

A detailed painting of the ruins of Pompeii. In the foreground, there are large, broken stone blocks and a wide, dusty street. Two figures in 18th-century attire stand in the middle ground, looking towards the ruins. To the right, a row of tall, fluted columns stands. In the background, a large mountain (Mount Vesuvius) is visible, with a plume of smoke rising from its summit into a cloudy sky. The overall scene is one of historical significance and archaeological discovery.

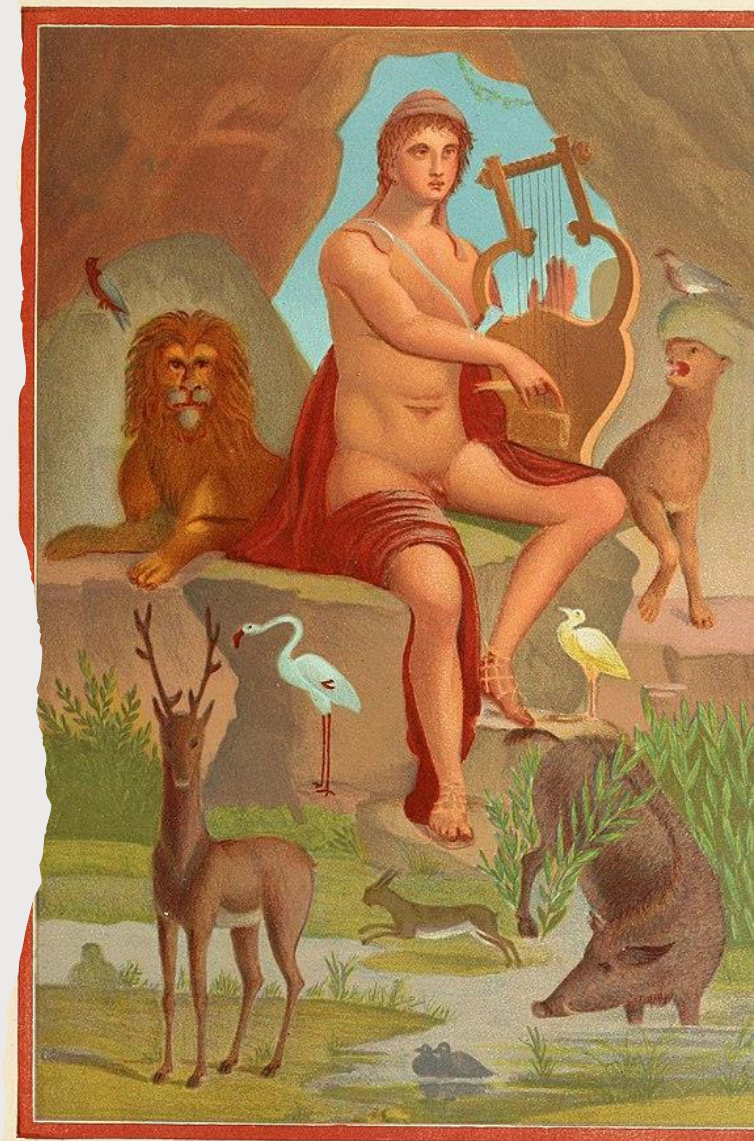
Pompeii and (early) modern “mania”

Pompeii: The life, death and rediscovery of a Roman town
(HPAH5078/HPAH6078)



The reception of Pompeii

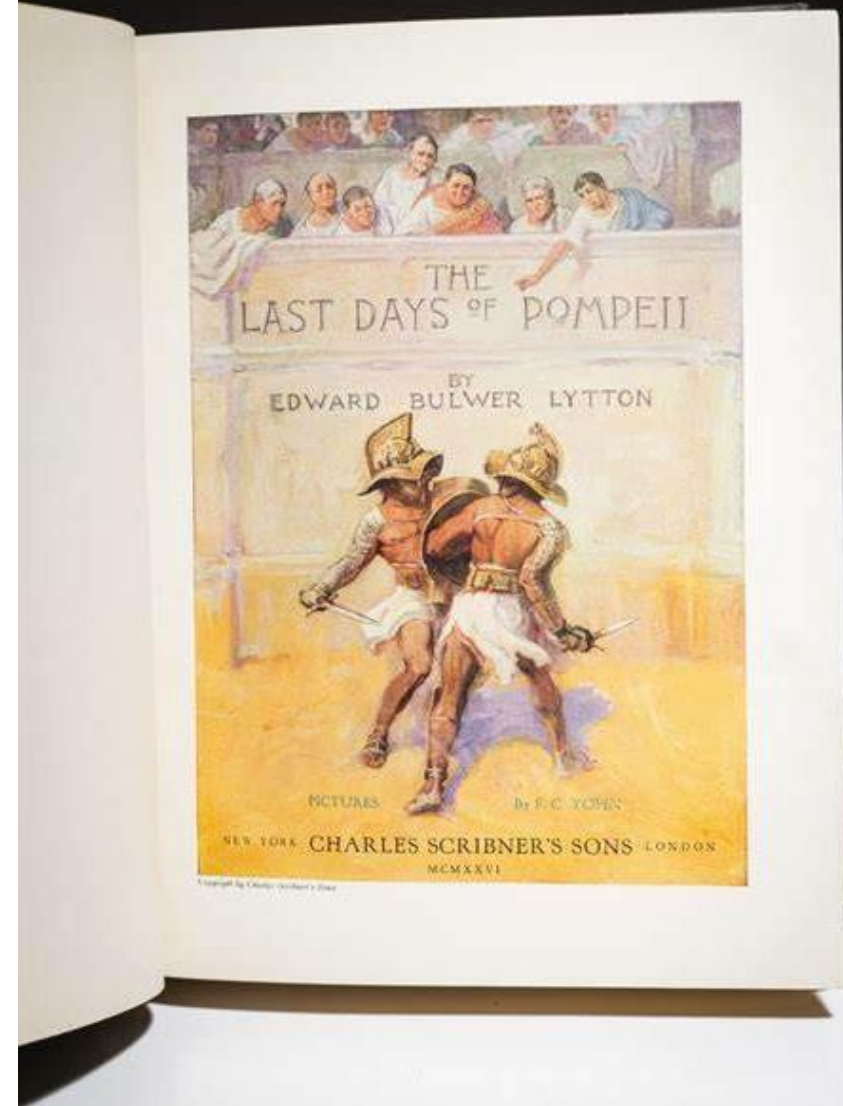
- Life and death appeal.
 - Comparatively well preserved.
 - Morbid curiosity and human frailty.
- Various media, multiple “readings”:
 - **Music:** Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (1781) to Satyricon's album *Volcano* (2002).
 - **Short stories:** Théophile Gautier and Wilhelm Jensen.
 - **19th century painters:** Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Geremia Discanno.
- Pompeii often a hedonistic place in the Victorian imagination.



Painting by Geremia Discanno (1882) of a mural from the peristyle of the House of Orpheus

Skeletal evidence and “narrative”

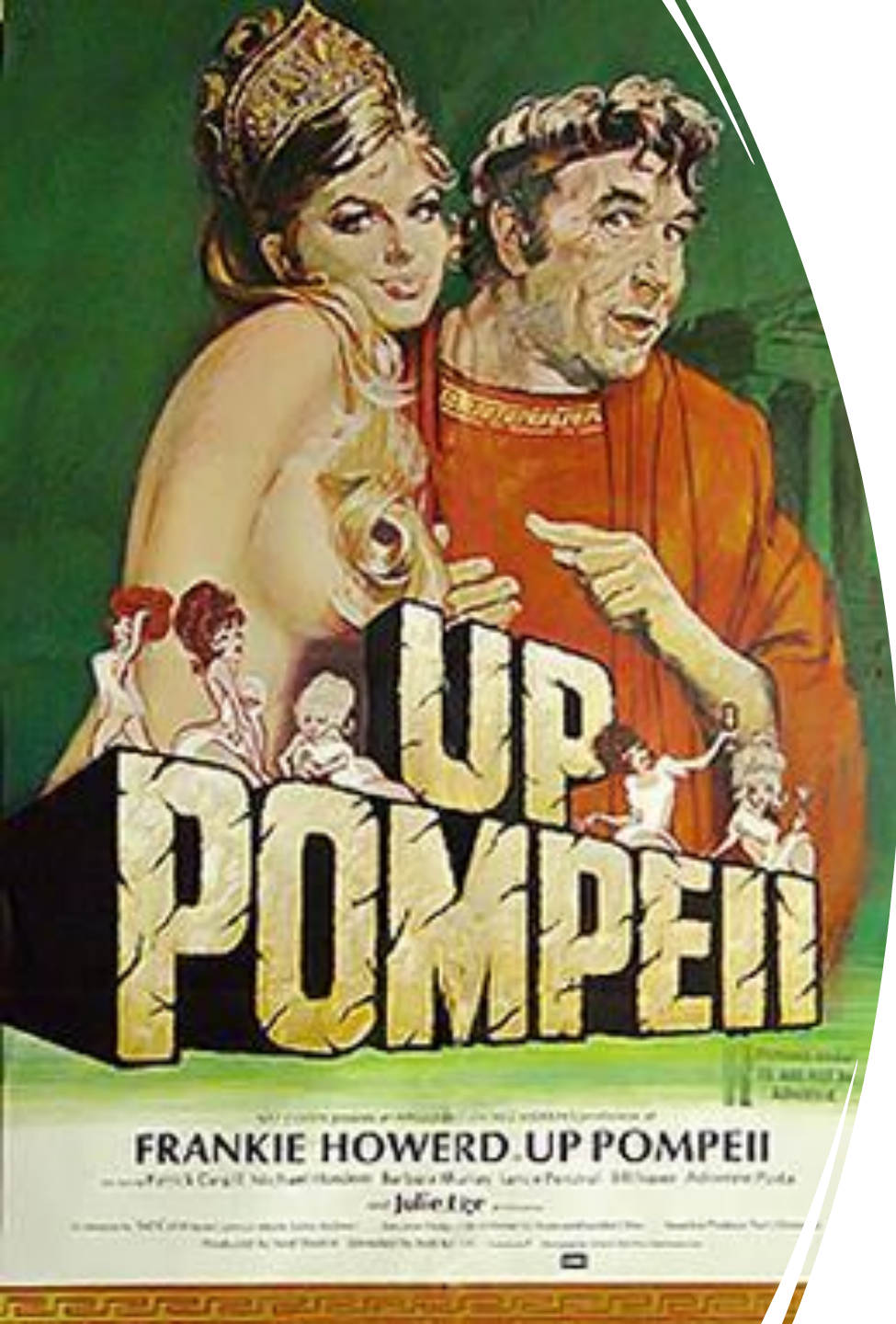
- Skeletal evidence and associated artefacts inspiring myths.
- “Soldier” just outside the Herculaneum Gate.
 - Death over desertion!
 - Dyer (1883), no academic publications.
- Skeletons found in connection with the Temple of Isis.
 - Two in the temple and one nearby with precious goods.
 - In actuality: one in the residential complex and the other in the *ekklesiasterion*.
 - Triangular Forum.
- The bejewelled “matron” in the quadroporcticus.
 - 18 other skeletons in the same room!



A *body* of literature

- Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834).
 - Flitting between describing the ruins and advancing the plot.
 - Inspired 19th century painters
 - Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *Glaucus and Nydia* (1867); Paul Falconer Poole *The Destruction of Pompeii* (1835).
 - Inspired 19th century playwrights.
- Théophile Gautier, *Arria Marcella* (1852).
 - Erotic time travel.
 - Similar-ish device used by Wilhelm Jensen in *Gradiva* (1903).





20th century cinema

- First film directed by Walter Booth (1900), *The Last Days of Pompeii*.
- Giovanni Vitrotti's film *Pompei* (1906).
 - Summer Olympics of 1908 originally planned for Rome.
- *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1935), starring Preston Foster.
 - 1hr, 25m, 40s: <https://youtu.be/j5mgrn-zj6l>
- Development of Technicolor and CinemaScope, and less concern with locational accuracy.
 - *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* (1959).
- *Up Pompeii!* (1971).
 - Trailer: <https://youtu.be/8EFvlo34n2A?si=fPL8eMDZ12s5iKAX>



Pompeii and *Doctor Who*

“It is like Soho, only Bigger”

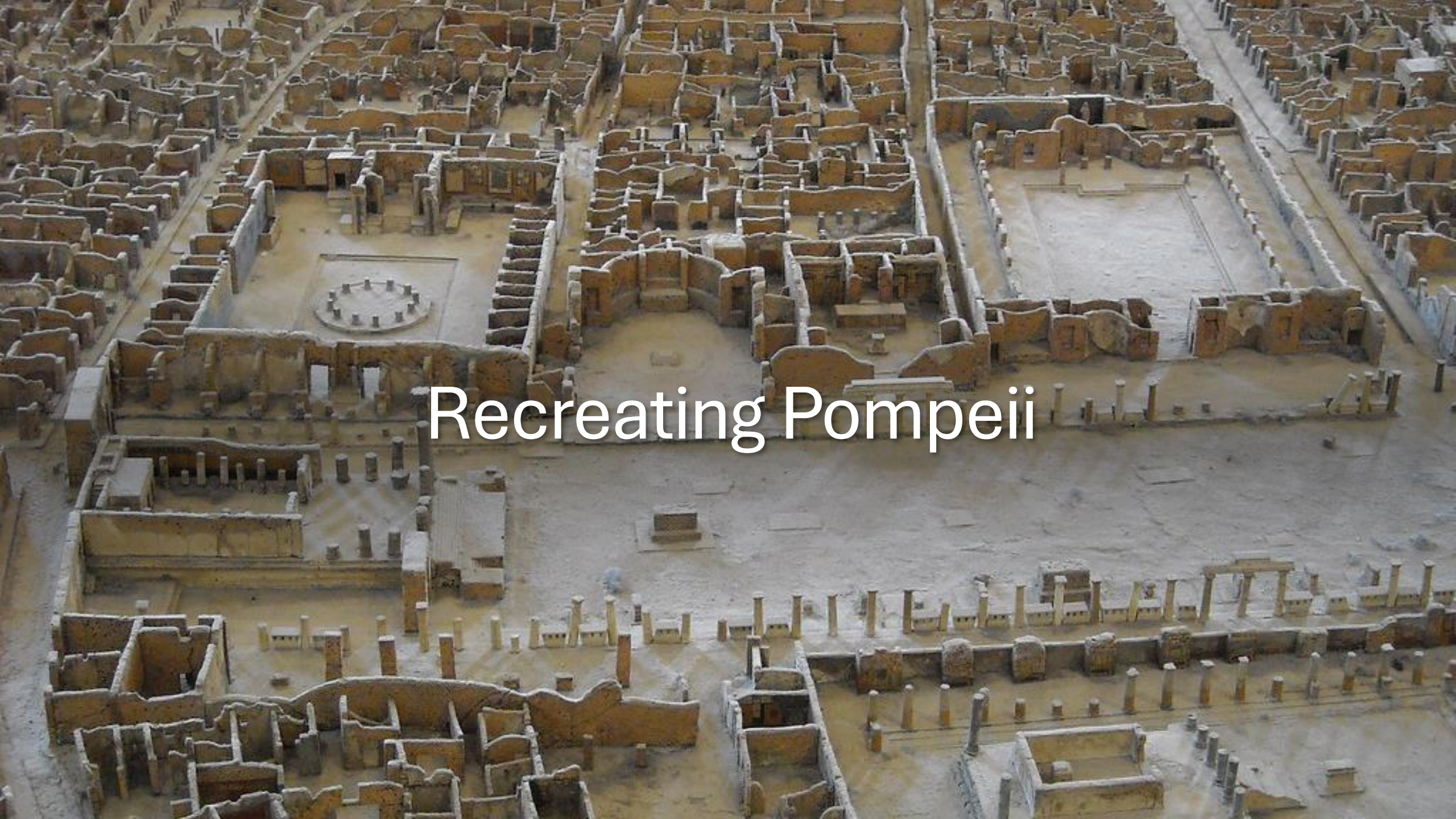
- *Doctor Who* – “The Fires of Pompeii” (first aired: 12/04/2008).
 - Escapism over historical drama?
 - Lack of need to “faithfully” represent the town?
 - Hedonistic clichés?
- Donna Noble – compassion in the face of historical inevitability.
 - Defeating the Pyrovile and saving the family of Caecilius.
 - Ash and the casts as emblematic of Pompeii.
- Initial conceptions.
 - Fire and people running.
 - No longer a portal to a Roman world, but a generic “dramatic” setting.



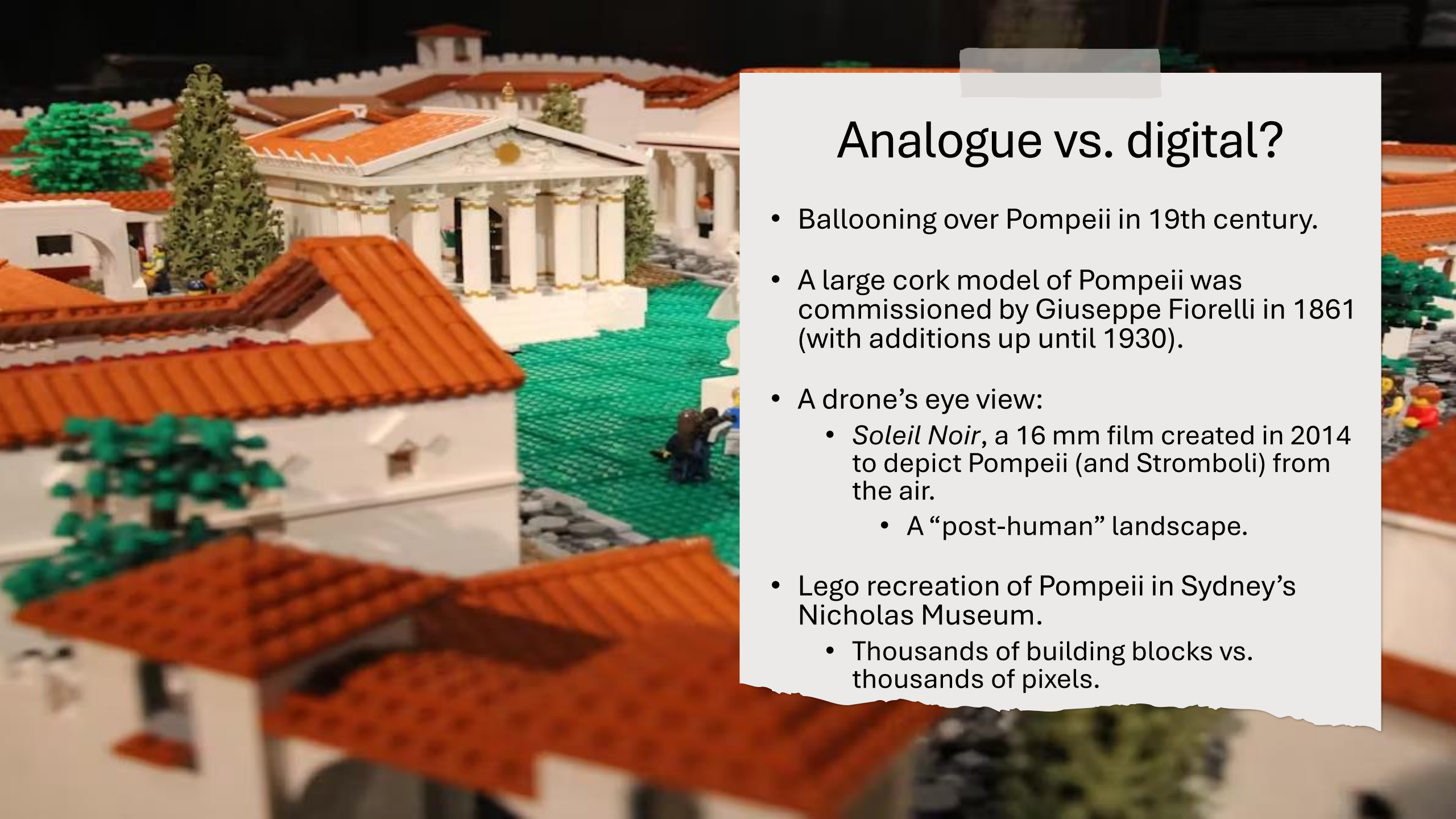
Depicting Pompeii

- *Contra* Rome: Pompeii a slightly old-fashioned provincial town ‘with less iconic buildings’ (Rovira Guardiola, 2015).
 - Epilogue of the episode, the family living more trendy, “modern” lives in Rome.
- Use of Cinecittà studios, but only limited locations.
 - street market, the houses of Caecilius and of Petrus Dextrus, the Sibylline temple and the volcano.
 - 1 min:
<https://youtu.be/XXNBe5AxZc0?si=W0ZYVv9PGGXUSiYI>
- The household alter of the Caecilii (in Rome):
 - 50 secs:
<https://youtu.be/QyaP6mWVSjE?si=gtTbNc7ibE-m5DLX>



An aerial photograph of the archaeological ruins of Pompeii, Italy. The image shows a dense grid of ancient Roman buildings, mostly constructed from brick and stone. Several large, open rectangular areas are visible, which were likely public spaces or forums. In the upper left, there is a circular structure with a central column. The ruins are surrounded by a network of streets and alleys. The overall scene is a testament to the well-preserved nature of this ancient city.

Recreating Pompeii



Analogue vs. digital?

- Ballooning over Pompeii in 19th century.
- A large cork model of Pompeii was commissioned by Giuseppe Fiorelli in 1861 (with additions up until 1930).
- A drone's eye view:
 - *Soleil Noir*, a 16 mm film created in 2014 to depict Pompeii (and Stromboli) from the air.
 - A “post-human” landscape.
- Lego recreation of Pompeii in Sydney's Nicholas Museum.
 - Thousands of building blocks vs. thousands of pixels.