A85-Eur-Roman Glass-Flask-Outsplayed rim and Circular Foot Base-1st to 4th century CE



**Case no.: 4**

**Accession Number: A85**

**Formal Label:** Roman Glass-Flask-Outsplayed Rim-Circular Foot Base-1st to 4th century CE

**Display Description:**

Flask ovoid, outsplayed rim and circular foot base with pontil mark. Green glass. Translucent pearl with brown patches. Pitchers with a strap handle and medusa mas have a similar glass and have been possibly provenanced to the Rhineland (see Whitehouse 2001 1:226-227, no. 798).

**LC Classification:** NK.5107.3

**Date or Time Horizon:** Late 6th to early 7th century CE

**Geographical Area:** possibly Rhineland area

**GPS coordinates:** 50º56'15.11" N 6º57'37" E (Cologne)

**Map,** Roman Empire, 533-600. Red markers indicate diffusion of Sidonian glassblowing. From http://users.clas.ufl.edu/ufhatch/pages/03-Sci-Rev/SCI-REV-Home/Historical-Research/maps/shepherd-c-052.jpg

**Cultural Affiliation:** Rhineland?

**Medium:** Blown glass

**Dimensions:**

Height: 13.8 cm

Inner Diameter (rim): 1.8 cm

Outer Diameter (rim): 4 cm

Maximum Diameter: 6 cm

**Weight:** 73 g

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** Ex-Touma Dabbah Collection

**Discussion:**

On the eastern borders of the Roman Empire, according to Pliny ca 79 CE (*Historia Naturalis* 36), glassblowing (*flatu figurare*, "shaping by breath") was developed by the Sidonians of the Phoenician Pentapolis.

Glassblowing diffused because of factors political, legal and economic (see Fleming 1999). Politically, Augustus ended a century of civil strife in Italy and created a network of pacified provinces. Legally, Augustus ushered in an era of speedy and safe travel under *Pax Romana* that protected citizens of Rome from Syria to Spain. Economically, Italy experienced a boom that attracted and invigorated entrepreneurialism among artisans and merchants.

Consequently, manySidonian glassblowers immigrated to Italy, established a *vicus vetrarius* or “glassworkers’ quarter” in the vicinity of the Roman Porta Capena in the heart of the Empire (M. Bacchelli et al. 1995) and thereby introduced glassblowing to Romans (Stern 1995, 68-69). Other Italian ateliers were established in Ticino (Biaggio 1991), Naples (Campania; Stern 1976) and Aquileia (Calvi 1991; Scatozza Höricht; Calvi 1968).

Glass-blowing trade expanded to Switzerland (Avenches), to Gaul (*Lugdunum*, i.e., Lyon and Saintes; Nenna 1997; Hochuli-Gysel 1992; B. Velde and A. Hochuli-Gysel 1996), Corsica (Cagliari; Canivet, 1969: fig 15) to the south of the Iberian Peninsula (Price 1987), Libya (Tripoli; Aurigemma 1958, pl.15, fig. 19), and Roman-Berber North Africa (*Caesarea Mauretaniae*, i.e., Tipaza; Lance 1967).

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