

Late Classical Pottery from Ancient Corinth: Drain 1971-1 in the Forum Southwest. Vol. VII.6, Corinth, by Ian McPhee and Elizabeth G. Pemberton, with contributions by Orestes Zervos and Elizabeth Whitton. Pp. xxiv + 400, figs. 74, b&w pls.52. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Princeton 2012. \$150. ISBN 978-0-87661-076-3.

McPhee and Pemberton have produced a comprehensive synthesis of the ceramic materials from Drain 1971-1, located between Buildings I and II in the area of the Forum at Corinth. The Drain represents the largest deposit of its kind from the second half of the 4th century B.C.E. and – although both authors previously worked with subsets of materials from the Drain – this study represents the first comprehensive statistical study of the assemblage. It offers a detailed description of the excavated materials as well as several discussions of form and form development that transcend traditional brevity; it also sheds light on the use and historical development of the associated buildings. Technical specifications pepper the prose, and their frequency creates a solid foundation for the volume's analytical components. A somewhat conversational tone facilitates access to this complex subject, and the authors succeed in organizing their analysis in a manner that is both user-friendly and intellectually sound.

Drain 1971-1 is a round-bottomed water channel cut into the bedrock in the southwestern part of the Roman Forum. The authors posit that it connected with a major built drain that extended along the northwest facades of four buildings in this area of the Forum before joining with the main city drain, though the second part of this hypothesis remains untested. Two short branches extend along the back of Building

II and behind Building I. The excavated portion of the Drain, initially uncovered in 1971, stretches for at least 22 m and has variable widths. The most numerous artifacts were ceramic fragments, decayed mud brick, and tile, though some metal and stone items were also present. Examination of the ceramics revealed that articulating fragments were scattered throughout the deposit, horizontally and vertically, and that the ceramics were broken prior to their deposition. The prevalence of vessels for food-related activities is clear, though some evidence of ritual and official activities is also present.

The authors' intimate knowledge of the site and its materials becomes apparent in their reconstruction of the events immediately preceding the original deposition. Their synthesis and contextualization of the data leads to the conclusion that the deposit is largely homogeneous and the result of a one-time fill dump, with much of the material originating in Building II. The singularity of this event is attributed to an earthquake that damaged the contents of the buildings and caused them to be shoveled into the Drain. The second chapter introduces six categories of attested ceramic materials, each of which is described in turn. Particular attention is given to black-glazed plain ware, pseudo-Cypriot blister ware, and cooking ware; the authors' analysis of the last and largest of these categories revealed overlap among the four main fabrics, a range of colors, and the characteristic presence or absence of stroke burnishing and dribbled slip.

The majority of the volume consists of a summary of the excavated materials that is divided into eleven catalogues based on functionality, many of which revolve around the preparation, transportation, and consumption of food and drink. Materials with shared culinary purposes such as food preparation and measurement (Catalogue II), cooking (Catalogue III), or

serving and pouring liquids (Catalogue V) are unsurprisingly grouped together. Other kinds of classifications – including the catchall category of vessels not intended for use with food or drink (Catalogue VIII), the more specific groupings of service vessels (Catalogue IX) and vessels for oil and perfumed oils (Catalogue VII), and the inevitable set deemed “miscellaneous” (Catalogue X) – are also included. Materials that pre- or postdate the main deposit are briefly addressed in Catalogue XI, along with a summary of eight of the best-preserved items from this category.

The forms represented in each catalogue are described in varying levels of detail and discussed in terms of variation and frequency, although no profile illustrations are provided in the catalogues themselves. An impressive set of illustrations and photographs of the referenced items is given in the set of figures at the end of the volume, but the separation of image and text feels a bit disjointed and could cause difficulty for students or others who are less familiar with the site’s ceramics. Technical specifications are described when necessary and a comprehensive, itemized list of all examples from the Drain is given at the end of each section. The end result is a synthesis that is able to present complex data in an accessible way, and this volume would be an excellent reference or comparative work for those focusing on Corinthian archaeology and all kinds of ceramic analysis.

Kathryn Marie Hudson

Department of Anthropology
SUNY at Buffalo