

0. WARNING SIGNS - Story Preface

1. POMPEII IN 79 A.D.

2. A SOPHISTICATED TOWN

3. WARNING SIGNS

4. VESUVIUS ERUPTS

5. RAIN OF TERROR

6. ANNIHILATION

7. THE PEOPLE OF POMPEII



Around 16 or 17 years before Vesuvius destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, a major earthquake shook Campagna. This image depicts damage inflicted on a Pompeii building as a result of that prior earthquake. Photo by Robert Decker, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

Sixteen or seventeen years (depending on the historical account) before Vesuvio (meaning smoke) destroyed Pompeii, a major earthquake shook Campagna.

Seneca wrote about it. Pompeii was damaged by it. Perhaps because of it, residents thought their homes would be the best place for families when the mountain came alive that summer day in 79 AD. People, after all, tend to stay where they feel most safe.

An eyewitness, Pliny the Younger, saw what happened as Vesuvius first started to erupt. Historians still rely on his account.

A 17-year-old whose uncle (a commander of the Roman fleet) died as a result of the disaster, Pliny watched the eruption from nearby Misenum, across the bay.

Later, in an effort to reliably describe events for Tacitus (the Roman historian), Pliny wrote (in his second letter):

There had been tremors for many days previously, a common occurrence in Campagna and no cause for panic.

Panic, however, was not far off.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WARNING-SIGNS-Pompeii)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WARNING-SIGNS-Pompeii>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WARNING-SIGNS-Pompeii)

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Media Stream



Earthquake Damage in Pompeii

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Top of Mount Vesuvius

Image online courtesy the [Earth System Science Center at Penn State](#).

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Boscotrecase. Repairs of damages caused by pre-eruption earthquakes.



Evidence of an Earthquake

Image, and information, online courtesy "[Explore Italian Volcanoes](#)."

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Prior Earthquake Damage in Pompeii

In his *Second Letter to Tacitus*, Pliny the Younger describes the impact of prior earthquakes on the people of Pompeii (before the massive Vesuvius eruption in 79 AD):

There had been tremors for many days previously, a common occurrence in Campagna and no cause for panic.

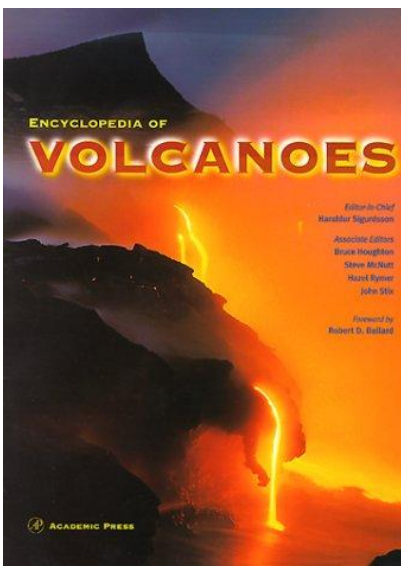
About 16 or 17 years before the eruption which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, a major earthquake shook Campagna. This image depicts damage inflicted on a Pompeii building as a result of that prior earthquake.

Image, and information, online courtesy "[Explore Italian Volcanoes](#)."

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Pompeii: bas-relief showing the effects of the earthquake occurred in 62 AD



Encyclopedia of Volcanoes

Image online, courtesy the [amazon.com](#) website.

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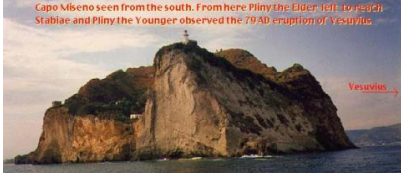


Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples

Image online, courtesy Tour Italy.

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Capo Miseno

Image, and information, online courtesy "Explore Italian Volcanoes."

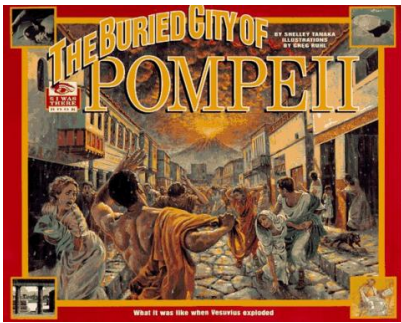
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Misenum

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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The Buried City of Pompeii

Image online, courtesy the amazon.com website.

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