

# Classics 17B: Republican Town Planning and Pompeii

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## 1 City Structure

Romans adopted the grid plan of Greek and Etruscan cities; cities like Marzabotto and Ostia are evidence of this structure. Roman armies also camped in grids after marching; soldiers were assigned blocks to be quartered in. Often, city centers would be built at the intersection of the *cardo* and *decumanos*, streets built on north-south and east-west axes, respectively.

## 2 Pompeii

Pompeii contains an amphitheatre, a distinctly Roman structure, where citizens could enjoy blood-sport; Greeks built theatres.

- How has the rediscovery of Pompeii impacted Western art, architecture, and culture?
- How can ruins connect the past with the present or future?
- Why are sites like Pompeii and Herculaneum so popular for tourists today?

Pliny the Younger describes the “phenomenon” of Mount Vesuvius’s 79 CE eruption while Pliny the Elder sails out to investigate, dying as a result.

### 2.1 The Exact Date of the Eruption

August 24, 79 CE on Vulcanalia, the festival in honor of the god Vulcan. There are arguments for both summer and autumn dates as well.

### 2.2 The Archaeological record of Pompeii up until 79 CE

- 10th–8th: Early settlement at Pompeii
- 8th–6th: Greeks and Etruscans in Campania
- 6th: Streets established, Temple of Apollo and the Doric Temple
- 5th: Samnites take control of Campania
- 4th: Pompeii is a Samnite city

- 4th/3rd: Rome conquers Bay of Naples
- 218–210 BCE: Economic boom in Pompeii
- 91–88 BCE: Social War between Roman and allied cities
- 80 BCE: Sulla converts Pompeii into a Roman colony, Romans move in
- 62 CE: Earthquake at Pompeii—extensive damage
- 79 CE: Vesuvius erupts

### 2.3 Pompeii After the Eruption

- Help from Rome—Emperor Titus, aid going to neighboring towns not wiped out from eruption.
- Clear evidence of salvaging or plunder from immediately after the eruption to the present.
- All statues in the Forum are missing, as well as marble veneers.
- Where were the cult statues (\*Capitolium fragments, Aesculapius)?
- Holes in houses by tunnellers in search of relics or those trying to escape.
- “Digging” started first at Herculaneum, then shifted to Pompeii.
- Kingdom of Naples (separate state, Italy was not unified until 1871) passed into the hands of foreign rulers, the Bourbons, the French, the Bourbons again, etc.
- The first buildings to come to ‘light’ at Pompeii were in the theater district: the Temple of Isis (1764), the large theater (1765), the Triangular Forum (1765). Bodies began to be unearthed too and became a morbid attraction for curious visitors to the site. The motive for digging was to find buried treasures.
- Giuseppe Fiorelli (1823–1896 once imprisoned by the Bourbons) was responsible for: stopping the removal of paintings; starting the antiquarium; creating the address system and plaster casts and much more.