

Notwithstanding my criticisms sketched above, the book is certainly a fitting tribute to a great scholar with great interests in a broad range of Indian and Iranian subjects. Some contributions are absolutely worth mulling over a second or third time, others are fine examples of dedicated research. But there are also articles which may well be on a par with an average paper of a graduate student. Certain shortcomings of books such as this honorary publication are inevitable, when there are so many contributors with a well-established scholarly reputation, whom an editor may choose not to offend by refusing an article on grounds of poor academic quality.

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ASIA'S MARITIME BEAD TRADE, 300 B.C. TO THE PRESENT. By PETER FRANCIS, JR. pp. xii, 305. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

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The present accounts ends by saying: "Beads are not the most important thing on Earth. Yet neither are they trivial. They are survivors of a great variety of human behaviours." Furthermore: "Beads are common things. Small and often understated, they have long been overlooked. When they are studied, however, they begin to assume considerable importance" (p. 198). Peter Francis, author of several books and hundreds of articles, has devoted almost his entire life to the study of beads and he certainly knows their story better than anyone else in the English speaking world. The book under review here is a gigantic synthesis based on past academic research and, as such, resembles a complex mosaic with a myriad of little pieces.

Put differently, from the viewpoint of an economic historian, this is a huge commodity study which offers a multi-dimensional approach to a multi-faceted theme. The trade objects themselves had to be identified and classified according to shape and composition. Archaeological data, collected from various sites, had to be compared with textual evidence. A further requirement was to analyse different production techniques and marketing strategies. And it was also necessary to consider the general background in each case – geographical factors, trade routes, merchant groups, institutional, political, socio-cultural and other elements.

This ambitious endeavour was certainly not eased by the fact that Francis has opted for a vast geographical scope: it extends from the shores of East Africa to Japan and Korea. Occasionally there are also references to the European and Mediterranean scenarios, to Central Asia, Alaska and the insular world beyond New Guinea. The time frame is equally broad: Francis takes his reader through more than two millennia, from circa 300 BCE to the twentieth century.

Beads are manufactured goods. Historians specialised in Asian trade history will know that subcategories for such commodities are often difficult to establish. Regarding beads, the situation is highly confusing because, not infrequently, many types of beads or bead-like objects can be associated with several coastal sites and their respective hinterlands at roughly one and the same point in time, or over longer periods. Reconstructing the history of bead "exchanges", therefore, is a task almost as difficult to accomplish as summarising the history of intra-Asian ceramic "flows", or the circulation of coins. Francis tries to master this "job" by resorting to larger categories, for example the "Indo-Pacific" bead category, and by rigorously distinguishing between different raw materials used in the manufacturing process. There were glass beads, stone beads and beads derived from organic matter such as red coral. Certain rare types were of course excluded, for instance beads made of tortoise-shell. Other criteria for categorisation, usually on a subordinate level, relate to their shape and decoration. This is especially important in the case of glass beads, which were wound and coloured in different ways. Needless to point out, with so much glass and crystal involved in the production process, general

remarks on glass-making techniques, which varied greatly in space and time, had to be included as well.

In some chapters, the overall sequence of presenting facts and events follows a roughly chronological layout. Here, Francis calls up archaeological evidence first and then often switches to literary sources. An astonishingly large body of texts from all parts of Asia is cited in this way, usually through well-known English translations. Generally, the presentation is strong, albeit not exhaustive, for the pre-colonial period. It is less elaborate for the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With the coming of the Iberians and later the Dutch and others, the quantity of documents and text collections that would need to be searched for additional data on beads simply becomes too large to be “controlled” by one modern writer. Thus, Pires, Barbosa and a few others whose accounts were published by the Hakluyt Society, mark the period beyond which this book does not really attempt to move. True, selected glimpses on the last two or three centuries are offered as well, but these remain rather “impressionistic” in nature.

In a complex work such as this, not every detail can be presented. There is much on the technical part of the problem and on such issues as production centres, which emerged in many parts of Asia, but comparatively little on the usage of beads in daily life. The demand side, possible substitution effects and other economic functions were not fully explored – if they can be explored at all. Another facet is beads in myths and legends. This was often left aside, certainly for reasons of space and consistency in the arrangement of the book.

The Asian terminology, a further theme to deal with, was only treated *en passant*. Some readers will be grateful for not being bothered with endless lists of terms and phrases, others may raise questions, for example in regard to beads made of lapis lazuli. Several Chinese expressions occur in written sources, but to what extent they referred to lapis lazuli is not discussed. A special study would be required to stub this terminological jungle. Further “gaps” can be found in the brief introduction to coral beads. Francis cites dozens of Chinese and other texts (in translation), but usually without addressing the philological problems associated therewith. All kinds of corals were used in trade, and not infrequently authors “classified” them by adding colour attributes, which indicates that, in some cases, a rudimentary distinction was made between different types or species; in other cases, however, no specification can be found and it is not at all clear what substance is meant. Yes, certainly, the book alludes to these and similar questions, but for many details one still has to consult the earlier works by Laufer, Chmielewski and others quoted, for example, in *Archipel* 39 (1990).

Identifying toponyms in early written accounts is a further point of concern. When it comes to such texts as Wang Dayuan’s *Daoyi zhilüe* or Fei Xin’s *Xingcha shenglan*, many historians would probably no longer trust the old translations by Rockhill, but would draw on more recent material instead. Apparently Francis had no access to these publications. Chinese works in particular offer many more details – not only in regard to place names but also in regard to trade activities. A glimpse at Lin Tianwei’s standard monograph on the “perfume” trade shows that all kinds of precious stones, pearls, glass, crystal, etc. were imported under the Song. The *Ming shilu* could have been exploited as well. Further evidence might be encountered in Korean sources.

Unfortunately, Francis’s book carries minor inaccuracies as well. This includes wrong transcriptions and spellings. “Burini” should be replaced by “Biruni” (diacritics left aside), and “*Song shu*” by “*Song shi*” (p. 161). “Xuan Zong” would be better than “Xuan Zung”; Zheng He can be associated not only with Islam and Buddhism but also with Daoism; and the Portuguese began trading in China already some years before 1519 (p. 70). Commercial transactions with them were temporarily halted, it is true, but this did not lead to “the expulsion of all foreigners and cessation of trade for three decades”. On the contrary, some tribute-envoys still came to China and there was a flourishing illegal sector, particularly off the Fujian and Zhejiang coasts. Finally, the granting of Macao to the Portuguese was very different

from the way in which Britain acquired Hong Kong (all p. 71). These are just some small *minutiae*, others could be added.

The bibliography, approximately forty pages in length, is an amazing and extremely useful list of primary and secondary titles. Yet, certain Western works should not have been omitted, for example recent research on Barus by Cl. Guillot and others, R. A. Donkin's wonderful monograph on pearls, as well as his book on camphor (see p. 151 n. 2), several studies by H. P. Ray and J. F. Salles on various aspects of early maritime relations across the Indian Ocean, E. H. Schafer's *Vermilion Bird*, certain dictionaries of Asian economic products, and so forth.

Apart from over ninety illustrations as well as dozens of carefully drawn maps and many special figures, Francis' book also carries two interesting appendices: on beads in the National Museum of the Philippines and a chapter entitled "Analyses of Indo-Pacific Beads". The second piece, in particular, deals with their chemical composition. This is written for specialists who are familiar with glass-making techniques. Finally, there is a reliable index with selected entries.

The above may be rather critical at times, but one should certainly not downgrade the extraordinary efforts which went into this book. To date there is no academic monograph in any major Western language which presents the same subject in a comparable manner. No doubt then, scholars interested in the trade of beads, their art and history, in gems and glass more generally, or just curious little things, will have to consult Francis' work for advice and guidance. It is a well-written account, a balanced *ensemble*, almost a handbook – a courageous and highly successful attempt at giving shape to something that, for ages, has almost remained "unstructurable".

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CIVIL AND CORRUPT ASIA. IMAGE AND TEXT IN THE *ITINERARIO* AND THE *ICONES* OF JAN HUYGEN VAN LINSCHOTEN. By ERNST VAN DEN BOOGAART. pp. viii, 123, 30 plates. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

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Jan Huygen van Linschoten's famous *Itinerario* has been the subject of many special studies and is regularly cited by historians investigating early Dutch expansion to the maritime world. The *Itinerario* was translated into several European languages, including Latin, and therefore bore a significant influence on seventeenth-century European descriptions of Asia. In 1604 Linschoten published another *opus*, entitled *Icones habitus gestusque Indorum ac Lusitanorum per Indiam viventium, templorum, aedium, arborum, fructum, herbarum, aromatum . . .* (Amstelredami apud Cornelium Nicolai). This work, which consists of thirty prints originally found in the *Itinerario* and of long captions collected from the Latin version of that text, is an exceedingly rare item and, so far, has attracted little attention from among the scholarly community. Copies are held, for example, by the Universiteitsbibliotheek in Amsterdam and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. The present study reproduces the thirty *icones* of which twenty-nine were taken from the Amsterdam copy and one from the Wolfenbüttel copy.

Ernst van den Boogaart's book originally appeared in Dutch as *Het verheven en verdorven Azië. Woord en beeld in het Itinerario en de Icones van Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (Amsterdam, 2000). The Latin captions of the *icones* were first translated into that language by C. L. Heesakkers, and then rendered into English by P. Mason, who also translated the modern Dutch introduction, as Boogaart explains. This introduction is a revised version of an earlier introduction, found in the author's *Jan Huygen van Linschoten and the Moral Map of Asia* (London, 1999).