

accompanied by gutsy Russian music. ARCO (Augmented Reality Cultural Object) is an EU sponsored project seeking to provide non-IT-specialist archaeologists and museum curators with inexpensive 'virtual objects' for archaeological research, display, educational and museum management purposes.

To bring us back to reality English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology reassessed their own current IT procedures for fieldwork recording, post-excavation analysis, publication and dissemination, a very self-satisfied performance.

### Ceramic Studies Session

Five papers (of a programmed eleven) spanned prehistory to post-medieval period, embracing regions of Russia, Macedonia, Hungary, Scotland and Ireland. A major sub-theme was the accessibility of scientific back-up to macroscopic analyses, which some countries do routinely for provenance studies while others simply cannot afford to. Neolithic coarsewares from a production centre in Thessaly, Greece, were distributed only locally while the painted pottery had a wider distribution. For the Roman period Macedonian Grey Terra Sigillata (similar to Gaulish terre sigillée grise) was the favourite table ware for a new Balkan aristocracy continuing through to AD 5th and 6th centuries, and it was suggested that the wide continental

dispersal of this cultural style was owed to the arrival of the Goths in late antiquity. Closer to home our Scottish colleague reviewed the state of knowledge of the medieval pottery industry based on production centres and larger assemblages of pottery from the Scottish burghs, backed by C14, chemical sourcing and petrographic analysis. A more thematic paper addressed medieval and later production centres in Carpathian Basin of Hungary, kilns classified on construction type and firing technology, backed up from ethnographic sources and pyrotechnical analysis.

Finally MPRG was closely involved with the inaugural meeting of a project, Perspectives of Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery Centre Researches in Europe, whose principal aim was to establish a standardized record system for a database of the Medieval and post-Medieval Production Centres in Europe. The project would require European Research Cooperation. For project updates see the Group's newsletter <http://www.medievalpottery.org.uk/newsletter>.

Our Russian colleagues were hugely enthusiastic and hospitable encouraging us to attend the annual Party in the House of the Architects, formerly Senator Polovtzev's Palace and the Annual Closing Dinner where we sampled traditional Russian food.

*Maureen Mellor*

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