

Geographical Setting and Natural Features of Campania

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Geographical Setting

- Pompeii and Herculaneum are in **Campania**, a volcanic plain which begins in the Volturno River in the north and ends in the Sorrentine Peninsula in the south
- **Sources for Campania:**
 - Strabo defined it as resembling a, “wine bowl”
 - Florus stated, “nowhere is the climate gentler... nowhere is the soil richer”
- The plain is separated by **Mount Vesuvius into two regions**
- **Pompeii**
 - Built on a Volcanic plateau (small natural hill) between the Sarno River (south) and the fertile slopes of Vesuvius (north)
 - Covered 66 hectares of fertile soil
 - Surrounded by mountains on three sides
- **Herculaneum**
 - A seaside town north of Vesuvius
 - The town was built on a steeply sloping spur which ended in a cliff - the views of the ocean made it a popular resort town
 - Had two inlets

Natural Features/Resources

Item	Evidence
Broad Beans	Carbonized beans were found in Pompeii, Herculaneum & the Villa at Torre Annunziata
Dates	Seeds and pips from dates have been preserved in volcanic ash
Figs	Seeds and pips from dates have been preserved in volcanic ash
Olives	Professor Wilhelmina Jashemski (archaeologist) has discovered many houses in fact had spaces for the cultivation of fruits including olives
Grapes	Evidence for viticulture (grape growing) is apparent in the vineyards, in addition to the wineskins and wine presses
Sheep & Goat	Animal bones from sheep, pigs and cattle attest to consumption of meat
Fish	Fish bones, fish hooks, garum (fish sauce) containers, fish skeletons, fishing boats and boat sheds

Plans and Streetscapes - Pompeii

- Pompeii was only 66 hectares which was small compared to Roman standards
- It was a well protected city surrounded by defensive walls, 12 towers and 8 gateways
- It had an array of gates
 - Herculaneum
 - Vesuvian
 - Stabian
 - Capua
 - Nola
 - Nuceria
 - Marina
 - Sarno
- There were various streets and roads which were lined with stepping blocks to determine wheeled traffic routes or allow pedestrians to cross over sewerage
 - Decumani (North - South)
 - Cardines (East- West)
- Click on this link to see the maps of the city streetscapes:

http://12ancient.weebly.com/uploads/8/1/8/4/8184194/plans_and_streetscapes_information.pdf

Plans and Streetscapes - Herculaneum

- Herculaneum had a Greek town layout, narrow straight streets to divide the town into insulae (nine regions, as established by archaeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli)
- It was also a well protected city with a large sea wall and large vaulted chambers for boats as a defence
- Herculaneum had less buildings because it was a much smaller residential town
- It also had various city gates which were positioned at the end of main thoroughfares
- Unlike Pompeii, the streets and roads featured
 - More efficient draining sewerage systems
 - Ranged from 2.5-7 metres wide streets, which actually didn't meet legal standards in some instances
 - Some streets were only allowed to be used by pedestrians, such as the Forum street
 - The magistrates (aediles) were responsible for the maintenance of the streets

Common Geographical Features within the towns

- Both towns had varying degrees of Greek influence
- Both towns had a main road that started at the city gate
- The legal system required both towns to have streets that were 5 metres wide at a minimum (however Herculaneum did not always abide by this standard...)
- Crossroads within both cities were often places for shrines and water fountains

Sample Questions

1. Within Herculaneum, who was responsible for the upkeep of the city's streets?
(1 mark)
2. How big in hectares was Pompeii? (1 mark)
3. In which region were Pompeii and Herculaneum situated? (2 mark)
4. Why is it suggested that Herculaneum is a smaller town than Pompeii? (3 marks)
5. What is insulae and how many insulae are noted on the map of Herculaneum?
(3 marks)
6. What are three resources within the Campania region and what evidence is there for these three resources? (6 marks)