

# NOTES ON SUPPLEMENTARY PLATES CIX–CXII

## HERCULANEUM

FOR the following illustrations we are indebted to Mr. H. A. B. White, of the Wyggeston Grammar School, Leicester, to Professor Amedeo Maiuri, who gave his permission for the photographs of the wooden article of furniture (Plate CXI) and of the bronze statuettes (CXII) to be published, to Mr. Kinchin Smith, and to Mr. J. Tobias. We are most grateful to them all.

The ruins of Herculaneum are comparatively unknown to the general public. It is a smaller place than Pompeii, but its site (some 60 feet below the modern town of Resina) makes excavation difficult and slow. At the time of the great eruption of Vesuvius it was a flourishing *municipium* of about 4,000 inhabitants, built on a regular Greek pattern, a residential rather than a commercial town. Unlike Pompeii, it appears to have carried no heavy traffic. There were fewer shops and more villas. The houses were constructed in a less uniform and more modern fashion. Its people were obviously cultured and affluent. On 24 August in A.D. 79 it was buried beneath heavy volcanic ash which afterwards solidified; in fact, whereas Pompeii was covered, Herculaneum was sealed—a fortunate circumstance, for its greater wealth and its abundance of *objets d'art* have been thereby largely preserved from robbers and the inefficiency of early archaeologists. It was discovered accidentally at the beginning of the eighteenth century (even its site had long been forgotten) when a peasant of Resina was digging a well for his house and found some *giallo antico*, a yellow marble used in Roman buildings of the richer sort. The Prince d'Elbœuf, a distant relative of the famous Prince Eugene, perceiving that the peasant had hit on something unusual, bought his land and sank subterranean galleries in all directions. He was fortunate enough (though he did not realize it) to strike the Theatre of Herculaneum, 60 feet or so below ground-level. Exploration was afterwards carried on for many years by tunnelling, with great but only sporadic enthusiasm, and the work was rewarded by finds that surpassed all hopes. However, this system has long been abandoned in favour of total excavation, made possible by modern machinery and scientific methods. At the moment much of the town still remains underground and doubtless under the hard tufa many treasures lie buried, lying as they have always lain since the eruption. It is even possible that the lost works of Greek and Roman writers may be recovered: in 1752 a whole library of papyri was found, containing *inter alia* a treatise on music by the Greek Philodemus. No less than 1,800 books were salvaged, though many were lost when attempts were unsuccessfully made to unroll them. The writings, which in Pompeii would have been perished altogether, had in Herculaneum been carbonized. Wood was similarly preserved (see Plate CXI). In another way, too, Herculaneum differs from the larger city of Pompeii: it is certain that at least 2,000 persons died in the Pompeian disaster, but only a few skeletons have so far been found in the former.

Corti's book, *The Destruction and Resurrection of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, recently published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, gives an excellent and up-to-date account of the excavations.

#### PLATE CIX

The ruins of Herculaneum as they appear today. In the middle distance is the modern town of Resina, about sixty feet above the ancient ground-level. In the background Vesuvius.

#### PLATE CX

- a. A part of the old excavations, illustrating how the houses were stripped of all their wealth.
- b. Narrow cross-roads in the centre of the portion of the town already excavated. The view is taken facing south, and this road once led down to the sea. In foreground (right) is the House with Wooden Partitions. Beyond it is a house with a balcony. The roads here show no signs of heavy traffic, such as the wheel grooves so common in Pompeii. The pavements, too, are better constructed than those in Pompeii.

#### PLATE CXI

A wooden article of furniture, probably a wardrobe, found in a very good state of preservation. Several wooden remains have been discovered in Herculaneum, carbonized but not destroyed.

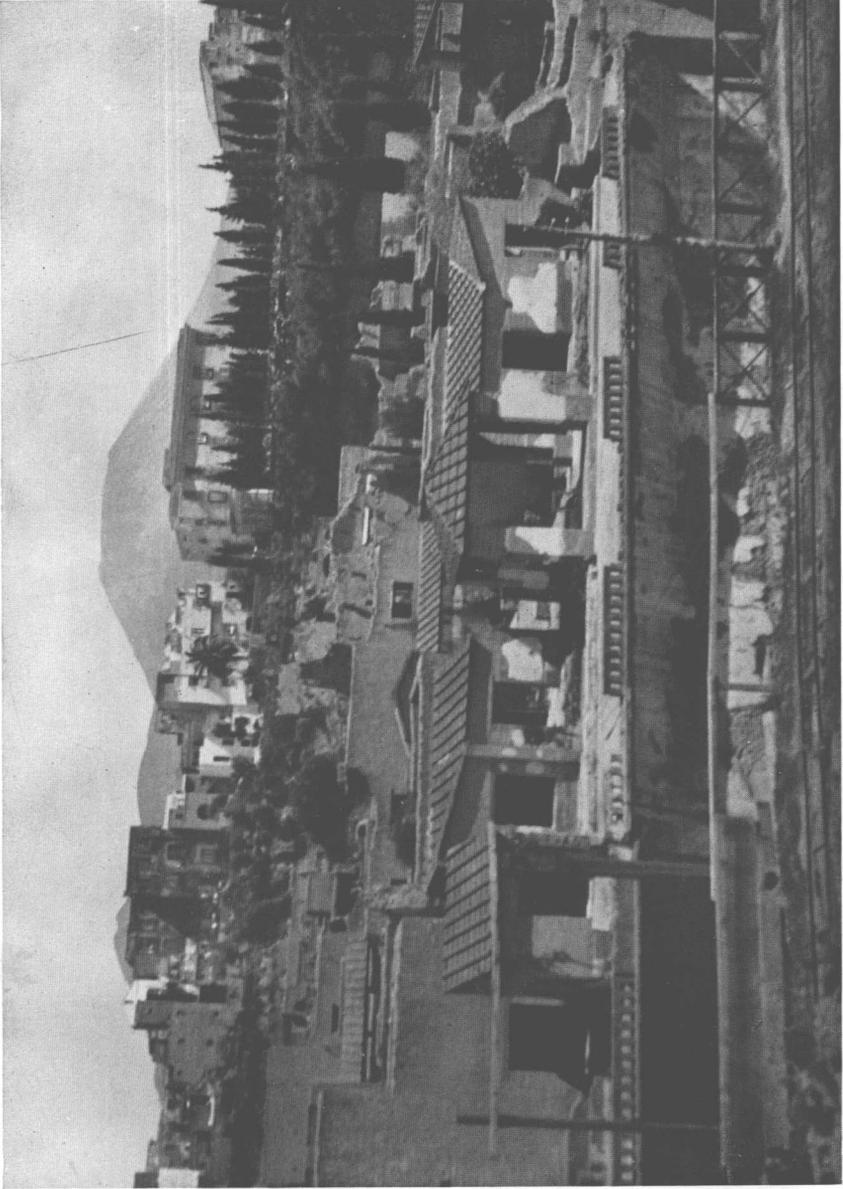
#### PLATE CXII

These bronze statuettes are typical of many found in Herculaneum and are hardly less impressive than the magnificent bronze busts and statues.

Copies of the Supplementary Plates, together with the Notes, are reprinted separately and may be obtained from E. R. A. Sewter, 54 Rectory Close, Newbury, Berks., at the cost of one shilling each, post free.

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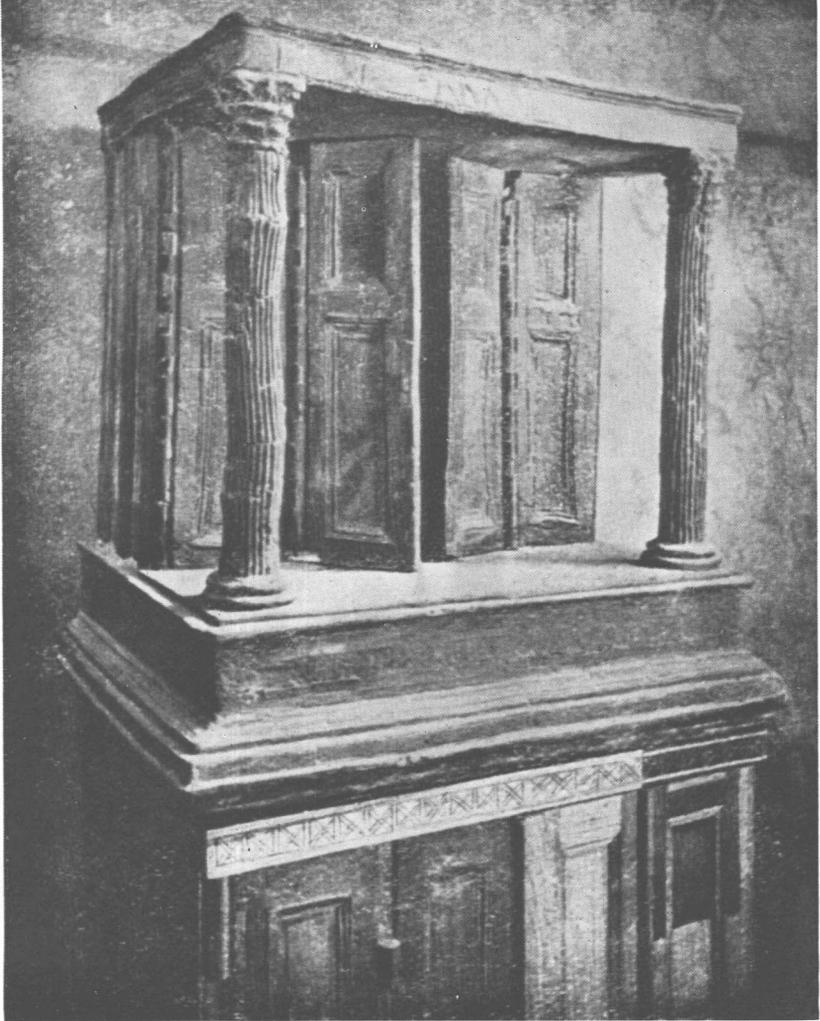
Herculaneum today



*a.* Old excavations



*b.* Cross-roads



Wooden furniture



a. The leaping pig



b. The stag assaulted