



The Vada Volaterrana Harbour Project: *discovering a Roman Harbour in Tuscany.* *2019 Report*

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Wall painting with
theatrical mask.

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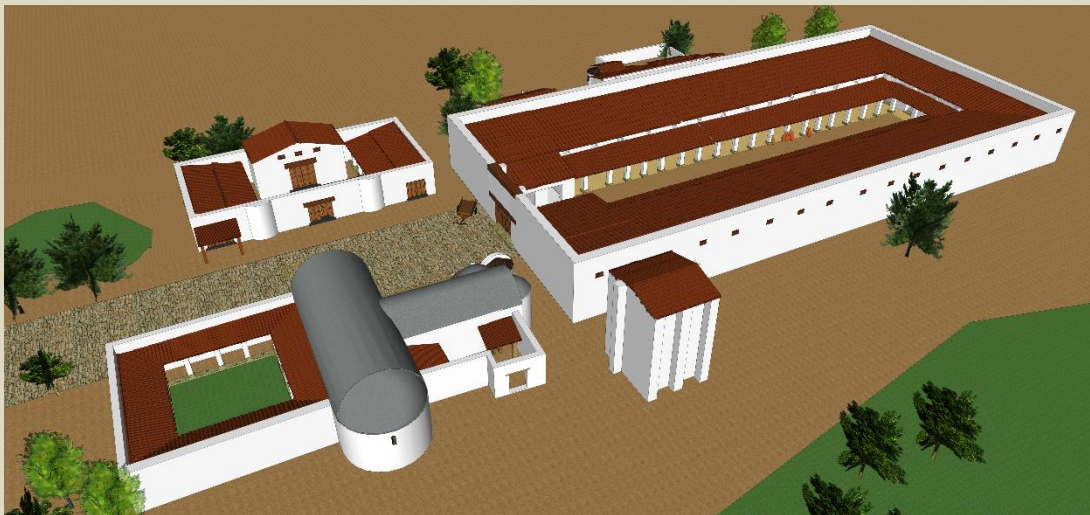
During the Roman imperial age the site was part of a wider harbour system called Vada Volaterrana, which belonged to the city of Volterra, more than 40 km far from the sea.

San Gaetano harbor quarter was built, according to a plan, during the Augustan age, to be abandoned at the end of the VIIth century AD.

Excavations discovered a large warehouse (horreum), a little thermal bath intended for the warehouse's workers, a fountain, a big water tank, a public thermal bath and the head office of the guild in charge of port activities management.



Warehouse cell



A Vada Volaterrana
harbour quarter
3D restitution

Plan of the
archaeological
site and
location
of the area
currently under
excavation



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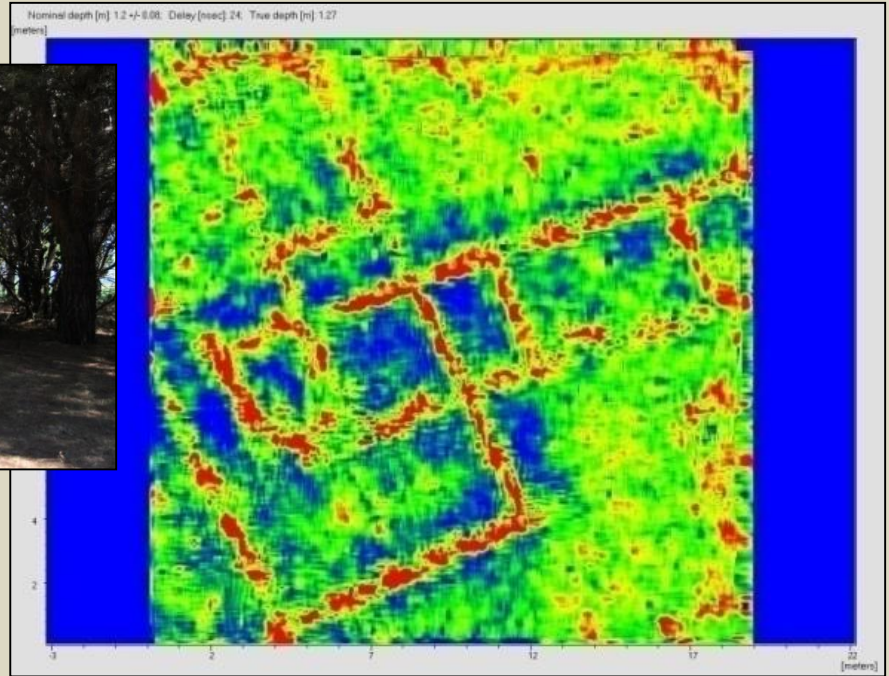
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Setting the drone....



Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey (above) and plan of the building currently under excavation (right).



Drone's photomosaic of the area currently under excavation at the end of the 2018 campaign.

Thanks to a GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) survey we were able to identify in the Southern sector of the harbour settlement, the structures of one or more new buildings, belonging to the harbour quarter. Starting from 2016, drone's survey are run at the end of the excavation, in order to get a detailed plan of the newly discovered buildings.





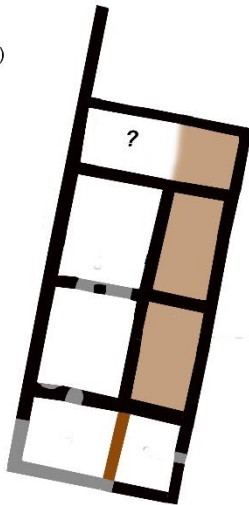
Digging the Vada Volaterrana harbour A new building...

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Classifying pottery after the excavation...

End of 1st cent. AD

- Walls
- Walls (destroyed/not dug)
- Plug walls
- Floor with drainage
- Marble floor
- Tombs
- Bread oven



After six years of researches, we are able to sketch a plan of the Roman age structures put on light so far.

At the end of the 1st cent. AD a big rectangular building was erected in the area currently under excavation, a sector of the Vada Volaterrana site previously empty of any structure.

The building, whose function is still unknown, is made of six rectangular rooms. A courtyard was perhaps located next to the Northernmost perimeter wall of the building.

Three rooms have floor made of more layers of clay mixed with pottery fragments. The attempt to make well drained floors seems to testify the use of these rooms for the storage of foods which needed protection against humidity, like corn.

2019 plan of the , building currently under excavation. Early phase (end of 1st cent. AD).



General view of the excavation at the end of 2019 campaign



Vada Volaterrana harbour excavation: the Southern sector of the site

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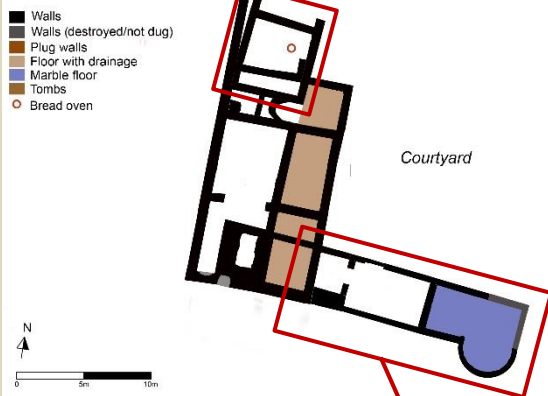
In 2019 our excavations provided new and very interesting data about the changes the rectangular building underwent between the IInd and the VIIth cent. AD.

Researches focused on Room 9, whose excavation - started in 2017 – already revealed the presence of a VIIth cent. AD metal workshop.

Excavating a Spanish fish-sauce amphora in the Southern sector of the building

After the removal of the workshops layers and structures we have been able to dig a sunken floor, made of clay, mortar and many small fragments of pottery. The latter allowed us to date Room 9 and other structures located in the South-Eastern corner of the rectangular building – such as the small Room 8 – to the half of the IIIrd cent. AD.

End of IInd-starting of IIIrd cent. AD

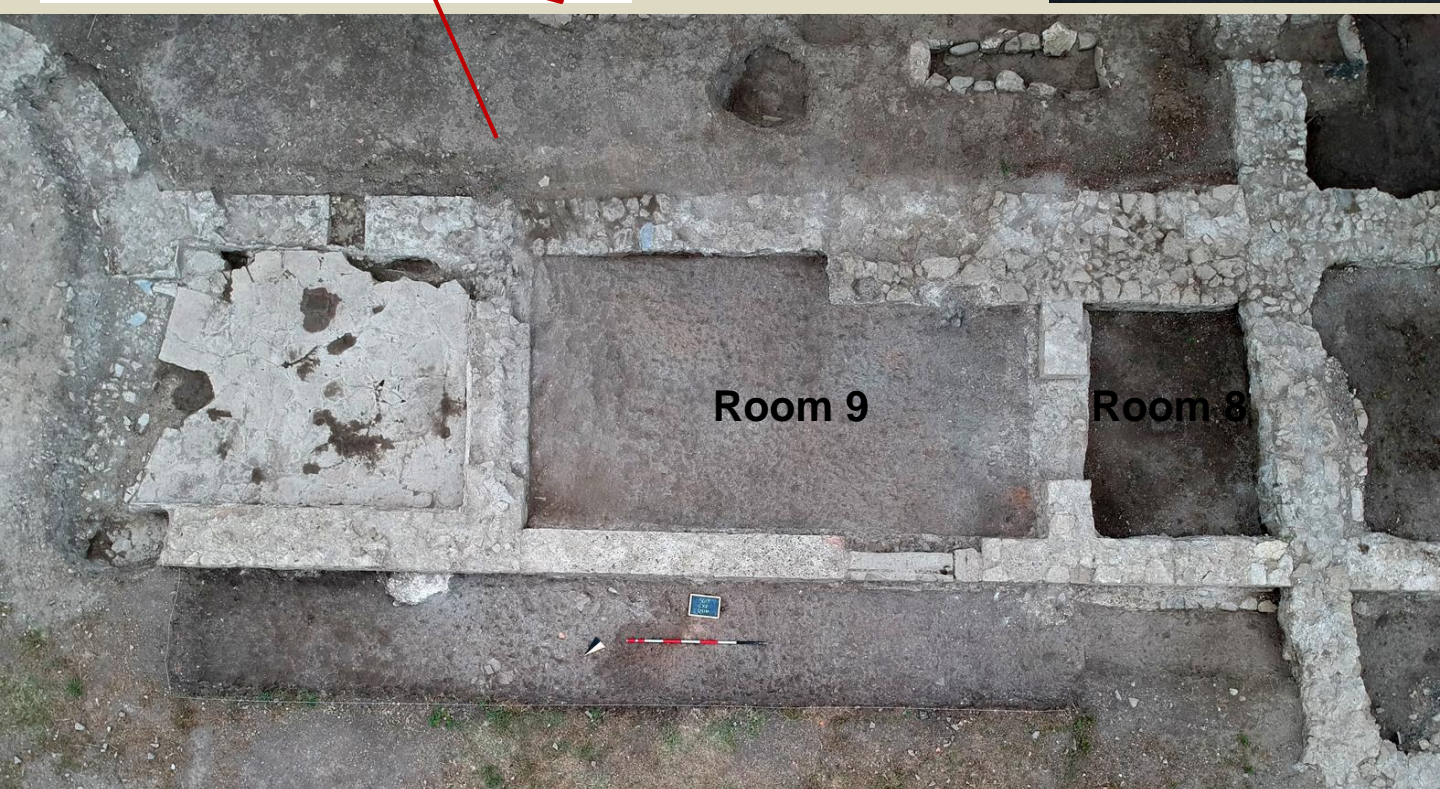


A lead weight, shaped as a fig, is likely related to the use of the whole area for food trade, already known thanks to the bakery dug out in the Northern sector of the area.

2019 plan of the excavation. We highlighted the rooms built between the end of the IInd and the starting of the IIIrd cent. AD.

General view from drone of the Easternmost area of the building currently under excavation (below).

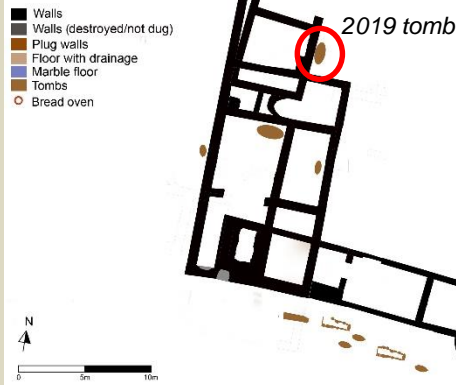
A lead weight shaped as a fig (below)





Archaeologists at work in the North-Eastern sector of the excavation.

Vlth cent. AD



2019 plan of the excavation with the Late Antiquity tombs. The new tomb is highlighted.

These features are very uncommon in Roman Imperial Age tombs. Stratigraphic data tell us the woman died between during the IInd cent. AD and her tomb was dug next the Eastern wall of the most ancient building identified in this sector of the Vada Volaterrana settlement.

Between the 2014 and the 2017 campaigns 9 tombs have been dug out in the area currently under excavation. All of them to the period between the Vth and the VIth cent. AD, when part of the building collapsed and was abandoned.

The new burial under excavation.



Vada Volaterrana harbour excavation. A burial from the North-Eastern sector of the area

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Also in the North-Western sector of the excavation 2019 researches have been aimed to understand more about the transformations the building went through after the IInd cent. AD.

We've been able to understand the bakery itself was built at the end of the IInd cent. AD, along with the new structures added to the South-Eastern corner of the rectangular building.

A new burial

The excavations carried on in the Northernmost sector of the site put on light the burial of a woman, 35-45 years old. The skeleton's position is very interesting: the woman was buried face down, with her left arm back.

Photo of the burial found in 2019 (below).





Public Archaeology: the Open Day at the Vada Volaterrana harbour quarter

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Open Day a Vada Volaterrana

Attività della giornata

Sabato 13 luglio h 10.00-13.00 e h 16.00-19.30

Visite guidate all'area archeologica

Ritrovo presso l'ingresso del sito; partenza ogni ora dalle h 10.30 (e fino alle 12.30) e dalle h 16.30 (e fino alle 18.30).

Stand di archeologia

Per tutta la giornata, gli archeologi e i professionisti impegnati a Vada Volaterrana saranno a disposizione presso stand allestiti lungo il percorso di visita. Ciascuno stand sarà dedicato ad un tema particolare: professione archeologo, reperti dallo scavo, antropologia, archeologia sperimentale, tecnologie per l'archeologia e l'archeologia subacquea ... e altre sorprese!

Laboratori: come un Romano

- Nella cucina di Marco Porcio Catone!

Archeologia sperimentale: prepareremo le focacce usando un'antica teglia romana!

Durata laboratorio: 30 min.

Inizio attività laboratori: h 11.00; 18.30.

- Nella camera della matrona Atea!

Parteciperete in prima persona alla toeletta e alla vestizione di una donna romana!

Durata laboratorio: 30 min.

Inizio attività laboratori: h 11.30; 17.00.

Registrazione gratuita presso lo stand di Archeologia Sperimentale (max. 15 partecipanti). Per gli spettatori, la registrazione non sarà necessaria.

Organizzazione programma: insegnamento di Topografia antica
Dipartimento di Civiltà e Forme del Sapere – Università di Pisa



L'ingresso è libero e tutte le attività gratuite!

Seguete su



Vada Volaterrana.
Lo scavo, le storie

The 2019 Open Day leaflet. Look at all the amazing stuff we have done! ;-)

In 2017, we have started a Public Archaeology program inside the frame of the Vada Volaterrana Harbour Project. In a couple of years, it has become one of the most appreciated parts of the whole project for both the participants of the Summer school and the visitors. Moreover, the local community is getting increasingly aware of the findings and is eager to re-discover its own past together with the archaeologists. As in previous years, the activities embedded in the program have been generously funded by the Administration of Rosignano Marittimo and private investors – INEOS S.p.A. and Inovyn S.p.A. The Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage has also contributed to cover part of the activities.



Some pictures of the 2019 Open Day. Visitors and archaeologists smiling at the camera!

As in the past, we have run a project involving local high school students in order to teach them the basics of Archaeology and Ancient History, under the supervision of a member of the Staff.

The archaeologists and the students alike have been at locals and tourists' disposal to answer their questions about the site and the findings. An open dialogue with the non-specialist audience is now to be considered a fundamental part of the job. As such, we are going to involve the participants of the Summer school in Public Archaeology activities. They will be given lessons, in order to interact with the non-archaeological audience and give information to visitors. On a voluntary basis, they will also be involved in the making of the Open Day!



Working tools exhibited during the Open Day in Vada Volaterrana.

Public Archaeology: the Open Day at the Vada Volaterrana harbour quarter

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The 2019 edition saw around 300 visitors (and many children among them) crowding Vada Volaterrana in the 3rd Open Day. This event has ever been meant to give the locals and the tourists the opportunity to get a glimpse of the archaeological field activities, through different thematic stands across the ancient site. Every year, the members of the Staff, along with the students of the University of Pisa, guide the visitors in an ideal path going from material culture to the re-enactment of Roman dressing, from the working tools to the excavation techniques.

The Open Day has ever provided us the chance to experiment with new stuff and share experiences with the visitors. This year we have arranged an experimental archaeology test. We have asked a local potter to fabricate a pottery oven. It was not imagination! We had found fragments of that type of oven during the previous excavation in Vada! We cooked some bread and you know what? It was very good!



Some scenes of the bread-making process. Please, look here at the marvellous reconstruction of the clibanus (i.e. the oven - also in the image below); the charcoal on the top of the oven has cooked a perfect 'focaccia'.



One of the posters drawn by the artists of the School of Comics in Florence. It depicts the ancient bath-house right next the ancient remains of...the bath-house itself!



We have also launched a partnership with the International School of Comics in Florence. Together we have worked on a series of posters with comics depicting the ancient remains...brought back to life! Aren't you eager to see them?



22 Luglio 2019

vada_volaterrana
Vada, Toscana, Italy

Piace a **troyuniversitanythr** e altre persone

vada_volaterrana 🍌 I nostri archeologi hanno terminato i lavori di scavo a San Gaetano di Vada 🍌 Ora studio e ricerca proseguono in laboratorio e in biblioteca 🍌 Per concludere in bellezza ecco qualche ricordo della

Pictures of the Open Day labs on our Instagram channel.



Piace a **comunicarcho** e altre persone

vada_volaterrana 🍌 Dopo una lunga giornata lavorativa, alcuni nostri strumenti riposano su una sedia, nell'attesa di terminare lo scavo archeologico a #VadaVolaterrana 🍌 Tante interessanti novità e aggiornamenti: San Gaetano di Vada continua a rivelarci - grazie al lavoro costante dei nostri archeologi - la sua Storia! 🍌 @cfsunipi @unipisa @palazzo_bombardieri @prolocovada @prolocorossiano

Please, consider to follow us on the Social networks: you will get a glimpse of our everyday activity on Vada Volaterrana (and on archaeological stuff in general!).

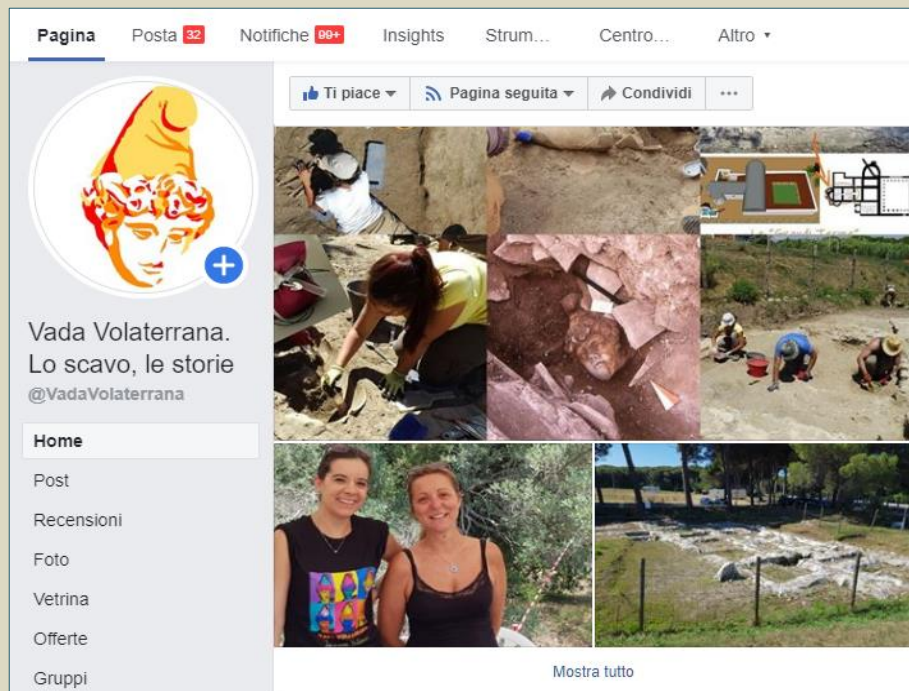
Public Archaeology at Vada Volaterrana Our Social Networks

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During the 19th (and much part of the 20th) century, communication in archaeology was not much of an issue. Luckily (!) things have changed and now it plays a fundamental role in creating a steady relation between academia and local communities.

As in the past, we have asked the participants of the Summer school to help us in the making of contents – photos and videos alike – to be posted on our social channels (FB and Instagram).

During the last two years, the number of our followers on FB and Instagram has constantly grown, along with our activities on the field: many thanks to all the participants and the students who helped us in achieving this goal!



Our FB page!

Although the Vada Volaterrana website is in English, you have probably noticed that most of the texts on our social networks have been written in Italian. Still, we are working on a series of posts devoted to the English-speaking audience. We are working to achieve this goal during the 2020 edition!



If you want to get more information or enroll for the 2020 edition, go on www.diggingvada.com!

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We look very much forward to welcoming you here!