

GLASS UNGUENTARIA OF ELONGATED TYPE FROM MARMARIS MUSEUM

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Three glass unguentaria of elongated type have recently been purchased by Marmaris Museum from a local dealer. Though their findspot is unknown, the unguentaria must have been found together, probably in the same tomb context as they share very similar dimensions, forms and glass characteristics (Fig 1a-b, 2a-b, 3a-b; cat. no. 1-3).

Glass unguentaria (especially tubular and candlestick types) became one of the most common among all vessel types soon after the invention of glassblowing in ca 25 B.C.¹ They were mainly containers for scented oils, perfumes, ointments, i.e. "unguents"². Unguentaria can be regarded as the blown counterparts of earlier core-formed glass containers (aryballoi, alabastra, amphoriskoi or oinochoai). They were simple but mass-produced items showing a wide distribution both in the western and eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.

¹For the invention and spread of glassblowing see: Avigad, N. "Expedition at Nahal David", *Israel Exploration Journal* XII (1962), p. 169-183 ; Avigad, N. "Excavation in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem", *Israel Exploration Journal* XXII (1972), p.193-200 Mazar, B. -Dunayevsky, I. "Ein Gedi -Third Season of Excavations, *Israel Exploration Journal* XIV (1964), p. 121-130 ; Israeli, Y. "The Invention of Blowing", *Roman Glass -Two Centuries of Art and Invention* (ed. by M. Newby -K. Painter), London 1991, p. 46-55, esp. Stern, E. M. "Roman Glassblowing in a Cultural Context", *American Journal of Archaeology* 103.3 (1999), p. 441-484.

²Though we do not have many specimens of unguentaria with their contents preserved (see: Crivelli, A. *I Vetri Romani di Locarno*, 1979, p. 26 or Greenewalt Jr., C. H.- Sullivan, D. G. -Ratté, C. J. -Howe, T. H. "Sardis 1981 and 1982" *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* XXVI.2 (1983) , p. 182-183 , there are enough written sources on the ingredients of unguents. Pliny gives detailed information in his *Natural History* (XIII.1-25). The most popular herbs used for unguent production were saffron, marjoram, henna, iris, bee balm etc. In addition to the herbs, different types of rose, honey or wild grape were used for the production of unguents: Fleming, S.J. *Roman Glass, Reflections of Everyday Life*, Philadelphia 1997, p. 27-35. For more information about the plants used for production of unguents and drugs in antiquity see: Scarborough, J. "Drugs and Medicines in the Roman World", *Expedition* 38.2 (1996), p. 38-51.

According to the Roman beliefs about the afterlife, there was a certain "attempt to make the dead feel at home in the tomb"³. That should be one of the reasons for the existence of glass unguentaria in graves. On the other hand, another reason for their presence in burials was explained as "to create sweet smells" in tombs⁴.

Elongated unguentaria with their pointed, solid toes were completely unable to stand. In this case, they must have functioned not only to keep but to "carry" unguents as well. Even today, the tradition of non-standing perfume flasks seems to still exist (fig. 4). On a wall painting from Villa Farnesina in Rome, a girl pouring perfumes had been depicted (fig. 5)⁵. The flask she holds in her left hand can easily be an elongated unguentarium. On another wall painting from a tomb at Marlupo, there is a group of the same type of glass unguentaria placed within a larger silver bowl (fig. 6)⁶. These may show the frequency of the type in Roman everyday life. Elongated versions, like the other types of glass unguentaria, were also modest, yet elegant grave gifts. The excellent state of preservation of the Marmaris examples suggests that they were found in a grave context rather than the living quarters of a settlement.

According to Isings, elongated unguentaria (Form 9-a) are rather rare, but she gives a list of recorded specimens from western findspots⁷. This type is not as frequent as tubular or candlestick unguentaria, yet today there are more recorded examples both from the east and west. Unfortunately, many of them are without known provenances⁸.

³ Toynbee, J. M. C. *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, Baltimore and London 1996, p. 37-38.

⁴ Hayes, J. W. *Handbook of Mediterranean Roman Pottery*, London 1997, p. 84.

⁵ Ramage, N. H. -Ramage, A. *Roman Art -Romulus to Constantine*, New Jersey 1991, fig. 3.28, p. 98

⁶ Naumann-Steckner, F. "Depictions of Glass in Roman Wall Paintings", *Roman Glass- Two Centuries of Art and Invention* (ed. by M. Newby- K. Painter) London 1991, pl. XXIV.a, p. 88, 94.

⁷ Isings, C. *Roman Glass from Dated Finds*, Groningen 1957, p. 24-25.

⁸ Auth, S. H. *Ancient Glass at the Newark Museum*, Newark 1976, no. 359, p. 204 (with thread decoration); von Saldern, A. -Nolte, B. -La Baume P. -Haevernick, T.E. *Gläser der Antike -Sammlung Erwin Oppenländer*, no. 639, p. 220; Hayes, J.W. *Roman and Pre-Roman Glass in the Royal Ontario Museum*, Toronto 1975, no. 103, pl. 10, p. 52; Crivelli 1979, p. 29 (a find from Muralto Necropolis, Villa Liverpool); *The National Archaeological Museum - Naples 1982* (guidebook), no. 3, p. 80-81; Özyiğit, S. "Hellenistik ve Roma Dönemlerinden bir Kap Formu : Unguentarium" *Tombak* 4 (1995), no. 6, p. 20; Harden, D. B. Hellenkemper H. -Painter, K.

Recorded examples from the east come from Cyprus⁹, Cautat (Epidaurum) in Croatia¹⁰ and perhaps from Syro-Palestian area¹¹. In particular, the Epidaurum unguentarium has a close resemblance to those from Marmaris (fig. 7).

A couple of examples of elongated unguentaria have been recorded in Asia Minor. There is one unguentarium of this type with its rim missing in Afyon Museum's collection of glass¹². Its exact findspot is unknown, but should surely be in Asia Minor. Another specimen is in İstanbul, in the collection of Turkish Glassware Industries Co. (fig. 8)¹³. Again, in İstanbul in the collection of Sadberk Hanım Museum, there are three examples of the same type¹⁴. In Staatlichen Museum in Berlin, there is another one. Its provenance was recorded as Asia Minor¹⁵. Both have some differences from the Marmaris examples. Unlike the Marmaris unguentaria, they do not have constriction at the base of neck. Unguentarium in the Collection of the Turkish Glassware Industries Co. was made of brightly coloured blue glass, which is typical for the early

-Whitehouse, D. *Glass of the Caesars*, Milan 1987, no. 52, p. 120 (from Cumae, Italy); *Shining Vessels - Ancient Glass from Greek, Roman and Islamic Times* (Fortuna Fine Arts Ltd. - Sale Catalogue) New York 1991, no. 163, p. 88-89; Fleming, S.J. "Early Imperial Glass at the University of Pennsylvania Museum", *Expedition* 38.2 (1996), fig. 15 A,B, p. 22 (with white spiral decoration on dark blue).

⁹Vessberg, O. "Roman Glass in Cyprus" *Opuscula Archaeologica* 7 (1952), pl. VII. 43-45, p. 132, 135.

¹⁰*Trasparenze Imperiali - Vetri Romani dalla Croazia* (catalogue), Rome and Milan 1997, no. 61, p. 83, 121.

¹¹ One example in a private collection is probably from Syria and it was acquired in Lebanon: *Glass from the Ancient World - R. W. Smith Collection*, New York 1957, no. 157, p. 92-93; the other is from Emesa: Barag, D. *Glass Vessels of the Roman and Byzantine Periods in Palestine*, Jerusalem 1970 (unpublished thesis in Hebrew), pl. 21. I, 94, Lightfoot, C.S. *A Catalogue of Glass Vessels in Afyon Museum*, BAR International Series 530, Oxford 1989, p. 24; a base fragment has been recorded as an excavation find from Ashdod: Barag, D. "The Glass Vessels", in: Dothan, M. *Ashdod II-III, The Second and Third Seasons of Excavations 1963, 1965: Soundings in 1967*, Atiqot (English Series) 1971, no. 13, fig. 105, p. 204.

¹² Lightfoot 1989, no. 5, pl. 1, p. 24, 74.

¹³ Canav, Ü. *Türkiye Şişe ve Cam Fabrikaları A.Ş. Cam Eserler Koleksiyonu*, İstanbul 1985, no. 37, p. 44. The same vessel was illustrated in: Küçükerman, Ö. *Cam ve Çağdaş Tasarım İçindeki Yeri - Glass and its Place in Contemporary Design*, İstanbul 1978, no. 21, p. 70.

¹⁴ These unguentaria were formerly in Kocabaş Collection: Akat, Y. - Fıratlı, N. - Kocabaş, H. *Hüseyin Kocabaş Koleksiyonu Cam Eserler Kataloğu / Catalogue of Glass in the Hüseyin Kocabaş Collection*, İstanbul 1984, no. 164-165-166, pic. 66, 67-a, 67-b, p. 28, 59.

¹⁵ Kunisch, N. "Neu erworbene antike Gläser der Antikenabteilung der Staatlichen Museen Berlin", *Archaeologischer Anzeiger* (1967), abb. 10, p. 184-185.

imperial period. The unguentaria in Sadberk Hanım Museum Collection also have glass thread and band decoration. Despite these differences, along with the Marmaris examples, it is still possible to consider all these unguentaria as the versions of same general type (Isings Form 9-a).

All recorded examples of the elongated unguentaria dated to the 1st or early 2nd century A.D. At this is the time glassblowing practice became a commercial activity and turned into an "empire-wide enterprise" rather than a local Syro-Palestinian craft¹⁶.

It is usually accepted that the western glass centers had more advanced products compared with the east in this period¹⁷. Though less elegant in respect to shape and decoration, it is still possible to identify many of the technical and artistic fashions in glass products of the east as well.

Within this framework, the three elongated unguentaria in Marmaris Museum must be regarded as modest (they do not bear any decoration, they were made of natural, uncolored glass) eastern examples of a type which was well-known and produced in the west either.

¹⁶ Stern 1999, p. 442.

¹⁷ Stern, E.M. *Ancient Glass at the Fondation Custodia -Collection Frits Lugt -Paris*, Groningen 1977, p. 155; for example, among the elongated unguentaria from the west, there are even a *cameo glass* examples: One of them is now in Ortiz collection in Spain: Whitehouse, D. "Cameo Glass", *Roman Glass -Two Centuries of Art and Invention* (ed. by M. Newby- K. Painter) London 1991, pl. VI, VII a-b, p. 25, 29-30; the other one was found in Torre di Siena in Italy and in Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Florence: Whitehouse 1991, p. 25, Fleming 1996, fig. 18, p. 23.

CATALOGUE

1. Marmaris Museum Inv. No.: 9.10.99

Fig. 1 a-b

height: 9.5 cm.; diameter (rim): 2 cm.

Natural green glass, rainbow and brown iridescence and weathering on the surface.

Rim folded inwards and flattened, cylindrical neck with constriction at base, bulbous body, drop-shaped, solid base.

Freeblown.

No decoration.

2. Marmaris Museum Inv. No.: 9.11.99

Fig. 2 a-b

height: 9.5 cm.; diameter (rim): 2 cm.

Natural green glass, rainbow and brown iridescence on the inner and outer surfaces.

Rim folded inwards and flattened, cylindrical neck with constriction at base, bulbous body, drop-shaped, solid base.

Freeblown.

No decoration.

3. Marmaris Museum Inv. No.: 9.12.99

Fig. 3 a-b

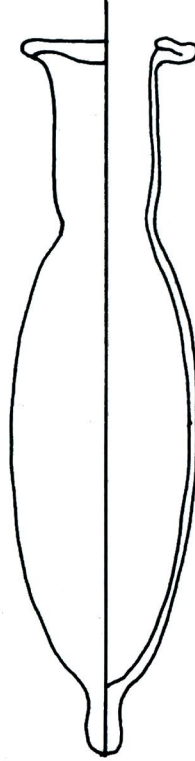
height: 10.5 cm.; diameter (rim): 2 cm.

Natural green glass, rainbow, yellow, brown iridescence and weathering on surface.

Rim folded inwards and flattened, cylindrical neck with constriction at base, bulbous body, drop-shaped, solid base.

Freeblown.

No decoration.



Res. 1a - Unguentarium- Marmaris Müzesi Env.
No. 9.10.99.

Fig. 1a - Unguentarium - Marmaris Museum Inv.
No. 9.10.99.

Res. 1b - Unguentarium- Marmaris Müzesi Env.
No. 9.10.99.

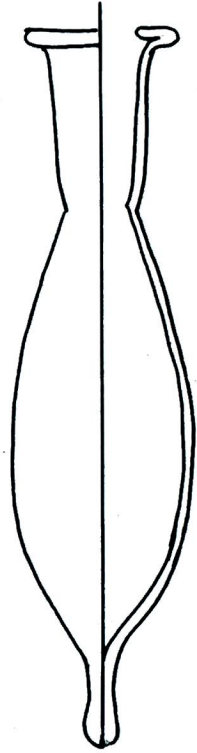
Fig. 1b - Unguentarium - Marmaris Museum Inv.
No. 9.10.99.

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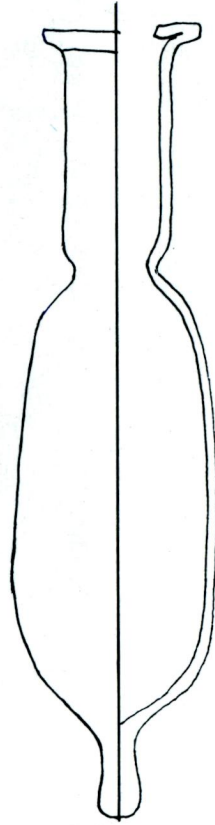
Res. 2a - Unguentarium- Marmaris Müzesi Env.
No. 9.11.99.

Fig. 2a - Unguentarium - Marmaris Museum Inv.
No. 9.11.99.



Res. 2b - Unguentarium- Marmaris Müzesi Env.
No. 9.11.99.

Fig. 2b - Unguentarium - Marmaris Museum Inv.
No. 9.11.99.



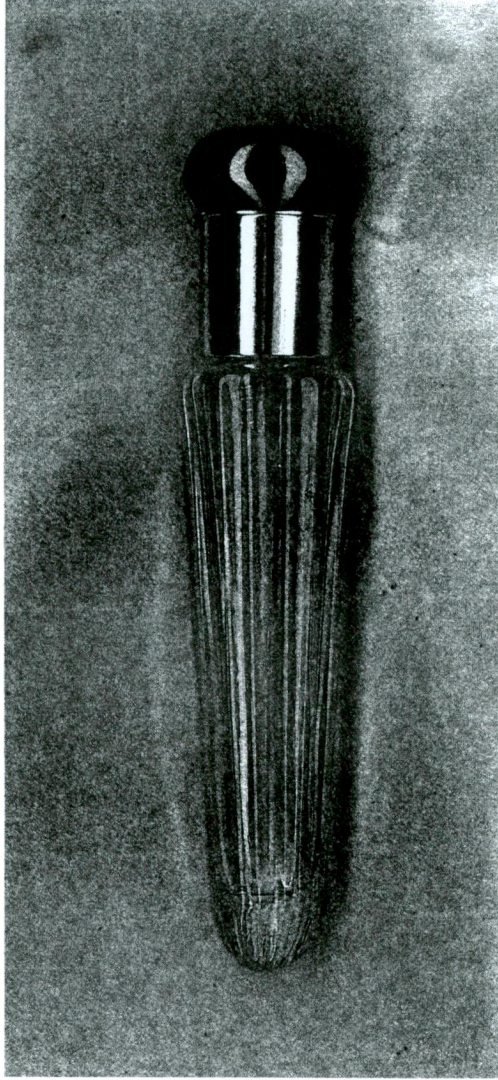
Res. 3a - Unguentarium- Marmaris Müzesi Env.
No. 9.12.99.

Fig. 3a - Unguentarium - Marmaris Museum Inv.
No. 9.12.99.

Res. 3b - Unguentarium- Marmaris Müzesi Env.
No. 9.12.99.

Fig. 3b - Unguentarium - Marmaris Museum Inv.
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Res. 4 - Modern Parfüm Şişesi ("Victoria", Victoria's Secret-Eau de Cologne).
Fig. 4 - A Modern Perfume Flask ("Victoria", Victoria's Secret- Eau de Cologne).



Res. 5 - Roma-Villa Farnesina Duvar Resmi (Ramage 1991, fig. 3.28, s. 98).
Fig. 5 - Wall painting excavated in Villa Farnesina, Rome (Ramage 1991, fig. 3.28, p. 98).



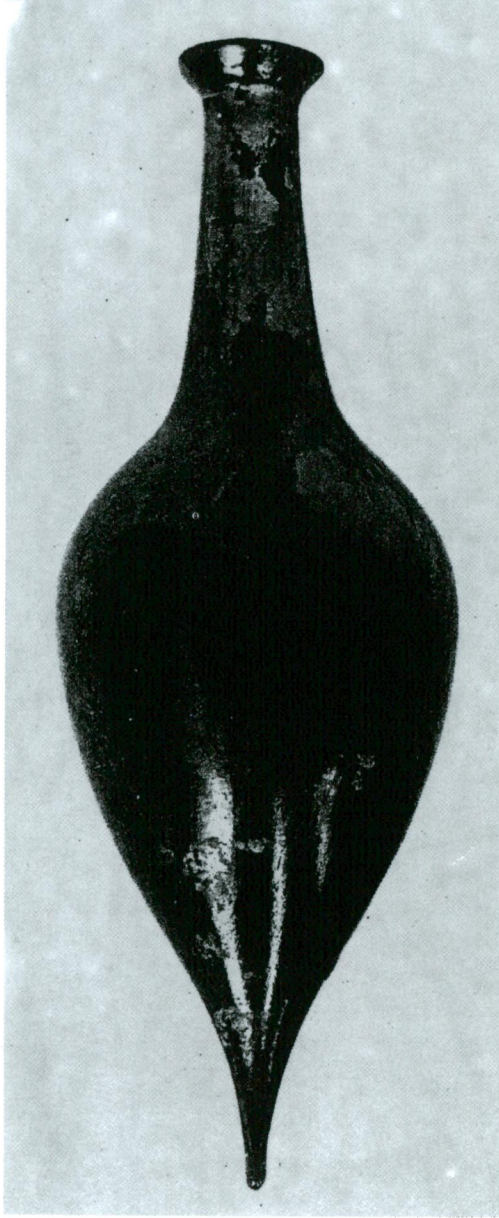
Res. 6 - Marlupo Mezari Duvar Resmi (Naumann-Steckner 1991, pl. XXIVa, s. 93).
Fig. 6 - Wall painting from Marlupo Tomb (Naumann-Steckner 1991, pl. XXIVa, p. 93).



Res. 7 - Epidaurum buluntusu Unguentarium (Trasparenze Imperiali 1997, no.61,p.121).

Fig. 7 - Unguentarium from Epidaurum (Trasparenze Imperiali 1997, no. 61, p. 121).

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Res. 8 -Unguentarium- Türkiye Şişe ve Cam Fabrikaları A.Ş Koleksiyonu-İstanbul (Küçükerman 1978, no.21, s.70).

Fig. 8 - Unguentarium in the Collection of Turkish Glassware Industries Co., Istanbul (Küçükerman 1978, no. 21, p. 70).