

WALLS THAT TALK: VOICES OF POMPEII

In Pompeii, people wrote messages on walls to show who they were, share their feelings, and leave a mark on their community. From simple "I was here" notes to love messages, jokes and children's practice letters, these inscriptions reveal everyday life, relationships, and personal identity. Graffiti was carefully placed in public streets and important buildings so others could see it, turning walls into a record of ordinary people's presence and interactions. These writings give voices to Romans we rarely hear about in history books, showing how they expressed themselves, participated in cultural life, and made themselves remembered.

"I WAS HERE"

Self portraits and simple inscriptions like "...was here" were a way for Romans to claim space and assert their existence. These short notes acted like a personal signature or a mini self-portrait, visible to passers-by. Writing their names allowed individuals to leave a trace in the city and mark themselves as part of the community.



Fadius_Nasso Self-portrait - check! Name - check! Claiming my spot in the city's memory, one wall at a time 🚻👤🔥 #RumbleInTheCity #FeelingTheHeat #CIL IV 03204 6 hours ago

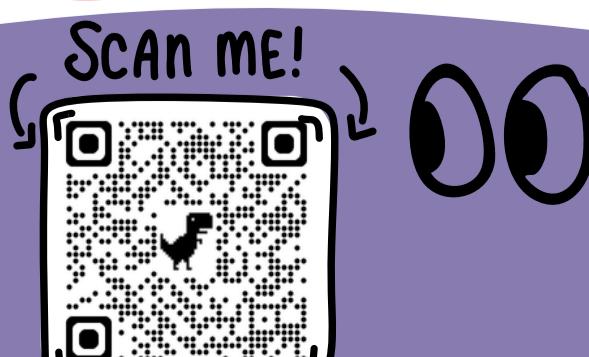
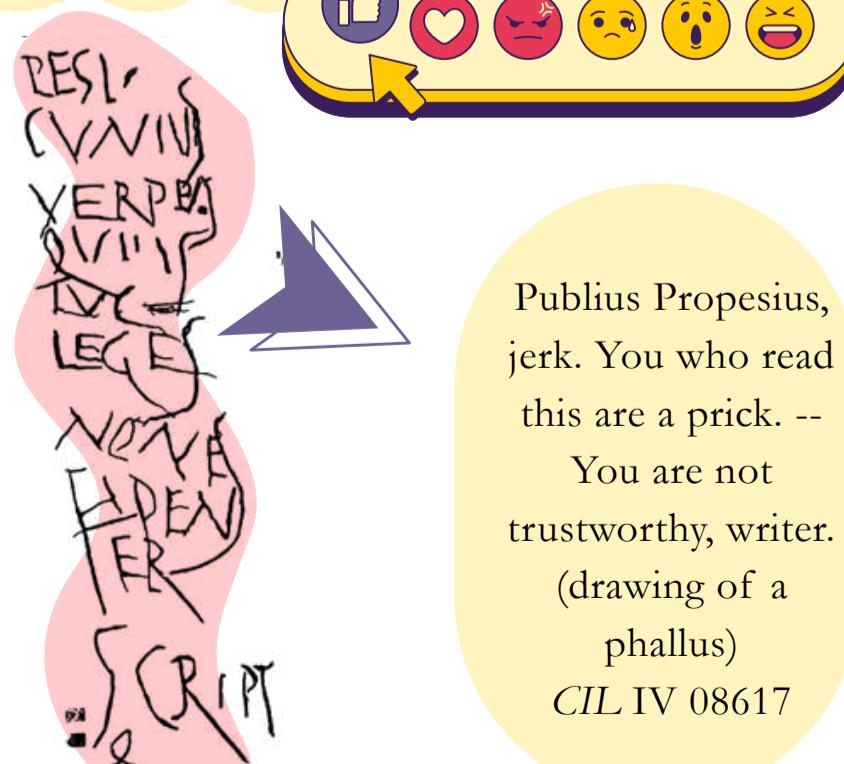
VIRGIL, VIRGIL

AND MORE VIRGIL

Some graffiti quoted or adapted famous poetry, such as Virgil's Aeneid. By doing this, ordinary Romans demonstrated literary knowledge, creativity, and participation in cultural traditions. These inscriptions show that even non-elites could interact with elite culture, blending personal identity with shared social values and contributing to public conversations through cleverly placed wall writings

TAGGED!

Graffiti could be humorous, teasing, or satirical. Romans used walls to perform identity, show personality, and communicate socially. By writing jokes, insults, or clever messages, people engaged with others in playful social interactions. These inscriptions highlight how everyday Romans created a public dialogue and expressed themselves beyond formal literature or official inscriptions.



Poster By
Paige Joyce

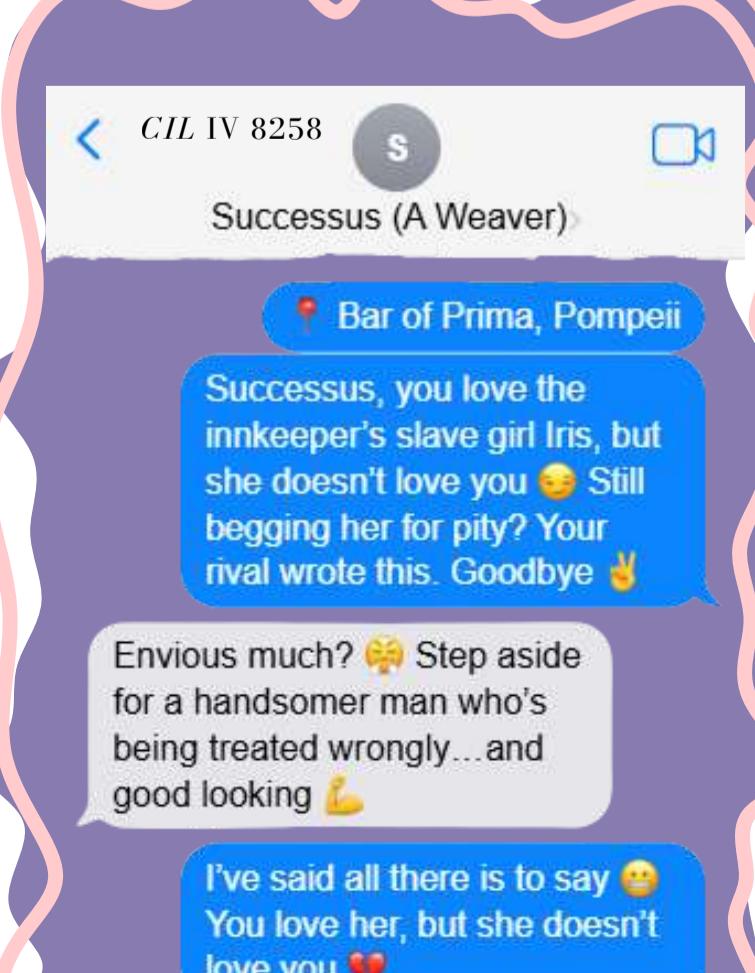
CRUSHES & CHAOS

ΓΛΙΜΙΓΕΝΙΑ
CVM ΓΛΙΜΑ

Primigenia was here with Prima: a Pompeian graffito that made friendship visible, turning private bonds into public identity.

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Pompeian walls weren't just for names, they were a stage for relationships. Graffiti recorded friendships, romances, rivalries, and professional connections, making private bonds visible to everyone. From playful teasing at taverns to love notes invoking Venus, these inscriptions show how Romans expressed their identity, negotiated status, and shared social and cultural knowledge in public spaces



Methes, a female slave, inscribed her love for Chrestus, invoking Venus. Her graffiti shows that even those outside the elite could use words and culture to shape how they were seen in Pompeii.



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