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Art and Culture Among the Ashanti of Ghana

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Stephen E. Adams

artifacts is optional. Recording every artifact is unrealistic if the artifactual content of the wall is dense.

After strata and features have been recorded, the profiler should describe the soils as to color and texture and also should record, on the profile, his interpretation of each feature. Description of soils and interpretation of features will allow for further interpretations of the wall from which soil, radiocarbon, and paleo-magnetic samples can be taken.

When profiling is completed, the profiler should again inspect the trench or pit wall to make sure he has left nothing out of the profile. He should then record on the profile any further comments or thoughts he might have. He should always initial each profile sheet so that those who are studying the profiles later will know whom to consult should a problem in interpretation arise. The profile should be dated and should include the site designation and the trench or pit designation. A scale on the profile is always included along with an arrow indicating north.

When two or more profilers are to work in different pits or trenches on the same site at the same time, they should go together to a freshly cut wall and try to reach agreement in their descriptions of the same types and colors of soil and interpretation of features. If possible, their nomenclature should be coordinated so that different profile sheets can be accurately compared. Color

and texture charts for soils can be used but are often inconvenient because they are time-consuming to use. Ideally, the profilers should have some background in geology or earth science.

Using two persons working together as a profile team has its advantages. One person records while the other measures strata and features. Two persons together usually see more than one person alone; therefore, it is less likely that something will be left out of the profile. However, in confined spaces two persons get in each other's way. Also, there may be some disagreement in description and interpretation. One person can profile just as accurately and quickly as two persons if his efforts are concentrated!

Conclusion

This paper is intended to be a general description of profiling techniques. The profiling techniques described in this paper are but a few of many. It is not intended to lay down hard and fast rules for profiling procedures; each individual profiler should choose methods best suited to his own needs and likes. It is my personal belief that various techniques should be tried before a profiler chooses any particular ones. Such action will improve profiling accuracy and so lend more accuracy to the interpretation of the data. This, in turn, will make the profiling meaningful.

Art And Culture Among The Ashanti of Ghana

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FOREWORD

This case study in cultural anthropology was designed to test an hypothesis presented by Morton Levine (New York University, and a fellow classmate at Harvard) relative to the interpretation of art forms among pre-literate people as an expression of cultural orientations, values, and how a people see themselves relating to lifeways. Levine was involved at the time with a similar study of the plastic arts and mythological expressions among the aborigines of Australia.

In this approach to cultural understanding we utilized some of the concepts and models presented by Sigmund Freud (Psychopathology of Everyday Life and Moses and Monotheism) and Franz Boas (Primitive Art), as well as Western European traditional and contemporary art forms Realism (Millet), Naturalism (Daumier), Impres-

sionism (Manet), Expressionism (Raoult), Abstraction (Klee), Fantasy (Miro), Surrealism (Dali) and especially Analytic Abstraction dealing with Cubism influenced by African sculpture and art objects.

We operate on the premise that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained through an analysis of all phases of expression by a people, abstractions and generalizations about social behavior, social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

A difficult problem confronting us in 1965 was how and when to indicate signs of change in traditional Ashanti cultural expressions. For the most part we are describing the Ashanti from 1953-1964 (W. R. Bascom and Paul Gebauer, Handbook of West African Art,

Art And Culture Among The Ashanti of Ghana

University of Wisconsin 1964).

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Introduction

"Ashanti," refers both to the territory and to the people that inhabit the central portion of the modern political state of Ghana in West Africa. History records the Ashanti, members of the Akan-speaking groups, as having migrated to this region from an area around the Niger River bend near Timbuctoo in the eleventh or twelfth centuries (Meyrowitz 1958: 17-19). These Akan-speaking people, after having defeated, driven out, or enslaved the people they found there, banded themselves together in a confederacy. When Europeans visited Ashanti in the nineteenth century, "they found a nation that had a well developed government of imperial cast and of remarkable political complexity for the non-literate world, being bureaucratic and hierarchic in its structure but using a principle of decentralization of authority which permitted the member states to manage all affairs which did not affect the confederacy" (Lystad 1958: 27).

The Ashanti are a predominantly rural people, living in small towns, villages and hamlets, and farming extensively the land surrounding these habitats. The area of Ashanti is approximately 24,000 square miles, and the population numbers about 850,000 persons (Lystad 1958: 28). Kumasi, the ancient capitol of the kingdom is the seat of government, center of commercial activities and sacred shrine to the Ashanti. In Kumasi is to be found the palace of the Asantehente (king) as well as the provincial council for the new state of Ghana, the weighing stations and storage houses for the cocoa beans (the Ashanti produce the great bulk of the Ghana crop), stores, shops and markets of all descriptions, and the Ashanti Golden Stool (which contains the soul of the Ashanti nation).

Like its history and political organization, Ashanti art, religion, and culture are elaborate, complete, and highly developed. This we hope to bring out more forcefully in an analysis of Ashanti art which is an expression of the cultural ontology of the people.

Ashanti Social Organizations

Genetically, the Ashanti are members of the large family of Negroes inhabiting the African Guinea Coast. They are of moderate stature, slight build, dark skin, and long headed cephalic index. Culturally the Ashanti are characterized by elaborate political and military organizations, highly developed legal systems based on a hierarchy of local and regional councils acting both as administrative and judicial bodies culminating in the king's court, and a subsistence economy based upon extensive farming and domestication. A somewhat shadowy conception of a high god is associated with

the worship of numerous lesser gods and quasi-mythological deified heroes, often connected with natural phenomena of social significance (e.g., rivers, lakes, thunderstorms). Throughout Ashanti land craftsmanship in wood, textiles, gold, bronze, and pottery is highly developed, being carried on by guilds in specialized villages giving hereditary craft services to the courts (Rattray 1924: 8-9). Trade is highly developed among them and was directed by the king. Commerce with the coastal tribes played a very important part in their history. Gold and slaves were exchanged at coastal ports for firearms, textiles, and other European products.

The basis of Ashanti social organization is the rule of matrilineal descent. Every Ashanti belongs to one of eight exogamous matrilineal clans, each associated with a totemic animal connected with the emergence of the first clan ancestress on earth (Rattray 1924: 13). Some secrecy surrounds these totems, but each Ashanti child is taught to respect them.

While inheritance of property and succession to chiefship and other offices and ranks are determined by matrilineal descent, paternity is especially important in Ashanti social organization. Through his father every man is a member of a ritual group (ntoro) or patrilineally connected people. There are about twelve such groups dispersed throughout the country. Each ntoro has one or more mythical animal ancestors, and should one of these animals (python or leopard) be found dead, members of the appropriate ntoro are obliged to bury it and put on mourning signs. Marriage is prohibited between near ntoro kin (Rattray 1924: 23).

"Neither clans nor ntoro groups ever act as units on a tribal basis. Such action occurs only in the local divisions of the clan" (Gotti 1960: 128). These groups in Ashanti, as previously mentioned, consist of matrilineal lineages of acknowledged common descent, whose members lived close together, have a common "stool house" in which are kept the consecrated stools of their ancestors, bury their dead in their private cemetery and in particular have a male head who, with the assistance of the elders and a female head, exercises oversight over the affairs of the lineage. All political offices, from the kingship down, are hereditary in particular lineages of the community in which the office is exercised. Thus the kingship is vested in the lineage of the clan domiciled in the Kumasi area, the royal city and territory. Land and other property rights are generally vested in segments of these local lineages. (Land cannot be sold in Ashanti because it belongs to no one earthly being, but to the spirits that inhabit it.) Sexual relationships between members of the same lineage are incestuous and violaters are punished by execution.

The brief foregoing statements relative to the general character of the Ashanti point out the elaborateness of Ashanti belief and imagination, and the fact that these beliefs are deeply rooted in the traditional mythology of the people. To the Ashanti these mythological characters are not only real but their spirits exist among the Ashanti

in everyday life experiences, along with the spirits of the deceased ancestors.

The Ashanti are an agricultural people, depending entirely upon the yield of the land for subsistence. Ashanti farms are worked intensively from early dawn until late in the afternoon. Basic food crops are yams, corn, casava, bananas, and palm oil. Goats and chickens are the principal domestic animals; hunting and fishing contribute only slightly to the Ashanti diet. One poor crop year and the Ashanti will be in danger of starvation. Hence, a person feels completely dependent upon the land upon which he must rely for his very livelihood.

Today, however, in addition to the aforementioned crops, the Ashanti grow and harvest most of the cocoa exported from Ghana, which produces more cocoa than any other nation in the world. Ashanti land is also rich in mahogany and gold, the latter from whence the old colonial territorial name Gold Coast was derived several centuries ago. One of the richest gold mines in the world is located near Kumasi, capital of the kingdom. Hence, even though the Ashanti subsistence farmer might supplement his food crops with cash, his cash-producing wealth is still due to the generosity of the land. This generosity of the good earth is never taken for granted by the Ashanti, for he gives thanks to the earth spirit whenever anything is extracted by offering ritualistic libations and beseeching the spirits to continue blessing the Ashanti people with bountiful crops. Celebrations are held before the harvesting of each crop. (I was fortunate to be in Ashanti during such celebrations in October of 1966.)

One such celebration is that of "Odwira", the great festival of the dead, often referred to as the "Yam Custom" (Bascom and Gebauer 1953: 12). This is the most important of all ceremonial rites. The ceremony is the occasion of the sacrifice to the ghost of the kings with these words:

The edges of the years have met, I take sheep and new yams and give you that you may eat.

Life to me.

Life to this my Ashanti people.

Women who cultivate the farms, when they do so grant the food comes forth in abundance.

Do not allow the penis of the Ashanti men die.

Grant fertility and many offspring to the women.

(Apter 1955: 30)

Only after the spirits had partaken of the new crops might the king and nation eat of them. The ceremony is also occasion for cleansing and purification of the Ashanti nation. Shrines, stools, and places of abode for lesser non-human spirits are thoroughly cleaned. During the ceremony, rules of society are relaxed and

wine drinking, feasting, and sexual intimacies are indulged in with license.

Another ceremony observed with less ceremonial participation is that of "Aday," which is observed locally throughout Ashanti twice in every successive forty-three days (Rattray 1924, Preface). The spirits of the appropriate clan chiefs are propitiated and their favors solicited. In this ceremony the chief sacrifices a goat in the stool-house, the blood is smeared on the stools, and a piece of meat placed on each with a prayer for long life and prosperity, while the drums call out the names of the departed and the people chant the attributes of each chief.

Out of these experiences the Ashanti have developed a wealth of music, dancing, folktales, proverbs, riddles and a form of artistic expression equal to that found among non-literate people anywhere in the world (Rattray 1924: 5). In the graphic and plastic arts, also, the Ashanti are not easily matched elsewhere in the world. Examples of Ashanti art are to be found in pottery, applied work in cloth, sculpture and filigree work in gold, bronze, iron, and wood, and in weaving and dyeing which is done in cotton, wild and imported silk, raffia, and banana fibers. It is probably in wood-carvings, brass castings, and weaving that the Ashanti craftsmen reached their highest degree of perfection in technique and style.

Even though there is no written record of the remote achievements of the Ashanti, much can be learned from the folklore and mythology of the people, which is in use by the Ashanti in ritually acting out through song and dance their past history, glory, and sorrows. Apter (1955: 30) gives an account of this in the following statement:

Tribal history is a mixture of the factual and the supernatural. In the beginning there is a man having supernatural powers, or acted upon by the supernatural. After a series of tests, or escapades this person sires a people. From the blood affiliation, mythologically reckoned, the relationships between other groups and other tribes is defined. The history of battles, famous victories, exploits and glories are all incorporated in the tribal mythology. Out of the histories, some of which, like the Dagoma drum history, are highly ritualized symbolic expressions, the traditions of the past are related to the people of today. Membership in a tribe or ethnic group is participation in a corporate body, the limits of which go beyond the immediate living environment, reaching backwards into the past. In the dance and the beat of the drums this past can be participated in, a process whereby strength

Art And Culture Among The Ashanti of Ghana

is renewed, the ancestors greeted, the gods propitiated, and the devils exorcised.

Ashanti Wood-Carving

The Ashanti Stools

Legend and mythology records the royal stool of Ashanti as having come into being during the reign of Osai Tutu (1700-1730), the fourth king of the Ashanti dynasty and founder of the empire. In the early days of his reign a man named Anotchi arrived in the country and announced that he had a mission from the Sky God to make Ashanti a great and powerful nation. A great gathering was summoned in Kumasi, and while the air was thick with dust and the heavens terrible with thunder, Anotchi drew from the sky a wooden stool, partly covered with gold. This stool did not fall to earth, but descended slowly upon the knees of Osai Tutu, to whom and to whose people Anotchi proclaimed that the stool contained the soul of the Ashanti nation, that their power, their health, and their bravery and welfare were in this stool, and that if it were destroyed then the Ashanti nation would sicken and lose its vitality. The stool is said never to have touched the ground, nor did any mortal sit upon it, and when it was taken to Batama once a year for the Odwira ceremony, it was conveyed under its umbrella (the umbrella is a symbol of aristocracy and authority in Ashanti), and surrounded by resplendent attendants (Rattray 1927: 5-24).

In addition to the "Golden Stool" which possesses the soul and spirit of the nation, the king has a stool, each chief has a stool, and each Ashanti has a stool which is the repository of each owner's soul; also there are a tribal stool, clan stool, family stool and village stool. Members participate in ritual ceremonies around their own stools, and also around the state, tribe, clan, and village stools. As the stool contains the soul of the individual, so it contains the soul of the clan, tribe, village, family, and state and serves as a symbol of unity for the Ashanti people in addition to its specific use.

Further these stools embody the spirits of the ancestors and are the living symbols of their presence, thereby giving the Ashanti access to constant relationships with the ancestors. To the Ashanti, not only does man possess a soul spirit, but so do plants and animals. In fact the tree from which a carving is to be made is recognized to have a soul, so that when the craftsman is about to cut such a tree he will make a libation to the soul of the tree, assuring the tree-spirit that the stool or drum to be carved will contain its soul in repository also (Rattray 1927: 5-24). The Ashanti stool is a beautiful art piece carved from a single block of wood with a seat shaped in the form of a slight crescent, and with no back, showing the skill, individuality, and craftsmanship of the carver.

Tools used by the Ashanti carver are often themselves elaborately decorated. Such tools consist of small chipping hoes, a hoe for splitting, a carpenter's plane,

a small knife, a spokeshave, chisels, an awl, and a cutting tool. Before the tools are used, the craftsman makes a libation of propitiation and grace, asking that the tools not harm the carver, and that no harm or sickness befall his family nor let his penis become sick or die as a result of work. Wine is poured over the tools and a sacrifice of blood from a fowl. Every stool in use has its own particular significance and its own special name, which denotes the sex, social status, and clan of the owner. One village Afwia, is the center of the stool-carving craftsmanship, and the art is passed down through heredity of sons and sisters' sons from father or uncle respectively.

Many of the stools are the copyright of the king of Ashanti and might not under any circumstances be sold on the open market; these are first given to the king, who will then present them to chiefs whom he wishes to honor. A woman might not carve a stool, because of the taboo against menstruals. She cannot even visit the workshop of the carvers; to do so is to invite severe pain upon herself and a fine to be used in purchasing the necessary libations to make propitiations to the spirits that have been offended.

The final product of the carver is christened through ceremonial ritual appropriate to the particular clan or tribe that it denotes. These stools are then taken out to the stool houses where they are deposited alongside the other ancestral stools. Upon initiation each Ashanti receives a stool which then contains his soul; until this moment his soul has been in a state of wandering with no special place to settle down. An individual is called by the name of his stool, which is his mark of identification. In the past this design might even be tattooed on his person (Rattray 1927: 5-24).

Ceremonial Drums

In the case of ceremonial drums carved from the same tree as the stools, the artist will engage in the same ritual for the tree spirit as exhibited previously. The aim is to provide a pleasant atmosphere for the spirit of the tree while at the same time creating a utilitarian object. Hence, the Ashanti will keep the drum or stool free from those taboos that he recognizes to be abhorred by the spirits, since all spirits are deemed to have taboos against certain things just as do human beings.

In the case of ceremonial drums two spirits must be reckoned with, those of the tree, and those of the elephant whose ears have been used for the head-covering of the drum. Each Ashanti drum has a special name, dress, and taboo.

In all of these actions by the Ashanti, there is a recognition of the important part played by all of the forces of nature in his survival. This is vividly portrayed in the acts of propitiation made to the spirits of all the tools in carving. It is further elaborated in his unwillingness to cease the ritual with the finished product, but in

the permanence of the art piece which is constantly consecrated and heaped with ritual libations.

This analysis of one aspect of Ashanti carvings shows clearly the incorporation of myth, everyday experiences of life, and the supernatural by the Ashanti craftsman in executing a work of art. Furthermore, while the artist is free to execute and perform a work of art according to his own style and technique, this is governed somewhat by the individuals doing the buying. A stool might vary somewhat if the important family, tribal, or clan designs are not adhered to rigidly. Unless these details are rigidly held to, the stool is useless and in fact is considered ugly to the Ashanti no matter how intricate the designs. Throughout the work of art by the Ashanti craftsman, ritual and ceremony is of utmost importance lest not only the final product be a failure, but also so that the spirits might look with good favor on the craftsman and shield him from harm and danger, and bless his household with fertility and increase.

The Ashanti are unique amongst Guinea coast Africans in making art work for ritual, in that they never made masks for ceremonial purposes; however, small figures and figurines are carved representing characters from mythological folklore. Ashanti folklore is filled with stories about the fairies (mmoatia), forest monsters (Sasabonsam), ghosts of hunters (saman bufuo), and witches (abayifo). These carved figures are used as sumans of fetishes, which are deemed to have exceptional powers and are worn by men to ward off impotency and by women to help strengthen fertility. In fact these objects are said to be made by the fairies themselves that inhabit the forest area. "Suman (fetish) come from the mmoatia, by whom they were first made and from whom they are now obtained. You place ten cowrie shells (used for money) on a rock, go away; on your return you find your covies gone, having been replaced by a suman" (Rattray 1927: 5-24). In Ashanti, as cowrie shells were traditionally means of economic exchange and women were mostly involved in trading, the women carried their wealth with them.

Proof that these wood "creatures" actually exist in the mind of the Ashanti is expressed through these wood carvings. An example would be in the physical characteristics of the fairies as described by Ashanti who have "seen" them. Folklore has it that these "forest fairies" or spirits are no more than a foot in stature (the same height as the carving?), with feet that point backwards instead of the characteristic human forward position. (Some Europeans seeing this attributed it to the stupidity of the African artist in not being able to detect that the feet of his figure are pointed in the wrong direction. In fact, the carver is not aware of this abnormal position of the feet because to him the carving is not only correct in detail, but is in fact very real.) These fairies are to be recognized in black, red, and white colors. Thus in these carvings the Ashanti craftsman creates not only the image of these "powerful forest sumans," but in

fact his carving actually brings into existence such characters in accordance with the descriptions.

So far, an analysis of Ashanti wood-carvings tends to express latent anxiety by these people for maintaining an adequate food supply for a society entirely dependent upon the good fortunes of earth and environment for survival. This anxiety is expressed through the Ashanti desire for potency, fertility, and increase of the natural species, man, plants, and animals, to insure continuity of the existing supply. In the Ashanti attempt to overcome this complete reliance upon the spirits of natural phenomena by recognizing the existence of a "soul" or spirit for all segments of the tropic scheme, man, plants, animals and the earth itself, he strives to placate all these spirits by offering libations when some part is to be altered or destroyed for his own use by restoring some parts of the destruction, or by offering a sacrifice and by creating a pleasant abode for the spirits to reside in, providing them with food and drink. This tropic recognition is extended even to the tools used by the carver.

Ashanti Weaving

Besides carvings, Ashanti artistic activity includes weaving of cloths. In this craft, the Ashanti is a master at his trade unrivaled anywhere. Of all the crafts in Ashanti land, weaving is the one that has not only survived in its original form and technique, but has seen an increasing demand as a result of the emergence of the state of Ghana into the modern political arena. The theme and ritual of the Ashanti weaver corresponds to that of the carver. The patterns of the cloth follow that of the social position of the individual, his clan, tribe, and trade. As in carving, weaving as an art is confined to the male sex; however, the cotton may be picked and spun into thread by women who have reached their menopause (Meyrowitz 1958: 23). Silk used by the Ashanti weaver is either collected growing wild in the forest or imported.

These cloths are woven into long slender bolts of geometric designs and patterns; afterwards they are sewn together in order to obtain the desired width. Each Ashanti weaver is known by the pattern of his materials, such patterns, as well as the art itself, being passed on hereditarily through apprenticeship in the same lineage manner as in the carving trade. Children begin apprentice training at a very early age. The boy selected to carry on the art is given a toy loom on which to practice while being near the adult weaver. The cloth designs are woven in colors of red, blue, greens, gray, yellow, brown, white, black, and orange.

Stamp-Cloth

Another technique used in designing of Ashanti cloth is stamping of the design upon the fabric. Fabrics done in this manner are referred to as "Adinkira" cloth. Legend records Adinkira as being a king of the adjacent Ivory Coast kingdom of Jaman, who angered the Ashanti

Art And Culture Among The Ashanti of Ghana

king by making a replica of the "Golden Stool"; for this he was killed by the king of Ashanti. Thus the term Ad-inkira in Akan is synonymous with imitation, which this method of cloth designing is considered to be. These cloths are worn mostly by common people who cannot afford to wear the more expensively woven designs.

Tools used in weaving consist of spools, bobbins, bobbin carriers, an iron skewer with wooden hammer-shaped head, a weaving reed, pulleys, loom, and a bowl used for dying threads. All these tools are consecrated before use.

Pottery

Pottery as a medium of Ashanti art is unique in many respects. First, there is rarely any design engraved or figurine modeled. Second, the craft is almost entirely in the hands of women, which accounts for the fact that there are no engravings or modeled figurines. Since there is a taboo against women modeling figures or figurines depicting ritualistic symbolism, these are always absent on pottery made by the women. This aspect of Ashanti art tends to point out more emphatically the place of ceremonial ritual in carving and weaving. In these two media, the beauty of a particular piece is not the ultimate goal of the craftsman but is incidental to ritualistic dictation. Since pottery has no such ritualistic symbolism, it can be carried on by women and there is no attempt to adhere to prescribed pattern or designs.

This art, however, is practiced with skilled craftsmanship. The art is passed on hereditarily from mother to daughter. Certain Ashanti villages are known as "pottress villages" in which whole families of women and girls engage in craft, selling their products all over Ghana and in many adjacent areas (Rattray 1927: 103).

Certain pottery objects used in ritual ceremonies and in burial rites are modeled by men and have ritual designs engraved on them.

Clays used in pottery making are of white, red, yellow, grey, and brown colors. The implements or tools used in making pottery consist of corn cobs, rags, small blocks of wood, a ring made from a strip of palm stem and used as a scraper, and a small smooth pebble used for polishing. A hoe is also used in digging the clay.

Ashanti Metal-Casting

As in other ancient kingdoms of the Guinea coast, the Ashanti reached a high degree of perfection in metal work. This craft has almost vanished in Ashanti due to the influence of more accessible metals from Europe; however, there are some older craftsmen to be found around Kumasi still plying this ancient trade. The metal-smiths cast objects from brass, iron and gold through use of the *cire-perdue* (lost wax) process.

Material used in this craft are clay and charcoal used as a foundation upon which the wax is laid, a forge made of clay for heating the metal, both double and

single bellows, small scales for weighing, tongs for holding the hot metal, block of wood with a hole in the middle upon which the wax is rolled, a wooden knife or spatula for working wax on the block, a small iron anvil, and a thin iron skewer. All these tools are consecrated before use by the craftsman (Rattray 1927: 314). The principal objects made from metal are small brass and iron figures used in weighing gold-dust. Such figures represent mythological characters or experiences from everyday life. Other objects include bells of various sizes and descriptions and little figures called Aqua Ba. These little figures are worn by women to insure fertility and healthy offspring.

These (carvings from wood, weaving, pottery, metal-casting) are the basic media in which the Ashanti make art. On rare occasions, the Ashanti paint upon the pottery or carvings. When this is done a stick is chewed at the end to make a brush (Rattray 1927: 314). The painting is done with ritual ceremony being performed before such paintings take place, and the objects painted on take on ritualistic significance with all of the taboos surrounding the other forms of art.

Modifications of ritual designs are to be seen in Ashanti house architecture and utensils of technology. These have no specific meaning to the Ashanti and are done purely for esthetic beauty. Rattray (1927: 217) points out that these must have had some significance in times past, but lost their meaning as they were replaced with more powerful spirits. Similarly gourds for carrying things are often so decorated. This would, it seems, aside from ritual and ceremonial objects, show the emphasis placed upon esthetic beauty by the Ashanti people as a result of their rich background in art expression and art making.

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A Classification of Some European Trade Beads From Louisiana and Mississippi

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Abstract

The sources of trade beads found in archeological sites in North America may be discovered through a system of bead classification. Typology should be based on shape, size, materials, color and translucency, decoration, and method of manufacture. A chronology can then be established. Ethnological data may reveal European contact and intertribal trade.

Glass beads have a long history; in fact, they were manufactured in Egypt as early as the 4th millennium B.C. (Turner 1936). The production and dispersal of glass and glass beads progressed up until the fall of the Roman Empire. The art of glass manufacture, lost during the Dark Ages, was revived in the 12th and 13th centuries, and Venice became the center of this industry. It is said that the bead industry became prominent after 1295, when Marco Polo returned from the Orient with tales of the insatiable desire of nobles of that part of the world for gems (Diamond 1953). The manufacture of imitation gems and beads of glass quickly established itself as the mainstay of the Venetian export trade. During the Age of Exploration trade beads were so important to trade with primitive peoples that their production continued to support the Venetian industry as long as Italy controlled their manufacture. In Venice, guilds were formed and other European governments sought then to establish industries in England, France, Spain and other countries.

Beads were used as an item of barter with primitive peoples at very early times. This practice may date back to the Romans (Diamond 1953). The earliest known date for the introduction of trade beads into the New World is October 12, 1492, by Columbus. His Log is quoted as follows:

Soon after a large crowd of natives congregated there . . . In order to win the friendship and affection of that people, and because I was convinced that their conversion to our Holy Faith

would be better promoted through love than through force, I presented some of them with red caps and some strings of glass beads which they placed around their necks, and other trifles with which we have got a wonderful hold on their affections.

Oct. 15. A man from Conception Island was presented with a red cap and a string of small glass beads. (Orchard 1929: 14)

Many other similar accounts exist in old journals and some exist almost with a folk tale aura, such as the Manhattan Purchase.

It is not too clear where trade beads were manufactured. Venice, of course, is the most logical and preferred answer, but Diamond (1953) implies that, although the British and French were buying the majority of the trade beads that they used from Venice, they still manufactured some of their own. The Spanish had a glass factory at Barcelona whose product was comparable to that of Venice (Bushnell 1937), and as early as 1611 there was a glass factory at Jamestown which manufactured glass beads for trade with the Indians (Bushnell 1937; Rogers and Beard 1948). It is the author's opinion that common sources of supply were used or that craftsmen with similar backgrounds and training were to be found in glass factories all over Europe. In the factory established at Jamestown, as stated in the *Records of the Virginia Company*, ". . . 6 strangers