

# Excavated settlements offer a unique perspective history essay

[History](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Excavated settlements offer a unique perspective into the past lives of human history and culture. Contributing to our ongoing understanding of the patterns of life in which these communities have lead. These settlements help in understanding not only when and where people lived, but also how and why they have lived by examining changes causes over time. Excavated settlements are glimpses of past lives, lived by everyday people through the analysis of artefacts left behind. Through this essay I will cover the study of Pompeii and how it has not only been restored to life but opens an understanding of past events capturing a moment in time, and how Troy has been able to cover their time periods to help understand the its different stages in life. PompeiiThe study of Pompeii and its hazardous volcanic end, leads to question the past lives of this buried civilisation. It is unclear that Pompeian's people knew what a volcanic was, since " Prior to the eruption the city experienced earthquakes increasing in size and frequency, and springs and wells dried up. It is unlikely, as commonly assumed, that the Pompeian's were caught completely unaware, but it is unclear if they understood the magnitude of the warning signs" as noted on the Papers from the Institute of Archaeology website, accessed April 20, 2013 [http://dx. doi. org/10. 5334/pia. 406](http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/pia.406). There is archaeological evidence which suggest that despite the warning signs of the earthquakes up until the eruption of the Mount Vesuvius volcano, which destroyed Pompeii, the city was still thriving with approximately 20, 000 Pompeian's. Pompeii was an ancient Roman city, in the region of the Italian Campania, near the now modern Naples. Well known for its destruction in 79 AD, which left the city buried under volcanic ash. The initial stage of destruction as described by Wallace-Hadrill, "

consisted of a large eruptive column, which stretched nearly 27 km into the air" (Wallace-Hadrill 2011: 26) followed by " For 18 to 20 hours, lapilli (pumice stones) and ash rained down on Pompeii and areas to the south, including Stabia and the Sorrentina peninsula. At Pompeii up to 15 cm of lapilli fell every hour, resulting in a total depth of 2.8 meters" (Berry 2007: 25) The second stage of the eruption surged the flow of volcanic material, the fluidised mass of raging rock fragments and gas, which contained much higher levels of gas. The effects of the pyroclastic surge travelled downwards to Pompeii, with an approximately depth of 1.8 meters, reaching up to 500°C having horrific effects on the Pompeian people shown by the deformation caused by the intense heat. Thought to be lost for about 1500 years, it was later discovered in 1599, then rediscovered in 1748 by Rocque Joaquin a Spanish engineer. The artefacts and remains of Pompeii have provided insight to the daily lifestyle, due to the nature of preservation, laying beneath the volcanic ash for thousands of years. They have stayed well preserved due to the lack of air and moisture under the volcanic ash, providing great archaeological insight. In 1860 when Italy was unified by King Victor Emmanuel, Giuseppe Fiorelli took charge and was appointed by King Victor to be the director of the ongoing excavations at Pompeii. By using a sort of stratigraphic analysis, Giuseppe Fiorelli pioneered the classical excavation " He proclaimed the recovery of works of art, which hitherto had dominated work at the site, to be secondary to the detailed excavation of all kinds of buildings and learning how they had been constructed and for what purposes each part of them had been used." (Trigger 1989: 196). During this time it was customary for excavators to dig

along the streets of a discovered city, and then later enter the housing attached to the street. By using this method, the supporting materials of the wall structures were comprised causing them to collapse. " Fiorelli decreed that once a street had been located its approximate course would be marked on the surface, but not excavated." (Stiebing 1993: 162) By doing this, excavators would instead enter houses from top to bottom, keeping the integrity of the wall structure. " In an attempt to make Pompeii easier to navigate, he introduced the " postal system" in which the city was divided into nine Regio (city regions), which were in turn divided into Insula (city blocks), and each doorway was assigned a numerical address" (Ling 2005, 164) systematically excavating them one by one. 4 years later in 1864 a team of excavators discovered a cavity in the volcanic ash, with what appeared to be a skeleton in the cavity. Seeing this Fiorelli ordered the cavity to be poured with liquid plaster of Paris. After the hardening of the plaster, he then carefully removed the surrounding ash to reveal an outline of organic remains, a complete detailed cast of a human body. The volcanic ash had covered the ancient Pompeian corpse and solidified the decaying flesh, preserving it in a solid mould of the human form. The preservation of the ancient Pompeian was so detail, expressions and clothing could be distinguished. With mould after mould filled with liquid plaster of Paris the full horror of Pompeii remains were realised. The expressions of death, fear and agony of the volcanic eruption on each corpse painted a snapshot in time. Fiorelli also left artefacts intact in place, when found, only " small, easily stolen items, of course were still removed to the museum in Naples" (Stiebing 1993: 162) with the remains of statues, fountains, paintings, altars

and jars left on site to explorer, Pompeii was resurrected." Fiorelli established an archaeological school at Pompeii where students could learn his techniques" (Trigger 1989: 196) and as a result, followed by his successors, the careful excavation method he pioneered, Pompeii has not only been restored to life but opens an understanding of past events. The site was later opened to the public, with visitors being able to step into the ruins of Pompeii, to discover the past and see the daily life of the ancient Pompeian with clarity never thought possible. TroyThe mythical city of Troy, also known as Troia, existed over 4000 years ago. Through many years, people believed Troy never existed; only known through mentions appearing in Latin and Greek literature in the tails of in Iliad and Odyssey. Until being discovered in north-western Turkey. Troy was strategically located a few kilometres from the narrow channel called the Hellespont or the Dardanelles. The channel linked to a body of water, Aegean with the Sea of Marmara, thus any ship sailing from " the Aegean to Constantinople and the Black Sea would have to sail through these waters." (Rose 1998: 405)The sites of Troy were first excavated between 1870 - 1890 by Heinrich Schliemann, and then later between 1893 - 1894 by his associate Wilhelm Dorpfeld. Schliemann's expeditions revealed that Troy was in fact several cities overlaid over each other. It is believed that when one city would fall and new city would be resurrected over the ruins of the old one. " His expedition dug the hill site and uncovered the ruins of ancient cities that dated from the Bronze Age through to the Roman period." As stated from Archaeology Expert website, accessed April 21, 2013 <http://www.archaeologyexpert.co.uk/archaeology-myth-excavating-troy.html> Although Schliemann was widely known as a

scoundrel in the archaeology society, which has caused doubts on the authenticity of artefacts that he has claimed to discovered at Troy such as the " Priam's treasure". After Schliemann's death " Professor Dorpfeld and his collaborators, considering the depth of the deposit and the character of the surviving remains in each stratum, were obliged to make an estimate on the basis of general probabilities" (Blegen 1936: 8) revealing that Troy was no less than 9 cities overlapping each other. Each version of Troy were classified by Roman numerals, from the latest being Troy IX to the earliest called Troy I." After this second campaign excavation would not resume until nearly forty years later, in 1932, when Carl Blegen of the University of Cincinnati began a new campaign that would last seven years." (Rose 1998: 405) Blegen work resulted in him been able to separate the remaining time periods of Troy, placing them in chronological order, isolating it into 47 strata of Troy. " Troy I was attributed to the first half of the third millennium, from ca. 3000 to 2500 B. C; Troy II to the second half of the same millennium, 2500 to 2000 B. C; Troy III, IV and V to the ensuing five hundred years, 2000 to 1500 B. C. Troy VI was dated from 1500 to 1000 B. C (later revised to 1200); Troy VIIa and b from 1000 (later 1200) to 700 B. C.; Troy VIII from 700 B. C. to the end of the pre-Christian era; and Troy IX from the turn of the era ca. 500 A. D" (Blegen 1936: 8) He also discovered the destruction of Troy's walls to be from natural disaster rather than war. Manfred Korfmann later resumed excavations in 1988 under the direction of the University of Tübingen in partnership with the University of Cincinnati. Korfmann excavations comprised of a substantial international team of archaeologists and other representatives from different academic disciplines. His goal was

to investigate all phases of habitation at the site of Troy, from the beginning of Troy I to the end of Troy IX, giving all version equal attention. His excavations found evidence in Troy VII of a possible battle, leading to confirm the possibility of the infamous Troy War, but reframed from clarifying the evidence wanting his team to focus on the cultures, continental, environmental and historical aspects of Troy stating " We are no longer interested in clarifying whether the Trojan War and the ensuing destruction of Troy VI around 1250 BC - really took place" During the early Bronze Age Troy I to V was a stronghold, the fortified capital served the purpose of protecting the royal residences, of kings and family, officials and other prestige guests. However the local population lived unfortified, theoretically only taking refuge in the citadel in times of danger. Troy I's citadel was a small construction, only being 90 meters in diameter, enclosed by flanking towers and massive walls with corridors. The citadel also contained approximately 20 houses in rectangular shape. Troy II however was twice as large, having higher, sloping walls made of stone to protect the king's palace located next to an acropolis and other royal residences. It is assumed that Troy II was destroyed but fired due to the burnt layer's and debris found. " Schliemann himself thought that the " burnt layer" first called Troy III, and later equated with the final phase of Troy II, represented the ruins of the citadel of Priam; but his discovery in 1890, at a much higher level in a stratum of Troy VI, of considerable numbers of Mycenaean potsherds made a revision of this dating imperative." (Blegen 1936: 8) The World History website goes on to state " The burning of Troy II seems to have been followed by an economic decline; each of the citadels of Troy III, IV, and

V was fortified and somewhat larger than its predecessor, but the houses inside the walls were much smaller and more closely packed than in Troy II." accessed April 21, 2013 <http://history-world.org/troy.htm> Troy VI and VII had further enlarged their city, erecting limestone walls that were approximately 4.5 meters thick and 5 meters tall with brick ramparts and watchtowers in the structure. The citadel had increased in size to 200 meters long and 140 meters wide, with houses lay on concentric terraces. The destruction of Troy VI as noted by Carl Blegen was done by a violent earthquake, as indicated by the Mycenaean pottery found, suggesting the date was earlier than the indicated time frame of the Trojan War in Homer's Iliad. The ruins of Troy VI from the earthquake were rebuilt in the short-lived Troy VIIa. Due to the use of materials in the reconstruction of Troy VIIa it is assumed that it was done by the survivors of the earthquake. Only lasting just over a generation " The ruins were leveled and covered over by new buildings, which were set close together and filled all available space inside the fortress. Almost every house was provided with one or several huge storage jars that were sunk deep into the ground, with only their mouths above the level of the floor." As stated on the World History website, accessed April 21, 2013 <http://history-world.org/troy.htm> Blegen concluded that the Troy described in Homer's Iliad was very likely Troy VIIa, which was destroyed in the Troy War by the Greek armies as evidence of new settlers and the partly rebuilt Troy VIIb and of the decline of imported Mycenaean pots. The excavation settlements in Troy and Pompeii have informed us about the past lives of communities lived in each. These settlements help in understanding not only when and where people lived, but also how and why



they have lived by examining changes causes over time. With each and every artefact found on an excavation settlement, it defines its location.