

TRADE RELATIONS OF MEDIEVAL ARMENIA IN THE VI—XIII TH CENTURIES (According to glass-work data)

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Armenia, due to its geographical position, played an important political and economic role in Western Asia. During the formation of feudalism and its development and especially with an increase in the production of goods, Armenian's economic relations with various countries, expanded. Strategic and important trade routes connecting the East and the West, the North and the South lay through the Armenian highlands. To a certain extent the development of the historical-cultural life of the land was also connected with international transit trade, the direction of trade routes and the degree to which they were used. Armenians actively participated in that trade, exporting agricultural and animal products, natural mineral wealth and especially craftware of good taste.

From Western Asia, Byzantium, the Far East and the North, Armenia imported spices, aromatic oils, Chinese silk, furs, various goods of daily use, among them pottery and glassware.

Glassworking was well developed in Western Asia and in Byzantium during the Middle Ages; thus it was quite natural for it to become a means of exchange in international trade. That fact became evident during excavations at Ani and Dvin, the largest Armenian cities. Although Armenia was known for its goods used in trade, one of the more important being glassware, yet glass vessels from the famous workshops of Egypt, Syria, Iran and Byzantium, comprised a considerable part of imported goods. The main aim of this work is to present those articles and thus, by using different methods, complete as much as possible and verify Armenian's trade-economical relations with different countries.

Home trade in early medieval Armenian cities was relatively less developed and less active when compared with foreign trade. It was in the IV c. that urban life received a strong blow when Shapuh II attacked the land, when trade and crafts stood on the brink of destruction; much time and a new upsurge in urban life was needed to restore them. Some information on home trade has been preserved in church canons. One of these canons strictly forbade

the clergy to indulge in trade, since it was considered an occupation for laymen.

Armenia, being between two great powers, Iran and Byzantium, was a centre of international transit trade. In the Justinian code, the emperor's edict of 408—9, spoke of a pact concluded between the Byzantine empire and Sassanian Iran, according to which international trade exchange was permitted in Western Asia at only three places formerly decided upon: at Nizibin (Iran), at Gallinicum (Racca on the Euphrates, Byzantium), at Artashat (Armenia). In later centuries the role of the latter was taken on by Dvin, not far from Artashat.

The main trade routes of this region of Armenia are given in the map called *tabula peutingeriane*. According to that map Artashat, and after the V c. Dvin, were connected by main routes to seaports in Iran, Asia Minor, Georgia, and the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea. It also shows the "royal road", the Artashat—Tigranakert segment a part of the "Great Silk Route" from China.

All cities on main trade routes, along with the capitals took active part in international trade. Theodosiopolis (Karin) and Vagharshapat differed in this respect.

From the V c. Dvin, the last capital of the Arsacids, founded in the 30's of the IV c., became a large centre of transit trade. Later it was the seat of Armenian marzpanes, Arab ostikan (governors), of Mohammedan emirs and for 400 years, the residence of the catholicos.

Dvin was one of the largest cultural and economic centres of Armenia. This is what the historian Procopius of Caesaria wrote in the VI c. "Dvin" (Dubois) has very fertile land; it has a mild climate and fine water. It is eight hours from Theodosiopolis. There the fields are level, suitable for horse riding. Well-populated villages close to each other are populated by tradesmen, since from India, from neighbouring Georgia and many places under Persian and even Roman rule, goods are brought here to trade with..."

According to itineraries compiled by Anania Shirakatsi in the VII c., five trade routes lay in different directions out of Dvin. The Northern route went from Dvin to Parlav and Derbend to eastern Europe. The Western route Asia Minor to Constantinople; the South-western road through Racca to Africa; the south-eastern to Nakhichevan, Tizbon, the Persian Gulf and the eastern to Paytakaran, the Caspian Sea and Middle Asia. Medieval Armenian itineraries show trade routes more extensively, not limiting themselves to only administrative centres. Another important trade route from India via Bactria, the southern shores of the Caspian Sea to Transcaucasia (Nakhichevan, Dvin, Shirak) is mentioned by Shirakatsi in another of his works. Jewels and other goods were imported on this route.

The infiltration of the Nestorians into Armenia for reasons of trade is particularly interesting. They came from Khuzistan, a large trade and handicraft centre in Sassanian Iran.

The Nestorians played an important role in Iran. Living in Armenia, they, therefore, organized their own community in Dvin and actively traded. Evidently, Syrians also had their trade communities in Dvin; they were a trade-loving people of the Near East and the Mediterranean basin. Archaeological finds are evidence of these communities; especially the seals, some stamps of which are not Armenian in origin.

Interesting material on the organization of trade in early medieval Armenia, is given by clay sealing bearing impressions of different seals, found at Dvin /tab. XLVII, 1—6/. They were used to ratify state documents, correspondence and also to stamp bales for trade. There were both stamps and personal stamps. Forty-one sealings were found at Dvin, some of them having as many as twenty stamps. Numerous impressions of the same stamp on various sealings lead to the conclusion that in medieval Armenia, merchants had their own organizations, necessary for long journeys by caravan and for foreign trade arrangements.

Numismatic material, especially monetary treasures /tab. XLVIII/ are particularly significant in studying and clarifying trade relations. The earliest coin in circulation at Dvin V—VII cc. was the Sassanian silver drachma, the basic unit of payment in Western Asia.

In Dvin coins of mints from thirty Iranian cities were in circulation in the VI c., besides which Byzantine copper and silver coins, gold dinars referred to in written sources, have been found during exca-

vations there. The discovery of coins vividly reflects international trade between the East and the West passing through Armenia.

Glass and bronze weights found at Dvin are most interesting from the point of view of trade—monetary relations existing between Armenia and Byzantium. Glass seals, of which bore the letter α and two others bearing the letter N, used to weigh gold coins, so-called exagiums /tab. XLVI, 79/ whose weight (4.52, 4.52, and 4.40 gms) is equal to the weight (nomisma) of one gold Byzantine coin. The bronze weights are of 2 and 12 nomisma, with corresponding symbols /tab. XLVII, 7/. Fundamental changes in the monetary system used in Armenia were not observed during the initial period of Arab domination (end of VII-1st half of VIII cc.). It was only in the second half of the VIII c. that coins of the caliphate appeared and Armenia began to use the general monetary system of the Arab caliphate.

The economic decline of Armenia during Arab domination (end of VII-beginning of VIII cc.) influenced transit trade as well. In spite of certain conditions leading to extensivities with various regions of the caliphate, Armenia, during that period, lost its position in international trade. In the initial period, trade relations between the East and Asia Minor came to an end, because of continual wars with the Byzantine empire. The breaking off of transit trade also had its influence on Armenian cities; it was a period of economic decline, and those cities became military-administrative centres. However, Dvin continued to be a main city, the capital and to a certain extent Theodosiopolis, about whose craftware Arab chronologists (Yakut, Yakubi and others) speak with high praise. In spite of limitations, foreign trade was conducted with different countries within the caliphate. There were trade relations with the Khazars.

Arab itineraries were compiled to help Arab soldiers and officials. They are in great detail giving all stops and the distances covered in one day. All the roads would finally meet at administrative centres in the northern region of the Arab caliphate such as Dvin, Partev, Maraga, Ardebil. Naturally enough, besides troops, tax collectors and trade caravans also passed along those roads.

Dvin began to mint its own coins from the first half of the VIII c. which along with other Arab dirhems were widely circulated in international markets, among them Armenia, then a province of the Arabian caliphate. Coins minted in Armenia may be found in the monetary treasuries of European

countries—Sweden, Finland, Denmark (IX—X cc.). Similar coins have been found in Old Ladoga, Novgorod, Kiev, Moscow, and Ryazan.

In the VIII—X cc. monetary units of adjacent cities and states (Iran, Syria, Thabaristan, Fars, Nishapur, Merv, Herat, Bukhara, Samarkand, etc.) were circulated in Armenia, an evidence of the extensive trade relations with those countries. Coins of Baghdad and Rayy were widespread. In Armenia copper coins were mainly used in home trade.

In the countries of the Caliphate, among them Armenia of IX c., there began a brisk increase in the forces of production and economic progress. That development finally brought about the formation of feudal cities, an increase in the production of goods, the separation of crafts from agriculture and the growth in home and foreign trade.

The political situation changed in Western Asia too in the IX c. The formerly mighty Arabian Caliphate began to decline. The weakening of the central Abbasian power made it possible to activate political life in outlying semi-independent principalities. In northern Armenia, the Bagratid feudal family whose political aims were very definite, received sovereignty and the royal crown. The Bagratid kings wanted to regulate the economic life of the country. First of all trade-diplomatic relations with adjacent countries were put into order. The first step in this respect was the trade agreement with the Byzantine empire at the end of the IX c., according to which Armenian merchants could trade at Black Sea ports (Trebizond, Sinope, etc.). Armenian itineraries till that agreement, pointed out Armenia as the only land route, connecting Asia Minor with the capital of the empire. That route went via Karin, Yezinka, Konia, Amasia to Constantinople and then on to Rome.

Thus at the end of the X c. and the beginning of the XI c. towns on the new route began to flourish and prosper. Contemporaries spoke with delight of the untold riches received at these cities from such sea—land trade.

As a result of brisk trade with Byzantium, a large quantity of Byzantine gold coins flowed into Armenia; being more stable currency, it gradually replaced the Arab dirhem. Byzantine gold coins found during excavations at Dvin were of Constantinople coinage.

After the fall of the Bagratids (1045) and with Seljuk invasions (1048), there was a temporary economic decline in Armenia. The political and economic life of Armenians was centered in Cilicia

where in the XI c. the Armenian kingdom was established. It played an important role in Western Asia for three centuries. Armenians, with their seaports and land routes, took an active part in trade between the East and the West. There existed ties between Armenia and Mohammedan countries in the East. Cilician coins and craftware found at different sites are proof of this.

In the XII c. a new rise in the economy of Armenia and growth of cities was noted. Large centres of trade and handicrafts in the XIII c. were such Armenian cities as Dvin, Ani, Karin, Kars, etc. Archaeological excavations at Ani and Dvin as well as written sources give evidence of the brisk trade with various countries. Outstanding among those are the fine porcelain objects from central Iran (Rayy, Kashan, Sultanabad), celadon of Chinese origin, Syrian glassware, etc. Precious stones, gold, spices and other goods were imported from the East.

Due to an increase in trade with Georgia in the XII c. large number of Georgian coins flowed into Armenia. Copper coins of Tamara and Rusudan were often found. Armenian-Georgian relations were the outcome of political events after the liberation of part of Armenia, the result of the political-military cooperation of these two peoples. The Zakarians were at the head of that movement.

The basic trade laws of Medieval Armenia are reflected in Mkhitar Gosh's code of laws. Many clauses of this XII c. code of laws reflect conditions which existed in the land in early times and traditionally passed on to the period of feudalism. The same thing may be said about the organization of trade.

Urban trade in the land was the privilege of the supreme sovereign and was supervised by the supreme power. Feudal lords controlled local trade; they supervised it both in cities and other settlements. Among the duties of the feudal lords was the establishing of measures and weights for goods sold. All throughout the state a uniform system of taxation was enforced. It was collected at the place of trade along with the sale of imported goods.

Home and international trade had to have its organization—a market. Among big trade institutions of the Middle Ages were market-fairs, which took place at previously designated places and times. The fairs had local and international significance.

As a rule, in large cities there were, beside the main market, many smaller markets, each specializing in the sale of a particular type of agricultural product or craftware.

Merchant organizations conducted their work locally. Generally, people, from the same city, of the same nationality and faith lived in a particular part of the city or settlement, basically outside the city walls. There, they had places to stop at, storage facilities and could hire watchmen.

If trade with a given city was conducted regularly, the more important trade settlements were transformed to permanent living quarters for merchants, thus organizing trade communities. To ensure the needs of merchants and caravans, special dwellings for caravans and inns were built on mountain paths. In cities too, inns were built for travelling merchants.

A few such constructions have been excavated at Ani. Two of them, the largest and more richly furnished, were located in the centre of the city, not far from "Main Street", near the central gates.

In one of the urban districts of Dvin, a large public building has been partly excavated, which was probably the central market of the town. That construction with its 36 columns (4 rows) is a fine example of early medieval monumental architecture.

Excavations at medieval monuments afford rich material to help in clarifying a number of problems concerning Armenian foreign trade. Artistic pottery and glassware stand out among the material found in Ani and Dvin. There is a collection of rare examples of local and imported glass vessels, which in respect to quantity have great historical value, widen our concept of glassworking in the IX—XIII cc. in Transcaucasia and Western Asia.

Glassworking in Armenia has very deep roots. Very early examples of glassware exist from the II—I millennium B. C., found in tombs and Urartian monuments. Glassworking reached a high level of development in ancient times (Garni, Artashat).

Medieval glassworking continued the best traditions of ancient production. This is evidenced by early medieval glass objects found at Dvin, Hatzavan, Aygevan, Garni.

Armenian and foreign sources give us much information on the development of glassworking in Armenia. First among them is Agathangelos' description of the life of Hripsimè. It contains much reference to different articles and glass vessels. In medieval Armenian manuscripts, interesting information has been preserved on the composition of glass. Armenia was rich in sources of raw material for glass. Much valuable material on that subject may be found in Byzantine and Arab sources. Mention is also made of imported glass. Thus king

Simbat Bagratuni presented the Arab emir with a coloured glass vessel, Byzantine in origin. Matheos Urhayetzi says that Katranidè, the Armenian queen, had a very expensive crystal torch brought from India for the Kathoghikè church in Ani.

Dvin was the famous centre of glassworking in medieval Armenia. The study of Dvin glass not only makes it possible to differentiate articles of local glasswork, but also to understand its development. In Dvin remains of a V—VI cc. glassworking furnace were revealed during diggings for a palace construction. Large quantities of leftovers were found there, glass panes for windows, pieces of lamps, etc. The chemical analysis of glass showed the extensive use of obsidian rocks and dolomite in the compound. In the IX—XIII cc. there were a number of workshops in Dvin whose products differed in characteristic features, style and technique, connected with different compositions of glass.

A large aluminium content is characteristic of Dvin glass of the IX—XIII cc. and is probably connected with local raw material. A comparison of Armenian glass with that of Georgia and the Near East, shows that the latter contain very little aluminium.

To determine where glassware was produced, especially by means of chemical analysis presents much difficulty, since craftsmen migrated from one country to another. There is such evidence concerning craftsmen who lived in Near Eastern countries. Those craftsmen brought with them not only traditions but also the basic part of the raw material used. That explains why components of glass found in different countries are similar.

Master craftsmen skillfully using old traditions and local raw material, created highly artistic objects of high quality. Glassware occupied a firm place in the life of city folk. Even though high-grade glassware could be found in Dvin, people, especially the upper strata, would get and collect in their homes aesthetically fine glassware made by famous masters of glassworking of Iran, Syria, Byzantium.

The collection of glassware in Dvin in VI—XIII cc. included wonderful objects brought from those countries, a fact confirming and outlining trade routes.

The oldest and best samples of imported glassware found during excavations at Dvin are products of Iranian masters. Those objects (mostly of everyday use) are varied in shape but have been prepared and ornamented by common techniques. There are thick, semi-transparent glass bowls on

which there are polished facets of diverse figures /tab. I—II, XIV, 1, 2/. Similar bowls were prepared locally, yet they were different in manner of execution.

The next group of imported vessels are thick-walled, conical cups, widespread in Western Asia in IX—X cc. /tab. IV, VI—XIII, XIV, 3—9, II, 12/. In literature they are called products of the "Abbasian workshops" of Iraq (Baghdad, Samarra) and used for export. Similar cups have been found over a very large territory: in Middle Asia (Afrasiab, Kuldor—tepe, Karabulagh); in the north Caucasus and even in northern Europe (Birka, Sweden). As a rule such cups were found along with Abbasian coins. These conical cups, well-known in archaeological literature and territorially wide-spread have various facets, ornaments, circular facets, almond-shaped and rhombic facets, etc. Recent excavations at central Dvin, have yielded new material, among them conical cups with polished facets. Outstanding among them are those found in 1977 richly decorated with vegetative and geometric designs /tab. VII—VIII, X/. One of them bears part of an Arabic inscription /tab. XIII/.

There is a bowl in the Dvin glass collection with Arabic inscription along the lip. Unfortunately the bowl was mold-blown, and the inscription is illegible; however the time and place where it was prepared (Northern Mesopotamia IX c.) may be correctly discerned by means of Kufa letters /tab. XII/.

The next group of glass vessels from Dvin, are cups with a body widening in the upper part, comparatively thin walls of transparent glass /tab. XVI—XVIII/. They are richly ornamented and may be classified with rare, valuable glassware. They are rarely found in glass collections. Such cups are known to be from Samarra.

Small, thick-walled flasks have long been known as articles of international trade-barter; large quantities of such flasks have been found during excavations of medieval cities and fortresses. Those flasks have a firm base and a narrow neck. They were molded and then worked up when cold /tab. XV/. Those vessels were very convenient for keeping and transporting aromatic oils and perfumes. A comparison of the shapes, quality of glass and ornamentation of those flasks with similar vessels of Syrian and Egyptian origin (Fostat) convinces us that they were imported. Those vessels are mentioned in references, as being sold in Syrian and Egyptian markets for medicaments and aromatic oils. No doubt

in the IX—X cc. Armenia traded extensively with Caliphate cities Baghdad, Samarra and glass was basically imported from there. Material from Dvin and Ani show that such imports also continued in the XI—XII cc.

In the Dvin collection there is a two-handled vase, made of thick colourless glass. The entire surface is covered with large facets /tab. V/. Parallel vessels are very few in number. We know of one vessel of green glass, at the Corning Glass Museum (USA); it is thought to be Iranian glass of IX—X cc.

Flasks and their necks /tab. XX—XXI/ are often found in IX—X cc. material, made according to complicated glass cutting techniques. There is one such complete vessel in the Dvin collection. Similar vessels may be found over an extensive territory, in Western Asia, Samarra, Rayy, Nishapur, Afrasiab. They are found in great numbers especially in Khulbuk, trade-craft centre of Middle Asia.

There is a thick, pear-shaped crystal jug which stands out in the Dvin collection. It is reminiscent of previous eras when metallic forms were known. Another one of the same vessel was found in Nishapur (Berlin Museum). Both vessels were prepared at the same workshop and are dated IX c.

Among material found in the IX c. layer of the central part of Dvin, a coloured-glass vessel stands out having a narrow oval lip and an ornamented body. A bird, probably an eagle, holding the victim in its claws, has been preserved. There is a Kufa inscription, a wish, among the pictures. Parallel vessels do not exist /tab. XXVIII, XXVIIIa/.

In that same place in 1980 fragments of three cups were found of thin transparent glass with coloured ornaments and inscriptions /tab. XXIII, 28, 29, XXIV, XXIVa/. The body of the first cup is decorated in yellow and brown. The vegetative design there includes a kind of fantastic animal. An inscription has been painted on the glass. Of the second cup only a small fragment with vegetative designs has been preserved. The ornament of the third cup consists of four-petalled flowers, the petals being green. The inscription on the lip may be read in part.

Similar copies of these coloured cups are not often found. There is a similar cup on display at the Moscow State Historical Museum in the showcase "Trade Relations of the Golden Horde XIII—XIV cc.". The place where the cup was found is not known, while the date is incorrect. More similar copies of the VIII—IX cc. are known in material found in Syria and Egypt. There is a cup decorated

in the same manner in the Metropolitan Museum fund (USA) dated IX c. and is believed to have originated in Egypt.

A deep bowl with folded lips is included in this same group; it is made of thin transparent glass and decorated in yellow, brown and green. The decoration is divided into four horizontal parts. The uppermost is an inscription, the second consists of vegetative design, the third is an inscription; while the fourth is decorated with rhombes and dots. There is another inscription at the bottom of the vessel with symbols of the Sun and the Moon /tab. XXV, XXVa/.

The same kind of glassware is to be found in Dvin excavations of previous years, though they are strictly fragments /tab. XXVI, XXVII/.

The technique of cut glass is traditionally considered the product of an Egyptian workshop; in the IX c. it spread to Western Asia and in XI—XIII cc. it was widely used in Byzantine and Syrian workshops. In the 200 years of development and perfection this technique, many separate schools—workshops appeared with characteristic features and aesthetic styles. Among Syrian cities it was Racca that first produced cut glass. The style of decorating used at those workshops, differing from those workshops, differing from those of Aleppo (XII c) and later Damascus (XIII c.), stands out for its richness and its greater use of gold. The entire group of painted glassware found in the central part of Dvin are of the IX c. and from the point of view of technique. They remind one of glassware produced in Syrian workshops, especially the famous masters of Racca.

According to Armenian itineraries, one of the busiest trade routes went from Dvin to Jerusalem, the Mediterranean Sea and then on to North Africa. That route lay near the south Armenian cities of Manazkert, Khlat, Nprkert near Hamid, then to the river Tigris and then south through Aleppo and Damascus. It was one of the important extensively used of the Middle Ages. It was on that route that tributes collected were taken to Damascus, the capital of the Caliphate; military and diplomatic detachments moved, and Mohammedans went to Mecca and Christians to Jerusalem. There was a continual flow of trade caravans on this road. In international trade this main road played a very important role and maintained its significance during the Arab caliphate (VIII—IX cc) and in later years (X—XIII cc.). Life in the cities on that road

was quite stable. They were well-populated, well-built and fine markets.

At both Dvin and Ani glass objects made by famous masters of Racca (IX c.), Aleppo (XII c.) and Damascus (XIII—XIV cc) were found.

The Byzantine glass finds at Dvin and Ani are very interesting. They have great significance not only in restoring trade relations but also make it possible to study Byzantine craft, especially the development of glassworking.

Fine bowls of mosaic and such fragments have been found at Dvin, which were widely known in the West, mostly in Italy in the IX—X cc. Two of them are shallow bowls made by the «millefior» method /tab. XXIX, 37/, the glass is thick and frosted. One of the bowls was found in the citadel along with XI c. Byzantine coins and with a blue, transparent glass vessel conical in shape on which there is an ornament called "bird feather" /tab. XXXIII/.

In 1953 in one of the citadel rooms in Dvin a blue flask of thin glass was found, the entire surface decorated with gold and yellow, green and red enamel. The vessel has a conical body, a thin neck and circular base. On the body of the vessel there are four small and large circular medallions, with pictures of people and animals in the centre. One of the medallions shows a man sitting crosslegged with a violin in his hand. The rest of the surface of this vessel is covered with various animal, vegetative and geometric designs. The flask is a rare sample of the high-grade objects made by Byzantine glass workers.

This is the oldest picture of a violin. Its horizontal position, held by the left hand and leaning against the jaw, is characteristic of western musicians, while in the East stringed instruments were held in a vertical position, when played.

According to specialists, stringed instruments were used in the West from the IX c. The violin pictured on this vessel may be called a kind of violin since it differs greatly from modern instruments. The waist of the violin is wider, its finger-board is short and has three strings, although there are four pegs at the end of the board.

In reality, it is a rare reproduction of a prototype of the modern violin. In respect to style and technique this vessel may be dated as belonging to the XI c.

Many years of archaeological excavations at Ani revealed the city's significance in trade and crafts among the cities of Northern Armenia. Exca-

ventions by N. Marr and his followers showed that the centre of trade and crafts of Ani was the new city which grew outside the defensive walls of the citadel. It was there that trade houses, markets, inns were located, that is on the "Main Street" which led from the citadel to the main entrance of the new city gates (Smbatashen). On this street there were other types of buildings too, such as churches, mosques, bath-houses, etc.

Ani residents conducted a brisk trade with Byzantium. There is a small collection of Byzantine glass finds during excavations by N. Marr at the State Historical Museum of Armenia. These valuable objects of imported glass were found in the palace complex of the city, where the houses and temples of rich townsmen were located.

There are two complete objects in this collection. One of them is a flask of dark lavender transparent glass, with an extended body, a small, round base and a high neck. It was found in 1907 in one of the courtrooms of the citadel palace /tab. XLIII, 7/. The second object is of milky-coloured glass funnel-shaped lamp, on which there are horizontal circular furrows and bluish drops /tab. XLII/. They were inserted into special frames and suspended from chandeliers. There are two semi-spherical bowls and fragments in the collection, ornamented with gold and enamel that could have served as parts of a lamp.

Among those finds in the palace complex there is a large number of fragments of glass vessels imported from Byzantine centres. There are many pictures on them, of vegetative, geometric and animal design, of gold and enamel /tab. XLIII/.

Thus all the above mentioned glass objects found at Ani and Dvin in the XI c., have all the features characteristic of Byzantine glassworking workshops. They are well worked out in motifs, styles, in technique of gold and enamel decorations, etc.

Although there are many references in written sources to the high level of Byzantine glassworking, till very recently there were very few finds which had originated within the limits of that widespread empire. Lately workshops were found where glassware had been decorated with gold and enamel the largest of them being that studied by Davidson in Corinth.

In the last two decades Byzantine glassware has been found in Old Ladoga, Novgorod, Turovo, Khersones. Byzantine glass finds of Novogrudok are particularly interesting.

Objects from the fortress of Pafos (Cyprus, A. Megaus excavations) are similar in decoration and form to Novogrudok vessels. Thus a whole series of well-described Byzantine glass became known. If formerly fine crystals were judged by the well-known flask of Constantinople now at St. Mark's in Venice, a few fragments found at Fostat (Egypt) confirmed the Theophile treatise on the description of the technique used in preparing coloured glass XI c.

Since at present there are large numbers of objects of this group of glassware described, it is possible to speak in detail of their aesthetic features and techniques used, correctly define the style and, in specific cases, give characteristic features of different schools and workshops of Byzantine glassworking and of local ones.

The Ani semi-spherical bowls have their parallels in finds at Old Ladoga, Novogrudok and Cyprus. The Dvin flask with the picture of the violinist has much in common with products from Corinth. It is very likely that the vessels from Novogrudok and Cyprus were prepared at the same workshop.

Byzantine glass together with coins help to clarify trade routes and Byzantine empire trade areas.

Glass bracelets found during excavations at Sarkel, the capital of the Khazar state, have led to interesting observations on trade relations of that city X—XI cc. Black glass bracelets were brought to Sarkel from Transcaucasian cities, mainly Dvin, while ornamented and mosaic bracelets originated at Byzantine workshops in Khersones and Corinth.

Medieval itineraries mention two other routes northward: one from Dvin, via Bdjni, along the ravine of the Aghstev-Hunan River to Tiflis; the other from Ani via Lori to Dmanis, importing pottery and glass objects from Georgia to Armenia.

It must be mentioned that glassworking was one of the most widely-spread, developed crafts in Georgia in the IX—XIII cc. Excavations have shown the existence of many glass workshops, whose products of fine quality were sold at home markets and imported to adjacent countries.

There is a wonderful Transparent glass cup with high feet in the Dvin material, decorated with overlay glass threads and yellow and reddish-brown buttons /tab. XL/. It is known that similar objects were made at Ruslavi.

Two fragments of vessels decorated with enamel of different colours are most interesting /tab. XXVII, 16, 17/. Parallels have been found in mate-

rial belonging to the glass workshops of Orbeti in Georgia. Also of Georgian origin are the two dark yellow glass bowls found at Dvin.

Armenia was given a heavy blow in the 30's of the XIII c. by Mongolian invasions. In later centuries, Armenia was a continuous battlefield, as a result of which it declined politically and economically; formerly prospering cities and provinces were destroyed. The urban population, craftsmen and merchants began to migrate from the land in great numbers.

As a result of the new political situation in Middle Asia and Western Asia, an important role in international trade was played by the Northern routes from Khorezm in Turkmenia via cities of the Golden Horde to the Baltic Sea. This, in its turn, had a negative influence on Armenian cities.

Trade was mainly conducted in Armenian communities established in Derbend, Trebizond, the Crimea, Northern Caucasus, Lvov, Podolsk and elsewhere on trade routes.