

77. THE MOHAWK GLASS TRADE BEAD CHRONOLOGY: AN ADDENDUM, by Donald A. Rumrill (1994, 25:11-12)

Response to "The Mohawk Glass Trade Bead Chronology: ca. 1560-1785," which appeared in Volume 3 (1991) of *Beads*, has so far been very positive. Since its publication, the author has continued to seek and examine new collections in order to confirm or help refine the information presented in the report. This work has revealed a few problems with the data presented for the Rice's Woods (Cnj-26) site. The bead collection from this site was the only one that the author did not examine personally, relying instead on two conversations with a primary source for the published information. The author recently had the opportunity to catalogue the Rice's Woods collection with the following results.

There are 32 varieties among the 2,878 glass beads in the collection. Only five of these are chevrons, contrary to the published statement that "a very high proportion" were chevron varieties (Rumrill 1991:11). Over half (1,679 specimens or 58.3%) of the bead collection is composed of small (under 4 mm in diameter), circular IVa12 beads which have a transparent light grey exterior and core, and an opaque bright navy middle layer. As this bead appears blue, as noted by Kidd and Kidd (1970:79), others who have catalogued the Rice's Woods material have identified this bead as varieties IIa41 (robin's egg blue) and IIa46 (shadow blue). Fortunately, the author had excellent lighting and a magnifier, and could, therefore, distinguish the three layers. It is almost impossible to distinguish them otherwise.

The above information has been shared with others researching the Iroquois chronology, and the same misidentification detailed above has been noted after a closer scrutiny of the relevant beads. In all cases, Kidd variety IVa12 appears to date around 1615, and may be considered diagnostic of the early 17th century, along with chevron, gooseberry, and flush-eye varieties.

In light of the above, it may be worthwhile for those involved in Iroquois trade bead research to re-examine their bead collections.

References Cited

Kidd, Kenneth E. and Martha A. Kidd

1970 A Classification System for Glass Beads for the Use of Field Archaeologists. *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History* 1:45-89.

Donald A. Rumrill

1991 The Mohawk Glass Trade Bead Chronology: ca. 1560-1785. *Beads* 3:5-45.

78. CORNERLESS CUBE STONE BEADS IN EGYPT AND PALESTINE, by Peter W. Schienerl (1985, 7:8-9)

Until quite recently many dealers in Egypt had a stock of old stone beads among their "antiquities." Beads and pendants made of carnelian and probably imported from India (cf. Peter Francis, Jr., "Indian Agate Beads," *The World of Beads Monograph Series* 6) formed the larger part of the stock. The specimens varied considerably in size and shape and will be dealt with separately.

The subject of this note is a stone bead always made of some green material (agate?) and shaped as a cornerless cube. Such beads occurred in comparatively large numbers and many of them showed considerable traces of wear. It should be noted that no other material seems to have been used for cornerless cube beads. One never got any reliable answer concerning the use and provenience of these beads, but their weight makes it difficult to believe that they might have been strung to form complete necklaces.

The photo archive of Edelgard Schienerl, Oldenburg, contains a very important picture. It shows a woman of Bedouin stock who temporarily (1973) stayed in the Fayoum Oasis, about 100 km southwest of Cairo. The woman carries her baby and a green cornerless cube is fastened to the hood of the child. When asked for the reason the mother only referred to its protective virtue against the "Evil Eye," but such an answer is of no great consequence as usually the original (possibly very specific) meaning of amulets has been obscured by now. Nevertheless, the amuletic character of the mysterious green cornerless cube beads has been established and it is obvious that such beads were worn singly.

Further references to the amuletic use of green beads were provided by the excellent study of Tawfiq Canaan: *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel*, Hamburg, 1914. The author states that at the beginning of this century Palestinians used green beads to ward off the dangers originating from *el kabsa*. This word means "pressure," but it seems that *al kabsa* is another expression to describe the ill-doing of the well-known female demon *al-Qarina* (cf. *Ornament*, 1979, 4[2]:33). According to Canaan these green stone beads are termed *harazat al kabsa* or *kabbas* and were worn in Palestine on a cord around the neck. It was obligatory for the mother to wear such a bead during labor and for forty days afterwards. After this period the stone had to be placed in water and the child washed with this liquid.