Gold-glass fragment with biblical scenes

Date	AD c.325-400
Material	Glass and gold
How was it made?	Thin sheets of gold were sandwiched between two sheets of glass to make an intricate pattern. This was then attached to a blown glass bowl as the base.
What is it for?	This is a fragment from the base of a plate. It was probably used for eating and drinking. It had a second life as a tomb decoration.
Where is it from?	Rome
What does it say?	**Text** PIE ZESES **Translation:** 'Drink, may you live'

More information:

- This phrase often appears on cups like this and is meant as an expression of good luck. The words are adopted directly from Greek, but written in the Latin alphabet.
- Gold glass like this was popular with Christian, Jewish and pagan communities.
- The motto shows that it was for feasting - perhaps to mark special occasions such as funeral feasts and anniversary feasts to commemorate deceased individuals, as well as feasts in honour of martyrs.

- A little gold went a long way in these vessels. While they are beautiful works of craftsmanship, people probably didn't need to be rich to afford them.
- The image at the centre is a double portrait of a man and a woman (probably husband and wife) dressed in fine clothes.
- The images around the outer circle are scenes from bible stories(going clockwise, from above the central female figure): the healing of the paralytic man, who is walking along, holding up his bed; next to him, the figure of a standing man, holding out a staff in his right hand, who we think is Christ; the raising of Lazarus; another Christ figure holding out a staff in his right hand; naked Adam and Eve, with the apple tree in between them, and the snake coiled around its trunk; another Christ figure holding a staff in his right hand; Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac; Moses striking a rock with his staff for water.

Topics to investigate: Christianity and Judaism in ancient Rome; The stories represented in the images; What were the catacombs like? What did these vessels look like when whole?