Case 4-A83-Eur- **Roman Glass-Jar-Vertically Ribbed-Zig-zag Neck Trail-**1st to 4th century CE





**Case no.: 4**

**Accession Number:** A83

**Formal Label: Roman Glass-Jar-Vertically Ribbed-Zig-zag Neck Trail-**1st to 4th century CE

**Display Description:**

Roman pale, translucent, vertically ribbed, green glass, cylindrical, short-necked jar or flask with one horizontal line of a zigzag trail at narrowest point of neck. Zigzag trail has discontinuous ends pulled up from shoulder to underside of rim. Pontil mark. A very elegant example, with an indented base, the mouth of the jar funnels in to form a filling hole. Nice and delicate green glass with some iridescence.   Similar examples have been found at Karanis, Egypt (Harden 1936: 179), Homs, Syria (Abdul Hak 1965: 31, fig. 15), and Beth She’arim, Israel (Barag 1976: 199, Fig. 97, no. 30). Comparable museum examples: Corning Museum 53.1.6 and Israel Museum 77.12.116.

**LC Classification:** NK.5107.3

**Date or Time Horizon:** 1st to 4th century CE

**Geographical Area:** unknown. Possibly Karanis, Egypt, Homs, Syria or Beth She’arim, Israel.

**GPS coordinates:** uncertain: [Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[29°31′04″N 30°54′12″E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Karanis&params=29_31_04_N_30_54_12_E_region:EG-FYM_type:landmark_source:dewiki). Possibly Homs, Syria via Karanis (Kom Aushim), Egypt. We find at Karanis some imported items, including glass from Alexandria and perfume flasks from Syria, showing some level of luxury. Unearthed household objects include beautiful locally made glass lamps, decanters and flasks. Among these perfume flasks from Homs, Syria may be containers similar to this (Harden 1936: 179).



**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:**

**Medium:** Blown glass

**Dimensions:**

Height: 6.2 cm

Inner Diameter (rim): 3.8 cm

Outer Diameter (rim): 5.5 cm

Maximum diameter: 5.5 cm

**Weight:** 76 g

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** Ex-old New York Estate 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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