

## HE National Prehistoric Form Typology Project Proposal:

### Discussion at PCRG meeting in Lancaster, 5.5.18

#### Format

It was agreed that the typology should be available for free online with a possible hardcopy also produced, this being similar to *The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection: a Handbook* which is available in printed and digital form. <http://romanpotterystudy.org/nrfrc/base/index.php> . The handbook is the recommended standard document for referencing Roman pottery fabrics and has been widely adopted by practitioners of Roman pottery analysis.

#### Fabric

Discussion took place as to whether fabrics should be included in the proposed prehistoric pottery typology. If included descriptions should be simple and follow the format presented in the **PCRG**

#### Guidelines for the Study of Prehistoric Pottery

[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/93ae8c\\_49ff5068d62241f0a662881502173bc9.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/93ae8c_49ff5068d62241f0a662881502173bc9.pdf)

The Project Design could also include a proposal for a general description of broad changes in fabric recipes through time for each region, defining chronological and geological/regional variation. This would be similar to that defining earlier prehistoric pottery fabrics from Wessex (Cleal R.M.J., 1995. 'Pottery fabrics in Wessex in the fourth to second millennia BC' in Kinnes, I. and Varndell, G., *'Unbaked Urns of Rudely Shape' Essays on British and Irish Pottery for Ian Longworth*. Oxbow Monograph 55, (Oxford).)

#### Decoration

It was agreed that standardised descriptions of decoration and surface treatment could be very useful and should be included in the proposal.

#### Typology standardisation

The group agreed that the proposed typology should aid standardisation of descriptive terms to be used in prehistoric pottery analysis and should be based on geometric shapes. By using terminology based on geometric descriptions the proposed typology could transcend typologies based on chronological and cultural traditions and be used across all periods of prehistoric ceramics including for assemblages which do not include many full vessel profiles.

The typology should be hierarchical and based on the following attributes:-

**Vessel shape:** Open, Neutral, Closed (for definition see Cleal, R., 2004, 'The Dating and Diversity of the Earliest Ceramics of Wessex and South-west England' in Cleal, R. and Pollard, J., (eds.). *Monuments and Material Culture*, 164-192. Salisbury, Hobnob Press).

**Rim shape:** Direct flat, direct rounded etc

**Shape at neck:** Concave, upright, everted etc

**Shape at shoulder:** rounded, angular etc

**Body shape:** (lower body/ girth) Ovoid, cylindrical etc

**Base shape:** Simple, foot-ring, pinched-out etc,

These formal attributes along with decoration and fabric could then be used to define form classification (jar, bowl etc) and aid assemblage interpretation.

## **Resource review**

The proposed document could include a review of typologies which are currently in use with links to pdfs of published examples

The group looked at a selection of existing typologies in use in the East Midlands and East Anglia (listed below).

Knight, D., 1998. *Guidelines for the recording of Later Prehistoric Pottery from the East Midland*. Unpublished Trent and Peak Archaeology Unit report

Brudenell, M., 2012. *Pots, practice and society: an investigation of pattern and variability in the post-Deverel Rimbury ceramic tradition of East Anglia*. Unpublished PhD thesis, York University

Hill, J.D. and Horne, L., 2003. 'Iron Age and Early Roman pottery' in *Power and Island Communities: Excavations at the Wardy Hill Ringwork, Coveney, Ely*. East Anglian Archaeology 103.145-184.

## **Other issues raised**

- As discussed in Worcester meetings, we need to think how we can accommodate cultural traditions in this scheme (e.g. Deverel-Rimbury, Grooved Ware etc)
- Need to consider time allocation for collating and harmonising drawings of key types, and balance between drawings and photographs.
- Need to consider how we can gather most effectively the views of PCRG members and other interested specialists: questionnaires? workshops? ClfA conference session?
- Should we consider training opportunities as an output? Useful to address capacity issue.

Those in attendance:

Adam Tinsley

David Knight

Sarah Percival