

Cover Page

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Title of Project: Ancient Graffiti Project: Tools for Analyzing Personal Communication

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Grantee institution: Washington and Lee University

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The Ancient Graffiti Project: Tools for Analyzing Personal Communication

Aim of our NEH ODH Start-Up Grant: To support prototype development of a web-based resource documenting handwritten inscriptions found within the ruins of the early Roman Empire, with a focus on the town of Herculaneum as a pilot case.

Overview of accomplishments:

We have now a fully functional web-based resource featuring hundreds of handwritten inscriptions from the first century. The Ancient Graffiti Project (<http://ancientgraffiti.org>) includes interactive maps, precise searching and browsing capabilities, numerous filters that allow users to research by different metadata fields associated with these texts, linked open data for each property in Herculaneum, critical editions and metadata for 350 inscriptions in Herculaneum (downloadable as JSON, CSV, and EpiDoc), and original illustrations (photographs and line-drawings) captured from three seasons of fieldwork. Previously, these inscriptions were only retrievable in nineteenth century folio volumes held in large research libraries and offering limited contextual data in Latin; now, these texts are available to anyone with an internet connection and a web browser. We have standardized our graffiti metadata schema (available as EpiDoc) and developed controlled vocabulary for property types and drawing descriptions (available as SKOS), all of which are downloadable from our public GitHub repository. With the development of these standards, we can import others' data into our application and make the data automatically discoverable.

Project Activities

With the support of our ODH grant, our main goal for the [Ancient Graffiti Project](#) (AGP) was to build tools to facilitate the study of inscriptions from ancient Herculaneum. The ODH Start-Up Grant supported three main activities:

1. creating standards for graffiti-specific data and metadata
2. developing multi-scalar geospatial visualizations of the archaeological site and the locations of graffiti within it
3. integrating textual and visual material and enabling search capability.

With the extension of one additional summer of development, we met all of our original project goals and completed some additional deliverables, which we describe at length in the next section.

We have publicized the Ancient Graffiti Project through presentations at international conferences and our Twitter ([@HercGraffProj](#)) and Facebook (HerculaneumGraffitiProject) presences. We have also offered workshops for scholars, students, and high school Latin teachers.

Accomplishments

Since 2016, we have made great strides toward improving the data architecture, knowledge organization, and metadata standards for AGP. As a result of the NEH award, AGP now includes:

- A list of all buildings and properties in Herculaneum, available as URIs.
- Graffiti-specific metadata schema, mapped to the EpiDoc encoding standard to allow for easy intake of others' data.
- A custom vocabulary for describing figural graffiti and property types, published according to SKOS specifications.
- An openly available database of graffiti in Herculaneum that adheres to the metadata schema and applies the controlled vocabulary; this data can be downloaded in bulk in several standard formats (EpiDoc--the TEI-XML standard for epigraphy, JSON, and CSV)
- An open RESTful API for searching for full or custom sets of inscription records by all metadata fields. This development makes the project truly open to researchers to study the graffiti data through a variety of computational methods.
- A web application interface to search for graffiti and visualize the graffiti locations at multiple geo-spatial levels

Below, we detail the new features of AGP that showcase this data.

Linked Open Data—Individual Buildings and Properties in Herculaneum and Pompeii. One of the most challenging issues regarding the sites of ancient Herculaneum and Pompeii is the lack of consistency in standardization of location information. This is due to shifts in describing or numbering locations that have taken place over the past two hundred years. Eric Poehler's [Pompeii Bibliography and Mapping Project](#) has confronted this head on. We drew from several maps to compile an authoritative and standardized list of the various buildings and properties in Herculaneum and used fieldwork on-site to resolve disparities.

To accomplish our goal of creating linked open data, we created URIs for every property in Herculaneum and we have begun working on Pompeii. Not only can researchers download this data as CSV or JSON for their own use, each property page includes descriptive and spatial information as well as architectural context provided by links to the Parco Archeologico di Ercolano and the project Herculaneum Panoramas. The list of properties with links to the property pages is available at <http://ancientgraffiti.org/Graffiti/properties>

Graffiti-specific metadata schema. Inscriptions on stone make up the majority of Greek and Roman epigraphy, since stone has a decent rate of survival. Graffiti differ from inscriptions on stone since they appear on fragile plaster surfaces. While most inscriptions on stone were monumental, graffiti were small, intended for a different audience, and were handwritten by non-specialists (i.e. the general population: women and men, slaves and free, visitors and residents). Based on our fieldwork and research, we determined particular kinds of information that would be valuable for understanding this type of material evidence.

We have now standardized a graffiti-specific metadata schema that takes into account our collaboration with the Epigraphic Database Roma (EDR) and the needs of researchers. Our metadata include:

1. Translations and brief descriptions of each inscription in English
2. Type of writing (i.e., scratched, charcoal, painted, other)
3. An accurate location that references current Herculaneum mapping and address standards
4. Language used: Latin, Greek, Greco-Latin, or other
5. Photographs and illustrations of ancient graffiti
6. Links to further information and related digital resources

This standardization of graffiti metadata and its mapping to the EpiDoc encoding standard enables us to integrate others' data into our database and thus allows the data to be discovered, automatically. We are currently working with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World to integrate graffiti found in Smyrna, Turkey (2nd-4th centuries) into the Ancient Graffiti Project.

Custom vocabularies. To facilitate searching for figural graffiti, we developed a controlled vocabulary to describe the subjects of the drawings. This vocabulary has been integrated into EAGLE (the Europeana Archive of Greek and Latin Epigraphy)'s Decoration vocabulary and aligned with the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus. EAGLE is a best-practice network that has been recognized and supported by the European Union. EAGLE unites 24 distinct epigraphic projects (AGP is one) and includes a total of 593,000+ artefact entries.

Additionally, we developed a controlled vocabulary, expressed in SKOS, for the types of properties found in ancient cities. We created these types from a top-down view into the spaces in the ancient city (e.g., public, residential, sacred, commercial). We then grouped particular types of buildings under subheadings. For example, scholars might be interested in bakeries or brothels, which are, more broadly, commercial spaces. The hierarchy of our property type controlled vocabulary represents this relationship, and our web application interface supports the hierarchy by allowing bakeries and brothels to be searched individually as well as through the "commercial space" heading. We offer property types as a filter in search results so that scholars can target different kinds of messages, e.g., written in private homes, or can compare the graffiti written in shops and theaters.

Our controlled vocabularies for figural graffiti types and for property types are available in SKOS format in our GitHub repository: <https://github.com/AncientGraffitiProject/metadata>

Open database of graffiti. Our database of graffiti is accessible by an open RESTful API and a web interface that displays the graffiti and its metadata in a user-friendly way and allows users to export the data as EpiDoc, JSON, and CSV files.

Open, RESTful API for searching graffiti. In addition to an improved user interface, visitors are able to access full or custom sets of inscription records via an open RESTful API, in HTML or

exportable into CSV, JSON, or EpiDoc formats. This development makes the project truly open to researchers to study the graffiti data through a variety of computational methods. The API is fully documented and available from the project web site:

<http://ancientgraffiti.org/Graffiti/swagger-ui.html>

Web application interface. The web application interface is what makes our data easily accessible and available to typical users. The web application features several discovery tools and tools to better visualize, analyze, and understand the graffiti.

We carefully designed AGP to present graffiti in ways that highlight their distinguishing characteristics and features. The results page is designed to be understood equally well by scholars and non-experts. It provides basic information: a brief identification or caption, the text of the graffito (or a description of the image if a figural graffito), and its provenance, including city and individual property. A link then takes the user to a page with more information. The location of the graffiti retrieved by the search is highlighted on a small map on the results page. The particular building or findspot is also presented as a hyperlink so that it is possible to then retrieve with a single click all the graffiti that appear in the same location. The web application also includes:

1. A fully interactive map of Herculaneum that allows a user to retrieve graffiti from any location with a single click or to retrieve graffiti from multiple locations of interest.
2. Filters that permit a user to conduct specific searches (e.g., all graffiti in taverns, houses, or public buildings; graffiti written in charcoal; specific types of drawings such as animals, gladiators, or geometric motifs)
3. A search bar that allows users to query the database with either Latin (e.g., *amat*, *imperator*) or English terms (e.g., horse, baths)
4. A full complement of both textual and figural graffiti (ancient drawings), material which previously had been considered separately
5. The ability *to browse* the inscriptions in the database
6. Presentation of metadata, including clearly labeled tables of metadata for graffiti and properties, links to related resources, and multiple illustrations in image galleries, e.g. photographs and line-drawings for comparison.

One of our top desiderata for AGP was foregrounding spatial metadata, which was previously almost entirely lacking for ancient graffiti. Using OpenStreetMap, satellite photography, and our own research on-site in the excavations, we created a geo-referenced, freely available, open-source map of Herculaneum. We used that plan as a base for the map of Herculaneum we incorporated onto the homepage of AGP. That fully interactive map of Herculaneum allows a user to retrieve and study graffiti from any location in the site with a single click. We have also made freely available to scholars and high school teachers a copyright-free, downloadable map of Herculaneum which we created. Nothing comparable had been available previously.

We launched our site at ancientgraffiti.org in August 2016. (We had a previous prototype at agp.wlu.edu.) In September 2018, we released an updated and expanded Ancient Graffiti Project that now includes all the features described above.

Audiences

AGP is designed to serve four main audience groups:

- 1) scholars of Classics (professors, post-doctoral fellows, and graduate students),
- 2) high school Latin teachers and their students,
- 3) college students, and
- 4) interested members of the general public.

A newly edited critical edition of each inscription is of primary interest for scholars of Classics. The additional materials--photographs, maps, links to further information, contextual data, translations and brief summaries--make this type of ancient primary evidence comprehensible and accessible to the other audiences.

We have noticed national reach among all four audience groups as well as international reach to scholars, college students, and interested members of the public. We list here a selection of anecdotes of usage. High school Latin teachers are now using AGP to bring real, first-century Latin into their classrooms. We know of at least 20 teachers in Virginia, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Minnesota who are now bringing these inscriptions into their teaching; several of these teachers have given presentations to their state foreign language groups on how to use ancient graffiti and AGP. When we were on-site in Herculaneum a year ago, we were approached by students in a study abroad group from the University of Saskatchewan (Canada). They were actively using AGP for a class project, and they took our picture and incorporated us into the video portion of their report, now available on YouTube. PI Rebecca Benefiel gave interviews to two college students this fall: a junior from Johns Hopkins University who traveled to Washington & Lee for the interview and an undergraduate in Australia who conducted the interview remotely. We have been contacted by scholars involved in studying similar inscriptions in Malta and by scholars in Switzerland interested in incorporating our work into their project on inscriptions.

Visitor flow has increased as much as five-fold since we launched ancientgraffiti.org.

- Our Facebook page now has more than 1600 followers.
- Google Scholar returns 50 hits that mention “The Ancient Graffiti Project”
- Over the past two years, AGP has received more than 30,000 visitors to our site and more than 110,000 page visits

AGP has made this ancient material available to wider audiences by virtue of its freely accessible platform.

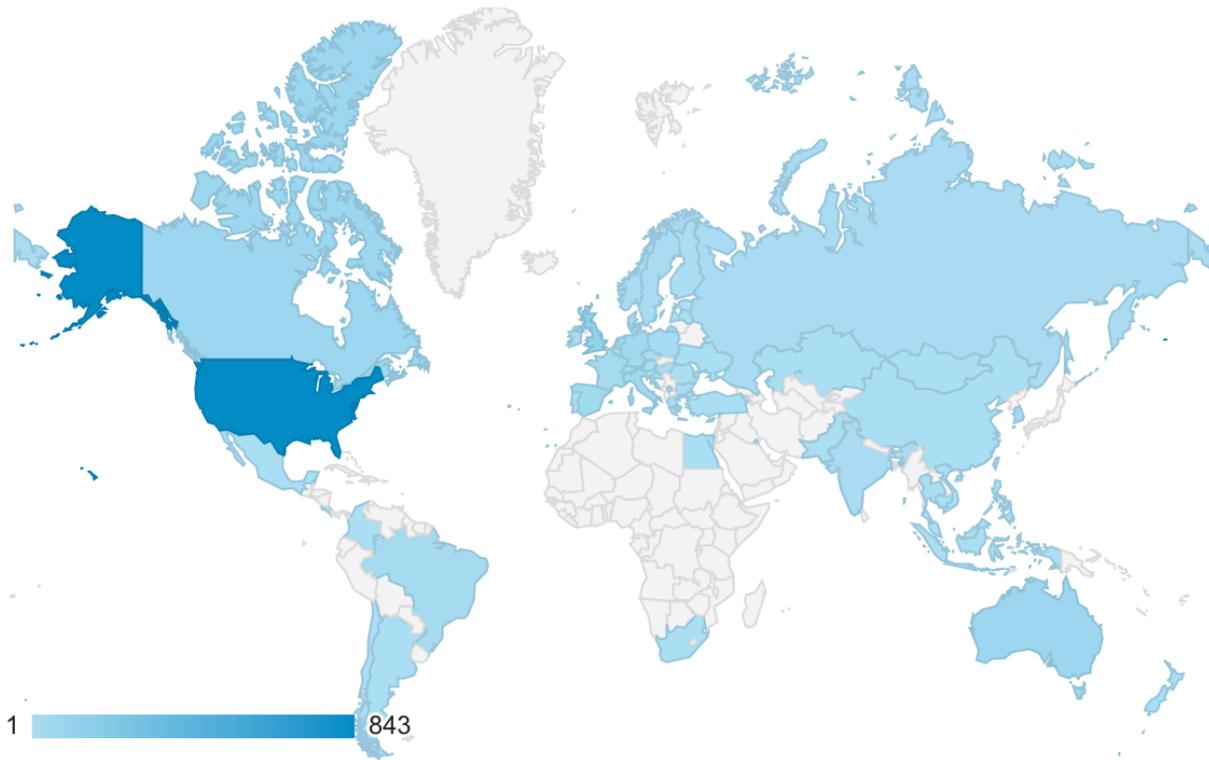


Figure 1: Locations of users of AGP

We installed Google Analytics on Dec. 20, 2018. Since then, AGP has been visited by users from more than 50 different countries (see Figure 1). Over this roughly two-month period, the countries represented most robustly are the USA (843 users) and the UK (115 users). There have also been significant numbers of users from Canada (61 users), Australia (58), Italy (38), and Spain (38).

Evaluation

We have met with focus groups and offered workshops presenting the Ancient Graffiti Project as we develop it. We have run three focus groups with high school teachers during 2016-2018 and we have presented hands-on workshops for undergraduates (at a Digital Fluency workshop in Washington DC, in 2015 and 2016), for graduate students (at the Universities of Texas, 2014, and Manitoba, 2016), and for professors (at the annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies, 2017).

At the end of our grant, we created a Google survey to obtain a broad cross-section of evaluation and feedback on the Ancient Graffiti Project. We posted a link to it on our Facebook page in January 2019, and we received 23 responses over a two-week period. The questions on the survey focused on how and why respondents use AGP, and what aspects of AGP they found most useful. (The full survey results are attached in the Appendix.) All types of audiences were represented. The greatest

number of responses came from high school Latin teachers (8), college professors (6), and college undergraduates (4). Other responses came from interested members of the public (3), a graduate student (1), and a high school student (1).

The ways the respondents had used AGP corresponded to their background. Many mentioned how they had used AGP in teaching (including teaching students as young as first graders). Several had used AGP to research specific inscriptions or as a resource for college papers and assignments. A few had visited AGP “just for fun.”

An open-ended question about what users found most useful about AGP received much appreciation that it was “user friendly” (6 responses). Others cited how “information-rich” entries were, the “thoroughness of content,” the many different ways to search, the cataloguing technique, the interactive map, and the synthesis of information text and images.

One survey question asked what tools or aspects of AGP were the most important to the visitor. An overwhelming number (22 of 23) checked “Photographs and illustrations.” We have heard this from multiple audiences. 1) People are interested in visuals and want to see images of this ancient writing. 2) There have been virtually no illustrations of photographs published previous to our work. It is extremely challenging to capture the small, subtly sketched ancient graffiti in a photograph and time-consuming to create accurate line-drawings. It is satisfying to see that this labor-intensive work is appreciated.

Other aspects appreciated by the majority of respondents include:

- Being able to find ancient graffiti (and/or specific graffiti) (19)
- Learning about graffiti in their physical and archaeological context (17)
- Being able to learn more about where graffiti were located and to learn about the locations that held graffiti (16),
- Having a reliable, accurate scholarly edition of the text (15), and
- Translations of the Latin and Greek (11).

When asked to select the tools used most, respondents highlighted the image gallery (illustrations and photographs) (19), the interactive map of Herculaneum (18), the search bar (17), and the filters that allow users to refine or change their search (17). Six other options received between 9 and 14 responses.

We were very pleased to read the candid answers to the question: **What have you learned? Or what can you now do that you couldn't before you used AGP?**

- I can have quick access to translations.
- I know that I can look for graffiti with this project! I have learned that these sources of ancient text exist and how powerful they can be in an instructional environment.
- I couldn't quickly access the graffiti unless it was published in a book. Having access to such a range of graffiti is wonderful and it shows the breadth of graffiti. Also quick access to the

maps to show exactly where the graffiti was located is so useful (especially for visual learners).

- I am excited to share a connection to the ancient world that seems more tangibly real to the students- they can see someone's handwriting, which is amazing.
- Its [sic] more about bringing the content alive for students
- Former academic, no longer working in academia. I love being able to dip in and mess around. I'm certain that non-academic users are a minority, but keep things easy to access. I no have access to a research library, and I really don't have time for serious scholarly research, so this is a lovely resource.
- Using the graffito I found on the site I learned a lot about ancient naval practices.
- I can incorporate graffiti into my Latin classes to make the culture & language more vibrant
- Surprisingly high concentration of Greek graffiti in [the] [L]upanar*
- A major benefit of AGP for me is the ability to explore the archaeological site through the interactive map and immediately search for graffiti by property. The presentation of the graffiti with photographs and line-drawings is also a huge advantage over CIL.*
- I like being able to find figural graffiti which would have been difficult before.
- I can now easily access the graffiti.
- I am able to bring a real world aspect into my classroom. My students are able to relate more.

*[*The Lupanar is a brothel in Pompeii. CIL is the standard reference for Latin inscriptions, published in 1870, with supplements published in 1909 and 1971.]*

Another open-ended question asked how AGP had improved a user's understanding of graffiti. We include a few of the heartwarming answers here:

- I guess I just never considered how important or prevalent it was before. It just gives me such easy access to the information, and I love sharing it with my students.
- I've been to both cities, but wish I could spend more time there. A nice escape during work.
- I didn't realize how much has disappeared and how quickly
- the location and find context of the graffiti help in a classroom context. also the ancillary resources within the page are so valuable for lesson planning. the links to additional digital databases is also very helpful!
- This has absolutely made incorporating graffiti into my lesson plans a regular activity as opposed to a one-time even[t] during the course of a school year!
- It's so difficult to get a sense of the where graffiti survive in Pompeii and Herculaneum from CIL. AGP helps me understand how the graffiti are spread through the ancient city, where they cluster, and where they survive. It allows me to see ancient writing in the urban space in a way that was impossible in CIL.

- This has improved my understanding of the ways in which the graffiti habit was unique as well as the ways in which graffiti intersect with the broader corpus of Latin literary texts and inscriptions.

A final question about suggestions for improvement received requests for more teaching resources and for expanding the project to include more graffiti and more locations.

Continuation of the Project

AGP will continue to grow over the next 5-10 years. The main focus of this initial period of development was the site of Herculaneum. We were able to complete fully entries for all 350 inscriptions from Herculaneum. Nearby Pompeii is a much larger site with more than 6000 inscriptions. We have begun work on Pompeii, which will be a multi-year venture. We have also been approached about including in AGP the ancient graffiti (2nd-4th centuries) discovered in Smyrna in 2003. We are actively working on harmonizing their metadata in order to be able to integrate their material into AGP.

AGP is a contributing member to EAGLE, the Europeana network of Ancient Greek and Latin Epigraphy (www.eagle-network.eu). We collaborate closely with the Epigraphic Database Roma, one of the four largest epigraphic collaborative undertakings. We have shared our material with the Epigraphische Datenbank Clauss-Slaby, and we are contributing to the growth of Epigraphy.info, a group which aims to support epigraphic projects with community-based standards.

Long term Impact

We have received positive feedback, especially from high school teachers who are eager to use the Ancient Graffiti Project in their classrooms. The appeal of AGP includes both the chance to introduce their students to the “real Latin of the ancient world” (i.e. something other than literature or language exercises created by modern authors) and the opportunity to situate Latin within its archaeological context. We have begun a “Featured Graffiti” page that will eventually present highlights of some of the most interesting graffiti. A high school teacher from Massachusetts has secured a short-term sabbatical to work with PI Benefiel to develop useful resources for teachers.

Grant Products

The most important product of this grant period was completing all features and the website <http://ancientgraffiti.org>. We have designed it to be a dynamic, interactive scholarly resource that is freely available and accessible to all members of the public. We have also made freely available our copyright-free map of Herculaneum as a downloadable pdf, found under “Teaching Resources.” We list in the Appendices the presentations we have given, publications that have arisen from our work with AGP, and media coverage our project has received over the past three years.

Appendices

Grant Products: Presentations

We and our team have delivered a number of presentations to various audiences. A selection are listed below. See more at: <http://ancientgraffiti.org/about/presentations/>

- Rebecca Benefiel, “Exploring the Populus in SPQR,” Keynote Address to the Classical Association of Minnesota annual meeting, Minneapolis, MN, October 2018.
- Erika Zimmermann Damer, “The Ancient Graffiti Project,” Virginia Governor’s Latin Academy, Randolph Macon College, July 2017.
- *Mary Beth Smith, *Megan Rebman, “Veni, Vidi, Scripsi: Ancient Graffiti in the Latin Classroom” - A Workshop at the CAMWS Annual Meeting, April 2017.
- Rebecca Benefiel, Holly Sypniewski, Jacqueline DiBiasie Sammons, Erika Zimmermann Damer, Kyle Helms, Matthew Loar, “The Ancient Graffiti Project,” *Ancient Maker Spaces: Digital Tools for Classical Scholarship*. A hands-on workshop showcasing digital projects at the annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies/Archaeological Institute of America, Toronto, January 2017.
- Jacqueline DiBiasie Sammons and Holly M. Sypniewski, “iGraffiti: Digital Recording of Ancient Graffiti from Herculaneum, Italy,” Archaeological Institute of America, Toronto, CAN, January 2017. **Winner: Best Poster Presentation, first runner-up.
- *Grace Gibson, “Pictorial Graffiti in Context: An Analysis of Drawn Graffiti in Herculaneum,” Archaeological Institute of America, Toronto, Canada, January 2017.
- Jacqueline DiBiasie Sammons and Grace Gibson, “The Ancient Graffiti Project: Using Graffiti in the Latin Classroom,” Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Assoc., Murfreesboro, TN, November 2016.
- Erika Zimmermann Damer, “The Writing on the Wall: Roman Graffiti in the Digital Age,” Saturday Seminar for K – College Latin educators, Randolph-Macon College, October 2016.
- Sara Sprenkle, “Thinking Like a Computer Scientist about Ancient Roman Graffiti,” [Linking the Big Ancient Mediterranean Conference](#), University of Iowa, June 2016.

*student participants

Grant Products: Publications

- R. Benefiel, H. Sypniewski, “Greek Graffiti in Herculaneum,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 122.2 (2018), 209-244.
- J. DiBiasie Sammons, “Application of Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) to the study of ancient graffiti from Herculaneum, Italy,” *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* (Feb. 2018)
- R. Benefiel, H. Sypniewski, K. Helms, E. Zimmermann Damer, “Latium et Campania. Pompeii et Herculaneum: Graffiti,” *Italia Epigrafica Digitale* (2017) vol. 2, fasc. 3. Open access at: <http://ojs.uniroma1.it/index.php/ied/issue/viewIssue/1169/29>

- R. Benefiel, S. Sprenkle, H. Sypniewski, J. White, "The Ancient Graffiti Project: Geo-Spatial Visualization and Search Tools for Ancient Handwritten Inscriptions," *DATECH2017. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Digital Access to Textual Cultural Heritage*, New York: ACM (2017), 163-168. Open access at: <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=3078081.3078104>
- R. Benefiel, H. Sypniewski, S. Sprenkle, "Working with Text and Images: The Graffiti of Herculaneum," *Digital and Traditional Epigraphy in Context, Proceedings of the EAGLE 2016 International Conference*, (eds.) S. Orlandi, R. Santucci, F. Mambrini, P. M. Liuzzo, Rome: Sapienza Università Editrice (2017), 145-158.
- R. Benefiel, J. DiBiasie, H. Sypniewski, E. Zimmermann Damer, K. Helms, M. Loar, K. Lundqvist, F. Opdenhoff, "The Herculaneum Graffiti Project: Initial Field Season, 2014," *The Journal of Fasti Online. FOLD&R 361* (2016), 1-23. <http://www.fastionline.org/docs/FOLDER-it-2016-361.pdf>
- R. Benefiel, H. Sypniewski, "Images and Text on the Walls of Herculaneum: Designing the Ancient Graffiti Project," *Off the Beaten Track. Epigraphy at the Borders*, edited by A.E. Felle and A. Rocco, Oxford: Archeopress (2016), 29-48.

Grant Products: Media coverage

- *Urbo.com*, by David Morrison, June 2018, ["Gaius Was Here": How Ancient Graffiti Reflects The Human Experience](#)
- *NPR Radio IQ*, by Sandy Hausman, May 2018, ["Virginia Scholars' Ancient Graffiti Project"](#)
- *The Local: Italy*, by Catherine Edwards, July 2017, ["Graffiti In Pompeii and Herculaneum give insight into groups marginalized by history books"](#)
- *Millsaps Bulletin*, February 2017, ["Student and Professor Secure Grant to Study Ancient Graffiti"](#)
- *Forbes*, by Sarah Bond, July 2016, ["New Project Uncovers Ancient Games and Gladiators through the Graffiti of Fans"](#)
- *The Atlantic*, by Adrienne LaFrance, March 2016, ["Pompeii's Graffiti and the Ancient Origins of Social Media"](#)

Evaluation of The Ancient Graffiti Project

23 responses

1. How have you used The Ancient Graffiti Project?

23 responses

In my teaching.

Share with Latin class, give examples of types, impress my family

Yes! I have used it to share authentic materials with my high school Latin classes.

I have been able to use it with students as young as 1st grade when they had a question about daily life in Pompeii, and I have referred a student to it when she was doing a paper about love.

To share graffiti with my Latin class every once in a while- often I am looking for something specific (such as gladiator mentions) related to our current topic. I have also used it to show what the handwriting would have looked like.

I have used it to find examples of graffiti that relate to something I am covering in class. I have also referred to lesson plans created by summer colleagues.

Share in the classroom, find pictures & line drawings

Research for 2 undergraduate college papers.

Used it with my class (covers a range of syllabus points for the nsw syllabus core topic)

Just for fun.

Yes

Research assorted ancient graffiti

For projects in Classics courses

Conduct research on a specific graffiti for a paper

to share with students, to find an example of everyday Latin with my class

To find graffiti in a specific language (Greek)

Finding ancient graffiti, organizing class projects based on graffiti in specific properties, checking for recent photographs

I have used it to find an example of an ancient graffiti, and share what Latin may have looked like in the everyday context.

To learn more about the ancient world and the purpose of the Project.

To conduct a research on ancient graffiti

Created a Project Based Learning assignment where the Ancient Graffiti Project was important for starting the project.

To learn about how it works to conserve the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum

to find examples of ancient graffiti (including ones with specific words or combinations of words)

2. What do you find most useful about The Ancient Graffiti Project (ancientgraffiti.org)?

23 responses

The filtering tools

Ease of use/user-friendly, plenty of images

I like how information-rich the entries are for the graffiti included in the project.

Translations, search engine, teaching resources, maps, pictures (in situ and representations)

I love the 'featured graffiti' page and just wish there was more there! It is so easy to pull things from there to show my students without me spending an hour trying to find a good relevant one.

I like the ease/multiple ways that you can search the system.

Links to EDR

User friendly

Ease of access

The ease of searching.

Being able to qualify my searches in different ways

The search engine

Ease of access, very user friendly

It's cataloguing technique and the ability to find what I needed.

the variety of ways you can search

synthesis of information on text, location, and other metadata with images

The map interface that allows me to search for graffiti by property in a way that is so much more accessible than CIL, and the rich set of photographs and line drawings

The Search option on the site that allows you to narrow down the results.

The website explains the context and location of the graffiti very well.

The possibility of finding the graffiti in their archaeological context

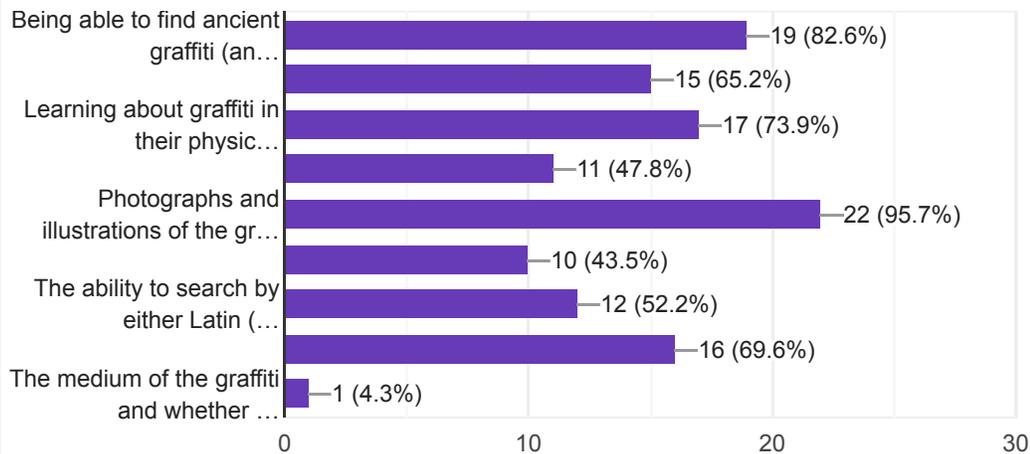
The featured graffiti with thought provoking questions.

How they were willing to answer my questions and providing me with further research and resources

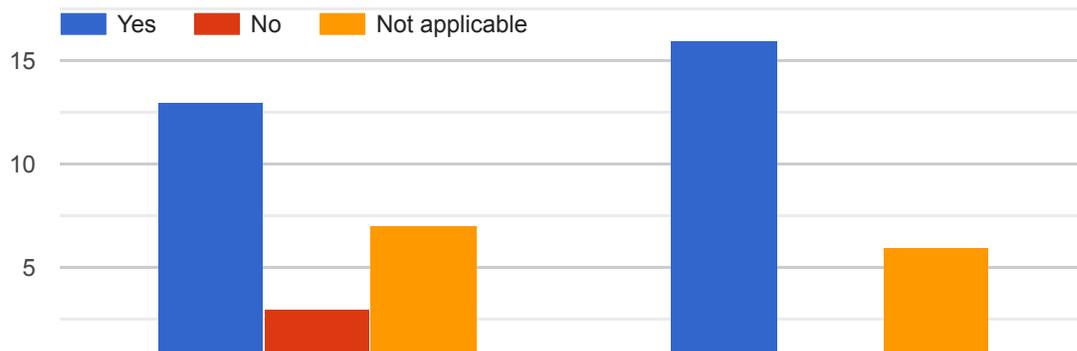
The ancient graffiti project makes it easy to search for specific examples of graffiti. I like how it's possible to do word searches and also browse the "drawing categories." The detailed information and links to the EDR are helpful, and I appreciate the thoroughness of the content and presentation.

3. Which aspects of The Ancient Graffiti Project are most important to you? (Check all that are relevant.)

23 responses



4. Do you (or do you intend to) use AGP in your research or teaching?



5. What have you learned? Or what can you now do that you couldn't before you used AGP?

20 responses

I can have quick access to translations.

I didn't even know that graffiti was as useful as it is before AGP!

I know that I can look for graffiti with this project! I have learned that these sources of ancient text exist and how powerful they can be in an instructional environment.

I couldn't quickly access the graffiti unless it was published in a book. Having access to such a range of graffiti is wonderful and it shows the breadth of graffiti. Also quick access to the maps to show exactly where the graffiti was located is so useful (especially for visual learners).

I am excited to share a connection to the ancient world that seems more tangibly real to the students- they can see someone's handwriting, which is amazing.

Much quicker search than through textbooks

Its more about bringing the content alive for students

Former academic, no longer working in academia. I love being able to dip in and mess around. I'm certain that non-academic users are a minority, but keep things easy to access. I no have access to a research library, and I really don't have time for serious scholarly research, so this is a lovely resource.

Look up graffiti that were originally in charcoal and no longer exist

Context of graffiti, drawings of graffiti

Using the graffiti I found on the site I learned a lot about ancient naval practices.

I can incorporate graffiti into my Latin classes to make the culture & language more vibrant

Surprisingly high concentration of Greek graffiti in lupanar

A major benefit of AGP for me is the ability to explore the archaeological site through the interactive map and immediately search for graffiti by property. The presentation of the graffiti with photographs and line-drawings is also a huge advantage over CIL.

I like being able to find figural graffiti which would have been difficult before.

I can now easily access the graffiti.

See the photographs of the graffiti

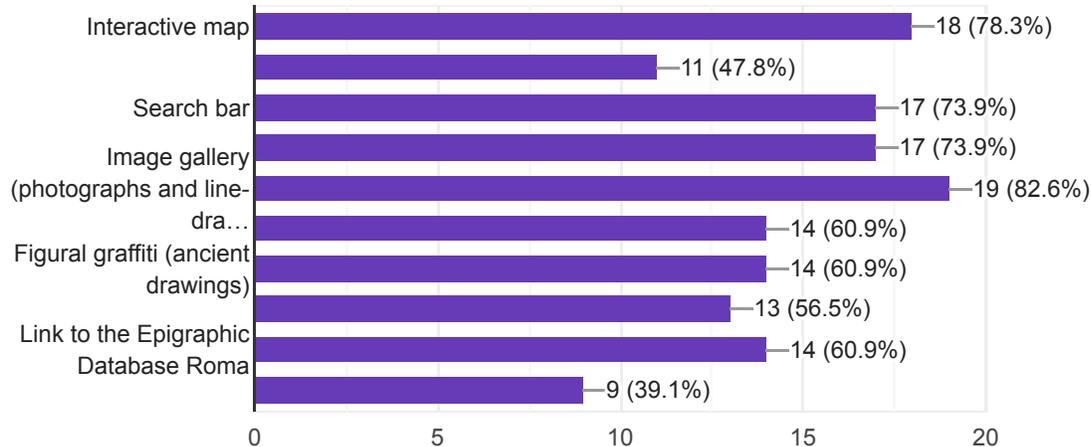
I am able to bring a real world aspect into my classroom. My students are able to relate more.

I didn't know anything about AGP so everything I know now I learned from my recent research

When performing word searches using the AGP I have found specific examples of words and word combinations that I did not know were present on graffiti, as well as interesting examples of figural graffiti. AGP also provides useful information about the archaeological contexts of the graffiti.

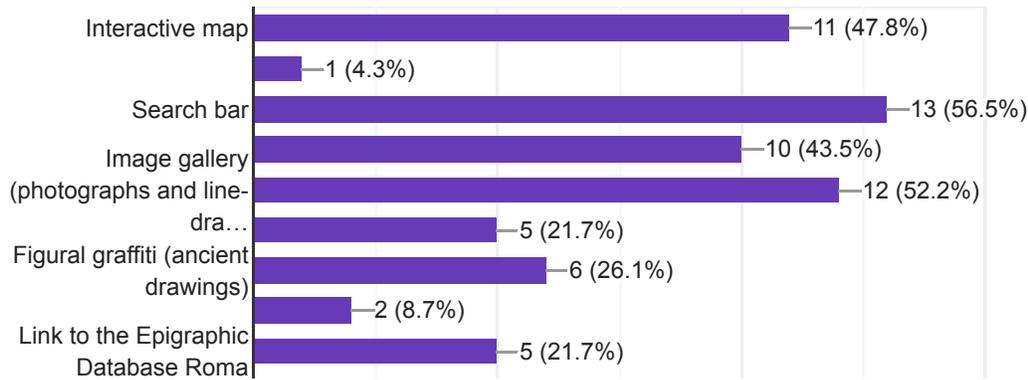
6. Which tools in AGP do you use? (Check all that are relevant.)

23 responses



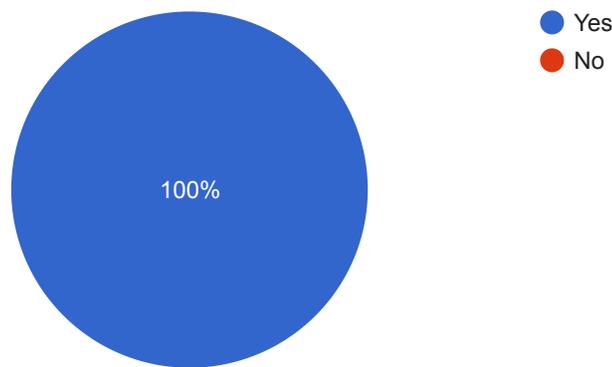
7. Which tools do you use the most? (Please choose three)

23 responses



8. Has AGP helped improve your understanding of ancient graffiti?

23 responses



If so, how?

20 responses

It allows me an easy way to explain and give examples of this type of research to my students.

the location and find context of the graffiti help in a classroom context. also the ancillary resources within the page are so valuable for lesson planning. the links to additional digital databases is also very helpful!

I believed that most, if not all, graffiti was figural or simply short words..I had no idea how detailed some of it is

Being able to visualize what these looked like and place them in the city helps the entire place come alive. Also to see another scholar's take on the graffiti is helpful- even when it is mostly just guesswork.

I guess I just never considered how important or prevalent it was before. It just gives me such easy access to the information, and I love sharing it with my students.

spacial understanding

I found examples of graffiti i didnt know was there

I've been to both cities, but wish I could spend more time there. This is a nice escape during work.

I didn't realize how much has disappeared and how quickly

I am now able to understand the meaning behind some graffiti.

What the everyday individual thought about.

This has absolutely made incorporating graffiti into my lesson plans a regula activity as opposed to a one-time even during the course of a school year!

Presentation of relevant sources

It's so difficult to get a sense of the where graffiti survive in Pompeii and Herculaneum from CIL. AGP helps me understand how the graffiti are spread through the ancient city, where they cluster, and where they survive. It allows me to see ancient writing in the urban space in a way that was impossible in CIL.

It created a context within the culture it was found.

I understand that graffiti is a link to the lesser classes of Rome.

It is very useful to know the context of the text. AGP allows to analyze both text and context

I better understand the geographic locations of certain graffiti.

The society in which it was written and the context around ancient graffiti and the information and knowledge it provides

By reviewing search results and browsing the AGP, I have gained a better understanding of the types of language and images that are part of the graffiti habit in Pompeii and Herculaneum. This has improved my understanding of the ways in which the graffiti habit was unique as well as the ways in which graffiti intersect with the broader corpus of Latin literary texts and inscriptions.

9. What do you wish AGP could do?

15 responses

Might be neat to have a interactive section for teachers/students.

Categorizing more of them by topic would be wonderful: adding more under the 'Featured Graffiti' page would be incredibly helpful. I recognize that some of them fall under multiple categories, so tagging them might be a good way to do it.

And adding as many pictures as possible in would be great (or linking directly to the other sites/databases that have them documented).

I wish it had more teacher resources and lesson plan ideas.

More effectively search by CIL number

More photographs of context

An at home lesson for students to explore the site to save time in class

Add more graffiti as it is revealed

YouTube videos for explanations of graffiti plus new the introduction of new graffiti.

NA

sometimes I can't find a graffito that I know exists - maybe there could be more tags to enable more accurate searches?

Expansion beyond the Bay of Naples would be interesting for comparison, since graffiti survive from all over the Ancient Mediterranean (the Greek East, Egypt, etc.).

I'm interested to see how far this project will expand and how many locations it will cover.

n/a

A student resource page.

It would be great to have links to the Clauss-Slaby database together with the EDR links.

10. Please describe your background

23 responses

