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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Conference Review: The Third Annual Vounous Symposium

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The Third Annual Vounous Symposium was held 1-16 September 2019 and located near Çatalköy in Northern Cyprus. In addition to ceramics and bronze casting, experiments were also conducted on smelting local copper ore, carving moulds from local limestone, and making faience.

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The focus of the symposium is to reconstruct the missing heritage of the area. Ceramic artists and experimental archaeologists are invited from around the world to recreate

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effigy statues, votive objects, and archaeological reproductions from Cyprus' Bronze Age. In addition this year, a ceramic mural was created as a special project, to be mounted on the Çatalköy city hall that depicts archaeological scenes of Bronze Age boats, local culture, including an interpretation of the Vounous Bowl.

The Opening Ceremony was held on the first Sunday of the symposium. The event was attended by the mayors of Çatalköy, Girne, and by the president of Northern Cyprus. In addition there were over 500 visitors at the ceremony, which included a torchlight procession of participants dressed in

Bronze Age clothing. Ceramic figures, some human-sized, lined the paths around the site and up to the entrance to the Bronze Age cemetery at the top of the hill. Other areas of the event displayed ceramic and metal objects made during previous symposia.

In addition to the workshops where participants worked and taught visitors, daily field trips took the participants to museums and archaeological sites in order to teach them more about Cypriot culture and archaeology. The trips included the ancient cities of Salamis and Soli, the Castle and Shipwreck Museum in Girne, and the Archaeological Museum of St Barnabas.

Last year the symposium introduced metallurgy to the disciplines in which participants worked. This year bronze was cast into moulds that were carved from local limestone in order to recreate knives that had been excavated at a site close to where the symposium was held. Usually limestone is not considered an ideal material for high-temperature moulds, but experiments with the stone proved that it was a durable and satisfactory medium for carving bronze-casting moulds. Both the moulds and some of the knives will be exhibited in a local museum along with the original artefacts. In addition to bronze casting, experiments were conducted smelting copper from malachite obtained from a copper mine near Lefke on the western peninsula.

The experiments in faience began with an impromptu workshop using supplies bought from a commercial ceramic company, however participants soon realized that faience could be made using locally sourced materials. Quartzite obtained from a hill near the site was crushed using a stone hammer and mixed with potash made from burnt olive branches. These were combined with copper carbonate ore gathered from the mine near Lefka. The resulting compound was used both as a medium for faience and also as a ceramic glaze, subsequently named Vounous blue.

This year participants also built a traditional bread oven to introduce experiments in ancient cooking techniques and for participants to enjoy freshly baked traditional breads and kebab. Another introduction this year was a beer locally brewed using an ancient recipe.

Videos of the event, as well as daily reports were put on the [Vounous Facebook page](#). In addition Kevin Frank and Chris Stone of Manufactum Historicum provided a daily vlog that is available both on their Facebook page and on [their website](#).

Plans for the future are proceeding. It is hoped that by the time the 2020 symposium is held there will be permanent structures where participants can live, work, and teach. These will be constructed based on the data gathered from excavated Bronze Age buildings. With those in place the ultimate plan is for the development of an open-air museum where the work of the symposium can continue throughout the year.

The Fourth Annual Vounous Symposium will be held 1-16 September 2020. Information about the event is available at the Vounous Symposium Facebook page and the EXARC Events Page <https://exarc.net/events/vounous>.

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