

Islamic Glass

Jens Kröger

Two mould-blown glass bottles in the exhibition are examples of the extensive glass production in Afghanistan. Both are typical of the 11th to 12th century. It is very probable that they were blown in the province of Herat. Glass was extensively used for commercial purposes and in private households. In addition to plates, bottles of different sizes were common. Most popular were mould-blown vessels such as the two presented examples. In modern times Herat was a centre, where the traditional way of glass making was passed down through the ages and is still thus exercised up to the present day.

The first bottle, made of yellowish glass, has a squat body (HNM 06.05.86a, cat. no. G1; Fig. 1 and title image). The long cylindrical neck is missing. Only a trace of glass is preserved around the lower part. A pattern of staggered rows composed of teardrop-shaped loops decorates the body. This was achieved by blowing the glass into a mould. Both, the type of object as well as the decoration are known from more complete examples in other collections and, thus, such vessels must have been common in eastern Iranian provinces.

The small bottle (HNM 06.05.86b, cat. no. G2) shown in Fig. 2 has a globular body and a short cylindrical neck. Its decoration consists of verti-

cal ribs, which were achieved by blowing the glass into a mould. It is a very typical example of Islamic mediaeval mould-blown glass, but little is known about the bottle's original use. If designated to contain liquids, such bottles would have had a stopper in the opening.

Cat. No. G1

HNM 06.05.86a, see Fig. 1 and title image
Glass bottle with tear-drop pattern, Khorasan, 11th-12th CE
Glass, yellowish-brown; mould-blown
Size (cm): h. 11

Squat bottle with cylindrical neck. The neck and rim are broken, the base is concave. The colour is translucent yellowish brown, with a greenish tint at places. The body carries four rows of staggered tear-drop-shaped or roundish loops of different sizes, starting from under the base and ending below the neck. They are formed either from the left or the right side of the pendant, most are closed, but a few are left open. The neck is decorated with a tooled spiral tail.

Cat. No. G2

HNM 06.05.86b, see Fig. 2
Small ribbed glass bottle, Khorasan, 11th-12th CE
Glass, greenish; mould-blown
Size (cm): h. 8

Globular bottle with cylindrical neck, slightly concave base. The body is decorated with rather large vertical ribs, which partly extend up to the neck.

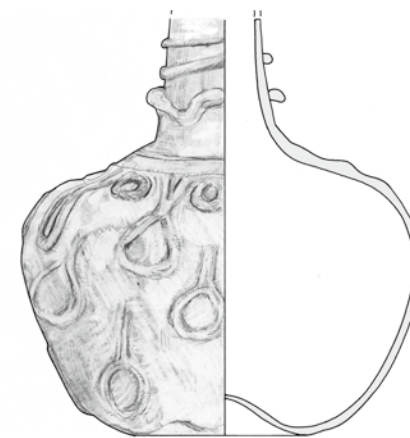


Fig. 1 Glass bottle
(HNM 06.05.86a, cat. no. G1), scale 1:2



Fig. 2 Glass bottle (HNM 06.05.86b, cat. no. G2), drawing: scale 1:2