

ROMAN GLASSWARE FROM KOREAN PENINSULA: SILLA, GAYA, BAEKJE FROM 4th TO 6th CENTURY AD. MYTH OR REALITY. II.*

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Cuvinte-cheie: sticlă, obiecte romane din sticlă, Drumul Mătăsii, cele Trei Regate, Estul Îndepărtat.

Key words: glass, Roman glassware, Silk Road, Korea, Three Kingdoms, Far East.

Rezumat: Partea a doua a articolului ia în discuție descoperiri de vase din sticlă de origine occidentală din cele Trei Regate din Peninsula Coreeană în contextul social. În perioada celor Trei Regate ale Coreei pot fi distinse trei orizonturi cronologice cu vase de sticlă: 1 - perioada care începe din al doilea sfert al secolului al IV-lea p.Chr.; 2 - orizontul care acoperă secolul al V-lea și prima jumătate a secolului al VI-lea; 3 - orizontul care reprezintă perioada de după jumătatea secolului al VI-lea. Cel mai bogat în descoperiri de obiecte din sticlă este al doilea orizont, acestea fiind predominante în înmormântările bogate atribuite conducătorilor regatului Silla în Gyeongju.

Importurile de vase din sticlă pe teritoriile celor Trei Regate, în special în Silla și Gaya, ar trebui să fie legate de dinastiile conducătoare nomade din nordul Chinei, de exemplu triburile Xianbei, ale căror înmormântări conțin și astfel de artefacte.

Obiectele din sticlă din perioada discutată, și anume din secolul al IV-lea până în al VI-lea, aveau în Peninsula Coreeană caracterul unor obiecte de prestigiu, motiv pentru care au fost incluse și în inventarele funerare. După ce populația s-a convertit la budism, obiectele din sticlă au continuat să fie semnul unui statut social ridicat, dar funcția lor s-a schimbat - au devenit ofrande oferite în templele budiste.

Abstract: In part two of the article, I discuss finds of western origin glass vessels from the Three Kingdoms on the Korean Peninsula in the social context.

Three chronological horizons with glass vessels can be distinguished within the Period of the Three Kingdoms of Korea: 1 - the period starting from the second quarter of

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the 4th century AD; 2 - the horizon covering the 5th and the first half of the 6th century; 3 - the horizon representing the period after the half of the 6th century. Most numerous, glassware was represented in the second of the horizons, prevailing in the rich burials attributed to the rulers of Silla in Gyeongju.

Imports of glass vessels to the territories of the Three Kingdoms, Silla and Gaya above all, should be connected with the nomadic ruling dynasties of Northern China, i.e. with the Xianbei tribes, whose burials also contain glassware.

In the Korean Peninsula, glassware from the period discussed, namely from the fourth to the 6th century, had the character of prestige objects and this is the reason why they were being added to grave goods. After the population had converted to Buddhism, glassware continued to be the sign of a high social status but their function changed - they became gifts offered at Buddhist temples.

1. Social context of glassware

As it was already mentioned, glass vessels were discovered in burials being of a special archeological interest, and this due to their structure, as well as to grave goods given to them. The cemetery was the burial ground for kings and queens of Gaya. A fragment of a glass vessel found in the grave 91 in Daesung-dong, Gimhae seems to be the oldest dated from Korea. All the grave goods found there point to a high status of the persons buried there, and are reflecting trade contacts between Silla and China¹. A next grave of a later epoch has been found in Okjeon M1; some of the burials there are also to be attributed to the social elites of Kaya, showing some obvious cultural influence of the kingdom of Silla².

Other interesting features are Gyongju burials - they are attributed to the Kim-clan³ and coming from the horizon II. In five cases they co-occur with characteristic golden crowns⁴, in one case it is cast out of silver; the crowns are thought to be the signs of royal power of Silla's kings and queens. They played part in different kinds of rites, above all, in shamanistic rituals and feasts⁵. The crowns of Silla (*daegwan*)⁶ easily fit in the well-defined culture phenomenon of covering a royal head with a jewel made of sheet gold with adjoining bands; sometimes containing other decorative elements such as shapes of trees or golden antlers, they can have round, heart-shaped or leaf-like pendants. The fashion for such kind of adornment most probably came from the West; the most characteristic specimen found in this cemetery/ necropolis is a golden crown from the Tomb VI in Tillya Tepe (Afghanistan), dated in the second quarter of the 1st century AD⁷.

¹ KOIKE 2014, p. 92.

² PARK 2012, p. 127.

³ BARNES 2001, p. 215, Table 8.4

⁴ Detailed analysis of the Old Silla Grave Goods cf. PEARSON *et al.* 1989.

⁵ KIM-HOGARTH 2002, p. 159; HAM 2013, p. 48.

⁶ Two kinds of such representative head adornment can be distinguished according to their shape: *mogwan* (conical cap) and *daegwan* (headband crown) HAM 2013, p. 45, 47-53, Pl. 9, fig. 3.9 and 3.10.

⁷ LEIDY 2012, p. 114-115, fig. 7; manufacture: HICKMAN 2012, p. 85-86, fig. 13 and 14. About the cultural affinities of the spectacular finds from Tillya-tepe graves see OLBRYCHT 2015, p. 350-358.

Other finds of this kind are mostly made in burials in Mongolia, Jilin and Liaoning provinces in north-eastern China⁸ and the possible presence of these artifacts are associated by scientists with the tribes of Xianbei, especially from their branch known as Murong-Xianbei⁹; their greatest political significance falls in the 4th century. The fashion disappeared in China by the half of the 5th century as Murong-Xianbei tribe was to a very much extent incorporated into the Northern Wei Empire, whose foundations had been set, by the way, by some other tribe of Xianbei-Tuoba's branch¹⁰. However, this style was continued later on in the East, in Baekje as well as in Gaya in the Korean Peninsula, and most intensely, in the Kingdom of Silla, where some very sophisticated adornment was produced, with the additional decoration of jade pendants. The most eastern land where they are found is Japan, and the best example of such site is the burial No. 126 in Niizawa Senzuka¹¹. The grave goods found there, apart from a square openwork plaque from a diadem with leaf pendants as its decorative pattern, include, among others, two glass vessels (Roman and Sasanian), and other objects stylistically suggesting cultural bonds with the Korean Peninsula. Returning to Silla, it should be mentioned that there are some other artifacts showing an obvious influence of the nomads of Eurasia and, farther still, with some cultural circles from its easternmost points; an example for this stylistical direction could be a dagger from the grave Gyerim-ro No. 14 in Gyongju (5th century - early 6th century)¹² and a torque from United Silla kingdom¹³.

A tendency to repeat a certain number of vessels can be observed in this burial. Most often, there are two vessels (five cases); rarely, there is only one, or pieces of it¹⁴. In only one case of the double burial Hwangnamdaechong No. 98, the number of glass vessels is greater. In the northern grave identified as the one of the queen¹⁵, where more gold objects have been found, a.o. an exquisite crown additionally decorated with 77 jade pendants, three glass vessels have been discovered (**Fig. 1.1**). On the other hand, in the southern grave, where a crown of silver has been found which is decidedly less representative, as much as seven vessels were deposited; six of them are intact and of the seventh one, only bottom and upper parts are preserved, most probably belonging to the same ware (**Fig. 1.2**). However, the southern grave is abundantly supplied with iron artifacts¹⁶. This untypical burial is interpreted as being the double grave of a royal pair, the female being more outstanding and representative¹⁷. Yet, there are no

⁸ OTANI 2011, p. 81-89, fig. 1: 1-9.

⁹ About Murong Xianbei cf. HOLCOMBE 2013, p. 10-15.

¹⁰ LEIDY 2012, p. 116-117. About Murong Tuoba cf. HOLCOMBE 2013, p. 15-22.

¹¹ NIIZAWA 1977, p. 47-52, fig. 27-30, pl. 13, 29- 37.

¹² HAYASHI 2013, p. 426, fig. 30-32.

¹³ MIYASHITA 2010.

¹⁴ LEE 2010, Table 1.

¹⁵ KIM 2016.

¹⁶ PARK 2008, p. 126-128, fig. 11.

¹⁷ In literature, the information can be found that the burials containing Golden crowns are typical for female graves (LEIDY 2012, p. 120); on the other hand, bone material is lacking and the *male* character of the grave goods is rather obvious, so it is a rather doubtful interpretation.

mentions in written sources about any female rule¹⁸, so that this can only be interpreted as the reflection of co-ruling of the royal pair¹⁹.

A special importance of glass vessels among the elites of Silla is also accentuated by the fact of depositing them in wooden chests which were placed in the burial chamber and filled with precious objects²⁰, or were put next to the bodies, most often at their heads²¹, but also at their feet, as in the case of Gaya²².

Graves with glass vessels, outside Korea, have also been unearthed in Kazakhstan²³, Mongolia²⁴, China²⁵ and Japan²⁶. Their common feature of Kazakh, Mongolian, Northern-Eastern Chinese and Japanese are indirect relations (nomads; burials) or direct ones (the presence of stylistical elements associated with nomadic peoples) with the nomadic environment, mainly with the tribes of Xiongnu and Xianbei.

Products of glass, with the focus of this article placed on glass vessels, were very appreciated in the societies of the Far East because of their exotic material, shapes, colors or their obscure origin and provenance from some far-off lands²⁷. Most often, their transparency and similarity to jade were admired²⁸. In Chinese written sources, several remarks can be found illustrating the way they were perceived:

In foreign countries water essence bowls are produced, which in reality are made by mixing five types of powdered components. Nowadays there are many [of those] who possess this method and produce them [bowls] in Jiao and Guang. Now, if we talk about the simple people, they are not willing to believe it. They say that the water essence is natural, like jade²⁹.

Another fragment reads:

Wang Tao³⁰ was once drinking together with the other countries. Raising a colored glass (liu-li) bowl, he said to Chou I³¹, 'The belly of this bowl is extraordinarily empty, yet

¹⁸ About ruling queens in Far East see: ARAKI 1999, p. 2-5.

¹⁹ NELSON 1993, p. 249.

²⁰ KIM 1983, p. 39, 45.

²¹ ITO 1971, p. 120.

²² LEE 2010, Table 1.

²³ KROPOTKIN 1970, p. 111.

²⁴ OTANI 2017.

²⁵ AN 2004; 2016.

²⁶ SUGIYAMA 2012.

²⁷ SCHAFER 1963, p. 236. See also DIEN 2007, p. 287-293.

²⁸ AN 2002, p. 57; HOPPÁL 2016, p. 106.

²⁹ (Ge Hong, Bao Puzi) Translation Marta Żuchowska. Borrowed from ŻUCHOWSKA & SZMONIEWSKI 2017, p. 170. The Baopuzi (compiled ca. 317-318 AD see: WARE 1966, p. 17), Inner Chapters: Chapter 2 - About Immortals.

³⁰ Wang Dao (276-339) was Eastern Jin Dynasty statesman. See SHIH-SHUO HSIN YU 2002, p. 626.

³¹ Zhou Yi, courtesy name Boren (269-322) was Eastern Jin (317-420) statesman. See SHIH-SHUO HSIN YU 2002, p. 546-547.

it's called a precious vessel. Why?' Chou replied, 'This bowl is lustrous and luminous, genuinely clear and translucent. That's the only reason it's precious'³².

The information of a high valuation of glass vessels, compared to the objects of gold is especially proved by two sources:

When he [Wang Tun]³³ came back the slaves girls held out a golden washbasin filled with water and a colored glass (liu-li) bowl filled with "bath beans" (tsao-tou). Tun proceeded to empty them into the water and drink them down, supposing them to be dried cooked rice. All the slave girls cupped their hands over their mouths and laughed at him³⁴.
and:

[Yüan] Ch'en³⁵ often gathered members of the royal household [at his mansion], and displayed all his treasures [for them]: more than one hundred gold vessels and silver jars, about the same amount of [gold and silver] bowls, footed containers, plates and boxes. Among other drinking vessels were several scores of quartz bowls, agate cups, glass bowls, ruby goblets – such marvelous craftsmanship was not to be found in China. All came from Western Region³⁶.

The imported Glassware was also a subject of poetry. The most significant is *Rapshody on a Glass bowl*³⁷.

While on the subject of Chinese written sources, let us have a look at a fragment from Yen Fan Lu dated in the year 1175 – it could be seen as a curiosity but also as an explanation for the superiority of glassware imported to China from other lands:

The liu-li which is made in China is rather different from that which comes from abroad. The Chinese variety is bright and sparkling, and the material is light but fragile.

³² From SHIH-SHUO HSIN YU 2002, p. 440 (A New Account of the Tales of the World - Chapter 25: Taunting and Teasing). Compiled and edited by Liu Yiqing (403-444). See also translation by Jiayao An (AN 2002, p. 56-57).

³³ SHIH-SHUO HSIN YU 2002, p. 516 (A New Account of the Tales of the World - Chapter 34: Crudities and Slips of the Tongue).

³⁴ Wang Dun, courtesy name Chuzhong (265-324) was a Jin Dynasty (265-420) governor, general and warlord. See SHIH-SHUO HSIN YU 2002, p. 627. See also translation by Jiayao AN 2002, p. 58.

³⁵ Prince of Ho-chien.

³⁶ YANG 1984, p. 193. The mention about the custom of storing food in glass vessels at the imperial court is contained in Cui Hong zhuan, section of Jin shu (compiled in the 7th century; see AN 2002, p. 58).

³⁷ *Examining those rarities amid the regional tributary offerings, / One prizes the uniqueness of this bowl / It would have had to across the remote perils of the shifting sands / And traverse the precipitous dangers of the Pamir. / The way it came was obstructed and distant, / The place to which it was consigned was dark and deep. / One relied on the multitudinous paces of repeated peaks / And overlooked the myriad spans of flooding streams [...] / [...] Its gleam and glitter [match] the sun's dazzle. / Its roundness and repletion [mirror] the moon's fullness. / Hairline blemishes are not to be found, / And flying dust does not adhere. / Its clarity and sparkle are on a par with a candle flame, / Its outer and inner surfaces conform to [one] shape. / Congealed frost is inadequate to match its purity, / Limpid water is unable to convey its clarity. / Its hardness is beyond that of gold or stone, / Its strength challenges the most excellent jade / Grinding does not wear it down, / Besmirching does not soil it. / To raise this bowl to toast the guests / Is to add luster to the imperial banquet's close-packed ranks. / Its flowing luminosity is bright and brilliant so as to discern what is inside, / The clear wind's glitter and gleam can be seen from without.* Pan Ni (d. 311 A.D.) borrowed from DIEN 2007, p. 291-292.

*If you pour hot wine into it, it will immediately break. That which is brought by sea is rather rough and unrefined, and the color is also slightly darker. But the strange thing is that even if hot water is poured into it a hundred times, it behaves like porcelain or silver and will never break*³⁸.

The presence of glass vessels within the Buddhist complex in Baekje should not surprise us when we consider the fact that glass belonged to the seven treasures of Buddhism, next to gold, silver, lapis-lazuli, crystal and agate. In this case, the finds of glass there should be associated with the Chinese Buddhism³⁹ which is supported by some later finds of glass śārīra in United Silla⁴⁰. Generally speaking, glassware in the context of Buddhist monasteries in China was a high treasured rarity and had a very high status within the hierarchy of materials⁴¹. From the perspective of Buddhism, glass vessels can be analyzed as belonging to two categories: as a luxury gift and as reliquaries. As the first category, Shen Hsueh-Man interprets the gesture of offering glass vessels as a form of *conspicuous consumption*, when an ideal gift of its own aesthetical value and of a high market value is never supposed to be retrieved, and so, there is the lack of any repayable material advantage. Another important feature is the perception of glass in the context of the Buddhist concept of translucent and clarity, the characteristics which are ideal for a material to enshrine the Buddha's relics⁴².

Concluding the above remarks about the perception of glassware, mainly vessels, by the society of Ancient China, it should be said that the highly probable diversity of forms and coloring of the vessels can be explained by different aesthetical tastes of diverse societies inhabiting territories of East Asia. Thus, it cannot be excluded that within Proper China, lighter and more translucent kinds of glass were preferred which is supported by the finds there, and other forms of glass were traded farther as less attractive from the local aesthetical point of view. This does not mean, though, that within Chinese borders, multicolored glassware produced in Da Qin (Roman Empire) was not known; in the opposite, they were mentioned in the list of products being objects of such trade: this list includes *ten varieties of glass: red, white, green, yellow, blue-green, dark blue, light blue, fiery red and purple*⁴³.

2. Localization of workshops and potential routes of importing glass vessels to Korea (Fig. 2).

It is difficult to unambiguously define places of the production, as well as routes of import of glassware, taking the complex history of the regions between Mediterranean basin and the Chinese Sea into consideration. In regard of the

³⁸ Around 1175 AD – The Yen Fan Lu. See: NEEDHAM 1962, p. 110.

³⁹ About Chinese-Korean contacts in the Three Kingdoms period see: BUSH 1984 and KOUDELA & YOO 2014.

⁴⁰ JOO 2003 & HONG 2010.

⁴¹ SHEN 2002, p. 72-74.

⁴² SHEN 2002, p. 77-78.

⁴³ Weilüe (Brief Account of Wei) written by Yu Huan between 239 and 265 AD. See HIRTH 1885: 73, new translation: HILL 2004: <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/weilue/weilue.html#section12>.

forms of vessels and their decorative patterns, Syro-Palestinian manufacturing centers seems to be the most probable provenance. It is true that the results of chemical analyses of a part of vessels from the mound No. 98 which are typical for this circle, show their chemical composition to be *plant ash soda glass with magnesia higher than 1.5 wt.%*⁴⁴ and so they seem to be made according to different recipes than those used in the Roman Empire which were based on soda-lime glass⁴⁵; the closest linkage connects them with the Sasanian and Central-Asian products⁴⁶. In other cases, the lack of such chemical analyses makes their identification and chemical description impossible as yet. Most interesting are close stylistical connections of a part of the glassware with those made according to the formulae from Veh Ardašīr. At this site, as well as in Nineveh, artifacts imported from the Late Roman Empire and made of natron glass have been discovered, deep bowls and conical lamps with blue dots among them⁴⁷. Within the Sasanian Empire, Mesopotamia, and with a high probability Southern Caucasus, were the main centers of glassware manufacturing. They were located in the zone of the interpenetration of Sasanian and Roman political interests and influences. Very much important was also the fact that Mesopotamia was located in the close neighborhood to the very active Eastern Mediterranean centers, where numerous glass products have been discovered, although no direct traces of glassware production there have been found and played an active role in the exchange of prestige goods⁴⁸. A big role was played also by Christian and Judaic societies which were maintaining close contacts with their own kind living beyond Euphrates; these contacts resulted in the increased intensity of the trade between the East and the West⁴⁹. In the case of the southern Caucasus, the probability is high that glass products found there were imports from the workshops situated on the coasts of the Black Sea⁵⁰. Thus, it is probable that the routes on which products from the Syro-Palestinian workshops⁵¹ were transported ran through the territories of the Sasanian Empire⁵² as far east as Honshū⁵³; along these overland routes, small caravans of camels carried goods wrapped in cotton and placed in wicker baskets protecting the goods from being damaged. Obviously, it was Sogdian merchants who played the most important role in these imports⁵⁴. These routes

⁴⁴ LANKTON *et al.* 2009, p. 580.

⁴⁵ FREESTONE 2005; FREESTONE 2006.

⁴⁶ LANKTON *et al.* 2009, p. 582.

⁴⁷ SIMPSON 2015, p. 80; SIMPSON 2003, p. 149, fig. 3.

⁴⁸ For example, Palmyra: GAWLIKOWSKA 2015 or Dura Europos: GROSSMAN 2011. Long-distance trade: BALL 2000, p. 123-139; ŻUCHOWSKA 2010 and 2013. After the fall of Dura Europos in 256 and the fall of Palmyra's magnificence at the end of the 3rd century, the road of the hearse rises north, through Asia Minor and on to Constantinople, and Syria itself is no longer part of the Silk Road - DIEN 2004, p. 25-26.

⁴⁹ DIGNAS & WINTER 2007, p. 208-209. See also GAWLIKOWSKI 1983 and BERNARD 2005.

⁵⁰ SIMPSON 2015, p. 94.

⁵¹ GORIN ROSEN 2000.

⁵² MEREDITH -GOYMOUR 2006, p. 123.

⁵³ ABE, SHIKAKU & NAKAI 2018.

⁵⁴ JÄGER 2003.

could also be the ways of the transfer of anonymous craftsmen and raw materials necessary for glassware production towards Central Asia. Local glassmakers accustomed with the Roman techniques and traditions were later producing similar glassware using local raw materials⁵⁵. Recycling of the Roman glass vessels, as for example a beaker with blue dots decorated in the Sasanian style of cutting⁵⁶ or gold (?) paintings of Sasanian style in a figural composition on the surface from plate Niizawa Senzuka from Japan⁵⁷, obviously points to the attractiveness of Roman models and to the possibility that local craftsmen were lacking skills necessary for the production of similar artifacts. At this point, it is necessary to underline that the range of forms, shapes and patterns of the Sasanian glassware is much poorer than of their Roman equivalents.

In literature, there is similarity between certain vessels from Korea and the glassware from the workshops along the Rhine. Yet, similar forms as displayed by the latter appear also in the Syro-Palestinian glassmaking circle, which is explained by the phenomenon of an extraordinary uniformization encompassing products from Rhineland, Egypt, Syria and North Pontic production areas in regard to the shapes of vessels, as well as to the decorative patterns⁵⁸.

The second potential region of their production as pointed to by analyses of a part of vessels from the burial 98 is Central Asia, especially Bactria and Tocharistan. Problematic is, however, a relatively small number of specimens found in this area which can be dated in the period between the 5th and the 7th centuries; another problem is connected with the difficulties of the chronological identification of finds, and, last but not least, the complete lack of sites which could be glassmaking workshops⁵⁹. The types of the receptures are as many as 16, according to Abdurazakov, which shows how great was the diverseness of the techniques used in glassmaking between the 2nd century BC to the 14th century AD in the valleys of the rivers Surkhandaryo and Kashkadaryo, and in ancient Khorezm in Southern Uzbekistan⁶⁰. Among chemical analyses published, and concerned with glass artifacts dated in the 4th and 5th centuries from the Surhandarja valley, most interesting results point to a high percentage of Al₂O₃ alternating between 11.03 wt.% and 2.41 wt.%, with K₂O lying between 5.11 wt.% and 2.73 wt.%; for artifacts from Kashkadarja valley (4th – 6th century) analyses show Al₂O₃ alternating between 13.27 wt.% and 2.27 wt.% and K₂O from 4.05 wt.% to 1.02 wt.% which suggests a clear advantage of plant-ash soda limes of Central Asian origins as their chemical compounds, and, to a lesser extent, plant ash soda related to Sasanian glass⁶¹. Apart from one result of the analysis of a colorless fragment of

⁵⁵ If merchants were travelling along this route, why should we not assume that craftsmen were also taking it?

⁵⁶ SIMPSON 2015, p. 95, fig. 17:1.

⁵⁷ MASUDA 1972.

⁵⁸ STERN 2001, p. 130.

⁵⁹ LANKTON *et al.* 2009, p. 585, 586; ABDURAZAKOV 2009, p. 216.

⁶⁰ ABDURAZAKOV 2009, Table: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3. Chemical types of glass from Uzbekistan: Table 8.4.

⁶¹ ABDURAZAKOV 2009: sample 8 from Table 8.2 has a lower content of K₂O than Sasanian glass (over 2%), however the content of Al₂O₃ is lower – 2.27% and MgO 5.40%.

bottle from Kashkadarja valley (4th – 5th century), which is most closely related to the chemical compounds of a bluish green trail (colored with CuO) with an ewer from the mound 98⁶², all other finds show a huge discrepancy in regard to percentages of their respective chemical compounds⁶³. Such discrepancy is thought to be the evidence of experiments conducted by local glassmakers introducing new techniques, raw materials and decorative patterns; thus, this region *joue un rôle important dans la propagation de ces innovations dans toute l'Asie centrale*⁶⁴.

A more recent interpretation of three of the analyzed vessels from the mound 98 (2, 6 and 7) using the cluster analysis has shown their closer similarity to glass beads and bead making debris from Bara in northwestern Pakistan, however dated broadly from 2nd century BC to 2nd century AD. These finds may serve a proxy for at least one type of Central Asian glass from within the Kushan Empire that extended from northern India to northern Afghanistan, and the vessels manufactured according to similar formulae may represent the later expression of a Kushan/Bactrian glassmaking tradition⁶⁵.

In this context of the Central-Asian origin of the vessels, a remark from 'The History of Northwestern Dynasties' seems to be especially interesting⁶⁶:

At the time of Shi Tsu⁶⁷ a merchant of Ta Yüeh Shih Kuo⁶⁸ traded in the capital. He spoke of his ability to make glass of five colors by smelting stone. Thereupon ore was gathered from the mountains and smelted in the city. Results were obtained. The luster of the glass objects made was more beautiful than that of those which came from the west. A crystal Palace large enough to accommodate more than one hundred persons was constructed at the Imperial command. The light and color shining through the building looked beautiful. So much so that all those who gazed upon it marveled and believed it to be the work of the gods. Henceforth the value of glass went down in the country, and the people no longer regarded it as a rarity⁶⁹.

The terms Yuezhi or Greater Yuezhi were applied by Chinese written sources for Kushan and their successors Heftalites, i.e. it related to the territories of Bactria and Tocharistan⁷⁰. The rules of those state entities sent diplomatic missions as

Glass produced in Central Asia has similar composition to Sasanian glass, however, Central Asian glass has higher concentration of K₂O, and sometimes also Al₂O₃ (ŻUCHOWSKA 2016).

⁶² Chemical analysis of the trail has shown its similarity to composition of Sasanian glass from Veh Ardašir, por. LANKTON *et al.* 2010, p. 234.

⁶³ ABDURAZAKOV 2009; table 8:2 sample 3 and LANKTON *et al.* 2010, Table 1, vessel 1 ewer – bluish green trail.

⁶⁴ ABDURAZAKOV 2001, p. 400-401; ABDURAZAKOV 2009, p. 216.

⁶⁵ LANKTON *et al.* 2010, p. 223.

⁶⁶ Yoshida HARADA (1939, p. 60-61) was the first to draw attention on to fragment and I borrowed his translation.

⁶⁷ Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei (408–452 AD).

⁶⁸ Dayuezhi.

⁶⁹ HARADA 1939, p. 60-61. See other translations: AN 2002, p. 64-65; Żuchowska in ŻUCHOWSKA & SZMONIEWSKI 2017, p. 171-172.

⁷⁰ THIERRY 2005, p. 423; LA VAISSIÈRE 2007; LANKTON *et al.* 2009, p. 587.

well to Northern Wei as to Liang⁷¹. The first of those missions to Northern Wei took place in the year 456, and the next one only in the year 507. Since that year, Hepthalites sent tributaries almost annually until the year 558 (from 534 to 537 - to Western Wei), and in the years 524, 530, 532 such missions took place even twice a year⁷².

Vessels made according to the chemical compound similar to the types of the Central-Asian (Silk Road) glasses as they were categorized by Brill⁷³, have been found in the burial No. 16 localized near Datong⁷⁴. First of the artifact is a ewer/beaker made of dark opaque glass, resembling very much to local ceramics products⁷⁵. A next vessel being a cup has been found together with three other vessels and a fragment of a foot in the grave of Feng Sufu⁷⁶ in Beipiao in Liaoning province, dated in the year 415 AD⁷⁷. The cup made of translucent greenish glass has a convex bottom, slightly cut-in neck and the rim folded inward⁷⁸. Interesting is the rim of the cup folded inward, similarly to the other shallow bowl with the foot in the form of a ring from this grave, reminds the the rims of two steamed cups from the grave No. 128 in Korea. According to Jiayao An, the bowl from the grave in Datong mentioned above, together with two other small vessels from this grave as well as a set of another seven ceramic products from a pagoda in Digxian were made by Bactrians at Datong (Pingcheng)⁷⁹. Finally, a glass vessel from the treasure in Hejia village⁸⁰ should be mentioned buried in the first (?) half of the 8th century⁸¹, which, after being chemically analyzed, shows striking similarities to Central Asian glassware, the same similarities can be observed in a fragment of a similar vessel from the Togujai (Moji) site in Xinjiang⁸². According to some new proposal, the vessel from Hejia is thought to belong to gifts⁸³, which were offered at the Imperial Court of Tang by the envoy from Kapiša⁸⁴ in 619 AD. A crystal cup⁸⁵ is said to belong to these gifts, which is being interpreted as a glass artifact now⁸⁶. This suggestion is very tempting when we remember that Begram was

⁷¹ LUNG 2011, p. 27.

⁷² KUWAYAMA 2002, p. 128, Table 2.

⁷³ BRILL 2009, Table 3.1 and 3.2.

⁷⁴ AN 2009, p. 383-384, Table 19.4.

⁷⁵ ŻUCHOWSKA & SZMONIEWSKI 2017, p. 172, fig. 8, 9; CHEN *et al.* 2016, Table 1.

⁷⁶ Younger brother of the Emperor Wencheng, Northern Yan (409-436AD).

⁷⁷ Two cups, bowl, lower fragment of the foot, and a duckshaped *unguentarium* FENG SUFU 2015, p. 34-37, fig. 23: 1-4 and 24: 1, Plates : 29: 1-3, 30: 1-3, 31: 1-3, 32: 1-3. Jiayao An linked these five glasswares to the northeastern Roman provinces glassmaking workshops (AN 2015, p. 233.)

⁷⁸ FENG SUFU 2015, fig. 23: 1 and 3, plate 29 and 32: 1-2.

⁷⁹ AN 2009, p. 385. See also CHENG 2014, p. 136-141.

⁸⁰ HUA WU DA TANG CHUN 2013, p. 101, no. 12.

⁸¹ HANSEN 2012, p. 152 (not longer after 731 AD).

⁸² LU *et al.* 2017, p. 116-117. See also BRILL 2009, p. 146, Tabl. 3.2. & 3.3.6.

⁸³ LIN 2017; AIHAITI *et al.* 2017.

⁸⁴ Kapiša was situated in Afghanistan and centered on what now is Kabul.

⁸⁵ In 619, envoys from Kapiša to the Tang court offered valuable belts, golden chains, rock crystal cups, glass, and date seedlings see: BIELENSTEIN 2005, p. 349.

⁸⁶ The Chinese believed that the glass is a product of nature and often linked it with crystal or jade. See ŻUCHOWSKA & SZMONIEWSKI 2017, p. 170.

localized just in the place of the later state Kapiša, which will be explained below; this fact could point to a certain continuation of a probable glassmaking tradition that had been evolving there since the Kushan period. However, yet another mention about a similar gift offering from Chieh can be found, which took place before the year 619⁸⁷. Chieh was probably localized in West Turkestan. Begram placed south from Bactria was the place of a spectacular find in two storerooms, anciently sealed off, in the so-called Palace in the New Royal City; the storerooms were filled with luxury goods coming from Graeco-Roman Mediterranean, India and China. Among these imported treasures, a diversified set of glassware was found consisting of *cut-glass vessels, mold-blown glass, glass with faceted decorations, colored enameled vessels and vessels with applied molded relief decoration, even bowls of millefiori or mosaic glass and multi-colored asks in the shape of fish and boats*⁸⁸. These artifacts are dated, according to recent analyses, in the first or in the early 2nd century AD.⁸⁹ It is suggested that they were brought in via the sea route across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean⁹⁰. However, I would like to draw the attention to some doubts expressed by Sanjyot Mehendale, when she wrote: ... *Begram was not merely a crossroads storage site but a trading center with its own workshops or ateliers*⁹¹. The localization of Begram within the very center of these old trade routes caused the fact that the city was connecting many routes running West toward the Caspian Sea and Mediterranean, from the South- from India seaway toward Mediterranean with the route of the Silk Road running East. The researcher in her analyses points to the fact that the question of the deposit of Begram has never really been solved as yet by associating it to some royal treasure, and thus, its interpretation can be different: *Central Asia in general and the Begram area in particular may have had local products – cultivated, manufactured or existing naturally – which were valued, even coveted by the Roman, Chinese and Indian worlds and which were traded for goods such as those discovered at Begram and, due to this, it could as well be a customs depot where trade taxes in kind were protected*⁹². Thus, within these territories, at some later points of time, different branches of craft could also evolve, among them glassmaking, relating to Mediterranean traditions but with a stamp of local provenance.

Some evidence of contacts between envoys from Korean Ambassadors with Central Asia representants is said to be presented by somewhat later paintings in Afrasiab (second half of 7th century) in present-day Uzbekistan; they were made later, this is true, but they could also suggest that such high-ranking contacts could take place also in the past⁹³. An analysis of these frescoes and their comparison with other depictions of Korean ambassadors from the wall paintings in Xian

⁸⁷ In 619, envoys from Chieh to the Tang court offered a valuable belt, a golden chain, a crystal cup, and 490 pieces of glass see BIELENSTEIN 2005, p. 339-340, 345.

⁸⁸ MAIR 2012; see also WHITEHOUSE 2012, p. 54-63.

⁸⁹ At beginning the deposition time was related to mid-3rd century AD. Now, an early 2nd century AD date for the concealment of the treasure BALL 2000, p. 136-137.

⁹⁰ BOȚAN 2014.

⁹¹ MEHENDALE 1996, p. 58.

⁹² MEHENDALE 1996: 60. See also: MAIR 2014; BHATTACHARYA-HAESNER 2016.

⁹³ KIM 1983, p. 45.

and Dunhuang, as carried out by Etsuko Kageyama, has brought some interesting results. The Japanese researcher has proved that this depiction is a stereotypical depiction of Korean envoys, the stereotype having been created in Xian, as next applied in Dunhuang, and finally in Afrasiab. Considering this interpretation as being true, we cannot but agree with her conclusion that these depictions *can no more be taken as evidence that Korean ambassadors actually visited Samarkand in the second half of the 7th century*⁹⁴.

Finally, another probable place of the production of the vessels, taking into account the similarity of the vessels with blue dots and the jug, we could suggest the northern coast of the Black Sea. However, in this case, the possibility that these vessels were imports from the Syro-Palestinian area should also be considered seriously. Very probable is the thesis that it was via Southern Caucasus that the glassware was imported to the Sasanian Empire which seems to be supported by the finds of such imports from the Gilan province⁹⁵ and from there, farther, across Central Asia, to their Korean destination.

Similarly as in the case of a potential place of their production, it is difficult to establish with certainty their routes of import to the Korean Peninsula. The role of the nomadic societies living in the steppe zones, especially of the peoples from Northern China, i.e. Xianbei, both Murang and Tuoba tribes, seems to be most important⁹⁶.

In the first horizon dated in the second/third quarter of 4th century contacts with Former Yan (337-370)⁹⁷ and Northern Wei (386-535) are being suggested to be the prior ones, which, more generally, means cultural influences of the Murong and Tuoba of Xianbei tribes. With a high probability, Western Jin can also be pointed to. Both in the burials of Northern Wei and Western Jin, glass vessels have been found which resemble those Korean ones⁹⁸. On the other hand, the role of Lelang commandery active since the year 108 BC and subjugated by Goguryeo in 313 AD cannot be excluded.

The second horizon with the chronology established in the period between the 5th century to the first half of the 6th century AD falls into the times of solidification of Silla as a state entity, the times of its raising power and increased activity in the region. For this epoch, Silla's transregional contacts with ruling dynasties in China, especially with Northern Wei⁹⁹, are accentuated. The intermediary in these contacts with the world of the steppe is considered to be Goguryeo, where numerous noble metal products came from, deposited in the graves of Silla. Unfortunately, apart from one exception, no localizations could be ascribed to the finds from the area occupied by this state entity as yet.

The last horizon related to the period starting in the second half of the 6th century is associated with the widespread of Buddhism; admittedly, Chinese dynasties played an important role also in this process.

⁹⁴ KAGEYAMA 2002, p. 319.

⁹⁵ SHIKAKU 2013, p. 356-357; 2016.

⁹⁶ About Korean contacts with Steppe see RÓSEN 2009.

⁹⁷ Possible also Later Yan (384-409). See LEE 2010, p. 215.

⁹⁸ HOPPÁL 2016; AN 2016.

⁹⁹ Possible also Northern Yan (407-436).

Sara Nelson suggests that vessels produced in Central Asiatic workshops, i.e. the Bactrian moved *north of the Altai Mountains and across the Eurasian Steppes to Liaoning could have gone directly from Northern Yan or Northern Wei to Silla*¹⁰⁰. The route across the steppe seems to be an attractive hypothesis, not only as a way of circulation of products from Central Asia, but also of imports from the Roman Empire and the wider sense West provenance which is supported by the growing number of such finds¹⁰¹. Thus, second to Xiongnu's role¹⁰² in the distribution of luxury goods across the steppe, the tribes of Xianbei are most probable candidates, and in the later times, also nomadic peoples living there¹⁰³.

The most probable route, however, seems to be the one leading from Bactria/Tocharistan, through Tarim basin around the Taklamakan desert and Turpan-Hami depression, to Hexi-corridor, and farther east. Most important part was played certainly by the Sogdian merchants used as go-betweens starting from the 5th century, and perhaps even earlier, who as small peddlers left Gansu or Turfan heading, among other routes and destinations, in the steppe¹⁰⁴. It is supported by numerous finds of glassware and by many depictions of glass vessels on the paintings in the Dunhuang caves¹⁰⁵ (Fig. 3-5). By this route, most probably, Roman Sasanian and Central Asian products were transported. The last region mentioned above was probably most important and the direction was known also due to the Buddhist monks, Faxian (337? -422?) and Xuanzang (600? – 664) among them, travelling there from the fifth to the seventh centuries¹⁰⁶.

3. Conclusions

The finds of glassware within the Korean Peninsula, in the regions of Silla and Paekche kingdoms as well as within the boundaries of Gaya confederation are striking due to their great number compared to other territories of the Far East. They show huge similarities to the glass products from the Roman Empire and especially from the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, i.e. from the Palestyno-Syrian circle. The results of the specialist analyses of some of the vessels, however, point to the Sasanian and Central Asiatic cultural circle. It should not be excluded, though, that a part of the vessels was produced by travelling craftsmen from the Roman Empire imitating, with a diverse success, the glassware of the Roman provenance. 'Romanizing glass', the term frequently used in literature, seems to express well the character of these products. Here, the most interesting region seems to be Bactria/Tocharistan. Considering these regions as the most probable hubs of glassware trade throws a new light on the productive

¹⁰⁰ NELSON 2017, p. 73.

¹⁰¹ BROSEDER 2015, p. 260-266, fig. 29.

¹⁰² Problem of the hypothesis about the redistribution of luxury goods by Xiongnu see HONEYCHURCH 2015, p. 288-290; BROSEDER 2015.

¹⁰³ STARK 2015.

¹⁰⁴ LA VAISSIÈRE 2002, p. 202-204; LA VAISSIÈRE 2004.

¹⁰⁵ TANIICHI 1986. Similar depiction to glass vessel from Hejia treasure is known from the painting of The Kumtura (Qumtura) Thousand Buddha Caves AIHAITI *et al.* 2017, fig.1: 3.

¹⁰⁶ SEN 2006.

possibilities of this area, being often ignored due to its location between great civilizations of Rome, Sasanian Empire and China, but playing an undoubted role in the production and transfer of prestige goods. It seems to be supported by the production of metal vessels, mainly of noble metals, which has brilliantly been concluded by Borys Marshak: *the silversmiths of Central Asia often reproduced prestigious models – in Bactria these were Hellenistic or, occasionally, Roman – but they did not copy them mechanically and would invariably add small, seemingly incidental ornamental details that they had memorized in their early training*¹⁰⁷. An analogical process could be suggested in the case of glass vessels. A possible activity of is the one of a workshop in Datong (Pingcheng), being the capital of Northern Wei until 494 AD, because of the interesting accumulation of metal vessels associated with Bactrian- Tocharian silversmiths there.

The appearing of a vessel in rich graves, conspicuous due to their construction as well as to their inventory, points to their special prestige status. One of the proofs of their special treating may be an ear of a jug mended by the means of a golden wire¹⁰⁸.

Undoubtedly, a great role in the imports of glassware to Silla was played by the nomads of Murong and Tuoba tribes of Xianbei peoples, the founders, among others, of Former Yan, Western Yan, Later Yan and Northern Wei state entities, whereby the last dynasty mentioned here played, in my view, especially important role in this process.

Fragments discovered in Baekje should certainly be associated with Buddhism and the perception of glassware as the one of the seven Buddhist treasures. However, this religion influenced the change in the character of glassware, which, in the place of grave goods, became gifts offered to Buddhist temples*.

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¹⁰⁷ MARSHAK 2004, p. 50.

¹⁰⁸ Analysis of the golden wire see: HWANG & YUN 2015.

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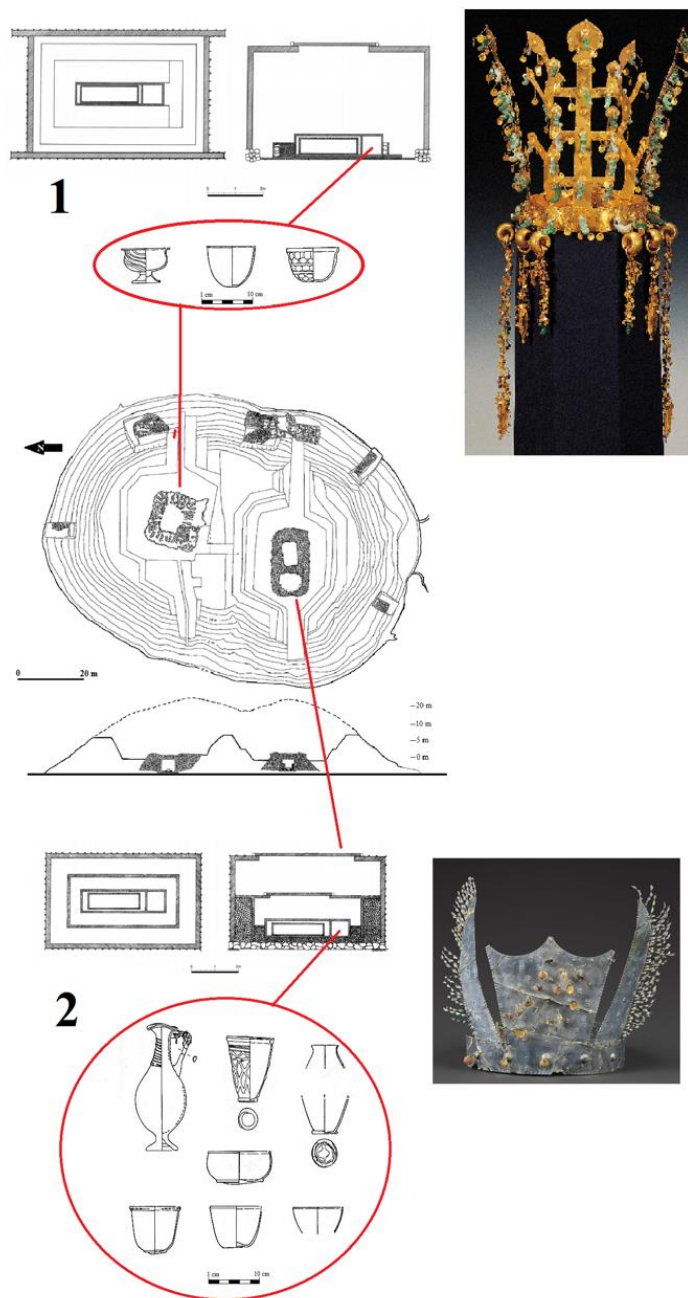


Fig. 1 - Glass vessels, Golden and Silver Crowns position in Hwangnamdaechong (no. 98). 1 – Northern grave, 2 – Southern grave (after CHOI 2016, SUGAYA 2014 and the National Museum of Korea).



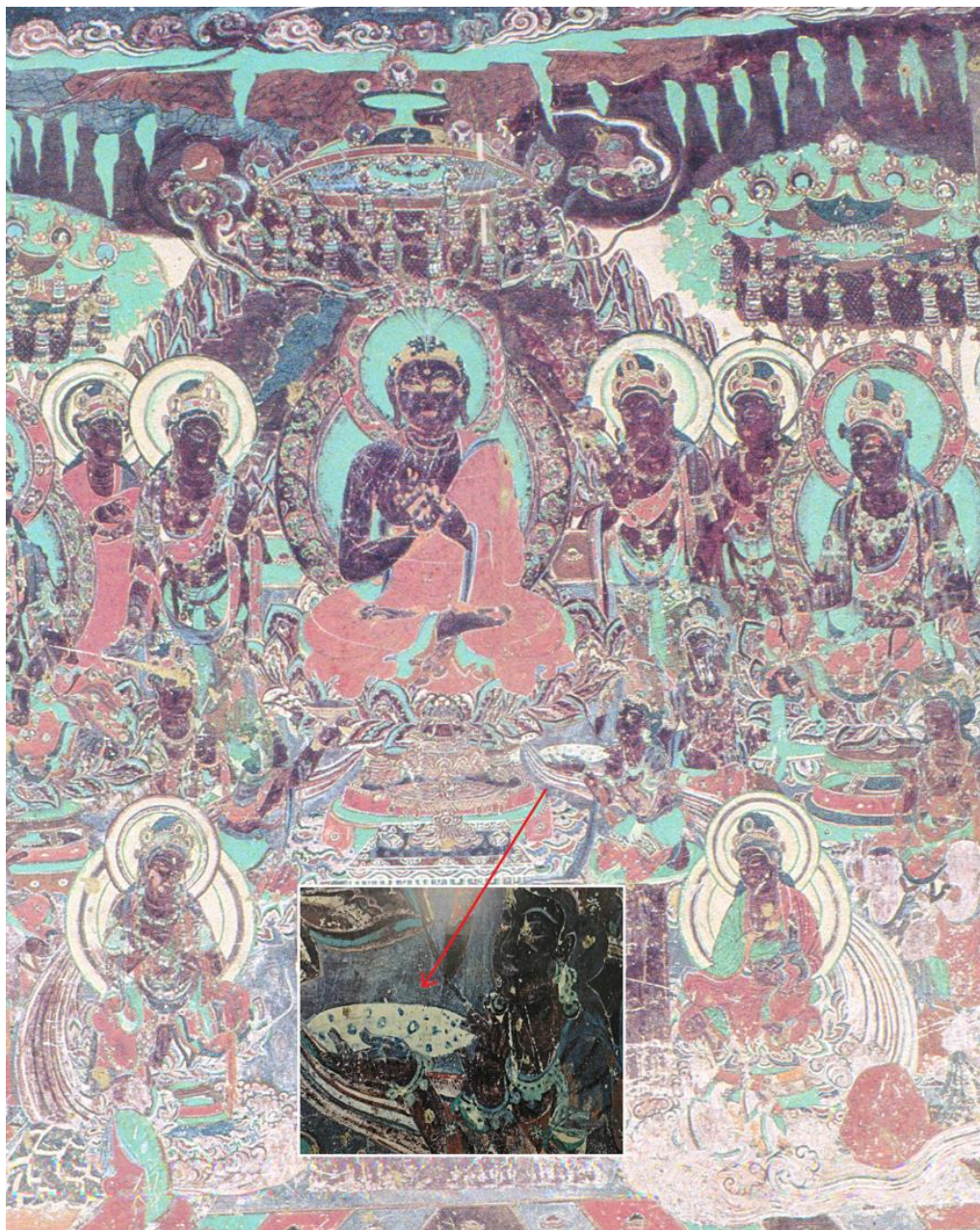
Fig. 2 - Possible production areas of glass vessels discovered in Korean Peninsula. 1 – Syro-Palestinian, 2 – Sasanian, 3 – Central Asian, 4 – Northern Black Sea, 5 – Datong, 6 – findspots in Korea (drawing B.Sz. Szmoniewski).



Fig. 3 - Glass vessels depicted in Dunhuang cave no. 57 - Early Tang (618-712) (after TONKOU 2002).



Fig. 4 - Glass vessels depicted in Dunhuang cave no. 401 – Early Tang (618-712)
(after TONKOU 2002).



**Fig. 5 - Glass vessels depicted in Dunhuang cave no. 217– Middle Tang (712-781)
(after *Fresques de Dunhuang* 1989).**