

ANTIKES GLAS

BY AXEL VON SALDERN (HANDBUCH DER ARCHÄOLOGIE). PP. XXV + 708, FIGS. 73, PLS. 406. C.H. BECK, MUNICH 2004. €178. ISBN 3-406-51994-6 (CLOTH).

This book has made a very important contribution to glass studies. A detailed study of glass in the ancient world from the late third millennium B.C. to the end of the Roman empire around A.D. 400, it is ambitious in coverage, using evidence from various sources, including ancient literature and iconography, archaeological investigation, private and museum collections, and experiments by modern glassworkers. On the whole, it succeeds admirably.

The book is broadly similar in scope to Anton Kisa's three-volume study published almost 100 years ago (*Das Glas im Altertume* [Leipzig 1908]), and is closer to two papers by Donald Harden published in the late 1960s ("Ancient Glass, I: Pre-Roman," *ArchJ* 125 [1968] 46–72; "Ancient Glass, II: Roman," *ArchJ* 126 [1969] 44–77), but the scale is very different from either of these earlier works and is unique in modern times. It represents the knowledge acquired during a professional life working with ancient glass and the collection, ordering and analysis of the research of other scholars over many years. The latter has been an enormous task as the number of ancient glass publications has increased greatly in recent decades, with hundreds now appearing every year. The bibliography is comprehensive and contains works published up to 2003, the footnotes contain additional references on nearly every page, and numerous unpublished postgraduate dissertations have also been consulted.

In the foreword, the author acknowledges that the writings of Harden have been a major influence on his research, and this is recognizable in many places. The book has been ordered chronologically and by culture and/or region and is divided into four principal chapters of varying length, reflecting the quantity of the glass known in each period and the volume of research. Chapter 1 (5–50) is concerned with

vessels and objects in the Near East and Egypt in the late third and second millennia B.C., chapter 2 (51–65) with vessels and inlays in Assyria in the early first millennium B.C., chapter 3 (67–156) with the greater cultural diversity of glass in the eastern and central Mediterranean region, western Asia, and Celtic Europe in the sixth–first centuries B.C., and chapter 4 (157–621) with the glass of the Roman empire. Chapter 5 is an appendix with nine sections on aspects (scientific analysis; workshops; production techniques and working practice; the contents of vessels; transport and packing; literary sources; heirlooms and repairs; dating; fakes, copies and replicas) that either are not studied in detail elsewhere in the book or have been brought together from various sections in the main chapters.

It is not possible in a short review to discuss the whole work, so my comments will concentrate on the glass of the Roman empire, which accounts for approximately 75% of the book. The mass production of vessels and globalization of glass production followed the invention of glassblowing some time in the mid first century B.C.; far more glass was produced and consumed in the following four centuries than in the previous two millennia. The Roman glass has been grouped according to technique of production and decoration and by form and function, followed by a discussion of findspots and origins and a broad survey of the glass and the traditions of glassworking in different regions and provinces.

Many of the groups contain a great amount of detailed information. Among the nonblown glass, the section on polychrome mosaic glass (161–82) includes information about late production, and among the blown glass, the section on cut decoration (352–406) studies a wide variety of vessels dating from the first to the end of the fourth century, though some of them (e.g., fig. 49, pls. 301, 307, 309, 310, 314)

are not usually thought to have been blown vessels. There is also an impressive amount of information about the forms and designs of early decorated, mold-blown tablewares and cosmetic containers (231–300). In particular, the vessels bearing Ennion's name have been closely studied and the competing arguments carefully presented. This section includes something new for everyone and a great deal to argue about. For example, one might take issue with the assertion that the circus cups and beakers found in the western provinces (283–91) were inspired from the eastern Mediterranean region on the basis of a latinized Greek name and a single fragment without date or provenance.

To decide to begin such a book was a heroic act, and determining when to end it must have been a great dilemma. Although the bibliography includes publications in 2003, it is inevitable in a book of this size that sections in the four chapters were completed at different times, and that some are therefore more up-to-date than others. Sometimes this has resulted in only part of a discussion being included (e.g., where Caron and Lavoie's paper interpreting a scene on a North African pottery lamp as a glassblowing scene [*JGS* 39 (1997) 197–98] is present but not the refutations by Bailey [*JGS* 41 (1999) 167–68] and Foy [*AntAf* 34 (1998) 227–30]). On other occasions it has led to significant developments being omitted, as in the section on window glass (200–2), which is short and lacks information about recent discoveries and, in particular, the experimental work in the last decade by Mark Taylor and David Hill that has suggested another method of production for matt-glossy glass (<http://www.romanglassmakers.co.uk/articles.htm>; accessed 7 May 2006). More emphasis could

have been given in section 1 of the appendix on the increasingly important contribution of scientific analysis to the study of ancient glass; another section bringing together references to the experiments by modern glassworkers that throw light on possible methods of production and decoration, or materials for tools, would have been helpful.

In addition, there are a few typos, missing explanations for abbreviations, and errors in cross-referencing (e.g., the fragmentary mold-blown head beaker from Caerleon is said to have "Tryphonos" on it [614], whereas it and the piece from London have "C Caes Bvgaddi" on them [298–99]; the polychrome mosaic bowl from Yemen is said to date from the first century A.D. [165–66] but is also dated to the third century [175]).

However, these are minor blemishes in a very large book and do not detract seriously from the enduring value to glass scholarship of this comprehensive, scholarly, and measured overview. It is a mature and well-balanced study and should be a most influential source book for students of ancient glass for many years, although this reviewer does not agree with all the conclusions.

Finally, this book is quite large to be described as a handbook. It is regrettable that the cost may prevent it from being as widely used as it should be, and it is to be hoped that the publishers will consider producing an English translation.

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