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*IN MEMORY OF A.R. LURIA*  
*ПАМЯТИ А.Р. ЛУРИИ*

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## Introduction to the Rubric “In Memory of A.R. Luria”

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### Вступительное слово к рубрике «Памяти А.Р. Лурии»

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Dear readers,

This issue of the Cultural-Historical Psychology journal contains a selection of the articles dedicated to the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alexander Luria’s birth. He passed away 45 years ago, and there are not many of his disciples left who were lucky to learn from Luria, know him personally, and collaborate with him. In this selection of the articles, Luria’s disciples Michael Cole, James Wertsch, and Luciano Mecacci write about him.

Michael Cole shares his very important thoughts on a shift in his consciousness – from a behaviorist and psychometrically oriented view of science typical for an American scientist of the middle of the XX century to a “...more mature understanding of the overarching theoretical framework that he (Luria) had been urging upon me from the beginning (“Read Vygotsky”)”. This theoretical framework is a cultural-historical psychology that helped Michael Cole to discover a new approach to experimentation and made him concern for ecological validity. The transition to the cultural-historical science was not easy, and the analysis of this transition seems prominent for a contemporary reader. Cognitive science is obviously approaching some of the ideas of Lev Vygotsky nowadays [2]. This is sometimes realized but more often not realized by cognitive scientists. A lot of scientists who are approaching the ideas by Vygotsky and Luria, hopefully, will have to overcome these difficulties of transition. Cole’s thoughts and his article on his hooking up with romantic science of Alexander Luria [3] will be useful for them.

Memories of James Wertsch complement the thoughts of his friend and countryman Michael Cole. They refer to another – emotional and ethical – aspect of Luria’s heritage. One of the strong and well-remembered impressions of James Wertsch was an impression from the dialogue between Alexander Luria and a female patient from the Institute of Neurosurgery, not so much the content of this dialogue but its atmosphere and Luria’s skills to establish an emotional contact with the patient, uphold her, and inspire her to struggle against her illness. James Wertsch is famous in science as a promoter of Lev Vygotsky’s ideas. The most famous book by him, “Vygotsky and the social formation of mind” (1985, 1988), was cited 8696 times.

Memories of Luciano Mecacci, an Italian psychologist and psychophysicist, reflect the ebullient energy of Alexander Luria like a drop of water. In their first meeting, Luria conceived a project of translation of his works on neuropsychology and psycholinguistics to Italian and immediately wrote a table of contents for a book. He then switched from his own works to the works by Luciano and inspired him to write a book with a review of relations between psychophysiology and psychology in the Soviet Union. All of these plans were implemented. Mecacci became a faithful associate of Luria and successfully spread his ideas and the ideas of Vygotsky.

These articles are followed by the works of Moscow disciples of Alexander Luria and their younger colleagues, and the works of the followers of his ideas. This section begins with an article by Natalia Korsakova who

had been working at Luria's laboratory in the Institute of Neurosurgery for many years. Korsakova and her young coauthor Yana Vologdina who is currently working in the Institute of Neurosurgery address a concept of neuropsychological syndrome which is highly important for the theory of neuropsychology by Alexander Luria. The authors introduce an original view of the dynamics of this concept's content. Korsakova and Vologdina consider the concept of syndrome to be fully elaborated in 1962 when the first edition of "Higher cortical functions in man" was published. I can certainly agree with them as the concept of function and principles of its localization are analyzed in detail in this book. The concept of factor is introduced in the preface to the first edition of this book: "Thorough analysis of these deficits (deficits of higher cortical functions in local brain injury – T.A.) allows a clinical psychologist to identify the factors which underlie them in many cases and to raise important questions on brain organization of complex forms of mental activity" (p. 10). Luria's concept of neuropsychological factor is based on a mathematical term integrated in psychology and psychophysiology by Vladimir Nebylitsyn (p. 89). The prominence of this concept for Luria is seen in the fact that the title of his report at the Ciba Foundation Symposium on Disorders of Language in May 1963 in London which brought together the narrow circle of scientific elite was the "Factors and Forms of aphasia".

In the next article by young neuropsychologists Yana Panikratova and Roza Vlasova, the disciples of Tatiana Akhutina, and their colleagues Irina Lebedeva, Valentin Sinitsyn, and Ekaterina Pechenkova, the theoretical issues of neuropsychology are addressed from another perspective. The authors of this article set a promising and extremely difficult aim to demonstrate the scope of neuroimaging and neurostimulation methods to develop the neuropsychological theory of systemic and dynamic localization of higher mental functions (TSDL). In my opinion, they have successfully fulfilled this aim. They begin their article with a brief description of the TSDL, then highlight the basics of a particular neuroimaging or neurostimulation method and results that may be obtained with it, and further address the scope of this method to study the intact brain or the brain with local injury. In their conclusions, Yana Panikratova and her colleagues suggest possible designs of the neuropsychological studies in patients with local brain injury and healthy individuals and methods for statistical processing of the results. The complex material is presented succinctly, simply, and clearly so that the article can be recommended as a must-read for neuropsychologists, psychophysiologicalists, and cognitive psychologists during their education.

An article by Tatiana Akhutina, a disciple of Alexander Luria, continues the neurolinguistic line of his

research. Tatiana Akhutina and her coauthor Ekaterina Oschepkova, a psycholinguist, analyze the possibility of dissociation between syntagmatic and paradigmatic mechanisms of language in typically developing children. Development of the structural-functional components of higher mental functions is irregular which is the main postulate of the contemporary neuropsychology of individual differences. Due to this irregularity, the neuropsychological analysis may reveal the relative strength/weakness in the functions of either anterior or posterior cortical regions located in either left or right hemisphere in healthy adult and child populations. The authors, following Luria, formulate a hypothesis on syntactic difficulties in construction of a text and sentence in primary schoolchildren with a weakness of the anterior regions of the left hemisphere, and lexical difficulties in children with a weakness of the posterior left-hemisphere regions. These difficulties were observed in the texts of narratives by second-graders based on a series of pictures. The finding confirms that it is valid to apply Luria's theory on syntagmatic and paradigmatic mechanisms of language to typically developing children.

The final article in this issue is a work by a famous psychophysiologicalist Regina Machinskaya and neuropsychologists Marina Zakharova and Anastasiya Agris, the disciples of Tatiana Akhutina. The relation between neuropsychology and psychophysiology is traditional. Complex studies which apply electroencephalography were carried out as early as by Alexander Luria and Evgeniya Khomskaya. The group of psychophysiologicalists from the Institute of developmental physiology of Russian Academy of Education under the leadership of Deborah Farber and then Regina Machinskaya has a long history of collaboration with neuropsychologists. Their reports and articles were always presented at Luria's anniversaries. This time the authors describe their studies addressing the associations between executive functions and school readiness in preschoolers.

All of the authors who provided the articles for the current issue rely on the same scientific basis. It is the theory of systemic and dynamic organization and localization of higher mental functions developed by Alexander Luria. Luria always insisted that he continues elaborating the ideas of his teacher and friend Lev Vygotsky. The neuropsychological school of Vygotsky and Luria is living and developing which is evident from the articles of our small selection. Their authors have a sense of duty to pay tribute of love and respect to their Teacher who was one of the founders of the world neuropsychology.

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