

**ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINIAN
DECORATIVE METALLOPLASTICS (VI – XIII centuries)**

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Ukrainian jewelry has an ancient and fascinating history that is immersed deep into ages.

The oldest of known metalwork artifacts on the territory of our country are dated back to VI – VIII centuries. Archaeologists state that in that time eastern Slavs already had highly developed art, one of directions of which was decorative metalworking and the production of various precious and non-precious metal adornments. These were earrings, rings, buckles, torcs etc. In those times Slavic artisans mastered such techniques as casting, stamping, embossment, engraving (method of obtaining an image on metallic surface by removal of the upper layer of metal), filigree (jewelry art with a thin layer of gold, silver or copper wire wound in cords or soldered on a metal background) or *skan'* (Slavic filigree) and inlay of metal and gems. It is an interesting fact that even then artisans developed technique of *champlevé* (enameling) and were able to gild (which is a coating of a thin layer of gold).

Filigree was mainly used in adornment production, however its exclusive development *skan'* gained in the X century. It was possible because of the drawing technology discovered. In case of previous wire manufacturing process – it was more primitive and was conducted by forging. The peak of its development was reached in XI – first half of XIII century. Filigree technique that was used in artworks of ancient Kyiv Rus artisans enriched the *décor* of products, where ornamental motifs were applied.

One more sophisticated method of decoration in ancient Kyiv Rus metalworks was granulation. Jewelry and decorative metalworking were flourishing exactly during the age of Kyiv Rus. Since then, *skan'* has become polychromatic. The composition adopted non-metallic materials like enamel, glass and gems.

Prominent scientist of the XI century Theophilus stated that among eastern and western countries Kyiv Rus's art was ranked second after Byzantine Empire. In his work "On various arts" he outlined that Kyiv Rus in particular discovered niello and enamel craftsmanship. It is crucial to mention, that some unique techniques like vitreous enamel (when the image is split by brazed partitions of wire and polychromatic enamel is cast into sectors) and granulation (fine spheres sized from 0,4 mm made of precious metals are brazed on the ornament of *skan'* or on jewelry. They create unique texture and *chiaroscuro*).

It is obvious that jewelers of Kyiv Rus not only were close to Byzantines in metalworks craftsmanship, but added quite a number of novelties. Outstanding success was reached in particular with the development of vitreous enamel. With this technique book covers, colts (ancient Rus female adornment for headdress) were made, diadems, golden and silver earrings.

After the Mongol-Tatars' invasion to Kyiv Rus (1239 – 1242 AD) the most of jewelry manufactories were robbed and destroyed. Many craftsmen were taken prisoners. Jewelry, just like other art directions, were exposed to a catastrophic damage. All these unique techniques of vitreous enamel, *skan'* and granulation disappeared.

The main source of the information about the decorative art and craftsmanship of the past were archaeological findings of many artifacts that were buried in times of Batu khan's invasion. Among them dishes and weapons were not found. All of them were adornments of rich women that were hidden during the siege. Metalworking suffered the most damage in times of invasion. The artisans not only were devoid of precious metals, but iron items and details. However, the iron mining and treatment of other metals were still conducted, keeping the main role among other directions of craftsmanship.

Analysis of all these facts lead us to a conclusion that if the Byzantian contribution to the development of the decorative metalworking is obvious, the contribution of Kyiv Rus's is underestimated. It is possible to assert guaranteed that jewelry techniques and technologies that were discovered in times of Kyiv Rus highly influenced the development of the worldwide decorative metalworking.

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