

***AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE CHEMICAL CHARACTERIZATION
OF CARIBBEAN CERAMICS:***

***AN INTRODUCTION TO A SPECIAL VOLUME
OF THE JOURNAL OF CARIBBEAN ARCHAEOLOGY
IN MEMORY OF JAMES B. PETERSEN***

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The papers presented in this issue of the *Journal of Caribbean Archaeology* were presented at the 2006 Society for American Archeology (SAA) annual meetings in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The conference papers were part of a session entitled “An Exploratory Study into the Chemical Characterization of Caribbean Ceramics: In Memory of James B. Petersen.” A participant in and strong supporter of the session, Prof. James B. Petersen was tragically murdered in the summer of 2005 while conducting fieldwork in Brazil. The organizer for the session was Christophe Descantes; the session chair was Michael D. Glascock. Ronald Bishop (Smithsonian

Institution) served as the discussant for the session and offered invaluable comments on the papers. For the journal issue, Christophe Descantes, Robert J. Speakman, Michael D. Glascock, and Matthew T. Boulanger are the special editors. Descantes, Speakman, and Glascock were involved in the instrumental neutron activation analysis (INAA) of the ceramic and clay specimens at the University of Missouri Research Reactor Center (MURR), and Boulanger helped in the editing, typesetting, and pre-press of the articles. Daan Iseendoorn et al.’s work was analyzed using x-ray fluorescence (XRF) at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

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***THE AUTHORS DEDICATE THE PAPERS IN THIS VOLUME
TO THE MEMORY OF***

***JAMES B. PETERSEN
1954–2005***

Among his many passions, Jim Petersen was dedicated to the thorough analysis of human material culture, past and present. His meticulous study of Amerindian technologies including ceramics, stone tools, and perishable textiles, led to groundbreaking insights into the material signatures of social interaction and ethnic boundaries. During his career, Jim analyzed hundreds of thousands of artifacts, all the time focused on what the careful study of objects could tell us about people.

Above all other classes of artifacts, ceramics held a special place for Jim. He could squeeze diamonds of data from the smallest of fragments. While decorated vessels certainly caught his eye, he loved every sherd equally. He always looked beneath the surface, always went one step further in his quest to learn more about pots and their potters. Jim was a champion of the small and underappreciated attributes, defending them with countless hours of his free time and the binocular microscope he lugged around in his carry-on bag. While Jim practiced his own more “traditional” approach to ceramic analysis, he was eager to explore the ways in which INAA could help us elevate our understanding of ceramic manufacture and exchange in the Caribbean. He would be excited by the progress this volume represents.

John G. Crock
University of Vermont



Jim Petersen, Anguilla 1992 (photo by David R. Watters).

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