

## Topic page:

# Pompeii

Ancient city of S Italy, a port near Naples and at the foot of Mt. Vesuvius. Possibly an old Oscan settlement, it was a Samnite city for centuries before it passed under Roman rule at the time of Lucius Cornelius Sulla (1st cent. B.C.). Pompeii was not only a flourishing port but a prosperous resort with many villas. An earthquake in A.D. 63 did much damage, and an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79 (which was described by Pliny the Younger) buried Pompeii, along with [Herculaneum](#) and Stabiae, under cinders and ashes that preserved the ruins of the city with magnificent completeness—down to the fresh colors of the wall paintings. The long-forgotten site of the city was rediscovered in 1748 and has been sporadically excavated since that time. The habits and manners of life in Roman times have been revealed in great detail at Pompeii by the plan of the streets and footpaths, the statue-decorated public buildings, and the simple shops and homes of the artisans. The houses and villas have yielded rare and beautiful examples of Roman art. Among the most famous are the house of the Vetti, the villa of the Mysteries, and, in the suburbs of Pompeii, the villa of the Boscoreale.

See A. W. Van Buren, *A Companion to the Study of Pompeii and Herculaneum* (1933); M. Brion, *Pompeii and Herculaneum* (tr. 1960); A. Maiuri, *Pompeian Wall Paintings* (1960); D. Taylor, *Pompeii and Vesuvius* (1969); M. Grant, *Cities of Vesuvius* (1971); W. Jongman, *The Economy and Society of Pompeii* (1988); P. Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life* (tr. 1999).

## Definition

**Pompeii** from *Collins English Dictionary*

An ancient city in Italy, southeast of Naples: buried by an eruption of Vesuvius (79 AD); excavation of the site, which is extremely well preserved, began in 1748.

**Derived words:** **Pompeian** *adjective, noun*.



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APA

[Pompeii](#). (2008). In *The Columbia Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <http://www.credoreference.com/topic/pompeii/>

Chicago

*The Columbia Encyclopedia*, s.v. "[Pompeii](#)," accessed May 22, 2012, <http://www.credoreference.com/topic/pompeii/>

Harvard

'[Pompeii](#)' 2008, in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, New York, NY, USA, viewed 22 May 2012, <from <http://www.credoreference.com/topic/pompeii/>>

MLA

"[Pompeii](#)." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. *Credo Reference*. Web. 22 May 2012.