

9 June 1974

Dear Neville,

Thank you for your letter of 23 May and for the photograph of two glasses found in tomb GT II in the Yodit stele field. It so happens that I am able to give you quite a firm identification for the goblet, which shows that it is a well-known form of the earlier third century A.D.

The goblet belongs, in fact, to a type which occurs both in the east and in the west. I assume it is of colourless glass, although its surface is now very heavily obscured by enamel-like weathering: all the other examples I cite are also colourless. Two complete ones were found in graves in the Luxemburgerstrasse, Köln, and reached the Römische Germanisches Museum, Köln, from the Niessen collection. They are published in S. Loeschcke et al., Beschreibung römischer Altertümer gesammelt von C.A. Niessen (1911), nos. 106 and 107, pls. 26 (no. 106) and 45 (no. 107); but this is a rare book in England and they are more readily available in F. Fremersdorf, Römische Gläser mit Fadenauflege in Köln (Die Denkmäler des röm. Köln, V, 1959), 71 f., pls. 108 and 109, which are - if the dimensions given by Fremersdorf are correct (and they agree with Loeschcke's) - more than life-size renderings. Fremersdorf mentions one or two parallels, but you need to treat them carefully, since they are not always exact parallels in shape or decoration. A more bulbous form of beaker with two handles and similar applied and tooled trails was found in the Mehlemstrasse, Köln (see Fremersdorf, ibid., 73, pl. 113), which is very similar to one in the Greek and Roman Department in the B.M. from Netvi, Liguria (reg. no. 87.6-13.10), published in my recent article 'Ancient Glass, II: Roman', in Archaeol. J., CXXVI (1970), 62, pl. xi, a, e.

The type is also represented at Karanis in the Fayum, but only by fragmentary specimens. For these see my Roman Glass from Karanis (1936), 137 f., 151 f., nos. 420-425, pl. xvi, and (for the western parallels) p. 139 f. The nearest of these Karanis pieces to yours is no. 420. When I illustrated this in Karanis, I restored it with a handle on the basis of the separate handle (no. 425) and assumed it was to be equated with the Mehlemstrasse and Netvi pieces; but its shape now looks to me to be more like 'cylindrical' than that, and should rather have been restored to match the Luxemburgerstrasse pieces and yours. These Karanis fragments were found in houses of various dates from the 2nd/3rd centuries to the 4th/5th centuries, but their fabric is too good to be later than the earlier 3rd century, and those in later houses were not in their true context. That is the date, too, to which I would ascribe your piece, if it does not disturb your own ideas of its date.

The bowl is too simple a shape to be easy to parallel or date. There is, however, no reason why it shouldn't be of the same vintage as the goblets.

with out a handle

I am glad to say that I am, it now seems, wholly recovered from my heart attack, and have been back at work at the B.M. since last Monday. So when you can manage it, after your return to England, please telephone me at the B.M. The no. is 636.1555, ext. 414, or, if I don't answer that, the 'enquiries' extension in the Greek and Roman Department, where you can at least leave a message, asking me to ring you back. I look forward to seeing you and going through the glass fragments with you.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Donald Harden