
The first volume of *Materials of the Berezan (Lower Bug) Expedition* has come out in the series “Archaeological Expeditions of the State Hermitage Museum”. It consists of two separate parts: one – *in memoriam* and the other academic. Despite belonging to very different genres they complement each other like two parts of the same organic whole. The book is dedicated to the memory of two scholars who departed this life in one and the same year and who had been researching into one of the most important classical sites in the Black Sea region – the island of Berezan: Ya. V. Domanskii, chief of the Berezan Expedition of the State Hermitage Museum and V. V. Nazarov, chief of the Berezan Expedition of the Archaeological Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of the Ukraine. The whole volume represents the fruit of the multi-faceted activities on and off the field of these two scholars and the expeditions they headed over the fifteen years spent investigating the site in question. These men often found themselves literally in one and the same boat in the middle of the liman, their tents were torn apart by gale-force winds and they shared their food and water on the island, which was only inhabited during the expedition season. They deserve to be gratefully remembered for long and they deserve this volume as well, which has been compiled by a new generation of scholars researching Berezan. Their departure from the scene marked the turning of a further page in the history of research into this site, from which followed a new stage in the investigation of the Island.

Those who had known Ya. V. Domanskii well and over many years cannot fail to note the warmth and tact of a true historian of science with which the account of his life has been written by V. Yu. Zuev (pages 7-24); not only was a list of his published works (c. 25-30) added to this account, but also some examples of the poetry he wrote (pages 31-32). The account was also enhanced by numerous and well-chosen photographs lending the text extra significance and interest: they show us Yaroslav Domanskii surrounded by many of his well-known archaeologist colleagues, whose academic lives have already become part of our history. The biographical essay contains important information on the main stages in the scientific writings of Ya. V. Domanskii and on the areas to which he directed his attention. Light is also shed on another aspect of Domanskii’s professional work, which is often not known about except by those who are themselves involved in museum work – namely the role he played as a member of the museum staff, as an expert specialist of the first order, when it came to preserving, exhibiting and publishing the collections from the Hermitage Museum.

This collection of articles also contains two major archaeological reports: Domanskii’s own last field report, written together with his constant co-researcher and fellow Berezanite, K. K. Marchenko, on work carried out in 2003 and also the first report by D. E. Chistov about work carried out in 2004, when he had taken up the torch from his predecessor. These are not just field reports, but serious academic publications, which contain not only descriptions of data but radically new conclusions stemming from their interpretation of questions crucial to the research of the site in question and to the early period in the Greek colonization of the North Pontic region as a whole.
The “Report on the work of the Berezan (Lower Bug) Classical Expedition of the State Hermitage Museum in 2003” (pages 33-54) is concerned with the final stage of the investigation into the area associated with the colonists’ manufacturing activity – the copper-smelting workshops. Apart from the thorough description of the stratigraphy and the actual built complexes, an extremely important conclusion has been drawn regarding the presence of a cellar that was lived in (pp. 35, 38) dating from the second construction period at the site. The presence at Berezan of mud-brick and stone structures sunk to varying degrees into the natural soil had already been recorded, but it had been generally believed that they had been standing buildings above ground. Future investigations will, undoubtedly, reveal further structures of the same kind and those will possibly help us to define terms with which to designate them. It would seem that they should be referred to not as cellars but as semi-cellars, since the rooms concerned were let into the ground to a depth of 1.0-1.2 metres.

The report entitled “Work on the island of Berezan carried out by the Archaeological Expedition of the State Hermitage Museum in 2004” (pp. 57-112) publishes further materials about the research undertaken in this part of the island. It is worth noting the extremely thorough stratigraphic description of the excavated area complete with a detailed list of all the pottery finds from the habitation levels and from individual structures. The author of this report, in the wake of the results obtained during his first field season at this complex site, was already able to draw some conclusions of fundamental importance. First and foremost he was able to specify the beginning of the transition from the building of dug-outs let into the ground (used both as dwellings and for production or economic purposes) to the construction of mud-brick and stone buildings above ground. Chistov dates this phenomenon to the beginning of the third quarter of the 6th century BC (p. 70) and it is worth remembering that not long ago the date spoken of in this connection was the end of the third quarter of the 6th century BC. This may, perhaps, not appear as a particularly significant chronological specification, but nevertheless, it was an important result, because the Greek painted pottery and transport amphorae (the dating of which is constantly being narrowed down and amended) enable us today to indulge in fairly reliable re-dating. The second important observation made is linked with the lay-out of the earliest building remains found at the site. D. E. Chistov, starting out from his own observations, suggests that there seems to be a certain logic in the arrangement of the pits used in the household and the semi-dugouts in relation to each other (p. 70). This conclusion, despite its as yet preliminary character, is also very important, given that any regulated lay-out in the construction of semi-dugouts had previously only been observed in Olbia and Chertovatoe-7 – one of the biggest Late Archaic settlements within the chora of Olbia.

Apart from the conclusions drawn by the authors of these reports, a major part of their significance lies in the fact that they are publishing mass-scale material yielded up by fieldwork from the habitation levels and closed assemblages – first and foremost of diagnostic parts of pottery transport amphorae, painted pottery, plain table-ware and hand-made vessels. In view of the fact that these materials constitute the earliest closed assemblages in the

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1 Solovyov 1999, 30.
2 Kryzhyskiy & Rusyaeva 1978, 3 f.
3 Buis’kykh 1990, 24 f.