

cards with names of specific destinations within Africa, Asia, Oceania, Central America, South America, Europe; cards without any specific destination; multiple cards; and manufactured goods.

Consequently when you start to look at the illustrations it may be confusing to try to find the matching description for a particular bead sample card. Nevertheless gradually we begin to get a better picture of the Venetian beads that were made by hand in such quantities and loved and traded around the globe.

As the largest publicly owned collection in Italy, the cards depicted in this book represent “a unique testimony of the copious output of a once great industry – namely glass-bead making – that produced artefacts linked to the traditions of peoples on every continent” (p. 5).

For all those who love, collect, and research Venetian beads, this book is most recommended for its images, the industry it celebrates, the history it records, and the connections it demonstrates.

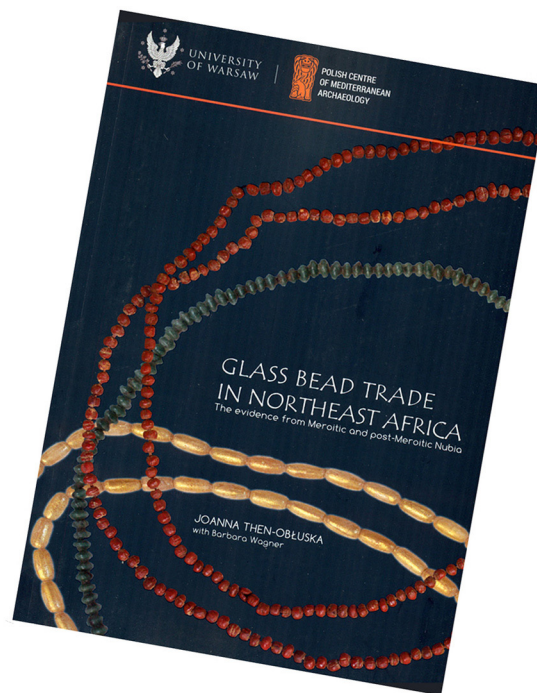
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*Glass Bead Trade in Northeast Africa: The Evidence from Meroitic and Post-Meroitic Nubia.*

**Joanna Then-Obluska, with Barbara Wagner.** Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, PAM Monograph Series 10. 2019. 316 pp., 32 color plates, 65 color figs., 11 B&W figs., 31 tables. ISBN-13 978-83-235-3899-8. 180 zł (paper cover) & 160 zł (PDF).

As the title proclaims, this book undertakes to determine the routes by which glass beads found at archaeological sites in the Nubian region of Sudan arrived there during the Meroitic and Post-Meroitic periods. This is accomplished by comparing the types of beads recovered with those from other sites ranging from the eastern Mediterranean to South Asia. In addition, information is provided concerning the techniques used to produce the beads, the chemical composition of the glasses used in their production, and how

they were utilized as ornaments. The author is well suited to the task, having studied the beads recovered from numerous sites in Nubia.

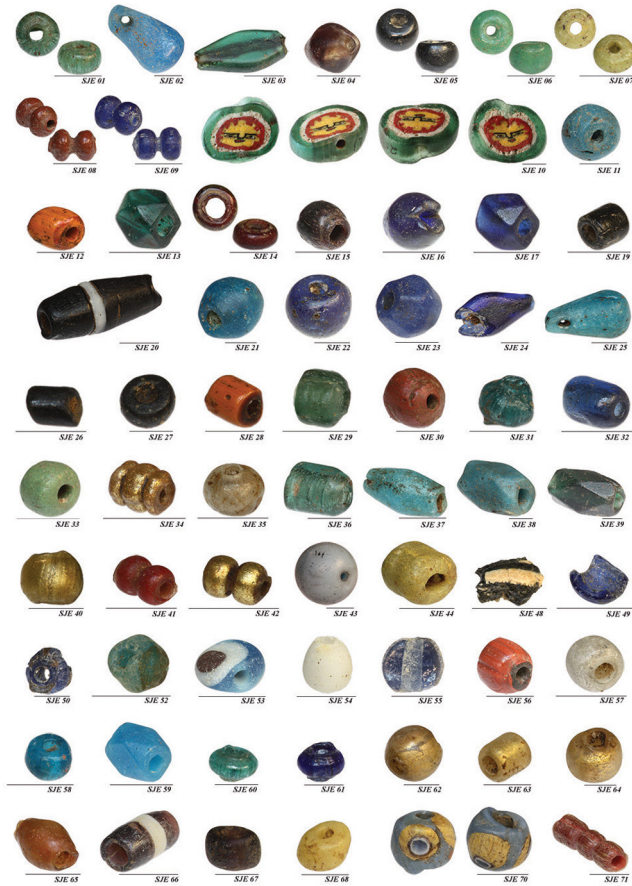


Following a brief Introduction, Chapter 1 discusses Nubia and its history during the pre-Islamic period. Centered at Meroë, at the confluence of several trade routes, the Meroitic Kingdom existed from around the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD. Its early phase corresponds to the Ptolemaic period in Egypt while the later part equates to Roman times. It was conquered by the Kingdom of Aksum in the early 4th century, marking the beginning of the Post-Meroitic period which lasted until the middle of the 6th century.

Chapter 2 provides examples of the various ways beaded ornaments are depicted in works of art in the region such as statues and bas-reliefs followed by an enumeration of the uses of actual beads found in burial contexts. While most beads and pendants comprised personal ornaments such as necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, others adorned garments and accessories, wooden boxes, and, on occasion, animals and their trappings.

The beads discussed in this book come from four major museum collections. These, as well as the sites involved, are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The next chapter describes the various morphological categories of the beads under

study. The main groups are drawn and segmented; drawn and cut; drawn and cut gold-in-glass with finished ends; drawn, cut, and rounded; mandrel wound; folded; joined; mandrel formed; and rod pierced. Extensive tables provide details about all the specimens.



Chapter 5 discusses the chemical composition of the various beads as determined by laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) analysis.

This section is supplemented by several lengthy tables which provide compositional data. A discussion of the provenience of the various glass groups and sub-groups concludes the chapter. Chapter 6 uses the compositional data to determine the chronological position and likely source of the beads under study. Egyptian glass was found to comprise the bulk of the specimens, but Levantine glass, as well as that produced in South Asia, is also present.

Chapter 7, the crux of this book, delves into various aspects of trade contacts in Northeast Africa, concentrating on the bead trade in Nubia. It not only deals with trade hubs, routes, and operators, but touches on trade factors and market demand, market and import awareness, and a number of other related subjects, including Nubian imports and exports, as well as the global market and early Byzantine fashion. Chapter 8 presents concluding remarks.

A Catalog of the bead and pendant types discussed in the book follows. This presents excellent macro color images of each type coupled with descriptions, including glass type. This in turn is followed by a section entitled Parallels which provides images of related bead types. A substantial References section concludes the volume.

This volume presents much new data on Nubian beads and is the first study to provide evidence of the presence of beads of Egyptian, Levantine, and South Indian/Sri Lankan glass in Nubia. While some of the contents may be too technical for the average bead enthusiast, those studying or collecting pre-Islamic beads will surely find this handsome and well-written book of interest. Likewise, the section on glass chemistry will be welcomed by those aiming to identify bead sources.

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