

# *Ancient Glass*

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**MAS**





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# Preface

Never before has the collection of archaeological glass of the MAS Vleeshuis Collection in Antwerp been described and disclosed in its entirety. This hidden treasure is part of a valuable study collection on twenty centuries of glass production, a wealth of information that has remained underexposed. The archaeological part is presented for the first time in this extensive catalogue.

The only description of archaeological glass to be found as yet was in the museum catalogue of 1894, which contained barely ten pieces. When in 1954 the fourth collection catalogue – on glass and ceramics – of the Museum of Antiquities and Applied Arts was published, there was no archaeological section at all: the catalogue focused on early modern to twentieth-century glass. The introduction to this catalogue explained that ‘the Museums of Antiquity also possess antique and non-European objects of glass and ceramic. These will be catalogued in other contexts’. Around that time, these non-European objects were separated from the museum to form the new Ethnographic Museum, which would gradually open up its collection. However, the antique objects in question remained mainly undescribed, up until now. Today they are included in the archaeological collection that comprises more than 10,000 objects in glass, ceramic, stone, iron, bone, etc. This catalogue of ancient glass is a first step in the disclosure of a limited part of this as yet unrevealed collection.

A quick scan by ancient glass specialist Dr Peter Cosyns in 2014 underlined the importance of the archaeological glass. To uncover this long-hidden treasure, a valuation and valorization project titled ‘Glass in MAS’ was initiated, of which the present catalogue is the result. The collection offers a selective overview of early Roman and Roman glass production through Merovingian, early Byzantine and early Islamic glass. However, the project was not only set up to draw attention to archaeological glass; early modern to twentieth-century glass is also considered. The project encourages further research into both the objects themselves and the history of the collection.

The catalogue entries are preceded by an comprehensive collection history focusing on the formation of the glass collection within the history of the subsequent institutions. It leads us back to the Antwerp Museum of Antiquities, founded in 1864. Due to the significant growth of the collection as a whole, the museum was expanded in 1913 to

the sixteenth-century Vleeshuis, the butchers’ guildhall that was converted into a Museum of Applied Arts. Almost a century later, the Vleeshuis Collection moved into its current residence, the MAS. The history of the collection is characterized by an irregular process of germination and growth, of rejection and reunification – as is the case with most public collections. These movements were influenced by various factors: the institutional history but also various social, economic and political events.

The valorization project also focuses on the study of materials. Throughout the centuries, glassmakers have constantly developed new techniques varying the use of raw materials. As glass has a specific composition in each period and/or region, archaeometric research enables us to examine these characteristics and to reveal more about the authenticity, origin and dating of the glass. Archaeologists study the style and technique of glass to determine its authenticity, date and origin as well as its use, while other scientists and engineers analyse the optical and chemical characteristics. The results of their research corroborate each other. In the context of ‘Glass in MAS’, twenty glass panels of the MAS Vleeshuis Collection were analysed by optical spectroscopy by Dr Wendy Meulebroeck and Mathilde Patin (B-PHOT, Vrije Universiteit Brussel) in the context of the Finestra project (BELSPO). To assess the feasibility of a possible restoration of glass in a severe state of degradation, a sixteenth-century glass was analysed by X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (MA-XRF) by Dr Geert Van der Snickt (University of Antwerp).

Within the framework of extensive research projects on heritage collections, hard science proves its relevance. The above-mentioned multidisciplinary collaboration emphasizes the opportunity for the so-called study collections, which project a rather antiquated image, to take on an important new role. The sub-collections of applied arts assembled by the museums of applied arts and of antiquities in the late nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth served various purposes: to furnish period rooms, showcase good taste and highlight the art-historical and aesthetic aspects. However, today the display of an entire collection is rarely an end in itself and the broad collections have largely disappeared into the depots. Nevertheless, these overview collections still have a relevant future and can be used for

a wide range of multidisciplinary research: research into the institutional and collection history of museum collections as well as archaeological and archaeometric research.

In the wake of the Glass in MAS project, several initiatives drew attention to this unrecognized collection of the MAS. Peter Cosyns spoke at the congresses of the *Association internationale pour l'histoire du verre* in Fribourg (2017) and Istanbul (2018), where he discussed, respectively, the collection history of the archaeological glass and the authenticity question of the Alexander medallion. At the same congress in Istanbul (2018), Danielle Caluwé presented a paper about specific vessels from the historical and archaeological glass collection. In the Open Depot of the MAS, an exhibition on Glass in MAS (2018–2020) drew attention to the ongoing project, and a lecture on glass deterioration was held in the context of the master’s degree programme of heritage studies (University of Antwerp).

Throughout the making of this catalogue, I have received the support and encouragements of many people. I therefore wish to express my gratitude to all the members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Glass in MAS project: Dr Peter Cosyns (VUB), Dr Eugène Warmenbol (ULB), Dr Geert Van der Snickt (University of Antwerp), Dr Wendy Meulebroeck (B-PHOT Brussels), PhD student Mathilde Patin (B-PHOT Brussels), Dr Andrea Ceglia (B-PHOT Brussels), PhD student Daniel Caluwé (VU Brussels), Johan Veeckman as well as my colleagues Marina Christiaens, Erwin Verbist, Marieke van Bommel and Leen Beyers.

My special thanks go to Steven Beckers and to my colleagues of Museum Vleeshuis for their unwavering support during an eventful period: Clement Caremans and Timothy De Paepe for careful proofreading, Marleen Maes, Myrjam Wagemans, Rita Vanwetswinkel, Freya Van Wijnsberghe and Mieke Vervoort; Bart Huysmans and Michel Wuyts for their wonderful photography, Guy Moorthamer and Fred Deckers, Els De Palmenaer, Vera De Boeck, Tonia Dhaese, Femke Gherardts, Julie Lambrechts, Ûlrike Muller, Diane ‘s Heeren, Wouter Goetschalckx, Bart Sas.

My most sincere gratitude goes to Eva Meesdom for her dedication to the MAS Vleeshuis Collection and for many wonderful years of collaboration.

*Annemie De Vos*

# History of the Vleeshuis Collection of the MAS

*Annemie De Vos, Peter Cosyns, Eugène Warmenbol*

The Vleeshuis collection is intrinsically linked by name to the grand building of which it was a part for more than a century: the Vleeshuis or Butchers' Hall (fig. 1), a sixteenth-century guild house and meat market. In 1913 the building was converted into a museum, when it was entrusted with the collection of the growing Museum of Antiquities, which had been housed in the Steen since 1864. The Steen is the distant precursor of the MAS, and as such, its history affects the story of all four collections gathered in the MAS today: the former Ethnographic Museum, the Folklore Museum, the National Maritime Museum, and Museum Vleeshuis. Their collections all stemmed from the Steen and followed an irregular growth process involving rejection and reintegration. A museum's collection is never a constantly growing entity. Its development is influenced considerably by social, economic and political circumstances as well as by new museological insights.<sup>1</sup>

The foundation of the MAS collection dates back to 1861, when the idea was put forward to establish a *Musée d'Architecture et d'Archéologie* in every provincial capital of the nascent nation that Belgium was.<sup>2</sup> That particular suggestion was made by the Antwerp provincial committee during the General Assembly of the Royal Commission of Monuments.<sup>3</sup> Museums founded in the nineteenth century often played a part in the nationalistic propaganda of young European states. The ancient art museums became particularly popular around and after 1860.<sup>4</sup> These institutions were considered essential for the preservation and conservation of local and national historical and cultural heritage.<sup>5</sup> But the new museums also had to offer a safe haven for the historical material relics, witnesses of urban traditions and identity. During the nineteenth century, heritage was threatened by the age of industrialization and by the relentless adaptation of the existing urban infrastructure to modern needs. The golden age had to be remembered by cherishing the cultural tradition through the collection of artistic, archaeological and historic artefacts preferably showing highly developed craftsmanship.

The Antwerp provincial commission was convinced of an even wider role the museum could play as a centre for self-study and examination.<sup>6</sup> The museum could respond to the growing interest in the technical aspects of traditional artistic crafts by offering a range of examples for painters and sculptors of the widely supported historicism in the arts and architecture. The artists could find a wealth of inspiration for



Fig. 2. Portrait of Pieter Génard, 2nd half 19<sup>th</sup> century.

their work in the exhibited examples of design and decoration, which demonstrated high-quality fabrication and highly skilled craftsmanship. And thus the Museum of Antiquities became a key player in promoting artistic development. In that capacity it clearly stood out from the conventional museum of fine arts housed at the time in the Antwerp Academy for Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.

In 1862 the provincial commission established the *Société pour la formation du Musée d'Histoire, d'Antiquités, d'Archéologie, d'Architecture et de Géologie d'Anvers*.<sup>7</sup> The committee's secretary, Pieter Génard (1830–1899) (fig. 2), at that time sub-librarian and later city archivist, was the driving force behind its realization. The Steen was put forward as its ideal accommodation.<sup>8</sup> Today the building is the last remnant of the Burcht, the former settlement of the marquisate of the Holy Roman Empire. It was built on foundations dating from the thirteenth century. Its latest function as a museum prevented the building's demolition 20 years later, when the entire Burcht had to make way for the modernization of the harbour infrastructure.



Fig. 3. Pieter Coecke van Aelst (attrib.), Detail of the Loggia of 'De Grooten Sot', Antwerp (Belgium), 1549.



Fig. 4. Entrance of the Museum of Antiquities Steen, 1876.

As the proprietor of the Steen, the city of Antwerp laid out the condition that the museum collection become property of the city, which occurred.<sup>9</sup> The early core collection consisted mainly of historical, archaeological and palaeontological objects, coins and medals, art and archival documents. Previously, these witnesses of the city's history were mostly kept in the attics of the town hall, where the archive was also housed, and in the city warehouse. During the preparatory period (1862–1864), the society started actively collecting prehistoric archaeological finds from the Antwerp region and requested permission from the Royal Committee for Monuments to excavate these grounds in search of relics. Even the Ministers of War and Internal Affairs contributed to this matter by arranging to have deposited in the museum all future archaeological finds discovered in and around Antwerp.<sup>10</sup>

The Society appealed to all citizens by inviting them to contribute to the development of the museum in the making.<sup>11</sup> Early gifts by members of the society, by the city itself and by private citizens remain the Vleeshuis collection's finest masterpieces. The Belgian romantic painter and society member Henri Baron Leys (1815–1869) donated a tapestry designed after a cartoon by Maarten De Vos (inv. no. AV.1360). The larger-than-life Rhenish statue of St Christopher dating from the late fifteenth century was a gift by one J. Van Hool. The masterpiece *par excellence* of the Vleeshuis collection, a complete sixteenth-century wooden loggia (fig. 3), was transferred from the patrician house 'De Grooten Sot' in 1864 to the museum, before or just after the opening.<sup>12</sup> Today it is a state-of-the-art sample of mannerist stylistic elements in the Southern Netherlands and one of the most remarkable constructions of sixteenth-century Antwerp.

### The Steen, Museum of Antiquities (1864–1913)

Two years after the idea was put forward, the Museum of Antiquities (fig. 4) was established, directed by an administrative commission composed of the members of the provincial committee and the society.<sup>13</sup> The public embraced this symbol of Antwerp's cultural identity from the start. Citizens, artists and students of the Academy visited the Steen daily. Later on, schools found their way to the new museum as well.

In order to guide the public through the exhibition, the objects were classified in five sections: (1) prehistoric and ancient archaeology, (2) the Middle Ages, (3) modern history up to 1864 (1500–1864), (4) historic paintings and portraits, and (5) the geological collection of the *Société Paléontologique de Belgique* (Palaeontological Society of Belgium).<sup>14</sup> Modern history up to 1864 (1500–1864) was the committee's favourite department, borne by the romantic philosophy and the pursuit of the revival of the city's former artistic and economic grandeur. All artefacts referring to Antwerp's history and its Golden Age in particular were entitled to enter the museum and were thus ensured a good future.

The varied museum collection consisted of paintings and painted glass, local and Roman archaeological and palaeontological finds, numismatics, weaponry, textile, metalwork and sculpture, as well as archival, written and printed documents. All were divided over 17 sub-collections.<sup>15</sup> Being aware of the rather modest number of objects on display, the committee was convinced of the ability of the nucleus to develop into a valuable collection. The first museum catalogue was written by Pieter Génard in 1876.<sup>16</sup> It was written in response to an important critique of the presentation and identification of the objects.<sup>17</sup> In the space of only 18 years, four editions of the entire museum's catalogue were published in French. Between



Fig. 5. Workshop Den Salm (attrib.), The Conversion of Saul, Antwerp (Belgium), 1547.

the first edition and the last in 1894, the number of objects tripled from 900 to 3140 and the number of categories rose from 17 to 31. The subsequent editions of Génard's catalogues give a clear insight into the collection's growth.

In the early years, expansion of the collection was the museum's main thrust. Citizens responded forcefully to the circular encouraging donations to the museum. Institutions equally helped to extend the collection: for instance, the Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts consigned its collection of weapons and armour and some Roman antiquities to the Steen in 1864.<sup>18</sup> Grants by the state, the province or the city of Antwerp had enabled purchases. In this early period, the administrative commission acquired important masterpieces, such as the sixteenth-century Antwerp tile panel 'The Conversion of Saul' (inv. no. AV.1571) (fig. 5), a Nautilus cup (inv. no. AV.1907), a fifteenth-century statue of St George (inv. no. AV.0843), a crossbow with fifteenth-century core (inv. no. AV.8739) and the altarpiece of the Abbey of Averbode (inv. no. AV.0887).

In these early years, the museum's interest in glass exclusively concerned painted glass panels.<sup>19</sup> This focus originated in the increased widespread interest in stained glass by the Gothic Revival and more particularly the 'revived taste for Gothic architecture'.<sup>20</sup> Assembling historic examples of glass panels was considered important by the committee and would soon be expanded to historic examples of vessel glass. The first registered acquisition dates from 1866 when a seventeenth-century goblet (inv. no. AV.1582) (fig. 6) depicting the Antwerp waterfront and coat of arms was purchased from a certain Toeteneel.<sup>21</sup> It was catalogued by Génard as the first object of the chapter *Faïences et verreries* in the first museum catalogue of 1876.<sup>22</sup> Glass and ceramics were listed together at the time, and 28 items were of glass. The second piece was an acquisition of a glassware Nizet basket on a plate (inv. no. AV.1586) (fig. 7), followed by a goblet with red latticino (inv. no. AV.1587). In 1874 a weather glass from around 1800 (inv. no. AV.1620) (fig. 8) was bought from the artist and antiquarian Alexander Théodore Honoré Struys (1852–1941).<sup>23</sup>



Fig. 6. Detail of the Antwerp waterfront engraved on a goblet, Bohemia (Czech Republic), 17<sup>th</sup> century.



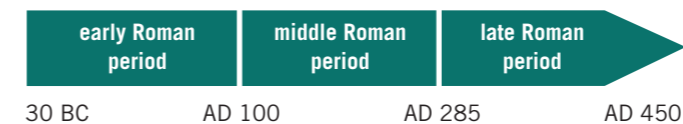
Fig. 7. Verrerie Nizet, Basket on a plate, Liège (Belgium), 18<sup>th</sup> century.



## Roman Glass

Glass production during the Roman imperial period can be divided into three periods (see figure below) with the early period characterized by a continuity of Hellenistic productions and the gradual introduction of Roman shapes derived from Roman pottery and metalware. By the end of the first century AD, Roman glassworkers had created a specific set of vessel shapes resulting from the particular characteristics of glass-blowing. Especially from the Flavian period (AD 69–98) onward, new shapes appeared and the intensity of Roman glass production expanded. However, the more classical shapes remained in use until the reign of Hadrian, such as the late Hellenistic thick-walled cast and slumped vessels, e.g. the ribbed bowls (cat. nos. 1-3). The increase of glass production throughout the entire Roman Empire and the swiftness of the glass-blowing production process by using a minimal amount of glass and reusing the glass waste turned glass into a ubiquitous item that lost its elitist status and made of it an ordinary material. In the first century AD, the wealthy classes reacted when the Roman market was flooded with glass and it became an ordinary commodity. Trimalchio's reaction in Petronius's *Satyricon* (Petr. 50) provides a nice illustration: 'You will forgive me if I say that personally I prefer glass. Glass at least does not smell. If it were not so breakable I should prefer it to gold. As it is, it is so cheap.'

During the early Roman period, the glass material in the north-western provinces was initially produced in glass workshops in Italy and the Mediterranean region, but the big centres in southern France and Switzerland progressively became the principal suppliers of glassware. The result was a communal set of vessel shapes within a vast area with minor variances between the different parts of the Roman Empire. Due to the economic developments during the Flavian dynasty, glass production reached all provinces by the end of the first century AD. These widespread provincial glass productions gradually initiated regional assemblages, with common vessel shapes finished in distinctive manufacturing techniques and sometimes also with idiosyncratic shapes. The middle Roman period introduced a huge variety of shapes and decoration patterns related to regional and local consumer customs and conventions. This period lasted until the mid third century AD and is characterized by the introduction of many new shapes and the disappearance of a large number of ancient shapes. The late Roman period can be considered a transition period with one leg still in classical Antiquity and the other leg in the upcoming early medieval period. Especially from the mid fourth century AD onward, major changes were observed in glass production, with a focus on the production of jewellery, windowpanes and vessel shapes essentially to use as lamps, pouring tableware such as flagons and pitchers, and storage ware such as cylindrical bottles. Because the gradual introduction of these changes took several centuries, the late Roman period has to be considered as the start of the late antique period, a period that introduced political, social and cultural changes, not least due to the impact of Christianity and Islam on society.



The ribbed bowl is the most representative vessel shape within the entire Roman Empire during the early Roman period before the introduction of glass-blowing. The late Hellenistic examples were polychrome, as were the ribbed bowls produced throughout the reign of Augustus, combining various contrasting bright colours imitating all sorts of semi-precious stones. During the Augustan era, deeply coloured, monochrome ribbed bowls were also introduced. The most common pieces, however, were made from the Tiberian-Claudian period onward in a bluish green glass, a natural tinge due to the presence of iron oxides in the glass matrix.

Ribbed bowls can be large and small, with respectively a diameter between 15 and 20 cm and a diameter of less than 15 cm down to about 10 cm. Both sizes can be deep and shallow, in this order when the height is either more or less than half of the maximum

diameter of the vessel. These vessels very rarely have a foot. Most commonly, the rim is straight and vertical, but a number of ribbed bowls have an everted rim resulting in an S-shaped profile. The inside of the ribbed bowls can be smooth or decorated with one or more grooves just below the rim and/or below the middle of the body.

All three ribbed bowls of the MAS Vleeshuis Collection are made in a monochrome glass. One is made in the very common naturally coloured blue-green glass, while the other two are in a deeply coloured or decolourized glass. The ribbed bowls in the MAS Vleeshuis Collection (cat. nos. 1-3) are small, with a convex-sided vessel shape and a flat or slightly concave base. One is a deep bowl with a slightly out-turned rim (cat. no. 1), and the two others are shallow bowls with a vertical rim.



### 1. Ribbed bowl

Late 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC–early 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD

Decolourized with purplish tinge, translucent

Cast, slumped and tooled

H: 6.5 cm; max. D: 11.7 cm; Th: 0.4 cm (base) – 0.55 cm (rim)

AV.5486 ■

Complete, but broken in two and mended. Small deep bowl with an almost hemispherical body, decorated with thick parallel ribbings narrowing towards the base. The undecorated zone above the ribbings forms a high, slightly out-turned rim with rounded lip. The decoration on the outer side of the body consists of 28 bulging short and slender parallel vertical ribbings with irregular intervals. The ribbings stop at the start of the flat base. Inside, the vessel has a wheel-cut concentric line far below the rim edge.

Unpublished; *parallels*: Isings 1957: Form 3

## UNGUENTARIA

A large section of the Roman glass vessel production that survived is toilet ware. The vessels in this group were used particularly as containers for perfume or medicine. The largest group, categorized as *unguentarium*, is known in a whole range of mainly small-shaped bottles without handles. Most museum collections possess these unguentaria in huge numbers and the MAS Vleeshuis Collection holds 61 pieces (out of 128 Roman glass vessels). These vessels were not only widely produced during the Roman imperial period. Indeed, because they were frequently given a final destination as a burial gift, these small glass bottles have repeatedly been found when excavating Roman cemeteries. One can wonder whether this funerary practice had a symbolic use giving the deceased a last set of his/her vital medicine or favourite perfume. It is clear from the burials all over the Roman Empire that unguentaria were used by children and adults, men and women, civilians and soldiers. A most interesting set of eight unguentaria (cat. nos. 5, 12, 18, 36-38, 51 and one missing piece) was excavated in 1826 in Ubbergen-*Hengstberg* near Nijmegen, in the Netherlands, where Walter F.J. Van Genechten exhumed a number of cremation tombs from the cemetery of the Legionary camp of the 10<sup>th</sup> Legion *Legio X Gemina Pia Fidelis* arriving in AD 70 to suppress Batavian revolt under Julius Civilis and abandoning the camp around AD 100 when moving towards the Danube to help Trajan conquer *Dacia* in AD 101-102. Afterwards, the 10<sup>th</sup> Legion was stationed in *Aquincum*, Budapest from AD 104 and later on in *Vindobona*, Vienna (Warmenbol et al. 2017: 265-266). The set includes two different types of unguentaria: those with an elongated conical body (cat. nos. 12, 18, 36-38) and those with a spherical body (cat. nos. 5 and 51). Unfortunately, Walter F.J. Van Genechten did not leave specific descriptions of individual tomb sets or their exact location. By chance, excavations in 2007 at the Sint Maartenskliniek site reopened the area as they found, besides additional early Roman burials, late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century trenches and pits, which most likely have to be linked to the excavation activities carried out by Walter F.J. Van Genechten and the initial discovery of the site by the French army in 1794 when besieging Nijmegen (Warmenbol et al. 2017: 266).

Although the bulk production of glass unguentaria falls within the first and third centuries AD, some production continued alongside the introduction of small glass ampules. Unguentaria could have different shapes and sizes, but the vessel type is generally shaped with a tall cylindrical neck and a constriction at its base towards the conical or hemispherical body. However, the Romans used mould-blowing to make perfume bottles in a wide variety of particular shapes: animals, fruit (cat. no. 4) and human heads (cat. nos. 65, 89).

Small date-shaped bottles (cat. no. 4) are made naturalistically in the shape of a ripe date full of wrinkles and usually in a natural orange to yellow-brown tinged glass, although examples in blue-green, purple and blue glass also circulated (Stern 1995: 172-179). During the first century AD, small date-shaped vessels were very popular in the eastern Mediterranean, although the shape is also attested within the rest of the Mediterranean, as demonstrated by a piece from Pompei, Italy (Scatozza Höricht 1986: 52, no. 105), and even up to the north-western fringe of the Roman Empire, such as a mid first century AD tomb

in Trier, Germany (Goethert-Polaschek 1977: 96, no. 453). However, the production of date-shaped bottles is presumed to have occurred in one or more Phoenician cities along the present-day Lebanese coast. The date-shaped bottle at Grand Curtius, Liège, Baar 398, was acquired in Beirut, Lebanon (*Trois millénaires* 1958: 57, no. 73). The Royal Museums of Art and History (KMG-MRAH) in Brussels hold a comparable date-shaped bottle, VE14 (unpublished).

Although no residue-analysis has yet been undertaken to define the contents of the date-shaped bottles, it is generally accepted that these small containers must have held a perfumed oil or a medicine based on dates. Ancient sources describe juice or liquor from dates being added as an ingredient to dishes and to produce aromatized wine. Dates were also used to produce perfumed unguents and oils. Fresh dates and/or date oil were also very popular as New Year's presents in ancient Rome according to Ovid (*Fasti* 185-188): '...for the sake of the omen... that the event may answer to the flavour, and that the whole course of the year may be sweet, like its beginning' (Stern 1995: 94). It is therefore likely that the date-shaped bottle from the MAS Vleeshuis Collection was such a New Year's gift in the early Roman imperial period.

Seven entries of unguentaria were left out from the catalogue because they have long been untraceable. It concerns AV.1648 and AV.1940.005.045-046-048-063-082 including an unreadable number. AV.1648 is known from earlier publications by the old number N(2).67 in Génard 1881: 100, N.67; Génard 1885: 143, N2.67; Génard 1894: 149, N2.67. The vessel is a complete unguentarium in blue-green glass of the former Walter Van Genechten Collection and discovered in 1826 at the Ubbergen-*Hengstberg* estate.

The six other accession numbers consist of very fragmented pieces of small early Roman unguentaria bequeathed in 1939 by Paul Osterrieth. These fragmented unguentaria are most likely related to his archaeological adventures at the Roman necropolis of Carmona in the south of Spain close to Seville, when doing some fieldwork with archaeologist George E. Bonsor in 1898-1899 (Warmenbol et al. 2017, 267).

### 4. Date-shaped unguentarium

Probably Mediterranean

1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD

Amber brown, transparent

Mould-blown

Max. pres. H: 6.9 cm – H (body): 5.8 cm; D: 1.4 cm (neck); W (body): 3.1cm (front) – 2.3 cm (side); Th: 0.17-0.20 cm

AV.5487 ■

Almost complete, rim missing. Short cylindrical neck with tooling at the base. Body mould-blown in a two-part mould with vertical sections; body shaped like a date, showing a relief pattern of long wavy ridges imitating the wrinkles in the skin of a ripe date. Shoulder dented on one side and convex base.

Unpublished; *parallels*: Isings 1957: Form 78d; Goethert-Polaschek 1977: Form 68; Stern 1995: 91-94; 172-180, nos. 84-108







### 5. Unguentarium

Burial gift from the Roman cemetery of the Legionary camp at Ubbergen-*Hengstberg* near Nijmegen, Netherlands; excavated in 1826; no individual tomb description

Late 1<sup>st</sup>–early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD

Blue-green, transparent

Free-blown

H: 7.0 cm; max. D (body): 3.9 cm; D (rim): 2.5 cm; D (base): 1.6 cm

Bequeathed by Walter F.J. Van Genechten (1881)

AV.1644 ■

Incomplete, small part of the rim missing. Everted rim with rounded lip. Short cylindrical neck with constriction at the base of the neck. Small globular body with flattened base. No pontil mark. The length ratio between neck and body is about 1:1.

Génard 1881: 99, N.63; Génard 1885: 142, N2.63; Génard 1894: 149, N2.63; *parallels*: Isings 1957: Form 6



### 6. Unguentarium

Second half 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD

Pale blue-green, transparent

Mould-blown

H: 10.7 cm; max. D (body): 9.1 cm; D (rim): 4.5 cm; D (base): 4.3 cm

Bequeathed by Paul Osterrieth (1939)

AV.1940.005.050 ■

Complete. Thin-walled vessel with hemispherical body and short cylindrical neck. Large flattened horizontally folded rim (outward-upward-inward). Squat cylindrical neck with a clear constriction at the base towards the shoulder. Wide hemispherical body with broad horizontal shoulder and slightly concave flat base with no pontil mark.

Unpublished; *parallels*: Isings 1957: Form 16



### 7. Unguentarium

Second half 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD

Pale blue-green, transparent

Mould-blown

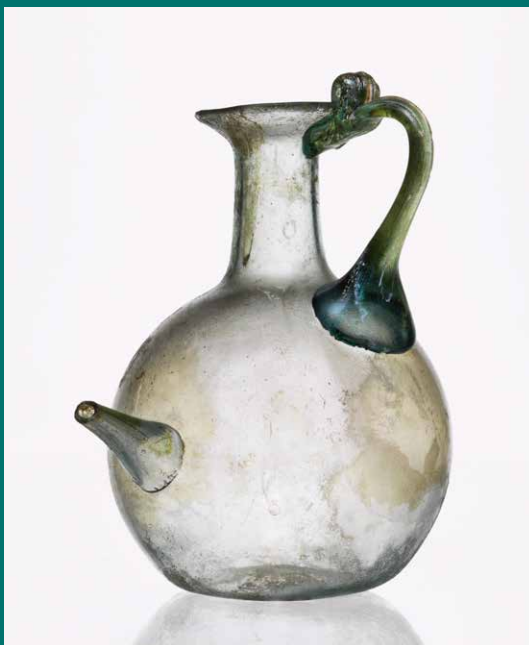
H: 16.7 cm; max. D (body): 8.4 cm; D (rim): 3.5-3.7 cm; D (base): 3.7 cm

Bequeathed by Paul Osterrieth (1939)

AV.1940.005.049 ■

Complete. Thin-walled vessel with pear-shaped body and tall cylindrical neck. The rim has a horizontal folded lip (outward-upward-inward) with oblique flattened surface. The straight cylindrical neck shows no constriction at the base towards the sharp shoulder. The pear-shaped body has a conical profile with convex belly. The equally thin-walled flat base has no pontil mark. The body was most likely blown in a plain open mould in a rotating motion.

Unpublished; *parallels*: Isings 1957: Form 16



The ancient glass collection is one of the hidden gems at the MAS (Antwerp, Belgium). It is part of a valuable glass collection numbering nearly 700 objects and is on a par with other international collections of glass. Now, for the first time, the subcollection of ancient glass is published in this comprehensive catalogue.

The ancient glass collection held at the MAS contains alongside more conventional objects, such as Roman toiletry items, some quite remarkable pieces that appear only rarely in international collections. The collection of approximately 150 ancient objects provides a historical outline of fragile Roman, Merovingian, Byzantine and Early Arabian glass tableware. The catalogue also includes some jewellery and a few modern replica pieces of ancient glass. Each object is described in detail and illustrated with high quality photographs. A section has been added at the end of the catalogue providing archaeological drawings.

A richly illustrated introductory chapter about the history of the MAS collection and of the institution itself illuminates how the glass collection has grown to become the extensive collection that we see today. On the one hand the ancient glass collection is made up of archaeological glassware collected from the Antwerp region, while on the other it owes itself to the acquisition of European and Mediterranean glass collections put together by collectors from Antwerp. The authors are Dr Peter Cosyns (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Dr Eugène Warmenbol (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and Annemie De Vos, former curator of the Vleeshuis collection of the MAS.

This catalogue is intended for lovers of glassware and scholars alike. Moreover, just as in the past, museum collections were deliberately put on display for the artistic instruction of painters, sculptors and craftsmen. And also today, we are inviting practising artists to take inspiration from this exceptional collection.

**BĀI**

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