

# MORE HERCULANEUM IN 2006

2005-6 has been a year of major progress for the Society. Since our first Annual General Meeting in July, membership has increased to just over 200 members. Gifts from several generous benefactors, including ISAC (The Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Christian Origins, at the University of Texas) have made possible the expansion of existing Society activities and the creation of new ones. Suggestions made at the AGM have led to the setting up of a new Society Studentship to be offered in 2006-7 (see page 8 for details).

We look forward to several events: in addition to the Study Day at the British Academy, 4 March, an event in Naples is being planned for late June-early July 2006. Members will shortly receive further details. Scheduled for the Naples event are visits to the National Library, the Accademia Ercolanese, Herculaneum and the Villa of the Papyri, and possibly Somma Vesuviana.

We also look forward with keen anticipation to the publication of the results of the feasibility study on excavation of the Villa of the Papyri, to be announced in Italy later this year. The colourful history and archaeological potential of the Herculaneum site continues to inform a wide-ranging audience, having been made the subject of major exhibitions, as well as articles and documentaries published internationally, via newspapers, television, and radio. (For latest updates see the Society's news page: <http://www.herculaneum.ox.ac.uk/news.html>)

We fully expect the Society's work over the forthcoming year to promote still further awareness and interest in the World Heritage Site of Herculaneum.

Dirk Obbink

## OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

The objects of the Society are:

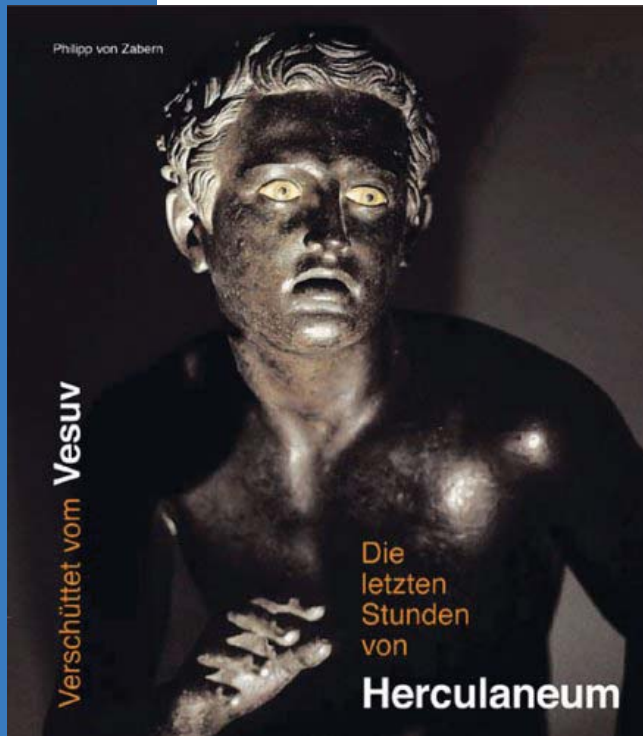
- to advance the **education** of the public concerning the World Heritage Site of Herculaneum, in particular to create an archive of materials relating to the World Heritage site at Herculaneum and the work of the Herculaneum Society
- to promote **research** into Herculaneum, including the continued investigation of the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, and the publication of the useful results of such research
- to promote the **conservation**, for the benefit of the public, of the artefacts and buildings at Herculaneum



Left: At the Society meeting on 9th July 2005, Girolamo F. De Simone discusses the excavation at Somma Vesuviana (see page 5 of this newsletter).

# HERCULANEUM THROUGH HISTORY

J. Mühlenbrock and D. Richter, ed., *Verschüttet von Vesuv: die letzten Stunden von Herculaneum*. (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2005). xix + 355 pp. 34,90 EUR



“Herculaneum is generally seen to stand in Pompeii’s shadow. That was not always the case.”

The editors’ introduction to this book thus begins to make the case for Herculaneum. Other contributors echo the theme that Herculaneum over the years has suffered from diminishing attention, and one observes that “among all the investigations, exhibitions, and studies of the cities of Vesuvius to date no event has yet occurred that was exclusively dedicated to Herculaneum.” If one event could right such a long-standing wrong, the museum exhibition cataloged by this volume is a worthy candidate.

**DIE LETZTEN STUNDEN VON HERCULANEUM** (“The Last Hours of Herculaneum”) is a museum exhibition that opened early in 2005 at Haltern, a fresh-air locale north of the German Ruhrgebiet. After a stay at Berlin’s storied Pergamonmuseum, the traveling exhibition is presently at the Focke Museum in Bremen. Originally scheduled for a tour of these three German museums, the exhibition will finish its programmed stay at Bremen on 21 May 2006, then travel to Munich’s Archäologische Staatssammlung (14 June – 1 November) and the Het Valkhof Museum in Nijmegen (early December 2006 – mid-March 2007). The exhibition is remarkable, and well reviewed. Those who are unable to travel to it will be rewarded, at least, by exploring this book. The catalog’s title translates into English as “Buried Alive by Vesuvius: the last hours of Herculaneum.”

It is worth noting that a related exhibition, “Pompeii: Stories from an Eruption,” will close at Chicago’s Field

Museum on 26 March before moving to Japan, returning to North America in late 2007. This traveling exhibition, too, has artifacts from Herculaneum — including the spectacular marble heads excavated in 1996 from the Villa of the Papyri.

The German exhibition was designed, among other purposes, to put a set of statues from ancient Herculaneum alongside other precious artifacts from the city and the Villa, many of which had never before left Italian soil. The occasion exported precious artifacts of all shapes and sizes — marble statuary and reliefs, furniture, erotica, bronzes, frescoes, household wares. Gruesome casts of skeletal remains from the seaside “boat-houses” are accompanied by photographic documents and various artifacts found with them. A carbonized loaf and even Herculaneum papyrus no. 476 made the trip! This rare trip placed the artifacts beside porcelain from Vienna, Berlin, and above all Meissen; several full-scale paintings, ranging from P.-J. Volaire (d. 1792) to Andy Warhol’s “Vesuvius, 1985” (not depicted in the catalog), were assembled from Neapolitan collections and from all over German-speaking Europe. A handful of 18th-century documents, which were also included in the exhibition, are not represented in the volume, though their descriptions are given.



Above: the “Dresden Women”



A sort of reunion after nearly three centuries has been brought about in the German exhibition. Of particular thematic importance for this show are the so-called “Dresden Women,” a pair of female marble statues secreted in 1709 away from Herculaneum by Emanuel d’Elboeuf and sold to August III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, who brought them to Dresden. The statues caused a considerable stir in 18th-century German culture, making an impression on the art and art-criticism of the day. Inasmuch as the reunion of these treasured sculptures with other artifacts from their native context is one apparent impulse for the 2005 exhibition, the Dresden statues are placed thematically throughout the volume, appearing early and late in the collected essays and full-page photographs.

The editors of the catalog have mustered nineteen contributions from an impressive variety of specialists in the Italian and German academic communities. Many Friends of Herculaneum will recognize Umberto Pappalardo, who offers two essays here on “Hercules in Herculaneum” and on Herculaneum’s *patronus* Marcus Nonius Balbus. Professor Pappalardo was a panelist at the January 2005 meeting of the Society in Oxford. Maria Paola Guidobaldi, who will speak at our March 2006 meeting at the British Academy, contributes a history of digging at Herculaneum from “treasure hunters” to “archaeologists.” The article covers its topic from Ambrogio Nucerino’s 1710 discovery of Herculaneum’s theatre through the cessation of excavation in 1998. Dr. Guidobaldi touches lightly upon recent efforts to restore and evaluate the site’s current state, and she makes an unspecific reference to “a feasibility study for furthering the study of the entire Villa complex. It is hoped that through this study, technical data will be acquired, upon which a decision as to how to proceed can be made.” The article offers bibliographical suggestions for those who would like to read further.

The book is truly multi-faceted, offering something for scholars, something for newcomers. Its essays treat the volcanology of Vesuvius, the “cultural history” of the “burning mountain”, the furnishings of houses, the discovery and study of the carbonized scrolls from the Villa, the gardens of Campanian urban houses, the 18th-century reception of these, anthropological investigations into earlier cultures snuffed out by volcanic eruptions, and much more. Since the editors gathered essays from qualified scholars, the book is a tool which scholars who are new to Herculaneum may confidently use to build a sound foundation for further work.

Copiously illustrated with photographs of artifacts of every sort and aerial (and even satellite) photographs of the site, *Verschüttet von Vesuv* is chock full of color. The catalog proper offers in smaller color images a healthy cross-section of the entire exhibition. Section II features large- and small-scale oil paintings and other artwork from the 18th century onwards depicting Vesuvian eruptions. An impressive set of wall-paintings from Herculaneum and the Villa finds itself in the exhibition together with several decorative reliefs and mosaics, and many of these serve to illustrate this beautiful book.

A useful feature of this book is a series of highlighted pages, white letters on ash-grey background, upon which various aspects of Herculaneum’s life and afterlife are articulated. A selection from diaries from visitors in the “subterranean” theatre of Herculaneum is included. Students preferring to read the excerpts from Thomas Gray, Charles Dickens and Mary Wortley Montagu in their original English may be disappointed to find only German translations, but they will still find this book’s documentation a useful guide toward original sources. Likewise, the excerpts from classical sources for Herculaneum and the Bay of Naples may at least point the utterly German-less student to some Greek and Latin texts that discuss Vesuvius before and after the Plinian eruption. L. Garcia y Garcia’s exhaustive listing of ancient sources for the region, *Nova Bibliotheca Pompeiana* (Rome, 1998): 30-59, is not rivaled by Mühlenbrock and Dichter’s selection; but the purposes of their publication do not warrant exhaustion and they focus primarily on sources that mention Herculaneum only. [An English translation of the sources culled by Garcia y Garcia is to be made available at <http://herculaneum.byu.edu>.] Elsewhere in *Verschüttet von Vesuv* other highlighted sections act as sidebars with specialized information. One lists some 500 individuals whose existence is known from inscriptions, and offers brief advice on deciphering details of Roman nomenclature. J.J. Winckelmann’s famous utterance about classical style, the “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” manifest in the Dresden Women, is excerpted on one of these highlight pages.

Winckelmann’s first published treatise, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst* (Thoughts on the imitation of Greek works in painting and sculpture), which marked its 250th anniversary in 2005, would be eclipsed by his monumental publications *Geschichte der Kunst des Altherthums* (History of the art of antiquity) (1764), in which he arguably established the study of art history, and *Monumenti Antichi Inediti* (Unpublished ancient monuments) (1767). That Winckelmann began his career in Herculaneum, as it were, is emphasized both in *Verschüttet von Vesuv* and in the exhibition it documents. Both emphasize further the broad effects of Herculaneum upon the culture of northern Europe in the 18th century. Three essays formally address it, but the theme pervades the presentation of the volume. Given the connection between the Dresden sculptures and their provenance, this thematic development suits the book comfortably.

Uwe Quilitzsch’s article, “‘C’est tout Herculaneum!’ Herculaneum im Park von Wörlitz,” presents a cultural monument, an artifact of German neoclassicism. A clear essay and applicable illustrations detail in ten pages the impressions Herculaneum made upon “grand tourists” Prince Franz of Anhalt-Dessau and his architect Friedrich Wilhelm von Erdmannsdorff. They built a monument to Herculaneum at Wörlitz, near Dessau, from 1769 through 1773. Elaborating neo-classical trends that were current in Dessau and beyond, Erdmannsdorff realized Prince Franz’ objectives in Schloß Wörlitz, in the minutiae of the Villa’s decorative scheme, in the garden complex which features

the replete Villa Hamilton and a miniature synthetic volcano. However successful the Prince was at exporting Herculaneum to his homeland, it is clear from this article and others that Vesuvian archaeology had a far-reaching effect on contemporary European taste.

A pair of essays address issues pertaining to the cultural history of Vesuvius and volcano-dwelling generally. On his way to recalling that Vesuvius “is no extinct volcano,” Dieter Richter gives a brief account of recorded eruptions since that of AD 79. The accompanying illustrations show Vesuvius’ horrific majesty. Joseph Mühlenbrock’s essay, “Mensch und Vulkan: eine archäologisch-historische Spurensuche,” considers other incidents of volcanic violence, from the stone-age city of Çatal Hüyük to Santorini and Martinique...

The international importance of such an exhibition as The Last Hours of Herculaneum is not lost on Pier Giovanni Guzzo, the Soprintendente Archeologo di Pompei: “Naturally, an exhibition can convey neither the insight nor the impression aroused by one’s own visit to the excavations on Vesuvius or in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. Conversely, we cannot assume that everyone will take the trip to Pompeii or Herculaneum; and thus it is our duty to use available means of communication and make ourselves messengers of our work. Thus, just as the work on location itself, so too collaboration in international, scientific contexts is indispensable for us. This collaboration indicates also a growing wealth of experiences; culture becomes, then, in ever greater contexts, an instrument of mutual dependence.”

The considerable logistical challenge involved in sending some of Herculaneum’s most fragile artifacts over many lands is to be applauded. The application of resources that allow this catalog to document the exhibition is likewise noteworthy.

The book lies beautifully on a coffee table, but is equally at home on a scholar’s desktop, as its essays are carefully detailed with footnotes and appointed with attractive illustrations of Herculaneum’s many facets. This is a book to be taken seriously. It will provide a starting-point for students of Herculaneum who are willing or able to manage the German text. It would be a very useful teaching tool for English-only undergraduates and anglophone Herculaneophiles, if it were available in translation. As it is, friends of Herculaneum should find much of diversion in this handsome book.

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Above: Statues of two runners from the Villa of the Papyri. Previously they were considered to be wrestlers.



# NEW LIGHT ON THE “DARK SIDE” OF VESUVIUS

While excavations are currently on hold at Herculaneum itself, elsewhere in the area of Vesuvius, digging continues. GIROLAMO F. DE SIMONE and SATOSHI MATSUYAMA report on some recent discoveries.

Right: General view of the excavation of the villa at Somma Vesuviana.



The study of the area around Vesuvius is usually restricted to the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the coastal settlements. The “dark side” of archaeological research in Campania is represented by the lack of data for the large area that in ancient times comprised the territories of two cities, Neapolis and Nola.

One bright exception is the excavation of the so-called Augustan Villa in the modern town of Somma Vesuviana. The site was discovered accidentally in the 1930s and interpreted at that time as the villa at Nola where Augustus died (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 98-100; *Life of Tiberius* 40; Tacitus, *Annals* 1.5, 9; 4.57).

In 2002 Professor Masanori Aoyagi of the University of Tokyo started a new long-term excavation project. The first results made it clear that the site had been destroyed and covered by the Vesuvian eruptions of AD 472 and 505/515. In recent activity, archaeologists have brought to light an enormous architectural complex (about nine metres high) including a monumental arcade on a four-pillar system; a Corinthian colonnade on monolithic columns; a richly decorated portal, where coloured stucco is still preserved; a room for farm works.

In 2003 two statues emerged from the ashes: the first a young Dionysos with panther, the second a *peplophoros*, found still in its niche. During the last year evidence of later remodeling at the site – a brick oven and a cistern – has been discovered, confirming the hypothesis of a change in the entire settlement’s domestic purpose during its latest occupation.

The abundance and variety of interdisciplinary studies related to this project and an integrated use of public and private funds enable us to shed new light on a territory that is at the same time interesting and obscure.

Girolamo F. De Simone  
Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici B. Croce  
Satoshi Matsuyama  
University of Tokyo



Above: Dionysos and the *peplophoros*.

# EXPLORING AN ANCIENT LIBRARY

David Sider, *The Library of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum* (Los Angeles, California: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005). viii + 123 pp. \$40.

This is a book which can be enthusiastically recommended to all those who want to get an overview of the history and current state of the Villa and the papyri without having to consult many books at once, or rare or foreign publications. David Sider is the author of a fine commentary on Philodemus' surviving poetry (Oxford, 1997), most of which comes not from papyri (unlike Philodemus' prose) but from anthologies and quotations in extant literary sources. But he has consulted the right experts on the papyri and their complicated history: Francesca Longo Auricchio, David Blank, Richard Janko and others. All these are responsible for significant discoveries in the documentation and publication history of the papyri from 1752 on. Their guidance and Sider's own lively presentation has resulted in a monograph with many excellent illustrations and covering far more and in much greater detail than one would have thought possible in 123 pages. I wish the Getty had made it a little larger, for the main text is in a fairly small typeface and the captions and notes in one smaller still, but I made it through without eyestrain.

Of Philodemus himself, author of the great majority of the Herculaneum papyri, a lively and interesting writer and philosopher at last coming into his own as we study the photographs produced by multi-spectral imaging (MSI) and do his style and thought the fullest justice we can, Sider has an excellent brief account at the end (78–99). For those who would like more, there are really fine introductory chapters about his life and work and a collection of the passages referring to him in ancient authors in Sider's 1997 *The Epigrams of Philodemus*.

For the rest Sider gives us in compact form an account of the Villa and its archaeological history, in which he sides (of course) with those who think that it belonged to the Pisos, the family of Philodemus' patron L. Calpurnius Piso, the father-in-law of Julius Caesar. There is a good discussion with maps of how differently Pompeii and Herculaneum fared in the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, Pompeii losing its papyri and wooden objects, Herculaneum preserving some of them but charred by the intense heat. Pages 24–45 are devoted to a clear and amusing discussion of writing, papyrus, bookrolls and the book trade in antiquity, to put the Herculaneum papyri in context. There follows a discussion (46–59) of the history since 1752 of the opening and reading of the papyri, in which Sider is quite justly severe on their early, many of them brutal or scientifically amateurish, openers, except for the two universally acknowledged 'good guys' in this story, Father Antonio Piaggio and the Rev. John Hayter. The illustrations make brilliantly clear how the techniques of splitting the papyrus open with knives and Piaggio's unrolling machine worked and Sider takes the history briefly up to recent times.

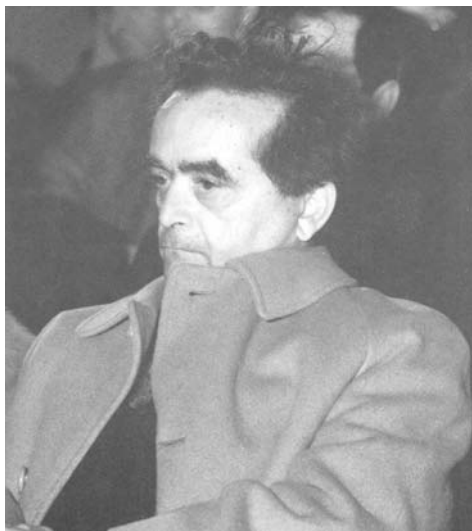


Left: Father Antonio Piaggio (1713–96), inventor of the unrolling machine. There is no known likeness of John Hayter (1755–1818), the English clergyman who continued Piaggio's work.

Unfortunately, though the book is dated 2005, Sider's history of all this concludes just too early to take properly into account the explosion of progress in reading the library that the MSI photographs of all the Herculaneum papyri in Naples and elsewhere in Europe by Brigham Young University have produced since 2000. These are by far the best images of the papyri that we have ever had. Many previously unreadable passages are now clear as day because of them. Sider just adumbrates and barely mentions the beginning of all this, describing in more detail the now largely superseded processes of opening and photographing used till the 1990s by Knut Kleve and others. An entire digital library of multi-spectral images is now in place, enabling scholars to work on any and all of these texts at home on their computer screens. So are excellent digitisations, created by the BYU team and by the Bodleian Library for the Herculaneum Society, of all the drawings made at their first opening by Piaggio's, Hayter's and their successors' artists, which reveal quite a lot of text now lost; these also no longer need to be consulted at Oxford or Naples in the original. Indeed the images of the Oxford *disegni* have already been placed on the Herculaneum Society's website for general consultation. It's not Sider's fault, either, that he does not convey the epoch-making importance of these developments. I myself only really began to realize just how much things had changed for Herculaneum studies as the Society was being founded in 2004. Members who attended the January 2005 meeting will remember how new the possibilities still seemed to me as I showed Ben Henry's and my new version of a column or two of Philodemus' *On Death*, and the gasps of astonishment when Nigel Wilson showed digital images of what can now be done with palimpsests and thus *a fortiori* with the papyri. Things move so fast now that Sider's book already needed a supplement by the day it came out. Just appearing as I wrote this review, from Naples, is a new, comprehensive digital catalogue of the papyri with illustrations and bibliography, created by Gianluca Del Mastro, an almost equal facilitation of study.



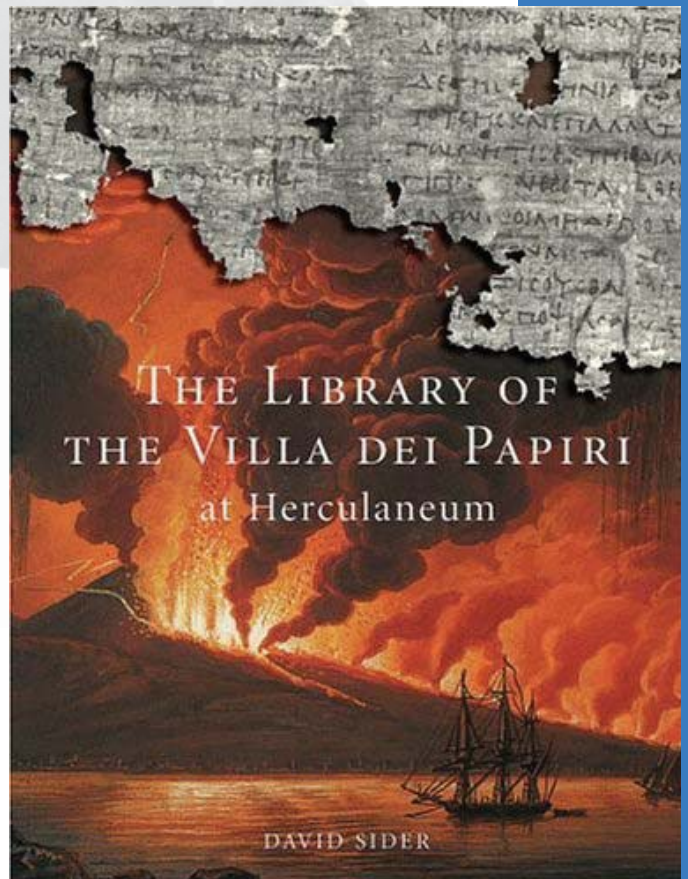
The book contains a remarkably fine and detailed account of the early history of Herculaneum studies. But if I have one criticism to level, it's that at least up to the time of Marcello Gigante's founding of the International Centre for the Study of the Herculaneum Papyri (CISPE) at Naples in 1969, the narrative is too polite. Camillo Paderni and Sir Humphry Davy deservedly receive brickbats for bad papyrus-opening techniques, but the deficiencies of early Herculaneum scholarship and the consequent sidelining of the Herculaneum papyri in intellectual history also deserved mention. A student of these matters can profit from Susan Sontag's and Lampedusa's fictional portraits of the backwardness of life in the old Kingdom of Naples (*The Volcano Lovers*, *The Leopard*) and even more from Sir Harold Acton's classic two-volume *The Bourbons of Naples (1734–1825)*, for the flavor and context of this period. We aren't told that Ferdinand and Maria Carolina, who ruled during the opening of the papyri by Hayter in 1802–6, were reactionary tyrants and an embarrassment even to their British allies who supported them against Napoleon. Or that Hayter was as poor at Greek as he was good at getting the papyri unrolled, and was ruined on his return to England when he had to confront the classical scholars of the day with his own version of his results. It wasn't just the excruciatingly slow progress of the first series of editions published at Naples, but also the often extremely poor quality of the supplements for gaps in the papyri, translations, and notes, provided by the Neapolitan Accademici, that led to the production of a second series of editions, in which only engraved versions of the drawings made from the papyri appeared. It was only late in the 19th century that any really great classical scholars started dealing with these texts, and there have been long periods since then and before Gigante when almost no classical scholar of note outside Italy paid them anything more than the most marginal attention. It is only with the immense labours of Gigante, to whom we owe, besides much else, the authoritative series of papyrus editions and translations by various hands *La Scuola di Epicuro* and the annual journal *Cronache Ercolanesi*, which has provided a home to so many of the most important articles on Herculaneum and the papyri in recent decades, that the modern era in Herculaneum studies can truly be said to begin. This side of the story is told well and without rancour in Mario Capasso's 1991 *Manuale di papirologia ercolanese*, which would repay revising and translating into English.



Left: Marcello Gigante (1923–2001).

With those two reservations, Sider has done a remarkable job of compressing all these complicated facts and arguments into a brief book, clearly written and very much for the intelligent general reader (at least one with a good classical dictionary in which to look up references). Readers will find much enlightenment here about what we are dealing with and what we are doing, and ample support for the argument that the papyri can now be excavated and dealt with correctly, and so can the rest of the villa, and that all this needs to be done. A second edition can wait till the rest of the papyri are dug up; as an interim report, the present work serves its function admirably.

David Armstrong  
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# NOTICES AND EVENTS

## SOCIETY NEWS

In July 2005 the following were elected Trustees of the Society:

David Armstrong (University of Texas, Austin)  
Richard Janko (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)  
Roger Macfarlane (Brigham Young University)

These three join Robert Fowler, Dirk Obbink and Nigel Wilson on the board of trustees.

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## NAPLES EVENT

This summer, from 29th June to 2nd July, the Society is organising an event in Naples. This promises to be an extremely enjoyable occasion and we hope that as many members as possible will be in attendance. Please contact the Society office for details, and check the website regularly.

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## DONATIONS

The Friends of Herculaneum Society acknowledges with gratitude the generous donations of the following:

- The Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Christian Origins (ISAC) at the University of Texas
- Eleni Sarigianni
- The Agricultural Bank of Greece.

We thank them for their support.

## SOCIETY STUDENTSHIP

The Friends of Herculaneum Society announces a call for applications for its Society Studentship competition to fund a currently registered student to pursue a research project pertaining to Herculaneum. The award is open to students applying from universities both in the UK and abroad.

Applications, consisting of a letter of application, 1–2 page description of the project, and at least one letter of recommendation, are due in the Society's office by 31 May 2006.

The award, which carries a stipend of up to £1000 plus travel expenses, will be announced at the Society's meeting in Naples in June and formally presented at the AGM in July.

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## OTHER NOTICES

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, there are two exhibitions of interest that are currently touring: "Die Letzten Stunden von Herculaneum" (<http://www.herculaneum-ausstellung.de/>) and "Pompeii: Stories from an Eruption" (<http://www.fieldmuseum.org/pompeii/>).

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For more information about the Society, or if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas for articles for the next edition of *Herculaneum Archaeology*, please feel free to contact the editor. We hope you have enjoyed this edition, and thank you for your interest.

Edited by Matthew Bladen