

Notes and News

TWO FRANKISH BEADS FROM THE COAST OF TANGANYIKA

(FIGS. 48-9)

These two beads of the fourth-sixth centuries A.D. are, as far as I am aware, the earliest beads of western origin yet recorded from the east African coast. The first (FIG. 48, no. 2) I recovered from a beach south of the town of Dar es Salaam, and the other (FIG. 48, no. 1) was taken from a swamp site near Kisiju about 56 miles further south (FIG. 49).

The Dar es Salaam specimen (half a standard barrel bead) was recovered together with Indian trade beads ranging in date from the second century A.D. (according to Dr. Dikshit of the Archaeological Survey of India) to the sixteenth century,¹ and fragments of Chinese celadon wares which Mr. Basil Gray (to whom I have shown them) would ascribe to the period between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries.² It is a

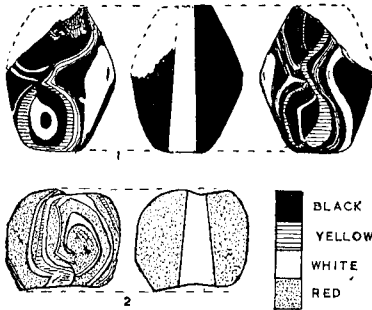


FIG. 48
FRANKISH GLASS BEADS
FROM TANGANYIKA

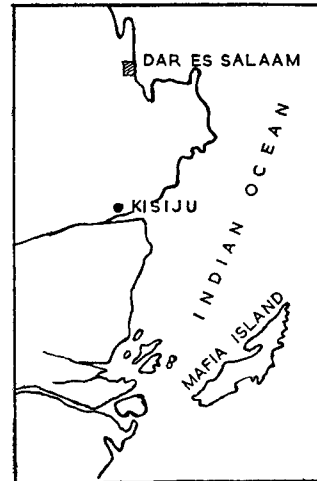


FIG. 49
THE COAST OF
TANGANYIKA

wire-wound bead in red opaque glass, decorated with wavy trails of white and yellow opaque glass, drawn on to the red body of the bead and marvered in. It compares closely, both in colour and form, with Frankish and Anglo-Saxon beads preserved in the British Museum.³ O. G. S. Crawford and F. Addison show what appears to be an almost identical specimen in *Abu Geili* (Wellcome Expedition to the Sudan, III) pl. xlviii, 1. D. B. Harden, who described the Abu Geili beads amongst which this particular

¹ Indian trade beads of the thirteenth to the sixteenth century are common along the east African coast in association with the ruined Islamic settlements found there.

² These fragments, together with the associated Indian beads, are to be the subject of a further paper elsewhere.

³ I am grateful to Mr. D. M. Wilson for discussing these beads with me and allowing me to examine them. Dr. A. J. Arkell and Dr. D. B. Harden have also provided helpful comments.

one was included, suggests that it is a Roman or Byzantine 'varied red-and-white opaque glass' bead of 'third-seventh century date', adding that had such beads been found in this country he would not have hesitated to call them Saxon of the sixth-seventh century; 'indeed', he suggested, 'some of the Saxon beads of the period may well have been imported from Egypt or the eastern Mediterranean'. Harden has seen my Dar es Salaam bead and agrees as to its Frankish and Anglo-Saxon affinities.

The bead from Kisiju, a long truncated convex bicone, is also wire wound. It is made of apparently black⁴ glass decorated like the previous example with trails of yellow and white opaque glass drawn on to the body and marvered in. There is a very similar Frankish bead, but with white trails only, preserved in the British Museum.

From the same site as the Kisiju bead came another which should also be mentioned here (see *Man*, Sept., 1960, No. 180). It is a very much weathered millefiori bead showing traces of its original colouring of blue, yellow and red. It is probably (in Basil Gray's view) of the eighth to the tenth century in date, being very similar to one of near-eastern origin found on the island of Birka in Björkö, Uppland, Sweden, and now preserved in the State Historical Museum of Stockholm.

The beads here dealt with seem to pin-point at least two of the earliest trading stations yet found on the Tanganyika coast, and also to indicate an earlier dating for some of the Indian trade beads than has hitherto been given to them in that area. Neither the Dar es Salaam nor the Kisiju site shows any evidence of former buildings in stone, though in both there are signs of once existing wattle-and-daub structures in the form of scattered lumps of hard, rather brick-like clay showing the impressions of branches and twigs, probably those of the mangrove trees in which both sites still abound. Though western beads such as these could have found their way to the east African coast direct from an eastern Mediterranean *entrepôt*, they could equally well have been re-exported from India, for it is known that European beads were reaching that country even before the time of Alexander. Beck found 'typical European beads' in settlements at Taxila dating back to the fifth century B.C. (see *Mem. Archaeol. Survey of India*, no. 65, 1941). Many more beads, however, of the kind I have described from Dar es Salaam and Kisiju will have to be found before they can be accepted as evidence of a trade in beads and not just as losses suffered by individual visitors.

JOAN R. HARDING

HANGING-BOWLS WITH PIERCED ESCUTCHEONS (PL. XXIV)

In his article on the fragments of a hanging-bowl from Bekesbourne, Kent (*Med. Archaeol.* II (1958), 75), Haseloff comments on the fact that the two escutcheons depart from the normal rule in that they do not form closed roundels but have central voids in which presumably other objects were fixed. He states that 'immediate parallels for this construction are not available but similar forms may be found', and adds that 'the Bekesbourne roundels are of a type that is not to be found among the hanging-bowls known to have come from Anglo-Saxon graves—with the probable exception of the escutcheon from Camerton. The conclusion to be drawn is that this group of escutcheons with open or inlaid central panels represents a later stage of development than do the hanging-bowls from Anglo-Saxon graves'.

In 1955 two complete hanging-bowls were recovered from the Anglian cemetery at Loveden Hill, Lincolnshire (*Med. Archaeol.* I (1957), 148). One of these had escutcheons of this type with a central void. Since the cemetery is big and excavation is still going on, it has not, as yet, been possible to publish the hanging-bowls in detail, but in view of Haseloff's article it may be advisable to draw attention to the escutcheons of this bowl although the bowl itself and its complicated group of associated finds including, amongst other things, a sword, a large and intricately-decorated bronze-bound wooden bucket and many other decorated bronze fragments, must await publication on another occasion.

⁴ Under the microscope a chip might show that like other apparently black glasses it is really brown.