Archaeologists are interested in determining the origins of beads made from shells as these were used as currency as well as for decoration and knowledge of the shellfish taxa could provide information on where the beads originated. This information allows the extent of travel and trading to be inferred. This data set contains data on the proportions of 6 amino acids (the constituents of protein molecules) found trapped within the shell matrix along with taxonomic information on the shell for which it was obtained (Class, Order, Genus and Species) as well as where the shell originated from (where known). In addition there are data from 17 archaeological beads and the aim of this project is to investigate classification of the shells at various levels of taxonomy and to consider the possibility of classifying of the shell beads.

The amino acids measured are:

Asx: asparagine or aspartic acid

Glx: glutamine or glutamic acid

Ser: serine

Gly: glycine

Ala: alanine

Val: valine