

of the trimming could at times be done to the purchaser's order. Ms. Mukerji suggests that such a visit to a shop and the choice of ornament could be a rite of passage for a young girl in the early 20th century.

Following are clearly and beautifully illustrated chapters on the varied basket forms and their care, preservation, and repair. Some owners chose to modify and decorate their baskets by painting, lining, or applying their own trinkets, and many of the results are illustrated. There are also unusual applications such as gesso and barbola.

The beads, bangles, coins, and tassels are each given their own chapters, with useful information on Chinese glassmaking and a chart showing the dates of the coins. These ornaments are fragile, and Mukerji makes some suggestions for repair, reuse, and reattachment.

The author is to be congratulated for her care, enthusiasm, and research. She has produced a charming and valuable reference volume that will be appreciated by all who collect or admire these baskets and "Peking" glass. The photographer, too, deserves plaudits for his beautiful work. I must regretfully add, however, that the book would have benefited from the work of an editor or simply a careful proofreader.

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*Middle Eastern and Venetian Glass Beads: Eighth to Twentieth Centuries.*

**Augusto Panini.** Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 300 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010. 2007. 311 pp., 712 color figs., glossary, index, synoptic tables. ISBN: 978-88-6130-164-1. \$100.00 (hard cover).

This lavishly illustrated volume showcases selected specimens from the author's extensive collection of glass beads acquired in West Africa, principally Mali, during the 1980s and early 1990s. There are over 700 superb color images which provide macro views of individual beads and full-page images of strands of related beads. These will be invaluable to those wishing to know what bead types have been found in a part of Africa where relatively

little archaeological excavation has been undertaken. Unfortunately, as the bulk of the beads were acquired in markets, just about nothing is known about their exact find spots or archaeological contexts.

For the purposes of this book, the beads have been sorted into two groups based on their likely place of origin: the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, and Venice. The volume is about evenly split between these two categories which are not only cultural and geographical, but temporal as well as the beads in the former group comprise the early part of the date range provided in the book's title while the Venetian beads are primarily from the late 19th and 20th centuries. The beads discussed in each category are grouped according to the form of their decoration and are then further subdivided on the basis of how they were manufactured and the specific nature of their decoration.

In the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern section, the major classes are Eye Beads, Beads with Striped Decorations, Beads with Wavy Linear Decorations, Beads with Feather Decorations, and "Mirror" Beads. The latter are what are generally termed "folded" beads. The author discusses the manner in which the beads were made, their distribution, provides dates where possible, and acknowledges that not all the beads in the section were necessarily produced in the Eastern Mediterranean or Middle East.

A "Finds" section follows. Although it lacks any introductory text, it is clear that the items in the first 14 photographs are small assemblages of beads and other small finds either surface collected or dug up at various places in Mali. While the general location of the finds is sometimes provided in the captions, it is not known if the beads are all from one site or from a wider geographical area, thus lessening their research potential.

Turning to the Venetian section, we find the beads grouped in much the same way as in the previous one: Eye Beads, Beads with Striped Decorations, Beads with Wavy Linear Decorations, Beads with Wavy Spiral Decorations, Beads with Feather Decorations, Beads with Reticulate Decorations, Beads with Curled Decorations, and Beads with Flower Decorations. The majority of the beads are lamp-wound; only one subgroup of the beads with striped decorations is of drawn manufacture. As in the previous section, information is provided concerning how the beads were produced, their stylistic variability, and their dating.

There follows a "Documents" section which, again, is without any prefatory text but is revealed to illustrate 41

bead sample cards, showing primarily fancy lamp-worked (wound) beads produced by the Società Veneziana per l'Industria delle Conterie of Murano. Another eight cards are from the collections of the Museum of Glass on Murano. While dates are not present on the bulk of the cards, the Società was formed in 1898 so the cards ascribed to it have to be later than that.

While the volume is visually stunning, there are problems with some of the text. This book was originally published in Italian and then translated for the English version. This has made some statements a bit confusing. For example, in the Introduction (p. 11), the production of “*mosaic cane beads*” is described as follows: ...[they are] made by fusing together cross sections of several polychrome canes set one next to the other, with subsequent folding back onto itself of the resulting glass tile.” While the first part is understandable, the last part leaves one guessing.

The paragraph that follows is equally confusing: “*drawn cane beads* are... made with glass of different colours stratified in crucibles with a growing number of layers – in circular, star-shaped or flower moulds – or successive dips, drawing the hot glass cane until the desired cross section is reached, saving the central hole and finally cutting it into cross sections and rounding the corners.” Again, a rather garbled description of a well-known process. Such problematic wording is also encountered elsewhere and could have been eliminated by a knowledgeable proofreader.

There are also a few questionable statements and odd inclusions in some of the categories. I do not intend to list

them all but will point out a couple of examples in the short section that deals with Circular Cross Section Drawn-cane Beads. The opening sentence (p. 175) states that “this type of bead is often called Nueva Cadiz....” This is certainly not the case as Nueva Cadiz beads are characterized by a square cross section as the author actually goes on to say in the next sentence! Furthermore, the example that is pictured (#180) does not exhibit any stripes, making the reader wonder why it is included in a subsection of the category, Drawn-cane Beads with Longitudinal Linear Stripes? These are decidedly minor points but such oversights should have been caught before the book was published.

Another problem area in my view is the limited Bibliography which is comprised primarily of secondary sources. One would have hoped that at least some archaeological reports that deal with West African beads, scarce as they are, would have been consulted. Citing the same old popular sources does little to further our knowledge of the beads of West Africa.

Despite its flaws, *Middle Eastern and Venetian Glass Beads* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on West African beads. While it may not be as useful to researchers as the author had hoped, it will certainly appeal to the bead aficionado.

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