

## INFORMATION

### INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM “RECENT APPROACHES TO ANCIENT CERAMICS IN ARCHAEOLOGY” October 29–31, 2013

On October 29–31, the International Symposium, “Recent Approaches to Ancient Ceramics in Archaeology” took place at the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The event was organized and conducted with the financial support of the Institute of Archaeology of RAS and the Russian Foundation for the Humanities (Project No. 13-01-14006r).

Throughout the history of archaeological science, ancient pottery has been the focus of attention for archaeologists in many countries, since clay ware, known from as early as the Upper Paleolithic, became a mass product in the Neolithic. Clay ware was used in all spheres of human activity from cooking and storage to rituals reflecting changes in lifestyle through new types of ornamentation, form, and technology.

The study of ancient pottery aims to answer two major questions, namely, what specific information clay fragments contain, and what methods can help make that information available to research, which historically has focused on three main areas: the relative (and for some decades now the absolute) chronology of historical events, the historical and cultural connections between different population groups, and the ethnic and cultural processes that occurred in antiquity and the Middle Ages and evolved into the present-day ethnic pattern. The three main approaches to the study of the above topic are: emotional and descriptive, formal and classification, and historical and cultural. Each offers a wide range of methods and techniques for studying pottery technologies, shapes of vessels, and ornamentation. A crucial role is played by various science-based and experimental methods of analysis

as well as ethnographic data on the pottery of various peoples.

The participants of the Symposium mostly focused their attention on discussing traditional and new methods for investigating ancient pottery and clarifying its role in the study of the history and culture of human society. The program of the Symposium was developed in accordance with these fundamental problems and included two sections: approaches and methods for studying ancient ceramics (Section 1, 22 papers), and the application of these methods to specific historical and cultural problems (Section 2, 17 papers).

The symposium was attended by Russian scholars from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Samara, Irkutsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, Petrozavodsk, Orenburg, Azov, Ufa, Barnaul, Omsk, Tyumen, as well as scholars from the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the Republic of South Africa. Unfortunately, due to objective reasons, a number of scholars who submitted their applications and abstracts, could not personally participate in the Symposium, including O. Stilborg (Sweden) with the paper, “Research of Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic Pottery of the Baltic Region”; M.G. Kosmenko (Petrozavodsk), “Theoretical Basis and Practical Methodology for the Study of Bronze and Iron Age Hand-Made Pottery of Karelia”; E.V. Dolbunova, M.A. Kulkova, and A.N. Mazurkevich (St. Petersburg), “Ceramic Traditions and the Role of Pottery in the Culture of the Early Neolithic in Eastern Europe”; O.D. Mochalov (Samara), “Local Components in the Ceramic Traditions of the Population of the Bronze



At the opening of the International Symposium. Left to right: P.G. Gaidukov, Vice-Director of the Institute of Archaeology of RAS; V.I. Molodin, Vice-Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of SB RAS; N.A. Makarov, Director of the Institute of Archaeology of RAS.

Age from the Northern Volga-Ural Interfluvial Area”; V.G. Loman (Kazakhstan), “On the Composition of the Population of the Sargary-Alekseyevsky Culture (According to the Technical and Technological Analysis of Pottery)”; N.V. Voitseschuk (Ukraine), “Technology of Manufacturing Ceramic Vessels in the 8th–12th Centuries in the Western Bug Region”; A.L. and E.V. Scherban (Ukraine), “On the Functions of Ukrainian Clay Vessels”; and A.I. Mikheyeva (Yoshkar-Ola), “Pottery Art of the Population of the Mari Volga Region in the 13th–15th Centuries.”

The Symposium was opened by P.G. Gaidukov, Chairman of the Organizing Committee. The Director of the Institute of Archaeology of RAS N.A. Makarov and the Deputy Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of SB RAS V.I. Molodin greeted the participants of the Symposium and wished them success in their work. Working sessions began with a brief report by V.I. Molodin, “Unknown Siberia – Most Recent Archeological Discoveries,” in which he presented the most recent achievements of Siberian archeologists.

**Section 1. Methods of Studying Ancient Ceramics.** In his paper, “Methodical Approach to the Complex Study of Ancient Ceramics,” G.N. Poplevko (St. Petersburg) argued that modern ceramics research

should be based on the use of typological, morphological, trace, technological, petrographic, geochemical, experimental, and statistical analyses. G.N. Poplevko presented results of his studies of the Maikop and Rakushechny Yar ceramic assemblages. I.N. Vasilieva (Samara) presented the paper, “Types of Paste of the Earliest Neolithic Pottery and Their Distribution Areas: The Volga Region and Adjacent Areas” and described three areas of Early Neolithic pottery traditions in the Volga region: the Lower Volga culture, where silty materials were used; the Elshaka culture, where pottery was made of silty clay tempered with grog; and the Kama culture whose carriers used crushed clay with a large admixture of grog and organic solution. The paper by I.V. Kalinina (St. Petersburg), “Anthropology of Movement and Technological Tradition” attempted to justify the opinion that technological traditions represent a level above ethnic divisions in comparison with archeological cultures. This is manifested in the existence of different traditions within the same culture and similar technological traditions in different cultures (sometimes at a great distance from each other). The paper by V.I. Molodin (Novosibirsk), “Pottery as an Ethnocultural Indicator in Western Siberian Communities of the Late Middle Ages–Early Modern

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