

18. THE ALLEN BOOK OF BEADS, by Peter Francis, Jr. (1988, 13:5-7)

Information even about relatively recent beads made in the most important centers is scarce. A few years ago an article on early 20th-century bead catalogues appeared, featuring one called "The Allen Book of Beads" (Liu 1975). This 32-page booklet (priced at 10 cents) was well illustrated, and included informative descriptions of beads currently on the market. It must have been published after 1917, as it refers to Czechoslovakia (p. 27). Liu suggested a probable date in the 1920s. Confirming such a date sheds light on the changes in bead styles in the early part of this century.

Allen's Boston Bead Store was located at 8 Winter Street, a building devoted to garments, furs, and fashion accessories in a district known for shops selling these sorts of goods. *The Boston Directory* first listed Allen's Boston Bead Store in 1920. Its proprietor was Herbert D. Allen, who continued to be listed through 1930. In 1931, it was run by Mrs. Mildred E. Wolk.

From 1932 to 1935, Mrs. Mildred E. Schwartz was named as owner of the store; in 1936 Mrs. Wolk was again in charge. In 1940 the store's name was changed to Allen's Bead Store, still under Mrs. Wolk. This continued through 1956. There is no listing from 1957 to 1959. In 1960 there was an Allen's Bead *Shop*, still with Mrs. Wolk; it specialized in repair work. No shop or store is to be found after that date. It seems likely that Mildred E. Wolk and Mildred E. Schwartz were the same person; she may have changed her name due to a short-lived second marriage or a reversion to her maiden name.

The Allen Book of Beads must have been issued while H.D. Allen was still alive, as he was named president of the store in two places. Thus, the catalogue can be dated between 1920 and 1930, much as Liu suspected. This helps to date beads which are quite different from those on several Venetian bead sample cards of the late 19th century (e.g., Fratelli Giacomuzzi n.d.; Karklins 1982). In general the lamp work is less fine than on older beads. There is an absence of floral or "arabesque" patterns, and more free-form waves. There is also quite a variety of millefiori shapes.

There are still things to be learned from this catalogue. In an "Important Notice," it says the store had published circulars and price lists for the past 15 years. Since the name of the store is the Allen *Boston* Bead Store, might Mr. Allen have started his business elsewhere? Can any of the earlier circulars named in the catalogue be located? There is also a section (p. 27) about glass rings for curtain and shade pulls. Allen had been importing these from China, but "The Chinese are not experts in glass making, so in addition to

being poor colors, they were mostly of opaque glass." He had just begun importing finer translucent ones from the Czechs. These rings are now popular as jewelry elements, and this contemporary insight into their origins calls for more study.

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19. ROCAILLE BEADS, by Peter Francis, Jr. (1988, 12:17-21)

"Rocaille" is a term frequently encountered when dealing with French beads and French bead traders. Its precise meaning has been a subject of discussion by English-speaking bead researchers, with different definitions proposed. The present note is offered to help clear up some of these ambiguities, or at least foster further discussion.

Rocaille in English Bead Literature

The first writer in English to use the term was van der Sleen. When discussing the production of Bapterosses et Cie in Briare, France, he said, "They are very typical cylinder beads, as straight as a military drum, called rocaille beads... in the trade. They are from 5 to 10 mm in length... feldspar is a real constituent of the mass, taking the place of some of the quartz" (Sleen 1967:114-115). A simple sketch shows a short tubular bead.

A Baedeker guide to northern France early in the century says, "Briare (pop. 5227) produces quantities of so-called 'porcelain' buttons made of feldspar rendered plastic by milk, a process introduced by M. Bapterosses, whose bust (by Chapin 1897) is in the Grande-Plaza (Baedeker 1909:625)." I cannot comment on the effect of milk upon feldspar, but otherwise this is the same process van der Sleen discussed for Bapterosses beads.

The beads (and buttons) in question are known as "tile" beads/buttons. They are often called "porcelain" because of their resemblance to the ceramic, and have been studied most thoroughly by Sprague (1983:172), who had several analyzed and concluded that they were made of glass. The three descriptions he quoted, including the U.S. patent by one of the Prosser brothers, the inventors of the technique, all state that clay and/or feldspar (clay is largely feldspar) are used in the process. This and the above descriptions are a bit difficult to correlate with the analyses showing them to be essentially glass, but this is a point for further discussion. Our interest focuses on a bead sample card published by Sprague (1983:169) made by F. Bapterosses and Co. of Paris about 1930. It contains uniform short cylinder tile beads which are called *rocaille* beads on the card.

The next person to discuss *rocaille* beads was Kidd (1979:59), who defined them as: "French term for large beads in general." His source was Barrelet (1953:166), whose entry reads: "Rasade ou Rocaille. Perles de verre pour chapelets, patenôtres, ou colliers. «Tous nos merciers vendent cette rocaille qui son des grains et verts» (H. de Blancourt XVn^e s). On en envoyait aux Indes, en Afrique au Canada et dans les Iles (XVIII^e s)."

The Bohemian beadmakers also use the word *rocaille* (or *rocaïl*) to mean small drawn "bugles" or tubular "seed" beads (Francis 1979:6). Modern French beadmakers produce *rocaille* beads, which are simple, rounded "seed" beads (Bovis n.d.). In sum, we have three types of beads called "*rocaille*:" 1) tile beads, as reported by van der Sleen and used by the Bapterosses Company; 2) any large bead, as reported by Kidd; and 3) "seed" beads, whether rounded or not, as used in Bohemia and by modern French beadmakers.

Rocaille in the French Literature

French dictionaries do not define "*rocaille*" beads. Huget's (1965) dictionary of sixteenth-century French does not list the word at all, although it was in use by that time. Bescherelle's (1865:1211) *National Dictionary* states that *rocaille* is the diminutive of "roc" or rock, and lists six definitions: 1) small fossil shells in rock; 2) small grains of

enamel used to paint upon glass, an ancient technique; 3) an architectural ornament; 4) a genre of furniture popular under Louis XV in the 18th century; 5) an artistic genre; and 6) something garnished with *rocaille*. Fleming and Tibbin's (1860:930) French-English dictionary defines *rocaille* as small pieces of stones, shell, or other things which ornament a cave or as imitations of these.

The standard French dictionary, the *Grand Larousse* (1977), also says that *rocaille* is derived from "roc" or rock, and traces the first use of the word to 1360 in the plural (*roquailles*) and 1648 in the singular (*rocaille*). The first definition given is of a mass of small stones, shells, and other debris on the ground, noting that in Normandy it has come to mean small shells and crustaceans fossilized in stone. The second definition is that of small stones which, along with shells, decorate something imitating a natural surface. By extension this became a decorative style especially popular in the Regency and under Louis XV for architecture, furniture, jewelry, and other objects with contoured lines and volutes. As an adjective, the French Academy and Victor Hugo used it in the 1840s as a synonym of *rococo* (*Grand Larousse* 1977:5233). Strangely, the *Grand Larousse*, the French equivalent to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, cites no uses of the word in regard to beads.

Conclusions

The references to the use of "*rocaille*" in French furnish clues as to how the beads should be regarded. The term is diminutive and means "little stones," and by extension "little beads." Secondly, the basic definition is of a surface decorated with small objects. This, of course, is a primary use of "seed" beads; tile beads served a similar function—van der Sleen emphasized their use to decorate wooden carvings.

In sum, I would argue that there is no particular bead which can be called a "*rocaille*" bead in the same way we can call certain beads chevrons, cornaline d'Aleppos, or tile beads. The term is suggestive of small beads, but primarily refers to the function of decorating a surface (whether African statues, cloth, or other objects) with small "stones" to produce a contoured effect. "Seed" beads are most often used for this purpose, but other, larger beads may be as well.

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20. WHAT'S A RANGO?, by Peter Francis, Jr. (1992, 21:8-11)

This note is submitted in hopes that someone can shed light on the beads called "Range" or "Arango." Exactly what sort of beads are they? Where does the name originate and how did it come to be so widespread, only to disappear later?

Both editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary* list "Arango," though not "Range." The entries are identical:

arango, Pl. -oes "A species of beads made of rough carnelian... formerly imported from Bombay for re-

exportation to Africa. McCulloch Dist. Comm. 1844. 1715 London Gaz mmmmmcccxxiv/3 Arangoes, Ostridge Feathers, Beads (Murray and others 1933:424; Simpson and Weiner 1989:600).

The references cited by the *OED* are not the first uses in English. The earliest I have found is in papers of the East India Company. Robert Bower, Henry Bolton, and Humphrey Pirom wrote to "the Commanders of Subsequent Ships" from St. Augustine's Bay, Madagascar (Malagasy) on 15 May 1644: "Beefe may be bought on the other side of the river for 10 rangoes a beefe, or 8 rangoes and 20 samma sammas" (Foster 1913:182). Foster (1913:182, n. 1) appended a footnote: "Sarnisamy is Malagasy for some kind of bead; while rango (long) probably indicates the long beads which were in special demand. Lockyer (1706) mentions 'beads and rangos' among articles suitable for sale at the Cape [of Good Hope]." *Arrangoes* is also reported to be used currently in "Gambian English" for carnelian (Opper and Opper 1989:7).

There are actually two mysteries here. "Samma samma" (however spelled) is a bead Burton (1860:392) described in East Africa: "Samsam (Ar.) sàmè-sàmè (Kis.)... are the various names for the small coral bead, a scarlet enamelled upon a white ground;" that is, a cornaline d'Aleppo or "white heart." As white hearts were not available in 1644, what beads were called this name then? The older "green hearts?" I do not know; that is the subject for another inquiry.

But, on to Rango. I first assumed it was a local name for a long bead, and since long carnelians were much in demand in Madagascar in those days, I thought that was it. But where does this word come from? It could not be Arabic, nor is it found in Malay (related to the Malagasy language). It is not in any Portuguese dictionary I have consulted. In Spanish (and Italian) it means rank, degree, station, quality, class, etc. French has *rang* and *rangée*, meaning file of things put in a row. In Hindi and probably Gujarati *rañg* is "color." On what basis Foster interpreted the word as "long" and how it was derived remains to be learned.

At one point I thought I had found a hint in West Africa. Ibn Battuta about 1350 told his readers that travelers there need only some salt, some perfume or incense, and beads. The French translation reads: "*des ornements au colifichets de verre, que l'on appelle nazhim, ou rangée*" (Defrémery and Sanguinetti 1922:394), or "ornaments and baubles of glass, which are called *nazhim*, or *rangée*." *Nazhim* is an Arabic word for bead, but *Rangée* is not in the Arabic text. *Rangée* is French; the translators must have used it to say "string of beads" in an unconventional way; this use does not appear in Robert's (1966) or Littrés (1961) dictionaries. Ibn Battuta never heard of Rangoes.