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Molten Color: Glassmaking in Antiquity

Karol B Wight

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Some of the most astounding antiquities in museums today are pieces made of glass. Not only are they beautiful, with marvelous colors and fanciful shapes, but the fact that these fragile items have survived the millennia is amazing. This volume describes the uses of glass and glassmaking in the ancient world, from their origins in Mesopotamia and Egypt to developments in the late Roman Empire.

The first half of this exquisitely illustrated book examines the earliest techniques for making glass, including casting, core-forming, and mosaic. All were used for centuries prior to the development of glass blowing, in which molten glass is inflated at the end of a hollow tube. This technique, which started in the middle of the first century, led to entirely new shapes and decorative approaches. The second half of the book looks at glass made during the Roman imperial period.

Most of the objects used as examples come from the J. Paul Getty Museum’s fine collection of ancient glass; additional pieces are from the Corning Museum of Art, New York, and the Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne. *Molten Color* accompanies a permanent exhibition of the same name on view at the Getty Villa.

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