

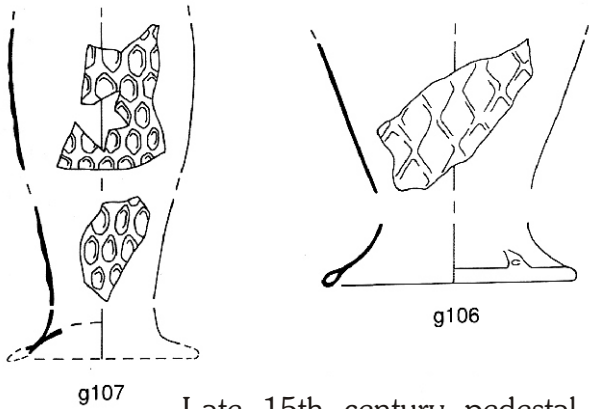
# Pedestal Beakers

(a summary by Roman Glassmakers)

Beakers become popular in the late 14th and 15th centuries, with some of the earliest pedestal beakers appearing during the later 15th century. The vessel gained in popularity during the 16th century, particularly amongst the lower social classes, who could not afford the *cristallo* glass imported from Venice for the nobility.

Although some of the earliest pedestal beakers have diamond and hexagonal lozenge patterns, and many later ones are undecorated, the most common variety is that with vertical or wrythen (spiralling) ribbing. Most are blown in the greenish colour of the forest glass tradition, although some are colourless and may have been imported from The Low Countries (such as Willmott, fig. 31(below)), Germany and Italy.

Fragments of pedestal beakers have been discovered in large enough quantities at English glasshouses such as Bickerstaffe (Hurst Vose 1995), Haughton Green (Hurst Vose 1994), and Hutton and Rosedale (Crossley and Aberg 1972) for us to be fairly certain that they were made at these sites during the late 16th and 17th centuries.



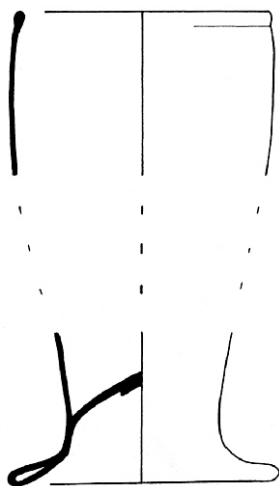
Late 15th century pedestal beakers (Tyson, Fig. 12, p. 78)

## **g106: 31-51 Pottergate, Norwich, Norfolk**

Body and foot fragments of pale greyish-blue glass beaker, optic-blown with diamond pattern, and folded pedestal foot. Base diameter c.82mm. From a cellar deposit, probably from fire of AD1507

## **g107: St. Peter's Street, Northampton**

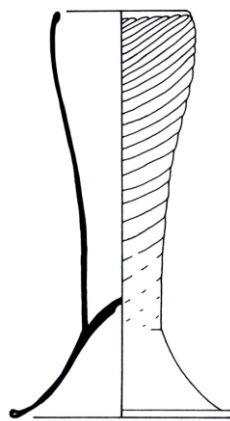
Body and foot fragments of greenish glass, with some enamel-like weathering. Faint optic-blown hexagonal lozenge pattern, becoming more prominent towards the base. Folded pedestal foot. Base diameter c.64mm. Probably an intrusive find in a pre-late 14th to early 15th century deposit.



**Figure 28**  
Plain pedestal beaker

Height 152mm

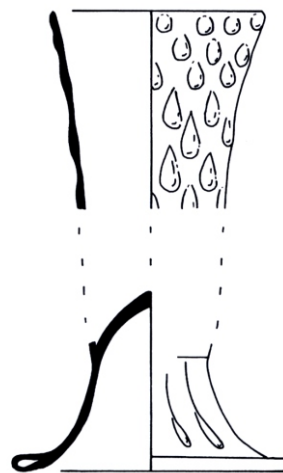
Eccleshall Castle,  
Staffordshire



**Figure 30** Pedestal beaker with optic-blown wrythen ribs

Height 130mm

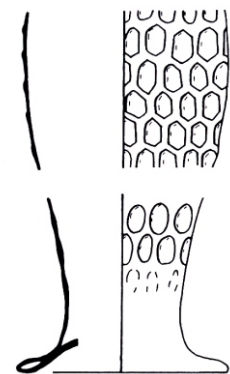
Nonsuch Palace,  
Surrey



**Figure 31** Pedestal beaker with optic-blown bosses

Height 148mm

Alcester,  
Warwickshire



**Figure 32** Pedestal beaker with optic-blown mesh

Height 116mm

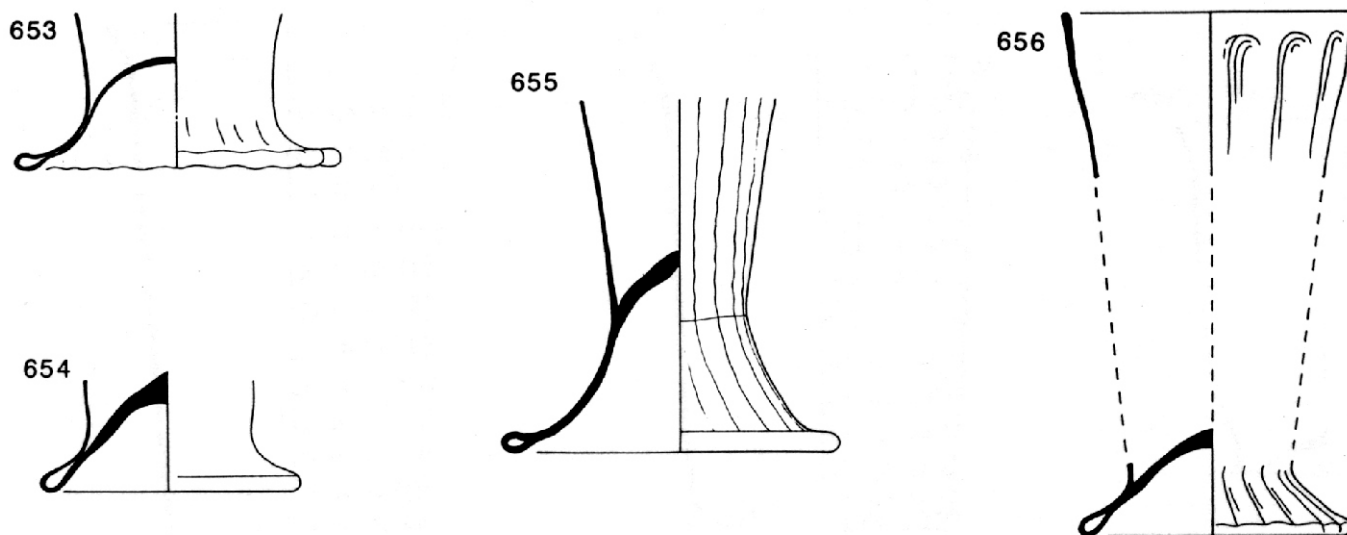
Northampton

16th and 17th century pedestal beakers (Willmott 2002)

Pedestal beakers are made from a single bubble of glass, and the foot is formed either by pushing or sucking the base back into the body and fusing it to its outer shell by constricting it from the outside. The rim is fire-polished and there is a scar at the base where the beaker has been detached from the pontil.

The pattern is formed by optic-moulding, with the decoration (either vertical ribs or a repeating series of variously-shaped lozenges) in high relief, and is altered and softened by reheating, blowing and shaping the bubble. The wrythen decoration is formed by moulding vertical ribs and twisting the bubble in the mould to create a spiral pattern.

The pedestals vary in height, as do the beakers themselves. The body usually flares outwards, and the rim may either continue the flare, or curve inwards.



Post Medieval pedestal beakers from Norwich (Haslam 1993)



**653: Base, folded foot**, with faint mould-blown ribbing; pale bluish-green glass, very weathered. (1550-1620). Base diameter: 80mm.

**654: Base, folded foot**, faint mould-blown ribbing; pale bluish-green glass, slight surface weathering. c. 1640. Base diameter: 66mm.

**655: Base**, and lower part of body, **with folded foot**, vertical mould-blown ribbing; pale bluish green glass, slight surface weathering. 16th - 17th centuries. Base diameter: 82mm.

**656: Base and part of rim**, probably from same vessel, **with folded foot**; bluish-green glass; decorated with vertical mould-blown ribbing. Base diameter: 66mm. Reconstructed height: 128mm.

**657: Part of rim**, similar to 656. Rim diameter: 80mm.

**658: Part of rim** (same type as 656, 657); pale bluish-green glass; decorated with lozenge-shaped mould-blown ribbing (honeycomb moulding); late 16th/early 17th century type. 1760-1780 deposit (possibly residual). Rim diameter: 94mm.

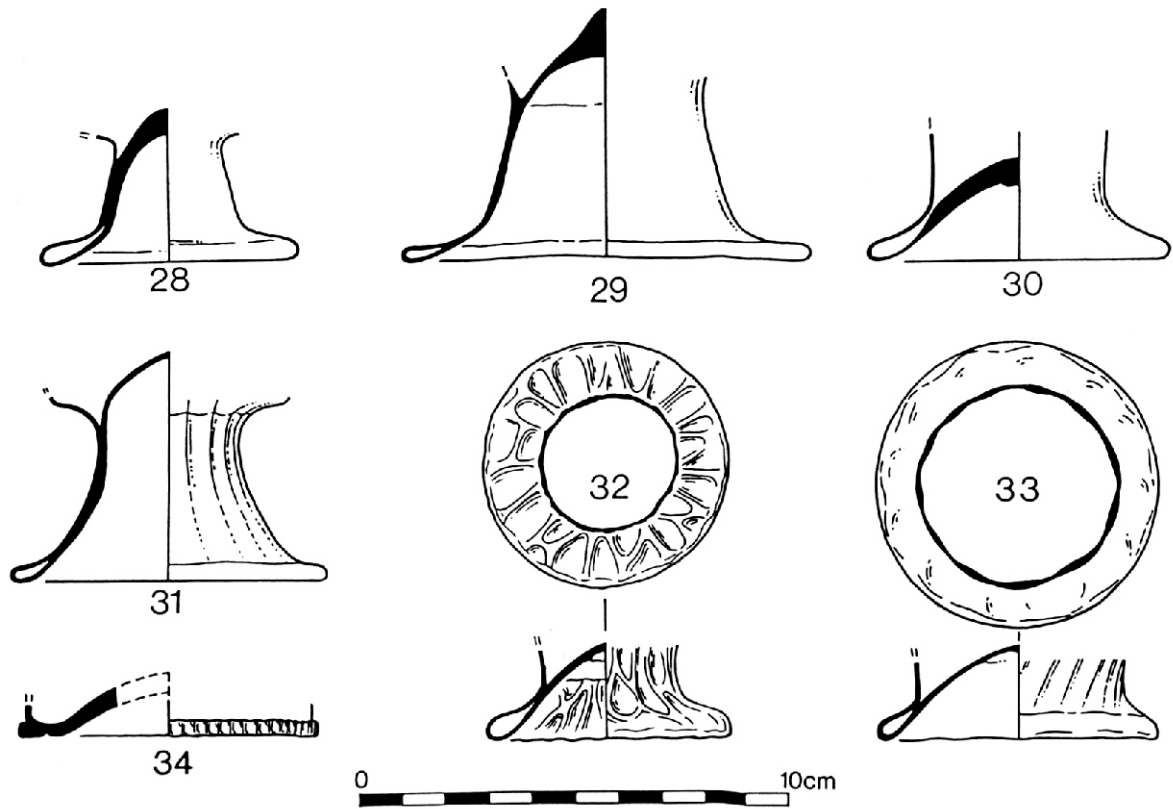


FIG. 9

Haughton Green: green vessel glass, 19-34.

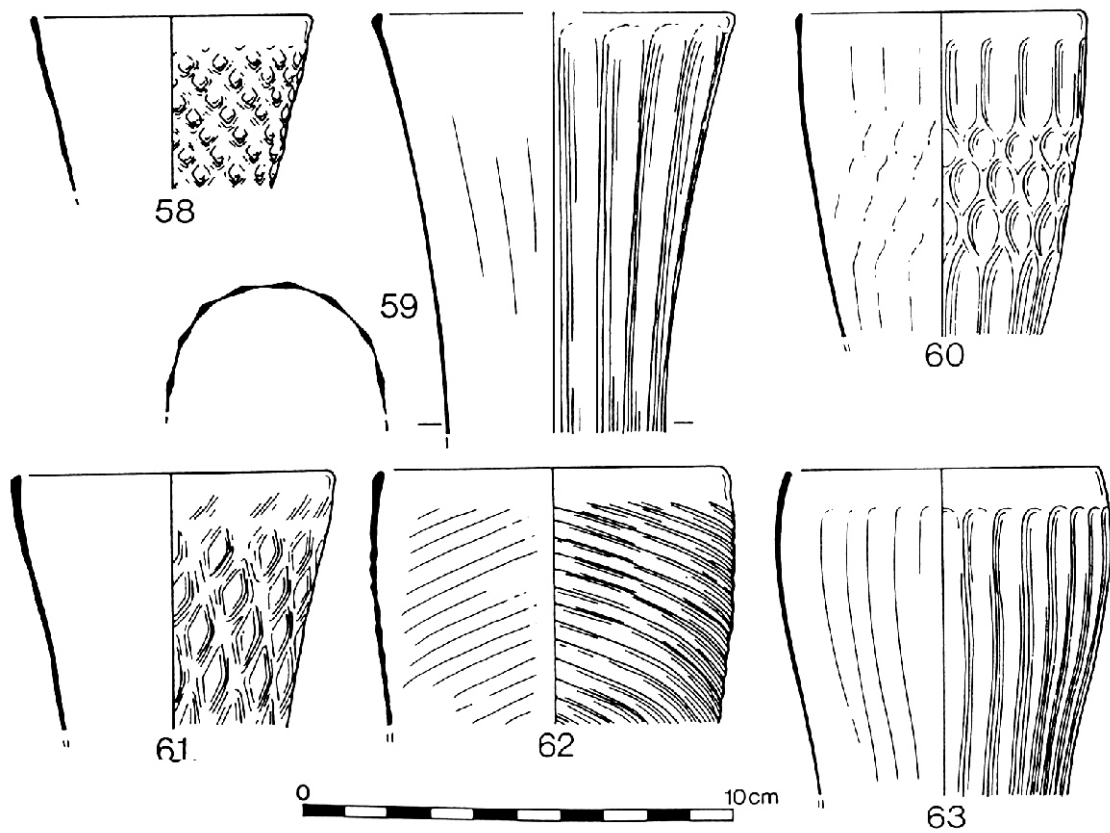


FIG. 11 Haughton Green: green vessel glass

17th century glass pedestal beakers from Haughton Green Glasshouse, Denton, near Manchester (Hurst Vose 1994)

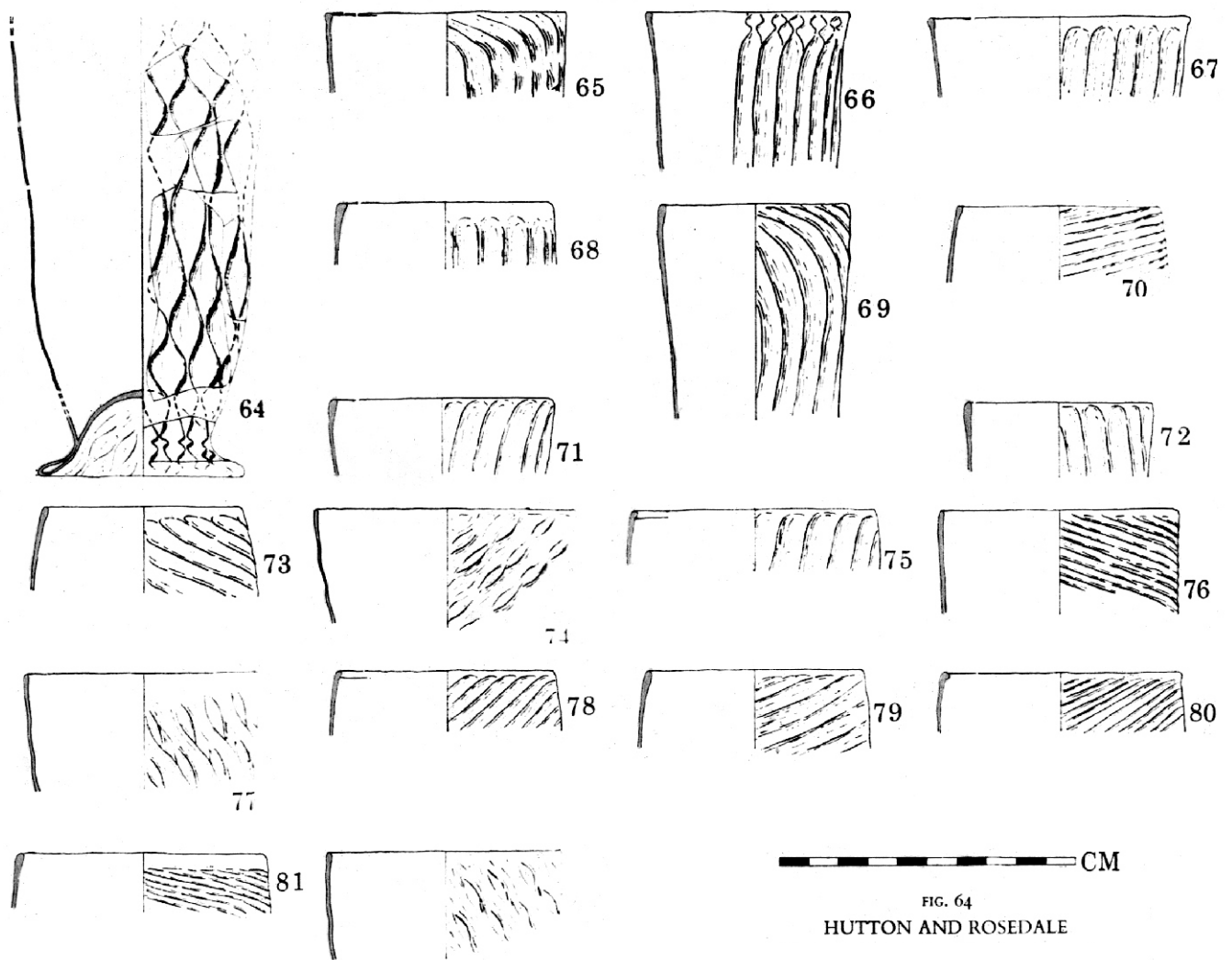
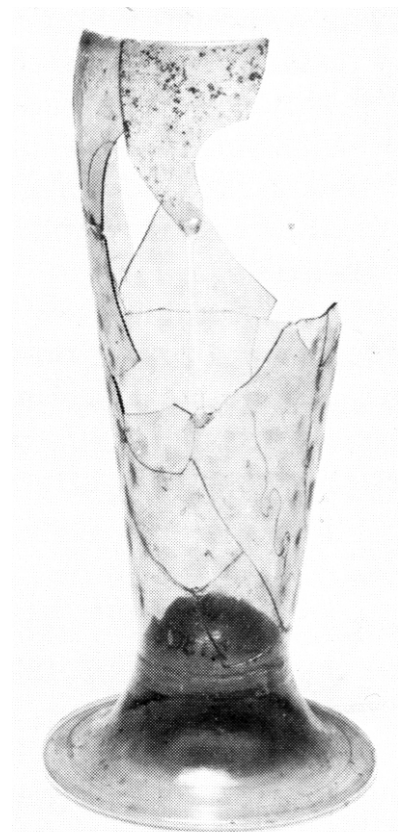


FIG. 64  
HUTTON AND ROSEDALE

82 16th century glass beaker fragments from Hutton Glasshouse, Yorkshire (Crossley and Aberg 1972)

### Selected References:

- Tyson, Rachel (2000) 'Medieval glass vessels found in England c AD 1200-1500' Council for British Archaeology: CBA Research Report 121 pp.78 (fig. 12), 82. Type B8: g106-g108
- Willmott, Hugh (2002) 'Early post-medieval vessel glass in England c. 1500-1670' Council for British Archaeology: CBA Research Report 132 pp. 45-50. Types 4.1 - 4.9
- Crossley, D. W. and Aberg, F. A. (1972) 'Sixteenth-Century Glass-Making in Yorkshire: Excavations at Furnaces at Hutton and Rosedale, North Riding, 1968-1971' *Journal of Post Medieval Archaeology* 6 pp.136-141 (fig. 61), 146 (figs. 64 - 65)
- Hurst Vose, Ruth (1994) 'Excavations at the 17th century glasshouse at Haughton Green, Denton, near Manchester.' *Journal of Post Medieval Archaeology* 28 pp.26-30 (figs. 9-11, nos. 26-68)
- Hurst Vose, Ruth (1995) 'Excavations at the c.1600 Bickerstaffe Glasshouse, Lancashire' in *Journal of the Merseyside Archaeological Society* Vol. 9, 1995 pp. 1-24 (pp. 9-12 (figs. 5,6, nos. 3-19))
- Haslam, J. (1993) 'Glass Vessels' in Margeson, S. (ed) (1993) 'Norwich Households - Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Norwich Survey Excavations 1971-78' *East Anglian Archaeology Monograph* No. 58 (Norwich Survey) pp.97-117 (pp.104-105 (fig. 70, nos. 653-658))



Charleston 1981, Fig. 31



Detail from 'A New Year's Guift for Shrews', c.1620s. It shows a man seated outside an inn, drinking from a tall pedestal beaker.

Fig. 31 **Beer-glass.** Found in Honey Lane, London, probably made in London. c.1600. Height: 18.25cm. Museum of London

**This is taken directly from Charleston 1981:**

"This shape of drinking glass (ie. the globular tankard) seems to have been superceded, at least for beer, later in the (16th) century by the tall cylindrical beaker (i.e. the pedestal beaker). Sir Hugh Platt, in his *Jewell House of Art and Nature*, published in 1594, specifies for one of his experiments: 'Take a beer glasse of six or eight inches in height and being of one equal bigness from the bottom to the top', and a print illustrating *A New Year's Guift for Shrews* belonging probably to the 1620's, shows a tippler drinking from a tall cylindrical glass. One form of this type of glass has fortunately been preserved virtually in its entirety in a pit in Honey Lane, London, which was sealed off soon after 1600 (Hume, 1962, fig. 1; *id.*, 1968, fig. 1). This glass (Fig. 31), of pale green glass with dimpled mould-blown patterning, stands 18.25 cm. (i.e. 7.2 in.) high - within the limits indicated by Platt. The foot is in the form of a pedestal, made by pushing in the base of the paraison and creating a double thickness, the enclosed air being pushed outwards to the edge of the foot where it is widest, giving it the apearance of being a folded foot. This type of foot is a type-fossil on glassmaking sites dating from the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century.....That glasses made by this 'pushed-in' technique were manufactured in England has long been recognized,.....and it cannot be doubted that this type of beaker was made in England."

He goes on to say that various sites in England, including glassmaking sites, have yielded fragments of beakers with incurved rims as well as with outward-turning rims from conical pedestal beakers, and that:

"Both kinds of glass were decorated with mould-blown ornaments, either a diaper design of dots, mesh moulding, or vertical ribbing which might be spirally 'wrythen'."

*Charleston, R. J. (1981) '16th to 17th century English Glass' in Bulletin de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre 1977-1980: Liege.*



MoL 80.12/30



MoL 83.463/54



MoL 83.463/55



MoL 5145



MoL 11737



MoL 21338



MoL A12618



MoL A28080



MoL NN23655



MoL NN23964/2



MoL NN23964/4

16th - 17th century pedestal beakers in the Museum of London (Mortimer Wheeler House, Ceramics and Glass store - Post-Medieval section)

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/ceramics/pages/glass.asp](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/ceramics/pages/glass.asp)  
(North European 'potash' glass - Other drinking glasses)

Base diameters vary from 69mm to 85mm, averaging 76mm.



MoL 21308

**21308:** Height: 144mm, Diam (rim): 58mm

This pedestal beaker has been created by joining the foot 28080 to the bowl 21308, and photoshopping ('Photopainting', actually) the result. The bowl is decorated with mould-blown shallow depressions.

