

ZEFIRO E CLORI

OGGETTI RARI E PREZIOSI AL MANN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUIGI SPINA

TEXTS BY VALERIA SAMPAOLO

Zefiro e Clori focuses on a wonderful fresco from Pompeii now in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. The large fresco, measuring 198 cm in height by 258 cm in width, was created in the Nero period, i.e. 50—60 AD, and was found in the House of the Ship, which was discovered in Pompeii in early 1826, but finally cleared of all the accumulated rubble only at the end of that year. Even at the time, those who unearthed the fresco depicting Zephyr and Chloris realized they were before one of the finest paintings in Pompeii.

The people who were living in the building where this enormous work was painted were probably familiar with Ovid's stories—not just those describing gods and mortals who changed form so as to love or to escape undesired attentions, but also the stories that explained the origins of the festivals in the Roman calendar, to be remembered each month. And the month of May included the story of Zephyr and Chloris.

No other painting in Pompeii depicts this particular subject, even though individual figures or groups were obviously popular models and recur in several other houses in the town.

Valeria Sampaolo provides an illuminating step-by-step commentary of the fresco, thanks to the superb and hitherto unpublished photographs of Luigi Spina. Together we examine the figures and unravel the symbols and mythological references of this magnificent work.

Valeria Sampaolo is head conservator of the collections of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. She is the author of several publications and her research concentrates on the first excavations in the Vesuvius area and on establishing the provenance of the museum's frescoes, to which she has dedicated a new exhibition.

Luigi Spina is a photographer. His work focuses on amphitheatres and the civic dimension of the sacred, the links between art and faith, the search for ancient cultural roots, and the physical impact of classical sculpture. He has published *L'Ora Incerta* (2014), *The Buchner Boxes* (2014), *Hemba* (2017), and *Mythical Diary* (2017) and has collaborated with Valeria Sampaolo and 5 Continents Editions to create the series *Oggetti rari e preziosi al Museo Archeologico di Napoli*, which to date includes *Memorie del Vaso Blu* (2016), *Amazzonomachia* (2017), *Centauro* (2017), and *Sette sapienti* (2018). He has also published *The Dancers at the Villa of the Papyri* for 5 Continents Editions' Tailormade series.