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*Western Rus in contact with Byzantium and the Orient*

Intercourse between Rus, on the one hand, and Byzantium and the Orient, on the other hand, its role in the development of the Old Russian culture is a question raised long ago but not well elaborated especially for Western Rus materials. One of the most interesting articles of the Byzantine and Oriental import to the medieval towns of Belarus was glassware. Finds from Novogrudok make the most numerous collection (more than 340 fragments) of Byzantine and Oriental glass vessels of the highest quality (thin-sided vessels painted with gold, or gold in combination with enamel, Hedwig's beaker). Apart from the vessels fragments, there are fragments of Byzantine glass bracelets found on the territory of Belarus. The glazed ceramics was another important article of Byzantine and Oriental import (Iranian and Syrian Kashi ceramics with luster painting, Iranian minai ceramics, Syrian lakabi ceramics, Golden Horde ceramics, Byzantine white clay ceramics with five-colour underglaze painting and sgraffito ceramics). Another significant group of Byzantine and Oriental import to the medieval towns of Belarus was silk fabrics. Among Byzantine devotional objects can be distinguished two groups. One of them consists of strictly import objects from Byzantium. Second one is presented by the products created by Byzantine craftsmen of different professional level, who moved to Rus and other Slavonic countries after Constantinople was seized by crusaders in 1204.

Most of Byzantine and Oriental goods imported to Western Rus are luxury goods, belonging to the elite culture and reflecting the fashion, common to the new European countries, where Byzantine and Oriental art was treated as the model of the highest artistic level. Byzantine and Oriental imported objects could be the samples for the local craftsmen. Byzantine devotional objects are a material evidence of the spiritual liaison of Western Rus with Byzantium.