

PASH ANTIQUES

A. PASH & SONS OF MAYFAIR

AN IMPORTANT 14th CENTURY MEDIEVAL GERMAN SILVER &
PARCEL GILT DOUBLE CUP CIRCA DATE 1350

REF: 12038

Height: 8.89 cm (3.5") Width: 13.33 cm (5.2") Weight: 311 g



Circa 1350

The cup in silver & parcel-gilt: the lower cup slightly larger with handle & foot. The upper cup serving as a cover which then also acts as a second cup once removed. The foot to the lower section inset with an engraved scene depicting a woman in period costume sitting amongst a wooded copse.

In fine condition with surface qualities as expected on buried plate of its age. The foot to the upper section now missing.

The 'doppelkopf', or double cup, was a particular type of Germanic vessel which had reached

it's developed form by the end of the 13th century. It endured without fundamental change for the next four centuries. The importance of a double cup in the medieval German speaking world was due much to the importance derived from the customs & rituals they served in the purpose of making toasts, and the amuletic and super-natural powers thereby invested in them.

'Minnetrinken' was a pledge to the goddess Minne to invoke the memory of the dead, and make farewell, love or devotional toasts . Used in the course of weddings, some examples appear to have taken part in Jewish weddings, where wine is drunk as a blessing, twice. This "Minnetrinken' custom was extended in early Christian times to embrace saints, martyrs, Christ or the Virgin. Because of the pagan origins, these practices were not approved by the Church but they were unable to curb the custom. "Johannesminne" in honour of St. John the Evangelist was more tacitly sanctioned by the Church.

The cup is an earthen find from a gravel pit near the river Danube in western Bavaria near Donauwoerth. The owners of the gravel pit collected anything interesting they found, in their excavations, for many decades. As far as we know, the cup was found in the 1960s. The majority of the finds were antiquities, mainly bronze and iron objects, ranging from the Bronze Age, to Celtic and Roman. In addition there were some medieval objects, amongst them the silver cup.

It seems the gravel pit is in a place where the river bed of the Danube has been settled for a long time, and so contains many objects either long lost or given as a donation to the river. It is also important to state that all those finds are 100% legal, since according to Bavarian law, 50% of a treasure find belongs to the land owner, and 50% to the finder. Here the owners of the gravel pit are also the finders, so they were the legal owners of anything they dug up.

There are very few double cups of a similar nature: also mostly found in interesting circumstances; and often only recovered after many years. All these examples remain in Museum collections, and there is no record of any having been available on the open market.

Similar examples can be found within the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, The Metropolitan museum of art, New York, Historisches Museum Der Pfalz, Speyer, The Erfurt Synagog, The Musee De Cluny, The Historisches museum, Basel, The National Museum, Zurich and The Riksmuseum, Amsterdam.