

Munsell Color

1976 *Munsell Book of Color, Glossy Finish Collection*.
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Glass Beads: Cultural History, Technology, Experiment and Analogy.

Marianne Rasmussen, Ulla Lund Hansen and Ulf Näsman (eds.). *Studies in Technology and Culture 2*. Historisk-Arkaeologisk Forsøgscenter, Slangealleen 2, DK-4320 Lejre, Denmark. 1995. 128 pp., 92 b&w figs., 22 color figs. 198 Dkr. (paper cover) + 150 Dkr. for postage and bank charges.

For a long time, beads in European archaeology were a neglected group of artifacts even though, owing to their frequency, variety and material persistence, they are perfectly suited for many kinds of analysis. A reevaluation of the research potential of beads by many European scholars led to a boom in various publications on beads from the mid-1980s onwards, one which continues to the present day. In October of 1992, the Historical-Archaeological Experimental Centre in Lejre, Denmark, organized the Nordic Glass Bead Seminar with the aim of presenting an overview of research results in Scandinavia and of improving contacts amongst the participants (see *Ulf Näsman*, pp. 9-10). The volume under review presents the proceedings of this symposium.

Several papers deal with special assemblages or beads of a particular region or period. For instance, using the collections of the British Museum, *Veronica Tatton-Brown* (pp. 37-43) gives an overview of the more unusual Mediterranean beads, worn mainly as pendants. Her examination begins around 600 B.C. and ends in late antiquity. A comprehensive picture of the beads of the Roman Imperial period in Denmark

(ca. A.D. 50-400) is provided by *Inge Elisabeth Olldag* (pp. 25-31). She presents her own system of classification and discusses the chronologically and regionally varying distribution of the individual bead types. They occur as grave goods and reflect variances in costume and cultural contact among the Danish islands of Jutland, Sjaelland, Fyn and Bornholm. Within this area, *Per Ethelberg* presents a special finds complex, the beads from the cemetery at Skovgårde on Sjaelland (pp. 91-94). Whereas cremation graves predominate elsewhere during the Roman Imperial period, the Skovgårde beads come from richly furnished inhumation graves. Consequently, the good condition and frequency of the beads permit a worthwhile analysis. A further regional overview is provided by *Helena Ranta* who deals with Finnish material from the Roman Imperial period through the Viking age (ca. A.D. 50-1050; pp. 45-48). As a result, periods of completely different fashions in beads become evident. Thus, during the Migration period (ca. A.D. 400-600), monochrome wound beads composed mainly of blue and green translucent glass are common. In the Merovingian period (ca. A.D. 600-800) beads of opaque glass predominate and new colors (e.g., orange) appear. During the Viking period (ca. A.D. 800-1050), drawn glass beads predominate, while the color blue becomes much more common again. Chronologically there follows the paper of *Ēvalds Mugurēvich* (pp. 33-36) which provides an overview of beads in Latvia from the 10th to 13th century. Whereas the Latvian beads, as well as the older Scandinavian ones mentioned previously, come from bead strands, the paper by *Keld Hansen* on beads in the Arctic refers also to other contexts of dress (pp. 59-63). In Greenland, beads of organic material are known from the first occupation. Glass beads, however, only appear with the Europeans in the 17th century. In the modern period at least, they were used less for bead strands, but rather for the creation of shawls and embroidery. *Barbara Sasse* and *Claudia Theune* (pp. 75-82) deal with the problem of classifying the various European beads, also a subliminal theme in the papers mentioned previously. They present the thoughts of a larger working group which is trying to develop an overall system for describing and classifying Merovingian beads of Central Europe (ca. A.D. 450-750).

A further group of papers is dedicated to the subject of glass analysis. *Julian Henderson* (pp. 67-73) gives a useful introduction to the whole question of glass analysis and to the various analytical techniques available. A specific application is demonstrated using Bronze Age beads (10th century B.C.) from northern Italy, the results showing them to be of local production. *Katalin Szilágyi*, *Judit Nagy-Balogh* and *Kamilla G. Sóllymos* (pp. 83-87) provide analyses of three archaeologically similar beads. Two of the beads represent a very common type from the 10th century in what is now Hungary. The third comes from the cemetery of Bolshije Tigani in the Tatar Republic on the Upper Volga, some 2,300 km further east. Chemical analysis indicates the probability that the beads originated in the same workshop, demonstrating far-reaching trading contacts. *Valentin A. Galibin* (pp. 89-90) discusses an unusually extensive program of glass analysis in which some 12,000 specimens—mainly stemming from Russia—were investigated. Galibin especially emphasizes the problems involved in the analysis of such masses of data.

A substantial number of papers deal with bead production from several different viewpoints. A possible starting point is the recent observation of craftsmen still producing beads today outside Europe. *Önder Küçükerman* (pp. 97-102) describes techniques and workshops in present-day Anatolia, whereas *Torben Sode* (pp. 103-107) gives an account of bead production in northern India. Time and again it is surprising to learn what modest means (in the way of materials, tools and heating techniques) an experienced craftsman has at his disposal and what large amounts of products a single workshop can turn out.

Other investigators attempt to reconstruct possible production methods of old beads by means of their own experiments. *Maibritt Jönsson* and *Pete Hunner* concern themselves with the widely distributed gold-foil beads (pp. 113-116). *Rosemarie Lierke*, *Frederick Birkhill* and *Pavel Molnar* describe trials to duplicate a particular type of very ornate La Tène beads (ca. 200-50 B.C.; pp. 117-119). Several of their basic considerations are contradicted by *Julian Henderson* in a brief reply (p. 121). *Tine Gam Aschenbrenner* presents her attempts to recreate beads from the Ribe excavations in Denmark (pp. 123-127)

in order to facilitate the interpretation of the beads and workshop residue found at the site. She stresses the theoretical problems involved in such experiments which should form the basis for analogies with material recovered from archaeological sites.

A further approach to the study of ancient bead production is provided by the analysis of the archaeological remains of workshops. *Per O. Thomsen* describes features of the Roman Imperial period from the trading center of Lundeborg on Fyn in Denmark (pp. 19-24). It is clear that sherds of broken Roman glass were collected here in order to produce new beads in a bead workshop. The reuse of broken antique glass in a much more direct way is demonstrated in the paper of *Lars G. Henricson* (pp. 13-17). He offers examples (mostly from Scandinavia) of sherds from the hollow rims of glass vessels being smoothed and then strung as beads. *Evgenij A. Rjabinin* and *Valentin A. Galibin* describe the situation in the trading center of Old Ladoga, some 130 km east of St. Petersburg, which has produced a large number of 8th- to 10th-century beads (pp. 109-112). Only during a relatively short period from about A.D. 780 to 830 can local bead production be proven. Chemical analyses of the workshop residue show that this production was based upon raw materials imported from the Orient and that the production technique itself had its origins there.

Only a few papers deal explicitly with the further meaning of bead finds. In the light of recent observations, especially in the modern-day Islamic world, *Torben Sode* points to the magical significance of beads (pp. 55-57). At the center of his paper are eye beads which, as evil-eye beads, are apotropaic and as such are worn by both humans and animals. *Johan Callmer's* paper (pp. 49-54) provides an extensive overview of beads as an important source for the history of trade, especially long-distance trade. He sketches its development over the whole of Europe west of the Urals from the 6th to 9th century and works out different trade routes and different trading periods.

All in all, the present volume is a typical congress report. Whoever is expecting extensive amounts of data or comprehensive analyses will be disappointed. However, each paper contains detailed references to further and, especially, new literature so that the reader may learn more about a particular point of

interest. The chronological, regional and thematic scope of the volume is considerable and covers all of the most important subjects presently being studied by investigators of pre-modern beads in Europe.

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Glass Beads from Europe.

Sibylle Jargstorf. Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 77 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, Pennsylvania 19310. 1995. 192 pp., 397 color figs., 87 b&w figs., value guide, index. \$29.95 (paper cover) + \$2.95 postage (North America).

Jargstorf's third book devoted to the study of glass beads is remarkably ambitious. The book is divided into six major sections, the first of which attempts to describe the ancient beginnings of glass-bead production and trade as a parallel circumstance with what was to come later. Although this is a valid approach in many regards, it is also a very different subject from the main body of the work. It could have been either a separate volume or more brief in presentation so as not to take away from the real topic. In the subsequent sections, the author attempts to present a well-rounded view of the history of glass-bead manufacture and trade in Europe from its early development before and during the Renaissance through the present period. She discusses such topics as The Use of Beads, Bead Technology and Bead Art, and The Future of Bead Art and Craft. There is much food for thought.

The grand number of color and black-and-white illustrations is countered by their variable quality and usefulness, by the fact that none are numbered for easy reference in text and, unfortunately, by some of the likely misinterpretations or presumptions applied them. Nevertheless, Jargstorf has an amazing ability to succinctly evoke the *Zeitgeist* of past times in rather few words, and broadly opens what are probably

unknown pages for those unfamiliar with European history. This context giving is remarkably useful and broadening and, for me, is the most important or impressive aspect of the whole book.

The volume's short foreword ends with a request for criticism from Italian glass historians, but asks nothing from her peers. It is remarkable, considering the literature that has developed in North America over the past 25 years regarding glass beads, that virtually none of these respected works are cited by her. Of the papers referenced in the text and listed in the two-page bibliography, the only work by a North American writer is one that was published in Europe! From details in the text, it is clear that Jargstorf is somewhat familiar with our literature, vis-à-vis information, topics and terms that have been published, but these items are not referenced.

In discussing Europe, Jargstorf has the advantage of being European and multilingual and, thus, having access to information not readily available to North American researchers. However valid and evocative some of this may be, a great deal of the scholarship and beliefs proposed must be frankly regarded as being out of date, speculative and countered by the very literature the author ignores. I will cite a few examples.

Several passages deal with the history and manufacture of *rosetta* beads and are incorrect in stating or implying an ancient origin for them. Though this is an issue that has appeared in the literature time and again for well over a century, *current research* demonstrates that the idea is anachronistic (Allen 1982, 1983, 1983-84). The caption for the upper figure on p. 15 states: "Similar overlay cane design is known from Alexandrian workshops during the Roman Empire and apparently they made similar beads around the first to third century AD as well." The passage does not inform us that the similarity mentioned is a visual determination and that technologically there is virtually no similarity. Therefore, no real relationship exists between Alexandrian mosaic-glass products and Venetian *rosetta* beads. Although the caption continues with, "Yet... most of the rosetta-type beads which were attributed to antiquity even by experts up to the 20th century, are in fact the products of Muranese craftsmen," even this is an understatement. It is not that "most" *rosetta* beads are Muranese, but rather that