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**"Villa of Riddles: A Century of Fascination"**

This paper considers the famous painted "salon" of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii as a twentieth century phenomenon. Beginning with its discovery in 1909, I trace the early documentation and repeated efforts of conservation through the 1920s. The Fascist era saw a new surge of interest in the villa with the opulent publication and physical reconstruction by Amadeo Maiuri. Since the 1970s the fresco has become a key draw for Pompeian tourism, its lively figures mass-produced in photographic images for international consumption. Despite subsequent changes in the nature of its reception, certain themes remained constant throughout the century: the inherent drama of revelation and concealment within the frieze inspired filmmakers, psychologists (notably Freud and Jung), female scholars and New-Age feminists. Today scholars continue to assert imaginative explanations for the frieze's elusive subject matter. The Bacchic painting has thus operated both as a stimulus and a mediator in a series of dynamic dialogues among cultures and generations. The history of the villa and its frieze in the past century covers two world wars, three volcanic eruptions, several earthquakes, unending upheavals in local politics, and the daily onslaught of tourist buses, yet the images remain a stubborn enigma, unwilling to give up their secrets.