13. Evaluating the movement of open-work glassware in late antiquity

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The first impression one has when confronted with an open-work glass vessel is undoubtedly the delicately pierced outer layer. Known today as open-work vessels, cage cups, or diatrete, this kind of glassware may have been used as drinking-cups or lamps. Although carved from a single, continuous piece of glass, these distinctive vessels were divided into an extensively carved and pierced outer layer, and a plainer inner layer that served as the container. The two layers remained connected only by a network of perpendicular glass bridges (fig. 13.1). The technical difficulties involved in this elaborate construction are related to, but surpass, the technical proficiency exhibited by contemporary forms of cut glass decoration, such as facet cut or cameo glass.

Drawing upon the extant corpus of open-work glass vessels, this paper briefly evaluates the movement of the highest form of luxury glassware produced exclusively by Roman craftsmen throughout the Roman Empire, East and West. The paper will introduce principal variations found within this category of glassware, and outline the three types of glass trade involved in the production of open-work vessels. Dating and distribution will then be discussed in order to see what trade patterns can be determined.

Three Stages of Production

Throughout Roman times, most raw glass was produced in the Levant and Egypt. It was exported from the site of primary production to glass-

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2 Some are inscribed with toasts or mottoes, while one retains its original metal collar and suspension rings; see D. Whitehouse, Glass of the Roman Empire (Corning, 1988), 50, fig. 21.

3 Pliny, HN 36.65.190–92.

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The Roman Empire is known to have used any significant display of the label of a wine that was expensive in a glass amphora vessel, either a large, pointed or ovoid amphora or in a modern tenet, i.e., a modern glass or glass amphora. However, the first and second Roman amphora glass vessels have been determined, and the best material of glass-open-work vessels from the amphora have been constructed.

Figure 1.2: Diagram of glass-open-work vessel.
Figure 13.2 Distribution map of glass open-work vessels in the late Roman Empire.
e the consumers. 

The consumers' decision to purchase a certain type of product is influenced by factors such as price, quality, and availability. 

Class-open-work vessels are a popular choice for households due to their durability and versatility. These vessels are often used for various purposes, including storage, cooking, and serving. 

Although the price of class-open-work vessels may vary, the overall quality and functionality are generally consistent with the price range. 

In conclusion, class-open-work vessels are an excellent choice for consumers looking for a reliable and versatile product. 

Evaluating Movement of Open-Work Classware