



The Gladiator Jug from Ismant el-Kharab

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The excavations at Ismant el-Kharab, ancient Kellis, since 1986 have produced a considerable quantity of glass of a wide variety of types,¹ including plain and decorated wares.² On 2 February 2000, however, a quite exceptional discovery of two adjacent deposits of glass was made within Enclosure 4 of Area D, amongst one of which were fragments from a jug painted with well-preserved scenes of combatant gladiators (Hope 2000, 58–9). This vessel forms the focus of the present contribution, which aims to place the piece within its broader context and to explore the question of its place of manufacture.³ The vessels that comprise the two groups were all found in fragments, not all of which from each vessel were recovered. Surface deposits on the pieces, of sand and salt crusts,⁴ some over the broken edges, indicate that the vessels were dropped where they were found and broke upon impact with the ground; that a considerable number of joinable pieces from each vessel was retrieved indicates that there was little subsequent disturbance following abandonment. This study is intended as an exploration of issues raised by the discovery of the painted jug and further refinement of many of these will undoubtedly be undertaken by authorities on ancient glass.

Find Context

Enclosure 4 lies at the north-eastern corner of the site, and is the last of a series of enclosures added on the northern side of Enclosure 1, which contains the Main Temple of Tutu and its associated structures (Hope this volume, Figure

1). The enclosure contains the West Church and its adjacent complex dated to the mid-fourth century (Bowen 2002, 75–81, 83), to the east of which are the two West Tombs (Hope and McKenzie 1999); slightly to the east of these there is a two-roomed mud-brick structure (Hope this volume, Figure 11). At various locations within the enclosure are east-west-oriented, single human burials presumed to be those of Christians (Bowen this volume; Hope this volume). The West Tombs predate the construction of the wall of Enclosure 4, which, in its north-western corner, is identical with the wall of the West Church. This indicates that the enclosure is contemporary with the West Church.

The two deposits of glass were found near to the inner face of the northern wall of the enclosure, Group 1 (Figure 1) 8.4 m west of the north-eastern corner and Group 2 (Figure 2) 0.6 m farther to the west, thus both to the immediate east of the two-roomed structure. They were found 20 cm and 30 cm respectively below the surface of the site within a deposit of sand and mud brick eroded from the northern enclosure wall. The area in which they were discovered was not excavated below the point of their discovery, but, from the excavations within the two-roomed building, it can be ascertained that they lay 1.3 and 1.2 m above the compact clay surface upon which this structure was constructed.

It would appear that the glass vessels were deposited in their find spot after there had been considerable accumulation of material against the northern wall of the enclosure subsequent to the construction of the two-roomed

¹ This has been studied by Carla Marchini who, through illness, has unfortunately been prevented from contributing to the present study. This has resulted in a lack of the necessary technical data being included.

² It is not possible to elaborate upon the range of material here, but it can be noted that examples of gold-sandwich glass, mosaic glass, both bichrome and polychrome, facet-cut glass, incised glass and painted glass have all been found; glass beads containing silver have also been recovered. A substantial part of a large colourless bowl in a shape resembling North African Red Slip ware bowls of the third-fourth centuries has also been recovered.

³ Helen Whitehouse has contributed the description of the vessel.

⁴ I wish to acknowledge the care and skill of Laurence Blondaux in cleaning the gladiator jug, and Michelle Berry in reconstructing the assemblage.

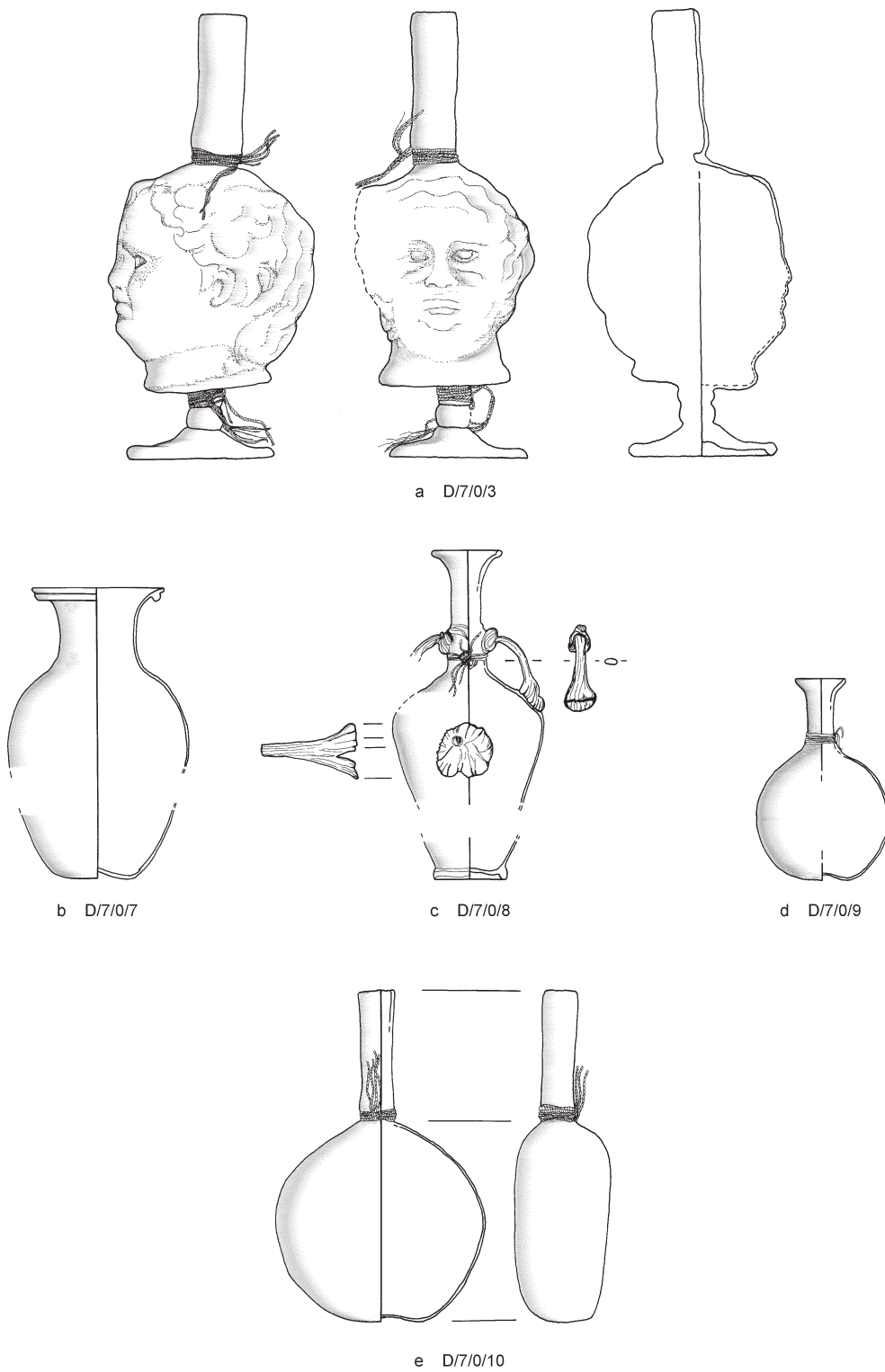


Figure 1 Area D/7 glass vessels in Group 1 (drawings by C. Marchini and B. Parr).
Scale 1:3; object registration numbers provided.

structure. Whilst the exact date at which this building was erected cannot be determined, this must have been during the second half of the fourth century. The glass vessels cannot be related with any certainty to the use of this structure. There is currently no evidence for occupation at Kellis after the early 390s (Hope 1999; 2002, 204-6). It is therefore probable that the glass vessels were dropped during the course of the abandonment of the site at the end of the fourth century or possibly very early in the fifth century, although why in the spot where they were found, given that it is not an obvious point of exiting the village, cannot be determined. The find context does not, therefore, assist in the dating of the manufacture of the vessels, but does indicate generally the period until which they continued in use.

Description of the Vessels

In the descriptions the dimensions are given in centimetres and the following abbreviations are employed: H height, D diameter, W width, Th thickness.

Group 1: Figure 1

Figure 1a: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/3⁵

Form: single head-shaped bottle with tall cylindrical neck, unaccentuated rim, applied bead stem and foot with fire-rounded edge; the face is of the chubby child-like type with blurred details.⁶

Colour: pale green.

Technique: head mould-blown; neck, foot and stem free-blown.⁷

Dimensions: Ht 19.8; D of head 9; H of head 10.2; D of head at base 5.7; H of neck 6.9; D of rim 2.1; H of foot/stem 3; D of foot 6.6; Th of wall at head and neck 0.2–0.3.

Contents: residue of pine, cedar or fir resin (Ross and Stern, this volume).

Stopper: String wound around top of stem of the foot and at the base of the neck; the two sections may once have joined thus forming a means of raising the vessel, or they could have been attached to a stopper used to close the vessel, on which see Stern 1995, 31 footnote 64.

*Date:*⁸ Provisionally the piece may be assigned to the late third or early fourth century; this date is confirmed by the use of pale green glass (Price and Cottam 1998, 16), which is the colour of all of the pieces in both deposits.⁹

Stern (1995, 204–15) has outlined the evolution of mould-blown head-shaped vessels during the first to fourth centuries CE based upon dated examples from excavations. Those with chubby child-like faces she identifies as representing Dionysos or Eros and notes that they were most common in the eastern Mediterranean. The largest number of head-shaped vessels was manufactured in that region during the second and third centuries, and production ceased during the mid-fourth century. Vessels with single heads were made predominantly in the first–second and fourth centuries. Of those detailed in her survey an early fourth century vessel from Worms in Germany has a foot similar in external shape to Figure 1a, though the stem is not beaded, and also a tall neck with an unaccentuated rim; however, the neck is funnel-shaped and the vessel has two faces (see also Harden *et al.* 1987, number 95). The shape of the eyes resembles those of Figure 1a. No other piece in both Stern's survey and catalogue has a similar foot; a single-head vessel of the first half of the third century (Stern 1995, number 148) possesses a similar neck and rim type, but has the usual flat base.

Jennifer Price (personal communication, 2003) has pointed out that parallels to the bead stem and foot of this piece occur in the late second and third century in the west (for example Isings' 1957 forms 91b–c), which might indicate a slightly earlier date for this vessel than is indicated by reference to Stern's study. These features occur on two flutes from Sedeinga assigned a date in the third century CE (see below; pointed out by J. Price personal communication, 2003).

Plates 1 and 3.

Figure 1b: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/7

Form: flask with a diagonal rim, fire-rounded edge, funnel mouth with applied trail, wide neck, convex body and a concave base.

Colour: pale green.

Technique: blown.

Dimensions: H estimated 12.9; D of rim 5.85; D of body 8.1; H of neck 3.6; Th of wall 0.2–0.3.

Date: fourth century.

The rim type occurs frequently at Kellis on flasks of various sizes and shapes, and jugs: see Marchini 1999, Figures 1c, 3h. A fragment preserving the rim to upper body from a similar flask was found at Alexandria in Gabbari Tomb B3 and ascribed to the fourth to fifth centuries (Nenna 2001a, 508 number 6).

⁵ This is the object registration catalogue number.

⁶ In the descriptions I have provided details following suggestions made by Jennifer Price.

⁷ I follow the terminology and data on manufacture and morphology provided in Price and Cottam 1998, 22–9.

⁸ In discussing the date of the vessels in both deposits I will only refer to parallels from well-dated contexts that serve as a guide to the date of the Kellis pieces; I will not discuss the distribution pattern of each type. As the dating of the glass from Karanis is acknowledged to need revision (D. Whitehouse, The Date of the Glass from Karanis, *Journal of Glass Studies* 41, 168–70), I have used the publication of this material sparingly.

⁹ Jennifer Price (personal communication 2003) has pointed out that pale green glass appears from the second century in some contexts in Egypt.



Plate 1 Group 1: head-shaped vessel, object registration number 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/3.



Plate 2 Group 1: flask, object registration number 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/9.



Plate 3 Group 1: flask, object registration number 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/10.

Figure 1c: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/8

Form: two-handled, spouted jug with a tall neck, flaring unaccentuated rim, conical body and low trailed ring base.

Colour: pale green body and neck, darker green handles and spout.

Technique: blown; ribbon handles applied to upper body and attached to base of neck and faceted spout drawn.

Dimensions: H estimated 13.5; D of body 6.6; D of rim 3; D of base 3.3; H of neck 5.1; Th of wall 0.1–0.3.

Stopper: string tied around the base of the neck between the handles indicates that the vessel was once closed with a stopper.

Date: fourth century.

The shape represents a combination of the features of single-handled, spouted jugs with globular bodies, and two-handled jugs with taller, narrower bodies, as found in forms 123b and 124 of Goethert-Polaschek 1977, both ascribed to the early fourth century on the basis of finds excavated in Germany.

The shape is attested by several examples from Kellis: for one with a single handle see Marchini 1999, Figure 3f.

Figure 1d: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/9

Form: flask with tall neck and flaring unaccentuated rim, globular body and concave base.

Colour: pale green.

Technique: blown.

Dimensions: H 9; D of body 6; D of rim 2.2; H of neck 3; Th of wall 0.2–0.3.

Contents: unidentified brown residue.

Stopper: string wound around the base of the neck indicates the original existence of a stopper.

Date: fourth century; compare forms 79c–d and 80 of Goethart-Polaschek (1977).

Plate 2.

Figure 1e: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/10

Form: flask with a vertical rim, tall neck constricted at base, flattened convex (lentoid) body and convex base.

Colour: pale green.

Technique: blown.

Dimensions: H 14.7; D of body 9.3 and 4.2; D of rim 1.5; H of neck 5.7; Th of wall 0.15–0.3.

Contents: unidentified brown residue.

Stopper: the presence of string wound around the base of the neck indicates the existence originally of a stopper.

Date: late third to fourth centuries.

Harden *et al.* (1987, numbers 116 and 151) have published two comparable flasks but with spherical bodies and decoration, the former being one of a group of nine similar flasks with abraded decoration representing Baiae and Puteoli, the second being enamelled and gilded with a mythological scene; they (1987, 125) note the rarity of bottles with flattened bodies. Undecorated examples, some without the restriction at the base of the neck, comprise Goethert-Polaschek's (1977, 150–2) form 93; both undecorated and painted are Isings' (1957, 121–2) form 103.

Plate 3.

Group 2: Figure 2**Figure 2a: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/6**

Form: two-handled jug a tall neck, slightly-accentuated rim, inverted piriform body and flattened ribbed ring base; the broad ribbon handles, applied to shoulder and attached to the neck, have a central groove and three rounded trails; the neck narrows above the flange at the junction of the handles on the neck, where there is a horizontal scroll.

Colour: pale green body and neck; handles and ring base darker green.

Technique: either blown into a ribbed one- or more piece mould, or fluting on body produced by optic-blowing (Price and Cottam 1998, 12–3; Flemming 1999, 107–9); neck free-blown; handles drawn.

Dimensions: H 27.6; D of body 14.1; D of rim 3.3; D of base 6; H of neck 12; Th of wall 0.15–0.3.

Stopper: string wound around the base of the neck between the handles for attachment of a stopper.

Date: fourth century; compare Isings 1957 form 129; Harden 1969, 64–5, Plate XIIc; Goethert-Polaschek 1977 forms 143 and 144; Harden *et al.* 1987, number 47.

Plates 4 and 5.

Figure 2b: 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/4

Form: one-handled jug with diagonal rim and fire-rounded edge, funnel mouth, cylindrical neck not off-set and with low ridge, narrow ovoid body, and low ring base; double-rod handle attached to a low thumb-piece at rim.

Colour: pale green with darker green handle and ring base.

Technique: blown; handle drawn and applied after enamelled/cold-painted decoration executed.

Dimensions: H 26.1; D of body 9; D of rim 6.3; D of base 6; Th of wall 0.2.

Decoration: see following section.

Date: For late third to fourth century parallels to the shape of the jug see Isings 1957 form 120b; Goethert-Polaschek 1977 form 124; Harden *et al.* 1987, numbers 70–2; Nenna 2003a, 366, Figure 19; none of these is painted. A close parallel exists in the Daphne Ewer from Kerch in the Crimea; this opaque white glass jug has cold-painted and gilded decoration. It is ascribed to the late second to early third century (Harden *et al.* 1987, number 150; Whitehouse 2001, 266–70 no. 864), as are fragments from another vessel of similar shape preserving the head of the goddess Thetis found at Dura Europos (Clairmont 1963, 34–5). Another jug of similar shape, but with a curved handle that rises above the rim, and with gilded decoration of a Dionysiac scene, was found at Begram (Kurz 1954, 106 number 154; Menninger 1996, 23–5); Whitehouse (1989a, 97–8; 1989b, 1553) has suggested a date within the late first or early second centuries for this vessel, another in the Corning Museum of Glass and an undecorated example of similar shape from Begram.

Examples of glass painted with scenes of gladiatorial combat occur from the late first to third centuries CE, and parallels to such scenes in mosaics occur from the second to early fourth centuries CE (see below). In theory at least,

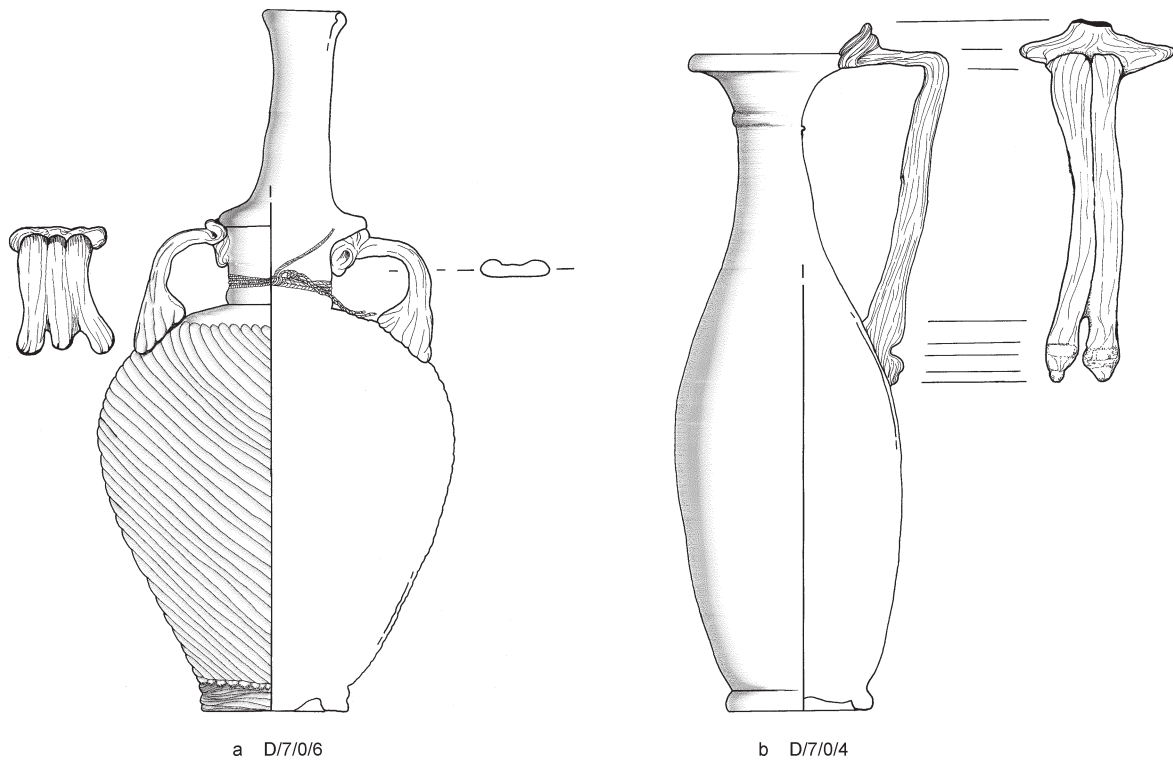


Figure 2 Area D/7 glass vessels in Group 2 (drawings by C. Marchini).
Scale 1:3; object registration numbers provided.

the use of such designs could occur until the demise of these combats in the fourth century.

A date for this vessel within the third or first half of the fourth centuries seems reasonable.

Plates 5–7 and frontispiece.

Decoration of the Gladiator Jug

Frontispiece and Plates 5–7.

The other surviving examples of painted gladiator scenes are on the comparatively simple forms of cups or conical beakers, with one or two registers of combat scenes demarcated by plain lines or surrounded with a floral frame: for example, the Begram beakers in the Musée Guimet (Coarelli 1963, Plates xi.2 and xii; Menninger 1996, Plate 19.3-4) and the Lübsow beakers (Coarelli 1963, Plates vii.1-x; Menninger 1996, Plate 20.2). As befits the more complicated shape of the flask, the decorative scheme is more ornate: the body of the jug is decorated with a single principal register occupied by two pairs of combatants, each with a referee. The entire decorative scheme (total height about 201 mm) is defined top and bottom by a band of black wave-ornament on a yellow ground demarcated above and below with reddish-brown lines; a third such band forms the ground-line to the principal figure scene. Below the top band of wave ornament, which is wider (16 mm) than the others, and shades from pale reddish-brown into yellow, the neck of the flask is decorated with a lotus frieze, the petals of each bloom

drawn in dark outline, and coloured alternately yellow and blue tipped in reddish-brown, with the occasional green bloom; a pair of yellow lanceolate leaves flanks each bloom. Below is a band of black herringbone on a pale reddish-brown/yellow background like that of the top wave-band, and similarly demarcated with reddish-brown lines. Below this is a yellow scroll dotted with blue and red blobs, demarcated below by a yellow then a reddish-brown line. Between the wave-band which closes the gladiatorial scenes and the lowest wave-band, is a similar but larger scroll, with the addition of green dots of foliage as well as the red and blue.

Within the principal figure zone (minimum height 77 mm), the two scenes of combat occupy the whole area: to the left of the handle, a gladiator with bare head and abundant curly dark hair faces right, with a slight smile on his features. A metal-scale protector (*manica*) worn slantwise across his upper chest covers his left shoulder and entire left arm, ending above a deep belt of yellow bounded top and bottom by reddish-brown strips with yellow studs. The right side of his chest and his right arm are bare, save for a green armband on the upper arm and a yellow wristband. In his right hand he grasps a metal dagger or short sword. He wears a loincloth (*subligaculum*), white with black decoration, yellow ties above and below either knee, and green and yellow anklets. His feet are bare, and behind his left foot lies a trident with blue metal prongs and a yellow handle. His mailed left fist makes contact with the boss of the rectangular



Plate 4 Group 2: two-handled jug, object registration number 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/06.



Plate 5 Two-handled jug, head-shaped vessel and one-handled jug, object registration numbers 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/ 6, 3 and 4.



a



b



c



d

Plate 6 Details of the decoration on the one-handed jug, object registration number 31/420-D6-1/D/7/0/4.
Colour enhanced for clarity.



Plate 7 One-handed jug showing handle attachment.

reddish-brown shield held in the left hand of his opponent, who is seen in a rather clumsily-depicted rear view. The shield is edged with blue studs on a yellow strip, and ornamented in yellow with a central rib and a scrolling X-device terminating in blue studs. This second gladiator also wears a continuous metal *manica*, protecting his right shoulder and arm, above a similar wide belt, this time decorated with a band of wave-pattern in black, again with bands of yellow-studded brown above and below; a flap of yellow cloth hangs below, over a white loincloth. Below the knees, the gladiator's lower legs and feet are protected with white wrappings (*fasciae*), cross-banded and studded in black and reddish-brown. His head is turned left to face his opponent and is entirely covered with a globular metal helmet, blue and yellow, with a fin-like crest, a yellow grating over the face and a horizontal rim protecting the neck. In his mailed right hand is a metal blade with a handle – a dagger or a short sword. Although still on his feet, he seems to be losing the fight: behind him stands a black-haired, bearded referee, wearing a knee-length baggy white tunic with reddish-brown stripes (*clavi*); with the forefinger of his raised right hand the referee points to the other gladiator, at whom his gaze is directed. In his left hand he holds a couple of slightly curving rods. Below the loincloth of the losing gladiator can be seen the hemline of the referee's tunic, but now painted yellow with dark-brown stripes, and his bare legs and feet, shod in short dark-brown boots, planted firmly on the wave-patterned 'ground-line'.

The other group, to the right of the handle, likewise consists of a pair of combatants and a referee. Another bare-headed, curly-haired gladiator seems to be delivering the winning blow at his opponent: his facial features are less clear than those of the other winning gladiator, but he seems to be smiling, and leaping with the triumphant force of the blow – his left leg is planted firmly on the wave-band 'ground-line', his right leg, bent at the knee, is raised in the air. Both legs are bare, save for yellow ties above and below the knees, and yellow and green anklets. He wears a dark-patterned white loincloth and a deep belt striped blue, yellow with black dots, reddish-brown with yellow studs, and green. At his left shoulder rises a yellow metal shoulder-guard (*galerus, spongia*) held by a hatched yellow strip slantwise across his chest. His left arm is protected with an arm guard, striped yellow, blue, reddish-brown and white, with yellow studs on the central reddish-brown band, and he grasps a short sword with blue metal blade and yellow handle in his left hand. His right arm is bare save for a green and yellow armband and blue wristband, and with his right hand he holds the yellow handle of a trident whose blue metal prongs threaten his opponent over the top of the latter's shield. The shield is a reddish-brown rectangle seen sideways-on, with yellow border, blue studs, yellow dots and a yellow/blue central boss (?) with yellow sawtooth ornament above and below. Behind it crouches the other gladiator, holding the shield with his bare left arm and attempting to stave off the attack with a short sword or dagger in his right hand. The right

arm is covered with a guard of white strips below a yellow-studded band of reddish-brown, then blue. His head is completely covered in a globular helmet of blue and yellow metal with a fin-like crest and a wide rim over his shoulders, but instead of a grating over his face, there is a solid metal piece with perhaps a slit for the eyes. He wears a short white tunic with a wide blue belt above a narrower reddish-brown strip with yellow studs; a flap of yellow cloth hangs below at the back. His left leg, kneeling on the ground, is protected from the knee down with white *fasciae*, cross-banded and studded in reddish-brown and black; only part of his bare upper right leg is visible. Behind him a standing referee dressed like the other and similarly bearded, faces full left and points with his raised right hand, which holds a curving rod, at the other gladiator. In his left hand he holds two further rods and a trumpet(?) coloured black.

The background to these scenes of combat is surprisingly floral, and more elaborate than that on the other surviving examples: around the top runs a chain formed by two green festoons. Below this the whole background is scattered with heart-shaped red blooms with a yellow calix, seen in isolation or attached to tall, leafy green stems. A green wreath, similar to those seen in more spriggy form on other gladiator glasses, lies just above the left leg of the kneeling gladiator, and a sprigged green stem between his shield and the left leg of his opponent may be a palm branch.

The painting is detailed and vivid, with sharp white highlights on the bronzed skin of the gladiators and the metal of the mailed arm-guards, the plates of which are indicated with little black strokes. The folds of the referees' white tunics are shaded with pale blue. The figures and their equipment are delineated with a thin brownish-black outline and seem to have been created as line-drawings which were then filled in with colour. The basic skin-colour is a thin reddish-brown with body contours outlined in stronger reddish-brown. Within the range of colours used, blue and yellow are apparently chosen to represent two different metallic surfaces (bronze and tinned bronze?), yellow perhaps also signifies wood and dense reddish-brown may be leather. The handle of the flask lies over the painted decoration and was clearly applied afterwards (Plate 7).

In each pair of combatants, the helmeted fighter may be identified as a *secutor*, from his distinctive helmet and other fighting equipment. His bare-headed opponent fighting with a trident should be a *retiarius*, but the net proper to this category of gladiator is nowhere apparent. This may be compared with the similarly netless figure in the Kos gladiator mosaic of the third century (Robert 1948, 98–9); for a unique example of the net shown in use see Junkelmann 2000a, 137. The referee (*summa rudis*) holds his typical pliant rod (Robert 1948, 84–6). The continuous scale-armour *manica* worn by both fighters of the pair to left of the handle is an item seen from the second–third century on in two-dimensional depictions and also bronze figures of gladiators (Junkelmann 2000a, 82; see also the early fourth-century 'Borghese' gladiators mosaic from Torrenova on the via Casalina, Rome: Junkelmann 2000a,

144 Figures 228–30). Despite their general similarity to the other painted gladiator representations on glass, the details and poses of the figures on the flask are more closely paralleled by representations on mosaic pavements; gladiatorial combats were a particularly popular subject in the Eastern Mediterranean in the second–third centuries (for the examples from Kos, Patras and Kourion see Dunbabin 1999, 216, 229). The gladiator seen in rear view may be compared with a variety of such figures in the 'amphitheatre mosaic' from Zliten now in Tripoli Museum (Ville 1965, Figures 17, 18, with a suggested dating late Flavian–early Antonine, though later dates have also been suggested, Ville 1965, 147, 152). This parallel was also noted by Coarelli (1963, 64) with reference to the better-preserved of the two gladiator glasses found at Lübsow in Pomerania, citing in addition the Gallo-Belgian relief illustrated by Robert (1949, Plate XXI).

Place of Origin of the Gladiator Jug

One of the most interesting questions raised by the discovery of this remarkable vessel at Ismant el-Kharab is its place of manufacture. In exploring this various avenues of investigation can be pursued: the distribution of painted glass in general, and specifically within Egypt, and suggestions for centres of its manufacture; in light of the possibility that Alexandria was the place of origin, what evidence exists for both glass manufacture there and the performance of gladiatorial games that could have inspired the production of such decorated vessels or created a market for them. The form of the jug does not provide unequivocal evidence for its place of manufacture, as variations on the type are found throughout Europe, around the Mediterranean and into the East.

I. Distribution of Painted Glass

Painter (1987, 259–62), Rutti (1991; 2003) and Nenna (in press) have outlined the development of painted glass from its appearance in Italy in the first century CE, where it was introduced from Syria or possibly Egypt. The material of the first century CE, *circa* 20–70 (Rutti 2003, 349), comprises hemispherical bowls and amphorisks in coloured glass, the latter only from Cyprus and Kerch on the northern shore of the Black Sea, the former from throughout Europe to Egypt, but mostly from the west. Rutti (2003, 357) lists 12 out of 76 examples as having been found in Egypt. It is suggested that many of the bowls were made in one factory, but that there was likely one factory in the east (? Egypt) and another in northern Italy. The motifs employed comprise predominantly birds and vegetation; recent finds, included in Rutti's count, at Berenike on the Red Sea coast conform to this pattern (Wendrich 1996, 137; Nicholson 1999, 233–4; Nicholson 2000, 206). Amongst exceptions to the standard decorative format of the early bowls is one from Nîmes decorated with pygmies and cranes (Rutti 1991, 130, Plate XXXVc; 2003, Figure 1).

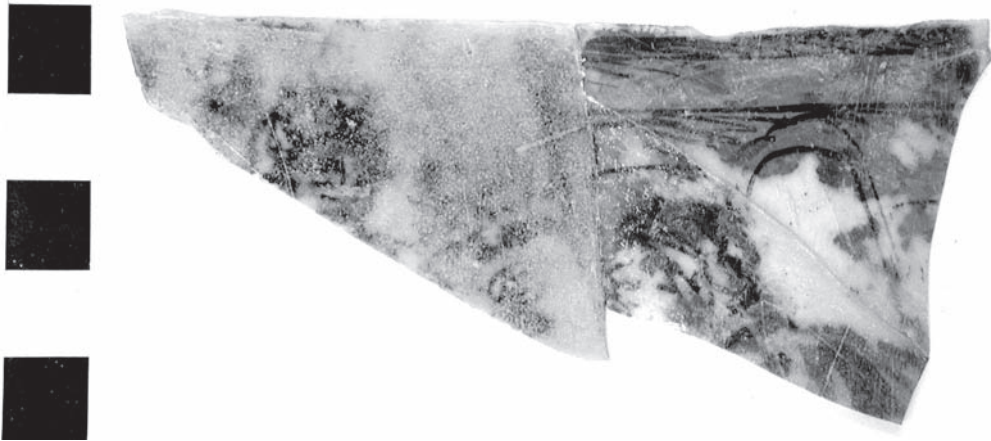


Plate 8 Large East Church (Area A/7): painted glass preserving the upper parts of three human figures.



Plate 9 Large East Church (Area A/7): painted glass preserving parts of two human figures.

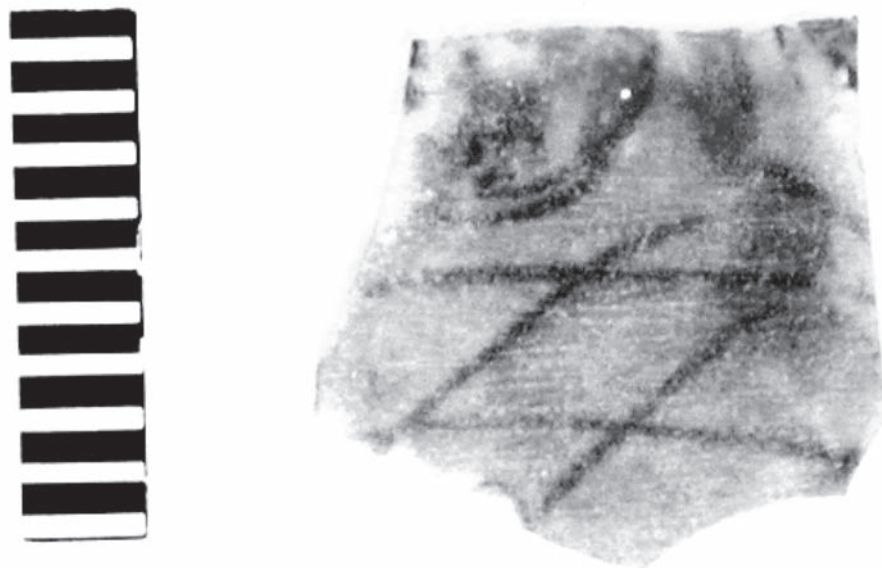


Plate 10 Large East Church (Area A/7): painted glass preserving part of a wrapped human figure, possibly Lazarus.

From Berenike, however, also come fragments from an exceptional, clear-glass bowl painted in polychrome with marine life, shells and vegetation, dated to the third quarter of the first century (Nicholson and Price 2003). Its fabric, form and decoration distinguish it from other first-century bowls and, along with pieces in the Corning Museum of Glass (Whitehouse 2001, 849–50), it may derive from an eastern source (Rutti 2003, 354–5) and may attest a distinct tradition. From the point of view of the present study, an even more interesting bowl derives from Algiers, which is decorated with figures of gladiators and foliage (Kurz 1954, 105, Figure 377; Coarelli 1963, 69, Plate XV).¹⁰ Painter (1987, 259) mentions this bowl as an example of the early manufactures, though it is morphologically distinct from them and also has a colourless base fabric; it may post-date them (J. Price personal communication, 2003).

Another group of painted glass, which includes a different range of shapes to those of the early group, has been thought to occur in the east from the late second century and in the west from the beginning of the third century (Painter 1987, 260–1; Rutti 2003, 354 with references). Other examples not from these sources are referred to by Hill and Nenna (2003, 89). Painter's dating of this group needs to be modified in light of suggestions that some of the material from the east (especially Begram) should be dated to the late first to early second centuries (see below). In the western examples the base material is colourless and the form, cylindrical cups, is very common and only found in the north-western provinces of the Roman empire; approximately 50 examples, some complete but most represented by fragments, are enamelled. They have been found around the North Sea in northern Germany, Denmark, Britain, western France and the Rhineland (Rutti 2003, Figure 9), and presumably were manufactured within the area. Seven or eight only show parts of gladiatorial scenes.¹¹

Amongst the painted glass from the east, of a variety of forms, Egypt has produced fragments, the Sudan has produced fragments and several more-or-less complete vessels, there are pieces from Syria, or ascribed to Syria, and an important collection has been found at Begram in Afghanistan. Those found in Syria or thought to have

been made there comprise the Daphne Ewer and pieces from a similar form found at Dura Europos, mentioned above, and the Paris Plate with mythological scenes (Harden *et al.* 1987, number 149).

The pieces from Egypt originate from 'Ain et-Turba and Dush in Kharga Oasis, Oxyrhynchos, Karanis, Quseir el-Khadim, Berenike and Krokodilô, plus a few without specific provenance. To these can be added not only the jug decorated with gladiatorial scenes from Ismant el-Kharab but also fragments found in the Large East Church at the same site (Marchini in Bowen 2002, 84). The latter may all derive from one or two flat panels, one of which was originally provided with a frame of turquoise glass rods and may have been set within a wooden frame into the altar of the church. The fragments are decorated in polychrome and preserve figurative, floral and geometric motifs. Amongst the former can be seen: a group of three figures with, on the left, a standing male figure with head turned to the right, a central figure looking straight ahead, and a figure on the right, bent and with head raised to look at the figure on the right (Plate 8); parts of two figures with that on the left with raised right hand (Plate 9); a small figure completely wrapped, possibly to be identified as Lazarus (Plate 10);¹² and a group with adults and a child at lower right (Plate 11). The identity of the scenes is uncertain, but given the find context it is tempting to suggest that they are biblical.

The 'Ain et-Turba fragments (Hill and Nenna 2003, 88–9) comprise those from a tall blue goblet decorated in red and with gold, and three fragments of thin colourless glass one decorated with a large feline (panther?) attacking a gazelle from a wild animal fight (*venationes?*), and two from the same object with the head of Eros or Victory and two figures, one making a libation. From Dush come fragments from a large plate decorated with the 36 decans (Nenna in press). Three pieces from Oxyrhynchos (Harden 1936, 100, Figure 2b; Coarelli 1963, 68, Plate XIV.4) derive from a bowl and are decorated with what may have been a circus scene: one fragment has the leg of a man wearing a tunic and boots before a bull, another a palm frond between two figures, and a third what resembles a naked child.¹³ Karanis (Harden 1936, 122, Plate XIV)

¹⁰ It is of interest to note that in the mid-first century CE mould-blown cylindrical cups and ovoid beakers with scenes of the arena were produced in the West, probably Roman Gaul: G. Ville, *Les coupes de Trimalcion figurant des gladiateurs et une série de verres 'sigillés' gaulois*, in M. Renard and R. Schilling, *Hommages à Jean Bayet*, Collection Latomus LXX, Bruxelles-Berchem, 1964, 721–33; Harden *et al.* 1987, numbers 88–90; J. Price, *Decorated Mould-Blown Glass Tablewares in the First Century A.D.*, in M. Newby and K. Painter, eds, *Roman Glass: Two Centuries of Art and Invention*, The Society of Antiquaries of London, London, 1991, 56–75; Nenna 2001b, 176–7, and numbers 286–99 with additional information in D. Foy and M-D. Nenna, *Productions et importations de verre antique dans la vallée du Rhône et le Midi méditerranéen de la France (I^{er}–III^e siècles)*, in D. Foy and M-D. Nenna, eds, *Échanges et Commerce du verre dans le monde antique*, Éditions Monique Mergoïl, Montagnac, 2003, 227–96.

¹¹ This information has been provided courtesy of Jennifer Price; for another recently-discovered piece see G. Sennequier and S. Le Mahéo, *À propos d'un verre à décor peint trouvé à Rouen*, *Annales du 13^e congrès de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre*, l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre, Lochem 1996, 175–84 and V. Arveiller-Dulong, G. Sennequier and N. Vanpeene, *Verreries du Nord-Ouest de la Gaule: productions et importations*, in D. Foy and M-D. Nenna, eds, *Échanges et Commerce du verre dans le monde antique*, Éditions Monique Mergoïl, Montagnac 2003, 150.

¹² This identification has been proposed variously by Gillian Bowen, Carla Marchini and Helen Whitehouse.

¹³ A fourth fragment mentioned by Harden (1936, 138) as possibly from a goblet with a pad-base and floral polychrome decoration is actually a piece of *millefiori* glass (M-D. Nenna personal communication, 2003).

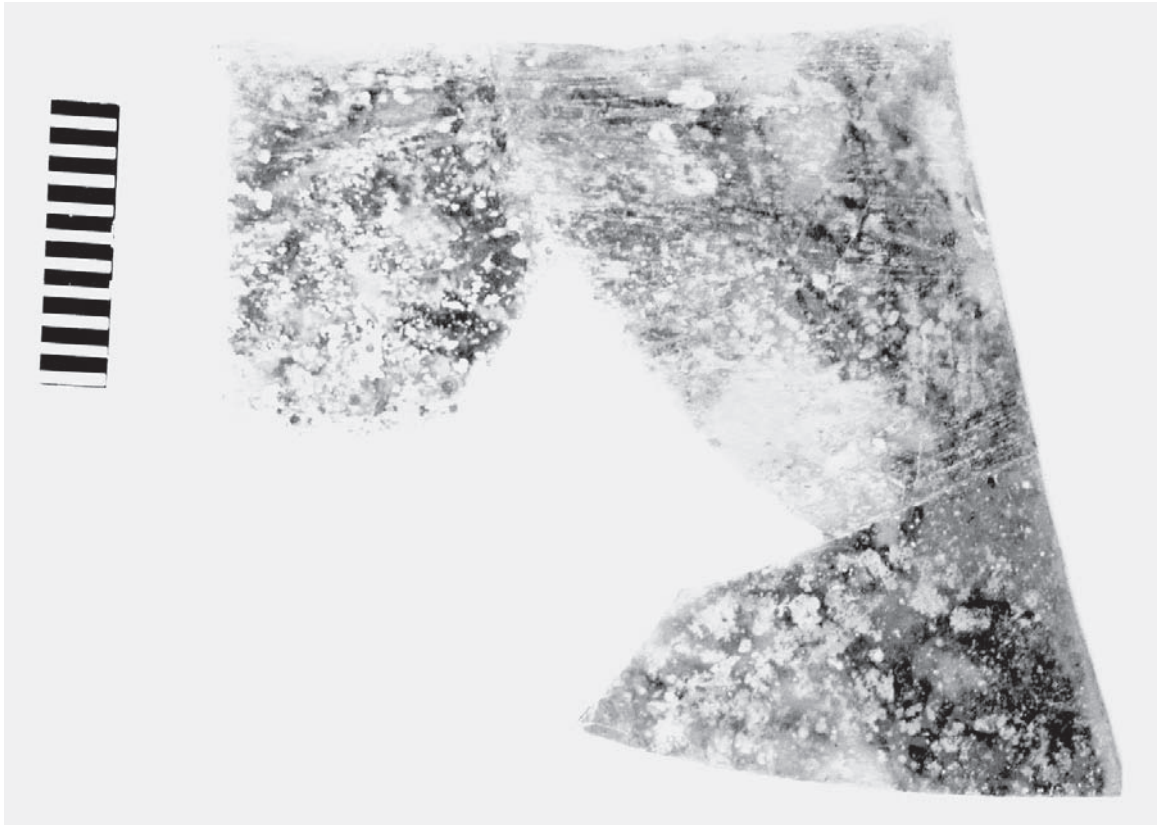


Plate 11 Large East Church (Area A/7): painted glass preserving parts of a group of three human figures.

yielded three pieces from a bowl with floral decoration. Amongst the Quseir el-Qadim fragments, eight in number (Roth 1979, 149; Meyer 1992, 38–9), floral and geometric designs occur, although one preserves the forepart of an animal identified as a dog (Meyer 1992, 38 number 342). From Berenike three fragments are reported, two from a flaring beaker and one with decoration of an animal (Nicholson 1998, 386–7).¹⁴ A single sherd from the Eastern Desert fort at Krokodilô (al-Muwayh) is decorated with what may be a bird (Brun 2003, 383). Of possible Egyptian provenance are: a cylindrical vase in the Metropolitan Museum of Art decorated with Nilotic scenes (Hill and Nenna 2003, 89), two fragments in the same collection from a tall goblet decorated with scenes of gladiatorial combat and animals possibly from the Fayum (Kurz 1954, 104, Figures 374 and 376; Coarelli 1954, 68, Plate VII.2–3), and two fragments in the Corning Museum of Glass, one decorated with a *putto* riding a hippopotamus and the other with a figure in boots (Whitehouse 2001, 259 numbers 854–5).

Painted glass found in the Sudan comes from Sedeinga and Meroe. Three vessels are known from the Meroitic

cemetery at Sedeinga. Two are tall narrow, dark blue flutes with beaded stems and feet similar to the head vase from Ismant el-Kharab, and carry painted and gilded decoration showing pharaonic-style offering scenes; they were found in pyramid WT8 (Leclant 1973) and have recently been dated to the second half of the third century and assigned a local manufacture (Wildung 1997, 364–7), though this has been questioned (M-D. Nenna personal communication, 2003). The third is a tall goblet from grave T56 in sector II of the cemetery, dated also to the third century, decorated with a Dionysiac theme and also thought to be a local manufacture (Berger-el Naggar and Drieux 1997; Berger el-Naggar 1999). Fragments of another blue glass goblet(?) were found in Tomb 5 of the northern cemetery at Meroe, with gilded decoration of a man with a shield and the legs and head of a lion (Dunham 1957, 127, 21-12-47c, 52, 70f). This tomb also yielded other painted fragments (Dunham 1957, 127, 21-12-50, 56). Tomb 13 there yielded other fragments from a green glass vessel thought to have originated in Tomb 5, including one with a royal or sphinx's head and a wreath, one with Nefertum on a lotus and another with a priest before a god

¹⁴ A further two fragments from Berenike are reported, but no detail or date provided; see J. W. Hayes, Summary of the Pottery and Glass Finds, in S. E. Sidebotham and W. Z. Wendrich, eds, *Berenike 1994. Preliminary Report of the 1994 Excavations at Berenike (Egyptian Red Sea Coast) and the Survey of the Eastern Desert*, Research School Centre for Non-Western Studies, Leiden University, Leiden, 1995, 38.

(Dunham 1957, 76, 22-1-47).¹⁵ They are assigned to the third century (Hill and Nenna 2003, 89).

One of the most significant discoveries of cold-painted/enamelled glass vessels was made at Begram between 1937 and 1939 in Rooms 10 and 13 of the so-called 'palace'. This material has been published with discussions by Hamelin (1953; 1953; 1954), Kurz (1954) and recently by Menninger (1996). Amongst the 179 glass vessels in the hoards were at least 18 cold-painted vessels, including cups, tall goblets and jugs, with the goblets being particularly common. They are decorated with mythological scenes: Zeus and Ganymede, Europa and the bull; the combat of Hector and Achilles, Orpheus; an Isiac ritual; several battle scenes; fishing and hunting scenes, including a panther attacking a gazelle; and at least two goblets had scenes of gladiatorial combat (numbers 199 and 201: Robert 1946, 128–36; Kurz 1954, 102–3; Menninger 1996, 56–7). Kurz (1954, 104) dated the goblets to the first century; Menninger (1996, 63) has assigned a date to the enamelled glass of late second to third century, while Whitehouse has on several occasions argued for a late first to early second century date (1989a, 153; 1989b, 97; 1998, 640–1), which has been accepted by Nenna (1999, 155). Amongst this find was one vessel decorated with what is regularly identified as the Pharos lighthouse. The place of manufacture of the painted glass from Begram has regularly been surmised to be Egypt,¹⁶ though Raschke (1978, 633 and note 510) has pointed out that this provenance is largely an assumption. The finds of painted glass from a wide variety of locations within Egypt and the Sudan, however, do render the possibility worthy of serious consideration, especially in light of the recent finds at Berenike,¹⁷ as does the similarity of the fabric of one of the painted goblets from Begram to second-century glass fabrics at Karanis (Whitehouse 1989a, 98–9; 1989b, 154). If these painted vessels were made in Egypt, then other goblets of similar type found at Lübsow in Pomerania and Sedeinga could also have an Egyptian place of manufacture (Coarelli 1963, 65). Other western types, namely two bowls from Denmark, are connected to some of the Begram finds by the use of the motif of a blue leopard with black spots (Kurz 1954, 105; Coarelli 1963,

Plate XIII.3–4), which is also found upon one of the pieces possibly from the Fayum (Coarelli 1963, 68, Plate VII.2). The similarity in the choice of the repertoire of motifs, the range of colours employed and the details of style, between pieces found in Egypt, Pomerania and at Begram has been observed (Kurz 1954, 104–5; Coarelli 1963, 65–6).

II: Glass Manufacture in Egypt

Nenna (1998, 152; Nenna *et al.* 2000, 107) has proposed that Alexandria played a significant role in the development of polychrome glass in the Ptolemaic Period, and that city's continued importance as a centre of glass manufacture is generally assumed (Harden 1936, 38–46; 1969, *passim*). Discoveries of kiln sites of Roman Period date confirm production and working at several sites in the Delta: Alexandria, Taposiris Magna, Marea and three in the Wadi Natrun (Nenna *et al.* 2000; Thirion-Merle *et al.* 2002–3); Thmuis (Bagnall 2001, 233)¹⁸ and Athribis (cited in Meyer 1992, 45). References amongst classical authors to Egyptian glass, glass manufacture and export, documentary evidence, and evidence for the working of glass at various sites (reviewed in Nenna *et al.* 2000, 107–12) all indicate activity from the Delta as far south as Edfu. At Ismant el-Kharab, while no kilns used for the working of glass have been found, several glass ingots have been recovered (Hope 2002, 182; this volume).

Various categories of glass have been identified as manufactured in Egypt. These types include, in addition to painted glass: a wide variety of engraved, facet-cut and high-relief-work glass from the first to fourth centuries, often inscribed and some with mythological scenes;¹⁹ mosaic glass from the Ptolemaic to late Roman Periods (Nenna 2002, 2003a–b); various types of mould-blown glass (Nenna 2003b) and inlays (Nenna 1995; 1998). Recent analyses have identified specific fabrics as Egyptian manufactures (Foy *et al.* 2003; Picon and Vichy 2003).

III. Gladiatorial Games in Egypt

The performance of gladiatorial games was linked to the imperial cult, the Roman army and Roman attitudes to

¹⁵ I am grateful to Joyce Haynes of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston for providing further information on these pieces, which are now in that collection and numbered 21.11757 and 21.11758.

¹⁶ Seyrig 1941, 261–3; Kurz 1954, 108–9; Coarelli 1963, 65; Harden 1969, 59; Price 1983, 215; Painter 1987, 260; Harden *et al.* 1987, 273; Whitehouse 1989a, 97; Whitehouse 1989b, 153; Menninger 1996, 71; Nenna 1998, 155. Whitehouse (1989a, 98–9; 1989b, 155) has suggested that some of the Begram pieces, especially the fish-shaped vessels and the goblets with openwork trailing, were made from cullet exported from Egypt to Mousa on the south-western tip of the Arabian peninsula and to Barbarike on the north-western coast of India, where it was made into vessels that later reached Begram. This suggestion is based upon analysis of samples from Begram and the similarity of their fabric to the group of early fabrics at Karanis.

¹⁷ This helps to confirm suggestions that glass was transported by ship down the Red Sea to India and then overland to sites such as Begram.

¹⁸ The source cited by Bagnall for this information (*Orientalia* 68, 313–420) was not available to me at the time of writing this article.

¹⁹ Kurz 1954, 100; Coarelli 1963, 73–8; Harden 1969, 54; Harden *et al.* 1987, 182, 190; Delacour 1993, 66; Nicholson 1999, 236–7; Hill and Nenna 2003; Nenna 2003a.

death and manhood (Wiedemann 1992, 44–7). Wiedemann (1992, 46–7) has proposed that amphitheatres situated on the margins of the Roman Empire assured soldiers that they were Roman, defined what belonged to Rome and symbolized, from a Roman perspective, confrontation with and triumph over barbarism. Attendance at the games marked acceptance of Roman ideology and cultural superiority. Thus, the celebration of the games following Roman conquest might be regarded as axiomatic in a city such as Alexandria, despite reservations that have been expressed in relation to their limited popularity in the Hellenized East (Robert 1940, 23–4). Their performance is certainly attested in Antioch, Beirut, Athens and Corinth and other sites in Greece, Rhodes and throughout Asia Minor (Robert 1940; 1946; 1948; 1949; 1950; Papapostolou 1989; Wiedemann 1992, 43–4, 129). Whilst the following discussion does not lay claim to representing an exhaustive study of the data, it does aim to draw attention to the variety of material that can be used to indicate the probability of the games having been performed in Alexandria.²⁰

A small but significant body of textual evidence attests the existence of gladiatorial training schools (*ludi*) in Egypt. An inscription from Naples from the reign of Domitian mentions this school and its procurator, and implies that it was created under imperial patronage (Robert 1940, 124–5; Lindsay 1965, 177; Ville 1981, 284), while other evidence indicates that it was in existence at least from the time of Nero (Ville 1981, 284–5, note 136) and even Augustus (Wiedemann 1992, 170). Juvenal (*Satire* VI, 82–3) refers to a Roman gladiator fleeing to Alexandria where, presumably, he would continue to fight.

From a military archive of the camp at Babylon (in modern Cairo) come documents relating to a *familia gladiatoria* attached to the camp (Robert 1946, 142–3) that mention gladiators, including a *retiarius*, wild animal fights and fights between men and animals. One fragment refers to a *ludos* at Nico ..., which Robert restores to read Nicopolis where the Roman army was stationed east of Alexandria. He believes that the school was attached to the army and was not for public performances. Whether the find spot of the documents indicates that there was a training school also at Babylon is uncertain.

From 260 comes a document recording the requisitioning of clothes on behalf of a *ludus* (P. Lips I 57: Robert 1940, 125; Lindsay 1965, 177), but which one is not specified, though it is assumed to be that at Alexandria. A second-century song, written upon one side of a papyrus the other side of which contains a tax-account from the Arsinoite nome, contains the complaint by a woman that her lover, a gladiator (*mirmillo*) has abandoned her (P. Rylands I, 15: Robert 1940, 125; Lindsay 1965, 176–7). Finally, gladiators are mentioned in Greek magical papyri

from Egypt (Robert 1940, 242 and note 3; Betz 1986: *PGM* IV. 1390, 1394, 2163; *PGM* VII.175; *PGM* XXXV.18). Of these one (*PGM* VII.175) is worth quoting here; it occurs in a collection headed ‘table gimmicks’: “To make the gladiators painted [on the cups] ‘fight’: Smoke some ‘hare’s-head’ underneath them”; the accompanying editorial note reads “It seems likely that the reference is to translucent, painted glass which, when lit, produces the effect” (Betz 1986, 120 note 6). This conveniently not only alludes to gladiators but glass painted with scenes of combatant gladiators being used in Egypt.

Gladiators of Alexandrian origin are attested throughout the empire especially in the West, from the first to third centuries, some specifically stated as from the Alexandrian *ludus*, though whether they all received their training in Alexandria is not known (Ville 1981, 264–7; Lindsay 1965, 177). A text of 113 implies the presence of gladiators in Alexandria (Lindsay 1965, 178). Whilst Dio Chrysostom (*Discourse* XXXII) at the end of the first century does not mention gladiatorial spectacles specifically amongst the pleasures of the Alexandrians, he does berate them upon their love of the games; Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus* 3, 11.77), late second to early third, warns against the moral dangers of attending the spectacles of the arena (Robert 1940, 243; Wiedemann 1992, 147).

The venue *par excellence* in which gladiatorial games were conducted was the amphitheatre. While no remains of such a structure in Alexandria have been discovered, there is textual evidence for one in Nicopolis. Strabo (*Geography* 17.I.10) refers to an amphitheatre and stadium there being new constructions; Josephus (*Jewish War* II. 490–91) records that in the reign of Nero the presence of large numbers of Jews at a public meeting in the amphitheatre prompted a riot. Other scenes of entertainment that included combat sports were the stadium and theatres, but these would only be used in the absence of an amphitheatre (Robert 1940, 34–66). Such buildings are also known in Alexandria, and at Antinoë and Oxyrhynchos (Bailey 1990, 122–3); Bailey (1990, 123) disputes the existence of amphitheatres outside of Alexandria. One theatre recently identified to the east of Pelusium has been claimed to have been used for gladiatorial games (Bagnall 2001, 232 and note 29, citing P. Grossmann), but no evidence to support this suggestion has been published.

One final category of data that may be reviewed here is representations of gladiators upon small finds.²¹ Reservations concerning the use of such material in a discussion of the location of gladiatorial games have been expressed, quite correctly, by Robert (1940, 37; 1946, 127–8). Such items as glass, lamps, terracotta and bronze figures, and ceramic vessels, decorated with gladiators were easily transportable, and their discovery at a site does not

²⁰ I would like to thank Klaas A. Worp for checking references to gladiators in documents from Egypt on my behalf.

²¹ My intention here is to indicate the range of objects that carry representations of gladiators not to present an exhaustive list of all examples.

indicate in all cases that games were conducted there. Robert (1946, 127) cites in this regard the glass vessels from Begram and Denmark, and a single lamp from Byblos, all sites or regions where there is no other evidence for the games. Whilst his reservations are acknowledged here, in the case of Egypt where inscriptional evidence proves the existence of at least one gladiatorial school and where suitable venues for the games existed, a brief review of such objects seems warranted. The manufacture of a variety of small items commemorating the games reflects their popularity, especially amongst the army. It has been noted that the frequency of such items is greater in areas with a strong military presence, and less in other regions (Hellmann 1987, 83–4). From the outset it should be noted that the number of such items is not large; for the glassware from Egypt see the discussion above.

Of terracotta figurines depicting gladiators there is one in the Graeco-Roman Museum at Alexandria²² (Breccia 1922, 263), one from Abukir and another from Middle Egypt²³ (Perdrizet 1921, 156–7 numbers 443–4), and one in Hamburg (Hamburg 1991, 80 number 86). Several others represent charioteers: two were found in the Fayum, one actually in a kiln (Perdrizet 1921, 156 numbers 440–1), several derive from Antinoë (Dunand 1990, numbers 609–11), one from Hawara now in the Ashmolean Museum (1888.776) (H. Whitehouse personal communication, 2003) and another lacks specific provenance (Dunand 1990, number 608). The identification of two figures from the Sieglin and Schreiber collections (Fischer 1994, 389 numbers 1002–3) as gladiators has been suggested; they appear to be equestrian. Finally, a figure in the Louvre of a monkey assuming the role of a gladiator may be noted (Dunand 1990 number 909; Willems and Clarysse 2000, 243 number 163). From the brief descriptions provided of the fabrics in which these pieces are made they appear to be Egyptian.

Another category of object made in local clay may be described, for want of a better term, as plaques. In the Graeco-Roman Museum at Alexandria there is a rectangular curved plaque (GR 22342; Bernard 1995, 43), made in a Nile silt fabric, decorated with two similarly-attired combatant gladiators (Breccia 1934, 50 number 320).²⁴ It was purchased from Nahman in 1930. Another plaque in brown clay from the Fayum (Perdrizet 1921, 115–6, number 439) bears a depiction of four *quadrigae* in a circus race.²⁵ Ceramic vessels were also decorated with gladiatorial themes. A fragment from Kom Firin, from a closed form in red clay, is decorated on the exterior in high relief with a combat between a *secutor* and what

may be a *retiarius* (Perdrizet 1921, 156, number 442). From Alexandria comes most of a bowl, in red-coated yellow clay, that has relief decoration on the interior of armour identified as that of gladiators (Perdrizet 1921, 157, number 446), but which could be that of soldiers.

Lamps and bronze figures form the final categories to be reviewed. Of 17 lamps or fragments from lamps, four derive from the recent excavations in the Gabbari cemetery.²⁶ Three of these are identified as imports on the basis of their fabrics; two depict single gladiators and the third gladiatorial armour (Georges 2001, 444 number 42). The fourth is made from a local fine clay and bears an indistinct representation of a gladiator shown from the rear. It appears to have been made from either an old mould or one made from a lamp that might have been imported (C. Georges, personal communication 2002). Kom Firin has yielded the handle from a lamp that is decorated with a figure of Nike crowing a triumphant gladiator while his opponent allows his sword to fall to the ground; it is made in yellow clay (Perdrizet 1921, 157 number 445). The remainder were discovered in Egypt, but lack further indication of provenance. Four are in the Alexandria Museum (registration numbers 28070, 28302, 28497, 25147; Breccia 1914, 237 Figure 91, 265 Figure 126; Michalowski n.d., Plate 83), three in the British Museum (Bailey 1988, numbers Q1909-10, Q1957) ascribed to the first and second centuries, and the others were part of a private collection (cited in Hellmann 1987, 85 note 8). The sole bronze figure of a gladiator published is from Xoïs and formed the handle of a knife (Perdrizet 1911, 75–6 number 112).

Conclusions

From the evidence that has been presented above it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions in relation to the place of manufacture of the jug decorated with gladiatorial combat found at Ismant el-Kharab. Egypt, and more specifically Alexandria, emerges as a possible candidate. The manufacture of a wide variety of glass in Egypt throughout the Roman Period is now accepted, amongst which enamel-painted glass, some with scenes of gladiatorial contests and other games, is one probable category.²⁷ Most of these examples of painted glass are ascribed to the late first century and the second century, but some are third to fourth centuries. If the flutes found at Lübsow and Begram were indeed made in Egypt, then there was a tradition for producing painted vessels in sets. The Alexandrian glassmakers, and other craftsmen, could

²² For information on items in this collection I am most grateful to Mervat Seif-el-Din.

²³ In the publication this is described as a lamp; however, while it possesses a handle and a hole at the front at the figure's genitals, there is also a hole in the rear at the shoulders, which renders its use as a lamp improbable.

²⁴ They wear crested helmets, a right arm guard, greaves and boots or leggings, and carry square shields and short swords.

²⁵ A third plaque possibly from Memphis in a silt clay carries a representation of Harpocrates as a Roman general (Willems and Clarysse 2000, 269 number 198).

²⁶ I am most grateful to Marie-Dominique Nenna for enabling me to see these items, and Camélia Georges for information.

²⁷ Examples from Ismant el-Kharab, 'Ain et-Turba, Oxyrhynchos, Meroe and possibly the Fayum; see the discussion above.

have witnessed gladiatorial games held at Nicopolis, if the performances there by members of the imperial school were not restricted to spectators from the military. In view of the suggested date of the jug from Ismant el-Kharab, it should be noted that gladiatorial games continued to be celebrated in various parts of the Roman world throughout the fourth century despite a series of rescripts by the emperors, and gladiators were still depicted upon consuls' medallions into the first half of the fifth century (Weidemann 1992, 156–9). How long games were celebrated in Alexandria is not known. They appear to have ceased in the west after the third century (Weidemann 1992, 159) but examples of engraved glass with representations of gladiators and the circus continued to be manufactured into the first half of the fourth century as examples found in Germany and Italy illustrate (Goethert-Polaschek 1977, 38 number 104, 48–9 number 150; Harden *et al.* 1987, 210–12).

The manufacture of small items decorated with gladiatorial or related themes does not need to have resulted from first-hand observation but could have drawn upon a repertoire of widely-available, accepted standard compositions. Indeed, the detail that is often included in such representations would have required either extremely good knowledge by the artisans of the differences in the armament of the various gladiators or access to descriptions/illustrations upon which to draw. The scenes depicted upon these items tend to be similar despite the type of object being produced. They focus upon the highlights, especially the end of the combat (Hellmann 1987, 84; Weidemann 1992, 92–3; Junkelmann 2000a, *passim*; 2000b, 31–74). As noted by Helen Whitehouse above, the iconography of the glasses with gladiatorial scenes resembles that found on mosaics, of which there are several in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa (Dunbabin 1978; Weidemann 1992, 25) as well as Europe. This is particularly obvious from the posture of the figures, the inclusion of the referee and the victor's prizes (palm-frond and crown). The similarity of one of the pairs of figures on a glass goblet found at Begram and figures in mosaics from Zliten in North Africa, Kreuznach in Germany and Reims in France, has been commented upon by Robert (1946, 129–36).

The decoration on the painted jug from Ismant el-Kharab conforms to the formats found upon the other glass with similar scenes despite it post-dating them by at least a century. This can be seen in the composition and colour scheme employed. Other close parallels can be found on a variety of clay medallions from Europe (Junkelmann 2000a, illustrations 213, 218 and 220). Weidemann (1992, 25) states that in mosaics from the late third century onwards representations of gladiatorial combat became rare and were replaced by those of the hunting and capture of wild animals, though some are known of the early fourth century (for example Junkelmann 2000a, illustrations 215–6 and 228–30).

Whether the Kellis jug was decorated by an artist who had personally observed gladiatorial games or was drawing upon the standard repertoires may not have been important to the person/s who acquired it. We cannot know what

significance the decoration held for the purchaser/s: was it a memento of a visit to the games or simply an item with interesting decoration? It certainly was a luxury piece; but was it brought to Kellis because of its decorative or ideological value, or for its contents, likely some precious oil or resin such as that once within the head-vase found nearby? Was it bought in Alexandria when new by its owner at Kellis or traded via middle-men, and when viewed at Kellis what significance could the decoration have held for those who had not seen the games, for which there is no evidence in the Egyptian countryside? It certainly must have acquired greater value because of the rarity of such items in the provinces, probably being a veritable antique when it was dropped, broke and abandoned. Its discovery offers the possibility of extending the time frame during which painted glass with gladiatorial scenes was produced, apart from being, without doubt, the best preserved of all such vessels. Items in the two deposits also indicate that some of the residents of ancient Kellis had access to luxury products of the highest quality.

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Colin Hope would like to thank a number of colleagues for their assistance. Marie-Dominique Nenna most generously made available copies of various of her studies of glass prior to publication and also of published material that could not be obtained in Australia; she provided a wide variety of information on glass from Egypt. Helen Whitehouse and Olaf Kaper have also aided me in matters bibliographic. Marie-Dominique Nenna and Jennifer Price have both kindly commented upon a first draft of the full article, made suggestions for its improvement, provided information for inclusion and saved me from a variety of assumptions and errors; however, any that remain are entirely my responsibility.

Postscript

Following the completion of this study the complete text of Nenna (in press) was made available. In this the painted glass of the late first century onwards is divided into two chronological groups, namely late first to second centuries and third to fourth centuries. It is not possible to emend the discussion herein in light of this division.

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