

The Roman Times

Pumice Pours Over Pompeii

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Yesterday, the city of Pompeii was wiped out after the volcano, Mount Vesuvius, erupted covering the city in millions of tonnes of volcanic ash and debris. It is estimated that over 2000 people were killed in the catastrophe. Those who escaped lost everything and have been forced to start a new life in other parts of Italy.

The first warning signs began at 6pm yesterday evening when a cloud of black smoke, shaped like a pine tree, was spotted over the volcano. Later that evening, a wave of hot ash, rocks and gasses began to rain down over the North side of Pompeii. Although most people evacuated the city at this time, many refused to leave their homes and possessions. Despite people's best attempts to shelter in homes from the falling pumice, toxic gas and blistering hot ash made it almost impossible to breath. Without warning, a molten rock and poisonous gas poured down the mountain: it was so hot and surged so quickly it swallowed everything and everyone in its path.

Julius, an 18 year old survivor, reported that, "A cloud of ash made it impossible to see and all that could be heard were shrieks and groans of both young and old." After showing us the burns on his arms and legs he went on to tell us "Those who escaped soothed their burns in the river for hours after the eruption, yet some were so



A cloud of ash and volcanic debris falls on the city

scolded they did not survive." Mariana, who wrapped a toga around her face to avoid suffocating in the ash cloud, refused to accept the eruption as a natural tragedy and claimed "The gods are punishing us for the sins of our city!"

By the time the eruption spluttered to an end early this morning, Pompeii was buried in a blanket, consisting of millions of tons of volcanic ash, covered the city. Nevertheless, many survivors returned in hope of finding lost family and friends. Unfortunately, the blistering heat of the ash and rocks made it impossible to dig for survivors. Therefore, many have now left the Bay of Naples to search for a new life in the big cities, especially Rome. Will Pompeii ever be rebuilt? Will the people be remembered? Only time will tell what will happen to the great city destroyed in a day.