Graffiti: The Social Media of Ancient Pompeii

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Praelocutio

While walls are not the only surfaces to be subjected to the phenomenon of graffiti, they do provide one of the most agreeable surfaces on which to create it. Excluding works that have been produced with the intention of imitating the stylistic quality of graffiti, the phenomenon in question is one of the most unadulterated mediums of societal expression. Whereas a historian arguably endeavors to transcribe a series of significant events in the most objective, uncolored, and dispassionate means as possible, a graffitist strives to do the very reverse, taking it upon themselves to comment on whichever matter their passion dictates, with the rawest pigments, oftentimes with little or no regard for the boundaries within which the historian remains.

Graffiti is history's shadow, standing in plain sight, yet all too frequently treated as if it did not even exist; as far as Plutarch was concerned, "There is nothing written in them which is either useful or pleasing – only so-and-so 'remembers' so-and-so, and 'wishes him the best', and is 'the best of his friends', and many things full of such ridiculousness."[1] Alas, just as a person and a shadow, the positive and negative spaces cannot physically exist without one another, and must both be examined, if one is to garner an accurate conception of the whole. This article, therefore, will consider the phenomenon of graffiti, and present what can be discerned of human civilization and society therefrom, which would not otherwise be encountered. While it would be fascinating to consider the message and significance of every single graffito created between the dawn of humankind and the present day, such a text would far exceed the time constraints allocated for its

[1] Emily Gowers. "Ancient Vandalism? – TheTLS." TheTLS. July 16, 2015. Accessed April 25, 2019. https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/ancient-vandalism/.

completion. As such, it must suffice to consider a limited number of examples of graffiti from a limited acreage.

Quaestio Investigationis

Through preliminary research on the subject, it came to my attention that there exists a substantial volume of remarkably well-preserved and documented ancient Pompeian graffiti, whose characteristics reveal an impressive degree of insight into its society. It seemed to me that this niche would consist of a sufficient volume of material to facilitate the writing of a thirty-page research paper without becoming unwieldy, as would be the case if the whole of the classical Mediterranean were to be the subject.

To further refine my research, I chose to operate within the theoretical framework presented in Tom Standage's *Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years*. Standage's position on graffiti is that it functioned as a form of social media, and to a certain extent still does. Standage writes that "Today's social-media users are the unwitting heirs of a rich tradition with surprisingly deep historical roots," and argues that graffiti retains so much more significance and pertinence to modern society than is often thought.[2]

Standage's work also draws to attention the unfortunate reality that pre-modern graffiti is too frequently overlooked as a valid subject of historic research. Apart from Rebecca Benefiel, to whom this paper owes a great deal, the number of historians and scholars who have ever valued and studied graffiti is frightfully insignificant. Given the precarious state of much of the extant Pompeian graffiti, as well as the fact that so much of it has yet to be properly documented and digitized, it is undeniably important that the study of pre-modern graffiti becomes a matter of greater concern within the community of historians.

Quod Inter Me et Os

While the study of ancient Pompeian graffiti is by no means a novelty, such works almost exclusively treat examples belonging to a single location or

[2] Tom Standage. *Writing on the Wall: Social Media - the First 2,000 Years* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 5.

theme. Those that do not are little more than visual encyclopedias, devoid of scholarly explication. In all the texts which were referred to in the creation of this paper, not one of them presents a comprehensive consideration of why the ancient Pompeians made use of graffiti, or what its use demonstrates about the aggregate of its creators.

By virtue of its size and scope, the *Corpus Inscriptionem Latinarum* comes exceptionally close to being comprehensive, though it presents merely the transcriptions and translations of such things as graffiti, lacking any interpretation or analysis of what their meaning and significance in a greater historical context might be. Similarly, sources such as "The Ancient Graffiti Project," "Pompeiiana," "Pompeii in Pictures," and even "Analysis of Roman Pottery Graffiti by High Resolution Capture and 3D Laser Profilometry," tend toward a much more archaeological lens, without great consideration for the social or cultural milieu in which the graffiti were created.

On the other side of the proverbial sestertius, modern academic research papers such as Rebecca Benefiel's "Dialogues of Ancient Graffiti in the House of Maius Castricius in Pompeii" and "Magic Squares, Alphabet Jumbles, Riddles and More: The Culture of Word-Games among the Graffiti of Pompeii", John Clarke's *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 B. C.-A. D. 250*, and Sarah Levin-Richardson's "Facilis hic futuit: Graffiti and Masculinity in Pompeii's 'Purpose-Built' Brothel" present thorough explications of specific groups and categories of graffiti, in some cases neglecting to connect them to a wider understanding of ancient Pompeian civilization in its entirety.

Furthermore, of all the primary and secondary sources referenced in this paper, there is not a single one which utilizes Tom Standage's social media argument about the nature of graffiti.[3] As such, this paper will present the analysis and interpretation of (lexigraphic) ancient Pompeian graffiti

[3] The single exception being "The Earliest Wall Posts: Pompeiian Social Networking?" by Andy Nuttall, the inclusion of which has been omitted on the grounds that it was written as part of the author's Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology at the University of Bristol, and independently published via Academia.edu; as opposed to a book or scholarly article in an academic journal. Furthermore, the research in Nuttall's paper is not limited to Pompeii, and maintains a distinctively archaeological perspective; in contrast with the social-historical one which is observed in my own.

neither limited to a single environ within the archaeological park nor a single thematic criterion, with a view to discerning whether or not ancient Pompeian graffiti can rightly be said to have played the role of a social media platform. For the sake of coherence and organization, the graffiti will be grouped and treated according to the following thematic criteria: service, advertisement, politics, salutation, censure, literature, and sexuality.

Quid Est Graffiti

It is worth noting at this point that while the etymology of the word graffiti might prove interesting to some, it would do little to aid the completion of this paper, and has therefore been omitted. In any case, a universal definition of the term is absolutely necessary, seeing as such a great deal of analysis and interpretation will be generated in its consideration. By consulting and cross-referencing various authorities on the term, it is possible to assemble a profile of certain criteria to which all instances of graffiti may and should be held.

Firstly, a graffito (pl. graffiti) must consist of either a lexigraph or pictograph marked directly onto a solid surface with either a pigmented medium or an implement of incision. Secondly, a graffito must be created without the authorization of the individual or organization to which the subjected surface belongs. Thirdly, a graffito must be created in a location in which it is freely viewable by the general population, which is to say, a public place. Whereas the first criterion is true for all graffiti, the second and third do not necessarily pertain to ancient Pompeian graffiti, which, as pointed out by Antonio Varone in his "I Graffiti," may and often does include markings made by the proprietor of the subjected surface, as well as those which have been made upon or within the walls of a private residence for limited consumption.[4]

Similarly, Rebecca Benefiel remarks in "Dialogues of Ancient Graffiti in the House of Maius Castricius in Pompeii" that "we have no modern parallel for substantial numbers of graffiti inside houses, especially elite houses. Yet

[4] Antonio Varone, "I Graffiti", in Alix Barbet and Paola Miniero Forte (eds.), *La Villa San Marco a Stabia* (Napoli: Centre Jean Bérard, 1999), 238-256.

Pompeii demonstrates that this was very much a part of the phenomenon of ancient graffiti. Graffiti appear in the majority of houses, often not just as one or two random scribblings but in substantial numbers."[5] In order to differentiate graffiti from the decorative frescoes and mosaic murals ubiquitous in the classical Mediterranean, it is necessary to replace the second and third criteria with the following: a graffito must not be the work of an artist or craftsman who receives compensation before, during, or after its completion.[6]

While many of the consulted sources refer to the criterion of a satirical, inflammatory, and outright threatening nature; this is only true for a portion of graffiti in existence, and cannot rightly be considered a universal element thereof. It is my belief that this misconception derives from the (now overwritten) third criterion and that one often considers graffiti to possess a subversive or offensive character by virtue of its frequently having been created in spite of an individual or organization's authority. If one examines any collection of modern or pre-modern graffiti however, one will just as frequently encounter declarations of love and friendship, compliments of character and countenance, the promotion and glorification of private and public figures, and words of wisdom.

The definition of graffiti being satisfactorily settled, it remains to point out that all examples thereof, which will be analyzed in this paper, possess a uniquely lexigraphic character.[7] Despite graffiti's definition being extended to pictographs, language is invariably less subjective than imagery and symbolism, and will pose far less of a challenge in its interpretation.

Transcribenda et Translatio

Though the Corpus Inscriptionem Latinarum maintains an exact system for the transcription of ancient Latin (a system which, incidentally, is

[5] Rebecca R. Benefiel, "Dialogues of Ancient Graffiti in the House of Maius Castricius in Pompeii." *American Journal of Archaeology* 114, no. 1 (2010): 59-101.
[6] Epigraphs would fall into this category, and so are not considered to be graffiti.
[7] Firstly, a graffito (pl. graffiti) must consist of either a lexigraph or pictograph marked directly onto a solid surface with either a pigmented medium or an implement of incision. Secondly, a graffito must not be the work of an artist or craftsman who receives compensation before, during, or after its completion.

used in most of the texts consulted for this paper), the method which I have elected to employ is an extremely simplified version, meant to ensure that the transcriptions remain as legible as possible. Therefore, a forward slash '/' represents a sentence break, or an unintelligible letter, an ellipsis '…' symbolizes either a series of the latter, or words that have an unknown meaning. When a single letter has been used as an abbreviation, its meaning is given in parentheses '()', and this notation is also used to illustrate a word or letter that is missing or unreadable, but which can nevertheless be accurately guessed, or when an implication or meaning has been clarified.

It is also worth noting that by virtue of an elementary familiarity with Latin, I have been able to discern when a translation has been rather liberal, and where the translator or author has used outright incorrect language, often with the aim of exaggerating the contents of a graffito. Though I appreciate the attempt to create an approximation of contemporary vernacular, such examples lack evidential support, and have thus been modified to reflect the closest and most unadulterated translations as possible.

Mos Muneris

The first body of graffiti to be considered in this paper pertains to the perceived quality of goods and services offered by certain businesses and establishments. As demonstrated by these instances: "What a lot of tricks you use to deceive, innkeeper. You sell water but drink unmixed wine" and "The finances officer of the emperor Nero says this food is poison" Pompeiians made use of graffiti to publicize criticisms (and sometimes praises) of particular commercial enterprises and industries within the town.[8][9] This deduction is further stressed by the consideration of the following examples: "Gaius Sabinus says a fond hello to Statius. Traveler, you eat bread in Pompeii, but you go to Nuceria to drink. At Nuceria, the drinking is better" or "Two friends were here. While they were, they had bad service in every way from a guy named Epaphroditus. They threw him out and spent 105 and a half sestertii most agreeably on whores," in which it could be interpreted that such

[8] (Transcription missing). "Graffiti from Pompeii" Pompeiana.org. Accessed March 18, 2019. http://pompeiana.org/. Hereafter "GFP"
[9] (Transcription missing). "GFP".

graffiti would have been widely consumed and considered by passersby.1011 This notion that Pompeian graffiti facilitated the communication of commercial peer-assessment and valuation is affirmed by Jennifer Baird, who, in Ancient Graffiti in Context, writes that "Traversing the city, the pedestrian would encounter a potential constellation of incidental social performances, reflecting how appropriately pervasive attestations of civic epigraphy and graffiti practices participate in this flexible and potent matrix of daily cultural diffusion" which in turn supports the position that Pompeian graffiti functioned as a form of, albeit archaic, social media.[12]

Venditatio

The second collection of graffiti to be treated in this paper consists of advertisements and notices concerning events and products which were available for public enjoyment and consumption. These examples provide illustration: "Eight asses for use of stables;" "Felicla, home-born slave, (for) two asses;" "Guest house, dining room to let with three couches and furnishings;" "Thirty six pairs of gladiators of Constantia will fight at Nuceria / on October 31, and November 1-4." Pompeiians used the medium of graffiti for commercial and non-commercial promotion alike.[13] This statement is reinforced through the evaluation the next instances:

> The city block of the Arrii Pollii in the possession of Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius is available to rent from July 1st. There are shops on the first floor, upper stories, high-class rooms and a house. A person interested in renting this property should contact Primus, the slave of Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius;" "Twenty pairs of Gladiators, belonging to Aulus Suettius Antenio and to his freedman Niger, will fight at Puteoli on the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th of March. There will also be a beast hunt and athletic contests: A hunt, and

[10] (Transcription missing). "GFP".
[11] (Transcription missing). "GFP".
[12] Jennifer A. Baird, and Claire Taylor. Ancient Graffiti in Context. New York: Routledge, 2012.
[13] *a(ssibus) viii / stabuli*. "The Ancient Graffiti Project." Ancient Graffiti Project. Accessed March 19, 2019. An as was ancient Roman coin made of bronze. *felicla virna a(ssibus) ii*. "AGP". *hospitivm / hic locatur triclinivm cvm tribvs lectis et comm(odis)*. Davis. *gladiatorvm paria xxxvi pvg nicerea constantia / pr kal et kal vi v non nov*. Davis.

> twenty pairs of gladiators belonging to Marcus Tullius will fight a Pompeii on November 4-7.[14]

It could be construed that the practice was so common that it was indiscriminately considered to be the most efficient method of informing the population as to the various goods and services at their disposal.[15] The idea that graffiti facilitated publicity is substantiated by Peter Keegan, who, in "Graffiti as Monumenta and Verba: Marking Territories, Creating Discourses in Roman Pompeii," writes that "In general, social media can be understood as the means by which people use digital technologies to create, share and exchange information and ideas. While the technology is vastly different, both forms of meaning production and consumption — graffiti and social media — rely on the engagement of human communities or networks." This underscores the argument that Pompeian graffiti played the role of a pre-modern social media platform.[16]

Politica

The third type of graffiti to be examined in this paper is comprised almost entirely of so-called "election programmata."[17] The citizens of ancient Pompeii utilized graffiti for the purpose of political campaigning and debate, as illustrated by these cases : "All the goldsmiths recommend Gaius Cuspius Pansa for Aedile;" "Lucius Aquitus, a fine man. Settlers, I appeal to you to elect him member of the Board of Two;" "Publius Carpinius, a fine man. I appeal to you to elect him member of the Board of Two;" "Lucius Niraemius, a fine man. To be member of the Board of Two."[18] This deduction is evidenced

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[14] Ancient Graffitti Project.
[15] "GFP". (Transcription missing). *glad par xx a svetti / tenionis / tnigri liberti pvgna / pvteol xvi xv xiv xiii kal ap venatio et / athletae ervnt*. Davis.
[15] *ven et glad par xx /m tvlli pvgn pom pr non novembres / vii idvs nov*. Davis.
[16] Peter Keegan (Hereafter "Keegan"), "11 Graffiti as Monumenta and Verba: Marking Territories, Creating Discourses in Roman Pompeii.," *Inscriptions in the Private Sphere in the Greco-Roman World*: 248-64. doi:10.1163/9789004307124_012.
[17] Keegan. A number of Pompeiian programmata are known to have been commissioned works (not graffiti), and have therefore been omitted.
[18] *c cvspiam pansam aed avrlifices vniversi rog*. Davis. *l(ucium) aquitum / d(uum) v(irum) v(irum) b(onum) / o(ro) v(os) c(olonei)*. Manfred G. Schmidt, Camilla Campedelli, and Lucien Villars. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter GmbH, 2015.
[18] *p(ublium) carpin(ium) / ii v(irum) v(irum) b(onum) o(ro) v(os) f(aciatis)*. Schmidt.
[18]*L(ucium) NIR(aemium) II V(irum) V(irum) B(onum)*. Schmidt.

by subsequent examples: “Numerius Barcha, a fine man; I appeal to you to elect him member of the Board of Two. So may Venus of Pompeii, holy, hallowed goddess, be kind to you;” “Numerius Veius Barcha, may you rot!” “Numerius Veius, a fine man. Settlers, I appeal to you to elect him member of the Board of Two;“ “Let anyone who votes against him take a seat by an ass.” It could be surmised that such programmata were not simply posters, but communicatory vessels which enabled the public discussion of eligible and not-so-eligible candidates.[19] This concept, that graffiti was made use of for active political debate throughout Pompeii, is underlined by Peter Keegan, who, in “Graffiti as Monumenta and Verba: Marking Territories, Creating Discourses in Roman Pompeii,” states that “Proximities of consumption, habitation and worship point to another inter-subjective network of social relations characteristic of the late Republican and early Imperial urban experience in a Roman Campanian town like Pompeii. The logic of this experience would appear mediated through the interactive syntax of graffiti and dipinti, a visual and kinesthetic dialogue among inhabitants and visitors along one of the linear through-routes or irregularly configured streets of this regional center of urban life. This statement undeniably supports the proposition that Pompeian graffiti existed as a living medium of social communication.[20]

Salutem

The fourth body of graffiti to be analyzed in this paper is characterized by messages of salutation and well-wishing written by inhabitants and visitors of Pompeii, as indicated by the succeeding examples: “Secundus says hello to his friends;” “May those whom Mr. LVP loves fare well”; “To the health of the one entering” Pompeiians made use of graffiti to greet one another indirectly, and to convey messages of good-will.[21] This argument is buttressed through

[19] *n(umerium) barcha(m) ii v(irum) v(irum) b(onum) o(ro) v(os) f(aciatis) ita v(o)beis venus pomp(eiana) sacra (sancta propitia sit)*. Schmidt. *n(umerius) vei bareca tabescas*. Schmidt.
[19] *n(umerium) veium i(i) / v(irum) v(irum) b(onum) o(ro) v(os) co(loni)*. Schmidt.
[19] *quintio(m) si qui recusat / assidat ad asinum*. Schmidt.
[20] Keegan.
[21] (Transcription missing). “GFP”. *quos l v p amat valeant*. Rebecca R. Benefiel, "Urban and Suburban Attitudes to Writing on Walls? Pompeii and Environs." *Writing Matters*, 2017. doi:10.1515/9783110534597-014.

the consideration of the subsequent instances: "Secundus says hello to his Prima, wherever she is. I ask, my mistress, that you love me;" "Greetings to Primigenia of Nuceria. I would wish to become a signet ring for no more than an hour, so that I might give you kisses dispatched with your signature," from which one might deduce that graffiti allowed the citizens of Pompeii to communicate with each other on a regular basis, even if they might otherwise be separately engaged within the town.22 This notion that graffiti enabled Pompeiians to address and wish their neighbors well without meeting them in person, is detailed in Rebecca Benefiel's "Dialogues of Ancient Graffiti in the House of Maius Castricius in Pompeii," which notes that "Graffiti are a dynamic form of communication and often inspire a response. The city of Pompeii is full of graffiti 'dialogues' where one message, inscribed on the wall and open to the public, receives an answer." This analysis serves only to strengthen the claim that contemporary social media is mirrored by the ancient Pompeiians' use of graffiti.[23]

Censura

The fifth assortment of graffiti to be treated in this paper is comprised of messages expressly intended to warn as well as to criticize the private citizens and slaves of Pompeii. This is illustrated by the next examples: "Watch it, you that shits in this place! May you have Jove's anger if you ignore this;" "Someone at whose table I do not dine, Lucius Istacidius, is a barbarian to me;" "Theophilus, don't perform oral sex on girls against the city wall like a dog;" "Restitutus has deceived many girls." Graffiti was used by Pompeiians to dissuade inhabitants and visitors from engaging in certain behaviors, and to publicly shame those who did so regardless.[24] This notion is stressed in the next instances; "Anyone who wants to defecate in this place is advised to move along. If you act contrary to this warning, you will have to pay a penalty.

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[21] *salute(m) venientis*. "AGP".
[22] (Transcription missing). "GFP". Transcription missing). "GFP".
[23] Benefiel.
[24] *cacator cave malum / aut si contempseris / habeas iovem iratum*. Clarke. [24] *luci istacidi / at quem non ceno / barbarus ille mihi est*. Clarke.
[24] (Transcription missing). "GFP".
[24] (Transcription missing). "GFP".

Children must pay [number missing] silver coins. Slaves will be beaten on their behinds;“ “A copper pot went missing from my shop. Anyone who returns it to me will be given sixty-five bronze coins (sestertii). Twenty more will be given for information leading to the capture of the thief;” “Whoever wants to serve themselves can go on and drink from the sea.”[25] It becomes clear that the Pompeiians used graffiti as a tool for the maintenance of a behavioral status quo, and that they weren't simply trying to offend one another as might first be interpreted. This concept of Pompeian graffiti facilitating the regulation of social comportment is echoed by Jennifer Baird, who, in Ancient Graffiti in Context, states that “In this way, through the repeated act of inscribing, and through the social memories these created, these groups were essentially representing a part of their own cultural experience, transferring to one another behaviors and attitudes.” This in turn reinforces the argument that a tangible parallel exists between contemporary social media, and ancient Pompeian graffiti.[26]

Litterae

The sixth collection of graffiti to be considered in this paper is characterized by the use of original and reproduced poetry and witticisms. The following examples provide evidence: “Nobody is ‘smart’ until he has loved a young girl;” “He only can make love properly who knows how to give a girl plenty of things,” “Whoever loves, let him flourish. Let him perish who knows not love. Let him perish twice over whoever forbids love;” “They all fell silent.” The Pompeiians used the medium of graffiti to publicize and share extracts of both novel and well-known works of ancient literature.[27] This idea is illustrated by the succeeding examples; “What happened? Now that your eyes have drawn me down by main force into a blaze, . . . you wet bountifully your cheeks. But tears cannot quench the flame; see here, they burn the face

[25] “GFP”. (Transcription missing). [25] “GFP”. (Transcription missing).
[25] (Transcription missing). “GFP”.
[26] Baird.
[27] *nemo est bellvs nisi qvi amavit mvlierem advles*. Davis. *solus amare v(alet qui scit dare multa puellae) / multa opus sunt s(ei quis flectere vult dominam*). Schmidt. (Transcription missing). “GFP”. *conticuere omnes intentique*. Publius Vergilius Maro, Barry B. Powell, and Denis Feeney. *The Aeneid*. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

and waste the heart away. Composed by Tiburtinus: "If anyone does not believe in Venus, they should gaze at my girlfriend;" "Beautiful girl, you seek the kisses that I stole. Receive what I was not alone in taking; love. Whoever loves, may she fare well" in which one can observe that laconic proverbs, puns, and witticisms, were also the subject of this form of graffiti.[28] The argument that Pompeian graffiti facilitated the dissemination of multiple forms of literature, however formalized or incidental, is supported by Peter Keegan, who, in "Graffiti as Monumenta and Verba: Marking Territories, Creating Discourses in Roman Pompeii," writes that:

> graffiti inscriptions record communications in informal contexts using vernacular media, offering the possibility of writing history about people living in the cities of these times which does not depend solely on the views of the cultural elites surviving in the European manuscript tradition and in formal epigraphic contexts. By the same token, examining the words and images inscribed on an ancient city's monumental fabric — its walls, doorposts, pillars, tombs, and so on — provides a means of assessing the manner by which and the degree to which ordinary men and women absorbed and exchanged culture and language through inscribed speech-acts under Roman rule.[29]

This portrays how the Pompeiians' use of graffiti for the purposes of publicizing, sharing, and discussing the written word of contemporary and bygone authors, bears a striking resemblance to the modern utilization of social media platforms.[30]

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[28] *(quid fi)t vi me oculei pos(t)quam deducxstis in ignem / (no)n ob vim vestreis largificatis geneis / (ust)o non possunt lacrimae restinguere flam(m)am / (hui)c os incendunt tabificantque animum / tiburtinus epoese*. Schmidt. [28] "What's up?" is the cited translation of *quid fit*, but "What happened?" is closer in meaning.
[28] "GFP". (Transcription missing).
[28] *vasia quae rapui / quaeris formosa puella / accipe quae rapui non ego solus / ama / quisquis amat valeat*. Benefiel.
[29] Peter Keegan, "Graffiti as Monumenta and Verba: Marking Territories, Creating Discourses in Roman Pompeii," in Rebecca Banfiel and Peter Keegan, *Inscriptions in the Private Sphere in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
[30] Ibid.

Sexualitatis

The seventh and final group of graffiti to be analyzed in this paper consists of sexual flaunting, flattery, and flouting. This is evidenced by the subsequent examples: “Myrtis you perform fellatio well;” “Phoebus is a good fucker;” “Celadus the Thracian makes the girls swoon;” “Floronius, privileged soldier of the 7th legion, was here. The women did not know of his presence. Only six women came to know, too few for such a stallion” Graffiti facilitated the Pompeiians’ expression and exchange of their sexual and relational identities.[31] This notion is highlighted in the following examples: “Successus the weaver is in love with the slave of the innkeeper, whose name is Iris. She doesn't care about him at all, but he asks that she take pity on him. A rival wrote this, bye,” (to which Successus responds) “You're so jealous you're bursting. Don't tear down someone more handsome. A guy who could beat you up and who is good-looking” (in turn eliciting the final graffito) “I said it. I wrote it. You love Iris, who doesn't care about you. To Successus: see above. Severus,” in which perceived sexual capacities, inclinations, and deficiencies are publicly displayed and discussed.[32] The concept that graffiti endowed the Pompeiians with a medium through which to communicate matters of a sexual nature is treated by Sarah Levin-Richardson, who, in “Facilis hic futuit: Graffiti and Masculinity in Pompeii’s ‘Purpose-Built’ Brothel,” writes that: “the graffiti, I argue, are more than just records of sexual liaisons or advertisements of the services of prostitutes; they represent an interactive discourse concerning masculinity. Clients and prostitutes could and did add their thoughts to the corpus over time, which encouraged multiple viewings. In addition, even illiterate viewers could be exposed to the graffiti through

[31] *myrtis bene felas*. Clarke. [31] *phoebus / bonus futor*. Sarah Levin-Richardson. "Facilis hic futuit: Graffiti and Masculinity in Pompeii's 'Purpose-Built' Brothel." Helios 38, no. 1 (2011): 59-78. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed April 3, 2019).
[31] Clarke uses the word “moan”, but *suspirium* is more accurately rendered as swoon or sigh.
[31] *suspirium puellarum celadus thraex*. Clarke.
[31] (Transcription missing). “GFP”.
[32] *successus textor amat coponiaes ancilla(m) nomine hiredem quae quidem ilium non curat sed ille rogat ilia com(m)iseretur / scribit rivalis / va*. Benefiel. [32] *invidiose quia rumperes se(ct)are noli formonsiorem et qui est homo pravessimus et bellus*. Benefiel.
[32] *dixi scripsi amas hiredem quae te non curat s(u)a successo ut su(p)ra s severus*. Benefiel.

someone else's recitation." This further evidences the statement that graffiti was utilized by the Pompeiians as a form of social media.[33]

Clausula

As has been demonstrated in this paper, Tom Standage's theory about the relation between graffiti and social media must be given credence, at least where ancient Pompeii is concerned. From what the analysis and interpretation of the primary and secondary sources considered in this paper illustrate, almost all behaviors which are facilitated through contemporary social media platforms, were acted out in parallel by ancient Pompeiians; the only difference being, that instead of communicating via digital walls, the latter made use of those which were positively literal. In Standage's own words; "Graffiti provided a vibrant, shared media environment that was open to all. As one of the thousands of messages in Pompeii puts it, 'scripsit qui voluit'— 'Anyone who wanted to, wrote.'"[34]

[33] Levin-Richardson.
[34] Standage.