

## The Beads

Glass beads of native manufacture are important if one is interested in the light that specialized technologies can throw on the origins of the various components of a prehistoric culture. The tiny yellow ring beads (Guido's [1978] Class 8) provide clear evidence of cultural links of some kind between southern England and Scotland in the late pre-Roman Iron Age (about the 1st centuries B.C. and A.D.) as Mrs. Guido's (1978:Fig. 25) map makes clear. X-Ray fluorescence analysis of the constituents of the opaque yellow glass paste from which these annular beads are made has shown that specimens from southern English sites (like Hunsbury hillfort in Northamptonshire) and from some Scottish brochs (including Leckie in Stirlingshire and Dun Mor Vaul on the island of Tiree in Argyllshire) were most probably made in the same workshop, presumably somewhere in the south (Henderson and Warren 1982). On the other hand, other beads in Scotland are distinctive, and were presumably made in the north.

Guido's Class 10 beads are globular and made of clear glass decorated with an inlaid yellow spiral pattern; the type is known as the "Meare spiral" after the many examples which were found in the Iron Age marsh village at Meare in Somerset (Guido 1978:79). In this case, the technical analyses showed that there are two groups, barely distinguishable to the naked eye, one made in southern England and one at a separate workshop, perhaps in the region of the Culbin sands in Morayshire in northeastern Scotland. The close similarities between the two groups must surely mean that one of them—presumably the Scottish one—was carefully copied from the other, or perhaps even made by a craftsman who had traveled to the north. One of the northern forms came from Leckie broch.

Of course, these examples of southern beads found on Scottish Iron Age sites could simply be the result of trade, but equally they could have been introduced by influential people who could command the services of craftsmen using local materials to produce copies. We can hardly know which is the more likely explanation without more evidence. Yet those archaeologists who keep confidently stating that there are no known links between the Atlantic Province and southern England in the broch-building period are ignoring important evidence.

## References Cited

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## 59. THE MISNAMING OF "DUTCH" BEADS, by Herman van der Made (1986, 8:11-13)

In *Ornament* 9(2), 1985, is an article by Karlis Karklins on "Early Amsterdam Trade Beads" in which he concludes that on their way along the trade routes of the world, beads from various manufacturing centers became mixed together. This has made it difficult to determine where certain bead types were manufactured. This is especially true of Dutch vs. Venetian beads where artisans from Venice were responsible for initiating the Dutch bead industry. At the present time, the only solution to the problem seems to be chemical analysis of samples from various European manufacturing centers such as Amsterdam, Venice, and Gablonz. While some information is available regarding 17th-18th century Dutch beads, contemporary comparative data are lacking. It is, therefore, impossible to say anything definite at the present time concerning the origin of European trade beads found on archaeological sites of the post-1550 period.

Another aspect that brings even more confusion to the study of bead origins is the misnaming of beads. In West Africa, all old round beads with a blue color are called "Dutch" beads. I am especially referring to variety W1b15 in the Kidd classification system, but other blue beads that differ slightly from the round ones are also called "Dutch" beads.

Recently a case was excavated at Goree, an island off the coast of Senegal. It contained a large number of W1d3 blue beads, but with larger perforations than usual. They were sold to the tourists as being "Dutch." However, on the basis of archaeological findings in Holland, I am quite sure that these beads were not manufactured in the Netherlands.

At markets in West Africa, traders frequently offered me W1b15 beads (15 mm - 18 mm) as Dutch beads. It is a well-known bead at these markets and has been traded in enormous quantities. It is, however, quite remarkable that this translucent ultramarine bead is hardly ever found in archaeological excavations and canals in Holland where factory refuse has been encountered. I have only one specimen in my collection which corresponds to the abovementioned bead variety. And I have seen no other examples in The

Netherlands. There is, however, a larger (20 mm-25 mm) blue, but opaque, bead similar to the Wlb15 variety which is found more regularly in excavations in Holland and which may be the basis for the “Dutch” appellation for the smaller specimens.

At the market of Bamako in Mali, the famous chevron bead is offered as “Dutch.” Although the colors of these beads (i.e., red, white, and blue) correspond to those of the Dutch flag, it is by no means certain that they were manufactured in Holland. In fact, it is much more likely that they were produced in Venice.

In his *Travels in Nubia*, 1819, Burckhard describes the trade in beads in East Africa. There the Italian traders called a white bead coming from the glasshouses in Bohemia as “Contaria d’Olanda” (“Beads of Holland”).

What’s in a name?

#### **60. BEADS FROM THE IRON AGE GRAVES OF KISSI, NE BURKINA FASO, by Sonja Magnavita<sup>1</sup> (1999, 35:4-11)**

The excavation<sup>2</sup> of the cemetery Kissi 3 in NE Burkina Faso revealed Iron Age graves dated to the 6th-7th centuries A.D. Numerous grave goods have been found, for example different kinds of iron weapons, tools, iron and copper jewellery, wood and leatherwork, basketry, and textiles. The materials show evidence of different kinds of trade connections, like local, interregional, and long-distance, even trans-Saharan, contacts. The arguments are based partly on the study of 1,300 beads, found as grave goods and presented here.

The sites of Kissi are situated in the north of Burkina Faso, West Africa, close to the *Mare de Kissi*, a seasonal freshwater lake. Since 1996, archaeological investigations resulted in the location of 25 settlement mounds, about 50 stone structures of different appearance, and six cemeteries with graves marked by stone slabs. All sites are situated in a quite small area of about 4 sq. km. The excavation of different sites indicate human occupation at least between the 1st and 13th centuries A.D. While settlement mounds revealed only a few beads, several thousand have been found in the cemeteries excavated so far. The analysis of the beads from one site (Kissi 3), has been concluded and will be presented here. Since the examinations of the beads of two other cemeteries are still in process, the results will be presented in further publications.

More than 1,300 beads made of different materials have been found in the cemetery of Kissi 3. Of these, 68% are made of **stone**, mostly of quartz (white quartz, rock

crystal, and rose quartz) and less of chalcedony (jasper and carnelian). All these raw materials occur within a radius of about 50 km, pointing to a place of production nearby. The stone beads are ground; additionally those made of chalcedony have a faceted and polished surface. Hypothetically, the beads of Kissi might originate from Hanouzigren in SW Niger (Vernet 1996:312ff.), where quartz and chalcedony beads of similar size, shape, and surface treatment were produced in the first millennium A.D. A few carnelian beads have different features. They belong to the “long bicone type” mentioned, for example, by Insoll and Shaw (1997:15), and are multifaceted and clearly thinner than the other stone beads. Previously, their origin has been placed to the Near East, Egypt, or India (Sutton 1991:152ff.; Insoll and Shaw 1997:15), but without further research (for instance, mineralogical analysis), this hypothesis remains unproved.

The second group is represented by **metal** beads with 17% made of iron and less than 1% of a cupric material. While the iron beads could have been produced locally, the cupric beads may come from a Saharan production center (Grébénart 1988).

The third group comprises **drawn glass** beads which make up about 10% of the collection (6% are white oxidized, 3.3% blue translucent, 0.5% green translucent, and 0.5% yellow opaque). Until now, there is no evidence of glass (bead) production in the 6th century A.D. in West Africa. Suggesting an import of glass beads, the nearest origin would be Byzantine North Africa. Preliminary mineralogical analysis carried out on yellow beads points to a hard, white, and translucent glass of high quality with numerous particles of antimony, resulting in the yellow opaque appearance (Prof. G. Brey: pers. comm.).<sup>3</sup> Interesting results are expected by comparison of the composition of the glass beads from Igbo-Ukwu with those of Kissi, which are very similar in size, shape and color (Shaw 1977: 20).

Beads made of **organic materials** and **clay** occurred only in a small percentage: 1% ostrich eggshell, 1% bone, and 1% clay. Local production of these beads is very probable. The clay beads are segmented. This is a specific shape known from many other sites in the region. De Beauchêne (1966:6 f.) mentions similar beads in SW Niger and Insoll (1996:82) affirms the occurrence of such beads and half-products in the Gao region indicating local production.

To classify the beads, three main groups with various subtypes have been used: cylindrical, spherical, and discoid shape.<sup>4</sup> To summarize the results, most of the beads are cylindrical (72%), 23% are discoid, and only about 5% are of a spheroid shape. Shape and raw material clearly correspond: