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Bicentennial House of Herculaneum

The bicentennial house is so named because it was found exactly 200 years after the first excavation began in 1738 at Herculaneum. After a violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD destroyed the entire city, burying it with more than 20 meters of volcanic material.

During the eruption, Herculaneum unlike Pompeii, was not hit by ash and lapilli, only mud and a pyroclastic flow that solidified everything. Because of this, unlike Pompeii, the ancient city was found in an excellent state of preservation.

The structure of the Bicentennial House

Stands on the most important street of [Herculaneum](#), the decumanus maximus, in a very central area of the ancient city, near the forum and the theatre.

The bicentenary house was one of the largest (about 600 square metres) and most luxurious dwellings in Herculaneum. Was structured on two levels, on the ground floor there were workshops while the rooms on the upper floor were probably rented out.



Beyond the entrance, one immediately entered the enormous and sumptuous atrium of the domus. With a marvellous black and white mosaic floor and a white marble impluvium in the centre, (the basin for collecting rainwater typical of all Roman houses).



The other rooms of the house were also characterised by the presence of coloured marble floors, black and white mosaic and numerous paintings depicting mythological scenes, cupids and animals.

From the atrium and tablinum, a corridor led to the peristyle, which was colonnaded on two sides and had a garden in the centre.

The latter has a special feature: during an excavation in the 1930s, the organic remains of some rose plants were unearthed. And as proof of this, roses have now been planted in the garden of the bicentennial house.



Findings house of the Bicentennial Herculaneum

A staircase led from the peristyle to the upper floor.

Here were found: tablets were found, approximately 700 in number, some still with traces of

writing on them, small wooden boards also used for writing and papyri. In one room two grooves in the plaster were discovered, placed horizontally and vertically, as if to form a cross.

According to Amedeo Maiuri, they represented a way of bringing the Roman people closer to the Christian religion. In fact, the latter believed they represented the base of a Christian cross, later it was discovered that they were actually supports for a shelf.

The Bicentennial House, undergoing renovation and redevelopment, was reopened to the public on 24 October 2019 after 30 years of closure

