

SMALL BOTTLE DECORATED WITH CROSSES AND LOZENGES

Byzantine, 6th - 7th century A.D.

Glass

H: 9.6 cm

Reference: 14482



This small bottle was blown in a hexagonal mold; the flat base still retains traces of the parison; the mouth is flared and broad, with a rounded rim.

Each face of the vessel is adorned with a pattern embossed in relief and bears the symbol that was carved on the mold. Unfortunately, this mold would have been widely used, and the decoration of the bottle is slightly blurry and not clearly visible.

The shape, the technique and the decoration nevertheless enable us to classify this example in a large group of vessels (composed essentially of bottles and of one-handed jugs), which can be related to the biblical religions and were intended for the pilgrims. Manufactured in series in Near Eastern workshops (in Israel, Syria and Jordan), they were decorated with religious symbols alternating with more or less elaborate vertical lozenges. The specimens intended for the Jewish faithful were adorned with objects such as amphoras, goblets or menorahs, while various types of crosses (with three-steps pedestals, in the shape of globes or boxes) embellished the flasks prized by Christian faithful. A small group of vessels is decorated with the caliph standing upright; these were probably intended for the Muslim worshippers.

Although partially faded, the decoration on our example still shows the three types of crosses alternating with lozenges: this vessel was therefore intended for the Christian community. Typologically, it belongs to group A, I-II of the classification proposed by D. Barag and can be dated between the late 6th and the 7th century A.D.

CONDITION

Complete and in good condition, but largely covered with patina that partially damaged the surface and made the decoration difficult to

decipher.

PROVENANCE

Acquired on the Swiss art market in 2001.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BARAG D., Glass Pilgrim Vessels from Jerusalem, in *Journal of Glass Studies*, XII, 1970, pp. 35-63.

STERN E.M., *The Toledo Museum of Art, Roman Mold-blown Glass, The First Through Sixth Centuries*, Rome, 1995, pp. 247 ff, nos. 169-170.