

Shedding light on obscure Roman scrolls

Scientists are using light 10 billion times brighter than the sun to help decipher ancient Roman scrolls, turned to brittle charcoal and buried when Mount Vesuvius erupted almost 2,000 years ago

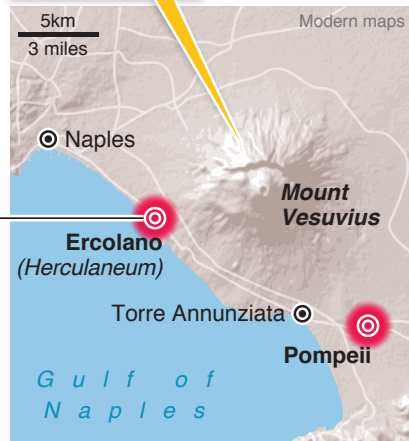


Left: One of two complete scrolls from Herculaneum, too fragile to open, that will be scanned by **Diamond Light Source** synchrotron in Oxfordshire, UK

AD79: Mount Vesuvius erupts, destroying cities of **Pompeii** and **Herculaneum** and burying them under massive pyroclastic surges and ashfall deposits



Ruins of Herculaneum: Archaeological site situated in modern town of **Ercolano**



Villa of the Papyri: Remains of lavish villa, likely owned by **Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus**, father-in-law of **Julius Caesar**. Housed library of some 1,800 scrolls – carbonised when villa was buried under intensely hot ash

UNRAVELLING SECRETS

Institut de France in Paris possesses 900 scrolls from Herculaneum – two have been loaned for this project

