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The Fullonica of Stephanus of Pompeii

Stephanus' fullonica stands in Regio I, insula 6 of Pompeii, was buried with the rest of the city of Pompeii during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD.

And it was found only in 1912 during excavations that were carried out in the area of Via dell'Abbondanza, was overlooked by the famous workshop.

The eruption of Vesuvius completely submerged the city of Pompeii, and not only the houses and streets were hit by the incessant rain of lapilli.

But also the many stores in the city and that mostly overlooked Pompeii's main street.

What was the fullonica of Stephanus

The Fullonica of Stephanus was an ancient building, used as a dyehouse and laundry located in the northeastern part of Pompeii.

The origin of the name probably comes from that of the owner. Election posters were found near the store that bore the name Stephanus, so it was assumed that he might have been the owner of the store.

The building was of considerable size, with several rooms and chambers specifically designed to carry out activities related to textile processing. Inside, there were tanks for washing cloth and softening cloth and large drying areas.

The structure of the fullonica

The Stephanus fullonica is one of the best preserved of all those found in Pompeii.

It is characterized by the presence of an atrium, as with all typical Roman houses, with a large basin in the center used for washing clothes.



In place of the compluvium, that is, the opening made from the roof of the atrium , a skylight was made and used for the 'drying of clothes.
In the same atrium are made two rooms, decorated with wonderful paintings depicting geometric figures, birds, animals. Frescoed both with classic Pompeian red in the center, a black wainscoting at the base, and white was used at the top.



The fullonica also had a garden, with a small peristyle probably used for drying clothes. And on the right side was the kitchen, where the dishes and pans used in ancient times for cooking are perfectly visible today.



The skeleton found in the workshop

During the excavations that unearthed Stephanus' Fullonica, a skeleton was found near the entrance holding a pile of coins.

It was speculated that it might have been the same owner Stephanus who tried to save the day's takings, but died as a result of the eruption.

Certainties about this are not there. It could also have been a fugitive who went to the fullonica in search of shelter but equally found death.