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Archaic to classical

John Boardman, Andrew Parkin and Sally Waite (eds) *On the fascination of objects: Greek and Etruscan art in the Shefton Collection.* pp. xii+179, 85 colour plates, 33 b/w illustrations, 23 drawings, 1 map. 2016. Oxford: Oxbow Books. ISBN 978-1-78570-007-1 e-publication; ISBN 978-1-78570-006-4 hardback £60.00.

This beautifully produced book is a celebration of Brian Shefton's activities in collecting antiquities for the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Thirteen scholars have collaborated to produce a series of discussions of particular objects or groups of objects in the collection, and these are prefaced by a short memoir of Brian Shefton by John Prag, and a short account of the development of the collection by Antony Spawforth and Andrew Parkin. The book not only does what it says on the can (the title was in fact supplied by Brian Shefton himself), by revealing the fascination of the objects in the collection, but reveals much of the fascination of the man behind the collection. The hundreds of classical archaeologists in whom Brian took an interest will find their memories warmly revived by this book; those who never knew him will acquire at least something of the flavour of the man, or perhaps better something of his accent.

Not the least charm of this book comes from the variety of approaches that the different scholars take. Some provide bare catalogues of the artefacts about which they write—so John Boardman merely catalogues ten 'Newcastle Gems'. Others catalogue a whole class of artefact or type of iconography to provide a context for the Newcastle examples—as Alessandro Naso catalogues Etruscan bronze funnels, or François Lissarrague, on an unusual *askos* with two pairs of helmets, catalogues occurrences of isolated helmets. Some, without actually cataloguing, provide an account of a class of artefact in order to make sense of a Newcastle object, as Diana Rodriguez Pérez on an Attic plemochoe (or exaleiptron), Brian Sparkes on Attic stemless 'Castulo' cups, and Athena Tsingarida of two Attic coral-red bowls. They situate fragments in Newcastle by judicious comparisons to particular objects elsewhere that enable their provenance and date to be established, as Dyfri Williams effectively places fragments of gold jewellery in relation to better-preserved and provenanced material from Lydia. Others again exhaustively explore one particular object collected by Shefton, tracing its collecting history as well as its own particular features of form and/or iconography. Sally Waite does this for an Attic red-figure *kalathos*, David Gill for an Attic *bolsal* once in the Nostell Priory collection. Some papers concentrate more or less exclusively on iconography, as do Susan Matheson in discussing farewell scenes on both red-figure and white-ground pots in Newcastle that can be attributed to the Achilles Painter, and Judith Barringer on the 'Shefton dolphin rider', a fragmentary marble relief that she suggests should be identified as Phalanthos, who appears riding a dolphin on Tarentine coins. By contrast Elizabeth Moignard concentrates exclusively on shape in conjuring up what is special about round boxes with lids in relation to ten examples in the Newcastle collection of diverse materials, periods and provenances. Moignard's observation that 'We hold a round box, especially a small one, in a different way from one with angles and corners and the sense that we hold a small world in our hands is very strong' wonderfully conjures up the tactile charm of these objects and the way in which shape affects, and effects, interaction.

From the volume as a whole one gets a very effective impression of the peculiar wealth of this small collection and the extraordinary capacity of Brian Shefton to spot objects of unusual interest and significance. Although Brian Shefton had an ability to persuade his university to spend rather more than they might have intended on purchases of antiquities, the collection that he built up involved rather modest expense. The whole collection is quite without showy pieces, but therein lies its value. This is not a collection that makes visitors gasp and ask how much such objects must be worth, but a collection that seduces those who spend time with it into becoming archaeologists, that is into discovering how relatively unassuming individual objects can open up a window on another world. This book is not a catalogue of the collection, but something far more valuable, a book that shows how variously the mute objects in a museum can be made to talk and the wide range of past experience which they can be made to talk about. Although no substitute for a visit to the Great North Museum in Newcastle, this recreates, rather wonderfully, the lost pleasures of conversing with, or perhaps rather being talked at by, the ever-eager and eye-twinkling Brian Shefton himself.

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Allison Glazebrook and Barbara Tsakirgis (eds) *Houses of ill repute: the archaeology of brothels, houses, and taverns in the Greek*

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world. **pp. viii+256, 59 b/w illustrations. 2016. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN 978-0-8122-9269-5 hardback and e-publication $69.95/£45.50.**

Recently archaeological scholarship on ancient Greece has widened its scope from monumental public buildings and town planning to include the sphere of houses, households and everyday life. The present volume, *Houses of ill repute: The archaeology of brothels, houses, and taverns in the Greek world*, edited by Allison Glazebrook and Barbara Tsakirgis, presents a welcome nuance by considering the realm between the public and the private in the Greek world. Written sources suggest we need to envision diverse urban landscapes in which housing and commercial areas are intertwined, and in this book a variety of contributors explore the possibilities for distinguishing such a reality with (work)shops, houses, brothels and taverns archaeologically in different urban contexts.

The Greek house is the starting point of the book and the baseline for establishing non-domestic contexts, as Tsakirgis writes in the first chapter, in which she offers an overview as well as an analysis of the concept of the Greek house by combining the archaeological evidence and the written sources, additionally employing cross-cultural comparisons and theoretical approaches. Do the commonalities in the layout of Greek houses from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period, mainly the courtyard and the entrance vestibule, hence the 'single-entrance courtyard house', hint at shared human behaviour and thought? Although it remains difficult to put it into words, the fact that Greeks recognised a house that did not adhere to the societal norms implies there was a socio-cultural set of norms attached to the concept of the house. The combination of different sources creates a lively picture of ancient housing in Greece, although I rather missed Lang's publication on Archaic houses (*Archaische Siedlungen in Griechenland: Struktur und Entwicklung*, Akademie Verlag Berlin 1991) in the bibliography.

The second and third chapters are devoted to finds assemblages and how these can inform us about the domestic or commercial character of buildings and spaces. Lynch explores this topic from the viewpoint of an early 5th century well-deposit from the courtyard of an Athenian house, and Lawall singles out the category of amphoras to examine ancient discard patterns.

Lynch (chapter two) uses the domestic assemblage that was found in well J2:4 on the Athenian Agora as a benchmark to test if and how assemblages, claimed to be from a tavern or brothel, are different. She concludes that the same kinds of pottery are used in these contexts, but that the crux is in the relative quantities in which the vessels occur. I agree with Lynch's statement, although in this case it seems not so much the larger portion of the ceramic assemblage devoted to drinking activities in the tavern deposit R13:4 which is decisive, but rather the ratio of cups to service vessels and the larger proportion of storage vessels, consisting of transport amphoras (4% for the domestic deposit and 9% for the tavern deposit). Reassuringly, the pottery assemblage from a possible brothel, Building Z at the Kerameikos in Athens, shows a different functional distribution as opposed to the domestic and tavern-context. And one wonders if the fact that the cups outnumber the service vessels at a ratio of 2:1 is merely a coincidence or suggests an intimate drinking setting, in which a prostitute and client might have enjoyed a drink as in a 19th century parlour house?

In an elegantly written chapter Lawall considers amphora debris associated with domestic and commercial structures. When amphoras are found in a house, either used as storage jar or kept on hand with the intention of reuse, the chronological span as represented by the different vessels is often large, suggesting a low rate of discard. On the contrary, shops selling amphora-contained goods or taverns show many closely dateable well-preserved amphora fragments indicating a very fast discard rate. What kind of the amphora discard pattern should we predict for brothels? Using the same building as Lynch, Building Z, Lawall concludes that the presence of commercial amphoras (Chian, Lesbian and Koan amphoras, see Ault) further strengthens the idea that the building is related to commerce in a broad sense. It would be interesting to know if, as Glazebrook suggests in her chapter, the storage volume as represented by the amphoras points at more than a single-family occupancy. The chapter gives a good overview of which amphora discard patterns we can expect in various contexts, but as these patterns are quantitative Lawall might have stressed the need for contextualisation, since quantities are of course relative. Looking at Building Z for example, Lawall's 'even larger number of well-preserved jars' (73) in phase three is not so large when placed in context, only 3% of the total pottery assemblage as calculated by Lynch in chapter two.

The following three contributions by Ault (chapter four), Trümper (chapter five) and Scahill (chapter six) all carefully analyse buildings for which an identification as a brothel has been proposed. In Ault's case the recent final publication of the aforementioned Building by Knigge (2005) offered the possibility to revisit the data and to verify its identification as

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a tavern, inn and brothel. His detailed study of the architecture and the finds from the building confirm the function of a combined tavern/inn/brothel for the first three phases, whereas in phase four and five the building had a banqueting function.

In fact, Ault uses many of the same criteria as formulated by Trümper in the next chapter in relation to places of ill repute in Hellenistic Delos. These places include two taverns that have previously been interpreted as offering wine as well as the services of prostitutes. Although the *taberna vinaria* still awaits final publication, it seems the best example so far of a tavern-type brothel as mentioned by Glazebrook in her chapter. On the other hand, Trümper's thorough contextualisation of the *taberna deversoria* in Delian domestic architecture demonstrates convincingly that it should be considered a house and not a brothel. Using a list of criteria that is very similar to Glazebrook's in chapter eight, which includes for example the layout of a building, the presence of cisterns and erotic incriptions or graffiti, Trümper identifies two more Delian locations of ill repute, the so-called Granite Palaistra that she considers a hostelry and several warehouses in which residence and commerce were combined, both locations possibly having offered additional sexual services, although this remains speculative.

Another Hellenistic building that has often been mentioned in connection to (sacred) prostitution is the South Stoa in Corinth, as discussed by Scahill in chapter six. A recent pottery analysis by McPhee and Pemberton and a study of the architectural design by the author demonstrate that such an identification is difficult to sustain, because although the building does provide the amenities we think necessary for a brothel, such as many individual rooms, access to water, and possibly even latrines, there is no real positive evidence for designating the building as a brothel. Although it is not made explicit if the pottery assemblage is rich in dining ware, the off-centred doorways and a figurine of a reclining banqueter suggest that dinner parties might have taken place in the stoa. That several *kantharoi* show inscribed names of deities might lend a sacred character to these meetings, which would fit in well with the presence of cults in the area and a votive deposit under the stoa's floor. It remains a guess if prostitutes were present at these occasions, perhaps an analysis of the finds might shed some light on this.

A fresh and different view on houses and interior space is offered by Smith (chapter seven) who analysed imagery on Athenian vases. Her study points out that distinguishing between interior and exterior spaces as depicted in vase paintings is difficult, all the more because some areas of the house, like the courtyard, are private, but not strictly part of the interior. Rather than painting real scenes, the painters evoked a sense of privacy by depicting interior space as articulated by architectural features like doors, columns and windows. The depiction of interior space is thus used to emphasise the social aspects of space, like the home. In a way, this chapter has a lot in common with Tsakirgis's chapter as both study the concept of the house and the ways in which it was perceived and used by the ancient Greeks.

In the last chapter, the focus shifts to places of ill repute again, brothels. Glazebrook rightly points at some interpretative difficulties, stating that a *porneion* is characterised by the presence of prostitutes, rather than by a specific architectural shape. Furthermore, many of these places were multi-purpose, and not so narrowly defined as our term 'brothel' implies, which is why the tavern-type brothel is perhaps most apt for the ancient Greek world, because in many of these establishments sex would have been just one commodity amongst many. To complicate things even further, a *porneion* might look frustratingly like a house, which it also might have been for the prostitutes, both in terms of architectural spaces and finds assemblage.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Glazebrook distils several factors associated with places of prostitution: a central location; the presence of wells/cisterns, a courtyard, multiple *andrōnes*, multiple entrances and small rooms; an assemblage with drinking ware; the presence of erotic inscriptions, graffiti or objects and an abundance of gendered objects. Glazebrook encourages archaeologists to take these factors into account and to consider a brothel as a possibility.

I would like to propose two additions to the toolkit for identifying places of ill repute both with regard to space: the first is the distribution of finds and the second is access analysis for determining accessibility and privacy of architectural spaces. Another suggestion would be to integrate non-ancient archaeology of brothels, like that of the 19th century United States, as a comparative model (as used by Glazebrook). Although the book has highlighted possibilities for identifying places of ill repute and added it as a serious category in archaeological thinking, simultaneously it has demonstrated limits and posed conceptual challenges. But above all, this book has shown that there are many realities hiding between the oversimplified categories of public and private, and that between this black and white the ancient Greek world is not grey, but all the more colourful.

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