

the war and the boudoir, they share a formal and functional similarity, both being metallic discs, both being able to rebound and deflect. In this chapter, the author dedicates some spaces to the shield of Lamachus in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, the mirroring shield in the Alexander mosaic of the House of the Faun, proceeding then to analyze two famous iconographic cycles connected with Achilles himself: Achilles on Skyros and Thetis in the forge of Vulcan. In the fifth chapter, "The Mirroring Shield of Perseus" (pp. 169–96), the author takes a look in the eyes of Medusa, starting again from the discussion on the mythological narrative and its iconographic counterparts, with digressions on various interpretations of the myth starting with Freud. Differently from the shield of Achilles which shows shadows of the past and the future as a means of moral correction, the shield of Perseus is interpreted only as a medium for diminution, with limited effect of absorbing force, not effecting change on the interiority of the protagonist.

The task undertaken in the volume is not easy, as it involves the discussion of a whole series of some of the most debated ancient images, from the frieze of the Villa of the Mysteries to the Alexander mosaic, dwelling in the myths of Narcissus and Perseus which are unexhausted sources for new interpretations. Nevertheless, the book is successful in its complex enterprise of analyzing the reasons of the non-casuality of the mirror image in Roman iconography. The inner division in chapters and paragraphs lacks some structural clarity to guide the reader, but among the merits of the volume are its rich and well selected illustrations as well as the new arguments and tools offered for the discussion on the imagery of reflection; it thus succeeds in perpetuating the fascination of the Roman mirror images.

Ria Berg

BARRY HOBSON: *Latrinae et Foricae. Toilets in the Roman World*. Duckworth, London 2009. ISBN 978-0715638507. X, 190 pp. GBP 14.99.

Barry Hobson's book, *Latrinae et Foricae: Toilets in the Roman World*, focuses on Roman toilets, their distribution, function and significance. Although the title mentions Roman world, the emphasis lies mainly on Italy, and on Pompeii and Ostia in particular. This is understandable because of the richness of the available material in, as well as author's extensive familiarity with, these sites, but might come as a disappointment to some. In order to compensate for the imbalance, the volume starts with an introduction in which known remains of toilets in various parts of the Roman world are presented, in a guide-book manner. The beginning constituted the most puzzling part of my reading experience. Whereas it shows that toilets were widespread, which does not come as a surprise, given that we talk about highly urban settlements, it also shows that they were varied in construction and style. The reader is left with too many questions as no explanations are given at this point. At the end of my reading experience I was left to wonder, whether it would have been better to start with the second to last chapter, *Who cares about latrines?*

Hobson's style is casual, yet informative. However, one notices Hobson's background as a doctor (GP) by the occasional use of rather specific scatological and medical terminology (especially in chapter *Motions, maladies and medicine*). The contrast is pronounced when the glossary contains explanations of terms such as "atrium" or "diachronic". The volume is very up to date, it includes, e.g., a reference to the recent studies of Herculaneum sewers, the final

results of which still await publication. Hobson's work is a part of a hitherto overlooked but quickly growing discipline. As far as I am aware, in Pompeii alone there currently are several studies focusing on waste disposal, including human excrement. On the whole this exemplifies change in interests from, as Hobson puts it, the "heroic and monumental", to everyday life.

The discussion of the evidence as a whole takes place towards the end of the work. It becomes clear that the great variability described at the beginning is a result of differences in local geology, settlement history and factors such as population size and city layout. Hobson poses the interesting question of whether the lack of toilets in the Roman villas of Britain is due to the availability of space and hence less evident pressure by a growing population to develop and control its disposal strategies.

Hobson's greatest contribution is to ask questions which are related to the experiential in addition to technical aspects of treating human waste. He seeks to comprehend how Romans understood concepts such as smell, dirt and privacy, and whether their understanding was bound to class or gender. This is a direction less taken so far but increasingly *en vogue* (see, e.g., Beard [2008] *Pompeii; Life of a Roman town*).

In terms of technological aspects, Hobson gives a very good picture of what we so far know of the actual use mechanisms of Roman toilets. He, for instance, lists ways to identify toilet structures. Although resembling criteria given, e.g., by Jansen (1997, in Bon and Jones [eds.] *Sequence and Space in Pompeii*) and Andrews (2006, *The Use and Development of Upper Floors in Houses at Herculaneum*), rewriting and reorganizing these arguments is a contribution towards a consensus on how to identify toilet structures and determine their functions.

Moreover, although based on material mainly deriving from a single Pompeian city block, Hobson suggest that there might have been time-related changes in the placing of toilets. They were first built deep into the matrix of the house. Later on, locations next to circumference walls, as well as upstairs, were favored. This line of thought needs further research but is interesting. If evidence for change is found more extensively, are the reasons resulting in changes related to building practices, changes in space use or changes in people's preferences? According to Hobson, living spaces were increasingly moved to upper floors, convenience and smell was thought of with these changes. He dates the changes to the first century AD, an era so often portrayed as a period of major changes in Pompeian society. Moreover, Hobson argues that over time smaller toilets were favored at the expense of large ones, which could indicate an increased desire for privacy.

As a further note on privacy, Hobson suggests that men only used communal toilets. Moreover, the elite members of the society, and perhaps women more in general, used chamber pots instead of built-in toilets. However, one wonders how much fictional characters, such as Trimalchio's exaggerated portrayal, or malicious notes written on walls, reflect common practices. If men's privacy was protected by their togas, could not women's voluptuous tunics provide similar privacy? Privacy is altogether a delicate discipline as is it very much based both on social practices and personal preferences.

In a similar vein to privacy, the definition of rubbish, or refuse, is very much a cultural construct and defined differently by different individuals. It depends on our perceptions of what is useful or not, recyclable or not, valuable or not, or inconvenient or not. Indeed, our concepts of cleanliness and unpleasantness were not shared by the Romans. Hobson embarks to define some of their concepts. He uses historical sources, ethnography, medical and chemical understanding to approximate their reactions, responses and attitudes to waste, bodily dis-

charge, fumes and smell. Interestingly, Hobson argues for some universals among all people of all times. Moreover, Hobson discusses sources which, according to him, show that rubbish problems were very real. The discussion takes him to the concept of hygiene and transmission of diseases.

All in all, Hobson's treatment of complex topics is worth an praise. He painstakingly goes through his sources to deduce some overarching principles. As Hobson treads on sensitive ground, it is rather easy to both agree and disagree with him, but at least he brings the topics up. And that is valuable.

*Heini Ynnilä*

*Atlante tematico di topografia antica* 19. A cura di LORENZO QUILICI – STEFANIA QUILICI GIGLI. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 2009. ISSN 2036-3834. 325 pp. EUR 195.

Ecco un volume benvenuto nella serie ATTA. Apre con tre contributi dedicati a centri dell'Italia centro-settentrionale: Ch. Chiussi, "Urbanistica di Piacenza"; Ch. Bianchi, "Le necropoli di Ariminum: analisi topografica"; A. Del Re, "Il sistema idraulico di Chiusi in epoca antica".

La parte del leone è costituita dai contributi su varie questioni riguardanti la zona più meridionale della penisola. In un contributo importante G. Cera, "Sopravvivenze della divisione agraria romana nella piana di Venafro" si analizzano i resti della centuriazione, strade e altre fonti per elucidare quanto resta di un sistema di organizzazione agraria di età romana. L'articolo è ricco di osservazioni interessanti ed equilibrate e nel complesso si può aderire ai risultati dell'a. Seguono contributi ugualmente interessanti di M. Pagano – M. Raddi – A. Pannacci, "Lo scavo di Macchiagodena-Fosso Pampalone (Isernia) e la problematica dei rapporti fra luoghi di culto e insediamenti nel Sannio Pentro"; S. Cascella, "La villa presso il teatro di Sessa Aurunca: una prima presentazione"; St. Quilici Gigli, "Organizzazione e aspetti dello spazio sacro. Appunti sul santuario capuano di Diana alle falde del Tifata". Segue un lunga sezione dedicata a Norba, con più autori; per i lettori di questa rivista il maggior interesse deriverà da un'analisi approfondita su una dedica a Diana rinvenuta nell'acropoli maggiore di Norba da parte di P. Carfora e D. Nonnis. Il dedicante era un certo *C. B+[/---] Attalus*, di cui lo stato giuridico resta aperto. Nonnis, che discute a lungo la questione (e la diffusione del cognome, di certa origine macedone [ma la rarità delle attestazioni dell'età repubblicana si spiega con la rarità della documentazione onomastica in generale]), sembrerebbe propendere per un'origine libertina, ma piuttosto penserei ad un ex peregrino; in documenti per così dire ufficiali della seconda metà del II secolo ci si aspetterebbe l'omissione del cognome, anche se d'altra parte ci sono noti, in fonti letterarie, casi dei liberti con cognome già molto prima (cfr. quanto dico in *Menschenraub, Menschenhandel und Sklaverei in antiker und moderner Perspektive* [2008] 104sgg.). Chiude il lungo articolo di L. Quilici, "Praetorium Speluncae. Ricerche sui confini della proprietà imperiale". Tutto sommato un volume ricco di contributi interessanti.

*Heikki Solin*