

# THE BEADS FROM OUDEPOST I, A DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY OUTPOST, CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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*The site of a provisioning station operated by the Dutch East India Company near the Cape of Good Hope during the late 17th and early 18th centuries produced a variety of European beads of several materials. A "typical" Dutch bead assemblage of the period, it is significant because it comes from one of very few independently dated bead-producing sites in southern Africa and, as such, will be instrumental in the formulation of a chronology for the beads found in this part of Africa.*

## INTRODUCTION

Oudepost I (33°08' S. lat., 18°02' E. long.) lies about 120 km north of present-day Cape Town, where the Dutch East India Company (VOC) established its initial refreshment station in 1652 to provision and facilitate the East Indies trade. The site (Fig. 1) is situated on the south shore of Langebaan Lagoon at the head of Saldanha Bay. This bay is one of the largest and most protected natural harbors on the African coast, and, as such, served as a refuge for ships battered by the storms that raged at the southernmost tip of the continent. Oudepost I was occupied for about 50 years, from 1669 to 1732, with a gap from 1673-1684/86, by a small garrison whose duties were to defend the land and to provision passing ships with fresh water, vegetables, and meat. Their activities involved labor and trade relations with the indigenous pastoral foragers, or Khoikhoi people, and it is these interactions that are reflected in part by the presence of trade beads at the site (Schrire 1990).

The archaeological and documentary investigation of Oudepost I began in 1984, and involved three principal seasons of intensive excavation under the direction of Carmel Schrire (Cruz-Uribe and Schrire 1991; Schrire 1987, 1988,

1990; Schrire and Deacon 1989; Schrire and others 1990). The site stands on a rocky spur above a small beach near one of the few permanent springs in this relatively dry region. It extends inland from the high water mark for about 70 m (Fig. 1). The living quarters consisted of two main buildings, rudely constructed from local, undressed stone. One, a rectangular two-roomed affair, was identified as the soldiers' lodge; the other, an eccentric structure with several paved rooms, a bastion, and a round embayment on the sea wall, was termed the "fort." Residues that included colonial and indigenous artifacts, as well as large quantities of food remains, lay scattered over the site, concentrating especially in and around the buildings. The loose sandy matrix was riddled with tunnels made by dune mole rats (*Bathyergus suillus*), and analysis of conjoined artifacts confirmed that considerable post-depositional movements of artifacts had occurred over time. This finding, together with the rarity of stratigraphic markers, encouraged us to try and infer a site sequence through an analysis of the large collection of recovered Dutch clay-tobacco pipes (Schrire and others 1990). The robustness of our results suggests that while no single object found in the Oudepost deposits can categorically be provenienced, a general chronological sequence may be inferred and applied to groups of artifacts.

## THE BEAD INVENTORY

The Oudepost I artifact collection contains 173 beads of glass, bone and metal that represent 31 varieties. The glass varieties, represented by those of drawn, wound, and blown manufacture, are described below using an expanded version of the taxonomic

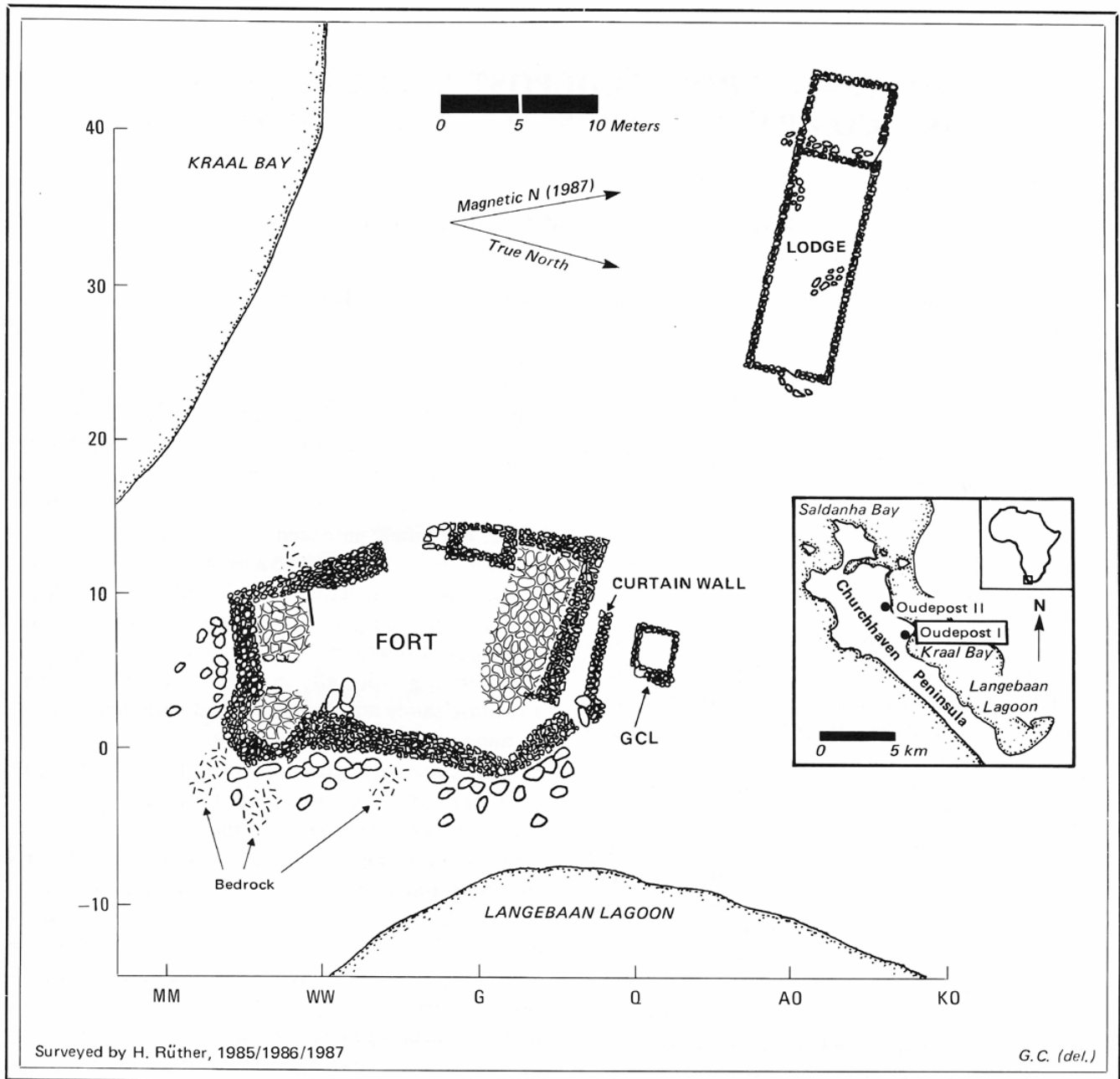


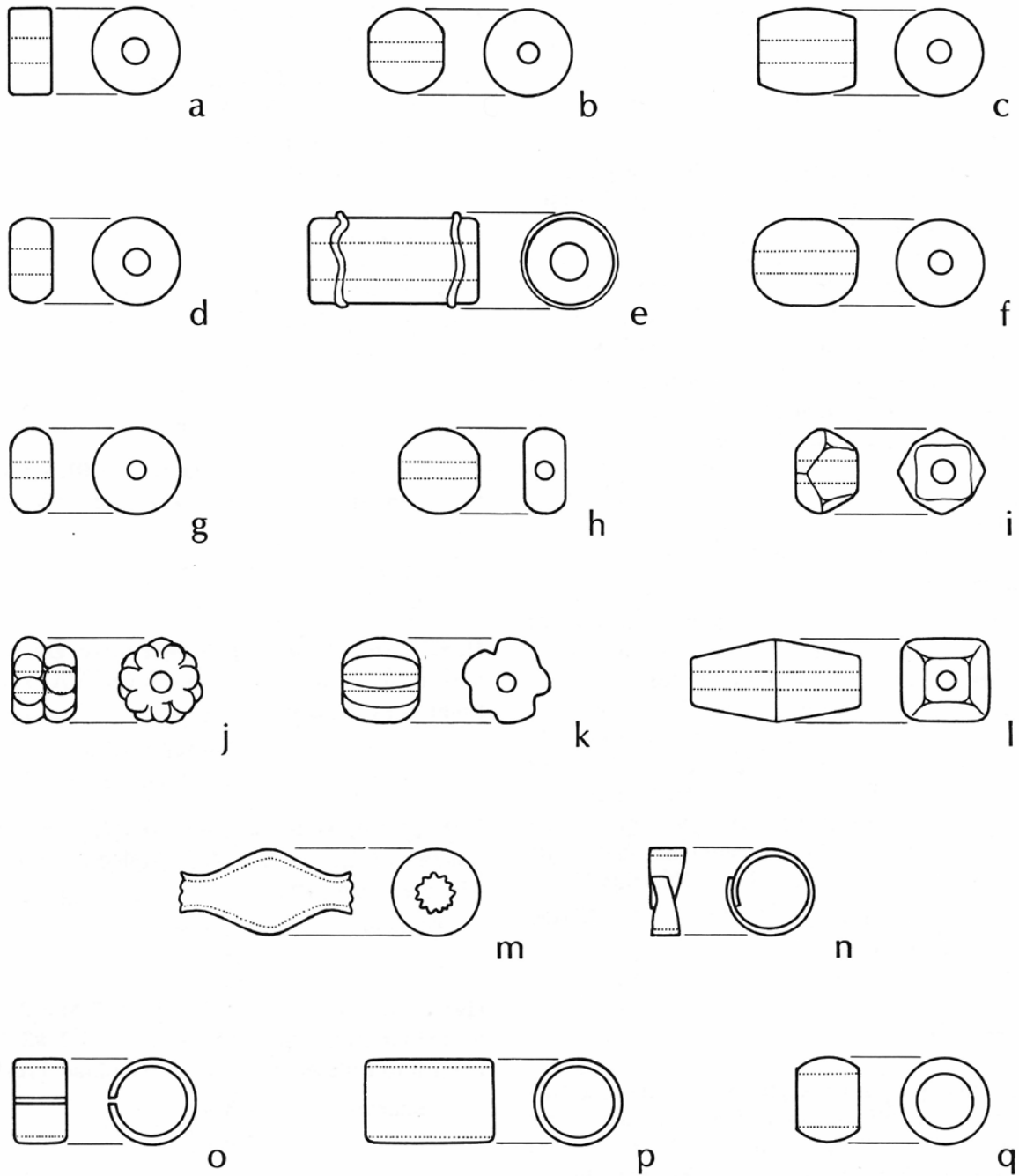
Figure 1. Map of the Oudepost I site, Cape, South Africa.

system developed by Kenneth and Martha Kidd (1970) as presented in Karklins (1985). Varieties that do not appear in the Kidds' lists are marked by an asterisk (\*); two asterisks (\*\*) denote a previously unrecorded type.

While the shape nomenclature is basically self-explanatory, Fig. 2 and a few comments will help clarify some of the terms used. *Oblate* drawn beads equate with the Kidds' "circular" category. The

wound *tabular* category (WIib) is what the Kidds term "flat 'disk' beads." The *pentagonal-faceted* (WIic) form is equivalent to the Kidds' "faceted five-sided bead," Beck's (1928: 17) "twisted square," and van der Sleen's (1967: 38) "pentagon." Finally, the *raspberry* bead (WIId) is what van der Sleen (1967: 38) calls "mulberry."

Colors are designated using common names followed by the appropriate color code in the Munsell



**Figure 2.** Oudepost I bead forms. *Drawn glass*: a, short cylinder; b, globular; c, barrel-shaped; d, oblate; e, cylindrical-decorated. *Wound glass*: f, globular; g, oblate; h, tabular; i, pentagonal-faceted; j, raspberry; k, melon; l, long square truncated convex bicone. *Blown glass*: m, segmented-ellipsoidal(?). *Lead*: n, short cylinder with overlap seam. *Copper*: o, short cylinder with seam; p, long cylinder; q, short barrel (drawing by D. Kappler).

notation system (Munsell Color 1976). Beads exhibiting lightly patinated surfaces were moistened with water to reveal their true color. Those covered with a thick layer of patina were mechanically cleaned in a small area before being moistened.

Diaphaneity is described using the terms opaque (op.), translucent (tsl.) and transparent (tsp.). Opaque beads are impenetrable to light except on the thinnest edges. Specimens that are translucent transmit light but diffuse it so that an object (such as a pin in the perforation) viewed through them is indistinct. A pin in the perforation of a transparent bead is clearly visible.

The size categories used refer to bead diameter and have the following numerical values: very small, under 2 mm; small, 2-4 mm; medium, 4-6 mm; large, 6-10 mm; and very large, over 10 mm. However, as this sizing system provides only a minimum of information, the exact diameter and length range of each variety is also presented to increase the comparative value of this report.

Varieties which have been found at archaeological sites in and around Amsterdam have "Amsterdam" appended to their descriptions, followed by the date of their contexts in quarters of a century. The quarters are identified by the letters a, b, c and d, respectively; e.g., 17c denotes the third quarter of the 17th century. *De Liefde* after the description indicates that the variety was present on the wreck of this Dutch East Indiaman that sank on its way from Amsterdam to Java in 1711 (Karklins 1988).

In the following text, Pl. = color plate, R. = row and # = position in row.

### Drawn Glass Beads

These consist of short sections of a tube that was drawn out from a hollow gather of molten glass. Their ends were rounded by subsequent heating and agitation. There are 12 varieties represented by 67 specimens.

#### *Ia - Undecorated Cylindrical Monochrome (Single-layered) Beads*

**Ia16.** Short cylinder; tsl./op. grayish blue (2.5PB 5/4); small size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.1, #1). Flat, possibly ground, ends. Earthy patina.

Diameter: 4.0 mm  
Length: 2.1 mm

#### *IIa - Undecorated Non-cylindrical Monochrome (Single-layered) Beads*

**IIa1.** Barrel-shaped; op. Indian red (7.5R 3/8); large size; 4 specimens (Pl. VA, R.1, #2-3). These range from short to long forms. Surfaces dull or covered with a flaky brown patina. Amsterdam: 18a.

Diameter: 6.1-7.5 mm  
Length: 5.8-7.2 mm

**IIa2.** Oblate; op. Indian red (7.5R 3/8); small size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.1, #4). Earthy patina. Amsterdam: 17a-18a.

Diameter: 4.0 mm  
Length: 2.2 mm

**IIa6.** Barrel-shaped; op. black (N 1/0); large size; 2 specimens (Pl. VA, R.1 #5). Dull to heavily patinated surface. Amsterdam: 17c-18b.

Diameter: 6.3-8.5 mm  
Length: 6.2-8.6 mm

**IIa\*.** Barrel-shaped; op. bright olive green (2.5GY 5/6); medium size; 4 specimens (Pl. VA, R.1, #6-7). Light brownish patina.

Diameter: 4.2-4.8 mm  
Length: 3.4-3.9 mm

**IIa\*.** Oblate; tsl. bright blue (5B 5/7); medium size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.2, #1). Eroded surface covered with a whitish patina.

Diameter: 4.2 mm  
Length: 2.3 mm

**IIa56.** Oblate; tsp. bright navy blue (7.5PB 2/7); small to medium size; 4 specimens (Pl. VA, R.2, #2-3). Flaky grayish to iridescent patina. Amsterdam: 17c-18c

Diameter: 2.8-4.6 mm  
Length: 1.6-2.7 mm

#### *IIb - Non-cylindrical Monochrome (Single-layered) Beads Decorated with Straight Monochrome Stripes*

**IIb\*.** Barrel-shaped; op. white (N 9/0) body decorated with 2 op. Indian red (7.5R 3/8) and 2 tsp. bright navy blue (7.5PB 2/7) stripes; medium size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.2, #4). Cased in clear glass. Amsterdam: 18a.

Diameter: 5.4 mm  
Length: 4.3 mm

*III\* - Cylindrical Polychrome (Multi-layered) Beads Decorated with Applied Wound Decoration*

**III\*\*.** Cylindrical-decorated; gilded tsp. light gold (2.5Y 7/8) body decorated with a wavy applied filament of op. light gold glass about either end (most of the appliqué has disintegrated leaving only a few traces); small size; 2 specimens (Pl. VA, R.2, #5-6). Well-rounded ends. Dark brown patina. *De Liefde*: 18a.

Diameter: 3.3-3.4 mm  
Length: 4.9-6.2 mm

*IVa - Undecorated Non-cylindrical Polychrome (Multi-layered) Beads*

**IVa\*.** Oblate; op. Indian red (7.5R 3/8) outer layer; op. black (N 1/0) core; medium size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.2, #7). Cased in a thin layer of clear glass. Flaky black patina.

Diameter: 4.5 mm  
Length: 3.2 mm

**IVa5.** Globular to barrel-shaped; op. Indian red (7.5R 3/8) outer layer; tsp. yellowish green (10Y 6/8) to bluish green (5G 6/6) core; medium to large size; 10 specimens (Pl. VA, R.3, #1-2). Cased in clear glass. Lightly to heavily patinated. Amsterdam: 17a-18b.

Diameter: 4.5-7.0 mm  
Length: 4.5-6.7 mm

**IVa6.** Oblate; op. Indian red (7.5R 3/8) outer layer; tsp. yellowish green (10Y 6/8) core; small to large size; 36 specimens (Pl. VA, R.3, #3-4). Cased in a thin layer of clear glass. Surface eroded and patinated. Amsterdam: 17a-18b.

Diameter: 3.5-6.9 mm  
Length: 2.1-5.3 mm

**Wound Glass Beads**

Wound beads were made by winding a strand of molten glass about a metal mandrel until the desired size and shape were achieved. The beads were sometimes pressed with small paddles to impart facets or clamped in small two-piece molds if a specialized shape was desired. Thirteen varieties are represented by 80 specimens.

*WIb - Undecorated Globular to Oblate Monochrome (Single-layered) Beads*

**WIb4.** Globular to oblate; tsp./tsl. pale blue or milky white (7.5B 8/2); large to very large size; 8 specimens (Pl. VB, R.1, #1-2). The glass of at least two specimens has a golden cast. Heavily patinated. Amsterdam: 17d-18c.

Diameter: 9.3-17.0+ mm  
Length: 6.2-17.2 mm

**WIb7.** Oblate; tsp. amber (10YR 7/8); very large size; 3 specimens (Pl. VB, R.1, #3). Thick white patina. Amsterdam: 17d-18b.

Diameter: 9.0+-13.2 mm  
Length: 7.5 - 8.3 mm

*WIib - Undecorated Tabular Beads with Circular Outlines*

This type was made by flattening a round bead parallel to the perforation while it was still in a molten state.

**WIib\*.** Tabular; tsp./tsl. pale blue or milky white (7.5B 8/2) with a golden cast; very large size; 1 specimen (Pl. VB, R.1, #4). Heavy white patina.

Width: 13.0 mm  
Thickness: 5.3 mm  
Length: 12.0 mm

*WIic - Pentagonal-faceted Monochrome (Single-layered) Beads*

These beads exhibit eight pentagonal pressed facets. The ends are square.

**WIic1.** Pentagonal-faceted; op. black (N 1/0); large to very large size; 4 specimens (Pl. VB, R.1, #5-6). Shiny to dull surfaces. Amsterdam: 17c-17d.

Diameter: 9.4-11.3 mm  
Length: 7.1- 8.7 mm

**WIic2.** Pentagonal-faceted; tsp. light gray (colorless; N 7/0); very large size; 5 specimens (Pl. VB, R.2, #1-2). The glass of one specimen exhibits a slight lavender (solarized) cast. Light grayish patina. Amsterdam: 17c-18b; *De Liefde*: 18a.

Diameter: 10.0-10.8+ mm  
Length: 7.8- 9.2 mm

**WIIc3.** Pentagonal-faceted; tsl. pale blue or milky white (7.5B 8/2) with an opalescent cast; very large size; 7 specimens (Pl. VB, R.2, #3-4). Whitish patina.

Diameter: 9.7+-11.6 mm  
Length: 7.7 -10.5 mm

**WIIc5.** Pentagonal-faceted; tsp. amber (10YR 7/8); very large size; 19 specimens (Pl. VB, R.2, #5-6). The surfaces are eroded and exhibit splotches of white and iridescent patina. Amsterdam: 18a-18b.

Diameter: 10.1-12.8 mm  
Length: 7.1-10.0 mm

**WIIc\*.** Pentagonal-faceted; tsp. light jade green (10G 6/6); large size; 1 fragmentary specimen (Pl. VB, R.3, #1). Light iridescent patina.

Diameter: 7.7+ mm  
Length: 10.0+ mm

**WIIc11.** Pentagonal-faceted; tsp. ultramarine (6.25PB 3/12); large to very large size; 14 specimens (Pl. VB, R.3, #2). Heavy brownish patina. Amsterdam: date uncertain.

Diameter: 8.6-11.4 mm  
Length: 7.0-11.2 mm

**WII d - Monochrome "Raspberry" (Single-layered) Beads**

These beads are encircled by two to three rows of six to eight rounded nodes each.

**WII d1.** Raspberry bead; tsp. light gray (colorless; N 7/0); large to very large size; 7 specimens (Pl. VB, R.3, #3-5). Iridescent to white patina. Amsterdam: 17c-18a.

Diameter: 9.2-11.5 mm  
Length: 7.0-10.5 mm

**WII d6.** Raspberry bead; tsp. bright navy blue (7.5PB 2/7); large to very large size; 8 specimens (Pl. VB, R.4, #1-2). Iridescent patina.

Diameter: 8.7-11.5 mm  
Length: 8.9-11.0 mm

**WII e - Monochrome "Melon" Beads**

These exhibit several rounded lobes set parallel to the perforation.

**WII e2.** Melon bead; tsp. light gold (2.5Y 7/8); large size; 1 specimen (Pl. VB, R.4, #3). The bead has four rounded lobes, and a light brownish patina.

Diameter: 6.8 mm  
Length: 6.4 mm

**WII p - Long Square Truncated Convex Bicone Beads**

These are Beck (1928) type IX.D.1.f. beads. They are square-sectioned and have pyramidal ends formed by four trapezoidal pressed facets.

**WII p\*.** Long square truncated convex bicone; tsp. ruby (2.5R 3/10); medium to large size; 2 specimens (Pl. VB, R.4, #4). Thick earthy patina.

Diameter: 5.5-6.2 mm  
Length: 7.1-8.0+ mm

**Blown Glass Bead**

The single recovered specimen was produced by blowing one or more oblong bubbles in a section of drawn tubing.

**BI d - Undecorated Segmented Monochrome (Single-layered) Bead**

**BI d(?)\*.** Segmented-ellipsoidal(?); tsp. light gray (colorless; N 7/0); small size; 1 fragmentary specimen. One end has been fire-polished; the other — which is broken — constricts and then flares out again slightly suggesting that the bead may have been segmented originally. Longitudinal bubbles and striae in/on the glass. Earthy patina.

Diameter: 2.6+ mm  
Length: 6.5+ mm

**Bone Beads**

These are lathe-turned, and have perforations that were drilled with a parallel-sided bit.

*Globular to oblate*; large size; 2 specimens (Pl. VA, R.3, #5-6). Surfaces are shiny to dull. Amsterdam: 16d-17b.

Diameter: 6.2-9.2 mm  
Length: 4.7-7.9 mm

### Lead Bead

This item was formed by rolling a very narrow strip of thin sheet lead into a cylindrical form. The ends overlap.

*Short cylinder*; medium size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.3, #7). Corroded.

Diameter: 5.0 mm  
Length: 2.6 mm

### Copper Beads

The copper beads are all cut from tubing and appear to be of European manufacture. There are 22 specimens representing three shapes.

*Short cylinder*; medium to large size; 11 specimens (Pl. VA, R.4, #1-2). The tube from which these beads were cut had a distinct longitudinal seam. Lightly to heavily corroded.

Diameter: 4.4-6.5 mm  
Length: 3.5-4.4 mm

*Long cylinder*; medium size; 1 specimen (Pl. VA, R.4, #3). This bead consists of a section of tubing of a lighter weight than the former variety and without the seam. Lightly corroded.

Diameter: 4.6 mm  
Length: 6.3 mm

*Short barrel*; small to medium size; 10 specimens (Pl. VA, R.4, #4-7). These were fashioned from light-weight tubing using a lathe that contoured the surface of each bead and then cut almost all the way through the tube where the ends were to be. After the entire tube was segmented, the individual beads were snapped off, occasionally leaving a slight burr at the edge of the perforation. Lightly to heavily corroded. *De Liefde*: 18a.

Diameter: 3.5-4.6 mm  
Length: 2.8-3.6 mm

### DISCUSSION

The Oudepost I bead collection is dominated by small to large oblate beads of drawn manufacture and large to very large pentagonal-faceted beads of wound manufacture. Together they comprise 54% of the

collection. The dominant varieties, representing 58% of the collection, are listed in Table 1.

As for color frequency, red beads predominate (red-glass and copper beads make up 44% of the bead collection), followed by white (19%; this group includes the light gray, pale blue/milky white, lead and bone beads), blue (16%), and amber/yellow (15%). Black (3%), green (3%) and decorated (<1%) specimens are rare. A like preference for red and white beads and a low estimation of black beads was noted by Le Vaillant (1790, II: 25) during his travels in South Africa towards the end of the 18th century.

The beads are all of European origin, with the possible exception of the lead specimen that may have been made locally by the soldiers who left ample evidence of leadmongery at the post. The bone beads are distinct from those found in Late Stone Age contexts in South Africa (*see*, for example, Deacon 1984: 172-3) by virtue of being lathe-turned. There is nothing even remotely suggestive of the Indian bead industry, nor of any other Asiatic beadmaking center, although two broken agate rings of probable South-Indian manufacture were unearthed at Oudepost. Where the rest of the collection is concerned, while there is a good possibility that at least some of the drawn glass beads were manufactured in Holland (Karklins 1983: 111-3), the source of the wound-glass, bone and metal specimens remains uncertain. While it is broadly assumed that wound beads like those found at Oudepost are of Dutch manufacture, there is presently no historical or archaeological evidence to confirm this. Only when we have sound comparative material from contemporary bead-producing centers in Europe and Asia will this problem be resolved.

As a collection, the Oudepost beads are consistent with what might be expected to be found at a VOC trading post of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Of the 118 beads to which we ascribe a date, all encompass the period from 1669-1732 during which the site is documented as being occupied by VOC personnel. This, in turn, is consistent with the fact that 132 specimens (76%) have correlatives at contemporary sites in and around Amsterdam, or on the 1711 wreck of *De Liefde* (Bax and Martin 1974; Karklins 1988).

It should be noted here that the Oudepost beads are not specific to just Dutch sites, nor should they be

**Table 1. The Dominant Bead Varieties at Oudepost I.**

Kidd Variety	Description	Size	Quantity	
			#	%
IVa6	Oblate; op. Indian red on tsp. yellowish green	S-L	36	21%
WIIc5	Pentagonal-faceted; tsp. amber	VL	19	11%
WIIc11	Pentagonal-faceted; tsp. ultramarine	L-VL	14	8%
Copper	Short cylinder	M-L	11	6%
Copper	Short barrel	S-M	10	6%
IVa5	Globular to barrel-shaped; op. Indian red on tsp. yellowish green	S-L	10	6%
	Total		100	58%

construed, *per se*, as proof of a Dutch presence. Most of the varieties are found at sites occupied or supplied by the English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Danes over a wide geographical area ranging from the Cape to Greenland, Canada, southern Argentina, and Indonesia (Karklins and Barka 1989: 70). Nevertheless, it is significant that there are no definite bead correlatives between Oudepost I and the 17th-century Portuguese sites investigated in Rhodesia by Garlake (1967, 1969). Certainly none of the distinctive drawn (varieties I Ib\* and III\*\*) and wound (class WII varieties) beads are represented. There is a similar absence of the distinctive Oudepost beads at Fort Jesus (Kirkman 1974), a major Portuguese trading establishment on the coast of Kenya. The difference in assemblages suggests that the Dutch and Portuguese both obtained their beads from different sources, principally Holland and possibly other European beadmaking centers for the former, and India or some other Asiatic beadmaker for the latter. It may, therefore, eventually be possible to define a "Dutch" bead assemblage for South Africa.

Many of the Oudepost bead varieties have relatively long temporal ranges which prevent particular varieties from being correlated with temporal divisions in a site that was itself only occupied for about 50 years. Consequently, the best we can do is to see whether there was any change in the density of beads over space or time. Beads were most densely distributed in and around the two main

structures, with about 1.47 beads/m<sup>3</sup> in and around the lodge, and 1.37 inside the fort. The density drops precipitously outside the fort where only 0.15 beads/m<sup>3</sup> were found. Since this is also the youngest deposit at Oudepost, the distribution of beads also shows a marked drop over time (Table 2). This pattern is similar to that found in the distribution of other artifacts at Oudepost I, such as clay pipes (Schrire and others 1990), indigenous artifacts (Schrire and Deacon 1989), stoneware and glass. Since the distribution pattern is not restricted to the kinds of commodities that were traded, the decline in bead frequency through time does not, in itself, reflect a diminution in colonial-indigenous trading, though it is certainly likely that trade did drop off in this region in the early 18th century, as the Khoikhoi abrogated their independence to the increasing demands of their European overlords (*see* Elphick 1982, 1985).

Turning to the wider view of bead distribution, archaeological excavations have revealed the occasional copper and glass bead in Later Stone Age contexts in the western Cape. These often occur in the uppermost levels of deeply stratified caves and rock shelters, attesting to the latest use of these sites by indigenous people after trading with Europeans began some 500 years ago (*see*, for example, Deacon and others 1978: 47; Robey 1987: 316). These beads have not been further identified, but several of the Oudepost varieties — most notably the drawn Indian red (IIa1 and IIa2), red-on-green (IVa5 and IVa6) and



Table 2. Distribution of Beads at Oudepost I.

Unit*	Drawn	Wound	Blown	Bone	Lead	Copper	no.	no./m <sup>3</sup>
II	38	41	1	-	1	9	90	1.7
I	26	31	-	1	-	11	69	1.3
X	-	5	-	1	-	-	6	0.1
Total	64	77	1	2	1	20	165	1.1 (ave.)

(\*) Units are listed from the oldest (II) to the youngest (X) according to the stratigraphy inferred in Schrire and others (1990). The table excludes beads whose provenience could not be related to these units.

black (IIa6) beads — occur in Iron Age and later sites over a great portion of Sub-Saharan Africa (*see*, for example, Killick 1990).

The distribution of the distinctive Oudepost bead varieties over Africa is quite restricted considering how many archaeological sites have yielded beads. The nearest site to produce Oudepost-type beads is Welgevallen, a colonial Dutch farm on the perimeter of the town of Stellenbosch which was occupied from around 1720 to 1760. Excavations conducted there between 1976 and 1980 uncovered 34 glass beads of 13 varieties (Vos 1985: 267) including IVa5 (1), Wlb4 (10), WIIc2 (5), WIIc5 (2) and WIId1 (1).

In West Africa, the 18th and 19th-century levels at the Clerk's Quarters site in Benin City, Nigeria, contained two specimens of variety WIIc2, as well as several examples of varieties IIa2, IVa\* and IVa5 (Connah 1975: 171-7). The investigation of the major Dutch fort at Elmina, Ghana, by Christopher De Corse (1989), produced a vast array of glass beads. A preliminary examination of the material reveals the presence of Oudepost varieties IIa56, IVa5, Wlb4, WIIc2, WIIc5, WIId1 and WIIp\* (Karklins 1988: pers. observation).

A necklace removed from the grave of "a renowned chief" around the turn of the century at Mansu, a town on the route between Elmina and Kumasi in southern Ghana, is composed of 13 glass and ostrich-eggshell varieties including Wlb4, WIIc2, WIIc5, WIId1 and a long form of variety Ia16 (Karklins 1987: pers. observation; Read 1905). The interment likely dates to the late 17th or 18th century

(Karklins and Barka 1989: 74), and the beads were almost certainly acquired from the Dutch at Elmina.

In North America, the distinctive wound beads found at Oudepost are diagnostic of George Quimby's (1966: 85-7) Middle Historic Period which extends from 1670 to 1760. More precise dates for the various types are provided in Karklins and Barka (1989: 74).

We turn finally to the function of beads at the Cape of Good Hope during the occupation of Oudepost I. The Dutch were involved in trading relations with the indigenous people at the Cape for half a century before they established their first settlement there in 1652. The Cape was an important provisioning stop on the long voyage between Holland and the East, where the sailors received fresh water, herbs and, above all, fresh meat. Meat was provided by the local Khoikhoi or Hottentot people, pastoral foragers who maintained herds of fat-tailed sheep and cattle. Unlike the Dutch-Amerind fur trade in North America that focused on wild animals, the Cape exchanges centered on domesticated stock (Schrire and Merwick 1991). Consequently firearms did not need to be a crucial element in trade, and the Dutch were even reluctant to trade in iron, lest the Khoikhoi turn benign tools into deadly weapons. Instead, the main goods that greased European access to Khoikhoi resources were liquor, tobacco, pipes, copper trinkets, and beads (Fig. 3). Around 1676, glass beads were weighed by *mas*, a measure equivalent to about 38 grams, while copper beads were traded in bunches of five chains, each chain holding one hundred beads (Leibbrandt 1902: 277). A shipment of four *massen* of sorted beads was made to



Figure 3. Hottentot fishing practices and colonial exchange at the Cape of Good Hope (Kolbe 1745).

Oudepost in 1669 (VOC 4004), and six pounds of glass beads and one thousand copper beads were sent there a few years later (VOC 4047).

Different varieties of beads had different purposes and values depending on the types of interactions taking place, as well as the social status of the recipients. Red beads were used to buy cattle (Thom 1958: 433), and copper necklaces were also sent annually to the Khoikhoi in the cattle trade (Schapera and Farrington 1933: 109). A memorandum of 1661 itemizes the beads presented to a hierarchy of Khoikhoi chiefs. It lists 24 varieties, including red beads for cattle, as well as violet, orange and milk-white beads, blue ones sparkling like crystal, and green beads speckled with yellow. The paramount chief was entitled to 16 of the varieties, his sons to 14, and the captains, at the bottom of the ranking system, to only nine of them (Thom 1958: 432-3).

Beads were apparently worn mainly by women. A 1673 description notes that "almost all, except the

very poor, wear necklaces of coral, glass, or bronze beads. These they acquire from the Noble Company in exchange for prime cattle" (Schapera and Farrington 1933: 119). More details appear in a sketch that recently surfaced in the South African Library in Cape Town. Part of an anonymous set of drawings of Khoikhoi people at the Cape around the turn of the 17th century, the drawing (INIL 6253) — which depicts Khoikhoi women — is annotated as follows:

Around the neck they have the beads preferably 6 thick and in several rows in space. Copper ones are most favored, then glass and of many colors mixed together. Around the body they prefer large ones or also small round discs of ostrich eggs. Around the arms and hands they wear the smallest beads (Smith 1991: 101).

The colonists and Khoikhoi were, therefore, engaged in exchanges at Oudepost that included food, iron, clothing, stock, tobacco, liquor and beads. Of all

these items, beads speak most explicitly of trade. In addition, the Oudepost beads confirm the identity and age of the VOC occupation. As historical archaeology proceeds in this part of the world, more information will emerge about the typology of the beads imported here, and their distribution over time and space.

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