

The Power of Vesuvius in the Ancient World:

The Ancient city of Pompeii and its town Herculaneum are perhaps the clearest visual image provided to us of Ancient (or Imperial) Rome. This is due to the carbonising effect the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 had of the bustling city, succeeding in both destroying the lives and buildings of those who lived there, whilst leaving the ruins nearly perfectly preserved. This result of this effect resembles a freeze-frame of Roman life providing us with a dioramic view of the lives of many poor Pompeians engulfed in the destruction Vesuvius caused. Due to this we know far more than we ever could about all aspects of daily Roman life including: Commercial, Business, Social, Administrative, Domestic, and even Religion. This means that without the eruption of mount Vesuvius and the subsequent mass-devastation caused we would not know nearly as much as we do now about Imperial/Ancient Roman life. Unfortunately, due to various combinations of atmospheric pollution, rainwater and frost and sunlight damage, as well as vandalism, casual damage and looting from tourists, and even centuries of generations of acidic pigeon droppings the damage that the many highly valuable ruins in Pompeii and its towns like Herculaneum have sustained means that they will not be around much longer for scholars to study and highly valuable information to be gained revolving the lives of Ancient Romans. There is still an abundance of sites to be dug up in the last third of the Ancient city Pompeii, however I have come to the incredibly difficult decision, and am (in fact) hesitant to say, that I think it is more useful to preserve the ruins already excavated than to excavate the remaining third of Pompeii despite there being more that could be learned about what is (in my opinion) the most fascinating culture.