

Part of a Glass Bowl from Ham Hill, S. Somerset

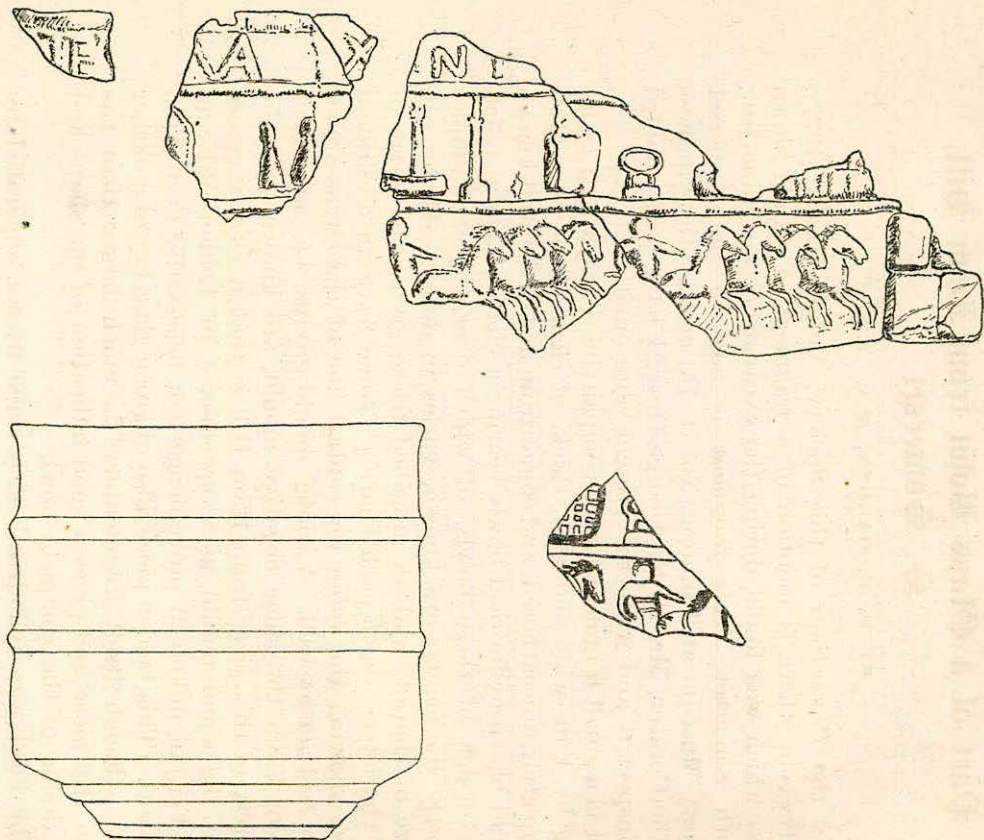
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IN the *Proceedings* of this Society, Volume lxviii (1922), p. lxxxviii, there is mention of a fragment of mould-blown glass which was found during the excavations on Ham Hill, South Somerset. This fragment is now in the Somerset County Museum at Taunton (No. G. 75) and by the kindness of the Curator, Mr. H. St. George Gray, I have been enabled to inspect it and write the present note on it.

It is a small fragment (see accompanying illustration) $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. long by 1 in. wide and $\frac{1}{8}$ in. thick, of clear olive-green glass completely unweathered, and comes from one of the well-known mould-blown cylindrical bowls bearing a chariot-race in relief. The design of these bowls, of which over thirty examples (mostly fragments) are known, varies in detail. All have a frieze of chariots and an inscribed frieze giving the name of the charioteer above each chariot; some have an additional frieze showing the *spina* (or central line of the circus-arena) with *ædicula* as well. Various mould-groups, i.e. specimens coming from the same negative mould, are known, and the interest of this piece from Ham Hill is that it clearly comes from the same mould as a specimen ¹ in Leiden Museum (see Fig.) of unknown provenience, not necessarily even from Holland. This Leiden piece, also of green glass but of a darker shade, though itself fragmentary, is much larger than the Ham Hill piece and gives a good indication of the shape and the design of the complete bowl.

The bowl was cylindrical with three friezes, separated by raised horizontal mouldings. The frieze at the top carried the inscription of which only parts of one or two names are preserved. The second frieze shows altars, obelisks, etc., such

¹ Hitherto unpublished. I have to thank Dr. W. C. Braat of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden for sending information about this piece and the drawing from which my figure is taken, and for generous permission to publish it.



Fragments of Glass Bowls depicting Chariot-races in Leiden Museum (*top figure*) and in Taunton Museum from Ham Hill, together with reconstruction of complete Shape of the Bowls.

(Scale $\frac{1}{2}$ linear.)

as were to be seen along the *spina*. The third shows portions of two of the four-horse chariots with their drivers, the second of which is approaching the *meta* or goal. It will be seen that the Ham Hill piece corresponds with the central portion of the largest fragment of the Leiden piece.

Fragments from Autun in France¹ and Vindonissa in Switzerland² and a third of unknown provenience in the British Museum³ are very similar in general design, and form a parallel mould-group.

These chariot bowls, and their counterparts which show contests of gladiators in the amphitheatre, are found in the western provinces of the Roman Empire (but not in Italy itself) on first- or early second-century sites. The stratification of most of them is not known, but since examples of the gladiator cups were found at Colchester⁴ in a stratification which must be before A.D. 65, it is clear that the date of fabrication of the group as a whole is probably nearer A.D. 50 than 100. The greatest number have been found in France and Switzerland and the most prolific single site is Vindonissa. In view of their distribution it seems likely that the place of fabrication was somewhere in Eastern or Southern Gaul.

¹ Now in Sèvres Museum (no. 4800): Morin-Jean, *La verrerie en Gaule sous l'empire romain*, p. 189, fig. 249.

² Now in the Vindonissa Museum, Brugg (no. 23, 1043), unpublished; I owe my knowledge of this piece to the kindness of the Curator, Dr. C. Simonett.

³ No. S. 198, formerly in the Slade and Roussel collections; A. Nesbitt, *Cat. of the Coll. of Glass formed by Felix Slade*, p. 33, fig. 46.

⁴ *Camulodunum*, by C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Rep. Res. Comm. Soc. Antiq.*, xiv; Sect. III, by D. B. Harden, p. 299 f.