1. **Geographical Context**

**NOTES**

* **Physical environment: the geographical setting, natural features and resources of Pompeii and Herculaneum**
* Pompeii is situated 20kilometers south-east of Naples on the Bay of Naples, western coast of the Italian peninsula.
* Located in the fertile region known as Campania in Southern Italy.
* Romans referred to it as “Campania Felix”
* Climate: hot, dry summers from May to September and mild, wet winters from October to April.
* The whole landscape of Campania is a result of volcanic processes and, just as in ancient times, the area is still subjected to earth tremors.
* Pompeii and Herculaneum were built on a volcanic spur.
* Material that spewed from the volcano weathered into extremely fertile soil🡪 rich is phosphorus and potash.
* Natural vegetation: poplars, willows and alder trees along the rivers, oak and beech on lower slopes of Vesuvius.
* The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79AD destroyed the once thriving cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.
* The main agricultural products of Pompeii were olive oil and wine but its industries included sheep products, millstones, fish sauce, perfume and a cloth and dye industry.
* Agriculture was the cash crop and intensive farming was evidenced everywhere, even on small garden plots inside the city walls.
* **Plans and streetscapes of Pompeii and Herculaneum**
* Pompeii is thought to be the wealthier commercial/trade town compared to Herculaneum - which is thought to be a lower-class resort/fishing town.
* This is seen in the wheel ruts in the roads of Pompeii, particularly along the Via del Abbondanza, suggesting a lot of commercial traffic and goods travelled through Pompeii. There's no evidence of wheel ruts in Herculaneum.
* Pompeii also has more grand/decorative architecture eg: fountains and it also has more public buildings eg: 4 baths compared to Herculaneum's 2. However, much of Herculaneum remains unexcavated.
* There's evidence Herculaneum had better sanitation than Pompeii. The streets of Pompeii had stepping stones, whereas Herculaneum's didn't. Herculaneum had an efficient drainage system with an underground sewer.
* Both towns followed the structure of Greek town planning and contained buildings of Roman towns eg: palaestra - suggests they followed the Roman way of life.
1. **The nature of sources and evidence**
* **The range of available sources, both written and archaeological, including ancient writers, official inscriptions, graffiti, wall paintings, statues, mosaics, human and animal remains**
* The range of sources is extensive. There are the writings of the major authors which include Tacitus, Pliny and Livy.
* Public and private buildings which reveal the wealth, concerns, priorities, ambitions, organisation and identity of people.
* Everyday lifestyles are revealed through the abundance of amenities such as shops, malls, bakeries, bars, brothels etc.
* The wealth of evidence lies in the wall paintings, mosaics, domestic art, which all detail the interests and concerns of Pompeian’s and outside cultural influences.
* Gardens reveal cultural influences and lifestyle priorities.
* Statues reveal mythology and religion.
* Advertisements show what people liked to eat and how they spent past times.
* Stone Inscriptions label buildings and provide valuable and reliable records.
* Domestic artefacts are abundant- kitchen utensils, loaves of bread, potters’ supplies, millstones, charred nuts and jewellery such as the signet rings identifying the House of Vetti.
* Human and animal remains, the skeletons, the deep body impressions made in ash, recreated in plaster from the eruption.
* **The limitations, reliability and evaluation of sources**
* Some historians suggest maybe Pompeii was a second or third rate town during the first century of the Roman Empire🡪 not much focus on the fairly insignificant city.
* The written sources are few, mainly passing references, except for the description of the volcanic eruption in Tacitus.
* Wealth of evidence is archaeological, though they have the limitation of being uncovered or discovered as ruins or relics. Evidence is usually incomplete, fragmentary or destroyed.
* Written sources can be misleading- open to interpretation🡪 BIAS.
* Temple of Isis- quickly rebuilt after 62AD earthquake- suggests that Pompeian’s held Isis in great esteem and were cult worshippers before they were traditional worshippers.
* The city is only a microcosm of the Roman world, its morality, culture, society, presentations of the state and religion. Although fairly insignificant, the window Pompeii gives us on the Roman world is of immense importance.
* This importance has made Pompeii the world’s longest continually excavated archaeological site.
* **The evidence provided by the sources from Pompeii and Herculaneum for:**
* **The eruption**
* 24 August 79 AD- first volcanic eruption to be describe in detail, by Pliny.
* Most inhabitants had returned to the area since the severe earthquake 17 years earlier.
* Lava, ash, pumice and lapilli covering the Campanian area.
* Herculaneum and other places to the south-east were buried in lava.
* About 2000 people were killed in Pompeii alone by thermal shock, falling debris, hot ash and poisonous gas.
* There was chaos in the streets as the situation worsened and people tried to escape, hiding in cellars or places such as the House of Fugitives, where many remains were found.
* In Herculaneum piles of bodies were found near the water’s edge where they were buried by the lava flow.
* People returned to Pompeii after the explosion, salvaging what they could.
* **The economy: trade, commerce, industries, occupations**
* The economy of both Pompeii and Herculaneum was small, and for the most part, local.
* In the forum at Pompeii, in a niche outside the Temple of Apollo, a limestone table was found containing an official set of **weights and measure** against which market goods could be tested.
* Economy was primarily agricultural with a number of trades and crafts practiced on a small scale.
* From archaeological evidence Pompeii appears more economically important- major market town for the sale of agricultural produce.
* The primary economic units in the agricultural region were working farms (*villae rustice)*, possibly owned by wealthy people of the towns.
* Walter O. Moeller in 1976 published an influential study of the **wool trade** of Pompeii- the centre of a textile industry based on carding, bleaching, dyeing, spinning and weaving. Sale room in the Building of Eumachia in the forum.
* This was challenged by Dutch scholar Willem Jongman that this information was overly influenced by Moeller’s knowledge of late medieval wool/textile cities.
* A **fullery** was a laundry where cloth and items of clothing were cleaned, bleached and sometimes dyed. Fullers were those who worked in this industry.
* **Fullers, bleachers and dyers** of cloth are well shown in Pompeii and the Fullery of Stephanus (excavated by Zpinazzola) reveals how a private house was turned into a bleaching and dyeing works.
* There is considerable archaeological evidence **for vineyards and for wine production**. The work of Wilhelmina Jashemski (created plaster casts of vine root systems in the ground) has established the existence of vineyards.
* The wine from Pompeii was, however, not well thought of by Pliny. It did not bear comparison with fine wines produced elsewhere and there is no evidence of exporting.
* One export for which Pompeii was famous was ***garum,* fermented fish sauce**, although, even here, the city did not dominate the market.
* **Bakeries** were a significant feature of the streetscape of both Pompeii and Herculaneum.
* Living quarters were upstairs and the garden space was used to house mills, the large bread oven, grain storage, stable for donkeys to turn the mills and a shop.
* Paintings of bread reveal that the common loaf was a round shape formed into eight segments- could be suggested that it was shared amongst a group of people.
* 33 bakeries have been found scattered around Pompeii, for example Bakery of Modestus.
* **CONCLUSION:** Pompeii and Herculaneum had small localised economies with a range of trades and crafts being practised and local wealth coming from agriculture and the exploitation of the sea.
* It can also be assumed that the needs of rich owners of villas in the neighbourhood of Pompeii and Herculaneum also provided an added stimulus to demand and made a significant contribution to economic life.
* **Social structure; men, women, freedmen, slaves.**
* **Slaves:
-** The Roman Empire relied on slaves as their source of labour.
- A large household could own hundreds of slaves.
- Slaves were both men and women and had no legal rights.
- The owner had complete control over the life and death of slaves and once they were freed they still had to buy their children from the owner.
* **Women:
-** Girls from privileged backgrounds were taught to read and write, either at school or by slave tutors in their own homes.
- Juneval writes scathingly of women who spend their time reading Latin and Greek, or singing and playing the lyre.
- Others believed that educated women made better house wives and mothers.
- Julia Felix was an independent woman who had inherited a large fortune.
- She owned an enormous, magnificently decorated house- House of Julia Felix.
- Lower- class women often went into partnership with their husbands and were allowed to earn profit from the business.
- Wives of craftsmen and traders would run the shop while their husbands took care of other aspects of the business.
-Female slaves performed a wide range of duties, depending on the needs of their owners. Some worked as household slaves, cooking and cleaning, or as nannies and wet-nurses.
- Large population of foreigners involved in trade which is shown by the names of women written in graffiti around the town of Pompeii.
-Prostitution was not illegal and was seen as a normal part of the sex life of Roman men. Wives, daughters and granddaughters of patricians and equites were forbidden to become prostitutes.
* **Men:
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* **Local political life**
* Political life at Pompeii and Herculaneum was dominated by the patronage of poorer citizens and of particular social and business groups by members of a powerful, wealthy and influential elite.
* Powerful local Pompeian’s offered both protection and assistance to individuals.
* Graffiti often spoke out about the people’s political favourites and who to vote for.
* **Everyday life: leisure activities, food and dining, clothing, health, baths, water supply and sanitation.**
* **Leisure activities**
* After the earthquake of 62BC the leisure complexes had priority in the rebuilding program.
* Public entertainment: the Grand Theatre and the Odeon (smaller covered theatre).
* The Grand Theatre accommodated 5000 people and included entertainment such as miming, acting, clowning, dancing and musical entertainment. Theatre was equipped with a sporting complex, athletic school and open-air arena.
* The amphitheatre was the **Grand *Palestra*** where people could not only watch gladiatorial games but also exercise themselves, practice sports, then take a bath and massage.
* **Food and dining**
* Many kinds of foods were sold including nuts, beans, chickpeas, grains and fruits, all of which were preserved after the eruption of 79AD.
* Written sources mention the keeping of sheep and pigs while paintings also show eggs, and chicken was the last unfinished meal of some temple priests.
* Houses in Pompeii had three couches for eating and a three-sided dining table called a *triclinium* in a separate eating room.
* **Clothing**
* Pompeian’s dressed as the Romans dressed. Males wore a tunic, the basic item of clothing, which was worn under the toga.
* Status was distinguished by stripes and colours- wall painting from a *larlarium* in Pompeii which shows the senatorial tunic.
* The toga was the national dress of Rome and was worn for public occasion and usually in the Forum. Women did not wear togas, only when to signify disgrace.
* **Health**
* Height can be used as an indicator of general health and nutritional status. It appears that the Pompeian’s in this sample, were well nourished and comparatively healthy in their childhood years.
* There were trained doctors, mostly Greek slaves, midwives and independent freeborn doctors. However, as Pliny, Matrial and Cato tell us, these homemade doctors were often regarded as frauds.
* In most families the *paterfamilias* was responsible for the health and doctoring of his family members.
* **Baths**
* Bathing was a communal activity for both sexes, but the baths were segregated.
* Pompeians could enjoy one of three public baths- the Central, Forum and Stabian Baths.
* Bathing was a concise process of entering the warm room, the hot room or steam bath and the cold room, with water and air heated by a central heating plant consisting of a great furnace.
* Included changing room, reading room, massage, resting and teaching room.
* The water for the baths was conducted from the aqueduct and wells and pumped through lead pipes to where it was needed.
* Discovery of 1300 lamps suggests that bathing was also a night time activity.
* **Water supply**
* The town’s water supply was brought from the springs of the Acquaro River by the Serinum aqueduct.
* The water was then distributed from the water tower situated at the highest point in the town.
* Pressure created by the downward flowing water provided a good flow through underground lead pipes to all parts of the town, including bath complexes.
* Although most people drew their water from public fountains, wealthier citizens paid special rates that allowed them to take a private supply from the public pipes straight to their homes.
* **Sanitation**
* Rome had brought the standard of sanitation to its highest levels in the civilised world.
* Sanitation levels, though high, were still inadequate because the connection between disease and poor sanitation was never fully appreciated.
* Some specialists drew the connection between health and sanitation but for most people it was simply a matter of aesthetics.
* Most toilets were an oblong hole in the floor joined by pipes to the subterranean cesspool. There was a stick and sponge in a bucket of salt water for personal cleansing.
* **Public buildings- basilicas, temples, *fora*, theatres, *palaestra*, amphitheatres**
* **Basilicas**- law court building
* The basilica was a large rectangular building located on the south-western edge of the forum.
* It is a large spacious building used for law courts and for large gatherings and commercial agreements.
* The interior space was designed to impress the visitor with the majesty of law and the purpose of the interior was the raised tribunal where the chief magistrates sat as judges.
* Other rooms and spaces may have been used as office and storage areas for archives.
* Not typically Roman, shows a Greek influence with a predominance of columns modified for Roman purposes.
* In Herculaneum, one building has been identified as a basilica but may be a temple or shrine instead. This is not certain as most of the Civic building and Forum is still buried.
* **Temples**
* The Hellenic influence in Pompeii’s art, architecture and living styles must be noted. The same influence flowed through Pompeian religion.
* There have been 10 temples excavated, most of which are centred around the Forum.
* The principal temples which are sources of evidence for religious architecture and beliefs and practices are the Temple of Apollo, the Temple of Fortuna Augustus, the Temple of Vespasian, the Temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, the Temple of Venus and the Temple of Isis.
* These temples reflect the breadth of religious beliefs and practices in Pompeii by AD 79 and include the deities appropriated from Greece and Romanised including Apollo, Venus and and Dionysus; the official Roman state deities Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, and foreign gods such as Isis.
* The temples also pay homage to the deified Emperors (the Imperial cult).
* ***Fora***
* **A forum is a large public area of a town containing open spaces for meetings and the main public buildings including religious, political and economic buildings.**
* **The Forum of Pompeii was focussed on the Temple of Jupiter at the north end, which dominated the space.**
* The buildings around the outside of the forum were a mixture of religious, economic and political buildings.
* **Theatres**
* The site for the large theatre was a slope on which there was already an ancient temple with Greek features.
* This slope enabled the architects to shape the theatre as a Greek structure with the seating inserted into the slope except for the upper levels which are supported by massive brickwork.
* This large theatre probably held about 5000 people.
* Entry was free but seating was assigned according to social class with the upper class in the front rows (called the imea cavea) and the women at the back.
* The magistrates who financed the public performances sat on raised platforms above the stage area reached by separate staircases.
* ***Palestra***
* The palestra was part of a Greek athletic tradition.
* This athletic area reflects the Augustan revival of Greek sports at Rome and elsewhere.
* Over one hectare in size which totally occupied the south eastern boundary of the town.
* The space was closed to wheeled traffic and was previously occupied by housing.
* The grounds were used for sports such as running, discus, wrestling and swimming.
* This formed part of the Augustan plan to promote the values of the state.
* Herculaneum held a smaller form of Palestra with a swimming pool shaped as a cross.
* **Amphitheatre**
* The most popular forms of entertainment were the blood sports held in the amphitheatre.
* The largest building in Pompeii, which seated between 13 000 and 20 000 people- larger than the population of Pompeii itself, suggesting it attracted other inhabitants.
* It is doubtful that Herculaneum possessed an amphitheatre.
* The games were spread throughout the year and included beast hunts, gladiatorial contests and athletic displays.
* **Private buildings – villas, houses, shops**
* **Villas**
* There were three types of villas: maritime, urban and rustica
* **Maritime Villas**: The bay of Naples area attracted wealthy, prominent Roman Patricians who built substantial villas generally functioning as holiday retreats overlooking the sea . In Herculaneum, the **Villa of the Papyri** is a well documented example even though it is still buried.
* **Urban Villas:** On the outskirts of Pompeii there are two large villas - the Villa of the Mysteries named after a fresco of the Dionysian (Bacchus) rites of initiation for women, and the Villa of Diomedes. These were larger than the most luxurious houses in the town itself, and were not as elongated as the marine villas.
* **Rustica Villas:** The primary function of these villas was as part of the working farm. They could include some luxury rooms since the wealthy owner did stay there when visiting. Alternately, some of these villas were owned by wealthy men from Pompeii who did not need to stay overnight, and so they do not contain cubiculum for sleeping.
* **Houses**
* Houses varied over the long period of settlement from the Samnite and Greek periods into the Roman periods.
* Houses reflect the period in which they were erected as well as the preferences of their owners by AD 79.
* **Shops**
* There are two groups of **small** private shops
* (a) some associated with workshops,
* (b) some which sold food and drink. Herculaneum shops mainly sold food and drink.
* With the increasing prosperity of traders and businessmen, the owners of large houses rented out fronts of their houses as shops, taverns or in the case of Pompeii especially, used the front rooms as workshops. In those instances, the shop was not connected to the rest of the house.
* Although Herculaneum was not a commercial city it did contain numerous shops for the service of its population.
* These included a bakery, [numerous thermopolia](http://ceocms.lism.catholic.edu.au/ahist-dvd/ahist-hsc/Pompeii/Herculaneum/economy/hercthermopfamouse.JPG) and tavern.
* The [shop at the front of the **House of Neptune** mosaic](http://ceocms.lism.catholic.edu.au/ahist-dvd/ahist-hsc/Pompeii/Herculaneum/houses/houseneptuneamphitrite/Shop%20annex%20of%20House%20of%20Neptune%20and%20A.JPG) is an example of the mixture of residential and commercial activity which characterised both towns.
* **Influence of Greek and Egyptian cultures: art, architecture, religion**
* Pompeii influenced by Greeks at Cumae , Napoli and Greek town of Herculaneum
* Roman expansion in 2nd century BC led to the absorption of Hellenistic culture, philosophy, art , architecture
* Domestic and Public architecture used Greek columns, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian
* Theatres were essentially Greek in design. Traditional Greek tragedies and comedies were performed
* Influence of Greek attitudes to keeping the body fit can be seen in the Palaestra/gymnasia
* **Religion**
* Religion influenced. Romans absorbed the Greek pantheon as there own. Apollo and Venus for Pompeii and Hercules for Herculaneum, patron deities.
* Mystery religions bought back by soldiers, merchants and slaves. Dionysian/Bacchus cult shown on the dining walls of the house of the mysteries
* Isis bought , probably by slaves and gained popularity, especially for women, because of the promise of an afterlife.
* Reflected in the Temple of Isis. Its repair soon after the earthquake speaks of its importance to the town.
* **Art**
* Paintings, mosaics and frescoes borrowed from Greek and Egyptian mythology to decorate the walls of elite houses.
* In Herculaneum the image of Hercules appears in a public fountain, in private houses and in a wine shop.
* The Alexander mosaic from the House of the FAUN is made from over a million tessarae. It shows the battle between Alexander and Darius the Persian king. The House also contained mosaics depicting life on the Nile
* **Architecture**
* Early Pompeii and Herculaneum had a distinctly Greek character due to the deliberate use of Greek architectural elements.
* Pompeii and Herculaneum in their early history were under the strong cultural influence of Greek settlements along the Bay of Naples.
* Triangular Forum at Pompeii has been interpreted as a Greek-style space.
* Houses of Herculaneum which go back to the 2nd century BC show a strong Greek influence, particularly in the decorative use of columns.
* **Religion: temples, household gods, foreign cults, tombs.**
* **Temples**
* REFER to Public Buildings
* **Household Gods**
* A distinctly roman practice was the cult of the household gods especially those called the Lares.
* Romans believed that these were guardian spirits who protected the family from sickness, ensured prosperity for the business or livelihood of the family and fertility for the family to ensure continuation.
* The lares were depicted as two young men in dancing postures, holding drinking horns.
* Traditional ancestor worship was practised in Pompeii as evidenced by the abundance of family statues and death masks.
* The lararium was a shrine to these guardian spirits of the Roman household.
* Within the household, the doorway was a popular place for a lararium to protect the family from outside evil.
* **Foreign Cults**
* The Roman tradition existed alongside the foreign cult of Isis.
* The Cult of Isis had a large amount of influence in Pompeii- after the earthquake of 62 A.D., it was the only temple that was fully restored before the eruption.
* The reason for the popularity of this cult in Pompeii is believed to be due largely to the fact that Pompeii was located near the main trade route between Alexandria and Puteoli.
* As a result, Pompeii received considerable religious and commercial influence from Egypt.
* **Tombs**
* Roman law prohibited burial within a town's walls and so the tombs of prominent people were erected on the main roads into the town.
* The Romans usually cremated their dead.
* Tombs varied from small structures with simple inscriptions to large, impressive structures with niches for statues.
* Popular were the ‘altar tombs’ which recounted the achievements and wealth of the deceased, as well as his political and social rank.
* These tombs expose the new competition which was prevalent in the Imperial Age for rank and status within Pompeii itself.
* Unique to Pompeii were the ‘bench’ or ‘sitting’ tombs where travellers could sit and rest outside the city, and read and ponder the life of some prominent person whose death afforded their resting place.