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**BATHING CULTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN SPACE:
CASE STUDY POMPEII**

TOPOI C-6-8

REPORT OF THE FIFTH SEASON, MARCH 2017

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In March 2017, a small project team returned to the Stabian Baths (VII 1,8) in order to complete the assessment of standing remains, carry out further limited excavation that could clarify remaining questions and begin with finds analysis.

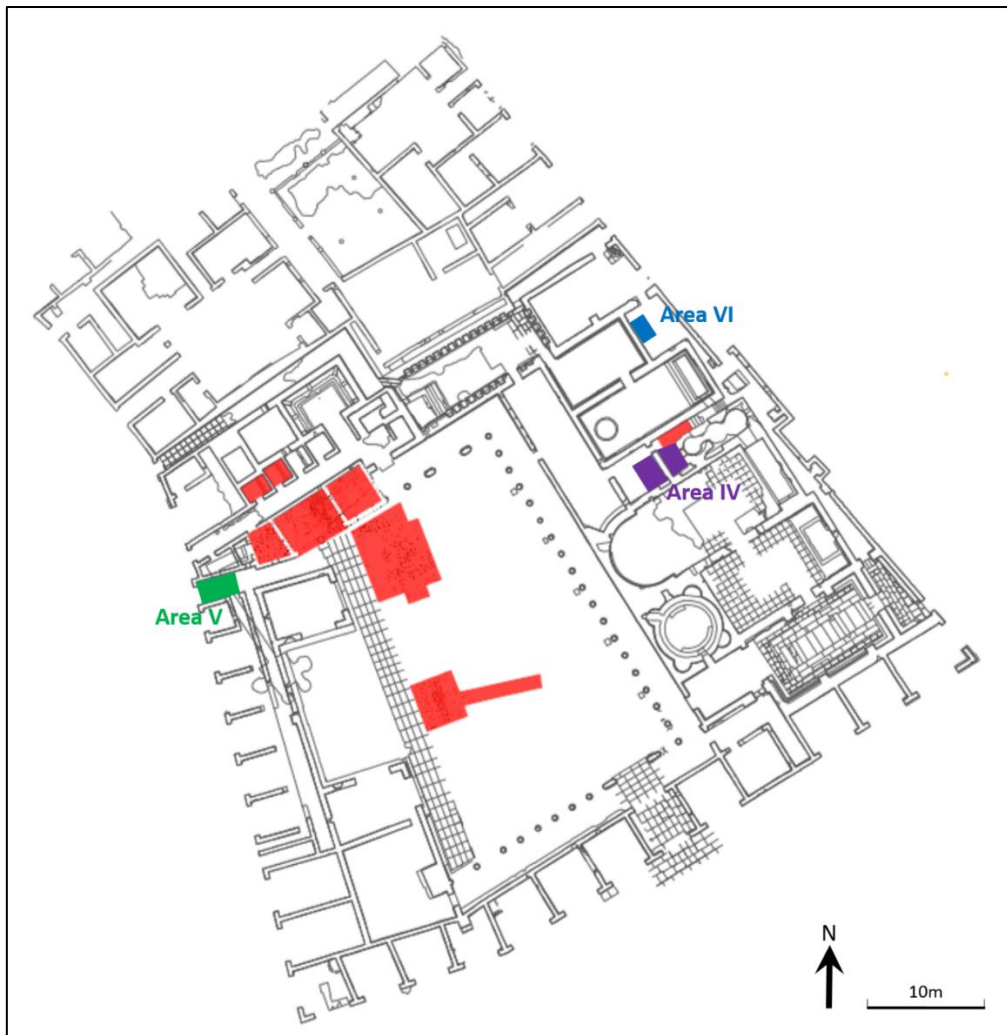


Fig. 1: Plan of the excavated Areas of the Stabian Baths (red: 2016 excavations, Areas IV-VI excavated in March 2017).

The excavation team of the project worked in four main areas. A key focus was on the central service and furnace area between the two caldaria of the Baths, where two trenches were excavated (Area IV). The eastern of these saw the continuation of work from the previous season around the central furnace and cauldron installation of the last phase of the Baths. In what Eschebach had termed room VI, intact ash levels had been identified in 2016 and left in situ due to time constraints. Further careful excavation of this area and extension of the trench identified previously unexcavated AD79 eruption deposits that provide a wealth of information on the state of this key area of bath functionality at the point of destruction of the Stabian Baths.



Fig. 2: Area IV, Collapse and destruction levels related to the AD79 eruption to the W of the furnace in Room VI.

Further W, a praefurnium arch in the northern wall of the men's caldarium was re-investigated by reopening an earlier, undocumented trench in the room identified as Room VII on Eschebach's plans. The work here showed a room accessed by stairs that gave access to a potential praefurnium to heat the men's caldarium. While remains of burnt tiles could be identified in the arch leading into the hypocaust, no original levels or such traces remained north of the caldarium wall. The identified sequence of walls, however, suggests that the developmental history of this central heating zone of the Baths was significantly more complicated than currently understood.



Fig. 3: Area IV, re-excavated subdivision of room with stairs and praefurnium arch towards men's caldarium in the S.

In order to test and further develop the hypotheses that arose from work carried out in the palaestra of the baths as part of the 2016 season (Areas II and III), a further trench was placed in the corridor providing access to the baths from the Vicolo del Lupanare (Area V). Here, the opus signinum surface did not survive in places, so that a small trench could be excavated in the central part of the corridor, identified as room H by Eschebach. Just as the palaestra work in 2016 had failed to identify any evidence for an Altstadt, Area V contained no traces of any defenses or delineating features. The trench did, however, identify floor levels of the house that existed in the W part of the insula before the Stabian Baths that are related to those identified in the previous year. A fluted column drum may originally have belonged to a peristyle of the house. Area V furthermore showed that the extension of the Baths followed immediately upon the abandonment of the house and provided large quantities of datable material for this change in use.



Fig. 4: Area V from the E with house floor and column drum (not in situ).

As the previous year's work failed to show any traces of Eschebach's early phases of the Baths in the W part of the site, instead suggesting that they were built only in the later 2nd century BC, a trench dug by Eschebach in the NE part of the Baths (his Room L16A) was reopened and extended (Area VI). This showed that features cited as evidence for a palaestra in Eschebach's earliest phase of the Stabian Baths were in fact foundation levels for the women's tepidarium, pits related to the construction phase and yellowish natural volcanic deposits related to the Mercato Eruption of Vesuvius. By extending the trench slightly, untouched deposits were excavated and an archaeological sequence dating from the 10th millennium BC to the present exposed. This confirmed 2016 observations from the W part of the baths regarding their construction. It is now clear that the Stabian Baths were built more or less to the same overall plan as visible today in the second half of the 2nd century BC. The E part of the Baths remained largely unchanged throughout their history.



Fig. 5: Area VI, S section with sequence from prehistoric eruption levels through to modern fill levels

Parallel to the excavations, the assessment of the standing remains of the Stabian Baths was continued in order to clarify remaining questions regarding their developmental phases as initially studied in the 2016 season. The water supply and heating systems were analyzed in detail and compared and contrasted with data from other baths across Pompeii and Herculaneum. These were visited and studied as part of site visits throughout the season.