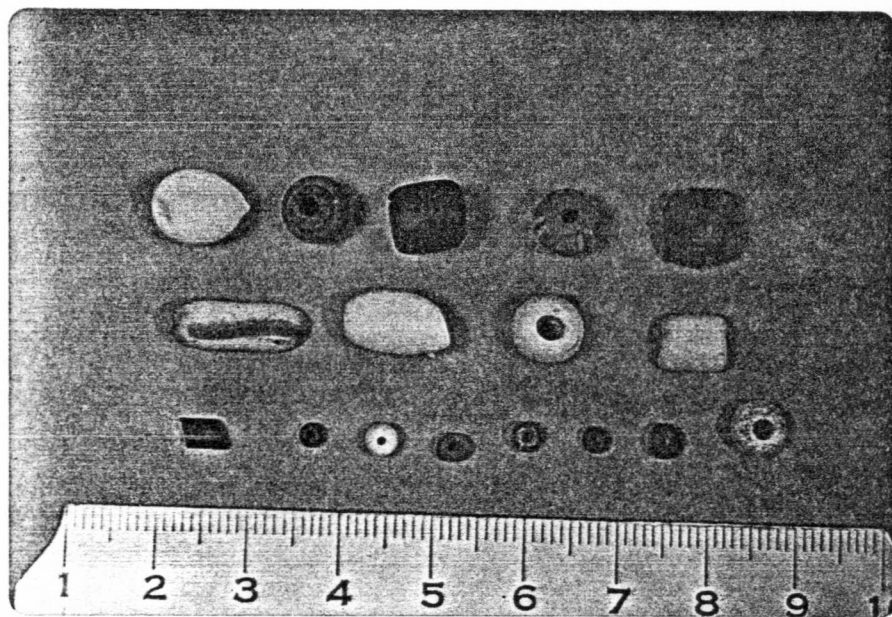


Analysis of Glass Trade Beads

Little Egypt Site 9 Mu 102

Excavation Unit Five



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In this paper, the glass trade beads from the Little Egypt site, 9 Mu 102, excavation unit five will be described and compared to other sites. Using this information, a possible time range for the burned structure contained in excavation unit five will be estimated. The comparisons will stress sites in the Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama area, but sites outside this area will also be considered. Sites chosen for comparison include Macon Plateau (Fairbanks 1956) and 9 Mu 104 (Garrow 1972) in Georgia, Hiwassee Island (Lewis and Kneberg 1946) and Chota (Gleeson 1970) in Tennessee, Childersburg (DeJarnette and Hansen 1960) and several sites in the Weiss Reservoir (DeJarnette et al 1973) in Alabama, Fatherland (Quimby 1966) in Mississippi, Wichita sites in Texas (Harris and Harris 1967), Fort St. Joseph in Michigan (Quimby 1966), and the Guebert site in Illinois (Good 1972).

In several instances, Munsell color descriptions will be given. It should be noted that these determinations are not based on my personal observations, since a Munsell Color Guide could not be located, but they are taken from Good (1972). Thus the possibility of error exists, particularly with the smaller seed bead types. General type descriptions of the beads were also borrowed liberally from Good (1972).

All beads in the sample (86 whole and fragmentary glass beads) were made by the hollow cane method. In this manufacturing technique, a large bubble of molten glass

was pulled out to form a long hollow tube. This tube was broken into sections the length of the beads, and in most cases (all but # 10 in this sample), ash was placed in the holes of the beads, which were then heated and tumbled to obtain smooth, rounded ends. Thus the beads from Little Egypt would be classified as tumbled cane beads, except # 10 which is an untumbled cane bead. For a further description of bead making, see van der Sleen (1973) or Kidd (1970).

Following Harris and Harris (1967:138), beads are further described as simple, compound, or complex. Simple beads are made of one structurally undifferentiated mass of glass. Compound beads consist of two or more concentric layers of glass one over the other. Complex beads have decoration, such as stripes, made from glass rods impressed into the surface.

Sizes given are diameters perpendicular to the perforation unless otherwise noted. It should be noted that due to the handmade nature of the beads, sizes will vary.

Dates given for the sites are periods of occupation, not the period of popularity of the bead, except in the case of the Wichita sequence worked out by Harris and Harris (1967).

Provenience of all beads are given in appendix A. While beads were obtained from two different excavation levels, which correspond to different house floors of a

rebuilt structure, there seems to be little difference in the samples, and since sample size was so small, the collections were lumped to obtain a rough date. While they are not really considered in this study of trade beads, it should be noted that there were approximately twice as many aboriginal pottery beads in the lower floor level (9 vs. 5), possibly indicating a shift away from a native craft to a reliance on European manufactured items.

#### Type Descriptions

(1) Opaque white round bead of simple construction.

5 whole and 5 fragmentary specimens. 9 mm. diameter.

Reported from Guebert (type 106) 1703-1833, Wichita sequence (type 3) 1700-1836, Fort St. Joseph 1700-1763, Fatherland 1682-1730, Childersburg circa 1700-1825, Weiss lake sites Ce 101 X2 and Ce 101 X4 believed to be pre 1700, Ocmulgee circa 1685-1716, Chota 1740-1760 or later, and Hiwassee Island estimated 1720-1760. This is a very common bead type which has a time range of circa 1670-1825 and is thus of little use as a time marker.

(2) Compound bead of opaque Munsell yellowish Red 7.5 R 4/6 over a dark translucent green core. This is called the Cornaline d'Aleppo.

4 whole and 1 fragmentary specimens. 7 mm. Diameter.

This bead also has the large distribution noted for type #1, but Harris and Harris (1967:147,156) limit the large variety in the Wichita sequence (type 86) to 1740-1767. This bead

type appears as early as 1640 in the Great Lakes area and persists until approximately 1800. However in the Southeast, the large variety seems to be a good marker for pre 1760 trade; later specimens are usually seed beads.

(3) Translucent Munsell purplish Purple-Blue barrel shaped bead of simple construction.

1 specimen            7 mm. diameter.

This bead appears at Guebert 1703-1833 (Good type 58), and at Conesoga in Tennessee (personal information).

(4) Light blue barrel shaped bead of complex construction. Three sets of stripes made up of a wide white stripe with a thin red stripe centered in the middle are evenly spaced around the bead parallel to the perforation.

1 specimen            7 mm diameter

This bead (or a very similar one) is reported from Chota circa 1740-1760 or later.

(5) Munsell purplish Blue 7.5 B 4/6 barrel shaped bead of simple construction.

1 fragmentary specimen.            9 mm. diameter

Found at Childersburg, Chota, Hiwassee Island, Weiss sites, Guebert (type 90a), Wichita sequence 1700-1836 (type 10).

This bead is another very common bead on sites in the Southeast. Surprisingly it is not mentioned as coming from Fatherland. Again its widespread temporal range (1650-1836), makes it rather useless for comparative purposes. It is surprising that there are not more beads of this type present.

(6) Opaque white elongated olive-shaped bead of complex construction. Three sets of stripes were inlaid parallel to the perforation. Each set is made up of a central blue stripe flanked by red stripes.

1 fragmentary specimen      6 mm diameter, 15 mm. long

This bead was found at Guebert (type 27), Fort St. Joseph 1700-1781, Fatherland 1682-1730, Wichita sequence (type 24) 1700-1740, and may be present at Hiwassee Island (inadequate description). At last we seem to have a bead of limited temporal distribution, probably the first half of the 18th century. This bead is probably the best time marker for the burned structure.

(7) Opaque white olive shaped bead of simple construction.

1 whole and 1 fragmentary specimen..      8 mm. diameter

This is basically the same bead as #1, but it is longer. Good (1972:119 gives it a separate number (100) in the Guebert collection.

(8) Opaque white barrel-shaped bead of compound construction.

The inner layer is opaque white and the thin outer layer is clear.

1 specimen      9mm. diameter.

This bead occurs at Guebert (type 107), Wichita sequence (type 5) 1700-1836, and probably at most of the other sites mentioned above, but inadequate description hampers comparison.

(9) Opaque white barrel-shaped bead of simple construction.

1 fragmentary specimen      7 mm. diameter

This is type 104 in the Guebert collection. Again it is hard

to compare with other sites due to the poor descriptions of white beads.

(10) Dark blue tubular untumbled cane bead of compound construction. This bead is made up of three layers of glass: (from center) medium blue, white, and dark blue. The outside surface appears striated.

1 fragmentary specimen                      4 mm. diameter

I have been unable to locate this bead in other written sources, unless it is one of the blue beads pictured in Greenman (1951: plate XXVI). Since it was a surface find, it has little significance.

(11) Opaque black seed bead

2 specimens                      3 mm. diameter.

Present at Guebert (type 169), Wichita Sequence 1700-1836 (type 50), Weiss lake sites, Hiwassee Island, Childersburg, and Chota. Seed beads are generally poor time markers and thus discussion of the following types will be brief.

(12) Opaque white bead of compound construction: white core with clear exterior layer.

5 complete and 1 fragmentary specimen.      4 mm. diameter

Present at Guebert (type 107a), Wichita sequence (type 45) 1700-1836. Again this bead is hard to distinguish from white seed beads commonly reported from most sites, so further comparison is difficult.

(13) Turquoise blue seed bead

40 whole and 3 fragmentary specimens      3.5 mm. diameter



This may be type 92 in the Guebert site described as Munsell bluish Blue-Green 7.5 BG 5/4. This is probably the most common bead in the Southeast.

(14) Opaque gray-blue seed bead.

1 specimen            4mm diameter

May be type 71 at Guebert described as Munsell purplish Purple-Blue 7.5 PB 4/2.

(15) Translucent blue seed bead

1 specimen    3mm diameter

May be type 70 at Guebert described as Munsell purplish Purple-Blue 7.5 PB 4/8.

(16) Translucent blue large seed bead.

8 specimens        4 mm. diameter.

May be type 60 at Guebert, described as Munsell purplish Purple-Blue 7.5 PB 4/14, and Wichita sequence type 48 1700-1836.

(17) Light opaque blue donut shaped bead with badly pitted surface.

1 specimen        6 mm. diameter.

I was unable to positively identify this bead.

Thus it is obvious that the majority of the bead types are common and have a widespread temporal distribution. Perhaps the best bead for the identification of the time period of structure 5 is #6, which seems to be restricted to the first half of the 18th century. This would agree with the estimate of 1725-1760 made by Richard Polhemus of the



University of Tennessee from a color slide of the beads (personal communication, 1973). While the majority of the bead types found in Excavation unit 5 are common well into the 19th century, I have ruled out a late date on the basis of comparison with a small sample of beads excavated from the nearby 9 Mu 104 site (Garrow 1972). 9 Mu 104 represents a probable historic cabin site of the Coosawattee Old Town Cherokee. A date of circa 1780 has been established from European ceramics and glass beads. The beads in this collection were excavated from a small pit. The sample includes 29 Cornaline d'Aleppo seed beads (red over an extremely light green core which at first appears colorless), 1 white seed bead, 9 opaque black bugle beads called Georgia Black Cylindrical and dated 1750-1825 by Woodward (IN DeJarnette and Hansen 1960:57), and two transparent blue bugle beads called Georgia Translucent Blue Cylindrical dated 1775-1825 (DeJarnette and Hansen 1960:57). The total absence of these types from the Little Egypt Excavation Unit Five sample (except for the common white seed bead) should indicate the earlier chronological position of the Little Egypt structure, probably pre 1750. In conclusion, I would estimate the occupation of the burned structure contained in Excavation Unit Five of the Little Egypt site 9 Mu 102 was probably between 1700 and 1750.

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