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ABSTRACT (English)

This is the introduction to the issue *Advertising Antiquity*. The contribution offers an overview of theoretical and methodological approaches to advertising as an encoded system of communication that can be studied from multiple angles and fields. The text looks at the social and cultural impact of advertising on modern societies, as well as at its different uses of the past and, specifically, of Classical Antiquity, in connection to modern values, aspirations and identities. The introduction also includes a comparative insight into ancient forms of political and commercial advertising, and provides a summary of the content of the issue and of themes and trends drawn by the individual contributions.

RESUMEN (Castellano)

Como introducción a *Advertising Antiquity*, esta contribución ofrece una visión de conjunto de los acercamientos teóricos y metodológicos a la publicidad, entendida como un sistema de comunicación codificado que puede ser estudiado desde múltiples perspectivas y áreas. El texto explora el impacto social y cultural de la publicidad en las sociedades modernas, así como sus diversos usos del pasado, especialmente de la antigüedad clásica, en relación a valores, aspiraciones e identidades modernas. La introducción incluye, además, una mirada comparativa a formas antiguas de publicidad política y comercial, y ofrece un resumen del contenido del número, así como de temas y tendencias delineadas en los artículos y ensayos que conforman *Advertising Antiquity*.

Advertising Antiquity: Introduction

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I.

Advertising Antiquity studies the interactions between ancient and modern forms of advertising. In the first place, the issue investigates ancient media of advertising and discusses how Greeks and Romans created different visual and written instruments of political, social and economic communication. Secondly, we are interested in exploring the traces of Classical Antiquity as a cultural and aesthetic referent for modern advertising. The issue discusses the place of the ancient past in modern forms of marketing and examines classical imageries and ideas as shaping agents of our everyday-lives, cultural environments and social identities. We will look at the heterogeneous ways through which myth, history, epic characters, events and stories, as well as iconographies, meet the communication strategies and the encoded discursive space of modern advertising. Our analysis focuses specifically on visual adverts in the 20th and 21st centuries.

II. A Market of Values, Virtues and Promises

Advertising dresses the visual environments of our everyday lives; it inhabits real and virtual spaces; it celebrates the present, but also proposes an ideal future we can aspire to, by suggesting and reaffirming the cultural tendencies of our modern society. This ubiquitous and hybrid practice has been defined from different fields of research: from cultural, economic, historical, sociological, anthropological and political perspectives. In essence, advertising can be reduced to a form of communication aimed to influence and/or inform a specific audience.[1] Building upon this basic idea, Bovée and Arens define advertising as "a non personal communication of information

1 In this regard, Jeremy Bullmore, from the Advertising Association of the UK, defines advertising as "any communication, usually paid-for, specifically intended to inform and/or influence one or more people" https://www.adassoc.org.uk/advertisings-big-questions/what-is-advertising/ [14/05/2018].

usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media."[2]

From a purely etymologically point of view the Latin term *adverto* (to turn towards, to draw attention to) provides us with one of the keys for this practice. Adverts are successful when the encoded message they contain is positively associated with a product (material or immaterial).[3] To achieve this aim, an advert needs to interact with its audience, and establish an effective communication strategy that captures its attention. It is this engagement that convinces the receiver of the message and, in the case of commercial advertising, ignites the desire of possession in the consumer's mind.

As a communication system, advertising creates its own typified discourse, that can be considered a 'genre'.[4] Brands and ad-makers link marketed-goods to iconographies and to values that help define targeting (the profile of the potential consumer). Values can be intrinsic (e.g. self-rewarding, benevolence, philanthropy, community feeling, universalism) and extrinsic, which rely on external factors for validation (e.g. the public opinion and approval by others). They fulfil purposes such as conformity, material success, public image and personal achievement, and tend to be grouped and sub-divided in order to identify targets and trends of consumption. As shown in the diagram below, values and identities interact with each other and do not form static categories [Fig. 1]. The identification of more or less defined categories is however important to target specific groups of receivers and audiences.

When we apply these ideas specifically to commercial advertising we meet a system that, basically, links human values to objects and services; hence the world of culture and social identities, on the one hand, and the realm of the market and the 'real life', on the other.[5] Advertising empowers objects with ideas and with life. These items meet the needs but also the

2 Bovée / Arens (1992) 7. From a commercial perspective, the ultimate purpose of advertising is to sell a product or service. *The Business Dictionary* frames advertising more specifically as "The activity or profession of producing information for promoting the sale of commercial products or services". See http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/advertising.html [14/05/2018]. Diverse definitions and approaches to advertising are scrutinised by O'Barr (2005).

3 On the communication mechanisms that shape advertising, see MacRury (2009).

4 Cook (1992).

5 The associations between the ideal and the material are analysed by Adorno (1991) 53.

aspirations of consumers.[6] According to this view, objects and services can be detached from their commercial context and become individualised and meaningful valuable things that transmit *per se* cultural ideas.[7] The act of purchasing thus becomes a special moment that allows the consumer to establish an intimate and unique relationship with the acquired object, which becomes the 'chosen one'. The purchased item now becomes a signifier of values and identities intrinsically or extrinsically attached to its owner. We may say that advertising brings objects to life and empowers them with aspirational and self-rewarding qualities traditionally attributed to gifts.[8] The object becomes the depositary of symbols, myths and metaphors, thus transforming the act of purchasing into something that we could qualify as almost poetic; a spiritual experience.[9] These ideas are transferable to forms of advertising not dealing with material objects, such as political or social publicity and propaganda.

Advertising can be thus received and regarded as a form of religious ritualization of everyday-life through which objects tend to be vested with magic and even totemic qualities.[10] From this perspective, advertisers can be also defined as agents and shapers of a form of mythmaking.[11] Barthes attributes to advertising a prophetic character, as it essentially works as a medium that fulfils promises and makes dreams real.[12] Accordingly, adverts often attempt to legitimise their messages with recourse to narratives and images that are linked to universal and religious values, as well as to durable and recognising traditions with which the consumer can identify.[13] This explains why advertising campaigns and brands often resort to symbols, icons and ideas from the past as useful instruments for the construction of transferable cultural identifiers. In the hands of the audience/consumer, the product, material or immaterial, becomes a de-commodified item

6 Stark (2014), discusses how aspirations are articulated through advertising (blog) https://blogs.adobe.com/experiencedelivers/experience-management/four-principles-e-commerce-every-marketer-aspiration/ [17/03/2018].

7 McRury (2009) 114-117 discusses the idea that successful advertising leads to a de-commodification of objects in the eyes of the consumer.

8 Cronin (2004) has studied this process of 'animation' of objects through advertising.

9 See the revealing contribution by Bachand (1986).

10 This function is discussed by Jhally (1989) and Sheffield (2006).

11 This idea is expressed by Randazzo (1993), cf. O'Barr (2005).

12 Barthes (1963).

13 Sauvageot (1987); Cottin (2001).

empowered with such inherited values. But to what extent do past traditions, imageries, events and characters contribute to such constructions? The present issue will discuss this key question through case studies from ancient and modern advertising. A short insight into key features of the development and impact of this phenomenon in both contexts is necessary to provide a historical and cultural frame to the single contributions that shape *Advertising Antiquity*.

III. Modern and Ancient Advertising

The rise of modern advertising is traditionally associated with the idea of progress represented by the Industrial Revolution and the development of urban public spaces. A relevant development in this context was the substantial improvement and popularization of printing technology, like the lithography that, from the second half of the 19th century, made it possible to easily (and cheaply) multiply the visual messages that changed the physiognomy of streets, squares, boulevards and promenades. The growing industry of marketing and publicity, animated with original slogans and imagery, created a new consumer culture. As Walter Benjamin plainly synthesised: "lithography made it possible for graphic art to accompany everyday life with pictures."[14] The proliferation of colourful posters, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets that transformed urban life, but also the domestic sphere, paved the way for new commercial languages, but also inspired artistic movements like Art Nouveau, Arts & Crafts and the Secessionism. Famous fin-de-siècle *affichistes*, such as Pierre Bonnard, Jules Chéret, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Alphonse Mucha, contributed to building visibility and prestige of brands and products through memorable extemporal icons and motives that recalled eternal and traditional values, but also through innovative ideas in line with the spirit of the new era. The transformation of cityscapes into show windows of dreams, desires and promises of a better life attracted the attention of privileged observers of reality, such as Charles Pierre Baudelaire, who captured the metamorphoses of urban life and its imageries in the figure of the *flâneur*.[15] The 'prophets' of modernity, such as Arthur Rimbaud, Guillaume Apollinaire and Blaise

14 Benjamin (1936) 4-21.

15 On the *flâneur* and the changing social and cultural reality of urban topographies of 19th century cities, see Hahn (2006); Salmi (2008) 92-97.

Cendrars, explored the fascinating interactions between poetry and advertising. Their poems reproducing adverts elevated the language of marketing to voices of the new muses of consumerism. In *Paris* (1871), for instance, Rimbaud announces a new age of public communication by evoking the ephemeral slogans posted on the walls of the city. Bulletin boards and kiosks covered with posters became characteristic architectonic elements of the modern cities. The protagonism in public spaces of these bearers of 'promises' in form of adverts is well-illustrated in a painting by Jean Béraud entitled *Paris Kiosque* (1880), in which the multi-colourful column dressed by messages in different sizes and formats attracts the attention of the passersby and of the viewer. The advertiser-kiosk stood as one of the most iconic symbols of the integration and normalization of the language of marketing within the everyday life of modern cities.

Yet, was this really an exclusive phenomenon of industrialised cities? A jump into the remote world of Greeks and Romans can help discuss this point and delineate some interesting comparative practices. Certainly, the Ancients did not dispose of the modern, revolutionary print techniques of the industrial age, even less of the digital media that invade the hyper-communicated societies of the New Millenium. Yet in absence of them, they managed to develop and spread sophisticated media of public communication and publicity. Ancient cultures conferred a great importance to the impact of visibility and reproductivity of published messages. Take for instance the extraordinary example of the city of Pompeii, which permits to enter a world frozen in time in the very moment of its death. The Campanian city provides a unique case study for the everyday life of an ancient city in the 1st century AD. Pompeii was certainly not the Paris of the Boulevards, but a relatively small and multicultural town situated in the prosperous region of the Gulf of Naples. The invaluable information that we find on its walls and public spaces provides the opportunity, however, to experience a world that was shaped by ubiquitous and heterogeneous written and visual advertising. The extraordinary preservation of thousands of announcements posted on public and private spaces reveals a urbanscape clothed by political, social, cultural and commercial messages that inform the identities of its inhabitants.[16] This unique corpus of material allows us to observe how the inhabitants of Pompeii formulated and negotiated their

16 On the use of announcements in Pompeii, see Hannah (2001) 139-159; Corbier (2006) 10; 36; 64.

wishes, fears, dreams, values and aspirations on different formats of communication. Some of the written messages were meant to last indefinitely, others were ephemeral posts accidentally preserved until today. Famous examples of the latter are the so-called *programmata*, painted messages produced by professional sign-writers that recommended individuals for the election to local magistracies.[17] A closer look at these messages unveils fairly formulatic and brief notices that include abbreviations such as *D*(*ignum*) *R*(*ei*) P(*ublicae*) *O*(*ro*) *V*(*t*) *F*(*acias*) ('worthy of public office, I beg you to elect'). Some of them distinguished groups of supporters – from fruit sellers, bakers, barbers to spectators of the amphitheatres – and the reasons that led them to ask for the vote of a particular candidate: 'He will preserve the treasury' (CIL IV 3702); 'He brings good bread' (CIL IV 429); 'A good aedile and great giver of games' (CIL IV 4999). The reversal of the positive promotion of candidates on these adverts were posts that ironically showed the support of dubious characters, such as thieves, drinkers and gamers.[18] Particularly remarkable and highly elaborated were the painted announcements of the popular gladiatorial games at the amphitheatre of the Colony. These events were generally co-funded by the local magistrates as part of their expected duties (*ob honorem*). This form of evergetism was an invaluable instrument of promotion for individuals, who were in this way regarded as patrons of the city. These engaging notices detailed the dates of the spectacles, as well as the numbers of gladiators and animals that performed in them. Also common was the mention of the very popular hunting spectacles and the use of awnings to protect spectators from the sun (a courtesy of the organizer). The name of the magistrate offering (and paying for) the games was particularly highlighted in *tituli picti* that aesthetically combined different letter-sizes and the contrast between red and black colours. All in all, they conformed a distinguished type of visually attractive encoded messages that

17 On the Pompeian elections and their written propaganda, see for instance Franklin (1980); Chiavia (2002); and most recently Viitanen / Nissin (2017).

18 The candidate to the *aedilitas*, Marcus Cerrinus Vatia, was the protagonist of several of these ironic messages, e.g. *CIL* IV, 576; 581. Another example of these humorous *programmata*: 'The dice-throwers ask for Cn. Helvius Sabinus (to be elected)', *CIL* IV, 3435.

could be read and identified from a certain distance.[19] Among the thousands of graffiti found in Pompeii, many were conceived as forms of commercial advertising, such as those linked to the *lupanar*, or to specific businesses. This is the case, for instance, of an inscription located on the walls of a bar in the Street of the Augustales, which highlights the quality of the wine that could be consumed for different prices.[20]

As we have seen above, one of the remarkable traits of the cultural 'revolution' brought about by the introduction and the industrial spread of chromolithography towards the second half of the 19th century was the possibility to combine stunning images and text in formats that could be easily reproduced. Despite their limitations, Romans were aware of the privileged relationship between word and image, as the ubiquitous epigraphic monuments, public and private, often show. In Pompeii, we can also enjoy other forms of imaged adverts, particularly in commercial contexts. Dozens of archaeologically attested bakeries inform the importance of this product in the colony. A very detailed fresco found in the *tablinum* of a house (*insula* VII.3.30) offers us a colorful insight of one of them. The shelves and the counter, the basket, the characteristic round bread, the customers, and a vendor compose a relatively realistic everyday scene of one of these locals. This painting per se stands up as a self-representation of a prestigious profession that was also a profitable business in the colony [Fig. 2]. Yet, if we pay a closer attention to the figure of the baker, who is dressed with the toga that distinguished full citizens from other members of society, we might like to link him with one of the characters referred above, who was supported for aedilship because 'he brings good bread'.[21] This association is of course purely speculative, but read together, this painting could have been worked not only as a promotion of a baker, but also as a specific representation of the virtues and promises of public generosity associated with a particular candidate.

The use of images as adverts of business was very popular in Pompeii (as it certainly was in other Roman cities). Particularly prolific is the case of textile-makers, one of the economic specializations of the Colony. Several

19 Two relevant examples are *CIL* IV, 3884, which announces the games offered by Nero's *flamen* Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens and his son, and *CIL* IV, 1180, referring to the games offered by Gnaeus [All]eius Nigidius Maius, a *flamen* of Augustus.

20 *CIL* IV, 1679: 'Hedone says, you can drink here for one as, if you give two, you will drink better, if you give four, you will drink Falernian.'

21 *CIL* IV, 429.

fullonicae of the town can be still recognized on colourful wall-frescoes that illustrate the activity of the workshops and that record the name of some of their proud owners and producers.[22] The infallible formula of bringing together text and image was paramount in the prosperous business of the Umbricii Scauri family, local producers and exporters of *garum* in the 60s and 70s of the 1st century AD. Around a 30% of inscriptions on fish-sauce amphorae found in Campania were associated with the Scauri workshops, and some of them reached as far as Southern France.[23] The Scauri were also patrons of Pompeii, and one of them was honoured with a city-council grant to pay for his funeral, as well as by an equestrian statue that stood on the Forum and recorded this public recognition. Their reputation was also associated with the success of their business, which was fostered not only by the product itself, but also by the creation of a prestigious brand, to which a characteristic container (a relatively small one-handled pitcher) and its *tituli picti* (the product's label) contributed. The pitchers of the garum *flos* ('flower of garum') of the Scaurus' brand included references to the workshop of the Scauri.[24] This was not only a way of distinguishing this particular production from others, but also an effective strategy of commercial branding. This strategy seems to be confirmed by the intentional choice of both, the pitchers and the inscriptions, as motives that decorated the mosaics of one of the *atria* of the huge villa of the Scauri in Pompeii.[25]

These examples show how Romans practised the art of publicity and advertising in similar ways as brands from industrial and post-industrial societies do. The search for distinction within a market defined by relatively standardised products, despite logical differences in quality, was a practice broadly spread in the Ancient Mediterranean. The paper of Katerina Volioti, in this issue, examines precisely the marketing strategies followed by a producer of Athenian black-figured pottery to create a successful brand.

Back to Roman society and to Pompeii, it is useful to take a glimpse at the ways authors reflected upon the practice of advertising. The available evidence provides some keys about the importance conferred by the

22 On the wool industry in Pompeii, see Flohr (2013). The urban economy of Pompeii is analysed in depth in Flohr / Wilson (2016).

23 On the Umbricii Scauri and their prosperous garum business, see for instance Tchernia (2016).

24 *CIL* IV, 5692: *Garvm flos Sombri / Scauri / ex officina ninhti*.

25 Cf. A Pompeiian mosaic of a *flos* (flower of garum) pitcher with the *titulus* G(ari) F(los) SCON SCAURI EX OFFI(CI)NA SCAURI

Romans to publicity both in public and private life. A telling, and uncommon example that can be recalled as a parallel (and precedent) of the iconic Parisian kiosk is preserved in the atrium of the Pompeian *praedia* of Iulia Felix. Here, a quite realistic wall-fresco reproduces scenes of temporary retail sales and other activities taking place under the porticoes of the Forum of the Colony. The uncommon content of the fresco suggests that the owner of the house aimed to emphasise his attachment to the town through images that celebrated its everyday life. One of the frescoes shows from the back a series of passers-by reading a long written tablet posted on the bases of equestrian statues.[26] The content of the tablets, possibly made of a wooden support, is unknown, but it is plausible to interpret them as public announcements made by the city council or by private individuals.[27] Legal sources like the Digest provide specific instructions on how announcements, public and private, should be written and posted to fully meet their purpose. A passage by Ulpian insists for instance that announcements should have a clear writing and should be posted in places in which they could be easily read, like a *taberna* or a place in which commerce was held: '*non in loco remoto, sed in euidenti*'.[28] The author adds that in such places, even if someone would not see the advert, would at least hear the comments of the people. Implicit in this regulation is the consideration that advertisements should reach also analphabetic viewers. A similar mechanism was followed in the publication of laws and other official regulations.[29] The very common use of the expression *in celeberrimis locis* on messages that are preserved in the epigraphic evidence reveals the importance of visibility and transparency in the

26 Fresco preserved at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale (Napoli), inv. nr. 9068: http://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R2/2%2004%2003%20p2.htm [14/05/2018].

27 On the fresco, see Sartori (2005) and Newsome (2013).

28 Dig. 14.3.11.3. (*Ulp. 28 ed.*): *Proscribere palam sic accipimus claris litteris, unde de plano recte legi possit, ante tabernam scilicet uel ante eum locum in quo negotiatio exercetur, non in loco remoto, sed in euidenti. Litteris utrum Graecis an Latinis? Puto secundum loci condicionem, ne quis causari possit ignorantiam litterarum. Certe si quis dicat ignorasse se litteras uel non observasse quod propositum erat, cum multi legerent cumque palam esset propositum, non audietur.*

29 This mechanism was also followed for the publication of laws. This is specified in the *Lex Iulia Municipalis*, *CIL* I², 206 (= 593), and in the *Lex Malacitana,* chapter *De locationibus legibusque locationum proponendis et in tabulas municipi referendis*, *CIL* II, Suppl. 1964. On the publication of public contracts and their adjudications, see the *Lex pareti faciundo*, *Lex libitina* from Puteoli, *Lex Iulia Municipalis*, *Lex Flauia Municipalis* and the *Lex Portorium Asiae*.

Romans' understanding of public communication.[30] On the Roman Forum, near the Rostra and the Comitium, the Columna Maenia was regularly used as a blackboard on which creditors posted written announcements.[31] This publicity, which included the name of the debtors and the properties put up for sale due to insolvency, secured the visibility and the spread of the announcements aimed to reach interested purchasers. Yet such notices had also a reversal side: the exposition of the damaged reputation of citizens in difficulties. Cicero expressed in several works his preoccupations for this problem.[32] In his early speech *Pro Quinctio,* the orator discusses the negative publicity of the *uenditio bonorum*, the sale of the goods of insolvent debtors.[33] Cicero laments that the written announcement of these sales (*proscriptio*) was a personal humiliation worse than death.[34] He insists in particular on the public *infamia* that was attached to the publication and the distribution of notices or *libelli in celeberrimis locis*. Cicero criticises that the creditors decided about the life of the debtor, whilst the crier (*praeco*) announced the prices and the names of the purchasers. These are compared by the orator with butchers who pulled apart the remains of a life.[35] This harsh judgement of the implacable process of publicity of sales of dispossessed debtors needs to be linked to Cicero's own view of this practice in relation to the persecutions of political enemies and their patrimonies that marked the agenda of the late Republican elites.[36] However, it also reflects a very spread practice that, beyond the criticism that questioned its damaging outcomes, aimed to provide legitimacy and transparency to these processes. Cicero's description of the regulated publicity of the *uenditio bonorum* finds a valuable complementary testimony in a corpus of wax tablets found near Pompeii, and that concerned the financial businesses of the Sulpicii from Puteoli

30 See, in particular, Corbier (2013). Examples include municipal regulations such as the *Lex irnitana* (AE 2008, 63) and senatorial decisions, such as the famous *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* (AE 2008, 651). Further examples: *CIL* X, 4643; XII, 4393.

31 On the *columna Maenia*, see Torelli (1993); Cascione (1996).

32 On the problem of debt in the Ciceronian age, see Rollinger (2009).

33 This case is analysed by Hinard (1975). On the *uenditio bonorum*, see also Gaius 3.79. Cf. Giuffrè (1993).

34 Cic., *Quinct.* 49.

35 Cic., *Quinct.* 50*: praeconis uox praedicat et pretium conficit, huic acerbissimum uiuo uidentique funus ducitur, si funus id habendum est, quo non amici conuenient ad exequias cohonestandas, sed bonorum emptores ut carnifices ad reliquias uitae lacernandas et distrahendas*.

36 On Cicero's view on patrimonial sales and their publicity on the Forum, see García Morcillo (2016).

around mid first century AD. A group of these tablets reveals the agreements between creditors and debtors regarding auctions of pledged goods that were handed over by the later as security of loans.[37] These relevant documents confirm the existence of a formalised procedure to announce the sales of these goods. The notice of those adverts needed to be posted thirty days before the auction in a specific place of the Forum of the town of Puteoli, *ante chalcidicum Caesonianum* (probably a columned Porticus), and it had to include the date and conditions of the sale.[38] The sale itself took place in the Forum, and two tablets also indicate that the auction was fixed on the day of the *nundinae* or weekly markets of the town.[39] The required posting of the advert in a particular location, and the choice of a specific date and place for the auction, which was announced and conducted by a *praeco*, aimed to secure a well-attended event and maximise the presence of potential purchasers. The competition between several bidders usually led to the rising of the final price of the objects sold, which included properties, slaves and other commodities. The Sulpicii tablets supply thus a precious complementary textual evidence to the visual information provided by the fresco from the house of Iulia Felix seen above, and demonstrates to what extent regulated publicity merged visual, written and oral systems of collective communication. The participation of *praecones* or *kerykes* at auctions, but also their intervention as announcers of public news and regulations, both in Ancient Greece and in Rome, show also how oral communication aimed to reinforce written messages.[40] Like the modern posters and placates – also electronic – that cloth the physiognomy of modern cities, and beyond the importance of epigraphy on permanent materials common in Roman society, a substantial part of the evidence on

37 The full, commented and critical edition of the Sulpicii archive has been published by Camodeca (1999). See specifically *TPSulp.* 83-93, concerning auctions and their regulated announcements.

38 The documents meet the regulations commented by the second century AD jurist Gaius in his *Institutes*, 3.79

39 *TPSulp.* 87 and 89.

40 The *proscriptio* referred generally to any written announcement. The Greek equivalent of the term was *prographo*, attested in Athens in the 4th century BC. Oral announcements were generally expressed through the terms *praedicare, nuntiare* and *praeconium*; *prokeryxis* in Greek, cf. Isaeus, frg. 162. On the importance of both written and oral announcements, see Meyer (2004) 250-293. In the case of public news, the emperor Claudius preferred the use of *tabulae* exhibited in public places rather than oral announcements made by the *praeco*, Suet., *Claud.* 21.10; Dio. 60.13.5.

the advertising culture of the Romans was, as the Campanian documents show, ephemeral. Their relevance for our understanding of the cultural lives and identities of individuals and collectives in those societies is however inestimable.

The public control over advertising was particularly detailed in the case of private sales. Legal texts specify the obligation of the vendor to declare any relevant circumstances regarding the sale and the object through the publication of a notice (*tabula*).[41] Cicero addresses this issue in his moral treaty *De Officiis*, where he discusses the conflict between honesty and economic interest between vendor and purchaser. He draws specifically upon the role of the seller: 'should he always declare the defects of a property put up for sale and proclaim the sale of an infested house (*domum pestilentem vendo*)?' The other side of Cicero's dilemma were those announcements that omitted the defects of a house.[42] The correctness of the sale-posts, which should indicate the size and conditions of a property, were essential, as they are now, for the strategy of purchasers and the estimation of the price.[43]

The sources pay particular attention to the correct conduction of sales of slaves, and to the obligation that they should bear a *titulus* hanging from their neck. The *titulus* had to provide precise information not only about the price, but also the age, origins, skills, possible deficiencies, illnesses and vices of the slave.[44] The non-fulfilment of these requirements implied the *actio redhibitionis*, the immediate return of the slave to the vendor and the recovery of the price.

Even if we do not know about the existence of any ancient work that theoretically conceptualised and defined advertising as a distinguished

41 Such circumstances included for instance the references to possible taxes or debts associated with a particular property and that might affect the vendor, Dig. 19.1.13.6 (*Ulp. 32 ed.*).

42 Cicero also mentions the case of M. Marius Gratidianus, who omitted in the proscription the defects of a house, which was acquired by C. Sergius Orata. The evident economic profit behind these transactions explains that only an ignorant would declare the defects of a house in an announcement (Cic., *Off.* 3.17.68: *sic tu aedes proscribes, tabulam tamquam plagam ponas*…). In *Pro M. Tullio*, Cicero denounces that a vendor has not indicated the limits of a *fundus* announced for sale (Cic., *Tull.* 7.7.16.17).

43 The Ciceronian correspondence shows several cases concerning the Roman estate market.

44 On the regulations of slave sales, see Dig. 21.1; Gell. 4.2.1. On the Roman slave market and the systems of sale, cf. Jakab (1997) 40-48.

sociological or economic practice, the instances mentioned above show relevant moral and legal considerations about different forms of publicity. Ancient Romans, like Vanguard Parisians, did in fact reflect upon the impact of advertising at different levels and expressed their thoughts about a practice that enabled multiple forms of public communication. Like the modern poets of the Parisian boulevards, ancient authors like Plautus, Martial, Petronius, Apuleius and Lucian, to mention only a few, acknowledged in their comedies, poems, satires and novels the power of commercial advertising to capture the spirit of everyday life, but also, and more importantly, to reveal the virtues of humans, and their most unspeakable vices and miseries.[45]

IV. Antiquity in Modern Advertising

A look at ancient forms of advertising can no doubt contribute to our understanding of the development of complex mechanisms that shape public communication in modern societies. The past provides marketing and advertising with strategies, with models and ideals that project universal values, recognisable and reliable images that work as effective mechanisms of persuasion. More than just a useful yet frozen catalogue of gods, epic characters, stories and easily recognisable iconographies, Antiquity offers the present a set of dynamic tools that contribute to the reformulation of our own cultural identities through a mixture of traditional, innovative and renovated discourses. Popularised imageries from the Ancient World have been part of the rhetoric of legitimation of brands and campaigns from the beginnings of modern Western advertising. As Talalay notes, Egyptian, Greek and Roman culture are particularly popular in the medium, as a contrast to other civilisations and periods.[46] This can be explained by the

45 Literary examples of this phenomenon are numerous. Take for instance, the oral and written forms of publicity incorporated as instruments of humour by Plautus (e.g. *Stich.* 190-219). Petronius refers with irony to the advertisement of the sale of the 'remainder goods' of someone who tried to avoid that his creditors found out that he was actually ruined (38.16). Martial caricaturises the unsuccessful marketing methods of a crier trying to sell a slave (6.66). Similarly, Apuleius recreates the oral advertising of the market of horses and donkeys (*Met.* 8.23). Lucian's *Vitarum auctio* is a huge parody in which philosophical schools are submitted to the marketing practices and proceedings of slave auctions.

46 Talalay (2004).

familiarity of Western societies – despite the temporal distance – with those cultures, their literature, myths and archaeology. Egyptians, Greeks and Romans are indeed remote, but also close enough to the modern world and to Western traditions – as we have seen above – to be able to 'speak to us' and to transfer recognisable signs and ideas to present experiences. Stereotypes such as the mysterious and exotic land of Egypt tend to be embodied in the eternal beauty of the seductive Cleopatra. This queen of Egypt has been the sole protagonist of a number of successful campaigns and brands linked with sectors that sell products designed to enhance physical and personal well-being and add distinction to their users (see for instance typical 19th and early 20th century ads for cigarettes and of brands such as L'Oreal or Nivea and the Cleopatra Soap).

Another important aspect to consider is the presence of Antiquity in political and commercial campaigns based on the construction of 'national brands' and collective values built upon traditional identities.[47] In the present issue, these reformulations of ancient ideas and imageries have been particularly explored by Helena González-Vaquerizo and in the contributions by Vivian Colbert, Johannes Valentin Korff and Joey Rauschenberger.

Ancient Greece tends to emerge in advertising both as a symbol of the eternal and of ideal beauty, particularly through myth and Homeric images– and as the stereotype of the pinnacle of world culture and knowledge, exemplified by classical art and philosophy. Greek iconographies appear traditionally linked with brands and ads associated with innovation, enlightenment and escapism. This is for instance the case of brands from the film industry (e.g. Achilles and Medusa Entertainments, Kalliope Films) and from the world of new technologies celebrating progress.[48] These ideas and symbols are also frequent on logos of brands. Classical aesthetics, in more or less stylised and conceptual shape, swamp an increasingly competitive market dominated by the ubiquity of the image.

Rome often personifies rational planning and efficiency, but also warfare, power and despotism through the distorted image of its emperors, and the

47 See Hamilakis (2000) and Kühschelm / Eder / Siegrist (2012). Specifically, on the use of antiquity in political posters, see García Morcillo (2008).

48 Examples include: Icarus technology and solar Energy, Hercules Industrial system, Aeneas Internet & Telephone, Minerva Softwares, Parmenion, a company that supports technology business and investments.

idea of popular, epic spectacle epitomised by the Coliseum, by gladiators and charioteers. Take for instance a series of popular ad-campaigns by Pepsi in 2004, which are the focus of the article of Fabien Bièvre-Perrin in this issue. On the occasion of the Football World Cup, the brand launched a series of spectacular adverts featuring prominent figures from the world of pop music and football stars, who performed as gladiators in the arena of an amphitheatre. The message was clear: the product was presented as the vehicle that links the world of ancient and modern mass spectacles and popular culture: from the Coliseum to FIFA and MTV, Pepsi celebrates the new 'gods' of popular culture. Despite the enduring popularity of Roman gladiatorial games, the Pepsi adverts could not have existed without the worldwide success of a Hollywood film that awakened the 'sword and sandal' movie genre after its close to 40 years of deep sleep. The film was of course *Gladiator* (R. Scott 2000). The enormous cross-cultural impact of this movie and of following productions, such as *300* (Z. Snyder 2006), and the TV series *Spartacus* (Starz, 2010-13) have transcended their own medium and are studied today as an example of a new era of popular entertainment marked by new technologies. 21st century advertising is thus enclosed within a hyper-communicated, globalised world dominated by mass consumption and increasingly fuelled by digital media.

Modern values and aspirations associated with forms of social distinction and well-being are often at the core of brands and advertising campaigns that resort to idealised aesthetic models from the Classical past. Anja Wieber's article on the *Sparta-Creme* in this volume is a telling example of the commercial and ideological instrumentalization of the idea of Spartan culture as epitome of the body-cult and the celebration of healthy life as a distinguished trait of identity. The idealization of a particular conception of body-aesthetics linked to Greco-Roman Antiquity has played a notable role in commercial advertising of the New Millenium, particularly in connection to modern approaches to masculinity, as Fabien Bièvre-Perrin and Tao T. Makeeff show in this issue. These examples demonstrate that the Ancient World participates actively in the renovation of discourses about the past and emerges as a valid instrument to define cultural and social iconographies of the present.

The dialogues between the ancient world and modern advertising suggest a series of questions that we will discuss throughout this issue: Why are certain ancient *topoi* still popular? Why are others neglected? What type of values does modern Western advertising attach to ancient characters, ideas

and stories? To what extend encoded messages and imageries linked to Classical Antiquity are the outcome of long established traditions and views of the past? Can we identify significant changes and radical ideas in the way the ancient world is represented in modern media throughout the 20th and 21st centuries? What are these developments and transformations telling us about the society and culture that produces and consumes those messages and the values attached to them? What can we learn from the understanding of these mechanisms and cultural products?

V. Advertising Antiquity

Advertising Antiquity aims to integrate and discuss different approaches to the conceptualization and practice of commercial, social and political communication, both in Classical Antiquity and in the modern world. The content of the issue is divided in three differentiated parts. The first one is dedicated to advertising in the ancient world, while the second one investigates the echoes and direct references to the ancient past in commercial advertising of the 20th and 21st centuries, with attention to different media of communication, from posters, to printed press, as well as TV and the internet. A third section is devoted to the long report and the contributions written by students of a University module that focused on History in advertising. This structure aims to offer to the reader a representative sample of studies that address, on the one hand, the usefulness of views and concepts borrowed from Marketing, Cultural and Social Studies for the better understanding of the language, targets and aims of ancient media of advertising. On the other hand, the contributions of the second and third part aim to demonstrate the significance of reaffirmed, reformulated and deconstructed forms of classical receptions and traditions in the encoded language of modern advertising.

The two contributions of the first block deal with two different media of ancient advertising: Athenian pottery, and Hellenistic funerary monuments. Katerina Volioti writes about the marketing language of Athenian figured pottery, with special attention to the so-called Leafless Group (ca. 510 to 480 BCE), a series of ceramic objects with a distinguished decoration, which were widely distributed across the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. The author establishes a link between the circulation of this black-figured pottery and the standardisation of its shapes and decorative patterns, and proposes

to read the latter as an effective form of visual advertising of the popular workshop operating in Athens. Antje Kuhle focuses her contribution on the communication strategies and the advertising qualities attributed to Hellenistic grave steles from Asia Minor that had the god Hermes as protagonist. In the author's view, the presence of the god on funerary monuments was not only linked with funerary ritual practices and believes but aimed, further, to signify the prosperous and successful life of the deceased, a message that could be read as a powerful open-ended advertisement of social and civic values. These two contributions demonstrate how the application of modern approaches and theories on the language, aims and mechanisms of advertising to the study of ancient societies can provide enlightening outcomes and new perspectives.

The second part of the issue is devoted to the use of Greco-Roman motives, themes and figures in the construction of successful brands, commercial and political campaigns associated to cultural and aesthetic trends and traditions. The interactions between political ideology and marketing dominates the in-depth study of the Spanish weekly magazine *Destino* by Jordi Cortadella and César Sierra. *Destino* was a very important medium that met the cultural interests and ideological aspirations of the bourgeoisie class during the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975). The frequent use of Greco-Roman imageries and topics in the commercial ads of the magazine covered a great variety of sectors and products: from beauty and cosmetic articles to wine and other alcoholic drinks, from household appliances to cars, from banks to insurance companies. The authors analyse the messaging and context of these adverts in relation to the changing political agenda of the country. Classical Antiquity, they argue, often embodies the prestige and reliability of the tradition, and the values attached to it, but it also provides referential models for a society in need of cultural openness.

The body-cult and its renewed protagonism in the commercial advertising of the 21st century centres the contribution of Fabien Bièvre-Perrin. The author discusses new values associated with ancient corporality transmitted by the visual advertising of brands such as Pepsi, Ferrero Rocher and Paco Rabanne, among others. Bièvre-Perrin considers the impact of new technologies and of the irruption of the neo-peplum as key factors in the rising of a new, stereotyped, aesthetics of the classical body promoted by the society of consumption. Helena González-Vaquerizo offers a far-reaching scrutiny of the resort to classical imagery and references in the

posters campaigns launched by the Greek National Tourism Organization in the 20th and 21st centuries. The author shows how the official campaigns that promote tourism in Greece have consistently transmitted an image of the country that combines natural paradises with unbeaten archaeological sites, and that emphasise the idea of the continuity of Classical Civilization in the modern nation. Virtues associated with Classical Greece, but also with Western Civilization are thus conveniently revamped into branding adverts that promise a world of pleasant and unique experiences for an audience familiar with these ideas. The merging between commercial and political purposes in the GNTO campaigns can be also followed in the next case study of this section.

Anja Wieber's article digs into the origins and history of a popular 20th century product and brand with a dark past, the 'Sparta Creme', created by the German company House 4711. The author's research stops in particular on the advertising campaigns of the crème during the Nazism, when it significantly contributed to the creation of an image of the ideal skin, health and lifestyle in harmonic connection with nature. This connection was reinforced by an idealization of the Spartan society and its celebration of the virtuous body, along with an interest in Greek classical sculpture in this period.

The essay of Tao T. Makeeff works as an appendix of this section. In line with 21st century ideas on male body-aesthetics also explored in Bièvre-Perrin's paper, the author examines the image of the hipster through the case study of the cosmetic brand HOMMER. Makeeff discusses the creation of a profitable market around this sub-cultural movement and its use of Greek imagery to reaffirm the identity of the sophisticated, cultivated and slightly 'classically' modern bearded man.

The third block of the issue begins with Filippo Carlà-Uhink's full-report of a module he taught in the academic year 2017-18 at the Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaften der Pädagogischen Hochschule Heidelberg. *(Alte) Geschichte in der Werbung* was an innovative course addressed to students of History from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Studies on the History of Advertising and, more specifically, of the uses of the past in Advertising are generally included in areas such as Public History and History Didactics, as well as within rising cross-disciplinary fields such as Cultural Studies, but rarely integrated in History and Classics University programmes. This under-representation is also palpable in historical research and Classical Reception studies. The module conducted by Carlà-Uhink aimed to fill this gap by

offering a comprehensive approach that combined theoretical perspectives and practical exercises that explored the presence and reworking of mythical and historical topics and imageries in modern advertising. These sessions provided the students with the necessary analytical tools to critically discuss specific case studies, both in oral presentations and written essays. These exercises allowed the students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the language, aims and targets of visual advertising in modern societies, as well as of its interactions with historical subjects linked to modern values, ideological and political movements, and cultural trends. The module's report includes a selection of the essays written by the students, summarised here.

In *The Appeal of Womanhood*, Vivian Colbert analyses the contrasting ideas of womanhood leading to different uses and aims of the imagery of ancient classical women in the political posters advertised by both the Suffragette and the contra-propaganda lead by the National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage. Jakob Fesenbeckh investigates the popular reception of ancient Gauls and the figure of Vercingetorix as a national hero in modern French history from different ideological angles. Particular attention is devoted to the use of this symbolic figure in the patriotic propaganda of the Vichy-Regime and its celebration of France's glorious ancient past. The 1980s is the period chosen by Sarah Heusch for her scrutiny of the advertisements of the Greek liqueur Metaxa for the German market. The connection between the product and Classical Greece is highlighted by the use of a personification of Athena. The goddess fulfils the marketing role of providing human consumers with a divine product usually restricted to the Olympians. Athena thus imprints Metaxa with the seal of distinction, a value often linked to alcoholic drinks. Johannes Valentin Korff focuses his contribution on the links between cultural memory and political advertising, and chooses for his work a specific poster promoted by the coalition Bündnis 90/Die Grünen for the regional campaign of the Nordrhein-Westfalen elections in 2017. The poster uses as theme the idea of 'Heimat' and is illustrated by an image of the statue of Arminius ('Hermann'), the hero of the Teotoburg battle against the Romans in 9 AD. Korff discusses the new meaning attributed by the campaign-designers to a 19th century monument traditionally associated with Nationalism. In *Aqua Römer*, Sarah Kupferschmied examines the marketing strategies of this German company that identifies the Romans of Germania Superior as the first satisfied consumers of its water, whilst it reinforces the idea of a continuity between

past and present. Martina Langhals' contribution draws upon a classical example of the use of Roman symbols in commercial branding. A 2009 campaign of the Italian coffee producer Lavazza is the case study of this paper, which focuses specifically on the motive of the Capitoline She-Wolf and the twins Romulus and Remus. A striking personification of the She-Wolf was chosen by the campaigners to signify the *Italianess* of the company at different levels, a way of fostering its already established international prestige. Joey Rauschenberger's exercise goes back to political posters and, specifically, to a campaign of the Bayerische-Volkspartei for the general elections of 1932. The eye-catching colourful poster – a typical trait of the very creative political propaganda in the Weimar Republic – proposes a confrontation between a human hero – a fighter for the law and the freedom, who dresses like a farmer, holds a sword and emulates Heracles, on the one hand, and a three-headed hydra, on the other. Two of the heads of the monster are labelled with the signs and names of the rival ideologies: Communism and Nazism. The Sparta-Creme is, again, protagonist in the essay of Jan-Felix Rieger, who explores its connection with the militarism of the Nazi-era and the idea of the 'perfect body' often attributed to ancient Spartan culture. The last essay by the Heidelberger students is signed by Alice Witt. This is the only contribution that deals with Prehistoric motives, as well as with a non-Western product and a non-printed medium: the TV-spots for the noodle-soup company Nissin.

All in all, the outcomes of these original works show the successful application of different methodologies learnt and practised during the course. The single case studies analysed by the students demonstrate the need to understand advertisements as complex cultural products and fundamental historical sources.

Overall, this collection of original articles has aimed to provide a representative sample of the enormous potential of an area of study still marginally explored in Classical and Historical Studies, despite its undeniable relevance for the history of culture, economy, politics and the arts of different periods and societies. One of the essential conclusions of *Advertising Antiquity* is the need to overcome limited forms of analysis that tend to undervalue advertising and ignore its potentiality as a complex system of communication. A look at how Greeks and Romans expressed their thoughts and ideas through and about advertising permit us to draw interesting parallels in the way different societies consider aspects such as the projection of ideals and promises, the clarity of messages, the use of

seductive language, the limits of honesty and the needs and expectations of targeted audiences. Advertising is ultimately a sophisticated world of marketed social and ideological values, and in this market, the past is always listed very high.

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Illustrations

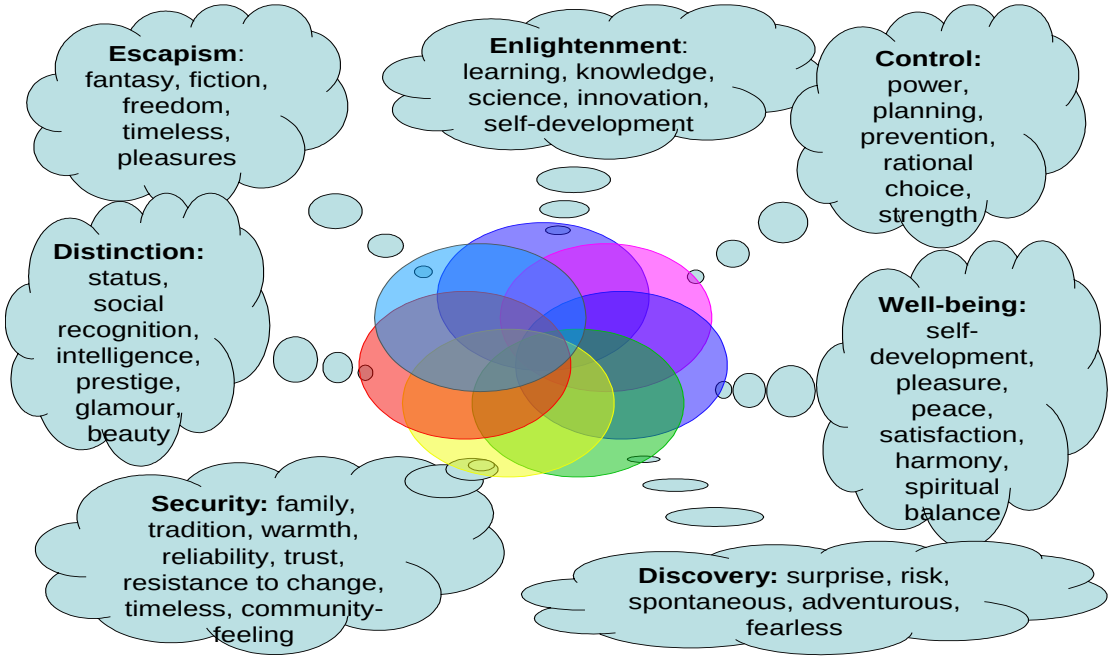

Fig. 1: Diagram showing the grouping of values and their interactions, partially based on the study by Subramanian (2017).

Fig. 2: Fresco of a bakery from a Pompeian house (insula VII.3.30). Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. Nr. 9071. Public domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sale_bread_MAN_Napoli_Inv9071_n01.jpg [18/05/2018].