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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Editorial |
| 2 | Letters to the Editor |
| 4 | News/Reviews |
| 10 | ✓ Pendant Glass Beads from San Pedro Quiatoni, Oaxaca, Mexico by Donald Cordry |
| 13 | The Intriguing Mystery of the Quiatoni Beads by Stephen C. Johnson |
| 17 | General Considerations on the Storage and Display of Beads, With a Method for the Display of Single Beads by Robert K. Liu, Ph.D. |
| 24 | Faience: Technical Aspects and Beads of Simple Form by Robert K. Liu, Ph.D. |

The Cover: Persian faience beads c. 100 B.C.-100 A.D. (upper 3 strands) and Egyptian faience beads, New Kingdom-Late Period, c. 1580-305 B.C. Since the sites for these beads are not known, the dating is only approximate. To avoid overlap, description of beads on the cover are included in the article on faience. Scale 1:1. Photography by Phil Shima.

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PENDANT GLASS BEADS FROM SAN PEDRO QUIATONI,
OAXACA, MEXICO

Donald Cordry¹

While in Oaxaca City, Mexico, (in 1940) on an anthropological field trip investigating Indian costumes, textiles, and jewelry² — we purchased a necklace of trade beads, of the kind called *Cornaline d'Aleppo*.

The reddish orange beads with white or dark green centers were interspersed with silver coins, small silver objects, and a most curious pendant glass bead. We later found that this bead, ranging from 1 cm. to 7 cms. in length, also varied in color. Examples were found in white, blue, green, and yellow, etc. The form was curious, with a flattened or bulbous end that was sometimes decorated with small spots of color. The glass was also on occasion worked with spiral lines like some of the old Waterford drinking glasses (Fig. 1).

We were told that these necklaces were used in only one village in Oaxaca state, namely San Pedro Quiatoni, inhabited by Indians who spoke the Zapotecan language (Fig. 2). At that time these rare necklaces were quite expensive and seldom seen. Although the pendant beads were apparently quite fragile, we had the impression that they were old family heirlooms — probably 17th or 18th Century. We tried during the ensuing years to find among anthropologists or in anthropological publications some reference to these beads — either pictures or written material. Though many investigators procured examples and many people were interested, no material showed up and the origin of this trade bead has not been discovered.

During the 1950s and 1960s, at the

ruins of Mitla and from sellers of "curiosities," we found that there were many more examples and prices had been reduced. On inquiry we were told that graves were being robbed near San Pedro Quiatoni — which is located in the mountains southeast of Mitla. This I found hard to believe as the Mexican Indians are usually devout, and have a superstitious disinclination to tamper with graves. Whether some other source was found, or whether it was part of a cultural breakdown, we do not know.

Figure 3 is a beautiful necklace made by the Tarascan Indians. The original is from the archaeological collection in the library of the town of Jiquilpan, Michoacan. The pendant beads are carved from rock crystal and may date c. 900 A.D. Though the time element is distant to the time of the coming of the Spaniards, and the distance from Jiquilpan to San Pedro Quiatoni great, these beads whose original form was in rock crystal *may* have had some special meaning to the Indians. Were they copied in quantity in glass as trade items by the Spaniards?

If any reader of this Journal has information regarding the pendant glass bead in question, has seen them in museums, or has excavated them in any other area, I hope they will kindly get in touch with the Editor.

¹Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

²Results of this and other field trips were later published in 1968 by the University of Texas Press under the title *Mexican Indian Costumes* by Donald and Dorothy Cordry.

Fig. 1. Tracings of various sizes and shapes of pendant glass beads, ranging from approximately 1 cm. to 7 cm. Some have applied polychrome decoration, one with spirals of thin glass rods and longest specimen is twisted. Original color slide from author.

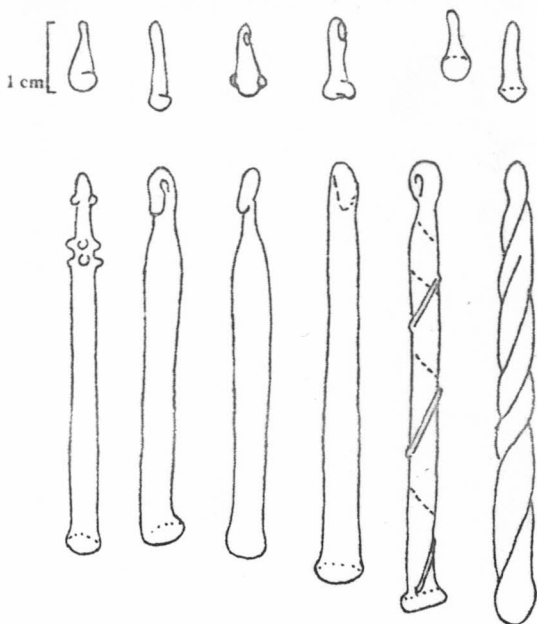


Fig. 2A. Woman from San Pedro Quiatoni, wearing necklace of glass pendant beads, Venetian polychrome beads and cylindrical coral beads. Photo by author.

Fig. 2B. Earrings typical of this village: stylized birds (probably turkeys) cut from hammered silver coin, strung with real coral beads, one turquoise-colored glass bead at apex of each earring. Slightly different version is shown in fig. 46, Cordry, 1968. Earring from A. Bird Coll.

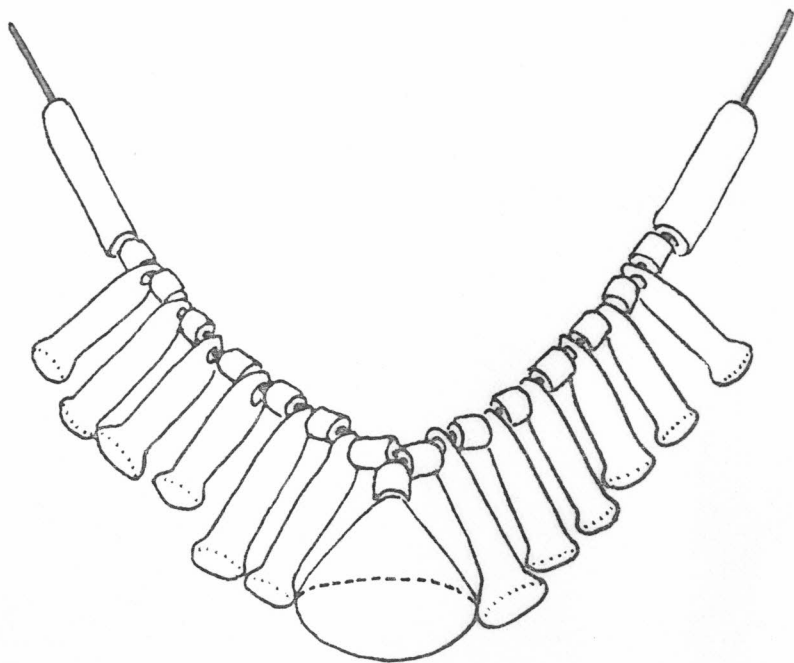


Fig. 3. Tracing of rock crystal necklace made by Tarascan Indians c. 900 A.D. Other than central pendant, other beads have shape similar to glass pendant beads. Traced from photograph (plate 148) in *Arte Pre-columbino del Occidente de Mexico*, Mexico: Secretaria de Educacion Publica, 1946. Information supplied by author.