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## ETHNOCULTURAL RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH METHOD (THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF THE CERAMIC MATERIALS OBTAINED FROM THE SLAVIC-KHAZARIAN CONTACT ZONE)

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One of such contact zones at the end of the 1st millennium AC was the territory of the south of Eastern Europe. Two large ethnopolitical masses existed during that period: the Khazar Khaganate and East Slavic tribes. Having been used for recent twenty years, their ethnocultural relationships research method on the basis of archaeological material determines several stages.

First, to create detailed maps, which depict the outspread of the sites of synchronous archaeological cultures in a contact zone. The Severyans Slavs of the Dnipro left bank area are represented by the Volyntzevo and Romny cultures, and the Slavs of the Don – by the Borshevo culture. Second, to discover the territories (microregions) of the closest territorial contact and the sites with multicultural deposition. Third, to uncover the most exemplary ethnical criteria in the archaeological material. The traditional criteria are the following ones: 1) ceramics as the most widespread material (technology, form, ornament); 2) housebuilding traditions; 3) building interior (foremost type and location of a heating facility); 4) burial ritual (the most conservative sphere of the spiritual life). A distinctive feature of our investigation was highlighting of two new criteria: 5) traditions of fortifications; 6) agricultural implements. Fourth, to determine etalon types of artefacts and archaeological complexes for each population group in every ethnic criterion. Fifth, in the result of archaeological excavations to detect the artefacts and complexes, which possess syncretic features and reveal a fusion of diverse elements into the organic whole.

The obtained ceramic materials give insight into the great influence of the ceramic traditions of the Khazar Khaganate on the production of the ceramic vessels by the nearby population.

*Key words:* the East Slavs, the Severyans, the Khazar Khaganate, ceramic production, technology, ornament, cultural interinfluence.

*Statement of the problem.* The modern world goes through a tough ethnopolitical period. One of its characteristic features is two completely opposite tendencies: unification of countries and nations to create better future, and, along with that, redrafting of the world map through creation of new countries, autonomies and “rectification of historical frontiers”.

This problem is not new for humanity. For this reason, by trying to use all known human experience, modern scientists investigate as wide a range of these contacts demonstration as possible. The most productive territories for the research of diverse interrelations are zones of interstate and interethnic contacts.

One of such contact zones at the end of the 1st millennium AD was the territory of the south of Eastern Europe. Two large ethnopolitical groups (fig. 1) existed during that period. The southern east was occupied by the multienthic early feudal Khazar Khaganate. Northwestern space belonged to East Slavic tribes that experienced the closing stage of the state creation. Written data illustrate these mutual relationships insufficiently and one-sidedly; there are only three short notifications in Old Russian Chronicle<sup>1</sup>. They caused the creation of the confrontation theory about persistent aggressive reaction of the East European nomads to the peaceful life of our ancestors<sup>2</sup>. The same situation occurs with the modern historical science<sup>3</sup>. Thus, archaeological sources in particular become central for the research of interethnic contacts and ethnocultural interrelations.

<sup>1</sup> *Повесть временных лет*, редактор Варвара Адрианова-Претц. (Москва, Ленинград: Изд-во АН СССР, 1950, 1), 16–18.

<sup>2</sup> Николай Карамзин, “История государства российского в 12-ти томах”, редактор Андрей Сахаров (Москва: Наука, 1989, 1), 171; Василий Ключевский, “Краткий курс русской истории”, (Москва: Госполитиздат, 1956, 1), 57; Николай Костомаров, “Черты народной южнорусской истории. Исторические произведения. Автобиография”, составитель Владимир Замлинский. (Киев: Лыбидь, 1990), 19, 52; Сергей Соловьёв, “История России с древнейших времён”, редакторы Иван Ковальченко, Сергей Дмитриев. Москва: Мысль, 1988, I (1–2), 116–117; Арсений Нассонов, “Русская земля” и образование территории древнерусского государства: Историко-географическое исследование. (Москва: Изд-во АН СССР, 1951), 28–46; Борис Рыбаков, “К вопросу о роли Хазарского каганата в истории Руси”, *Советская археология*, XVIII, (1953): 128–150.

<sup>3</sup> Наприклад: Петро Толочко, *Київська Русь*. (Київ: Абрис, 1996), 35–39; Петро Толочко, *Кочевые народы степей и Киевская Русь*. (Киев: Абрис, 1999), 34–42; Олексій Толочко, Петро Толочко, *Київська Русь*. (Київ: Видавничий дім “Альтернативи”, 1998), 36–39; Эльдар Усманов, “История Хазарии в школьных учебниках Российской Федерации”. *Салтово-маяцька археологічна культура: проблеми та дослідження*, упорядник Геннадій Свистун. (Харків: Харківський науково-методичний центр охорони культурної спадщини, 2013, 3), 122–128.

*Method.* We further offer you to have a look at our research method that helps to investigate ethnocultural relationships between the Slavs and multiethnic forest-steppe Khazarian population. The efficiency of this method has been proven during field and theoretical investigations in the last 20 years. It determines several stages and can be applied to the archaeological material from different activity areas of the Early Medieval population.

**First step:** where to find the marks of the interrelations and interinfluences mentioned above?

It is necessary to create detailed maps depicting the outspread of the sites of synchronous (the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium) archaeological cultures for the purpose of uncovering the zones of the closest contacts. The most promising sites to the research are those ones of the mentioned zone (mainly settlements), which provide multiethnic, but synchronous in the selected range, cultural deposition and complexes. In this case, two such contact zones (fig. 1) can be distinguished: the middle reaches of the Siverskyi Donets (1) and the middle reaches of the Don (2).

**Second step:** which lines of the research (ceramics and beyond)?

It is necessary to determine the most exemplary ethnical criteria in the archaeological material. The traditional criteria are the following ones: 1) ceramics as the most widespread material (technology, form, ornament); 2) housebuilding traditions; 3) building interior (foremost type and location of a heating facility); 4) burial ritual (as the most conservative sphere of the spiritual life). A distinctive feature of our investigation was highlighting of two new criteria: 5) traditions of fortifications; 6) agricultural implements<sup>4</sup>.

**Third step:** what to find?

It is necessary not to take into account imported things, which reflect trade contacts. In the present case, it is a great number of amphoras of Byzantine types, ceremonial (dinner) vessels, clothes items and accessories, which were implemented into the environment of the East Slavs from the Khazaria state or by transit through its territory. Further in our opinion, it is necessary to assume that the phenomenon of syncretism (from Greek, *synkritisμός*) means fusion of diverse elements into the organic whole) is a characteristic feature in material and spiritual culture of the contact zones. In reference to the archaeological material, syncretism is understood as a blend of separate elements with distinctive technological, typological, morphological and artistic (ornamental) traditions for different ethnoses.

**Forth step:** what to compare with?

In investigation of syncretic ethnocultural phenomena, it is important to determine etalons in material and spiritual cultures of those ethnoses whose cultural relationships are the subject of the present research. In this case, it is, on the one hand, the East Slavs, and on the other hand, the multiethnic peoples of the Khazar Khaganate (in particular, the Alans that occupied forest-steppe spaces of the Khaganate, and the Bulgarians, which constituted an ethnic majority in the Black Sea region steppe).

**Fifth step:** in the result of archaeological excavations to detect the artefacts and complexes, which possess syncretic features and reveal a fusion of diverse elements into the organic whole.

Ethnocultural situation that happened on the South of the East Europe *at the end of the first millennium seems as follows*. The Slavs of the Dnipro left bank region are represented by a recorded tribe – the Severyans (fig. 2). In an archaeological sense, they are expressed by two successive archaeological cultures: the Volyntzevo (mid. VII – mid. VIII) and the Romny (mid. VIII – boundary of X-XI cen.). The Slaves of the Middle Don are reflected by the Borshevo archaeological culture (VIII – beg. XI cen.). The remains of material and spiritual cultures of a multiethnic population of the Khazar Khaganate are incorporated into the Saltov archaeological culture (mid. VIII – mid. X cen.).

*Presentation of the main material. Ceramic material analysis.* Syncretism is manifested in various spheres of human life and activity to different extents. However, it becomes mostly noticeable in pottery production. Namely, ceramics (its remains) is one of the most widespread types of the material sources (up to 90% of the artefacts at the Early Medieval settlements). Moreover, ceramic pottery has always been a complicated household cultural phenomenon that displayed a level of technological development and manufacturing skills, world view, and aesthetic predilections.

For this reason, ceramics is often one of the bases for detecting ancient ethnic and chronologic groups. Ceramics is particularly demonstrative at sites of the contact zones, where its syncretism manifests itself to a greater degree than it is on nominal “central” (parental) ethnic territories. Within the pottery production, it is embodied in a manufacturing technology of vessels, their forms, typology, and ornamentation. From

<sup>4</sup> For example: Володимир Колода, “Слов’яни та Хозарський каганат: аспекти взаємодії” *Археологічні дослідження Львівського університету*, 25 (2021): 78–109.

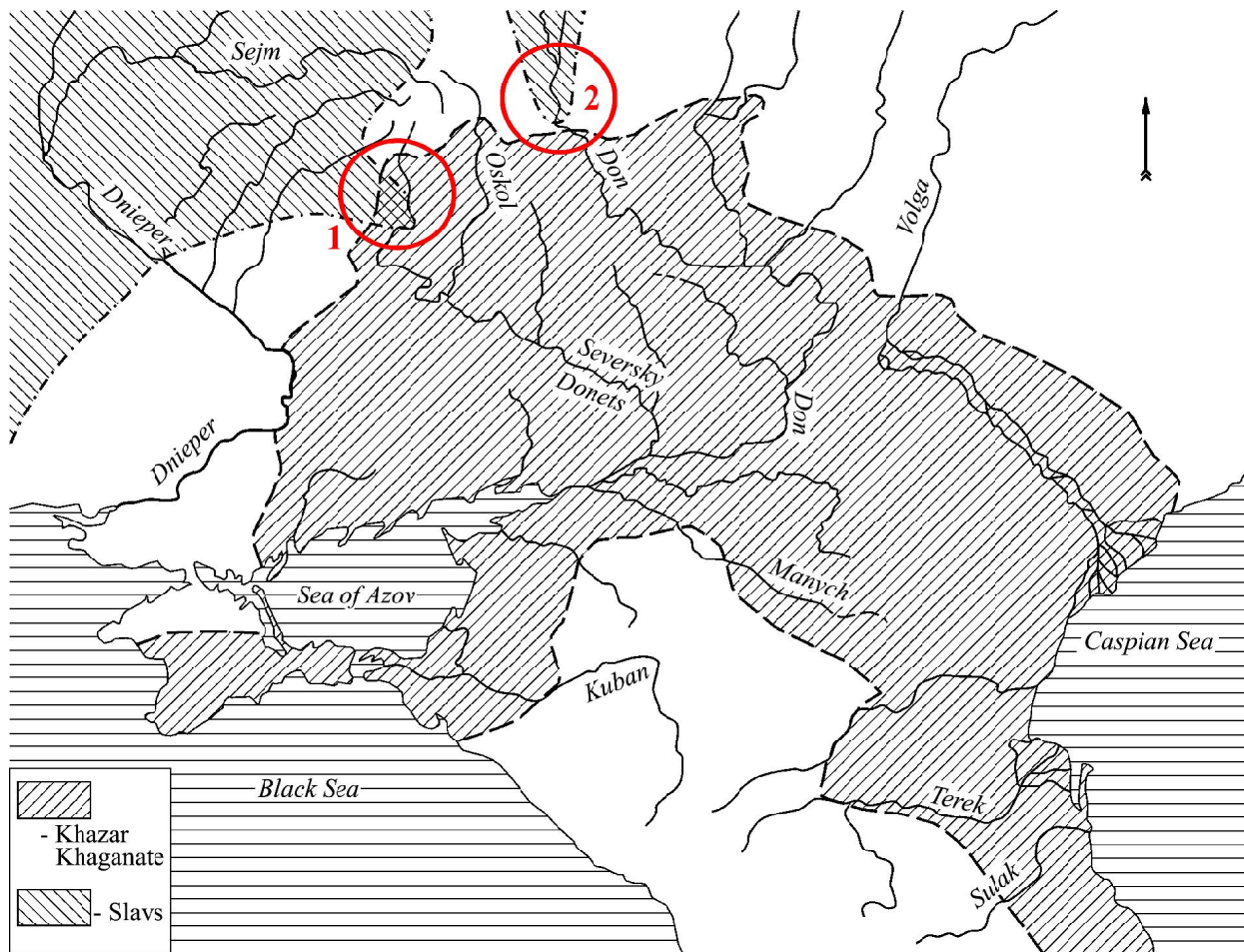


Fig. 1. Contact zones of the East Slavs and the Khazar Khaganate.

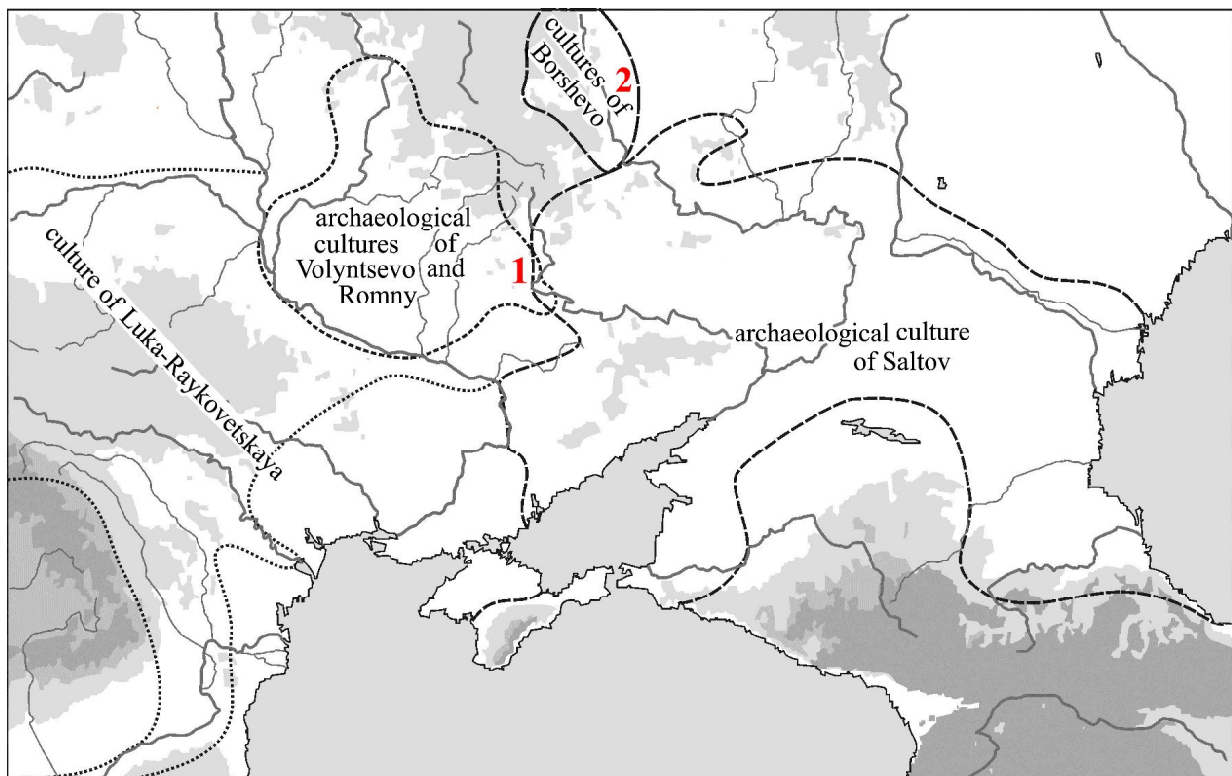


Fig. 2. Archaeological cultures and interethnic contact zones (1,2) on the South of the Eastern Europe at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

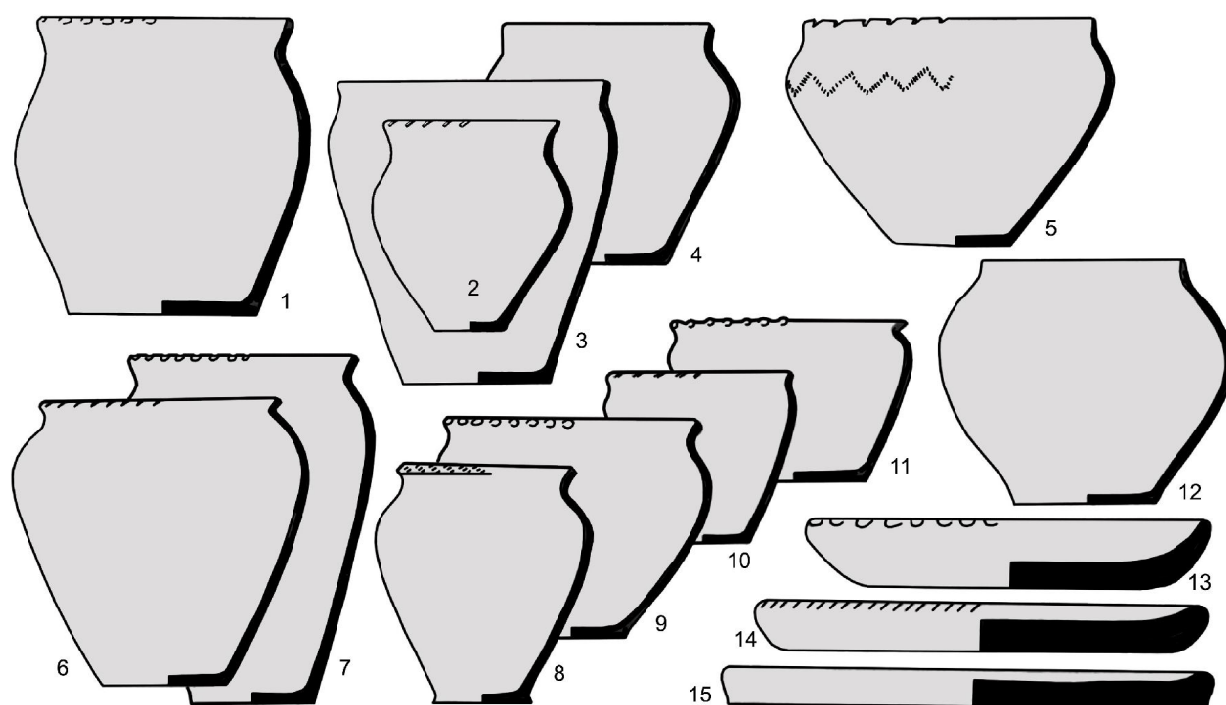


Fig. 3. Moulded ceramics of the Volyntzevo culture (the early Severyans).

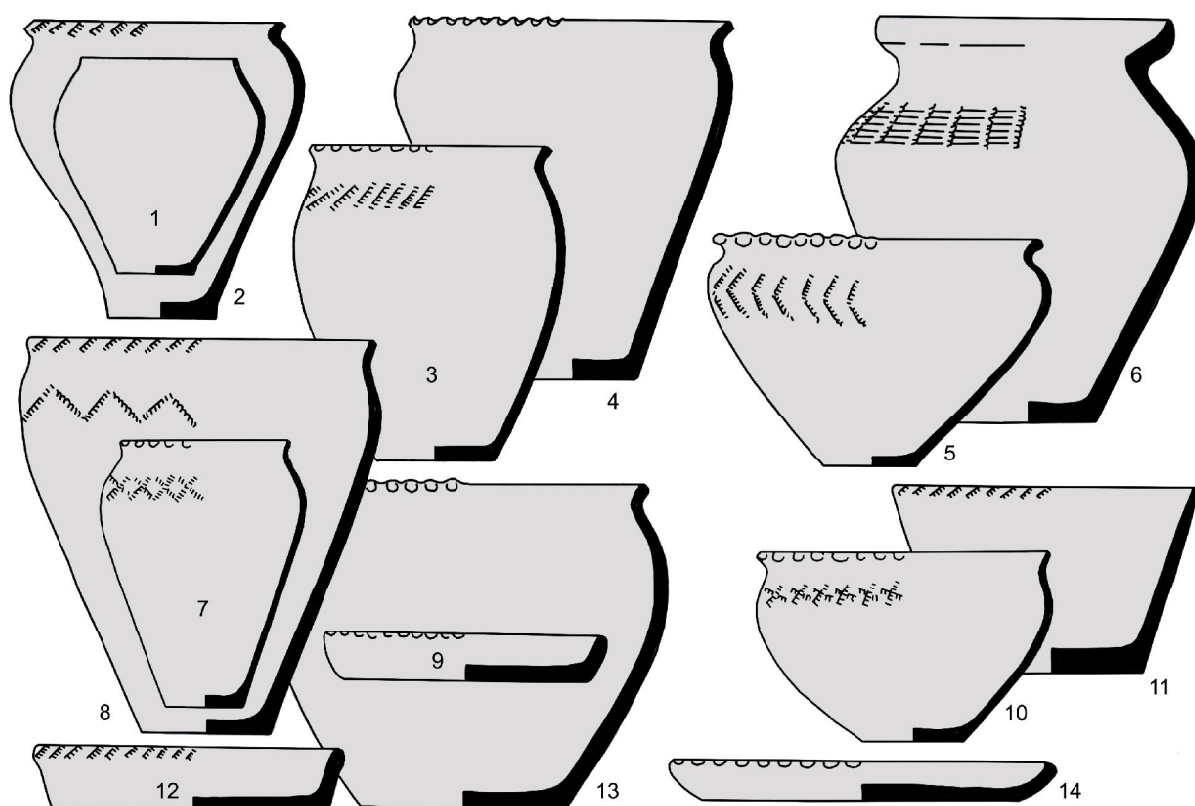


Fig. 4. Moulded ceramics of the Romny culture (the late Severyans).



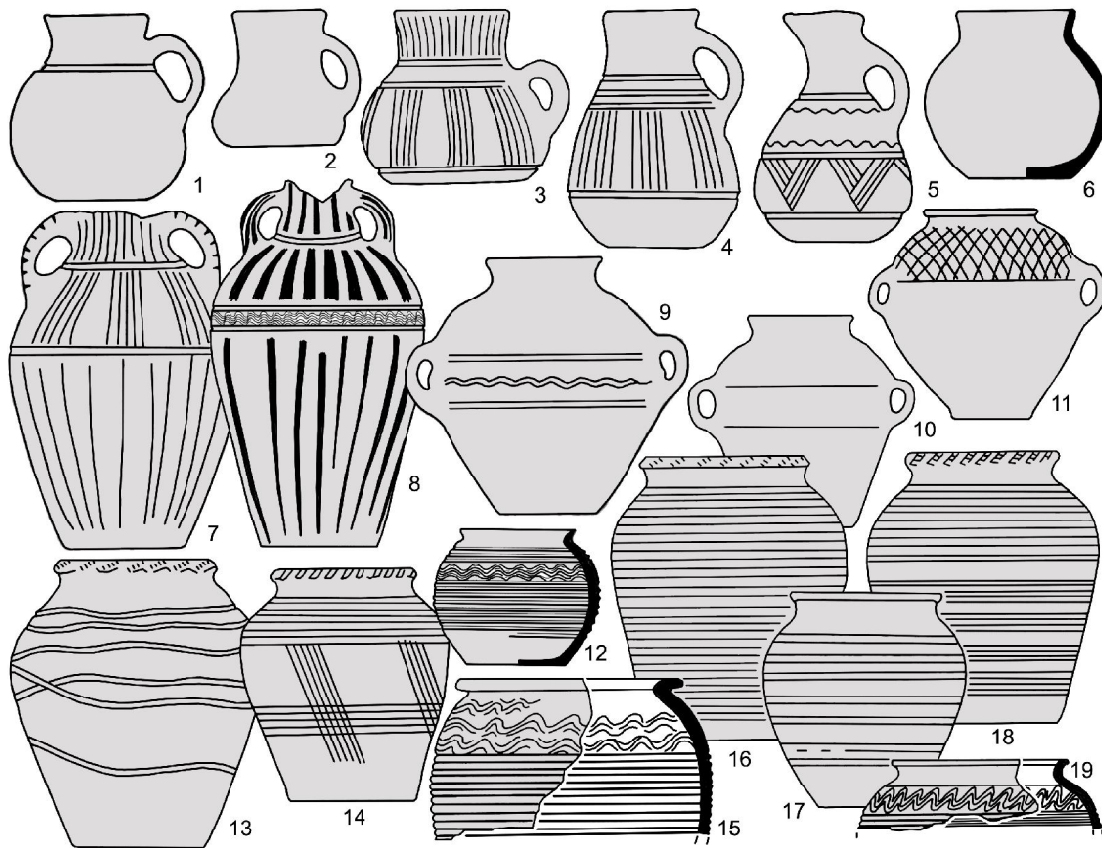


Fig. 5. Burnt ceramics of the Khazar Khaganate.

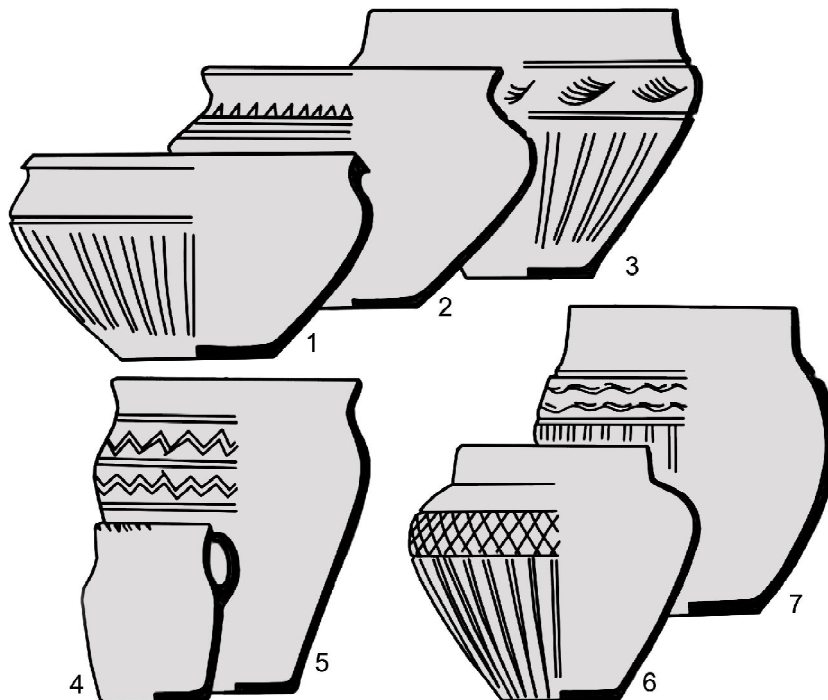


Fig. 6. Syncretic ceramics on the Volyntzevo culture sites.

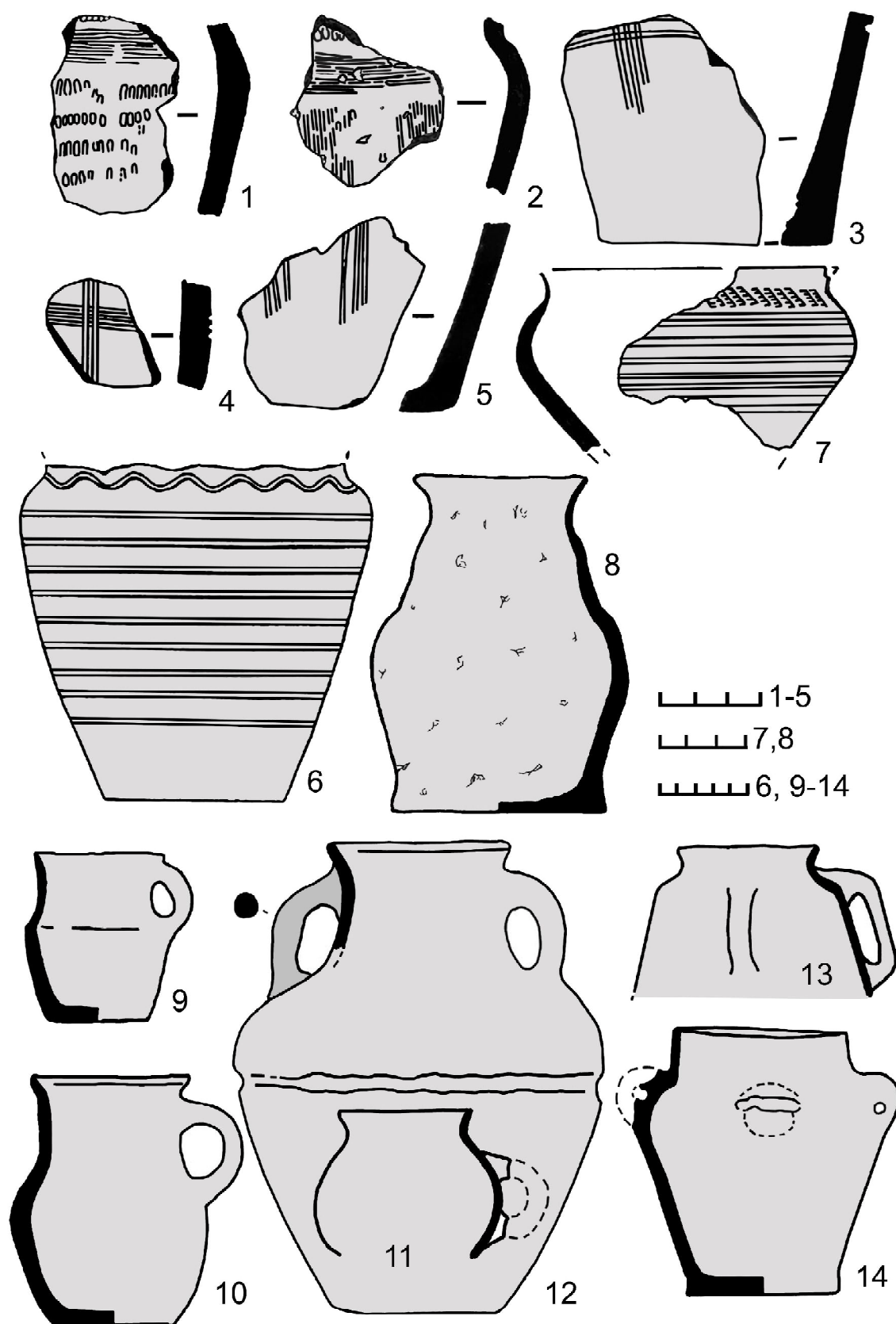


Fig. 7. Syncretic ceramics on the Romny culture sites.

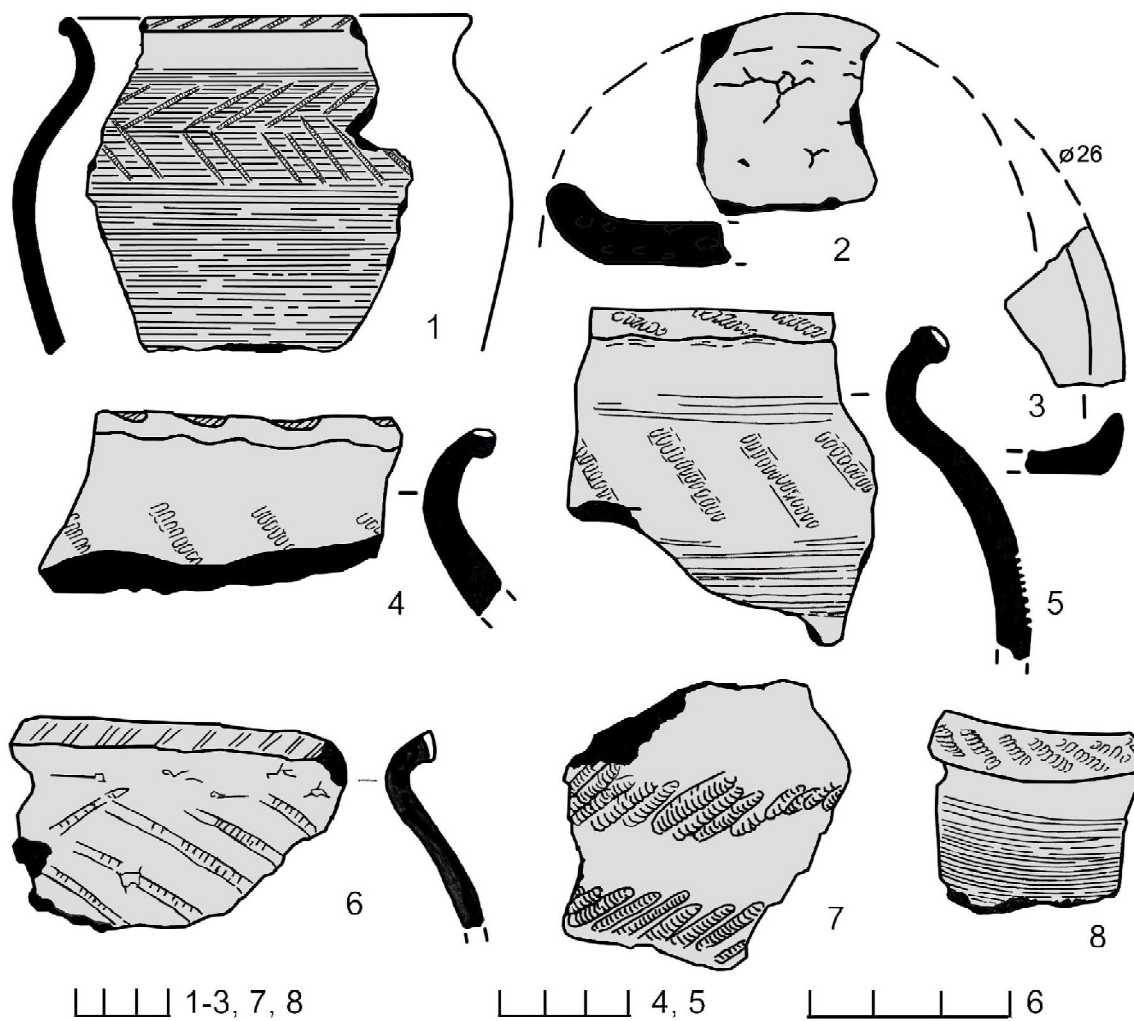


Fig. 8. Syncretic ceramics on the Saltov culture sites.

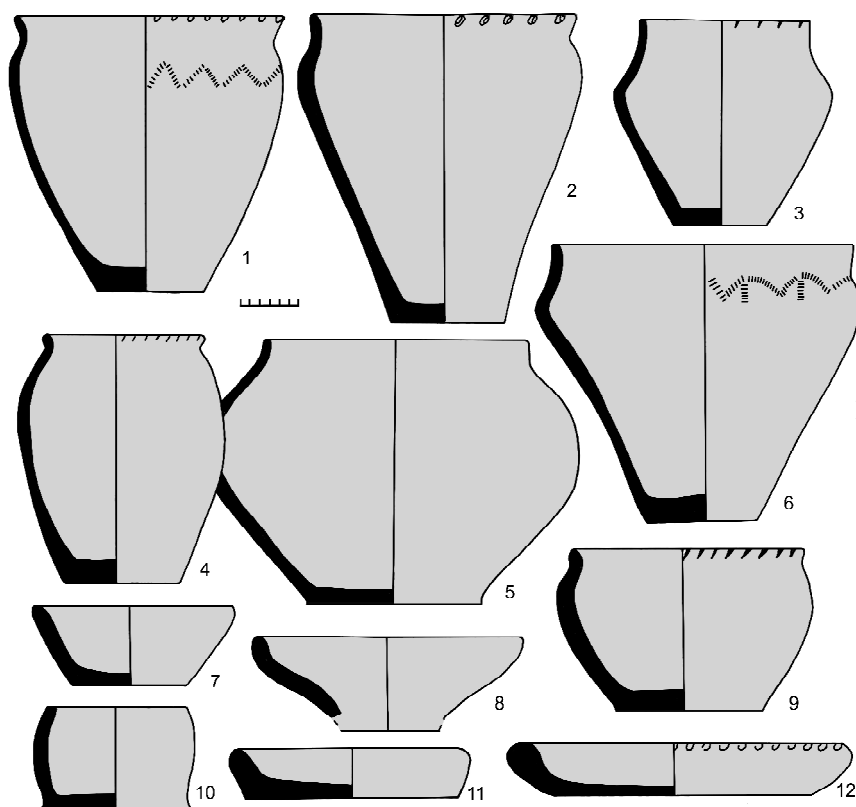


Fig. 9. Moulded ceramics of the Borshevo culture (the Slavs on the

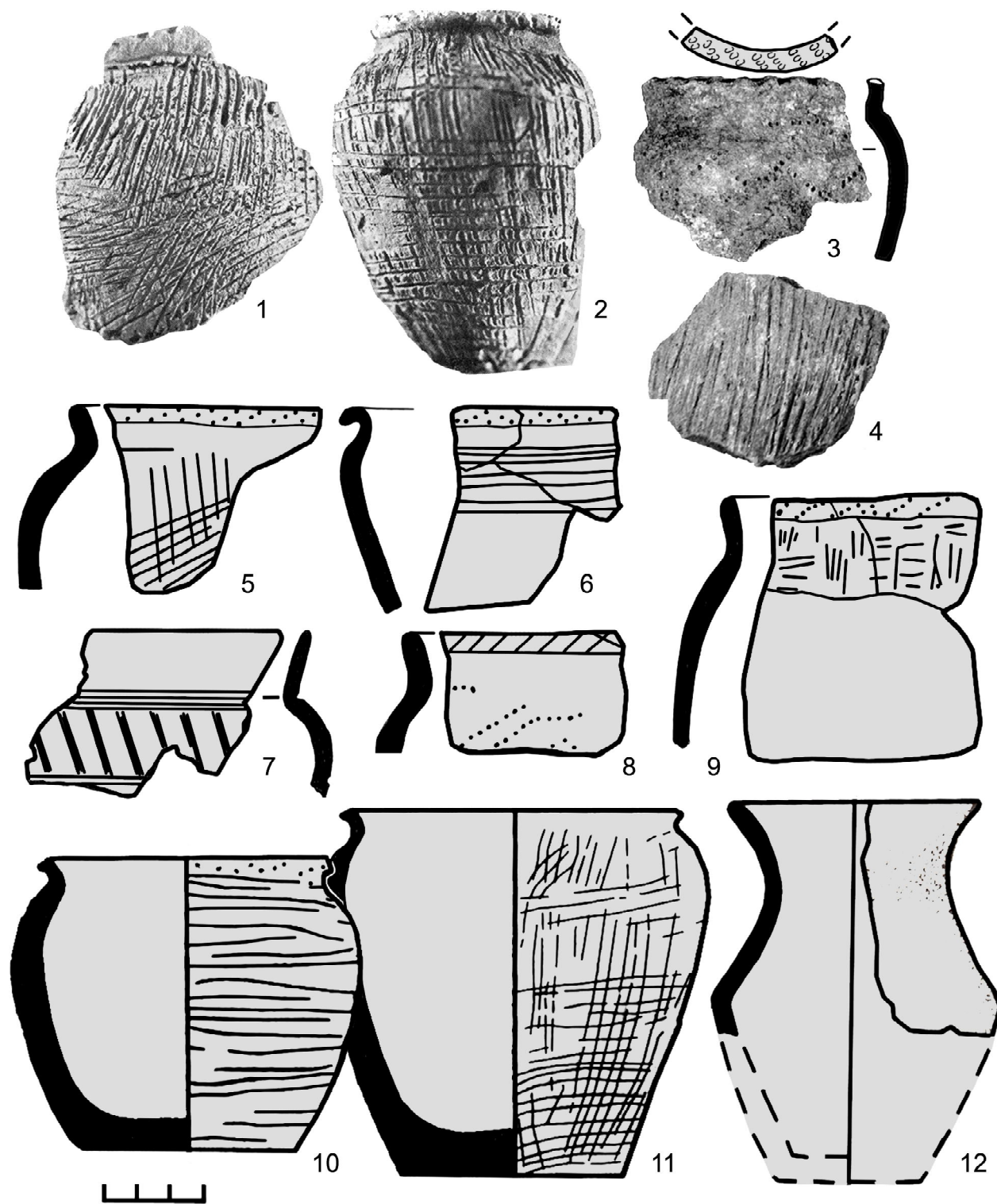


Fig. 10. Syncretic ceramics on I Belogorsky hillfort (Don River).



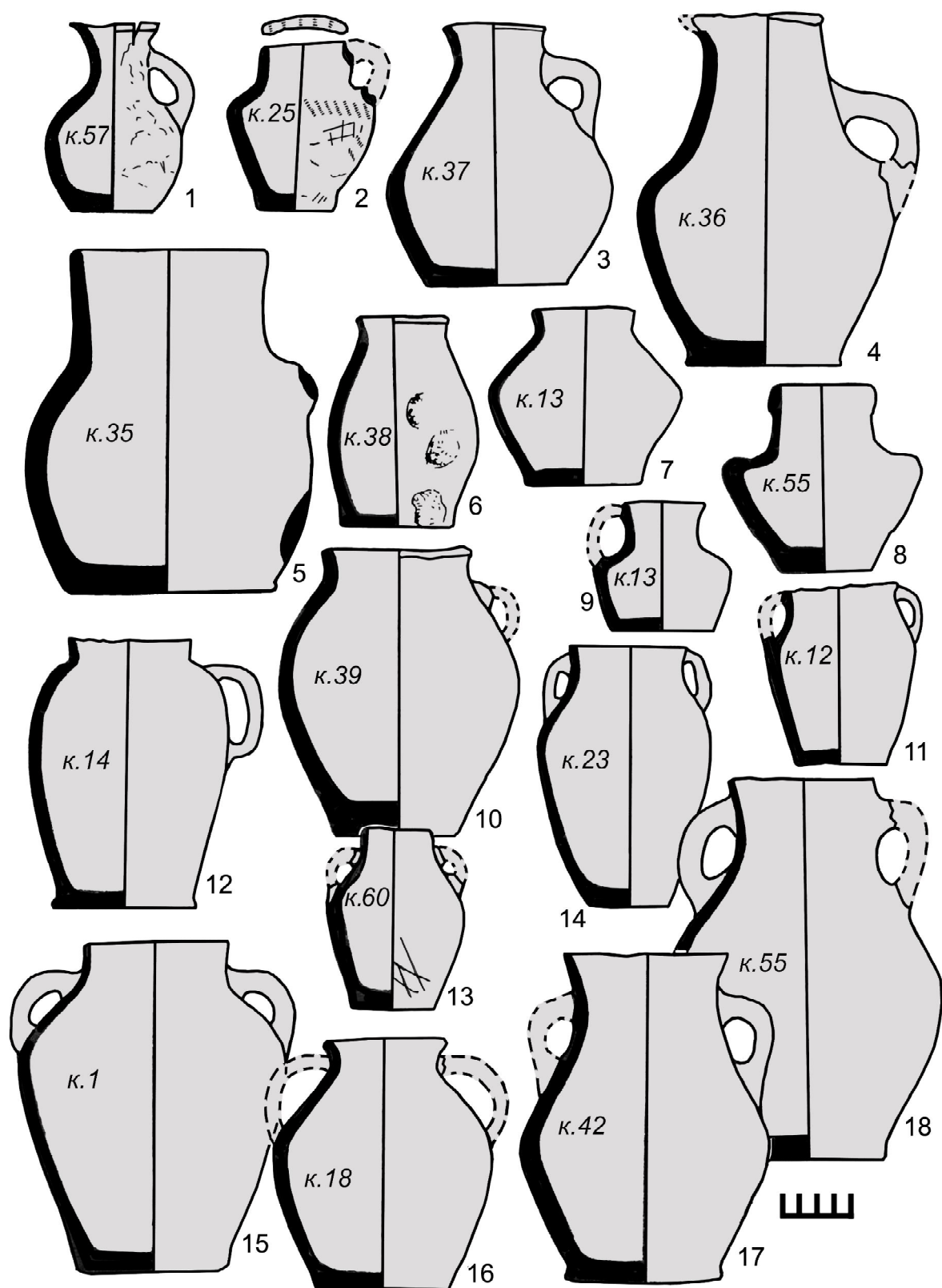


Fig. 11. Syncretic ceramics on II Belogorsky burial site (Don River).



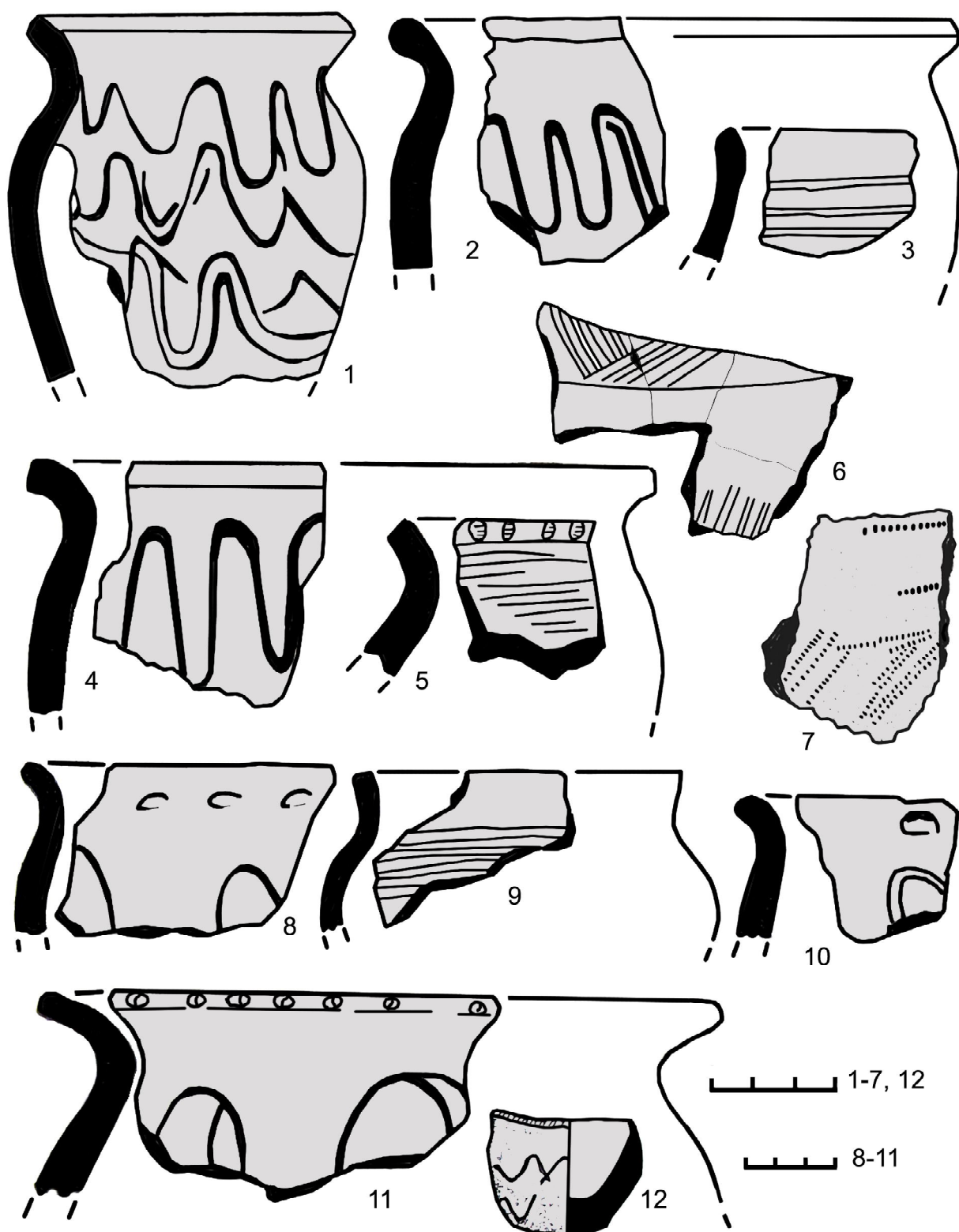


Fig. 12. Syncretic ceramics on Zhivotinnoye hillfort (Don River).

this perspective, demonstration of syncretism in ceramic complex of separate communities and at particular sites takes place at least on two levels. They can be notionally called as a macro level and a micro level. Each of them has its own object of research (Колода, 2008, с. 106; 2009, с. 61–62).

Macro level analysis aims at the enquiry into the ceramic complex in general (settlement, burial site, dwelling, etc.). On this level, syncretism meaning can have two implementations: “external” and “internal” syncretism. External syncretism is manifested in simultaneous use of home and foreign production goods. In some cases, the biggest challenge in import artefacts analysis is identification of a production site: whether this vessel was brought from outside of the sites under research, or it was created by an alien craftsman, who lived among the given community (site). Internal syncretism on a macro level is expressed by imitation of a houseware exterior form that is not typical to the present ethnic community. Copy models were presented by import vessels and sometimes an ornamental motif while retaining home technological traditions. Thus, it is possible to identify some local ceramic production innovations, which highlight understanding the advantages (practical or aesthetic) of a new vessel form and desire to use it.

Micro level analysis provides investigation of a separate artefact (a vessel or its fragment) that was created using technological, morphological or ornamental traditions which were typical for representatives of various ethnoses. In this respect, the vessels ornamented in two ethnic traditions are the most exemplary ones. It gives evidence of substantial syncretism in aesthetic predilections of a craftsman and a user of his products. Hence it follows that the most profound display of syncretism, that allows raising an issue on ethnocultural complementarity and fusion of cultural traditions, can be traced primarily on a micro level.

The following examples can be examined:

Traditional ceramics of the Severians at the first stage of development – the Volyntzevo culture (no scaling done): cooking pots with raised “shoulders” (fig. 3: 1–12) and frying pans (fig. 3: 13–15); all of them are moulded. Ornament: imprints of a stick (fig. 3: 2, 5, 6, 10, 14), a finger (fig. 3: 1, 7, 9, 11, 13) or a stamp of a stick in a form of a tangled rope (fig. 3: 5, 8). They ornamented mainly a neck. There are no ornaments on the majority of vessels<sup>5</sup>.

Traditional ceramics of the Severians at the second stage of development – the Romny culture (no scaling done). Criteria, crafting technologies and most of forms remained unchanged (fig. 4). Ornamental elements – too: imprints of a stick (fig. 4: 4), a finger (fig. 4: 9, 10, 13, 14) or a stamp of a stick in a form of a tangled rope (fig. 4: 2, 3, 5–8, 10–12). They ornamented a neck and a top part of a body. There are not ornaments on the majority of vessels<sup>6</sup>.

Traditional ceramics of the Saltov culture – burnt ones (no scaling done): tare pithoi (fig. 5: 13, 14, 16, 18); cooking pots (fig. 5: 12, 15, 17, 19); dinner ones: mugs (fig. 5: 1–3), earthenware pots (fig. 5: 4, 5), treasure pots (fig. 5: 6), double-handed jars (fig. 5: 7, 8); ceremonial pithoi (fig. 5: 9–11). Ornament: slotted horizontal straight or curly lines (fig. 5: 1, 3–5, 7–19). Groups of sideways lines appears on some of cooking and tare vessels (fig. 5: 14). Dinner and ceremonial vessels have polished ornament: vertical (fig. 5: 3, 4, 7) or sideways (fig. 5: 5) lines, grid (fig. 5: 11), sectional polishing (fig. 5: 8). There is vertical (fig. 5: 8) or horizontal (fig. 5: 7) polishing of hands.

Syncretic ceramics on Volyntzevo sites of the Dnipro left bank region (no scaling done)<sup>7</sup>. Burnt ceramics (fig. 6: 1–3, 6, 7): Slavic body, somewhere vertical necks from the Northern Caucasian Alans (fig. 6: 3, 6, 7), ornamented in the traditions of the Khazar Khaganate – horizontal drawing, and vertical and reticulate polishing. Moulded vessels – imitation of Saltov ceramic traditions: form – a mug (fig. 6: 4); ornament on a pot with a Slavic form (fig. 6: 5).

Syncretic ceramics on Romny sites of the Dnipro left bank region and in the middle reaches of the Siverskyi Donets – (fig. 7). Moulded ceramics imitated forms of burnt vessels of the Khaganate (fig. 7: 8–14)<sup>8</sup>. There is a burnt Severianian pot with borrowed ornaments (fig. 7: 6)<sup>9</sup>. There are fragments of moulded

<sup>5</sup> Олег Сухобоков, *Славяне Днепровского Левобережья*. (Киев: Наукова думка, 1975), 53; *Этнокультурная карта территории Украинской ССР в I тыс. н. е.* редактор Владимир Баран. (Киев: Наукова думка, 1985), 119–121.

<sup>6</sup> Олег Сухобоков, *Славяне Днепровского Левобережья*, 75–80; *Этнокультурная карта территории Украинской ССР в I тыс. н. е.*, 127–129, рис. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Этнокультурная карта территории Украинской ССР в I тыс. н. е.*, 127–129, рис. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Иван Ляпушкин, “Городище Новотроицкое”. *Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР*, 74. (1958): 44; Владимир Колода, “Взаимовлияние северянской и алано-болгарской керамических традиций конца I тысячелетия в Днепровском лесостепном Левобережье”, редактор Владимир Енуков *Славяно-русские древности Днепровского Левобережья*. (Курск: Курский государственный университет, 2008), 107, рис. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Владимир Колода, “Взаимовлияние северянской и алано-болгарской керамических традиций конца I тысячелетия в Днепровском лесостепном Левобережье”, 107, рис. 1–2; Владимир Колода, Татьяна Колода, “Керамика раннеславянского времени городища Водяное на Харьковщине”. *Stratum plus*, (2005–2009, 5): 259–260.

Slavic pots with Saltov ornaments (fig. 7: 3–5) and ornamentation in two cultural traditions – those of the Slavs and the ones of the Khazarian nations (fig. 7: 1, 2, 7)<sup>10</sup>.

Syncretic ceramics on Saltov sites of the middle reaches of the Siverskyi Donets – (fig. 8). There is a Slavic type of vessels and moulded frying pans on the territory of Khazaria (fig. 8: 2, 3). There is Slavic ornament made by a rope on burnt Saltov ceramics (fig. 8: 4, 5, 7)<sup>11</sup>. There is ornamentation of burnt pots in two cultural traditions (fig. 8: 1, 5, 8)<sup>12</sup>. There is a piece of a Slavic cooking pot from a Saltov dwelling (fig. 8: 6)<sup>13</sup>.

Traditional ceramics of the Slavs in the middle reaches of the Don (the Borshevo culture) – everything is moulded: pots (fig. 9: 1–6, 9, 10), bowls (fig. 9: 7, 8), frying pans (fig. 9: 11, 12)<sup>14</sup>. Categories of ceramics and the ornament are almost identical to the Volyntzevo-Romny one. The majority of the vessels are without any ornament. The question of the influence of *Alan-Bulgarian* traditions has been risen in the literature<sup>15</sup> a number of times, which makes it easy to resolve our issue.

Syncretic moulded ceramics on Borshevo sites of the middle reaches of the Don is famous on Bila Hora hillfort–I. Here we see Saltov ornament on pots with a Slavic form (fig. 10: 1–11); imitation of “a Khazarian jar” (fig. 10: 12). Syncretic moulded ceramics are found on Bila Hora burial–2 site: here we notice that the technology is Slavic (moulded), the form is made in a tradition of the Khazaria communities (fig. 11). Syncretic moulded ceramics are also found on Slavic Zhyvotynne hillfort on the Don as well: the technology is Slavic, the ornament is imitation of ornamental motives of the Khaganate population (fig. 12).

*Conclusions.* Summing up the data, it may be concluded that ceramic artifacts from the sites of the forest-steppe Siverskyi Donets zone and the Don provide the considerable qualitative and quantitative material about the diverse interinfluence of ethnocultural traditions between the Slavs and the population of the Khazar Khaganate in the ceramic production area. These interinfluences are traced in production technologies, ceramic forms and ornamentation. We see the diverse (in particular, multidirectional and multilevel) demonstration of syncretism in the ceramic complex. This demonstration points not only to mainly peaceful coexistence on the mentioned region. It points to the close relationships between the nearby population groups, as well as within the one family community. Besides, we do not exclude the blend of these two ethnoses on the level of family matrimonial relationships<sup>16</sup>.

On the whole, the reason for diverse, by quality and quantity, influences of the Saltov ceramic tradition on the Slavs' population in the border zone lies in its more proficient vessels and their production organization. It allowed to create more qualitative products, which could put an end to traditional views on ceramics among nearby Slavic tribes. The Saltov population brought new ceramic production technologies, new ornamentation opportunities, and new process organization to the Slavic world; all of this stimulated relevant innovations in the quite traditional world of the East Slavs. Sometimes, Slavic craftsmen tried to copy nonethnic ceramic patterns, but they mostly tried to reinterpret foreign traditions and to implement them into their own products.

<sup>10</sup> Владимир Колода, “Взаимовлияние северянской и алано-болгарской керамических традиций конца I тысячелетия в Днепровском лесостепном Левобережье”, 107–108, рис. 1; 2; 3: 2; Владимир Колода, Татьяна Колода, “Керамика раннеславянского времени городища Водяное на Харьковщине”, 263.

<sup>11</sup> Владимир Колода, “Взаимовлияние северянской и алано-болгарской керамических традиций конца I тысячелетия в Днепровском лесостепном Левобережье”, 108–109, рис. 3: 3, 4, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Владимир Колода, “Взаимовлияние северянской и алано-болгарской керамических традиций конца I тысячелетия в Днепровском лесостепном Левобережье”, 108–109, рис. 3: 1, 4, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Володимир Колода, “Слов'янське житло на Верхньому Салтові” редактор Василь Білоцерківський. *Збірник наукових праць: історичні науки. Науковий вісник ХДПУ*, 2. (1999): 17; Владимир Колода, “Взаимовлияние северянской и алано-болгарской керамических традиций конца I тысячелетия в Днепровском лесостепном Левобережье”, 108, рис. 3: 6.

<sup>14</sup> Анатолий Винников, *Славяне Лесостепного Дона в раннем средневековье (VIII – начало XI века)*. (Воронеж: Изд-во ВГУ, 1995), 72–84.

<sup>15</sup> Анатолий Винников, “Керамика донских славян конца I тысячелетия н.э.”, *Советская археология*, (1982, 3): 165–180; Анатолий Винников, “Контакты донских славян с алано-болгарским миром”, *Советская археология*, (1990, 3): 124–137; Владимир Колода, “Влияние традиций салтовского гончарного производства на керамический комплекс боршевской культуры Подонья”, редактор Александр Евглевский *Степи Евразии в эпоху средневековья. Хазарское время*, 7. (Донецк: Донецкий национальный университет 2009): 61–98.

<sup>16</sup> A rather different view on the degree and depth of the relationships between the Slavs and the forest-steppe Khaganate population on the Don is shown in the: Анатолий Винников А. 3. “Донские славяне и алано-болгарский мир: мирное сосуществование или противостояние”, редакторы Владимир Петрухин, Елена Носенко-Штейн. *Хазары: миф и история*. (Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 2010): 189–216.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, the question arises: where is a boundary between syncretism and creation of a new culture on its basis? In the context of ceramics, it is possible to talk about the creation of a new cultural tradition only in the case, when the whole of separate elements of syncretism starts to repeat itself in a standardized view (retailing). In other words, when they become a part of an ethnocultural background. This phenomenon cannot be observed on a Slavic-Khazarian frontier. In our point of view, the Slavs of the Middle Don drew closer to this process.

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## МЕТОДИКА ВИВЧЕННЯ ЕТНОКУЛЬТУРНИХ ВЗАЄМОВІДНОСИН (НА ПРИКЛАДІ КЕРАМІЧНОГО МАТЕРІАЛУ СЛОВ'ЯНО-ХОЗАРСЬКОЇ КОНТАКТНОЇ ЗОНИ)

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Однією з контактних зон наприкінці I тис. н.е. була територія півдня Східної Європи. В цей період тут існували два великих етнополітичних масиви: держава Хозарський каганат та східнослов'янські племена. Апробована за останні двадцять років методика вивчення їх етнокультурних взаємин на археологічному матеріалі передбачає кілька етапів.

По-перше, створення детальних мап розповсюдження пам'яток синхронних археологічних культур в контактній зоні. Хозарія представлена багатоетнічною салтівською археологічною культурою Слов'яни-сіверяни Дніпровського лівого бережжя репрезентовані волинцевською та роменською культурами, а слов'яни Дону – боршевською. По-друге: виявити території (мікрорегіони) найбільшого територіального зближення та пам'ятки із різнокультурними відкладеннями. По-третє, виявити етнічні критерії які є найбільш показовими в археологічному матеріалі. Традиційними в цьому сенсі є: 1 – кераміка як найбільш масовий матеріал (технологія, форма, орнамент); 2 – традиції домобудування; 3 – інтер'єр помешкання (головним чином: тип та місце розташування опалювального пристрою); 4 – обряд поховання (найбільш консервативна сфера духовного життя). Особливістю нашого пошуку біло виділення двох нових критеріїв: 5 – традиції фортечного будівництва; 6 – знаряддя сільськогосподарської праці. По-четверте, визначити еталонні типи речей і археологічних комплексів для кожної групи населення в кожному з етнічних критеріїв. По-п'яте, в наслідок археологічних розкопок виявити артефакти та комплекси які мають синкретичні риси і свідчать про змішення, злиття різнорідних елементів у нероздільне ціле.

Отримані керамічні матеріали свідчать про значний вплив керамічних традицій Хозарського каганату на виробництво глиняного посуду сусіднім слов'янським населенням.

*Ключові слова:* Східні слов'яни, сіверяни, Хозарський каганат, керамічне виробництво, технологія, орнамент, культурні взаємовпливи.

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