The first book is the second volume of the Collana Pompei series and the second volume on the Casa di M. Fabio Rufo and the research of the project, Pompei – Insula Occidentalis: le case sulle mura, and reports on ten years of excavation in the garden of this house. In his introductory statement Massimo Osanno, superintendent of Pompeii, reminds us that safeguarding Pompeii is central to contemporary culture. The further brief introduction by Umberto Pappalardo and Masanori Aoyagi, stresses this publication’s importance for understanding the building history of the Casa di M. Fabio Rufo, and refers to an online database but this does not seem to be available as yet. The main part of volume is divided into four main chapters.

Ch. 1, by Mario Grimaldi, provides an overview of the project which investigates two areas where houses straddle Pompeii’s city walls – the area to south of Porta Marina, and the Insula Occidentalis. He outlines previous excavations in the latter area, commencing in the mid-18th century and including excavations in garden by Amedeo Maiuri in 1959. He also outlines the main construction and decoration phases of this area and particularly of the Casa di M. Fabio Rufo. Grimaldi notes that among the epigraphical remains a signet ring of M. Fabio Rufo was found in the adjacent house (VII, 16, 17). He also noted pipes with names C.C. Juliorum Eupli et Pothini, whom he identified as freedmen of the Julii family, occupying this house in the Augustan-Claudian period.

Ch. 2 summarises the results from the thirteen excavation trenches in the garden of Casa di M. Fabio Rufo, the stratigraphical identification of five occupation phases of the house, and relationships of the city wall to the development of the Insula Occidentalis.

Ch. 3, of some 237 pages, takes up most of the volume, and consists of twenty-five sections by various authors with detailed discussions and catalogues of classes of material excavated in this garden. These finds are predominantly ceramics but also coins, remains of decoration, furniture, sculpture and other silver, bronze and bone artefacts, such as cloth-working and gaming items. The bulk of the finds come from levels dated 62-79 C.E., but other finds serve to date the different stratigraphic phasing of the area. For example, Bucchero, Attic Black-figure and pre-Roman architectural terracottas are used to date the earliest levels and to identify a 6th century B.C.E. sanctuary adjacent to the Temple of Apollo. Coins were predominantly from the Imperial period, the latest a Vespasianic as dated 77/78 C.E., but also some poorly preserved Greek and Republican
coins are reported. Notably no utilitarian items such as utilitarian ceramics except amphorae or iron artefacts are reported, undoubtedly because the focus is on these finds as chronological indicators. Luana Pisano noted (132) the need for closer collaboration among the colleagues analysing different classes of material. I would agree, although possibly for different reasons. That is, a better sense of the contextualised deposits and a focus on what these artefact assemblages comprise in terms of, for example, the percentages of different types of materials, and more analyses across these different materials would provide more information on living in the area during the different phases. For example, P. Buondonno’s section on ‘la ceramic a pareti sottili’ does not enlighten the reader on the function of these fine-walled cups. And what do the large lamp assemblage and the more precise stratigraphical contexts tell us about their roles throughout Pompeian history (cf. Griffiths n.d.)? Or what can we learn from the range of terra sigillata forms, or the relative quantities of cloth-working, writing and gaming equipment, in the different occupation phases (see Allison 2009)? And. Such consumption approaches to these finds would have been welcome (cf. Breeze 2016), although, without documentation of the more utilitarian material, the quantities of lamps and terra sigillata might seem proportionately higher than they actually are, and the activities they document more significant. This recent excavation appears to have focussed on the exceptional material rather than a more holistic record of these artefactual remains.

Ch. 4 has sections on: the history of excavations and building conservation of Casa di Fabio Rufo; the digital surveys and 3D reconstructions of this house and their technological evolution over the duration of the project; the zooarchaeological remains, including dormice, identified principally as food remains; and analyses of pigments and drawing techniques used in the wall-paintings. Missing from this chapter, though, are any archeobotanical analyses. The chapter is titled ‘interdisciplinary studies’. However, such scientific analyses might be considered fairly standard in many current archaeological reports.

The volume is lavishly illustrated, with fifteen plates and hundreds of figures comprising current and archival plans and photographs, and reconstruction drawings. Many archival plans and the reconstruction drawings of wall-painting schemes are too small to read, though. Also many of the captions lack full location and directional information and figure numbers change for each chapter.

In summary, this volume constitutes a splendid presentation of most of the excavated material from this garden and state-of-the-art reconstructions. While this report is fairly traditional in general archaeological terms, it can be considered a milestone in publications of Pompeian excavations, with its relatively comprehensive catalogues of contextualised artefacts.
The second book is the third volume of the Collana Pompeii series and comprises a study of the Pompeian Forum for which Grimaldi carried out a careful examination of the *Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia* I-III (1860 – 1864), Giuseppi Fiorelli’s publication of the pre-1860 excavation diaries. The two prefaces by Osanno and Luca Moschini of Il Gruppo Laminazione Sottile who supported this project are again followed by an introduction by Pappalardo and Aoyagi, stressing this publication’s particular importance concerning the sculptural remains from the region of the forum in Pompeii. The main part of the volume comprises nine main chapters, by Grimaldi, and an appendix by Grimaldi and Annamaria Rodriquez.

In his brief ch.1 Grimaldi outlines his examination of the *Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia* (PAH), for a more complete understanding of the Forum excavations between 1811 and 1825, and exemplifies some of his discoveries during this examination. Ch. 2 comprises a history of these excavation, and of the excavators, commencing with the renewed enthusiasm that was brought to the Pompeian excavations with the reign of the French king of Naples, Giuseppe Bonaparte. This chapter also traces the history of the development of the Forum from its Oscan foundation, as a simple beaten earth square, to its latest rectangular form in the 2nd cent. B.C.E, to its final monumentalisation in the 1st cent. C.E. Here Grimaldi also outlines the histories of the various buildings and their identifications during various excavation programmes. Much of this history is well known, but this chapter provides a useful reminder that Pompeii’s civic centre, many of its buildings, and its final form were pre-Roman.

The following five chapters (chs 3 – 7) comprise more in-depth studies of each building in this area – the Temple of Apollo, the various buildings that surround the Forum, and the Temple of Fortuna Augusta to the south of Forum. Each chapter includes a history and chronology of specific buildings and their excavations, and their identifications. The buildings around the Forum are described in an anticlockwise direction starting with the Basilica and finishing, along the west side of the forum, an area which has received less attention, at the site of the *Mensa Ponderaria*. For their excavation and building histories Grimaldi is largely reliant on studies and published excavations, not only by Fiorelli, but also by other scholars such as Amedeo Maiuri, Paul Arthur, John Dobbins and Kurt Wallat. Again much of this is published elsewhere but this study provides a useful synthesis of these earlier studies and, where there have been disputes, serves to put the record straight. In some cases, though, Grimaldi would seem to accept building chronologies and their absolute dates without critical discussion, such as the actual evidence for the dating of the Sanctuary of the Public Lares (46).

Grimaldi’s original contributions in these chapter, though, result from his close scrutiny of the reports in the *PAH* and a re-examination of relevant sculptural remains in the Naples Museum,
including of their ancient and modern restorations, to enhance our understanding of the area of the
civic centre in Pompeii. In particular, he identifies: the two sculptures of Concordia and Eumachia
from the Building of the Eumachia and their original locations; the sculptures from the Macellum as
Flavian - Titus’ daughter Julia, and Britannicus; and two heads of Jupiter and a head of Juno from
the Temple of Jupiter.

Ch. 8 comprises brief biography of Fiorelli’s career and reproduces the parts of the PAH
describing the excavation in the Forum area (May 1813 until April 1822). Ch. 9 reiterates the
important role of the French rulers of the Two Sicilies in the excavations of this civic centre of
Pompeii and reinforces the argument that it had been largely destroyed prior to the final eruption in
79 CE. Following this conclusion is an illustrated appendix which summarises some the notorieties
who visited Pompeii – from Wincklemann and Piranesi in 1770 to Picasso, to Pink Floyd in 1971 –
and use the PAH to emphasise the support of Queen Caroline for the Pompeii excavations.

The book is generally very well illustrated with both archival and modern plans, as well as
archival drawings, paintings and photographs, and a wealth of current photographs, many taken by
Grimaldi. Some of the archival maps showing the actual state of the excavations during the early
nineteenth century, again, have been reproduced at too small a scale for their legends to be legible.
Also there are several references to plates and associated Naples Museum inventory numbers (116-
118) but no such plates and no image of MANN 6083.

With the lavish illustrations, are not all discussed in the text, and the relatively synthetic
treatment of much of the urban development of the Forum area, there is often the sense that this
volume constitutes more of a coffee-table or general interest book, presumably for Il Gruppo
Laminazione Sottile, rather than a scholarly work. However, the detailed research that has been
undertaken to produce this book should not be underestimated. Grimaldi has amply demonstrated
his detailed attention to both the archival evidence and the extant remains of sculpture in the Naples
Museum to makes an important contribution to Pompeian studies.

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