

### 7.1.2.3 Medieval GLASS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

One-hundred and eight-four fragments of glass were recovered from excavations in the church during the Tarbat Discovery Programme. While the majority of the assemblage consists of window glass, a small quantity of vessel glass was found in the nave. The window glass comes from two distinct areas, the nave and the crypt, and is therefore discussed by area within this report.

## 2.0 VESSEL GLASS

### 2.1 THE NAVE

#### 2.1.1 Vessel glass

Three vessels were recovered from contexts in the nave. The only medieval fragment is a small portion of rounded rim made in a potash-rich glass from a hanging lamp. Lamps are relatively common medieval vessels, particularly in ecclesiastical contexts, and are frequently found in the excavations of churches and monastic houses. First occurring in significant numbers in the early 13th century, they are a form that does not survive beyond the 16th century. The other two vessel present are post-medieval in date. The first is the rim and neck from a green glass thick-walled bottle. Although superficially resembling a wine bottle, the colour of the glass and the shape of the neck suggest that this might in fact be an early 18th-century mineral bottle. Mineral waters were popular drinks amongst those who could afford them and were imported from across Europe, the spa at Bad Pyrmont, Lower Saxony being the producer most favoured in the United Kingdom. The final vessel fragment is a late 19th-century mould-pressed jar rim.

### 2.2 Window Glass

Seventy-seven fragments of window glass were recovered from the nave area. The vast majority is undecorated and in the absence of edges relatively undiagnostic, although from the colour of the glass and its subsequent weathering most can be said to be medieval in date. Of these, only two fragments have any surviving evidence for surface painting and staining. This is not necessarily surprising, decorative window glass was a very expensive and specialist commodity. Furthermore, the medieval iron oxide paint and silver-based stains employed often do not survive in acidic archaeological conditions, and many of the fragments that now appear plain may once have been decorated. The earliest of the two painted fragments is

probably 13th-century in date. Although extremely fragmented and without any edges, it is clearly painted with a scroll design that is found on 'stickwork' borders used around the edges of larger window compositions. The other painted fragment is also from a border. This is painted with the lower portions of several Gothic black letters that once formed an inscription, and are set against a stain wash. This style of decorative glass became popular in the 15th century and remained in use until the Reformation. Unfortunately the fragment is too small to reconstruct any of the letters or interpret what the inscription might have been. Although plain, several other fragments retain two or more edges that demonstrate that they also formed portions of rectangular borders used to frame the edges of larger glazing schemes, and these vary in width from 25-51mm. The remaining fragments are largely undiagnostic, retaining either one or no edges. However, these are likely to have originally formed part of other rectangular borders, or more likely central diamond-shaped quarries, the most common shape of the period. Five fragments of window glass were also found in the nave that are clearly later, being 17th or even 18th-century in date. One of these is the central 'bull's eye' from a crown of window glass. These are usually associated with poorer buildings that could not afford the thinner, clearer portions of glass made by this method, and its presence in the church might well indicate a change in its fortunes by this date.

## 2.2 THE CRYPT

### 2.2.1 Window glass

Excavations in the crypt produced a total of 104 fragments of window glass. In striking contrast to the nave, all this glass is early post-medieval and probably dates to the 16th or 17th century. Although most of the fragments are very small and relatively undiagnostic, it is possible to reconstruct other elements of the glazing pattern. Most interestingly two quarries can be sufficiently reconstructed to show that they were originally large and rectangular in shape, rather than the more typical diamond design. This was a glazing type that only started to appear in the later 16th century, when the increasing supply and quality of window glass enabled larger quarries to be used. Also present in the assemblage are two complete triangular corner pieces that would have fitted into this standardised geometric design. What is interesting is the lack of any medieval glass from this area, perhaps suggesting that it remained unglazed until the late 16th or 17th century.

## **Catalogue**

### **Vessel Glass**

#### *The Nave*

**17/C1000** Find 6 1 fragment of rim from a press-moulded jar. Colourless glass. Rim diameter 80mm. Late 19th century.

**17/C1153** Find 168 F51 1 fragment of rounded vertical rim from a hanging lamp. Potash-rich glass. Diameter uncertain. 13th-15th century.

**17/C1011** Find 45 1 fragment of rim and neck from a possible mineral water bottle. Green high lime low alkali glass. Rim diameter 28mm. Early 18th century.

## **Window Glass**

### *The Nave*

**17/C1002** Find 5 2 miscellaneous fragments. 17th-18th century?

**17/C1003** Find 33 1 miscellaneous fragment. 17th-18th century?

**17/C1004** Find 8 3 miscellaneous plain fragments, 1 edge. Late medieval.

**17/C1061** Find 14 1 miscellaneous fragment. 17th-18th century?

Find 15 1 fragment of painted border 50 wide. Decorated with the lower portion of Gothic black lettering and a line edging.

Find 16 3 joining fragments from a rectangular border 51mm wide. Late medieval.

Find 17 5 fragments from a rectangular border of uncertain width. Late medieval.

**17/C1065** Find 2 1 miscellaneous fragment of thick 'bull's eye'. 17th-18th century?

**17/C1095** Find 39 1 curved and rounded crown glass edge. Late medieval.

**17/C1147** Find 161 1 fragment of painted stickwork border, with no edges remaining. 13th-15th century; 1 fragment of rectangular border 25mm wide. Late medieval; 7 fragments of rectangular border of uncertain width. Late medieval; 33 small miscellaneous plain fragments, some edges but unreconstructable. Late medieval.

Find 258 1 fragment of rectangular border 33mm wide. Late medieval.

**17/C1099** Find 3 2 miscellaneous plain fragments, 1 edge. Late medieval.

**17/C1011** Find 69 F 7 12 tiny miscellaneous plain fragment. Late medieval.

**17/C1110** Find 79 F35 1 straight and rounded cylinder glass edge. Late medieval.

**17/C1166** Find 202 F59 1 miscellaneous plain fragment. Late medieval.

**17/C1208** Find 463 1 straight and rounded cylinder glass edge. Late medieval.

### *The Crypt*

80 miscellaneous quarry fragments, some portions of edges. 16th-17th century

4 fragments from a rectangular quarry. Maximum surviving dimensions 52x43mm. 16th-17th century.

11 fragments from a rectangular quarry. Maximum surviving dimensions 75x66mm. 16th-17th century.

1 complete small triangular quarry. 33x33x47mm. 16th-17th century

1 complete small triangular quarry. 28x35x45mm. 16th-17th century

Find 9 1 miscellaneous quarry fragment, no edges. 16th-17th century

Find 11 1 quarry edge. 16th-17th century

Find 12 1 complete square quarry. 38x38mm. 16th-17th century

Find 13 1 corner from a rectangular or square quarry. 16th-17th century

Find 14 1 miscellaneous quarry fragment, no edges. 16th-17th century

Find 15 2 miscellaneous quarry fragments, no edges. 16th-17th century