

Herculaneum preservation

Post by “Joshua” of June 12, 2019 at 3:50 PM

I've had the pleasure of visiting Pompeii and Herculaneum, and of hiking Vesuvius. Pompeii is unforgettable, at least as an outline in my head; the image most striking to me will forever be the plaster casts made from cavities in the ash, where the organic remains have long since rotted and gassified. Thus do we find a human figure sitting with its legs drawn up and its hands to its face, choking on volcanic ash and mortality.

My two lingering regrets from that trip were these--first, that I did not at that age enjoy or appreciate wine. I had imbibed a stoic sense of pleasure as being base, and avoided alcohol until I was 23. (Sadly, one never does get a second chance to mis-spend one's youth. To think that I wasted all those perfectly good years on books!) And second, that I had no special interest in the school of Epicurus.

One day I should like to atone for that, both at the Getty Villa and again in the Bay of Naples.