Religion in the Roman Empire

Volume 1
No. 2
2015

The Role of Objects: Creating Meaning in Situations

Mohr Siebeck

Religion in the Roman Empire

Edited by Reinhard Feldmeier, Karen L. King, Rubina Raja, Annette Yoshiko Reed, Christoph Riedweg, Jörg Rüpke, Seth Schwartz, Christopher Smith, Markus Vinzent

Please send manuscripts and editorial inquiries to:
Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke
Universität Erfurt
Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien
Postfach 900221
99105 Erfurt / Germany
E-mail: *rre@uni-erfurt.de*

Full Text Online
Free access to the full text online is included in a subscription. We ask institutions with more than 20,000 users to obtain a price quote directly from the publisher. Contact: *elke.brixner@mohr.de*.

In order to set up online access for institutions/libraries, please go to:
http://www.ingentaconnect.com/register/institutional.

In order to set up online access for private persons, please go to:
http://www.ingentaconnect.com/register/personal.

Publisher: Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG, Postfach 2040, 72010 Tübingen
Can be purchased at bookstores.

Typeset by Martin Fischer, Tübingen.
Printed by Gulde-Druck, Tübingen.
Printed in Germany.

ISSN 2199-4463 (Print Edition)
ISSN 2199-4471 (Online Edition)

Hallie G. Meredith

Engaging Mourners and Maintaining Unity: Third and Fourth Century Gold-Glass Roundels from Roman Catacombs*

Abstract

Roman gold-glass provides evidence of a nascent custom widely practiced throughout the catacombs but limited to Rome – excising a gold-glass roundel from a functional vessel or inserting an entire vessel with gold-glass base and – permanently sealing it outside of a *loculus*. Although less common, gold-glass pendants were also selected for inclusion outside of tombs. It had been presumed that the intended recipient was the deceased. This essay, however, argues that gold-glass roundels were effectively a means of engaging mourners; their placement shaping interactions in funerary spaces. Analysing the iconography and inscribed content typically found on both third century gold-glass pendants and third to fourth century gold-glass vessel bases, this essay investigates the shift from likeness to abstracted individuation on these roundels which coincided with a fundamental change in the relationship between viewer and mourner.

Keywords: funerary space, gold-glass, iconography, inscriptions, mourners, Roman catacombs, third and fourth centuries CE, use

1 Gold-glass roundels: Shaping interactions in funerary space

Gold-glass roundels are remnants of a circuitous and only partially preserved chapter in the history of art from a dynamic period of change. Roman gold-glass provides evidence of a nascent third century custom widely practiced throughout the catacombs but limited to Rome – excising a gold-glass roundel from a functional vessel – and permanently sealing it outside of

* This paper benefitted from lively discussion offered by participants at the Lived Ancient Religion conference on Objects in Eisenach, Germany in 2013. I wish to thank Jörg Rüpke, Rubina Raja and Lara Weiss for the opportunity to explore such a rich topic. I also wish to thank Jaś Elsner, Michael F. Thomas, and two anonymous reviewers for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

RRE 1 (2015), 219–241 DOI 10.1628/219944615X14296073073610
ISSN 2199-4463

a *loculus*. Although less common, entire vessels with gold-glass bases and gold-glass pendants were sometimes selected for inclusion in the catacombs, but not inside of tombs. Until now, it has been presumed that the intended recipient was the deceased. Although stratigraphic contexts cannot specify dates for burial or use of the catacombs, historical evidence provides a narrow date range for this custom of approximately the mid-third to early fourth centuries CE.[1] Vessels with gold-glass roundels are adorned with text, imagery, or a combination thereof. The name 'gold-glass' refers to the inclusion of a thin piece of gold-leaf which was carved and sometimes painted.[2] Also known as *zwischen* glass or *sandwich* glass, such terms refer to the production technique: a thin layer of gold-leaf is permanently encased between two layers of transparent glass.[3] Typically, a gold-leaf decorated, transparent roundel was encased within the base of a vessel.[4] However, smaller figural roundels were also known to have adorned the walls of wide vessels such as bowls or lamps.[5] Based largely on iconography and inscribed content, it is possible that gold-glass vessels were often personalised gifts marking an important event in the life of the user(s), such as marriage or a religious commemoration.

These personalised gifts were subsequently and irrevocably transformed from movable, functional vessels, to immovable features embedded in catacombs throughout Rome. These roundels became part of the space itself, shaping its use.[6] The evidence suggests that individual agents within a collective chose to end any alternative uses for these functional vessels by either excising a personalised gold-glass roundel for use in the context of bur-

1 For monotheistic groups that would not sacrifice to the imperial cult, the period from Decius (r. 249–251 CE) to Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) resulted in intermittent religious persecution. See Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 8.2, 17.6–10 (transl. G. A. Williamson, 1989, London: Penguin Books); *Lactantius: De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 12 (transl. J. L. Creed, 1984, Oxford: Clarendon Press); Frend 1984.

2 For variations, see Meek 2013.

3 A variation is also known whereby the gold-leaf was applied and carved onto one piece of glass without the addition of a second layer to sandwich the gold-leaf. In this case the choice to use one layer of glass may have been the result of using cobalt blue glass in place of colourless, since a second layer of cobalt glass would have obscured the gold scenes. The result is a wearing away of the gold-leaf. It is only because the imagery was carved into the gold-leaf that the original imagery has been preserved in some form, see, for example, the Old Testament scenes on an early fourth century glass cup from modern Cologne, Harden et al. 1987, 25–27, fig. 5.

4 For further discussions of this technique, see Goldstein 1989, 115–120; Pillinger 1984.

5 See Harden et al. 1987, 277, fig. 154; Utro 2000, 53–84.

6 This intriguing practice is almost exclusively confined to Rome alone.

ial or by inserting a complete vessel alongside a grave.[7] Thus, through the accretion of individual actions, taking place diachronically, an assemblage of gold-glass roundels amassed throughout the various catacombs of Rome.

Although it is difficult to be precise, evidence generally found in the catacombs of Rome suggests continued use of grave goods – deposited with the deceased *inside* tombs. If a 'grave good' was originally a literal sacrifice taken out of circulation, buried with and intended to benefit the deceased in the afterlife, then gold-glass roundels clearly are not grave goods. Whether intact vessels embedded in tufa outside a *loculus* or an excised roundel, gold-glass fragments were prominently displayed and meant to be viewed by collective family members and mourners alike. Gold-glass vessels and roundels appear to have served as intimate or personalised epitaphs of sorts, connected to the deceased as well as close family members. Thus, instead of serving as traditional grave goods, they were effectively a means of engaging mourners: through use, iconography, and inscriptions aimed directly at mourners. Moreover, in the dark subterranean space of the catacombs, the light from lamps would surely have shone brightly on gold-glass, making it easier to find one's way and to identify one tomb from among the hundreds in the labyrinthine space.

In a comprehensive – and convincing – study of late Antique epigraphic material concerning the care of the dead, it has been argued that families were responsible for third and fourth century burials.[8] An intriguing question raised by the study of gold-glass roundels found in catacombs but beyond the scope of this paper is: was the shift in focus to the outside of third and fourth century tombs *via* personalised material objects uniting image and text indicative of a social change integrating increasingly engaged mourners?

2 Gold-glass roundels: An overlooked category of material culture

Gold-glass roundels are an often overlooked category of material culture. This is, in part, for good reason. In an excited rush to gather these unusual remnants from throughout the Roman catacombs after they were discov-

7 Throughout the catacombs, it was more common to find excised gold-glass roundels. Only occasionally was an entire vessel with gold-glass roundel found in the tufa. See Grig 2004, 203–230.

8 See Rebillard 2009 who argues this may have continued as late as the fifth century CE. On the cult of the saints, see Brown 1981; Grabar 1946.

ered, their individual contexts of deposition were lost.[9] As a consequence, individual gold-glass roundels have too often been understood as part of a single homogenous 'religious' group – that is, either Christian, Jewish or pagan.[10] Furthermore, it is often taken for granted that gold-glass expressed increasing divisions between exclusively Jewish or exclusively Christian users.[11] Clearly there are a number of problems with such generalisations. Contextual evidence suggests different conclusions.[12] First, the tacit assumption that individuals exclusively practiced one religion or another, in the way they might today, ignores the gradual and successive historic events that contributed to the formation of religious doctrines, practices and identities. Second, with reference to their find spot, the *en masse* categorisation as either Christian, Jewish or pagan presumes that there were pre-existing divisions among burial places and corresponding standards or rules and death rituals regulated institutionally, for example by the church.[13] However, their provenance in the Roman catacombs does not correlate with exclusively Christian burials. Third, despite the fact that not even one gold-glass fragment has been found in a domestic context, it is generally accepted that they must have originated there only to be subsequently moved – every extant fragment – to a single cities' catacombs, those of Rome.[14] It is this third assumption that this paper seeks to challenge, forming the crux of this investigation.

What remains of a largely unknown third and fourth century practice carried out in secret are excised gold-glass roundels.[15] No texts survive explaining the practice. Nor do contemporaneous gold-glass vessels remain from contexts other than the catacombs.[16] Yet, for over a century, scholars have agreed that their initial contexts of use were surely domestic, despite the

9 For one of the first publications on gold-glass objects see Bosio 1632, 126, 197 and 508.
10 See, for example, Grig 2004, table 1, 206; Smith 2000, appendix B classification.
11 Consider the categorisations offered, for example, by Smith 2000, 64–66 and appendix B; Vopel 1899.
12 See Elsner 2003a, 114–128; Rebillard 2009.
13 For evidence of mixed pagan/Christian burials, see e. g. Johnson 1997, 37–59.
14 Smith 2000, esp. 179–195. For an overview of the historiography concerning omissions and *a priori* assumptions about domestic gold-glass going back to the mid-nineteenth century, see Smith 2000, 180, note 82.
15 Since the catacombs were certainly in use during the time of the Great Persecution, presumably many of the worshippers were integrating monotheistic practices or were entirely monotheistic.
16 For two exceptions not mentioned in Morey and Ferrari, see Bradley 2010, appendix 2, 42. I wish to thank one of my anonymous reviewers for this reference. See also Rubery 2014 for a discussion contextualising one of these pieces (fig. 9e).

complete absence of physical evidence.[17] It is taken for granted that the catacombs were the secondary contexts of use for gold-glass vessels. Their presumed original domestic contexts are not fact; rather, this assumption is largely based on iconography and inscriptions on the remaining gold-glass fragments. In addition, this assumption concerning vessels makes no mention of third century gold-glass pendants.[18] Apart from the evidence gleaned from the fragments themselves, we are completely in the dark about how, when or why gold-glass could have been used in Roman homes.

Moreover, by uncritically accepting domestic use, interesting questions remain unasked. For example, there is a curious change in the use and display of these discs, from pendant to vessel base. Was such a shift in use limited to the catacombs or was it more widespread?[19] Despite the complete absence of domestic evidence, it is taken as *a priori* that the home was the primary context for gold-glass vessels. Questioning that presumption, this paper considers an opposing possibility: Could gold-glass vessels have been made specifically for burial? Is there evidence to suggest that their original – or only – context of use was in fact the catacombs? Just as ancient Greek terra cotta zoomorphic *rhyta* were made exclusively for burial and use in the afterlife,[20] it is worth considering whether gold-glass vessels could have been made exclusively for funerary contexts. Their inscriptions, however, often suggest a dining context. This has too often led scholars to accept a domestic context without question. But could these have referenced meals in a funereal space? There is insufficient evidence with which to ascertain definitively whether gold-glass vessels were made solely for funerary contexts.[21] Taking a less radical position, and the one supported by the evidence, the central focus of this paper is the development from third century gold-glass pendants which directly engage viewers to fourth century gold-glass vessels honouring mourners' loved ones. This developmental shift is achieved by offering mourners a way to remember individuals as part of a community, such as through marriage or via the unity of the church.

17 See supra note 14.

18 This use of these earlier pendants merits further consideration and is discussed below.

19 For examples of coinage worn as jewellery and belts, see Weitzmann 1979, fig. 276 (mid-third century), 62 and 262. Are the gold-glass pendants related to the imperial numismatic trend?

20 See e. g. Alexander 2012, 32–33.

21 For recent work on gold-glass fragments, see Howells 2013, 112–120; Meek 2013, 121–130.

3 The evidence

Gold-glass roundels are generally dated from the mid-third to early fourth centuries CE. Over 600 pieces of 'gold-glass' (also known as *vetri a fondo d'oro* or *Goldgläser*) survive.[22] The largest collection is in the Vatican Museums.[23] The vast majority of gold-glass roundels have been found in Rome, with a scattering in other parts of Italy, the Rhine region, Croatia and Hungary.[24] Those with known provenance were from the catacombs of Rome serving, in part, as grave markers for tombs.[25] While a majority of gold-glass roundels were excised from the bases of vessels and permanently sealed next to a *loculus,* some were inserted as part of a complete vessel. Presumably, the vessel was intended for continued use by mourners – the family of the deceased – on occasions of remembrance.[26] In addition to fourth century gold-glass roundels which originally served as vessel bases, earlier third century gold-glass medallions bearing portraits had identifiable functions as pendants.

Throughout the corpus of gold-glass roundels, there was a shift in imagery from individualised portraiture in the third century, to more generalised scene types in the fourth century (i. e., narrative scenes: Christian, Jewish, mythological, etc.). Figural imagery on gold-glass roundels provides two

22 See Bradley 2010. One complete terracotta version survives, closely following the gold-glass model.

23 For their gold-glass catalogue, Morey and Ferrari 1959. More recently, see Bradley 2010; Smith 2000. See also Grig 2004, 203–230. For an index of subjects, see Grig 2004, esp. 206, table 1; Morey and Ferrari 1959; Smith 2000, chapter 3. In addition to images of human and divine figures, animals and religious symbols, gold-glass inscribed roundels exist devoid of imagery, see, for example, Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. xxiv, fig. 204. Over 60 names survive of Latin, Greek or foreign origin, Grig 2004, 208, note 33. Various combinations of image, or text and image are known. The shape of the outermost frame varies as well. Although most typically circular along the periphery, square frames also occur as do painted accents or the addition of blue glass, see fig. 6. Fig. 6 reads: PIE ZESES, ('Drink, may you live!'), *Paul, Xystus/Sixtus, Lawrence, Hippolytus, Christ, Timothy*, fourth century CE, greenish-colourless glass, gold leaf. Measurements: diameter of base-disc: 9.1 cm, thickness (bottom): 0.38 cm, thickness (base): 0.15 cm, British Museum, London, inv. no. 1863.7–27.9. See Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. xxx, fig. 344; Harden et al. 1987, 284, fig. 159. There is no evidence to suggest that either painted additions or the shape of the exterior frame may be subject-specific, see Smith 2000.

24 Grig 2004, 204, n. 7.

25 Unfortunately, the catacombs were excavated in a less than ideal manner resulting in the destruction and loss of recorded grave good assemblages. On catalogues of object types from the catacombs, such as animal teeth, bones, clay lamps, coins, figurines, jewellery, plaques and shells, see Salvetti 1978, 103–130. For a discussion of individual catacombs, see for example, De Santis 1994, 23–51.

26 See Rebillard 2009, esp. 140–178; Scheid 2005, 161–188.

distinguishable but overlapping types with which to document a cultural change from image to icon.

Gold-glass vessels from the Hellenistic period are radically different from third and fourth century Roman gold-glass in terms of imagery and use. Instead of figural imagery, extant Hellenistic gold-glass vessels are typically adorned with vegetal or geometric patterning.[27] Furthermore, Hellenistic bowls were usually found as a grave good inside a tomb. Thus, not only was it decorated with non-figural patterning across the entire vessel,[28] but its function was also dissimilar from later gold-glass vessels and their fragmentary roundels which were visibly displayed and intended for use by mourners in the Roman catacombs.

4 Characteristics of third and fourth century gold-glass roundels

The corpus of gold-glass roundels is a category of third and fourth century material culture that provides a record of the transformation from specific image to abstracted icon. It is precisely this development that allows for the identification of a clear division between third century pendants and later vessel bases. Third and fourth century gold-glass is typically divided into two distinct groups along functional lines: third century pendant medallions, and third to fourth century roundels incorporated in the walls of bowls or lamps, and vessel bases. Fourth century gold-glass roundels come in two sizes: small discs approximately 2 to 3 cm in diameter; and larger discs with diameters ranging from 7 to 10 cm. The latter were discovered throughout the catacombs, surviving in far greater numbers. The jagged contours of gold-glass roundels from the catacombs strongly suggest that they were excised in antiquity, before deposition. Thus, there were third century gold-glass medallions with individualised portraits and cleanly cut edges; third to fourth century small gold-glass roundels which are known to have adorned the walls of wide bowls and lamps; and third to fourth century large glass

27 An exceptional example with fine details arranged in radial symmetry is one of at least four Hellenistic sandwich gold-glass bowls from southern Italy, dating to c. 270–200 BCE, found in a tomb at Canosa, Puglia, southern Italy. Measurements: diameter c. 9.750 in., height c. 4.250 in., British Museum, London, inv. no. GR 1871.5–18.2. See Tait 1991, figs. 54–55.

28 The decorative area is below a wide plain horizontal band below the lip. This is a common feature of much Graeco-Roman glassware from this point onwards and often a form of distinguishing between Roman glass vessels in contrast to, for example, late Antique Sasanian glassware. See Meredith-Goymour 2006, 123–130.

discs which were originally the bases of wide vessels. The third to fourth century group is the most widely represented among the catacombs of Rome.

Considering the corpus of fragments as a whole, iconographic evidence highlights identifiable differences between third century and third to fourth century gold-glass roundel production. What characterises the earlier third century phase of gold-glass production is specificity in portraiture. The features and details are individualised (figs. 1 and 2).[29] In contrast, the latter group – those that were found in the greatest numbers throughout the catacombs of Rome – is predominantly abstracted and generalised in its iconography. Part of what makes gold-glass a wider third century phenomenon, rather than exclusively 'Christian', is the influence of earlier individual gold-glass portraits and a widespread adherence to a frontal format: typically a centralised image within a circular frame surrounded by an inscription.[30] It has been argued that this format is closely related to numismatics; the figures, however, are not shown in profile as one finds on coinage. Instead, the married couples or family groups appearing on gold-glass roundels are typically frontal, as in imperial *tondi*,[31] on *fibulae*,[32] on silver vessels[33] and on late Antique sarcophagi.[34]

The individualised third century gold-glass roundels were clearly a precursor to the more generalised roundels found in the Roman catacombs. While the third century format is maintained and the familial groupings retained, the later style is no longer a true likeness but rather a standardised form of representing individuation. The evidence clearly shows a shift in third century gold-glass production: a true likeness worn on a gold-glass pendant becomes a generalised representation on a gold-glass vessel base.

---

29 For third century examples, see the Gennadios medallion or the medallion of a mother and child. Both are discussed below.

30 For examples of variations such as a central inscription in place of an image, a square frame around a central inscription or image, see Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. iii, nos. 21, 19 and 17, respectively.

31 See, for example, the Severan portrait from Egypt in Levick 2007, pl. viii.

32 See, for example, Coarelli, Cascino, Gasparini 2009, 139, no. 83. I wish to thank Valentino Gasparini for this reference.

33 See, for example, Elsner 2003b, 22–36.

34 See, for example, Murray 1981. For recent scholarship on sarcophagi, see Elsner, Hung, Pelizzi 2012; Elsner, Huskinson 2011. See also the mosaic programme in the Mausoleum of Santa Costanza in Rome, Mackie 2003.

5 Third century gold-glass pendants

Surviving evidence suggests third century medallions were worn on the body as pendants. These medallions (figs. 1, 2 and 3) show individualised portraits.[35] It is evident, for example, that the peripheral inscription and circular border surrounding the Gennadios medallion was part of the original design (fig. 1).[36] The portrait bust was created to fit within the circular frame with space for the Greek inscription proclaiming 'Gennadios most accomplished in the musical arts'.[37] The three-quarter portrait was clearly intended as a likeness in the form of a bust. The fine details in the face, hair and upper body are all vivid, coupled with highlights and contrasting shadows. Moreover, the dark blue background makes the gold leaf portrait in the foreground appear more vibrant. While iconographic features later change, the complementary colour relationship of blue and gold remains typical of third and fourth century medallions and roundels.

Since inscriptions are sometimes absent, the primary characteristic common throughout all third century gold-glass medallions is the inclusion of an individualised portrait or portrait group. The specificity of the family portraits in a medallion with a mother and child is strikingly similar to the Gennadios medallion (cf. figs. 2 and 1, respectively).[38] The lower limit of the family portrait still fits within the circular border; the facial features, hair and clothing are all carefully rendered, individualised elements. The layers on the child's outfit are differentiated through the addition not only of gold but also of white. Moreover, the child is shown in smaller scale than the mother, hinting at increasing abstraction soon to appear on gold-glass roundels.

Unlike the Gennadios medallion, the portrait of a mother and child show the pair gazing directly at the viewer. Present in the portraits of both figures, their gaze alludes to increasing engagement with a viewer. The frontal gaze

---

35 The scholarship on portraiture is vast. See, for example, Bažant 1995; Bodel 1999, 259–281; Borg, Witschel 2001, 47–120; Edwards, Swain 1997; Fejfer 2008; Hannestad 2001, 93–107; Smith 1999, 155–189; Stewart 2003.

36 Although one could conceivably argue that these medallions were excised and trimmed along the edges post-production, this would not be ideal as breakage could easily occur if such extensive cutting was left to the end instead of the beginning.

37 See the Gennadios medallion 250–300 CE, made in Egypt, glass, gold leaf, polychromy, dimensions: 1–5/8 × 1/4 in. (4.1 × 0.6 cm), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, inv. no. 26.258; Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. xxxvi, fig. 454.

38 On the medallion portraying a mother and child, third century CE, made in Egypt, glass, gold leaf, dimensions: 1–7/8 × 3/16 in. (4.8 × 0.5 cm), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, inv. no. 17.190.109a; Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. xxxvi, fig. 452.

suggests a shift in the relationship between the wearer of a portrait pendant and the viewer (cf. fig. 1 vs. figs. 2 and 3).[39] Displayed near eye level, a focused portrait bust invites viewers to directly respond to the image.

A final third century roundel further reinforces the argument that whether serving as a pendant adorning the body or displayed in a funerary context, gold-glass roundels engaged viewers. Fig. 3 is a representation of a lone woman with an inscription addressing a male. Similar to the medallion with a mother and child, this frontal female figure is looking directly at the viewer. The figure is centralised with peripheral vegetal decoration above the portrait bust. Flanking the woman, and between the portrait and the vegetation, is an inscription.[40] Unlike the Gennadios medallion's Greek inscription, this medallion is inscribed in Latin. Despite the fact that the portrait clearly shows a female figure – evident in terms of her facial features, hair and dress – the inscription wishes joy to a man. Unlike the inscription on the Gennadios pendant naming the recipient and celebrating his achievement, this portrait medallion does not address the figure portrayed. Instead, the inscription suggests that the male addressee is close to the woman portrayed, perhaps a spouse. Moreover, the female figure's frontal gaze conveys direct engagement with the intended audience or viewer of the gold-glass roundel.

The handful of pieces surveyed from among the third century portrait group suggest that they were made as part of a relationship with a viewer other than the deceased. The Gennadios medallion refers to the recipient by name but has been identified as a portrait meant to be worn and displayed – visibly to others – as a pendant (fig. 1); the gazes of the mother and child portrait (fig. 2), and the female figure with the Latin inscription (fig. 3) unequivocally seek to elicit a response from a viewer. Moreover, the Latin inscription on the latter piece clearly addresses someone other than the figure portrayed: the gender used suggests a man intimately connected to the woman depicted. Although the third century portrait medallion group is clearly differentiable from the abstracted representations on later gold-glass roundels, the earlier group already indicates a clear sense of engagement with a viewer which further developed in the third to fourth century gold-glass group.

---

39 On Roman portrait busts and the gaze, see Fejfer 2008, 181 and 228.

40 Medallion with a female portrait, Latin inscription: ANATOLI GAVDIAS ('Anatolius, rejoice!'), third century CE, blue and decolourised glass, gold leaf, diameter: 4.9 cm, thickness: 3.5 cm, the Corning Museum of Glass, NY, inv. no. 90.1.3.

6 Third to fourth century gold-glass vessel bases

The characteristics found on the later gold-glass vessels dovetail with emerging trends in late Antique iconography: their abstracted figural imagery is very similar to catacomb paintings which are found in close proximity.[41] Whether gold-glass vessels and catacomb paintings were made for the same funerary spaces is an intriguing question.

In contrast to earlier third century portrait busts, the third and fourth century gold-glass roundels consist of multiple figures, flat figural outlines, often an extended bust including the abdomen, abbreviated or irregularly placed and divided inscriptions, decreased use of polychromy,[42] a standardised gaze for the figures shown – typically focusing on other figures within the scene – and use as the base of a vessel. *In toto*, these alterations in imagery and use support a change from a movable pendant adorning the body and occasionally used as a grave marker, to fixed, stationary use as funerary architecture throughout the catacombs.

Whereas the gaze on third century portrait pendants elicits engagement with a viewer through eye contact and specificity in the portrait image, the gaze represented on later gold-glass vessel bases appears more as a model for the viewer. Later viewers are not interacting with portraits worn on the body of the person depicted, instead these viewers are users, interacting with a vestige from a functional vessel with a personalised image. The selection and placement of gold-glass imagery strongly supports the argument that the viewer is primed and instructed to perform commemorative actions on behalf of another, most likely for a spouse or as part of their faith. Thereby, acts of remembering an individual become part of unifying, communal practice.

7 Regional production and abstracted marriage commemorations in the late Roman period

When the artefactual assemblage is considered as a whole, the consistency throughout the abstracted imagery and inscribed content suggests standardised, local production over a limited geographic range and for a relatively

41 On abstraction in representations of social status in figural imagery around the third century CE, see Fejfer 2008, 33–45, esp. 41.

42 By this I mean the standard media consists of a gold leaf image sandwiched in between a colourless background and foreground. In the third to fourth century group, a colourless background replaces a blue one.

short period of time. Given the uniformly abstracted figures portrayed on gold-glass roundels with (1) married couples and (2) Christ, saints and other overtly Christian, Judaic or mythological symbols and figures, it is worth considering whether the artefactual assemblage suggests a gold-glass series of variations (i. e. scenes of married couples, Christian figures, inscribed toasts, etc.) from which works were purchased or commissioned.[43] Moreover, given the consistent find-spot of the Roman catacombs, it may have been possible that small Roman communities produced gold-glass vessels – resulting in a short-lived, localised trend.

While the context of the Great Persecution has led scholars to consider finds from the catacombs through the lens of religion, the objects themselves allude to different categories. There are several themes and combinations of subjects portrayed on third and fourth century gold-glass vessels and base fragments, as evidenced by the large numbers of surviving examples. The range of permutations present within each subject type, as well as the contrasts and overlap evident, indicate two conspicuous sub-categories. One is the fundamental importance of marriage, highlighting the role of family as mourners to commemorate the passing of loved ones.

The second category is developing Christian iconography. The integration of religion appears rather limited within later gold-glass roundels. Images on third to fourth century gold-glass bear striking similarities to sarcophagi and catacomb paintings, alluding to their corresponding emergence. Moreover, only a limited repertoire of Old Testament, Judaic and mythological symbols and figures were chosen for inclusion on gold-glass vessel bases, suggesting increasingly abstracted content as well as form. Just as abstraction replaced likeness, symbolic or iconic image replaced narrative content.

The majority of inscriptions on roundels depicting couples include toasts such as *PIE ZESES* ('Drink, may you live!'),[44] with variations including the name of one or both individuals.[45] These inscriptions reference a celebration. In tandem with an image of an abstracted man and woman within a conventional circular border as the base of a vessel, these pieces strongly suggest a commemoration on the occasion of marriage. Whether such personally significant vessels were in fact made or received at the time of mar-

43 Cf. variations among imagery and inscriptions found on first through sixth century CE openwork vessels also found in glass in significant quantities, see Meredith 2009, 191–197; Meredith in press.

44 This transliteration from the Greek calls into question whether the consumers were in fact elite Romans. See also first through sixth century CE openwork vessels made of glass, metal or precious stones, see Meredith in press.

45 See Morey and Ferrari 1959; Smith 2000. For a variation including the names of Christ and various saints in tandem with the toast, see fig. 6.

riage is yet another unanswerable question. The consistently standardised abstractions evident throughout the third and fourth century gold-glass roundels suggest that the vessels and vessel fragments discovered in the catacombs may have been made over a limited time period. As a consequence, this could have implications concerning the widely accepted question whether these objects were initially made for a domestic context before each and every one was relocated to the catacombs of Rome, or whether they were perhaps made specifically for inclusion in burials.

The Latin inscription on fig. 4 is dedicated to a married couple: 'Orfitus and Co[n]stantia. Live happily in the name of Herakles, conqueror of the underworld.'[46] The use of Herakles and the underworld in the inscription could support the view that gold-glass vessels were made for burial. Debates concerning this particular piece have sought to identify the named couple.[47] The inscription, also in Latin, on fig. 5 is intended for a single recipient (singular, second person): 'Sweetheart, may you live [long].'[48] If, however, gold-glass was indeed made for burial, then the addition of *long* may be incorrect. Without this addition, the inscription could instead refer to the afterlife. Regardless of the original context, both inscriptions suggest that whereas the inscription on fig. 4 was addressing the couple, the inscription on fig. 5 was intended for one or the other of the figures depicted. The inscriptions on both fragments support the interpretation that as part of a funerary context, gold-glass roundels were often personalised gifts. While it remains uncertain whether fig. 5 was given to the deceased buried in the tomb, or to a surviving spouse, the inscription identifies the vessel as one shared by the mourner and the spouse buried in the grave.[49]

Figs. 4 and 5 both portray a married couple with an interchangeable religious figure. Inscriptions and iconography on both roundels refer to the inti-

46 ORFITUS ET COSTANTIA IN NOMINE HERCULIS, ACERENTINO FELICES BIBATIS, fourth century CE, colourless glass, gold leaf, red and white polychromy. Measurements: height: 10.8 cm, width: 10.2 cm, British Museum, London, inv. no. M&ME 1863.7–27.3. See Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. xxix, fig. 316. It is most likely that VIVATIS was meant to replace BIBATIS, and ACERENTINI in place of ACERENTINO, see Harden et al. 1987, 280, fig. 155.

47 Based on prosopography, it has been argued that Orfitus is possibly Memmius Vitruvius Orfitus, a pagan aristocrat and prefect of Rome in the mid-fourth century CE, *PLRE* s. v. 'Orfitus' 3, 651–653. See, for example, Grig 2004, 203–230. See also Cameron 1996, 295–301.

48 Married couple with Christ, DULCIS ANIMA VIVAS, fourth century CE, colourless glass, gold leaf, diameter: 60.4 mm, British Museum, London, inv. no. M&ME 1898.7–19.1.

49 On the primary role of third and fourth century CE families burying and commemorating loved ones, see Rebillard 2009.

mate relationship between the spouses represented; however neither refers to religious exclusivity, nor a domestic or funerary context. Fig. 4 refers to the couple by name and in addition to the inscription, Herakles is visually identifiable by his characteristic lion skin and club. In his left hand are three painted apples – the apples of the Hesperides from among his twelve labours – which have been taken as further evidence that this piece was made as a wedding gift. There is, however, no reference to Herakles as a means of religious expression. Instead, the apples appear to limit the symbolism to marriage.

While the small-scale figure above and between the couple on fig. 5 is not identified or referred to in the inscription, since other bowls with similar imagery are inscribed with the name of Christ it has been identified as a religious representation. In this instance, Christ wears a toga and is shown in the act of bestowing laurel wreaths onto the heads of each figure. Yet there is no explicit religious identification: neither Christianity nor Christ himself are mentioned in the inscription.[50] The inscription articulates the well wishes of one spouse to the other, directly and unambiguously. In contrast, the Herakles figure (fig. 4) is included as a way of symbolising the centrality of marriage to the representation. Well wishes on the occasion of the marriage of Orfitus and Constantia are expressed both in the inscription and in the iconography through the guise of the apples of the Hesperides. This traditional mythological reference was long ago integrated into Roman culture; therefore, it served as a symbol of marriage. In contrast, fig. 5 did not employ overtly religious symbols; only the interchangeability with the figure of Christ in an equivalent position and scale on other gold-glass roundels gives a commensurate interpretation. Christian imagery had not yet become

50 Fig. 6, for example, is explicitly Christian in content, Harden et al. 1987, 284, fig. 159; Morey and Ferrari 1959, pl. xxx, fig. 344. It identifies a large-scale, frontal figure of Christ by name in an accompanying inscription. Fundamental to this image is the focus on Christ, and his unambiguous identification by name. Iconographically, this is achieved both through scale – since he is rendered in a scale larger than any other figure on the roundel – his frontality, and the gaze of the apostles on either side, which is clearly focused directly on Christ and serving as a model for the viewer. In addition, the upper register of abstracted figures shows the complete abandonment of portraiture and individualisation. Each of the figures in the top register is a copy of the figure adjacent to him with disproportionately large heads and hands. It appears that the only reason why these four figures were included was to gaze upon the central figure of Christ and to honour these saints by including their names on the same gold-glass vessel base as Christ. Thus, this sub-category among the gold-glass fragments suggests an overt agenda modelling for the mourner: collectivity and membership. Throughout the corpus of later gold-glass vessel bases, equivalences exist displaying Judaic symbols and figures as well as mythological ones.

entrenched as a Roman cultural symbol integrated in marriage commemorations.

Both scenes, therefore, focus on the union of husband and wife: the creation of an intimate bond between the couple which is most likely maintained in death by means of a loved one, perhaps a spouse, honouring and remembering the deceased via a personalised gold-glass vessel base. In tandem with the location of the catacombs, the roundels – as a means of remembering individuals – thereby create the space in which to honour those relationships as part of a community.

8 Union and community on gold-glass roundels: Models for mourners

Whether rendered on gold-glass vessels, silver vessels,[51] mummy portraits,[52] sarcophagi[53] or in paintings throughout the catacombs of Rome,[54] a family group or married couple within a circular frame is a typical late Roman subject (cf. figs 4 and 5). This is surely because of the importance of the consecrated act of joining hands, both to the community and to a surviving spouse or family commemorating a loved one thereafter in a funerary space. The two representative gold-glass roundels excised from vessel bases discussed above each depict a man and woman with an inscription expressing intimacy and good wishes.[55] In conjunction with the smaller-scale figure shown between the couple, the imagery and inscription on both roundels suggest that they were celebrating a marriage. Overt religious associations, however, are limited to abstracted symbols and are entirely omitted from the inscription.

Despite identifications with either the Roman mythological tradition (fig. 4) or Christianity (fig. 5), their abstracted iconographic form is virtually interchangeable. Similar to third century gold-glass portrait pendants, figs. 4 and 5 contain figures whose busts extend to the confines of a circular border. Both roundels include peripheral inscriptions, either entirely encircling the image (fig. 4) or only in the upper part (fig. 5; cf. fig. 3 wherein

51 See supra note 33.

52 See, for example, Corcoran 1995; Doxiadis 1995; Walker 2000.

53 See supra note 34.

54 See, for example, Athnos 2011; Finney 1994; Tronzo 1986. On the catacombs more broadly and material culture discovered therein, see Baruffa 1992; Ferrua 1991; Fiocchi Nicolai et al. 1999; Snyder 2003.

55 In contrast to the smooth edges of figs. 1 and 2, it is clear that figs. 4 and 5 were vessel bases removed post-production.

both the surrounding vegetal imagery and inscription are limited to the upper part of the likeness). Figs. 4 and 5 portray highly abstracted beardless men with short curly hair, wearing a *toga contabulata* with a stripe on the figures' shoulders indicative of rank. The female figures are also largely rendered in outline, looking at their spouse or the half-sized figure above and between them. Both women wear jewellery indicating wealth: fig. 4 includes a painted necklace and earrings on Constantia. While Constantia's hair is generalised under a head covering, it closely resembles the distinctive horizontal waves of Severan Empress Julia Domna.[56] In contrast, the woman shown in fig. 5 wears her hair in a manner made popular by fourth century empresses: it is drawn back in plaits and piled neatly atop her head, with a row of curls across her forehead. Like her spouse, her hairstyle is extremely abstracted, indicated by a series of diagonal and cross-hatched lines. Similarly, the patterning on her dress is indicated by diagonally arranged curvilinear lines. Thus, both representations contain individuated elements within a standardised, largely abstracted form.

In stark contrast to third century gold-glass portraits (cf. figs. 1, 2 and 3), these later couples are rendered through generalised abstractions. There is no effort to render a truer likeness with highlights or modelling; instead symbols are suggested and stylised, such as similar facial features shared by each couple (compare, for example the nose of each spouse in fig. 5). There are, however, at least two very important and interconnected elements distinguishing these abstractly rendered couples. One is the portrayal of rank and status. Both figs. 4 and 5 succeed in conveying the wealth of the female figure, via her jewels and fashionable hair, and the male figure's rank through his dress. The other is the occasion, the celebrated union in marriage. While the inscriptions make this unambiguous, interestingly, the small-scale third figure credits one of two conferring agents. Unlike third century gold-glass portraits, later roundels typically integrated a small figure performing an important act to do with the figures represented. Fig. 2 demonstrates how gold-glass portrait pendants incorporated scale to differentiate a mother from her child – the latter, younger figure is rendered in small-scale and to the side. Thus, the use of a hierarchy of scale is not a later development. What is novel, however, is the inclusion of a religious figure (whether mythological in fig. 4, or Christian in fig. 5) in small-scale.[57] In general, religious

56 See, for example, Levick 2007, pls. 8 and 9.

57 An interesting question is whether identifiable religious figures exist among third century gold-glass portraits or whether they are exclusively portraits. With at least a couple of exceptions, the latter appears to be the case. There are two noteworthy exceptions from the catacombs, now housed in the Vatican Museo Sacro. One is a portrait similar

figures – whether from polytheism or monotheism – are depicted larger in scale than any human figure (cf. the scale used to render Christ in contrast to the surrounding holy figures, fig. 6). What is typical of contemporary iconography, and found on figs. 4 and 5, is the central and largely frontal view of the religious figure.[58] The integration of a conferring authority on later gold-glass roundels – regardless of any identifiable religious associations – suggests a relational shift.

The figures on later gold-glass vessel bases are typically shown relating to one another, modelling an interaction. No longer limited to portraits or visual likenesses gazing at the viewer; the later compositions found on gold-glass vessel bases invoke an act of union, a liminal moment, such as the ritual *dextrum iuncto*, or becoming part of or celebrating inclusion in a religious collective. Additionally, third to fourth century gold-glass vessel bases include significant symbols and holy figures, such as Christ and saints from the Christian calendar,[59] Old Testament scenes, Judaic symbols or

to the third century portrait pendants – a highly realistic likeness of a married couple is presented frontally, gazes directly at the viewer rather than at one another – however, the large size (diameter 10.5 cm) and jagged edges indicate it was a vessel base rather than a portrait, Morey and Ferrari 1959, fig. 1. An inscription along the periphery includes a toast to the couple identified by name: GREGO RIBIBETPROPINATVIS. A second example is a fragment also from the catacombs but instead of gold-glass proper with two layers the gold leaf is exposed, Morey and Ferrari 1959, fig. 13. The figure in this fragment is rendered in a style similar to the third century portraits, however, what remains of the jagged-edged fragment appears to fit within the size range for a vessel base (12 × 7.3 cm). Although the subject is unclear due to its fragmentary state, a female figure is shown from the back, moving left. Morey and Ferrari identified the figure as nude apart from a drapery covering or falling down her right shoulder and over the legs. It is difficult to tell whether her back is covered. Next to what may be a partially nude (goddess?) figure is a tripod (altar?). An inscription along the periphery states: [Vi]VAS MVLTIS ANNIS with ZESES horizontally presented ('May you live for many years!'). ZESES is a transliteration of the Greek 'to live'. A nude female figure in tandem with the altar suggests a religious scene or oath. In 1864, the fragment included a second piece with a partial male figure, Garrucci 1864, pl. xxxvi, 5. While these are only two examples of third century style portraits rendered as vessels bases, these two exceptions could suggest aberrations or a larger but now unknown corpus of gold-glass. Perhaps, for example, portraits depicting a married couple may have developed late in the third century group, initiating a shift whereby transitional pieces – in the style of third century portraits but produced as early vessel bases – developed and were only gradually abstracted. The inclusion of a tripod and a nude female figure, however, signal a clear shift towards including religious imagery on vessel bases. This, however, is a subject which clearly calls for more extensive work on the extant material.

58 Whereas the body of the deity Herakles is shown standing on a disc in three-quarter view with his head in profile (fig. 4), Christ is frontal (figs. 5 and 6). On ritual-centred visuality, frontality and the sacred, see Elsner 2000, 45–69.

59 On the pairings of saints on gold-glass and adherence to the nascent martyrological calendar, see Grig 2004, 203–230.

mythological figures, for communal commemoration. These implicit relationships – highlighted on later vessel bases – are most likely what made this particular subset of gold-glass medallions so important to the mourners who chose to include images with an inherently united, collective focus as part of a permanent feature of burial, visible forevermore to family, mourners and passers-by. Joining was central to these marriage commemorations. The collective aspect of the imagery and inscriptions on gold-glass vessel bases are a testament to the fact that this particular small-scale artefactual assemblage resonated with mourners throughout the catacombs of Rome to such an extent that mourning family members chose meaningful, abstracted imagery as a permanent means of remembering loved ones.

9 Conclusion

In sum, despite the widespread acceptance of the theory of initial household use for third and fourth century gold-glass vessels, there is no evidence that they were in fact made for or used in domestic contexts. Moreover, neither imagery nor inscriptions suggest use in a domestic space. Their contexts of use were most likely funerary and their primary users appear to have been mourners maintaining a personal relationship with loved ones, remembering and honouring the dead at their tombs. The consistently visible placement of gold-glass – pendants, vessels and excised roundels – shaping interactions in funerary spaces supports this interpretation.

Gold-glass roundels were prominently displayed outside of tombs. They were, therefore, clearly not for the deceased but for mourners. Vessels were potentially useful objects. Continued use graveside is certainly a plausible explanation for their insertion as a conspicuous burial feature. What reason could there have been to permanently fix non-functional pendants or deliberately excised roundels, adorned with imagery and inscriptions, outside of tombs if not to honour and remember loved ones through an intimate connection?

Given the absence of testimony concerning the inclusion of personalised third century gold-glass pendants sealing *loculi* in the catacombs of Rome, one would expect that a pendant would have been selected as a personal portrait, or at least an image of the deceased potentially, although not necessarily, worn in life. Furthermore, as their frontality and penetrating gaze make clear, such portraits elicit direct engagement, remembrance and commemoration at the grave of the individual portrayed.

An intriguing question raised by the gold-glass assemblage, and seemingly unanswerable, is whether mourners' interactions served as a catalyst for the shift in iconography and use from portrait pendants to abstracted vessel bases. Although the stratigraphic context of the catacombs cannot shed light on the duration of the practice of sealing a tomb with a third century portrait, or a third to fourth century gold-glass vessel or excised roundel, their use within the limited provenance of the Roman catacombs and the shift in iconography – from portrait pendant to abstracted vessel base – strongly supports a transformation in use and depiction commensurate with developments in funerary practices concerning commemoration and remembrance.

The shift from a likeness to abstracted individuation on gold-glass roundels coincided with a fundamental change in emphasis between viewer and mourner. Whereas third century gold-glass pendants elicited direct engagement with a viewer, later vessel bases displayed and honoured the union of marriage, thereby modelling community and collective belief for mourners.

In the third and fourth centuries, families buried their loved ones. According to the corpus of gold-glass roundels, remembrance and commemoration were of paramount importance to mourners. The appropriation of symbols by Christianity was not yet sufficiently entrenched, or visually articulated in an encapsulated form, to have served as part of established visual vocabulary signifying marriage. While religious subjects may adorn third to fourth century gold-glass roundels, their abstracted style reflects their function as models for community. Third century gold-glass roundels engaged mourners by displaying likenesses on pendants; third to fourth century gold-glass vessel bases highlighted the communality and intimacy of the act of marriage and preserved that unity for mourners remembering loved ones. Thus, the corpus of gold-glass roundels not only documents a widespread shift from use as portrait pendants to abstracted vessel bases, their use in a limited geographic and temporal context shaped remembrance, commemorations and the use of funerary space throughout the catacombs.

Bibliography

Alexander, Karen B. 2012. 'From Plaster to Stone: Ancient Art at the Art Institute of Chicago.' In *Recasting the Past: Collecting and Presenting Antiquities at the Art Institute of Chicago*, ed. Karen Manchester. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago. 14–39.

Athnos, Gregory S. 2011. *The Art of the Roman Catacombs: Themes of Deliverance in the Age of Persecution*. Parker, CO: Outskirts Press.

Baruffa, Antonio 1992. *The Catacombs of St. Callixtus: History, Archaeology, Faith*. Vatican City: L. E. V.

Bažant, Jan 1995. *Roman Portraiture: A History of its History.* Prague: Koniasch Latin Press.

Bodel, John 1999. 'Death on Display: Looking at Roman Funerals.' In *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, eds. Bettina Bergmann, Christine Kondoleon. London: National Gallery of Art. 259–281.

Borg, Barbara; Witschel, Christian 2001. 'Veränderungen im Repräsentationsverhalten der römischen Eliten während des 3. Jhs. n. Chr.' In *Inschriftliche Denkmäler als Medien der Selbstdarstellung in der römischen Welt.* Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 36, eds. Géza Alföldy, Silvio Panciera. Stuttgart: Steiner. 47–120.

Bosio, Antonio; Aldobrandino, Carlo; Severani, Giovannni 1632. *Roma sotteranea*. Rome: Facciotti.

Bradley, John 2010. *Late Roman Gold-Glass and its Contexts*. Master of Arts. Royal Holloway, University of London.

Brown, Peter 1981. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cameron, Alan 1996. 'Orfitus and Constantius: A Note on Roman Gold-Glasses', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9. 295–301.

Coarelli, Filippo; Cascino, Roberta; Gasparini, Valentino 2009. *Falacrinae: le origini di Vespasiano*. Rome: Quasar.

Corcoran, Lorelei Hilda 1995. *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt (I–IV centuries A. D.): with a Catalog of Portrait Mummies in Egyptian Museums 56*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

De Santis, Paola 1994. 'Elementi di corredo nei sepolcri delle catacombe romane: l'essempio della regione di Leone e della galleria Bb nella catacomba di Cormodilla', *Vetera Christianorum* 31. 23–51.

Doxiadis, Euphrosyne 1995. *The Mysterious Fayum Portraits: Faces from Ancient Egypt.* New York: H. N. Abrams.

Edwards, M. J.; Swain, Simon (eds.) 1997. *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Elsner, Jaś 2000. 'Between Mimesis and Divine Power: Visuality in the Greco-Roman World.' In *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 45–69.

Elsner, Jaś 2003a. 'Archaeologies and Agendas: Reflections on Late Ancient Jewish Art and Early Christian Art', *Journal of Roman Studies* 93. 114–128.

Elsner, Jaś 2003b. 'Visualising Women in Late Antique Rome: The Projecta Casket.' In *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, ed. Christopher Entwistle. Oxford: Oxbow Books. 22–36.

Elsner, Jaś; Hung, Wu; Pelizzi, Francesco (eds.) 2012. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: The Peabody Museum of Archaeology.

Elsner, Jaś; Huskinson, Janet (eds.) 2011. *Life, Death and Representation*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Fejfer, Jane 2008. *Roman Portraits in Context*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Ferrua, Antonio 1991. *The Unknown Catacomb: A Unique Discovery of Early Christian Art*, transl. Iain Inglis. New Lanark: Geddes and Grosset.

Finney, Paul Corby 1994. *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Fiocchi Nicolai, Vincenzo; Bisconti, Fabrizio; Mazzoleni, Danilo 1999. *The Christian Catacombs of Rome: History, Decoration, Inscriptions*. Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner.

Frend, W. H. C. 1984. *The Rise of Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Garrucci, Raffaele 1864. *Vetri ornati di figure in oro trovati nei cimiteri cristiani di Roma*. Rome: Tipografia delle belle arti.

Goldstein, Sidney M. 1989. 'Old Glass, New Glass, Gold Glass: Some Thoughts on Ancient Casting Technology', *Kölner Jahrbuch* 22. 115–120.

Grabar, André 1946. *Martyrium: Recherches sur le Culte des Reliques et l'art Chrétien Antique*. Paris: Collège de France.

Grig, Lucy 2004. 'Portraits, Pontiffs and the Christianisation of Fourth-Century Rome', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 72. 203–230.

Hannestad, Niels 2001. 'The Ruler Image of the Fourth Century: Innovation or Tradition', *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia* 15. 93–107.

Harden, Donald B.; Whitehouse, David; Painter, Kenneth S.; Hellenkemper, Hansgerd 1987. *Glass of the Caesars*. Milan: Olivetti.

Howells, Daniel Thomas 2013. 'Making Late Antique Gold Glass.' In *New Light on Old Glass: Recent Research on Byzantine Glass and Mosaics*, eds. Christopher Entwistle, Liz James. London: British Museum. 112–120.

Johnson, Mark Jeffrey 1997. 'Pagan-Christian Burial Practices of the Fourth Century. Shared Tombs?', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5, 1. 37–59.

Levick, Barbara 2007. *Julia Domna: Syrian Empress*. London: Routledge.

Mackie, Gillian Vallance 2003. *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function and Patronage*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Meek, Andrew 2013. 'Gold Glass in Late Antiquity: Scientific Analysis of the British Museum Collection.' In *New Light on Old Glass: Recent Research on Byzantine Glass and Mosaics*, eds. Christopher Entwistle, Liz James. London: British Museum. 121–130.

Meredith(-Goymour), Hallie G. 2006. 'Disentangling Material Cultures: Late Roman and Sasanian Facet Cut Glassware in Late Antiquity', *SOMA 2004: Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of Postgraduate Researchers 1514*. Oxford: Archaeopress. 123–130.

Meredith, Hallie G. 2009. 'Evaluating the Movement of Open-Work Glassware in Late Antiquity.' In *Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th Centuries the Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange Papers of the 38th Annual Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 14*, ed. Marlia Mundell Mango. Publications of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Aldershot: Ashgate. 191–197.

Meredith, Hallie G. in press. *Word becomes Image: Open-work Vessels as a Reflection of Late Antique Transformation*. Two volumes. Archaeopress Archaeology. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Morey, Charles Rufus; Ferrari, Guy 1959. *The Gold-Glass Collection of the Vatican Library with Additional Catalogues of other Gold-Glass Collections*. Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

Murray, Sister Charles 1981. *Rebirth and Afterlife: A Study of the Transmutation of Some Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Funerary Art*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports International Series 100.

Pillinger, Renate 1984. *Studien zu römischen Zwischengoldgläsern 1: Geschichte der Technik und das Problem der Authentizität*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
Rebillard, Éric 2009. *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity*, transl. Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings and Jeanine Routier-Pucci. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Rubery, Eileen 2014. 'From Catacomb to Sanctuary: The Orant figure and the cults of the Mother of God and S. Agnes in early Christian Rome, with special reference to Gold Glass', *Studia Patristica* 73. 129–174.
Salvetti, Carla 1978. 'Il catalogo degli oggetti minuti conservati presso la Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra', *Rivista dell'Archeologia Cristiana* 54, 3–4. 103–130.
Scheid, John 2005. *Quand faire, c'est croire: les rites sacrificiels des Romains.* Paris: Aubier.
Smith, R. R. R. 1999. 'Late Antique Portraits in a Public Context: Honorific Statuary at Aphrodisias in Caria, A. D. 300–600', *Journal of Roman Studies* 89. 155–189.
Smith, Stephanie Leigh 2000. *Gold-Glass Vessels of the Late Roman Empire: Production, Context, and Function*. Dissertation. Rutgers University, New Brunswick.
Snyder, Graydon F. 2003. *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine*. Macon: Mercer University Press.
Stewart, Peter 2003. *Statues in Roman Society. Representation and Response*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Stewart, Peter 2008. *Social History of Roman Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tait, Hugh (ed.) 1991. *Five Thousand Years of Glass*. London: British Museum Press.
Tronzo, William 1986. *The Via Latina Catacomb: Imitation and Discontinuity in Fourth-Century Roman Painting.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University.
Utro, Umberto 2000. 'Temi biblici nella collezione di medaglioni vitrei con figure in oro del Museo Cristiano', *Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie Bollettino* 20. 53–84.
Vopel, Hermann 1899. *Die altchristlichen Goldgläser: ein Beitrag zur altchristlichen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte 5*. Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr.
Walker, Susan 2000. *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt.* New York: Routledge.
Weitzmann, Kurt (ed.) 1979. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Table of image links

Fig. 1: Gennadios gold-glass medallion, mid-third to fourth centuries CE, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY (26.258)
http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/466645?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=gennadios+&pos=1
Accessed 9th February 2015

Fig. 2: Mother and child gold-glass medallion, third century CE, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY (17.190.109a)
http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/463989?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=17.190.109a&pos=1
Accessed 9th February 2015

Fig. 3: Medallion with a female portrait, third century CE, Corning Museum of Glass, NY (90.1.3)
http://www.cmog.org/artwork/medallion-portrait
Accessed 9th February 2015

Fig. 4: Orfitus and Costantia gold-glass medallion with Herakles, fourth century CE, British Museum, London (M&ME 1863.7–27.3)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_mla/g/gold-glass_medallion_showing_h.aspx
Accessed 9th February 2015

Fig. 5: Married couple with Christ, fourth century CE, British Museum, London (M&ME 1898.7–19.1)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_mla/g/gold-glass_medallion.aspx
Accessed 9th February 2015

Fig. 6: Christ with Saints, fourth century CE, British Museum, London (1863.7–27.9)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/complete_projects/gold_glass_in_late_antiquity.aspx
Accessed 9th February 2015

Hallie G. Meredith
730 Telegraph Road
Apt. C
Bellingham, WA 98226
USA
hallie.meredith@lincoln.oxon.org

Religion in the Roman Empire Volume 1 (2015), No. 2

Religion in the Roman Empire (RRE) is bold in the sense that it intends to further and document new and integrative perspectives on religion in the Ancient World combining multidisciplinary methodologies. Starting from the notion of 'lived religion' it will offer a space to take up recent, but still incipient research to modify and cross the disciplinary boundaries of 'History of Religion', 'Anthropology', 'Classics', 'Ancient History', 'Ancient Judaism', 'Early Christianity', 'New Testament', 'Patristic Studies', 'Coptic Studies', 'Gnostic and Manichaean Studies', 'Archaeology' and 'Oriental Languages'. It is the purpose of the journal to stimulate the development of an approach which can comprise the local and global trajectories of the multi-dimensional pluralistic religions of antiquity.

Mohr Siebeck www.mohr.de

2199-4463(201507)1:2;1-S