[RADIOCARBON, VOL 35, NO. 3, 1993, P. iii–iv]

FROM THE EDITORS

The radiocarbon method is now widely used in natural, exact, human and technical sciences. More than a hundred active laboratories publish their results in the international journal, *RADIOCARBON*. In addition, numerous articles devoted to the radiocarbon method or the interpretation of its results appear in journals published in a variety of disciplines and languages, making access difficult for scientists who work on developing the radiocarbon method or who are interested in applications of radiocarbon dating.

In the former USSR there were between 30 and 40 radiocarbon laboratories whose activity was coordinated by the Scientific Council of Isotope Geochemistry and Isotope Chronology at the Academy of Science. As most of the research carried out over many decades has been published in Russian in localized journals of limited distribution, international awareness and appreciation of this literature is quite poor.

During recent years, major political events have occurred and many states belonging to the former USSR have reestablished their independence. Democratic rearrangements and transition to an open society demand quick and effective exchange of knowledge and the integration of radiocarbon researchers from Eastern Europe and Siberia into the international radiocarbon community. Therefore, radiocarbon laboratories from Eastern Europe and Siberia sponsored a workshop in Tallinn at which participants decided to organize the Eastern European Association of Carbon-14 Laboratories to develop further cooperation (see Long, A. 1992 From the Editors, ACL-East. *Radiocarbon* 34(1): iii).

This current collection presents articles reflecting the principal research directions of radiocarbon laboratories in Eastern Europe and Siberia; it is a first serious step in establishing closer contacts with the international radiocarbon community. The appearance of this collection became possible thanks to the help and support of Prof. Austin Long and Renee Kra. In the name of the authors, I would like to express our deep gratitude for this and also for the great job done in editing the collection.

Jaan-Mati Punning
Guest Editor

It was, indeed, an honor and privilege, a couple of years ago, to visit several of the laboratories whose works are represented in this issue of *RADIOCARBON*. During those visits, I became aware of two things. First, I learned that American and Eastern European scientists have much in common. I met many scientists who are interested in understanding more about nature through the eyes of our geochemical analyses, and found them to be warm, human individuals, who are also quality scientists with a passion for and dedication to their research. Second, I learned that their significant contributions to their scientific research have revealed much about radiocarbon technology, geology and archaeology that many Westerners have not seen. Therefore, when Jaan-Mati Punning suggested this all-USSR (at the time) issue, our response was immediate and positive.

However, because of other pressing publication priorities, the realization of this issue has spanned an interval of unprecedented change in the political structure of the former Soviet Union. Yet, fortunately, even though place names may have changed and maps may have been redrawn, scientific institutions and personnel have prevailed. Some changes are underway, in terms of

sources and amounts of funding and focus of research institutions. Another change, which we hope to promote here, is greater information exchange between scientists of Eastern Europe and the West. The radiocarbon scientists at The University of Arizona initiated this trend at the 14th International Radiocarbon Conference, when we invited 15 scientists of the then-USSR to attend the conference.

Jaan-Mati is the ideal Guest Editor for this issue, for not only does he possess the scientific background, linguistic abilities and personal contacts needed for soliciting and translating papers, but he also has the energy and resourcefulness needed to see the project to fruition. We congratulate Jaan-Mati for a job well done and thank him for his patience and perseverance in dealing with us.

We wish to thank Irena Matveev of the A. F. Ioffe Physico-Technical Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, for helping us with translations while she was in residence at The University of Arizona. Finally, we thank our Associate Editor, Grant E. Kocharov, for his invaluable help during his visits to our department.

Austin Long
Editor

Note: Titles of books and articles originally published in Russian are given in English translation in the references to articles in this issue.