



TYOLOGY OF GLASS JEWELRY OF TURAN

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a scholarly analysis of the typological characteristics of glass jewelry used in the territory of Turan from the Bronze Age to the early 13th century AD. The research is based on archaeological findings as well as available scientific and historical sources. It examines the names, functions, shapes, and color features of glass items, along with their role in the socio-economic life of the Turanian population. In addition, conclusions are drawn regarding the typology and cultural significance of glass ornaments. The results of the study contribute to a new interpretation of Turan's glassmaking traditions and their historical development.

Introduction. The tradition of making glass objects in ancient Turan began in the Bronze Age, and the earliest examples were primarily jewelry. According to archaeological data, the population of Turan in the Bronze Age produced nine types of glass ornaments, and in the Iron Age they made eleven types of personal ornaments. In the Bronze Age glass was used as an inexpensive substitute for precious stones such as lazurite, carnelian and turquoise. For this reason, early glass objects were mainly used by members of the lower social strata. From antiquity onward, the techniques for working glass in Turan were further refined. This process contributed to elevating glassmaking to the level of an art. During this period glass objects occupied a special position in the lives of upper-class households, rulers and nobles, and in some cases were used as valuable items offered to places of worship. The shape, color and manufacturing technique of glass objects reflect the technological possibilities of a given period and the aesthetic tastes of the population. The glass items found in the Turan region are typologically very diverse, among them beads are the most frequently encountered archaeological finds.

1.Beads. The use of glass beads in the territory of Turan began in the Bronze Age, and the earliest example belongs to the Zamonbobo culture [23:30-31]. According to archaeological evidence, such items have been found in graves from antiquity to the early Middle Ages, and they served as indicators of the deceased's social status during their lifetime. Glass beads vary greatly in type, shape and color, and they were widely used and cherished by the population throughout all regions of Turan-Turkestan. In burial practices, the belongings used by the deceased during their lifetime were interred together with them. The glass findings from Kunya-Uaz show that the inhabitants often wore numerous beads made of thick blue, ribbed, and spherical glass[27:126]. It has been determined that at the Akchagelin settlement, blue-

colored, ribbed and spherical glass beads were produced [8:86-89]. Special workshops for making jewelry had already developed in Turan from ancient times [8:86-89]. Craftsmen in Khorezm[28:97], Nurtepa[24:31], Afrasiab[11:121-123] and Kuva[8:86-89] produced various types of beads. In Akhsikent, more than 20 types of beads were used in the 10th–12th centuries [1:231-240]. The population also wore items made from volcanic glass—obsidian of black color[2:249]. The Qanqa people produced fewer beads from clear glass. Dull-colored beads were more widespread. This is illustrated by two beads from Qanqa made of black dull glass with white eyes inserted into the soft mass, as well as ribbed beads in red-orange hues[36:87-88]. Beads varied in size, shape, and color, and were made using techniques such as carving, drilling, casting, and blowing. According to their shape, they are classified as spherical, multifaceted, ring-shaped, and cylindrical types. These forms were widely distributed in the early 12th–13th centuries in the cities of Afrasiab, Akhsikent, Marv, and Shahr-i-Islam[27:103]. Beads with eyes and multicolored beads were produced in the cities of Southern Turkmenistan in the 11th–13th centuries. The population of the Tashkent oasis also wore glass beads[26:47]. However, in Turkestan during the 9th–early 13th centuries, wearing carnelian and glass beads was not widespread among members of the upper social strata [33:169]. During this period, glass beads were primarily worn by women of the common population.

2.Small beads. Glass small beads have long been used to decorate clothing. Their earliest examples date back to the Bronze Age and later became widespread during antiquity. According to archaeological evidence, such small beads have been found in the Zamonbobo cemetery[15:30-31]. Additionally, at the Koktepa site, glass small beads that were sewn onto clothing have been identified in the grave of the “Saka queen” alongside gold ornaments [19:79-86]. These findings indicate that glass decorative items reflected social status and aesthetic taste in ancient Turan society.

1. Button-beads or bead-buttons. One of humanity’s major and significant inventions. At the Bronze Age sites of Kokcha-3[20:86-89], Karamkul[14:133], and Burmachap[10:314], buttons are found alongside beads. The inhabitants of the city of Tuproqqala (4th–6th centuries) used glass buttons and rings as decorative items[29:40]. Buttons served to fasten clothing and retain warmth.

1. Amulet. Since ancient times, it has been considered a protective item against misfortunes and illnesses. During the Bronze Age, the inhabitants of Tandiryul used early amulets made of glass [4:2].

2. Bead-necklace. Recorded at the Sopollitepa and Jarkoton sites[21:80]. A necklace made of beads, with pendants or charms suspended between them, worn by women.

3. A shokila is a type of bead that hangs between necklaces worn around the neck, and the earliest glass example was found in the Bostan VI cemetery [3:23]. Over 100 shokilas and pendants have been identified at the Diyorqul site, made of both glass and stone [27:126]. Glass pendants were blue and black in color, decorated with white linear patterns. Jewelry items such as beads, pendants, rings, and earrings indicate that glass objects were widely used in Khorezm, especially during the period of the Khorezmshah dynasty.

4. **Seal.** In Southern Turan, during the Bronze Age, ownership of property was confirmed using seals. Seals were also made from stones containing glass. At the Jarkoton ark, seals made of glass-containing stone with sun images engraved on their surfaces were used[34:13].

5. **Bead-bracelet.** In the Bronze Age, people wore bead-bracelets. The inhabitants of Jarkoton used bracelets made of necklaces with beads crafted from chlorite, lazurite, and faience [7:35]. Those made of glass were also bead-bracelets. In Southern Turan, people wore bead-bracelets with beads shaped as biconical, barrel-shaped, and cylindrical forms [6:5].

6. Glass “eyes” in earrings and rings were first identified in the Bostan VI graves, dating to the Bronze Age [21:51]. In the early Middle Ages, the Sogdians preferred to decorate their jewelry with “eyes” made of precious stones and glass. The “eyes” of a gold earring found in Panjikent were made of glass, dating to the period before the Arab invasion, that is, the mid-8th century AD[30:110-116]. The earrings made at Aultepa in the 5th–6th centuries were composed of a bronze hoop and a hanging part, with glass “eyes” set into them [30:113].

Bracelets. It is known that during the Bronze Age, many bracelets were made of bronze and were widely worn [35:72-81]. There are two methods for making bracelets. In the first, beads are strung on a thread, and in the second, they are cast in a mold. During the Iron Age, it was more typical for the people of Turan to make bracelets by stringing beads. The earliest glass bracelets in Turan date back to the middle of the 1st millennium BC[25:595]. Bracelets made from glass beads have been found in the Juzquduq[25:595] and Tomdi[10:314] cemeteries. Cast bracelets were used in Akbeit[10:315]. In the Tashkent oasis, bracelets made by threading beads onto a string have been used since antiquity [18:45]. In the early Middle Ages, cast bronze bracelets were found in Sogdiana at the Jartepa II sanctuary (5th–8th centuries)[9:48], Tali-Barzu (5th–6th centuries), and Panjikent (6th–8th centuries)[30:11]. Circular glass bracelets became widely distributed worldwide during the High Middle Ages. At the same time, silver bracelets were also extensively used in Turkestan. In the 9th–early 13th centuries, Tashkent and Southern Kazakhstan were major centers for the production of silver jewelry in Turkestan[33:169]. During the reign of the Karakhanid dynasty, the population in northern Tashkent wore silver bracelets shaped like snakes’ heads, while the Qanqalik people used ordinary bracelets[36:88]. Archaeological research has revealed numerous glass bracelets in Khorezm, in cities such as Khazarasp, Kohna Urganch, and Mizdahkon. They were made in green and blue colors, with smooth, rounded shapes. The bracelets of Khorezm from the 12th–13th centuries were further refined during the period of the Golden Horde[22:249]. Before the Mongol period, the production of glass bracelets was widespread across many regions. In particular, bracelets were also made in Russian cities before the Mongol invasion (by 1237)[5:51]. In the Moscow Kremlin area during the 12th–13th centuries, more than 40% of glass products consisted of bracelets[31:86-89]. In the city of Samosdelskoye, bracelets were also widely used during the same period [12:65].

1. **Eye-beads.** Similar to amulets, the function of eye-beads was to protect their owner from various misfortunes and to provide protection. A distinctive feature of these beads is the presence of white dots on a black bead. They were widespread in Turkestan. In some regions, blue beads were decorated with white dots. Such eye-beads were widely used during the Iron Age. They differ from ordinary beads in terms of their construction, function, and spiritual significance. The transmission of eye-beads from generation to generation can be observed.

Glass eye-beads were made by placing differently colored glass into a mass of hot glass. These are clearly evident in the eye-beads found at Uyg'arak (a site dating to the 7th–6th centuries BC)[13:84], the Chak cemeteries in the Fergana Valley (5th–3rd centuries BC) [17:105], and the Chirik Rabod[32:213] settlement. In Panjikent, eye-beads with white “eyes” set into a mass of hot blue glass were used [30:112–113]. Additionally, eye-beads were also used as amulets. Some eye-beads were made by painting the “eyes.” In Afrasiab, during the 9th century, a jewelry workshop produced amulet beads with painted eyes [11:121–123]. People believed that eye-beads could avert misfortunes and protect from the evil eye. Before the Mongol period, wearing colorful “protective eye” beads was widespread among women [1;231].

2. Pendant. Among the necklaces worn around the neck, large glass beads resembling shokilas—pendants with symbolic and religious meaning and serving as a mark of beauty—were also worn. Unlike shokilas, pendants were placed singly in the central part of the necklace. In some cases, pendants were made by casting or by encasing glass in gold foil with gold particles inside. Among the finds at the Jergetal cemetery, a pendant wrapped in gold foil, buried together with the deceased, was also identified[4:21]. At the Sheikh Tepe sanctuary, a necklace made of glass paste was discovered, with a hanging pendant in the shape of a grape at its center [16;346]. The inhabitants of Tuproqqala wore glass pendants shaped like frogs[32:213]. This type of pendant likely entered the Turan region through trade relations with the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean. Frog-shaped pendants from the Middle Ages have been found at Suyurlitepa in the Tashkent oasis, as well as at sites in Fergana, Surkhandarya, and Khorezm. In the beliefs of local peoples, the frog symbol was revered as a sign of fertility, abundance, and rainfall.

2. Ring. In the Fergana Valley, glass rings were widely used during the 6th–8th centuries, as evidenced by finds from the Munchoqtepa and Koktosh cemeteries, as well as the Balandtepa, Andijan, Kuva, and Khilla sites. In Khorezm, glass was one of the main materials used for making rings[22:249]. Glass rings were one of the main types of jewelry in the Middle Ages and were also widely used in the city of Samosdelskoye[12:65].

3. Earrings. While the tradition of setting glass “eyes” in earrings is known from the Bronze Age, earrings made entirely of glass became widespread only in the Middle Ages. At the Shehrlik, Jampiqqala, and Mizdahqan sites, teardrop-shaped earrings were observed to be decorated with glass beads attached to their three parts[22:249]. At the Ustyurt cemeteries in Khorezm, burials from the 13th–14th centuries have revealed that the deceased were interred along with their earrings [22:249].

Conclusion. Archaeological evidence indicates that glass jewelry in the Turan region has played an important role in the cultural and economic life of society since ancient times. The technology and types of glass items in Turan developed gradually over time. Glass objects were significant not only as aesthetic ornaments but also as markers of social status and religious symbols. Through them, social stratification, worldview, and lifestyle were expressed. The typological diversity of glass items in the Turan region reflects the well-developed craftsmanship traditions and the high skill level of local artisans. This demonstrates that glassmaking had formed as an independent craft in Turan. Studying the typology of glass items has provided the opportunity not only to systematize archaeological

materials but also to reinterpret the social, economic, and cultural life of the people of Turan from a new scholarly perspective.

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