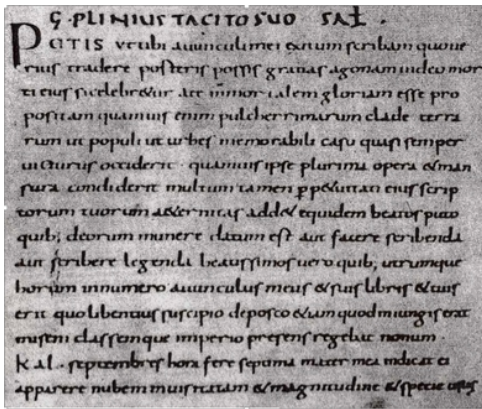


# Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (aka Pliny the Younger).

The only recorded account of an eyewitness to the Mount Vesuvius eruption



The original manuscript of Pliny's letters

## Pliny the Younger



As my uncle was leaving the house, he was handed a message from Rectina, whose house was at the foot of the mountain and whose escape was impossible except by boat. She was terrified of the danger threatening her and implored him to rescue her from her fate. He changed his plans, and what he had begun in a spirit of inquiry, he completed as a hero.

He gave orders for the ships to be launched and went on board himself with the intention of bringing help to many more people besides Rectina, for this lovely stretch of coast was thickly populated. He hurried to the place which everyone else was hastily leaving, steering his course straight for the danger zone. He was entirely fearless, describing each moment of the eruption to be noted down exactly as he observed it. Ashes were already falling, hotter and thicker as the ships drew near, followed by bits of pumice and blackened stones, charred and cracked by the flames.

Then, suddenly they were in shallow water, and the shore was blocked by the rubble from the mountain.

For a moment my uncle wondered whether to turn back, but when the helmsman advised this, my uncle refused, telling him that Fortune stood by the courageous ...

Later in his letter to Tacitus, Pliny records that his uncle died in the eruption.