

FOTONOTICIA

Un burdel a la romana

ELPAIS.es - Cultura - 27-10-2006 -

Arqueólogos italianos han restaurado un burdel en el complejo arqueológico de Pompeya.

Los frescos eróticos demuestran que las famosas bacanales también han pasado a la historia del Imperio.



Imagen de un fresco. (Foto: AFP/Mario Laporta)

El Lupanar, que así se llama el burdel, debido a la derivación de la palabra latina “*lupa*” (prostituta) ha sido restaurado durante todo un año. En ese periodo se ha rehabilitado el edificio, que cuenta con un total de dos plantas y cinco habitaciones por planta.

Aquí también había clases, los clientes más pudientes tenían la segunda planta reservada, aunque todas las habitaciones contaban con camas de piedra cubiertas por colchones de paja y un fresco erótico.



Visitantes aguardan su turno para visitar el 'Lupanare'. (Foto: EFE/Ciro Fusco)



Unas chicas ríen durante la visita al 'Lupanare'. (Foto: EFE/Ciro Fusco)



The murals of Pompeii's luxury brothel will make it popular with visitors again after centuries. (Foto: EFE/Ciro Fusco)

Erotic frescoes put Pompeii brothel on the tourist map

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A LUXURIOUS brothel that once entertained wealthy clients in Pompeii has been opened as a visitor attraction after painstaking restoration.

The two-storey structure, which features erotic frescoes that leave little to the imagination, is expected to become one of the ancient city's top draws. Officials who unveiled it yesterday emphasised that the year-long restoration had been carried out in the interests of archaeology — and to save the frescoes — rather than prurience. The brothel was named the Lupanare — from *lupa* (she-wolf), the colloquial Latin term for a prostitute. Prices were posted outside the building, which had three entrances, and the frescoes depict the sexual services on offer.

The Lupanare boasted ten rooms, five on each floor, with the upper floor (which had a balcony) reserved for more important and wealthier clients. Sexual activity took place on stone beds, which would have been covered by mattresses.

Like other parts of pleasure-loving Pompeii, the brothel was overwhelmed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which buried the city in a 6m (19½ft) layer of volcanish ash in AD79. The ash preserved the city as a time capsule until the 18th century, when the first excavations began to bring to light well-preserved houses, shops, frescoes and skeletons of people caught as they tried to flee.

Scholars say that Pompeii had many brothels, but most consisted only of a single room, often above a shop or wine bar. The prostitutes were slaves and were usually of Greek or Oriental origin. Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, superintendent of Pompeii, said that ancient Roman attitudes to sex and obscenity were more relaxed than those of later civilisations.

Erotic objects found during the 18th and 19th-century excavations were considered so salacious they were kept in a "secret cabinet" at the National Archeological Museum in Naples, to which only those deemed to be of "mature age and respected morals" were admitted. The objects include a statuette of the god Pan copulating with a goat, and numerous phallic symbols, considered by the Romans to be good luck or fertility charms.

The stone beds were placed in discreet alcoves. Scholars said that one prostitute, named Myrtis, had a sign outside her room explaining that her speciality was oral sex. Other girls working at the brothel — according to Roman-era graffiti on the walls — were Callidrome, Cressa, Drauca, Fabia, Faustilla, Felicia, Fortunata, Helpis, Mula, Nica, Restituta, Rusatia and Ianuaria.

Luciana Iacobelli, lecturer in Pompeiian antiquities at Bicocca University in Milan, said that not all the prostitutes were slaves. There was even some evidence that Roman women frequented brothels for sex with male prostitutes.

"Sex, like death, is always of consuming human interest and has been over the centuries," she said.