Twitter Thread by Marco Malvagio - poorly explained history stuff



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Ok, holidays and coups are mostly over, so back to threads.

There was some recent talk about pompeii because they dug out some more of it.

■A TERRIBLE PERSON'S GUIDE TO POMPEII■■

Including, but not limited to, SO MANY STONE DICKS.



Like, seriously: CW for *very old* porn.

Also, I will speak of the casts of dead bodies in pompeii. That can be disturbing.

(also, I've already posted some stuff on pompeii recently, but I'll repeat it because I'm deeply unoriginal, sorry)

- As a physicist, I'll start with an incredibly boring things that brings me tears of joy: THEY KEPT A PUBLIC SET OF STANDARD WEIGHS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE. The Romans were big on standardization.
Truly, civilization never recovered.



- You might know of the "Cave canem" mosaics, this is the most famous one but there are a few.
Literally "beware of the dog", so it's easy to think it's like our modern similar signs. (1/2)



...except *this* was probably the breed of roman pet dogs. Basically a rat walking on sticks. So, it's likely they meant more "CAREFUL, DON'T STEP ON MY DOG!". (2/2)



- About the body casts of the victims: a lot were tentatively identifies with stuff like "the beggar" or "the pregnant woman". But more recently they were studied with NMR. The majority were healthy young males! (1/2)

Since they seem well off (by clothes and carried money), current hypothesis is that most ppl who remained in pompeii were rich people who meant to either guard or take away their wealth.
Don't eat the rich, preserve them for posterity. (2/2)

(mind you, there were women, elderly and children too. But not as many as one would expect. A good chunk of the population decided to flee when ash started falling from the sky. The people in the casts would be anti-maskers in modern times I guess) (3\2 don't judge me)

- Working class people lived in apartment blocks of varying degree of shittiness.
But the (many) fancy houses with painted walls weren't owned by some super-wealthy elite, they were more like middle class: bakers, artisans, shopowners had them. I'd trade home at any time tbh.



- The city is full of bars - many, if not most, people ate out everyday.
Hard to cook your own food if you rent a small room after all! They recently excavated a super cool one:
https://t.co/ULlGaMwIKr

- ok, ok we get to the dicks. SO MANY DICKS WERE FOUND IN POMPEII. STONE DICKS, METAL DICKS, PAINTED DICKS. CARVED IN WALLS, SCULPTED, JUST LYING AROUND.
It's... actually not 100% clear why they did that.
it's *probably* that they used them as good luck charms.



- There's also plenty of roman erotic art.
Some was in brothels, possibly meant as a menù of sorts, or more likely just to set the mood.
Some, however, were in regular public buildings.



(incidentally, tourist guides and some pop hist love to claim any building with erotic art was a brothel, but most historians agree that's a mistake.
The vast majority were regular buildings, romans just liked their porn)

Why did the roman just paint people having sex of every possible kind on, say, the dressing room of a public bath?
Some say they were used as occasional brothels too.
More think it was just random porn, plus a way to help people remember where they put their clothes!



It might sound silly, but romans were DEFINITELY not above coarse humor, and not all were literate, so "I hung my toga by the threesome painting" was definitely more helpful than "locker XIII".



The erotic art in pompeii easily settles any doubt that homosexuality was invented in the 1990s.
Also, sometimes you hear the claim that "the ancients didn't have a concept of female sexual pleasure".

But both paintings and graffiti on the walls advertise cunnilingus.
So brothel clients weren't just males, no matter what literary sources would have you believe.



- The amount of erotic art and stuff was so shocking to italians when Pompeii was excavated, some roman frescoes WERE PAINTED OVER, and most of the "obscene" artifacts were locked in a special section of the museum!

These day the museum has a section showing the special permissions once needed for people to see that part of the museum, which is wonderfully meta.
Overall, a look at the paintings above makes pretty clear we're still extremely prudes compared to the ancients.

- Tbh there's a fuckton of cool stuff about pompeii, but I need some space for my favourite parts: the graffiti on the walls. The romans were pretty literate - and they made the point by writing every-fucking-where.

In a way love that this random shit became immortal when so many important, revered books written and edited over years where lost forever.
(also, graffiti ARE one of the most useful sources about roman society)

There are SO MANY, I'll make a few examples, split in sections.

1 - BASHFUL, MODEST ROMANS
"I screwed a lot of girls here"
"Celadus the Thracian makes the girls moan!"
"Floronius, privileged soldier of the 7th legion, was here. Women didn't know of his presence. Only six women came to know, too few for such a stallion." (whiniest boast ever)

2 - ROMANS TALKING ABOUT SHIT

- "To the one defecating here. Beware of the curse. If you look down on this curse, may you have an angry Jupiter for an enemy."
- "Shitter, may everything turn out okay so that you can leave this place."

2-BIS: MORE SHIT

- "Apollinaris, the doctor of the emperor Titus, defecated well here"
- "here it's not safe to open your ass"
- "Secundus defecated here three times on one wall."