

1 and 2 (*left to right*)



5, 6 and 7 (*left to right*)



8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 (*left to right*)

Glass from Pompeii in Alnwick Castle Museum

VII.—GLASS FROM POMPEII  
in Alnwick Castle Museum

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These thirteen glass vessels from Pompeii were given to the 4th Duke of Northumberland by the King of the Two Sicilies when the Duke visited the excavations in the course of an Italian tour in 1854.<sup>1</sup> All are in natural green glass. All are blown and all are complete although one jar (no. 4) has been broken and mended with some mud and iridescence stuck on over the join to disguise it. The group is interesting because it illustrates some of the types of glass in ordinary, everyday use in the first century A.D. No blown glass is known before the beginning of the Christian era and Pompeii itself was overwhelmed by Vesuvius in A.D. 79, so there is a fairly close date limit on all the pieces. It is probable that all the pieces belong to the later years of the town's life, c. 60-79.

1. Small natural green glass bowl with an outfolded rim, coil base ring, flaking iridescence. Height 4 cms. Diameter of rim 6.4 cms. pl. XIII, 1. Bruce 706, pl. IV fig. 8.

2. As 1. H. 3.4 cms. D. 6.4 cms. pl. XIII, 2. fig. 1. Bruce 707, pl. IV fig. 11.

These bowls (Isings form 44)<sup>2</sup> are of a well-known first

<sup>1</sup> Bruce = J. C. Bruce, *A descriptive catalogue of antiquities at Alnwick Castle* (1880) p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Isings = C. Isings, *Roman glass from dated finds* (1957).

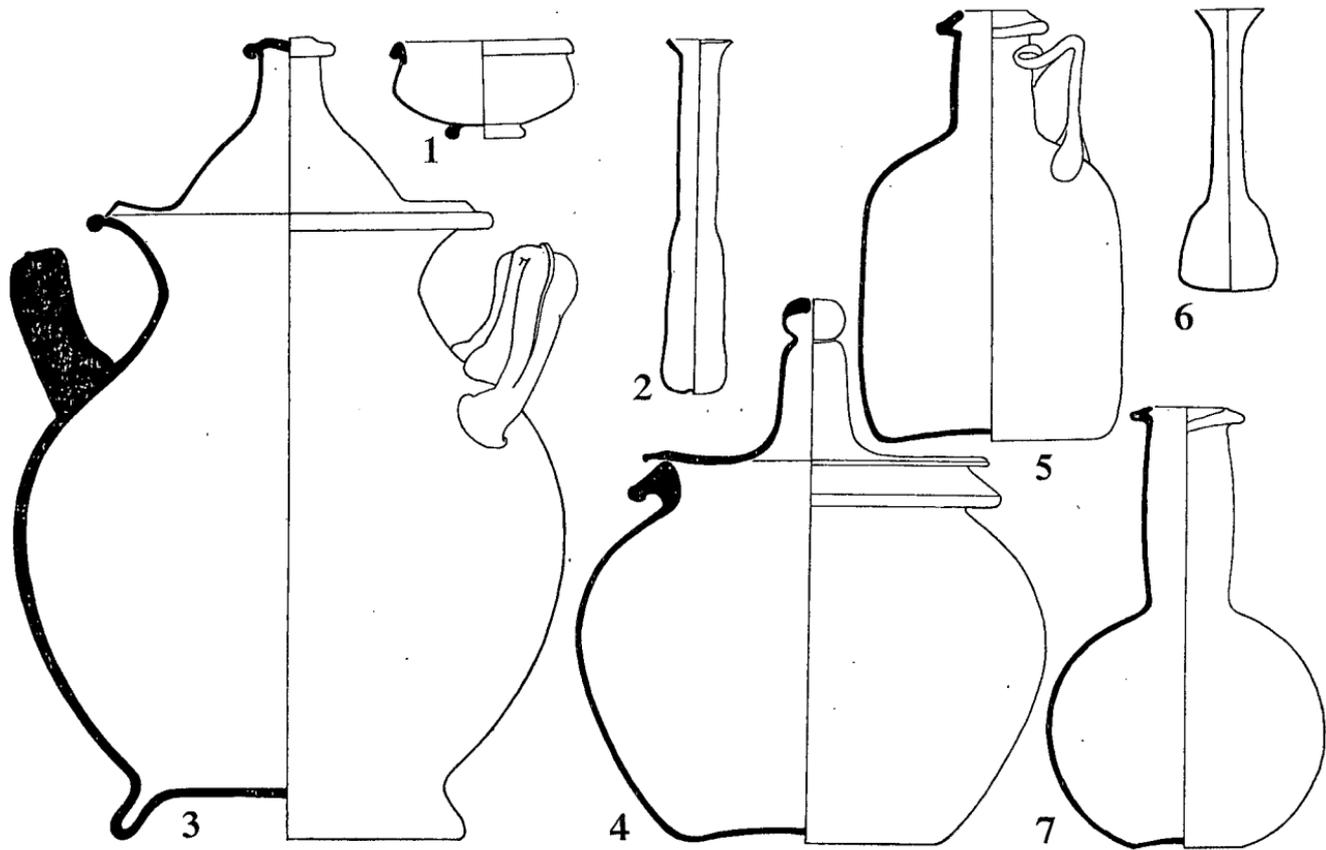
century type, but the shape is so simple that it is long-lived and, although the small examples seem to be confined to the first century and to belong mainly to the Flavian period, larger bowls of similar shape are found throughout the Roman period. The small bowls are quite common at both Pompeii and Herculaneum. One unusual example from Pompeii, in the City and County Museum at Lincoln, is in blue glass with a single handle, slightly larger than the two at Alnwick, H. 4.5 cms. D. 8.2 cms. An early rim fragment of this type, also in blue glass, was found in period VI at Camulodunum (A.D. 49-61)<sup>3</sup> and Miss Isings quotes pre-Flavian examples from graves at Locarno and Este, two opaque white bowls, and further north at Kröv a decorated example. It may well be that the coloured bowls are somewhat earlier than the natural green, which could be more cheaply produced for a wider market and outlive the finer coloured vessels. The folded rim, however, is rare even in the mid first century when blown vessels were still influenced by the moulded and polished bowls which were gradually going out of use in the first half of the century. It does not occur, for instance, at Hofheim and is not found in the earliest levels at Camulodunum and in periods IV to VI it is still rare. The unworked or fire polished rim is typical of the early blown bowls.

These two bowls were probably made in Italy in the Flavian period. The type is most common in Italy and Switzerland, with only a scattering of examples further north. In southern Britain there are a few fragmentary examples, as at Richborough, where one was found in pit 194 filled in c. A.D. 85.<sup>4</sup> Such bowls do not seem to have been made in the eastern provinces, although examples of the larger, later bowls are recorded.<sup>5</sup> The two bowls are almost the same size and were probably used as a pair. In tomb groups two

<sup>3</sup> Soc. of Antiquaries Research report XIV, C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum* No. 81, pl. lxxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> Soc. of Ant. Res. rep. XVI, J. P. Bushe-Fox, *4th Rep. on . . . Richborough* (1949) p. 158, No. 371.

<sup>5</sup> D. B. Harden, *Roman Glass from Karanis* (1936) Class II and III.



GLASS FROM POMPEII IN ALNWICK CASTLE MUSEUM: FIGS. 1-7

or more vessels of the same size and shape are often found together, for example in the mausoleum at Lullingstone<sup>6</sup> and at York,<sup>7</sup> both later instances of this practice.

3. Large bulbous jar with a folded rim, slightly concave base. Lid seems made for it, both iridescent. Jar H. 13.4 cms., Max. D. 17 cms., lid H. 6.5 cms., D. 12 cms. fig. 4. Bruce 701, pl. IV fig. 1.

These jars (Isings form 67) also seem to be a western type of vessel made in Italy and probably southern Gaul. They are often found in graves, used as cinerary urns, but this is their secondary use. They are domestic vessels and at Pompeii and Herculaneum have been found in the houses. A rim fragment which is certainly from one of these jars was found in period IV at Camulodunum and this is the earliest properly dated example.<sup>8</sup> Jars in graves cannot be closely dated. One was found associated with a worn coin of Claudius at Ampurias.<sup>9</sup> That jar was placed in a lead box and it is because the lead or wooden box in which they are buried protects the fragile vessel that most examples are known from graves. An example from Colchester was found with a coin of Domitian. One of the London jars is from a grave of the Flavian period.<sup>10</sup> Another Colchester example was found with two colour coated ware beakers, which gives a late second century dating to the group. An undated example with a lid was found at York.<sup>11</sup> Fremersdorf suggests a date in the second half of the second century for one of the Cologne jars,<sup>12</sup> but it is not certain that the type was still made as late as that. It could well be that some of the examples in graves were old when they were buried. Undated examples are common throughout the Roman world from Spain to Pannonia. I know of no examples in the Near Eastern provinces and there is only one example in Cairo

<sup>6</sup> *JRS* xlix p. 132, fig. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Royal Comm. on Hist. Mon. *Eburacum* (1962) p. 140 fig. 90.

<sup>8</sup> *Camulodunum* No. 90, pl. lxxxviii.

<sup>9</sup> M. Almagro, *Las Necropolis de Ampurias II* (1955) p. 153.

<sup>10</sup> Royal Comm. on Hist. Mon. *Roman London* (1928) p. 159, fig. 65, 32.

<sup>11</sup> *Eburacum*, p. 136, fig. 89.

<sup>12</sup> *Die Denkmäler des römischen Köln IV* (1958) No. 243 pl. 110.

Museum, bought in 1885 and its history unknown.<sup>13</sup> None was recorded in the excavations at Karanis. However, there is no reason why jars from the west should not occasionally have reached the east.

4. Large bulbous jar with an infolded rim, open base ring and two M shaped handles. It is complete but has been mended and some of the iridescence has been stuck on over the repair. H. 23.2 cms. D. 19.6 cms. Lid H. 6.5 cms. D 14.3 cms. fig. 3. Bruce 700, pl. IV fig. 2.

This jar (Isings form 63) is related to the previous one and seems to be contemporary with it. Again most examples are found in graves<sup>14</sup> and although the type is very common in the western provinces it is extremely difficult to date. At Nijmegen one was found with a Celtic mirror,<sup>15</sup> but the mirror must have been an heirloom for the glass vessel was certainly not made in the La Tène period. At the other end of the scale is a late survival found buried in a sarcophagus at Southfleet. It does not seem likely that these jars were made after the middle of the second century, if indeed as late. The lack of reliably dated second century groups including glass is one of the major difficulties in the study of Roman glass and one which, it is hoped, excavation of the cemeteries on the line of Hadrian's Wall may some day help to overcome, although one can hardly expect a wealth of grave goods in military cemeteries.

5. Mould blown, square-bodied jar, outfolded, collar rim, base marking five concentric circles. Flaking iridescence. H. 13.5 cms., base 9.5 × 9.5 cms., pl. XIII, 5. Bruce 697, pl. IV fig. 4.

These jars (Isings form 62) are very common at Pompeii and they seem to be a long-lived shape which is common to both the eastern and western provinces. They are obviously closely related to the square bottles (6 and 7), which are the more common form and in dealing with fragmentary material

<sup>13</sup> M. C. C. Edgar, *Graeco-Egyptian Glass*, Cat. gén. des ant. égypt. du musée du Caire xxii (1905) No. 32748 pl. x.

<sup>14</sup> e.g. in lead box, Warwick Square, *Roman London*, p. 154 pl. 56.

<sup>15</sup> Isings p. 82.

it is generally assumed that the complete shape is bottle rather than jar. A complete square jar, found locally, is in the Cirencester museum, but in Britain the type is very rare. The base markings are not likely to be of any help in distinguishing the fragmentary jars from the bottles. A square bottle in a tomb at Vervoz of the second half of the second century has five concentric circles on its base<sup>16</sup> as has the Pompeian jar. A base fragment from Great Chesterford is similarly marked.

There are two different rim types used on the jars. The folded, collar type of this example is the more common than the slightly flared rim, rounded at the tip. Both rims occur at Pompeii and in Gaul and Germany and so far there is no evidence to suggest that one is later than the other. They must, however, represent different places of manufacture.

6. Square bottle, free blown and flattened on the marver, infolded rim, strap handle with a central groove, no base marking, some iridescence. H. 15.5 cms. Base 8 × 8 cms. pl. XIII, 6 fig. 5. Bruce 698.

7. As 6. H. 19 cms. Base 8.5 × 8.5 cms. pl. XIII, 7. Bruce 699 pl. IV fig. 3.

Fragments of square bottles (Isings form 50) are perhaps the most common glass find on any site of the Flavian to Hadrianic periods. At Camulodunum a fragment was found in pit K 14, period III (A.D. 43-8)<sup>17</sup> and this is one of the earliest examples. Morin Jean<sup>18</sup> thought that they were introduced in the Augustan period, but although there is some blown glass as early as that the mass-produced natural green vessels, bottles, flasks or bowls all seem to date from the 40s of the first century at the earliest as though there were a great expansion of the glass industry at that time and it ceased to be a luxury.

The shape of these bottles is adapted for the transport of liquids and examples packed in wooden boxes have been

<sup>16</sup> M. Vanderhoeven, *Les verres romains des Musées Curtius et du Verre a Liège* (1961) No. 63 pl. xiv.

<sup>17</sup> *Camulodunum* No. 98 pl. lxxxviii.

<sup>18</sup> Morin Jean, *La Verreries en Gaule sous l'Empire Romain* (1913) p. 62.

found in the Casa del Menandro at Pompeii.<sup>19</sup> The mould blown square bottle, generally with a marking on the base, seems to be more common than the free blown. The mould blown are generally rather thicker and the angles of the base and sides are sharper. The history of the bottles after c. 100 is obscure. It seems possible that they continued to be made until about the middle of the century, but it is doubtful that they were made later, in the west at least. At Karanis<sup>20</sup> fragments of these bottles were found at all periods. In Cyprus two bottles were found associated with Severan material.<sup>21</sup> At Corbridge fragments are abundant but most are from the earlier excavations and unstratified, so that it is not possible to work out what proportion of them come from the first century, what from the Antonine and what, if any, from the later levels.

8. Unguent bottle, narrow body, knocked off and rounded rim, fig. 2. H. 11.6 cms. D. 2.6 cms. Bruce 702 pl. IV fig. 7.

9. As 8. H. 13.6 cms. D. 2.6 cms. Bruce 705.

10. As 8 but with more bulbous body. H. 10.5 cms. D. 3.8 cms. Bruce 703 pl. IV fig. 10.

11. As 10. H. 13.6 cms. D. 4.6 cms. fig. 6. Bruce 704 pl. IV fig. 9.

12. As 10 but a larger example. H. 15 cms. D. 8.8 cms. Bruce 695 pl. IV fig. 6.

13. As 12 but rim folded inwards. H. 15 cms. D. 11 cms. fig. 7. Bruce 696 pl. IV fig. 5.

All the unguent bottles are illustrated in order from left to right pl. XIII.

These small unguent bottles or perfume flasks are very common in the first century. Many of them are found in graves and were given the name of "tear bottle" in the nineteenth century in the belief that they were used to gather up the tears of the mourners to put in the grave. They are

<sup>19</sup> Isings p. 63.

<sup>20</sup> Karanis Class XI C.

<sup>21</sup> *Opuscula Archæologica* vii Vessberg, *Roman Glass in Cyprus* p. 126.

found throughout the Roman world and must have been made in many different glass houses. The difference in rim may indicate a difference in date, the rounded rim being earlier than the folded, but there is probably a considerable overlap and it is not a reliable guide. Nor does the shape of the body seem to help. The shape is probably dictated by quantity which it was required to contain. The more precious the perfume the smaller the bottle. On the other hand none of these flasks look as though they were designed for the marketing of a rare and costly product. They are a cheap form of glass and only roughly finished.

The many collections of glass from the rich city of Pompeii are the most important source of material up to the year 79 and it is because of them that we are able to date so much first century glass confidently. Unfortunately there is as yet nothing comparable for the period which follows the destruction of the city and it proves impossible to give a terminal date for any of the types under consideration.

