

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **POMPEII SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION PROJECT finishes its first campaign successfully – A meeting place among ancient tombs!**

**In ancient Roman times, the necropolis was more than just a burial ground for deceased relatives and friends. It played an important role in the social life of the community, serving as a meeting point and providing a setting in which highly placed families could demonstrate their wealth. Their tombs were often as ostentatious as their homes inside the city walls. The preservation of these monuments, built to contain the mortal remains of the inhabitants of Pompeii, is thus no less important than efforts to conserve their town houses. This is why the members of the POMPEII SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION PROJECT decided to focus on the largest burial ground of this ancient city: the Necropolis of Porta Nocera. This site will lie at the center of their work over the next five years, reviving its function as a meeting place. Archaeologists and historians, scientists and experts in conservation as well as university students and local Italian schools will meet in Pompeii to study, to teach, and to learn. The first campaign under the auspices of this international research initiative was finished successfully on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2014.**

The necropolis outside Porta Nocera was first excavated in the 1950s. The last general restoration works date to the 1980s. Since then its 60 tombs have remained largely unprotected, exposed to the elements and the effects of time. Before work can begin on the restoration and conservation of the historic remains of Pompeii's largest burial ground, more than 60 years after it was originally excavated, the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics IBP and its partners have launched a documentary study. During the past two months, an interdisciplinary and international team of specialists, led by an Italian conservation expert, Monica Martelli Castaldi, and a German archaeologist, Pia Kastenmeier, including students from the Chair of Restoration, Technology of Art and Conservation Science at Technische Universität München (TUM), have surveyed the necropolis. The group was assisted by the Director of the Istituto per i Beni Archeologici e Monumentali of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR-IBAM), Daniele Malfitana, a classical archaeologist, together with his team. This interdisciplinary and international group has prepared an inventory of the necropolis including a wide conservation survey, a detailed pilot examination of two monuments, geophysical research, as well as a virtual tour designed to provide to a broader public the possibility to get to know, online, this part of Pompeii. Dr. Ralf Kilian, project coordinator and scientist at Fraunhofer IBP, explains what this involves: "First of all we need to assess the condition of the archaeological remains. This assessment goes hand in hand with estimating the cost of the planned restoration work and the question of

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defining specific areas of research and training." The team will then use the information collected to carry out urgent measures to consolidate the structures most at risk and to work out a long-term plan to preserve the site.

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**A researcher's dream come true**

Funding for this two-month study period is assured by the Executive Board of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and by Fraunhofer IBP and the CNR IBAM. Nonetheless, Dr. Ralf Kilian and the other two project coordinators, Dr. Albrecht Matthaei and Dr. Anna Anguissola, are still looking for sponsors willing to support the POMPEII SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION PROJECT, for its members have ambitious goals. Over the coming five years, it is planned to restore the antique Roman monuments using traditional and innovative materials to ensure their preservation. The team also intends to develop new and sustainable methods and strategies to prevent further decay, which could also be applied to other sites and buildings of historical interest. "The necropolis is the perfect location to start the POMPEII SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION PROJECT," says Matthaei. "Here we can study and conserve everything from ancient plaster and mortar, painted frescos and stucco, to entire walls and buildings." During the course of the five-year project, they also plan to hold annual Summer Schools to familiarize students and young future specialists with new methods and techniques for the preservation of our cultural heritage.

A key partner of the Pompeii Sustainable Preservation Project is the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Pompei, Ercolano e Stabia (SAPES). Its director, Prof. Dr. Massimo Osanna, declares: "We welcome the initiative and commitment shown by this international consortium in Pompeii and look forward to working together with its researchers on this project."

Collaboration with ICCROM, a UNESCO center for training in conservation, and with Italy's National Research Council (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, CNR) has also been intensified. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its institute for archaeological heritage – monuments and sites (Istituto per i Beni Archeologici e Monumentali, CNR-IBAM).

**Private funding for research initiative**

To realize the first stage of this plan to conserve the necropolis, which runs in the next five years to 2018, the POMPEII SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION PROJECT still requires funding of around six million Euros. The entire project with the aim to help preserving this unique UNESCO World Heritage Site is slated to continue for an initial period of ten years, during which time it will require total funding of around 10 million Euros in order to carry out the planned work to the necessary high quality standards. For this reason, the consortium is currently looking for patrons and sponsors who share the same desire to contribute toward the preservation of this 'jewel of European

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cultural heritage' while at the same time helping to promote scientific research and teaching.

More information can be found on the project website at:  
[www.pompeii-sustainable-preservation-project.org](http://www.pompeii-sustainable-preservation-project.org).

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**The scene: View of the necropolis on the Porta Nocera and the Vesuvius.**  
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**Discussion in the eastern section of the Necropolis held during the 1st Workshop.**  
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On March 12th 2014 the Memorandum of Understanding with the Italian CNR was signed. From left to right: Prof. Dr. Klaus Peter Sedlbauer (Director Fraunhofer IBP), Prof. Dr. Daniele Malfitana (Director CNR IBAM), Prof. Erwin Emmerling (Ordinarius for Conservation Sciences at the TU München), Prof. Dr. Luigi Nicolais (President of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche), Prof. Dr. Raimund Neugebauer (President of the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft), Dr. Ralf Kilian (Coordinator PSPP) and Dr. Anna Anguisola (Coordinator PSPP).

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Building physics is one of the keys to a successful building project. The **Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics IBP** focuses its work on research, development, testing, demonstration and consulting in the various fields of building physics. These include noise control and sound insulation in buildings, the optimization of auditoria acoustics and solutions for improving energy efficiency and optimizing lighting technology. Fraunhofer IBP's work also covers issues of climate control and the indoor environment, hygiene and health protection, building material emissions, weatherproofing and protection against heat and moisture, preservation of building structures and the conservation of historic monuments.

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