

He Fled Pompeii, but Still Didn't Make It

By YONETTE JOSEPH

LONDON — The man, believed to be in his 30s, was fleeing the spectacular explosion of Mount Vesuvius that buried the Italian city of Pompeii in A.D. 79.

He had an infection of the tibia that may have made walking difficult, archaeologists say. So while he fled the first furious eruption, when the volcano fully rumbled to life after being dormant for more than 1,500 years, he did not get very far.

The man died not in contorted agony, buried in pumice and ash, but under a large rock that most likely had been propelled through the air by volcanic gases, crushing his thorax and head.

Officials at the Pompeii archaeological site announced on Tuesday that they had found the man's remains, almost 2,000 years after he died. They released a photograph showing the skeleton protruding from beneath a large block of stone, believed to have been a door jamb that had been "violently thrown by the volcanic

cloud."

The skeleton showed evidence of a bone infection in one leg, which could have hindered the man's ability to escape "at the first dramatic signs which preceded the eruption," officials said.

Archaeologists have yet to find his head, though they believe it may lie "probably under the stone block," according to an emailed statement.

Massimo Osanna, general director of the archaeological site, called it "an exceptional find" that contributed to a better "picture of the history and civilization of the age."

"This discovery has shown the leaps in the archaeological field," he said in another statement to CNN. "The team on site are not just archaeologists, but experts in many fields: engineers, restorers," he said, who used technical tools like drones and 3-D scanners.

"Now we have the possibility to rebuild the space as it once was," he added.

The discovery was made after new excavations at the site began in March, in a section called Regio V.

It was the second announcement in a week from the excavation of an unexplored part of Pompeii, one of the most-visited archaeological site in the world and a Unesco World Heritage site 16 miles southeast of Naples.

Last week, officials said they had discovered a street of houses with intact balconies that were buried when Mount Vesuvius erupted.

Some of the balconies had conical-shape terra cotta vases used to hold wine and oil. The Culture Ministry said the balconies were a "complete novelty" for this part of the buried city, which has yet to be fully excavated.

The statement said the balconies would be restored and the area would be included in a tour for the public, according to The Associated Press.

Mount Vesuvius had been rumbling for a while before it erupted,

destroying Pompeii and Herculaneum nearby, burying their residents in lava and leaving their remains preserved in fossils of ash. About 2,000 people died in Pompeii, a city of 20,000.

Vesuvius is mainland Europe's only active volcano. Geologists say there is no doubt it will erupt again; it is only a question of when.

The volcano has erupted about three dozen times since A.D. 79, most recently in 1944, when it left 26 people dead and caused relatively minor damage.

The volcano is still considered a danger to cities nearby, including the metropolis Naples. About 600,000 people live in 18 towns inside the so-called red zone, the populated area that would bear the brunt of an eruption.

Italy's government has offered to pay people thousands of euros to move outside the zone. It has also devised an evacuation plan to clear out the red zone 72 hours before any expected eruption.

Archaeologists found a skeleton almost 2,000 years old.



CIRO FUSCO/ANSA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

An anthropologist on Tuesday at the Pompeii archaeological site in Italy where the skeleton of a man who died while fleeing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79 was found.



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