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POMPEII ARTIFACT LIFE HISTORY PROJECT: 2022 FIELD SEASON

Stahl Field Report #37

2022, Archaeological Research Facility, UC Berkeley

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The Stahl Fund provided substantial financial support for the eighth field season of the Pompeii Artifact Life History Project (PALHIP), carried out at Pompeii (Napoli), Italy, between July 3 and July 30, 2022. The PALHIP team consisted of three persons: the author of this report as project director (JTP) and two assistants: Susanna Faas-Bush (SFB), a graduate student in the University of California, Berkeley Graduate Program in Classical Archaeology, and Cesca LaPasta (CL), a graduate student in the University of California, Berkeley Graduate Program in Classics. (fig. 1)

PALHIP is a long-term program of research designed to elucidate aspects of the life history of Roman material culture in the town of Pompeii and at some of the sites in its environs through the detailed characterization of sets of artifacts recovered in the course of previously completed excavations in contexts that promise to be particularly informative in this regard.

The 2022 season was the third of the second phase of the project, projected as a series of five study seasons (originally projected for 2018-2022, but now projected for 2018-2024 on account of interruption resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic) in which the team is focusing on the documentation of the sets of portable artifacts recovered in the excavation of several residential and commercial/residential structures of small to medium size that occupy one specific block in the city of Pompeii - Regio I, Insula 11 (I.11) - with a view to elucidating patterns of household consumption in the middle and lower ranges of the socio-economic scale in the final period of the town's occupation. (figs. 2-3) This block was excavated in its entirety under Vittorio Spinazzola during the period 1912-1913 and Amedeo Maiuri during the years 1952-1962, with most of the artifacts recovered in this work remaining unstudied and unpublished. The residences in question are the following (according the address system employed to identify properties at Pompeii): I.11.1.2; I.11.3; I.11.4; I.11.5.8; I.11.6.7; I.11.14; I.11.15.9; I.11.16; I.11.17). (tab. 1)

The 2022 season represented the project's return to field work following the cancellation of the planned 2020 and 2021 seasons on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. (The author was able to spend one week working by himself at Pompeii during July, 2021, during which time he undertook archival work at the offices of the Parco Archeologico di Pompei and initiated the project's program of rapid architectural surveys of the various properties in Insula I.11, completing surveys of two of these – I.11.5.8 and I.11.17.) In recognition of what it was anticipated were likely to be substantial constraints in the conduct of field work due to the pandemic the project operated with a team of reduced size (three rather than four or five persons) and adopted only a modest set of research objectives, namely the completion of the documentation of the artifact assemblage from the Casa della Venere in Bikini (I.11.6.7), which it had begun in 2019, and the extension of the program of rapid architectural surveys to three additional properties. In the event, the amount of progress that the team was able to register was significantly constrained by the fact that the laboratory space at the Casa di Bacco storage facility in which it had

worked in 2018 and 2019 had been converted to other uses, obliging us to work in a cramped and poorly ventilated space adjacent to the Parco Archeologico di Pompei's conservation laboratory at VII.4.22, restrictions in our ability to gain access to artifacts housed in the Casa di Bacco storage facility, the obligation for one or more team members to remain off-site in order to observe a five-day COVID-19 quarantine on three separate occasions and our inability to gain physical access to one of the properties slated for rapid architectural survey. Despite these problems the team was able to effectively complete the documentation of the assemblage of portable artifacts from the Casa della Venere in Bikini and to complete surveys for two of the three properties.

The work with the portable artifacts involved the application of protocols for the description of artifact morphology, micromorphology, and use alterations developed in the course of earlier seasons; the macrophotography of all artifacts using a Nikon D5000 digital SLR camera; and the creation for each artifact of a record in a database in FileMaker Pro 17. The database was run on a MacBook Pro with project members creating and updating records through file sharing using their personal Mac laptops.

For this work the project members had specific areas of responsibility, as follows:

JTP: overall direction and coordination, spreadsheet and database management, description/documentation of various categories of artifacts.

SFB: photography, description/documentation of various categories of artifacts.

CL: description/documentation of various categories of artifacts, database editing and updating, photography.

During the course of the season the team completed the documentation of 206 items from the Casa della Venere in Bikini, as follows:

53 objects in copper alloy (18 vessels, 2 vessel handles, 1 base, 4 implements, 1 steelyard, 1 balance, 1 weight, 2 seal rings, 3 belt buckles, 1 fibula, 1 ring, 1 harness fitting, 1 mirror, 1 lantern, 2 candelabra, 2 dice, 7 lock components, 1 door/drawer pull, 3 door plates), 14 copper alloy and iron strap hinges, 4 objects in iron (2 keys, 2 door pivots), 21 objects in glass paste (1 gem, 20 tokens), 22 blown glass vessels, 1 ceramic lamp, 8 ceramic transport amphorae, 1 worked bone and iron knife, 77 items in worked bone (6 dice, 4 implements, 6 furniture inlay strips, 61 continuous hinge bushings), 4 bone astragals, 1 stone egg.

Some of the more interesting of these objects were the copper alloy steelyard (fig. 4) and the copper alloy and bone dice and astragals (fig. 5). The project was able to improve its understanding of Roman storage furniture very considerably thanks to the presence of two well preserved locks (fig. 6) and several strap hinges that preserved substantial remains of the wooden panels and framing elements to which they had been attached (fig. 7).

The team also completed rapid architectural surveys of two of the residential structures in Insula I.11 – the Casa della Venere in Bikini (I.11.6.7) and the Casa di Saturninus (I.11.16). This work involved the evaluation of these structures with a view to documenting through notes in the form of voice recordings made using a cellphone and photographs made using an iPad the presence of fixtures and other features relevant to accessibility (e.g., doorways, interior pass through windows, stairways) (fig. 8), room function (e.g., basins, drains, benches, cistern heads, bed/dining couch recesses) (fig. 9), and the disposition/storage of portable objects (e.g., niches, shelving). The team also completed the preliminary work required for the survey of the Casa del Piano Superiore (I.11.15.9), though was unable to gain access to this structure.

For the 2023 season the team plans to document the portable artifact assemblages from the three small, unnamed, commercial/residential structures on the north side of the block (I.11.1.2; I.11.3; I.11.4) and undertake the rapid architectural survey of I.11.5.9 and these three structures.

The author would like to thank the following functionaries at the Parco Archeologico di Pompei for their generous assistance in the organizing and conduct of the author's individual work in 2021 and the 2022 PALHIP field season: Giuseppe Scarpati, Stefania Giudice, Domenico Buzziello, Ludovica Alesse, the functionaries in the Ufficio Coordinamento and the site guardians responsible for Regio I.11.

| Address | Use | Name | Ground Floor 1 | Ground Floor 2 | Quartile |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| I.11.1.2 | <i>caupona</i> & residence | None | 199 m ² | 190 m ² | 3rd |
| I.11.3 | shop & residence | None | 64 m ² | 65 m ² | 2nd |
| I.11.4 | shop | None | 10 m ² | 10 m ² | 1st |
| I.11.5.8 | residence | Casa di L. Habonius Primus | 347 m ² | 325 m ² | 3rd |
| I.11.6.7 | residence | Casa della Venere in Bikini | 181 m ² | 170 m ² | 2nd/3rd |
| I.11.10.11 | <i>Caupona</i> , residence & vineyard | Caupona of Euxinus and Iustus | 776 m ² | 400 m ² | 4th |
| I.11.12 | residence | Casa di Euxinus | | 340 m ² | 3rd |
| I.11.13 | residence | None | 180 m ² | 170 m ² | 2nd/3rd |
| I.11.14 | residence | Casa del Cherem | 416 m ² | 400 m ² | 4th |
| I.11.15.9 | residence | Casa del Piano Superiore | 472 m ² | 460 m ² | 4th |
| I.11.16 | <i>hospitium</i> & residence | Casa di Saturninus | 173 m ² | 150 m ² | 2nd/3rd |
| I.11.17 | residence | Casa L. Caelius Ianuarius | 136 m ² | 140 m ² | 2nd |

Table 1. Summary of basic data for the properties in Insula I.11. Figures for Ground Floor 1 are from *Pompeii Bibliography and Mapping Project*. Figures for Ground Floor 2 and Quartile are from A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Housing and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (1994), 194 and 81 Table 4.2, respectively.



Figure 1. PALHIP 2022 field season project team. From left: Ted Peña, Susanna Faas-Bush, Cesca LaPasta

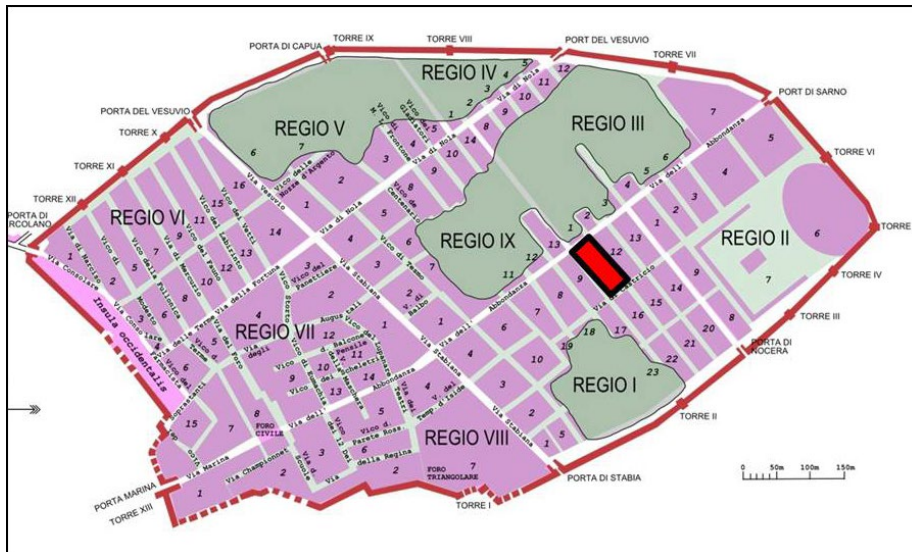


Figure 2. Plan of Pompeii showing location of Regio I Insula 11 (red rectangle with black border).

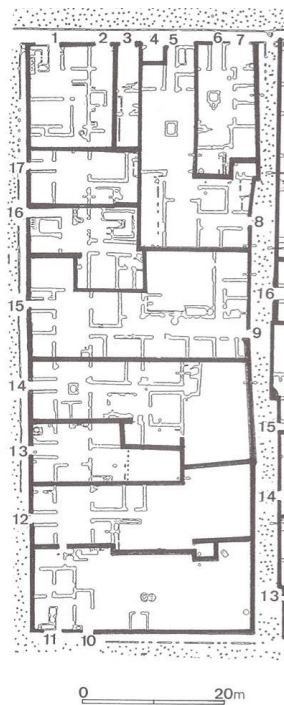


Figure 3. Plan of Regio I Insula 11. Property for which artifact documentation was carried out in 2022: Casa della Venere in Bikini (I.11.6.7); properties for which rapid architectural surveys were carried out in 2021: Casa di Lucius Habonius Primus (I.11.5.8), Casa di Lucius Caelius Ianuarius (I.11.17); properties for which rapid architectural surveys were carried out in 2022: Casa della Venere in Bikini, Casa di Saturninus (I.11.16).



Figure 4. Copper alloy steelyard with counterweight in form of an acorn from I.11.6.7.



Figure 5. Worked bone and copper alloy dice (top, middle) and bone astragals (bottom) from I.11.6.7.



Figure 6. Copper alloy lock box with fixing nails (left), deadbolt (center) and tumbler spring (right) from slide lock fitted to storage box from I.11.6.7.



Figure 7 Copper alloy strap hinge with iron pin from piece of storage furniture preserving iron fixing nails and portions of wood panel and framing element on it was which mounted.



Figure 8. Threshold block in interior doorway in I.11.6.7 with cuttings for pivots for double leaf door and drop bolts.



Figure 9. Recess for bed/dining couch in I.11.16.