

Greetings Graffiti Lesson by Amanda Levit and Nicole Wellington

Introduction

Refer to p. 108 of *Scribbling Through History*, which discusses how Pompeian greeting graffiti was very friendly, very social, and anything but anonymous. By greeting someone you were not only acknowledging her, but you were acknowledging yourself.

I. Vocabulary

- Assuming that your students have learned basic greetings at the beginning of their study of Latin, they should be familiar with the verbs *saluto*, *valeo* and the commands *salve/salvete* and *vale/valete*.
- Explain the graffiti conventions of *SAL* for *salute* and *VAL* for *vale*.

II. Examples of Goodbyes

- For graffiti with simple farewells to women, see the graffiti from the Casa dei Quattro Stili. Here, there are many farewells addressed to women. Per Dr. Benefiel, this gives credit to just the woman, leaving her name alone without the inclusion of the one saying farewell.
- See:
 - CIL 04, 08219b [Quartilla va\(le\)](#)
 - CIL 04, 08212b [Quartil\(l\)a va\(le\)](#) (a subtle spelling error in her name humanizes the farewell even more)

III. Graffiti as a Signature

- For graffiti as a signature (i.e. someone was here), with a simple nominative, use of *hic*, and *fuit*.
- See:
 - CIL 04, 10525 [Hyacinthus hic fuit](#)

IV. Playful Greetings

Project or give students laminated copies of graffito CIL 04 659 for students:

SUILIMEA CISSONIO FRATRABILITER SAL

- Initial discussion questions based on their observations: Do they remember what the SAL represents? Do they know a vocabulary word related to FRATRABILITER? What do they know about greetings and word order? Who is greeting whom? What is unusual about the greeter's name? What is the case ending of CISSONIO? What is AEMULIUS giving to CISSONIUS?

- Develop the discussion further by asking: Who was this Aemilius? Why would he choose to spell his name backwards? Who is Cissonius? Would he get what Aemilius was doing? This conversation is a good way to say to the students, after your discussion, that it is still okay to not know all of the answers. Sometimes we have to be satisfied with not knowing.

Lesson Extension

- Challenge your students to leave greetings for one another during the week using the correct formula. Save space on your one of your whiteboards or put up a large piece of Craft Paper in the classroom for students to add their graffiti. Perhaps it could even be assigned as homework.