

Historians visit The Lost City of Pompeii

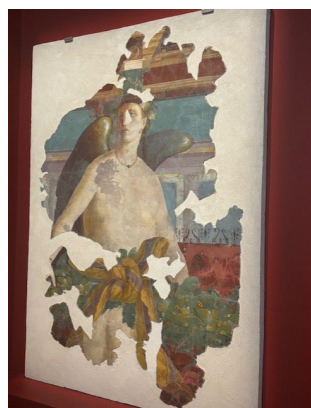
"Ashes were already falling, not as yet very thickly. I looked round: a dense black cloud was coming up behind us, spreading over the earth like a flood." Pliny the Younger, Book VIII, Letter 24, letter to Maximus

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Years 11 and 12 Ancient History students recently visited the National Museum in Canberra, where they immersed themselves in the captivating exhibition *Pompeii: A Lost City*. The day-long excursion provided our young historians an opportunity to witness firsthand the archaeological treasures of one of history's most compelling disaster sites.

Year 12 students are currently studying "Cities of Vesuvius: Pompeii and Herculaneum" as part of their HSC curriculum. On the excursion, they could make direct connections between their classroom learning and the exhibition's remarkable artifacts. For these students, the timing proved particularly beneficial.

The Year 11 students, currently undertaking their archaeology unit: "Locating Sites and Sources", benefited from examining the preservation techniques and excavation methods on display. They studied various artifacts from everyday household items to elaborate jewellery and artwork, gaining insights into the archaeological processes that have revealed Pompeii's secrets over centuries of excavation.



Seeing the plaster casts of Pompeii's victims was a profoundly moving experience. The haunting forms gave everyone present a genuine understanding of the human tragedy that unfolded in 79 CE, bringing an emotional dimension to an academic understanding.

"What impressed me most was seeing how the smallest artifacts could tell us so much about daily life in Roman times," shared one Year 12 student.

"The jewellery, cooking implements, and even the graffiti have survived for nearly two millennia and still communicate so much about the people who owned them."

The excursion underscored the History Department's commitment to experiential learning, providing students with opportunities to engage directly with primary historical sources beyond readings and classroom discussions.

As the students returned to Sydney, they carried with them not just photographs and notes, but a deeper appreciation for ancient Roman civilisation and the archaeological processes that have preserved this snapshot of history.

Thank you to Mrs Cheryl O'Loan for organising such a wonderful educational opportunity for these students, and to her and Ms Amy Wilson for all their guidance on the day.

Mrs Danielle Newman
Head of History Department

