

BOOK REVIEW

Domus Pompeiana M. Lucretii IX 3, 5.24: The Inscriptions, Works of Art and Finds from the Old and New Excavations. Edited by RIA BERG AND ILKKA KUIVALAINEN. *Commentationes humanarum litterarum*, 136. Helsinki, FI: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2019. Pp. 323. Paperback, 103,05€. ISBN: 9789516534339.

The name of this house derives from a small fresco found in a room off the garden showing writing materials and a letter on a papyrus-roll addressed to “M Lucretio, flam(ini) Martis decurioni Pompei[s]” (p. 29; *CIL* IV 1879; MANN 9818). Excavated in 1847, with additional investigation by the University of Helsinki between 2002 and 2012, the House of Marcus Lucretius is the largest (555 sq. m./5,974 sq. ft.) and most richly appointed house of *Insula IX.3*. An official daily record documents the finds from 1847, and the reports of Edward Falkener (1814-1896), an English architect and antiquarian who supervised the work, provide contexts for these early finds. Wall paintings and some 460 individual finds were taken to the Archaeological Museum in Naples (MANN), but the Bacchic marble garden sculptures were left in the raised garden—rather like a stage—visible through the atrium, attracting many visitors.

This book is the first in a projected series on the house that will include further volumes on wall paintings and floors (summarized in Appendix 2, 292-301); architecture; “finds processing”; and surveys, plans and 3D modeling (for a new plan, see Appendix 3, 302). Described as a “holistic approach to Pompeian finds in their lived context, [the book] emphasizes the long post-excavation history of the objects, and ultimately hopes to represent one further step towards the important goal of a more comprehensive publication of Pompeian AD 79 house-floor contexts” (R. Berg, “Introduction,” 15).

Many early finds were rediscovered during this project; they have their own catalogue numbers, but the authors have also provided inventory numbers from excavation reports and from MANN. Besides detailed descriptions and lengthy discussion of catalogued items with comparanda, entries include excellent color photographs and profile drawings, and 19th-century illustrations such as Falkener’s 1847 watercolors, G. Abbate’s illustrations for Niccolini 1854, engravings by Breton 1855 and Ceci 1858 and photographs by R. Rive, W. Plüschow and

others – all conveniently placed within the text and revealing the impact of this house and its contents during the 19th century.

The first chapter contains an overview of ancient and modern inscriptions (P. Castrén, 16-23), and a catalogue of six painted inscriptions and 18 graffiti - eight previously unpublished (A. Varone, 24-44). Next comes “Documentation History” (45-53): R. Berg surveys transfers and inventories of the finds, pointing out that some statues were left in the house, others disappeared. In addition to official records, the house and its contents were widely published. F. and F. Niccolini illustrated the house-plan and some of the more impressive finds in *Le case e i monumenti di Pompei* (1854). Alma Tadema owned a photograph of the raised garden with statues in situ (p. 46 fig. 1); in his painting of *The Sculpture Gallery* (1874, Hood Museum of Art), he rendered a lantern of the type found in this house (catalogue III.1.1, pp. 164-166, with figs. 1-3). Berg notes E. Dwyer’s important work on this house, including construction history and inventory of finds, but does not expand upon Dwyer’s comment that a layer of earth was left in rooms promising to yield good finds, so that they could be excavated later in front of important visitors (*Pompeian Domestic Sculpture*, 1982, 20 [19-52]).

In “Distribution Patterns” (54-67) Berg tabulates ca. 500 finds first recorded in 1847, by type, quantity and location, with comparative lists from 16 other houses. She discusses the value of “lived ancient artefact assemblages” and notes that individual rooms were part of “larger activity zones” (67). A detailed catalogue of the early inventories, room by room and by date of discovery, and summarized in a table, is the subject of Berg’s Appendix 1 (228-291).

“I. Works of Art” begins with a catalogue of 28 marbles - mythological figures, animals, herms, and oscilla from the raised garden beyond the atrium (I.1, I. Kuivalainen, 68-116). These have always been the focus of modern interest in this house. Interpretations include frequent references to others’ opinions regarding the theme of the array of works in the garden, and to the individual sculptures. Kuivalainen concludes that the owner of this mismatched collection “combined meaningful aesthetic and religious elements in the spaces of his everyday life” (116). Ten 1st-century-AD terracotta figurines, with both Greek and Roman subjects, were found in various rooms of the house, but none associated with a *latrium*: L. Pietilä-Castrén finds no apparent thematic connection among them (I.2, 117-132).

Berg is the author of “Vessels” (Ch. 2, 133-160), “Instruments and Utensils” (Ch. 3, 161-186), “Fixtures” (Ch. 4, 187-194) and “Architectural Elements” (Ch. 5, 195): in each chapter, discussion precedes catalogue entries. Only 46 of 137

vessels found in 1847 have been located: those catalogued here include 4 of bronze; 10 glass; 1 terracotta. "Instruments and Utensils" addresses 19 lamps (4 catalogued); a fascinating assemblage of 20 medical and cosmetic instruments (9 catalogued); 14 iron gardening and carpentry tools (1 plane catalogued); 3 pieces of simple jewelry, and 2 money boxes. "Fixtures" include latches and locks, hinges, keys, a few parts of a chariot, nails, bosses and pieces of furniture, many cited and discussed, but none catalogued. "Architectural Elements" are barely touched upon. Among the finds from 2001-2010 are "Wall [and ceiling] Plaster Fragments" (Ch. 6, V. Hakanen, 196-221) and "Masks" (Ch. 7, L. Pietilä-Castrén, 222-224).

The book is beautifully designed, and it is very much worth having such an extensive and thorough treatment of finds and inscriptions from a house that has fallen into obscurity in recent times. It is to be hoped that this book and subsequent volumes in the series will result in the reappearance of the House of Marcus Lucretius in Pompeian guidebooks.

CAROL C. MATTUSCH

George Mason University, mattusch@gmu.edu