

Early discoveries and changing nature of excavations in 19th and 20th Century

Gabby

19th Century

Giuseppe Fiorelli (1860-1875)

- Grandfather of modern archaeology who put a stop to destructive archaeological methods
- Was appointed as inspector of excavations at Pompeii and was later named superintendent
- His goals included to...
 - Introduce a more cohesive and systematic approach to excavation as a whole
 - Ensure more effective controls of publications of excavation results
 - Incorporate the site into a teaching program at Naples University
- Fiorelli's achievements
 - Introduced a uniform numbering and naming system by dividing the site's topography into nine regions → this system made it easier to draw up plans and locate structures
 - Introduced a more systematic approach to excavation, unlike haphazard digging of his predecessors
 - His devised method of injecting liquid plaster into the cavities, enabling him to recover, not only the shapes of humans and animals as they died, but other objects made of perishable material

19th Century Continued

August Mau

- The German archaeologist originally worked on the inscriptions from Pompeii, yet his main interest was art and architecture
- His achievements included
 - Studying the frescoes of Pompeii and classifying them according to 4 styles
 - Providing a date range for each style which aided in the dating of buildings
 - Published two important books, 'The History of Decorative Wall Paintings in Pompeii (1882) and 'Pompeii in Life and Art' (1903)
 - Although there were a few minor issues in Mau's work, his general classification is still used today


Vittorio Spinazzola (1910-1923)

- Director of sites, who was more interested in "realities of town planning" and "extraordinary discoveries" and he unearthed much of the site

19th Century Continued

- His methods included
 - Carefully restoring the facades of buildings, revealing houses, shops, taverns and workshops
 - He used the modern technology of photography to record his excavations
- However, some criticisms of Spinazzola's work can be made
 - His directorship was ultimately caught up in bureaucratic reorganisation and political changes associated with the rise of Fascist government of Mussolini in Italy and in 1932 was forced to retire

Amadeo Maiuri (1924-1961)


- Maiuri took over dictatorship in Pompeii in 1924 and remained in charge until his retirement in 1961
 - He has often been described as the most productive, determined and controversial director in the history of excavations
 - His most productive period was from the 1920's til WW2, when Italian archaeology benefited from the injection of state funds
 - Excavations ceased during the war, with Pompeii suffering serious damage as a result of 160 bombs dropped by the allies
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19th Century Continued

- Digging resumed in 1947-1951, until 1961 when there was intense activity at Pompeii with over ten insulae cleared
- Summary of his achievements
 - Continued work of Spinazzola along the Via dell'Abbondanza in an attempt to uncover the insulae on either side and gain a view of the whole
 - Excavated the House of Menander with 118 pieces of silver treasure
 - Studied the structure of walls and towers
 - Cleared and restored the area behind the Triangular Forum which revealed the terrace houses on the steep flank of the Pompeian mound
 - Deepened the excavations at significant locations to investigate pre-Roman levels
 - Restored public buildings such as tribunal of basilica and roofs of many houses
 - Supervised re-openings of excavations at Herculaneum
 - Discovered house of Bicentenary in Herculaneum
 - Resumed excavations following WWII with the Villa of Imperiale discovered under the antiquarian and a pre-Roman to Dionysus found in bomb crater
 - Cleared the necropolis outside the Nuceria Gate
 - Made Pompeii a popular tourist destination (a contested issue)

20th Century

Estelle Lazer

- From 1986, Lazer worked on a sample of over 300 individuals who were represented by disarticulated bones stored in the Sarno Baths and in the female area of the Forum
 - The techniques of forensic medicine and physical anthropology were used to determine sex, age-at-death, height, signs of disease and population affinities of the victims
 - Work on the skeletons of the House of the Menander
 - Some skeletal remains were 'staged' into scenes - Lazer examined remains on display in the house and published a study showing how the skeletons had been manipulated
 - X-Ray analysis of the cast of 'Lady of Oplontis' revealed
 - Lazer and a multi-disciplinary team, including radiologists and radiographers, an anatomist and forensic dentist examined the body of the 'Lady of Oplontis' at a Sydney clinic while it was in Australia for an exhibition on Pompeii
 - The body (which had been made in transparent epoxy resin rather than traditional plaster) was x-rayed and the lower half of the body was CT scanned
 - The scans ultimately revealed the woman was an adult female in her early forties
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20th Century Continued

Estelle Lazer

- Conclusions from her research revealed that: there was almost equal numbers of males and females from all age groups did not manage to escape from the town before it was destroyed
- Technology used included x-rays and CT scans

Sara Bisel, physical anthropologist from 1982-1988

- Carefully disinterred and closely studied the skeletal remains inside a boat chamber in Herculaneum
- Conclusions from her research
 - Calculated the average height of victims (155.2cm for women and 169.1cm for men)
 - Revealed that ancient Campanians diet was adequate and that they enjoyed relatively good health
 - Concluded that the teeth she studied from Herculaneum reflected a diet of little sugar
 - She also concluded that the high amount of fluoride in their teeth (most likely from seafood) provided protection against tooth decay