

The Second Life of Broken Greek Pots (San Francisco/online, 7-10 Jan 26)

San Francisco, California (USA) / Online, Jan 7-10, 2026

Deadline: Mar 15, 2025

Michael Anthony Fowler, East Tennessee State University

"Sherds of Time: The Second Life of Broken Greek Pots",
Hybrid Panel organized by Michael Anthony Fowler (East Tennessee State University) and Astrid Lindenlauf (Bryn Mawr College).

Clay objects break at different rates, but they tend to break eventually. Yet breakage does not necessarily end the use life of vessels. If a damaged vase is not considered irreparable, it may be mended and used for the same purpose (reuse) or a different function (reutilization). The re-utilization of potsherds, large and small, may involve modifications, for instance, when they are repurposed as gaming pieces or serve as readily available materials to fill potholes or to level the ground as part of a construction project. Furthermore, a broken vessel (or potsherds) may also be broken down completely to reclaim the material (recycling). While these processes and practices have received some attention in recent years, especially with reference to Roman clay objects, they remain understudied for Greek pottery.

In this session, we bring together scholars who examine practices and processes resulting in the manifold trajectories of broken Greek pottery in antiquity. We seek contributions that discuss the circumstances under which individuals or groups of people afforded damaged Greek pots (and their fragments) a second life. Going beyond explanatory models of scarcity and economic necessity, we aim to illuminate the properties and qualities that people or entire communities appreciated and valued in these objects, ranging from shape to sharpness.

We are also interested in exploring the degree to which a focus on efforts to keep things in the flow of time, even as their form recalls acute moments of breakage, enables fresh insights into notions of beauty, functionality, emotional attachment, and memory and its materialization. We likewise seek contributions that engage with technical and practical questions, such as tools, craft specialization, and workspaces. In short, we welcome papers that study the renewed lives of ancient Greek clay objects from a diversity of approaches, including social biographical, technical, economic, phenomenological, aesthetic, and emotional.

Data sets from archaeological sites and the plentiful yet un(der)studied evidence contained in museum collections are welcome, as are data sets of different scales, ranging from an individual example to quantitative studies across time and space that can speak to well-established economies of circularity.

We ask that paper abstracts of 300 words (excluding title) be sent in English to: fowlerma@etsu.edu and alindenlau@brynmawr.edu by March 15, 2025.

Please address the following when submitting your abstract:

- 1) The research problem addressed
- 2) Significance of the research (topic, methodology, or outcomes)
- 3) Goals of the study
- 4) Sources of evidence / data used in the study
- 5) Research / analytical methods
- 6) Conclusions of the study

Each panel may nominate one nonresident (of the USA or Canada) speaker for an AIA Nonresident Presenter Travel grant. Please indicated whether you would like to be nominated. For planning purposes, please also indicate whether you are likely to present remotely. While we encourage on-ground delivery, remote applicants will be given equal consideration.

All submissions will be reviewed anonymously, and the decision of the reviewers will be communicated to the authors of abstracts by March 19, 2025, with enough time that those whose abstracts are not selected can choose to submit them through the individual abstract submission process.

Questions about the panel and submissions may be sent to fowlerma@etsu.edu and alindenlau@brynmawr.edu.

Reference:

CFP: The Second Life of Broken Greek Pots (San Francisco/online, 7-10 Jan 26). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 1, 2025 (accessed Apr 4, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/44086>>.