

phenomenon.

The second artifact is a marble mould for a column base. Again, Caprino describes the object and seeks parallels in column bases from Rome and elsewhere. Only a few matches can be found for this particular type. In the next chapter, Peter Rockwell discusses the use of the mould. He arrives at the conclusion that the mould was used for casting stucco column bases in situ, a tool rather than a piece of decoration and probably a unique piece.

The third find is not really an artifact as such but the burial of a child in an amphora. The clay vessel is of African manufacture and probably made between 5th century and 6th century AD. The skeleton of the child disintegrated when exposed. The date of the amphora shows that the burial was made at a period when the Villa Adriana was already abandoned and illustrates its destiny similar to any other ruin in Italy.

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ALESSANDRO GALLO: *Pompei. L'Insula 1 della Regione IX. Settore Occidentale*. Studi della Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei 1. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 2001. ISBN 88-8265-150-9. 156 pp., 54 figs., XVIII plates. EUR 78.

In the recent decades, a great deal of work has been done in Pompeii to re-examine the houses and city blocks excavated in previous centuries. The results of this work are starting to be published, and this book by Alessandro Gallo is one contribution to the effort to better elucidate the probably best-known ancient city ever.

The area examined is the western section of the *Insula IX 1*, Houses 1 to 19 as well as 33 and 34. The contents of the book have been arranged in seven major chapters, the first of which describes the research history and the three next chapters introduce the buildings, their decorations and the artifacts recovered in them during the original excavations in the 1850s and 1860s. During the work conducted by Gallo, three small trenches were excavated in one part of the area and the results of this work are described in the next chapter. The last chapter discusses the urbanistic development of the *insula*. The latter part of the book deals mostly with the finds: first, a full catalogue of the finds from the new trenches and then, two appendices of tables present the material by find location.

A concise description of the complicated building histories very often present in Pompeii is never easy, and for the most part Gallo manages to do a very good job. The text is clear and easily comprehensible. It also maintains a certain order, which makes using the text fairly easy. The descriptions of the wall structures and decorative elements have been divided into two chapters, which, for the most part, seems unnecessary as only a few of the houses are so elaborately decorated that their treatment requires more space than one or two short paragraphs. The decoration chapter also includes the dating and phasing of the buildings. Arranged this way, the reader has to continuously go back and forth to see what was said of the walls in order to fully comprehend the phasing of many of the buildings.

The presentation of archaeological material very often benefits from lavish

pictorial display and this material is not an exception to this rule. Unfortunately, the figures and plates of plans and other drawings in this volume are not up to their task. The ground plan of the houses (Plate II) has been carefully drawn to the scale 1:100, but the reproduction reduces it to almost illegibility. The keys used to designate different building techniques are so similar that they cannot be easily differentiated in the published drawing. No sections have been published, which means that very few of the walls can be seen in any kind of image as the number of photographs is also quite limited for this part of the book. Moreover, the two most important plans, the old ground plan of the entire insula (Plate I) and the new ground plan in Plate II are printed in different orientations making their comparison quite difficult. Variations in floor levels could also have been indicated on the ground plan (or preferably in a separate plan) elsewhere than in the central eastern part, where the trenches were dug. The descriptive text overall receives very little visual verification.

House 12 is the unit receiving most attention as it is probably the oldest of the buildings at hand containing many *opus africanum* walls and other features possibly dating it to the 3rd century BC. Also, the excavated trenches were designed to verify and to date the association of rooms Q, T and V of House 20 to the House 12. The two blocked doors between room O of House 12 and rooms Q and V of House 20 already indicated a change in ownership. Trench "Alfa", below one of the blocked doors, yielded a small cistern built after the blocking of the wall. In trench "Beta", another cistern or small silo for grain was found along with a beaten earth floor and these are connected to the earlier phases of House 12. As the evidence for the phases of House 20 (The House of Marcus Epidius Rufus) is not presented, it is relatively difficult to assess Gallo's deductions. Could there have been a house on the next plot at the same time? The evidence from trench "Beta" in room T shows, in its latest phase, no connection to House 12. The solid walls running between the western sector of the block and House 20 in the north and south break only at room X of House 20, which is interesting and might have merited a trench in the middle of room X to see whether the division wall continued or not.

The chapter dealing with urban development deals mostly with the date, the planning and building of the so-called *Neustadt* of Pompeii, to which *Insula IX 1* belongs. After this longish and more general discussion, Gallo also describes the division of plots in the *insula*. The city block can be divided into three larger parts around the large House 20, which stretches through the entire block. The western section is then divided into five plots, the back wall of which is the western wall of House 20, irregular only in the middle in room X, as stated before. The divisions are based on long walls running more or less continuously through the sector examined. The only division which possibly could be questioned is the one drawn through House 8. There is an *opus africanum* wall between Houses 9 and 10 and this same wall also seems to form the natural northern border for House 12 (comprising, in its earliest form, also Houses 10, 11 and 13). Could there have been a further, narrow plot in the middle of the *insula*?

Gallo's book is interesting reading and provides a further source of information for Pompeian studies. We shall eagerly wait for the evidence from the rest of the *insula* and hope for slight improvements to that publication's layout.

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