



The Museum of Vesuvius Observatory and its public. Years 2005 - 2008

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The museum of Vesuvius Observatory was created through the enlargement and updating of a permanent exhibition called "Vesuvius: 2000 years of observations", set up in 2000 with the aim of make citizens aware of volcanic phenomena, volcanic hazard and surveillance of active volcanoes in high risk areas, such as Naples and surroundings. The museum is located in the nineteenth-century historical building of the Vesuvius Observatory, the first volcanological observatory in the world, currently part of the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology.

In the museum the dominant theme is the volcano Vesuvius: along the exhibition scientific issues are strictly interlaced with historical, archaeological and literary topics. The exhibition path begins with the presentation of eruptive phenomena, and related hazard for people and things. It traces the eruptive history of Somma-Vesuvius pointing out the most famous eruptions, occurred in 79 AD and 1944, and the methodologies used by volcanologists to define the eruptive history of a volcano through the study of its products. In the octagonal room the products of effusive and explosive eruptions, and minerals formed in volcanic environments, are displayed. The path, consisting of panels and video on big screen, is enriched by the exhibition of historical documents as the geological map of Somma-Vesuvius by Henry James Johnston-Lavis and of copies of Ercolano and Pompeii casts. Also historical scientific instruments once used for surveillance are on display, including the first electromagnetic seismograph, built in 1856 by Luigi Palmieri, director of the Vesuvius Observatory from 1855 to 1896. The tour ends with a practical experience of simulation of an earthquake. Communication tools used in the museum are basically video and panels.

The museum admission is free; visitors enter the museum by guided tours only.

Since the year 2000 checking of visiting public was carried out, either through booking requests received by the museum, either through an evaluation sheet given to visitors at the end of the tour. Definitive data were obtained by comparing the results of the two kinds of detection.

This work presents statistics related to the public of the museum in the years 2005 - 2008. Indicated in the poster will be: the monthly occurrence of visitors, visitors provenance data (Italy and abroad), category of visitors (distinguishing among schools, universities, groups and others) percentage, amount of visitors during weekdays and holidays.

Statistics put in evidence that public – 10,000 persons every year - is mostly made up of school groups, coming from the Campania region preferentially in the months of April and May. The accurate identification of the public, obtained by statistics, allows the museum staff to arrange a tour tailored for different types of visitors, enhancing the quality of the communication during the visit.