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Continuity and Change in Late Antiquity  
Recent Discoveries

Title of the paper:  
Beyond Pompeii: the north slope of Vesuvius

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Abstract:  
Beyond Pompeii: the north slope of Vesuvius

The study of Vesuvian area usually pertains to the eruption of AD 79, the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the maritime villas on the coast. This focus is caused by multiple historical and political factors.

The “dark side” of archaeological research in Campania is represented by the loss of data for the large area that was in ancient times the territory of two big cities, Neapolis and Nola, and their boundaries with the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

A complete analysis of the ancient sources, archive documents, but mainly brand new evidence from two massive Roman villas, show how the hiatus in the pattern of the Roman settlements in this part of Campania is not a historical fact, but it has to be interpreted as a distortion, which stems from the factors above mentioned. Moreover, the north slope of the volcano was less affected by the AD 79 eruption, allowing several of the settlements to survive until the Late Antique AD 472 eruption.

This paper provides an exhaustive overview of the settlement pattern before and after the AD 79 eruption, showing and analysing the changes until the AD 472 eruption. This paper takes advantage of new discoveries for moving beyond the geographical and historical frames of Pompeian studies and offers groundbreaking new interpretative scenarios, which move over the traditional hypothesis of a cultural and economic falloff of the entire area after the eruption, in favour of a more complex pattern of opposed factors until the end of the Roman Empire.