

Ancient Roman city remains unscathed by "selfie" invasion

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Temple of Apollo in 2014 (courtesy of TripAdvisor) and 1923

Dr Zena Kamash from the Department of Classics at Royal Holloway, University of London, has discovered the photos tourists take of Pompeii are almost identical to those taken by our ancestors.

After examining 19th and early 20th century lantern slides of Pompeii and modern day [photos](#) from review site TripAdvisor, Dr Kamash discovered the shots taken around the site are remarkably similar. Surprising still, most photos across the eras contain few people, demonstrating an amount of ingenuity and determination to take the 'perfect' photo while avoiding the hundreds of tourists who visit the site every day. The desire for people free photos meant there were barely any 'selfies', despite 2014 being named the year of the selfie.

Dr Zena Kamash, said: I was inspired by looking through the 19th and 20th century photos of Pompeii and realising as I looked at them that I had taken some of the same photos as they had without intending to - this made me wonder why we had taken the same shots and whether other people had too.

"I think we have a very powerful imagined idea of what an ancient city should be like, which is a romantic empty ruin that stands in mute testament to the past. This is the view that has come down to us from the earliest drawings of archaeological sites (by people like Stukeley and Piranesi) and through the quiet, empty photos that we find in the lantern slide collection.

In the case of Pompeii, I think this is particularly strong because we all know the tragic story of its destruction and devastation by Vesuvius erupting in AD79 - the silent plaster casts of the bodies trying to flee seem to really capture people's imagination and bring home to visitors the emptiness, death and loss suffered by the city all that time ago."

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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