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Diffusion of Byzantine and Islamic ceramics into Scandinavia: laboratory investigations of samples from Sigtuna, Sweden.

Contacts between Scandinavia and Byzantium are well attested by coin hoards, dated to the late 10th and early 11th centuries.¹ Other artefact types suggest a much later connection with the Empire, with a peak from late 11th to late 12th century. We can discern a first Varangian mercenary phase and a second phase based on exchange, overlapping from mid-11th century.² The later contacts show not so much a constant interest for Byzantium as a strong affiliation to Kievan Rus'. However, in the High Middle Ages, Byzantium was important as model for social display in both regions.

Consumption patterns in Sigtuna coalesced with those in Kievan Rus'. This is also seen in the imported ceramics. Byzantine and Islamic wares can be found in Sigtuna, as they are in Novgorod and its Hinterland and even further to the northeast, displaying a Mediterranean wine consumption tradition in the North.³

To understand the trade connections with higher resolution, chemical analyses were undertaken on different categories of wares (amphorae, common ware, table ware), found in layers dated back to the 11th to 13th centuries and suspected to belong to Günsenin 1 or 3⁴ types (amphorae) and to Byzantine White Ware⁵ (table ware). Samples were investigated by chemical analysis in the "Laboratoire de Céramologie" in Lyon to check this hypothesis. Analyses support a Byzantine origin for most of the amphorae samples, which are likely to belong to productions of Günsenin 1 and 2.

¹ Müller-Wille, M., 1997, Relations between Byzantium and the North in the light of archaeology. Some concluding remarks, in: *Rom und Byzanz im Norden : Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8. - 14. Jahrhunderts*, Band I, pp. 405-422.

² Roslund, M. 1997. Crumbs from the rich mans' table- Byzantine artefacts in Lund and Sigtuna ca 980-1250. I Andersson, H, Carelli, P & Ersgård, Lars (red) *Visions of the Past. Trends and Traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology*. Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology 19/Riksantikvarieämbetet Antikvariska undersökningar Skrifter nr 24.

³ Koval, V. Y. 2006. Eastern pottery from the excavations in Novgorod, in: Orton, C. (ed.) *The pottery from Medieval Novgorod and its region*. London, pp. 161-192.; Makarov, N. Rural settlement and trade networks in northern Russia, AD 900-1250, in: Mango, M. M. (ed.) *Byzantine trade, 4th - 12th centuries. The archaeology of local, regional and international exchange*. Farnham, pp. 443-461.; Volkov, I. V. 2006. Amphorae from Novgorod the Great and comments on the wine trade between Byzantium and medieval Russia, in: Orton, C. (ed.) *The pottery from Medieval Novgorod and its region*. London, pp. 145-159.

Zakharov, S. D. 2004. *Drevnerusskij gorod Beloozero*. Moscow.

⁴ Günsenin, N., 1990, *Les amphores byzantines (Xe-XIIIe siècles): typologie, production, circulation, d'après les collections turques*, unpublished PhD thesis, University Paris I.

⁵ Hayes, J.W., 1992, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul. Volume II. The Pottery*, Princeton University Press.

Comparison of table ware, previously analysed in England by the late Alan Vince, with the large corpus of chemical data available in Lyon on Byzantine White Ware⁶ is currently under way.

The Islamic wares are incised and glazed, with an expected origin in production centres in Fustat or Damascus.⁷ In Sigtuna, they are found in deposits dated to the late 11th and 12th centuries. As the Byzantine wares, they probably came through the Rus' trade network.

⁶ Waksman, S.Y., Bouquillon, A., Cantin, N., Katona, I., 2007, The first Byzantine "Glazed White Wares" in the early medieval technological context, in: *Archaeometric and Archaeological Approaches to Ceramics*, BAR International Series S1691, pp. 129-135; Waksman, S.Y., forthcoming, Eight centuries of production of "Byzantine White Ware".

⁷ Roslund, M. 2011. Muslimskt Medelhav vid Mälaren. Spår av islamisk handel i det förmoderna Sverige., in: Andréén, A. (ed.) *Förmodern globalitet. Essäer om rörelse, möten och fjärran ting under 10 000 år*. Lund, pp. 159-177.