

Investigating Pompeii and Vesuvius

In the year AD 79, the volcano Mount Vesuvius erupted. It caused lots of damage to the nearby Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Buildings were destroyed and many lives were lost. The entire area was covered in layers of ash.

Many years later, the remains of the buildings were uncovered. The bodies of the buried victims had decomposed over time, leaving just skeletons behind. However, they also left hollow spaces where they once were, surrounded by compacted earth and volcanic ash.

The spaces were filled with plaster which was left to harden. Three-dimensional replicas were made from this. Experts are now able to see the final poses of the people of Pompeii and the plaster casts have helped them to piece together clues about life in the ancient cities.

Evidence has been found of animal remains as well as human. One dog was wearing a collar and was chained up to a post – this suggests that it was probably kept as a pet or guard dog. A famous plaster cast shows the dog in the position in which it perished: lying on its back with its legs in the air.

The remains at Pompeii are now a huge modern tourist attraction. The well-preserved ancient buildings make it one of the most visited archaeological sites in the world.

Delta – Truth or Myth?

Some sources suggest that evidence of another dog was discovered, lying above the body of a child. Some believe that the faithful dog died while trying to protect the young boy from the volcanic debris. A collar is also said to have been found, with the name 'Delta' engraved upon it.

It is thought that Delta belonged to Severinus, and stories say that the dog had already saved his life on previous occasions. The tales of Delta have inspired modern fiction such as 'The Pack of Pompeii'.



Mount Vesuvius in Italy.