53. AN UNUSUAL GILT-DECORATED FACETED GLASS BEAD, by Paul Lawson (1997, 31:12-13)

A blue, octagonal, faceted tubular glass bead (#12,155.1; Fig. 1) was recovered during the Portland State University Archaeology Summer Field School in 1996, at the early-19th-century Chinookan village site of Cathlapotle, near Ridgefield, Washington, USA. The site (45CL1) is in the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and was known as Cathlapotle when Lewis and Clark visited briefly in 1806. It was occupied prehistorically from ca. 1400, and was abandoned initially after epidemics in 1832-1833. The village was probably occupied briefly by Klickitat Indians until 1859, when an Indian Agent removed remaining Indians in the area up the Columbia River.

The bead was found in a storage pit near one wall of a plank house, approximately 1.1 m below grade. It is a translucent blue, octagonal tube with four rows of ground facets, two rows at each end with the facets closest to each end being quite small. It measures 2.5 cm in length and 0.84 cm in diameter, and has a perforation that is 0.28 cm (7/64 in.) wide. Under some lighting conditions, its color is an intense blue. Stating an exact Munsell color is not possible with available chips, but 5BP 4/2 is an approximate value. The glass fluoresces a strong lemon yellow under both short- and long-wave ultraviolet light. Together with a refractive index of 1.51, a specific gravity of 2.44, and a weight of 2.83 g, it is probable that the bead is a lime glass.

A unique feature of this bead is that the long side facets show "shadow" marks where gilt was once applied. This gilt decoration has eroded away (a characteristic also observed on some Ching period Chinese ceramics). Each side had one of two gilt patterns, with each pattern found on alternating sides. The shadow of a gilt band (0.4-0.5 mm in width) is also present on each side, oriented perpendicular to the length of the bead at the mid-point of each side, thus dividing the bead lengthwise into two equal decorative zones.

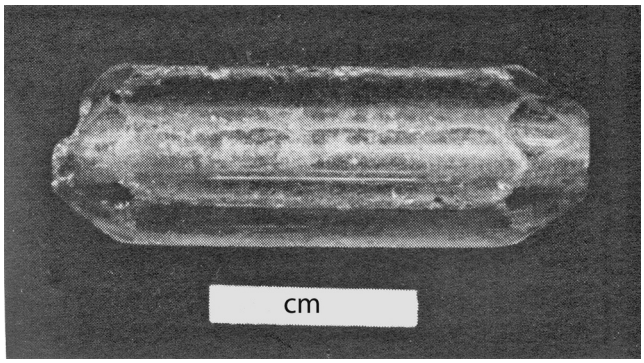

Figure l. The octagonal, faceted tubular glass bead from Cathlapotle.

54. CONSERVATION OF THE DAUGMALE CASTLE-MOUND BEADS, LATVIA, by Jana Lībiete (2000, 36:5-11)

One of the largest collections of beads in Latvia was acquired during the excavation of the Daugmale castle-mound complex. The site is located on the Daugava River not far from the capital city of Riga and in ancient times it was an important craft and trade center. Incorporating the ancient town, harbor, and burial ground, the castle mound is one of the most significant cultural and historical monuments in Latvia, where the most extensive archaeological investigations have been performed.

The occupation of the Daugmale site appears to date back to about 2000 B.C. Excavations there were undertaken over a number of years, both before and after World War II. Archaeological research of the castle mound was started by V. Ginters in 1933, and continued in 1935-1937. After a 30-year hiatus, excavations were resumed by V. Urtāns during 1966-1970, and continued in 1986-1998 under the leadership of G. Zemītis and A. Radiņš. It is important that the organizer of these excavations has been the Latvian History Museum, thereby ensuring not only a high degree of scientific and professional research, but also the preservation, restoration, and conservation of all the recovered antiquities at this museum.

There are about 9,000 beads in the collections of the Department of Archaeology at the museum which need to be restored to preserve them for further study and exhibition. The oldest specimens date back to the 3rd century, but the largest part of the collection dates from the 10th to 12th centuries. The beads originated from a large multinational area extending from Scandinavia in the north to Byzantium in the south, and from Western Europe to Russia in the east. The beads bear witness to significant trade and cultural relations between these nations in the past.

There are 1,541 beads in the Daugmale castle-mound collection and these came from 12 different excavation layers. Five hundred ninety-six of them were examined and restored. Comparing these beads to those found in other archaeological excavations in Latvia revealed that they were remarkably varied. They were classified according to the following attributes: color; size; form (ring-shaped, cylindrical, barrel-shaped, ribbed, and biconical); glass composition; and production technology (wound, poured into a mold, cut from a glass tube, or decorated with gold or silver foil or a colored glass inlay).

The condition of beads recovered from archaeological sites is mainly determined by the nature of the soil in which they reposed and the chemical composition of the glass.