

# GLASS VESSELS DISCOVERED IN DACIAN *BURIDAVA* \*

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**Keywords:** pre-Roman Dacia, Romania, *Buridava*, glass, ribbed bowls, beaker, bottles, carchesium, skyphos, rython, sagging, mold-blowing, free-blowing, splashed glass, cut-faceting, inscription

**Abstract:** The article presents glass items discovered over time during archaeological excavations performed on the Dacian site of *Buridava* and preserved in the collection of the “Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu” Vâlcea County Museum. The analyzed fragments were once part of glass vessels created in different techniques: sagging, mold-blown, free-blown, cut-faceted, and splashed glass. Most identified shapes are ribbed bowls, but one could also mention one cylindrical beaker with inscription, a beaker with cut-faceted decoration, one “*carchesium*” fragment, two fragments from bottles handles, one skyphos (?) handle, and one fragment from a rython(?). Though the analyzed lot includes a relatively small number of items, it draws attention due to the variety of production techniques employed and the variety of identified shapes. Taking all these into consideration, one may say that the lot represents a group of glass items typical to the chronological interval between the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.

**Rezumat:** Articolul prezintă obiecte de sticlă descoperite pe parcursul săpăturilor arheologice sistematice efectuate în așezarea dacică de la *Buridava*, jud. Vâlcea, aflate în colecția Muzeului Județean „Aurel Sacerdoțeanu” din Râmnicu Vâlcea. Fragmentele analizate provin de la obiecte de sticlă realizate în tehnici diferite: presare în/pe tipar, suflare în tipar, suflare liberă, fațetare și sticlă pătată. Cele mai multe piese – șapte fragmente – provin de la boluri cu nervuri în relief, alături de care au mai fost identificate și fragmente de la un pahar cilindric cu inscripție, un pahar cu decor polifațetat, un “*carchesium*”, două butelii, un skyphos (?) și un rython (?). Chiar dacă lotul prezentat este alcătuit dintr-un număr mic de exemplare, el atrage atenția prin tehnicile variate de realizare a pieselor și prin varietatea formelor de vase identificate. Se poate spune că el reprezintă o sinteză a tehnicilor de prelucrare a sticlei și a celor mai frecvente forme confecționate din acest material în intervalul cronologic cuprins între sfârșitul secolului I a. Chr. și începutul secolului I p. Chr.

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The items included in the present catalogue were discovered during archaeological excavations performed during the 1970s and 1980s in the Dacian settlement of Ocnîța - Fundătura Cosotei, known in specialized literature as Dacian *Buridava*. Just like the whole material discovered on the site, these items are currently preserved in the collection of the County Museum Vâlcea. The sixteen items under analysis (out of which 14 could be determined) do not represent the entire lot of glass objects discovered in *Buridava*; existing publications also list items that are not part of the lot received for research.<sup>1</sup>

According to the production technique, the items under discussion can be grouped as follows:

**Cast vessels** (sagging glass). This category includes five fragments of ribbed bowls (no. 1-5) created through the pressing of a heated piece of glass on a semispherical mold placed on a wheel. As the wheel was slowly turned, the edge of the bowl was created by pressing the margin of the glass disk against the mold with a metal bar, while another bar was employed in the formation of the ribs through rhythmical movements.<sup>2</sup> The earliest ribbed bowls were discovered in the Syrian-Palestinian area in contexts dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.<sup>3</sup> Such vessels were exported to sites around the Mediterranean and there they generated local production that brought significant changes and improvements in the shape and decoration of glass vessels.<sup>4</sup>

The fragments identified at *Buridava* were part of deep semispherical bowls with rounded narrow rims, flared and slightly concave on the outside (no. 1, 3) or slightly in-turned (no. 2), and more (no. 1) or less (no. 3) concave walls. They are made of natural glass, of various colors: semi-transparent blue (no. 1-2, 5), semi-opaque white (no. 3) or yellowish-brown (honey-like) (no. 4). A single fragment (no. 3) was discovered in a closed context, inside a pit (subterranean room?) – room/Gr. 2/73 -, inside a sanctuary on the acropolis

\* This article was supported by the National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project no. PN-II-RU-  
PD-2011-3-0122. The Romanian version of the article was published in *Buridava*, no. 10/ 2012, the journal of “Aurelian  
Sacerdoțeanu” County Museum, Râmnicu Vâlcea.

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<sup>1</sup> For example the items published in Berciu 1981, p. 51, Pl. 38/4-5; p. 94, Pl. 48/1.

<sup>2</sup> Hayes 1975, p. 16; Grose 1984, pp. 28-29, Fig. 4; Fleming 1996, p. 20, Fig. 14 A, B, D; Ferrari *et alii* 1998, p. 185; Jennings 2000, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson-Tal 2004, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Fleming 1996, p. 20.