasters discussed in my paper, but even more convincing of an Early Islamic date because of its provenience and because several unfinished beads are among the finds. The specimens are mosaic beads formed without a core in the manner typical of the Early Islamic period. I now have no doubt that this is what they are.