

4 LOOKING AT A PRIMARY DOCUMENT

Pliny the Elder was born in 23 CE and died in 79 CE while trying to rescue friends during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. He was the son of an equestrian who became a navy and army commander. He was also an author. His last work, written in 75 CE, was the *Naturalis Historiae*, an encyclopaedia in which he collected much of the knowledge of his time.

1 Read the following extract and answer the questions.

In great buildings as well as in other things the rest of the world has been outdone by us Romans. If, indeed, all the buildings in our City are considered ... the united grandeur of them would lead one to imagine that we were describing another world, accumulated in a single spot.

Not to mention among our great works the Circus Maximus, that was built by the Dictator Caesar ... one *stadium* [about 200 metres] broad and three in length ... and occupying with the adjacent buildings no less than four *iugera* [about 10 000 square metres] with room for no less than 160 000 spectators seated ...

Frequently praise is given to the great sewer system of Rome. There are seven 'rivers' made to flow, by artificial channels, beneath the city ... to carry off and sweep away all the sewage.



SOURCE 3 From Pliny's *Naturalis Historiae*

2 a What is a primary document?

b Explain why the extract from Pliny's *Naturalis Historiae* is considered a primary document.

c Select and write down any three words or phrases from the extract that demonstrate Pliny's opinion of the city of Rome.

d In your own words, rephrase what Pliny meant about Rome by the phrase 'another world, accumulated in a single spot'.

e Describe any two features of the Circus Maximus.

f Why was praise frequently given to the Roman sewer system?

g Do you think Ancient Rome was a great city? Explain your answer below.
