

New Pompeii evidence rewrites Vesuvius eruption history

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One of the petrified remains of a victim of the eruption of Vesuvius volcano in 79 BC

A newly-discovered inscription at Pompeii proves the city was destroyed by Mount Vesuvius after October 17, 79 AD and not on August 24 as previously thought, archeologists said Tuesday.

Archeologists recently discovered that a worker had inscribed the date of "the 16th day before the calends of November", meaning October 17, on a house at Pompeii, the head of archeology at the site, Massimo Osanna, told Italian media.

Pompeii and Herculaneum were previously thought to have been destroyed by the massive eruption of Mount Vesuvius on August 24, based on contemporary writings and archeological finds.

Nevertheless, evidence such as autumnal fruits on branches found in the ashen ruins had suggested a later date since the 19th century, Osanna said.

"Today, with much humility, perhaps we will rewrite the history books because we date the eruption to the second half of October," said Italy's Minister of Culture Alberto Bonisoli.

Pompeii is the second most visited tourist site in Italy, after the Colosseum in Rome, with more than three million visitors in the first eight months of this year.

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