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# THE OLD POTTER'S ALMANACK

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## EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

This September issue of *The Old Potter's Almanack* presents two papers, in which several uncommon analytical techniques have been used to investigate pottery.

The first, by Marianna Kulkova and Alexander Kulkov, is a detailed study of Neolithic ceramics from Russia and Belarus, by petrographic analysis and 3D computed microtomography (micro-CT). Micro-CT and 3D visualisation of the voids in pottery samples allowed the identification of plant species, shells and feathers present in the clay, which would not have been possible by optical microscopy in thin section.

The second paper, by Nasim Qanbari-Taheri and Parviz Holakoei, focuses on a very highly-fired 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC black-painted vessel, found at Tepe Sialk in central Iran. Multiple techniques, such as X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, micro-Raman spectrometry, scanning electron microscopy and measurements of the porosity and specific gravity of the clay were used to identify the chemical composition of the black paint and the firing temperature of the body.

On 31 August-3 September 2016, I attended the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, in Vilnius, Lithuania. There were many interesting sessions on ceramics from different perspectives, including diet, mobility and technology. I co-organised a session with Robert Hofmann (Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany) and Jasna Vuković (University of Belgrade) on “Blurred borders? Making pottery and cultural interaction in Neolithic and Eneolithic Europe” ([http://eaavilnius2016.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Programme\\_Layout\\_08-29.pdf](http://eaavilnius2016.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Programme_Layout_08-29.pdf))

There were presentations on ceramics found in Russia, Belarus, Latvia, Hungary, Serbia, Macedonia, Greece, and France. The discussion touched on the definition of mixed assemblages, their examination and interpretation. A wide range of methods (macro-examination, typo-stylistical analyses, chaîne opératoire, archaeometric analyses) was used to study the pottery.

I also took the opportunity to collect a few pieces from local potters, who were happy to talk about the firing and glazing techniques used for their creative Baltic ceramics.

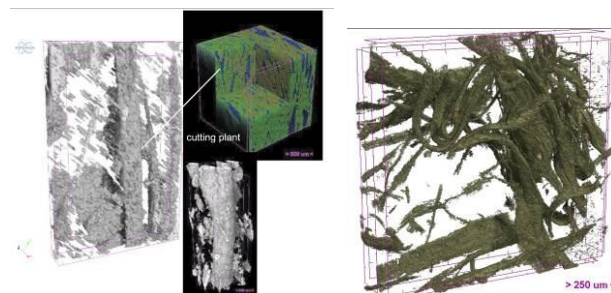
I hope you will enjoy this issue.

*Michela Spataro*

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