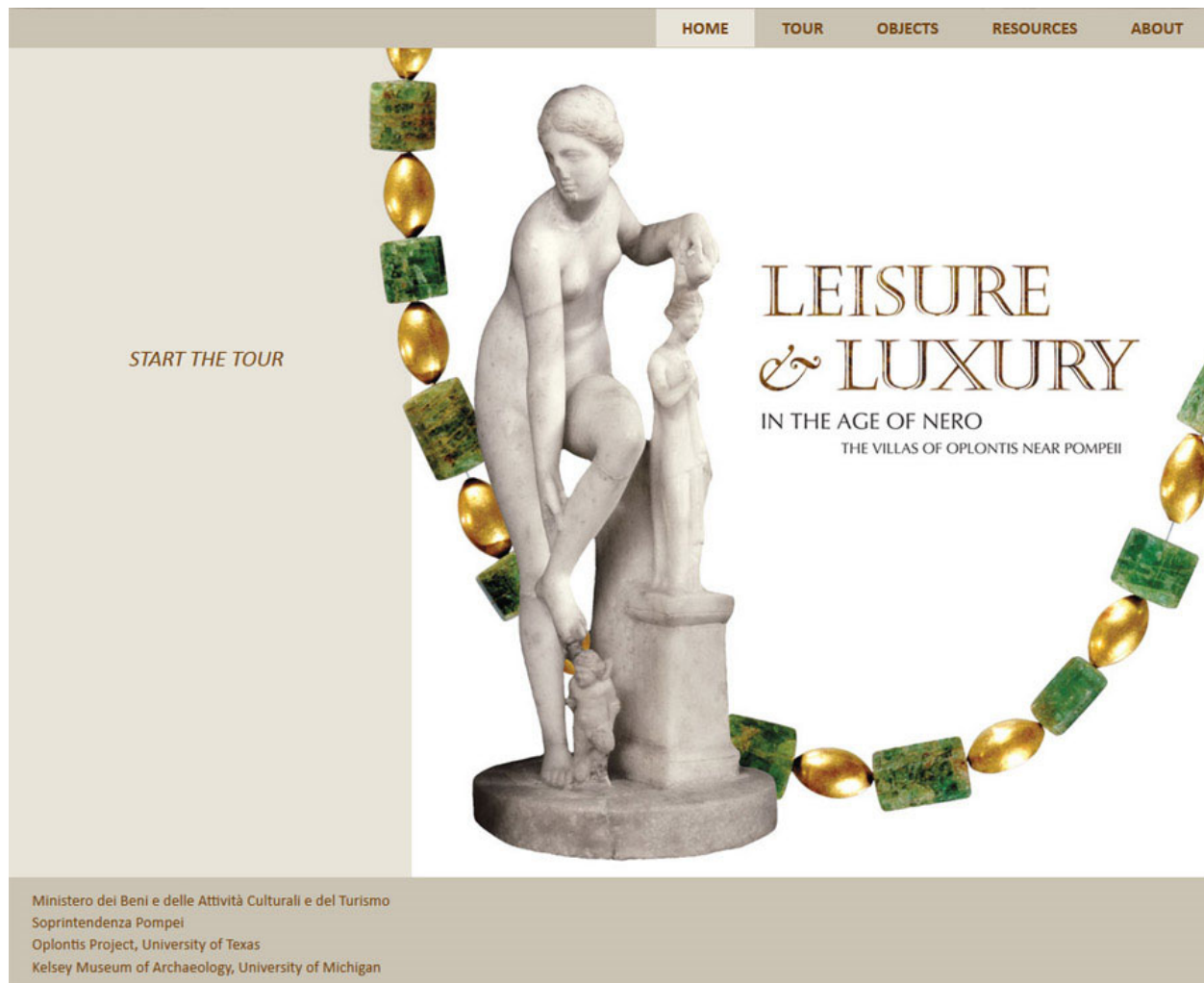


Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis near Pompeii



“Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis near Pompeii” is the online version of an international traveling exhibition that was organized and presented by the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology in Spring 2016. This spectacular show explored the lavish lifestyle and economic interests of ancient Rome’s wealthiest and most powerful citizens, who vacationed on the Bay of Naples in the 1st century AD. On display were more than 200 objects brought from Italy, including [magnificent marble statues](#), [colorful fragments of wall paintings](#), [precious jewelry](#), and [various objects of everyday life](#). The exhibition was mounted in cooperation with the Archaeological Superintendency of Pompeii and the Oplontis Project at the University of Texas; following its premiere at the Kelsey Museum, it traveled to two additional venues in the United States. The online exhibition was produced in house, using resources and didactic material originally developed for the physical show and its accompanying printed catalogue (see [Acknowledgments](#) for a full list of contributing institutions and individuals).

“Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero” focuses on two structures at Oplontis near Pompeii that were buried when Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79. The exhibition evoked spaces in an elite Roman residence (Villa A) and a neighboring commercial complex (Oplontis B), to allow contemporary visitors to visualize the daily lives of both the upper and lower classes of Roman society. This project is a result of many years of international and inter-institutional research collaboration, and one of the main challenges was to interpret its rich scholarly content for the general public; to achieve this goal, information presented on the website has been structured in several layers.

HOME TOUR OBJECTS RESOURCES ABOUT

LEISURE & LUXURY

IN THE AGE OF NERO
THE VILLAS OF OPLONTIS NEAR POMPEII

TOUR ITINERARY » NEXT »

The Wine Trade

Bacchus and Mount Vesuvius, from House of the Centenary, Pompeii

[Read more](#)

TRADERS AND CONSUMERS

COMMERCE & WEALTH

Amphorae from Oplontis B

The bottling and exporting of wine was a major, though seasonal, activity at Oplontis B. The many other goods that were traded and consumed here give us a fuller picture of the Empire-wide commerce conducted at Oplontis B as well as the nature of residential life in this complex.

The residents and workers in this settlement were also consumers of goods, as is evident from the kinds of products and wares they used in daily life. Excavators have found large amounts of pottery, ceramic and wooden building materials (brick, tile, wooden doors and fencing), decorative marble and fresco fragments, metal objects (nails, hinges, coins, keys and locks), and

Website users are advised to start their visit by following a [linear itinerary](#) through reconstructed ancient spaces, such as residential apartments, gardens, luxurious living rooms, and service courtyards; here, groups of objects are displayed in the context of their possible usage. Along with its main content, each tour station has a few expandable boxes that provide opportunities for more in-depth exploration, including higher-resolution images, detailed object descriptions, and 3D reconstructions. The tour narrative tells website visitors about the lifestyles of both [the wealthy villa owners](#) and their [house slaves](#), just before the [catastrophic eruption](#) of Mount Vesuvius. The emotional climax of the tour is [the story of the 54 skeletons](#) of men and women found in one of the vaulted storerooms of Oplontis B where they had sought shelter from the volcanic eruption.

The online exhibition includes a selection of [3D movies](#) that allow visitors to virtually walk through reconstructed rooms of the elite Villa A. This is an exciting resource that puts fragments of wall paintings and other architectural details [in context](#).

An alternative way to visit the “Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero” website is via [the object pages](#) where individual objects are grouped by their function and material. Each object is linked to the respective tour station where it has been displayed; object images are accompanied by ["tombstone" labels](#) that may be valuable for scholars and students.

The screenshot shows the website's interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for HOME, TOUR, OBJECTS, RESOURCES, and ABOUT. Below the menu is the title "LEISURE & LUXURY IN THE AGE OF NERO" and the subtitle "THE VILLAS OF OPLONTIS NEAR POMPEII". A decorative string of gold and green beads is visible on the right side of the header.

On the left side, there is a "List of Objects" section with a bulleted list of categories and sub-items:

- Architectural Components
 - Capitals
 - Antefixes
 - Floors
- Painting Fragments
 - Wall and Ceiling Painting
 - Molded Stucco Fragments
- Sculpture
 - Garden Sculptures
 - Household Statuettes
- Portable Wealth and Adornment
 - Jewelry
 - Silverware
 - Coins
- Objects of Daily Life
 - Sundial
 - Incense Burner
 - Strongbox
 - Metal and Glass Vessels
 - Pottery Vessels
 - Lamps
 - Loom Weights
 - Mortar and Pestle
 - Dice
 - Seal Ring
 - Stone Weights

The main content area is titled "MOLDED STUCCO FRAGMENTS" and displays a grid of six items, each with an image and a descriptive label:

- FRAGMENTS WITH PALMETTES WITH ACANTHUS TENDRILS**
Stucco
Fourth style (AD 45-79)
From Villa A, original room unknown (cat. 112)
Inv. nos. 2012.00.06.00178a, 2012.00.06.00178b, 2012.00.06.00178c, 2012.00.06.00178d
[View in context](#)
- FRAGMENT WITH VEGETAL MOTIF**
Stucco
Fourth style (AD 45-79)
From Villa A, original room unknown (cat. 113)
Inv. no. 2012.00.06.00177
[View in context](#)
- FRAGMENT WITH SMALL PALMETTES AND LOTUS BUDS**
Stucco
Fourth style (AD 45-79)
From Villa A, original room unknown (cat. 116)
Inv. no. 2012.00.06.00152
[View in context](#)
- FRAGMENTS WITH RUNNING WAVE MOTIF**
Stucco
Fourth style (AD 45-79)
From Villa A, room 55 (cat. 119)
Inv. nos.
- PAINTING FRAGMENT WITH STUCCO MOLDING**
Stucco

Credits

Exhibition curator: Elaine Gazda
Curatorial assistant: Lynley McAlpine
Graphic artist: Steven Driscoll Hixson
Editor: Margaret Lourie
Website designer: Julia Falkovitch-Khain