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# Postgraduate Conference Fund, Conference Reports: Complexity in Geomorphology: 38th Annual Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium, Duke University, North Carolina, USA, 5-7 October 2007

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## **POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE FUND — Conference Reports**

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### **Complexity in Geomorphology: 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium**

**Duke University, North Carolina, USA  
5-7 October 2007**

**Caroline Burberry—Imperial College London**

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The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Binghamton Symposium continued the tradition begun in 1966 by four geomorphologists from SUNY Binghamton, of meeting up over an informal lunch to discuss their common interests, geomorphology and water. One of the original aims was to combat the increasing compartmentalization in the discipline, which was neatly achieved in the Duke Meeting, organised by Brad Murray and Mark Fonstad, bringing together fluvial, tidal, aeolian, hillslope, vegetation and even planetary geomorphologists to discuss the issues of complexity and self-organisation arising in their work.

The Meeting was structured into five sessions, each with two main speakers, followed by time for detailed discussion. Speakers were drawn from across America and Europe, each an expert in their field. The British Society for Geomorphology was well-represented, with stimulating talks from Prof. Janet Hooke, Dr. Andreas Baas and Prof. Thomas Coulthard. A longer keynote address given by Stefano Lanzoni (University of Padova) followed the end of the first session, discussing the 'Dynamics of eco-geomorphic patterns in tidal environments'. The second keynote address preceded the Symposium Banquet and was given by Chris Paola (University of Minnesota). This address, titled 'Autogenic dynamics and fossilized complexity in depositional systems' provided a thought-provoking link between the past and modern-day geomorphologic processes, using sedimentary evidence of ancient river systems as a starting point. During the Symposium Banquet, the speaker, Peter Haff, provided an intriguing look at the development of geomorphology from the Stone Age until the present day, using a dimensionless measure of the movement of mass and other surface processes.

Accompanying the main sessions, over 20 posters were displayed in the refreshment area, and ample time was provided in the meeting schedule for poster sessions, in which I was given the opportunity to present a poster entitled 'Drainage diversion patterns and landform morphology as an indicator of deformation style:

Examples from the Zagros Simply Folded Belt, Islamic Republic of Iran'. Many posters were presented by students, and covered categories of Self-organized and Emergent Behaviours, Observations of Natural Systems and Anthropogenic and other Biological Interactions. The poster sessions were another source of productive discussion and allowed the presenters

The meeting closed with an extended discussion, with the main and keynote speakers taking questions from the rest of the participants. Discussion was very lively and provided a summary of our current understanding of complex processes and the meaning of 'complexity' itself. Papers from the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting can be found in *Geomorphology*, vol.91, issue 3-4, a copy of which was given to participants. Before dispersing, the main and keynote speakers were corralled in the refreshment area, and a short book-signing session ensued, to the amusement of the European speakers!

I am grateful to the British Society for Geomorphology for the award of £400 from the Postgraduate Conference Fund, which enabled me to attend this meeting.