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**CONFERENCE REVIEW: CPG Annual Meeting November 7<sup>th</sup> 2015, Durham**

**Kamal Badreshany**

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**CPG Annual Meeting 2015, Durham**

This year's Ceramic Petrology Group annual general meeting took place on November 7<sup>th</sup> in the Department of Archaeology, Durham University. The meeting, which consisted of eight presentations and drew more than 20 participants, was organised by Kamal Badreshany. As is typical for the CPG annual meeting, the papers covered an interesting and diverse range of methodological, geographical, and chronological topics.



*Delegates on the heritage sites tour, Durham.*

New methodologies for the analysis of pottery decoration using  $\mu$ -XRD2 and  $\mu$ -Raman Analyses Spectroscopy were presented by Silvia Amicone. Her work convincingly demonstrated the value of both techniques in understanding the use of graphite to decorate Neolithic/Chalcolithic pottery from the Balkans.

Seth Priestman and Enrica Bonato presented their recent work on material from the Georgian Caucasus, which combined macroscopic ceramic studies with petrographic analyses. Their results show long-term continuity in potting traditions despite major political changes in the area.

Ian Whitbread demonstrated the use of micro-XRF for the sourcing of raw materials used for ceramic production from the Iron Age to the Romano-British period at Burrough Hill Hillfort in Leicestershire.

The results of a petrographic analysis of a geographically extensive data set of Neolithic ceramics from Lebanon and Syria was presented by Kamal Badreshany. His work shows that the earliest ceramics in the Levant, the so-called Dark Faced Burnish Wares, were imported over long distances and were likely produced as socially and/or

symbolically significant objects rather than purely functional ones.

Steven Humphreys presented his investigation of Cypriot ecclesiastical bread ovens in Late Antiquity and the Early Islamic period. His research shows churches remained important public spaces after the advent of Islam, possibly playing a role in caring for refugees from the Levantine coast.

Mario Cantisani studied ceramic production patterns at the Bronze Age site of Mursia located in Pantelleria (Sicily) with the goal of understanding material networks, technological patterns, and the dynamics of social interactive processes. His research shows conservatism of material network systems in this area during the Bronze Age.

Lisa Snape-Kennedy and Agni Prijatelj provided an overview of recent trends in micro-morphological studies emphasising the relevance of recent methodological advances to ceramic petrographic studies.

One of the highlights of the CPG was the discussion session lead by Patrick Quinn, which tackled the very important issues related to the status of archaeological ceramic thin-sections. The session resulted in a spirited and productive conversation about whether thin-sections and powdered samples used for chemical analysis should be considered as artefacts in their own right or hold another status. The discussion also touched on the question of 'who owns thin-sections?'. Is it always the producer or is it the analyst (if they are not the same person)? Who will ultimately be the caretaker of collections and databases of ceramic thin-section databases? Individuals? Or private or governmental organisations?

The workshop was capped off by a tour of Durham and its famous Unesco world heritage sites, Durham Cathedral and Castle.

