



How safe and clean were the streets?

EVIDENCE A

“ Your drunken bully who has by chance not yet killed anyone passes a night of torture ... lying now upon his face, and now upon his back; he will get no rest in any other way, since some men can only sleep after a punch-up. Yet however reckless the fellow may be, however hot with wine and young blood, he avoids one whose scarlet cloak and many attendants, with torches and brass lamps in their hands, warn him to keep his distance. But to me, who is generally escorted home by the moon, or by the small light of a candle whose wick I look after carefully, he pays no respect. Hear how the wretched fight begins – if fight it can be called when you do all the thrashing and I get all the blows! The fellow stands up against me, and orders me to stop; obey I must. What else can you do when attacked by a madman stronger than yourself? ... Whether you try to say anything, or get away silently, it's all the same; he will beat you up just the same, and then, in a rage, steal from you. Such is the life of the poor man; having been pounded and slapped into a jelly, he begs and prays to be allowed to return home with a few teeth in his head. ”

The Roman poet Juvenal. He made a career writing poems complaining about life in the city of Rome!

EVIDENCE B

Pompeii is built on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius. When it rains today, all the rain water is channelled down the narrow streets.



EVIDENCE C

The main form of transport in the town was horse or mule. Many of the roads have deep grooves in them where cart wheels wore the stone down. It is likely there were hundreds of animals on the streets.

There were also 'stepping stones' built across the streets, often near junctions between streets.



EVIDENCE D

There were no street lights in Pompeii. Some bars had lanterns above them, but otherwise the streets would have been very dark at night. On the via Marina, there are little white marble pieces in the road. Some archaeologists think these might have acted like 'cats eyes' – at night the marble would have sparkled by torchlight.



How safe and clean were the streets?

EVIDENCE E

Around 400 private toilets have been identified in Pompeii, in Amarantus' properties alone there are 3 including one upstairs! This implies that most houses had some kind of toilet, although we also know that people used pots which then had to be emptied. Some toilets are cleaned/flushed by using drain or gutter water collected by pipes from roofs or the garden. Others were flushed by throwing a bucket of water down them. There were no overall city drains so poo was flushed into cesspits (mainly under the roads) and then it soaked away through the porous volcanic bedrock.

Public toilets were needed for when people were out and about in the town or for those passing through Pompeii. Below is a picture of the public toilets in the Forum – main market square – in Pompeii. The stones sticking out around the edges would have supported seats, under which a flow of water would wash the waste into the drain you can see at the back. Roman toilets were not divided into cubicles like ours, going to the loo was quite a social thing!



EVIDENCE F & G

Not all streets were the same however, **Source F** shows the crossroads of two main streets – via dell' Abbondanza and via Stabiana – with shops, stepping stones, fountain and water tower. **Source G** shows a much narrower backstreet lined by houses, these could be winding and very dark indeed.

F



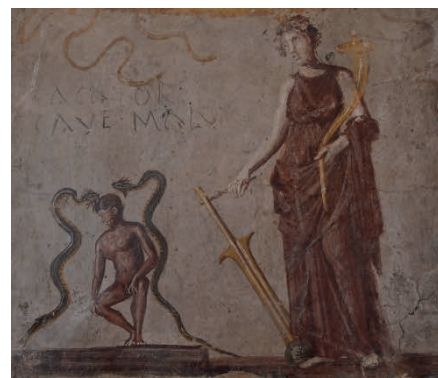
G



EVIDENCE H

It is possible that some people went to the toilet on the street itself; graffiti has been found warning off people who may want to relieve themselves, for example "may he who pees or poos here incur the wrath of the gods both above and below".

This fresco found near a toilet in a Bar shows a man squatting to do a poo and the goddess Fortuna looking on in horror, perhaps meant to encourage people to do their business in the proper place!





What were the streets used for?

EVIDENCE A

Water came into Pompeii via an aqueduct from a spring 26 miles away. It was distributed via lead pipes which ran beneath the pavements to fourteen water towers usually built near crossroads.

Dotted throughout Pompeii's streets are public water fountains to provide water to the households living around them. These fountains would have been a meeting place where you could catch up with your neighbours whilst fetching water.



EVIDENCE B

The counter of one of the many bars in Pompeii with pots containing different kinds of food were sunk into it. Some bars had a small dining room at the back but mostly customers ate the food on the street. Amarantus' bar also has a section which faces out onto the street to serve people passing by who don't necessarily want to stop in.



EVIDENCE C

Here is a plaster cast of a cart wheel with a metal rim, archaeologists used the remains of carts found in the city and frescos to work out what they probably looked like. Carts brought in goods to the city and there were so many their metal rims made ruts in the stone roads. In Rome carts were only allowed into the city after sunset. It is possible that the same was true in Pompeii.



What were the streets used for?

EVIDENCE D

Where the plaster has survived, it is possible to see the remains of graffiti. Archaeologists think most walls were probably covered with it. Some were adverts (e.g. promoting gladiator), others were made by politicians appealing for votes (example in the picture), some were - often very rude! – personal messages (e.g. "Atimetus got me pregnant") or notes about everyday life (e.g. "On April 20th, I gave a cloak to be washed. On May 7th, a headband. On May 8th, two tunics"). One, found in the basilica, gives a sense of how much graffiti there must have been: "O walls, you have held up so much tedious graffiti that I am amazed that you have not already collapsed in ruin."



EVIDENCE E

A fresco (wall painting) found in a bakery showing two men and a boy buying a loaf of bread from a stall.

EVIDENCE F & G

58 street shrines have been found in Pompeii. **Source F** is an altar shrine on Vicolo della Regina which originally had snakes painted on the back wall. **Source G** is one found in the insula next to Amarantus'.

F



G





Who were the streets for?



EVIDENCE A

This picture shows the entrance to the House of Julia Felix. Julia Felix was a very rich woman. She paid to have the whole pavement raised to make it easier to get to her front door.

EVIDENCE B

The picture also shows two stone benches, one on either side of the doorway. It has been suggested that they were placed here outside the house to give visitors somewhere to sit while they wait to be invited into the house.

EVIDENCE C

These four brick pillars suggest a covered area in the middle of a road (Via dell'Abbondanza) just by the public baths. This would not have been accessible to wheeled traffic and could have been a market.



EVIDENCE D

Many roads in Pompeii have wheel ruts in the stone because so many carts travelled along them.





Who were the streets for?

EVIDENCE E

Because the homes of the poor were so small, they would have made a lot of use of the space in the streets. They ate on the streets (at bars like Amarantus' pictured) and met their friends there.



EVIDENCE F

This fresco (wall painting) from the House of Julia Felix shows a scene in the Forum (marketplace).

