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The garden of the fugitives of Pompeii

The garden of the fugitives represents the harshest and most real testimony to the immense tragedy that befell Pompeii that distant October 24, 79 AD.

Here, in fact, as many as 13 bodies of the victims of the tremendous eruption that struck Pompeii were found.

That day, around 1 p.m., Pompeians were suddenly overwhelmed by a thick shower of ash and lapilli that began to erupt from Mount Vesuvius. To them, Vesuvius was simply a mountain and not a volcano, and they never imagined that it would erupt with such violence.

Within hours Pompeii found itself submerged first by a shower of ash and lapilli and then later overwhelmed by a powerful pyroclastic flow. Its inhabitants did not even have time to escape to safety, many dying as a result of the roofs of their houses falling in, others being run over by the powerful pyroclastic flow.

It is from this unsuccessful attempt to escape that the garden of the fugitives, found after excavations begun in 1748, is named only in 1961.

The discovery was exceptional and the bodies of the victims were reconstructed thanks to the cast method developed by director Giuseppe Fiorelli.

How the victims of the garden of fugitives died

The garden of the fugitives of Pompeii stands in Regio I, insula 21, near the entrance to Piazza Anfiteatro.

It is named after the 1961 discovery of 13 bodies of victims of the eruption of Vesuvius, who tried in vain to escape death by moving away from their homes.

Before the eruption, several houses stood in this area, later transformed into a splendid vineyard, used for holding outdoor banquets.

The 13 victims, probably an entire household, attempted during the eruption to escape the relentless fall of ash and lapilli. But they were engulfed by a pyroclastic cloud at extremely high temperatures, causing them to die instantly from suffocation and asphyxiation as they fell side by side.

The bodies of women, men and children, reproduced in [plaster casts](#), can be seen today inside a protective case by the wall of the garden.

The reproduction was possible thanks to the method pioneered by the then director of works, Giuseppe Fiorelli.

Who had the insight to pour liquid plaster into the boulder of ash that covered the skeletons. Once the latter solidified, it left the perfect imprint of the victims' bodies and their clothes. At the exact moment of agony and pain that they experienced in the last moments of their lives.

