

THE LYCURGUS CUP

The Lycurgus Cup demonstrates a short-lived technology developed in the fourth century AD by Roman glassworkers. It is the only known complete example of dichroic glass; a glass which changes color when held up to light.

The opaque green cup turns a glowing translucent red when light is shone through it. The glass contains nanoparticles of colloidal gold and silver giving it these unusual optical properties. The Lycurgus Cup is an outstanding example of this technology; its cut work and red-green dichroism render it unique.

The Lycurgus Cup © Trustees of the British Museum

