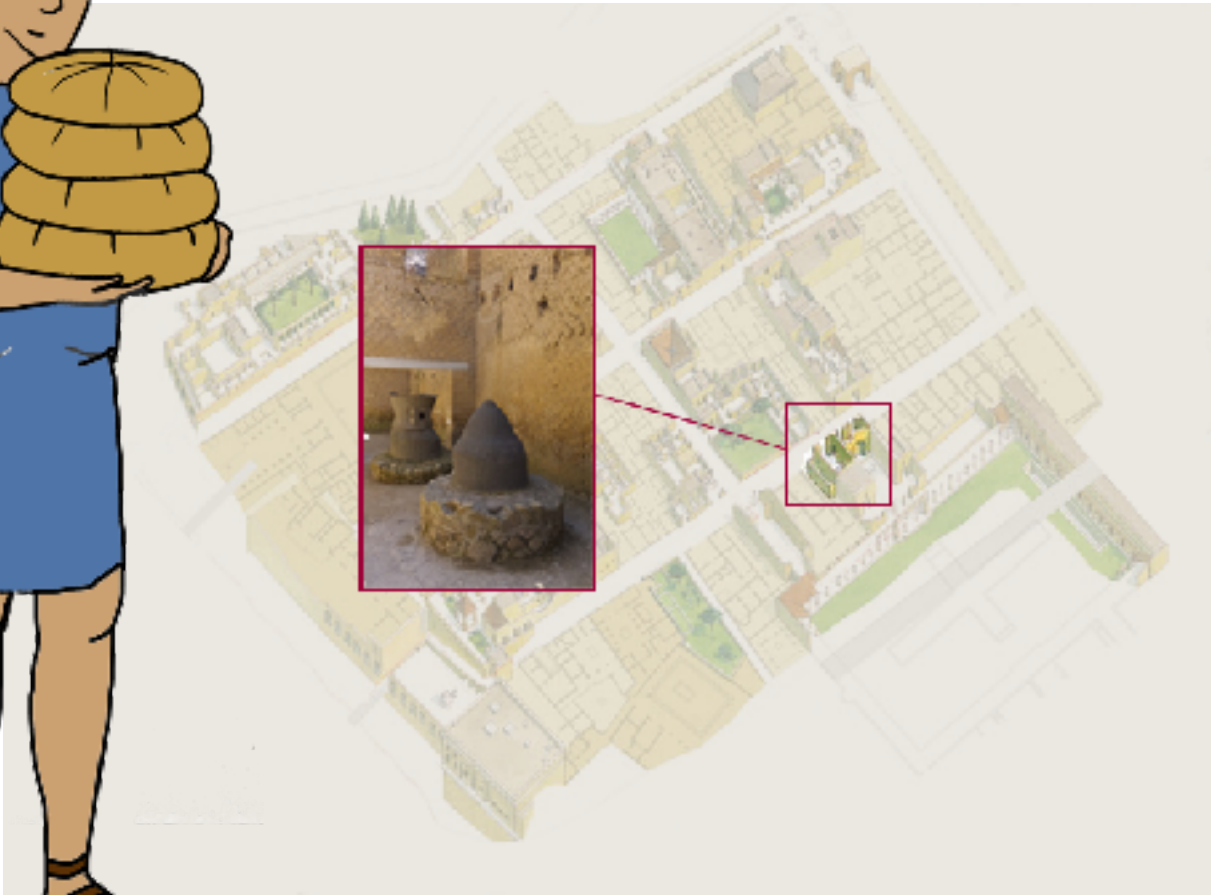


Fact file: Sextus Patulcius Felix



The town's bakers had a busy job keeping Herculaneum supplied with bread.

There are several bakeries in Herculaneum, spread across the city, but one of the most impressive is that of Sextus Patulcius Felix. We know it's a bakery partly because loaves of bread were found here - still in the oven from when Felix was baking them!

We think the baker who owned this bakery was called Sextus Patulcius Felix, because of a seal ring found there with his name on it.



Felix's bakery wasn't just used to sell bread - on site there were mills which ground the grain to make flour.



These are two large mills to grind the grain to make flour.

A wooden beam would be slotted through the square hole and a slave or a donkey could use this to turn the mill.

In this bakery we know that it was donkeys not slaves who turned the mills because we have found their remains.



This would have been a very hard job as the mills were made of basalt lava which is very heavy and it would have got very hot in the summer in Herculaneum - poor donkeys!

In the room at the rear of the bakery the dough was mixed and kneaded in large stone bowls and worked into shape ready for baking. Twenty-five round bronze baking pans were found in this room.

The loaves were then stamped with the name of the baker, just like food today is labelled with brands.



The prepared loaves were then placed in the oven for baking.

They heated the ovens by burning wood. This made lots of smoke so each oven had a chimney to get rid of the smoke. Many oven rooms also had ceiling vents to help disperse smoke.



It is likely that not all of the bread would have been sold here and would have been sold in other shops around the town.

This painting from Pompeii, a Roman town very near Herculaneum shows just how much bread was being sold and eaten in these towns. One bakery in Pompeii had over 80 loaves still in the oven when Vesuvius erupted.



The bakers must have been very important to the town, as bread was eaten by all those who lived there, and poor people particularly relied on bread for many of their meals.