

L. C. FEITOSA, *THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF GENDER, LOVE AND SEXUALITY IN POMPEII* (British Archaeological Reports International Series 2533). Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013. Pp. x + 63, illus., maps. ISBN 9781407311517. £21.00.

This monograph, derived from the author's doctoral thesis (and translated by Miriam Adleman), addresses the themes of love and gender among non-élite groups. In particular, the argument focuses on the graffiti with sexual content found at Pompeii. The first four chapters introduce this inquiry, its material, premises and method. This preamble explains that traditional scholarship, which mainly relied on sources produced by the male élite, has failed to pin down the intellectual, social and emotional world of the ordinary people. In order to gather information on this otherwise voiceless category, Feitosa turns to the humbler media of graffiti.

Ch. 1 discusses how historians have increasingly focused on the study of groups and activities that were previously neglected and provides an overview of works in Women's Studies. Through this, the author defines the framework for her research. Specifically for Pompeii, she invokes studies of domestic architecture that indicate how people (male and female, free and slave) lived and interacted in close proximity. Ch. 2 describes how evidence for Roman sexual practices of the Vesuvian region has been used by scholars. Traditional scholarship regarded both the sexual representations and the graffiti with explicit content as the product of erotic situations or contexts. The author exposes the anachronistic attitude behind this assumption, arguing that images with sexual content could occur in a variety of contexts and reflect the mentality of the 'Pompeian popular classes'.

In ch. 3, F. goes over the history of the burial and rediscovery of Pompeii, and then delineates the main questions at stake about Pompeian graffiti, providing a brief and uncritical overview of the available literature. F. devotes two sub-sections to the scholarship on Roman economy and the particular case of Pompeii. In both, she overlooks the most recent scholarship. The excellent collections *The World of Pompeii* (2007) and *Pompeii: Art, Industry and Infrastructure* (2011), which the author does not cite, would have provided much insight on the social history of Pompeii. It is likely that Emanuel Mayer's *The Ancient Middle Classes* (2012) was published when F.'s book was already in press. This is unfortunate, since Mayer's account of the Pompeian evidence for the rise of a commercial 'middle class', which eventually developed its own forms of cultural expression, provides the theoretical framework that F.'s book lacks.

Ch. 4 defines Pompeian graffiti 'as a form of popular expression'. The author presents a selection of texts inscribed on Pompeian walls to highlight their simplicity, the use of vernacular expressions, popularization of high culture and attention to private, inter-personal events. F. concludes by reviewing the social, cultural and economic conditions of slaves and freedmen in Pompeii. Petronius' fictional freedman — the hyperbolic Trimalchio — serves as evidence that freedmen could enjoy considerable financial success. Regrettably, the attempt at defining 'popular culture' relies entirely on the analysis of (highly selective) written sources, neglecting visual representations. Even without entering the historiographic debate about 'Roman plebeian art', a number of publications exist, that could have offered a useful starting point: for example, T. Fröhlich, *Lararien- und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten* (1991); J. R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans* (2003); L. H. Petersen, *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History* (1996).

In ch. 5 the author comes to her point. First, she concentrates on graffiti that show affective and sexual activities between men. These texts, F. argues, negotiate the conflict between idealized moral behaviour and the actual, more tolerant, practices of daily life. A second class of texts, using the verb *futuere*, she argues, points to the representation of men's virility. Texts mentioning the activity of *cunnum lingere* emphasize women's gratification. A final section collects the texts that, often drawing from literary models, show the exchange and reciprocity of affections. Unfortunately, F. compresses her conclusions into only two pages (52–4). She argues that the members of the lower classes constructed egalitarian sexual behaviours and imagery, based fundamentally on give-and-take associations. The masculine was 'constructed in relation to the feminine: as agreement established between those who share work, luck, misfortune and exploitation'.

One shortcoming of the book lies in the lack of information on the architectural context of the graffiti. A discussion of the physical context — in public or private buildings, representative spaces or places of work — could provide insight into their function, authorship and readership. Similar remarks apply to the author's neglect of other comparable materials, such as the figural graffiti on the walls of Pompeii (discussed by M. Langner, *Antike Graffitizeichnungen* (2001)) or wall-paintings depicting sexual interactions. Also the social and economic issues related to

prostitution, which are cursorily discussed in ch. 5, require greater attention (for example, P. G. Guzzo and V. Scarani Ussani, *Veneris figurae: immagini della prostituzione e sfruttamento a Pompei* (2000)).

The most valuable aspects of F.'s book are its assessment of the impact of Women's Studies on the field of classical antiquity and the assembly of texts on specific sexual practices. A more widespread coverage of the scholarly literature, especially on Pompeii, as well as an efficient selection of fewer case studies explored in greater depth, would have done better justice to F.'s theoretical framework. Nonetheless, her work is a useful instrument for further research on Pompeian graffiti and the ancient view on sexuality and gender relations.

The book regrettably includes many mistakes in editing and in translation, in particular when it comes to Latin names (for example, on 8), a carelessness which is apparent also in the final list of Latin authors (55).

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K. MILNOR, *GRAFFITI AND THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE IN ROMAN POMPEII*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xvi + 311, illus. ISBN 9780199684618. £70.00.

You might not expect a book on the literary landscape of Pompeii to begin with discussion of a group of texts stating, *cacator, cave malum* ('Shitter, watch out!'), but that's where Kristina Milnor begins her book and that decision speaks to her goal to look broadly across Pompeii for metrical graffiti. M. covers much ground in this volume, examining the literary influences on graffiti, from epigram to ekphrasis, from funerary to epistolary, from elegy to panegyric. Her perspective prioritizes the literary aspects of Pompeian graffiti, and she is deeply interested in considerations of genre and how to classify graffiti writers. The goal of her work, variously stated in the introduction, is to see the place of literature in the urban landscape of Pompeii, a goal that she ultimately accomplishes well.

The first chapter ranges widely, beginning with public inscriptions as a backdrop for the painted *cacator* inscriptions in Pompeii. Two of these include additional text in metre, drawing authority, she suggests, from more formal inscriptions while alluding to the tradition of epigram. Another inscription presents a joke that combines three genres: funerary epitaph, epigram and signage; a graffito of four pentameters raises questions about epigram as a literary exercise; another, well-known graffito tricks the reader into insulting himself ('... et ego verpa qui lego'), evoking the addresses of funerary epitaphs. M. folds in painted and incised inscriptions (some issues arise in mixing these two forms) from the Tavern of Salvius, House of the Epigrams and Caupona of Euxinus, while discussion ranges from Catullus to pastoral to the satires of Persius.

M. begins the second chapter by evoking literary mention of graffiti as 'sharply critical of the actions of the powerful' (53), then must explain why the Pompeian material does not agree with this representation. This framing skews expectations because M. does in fact locate a few poetic graffiti that provide comment on the political scene. Even if we do not fully understand the referents, comments on leading families would seem to underscore that all politics are local. Political discourse, oratory, an anecdote from Strabo and epigram come into play. Two poetic verses among the *programmata* elegantly endorse candidates, inspiring discussion of panegyric and ekphrasis. (It should be noted that in Pompeii the position of aedile was not a 'fairly low-level magistracy' (61); these were two of the four magistrates elected annually to govern the city.) Then, graffiti in the House of Iulius Polybius: a possible allusion to Euripides' *Bacchae*, messages naming Nero and Poppaea, and a vow for safe return (on these, see also M. Corbier in M. Corbier and J. P. Guilhemet (eds), *L'Écriture dans la maison romaine* (2011), 7–46). At one point, M. asks why these inscriptions would be inside a well-appointed house and repeats ideas from a generation ago: the house had been damaged in the earthquake and was no longer functioning as an elite dwelling. Yet graffiti are found in elite dwellings across Pompeii.

The third chapter begins, 'Who wrote Pompeian graffiti?' M. problematizes the question further, marshalling Foucault, Barthes and contemporary critical theory, and describing graffiti writers as 'heirs to complex questions about authorial self-representation and identity' (93) inherent in