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81. EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHEVRON BEADS IN THE SOUTHEAST, by Marvin T. Smith (1990, 16:6-9)

In 1976, Fletcher Jolly and Ken Cornett published an article describing chevron beads with a hexagonal cross-section found in surface collections from the Overhill Cherokee town of Great Tellico (40Mr12) in Tennessee (Fig. 1). They carefully describe the beads and suggest that they may date to the 17th century. Both blue and green are listed as exterior colors, and Cornett (pers. comm.) later found an identical bead with a red exterior at another nearby site in Tennessee.

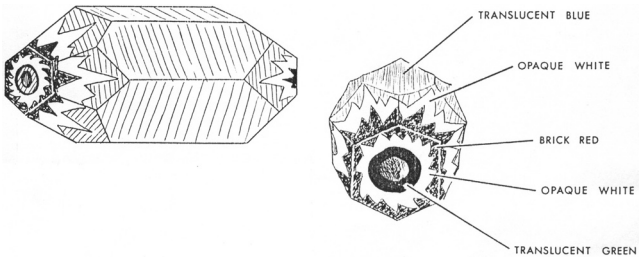

Figure 1. Hexagonal-sectioned chevron bead (Jolly and Cornett 1976:Fig. 2).

These beads differ from 16th-century faceted chevron beads (see Smith 1989; Smith and Good 1982) in many respects: 1) they have a hexagonal cross-section, while 16th-century examples have a round or, very rarely, square cross-section (Smith and Good 1982); 2) they have five layers of glass, while 16th-century chevrons usually have seven; 3) they have no "teeth" on the inner green layer, while 16th-century chevrons do; and 4) the chevrons of the type seen at Great Tellico are much larger than the usual 16th-century type, frequently being over 20 mm long. There has been some confusion in the literature about this hexagonal type of chevron bead (I will use this term in place of the longer but more precise hexagonal cross-section), and now may be the time to clear up some of that confusion.

Jolly and Cornett were unable to find comparable examples in the archaeological literature, except for a related hexagonal chevron in a large collection of beads from several sites in the Lower Tallapoosa River valley reported by Burke (1936; reprinted by G.B. Fenstermaker in 1974). As Jolly and Cornett note, even this hexagonal chevron is different: the Alabama specimen has seven layers (Burke 1974:no. 162). Since their article, additional research has located hexagonal chevron beads at the 18th-century Overhill Cherokee towns of Chota (ca. 1710-1819; Newman 1986:427), Hiwassee Old Town (Fenstermaker 1978), and Toqua (Polhemus 1987:945); the Peachtree Mound site in North Carolina (Mary Ann Thompson collection; see Setzler and Jennings 1941 for details of the site); the site of Fort Moore/Savannah Town in South Carolina (ca. 1680-1770; Story n.d.:types 223, 274); and the site of "Big Town," an 18th-century Chickasaw site in Mississippi (Steve Cook collection). Although some of these sites (Toqua, Hiwassee Old Town, and Peachtree) have earlier components that may represent occupations during the 16th century, most are single component, 18th-century sites. The distributional data strongly suggest that this bead type was traded by Englishmen during the 18th century.

But of much more importance was the eventual excavation of this hexagonal type of chevron bead in a good archaeological context. Green chevrons of this hexagonal type were excavated in an 18th-century Cherokee burial at the Citico site on the Little Tennessee River by James H. Polhemus (Richard Polhemus: pers. comm.). This burial also contained silver earrings of a type first traded during the 18th century. There is no doubt that this five-layered, hexagonal-cross-sectioned chevron bead is an 18th-century type.

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82. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON "FUSTAT BEADS," by Maud Spaer (1993, 22:4-11)

Although the first issue of *Beads* came out in 1989, I encountered it only recently. As a student of ancient beads, I had not expected much of interest. I was pleasantly surprised to read Peter Francis' "Beads of the Early Islamic Period." Certain trailed glass beads, with and without eyes, found at Fustat in Cairo and published by Pinder-Wilson and Scanlon (1987:71, Fig. 22) are among the bead types discussed by Francis (1989:29, Fig. 2b, PI. ID). I, too, found these beads very interesting and, in fact, questioned Prof. Scanlon about them more than a decade ago. My observations differ somewhat from Francis' and I would like to comment on the manufacturing technique, distribution, and time span of these beads.

Manufacturing Technique

The "Fustat Beads" share many characteristics which would justify considering them to be a separate type or class of beads. At the same time, however, they exhibit numerous minor variations. It is best to concentrate on specific examples, especially when discussing manufacturing techniques. Two beads in the Israel Museum collection, one with and one without eyes, suit this purpose.

Bead #1: 77.12.822 Dobkin coll. L 23, D 22, P 6 (Fig. 1). It is possible that this same bead was published by Neuburg (1949:Pl. 32, top center). The bead surface is divided longitudinally into eight fields, each with a diagonal pattern of stripes forming a non-continuous zigzag pattern. The stripes differ in width from field to field, but conform to one repeated pattern in opaque colors: white/ brownish red/yellow/green/yellow/brownish red/white/black (?). At the edges, close to the perforation openings, are some small monochrome areas of translucent grayish-green glass. The striped pattern can be seen inside the perforation, which is quite neat.

I have not had the privilege of examining the broken beads found at Fustat and discussed by Francis (1989:29). Even so, I find a multi-seamed technique of wedge-shaped sections more likely than one of fused cylindrical rods as proposed by Francis. I suggest that a flat, monochrome, grayish-green bar about 6 mm high was completely covered with trails, being left uncovered only at the sides. (A drawing process had certainly taken place previously, but it is difficult to know if the opaque trails were drawn separately or with the translucent glass; the latter seems more likely). The trailed bar, probably first cut from a larger bar, was cut diagonally in alternate directions into wedge-shaped sections. Every second section was turned upside down. Eight wedges were then fused around a rod, resembling the segments of a citrus fruit (Fig. 2). While the glass was still hot on the rod, it was tooled into its final barrel shape, exposing some of the monochrome glass at the edges.

Bead #2: 90.83.375 L 19 D 19 P 4 (Fig. 3). The bead surface appears to be divided into eight fields. Six have a pattern of stripes in white/brownish red/yellow/green/ yellow/brownish red/white, placed on monochrome grayish-green glass which forms an additional, seemingly black, stripe. Three fields have a pattern of three eyes each. The eyes have been cut from a mosaic cane having a black center and white, brownish-red, and yellow rings, and one outer ring of striped green and yellow.

Like Bead # 1, this bead is likely to have been fused from eight, striped, wedge-shaped sections. Two of the three rows of eyes were placed on top of two striped sections, completely covering them, including the monochrome ends. The third row of eyes was put on top of the junction of two striped sections, covering a little of one section and much of the second (Fig. 4).

This bead is formed with somewhat less care than Bead #1, as the stripes do not always form a zigzag pattern. The colors, although arranged in the same way–minus the added black–are more garish. We might be tempted to call this more "typically Islamic."