

**BATHING CULTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN SPACE:
CASE STUDY POMPEII
TOPOI C-6-8
REPORT OF THE SECOND SEASON, SEPTEMBER 2015**

Prof. Dr. Monika Trümper, Dr. Domenico Esposito, Dr. Christoph Rummel – in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Mark Robinson, University of Oxford

Members of the Team: Simona Arrabito (Palermo - archaeologist); Florian Birkner (Freie Universität Berlin - archaeologist); Clemens Brünenberg (Technische Universität Darmstadt - architect); Johnathan Cook (Oxford University - archaeologist); Daniel Fallmann (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg - historian); Jennifer Hagen (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg - architect); Thomas Heide (Freie Universität Berlin - archaeologist); Rebecca Henzel (Freie Universität Berlin - archaeologist); Katie Hiscocks (Oxford University - archaeologist); Alexander Hoer (Freie Universität Berlin - archaeologist); Catello Imperatore (Pompeii – archaeologist/ small finds); Cleopatra Lawrence (Oxford University - archaeologist); Sebastiano Muratore (Palermo - archaeologist); Jennifer Robinson (Oxford – finds assistant); Theresa Schelling (Technische Universität Darmstadt - architect); Rosanna Sheehan (Oxford University - archaeologist).



Fig 1: September 2015 Excavation Team from the Freie Universität Berlin (© TOPOI / FU)

In 2015, a new research project under the direction of Monika Trümper, “Bathing Culture and the Development of Urban Space: Case Study Pompeii”, was initiated within the research framework of

the TOPOI Excellence Cluster 264 of the German Research Foundation (DFG). The project is a research collaboration between the Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Oxford. Overall, it investigates various aspects of the development of bathing culture within the historic context of urban development of the city of Pompeii. A particular focus lies on the study of the development of baths and bathing in the late Republican period and the transition from Greek to Roman bathing traditions. In this, bathing culture is seen as a reflection of cultural identity and therefore contributing factor to current research on the urbanistic development of Pompeii between the Archaic, Samnite, and Roman periods. On the ground, investigations are centered on two key structures in this respect, the Republican Baths (VIII 5, 36) and the Stabian Baths (VII 1, 8).

Republican Baths:

Aside from initial superficial excavations under Sogliano in 1882, the first systematic investigations of the Republican Baths were carried out under Amedeo Maiuri in 1950 (fig. 2).

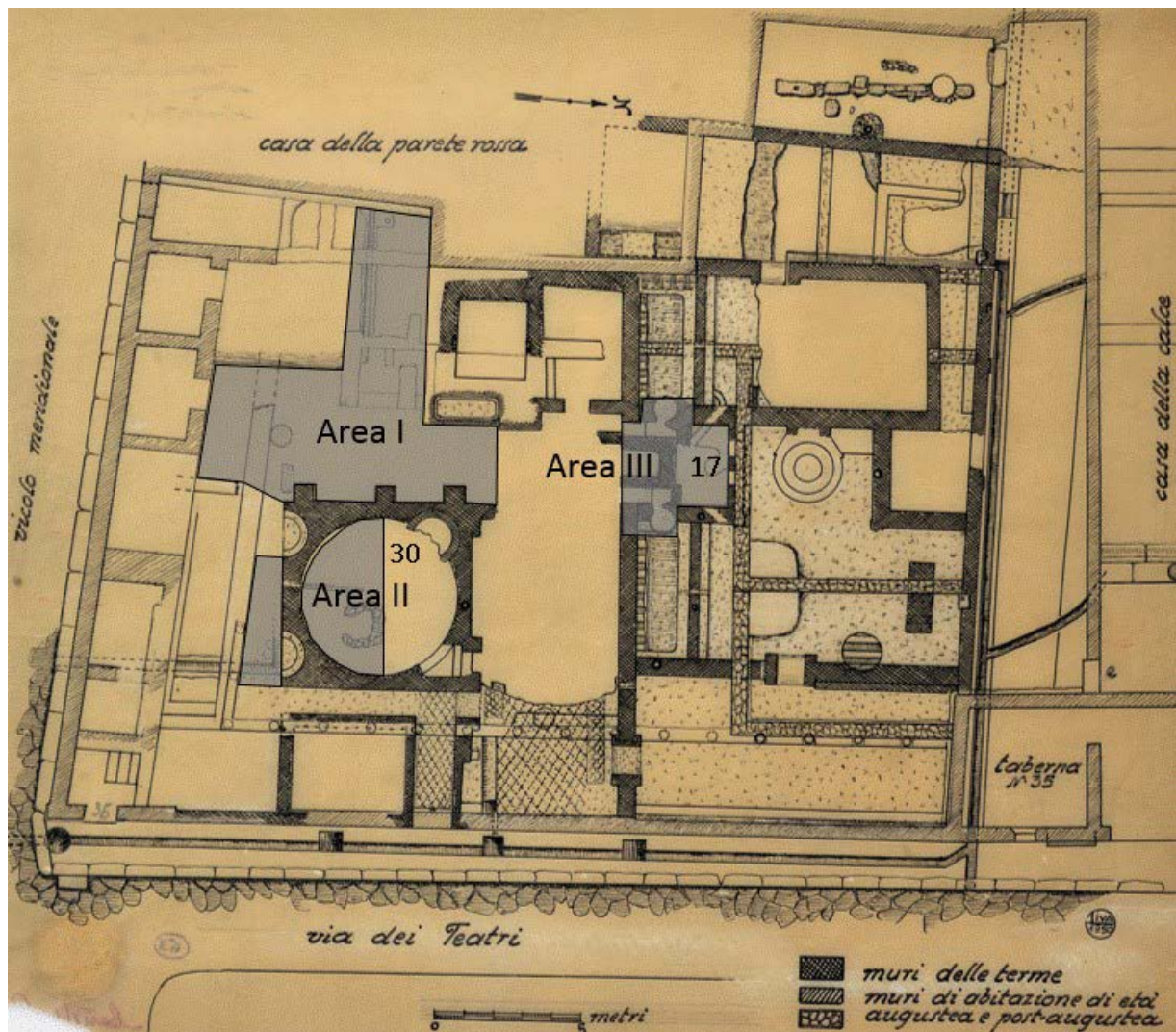


Fig. 2: Plan of the Republican Baths by Maiuri with areas excavated in 2015 (© TOPOI / FU)



Fig. 3: View of the Republican Baths from the S before and after cleaning (© TOPOI / FU)



Fig. 4: View of the Republican Baths from the NW before and after cleaning (© TOPOI / FU)

Following this research, the building remained largely forgotten for several decades – it was only in recent years that Fabrizio Pesando suggested a more refined chronological interpretation based on observations of the standing remains that were visible, but largely obscured by covering vegetation. This latest understanding of the development of the site, however, remains to be tested against reliable archaeological data and the stratigraphic sequence in particular.

Two field seasons were conducted in 2015. In March, the Republican Baths were returned to the state left by the Maiuri excavations in 1950 by cleaning of surface material and vegetation.

At the same time, a georeferenced plan of the entire area, including all earlier and later remains, was created in order to provide a basis for further study and identification of the developmental phases of the site.

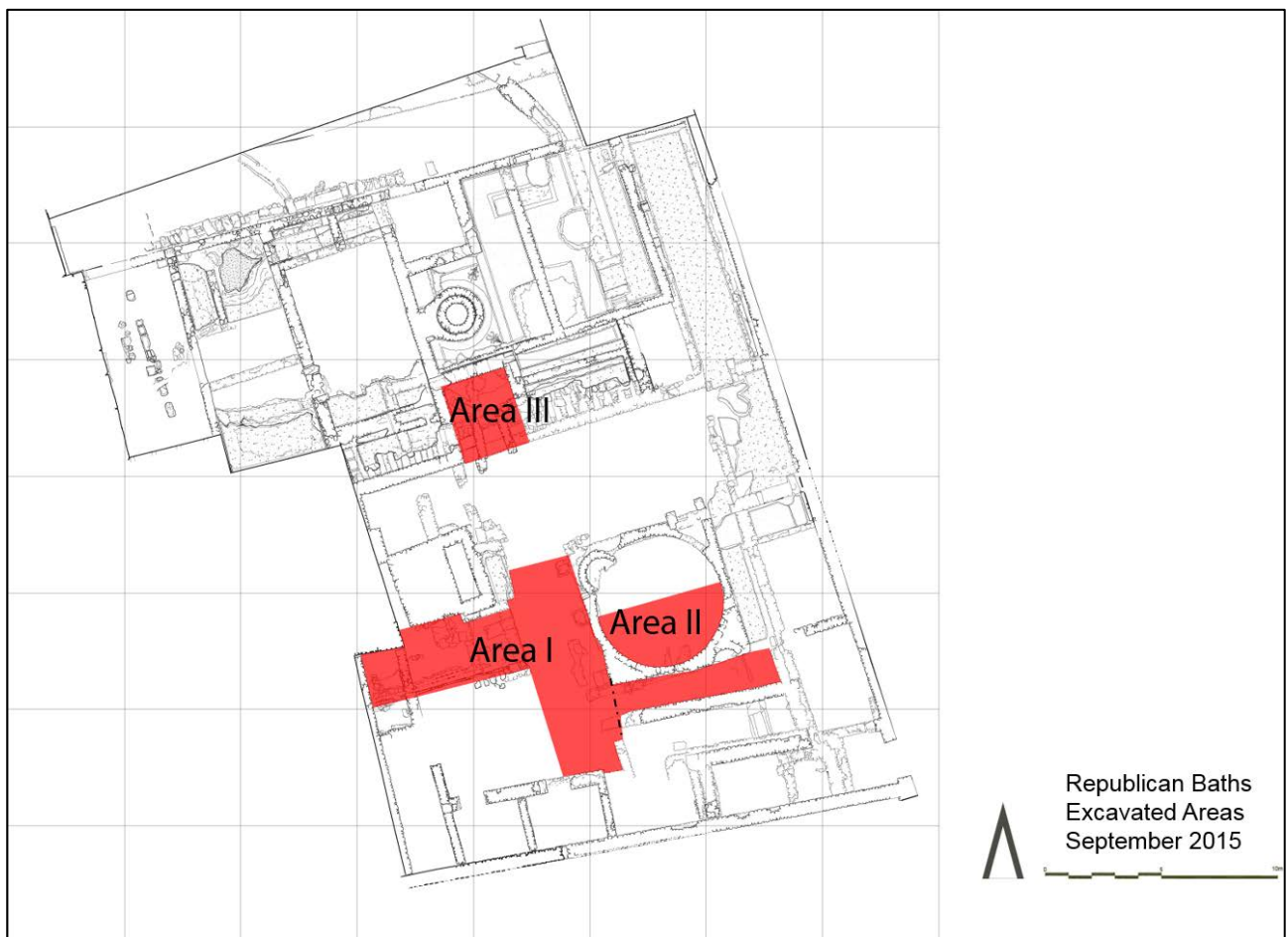


Fig. 5: New Plan of the Republican Baths with areas excavated in 2015 (© TOPOI / FU)

In September 2015, first stratigraphic excavations in the southern parts of the Republican Baths were carried out. Three separate areas were targeted: area I – the SE part of the baths; area II/1 – the laconicum; area II/2 – the corridor running along the S face of the laconicum; area III – the praefurnium.

All excavated areas had been affected by trenches dug by Maiuri, resulting in incomplete or disturbed stratigraphic sequences. Nonetheless, it was possible to identify and reconstruct a substantial overall Matrix of contexts reaching from the Bronze Age through to 79AD. While most data remains preliminary at present and requires further analysis, some interesting observations can already be made: The Baths were built in the 2nd c BC (more precise date remains to be determined); the round laconicum was added later, probably still in the 2nd c BC, at the expense of a rectangular room of unknown function; the laconicum was remodeled around the mid-1st c BC, when three buttresses were added to its west wall



Fig. 6: 3D Model of the excavations in the Laconicum / Room 30 (SFM Model by A. Hoer, © TOPOI / FU)

The development of the various identified phases of the praefurnium (identified as room 17) remains far more problematic: created originally as a rectangular space with six heating ducts for the two sets of caldaria and immersion pools, it was repeatedly modified, reduced in extent and reconstructed in order to modify heat flow and firing accessibility, as well as in response to the changing needs of the modified baths complex as a whole in its various phases.



Fig. 7: The praefurnium after excavation (Photo M. Trümper, © TOPOI / FU)