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# Dissertation abstracts 2023–2024

Muhammad R. Ragab, *The workmen's graffiti in the Valley of the Kings. The impact of landscape and social networks on graffiti-making, with a focus on the unpublished graffiti discovered by Howard Carter in 1915–1918*, Uppsala University 2024. ISBN 9789151320823  
<https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-525118>

Graffiti have the power to transform a space within a given landscape into a meaningful place. This study undertakes an in-depth analysis of more than 4000 graffiti created by the workmen of Deir el-Medina in the Theban Mountain during the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1050 BCE), with a particular emphasis on the Valley of the Kings. Additionally, the research contributes to the existing documentation by publishing graffiti numbers 1406–1526, identified as “Carter Graffiti” in the Valley of the Kings. Significantly, these graffiti have not been previously published, addressing a notable gap in scholarly knowledge. Acknowledging that the documentation of unpublished graffiti surveyed by Howard Carter from 1915 to 1918 served primarily an exploratory and documentary purpose, this study seizes the opportunity for extensive, on-site examination and analysis. The principal objective is to elucidate the evolution of graffiti-making practices and the multifaceted roles of these informal inscriptions, particularly within the Deir el-Medina community context. To achieve this aim, the research employs three case studies, undertaking the following endeavours: to employ spatial analysis related theories, including post-phenomenology, to understand the influence of the landscape on the making of graffiti. This includes investigating the spatial and environmental factors that influenced the selection of locations of graffiti and patterns of their making; to apply place-making and place-marking related theories to understand how graffiti transformed spaces into meaningful places; to employ the social network analysis theory as a lens to understand the influence of social relations among graffiti writers on the graffiti-making process. This approach aims to unravel the intricate dynamics and impact of

social networks on the making of graffiti within the historical and spatial context of the Valley of the Kings; to examine and analyse the content and context of the graffiti created by the Deir el-Medina community within the Valley of the Kings. This investigation considers the diachronic (historical evolution over time), diatopic (spatial distribution), and socio-stratigraphic (social layers) dimensions. This includes the examination of the characteristics of particular graffiti, such as self-presentation, updated self-presentations in graffiti, and their role in social dynamics and the appropriation of the landscape. The analysis of content also involves investigation of patterns and motivations behind selecting specific locations and the potential influence of earlier graffiti on later creations. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how the ancient Egyptians employed graffiti as a medium for engaging in discourse not only with their immediate surroundings and landscape but also with their contemporaries and, possibly, posterity. It endeavours to illuminate the diverse functions and significances of graffiti in the lives of the Deir el-Medina community members and beyond.

Filmo Verhagen, *Daily life in the Roman Republican countryside. A ceramic perspective on change and continuity in the production, distribution and consumption of cooking wares from the Pontine region (Central Italy), 4th–1st centuries BC*, Uppsala University 2024. ISBN 9789150630466  
<https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-524897>

Daily life in the Roman Republican countryside (4th–1st centuries BC) was influenced by the lasting effects of unification and integration into the Roman state. The outcomes of this process varied between areas depending on the local environment and pre-Roman history, leading to variation in daily practices among rural communities. This study aims to shed new light on the rural communities of the Pontine region and how they were impacted by larger-scale socio-economic

processes. Through a detailed study of the production, distribution and consumption of cooking wares retrieved during surveys of farmsteads in the region, elements of change and continuity are explored.

In order to be able to connect small-scale data obtained from ceramic fabrics and individual sherds to large-scale socio-economic and top-down political processes, a multi-scalar behavioural framework centred on the life cycle of cooking wares is employed. The assemblages recovered from consumption contexts are viewed as remnants of habitual behaviour performed in domestic settings. Indirectly, the ceramic fragments also provide information about the production and distribution of these pots through their fabrics.

The morphological longevity and standardisation of different vessel forms suggests that production technology and consumption practices were widely shared, leading to the conceptualisation of what a cooking pot should look like. Minor morphological, technological and distributional changes occurred in the first half of the 2nd century BC. These tentatively point to changes in the organisation of production and

distribution mechanisms, with regional and interregional producers supplying the Pontine pottery markets. This coincided with much wider societal changes associated with the Second Punic War.

The assemblage study reveals intra-regional variation and similarities. The Pontine plain shows a high level of uniformity in the assemblages, suggesting a homogenous population of (Roman) colonists settling the previously uninhabited but now drained marshland in the late 4th century BC. On the other hand, the coastal area shows more variation in consumption practices, reflecting the co-habitation of different groups such as the Volscians and Latins, mixed with Roman colonists, as well as possibly more socio-economic diversity between households. Diachronically, Mid-Republican foodways were centred on (semi)liquid foods prepared in jars and served in bowls, supplemented with a pre-Roman local tradition of bread baking. By the Late Republican period, foodways and their associated assemblages became more varied. Nonetheless, by the end of the 1st century, what inhabitants of the region would serve for dinner would still been somewhat recognisable to their Mid-Republican ancestors.