## Overview of Contents

An important aspect of a museum’s mission is to share its collections with the public. Along with its exhibitions, publishing the content of its collections in scholarly organized catalogues is the most efficient way to achieve that goal. The thorough, scholarly publication of the Getty Museum’s ancient glass collection aims to be beneficial not only to specialists, students, and professional art historians and archaeologists, but also to amateurs of ancient and Roman art and technology, studio artists, designers, and glass blowers, who will now gain access to a diverse and understudied corpus of artifacts. Furthermore, it is aimed toward the wider public, who will gain insight on one of the more intriguing genres of ancient art. Visitors to the Getty Villa’s galleries of ancient glass are almost inevitably intrigued by the impressive variety of shapes and colors, as well as the remarkable survival of such delicate objects over the centuries. This publication is also intended to serve as an extended guide with the hope that school groups and educators in the local communities might use information from it for their curricula, as an aid for their visits to the museum, and for deepening their knowledge of an ancient craft that in many ways continues to rely on the same techniques and aesthetics even today.

Many of the artifacts represent extremely rare technologically categories, for example, cameo glass and gold-band glass; classical Greek core-formed, single-colored, and even decolorized vessels, in addition to an exceptionally accomplished group of mold-blown vessels with naturalistic human heads, fruits, mythological scenes, and figures as well as intricate geometrical patterns. Namely, the Getty Museum possesses a rich and diverse collection of 649 objects catalogued as glass, 584 of which are included in the present publication, which excludes glass gems, faience, and objects made of stone or other materials. The majority stems from the Oppenländer Collection, which the Getty Museum acquired over half of in 2003 and 2004. Chronologically, the collection and the content of this publication span three millennia, from the Bronze Age to the medieval period (1500 BCE–1000 CE). The objects originate from a wide geographical area, including Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and central European regions. Vessels comprise the largest group, with 447 objects, but there are other important glass artifacts as well: 59 pieces of jewelry, 61 incrustation fragments for sumptuous inlaid furniture and shrines, 3 sculptures, and 14 implements of symbolic and practical use, including distaffs and spindle whorls for weaving, gaming pieces in the form of knucklebones, medicinal bleeding cups, and parts of an alchemical alembic apparatus.

A group of the top glass researchers at the time, including Axel von Saldern, Birgit Nolte, Peter La Baume, and Thea Elisabeth Haevernick, summarily presented a large portion of the glass artifacts (422) with primarily black-and-white group photos more than forty years ago. A number of these pieces were also featured in the 2007 exhibition and 2011 Museum publication, Molten Color: Glassmaking in Antiquity, by Karol Wight. The publication project has provided an excellent opportunity to identify the nature and the physical properties of some of these long-known but little-studied objects, which are here the subject of thorough scholarly analysis, dating, and attribution to regional production centers. An analytical study of a few selected objects by the Getty Conservation Institute scientist Dr. Monica Ganio, using the technology and equipment available at the GCI, supplements the macroscopic art-historical and archaeological perspectives of the author.