

# GLASSMAKING AT CORINTH : A REASSESSMENT

David Whitehouse

The Corning Museum of Glass, USA

The workshops at Corinth have occupied a prominent place in the study of medieval glassmaking for nearly 50 years. There are two reasons for this : (1) ostensibly, they are the only Middle Byzantine glassmakers' workshops that have been discovered and (2) they are thought by many to be the producers of prototypes for some of the most common varieties of late medieval glass vessels in Italy and central Europe, such as pruned beakers (Fig. 1) and beakers with mould-blown ribs (Fig. 2). We owe our knowledge of medieval glassmaking at Corinth to Gladys Davidson (Mrs Saul Weinberg), who has published four accounts and discussions of the finds : Davidson 1940, which contains descriptions of their discovery and of one of the workshops and its products ; Davidson 1952, which includes a catalogue of medieval glass from Corinth ; Weinberg 1975, which is a review of the evidence for glassmaking at Corinth in the light of discoveries elsewhere in the Mediterranean in the sixties and early seventies ; and Weinberg 1981, which is a summary of her previous paper with additional parallels. We owe the fact that the workshops are susceptible to reinterpretation so long after their discovery to the careful accounts by Mrs Weinberg, and by Prof. Robert Scranton, who published an analysis of the medieval architecture of Corinth (Scranton 1957).

## The Discoveries at Corinth

In 1937, the remains of two glassmakers' workshops were discovered on the site of the ancient agora : Agora Northeast, which was represented by fragments of pots and other debris but no diagnostic structures, and Agora South Centre. Although they seem to have employed different practices and made a number of different products, the two workshops were assumed to be contemporary (Weinberg 1975, p. 127). « The most noteworthy difference between the two... was the use in the Northeast factory of circular (probably cylindrical) clay furnace pots as well as the production of somewhat different vessels and of bracelets or bangles » (Ibid., p. 130 ; see also Idem

1981, pp. 916 and 918). My remarks apply exclusively to the South Centre workshop.

The South Centre workshop was found at the end of the Spring season (Morgan 1937a, pp. 480-481 ; 1937b). The excavators encountered « a stratum of rather sandy, reddish earth, containing a mass of glass frit, fragments of vases, and a few medieval coins of indeterminate date. The following day more glass was found in this area... With the glass were a few sherds of sgraffito pottery, two Byzantine lamps, and two coins, one of Alexius I (1081-1118), and the other of Manuel I (1143-1180) » (Davidson 1940, pp. 297-299).

Work resumed in October (Morgan 1938a, p. 155 ; 1938b). On the first day, the excavators found a dump of broken glass apparently associated with two coins of Manuel I. The next day, in area M-L 5, they discovered further dumps in and around a group of buildings measuring some 42 x 20 metres, one of which contained a furnace. « With the glass were many more coins : 1 Roman, 1 Vandal, 1 Romanus III (1028-1034), 1 Isaac I (1057-1059), 1 Michael VI (1056-57), 1 Michael VII (1071-1078), 2 Alexius I (1081-1118), 6 Manuel I (1143-1180), 1 Nicholas of Monforte (1450-1462), and a number of illegible pieces. From the immediate vicinity of the furnace came the following coins : 1 Corinth IIvir, 1 Constans II (641-668), 3 Nicephoros II (963-969), 1 Alexius I, 3 Manuel I. It may be observed from these coins, as well as from others subsequently found, that the coins are predominantly from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The few Frankish coins found with the glass were discovered in areas where there was suspicion of later intrusion. The pottery found with the glass is also from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a few pieces from the early thirteenth century » (Davidson 1940, p. 299). Coins from the deepest deposit of glass comprised « 1 Constantius II (337-361), 1 Leo VI (886-912), 1 Romanus I (919-944), 4 Manuel I (1143-1180), 3 illegible, probably Manuel I » (Ibid., p. 299, n. 5).

The glass from the vicinity of the South Centre workshop is described in Davidson 1940, pp. 308-323 ; Davidson 1952, pp. 83-90 and pp. 107-122 (together with finds from other parts of

the city) ; and Weinberg 1975, pp. 130-141. The following is a selection of types that were present in relatively large numbers and so presumably were made on the spot :

1. Mould-blown cups (Fig. 3 : 1). « These simple cups were one of the chief products of the... factory (120 bases were found)... The shape is a shallow one, with the sides narrowing toward the deeply pricked bottom. The rim (diameters varying from 0.04 m to 0.075 m) is usually rounded off, but occasionally folded or finished with an applied coil. The material is always very thin, of a [transparent pale] blue or green color. The cups were blown into moulds, and often the blowing was continued after they were removed from the moulds, as is shown by the swirled effect on some of the fragments. The patterns... are various – circles, ellipses, diamonds, herring-bone, ribs. Usually they start a short distance below the rim and cover all of the cup, sometimes even under the bottom (Davidson 1952, p. 87).

2. Prunted beakers (Fig. 3 : 2-3). Two varieties occur at Corinth. The first variety was represented by « a large number of fragments, found chiefly in the Agora South Centre factory. All are made of an almost entirely colorless material... The rather graceful shape is distinguished by a wide flaring rim, separated from the body by an applied thread of the same material. The body, tapering gradually toward the bottom, terminates in a base formed of an applied coil pinched out into tiny feet (toed base). The deep kick usually retains traces of the pontil mark. The small prunts or blobs, of the same color as the [beaker] itself, are applied to the body in oblique rows » (Davidson 1952, p. 87). The second variety is made of transparent yellowish glass and has a shorter rim, a squat, slightly bulbous body and a trailed base-ring. Only two examples were found in the South Centre area and, as Mrs Weinberg pointed out, the type may not have been made at Corinth (Weinberg 1975, p. 136).

3. Beakers with vertical ribs (Fig. 3 : 4). « This vessel, which has mold-blown vertical ribs prominent at the upper ends and fading as they descend, is not nearly so common at Corinth as the prunted beaker, but the preserved fragments are sufficient evidence of local manufacture. Most come from the South Centre Factory... All the beakers are about 9 cm high ; the bases vary from 6.4 to 7.1 cm. Most of the specimens are [transparent] pale blue-green, much like the prunted beakers... Both rims and bases of these beakers are finished off by a coil, some of the body color, others with a dark blue rim » (Ibid., p. 137-138).

4. Bottles with everted rims, tall necks and globular or ovoid bodies (Fig. 3 : 5-7). The neck may have a bulge and the body may have vertical ribs ; the base invariably has a kick (Ibid., p. 134-136).

One other type of vessel found at the South Centre workshop has occupied a prominent place in discussions of glassmaking at Corinth : a cylindrical bottle with cold-painted gold and enamelled decoration (Fig. 4) (Davidson 1940, p. 320, figs. 20-22, no. 51 ; Idem 1952, p. 115, pls. 58, 146. a, fig. 14, no. 750).

In 1940, Mrs Weinberg noted that the majority of the coins from the South Centre workshop date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. She also noted that some of the glass appeared to be Egyptian or in imitation of Egyptian prototypes. In particular, she pointed out that the bottles with gilt and enamelled decoration have parallels from Fustat in Egypt, which Lamm (1930, p. 121, pl. 41, no. 28), believed to be Egyptian and attributed to the period around A.D. 1000. One of these parallels is decorated with a camel accompanied by a Greek inscription. The object, Mrs Weinberg concluded, was made in Egypt around 1000, by a craftsman who spoke Greek.

This conclusion led to the conjecture that the workshops at Corinth were established by Greek-speakers from Egypt. Given the supposed date of the parallels from Fustat and the dates of the coins from the South Centre workshop, Mrs Weinberg went on to suggest that the glassmakers were refugees from the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (996-1021). « During the first ten years of the reign the Christians and Jews enjoyed the immunity and even privileges which they had obtained under the tolerant rule of Aziz ; but as time went on they came in for their share of irrational persecution... Next, a general order was issued for the destruction of all the Christian churches in Egypt, and the confiscation of their lands and property ; the work of demolition went on for at least five years (1007-1012). the Christians were offered the choice of becoming Muslims, or leaving the country, or else wearing a heavy cross as a badge of their degradation » (Davidson 1940, p. 324, quoting Lane-Poole 1901, pp. 126-127 ; see also Weinberg 1975, p. 141).

Mrs Weinberg also suggested an explanation of the end of glass production at Corinth : « In the year 1147 the Normans, under Roger of Sicily, conquered and systematically pillaged the town of Corinth. It is quite probable, in view of the coins and other evidence found in the debris, that the [South Centre] glass factory was destroyed at this time. Roger was especially interested in establishing fine industries in Sicily, and is said to have carried off with him most of the Corinthian artisans as well as their products » (Davidson 1940, p. 324).

The supposed removal of Corinthian glassmakers to Sicily led to speculation about the origin of prunted beakers in central Europe : « The trail of [prunted] goblets after the twelfth century is a long and devious one to follow... All over the Near East the shape persisted, usually without the

prunted decoration. In South Russia a number of specimens have been found, and in Germany, where it was introduced ca. 1300, the shape developed extensively during the following centuries. It is possible that Greece was an intermediate stage between Syria and Germany.<sup>1</sup> More plausible is the possibility of transmission through the Norman Kingdom of Sicily » (Ibid., p. 310).

These conclusions about the beginning and end of glassmaking at Corinth and their significance for developments in Italy and central Europe were repeated in 1952 : « It appears that the establishment was founded early in the eleventh century by Greeks from Egypt, probably as a result of oppressive measures of the ruling Caliph. Setting up a simple, one furnace glasshouse, these refugees proceeded to make a great variety of wares, mostly of a delicate, « luxury » type... The glass factory flourished throughout the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, then ceased to operate after the Normans in 1147 carried off most of Corinth's technicians... The closest parallels to the Corinthian [prunted] goblets, both in form and decoration, are those which appeared in Germany in the early fourteenth century... the Normans who made off with the Corinthian artisans probably were responsible for the transmission of the type » (Davidson 1952, pp. 83 and 88 ; cp. Schneider 1980, pp. 227-8).

### Corinth, Apulia and the Balkans

When the workshops at Corinth were discovered, next to nothing was known about medieval glass vessels elsewhere in Greece, or in Italy and the Balkans. In the 1960s, however, similar material began to accumulate in southern Italy and Donald B. Harden advanced the hypothesis of a direct relationship between the prunted beakers from Corinth and similar vessels found during survey and excavation in Apulia. Echoing Mrs Weinberg's conjecture about the transportation of artisans from Corinth in 1147, he wrote : « Some of these technicians might well have settled in Italy (where Apulia itself was then under the sway of the Norman kingdom of Sicily), and have continued to produce glasses of the Corinth varieties for a century or more. Indeed, some such assumption is almost essential if we are to explain how the prunted goblet... spread westwards, becoming current from the 14th century onwards in western Europe... We can, therefore, with some assurance ascribe these Apulian prunted goblets and other types which can be paralleled at Corinth to the late 12th or 13th century » (Harden 1966, p. 70).

The similarity between vessels from the glasshouses at Corinth and from sites in Apulia was underlined by the discovery at Lucera castle in 1964-5 of numerous prunted beakers (Fig. 5)

and other objects with parallels at Corinth, most of which were found in contexts datable to the thirteenth century (Whitehouse 1966).

Shortly afterwards, Ljubinka Kojić and Marian Wenzel published a number of late medieval glass vessels found in Yugoslavia. These included a prunted beaker, closely comparable with the squat beakers from Corinth and Lucera. It was discovered during the excavation of the medieval cemetery at Veličani, in Herzegovina, in association with a coin minted at Dubrovnik in 1356-1438. Kojić and Wenzel drew attention to the commercial connections between Dubrovnik and Apulia and suggested that Apulian glass vessels may have been an item of trade (Kojić and Wenzel 1967, pp. 76-80, figs. 4-5 and pp. 88-90 ; see also Wenzel 1977 and De Maine 1979).

Thus, in the late 1960s, it appeared that glassmakers in Apulia produced vessels very similar to some of the vessels produced at Corinth. Finds from Lucera showed that some of these objects belong to the thirteenth century. These and other discoveries reinforced the hypothesis that southern Italy (with or without Sicily) served as a geographical and chronological « bridge » between glass made at Corinth in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and glass made in central Europe in the fourteenth century (cp. Harden 1972, p. 101).

Despite these discoveries, Astone Gasparetto (1975) dismissed the suggested role of Apulia in the diffusion of glass of this type and insisted on the primacy of glassmakers in Venice and the immediate vicinity in the distribution of Corinth-type glasses, and by Han and Zecchin (1975), who presented copious documentary evidence for the exportation of glass and glassmakers from Venice to the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile, another variety of glass found at Corinth had been re-assessed : the cylindrical bottle with gilt and enamelled decoration (Megaw 1959, 1968 ; see also Idem 1980). The most prolific find-place for bottles and other vessels of this type is Paphos in Cyprus, where A. H. S. Megaw recovered fragments of at least seven examples during excavations at the castle known as Saranda Kolones. Megaw concluded that at least some of these objects were in use when the castle was abandoned after a violent earthquake in 1222. They appeared, therefore, to have been made between the late twelfth century and 1222. If this is correct, they cannot support the view that the South Centre workshop came into existence shortly after 1000. Moreover, wherever the objects were made (Mrs Weinberg believes that they are Corinthian, while Megaw argues in favour of Constantinople), it is generally accepted that they are not Egyptian.

In the light of the new information from Italy, the Balkans and Cyprus, Mrs Weinberg sta-

ted in 1975 that she « would no longer insist on definite dates for the beginning or end of the Corinth South Center factory » (Weinberg 1975, p. 133). Nevertheless, her « Egyptian hypothesis » survived. Indeed, she now drew attention to the presence at the South Centre factory of an Egyptian green glass jeton bearing the name of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir (1036-1094). « Adding to this the fact that all the single pieces from the factories – that is, those apparently not made at Corinth – are Egyptian in character », she wrote, « ... one may conclude... that the glassmakers of Corinth came there from Egypt » (Ibid., p. 141, fig. 32).

Mrs Weinberg also commented on the end of the South Centre workshop : « All [Corinth-style glasses] have been dated either in the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, some on good evidence, others not. For the present the Corinth specimens seem to be the earliest which are reasonably securely dated. When the South Center factory began to operate is not definitely known, but it cannot have lasted beyond the reign of Manuel I [1143-1180]. Whether the establishment terminated in 1147 (as I maintained in 1940) or whether it continued with part of its working force, as I am now more inclined to believe, we are still left with the problem of the disparity in date between the Corinth material and most of the similar goblets found elsewhere » (Ibid., p. 137).

### Recent finds from Italy

In the next few years, the chronological gap between the material from Corinth and similar material from Italy seemed to shrink. For Gasparetto (1975, p. 146), finds from Torcello provided the missing link. Preliminary reports on excavations at Torcello suggested that glass with parallels at Corinth was present in the twelfth or thirteenth century. The key deposit is *strato* III in *scavo* II. This included fragments of bottles with a tall neck and globular body, rims with green trails, one fragment with a blue trail and one fragment with a mould-blown pattern of circular depressions (Leciejewicz, Tabaczýnska and Tabaczýnski 1977, pp. 175-81). The bottles and mould-blown fragment, wrote Gasparetto (1982, p. 16, in Italian, summarizing Idem 1975), « ... make rather plausible the hypothesis of a derivation of forms and decorative techniques from [Corinth] to Venice, which after 1082 had not only acquired complete sovereignty from Constantinople but also obtained exceptional commercial privileges in many maritime cities of the [Byzantine] Empire, one of the most important of which was Corinth. Here, there were already more than a few resident Venetian merchants in the twelfth century. In

1129, one of them was a Muranese, Vitale Luparini... »

The evidence, however, is not conclusive. The deposit contained nine coins ranging in date from the fourth or fifth century (?) to at least the reign of Frederick II ; in fact, there were two coins of Frederick II, struck between 1218 and 1250, and two unidentified coins of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (S. Tabaczýnski in Leciejewicz, Tabaczýnska and Tabaczýnski 1977, pp. 272-4). The fragments of glass, therefore, may be as early as the twelfth century, as Gasparetto supposed – or as late as the thirteenth century.

A similar uncertainty surrounds the pruned beaker from Palermo, published by Rosa Barovier Mentasti and others (1982, p. 67, no. 45) as datable to the twelfth century. The beaker was found in a deposit in *saggio* III in Lo Steri, which the excavator attributed to the « Norman period » (Falsone 1976, p. 121). The same deposit, however, also contained fragments of spiral ware and of maiolica with brown and blue decoration imported from the Maghreb (Ibid., figs. 6 and 7). Spiral ware was made at least until the second quarter of the thirteenth century (Berti and Tongiorgi 1984) and the maiolica with brown and blue decoration was made at least until the mid-thirteenth century (Ibid., pp. 207-211). The « Norman » deposit at Lo Steri, therefore, contains material that is just as likely to date from the thirteenth century as the twelfth.

Indeed, the latest finds from Italy, have emphasised, rather than reduced the apparent disparity in date between the Italian and Corinthian material. We know now that mould-blown cups, pruned beakers, beakers with vertical ribs, bottles with vertical ribs and the use of blue prunts or trails occur in most parts of the peninsula – in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Whitehouse 1973, pp. 115-117). The following list (which is far from exhaustive) makes the point :

1. Genoa, Liguria. At San Silvestro, the earliest pruned fragments were found in deposits attributed to *fase* Q, which is believed to have begun in 1404 and ended in 1472 (Andrews and Pringle 1977, p. 172).

2. Farfa, Lazio. At Farfa abbey, the earliest pruned beakers (Fig. 6) and cups with mould-blown ornament occur in period 11, in association with some 40 coins, the latest of which was struck in 1253-6. Unfortunately, the character of most of the deposits attributed to period 11 (garden soil, which contained numerous residual finds and appears to have been turned over frequently) prevented us from dating the finds more closely. The pruned beakers that have been published have straight sides and a trailed base-ring (Newby 1987, pp. 263-264 ; Idem, in press).

3. Tarquinia, Lazio. All the types mentioned above were in common use in the forerunner of

the Palazzo Vitelleschi in the years around 1390 (Fig. 7). While some of the pruned beakers resemble the straight-sided vessels from Farfa, others resemble the two varieties found at Corinth (Whitehouse 1987, pp. 325-326, nos. 5-11).

4. Brindisi, Apulia. The earliest pruned fragments were found in *strato* VII, associated with a coin of Frederick II minted in 1209 (Patitucci Uggeri 1976, pp. 155-159).

5. Otranto, Apulia. Cups with mould-blown decoration, comparable with the cups from Corinth, occur in deposits assigned to phase V (which began in the late eleventh century and ended some time in the twelfth century). The first pruned beakers and vessels with blue prunts or trails occur in phase VI (which is attributed to the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries). The pruned beakers are made of pale yellowish-green glass, which is thought to be of local origin. The glass from phase VI also included two fragments of blue bottles with gilt and enamelled decoration. There was no diagnostic glass from phase VII (fourteenth century) (Giannotta in preparation).

## Corinth reconsidered

At the time of their discovery, the workshops at Corinth were dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries on the basis of the coins that were found with them. The subsequent recognition of an apparent gap of more than half a century between the glass from Corinth and the examples of very similar glass from sites in Italy raises the question: was the South Centre workshop correctly assigned to the eleventh and twelfth centuries? Two aspects of the site, the stratigraphy and the history of the medieval buildings in the South Centre Area, suggest that the accepted chronology may be mistaken. Moreover, it is now clear that the written evidence for the removal of glassmakers to Sicily in 1147 is wholly inconclusive.

First, the stratigraphy. Like many old excavations, the investigation of the South Centre workshop is difficult to reconstruct from the published records. In terms of absolute depth, the highest dump of glass was found 2.4 metres below the site datum and the lowest dump 3.2 metres below datum. « The rather wide range of depth which they show may be explained by the fact that the damaged glass must have been dumped into pits dug in the existing surface, the depth of such pits depending largely on the amount of glass to be discarded » (Davidson 1940, 299). The use of the words « must have been » suggests that no pits were actually observed; their existence appears to have been assumed. It further suggests that the excavation may not have been strictly stratigraphical – a conjecture supported by the excavator's use of the word « cleared » to describe what was done

in the South Centre complex (Morgan 1938b, p. 367). These considerations raise the possibility that finds from some 0.8 metres of deposit, comprising both the glass-filled pits and the earlier deposits through which the pits were dug, may have been combined. If this is the case, we have no means of determining from the published accounts which of the glass and coins came from the workshop and the dumps of glass and which came from deposits that were earlier than the workshop and the dumps.

Secondly, the structural history of the South Centre Area. In his account of the architecture, Scranton made two important observations. Concerning the date of construction, he wrote that « coins of Alexios I were discovered in the walls of integral parts of the complexes, showing that the major surviving construction must date from the end of the eleventh century. Other coins on the floors indicate that the buildings continued to exist until the fourteenth century at least, although they may not have continued in use as glass and pottery factories to that date » (Scranton 1957, p. 68). Similarly, when discussing the buildings in the Central Area after the fall of Corinth to the Franks in 1210, he noted: « Throughout the entire area the buildings of the twelfth century survived in considerable parts through the thirteenth century at least, subject to repair and remodeling. This is evident from the alterations to the twelfth-century buildings themselves, some of which are datable by coins to the thirteenth century, and from the addition of walls and rooms to earlier buildings at higher levels » (Ibid., p. 86).

Finally, the removal of the glassmakers to Sicily. The « evidence » for this consists of a passage in the chronicle of Nicetas Choniates (c. 1140-1213). According to the chronicle, Roger II, while returning from raiding farther east, entered the Gulf of Corinth, landed at Itea and marched on Thebes. He attacked and entered the city, departing with loot and prisoners, among whom were silk-weavers. Next, the Normans attacked Corinth. Again, they were successful. Choniates continued: « So he [Roger] then put the wealth of Corinth and the most distinguished Corinthians on his ships... And one that saw the Sicilian triremes departing thence would not have guessed them to be pirate ships, but would rather have thought them merchantmen of a thousand wares » (Finley 1932, quoting Becker 1835, p. 101). Following the Peace of Ancona in 1155, Roger repatriated all his Greek prisoners, except the Thebans and Corinthians. « Even now », wrote Choniates, « one may see the children of these Thebans and Corinthians weaving their fine gold-stitched cloths in Sicily ». As Gasparetto (1975, p. 145) remarked, two points are immediately obvious: the first passage makes no reference to the seizure of Corinthian artisans and neither passage mentions any craftsmen other

than weavers. There is, therefore, no documentary evidence for the removal of Corinthian glassworkers to Sicily in 1147.

## Some Implications

The preceding paragraphs have four major implications for the South Centre workshop and its products:

1. If the medieval structures in the South Centre Area date from the end of the eleventh century, the establishment of the workshop cannot have taken place before about 1100.

2. The main products of the workshop – mould-blown cups, pruned beakers, beakers with vertical ribs and bottles – have no close parallels in Egypt and the hypothesis that it was founded by Egyptians cannot be sustained.

3. If the building that housed the workshop continued to exist until the fourteenth century, the latter could have ceased to function at any time between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.

4. Given the similarity of the workshop's products to thirteenth and fourteenth century glass in Italy, we should consider seriously the possibility that its activity began and ended in the period of Frankish occupation and that the glass-makers were Italians.

The corollary is obvious: if the South Centre workshop belongs to the thirteenth or fourteenth century and is Italian, we must abandon the hypothesis (which is widely accepted as « fact ») that medieval glassmaking in Italy and central Europe was influenced by Byzantine glassmaking in Greece.

## Acknowledgments

This paper was stimulated by discussions at the colloquium on « The Aldrevandini Group », held at the Historisches Museum, Basel on 27-28 August, 1988. The colloquium was convened by Hugh Tait of the British Museum to coincide with the exhibition *Phönix aus Sand und Asche* and the Eleventh Congress of the International Association for the History of Glass. I am particularly grateful to Erwin Baumgartner, David Buckton and Ingeborg Krueger for their comments on the material from Corinth. For information on unpublished material from Italy, I thank Maria Teresa Giannotta (Otranto) and Martine Newby (Farfa). None of these persons, however, should be held responsible for what I have written.

## Résumé

L'atelier de verriers mis au jour à Corinthe (dans le centre sud de l'agora), il y a près de cinquante ans, peut aujourd'hui être reconsidéré à la lumière des verres médiévaux mis au jour en Italie du Sud puis à Tarquinia. Les comparaisons avec ce matériel récent ainsi qu'un réexamen des fouilles de Corinthe permettent de proposer une

nouvelle interprétation de cet atelier : daté non plus des XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles, mais du XIII<sup>e</sup> ou du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, il aurait été en activité durant la période de l'occupation franque et les verriers auraient été non pas des Egyptiens immigrés à Corinthe mais des Italiens. Nous devons dans ce cas abandonner l'hypothèse selon laquelle l'art du verre médiéval en Italie et en Europe centrale a été largement influencé par les verriers byzantins de Grèce.

## Abstract

One can re-consider the status of the glass workshop of Corinth (in the south center of the Agora) in the light of medieval glass finds in southern Italy and Tarquinia. Comparisons of the Corinthian glass discoveries with the new Italian finds and a detailed consideration of the stratigraphy of the old investigation lead to a new interpretation: the Corinthian workshop would be 13th-14th century instead of 11th-12th century in age. It was in operation during the period of Frankish occupation, and the workers would be not of Egyptian origin but Italian. Therefore one should abandon the idea that the central European and Italian medieval glass was influenced by Byzantine or Greek traditions.



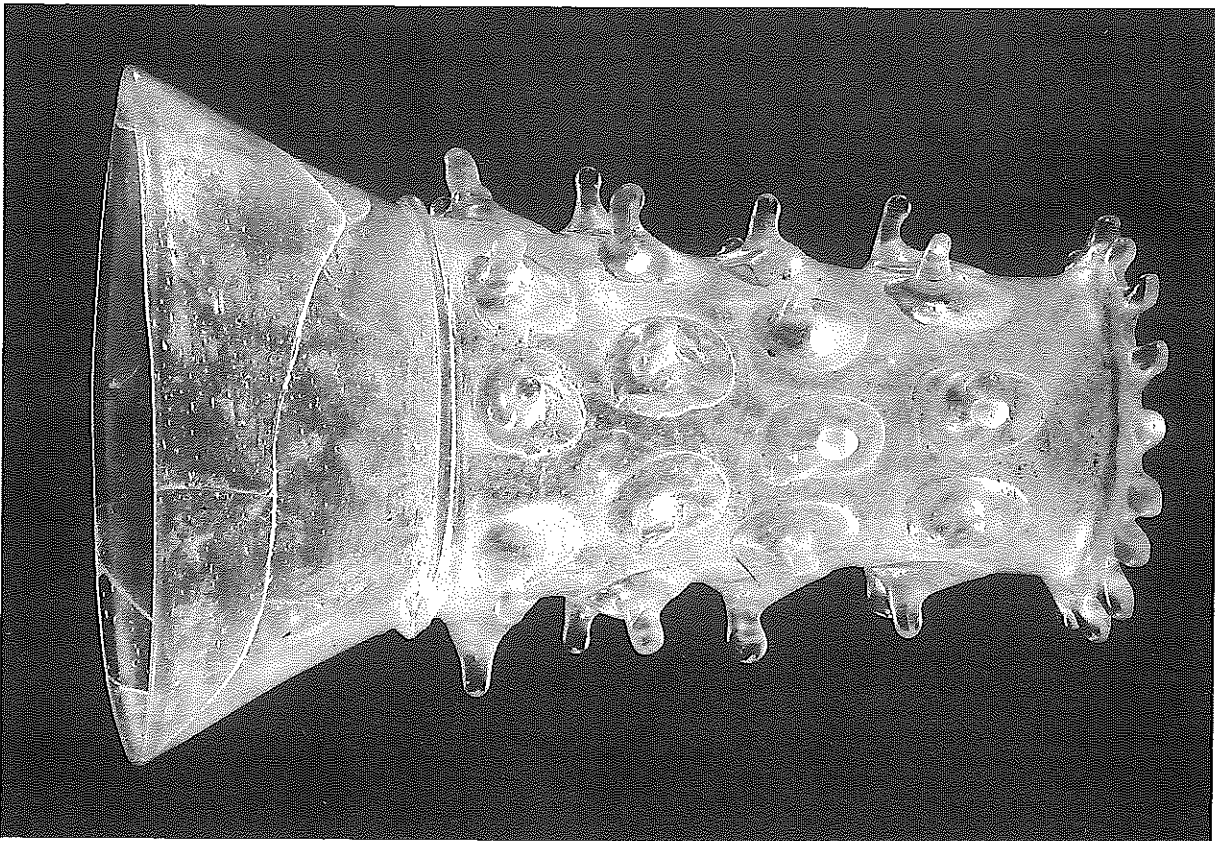


Fig. 1. Printed beaker. Colourless glass. H. 12.5 cm. Formerly in the Biemann Collection. The Corning Museum of Glass, 87.3.33.



Fig. 2. Beaker with mould-blown ribs. H. 9.5 cm. Colourless glass with translucent blue trail on rim. The Corning Museum of Glass, 88.3.47.

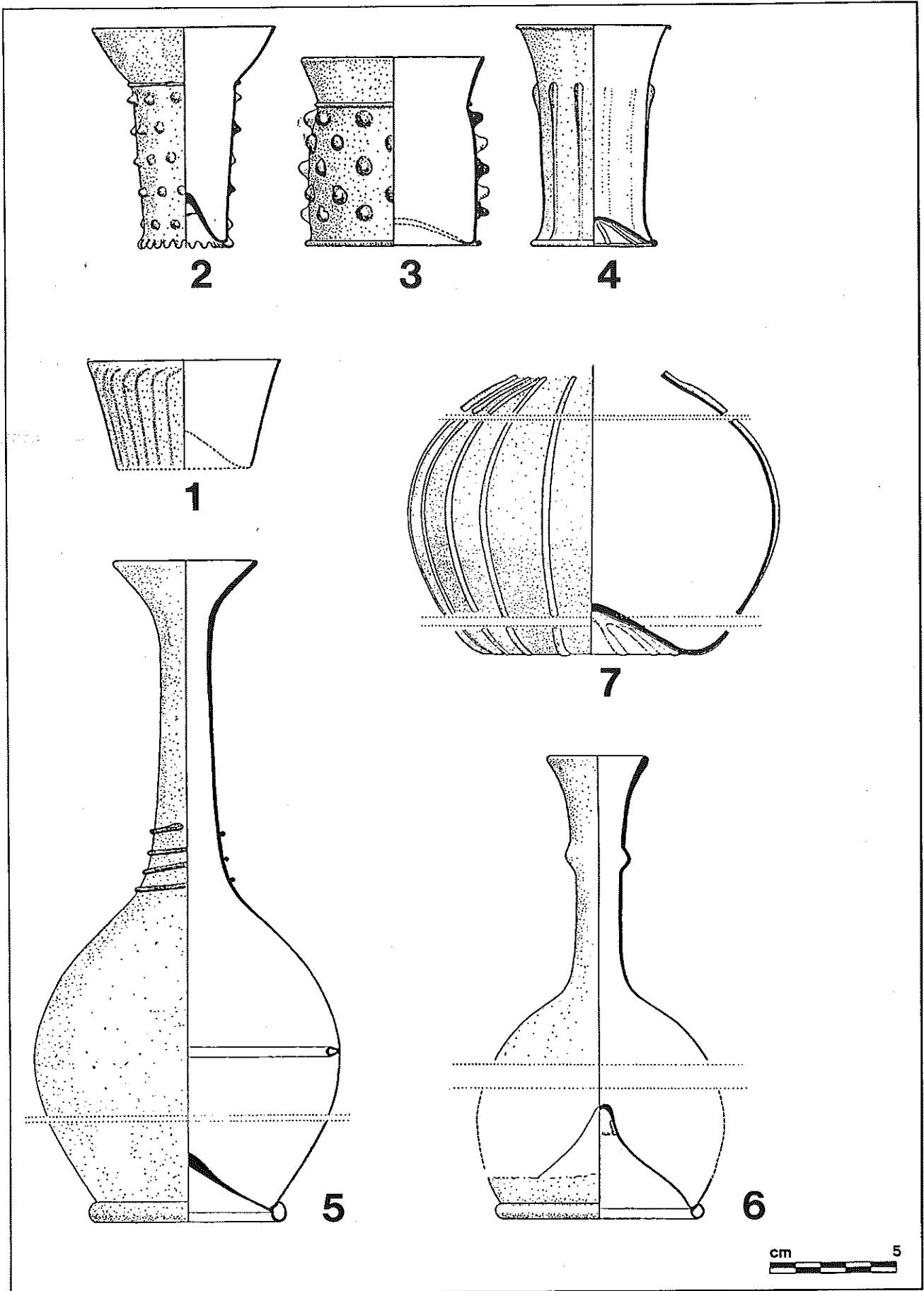


Fig. 3. Glass from the South Centre Workshop at Corinth : 1, Mould-blown cup ; 2 and 3, prunted beakers ; 4, Beaker with mould-blown ribs ; 5-7, bottles.



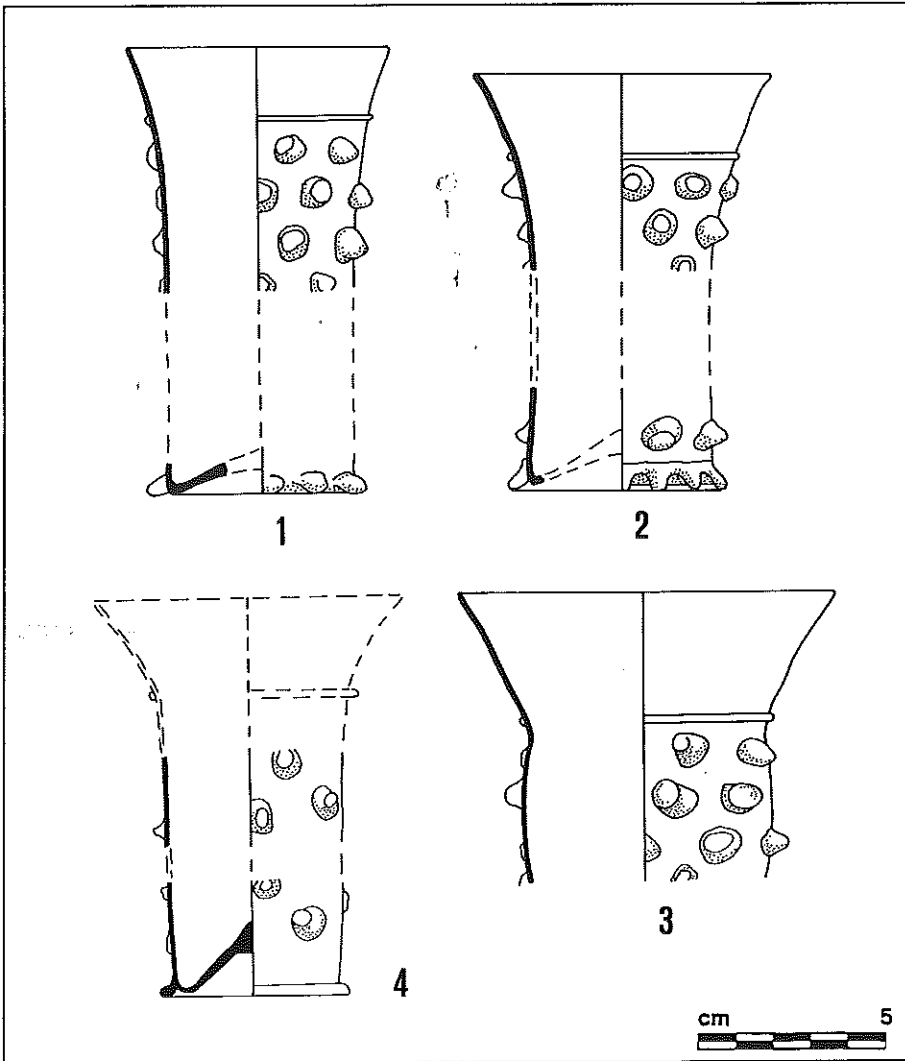


Fig. 5. Prunted beakers from Lucera castle. Scale, 1 : 2.

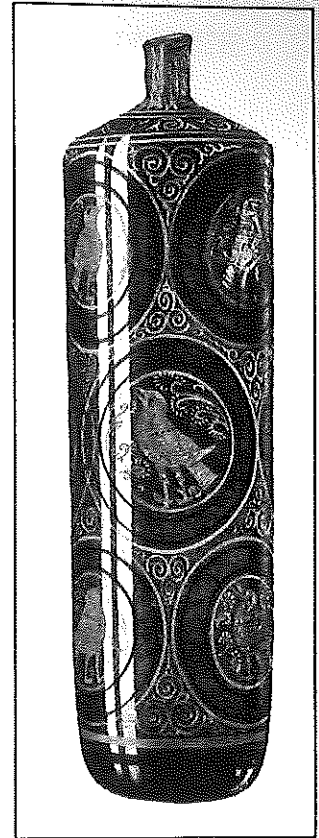


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of gilt and enamelled blue glass bottle from Corinth. H. about 21 cm. After Davidson 1952.

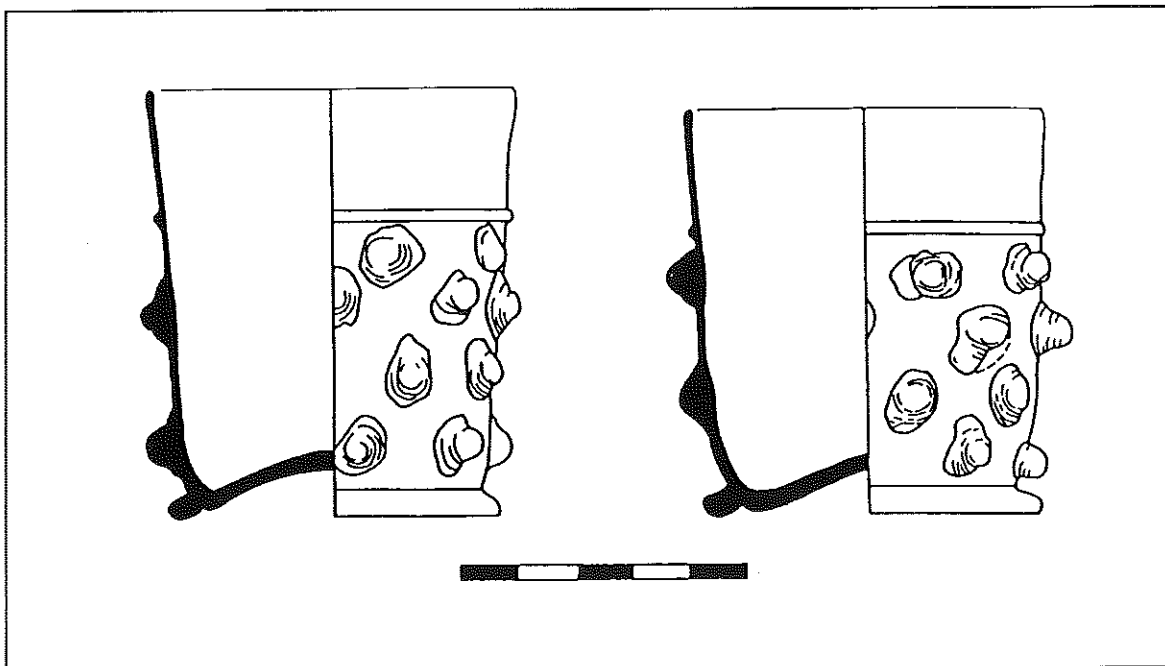


Fig. 6. Prunted beakers from Farfa abbey. Length of scale, 5 cm. After Newby 1987.

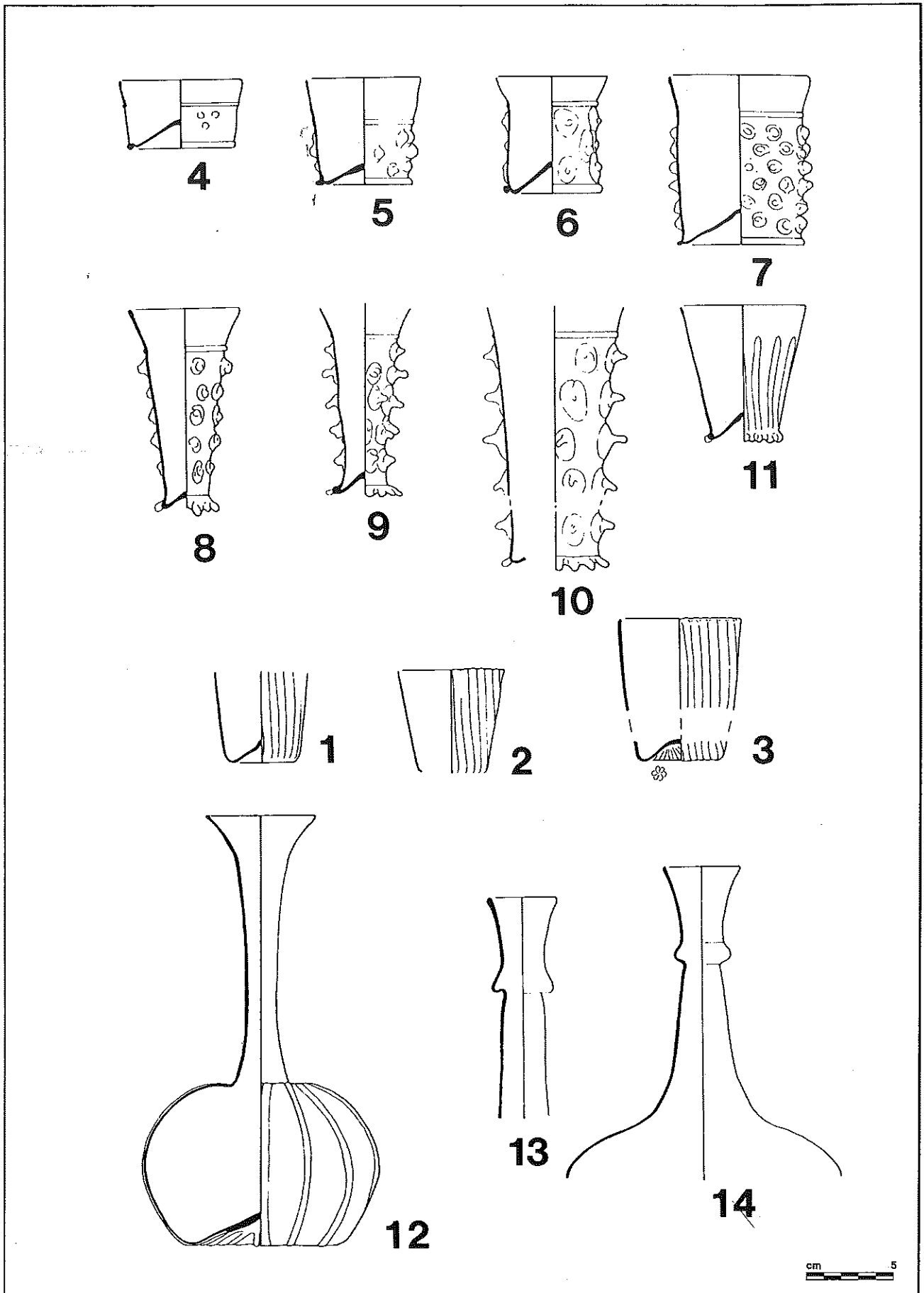


Fig. 7. Glass from Tarquinia : 1-3, mould-blown cups ; 4-10, pruned beakers ; 11, beaker with mould-blown ribs ; 12-14, bottles. After Whitehouse 1987. (Figs. 1 and 2 appear by courtesy of The Corning Museum of Glass.)