

UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA  
FACULDADE DE LETRAS



# CONIMBRIGA



VOLUME XXXVI - 1997

INSTITUTO DE ARQUEOLOGIA

MANUELA ALMEIDA FERREIRA

Mestre em Arqueologia

SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GLASS DRINKING  
VESSELS AND BOTTLES FROM LISBON — PORTUGAL

“Conimbriga” XXXVI (1997) p. 183-190

RESUMO: Os copos, garrafas e frascos em apreço provieram de seis estações arqueológicas da área urbana de Lisboa. A maioria é comparável ao vidro europeu do mesmo tipo datado dos sécs. XVII e XVIII. Algumas das formas e os selos de garrafa nos quais se pode ler um nome português encontram-se igualmente entre o espólio das escavações levadas a cabo no sítio de Real Manufatura de Vidro fundada em 1719 no lugar de Coina (Barreiro). Foram ainda encontrados, em Lisboa, um selo inglês e um francês.

SUMMARY: The drinking glasses, bottles and flasks under consideration were brought to light in six different archaeological sites in Lisbon. Most of them are comparable to European glassware of the same type dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some of the forms and the bottle seals which read Portuguese names are analogous to those found at the site of the Royal Manufacture of Glass established in 1719 at Coina near Lisbon. English and French seals were also discovered.

(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)

# SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GLASS DRINKING VESSELS AND BOTTLES FROM LISBON — PORTUGAL

## Introduction

During 1990 and 1991 the Roman Theatre Board undertook excavations in Lisbon which brought glass finds from Roman times through the 20<sup>th</sup> century to light. In this paper we shall consider only two types of these finds, namely the drinking vessels and the bottles and flasks, both from levels buried by the massive 1775 earthquake.

In order to give a comprehensive overview of the evolution of these vessels, we have established two chronological type series based on their archaeological contexts. Reconstructions have been made after comparison with similar, well preserved and well-documented items (Plates 1 and 2).

## The forms

Group I (Plate 1) consists of drinking glasses that still belong to the tradition of light goblets reflecting the Venetian style. Within this group numbers 1 and 5 show mould-blown decoration, while numbers 2 and 4 have applied threads of opaque white glass. These vessels are the last survivors of Renaissance glass *design* as found not only in Portugal, but in many other countries as well<sup>1)</sup>.

0) WARD-PERKINS *et al*, 1973, 127-130; BARRERA 1990, 347 and foil; MOORHOUSE 1971, 64-65, Pl. 27/5; GUDIOL RICART 1936, Pl 72 and foil.

However, from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> onwards, when we find a major change in the centers which influenced glass making, fashion also changed. Heavy stemmed goblets, made of lead glass, triumphed over the light glasses that had been produced during the 17<sup>th</sup> century (2).

Numbers 1 through 4 of group II, together with numbers 1 and 2 of group III plus group VIII illustrate especially well the influence of English patterns on 18<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese glass. The first one documents the transition from the Venetian hollow stems to the solid ones of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The other three of that same group are baluster stems enclosing tear-shaped air bubbles (3) while the sherd of group VIII belonged to a stem with embedded decoration of twisted ribbons in opaque white (4).

Cut stems like numbers 1 and 2 of group III (typical Silesian goblets) (5) also reflect a favourite decorative theme of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was developed in Bohemia and soon spread through several Western countries (6).

In conclusion we find, in group VII, the wheel-engraved floral ornamentation known elsewhere during this period.

The polygonal shapes represented in group V were very frequent in Portugal in glass as well as other decorative arts, as a result of the influence which Architecture had on the crafts during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

We shall refer to group IV below, when treating on a possible local production for the goblets under discussion.

Concerning the bottles (Plate 2), we may note that the Lisbon series also documents the well-known shift from the 17<sup>th</sup> century light coloured, bulbous, bottles to dark cylindrical ones in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Group I shows hypothetical reconstructions of 17<sup>th</sup> century bottles; numbers 1, 2, and 5 are fragments of *vetri afili*.

Groups II and III picture the forms of the 18<sup>th</sup> century bottles and flasks discovered. Apart from number 1 of group II, these are all cylindrical bottles, whereas in group III we again find polygonal containers for liquids commonly called "case-bottles" (numbers 1 through 7). Number 8 almost certainly is ajar.

(2) BARRELET 1957, 109; DAVIS 1971, 16-19.

(3) ODDY 1977-80, 116, fig. 41; ASHURST 1987, 196, PL 18/1.

(4) KLEIN and LLOYD 1984, 134.

(5) NEWMAN 1977, 297; DAVIS 1971, 9 and 24-25; KUBALSKA 1991, 491 and 493.

(6) BARRELET 1957, 114, Pl. 19, 21 and 27; DAVIS 1971, 24, 26 and 43.

We would like to point out that the thick conical bottom of the case-bottle number 2 (group III) has an engraved double-cross analogous to the crosses observed on similar American containers dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (7).

Furthermore it should be noted that the glass seals of five bottles were brought to light in Lisbon. The first three are marked with the Portuguese name “Andre Lopez de Castro” (Plate 3/A). The fourth seal is in English. It consists of a coat of arms surrounded by the legend: “EARL’S . HOLT . MINARIL . WATER . 1730” (Plate 3/B). The last one is a French seal; it reads “VNIS A IAMAIS” (Unis à jamais), and bears the figure of a Cupid (Plate 3/C).

### **The origins of the finds**

After treating on the formal aspects of the glassware from Lisbon, let us look at the evidence that leads us to consider most of it to be of local production.

To begin with we must briefly focus on three events in modern Portuguese history which are relevant to the study of local glass production.

First of all, we must realize that from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Portugal enjoyed an outstanding prosperity due to the gold from its Brazilian possessions. Secondly we have the Methuen Treaty of 1703 to consider. It established free trade for English textiles in Portugal and for Portuguese fortified wine in England. And lastly, not only Portuguese craftsmen, but also several English and Irish glass-makers were employed at the Royal Manufacture of Glass at Coima, near Lisbon, established by King John V (died 1750) in 1719 (8).

The analogy evident between some of the glasses from Lisbon and those from Coima (Plates 4-5), leads us to conclude that at least part of the productions of the Royal Manufacture was sold on the open market (9).

(7) HUME 1961, 106; McNULTY 1971, 106, fig. 24.

(8) CUSTÓDIO 1986, 44-45.

(9) The excavation at Coima was directed by Mr. Jorge Custódio, whom I thank for allowing me to refer to some unpublished glass finds.

The stemmed goblet with white twisted ribbon decoration must be slightly more recent than the other 18<sup>th</sup> century drinking vessels. Even though no similar glasses have been found at Coina, the normal recycling practice does not guarantee us that such decoration was never produced by the Royal Manufacture until it was closed in 1747.

It is certain, nevertheless, that these goblets were blown at Marinha Grande — 120 km. North of Lisbon — where the glassworks were moved in 1769. The very first catalogues from this workshop display a variety of them, strangely called *copos de calix com pé esmaltado* (goblets with enamelled stem)<sup>(10)</sup>.

The original forms and dimensions of the bottles with seals bearing Portuguese names are shown by intact specimens found in museums and private collections. They document the name of the nephew of a Portuguese Jewish physician born in 1691 who fled to England to avoid the Inquisition. A bottle bearing a seal with his name and the year 1749 is preserved in the Beja museum.

Written sources say that these bottles were for *agoa de Inglaterra* (water from England). This actually was a solution, containing imported Peruvian quinine, prescribed as a cure for malaria and other illnesses caused by deleterious living conditions ("). It was in use at least until the Napoleonic Invasions.

The nephew in question inherited the formula from the inventor of the "water from England", and continued to prepare and sell it in Portugal. However, since there also were many spurious imitations available, the seal discovered at Coina could well be a forgery.

There is a further problem: why is the name spelled "Lopez" with a final "z", while it appears with a final "s" in contemporary written sources? Could it be a phonetic spelling of the way it is usually pronounced by non-Portuguese speakers? Even though it is not quite clear whether these bottles were made in either England or Portugal, we therefore assume them to be of English manufacture.

The English seal likewise belonged to an English made container for medicinal water. The wells for this potion were situated at Holt, in the region of Bath (Western England), and for some period up to 1731 the water was commercially exploited by Henri Eyre. From that date onwards however, Eyre appears as a professional promoter and thus it

<sup>(10)</sup> BARROS 1969, Pl. X.

<sup>(11)</sup> D'ESAGUY 1931, 30-33.

is likely that around 1730 other residents at Holt or its surroundings, started bottling the mineral water as well.

John and Priscilla Earl certainly were amongst these. Between 1727 and 1729 they not only were witness to the case of a recorded cure, but they also provided lodgings for the patient concerned <sup>(12)</sup>.

## Glass and Society

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century matched sets of drinking glasses were rare for all but the upper classes. Therefore we can picture a varied collection of goblets stored away in cupboards or on display on the sideboard at mealtime. It is also likely that several guests used one and the same goblet, with a wash-up after each usage.

In practice water, mineral water and wine were probably poured into larger goblets than those used for gin and rum or sweet alcoholic drinks such as liquors. The intact little polygonal beaker from Lisbon and the similar but only partially preserved piece excavated at Coima (Plate 4), must have served for this last purpose.

Flasks and bottles were used for medicines, ink, beverages and perfumes, while square case-bottles were the preferred containers for spirits with presumed medicinal properties. Dark green cylindrical bottles containing wine were relegated to the cellars and fetched as needed.

A quantitative examination of the vast amount of sherds found by the Roman Theatre Board in Lisbon should be of interest. A comparison with other urban data will surely show us the typology and the quantity of the most common bottles kept in the cellars of the lower and middle class residents of the neighbourhoods where the excavations took place.

We must be aware that glass is a cultural article; it therefore becomes mandatory, when studying glass remains, to go deeper than a typological and chronological discussion. Through the remains we must try to fathom the person who created and used those objects. As was said before: "Man does not go naked".

<sup>(12)</sup> I am deeply grateful to Mr. Neil Willcox (Antique Bottles & Stoneware 1650-1850, England) for assistance in the interpretation of this seal.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BARROS 1969  
*Real Fábrica de Vidros da Marinha Grande — II.º Centenário — 1769-1969*/  
Carlos Barros; Lisbon 1969.
- BARRELET 1957  
Le verre à boire en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle / James Barrelet; *Cahiers de la  
Céramique, du Verre et des Arts du Feu*, 7 (1957), 100-117.
- BARRERA 1990  
Le verre à boire des fouilles de la Cour Napoléon du Louvre (Paris) / Jorge  
Barrera; *Annales du II<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l A.L.H.V.* (1990), 347-364.
- CUSTÓDIO 1986  
A Real Fábrica de Coína e as origens da indústria vidreira na Marinha Grande  
(1719-1926) / Jorge Custódio; *Actas do I Encontro Nacional sobre o Património  
Industrial* (1986), 41-78.
- D'ESAGUY 1931  
*Apologia da Agoa de Inglaterra da Real Fábrica (1812)* / Augusto d'Esaguy;  
Lisbon 1931.
- DAVIS 1971  
*Early 18<sup>th</sup> century English glass* / Frank Davis; London 1971.
- GUDIOL RICART 1936  
Els Vidres Catalans / Gudiol Ricart; *Monumenta Cataloniae* III; Barcelona  
1936.
- HUME 1961  
The glass wine bottles in colonial Virginia / Ivor Noel Hume; *Journal of Glass  
Studies* 3 (1961), 91-117.
- KLEIN and LLOYD 1984  
*The History of Glass* / Dan Klein and Ward Lloyd; London 1984
- KUBALSKA 1991  
Les verres à jambe du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle en Pologne / S. Ciepiela Kubalska; *Annales du  
12<sup>e</sup> Congrès de V.A.L.H.V.* (1991), 487-498.
- MCNULTY 1971  
Common beverage bottles: their production, use and forms in seventeenth — and  
eighteenth century Netherlands — Part I / Robert H. McNulty; *Journal of Glass  
Studies* 13(1971), 91-119.
- NEWMAN 1977  
*An illustrated dictionary of glass* / Harold Newman; London 1977.
- ODDY 1977-80  
British glass, 1680-1830 / R. Oddy; *Bulletin de V.A.L.H.V.* 8 (1977-80), 113-126.

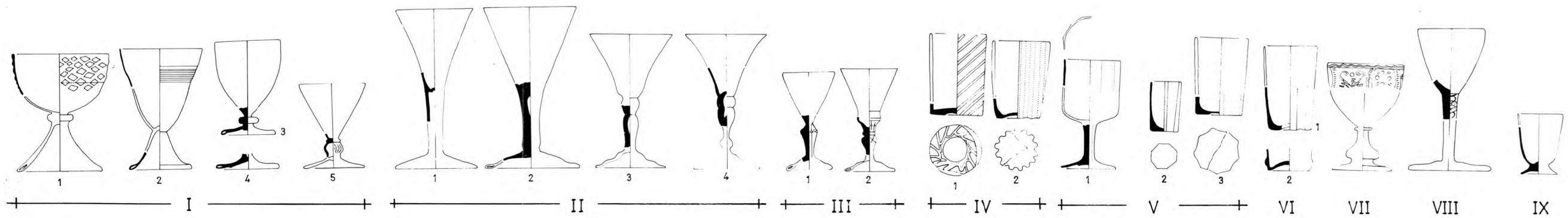


PLATE I Drinking glasses from Lisbon - Attempt of dating

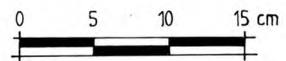
Sites of origin: I-1,2,4, Rua de S. Lourenço  
3,5, Teatro romano

II-1,4, Teatro romano  
2, Rua das Pedras Negras  
3, Rua de S. Nicolau

III-1, Rua das Pedras Negras  
2, Teatro romano  
IV-1,2, Rua das Pedras Negras

V-1,2, Teatro romano  
3, Rua das Pedras Negras  
VI-1,2, Teatro romano

VII - Teatro romano  
VIII - Teatro romano  
IX - Rua das Pedras Negras



(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)

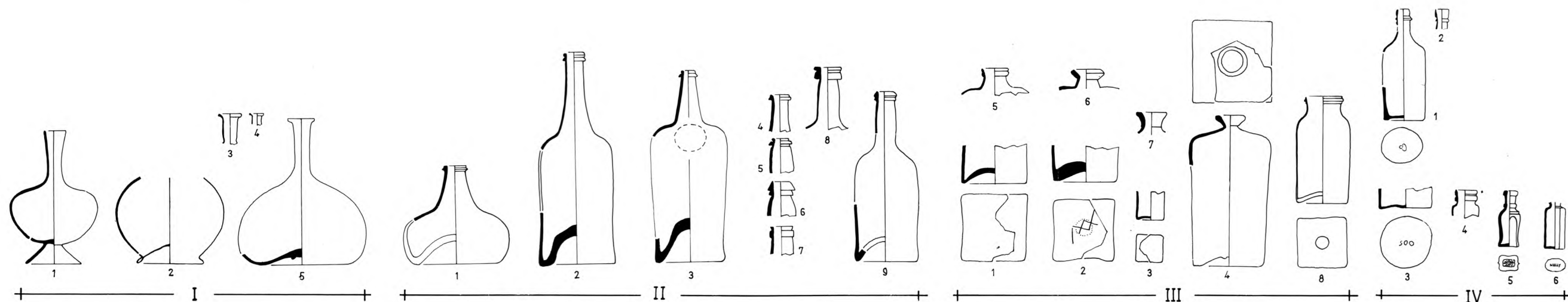


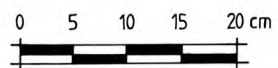
PLATE 2 Bottles and flasks from Lisbon - Attempt of dating

Sites of origin: I-1, Palácio Penafiel  
2,5, Rua de S. Lourenço

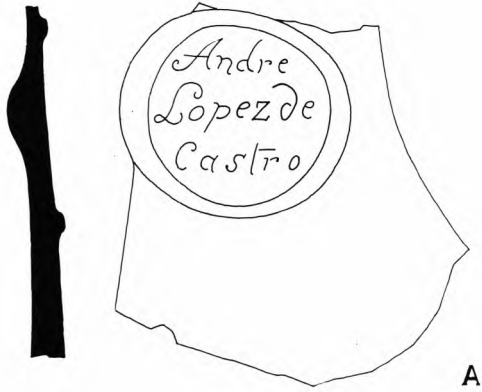
II - 1,3,5, Rua das Pedras Negras  
2,4, Rua dos Correeiros  
6,7, Teatro romano

III- 1,3,7, Teatro romano  
2, Rua das Pedras Negras  
8, Palácio Penafiel

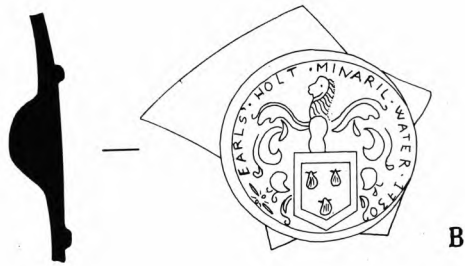
IV- 1,6, Teatro romano



(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)



A



B



C

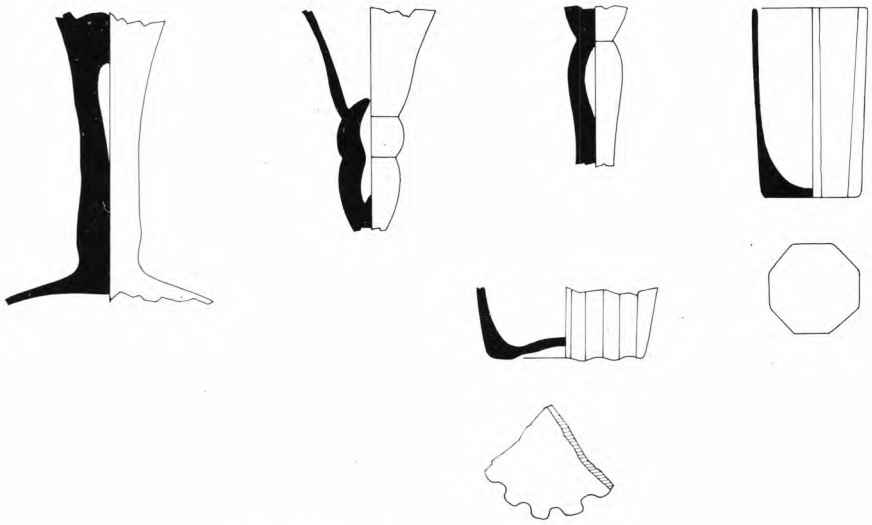


FIG. 1 – Drinking glasses from Lisbon.

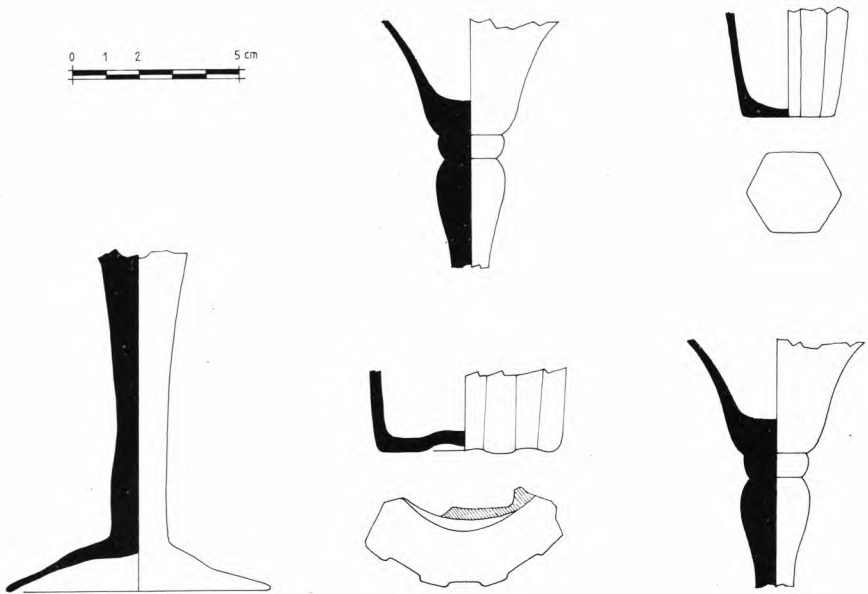


FIG. 2 – Drinking glasses from the site of the Royal Manufacture at Coima.

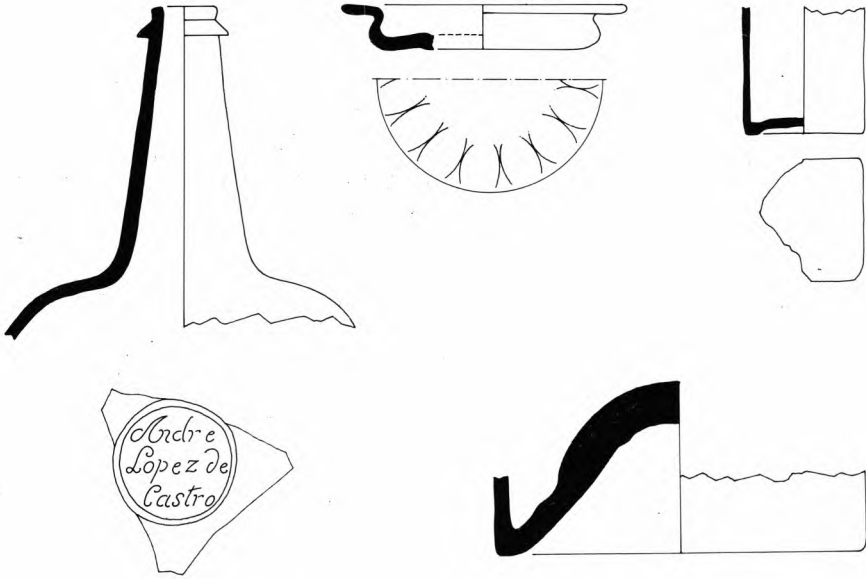


FIG. 3 – Bottles and other glass vessels from Lisbon.

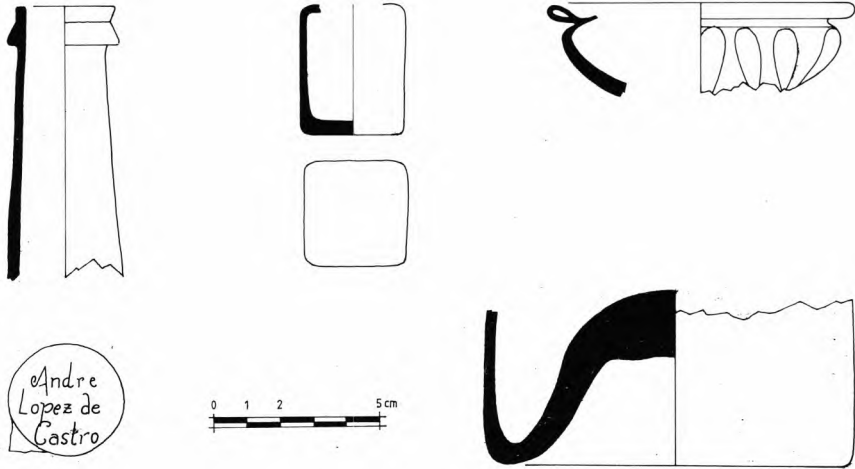


FIG. 4 – Bottles and other glass vessels from the site of the Royal Manufacture at Coima