

DAVID AARON



Glass Vessel, Discovered in 1933

C. 1st - 2nd Century A.D.

6.5 x 7 cm (2 1/2 x 2 3/4 inches)

Glass

Small moulded Gallo-Roman glass vessel, with geometric raised decoration in the form of a central band with a zig-zag pattern framed by bands punctuated with raised hemispheres. Discovered in the Gallo-Roman necropolis at Soings-en-Sologne, Loir-et-Cher, France, in excavations in 1933.

The large Gallo-Roman necropolis at Soings-en-Sologne, around 25 km southeast from Blois, had been known about for over two hundred years. Louis de la Saussaye, who partially explored the site in 1821 and wrote about it in 1844 and E.C. Florance, who wrote about it in 1923-29.[1] It is located to the south-east of the village, between what was then the route de Gy et le chemin rural du Grand Orme and near a small lake, which was said to have been sacred to the druids.

In 1933 Dr. Pierre Filloux, a young medical doctor and keen amateur archaeologist from nearby Contres who had learned of the necropolis from his father, rented a portion of the cemetery, an asparagus field belonging to a local farmer Mr. Coupechou, and paid for a team of workmen to excavate the cemetery, hoping to uncover its secrets. He discovered over 500 tombs and around 1,200 objects, including a fine array of late Roman glassware, of which this cup is an example. The excavation caused a stir at the time and was written about in the Miroir du Monde (November 1933, who call him Dr. Raphael Filloux, which may either be a mistake or an alternative name) and the New York Times (December 1933). A series of postcards printed in 1933 and featuring images of the local area even included images of the excavation, as well as images of objects discovered, amongst them the present cup. Unfortunately, the notes taken during the excavations disappeared during the war, so it is not possible to determine the precise tomb this cup was discovered in.

The site has since been excavated again, in August 1967 and November 2012.

Gallo-Roman finds from August 1967, including glass cups similar to the present example (Debal 1969, published 1970).

Roman glass found in a tomb during a more recent excavation of the cemetery at Soings-en-Sologne, November 2012 (image from 'Le mobilier en verre déposé dans une tombe d'enfant à Soings-en-Sologne')

The cup remained in the possession of Dr. Filloux, who kept it in his house alongside many other objects discovered in the excavation. On 25th September 1966 the Société Archéologique de l'Orléanais visited him at home, recording the trip in their Bulletin. They described the collection as hundreds of objects found in the ancient cemetery, above all admiring the 'extraordinary glassware'. Dr. Filloux expressed some displeasure at having had no assistance with the project, and seems to have hoped the collection would have been installed as a permanent exhibition in the nearby Château de Fougères-sur-Bièvre, which had been acquired by the state in 1932.

The cup was still in his possession in June 1975, when Francois Lacore recorded it in his memoir of the 'Typologie des Verres Gallo Romains de Touraine', alongside other objects in the Filloux collection.

Literature:

Reproduced in a series of postcards produced in 1933 after the excavation.

Pierre Filloux, 'A propos d'archéologie gallo-romaine', Les cahiers de Marottes et Violons d'Ingres, revue réservée au corps médical, nouvelle série, 1949, n°3, p. 94.

Bulletin de la Société archéologique l'Orléanais, NS, IV, 3-4., 1966, pp. 193-196

Jacques Debal, 'Le 'cimetière romain' de Soings-en Sologne (Loir-et-Cher)', Revue archéologique du Centre de la France, 1970, 9-1, pp. 20-31

François Lacore, Typologie des verres gallo-romains de Touraine, Université de Tours, Mémoire de maîtrise dactylographié, June 1975, pp. 133-135.

David Aaron Ltd, 2023, No. 17.