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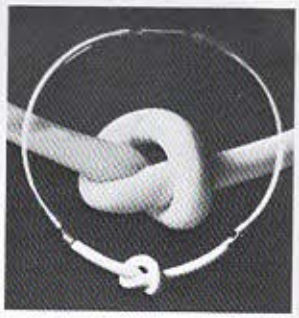

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Cover: *QUEEN OF THE NIGHT* necklace by Dr. Stephen Paul Adler: 22K gold, hematite, black pearls, green Afghani tourmaline; one-of-a-kind, for Roberta Peters. Limited edition earrings: 18K gold, topaz. Worn by *Roberta Peters*, Metropolitan Opera soprano. *Photo: Jimmie Poster.*

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SPECIAL PICTORIAL
VENETIAN BEAD FACTORY

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■ There is very little pictorial information on most bead-making processes, especially with regards to the Venetian bead industry. Here we have the rare opportunity to show and comment upon some historic photographs of one of the largest Venetian bead firms. Although these photos are supposed to date from the turn of the century, the processes and equipment do not differ appreciably from similar photos of the 1950s (Morazzoni & Pasquato 1953).

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FIG. 1 Women workers sorting the canes according to size, color and/or quantity, into bundles of a certain size. Kidd (1979) recounts an 1834 account whereby such sorting or assorting was done by workmen, using only the sense of feel. These approximately yardlong cane bundles are then placed into wooden bins. *Cernita della canna* was handwritten under the original print, which was bound in an album. *All photos courtesy of Ruth Poris and Societa Veneziana Per L'Industria Delle Conterie.*

FIG. 2 Women cutting or clipping canes into bead-sized lengths; these cut canes are apparently collected in the bins at the end of each cutting machine. These are possibly the automatic cutting machines described by Francis (1979). Again, men appear to be supervising or adjusting the machines. Morazzoni and Pasquato (1953) show an almost identical photo, but dating from some five decades later. The working conditions appear improved, and the machines appear more complicated but delegation of duties remain the same. There now appears to be only one operator per machine, versus two women in the earlier photo. As in the earlier photo, cut canes are stored in wooden bins in the middle of the room. Note the common power source for all the pulleys powering the cutting machines. The Italian description was: *Taglio della canna.*

FIG. 3 Small furnaces for hot tumbling cane beads to make them round. The bins and piles in the foreground are probably mixtures of charcoal and lime, or sand. The former was used to fill the perforations of the sharp-edged canes, after which they were placed into the latter for heating (Kidd 1979). A near-

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ly identical photo is also shown in Morazzoni & Pasquato (1953). The Italian description was: *Fornetti per arrotondamento.*

FIG. 4 First cleaning of the beads *(Prima pulitura delle perle).* It appears that the contents of the above furnaces were emptied into round metal pans (for cooling), after which they were fanned out to separate the beads from the sand/ash (Kidd 1979). It appears that cloth, leather or paper (?) is used to separate the mixtures of cooling sand/beads if more than one kind is in a pan.

FIG. 5 Machines which separate the beads according to the diameter of the holes in the drum of the sorting machine *(Macchina separatrice delle perle secondo il diametro del foro).* The sorted beads drop through the funnel into round cans; again, the machines are pulley powered. Since stacks of mechanical sieves are visible in the background, these machines are not for sorting to size but for determining the condition of the beads' perforations, as mentioned by Kidd (1979). Karlis Karklins and Lester Ross (*pers comm*) surmise that possibly pins inside the drum are used to differentiate between occluded and nonoccluded perforations.

FIG. 6 Sorting of bunched beads for color and size (?) in the packing room *(Riparto perle a lume: sala impaccatura.).* Those shown appear to be primarily cylindrical millifiore, which are wrapped with paper after this sorting. Note that each package has a bead tied to the outside of the paper to indicate the type of contents.

FIG. 7 Multistory high device for mechanically stringing beads on cotton threads? None of the references have mentioned such an apparatus and it is not possible to determine from this photo how it may have functioned. The four seated women in the foreground appear to be cutting and tying the long strands into bunches. Original description was: *Macchine per infilare su filo di contone.*

FIG. 8 A side aisle of a bead warehouse *(Una tettoia laterale del deposito conterie).* Besides the paper wrapped packages of beads, the bins along the wall are filled with strands of beads arranged according to a chromatic scale (Kidd 1979). Even the beads in this portion of the warehouse give an indication of the scale of the bead business, even as late as the early 20th C.

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