Institution: University of Oxford

Unit of Assessment: UOA31

Title of case study: Accessing Ancient Art: The Beazley Archive Online Database

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The Beazley Archive Online Database enables large and diverse audiences to access and understand ancient art through Oxford research. It allows users around the world to ask and answer their own research questions and to learn about ancient imagery. It is principally dedicated to the study of ancient Athenian figure-decorated pottery and ancient/neo-classical engraved gems. It makes available hundreds of thousands of pictures and information-fields which can be browsed and searched in a variety of ways, according to the level and requirements of the user. The Database is the foremost academic tool for the study of ancient Greek pottery, but its demonstrable impact extends far beyond academia, to an international audience of students, educators, museums, businesses, and private researchers.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

The research described below was undertaken specifically to construct the Beazley Archive Online Database as the first and only database of its kind. This case-study relates to two parts of the Database which have been constructed on the basis of in-house research - those covering pottery and gems - as described below. For the sake of clarity they will be referred to in this section as separate databases, although technically they are a single resource accessed on one server through a single programme.

(i) Pottery Database:
The Pottery Database documents more than 107,000 ancient Greek painted pots and fragments, primarily those produced in ancient Athens during the 6th to 4th centuries BC. The pottery database was begun in its pre-web form in 1979, but an estimated 86% of the current records have been created, edited or expanded since 1 January 1993 (with high-quality images added to more than 53,000 of the records since that date). Effectively, all usage of the Database therefore necessarily relies on research conducted within the relevant census period.

The underpinning research for the database involves the construction of records that: describe painted pots; identify their place and period of production; identify the elements of their iconography; compile thorough image-bibliographies; and document past attributions to particular pot-painters. The records are stored in XML format on a bespoke XDB ('extensible') database designed in 2004 by the Beazley Archive's IT director, Gregory Parker. The database seeks to include classical Athenian pots appearing in every available publication, including auction catalogues. A fundamental part of the research process is identifying painted pots on the art market if they have previously been recorded, or creating new records for them if they have not. Researchers have also integrated into the records the English and ancient Greek text from H. Immerwahr's *Corpus of Attic Vase Inscriptions* (http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/attic/) and data/images from the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, which the Archive digitizes on behalf of the Union Académique Internationale. The Database has become the world's main resource (unrivalled except by the vases themselves) for research into ancient Athenian pottery. This is evidenced, for example, by the fact that Beazley Archive Database record numbers are now regularly used as a standard, internationally recognised means of citing individual pots.

(ii) Gems Database:
Begun in 2002, the Gems database now has more than 25,400 records comprising texts and images of individual engraved gems or sets of gems and impressions. Its main purpose is to document unpublished or dispersed collections and series of ancient and neoclassical gems. The underpinning research involves archival study and examination of the gems/impressions themselves in order to identify and date them, and to interpret their iconography and significance.

The main collections covered include: Corpus of Classical Phoenician Scarabs; Poniatowski Collection; Marlborough Collection; Paoletti and Amastini impressions; James Tassie impressions; Danicourt Collection.

Research for the pottery and gems database records was carried out between 1 January 1993 and 31 December 2013 by the following staff: Dr Thomas Mannack (Senior Researcher, 1993-2013); Dr Claudia Wagner (Senior Researcher, 2002-2013); Melanie Mendonça (Research Assistant, 1993-6); Alastair Harden (Research Assistant, 2010-2013). Also, Professor Sir John Boardman (Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art, Oxford, 1978-1994 and Beazley Archive Senior Research Associate working on gems, 1994-2013). Five other research assistants were employed at particular stages to help integrate material from the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* into the Pottery Database.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Principle reference:
Various authors (see list of researchers, above)
Beazley Archive Online Database, 1993- (see above for explanation of dates)
Online Extensible Database freely accessible through the Beazley Archive's website:
http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/databases/
Direct access to pottery section in basic and full versions: http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/pottery
Direct access to gems section: http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/gems
Evidence of quality of the research:

- Peer review for successful funding applications to the Getty Grant Program (2002-4), AHRC (2003-6), Paul Mellon Centre for British Art (2007, 2009-2010).
- Archive has had status of British Academy Research Project since 1981, with grant support for database during 1990s and early 2000s.
- Beazley Archive Pottery Database record numbers have become international standard form of citing ancient Greek vases.
- Testimonials available on request from leading academics and curators in the field.

Additional references:
The online Database is the focus of this Impact Case-Study, but the following traditional outputs are cited as additional evidence of the range and quality of the underpinning research, and because these publications closely complement the Database.

T. Mannack, *Haspels Addenda* (Oxford, 2006).
Printed additions to CHE Haspels's *Attic Black-Figured Lekythoi* (1936), compiled in conjunction with the Database research. Can be supplied on request.

C. Wagner and J. Boardman, *A Collection of Classical and Eastern Intaglios, Rings and Cameos* (Oxford: Beazley Archive in Association with Archaeopress, 2003).
Catalogue of an important, old, private collection, researched in parallel with the Database. Can be supplied on request.

C. Wagner, contributions to J. Boardman, D. Scarisbrick, C. Wagner, E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *The Marlborough Gems Formerly at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire* (Oxford, 2009). REF2: Wagner – N04

> Review by Roger Ling, review in *The Antiquaries Journal* 91 (August 2011): 387: "The Marlborough catalogue is an extremely valuable compilation. It is, moreover, a triumph of detective work: much energy has been devoted to tracing the history and present whereabouts of individual gems. At the same time, it is a work in progress: many of the missing pieces may still turn up, and it is clearly one of the purposes of this publication to help in the quest.")

Catalogue reconstructing a major collection. Researched in parallel with the Database, and the Database has been used to update information and advertise the hunt for lost gems. Relevant contributions listed in REF2.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Beazley Archive Online Database is a unique tool for all kinds of users, academic and non-academic, to carry out their own research and learning. It facilitates and promotes study by school and university students, curators, businesses (including all the major international auction-houses), archaeological authorities, collectors, and other members of the public. Giving access to thousands of images, descriptions and scholarly information, it enables users, e.g.:

- to study a phenomenal range of ancient iconography;
- to identify artefacts and make comparisons;
- to carry out provenance research;
- to discover for themselves previously unseen patterns and correlations among the data.

Numerous search and filtering methods are available to users according to their needs and level of specialism - from simple searches in selected portions of the Database to complex searches (up to *c*. 30 search fields), a mapping function, statistical tools, etc. for the pottery records. These facilities allow a huge variety of users to generate their own information, ideas, and questions, profiting from the intellectual 'capital' invested through the research that created the Database. The database is freely available through the internet. It is visually accessible and further accompanied by webpages designed to have a broad appeal (e.g. introductions to vase-painting and gems).

The extent of use and diversity of users are attested by server logs and Google Analytics, other websites and publications referring to the Database, and the testimony of colleagues and other users. For example, in the year to 31 July 2013: 592 'unique visitors' each day (*c*. 15,820 page views), from 160 countries, especially North America, UK, the rest of Europe, Australasia, Japan, India, and the Middle East. Optional user registrations offer more detail: 2,647 registrations in the census period with at least 455 from outside higher education, including 238 high schools, 64 commercial organisations, 68 museums, and 85 (inter-)governmental bodies/authorities etc. They include Italian and Greek Ministries of Education and Culture/ Tourism; and other cultural/archaeological authorities in Greece, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands.

The positive impact of the wide and genuine accessibility of this intellectual and cultural resource can be traced in various contexts, notably those summarized below:

The Art/Antiquities Trade[1, 2]

The Database is routinely used in the art trade. It is essential for gathering information and scholarly judgements about collection history, authorship, date, meaning, and comparanda for Greek vases and engraved gems. Such information has an often dramatic effect on the value and saleability of the material, as well as fostering good practice in provenance research. Consequently, catalogues of the main international auction houses now cite Beazley Archive Database numbers in provenance information.

Scrutinising the Antiquities Trade[i, ii]

The Database is equally used by those combating the looting and illegal trade in antiquities. Prominent critics of the trade use the Database to establish whether works for sale have been in circulation before the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. It is the first recourse for those wanting to check whether a Greek vase has a long history above the ground, and thereby to scrutinise the wider practices of the trade.

Museums

Curators in museums with relevant collections routinely use the Database to understand their own objects. It has led to important new discoveries. For example, between 2009 and 2011, the Getty Museum in Los Angeles used the Database to help discover that one of its most famous ancient 'Roman' gems is, in fact, 19th-century[3]. Dr Alexandra Villing at the British Museum states 'We are ... using the Beazley Archive database regularly here for our own research ... and I often refer students and members of the public to it as well if they have any queries relating to vases or gems ... a phenomenally useful resource'[4].

Student Learning
The Database has been used to inform teaching materials and textbooks aimed at undergraduates studying ancient pottery[iii]. Many university libraries internationally refer students to the Database in lists of online resources[iv]. Undergraduates use the Database for assembling images for written assessments.

Public Education/Private Information
The Database is used to inform online resources such as Wikipedia (where it is regularly cited), which then serve to disseminate the product of the underpinning research further in different forms[v]. Online references to the Database and anecdotal evidence (including messages of thanks) attest to the fact that it has transformed private individuals' understanding of ancient works of art or objects in personal collections (e.g. enabling them to identify, date, value and interpret objects and images)[vi]. The database ranks high in relevant Google searches and appears in 40+ online resources for students and the public created by university libraries, museums etc., including the European Commission's openeducationeuropa.eu

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Testimony
[1] Corroboration of impact on the Art/Antiquities Trade: International Head of Antiquities Department, Christie's
[2] Corroboration of impact on the Art/Antiquities Trade: Chairman, International Association of Dealers in Ancient History
[3] Corroboration of impact on museums: Associate Curator of Antiquities, J. Paul Getty Museum
[4] Statement from Curator of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum

Other evidence sources
[i] Professor David Gill's *Looting Matters* blog, passim (40+ references since 2008): http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/
[ii] Association for Research into Crimes Against Art (ARCA) Art Crime blog, e.g. http://art-crime.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/online-review-of-christies-sale-of.html
[iii] B. Sparkes, *Greek Art* (Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics, no. 40) (Cambridge University Press 2011), pp. 109-110. Guide to the subject aimed at 6th form and undergraduate students, explaining Database as a key resource.
[iv] Ithaca College 'Project Look Sharp' media literacy website, recommending Database as a school classroom resource: http://www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/?action=webresources_socialstudies
[v] Full list of URLs for online listings and Wikipedia entries can be supplied on request. E.g.: htttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engraved_gem
[vi] Dossier of correspondence/feedback from users can be supplied on request.