



## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Sienkewicz Lecture on Roman Archaeology



1853

# Solving the Mystery of Vesuvius: When Exactly Did It Destroy Pompeii?

**Abstract:** There has been much argument about whether the AD 79 eruption of Mt. Vesuvius happened in summer or autumn, with recent scholarly and popular opinion swinging toward the latter. While a difference of a few months might seem insignificant, it matters because it is a test of our argumentative methods and processes in archaeology and history. I will present the results of a 9-year project to examine all of the archaeological evidence but also, for the first time, to collate all surviving manuscript and early book sources for the Younger Pliny's account. This investigation reveals that many current arguments are based on a long trail of sometimes spectacular blunders and misconceptions, and I offer a solution to the mystery of when Vesuvius buried the ancient cities of the Neapolitan coast.



**Dr. Pedar  
Foss,  
DePauw  
University**

**Wed., Nov. 20  
7:30 PM  
Poling Hall 208  
(Morgan Room)  
Monmouth College**

Pedar W. Foss is Professor and Chair of Classical Studies at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. He is author of *Pliny and the Eruption of Vesuvius* (Routledge 2022), co-editor, with John J. Dobbins, of *The World of Pompeii* (Routledge 2007), and an archaeologist who works on the ancient Bay of Naples and landscape archaeology. He is currently co-director of the Trasimeno Regional Archaeological Project in Umbria, and has done fieldwork in Greece, Turkey, Tunisia, and Italy. He received his Ph.D. in Classical Art and Archaeology from the University of Michigan.

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**All are welcome!  
Free and open to  
the public!**