

## ANCIENT HISTORY

### Extended Response: Explain what your sources reveal about everyday life in Pompeii and Herculaneum (8 Mark)

The recovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum transformed modern understanding of everyday life in the ancient world through the distinct archaeological evidence preserved in each city. Greek Hellenistic and Roman culture predominantly influenced all aspects of daily life including forms of entertainment, food and dining practices and clothing habits.

Characteristics of both Greek Hellenistic and Roman culture introduced unique forms of leisure activities such as attending the amphitheatre where gladiatorial games took place. The amphitheatre (Source A) built in 70BC in the south-eastern district of the town was estimated to have a seating capacity of 24,000 indicating that the arena was built to cater for visitors. Over 70 inscriptions (*dipinti*) in the amphitheatre announcing forthcoming games provides an insight into the organisation of games by members of the local elite. A series of inscriptions on the upper wall suggests that spectators were divided and allocated seats in different parts of the auditorium according to their social status. This is supported by the architectural design of the amphitheatre and Tacitus who provided a description of a system of separate entrances, tunnels, and staircases that gave access to the lower and upper tiers of seating. In addition, graffiti found in many areas of the town commonly depicting fighters and complex battle scenes. This highlighted the frequency and popularity of gladiatorial games as a form of leisure activity. The graffiti found in the House of the Labyrinth depicts two gladiators engaged in combat; with a person presiding over the games seated on an honorific seat upon a platform reinforcing the hierarchical seating system. Spectators of all classes were dedicated to this form of entertainment with the intense rivalry that was noted by Tacitus regarding a notorious riot in the amphitheatre given by Livienius Regulus that involved “*Bloodshed, abuse, then stone-throwing, then the drawing of weapons.*” Evidently, Pompeii and Herculaneum were fond of entertainment reflecting the varied interests and customs of the city’s inhabitants, thereby confirming that leisure activities were a crucial aspect of everyday life in both towns.

Numerous public baths (*thermae*) were frequented by the residents of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Inscriptions found portraying the low entry cost of baths indicates that attendants would include a wide cross-section of the population. The visits to the baths also served a social function where residents conducted business, political meetings, and games. The discovery of communal swimming pools supports this. The Stabian Baths (Source D) located in the intersection of the Via Stabia and Via Dell’Abbondanza, provided evidence of the water supply where the water flowed through an aqueduct system and heated through a heating system (*hypocaust*) that circulated hot air in underground cavities beneath the marble. In addition, series of graffiti found in the Suburban bath provide evidence for the sale of food and prostitution on premises. Further, the wall paintings in the changing rooms in the Suburban Baths depicting erotic scenes which underlines the connection between baths and promiscuity. Therefore, indicating that public baths served multipurpose in the everyday life of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Pompeii and Herculaneum constituted an elaborate dining tradition. Graffiti found in the summer triclinium in the House of Moralists depicting a feast hosted by the wealthy is evidence for the formal dining tradition. Houses uncovered revealed the prevalence of dining rooms (*triclinium*) and large open dining areas in gardens indicating that meals were enjoyed in aesthetic surroundings. Moreover, the existence of vineyards was confirmed by Jashemski’s archaeological studies of gardens in both towns. In addition, the region’s fertile land made an important contribution to the variety and availability of food for consumption. The discovery of organic remains (Source B) including seeds, fish bones and marine shells in

Latrine pits underneath Insulae Orientalis II at Herculaneum, suggests that the diet of both towns consists of a significant portion of seafood, fruits, and nuts. This is further supported by mosaics found in the House of Faun Pompeii depicting marine life. Pliny the Elder also noted that Pompeii was reputable for the large-scale production of fish sauce (*garum*) with “almost no fluid except for perfume that fetches a greater price, bringing fame to the country of origin.” Bisel's studies of human remains highlight the good dental health of residents due to the heavy consumption of seafood. This suggests that the inhabitants of both towns had a well-balanced and highly nutritious diet, which ultimately reveals the wide variety of foods available and the elaborate dining tradition. For poorer residents, many meals would have been bought from one of the city's 150 *thermopolia*, which consist of terracotta containers (*dolia*) sunk into a masonry counter that heated food. In one *thermopolium* found in Pompeii, remains of a cloth bag along with over a thousand coins were discovered in one of the *dolia* which are thought to represent the earnings of the day and demonstrates the popularity of the establishment. From this evidence, it can be concluded that food and dining was a significant aspect of everyday life for residents in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Archaeological sources that reveal the most about clothing worn by residents of Pompeii and Herculaneum include statues, frescoes, mosaics, and several remains including shoe leather, pins, and metal fasteners. The statue of Proconsul Marcus Nonius Balbus depicts him in a typical Roman toga loosely hanging over a belt and reaching only to the knee to signify his position as a prominent political figure. A statue of Eumachia (Source C) was found complete with its inscribed base near her building on the east side of the Pompeii Forum. It depicts her dressed in a garment known as a *stola* which is a long, sleeveless tunic that suspended from the shoulders and a cloak known as *palla* or mantle. This indicates the distinctive clothing of respectable matrons and the clothing that signified a woman's chastity and modesty (*pudicitia*). In addition, frescos of a market scene found in the Praedia of Julia Felix confirms the types of clothes commonly wore including toga and simple short tunic. Further, one of the wax tablets of Caecilius Iucundus records the import of linen from Alexandria indicating that linen was a luxury product. Evidently, the archaeological remains confirm clothing worn by residents in Pompeii and Herculaneum varied according to social status.

In conclusion, archaeological remains provided authenticity and allow historians to gain insights into the everyday lives of residents in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Intact graffiti and inscriptions revealed the numerous forms of leisure activity that took place, including public baths that served multipurpose, statues of prominent figures and artworks portrays common clothing. Organic and human remains highlight the availability of food and elaborate dining traditions.