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As a result of not knowing Russian, the *lingua franca* in the ex-Soviet states, or English, the *lingua franca* in the West (and not only), and also owing to certain historical or political prejudices, the archaeologists from the two spaces, although interested in similar research topics, often remain disconnected, having confined themselves to their own linguistic and academic universes. From this point of view, the volume edited by O.V. Lozovskaia, A.N. Mazurkevici and E.V. Dolbunova, *Традиции и инновации в изучении древнейшей керамики / Traditions and innovations in the study of earliest pottery*, is radically different and represents a sign of normality.

The volume is the result of an international conference organized in Sankt Petersburg in May 2016 by the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the State Hermitage Museum, the Samara State University of Social Sciences and Education, and UMR 8215 –Trajectoires CNRS-Université Paris 1. Its pages bring together the works of researchers from both Russia and Ukraine along with other countries in Europe (Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark, Great Britain, France, Spain), and the United States of America. Among the participants, there is also an archaeologist from Lebanon.

Many papers are written in Russian, but they also have abstracts in English, some almost equal in length with the original Russian text (e.g. V.V. Ilyushina, p. 78-80; N.L. Morgunova *et alii*, p. 116-120; K.B. Kalinina and E.G. Starkova, p. 125-128). In their turn, the texts in English have abstracts in Russian. Some abstracts in English (e.g. V.L. Bodnarenko and T.V. Oleynik, p. 110-112; E.S. Yakovleva, p. 156-159; L.N. Mylnikova, p. 160-162) and Russian (e.g. N. Tarifa Mateo *et alii*, p. 197-199; K. Nordqvist and T. Mökkönen, p. 204-207) are nevertheless very short. All the texts include bilingual captions of the illustrations. Unfortunately, in the case of one of the titles only the abstracts in English and Russian are available to the reader (M. Spataro *et alii*, p. 51).

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The volume is dedicated to the memory of Liya Yakovlevna Krizhevskaya (1916-1995), a researcher focused on the Neolithic period in Eastern Europe and the east and west of Siberia. The introduction of the volume includes two articles about Liya Yakovlevna Krizhevskaya's scientific activity, a list of her publications, a catalogue of the documents from various archaeological sites she excavated, and a catalogue of her photographic archive, all preserved in the archive of the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Closely related to the introductory texts, the first part of the volume includes eight articles about a series of current archaeological research on topics approached by Liya Yakovlevna Krizhevskaya, such as the Neolithic cultures in the Ural Mountains, the pre-ceramic Neolithic in the south of Eastern Europe, and the ceramic traditions during the early Neolithic in Eastern Europe, in the Volga-Don region.

The second part of the volume is the most substantial one – 51 articles – and focuses on various aspects of the research on pottery. The oldest ceramic material presented in the second part of the volume is a clay vessel from a Paleolithic context excavated in the Kapova Cave (the southern Urals, Russia), interpreted as “sanctuary” (V.E. Shchelinsky and P.B. Vandivier, p. 56-61). In chronological order, there are several articles dedicated to the emergence of pottery in certain regions, for example the Jōmon vessels in the Japanese archipelago (O. E. Craig, p. 179-182), or the chronology of the earliest pottery in the Transbaikal area (M.V. Konstantinov, p. 183-186). Besides these, there is an entire series of texts about the technology of some Neolithic and Eneolithic ceramic traditions from very diverse geographical regions, ranging from the Iberian Peninsula to the Japanese archipelago. Further on, a few texts refer to the ceramic assemblages from the Bronze Age; some of the sites under discussion are from Russia, for example the fortified settlement at Kamenny Ambar in the southern Urals (S.E. Panteleeva *et alii*, p. 86-87), the Turganik settlement in the Orenburg region (N.L. Morgunova and N.P. Salugina, p. 121-124), or the Srubna-Andronovo cemeteries in the same region (L.V. Kuptsova and M.I. Mukhametdinov, p. 161-166), whereas others are from Brittany, France (J. Ripoche, pp. 222-226).

Some of the texts from the second section of the volume are dedicated to the technology of Neolithic and Eneolithic ceramic materials mostly stemming from settlements (*e.g.* T.A. Khoroshun, p. 104-105), but also from enclosures (F. Giligny, p. 234-235), from rock shelters (*e.g.* L. Gomart *et alii*, p. 245-247), and from graves (*e.g.* L.N. Mylnikova, p. 160-162). The level of the analysis is that of a single site (*e.g.* A.N. Mazurkevich *et alii*, p. 236-241), a few sites (M.V. Ivanischeva *et alii*, p. 88-99), a certain geographical region (*e.g.* E.L. Lychagina and N.S. Batueva, p. 113-115), or the area of a ceramic tradition (*e.g.* P. Kozhin and I. Palaguta, p. 248-251).

Besides this category of articles, there are also some predominantly methodological texts, such as those about the estimation of the quantity of shells used as temper in the ceramic paste (N. Yu. Petrova, p. 65-67), the basic criteria for distinguishing between the shells naturally found in the source of clay and the ones added as temper (N.P. Salugina, p. 68-71), the estimation of the firing temperatures for ceramics (H.V. Volkova and Yu. B. Tsetlin, p. 76-77), the identification of the organic components in the ceramic paste (V.V. Ilyushina, p. 78-81), the models to correlate the lithic and the ceramic material (V.A. Manko, p. 174-178), or transmission and innovation in ceramic traditions (S. Manem and M. Vander Linden, p. 231-233).

Other studies are dedicated to a certain aspect of ceramic production. For instance, a series of articles refer to the materials used by the potters, such as the vegetal temper used in

early and middle Neolithic pottery in Normandy, France (D. Jan, p. 72-75), the composition of the colors on the Tripolie ceramics in Ukraine (K.B. Kalinina and E.G. Starkova, p. 125-128), or the selection and treatment of raw materials in the Neolithic in the Mediterranean Basin (X. Clop García *et alii*, p. 242-244). Regarding the modelling techniques, an article focuses on the shaping of the Senogdinsky type of vessels in the Baikal region, Russia (D.E. Kichigin, p. 143-145), whilst another one has as its central topic the pottery of the 4th–3rd millennia BC in the east of the Gulf of Finland (M.A. Kholkina, p. 149-152). Several texts refer to the tools used by the potters, such as those used for the manufacturing and repairing of the Neolithic ceramics in the Iberian Peninsula (Clemente Conte *et alii*, p. 135-139); or to the surface finishing of the Koshkino pottery from the Mergen 6 site, in the Priishymye region, Russia (S.N. Skochina, p. 131-134). Ceramic surface treatment is also the topic of another technological study on the decoration of the pottery in northern Baikal, Russia, in the 3rd–2nd millennia BC (Y.A. Emelianova, p. 146-148). Some of the analyses have also resorted to experimental studies (N.N. Skakun and V.V. Terekhina, p. 129-130).

Another extremely important technological aspect discussed in the second part of the volume is that of the use of the vessels, the studies referring to examples from different regions: the Jōmon pottery in the Japanese archipelago (O.E. Craig, p. 179-182); the Subneolithic and Neolithic pottery in the Baltic area, between 3300 and 2400 Cal BC (C. Heron *et alii*, p. 187-190); the Narva ceramics in Estonia, in the 6th millennium BC (E. Oras *et alii*, p. 191-193); the late Neolithic pottery in the south of France (P. Debels, p. 194-196); the prehistoric ceramics in the mountainous site of Cova del Sardo in Catalonia, Spain (N. Tarifa Mateo *et alii*, p. 197-199).

The technological analysis of some Bandkeramik (LBK) fragments from Rovanci, Volhynia, Ukraine is very interesting as it led to the discovery of several stages in the biography of the vessels: initially they were decorated in the LBK style; then they were covered with a brownish-black organic substance and, in the end, re-decorated with incised lines and “wolf teeth”, in a totally different manner from the original incised decoration (A. Berdeckij *et alii*, p. 140-142).

Furthermore, among the most important topics of discussion, we should mention the direct dating of the prehistoric pottery – a subject approached on the basis of some ceramic materials in north-eastern Europe (J. Meadows *et alii*, p. 200-203; K. Nordquist and T. Mökkönen, p. 204-214; M.A. Kulkova *et alii*, p. 215-218; O. Seitsonen *et alii*, p. 219-221).

Both important and stimulating is the epistemological innovation proposed by J.-S. Baldi in the analysis of the ceramic material, based on the study of the prehistoric Coba type bowls in the north of Mesopotamia (p. 227-230). According to J.S. Baldi, “Any narrative putting in opposition human and material agency is essentially fake. The acknowledgement of an active role (also) to things allows to observe ceramic change in terms of evolution of a relationship between producers and vessels” (p. 229).

To sum up, the volume edited by O.V. Lozovskaia, A.N. Mazurkevici and E.V. Dolbunova grants the reader’s access to the results of some new research on prehistoric pottery from various regions of Eurasia, provides those interested with a series of methods that can be used in other contexts as well, and, last but not least, it facilitates the discovery of some reference works in studying prehistoric ceramics to those who, due to the linguistic barrier, know less about the archaeological tradition of the Other. At the end of this brief presentation, I can but congratulate the organizers, participants and editors for all their effort.