

SECOND EDITION



POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM

A SOURCEBOOK



ALISON E. COOLEY AND M. G. L. COOLEY

Routledge Sourcebooks for the Ancient World

POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM

The original edition of *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* was a crucial resource for students of the site. Now updated to include material from Herculaneum, the neighbouring town also buried in the eruption of Vesuvius, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook* allows readers to form a richer and more diverse picture of urban life on the Bay of Naples.

Focusing upon inscriptions and ancient texts, it translates and sets into context a representative sample of the huge range of source material uncovered in these towns. From the labels on wine jars to scribbled insults, and from advertisements for gladiatorial contests to love poetry, the individual chapters explore the early history of Pompeii and Herculaneum, their destruction, leisure pursuits, politics, commerce, religion, the family and society. Information about Pompeii and Herculaneum from authors based in Rome is included, but the great majority of sources come from the cities themselves, written by their ordinary inhabitants – men and women, citizens and slaves.

Incorporating the latest research and finds from the two cities and enhanced with more photographs, maps and plans, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook* offers an invaluable resource for anyone studying or visiting the sites.

Alison E. Cooley is Reader in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Warwick. Her recent publications include *Pompeii. An Archaeological Site History* (2003), a translation, edition and commentary of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (2009), and *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy* (2012).

M.G.L. Cooley teaches Classics and is Head of Scholars at Warwick School. He is Chairman and General Editor of the LACTOR sourcebooks, and has edited three volumes in the series: *The Age of Augustus* (2003), *Cicero's Consulship Campaign* (2009) and *Tiberius to Nero* (2011).

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A SOURCEBOOK

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*Alison E. Cooley and
M.G.L. Cooley*

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*For Emma and Paul, who enjoyed the stepping-stones
in the torrential rain at Pompeii*

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CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiv
INTRODUCTION	1
1 PRE-ROMAN POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM	7
<i>Geographical location of Pompeii and Herculaneum (A1–2)</i>	9
<i>Origins and early history of Pompeii and Herculaneum (A3–10)</i>	10
<i>Administration and religion (A11–18)</i>	12
<i>Hellenistic culture at Pompeii (A19–26)</i>	15
<i>The Popidii family (A28–32)</i>	23
2 THE SOCIAL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH	25
<i>The Social War (B1–8)</i>	26
<i>Colonists at Pompeii (B9–15)</i>	28
<i>Herculaneum as a municipium (B16)</i>	31
<i>Dissent at Pompeii (B17–20)</i>	32
<i>Property interests of Rome's elite around Pompeii and Herculaneum (B21–27)</i>	35
3 DESTRUCTION OF POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM	38
<i>The impact of earthquakes, AD 62–79 (C1–6)</i>	39
<i>Eruption of Vesuvius, AD 79 (C7–16)</i>	43
<i>The aftermath of the eruption (C17–32)</i>	52
4 LEISURE	58
<i>The Amphitheatre at Pompeii (D1–10)</i>	61
<i>Games in the Forum and Amphitheatre at Pompeii (D11)</i>	65
<i>Games at Herculaneum (D12–13)</i>	66

CONTENTS

	<i>Organization of games at Pompeii: announcements of shows (D14–29)</i>	66
	<i>Shows beyond Pompeii (D30–35)</i>	74
	<i>Commemoration of games (D36–38)</i>	77
	<i>Riot in the Amphitheatre, AD 59 (D39–46)</i>	80
	<i>Gladiatorial barracks and training school (D47–53)</i>	85
	<i>Theatrical entertainment (D54–82)</i>	89
	<i>Playing with words (D83–120)</i>	101
	<i>The Baths (D121–130)</i>	112
5	RELIGION	117
	<i>Temple of Apollo, Pompeii (E1–2)</i>	118
	<i>Temple of Isis, Pompeii (E3–9)</i>	119
	<i>Jupiter at Pompeii (E10–15)</i>	124
	<i>Neptune at Pompeii (E16)</i>	126
	<i>Pompeian Venus (E17–28)</i>	127
	<i>Venus at Herculaneum (E29–31)</i>	129
	<i>Genius of Herculaneum restored (E32)</i>	131
	<i>Popular views of the gods (E33–39)</i>	131
	<i>Cult of Mercury and Maia, and Augustus, Pompeii (E40–43)</i>	133
	<i>Temple of Augustan Fortune, Pompeii (E44–51)</i>	134
	<i>Emperor worship at Pompeii (E52)</i>	136
	<i>Public priestesses at Pompeii (E53–69)</i>	138
	<i>Cults in the home (E70–77)</i>	149
	<i>Cult of the dead (E78–86)</i>	152
	<i>Visions and vows (E87–89)</i>	155
	<i>Cross-road shrines to the Lares at Pompeii (E90–96)</i>	155
	<i>Jews (E97–99)</i>	159
6	POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE	160
	<i>Elections at Pompeii (F1–85)</i>	163
	<i>Magisterial duties (F86–89)</i>	180
	<i>Careers (F90–109)</i>	183
	<i>Public tombs honouring leading families (F110–14)</i>	194
	<i>Augustales (F115–31)</i>	196
	<i>The impact of Rome (F132–51)</i>	202
	<i>Country District officials at Pompeii (F152–55)</i>	210
7	LAW AND SOCIETY	212
	<i>Archive of Venidius Ennychus (G1–4)</i>	213
	<i>Petronia Iusta versus Calatoria Themis (G5–11)</i>	215
	<i>Other wax tablets from Herculaneum (G12–13)</i>	219
	<i>Freedmen and freedwomen (G14–21)</i>	219

CONTENTS

<i>House of the Vettii (G22)</i>	222
<i>Geographical mobility and integration (G23–27)</i>	223
<i>Property law (G28–30)</i>	224
8 COMMERCIAL LIFE	227
<i>A regional perspective (H1–4)</i>	229
<i>Wine production and selling (H5–13)</i>	230
<i>Other agricultural production (H14–19)</i>	234
<i>Consumption: food and drink (H20–33)</i>	235
<i>Fish sauce (garum and hallex) (H34–46)</i>	247
<i>Other products (H47–51)</i>	252
<i>Commercial transactions (H52–57)</i>	254
<i>Money-making (H58–79)</i>	257
<i>Trades and occupations (H80–97)</i>	266
<i>The organization of trade (H98–101)</i>	274
<i>The wax tablets of the banker Caecilius Iucundus (H102–15)</i>	277
<i>Town amenities at Pompeii (H116)</i>	286
Appendix 1: Known dates of games at Pompeii and outside: data for barchart (D15)	289
Appendix 2: Table showing quotations from literature found written on the walls of Pompeii	292
Appendix 3: A guide to monetary values	294
Appendix 4: Brief list of dates of relevance to Pompeii and Herculaneum	295
<i>Glossary</i>	296
<i>Further reading</i>	299
<i>Bibliography</i>	305
<i>Index of persons</i>	315
<i>Index of places and peoples</i>	325
<i>Index of themes</i>	329

ILLUSTRATIONS

Maps

1	Map of Pompeii	xv
2	Map of Herculaneum	xvi

Figures

1.1	A1	Map of the Bay of Naples	9
1.2	A19	Plan of the Sanctuary of Dionysus, 'S. Abbondio'	16
1.3	A23	Plan of the House of the Faun, Pompeii	19
4.1	D15	Bar-chart: half-monthly distribution of games in Pompeii and other towns in the region	68
4.2	D31	Victory of 'The Leading-Man'	75
4.3	D32	Debut of Marcus Attilius	75
4.4	D33	Further success of Marcus Attilius	76
4.5	D38	A complex scene at the games	79
4.6	D42a	Celebration of the Nuceria's defeat	83
4.7	D47	Plan of the Gladiatorial Barracks	86
4.8	D69a	A curved structure (seating area?) with a tower	97
4.9	D96a/b	An architect's signature	105
4.10	D97a/b	The snake-game	105
4.11	D98a	The minotaur at Pompeii	106
4.12	D121	Plan of the Stabian Baths	113
5.1	E3	Plan of the Temple of Isis	121
5.2	E55	Plan of Eumachia's Building	142
6.1	F29	Findspots of electoral notices supporting Helvius Sabinus	169
8.1	H32b	Drawing of fish from mosaic, House of the Faun	246
8.2	H116	Distribution map of public water fountains, bakeries and snack-bars (<i>popinae</i>) at Pompeii	287

ILLUSTRATIONS

Plates

1.1	A23	The Alexander mosaic, detail	20
1.2	A26	A mosaic scene from a comedy by Menander	22
2.1	B8	Traces of Sulla's bombardment of Pompeii	28
2.2	B18a	A painting of Spartacus in battle?	33
3.1	C3	Relief panel depicting an earthquake, House of Caecilius Iucundus (V.i.26), Pompeii	40
3.2	C4	Repairs in brick to the north enclosure wall of the Temple of Apollo	42
3.3	C12	An umbrella pine, with Vesuvius in the background	50
4.1	D2b	Seating inscription of T. Atullius Celer	62
4.2	D14	Painted notices for games at Pompeii	67
4.3	D36a	Stucco relief on 'tomb of Umbricius Scaurus/Festius Ampliatus'	77
4.4a	D41a	Painting of the riot	82
4.4b	D41a	Painting of the riot, detail	82
4.5	D67a	Bronze statue of Calatorius Quartio	95
4.6	D68a	Bronze statue of Mammius Maximus	96
4.7	D123a	Bronze bench of Nigidius Vaccula	114
5.1	E52a	Altar for the emperor: scene of bull sacrifice	137
5.2	E52b	Altar for the emperor: sacrificial paraphernalia	138
5.3	E54	Mamia's tomb	139
5.4	E57a	Eumachia's statue	143
5.5	E62b	Eumachia's tomb	145
5.6	E63a	Herm of Eumachius Aprilis	146
5.7	E69	Statue of a local priestess, from the <i>Macellum</i>	148
5.8	E70	Shrine of the household gods (<i>lararium</i>), House of the Vettii	149
5.9	E76a	Herm of Lucius in the House of Caecilius Iucundus, Pompeii	152
5.10	E90	District shrine on a street corner, between I.xi and I.ix	157
6.1	F93a	Statue of Marcus Holconius Rufus	187
6.2	F95a	Marble equestrian statue of Nonius Balbus	189
6.3	F105a	Statue and altar of Nonius Balbus outside the Suburban Baths	192
6.4	F115a	Tomb of a prominent <i>Augustalis</i> at Pompeii	197
6.5	F117a	Munatius Faustus commemorated by his wife, outside the Herculaneum Gate	198
6.6	F140a	Colossal heroic bronze statue of Claudius	207
8.1	H22	Wine-selling at Herculaneum	236
8.2	H23	<i>Thermopolium</i> on the <i>decumanus maximus</i> at Herculaneum	237
8.3	H24	Bakery at Pompeii	238
8.4	H32a	Fish mosaic from the House of the Faun	246

ILLUSTRATIONS

8.5	H38a	Mosaic fish-sauce vessel from Scaurus' house	251
8.6	H58a	'Salve lucrum' (hail, profit)	257
8.7	H95a	Epitaph of the surveyor Popidius Nicostratus	273
8.8	H98a	Measuring table in the Forum at Pompeii	275
8.9	H100	Market stalls in the Forum	276
8.10	H101	Market stalls in the Forum	277

Tables

8.1a	List of fruit and nuts	242
8.1b	List of grains and vegetables	243
8.2	List of animals reared for meat	244
8.3	List of birds reared or caught for meat	245
8.4	List of fish and seafood	248
8.5	Labelled contents of pottery vessels	253
8.6	Occupations at Pompeii	268

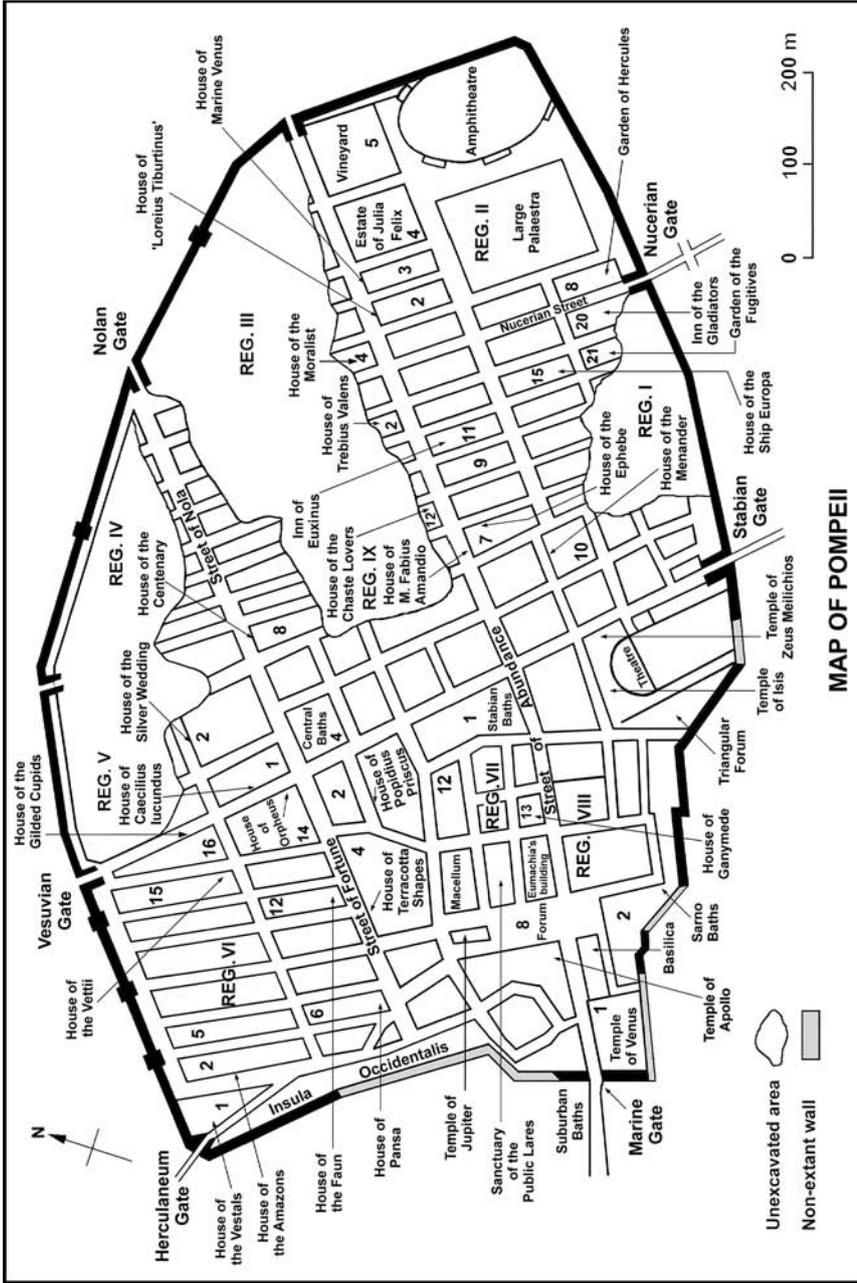
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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AE</i>	<i>Année Epigraphique</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Ephemeris Epigraphica</i>
GC	Giordano, C. and Casale, A. (1991) 'Iscrizioni pompeiane inedite scoperte tra gli anni 1954–1978', <i>Atti della Accademia Pontaniana</i> n.s. 39: 273–378
<i>ILLRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
<i>Imagines Italicae</i>	<i>Imagines Italicae. A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions</i> 2 vols, ed. M.H. Crawford (2011: London: BICS Suppl. 110)
<i>JIWE</i>	<i>Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. I. Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul</i> , ed. D. Noy, (1993: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
MANN inv.	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inventory number
<i>NHP</i>	<i>The Natural History of Pompeii</i> , eds W.F. Jashemski and F.G. Meyer (2002: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
<i>PAH</i>	<i>Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia</i> , 3 vols, ed. G. Fiorelli (1860–64: Naples)
<i>TH</i>	<i>Tabulae Herculaneses</i>



Map 1 Map of Pompeii

INTRODUCTION

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Neither Pompeii nor Herculaneum was a particularly significant Roman town. Even within the region of Campania, they were not as large or as important as Naples or Puteoli; not as fashionable as Baiae or Stabiae; not as strategically important as Misenum, nor as celebrated in literature as Cumae. No inhabitant of Pompeii or Herculaneum made a significant impact on Roman literature or politics. No crucial moments in Rome's history hinge upon them.

Although the names of the two towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum are often spoken in the same breath because of their shared fate, destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in October/November AD 79, the cities themselves were quite distinct from each other in terms of their size and society. In fact, fundamental differences are immediately apparent even in their archaeological record, because although destroyed by the same eruption, the process of destruction was quite different in the two cases. The town of Herculaneum, a mere 6 kilometres from the crater of the volcano, suffered speedy destruction in the early hours of the second day of the eruption, as the tremendous pyroclastic blasts and surges swept down the mountainside, engulfing the town and its inhabitants. Pompeii was destroyed a few hours later on the same day as the third of six surges reached the northern wall of the town, with the final three surges then overwhelming the rest of the town too. These details are not just of antiquarian interest, since the differing processes of destruction had a direct impact upon the archaeological record. In the case of Herculaneum, the searing temperatures of the surges carbonized wooden furniture and wax tablets. At Pompeii, the upper storeys of buildings were first damaged by volcanic fallout before the surges then completed the town's annihilation. It is often suggested that whereas Herculaneum disappeared completely under some 20 metres of volcanic deposits that then solidified, some of Pompeii's outline may still have been visible in the aftermath of the eruption. Certainly, the site of Pompeii was plundered extensively after the eruption, both immediately and through many centuries, before official excavations actually began there in 1748. Recent investigations have also revealed that Herculaneum's deep sleep also did not remain undisturbed, and traces of medieval

INTRODUCTION

tunnelling through the site show that the popular impression of a town that lay undisturbed until Prince d'Elboeuf stumbled across the theatre in 1710 should now be cast to one side. Neither city presents us with a potential time-capsule of life frozen at one moment, despite popular images of bread still baking in an oven, and paint pots complete with their pigments where fresco-workers abandoned them. It is not the case that, if only the right archaeological techniques were used, we could gain a full picture of daily life in Roman times, in towns frozen at the moments of their destruction.

The other major difference between the two towns is one of scale. Whereas Pompeii may have had a population of roughly 10,000–12,000 inhabitants over an area of some 66 hectares, Herculaneum had a much smaller population, of around only 4,000 inhabitants, covering approximately 20 hectares. Pompeii's urban origins extend back into the sixth century BC, whereas Herculaneum was founded only in the fourth century. Both towns fought against Rome in the Social War in the early first century BC, but whereas Pompeii then became a *colonia*, Herculaneum remained only a *municipium*. The chronology of their respective urban development too was radically different, with Pompeii experiencing a notable boom in public and private architecture during the second century BC. Herculaneum, by contrast, had to wait until the Augustan period at the end of the following century for a similar boom. For visitors to the two sites today, Herculaneum seems to be dominated by private dwellings, whereas Pompeii has a much richer diversity in architecture on display. Some of these differences are real and not just apparent: Herculaneum had no amphitheatre, for example. Nevertheless, it is essential to appreciate that Herculaneum's major public buildings, including its Forum, market, theatre and basilica, remain underground.

Our purpose in writing this sourcebook is to allow the inhabitants of the two towns to speak for themselves. Some of the written sources in this book – the inscriptions carved in stone on public and private monuments – were intended to perpetuate the memory of the individuals concerned, and, even if Vesuvius had not exploded, a few would probably have survived into modern times like the thousands of stone inscriptions from other parts of the Roman empire. But the great majority of the documents in this sourcebook were not 'written in stone' literally or metaphorically. They include notices to advertise gladiatorial games and endorsements of candidates in the local elections, written in paint upon walls; business records and legal documents carefully stored away on wax tablets; graffiti scratched upon walls for a purpose and casual scribbles. These are the documents that Pompeii and Herculaneum preserve on a unique scale.

Oddly, these documents are considerably less accessible to most people than the site of Pompeii itself. They are published in mighty tomes available in university libraries, without translation, often without transcription and with commentary in Latin. The aim of our sourcebook is to make accessible a representative sample of this material to pupils studying GCSE and A level Classical Civilization and their teachers, to university students, and to the visitor to the site who perhaps

notices some of the Latin writing around the site and is intrigued to find out what it means, or who simply wants to learn more about the life of the people in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Notes on literary authors

Appian wrote a history of Rome's civil wars in Greek during the second century AD.

Cicero 106–43 BC; statesman and orator, who wrote prolifically. His letters to his close friend Atticus, not originally written for publication, often give an intimate picture of his hopes and fears during the political turmoil of the late Republic.

Columella originally from Spain, wrote a short work on trees, and a lengthy handbook on agriculture AD c.60–65. Book 10, on gardening, is in hexameter verse, while the other books are in prose.

Dio Cassius AD c.155–c.235; senator who wrote an extensive history, some of which survives only in summary form.

Florus first or second century AD; wrote an abridgement (or epitome) of Roman history with special reference to wars waged up to the time of Augustus.

Frontinus AD c.30–103; best known for his work *On Aqueducts*, he also composed a guide to military strategy.

Macrobius One of the topics covered in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, a wide-ranging dialogue, set over the period of the Saturnalia festival of AD 383?, is a discussion of witty sayings of and about famous people, taken from earlier authors.

Pliny the Elder AD 23–79; wrote an encyclopedic work on Natural History (which survives) and a history (which does not); commander of the Roman fleet at Misenum; died at Stabiae during the eruption of Vesuvius.

Pliny the Younger nephew and adopted son of Pliny the Elder. Witness of Vesuvius' eruption. He published ten books of *Letters* in the reign of Trajan.

Plutarch AD c.45–125; his *Parallel Lives* presented biographies of pairs of Greeks and Romans. His *Moralia* deals with a huge range of topics.

Seneca the Younger 4 BC–AD 65; Stoic philosopher and tutor to the young emperor Nero, forced to commit suicide after falling from favour. His *Natural Questions* investigates natural phenomena.

Strabo geographer and historian, born in the Black Sea region, wrote in Greek at the time of Augustus and Tiberius (late first century BC – early first century AD).

Suetonius AD c.70–c.140; best known for his biographies of emperors, he had earlier (under Trajan) composed a work, *The Lives of Illustrious Men*, taking grammarians, orators, poets and historians as his subjects. The biographical sketch of Pliny the Elder (included in his capacity as a distinguished historian) survives only partially.

Tacitus AD *c.*56–*c.*120. Orator and senator who wrote two major historical works, the *Annals*, covering the period from the death of Augustus in AD 14 to that of Nero in AD 68, and the *Histories* from the civil wars of AD 68/9 to the death of Titus in AD 81. Neither work survives in its entirety.

Notes on epigraphic sources

Pottery inscriptions

A great many inscriptions have been found on the clay vessels discovered within Pompeii and Herculaneum, as throughout the Roman world. (In Rome, Monte Testaccio, a hill 35 metres high, has been formed from *amphorae* dumped there, and rows on rows fill Pompeii's stores.) These inscriptions, some scratched on the clay by a sharp point, and others written in carbon or paint, were essentially labels, usually abbreviated and needing only to be meaningful to one or two people. Despite this, most can be read, and enough examples do survive to give us some interesting glimpses of trade and life in the two towns. They are published mainly in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV.

Monumental inscriptions, dipinti, graffiti, wax tablets

The monumental stone inscriptions found at Pompeii before the twentieth century are mostly published in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* X (two fascicles), which is supplemented by *Ephemeris Epigraphica* VIII. In addition, Giordano and Casale (1991) published some of the inscriptions found in the period 1954–78. Otherwise, inscriptions found since the 1950s are scattered through archaeological reports, journal articles and monographs, and can only be tracked down by going through *Année Epigraphique*, but even this does not pick up everything that has been published.

Painted inscriptions (*dipinti*) and graffiti from Pompeii and Herculaneum, and wax tablets from Pompeii can be found in the fascicles of *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV, with the latest supplement appearing in 2011, ed. Weber. A very welcome tool is the publication of archive photographs of painted inscriptions in situ, which have since disappeared through weathering, by Varone and Stefani (2009). The Internet offers two major resources, in the form of scanned copies of several fascicles of *CIL* (http://cil.bbaw.de/dateien/cil_baende.html#xvi) and *ILS* (www.archive.org/details/inscriptionesla00dessgoog).

Giuseppe Camodeca is still painstakingly publishing the fascinating wax tablets from Herculaneum, which give vivid glimpses into the everyday economic and legal concerns of a cross-section of the town's population. His insightful articles unfortunately tend to appear only in specialist legal and epigraphic journals, but deserve to have a much greater impact upon people's perceptions of society at Herculaneum, revealing, as they do, Roman law in action.

INTRODUCTION

Brackets

- [] indicate part of the original text is missing from the stone.
- () indicate that the translation is expanding words abbreviated in the Latin.
- < > enclose letters omitted by error from the original text.
- [[]] indicate that part of a text has been deliberately erased in antiquity.
- { } indicate explanatory notes.

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PRE-ROMAN POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM

The vast majority of our evidence for the early history of Pompeii and Herculaneum is archaeological. Scatterings of prehistoric artefacts indicate a long history of activity on the lava plateau at the mouth of the River Sarno occupied by the later town of Pompeii, but we have to wait until the sixth century BC for what can be identified as a city to develop on the site. During that century, the Doric Temple and sanctuary of Apollo were constructed, and an area of around 66 hectares was enclosed in a defensive wall. It had long been thought that it was possible to discern in the current street pattern the less regular layout of the earliest settlement at Pompeii. This so-called ‘Altstadt’, or ‘Old Town’, covered an area of about 14 hectares. It is now clear, however, that this area was not an original nucleus from which the settlement later expanded. Exactly what it does represent is still much debated. Ten miles away from Pompeii around the Bay of Naples, Herculaneum was a much later foundation, with the earliest evidence on that site dating only from the fourth century BC, and was on a much smaller scale of approximately 20 hectares. Nevertheless, both towns celebrated their mythological foundations by the Greek hero Hercules (**A3–6**).

The earliest writing from Pompeii is scratched upon fragments of pottery, notably in a deposit of votive offerings in the Temple of Apollo. Some of these texts are dedications, while others record the identity of the owner of the pottery. They range in date from *c.*600 to *c.*475 BC and are written in Etruscan. Otherwise, the earliest decipherable writing from the site (second/first centuries BC) appears in Oscan, an Italic language used in parts of southern Italy. Written from right to left, it uses an alphabet different from that of Latin, although some words mirror Latin usage. Monumental inscriptions and graffiti in Oscan provide our main documentary source for life in Pompeii before it came directly under Rome’s control in the first century BC (**A11–17, A20–21, A27–30**). These Oscan inscriptions give an insight into how the town was administered and what gods were worshipped. Although a few of these inscriptions were still on public display in AD 79, the majority were found where they had been reused as building material. By contrast, only one monumental Oscan inscription has been found so far at Herculaneum (**A18**), with only two other Oscan texts also known, a graffito in the Samnite House (*Ins. V.1*), recording possibly craftsmen’s signatures, and another on a tile.

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