

0. POMPEII IN 79 A.D. - Story Preface

1. POMPEII IN 79 A.D.

2. A SOPHISTICATED TOWN

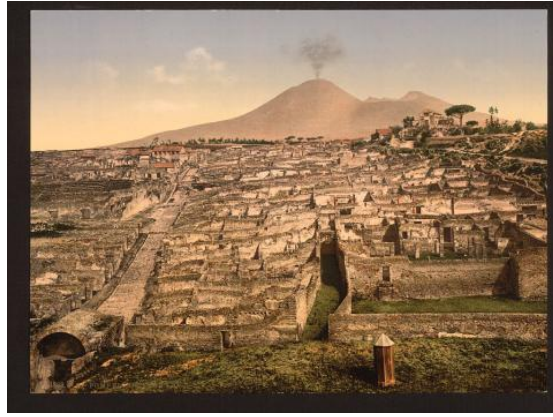
3. WARNING SIGNS

4. VESUVIUS ERUPTS

5. RAIN OF TERROR

6. ANNIHILATION

7. THE PEOPLE OF POMPEII



A view of Pompeii, sometime between circa 1890 and circa 1900. By this time, archaeologists have been working on excavating the city. Picture from the Detroit Publishing Co., Catalogue J Foreign Section. [Online via the Library of Congress](#). Click on the image for a better view.

Located in the [Campania](#) region of southern Italy, Pompeii is near Naples and the beautiful [Amalfi coast](#). Boasting some of the most [stunning scenery](#) in the world, towns like [Sorrento](#), [Ravello](#) and [Positano](#) are not far away. People who lived in Pompeii had quick access to the Bay of Naples through the port town of [Stabiae](#).

In 79 A.D., Pompeii was a resort town inhabited by wealthy Romans who were known for lavish spending on their homes. A typical upper class residence usually included [fresco](#) wall [murals](#), a [fountain](#), private bath, [mosaic](#) floors, an [atrium](#) and [inner garden](#) (called a [peristyle](#)) and a [shrine](#).

The wonderfully preserved ruins of today help us to understand the [splendor](#) of [life](#) then. Surviving records also reveal the difficulties of life in the region.

Beyond its beauty, Campania was known for something else in ancient times. The area was struck by earthquakes, including a particularly bad one around 62 A.D. [Seneca the Younger](#) (c. 3 B.C. - 65 A.D.) wrote a contemporary account about it (broken into paragraphs here, for easier reading):

...Pompeii, a busy town in Campania, has subsided under an earthquake... All the surrounding areas have also been affected.

What is more, this happened during winter, a time our ancestors used to promise us was free from danger of this kind. This tremor was on 5 February...and it inflicted great devastation on Campania, a region never safe from this evil, yet which has remained undamaged and has so often got off with a fright.

For part of the town of Herculaneum too fell down and even the structures that remain are unstable, and the colony of Nuceria, though it escaped disaster, nevertheless is not without complaint. Naples too lost many private buildings, but no public ones, being stricken only lightly by the great disaster; even villas have collapsed, everywhere things shook without damage.

In addition, the following events occurred: a flock of 600 sheep died and statues split, some people have lost their minds and wander about in their madness. Both the plan of my proposed work and the coincidence of the misfortune at this time demand that we explain the reasons for these things.

Therefore let us adopt great courage in the face of that disaster, which can neither be avoided nor predicted and let us stop listening to those who have renounced Campania, who have emigrated after this misfortune and say that they will never go there again.

For who can promise them that this or that piece of ground stands on better foundations? We are mistaken if we believe any part of the world is exempt and immune from the danger of an earthquake.

...Yet why did the earthquake last several days? For Campania shook continuously and did not stop though it became less violent. Nonetheless there was great damage, because it was shaking things that had already been shaken, and things that are hardly standing do not need to be overturned, but merely pushed, to fall down. ([Pompeii: A Sourcebook](#), by Alison E. Cooley and M.G.L. Cooley, quoting Seneca the Younger at pages 28-29.)

Pompeii, a sophisticated town in Campania, was not yet populated with people who understood that volcanic eruptions sometimes follow earthquakes (like the one reported by Seneca). [Archeology helps](#) us to learn more about them.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/POMPEII-IN-79-A.D.-Pompeii>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/POMPEII-IN-79-A.D.-Pompeii>

Media Stream



Campania Region

Image online, courtesy the answers.com website.

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Amalfi Coast

Image online, courtesy the holidaystreets.com website.

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Stunning Scenery Near Pompeii

Image online, courtesy the dimoras.com website.

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Sorrento

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Ravello

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Positano

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Stabiae

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Girl with Stylus and Tablets - Sappho from Pompeii

Image online, courtesy the Fun Science Gallery website.

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Wall Murals - Boscoreale

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Fountain in Pompeii

Image online, courtesy the University of Akron website.

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Atrium at a Pompeii Home

Image online, courtesy Professor John Nicols, University of Oregon's Department of History (Ancient History).

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A Rich Life in the First Century

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Inner Garden at a Pompeii Home

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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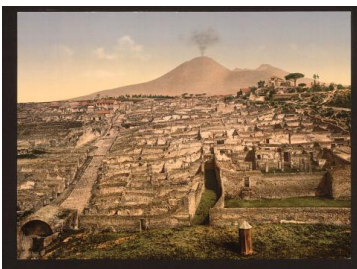


Shrine to Household Gods in Pompeii

Image online, courtesy the monmouthcollege.edu website.

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