

POMPEII & HERCOLANEUM

**SPLENDOUR AND DEATH
UNDER THE VOLCANO**



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expona

POMPEII & HERCOLANEUM

SPLENDOUR AND DEATH UNDER THE VOLCANO

(WORKING TITLE)



CONTEMPORANEA PROGETTI srl

Via del Campofiore 106
50136 Florence
tel +39 055 6802474
fax +39 055 6580200
www.contemporaneaprogetti.it
f_merz@contemporaneaprogetti.it



EXPONA

Dr. Alex Susanna
Via Leonardo da Vinci 2c
39100 Bolzano
tel: +39 335 7294859
www.expona.net
alex@expona.net

The exhibition features objects from Pompeii and Herculaneum, the cities obliterated by the volcano. You'll be able to see some of the most famous objects from antiquity, first hand.



Fountain head in the form of a satyr from Pompeii. Marble, 1st century AD. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Bracelet, double band of joined hemispheres, from Pompeii. Gold, 1st century AD. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Loaf of bread from Herculaneum carbonised by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, 79 AD. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Bracelet, in the form of a snake, from Pompeii. Gold, 1st century AD. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Vessel for keeping drinks warm from Pompeii. Bronze, 1st century AD. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Mother of pearl earrings from Pompeii. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Fresco, warship crowded with soldiers, 62-79 AD Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Votive relief depicting Portus, Ostia Museo delle Navi Romane di Fiumicino
 Relief two warships, Naples, Stone 200-30 BC Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
 Copy of a cast of a man, Pompeii Soprintendenza Archaeologica di Pompeii
 Statue Hermanubis, Baiae Marble, 1st Century AD Museo dei Campi Flegrei

EXHIBITION CONCEPT

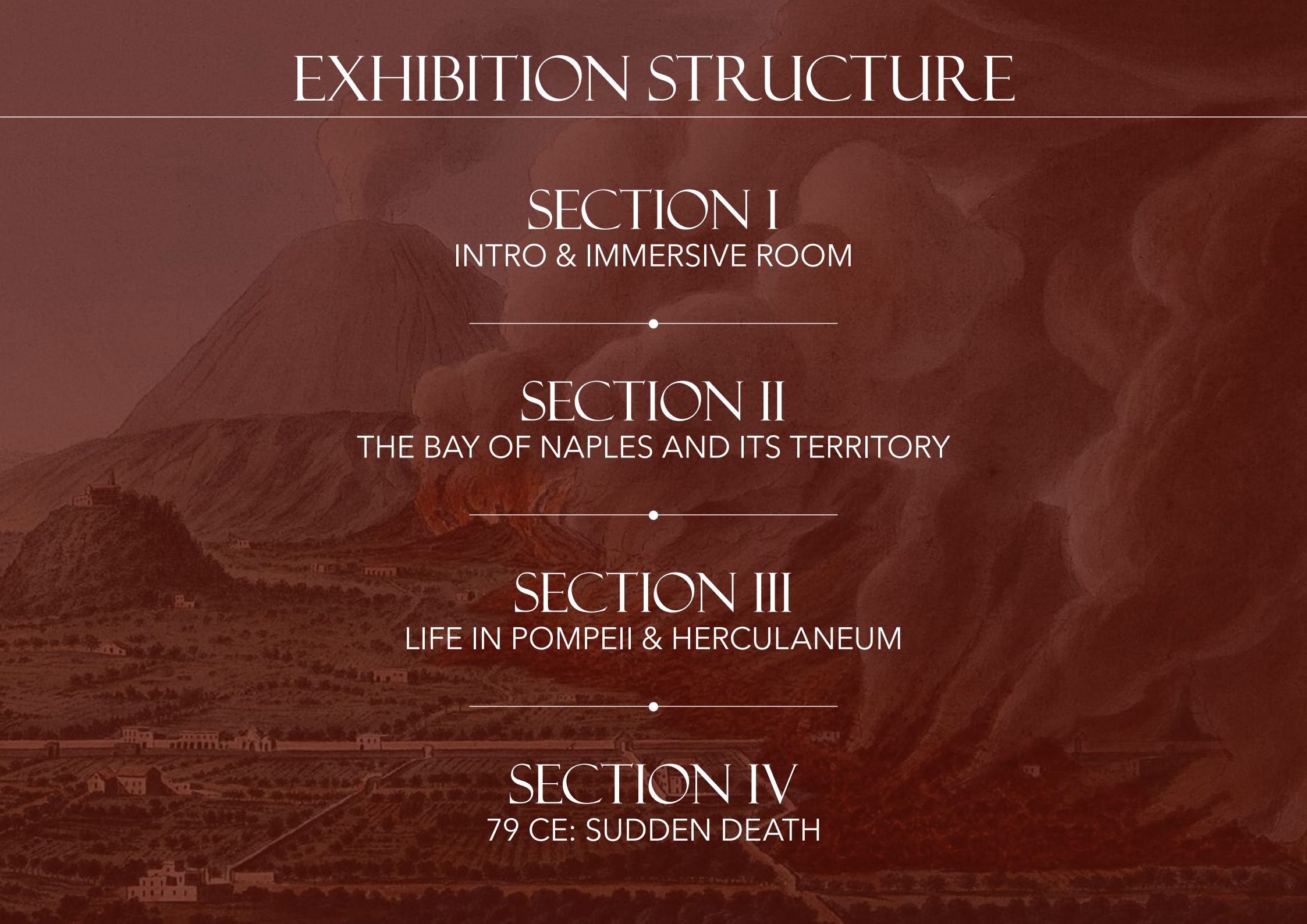
The Myth of Pompeii continues to attract millions of people even more than two thousand years after the night when Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying the cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae, and Oplonti. The exhibition "Pompeii & Herculaneum. Splendour and Death Under the Volcano" (working title) leads the visitor through an affective and explorative journey along the myth of Pompeii. A thorough project unveiling the fascinating and at the same time dramatic history of the prosperous city of the Roman Empire and its relationship with a territory characterized by extraordinary volcanological events that determined its obliteration.

The exhibition brings to light the latest discoveries that recent excavations in Pompeii have unearthed over the last few years and it develops, also from a geological and scientific perspective, the complex phenomena related to volcanism and bradyseism, still relevant today in the areas of the Gulf of Naples and of the Phlegraean Fields.

Through 4 sections, the visitor is accompanied by Pliny the Elder, great scholar and scientist who, thanks to his direct witness, leads the audience to the discovery of the Gulf of Naples, of the Vesuvian area, and of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the most wealthy and splendid cities of the Roman Empire. Their splendour, but also their dramatic destruction, are narrated thanks to Pliny the Elder who lived first-hand the events of those fateful days, in the desperate attempt of saving the inhabitants escaping from the tragic eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

In the exhibition, original artworks drawing from the excavations of Pompeii, Herculaneum and other important archaeological sites of the Italian region Campania are in dialogue with explicative and educational devices designed through a rigorous scientific approach, together with suggestive reproductions and multimedia immersive environments.

EXHIBITION STRUCTURE

The background of the entire page is a sepia-toned illustration. It depicts Mount Vesuvius in the upper left, with a large plume of smoke or ash rising from its crater. Below the mountain, the Bay of Naples is visible, with several small boats on the water. In the foreground, the ruins of ancient cities are shown, including the prominent amphitheater of Pompeii and the more densely packed ruins of Herculaneum. The overall atmosphere is one of historical drama and tragedy.

SECTION I INTRO & IMMERSIVE ROOM

SECTION II THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY

SECTION III LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM

SECTION IV 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH

SECTION I

INTRO & IMMERSIVE ROOM

“The observation of nature has persuaded me that nothing should be judged incredible when relating to it.”

Pliny the Elder, Natural History

Mount Vesuvius, the renowned Italian active volcano, is famous around the world mainly for the eruption of 79 CE, which destroyed the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in two days, an event that shocked the people of the time and that still today generates a mix of fascination and fear.

However, not everyone knows that Mount Vesuvius is part of a much wider volcanic area including the so-called ten most dangerous ‘super-volcanoes’ in the world, within the entire area of the Bay of Naples and of the Phlegraean Fields – the mythic region of the ‘burning fields’ where, according to the legend, Hercules defeated the Giants “...from a mount that once threw flames” (Diodoro Siculo, 1st century BCE).

The exhibition starts with a geo-scientific presentation of volcanism in the lands of the tragically famous Roman cities. The stories of Pompeii and Herculaneum are intertwined and strictly connected to one of the most incredible natural phenomenon existing on earth.

The visitor embarks on an enthralling journey starting from a suggestive immersive room where the events of volcanism, bradyseism, and the phenomenon of ‘super-volcano’ – still existing today and acting beneath the fertile lands around Naples – are developed thanks to engaging video-projections, animations and sound effects accompanying the audience throughout the course of the exhibition.

MAIN TOPICS

- Vulcanism
- Bradyseism
- *Super-volcanoes*: 1 of the 10 most dangerous in the world
- Clash of the Gods of Olympus (Gigantomachy)

SECTION I • INTRO & IMMERSIVE ROOM



IMMERSIVE ROOM • Vulcanism

SECTION I • INTRO & IMMERSIVE ROOM



VIDEO PROJECTION • The Vesuvius Eruption of 1944

SECTION II

THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY

“How am I to describe the coast of Campania, a fertile region so blessed with pleasant scenery that is manifestly the work of Nature in a happy mood?”

Pliny the Elder, Natural History, III 40

The Bay of Naples was located almost in the middle of the Roman Mare Nostrum, in a strategic position, with significant commercial (*Pozzuoli* and *Neapolis*) and military (*Capo Miseno*) ports and rich towns, including Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae, and Oplonti. It was boarded on the east by Mount Vesuvius and on the north by the volcanoes of the Phlegraean Fields.

In this first section, the territory where Pompeii and Herculaneum arose and developed is geographically contextualized. The visitor has the chance to understand how the prosperity and splendour of the entire area of the Bay of Naples, with its complex and controlled commercial network, allowed smaller towns like these to import luxury goods from all over the Roman world, and to export their goods even beyond their own borders.

Before examining the life of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the exhibition sheds light to their territory, with an interesting focus on the area of Baiae, of the Phlegraean Fields, and of the ancient Neapolis, thanks to a selection of precious original artefacts drawing from several land and underwater archaeological excavations.

MAIN TOPICS

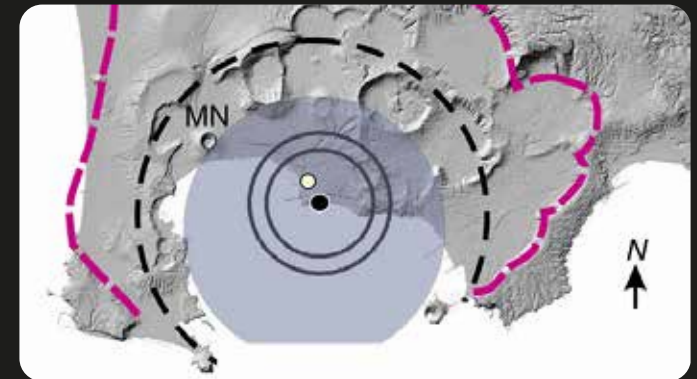
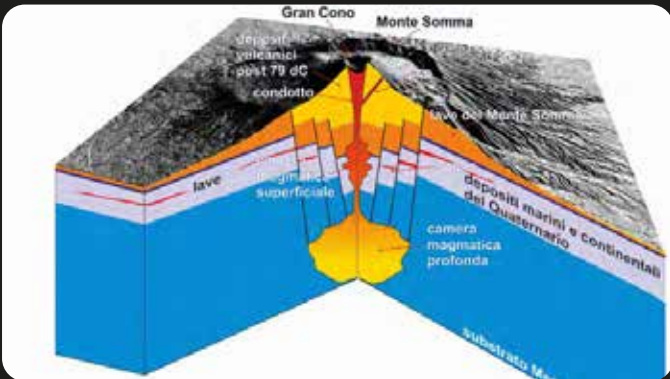
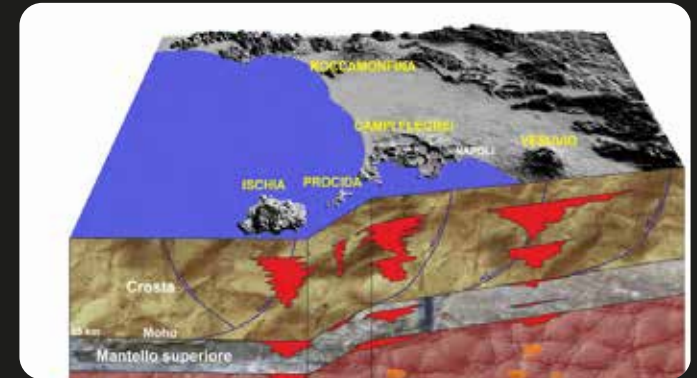
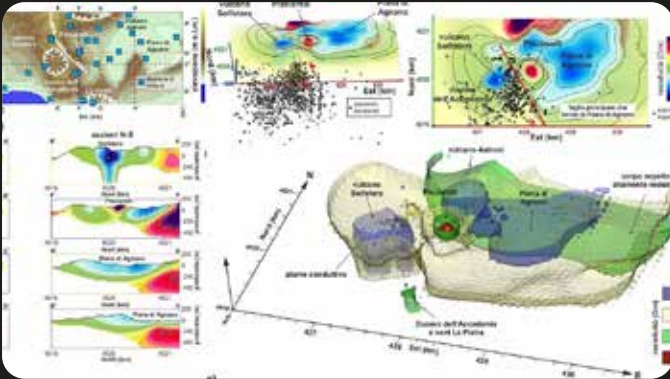
- The Bay of Naples: landscape and development
- The Flegraean Field: phenomena of Bradyseism
- Focus on the *Macellum* of Pozzuoli and the submerged Villae of the coast of Baia
- *Neapolis* and its Harbour: trade & wealth

SECTION II • THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY



Wall painting showing an ideal Campanian Landscape

SECTION II • THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY



SECTION II • THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY



Statue of Serapis
from the *Macellum* of Pozzuoli

SECTION II • THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY

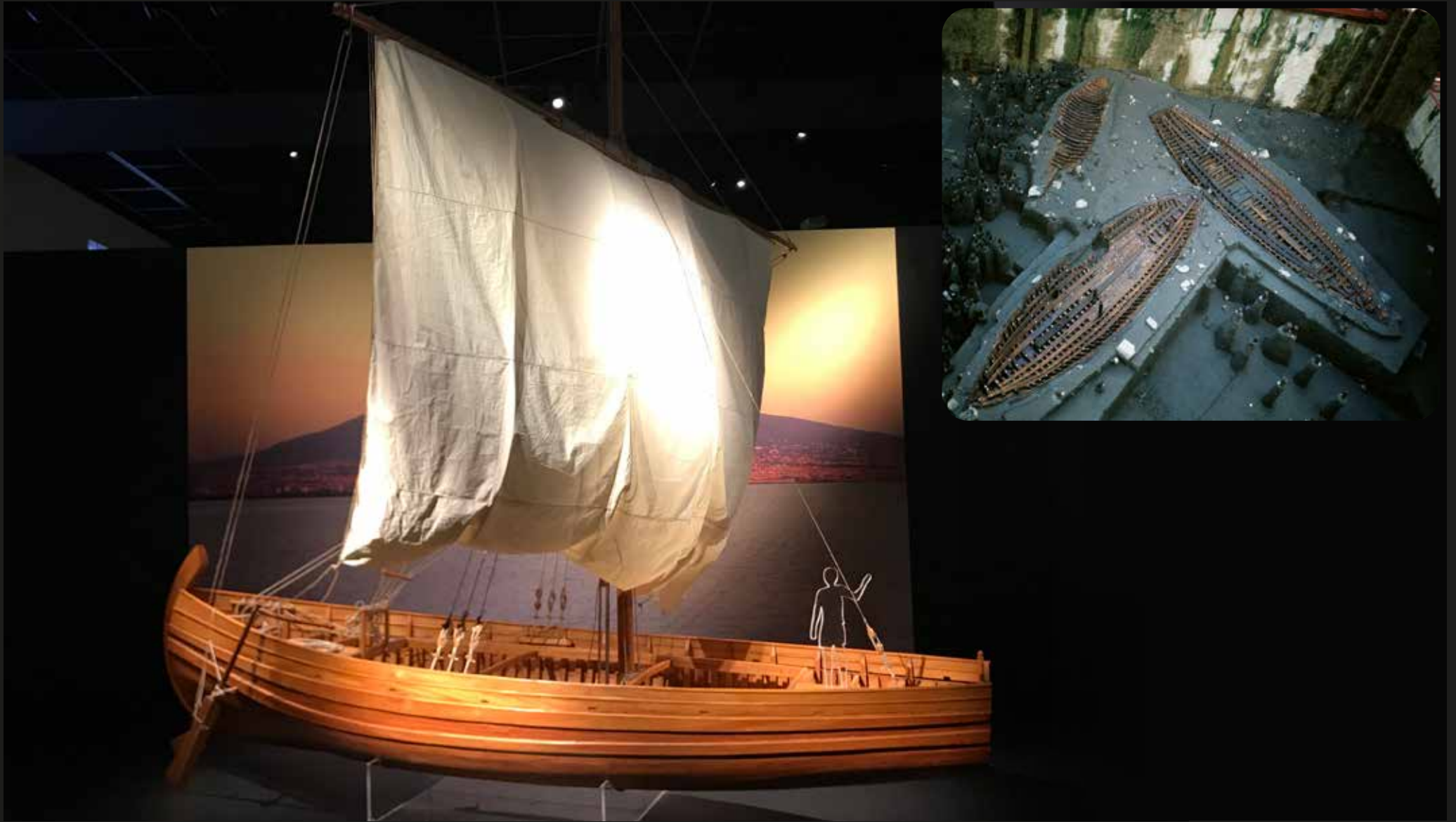


Antefix with head
of Silenus from Pozzuoli



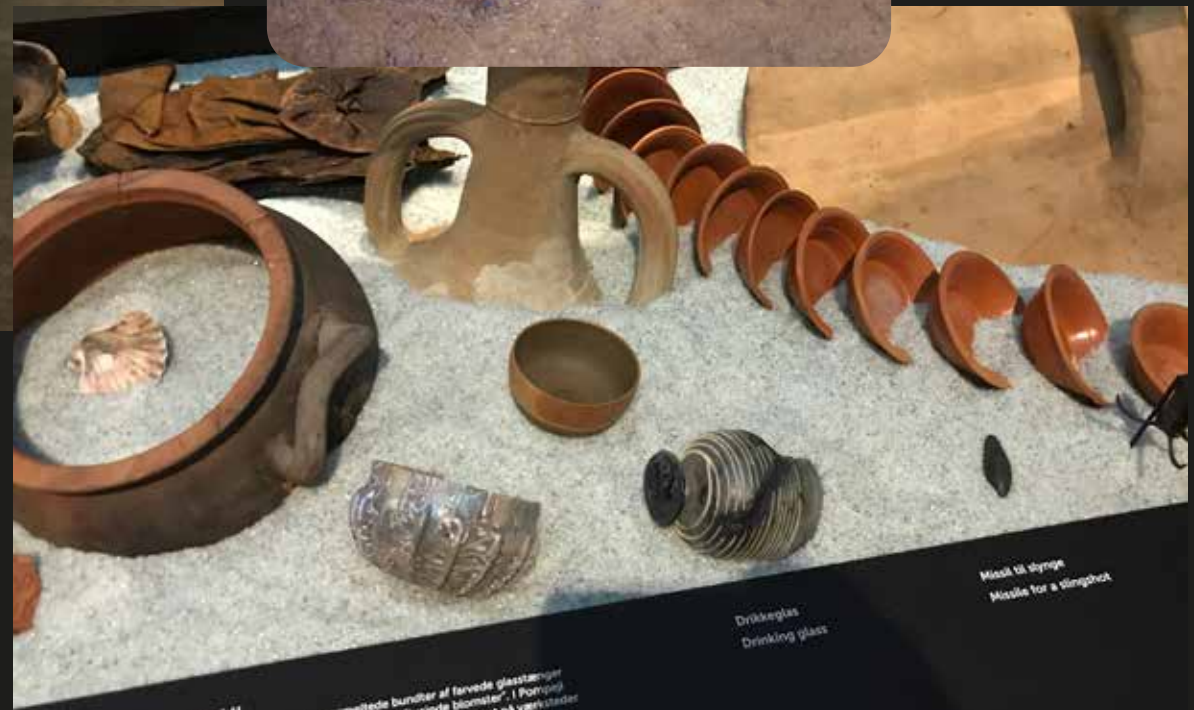
Sleeping Eros
from Misenum

SECTION II • THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY



Model of an *Horeia*: a Roman commercial vessel discovered in the Port of ancient *Neapolis*

SECTION II • THE BAY OF NAPLES AND ITS TERRITORY



Neapolis and the Seabed of its Port

SECTION III

LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM

“And the vital and eternal salubrity, the climate’s mildness, the fertile lands, the sunny hills [...] the trees’ variety of products, the breezes generated from the mounts, the fertility of the harvests, vines, and olive trees [...]”

Pliny the Elder, Natural History, III 40

The wealthy towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum were located in an area made extremely fertile by the ash of the volcano. They were surrounded by a landscape of unmatched charm where, besides sumptuous public buildings and splendid private residences, dozens of vast and efficient farms - in which wine, olive oil, fruit, vegetables and grains were produced - grew.

In this section visitors discover the private and public life of many Pompeians, as they met business partners and pursued trade, or worked and studied while also finding time for leisure, culture and an extremely lively social life that mostly took place outdoors.

The degree of affluence, civility and refinement is reflected in the objects as well - both luxury items and everyday utensils - which archeological excavations have recovered, from furnishings and jewelry to simple pottery and tools.

MAIN TOPICS

- Development and organization of Pompeii & Herculaneum: map plans and animation
- Public and the daily life
- Colours of Pompeii & Herculaneum: beautiful frescos
- *Termopolium* Regio V: latest discoveries of Pompeii / Environment & Reconstruction
- Secrets of private life
- Focus on a Pompeian Domus : plan & 3D video
- *Triclinio*: a typical Roman banquet / Environment & Reconstruction
- Entering the private gardens

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



VIDEO PROJECTION • City Map of Pompeii & Herculaneum

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Thermopolium "Regio V"
latest discovery in Pompeii,
December 2020

Reconstruction of
a Roman Thermopolium

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Mosaic with still life of fish
and other animals

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Modius - used to measure grain



Wheat and Figs

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



VIDEO PROJECTION • Colors of Pompeii: journey into the most famous Frescos

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Wall Painting with Erotic Scene

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



VIDEO PROJECTION • Inside a Domus of Pompei

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Reconstruction of a
Roman Triclinium



Reproduction of objects used
during Roman Banquets

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Selection of original
objects from Pompeii



Reproduction of objects used
during a Roman Banquets



Cauldron



Glass Bowl

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Candelabrum

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Statuette of a bread seller

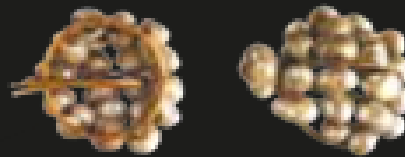
SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Nacklace



Bracelet



Earrings



Golden Ring

Beauty of Roman Women:
Luxury and Jewellery from Pompeii

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Silver Mirror



Bracelet

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Original carbonized
Furniture from Herculaneum

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Statue of Drunk Hercules



Head of Amazon

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Enter a Roman Domus
and discover the private Garden



SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Statue of Bacchus



Statue of Satyr and Pan

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Wall Painting showing a detail of a Pompeian Garden

SECTION III • LIFE IN POMPEII & HERCULANEUM



Fountains Head decorations

SECTION IV

79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH

“He hastened, therefore, towards the place whence others were fleeing, and steering a direct course, kept the helm straight for the point of danger, so utterly devoid of fear that he described every movement of the looming portent [...].”

Pliny the Younger, Letter VI, 16

The eruption began with a tremendous explosion and a large column of ashes rose up to 14 km in height, visible to the inhabitants of the entire Bay of Naples. A long-time scholar of natural sciences, Pliny the Elder immediately understood that what was happening was an important phenomenon that deserved firsthand observation from up close. In the middle of the night, he ordered twelve quadriremes to set sail for Pompeii, boarding one himself: while everyone was escaping, he went forward both to witness and document the exceptional natural phenomenon, and to save as many people as possible. What was intended as a scientific expedition was soon transformed into perhaps the first recorded instance of a rescue attempt of civilians by a military force.

In this section, visitors retrace the final acts of Pompeii and Herculaneum, in a compelling “live” chronicle, told hour by hour through the words of Pliny the Younger who recalled the expedition of his uncle.

The exhibition ends with the presentation of the casts and skeletons found in Pompeii and Herculaneum: witnesses of people caught in the desperate attempt to escape and protect themselves from a natural phenomenon of such magnitude. These are probably the most impressive evidence of the Vesuvius eruption and its destructive force which, still today – almost 2000 years later, bring us closer to

the humanity lived by our ancestors immortalized in the last act of saving their lives. Visitors have the opportunity, not only to learn the realization processes of these evidence, but also to experience the strong emotional impact that the casts continue to arouse on those who observe them thanks to a touching and scenographic presentation.

MAIN TOPICS

- The End of Pompeii. How everything suddenly changed
- The eruption told by the one who lived it in person and decided to write about: the expedition of Pliny the Elder told through the letters of his nephew Pliny the Younger
- Who was Pliny the Elder: science man but also admiral of the military fleet of Miseno
- Reconstruction/Evocation of Pliny’s study
- Living the eruption: video installation of the eruption and presentation of the casts of Pompeii and the skeletons discovered in Herculaneum
- Understanding the casts: why, how did they survive until today?
- Differences between the eruption in Pompeii and Herculaneum
- 24 Hours in Pompeii
- Eruption date: open discussion / new discoveries
- “Plinian Eruption”

“On the 24th of August, about the seventh hour, my mother drew his attention to the fact that a cloud of unusual size and shape had made its appearance.”

Pliny the Younger, Letter VI, 16

“He hastened, therefore, towards the place whence others were fleeing, and steering a direct course, kept the helm straight for the point of danger, so utterly devoid of fear that every movement of the looming portent and every change in its appearance he described and had noted down by his secretary, as soon as his eyes detected it.”

Pliny the Younger, Letter VI, 16

“Already ashes were beginning to fall upon the ships, hotter and in thicker showers as they approached more nearly, with pumice-stones and black flints, charred and cracked by the heat of the flames, while their way was barred by the sudden shoaling of the sea bottom and the litter of the mountain on the shore.”

Pliny the Younger, Letter VI, 16

“Then the flames, and the smell of sulphur which gave warning of them, scattered the others in flight and roused him. Leaning on two slaves, [Pliny] rose to his feet and immediately fell down again, owing, as I think, to his breathing being obstructed by the thickness of the fumes and congestion of the stomach, that organ being naturally weak and narrow, and subject to inflammation.”

Pliny the Younger, Letter VI, 16

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH





Loaf Bread from Herculaneum

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



The Eruption. Victims in Pompeii.

Immersive Room with the presentation of casts of the victims of Pompeii on volcanic stones

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



Casts of victims from Pompeii

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



VIDEO PROJECTION • Pompeii: The last Day

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



The Eruption. Victims in Herculaneum.

Reconstruction of the beach docks of Herculaneum and the
Reproduction of skeletons of victims died on the shore

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



Reproduction of skeletons from Herculaneum

SECTION IV • 79 CE: SUDDEN DEATH



Skeleton of a soldier discovered on the beach of Herculaneum

SECTION IV • HANDS-ON



ARCHAEOLOGIST AT WORK
Discover treasures of Herculaneum



Reproduction of objects from the
"skeleton of woman with jewellery and lamps"



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