POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM

INVESTIGATING AND INTERPRETING THE SOURCES

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Contents

AD 79

2021

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Pompeii and Herculaneum: Investigating and Interpreting the Sources explores the remarkable remains of two ancient cities preserved in the moment of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79.

This book's approach to the cities combines the practice of historians with the needs of senior secondary students. Like the historian, students engage with the secondary literature and investigate and interpret the sources. By taking this approach they apply the historical concepts of causation, continuity and change, perspectives, significance and contestability. This prepares students to become more than simple observers of the past. They are empowered to understand it and its implications.

Chapters and activities encourage the application of historical concepts and skills, including the analysis and use of sources, historical interpretation, historical investigation and research and explanation and communication.

Historically accurate images, including photographs and artworks, as well as diagrams and tables, enhance engagement and present information and interpretations in a variety of ways.
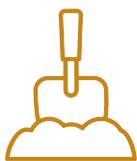
Source studies, which include artwork, photographs, extracts from speeches, laws and personal accounts, as well as historians' interpretations, feature regularly throughout the textbook. Each source study includes many of the types of questions posed in examination of the topic.

Review activities consolidate student understanding, encourage the synthesis of content, include opportunities for research, and support the application of historical concepts.

Each **chapter ends with activities** that focus on larger historical questions arising from the topic and suggestions for further resources.

Publisher acknowledgements

Author acknowledgements

Stephen Clarke

Writing a textbook is always a challenge, particularly when you want to get access to the most recent and relevant scholarship. Doing this in a pandemic was particularly challenging. My wife is a constant source of love, and I am ever-thankful for her support in all that I do, while my children are an ongoing source of respite from work. Also, it is always a pleasure to work with Marty – my former colleague, friend and political co-conspirator (not necessarily in order of importance). When we do the second edition, I am looking forward to our families going on that big trip to Italy we had hoped for in 2020 (if not for Covid)!

Martin Garner

Thanks to my lovely and supportive wife Pepper, and our beautiful children. I would also like to thank one of my oldest friends, Tom Allinson, who dropped everything during a pandemic to provide many of the images for this book. Thanks to my parents, John and Judy, to whom I owe so much including my love of history and my brothers Nick and Dave. Thanks to Denise Tomlinson for her sage advice over the years. Massive thanks to my friend, collaborator and co-author Stephen Clarke, publisher Michael Spurr and the team at Small Caps Publishing who have been a dream to work with.

Glossary

aediles
the two junior officials in Pompeii elected each year

amicitia
friendship, usually of a reciprocal nature

amphitheatre
a large open stadium for events

Aqua Augusta
the aqueduct (raised waterway) that probably provided Pompeii and Herculaneum with a steady supply of water

artefacts
the material remains of a culture found at an archaeological site

ateliers
the leading figures

atrium
the large interior space in a Roman-style house where the head of the household would meet guests

Augustales
priests appointed to maintain the worship of the Emperor Augustus and his family, the Julii

autonomous
the ability of a city or region to create their own laws, follow their own foreign policy and not be controlled by another power

basilica
a large, open-air colonnaded building, usually used for legal or civic matters, such as court cases or elections

bisellia
a wide chair used by magistrates and other officials to mark them as important; often used in official government meetings

bone collagen
the connective tissue around bones; made from amino acids

caldarium
a room with a bath full of hot water

cardi (sing. *cardo*)
the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum that had a north-south route

castellum aquae
the first point of water entry into the city from the aqueduct; water filled the castellum and was distributed through the city by three outlet points

caupona (pl. *cauponae*)
a shop that would specialise in the sale of alcohol, with some food for sale

chalcidicum
a porch area, usually used for official committee meetings

CIP
shorthand for Gaius Julius Polybius; the G is often represented as a C in Latin inscriptions because the original Latin spelling was Caius , but this changed over the years to become Gaius

cistern
a large area of device used to capture and keep water for later use, usually part of a sewage system

clientelism
the relationship of a patron and client and its impacts

colonia
a city, usually settled with Roman citizens, that was given a larger degree of autonomy than other cities

colonists
Roman citizens sent out to settle areas

columella
stylised tombstone busts of the dead, beneath which their ashes were buried

columnar
the use of columns in architecture

commerce
the buying and selling of goods and services

commode
a large pot kept under a bed, used as a toilet and emptied after use

conservation-based approach
a method of archaeology that takes into consideration the need to conserve what is found, and which discoveries will be conserved, prior to excavation

cosmopolitan
a city or region that has many different culture, sometimes kept separate and sometimes blended to form a new culture

decumani
the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum that had an east-west route

deified
formally recognised as a god

dictator
a single leader of Rome, constitutionally appointed to govern Rome during a crisis

dolia
large pottery vessels usually used for storage of liquids such as wine or oil

duumviri
the two senior political appointments made each year in both Pompeii and Herculaneum

epigraphic
information that comes from inscriptions

fibula
a formal pin used to fasten different items of clothing together

forum
a large, open space in a Roman city that served as a political, religious, legal and social centre

freedman/freedwoman
a person who had once been a slave but had been given their freedom

fullonica (pl. *fullonicae*)
a workshop that specialised in one of the four types of wool working, washing or dying

genius
an anonymous spirit who protected each person like a guardian angel; the *genius* of the male head of the household depicted in domestic shrines was worshipped as a protector of the *familia*

gens
an extended family group in Roman society, including nuclear and extended family members of the same name

Hellenised
when someone wanted to show their appreciation of Greek (Hellenic) culture

Hellenistic
a period of Greek history stimulated by Alexander the Great's conquests when Greek culture was spread widely

herm
a marker used at important junctions, such as crossroads, to give people religious protection when making decisions about which way to go

holitorium
a market that specifically sold various types of grains and pulses

in situ
when an artefact is left in its original find location

industry
the production of goods

ingenui
freeborn citizens of the Roman empire, meaning that they had citizen parents and had never been slaves

insula (pl. *insulae*)
a block of grouped housing in Pompeii and Herculaneum

lanolin
the thick, greasy, naturally-occurring oil on wool that makes the wool (and the animal) waterproof

lares
the household gods, often worshipped in a private house or business

libations
offerings made to the Gods of the Dead who lived underground, usually by pouring wine or oil onto the ground

liberti
the Latin term for those people who had been slaves; masculine: *libertus*, feminine: *liberta*

loom
the machine used to weave cloth into clothing

magistrate
an officially elected or appointed government position

Magna Graecia
the part of Italy that was settled by Greek people in the 6th to 4th centuries BC

manumit
to free a slave

matrona
a woman in Roman society who was the mother of the house; the title often conveyed a sense of tradition and religious piety

millstones
the stone grinding mechanism used to mill grain into flour

municipes
local citizens

municipia
a city that was given less self-control than other cities, such as colonies

Nilotic
something that is of, or relates to, the River Nile

Odeon
a performance hall for poetry recitals or plays

opus craticus
a type of construction where timber beams provide a frame for building materials to construct a wall

ordo decurionem
the town council

Oscans
an early people of southern Italy

otium
leisure, often considered to be somewhat self-indulgent by many people at the time

palaestra
an open-air building surrounded by columns, used for exercise

palla
a thick formal item of clothing like a cloak, worn by women

paterfamilias
the oldest living male in a family who had authority over his household

patriarchy
a society that is structured to give men dominance

patroni coloniae
'patrons of the colony' were unelected men whose connections gave influence in the city

peristyle
a colonnaded walkway, usually around a feature of a building such as garden or *palaestra*

pistrina
a bakery

plebs humilis
the lowest group of citizens, who could afford little in life and would have lived life on a day-to-day basis

plebs media
the ordinary people of the cities who could afford a relatively comfortable life and a reasonably nice house with multiple rooms

Plinian eruptions
the phase of an eruption where the column of the eruption in the air begins to fan out and resemble a pine tree, as described by Pliny

Pompeiani
the name for people of Pompeii

portico
a covered walkway

programmata
political graffiti encouraging people to vote for a certain person

pumice
a light volcanic rock that is often the first material to be distributed in a volcanic eruption

pyroclastic density currents
the moving wall of volcanic material that progresses at different paces depending on its density (light material PDCs will travel fast, while heavy material PDCs, such as lava, move much more slowly)

quaestors
officials elected to office to control finances – found in Herculaneum rather than *aediles*

quarries
areas where rock is mined for economic or practical purposes

rogatores
a person asking for people to vote for a candidate

Romanisation
the process by which a city, region or group of people incorporated more Roman styles in their outlook, attitudes and customs

Samnites
an early people of southern and central Italy, who were originally very aggressive towards Roman expansion in the 4th century BC

schola
a formal seating area

Second Punic War
the second war against Carthage, which made Rome the master of a large overseas empire with significant control over areas in Africa, Italy and Sicily

sparsiones
mechanisms that would spray a fine mist of water on patrons at the amphitheatre and theatre to keep them cool

stola
a long, pleated tunic usually made of thick wool, worn by women

streetscapes
the view that one would see looking down a street

suggestum
a raised platform for a person of importance to sit on during formal proceedings

taberna (pl. tabernae)
a shop that could sell anything from pottery to food; often, it was a term used to describe all shops

tableaux
models used to re-create a scene or moment from the past

thermally-induced
caused by intense heat

thermopolium (pl. thermopolia)
a shop that specialised in the sale of food for immediate consumption

torcular
wine press

triclinia
formal dining rooms

vignettes
small images that tell a little story or remind viewers of one

villa rustica
a villa which was either solely or partially devoted to agricultural production

villa urbana
a villa located near or in a city that was designed to be purely for relaxation, with no agricultural purpose at all; these were very uncommon in this period

water tower
a large tower which served as a water distribution and regulation point around the city

Pompeii

KEY

City walls

Unexcavated 2020

N

0   100   200 m

Herculaneum Gate

Vesuvius Gate

Nola Gate

Sarno Gate

House of Julia Felix

Amphitheatre

Palaestra

REGIO II

Nucerian Gate

Inn of the Gladiators

Via dell'Abbondanza

REGIO III

House of the Century

Central Baths

REGIO IV

House of the Silver Wedding

REGIO V

House of Leda and the Swan

Via del Vesuvio

REGIO IX

REGIO I

Stabian Gate

Via Stabiana

Stabian Baths

Odeon

Large Theatre

Temple of Isis

REGIO VI

House of the Faun

Marcellum

REGIO VII

Via dell'Abbondanza

REGIO VIII

Eumachia's Building

Forum

Sanctuary of the Public Lares

Forum Baths

Temple of Jupiter

Basilica

Temple of Apollo

Temple of Venus

Suburban Baths

Marine Gate

Herculaneum

Theatre

House of the
Bicentenary

Decumanus Maximus

College of
Augustales

House of the
Two Atria

INS V

INS VI

Central Baths

INS VII

Samnite House

House of the
Wooden Partition

Decumanus

Cardo III

Cardo IV

Interior

INS II

INS III

Cardo III

Cardo IV

House of the
Mosaic Atrium

INS IV

House of the
Stags

Cardo V

IOI

Suburban
Baths

Boat Houses

Cardo V

IOH

Palaestra

Ancient seafront

Villa of the Papyri

N

0   100   200 m

KEY

18th-century excavations
still underground

Introducing Pompeii and Herculaneum

FIGURE 1.1 Plaster casts at Pompeii
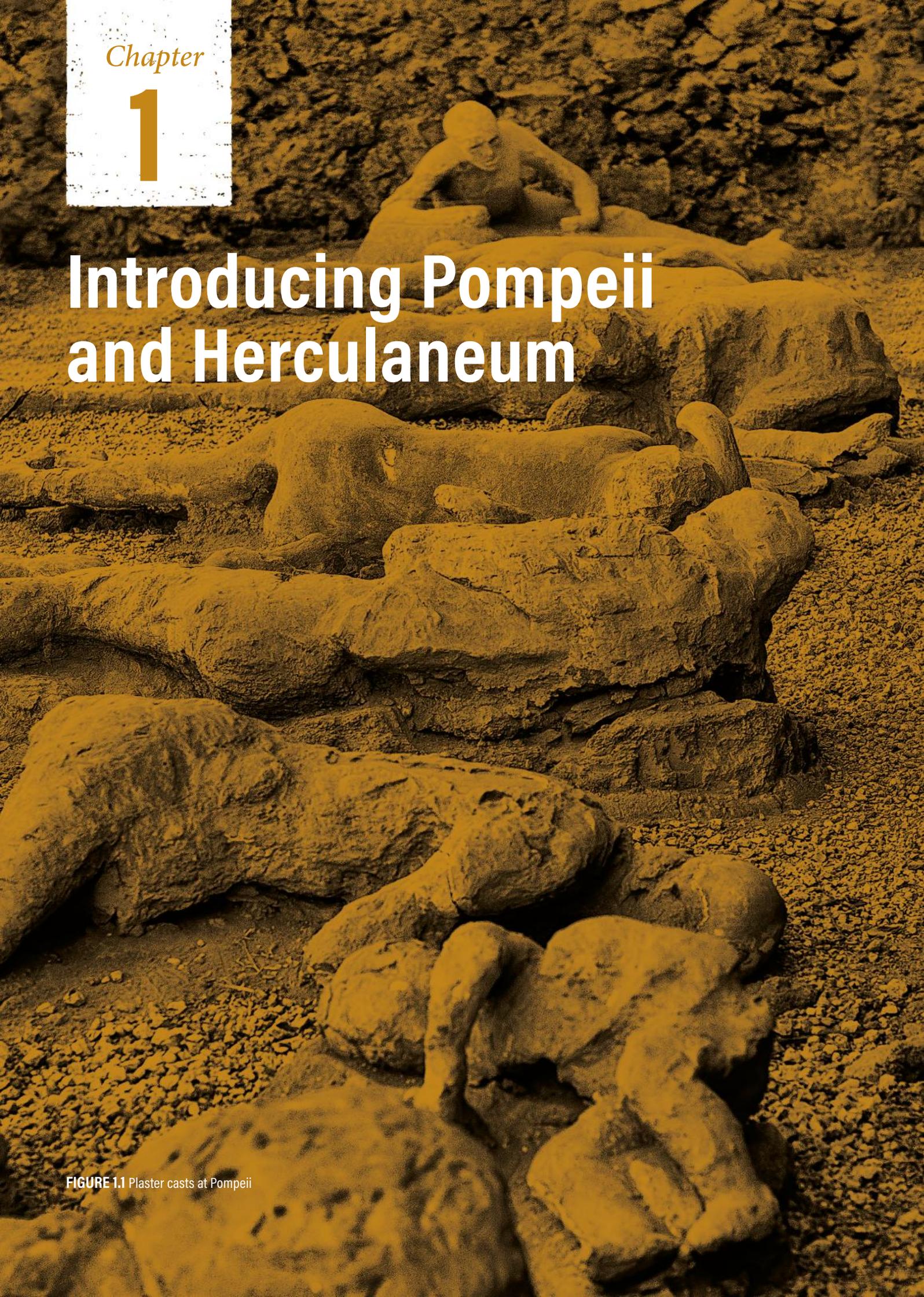
While it is tempting to think of Pompeii and Herculaneum as modern cities, they were not comparable to the cities of today. There are fundamental differences in how the people thought about life in a city, commerce, daily life and politics that make it impossible to compare these cities to our own. More importantly, because they each had separate pasts, Pompeii and Herculaneum were quite different to each other.

Pompeii and Herculaneum are cities caught in one moment in time, so it is easy to think of each city as an independent single unit, but this is not the case either. We need to think about each city individually and consider their contexts. The burial of the cities left much historical evidence unusually intact, and has preserved a large range of helpful sources for historians and archaeologists to use to piece together a picture of life at the time.

This chapter will explain:
- the streetscapes of the cities
- the context of the cities
- the reasons for different development in the cities
- the history of Pompeii and Herculaneum
- the types of evidence in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The streetscapes

Pompeii was a large city and, as a result, there are many different **streetscapes** to explore. Major roads include the one now called the Via dell'Abbondanza (a modern name meaning 'street of abundance' in Italian), which runs along the east-west line of the city. This is a main thoroughfare with wide streets and wheel ruts from the continual carts that used it primarily at night to deliver goods to different parts of the city. Some of these busy roads were one-way at certain times of the day to assist with the movement of traffic. The Via dell'Abbondanza is lined with shops of all types, because there were not parts of the city that specialised in just one product, such as a 'butchers' section'. It connected the **forum** in the western part of the city with the main venues of the eastern side, such as the **amphitheatre** and large *palaestra*. Other main roads that ran east-west (called *decumani*) were the Via di Nola and Via Marina, so named because they went through the Nola and Marine Gates. The main north-south streets (or *cardi*) were the Via del Vesuvio (going through the Vesuvian Gate) and the Via Stabia (going through the Stabian Gate). Another main *cardo* was the Via Mercurio, which ran adjacent to the forum. Here, stone barriers were erected to ensure that carts did not enter the forum.

streetscapes
the view that one would see looking down a street

forum
a large, open space in a Roman city that served as a political, religious, legal and social centre

amphitheatre
a large open stadium for events

palaestra
an open-air building surrounded by columns, used for exercise

decumani
the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum that had an east-west route

cardi
the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum that had a north-south route

FIGURE 1.2 A view along the Via di Nola in Regio IX, Pompeii, with Mt Vesuvius in the background

FIGURE 1.3 The Via dell'Abbondanza, Pompeii

Pompeii's main streets were paved in lava stone from Mt Vesuvius and ranged from approximately 2.5 to 4.5 metres in width. Walking along the footpath, there would have been many doors open to private houses, shops with large open doors and awnings covering the footpath, and double-storey houses throughout most of the city (the majority of these were destroyed by the eruption in Pompeii but preserved in Herculaneum).

Footpaths were up to 30 centimetres higher than the road and ran along most of the main roads around Pompeii and Herculaneum. They would have varied in colour and decoration because they were designed by the owners of the houses that lined the streets. The footpaths needed to be as eye-catching as possible to draw the attention of passers-by into the house to show how luxurious it was. Large houses would often have stone seats outside the houses for guests to sit and wait for their patron to be available.

FIGURE 1.4 A hole in a sidewalk for an awning pole to be inserted, Pompeii

FIGURE 1.5 One of the smaller streets in Regio VI, Pompeii. What do you notice in this image of Pompeii that you have not seen in earlier images?

FIGURE 1.6 Exterior of the Samnite House, Herculaneum, with stone benches outside the front door

Herculaneum was similar, but different, to Pompeii. It was smaller, although archaeologists are unable to excavate it completely because the modern town of Ercolano sits on top of its ancient ancestor. It has been suggested that up to three-quarters of the ancient city remains buried. Unlike Pompeii, the streets of the excavated section are almost entirely regularised. The Decumanus Superior and Decumanus Inferior, the two main east-west oriented streets, are cut in regular lengths by the *cardi*, creating a series of **insulae**, the main divisions by which archaeologists name the city.

insula (pl. **insulae**)

a block of grouped housing in Pompeii and Herculaneum

FIGURE 1.7 A view along Cardo V, Herculaneum

FIGURE 1.8 A view down the Decumanus Inferior, Herculaneum

The most obvious difference between the streetscapes of Pompeii and Herculaneum is the presence of double-storey buildings in Herculaneum, preserved by the first phases of the eruption in AD 79. Often these second storeys extended over the footpath below, providing shade. The second storeys were sometimes made using timber frames and inserting building material between the timbers, a construction method known as *opus craticus*. This would have been easy to construct as well as more resistant to earthquakes.

The presence of an extensive underground sewer system meant that stepping stones were not required in Herculaneum. Also, there is little evidence of the movement of carts across the volcanic stone street paving that can be seen in Pompeii. It has been suggested that this is because Herculaneum was less of an industrial centre than Pompeii and therefore less cart traffic was present. Like Pompeii, there were fountains for access to fresh water at points around the city, and both used fountains and boundary stones to prevent access to important areas by carts.

opus craticus

a type of construction where timber beams provide a frame for building materials to construct a wall

FIGURE 1.9 An *opus craticus* section of the House of the Wooden Partition, Herculaneum

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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Outline all the features you can see in the images of Pompeii.
2. Explain the width of the Via dell'Abbondanza.
3. Compare Figures 1.3 and 1.5 from Pompeii. Explain the differences you see.
4. Describe and explain the key features of the streetscapes you can see in the images of Herculaneum.
5. Explain the differences you notice between the streetscapes of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The forum

The forum is one of the most typically Roman features of town planning. It served as a centre for most aspects of life, including religion, the economy, government and law. Pompeii's forum reflects the changes that happened to the city after it became a Roman colony in 81 BC, while Herculaneum does not seem to have had a traditional Roman-style forum.

The forum in Pompeii reflected Roman design, both in terms of function and style. This is demonstrated by prominence of the Temple of Jupiter (*Capitolium*), which highlighted a direct connection with Rome. Further evidence of **Romanisation** can be seen where shops that had previously been situated on the eastern side of the forum were replaced with public buildings and features with a strong connection to the imperial family, such as the Temple to the Genius of Augustus. As Laurence notes, '[The Roman **colonists'**] arrival marked a new beginning for the city. It was renamed *Colonia Veneria Cornelia Pompeianorum* ... The reassignment of property to the colonists remains obscure. What is clearer, however, from inscriptions and archaeology is a reshaping of public space to create an image of a Roman town.'[1]

Early excavators, such as August Mau and Amedeo Mauri, believed that at the time of the eruption the forum was a building yard, still under repair from the earthquake of AD 62. More recently, archaeologists from the Pompeii Forum Project have argued that the forum had been significantly rebuilt in the aftermath of the AD 62 earthquake. Below is a list of the key buildings in the forum and the function they are thought to have had, according to the research of the Pompeii Forum Project.

Economic

- *Macellum* – marketplace with shops and a central columned pavilion which held a pool. This was used for cleaning and selling fish, and had a shrine probably dedicated to the imperial family in Rome.
- North-west building: *holitorium* (granary) – simply designed and decorated, its location close to the *macellum* and *mensa ponderaria* supports the idea it had a commercial purpose.
- Building of Eumachia (Portico of Concordia Augusta) – a large multipurpose building, paid for by the priestess Eumachia and dedicated to *Concordia Augusta* and *Pietas*.

Religious

- Temple of Jupiter (the *Capitolium*) built in the early period after Pompeii came under the control of Rome. Dedicated to the worship of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, and by extension the Roman state, its prominence and position reflect the status of Pompeii as a Roman colony.
- Sanctuary of Apollo – the temple dates back to as early as the 6th century BC and shows Greek and Etruscan influence in Campania. An altar and sundial were added in approximately 80 BC.

Romanisation

the process by which a city, region or group of people incorporated more Roman styles in their outlook, attitudes and customs

colonists

Roman citizens sent out to settle areas

- Imperial Cult Building (also called the Sanctuary of the Public Lares) – built after AD 62. The exact purpose of this building is unclear, but it was originally seen as a temple to public protector gods (***lares***). It may also have been dedicated to the deified Augustus.
- Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus (also called the Temple of Vespasian) – built in the first decade of the 1st century AD, the imagery and design link the building with the worship of Augustus, or the imperial cult more generally, although this is not certain. A nearby inscription suggests it was paid for by the priestess Mamia and dedicated to the worship of either the Genius of Augustus or the Genius of the Colony (the inscription is damaged).

Government (municipal, legal, political)

- Civic buildings – the exact use of these buildings is impossible to determine but may have included a council chamber, an archive for documents and possibly an office for the two chief magistrates, known as ***duumviri***.
- *Basilica* – a large open-air colonnaded structure, often seen as the most impressive structure in the forum; a richly decorated raised platform (***suggestum***) located there points to seated judges hearing legal cases. The building was also a commercial hub.
- *Comitium* – a large voting hall, where votes were cast and speeches heard.

lares

the household gods, often worshipped in a private house or business

duumviri

the two senior political appointments made each year

suggestum

a raised platform for a person of importance to sit on during formal proceedings

FIGURE 1.10 Plan of the forum of Pompeii

- Temple of Jupiter (the *Capitolium*)
- *Macellum*
- Northwest building *holitorium*
- Imperial Cult Building (Sanctuary to the Public Lares)
- Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus (Temple of Vespasian)
- Sanctuary of Apollo
- Building of Eumachia (Portico of Concordia Augusta)
- *Basilica*
- Civic buildings
- *Comitium*

0m   50m

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how the forum was laid out in Pompeii. How were the different functions, such as religion and commerce, grouped?
2. What does the layout and design of the forum suggest about what was important in public life to the people of Pompeii in AD 79?
3. Explain what the forum reveals about everyday life in Pompeii.

autonomous

the ability of a city or region to create their own laws, follow their own foreign policy and not be controlled by another power

Samnites

an early people of southern and central Italy, who were originally very aggressive towards Roman expansion in the 4th century BC

Oscans

an early people of southern Italy

aediles

the two junior officials in Pompeii elected each year

quaestors

officials elected to office to control finances – found in Herculaneum rather than *aediles*

quarries

areas where rock is mined for economic or practical purposes

A tale of two cities

Pompeii and Herculaneum had very distinct histories. This was because most cities of the time were **autonomous** and were not controlled by other towns. This changed over the years and they both gradually came under the influence of Rome, then under its direct control after the Social War in the first century BC.

Pre-Roman history

Of the two cities, Pompeii is the oldest. Dating back to the 6th century BC, it was a sparsely occupied site that was surrounded by walls at approximately the same location that the newer ring of walls occupy today. Settlement occurred on the western side of the city and the Via del Vesuvio and Via Stabiana roads marked the border of occupation, with the remainder of the city agricultural and quarries for volcanic stone. The area around what later came to be the forum, the 'Old Town', was relatively undeveloped and was the site of the archaic Temple of Apollo. The city gradually became more focused on the Old Town, an area of about 14 hectares. The city went through a prolonged period of decline in the 5th to 4th centuries BC, and walls were constructed around the Old Town. It generally displayed **Samnite** features. In the Temple of Apollo, dedications on pottery fragments were found in Etruscan, the language of the peoples to the north of Italy, indicating an early Etruscan presence. However, the city itself was largely **Oscan**, with typical Oscan gods and features of government found in inscriptions. For example, Pompeii had a popular assembly and a town council, and we know that *aediles* were responsible for roads and *quaestors* were responsible for financial affairs, typical features of Oscan society.

FIGURE 1.11 An Oscan inscription found on the interior arch of the Nola Gate, Pompeii

Herculaneum goes back to the 4th century BC and was only 20 hectares in total. It traced its origins to the Greek hero Heracles, from whom the city derived its name (the Roman version was Hercules, hence 'Herculaneum'). Some Oscan inscriptions and graffiti in Herculaneum survive, as does an altar to Venus in her Oscan form, giving a clue to its original occupation. Herculaneum was slower to develop than Pompeii because it was not situated near features that would encourage growth based on trade.

In approximately 300 BC, Pompeii again started to flourish and grow, with the existing position of walls and gates established. **Quarries** continued in this period in the north-east and south-east parts of the city until the population expanded and the quarries closed. The alliance signed with Rome stimulated economic development and new infrastructure and houses were built. The Old Town walls were pulled down and

a large entertainment area was constructed in the city, including the Stabian Baths, Samnite Palaestra and the Large Theatre. **Hellenistic** styles also became fashionable throughout most of the city in both public and private architecture. The palaestra and **portico** added to the Stabian Baths reflect the Hellenisation of Pompeii, as does the existence of the House of the Faun, which dates to this period. Given the development of Pompeii in this period, it is surprising that Herculaneum does not see any significant development until the early 1st century BC.

Hellenistic
a period of Greek history stimulated by Alexander the Great's conquests when Greek culture was spread widely

portico
a covered walkway

FIGURE 1.12 Corinthian columns in the Samnite House, the oldest excavated house in Herculaneum

The cities become Romanised

Both cities joined the Social War against Rome, which lasted from 91 to 87 BC, and they were besieged and taken by the soon-to-be Roman **dictator**, Lucius Cornelius Sulla. As a result of their revolt against Roman authority, Pompeii became a *colonia* and Herculaneum a *municipia*, losing their autonomy to different degrees. In 81 BC Pompeii was renamed *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum* and a colony of Sulla's military veterans (up to 4000) were settled there. Latin became the main language used in public life (previously Oscan was the primary language, with some Greek and Samnite), and Pompeiians may even have been excluded almost completely from public life. A large temple was built to Venus (honouring the Roman connection and the 'founder' of the colony, Sulla, whose patron goddess was Venus), and funerary customs became Roman, such as the use of monumental tombs. The **Odeon** and Amphitheatre were also constructed.

There seems to have been some resentment towards Rome. The revolt of Spartacus between 73 and 71 BC gained some support from Pompeiians, and there was a possible Pompeian connection to the conspiracy of Catiline, a Roman noble who attempted to overthrow the Roman constitution in 63 BC. In the Augustan period there was significant economic growth across Italy. There was extensive transformation of Pompeii in particular, where monumental buildings were erected, and the increasingly Romanised forum became the focus of the town. The *Aqua Augusta* also transformed the cities, bringing new volumes of water, allowing the construction of larger, modern baths at Pompeii.

dictator
a single leader of Rome, constitutionally appointed to govern Rome during a crisis

colonia
a city, usually settled with Roman citizens, that was given a larger degree of autonomy than other cities

municipia
a city that was given less self-control than other cities, such as colonies

Odeon
a performance hall for poetry recitals or plays

Aqua Augusta
the aqueduct (raised waterway) that probably provided Pompeii and Herculaneum with a steady supply of water

How do we know about Pompeii and Herculaneum?

When we are examining Pompeii and Herculaneum, we are fortunate to have access to a much larger range of sources than other sites. The cities were buried during the eruption of Mt Vesuvius and largely survive as they were on the day of their burial, which provides archaeologists and historians with an unusually well-preserved and accurate picture of both cities.

The range of sources

We should be cautious about using all forms of evidence available, and should not take evidence from our sources at face value simply because they are primary sources. It is important to be able to understand all the types of sources in context in the cities to develop as complete a picture as possible – if researchers are reliant on only a small range of source types, the evidence developed by historians and archaeologists will not be as complete as if we access the complete range of primary sources available.

TABLE 1.1 Types of sources in Pompeii and Herculaneum

Type of source	Description	Examples
Site layout	The way the city is designed	The 'entertainment quarter' of Pompeii
Streetscapes	The view down a street if you were walking along it	The view down the *Decumanus Superior* in Herculaneum
Public buildings	Buildings that were owned and maintained by the city	The amphitheatre of Pompeii
Private buildings	Buildings that were owned and maintained by private individuals	Houses, shops, private baths
Ancient writers	Authors who wrote information that we can use to study the cities or their context	Pliny the Elder, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus
Inscriptions	Information recorded on stone to preserve official information, such as decrees, or unofficial information, such as epitaphs on tombs	Town decrees
Graffiti	Writing painted or scratched onto walls or other physical objects	*Programmata* in Pompeii
Wall paintings	Artwork decorating walls on buildings	Painting of Leda and the Swan, House of Leda and the Swan, Pompeii
Statues	Statues of individuals funded by the state or private individuals	Equestrian statue of Marcus Nonius Balbus, Herculaneum
Mosaics	Little pieces of coloured stone or shell designed to create a large image	Alexander Mosaic, The House of the Faun, Pompeii
Human, plant and animal remains	Any actual remains of humans, plants or animals or the casts that can be made of their remains	Equestrian remains in mills, Pompeii; plaster casts of roots in Pompeii

REVIEW QUESTION

1. For each of the types of evidence in Table 1.1, write down any benefits and limitations of using the sources that you can.

Further resources

R Laurence, *Space and Society*, Routledge, London, 2011.

J Dobbins, 'The Forum And Its Dependencies' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds.), *The World of Pompeii,* Routledge, London 2009, pp 150–183.

M Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2008.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Who were the original inhabitants of Pompeii and Herculaneum? How does the evidence support this?
2. How did the layout of Pompeii change over time?
3. Explain the changes that happened in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.
4. Why was there such a significant culture change in the cities in the early 1st century BC? How did this change the cities?
5. What is the evidence for significant economic progress in the cities in the Augustan period?

Activities

1. Explain the term 'Hellenisation'. Research Hellenisation in Pompeii and Herculaneum and find images of as many examples of this as you can.
2. Think about the phases of development in Pompeii and Herculaneum and write a list of them. For each phase, describe its key features or activities. Find examples of what you have described and explain how these examples show aspects of each phase of development. Use the tables on the right to help structure your information.

Pompeii

Phase and dates	Key features/ activities	Examples	Explanation of examples

Herculaneum

Phase and dates	Key features/ activities	Examples	Explanation of examples

HSC-style questions

1. Outline the key features of the forum in Pompeii. (4 marks)
2. Explain the value and limitations of using buildings as a source when studying Pompeii and Herculaneum. (5 marks)
3. Explain the importance of the forum to life in Pompeii. (8 marks)

Endnotes

1   R Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, Routledge, London, 2011, p 20.
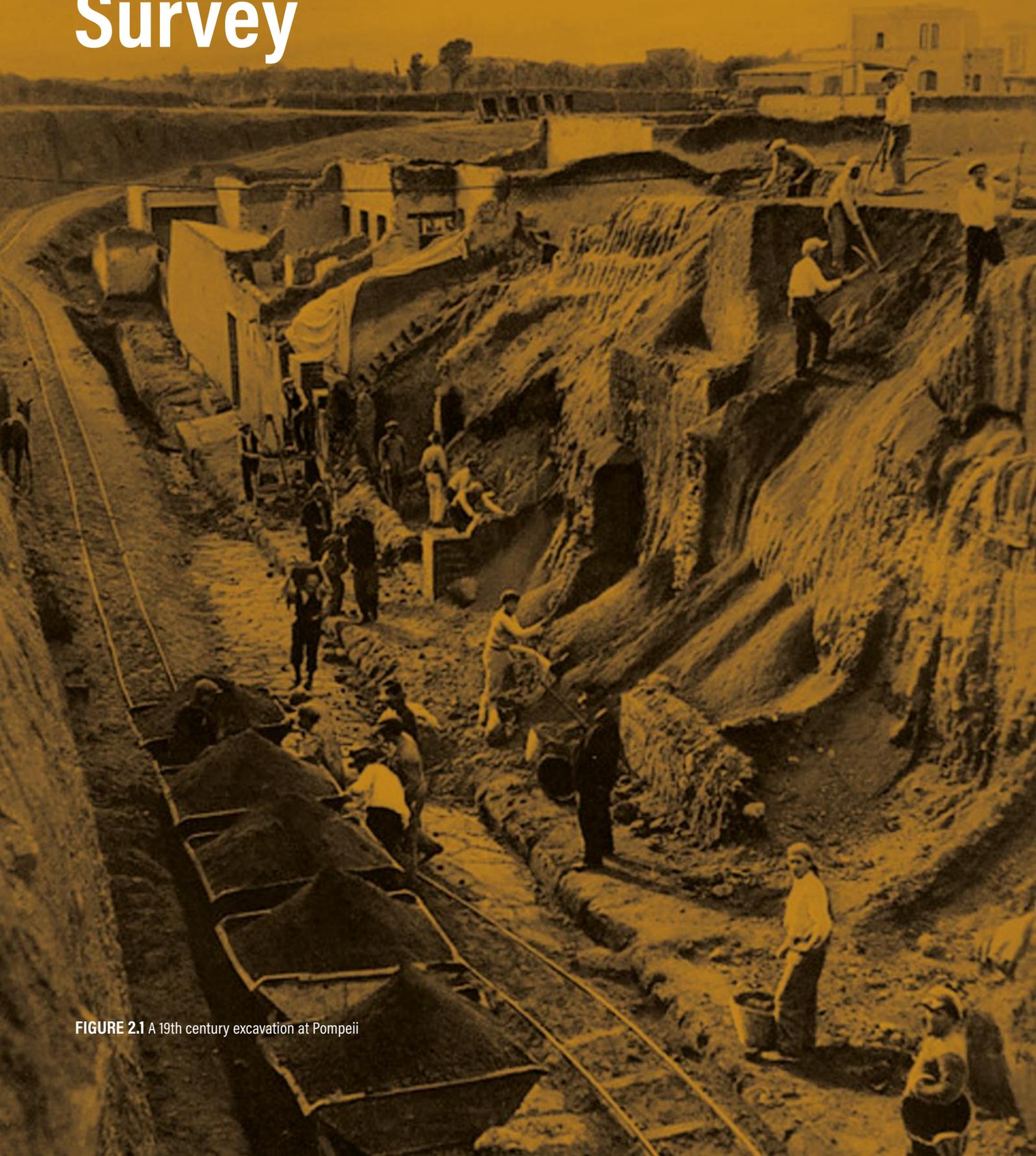
Survey

FIGURE 2.1 A 19th century excavation at Pompeii

Pompeii and Herculaneum were located in a very fortunate spot. *Campania Felix* (Lucky Campania) was ideally situated for trade, agriculture and respite from Rome. Once under Roman influence and control, it soon became a location for people escaping the hustle and bustle of city life. It also became a thriving hub of commerce, not only for Campania, but also for Italy and the Empire.

This chapter will explain:

- the effect of the natural features of Campania on Pompeii and Herculaneum
- the stages of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and its impact on the cities
- the scientific, archaeological and literary evidence for the eruption and its impact
- the nature of the early discoveries and excavations of the sites in the 19th and 20th centuries
- the way Pompeii and Herculaneum have been represented over time.

Geographical setting and natural features of Campania

Pompeii and Herculaneum were situated on the coast of the region known as Campania. It was a remarkably fertile region and an important producer of food, wine and wool. Being situated in a volcanic area brought many benefits to the cities of Campania.

The temperature of the region was pleasant throughout the year, and the cities were ideally positioned to catch the breezes that blew in from the Bay of Naples. It was known as such a pleasant location that many of the famous (and infamous) residents of Rome would holiday in Campania, enjoying the temperature, food, wine and the break from Roman politics. The philosophers Seneca and Lucan both retired to their villas in Campania to escape Roman politics. The emperor Nero, his mother Agrippina the Younger, and Nero's wife Acte all owned villas in Campania. It was even the location of Nero's infamous artificial lake, on which he would hold mock sea battles.

Campania was more than a luxurious retreat; it was also an economic centre of Italy. In particular, the position of the cities near the coastline meant that they were able to engage in trade, and the Bay of Naples was an important stop on the trade route along Italy's coast. This meant that their wine, wheat, oil and other products were traded around the Mediterranean. The position of Pompeii on the Sarno River also meant that it was able to trade inland. The volcanic rock on which Campania was situated was an important item of trade, as it was used in building structures and in machines that pressed oil or ground grain.

Source Study 2.1 Pliny on Campania

Source A: Pliny

The land here ... is dusty on top, but below it sucks liquid in porous like pumice … the earth allows rain to percolate and then pass through, and by not allowing it to become drenched or marshy, facilitates cultivation. ... The land is sown all year, once with Italian millett and twice with emmer wheat, but in spring, after the fields have been rested it brings forth an abundance of roses with a sweeter smell than garden roses, for here the earth never ceases to produce. This led to the saying that Campania produces more odours than the people do oil.

Pliny, *Natural History* 18.29

Source B: Pliny

At this place Lucky Campania begins, and in this valley begins the vine-covered hills, whose alcohol-filled juice is celebrated throughout the world, and, as was said of old, is the place of struggle for mastery of Father Liber and Ceres … Here, the shore is supplied by warm water from springs and, more renowned beyond all others for the excellence in shellfish and other fish. Nowhere else has superior olive oil. Here also is a contest for human desires. It has been held by the Oscans, Greeks, Umbri, Tuscans and Campanians.

Pliny, *Natural History* 3.9

Questions

1. Outline the key resources that came from Campania.
2. How does geography make Campania a desirable places for cities?
3. How does Pliny account for the fertility of the soil in Source A?
4. Outline the food resources of the region that Pliny mentions.
5. How does Pliny imply in Source B that the region was seen as desirable by many people?

The eruption of AD 79 and its impact on Pompeii and Herculaneum

In AD 79, Mt Vesuvius erupted in one of the most devastating volcanic eruptions in recorded history. This eruption has traditionally been dated to 24–25 August, based on the date provided on the most reliable manuscript of the writer Pliny the Younger. He witnessed the eruption and wrote a firsthand account of what he saw, but there are several dates preserved in the different versions of the manuscripts, which were probably a result of errors in copying them over the years, something that would have been done by hand. Although the traditional date is in the northern hemisphere summer, there were different fruits found throughout the site that were generally only available in autumn, and braziers to provide heat were also found throughout the cities, which would only have been used as the weather cooled down. Also found was a coin of the emperor Titus, which can only be dated to after September AD 79, causing more uncertainty.

In 2018 archaeologists uncovered a graffito in the Regio V excavations in Pompeii, directed by Massimo Ossana. Written in charcoal, it clearly states, 'the 16th day before the calends of November', which equates to 17 October using a modern calendar. A date in October, possibly 24 October, is now believed by archaeologists to be the time of the eruption.
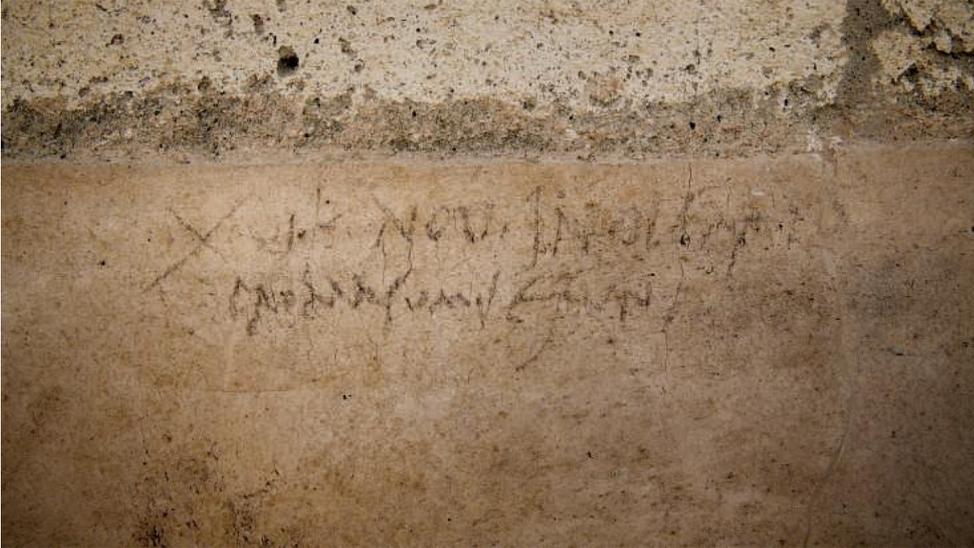

FIGURE 2.2 The graffito found in Regio V excavations in Pompeii. Discovered in 2018, evidence from this source has led to a reassessment of the date of the eruption. With the permission of the Ministry of Culture, *Parco Archeologico di Pompei*. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited.
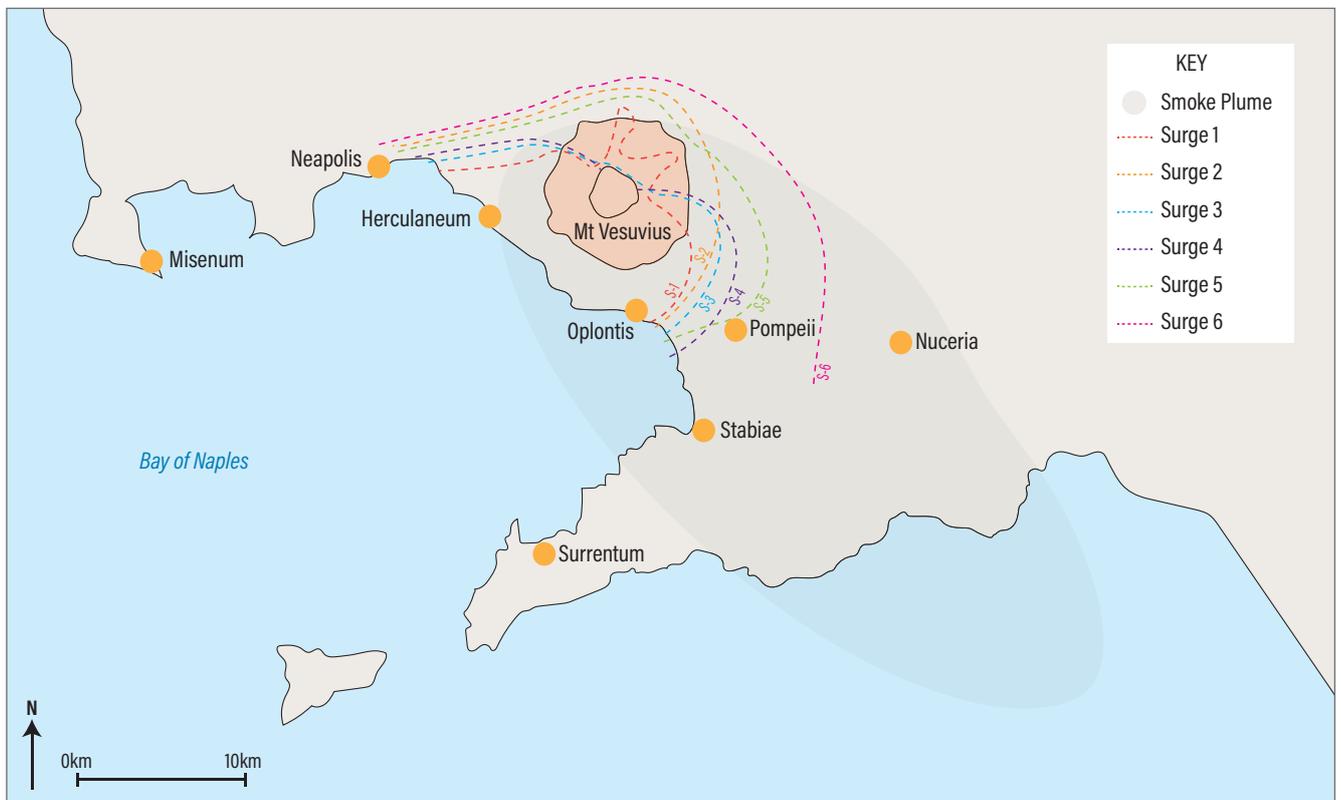

FIGURE 2.3 Map of the Bay of Naples showing the spread of the smoke plume and the extent of each of the major pyroclastic surges that covered the cities in volcanic materials.

Written evidence

Our best source of information on the eruption is the writing of Pliny the Younger. He was stationed with his uncle, Pliny the Elder, who was also a writer of note and the commander of the Roman fleet stationed at the bay of Misenum. Pliny the Younger described what he saw in detail and the basic chronology of the eruption in two letters to the historian Tacitus.

Pliny the Younger describes the eruption

Pliny's firsthand account of the eruption

> On [24th August], at around the seventh hour, my mother pointed out a cloud of both extraordinary size and shape … it arose in likeness and form imitating a pine tree more than anything else, for what was like the trunk was of great length and height and spread out into something like branches, I suppose because while the air was fresh … then becoming exhausted lost impetus, or disappeared under its own weight laterally …
>
> [Pliny the Elder sails over to offer help] Ashes were falling on the ship, which as they drew nearer became hotter and thicker, with pumice and black flint scorched and fractured by fire, while the approach was blocked by a sudden shoaling and bits of the mountain on the shore … Meanwhile, at many places on Mt Vesuvius broad flames and fires blazed … the lightning and brightness enlivened by the darkness of the night.
>
> [Pliny finds a place to take shelter] The open area of the house leading to the room he was in was so full of ash and pumice mixed together in such a way, and filled to such a depth, that if he waited in the bedroom any longer, there would have been no escape … They consulted as a group whether they should remain under cover or roam out in the open, for the buildings were beginning to shake to and fro with the numerous and monstrous tremors, and seemed to be moving one way, then the other, as if dislodged from their foundations.
>
> Pliny, *Letters* 6.16

Pliny's account of the impact of the eruption

> The vehicles that we ordered to be brought, though they were standing on flat ground, were moving in different directions, and though they were wedged by stones we could not keep them still. Moreover, we saw the sea suck back on itself, as if repelled by the tremors of the land. The shore certainly advanced, and many sea animals were left on the dry sands. On the other side, a dark and horrible cloud, a fiery spirit twisting and moving about erupted to and fro, splitting into figures of long flames similar to lightning but much larger … Soon after this, the cloud descended on the earth, covering the sea.
>
> Pliny, *Letters* 6.20

Archaeological evidence

Prior to the eruption, Pompeii had been shaken by earthquakes, now recognised as long- and short-term warning signs of a volcanic eruption. Pliny tells us that the eruption was '… preceded by many tremors of the earth, which were less terrifying because they were common in Campania.' In February AD 62, the region was hit by a devastating earthquake. The damage was so extensive that at the time of the eruption, the repairs were not quite finished. This may indicate that the local economy was also affected by the earthquake.

The eruption started with weak explosions which deposited a thin layer of ash to the east, followed by the growth of an eruption column, which varied in height between 14 and 27 kilometres. This lasted for several hours and deposited a 1-metre-thick layer of white **pumice** on Pompeii, but not on Herculaneum because of the wind direction.

pumice

a light volcanic rock that is often the first material to be distributed in a volcanic eruption

After this initial phase, the column partially collapsed, which led to the first of a series of **pyroclastic density currents** (PDCs, also known as pyroclastic flows and surges), between 380°C and 500°C. This covered Herculaneum with a 1.5-metre layer of material, but did not destroy any buildings, and did not reach Pompeii. The eruption column re-established itself and reached about 32 kilometres in height, leading to more pumice deposits on Pompeii. A second eruption column collapsed and a PDC hit Herculaneum again, leaving 7 metres of material. A third weak PDC reached Pompeii and the recent Regio V excavations have found evidence of this 200 metres into the city. It is possible that there was a pause in the eruption at this point.

pyroclastic density currents

the moving wall of volcanic material that progresses at different paces depending on its density (light material PDCs will travel fast, while heavy material PDCs, such as lava, move much more slowly)

FIGURE 2.4 Stone pines were the type of tree that Pliny the Younger used to describe the eruption he witnessed.

A fourth PDC hit Pompeii, but this was so powerful that it slid several layers of blocks on the wall near Tower XI (the Mercury Tower, in the north of the city) by 10 centimetres, indicating that the winds were travelling at approximately 300 km/h and carrying dense volcanic material. After possibly another two PDCs, Pompeii was covered in 2–5 metres of volcanic material.

At this point, the third phase of the eruption began, where the rock structure in the volcano started to weaken, leading to the most violent phase of the eruption on the next day. As Pliny described, there were violent earthquakes, followed by the sea drawing back and becoming a tsunami. This was followed by the most powerful PDC, which covered Pompeii and Herculaneum and destroyed any buildings that were not surrounded by pumice and smaller stone. Four more PDCs covered the city with ash. The recent Regio V excavations have found eight new volcanic ash layers that fell on Pompeii after the town was covered. Herculaneum was now buried 20 metres below the material, while Pompeii was buried in some places by up to 5 metres. Pliny also tells us that earthquakes happened during the eruption. These were likely part of what is called an 'earthquake swarm': shallow earthquakes caused by magma being drained from underground reservoirs during **Plinian eruptions**.

Plinian eruptions

the phase of an eruption where the column of the eruption in the air begins to fan out and resemble a pine tree, as described by Pliny

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Outline the aspects of the eruption mentioned by Pliny in the first letter excerpt.
2. Describe the immediate impact of the eruption on the environment outlined by Pliny in the second letter excerpt.
3. What was happening when Pliny says, 'we saw the sea drawn back upon itself'?
4. How does Figure 2.4 help us to understand Pliny's description of the eruption?

Impact of the eruption

In total, 1214 bodies have been found in Pompeii and the surrounding suburbs, and 349 bodies have been found in Herculaneum. In Pompeii, almost one-third of the victims were found outside buildings on top of pumice and encased in ash. This would suggest that many people tried to escape, only to be caught in a subsequent PDC. Many of these remains are in the 'boxer posture', caused by the contraction of muscles in the extreme heat of a PDC. This is where people's arms are pulled up to cover their faces like boxers do in a fight.

Most of the victims in Herculaneum were found outside houses in ash, again often in the boxer posture. These were almost all found on the beach or in nearby buildings. A recent study examined the bones and other remains in this area. It has shown that the extreme heat previously thought to have killed individuals inside the buildings was actually much lower (possibly 240°C) because of the number of people indoors and the walls, leading to a slower death. This is shown by the blackening of bones, which had previously been attributed to the sudden death of a PDC. Their boxer posture was a result of body tissue drying out.[1]

This can be compared to the remains of a victim found inside the *collegium* at Herculaneum, where Petrone says that:

> Features suggesting a maximum temperature of 520°C were detected on charred wood …
> This suggests that extreme radiant heat was able to ignite body fat and vaporise soft tissues …
> The detection of glassy material from the victim's head, of proteins expressed in human brain, and of fatty acids found in human hair indicates **thermally-induced** preservation of vitrified brain tissue [i.e. brain tissue was turned into glass because of the heat].[2]

thermally-induced

caused by intense heat

The eruption also seems to have created a large refugee population. In a recent analysis, it was found that people with names associated with Pompeii can be found in towns predominantly to the north of those destroyed.[3]

The eruption had a different physical impact on each of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Apart from covering the cities with volcanic material, most of the second storeys of Pompeii's buildings were destroyed by PDCs; ground floors were generally preserved by the pumice falls. At Herculaneum, many of the second storeys of buildings were preserved by the less damaging PDCs early in the eruption that buried the town earlier in the process.

Other impacts are less studied and harder to identify. In Pompeii, there are about 246 walls that appear to be red and 57 to be yellow, however this may have been an impact of the eruption. Using samples from the site, a scientific team was able to show that the yellow paint changed colour to red at between 225°C and 275°C. This study not only tells us about the impact of the eruption on the paintings, but also the temperatures of the PDCs when they arrived at Pompeii. Further away, we know that Naples, Nola and Nuceria were extensively damaged by the earthquakes that accompanied the eruption, as there are many inscriptions that talk of the repairs needed.

The impact on the surrounding region was immense. After the eruption, huge mudslides were triggered by rainfall washing away loose volcanic material and ash. The mudslides have been preserved and can still be seen at Torre Annunziata. The land in the region required an extended period of time before it could be farmed again, but afterwards the region became even more fertile. Most natural water supplies would have become undrinkable as a result of the toxins released from the explosions. The eruption displaced

10 kilometres^3 of material, covering both the cities and extending the coastline by up to 1 kilometre in some locations, making Herculaneum, which was a coastal town, into an inland town by approximately 500 metres.

FIGURE 2.5 Skeletons found in Herculaneum. Previously, scholars thought the bones were blackened as a result of the extreme temperatures of a PDC.

FIGURE 2.6 Herculaneum, showing the boatsheds and the height to which the city was covered by the PDCs

REVIEW QUESTION

1. Create a summary of the impacts of the eruption on the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum and give reasons for them.

Early discoveries and changing nature of 19th and 20th century excavations

The sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum have been excavated by many archaeologists over a few centuries. Some of their work has been ground-breaking, while others have been damaging to our understanding of the sites.

19th and early 20th century excavations

artefacts

the material remains of a culture found at an archaeological site

Very soon after the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 (possibly as soon as weeks afterwards), people started to excavate the site, taking **artefacts** and treasure. While this seems to have stopped fairly quickly at the time, when the cities were identified more than a millennium later, excavations began to unearth the treasures of the site. It was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that more scientific archaeology was undertaken.

The rediscovery of the cities

Timeline 2.1: 1592–1763

1592	Domenico Fontana cut a large irrigation channel through Pompeii.
1689	An inscription was found bearing the name 'Pompei'.
1709–16	Austrian Prince d'Elbeuf used marble from Herculaneum to decorate his nearby villa.
1738	Charles III sponsored treasure hunting led by Roque Joaquín de Alcubierre at Herculaneum, using tunnels to excavate.
1748	Roque Joaquín de Alcubierre began formal excavations at Pompeii.
1749	Karl Weber began excavating systematically at Herculaneum, creating plans of the theatre, *basilica* and Villa of the Papyri.
1763	A second inscription was found at Pompeii, confirming the city's existence.

19th and 20th century excavations

TABLE 2.1 Key periods of excavations

Key periods of excavation	Actions
French Bourbon excavations 1806–15	• Excavations focused on the Via Consulares and Street of the Tombs. • Children were used to move dirt in bags rather than wheelbarrows to save money. • Excavation was funded by Queen Caroline Boneparte Murat to excavate Pompeii as quickly as possible, which allowed hundreds of workers to be employed.
Neapolitan excavations 1815–60	• Workers begin to leave wall paintings *in situ* under shelters to display them to the increasing number of visitors. Wooden gates were erected around artwork left *in situ*. • An amount of money was set aside for the restoration of buildings in Pompeii. • Plaster and walls began to be repaired. Artists began to paint artwork left *in situ* with a varnish to protect them. Nameplates were put around the site with names and numbers of streets and houses. Inscriptions were repositioned to where they were believed to have been. • A commission was established to direct restoration activities. Instructions were set down for restoration. • There were attempts to make Herculaneum an open-air site from 1828, but these stopped in 1837.
Giuseppe Fiorelli's excavations 1863–75	• Building on earlier attempts, Fiorelli created the first successful plaster cast of one of Pompeii's victims. • He began to develop the 'postal system' of Pompeii, dividing the city in regions, *insulae* and blocks. • He started excavating houses from top to bottom, documenting his work using photography and extensive diaries and daily reports. • He encouraged tourism, instituting entrance fees. • Land was purchased east of the site to Herculaneum, where excavations continued.
Michele Ruggiero and Giulio de Petra's excavations 1875–1901	• Rebuilding of spaces and sections of ancient buildings was undertaken. • Walls and roofs were rebuilt, sculptures left in a newly replanted garden, and fountains repaired and set in working order. • This time saw the start of use of iron and asbestos concrete to reinforce buildings.
Vittorio Spinazzola's excavations 1911–23	• Excavations were refocused from the north of Pompeii to the region between the Via Stabiana and the amphitheatre. • Spinazzola uncovered and excavated 600 metres of the Via dell'Abbondanza. He restored the facades of the buildings, saving the inscriptions and graffiti. • He preserved and restored the second storeys of buildings along the Via dell'Abbondanza as he excavated.
Amedeo Maiuri's excavations 1924–61	• Maiuri undertook systematic excavation and analysis of houses in Pompeii. He reconstructed buildings that he excavated extensively. • He excavated 4 hectares of Herculaneum. • He added lighting to Pompeii for night visits and used the theatres for dramas. • Used the extensive funds provided to maintain and restore Pompeii. • Sections of the forum and various buildings were destroyed by Allied bombing in 1943 during World War II. • Excavations began after World War II to reduce unemployment, but little attention was paid to the preservation of what was excavated.

in situ
when an artefact is left in its original find location

REVIEW QUESTION

1. Read through Table 2.1 and identify the various techniques used by archaeologists to excavate, restore and preserve. Write a paragraph outlining how and why practices changed at Pompeii and Herculaneum, using examples.

Source Study 2.2 Luigi Bazzani and Pompeii

In the late 19th to early 20th centuries, artist Luigi Bazzani painted a series of watercolours of Pompeii. These paintings were considered highly accurate by the archaeologists at the time, particularly because Bazzani was experimenting with a new form of architectural painting, capturing the building as it really looked. They have become an important source for the study of Pompeii as the buildings he painted now have lost most of their colours, but he had painted them while they still retained much of their original colour.

Source A: *Atrium from the House of the Hunt*, 1886

FIGURE 2.7

Source B: *House of the Silver Wedding*, 1895
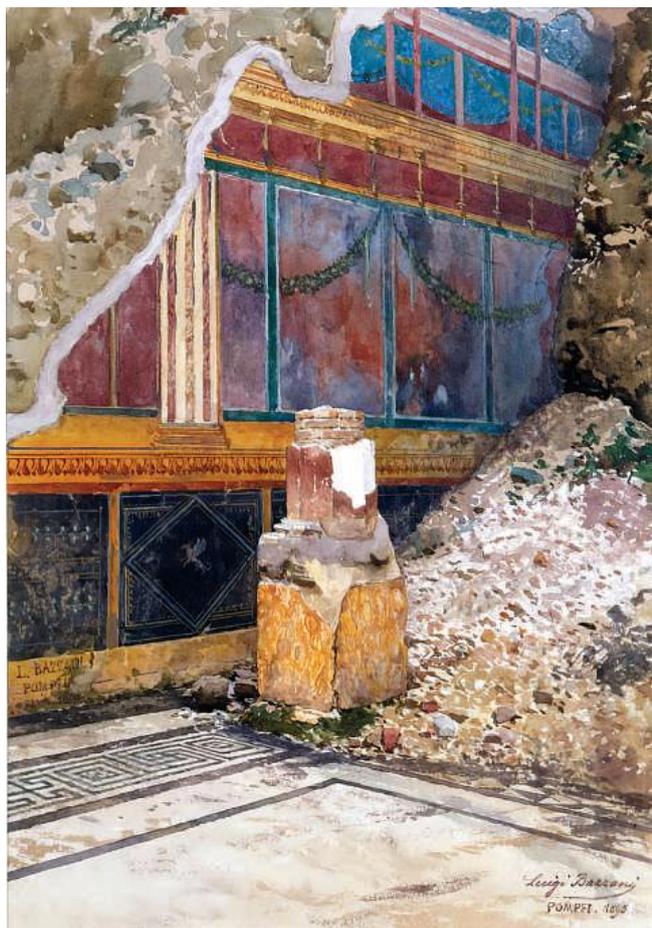
FIGURE 2.8

Source C: *Summer triclinium of house V, 2, 15*, 1914

FIGURE 2.9

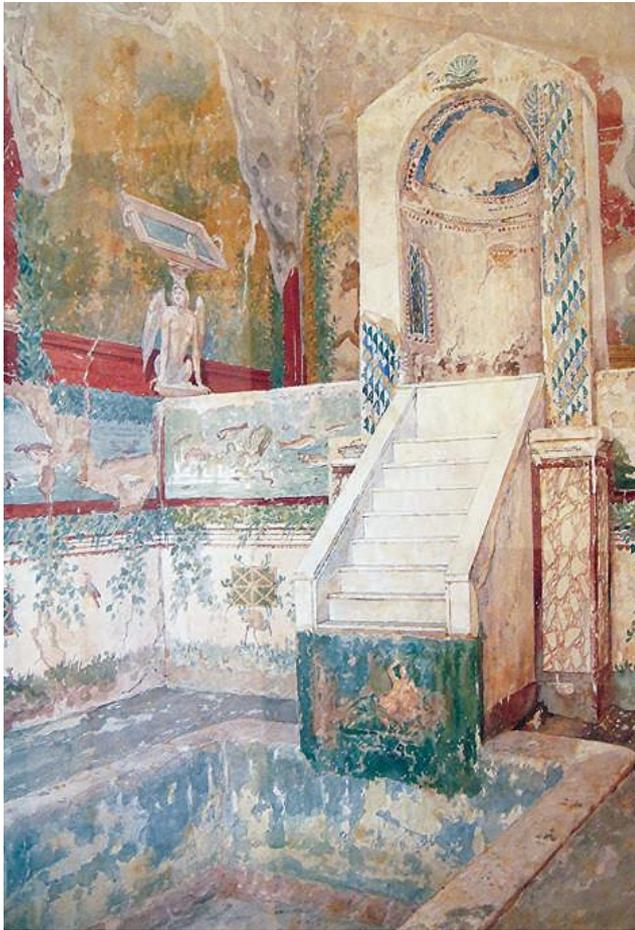**Source D:** *Atrium from the House of the Dioscuri*, 1901

FIGURE 2.10

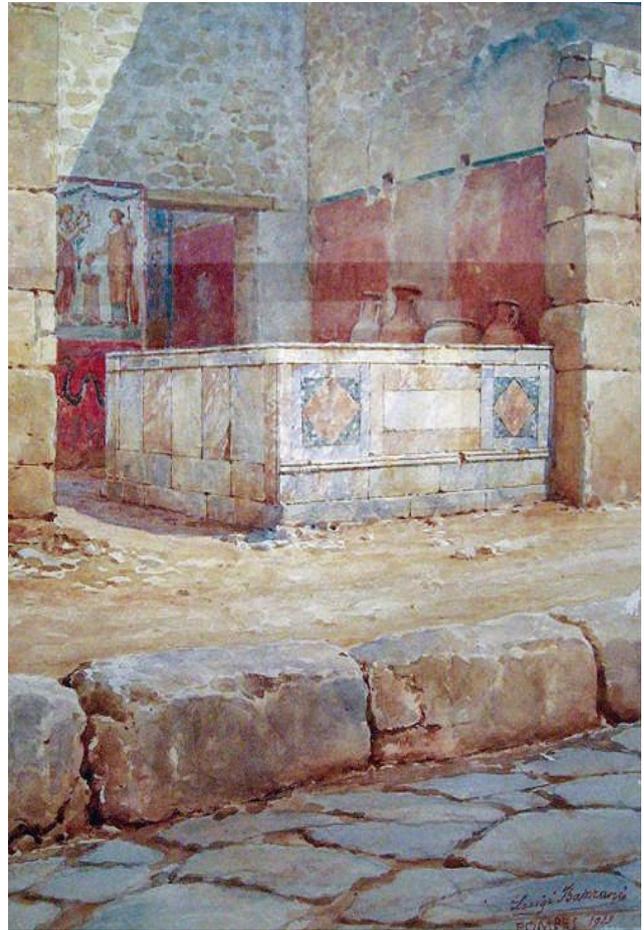**Source E:** *Thermopolium in the Alley of the Pharmacist*, 1913

FIGURE 2.11

Questions

1. Describe what you can see in each of the sources.
2. Explain why these are important images of Pompeii.
3. How useful are these for a historian studying the buildings in the city? Explain your answer.
4. Research Bazzani and his other artwork in Pompeii. Select one of his artworks and research the remains of the building it depicts as they are today. Explain how Bazzani's artwork adds to our understanding of the building.

Representations of Pompeii and Herculaneum over time

It is common to use ideas or aspects from one context in a different one. This is called 'appropriation', and it is found frequently in the study of history. Because of its difference and its connections to a 'grand' age, artists, musicians and authors all appropriated the cities, particularly Pompeii, in their creations. These creations often reflect the creator's time rather than the actual sites.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, there were three main artistic movements: Neoclassicism, Romanticism and Realism. These movements all provided a framework for different representations of Pompeii in particular. Instead of a single vision of the town, artists created a version that suited their own vision and needs.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, it became customary for wealthy young men to embark on a tour of Europe when they came of age, often called the 'grand tour'. This was largely a British custom, but many people from around the world with the means to do this undertook the trip as a mark of their position in society and as a way to complete their education. Many of those who went on a grand tour ventured to southern Italy to view the remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Edward Bulwer Lytton's novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (published in 1834) became one of the most popular historical novels of the 18th century. Bulwer Lytton was a 19th century politician and writer who penned several novels with historical themes that were very popular at the time. This particular title was based on the archaeological work of Sir William Gell, and the house of one of the main protagonists, Glaucus, is clearly described as the House of the Tragic Poet. It was written to appeal to the educated, wealthy Christian audience of England.

Bulwer Lytton's book inspired the opera composed by Giovanni Pacini in 1825, entitled *L'ultimo giorno di Pompei* (*The Last Day of Pompeii*), which mirrored aspects of the book. It involved special effects including shaking the scenery, flash lighting and powder smoke. James Pain put on a similarly dramatic 'pyrodrama' called *Pain's Last Days of Pompeii*, which toured 37 American cities. It included fireworks, drama, music, opera and dance, with the main story again loosely based on Bulwer Lytton's novel. Representations of Pompeii were made throughout the 20th century, with several movies made based on Bulwer Lytton's premise of the city's final days.

In 2003 author Robert Harris wrote a novel about Pompeii's last days from the perspective of a water engineer. In writing it, Harris said:

> You tread such a narrow line between trying to make it authentic and make it accessible, and almost, if it's accessible it's not authentic and if it's authentic it's not accessible. You have to pick your way between these two, and it's very hard … In the end, I think my job is to make it accessible, whilst keeping as much of it that is authentic as I possibly can. I mean, Mary Beard read it; I tried to get it checked, at least for howlers, as it were.[4]

Source Study 2.3 Representations of Pompeii

Source A: Karl Brullov, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, 1833

FIGURE 2.12

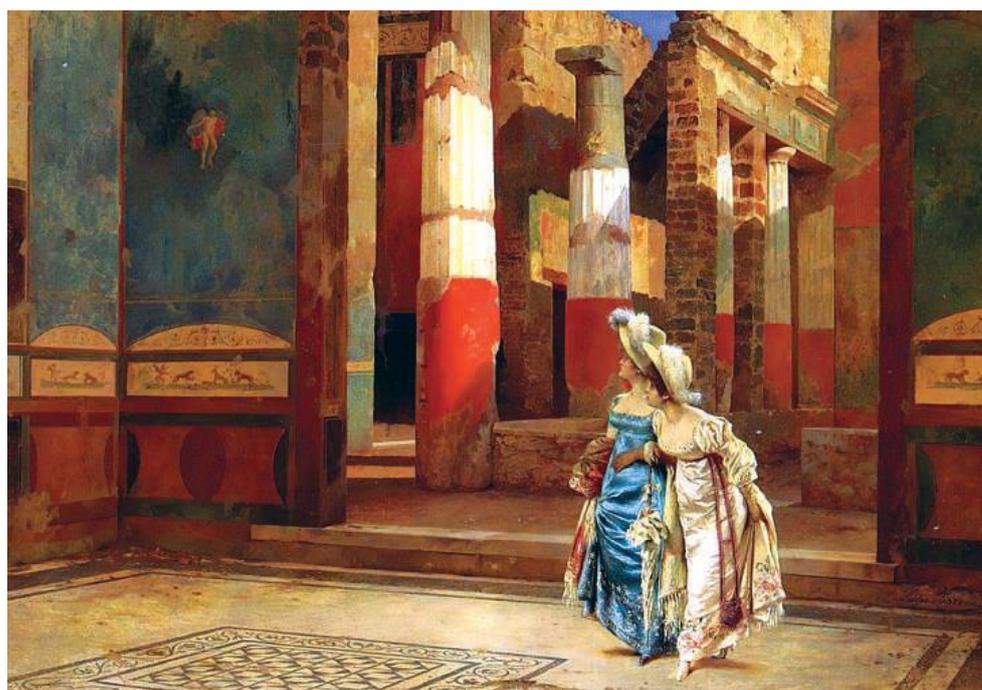**Source B:** Luigi Bazzani, *A Visit to Pompeii*, before 1927

FIGURE 2.13

Source C: Luigi Bazzani, *Feeding fish in the atrium*, late 19th century

FIGURE 2.14

Source D: Robert S. Duncanson, *Vesuvius and Pompeii*, 1870

FIGURE 2.15

Questions

1. Research the three different artistic movements. Copy and complete the table below to record the key characteristics of each.

Movement	Characteristics
Neoclassicism	
Romanticism	
Realism	

2. For each of the sources, identify the movement from which they were created and justify your decision.

Further resources

M Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2008.

P Petrone, 'Head-induced brain vitrification from the Vesuvius eruption in C.E. 79', *The New England Journal of Medicine,* 382, 2020.

S Hales and J Paul, *Pompeii in the Public Imagination from its Rediscovery to Today*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.
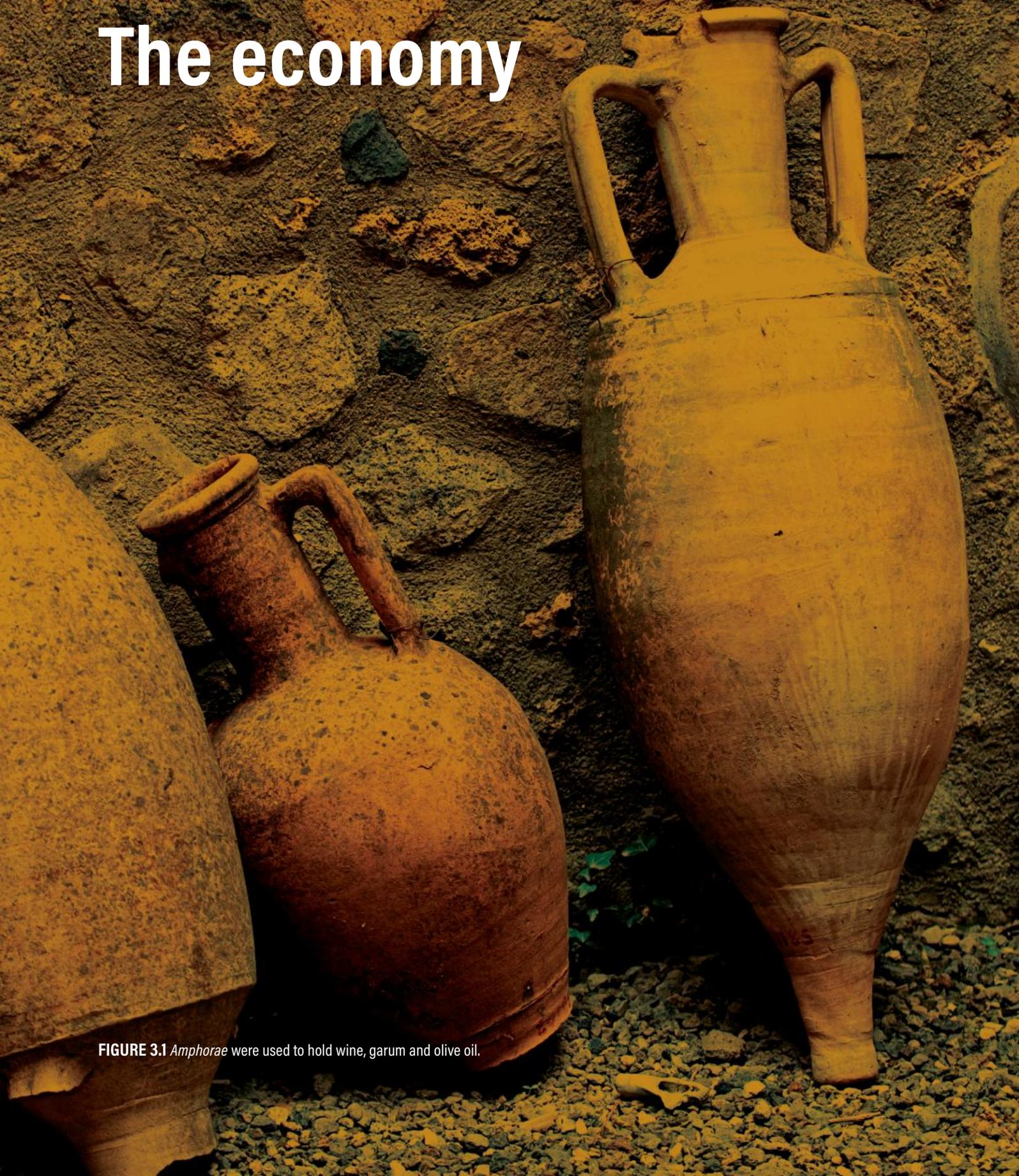
Activities

Bringing it together

1. Read Pliny the Younger's letter (book 6, letter 20) and outline the reaction of the people to the eruption.

2. Many scholars have tried to put a timeline on events, even though it is difficult to identify exactly when things happened. Use their timelines and the information in this chapter to create your own timeline of the eruption. Include references to Pliny's account and the archaeological evidence where possible.

3. The people of Pompeii and Herculaneum celebrated their environment in their buildings with many images of the landscape or its products. Locate three images from Pompeii and three from Herculaneum that show the landscape or its produce. Record the location in the city in which the images were found. Write a sentence about each one, what it displays and why it was important to the city.

4. Examine the images throughout the chapter. Select five images that best demonstrate how archaeological practices have changed over the 19th and 20th centuries, and explain why you have chosen them.

5. Many famous people visited Pompeii and Herculaneum in the 18th and 19th centuries, including Charles Dickens, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Samuel Clemens (known by his pseudonym, Mark Twain). Create a list of people who visited the cities, noting when and why they visited, and record their impressions of the sites.

FIGURE 2.16 John Martin, *The Eruption of Vesuvius*, 1821

HSC-style questions

1. Outline the natural resources found in Campania. (4 marks)

2. Explain the impact of the eruption on the inhabitants of Pompeii and Herculaneum. (5 marks)

3. Outline how archaeological practices developed over the 19th and 20th centuries. (6 marks)

4. To what extent is Figure 2.16 an accurate representation of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79? (10 marks)

Endnotes

1. R Martyn *et al*, 'A re-evaluation of manner of death at Roman Herculaneum following the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius', *Antiquity*, Issue 373, February 2020, p 76–91.

2. P Petrone, 'Head-induced brain vitrification from the Vesuvius eruption in C.E. 79', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 2020, p 382.

3. SL Tuck, 'Harbours of refuge: Post-Vesuvian population shifts in Italian Harbor Communities', in JH Peterson & N Bargfeldt (eds.), *Reflections. Harbour City Deathscapes in Roman Italy and Beyond,* Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Rome, 2019.

4. S Hales and J Paul, *Pompeii in the Public Imagination from its Rediscovery to Today*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p 334.

Chapter

3

The economy

FIGURE 3.1 *Amphorae* were used to hold wine, garum and olive oil.

The economies of Pompeii and Herculaneum revolved around agricultural production. The rich soil and agreeable climate allowed for a wide range of crops to be grown and animals to be reared. Easy access to the Mediterranean Sea facilitated trade, provided salt, seafood for eating and the materials for making garum, a rich fermented sauce of fish guts that was loved throughout the empire. This access to trade also allowed a large number of other industries and occupations to flourish, particularly in Pompeii, which was a far more industrialised city than Herculaneum.

> **This chapter will explain:**
> - the importance of agriculture and fishing to the economies of Pompeii and Herculaneum
> - the industries of the area and the role of small workshops in production
> - the role of the Pompeian forum in commerce
> - the types of commercial activities that took place
> - the occupations of the people.

The ancient economy

Pompeii, the larger of the two cities, was one of several regional hubs. Although it was not as large as other cities in the Campanian region such as Neapolis, Capua or Nuceria, it was the economic centre of the surrounding area and played an important role in regional trade. Its port gave access to the sea and the inland via the River Sarno. Archaeological evidence from Pompeii shows a diverse range of **industries**, including pottery, wine production and cloth manufacture and cleaning. These industries were based in small-scale workshops. Despite only producing a small quantity of goods, it has been found that these goods were traded over long distances. Extensive evidence also exists of **commercial** enterprises including snack bars, taverns, inns and brothels.

Herculaneum was smaller and much of it, including the forum, is unexcavated. As a result, our understanding of its economy is less complete, but it is generally assumed to have less industry and production. What we do know is that fishing was an important activity, a conclusion supported by the boathouses and fishing material discovered. There were also shops and workshops in Herculaneum, such as a metal workshop next to the House of the Black Hall, which contained lead ingots imported from Spain.

industry

the production of goods

commerce

the buying and selling of goods and services

FIGURE 3.2 Lead fishing weights from Herculaneum

FIGURE 3.3 Lead fishing hooks from Herculaneum

Agriculture

The primary units of agricultural production were the ***villae rusticae***. Many of these were owned by the local elite who lived at least part of the time in the region's towns, like Pompeii. The land was probably managed by **freedmen** and worked by slaves or rented out to tenant farmers.

FIGURE 3.4 Bronze needles for repairing fishing nets from Herculaneum

FIGURE 3.5 A working farm discovered in 1977 at Villa Regina, a town 1.5 kilometres outside of Pompeii and Herculaneum that was also buried by the eruption. It has been partially reconstructed and vines have been replanted. The farm had 18 dolia for wine production, a *torcularium* (a room that housed a ***torcular***, or wine press), a kitchen and a floor for threshing grain.

villa rustica

a villa which was either solely or partially devoted to agricultural production

freedman/freedwoman

a person who had once been a slave but had been given their freedom

torcular

wine press

Archaeological evidence, such as casts of root cavities and farm equipment, show that a mix of wine, fruits, vegetables and grains was cultivated. Animal remains reveal cattle, horses and sheep were reared alongside crops. As well as archaeological evidence, ancient texts tell us about what was grown in the region; for example, Pliny the Elder says that the region was famous for its wine and perfume. Cato tells us that the region produced fine timber and that Herculaneum was famed for figs. Columella claims that cabbage was grown throughout Campania, and Pompeii was renowned for a particular type of onion.

Market gardens and vineyards in Pompeii

Pioneering research into the horticulture at these sites, conducted by Wilhelmina Jashemski in the 1960s, revealed that much of the available land in the urban spaces of Pompeii was farmed for commercial purposes. Her work involved studying the subsoil of suspected gardens, such as in the House of the Ship Europa in Regio I, near the amphitheatre. New understandings of land use were developed by her pioneering method of making plaster casts of root cavities and then mapping what was planted. For example, in the garden of the House of the Ship Europa in Pompeii, evidence was found of onions, cabbages, beans and fruit trees, as well as a stable for animals. There also seems to have been widespread use of gardens in houses to grow products for sale, making even the house in town a place for agricultural commerce.

FIGURE 3.6 A plaster cast of root cavities from the *Forum Boarium*, excavated by Jashemski in the 1960s.

Wine production

The regions around Vesuvius are associated in ancient texts with wine production and extensive archaeological evidence exists to support this. The Roman poet, Martial, links Vesuvius with the god of wine, Bacchus.

Wine for the towns was delivered from the countryside in animal skins. Wine production took place outside Pompeii, but evidence of vines can also be found throughout the town. Wilhelmina Jashemski's work in the *Forum Boarium* (cattle market) revealed that large-scale wine production took place near the amphitheatre. The site had earlier been called the *Forum Boarium* because of the animal remains discovered there. Jashemski found an extensive vineyard, a wine press and dolia for fermentation, and a tavern that served food alongside the wine they produced. Girolamo de Simone claims that wine was also an important part of the export economy, and says that, 'One could reasonably suggest that a quarter or even a third of the plains around Vesuvius were devoted to wine production … The Vesuvian region easily produced four times the local demand.'[1]

Pliny the Elder on the wine of Campania

At this place Lucky Campania begins, and in this valley begins the vine-covered hills, whose alcohol-filled juice is celebrated throughout the world …

Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History,* 3.9

FIGURE 3.7 Fresco depicting Bacchus and vineyards on the slopes of Vesuvius from the House of the Centenary, Pompeii

FIGURE 3.8 Vinyard entrance at the *Forum Boarium*

FIGURE 3.9 Replanted vines at the *Forum Boarium*

Olive oil

Olive oil was a necessity of life. It was used in cooking, washing and massaging the skin in gymnasia and baths, in perfume production and as oil for lighting. Evidence of olive oil production can be found throughout the region, in the *villae rusticae* as well as within the towns. But it seems that, unlike wine, oil was produced primarily for local sale. De Simone claims that:

> Olive oil production is attested by a relatively small but constant number of mills in almost all the farms, and by a very small number of charcoal remains. Probably olive oil was widely produced but in rather small quantities in each unit—mainly for consumption in the villa and perhaps partially to supply urban needs within the region.[2]

FIGURE 3.10 Reconstruction of an olive oil press, Pompeii

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how Jashemski's work changed our understanding of the economy of Pompeii.
2. Outline the evidence for wine and oil production in Campania.
3. How were gardens in houses used as sources of agricultural production?
4. What do the sources tell us about the importance of wine for the region of Campania?
5. Why was olive oil such an important item in the ancient world?
6. It was traditionally believed that olive oil production was for widespread trade across the Roman Empire. What does De Simone suggest about the scale of olive oil production in Pompeii? How does this differ from wine production?

Industries

The fragmentary nature of the archaeological evidence in the region has led to a range of theories about what the key industries were and to what extent production exceeded local demand. Recent research has focused on the evidence of manufacture and commerce in most ordinary houses, making it appear that there was little distinction between home and work for people in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
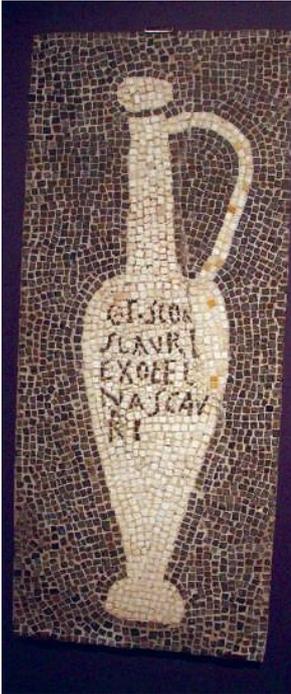
Fishing and garum

Fishing provided food and the materials for making the fermented fish sauce called garum. Analysis of human bones, as well as faecal remains from the Cardo V sewer, in Herculaneum have shown that fish was also consumed by people of all social classes, challenging earlier assumptions that only the wealthy could afford animal proteins. Many of the fishbones came from fish known to have been used in the manufacture of garum.

Ancient texts tell us that garum production, consumption and sale were important to the region. Roman writer, Pliny the Elder, said that almost no other liquid fetched as high a price, and named Pompeii as a town known for its high quality garum. There is no known garum production workshop within the walls of Pompeii, but this is not surprising as the key element in its manufacture was allowing fish remains to decompose, which would have produced strong, unpleasant odours.

Marked vessels for garum from one local producer, Aulus Umbricius Scaurus, have been found throughout Pompeii and its surrounds, and inscriptions refer to 'Scaurus' finest mackerel sauce from Scaurus' workshop'.[3] A house identified as belonging to Scaurus bears a reference to garum on the mosaic floor of the house's atrium. There was also one building found in Pompeii, the Garum Workshop, that seems to have been a distributor of garum.

Bakeries

Bread was the staple food of the Roman town. Some bakeries had their own **millstones**, made of basalt lava, that ground grain. Many of these were produced locally, and Campania was famous for the quality of its millstones. Other establishments used flour that was purchased. The clearly identifiable segmented loaves were sold at a bread shop called a *pistrina*, found in both Pompeii and Herculaneum. Bakeries are fairly easily identifiable, and archaeologist Felix Pirson says:

> [The] combination of bakery and mill is fairly common in the Vesuvian cities. The four millstones are arranged so as to make the best possible use of space. The floor is paved, indicating the use of mules or donkeys to turn the mills, as depicted on a shop sign from Pompeii.[4]

FIGURE 3.11 A mosaic showing an *amphora* of garum

millstones

the stone grinding mechanism used to mill grain into flour

pistrina

a bakery

FIGURE 3.12 Mill for grinding flour and oven from a bakery in Pompeii

FIGURE 3.13 Carbonised loaf of bread

Cloth manufacture and treatment

Textile manufacture and cleaning were important parts of the Pompeian economy although views about the importance of this industry have changed. Some scholars argued that cloth production was important to Pompeii. Walter O. Moeller identified 39 sites for wool processing in his 1976 study of the wool trade in Pompeii.[5] He thought that the large number of businesses involved in treating and manufacturing cloth suggests that Pompeii was a specialist producer of cloth. Others have questioned this view, arguing that it drastically overstates the importance of textiles. It is difficult to know for sure, but there is evidence of a significant textile industry at Pompeii that suggests it was more than for local production. We have evidence for four types of *fullonicae* (fulleries) in Pompeii: for refinement of wool into thread, weaving thread into cloth, dyeing cloth and washing garments.

> **fullonica (pl. fullonicae)**
> a workshop that specialised in one of the four types of wool working, washing or dying

Source Study 3.1 Cloth manufacturing

Source A: Extract from 'The loss of innocence: Pompeian economy and society between past and present' by W Jongman

> Archaeologically, the workshops identified as serving the cleaning of raw wool may well have served food instead. There is not a shred of evidence to suggest that they had anything to do with wool. That reduces the number of textile workshops significantly, and it destroys the case for the fullers as the big organizers of the industry. What we have left are a few proper fulleries indeed, but they may have served as laundries, rather than for fulling new cloth.
>
> W Jongman, 'The Loss of Innocence: Pompeian economy and society between past and present', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss, *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, p 506.

Source B The Fullery of Stephanus

FIGURE 3.14 The Fullery of Stephanus, showing a vat for cleaning cloth

Source C: Fresco from the *fullonica* of Veranius Hypsaeus, Pompeii

Source D: Fresco from the *fullonica* of Veranius Hypsaeus, Pompeii

FIGURE 3.15 Fresco depicting a customer inspecting cloth, a worker brushing wool on a line and, on the right, a rack for bleaching cloth with sulphur

FIGURE 3.16 Fresco showing a worker hanging cloth for drying

Questions

1. What is Jongman's main point in Source A?
2. Describe the image in Source B. What do you think was its purpose in the fullery?
3. What activities can you see happening in Sources C and D?
4. What do the sources tell us about fulleries in Pompeii?

FIGURE 3.17 Pottery lamp manufactured at the Via di Nocera facility, Pompeii

Pottery

Pottery was an important industry and pottery from Campania, known as 'red ware', has been found throughout the Mediterranean region. Two pottery workshops have been identified inside the town's walls and a third pottery workshop was discovered outside the Herculaneum gate. Peña and McCallum say that:

> Frescoes suggest that potters at Pompeii used rod-driven, single-wheel potter's wheels. The Via di Nocera facility, which manufactured lamps and commonware, is perhaps the most complete pottery production facility from the Roman world, and it is possible to reconstruct the operations carried out in its various spaces in considerable detail. The Via Superior facility, which manufactured cookwares, was only partially excavated, so it is more difficult to infer its operations. Together, these two facilities may have supplied Roman-period Pompeii with much or all of its locally manufactured cookwares, commonwares, and lamps.[6]

Other industries: tanners, metal workers, painters, carpenters

As well as the workshops identified above, other types of workshops and evidence of industries have been found throughout Pompeii and Herculaneum. These include carpentry, metal working, leather making and goldsmithing. Often, these types of workshop are determined by the artefacts found, such as tools, raw materials or finished products.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the main industries in Pompeii?
2. What kinds of evidence are useful for understanding the nature of the economy in these towns?
3. What is our evidence for the manufacture of garum in Pompeii?
4. Describe the evidence for bakeries in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
5. Why do you think debate exists about the scale and importance of industries such as fulleries and vineyards?
6. How important do you think the pottery industry was for Pompeii? Explain your answer.

Economic role of the forum

Economic activity was one of the key functions of the forum and many of the buildings and areas would have had an economic purpose, at least some of the time. As an example, the building of Eumachia and the ***basilica*** may have had some religious and political uses although commerce was their primary purpose.

basilica

a large, open-air colonnaded building, usually used for legal or civic matters, such as court cases or elections

FIGURE 3.18 Model showing the forum, from the Naples National Archaeological Museum

Macellum

The *macellum*, located in the north-eastern corner of the forum, was probably a permanent food market, although it had many of the architectural features of a temple, including niches for statues. Historian Alastair Small suggests that these features show the building's function was primarily religious, with a butchers' market located in the courtyard.[7] The presence of fish scales and bones in the drain of the central columned area, as well as the layout with an open entryway and small rooms (thought to be stalls surrounding a central courtyard), support the idea that it was a marketplace.

FIGURE 3.19 The *macellum* as it exists today

FIGURE 3.20 The *mensa ponderaria* in the *holitorium*, Pompeii

Holitorium (granary)

The purpose of the *holitorium* is also uncertain. This building on the eastern side of the forum, with eight openings separated by brick columns, has been labelled a granary, although John Dobbins from the Pompeii Forum Project has argued that the open layout would not have facilitated the storage of grain. One of the most recognisable artefacts from the forum, the *mensa ponderaria* or measuring table, is located near the *holitorium* and supports the idea that this building had a commercial purpose. It is generally considered a fruit and vegetable market.

Building of Eumachia (Portico of Concordia Augusta)

The Portico of Concordia Augusta was an impressive structure. It had a dedicatory inscription, revealing that it was paid for by Eumachia, the daughter of the successful Pompeian businessman Lucius Eumachius, to promote the political career of her son Marcus Numistrius Fronto.

Its function has been the subject of speculation. A dedicatory inscription from the guild of fullers has led some researchers to claim it was a *fullonica*. Art historian and archaeologist in the 19th century, August Mau, proposed that it was a wool and textile market, but this is not the generally accepted view now. It was probably a multi-purpose building with both non-commercial (religious and social) and commercial uses, in which wool, cloth and perhaps luxury goods were traded. Archaeologist Elizabeth Fentress has said that the architectural layout, with a single entryway, suggests it was a slave market:

The effort to separate buyer from merchandise, while providing close visual (even tactile) communication, can only suggest that the merchandise was human: wool and sheep do not need cordoning off from buyers, while luxury goods would hardly suit the shadowy undifferentiated space … Finally, the presence of the fountain at the entrance of the building might reflect a need to rinse slaves and give them water before their arrival in the building.[8]

Market days

Graffiti about market days found on a shop wall in Regio III shows that regular markets were held in Pompeii, as well as other towns in Campania. A series of frescoes found in the house of Julia Felix show scenes of commerce in the forum, including people buying and selling cloth, pots and pans, as well as ironmongers and shoe-makers. Markets were also held in the arched openings around the amphitheatre on the other side of Pompeii, demonstrated by an inscription revealing that the aediles gave permission for the stall holder Gnaeus Aninius Fortunatus to occupy a spot by the amphitheatre.[9] Advertisements for markets have been found, recording when the markets of the region would be held. For example, one such advertisement found in Pompeii says, 'In the consulship of Nero Caesar Augustus and Cossus Lentulus, son of Cossus, 8 days before the Ides of February [6 February], Sunday, 16 (day of the new) moon, market at Cumae, 5 (days before the Ides of February), market at Pompeii.'[10]

REVIEW QUESTION

1. Create a table that records the different buildings and spaces in the forum that were used for commerce. Record the purpose of each space and the evidence we have for its use. Indicate any problems of interpretation for the space.

Consumer or producer cities?

Trade in Pompeii was facilitated by its geographical location near both the sea and the River Sarno. Literary evidence from the Greek geographer and historian, Strabo, tells us that the port of Pompeii served some of the larger regional towns of Campania. Academic debate continues around how many of the items produced in Pompeii and Herculaneum were consumed locally, and the extent of trade in which these cities were involved.

A range of sources support the notion that goods produced in Campania were widely traded. For example, the red pottery produced in the region known as 'Pompeian red ware' has been found throughout the western Roman Empire. Other evidence of widespread trade can be found outside of Italy in the form of marked amphorae for wine, olive oil and garum. A range of goods were also imported into these cities, as shown by the archaeological remains.

TABLE 3.1 Examples of known imports and exports of Pompeii and Herculaneum

Evidence of imports	Evidence of exports
• Pepper grains from India found in the sewer in Herculaneum • Pottery from northern Italy and Gaul found in a house in Pompeii • Religious icons from Egypt • Elephant ivory statuette from India	• Red ware pottery found in Western Europe • Garum containers from Pompeii found in Gaul • *Amphorae* for wine from Pompeii found in Ostia near Rome

Some historians, such as Jongman, have characterised Pompeii as a 'consumer city', arguing that most people of the region lived at near-subsistence levels, producing goods for the region. According to this model at least two-thirds of people were directly involved in agricultural production, while wealth from this production was concentrated in the hands of urban elites. Jongman also believed that the luxurious nature of the goods indicates that they were made for a local market of urban elites.

Other scholars have suggested that Pompeii was a 'producer city', which exported goods produced locally on a large scale, particularly textiles and wine, and functioned as part of the wider Roman economy. Moeller argued that the textile industry was central to the economic life of Pompeii and that production of woollen cloth was produced in such a quantity that it would have been an export item. Ray Laurence, in his study of Roman Pompeii, also notes that:

> The Roman city was neither a consumer nor a producer city. However, goods were produced and consumed. Between the producer and consumer there was a network of traders that leaves no record of itself but is implicit for the production of the pattern … available to the archaeologist, which have at best given us an indication of the complex patterns of trade and exchange to and from Pompeii. The economic complexity of this trade and exchange should not be underestimated.[11]

FIGURE 3.21 Building of Eumachia (the Portico of Concordia Augusta). What does the entrance suggest to you about the building?

Commerce

The streets of both Pompeii and Herculaneum were lined with shops, inns, taverns and small workshops. These commercial buildings were built into the walls of private residences throughout the towns. There is no clear separation between commercial and domestic spaces, revealing an intensive use of urban real estate. Overall, the picture revealed by the archaeological evidence is of towns in which business and other aspects of religious and domestic life were intertwined.

FIGURE 3.22 The Grand Taberna, one of the most significant shops discovered in Herculaneum. There were eight *dolia* set into the marble benches, containing cereals and vegetables, and there was also a cooking stove. Connected to a house on a busy street, the rich furnishings and decorations suggest that this was a successful business.

FIGURE 3.23 Thermopolium of Asellina, Pompeii

Tabernae, *cauponae* and *thermopolia*

Shops were located throughout the towns. They are recognisable by the wide openings to the street, distinct from a private dwelling's narrow entryways. ***Tabernae*** would have had wooden shutters to be closed at night and painted signs on the walls advertising the goods and services for sale. These shops sold a range of different products from bread to perfumes. Other shops included ***cauponae***, which sold alcohol and some food, and ***thermopolia***, which specialised in the sale of food for immediate consumption; although *thermopolium* is a commonly used term today for this type of shop, it seems that it was rarely used in the time period studied.

Commercial transactions

Wax writing tablets preserved by the eruption have provided important insights into banking in the Roman world. The tablet archives (mostly from the decades before the AD 62 earthquake) are from the house of the banker Caecilius Jucundus in Pompeii; the Murecine Tablets were found in a villa outside Pompeii (Inn of the Sulpicii) and a collection of tablets found in eight houses of Herculaneum are named the *Tabulae Herculanenses*. These tablets reveal a complex web of transactions between government, money lenders, auctioneers and middlemen who provided the financial backing for trade in everything from slaves to land.

***taberna* (pl. *tabernae*)**

a shop that could sell anything from pottery to food; often, it was a term used to describe all shops

***caupona* (pl. *cauponae*)**

a shop that would specialise in the sale of alcohol, with some food for sale

***thermopolium* (pl. *thermopolia*)**

a shop that specialised in the sale of food for immediate consumption

FIGURE 3.24 Silver coins and a golden coin of the emperor Nero, held in the Herculaneum Museum

Coins of different values have been found all over the site; many are associated with human remains, suggesting that most people carried small amounts of money with them. Finds of larger amounts imply that some people grabbed as much wealth as they could when disaster struck. Other finds in houses and *tabernae* give insights into the way money was used day-to-day. It is important to note that the commercial transactions could happen in more than just coinage. Verboven says:

> Money in Campania was primarily coinage, but to describe the system as a cash economy is widely off the mark. Coins were merely an instrument within a payment and valuation system that depended on credit and accounting instruments.[12]

Brothels

Frescoes and statues depicting intimate details of sexual activity are some of the most famous sources from Pompeii and Herculaneum. Although assessing the sexual morality and attitudes of the population is problematic from this evidence, some things are known. Prostitution was tolerated and regulated by the town. Sex workers could have been slaves or freeborn, some worked in purpose-built brothels and others would have operated out of inns or on the streets. While the prostitutes were denounced as being low-class, the people who frequented brothels were not always considered as such, with men of all levels of society frequenting them.

Occupations

programmata

political graffiti encouraging people to vote for a certain person

Graffiti, particularly ***programmata***, as well as the archaeological evidence from workshops including frescoes, attest to the wide range of occupations of the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Apart from the workers in the industries noted previously, these occupations included carpenters, iron workers, goldsmiths, tanners, potters, dyers and mule-drivers. A possible surgeon has even been identified based on the surgical equipment found in his house.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to say that '… business and other aspects of religious and domestic life were intertwined'?
2. In what way did *tabernae*, *cauponae* and *thermopolia* play an important commercial role in the cities?
3. What surprises you about the nature of commercial transactions in Pompeii and Herculaneum? Why did you find it surprising?
4. Using the information above and your own research, copy and complete the table below of industries and occupations in Pompeii and Herculaneum. You might find that you cannot associate an industry with an occupation or vice versa – leave spaces blank if this is the case. The first example has been done for you.

TABLE 3.2

Industry	Occupations	Evidence
Cloth and textile	Fuller	Fullery of Stephanus: large tubs for soaking wool.

Further resources

W Jongman, 'The Loss Of Innocence: Pompeian economy and society between past and present' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss, *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp 541–559.

R Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society. In Roman Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2010.

M Flohr and A Wilson (eds), *The Economy of Pompeii*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. What was the basis of the economies of Pompeii and Herculaneum?
2. What agricultural activities took place in Campania?
3. List the range of industries in Pompeii and Herculaneum, recording one piece of evidence for each.
4. Explain the role of the forum in the economy of Pompeii.
5. What do you find to be modern about the economies of Pompeii and Herculaneum?

Activities

1. The Fullery of Stephanus is a famous business in Pompeii; research what the evidence, including the layout of the building, reveals about the fullery industry.
2. Research the process of making wine or olive oil in Roman society and create a flowchart of how it was done.
3. Research one of the following industries in detail. Copy the following table and record your information.
   a. fullery
   b. olive oil
   c. wine

Evidence of the industry in Pompeii and Herculaneum	Location of the evidence	Explanation of how the evidence supports our understanding of industry and commerce

4. Consider the evidence and information in this chapter about industry and commerce in Pompeii. Write a list of points for the city being a consumer city and a list for the city being a producer city. What does your list suggest to you about the status of Pompeii as a producer or consumer?

HSC-style questions

1. Outline what the evidence reveals about occupations in Pompeii and/or Herculaneum. (4 marks)
2. How useful is graffiti in understanding the economy? (6 marks)
3. What does the evidence reveal about trade in Pompeii? (8 marks)
4. Assess the value and limitations of private buildings as evidence for understanding the economy in Pompeii and Herculaneum. (12 marks)

Endnotes
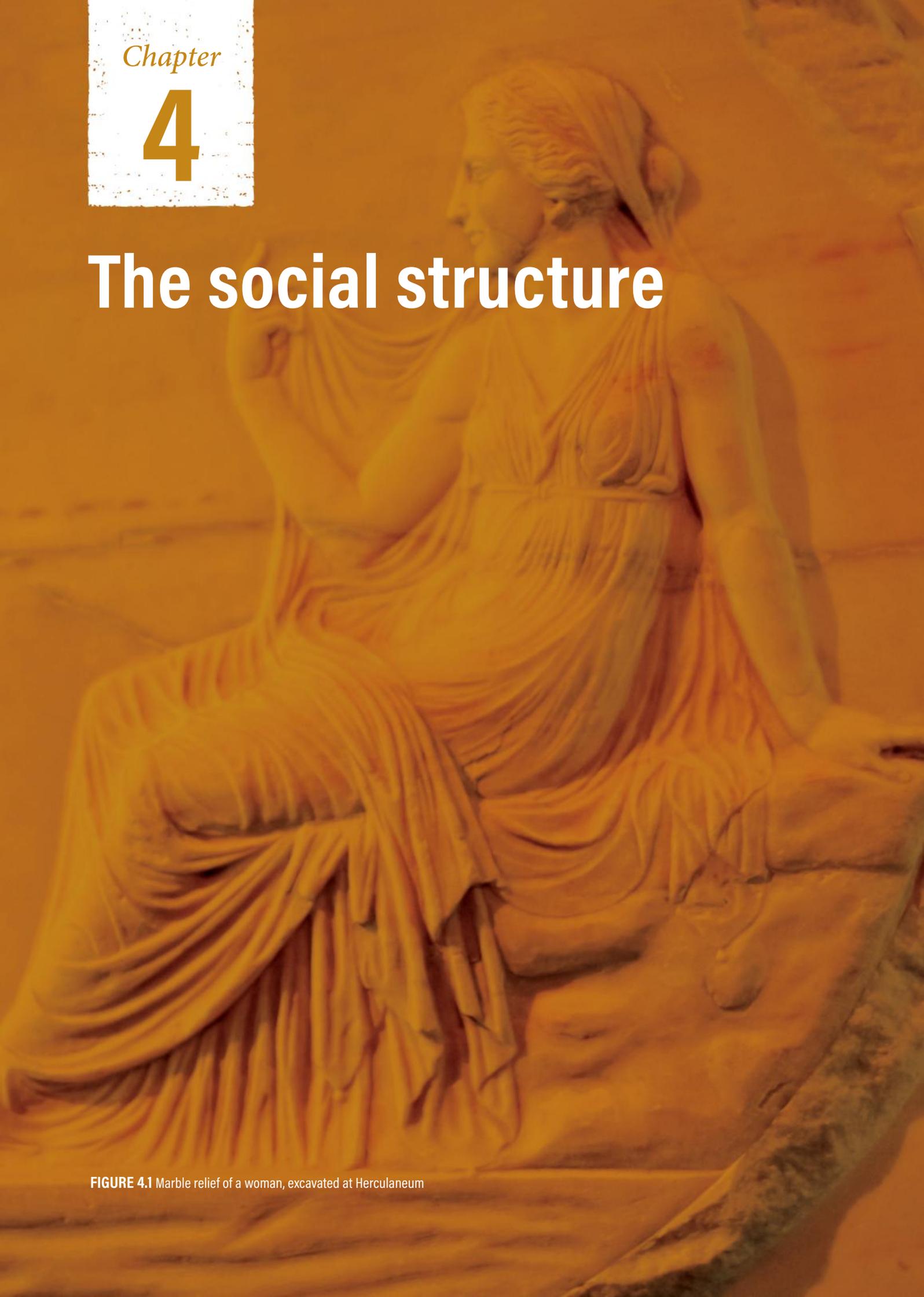
1 G De Simone, 'The Agricultural Economy of Pompeii', in M Flohr, and A Wilson (eds), *The Economy of Pompeii*, OUP, Oxford, 2017.

2 G De Simone, 'The Agricultural Economy of Pompeii', in M Flohr and A Wilson (eds), *The Economy of Pompeii*, OUP, Oxford, 2017.

3 *CIL* IV 5694.

4 F Pirson, 'Shops and industries', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss, *The World of Pompeii,* Routledge, London, 2009, p 462.

5 Walter O Moeller, *The Wool Trade of Ancient Pompeii*, Brill, Leiden, 1976.

6 J Peña and M McCallum, 'The Production and Distribution of Pottery at Pompeii: A Review of the Evidence; Part 1, Production', *American Journal of Archaeology,* 2009, p 113.

7 A Small, 'Urban, Suburban and Rural Religion in the Roman Period', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss, *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2008, pp 184-211.

8 E Fentress, 'On the block: Catastae, chalcidica and cryptae in Early Imperial Italy', *Journal of Roman Archaeology,* 18, 2005, p 228.

9 *CIL* IV 1096.

10 *CIL* IV 4182.

11 R Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, Taylor and Francis, London, 2010.

12 K Verboven, 'Currency and Credit in the Bay of Naples in the First Century AD' in M Flohr and A Wilson (eds), *The Economy of Pompeii*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, pp 382–383.

The social structure

FIGURE 4.1 Marble relief of a woman, excavated at Herculaneum

Roman society in general was patriarchal (male-dominated) and highly stratified (it had clear social divisions). Gender and class determined who could hold political office, who could vote and how the law was applied. In effect, social class governed a person's day-to-day life. However, at the time of the eruption in Pompeii and Herculaneum, there was a certain amount of social mobility and those who started life as a slave could hope to see freedom, and even have children who were full citizens of Rome.

This chapter will explain:

- the hierarchical social structure of Roman society
- the patriarchal nature of Roman society
- the different social groups
- examples of social mobility and complexity within the social structure
- the value and limitations of different types of evidence for understanding social structure.

Social structure

There is a wide variety of evidence that can tell us about social structure in Pompeii and Herculaneum. A government notice on a **water tower** in Herculaneum gives us insight into the stark differences between how different classes were treated by the law. It says:

water tower

a large tower which served as a water distribution and regulation point around the city

> Marcus Alficius Paulus, aedile [declares]: any who would throw excrement in this location is warned that it is not allowed. If someone provides information contrary to this warning, freeborn will pay a fine of […] denarii, and slaves will be punished with […] lashes.[1]

An archive of wooden tables from the banker Lucius Caecilius Iucundus, the son of a freed slave, also tells about the importance of social class. In the 153 wooden tablets on which receipts were recorded, witnesses are listed in order of importance, giving an insight into the need for the people to put their understanding of social class on display. Despite the structured nature of society, the overarching story revealed by the evidence paints a more complex picture of social mobility and social relations. There is evidence of women as priests and property owners with status, influence and wealth. Successful freed slaves, with the symbols of success and achievement, were promoting the position of their freeborn children. However, the fragmentary nature of the sources means we need to be careful when assessing what evidence reveals about social structure.

FIGURE 4.2 Wax tablet from Herculaneum

Patriarchy, the *paterfamilias* and patron-client relationship

paterfamilias

the oldest living male in a family who had authority over his household

The Roman household was built around the authority of the **paterfamilias**, the male head of the household who had varying degrees of legal control over the people who depended on him, including his family, freedmen and slaves. In theory the *paterfamilias* held the power of life and death over his dependents, though this legal authority was rarely actually exercised.

Roman society was also a **patriarchal** society – elite male members of society had a degree of power over others, which they exerted both legally and through influence. This influence was called patronage, and underpinned social interactions. Elite men (patrons) would have clients (less powerful men) to whom they would provide assistance in return for support, particularly in elections. Elite women could also develop relationships as patrons with clients although they could not hold any political office. Men who became **magistrates** were required to provide for the inhabitants of the town through building programs and by providing entertainment, acting as patrons for the town. Elite women in these towns, such as Eumachia and Mamia, also built important buildings with their own wealth.

patriarchy

a society that is structured to give men dominance

magistrate

an officially elected or appointed government position

TABLE 4.1 The relationship between patrons and clients

Patrons	Clients
· Supported clients in legal matters · Promoted the career and status of clients · May have promoted clients for election · Supported the business interests of clients	· Worked for the patron in elections, commissioned *programmata* · Looked after the patrons' interests generally · Voted for the patron in elections

Social classes

As Roman cities, the populations of Pompeii and Herculaneum could be divided into four major groups:

- elite freeborn members of the society (i.e. elite from Rome and local elites) who owned significant wealth, either from commerce or land
- non-elite freeborn (*plebs media* and *plebs humilis*)
- freedmen and freedwomen (*libertus* and *liberta*)
- slaves (*servi*).
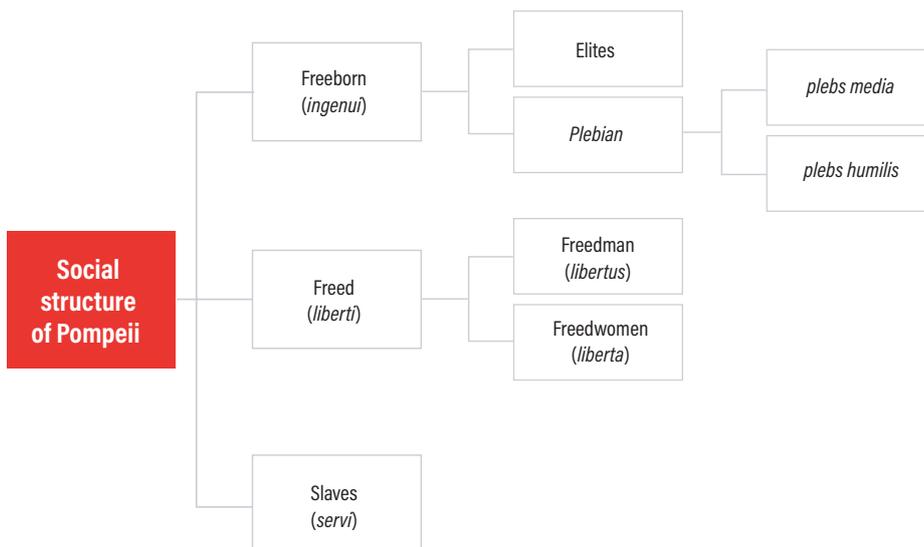
FIGURE 4.3 Social structure of Pompeii

Freeborn (*ingenui*)

After the towns in Campania became Roman around 80 BC, **ingenui** in Pompeii and Herculaneum were people who had been born Roman citizens. Roman citizenship was guarded carefully and it extended a range of rights not enjoyed by non-citizens, including the right to vote and hold political office, although the right to hold office was also limited by factors including wealth and profession (see Chapter 5).

Senatorial and local elite

Literary evidence from the period, such as the letters of the Roman senator Cicero, tell us that many Roman senators ('men of the Senate in Rome') owned villas and land in Campania. These men and their families were from the highest level of society. They would have visited the region occasionally to get away from the crowded and filthy Roman metropolis.

FIGURE 4.4 The Villa of Poppaea, approximately 25 kilometres north-west from Pompeii, on the other side of the Bay of Naples. The family of Poppaea Sabina, second wife of the infamous emperor Nero, were from Pompeii. The Villa Poppaea at Oplontis is thought to have been their home when they were not in Rome.

epigraphic

information that comes from inscriptions

ordo decurionem

the town council

The establishment of Pompeii as a Roman colony was accompanied by an influx of Roman veterans who became a key part of the local elite and political world. **Epigraphic** evidence (official inscriptions and *programmata*) suggests some older Pompeiian families retained their status, and new families joined the elite, including the freeborn children of freed slaves.

The elite were wealthy landholders, business owners and traders. They were able to stand for elections as magistrates and secure a place on the ***ordo decurionem***. Some family names feature repeatedly in the funerary monuments, official inscriptions and *programmata*.

Despite the exclusivity of the elite, Jongman suggests upward social mobility was a byproduct of high rates of infant mortality and low life expectancy among all classes.[2] This insecure 'intergenerational succession' opened up places for people outside the elite to join their ranks. Jongman argues that 'the continued existence of a town council could only be maintained by an influx of social climbers.' This conclusion can be contrasted with Estelle Lazer's conclusions about health and life expectancy, that people in Pompeii and Herculaneum lived far longer lives than previously thought (see pages 93–94).

Non-elite freeborn

Not all freeborn people were part of the elite, and other classes of freeborn existed that farmed and operated businesses such as workshops, inns and hotels. The *ingenui* who fell outside of the elite can be divided into two groups.

Plebs media were relatively wealthy but outside the elite. These were people who lived a comfortable life in a moderately sized home but lacked the money to live in the greater luxury that would be expected of the elite class. *Plebs humilis* were the lowest class of freeborn. They would live in smaller houses, possibly in rooms connected to the business they might run. Changes in opportunities would hit these people hard as they were often earning only enough money to survive on a day-to-day basis.

Freed slaves (*liberti*)

Roman society allowed slaves to be freed (**manumitted**) by their owner, or buy their own freedom, sometimes from an allowance given to them by their masters. These ex-slaves were called *liberti* and maintained a legal and social bond with their ex-masters.

They may have remained in the house or operated a business on behalf of their patron. Judging by some of the houses, such as the House of the Vettii, some *liberti* became very wealthy. Freed slaves were not granted all the rights of citizenship: they could not vote, stand for office or hold state priesthoods. Despite these limitations, children born to them after their manumission were legally freeborn.

Freedmen and women feature heavily in the available evidence in Pompeii and Herculaneum, particularly in funerary monuments. More of the tombs built in the period just prior to the eruption commemorated *liberti* than freeborn. Henrik Mouritsen suggested that this is because elite Romans were moving away from using large funerary monuments, while the large tombs of *liberti* revealed a desire to advertise their success and free status.[3]

What we learn from Pompeii and Herculaneum is that freed slaves could achieve significant wealth and some status in society. The inscription from the Temple of Isis shows that the son of a freed slave was granted a position on the *ordo* by virtue of his parents' payment for the rebuilding of the Temple of Isis.

Liberti were obviously concerned with advancing their own and their family's social status. This could be done through wealth and patronage. Another was through membership of the *Augustales*, a cult associated with Rome through worship of the first Roman emperor, Augustus, and his family.

Slaves

Some estimates put the number of slaves in Pompeii and Herculaneum at around 40 per cent of the total population, although this is impossible to verify. Slaves were fundamental to the economy, and were used as workers on farms, in workshops and in households.

Despite the number of slaves, understanding their lives presents a challenge because the evidence that survives does not give clear insights into slaves' experiences. Literary texts concerning slavery from the Roman world are almost exclusively written by elite men, and archaeological evidence depicting slaves, such as paintings and statues, lack enough context to reveal the reality of their lives.

plebs media
the ordinary people of the cities who could afford a relatively comfortable life and a reasonably nice house with multiple rooms

plebs humilis
the lowest group of citizens, who could afford little in life and would have lived life on a day-to-day basis

manumit
to free a slave

liberti
the Latin term for those people who had been slaves; masculine: *libertus*, feminine: *liberta*

Augustales
priests appointed to maintain the worship of the Emperor Augustus and his family, the Julii

FIGURE 4.5 The College of the Augustales, Herculaneum

It is easier to understand the work slaves did than it is their life experiences. What we do know is that slaves were considered property and had no rights. Also, a slave's experiences differed depending on their role. There was a hierarchy of slaves, even within a single household: slaves who did manual labour were considered lesser than educated or skilled slaves. A favoured domestic slave, helping purchase and cook food or managing their master's accounts, would have an easier job than a slave working on a farm or in a *fullonica*.

Something else the evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum does not reveal is the disposition of the owner, which would have affected every aspect of a slave's life from what they ate and wore, to how harshly they were treated.

Source Study 4.1 The social order

Source A: An extract from Cicero

I meet many people every day, for a large number of men of the best rank come to this location for their health, and I also have frequent visits from men of the municipal towns.

Cicero, Letter to P. Cornelius Dolabella, Pompeii, 3 May

Source B

Numerius Polidius Celsinus, son of Numerius, restored the Temple of Isis from its foundations, which had collapsed through earthquake, at his own expense. For his generosity, the *decuriones* elected him to their order even though he was only six years old.

CIL X 846

Source C

Although Maximus is the second-best-attested individual at Herculaneum, his origins and legal status are shrouded in controversy. He is identified as an *Augustalis* on an inscription labeling his portrait erected in the Theatre of Herculaneum … His wealth was significant, for, in addition to the sculptural cycle, he also financed a *macellum*, or meat market, and another unknown public work … L. Mammius Maximus' position in the town was that of a legal outsider, and his membership in the Augustales provided an important social outlet.

M Laird, 'Evidence in context: The public and funerary monuments of the *seviri augustales* at *Ostia*' (unpublished PhD thesis), Princeton University, 2002, pp 125–26.

Source D

… the Augustales, an order of economically successful freedmen first established under the emperor Augustus and devoted to imperial cult … two, C. Calventius Quietus and M. Cerrinius Restitutus, rose to sufficient prominence to have been granted the right of a bisellium, the doublewide seat that was otherwise a sign of membership in the local senate, as noted with pride on their tombs.

J Franklin, 'Epigraphy and Society', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2008, p 520.

Source E

Curtailment of freedom and even violent punishment could be inflicted on a whim, and the leg irons found in a cupboard in the House of the Venus in Bikini (I.11.6) at Pompeii attest to the dark side of the master/slave relationship in the house. Sexual coercion, moreover, of both male and female slaves at an owner's hands was common; graffiti which advertise vernae [house-born slaves] for sexual purposes stand in sharp contrast to the loving commemorations they receive in funerary inscriptions, and show that their position in the household was not always privileged.

M George, 'The Lives of Slaves', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2008, p 539.

Source F: Plaster cast remains of a shackled human
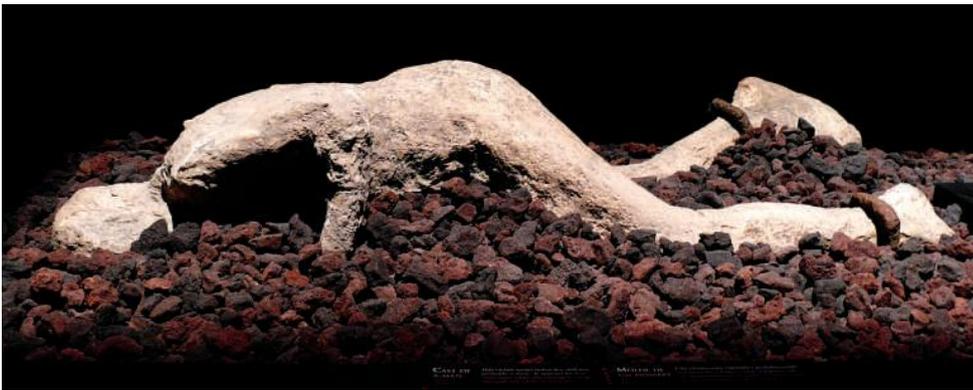
FIGURE 4.6

Source G: Gold bracelet

FIGURE 4.7 The inscription on the bracelet reads, 'From a master to his slave girl'. The bracelet was found on the arm of a woman from Moregine, near Pompeii.

Source H: Discussion of the 'From a master to his slave girl' bracelet

Given the breadth of our knowledge on Roman slavery and its many horrors, the question must be asked why such an object and inscription immediately conjures 'emotional bonds', not revulsion, or 'inklings of affection', not a realization of the comparability to modern situations of sexual abuse and exploitation, such as the trafficking of women and forced sexual labor.

JA Baird, 'On Reading the Material Culture of Ancient Sexual Labor', *Helios* 42, 2015, p 166.

Questions

1. Describe the features of the elite class of Pompeii and Herculaneum.
2. Source A is written by Cicero, a famous Roman senator who spent time in his house in Campania. What does this say about the importance of Roman senators in Campania?
3. What did the six-year-old boy in Source B do to earn an honorary position on the *ordo decurionem* in Pompeii? What does this tell us about social mobility?
4. What does Source C tell us about L. Mammius Maximus' position in society in Herculaneum?
5. Who were the *Augustales*, mentioned in Source D? How do we know it was an honour to be an *Augustalis*?
6. What does Source E support in Sources F and G? Does this problematise the bracelet in Source G? Explain your answer.
7. What modern problem does the author of Source H associate with the bracelet in Source G? Do you think this is a fair comparison? Why or why not?
8. Using the information and sources, copy and complete the table below to show the different social classes.

Social class	Features of the class	Evidence and what it tells us

Women

The archaeological and epigraphic evidence about women's lives preserved by the eruption of AD 79 provides a more complex picture of women's roles than literary sources from the period written by men. Even so, the remains reveal more about upper-class women and successful freedwomen than they do about lower class and servile women. What becomes apparent is that women in Pompeii and Herculaneum did not only hold the traditional roles associated with women in patriarchal societies. As mothers, housekeepers and wives, they were also actively involved in the political, economic and social life of these cities.

The position of a woman in these cities was determined by the status of her parents at the time of her birth and by the position of her husband. Marriage and wealth provided some women with opportunities for upward social mobility. **Loom** weights found in many of the homes of Pompeii support the idea that weaving was seen as a woman's duty. The Roman writer, Suetonius, said that Livia, the influential wife of the first emperor Augustus, wove garments for him.

Women were active participants in the economy, and they may have had money through either inheritance or work. They had an economic role in the family and were often required to make purchasing decisions and manage the household budget. They could own and inherit property and run businesses. For example, Julia Felix owned a large estate which leased out property and had several businesses there, including *tabernae* and a private bath, and an inscription tells us, 'Pompeii, to let, in the estate of Julia Felix, daughter of Spurius: elegant baths for respectable people, shops with upper rooms, and apartments. From 13 August next to 13 August of the sixth year, for five continuous years. The lease will expire at the end of the five years.'[4]

loom

the machine used to weave cloth into clothing

FIGURE 4.8 A woman painting in her home. Do you think the women in this fresco are wealthy or poor?

Women also attempted to influence elections and developed patron-client relationships, despite being excluded from voting or holding office. One way a woman could do this was by spending her money on building and repairing public buildings for the people of the town. Another way to achieve status and influence was through religion as a priestess; women were active participants in religious activities both inside and outside the home.

Eumachia and Mamia

Two prominent women in Pompeii revealed their status through official inscriptions on dedicatory buildings, and we can determine the influence that these women sought for themselves and their families. Both were public priestesses.

Eumachia, the daughter of successful businessman Lucius Eumachius, paid for one of the finest buildings in Pompeii in her name and that of her son, to promote herself and the political career of her son. Mamia erected the sanctuary to the Genius of Augustus (the first emperor of Rome), sometimes called the Temple to the Public Lares. Although there is some dispute about the exact nature of the building's dedication because the inscription is incomplete, it is clear that Mamia supported the rebuilding of the forum with her own money. Mamia is also honoured with a seated tomb, or *schola*, paid for by the town.

Source Study 4.2 Women

Source A: Copy of a statue of Eumachia dedicated by the fullers, Forum Pompeii

FIGURE 4.9 Eumachia is dressed as a priestess, showing her status.

Source B: Inscription found outside the Eumachia Building, Pompeii

Eumachia, daughter of Lucius, public priestess, in her name and the name of her son Marcus Numistrius Fronto, built the entrance hall and the hidden porticoes and dedicated them to Concordia and Augustan Piety.

CIL X, 810

Source C: Inscription in Pompeii

To Eumachia, daughter of Lucius, public priestess; the fullers [set this up]

CIL X 813

Source D: *Exedra* tomb of Mamia outside the Herculaneum Gate, Pompeii

FIGURE 4.10

Source E: Dedicatory inscription on the tomb of Mamia

To Mamia, daughter of Publius, public priestess, a burial place was bestowed by decree of the *decuriones*.

CIL X 998

Source F: Inscription about the building of the sanctuary to the Genius of Augustus (Temple of the Public Lares)

Mamia, daughter of Publius, public priestess, built this to the *genius* and *lares* of Augustus on her own land and with her own money, and had it dedicated.

CIL X 816

Questions

1. What tells us in Source A that Eumachia was a prominent person in Pompeii?
2. What did Eumachia do, recorded in Source B, that seems to have been exceptional for a woman?
3. Why would Source B mention Eumachia and her son, even though it is very clear that Eumachia is the important person in the inscription?
4. What is significant about Source C?
5. What is Source D? What do you think makes this an interesting piece of evidence about women?
6. What does Source E add to the information in Source D? How does this make Mamia more important?
7. What does Source F tell us about Mamia and what she contributed to the city? In what way is this a common theme in these sources? What does this tell us about the position of women in society?
8. What do the sources together reveal about the role of women as patrons? Make direct reference to the sources where possible.

Evidence for social classes

While there is significant evidence for establishing our understanding of social classes in Pompeii and Herculaneum, an ongoing conundrum is always centred on the person who created the source. The sources can present only one side, particularly when dealing with evidence of anyone who is not a freeborn citizen.

The value and limitations of funerary monuments as evidence

Funerary monuments are valuable because they reveal the status of specific individuals and relationships between people in society. These include relationships between a patron and client, or a freed slave and their former owner. They also demonstrate the role of the town council in providing funerary monuments to prominent Pompeiians. When cross referenced with other evidence such as graffiti and information we have about buildings, they can allow us to partially reconstruct some social relationships in Pompeii.

The limitations of this type of source include:

- the monuments are designed to memorialise (praise and tell of the good deeds)
- most of the inscriptions are short
- the bulk of the funerary monuments (58 per cent, according to Henrik Mouritsen[5]) are from freed slaves
- funerary monuments are limited to people with the wealth or status necessary to fund construction.

Mouritsen argues a change in taste means that the elite moved away from monumental tombs in the period before the eruption.

Value and limitations of portraits and statues as evidence

As with funerary monuments, portraits and statues reveal valuable information for historians and archaeologists. They give an indication of how people wanted to be seen and their status. They reveal the clothes, hairstyles and artistic practices popular in these Roman cities before the eruption.

The limitations of these sources include:

- they are stylised rather than realistic representations
- modern historians need to be aware of the underlying symbolism to understand the purpose of the sources
- the class or education of the people cannot be assumed from their portraits.

FIGURE 4.11 Tomb of freed slaves Caius Cuspius Cyrus, Caius Cuspius Salvius, and Caius Cyrus' wife, Vesuvia Iucunda

Programmata as sources of evidence for social class

Graffiti associated with elections in Pompeii provides valuable insights into social structure. They tell us about the people standing for election to the role of magistrate and the people, or *rogatores*, asking for people to vote for them. It is possible to learn about women's involvement in politics, the patron-client relationships that underpinned the system and the role of guilds and other social groups in political campaigns.

Limitations of this source type include:

- many of the inscriptions are fragmentary and open to interpretation
- nobody knows how effective the *programmata* were
- many of the *programmata* lack contextual information, such as when they were written
- some *programmata* are positive and some are negative – the intention of the author is not always clear
- only about 30 per cent of more than 2500 *programmata* include the supporter's name.

Mouritsen argues that women's involvement in political campaigns cast the candidate in a doubtful light. Scholars such as Phillippe Akar disagree with his assessment.

FIGURE 4.12 Fresco showing Terentius Neo and his wife from Pompeii. What do you think is implied by the fact that Terentius' wife is holding a stylus, used for writing?

rogatores
a person asking the people to vote for a candidate

Women and *programmata*

Of the 400 inscriptions which are 'signed', about sixty include the name of one or more women *rogatores*. The women *rogatores* on the whole supported the same candidates as the men. They probably had the same kind of relationship to the candidates as the male *rogatores* did, that is relationships of *amicitia* or **clientelism**, sometimes in a neighbourhood context. The electoral support offered by these women arose from the mutual obligations involved in this sort of relationship.

P Akar, 'Women and electoral politics in Pompeii', trans. by A. Stevens, *Clio. Women, Gender, History* 43, 2016.

amicitia
friendship, usually of a reciprocal nature

clientelism
the relationship of a patron and client and its impacts

REVIEW QUESTION

1. For each of the types of evidence discussed, explain their limitations. Find examples to demonstrate your arguments.
2. With reference to specific sources in the chapter, explain the difficulty of using evidence to understand social structure in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Further resources

F Bernstein, 'Pompeian Women', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, p 526–537.

VL Campbell, *The Tombs of Pompeii: Organization, Space, and Society* (Vol. 7), Taylor and Francis, 2014.

M George, 'The Lives of Slaves', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2008, p 539.

WM Jongman, 'The loss of innocence: Pompeian economy and society between past and present' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp 499–517.

H Mouritsen, 'Freedmen and Decurions: Epitaphs and Social History in Imperial Italy', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 95, 2005.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Outline the types of evidence that are useful for understanding social structure.
2. Explain what evidence reveals about the social structure of Pompeii and Herculaneum.
3. Why were slaves an important part of society in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
4. Assess the importance of women in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Activities

1. Identify prominent men, women and freed slaves in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Explain how the evidence supports our understanding of their position in society.
2. Research a building that is alleged to have belonged to a prominent person. Explain how the evidence supports the identification of its owner.
3. Research the 'Pompeii Archaeological Research Project: Porta Stabia', and explain what the project has revealed about social structure.

HSC-style questions

1. How useful are funerary monuments for understanding the social position of freed slaves (*liberti*)? (5 marks)
2. What do Figures 4.9 and 4.12 reveal about the status and roles of women in Pompeii and Herculaneum? (8 marks)
3. Assess the value and limitations of funerary monuments and inscriptions for understanding the social structure of Pompeii and/or Herculaneum. (15 marks)

Endnotes

1 *CIL* IV 10488
2 JM Jongman 'The loss of innocence: Pompeian economy and society between past and present' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp 509–512.
3 H Mouritsen, 'Freedmen and Decurions: Epitaphs and Social History in Imperial Italy', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 95, 38–63.
4 *CIL* IV 1136

Government and politics

FIGURE 5.1 Statue of Marcus Nonius Balbus, Herculaneum

From the beginning of Augustus' sole rule (31 BC), all towns in the Roman Empire were subject to imperial control. Pompeii, as a *colonia*, was allowed a greater latitude in its law-making than Herculaneum, which was a *municipia*, but Pompeii was still required to follow imperial policies set in Rome. Also, similar to Rome, Pompeii and Herculaneum had governments that reflected the structure of Roman government. This form of government had been in place for centuries and showed a deliberate and calculated deference to Roman authority. This authority continued in the 1st century AD in various ways. As in Rome, it is also likely that older, well-established families that could trace their ancestry back many generations in the region-dominated politics in Pompeii and Herculaneum, but in the 1st century AD, possibly 50 per cent of men who attained public office (and a lifetime position in the *ordo*) were from families who had never, or rarely, held public office, possibly reflecting the social mobility that had started to take hold in Rome.

This chapter will explain:

- the role of the *decuriones* and the magistrates of Pompeii and Herculaneum
- the function of the *comitium*
- political campaigns in Pompeii.

Decuriones and magistrates

Like most Italian towns, Pompeii and Herculaneum had two senior positions, *duumviri* and the *ordo decurionem*. The *ordo decurionem*, or town council, assisted the magistrates in running their respective towns. The *duumviri* were elected annually, with two junior magistrates, *aediles*, also only elected in Pompeii.

Ordo decurionem

The *ordo decurionem* was made up of freeborn males of good standing, who lived in the surrounding area. There was a minimum property qualification of 100 000 sesterces that they were required to possess, which ruled out the vast majority of people in both towns. These men were required to have respectable professions, which ruled out actors, brothel owners, and various other trades. It is often said that there were 100 *decuriones*, or members of the *ordo decurionem*, but there is no explicit evidence for this.

Once a man was elected to a public office, they became members of the *ordo decurionem* for life. There was probably a hierarchy within the *ordo* that depended on your public profile and the offices you had held, but it was still an honour to be in the *ordo* even if their ability to contribute to debates was limited. Members were granted specific honours, such as special seating in the amphitheatre.

The *ordo* was the standing body of Pompeii and Herculaneum and had many important duties to keep them occupied. It was responsible for managing the standard weights and measures, which was an important role in a commercially-focused town like Pompeii. This responsibility extended to ensuring that all transactions in the public markets utilised the official weights and measures so that no one was cheated. The body was also responsible for

raising taxes and managing the money that was raised through taxation. The cities owned properties within their own walls, and a key role of the *ordo* seems to have been to lease and manage those properties. It was also responsible for setting the budget for new buildings in the town (while the *duumviri* would find the contractors needed to construct the building and approve the final product).

The *ordo* also played an important role in honouring individuals. This was a significant role because honour was an essential concept in Roman public life. One of the great honours a citizen could be awarded by the *ordo* was to be granted a funeral paid for by the city, no doubt bestowing some of the honour of the dead man onto his heirs and family, assisting them in their own future public journey. The *ordo* could also grant permission for honorific statues of prominent individuals to be erected. The *ordo* also approved statues to be built of members of the imperial family, no doubt to gain the favour of the emperor.

Magistracies (elected positions)	· Two *duumviri* · Two *aediles* (possibly *quaestors* in Herculaneum)
Ordo decurionem (town council)	· Freeborn men of good standing
Voting public	
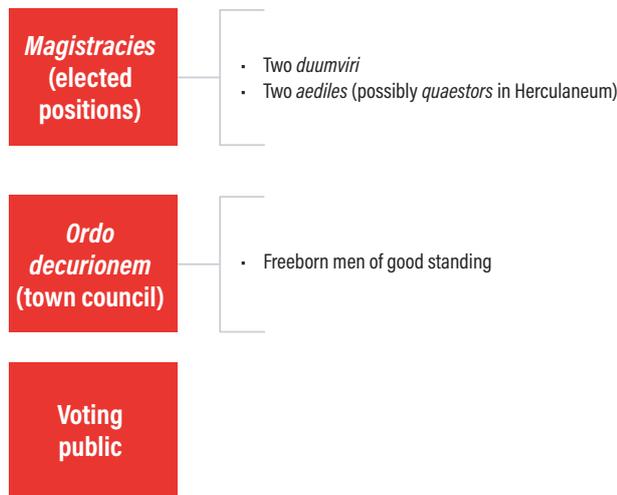
FIGURE 5.2 Political structures

Carroll on the leading men in Pompeii

The leading men, the ***patroni coloniae,*** were not drawn from the indigenous population, but were Roman supporters and agents of Sulla [the dictator of Rome] who arbitrated in political affairs and defended the colony's interests, and the earliest government of colonial Pompeii was run entirely by magistrates elected from the body of new Roman colonists. That the 'privileged position of the colonists was at the expense of the Pompeians' is not disputed by Cicero (Pro Sulla 62). P. Sulla [not the dictator] was accused of attempting to involve the ***municipes*** of Pompeii in the conspiracy of Catiline to overthrow the Senate in Rome in 63/62 BC, and it was perhaps the ill feeling and resentment felt by the ***Pompeiani*** (who formed the majority of the population) over injustices in their community that had been exploited in this context.

M Carroll, 'Exploring the sanctuary of Venus and its sacred grove: politics, cult and identity in Roman Pompeii', *Papers of the British School at Rome,* 78, 2010, pp 63–106.

patroni coloniae
'patrons of the colony' were unelected men whose connections gave influence in the city

municipes
local citizens

Pompeiani
the name for people of Pompeii

Duumviri and *aediles*

The *duumviri* were the two senior magistrates elected every year and took office in Pompeii on 1 July. It seems to have been normal for a *duumvir* (sing.) to have been an *aedile* three to five years previously. Their main role was to supervise the meetings of the *ordo decurionem* and to sit as judges, probably in the basilica. It was traditionally thought that the *duumviri*

would sit on the raised porches of the basilica, but the layout of the building would have meant that a statue blocked their view. It is more likely that many of the legal disputes were settled informally before needing the formal judgement of a *duumvir*. The *duumviri* were probably allocated a staff paid for from the public purse, and this staff reflected their various administrative, religious and public duties. For example, they were entitled to secretaries, messengers, *haruspex* (a diviner, or someone who used various methods to read the future) and lictors (men who preceded the *duumvir* to symbolise his position, as consuls also had in Rome).

The two *aediles* elected each year were often younger men beginning their public career at about the age of 25 or 30. The name they are sometimes given ('*duumviri* in charge of streets, and sacred and public buildings') gives an insight into their main role: ensuring that the physical features of the city were maintained appropriately. They would have been given a budget each year, but they probably funded repairs and new buildings personally. This allowed them to be able to place an inscription on the building advertising that they had paid for it to be built, a powerful investment in a future political career and honours.

These four elected magistrates were the official leaders of the city in the year of their election. Every five years, however, the *duumviri* were elected as *quinquennales* ('Five-Year Men'). It would have been a great honour to have been elected to this particular position, as there was much less opportunity to win it, and we can assume that there was fierce political campaigning. The main role was to revise the citizenship rolls, ensure that they were current, and add members to the *ordo* that may have declined in number due to death, disgrace or other reasons. It also gave them the opportunity to ensure that all members of the *ordo* were of appropriate standing (for example, they still owned the minimum property qualification); members whose standing was not sufficient, for any reason provided by the *quinquennales*, could be removed. In the year of his assassination (AD 41), the emperor Gaius was *quinquennalis* – he had also been *duumvir* in AD 34. That is not to say that the emperor took an active role in the political process of Pompeii; it was simply an attempt to gain the favour of the emperor. In each year, a 'prefect with judicial power' was appointed to undertake the actual role in this instance.

Electing a prefect as a proxy for someone elected to the *ordo* but who could not undertake their role was relatively common. For example, children were sometimes elected to the *ordo* when their family made huge benefactions to the city. Numerius Popidius Celsinus was elected to the *ordo* 'without payment' for rebuilding the Temple of Isis in AD 6, though he would not have had any voting rights (his parents had paid for the rebuilding in his name, to improve his prospects in society). In times of emergency, the city could also appoint a prefect, such as after the earthquake of AD 62. Informal positions could also exist. Marcus Holconius Rufus was 'Patron of the Colony' in Pompeii. He had connections and influence in Rome, and if someone, or even the city, needed assistance they might ask him to intercede on their behalf.

Source Study 5.1 *Decuriones* and magistrates

Source A

Lucius Avianius Flaccus Pontianus, son of Lucius, of the Menenian voting-tribe, and Quintus Spedius Firmus, son of Quintus, of the Menenian voting-tribe, *duumviri* with judicial power, paved [or repaired] the road from the milestone to the carriage station, where it is in Pompeii's territory, with their own money.

CIL X 1064

Source B

On the 28th February, everyone was present for the drawing-up of the decree:

> that Marcus Remmius Rufus, father and son, *duumviri* for the second time, with their own money had built weights, a **chalcidicum** and a **schola** in accordance with the splendour of the town, to be cared for at public expense. Concerning this, it was also determined that since Marcus Remmius Rufus, father and son, *duumviri* for the second time, had been so generous in providing such monuments for the town, and had been so diligent that they remedied the faults in the weights and providing for this in perpetuity, that the *decuriones* determined that Marcus Remmius Rufus, Father and Son, for as long as they live, be given administration of the weights, *schola* and *chalcidium*, which they had built themselves, and they be given slaves who have been and will be bought for this purpose, and that this should not be removed from them without a decree of the *decuriones*, and that public thanks be given to Marcus Remmius Rufus, father and son, because they undertook a second term not through ambition or vanity, but for the cultivation of the town [Herculaneum] and its beauty.

CIL X 1453

chalcidicum

a porch area, usually used for official committee meetings

schola

a formal seating area

Source C

> Aulus Clodius Flaccus, son of Aulus, and Numerius Arcaeus Arellianus Caledus, son of Numerius, duumviri with judicial power, saw to the standardisation of the measures in accordance with a decree of the town councillors [by having the *mensa ponderaria* built].

CIL X 793

Source D

> By permission of the aediles. Gnaeus Aninius Fortunatus occupies (this space [by the amphitheatre]).

CIL IV 1096

Source E

> Gaius Quinctius Valgus, son of Gaius, and Marcus Porcius, son of Marcus, quinquennial duumviri, for the honour of the colony, saw to the construction of the Amphitheatre at their own expense and gave the area to the colonists in perpetuity.

CIL X 852

Source F: Inscription of Valgus and Porcius on the entrance to the amphitheatre

FIGURE 5.3

Questions

1. Ensuring that roads were cared for within Pompeii was the role of the *aediles* – what does Source A tell us about the roads outside the city?
2. Examine Source B.
   a. What did the father and son *duumviri* do that was so important?
   b. What was their reward for their actions? Why would this have been an excellent outcome for them?
   c. Why would public thanks have been desirable for them?
3. How are Sources B and C similar? What do they tell us about the importance of the *duumviri* in the towns?
4. What important role were the *aediles* playing in Source D?
5. What is Source E telling us about the role of *duumviri*?
6. Source F was located at the entrance to the amphitheatre. Why would the men who built this have their name displayed so prominently?

The *comitium*

The *comitium* was an open-air colonnaded building in the south-east corner of the forum in Pompeii. It was built during the 2nd century BC and originally seems to have been a centre for voting from this early period. Not long before the eruption in AD 79, the *comitium* seems to have undergone a transformation, whereby pillars were bricked-up, leaving only two entrances from the forum and one from the Via dell'Abbondanza. On the southern side is a small speaking platform about 1.5 metres high, which is accessed by a flight of stairs. This then leads into a small room which was also bricked-up at the same time as the main area of the *comitium*.

The actual purpose of the *comitium* is not clear. It was decorated with marble and is dotted with niches, which probably housed busts. It is most widely believed that the building was where votes were cast in public elections. There were cuttings into the sidewalk on the north side of the building, which seems to indicate that it was a queuing system, allowing public officials to control the people entering to cast their votes. It has more recently been suggested that it was the *diribitorium*, where votes were counted – this means that the actual voting probably happened in the forum itself. It has also been suggested that the *comitium* served as a courthouse. However, due to the amount of political graffiti on its walls, it is more likely that it played some part in the elections.

In a series of archaeological campaigns between 2015 and 2018, a team of archaeologists, led by Professor Johannes Lipps and Dr Manuel Flecker, conducted geophysical surveying of the site. While the *comitium* is generally believed to have been built at the time of Sulla (70s BC), archaeological material (mainly pottery) indicates that it was built in the Augustan period. Moreover, the geophysical surveying shows that there were *tabernae* (shops) lining the building along the Via dell'Abbondanza, connected to houses and alleyways.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where was the *comitium* located? Explain why this is important for its role in Pompeian society.
2. Describe the details of the *comitium* that can help us to better understand its purpose.
3. What has the research of Lipps and Flecker uncovered? How has this led to a new understanding of the *comitium*?

Political campaigning

One of the things that makes Pompeii unique is the vast amount of political graffiti, or *programmata*, written on the walls in the public spaces of the city. There have been 2800 graffiti found in Pompeii and only one in Herculaneum; this gives us an insight into the political campaigns for office in Pompeii. They were mostly written by professional (but not full-time) signwriters who seem to have lived in the area in which they wrote the graffiti. Most of the graffiti was from the final year before the eruption, and after the election the walls were whitewashed. However, there are many graffiti from the previous decade, which allows us to reconstruct political campaigns, and even careers, over a longer time, and Franklin was able to reconstruct a list of candidates from the decade prior to the eruption.[1]

Political campaigns for the duumvirate would have been contested, but not nearly as hotly as the aedileship. This is because of the requirement for a *duumvir* to have been an *aedile* previously, limiting the potential number of candidates who were eligible to stand. The aedileship, however, had many more candidates, and we can tell this from the number of inscriptions that urge citizens to vote for them in the election. Most of the inscriptions were requesting citizens to vote for their candidate for specific reasons; for example, because they made good bread, or they were *dignus* ('dignified' – the most common attribute given to candidates in graffiti).

Many inscriptions also attack the qualities of a candidate to discourage others from voting for them, either directly or indirectly. Women were keen to support different candidates, even though they did not have a vote. In one case, Zmyrina (probably one of the barmaids who worked inside the bar on whose wall the graffito was painted) had her name removed from a request for support for **CIP** (Gaius Iulius Polybius – so well known that he did not need his full name written), making it seem as though CIP did not want public support from this person.

Campaigning would have happened largely as it did in Rome. In the morning, candidates would go to the forum or other large public spaces with all their clients, friends and family, greeting as many people as they could. They wore the *toga candida*, a toga specially whitened to make it stand out from others. On the day of an election, citizens would have crammed into the basilica. Citizens probably voted in a secret ballot in districts (for example, Saliniensis, Forenses, Urbulanenses). Each district was allocated one vote, which was determined by the majority votes of that district, with a majority of districts needed to secure election.

There is only one political graffito from Herculaneum, possibly asking for a man who was an elected official looking after the public treasury in Herculaneum to be elected *quaestor*.

FIGURE 5.4 A graffito from Pompeii: 'CN. HELVIUM. SABINUM. AED. D[ignos]. R[ei]. P[ublicae]. O[ro]. V[os]. F[aciatis].' The translation reads: 'I beg you to elect Gnaeus Helvius Sabinus, worthy of public office, as aedile'.

CIP

shorthand for Gaius Julius Polybius; the G is often represented as a C in Latin inscriptions because the original Latin spelling was Caius, but this changed over the years to become Gaius

Source Study 5.2 Political graffiti

Source A

I ask you to elect Claudius Verus *duumvir* with judicial power, an honest young man.

CIL IV 3741

Source B

If integrity in life is thought to be of any use,

This man, Lucretius Fronto is worthy of great honour.

CIL IV 6626

Source C

I beg you to elect Gaius Julius Polybius *aedile*. He brings good bread.

CIL IV 429

Source D

Genialis asks for Bruttius Balbus as *duumvir*. He will preserve the treasury.

CIL IV 3702

Source E

Marcus Casellius Marcellus, a good *aedile* and great giver of games.

CIL IV 4999

Source F

Thalamus, his client, elects Publius Paquius Proculus *duumvir* with judicial power.

CIL IV 933

Source G

The fullers all ask for Holconius Priscus as *duumvir*.

CIL IV 7164

Source H

Marcus Caecilius Potitus quaestor […]. [found in Herculaneum]

M Pagano, 'Una iscrizione elettorale da Ercolano', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 17, 1987 pp 151–52.

Questions

1. What quality do Sources A and B appear to be claiming for their desired candidates?
2. Gaius Julius Polybius, named in Source C, was a well-known (and wealthy) baker in Pompeii. Why would his bread feature in *programmata*?
3. Why would the appeal in Source D focus on the financial skills of the candidate Bruttius Balbus?
4. Why would the claim in Source E that Casellius Marcellus was a good *aedile* and provided great games be important for the election? What does this tell us about the importance of the aedileship in a political career?
5. Explain the relationship in Source F between Thalamus and Paquius Proculus. Why would Thalamus be voting for him?
6. What do Sources F and G tell us about the importance of clients in politics?
7. What is so different about Source H and what it says? What does this tell us about a possible significant difference of government in Pompeii and Herculaneum?

Further resources

J Franklin, 'Epigraphy And Society', in *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2008, pp 560–567.
B Levick, 'Women and elections in Pompeii', in R Hawley and B Levick (eds), *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments*, Routledge, London, 1995, pp 214–226.

VL Campbell, *The Tombs of Pompeii: Organization, Space, and Society (Vol. 7)*, Taylor and Francis, London, 2014.
H Mouritsen, 'Freedmen and Decurions: Epitaphs and Social History in Imperial Italy', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 95, 2005.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. From an examination of the sources, what did people want from their elected magistrates?

2. What do the sources tell us about politics in Pompeii and Herculaneum? Was it all about public service, was it personal, or was it something in between? Use sources to support your response.

3. Explain how the *comitium* may have been a part of the political processes in Pompeii.

Activities

1. Marcus Holconius Rufus was a prominent man in Pompeii and Marcus Nonius Balbus was a leading citizen in Herculaneum. Research these men. Use primary sources to reconstruct their life, positions they held and honours they were given. When you have researched their lives, explain how they were or were not typical men of their time.

2. Read the extract from Mary Beard below and explain the point that she is making.

> There is one document never found in the excavations that would have allowed us to fill in the details of the town's government, the duties of its officials and the regulations for its council. As a Roman colony, Pompeii would have had a formal constitution or charter (in Latin, *lex*), most likely inscribed on bronze and publicly displayed in a temple or other civic building. This has never come to light – perhaps it was rescued (or stolen) by salvage parties just after the eruption. In its absence, scholars have tried to fill in the picture of Pompeii's constitution from other such documents which have survived. The basic justification for doing this is that Roman legal provisions were for the most part applied even-handedly across the Roman world. What was laid down for a colony in, for example, Spain probably went for Pompeii too.
>
> M Beard, *Pompeii. The Life of a Roman Town*, Profile Books Ltd, London, 2008, p 198.

HSC-style questions

1. What does the evidence reveal about the role of *duumviri* and *aediles* in Pompeii? (5 marks)

2. Assess the value and limitations of sources as evidence about politics in Pompeii and Herculaneum. (12 marks)

Endnotes

1   J Franklin, 'Pompeii: The electoral programmata, campaigns and politics, A.D. 71–79', *Papers and Monographs of The American Academy in Rome*, Rome, 1980.

Everyday life

FIGURE 6.1 A mosaic from Pompeii representing Death and showing a skeleton of a wine bearer

It is easy to forget when going through the archaeological material that the people who lived and died in these cities lived ordinary lives. The way they lived their lives was similar to ours in many respects. It is important not to lose sight of the very human aspect of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and a good way to do this is to explore the evidence for exactly how they lived their life on a daily basis.

This chapter will explain:

- the different features of houses in the cities
- how and why houses differed from each other
- leisure activities that the people enjoyed
- the food that people ate and the way people dined
- how people dressed
- the health of the populations and how we know about them
- the importance of baths
- how the city was supplied with water and kept clean.

atrium

the large interior space in a Roman-style house where the head of the household would meet guests

triclinia

formal dining rooms

peristyle

a colonnaded walkway, usually around a feature of a building such as garden or *palaestra*

Housing

Houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum were generally of a Roman style at the time of the eruption. This means that the rooms of larger houses were focused around the **atrium**. Traditionally, research has been focused on the purpose of the rooms in each house, with specific purposes attributed to rooms based on the artefacts found in them and on what is known about houses at the time. It was thought that rooms had single, or limited, purposes (for example, *triclinia* were for dining only). New research is focusing on the multipurpose nature of most spaces in the houses, and also how and why houses were integrated into their context.

Standard features of houses

It is important to understand that while there was a degree of similarity between houses, they were as different to each other as they would be down any street today. Some houses have been recognised as particularly old, and they display a number of features that are more accurately called 'pre-Roman'. Most houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum tend to be Roman-style 'atrium houses', meaning that if the family could afford it, the house had an atrium as the central point. This was because of the social importance associated with an atrium in Roman society. Even in less wealthy households, an atrium was still seen as a desirable central point of the house.

Unlike today where houses are often private, or at least have spaces for guests, most rooms in a Roman-style house would have been used to entertain visitors and guests. On the outside of a house there might also have been rooms used by businesses. These might be separated from the main part of the building by a wall (particularly if they were rented) or be a part of the house.

There were many ways in which a house could be designed in Pompeii and Herculaneum, but while there were standard

FIGURE 6.2 Peristyle garden (just beyond the atrium) from the House of the Golden Cupids, Pompeii

features, there were also several ways in which they could be used. For example, while *cubicula* were clearly used primarily for sleeping, they could also be used to entertain guests, where the *paterfamilias* might have a small gathering to hear a poetry recital. Another example is the *tablinum*.

Spinelli on the *tablinum*

The scarce textual evidence for the tablinum has discouraged a fuller discussion of this space in the modern scholarship … I argue that the tablinum was a versatile space that did not necessarily function as an indicator of the householder's social status … This space may have served both 'private' and 'public' activities, depending on the family's needs. Analysis of walls and floors of tablina, in particular, confirms a 'static' use of the tablinum for activities such as conversing, dining, and resting. Earlier scholarship on Pompeian domestic spaces interpreted the addition of the peristyle garden as resulting in a gradual decrease of the importance of the tablinum, which developed into a decorative, amplified vestibule leading to the back of the house. My study, however, argues that the tablinum in the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum still played a key role in meeting the household's practical and ideological needs up to 79 CE … Through a series of strategies that included displaying busts of family ancestors flanking the entrance to the tablinum, the '**columnar**' treatment of the tablinum recalling a temple-like façade, and the view onto the lararium from and through the tablinum, the dominus would have communicated above all his *pietas ergo deos*, *patriam*, *parentes* [piety to the Gods, his ancestors and his parents]. By doing so, he promoted his presence and appearance as a *bonus vir* [good man] within the town.

A Spinelli, 'The Tablinum: A space and stage for 'private' and 'public' rituals in the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum' (unpublished PhD thesis, 2019), pp 185–191.

FIGURE 6.3 The central *cubicula* from the House of the Wooden Partition, Herculaneum

columnar

the use of columns in architecture

FIGURE 6.4 Atrium and *tablinum* from the House of the Wounded Bear, Pompeii. The *tablinum* is the slightly raised area in front of the arched fountain at the rear of the photo. How does this image illustrate Spinelli's argument about the purpose of the *tablinum*?

REVIEW QUESTION

1. Research the different elements of houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum listed below and complete the table. You will note that there are some features of the rooms already listed.

Element	Location in the house	Description and features	Purpose	Other information (e.g. usually decorated)
Fauces		*Vestibulum*		
Atrium		*Impluvium* and *compluvium* *Lararium*		
Tablinum				
Cubiculum				
Culina		*Latrinus*		
Triclinium		Couches		
Peristyle		*Hortus*		
Alae		Storage		

Decorations in the house

Art historian and archaeologist, August Mau, categorised artwork in Pompeii into four styles in 1899. Examples of these styles can be found at both Pompeii and Herculaneum. Though art in houses can be seen as a good indicator of the owner's wealth and social standing, historian Andrew Wallace-Hadrill points out that this is not always perfect (see Source Study 6.1). It was unusual for the smallest houses to have wall paintings, just as it was unusual for the largest not to be richly decorated. The extent of decoration in a house seems to have been the more important indicator of social standing. The extravagant use of mythological scenes in large houses also seems to have been a marker of social standing, demonstrating not only wealth but also culture, showing the owner to be **Hellenised**.

Hellenised

when someone wanted to show their appreciation of Greek (Hellenic) culture

Source Study 6.1 Decoration of houses

Source A: Andrew Wallace-Hadrill

How we should explain the growth and range of this repertoire in terms of the relationship between the artist and patron is of subordinate importance. One might argue that as demand for decoration spread to the less well-off, the **ateliers** of decorators responded by reducing the quality of a former luxury; or that the ateliers deliberately introduced simpler and cheaper scenes of decoration in order to tap a wider market. From the point of view of the present analysis it makes little difference (and both explanations may be simultaneously true). The point is that the fourth style is well adapted for a market that ranges, as we see in Pompeii, from the rich to the poor: wall decoration is no longer the preserve of an elite.

A Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994, pp 168–169.

ateliers

the leading figures

Source B: Beth Severy-Hoven

In homes decorated with wall paintings, mythological scenes tend to be presented in the reception rooms, including rooms designed for dinner parties. Such paintings are usually elaborate and engaging, calling for explanation and thus prompting conversation … Among the owner's motivations for selecting art in this house was to display luxury characteristic of the upper class …

This home [the House of the Vettii] may have been owned by ex-slaves … and it is worth considering the implications of this possibility … Much of the extensive programme of wall paintings in … the House of the Vettii create and project the status of the owners as masters … Corporal punishment – strongly and purposefully present in these rooms – had a cultural association with slavery as well as with mythological figures who offend the divine …

It is worth pausing here to consider the likely function of [these] rooms as dining rooms (triclinia) because the banquet was a place and time of intense contact between slave and free.

B Severy-Hoven, 'Master Narratives and The Wall Painting of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii', *Gender and History*, 24, 3, 2012, pp 549–561.

Source C: House of Leda and the Swan
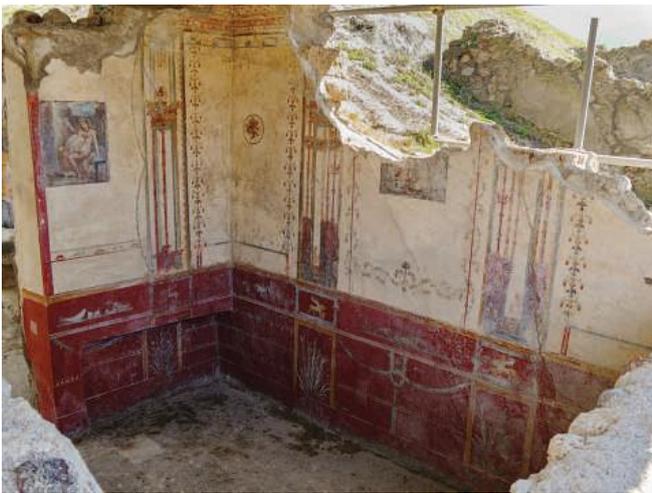
FIGURE 6.5 The House of Leda and the Swan was first excavated in 2019, and is an example of the Fourth Style artwork of a mythological scene.

Source D: Mosaic vestibule from the House of the Faun
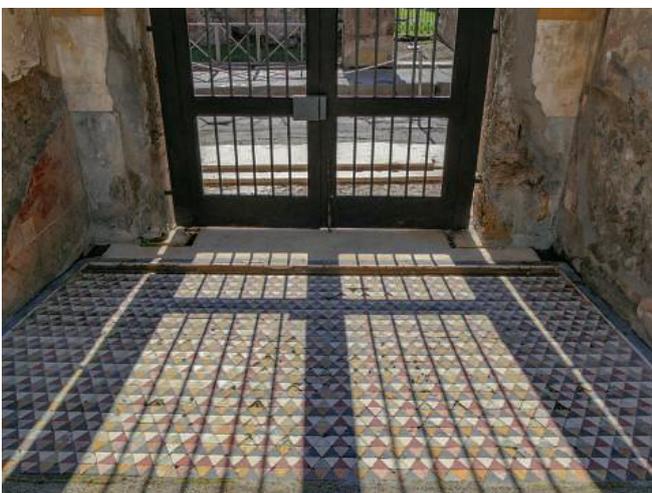
FIGURE 6.6

Source E: The Samnite House, Herculaneum

FIGURE 6.7

Source F: House of Marcus Pompeius Rufus, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.8

Source G: House of the Vettii, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.9

Questions

1. What does Wallace-Hadrill suggest the 'ateliers of decoration' did when they had less wealthy people desiring artwork in their houses in Source A? Why do you think they might have done this?
2. What does Wallace-Hadrill mean when he says '... the fourth style is well adapted for a market that ranges ... from the rich to the poor'. What implication does this have for the study of houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
3. According to Severy-Hoven in Source B, what was one of the purposes that painting served in houses?
4. Explain what Severy-Hoven believes about the purpose of some of the paintings in the House of the Vettii.
5. Why might paintings demonstrating corporal punishment (something associated with slavery) be on display in the *triclinia*?
6. Research Mau's artistic styles and complete the table below.

Style	Name	Dates of use and features	Examples in Pompeii and Herculaneum
First Style			
Second Style			
Third Style			
Fourth Style			

7. Examine the images of artwork from Pompeii and Herculaneum in Sources C to G. Describe the features of art you can see in each source and explain which of the four styles of art you think they are.

The exterior of a house

While traditional research has focused on the inside of the house to examine the status of its owners, much recent research examines the houses in their context within the city. In particular, the exterior of the house (including decorations, size and how easily grand entranceways can be seen at important street junctions) can tell us what the owner wanted to say about himself.

The doorways were traditionally the most decorated part of a house's exterior. As can be seen in frescoes, they were painted, usually framed by colour and/or artwork, and could even be moved to be seen from important city thoroughfares. This was done for ritual purposes (in Campanian houses, there was particular importance placed on the door as a portal for bad fortune and evil), as much as to mark out the owner as wealthy or important. Main entrances were often kept open to allow people glimpses of the inside of sumptuously decorated houses, sometimes with a slave at the front to permit or deny access to the house.

Hartnett on the exterior of houses

In her intensive study of sidewalk construction, Catherine Saliou has shown that changes in curbstone material and quality often mesh closely with junctures between properties. She deduces that … the responsibility for the space between the façade and the roadbed fell primarily to the property owners … The sidewalk … also afforded frontagers the opportunity to draw attention to and mark the space as their own. Across the entire front of the Casa del Fauno at Pompeii, for instance, a grid-like pattern of white stones stood out from the sidewalk's black background. Coloured stones in front of the main doorway aided in spelling the tessellated greeting 'HAVE [Welcome]'. The salutation makes explicit … that the house's owner was communicating to streetgoers the extension of the house's realm into the sidewalk …

Beyond the immediate physical impact of a severe façade, what emerges across the many types of façade décor is a visual sensibility that stressed starkness and a restricted decorative palette over extensive and elaborate ornament … Their aesthetic of austerity and lack of frilly adornment held meaning precisely by showing very little. A dearth of decoration did not mean a lack of signifiers, but was a signifier itself – an architectural and decorative demonstration of, or at least aspiration to, the self-restraint appropriate for elite self-presentation in the public sphere.

J Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum and Rome*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp 123–124, 158, 161.

FIGURE 6.10 View into the atrium from the vestibule in the House of the Bicentenary, Herculaneum. What can you see from the front of the house?
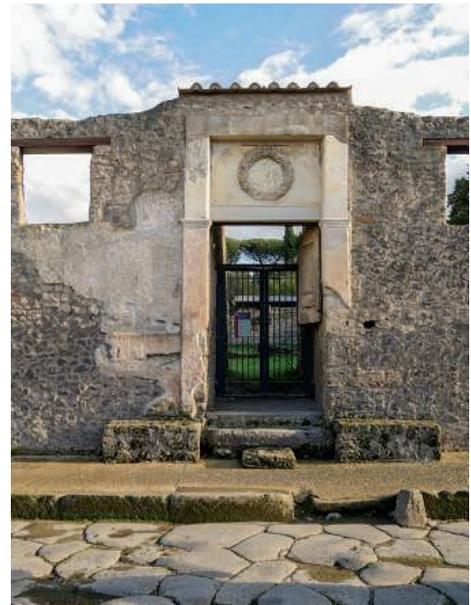
FIGURE 6.11 Main entrance to the House of Octavius Quartio. What would you think of the owner of this house from the outside? Why?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did owners of properties draw attention to the exterior of the house?
2. Why does Hartnett believe that, apart from sidewalks, owners kept the exterior of the house stark and relatively undecorated?
3. Why do you think doorways were usually the most decorated part of a house's exterior?
4. How is the main entrance to the House of Octavius Quartio (Figure 6.11) a good example of a doorway in a house in Pompeii?

Villas

Villas were an important part of the lifestyle of the wealthy in Roman society. Villas were mainly luxury houses and gave the wealthy an opportunity to show that they understood how to appreciate a life of luxury, as well as business and politics. Grand estates had existed in Italy from the 6th century BC, but the villa as a symbol of wealthy luxury, as well as agricultural production, did not emerge until the 2nd century BC.

Villas originally served a more agricultural purpose (the *villa rustica*). These were large farmsteads, still owned by wealthy people, but were in line with traditional Roman values of frugality and austerity. The growth of the luxury villa (the ***villa urbana***), where a wealthy

villa urbana

a villa located near or in a city that was designed to be purely for relaxation, with no agricultural purpose at all; these were very uncommon in this period

man could enjoy **otium**, was an opportunity for wealthy men to show their wealth, their Hellenic outlook and their good taste. By the 1st century BC, villas were almost always both for leisure and production, even though texts from the time try to ignore this fact. These villas generated significant levels of wealth for their owners. The Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum is an excellent example of this blending of opulence and agricultural output. In particular, Campania and the Bay of Naples were seen as attractive spots for wealthy Romans to own estates, including members of the imperial family in Rome.

FIGURE 6.12 Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii

Zarmakoupi on villas

Luxurious country houses were one of the most important features of the Roman elite lifestyle from the end of the second century BCE to the fourth century CE, both in Italy and the provinces; they were effectively at the centre of Romans' cultural negotiations. The cultural phenomenon of luxury villas flourished in the Italian peninsula from the middle of the first century BCE to the end of the second century CE. It mainly developed along the coast near Rome and especially around the bay of Naples, where rich senators would retreat from their public obligations to their private luxury villas in order to enjoy a sophisticated life of leisure … The residential part of the villas, the *pars urbana*, looked over farmland, a fishpond, or a pigsty, as well as an ornamental garden, as the Villa at Settefinestre did. Delicate interiors offered masterful views of surrounding landscapes of all kinds, and all of them were equally important to villa owners.

The first *villae rusticae* began to appear in Campania after the **Second Punic War** … At this point, Romans acquired estates with the aim of cultivating them and profiting from their agricultural produce … While they were appearing on the northern side of the bay of Naples, in the territories around Pompeii the villas were still working farms (*villae rusticae*) of medium dimensions, specializing in the production of wine and oil. It was only after Pompeii became *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum* that elite residences came to be situated in this area.

M Zarmakoupi, *Designing for Luxury on the Bay of Naples: Villas and Landscapes (c. 100BCE–79CE)*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp 1–7, 25–27.

otium

leisure, often considered to be somewhat self-indulgent by many people at the time

Second Punic War

the second war against Carthage, which made Rome the master of a large overseas empire with significant control over areas in Africa, Italy and Sicily

dolia

large pottery vessels usually used for storage of liquids such as wine or oil

FIGURE 6.13 *Triclinium* of the Villa of Poppaea at Oplontis, approximately 4 kilometres north-west of Pompeii

FIGURE 6.14 Wine *dolia* at the Villa Regina, Boscoreale, approximately 1.5 kilometres north-west of Pompeii

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did a *villa urbana* contribute to the wealth of its owner?
2. What was the original purpose of Campanian villas? How and when did this change?
3. What is the evidence that there was a change of people who owned wealthy estates and villas from the mid-2nd century BC?
4. Historians have previously focused on the buildings that were erected to show wealth. This is because the written sources focus on the leisure and display aspect of estates and villas. How has a focus on archaeological evidence changed this view of villas?

R	O	M	A
O	L	I	M
M	I	L	O
A	M	O	R

CIL IV 8297

FIGURE 6.15 A word square found in Pompeii

bisellia

a wide chair used by magistrates and other officials to mark them as important; often used in official government meetings

FIGURE 6.16 Gladiator helmet found in Pompeii

Leisure activities

Just like today, there were many ways by which people in Pompeii and Herculaneum entertained themselves. Culturally, Italians enjoyed a number of activities in common, such as games put on by officials, theatre, gladiatorial events and bathing, as well as more commonplace activities such as drinking, gambling and feasting. There are even graffiti of word games on walls in Pompeii, created in people's spare time.

The amphitheatre

The scene of a Roman city's most exciting entertainment was the amphitheatre. While there is no amphitheatre in Herculaneum, Pompeii's amphitheatre was built in approximately 70 BC, making it the oldest surviving amphitheatre in the Roman world. After the AD 62 earthquake, it was rebuilt quickly (seemingly before many houses and shops) and reinforced. It seated around 20 000 people, which was enough space for both the entire population of Pompeii and many visitors, meaning that people may have travelled to see entertainments at larger urban centres. Public officials and honoured individuals would have sat near the front in double-width honorific seats (**bisellia**). This first section of seating was called the *ima cavea*, which was the first five rows of seats. The middle section of seating, the *media cavea*, was about 12 rows of seating, while the rear 18 rows, the *summa cavea*, was the cheapest and furthest away.

One of the most important spectacles in the amphitheatre were gladiatorial contests. These were large battles in which men armed with different styles of armour and weapons would fight. At the time of the eruption, many of these fights were to the death. If a gladiator had fought particularly well, the crowd might shout out for the defeated gladiator to be spared to fight another day.

Games

As part of their responsibility of office, *aediles* in Pompeii were required to put on games in Pompeii and Herculaneum. An example of what was on offer can be found in the announcements, graffiti and inscriptions. Games were held all year around – the only month for which we have no evidence of games in Pompeii is September.

Announcement of games in Pompeii, on the tomb of Aulus Clodius Flaccus

Aulus Clodius Flaccus, son of Aulus, of the Menenian voting tribe, *duumvir* with judicial power for the third time, *quinquennalis*, military tribune by order of the people.

In his first duumvirate, at the Games for Apollo in the forum [he presented] a procession, bulls, bull-fighters and their nimble helpers, three pairs of fighters, boxers fighting in bands and exhibition boxers …

In return for his second duumvirate, as *quinquennalis*, at the Games of Apollo in the forum [he presented] a procession, bulls, bull-fighters and their helpers, and boxers fighting in bands; on the second day, in the amphitheatre, [he presented] 30 pairs of athletes and five pairs of gladiators, and with his colleague [presented] 35 pairs of gladiators, and a beast-hunt with bulls, bull-fighters, boars, bears, and other types of beast-hunts.

CIL X 1074

CIL IV 10237

FIGURE 6.17 A graffito from Pompeii showing the emperor (*princeps*) Nero on the left, musicians on the right and two gladiators

CIL IV 8055

FIGURE 6.18 A graffito depicting two gladiators, Oceanus (a particularly famous gladiator) and Aracintus

Source Study 6.2 Riot of the amphitheatre, AD 59

Source A: Tacitus' account of the riot in the amphitheatre

At about the same time, a trivial beginning led to atrocious murder between the people of Nuceria and Pompeii at a gladiatorial show put on by Livineius Regulus, who … had been expelled from the Senate. With the the unruliness of countryfolk, they attacked each other with bad language, then they used stones, then weapons, the Pompeiians most powerfully, that being the place where the show was held. Thus, many people of Nuceria were taken to Rome, their bodies full of wounds, and many weeping over the deaths of children or parents. The Emperor gave judgement of this case to the Senate, and the Senate delegated to the consuls. Then, when the case was referred back to the Senate, the Pompeiians were prohibited to hold such public gatherings for ten years, and associations that had formed contrary to the law were dissolved. Livineius and any others who had provoked any civil discord were punished with exile.

Tacitus, *Annals* 14.17

Source B: Fresco from the House of Actius Anicetus, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.19 This fresco shows the AD 59 riot.

Questions

1. Explain how Source B supports Source A's account.
2. Why would someone depict the riot in their house?
3. What was the impact of the riot on Pompeii? Who made the decision? What does this say about the seriousness of the riot?

Theatre

Theatres were a popular form of entertainment for all levels of society for centuries before Pompeii became 'Roman'. The Large Theatre in Pompeii could seat around 5000 people. It dates back to the 2nd century BC and was modified extensively during the Augustan period. Magistrates would have been seated on honorific chairs and the crowd was divided into several sections. There were two areas of 'boxes' (seating for wealthy or official members) that led to the orchestra. Seating and a tower were also found represented on a token thought to be an entry token, indicating that the theatre was regulated. Musical instruments were found in the building next to the theatre, indicating the musical accompaniment that accompanied performances. People were protected from the weather by large awnings and occasionally sprayed by water by the ***sparsiones*** to keep them cool.

sparsiones

mechanisms that would spray a fine mist of water on patrons at the amphitheatre and theatre to keep them cool

FIGURE 6.20 The Large Theatre in Pompeii, taken from the top of the seating

Next to the Large Theatre was the Odeon. Built in the 70s BC, it was much smaller with a seating capacity of around 2000, and was intended for more intimate performances of plays. It has been suggested by some scholars that it was originally intended to be a council chamber for the Roman colonists. There was also a theatre found in Herculaneum that could seat approximately 2500 people. It was one of the first structures excavated in Herculaneum and was decorated with many bronze statues and sculptures.

There was a variety of performances in the theatres. Greek tragedies were performed, as well as mimes, comedies and a local form of theatre, Atellan farces. An inscription naming Menander, an Athenian comic playwright from the late 4th century BC, has been found at Herculaneum, as have inscriptions naming Aeschylus, an Athenian tragedian from the 5th century BC. The name of a known mime, Actius, was found inscribed on a tomb near the Amphitheatre in Pompeii and on a wall on the stage of the Large Theatre in Pompeii. A bust of the mime actor Norbanus Sorex was also found in the Building of Eumachia in Pompeii.

FIGURE 6.21 The Odeon, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.22 The Grand Taberna in Herculaneum

FIGURE 6.23 Table in the Taberna of Sotericus, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.24 The exterior of a *thermopolium*, Pompeii

Bars

Bars were very common in Pompeii, with at least 158 premises identified as a bar of some sort; few have been identified in Herculaneum. Generally called a *caupona* or a *taberna* by the people, they were a place where someone could buy a meal, drink, or even arrange lodgings for the night. *Thermopolium* (though this seems to have been an uncommon name at the time) is the name given to a bar that primarily sold food, often determined by the presence of a likely cooking surface. These establishments were found throughout the city, but were especially concentrated around the city's gates, obviously located to benefit from the people entering the city after a long trip.

It is difficult to determine the actual business run in a *taberna* unless there has also been a bar with *dolia*, remains of food, or inscriptions found, hinting at their purpose. There were many smaller *tabernae* scattered around the city which might consist of a small room. Often they were open to the streets with large awnings (indicated by the holes in the sidewalk for the poles that held them) and had large gates that shut for the night with a smaller door inset for easy access. Some, such as the *caupona* found in the House of Julia Felix, were much grander and even had in-built seating and *triclinia* for their patrons.

While the wealthy and elite looked down on the owners of these bars, the women who worked there and the patrons that visited them, they were an important part of society in Pompeii and Herculaneum. The sheer number found in Pompeii indicate how normal it was for people to go out to eat meals, and they were an important social venue, particularly for men. These were places where they would come to socialise with friends, eat a meal, enjoy a drink and gamble, a very common pastime of people in this period.

FIGURE 6.25 The *thermopolium* of Lucius Vetutius Placidus in Pompeii

FIGURE 6.26 Close-up of the fresco in the *thermopolium* shown in Figure 6.25. Why would it be there?
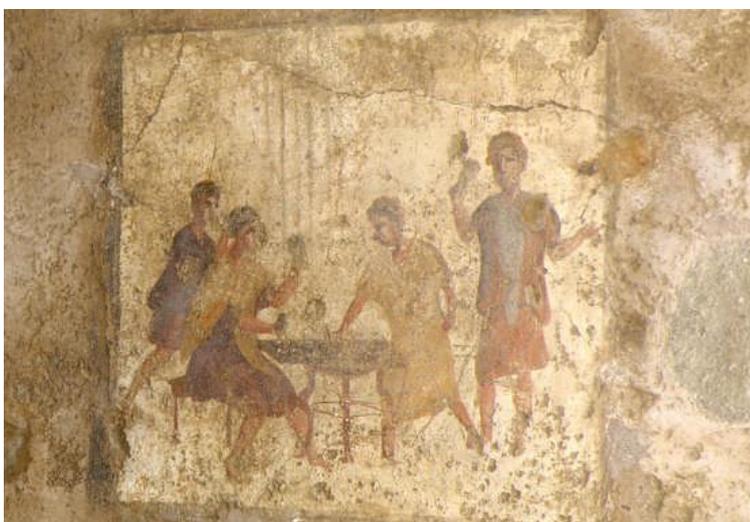
FIGURE 6.27 A painting of men gambling in the back room of a *caupona*, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.28 Gambling dice found in Pompeii (Naples Museum)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Outline the events that happened in the amphitheatre.
2. Using the images of the theatres in Pompeii, outline the differences you can see between them.
3. Research the different parts of the Large Theatre and Odeon. How were they used?
4. The 'theatre region' of Pompeii was built into a large hill. Why do you think this was done?
5. There is a circular reservoir behind the Large Theatre to the north-east. What was its likely purpose?
6. What does the table in the *taberna* of Sotericus tell us about what happened in a *taberna*?
7. Examine the image of the *thermopolium* of Lucius Vetutius Placidus. Explain how an archaeologist would determine the function of the features you can see in the source.
8. What might the image of an entrance of the *thermopolium* in Figure 6.24 tell us about the role of *thermopolia* in the city?
9. Outline the activities that happened in bars. What is the evidence for each of them?

FIGURE 6.29 Painting of a plate of fruit, House of the Deer, Herculaneum

FIGURE 6.30 A loaf of bread found in Pompeii

bone collagen

the connective tissue around bones; made from amino acids

FIGURE 6.31 Olives found in Pompeii

Food and dining

There is a rich array of evidence that shows the range of food available at Pompeii and Herculaneum. It is clear that dining was sometimes more than an everyday experience for the wealthy, with lavish dinner parties thrown to impress their guests.

Food

The people of Pompeii and Herculaneum had a broad diet. They generally ate a lot of bread, which was primarily made from emmer, an ancient form of wheat. Staple food included bread, olives, cheese, fish and shellfish. They also had access to fruit (including apples, pears, grapes, olives, figs, quinces and pomegranates) and vegetables (including cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, endive, onions, leeks, asparagus, radishes, turnips, parsnips, carrots, beets and cucumbers). Meat was occasionally eaten, usually wild game and poultry. Butchered meat, such as beef, lamb and pork, was usually associated with rituals or dinner parties of the elite. Isotopic analysis has been conducted on the **bone collagen** of skeletal remains of people from both Pompeii and Herculaneum.[1] This measured the stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes to give insights into the diet of these individuals. These studies found that approximately 30 per cent of the diet of people in Herculaneum was comprised of seafood, with men eating significantly more seafood than women. In Pompeii, 26 per cent of men's diets was comprised of seafood, while only 17 per cent of the women's diets was seafood. In both cases, little protein was consumed, indicating that most of the food came from other sources (primarily bread).

The Roman diet

Certainly, we would expect some age and sex related differences at Herculaneum. By 30 years of age, most men might be supposed to have received a boost in their disposable income, allowing access to greater quantities of more expensive commodities such as fish … [A] study proposes that ca. 69% of the adult male citizen population were ex-slaves, and that ca. 60% of the entire urban slave population at Herculaneum were manumitted by the age of 30 … their standard of living and subsistence is likely to have improved following manumission … Furthermore if, as seems probable, freedmen were involved in the processing and trade of fish, they are likely to have had preferential access to this resource …

REV Martyn et al., 'Capturing Roman dietary variability in the catastrophic death assemblage at Herculaneum', *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports* 19, 2018, p 1027.

FIGURE 6.32 Mosaic of sea life of the Bay of Naples, the House of the Mosaic, Pompeii

Dining

Eating was an important part of life in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Most of the population did not eat at home regularly, but bought food from one of the many *thermopolia* or *tabernae* in the city. The numerous archaeological finds of tables and chairs that were probably dining chairs suggest that ordinary people of the cities purchased the food and returned home to eat it. The houses of less wealthy people also did not have facilities for cooking and preparing food.

FIGURE 6.33 An elaborate *triclinium*, the House of Julia Felix, Pompeii

Wealthier people of Pompeii and Herculaneum would often eat food prepared for them by their slaves at home. This would be eaten in various rooms in the house, depending on the time of year and the weather. Often tables and chairs were easily movable so that the family could dine together in different places in the house.

When wealthy people wanted to impress, they might hold a dinner party, which was a way of showing wealth and style to friends, business associates or political allies. These dinner parties would be carefully arranged by slaves, inviting only selected guests who would arrive at the house in their finest clothes. The dining group would be escorted to the formal dining room, the *triclinium*, which was arranged with three lounges on which the guests would recline and eat with their right hand from a central table while they rested on their left. Tableware would often be elaborate and expensive – there was an extensive collection of silverware found in the House of Menander in Pompeii. Often the *triclinia* would look onto a central feature of the house, such as a *hortus* or peristyle. The guests were arranged so that the guests of honour were closest to the host. Entertainment could include music, poetry recitals or even dancers. While the wife of the host would often dine with the guests, they would leave at an appropriately early point to allow the men to enjoy their own company.

FIGURE 6.34 Fresco from the House of Julia Felix, Pompeii. What items in this image would be seen as luxurious at a dinner party?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify the different foods represented in the images.
2. Outline the key points made by Martyn in the information box with regards to the Roman diet.
3. Explain why Martyn believes that men would have had greater access to seafood than women.
4. Explain how science supports the archaeology when investigating diets of Pompeii and Herculaneum.
5. Explain the difference in the dining experiences of the rich and poor people of the cities.

Clothing

Clothing in Roman cities was often used as a marker to indicate your association with Rome. The familiar image of the toga, however, would not have been common in everyday wear, with a more Hellenised, practical form of clothing worn by most people.

Men and women who had more physical work would have worn a simple tunic. This probably had a cord belt and was a simple colour, mostly blues and greens. Men who wanted to make themselves look more important (often members of the upper classes) would wear long tunics, wearing a full toga on special occasions. Formal togas were complicated to put on, often requiring several slaves to assist because they could be up to 6 metres long. When a man was campaigning for office, he would wear the *toga candida*, which was a toga bleached bright white to stand out in a crowd.

Upper-class women would mark themselves out as a ***matrona*** by wearing the traditional long gown that would extend nearly to the feet. This was worn over a light tunic and, in winter, a ***palla*** was draped over the shoulders. When upper-class women left the house, they would cover their heads with a ***stola*** or *palla*. This was also worn to mark a woman as respectable. Women would use a ***fibula*** to fasten them together on their shoulder. Simple strapped shoes were worn most of the time by all classes, though covered shoes would have been worn if a person needed to walk long distances.

matrona

a woman in Roman society who was the mother of the house; the title often conveyed a sense of tradition and religious piety

palla

a thick formal item of clothing like a cloak, worn by women

stola

a long, pleated tunic usually made of thick wool, worn by women

fibula

a formal pin used to fasten different items of clothing together

Source Study 6.3 Clothing

Source A: Scene from the Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.35

Source B: Distribution of bread, House of Julia Felix, Pompeii
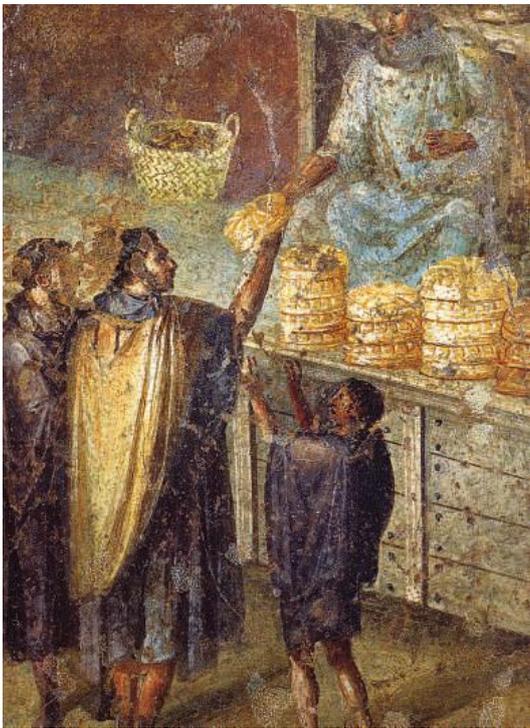
FIGURE 6.36

Source C: A banquet, House of the Triclinium, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.37

Source D: The soles of cork sandals found in Pompeii

FIGURE 6.38

Source E: Woman painting, the House of the Surgeon, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.39

Source F: Statue of Eumachia, modern copy of the original, Pompeii
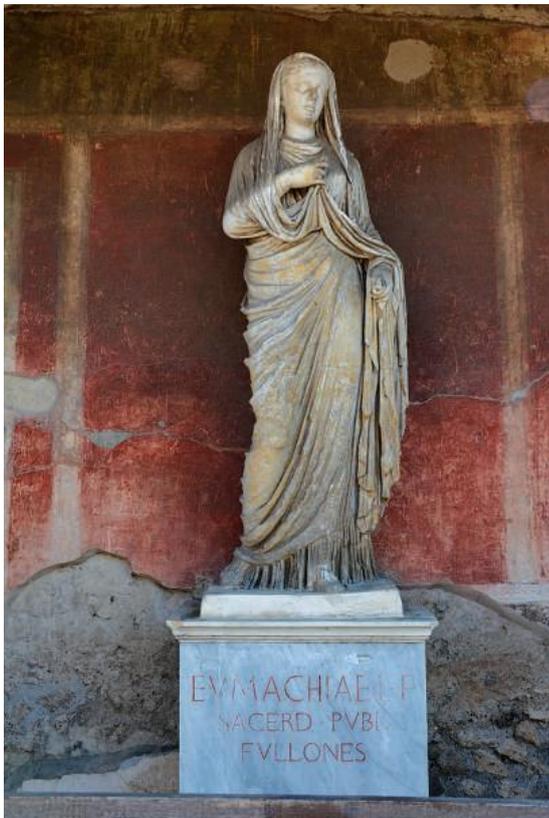
FIGURE 6.40

Source G: Statue of Marcus Nonius Balbus, Herculaneum

FIGURE 6.41

Questions

1. Select three of the sources showing clothing and describe in detail what the people are wearing.
2. How useful would the forum scene in Source A be when trying to investigate clothing in Pompeii?
3. Do you think the people receiving bread in Source B are upper, middle or lower class? Explain your answer.
4. Why do you think the clothing worn in Source C is an example of formal clothing? What features do you think makes the clothing 'formal'?
5. Why might Source D be considered a significant artefact?
6. Do you think the depiction of people and their clothing in Source E is realistic? Explain your answer.
7. Explain why the statues in Sources F and G are both useful and problematic sources to use when studying clothing in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
8. Do you think that the paintings or statues are better representations of clothing in Pompeii and Herculaneum? Explain your answer.

Health

It has long been believed that the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and more generally of the ancient world, lived lives that were much shorter, more violent and full of disease than we do today. This is often because when lifespan averages are calculated they take into account the high mortality rate of children. In fact, the evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum tends to suggest that once a person survived childhood they would generally live a life similar to ours today in terms of longevity and disease.

FIGURE 6.42 Plaster casts of human remains, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.43 Skeletal remains in the boatsheds, Herculaneum

One of the most reliable ways of examining health is by analysing the skeletal remains. Estelle Lazer has examined the bones of survivors of Pompeii and points out that while it is difficult to extract much information as a result of poor storage and excavation techniques, it is possible to determine a number of ailments. One of the ways that Lazer can determine health is by looking at evidence in the bones and making suppositions based on the health of someone suffering a similar ailment today.

Lazer found that the people of Pompeii generally had levels of health comparable to people today, potentially living lives as long as ours. She also believed that they had a robust immune system based on the levels of recovery from disease, illness and physical trauma. An analysis of dental remains also provides much information about the health of the population. Teeth are the hardest and most chemically stable remains, as well as highly mineralised. Because they interact with the environment when chewing, they are also useful to study the diet and health of individuals. The dental evidence indicates that oral hygiene was not practised, with only tooth extraction done. The presence of high levels of calculus and dental problems may indicate systemic conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and gastric and respiratory disorders. This is because in modern medicine: 'Correlation has been found between dental pathology, particularly periodontitis, and other cardiovascular disease, as well as pre-term low birth rate, diabetes, aspiration pneumonia and abscesses of the lung.'[2] There was a high incidence of dental enamel hypoplasia, a pathology that leads to a disorder of enamel formation during childhood. This can happen to children as a result of physiological stress, such as lack of food or poor hygiene. A study was carried out to find correlation between the AD 62 earthquake and the remains, and it found that one group of children who were about six years old at the time of the earthquake, and another group who were children approximately 10 years before the earthquake in AD 62, showed signs of enamel hypoplasia. This could also be the result of the significant amount of fluorine in the drinking water, heightened by increasing volcanic activity below the ground.[3]

Changes to bones (osteophytic change), including osteoarthritis, affect the load-bearing joints (such as hips, knees and spinal column) and can be caused by disease, diet, trauma or advancing age. The only specific disease that could be identified was diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis, which is associated with early life obesity and diabetes, and is unlikely to be present in modern populations under 50, indicating that people may have lived to a more advanced age.

The number of bones exhibiting healed or healing trauma was possibly 3 per cent. Sara Bisel, who completed studies of the skeletons found in Herculaneum, indicated that it was as high as 32 per cent of males and 11.4 per cent of females at Herculaneum, but she did not distinguish between inflammation, dislocations and fractures. Luigi Capasso, who also examined the skeletons at Herculaneum, found 10.5 per cent of people in Herculaneum with fractures, with a significantly larger number of males represented, which he claimed was labour-related.[4]

However, *porotic hyperostosis* to some degree (pitting on the cranial vault and orbits) can be identified in 90 per cent of skulls examined at Pompeii. This might indicate a nutritional deficiency, possible iron deficiency, anaemia or even a high parasite load in the population.

As a further discovery from the skeletons, Lazer also found that the people who died in the city were not just the very old or young, as has been traditionally supposed, but included people from all ages and genders. The people found were also genetically similar, indicating that they were mostly Italian. This indicates that there may have been a large exodus of non-Italians from the city, possibly after the earlier AD 62 earthquake.

The preponderance of figs and pomegranates found stored under layers of straw prior to pressing is important. The conservation method of these fruits produces heightened levels of *Streptomyces spp*, an antibiotic, which may have been eaten without the Romans knowing why these fruits were helpful to health. The low incidence of non-specific bone infections and inflammatory processes at Herculaneum is suggestive of the effectiveness of this antibiotic.

Pomegranate and figs were also suggested by medical handbooks at the time for the treatment of mouth and tongue ulcers, inflammations and oral soft tissue problems. Recent studies suggest that ingestion of pomegranate leaves, fruit, seeds and bark have antimicrobial and antifungal effects. These possibly protected the population from infections.[5]

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are skeletal remains useful for studying the health of the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum?
2. What type of information can we obtain from these skeletal remains?
3. Outline what the evidence of skeletal remains tells us about the health of people in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
4. Explain why Lazer's findings are contrary to the previous ideas of health of people in the cities.
5. Why are teeth useful for studying health of people in the ancient world?
6. Explain the connection between preserved figs and oral health and what this means for health more generally in the cities.
7. Explain what the evidence of dental records reveals about the lives of the people in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Baths, water supply and sanitation

Bathing was one of the most typically Roman activities. Whether or not you were a citizen, a freedman or from out of town, the baths were an important place to relax and stay clean. However, to have such large baths, huge amounts of water were required. This led to the building of another of Roman society's most recognisable features, aqueducts and water supply.

Baths

Many bathhouses were found throughout the Roman world. While there were only two bathhouses found in Herculaneum, the Forum Baths and Suburban Baths, there were several in Pompeii: the Forum Baths (built in the mid-1st century BC and rebuilt in the Augustan period); Central Baths (built after the AD 62 earthquake but not finished at the time of the eruption); Suburban Baths (built in the early 1st century AD); Sarno Baths (built in the 2nd century BC); and Stabian Baths (built during the 2nd century BC, and after AD 62) and private bathhouses, such as in the House of Julia Felix.

As well as contributing to good health and hygiene, bathing was a social event. Men would gather to discuss business, politics, or just to meet friends. Patrons would often gather at around noon to relax. They would undress in the *apodyterium*, begin in the *tepidarium*, then move into the **caldarium**. They might enter the *laconicum* if there was one in the bathhouse, then finish in the *frigidarium*. Slaves would be present to rub oil into the skin, then scrape it off with a strigil, which was a very effective way of cleaning the body.

The main bathhouses, the Forum, Central and Stabian, were entirely public, which meant that anyone could go and enjoy them. Often dignitaries would fund additions to them to enhance their status as public benefactors.

Bathing was not just for men, and some bathhouses (such as the Forum Baths) had separate sections for women. These baths would have separate entrances for men and women. The women's section was significantly smaller than the men's. In some baths, it was not unusual for the bath to be open to men and women at different times of the day.

Many other activities took place at the baths apart from bathing. It was a place where men could exercise, which was the purpose of the *palaestra*. They could also buy food while they were there and enjoy the company of women who were basically prostitutes. Most importantly though, the baths were a place for people to relax, stay clean and catch up with friends, business associates or political allies.
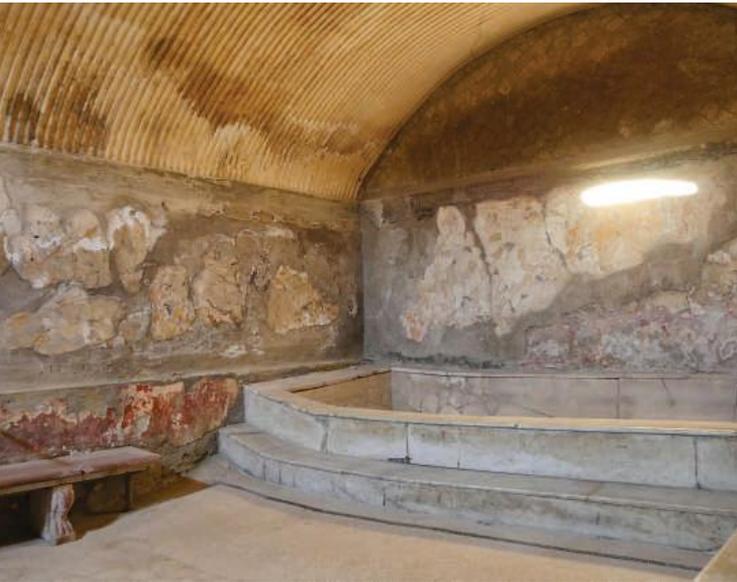
FIGURE 6.44 The *caldarium* in the Central Baths, Herculaneum

caldarium

a room with a bath full of hot water
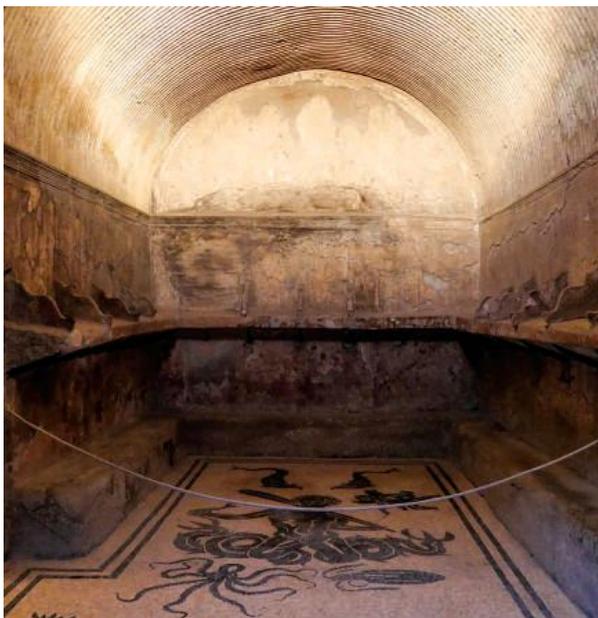
FIGURE 6.45 The *apodyterium* of the Central Baths, Herculaneum

Graffiti in the baths

A graffito found in the Suburban Baths at Herculaneum
Nuts and drinks, 14; pork rind, 2; bread, 3; cutlets, 12; sausages, 3; 8.51

CIL IV 10674

A graffito found in the Suburban Baths at Herculaneum
Two friends were here and because they had bad service for a long time from a person called Epaphroditus, they threw him out into the forum too late. They ate well and spent 105.5 sesterces ...

CIL IV 10675

A description of what happened in a bath in Rome
Imagine yourself now all the sorts of sounds, which are such that it is possible to make hearing odious. When strong men train and throw their weights around with their hands, or when he is working hard (or imitating someone working hard),

I hear the grunts; and whenever he lets out the breath he is holding, I hear his sharp breath out and high-pitched tones. Or maybe I notice some lazy guy content with a common oil rub, and hear the cracking blow on his shoulder, the sounds changing depending on whether the hand is flat or curved. Then if a ballplayer arrives and starts to count the score out loud, that's it! On top of that, occasional arrests of the guy who wants to fight or a pickpocket, or the man who likes to hear his own voice in the bathroom, then the one who jumps into the pool with great noise and splashing. Besides all of those whose voices are good, if nothing else, think about the hair plucker with his thin and hissing voice, who is doing it to distinguish himself, continually squeezing it out and never shutting up unless he is plucking someone's armpit and making them scream in his place. Then the cake-seller with various exclamations, and the sausage-seller, and the confectioner, and all the peddlers from the taverns selling their goods, and each with their own distinct melody.

Seneca, *Letters* 56
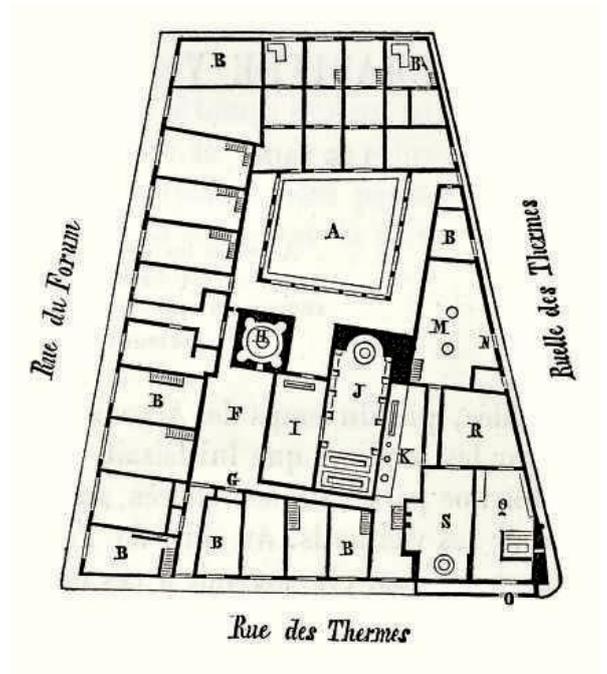
FIGURE 6.46 The Forum Baths in Pompeii. Which parts were for men and women? How can you tell?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Research the following terms and write down the role they played in bathing in a Roman bathhouse.

   a. *palaestra*   e. *frigidarium*

   b. *destrictarium*   f. *tepidarium*

   c. *laconicum*   g. *caldarium*

   d. *apodyterium*   h. *labrum*.

2. Pick a private and public bathhouse from Pompeii. Research them in detail. Investigate key information for each bathhouse on the following:

   a. rooms

   b. artefacts

   c. decorations.

3. Explain what the evidence can tell us about how Romans used the bathhouses. To help you, copy and complete the following table. You should include examples from both public and private bathhouses.

Purpose	Explanation	Evidence
Hygiene		
Recreation		
Social interaction		

4. Compare the nature of public and private bathhouses. Select three different features and copy and complete the following table.

Feature	Public bathhouse examples	Private bathhouse examples	Explanation of differences

Water supply and sanitation

As typical Roman cities, Pompeii and Herculaneum were provided with an aqueduct system. This was possibly supplied by the *Aqua Augusta*, although the exact system that provided the cities with water is unconfirmed. It is possible that Pompeii was supplied by a natural spring on the slopes of Vesuvius rather than the *Aqua Augusta*. Prior to the Augustan period, Herculaneum's water was supplied by wells, an underground rainwater **cistern** and the two nearby streams. Pompeii's water was originally also supplied by wells, and possibly the River Sarno.

Water infrastructure

The infrastructure of water supply was similar in both Pompeii and Herculaneum, however the remains of Pompeii's system are far more abundant than those of Herculaneum. At Pompeii, water was brought to the **castellum aquae**, located at the highest point in the city – the Vesuvian Gate (42.6 metres above sea level); the lowest point in the city, the Stabian Gate, was only 8.8 metres above sea level. Water was then circulated around the city by three main pipes which distributed water to a series of water towers. These water towers had grooves cut on each side, allowing pipes to connect to the open top container of the water tower. The containers were left open so that atmospheric pressure would continue to pump the water around the system and it also reduced water pressure in the system. Fourteen water towers have been found in Pompeii, while only three have been excavated in Herculaneum.

Water was supplied to fountains around the city (42 have been found in Pompeii, only three in Herculaneum), private houses (63 houses in Pompeii have been found to be connected to aqueduct water in Pompeii) and businesses (46 were connected in Pompeii) using primarily lead pipes. Water in fountains supplied most people with drinking water on a daily basis. Romans preferred rainwater or springwater to aqueduct water, so the houses of wealthier people in Pompeii had rainwater tanks. Aqueduct water was mostly used for water features in private houses, such as fountains. These could be shut on or off using valves installed in the houses.

Some of the largest consumers of water were businesses, such as fulleries, dyehouses and tanneries, which were sometimes connected to aqueducts. Bathhouses were also connected to aqueduct water, particularly as more people expected to see large water features such as pools in bathhouses. However, water was originally supplied to bathhouses

cistern
a large area or device used to capture and keep water for later use, usually part of a sewage system

castellum aquae
the first point of water entry into the city from the aqueduct; water filled the *castellum* and was distributed through the city by three outlet points

FIGURE 6.47 A fountain, Herculaneum

FIGURE 6.48 The *Castellum Aquae* of Pompeii

by wells found in the buildings. It was brought to the surface by treadmill-style machines and was then stored in large storage tanks – the capacity of the storage tank in the Stabian Baths was approximately 38 000 litres. Access to aqueduct water also seems to have stimulated development of bathhouses, with the women's baths in the Forum Baths added in the Augustan period.

The aqueduct system underwent several changes over time. The Augustan period saw the development of the water supply infrastructure in conjunction with improvements to the streets and footpaths. Extensive repair work was done after the earthquakes in the early AD 60s. Finally, at the time of the eruption, there seems to have been a new, deep-underground system being installed, some 2 metres below street level in some places. This is evidenced by the large trenches open on the side of the roads and was likely done to protect it from further earthquake damage.

The changes to the system in the AD 60s were probably a result of interrupted water supply after the earthquakes. There is also evidence of repair work done to the *castellum aquae* and numerous water towers. It seems that for most of the last decades, there was a significantly reduced water supply because the aqueducts in the region were affected by supply problems. The bathhouses appear to have been running on reduced capacity at the time of the eruption, or even being rebuilt, indicating reduced water supply at the time. However, the buildings of the Central Baths indicate that they expected the water to come back from the aqueduct soon, because the newly designed features, such as large baths, needed significant water supply. At least 11 of the 33 known private bathhouses went out of use after the AD 60s, possibly indicating a lack of water. Some private houses also installed rainwater tanks for water storage, indicating further problems with the water supply. Even the public toilets installed near the forum in the AD 60s were not connected to the aqueduct supply and probably used rainwater to flush them out.

FIGURE 6.49 Lead pipes carrying water into a building, Pompeii

Water supply

This evidence clearly shows a period of deteriorating, but continued, supply of water to the city, where pressure at the downstream end of the system became unreliable at best. Supply was reduced, then cut off, to peripheral areas … to increase the amount of water flowing to the main part of the system. Private properties at the upstream end of the system were least affected, but this seems to have been an accident of geography rather than deliberate preferential treatment.

D Keenan-Jones, 'Somma-Vesuvian ground movements and the water supply of Pompeii and the Bay of Naples', *American Journal of Archaeology* 119, 2015, p 199.

FIGURE 6.50 Lead pipes on the side of a road, Herculaneum

FIGURE 6.51 A water tower, Pompeii

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Using the information and images above, and any research you have undertaken, copy and complete the table.

The evidence reveals that:	Relevant historical details	Evidence
water systems were extensive		
water systems were systems were used by privately owned houses and businesses		
water systems developed over time		

2. Why were water towers an important part of water distribution?
3. Outline the different uses of water in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
4. What was the main use of water from the aqueducts in the cities? Why?

Sanitation

Pompeii and Herculaneum were very different cities with respect to sanitation. As Pompeii was a relatively old city, it lacked a sewer system. The only sewer systems in Pompeii surrounded the forum, Central, Stabian and Forum Baths, and the *palaestra*. In contrast, Herculaneum had a well-developed sewer system, which in some places was 3 metres high. Very few households had access to running water for sanitation, with cesspits used in Pompeii and niches in walls more common in Herculaneum. Only the wealthiest and oldest houses have toilets built in to the house, such as the House of the Faun or the Villa of the Mysteries; more often than not, people went to the toilet in a **commode**, or chamber pot. In Herculaneum the contents could be emptied down a drain, but in Pompeii many people would have emptied them on the streets at night. The natural downward slope of the city was important, because the rain would have flushed much of this type of waste away.

Public baths sometimes had a public toilet, and the overflow water from the baths were used to flush waste away. More often, public toilets (for men at least) were *dolia* placed around the city, cut short so that men could urinate into them. These were then sold to fulleries, where the urine was used as an important step in removing the **lanolin** from the wool. There were 10 known public toilets around Pompeii. One notable toilet was found in the western *summa cavea* of the Large Theatre, which seated six to eight people, and the circular water storage to the north-east may have also been used to supply water to flush away waste. The best-known public latrines were those found in the forum, which could seat 16 to 18 people. There is only one identifiable public latrine in Herculaneum, located in the men's section of

commode

a large pot kept under a bed, used as a toilet and emptied after use

lanolin

the thick, greasy, naturally-occurring oil on wool that makes the wool (and the animal) waterproof

FIGURE 6.52 The remains of the public toilet located near the forum, Pompeii

the forum baths. It is likely that a sea sponge attached to a stick was used to clean up after using a toilet, with water often in a narrow channel on the ground in front of the toilet.

Flooding could be a problem in Pompeii, so the city built raised stepping stones into the road to allow people to cross without getting wet. They were also separated so that carts could still travel up the roads. Masonry barriers were also built to direct water flows around the city.

Public urination

> … many people [in Pompeii and Herculaneum] were still using alleys or urban corners for their needs, others were probably more blatantly urinating against convenient building facades … It seems, then, that with the construction of these early toilets we are seeing the beginning of an attempt by urban officials perhaps to change personal habits or more likely to somewhat restrict unpleasant waste in public areas.

> AO Koloski-Ostrow, *The Archaeology of Sanitation in Roman Italy: Toilets, Sewers and Water-systems*, University of South Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2015, p 12.

FIGURE 6.53 A toilet in a private building, Pompeii

FIGURE 6.54 Raised steps in the road, Pompeii

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Outline the features of sanitation in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
2. Explain the differences in sanitation facilities between Pompeii and Herculaneum.
3. What does Koloski-Ostrow suggest about the reasons for the development of toilets in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
4. What does the evidence reveal about bathing in Pompeii and Herculaneum? In your response, refer to Figure 6.46 and your own knowledge.

Further resources

A Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994.

REV Martyn et al., 'Capturing Roman dietary variability in the catastrophic death assemblage at Herculaneum', *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports,* 19, 2018.

E Lazer, 'Skeletal remains and the health of the population at Pompeii', in M Flohr and A Wilson (eds), *The Economy of Pompeii*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017.

D Keenan-Jones, 'Somma-Vesuvian ground movements and the water supply of Pompeii and the Bay of Naples', *American Journal of Archaeology* 119, 2015.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Describe the different types of housing found at Pompeii and Herculaneum.
2. Explain why there are a variety of features, such as gardens and artwork, in different types of houses.
3. What is the difference between a villa and an urban house?
4. Explain the importance of evidence in understanding entertainment for the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum.
5. What types of entertainment would have been daily events, and which would have been 'special events'?
6. How did the experience of dining differ for people of different social classes?
7. Were the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum 'healthy'? Explain your answer.
8. Was going to the baths more of a social event or more for hygiene? Explain your answer.
9. What was the source of water for drinking in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
10. What were the main uses of water from aqueducts in Pompeii and Herculaneum?

Activities

1. There were many artefacts found inside houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Research artefacts found in the cities and copy and complete the table. You might want to consider not just the purpose of the artefact, but what its design can tell us about the people who owned it, or even what its location can tell us about the room in which it was found.

Artefact	City	Location	Description	Purpose	What can it tell us?

2. Choose two villas, one from each city. Research the villas, examining the evidence for both leisure as well as agriculture. Copy and complete the table for each villa.

City name	Villa name	Structures present	Artefacts found and location	What made it luxurious	What made it agricultural
Pompeii					
Herculaneum					

When you have finished the table, use the information to answer the following question: 'What does the evidence reveal about villas in Pompeii and Herculaneum?'

3. There are two buildings with strong associations with gladiators, the House of the Gladiators and the Gladiators' Barracks. Create a profile of each building, including information about their location, the history of the buildings, various rooms and artwork, artefacts found and any information about gladiators and gladiatorial contests that come from them.

4. Research the structure of a typical Roman amphitheatre. Find images of the Pompeian amphitheatre. On paper copies, or using a program such as Word, write annotations to accompany the images explaining how each part of the amphitheatre was used. Label as many parts of the images as you can.

5. Research the theatre at Herculaneum. Write a description of what was found and what it probably looked like 2000 years ago. Explain the similarities and differences between the Theatre of Herculaneum and the Large Theatre in Pompeii.

6. Dinner parties in Pompeii and Herculaneum would have been carefully staged to show the host in the best possible light. Research the organisation of a dinner party. Include different courses of meals, types of food, entertainments. Next, identify a *triclinium* from a house in Pompeii, and one from Herculaneum. Explain why these would have been appropriate rooms to hold an elaborate dinner party. Finally, write a paragraph outlining what the evidence reveals about dinner parties in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

7. Research how the *caldarium* and *frigidarium* were supplied with hot water. Find primary sources that you can use to support the information you find.

8. Pick a private and public bathhouse from Pompeii. Research them in detail. Record key information for both on the following:

   a. rooms
   b. artefacts
   c. decorations.

9. Explain what the evidence shows about how Romans used the bathhouses. To help you, copy and complete the table below. You need to include examples from both public and private bathhouses.

Purpose	Explanation	Evidence
Hygiene		
Recreation		
Social interaction		

10. Compare the nature of public and private bathhouses. To do this, select three different features and copy and complete the table.

Feature	Public bathhouse examples	Private bathhouse examples	Explanation of differences

HSC-style questions

1. How was water supplied to the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum? (4 marks)

2. Outline the main features of a house in Pompeii and Herculaneum. (5 marks)

3. What does the evidence reveal about entertainment in Pompeii and Herculaneum? (8 marks)

4. Assess the value and limitations of sources for studying bathing in Pompeii and Herculaneum. In your response, refer to Figure 6.55, other sources and your own knowledge. (12 marks)

FIGURE 6.55 The *palaestra*, Stabian Baths, Pompeii

Endnotes

1   REV Martyn *et al*, 'Capturing Roman dietary variability in the catastrophic death assemblage at Herculaneum', *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 2018, p 1023-1029.

2   E Lazer, 'Skeletal remains and the health of the population at Pompeii', in M Flohr and A Wilson (eds), *The Economy of Pompeii*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017, p 136.

3   C Tanga *et al*, 'Dental paleopathology seen through historical, archaeological and biological sources in Ancient Herculaneum', *Medicina Historica* 4, 2020, pp 1–10.

4   M Becker and L Capasso, '*I fuggiaschi de Ercolano: Paleobiologia delle Vittime dell'Eruzione Vesuviana del 79 d.C.*' Journal of Roman Studies, 93, 404.

5   C Tanga *et al*, 'Dental paleopathology seen through historical, archaeological and biological sources in Ancient Herculaneum (79 AD, Italy)', *Medicina Historica*, 2020, p 7.

Religion

FIGURE 7.1 A replica statue of Apollo in the pose of an archer, at the Temple of Apollo, Pompeii, with Mt Vesuvius in the background

Religion was fundamental to the daily rhythm of life in both Pompeii and Herculaneum. Both towns abound with evidence of sacred activity. There are the remains of large, ornate temples in the Pompeiian Forum, small religious shrines dedicated to protector gods (*lares*) carved into buildings at crossroads, private shrines in the atria and kitchens of homes and businesses, and religious art and graffiti plastered on walls of every type of building. Many of these same religious figures are also displayed on every day, non-religious items such as lamps.

This chapter will explain:

- the early influences of cultures, such as the Greek, Egyptian and Etruscan cultures, on religion
- the communal nature of public worship, centred on temples across sites in Pompeii and Herculaneum
- the importance of Roman state gods and the imperial family to religion after 80 BC
- the large number of shrines to the *lares* found across the sites at crossroads, *thermopolia* and bars
- the importance of household gods and household shrines (*lararia*) found in private buildings
- tombs as evidence of funerary and burial practices.

Forms of worship in Pompeii and Herculaneum

Religious activity can be loosely divided into three areas:

- public religion, which was focused on the worship of gods associated with the Roman state and was particularly concerned with the protection of the community and connection to Rome
- household and personal religion, which took place in private and focused on a range of protector gods of the family, kitchen and pantry; ritual practices were designed to ensure the health, wealth and continuing success of the *familia*
- mystery cults for initiated adherents, which had initiation rites (ceremonies) and a belief in an afterlife as two of their defining features.

All three spheres of religion were focused on ritual, rather than scriptural texts or an individual relationship with a god. Rituals included offerings of food and wine, as well as animal sacrifices. People prayed to the correct gods on particular days and said the correct prayers. Worshippers hoped to earn the favour of these gods, or at the very least keep them happy enough to avoid catastrophe.

FIGURE 7.2 Lamp depicting the goddess Diana with a crescent moon. How is this an example of personal piety to an individual deity?

Public worship

Evidence reveals that religion and politics were intertwined and public worship was a key means of establishing community identity. Regular festivals to the pantheon of gods took place on the steps of the temples and in the forum.

FIGURE 7.3 Pompeiian forum

The remnant history of religion at Pompeii and Herculaneum pre-dates the Romanisation that occurred throughout Campania in the 1st century BC. Before this period, religion in these towns was influenced by Greek, Etruscan and Egyptian practices. Some of this worship centred on the Greek god Apollo, whose temple was built in the 6th century BC. Other evidence from the pre-Roman period includes the Doric Temple in the Triangular Forum in Pompeii, which was probably dedicated to Minerva and Hercules. Near the Great Theatre was a shrine to Asclepius (or Jupiter Meilichios) and a temple to the Egyptian goddess Isis (the earliest example of a cult building to her in Italy). Both of these buildings have been dated to around the 2nd century BC.

After coming under Roman control, religious practices changed significantly. Priesthoods came under the control of the local magistrates, becoming political appointments, and new buildings were commissioned in the Forum that reflected the influence of the Roman state and culture. During this period buildings and shrines were dedicated to Venus, Augustus, Fortuna Augusta, and the imperial family of Rome. The worship associated with these new temples reflected the importance of publicly recognising the gods and rulers of Rome. Many elite citizens and *liberti* dedicated land and statues to the Roman deities, demonstrating both loyalty and a desire to establish their own social position.

FIGURE 7.4 Panel from Herculaneum depicting a ceremony for Isis on the steps of a temple. The altar is surrounded by priests and worshippers.

AM Small on priesthoods

The priesthoods were reformed according to Roman practice. In the new colony there were *pontifices* who administered Roman religious law, and *augures* who interpreted the omens sent by the gods (especially in the flight of birds). There was also a public priestess, drawn from one or other of the leading families of the city, who must have performed sacrifices at the Temple of Venus, and may have had a role in other cults as well ... Most of the pre-Roman sanctuaries continued, but they must have been brought within the religious laws that governed the cults of the new colony. In the Sanctuary of Apollo the magistrates replaced the old altar with a new one, in accordance with a decree of the decurions, as they recorded in an inscription.

AM Small, 'Urban, Suburban And Rural Religion In The Roman Period', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 186..

FIGURE 7.5 Map of the forum of Pompeii highlighting key buildings

The map legend:
- Temple of Jupiter (the *Capitolium*)
- *Macellum*
- Northwest building *holitorium*
- Imperial Cult Building (Sanctuary to the Public Lares)
- Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus (Temple of Vespasian)
- Sanctuary of Apollo
- Building of Eumachia (Portico of Concordia Augusta)
- *Basilica*
- Civic buildings
- *Comitium*

Religion in the Pompeiian forum

The forum was the centre of public worship, particularly for the gods associated with the city of Rome and with the Roman emperor. The most significant site was the Temple to Jupiter (the *Capitolium*), which dominated the open space of the forum at the northern end. The Temple of Apollo took up much of the western side, although it did not open into the forum. The eastern side of the forum had undergone significant changes since becoming a Roman colony. Many of these additions were focused on the town's new status, and the desire of the inhabitants to publicly express allegiance to Rome.

Temple of Jupiter (the *Capitolium*)

Built early in the period after Pompeii came under the control of Rome, the Temple of Jupiter was dedicated to the worship of Jupiter (king of the gods), Juno (his sister and wife, queen of the gods) and Minerva (Jupiter's daughter). These were the cult gods of the *Capitolium* in Rome, known as the Capitoline Triad. The temple's prominent position in the forum reflects the status of Pompeii as a Roman colony.

FIGURE 7.6 The Temple of Jupiter in the forum of Pompeii

FIGURE 7.7 The Temple of Apollo in the forum, Pompeii

Sanctuary of Apollo

The Sanctuary of Apollo dates back to as early as the 6th century BC and shows both the Greek and Etruscan influence in Campania. The temple was built during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. An altar and sundial were added after Pompeii became a Roman colony around 80 BC.

Apollo was associated with several activities, including archery, music and dance, and during the Roman period he was a god of healing and of oracles (foretelling the future). Bronze statues depicting him and his sister, the goddess Diana, were recovered during excavation and are now housed in the Museum of Archaeology in Naples. Initiation rites for boys and girls called the *ludi Apollinares* took place in honour of Apollo and Diana, including gladiatorial games and theatrical performances.

Imperial Cult Building (also called the Sanctuary of the Public Lares)

This building is now in a ruinous state, generally thought to have been built after the AD 62 earthquake. Exactly how it functioned is unclear. It may have been both a temple to public protector gods (*lares*) and also dedicated to the **genius** of the first emperor of Rome, the **deified** Augustus – it had niches for oversized statues, perhaps for emperors and other members of the imperial family. It has been compared to a *lararium*, a shrine for household wordship. Ley and Mau claim this is because:

> Cities, as well as households, had their guardian spirits. The worship of these … divinities was reorganized by Augustus, who ordered that, just as the Genius of the master of the house was worshipped at the family shrine, so his Genius should receive honor together with the Lares of the different cities.[1]

genius

an anonymous spirit who protected each person like a guardian angel; the *genius* of the male head of the household depicted in domestic shrines was worshipped as a protector of the *familia*

deified

formally recognised as a god

FIGURE 7.8 Altar from the Temple of Vespasian

Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus

Also known as the Temple of Vespasian, it was constructed in the first decade of the 1st century AD. The imagery and design link the building with the worship of Augustus and the imperial cult more generally, although this is not certain. A nearby damaged inscription suggests it was paid for by the priestess Mamia and dedicated to the worship of either the Genius of Augustus or the Genius of the Colony.

FIGURE 7.9 Close up view of the altar showing a priest and his attendants. He is preparing a ceremonial offering on a tripod, a bull is led by an attendant holding a ceremonial hammer.

Other shrines in the Pompeiian forum

As well as the temples, other buildings in the forum had religious associations and shrines. The building of Eumachia is more properly known as the Portico of Concordia Augusta, because it was dedicated by Eumachia to Concordia Augusta (a goddess of agreement in marriage and society, associated with the imperial family) and

Pietas (the personification of religious virtue, particularly in relation to duty to family). The building was dedicated to worship of the emperor and his family and included statues of important figures from Pompeii, as well as mythical figures associated with Rome, the Trojan hero Aeneas, and founder of Rome, Romulus. A series of shrines in the *macellum* also were dedicated to the imperial family.

Temples outside the forum

Public religious activity was not confined to the forum in Pompeii. Important temples to Venus, the patron of the Roman colony, and Fortuna Augusta were built in the period before the eruption. Older temples such as the Doric Temple, Temple of Asclepius (or Jupiter Meilichios) and the Temple of Isis were also outside the forum.

FIGURE 7.10 The Temple of Isis, Pompeii

Temple of Venus

Disassembled columns and stonework are all that survives of what is called the Temple of Venus; at the time of eruption in AD 79, it was still being reconstructed after damage from the AD 62 earthquake. The temple was located near the Marine Gate and is believed to have been focused on Venus, the protector goddess of Pompeii. The colony at Pompeii, established by the Roman politician and general Cornelius Sulla around 80 BC, was called *Colonia Veneria Cornelia Pompeianorum*. This name reflected Sulla's belief that he was favoured by the goddess Venus. Multiple pieces of epigraphic evidence refer to Venus Pompeiana, a title for the goddess unique to the city. The inhabitants of Pompeii called on her for protection and favour.

Religion in inscriptions found in Pompeii

I ask you to elect Numerius Barcha, a good man, as duumvir. May Venus Pompeiana [be favourable] to your offerings.

CIL IV 26

Methe, slave of Cominia, from Atella loves Chrestus. May Venus Pompeiana be propitious to their hearts and always let them live in harmony.

CIL IV 2457

Temple of Isis

One of the only public buildings to be largely rebuilt after the AD 62 earthquake, the temple of Isis was built near the end of the 2nd century BC. The cult of Isis was popular among the inhabitants of the cities, with ritual images of Egyptian gods, including Isis and other objects associated with her worship (such as ritual rattles, known

FIGURE 7.11 Reconstruction of the temple of Isis in Pompeii using a 1:25 scale, designed and made by architect Francesco Colussi, Naples Museum of Archaeology

FIGURE 7.12 The Temple of Fortuna Augusta

FIGURE 7.13 Steps of the Doric Temple

FIGURE 7.14 The Temple of Asclepius

Augustales

priests appointed to maintain the worship of the Emperor Augustus and his family, the Julii

as *sistra*), found throughout Pompeii and Herculaneum. The building was surrounded by a high wall and worship there was for initiates (members) of the religion. The temple probably indicates trade and cultural links between the cities. Not far away on the Bay of Naples, there was a town called Puteoli (now known as Puzzuoli), which had a temple dedicated to a different Egyptian god, Serapis, and evidence suggests that the cult was also worshipped in Herculaneum and Stabiae.[2]

Temple of Fortuna Augusta

The temple of Fortuna Augusta was paid for by one of Pompeii's leading citizens at the time, M Tullius. The temple was dedicated to an emerging cult surrounding the emperor Augustus and the goddess of chance, Fortuna. It was built at an important crossroads near the Forum and was a public demonstration of Tullius' loyalty to Rome and generosity to the city. The cult was important for slaves and freedmen, who served as its presidents and attendants, giving thanks for the new regime introduced by Augustus.

Doric Temple

Minerva (also known as Athena) and Hercules are thought to have been the objects of worship at this site, although it may have been nothing more than ruins already at the time of the eruption. Large numbers of votive terracotta offerings depicting Minerva were discovered around the temple, dating from the 4th to 2nd century BC. According to scholar Rebecca Ammerman, these large numbers of votive offerings demonstrate the connection with Minerva.[3]

Temple of Asclepius (Temple of Jupiter Meilichios)

The attribution of this temple is contentious and may have been linked with the Greek god of medicine and healing, Asclepius. This attribution is based on a terracotta statue and medical kit found at the site. Another hypothesis is that it was a temple to Jupiter Meilichios (honey sweet), a god associated with the underworld, although such shrines are usually located outside the city walls.

Temples and sanctuaries outside the walls of Pompeii

Three other religious sites have been identified in the area surrounding Pompeii, all of which date to the pre-Roman period and reveal the strong Greek influence in the area. They are a temple of Dionysus, near what was then the mouth of the River Sarno; a sanctuary probably dedicated to Neptune; and another temple which may have been dedicated to Jupiter (Zeus) Meilichios.

Evidence of public religion in Herculaneum

No significant public temples have been found in Herculaneum. This is not surprising, because much of the city remains unexcavated. Two small shrines have been identified overlooking the sea and are associated with the worship of Venus. Evidence from a building, called the 'College of the Augustales', shows that the *Augustales* were active there, although the exact function of the building is unclear. It may have been a temple to Augustus and the imperial cult.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the difference between the three different types of religious experience in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
2. What influenced religion in these cities before 80 BC?
3. What impact did becoming a Roman colony have on religion in these cities?
4. What was the importance of public worship?
5. Explain the importance of the forum in public religion.
6. Explain the relationship between politics and religion.
7. What was the purpose of the Imperial Cult building?
8. What different influences can you identify in the religious sites outside the forum?
9. What does the evidence from temples and shrines reveal about the nature of public worship in the cities?

Household and personal religion

Private religious activity was centred around the home and the worship of the protector gods (the *lares*), the *genius* of the family, gods of the pantry (the *penates*) and the goddess of the hearth, Vesta. Worship focused on a shine called a *lararium* (plural *lararia*), often located in a prominent position in the house. Prayer was usually led by the *paterfamilias* although others in the household, including women, would offer prayers.

Different households seem to have favoured different gods, demonstrated by statues found on *lararia*. Ancestor worship was a common feature, with the *paterfamilias* saying prayers to the family **gens** and we know that wax masks of deceased loved ones were placed in *lararia*.

Common features of religion in the household included:

- the *lararium*, associated with a hearth; many *lararia* are found near kitchens, in atria or in gardens
- *lares*, sometimes thought of as household gods, who were benevolent guardians associated with particular places, such as the home, travel, crossroads and ancestors
- *penates*, guardians of the household, usually linked to the pantry – these gods were kept content to ensure the continuing prosperity of the family, and food would be set aside or burnt for them as an offering
- the *genius* of the family, like a guardian angel; associated with the male head of the household and worshipped to ensure the continuity of the household
- snakes, a common feature of *lararia* and household worship, because they were symbols of fertility and protection.

gens

an extended family group in Roman society, including nuclear and extended family members of the same name

FIGURE 7.15 *Lares* and snake from a house in Regio VII, Pompeii. *Lares* appear on either side of a sacrifice scene, pouring wine from a rhyton (horn-shaped cup) into a bucket. In the centre of the top panel, the *genius* performs a sacrifice on an altar, accompanied by attendants and a flute player. Below are two snakes, symbols of prosperity, near an altar with eggs.

FIGURE 7.16 A curled serpent, a symbol of divinity, found at a *lararium* in the *villa rustica* of Gnaeus Domitius Auctus, Pompeii

Other gods might be worshipped in the house for a range of reasons. For example, the household of a businessman might offer sacrifices to Mercury, the god of commerce, or a household might make offerings to Isis if they were initiates in the cult of Isis.

Crossroads shrines

Pompeii was divided into separate districts, and each district also had *lares* to protect them in the same way that a household would. The shrines for the *lares* were usually found at crossroads because such places were where people had to make choices about which direction to travel. Crossroads were seen as opportunities for evil spirits to play havoc and cause people to get lost and confused. This was particularly important in the ancient world when it was very dark at night and danger was never far away if you strayed down the wrong road.

Flower on the *lares* of Pompeii

From monumental temples to modest altars at street corners, from household shrines to tiny, portable bronze statuettes, inhabitants of Rome (and many other places in Italy and beyond) spent their days under the watchful care of a multitude of different lares. As the case of Pompeii, the best-preserved ancient city, reveals, the religious landscape of a Roman(ized) town consisted of a handful of temples in their own dedicated precincts balanced by dozens of street altars and hundreds of domestic shrines inside houses and places of business … In simple visual terms, a person walking around the city streets in the first century AD and entering the houses, shops, or places of production was constantly encountering easily recognizable twin lares in similar iconographic patterns, many freshly (re)painted and often accompanied by visible signs of recent offerings.

H Flower, *The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2017, p 1.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Outline the features of household worship.
2. What were crossroads shrines and why were they important?
3. Read the extract from Flower.
   a. Which city is she talking about? Why is this relevant?
   b. What does she say that people of the city would have seen walking around their neighbourhood?
   c. What does the extract indicate about the nature of religion in Pompeii?
4. Research the different household rituals performed at *lararia*. Write a report explaining the gods worshipped, and the prayers and rituals performed.

Foreign 'mystery' cults and religions

People throughout the Roman Empire incorporated gods from other lands. These gods were adapted and worshipped alongside the Roman pantheon of gods. Not all people worshipped the 'foreign' gods but there is extensive evidence of the worship of Egyptian gods, such as Isis, Osiris and Bes as well as other gods such as Sabazius and Dionysus (Bacchus). The stories and myths surrounding these foreign gods were Romanised, with aspects of Roman

(or other foreign) gods and their stories intertwined to create a new mythology. The two primary mystery cults for which there is solid evidence are dedicated to Isis and Dionysus. These cults offered a hope of life after death that was not a feature of Roman religion generally and a mystical world not open to everyone, only those initiated into the cult.

Cult of Isis

The Cult of Isis was based on worship of the Egyptian goddess, Isis. Even though the gods who were worshipped and many of the symbolic elements were Egyptian, it was similar to other Greco-Roman cults in that it focused on fertility, regeneration and life after death. Statues and frescoes from the temple show that Egyptian gods, such as Bes and Anubis, were also worshipped in the sanctuary of Isis. Statues to the Roman goddess Venus and the Greek god Dionysus were also found at the temple of Isis.

To partake in the ceremonies, one needed to be initiated into the cult, and although there was a large shrine near the theatre, high walls would have obscured the private ceremonies that took place inside. The cult was popular with women and freedmen, and also much of the general population in the period before the eruption, based on the widespread evidence of Isis worship found throughout both cities.

FIGURE 7.17 Statue of Venus, Pompeii

FIGURE 7.18 Statue of Isis from the Temple of Isis, Pompeii

Worship of Sabazius

Bronze hands associated with the Eastern god, Sabazius, were found in Regio II of Pompeii. The cult of Sabazius was associated with both Zeus and Dionysus, and orgiastic initiation rites. It was outlawed in Rome from 139 BC. Even though it is unlikely that the worship of Sabazius was widespread in Pompeii and Herculaneum, the 'shrine' to Sabazius found in Regio II shows the diversity of religious practices in the home. The house had frescoes to conventional Roman gods such as Venus and Priapus, as well as a shrine with objects related to Sabazius.

Cult of Dionysus (Bacchus)

Dionysus was an important Greek god, associated with agriculture, fertility, grapes and wine and the Roman god Bacchus. There was a temple dedicated to his worship outside Pompeii that was built in the early 3rd century BC. Images of Dionysus commonly appear as frescoes, statues and mosaics in houses, shrines and gardens. Some depictions were probably more decorative than religious. One important series of frescoes is from the large Villa of the Mysteries outside the Herculaneum Gate of Pompeii. These frescoes depict mythic elements associated with Dionysus, including his wife Ariadne, fauns and winged figures engaging in what appear to be activities associated with initiation, drinking wine, dancing and ritual flagellation (whipping).

Judaism and Christianity

Some evidence to support a Jewish presence in Pompeii has been found, including the presence of names such as Maria and David, and marked amphorae from Judea. This evidence is far from conclusive, however. Despite some claims by 19th century writers, there is no definitive proof of any Christian presence in Pompeii or Herculaneum.

FIGURE 7.19 Votive bronze hands; the front two are associated with the worship of Sabazius. This is revealed by the symbols of pinecones and snakes wrapped around the wrists of the front two hands.

FIGURE 7.20 Fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries, showing scenes from Dionysus' life and an initiation ceremony

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the key characteristics of mystery cults? Explain how mystery cults were different from more traditional religious practices.
2. Which mystery cults seem to be the most prevalent in Pompeii? What is the evidence for this?
3. What does evidence reveal about the importance of foreign cults and religion to the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum?

FIGURE 7.21 *Aedicula* tomb of Publius Vesonius Phileros, Vesonia, and Marcus Orfellius Faustus. Evidence of pig bones indicate that a ritual meal took place, and a burnt coin was buried in an urn with the ashes.

Tombs

Death brought pollution, so the Romans buried their dead outside a town's walls. In Pompeii the dead were buried along the roads that radiated out from the city. *Necropoleis* (cemeteries) have been uncovered outside Pompeii's walls around the Herculaneum, Vesuvius, Nocera, Stabiae and Nola gates. Many tombs, such as that of Publius Vesonius Phileros, Vesonia, and Marcus Orfellius Faustus, were built to house the remains of multiple members of a household; in this tomb complex, 18 individual burials were found.

Approximately 250 tombs and burials have been recorded and excavated since Pompeii was rediscovered. The earliest burials are found outside the Herculaneum Gate, and many aristocratic tombs are located there, including the *schola* (bench) tomb of the priestess and patron, Mamia. Outside the Vesuvius Gate some highly decorated monumental tombs were uncovered. The Nola Necropolis has tombs for members of the Praetorian Guard as well as urns containing the ashes of lower-class citizens. The *necropolis* of the Nocera Gate has the tomb of the famed Eumachia, as well as many tombs for ex-slaves (*liberti*).

Although the tombs represent how people, including slaves, *liberti* and the wealthy, were buried, they can be problematic. Some groups (such as the *liberti* and the elite) are over-represented, while others (such as slaves and lower-class citizens) are under-represented. Regardless of this, the tombs give us tantalising glimpses about Roman beliefs surrounding death.

Burial practices

Ancient literature helps us understand what happened during a Roman funeral. When somebody died a cyprus branch was placed above the door to warn others of the pollution of death. All the family took part in the funerary preparations; women from the household laid out the body and washed it, anointing it with oil. Perfumes were used to cover the smell. Death masks were made, which relatives or actors wore. Almost all bodies were cremated and placed in funerary urns in a tomb, or in the ground beneath a grave marker such as a **herm** or **columella**.

Incorrectly buried bodies were thought to become ghosts. While Roman religion was not particularly focused on life after death, the correct rituals around cremation, rites of purification and funeral feasts were of great importance. After the burial, rituals and offerings would be carried out beside the grave, particularly on festivals associated with the dead such as the *parentalia*. Sometimes **libations** were also offered through a tube into the ground. According to Virginia Campbell these were 'aimed at freeing the living survivors of the pollution of death and modifying the status of the deceased in order for him/her to become the recipient of a funerary cult.'[4]

herm

a marker used at important junctions, such as crossroads, to give people religious protection when making decisions about which way to go

columella

stylised tombstone busts of the dead, beneath which their ashes were buried

libations

offerings made to the Gods of the Dead who lived underground, usually by pouring wine or oil onto the ground

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were tombs located outside the walls of Pompeii?
2. For whom were the tombs built? Which groups are best represented? Why?
3. What is the importance of burial rituals according to Virginia Campbell?
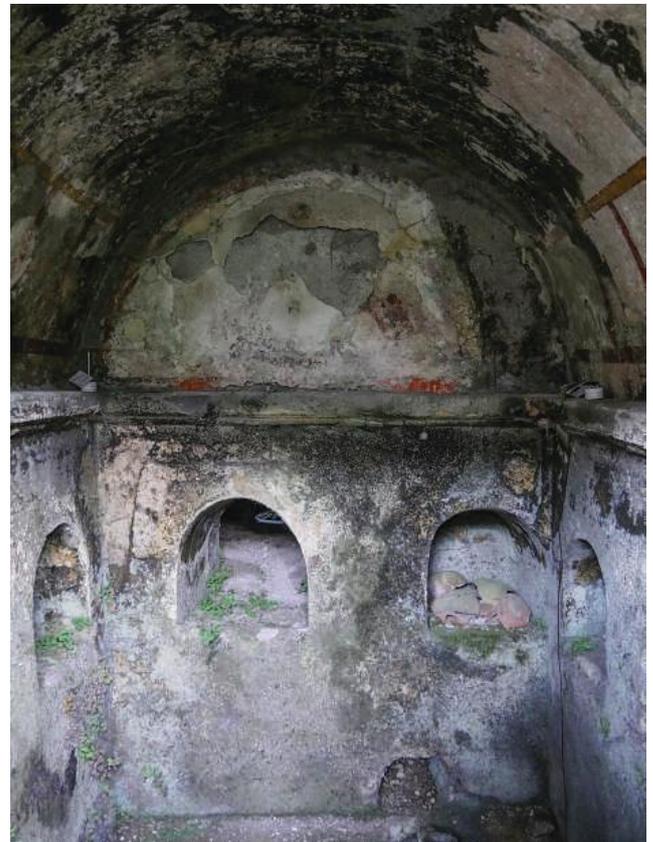
FIGURE 7.22 The inside of a tomb, outside the Nocera Gate. The tomb has a vaulted ceiling that was painted with a hunt scene. The niches were for individual funerary urns to hold cremated ashes.

Further resources

AM Small, 'Urban, Suburban And Rural Religion In The Roman Period', in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp 184–211.

AE Cooley and MGL Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum. A Sourcebook*, Routledge, London, 2014, pp 117–159.

M Beard, *Pompeii: The Life of a Roman Town*, Profile Books, London, 2008, pp 276–308.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. What was the role of temples in the religious life of the people of Pompeii?
2. Explain the importance of household gods to the Roman family?
3. Outline what evidence suggests about the worship of foreign gods and cults?
4. What does evidence from tombs reveal about burial practices of the people of Pompeii?

Activities

1. Create a table of sources for understanding religion in this chapter. Use the example in the table to help structure the information.

Source	Evidence
Lamp with Diana	• Religious imagery was used on everyday objects. • Greek gods and imagery were important to religion.
Temple of Fortuna Augusta	

2. Research the Temple of Apollo. Explain what the history, layout and dedication of the altar reveal about the changing nature of religion in Pompeii.
3. Design a ritual ceremony, including prayers, to ask for blessings for you and your school *familia* (Ancient History class). You could even make a mock *lararium* based around a shelf (in place of an altar).
4. Select a mystery cult that was present in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Research its practices and beliefs. Explain how the evidence found at the cities supports our understanding of the cult.
5. Research different types of tombs found in Pompeii. Create a table that records the type of tomb, the features and an example.

HSC-style questions

1. Outline what public buildings reveal about religion in Pompeii. (4 marks)
2. How useful are tombs for understanding religion? (6 marks)
3. What does the evidence reveal about foreign cults and religions? (8 marks)
4. Assess the value and limitations of household shrines as evidence for understanding the religious practices of the people of Pompeii. Refer to Figure 7.22, below, and your own knowledge. (12 marks)

FIGURE 7.22 A funerary urn. This ornate blue vase was discovered in Pompeii in 1837.

Endnotes

1   FW Kelsey and A Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, Macmillan, London, 1902, p 104.

2   AE Cooley and MGL Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum. A Sourcebook,* Routledge, London, 2014, p 119.

3   R Ammerman, 'New evidence for the worship of Athena at the Doric temple in Pompeii's Triangular Forum – *Maria Teresa D'alessio, Materiali Votivi Dal Foro Triangolare Di Pompei* (*Corpus delle stipi votive in Italia XII. Regio I*)', 1; Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, Rome 2001. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, vol 17, 2004, pp 531–536.

4   V Campbell, *The Tombs of Pompeii: Organization, Space, and Society*, Routledge, London, 2015, p 8.

The influence of Greek and Egyptian cultures

FIGURE 8.1 Perseus with the head of slain Medusa from a fresco, Pompeii

Evidence shows that Pompeii and Herculaneum were **cosmopolitan** cities influenced by a history of migration and their location near the centre of the Mediterranean. As with much of the southern Italian peninsula, these towns were heavily influenced by Greek and Egyptian cultures. Roman society in general was heavily influenced by Greek culture, but it was seen as a mark of a cultured citizen to appeal to Greek culture and there is evidence of this in both cities. It also became fashionable to use Egyptian symbols and motifs in art and architecture after Augustus' defeat of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, in 31 BC.

cosmopolitan

a city or region that has many different cultures, sometimes kept separate and sometimes blended to form a new culture

This chapter will explain

- the impact of Greek colonisation of southern Italy on the art and architecture of Pompeii and Herculaneum
- the spread of Egyptian influence to southern Italy during the Hellenistic period
- the types of evidence that show the influence of Greek and Egyptian cultures
- the impact of both cultures on art and architecture.

Greek influences

Greece was a particularly important and early influence on the area and, in fact, Campania formed part of an area known as *Magna Graecia*, or Greater Greece. This Roman term referred to the sections of southern Italy that had a large Greek population dating back as far as the 8th century BC.

The dominance of Greek city states in the Mediterranean was later replaced by Roman power. After the 2nd century BC, further cultural exchange resulted from Roman expansion into and trade with **Hellenistic** Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. These links with the Hellenistic world led to incorporation of many aspects of Greek and Egyptian culture into Roman art, architecture and religion.

Magna Graecia

the part of Italy that was settled by Greek people in the 6th to 4th centuries BC

Hellenistic

a period of Greek history stimulated by Alexander the Great's conquests when Greek culture was spread widely

FIGURE 8.2 Greek columns from House of the Relief of Telephus, Herculaneum

FIGURE 8.3 The Large Theatre in Pompeii is laid out in the manner of a classical Greek theatre.

Greek influence can be seen in the art, architecture and religion of both cities. Herculaneum is named after the Greek demi-god Herakles (the Roman Hercules). The Temple of Apollo and the Doric Temple are two of several Greek temples in and around Pompeii (see Chapter 7). The statues, frescoes, gardens, design and layout of buildings all reflect not only the artistic style and beliefs of early Greek settlers, but also a Roman love of Greek culture.
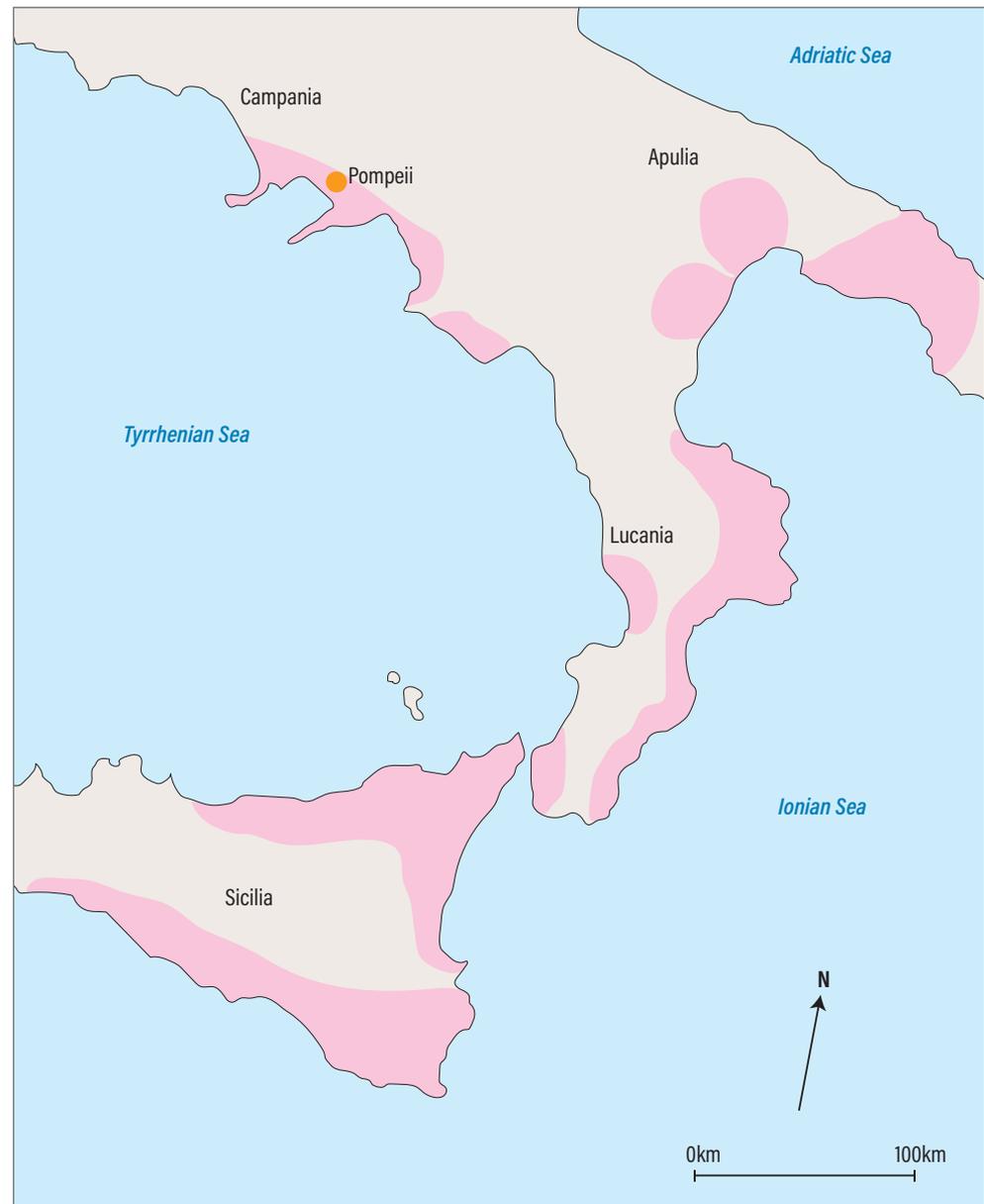
FIGURE 8.4 Greek areas of southern Italy are shown in pink.

Much of the art painted on the walls, the mosaics laid on the floors and the statues that adorned the buildings reflected Greek myths and aesthetics. Similarly, many of the architectural elements including columns, porticoes and peristyles used throughout the towns are of Greek origin. One of the most impressive examples is the Alexander mosaic from the House of the Faun. Based on a painting from the 3rd century BC, it is believed to depict the battle of Issus, where Alexander the Great defeated Persian King Darius III.

FIGURE 8.5 Top: a painted reconstruction of the Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun
Details of the mosaic showing the Persian King Darius III, left, and Alexander the Great, right.

FIGURE 8.6 Mosaic of Greek theatrical masks from the House of the Faun

Egyptian influences

Although Egypt's influence throughout the Mediterranean was extensive, it increased after Egypt came under the control of Alexander the Great's general, Ptolemy. This period in Egyptian history is referred to as the Hellenistic period, and the Egyptian influences brought to southern Italy during this time were combined with Greek elements. Further interest in Egyptian culture stemmed from the incorporation into the Roman Empire of Egypt, a faraway land of exotic creatures, gods and art.

Egyptian images adorn many gardens, and the Temple of Isis combines the worship of an Egyptian goddess with Greek cult elements. Similarly, private buildings, such as the House of the Faun, contained mosaics and frescoes depicting animals and scenes from the Nile.

FIGURE 8.7 Details from a large Nilotic mosaic depicting the animals of Egypt, the House of the Faun, Pompeii

FIGURE 8.8 Image of the Egyptian god Bes from the Temple of Isis, Pompeii

FIGURE 8.9 Fresco from Herculaneum depicting a cult ceremony to the goddess Isis

FIGURE 8.10 Nilotic scene with pygmies, from House of the Physician, Pompeii. Why do you think the artist included pygmies?

Merrills on the Egyptian influence

By the time of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE, **Nilotic** motifs or 'Aegyptiaca' were exceptionally common in public and domestic settings throughout Pompeii and Campania and were also to be found in a number of tombs. Encompassing a wide range of decorative forms, from small floor mosaics and tiny **vignettes** within complex wall-schemes to substantial vistas and complete decorative systems, this material provides an extraordinary – indeed unique – opportunity to reflect upon the conceptualization of a distant colony within the emergent Empire.

A Merrills, *Roman Geographies of the Nile: From the Late Republic to the Early Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, p 106.

Nilotic
something that is of, or relates to, the River Nile

vignettes
small images that tell a little story or remind viewers of one

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In which ways did Greek culture influence the culture of people in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
2. Which aspects of Egyptian society seem to have influenced art and architecture in Pompeii and Herculaneum?
3. What are the points of similarity in the influences of Greece and Egypt in the cities? How can you account for this?
4. Merrill claims that Pompeii and Herculaneum give historians and archaeologists a chance to see how the people of the cities 'conceptualised' Egypt. What does this mean? What seems to have been the concept of Egypt in the cities? Use examples to support your answer.

Further resources

M Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Fund,* Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2008.

A Merrills, *Roman Geographies of the Nile: From the Late Republic to the Early Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.

A Wallace-Hadrill, 'Hellenistic Pompeii: Between Oscan, Greek, Roman and Punic', in J Prag and J Quinn (eds), *The Hellenistic West: Rethinking the Ancient Mediterranean,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013, pp 35–43.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Why were these towns influenced by Greek and Egyptian cultures?

2. What seems to have been the most significant areas of influence that Greek and Egyptian cultures had on Pompeii and Herculaneum? Explain your answer.

3. In what ways were both Egypt and Greece made to seem both foreign and exotic, yet familiar to the audience?

Activities

1. Explain how the layout, art and architecture of the House of the Faun reveal both a Greek and Egyptian influence. Choose three key pieces of evidence from the house to support your explanation.

2. Locate images showing the influence of Greek and Egyptian culture on architecture in the cities. Explain how the influences can be seen in each of the images.

3. Examine images of Nilotic scenes from Pompeii. Explain which features you think are realistic and which ones are not. Explain the reasons for depicting things as they have in the images you locate.

HSC-style questions

1. Outline what evidence from private buildings reveals about the influence of Egyptian culture. (4 marks)

2. How useful is art and architecture for understanding the influence of Greek culture? (6 marks)

3. What does the evidence reveal about the influence of Greek and Egyptian cultures? (8 marks)

Changing interpretations

FIGURE 9.1 A fresco of Apollo; new technologies can be used to analyse the mineral composition of the paint used.
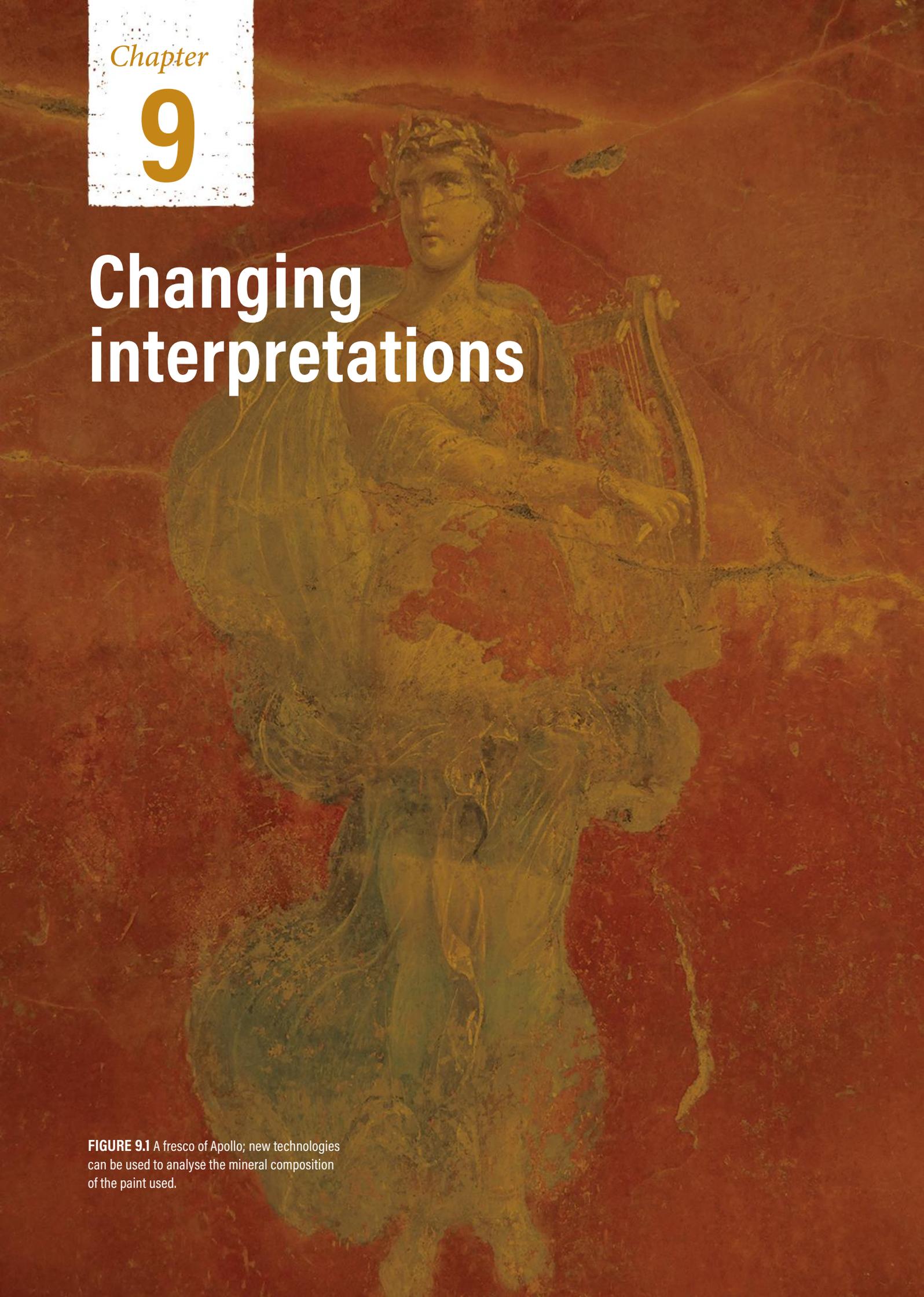
Archaeology is continually finding new evidence to study. One of the most important aspects about the study of Pompeii and Herculaneum is that our knowledge is constantly being updated. This can be through the use of new technology, by finding new materials through excavations, or simply by reinterpreting old evidence in a new light.

This chapter will explain:

- why interpretations of evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum change
- how new technology changes our understanding of the evidence
- how changing archaeological methodologies have led to new interpretations
- the role of new research in changing interpretation of these sites
- some recent noteworthy finds and their implications for future study.

Impact of new research and technologies

The sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum are two of the most intensively studied archaeological sites in human history. Since their rediscovery in the 18th century, the way they have been uncovered and studied has developed alongside the field of archaeology more generally. This understanding can be attributed to three major factors:

- the increasing professionalisation of archaeology as a discipline
- the evolving nature of technology available to researchers
- the changing values and perspectives of the people studying the sites.

Thus, the story of the excavation of Pompeii and Herculaneum is fundamentally a story of changing interpretations. As new discoveries are made and new technologies are used on the material, our understanding of every aspect of life in these cities is shifting. These changing interpretations affect almost every area studied, many of which have been covered in the preceding chapters.

New research in archaeobotany has changed our understanding of what types of food and wine were produced and consumed. New technologies, such as carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis of bones, have allowed researchers to reconstruct people's diets from their remains. Changing values and perspectives have led to the re-evaluation of earlier theories about the impact of the AD 62 earthquake on the economy and society of these cities. It is important to realise that these processes are ongoing and that new interpretations resulting from technological advances and changing approaches to the evidence, will continue to take place.

Recent excavations conducted by the Great Pompeii Project have focused on Regio V in Pompeii, a region partially uncovered in earlier periods but now more intensely researched. Not all changing interpretations are a result of new evidence, some are the result of researchers bringing new perspectives to already existing evidence.

How science is improving archaeological methodologies at Pompeii

The archaeological investigations conducted in Regio V employed a methodology based on cutting-edge technology (from the drone to georadar, the endoscope and the laser scanner) and a large multidisciplinary team (architects, archaeologists, restorers, volcanologists, palaeobotanists, anthropologists and archaeozoologists). This made it possible to document and analyse each phase of the excavation in all its many aspects. The constant presence of an anthropologist during excavation, for example, made it possible to carry out a real-time study of the skeletons of the victims … in much greater detail than was previously possible. The ongoing studies, including those on their DNA, will also allow an accurate understanding of their eating habits, medical pathologies, age and family relationships. Furthermore, for the first time it was possible to observe and document the excavations conducted in the past in detail, courtesy of the survey of numerous traces of tunnels, which probably predate the excavations.

M Rispoli and S Siano, Archaeological Areas of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, *2020 State of Conservation Report*, Archaeological Park of Pompeii and Herculaneum, 2020.

Changing views about the significance of the AD 62 earthquake

It is likely that the area of Campania experienced a long period of seismic activity before the eruption. One such event mentioned by ancient writers is the AD 62 earthquake, and the impact of this earthquake on the economy, health and social structure of Pompeii has been an important area of ongoing discussion since the 1940s, covering almost all areas of research from the health of the population to the economy.

Amedeo Maiuri argued in 1942 that the earthquake hastened the social decline of Pompeii, noting that this period witnessed the 'transformation of many upper-class houses' into workshops, 'modest dwellings' and bars 'in short the invasion of the mercantile class'. He proposed that there was an exodus of the upper classes to the countryside, who were then replaced by small business owners and industrialists. However, since Maiuri, many scholars have looked at the impact of this event in a different light.

FIGURE 9.2 Recent excavations in Regio V have employed the latest methods of excavation and a multidisciplinary approach.

Source Study 9.1 The impact of the AD 62 eruption

Source A: 'Houses of regions I and II'

In the turbulent years after the earthquake of AD 62 … Many houses [in regions I and II] were gradually abandoned, to be purchased by an active and highly specialized artisan and mercantile class that transformed and adapted them to meet their specific needs.

SC Nappo, 'Houses of regions I and II' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, p 350.

Source B: 'The development of Pompeii's public landscape in the Roman period'

It has traditionally been argued that the city was crippled by the earthquake and that many public buildings were still in a state of ruin at the time of the final eruption seventeen years later; only in houses and other projects involving private finance was the work of reconstruction well advanced. But research by John Dobbins has shown, for the buildings on the east side of the forum at least, that this view is misguided. Rather than being incomplete, the buildings to the east of the forum seem to have been largely restored.

R Ling, 'The development of Pompeii's public landscape in the Roman period' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, p 125.

Source C: 'Intensification, heterogeneity and power in the development of insula VI.1'

When all of the post-earthquake changes in the House of the Vestals are considered together, it can be demonstrated that the householders were clearly concerned with maintaining their property as an active status symbol after AD 62.

R Jones and D Robinson, 'Intensification, heterogeneity and power in the development of insula VI.1' in JJ Dobbins and PW Foss (eds), *The World of Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, p 401.

Questions

1. Outline what each of the sources says about the eruption and its impact.
2. How have the historians each reached different conclusions?
3. Outline the debate surrounding the significance of the AD 62 earthquake.

FIGURE 9.3 Plaster cast stored in the *holitorium*

holitorium
a market that specifically sold various types of grains and pulses

Dating the AD 79 eruption

The eruption of AD 79 was recorded as occurring in summer on 24 August, by Pliny the Younger in his letters to Tacitus. Scholars have questioned the reliability of this date, because the letter was written many decades after the eruption and does not fit with archaeological evidence discovered, including bodies with heavy clothing, unripe pomegranates and wood-burning heaters in homes (all of which point to a later date than the end of the northern hemisphere summer, probably closer to mid- to late-autumn). The debate about the date of the eruption was thrown into the spotlight by the discovery of the graffiti in Regio V (see page 16) which showed a date after 17 October – in autumn, which would fit with other evidence.

The impact of new technologies

The increasing use of new technologies to investigate these sites has changed how the evidence is studied and treated as well as what we know about almost every aspect of evidence from the cities.

TABLE 9.1 Technologies used in Pompeii and Herculaneum and their impacts

Technology	Evidence and impact
Investigation of human diet from analysis of bone collagen	The use of stable carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis of bone collagen can reveal the dietary patterns of a person from their remains. The analysis of bones in Herculaneum and Pompeii showed that these people obtained a relatively low amount of seafood in their diet, with men having a greater proportion than women.
DNA analysis of human remains	According to Massimo Ossana, 'through DNA analysis we can learn age, sex, ethnicity and even disease'. [1] For example, DNA analysis has been used to establish that six of 13 bodies found in the House of Caius Iulius Polybius were likely to be closely related. There are limitations to using ancient DNA, because much of the genetic information is hard to retrieve from ancient samples, particularly when affected by high temperatures.
DNA analysis of *equidae* (mammals from the horse family)	DNA analysed from bones of five small equine skeletons from Pompeii and one from Herculaneum revealed that they were horses and mules.
X-ray and CT scans of plaster casts	Medical technology such as CT scans have been increasingly important to archaeology. University of Sydney's Dr Estelle Lazer has used CT scans to look into the plaster casts of Pompeii, revealing that some of the casts 'were almost devoid of bones but were reinforced with metal rods and brackets'.
Plasma mass spectrometry and raman microspectroscopy	Plasma spectrometry is used to measure elements at trace levels in biological fluids. Raman microspectroscopy also looks at molecular compounds found in archaeological evidence. These techniques were used to determine that human remains in the boat houses of Herculaneum had high levels of 'heme iron' inside their skulls, consistent with the 'vaporization of body fluids and soft tissues' as a result of exposure to extreme heat.
Herculaneum 3D scan	3D point clouds were created using 3D laser scanners and photogrammetric drone images (photos taken by a drone for mapping distances between points/objects). These virtual reconstructions aid the documentation and conservation of important houses in Herculaneum. The project is part of the program supported by the Packard Humanities Institute.
Computer Assisted Design (CAD) recreations of buildings	Researchers, such as those involved in the British School at Rome's Pompeii Project, have turned to computer assisted design programs used by architects and engineers to digitally map, record and photograph walls and floors. This provides effective data storage and can be used to digitally recreate buildings' interiors.
Portable X-ray fluorescence	X-ray fluorescence is a technique used to determine the elemental composition of a sample. It uses energy from an X-ray to create a reaction in the sample, which is then measured by the same device, revealing what it is made from. The portability of new machines has made the process cheaper and deployable in the field. It has been used for analysing paint composition on frescoes such as those in the House of the Bicentenary in Herculaneum.
Wavelength-dispersive electron probe microanalysis	Wavelength-dispersive electron probe microanalysis was used to determine the chemical composition of glass found in Pompeii in comparison to other Roman glasses from the Mediterranean region. The results revealed that the samples of glass from Pompeii are soda lime silica glass. This is a typical composition of the Roman glass found across Western Europe, with raw materials probably coming from the eastern Mediterranean near Egypt.
Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and electrical resistivity tomography (ERT)	These methods of geophysical survey allow researchers to peer beneath the surface of walls and floors, revealing earlier structures and methods of construction. These two techniques were used in the 2016–17 survey of the Sarno Baths, revealing detailed information about the buildings' structure and underlying geology helping map the development of the complex over a number of centuries of building and rebuilding.
Scanning electron microscopes	Scanning electron microscopy involves scanning a sample with a beam of electrons to produce a detailed microscopic image. It has been used extensively throughout the sites to examine materials closely. It was used to examine the state of preservation of bones stored in the Sarno Baths, showing a generally good level of preservation.

FIGURE 9.4 Copy of a plaster cast of equine remains, discovered in 2018

1. Research examples of new technologies listed. Use your findings to complete the following table.

Technology	Example of its use	Contribution to understanding of the sites

New research

New research is often characterised by re-examining what is already known and reconsidering the problems from a different light. Sometimes new technology is involved in the new research, sometimes it is simply revisiting old theories and improving them.

Pompeii's traffic systems

Research by Eric E. Poehler has examined the street level 'wear and tear' to propose theories about the traffic pattern and organisation of Pompeii. Poehler suggests that:

> … on the largest streets, evidence points to the rule and the norm: drivers were required to use the right side of the road but would, whenever possible, try to stay in the middle of the street. One-way streets were instituted, but the evidence reveals they would not all stay flowing in the same direction.[2]

FIGURE 9.5 Fresco from the House of the Bicentenary, Herculaneum. Portable X-ray fluorescence was used to analyse the paint on these frescoes.

The fortification of Pompeii's walls

Ivo van der Graaff's study of the walls of Pompeii traces the development of the fortifications over the centuries of Pompeii's history. His research, based on archaeological examination of the material and methods of construction, highlights the connection between the walls and the community of Pompeii. Van der Graaff argues that:

> … for all their military character, the day-to-day functioning of the defenses occurred largely in peacetime. Factors such as patronage, political ideologies, and ideas of communal identity would continually influence the appearance of the fortifications. In turn, the city walls, through sheer scale and presence, would be a critical structure in the spatial and social development of Pompeii.[3]

The iron streets of Pompeii

Examination of roads in Pompeii has revealed the widespread use of molten iron to repair road damage. The research was conducted by examining '434 instances of solid iron and iron staining among the paving stones'. The researchers argue that this type of repair was an effective and economically advantageous alternative to repaving roads.[4]

FIGURE 9.6 The Marine Gate, Pompeii

The impact of the eruption on citizens

New modelling by volcanologists and environmental scientists from the University of Bari, the British Geological Survey and the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology has suggested that inhabitants of Pompeii were hit by clouds of gases and ash minutes after the eruption. This new model indicates:

> … that the current had low strength and low temperature, which is confirmed by the absence of signs of trauma on corpses. Under such conditions, survival should have been possible if the current lasted a few minutes or less. Instead, our calculations demonstrate a flow duration of 17 min, long enough to make lethal the breathing of ash suspended in the current.[5]

New insights on Roman ceramics

Research conducted on the Via dei Sepolcri ceramic workshop has revealed new information about changing design and methods of manufacturing. It also indicates that Pompeii imported the materials for making pottery from the island of Ischia, and later from closer to Pompeii, near Salerno. This change in construction techniques is demonstrated by the 'stratigraphic relationships' which:

> … indicate a significant change occurred in the workshop that involved the reorganisation of most of the production facilities and corresponded with a change in the pottery types crafted there.[6]

Analysis of fish remains from the 'garum shop'

This research analysed bone fragments taken from amphorae found in the garum shop in Pompeii to determine the species of the fish used and methods of production. The fish species used in this shop was picarel, a common fish in the Mediterranean Sea. Carannante noted that:

> This study represents the first detailed archaeozoological analysis on garum remains from Pompeii … the product was still in the maceration stage awaiting the final process when the Pompeii destruction happened. The study revealed that the picarels were left to macerate whole; they were neither decapitated nor filleted.[7]

FIGURE 9.7 A four-wheeled chariot uncovered by archaeologists of the Great Pompeii Project in March 2021. With the permission of the Ministry of Culture, *Parco Archeologico di Pompei*. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited.

FIGURE 9.8 A thermopolium excavated in Regio V. With the permission of the Ministry of Culture, *Parco Archeologico di Pompei*. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited.

Recent finds

There have been many spectacular finds as a result of the Great Pompeii Project's archaeological work undertaken to protect and conserve areas already excavated. New finds have been uncovered in a section of the city that was previously unexcavated, including double-storey buildings and a range of spectacular artefacts, artworks and inscriptions.

Ceremonial chariot

The discovery of a remarkably intact Roman chariot was announced in March 2021. It was found in a villa, Civita Giuliana, just north of the walls of Pompeii. The chariot's bronze, iron and tin components were well preserved. Plaster was carefully poured into the cavities left by the decayed organic material, including the remains of ropes and floral decorations.

Thermopolium in Regio V

The *thermopolium* uncovered in 2019 by the Great Pompeii Project is one of the oldest in Pompeii. It is beautifully decorated and seems to have used an image of the shop itself as a sort of trademark, found on the *amphorae* in the shop. The remains of the animals depicted on the outside of the bar, such as a duck and rooster, were found on the inside of the various *dolia* in the bar.

Inscription on a monumental tomb

The rediscovery in 2017 of a long funerary inscription on a large tomb outside the Stabian Gate has revealed new information about benefactions given by a previously unknown local man. One particular benefaction is related to the riot between the Nucerians and Pompeians in AD 59, and the inscriptions seem to indicate that the men who organised the games, possibly even their entire family, were exiled from the city by decree of the Roman senate. This is previously unknown information about a well-known event.

Further reading

E Poehler, *The Traffic Systems of Pompeii,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2017.

I van der Graaff, *The Fortifications of Pompeii and Ancient Italy*, Routledge, London, 2019.

E Poehler, J van Roggen and BM Crowther, 'The Iron Streets of Pompeii', *American Journal of Archaeology,* 123(2), 2019, pp 237–262.

P Dellino, F Dioguardi and R Isaia, 'The impact of pyroclastic density currents duration on humans: the case of the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius', *Scientific Reports* 11, 2021, p 4959.

C Grifa, C Germinario, A De Bonis, L Cavassa, F Izzo, M Mercurio, A Langella, I Kakoulli, C Fischer, D Barra, G Aiello, G Soricelli, C Vyhnal and V Morra, 'A pottery workshop in Pompeii unveils new insights on the Roman ceramics crafting tradition and raw materials trade' *Journal of Archaeological Science,* 126, 2021.

A Carannante, 'The last garum of Pompeii: Archaeozoological analyses on fish remains from the "garum shop" and related ecological inferences', *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 29, 2019, pp 377–386.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Explain why our understanding of these archaeological sites has changed.
2. What impact have new technologies had on our understanding of these sites?
3. How has new research, as opposed to new technologies, contributed to our knowledge of everyday life in these cities?

Activities

1. Find three sources from this book that reveal how interpretations of evidence change. Explain what they indicate about the changing nature of knowledge at Pompeii and Herculaneum.
2. Find out what projects are currently operating in Pompeii and Herculaneum.
   a. Write a list of the projects and a short paragraph explaining what they are researching.
   b. Choose one project to examine in depth. Create a short presentation to teach someone about the project. In your presentation you should cover the purpose, methods used and any significant findings that have been made.
3. Look over the preceding chapters of this book and create a table like the example given, identifying the areas of debate, new understandings and changing interpretations that are explored. Once you have completed the table, explain what our changing understandings of these sites reveal about the nature of archaeology.

Area of changing interpretation/ debate/new understanding	Outline of debate	Reasons for the new understanding
Economy		
Use of buildings in the forum		
Land use within Pompeii		
Diet		
Social structure		
Cause of death		

HSC-style questions

1. Outline how a new technology has changed our understanding of human health in Pompeii and/or Herculaneum. (6 marks)
2. Explain how an example of new research has changed our understanding of everyday life in Pompeii and/or Herculaneum. (10 marks)
3. Assess how new technologies have changed what we know about life in these cities. (12 marks)

Endnotes

1   F Lidz, 'The New Treasures of Pompeii', *Smithsonian Magazine*. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/new-treasures-pompeii-180972829, accessed 1 August 2021.

2   E Poehler, *The Traffic Systems of Pompeii*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2017, passim.

3   I van der Graaff, *The Fortifications of Pompeii and Ancient Italy*, Routledge, London, 2019, p 1.

4   E Poehler, J van Roggen and BM Crowther, 'The Iron Streets of Pompeii', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 123, 2019, pp 237–262.

5   P Dellino, F Dioguardi and R Isaia, 'The impact of pyroclastic density currents duration on humans: the case of the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius', *Sci Rep* 11, 2021, p 4959.

6   C Grifa, C Germinario, A De Bonis, L Cavassa, F Izzo, M Mercurio, A Langella, I Kakoulli, C Fischer, D Barra, G Aiello, G Soricelli, C Vyhnal and V Morra, 'A pottery workshop in Pompeii unveils new insights on the Roman ceramics crafting tradition and raw materials trade' *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 126, 2021, passim.

7   A Carannante, 'The last garum of Pompeii: Archaeozoological analyses on fish remains from the "garum shop" and related ecological inferences', *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 29, 2019, pp 377–386.

Conservation and reconstruction

FIGURE 10.1 Ceramics stored on site at Pompeii

When they were initially discovered, Pompeii and Herculaneum were treated like treasure sites, with little care taken to protect the sites after treasures were extracted. Over the centuries, this attitude has changed dramatically and, from the end of the 19th century, archaeologists took more care to ensure that the sites were protected from both nature and thieves. This was done to varying degrees of success – some harmful practices were undertaken in an attempt to preserve the site; some of what is done today to conserve Pompeii and Herculaneum is to rectify previous attempts to protect the sites.

This chapter will explain:

- the link between excavation and conservation
- the significance of the UNESCO World Heritage listing in 1997
- the impact of the collapse of the House of the Gladiators in 2010
- the importance of the 2011 UNESCO/ICOMOS report on conservation
- the role of international and Italian collaboration to conserve the site – the Great Pompeii Project and the Herculaneum Conservation Project
- methods of conservation and reconstruction currently in use.

Issues of conservation and reconstruction

Many of the conservation issues that face Pompeii and Herculaneum started with the first significant excavations in the 18th century. During the early period of excavation, very little attention was paid to conservation. Even after Fiorelli and the increasingly professional approach taken by archaeologists, the practices left a mark on the integrity of these sites. Once a building or *insula* is excavated, material such as walls and frescoes start to decay, water penetrates the material and invasive vegetation, mould and animals can move in.

Archaeologists such as Spinazzola and Maiuri, who excavated in the early 20th century, contributed greatly to the excavation of these towns, but their work left large amounts of material uncovered. This can be partially attributed to a desire to reveal as much of the site as quickly as possible, as well as ineffective and damaging early reconstruction efforts, often undertaken to make the site more interesting for tourists. For most of the history of these sites, not enough money or energy have been dedicated to the conservation of what had

FIGURE 10.2 Modern graffiti in Herculaneum. Tourism brings money to conserve the site, but tourists are also a threat to conservation.

FIGURE 10.3 Faeces from roosting birds hastens the decay of frescoes; this image was taken in 2020 in Herculaneum.

been dug up. Governmental inefficiency, corruption and a lack of funds have also prevented money from flowing effectively to the management of these sites.

1997 UNESCO World Heritage listing

In 1997 the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) listed Pompeii, Herculaneum and Oplontis (a nearby coastal city that was also buried by the eruption) as World Heritage Sites. This listing has proved invaluable because the international attention and oversight have been crucial to the conservation efforts undertaken since.

World Heritage Committee decision

UNESCO, Decision: CONF 208 VIII.C Inscription: The Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculanum and Torre Annunziata (Italy)

The Committee decided to inscribe this property on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), considering that the impressive remains of the towns of Pompei and Herculaneum and their associated villas, buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, provide a complete and vivid picture of society and daily life at a specific moment in the past that is without parallel anywhere in the world.

http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/2884, accessed 19 July 2021

International attention from the 2010 collapse of the *Schola Armaturarum* (House of the Gladiators)

Since the 1997 listing, Pompeii and Herculaneum have been included multiple times on the World Monuments Heritage Watch List for their poor state of conservation. Of particular note was the 2010 collapse of the *Schola Armaturarum* in Pompeii, which gained worldwide attention. The collapse was the result of a combination of water damage and previous poor reconstruction work. Because of the scrutiny stemming from the 2010 collapse, UNESCO and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) visited Pompeii and Herculaneum in 2011 and wrote a report on the conservation issues facing the site noting that many houses and other structures in both cities are at risk and require conservation work.

The report highlighted the conservation issues that were present in 2011. The conservation issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- a lack of effective site management including a backlog of routine maintenance
- diversion of funds from conservation to other less vital projects
- uncontrolled development surrounding the properties
- the use of inappropriate materials and methods for restoration and reconstruction
- a general lack of qualified staff

FIGURE 10.4 Artist's impression of the *Schola Armaturarum*

- lack of an efficient drainage system making water damage a key factor in the degradation of structures and decorations throughout the sites
- rampant plant growth
- animal activity, including pigeons, vermin, and stray cats and dogs.

Since the 2011 report, far more money and resources have been dedicated to the conservation of these sites. As well as receiving all funds from tickets, there have been large amounts of money given to conservation by the European Union, Italian government and private institutions, such as the Packard Humanities Institute. Consequently many issues, such as the lack of a coherent management plan, have been addressed in the years since the 2011 report. Other issues, such as the impact of water, vegetation and visitors on the site, represent ongoing challenges.

FIGURE 10.5 The *Schola Armaturarum* after its collapse in 2010

FIGURE 10.6 Where the *Schola Armaturarum* stood there is now an open-air exhibit detailing the history of the building.

Pompeii, Herculaneum and COVID-19

Since the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 severely curtailed overseas travel, the number of visitors to the site has decreased significantly. According to the *Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, 2020 State of Conservation Report,* the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed for 'an opportunity to concentrate on planning and, at the same time, to conduct in-depth inspections, in compliance with anti-Covid legislation, while taking advantage of the absence of visitors.'[1]

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were these sites added to the World Heritage List by UNESCO?
2. What was the significance of the collapse of the *Schola Armaturarum* in 2010?
3. Why was the 2011 report important in terms of ways in which the sites could be better protected?
4. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect conservation efforts at Pompeii and Herculaneum during 2020 and 2021?

Italian and international contributions and responsibilities

Current work to conserve these sites represents the combined efforts of academic institutions from around the globe, international bodies, such as UNESCO, and the European Union working together with the Italian government.

Great Pompeii Project

The Great Pompeii Project (GPP) developed out of the 2011 report into conservation at the site. The project has been funded by the European Regional Development fund and the Italian government. The main interventions include:

- securing unexcavated embankments to minimise water damage and collapses
- securing *insulae*
- restoration of masonry
- restoration of decorated surfaces
- minimising damage from weather exposure
- installing more video cameras around the site.

2020 State of Conservation report

In the years 2018-2019 important discoveries were made within the archaeological area of Pompeii, during the 'GPP (M)- Securing of the excavation fronts and mitigation of hydrogeological risk in Regiones I, III, IX, IV and V of the archaeological site' intervention. The new excavations are actually part of the larger stabilisation intervention which has involved the over 3 km of fronts which border the 22 hectares of the unexcavated area, in order to reprofile the fronts so as to avoid the threat of pressure from the earth on those structures which have already been excavated. In fact, as was the case in this area, it can sometimes happen that it is necessary to excavate in order to stabilise those structures which have already been partially investigated and to consolidate those that are still buried, which are subjected to pressure from the excavation fronts. In the area of the so-called 'wedge', in order to protect the buildings which had already been unearthed as early as the 19th century, it was necessary to undertake a true excavation of an area of over 1000m[2]…

M. Rispoli and S. Siano (2020), *Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, 2020 State of Conservation Report, Archaeological Park of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, p. 108, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/829/, accessed on 31 March 2021.

FIGURE 10.7 A reconstruction of the Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun. Visitors can get a sense of what the site was like, despite the original being in the Museum of Archaeology in Naples.

FIGURE 10.8 Embankments in Pompeii are designed to prevent further wall collapses.

FIGURE 10.9 A fresco in the House of Leda and the Swan is flanked by reinforcing walls, designed to prevent the walls collapsing; an example of securing an *insula*.

The House of Leda and the Swan

As part of the conservation efforts of the Great Pompeii Project, new excavations have been undertaken. Although these excavations are primarily concerned with solving conservation issues, in the process of excavation new evidence has come to light, such as from the House of Leda and the Swan, which is named after a fresco discovered in the house.

FIGURE 10.10 Cleaned and restored fresco showing Leda and the Swan
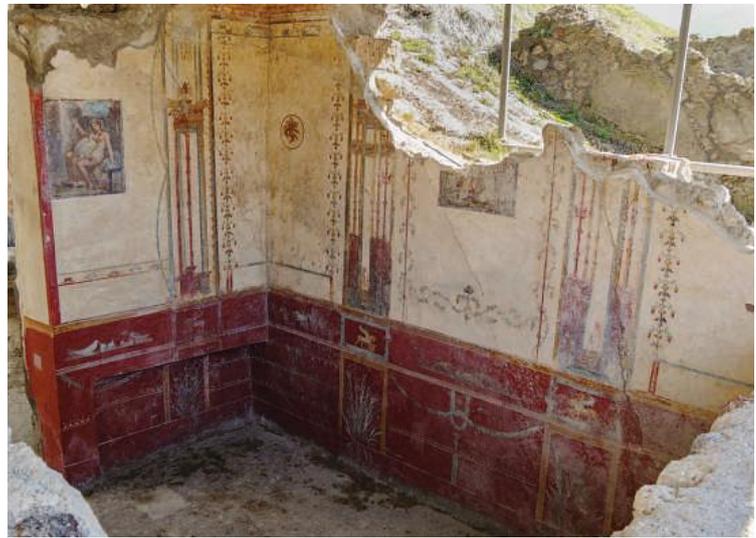
FIGURE 10.11 The House of Leda and the Swan was excavated as part of conservation work carried out by the Great Pompeii Project.
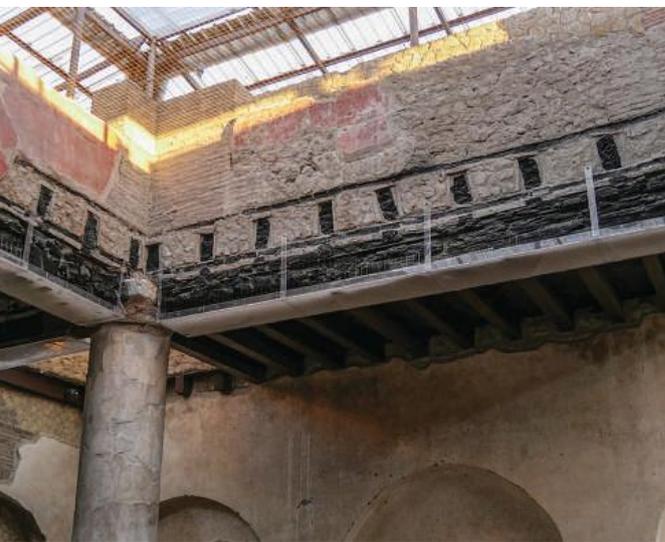
FIGURE 10.12 In this image of the College of Augustales in Herculaneum, we can see a range of conservation and reconstruction interventions; a clear roof has been constructed over the whole building to prevent damage from weather whilst allowing light in. There are also protective plastic sheaths over the carbonised wooden beams.

Herculaneum Conservation Project

In 2000 David Packard, son of the co-founder of computer giant Hewlett Packard and president of the Packard Humanities Institute, visited Herculaneum. He decided to commit to funding conservation at Herculaneum after seeing the conservation issues facing the site and what could be lost if urgent work was not carried out. In 2001 the Packard Humanities Institute signed a public-private partnership agreement aimed at addressing the conservation issues at Herculaneum. The agreement saw the development of the Herculaneum Conservation Project (HCP), which worked in partnership with the local government bodies and academic institutions. Led by project director Andrew Wallace-Hadrill and the British School at Rome, the HCP has contributed hugely to our understanding of the site and unearthed a range of significant finds while being primarily focused on conservation.

Wallace-Hadrill on the Herculaneum Conservation Project

Priorities have changed and become more clear through the development of the project. In terms of conservation, the overriding priority is to address infrastructural problems which underlie a wide range of symptoms of decay. Management of water on site emerged as of

fundamental importance: the advice of engineer Ippolito Massari has led to the rediscovery and unblocking of the original Roman drainage system of the city, and a[n] … integrated response to the problems of drainage: it is no use protecting one room with a roof if the water simply pools in the nearest adjoining space. Roofing is of critical importance on this as all other sites, and the debate over the reconstruction of ancient rooflines versus the creation of architecturally distinct shelters will continue to rumble on. We have experimented with a range of temporary and less-temporary shelters.

A Wallace-Hadrill 'The Herculaneum Conservation Project: an introduction', in A Coralini (ed.), *Vesuviana: archeologie a confronto. Proceedings of the international conference, Bologna*, 14-16 January 2008, Bologna, *Edizioni Antequem*, 2009, p 204.

House of the Bicentenary

The House of the Bicentenary was first excavated in 1938, under the direction of Amedeo Maiuri. The house was one of the most richly decorated houses found in Herculaneum. In particular, the *tablinum* was richly decorated with beautiful frescoes and mosaic floor. Speaking to *The Times* newspaper about the state of conservation in 2004, Wallace-Hadrill said, 'The House of the Bicentenary has hundreds of tiles missing from its roof. When it rains, water just cascades through it into the entrance hall. It makes me weep because it's such a splendid entrance hall.'[2]

Since then the HCP, working with other bodies such as the Getty Institute of Conservation, have carried out a series of significant interventions to save the property, reopening the house to the public in late 2019.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the Great Pompeii Project?
2. What interventions have the GPP taken to deal with the conservation issues that face Pompeii?
3. Why was the House of Leda and the Swan excavated?
4. What is the Herculaneum Conservation Project? What are its aims?
5. What were the problems with the House of the Bicentenary in Herculaneum and how have they been rectified?
6. Research the work done by the Herculaneum Conservation Project and the Getty Conservation Institute at the House of the Bicentenary in Herculaneum and outline what has been done at the site.

FIGURE 10.13 Atrium from the House of the Bicentenary looking to the *tablinum*

FIGURE 10.14 Restored mosaic and marble floor, House of the Bicentenary

Source Study 10.1 Conservation and reconstruction

Source A: Reconstruction work in Herculaneum

Source B: Restored fresco from the *tablinum* in the House of the Bicentenary, Herculaneum

FIGURE 10.15 Drawing in the missing architectural features gives a sense of what the wall would have looked like originally.
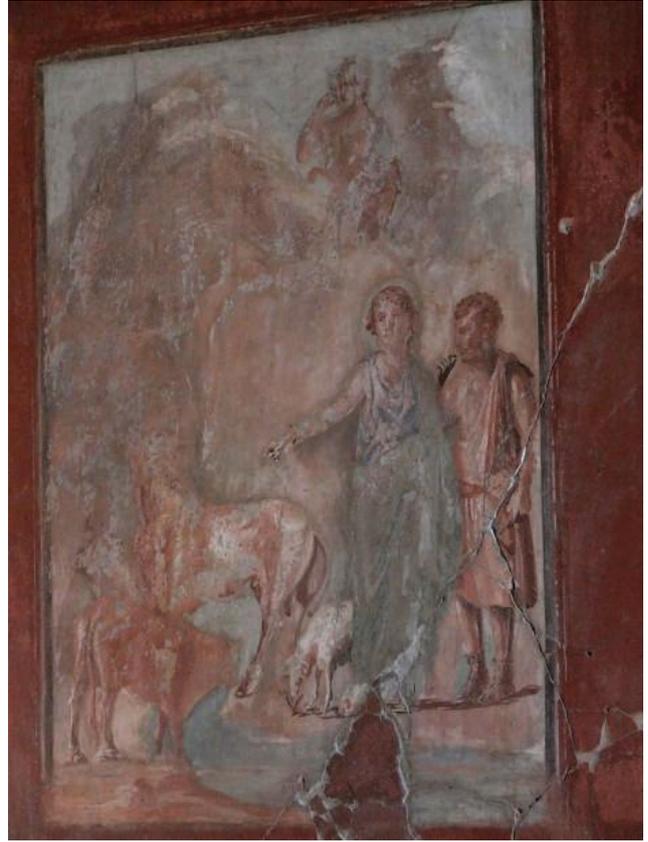
FIGURE 10.16

Source C: Video surveillance

FIGURE 10.17 Video surveillance of the site is key to ongoing conservation efforts in Pompeii.

Source D: Protective barriers

FIGURE 10.18 Counter placed behind a protective barrier

Source E: Carbonised wooden beams, Herculaneum

FIGURE 10.19 Wooden beams carbonised in the eruption are encased to conserve them.

Questions

1. Outline the various methods of conservation shown in the Sources A to E.
2. What is the difference between reconstruction and restoration, as shown in Sources A and B? Which is better? Explain your answer.
3. How effective would video surveillance, shown in Source C, be for conservation? Why?
4. Why is encasing material, shown in Sources D and E, effective? Can you think of any problems that might arise from this conservation strategy?

Further resources

A Wallace-Hadrill (2009), 'The Herculaneum Conservation Project: an introduction', in A. Coralini (ed.), *Vesuviana: archeologie a confronto. Proceedings of the international conference, Bologna, 14-16 January 2008. Bologna,* Edizioni Antequem.

M Rispoli and S Siano, *Report on the State of Conservation. Archaeological areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata. World Heritage List (Italy) Property C829*, UNESCO.

Websites

Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, UNESCO, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/829/

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Why are both conservation and reconstruction important issues for these archaeological sites?
2. Which groups mentioned in this chapter are responsible for conservation and reconstruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum?
3. Explain the steps that have been taken to conserve these sites.
4. Using the sources on pages 141–42, outline the various ways in which Pompeii and Herculaneum are being protected.

Activities

1. Visit the UNESCO World Heritage website and download the most recent report on the state of conservation. Choose a section from the report and explain what different interventions and approaches are being used to conserve and reconstruct the site.
2. Research an Italian and a non-Italian conservation project. Outline their aims and what they have achieved.

HSC-style questions

1. Outline the conservation issues facing these sites. (6 marks)
2. Explain the contribution of Italian and international groups to the conservation of Pompeii and Herculaneum. (10 marks)

Endnotes

1 M Rispoli and S Siano, *Report on the State of Conservation. Archaeological areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata. World Heritage List (Italy) Property C829*, UNESCO, p 126.

2 M Penner, 'Britons set out to save buried jewel of Ancient Rome', *The Times*. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britons-set-out-to-save-buried-jewel-of-ancient-rome-6xt02qpzk5j, accessed 14 April 2021.

Ethical issues

FIGURE 11.1 A cast of a dog on display at Pompeii

Ethics involves considering the moral rules (right and wrong) related to an issue such as the display of human remains. It is important to realise that ethical values are different for different people (for example, based on religious beliefs) and can also change over time. What may be considered unethical today may have been permissible in the past and vice versa. Archaeology as a science is fraught with concerns about ethics, and Pompeii and Herculaneum provide archaeologists with numerous concerns about ethics and their responsibilities.

This chapter will explain:

- the ethical issues currently regarding Pompeii and Herculaneum
- the importance of a conservation-based approach to archaeology
- how attitudes to ethics have changed over time and will continue to change
- the ethics of excavation and conservation
- the ethics around the study and display of human remains
- how international agreements shape current practices with regards to the sites.

FIGURE 11.2 A plaster cast of one of the victims from Pompeii. How does this make you feel as a viewer of the cast?

Ethical issues

For most of the period of excavation of Pompeii and Herculaneum since their rediscovery, little consideration was paid to ethical issues. The methods used by earlier excavators led to the loss of important evidence that can no longer be studied or enjoyed. Similarly, little

thought was given to using human remains in dioramas and **tableaux** to create narratives about the final moments of Pompeii.

More recently ethical considerations have become increasingly important to all stakeholders in the sites. This includes archaeologists, conservators, researchers, governments, museums and visitors. Although conservation is now a key concern for these groups, the treatment and presentation of human remains is a complex ethical area. The plaster casts and skeletal remains are some of the most evocative and famous elements of the sites, loved by visitors. How 2000-year-old human remains and their plaster casts should be treated continues to be an issue.

Excavation and conservation

Excavation is an inherently destructive process that inevitably leads to the loss of evidence. The excavated sections of these sites are decaying at an alarming rate, so the safest place for undiscovered evidence is in the ground. In the late 1990s it was decided by the then-superintendent of the site, Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, that no new excavations should be started while much of the site was under grave threat of destruction. This was a decision based on an ethical consideration of the need to preserve the site for future generations.

This move away from excavation has been accompanied by the development of a more coherent, **conservation-based approach** to archaeology at these sites. This approach essentially requires that excavations should be focused on conservation. This ensures that future generations will be able to study and visit these sites. Recent excavations made by the Great Pompeii Project, which have made amazing discoveries such as those in the House of Leda and the Swan, have been undertaken to prevent further damage to the sites; in this case it was part of a digging exercise to stop flooding in other parts of the site.

conservation-based approach

a method of archaeology that takes into consideration the need to conserve what is found, and which discoveries will be conserved, prior to excavation

One of the key issues is the cost of conservation. In 1997 it was decided that all ticket and tourism-related revenue from Pompeii would remain under the control of the superintendent of the site of Pompeii. Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, superintendent from 1995 to 2009, said, 'We have much more money than before … but it's always too little … Pompeii is an ancient city that died … We are not trying to make new life here. That is impossible. We can only conserve what's there. And work to make the public understand.'[1]

Many of the most famous sites, such as the House of the Faun, need to be maintained at significant cost otherwise they will be lost to future generations. Should the money be spent on preservation of this building, or on others? This is a difficult ethical question: who should choose what undergoes conservation?

FIGURE 11.3 Conservation work at the House of the Faun, Pompeii

The display and study of human remains

The first human skeleton was unearthed at Pompeii in 1748. During this early era of archaeological investigation, human remains found at the site were not generally considered valuable in and of themselves. They had more value as evocative props to shock and impress tourists. Skeletons were dug up in the presence of important dignitaries, such as visiting royalty, and arranged to tell concocted stories about the final moments of these people's lives.

This story-telling was enhanced by the innovative use of plaster to create casts of human remains, developed by Guiseppe Fiorelli, who made the first cast in 1863. These haunting plaster casts have become synonymous with the suffering and calamity that befell those who did not escape the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79.

FIGURE 11.4 Early plaster casts, stored near the forum in Pompeii

In modern times as values have changed, the rights of the deceased and the values of people living today are current ethical considerations related to the display of human remains. Archaeologists and museums have started to consider the tension between the educational value of human remains and their use as sensationalist props.

Until the 20th century many skeletons were stored haphazardly in buildings, such as the Sarno Baths, making it difficult for modern-day researchers such as Dr Estelle Lazer to identify individual remains. As technology has improved, human remains have revealed a wealth of important and interesting details about the diet, place of origin and health of the people who died in AD 79. These revelations are likely to continue as technology advances. As such, the ethical responsibilities of people studying human remains are less clear. There is a need to respect the deceased, but there is also a responsibility to learn about our ancient ancestors, while preserving their remains for study by future generations of scientists with new technologies and insights.

Lazer on the use of bodies as props

Over time, the use of skeletons of Pompeian victims for the manufacture of tableaux was expanded from being exclusively for regal visitors to more common use to entertain the increasing number of tourists to the site. A good example that demonstrates this activity in the twentieth century is the treatment and presentation of the skeletal finds housed in Room 19 in the Casa del Menandro … Despite Maiuri's statement that the positions of the bodies were not altered during their removal to Room 19, it became obvious on inspection that the skeletons had been manipulated.

E Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp 10–12.

FIGURE 11.5 Display of plaster casts, Garden of the Fugitives, Pompeii

FIGURE 11.6 Biochemical analysis of bones in the boathouses in Herculaneum have revealed much important information about diet. These bones have been removed and replaced with replicas. Is it ethical to leave replicas in their place?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain why the excavation and conservation of these sites raise ethical concerns.
2. What was Guzzo saying about the future excavation of the site?
3. How were skeletons used in the 18th century at the site?
4. Until the 20th century, how were skeletons stored once they were excavated?
5. Why are human remains an important part of the study of Pompeii and Herculaneum? What are the problems with using them to study the people to whom they belonged?

International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums

This code of ethics governs how museums treat, display and study human remains. The sites near Vesuvius are governed by this framework because they are huge open-air museums. The code was first drafted in Argentina in 1986; since then it has been revised at further conferences, such as in the 21st General Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, in 2004.

The ethics of human remains

2.5 Culturally Sensitive Material

Collections of human remains and material of sacred significance should be acquired only if they can be housed securely and cared for respectfully. This must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic or religious groups from which the objects originated, where these are known.

3.7 Human Remains and Materials of Sacred Significance

Research on human remains and materials of sacred significance must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and take into account the interests and beliefs of the community, ethnic or religious groups from whom the objects originated, where these are known.

4.3 Exhibition of Sensitive Materials

Human remains and materials of sacred significance must be displayed in a manner consistent with professional standards and, where known, taking into account the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic or religious groups from whom the objects originated. They must be presented with great tact and respect for the feelings of human dignity held by all peoples.

ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (2017), https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf, accessed on 31 March 2021.

The Vermillion Accord

The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains governs how archaeologists should treat human remains. It was adopted in 1989 at the World Archaeological Congress in Vermillion, South Dakota, United States.

World Archaeological Congress Code of Ethics

1. Respect for the mortal remains of the dead shall be accorded to all, irrespective of origin, race, religion, nationality, custom and tradition.

2. Respect for the wishes of the dead concerning disposition shall be accorded whenever possible, reasonable and lawful, when they are known or can be reasonably inferred.

3. Respect for the wishes of the local community and of relatives or guardians of the dead shall be accorded whenever possible, reasonable and lawful.

4. Respect for the scientific research value of skeletal, mummified and other human remains (including fossil hominids) shall be accorded when such value is demonstrated to exist.

5. Agreement on the disposition of fossil, skeletal, mummified and other remains shall be reached by negotiation on the basis of mutual respect for the legitimate concerns of communities for the proper disposition of their ancestors, as well as the legitimate concerns of science and education.

6. The express recognition that the concerns of various ethnic groups, as well as those of science are legitimate and to be respected, will permit acceptable agreements to be reached and honoured.

World Archaeological Congress (1989), https://worldarch.org/code-of-ethics/, accessed on 31 March 2021.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the key responsibilities that apply to Pompeii and Herculaneum under the ICOM code of ethics?
2. What does the Vermillion Accord reveal about the ethics of studying human remains in modern archaeology?
3. How are these codes of ethics both similar and different?

The Pompeii Cast Project

A Sydney-based team, including Dr Lazer, focused on X-ray and CT-scanning plaster casts and, where possible, studying any remains inside. They used cutting-edge technology, such as digital imaging and scientific analysis, to better understand the remains of the victims of the eruption. A key aim of the project is to challenge some of the long-held myths of the remains, such as the lives and personalities that have been attributed to some of the bodies as a result of where or with what they were found. In doing this, the project aims to restore the dignity and respect as individuals to these people who were killed in a natural disaster, much as we would do to people who suffered a similar fate today.

The issue of human remains

When current excavations at Pompeii unearthed the remains of a seemingly decapitated skeleton, an image was released by archaeologists working in Regio V. Thought to be of a man crushed by an enormous door jamb while attempting to flee the deadly Vesuvian eruption of 79AD, the image was widely shared, in many cases with the addition of captions which poked fun at the Pompeiian's dramatic demise.

Yet the photograph is essentially a representation of human remains – a snapshot of the circumstances of someone's death – raising questions as to the ethics of the 'memeification' of the dead and our own often abstract perception of death and dying.

E Finn, 'Pompeii should teach us to celebrate people's lives, not mock their death', *The Conversation*, 27 June 2018, accessed 19 July 2021.

Further resources

E Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, Routledge, London, 2009.

C Scarre and G Scarre (eds), *The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2006.

Website

Pompeii Cast Project (2018), http://www.castprojectpompeii.org/, accessed 11 March 2021.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. What are ethics and how do they affect Pompeii and Herculaneum?
2. What is a conservation-based approach to archaeology?
3. Explain why there is tension between the study and display of human remains and ethical practices promoted by the Vermillion Accord and the ICOM Code of Ethics.
4. What is the purpose of the Pompeii Cast Project?
5. Considering the excerpts and images from this chapter, do you think that the death of those who died in AD 79 is being exploited?
6. Considering the evidence in this chapter, do you think the tension between displaying, studying and respecting the dead can be resolved?

Activities

1. Investigate the steps that have been implemented to address the ethical issues at Pompeii and Herculaneum.
2. Find an article about the study of human remains and read it. Explain the key arguments and reasons for them.
3. Imagine you are an archaeologist who passionately believes that it is wrong to study human remains. Outline the main points to an argument you would make to your colleagues about your beliefs.

HSC-style questions

1. Outline the ethical issues relevant to studying Pompeii. (6 marks)
2. How has the understanding of ethical issues related to the study and display of human remains in Pompeii and Herculaneum changed? (10 marks)

Endnotes

1 Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 December 2003. https://www.smh.com.au/world/pompeii-rises-again-20031212-gdhysc.html, accessed 19 July 2021.

Value and impact of tourism
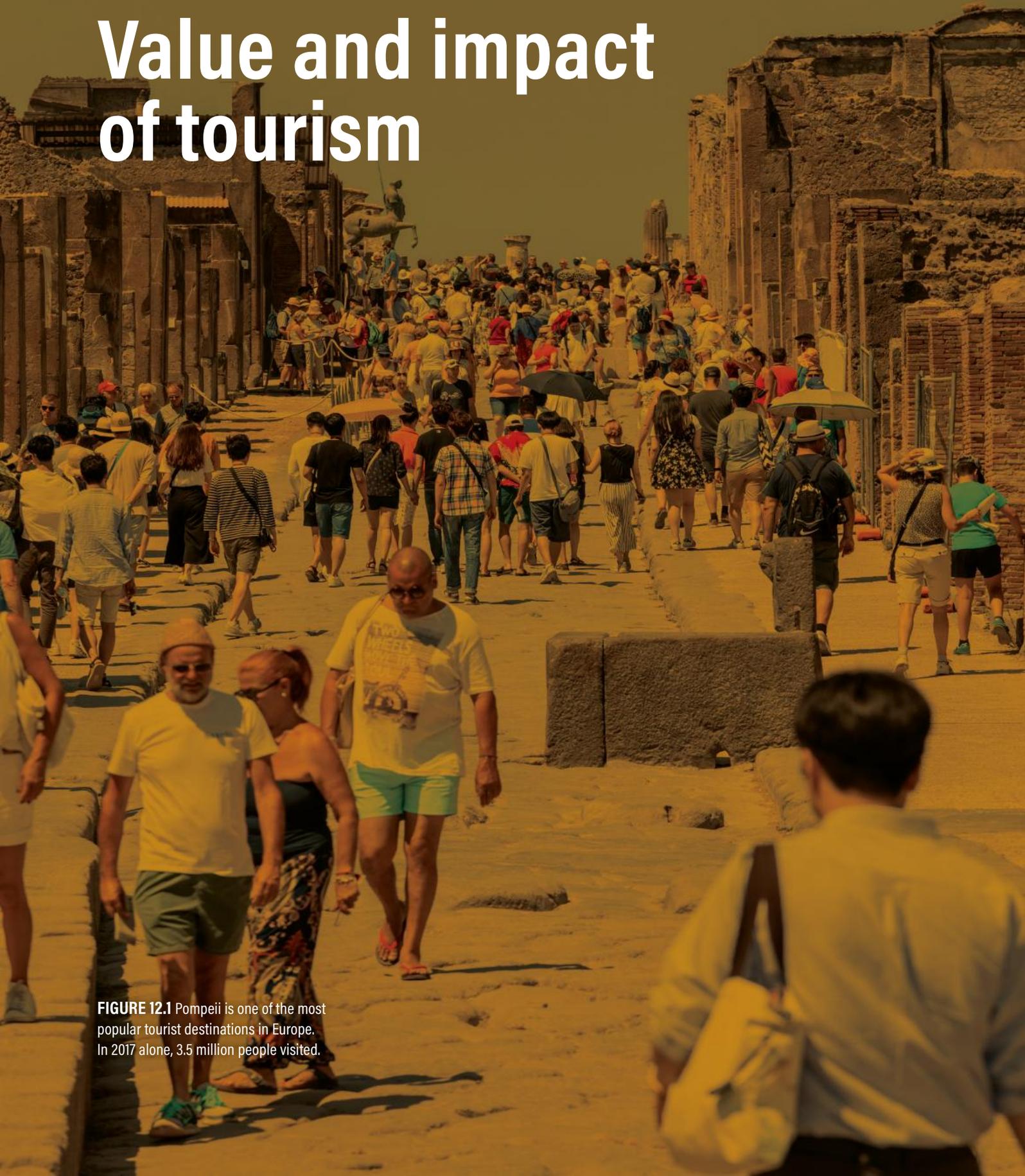
FIGURE 12.1 Pompeii is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. In 2017 alone, 3.5 million people visited.

Tourism has been a key part of Pompeii and Herculaneum's histories since their rediscovery in the 18th century. The fascination of the general public has had both positive and negative impacts on the preservation of these sites. On one hand, international interest and engagement with these ancient cities has had a huge impact on our collective human history and led to significant investment in conservation that may not otherwise have been forthcoming. On the other hand, the integrity of the sites has also been negatively affected by tourism. The need for amenities such as car parks, restaurants and toilets, as well as the effect of tourist traffic, have all irreversibly damaged these sites.

This chapter will explain:

- the long history of tourism at the sites
- the positive and negative impacts of tourism
- the solutions being proposed and undertaken to deal with the impact of visitors
- the work by the Italian government and international stakeholders such as UNESCO, aimed at limiting the negative impact of tourism while still giving people an opportunity to visit these World Heritage Sites.

Problems and solutions

Tourism is fundamental to the economy of the region and a major incentive for the local government to conserve the site. The Italian government and international groups responsible for managing the sites, such as UNESCO, have to balance the public's interest in the site with the need to preserve the remains for future study and future generations of visitors. Since becoming an autonomous entity in 1997, all money received from ticket sales has gone back directly to the parks.

FIGURE 12.2 Tourist entrance to Pompeii; the Marine Gate during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Temperature cameras check all visitors on entry.

FIGURE 12.3 A pizza shop situated in the remains of a building in Pompeii. Is this a problem or a solution?

Negative impacts of tourism

There are many negative aspects to tourism at the sites. Large tour groups visiting the same buildings focus their impact on a small area, hastening decay. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing numbers of tourists placed greater pressure on the site. Tourist amenities, such as toilets and restaurants, needed to be built in response to the visitor numbers, which have also negatively affected the integrity of the site. Even if tourists are being respectful, foot traffic alone wears away footpaths and the heat and moisture from large tour groups in small spaces, such as the only positively identified brothel of Pompeii (a very popular location in the city), degrades frescoes.

Unfortunately, not all visitors to the sites are respectful. Many people have graffitied walls, touched sensitive material, ignored barriers and taken souvenirs. A lack of money spent on signage and supervision at the sites means that some tourists ignore guide ropes and wander into closed areas, even when they know it is wrong to do so. Archaeologist Alia Wallace says that:

FIGURE 12.4 Visitors to Pompeii sitting on the remains of the site. This is neither surprising nor unreasonable in the hot weather of an Italian summer.

… Much of the decay caused by visitors comes from overcrowding and damaging behaviours, both intentional and unintentional, such as leaning on walls or bags rubbing against fragile frescoes in crowded areas … research finds that visitor impacts primarily enhance decay that is already present, either through direct physical damage or by limiting the resources available for conservation work. The conservation problems are a vicious circle that results in closure of more areas each year, thereby concentrating the growing number of visitors in smaller areas and thus accelerating the rate of attrition.[1]

FIGURE 12.5 A sign in Pompeii. What problem of conservation can you see immediately with this sign?

FIGURE 12.6 Map of all visitor tracking data with regions of high, medium and low visitor traffic. Locations 1–5 represent high visitor traffic, locations 6–10 experience medium visitor traffic, and 11–15 indicate low or no visitor traffic.

Solutions

Several solutions have been proposed over the years to deal with the problem of tourists. While no single solution will ever be effective, a combination of many possible solutions will assist in limiting the damage done to the sites. These solutions include:

- the development of new routes by tracking movement to understand the pressure points for tourist impact
- increased education of visitors about their impact on the site and the conservation work being undertaken
- the use of new technologies such as smartphone apps that provide guided tours and advise visitors of how many people are in popular attractions, helping spread tourists across the site
- the use of video surveillance and more guards
- the development of walkways through the houses that stop the degradation of material such as mosaic floors
- conservation and restoration work focused on opening or reopening closed attractions to better spread visitors around the site
- construction of viewing platforms at Herculaneum and Pompeii
- promotion of less visited sites, such as Stabiae, Boscreole and Oplontis.

Rispoli and Siano on managing tourism

To avoid congestion at the most popular locations, 4 visitor itineraries have been devised that allow visitors to spread like wildfire around the site. The visit is assisted by the site map which is distributed to visitors at the entrance and is published in 9 languages: Italian, English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese, Russian, Chinese and Arabic.

In addition, from 2020 the visitor can use the app My Pompei (Apple Store and Google Play Store) which, once downloaded, allows one to scan the QR code on the ticket and commence the tour within the site. This is an endeavour which has planned for safe tour routes both for the visitors and for the areas of Pompeii because in order to avoid crowding, the app will allow the visitor to view, in real time, the number of people present in the buildings and along the streets.

M Rispoli and S Siano, 'Archaeological Areas of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata', *2020 State of Conservation Report, Archaeological Park of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 2020, p 111.

FIGURE 12.7 A walkway protects the mosaic floor in the atrium of the House of the Wounded Bear, Pompeii.

FIGURE 12.8 A tourist's temperature is checked before entering Herculaneum during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The impact of COVID-19 on Pompeii and Herculaneum

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure the archaeological parks during most of the period of March until May 2020. After re-opening, the number of tourists remained well below previous years and new measures were introduced in response to the threat of the coronavirus outbreak, including temperature checks at the gates, the use of masks by visitors and a booking system to restrict numbers and allow social distancing. Another consequence of the pandemic has been a severe economic loss, which will affect future conservation efforts.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What positive impacts do you think tourism brings to these sites?
2. Explain the negative effects of tourism.
3. What does Wallace reveal about the impact of tourism on the sites?
4. Which possible solutions do you feel would be the most effective? Explain your answer.
5. Do you think Rispoli and Siano's solution would be effective? Why or why not?

Further resources

A Wallace, 'Presenting Pompeii: Steps towards Reconciling Conservation and Tourism at an Ancient Site', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 22 (2013), pp 115–136.

M Rispoli and S Siano, 'Archaeological Areas of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata', *2020 State of Conservation Report, Archaeological Park of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 2020.

Websites

Regulations for visitors, Pompeii websites, http://pompeiisites.org/en/visiting-info/regulations-for-visitors/, accessed 31 March 2021.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. What solutions have been developed, according to Rispoli and Siano, to lessen the negative impacts of tourism?
2. Explain why there is tension between tourism and conservation at Pompeii and Herculaneum.
3. What has been the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and the conservation of these archaeological sites?

Activities

1. Research the role of UNESCO in managing tourism at the site. What interventions have been undertaken as a result of these sites being listed as World Heritage Sites?
2. Research the visitor regulations at the Pompeii Sites website. What do they reveal about the threats to the site and what is being done to address them?
3. Prepare for a class debate. One half of the class will research the idea that Pompeii should be excavated as much as possible, while the other half will research the benefits of leaving as much in the ground as possible for the moment.

HSC-style questions

1. Outline the impact of tourism on both Pompeii and Herculaneum. (4 marks)
2. How have conservation efforts attempted to deal with the impact of tourism at Pompeii and Herculaneum? (10 marks)

Endnotes

1   A Wallace, 'Presenting Pompeii: Steps towards Reconciling Conservation and Tourism at an Ancient Site', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 22 (2013), pp 116–121.

Index

It is tempting to think of Pompeii and Herculaneum as modern cities. But the sources beneath Mt Vesuvius' volcanic debris reveal a different picture. Both cities are unusually intact, preserving evidence for historians, archaeologists and students of life in AD 72. What this evidence reveals is two very different cities that bear few similarities to those of the modern world.

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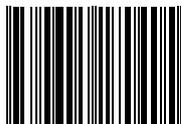Exam-style source questions

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