

# BEADS: Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers

---

Volume 25 (2013)

Article 9

---

1-1-2013

## Reviews and End Matter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/beads>



Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#), [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), [Science and Technology Studies Commons](#), and the [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

(2013). "Reviews and End Matter." *BEADS: Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers* 25. Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/beads/vol25/iss1/9>

This End Matter is brought to you for free and open access by SURFACE at Syracuse University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BEADS: Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers* by an authorized editor of SURFACE at Syracuse University. For more information, please contact [surface@syr.edu](mailto:surface@syr.edu).

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Zhongguo gudai zhuzi* (Chinese Ancient Beads).

**Zhu Xiaoli.** Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, 9 Wangyuan Road, Nanning, Guangxi 530022, China. 2010. 330 pp., 300+ color and B&W figs., fold-out bead timeline. ISBN: 978-7-80746-964-3. 150 Chinese yuan (available for \$50.00 including shipping within the continental U.S. from Leekan Designs: paddy@leekan.com) (paper cover).

In Chinese, with an English table of contents (pp. 325-329), *Chinese Ancient Beads* has received rave reviews in China where it is apparently heralded as the Chinese counterpart to Lois Dubin's *The History of Beads from 30,000 B.C. to the Present* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1987). Zhu reportedly spent nearly a decade researching her book, earning a Ph.D. in the process. True to its ostensible prototype, *Chinese Ancient Beads* ends with a fold-out color timeline extending to 8 pages that presents dozens of Chinese beads, necklaces, earrings, and other ornaments dating from 16,000 B.C. to A.D. 1911. As many know, Dubin originated the bead timeline concept.

The links to Dubin 1987 do not end there. Regrettably, they underscore global differences in scholarly practices and publishing standards. At least four images originally commissioned by Dubin for use in her book appear in *Chinese Ancient Beads*: Figure 172 (cf. Dubin Figures 10-11, a beaded cloak in the collection of the University Museum, Philadelphia, PA); Figure 173 (cf. Dubin Figure 29 of double-spiral beads in the collection of Henry Anavian); Figure 254 (cf. Dubin Figure 214, a Tibetan prayer box and shoulder ornament in the collection of Ivory Freidus); and Figure 271 (cf. Dubin Figure 69, a Viking-period necklace in the collection of the Trondheim Royal Norwegian Scientific Society Museum). Dubin's 1987 book appears to be credited only once, in the caption for Zhu's Figure 254.

According to Dubin, in at least one (Figure 173) and possibly all four cases, reproduction rights were not obtained from the owners of the objects or the photographer, which is to say, according to international copyright regulations established by the Berne Convention, the rights were violated. Dubin finds the probable unauthorized use of the images from the museums and the definitely unauthorized use of the Anavian collection image disturbing (Dubin

2013: pers. comm.). There are several other images in *Chinese Ancient Beads* that, one suspects, may also derive from English-language publications.

It should be noted that since China is not a signatory to the Berne Convention, from the Chinese perspective, Zhu Xiaoli has done no wrong. Nor is she alone. China's apparent lack of concern for what much of the rest of the world identifies as intellectual property has sparked a debate that will likely continue for some time. In fact, as Nancy Berliner recently observed, "more and more scholars are noticing that their research, originally published in English, has been appearing in Chinese without attribution or credit" ("Lin, Mo, Fang," *Orientalism* 43 [Nov./Dec. 2012]: 126).

There are dozens of images in *Chinese Ancient Beads* which apparently originate in China. The image quality is uneven – some images look like scans – but the images are memorable for the broad assortment of ancient beads and beaded body ornaments they display. Readers may be unfamiliar with many of them as they were unearthed from archaeological contexts and typically first published in Chinese excavation reports and other sources. Beads from other countries are also occasionally depicted.

There are 15 chapters in *Chinese Ancient Beads*:

Chapter 1: About Beads

Chapter 2: (5000-3500 B.C.) – Beads in Prehistoric Village Culture

Chapter 3: (3500-1500 B.C.) – Beads in Prehistoric Rural Settlement Culture

Chapter 4: (1800-1000 B.C.) – Beads of the Xia and Shang Dynasties

Chapter 5: (1000-700 B.C.) – Aristocratic Adornment of the Western Zhou Dynasty

Chapter 6: (700-200 B.C.) – Beads of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods

Chapter 7: (260 B.C. - A.D. 220) – Beads of the Han Dynasty

Chapter 8: (A.D. 220-589) – Beads of the Wei and Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties

Chapter 9: (A.D. 581-907) – Beads of the Sui and Tang Dynasties

Chapter 10: (A.D. 960-1234) – Beads of the Song and Liao Dynasties

Chapter 11: (A.D. 1206-1244) – Beads of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties

Chapter 12: (A.D. 1616-1911) – Beads of the Qing Dynasty

Chapter 13: Additional Discussion of Questions Relating to Beads

Chapter 14: Tibetan Beads

Chapter 15: Well-Known Ancient Beads of Other Civilizations

Bead scholars who do not read Mandarin will be able to evaluate the accuracy of the information provided in these chapters only after they have been translated into English or other languages and checked against Chinese and other bead scholarship. For the moment, on the basis of unpublished English translations of two sub-chapters, we may conclude that there is much of value in Zhu's text, though it falls short of perfection.

The sub-chapter "Glass Beads of Yongning Temple in Luoyang" (pp. 200-202, Chapter 8) concerns the approximately 150,000 drawn glass beads dating to A.D. 534 unearthed at the Yongning Temple in Luoyang, Henan. The information provided is accurate until Zhu ventures the problematic assertion that the beads were netted together in a technique akin to that used by the ancient Egyptians to unite faience beads into mummy ornaments. There is no evidence for such a claim. What 6th-century Chinese netted beadwork might have looked like, let alone that it proceeded two beads at a time in a technique known as peyote stitch to many English-speaking beadworkers, has not been established, as far as I know. Early Chinese beadnetting techniques may well follow a different logic. Color images of the Yongning Temple bead finds (Figure 182) and of an ancient Egyptian mummy bead ornament (Figure 183) add much to the presentation.

The sub-chapter "Bead Curtains and *Liuli* Techniques of the Song" (pp. 233-234, Chapter 10) discusses Song dynasty (960-1279) glass bead curtains as they are referenced largely in Song Dynasty poems. Such a literary perspective is helpful as far as it goes, but much is missing. Bead curtains existed in Chinese textual and material culture long before and after the Song dynasty, a fact Zhu does not mention. Further, they were made of other materials besides glass and used in a wide variety of contexts. No images of bead curtains accompany the text – another disappointing omission. Zhu says little in this sub-chapter about *liuli* production techniques (*liuli* is a common Chinese term for glass).

*Chinese Ancient Beads* concludes with six appendices: 1) Distribution and Chronicle of Beads of the Prehistoric Period, 2) Chinese Dynasty Chronicle and Beads Variety, 3) Chinese Ancient Literature Related to Beads and Personal Adornment, 4) Bibliography (which includes approximately 55 Chinese publications as well as several English-language ones), 5) Illustration of Chinese Ancient Beads (the timeline), and 6) English Table of Contents.

Appendix 5 presents Zhu's timeline of Chinese beads, which runs from 16,000 B.C. to A.D. 1911. The timeline is structured by the dates of Chinese dynasties, whose lengths vary considerably. While Chinese readers may take such a periodicity for granted, Western readers may find it confusing. In Zhu's timeline it is difficult to draw a line up from a bead to find the exact date of its origin. Moreover, Zhu sometimes grants the beads of one dynasty a disproportionate amount of space, even as beads of other dynasties receive comparatively less (Robert K. Liu 2013: pers. comm.). The disparity is particularly noticeable with respect to beads of the Zhou (ca. 1046-221 B.C.) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Thus, while beads dating to the 825 years of the Zhou dynasty occupy a generous 56 cm on the timeline, beads from the 267 years of the Qing receive a scant 6 cm. In sum, although the timeline is visually compelling and especially strong on ancient Chinese beads, it should not be regarded as definitive for all dynasties.

Note: Robert K. Liu (2013: pers. comm.) reports that a second, revised edition of *Chinese Ancient Beads* has been published. To what extent it differs from the first edition remains to be seen.

Valerie Hector  
1187 Wilmette Ave., #108  
Wilmette, IL 60091  
E-mail: valeriehector@sbcglobal.net

*Journal: Borneo International Beads Conference 2013.*

**Heidi Munan and Kay Margaret Lyons (eds.).** Craithub, No. 96 Main Bazaar, First Floor, 93000 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. 2013. i-vi + 206 pp., 59 color figs., 9 B&W figs. \$50.00 postpaid (paper cover). To order, contact [craithub@gmail.com](mailto:craithub@gmail.com).

This volume contains the ten papers presented at the third Borneo International Beads Conference which was held in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, in October of 2013. While the bulk of the articles deal with Asian beads and beadwork, there are also two that deal with African material and another that surveys the various organic materials that have been used to produce beads in various parts of the world.

“Conserving Ancient Beads Within Shifting Contexts: A Case Study among the Kelabit of Sarawak,” by Poline Bala, examines why ancient beads play important roles in the social life of the Kelabit of the highlands of Borneo and discusses efforts to preserve the value of such beads in contemporary Kelabit society.

“Exploring the Cultural Meanings Conveyed by the Paiwanese Beads,” by Kathy Chen Huei Yun, explores the way in which the visual patterns on the glass beads utilized by the indigenous Paiwanese peoples of Taiwan encode meanings.

“Jewellery in Action – Examples from East Africa,” by Martina Dempf, discusses the use of beads as adornment in East Africa with specific examples from the Toposa of the Southern Sudan, the Turkana of Kenya, and the Rashaida of Eritrea.

“The Story of Beads: Ghana/Africa,” by Akwele Suma Glory, presents a brief survey of a very complex subject, glass beads and beadmaking in Ghana, West Africa.

“20th-Century Chinese Glass Bead Curtains,” by Valerie Hector, begins with a look at the historical evidence for bead curtains in Imperial China followed by a discussion of 20th-century curtain iconography and the beads that comprise the curtains.

“Ancient and Modern Beads of Korea,” by Elaine Kim, introduces the reader to the World Jewellery Museum established in Seoul in 2004 by Lee Kang-won, followed by a lengthy discussion of the ancient and modern bead culture of Korea, as well as beads made by contemporary Korean artists and jewellery designers.

“An Overview of Beads in the Sabah Museum,” by Joanna Datuk Kitingan and Su Chin Sidih, consists only of an abstract and some images of Tenggara and Rungus individuals wearing beads.

“Borneo Beads in Literature,” by Heidi Munan, discusses publications that deal with the beads of Borneo and includes a bibliography of such publications as well as a list of Internet sources.

“Opulence in Organic Bead Jewellery,” by Stefany Tomalin, presents an overview of the various organic materials that have been used to produce beads around the world.

“Discovery and Research of Various Types of Beads in Bujang Valley, Kedah,” by Zuliskandar Ramli, discusses the glass beads of the early centuries A.D. excavated from sites in the Bujang Valley of Peninsular Malaysia. Most of these appear to be Indo-Pacific beads of local manufacture but there are also polychrome beads which appear to be imports.

As in the past, this volume was printed in time to be distributed at the conference, a commendable practice. Unfortunately, to meet the deadline, editing suffered. For example, in Plate XIV, which depicts a woman with a beaded headpiece, the caption incompletely reads, “Plate XIV: Girl with bead.” In the case of Valerie Hector’s article, no attempt was made to change her figure references in text to the appropriate plate number. Instead, the captions read, for example, “Plate XXII: Fig. 1 striped curtain.”

In Stefany Tomalin’s article, there are problems with some of the headings. For example, the heading “Fossils as Beads” (p. 159) looks to be a main section heading but should be the same as the other headings on the page. Further along, the sub-section “Operculum” (p. 161) also incorporates sea urchins, stone beads, and shell slices! In a number of instances, what appear to be the speaker’s personal notes have been included (e.g., pp. 164, 165, 175).

Despite these minor shortcomings, bead researchers and collectors will find this volume a good source for information on the beads and beadwork of various Asian and African cultures, past and present.

Karlis Karklins  
1596 Devon Street  
Ottawa, ON K1G 0S7  
Canada  
E-mail: karlis4444@gmail.com

*Glass Beads: Selections from The Corning Museum of Glass.*

**Adrienne V. Gennett.** The Corning Museum of Glass, One Museum Way, Corning, NY, 14830-2253. 2013. 88 pp., 55 color figs. ISBN-13: 978-0-87290-192-6. \$19.99 (paper).

This beautifully produced book is a companion to the exhibition “Life on a String: 35 Centuries of the Glass Bead” (May 18, 2013 to January 5, 2014) at The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY. The volume presents full-color photographs of 50 of the finest items from the exhibit along with information regarding their manufacture, history, and cultural context. The images can also be found on the museum’s website ([www.cmog.org](http://www.cmog.org)), sometimes with a bit more descriptive material, but are larger in the print version and for this reason alone, the book is worthwhile. A visitor to the exhibition mentioned the difficulty of seeing the items in the dim light needed to conserve the integrity of the items. In the book they are large, well lit, and clear.

A question I had from the beginning was “who was this written for?” Karol B. Wight, Executive Director of the museum, provides the answer in her Forward: “These entries... may inspire the reader to seek more information in the specialistic literature on beads.” The book, then, is for a glass lover or a potential glass-bead lover, not a bead scholar.

The format for the book has a heading for each item which provides information on provenance, time period, mode of manufacture, color, and dimensions, as well as the accession number. This is followed by a description of the item itself.

I have a quibble about the headings of some of the pages: “107 Beads,” “147 Beads,” “String of Beads,” and “Bead.” These contrast with the more informative headings such as “*Magatama* Amulet,” “Chevron Bead,” “Beaded Fringe Sample Cards,” etc. It would have been more instructive to write, for example, “Southern Indian Indo-Pacific Bead Strand,” “Malaysian Indo-Pacific Bead Strand,” and “Islamic-Period Trailed-Bead Strand” to give some distinction among the presently anonymous beads.

Tina Oldknow, Curator of Modern Glass, wrote about the six contemporary pieces in the book. Adrienne Gennett, formerly curatorial assistant at the museum, wrote about all the other items. Her expertise is in 18th-century English silver and 19th-century French furniture.

The selected items are arranged chronologically from a Greek or Cretan necklace with pendants (1400-1250 B.C.) to Kristina Logan’s “Constellation Necklace” of 2011. Often the items are or show beads that were common and much loved/valued in their time; too often we are shown great rarities which, while beautiful, do not really assist with understanding the bead trajectory through time. Examples of the well-known in the book are the Indo-Pacific beads, millefiori, the ubiquitous glass seed beads, and Czech molded beads. Of course, the contemporary offerings are unique, but still the products of their time.

The last six items in the book are contemporary works of art featuring glass beads and differ enormously from the others. They refer to historic events (Joyce Scott’s beaded memento of the Rodney King beating), are works of contemporary sensibility (David Chatt’s “108 Meditations in Saffron”), or are a reworking of ancient and modern (Laura Donefer’s “Blue Note Amulet Basket”). The other 44 items are anonymous, part of the stream of bead history.

For someone beginning to study beads, how beads are made becomes of paramount importance and it was the

descriptions of fabrication that often confounded me. On page 52, the illustration shows three faceted Czech glass beads made to imitate carnelian. The technique listed at the top of the page states “ground,” while the text below describes the invention of the two-part tong mold which was used to initially form these beads; the grinding being used for finishing and removing the mold seams. A more complete technique description would have been “tong-molded, ground.” The next page, “Snake Beads,” correctly describes them as “molded,” but misspells the manufacturer’s name, Redlhammer, as Redhammer in the footnotes. Further, the text about the glass carnelians suggests the “beads were made in imitation of garnets or other red stones, such as carnelian.” Garnet and carnelian are not at all similar and this is a surprising suggestion. A usage in the text, “semiprecious stones” is outmoded; current usage requires “gemstones” to refer equally to emeralds, agates, and carnelians.

In the case of the glass carnelians, only the second manufacturing phase was mentioned; in other cases only the first is. On page 34, the millefiori bead is described as “wound” with no mention of the additional need of fused canes or marvering, but for the chevron bead on page 30, techniques are correctly listed as “cased, drawn, ground.” It is more puzzling when two beads with similar decoration have the technique described differently. On page 22, “String of Beads” (Islamic-period trailed and feathered beads) is noted as being “tooled, decorated” in the heading, and in the text it is described as “trails were inlaid into the glass and then tooled to create patterns in feathered or geometric forms.” The term “inlaid” gives the wrong impression. At the same time, “Bead, Fancy Type,” a Venetian feather bead (page 33), is correctly described as “combed. Its colored trails were laid around the matrix... and a tool was used to drag the hot trails... creating a feathered pattern.” Apparently the similarity between these beads was not noticed. In the case of beaded objects (e.g., “Italian Beaded Fringe Sample Cards,” “Ceremonial Court Chain,” and “Beadwork Bag”), however, Gennett is much more at home and fills the text page with details concerning the uses, social rank, popularity, and design characteristics of the items as well as historical connections.

The beauty of the book is in the photographs of the beads and beadwork. It’s usefulness is in the text and bibliography, and the text leads to curiosity and further investigation.

Gretchen Dunn  
6102 85th Place  
New Carrollton, MD 20784  
E-mail: gedance@verizon.net