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Textile ceramics from the site of Galik 11 after materials from excavations of 2020 (south-eastern coast of the Gulf of Finland)

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Abstract

This paper considers finds from excavations at the settlement site of Galik 11 situated in the lower Luga River region, in Russia. The site of Galik 11 was discovered and excavated in 2020 on the area of 1550 square metres. Fragments of Textile ceramics were concentrated in the area measuring about 10 x 12 m. This area with a cultural layer, hearths and pits was interpreted as a dwelling zone. Totally more than 4000 fragments of Textile pottery were found, and at least 42 vessels were identified. In the same context were also objects related with bronze-casting manufacture, stone finds, and small fragments of calcined bones. Four radiocarbon dates point to the late 2nd – early 1st millennium BC.

Keywords: settlement Galik 11, Textile pottery, Bronze Age.

15.1 Introduction

The Textile pottery appears in the Neolithic and is used during the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age throughout the vast areas from the Baltic region to as far as the Volga and Kama region. The honourable Professor Mika Lavento whose jubilee is celebrated has devoted a considerable part of his scientific works precisely to studies of this circle of archaeological cultures. M. Lavento is the author of fundamental researches on the Textile ceramics in Finland (and the Karelian Isthmus) which are reflected in a separate book and some chapters of collective monographs (Lavento 2001; 2003; 2015). A series of his publications in co-authorship with his colleagues are dedicated to studies of Textile pottery in neighbouring regions, e.g. Estonia, Latvia, the upper and middle reaches of the Volga, etc.

This paper considers finds from excavations at the settlement-site of Galik 11 situated in the lower Luga River region, in Russia (Fig. 15.1). The south-eastern coastal zone of the Gulf of Finland where the site is located until presently has been fairly little studied; practically no sites of the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age were known here. However it could be expected to find settlements with Textile ceramics in this region since they are known westwards in the territory of Estonia and eastwards



Figure 15.1. Map of the locations of the settlement of Galik 11 and the nearest settlements with Textile ceramics mentioned in the text. Map M. A. Razzak.

in the southern Ladoga region and on the Volkhov River, as well as in the north – on the Karelian Isthmus and farther.

In recent years, active research and rescue archaeological investigations are being conducted in the locality of the lower reaches of the Luga River. They have resulted in the discovery of numerous sites of the Stone Age (Gerasimov 2019) and settlements of the modern period. Lately a number of sites with Textile ceramics were found (Gorodilov & Razzak 2020: 242–247). At the settlement of Galik 11, large-scale excavations were carried out in 2020 under the direction of A. Yu. Gorodilov (Department of Rescue Archaeology of the Institute for the History of Material Culture RAS) with the participation of the present author.

15.2 The settlement of Galik 11 – excavations of 2020 and finds

The site of Galik 11 was discovered in 2020; it is situated on the Lower Luga River, 0,7 km to the east from the latter, on a sandy palaeospit ranged along the Kurovitsy Plateau. This sandy ridge is about 9 m above sea level in the Baltic system of heights rising at the height of about one metre above a marshy depression which gradually lowers toward the Luga bank. The settlement is ranging along this sandy ridge in the meridional direction. The excavation area of 2020 was of a subrectangular plan and crossed perpendicularly the spit and the settlement located on it from the western to eastern borders of the latter. Within the excavation area, the sandy spit consisted of two parallel elongated sandy hills. The total area of the excavation was 1550 sq. m.

In the course of the excavation, materials of different cultural and chronological groups were found: the Typical Comb-pit Ware, Corded Ware, and Textile pottery (Gorodilov & Razzak 2021). The materials of different periods were differently localized within the excavation.

The finds of Textile ceramics were concentrated in the central area measuring about 10 x 12 m on the eastern ridge in a layer of grey-yellow sand (Fig. 15.2). The spot of the layer of grey-yellow sand was of a nearly rectangular form. In the course of excavation of this layer, there were revealed two hearths and a series of amorphous spots of grey humic sand. Hearth No. 1 was an accumulation of stones of a nearly oval form measuring 1.0 x 0.7 m. Hearth No. 2 was constructed of stones and had a round form 0.8 m in diameter. The total thickness of the cultural layer (grey-yellow sand) was about 0.4 m; in the pits it was up to one metre thick. In total, 14 pits have been excavated including those under the hearths. The sizes of the pits were from 0.5 to 3.0 m and their depths were up to 0.6 m from the level of the spots.

The excavated section of the settlement with a cultural layer, hearths and pits rich with fragments of Textile ceramics was interpreted as a dwelling zone. Possibly here a house was located although no traces of structures have been revealed. During excavations of this area, 90 percent of the entire quantity of Textile ceramics have been retrieved. The fragments of separate vessels stuck together



Figure 15.2. The Galik 11 settlement, excavations 2020. Cultural layer of a dwelling zone with Textile ceramics. The length of scale bars is 4 m. Photo A. Y. Gorodilov.

suggest the conclusion that the cultural layer inside the dwelling zone was considerably mixed. Some conglomerated fragments were deposited near each other but some were distanced for up to 7–10 m located simultaneously in the layer of grey-yellow sand and in pits.

In the excavation of 2020, in total 4087 fragments of Textile pottery were found with the total weight of about 40 kg (amounting to more than 70 percent of the entire number of fragments of ware of different types retrieved from the excavation of 2020).

Through examination of the upper bodies, at least 42 vessels have been identified. They are relatively uniform in terms of their typology. The clay of all the vessels was tempered with admixtures of crushed rock with the fraction sizes up to 0.5–0.9 cm. The outer surface of the predominant number of the vessels was entirely covered with textile imprints, about half of the ware have the same imprints on the inner surface. All the vessels are decorated in a similar way with series of pits or holes beneath the rim. On two of the vessels, the decoration by a series of pits is supplemented with stripes drawn at an angle down from each pit. In terms of its dimensions the ware is divided into two groups. The first includes the pots with a diameter from 27 to 40 cm (most often 32–35 cm) and with the wall thickness of 0.9–1.2 cm. The second group comprises miniature vessels from 8 to 18 cm in diameter and with the walls about 0.5–0.8 cm thick. The profile of the majority of the vessels is straight or slightly S-shaped, there are open forms present; the bottoms are flat.

In addition to the fragments of ceramic ware in the area under consideration, at the settlement were found objects related with bronze-casting manufacture, stone finds, and small fragments of calcined bones. The bronze objects are represented by two finds: a sickle-shaped blade (razor?) measuring 2.8 x 1.1 cm and a fragment of a narrow band measuring 1.8 x 0.3 cm with broken-off ends. Also were found ten fragments of ceramic crucibles and two small fragments of ceramic casting moulds. Among the stone finds, the main group is composed by objects from sandstone with smoothed working surfaces (21 specs.). Also was found a small fragment of a polished slate axe and a few flint flakes (10 specs.).

15.3 Radiocarbon dates

By now there has been carried out radiocarbon dating of three specimens of charcoal crust on pottery (Fig. 15.3: 1–3) and one sample of charcoal from hearth No. 2.

Sampled item	Lab code	Date BP	Date cal (95.4%)
Charcoal crust on a vessel, №2-5065	Poz-139734	2950±30	1260–1051 BC
Charcoal from hearth No. 2, №3055	Poz-139735	2905±30	1209–1009 BC
Charcoal crust on a vessel No. 1, №4-2611	Poz-139732	2840±30	1109–916 BC
Charcoal crust on a vessel, №4-5387	Poz-139733	2790±30	1014–836 BC

The obtained dates are not completely identical but close to each other and allow us to date the excavated complex with Textile ceramics to the late 2nd – early 1st millennium BC.

15.4 The nearest settlements with Textile ceramics

The nearest sites with Textile ceramics are in Estonia, south-eastern Ladoga region, on the Karelian Isthmus and in the south-west of Leningrad Oblast (Fig. 15.1).

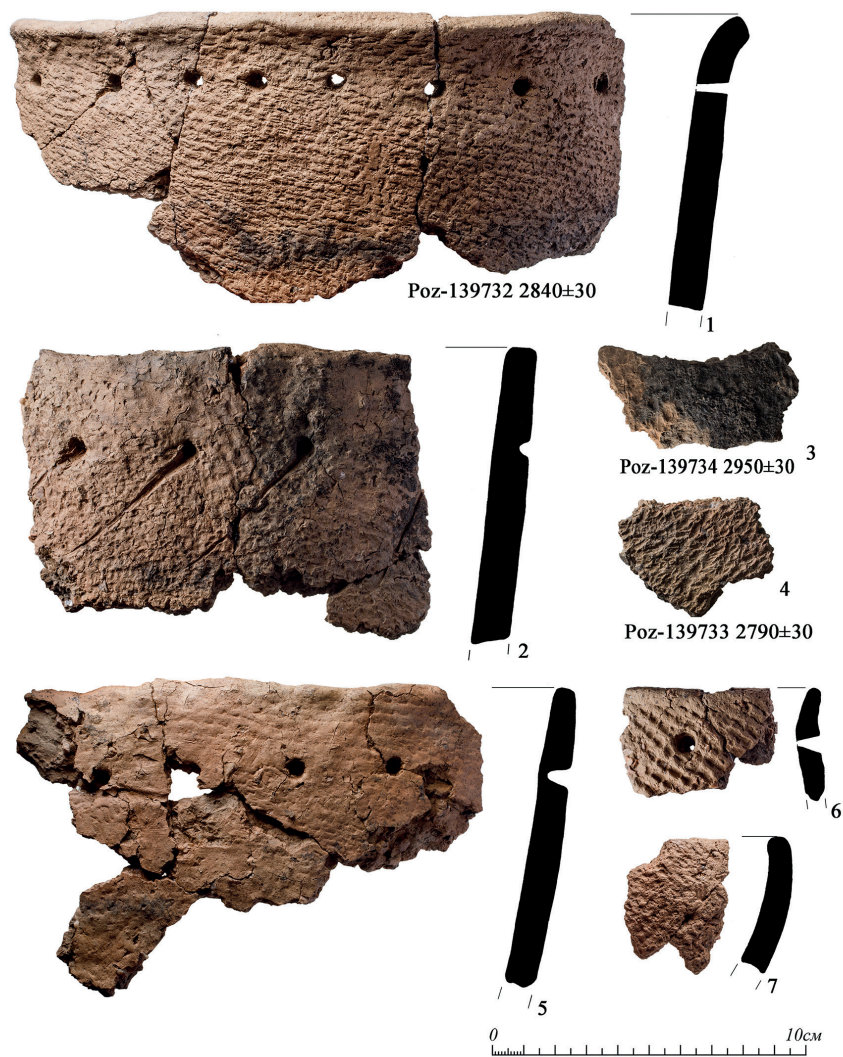


Figure 15.3. The Galik 11 settlement, excavations 2020. Textile ceramics. Photo I. G. Samovarov.

In Estonia several tens of sites are known with Textile Ware of different periods. The most numerous collection was obtained by L. Yu. Jaanits from excavations of the settlements of Akali and Kullamägi at the mouth of the Emajõgi River in south-eastern Estonia. After excavations of long-lived settlements in this region, the author has distinguished the relative sequence of different types of pottery with textile imprints: porous ware (with admixtures of organics), pottery tempered with sand, and ceramics with admixtures of crushed rock (Jaanits 1959: 143–151).

The question of the typology and chronology of the pottery with textile imprints from Estonia was specially considered in the article by A. Kriiska, M. Lavento and J. Peets (2005) and Kriiska and Lavento (2007). The authors write that textile imprints are found in Estonia on pottery of four types: it is the Late Comb Ware, Corded Ware, Early Textile Ware and Textile Ware. The latter type of pottery, judging through its description, is the closest to that of the finds from the settlement of Galik 11. Vessels of this type have admixtures of crushed rock in the clay, upright walls, different diameters ranging up to half a metre; the textile imprints on them sometimes cover the entire external surface and occasionally are found on the inner one. The decoration is laconic and usually represented by pits occasionally accompanied by comb imprints. Radiocarbon dates of the charcoal crust on two

vessels of this type were obtained from the site of Assaku Kükita in the surroundings of Tallinn (date of 2765 ± 50 Hela-837, 1042-810 calBC 95.4%) and the settlement of Altküla in the surroundings of Pärnu (date of 2885 ± 45 Hela-838, 1211–931 calBC 95.4%). V. Lang attributes these fragments of pottery to the Lügänuše type and dates them to the Late Bronze Age – pre-Roman period. Similar pottery with textile imprints is encountered among the ceramics of the Asva type dated to the Late Bronze Age (Lang 2007: 127–130, Fig. 58, 60). The considered settlements of Estonia are distanced for 190–250 km from the site of Galik 11.

In the south-west of Leningrad Oblast there is a settlement-site of Syaberskaya 3, investigated in the 1980s by V. I. Timofeev. Among the finds, a rather not numerous group of textile ceramics tempered with crushed rock which is datable to the Bronze Age has been distinguished (Timofeev 1993: 30–32).

In the east of Leningrad Oblast a group of sites with Textile ceramics is known in the south-eastern Ladoga region and on the lower Volkhov River. They are distanced for 230–280 km north-eastwards. The most information-rich settlement is that of Ust-Rybezhna 2 – the settlement has been excavated over a considerable area, a rich collection of pottery and lithics has been retrieved and radiocarbon dates have been determined. The excavations were conducted by N. N. Gurina in 1954–1959; M. A. Yushkova (Razzak) carried out archaeological surveys here in 2008. The pottery from the settlement have the textile imprints on the outer surface of the vessels; the ceramics with admixtures of crushed rock predominate. However, the decoration and the form of the vessels from the settlement of Ust-Rybezhna 2 considerably differ from those at the settlement of Galik 11. Among the materials from the settlement of Ust-Rybezhna 2, practically all the vessels are richly ornamented with pits, comb stamps and different imprints constituting multirow compositions; distinctly marked profiles with an out turned rim are common. The assemblage of the lithics also much differs – at the settlement of Ust-Rybezhna 2, numerous flint tools and flakes were found. The greatest similarity between the finds from the two settlements under consideration is expressed in objects related with the bronze-casting manufacture: at the settlement of Ust-Rybezhna 2, a deep pit was revealed interpreted as a dwelling, in it and nearby were found a bronze plate and also fragments of ceramic crucibles practically identical to those from Galik 11. Two samples from the settlement of Ust-Rybezhna 2 were radiocarbon dated. One specimen taken during clearing of a cultural layer in 2008 on the edge of the N. N. Gurina's excavation, in the section most closely adjoining the presumed dwelling structure, yielded the date of 3180 ± 100 BP (SPb-1), 1601–1298 calBC (68.3%). The second date is 3250 ± 80 BP (SPb-16), 1612–1441 calBC (68.3%) and it was obtained from a specimen of charcoal sampled by N. N. Gurina from a bonfire site in the same part of the excavation (Gurina 1961; Yushkova 2015). In the south-eastern Ladoga and Volkhov regions also other settlements with Textile ceramics are known. Generally they are dated to the span from the second quarter of the 2nd millennium BC to the early 1st millennium BC.

In the northern direction, settlements with Textile ceramics have been studied in Finland and on the Karelian Isthmus. M. Lavento distinguishes four subgroups of Textile ceramics in the territory of Finland; the map of their distribution shows that they all are remote from the coast being situated in the inland regions (Lavento 2019: Fig. 1). In south-eastern Finland, textile ceramics of the Tomitsa group are widespread.

From the Karelian Isthmus, several settlements with Textile ceramics are reported, they all are situated in its northern part and are remote from the Gulf of Finland. The materials obtained here come from pre-War collections and excavations, therefore virtually no information on the plans and stratigraphy of the settlements is available. In general, the absence of the direct similarity is notable of the pottery found here with the vessels from the settlement of Galik 11. Thus among the materials from sites in Kaukola, fragments of Textile ceramics are represented both by examples with admixtures

of crushed stone and those tempered with organics. The decoration on the vessels is more diverse being represented not only by a row of pits on the neck of the vessels but also by lines of pits on the body and comb-stamped imprints. One of the ceramic specimens from this settlement was dated through its charcoal crust to 3085 ± 70 (Hela-467), 1430–1260 calBC (68.3%) (Lavento 2001: 365).

15.5 Conclusions

The culture of the Textile ceramics of the Bronze Age an assemblage of which is found at the settlement of Galik 11 is geographically widely distributed and had been used for a long period. The majority of settlements situated to the north and east from the region under study, i.e. in the Ladoga and Volkhov regions, on the Karelian Isthmus and in Finland, are dated to the middle and second half of the 2nd millennium BC. Among them, generally vessels with the clay tempered with mineral admixtures (although a group of pottery with organic tempers also is present), decoration by pits and comb-stamped imprints, as well as S-shaped profiles of the vessels are typical. The closest dated settlements are those of Ust-Rybezchna 2 and Kaukola.

In the west, i.e. in the territory of Estonia, two groups of Textile ceramics – Early Textile ceramics (late 3rd – early 2nd millennium BC) and Textile ceramics dated to the end of the 2nd – beginning of the 1st millennium BC have been identified. Judging through its typological description exactly this group of ceramics is the most similar to the finds from the settlement of Galik 11. Such features are characteristic of it as exclusively mineral admixtures, uniform decoration in the form of pits beneath the rim and straight profiles of the vessels.

The assemblage of finds from the dwelling zone with Textile ceramics at the settlement of Galik 11 (excavation of 2020) can be considered as a reference complex for the region of the south-east of the Gulf of Finland. Here a representative collection of ceramics was retrieved – at least 42 vessels, objects related with bronze-casting manufacture and stone finds. A dwelling zone with hearths and pits has been completely investigated. Radiocarbon dates of the carbon crust on pottery and of charcoal from the hearth have been obtained.

Investigations of the retrieved finds and excavation of the settlement of Galik 11 are being continued. In particular, the exploration of the dwelling zone is carried out by geochemical methods (on the samples collected during the excavations) as well as a natural-science study of ceramics.

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