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... ceremony was but devis'd at first
To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,
Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown;
But where there is true friendship, there needs none.
(William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, 1.2, 15-18)

Donatella Pallotti, Paola Pugliatti

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Editorial

'Adi 26 ... obris 1742 (1712?) d'ordine della Sig. N.N. feci questa memoria e la Sig.ra teneva il lume'.[1] We can imagine a woman, holding a candle or a lantern, and another person – a man –, engraving a few words on a wall or, more precisely, on a door jamb. The setting of this scene is a room on the ground floor of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, currently mainly used for temporary exhibitions (the Palace is today the home of the National Gallery of the Marche Region). The writing explains the circumstances of its production, which is rather unusual, even exceptional, I would say. It also explains its purpose: it was a record, a memento (of sexual intercourse, by the way). This is less uncommon: other wall writings, too, explicitly state that they were written to leave a memento: 'Adi 6 Agosto 1565 a memoria di un grave e giusto sdegno'.[2] In others such an aim is not explicit, but can be gleaned from a variety of features (the presence of a date, the content, sometimes also, at least in part, the form and the position). However, those writings and drawings which were not written to leave a (long-lasting) memento but for other purposes - for instance the lines that almost certainly were the scores of a game – also represent clues to past lives.

If scholars respond to the call for memory-keeping of these writings and drawings and, more generally, take them seriously, these almost forgotten scribblings that for centuries have been waiting to be photographed, copied, catalogued, filed and studied turn into an archive: a huge archive, in fact. The walls, columns, door frames and lintels of the Palace carry thousands of drawings, symbols, names, dates, sentences in Italian, Latin, French, German, Spanish ... Most of the drawings and writings have been carved using sharp instruments; they are literally graffiti. Others have been made using charcoal, red chalk, ink, pencil, ball-point pens. The oldest dates found so far are from the mid-fifteenth century: in the Terrazzo del Gallo it is possible to read, 'AD 1453'. This even predates the building of the palace as we see it today since, according to existing documents, architectural work began in 1454, although it proceeded by incorporating older buildings.

[1] 'Today 26 October 1742 (1712?) I wrote this memento by order of Lady N.N. and the Lady held the light'. Unless otherwise stated, translations are mine.

[2] 'Today 6 August 1565 in memory of a serious and just indignation'.

The most recent are from the present, and (obviously) were made evading the surveillance of the palace staff (Sarti 2009, 52; Sarti *et al.* 2017, 28).

Although some wall writings from the Palace were already mentioned in nineteenth-century guides of the city and in later studies,[3] systematic analysis started only in the late 1990s (Sarti 2017, 177-180) and is far from being complete, due to the huge number of writings and drawings (maybe as many as 5,000) and the problems arising from the difficulty of cataloguing them: there are often dozens of scribblings overlapping each other; because of this and other reasons (the vanishing of the material used for writing and drawing, the deterioration of the walls, refurbishing work), many of them are no longer readable or clearly visible. Furthermore, on walls now whitewashed there certainly were (and are) other writings and drawings, as shown where the paint has been removed.

Research carried out so far has resulted in the publication of some scholarly essays (Sarti 2007, 2009) and a short article published online addressing a larger audience (Sarti 2011), followed by an MA dissertation in Cultural Heritage Photography (Marraccini 2015). More recently, it has led to an exhibition,[4] the publication of its catalogue,[5] a virtual tour,[6] a conference that aimed at creating an arena where the case of Urbino could be compared with others and contextualised within research on what is generally defined as historical graffiti, which offered researchers from a different background but interested in the subject an opportunity for exchange and discussion. The conference, which focused on writings in palaces and castles on the one hand and on rocks on the other, paid particular attention to the variety of writings and, to a lesser extent, drawings, to the categories used to study them and to the state of the art of research on the subject. Furthermore, it discussed ways of enhancing the value of historical graffiti as cultural heritage and preserving historical sites from vandalism without completely interrupting the tradition of writing on them (*Pietre, castelli e palazzi da leggere nell'Europa medievale e moderna / Stones, Castles and Palaces to be Read in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Urbino, University of Urbino, 15-17 May 2017).[7] The reflections elaborated by the researches who attended the Conference can be considered a starting point for the project which is at the basis of the present volume.

The research on the wall writings and drawings of the Palazzo Ducale and its linked activities, which have also had a certain resonance in the mass-media (for instance Smargiassi 2017a, 2017b), have contributed and are contributing not only to making the graffiti of the Palace (better) known among researchers, but also to raising attention to them from outside the scholarly world. An entire section of the Lonely Planet tourist guide now deals with them;[8]

[3] Gherardi and Gherardi 1890, 85; Rossi and Peruzzi 1967; Batini 1968, 14; Olsen 1971, 48; Fontebuoni 1985, *passim*; Bernini, 2000, 42; Dal Poggetto 2003, 184.

[4] *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere / Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace*, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, 29 March – 21 Mai 2017, <http://www.gallerianazionalemarche.it/la-pietra-racconta-un-palazzo-da-leggere-29-marzo-21-maggio-2017/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/home/archives/9159>, accessed 10 January 2020. See Marraccini and Rachiele in this volume. The exhibition was held in the very rooms on whose walls many of the graffiti illustrated in the tables set up for that occasion are engraved, including the one mentioned at the beginning of this *Editorial* (and not included in the exhibition).

[5] The catalogue was published by the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Isia, Urbino and the Università degli Studi of Urbino; see Sarti *et al.* 2017.

[6] <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>, accessed 10 January 2020. See Rachiele in this special issue.

[7] The programme is available on <http://www.people.uniurb.it/RaffaellaSarti/Pietre,%20castelli%20e%20palazzi%20da%20leggere-Stones,%20Castles,%20Palaces%20to%20be%20read-Urbino,%2015-17.05.2017.pdf>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[8] 'Le cronache minime sui muri del Palazzo Ducale' ('The minimal chronicles on the walls of Palazzo Ducale', Bassi 2016, Kindle position 4950). In the Italian version of the Lonely Planet Guide, the description of a graffito

they are addressed as part of the activities organised by the Gallery for the children of the local schools;[9] some of them were discussed in a TV documentary on Urbino by the well-known Italian journalist and populariser Alberto Angela,[10] to mention only some examples.

While the case of Urbino has some peculiar features, especially thanks to the exhibition and the creation of the virtual tour, a growing interest towards wall writings and drawings – usually called graffiti – can be recorded in many other contexts, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas. Research is carried out by people ranging from simple lovers of the cultural heritage of their cities, towns, villages and the environment, to highly specialised researchers: archaeologists, palaeographers, historians, art historians, anthropologists, ethnologists, and so on. Several associations, websites, blogs, digital museums, have been created;[11] many conferences have been and are going to be organised,[12] and plenty of books, special issues of journals and collections of essays have been and are going to be published.[13]

Surfing among all these webpages and publications we realise that the label 'graffiti' is used to address an enormous variety of human expressions of creativity, religiosity, emotions, desire or need for communication, protest etc., from the most remote antiquity to the present, from prehistoric rock art to spray paint graffiti. Some authors deal with a variety of types in a single book, both popular and academic, reinforcing the idea that they all belong to this broad category.[14] For instance, the *Popular History of Graffiti* by Fiona McDonald, aims 'to look at as many aspects and types of graffiti as possible, from the distant past to the most up-to-date practices' (2013, Kindle position 53), and encompasses chapters ranging from prehistoric graffiti to 'Sidewalk Art, Reverse Graffiti, installations, and even performance and mixed

referring to the authorities in Urbino around 1660 is inaccurate; for a detailed description of it see Sarti 2017, 90-93. See also <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/10-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[9] Palazzo Ducale di Urbino 2018-2019, 34-35.

[10] *Meraviglie. La penisola dei tesori - Tra vette e colline: da Urbino al Monte Bianco*, Italy, season 2019, <https://www.raiplay.it/video/2019/04/Meraviglie-La-penisola-dei-tesori-Tra-vette-e-colline-da-Urbino-al-Monte-Bianco-a6d2c9f5-f64f-49fd-93a6-89bba967afca.html>, accessed 10 January 2020, from minute 17:20 onwards.

[11] <http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/>; <https://grga.fr/>; <https://graffiti.monuments-nationaux.fr/>; <http://www.memoiredesmurs.com/musee-graffiti-anciens.html>; <https://elgrafitohistorico.wordpress.com/>; <https://historischegraffiti.wordpress.com/author/pollyglotta/page/2/>, accessed 10 January 2020, etc.

[12] For instance, *Historische Graffiti als Quellen - Methoden und Perspektiven eines jungen Forschungsbereichs*, Institut für Klassische Archäologie der LMU München, 20-22 April 2017, <https://www.hgw.geschichte.uni-muenchen.de/aktuelles/archiv/archiv_termine/workshop_graffiti1/index.html> (see Lohmann in this volume); *Inquisizione e testimonio - Graffiti, iscrizioni e disegni delle carceri di Palermo*, Palermo, 14 June 2017, <https://www.unipa.it/Convegno-internazionale-Inquisizione-e-testimonio---Graffiti-iscrizioni-e-disegni-delle-carceri-di-Palermo/>; *Making Your Mark: The First National Symposium for the Study of Historic Graffiti*, The University of Southampton, 5 October 2019, <http://historicgraffiti.co.uk/>; *Stone canvas. Towards a better integration of Rock Art and Graffiti studies in Egypt and Sudan*, Cairo, IFAO and PCMA, 10-11 November 2019 <https://www.fasticongressuum.com/single-post/2019/04/13/CALL-30052019-Stone-canvas-Towards-a-better-integration-of-Rock-Art-and-Graffiti-studies-in-Egypt-and-Sudan---Cairo-Egypt>; *22nd International Glyptographic Conference, Stone stories across Europe: study and valorization of stones' marks and signs*, Larnaca, Cyprus, 29 June-4 July 2020, <https://www.academia.edu/39054630/extended_deadline_cfp_stone_stories_across_europe_study_and_valorization_of_stones_marks_and_signs>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[13] See Fleming, Castillo Gómez and Lohmann in this volume. Among the publications of the last few years (2015-2020) see Béroujon 2015; Giovè Marchioli 2015; Lovata and Olton 2016; Romero Medina 2015a; Castillo Gómez 2016; Reyes Téllez and Viñuales Ferreiro 2016; Mélard *et al.* 2016; Civale 2017, 2018; Fiume 2017a, 2017b; Bertamoni and Ghidotti 2018; Champion and Williams 2017; Demesticha *et al.* 2017; Dirven and van Gelder 2018; Errani and Palma 2018; Fiume and García-Arenal 2018a, 2018b; Lohmann 2018; Ragazzoli *et al.* 2018a; Sarti 2018; Schulz 2018; Stern 2018.

[14] One of the first books to propose a long-term history of graffiti was Reisner 1971.

media art' (2013, Kindle position 2218).[15] Cave painting, petroglyphs, *rongorongo* (pieces of wood with symbols and pictures on them) from Easter Island, the Rosetta Stone, chalk figures, writings by Russian soldiers on the German *Reichstag* from the Second World War and many others are all included in the book. At a different level, to mention another case, an academic collection such as Lovata and Olton's *Understanding Graffiti* gathers multidisciplinary studies also ranging from prehistory to the present. Their aim, in this case, 'is to show how insightful scholars from different disciplines and perspectives approach and understand graffiti. Rather than defining what graffiti is or is not' the fifteen chapters 'demonstrate the varieties of contemporary practice in analyzing the expression (known as graffiti)' (2015, 11). While the book has chapters on prehistoric Peru and anti-nuclear activists (see Pozorski and Pozorski 2015; Beck *et al.* 2015, to mention only two), it is also interesting to approach the issue from a historical perspective, trying to understand where the term graffiti comes from. 'Graffiti' spread to other languages from Italian. In Italian 'graffito' means 'carved' or 'engraved' and was originally used as an adjective. In 1840, for instance, Achille Gennarelli published a discourse on graffiti Etruscan mirrors, i.e. mirrors on which words were engraved (Gennarelli 1840). As a noun, graffiti was used at least as early as the 1840s-1850s to describe wall writings and drawings of ancient Pompeii. In 1841, Francesco Maria Avellino, dealing with such matters, used it as a noun in some passages, although still employing it mainly as an adjective.[16] Some years later, Raffaele Garrucci in a sense canonised its use as a noun, entitling his rather influential book *Graffiti de Pompéi: inscriptions et gravures tracées au stylet* (1856).[17] As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, and possibly even earlier, the term was also employed in relation to carved writings and drawings from the Middle Ages (Coulton 1915; Styger 1915, 106; Fasiolo 1915, 206) and Early Modern times (Styger 1915, 106);[18] then it later came to describe those dating from later times.[19]

[15] 'Prehistoric Graffiti' (chapter 1); 'Graffiti in Ancient Civilizations' (chapter 2); 'Medieval Graffiti' (chapter 3); 'Graffiti Up Until the Twentieth Century' (chapter 4); 'Modern Day Graffiti' (chapter 5); 'Street Art and Urban Artists' (chapter 6); 'Beyond Traditional Graffiti' (chapter 7).

[16] See Avellino 1841, 8: 'Questa visiera pure sembra che siesi accennata nel nostro graffito pompejano' ('This visor also seems to be outlined in our Pompeian graffito').

[17] Garrucci had started to focus on these writings because he aimed at establishing the origins of cursive script. He explained in his book that the first inscriptions he defined graffiti had been documented in the *Journal des fouilles* in 1765 and provided the readers with a detailed survey of the later studies which recorded and analysed some of them: 'Les premières données relatives aux *graffiti* de Pompéi se trouvent dans le *Journal des fouilles* (1). Ce journal publié par les ordres du gouvernement était formé des procès-verbaux que le préposé aux fouilles devait adresser chaque jour et chaque semaine au ministre de la maison du roi ... La première inscription au stylet, rapportée dans le *Journal des fouilles*, se trouve dans le n° du 18 octobre 1765: cette date précède de vingt-huit ans celle de la première publication spéciale concernant les inscriptions *cursives* de Pompéi, puisque celle-ci parut à Nuremberg, ainsi que nous le verrons, en 1792 et 1793' (1856, 8). ('The first data on graffiti in Pompeii can be found in the *Journal des fouilles*. This journal, published on the orders of the government, was made up of the minutes that the official responsible for the excavations had to send daily and weekly to the minister of the king's house ... The first stylus-made inscription reported in the *Journal des fouilles* can be found in the number of 18 October 1765: that is twenty-eight years earlier than the first publication focussing on the cursive inscriptions of Pompeii, since this one appeared in Nuremberg, as we shall see, in 1792 and 1793'). According to Lohmann (2018, 4-5), the word 'graffiti' started to be used in the eighteenth century; Milnor 2014, 21 stresses the role of Garrucci in popularising it. See also Ragazzoli *et al.* (2018a, 1-2). Pompeii's wall writings and drawings are the object of numerous studies; besides those already mentioned, see for instance, Canali and Cavallo 1991; Weeber 1996; Baird and Taylor 2010; Hunink 2013.

[18] On medieval graffiti see for instance Pritchard 1967; Trentin 2010-2011; Miglio and Tedeschi 2012; Tedeschi 2012, Champion 2015; Champion and Williams 2017.

[19] Kraack and Lingens 2001; Tedeschi 2014. For publications of the years 2015-2020 see note 13; among earlier publications not yet mentioned see for instance Pugliese Carratelli 1997; Gimeno Blay and Mandingorra Llavata 1997; Fleming 2001; Northoff 2005; Guichard 2014.

Furthermore, while the first uses of the term referred to Italy, in later times it was employed to refer to other geographical contexts all around the world.[20]

In the numerous publications now available we can distinguish different strands of study according to the location of the writings and drawings (graffiti in churches and other religious sites;[21] graffiti in palaces, castles, towers;[22] graffiti in prisons;[23] graffiti on rocks;[24] graffiti on trees (see Kruschwitz 2010; Lovata 2015); latrinalia (see Meade 2015; Trahan 2016), etc.; according to the subject represented – the studies on graffiti of ships, for instance, are particularly numerous;[25] according to specific subjects (pilgrims, prisoners, tourists, soldiers, students, scholars, political activists, shepherds, women)[26], purposes (tagging, protesting, expressing love, etc.) and circumstances, such as the World Wars or the Nazi persecution of Jews.[27] Furthermore, we can distinguish studies on graffiti as a type of writing (or drawing) to be understood within the history of writing (see Castillo Gómez in this volume), and graffiti as a source for a huge variety of different themes, from religiosity to political protest, from court life to changing use of certain spaces,[28] to mention only a few. As any other historical source, graffiti can be studied from many different perspectives in order to investigate a virtually unlimited number of topics.

Until the nineteenth century, our ancestors did not have any particular word to distinguish what today is called (historical) graffiti from other types of writing and drawing. As a consequence, the (etic) categories of historical graffiti used by scholars does not have any relationship with the (emic) categories used by those who made them.[29] But, by now, graffiti has become a common word: scholars studying modern and contemporary graffiti on the one hand and those who made/make them on the other are likely to share more or less the same notion of graffiti. On the other hand, the success of the notion of graffiti and the practices it refers to is likely to lead to anachronism while studying the past: because features of contemporary graffiti are likely to be 'projected' on historical ones. One of these aspects is graffiti's legitimacy, an aspect I shall discuss below.[30]

[20] See, for instance, Crone and Moreh 2000; Romero Medina 2015a; Stern 2018.

[21] Palmucci Genolini 1886; Santarelli 1998; Kraack 2002; Persic 2002; Plesch 2002, 2005, 2010; Biganzoli and Pizzigoni 2006; Dimitriadis *et al.* 2006; Schmitz-Esser 2006; Owen 2010; Trentin 2010-2011; Champion 2015; Hollis 2017; Bertamoni and Ghidotti 2018.

[22] Borettaz 1995; Bruzzone and Melis 1998; Passini 2001; Carosi 2003; Pucci 2006; González Gozalo 2015; Motte and Mélard 2015; Mélard *et al.* 2016; Barrera Maturana 2016; Schulz 2018 and Schulz's article in this volume; Schmitz-Esser in this volume.

[23] Lombroso 1888; Pitrè and Sciascia 1999; Bruzzone and Melis 1998; Prosperi 1999; Pugliese 2002; Nini 2002, 2007; Candau and Hameau 2004; Bucherie 2006; Carletti 2010; Giovè Marchioli 2015; Civale 2017; Fiume 2017a, 2017b; Civale 2018; Fiume and García-Arenal 2018a, 2018b.

[24] Several articles in Mannoni *et al.* 2006; Stagno 2013; Bazzanella and Kezich 2013; Bazzanella in this volume, with further references.

[25] Bucherie and González 1998; Rivera-Collazo 2006; Parizzi 2014; Demesticha *et al.* 2017; González Gozalo 2017, etc.

[26] For some examples from a rich literature, on pilgrims see Kraack 2002; Wozniak 2014 and note 21; on prisoners see note 23; on tourists and travellers, see below (*infra*, 15-16); on artists see Guichard 2014; Koering and Pludermacher 2014; on soldiers see the graffiti left in Rome by German landsknecht soldiers from Charles V's imperial army during the Sacking of Roma in 1527 in Schmitz-Esser's article in this volume (figure 7), Guichard 2014, 41-42, Sherer 2019; Polli and Cortese 2007, Scrimali and Scrimali 2007; Sarti 2017, 112-117; on students and scholars, see Errani and Palma 2018; on political activists see Ciappelli 2012; on shepherds see Bazzanella in this volume. As for women, studies on latrinalia especially focus on differences between female and male graffiti, see, for instance, Meade 2015 and Trahan 2016.

[27] Pugliese 2002; Polli and Cortese 2007; Scrimali and Scrimali 2007; Felix 2019.

[28] On court life see Sarti, Schmitz-Esser and Schulz in this volume; on graffiti as evidence of changing use of rooms Sarti 2009.

[29] Pike (1967) defined *etic* the categories of the observers of a social group; *emic* those used within a social group.

[30] For an interesting discussion of this issue see Champion 2017b.

As mentioned before, 'graffito' literally means carved: the common feature of the writings and drawings analysed in many studies is exactly the technique of their production, whereas the location on walls or the kind of support is not always considered essential: we have studies on graffiti carved on ceramics, wood, rocks, trees.[31] On the contrary, what is common in other studies is the location on walls and public places (both inside buildings and in the open air), whereas the technique used might not be crucial, and writings and drawings carved, painted and made with other materials are likely to be dealt with together.[32] Today, common understanding of the word generally highlights the location.

While several authors have engaged with defining graffiti, for instance distinguishing them from masons' marks,[33] a feature often considered important to label some writings and drawings as graffiti is their unofficial or even illegal character. Such a feature, too, is generally considered crucial by (more or less popular) current dictionaries and encyclopedias. According to *Lexico*, graffiti are 'writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place'[34]; according to *Wikipedia* 'writing or drawings made on a wall or other surface, usually as a form of artistic expression, without permission and within public view'[35]. In a similar perspective, some scholars have suggested the word 'graffiti' be used in relation to writings and drawings unauthorised by the owner of the building or wall where they were left, or even made against his/her will, thus limiting this definition to signs which, as such, regardless of their content, were the outcome of transgressive, undisciplined, insubordinate acts, or even a contestation of power. On the contrary, the definition of 'inscription' should be reserved to writings with an official character, such as official headstones and epigraphs.[36]

On the one hand, such a distinction may be useful; on the other, however, the same scholars who have contributed to articulate it, stress that it is not always applicable. They mention, for instance, the case of priests who allowed the faithful to write and draw in churches,[37] and of hotel keepers who considered the scribblings on the walls of their hotels made by their customers as useful advertisements, especially if the latter were important people (Kraack and Lingens 2001, 23, 26). These writings were not official but they were not unauthorised either.

The applicability of the aforementioned dichotomy depends on specific contexts. Let us go back to the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino. As mentioned, some writings were made recently, for instance 'Mirco 2000' (carved on a door frame opening onto the Palace's main courtyard)[38] or the tag left by one Lucia and dated 2016: according to Italian law, they are not only unauthorised, but also liable to be punished as a criminal offences (Sarti 2017, 28, 34).[39] Thus, they fit into

[31] As written by Miglio and Tedeschi (2012, 606), proper graffiti were technically carved with a sharp tool.

[32] Oliver and Neal write that 'From Classical Greece and Rome ... to post-Revolutionary France ... to nineteenth century Puerto Rico ... graffiti adorned the walls of public places' but also acknowledge, when referring to the studies by Juliet Fleming, that 'the prohibition against wall writing broadly accepted today was not necessarily shared in Elizabethan England: in this context the line between texts attached to interior walls and texts inscribed on them was not a hard and fast distinction' (2010, 1).

[33] Coulton 1915, 53; Owen 2010, 39. It is true, however, that both masons' marks and 'spontaneous' graffiti are the object of glyptography, which focuses on engraved stones, see Romero Medina 2015a, and the webpage of the Centre International de Recherches Glyptographiques (C.I.R.G.), <http://www.cirg.be/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[34] <https://www.lexico.com/definition/graffiti>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[35] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graffiti>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[36] Kraack and Lingens 2001, 9-10. On this issue see Fleming and Castillo Gómez in this volume.

[37] Bucherie 1984, 2, does not consider votive images as graffiti because they had an official character.

[38] See <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/2-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[39] Art. 639 of the Italian Penal Code :'Deturpamento e imbrattamento di cose altrui' ('Disfiguring and smearing someone's property'). See, in this volume, the essay by Schmitz-Esser.

the graffiti category as defined by Kraack and Lingens and other authors. Yet today many people contest that graffiti are illegal: 'If graffiti encompasses only unsolicited text and images, then where does cave art fit in? Or pieces that have been commissioned by school or city councils? And who should say if graffiti should be illegal, painted over, or not? And in the same vein, we must ask if the graffiti that sells for thousands of dollars through art galleries is really, in effect, graffiti or some new art form' (McDonald 2013, Kindle position 43). Social life is conflictual and people have different views and ideas. Although controversial, the boundary between licit and illicit writing and drawing practices is not the same today as it used to be centuries ago. No doubt, in some cases, wall writing and drawing were stigmatised in the past, too.

For instance, the Dominican friar from Ulm, Felix Fabri (c. 1441-1502), in his *Evagatorium* (an account of the author's journey to Palestine in 1483-1484) harshly denounced nobles visiting holy places who left signs with their names and coats of arms, or wrote and drew their names and coats of arms on the walls, or carved them on columns with sharpened metal tools, in perpetual memory, Felix deemed, not of their nobility but their fatuity.[40] As shown by Antonio Castillo Gómez in this volume, in early modern Europe stigmatisation and repression of wall writing and drawing was not uncommon. Frequently, however, people were stigmatised or even punished because of what they wrote and drew – i.e. because of content considered offensive, transgressive or heretical by the authorities (see, for instance, Evangelisti 1992, 2018) – rather than for the simple fact of writing, drawing, scribbling on walls or other surfaces.

In many contexts, writing on mainly vertical surfaces rather than on paper was very common. Fleming (2001) has stressed that in Elizabethan England, which had no paper mills, paper had to be imported and was rather scarce, whereas there was no lack of walls and other surfaces where one could write. Furthermore, preparing ink and pen was laborious. As a consequence, a large share of everything that was written was recorded in charcoal, chalk, soot, red ochre, pencil, or with nails, knives, or other sharp tools on walls, doors, windows and furniture, both in public and domestic spaces. In fact, it was very common for people to write on the walls of their own houses and, in their books, some authors, notably Thomas Tusser in 1570, even suggested that readers copy some parts of them on the walls of their homes. This established an exchange, a dialogue, a circulation between walls, books and other surfaces: sentences were likely to be copied from walls on paper and then on another wall. These writings offered content to be read and were at the same time wall decorations. A genre consisting of short texts intended to be copied on a support (*posies)* also existed. All this created a variety of writings that makes any simple opposition (paper-wall; licit-illicit; outside-inside; etc.) impossible.

At first glance, in the case of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, the opposition 'inscription' vs. 'graffiti' works better than in the houses described by Fleming, since elegant inscriptions in capital letters made by skilled stonecutters are present all around the Palace and appear very different from the set of writings and drawings on the walls, columns, doorframes, etc. (Sarti 2017, 13-26). Yet, looking carefully at the scribblings, one realises that at least two were very likely written by dukes, several refer to the life of the ducal family and dozens provide readers with names, dates and sometimes other circumstances about the Papal legates and vice-legates, i.e. those who, after the inclusion of Urbino in the Papal State in 1631, were, so to say, the masters of the house. Such writings were certainly not made without the permission of the persons who had authority over the Palace. On the other hand, there are some well written ones that have a rather official character (as the one announcing the victory in the 1683 battle

[40] Fabri 1843, vol. 2, 94. See Kraack 1997, 343-353 and Kraack and Lingens 2001, 225.

of Vienna against the Turks).[41] The very abundance of writings and drawings makes one think that they could not have been made in secret; on the contrary, some might have been encouraged by the *domini* of the Palace.[42]

Interestingly, some writings clearly tried to reproduce inscriptions in capital letters,[43] or are introduced by formulas used in official inscriptions, such as 'D.O.M.' ('Deo Optimo Maximo') or 'A.P.R.M.' ('Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam'), and/or have a frame, as if the writer wanted to make them similar to a headstone or a tablet: in a sense, they were 'rudimentary epigraphs'.[44] All in all, the case of Urbino contributes to undermining the opposition official inscriptions vs. unauthorised graffiti, showing a wide range of writings instead: official epigraphic inscriptions in capital letters, 'spontaneous' writings made by the masters of the house, 'spontaneous' writings made by a large variety of other people. Such 'spontaneous' writings (and drawings) can be defined as graffiti only if no transgressive intention or meaning is attached to the term 'graffiti' and if it is used only to distinguish such writings from those made by professional stonemasons.[45] Some writings and drawings were certainly rather transgressive because of their content or position but not all of them were, and not as writing and drawing acts.

On the other hand, in addition to categorising them as graffiti, other categories can be used to pinpoint the characteristics of much writing in the Palace, notably that of 'scritture esposte' ('exposed writing') introduced by Armando Petrucci and defined as 'any type of writing designed to be used in open or closed spaces, which allows for a plural (in-group, massive) reading, from a distance, of a text written on an exposed surface'. This category therefore includes writing with a conscious function of exhibition, which must be sufficiently large and present the message in a clear (verbal and/or visual) way (1986, xx).[46] Using it implies placing the writings analysed in a different set from graffiti, only partially overlapping with the latter. As shown by Castillo Gómez in this volume, exposed writing covers a huge variety of writing, from monumental epigraphy to ephemeral advertisements, from edicts to infamous libels, to mention only some examples.[47]

Archaeology has shown that on the walls of ancient Rome or Pompeii there were plenty of written signs: people's names, commemorations of events, advertisements for shops, erotic and obscene graffiti, complaints about corrupt officials, electoral writing, protests against unpopular emperors and so on. This writing might have a formal similarity with epigraphic writing, for instance as far as highlighting techniques, usually done with minium, are concerned.[48] While in the Middle Ages there was initially a decline in literacy, the reversal of this trend led to the spreading of writing. Walls, columns, monuments but also rocks, stones, trees, as well as

[41] Sarti 2017, 128-130; see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/44-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[42] See for instance <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/10-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[43] An example is 'Niclaus Müler von Ruswil 1766', written on the lintel of a door in the main entrance; see Sarti 2017, 161-164; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/22-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[44] Troncarelli 1997 ('epigrafi rudimentali'). For some examples see Sarti 2017, 81-83, 161-163; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/25-2/>; <www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/44-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[45] This is the case, for instance, made by Romero Medina 2015b, 37, who is interested in distinguishing graffiti from signs made by stonemasons.

[46] As noted by Castillo Gómez in this volume, there is an English version of this work by Petrucci, but it does not include the preface to the Italian edition, where 'scritture esposte' are defined. I borrow the English translation from Castillo Gómez's article, which focuses on exposed writing.

[47] See also, for instance, Evangelisti 1992, 2018; Niccoli 2010; De Vivo 2012.

[48] Troncarelli 1997 and *supra*, note 17. In such a context, too, the opposition 'inscription' vs. 'graffiti' is not applicable. However, Canali and Cavallo 1991, 6-7 distinguish 'free writing' from institutional writing (both public and private), i.e. on monuments, mosaics, celebrative epigraphs, milestones, gromatic stones, gravestones, *tabulae* with treaties, constitutions, *senatus consulta* and decrees.

benches and other pieces of furniture increasingly became locations where people could write and actually wrote tags, devotions, advertisements, defamations, slanders, protests, obscenities, declarations of love, and much more (Borettaz 1995, 5). Armies of people with different levels of literacy and writing abilities left written signs of their existence both in open air and interior spaces, from the pilgrims and faithful who wrote in churches to the shepherds who left their marks on rocks, as those from the Fiemme Valley analysed in this volume by Marta Bazzanella, from the prisoners who covered the walls of their jail with writings and drawings to the tourists and artists who tagged the monuments they visited, to the students who 'soiled' the benches and walls of their schools, to quote but a few examples (see notes 21-26).

A good proportion of this writing certainly fits in the category of 'scritture esposte' which, articulated around an explicit or implicit search for readers, allows us to understand what is common to otherwise different written expressions. However, not everything written on a wall, stone, rock etc. can be considered a case of exposed writing (Sarti 2009, 2017; Miglio and Tedeschi 2012). Let us go back to Urbino: in addition to writing that can be read from a certain distance and has evidently been written in order to be read, there are many other examples that are small, only superficially carved and/or located in hidden places: as in the case of the Ludwigsburg Palace analysed in this volume by Daniel Schulz, many are 'verborgene Spuren' ('hidden traces'). Furthermore, some appear as intimate writing that did not address any particular reader but rather implied a dialogue with, or an analysis of, oneself: 'Io non mi arritrovai / mai piu tanto / malenconico'.[49]

In the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, as in many other historical sites, visitors and tourists have left traces of their presence. In a sense, also the writing by the Papal legates and vice-legates, who were short-term *domini* of the Palace, can be seen as a case of the so-called 'I-was-here-syndrome' that led travellers to leave their names or other traces in the places they visited (Reisner 1971, 10; Kraack 1997, 379 and *passim*). While such custom is rooted in a distant past, and thousands-year-old visitors' and tourists' graffiti are attested in ancient Egypt (Peden 2001), the alleged syndrome had peculiar features in different periods. In the Middles Ages and Early Modern times, many people shared the idea that travelling was a source of honour (Kraack 1997, 6-7). The nobles travelled a great deal and left signs of their presence in the places they visited, generally attaching their coats of arms painted on wood or paper, or engraving them, alongside their names, on the walls of hotels, sanctuaries, castles, palaces, baths and universities. Other visitors noted and often appreciated them (Kraack 1997). In the Castle of Issogne, in the Aosta Valley, from the seventeenth century onwards the number of graffiti declined and this, according to Omar Borettaz (1995, 47), testifies as to the loss of importance of the castle, by then less frequently visited than in previous times. As already noted, the aforementioned practices were sometimes stigmatised, but stigmatisation was not very common and the custom continued until the seventeenth century. Over that century, however, according to Detlev Kraack, both the features of trips and the location of the coats of arms changed, the latter especially thanks to the widening use of the so called *album amicorum,* a volume that travellers brought with them where they recorded or had recorded the coats of arms and names of, and other information about the important people they visited (1997, 334-343, 375, 381-382). While such books were common among German travellers (Rosenheim 1910; Rosenthal 2009), their increased use did not imply that *élite* voyagers suddenly gave up the well-rooted tradition of leaving signs of their presence in the places they visited. Although the custom of attaching or engraving one's coat of arms de-

[49] 'I never felt so melancholy'; Sarti 2017, 57-59, see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/18-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

clined, the practice of tagging monuments with one's name, however, did not (some examples in Sarti 2007), and became more popular among people who were not noble, thanks to increasing literacy. On 8 December 1615, for instance, Pietro Della Valle, a member of Rome's patriciate who travelled in Turkey, the Middle East, Egypt, Persia and India, wrote in his journal that he had visited the pyramids not far from Cairo, had climbed on the top of one of the biggest and had engraved his name in the stone.[50] While in Egypt many others, both long before Della Valle and after him, tagged the pyramids, back in Rome travellers did the same on the local monuments. Recent research shows the huge evidence of tags and dates on monuments, frescoes and paintings in the city between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Guichard 2014).

According to Kraack (1997), the spread of the practice among people who were not noble was matched by its growing stigmatisation. The issue of the licit or illicit character of this writing is multifaceted. The growing literacy certainly increased the numbers of (potential) writers. Furthermore, the introduction of the movable-type printing press increasingly (but slowly) associated public writing with printed matter, whereas (licit) handwriting, in the long-run, was confined to the expression of private issues (Troncarelli 1997, 458). Official writing in public spaces (signs, plates, tablets, posters etc.) were less often made by hand, and more frequently produced by specialists in places other than those in full view. This transformation of the urban environment has contributed to marginalising hand-made writings. Finally, during early modern times, authorities often increased their control over the different types of writings, trying to discipline them (Béroujon 2015).

Yet, while there is certainly a difference between the present and the past, transformations appear to be complex. First, it is not necessary to be literate in order to scribble or draw on a wall: many graffiti are signs, symbols and drawings. Furthermore, as shown by the case of sixteenth-century Paris street walls - the proliferation of writing of all types (inscriptions, wall posters, shop, workshop, tavern signs, libelles etc.) was likely to take place when many city dwellers were still illiterate (Béroujon 2015, 33). Furthermore, both in the case of the writings made by the shepherds studied by Bazzanella and in those of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino analysed by Sarti, as early as the sixteenth century rock/wall writing did not seem a privilege reserved to the elite. In Urbino, both the writings made by servants or guards and those made by the masters of the house (legates and vice-legates, from 1631) are more numerous in the seventeenth and eighteenth century than at earlier times. Thus, the growing number of graffiti made by the staff cannot be interpreted as a sign of diffusion of graffiti writing among the lower classes corresponding to the fact that it was no longer practised by the elites.

There is evidence of the absence of stigmatisation elsewhere, too. Lady Montagu, to quote only an example from the eighteenth century, writing about the Castle of Fontainebleau in 1718, noted that 'The late King passed some months every year at this seat, and all the rocks around it, by the pious sentences inscribed on them, shew the devotion in fashion at this court, which, I believe, died with him; at least I see no exterior marks of it at Paris, where all peoples' thoughts seem to be on present diversion' (1767, 268). About a century later, in 1816, Bernardino Drovetti wrote his name and the date on the Egyptian temple of Dendur; he certainly

[50] Della Valle 1996: '[Martedì] 8 dicembre. Andai a veder le piramidi ... Giunsi finalmente alle piramidi più vicine dove tra l'altre ci si è una delle più grandi, e sono lontano dal Cairo dodici o quindici miglia in circa … Salij in cima, dove nella parte che guarda verso Italia, cioè a Ponente e Maestro, lasciai scritto il mio nome intagliato nella pietra' ('[Tuesday] 8 December. I went to see the pyramids … At last I reached the nearest pyramids, where one of the largest stands, and they are at a distance of about 12 to 15 miles from Cairo … I climbed to the top, where on the side facing Italy, that is west-north-west, I engraved my name on the stone', Sarti 2007, 424).

was not someone who disregarded the conservation of the cultural heritage, although with a western-centric perspective, being the founder of the Egyptian Museum of Turin (Sarti 2007, 424-425, figure 13). On the other hand, the name of one of his friends, the explorer Carlo Vidua, deeply engraved on many monuments, irritated Gustave Flaubert, who stigmatised this custom and did not write his own name on the Egyptian monuments he visited.[51]

Commenting on another of Flaubert's letters also condemning the practice of writing one's name on historical sites, Champion argues that the French writer

> was expressing a growing sense of concern and frustration at the proliferation of such inscriptions at ancient sites. At the very same time that serious academic study was being directed at earlier inscriptions, most notably at ancient Roman sites such as Pompeii, the increasing number of modern inscriptions was, in Flaubert's eyes, damaging and defacing the monuments themselves. Still, Flaubert was merely articulating the concern of 'his' age. (2017b, 18-19)

According to Champion, it is possible to pinpoint a chronology of changing attitudes towards graffiti: 'in the late medieval and through to the beginning of the early modern period there is no evidence of condemnation of graffiti as a physical act, with the only criticism being at the content of individual inscriptions, or the context in which they are created'. In his view, a shift took place by the early seventeenth century, when creating graffiti in an ecclesiastical setting began to attract criticism, if not condemnation. On the contrary, 'the creation of graffiti inscriptions outside the ecclesiastical setting, and most particularly on historic monuments, largely fails to attract any critical literature until well into the nineteenth century', when 'the condemnation of graffiti, as an entire genre, becomes what may be considered universal' (2017b, 25). While this chronology may be useful, the pace and features of the historical transformation in the attitudes toward graffiti may not have been the same everywhere and needs to be identified for each specific case (also considering that in any particular context there were people with different, often conflictual, views).

The case of Urbino, where there are tags and inscriptions very probably made by nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists, professionals, teachers, once again contributes to clarify the complexity of historical change (Sarti 2017, 166-169). Similarly, in the Oratorio of San Sebastiano in Arborio, a small town on the Italian Piedmontese Plain, there are graffiti bearing dates ranging from 1531 to 1889. As noted by Véronique Plesch who has studied them, 'graffiti making was carried on for at least four centuries and therefore must have been at least tolerated by the authorities' (2010, 157). The Oratorio is similar to many other churches and chapels, all around Europe, where historical graffiti are frequently present. In England, where systematic analysis on medieval churches – 'church by church, county by county' – has been undertaken 'to discover the early graffiti inscriptions that lie hidden in plain sight upon the walls', tens of thousands of inscriptions have been catalogued and recorded. 'They had meaning to those who made them, and an intended function that went far, far beyond modern preconceptions of vandalism and mark making'. They were largely 'medieval prayers made solid in stone' (Champion 2017a, 2).

[51] On 22 April 1850 Flaubert wrote a letter to his mother stigmatising Vidua: 'Nous lisons dans les temples les noms des voyageurs; cela nous paraît bien grêle et bien vain. – Nous n'avons mis les nôtres nulle part. – Il y en a qui ont dû demander trois jours à être gravés, tant c'est profondément entaillé dans la pierre. Quelques-uns se retrouvent partout avec une constance de bêtise sublime. – Il y a un nommé Vidua, surtout, qui ne nous quitte pas' (Flaubert 1850) ('We read the names of voyagers in the temples; this seems to me to be rather frail and vain. Nowhere did we write our names. There are names whose writing must have taken three days, so deeply are they carved in the stone. Some are found everywhere, with a constance that appears to be sublime stupidity. There is one named Vidua, above all, who is always with us'). See also Sarti 2007, 424-425.

While the Arborio graffiti are still there, in the nearby chapel of Santa Maria dei Campi in Lenta (also called Madonna di Campagna), recent restoration rendered several graffiti that could be read until a few years ago illegible (Plesch 2010, 143). From a (still dominant) art history and conservation of heritage perspective, they belong to the category of anthropic damage. Therefore, in order to restore the artwork, they must be removed. This may be surprising, if we pay attention to the fact that Garrucci, who, as mentioned, played a crucial role in elaborating the notion of graffiti, considered them as testimonies of the past that should be catalogued and studied, and worried about their degradation: in a sense he saw his own work of collection and transcription as a way to record them before they disappeared.[52] Ancient graffiti tended 'to be discreet and unobtrusive'; they were usually small and did 'not run across decorative elements; rather, they show a certain respect for wall decoration and for the space taken up by other graffiti'. Furthermore, 'leading citizens and slaves, male and female, inhabitants and visitors to the town all engaged in writing and reading graffiti' (Benefiel 2018, 102). Nonetheless, many scholars already in the nineteenth century considered them less important than other writings and associated them with children and lower-class people (Lohmann 2018, 39-41). The spreading of the word 'graffiti' in the common language intermingled with its growing connotation as transgressive graphic acts and vandalism, although, as mentioned, ideas on the subject were and are different.

However, the growing interest in historical graffiti also calls for yet another shift in attitude: according to a growing number of scholars and researchers, graffiti, too, are part of the historical heritage, and must be preserved, catalogued, studied, shown to a larger public, as it has been done, in Urbino, with the exhibition 'Stone with a story: Reading the Palace' (2017) and the associated virtual tour. As explained in this volume by Manuele Marraccini and Valentina Rachiele, modern photography, new technologies of multimedia communication and interaction design offer the opportunity to perceive the artifacts in a way that would not be possible in a traditional exhibition, providing an enhanced understanding of the execution, writing and/or drawing process and meaning of each specific example of graffiti.[53] We hope that this monographic issue of *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, too, will contribute to boost the value of historical graffiti as part of our cultural heritage.

But if historical graffiti are valuable traces of past lives, thoughts, emotions, what about contemporary ones? Especially if they are created on monuments and historical sites, they are considered vandalic acts, although many people see them, on the contrary, as street art. While it is not possible to deal with such a complex discussion in this *Editorial*, it is worth mentioning that in some historical sites new solutions are currently found to preserve monuments without completely interrupting the old tradition of leaving a tag, writing one's name or a comment on them. In Florence, in particular, as explained by Alice Filipponi, to protect the immense patrimony of the Opera del Duomo (The Cathedral Fabric), a new medium has been created by means of which tourists can state 'I was here!'. It is called *Autography*. Tablets are available to tourists before they walk up Giotto's Bell Tower and Brunelleschi's Dome; tourists can write on the tablet, choosing the means and support, what they would otherwise have written on the

[52] 'Très-peu de ces inscriptions au trait ont été transportées dans le musée Bourbon, le reste est demeuré à Pompéi; mais de dire ce qui en existe encore, c'est ce que je ne pourrais faire. L'enduit des murailles se dégrade tous les jours et sa chûte entraîne celle des inscriptions' (Garrucci 1856, 1-2, 'Very few of these line inscriptions have been transported to the Bourbon museum; the others remain in Pompeii; but I cannot say which ones are still there. The plaster on the walls deteriorates every day, and its fall also implies the fall of the inscriptions').

[53] See also Marraccini *et al.* 2017; Tortoioli Ricci 2017; Salvucci 2017.

monument. In a sense, the application 'transforms vandalism in the "real world" into testimony and memory in the "digital world" ' (Filipponi 2017, 1). Furthermore, writing and comments by tourists are published in paper books, creating a new, interesting connection between walls - in this case digital ones - and paper, and, in a sense, establishing strong links between different types of writing that the spreading of the term graffiti had contributed to weakening.[54]

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Part One

Preliminary Statements

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Graffiti Futures

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Abstract

Historical graffiti survives in much greater quantities than has hitherto been understood. For those with eyes to see it, the technologies to restore it to visibility, and the patience to learn to read it, graffiti can be found everywhere. Graffiti is also a phenomenon of current consequence that continues to produce and constitute archives of immense historical importance. But there is nothing singular about it, and its global history – which might be said to run from Upper Paleolithic hand stencils (40,000 CE) to the present – could never be written. For those who study graffiti are quickly confronted with the contingency of our own concepts: starting with 'writing', and including 'art', 'public/private', 'property', 'authorized/unauthorized', 'literate' and 'literacy', 'authenticity', 'spontaneity', 'signature', 'author', 'criminal', and 'popular'. Our task – which is already immense – is to develop site-specific protocols that will allow us to identify, read, and preserve without judgment the astonishing archives that are comprised by graffiti as it occurs at local sites, within local writing economies or 'graphospheres'.

Keywords: *Futures, Graffiti, Histories, Local, Theory*

It's history from a hundred points of view.
Henry Chalfant

In a journal entry for 4 May 1802, Dorothy Wordsworth recorded a day spent with her brother William and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the hills above Grasmere. Before leaving they inspected a rock into which were inscribed the initials of Sara Hutchinson, the woman Coleridge loved but did not marry; Coleridge had just added Dorothy's initials as well as his own to the inscription. 'We parted from Coleridge at Sara's crag', wrote Dorothy, 'after having looked at the Letters which C carved in the morning. I kissed them all. Wm deepened the T with C's penknife' (see Worthen 2001, 181-183).

The initials of William Wordsworth, William's fiancé Mary Hutchinson, and William's brother John were also subsequently added to the 'rock of names', which stood midway between the households of the two famous poets and marked the point, a

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two-hours' walk from each, where its members often met and parted. Preserved by its inaccessible location, and by the lichens that covered its face, the rock survived until the late 1880s, when the Manchester Water Authority sought its removal as part of plans to build a dam and a new road around Thirlmere. Nation-wide protest failed to stop the blasting, but members of the Wordsworth Institute were allowed to collect the shards containing the initials and cement these into a pyramid close to the rock's original site. In 1984 the fragments were detached from this support and reassembled on a newly-constructed rockface at the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere, in accordance with their original configuration as recorded by photographs (see D. Wordsworth 1991, 191-192).

It was not the first time that the companions had carved their initials in the landscape, and these inscriptions were part of a wider practice – which also informed Wordsworth's poetics – of calling out local landmarks, using them as objective correlatives of their own feelings, and naming them in recollection and anticipation of times spent together there: 'Sara's Eminence', 'John's Grove', 'Mary Point'. In April 1801 William wrote to Mary: 'You will recollect that there is a gate just across the road, directly opposite the fir grove … You know that it commands a beautiful prospect; Sara carved her cypher upon one of the bars, and we call it her gate. We will find out another place for your cypher, but you must come and fix upon the place yourself'. Mary did so, for Dorothy later recorded resting near the chosen site: 'We sate by the roadside at the foot of the Lake close to Mary's dear name which she had cut herself upon the stone. William … cut at it with his knife to make it plainer' (Worthen 2001, 22-24). As John Worthen argues, the naming of places had quickly become part of the everyday lives of the friends as they settled into the area and made it their own – so that when the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was suddenly lacking material in October 1800 Wordsworth and Coleridge 'quite naturally' proposed to fill it with a section called 'Poems on the Naming of Places'. 'It would be too easy', Worthen observes, 'to dismiss such activity as the transient pleasure of a group of educated and high-spirited people who could afford to spend their days clambering round the Lake District, naming things'. As he sees it, and as they doubtless saw it themselves, their purpose was more serious: 'they were engaged in what we might now call emotional mapping: identifying the ways in which they belonged both to each other and to the place' (Worthen 2001, 24-25). Worthen is no doubt correct here – but it is also the case that one person's emotional mapping is another person's graffiti. If Wordsworth, Coleridge and their companions were able to mark a moment, articulate their place, and enhance their pleasure in a landscape by s*igning off on it* then they were only doing what graffiti writers have always done.

The rock of names is unusual in the study of historical graffiti in being so well documented. In other ways it is not a-typical and, as a small case study, provides an efficient demonstration of the issues that form the conceptual nexus within which we encounter graffiti today, and within which the contributors to this volume have worked. But the first thing to note is that this is a cautionary tale, for it demonstrates that the concepts that allow us to identify graffiti are the same ones that prevent us from arriving at a stable or single definition of it. Graffiti writing is an observable fact, it is a phenomenon of current consequence, and, as the following essays demonstrate, it continues to produce and constitute archives of significant historical importance. But there is nothing singular about it, and its global history – which might be said to run from Upper Paleolithic hand stencils (40,000 CE) to the present – could never be written. Our task – which is already immense – is to develop site-specific protocols that will allow us to identify, read, and preserve graffiti as it occurs at local sites, within local writing economies or 'graphospheres' (see Bazzanella, Sarti, Schmitz-Esser, and Schulz in this volume).

Attempts to define graffiti – whether as a criminal, artistic, political, expressive, or 'simply human' practice – have been many, and they continue to yield the conceptual tools that allow us to grasp its significance as an archive (see, for example, Castillo Gómez in this volume). Nevertheless, no definition fits all cases, every definition can be found wanting, and even the most unexceptionable of them can appear outmoded or extravagant when generalized. And they prove particularly unwieldy when applied to historical graffiti. We might, for example, define graffiti as unauthorized writing that appears in public places. This was the working assumption of the first archaeologists of Pompeii, who judged that the presence of 'unofficial' inscriptions on walls meant that the building in question was 'public' rather than privately owned. In fact, we do not know that the Romans wrote only on public walls (much evidence now suggests the contrary), or that such writings were 'unauthorized' (whatever that means in the context of Pompeii), while to use graffiti as the index of public spaces is to assume without warrant that Roman attitudes to property, as well as to graffiti, were the same as our own.

If we bracket out the variable of a given culture's legislation and understanding of public and private realms we might define graffiti, more simply, as unauthorized writing. We would need to allow writing on any surface as well as in every place, since graffiti is of course not confined to buildings or to urban environments, but is found on cars, trains, pavements, sidewalks, trees, rocks, way-signs, posts, fences, artworks, books, and other moveable properties. The graffiti writer looks at their own world in terms of possible locations (see, for instance, Bazzanella in this volume), and their reasons for choosing a particular site will be enormously varied. They may aim to have their pieces highly visible, or visible only in certain lights or under certain conditions, or even stay hidden; they may be trying to enhance, trump, or detract from the visual logic of what it is already there; they may intend their own graffiti to last, or expect them to vanish or decay; they may want to be known as the author of the piece, or prefer to remain anonymous; and they may want to reach a wide audience, speak to a coterie, address a single other person, ghost or god, or commune only with themselves. Already, and before we have even considered its myriad forms and contents, the motives behind graffiti are too numerous to tell (see also Schulz in this volume).

Were we to be as ecumenical as possible, prepared to accept that graffiti is unauthorized writing at any location, in any medium, and on every imaginable surface (including human and animal bodies), we are still facing two problems. The first is what we mean by 'unauthorized', when 'authorization' would have to be the sum of every institutional affordance that is in place to protect all these surfaces from writing – but which is, in each given instance of graffiti, ineffectual. The second problem is larger still, and one that graffiti itself throws into sharp focus, for in order to define it we will have to know what writing is, not only for ourselves, but more particularly for the varied local cultures with which graffiti historians are concerned. And here, if our understanding of writing as a formal system does not extend, at the very minimum, to include drawings, images, designs, tallies, and other marks, we will already have abandoned and therefore altered and impoverished much of our archive. A standard, phonocentric definition of writing, as the register of spoken language, would even preclude the designedly illegible wild style signatures that, for today's taggers and their detractors, constitute the 'pure form' of graffiti in our contemporary urban environments. For while its practitioners call themselves writers and their letter-based art form writing, and sometimes insist that this is what differentiates them from other artists of the street, what a wild-style writer actually produces is not writing as is commonly understood, but an indexical mark that is repeated as a signature effect. Jean Baudrillard admired wild style precisely because, as he thought, it has no 'meaning': while it looks like writing as that serves semiotic functions, wild writing is in fact using its own 'emptiness' to create a blockage in the messaging system of the contemporary mass media. Wild style is

thus, argued Baudrillard, a sort of anti-writing – an importantly resistant and 'savage cultural process with neither goal, ideology, nor content at the level of signs' (1993, 80).

Even if their own corpus is primarily writing in the narrow sense, graffiti historians will need to keep in mind and situate their archives within (even as they may want to differentiate them from) a much broader understanding of writing. Although the list cannot be closed, we might note that in our own moment graffiti include sticker bombing, fly posting, wheat paste-ups, stenciling, 'subvertising' (which amends corporate advertisements), illegal sculpture, and certain forms of land and laser art. Graffiti interacts with and is supported not only by its own materials and locations, but also by other artforms (especially music and dance); other media (photography, fanzines, the internet); and highly various geographical (and therefore physical, political and institutional) environments; as well as by local communities and cultures (including corporate sponsorship, the entertainment industry, art school, art galleries, and the world of fashion) – and all these could be said to be part of its 'writing' in the broader sense. While it is true, as Schmitz-Esser argues in this volume, that 'writing skills are a necessary prerequisite for making graffiti' (*infra*, 91) (a claim that draws important attention to the fact that graffiti is *never the work of an instant*), it is a claim that can be generalized only if writing is understood in its most expanded sense. Indeed, although graffiti is sometimes used as an index of 'literacy', and is taken as evidence that certain groups could or could not 'write', its most valuable lesson to the historian is that it demonstrates the theoretical poverty of such categories. For everyone makes marks: it is the privileged challenge of the graffiti historian to learn how to read them.

It is a striking fact that if Sara Hutchinson was responsible for her own initials on the rock of names, as well as on the gate where she left her cipher, then it was a woman who was the probable initiator of the graffiti culture that helped to articulate the friendship of the Lakeland poets. More importantly, the evidence of this practice runs counter to the claim from which much of the value of historical graffiti is still being derived – that graffiti is a unique (individual, counter-cultural, anti-institutional, non-commodified, or 'authentic') expression of individual experience. For the inscriptions on the rock of names are primarily expressive of group sentiment as this circulates through and blends and fractures individual identities. It is likely that Sara began the game with her own initials; sometime later Coleridge added Dorothy's initials as well as his own, while William improved Coleridge's signature by re-carving its middle initial. Dorothy approved and kissed the inscriptions, documented them in her journal, and experimented with alternative layouts for them, with different groupings, on a separate piece of paper. These groupings included the initials of Mary Hutchinson and John Wordsworth, neither of whom had been present to carve their own initials, although these were also added to the rock of names.

As we have seen, William also urged Mary to join the graffiti writers, offering Sara's cipher as a model to follow, and his own help in choosing a site: when Mary did cut her name upon a stone, William deepened the letters. Already it is hard to say who created which inscriptions – and it is worth underlining this fact since even at a simpler level it is not enough remembered that graffiti initials may stand for the name of someone or something other than the person who carved them (see Schmitz-Esser, in this volume). In a more theoretical sense, however, we might say that no one writes alone. Behind William Wordsworth's poetry lie the journals of his sister Dorothy, the observations and conversations of herself and the other members of the 'Gang' of which these are the register, and the comments they exchanged in their frequent letter correspondence. Similarly, behind every graffiti inscription is the encouragement, advice, example, and provocation of another.

The question of who 'wrote' the rock of names (who inscribed what, for whom, with what degree of their own desire or consent) is further complicated by the fact that local memory attests

that the initials were subsequently deepened and 'improved' by local amateur stonecutter John Longmire even before they were blasted apart by the Manchester Water Authority and twice re-assembled by the Wordsworth Trust. As Derrida argues in *Mal d'archive* (1995), preservation is so deeply involved with destruction as to be indistinguishable from it. But the more important lesson here is that it takes a community to create, as well as preserve, even the most 'artless' and 'autonomous' inscription. However small the group within which it is produced and read, graffiti is an 'instituted' form: its inscriptions may be 'unauthorized' in relation to certain institutions – and they often revel in and draw their strength from this fact – but they are no more 'individual', 'authentic', or 'free of rules' than any other form of writing or drawing (for an alternative view see, for example, Lohmann and Schulz in this volume).

Often, indeed, they are less so: if you want to test yourself and surprise your colleagues by tagging in your nearest large city you will first have to study the graphic forms of other writers in order to develop your own. (Whoever thinks graffiti is 'spontaneous' has never tried it: graffiti writers usually carry a 'black book' of designs as they do not expect to have the time to develop these on the spot; and even if you are going to confine yourself to a single tag you will want to practice it over and over until you feel ready to throw it up at speed.) Then you will have to buy or steal markers or spray paint, with nozzles of different sizes (if these are not available you will have to discover what alternative media are being used in your neighborhood), and before you start you would be well advised to serve what amounts to an apprenticeship in the protocols and street rules of your local scene, including where you may and may not put your tag in relation to those of others – and all this before you have made a mark of any kind! Of course, once you have sufficient training you will be able to quickly throw up your tag (if you have your paint or markers with you) when the opportunity comes – but this does not obviate the months of preparation that lie behind that moment. So, while it is sometimes felt that graffiti 'attract' other graffiti, as if they had a tendency to appear in spontaneous clusters, what is really at stake is the development of the highly organized microcultures that institute graffiti and render it legible (see Lohmann in this volume).

Drafting lines for 'Benjamin the Waggoner', a poem in which the title character refreshes himself at a rivulet that flows from the rock of names, Wordsworth later recalled the effort required to make the inscriptions on its hard surface:

Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing,
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! O thought of pain,
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as said
With a staid heart but playful head;
And fail not Thou, loved Rock! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep.
(W. Wordsworth 1981, 118)

By the time he published the poem, Wordsworth had come to feel that such personal references 'stopp[ed] [its] progress' (Wordsworth 1981, 219, 300), and the passage was excised. But its surviving form gives evidence of Wordsworth's contradictory thoughts about the inscriptions. The lines argue that the inscriptions will be meaningful as long as a signatory survives who can recognize them as a register of the profound personal friendships that bound 'the Gang' (as they called themselves): this is what gives 'monumental power' to the rock. But the passage also

acknowledges that the 'genial feelings' of the group are already changing, and may need future repair. Appearing to fix the moment and entail the future, the carved initials create a reserve of fraternal sentiments to the friends, in an anticipated or imminent future, will be able to refer back. However, the 'impairment' or 'profanation' that threatens the capacity of the rock to archive these feelings also casts its shadow over them. What needs archiving that is still present; and what human feeling can be 'kept' alive in a rock? The potency of graffiti inscriptions lies in the fact that they appear to have the power to capture the moment even as they monumentalize and therefore leave it behind: 'Hic fuit'. But obviously something is unsatisfactory here, and Wordsworth's passage ends with an unfocussed apology in which he asks to be excused on the grounds that the friendships were in earnest, even as the inscriptions, or the claims being made for them, were meant in play.

Graffiti and photography are both technologies that engage with the simultaneous loss and preservation of the moment. Although their techniques are so different as to obscure their connection, it would be fruitful to start thinking about graffiti as the photography of a pre-photographic era. Once it emerged, graffiti was quick to establish links with photography, and these remain very deep. In the first place, of course, photography preserves and archives graffiti, frames and aestheticizes it, and renders it subject to academic investigation and other forms of cultural work and appropriation. 'I always knew that the photos would last longer than the pieces and I shot in the spirit of historic conservation', noted Martha Cooper of the painted trains she photographed in New York in the 1980s (Lewisohn 2008, 37); and, had it not been for photographs, the informationally significant configuration of the signatures on the Rock of Names would have been permanently lost. Nevertheless, the argument is often and rightly made that while photography can capture graffiti as an image, it leaves behind graffiti's site-specific embeddedness, and so robs it of the 'aura' that makes graffiti what it is. Although the commercial interest in graffiti, and the lucrative artistic careers of some graffiti writers can suggest otherwise, many of today's graffiti writers feel that it is one of the few things in our lives that cannot be bought or owned: that it necessarily 'belongs' where it is as having become an immanent part of its environment, unframed, subject to all forms of wear and tear, and seen in different lights, from different and non-frontal perspectives, within a constantly changing visual context. The special aura of graffiti differs from that ascribed to ritual objects by Walter Benjamin in that it describes 'belonging' as process rather than as being: graffiti is site-specific even as (and indeed because) that site is subject to change, while it is the particular property of graffiti to be in the process of decay. Impossible to preserve as what it is (subject to the unfolding of the future), graffiti is a strong instance of archive fever.

But the joint work of Raffaella Sarti, Manuele Marraccini, Angelo Rubino and Matteo Dellepiane (Sarti *et al.* 2017), which culminated in 2017 in an interactive exhibition of the graffiti at the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, has demonstrated the consequence of new photographic technologies, which can not only record but also restore and even *enhance* historical graffiti, revealing visual elements that have never been seen before, even by the people who first made them. Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) captures surface shapes and colors, permits their mathematical enhancement, and enables the interactive re-lighting of them from any direction: together with 3-D photography, image tracing using vector paths, and 3D printing, it allows for the virtual manipulation and re-organization of visual information (see also Sarti and Marraccini in this volume). As Valentina Rachiele explains, visitors to the exhibition's website could 'handle' the graffiti, rotating them along three spatial axes, modifying light sources in the RTI, and zooming in to look at details not normally visible to the naked eye. As she says, these technologies conflate distinctions 'between real and digital, between real and

virtual, between real and enhanced' (*infra*, 207), but they also mean that photography is now able to capture some of the properties of graffiti that have hitherto eluded it: 'virtual visitors, who are not physically in Urbino, can wander through the rooms in the Palazzo Ducale and see the graffiti as if it were right before them' (*infra*, 209); they can also see them in every light and from every angle, compare them to each other, manipulate, copy and re-produce them.

Where historians have been tempted to regret photography's limitations as an archival tool for graffiti on the grounds that it 'frames' and so destroys what is essentially frameless, it now seems to be more than ready for the task of capture. Whether what remains in its net will still be called graffiti is an argument for the future.

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Historical Graffiti
The State of the Art

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Abstract

The article summarises the current situation in relation to projects and approaches to the study of wall graffiti from all periods of history, referring particularly, but not exclusively, to the conference 'Historical Graffiti as Sources, Munich, 20-22 April 2017'. It argues that graffiti act as valuable sources in a variety of ways and a multitude of contexts – e.g. recording business transactions in the Roman town of Virunum, following the trails of medieval pilgrims, offering a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of a building, or passing down the names of prisoners killed in the Gestapo prison in Cologne. The comparison of ancient, medieval and modern graffiti shows that the majority of such inscriptions consist of name tags often combined with specific identity markers. They could function as representatives of their authors and guaranteed a longer lasting symbolic presence in, or in connection to a place. Long neglected as supposedly products of the lower classes, graffiti seem rather to have been made by members of society who possessed at least basic literacy; and to have often been left even by the *élite* of a given society, including ancient Egyptian priests and medieval/early modern European nobles.

Keywords: *Epigraphy, Graffiti, Materiality, Memory, Pompeii*

1. *Introduction: Leaving Marks on Walls*

Leaving one's mark on a wall seems to reflect a desire as old as humankind. Whether names (tags), hand prints, portrait sketches, coats of arms or professional symbols, personal identifiers – though differing in type and technique – have come to us from all periods of time. The earliest such identifiers are negative hand prints made in prehistoric times (figure 1),[1] whilst

[1] García-Diez *et al.* 2015. I would like to thank Raffaella Sarti for inviting me to take on both the honour and challenge of representing German-speaking graffiti scholars at the conference *Pietre, castelli e palazzi da leggere nell'Europa medievale e moderna*, 15-17 May 2017 at the Università di Urbino Carlo Bo, and to outline the 'state of the art' of graffiti scholarship for the present issue of

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the earliest examples of what we consider to be actual graffiti date back to Pharaonic Egypt (Old Kingdom).[2] Although historical graffiti largely consist of names and the ubiquitous message that 'so-and-so was here', they offer posterity much more than just this and preserve personal messages, love letters, reports of business transactions and local events, individual experiences, wordplay, poems, alphabets and numbers and a great variety of drawings, all of which enrich our knowledge of past cultures.

Figure 1 – Prehistoric hand prints in the Cueva de las Manos, Argentina, Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cueva_de_las_Manos-Santa_Cruz-Argentina.JPG>, accessed 10 January 2020

In 2017, no fewer than three conferences – in Munich, Urbino, and Berlin – were devoted to the topic of graffiti. Although the individual focus of each conference differed, all three considered the full chronological span of wall-writings from ancient to modern times.[3] Two more workshops on graffiti took place in Karlsruhe and Lisbon in 2018, and the larger part of the papers held at the Symposium Campanum 2019 *Inscriptions of the Bay of Naples* focus on ancient graffiti-writing.[4] However, (historical) graffiti have not always been appreciated as

JEMS. My sincere thanks also go to Dr Emrys Schlatter (Berlin) for correcting my English, and to PD Dr Thomas Wozniak (Stuttgart) for his comments.

[2] See e. g., Ragazzoli and Frood 2013 (on graffiti from the New Kingdom); Preisigke 2018.

[3] *Historische Graffiti als Quellen. Methoden und Perspektiven eines Jungen Forschungsbereichs*, 20-22 April 2017 at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (see Lohmann 2018a, from which the present article derives); the Urbino conference mentioned in note 1; and *TAG: Name Writing in Public Space. A Conference about Tagging, in History and Today*, 14-15 September 2017 at the Free University of Berlin (publication in preparation).

[4] *Graffiti als Gegenstand der Forschung*, 22-23 June 2018 at the Institut für Technologie Karlsruhe; *Lisbon Street Art & Urban Creativity Conference. Changing Times: Tactics and Resilience*, 5-7 July 2018 at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon; *Reading the City: Inscriptions of the Bay of Naples*, 23-27 October 2019 at the Villa Vergiliana, Cumae.

an object of study and these events mark an important change – or a new high point – in the history of graffiti scholarship. This sub-area of epigraphy has, in fact, only emerged within the past ten years, even if earlier works exist which are crucial to the field of study (see below). The number of scholars who specialise in graffiti is still relatively limited and individual studies on it relatively few; but, in recent introductions to ancient epigraphy and history, graffiti are increasingly being granted individual chapters as a separate category of inscriptions and textual sources (Cooley 2012; Bruun and Edmonson 2015; Rhode and Wawra forthcoming).

It should be noted here that, when speaking of historical graffiti, this article will not consider 'contemporary' graffiti and urban art, even if these most recent forms are historical themselves in their beginnings (i.e. if one considers history to include the past up to one second ago, even the most recent graffiti could be considered historical; however, these largely sophistic musings are not relevant to the present article). Contemporary graffiti-writing emerged as – and still often is – part of social subcultures which can be broadly defined as young and male. As a matter of (often political) expression, contemporary graffiti have developed their own forms and styles, and are nowadays perceived as art by supporters and outsiders. Meant as civic dissent, graffiti have been deemed illegal in urban spaces, apart from spaces explicitly provided for colourful murals. Historical graffiti-writing as dealt with here is represented by regular forms of (hand) writing executed on walls. There were no textual sources which generally declared writing on walls illegal in antiquity, for example. Only in relation to specific spatial or functional contexts, such as Roman graves or medieval churches, do we know of explicit bans. Historical and contemporary graffiti, therefore, differ both in the intentions of their authors and their perception by the public (Lohmann 2017a, 19-37).

The present article outlines the current work on graffiti primarily by German-speaking scholars as represented at the Munich graffiti conference, even if the studies and projects referred to are not all based within the geographical borders of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.[5] The article also aims, however, to give a broader overview of the history of graffiti scholarship up to and including current projects and methodological approaches. It should also be borne in mind that, as a Roman archaeologist, I invariably see graffiti and graffiti research against the background of this field, which may at times come through in my following observations.

2. *Graffiti Scholarship: A Difficult (Hi)Story*

The two most pioneering works of graffiti scholarship in German are Martin Langner's study of all known ancient (Greek and Roman) graffiti drawings and the comprehensive bibliography on graffiti by Detlev Kraack and Peter Lingens.[6] Both works were published in 2001 and, independently of each other, define graffiti as graphic signs (i.e. letters, numbers, and images) made on a surface not primarily designed for this purpose, a definition which is still crucial for our understanding of graffiti (Langner 2001, 12; Kraack and Lingens 2001, 9). As early as 1997, Detlev Kraack published his dissertation for the Christian Albrechts University of Kiel as a monograph on the epigraphic evidence of princely pilgrimage. Whilst his observations about the striving for honour and the memorial character of noblemen's graffiti complemented earlier works on aristocratic travel (Kraack 1997 and 2005, 148), Martin Langner's work was ground-breaking for its methodology and represented the first systematic study not only of

[5] This focus derives from the Urbino conference, to which I was invited as a referee of the Munich conference.
[6] Langner 2001; Kraack and Lingens 2001, on graffiti from 1500 to 1900.

motifs and styles, but also of the distribution of (ancient) graffiti. Nonetheless, these works stood alone as relatively isolated publications on the subject for several years before the field attracted further attention.

Only within the past years – and primarily within the fields of archaeology and ancient history[7] – have graffiti seen a kind of renaissance as objects of study. One hundred years earlier, and from the first discovery of graffiti at the newly excavated site of Pompeii since the end of the nineteenth century, the etched inscriptions had been regarded as illicit scribbles left by the young, poor and uneducated (Lohmann 2017a, 39-44). It was this site which initiated the term 'graffiti' (Garrucci 1856, 8). Cesare Lombroso, in his work on prison graffiti from 1899, generalised graffiti as mostly the products of children who, more than any other demographic group, share characteristics of primitive humans (301, fn. 1). German archaeologist August Mau underlined his interest exclusively in *élite* culture by arguing: 'The people with whom we should most eagerly desire to come into direct contact, the cultivated men and women of the ancient city, were not accustomed to scratching their names upon stucco or to confide their reflections and experiences to the surface of the wall' (1899, 481 ff.). The bulk of the approximately 5,600 graffiti from Pompeii had therefore long been neglected, in spite of being seen by early excavators and Victorian Romantics as offering a unique glimpse into the simple everyday life of Pompeians: 'One of their favourite ways of amusing themselves', wrote Helen Tanzer in her book *The Common People of Pompeii*, 'was idly scribbling on any convenient surface' (1939, 83). Only smaller samples, mainly from erotic texts or consisting of metric sentences and literary quotes, either attracted scholarly interest[8] as sources for the study of oral poetry and literary reception, or satisfied the Romantic imagination of 'the city of sin' on the eve of its downfall.[9]

Beginning in 2010 and 2011 with the works by Rebecca R. Benefiel (2010 and 2011) and Henrik Mouritsen (2011), however, the scholarly perception of this previously unrecognised genre of ancient inscription has changed. In 2011, a conference was held in London with the title *Ancient Graffiti in Context*.[10] Case-studies of the distribution of graffiti within private houses showed that graffiti were concentrated in the most central and accessible rooms, suggesting that they were neither made in secret nor prohibited;[11] since then, further analyses have confirmed this observation (Lohmann 2015 and 2017a). With this renaissance of ancient graffiti, new questions arose: what influenced graffiti? How were they integrated into the surrounding (man-made) environment? Did their makers work around or respect wall-decorations? Can their location tell us anything about their authors and readership? How do graffiti address their readers? How did authors and audience perceive graffiti?

A book by Peter Keegan, published in 2014, compares graffiti from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome (Kegan 2014); Kristina Milnor focusses on literary graffiti within their urban context (Milnor 2014); in 2016, a volume edited by Rebecca R. Benefiel and Peter Keegan brings

[7] For a brief history of the (limited) scholarship on medieval and modern graffiti (state: 2001), see Kraack and Lingens 2001, 14-17.

[8] Kruschwitz and Halla-Aho 2007, 31. When Kraack and Lingens (2001, 14) wrote that graffiti had long been an object of interest in Classical studies, this was in fact true only for a small portion of the graffiti; see e. g., Gigante 1979; Ferraro 1982; Wachter 1998 on literary graffiti; Della Corte 1976 and Varone 1994 on the subject of erotic graffiti.

[9] Foss 2007, 32-34; Blix 2009, 78-84. More contextual approaches were limited to exceptional cases, such as the early case-studies by Solin 1975 or Moormann and Wynia 1993.

[10] See the conference proceedings by Baird and Taylor 2011.

[11] On 'public' and 'private' in the Roman house, see Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 17-37; in Roman society, see Winterling 2005.

together papers from a section of the *14th International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy* on graffiti and other types of inscriptions from ancient private spaces (Benefiel and Keegan 2016); and a new volume by Chloé Ragazzoli, Ömür Harmansah, Chiara Salvador, and Elizabeth Frood addresses graffiti-writing throughout history (up to and including contemporary writings; the majority of the papers, however, deal with ancient graffiti (Ragazzoli *et al.* 2018). These recent English publications demonstrate a new dynamics of ancient, or 'classical', graffiti on an international level. Furthermore, the latest editions of graffiti from current field projects offer a careful analysis of the epigraphic material thanks to high quality images and drawings provided for specific sites, such as Ephesus and Smyrna.[12]

3. *The State of the Art*

3.1 *Projects and Preconditions*

The material basis for graffiti scholarship is uneven and varies largely according to the time period in which the inscriptions originated, which affects not only their survival rate, but also their documentation. Graffiti executed in charcoal or chalk fade away over the centuries; although we can assume that they were once numerous, only very few have survived from antiquity. The survival rates of engraved graffiti depend largely on the surface which bears them, with wall-plaster being a comparatively delicate material: not only ancient graffiti, but even graffiti from the twentieth century, written on the wall-plaster of buildings in the Jewish ghetto/concentration camp at Terezín/Theresienstadt (Czech Republic, figure 2) are threatened with decay.[13]

Ancient graffiti, especially on plaster, have survived in greater numbers in very few places; in Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ephesus they have been preserved under destruction layers (figure 3). In contrast, graffiti from medieval and early modern times are known from multiple building complexes in Germany alone, although only a small number of them have been thoroughly investigated, such as the graffiti in the late-antique basilica in Trier (Binsfeld 2004 and 2006), the cathedral in Aachen,[14] the church of St. Katharina in Wenau (Heckner 2010 and 2018), that of St. Elisabeth in Marburg (see Dietrich 2018), the cathedral in Magdeburg (Wozniak 2014) or the church of St. Mary in Quedlinburg (Wozniak 2013 and 2016). It is not by chance that medieval and early modern graffiti are known predominantly from churches: these buildings have either been under continuous use or at least been protected as sacred spaces and cultural heritage.[15] For this reason, we must bear in mind that the graffiti we know represent an arbitrary selection.[16]

[12] For the slope houses in Ephesus, see Hans Taeuber's contributions in the series 'Forschungen in Ephesos' (2005; 2010a; 2010b; 2014); for Smyrna, see Bagnall *et al.* 2016.

[13] See Uta Fischer's documentation and conservation project: <https://ghettospuren.de/> (Ghetto Theresienstadt 1941-1945), especially her online contributions 'Poterne III' (<https://ghettospuren.de/project/poterne-3/>); 'L 237 – Kriegsbeschädigte, Ordonnanzen' (<https://ghettospuren.de/project/l-237/>); 'Q 414 - SS-Kommandatur' (<https://ghettospuren.de/project/q-414/>), accessed 10 January 2020. See also Fischer 2018.

[14] Heckner and Heckes 2002, and recently Pieper and Schindler 2017.

[15] See also Weniger 2016, 132. At the same time, many churches were renovated or rebuilt, which is why we find fewer graffiti in Germany than in France, the UK or Italy, where buildings would more often remain unchanged for several centuries (Kraack and Lingens 2001, 24). See Champion 2012, 104-106, with a short comment on the situation in England.

[16] The production of graffiti differed according to surface/material: sandstone buildings, for example, were more likely to attract graffiti as the stone is soft and therefore easy to engrave (see Kraack and Lingens 2001, 21).

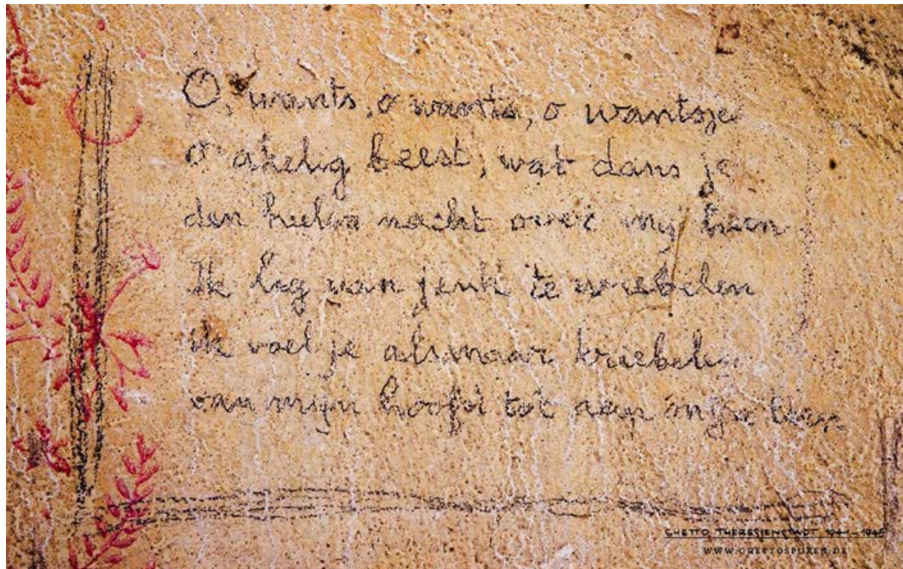


Figure 2 – Dutch verse from Terezín about a sleepless night due to bedbugs.
Photo by Roland Wildberg/Uta Fischer. Courtesy of the Author

Figure 3 – Graffiti in slope house 2 at Ephesus.
Photo by Polly Lohmann, with permission of the Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut

A special group of the historical graffiti in Germany are those from the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth-century detention rooms ('Karzer') of educational institutions, such as the universities of Heidelberg, Marburg, Tübingen and Göttingen. The names, jokes, anecdotes

and reports left there are, as Ulrike Götz states, related to prison graffiti, but have their origins in a more 'modest', i.e. educational context and were authored by students who were 'imprisoned' for only short periods of time because of (moral) misbehaviour (2018, 221). With the exception of the eighteenth-century graffiti at the episcopal academy in Freising, scholarship has not yet been conducted on these epigraphic samples (Götz 2001 and 2018). The popularity of these kinds of graffiti, which, in the case of Heidelberg (for example), are accessible to tourists visiting the detention rooms (figure 4), stands in sharp contrast to the wish for systematic scientific study.

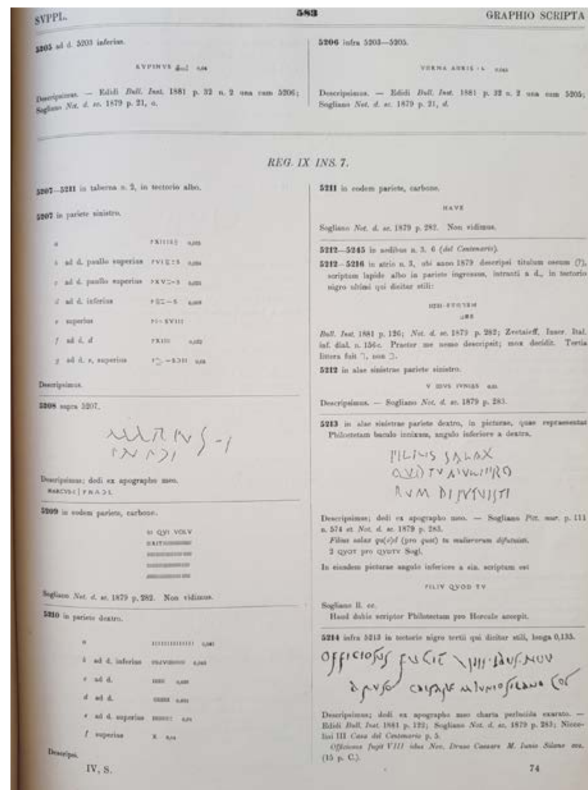
Figure 4 – Graffiti in the Heidelberg Karzer.
Photo by Polly Lohmann. Courtesy of the Universitätsmuseum Heidelberg

Despite the loss of many excavated Pompeian graffiti due to weathering, we are fortunate that, after excavation, they were at least recorded in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV (CIL IV, figure 5).[17] The CIL IV, therefore, constitutes the most important source for studying Pompeian graffiti, and can now also be digitally accessed via the 'Electronic Database of Greek and Latin Epigraphy' (EAGLE). Unfortunately, epigraphic corpora offering the same breadth of material as the CIL and IG (*Inscriptiones Graecae*) do not exist for all periods of time. The co-operative project 'Die Deutschen Inschriften', established in 1934, offers a variety of medieval and early modern inscriptions from present-day Germany, Austria and the South Tyrol, but does not systematically collect graffiti.[18] A project such as the 'Norfolk

[17] For the history of the excavation of Pompeii, and the survival rates of graffiti after excavation, see Lohmann 2017a, 123-128.

[18] Kraack 1997, 19-21; Weniger 2016, 129. See, however, the graffiti from the Mariental monastery at Helmstedt published online (*Deutsche Inschriften Online, Die Inschriften und Graffiti des Klosters Mariental*, <http://www.inschriften.net/kloster-mariental/einleitung.html>, accessed 10 January 2020); I would like to thank PD dr. Thomas Wozniak (Stuttgart) for this reference.

Medieval Graffiti Survey', including a database providing online access to graffiti from a particular region and era, does not, unfortunately, exist for Germany, Austria or Switzerland. For later graffiti, like those found in the castle at Ludwigsburg (Schulz 2018 and the article in this volume), the Gestapo-prison ('EL-DE House') in Cologne (Jung 2014 and 2018) or the Reichstag building in Berlin (Felix 2015 and 2018), the situation is similarly poor, as there is no consistent approach to comprehensive documentation and collective publication, but only projects by individuals or institutions, if at all. The reason for this neglect may be the relatively recent date of the graffiti: the twentieth century marked the beginning of graffiti writing as part of a youth subculture and the polarization of opinions on graffiti, which may in turn have contributed to a diminished public awareness of their historicity.[19] And so it is that the Classics – perhaps unexpectedly – have played a pioneering role in the documentation of graffiti, even though there remains a large body of material from antiquity that has neither been properly recorded nor published.



SVPPL. 583 GRAPHIO SCRIPTA

5205 ad d. 5203 inferius.

Descripsimus. — Edidi *Bull. Inst.* 1881 p. 32 n. 2 una cum 5206; Sogliano *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 21, c.

5206 infra 5203—5205.

VERNA [illegible]

Descripsimus. — Edidi *Bull. Inst.* 1881 p. 32 n. 2 una cum 5205; Sogliano *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 21, d.

REG. IX INS. 7.

5207—5211 in taberna n. 2, in tectorio albo.

5207 in pariete sinistro.

[illegible]

Descripsimus.

5208 supra 5207.

[illegible]

Descripsimus; dedi ex apographo meo.

5209 in eodem pariete, carbone.

[illegible] QVI VOLV [illegible]

Sogliano *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 282. Non vidimus.

5210 in pariete dextro.

[illegible]

Descripsi.

IV, S.

5211 in eodem pariete, carbone.

HAVE

Sogliano *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 282. Non vidimus.

5212—5245 in aedibus n. 3. 6 (*del Centenario*).

5212—5216 in atrio n. 3, ubi anno 1879 descripsi titulum oscum (?), scriptum lapide albo in pariete ingressus, intranti a d., in tectorio nigro ultimi qui dicitur stili:

[illegible]

Bull. Inst. 1881 p. 126; *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 282; Zvetaieff, Inscr. Ital. inf. dial. n. 156c. Praeter me nemo descripsit; mox decidit. Tertia littera fuit [illegible]

5212 in alae sinistrae pariete sinistro.

[illegible]

Descripsimus. — Sogliano *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 283.

5213 in alae sinistrae pariete dextro, in picturae, quae repraesentat Philoctetam baculo innixum, angulo inferiore a dextra.

[illegible]

Descripsimus; dedi ex apographo meo. — Sogliano *Pitt. mur.* p. 111 n. 574 et *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 283.

Filius salax [illegible] (pro quot) *tu mulierorum difutuisti.*

2 QVOT pro QVOTV Sogl.

In eiusdem picturae angulo inferiore a sin. scriptum est

FILIV QVOD TV

Sogliano l. c.

Haud dubie scriptor Philoctetam pro Hercule accepit.

5214 infra 5213 in tectorio nigro tertii qui dicitur stili, longa 0,135.

[illegible]

Descripsimus; dedi ex apographo meo charta pellucida exarato. — Edidi *Bull. Inst.* 1881 p. 122; Sogliano *Not. d. sc.* 1879 p. 283; Niccolini III *Casa del Centenario* p. 5.

Officiosus fugit VIII idus Nov. Druso Caesare M. Iunio Silano cos. (15 p. C.).

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Figure 5 – A page from CIL IV

[19] See Bogerts 2017, 7 on the perception and use of street art as a political tool. On the difference between contemporary graffiti-writing/urban art and historical graffiti/visitors' inscriptions, see Lohmann 2017a, 19-37.

3.2 *Questions and Methods*

The renaissance of graffiti within the field(s) of Classics, as outlined above, cannot be seen independently from recent development in cultural studies. Firstly, from the late 1980s, the 'spatial turn' has drawn attention to the perception of natural and built spaces and to the interaction of human beings with their environment.[20] The sociology of space, and especially of architecture, is built upon the idea of a reciprocity: whereas a space is designed to fulfil a specific function, it can itself – by its size, building material, decoration, lighting, etc. – evoke a certain atmosphere or prompt specific actions not necessarily intended by its builders, as well as fulfil different functions over time.[21] As informal inscriptions produced and placed without the permission of any 'authority' (even just the owner of the property on which an inscription is found), graffiti are direct reactions to the built environment and thereby reflect the use and perception of a space (Lohmann 2017b, 69 ff.) This does not, of course, apply to graffiti on movable objects such as ceramic vessels or coins which were used outside the radius of one specific building or building complex. Secondly, the 'material turn' takes things, or 'objects', as starting points, and regards them as agents or 'subjects' in and of themselves: objects can carry and constitute meaning, provoke actions, and even have their own biography, which begins at the time of production and includes different phases of use, re-use, disposal, destruction or deposition.[22] *Inscribed* objects can communicate explicit information on behalf of their producer or author and inscriptions constitute objects, too, because they are not just mere texts (content), but texts expressed in a physical medium with material characteristics. The materiality of texts and inscriptions has more recently been adopted as an approach in literary, historical and archaeological studies (Lohmann 2017a, 57-59).

Bearing in mind the theoretical concepts briefly (and admittedly superficially) summarised above, we might use graffiti as historical sources in several ways – or from different angles: as texts (or images), graffiti can provide information about local events and people, ritual or magic practices, business transactions (see e.g., Gostenčnik 2018), currency systems (see e. g., Taeuber 2002), political issues,[23] etc. The language and style of graffiti can reveal different levels of literacy, local dialects, common forms of orthography or the relation between oral and written language. Form and text layout (or motifs and iconography in graffiti drawings) can offer insights into the reception of other media or even provide us with an idea of ancient texts or artworks which have been lost. By re-contextualising graffiti, we are also able to analyse their accessibility and visibility, the way they interact with their surrounding space and with the wall as a surface, and, occasionally, the circumstances of their production. Graffiti can sometimes even offer clues to the construction process and dating of a building.[24]

[20] See Döring 2011 for the background on the spatial turn, with further references, and especially p. 94 on the adaption of the sociology of space to the cultural sciences.

[21] See, for example, Schäfers 2010, 30, for a brief definition of architecture sociology. On social space, see Kajetzke and Schroer 2011, 193: 'Architectural sociology focusses on the ways space is constructed and given meaning by social actors but also on the role which space takes in structuring individuals'. Unless otherwise stated, translations are mine.

[22] For an introduction to this subject, see Bräunlein 2012 and Knoll 2014; the latter defines the material turn as 194; Schroer argues that the different 'turns' in the social and cultural sciences, including the social turn and the material turn, are interconnected (2009, 144).

[23] See, for example, the ancient author Suetonius referring to graffiti mocking the emperor Nero (*Nero*, xxxix and xlv [Suetonius 1914, 157-161 and 168-171]).

[24] See, for example, Weniger 2016, 135-137, with medieval examples.

By focusing on graffiti on architectural surfaces, it is possible to investigate the habits of graffiti-writing over time with regard to the use of space, patterns of movement, spatial hierarchies within one space; the motivation and intention of graffiti writers, intended readers and function of graffiti and ways of self-commemoration and self-display. The samples can, however, vary considerably: they can be of a commercial and touristic nature, from sacred or profane spaces, by travellers, guards and prisoners. Methodologically, epigraphic samples from the projects represented here can be divided into graffiti from single buildings,[25] graffiti from whole city areas,[26] and graffiti comparing different spots within one region[27] (or an even broader geographical context).[28]

4. *Diachronic Observations and Conclusions*

The term 'graffiti' covers a wide range of inscriptions (not to mention contemporary graffiti/tags) from all periods of time, made by diverse groups of people with different intentions in various types of places. On the other hand, the term has not been applied to one of the most recent groups of samples, i.e. the graffiti from the Gestapo prison in Cologne, because it seemed inappropriate in view of the cruel living conditions, the torture and murder of prisoners to use a term predominantly associated with funny doodles or riddling scribbles.[29] Not all informal, unauthorised inscriptions are called graffiti, and not everything we call graffiti was informal and unauthorised. The variety of epigraphic material being called graffiti shows that no strict criteria can be applied to all the material presented, but that each scholar has to position his or her material individually within a large framework of extremes: spontaneous and planned, ephemeral and permanent, legal and illegal, individual and formal.[30]

Graffiti often seem to have been doodles arising in moments of boredom or spontaneous inspiration – by something just experienced or seen, e. g. a famous place, other visitors' inscriptions or both.[31] Numerous graffiti left by tourists in ancient sites in the context of nineteenth-century Grand Tours can, for example, be found on the Roman aqueduct in Pont du Gard (France, figure 6), the amphitheatre in El Djem (Tunisia, figure 7), the Gate of all Nations in Persepolis (Iran, figure 8) or left by Napoleon's soldiers at the temple in Edfu (Egypt).[32] In some cases, graffiti functioned as provisional markers and placeholders, or notes to be later executed in a different medium, thereby indicating, for instance, the

[25] Dietrich 2018 (see *supra*, p. 1); Götz 2018 (see *supra*, p. 1), Gostenčnik 2018, on the graffiti from the Roman town of Virunum (Austria); Jung 2018, on the above-mentioned Gestapo prison in Cologne; Heckner 2018 (see *supra*, p. 1); Schulz 2018 and in this volume, on the graffiti from the Ludwigsburg castle (Germany), mentioned above.

[26] Chaniotis 2018, on graffiti from the ancient city of Aphrodisias (Turkey); Lohmann 2018c, on all (known) graffiti from the city-area of Pompeii.

[27] Preisigke 2018, on graffiti from Egyptian temples; Schmitz-Esser 2018 and in this volume, on late medieval and early modern graffiti in the region of Tyrol.

[28] Kraack 2018, on the medieval and early modern aristocratic pilgrims' graffiti in Jerusalem, Sinai, and elsewhere; Wozniak 2018, on medieval graffiti representations of men-at-arms from all over Europe.

[29] Jung 2018, 267 ff. Werner Jung's publication of these graffiti (2014) is therefore titled 'The wall inscriptions in the Cologne Gestapo Prison in the EL-DE House'. The application of the term graffiti to this collection of inscriptions was a much-discussed topic of debate during the Munich conference.

[30] See Lohmann 2017a, 15-19 and 2017b on these ambiguities.

[31] See Kraack and Lingens 2001, 20-25, on the conditions for graffiti-writing, with the importance of a place, its accessibility and building material as primary criteria; the function of a space and the duration of visits influenced the making of graffiti as well.

[32] For the graffiti at Edfu, see Effland 2009 and 2010.

original locations of former altars or graves in churches or transmitting events like baptisms and weddings (Weniger 2016, 138). But however ephemeral they may seem as spontaneous expressions, they sometimes have a long life of many hundreds of years. The graffiti from the EL-DE House in Cologne even express the wish to last in order to preserve the names of those murdered by the National Socialists for posterity. In this case, some of the graffiti left behind, in fact, reveal the names of prisoners about whom we would otherwise not know anything (see Jung 2014, 344 no. 435). The later medieval graffiti by princely pilgrims which Detlev Kraack has studied were even considered a form of monument; they were part of an aristocratic tradition (and competition) charged with passing on the memory of the family and gaining immortal honour for the long, dangerous and expensive journey undertaken (figure 9). The coats of arms and emblems of chivalric orders were, apparently, not necessarily made by the noble travellers themselves, but by professional stone cutters. Literary evidence proves that pilgrims even carried little wooden tablets or pieces of parchment or paper with them which had been prepared in advance and painted with the individual heraldic symbols (see Kraack 1997, 314 ff. and 2018, 200 ff.).

Figure 6 – Graffito at Pont du Gard (1831).
Photo by Polly Lohmann. Courtesy of the Author

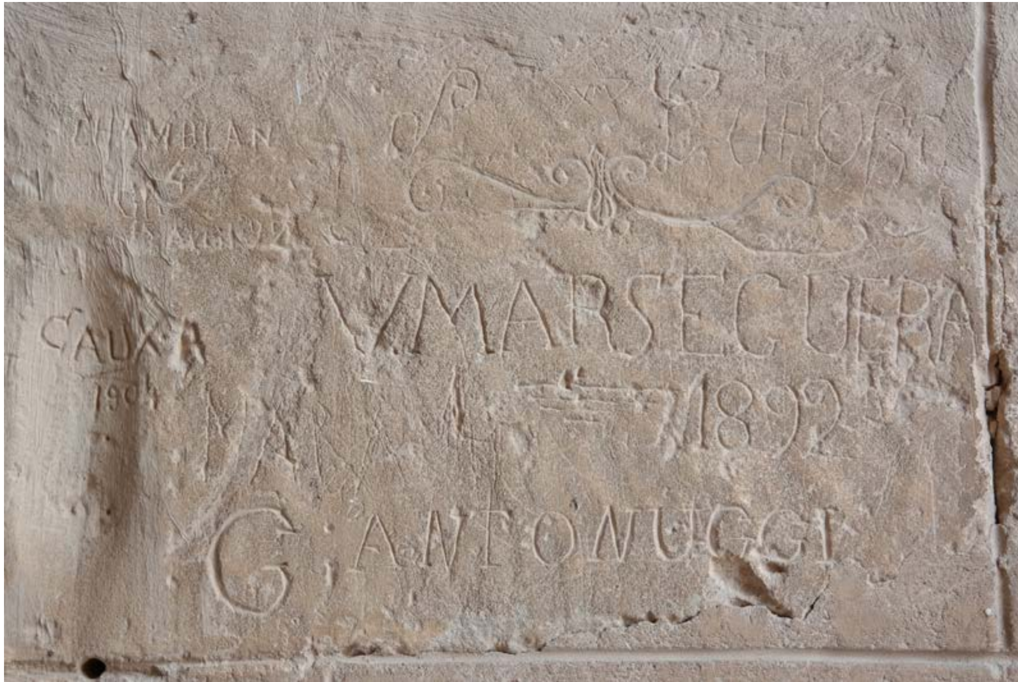

Figure 7 – Graffiti at El Djem (1899). Photo by Polly Lohmann.
Courtesy of the Author

Figure 8 – Graffito at Persepolis (1810). Photo by Polly Lohmann.
Courtesy of the Author

Figure 9 – Late medieval coats of arms of Alex Gradner and his travelling fellow at the Monastery of Saint Catherine on the Sinai (Egypt). Photo by Detlev Kraack. Courtesy of the Author

The thousands of graffiti found in the Roman town of Pompeii, predominantly inside its houses (figure 10), suggest that graffiti were at least tolerated,[33] even though some public inscriptions announce a ban on graffiti from graves or sacred spaces (see e.g. CIL IV 538). We also know of prohibitions related to graffiti-writing from medieval times, but the epigraphic evidence tells us that travellers did not comply with the rules (see e.g. Kraack 1997, 415 no. 22c). In ancient Egypt, certain graffiti can only have been made by priests, because they are located in areas of temples which were not accessible to the public (Preisigke 2018, 24 ff.), whereas, during the Napoleonic period, soldiers showed no compunction in leaving behind memorial inscriptions in Egyptian temples (see n. 32). In the detention rooms of universities, graffiti seem not only to have been a kind of tradition or ritual among the imprisoned, but also to have been accepted by their respective institutions. This becomes clear when one considers that the colours, brushes and pencils used to create graffiti were apparently readily available at Freising (as at Heidelberg, see figure 4), as Ulrike Götz has pointed out (2018, 236). Writing on the wall, as she suggests, may have been thought to act as a psychological outlet.

[33] See Benefiel 2010, 2011, 2014 and 2016; Mouritsen 2011; Lohmann 2015, 2017a and 2017b.

Figure 10 – Map indicating Pompeian buildings containing graffiti (from Lohmann 2017a, 130, figure 31)

Graffiti were usually, though certainly not always, left at central, highly frequented places.[34] They were left by inhabitants or prisoners/guards, visitors (such as pilgrims, worshippers, tourists and guests) or professionals working on site (such as craftsmen, builders, tradesmen and sellers). Independently from their authors and historical time-frame, graffiti consist largely of names, which are frequently combined with personal symbols and images. Expressing individual identity is one of the main characteristics of historical (and modern?) graffiti-writing, which, paradoxically, developed standardized forms such as the ubiquitous 'hic fuit'.

It comes as no surprise to find graffiti originating from specific groups of people in certain places when that place attracted or allowed only a specific group: in churches, we find marks of socially heterogeneous pilgrims and believers, whilst detention rooms bear only those of (male) students. In state prisons, on the other hand, we find a mix of people of different ages and social groups, origins and genders who were forcibly thrown together and would otherwise have no connection to each other. The epigraphic evidence from entire cities, such as Pompeii or Aphrodisias, is similarly heterogeneous. Nonetheless, – generally speaking – only rarely do women appear as authors of graffiti. This could be due to their lower literacy levels in antiquity, medieval and early modern times, or to their restricted access to certain buildings, events or communities (Lohmann 2018b, 15).

However heterogeneous their creators, graffiti often attracted other graffiti, and graffiti clusters developed over time. This could sometimes result in competitions for the best position on a wall or within a room, with one graffito overlapping another. Sacred spaces were particularly hierarchised: the closer to the sacral centre, the more meaningful a graffito, both in symbolic (visual)[35] and practical terms, not only in terms of self-display but also of a possible apotropaic, magical or votive function of the inscription.[36] As representatives of their producers, graffiti

[34] See Kraack and Lingens 2001, 22 ff.

[35] See Kraack 1997, 310 ff. on the lack of space in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the competitive struggle for the 'best' place.

[36] Medieval graffiti in particular suggest such 'practical' functions; see Kraack and Lingens 2001, 31-33; Schmitz-Esser 2018, 165. Predominantly studies from England suggest that graffiti could also function as votives: see i.a. Champion 2012.

guaranteed their permanent 'physical' presence in a place and thereby also the connection to the divine power (Champion 2012, 122). That ships were one of the most popular motifs in ancient graffiti may be explained with a diachronic comparison with medieval ship graffiti, which are thought to have served as votive offerings in order to secure safe travels.[37] The ships could, however, also be simple repetitions of everyday scenes, just as the gladiators engraved in Pompeian walls were perhaps just expressions of a fan culture.

The fact that ancient and medieval literary sources tell us about the contemporary practices of scratching or writing on the walls not only proves that the phenomenon was widely spread, but also that it was a matter of debate.[38] Graffiti writers themselves clearly thought about their creations as well: amongst the ancient graffiti which do not seem to possess a clear function or deeper meaning as identity markers, there are graffiti addressed to the wall which, ironically, reflect upon the acts of reading and writing graffiti, thereby revealing glimpses into a history of mentality of informal writing.[39] Graffiti are not, at any rate, thoughtless marks by the uneducated, but range from doodles by those who had at least rudimentary writing skills to conscious creations by priests and noblemen who belonged to the literary *élite*.[40] Prominent graffiti-writers such as the English poet Lord Byron and his German contemporary Johann Wolfgang von Goethe provide the best examples to counter the assumptions made by the early scholars referred to at the beginning of this article.[41] By containing personal identifiers, self-reflective jokes, personal messages and statements, graffiti represent the individual rather than the whole of society, microcosms more than macrocosms, emotions rather than facts and therefore have a specific value as historical sources.

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[37] See e. g., Peake 2012; Westerdahl 2013; critically Champion 2015, 350 on a monocausal explanation of the ship graffiti. See also Demesticha 2015, 113 for a short overview of scholarship of ship graffiti.

[38] See the sources collected by Kraack 1997, 391-474, and a short overview in Lohmann 2017a, 8-11.

[39] On this topic, see Lohmann 2018c.

[40] This is also stressed by Weniger 2016, 133.

[41] See Kraack and Lingens 2001, 27-29 on Goethe recording his own graffiti.

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Words on Walls
An Approach to Exposed Writing in Early Modern Europe

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Abstract

The article outlines an approach to different modalities of exposed writing in early modern Europe, following a discussion on the concept. Domestic, closed and public spaces are considered, in order to understand the multiple meanings – political, informational, devotional, promotional, testimonial and even as mere pastime, as is the case of many graffiti – of exposed writing. This approach always looks into the places where the writings were displayed, their supports (parchment, paper, cloth, stone, wall), the different ways in which they were made (written and painted by hand, printed, incised or chiselled) as well as the conditions of exposure, since all these aspects have an explicit impact on the function pursued by each writing fixed or written on a wall. There are clear differences between monumental inscriptions, commercial advertisements, libels and graffiti. Likewise, their placement in a street where everyone could see them or in a church, a prison or a domestic space entailed different functions. Depending on the place of exposure and the type of writing, they were used to question their contemporary society in one way or another; the questions that arise today, when we study the presence of these types of writing during that period, are just as manifold.

Keywords: *Domestic Space, Early Modern Europe, Exposed Writing, Meanings of Writing, Public Space*

> Words on walls are words imposed by someone's will, whether that person is high up or low down, words imposed on the gaze of all the others who have no choice but to see them or receive them.
> Italo Calvino

1. *Introduction*

If we aim to propose a general approach to exposed writing in early modern Europe, we must begin by establishing the scope of that term. Our starting point has undoubtedly to be the definition given by Armando Petrucci in *La scrittura. Ideologia*

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e rappresentazione (1986). In its preface, Petrucci also proposed a series of concepts – the social function of writing, the social use of writing, monumental writing, graphic space and writing space, domain of graphic space and programme of graphic exhibition – which are key to understanding the analysed written production. It is a production that appeals to the visibility and readability of the text both from the procedures of its manufacture (i.e. its materiality) and from the places where the text is exposed. In this context, exposed writing can be understood as 'any type of writing designed to be used in open or closed spaces, which allows a plural (in-group, massive) reading, from a distance, of a text written on an exposed surface'. As a result, a 'necessary condition for its use to be effective is that exposed writing needs to be sufficiently large, and to present the message it carries in an evident and clear (verbal and/or visual) way' (Petrucci 1986, xx).[1]

Although the Italian palaeographer focussed his study mainly on monumental inscriptions, he also included other less solemn products, such as the defamatory posters of the modern age or the graffiti of different times, but especially of the last third of the twentieth century. Along with monumental writings, graffiti represent one of the most ancient types of exposed writing. However, they introduce some nuances in the conditions attributed to exposed writing, since the execution of graffiti did not always take into account whether size and location would make the messages evident and clear.

Further expanding this graphic universe, I will also consider in this essay any written manifestation – permanent or ephemeral – conceived to convey a message from an exposed surface. This nuance expressly affects all types of broadsheets or single-sheets used for the transmission of mandates and official regulations, proclamation of festivities, announcement of academic dissertations or commercial advertising. Many of these configured the cheap prints that constituted the main activity of plenty of printing shops, particularly from the second half of the sixteenth century. Yet, limiting the study to typographic formats, as usually happens since they are easier to trace, means to fragment the written culture of a given moment. This is especially so when the functions performed by the different materials do not depend on whether they were handwritten or printed.[2]

Under this global approach – rooted in the Petruccian concept of the history of written culture (Petrucci 2002, v-vi) – I propose a journey to the world of exposed writing in the early modern age. Undoubtedly, such a wide endeavour involves certain risks, both chronologically (since it covers a couple of centuries) and geographically (since only part of Western Europe is included). However, this essay, also limited in size, does not aim to focus on the specific aspects of each cultural, political or religious context, but on the common elements that emerge in the uses and meanings of exposed writings.

[1] There is an English version of this work by Petrucci (1993), but it does not include the preface to the original Italian edition, where this and the aforementioned terms are defined. This article is the result of the research project *'Scripta in itinere': Discourses, Forms and Appropriations of Written Culture in Public Spaces from the Early Modern Era to the Present* (HAR2014-51883-P), funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the National Research Agency of Spain. Here and elsewhere in this essay, translations of works not available in English are by Enrique Iñiguez Rodríguez, who translated this article from the Spanish original.

[2] I make this clarification because typographic fetishism sometimes leads to forgetting similar products copied by hand, as in Pettegree 2017.

Therefore, I prefer to deal with its communicative function in the broad sense, taking into account the plurality of its manifestations and the interaction between the messages and the places where exposed writing was registered and made visible, while considering specifically the urban space, which was the main scenario of said written activities. As we shall see, walls hosted a wide spectrum of written communication, where the word was imposed, inevitably in many cases, as Italo Calvino puts it in the quotation at the head of this essay. In other cases, however, the strength of this communication did not fall in the public presence, but in what the messages indicate about the intended motivations of those who wrote or painted on a specific wall or similar surface. Lastly, since the execution of certain kinds of exposed writings could lead to transgression due to the occupation of spaces not conceived for that purpose or to the dissemination of messages that were incompatible with the prevailing ideology in each territory, it seemed appropriate to close this article with a discussion of this subject.

2. *Between Private and Public: Home, Church and School*

The location par excellence of exposed writing is the public space, but this does not mean that writings were not executed as well in the domestic sphere under different materialities and temporalities. Devotional woodcuts, whose origin dates back to fourteenth-century Germany and, a bit later, Italy, were massively disseminated and one of the spaces in which they were used was the homes of medium and upper social groups, especially thanks to the multiplying effect introduced by the printing press. Those images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints, on planks and in particular as prints, often with their corresponding legends and prayers, were placed in canopies, pantries and hangings on the walls as a form of family devotion (Nalle 2008; González Sánchez 2017, 77-79) and as a means of educating children (Niccoli 2011, 22-42). Their presence was also a way to implore the mediation of the saints, thus fulfilling magico-religious functions comparable to those that have been observed of the so-called *nóminas* (cloth bags hung on the neck with written papers or images inside), *cartas de tocar* and other iconographic and textual amulets (Marquilhas 1999; Pérez García 2002).[3] Next to the images hung on the walls there could be a forecast, calendar or almanac with very varied information: astronomical and meteorological data, health recipes, agricultural advice, relevant events, festivities, etc. (figure 1);[4] i.e., a series of practical recommendations, some of them expressly useful for those who lived in rural areas or had agricultural properties. However, the product is much more complex and, whether in the hanging version or a small-format printed edition, it was also used in certain circumstances to comment on events and disseminate political content (Curto Ramada 2015, 186-191).[5]

[3] For a discussion on the magico-religious uses of writing, with a broad perspective, see Poulin 1979 and Cardona 1987, 154-193.

[4] For more information on the collection of almanacs of the Archivo Municipal of Toledo, centred mainly on the ways of indication of time, see Galende Díaz 2011.

[5] Since these can be found in greater amounts for the eighteenth century and later, a part of the bibliography has focussed on this period. Capp 1979, Salman 1999 and some authors of the collective volume Lüsebrink *et al.* 2003 have dealt with their dissemination in the previous period. For the case of Spain, see Moll 1996.

Almanac, ò Kalendario deste Año del Señor de 1681. con los Santos, Fiestas mouibles, y demas solemnidades, y Vigilias que se guardan en España, Abstinencias, Conjunciones, y Quartos de Luna. La entrada del Sol en los doze signos. Dias en que por concesion del Sumo Pontifice

Figure 1 – *Almanaque o calendario deste año del Señor de 1681* (1680), Madrid, Julián de Paredes. Courtesy of Archivo Municipal de Toledo

In some dwellings, the protection invoked by religious images was materialised more permanently through maxims incised or painted on the walls of the rooms. As noted by Juliet Fleming, William Phiston's compilation *Welspring of wittie conceites* (1584) proposed in its final part 'certaine worthie sentences, very meete to be written about a Bedchamber or, to be set up in any conuenient place in a house' (2001, 95). Contemporaneously the appendices of Thomas Tusser's *A hundreth good pointes of husbandry, lately maried vnto a hundreth good poynts of huswifery* (1570) included a series of 'husbandry poesies' for the different rooms of the house (hall, parlour, guest's chamber, bed chamber). Among others, in the form of a question and its answer, the following 'wise sentence' was recommended for the bedroom wall: 'What worse dispaire, than loth to die, for feare to go to Hell? What greater faith than trust in god, through Christ in heuen to dwel' (1570, fol. 40v). Inscriptions in Arabic with the texts 'Al-Mulk-lillāh' ('The kingdom is God's') and 'Al-Shukr-lillāh' ('Thanks be to God'), found in several rooms on the ground floor of a medieval manor house in Sigüenza (Guadalajara, Spain), built in the fifteenth century on a previous dwelling (Lavado Paradinas 2006), show the roots of these devotional decorations in different cultures.[6] A similar function can be determined for the inscriptions with sacred names carved on the lintels of the doors or the symbols of the cross, widely disseminated in rural areas (Cruz Sánchez 2010). In this regard, the presence of cruciform signs in the form of graffiti in the Morisco houses that survived in Spain in the sixteenth century has been interpreted as a way to purify them against the Islamic content of other motifs, such as six- and eight-

[6] In the Islamic world the use of writing with decorative characters was widely disseminated on account of the prohibition of representing the human figure.

pointed stars, six-petal rosettes or inscriptions in Arabic (Barrera Maturana 2008).[7] Thus, the inscription of religious symbols and maxims on visible surfaces was a way of sanctifying the houses practised by different cultures, which remained in force during the early modern age and even later.

Transcending into public space, and surely as a form of popular catechism linked to the effects of the Catholic Reformation, the biblical sentence 'En la casa del que jura, no faltará desventura' ('The house of a man that useth much swearing shall be filled with misfortune', rephrasing Sirach 23:11) – an exhortation against blasphemy and unnecessary swearing referring in turn to a paraphrase of the book of Zechariah (5:3-4) – was recorded or painted between 1549 and 1682 on the outside of many churches and civil buildings, mainly town halls, in the Spanish provinces of Álava, Burgos, Cuenca, Guadalajara, La Rioja, Navarra, Biscay and Zaragoza (González Blanco and Calatayud Fernández 1996, 2001 and 2004). Aiming at the moral edification of the nuns, the *Ceremonial povr l'vsage des religievses carmelites deschaussées* (1659), by Father Giovanni Agostino Gallicio, general of the congregation of Clerks Regular of Saint Paul, or Barnabas, included a chapter – book XVI, chapter xv – on the sentences that were to be written in different places of the convent of Saint-Denis, founded in 1625 and converted today into the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire. However, this phenomenon occurred likewise in other convents in France, Belgium and Luxembourg (Rollin 1986, 46). Although the writings that have been preserved date back to a plan executed in 1869, the historical record was immortalised earlier in the painting *L'infirmerie du carmel*, by Guillot, an eighteenth-century French painter. They were mainly quotes from the Old and New Testament, followed by writings of saints, and among these some from the founder of Carmel, Saint Teresa of Jesus. As the ceremonial text says, the purpose of the writings was to help people 'raise their soul to God':

> Un des foins que doiuent ceux á qui Dieu commet le governement des maisons religieuses, c'est de les remplir d'objets qui puissent aider les personnes qui y demeurent, á enlever leur ames à Dieu. C'est pour cet effet que cet ordre a en usage d'avoir des sentences tirées de l'Écriture Sainte et des oeuvres de divers saints en quelques endroits du monastere, savoir au Chapitre, au Novitiat, au Refectoir, au Chaufoir et au Parloir. Ces sentences sont escrites autour des murailles et enfermés dans de cartouches. Et comme ces sentences doiuent être appropriées à chaque lieu on a jugé à propos de les inserer ici et d'en faire un Chapitre. (Gallicio 1659, 427)[8]

These edifying uses of certain types of exposed writing are rooted in a long tradition exemplified by the inscriptions, mosaics and phylacteries traced everywhere in worship places of different faiths. From this perspective, the recovery of writing with political and civil functions in open spaces that took place between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, comprehensively studied in Italy

[7] Other graffiti found in a house of medieval origin in the port city of Toulon, France, dating from the second half of the sixteenth century to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, reveal an Arab-Islamic influence. This constitutes an atypical set of Islamic anthropomorphic figures, animal and plant motifs, naval representations and some inscriptions in Arabic, and they could prove the existence of relations between members of the Christian and Islamic communities – particularly commercial relations – despite the evident differences and cultural and religious barriers of those times (Molina *et al.* 2015, 181).

[8] 'One of the tasks of those to whom God commits the government of religious houses is to fill them with objects that may help the people who live there to raise their souls to God. It is for this purpose that this Order is in the habit of having sentences from the Holy Scriptures and the works of various saints in some places of the monastery, namely the Chapter house, the Novitiate, the Refectory, the Calefactory, and the Parlour. These sentences are written around the walls and enclosed in cartouches. And since these sentences must be suited to each place, it has been deemed appropriate to insert them here and build a Chapter around them'.

(Petrucci 1993, 1-15), was also reflected in a wide display of epigraphy and other expressions of the *visibile parlare* in sacred spaces.[9] During the early modern age the practice of placing large-sized inscriptions in the most relevant places of the churches continued uninterrupted. Culminating the approach to God, that was intended for the construction in height, a text of the Gospel of Matthew (16: 18-19) was inscribed at the base of the dome of St. Peter in Rome, between 1603 and 1613, to remember the ecclesiastical mandate of Christ to Saint Peter: 'TV ES PETRVS ET SVPER HANC PETRAM AEDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM ET TIBI DABO CLAVES REGNI CAELORUM'; while on the entablature of the main façade – by Carlo Maderno – another inscription of equal solemnity commemorated the culmination of the works in the time of Pope Paul V: 'IN HONOREM PRINCIPIS APOST. PAVLVS V BVRGHESIVS ROMANVS PONT. MAX. AN. MDCXII. PONT. VII' (Lansford 2009, 510, 526).

Inside St Peter's basilica, the funerary monument of Urban VIII by Bernini, a true testimony of the baroque *pathos* of death (Petrucci 1998, 94), brings us closer to another of the most widespread types of visible words: funerary epigraphy. Despite the reluctance that different sectors of the Catholic Reformation showed towards *ad sanctos* burials, inside the churches, the funeral culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries encouraged them in large quantities, as had been the case since the fifth century, when Christianity put an end to the pagan disgust with the proximity of the dead. The protection of the martyrs was sought through those burials, not only for the mortal body of the deceased, but for their whole being, for the day of Resurrection and the last Judgement (Ariès 2011, 41-45 and 59-61). As Martín Carrillo, doctor in canons and member of a religious order, puts it in his *Explicación de la bula de los difuntos* (1615), this custom gave the deceased the opportunity to take advantage of the intercession of the patron saints of each temple and of the prayers of the faithful, as, meanwhile, the latter could find models of behaviour in the lives of the deceased. They could also become aware of the transience of life, which was remembered, according to this author, by the epitaphs: 'Quién, llegando a una iglesia, viendo tantas sepulturas, tantos epitafios dellas, no se acordará que es mortal y se ha de ver bien librar en semejantes lugares, principalmente leyendo algunos epitafios curiosos' (Carrillo 1615, 87v).[10]

One feature of the funerary culture of the modern age was the eloquence and size of the epitaphs, so that the brief pious exhortation of other times became, in the sixteenth century, the 'edifying account of the life of the deceased', within a *modus operandi* increasingly inclined to collective register, i.e. the memory of the whole family (Ariès 2011, 249). Accompanied on occasion by images and in some cases replaced by these, the inscriptions, often especially extensive, narrated the sad or glorious avatars of the deceased (figure 2). Thus, among the tombstones of the Roman churches in the sixteenth century, one lamented the death of Alberto, two and a half months old, the son of the baker of Pope Clement VII; while another lamented the death of the bricklayer Antonio di Treda, recounted the death of his wife and his daughter, who must have died tragically as the word 'discratiata' of the epitaph suggests (D'Achille 1987, 96, 98; Niccoli 2010, 340-341). At a graphic level, the funerary memory of the early modern age confronted the clarity of the Renaissance tombs with baroque effects. In this period the epitaphs broke with the traditional epigraphic formats by dislocating the writing in curved and wavy lines, decomposing the text into sections, simulating non-stone materials as graphic spaces (wood, rags, paper, shells, skins) and resorting to polychromy (Petrucci 1998, 92-95).

[9] The expression *visibile parlare*, coming from Dante's *Divina Commedia* (Purgatorio, Canto X, 95), has been used to name different modalities of the exposed writing (Ciociola 1992 and 1997).

[10] 'Who, entering a church, seeing so many tombs, so many epitaphs on them, shall not remember that he is mortal and shall not consider it good to pass time in such places, mainly reading some curious epitaphs'.

Figure 2 – Funerary monument of William Cokain (1626), partially destroyed in the great fire of London in 1661. Dugdale 1658, 65v., Guildhall Library, A 5.2 NO 6, London. Courtesy of Guilhdall Library, London

As much as some epitaphs suggest a different phenomenon, the funerary culture of those centuries is a good example of social and gender inequalities with respect to what Petrucci called the right to 'writing death' (1998, xvi). The language of the epitaphs, the location of the tombs and the different types – tombstones at ground level, embedded tombs, funerary monuments attached to the walls and, to a lesser extent, exempt tombs, seen negatively by the Church – contributed to perpetuate those inequalities among the living, at a time when there was a change in attitude towards death (Ariès 2011, 261-272).[11] In the domains of the Spanish monarchy, the ostentation reached by some tombs motivated the intervention of the Church in the second half of the sixteenth century. In addition to combating the erection of exempt tombs, the Spanish synods issued rules to avoid some excesses that had been committed up to that time, in particular exaggerated luxury, the placement of pagan elements to identify the deceased and the exaltation of lineages by means of shields and other symbols (Martínez Gil 2000, 209; Polo Sánchez 2015, 390).

[11] In addition to the aforementioned works by Armando Petrucci and Philippe Ariès, for Britain we can highlight the studies of Llewellyn 2000, Sherlock 2016 and Newstok 2009, the latter focused on the poetics of the epitaphs. For a comparison of burial cultures in London and Paris, see Harding 2002.

Monumental, commemorative or funerary epigraphy symbolises the most visible and indelible aspect of the ecclesiastical graphosphere. Along with it, the interior of the temples was the scene of a preaching to the eyes that relied on the paintings hung on the walls, in which the images used to be accompanied by explanations or larger texts on the story represented in the painting or the life of the person portrayed. In addition, as had happened in the Middle Ages (Pritchard 1967; Champion 2015), the practice of graffiti inside churches was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was immortalised by the Dutch painters Pieter Saenredam, Gerard Houckgeest and Emanuel de Witte in some of their characteristic paintings of interiors (figure 3).

Figure 3 – Emmanuel de Witte, *Interior of the Oude Kerk, Delft* (ca. 1650).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) - Public Domain Dedication

In the foreground you can see the moment when two boys paint, probably with charcoal, on the base of a temple column. Although profane, the theme does not clash with reality because the studies on graffiti in churches during the modern age have shown their thematic and social heterogeneity, in some cases linked to the specific use of the spaces where they were executed (Trentin 2010). In the baptistery of Parma, dates of birth and records of baptism were engraved on the marbles (Dall'Acqua 1976, 74). Even richer is the group of about one hundred and fifty graffiti, dated between the beginning of the sixteenth and the end of the nineteenth centuries, made on the frescoes of the oratory of San Sebastiano in Arborio, which thus became a true 'palimpsest of senses' (about this term, see Bailey 2007, 208). In them, we can see the preference of the authors for placing the inscriptions near the figures of

the saints, again seeking their protection, but also as a 'form of bullying, of intimidation, to ensure that the saints do their job' (Plesch 2014, 139). Furthermore, the graffiti in Arborio evidence the individuals who went to the oratory – pilgrims, shepherds, soldiers – and document events of critical importance for the town and its inhabitants (wars, plagues, good and bad harvests, etc.), which makes them a sort of inventory of fears. As they wrote on the wall, people assumed a certain level of control over the events and in this way their individual memories were incorporated into the collective register as a kind of community memorial (Plesch 2005, 2014 and 2018).

The walls of the temples also served for the dissemination of all kinds of pastoral notices on masses, festivities, prayers or sermons. In this sense, in the synod of the diocese of Toledo held in 1480 in Alcalá de Henares, it had been agreed that the principles of Christian doctrine be exposed in a 'board' to be hung from 'un clavo en lugar público eminente donde cualquier persona la pueda leer e informarse de lo en ella contenido'.[12] This mandate was later reproduced in different Hispanic synods of the sixteenth century and the location of the 'board' used to be the door, where the lists of sinners and those threatened with excommunication were also fixed (Castillo Gómez 2016a, 207-212).

By means of publications such as these, the Church intervened in the life of the community, publicising its precepts and publicly sanctioning those who did not comply. In certain cases, the disapproval of sinful behaviour was made visible by forcing the transgressors to wear around their necks a text with the account of the sin or crime committed. After stealing the flutes from the organ in the convent of Santa Catalina, in Barcelona, on 2 July 1612, Gabriel Monclús was forced to walk wearing a piece of parchment through the streets of the city.[13] Likewise, on 23 July 1648, the Venetian Inquisition sentenced the bookseller Giacomo Batti to stay one hour in front of the main door of St. Mark's basilica with a candle in his hand, a rope around his neck and a sign confessing that he had sold forbidden books (see Infelise 2014, 191-192). In the case of a crime against the faith, the penitents were taken to the podium where the *auto-da-fé* was held, dressed with the signs of their infamy, and remained so, in view of all, during the whole act, each one bearing the symbols of their crimes and penalties. At the end of the act, the *sanbenitos* of those condemned and reconciled – bearing their names, professions, places of abode, crimes and condemnations inscribed – were to be exhibited in the churches where those people had been residents or parishioners. The *sanbenitos* were to be kept there permanently and in good condition – although that was not always the case – so that the despicable memory of the heretics and their descendants would not fall into oblivion (Castillo Gómez 2008; Peña Díaz 2012).

In line with what I have just mentioned about the board of doctrines, it should also be noted that the bill entitled *Regole di costumi christiani a voi scolari*, printed in Italy in the 1570s-1580s, was probably also exhibited, along with catechism schools, in churches and other public places as an expression of the zeal of the Church, just after the Council of Trent, in the surveillance of 'each stage of the life of the faithful' (Niccoli 2004, 32-34; Niccoli 2010, 344). In the educational context, the school iconography at the beginning of the modern age includes the use of certain forms of exposed writing for teaching. This is clear from the engravings reproduced on the cover of some editions of the *Exercitium grammaticale puerorum per dietas distributum*, whose

[12] *Constituciones de los Arzobispados de Toledo y Tarragona en los siglos XIV-XV*, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, MSS/3021, 97r-v. See Castillo Gómez 2016a, 208 ('a nail in an eminent public place where anyone may read them and find out what is contained therein').

[13] Pergamí Gabriel Monclús, Arxiu Històric, *Pergamins Municipals*, S/R, Barcelona. His transcript can be seen in Expósito i Amagat 2016, 36.

first edition was printed in the 1480s in Haguenau (Bas-Rhin), and specifically the editions of Strasbourg in 1502 and 1504 (figure 4) (see Reicke 1979, 17); and likewise in the *Cartilla para mostrar a leer a los moços* (ca. 1526) (Infantes 1998, IV). All of them show some kind of written boards hanging on the wall; in the Latin grammar behind the teacher and in the Spanish primer in the background. The latter shows separate letters that could correspond to the alphabet, while in the German manual some lines of text can also be made out. Both details suggest an object similar to the hornbooks or ABCs used in modern England, personal tablets that included the alphabet, the basic syllables, the Lord's Prayer and the articles of faith, as was typical of a teaching tradition always associated with religious instruction (Lamb 2018, 29-70). In England, at the end of the sixteenth century, John Hart, author of a fast-learning method for the English language, also considered the use of mural alphabets for educational purposes, but not only in schools: 'if the figures with their letters wer drawen on the walles, pillers, and posters, of churches, tounes, and houses, they moughte muche helpe and further the ignorant of al letters, to atteine to reade' (Hart 1570, sig. *ijr; see Fleming 2001, 50).

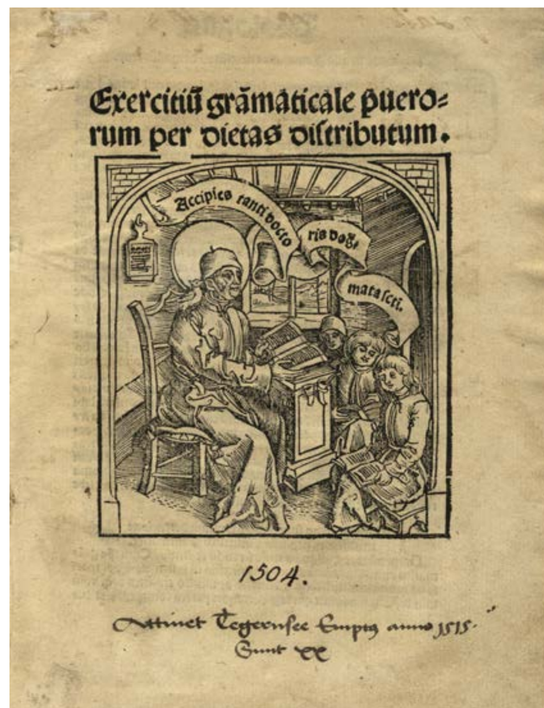

Figure 4 – Mural alphabet to teach reading, *Exercitium grammaticale puerorum per dietas distributum*, [Strasburg, Husner], 1504. Courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Münich, 870259 4 L.lat. 191

3. *The Urban Space as a Public Graphosphere*

As an instrument of communication in its broadest sense, exposed writing reached its apogee in the cities of the early modern age, which were turned into genuine public graphospheres.[14] The

[14] I borrow this term from Franklin (2011, 531), who has used it to study the same phenomenon in Franklin 2017; 2019, 1-10.

halls of power published their mandates, regulations and other provisions by means of public announcements and, increasingly, by fixing documents in the busiest places of the city, initially as manuscripts and from the mid-sixteenth century mainly in printed formats (Castillo Gómez 2016a, 200-206; Castro Rojas 2016 and 2019; Bruni 2017; Cumby 2017). In the forties, this was a dilemma for the French authorities, suspicious of the trivialisation and falsification that the mass production of this type of documents could involve, against the greater security and control offered by the publication by means of royal criers (Fogel 1989, 105).

The shops, in turn, were identified by signs placed on the doors – as can be seen in engravings by William Hogarth – where lists of products and prices were also put on view (Welch 2005, 137-139). According to the testimonies that have been preserved, writing teachers and theatre companies usually resorted to bills to announce classes and productions: the former, as may seem logical, in manuscript formats (D'Haenens 1983); the latter, also in manuscript formats in the domains of the Spanish monarchy (Reyes Peña 2015), while in Shakespearean London printed single-sheets were used (Stern 2006). Leaving aside catalogues of fairs – such as Leipzig's – and booksellers, the sale of books was promoted by showing them on the street and announcing them by means of bills such as the one that Giulio Cesare Croce had composed in 1608 with the index of all his works (figure 5). He was not satisfied with just reciting and singing his poems through the streets of Bologna or selling them in opuscules; he also turned to printed advertising in order to broaden the circle of his readers (Zanardi 2009).

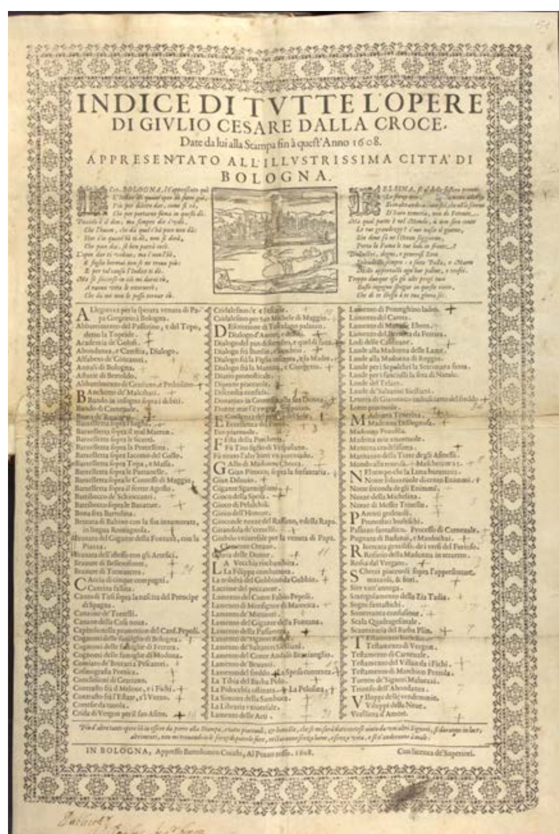
INDICE DI TVTTE L'OPERE
DI GIVLIO CESARE DALLA CROCE.
Date da lui alla Stampa fin à quest'Anno 1608.
APPRESENTATO ALL'ILLVSTRISSIMA CITTA' DI
BOLOGNA.

Figure 5 – *Indice di tutte l'opere di Giulio Cesare Dalla Croce*. In Bologna, appresso Bartolomeo Cocchi, 1608. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, MS 3878, c.[51].
Courtesy of Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna

This type of paper ephemera fulfilled an informative function, but in the case of edicts, proclamations and other mandates, the public exposure of the document also contributed to the visibility of power and social order (Petrucci 1996, vi-viii). As a consequence, their design combined readability with propagandistic sense, as simultaneously happened in the typographical bills of literary contests and in the announcements of academic theses.[15] Typography introduced, in all of them, significant improvements in the organisation of the text by distinguishing sections and levels of information; in turn, coats of arms and figures on the header acted as signs of representation of the authority, the institution organising the festivity, the person or saint celebrated, or the sponsors and academic principals. In the bills advertising theses, the employment of Latin suggests a preferentially educated public, despite the fact that they were placed in the university colleges and on occasion on the doors of some churches and other buildings. The bills were initially manuscript, but in the second half of the sixteenth century the printed format prevailed, with the prior authorisation of the rector or another authority: in Germany printed bills are already documented in 1560 (Kirwan 2017); in France, the first appeared in the Protestant universities of Orthez and Lescar, between 1585 and 1592, while in the Sorbonne 127 bills were printed between 1588 and 1660 (Walsby 2017); and with regard to the Hispanic universities, the first remaining bill advertising a thesis is the examination that Pedro Balli took on 26 August 1584, 'hora nona antimeridies', to obtain the degree of doctor in Law at the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico (Fernández de Zamora 2015, 21-22).

The communication instrumentalised through the different kinds of exposed writings cannot be explained only by consideration of them as texts to be read. It must be taken into account that many texts were published or circulated while interacting with orality: be it edicts, previously proclaimed by the crier; or libels, whose mobilising effect was increased by the wide diffusion through handwritten and printed copies, reading in the street and easy memorisation of many of them, as they were written as dialogues or with accessible rhymes (De Vivo 2007, 200-248; Castillo Gómez 2016b, 121-152). As has been pointed out in relation to the English ballads, street reception was deeply influenced by the relationship that the presenter established with the audience through the use of several strategies: ways of addressing the public, exhortations to promote certain reactions and a colloquial language with frequent insertion of proverbs and sayings (Würzbach 2011, 54-74).

Many of these texts used images as well, sometimes to ridicule the people insulted in defamatory libels; in other cases, to emphasise the criticism formulated in many of the pamphlets distributed in the religious and political conflicts of the early modern age, initially with the Lutheran reform – deeply linked to printed propaganda (Scribner 1994; Pettegree 2017) – then the anticlerical pasquinades of Renaissance Italy (Niccoli 2005), the French wars of religion (Debbagi Baranova 2012), the revolts in different places of the Spanish monarchy in the time of Philip IV (Hugon and Merle 2016) or the English civil war (Peacey 2004). In each of these instances, pamphlets – fixed on the walls or distributed through the streets – were used to intervene in the public opinion of the time, just as was the case with books, sermons and theatre (Briggs and Burke 2009, 61-89). Their effectiveness as instruments of opinion is beyond doubt as revealed – by way of illustration – by the letter that the Bishop of Valence, Jean Monluc, wrote on 8 January 1573 to Charles IX of France

[15] For the bills designed to announce the literary contests organised during the festivities for the proclamation of a king, births and funerals in the royal family or canonisation of saints, among other outstanding events, see Castillo Gómez 2011; Osuna and Infantes 2011.

justifying the use of libels for his duty to defend the reputation of the sovereign, questioned by the intense Protestant propaganda that was disseminated during the wars of religion (see Debbagi Baranova 2012, 337).

Yet, it was in monumental epigraphy that exposed writing best evidenced its meaning as a figurative device. This can be said of the inscriptions painted in the ephemeral constructions erected in public displays, but mainly for those carved in stone. Some had an advertising function because they contained a summary of the mandates of public authorities, such as the 'lapidi prohibitorie' used in Italy in the seventeenth century and, especially, in the eighteenth century, to warn of the penalties and sanctions incurred when throwing garbage into the street, playing ball on, or putting a market stall near the wall of a church (Petrucci 1993, 84-85). Within this modality of 'epigraphic edicts', in Lisbon a plaque placed in 1686 reported an order of King Peter II regulating the transit of carriages in Salvador Street (figure 6). This street was back then an important communication junction, as it linked the Castle of São Jorge with A Baixa, but its middle stretch was narrow and this fact caused disputes over whether the carriages that went up or those that went down had right of way (Soares, Barreto and Markl 2007, 114).

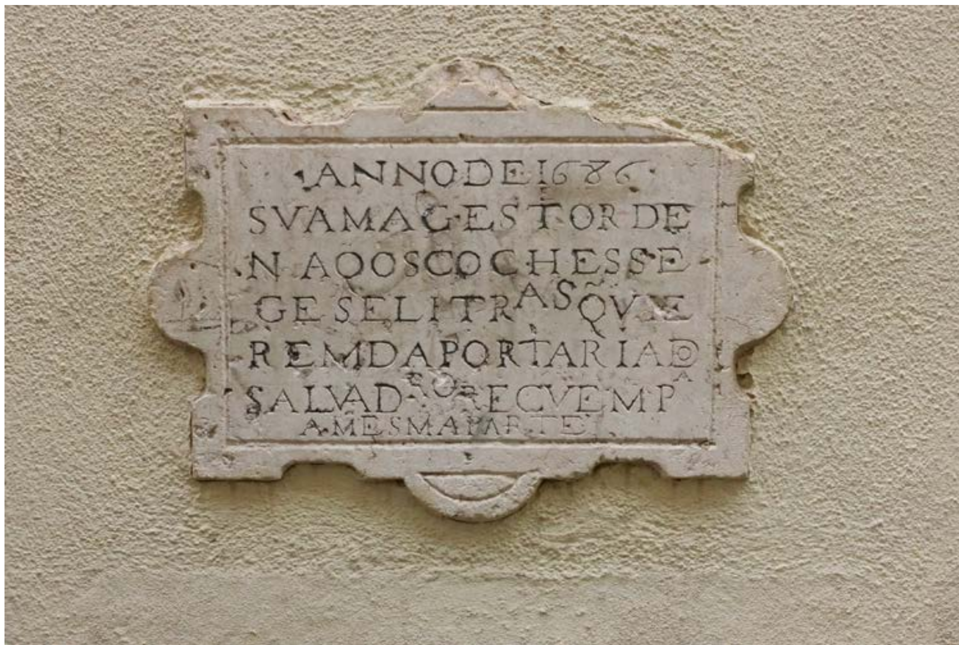

Figure 6 – *Epigraph on the regulation of carriage traffic in Lisbon, 1686*,
Photo by Ivan Batinic / Alamy Foto de stock.
By permission of the Universidad de Alcalá, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras Alcalá de Henares, Madrid

Other forms of exposed writings had a clear celebratory and propagandistic intention, and were therefore manufactured with a greater care in the epigraphic composition, for the inscription operated as a representation of the authority that had ordered its placement. To see this phenomenon, it is enough to go through sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome and its urban transformation, where a large amount of monuments were erected to extol the grandeur of the *caput mundi* and the power of the Popes (figure 7). Everywhere, gates, arches and fountains

were erected, with their accompanying inscriptions in large and elegant humanistic capitals as 'an important part of the visual power system', aimed at praising the figure of the promoters of those changes (Paolucci 2016, 9).

Figure 7 – Fontana dell'Acqua Paola, erected in the time of Pope Paul V, Rome, 1612, Photo by Antonio Castillo Gómez. Courtesy of the Author

In this kind of materialisation, the written text could be read alphabetically, though it was certainly perceived mainly as a visual product on the whole. Moreover, for a large part of that society, the interpretation of the epigraphs was hindered not only by illiteracy, but also by certain graphic resources used in the epigraphic composition – such as inscribed letters, so characteristic in some epigraphic cultures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – and by the frequent use of Latin, although its stereotyped and formulaic character could make up for the inexperience that many had in the use of that language. Therefore, limiting the interpretation of epigraphic production and even other exposed writing from the early modern centuries to an alphabetical reading would entail disregarding the symbolic and propagandistic meaning intrinsic to the flamboyant solemnity of a part of that production. This type of inscriptions conveyed a meaning through their letters, but also through their material form, their relation with other discourses – especially the iconographic discourse – and by their position within the monumental ensemble.

Inscribed in the public space, the different kinds of exposed writing showed all their performative capacity as 'acts of writing' (Fraenkel 2007). Insofar as they made visible the governing ideology or the criticism thereof, their concurrence created a place of dispute. This happened with the bronze decree that Sophia Alekseyevna, Regent of Russia from 1682 to 1689, had placed in the Red Square in Moscow, legitimising the acts of the nobles who had taken her to power, while Peter the Great, proclaimed Tsar when he was ten, after the death

of his brother Theodore III, and his mother, were removed from the court. At the end of the regency, the decree was destroyed (Franklin 2017, 348; and 2019, 148).

By destroying or replacing certain inscriptions and symbols (arms and emblems), people intervened in the memory and in the re-signification of public spaces, as was highlighted in the Neapolitan revolt against Philip IV. Initially, as the revolt was a popular reaction against a rise in taxes on consumption, its leader, the fisherman Masaniello, did not suppress the Habsburg arms, but ordered the placement next to them of a shield crowned with an uppercase P in the centre of the blazon as an expression of the People. Simultaneously, around 11 or 13 July 1647, in the Market Square, began the works of an *epitaph*, on whose walls boards with the clauses of the agreement between the rebels and the viceroy, the Duke of Arcos, were to be placed: 'Detto Viceré, per dar forma a quello che haveva promesso e dar loco che esso non solo volse sodisfatione per li detti Capitoli, ma ancora aggiungere altri di sua volontà, si diede ordine che si facesse l'epitaffio in mezzo del Mercato per fare scolpire in marmo detti capitoli' (Fuidoro 1994, 65).[16] The famous architect Cosimo Fanzago was employed to that end, thus highlighting, according to Alain Hugon, the 'will to magnify the construction of a monument that celebrated the recovered Concord' (2011, 304).

From the autumn on, the revolt entered a markedly political phase that culminated with the proclamation, for a few months, of the Most Serene Republic of Naples, commanded from November by the Duke of Guise, thus rehabilitating French influence in southern Italy. At the end of January 1648, Neapolitan independence came to an end with the capture of the city by the troops of John Joseph of Austria. During the period that the Republic maintained its independence, Duke Henry of Guise ordered that the arms of Philip IV be removed from the gates and be replaced by his own arms, the acronym SPQN (*Senatus Populusque Neapolitanus*) and the word *Libertas* as an expression of republican power. This dispute on symbols was also manifested in coins, paintings, images and even the calendar of saints' days (Hugon 2011, 291-326).

As for the mandates of the authority, their public exposure decisively influenced the acts of disobedience held against them. On the one hand, we may recall the judicial proceedings for contempt, such as the one instituted by the Council of the Supreme Inquisition in September 1559, to identify the people who had 'removed and detached from the said church' an edict on forbidden books that was to be exposed in the door of the Cathedral of Coria (Cáceres, Spain) for thirty days. Under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Venice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were various acts of insubordination towards the edicts, which were broken into pieces and 'befouled' amidst public disorder instigated not only by the people, but also by the nobles (De Vivo 2007, 132-133). On the other hand, we find the confrontation between Venice and Rome as a result of a Papal Decree, of April 1606, which excommunicated the Doge and the Senate and banned all religious functions in the Republic. Apart from the subsequent libel war, the Venetian authorities initially prevented the public exhibition of the pontifical proclamation at the entrance of Basilica di San Marco, while the 'protest' written by Paolo Sarpi in opposition to the initiative of Paul V, was printed on large bills and fixed on the doors of the churches (De Vivo 2007, 164-167).

[16] 'This viceroy, in order to shape what he had promised and to show satisfaction for the aforementioned Agreements while contributing of his own accord, ordered that an epitaph be placed amid the Market Square so that said Agreements may be sculpted in marble'.

4. *Between Norm and Transgression*

The existence of a *dominus* that, as pointed out by Petrucci (1986, xxi), determines the use of the spaces used for the placement of the writing and, in some circumstances, also its formal characteristics and means of appropriation, implies the distinction between legitimate or authorised kinds of exposed writings and those that may constitute a subversion of the norm. In Lyon, for example, the municipality intervened in 1651 against the profusion of unauthorised notices fixed on streets and squares, some even on the door of the City Hall (Béroujon 2009, 158). Yet, in Elizabethan England, the spread of graffiti in domestic spaces and churches may indicate a certain permissiveness. It had nothing to do, in the opinion of Juliet Fleming (2001, 40), with the connotation of illegality which it acquired in the mid-nineteenth century.

Historically analysed, the practice of graffiti is more complex, although its distinction from other forms of exposed writing may be understood as referring to 'any unofficial inscription (or image), drawn freehand on a surface (architectural or otherwise) whose main function differs from that of the supports commonly used for writing or drawing' (Bucherie 1983, 486). But this 'unofficial' character – it might be better to say spontaneous – does not necessarily mean communicative transgression as is inferred from a large part of the legacies from the early modern age. In Italy, the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino – considered by Baltasar Castiglione in *Il Cortegiano* (1528) one of the most beautiful palaces of the Italian Renaissance – is in itself a 'palazzo da leggere' ('a palace to be read') because of the large number of writings on its walls. Some are monumental inscriptions, such as the one that honours, in Latin and in beautiful humanistic capitals, Federico da Montefeltro, who ordered the construction of the palace. The initials F. C. (Federicus Comes) and FE. DUX (Federicus Dux) are repeated on all doors and in other places, as are the family's arms, placed there to communicate who held control over those spaces, which does not mean that the owners determined the communicative instrumentation thereof. Other writings are graffiti in different languages – Italian, Latin, French, German and Spanish – that follow one another from the fifteenth century to our day with multiple messages in consonance with the functions that the palace had: residence, theatre and university in the modern age, and, in the nineteenth century, a partial use as a prison (Sarti 2007, 2009 and 2017).

Regarding prisons – a privileged space for graffiti – we know that in France between 1839 and 1972 prisoners had an obligation to keep their cells clean, from which it can be deduced that writing on the walls was sanctioned along with other communications (Sanchez 2018, 66). On the contrary, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with a different penitentiary regime and the cells usually located in dark and unhealthy rooms, it seems that there was a certain tolerance, at least in the inquisitorial prisons (Civale 2017, 265). Meanwhile, the exchange of messages between prisoners and the outside was more seriously controlled – at least by regulation – and probably more so in the prisons of the Holy Office (Silva 2011; Braga 2015, 109-132 and 177-271; Castillo Gómez 2016a, 96-118).[17]

What to say about graffiti in churches and shrines? Their profusion suggests that the faithful and the ecclesiastical authorities tolerated them and even understood them as a form of devotional expression. The aforementioned oratory of San Sebastiano in Arborio constitutes a palimpsest of meanings due to the plurality of the messages that were superimposed on its

[17] Graffiti and prison writings have merited a number of approaches in recent times, among them Candau and Hameau 2004; Sherman and Sheils 2009; Ahnert 2013, 33-42; and Castillo Gómez 2018, which includes a historiographic review. For the rich collection of the Palermo Inquisitorial Prison, see Civale 2017, Fiume 2017a and 2017b, and the recent compilations of Fiume and García-Arenal (2018a and 2018b).

frescoes. Names, dates and devotional writings are likewise present in the walls of two basilicas: San Giulio, on the homonymous islet on Lake Orta and San Zeno in Verona (Plesch 2002 and 2007), as well as in different rural churches of Trentino in Italy, along the valleys of the rivers Cismon and Vanoi, bearing devotional graffiti, acronyms and names of people from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries (Antonelli 2006, 87-93). In a different sense but with similar permission, scholars and visitors of the Malatestiana Library in Cesena left their marks there from its opening in 1454 until our time (Errani and Palma 2018). In turn, in modern Rome, artists – some of them relatively well-known – who had settled there in their formative stages, as well as lovers of art, soldiers and tourists alike wrote on the ancient paintings of the Villa Adriana in Tivoli, the frescoes of Rafael in the Vatican or on the Carracci gallery in the Farnese palace as a testimony of their admiration for the painters and their works (Guichard 2014). Lastly, as nowadays, graffiti also attracted the attention of the university world. In the Old Treasury at St. John's College, Cambridge, are several signature inscriptions by former fellows at the college, some of them dated (Underwood 1980, 23-26).[18]

While some graffiti were tolerated and even well regarded, others were rejected and even persecuted for different reasons. For Joseph Hall, author of the dystopian *Fooliana* (1605), it was in bad taste that 'the houses are all passinglie well painted within, especially with the names of their ancestry, their guests, and acquaintance, gracefully delineate with coale and candle', which led him to add the marginal note: 'muro bianco carta di matto: A white wall is a foole's book' (Fleming 2001, 49). Likewise, an edict of the rector of the Roman *Studium Urbis*, issued in 1689, severely forbade 'che alcuno non ardisca dipingere e scrivere coi carboni, lapis, gesso et altri instrumenti nelli muri, porte, capitelli, finestre, colonne, cornici, cathedre, ò banhi'.[19] Apart from pointing out the different ways of writing or painting graffiti and the multiplicity of surfaces, the mandate was expressly aimed at 'figure, massime dishoneste, lettere, segni, caratteri, versi, motti, lineamenti, armi, insegne, et in qual si voglia modo imbrattatarli, etiam che si pingessero, o scrivessero cose buone' (cf. Petrucci 1986, 117-118).[20] Beyond the nature of the message, it was thought important to avoid the 'soiling' of spaces that did not have communicative function.[21] For mainly aesthetic reasons, a proclamation of the city of Arezzo prohibited the drawing of 'signs, scribbles or other things with coal or something similar' in the building of Loggia della Misericordia, decorated by Giorgio Vasari (Welch 2005, 121). A more exhaustive tracking of the municipal ordinances is however missing in order to understand how the regulation of the public space set forth in the ordinances of Barcelona in 1302 evolved in the following four centuries: "Que ningú non gosi pintar, ni escriure a les tàpies o partes dels

[18] Likewise, in several windows on the ground floor of the Colegio Mayor de San Ildefonso in Alcalá de Henares, a number of incised graffiti have been recovered bearing the symbol of the 'victor', names and unfinished scribblers as *probatio pennae*, among which several students and chaplains from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries have been identified (Serrano Pozuelo 2008). Their execution and location differentiates them from other 'victors' painted on the walls for clearly celebratory purposes, though not only for academic merits. For a discussion on these, see Rodríguez-San Pedro Bezares and Weruaga Prieto 2011. In Italy, university celebrations were materialised by the placement of coats of arms, as can be seen in the Archiginnasio and in the vaults of the cloister of the Collegio di Spagna, both in Bologna, and in the Palazzo Bo, the historical seat of the University of Padua since 1539. See Rossetti and Dalla Francesca 1987, Benucci 2007 and Brizzi 2011.

[19] 'Anyone to paint and write with charcoal, pencil, chalk or other instruments on walls, doors, chapiters, windows, columns, cornices, chairs or benches'.

[20] 'Any figure, dishonest expression, letters, signs, characters, verses, mottos, portraits, arms, emblems, or to soil them in any way, even when agreeable things are painted on written' (Petrucci 1993, 92-93).

[21] The misappropriation of the space, the use of non-canonical writings and the content of the messages form the three levels of communicative transgression applied to graffiti, especially in more recent versions (Gimeno Blay 1997, 14-21).

carrers o camins, i que tot el que tingui pintades o escrits en les seves parets o tàpies que les faci treure' (Batlle i Gallart and Vinyoles i Vidal 2002, 17).[22]

What happens when the graffiti or any other kind of exposed writing openly questions the power relations, the moral system or the normal development of an activity? In situations like this, complacency was much rarer. In 1591 the attacks of the students of Padua against the Jesuits by means of mural writings provoked a crisis that ended with the closing of the Company's school (De Vivo 2007, 141). A clear ideological motivation was also put forward by the Jesuit Jerónimo López against the graffiti that he found in Valencia and Salamanca when he went there to preach, in 1651 and 1653 respectively. As soon as he stepped in both cities, he warned that the 'walls, doors and hallways of many houses, streets and squares' were defaced with obscene and blasphemous messages. Outraged, he devoted the occasional sermon to the subject, and from the pulpit he harangued the people to erase them. He even threatened to do so himself 'going through the streets with a pot of lime, mixed with water, erasing these abominable and ugly things with a brush'. But it did not go beyond that. The faithful obeyed and immediately a group of people, led by nobles and priests, got down to work (Naja 1678, 276-277, 299). In those years there was also a notable scandal in Lyon due to insolent writings and graffiti figures on the walls of the Hôtel de Ville and other locations in its quarter in 1652. In response, the municipal authorities approved a salary of 600 pounds a year and lodging in the Hôtel de Ville for a guard to make sure that those events did not happen again (Béroujon 2009, 159). Finally, in February 1664, the governor of Rome and Vice Camerlengo, Monsignor Giovanni Nicola Conti, published a proclamation, periodically repeated, sanctioning those who disturbed the development of classes in the Jesuit College, including especially those who wrote or drew, with 'inchiostro, carbone, lapis, gesso, ò altra materia, ò pur con ferri, ò altri instrumenti' (Archivio di Stato di Roma, Bandi, vol. 410),[23] on the 'mura, pilastri, porte, finestre, pavimenti, libri e carte di detto Collegio' (cf. Petrucci 1982, 43).[24]

More conspicuously, the permissiveness in the case of libels and pasquinades was inversely proportional to the degree to which they questioned authority and moral order. It should be kept in mind that in Rome the festival of Pasquino was funded by the popes, who in fact were quite indulgent with the publication of pasquinades until the Council of Trent. From then on, the situation changed in the Catholic countries. This became evident after the censorship of the literary genre of the pasquinades decreed by Paul IV and Pius V (Niccoli 2005, 128-157; Fragnito 2006). In the same vein, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* published in 1583 by Inquisitor Gaspar de Quiroga condemned the writing and dissemination of pasquinades, libels or songs with messages that were heretical or critical towards the religious authorities:

> Item se prohiben todos los pasquines o libelos infamatorios y famosos, debaxo de cualquier titulo y nombre salgan o se escriban e intitulen, en los cuales con autoridades y palabras de la Sagrada Escritura se dicen y tratan cosas y materia profanas. Y lo mismo se entienda de todas las canciones, coplas, sonetos, prosas, versos y rimas, en cualquier lengua compuestas, que traten cosas de la Sagrada Escritura, interpretándola contra su debida reverencia y respeto, profanamente y a otros propósitos contra lo que común y ordinariamente la santra madre Iglesia romana admite y usa. (Martínez de Bujanda 2016, 60)[25]

[22] 'It is forbidden to paint or write on the enclosures or walls of the streets or roads, and anyone who has painted or written on their walls or enclosures is to erase all of them'.

[23] 'ink, coal, pencil, chalk or any other matter, even with irons or other instruments'.

[24] 'walls, pilasters, doors, windows, pavements, books and documents'.

[25] 'All pasquinades as well as defamatory or reputable libels are prohibited, regardless of the title or name under which they are published or written and entitled, wherein using authorities and words from the Holy Scripture, profane things and matters are said and discussed. And the same prohibition is to apply to all songs, ballads, sonnets, prose, verses and rhymes, composed in any language, which discuss things from the Holy Scripture, interpreting it without due reverence and respect, profanely or with other purposes, against the uses ordinarily admitted by the Holy Mother Roman Church'.

A common consequence was moral condemnation, in the form of the penalty of excommunication, decreed both against the authors or inspirers of libels and against those who, having seen them on the wall, did not detach, break and denounce them. Such a consequence is alluded to by the edicts promulgated for the persecution of libels, pastoral visits, collections of sermons, manuals of confessors and, to be sure, synodal provisions (Castillo Gómez 2013, 313-317).

In conclusion, this approach to the functions and uses of exposed writing has tried to show the scope and richness of the field, pointing out some of the spaces where inscriptions were made and some of their functions. Existing from the very origins of writing, it is undeniable that in the early modern age these writings experienced a golden age stimulated by the development of literacy, the diffusion of the printing press and, in general, by the importance of writing within the social organisation, albeit that the dissemination of exposed writing was far from homogeneous. A more detailed study would provide a basis for clarifying the chronology of the phenomenon while highlighting the particularities of each cultural, political and religious context. However, with some peculiarities derived from the different degree of literacy as well as political and religious differences, a common feature in Europe at that time, at least in its western part, was the massive presence of exposed writing in domestic spaces, interiors with different functions and, above all, the public space. It was frequently advised that the texts should be made using clear and visible letters but, of course, there are exceptions that prove the rule. Many graffiti clearly violated this norm both because of their location and because of graphic inexperience, due to the semi-literacy of the writer or the difficulties derived from some walls. Likewise, defamatory bills were often written by disguising the writing, i.e. with a clumsy layout (figure 8), often mixing upper case and lower case, in order to better ensure that the offence would remain anonymous (Evangelisti 2018, 13-87).

Figure 8 – Notarial reproduction of the defamatory libel against two friars published in Faenza.
Courtesy of Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali - Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Tribunale del Torrone, reg. 1648, c. 198v.

Solemn inscriptions make power and social stratification visible in many buildings or funeral monuments. The institutions of power, ranging from the king to the municipality and including the ecclesiastical authorities among others, made use of more ephemeral instruments, both manuscript and printed, to display their authority and publish mandates that should be known by the entire population. But since the public space was not only at the service of power, political contestation, religious dissidence, social tension or personal confrontation were also visible there, mainly through libels and pasquinades, but on occasion also by means of graffiti. The latter were particularly common in private homes, churches, taverns, universities, prisons and libraries, among other places, with very varied purposes: ranging from a willingness to leave testimony of one's presence at that place to devotion or affirmation of identity, as can be seen in other graffiti. Furthermore, with the emergence of a pre-capitalist economic structure, the first signs of commercial advertising made their entrance in the streets and squares.

There are obvious differences between monumental inscriptions, commercial advertisements, libels and graffiti. Likewise, their placement in a street where everyone could see them or in a church, a prison or a domestic space entailed different functions. Depending on the place of exposure and the type of writing, they were used to question their contemporary society in one way or another; the questions that arise today, when we study the presence of these types of writing during that period, are just as manifold.

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Part Two

Case Studies

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Sacred Signs or Mundane Scribblings? A Survey of Medieval Graffiti in Tyrol

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Abstract

This article asks for the respective importance of mundane and religious aspects in pre-modern graffiti writing and reflects upon differences in education by class and gender of the graffiti writers. In contrast to most research in this field, the observations here are not based on the scrutiny of a specific site or an urban setting, but they consider the vast amount of graffiti from a whole region, the Tyrol. It is shown that a regional male elite ranks first amongst the graffiti writers and that their writings on walls served social purposes within this group. Here, women and lower classes were mainly absent. This questions our modern understanding of graffiti as ephemeral writing and as a spontaneous, faithful picture of society regardless of class: in fact, graffiti were often used for inscriptions with high durability, reminding of the dead or an act of donation toward a church or chapel. Their content was rather conform with conservative ideas and – in contrast to other regions – did only rarely touch directly upon political issues, although indirect reflexes on the process of Confessionalization can be observed. At the same time, the communication with the beyond has been another reason for graffiti writing. In drawing gallows, devils, and religious symbols on church walls, their writers tried to reach beyond the community of the living, too.

Keywords: *Donation, Gallows, Gender,* Memoria, *Social Class*

1. *Introduction*

In the well-known account of his travels to the Holy Land, Dominican Friar Felix Fabri gives a vivid description of travel and pilgrimage at the end of the fifteenth century. In one passage, he remarks on one of the annoying customs of his fellow pilgrims: against the wishes of the care takers, with sharp iron instruments, pilgrims would engrave their coats of arms and their names on walls and columns of churches in the holy sites. Fabri claims to have seen one such pilgrim himself, pretending to pray whilst shielding with his elbows the clandestine deed of inscribing his signs on Mount Calvary. Filled with indignation, Fabri does not convey a positive reading of such acts: these were not the signs of the pilgrims' nobility (coats of arms), but rather

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of their stupidity, memorializing forever their simple-mindedness ('orare se simulabant, et circumpositis brachiis occulte acutissimis instrumentis insculpebant scuta cum signis, non dico nobilitatis sed stultitiae suae in perpetuam suae fatuitatis memoriam', Fabri 1843, 94).[1] To a modern reader, this evaluation of the act of graffiti writing is easily understandable, because it resonates with many of our own presumptions about this practice: is graffiti writing not a clandestine act, undertaken by an uneducated, foolish person in search of a fame that in the eyes of the educated is merely proof of the writer's poor manners? Moreover, it is punishable behaviour, even if the deed might be a petty crime. But, now as then, the phenomenon is more complex than such a simplified judgement would have it.

In this article, I argue that the interpretation given by Felix Fabri does not offer a full view of the phenomenon of graffiti writing at his time. Focussing mainly on the fifteenth, sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the broader historic region of Tyrol, this case-study tries to underpin the argument that, at least in the Central Alps, graffiti were written by an educated male elite; that writing graffiti was part of the bonding practices of groups such as pilgrims or members of the administrative, governing, and wealthy classes; and, moreover, that writing graffiti was often neither clandestine nor banned, but might have had an important economic influence, now mainly lost due to the lack of written accounts about the income graffiti writing produced on a very regional level. That pre-modern graffiti writing was probably widely seen as legitimate by contemporaries has already been highlighted by earlier research (on English graffiti from the Tudor era by Fleming 1997, 2, and in more general terms by Tedeschi 2014, 365-366), although the example of Felix Fabri underscores that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to fully understand the phenomenon in all its regional and social diversity. In combining reflections on the public character of inscriptions in space with an eye toward social implications, I build on discussions about 'scritture esposte', led mostly by Italian historians and epigraphers (see, e.g., Petrucci 1985; Petrucci 1986; Ciociola 1997; Niccoli 2010). I will show that the case for the Tyrol is different, though, since it is predominantly material that does not belong to an urban culture that is under close scrutiny here. Armando Petrucci's reflections on literacy and the presence of writing in public spaces can be most useful, since the ability to read and write also seems to have been a major driving force behind graffiti production in rural areas during the late medieval and early modern period.

After offering a critique of Felix Fabri's notions about graffiti writing and bringing a certain reassessment of the picture, at least for the case of pre-modern Tyrol, this article discusses the extent to which we can read graffiti as a means for conveying a message addressed to the public or to specific people; although, in many cases, this might have been the aim, other aspects of the material also strongly hint at the relationship of the graffiti towards the otherworldly, the sphere of sanctity, of God, and, of course, of its counterpart, the world of demons. This article contributes to a broader reinterpretation of medieval graffiti, using the term 'medieval' in the sense given by Jacques Le Goff (2014), as a more flexible concept that includes the early modern period as well. This article considers graffiti from an era roughly stretching from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries and attempts to offer some fresh insight into a phenomenon not yet fully understood by what is, fortunately, an ever-increasing amount of research on this kind of written sources.

[1] 'They pretended to pray, but behind their folded arms they secretly incised their coat of arms with sharp instruments, showing the emblems not of their nobility, but, as I want to put it, of their stupidity as eternal markers of their simple-mindedness'. Unless otherwise stated, translations are mine.

2. *Sigismund Sultzperger and the State of Current Research*

Visitors of Frundsberg Castle in Schwaz, in Northern Tyrol, can climb the belfry steps to reach a well-decorated chamber, depicting scenes of wildlife and coats of arms, dating to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Much to the astonishment of modern visitors, people had already begun writing their own names on the very same wall during the sixteenth century. Not only did they do so willingly, but also openly, without any shame or restraint. Using red chalk (*Rötelstift*) or a sharp instrument such as a nail, they searched for the best spot on the painting to ensure their text was visible. A barber, possibly attached to the nearby court in Innsbruck (he appears to call himself 'Gabrielus Tonsor Neapoletanus 1592', which would make him an Italian craftsman), used the red framing of a painted window for his inscription, resulting in bright, white letters which immediately catch the eye. Another writer who was engaged in shipping activities on the River Inn did the same, adding to his name a picture of one of the commercial vessels used on the Alpine river, thus providing evidence of the role of the river as a major trade route during the sixteenth century, as it was used to supply the huge silver and salt mines in the Tyrol with grain, meat and other food from Bavaria (Kießling 2004; Flatscher 2017). In contrast, one Sigismund Sultzperger used red chalk for his inscription, searching for a white surface within the painting; he found it in the frame of another window depicting an architectural setting with a small turret, next to which Sigismund placed his graffiti (figure 1). Writers like him must have been fully aware that these graffiti were very visible. An important part of the graffiti of the fifteenth and sixteenth century were clearly not clandestine scribblings or vandalism by tourists, but serious attempts to communicate, mainly directed at a large audience from the elite to which the writers often belonged and already conceptualised with a certain durability in mind.

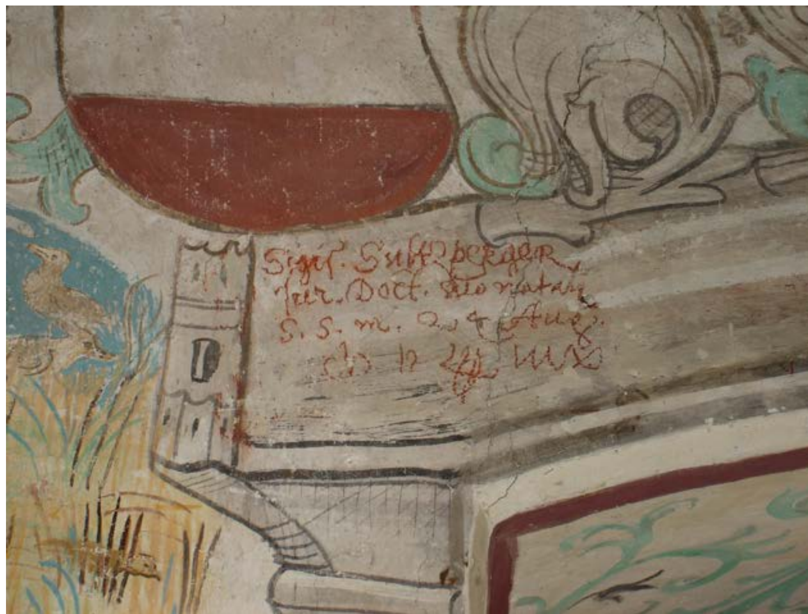

Figure 1 – The graffito by Sigismund Sultzperger in Frundsberg Castle, Schwaz, Northern Tyrol. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

The inscription by Sigismund Sultzperger also underlines this hypothesis by its content. He starts with the words: 'Sigis(mund) Sultzperger / Jur. Doct.', thus offering us a first insight into his social status: Sigismund not only allowed clear recognition of his person, since he added his surname (many modern graffiti writers try to conceal their precise identity to uninitiated readers in order to avoid prosecution by restricting legibility and certainly omitting their surnames), but he also added his academic title of Doctor of Law. He was thus the member of the social elite in the Tyrol, and it seems likely that he knew the castle warden, his local peer. The graffiti need not be a sign to highlight the decay of the structure or a lack of attention to its maintenance, but can rather be understood as a means of reaffirming authority by linking the writer to the ruling class. I will show that this is not an isolated and exceptional case, but a consistent motif in the historic graffiti found in the Tyrol. One of the most obvious arguments lies in the fact that, out of several hundred graffiti produced in the late middle ages and the early modern period, only a handful of female writers can be traced as authors, and the graffiti by women tend to appear later and to be largely products of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Even women from a higher social class, it seems, were either unable to write, hinting at educational differences in the late-medieval Tyrol, or they did not have the social accessibility their male counterparts enjoyed, enabling them to reach the frescoes in castles, churches and chapel choirs to record their names and ideas for posterity. It is thus by no means a coincidence that we encounter a man like the jurist Sigismund Sultzperger in the graffiti scrutinized here, and his case offers a good starting point to open up the reflection about medieval and early modern graffiti from the Tyrol.

The case of Sigismund also underlines a third aspect: scholarly research into graffiti is a relatively new field of study, and in order to understand Sigismund's graffiti it is necessary to dig deeper than just reading one single example. This article is based on my work on graffiti in the historic region of the County of Tyrol. This region today comprises the autonomous provinces of Alto Adige and Trentino in Italy, and Northern and Eastern Tyrol, i.e. today's province of Tyrol in Austria. A myriad of historic graffiti has survived throughout this area and this wealth of material has only partially been documented and studied (as a consequence, I cannot always cite a reference to each of the graffiti, since this article is also the fruit of unpublished fieldwork). The first volume of the edition of medieval and early modern inscriptions in the Tyrol included several graffiti from the upper Inn valley in Northern Tyrol (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013), and several series of graffiti were studied in the town of Hall in Tirol (Schmitz-Esser 2006a, 2006b, 2010) and in the Cistercian Monastery of Stams (Schmitz-Esser 2003). Projects on the graffiti on the altar piece in Castle Tyrol near Meran/Merano, currently part of the collection of the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck (Hörmann-Thurn und Taxis *et al.* 2011), on the graffiti on the kitchen walls in Runkelstein Castle in the vicinity of Bozen/Bolzano (Bechtold 2000), and on the series of graffiti in the chapel of Bruck Castle in Lienz, Eastern Tyrol (a project currently under way at the University of Graz, in cooperation with the castle museum – this series alone has well over 750 readable graffiti!), have led to better understanding of the role of graffiti in the context of castles in the region. The seminal study by Detlev Kraack (1997) on graffiti left by nobles on their pilgrimages to the Holy Land also traced some of the writings by these noblemen in the Tyrol. The latter examples will not be repeated here, since most experts in the field will know about the work by Detlev Kraack (2005), allowing us to concentrate on newer findings that complement Kraack's research. Although these studies have shed some

light on the situation in the region, large part of the graffiti in the Tyrol remains unexplored, thus leaving much space for further investigation.

Graffiti are often underestimated as historical sources. There is a practical reason for this that becomes clear immediately once we ask ourselves what part of the Humanities graffiti belong to. Graffiti are certainly not part of the every-day material in our archives and this leaves many historians in doubt as to whether this is their business, even when they have the palaeographic skills to deal with this kind of material. As a result, in-depth palaeographic analyses of graffiti are scarce (for one such exception, see the work of Tedeschi 2012). Art historians do the field work and uncover them, but often lack sympathy with sources of this kind, which appear to do little more than destroy the main objects of their research, and neither palaeography nor social history are commonly their area of expertise (again, there are exceptions to this rule, too, see e.g. Plesch 2010, 2018). Archaeologists do not normally have the time to deal with hundreds of graffiti and again neither their focus nor their skills are dedicated to working with these sources (here, one can quote the current graffiti survey in England as an initiative to overcome the problem; cf. Champion 2015). The interdisciplinary gap is bridged by epigraphy, but most epigraphists follow a definition that fosters the publicity and durability of the inscriptions (Favreau 1997, 31), or they focus on a definition that regards inscriptions as writing made by writing tools not pertaining to the sphere of the chancery (Kloos 1992, 2). I would like to argue that both definitions must include graffiti, since there are hints that at least some of them were meant to reach a specific public and achieve permanency: although they might have been written with pen and ink or sometimes even with red chalk, which was used for writing on paper, other common writing tools were made of sharpened iron (such as nails); the surfaces on which graffiti were written were neither paper nor parchment, but walls, beams, metal and the like (for more on the definition of graffiti, see Kraack and Lingens 2001, 9-10).

There is also a second, less theoretical and more prosaic reason for the relative disinterest of research in medieval and early modern graffiti: their frequently very precarious state of conservation, the poor legibility of the material with its insecurities and the difficulty of tracing the graffiti left on walls can make checking the results of this kind of research a tricky business (see, e.g., the recent remarks by Champion 2018). This leads us straight back to Sigismund Sultzperger. His graffito is difficult to read and shows traces of his own, very personal style of writing. Out of hundreds of graffiti, his would not have come under special scrutiny, had it not been for the enthusiastic research undertaken by genealogist Sebastian Neumann. While researching his ancestors, he recently contacted me and offered a great deal of insight that added flesh to the dry bones of the inscription in Frundsberg Castle. According to Neumann's research, Sigismund was born in 1547 and was appointed advocate at the court of Archduke Charles II of Inner Austria in Graz. Leaning toward protestant ideas, he became one of the victims of the Counter Reformation and left Styria together with his sons Johann Rupert and Siegmund Friedrich during the reign of Archduke Ferdinand II. The family found refuge in Saxony, where Sigismund died in 1603 in Dresden (Lesser 2015, 165; Halbedl-Herrich 2015, 154, 251 n. 1112). Moreover, Neumann had succeeded in finding a book that had belonged to Sigismund, containing a copy of the *Explicatio et continuatio titulorum Iuris Civilis & Canonici* by Melchior Kling and some other juridical treatises, which well fitted his professional interests. On the cover, he named himself as 'Sigismundus Sultzpergerus Tyrolensis' and dated the acquisition to 28 March 1571 (Universitätsbibliothek, Salzburg,

Ms. R 96.277 I).[2] He used a peculiar 'M' and 'D' for the Roman dating, thus enabling us to understand the rest of the text in his graffiti and leaving no doubt that the owner of the book and the writer of the graffiti were one and the same. Only the cooperation of researchers with different backgrounds and interests had allowed a better understanding of this graffito, and together with my thanks to Sebastian Neumann for sharing his results with me, this article is meant to be an appeal for further collaboration in this field.

3. *Writing Skills, Gender Exclusion and the Practice of Graffiti-Making by the (Male) Elite*

Not only do Sigismund's graffiti name him as a Doctor of Law, but they also state that he is a notary of His Majesty's (s.s.m. – *suae sacrae maiestatis*), which dates the graffiti probably to 1577 (the correct date is a little difficult to discern since there seems to be an unclassical 'IIIX' at the end; if this reading is correct, the Roman letters mean 1577). Why did he inscribe himself in this setting in the most representative room in the belfry? As already mentioned, he was not alone: one Christian Kholler seems to have been either a toll keeper or a boatman on the River Inn, the barber Gabriel might have been attached to the court in Innsbruck and several more men named themselves, sometimes giving away their origins. One group from 1658 apparently came from the Southern Tyrol, since one of them names himself as 'Eppanensis', thus coming from Eppan/Appiano (figure 2). The wine from this region was one of the major trade goods in the area and, consequently, their presence here could hint at them being part of the wine trade, be it as wine merchants or hauliers of this precious good (as to the trade in the Inn Valley, see Schmitz-Esser 2017). Although this must remain a hypothesis, the geographic situation (in the lower Inn Valley, at the trading post of Schwaz) and the context (with other graffiti reflecting trading and shipping along the river) make this highly probable. In simple terms: whenever more can be said about the people concerned than the bare fact of their names, it begins to emerge that they belonged to a regional elite of court officials, administrators, traders or well-to-do craftsmen. It appears likely that graffiti in surroundings of this kind can be linked to similar series produced in officially-sanctioned wall paintings, such as the coats of arms in drinking halls (*Trinkstuben*) or court houses (*Richterhäuser*), as can still be found in Bruneck/Brunico (Pustertal, Southern Tyrol) or Pfunds (Upper Inn Valley, Northern Tyrol; see Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 255-262, cat. no. 273).

[2] <http://www.ubs.sbg.ac.at/sosa/webseite/vorbesitzers.htm>, accessed 10 January 2020.

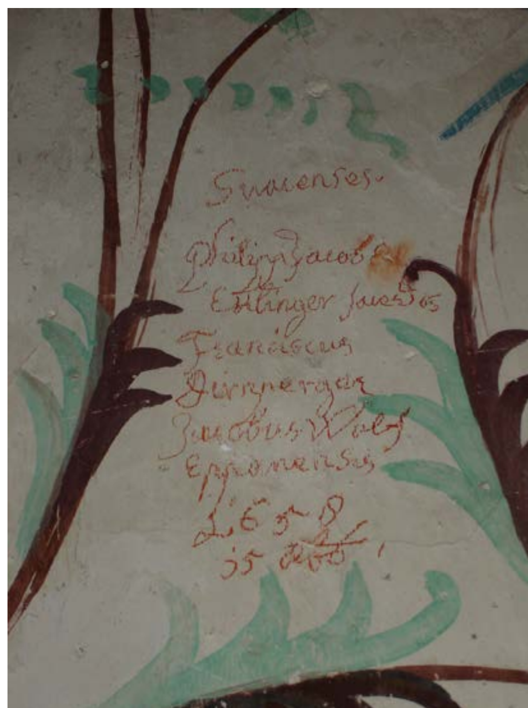

Figure 2 – Graffiti by a group of wine merchants in Frundsberg Castle, naming one of them as 'Eppanensis' (third line from below). Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

That a certain social situation – and possibly a male ritual of some sort, a display of togetherness – stood behind the creation of some graffiti series seems likely when we consider another, although exceptional, example. Within the old thirteenth-century bell of the church of the Cistercian monastery in Stams, some chalk graffiti have survived, naming amongst others one Mathaeus Steger in the year 1561 and one Hans Kennastein. Upon scrutiny, it emerges that these people were not vandals, but members of the congregation: Kennastein was a minister in one of the parishes belonging to the monastery, Steger a prior of the abbey (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 70-71, cat. no. 54; see Schmitz-Esser 2003, 92). Out of the many graffiti on the fresco of Christ the Saviour in a Church in Hall in Tirol, it has been possible to identify the Parish Priest of Absam and Hall, Johannes Hamerspach, in a very small graffito. With some humour, he inscribed himself with the words: 'hic fuit johannes de hamerspach la la la' (Schmitz-Esser 2010, 61). In the same series, the regionally influential nobleman Hans Franz of Wehingen named himself and the year 1563 (Schmitz-Esser 2006a, 115). Next to them, a group of craftsmen from the city: a mason, a barber and a girdler also named themselves (Schmitz-Esser 2006a, 112, 114, 116, 120). That they did so using Latin forms for their trades (*Murator, Tonsorus, Cinctor*), gives a clue about the language used for acquiring writing skills by the urban elite during the sixteenth century: Latin was clearly important in the education of this social group, too. The fact that we have to include these craftsmen with the upper crust of urban society is underlined by the fact that they received such an education. Once again, it is the affluent male elite that we can perceive here as a major group amongst the writers of the graffiti.

Since writing skills were the necessary prerequisite for creating graffiti, it is not surprising that we only find members of a specific social class among our writers. Nor is it surprising that their

social origin appears to broaden during the course of the early modern period, extending from the original core of noblemen and clerics to include burghers, craftsmen and students or pilgrims, traders and musicians as the centuries pass (Schmitz-Esser 2006b, 104-105). It is noteworthy, however, that women did not play a significant role amongst the writers of graffiti in the Tyrol and this finding complements similar, recent observations for Styrian graffiti from the same period (Stelzer 2016, 46). Their part in graffiti writing seems to have been no more than marginal. There are some sporadic cases, such as the inscription by one Maria, dating her visit to the chapel choir of Frundsberg Castle in Schwaz to April 1620. On the same wall, in 1660, a butcher's serving lad inscribed himself as such ('1660 Jar Mezer Knecht') and added a butcher's axe to make sure everyone got his message. Thus, even the relatively simple helping hand of a tradesman's supplier inscribed his name in the same place as Maria, whose surname is unfortunately no longer clearly legible, thus leaving us in doubt as to her exact social background. The fact that out of hundreds of graffiti in the church of Our Saviour (*Salvatorkirche*) in Hall in Tirol not one female writer could be identified adds further mystery to this perplexing fact: most of the graffiti date from a time when the church housed a convent of Augustinian nuns and many people from the region left their names and marks in their choir and on their main fresco of the Saviour behind the high altar – but not so the nuns themselves. In the context of the Cistercians and their bell inscriptions in Stams written at precisely this time, this absence is even more difficult to explain.

Answers to this remain so far unconvincing, but it might at least be worth doing some rethinking about the possibilities here. First, as already mentioned, a different education might lie behind the fact that only rarely did women create graffiti; according to Edith Ennen (1999, 194-195), after the later middle ages girls were increasingly excluded from higher education, and this exclusion extended to the daughters of both wealthy citizens and the peasantry. In contrast with Ennen's assessment, however, recent scholarship has stressed the role of mothers in educating their children and the use of books to transfer knowledge in late medieval families (Clanchy 2011; Sheffler 2015, 403). In fact, explaining the lack of female graffiti by gender inequality in education is less convincing in the case of the Augustinian Convent in Hall. Despite the negative prejudice of contemporary men, among women in religious communities writing and reading skills were especially common and widespread (Régnier-Bohler 2002, 543-552). In the case of the nuns from Hall, their monastery had to obey special rules, formulated at the end of the fifteenth century by the famous Cardinal and Bishop of Brixen/Bressanone Nicolaus Cusanus, who extended the Augustinian rules by 24 special chapters. These were written down for the nuns and sent to them, so the well-known Cardinal obviously assumed they had basic reading skills. The administrator of the nunnery during the early sixteenth century, Magdalena Götzner, was a member of the local nobility (Gratscher 1953; Nothegger 1953, 290-291; Grass 1970; Schmitz-Esser 2006a) and, again, it is therefore highly unlikely that she was unable to write. Secondly, there could have been social practices that differentiated gender roles, too, and the practice of writing graffiti might have been one of them. Were women not allowed access to places where graffiti were left? It seems plausible that they were not present at male gathering places such as drinking halls (*Trinkstuben*). But, although the church choirs where most of our graffiti are found might not have been open to women during mass, they were certainly allowed in to visit the relics as pilgrims, or to prepare for mass in the church of their own nunneries. Thirdly, the answer could lie in the fact that writing materials were not as readily available to women. Graffiti made by red chalk were probably created by using a pen with a chalk tip (*Rötelstift*). One such pen has been preserved as part of the collection in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. no. Kunstkammer 4922; see Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, 2018). Dating to the seventeenth century, it is made of ivory and in the shape of a column, thus distinguishing it from a 'normal' feather-pen by its costly material and elitist iconography. Such a pen was kept in the hands – or

the pockets – of the male elite, but possibly not in their spouses'. But expensive pens of this kind had the best survival chances in museum collections, and we cannot be sure that every graffiti item was made with such an elaborate tool. Moreover, the practice of using a sharp object such as a nail must have been a possibility for women, too. To conclude these reflections briefly, our unsolvable riddle might hint that we are confronting the proof of a social practice that distinguished gender in pre-modern Tyrol, but nothing about it is (yet) certain.

It is obvious that writing skills and the daily practice of reading and writing amongst certain groups of men were related to the creation of graffiti. Clergymen often used graffiti to instruct their flock and church walls could be used by both laymen and clergy to disseminate a good, Christian lifestyle: '1543 O mensch las dier auf Erden nicht so lieb sein das du vergesest got des herrn',[3] an inscription in the chapel of Landeck Castle states (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 181-182, cat. no. 182). Not too far away, in the belfry of Berneck Castle in Kauns, we also discover the identity of a graffiti writer of this kind: '1578 O homo, Memorare nouisima tua. Anthonius Gachter Ex Aesteten, pastor in Serfaus', see, 197-198, cat. no. 204 (figure 3).[4] We do know something about Anthony Gachter, who was visited by episcopal investigators only the year before in his parish in Serfaus. Books with protestant content were confiscated and he had to dismiss his servant, who probably was his mistress. Thus, the moralising inscription is doubly interesting, since it might not only reflect the worries of a priest for his flock, but his inner reflection at times of conflict due to confessionalization. We can even guess which books he was reading at the time: the formula he used ('O homo, memorare novissima tua') appears several times in the forty-eighth sermon of the 'Sermones ad fratres in eremo', once thought to have been written by one of the church fathers, St. Augustine (Pseudo-Augustinus 1841, 1331-1332). It was thus certainly not forbidden by the episcopal inspectors he received the year before his own visit to the noblemen living at Berneck Castle, but was considered in line with a catholic, orthodox reading list.

Figure 3 – The graffito of Anton Gachter, a minister from Serfaus, in Berneck Castle, Kauns, Northern Tyrol. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

[3] '1543 Oh man, do not be so enamoured by this life on Earth that you forget God the Lord'.
[4] '1578 Oh man, think of your ultimate fate. Anthony Gachter from Aesteten, minister in Serfaus'.

4. *Durability, Memoria and What You Wanted to Say With Graffiti*

Berneck Castle in Kauns offers more than just this one graffito, and it is worth taking a closer look at some of these. Shortly afterwards, two graffiti in red chalk were added to the castle chapel facade. One fits the picture of the inscriptions already mentioned, encouraging a Christian life in a rather stark rhyme: 'Hin geth die Zeit, her khombt der dod, o Mensch Gethue Recht vnd furchte Got' (see Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 221, cat. no. 228).[5] But the second inscription, probably by another hand, refers to dates in the building history of the chapel: 'Jm den Jar Christj 1437 Jar ist diße CaPelln ErPaut worden, darnach Jn dem Jar Christj (etc.) 1482 Geweich worden' (see *ibidem*).[6] This graffito took the construction date certified by a contemporary, fifteenth-century inscription in the chapel and added the date of its (or one of its) consecration(s). This was not meant to be just another graffito amongst others: it is carefully drawn within a rectangular field in the shape of a ribbon, giving it a more formal appearance. Graffiti could therefore replace their counterparts in painting or inscriptions in stone and thus to distinguish between graffiti and 'proper' inscriptions does not make much sense. They might aim at durability and public visibility, exactly as a formal definition of inscriptions demands (Favreau 1997, 31). Although this is not normally applied to graffiti at all, this observation falls in line with remarks recent graffiti research has already made (see e.g. Plesch 2015, 50). When, in 1544, Hans Gräfinger and Dorothea Altspaur took care that their coats of arms, family names and the date were painted in red chalk on the walls of the small chapel at the Alpine pass in Nassereith, they certainly wanted to commemorate something important, as they were members of the local nobility and were not two of the pilgrims who also used the chapel walls for their inscriptions (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 66, cat. no. 49; figure 4). The most likely explanation might be the fact that they had made a significant donation to maintain the chapel, so this was the inscription memorializing their good deed. The carefully-drawn coats of arms, the naming of both families, underlining the marriage alliance and the couple's status as nobility, and the visible positioning on a central wall of the chapel do support such a view.

Figure 4 – The Northern wall of the small chapel at the Fernpass, Nassereith, Northern Tyrol, shows the coat of arms of the Gräfinger and the Altspaur families. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

[5] 'There goes time, here comes death, oh man, do righteous deeds and fear God'.

[6] 'This chapel was built in the year of Christ, the year 1437 and was consecrated thereafter in the year of Christ (etc.) 1482'.

But the most obvious example of the intended durability of graffiti and their use as a cheaper alternative to 'regular' inscriptions in stone and paint is preserved in a small church close to Schönwies in the upper valley of the Inn, the church of St. Vigil in Obsaurs. On one of the inner walls of the church, a rectangular shape is filled with this inscription: '1543 Marta Kolbin leyt hye pegraben, gott gnat der sel vnd al glaibigen' (see Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 182, cat. no. 182 (figure 5).[7] Only its formal drawing in red chalk and informal placing on the wall make this a graffito. The text and content are similar to any normal tombstone inscription of the time, once more blurring the dividing lines between graffiti and other inscriptions. One could even speculate that it was an ephemeral monument, waiting to be replaced by a stone marker which was never done (Weniger 2016, 138). Since this graffito is intended to express the idea of *memoria* of the deceased, it must have been placed here with the intention of durability, and since it is still there after nearly five centuries, it has accomplished this task very well. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that such material, as frequent as it might have been in the sixteenth century, had less chance of survival than its counterpart in stone. This might be an explanation both for the rarity of such explicit examples and for the relative neglect of researchers for the possibility of graffiti being used as substitutes for formal inscriptions in a regional setting. Nevertheless, many well-studied series of graffiti hint at this, be they a coat of arms noblemen left on their way to the Holy Land (Kraack 1997) or the historical notices on the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (Miglio 1997). The influence of graffiti on historiography and on the literary production is understudied, although there are hints that graffiti might predate their counterparts in these genres (see the reflections in Miglio 1997, 62-63, and Fleming 1997, 8-10) – which would be evidence of their wide perception and erudite audience.

Figure 5 – This memorial inscription for Marta Kolb was written after her death on the Southern wall of the St. Vigil church, Obsaurs, Northern Tyrol. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

Both examples, the graffiti of the Gräfinger couple at the Fernstein Chapel and the inscription recording Marta Kolb in Obsaurs, are part of a very similar setting: both are found on a chapel

[7] '1543 Marta Kolb lies here buried. God have mercy upon her soul and [those of] all believers'.

wall and they are not the only inscription in red chalk on these walls. In both chapels, many other graffiti can be found, mainly dating from the sixteenth century. They were left by pilgrims. A group of pilgrims from Cambrai crossed the Alps here, passing Fernstein on their way to Rome. They recorded not only their city of origin and their names, but placed a pilgrim's staff crossed with a key (the symbol of St. Peter) next to their graffito. A coat of arms bearing the cross of Jerusalem and a scallop shell on the opposite wall testify to the many pilgrims heading for Rome or Venice (as the main port for those sailing to the Holy Land) who wrote on these walls. It was not unusual for a group of pilgrims to inscribe themselves simultaneously on the walls and they often used signs or moralising mottos to underpin their religious motivation. In the case of the Cambrai pilgrims, a sign of three overlapping fish in the shape of a triangle showed their Christian motivation. In Obsaurs, pilgrims used more outspoken mottos, such as 'Allß zeit vnd Zil gett wies gott wil' (see Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 194, cat. no. 199).[8] Several pilgrims wrote this text on the wall of the church and at least one group visiting the chapel in 1574 can be singled out. But similar mottos proliferate on the church walls and sometimes only capital letters hint at them – as, for example, 'WGW' for 'how it pleases God' (or 'according to God's will', as translated before: 'Wies Gott Will'; for more examples, 213-214, cat. no. 218, too). Such mottos were commonplace in sixteenth-century Tyrol and even became part of courtly culture (as evidenced by the 'Ambraser Trinkbücher', a guest book from Ambras near Innsbruck, with the addition of such mottos to the names of the visitors to the Habsburg court; Igálffy von Igály 2010), again hinting at the relatively distinctive social group such pilgrims at least aspired to. This is consistent with findings from Elizabethan England highlighting the use of readily available poetry in graffiti (Fleming 1997; Fleming 2001).

The combination of the pilgrims' graffiti, the naming of donors to the church and a memorial inscription on the same walls may be more than just a coincidence. As in other places, they certainly hint at devotional practice (see Plesch 2010, 157-161). But, even more so, they might refer to a socio-economic practice, too: as I have already argued above, the inscriptions might not have been clandestine, nor were they necessarily created without the knowledge of the owner of a church, chapel, or castle. This leads to the hypothesis that whoever wanted to inscribe his name on the walls of a church like the one in Obsaurs or at the Fernstein pass, had to pay to do so. Thus, a benefactor of the church, relatives who sought remembrance for a deceased loved-one or pilgrim groups wishing to leave their names at a place of worship they passed all ended up on the same wall, using the same technique. Although outspoken written sources for this practice have not survived, they exist in the case of some churches on the pilgrim routes to the Holy Land; it is likely that the rights to leave a graffito with a coat of arms here were given in exchange for donations (Kraack 1997, 312-313, 316, mentioning, among others, the cases of the monasteries of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai and St. Anthony in Candia). Moreover, we have hints of a somewhat similar practice on the cemetery walls of Gothic churches in the Tyrol: both the parish churches in Imst and in Matrei show a series of painted epitaphs that were created by different donors not long after the fifteenth-century church building project had been completed (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, xxi). Buying such a distinguished place for burial in a churchyard obviously meant some prestige for its owners and at the same time secured a certain pay-back for the building project. Unfortunately, we know little about financing church buildings in late medieval Tyrol, but we can guess that they were major undertakings by the whole parish, not only by princes, rich landlords and church authorities, as has been impressively shown for England at about the same time by Gabriel Byng (2017).

[8] 'All time and purpose run according to God's will'.

Moreover, the scrutiny of Tyrolese graffiti indicates that pilgrimages and building patronage often could go hand in hand on a regional level. In the small church of St. Leonhard in Nauders, located on another crucial Alpine pass (the Reschen Pass/Passo Resia, connecting the Upper Inn valley to the Vinschgau/Val Venosta and the region around Meran/Merano), graffiti testify not only that visitors came from places nearby, as in the case of one Jacob Pach from Mals/Malles in Southern Tyrol, visiting the church in 1597 (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 215-216, cat. no. 221). Since Jacob returned in 1609 and added another graffito in the same church, we know that people visited the same place frequently and not just once. In the same series of graffiti, the explicit and proud remark of a donation to the church is made: 'Jch Josef Jäger als stifter dißes Gotshauß 1609 Jars', (215-216, cat. no. 221).[9] Pilgrims and donors both feature amongst our graffiti writers. We can sometimes see that the reason for travelling was more mundane, testifying as to the strong trading links in the region. There are graffiti hinting at travellers from St. Gallen and the Valais/Wallis (St. Georgenob Tösens, 164-165, cat. no. 157), from Kaufbeuren (in the house of the clergy at Kals in Eastern Tyrol), from Prettin, in today's Saxony-Anhalt in Germany, from Füssen in the Allgäu and from Hainfeld in Lower Austria (St. Margaretha in Pians, 134-136, cat. no. 127). In these cases, trade links seem a more likely reason for the presence of graffiti writers in the Tyrol (as to the major trade links, see e.g. Noflatscher-Posch 1992; Schmitz-Esser 2017), although it is still difficult to be sure of the exact motivation to travel in each single case. In at least two cases, we can assume yet another reason for travelling: in Pians, one Brother Geoffrey Bodenhof called himself a 'scolaris' ('hic fuit fr[ater] gotfryd[us] bodenhoff […] sc[o]la[r]is', Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 134-136, cat. no. 127), and in Naudersone 'Johannes de Bamberga' wrote the year of his journey, 1515, and the Aristotelian motto 'Ens mobile', thus making it clear that he was a scholarly man and probably a student attending an Italian university at the time. He may quite possibly be identified with the Franciscan friar John of Bamberg who in 1493 had already ended his studies in Theology in Lipsia and had become a tutor to a Saxon prince in the following years (168-169, cat. no. 161).

In some cases, it seems that writers wanted to leave their mark in more than one church; the most prominent example found so far for the period around 1500 is one Lienhart von Maurn, who not only left his mark in the Romanesque choir of Stams monastery, but whose identical signature is to be found in the choir of the church of Our Saviour in Hall in Tirol (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 56, cat. no. 38; see Schmitz-Esser 2006a, 113-114). Here, we learn something about the way graffiti were thought fully placed on the wall, since Lienhart left the first three letters of his name on the brownish board of the main fresco in the church's choir, before he decided that a place a little further up the fresco, in the middle of the white gown of one of the dominant angels calling the dead to the Last Judgement, would be much more suitable for his inscription: the red chalk is still very visible on the white surface of this section of the fresco. But why did someone like Lienhart want his name to be inscribed on choir walls? This is difficult to explain, but the question is all the more pressing since it affects the vast majority of our graffiti, which only mark a visit with sparse wording. They rarely give away more than a 'hic fuit' followed by a name and the year of the visit. A random example is that by one Erhardus, who painted his name on the walls of the parish church at Gries close to Bozen/Bolzano, scribbling his coat of arms (maybe a star surrounded by a border of clouds), the year of his visit, 1441, and a 'hic fuit' followed by his name in red chalk on a

[9] 'I, Joseph Jäger, as benefactor of this chapel, in the year 1609'.

stone (figure 6). It has not been possible to read his full surname and the coat of arms could not be identified in the relevant compendia on heraldry in the region, leaving us with not much to conclude from the inscription other than the date and the use of an all-too-common German name in the region.

Figure 6 – A certain Erhard placed his name, coat of arms and the date of his visit in 1441 on the walls of the church at Gries, Bozen/Bolzano. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

But we should not underestimate the seemingly limited charm of the 'hic fuit' inscriptions, widely found in our material in Europe (see e.g. Miglio and Tedeschi 2012, 614; Tedeschi 2014, 368). Such inscriptions contradict the idea that graffiti of the time are more generally 'tending towards non-subjectivity' (Fleming 1997, 6), since they place an obvious emphasis on the individual. And even such limited information can, in some cases, be very useful as a clue to the history of a fresco or wall painting: in the case of the named fresco in Hall in Tirol, by analysing the graffiti it was possible to discern the date in the late sixteenth century when the Gothic picture became unfashionable and was whitewashed over (Schmitz-Esser 2006a, 119); in another case, at Imst, a 1515 graffito put in question the date of a fresco art historians had assumed to have been painted around 1530 (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 58-59, cat. no. 42). As useful as such graffiti might be to art historians as a *terminus post or ante quem*, their sparse information does not reveal the inner motivation for their creation, especially if the social background and origin of the writer remain unknown. Did people want to stay close to the sanctuary and prolong their presence, so that their names remained close to the altar and the relics even when they themselves were no longer present in the church? The frequent location in choirs and on altar pieces from the region (adding to the above-mentioned cases, see the altar piece scrutinized by Söding 2011) seems to confirm such an assumption. Or did people simply want to leave their mark, giving the practice a more touristic aspect? Lienhart's case seems to indicate that this is a viable interpretation of his motives. It may not be necessary to distinguish clearly between *memoria* and *fama*. Nevertheless, I would like to return to the question in the next chapter of this article.

In sharp contrast to today's graffiti, in our material from the Tyrol sex, politics and sports are entirely marginal. This might have to do not only with differing cultural aspects behind the act of graffiti writing, but very practical reasons of preservation might have played a significant role, too. Whereas Gothic and early-Renaissance frescoes in churches and especially in their choirs have survived in large numbers in the Tyrol, followed by wall paintings in formal rooms in the region's castles and on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century facades of inns, only rarely do the wall surfaces of kitchens or toilets survive to this day (for the best surveys on the topic so far, see Wagener 2014, and Niccoli 2010, 347, with her hint at Roman tavern scenes painted by Pieter van Laer, showing such graffiti on their seventeenth-century walls). Although the interiors of private houses may have been as full of graffiti as church walls, only the latter survive to this day in great number (as for Tudor England, this was hypothesized by Fleming 2001, 73-78; Fleming 1997, 3-4 and 15-19) and Elizabethan literature attests to the fact that, at least in England, political and sexual allusions were rather common in graffiti writing (Fleming 1997, 10-15). Where medieval wall surfaces have been preserved, as in Runkelste in Castle/Castel Roncolo close to Bozen/Bolzano in the Southern Tyrol, astonishingly explicit material can still be found. In this case, the graffiti in the kitchen mock the frescoes in the castle's *palas*, making the courtly allusions to worldly love in the paintings explicit in their crude sexual variations on the same themes (Bechtold 2000). But, although such a bias in our material seems highly likely, it cannot explain the nearly-total absence of such cases in the material from castles and urban dwellings with their otherwise rich material in graffiti; to give but two examples, one can name the Goldener Engl Inn at Hall in Tirol or the walls of the outer bailey of Kronburg Castle in Zams. In both cases, however, there are shapes similar to a hose with a round ending and a slit-like stroke (a man's penis?) and dots at the other end (pubic hair?), but since the drawing is usually bent in the middle at a 90-degree angle, the allusion to the male genitalia remains vague, leaving the possibility that another (innocent) explanation may be found in future research, e.g. a caricature of an early-modern tobacco pipe. The relative absence of explicit sexual allusions in secular graffiti settings is all the more astonishing in the light of recent research on secular badges and iconographies such as the penis-trees depicted in book illuminations and public frescoes (Ziolkowski 1998; McDonald 2006; Lindquist 2012). It is clear that graffiti had another main purpose, at least in the Tyrol, and that this lay more in the sphere of medieval pilgrimage and travel experience. Here, the special situation of the Tyrol as a major trade hub for the traffic crossing the Alps is visible in our source material.

This might well be the explanation for a further knowledge gap. Political statements are extremely rare. If we do not consider the graffiti calling for a moral life as political statements (which they might well have been in the sixteenth century, by evoking ideas about the reformation), there are almost no examples of graffiti reflecting on current politics or political events. This is in stark contrast to other regions in Europe, and again, the setting the graffiti are preserved in might be crucial here. In the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, Italy, for example, reflections on the court and courtly life are rather ubiquitous in the scribblings (Sarti *et al.* 2017, esp. 72-86; for other Italian examples of political criticism, see also Niccoli 2010, 349-352). War events were noted in late medieval graffiti in Bergamo, Verona, and Gavignano, for example (Weniger 2016, 134-135; Miglio and Tedeschi 2012, 620-621). There are German graffiti with such content, too, as evidenced by the well-known graffiti in the Villa Farnesina in Rome: on one of the walls painted with a lovely scenery of the countryside, a *landsknecht* soldier from Charles V's imperial army commented on the infamous Sacco di Roma in 1527: 'Was sol ich schreibenn und nit lachen, die lanzknecht haben(n) den babst lauffenn machen'[10] (see Esch 2004, 109; Guichard 2014, 41-42, figure 1, transcription slightly corrected; figure 7).

[10] 'What shall I write without laughing? The *landsknecht* have made the Pope run'.

Since one of the most important generals in the war was Georg of Frundsberg, from the family that took its name from the already mentioned castle by the same name in Schwaz, the writer might well have been of Tyrolese, most certainly of Southern German origins. Nevertheless, similar graffiti have not been found (yet) in the region itself.

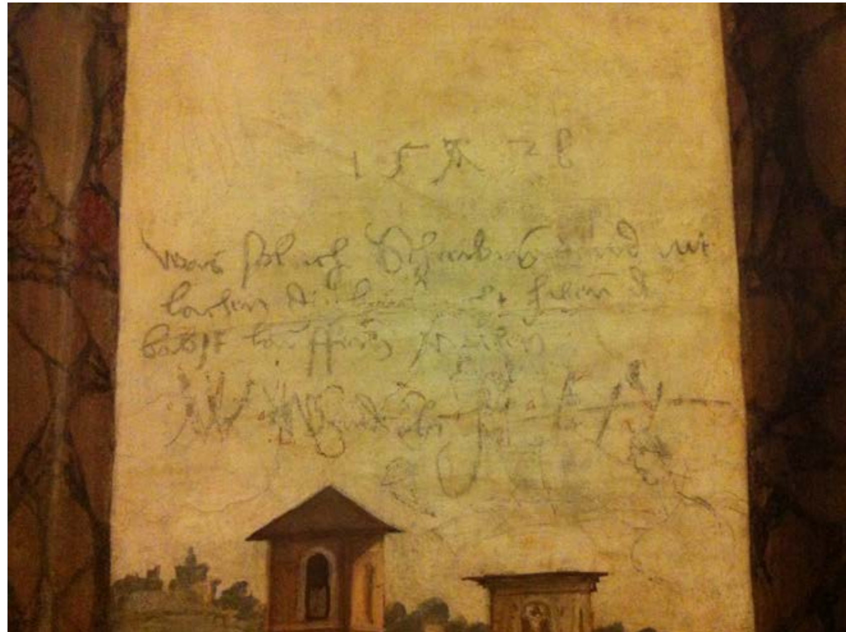

Figure 7 – One of the most famous early-modern graffiti in the city of Rome, these ironic lines by a *landsknecht* placed boldly on top of a landscape painting in the Villa Farnesina comment on the Sacco di Roma in 1527. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

Less surprising is the fact that graffiti related to sports have not shown up in the Tyrolean material so far. Common in Roman Antiquity (in the context of gladiators and horse races, see e.g. the examples given by Köhne and Ewigleben 2000, 73, figure 62; 138, figure 123; 141, figure 127) and very popular in our own times (especially among European soccer fans), graffiti of the medieval and early modern period do not show any similar hints to opposing parties in such events as tournaments. But it seems that these events were usually part of courtly representations, and in the region discussed here they did not have clear teams or factions, although this might not have been true within Italian city-states (such as Florence, Siena, in the Venetian game of *pallapugno*, or in the Palio della Balestra in Gubbio and Sansepolcro). There is a graffiti dating from 1540 showing a man with a halberd in Hasegg Castle in Hall in Tirol, but since he wears a peculiar garment with bells stitched on it, he might have something to do with the place being used as a mint (Schmitz-Esser 2008). Weapons are sometimes represented (this is the case with a door to a sacristy in Friesach, in Carinthia, today displayed in the entrance room to the Alte Galerie in Eggenberg Castle in Graz, depicting St. Nicolas and showing some finely engraved graffiti crossbows), but it is difficult to interpret the precise meaning of such weapons. The most convincing explanation is that they fit within the inscriptions that name the profession of the writer, often followed by a depiction of their working tools, as in the above-mentioned cases of the butcher's helping hand in Frundsberg Castle and the craftsmen from Hall, giving not only their names, but their professions, too.

What can be learned by the relative absence of sexual and political content and any reflection on major events of the day from the graffiti in the region? First, it seems noteworthy to underline that this stands in stark contrast to other regions in Europe. In the 'palazzi' of Renaissance Italy, historical and political remarks were relatively common. In the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, a series of graffiti starting around 1433 and dating from the century that followed added short historical comments in the style of chroniclers of the day, using the walls with the famous frescoes by Taddeo di Bartoli for their laconic remarks (Miglio 1997). Some researchers have argued in favour of a link between these historic references in the material and the degree of participation in society, i.e. to the civic life of the (Italian) city-state (Miglio and Tedeschi 2012, 614-615). In this light, it is noteworthy that the graffiti so far found in the Tyrol did not include political statements, underlining that regional diversity makes a general evaluation of graffiti more difficult. In the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, for example, the following graffito was found: 'W Isabella bella che una volta è stata cortese con me' (Sarti *et al.* 2017, 72).[11] In this case, the writer must have had either a political or an erotic allusion in mind. In contrast, the graffiti writers from the Tyrol seem not to have been trying to communicate with their readers in order to shape public opinion or memory, or to distribute a subversive message by means of a cheap and highly visible statement on a church or castle wall. To all our knowledge, not even in times of crisis such as during the popular uprisings of 1525 has there been a major use of graffiti for political aims. On the contrary, many graffiti sites in the Tyrol suggest that they were embedded in communication that included the upper or middle classes: the graffiti could serve as a kind of guest book in a castle or as a marker left by a donor in a church. In this sense, they come closer to the observations made for early modern England, where there were even printed advisories for the sentences to adorn interior walls in Halls, Bedrooms and Guest Chambers (Fleming 1997). The secular writers of our graffiti had some education, as such they were part of the establishment and therefore people who wanted no major share in any subversive message. In this regard, the context of the court we find in Italian 'palazzi' like in Urbino or in Siena might be radically different to the situation in the Tyrol, with its many different, rural settings for graffiti writing. The only context in which there seems to have been a major reflection of a socio-political development relates to the confessional disputes of the sixteenth century following the Reformation, already mentioned above. But in the Tyrol, the expression of the new faith had mainly resorted to choosing the clandestine path of allusions, for example by correcting Christian conduct. To be openly critical – as in the case of the *landsknecht* in the Farnesina – might have just been one step too far; and why take such a risk, if you could underline your ideas perfectly well by propagating Christian ideals based on the Bible? In this sense, the often found graffiti with their moralising contents fitted neatly within the broader picture of the reformation in the Tyrol (Andergassen 2017).

It is well known from other examples that graffiti contained references to historical events. Apart from the already mentioned, prominent case of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, we could refer to graffiti such as the one found in a small chapel in San Sebastiano in the Savoy, close to the town of Arborio, where a sixteenth-century writer alluded to the plague affecting Lombardy at the time (Plesch 2010, 141; 2014, 140-142; 2015, 47-48; 2018, 78 'Was sol ich schreibenn und nit lachen, die lanzknecht haben(n) den babst lauffenn machen', see Esch 2004, 109; and Guichard 2014, 41-42, figure 1, transcription slightly corrected). Although such cases are missing in the Tyrol, references to the buildings the graffiti were written on can sometimes be observed:

[11] 'Long live Isabella the fair, who once was courteous with me'.

one such case are the graffiti on the consecration of the chapel at Berneck Castle already quoted above; another one can be found in the small chapel dedicated to Saint Rochus in Bieberwier. Here, on the back of an altar piece, a graffito gives us the only written evidence of destruction by fire and subsequent reconstruction of the chapel's tower in 1640 (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 307-308, cat. no. 329). It remains difficult to find out why allusions to dramatic social events (such as the unrest in 1525 or the devastating plague in the 1640s that struck the region and is well documented in other – even epigraphic – source material) are absent from the graffiti found so far in the Tyrol. Although graffiti with political content might have been a phenomenon tied to an urban or court environment, the case in San Sebastiano in the vicinity of Arborio shows that, in principle, even in similar rural communities such discussions could be found. It might well be that further research clarifies the picture, but the loss of large part of the graffiti from the often renovated, enlarged and reconstructed court buildings in Innsbruck does not help in the comparison to the Italian graffiti findings. It is important, though, to underline that in contrast to most other graffiti studies, the survey underlying this paper is based on extensive scrutiny of well over a thousand graffiti within a broader region (especially the Inn Valley), and not of single case studies in prominent churches or 'palazzi', so that the absence of certain graffiti types in this mainly rural setting is all the more significant and demands further explanation. We should not forget that we are still in the early stages of serious graffiti research: if the chapel in San Sebastiano, with its many allusions to catastrophes, leads us to think that graffiti might have helped to overcome such trauma (Plesch 2014, 135-140, 142-145; 2015, 56), this cannot be the reason behind contemporary graffiti writers in very similar socio-economic circumstances in the Tyrol, although in some instances even the same context applies. The back of the altarpiece of the chapel in Bieberwier that contains the above-mentioned inscription on the chapel tower is full of graffiti made by church visitors, and since it is dedicated to Saint Rochus, they certainly searched for protections against the plague, as in the case of the chapel in San Sebastiano (Plesch 2014, 134; 2015, 51). Nevertheless, none of them used the same explicit allusion to a concrete outbreak of the plague as their Savoy counterparts did, writing only their names, the date, their profession, and/or moralizing aphorisms (Köfler and Schmitz-Esser 2013, 307-308, cat. no. 329). This might well hint at a different social practice when using sanctuaries for protection in times of plague, although we are unable to glean how far this is the case.

5. *The Devil, the Hangman and the Cross of Jerusalem – Graffiti and Beyond*

The previous sections have shown that most of the graffiti are found in churches, that a great bunch of them seems to relate to pilgrims and benefactors of the churches where they were produced and that the (male) writers belonged to a social class capable of writing and mostly educated in Latin. Many of them only indicated their presence, gave their name (with or without their profession), and the year they visited. Some graffiti hint at the day of the visit, in this case usually a saint's day or a festivity when the church was visited by the author. But why did they inscribe themselves here, in a sacred space that, during mass, was only open to the clergy and where visitors came as close as possible to the relics of the church? This seems to hint at a function of graffiti as communication aimed not just to other visitors, but also to the other world. In fact, this becomes clearer when we look for content that was drawn with apotropaic or malicious intent. This is not very frequent, but can be found amongst the material under scrutiny here.

In a house in Landeck that was formerly used as the residence of the local judge, an inscription in red chalk (?), today covered by new plaster and dating to 1520, read as follows: 'Avertat[ur] retrorsus [et] erubescat q[ui] volu[i]t mihi mala' (Ammann 1978, 222; Köfler and

Schmitz-Esser 2013, 170, cat. no. 164).[12] The apotropaic content is obvious. The interpretation of a small devil's head in the lower part of the fresco in the Church of Our Saviour in Hall in Tirol is more difficult (figure 8). The profile of the devil's head comments on the thematic strand of the fresco above, showing the Last Judgement and a demon pulling on one of the rising dead to take him to Hell. Thus, the graffiti writer might have thought of commenting on or contemplating the fresco's main message. Matthew Champion has included an English example in his recent work on graffiti, too (from Beachemwell, Norfolk, see Champion 2015, plates in between pages 114 and 115, seventh figure), so that we can confidently state that this devil is not unique. However, in the case of the head in Hall, the eye is over-emphasised, making it possible that the graffiti was attacked at its 'weakest' point to restrain the power of the image. Such practice of mutilating the devil's image is well documented in medieval book illuminations (Camille 1998), and it is striking that a painted devil above its graffiti counterpart in the fresco from Hall is not as well preserved as the rest of the painting.

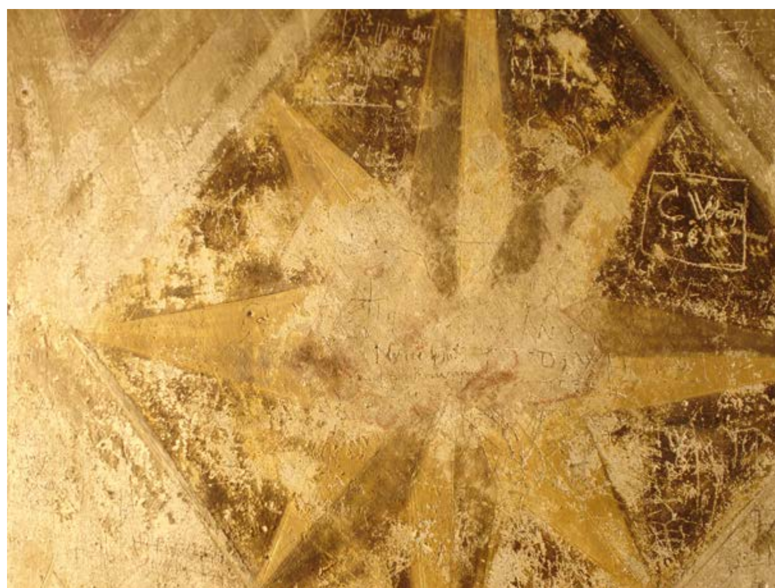

Figure 8 – Amongst the many graffiti in the Church of Our Saviour, Hall in Tirol, Northern Tyrol, one graffiti writer placed a devil's head here, well visible on the left ray of the underlying star. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

But the most astonishing sequence of graffiti in this context are scratchings showing gallows with two capital letters 'hanging' from the crossbar, dating from the sixteenth century. There can be no doubt that this interpretation as a sketch of gallows is correct, since some of the examples – all either from the fresco in the choir of the Church of Our Saviour in Hall in Tirol or the balustrade of the gallery in the parish church in Hall – even depict the ladder used by the hangman to put criminals on the gallows (Schmitz-Esser 2006a, 117; Schmitz-Esser 2006b, 105; figure 9). The interpretation is open to debate, but to me it seems highly probable that we are dealing with initials (what else could two capital letters indicate, all the more since they

[12] 'Who wished me evil, shall be turned away and repent'.

are not the same but vary in every graffito: 'BK', 'MG', 'IH', 'WP'). Placing these signifiers of a person in the place of the hanged and using a sacred space for the graffiti would indicate that a curse might be a possible explanation for these graffiti. Or did someone wish for the rescue of a beloved one, condemned to death on the gallows? Hall, after all, had a place of execution and was home to a professional hangman (Moser 1982). A third interpretation could make these drawings a form of prayer for the hanged after their death, helping them in the afterlife and testifying as to the remembrance of the condemned after their execution. It is interesting to think that the gallows in Hall (so far, no other examples of this iconography have been found in the Tyrol) are in all three scenarios, a reflection of the nature of the other graffiti they complemented. All of them tried to connect the writer and his message – mostly in the positive sense of a perpetuation of presence close to the divine – to the other world.

Figure 9 – Several graffiti from Hall in Tirol show the picture of gallows with pending letters (initials?). This example with ladder can be found in the choir paintings of the Church of Our Saviour. Photo by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Courtesy of the Author

The reality, however, is more complex, and this is just one aspect of medieval and early modern graffiti. As shown above, *memoria* and *fama* went hand in hand. And for contemporaries, using the cross of Jerusalem to identify the reason for a pilgrimage, the naming of a donor to the church to perpetuate a good deed or to inscribe oneself in the context of the regional literate elite might not have made such a great difference after all. As Detlev Kraack has shown in his work, noble pilgrims of this age even commissioned professional masons to make their graffiti, which included sophisticated coats of arms (Kraack 1997, 314-315). Adventure and pilgrimage, praying and remembering a visit might often have been one and the same thing. Moreover, contemporaries already had differing views on the practice of graffiti writing, as Felix Fabri's remarks quoted at the beginning of this article underline. But the one thing that can be learned from this is the insight that one explanation for the whole phenomenon of pre-modern graffiti writing will in any

case not be sufficient. In some places, the practice was welcomed, since it was linked to prestige and income; in others, it might have been prohibited and restricted (as in the cases in Palestine mentioned by Felix Fabri). The same is true for the intention behind this act of writing, and once more, this article intended to question the often all too clear-cut line in epigraphy between graffiti and 'proper' inscriptions in the sense of canonical definitions of the field.

Taking a somewhat contrary position to the comment by Felix Fabri at the end of the fifteenth century, in this article I have argued that graffiti writing in late medieval and early modern Tyrol was not simply an act of vandalism, nor was it perceived as such by most contemporaries. The graffiti may well have been part of a social practice that enabled rural churches to pay for construction and maintenance work, to pay for the clergy in the region or to form a social bond within male groups, be it by the act of inscribing a group of pilgrims on their crossing of the Alps, thereby perpetuating their prayers for a safe passage, or by reuniting a local elite in prestigious places such as a castle hall or a special church. As so often in the pre-modern European world, mundane and religious thought intertwined, and although it is worthwhile reflecting on the practices and meanings of graffiti in the Tyrol, one of the most challenging aspects of the epigraphic field work is that we only gradually arrive at a better understanding of them. Further research needs to be carried out and, as the Tyrolese case has shown, in order to be efficient it must include a broad regional survey.

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Speaking Walls
Graffiti from the Ludwigsburg Residential Palace

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Abstract

Ludwigsburg Palace, built in 1704-1733 by Duke Eberhard Ludwig of Württemberg, is one of the great baroque residences of Germany. While a lot of palaces were destroyed during World War II, Ludwigsburg was hardly damaged; therefore, its original surfaces are still to be seen. In the eighteenth century, craftsmen used the walls in the shell to leave graffiti, they made jokes about other people, but they also used the walls instead of paper for drawings or calculations. These graffiti are a historical source which illustrates the building of the palace. When the palace was finished, most of these graffiti remained hidden behind paint and tapestries; but people still left their traces: inhabitants, staff, guards, visitors, tourists, travellers, lovers have left their mark on the palace walls, doors or windows. Names, figures, sayings, drawings and cartoons can be found ranging from incised monograms to hooks, over a period from 1704 until today. In addition to this historical source, under the wood floor panels, legacies of the inhabitants like letters, bills, clothing, shoes, ceramics and utensils were found. Thus, the walls and floors of the building become a living history book, a huge stone calendar, which has lasted up to the present and is still ongoing.

Keywords: *Apotropaic Graffiti, Eighteenth-Century Graffiti, Ludwigsburg Residential Palace, Remembrance Culture, Traces*

1. *Introduction*

Ludwigsburg Palace, built from 1704 to 1733 by Duke Eberhard Ludwig of Württemberg, is one of the few great Baroque residences in Germany that suffered no significant damage in World War II (Schulz 2005, 96-97). The palace complex has undergone many changes due to its constant use, especially in the nineteenth century, when it was the summer residence of Friedrich I, first king of Württemberg. Unimaginable discoveries are possible in the original building fabric, and floors and walls reveal secrets. That is why Ludwigsburg Palace deserves special protection, which I call *right of origin*.

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Figure 1 – Ludwigsburg Palace, view from South, aerial view by ArchFlyTech/Arbeit Kunst. Courtesy of the Author

People – architects, craftsmen, artists, palace staff, guards, visitors, tourists, travellers, lovers – have left their mark on and in the palace. They immortalized themselves on the outside walls, on the inside walls, on doors, windows and paintings. Names, dates, sayings, drawings and caricatures can be found in a range that stretches from engraved monograms to swastikas over a period from 1704 to the present day. In addition, under the flooring, the legacy of the inhabitants and users has been revealed: fragments of letters, bills, clothes, shoes, ceramics and everyday objects. Thus, the walls and floors of the building become a living history book, a huge stone calendar that reaches into our present and is constantly being updated. There are also traces of various decorations of the palace rooms and traces that certain rooms have been used for different purposes. Graffiti, findings of various kinds and other traces, taken together, make history in *layers of time*, for many layers of memory lie on top of each other and next to each other. The history of the palace is reflected in a constant process of concealing and uncovering because there were many periods of redecoration and restoration. Of course, the graffiti writers on the eighteenth-century building site were aware that their traces would be of limited duration, as the walls would be whitewashed (Fleming 2001, 73ff.), or otherwise covered; often, however, these whitewashed walls became a palimpsest, ready to be written on again. Indeed, in many buildings layers of graffiti from different periods are found. In Ludwigsburg palace, for instance, during the restoration were found some smudged red chalk graffiti under the white paint; soon after the graffiti were made, the wall was whitewashed: on this layer of paint, no other graffiti were made.

What fascinates us about this monument? Why do we maintain and care for it? The monument allows us to travel the length of time, provided that it remains as an authentic document.

The traces range between *high and low art*. To *high art* belong, of course, the paintings, frescoes and furniture which decorate the palace, such as, for example, the paintings by Carlo Carlone from Scaria in Valle Intelvi, in Lombardy. As a second layer you find traces of a supposed *low art*, although it is anything but low for the historian. Traces – especially the graffiti, which are treated in detail below – tell three-hundred years of the palace's everyday history; they not only give information about what people did or thought at what time, but also about how they dealt with the palace as a historical object.

2. *Graffiti and Debris Finds as Historical Sources*

Graffiti, as a more or less spontaneous confrontation of people with their environment, are one of the earliest forms of human expression and communication, telling of 'lives of forgotten voices from the recent or distant past.' (Oliver and Neal 2010, 15). You find graffiti everywhere, across time and cultures: on Egyptian temple walls (Preisigke 2018), in Roman Pompeii (Langner 2001; Lohmann 2018), in England's medieval churches (Pritchard 1967; Champion 2015), in the Renaissance palace of Urbino (Sarti 2009), in post-revolutionary France (Sheon 1976), left in Berlin's Reichstag by Soviet Soldiers during World War II (Foster 2003), on trees (Oliver and Neal 2010) and in twentieth-century American cities (Baudrillard 1976). Shrill and colourful, they decorate or deface the concrete – it depends on one's point of view. To leave a sign of your presence can be seen as 'an archaic trait of human behaviour' (Kraack 1997, 378), or simply a gesture coming from a certain playful instinct: people who, for whatever reason, were waiting on a certain site, for example, scratched drawings and play panels on steps, pillars and benches only to kill the time.

Graffiti can be found from antiquity in various cultural monuments. They also appear in works of fine art, for example as superimposed signatures, as those discussed by Guichard in paintings by Hendrik Avercamp, Pieter Saenredam or Jean-Siméon Chardin (Guichard 2014, 121ff.). Brassaï (1960) was the first to deal seriously with graffiti, photographing them on the street walls of Paris.

Graffiti are still appearing every day and the widespread astonishment that they are not a modern invention comes from a perception gap in cultural studies: graffiti have simply not always been noticed. Older graffiti can be defined as *historical graffiti*. They are to be understood as an independent source genre in their own right, occupying the space between *high and low art*, traces (or legacies) ranging from documents to scribble and vandalism.

Debris – which have been found, or disposed of, below the floors – can be found everywhere in buildings. In the case of Ludwigsburg palace, graffiti and debris finds represent unusual testimonials of everyday life and culture, and therefore a multifaceted, although fragmentary, picture of everyday life.

The graffito is one of the most immediate works that a human can leave – 'it is because humans worked, and committed something to stone, or bone, or baked clay tablets, or papyrus, or paper, or recording tape, or a computer's memory, that their works outlive their working. People pass, their works remain' (Ricoeur 1988, 120). Doris Jones-Baker discusses graffiti as sources of a special kind, also as the voice of the unprivileged people, 'belonging to the archaeology of history' (1993, 4). Graffiti, she argues, are one source by which to understand history, alongside other more traditional sources, such as those we consider documents. As she states:

> English graffiti, particularly those belonging to the mediaeval and Tudor periods when they were used as a drawing and verbal recording medium by the educated and the literate as well as by the lower orders of society, are an important and often unique source of historical information – yet one still largely overlooked and unused by local historians. (1993, 4)

Graffiti are therefore to be considered as sources of an informal story of people who had no opportunity to portray themselves: they 'shed light on the lives of people who might not otherwise have been the subject of more conventional narratives' (Oliver and Neal 2010, 15). Matthew Champion also states that we find in graffiti 'the voice of those who worked the parish land, who carried the stones to build the church itself, and worshipped in this splendid monument to their betters' (Champion 2015, xii), as they could not afford artworks and monuments like the rich who had the possibility to be memorialised.

In old buildings, finds are of many kinds; among them, the shoe is the object that is most closely associated with its wearer because, over time, it takes on the impression of the body. The debris finds, in particular, show a picture of everyday life, the living and working world in the residence, which cannot emerge from written sources like court diaries or inventories. Their historical and epistemological value is therefore a source of everyday life; together with graffiti, debris finds represent a source which is as historical as that represented by reports or any other kind of written document. By examining them, therefore, we encounter the traces of a micro-history, not a story of *little things*, but a microscopic examination of essential traces of the past (Ginzburg 1986). Whatever has found its way onto the palace walls or under the palace floors, came there deliberately, and indeed the value of this fragmentary material today lies in its authenticity and immediacy: they are first-hand sources. Graffiti and debris finds must therefore be seen as part of the monument. As Paul Ricoeur argues, 'any trace left by the past becomes a document for historians as soon as they know how to interrogate its remains, how to question them' (1988, 117).

We find graffiti in many eighteenth-century historical places, but – excepting those we find in prisons – these have not been studied: indeed, I do not know of any other study of graffiti left by eighteenth-century craftsmen and construction workers during the building of a baroque palace such as Ludwigsburg. There is therefore no other material to which to compare Ludwigsburg's.

There are some graffiti in the palace staircase at Seehof near Bamberg (Schulz 2018, 92ff.). Built between 1687 and 1696, Seehof was re-designed from 1746 to 1753. Probably from this time there are graffiti in red chalk and graphite representing cupids and rocaille ornaments; one of the cupids is wearing an Allonge-wig. In the palace of Rastatt you can see a rare example of a wall used as a sketch-book.[1] Plasterer Johannes Schütz was working there in 1752 and made a natural-sized red chalk drawing on an unfinished wall to show his draft for a monument to Markgraf Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden-Baden, so called Türkenlouis. The monument was then executed in the choir of the church in Baden-Baden, 20 kilometres away from the graffiti in Rastatt. You find another, but unpublished, example of baroque graffiti in the church of Santa Maria dei Ghirli in the Italian enclave of Campione d'Italia on Lake Lugano. The graffiti probably date from the building's renovation that took place from 1623 to 1636: they represent cherubs, cupids and caricatures. This is remarkable because it is close to the valley of Intelvi, from which a lot of families who worked at the beginning of the eighteenth century at Ludwigsburg Palace

[1] See <https://www.schloss-rastatt.de/erlebnis-schloss-garten/verborgene-schaetze/entwurf-grabmal-tuerken-louis/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

came. Another example are graffiti in the prison of the Bishop's high school in Freising in Bavaria. Students at the Bishop's high school or the college in Freising made them between 1740 and 1770 (Götz 2018). There are two well researched palaces with graffiti: Castello di Issogne in the lower Aosta Valley, in north-western Italy, where you find graffiti on the late Middle Ages frescoes made by visitors, servants and the lords of the manor themselves, mainly from the sixteenth-and seventeenth centuries (Borettaz 1995); the second is the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino.[2]

The importance of the Ludwigsburg graffiti is that they give insights into the everyday life of a palace building site in the eighteenth century, being traces of the lives of mostly nameless workers. Only a few people in those times left their name in a graffito, even fewer a date and none his place of origin. 'Johannes Streitl [?] 1721', who wrote his name and a date in the old main building's staircase, could be a local or from far away. His name's ending indicates he could be a worker from the Austrian Tyrol, as many Protestants from there came as refugees to Württemberg, where reformed religion was practised. But this remains speculation.

An apt comparison with Ludwigsburg Palace may be the Palace of Skokloster in Sweden, the only building in Europe with a complete seventeenth-century building site of equal authenticity to Ludwigsburg. The palace started to be built in 1654 for Commander Carl Gustav Wrangel, but was never finished (when the builder died in 1676 the large banqueting hall remained unfinished); but, while in Ludwigsburg we find eighteenth-century graffiti of construction workers, in Skokloster we find a baroque building site with machines, instruments, equipment and frameworks. If there are also graffiti, I was unable to find out.

In the nineteenth century there was a renewed interest in graffiti and caricatures, also in children's and folk art, and primitive artefacts. In 1865, the English antiquarian Thomas Wright stated that 'graffiti and caricature were the first manifestations of artistic activity, the ur-styles of civilization. … Graffiti was recognized as part of man's basic creative instinct, his most primary form of art' (quoted in Sheon 1976, 21ff.). But the term 'graffiti' was first used by archaeologists when, by mid-eighteenth century, they discovered the ruins of Pompeii.

I first became aware of the graffiti in Ludwigsburg Palace about fifteen years ago, when I worked there as a museum guide. When I started to document them, there was no general interest in graffiti. I uncovered and catalogued part of the graffiti, and they found their way into my dissertation (Schulz 2018). In Ludwigsburg palace, there is a great diversity of inscriptions, made at different times: we find not only eighteenth-century inscriptions, but also others made by craftsmen and visitors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this article, I intend to deal mainly with eighteenth-century graffiti, starting with what I believe is their typology.

3. *The Ludwigsburg Graffiti: A Typology*

The Ludwigsburg graffiti can be typologically distinguished as follows:

1. *Inscription Graffiti*: names, initials, dates (traces left by people with the aim of perpetuating their own memory: they can be identified by the term *culture of remembrance*); sayings; invoices, doodles (the use of the wall as a notebook by craftsmen or archivists).

[2] The Renaissance graffiti in the Palace of Urbino (Sarti 2009; Sarti *et al.* 2017) were the subject of an outstanding exhibition and a major conference in 2017.

2. *Figure graffiti*: caricatures, human figures, animals.
3. *Architectural graffiti*: houses, churches, other buildings.
4. *Ornamental graffiti*: ornaments, motifs and patterns (which are related to the palace's domestic equipment); construction signs; apotropaic figures.

Generally speaking, Kraack and Lingens divide graffiti into three groups. In the first group, they consider simple signs, symbols, letters and numbers that often elude any further interpretation – for example monograms or single dates. The second group consists of words, sentences or texts which, they argue, have the same source value as other written traditions and often contain references to events that have not been documented. Thirdly, they consider naive, simple sketches (as well as artistically high-quality drawings) as *graphic representations* (2001, 30-31).

An important feature of the graffiti, which also affects their typology, is their execution; also important are the tools used to make them. In Ludwigsburg you find scratched graffiti on plaster, wood, glass and stone. Graffiti in red chalk, charcoal, chalk and graphite can be found on plaster, wood and stone. In the eighteenth century it was mainly red chalk that was used, while in the nineteenth century it was graphite. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, graffiti. Coal and chalk are likely to suffer from losses over time as these are not durable materials. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, graffiti are mainly scratched or applied with a pencil or a ballpoint pen. Obviously, sprayed graffiti, the technology that we nowadays mainly think of as graffiti, does not exist in Ludwigsburg Palace at all.

4. *Statistical Evaluation of Graffiti in Ludwigsburg Palace*

Of the 891 recorded graffiti in Ludwigsburg Palace, 387 are dated (figure 2). Only 7.5% of graffiti belong to the eighteenth century; only 5 graffiti come from the reign of the palace builder, Duke Eberhard Ludwig, (1716-1731); and 24 come from the time of Duke Carl Eugen, or those governing on his behalf, 1737-1790. 46% of graffiti date back to the nineteenth century: of these, 12 are attributed to the time of King Friedrich, and the widow Queen, Charlotte Mathilde, 1797-1828; 45 graffiti come from the period between 1828 and 1864 and 120 from the period between 1865 and 1918. 46.5% of all dated graffiti were applied in the twentieth century: 46 from 1919 to 1949, 74 from 1950 to 1979 and 61 from 1980 to 2006. If one adds to the dated the undated font graffiti, by analysing their typeface, the following picture emerges: 17% of the typeface graffiti date from the eighteenth century (80 undated, 29 dated), 44% from the nineteenth century (95 undated, 177 dated) and 39% from the twentieth century (67 undated, 179 dated). Another view emerges when looking at graphic graffiti: 59% are from the eighteenth century, 15% are from the nineteenth and 26% from the twentieth century. If one then adds up the graphic and the font graffiti (dated and undated), the result divides almost exactly into thirds: 30% of all graffiti are from the eighteenth century, 35% from the nineteenth century and 35% from the twentieth century.

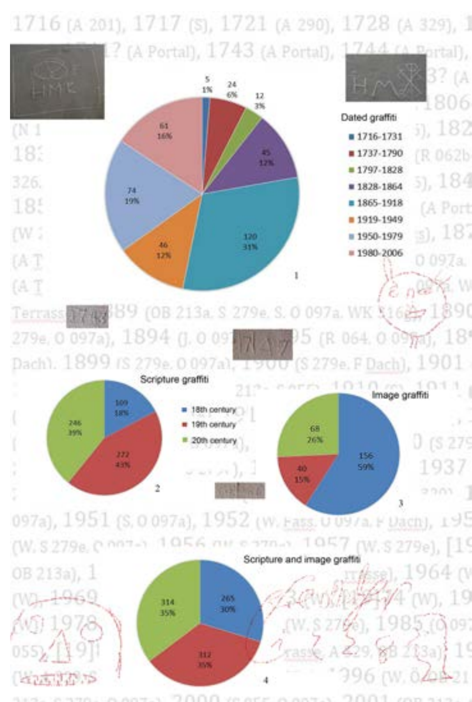

Figure 2 – Statistical analysis of graffiti. Graphic by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

These numbers prove, after all, that graffiti writing was equally practised throughout the centuries. However, the number of eighteenth-century graffiti would be much higher if one could examine all wall surfaces. I have only documented graffiti which appear on those walls where all layers of wallpaper or tapestries were removed during restoration.

Of course, graffiti were made with different intentions throughout the centuries. In the eighteenth century we find mostly graphic graffiti or sayings and more initials than names; for us, on the whole, the graffiti makers remain anonymous. You find these graffiti by construction workers everywhere in the palace because workers had access to all parts and they did know that whatever they left on the walls would later become invisible, because it would be covered by paint or textile tapestries. Later eighteenth-century graffiti were probably done mainly by soldiers and guards in public areas of the palace like staircases, galleries or on frames of entrance doors. Normally these public places were never left unattended, but most graffiti were made in years when the court was less often in Ludwigsburg, and therefore the surveillance was less strict. Maybe, then, at those times, workers did not have to hide when they chiselled their initials in sandstone.

In the nineteenth century people told more about themselves – they left their names, dates and places of origin. There are a lot of graffiti from visitors, tourists and craftsmen – which simply mean to say 'I was here'. You find graffiti of craftsmen not in public places but in backstairs, places that were used only by them. There are also graffiti from the mid-nineteenth century, made by employees in rooms used as offices for different authorities when the king's court was no longer in the palace (he and his family preferred Stuttgart and its palaces). Also graffiti from visitors are found only in places open to the public, because no one could enter the state and private apartments of the ruler.

In the twentieth century we still find graffiti by craftsmen in areas where they alone could enter. A lot of them placed their graffiti next to an elder's to show the continuity of their craft; sometimes they are arranged in groups of crafts, at other times you find graffiti from the same family. Graffiti by tourists are located in public areas: these are names, jokes, hearts or vows of love and also sexual graffiti; but people also placed graffiti in unattended areas like open ground floor galleries where they were not overseen by the museum's supervisors. As the monarchy was abolished in 1919, from that date the palace was not used as a royal residence any longer.

Throughout all these times, by leaving such traces as names, initials and dates on the Ludwigsburg Palace walls, people manifested a desire to be remembered. I will start my illustration of those traces by commenting on what I call 'graffiti of remembrance culture' from 1716 to 2001.

5. *Remembrance Culture: Names, Initials and Dates*

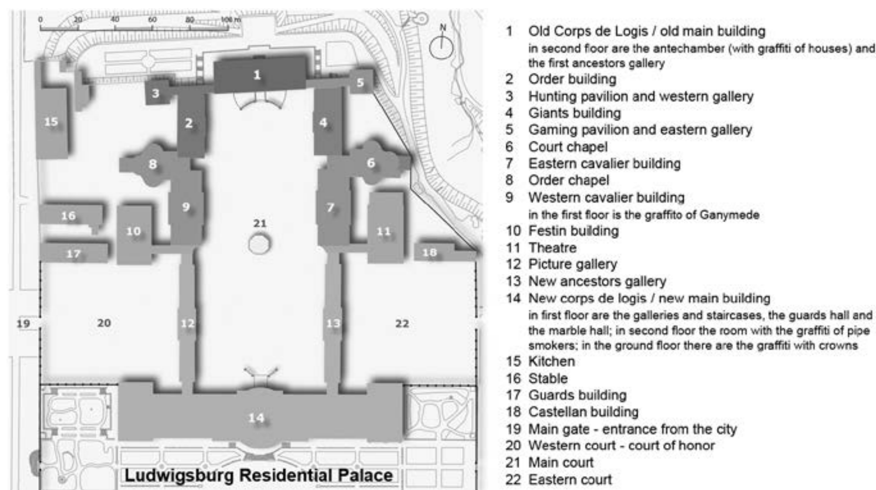

Figure 3 – Plan of Ludwigsburg Palace, Graphic by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

Craftsmen, guards and visitors immortalized themselves on the palace walls. Many left only a name, more often their initials, sometimes only an indication of the year (the latter is true especially as far as the eighteenth century is concerned), and also a lot of jokes. In the eighteenth century, in the north-eastern staircase in the Festinbau building, an alphabet was written on the wall; below it, was written 'der das geschrieben hat ist ein Prafer'.[3] Right next to it, somebody has written an incomplete Latin *Our Father*, ending suddenly with 'as in heaven as on earth'. The writer may have abandoned the graffito because had been disturbed while writing; in any case, someone showed their devotion by bringing it to an end. In the eighteenth century, in the intermediate floor of the Old Corps de logis, somebody wrote: '... [unrecognizable or wiped out] der alte iß ein praffes [braver] Mann er thut wie Wanndputz'[4]. Around 1730, in room 259 in the New Corps de logis , someone wrote on the wall: 'Wer in das Zimmer scheist der soll

[3] 'who wrote this is well-behaved'. Unless otherwise stated, translations are mine.
[4] 'the old man is well-behaved, he sticks like wall plaster', in the sense that he is reliable.

den Dreck mit der hand zum fenster raus werfen'.[5] We can imagine that someone really did this and that, therefore, the building site was stinking. In other words, the writing was maybe a threat by a foreman or overseer. Comparable to this is a graffito in the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino which says: 'Recordat dello turno' ('remember whose turn') in a room behind the stove for the bath. This was a reminder to a servant not to forget that the bath had to be regularly heated (Sarti 2009, 66).

As I already said, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, people were more communicative – they left names, a date, a profession, their origin, sometimes messages. These range from expressions of love to descriptions of the work done in the palace. From certain writings, therefore, we learn who loved whom or who repaired which windows. In the old Corps de logis several members of a family of glaziers left their names next to each other. Only craftsmen came to this place, which was not available to the public, as was the case with the staircase in the bell tower of the order chapel.

Staircases and portals are public places that are easily accessible to visitors who, before being admitted, had to wait in the stairwells, the galleries or the guard's hall. These public places were regularly under control during the eighteenth century and up to 1827, when Queen Charlotte Mathilde, who was the last of the royal family permanently living in the Palace, died. Afterwards, fewer guards or servants were necessary, as the palace was only intermittently used by distant family members.

On the balustrades of the stairwells in the New Corps de logis (Room 128a, 163a) the following initials followed by a date are inscribed: 'MK 1737', 'HH 1738' (in the latter, the number '1' is reminiscent of the symbol of an anchor), 'HSPVW 1738 DEW', 'ATBE 1738', 'HIRFS 1739' and 'BM 1781'. 'HMK' has made a more elaborate immortalization with a pretzel (or a heraldic symbol?) engraved over his initials, and he framed the whole. In addition, numerous other incisions can be seen, like 'HM' and 'IFM' with three crossed swords, an indication that it was probably guards who carved their monograms into the sandstone. The mere initial grants a certain anonymity, and therefore it is aimed at initiates.

It is interesting to notice that most dates are from the end of the 1730s; in the years from 1737 to 1744 there was an interim government in Württemberg; therefore, the palace was less used because Stuttgart became the capital again.

Probably, therefore, the public areas like the staircase were sometimes less supervised. It may be that the controllers themselves left these graffiti when they were unattended and had nothing to do.

Similar monograms, crossed swords and crosses can also be found on the portal of the Old Corps de logis: 'IHKF 1739', 'FKM 1741', 'iMTS 1743', 'SH 1744 HCS', 'HGG 1747', 'HFK 1747', 'GEORG VSLT ANO 1747' (next to it a sword or dagger), 'MK 1751', 'HB 1797'. Both sides of the portal have noticeable deep longitudinal grooves in the sandstone, probably left by the guards who whetted their sabres or swords there (Heller 1993, 226-229). Most of these graffiti date from the reign of Duke Carl Eugen (1744-1793), both before and after the court was officially transferred back to Ludwigsburg between 1764 and 1775. But the Duke used the palace before 1764 as well, when he set up a new apartment in 1758. This area of the palace, the first and oldest building, was not used by him, but only by courtiers.

In the palace, people who otherwise have not emerged in history have immortalized themselves. They have created their own monument of *culture of remembrance*. We do not have a graffito from every one of the 300 years of life of the palace, but traces have been left at least from every century of its history: 1704, 1804, 1904, 2004. Below is a chronological selection from the pages of this *historical calendar* (figure 4).

[5] 'Whoever shits in the room should throw the dirt out of the window by hand'.

Figure 4 – Historical Calendar – Graffiti of various centuries from the Ludwigsburg Palace.
Photo and collage by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

The saying 'si tout les vis volet 1716'[6] was carved into a windowpane in the guardroom of the Old Corps de logis (figure 4.1).

On the west facade of the palace church, under the top cornice and set in a box, there is a large inscription written in red chalk. It probably consists of a first and last name, a place of origin and a saying, probably from a roofer. However, only the first name 'Johann' and the date, 'Ano 1717', are legible (figure 4.2).

The construction of the palace church started in 1715 and, in 1718, after the dome was completed, work in the interior began (Wenger 1998, 19). 'Johannes Streitl 1721' can be read in a window embrasure of the outer hall of the old picture gallery in the Old Corps de logis; in turn, 'HR 1722' is carved on a stucco vase on the first floor of the staircase (figure 4.3); in the attic is written in chalk 'MBH 1728'; on a pillar in the Sala Terrana in the New Corps de logis is written 'Esel [donkey] Matheis 1728', and in room 249 only the date '1731'. Two years before the death of Duke Eberhard Ludwig, the interior design of the New Corps de logis was in full swing. On the balustrade in the stairwell of the Queen in the New Corps de logis you can find the inscriptions 'H.H. 1738' and 'IMTS 1743'; on the portal of the Old Corps de logis 'MK 1751' (we are now in the reign of Duke Carl Eugen, 1744-1793); and in an elaborately carved framing in the Sala Terrana of the New Corps de Logis 'CRAR 1753' (figure 4.4).

In a dormer of the Festinbau, there is a sentence, presumably left by a roofer in 1768, saying 'Zum Creitz und leidten bin ich gemacht gott fahr mihr zur fall ich heit und nicht das gelt'[7] (figure 4.5).

A certain Hiller immortalized himself, by name ('Hiller') and date ('1767'), in a corner room above the marble hall. Below is written '1767' and, much bigger, '1777', which has no reference to the name written above: the dates were probably carved by someone else who remains anonymous. Evidently, in 1777, that is, ten years after the inscription was made, somebody thought that a reference to Hiller's inscription was appropriate. But what was remarkable about these years and what did someone in this little, out of the way room want to highlight? July 1767 seems to be a remarkable date because it was then that Duke Carl Eugen was back from his long travels in Italy. In the evening of the day he returned, there was a great banquet in the Marble Hall. A window opens the little corner room onto the hall below. So maybe Hiller observed the party from his raised hideaway, the little corner room above the Marble Hall. But in 1777 there was nothing remarkable, the court having left Ludwigsburg, except that 1777 was the year when the poet Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart was arrested for his criticisms of Duke Carl Eugen and imprisoned for ten years: someone may have intended to mark that date for this reason. The time of glorious celebrations was over, when also 'CFR, HF and I.C.F.G. 1790' was written on the base of one of the vases on the staircase balustrade in the Old Corps de logis (figure 4.6).

Then we follow the few traces from the reign of Frederick (1797-1816), Duke, Elector, then King, and his wife Charlotte Mathilde (died 1828). Under the northern staircase of the castle church is written in black 'Weigel 1798' (figure 4.7).

Again, on the west facade of the palace church, there are several names under the top cornice: 'Honorus Honorusys Jacob Marqwardt von Massenbach [? Close to Schwaigern] / Anton Schnekenbürzer of Deilingen [near Balingen] Ano 1812'. The church must have been scaffolded again at this time, because the place where the inscription was made cannot otherwise be reached. An equally unusual place is the inside of the big barrel in the basement under the

[6] 'if all the screws fly', meaning 'if all the screws are not well fastened'.

[7] 'I hope only my money will slip out of my pocket and fall down and not I myself will fall down from the roof'.

games pavilion. There are numerous chalk inscriptions of coopers, like 'Christian Friedrich Schelling von Derdingen ano 1820 Küferknecht' (figure 4.8).

'Christian 1825' immortalized himself on a door on the third floor of the Old Corps the Logis; 'Wenzler 1844' was engraved on another door.

On the roof window in the Festin building are the initials 'K. D. 1879 b. 1898'; on a marble door vesture in the western gallery of the Old Corps de logis 'Klemm Maler [Painter] 1884' is scratched; immortalized in the stairwell of the bell tower of the Order chapel we find 'W. Wanner von Urach 1893', and another inscription tells us 'Richard Drexel u. W. Wanner haben hier oben Tauben verjagt!! […] 1894'[8] (figure 4.9).

In a box with a flaming heart on the third floor of the Old Corps de logis stands the inscription 'Paul Albrecht (?) Monteur [installer] 20.3.1913', 'H. Hohenstein Installateur [fitter] 24.3.1920'. The inscriptions were crossed out later but are still legible. A certain Klara Krautt has repeatedly immortalized herself on a door on the ground floor of the New Corps de logis: '1932 Klara Krautt Ossweil'. From another graffito we learn that she was born on 5 November 1882; 'Karl Lillich Elektromeister [master electrician] 29.5.1934' was inscribed in the ceiling of the gallery on the second floor. Under his inscription Lillich drew a lightning, which today is still the company logo of 'Elektro Lillich'. In the arcades of the eastern gallery to the games pavilion is inscribed in a heart: '1939 Helmut Breuninger' (figure 4.10) and in the arcades of the western gallery 'Erika + Robert 24.2. [19] 57' (figure 4.11).

In the same place, 'Eddy + Marina 7.5.1967' swore eternal love. On a door in the stairwell of the order chapel, craftsman 'Eckstein Ossweil 1975' is perpetuated; again, in the western arcade gallery was written 'Dave loves Gina 1990'; and in a dormer in the Festin building we read '2001 Wirth', also a craftsman. I stopped to collect graffiti made around that date. Perhaps someone else can look in Ludwigsburg palace for graffiti from the last 19 years.

Below I present some eighteenth-century graffiti belonging to the different stages of the palace's construction: inscriptions, accounts, sayings, drawings, caricatures and dates. On the eighteenth-century building site, using the wall as a notebook or sketch pad, sometimes as *smudge paper*, was the rule. The wall surfaces in the shell of the Ludwigsburg Palace were obviously a common carrier for all sorts of notes and jokes, the more so since paper was then not as easily available as it is today. We should not look at graffiti only from our current perspective. Influenced by 'Tags' of graffiti writers, we now see them as vandalism and assume that it is forbidden to write on walls. Therefore, most historians conclude that writing on walls was forbidden earlier as well. Matthew Champion, however, proved that many medieval carved graffiti were, on originally coloured architectural surfaces, clearer to see than today and that 'Modern perceptions of graffiti as something that is destructive and unacceptable simply cannot be applied to these medieval inscriptions' (2015, 5); and Raffaella Sarti demonstrated that in the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino even the ducal family members themselves left graffiti (Sarti *et al.* 2017, 46ff.). Juliet Fleming, in turn, has shown that writing on walls was common in Elizabethan and Jacobean England; as she states that, 'early modern England was paper-short. As a result, the unleisured of every class wrote (usually in chalk, charcoal or marking stone) on walls, furniture and other suitable surfaces' (2001, 9). In other words, writing on walls was not condemned at all times (Oliver and Neal 2010, 35).

[8] 'Richard Drexel and. W. Wanner have chased away pigeons here!!'.

We can see the practice of wall writing in taverns illustrated in seventeenth-century pictures by the brothers Roeland and Peter van Laer (Guichard 2014, 71) and we know from different testimonies by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that he himself was used to make graffiti (Guichard 2014, 28ff.). But Goethe never used the term 'graffito' for the traces he left on tables, walls or other surfaces. He just used a description of his activity: he carved, cut or wrote.

In *Moll Flanders* (1722) lovers scratch a dialogue to a window glass: 'You I love and you alone. I read it and asked him to lend me the ring, with which I wrote under it thus: And so, in love says everyone. He takes his ring again and writes another line thus: Virtue alone is an estate. I borrowed it again, and I wrote under it: But money's virtue, gold is fate' (Defoe 1964, 71). In 1798, the glass journeyman Christian Ludwig Eichenbrander scratched a similar saying to a window glass in Ludwigsburg Palace: 'Ein Jungfer und ein Glasersgsell sind 2 Verbrechens Ding. Es ist um einen Stoß zu thun so sind beyde hin'.[9]

We even find graffiti on artworks, wall paintings and frescoes (Plesch 2010; Guichard 2014), for example in the Castello di Issogne. As Omar Borettaz states, 'in the late middle ages, there was probably no palace, no church, no guesthouse, no tavern, or other public space that did not reveal on its walls traces of the passage of guests, pilgrims, wayfarers, or customers' (1995, 5).

In the context of graffiti on artworks two graffiti that relate to the history of Württemberg stand out. A letter from Pope Benedict XIV to Cardinal Tencin, written on 23 May 1753, reveals a piquant story about Duke Carl Eugen during his first Italian journey. The Pope said he wanted to buy antique statues, which were in the Villa of the Duke of Modena in Tivoli. One of the statues was a Venus, that can be described as follows: 'a beautiful naked Venus, and on one of her buttocks, engraved with the point of a diamond, you can find the name of the Duke of Württemberg, and on the other, that of the Princess, his wife; Interventions carried out by both of them when they were in Tivoli just before leaving Rome' (Zahlten 1993, 28). Until 1830, this Venus figure stood in the salon of the Capitoline Museum and has since then disappeared (Uhlig and Zahlten 2005, xxxii). A graffito is also linked with the end of Carl Eugen's Charles Academy. On the occasion of the dissolution of the Charles Academy in Stuttgart in 1794, under Duke Ludwig Eugen, the buildings were to be converted into horse stables. The former academician Johann Christoph Friedrich Haug chalked the following epigram on the door: 'Olim musis, nunc mulis' ('once the muses, now the mules').

In Ludwigsburg you can find graffiti on a fresco by Luca Antonio Colomba from Arogno in Ticino. In the court chapel above the duke's lodge there is a second site where visitors, pages and other servants could watch the ceremonies in the church. They left graffiti here (even a penis scratched onto a cupid), and also in the staircase leading to this place. Of course, the monarch would not be amused to see that penis on Colomba's cupid, but no nobleman ever came to this place, and from the church below you cannot see it.

It is different with the cheeky saying about the young lady and the glazier's journeyman quoted above. Next to this writing, we find: 'Christian Ludwig Eichenbrander Glasers Gesell bey Herrn Meister Andreas Wirthauß da in Ludwigsburg Anno 1798 d. 24. May.'[10] To find this in a noble apartment, made when the rooms were restored for Friedrich I, maybe before the window was set in! This was the room in which Napoleon was to be housed when he visited Ludwigsburg in 1805. Did he see this? In any case, he surely could not understand German.

[9] 'a young lady and a glass journeyman are easy instruments of a crime, it just needs one push and both are ruined'.
[10] 'Christian Ludwig Eichenbrander glazier's journeyman at Master Anreas Wirthausß in Ludwigsburg 24th May 1798'.

So, there are enough examples showing that leaving graffiti was common and not forbidden until comparatively recent times. I can certainly say that it was common among construction workers on the eighteenth century building site. But we see that in late-nineteenth century, it was forbidden to leave graffiti on the palace walls; in fact, in the galleries of the old main building that were open to the public, there was a plate fixed ordering that it was not allowed to scribble on the walls (Schulz 2018). But this warning did not stop anyone!

The Ludwigsburg graffiti remain perplexing because in most cases we do not know exactly why a person was drawing or writing a particular graffito on the wall. Even the most common traces, the calculations which show what was measured, are not easily interpreted, for the traces remain fragmentary: what the person thought at the time and what we think as twenty-first century observers are never congruent. They are a directly historical source opening a door to another world, when the palace was built and used and not just a tourist site as it is today. Together with other historical sources like written documents or files, graffiti sharpen our view of the palace and complete the mosaic. What Champion states about the graffiti we find in medieval churches is also valid for Ludwigsburg Palace: 'The medieval graffiti that we discover in churches today tells us about all aspects of the medieval world. It tells tales of grief and loss, of love and humour. … In short, it tells us of life' (2015, xiii).

6. *Caricatures of Duke Eberhard Ludwig*

The preludes to our excursion into the eighteenth-century figure world in the Ludwigsburg Palace are two caricatures. The draughtsmen seem to have had the palace builder, Duke Eberhard Ludwig, in their sights when drawing them (Schulz 2017, 68-71). The drawings are quite unremarkable, both in their size, and in the style of drawing and the material. A graphite drawing (about 20 cm high) in the picture gallery in the Old Corps de logis shows an aristocratic-looking person (figure 5). The head, shown in profile, has striking details: the eye too small compared to the proportion of the face, the straight long nose, the narrow sloping upper lip and the fuller lower lip. The face is framed by a wavy line indicating curly long hair, probably an allonge wig. Diagonally across from the sketch above the central entrance to the gallery is the bust of Duke Eberhard Ludwig, which was made by Donato Giuseppe Frisoni around 1711 (Fleischhauer 1958, 152, figure 5). The profile line and character of the drawing are similar to the bust. The drawing could be a sketch for fixing the stucco bust. Next to the drawing, a door frame seems to be sketched, above it a circle indicating the extent of the composition of the 'bust'. The face profile fits into the circle, the lines in front of the head indicating the wall surface. The graffito exaggerates certain features, such as the big nose, a stylistic device that was also used by Bernini or Tiepolo in their caricatures (Brauer and Wittkower 1931, plate 149b).

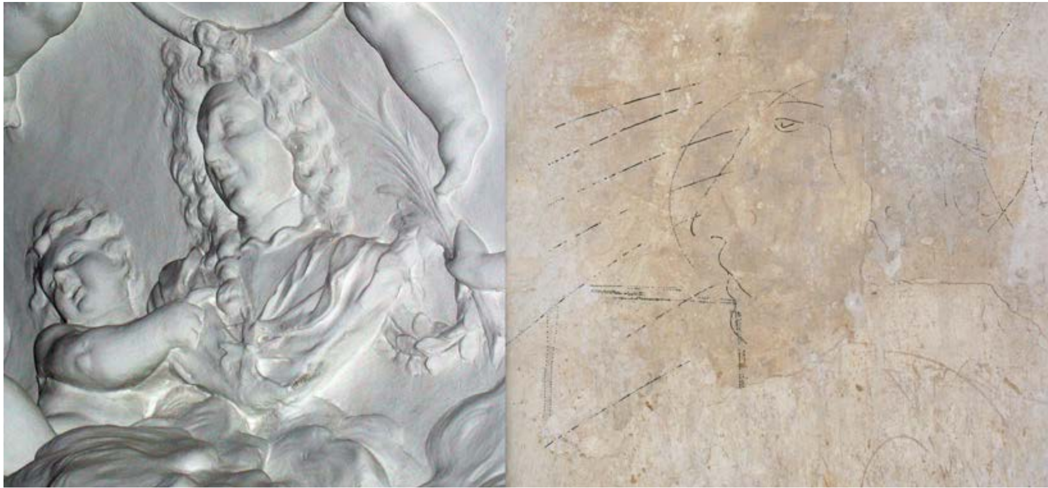

Figure 5 – Stucco bust of the Duke Eberhard Ludwig by Donato Giuseppe Frisoni in the picture gallery of the Old Corps de logis and caricature of the Duke. Photo by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

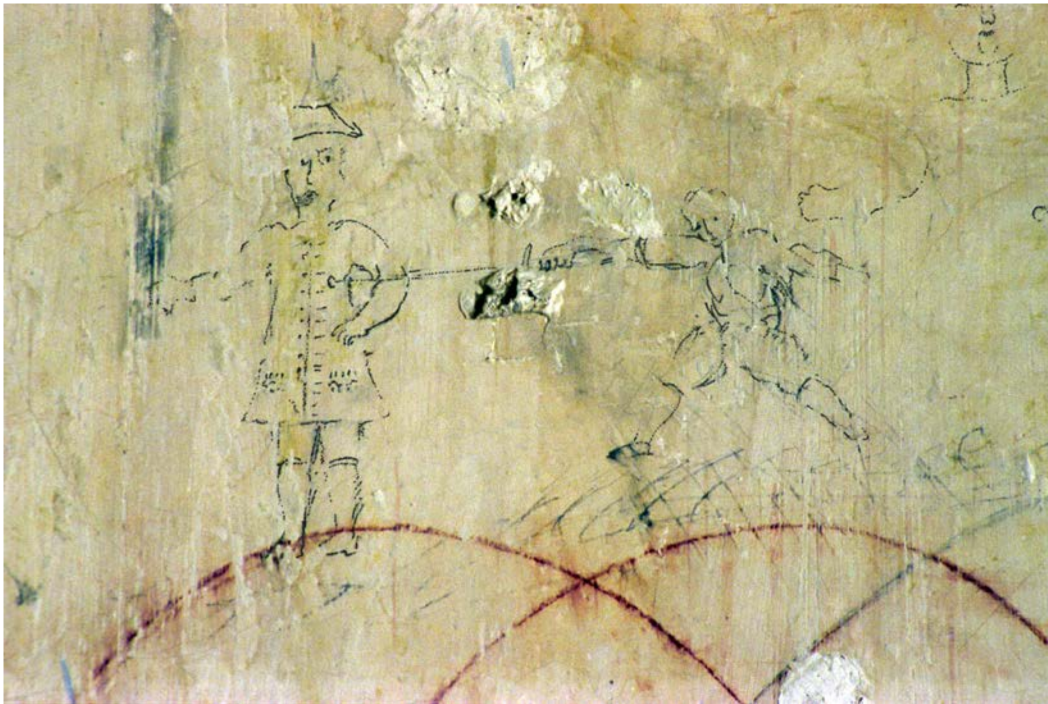

Figure 6 – Drawing in graphite, figure of nobleman about 10 cm high and a fencer. Photo by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

While the Duke appears in a caricature or work sketch in the picture gallery, in the New Corps de logis he appears to be the protagonist of an unusually harsh caricature. A young fencer determinedly stabs a well-dressed gentleman in fashionable eighteenth-century costume with a tricorn on his head (figure 6). While the tricorn's long tip fails to convince, the rest of the clothes are very detailed and accurately represented: the figure wears a *justaucorps* with long button placket and patch pockets, breeches and boots. The short-curly-haired head has portrait features. From the mouth, the figure's spirits seem to escape. Right above, another figure is visible. An oversized and obese lady seems to try to stop the fencer with a clenched fist. It seems as if the figure of the nobleman was drawn first. Then another hand drew the fencer and maybe a third person the lady. These figures are probably the outcome of an interactive collective work, but this is difficult to determine.[11]

The corpulent lady could also be a separate graffito. It's drawn with a very thin graphite line, nearly invisible. I only discovered it in a photo. It could be a very disrespectful caricature of the Duchess or the mistress of the Duke, Christina Wilhelmina of Grävenitz. Some people accused her of being the driving force behind the Duke spending too much money on his palace. If one compares facial features, clothing – above all the patch pockets on *justaucorps* – and stature of the figure with the portrait of Eberhard Ludwig by Antoine Pesne from the year 1731, a similarity cannot be denied (figure 7). The caricature could well have originated in the same period as the painting, for around 1731-1732 the expansion of the New Corps de logis was in full swing (Fleischhauer 1958, 193-194). But does the figure really represent Duke Eberhard Ludwig? Also, does it represent a social critique or is it simply a joke? Above all, the differences in clothing show that the draughtsman meant and depicted two people of different social rank. It is noticeable that the 'duke' is precisely executed in the details and the draughtsman attached importance to the recognizability of the figure. In the figure of the fencer, instead, emphasis was placed on non-recognizability, for it looks like a stereotype: a young man, not identifiable, dressed only in a simple shirt, breeches and flat shoes.

The idea of someone stabbing the sovereign Eberhard Ludwig in a caricature is not so outlandish. The court did not pay up promptly and this could be a reason for one of the artists or craftsmen to give vent to his frustration in this drawing. Perhaps the Duke is meant as a kind of *windbag* – not murdered at all but punctured so the air is let out of him.

[11] There is a rare example of interactive graffiti in the student's detention cell in Freising (Götz 2018, 234). The student Anton Andreas Lang painted his name there in 1764 in yellow ochre paint and someone else hung the name on red painted gallows and wrote below the offensive phrase, 'little brat'.

Figure 7 – Caricature and portraits of Duke Eberhard Ludwig (a portrait of Eberhard Ludwig from 1731 by Antoine Pesne; another portrait that shows the hat of the duke). Courtesy of the Ludwigsburg Palace/SSG Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg. Photo and collage by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

There is no comparative example in the history of caricature in the eighteenth century that could have been a role model in any way. Nobody seems to have dared to portray a princely person in this way. Similar drastic representations exist only later, during the Thirty Years' War, in pamphlets on the assassination of Wallenstein or, later, in William Hogarth's *Marriage A-la-Mode* of 1745. In the fifth sheet of Hogarth's series of six engravings, the young count is stabbed by his wife's lover (Hogarth 1986, 133, figure 86). James Gillray's 1793 engraving on the execution of Louis XVI is downright brutal (Gillray 1986, 77). Only much later can one find caricatures of Duke Carl Eugen and then, often, of his nephew, King Friedrich I, who was a preferred target of cartoonists (Schulz 2017, 71-83).

The caricature of Eberhard Ludwig remains unique in its time in that the artist preferred to remain anonymous. Only the group of craftsmen directly involved in the palace knew who and what was meant by the caricature. With the completion of the work and the whitewashing of the walls, this knowledge was obscured. The red chalk over this graffito belongs to 'Pipe smoker 3' (figure 8.3). Maybe it was set over the scene with the fencer to mean another joke along the lines of 'you can smoke the Duke in a pipe' or 'his promises are like smoke'. In this room there are in total four caricatures of pipe smokers who smoke different Italian pipes, as well as classical clay pipes of German origin ('pipe smoker 1-4', Schulz 2003).

7. *Smoking - No Smoking: Pipe-Smokers and Smoking Pleasure*

The drawings of the pipe smokers are fleetingly drawn on the wall, mocking portraits of work colleagues or superiors, created around 1725-1733. Day labourers from different nations were involved in the palace building, so there was a multi-cultural crowd and the different pipes showed that everyone had their own tradition. Tobacco consumption was already considerable in the eighteenth century and, because the tobacco trade was lucrative, in 1736 Duke Carl Alexander wanted to set up a tobacco factory in Ludwigsburg. The goal would be to carry on the trade without foreign imports (Schönleber 1834-1836, Fasz. 9, 10).

'Pipe smoker 3' was initially drawn as a large head in graphite, about 60 cm high (figure 8.3). Probably a second person then re-drew the head in red chalk, put a pipe in the mouth and then sketched a circular line, maybe representing the cloud of smoke surrounding the head. This smoker smokes a very long, one-piece clay pipe, but the pipe bowl is covered by layers of paint. These long-stemmed pipes were common in Germany and Holland, but they were not particularly strong because the long pipe broke quite often. Another one-piece clay pipe is smoked by 'Pipe Smoker 2' (figure 8.4), of whom only a fragment remains. This pipe has a cover to stop burning ash from falling out.

'Pipe Smoker 4' (red chalk, about 10 cm high) shows the folkloristic caricature of an Italian or Croatian, who certainly had a pronounced head in life. The figure smokes a two-part pipe typical of these regions, in which the pipe bowl is stuck onto a wooden stem (figure 8.1). In the corner under the head of the figure there is a scarf, a cravat. Because of the many artisans from northern Italy and the Balkans, who were noticeable because of their scarves, their settlement near the palace was called *Krawattendörfle*, which means cravat-village (Schulz 2009, 42-46). 'Pipe Smoker 4' has apparently not only irritated the draughtsman but is also ridiculed by someone else because the caption *Ein Genusmann* (a gourmet) is written with a graphite pencil by another hand. The saying 'smoking someone in the pipe' comes to mind. If you smoke someone in the pipe, you can easily handle them: they are no match for me. It may well be that such a proverb, or a similar joke, prompted the caricatures. So, many jokes of the artisans may have been aimed at people workers saw as fools. In general, it was probably rather rough at the palace, as, indeed, is illustrated in the same room by the saying about the 'shit'.

The two-part pipes were smoked in Italy, the Balkans and south-eastern Europe. The most important centre of pipe making in these regions, from which a large number of workers came, was Chioggia in the lagoon of Venice (Articus 1999, 63). The shape of the 'Smoker 4' pipe is similar to the barrel-shaped bowls from Chioggia. The pipe bowl, however, seems to be reproduced in a frontal view, the strangely kinked pipe in a side view. The upper part of the pipe bowl could indicate a cover to protect against flying sparks. 'Pipe Smoker 1' (red chalk, size about 20x30 cm) also smokes a pipe with a pipe bowl in the shape of an animal (dog or owl?) or a little man (figure 8.2).

Presumably, an Italian or Croatian craftsman has been caricatured here, but the curved moustache suggests a Croatian folk type. His streamlined hairstyle is emphasized by the length of the pipe. For this pipe bowl, there is no exact equivalent in the spectrum of Chioggia pipes. There's a rough resemblance to pipes in the form of human heads, such as a Turk's head, a bearded old man with a hat or the 'Zuavo', a figure from the middle of the eighteenth century with hat and curly moustache (Boscolo 2000, 134). The figure occurs, like other human figures or animal forms, especially from about 1750 on (period 2 of Chioggia pipes). But, since the pipes of Chioggia can be distinguished only roughly, an appearance of such figures around 1725-1733 is quite possible. Where this character comes from is unknown, but he may be a lucky charm. 'Pipe Smoker 1' also has a similar moustache as the 'Zuavo'.

As I said before, this building site had workers from different cultural backgrounds; contemporary documents report troubles between locals and foreigners, and even between Protestants and Catholics. It seems that these troubles are reflected in the caricatures of pipe smokers, as they smoke pipes from different origins. But, mainly, they all had reasons enough to joke about their employer, the Duke. When it was about their wages, all of them – locals and foreigners – shared the same concern: they were all waiting for money, as is witnessed by the many complaints. In any case, this big room on the second floor of the New Corps de logis was full of graffiti and we can imagine that the workers and craftsmen here came up with a lot of nonsense, gave vent to their own feelings, got rid of frustration and found in such joking relief from their hard work. Maybe graffiti were tolerated for this reason?

It would be interesting to know if Duke Eberhard Ludwig saw the graffiti, especially the ones on himself. But they were really inconspicuous compared to the pipe smokers. For instance, the graffito of the Duke and fencer (figure 6) cannot be seen from a distance. Graffiti were so *low art* that the Duke did not pay attention to them when he made his inspections of the building site. But we do not have any written proof of this.

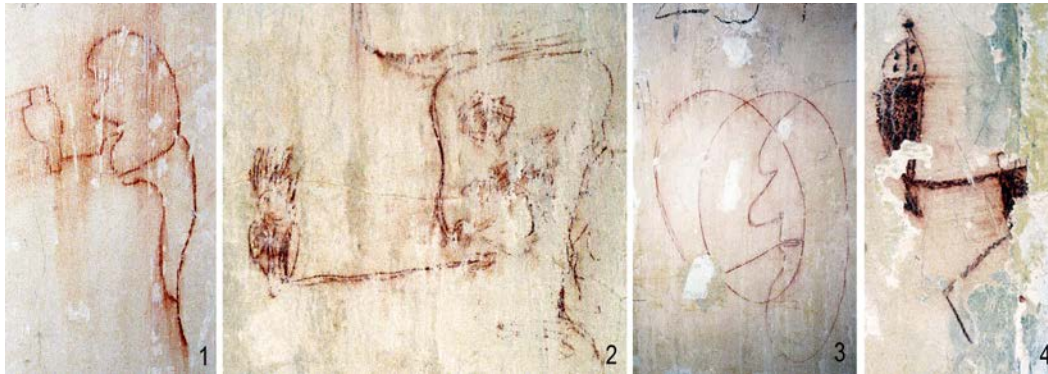

Figure 8 – Graffiti of pipe smokers.
Photo by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

8. *'Our Little Town': Graffiti of Houses and Churches*

Many of the graffiti of the palace represent buildings. In the vestibule to the picture gallery of the Old Corps de logis, numerous inscriptions and drawings of houses and other buildings are located on both sides of a window embrasure. Craftsmen have created here 'their little town'. A name inscription dated 1721 gives information about the time of origin of the drawings. The antechamber was unrecognizable until 2001 because it was divided into small rooms and a part of it formed a corridor with no daylight that gave access to the various apartments. Fortunately, during the restoration of the entrance hall, the graffiti were preserved. Let us first look at the drawings in the eastern window embrasure (figure 9). On display are three timber-framed gables, a faintly visible large timber-framed house with plastered floor, two small plastered houses or stone buildings, two towers, an elongated building, a small tower and a dome as well as the profile drawing of a figure, a grid-like ornament, an 8-shaped magical (?) knot and illegible inscriptions. The timber-framed buildings stand out and, on closer inspection, all look differently constructed. For example, the small timber-framed gable of 'House 1' shows an axial emphasis and a division by K-struts (formed by stands with head and foot struts) and St. An-

drew's crosses. On the roof ridge is what looks like a ball or a crescent moon. The reduced but clear shape of this gable, but also of all the others, corresponds to the usual eighteenth-century half-timbered buildings which were everywhere to be found in the surrounding villages. Even in Ludwigsburg, most of the houses were not massive stone buildings, but half-timbered buildings with plaster. In the western window embrasures are shown: a building with a structure on the roof, a timber-framed house, several stars, a deer antler, several name inscriptions, three birds and a fantastic animal.

Figure 9 – Graffiti of houses and buildings in a window embrasure.
Photo by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

Figure 10 – Graffito of a half-timbered house, pentagram and pheasant.
Photo by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

The house represented there is a two-storey building with a half-timbered gable and plastered floors (figure 10). The gable is divided into four zones and on the ridge sits a ball or decorative disc. In the middle upper window something illegible is written in graphite; next to the house is a pentagram, one of whose symbolic meanings was protection against evil, drawn to protect the house. On the right

are a naive drawing of a bird, probably a pheasant, and, above, the name 'Jacob Beury' (?). Probably the joke was meant as a mockery to Beury, and, perceiving the ridicule, he crossed out his name. Above the drawing of this house and of another building there is a name inscription: 'Johannes Streitl [?] 1721' (see *supra*, 113). Further names scratched in the plaster can be read on the left above this other building: 'Von Körn; Von K_ttolin [s] ky; Von Rieder' and, above, a calculation. Perhaps the engraved names are those of the page boys at the court of Carl Eugen, because, at least since 1767, these rooms served them as a dormitory. Although these are not names of noble families, a 'von' prefix has been added to them; maybe the pages, or the guards, who made the inscriptions jokingly made themselves noble by adding it to their names.

In the upper part of the embrasure is a red-chalk drawing of another pentagram which, instead of sharp corners, has loops. Right next to it is a naive graphite drawing of deer antlers. Other animals are a flamingo (?), maybe a monkey (?) with a long tail and two peacocks. Pheasant, flamingo and peacocks could probably be seen in the ducal gardens; indeed, Eberhard Ludwig had created a pheasant garden around the pleasure palace named Favourite, which can be seen from the window whose embrasure we are examining. The flamingo seems to have been unknown to the drawer, because the drawing does not really come off and the beak is wrongly drawn. As can be seen from the above description, this particular wall has been busily written on.

The reason why so many half-timbered houses are represented in this site is that half-timbered buildings were not unusual in the eighteenth century. The craftsmen, then, drew houses whose construction type was common in rural areas and therefore known to them. To build houses in Ludwigsburg, the craftsmen and new citizens were given mainly wood, with stones used only as foundation and basement. Even in Ludwigsburg, not all houses were plastered immediately – despite the fact that there was a regulation which prescribed that the facades should be plastered – but the timber-framed structure remained visible for a while. You still find timber-framed gables in fire lanes.

Nevertheless, those represented here are not houses which existed in reality, although they were not simply drawn for fun either: indeed, too many different and detailed house types are shown in too small a space to be considered mere doodles. But what did the draughtsmen mean by drawing them? And also, did the craftsmen make those sketches simply to kill the boredom of their idle time? Were there bottlenecks in the construction process, when they had just to pass the time? Were there discussions about house types and construction methods? In any case, the very settlement where the construction workers lived may have provided examples for these drawings. Indeed, around 1707, the so-called *colony, Krawattendörfle* ('village of cravats'), today called Bauhofstraße, served the building site as settlement for the workers (Sting 2000, 66); the area, with its houses, huts and barracks may have presented a colourful picture, similar to the collection of houses drawn in the graffiti.

In the courtyard is the guards' building with a detention cell. A whole scene is painted in red on the wall of the cell – mainly towers and a few houses, in one line. On the same wall is also painted a fortified city; does it represent the painter's wish to be protected? Protected from despotism? Does it represent the heavenly Jerusalem? Jailed people have a lot of time, and therefore, in prisons we often find detailed scenes, drawn or painted, such as those in the Bishops' prison in Chur (Tischhauser 2007), or in the prisons of the Inquisition in Palermo (Fiume and García-Arenal 2018). Other drawings seem to show stately buildings and may have something to do with the alterations to the Old Corps de logis, which were in full swing in 1721. For example, 'Building 1', a long, rectangular building with three gantries or arcades in the centre, designed with a clear solid line, could represent a draft of the planned sub-structure walls on the north side of the Old Corps de logis. Frisoni's 1721 expansion plan envisaged a widening of the building to the north, which would then rise above the mighty sub-structure walls and terraces (Olschewski 2004, 54). These expansions never got beyond the work on the foundations. In 1724, Paolo Retti was instructed to dismantle what he had begun,

and restore the terrace, including stairs and guardhouse. But it could also be the ground floor of the old main building (with the north-facing portal and other portal openings meant instead of the windows), or the former cascades in the sub-structure of the terrace.

'Tower 1' shows a clear connection with the construction of the Old Corps de logis. The draughtsman first drew a central axis, which at the same time forms the top of the turret. The turret apparently shows right and left of the axis different silhouettes of a roof hood. Below is an alternative design for the roof hood and, finally, someone jokingly put a flower in the spire. The shape of the roof and the top of the turret resemble the bell tower of the Old Corps de logis. Between 1719 and 1722, according to Frisoni's plans, the building was raised with a 5-axis pavilion-like structure, called a Mezzanine. The construction was given a high mansard roof with a watch case and clock tower. The drawing of a turret is similar to this. So, it is not to be doubted that these graffiti were related to the planning and execution of parts of the palace.

This also seems to apply to various church representations in the northeast spiral staircase of the Festinbau, a festival hall building. 'Tower 1' is constructed in clean lines around a torn midline and the drawing could well have come from the hands of a skilled draughtsman. Above the shaft rises the gently curved, bell-shaped helmet, above it a gallery with a double-arched window. On top sits the tower dome, or lantern, whose shape is reminiscent of an elongated onion, vase or amphora. Similarly, the towers in Frisoni's first design for the facade of the city church of 1717 are shown. 'Tower 3', however, shows a bell-shaped tower helmet, which has some similarity with Retti's design of the Reformed Church opposite the city church on the market square, which he started planning in 1731.

9. *Construction Traces: Offset Marks and Stonemasons' Marks*

From graffiti of buildings we will come shortly to the practice of building itself. In some places, both on the exterior and in the interior of the Ludwigsburg Palace, in addition to conventional stonemasonry, you find various graffiti referring to elements of the building's structure, such as offset marks, calculations or tallies, maybe checks on the delivery of materials. Not always fully understandable, these are inscriptions both similar to and different from those we have encountered up till now: they are notations provided with a practical use. Matthew Champion defines such masons' marks graffiti of a particular kind, that of a quality control in the sense of 'I made this' similar to the 'I was here' graffiti (Champion 2015, 125ff.).

High up on the hunting pavilion cornice above the windows of the first floor, sandstones bear painted numbers or letters in red chalk such as 'F' and 'A', which served as offset marks or signs that have a purely constructional task. They refer to the fact that a stone belongs to a certain position.

On the game pavilion there are different offset marks with a 'B' and on a corner plate there is 'Zum Ecke' (?) ('for corner'). Two offset marks with the letter 'C' are labelled 'Mitel' and 'Mitte' ('middle'). In the latter case, the writing stands on the head, which proves that the stones were worked on the ground. Then there are the marks 'D', 'G', 'K', 'W' and 'M' and, on a piece of sandstone, strokes, or Roman numbers, a kind of checklist. A stone above the segmental arch of a window bears *bogen* ('bow') and on a corner of the south wall stands *süden* ('south').

In addition to these marks, on many stones are found carved stonemason marks such as 'H', which refers to the master craftsman Johann Ulrich Heim or to his brother, the stonemason Matthias Heim. The master builder Christoph Friedrich Weying, for whom the symbol 'W' stands, worked for the brothers Heim, while the symbol 'V' stands for Johann Georg Vögelin.

These graffiti in which structural elements are represented lead us to graffiti related to the palace decorations, which can be seen in several different ways, as I will try to show in the following pages.

10. *Drafts and Work Sketches*

There is an interesting graffito on the south wall in Room 227 in the western cavalier building. A youthful, naked Ganymede, with his left arm raised, seems to be leaning against the frame of a wall panel (figure 11). Of this frame decoration, only the preliminary drawing in pencil, from around 1788 is visible. In fact, the figure is under this more recent decoration and is certainly from the time of building. If the body was drawn in some detail by the draughtsman, the head is more abstract: this was made by a circle surrounded by lines – like a sun – which probably represent the hair. In this faceless head, a second person has drawn in graphite the face of the older, bearded god-father Zeus.

There is a direct connection between the drawing and the ceiling picture of the *Abduction of Ganymede in Olympus* from the circle of Luca Antonio Colomba, painted around 1720 (figure 11). The picture, hidden under a suspended ceiling, was made especially for this room and its exclusive ceiling mirror. This is proven by the fact that the restorer saw that the canvas had never been re-framed.

The red chalk drawing could be a draft of the ceiling image, as the posture of Ganymede in the drawing clearly matches the execution in oil. But the figure is drawn in quite an amateurish manner. Why is the head so peculiarly abstract and the face of Zeus drawn in it? Why is Zeus not depicted as a separate figure as it is in the painting? The answer is probably that the drawing, rather than a simple draft, is a satirical re-presentation of the ceiling. The craftsmen or workers have made fun of the pathos of Colomba's image in the jokes they have put on the wall. Thus, next to Ganymede, is also drawn the joking figure of a small male. One person might have painted the Ganymede, another the face of the elder in the figure of the youth. Did the illustrators realize that, by portraying two figures merging into one, they were representing the idea of Platonic love, in which two people merge into one. Next to this graffito, is a small jesting figure drawn in graphite, with a big head and small body. Someone coloured the cheeks in red chalk.

Figure 11 – Ganymede, graffito in Western Cavaliers building, a Persiflage (?) on Colomba's ceiling picture, 80x50 cm, red chalk and graphite. Courtesy of the Ludwigsburg Palace/SSG Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg. Photo and collage by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

On the ground floor of the New Corps de logis (Room 4, today Lapidarian), can be found decorative drawings of the monogram, EL, Duke Eberhard Ludwig (figure 12.1). Thus, the drawings unambiguously betray their date of creation as between 1725 and 1733. It seems as if the wall surfaces of a window embrasure and an adjacent wall were used as practicing areas for these designs.

The large initials are meshed and standing on a kind of scroll or volute, and they are specular. The letters end in acanthus leaves and above the monogram sits a detailed, and realistically drawn ducal crown (*Herzogshut*). The hoop is covered with ermine, the purple cap framed by edging, decorated with pearls and on top of the imperial orb. On the left-hand side an arrow points to a second ducal crown, which was done unrealistically, with only a few strokes drawn fast against the wall. Next to it is an also imperfect orb (the cross lacking the crossbeam) and the name 'Fridrich'. In addition to the large monogram, on the right-hand side there is a smaller one in graphite, but less detailed. The orb on this *Herzogshut* is indicated only as a ring bearing a high cross. Then several ducal monograms without crowns are inscribed. One finds the inscription 'ELutt [Eberhard Luttwig (Ludwig)] ich habe zieret' ('ELutt I decorated') – but we have no information about this 'I'. The name of the Duke, Eberhard, elegantly executed in red chalk, also appears on the wall.

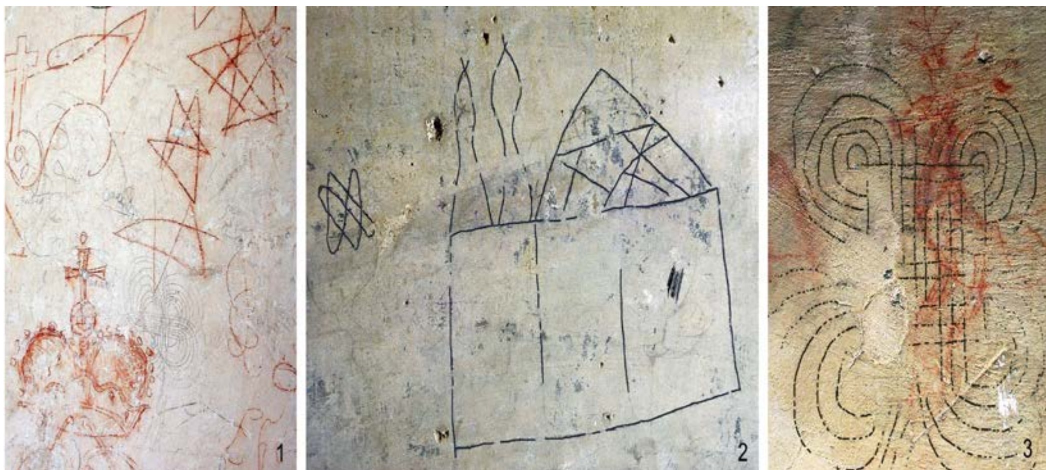

Figure 12 – Apotropaic graffiti: knots and pentagrams.
Photo by Daniel Schulz. Courtesy of the Author

The sketches are exercise drafts for the ducal monogram and the ducal crown, such as are found everywhere in Ludwigsburg. The idea was that who the ruler in this palace was had to be proclaimed everywhere. Translated into our present language of forms, the ducal monogram would correspond to the tags of today's graffiti writers. Originating from the tradition of memorial graffiti, the tag consists only of the name (or pseudonym) of the sprayer (writing name), often heavily stylized, graphically over-drawn and therefore hardly decipherable (Treeck 1993, 148).

On the same wall next to the crowns and monograms we find a knot and several stars that should be hexagrams or pentagrams. These seem to allude to the practice of magic, a last typological group of graffiti, those with an apotropaic character.

11. *Apotropaic Graffiti: Pentagrams, Hexagrams and Knots*

Some of the graffiti in Ludwisburg Palace are at first sight mysterious, and call for interpretation: mazes, knots and stars (hexagrams and pentagrams), which are not simply decorative designs, for instance. Since pentagrams, so-called *Drudenfüße*, are to be found clearly in different places, one must consider whether the symbolic ornaments they present have an overall apotropaic character and whether the labyrinthine forms are to be regarded as knots. Of course, all of these forms have also a playful character, which also applies to the knots, or mazes. Therefore, a symbolic interpretation should not be out of place here.

As I noted above, since antiquity, the pentagram, also known as the *Drudenstern* or *Drudenfuß*, has been held as a magical apotropaic sign. The *Drud* or *Trud* is a plague that threatens humans, and according to superstitious thinking, the pentagram is supposed to protect against it as well as evil spirits, the evil eye, the dead, witches, disease and all other evils, probably because the five spikes of the pentagram symbolize the five wounds of Christ. If the pentagram is to be effective, it must be drawn in a continuous line, which means an infinite line, drawn all at once, without the pin used to draw it dropping off the writing surface. Often it is painted on doors, bedsteads, etc., as a protection against witches (Seligmann 1910, 293-294; Adler *et al.* 1991, 86). In Pfisterer's *Barockes Welttheater* (1716) there is, for example, the figure of a dismissed soldier marching with his wife. She carries the child on her back in a cradle protected by a pentagram, and on another leaf a pentagram is attached to the foot of a cradle (Pfisterer 1996, 126, 220). Pentagrams and hexagrams symbolize both the visible and the invisible world. The ambivalence of these signs is expressed by the fact that they were also thought to be used by demons to gain access to humans.

The hexagram is a six-pointed star, also called Solomon's Seal, which is formed from an upright and a fallen triangle. It has a superstitious function and is a symbol of protection like the pentagram. The sides of the two triangles represent the six sides of the world (top, bottom, front, back, right, left); the three straight lines symbolize the holy Triassic. In many cases, the hexagram is also called the Shield of David because, according to tradition, this made him invulnerable (Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck 1977, 238). Often the pentagram, hexagram, and octagram are used interchangeably, for in principle they serve the same superstitious purpose.

In the window embrasure in the antechamber of the picture gallery (Old Corps de logis), there is a pentagram drawn in graphite over the drawing of a half-timbered house, probably meant as the house's protection (figure 10). Above the house another pentagram appears. Since the ends end in loops, this seems to be just a doodle.

In the western servants' stairway (New Corps de logis) a pentagram, but also three seven-pointed stars, are next to stucco designs. The seven-star (heptagram) is also considered a protection against disaster (Bentele 1995, 77). In the Hornmoldhaus in Bietigheim-Bissingen, on a wall in the gallery to the summer-room, there is a graffito with a *Drudenfuß* and a seven-pointed star (*Heptagramm*). The wall bears a decorative painting of the eighteenth century and inscriptions of the years 1762 and 1789. However, they could also be just failed pentagrams or playful drawings.

In room 4 on the ground floor, next to the designs of the ducal monogram, more failed penta – or hexagrams can be seen (figure 12.1). That may have been an area in which workers were practicing the drawing of certain geometrical forms: they probably practised the drawing of an hexagram, which is more uniform than a pentagram, but its angles are more difficult to draw. That some of the pentagrams have been hastily drawn may well be due to the hustle and bustle of each situation. Furthermore, since these are magical characters, secrecy was essential. If the *Drudenfuß* is seen by someone else before it is completed, it is ineffective. Even a pentagram that is wrongly drawn may not be effective.

In Ludwigsburg Palace there are also representations of knots that are comparable to certain medieval knot graffiti, as those found and documented in many English churches (Pritchard 1967, 86; figures 119, 43, 71). In the antechamber of the picture gallery (Old Corps de logis) there is a knot in the form of an '8' or loop whose intersecting lines form nine rhombuses in the middle. This form also corresponds to the sign of infinity. A multiple entangled knot is located in the northern stairwell in the Order building. It is a so-called

Solomon's knot, composed of two superimposed '8s' or a swastika (Pritchard 1967, 33, figure 43; Biedermann 2000, 238). A similarly constructed, but less artfully entwined knot can be seen close to the representation of the Ducal crown (Room 4, New Corps de logis, figure 12.1), and beside it there is another imperfect knot. Similarly, there is a knot in the Old Corps de logis, drawn above a deer, in a hunting scene (figure 12.3). Another is drawn next to a church (New Corps de logis, figure 12.2).

Finally, some debris found in the palace's foundation may have a superstitious character: the New Corps de logis of Ludwigsburg Palace was built on a hillside, so that the actual ground floor under the rooms of the southern front constitutes the foundation, walkable if one stoops, with a higher cavity below the marble hall. In the foundation walls there is the head of a Bacchus figure with vine leaves (?) in its hair. But why they walled the head here and what that could have meant we don't know: the reason remains hidden in the darkness of the foundations. Also found there were the fragments of two ammonites. In fact, it was believed that fossilized ammonites, belemnites (cuttlefish) and sea urchins, but also so-called 'thunderbolts' (prehistoric tools), were thrown from the sky during storms. Due to their heavenly origin, the stones were regarded as power bearers and often used in house walls (Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck 1977, 32). Ammonites were also seen as fossilized snakes and because of their round shapes in some regions they were sunstones, into which the sun had burnt a face. Ammonites in walls, especially in facades, were thought to protect against lightning. Perhaps the ammonites in the New Corps de logis were meant to perform the same task if they were not accidentally trapped in the building stone.

Shoes were often stored in attics for superstitious reasons. Two women's shoes, six men's shoes, several shoe soles and fragments of side and heel parts were found in the palace. However, information about where exactly they were found is missing, so whether they were stored for superstitious reasons can only be surmised. The Sumerians left dead shoe cups as a gift of dedication in graves, because shoes would be useful for the journey to the afterlife. Shoe amulets were also used in various prehistoric cultures, for they were probably thought to protect the wearer in all cases and warding off all evil (Sulser 1948, 28-30).

How widespread superstition still was in the eighteenth century is shown by the numerous witch trials that were still being carried out. When, in 1731, Duke Eberhard Ludwig separated from his long-time mistress, Wilhelmina von Grävenitz, she was brought to trial on a charge that she had bewitched the Duke and tried to get his blood and hair for black magic practices Osswald-Bargende 2000, 10).

12. *Conclusion*

The few examples of graffiti from the baroque building site of Ludwigsburg Palace presented here show that graffiti are an important cultural manifestation and source of historical information. In the Ludwigsburg case, they greatly enrich the history of the palace, as they provide an insight into the everyday life of the palace which can hardly be inferred from its building files. As maintained by Doris Jones-Baker (1993), graffiti can be considered as records of secular life, as historical records, as records of people's names and initials, as a local record of natural events, as a record of religious life in the parish, as witnesses of the design and fabric of buildings and, therefore, as records of the work of architects, masons and craftsmen.

The aim of this article has been to show that the Ludwigsburg eighteenth-century graffiti are direct records of the life, practice and work of construction workers, artists and craftsmen on the building site of a palace. So far, there is no other known baroque palace which can

give the same view – and in such quantity – as Ludwigsburg. Since the written files do not provide much information about the workers, graffiti offer an added window onto a palace building site and the minds of those working there and creating all the splendour with which to honour Duke Eberhard Ludwig. The palace was meant to give him immortality and Chronos to record the Duke's acts in the book of history for all eternity.

What Champion states as regards the English medieval church graffiti also applies to the Ludwigsburg Palace. Graffiti 'offers us a rare glimpse of the lives of those who worshipped in the parish church; lives that otherwise have left almost no marks upon the world that they inhabited' (2015, xi). Compared to the Duke's world, in which the palace was the scene of a hierarchical court life, graffiti constitute a contrasting anarchical layer, which remained in place even when they became invisible because the walls were covered over or whitewashed.

Graffiti were, for workers, a means to vent their grievance against the hardships of working life. We have seen some of them as interactive communications, reflecting conflicts, jokes and mockery. But we have also seen that some graffiti simply served a practical purpose, using the walls as a sketchbook for designs, to explain building processes. We have seen that at this building site it was common to use walls as surfaces for writing and drawing and we have no indication that this practice was forbidden. The workers had access to all areas of the palace, so long as structures of buildings were not finished. We have seen that some workers, guards and servants wrote their names or initials, simply meaning 'I was here' to leave a personal trace. You find these graffiti mainly in public areas and most often in periods where the palace was less in use. Most of these eighteenth-century graffiti are anonymous. Rarely do we find a full name and a date.

Although the graffiti of the following centuries are not the main focus of this article, I wish to point out a few things: in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, craftsmen could not leave their traces on walls because they had access only to some parts of the palace; later graffiti, therefore, were made by visitors or tourists, and only in the public parts of the palace to which they were admitted, where they were either waiting or passing through. As no one was allowed to enter the state and private apartments of the monarch without a guide, you find no graffiti there. It is a completely different situation to that, for example, in the sixteenth-century Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, where you can find graffiti in private as well as in public areas (Sarti 2009). But the baroque palace of a ruling family is less a domestic than an institutional place, as the whole life of the ruler was public. Duke Eberhard Ludwig didn't have a private apartment, he had only a state apartment, and it is only in the nineteenth century that we see a division between public and private rooms. From the middle of the nineteenth century there was a change in function. The palace was no longer used by the king, but only by more or less distant relatives and as a base for regional authorities and archives. Their employees left different graffiti, the family members none.

In my doctoral thesis (Schulz 2018) I give a view of the history of the palace and I tell the story of the life which was led there, analysing the furnishings, decorations, written files, inventories, objects found beneath floors and graffiti. All these sources together allow us to reconstruct a reliable account of the history of the palace and of its inhabitants and users. As I have been trying to show, graffiti are an essential source for the reconstruction of that history.

Sometimes, maybe, graffiti are nothing but small marginal notes; sometimes they are a valuable source, as in Ludwigsburg Palace. But all in all they enrich the classical art-historical point of view immensely.

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The Mind of the Shepherds Five Centuries of History Told by the Rocks of the Fiemme Valley

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Abstract

Mount Cornón in the Fiemme Valley (Eastern Trentino, Northern Italy) was subject to intensive use in a local economy based on forestry, agriculture and animal farming. Through the centuries the shepherds working in this area left thousands of inscriptions on the rock using red ochre. There are initials, family symbols, acronyms, dates, names, livestock tallies, portrayals of animals, greetings and short anecdotes. What is surprising is the shepherds' ability to write before the first literacy schools in the valley were established. The resulting visual effect is that of a painted mountain, which looks like other rock art contexts of the Alps such as, for instance, Valcamonica in Lombardy or Monte Bego in France; but there the writings are engraved on the rocks. The ongoing historical-ethnographic and ethno-archaeological research on the rock art sites of Mount Cornón by the Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina aims to reveal the circumstances of pastoral life in the Fiemme valley over the last five centuries and, thus, to discover the particular socio-economic and cultural context that brought the writings into being.

Keywords: *Ethno-Archaeology, Fiemme Valley, Rock Art, Shepherd's Writings, Trentino – Northern Italy*

1. *Introduction*

It is a thousand-year old history that is painted on the rocks of Mount Cornón[1] in the Fiemme valley (figure 1). When the shepherds, from the villages or the valley bottom, used to bring their flocks to the high pastures, they would take paths along steep slopes to reach the grassland, or at least some grassy canyon or flat ground, to exploit the grass resources the mountain could offer to the full. In their passages the shepherds wanted to leave a trace of themselves on the rock by writing their initials or their signature, a date, a sum, some greetings, or an anecdote using a red ochre found on the same mountain (figure 2). However, what is

[1] Mount Cornón (see figure 1), which has a maximum altitude of 2,189 metres, is composed of three distinct mountains. From West to East we find: Mount Cornón, as it is properly called, Mount Pizancae and Mount Pelenzana.

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the meaning of this writing? Why did the shepherds write? What was their motivation? An ethno-archaeological investigation, carried out between 2007 and 2017, tried to find an answer to these questions.

Figure 1 – Mount Cornón in the Fiemme Valley. Photo by Laura Gasperi.
Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

Figure 2 – Mount Cornón – Cava dal Bol LXIII.
Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

2. *The Writings*

Spread over an area of about 6,400 hectares, the inscriptions are concentrated on the rocky walls above the residential areas of the villages of Tesero, Panchià, Ziano di Fiemme and Predazzo. More precisely, they are in the altitudinal range between the last fields assigned to agriculture and the high elevation grasslands assigned to haymaking. The inscriptions are found in those parts of the mountain related to grazing or mountain pasture, in particular rock shelters, ledges, rock faces, or near some springs, where the shepherd used to wait for the flock to graze or take a break before reaching the higher pastures; and on a mountain as rugged as the Cornón, the places to take a break were always the same, so that, as time passed, it is precisely in those spots that large painted friezes originated, such as the *Coròsso dai Nomi*, the *Coròsso da l'Aqua* or the *Coròsso da la Palestra*, which look like large frescoes with great visual impact (figure 3).

Figure 3 – Mount Cornón – *Coròsso dai Nomi I*: detail of the writings on the wall
Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

If at first sight the writings simply seem to mark the transit of shepherds, on a more careful reading they represent a sort of 'stone archive' from which one can reconstruct the memory of a past that has left no trace in coeval written documents as regards the daily life and most intimate moods not only of shepherds, but also of hunters, haymakers and miners, who passed through the mountains for various reasons.

There are 2,730 painted walls identified in the Cornón group, all of them located between 1,200 and 2,000 metres above sea level: i.e., below the pastures traditionally intended for haymaking and above the cultivated land just outside the residential area. The shepherds were supposed to graze community flocks there, being careful not to damage the land reserved for other subsistence activities. This spatial organization reflected an intentionally intense exploitation of the territory and a strict regulation of the use of community resources.

The information about the pastoralism of the Fiemme valley that can be gathered from 47,700 writings includes, in addition to the chronology (present in 24,389 inscriptions, 51.12%), the name and surname of the shepherds writing in 1,511 cases (3.16%). In 34,528 inscriptions (72.38%) writers left only their initials, sometimes together with the family sign (9,644, 20.21%), so as to be better identified by readers. This family sign[2] (called *noda*) was very important in the past for marking sheep as well as wooden tools and equipment used in collective activities (Bazzanella and Kezich 2013; Bazzanella *et al.* 2013a). In 289 cases (0.6%), the shepherds also wrote the name of the village they were coming from: mainly villages in the valley, but also from the near by Fassa valley; Primiero, Falcade, Belluno, Enego, Pejo in the Sole valley; and the Non valley. Exactly 3,111 inscriptions (6.52%) included counts of animals grazing. Of these 2,409 (5.05%) display a count of goats, 2,482 (5.2%) a count of sheep and 208 (0.43%) a count of young goats. The sheep were bred for their wool. Therefore, they didn't need to be milked and they could follow the shepherd for a long time away from the villages: from late spring through all summer and autumn and, if the ground did not freeze, also in winter. The writings are sometimes completed with *historiolae*, short messages (greetings and dedications) included to provide more information about the moods of the shepherds, which recur in 1,912 writings (4.00%) and represent a unique heritage to trace the historical memory of the more recent past of pastoralism. Lastly, there are assorted drawings (pictograms: 4,778, 10.01%) of animals and human figures, sacred symbols, buildings, plants and doodles (table 1).

[2] Regarding family or 'house' signs see also: Zug Tucci 1982; Gri 1990-1991; Isabella 1995; Bernardin 2015. The function of these symbols was to mark the private property as opposed to public. These signs resemble heraldic symbols, but unlike the latter, they were used by all social classes and their origin is more ancient. The illiterate employed them to be able to identify the property they owned. Their function was limited to the community area in which they had been generated.

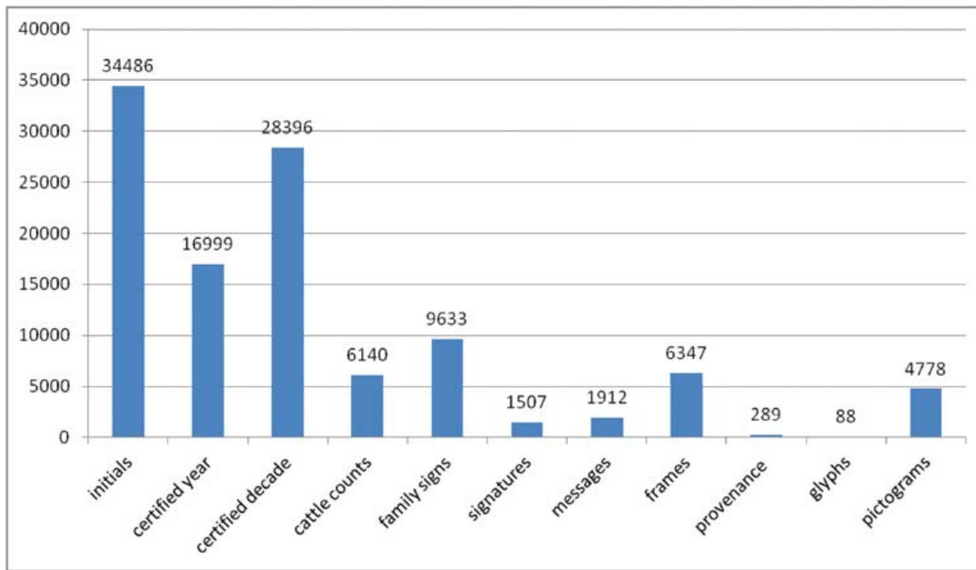

Table 1 – Mount Cornón: types of writings

2.1 *The Chronology of the Writings*

The shepherds' writing activity on the rocky walls of mount Cornón is documented from the second half of the fifteenth century up to the mid-twentieth century, in other words to the end of 'traditional' society when industrialization attracted to the bigger towns a considerable amount of workers and contributed to depopulating the mountain (figure 4).

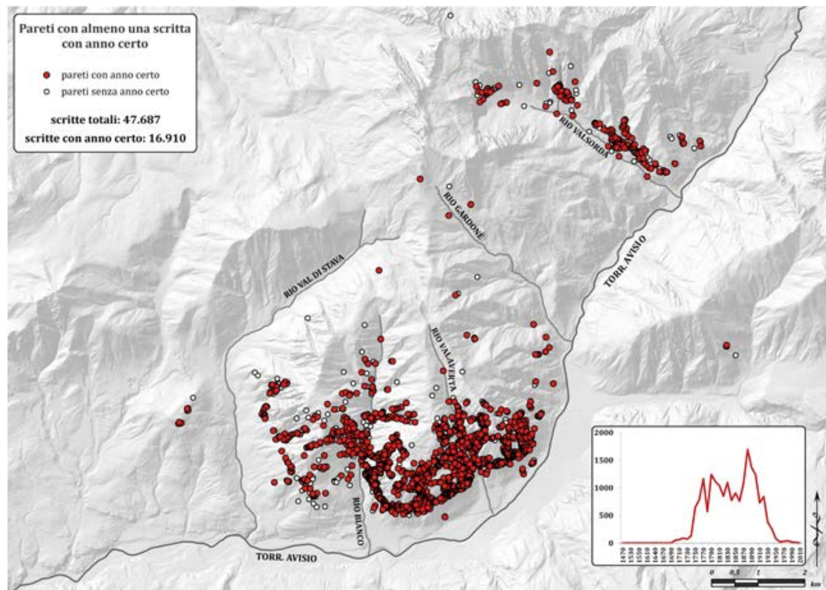

Figure 4 – Mount Cornón: spatial distribution of the walls with writings and chronology. Graphic processing by Roberta Covi. Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

Few writings are dated before the end of the sixteenth century (11) and their low number until the end of the seventeenth century, only 21, is certainly due to the daily and unstoppable exposure of the rocky supports to rain, sunlight and frost. These conditions have inexorably compromised the readability of all the writings, even the most recent ones, that have not been protected in some way from water and sun. We can therefore hypothesize that the low number of writings before the first half of the eighteenth century is due to the low demographic rate of the valley and also to the low literacy rate of the shepherds (Silvestrini 1982; Sartori Montecroce *et al.* 2002). Conversely, the production of the largest number of writings, from the second half of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century, coincides with the period of the most intense exploitation of the mountain by the communities of the valley bottom. It is certainly due to a demographic increase and to the Teresian school reform (1774) that was aimed at giving a basic education to all without distinction of class or sex (Vadagnini 1998; Antonelli 2001; 2013).

The oldest inscription on mount Cornón dates back to 12 June 1470. It was left just above the village of Ziano by a shepherd with 'JBZ' as initials, who was guarding 170 sheep. This inscription was very difficult to identify, due to how faded it was, and has been made legible only through digital image processing. Almost six centuries separate us from this writing, but even just this one indicates that the custom of painting the rock in this area is very old, perhaps much older than this date.

The second oldest writing dates back to the first half of the sixteenth century (1527) and is located on the base of one of the two huts in Valboneta, right at the edge of the area destined for making hay, which were built to accommodate those making hay and shepherds after the end of hay making.

Among the most ancient writings, there is a group of inscriptions dated to 1558. The rocky wall where they have been painted is now located in the territory of Panchià but at that time was part of the village of Tesero. In 1558 we are still far away from the separation of the settlements of Panchià and Ziano from Tesero, which occurred in 1780. About the author of the inscriptions, who left five records of his passage, we know only the initials 'BA' of the name and 'T' of the surname. We don't know anything else about him except that he decided to enclose two of his five writings in linear frames.[3] In one of these he made a dotted decoration, creating a sort of background to better bring out his identity, and in one of the others he surmounted the frame with a cross decorated with a point above and below the two arms and enclosed in a circle. In the writings the initials of the author's name and surname are followed by the abbreviation 'FL', which stands for 'FATTO L'ANNO'[4] and means 'made in the year' (figure 5). Almost all these writings have been affected by the passage of time: frost has made small portions of the rocky support come away here and there, which has significantly compromised the image.

With a closer look at the details of the 47,705 writings that were found in the Fiemme valley, it was possible to sort them by their features and period of execution to facilitate understanding

[3] I use the masculine pronoun because the shepherds were predominantly men. However, in 18 cases in the inscriptions of Mount Cornón women's writings are also documented.

[4] These abbreviations are very common in alpine popular epigraphy (Antonelli 2006; Bettega forthcoming). They are exhibited in the villages of the valley bottom on the architraves of houses, haylofts, stables or huts (and also outside and inside the churches and on aedicules). They must be understood as part of *riti di soglia* ('ancient threshold rites') carried out in search of protection (Fillipetti and Trotereau 1978). Yet more symbols can be interpreted in the same way, such as the sacred heart, the cross, the Calvary, the trigraph of Christ, the monogram of Mary, the rose of fortune, the wheel symbolism of the sun (all very frequent on the rocks of Mount Cornón).

of them. In their typology, the writings have a variability that makes it possible to distinguish, at first sight, two groups: the writings realized before the first half of the nineteenth century and the writings made after then (Bazzanella *et al.* 2014).

Figure 5 – Mountain building with the writing 'FATTO L'ANNO'. Photo by Marta Bazzanella. Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

2.2 *The Writings of the First Period*

In the first group, the oldest, dated to some time before 1850, the writings are essentially composed of initials, abbreviations, dates, family symbols and counts of livestock. The author is hardly recognizable except through the family sign, and the writing space is surrounded by a frame, often creating a sort of small votive shrine surmounted by a cross, or characterized by a full-colour background (figure 6) in which the writing appears as a kind of negative. These stereotypical writings seem to express the clear desire by the author to mark the territory, to leave a trace of his passage. The mastery of writing is not yet evident (Baggio 2013) so that for the authors of this period we can only speak of a primitive literacy.

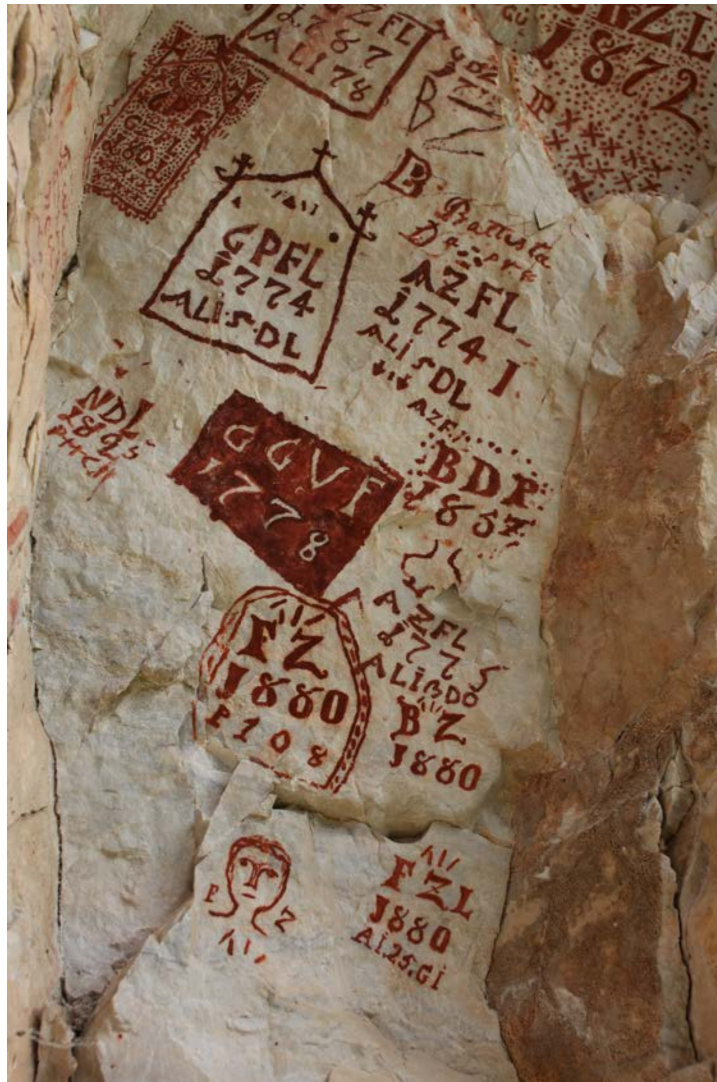

Figure 6 – Fiemme Valley, Mount Cornón: example of writing of the first period.
Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

2.3 *The Writings of the Second Period*

In the second group of writings, dated to some time after 1850, the initials and the family signs often give way to the author's full name, frequently completed by an indication of his municipality of origin. Furthermore, brief descriptions of the days spent in the mountains begin to appear, accompanied by anecdotes that seek to convey events such as weather condition, a search for a lost sheep, great effort, fatigue and happy, or less happy, moods. In the late twentieth century messages of a public nature appear, reflecting the great political events of the time. In this period, the authors of the writings show well-established mastery in writing (figures 7, 7a).

Figure 7 – Fiemme Valley, Mount Cornón: example of writing of the second period.
Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

Figure 7a – Example of a political writing on the rocks of Mount Cornón. You can read: '*AZINO F.D. Zorzalin 23/ XII 18 [.]fine della guera mondiale cola disfata dei Todesci EVIVA SAV[.] Po[.]*' ('end of the world war with the defeat of the Germans HURRAY'. On the top of the writing someone else wrote: donkey).
Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

3. *Society and Economy in the Fiemme Valley Between the Mid-Sixteenth Century and the Mid-Nineteenth Century*

The history of pastoralism in the Fiemme valley is inseparable from that of the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme* and its member villages, which have been able to preserve their independence and the governance of their territory over the centuries, proving great ability in self-regulation. The *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme*, whose origin dates back to the late Middle Ages, manages a collective patrimony founded on a vast territory of about 200 square kilometres, of which over 110 are kept as woods, whose management is entrusted to elected representatives. Considering the traditional economy of the valley, based on tillage, forestry and grazing, a wise collective management of the resources was necessary for the sustenance and development of the local communities in the harsh mountain environment (Netting 1981). The *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme* was born in the first place to allow the use and the protection of these common assets. The main purposes were in fact to prevent the attempts by higher authorities to seize the resources, to defend them from the negligence of the local populations and to regulate their use, by those entitled, in order to guarantee their best possible exploitation and preservation (Degiampietro 1997; Giordani and Zancanella 2008).

Pastoralism was also strictly controlled by local institutions: by the municipalities, through the respective *Società di Malghe e Pascoli* (Mountain Pastures and Dairy Societies), and by the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme* which used to manage the community's properties. From the twelfth century the documents preserved in the archive of the *Magnifica Comunità* (Bonazza and Taiani 1999; Sartori Montecroce *et al.* 2002), testify to the custom of exploiting the common parts with annual rotations, according to a specific division of the mountain pastures.

The rights for the communal exploitation of the high pastures, which also existed in other contexts in the Alps, although with different arrangements, were ratified in the Fiemme valley in 1315 by Prince Bishop Henry of Metz with the so-called 'Privilegio Enriciano'.[5] The rights of members included the opportunity to obtain free firewood and wood to repair or construct houses, fences, work tools etc., which still exists today. This document lists all mountains, pastures and woods belonging to the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme*. The same paper confirms two hundred year-old rights such as the right to graze, to harvest timber, to hunt and fish. From the beginning of the twelfth century, we can therefore refer to the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme* as a collective institution, recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities and provided with self-given rules regulating its management and the exploitation of lands and woods (Sartori Montecroce *et al.* 2002). Woods, pastures and huts were exploited in rotation by the villages according to a hundred year-old alpine custom. This partitioning lasted until 1847 when rotation was cancelled (Giordani 2016; 2018).

From the regulations known as 'regolamenti d'uso delle malghe' (regulations for the use of the mountain pastures) and 'quaderni d'oneri per l'affittanza delle malghe' (notebooks for renting the mountain pastures and dairy), it is often evident that the job of the shepherd was prestigious in traditional society,[6] and was very far from the relative marginalization of the last decades brought about by abandonment of the primary sector in favour of more profitable service industry, related

[5] The roots of *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme* hail from a long time ago. During the fourteenth century, Henry of Metz (1310-1336) Prince Bishop of Trento issued a document confirming the community's ownership of the land: it is the so-called 'Privilegio Enriciano' (Degiampietro 1975; Giordani and Zancanella 2008).

[6] As pointed out by the shepherds during the interviews (Delladio 2015).

to tourism and craftsmanship (Giacomoni 1991).[7] A man needed to benefit from the trust of the community to be appointed shepherd of the collective flock by the *Società di Malghe e Pascoli* (there was one society for each municipality), according to established rules and practices.

At the beginning of the warm season, the main task of the shepherds was to keep the flock in the range above the inhabited areas, between the last cultivated land and the fields reserved for haymaking, respecting the boundaries of the assigned lots and all the *bandi di pascolo* (grazing bans) that the forest management required. The goats and the sheep had to wait until the meadows on the summits had been mowed, grazing in the meantime only in the intermediate areas of the mountain, at lower altitudes, between 1,200 and 1,900 metres. Between the end of August and the beginning of September, after the seasonal mowing, goats and sheep had all the grassy area for themselves for the remaining summer period and until late autumn, when the arrival of the first snow or the first frosts would mark the end of the grazing. Whether the shepherds with their flocks were in the intermediate areas of the mountain or, towards the end of summer, in the high elevation fields, in both cases they would stay in the mountains overnight, using huts commonly called *bàiti* (huts), when available, or rock shelters. The southern slopes of the Cornón are in fact characterized, above the villages, by steep sub-vertical walls shaped by selective erosion, and there are many shelters and niches created by both the effect of gravity, due to the detachment of materials from the base of the walls, and the influence of karst processes. In some of these shelters (Bazzanella 2012), it is still possible to find evidence of past human presence, such as remains of hearths and dry-stone walls, related to the search for protection against the hardships of the weather, given that the steep terrain did not allow the construction of wood or masonry huts.

Finally, the area of Mount Cornón became a heavily exploited area, strictly controlled in carrying out its economic activities.

4. *The Writings of the Prisons*

In the Fiemme valley, the custom of 'exhibited writing' is not limited to the rocks of Mount Cornón or the houses of the villages of the valley bottom. Writing on churches and buildings was a widespread practice, as can be witnessed thanks to recent restorations. A special case in the valley is that of the prisons of the palace of the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme*. On the doors and on the walls of the cells, located in the basement of its historic building in Cavalese, about 500 writings of prisoners were documented thanks to restorations (Delugan 2013).

Four cells and the rooms in front of each one (ante-cells) exhibited writings dating back to the period between 1838 and 1902, i.e. from the moment the Bishop of Trent rented the building to the *Giudizio Distrettuale di Cavalese* (administrative and judicial district) until the Community of Fiemme purchased it a few decades later.[8] In most cases, the crimes were of violence and against property.[9]

As on the rock walls of Mount Cornón, here names, dates, short annotations, drawings, information on the village of origin or profession of the writer, devotional messages, proverbs, insults, messages of love, erotic thoughts and the causes and the period of detention also recur

[7] In the past ten years, many foreign shepherds, mainly Romanian, have replaced the locals, here as elsewhere, even though recently young people seem to have become interested in returning to this economic activity.

[8] The episcopal principality of Trent ended at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as a consequence of Napoleon's invasion; thus, the Bavarian government turned the palace into a courthouse for the Fiemme, Fassa and Primiero valleys. The cells were used up to the end of that century (Degiampietro 1997; Giordani and Zancanella 2008).

[9] The research conducted at the Cavalese court archive (Delugan 2013) did not document the presence of shepherds among prisoners.

(figure 8). Among the drawings there are crosses, sacred hearts, female images, human figures both male and female, plants, animals, buildings and work tools. The writing is mostly done with a pencil, but can also be carved, engraved or stamped, in this case generally on the wooden covering of the walls, probably using tools like awls, nails or knives that escaped the prison's apparently not very strict supervision. Only one inscription, located on the brick wall of one of the ante-cells, was made with *ból*, the same pigment used by the shepherds on the Cornón.

Taken together, the writings of the prisoners[10] recall those of the shepherds of Mount Cornón, as they share the same feelings of self-assertion and self-representation of men relegated for long periods in isolated (subordinate) places far from their original social context.

Figure 8 – Cavalese, the prisons of the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme*. A: ante-cell. B: writings on the wooden walls of the prisons. Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

5. *The Ethno-Archaeological Research*

To better outline the meaning of the high concentration of pastoral writings on Mount Cornón, ethno-archaeological research was conducted, based on the one hand on an ethnographic interview of the last shepherds of the Fiemme valley and, on the other, on the archaeological investigation of the deposits of two rock shelters, identified through the interviews, to define the human presence in a diachronic perspective (Bazzanella *et al.* 2012; Bazzanella *et al.* 2013b; Bazzanella and Kezich 2013; Bazzanella *et al.* 2016).

The first shelter, the *Trato*, is situated above Ziano di Fiemme (figure 9) at an altitude of 1,550m, at the base of a rock wall, up to 100m high, interrupted to the east by a steep and partially grassed canyon. The site is located along one of the main access roads to the Cornón high

[10] As regards the prisoners' writings, see also (Lombroso 1888; Pastore *et al.* 1990; Setti 2008).

pastures, which were off-limits until the mowing had occurred, and above the cultivated land, in the altitudinal range where most of the writings are found. The shelter, whose dimensions are of 17 square metres, is placed far from any water source and was therefore used only for short amounts of time, as interviewees emphasized. Fires were lit mainly to warm up and dry clothes during rainy days, not for cooking, as the shepherds, when it was possible, used to spend the night in the *bàiti*, used as base camps (Bazzanella and Wierer 2013). They would sleep outside only when they were too far away to return before the end of the day or in the summer, when the *bàiti* were used by haymakers.

Figure 9 – Ziano di Fiemme – the *Trato* shelter: the frieze and the excavation. Photo by Marta Bazzanella. Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

A more careful analysis of the writings of the shelter made it possible to better outline its characteristics from both a chronological and a content point of view and to make a small report of local history. The frieze consists of 68 writings, more than half of which (38) are chronologically defined. The oldest inscription dates back to 1717, the most recent to 1901. The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of more intense use of the place (with 25 writings made by 17 different shepherds). During the first half of the 1800s, the graffiti activity is represented by 10 writings (made by 4 shepherds at least), whereas during the second half of the same century and throughout the 1900s only three dates were identified (1853, 1887 and 1901). There are at least 40 authors, identified on the basis of their initials, but the readability within the palimpsest is strongly compromised due to overlaps and the conservation status (colour fading, small detachments of the rocky support etc.). In 13 cases the shepherds returned

to the *Trato* shelter to leave more than one writing, as in the case of GBP, belonging to the Partel family, who was accompanied by 80 sheep and left its family/house mark in 1809, in 1810 and in 1813 (on the 7th of May). From the family/house signs it was possible to recognize the presence of shepherds belonging to some of Ziano's families: the Zanons, the Zorzis 'Tistonato', and the Partels, but in most cases the signs were not identified. Only a few shepherds went into the details of their passage, adding the year, the month and the day of the transit (10 cases), as well as the livestock count (8 cases). We learned that the *Trato* shelter was used during April and July, and also that between 20 and 91 goats or sheep were brought to pasture. Among the symbols accompanying the writings the heart and the cross recur; 11 inscriptions also present a delimitation consisting of a frame (7 cases) or a dotted background (4 cases). All the graphic delimitations belong chronologically to the second half of the eighteenth century and can be interpreted as the shepherd's intention to distinguish and separate himself from others at a time when use of the place was very intense (Bazzanella and Kezich 2013).

Given the overcrowding and complexity of the writings, the desire to leave a reminder of themselves is also evident,[11] as is the ambition of writing close to other writers' inscriptions (very old in some cases), whose memory was already certainly lost. According to the testimonies collected (interviews with old shepherds), there was not an ideal time for writing: it would occur while the animals were grazing, during break times or during rainy hours, waiting inside shelters for the good weather to return.

Thanks to its location, the *Trato* shelter was suitable for an ethno-archaeological investigation with regard to the chronology of the deposits. Other reasons were its dimensions, which allowed not only the shepherd but also his flock to take a break, and the presence of a frieze of writings with dates ranging from the second half of the eighteenth century to the very first years of the twentieth century. The excavation, conducted in the summer of 2007, involved an area of 1 x 3m and was performed to a depth of about 1m before large boulders which forced the end of the investigation were encountered. The deposit consisted of debris layers alternating with charcoal layers. The combustion areas also contained burnt stones. From the excavation and sieving of the sediment, carried out with sieve meshes of 1x1 mm, nothing was found ascribable to anthropic presence, with the exception of a nail and two fragments of small animal ribs. However, C-14 analysis of charcoals[12] allowed us to document a long period of use of the shelter, stretching from prehistoric times, precisely from the Middle Bronze Age (fifteenth century BCE), up to the fourteenth century C.E. (Bazzanella and Wierer 2013).

The second shelter object of ethno-archaeological investigation, called *Mandra di Dos Capèl*, is located at an altitude of 2,030m in the municipality of Ziano di Fiemme, at the eastern end of a plateau overlooking the Valaverta. This area is still without arboreal vegetation today and therefore represents a suitable place for sheep grazing, as well as overnight stays. The shelter had archaic features, consisting of a group of 29 wooden elements of various sizes (figure 10). The blackening of the rock and the presence of carbonaceous soil to the west of the accommodation structure indicated the presence of a hearth. On the walls of the shelter there are some isolated writings dating back to 1867 (BDP), to 1889 (GG from Masi di Cavalese, with 212 sheep), to

[11] In their form, the writings of the Fiemme valley also recall the messages of the summit books – books left on the summit of a mountain where excursionists may leave their messages (Campesi 2015) and the graffiti of the metropolitan suburbs (Kezich 2013).

[12] The C-14 AMS dating of the charcoal particles recovered in the various excavation levels was carried out by CEDAD (Centro di Fisica Applicata, Datazione e Diagnostica), research centre of the University of Lecce (Bazzanella and Wierer 2013).

1915 (TZ), to 1925 (GIL) and to 1928 (Giacomo Zorzi Zamata). There is also a self-portrait, dated 1933, made by Silvio Gilmozzi, a shepherd from Panchià, who also left the message 'PÜRE SILVIO' ('poor Silvio').

Figure 10 – Ziano di Fiemme – the shelter by the *Mandra di Dos Capèl* and the shepherd Carlo Trettel. Photo by Marta Bazzanella. Courtesy of Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina

The ethnographic survey, conducted among the shepherds of the valley, allowed the tracing of the last shepherd to use the shelter.[13] His father had laid the axes of the roof in the early 40s of the last century. The structure of the shelter was however pre-existing and its builder is still unknown. The dendro-chronological analysis conducted on the wooden structure of the shelter[14] identified different restoration phases. The oldest dates back to 1776 and consisted of the re-use of material from a previous structure, the others date back to the end of the 1800s (1894, 1895, 1897), the beginning of the 1900s (1905, 1906, 1911), 1919-23 and 1942-43 (Bazzanella *et al.* 2012). The last two periods of use have been confirmed by the ethnographic research.

[13] Carlo Trettel from Ziano di Fiemme.

[14] The analysis was carried out by Mauro Bernabei and Jarno Bontadi of the CNR/IVALSA laboratory, San Michele all'Adige, Trento (see also Bazzanella *et al.* 2012).

The excavation, that aimed to test the chronological-structural information received from the shepherds, involved an area of 8 square metres, including both the area of the shed and that of the hearth. The deposit was investigated up to a depth of about 1m and revealed two hearths and some charcoal layers. A dry-stone wall, parallel to the wall of the shelter (and 3m away from it) was documented; it was built to contain oil erosion. The evidence recovered consists of metal objects, some wooden fragments and sporadic animal remains. All the metal objects come from the highest layers and are ascribable to historical periods. These are nails of various types, used in the construction of the hut, a shovel, a file, a rivet, iron wire and various fragments of iron sheets. A coin, an Austrian *carantano* from 1858, was found in the uppermost layer.[15] The absence of material culture in all the underlying levels must surely be considered carefully, but in this specific case it could be due to the particular economic destination of the site: a pastoral structure for short breaks, or for short seasonal stays, which usually leave no trace, except when a fire is lit (as confirmed also by the *Trato* shelter). The dating of charcoal particles[16] also showed an early use of this shelter in prehistoric times. The dates refer to the Copper Age, the recent Bronze Age and the Iron Age (Bazzanella and Wierer 2013).

The surveys conducted by the Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina between 2007 and 2011, in order to record all the written and material evidences on Mount Cornón, made it possible to identify even the structures related to the practice of the mountain pasture.[17] These are *malghe*, huts (or huts' foundations, built with the technique of *Blockbau*) and rock shelters that reflect an intentionally intense use of the territory, as well as a strict regulation of the use of common resources.[18]

Malghe and huts were generally located in the high pastures above 2,000m. The surveys have identified 32 of these structures, but some of them were also found at a lower altitude, where meadows or clearings allowed their construction. At the medium altitude (1,500-1,900 metres above sea level) 41 rock shelters provided evidence of human presence. All these shelters have surfaces ranging from 5 to 20 square metres. The anthropic activity consists of the occurrence of dry-stone walls, built to delimit an area to take a break, to accommodate a pallet or to adjust the slope in front of the shelter, in order to get a more or less flat surface to stay (as by *Mandra di Dos Capèl*). We could furthermore find evidence of fire lighting, recognizable by the blackened ground or by the blackened stones present in the area. Many abandoned objects were found during the surveys (Bazzanella 2012; Pisoni 2013): food cans, iron wires, nails, fragments of tools such as rasps (certainly used to sharpen the tools to cut trees and therefore related to the presence of forestry workers and woodcutters in the shelters), fragments of bottles, soles of boots, bullets and traps/baits for animals such as salt pans (related to hunting), collars for goats or sheep, walking sticks (sometimes engraved, which recall the livestock surveillance activity and therefore the transit of the shepherds).[19]

[15] As regards the value of a *carantano*, the accounts book of Francesco Dondio of Tesero (1832-1858) record that 6 *carantani* were paid for a day of wool carding; and that 9 *carantani* were paid for a pair of wooden men's clogs (Vinante 2015).

[16] The C-14 AMS dates of the coals recovered in the various excavation levels were carried out by the CEDAD research centre.

[17] The survey of the museum was funded within the projects: 'Stone Archives/Archivi di Pietra', supported by the CARITRO Foundation and APSAT (Ambiente e Paesaggi dei Siti d'Altura Trentini / Environment and Landscapes of Upland Sites of Trentino) funded by the Autonomous Province of Trento.

[18] *Malghe* and huts belonged to the municipality or the *Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme* and were used commonly from ancient times by all the registered population (the *vicini*) that owned livestock (Nequirito 2011; Giordani 2016; 2018).

[19] These activities took place on Mount Cornón up to the great flood of the 1960s that put an end to the exploitation of the woods of the mountain when the easiest access routes were wiped out (Degiampietro 1975).

The rock shelters identified thanks to the systematic investigation conducted in the whole area of Mount Cornón to provide an explanation for the presence of thousands of writings made by shepherds on its rocks, were certainly subject, in the recent past, to human presence related to the economic exploitation of all the possible resources of the mountain: the grass for breeding the livestock, the hunting, the timber and the undergrowth plants. Even today these shelters preserve in the palimpsests of their written walls (such as by the *Trato* shelter) and in the stratification of the ground (such as by *Mandra di Dos Capèl* shelter) the evidence of human presence in an even more remote past, with roots in prehistory. While the analysis of the writings of the shelters enabled the recovery of the names and the families of the shepherds who lived between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries, the ethnographic survey and the observation of the landscape have made it possible to get some indications, albeit scarce, of the economic activity carried out and to rediscover the exact places frequented by the shepherds of the last generations of the traditional society.

5.1 *The Colour of the Writings*

The shepherds were able to paint the rocks of Mount Cornón thanks to the presence of hematite veins, easily found in some mines on the mountain itself and on the near by Latemar. These mines were exploited in the early decades of the last last century to obtain the pigment and, in a distant past, probably also to extract the iron contained in the mineral (Leonardi 1991).

In the local dialect, this pigment is called *ból* (mark) or *ból de bessa* (sheep's mark) because it was mainly used to mark the sheep. To make the red ochre last and make it resistant to sun and bad weather on the rocky support, the shepherds put a bit of sheep's or goat's milk in a slightly concave stone and then rubbed the piece of ochre on the wet stone to obtain a thick mash, which at that point was ready to be spread on the rock to obtain the writings.[20] A twig, chewed at the end or beaten with a pebble to partially release the fibres, was used as a brush. Saliva or urine were alternatives to milk. That the writings have remained clearly visible for over four centuries shows that this preparation was very effective (Delladio 2015).

The writings were often made very high up on the wall, up to 8-12 metres. To make them the shepherds reached the wall using trunks of dry trees as ladders, or climbing, in spring, on the snowdrifts at the base of the rocks.

The ethno-archaeological research into the phenomenon of the shepherds' writings was integrated with a geophysical analysis conducted with the aim of determining the supply source of the red pigment used by the shepherds and identifying any presence of binding substances used to allow the dispersion of the colour and improve its subsequent application on the calcareous substrate (Toniutti and Miotello 2013).[21] In relation to the pictorial layer, the analysis made it possible to ascertain that the hematite crystallites responsible for the red colour of the writings have shapes and dimensions perfectly compatible with those of the raw material present in the mines of the Latemar-Cornón group. As far as the binding substance is concerned, traces of an organic component, that was identified as milk, were found in a part of the analysed pictorial layers. In a couple of cases, the presence of carotenoids was also identified. These substances are easily found in natural products such as flowers, berries and vegetables. For the samples taken into consideration the use of resins, greases or waxes was excluded.

[20] Ferruccio Delladio, a shepherd from Tesero active on Mount Cornón between 1941 and 1953, interviewed in 2007, said: '... You took a small slightly concave stone and spat on it, scratching with the *ból de bessa,* then you took a sprig of juniper you had to fray with your teeth ...' (Delladio 2015, 84-85).

[21] The geophysical research has been conducted by the Department of Physics of the University of Trento.

5.2 *The Writings and their Authors*

The messages left by the shepherds on the rocks of Mount Cornón are part of a folk custom of exhibited writing inside and outside houses, churches or on rocks; a custom which was particularly widespread in the Alps and made with the intention of marking, watching over and controlling the territory, establishing in this way a dominance over nature, a nature subjugated by man from the most remote times, from prehistory, to obtain from the surrounding environment everything needed for subsistence. This is already evident from the first seasonal camps related to hunting (dating back to the Paleolithic and Mesolithic) and to scouting the territory in search of precious raw materials such as flint, quartz, ochre, metals and even salt. Moreover, this is highlighted by the first stable settlements in the innermost valleys of the Alps, obtained by terracing the slopes of the mountain, where human survival depended on a clever exploitation of all the resources of the territory. This balance reached its maximum expression in the traditional society of the last three centuries, with an economy based on tillage, forestry and grazing and on a strict control over all the territory (Netting 1981; Viazzo 2001). Everything was controlled; everything was strictly regulated because everything, down to the last blade of grass, was necessary to survive in the Alps. It is in this context that the shepherds' writings of the Fiemme valley have to be included and understood. The written landscape, the topic of this paper, originated over the centuries thanks to the natural presence of a high-quality pigment. In this way the memory left by the men, mainly shepherds, who travelled along the countless paths of this mountain, was preserved.

The shepherds had the task of leading the flocks to the Cornón pastures, while keeping them outside the forests and meadows devoted to haymaking. Every trespass was punished. So, only the most inaccessible land remained available to the shepherds, who were able to move on those slopes with as much dexterity as their sheep and goats, strong because of the remuneration they received, and often very resilient.

Grazing the flocks in the high pastures, making sure the animals did not get lost during transfers or hurt themselves or even die from falling into precipices, administering them the right medicines, helping them when they were giving birth, weaning the little ones: this was a complex task, which required commitment and could not be carried out by anyone. In carrying out their work, however, the shepherds could feel lost and need help and protection; this protection was offered by religion, a religion that promised shelter against the hostilities of nature. This is why religious symbols were reproduced in every dangerous place, inside and outside the villages (Fillipetti and Trotereau 1978; Troletti 2013; Antonelli 2006; Bettega forthcoming; Fait *et al.* forthcoming).

In the writings of the fifteenth-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the only imagery the shepherds had was the Christian one. Even the *nòda*, or home/family sign, was often inserted in an aedicule-shaped frame surmounted by a cross, so as to protect the sheoherds and their families from adversities and 'evil'.[22] We are dealing here with the folk expression of a faith permeated by doctrinal certainties, characterized by the trust in the affective closeness of the

[22] It should be noted, here only in passing, that the Christianization of the Fiemme valley took place quite late, around the tenth-eleventh centuries, and met considerable resistance in a community that possessed a religiosity of which very few traces remain (Cavada 2000, Bonazza *et al.* 2008). The trial for witchcraft celebrated in Cavalese in the years 1501-1506, in whose documents Mount Cornón is often mentioned as a site of the Sabbaths, ended with 20 'witches' and two 'sorcerers' burnt at the stake (Di Gesaro 2003; Giordani 2005). Nowadays we know from the documents that the number of death sentences must have been even greater and this may have caused the definitive abandonment of the pre-Christian imagery (Renzetti and Taiani 1988). The high number of Christian symbols occurring on the rocks of Mount Cornón could also connote the strongly repressive character that the new religion imposed on the communities of the Fiemme valley.

saints, of the Virgin and of Christ, guaranteed by the priests with their preaching. Sacred shrines, tabernacles, aedicules and wall niches are found in the villages of the valley bottom or along the country or mountain roads, at crossroads, bridges or stopping stations with the aim of reassuring the believers. The niches and crosses on the rocks of the Cornón are therefore to be interpreted as signs of an extemporaneous religiosity, made with an auspicious intent, given the danger of the places. The Christian religion seems to characterize almost all the writings, so that it is only in the last century that some writings with 'secular' content (figure 7a) appeared, revealing independence and autonomy from the Catholic Church.

6. *Conclusion: the Motivations of the Shepherds*

The red writings left over the centuries on the rocks of the Latemar-Cornón group arouse, besides the wonder that inevitably arises in the observer of these walls at the beauty of their visual effect, the formulation of some questions about the authors and the meaning of these spectacular messages.

These are the same questions we ask ourselves in front of the painted caves of the Paleolithic in France or in Spain (the famous caves of Lascaux, Chauvet, Cosquer and Altamira), or also in front of the no less famous alpine rock engravings of Valcamonica in Lombardy or of Mont Bego in the Merveilles valley (Maritime Alps, southern France), which date back to pre- and protohistory.[23] The difference between the prehistoric drawings or engravings and the writings of the Fiemme valley consists in the fact that some authors of these younger writings are still alive.

As previously mentioned, the meaning of this writing activity, which was possible thanks to the natural availability of colour, is obtainable from the interviews conducted among the last shepherds of Mount Cornón. They wrote, especially as they were young, to imitate others, with the aim of taking possession of the territory, of leaving a trace of themselves, of excelling and surpassing other shepherds, friends or relatives. However, these interpretations are valid only for the last generations of shepherds: those closest to us.

Observing the writings of Mount Cornón it would be simplistic to stop at first impressions, since the shepherd-writers, 'artists' if we want, using just a rudimentary brush and a rock as canvas, told us a lot more. They told us the year, the month and the precise day of their passage, often accompanied by the name of the saint of the day, by the indication of the number of livestock led to pasture and by the specification of the family they belonged to (deducible from the sign of the house, which best served to identify the author of the writing). Greetings or anecdotes that occurred in the mountain, some drawings, doodles or self-portraits complete the writings, performed by those who were better at drawing, and they were many. What transpires from the reading of the anecdotes is the desire to leave a precise memory of themselves and their own moods, happy or unhappy, of their fears about what could happen on the Cornón. What still emerges from the rocks of Mount Cornón is the whole culture of the villages of the valley bottom.

Finally, the writings found on the whitish rocky slopes of Mount Cornón represent an exceptional testimony of folk writing from the period between the pre-modern age and the 1950s-60s. These writings recall the image of a peasant society of the upland, sub-divided into patrilocal families and strongly permeated by Christian religion, almost until the beginning of the twentieth century.

[23] de Lumley 1995; Barfield and Chippindale 1997; Maretta 2005; Magnardi and Breteau 2005; Arcà 2009; Clottes 2010; Magnardi 2015.

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'Felice dolc aventuroso loco' Courtly Life, the Courtier's Model and the Myth of Urbino in the Graffiti of the Palazzo Ducale

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Abstract

Baldassar Castiglione described the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, as 'the fayrest that was to be founde in all Italy' 'to the opinion of many men'. For Castiglione, such a Palace was the setting of his book *The Courtier*, published in 1528 but written from 1513-1514 onwards. The book became a kind of manifesto of the refined life of the courts of the Italian Renaissance, was translated into several languages and had numerous editions. While the Palace was associated (and in part still remains associated) with such an ideal and idealised world, this essay tries to find clues of the courtly life that actually took place in the Palace, of the reception of the behavioural model of the good courtier as well as of the attitudes towards it and the city of Urbino as expressed on the surfaces of the Palace itself by analysing writings and drawings engraved on its walls, door jambs, lintels, columns, etc. The article thus studies graffiti not exclusively, nor mainly, in a history of writing perspective but also, and mainly, as a source of social and cultural history. Within this perspective, the circulation of contents among different supports deserves particular attention. By showing the wealth of information that historians can find by analysing the walls, the essay argues that historical graffiti, still today often removed as human damage during refurbishments, should on the contrary be considered an important component of the cultural heritage, and – as such – preserved, studied and displayed to visitors.

Keywords: *Courtiers, Courtly Life, Graffiti, Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, Servants*

1. *Introduction*

The well-known Italian Renaissance writer Baldassar Castiglione (1478-1529) described the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, as the fairest that was to be found in all Italy, according to many people. It was furnished with all that was necessary, to the point that it appeared

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a city in the form of a palace (figure 1).[1] For Castiglione, such a marvellous palace was the setting of his book *The Courtier*, published in 1528 but written from 1513-1514 onwards, or maybe even from 1510.[2] The book aimed to shape a good courtier, specifying all the conditions and qualities necessary to deserve to be defined as such. Additionally, it aimed to shape the perfect gentlewoman of the Palace.[3] It became a kind of manifesto of refined courtly life and a manual of social conduct, was translated into several languages, republished in dozen of editions and has had a wide and long-lasting influence.[4] Although there are many different interpretations of *The Courtier*, in fact Castiglione, with his work, contributed to creating the myth of the city Urbino (Motta 2003), which was (and in part still is) associated with such an ideal and idealised world.

Bearing in mind this representation of Urbino as a kind of background, in this article I will try to find clues to the courtly life that actually took place in the Palace, to the diffusion of the ideology that praised loyal service to the prince, the reception of Castiglione's behavioural model of the courtier and the attitudes towards the court and towards Urbino, both in Castiglione's times and later, using and reading a rather unusual source. I will not browse through hundreds of pages but will scrutinise walls, columns, door jambs and lintels; I will not read parchment or paper but the surfaces of the Palace itself; or, better, what such surfaces display: thousands of writings (and drawings). [5] I will use Castiglione's dialogue to interrogate the Palace where the elegant and refined discussions that form the book should have taken place. *The Courtier*'s characters were men and women who had really existed and participated in Urbino's courtly life. The dialogues imagined by Castiglione were inspired by the discussions actually held in the Palace. Castiglione created the fiction starting from his own experience. His complex literary work offers a representation

[1] Castiglione 1997, 23; Castiglione 2003, Libro I, cap. 2, 18-19. Literature on Castiglione is huge: see for instance, Burke 1995; Quondam 2000; Motta 2003; Albury 2014. For essential information see Quondam n.d. and Mutini 1979. A detailed chronology is provided in Castiglione (2016, I, xxxviii). Photographs of graffiti and the Palazzo Ducale by Manuele Marraccini, tracing of graffiti by Manuele Marraccini, Maria Chiara Moro and Sebastian De Bellis, all within the project *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere (Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace)*, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Italy; Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche (Isia), Urbino, Italy; Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy; scientific direction by Raffaella Sarti. I am grateful to the editors of *Journal of Early Modern Studies* Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti, to the journal manager and managing editor Arianna Antonielli, to the anonymous referees and to Marzio Barbagli, Attilio Bartoli Langeli, Antonio Castillo Gómez, Patrizia Delpiano, Guido Dall'Olio, Tommaso Di Carpegna Falconieri, Bonita Cleri, Juliet Fleming, Nicoletta Giovè, Adelina Modesti, Gabriella Morisco, Antonella Negri, Ottavia Niccoli, Alessandro Pastore, Gianni Ricci, Salvatore Ritrovato, Cesarino Ruini, Simone Sorini, Alba Tontini, for information and comments. Transcription criteria of the graffiti: in the main text, graffiti are generally reported without reproducing capital letters and abbreviations; in the comments and notes some information is provided; writings on more lines are shown (with the sign /) if the graffiti dealt with are poems. As regards the graffiti's location, I will indicate the room of each one using the current rooms' names following the English version of Dal Poggetto 2006. As for the rooms' numbering, I will follow the current one used in the Palace, which slightly differs, as for the ground floor, from Dal Poggetto's. Furthermore, I will provide the links to the virtual tour of the Palace for those graffiti presented in it; the first allow the viewers to enjoy an enhanced vision of the graffito; the second, to navigate the room and to see the graffito's exact position in the room (the virtual tour does not include the vision of the rooms on the ground floor where temporary exhibitions take place). Abbreviations: GF = Ground Floor; FF = First Floor; SF = Second Floor; AP-D = Apartment of the Duke; AP-DSS = Apartment of the Duchess; AP-J = Apartment of Jole; AP-R = Apartment of Della Rovere.Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

[2] Castiglione 2003, Libri VIII-IX; Motta 2004, 456.

[3] Castiglione 1997, 31, 143; Castiglione 2003, Libro I, 12 and Libro II and XCVIII.

[4] According to Quondam (1980, 19), *The Courtier* represented 'the fundamental grammar of court society up until the French Revolution, and even beyond'. Recent literature has partially revised this interpretation, noting the decreasing frequency of translations and editions from the beginning of the seventeenth century. In any case, the work was extremely influential (Burke 1995, especially chapters 3 and 4).

[5] On research on graffiti see, in this volume, my Editorial, the essay by Fleming, and the articles by Castillo Gómez and Lohmann.

of Urbino as site of a refined court and develops a behavioural model destined to have wide resonance in early modern Europe. Thus in this article I will try to answer the following questions, bearing in mind that not only *The Courtier*, but also the graffiti were expressions of their authors' creativity: has the courtly life that inspired Castiglione left traces on the walls of the Palace? If so, which ones? What do these traces tell us? Do they offer representations consistent with Castiglione's or do they offer a different image? Furthermore: do we find evidence on the walls that the values at the core of Castiglione's behavioural model were shared by (at least some) people of the court? And what about the model itself? Can we understand whether it was followed, or did it remain a literary ideal far from actual practice? Finally, I will focus on the myth of Urbino, to which *The Courtier* contributed so much. Are there clues to this myth on the walls? Or rather do graffiti offer us different views of the city?

The aim of this article is only marginally to contribute to the debate on Castiglione's *The Courtier*. My focus is on graffiti. I will study graffiti not exclusively, nor mainly, in a history of writing and writing practices perspective but also, and primarily, as a source of cultural and social history, trying to verify whether they bear evidence of courtly life, of the reception of the *Courtier* model and/or the values associated with it, and of the myth of Urbino. In part, this implies looking for the circulation of contents between books and stones;[6] painting attached to the walls and drawing carved into the wall; sheet music on paper and musical notes on doorframes.

2. *Reading the Walls*

As mentioned, the walls, columns, door frames of the Palace carry thousands of drawings, symbols, names, dates, sentences: maybe as many as 5,000. A few of these graffiti were already mentioned in nineteenth-century guides of Urbino (Gherardi and Gherardi 1890) and later in other works.[7] Furthermore, in the 1980s, Luisa Fontebuoni (1985) exploited several of them to identify the use of the rooms of the Palace in different periods. However, no one had studied them in a systematic way before I started my research in the 1990s (Sarti 2007, 2009, 2011). An important turning point took place in the 2010s, when I began to establish relations with the Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche (Isia) in Urbino. In 2014, Manuele Marraccini, then a student at the Isia, having been captivated by the Heritage of writing and drawings at the Palazzo Ducale, decided to devote his MA dissertation in Cultural heritage photography to this subject and asked me to be his co-supervisor for historical aspects. The thesis, supervised by Angelo Raffaele Rubino (Isia, supervisor), Matteo Dellepiane and myself was examined in April 2015 and involved extensive photographic work using sophisticated photographic techniques (Marraccini 2015). The project *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere* (*Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace*) originated from these premises thanks to an agreement between the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche and Isia of Urbino, with the scientific direction of the University of Urbino Carlo Bo and myself in particular. The project, involving a large working group, has led to extensive reproductions of the writings and drawings engraved on the walls of the Palace (photography and 3D scanning); to the organisation of an exhibition that offered visitors a multimedia experience; to the preparation of an itinerary inside the Palace and a virtual tour.[8] This article is based on the sample of graffiti

[6] On content circulation between books and walls see Fleming 2001.

[7] Rossi and Peruzzi 1967; Batini 1968, 14; Olsen 1971, 48; Bernini 2000, 42; Dal Poggetto 2003, 184.

[8] *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere,* Urbino, Palazzo Ducale, 29 March-21 Mai 2017, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Isia Urbino, Università degli Studi di Urbino 2017; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>, accessed 10 January 2020. See Marraccini and Rachiele in this volume.

collected, photographed and interpreted by me since the late 1990s and by Manuele Marraccini while working at his thesis and then at the project *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere*.[9]

Despite such an extensive work, the research on the graffiti of the Palace is far from being complete, due to the huge number of writings and drawings (as mentioned, maybe as many as 5,000) and the problems posed by their classification and interpretation. A main problem stems from the fact that there are often dozens of scribblings overlapping each other. Furthermore, because of the deterioration of the walls, the vanishing of the material used for writing and drawing as well as refurbishing work, many of them are no longer readable or clearly visible. Finally, on walls now whitewashed there certainly were (and are) other writings and drawings, as shown where the paint has been removed. To have a complete catalogue, these graffiti, too, should be analysed.[10]

Not only the number, but also the variety of writings and drawings is impressive. Let us start with the tools and techniques used for them. Most of them have been carved using sharp instruments, that is, they are literally graffiti. Others have been made using charcoal, red chalk, ink, pencil, or ball-point pens. However, those which are engraved, are also very different the one from the other, because some are only superficially scratched, while others are deeply carved in the stone, with innumerable intermediate cases. As for their dimensions, they range from minuscule ones (showing letters of 2-3 mm), to very large ones (showing letters of 8-10 cm). Some are almost invisible, not only because of the aforementioned overwriting, vanishing etc., but also because they are very small, only superficially carved and/or located in hidden places; others, on the other hand, are immediately visible because of their dimension, depth and/or position. Furthermore, some of them, both writings and drawings, are extremely accurate, while others are wild scribblings, with a multitude of intermediate cases. As for writings, they reveal different levels of literacy and handwriting skills. Scripts are cursive, capital, or gothic, and so on. As for languages, Italian, Latin, French, German and Spanish have been found so far. There are many dates; the oldest go back to the mid-fifteenth century: one, actually rather unclear, has been interpreted as 1449 or 1455; another appears to read 'AD 1453' i.e., 'Anno Domini 1453'. These dates even predate the building of the palace which, according to existing documents, began in 1454, thus helping to pinpoint the beginning of the construction.[11] The most recent dates are from the last few years, and (obviously) were made by evading the surveillance of the Palace staff (Sarti 2009, 52; 2017, 28). A large number of these graffiti are simply names, often with a date; nonetheless, the variety of themes of both writings and drawings is also huge: expressions of love or courtship, insults, poems, proverbs, jokes, quotes, counts, lists of goods, chronicles of both little personal events and

[9] The surfaces of the Palace have been extensively photographed. I have interpreted about 300 writings. As for drawings, in Marraccini 2015, 115, drawings on recurrent subjects have been reproduced. In the exhibition *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere* and in the catalogue (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Isia Urbino, Università degli Studi di Urbino 2017), 115 writings and drawings have been described and further 44 drawings simply shown. Since the exposition I have continued my research. Some of the writings discussed in this article are presented for the first time.

[10] See also Sarti 2009 and Sarti 2017. For an overview of research on graffiti see the Editorial and Lohmann in this volume.

[11] Polichetti 1985a, 163-164; the date is in the intrados of an entrance door on the ground floor, closed when the Palace was built, belonging to one of the pre-existing buildings (the so-called Palazzetto di Guidantonio) incorporated in the Palace. With the techniques used by Marraccini (2015, 42), it seems to be 1449 rather than 1455, but not conclusively. Polichetti 1985a, 161, mentions a 1453 date I was not able to find, whereas she doesn't mention the 1453 I found on the frame of a door in the Cortile del Gallo ('Gallo Courtyard'; Sarti 2017, 28, 34; see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/3-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020). On 1454 as starting date of the Palace's construction see Polichetti 1985a, 163 and Höfler 2004, 98-99, who, however, suggests that Pasquino da Montepulciano might have started working at the Palace in December 1453; the graffito might confirm this hypothesis. On the planning and construction of the Palace which, in addition to Duke Federico da Montefeltro himself, involved Luciano Laurana, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Maso di Bartolomeo, Leon Battista Alberti, Piero della Francesca, Bramante and others, see, for instance, in the extensive bibliography, Polichetti 1985b; for an overview of different interpretations, see Zampetti and Battistini 1986 and Hofler 2004; on the History of Urbino see Dennistoun 1851; Clough 1981; Cerboni Baiardi *et al.*, 1986; Benevolo and Boninsegna 1986.

well-known historical facts, intimate reflections; notes on meteorological phenomena, appraisals of the dukes and other authorities, music staves, 'sators', games, game's scores, lines indicating the height of children and lackeys, coats of arms, portraits of ladies, gentlemen, soldiers, profiles, heads, eyes, hearts, penises, legs, shoes, knots, circles, triangles, stars, crosses, bells, churches, houses, the Palace, landscapes, ships, trees, leaves, flowers, horses, bulls, dogs, deer, sheep, birds, peacocks, eagles, owls, fish, snakes, insects, squiggles, etc. Identifiable authors are mainly men, but also some women seem to have been among the authors; their social status ranges from servants to members of the duke's family and representatives of the Pope.

If we want to avoid making simple lists of graffiti present in the Palace (which, however, is also an important task), and - more ambitiously - aim to grasp the meaning of graffiti for the people who made them, discover the references that they might hide and use them as sources for a cultural and social history, the endeavour is far for simple.

Let us focus on the writings. Whereas books and written documents usually present a coherent context to words and sentences, this is rarely the case with the walls of the Palace that, unlike most written documents, often host writings written one close to the other, or even one over the other, made by different people, in different epochs, with different purposes, and on different topics. The first impression is often that of an inextricable chaos. In some cases, a closer look reveals that, on certain walls, there is a certain degree of thematic coherence, as if the place itself, or the particular use of that place or, even, certain graffiti made there by the first writers had inspired (other) writers to do (more or less) the same (Sarti 2009; 2017, 57-58). Nonetheless, single graffiti generally remain isolated one from the other, and to understand and interpret them may require a kind of 'thick description',[12] implying a reconstruction of the graffiti's contexts. To sum up: the Palace's graffiti represent a huge and still largely unexplored and unordered archive. Searching through such an archive, I will attempt to assess whether and to what extent the courtly life, the courtier's model and the myth of Urbino left traces on the walls of the Palace where the first took place and which was crucial for the elaboration of the latter two.

Figure 1 – The Palazzo Ducale of Urbino. Photo by Manuele Marraccini

[12] I refer in a rather free way to Geertz 1973.

3. *Elisabetta, Courtesy and Love*

Castiglione explained that he had written *The Courtier* remembering the good time he had had at the Urbino court. From 1504 onwards, he served Duke Guidobaldo of Montefeltro (1472-1508) – the son of Federico (1422-1482), who had had the Palace built – and his wife Elisabetta Gonzaga (1471-1526). After Guidobaldo's premature death, he continued serving his successor, Francesco Maria Della Rovere, until 1519.[13]

The Courtier develops a dialogue supposed to have taken place in the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino in 1507, over four evenings, shortly after a visit by Pope Julius II: Duke Guidobaldo, already ill, retires to bed early, whereas, after dinner, a refined, pleasant and joyful meeting of courtly gentlemen and ladies takes place in Duchess Elisabetta's rooms (figure 2).[14] According to Castiglione, Elisabetta – also praised by many other writers (Motta 2004) – took up the role of leader and teacher of the whole company, showing that a single, beautiful woman could have a number of virtues rarely found in grave men: wisdom, courage and many others.[15]

Interestingly, on the walls of the Palace there are several examples of apparently very old graffiti praising 'Elisabetta'. One of them, stating 'W la Isabta bela W' ('Long live beautiful Isabta Long live'), is engraved on the jamb of the entrance door to the so-called Sala delle Veglie (Room of Gatherings) (figure 3),[16] where, according to an old tradition (but challenged by modern research[17]), the pleasant conversations that inspired Castiglione took place. Is the praised Elisabetta the duchess? Signs on the walls refer to a multitude of people and it would be rather naif to connect them immediately to the most well-known inhabitants of the Palace without the support of other evidence. In this case, although we cannot completely exclude such an identification, some clues make it problematic.[18] Several graffiti on the walls, however, give us an impression of refinement and courtesy, such as 'W Isabella bella che una volta è stata cortese con me…' ('Long live the beautiful Isabella that was once kind to me…'),[19] or another one, according to which a certain 'Signora Camilla' ('Lady Camilla') was 'bella e ancor gentila [gentile] piu ch ogni altra donna de questa corte' ('beautiful and also kind more than any other woman of this court').[20] While graffiti referring to courtship are plentiful,[21] on a

[13] Castiglione 1997, 9; Castiglione 2003, Proemio, I.

[14] Castiglione 1997, 24; Castiglione 2003, Libro I, cap. 4, 21-22.

[15] Castiglione 1997, 24-25; Castiglione 2003, Libro I, cap. 4, 21, 23.

[16] FF, AP-DSS, Sala delle Veglie (Room of Gatherings), no. 23.

[17] According to Fontebuoni (1985, 216-217), at that time the Duchess lived in another section of the palace, whereas the room now called Sala delle Veglie was one of the rooms occupied by Giuliano de' Medici (1479-1516) when he was in Urbino (1503-1512). Baldi 1590, 518-519 had already stated that the area of the Palace close to the Cathedral was occupied by Giuliano.

[18] Two other graffiti, apparently made by the same writer, both with a combination of cursive script and capital letters, make the identification with the Duchess less likely: one, deleted by various strokes, reads 'WW La Isabta de borgo, B.L.A.'; another 'W la Isabeta de borgo XXXX' (see the latter graffito, under the drawing representing a peacock on the picture visible at this webpage <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/81-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020; they are both on a door jamb in the first room of the so-called Appartamento Roveresco (Della Rovere Apartment) no. 2, visible at: <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/appartamento-roveresco-prima-sala/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[19] GF, Room no. 14. The complete sentence is 'W Isabella bella che una volta è stata cortese con me con (?) fare del no con affetuosi sì': a rather difficult sentence, that, however, seems to indicate that Isabella, albeit in a contradictory way, accepted the courtship of the writer of the graffito. 'Isab' is written in capital letters. For a photo of the writing see Marraccini, Rubino and Dellepiane 2017, 203, figure 4.

[20] FF, AP-D, Loggia (Balcony), see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/39-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/loggia-piano-nobile/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[21] Sarti 2017, 56-70; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/consulta/amori-e-malinconie-al-balcone/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

door jamb in the same room, on the ground floor, a graffito states 'Baldesar mio bello e caro' ('my handsome and beloved Baldesar'): was this Castiglione?[22] Maybe: in this case we have no evidence to support such an identification, but neither have we any to disclaim it. Thus, so far the question remains open. In a different way, this graffito, too, shows that identifying traces, especially traces of specific people who did not write their names, is far from simple.

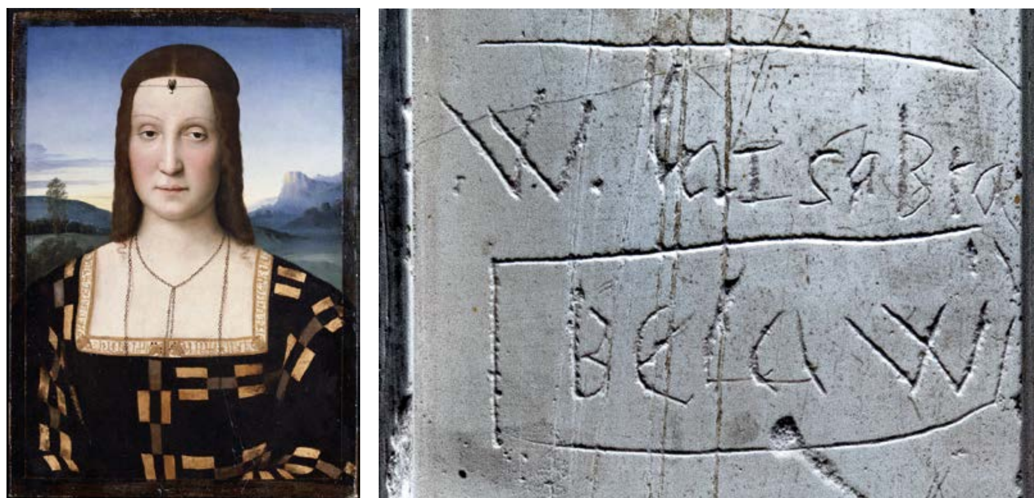

Figure 2 – Left: Raffaello Sanzio, *Ritratto di Elisabetta Gonzaga,* Galleria delle Statue e delle Pitture degli Uffizi, Inv. 1890 n. 1441. Courtesy of Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited. Figure 3 – Right: 'W la Isabta bela W'. Photo by Manuele Marraccini

Some drawings, too, however, give the impression of culturally refined courtly life, as if the graffiti, too, or part of them, participated in the lively artistic atmosphere of the Palace.

In the basement, for instance, there is a profile in charcoal that is very likely Federico da Montefeltro's – as it resembles the well-known portrait of Federico by Piero della Francesca.[23] Other drawings, too, show noblemen and maybe dukes.[24] The letters 'W D' 'GV.Z.' respectively on the left- and right-hand sides of one of them might indicate a 'long live' addressed to Guidobaldo, although in this case the 'Z' would be unexplained: it might also be a 2 and indicate Guidobaldo II, but the engraved man, with long hair and a rather sad gaze, shows no resemblance with the existing portraits of Guidobaldo II, whereas he resembles the possible portrait of duke Guidobaldo I attributed to Raphael, who was born in Urbino in 1483 and

[22] GF, Room no. 14.

[23] Basement, Rooms adjoining the kitchen, no. 21; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/27-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/annessi-cucine/>, accessed 10 January 2020; Sarti 2017, 24.

[24] In addition to the image of figure 6, see also <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/54-2/>, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/cortile-onore/>, GF, Cortile d'Onore (Courtyard of Honour).

frequented the Palace when he was young (Mochi Onori 2009). However, the portrayed man also resembles a young man with an apple (also attributed to Raphael), generally identified with Guidobaldo's successor, duke Francesco Maria della Rovere, but sometimes identified with Guidobaldo himself (figure 4).[25]

As for female portraits, a small drawing of a woman, the so-called 'Franceschina inamorata' ('Franceschina in love'), seems reminiscent of the Fornarina by Raphael (figure 5)[26] whereas an almost invisible elegant profile of a lady is a real hidden masterpiece (figure 6).[27]

Figure 4 – From left to right: Graffito of a gentleman (Duke Guidobaldo da Montefeltro?). Photo by Manuele Marraccini; Raffaello Sanzio (attributed to), *Ritratto di Guidobaldo da Montefeltro* (?), Galleria delle Statue e delle Pitture degli Uffizi, Inv. 1890 n. 1441, detail; Raffaello Sanzio (attributed to), *Ritratto di Francesco Maria della Rovere* (?), Galleria Palatina e Appartamenti Reali, Inv. 1890 n. 8760, detail. Courtesy of Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited

[25] GF, Cortile d'Onore (Courtyard of Honour); Sarti 2017, 38. On the identification of the young man portrayed, see Polo Museale Fiorentino <http://www.polomuseale.firenze.it/catalogo/scheda.asp?nctn=00287212&value=1>, accessed 10 January 2020. Guidobaldo da Montefeltro was the third duke of Urbino but sometimes was wrongly presented as the second, see for instance Bombaci 1640, 115. This might explain the number two after the name (?).

[26] FF, Appartamento della Duchessa (Apartment of the Duchess), Room no. 23; Sarti 2017, 66. The Fornarina was painted in 1518 or 1519, not long before the death of Raphael in 1520, who at that time lived in Rome; the painting was successful and, very early, copies started to circulate; see Mochi Onori n.d., Mini-Minimuseo, <https://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/multimedia/MiBAC/minisiti/fornarina/for0.html>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[27] FF, AP-J, Fifth Room, no. 5, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/62-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/appartamento-jole-quinta-sala/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

Figure 5 – Left: Raffaello Sanzio, *La Fornarina*, Inv. n. 2333, detail, Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica, Roma. Courtesy of Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica (MIBACT) - Bibliotheca Hertziana, Istituto Max Planck per la Storia dell'Arte/Enrico Fontolan. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited.
Right: a drawing of a woman, located below the following writing 'Franceschina inamorata de lo mco compagno suo' i.e. 'Franceschina in love with Marco her companion' and therefore I have called the portrayed woman 'Franceschina'. It must be added that between the writing and the drawing there is some space, occupied by another, later piece of writing about a big snow fall on 8 May 1682 (partially overlapping the head of the alleged Franceschina)

Figure 6 – The graffito of the head of a lady (photograph and tracing). Photo by Manuele Marraccini; tracing by Manuele Marraccini, Maria Chiara Moro and Sebastian De Bellis

What can we say about the literary life of the Palace? Do we find traces of it in the jungle of the Palace's graffiti? At this stage of research, I cannot claim to have found all the traces of that life (provided that such a goal might ever be reached). Nonetheless, some are present, and show that the walls, too, were involved, at least to a certain extent, in the literary life of the Palace. On the marvellous balcony of the Duke's apartment, for instance, from where a majestic view of fields, woods, hills and mountains could be enjoyed, we can read the name of 'Tirsi', the shepherd who, since antiquity, had been a character in numerous bucolic poems (Carrara 1909;

Sampson 2006) (figure 7).[28] Castiglione himself, in 1508, together with his cousin Cesare Gonzaga, wrote an eclogue entitled *Tirsi* which they recited at the court of Elisabetta Gonzaga and Guidobaldo da Montefeltro during Carnival, not in the Urbino Palace but in the one in nearby Fossombrone (Quondam n.d.; Castiglione 1955). Marc'Antonio Flaminio, to honour Castiglione, whom he followed in Urbino in 1514, also composed an eclogue entitled *Tirsi*.[29] Furthermore, a shepherd called Tirsi is a character in the very successful play *Aminta*, by Torquato Tasso, which, after being represented probably for the first time in Ferrara in 1573, was also performed by a group of young people of Urbino in 1574.[30]

In 1578, Leonard Meldert from Flanders set the poem *Tirsi morir volea* to music for the first time, followed by many others. He may have believed that it, too, had been written by Tasso. Initially, in fact, it had been wrongly included in the latter's *Rime* published by Manuzio in 1581. In actual fact, however, it had been written by Giovan Battista Guarini.[31] At that time, Meldert – a musician at the court of Guidobaldo II della Rovere until the duke's death in 1574 – was back in Urbino, where he would later be appointed chapel master of the cathedral (*maestro di cappella*).[32] Since the time of Federico da Montefeltro, the court of Urbino had also been an important centre for the development of Renaissance music.[33] On the walls some engraved musical staves remind us of this activity at the court, too, allowing us to imagine a festive atmosphere of music and dance.[34]

The graffito mentioning Tirsi, probably because of its large size and accurate capital letters, was one of the few already noted in the past: in a nineteenth-century guide of Urbino, it was associated with the presence of Tasso in the city (Gherardi and Gherardi 1890, 85). The complete graffito, however, states 'W Florida e Tirsi' ('Long live Florida and Tirsi'), and Florida was neither a character in Castiglione's *Tirsi* nor Tasso's *Aminta* nor Guarini's poem. However, the two shepherds featured in the works of various authors, such as Niccolò da Correggio, Girolamo Benivieni, Francesco Cristiani,[35] and others: the best known may be the madrigals *A Dio Florida bella* and *Qui rise, o Tirsi,* respectively the fourth and seventh in the *Sixth book of madrigals* by Claudio Monteverdi (1614), based on texts by Giovan Battista Marino (figure 7).[36]

[28] FF, AP-D, Loggia (Balcony); <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/38-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/loggia-piano-nobile/>; Sarti 2017, 59.

[29] Flaminio 1978, 216 (75. Letter to Alessandro Manzoli (1515)); Cuccoli 1897, 36; Carrara 1909, 399.

[30] According to Luisi 1999, 313, 315-318, 321, there was a representation in Urbino and one in Fossombrone; Piperno 2001, 198, 227-231, more convincingly argues that there was a representation in Pesaro by a group of young people of Urbino and a replica in Fossombrone.

[31] Luisi 1999, 315; Piperno 2001, 236; Piperno 2014, vii-viii, xxvi.

[32] Luisi 1999, 315-316; Piperno 2001, 108-109, 234; Sorini 2012, 26-31; Piperno 2014, viii.

[33] On the importance of music at the court of Urbino under the Montefeltro see Guidobaldi (1995) and Villa (2009) As for the della Rovere, according to Piperno 2001, 254-255, musical commissions of Guidobaldo II (duke between 1538 and 1574) were not at the same level as other Italian courts; according to Luisi 1999, 316, musical development at Urbino's court the 1590s was extraordinary. For an overview, see Magaletta 1992.

[34] Sarti 2017, 72-74. So far, four graffiti representing musical staves have been found in the Palace. For an example see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/65-2/>, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/appartamento-melaranci-prima-sala/>, accessed 10 January 2020, in the so-called Appartamento dei Melaranci (Apartment of the Sweet Oranges), first Room, no. 9.

[35] Nicolò da Correggio 2020; Girolamo Benivieni, *Ecloga* (Mopso, Titiro e Pico), in Ferrario 1808, 1-4, also available on <https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Egloga_(Benivieni)>, accessed 10 January 2020; Antonio Cristiani, *Tirsi ben mio, Florida tua s'accora* and *Florida mia che ti chiamo ogn'ora*, in *Rime di diuersi ecc. autori, in vita, e in morte dell'Ill. S. Liuia Colonna* 1555, 58-59.

[36] Monteverdi 1614. The texts are available online Choral Wiki, <http://www1.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/A_Dio,_Florida_Bella_(Claudio_Monteverdi)>; <http://www1.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Qui_rise,_O_Tirsi_(Claudio_Monteverdi)>, accessed 10 January 2020.

Figure 7 – Graffito 'W Florida e Tirsi'. Photo by Manuele Marraccini

The names of Florida and Tirsi, as well as that of Silvano, or Silvana, written nearby but not distinctly readable, certainly reveal familiarity with bucolic poetry, which actually featured conspicuously at court, as we know from other sources. We cannot exclude, however, that the 'long live' referred to two lovers in flesh and blood disguised as Florida and Tirsi, rather than a specific play or madrigal. While bucolic poetry often sang the bitter-sweet pains of love, these pains have left many traces on the walls of the palace: interestingly, in some cases, they are expressed with literary references: the graffito 'sdegno duo [= tuo] piu che amore l'amore in odio torse' ('your disdain rather than love, turned love to hatred')[37] echoes a verse from Petrarch's *Trionfo d'Amore* (*Triumph of Love*).[38] The particular shape of the letter T, written as a 7, might indicate that the writer was in touch with the academy founded in Rome by Pomponio Leto (Accademia Pomponiana or Accademia Romana). Its members used to write the letter T in this way, especially Tommaso Fedra Inghirami, whose cross eyes we know about thanks to Raphael's portrait.[39] Members of the academy who spent some time in Urbino included, for instance, Giannantonio Campano, sent by Pope Sixtus IV to Urbino to represent the papal court at the burial of Battista Sforza, wife of Federico da Montefeltro, in August 1472,[40] and Giovanni Antonio Sulpizio of Veroli or Verulano, teacher of Latin at the Urbino court.[41]

[37] GF, Sala Didattica (Teaching Laboratory); there is another graffito, in Spanish, very probably written by the same writer, also in capital letters: 'yo no chero mas / amor / no chero amar', GF, Room no. 14, see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/73-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020 and Sarti 2017, 67, note 47.

[38] 'Udito hai ragionar d'un che non volse /consentir al furor de la matrigna / e da' suoi preghi per fuggir si sciolse, / ma quella intenzïon casta e benigna / l'occise, sì l'amore in odio torse / Fedra amante terribile e maligna ...' ('And yet his chaste and rightful steadfastness / Brought him to death: for to such hatred turned / The love of Phaedra, terrible and malign ...') (Petrarca 1957, *Trionfi. Triumphus Cupidinis. Trionfo d'amore*, I, 109-113; also available, both in English and Italian at Francesco Petrarch & Laura deNoves, <http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/read_trionfi.html?page=I-I.en)>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[39] I am grateful to Alba Tontini for this information, on which see Questa 1985, 225; Tontini 2010, 34. It is correct to note, however, that the graffito is written in capital letters; in the manuscripts analysed by Tontini the T has a 7-shape in the cursive handwriting, but not in capital lettering (see especially MS 36.36 Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Teca Digitale, Florence, <http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOIea3DI1A4r7GxMHrE&c=Plautus#/book)>, accessed 10 January 2020. The issue thus needs more research. For Raphael's portrait of Inghirami (Florence, Palazzo Pitti) see Wikipedia, <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritratto_di_Fedra_Inghirami#/media/File:Inghirami_Raphael.jpg>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[40] Repertorium Pomponianum, <http://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/pomponiani/campano_giannantonio.htm>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[41] Repertorium Pomponianum, <http://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/pomponiani/sulpizio_verulano.htm>, accessed 10 January 2020.

Petrarch's *Trionfi* (*Triumphs*) are quoted much more literally in another graffito, which shows in part in capital letters, on four lines, two verses of the *Trionfo della Morte* (*Triumph of Death*)*:* 'non minore / il dol perche / altri il prema / ne majore / per andarsi / lamenta [unreadable]'. The writer of the graffito possibly knew the poem by heart, since the original it almost identical and goes as follows: 'Non è minor il duol perch'altri il prema, / né maggior per andarsi lamentando', translated into English as 'Dole that is hidden is no less a pain, / Nor is it made the larger by laments'.[42]

The Palace's intense artistic and cultural life has left many traces on its walls, and several engravings seem to confirm that it really was a 'felice dolc aventuroso loco' ('happy sweet adventurous place') as shown on the walls of the spiral staircase in one of the 'torricini' (the two elegant and slender towers).[43] The hendecasyllable engraving may also possibly echo Petrarch ('O sacro, avventuroso e dolce loco!'[44]) or other authors (for instance Agostino Centurione: 'felice, / dolce gioconda e avventurosa piaggia').[45] Below the engraving, which is written in capital letters, there is 'in smaller capital letters' the name 'Fabio Lan.no', and 'Fabio' has also been written above the graffito: this may be the name of the writer. The abbreviated name is likely to refer to Fabio Landriano, one of the members of Guidobaldo II's court who was closer to the duke, to the extent that he had been granted the right to add the della Rovere's coat of arms to his own (figure 8).[46]

Figure 8 – Graffito 'Felice dolc aventuroso loco Fabio Lan.no'. Photo by Manuele Marraccini

[42] GF, Loggia (Balcony); Petrarca 1957, *Trionfi. Triumphus Mortis. Trionfo della Morte*, II, 145-146, also available, both in English and Italian at Francesco Petrarch & Laura deNoves, <http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/read_trionfi.html?page=III-II.txt)>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[43] The graffito is on the wall of the spiral staircase, at the first floor, near to the door opening on the Duke's Apartment, no. 19; see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/17-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[44] Poem 243 of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* (Petrarca 1976, 418); English trans. by A.S. Kline, available at Francesco Petrarch & Laura deNoves, <http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html?poem=243>: 'O advantaged sweet and sacred place'.

[45] Centurione 1839, *Stanze* in *Scelta di poesie liriche, dal primo secolo della lingua fino al 1700,* 301 'happy, / sweet, joyful and adventurous shore'.

[46] Palazzi 1575, 82; Moroni 1844, 23; Ugolini 1859, 292, 338; Celli 1892, 60, 65-66, Solerti 1895, 27; Segarizzi 1913, 191. Fabio Landriano had married Costanza, Guidobaldo's granddaughter (the daughter of his illegitimate daughter Camilla). In 1570 (or 1571) he received the Castle of Montefelcino from Guidobaldo II.

4. *Serving the Prince: the Courtier's* sprezzatura *and Dissimulation*

Castiglione's courtier represents an ideal of education and refinement. The perfect courtier, with a certain *sprezzatura* (translated into English as 'disgracing', 'reckelessness', 'negligence', 'easy carelessness'),[47] must give the impression of performing, naturally and without any effort, even activities that require a hard apprenticeship and are very tiring.[48] As noted by Peter Burke, Castiglione 'is well aware that he is instructing his readers how to play a role, how to "become another person" or better, perhaps, to "put on a different mask" ('vestirsi un'altra persona') when the occasion demands it': 'Courtier is itself such a role' (1995, 660-662 kindle position).

This might imply some degree of disguise. In several passages, Castiglione stressed that a courtier must be able to conceal his efforts. Furthermore, the rules of courtesy and civility might require him to hide his ideas and emotions. In short, the ability to conceal one's feelings and thoughts is a constituent element of the model of behaviour proposed by Castiglione in his book, even though *The Courtier*, being a dialogue, presents a variety of opinions: according to one of the participants, Gasparo Pallavicino, an honest man must never deceive.[49] According to Iuliano de' Medici, the courtier must 'tener secreti gli amori suoi' ('kepe his loves secrete') and 'dissimular i desidèri, le gelosie, gli affanni e i piacer suoi e rider spesso con la bocca quando il cor piange' ('dissemble his desires, jeolosies, afflictions and pleasure, and manye times laugh with mouth whan the hart weepeth').[50]

Castiglione provided his readers with complex conduct norms. As explained, the experience made at the court of Urbino had been crucial for Castiglione and his work. We can wonder whether the people who lived, at least for some time, at that very court shared those values and behavioural norms and whether, if they did, left traces of such an attitude on the walls of the Palace. Interestingly, one of the innumerable graffiti in the Palace of Urbino – written in French – seems to follow Castiglione's advice, as it states: 'se que mon cour pansa, / je ne le dis pas', 'what my hearth is thinking, I don't say' (figure 9).[51] Obviously we do not know whether the person who wrote these words (without adding a date) followed Castiglione's guidelines or expressed a personal attitude not influenced by the latter. Yet the similitude is striking.

[47] On the English translations of *sprezzatura* see Burke 1995, chapter 4.

[48] 'Però si po dir quella esser vera arte che non pare esser arte; né piú in altro si ha da poner studio, che nel nasconderla' (Castiglione 2003, Libro I, cap. 26, 60; 'Therfore that may be said to be a very art that appeereth not to be art, neyther ought a man to put more dilgence in any thing then in covering it', Castiglione 1997, 42).

[49] See for instance, Castiglione 2003, Libro II, cap. 72, 220 and cap. 75, 223; Castiglione 1997, 126, 128.

[50] 'Però se 'l nostro cortegian volesse usar del mio consiglio, io lo confortarei a tener secreti gli amori suoi' (Castiglione 2003, Libro III, cap. 67, 348; 'Therfore if oure Courtier would folowe my counsell, I would exhort him to kepe his loves secrete', Castiglione 1997, 194).

[51] FF, AP-J, Second Room, no. 2.

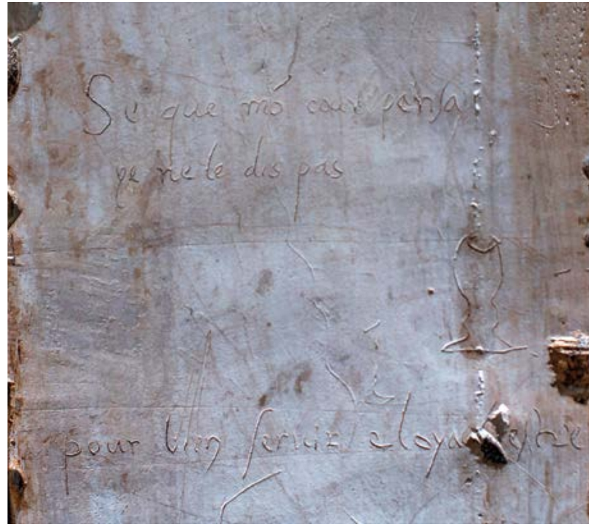

Figure 9 – Graffito 'Se que mon cour pansa / je ne le dis pas / pour bien servir e loyal estre'.
Photo by Manuele Marraccini

According to Castiglione, within the hierarchic world of the court, a courtier must love his prince and should make any possible effort to please him. Such a courtier was 'un nobile adulatore' (a 'joly flatterer'), replied Pietro da Napoli to Federico Fregoso, who gave these directions, in one of *The Courtier*'s dialogues. But Fregoso absolutely rejected such an interpretation. In his view, flatterers did not love their lords nor their friends, whereas the perfect courtier should love his prince; furthermore, in his view it was possible to please him and obey his orders without flattery. In any case, the perfect courtier should frame himself according to his prince's orders and desires; he should talk with him of matters that he was glad to hear and should appreciate what the prince loved even though he did not like it, never being melancholy while staying in the presence of his lord. Furthermore, he must always show for his prince, especially in public, reverence and respect as is fitting for the servant toward the master,[52] to whom he must be faithful (Castiglione 2003, Libro I, cap. 17, 45).

Just below the French graffito mentioned above, there is another, French as well, very likely made by the same writer. It does not seem distinct and independent from the first; on the contrary it may complete the reasoning: 'Se que mon cour pansa, / je ne le dis pas', 'pour bien servir e loyal estre'. If read as one single sentence, these words express Castiglione's ideal of the courtier, who, to serve his prince loyally, does not disclose his real feelings (figure 9). However, while these words seem to echo Castiglione's ideas, or at least to unveil a shared view, in fact, they hide an almost literal reference not to *The Courtier* but to a French proverb, attested in several slightly different versions: 'Pour bien servir et loyal estre, / De serviteur on devient maistre' (Le Roux de Lincy 1859, 136), 'pour bien servir e loyal estre / le serviteur souvent

[52] 'voglio adunque che 'l cortegiano ... si volti con tutti i pensieri e forze dell'animo suo ad amare e quasi adorare il principe a chi serve sopra ogni altra cosa; e le voglie sue e costumi e modi tutti indrizzi a compiacerlo' (Castiglione 2003, Libro II, cap. 18, 144; 'I will have our Courtyer therfore ... to turne al his thoughtes and force of minde to love, and (as it were) to reverence the Prince he serveth above al other thinges, and in his wil, maners and facions, to be altogether pliable to please him', Castiglione 1997, 85-86).

vient maistre' (Poissenot 1586, 167-168), and 'par bien servir et loyal estre / souvent devient le vallet maistre' (Nicot 1606, 10), which mean 'to serve well and to be loyal' or 'by way of serving and being loyal', 'from servant one becomes master' or 'the servant becomes master'. Such a proverb was already mentioned by Marguerite d'Angoulême (1492-1549) in her *Heptaméron,* inspired by Boccaccio's *Decameron.*[53] In *Heptaméron* is told a story according to which Urbino's Duke Francesco Maria I della Rovere condemned to death by hanging a lady-in-waiting who had accepted to carry messages from his son Guidobaldo, then aged eighteen or twenty, to a young lady whom he loved.[54]

According to Castiglione, the perfect courtier should gain his prince's trust to the point of always being in a position to tell him the truth; he must also give him good advice and make him virtuous.[55] The perfect courtier, therefore, should be extremely influential. Nonetheless, hierarchical roles appear in the dialogue as fixed, no possibility of a role reversal is foreseen. In a sense, the servant never becomes a master. Interestingly, the writer of Urbino's graffito did not mention the conclusion of the proverb: maybe because he completely shared this hierarchical ideology. Certainly (if my interpretation is correct, and the two graffiti belong to the same sentence) he used part of the proverb to express a different concept from the proverb itself and created a statement that well expressed the values of *cortigiania*, made of loyal service but also seasoned with dissimulation.

Going back to the first part of the statement, it should be noted, that it, too, was probably a quotation, notably from the song by the French musician Jean Mouton (1459-1522) which started exactly with the words 'ce que mon coeur pense, Ie ne le dis pas' (*Mellange de chansons tant des vieux autheurs que des modernes, a cinq, six, sept, et huict parties* 1572, 2v). According to Edward M. Lowinsky, Mouton may have been the editor of the manuscript known as Medici Codex 1518, a music book which, also according to Lowinsky – had been commissioned by the French King François I as a royal present for the 1518 wedding between Lorenzo de' Medici (1492-1519) and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne (1495-1519) (Lowinsky 1968, III, 4, 28, 38). Lorenzo was the grandson of the ruler of Florence by the same name. In 1516, after the

[53] Angoulême 1833, 155, 223 (in this edition, the first part of the proverb is the same as the one we find on the wall in Urbino, except for its modern spelling: 'pour bien servir et loyal être'). The proverb is mentioned in the tenth story of the first day of the *Heptaméron*. The work was published for the first time in 1558 by Pierre Boaistuau, with the title *Histoires des amans fortunez*, without the name of the author and including only 67 stories arranged arbitrarily; since 1559 it has been published as *Heptaméron* (François 1960, xvi-xviii). The proverb is mentioned in a story whose main character is called Floride. In the edition by François the proverb is as follows: 'De bien servir et loyal estre, / De serviteur l'on devient maistre'; a footnote mentions yet another version: 'Le bien servir et loyal estre / le serviteur faict estre maistre' (Marguerite de Navarre 1960, 84, 460). Interestingly, according to the Catalogue of the Italian National Libraries Service (Opac SBN), the only Italian library owning a copy of a 1558 edition of the work is the Humanities Library of the University of Urbino (Biblioteca di Area Umanistica). The entry of the catalogue wrongly reports the publication date as 1552, yet on the book it is 1558 (80v: 'De bien servir & loyal estre, de serviteur on devient maistre'). Such edition is not published by Gilles as the 1558 generally mentioned, but by Benoist Prevost, who in 1559 published the book as *Heptaméron* with the name of the author and including all the seventy-two stories. I have checked an English translation of the *Heptaméron*: the proverb is translated as follows: 'loyal service makes the servant master', in my view with a certain oversimplification (Marguerite de Navarre 1984, 153).

[54] In the 1558 edition the story is the sixty-second (Marguerite de Navarre 1558a, 1558b, 166r-168r) and the name of the duke is missing, whereas in later editions the story is told during the sixth day, is the fifty-first and mentions the name of the 'Duke of Urbino' with details making possible to identify him as Francesco Maria I della Rovere ('Le duc d'Urbin, contre la promesse faite à sa femme, feit pendre une sienc damoyselle, par le moyen de laquelle son filz (qu'il ne vouloit maryer pauvrement) faisoit entendre à s'amye l'affection qu'il luy portoit', Marguerite de Navarre 1960, 329-333; for the English version see Marguerite de Navarre 1984, 429-433).

[55] See especially Castiglione 1997, 205; Castiglione 2003, Libro IV, cap. 5, 368-369.

death of his uncle Giuliano – the 'Magnifico Iuliano de' Medici', who was a character in Castiglione's *The Courtier* and, for as long as he lived, protected Urbino and its dukes – Lorenzo conquered the duchy and was made duke of Urbino by another uncle of his, Pope Leo X. The della Rovere family reacted to this attack, and the War of Urbino broke out; the della Rovere eventually got Urbino back when Pope Leo X died in 1521 (at the time, both Lorenzo and his wife had already died, having passed away at a young age in 1519, a few days after the birth of their daughter Caterina, the future queen of France) (Benzoni 2006).

While early doubts (see Perkins 1969) were raised on the idea that the Medici Codex was a French product and that Mouton was a kind of editor in chief of the work, Lowinsky's interpretation, especially as regards Mouton's role, was and still is reported in many texts.[56] Today, however, the majority of scholars believe that the Medici Codex was written in Rome rather than France, and that it was a papal present to Lorenzo and Madeleine, maybe even given to them sometime after their wedding.[57] But why would a manuscript made in Rome mainly contain motets of French musicians? Of course, French musicians 'did not only live in France'. On the contrary, 'they moved from centre to centre and from one patron to another, rapidly crossing local, regional, and national boundaries' (Lookwood 1979, 244), and many of them worked in Italy, since in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many Italians had a passion for French music and musicians (Bowen 2003). Like many of his contemporaries, Leo X, too, had a predilection for them, especially Mouton: interestingly, several musicians whose motets were included in the Medici Codex spent some time in Italy and a relatively high number (eleven) were 'in direct touch with, or in the service of' patrons of Ferrara's court, also visited by Mouton (Lookwood 1979, 243-244). Therefore, even if Mouton was not the editor of the Medici codex given to Lorenzo (who, on the other hand, despite his title as duke, spent only very little of his short life in Urbino), several of his motets were present in the book (although not the *chanson* 'Ce que mon coeur pense').[58] Even more importantly, his work was known and appreciated in Italy. In sum, knowing the context, it is not so surprising to find a possible quote from one of Mouton's *chansons* scribbled on a wall in Urbino, where French music was appreciated and the dukes employed French musicians, such as Dominique Phinot (before 1544-1556?) and Jachet Bontemps (1551?-1572) (Piperno 2001, 115 and *passim*).

I mentioned Lorenzo de' Medici's conquest of Urbino to recall one of the dramatic events which involved the Duchy that, some years earlier, had also been conquered by Cesare Borgia (1502-1503) (see Ruggiero 2016). In the very days when the refined dialogues described by Castiglione in *The Courtier* must have taken place, the Palace was certainly not only 'il proprio albergo della allegria',[59] and this also, and especially, because Duke Guidobaldo, as mentioned, was ill and would die as early as 11 April 1508, aged 36. Furthermore, courtiers, princes and courtly life were often rather different from the ideal ones described in Castiglione's dialogue, as he and the characters of his dialogue actually knew very well, and this was true, in Urbino, too.

[56] See for instance Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medici_Codex>; <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Mouton>, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Mouton>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[57] Rifkin 2009; Shephard 2010. Before reading these texts I, too, mentioned Mouton as the possible editor of the Codex, see Sarti 2017, 77.

[58] Lowinsky 1968; Rifkin 2009, 522-523; Shephard 2010, 122-123.

[59] Castiglione 2003, Libro I, cap. 4, 21 ('the verye mansion place of Myrth and Joye', Castiglione 1997, 24).

5. *The Frustrations of Courtly Life*

'If these walls could talk, man, the stories they would tell ...', the saying goes. In fact, the walls of the Palace of Urbino tell a lot of stories, or at least give a lot of information, to those who are patient enough to read the graffiti that cover parts of them. And graffiti do not only provide the reader with clues of a refined courtly life. On the contrary, many of them reveal other aspects. 'non è vero' ('it is not true') a different hand added alongside the graffito exalting the 'felice dolc aventuroso loco' ('happy sweet adventurous place') (figure 8).

To be sure, on the walls of the palace several 'evviva' ('long live') and praises to Giulia, Fenice, Livia, Franceschina and many more, appear. For the most part, these seem to have been written by men, writing about their sweethearts (sometimes they are signed); and there are also declarations which praise men such as the aforementioned one on Baldassar and the following one: 'Vincenzo bello per me' ('Vincenzo, beautiful to me'),[60] which might have been left by women or by homosexuals. Drawings of hearts, pierced by arrows, laughing, or crying, are found alongside some of the writings.[61] The erotic urges expressed through graffiti are not all sublimated: there are dozens of more or less funny drawings of phalluses.[62] One phrase even commemorates the place where, in 1683, a woman 'di grandissima consideratione' ('of very great importance') lost her virginity (Sarti 2017, 56-71).[63]

Furthermore, the writings and drawings on gentle loves are counterbalanced by those expressing frustration and sometimes even violent rage. 'Pazze donne donzelle perche poco [esti]mate gl ho[mini] della corte' ('Witless ladies, maidens why have you scant [est]eem for the me[n] of the court') is written on a wall of the same balcony where there is also the 'Long live Florida and Tirsi' graffito. Such vehemence elicited a piqued response, actually not easy to read, maybe by a woman arguing, so seems to read, that those men never deserve to be considered better knights.[64] A nearby a graffito accuses a woman from Milan of being a whore ('Millanesa unicha putana'),[65] whereas another one by the same writer on a door jamb in another part of the palace defines the woman from Milan as 'signora mia' ('my lady'): probably at some stage something went wrong.[66] Problems of the heart seem to have led someone to express their feelings in verses with moral tones: 'Fugite amanti ogni lacivo amore / perché egli apporta al fin pena e dolore' ('Lovers, flee all lascivious

[60] FF, AP-DSS, Camera da letto della Duchessa (Bedroom of the Duchess), no. 26; see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/67-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/camera-letto-duchessa>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[61] See <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/consulta/amori-e-malinconie-al-balcone/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[62] See <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/75-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/74-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[63] FF, AP-DSS, Salotto della Duchessa (Salon of the Duchess), no. 25; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/76-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[64] FF, AP-D, Loggia (Balcony); see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/36-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/loggia-piano-nobile/>, accessed 10 January 2020. The first part is rather clear ('ti rispondo che non meritano essere sti') whereas the next words, rather difficult to understand, appear as follows: '(sti)mati no mai per meglior cav.ri'; thus the translation would be 'I answer you that they never deserve to be considered better knights'.

[65] FF, AP-D, Loggia (Balcony).

[66] FF, AP-D, Sala delle Udienze (Audience Chamber), no. 16 ('Milanesa vita mia', 'Milanesa my life'); FF, AP-D, Guardaroba del Duca (Duke's Wardrobe), no. 19 ('Milanesa S.ra mia'; 'Milanese my Lady'); FF, Sala degli Angeli (Room of Angels), no. 21 ('Millanesa bb (?) S.ra mia(?)'; 'Milanese my Lady').

love / because ultimately, it brings pain and suffering').[67] It is not difficult to guess such pain and suffering, and bitter disillusion, behind several names deleted with violent scratches. Certainly, as for love, the palace was not always a 'mansion place of Myrth and Joye'. On the contrary, its walls are crowded with writings and drawings that disclose a variety of feelings and emotions linked to love: a rich repertoire of expressions of desire, erotic impulses, disillusions, insults, reflections and much more that can represent interesting sources for the (currently booming) studies on the history of emotions.[68] However, also for those less interested in the historical study of emotions, these passions, scratched on the walls, represent a touching testimony of a past that, although vanished, is still able to communicate trepidation, sighs, joys, tears and anger.

We can wonder whether the walls provide us with a similarly rich and complex repertoire on other aspects of life, and more specifically of courtly life. What about service, for instance? There is much writing that can be attributed to servants and courtiers. Interestingly several servants present themselves mentioning the name of their masters, thus clearly considering the relationship with the latter crucial to define their social identity. Yet these graffiti were mainly written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, maybe because at that time literacy rates among servants were higher than in previous centuries. Furthermore, we don't know how many of the authors of the thousands of graffiti on the walls were servants: we can only recognise those who present themselves as such. Nonetheless, these graffiti show that at least some servants shared and/or exploited the hierarchical ideas implied in what we can define as a service ideology. Even more interestingly, there is no shortage of servants who present themselves on the walls as good and appear to display a kind of service ethics: 'bono servitore vostro' ('Your good servant'),[69] 'per amore e per fede sempre servo' ('for love and faith I always serve')[70]; 'servo di Vostra Signoria' ('Your Lordship's servant'),[71] (Sarti 2015; Sarti 2017, 102-111).

On the other hand, several writings and drawings present service in a rather dark light, for instance stating that 'servir con poca sorte' ('to serve with scant fortune') made people similar to penitents;[72] expressing all the sadness of being in a condition that is never blessed by fortune ('la rota de fortuna mai non volta per te stafiere'; 'the wheel of fortune never turns for you, lackey/ footman'),[73] arguing that the aim of a courtier was to turn the court into a jail ('galera'),[74] or, still, that 'virtu è non fidarsi di corte' ('virtue is not to trust the court')[75] (Sarti 2017, 102-111).

[67] FF, AP-D, Entrata dello Studiolo (Entrance to the Studiolo), no.17; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/68-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/sala-udienze/>, accessed 10 January 2020 (clicking the jellow circle that appears on the floor).

[68] Ferente 2009; Matt 2011; Eustace *et al.* 2012; Rosenwein 2016.

[69] GF, Room no. 14; the graffito is written 'Bono servitore V.o'.

[70] GF, Room 14; on the same door jamb as the previous; 'per amore e per fede' is written in capital letters, 'sempre servo' in small letters.

[71] FF, AP-D, Camera da letto del Duca (Duke's Bedroom), no. 20; the graffito is written, all in capital letters, 'Servo D. V. Sx'

[72] FF, AP-D, Entrata dello Studiolo (Entrance to the Studiolo), no.17, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/50-2/>; to see the location see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/sala-udienze/>, accessed 10 January 2020, clicking on the yellow circle on the floor. There also are other similar ones, see Sarti 2017, 79.

[73] FF, AP-D, Loggia, (Balcony), <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/49-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/loggia-piano-nobile/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[74] SF, AP-R, First Room, no. 2. This rather difficult writing seems to be readable as follows: 'questo del cortegiano l'è il fine far le cort[i] a galera a forca [?] e l ospitale [?]', that is 'this is the goal of the courtier, to transform the court into a jail, a gallows, an hospital', see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/64-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/appartamento-roveresco-prima-sala/>, accessed 10 January 202.

[75] FF, AP-D, Guardaroba del Duca (Duke's Wardrobe), no. 19; 'virtù' and 'non' are in capital letters.

A writer has even left an entire, rather desperate poem, on the negative aspects of courtly life, describing the court as a ‘sea of pain’, a ‘nest of deception’, ‘where you struggle and sigh, but always in vain’, and where ‘tyrants are adored as gods’, to the extent that ‘little by little you go to ruin’. All that remains is to flee, at least in one’s imagination, ‘the thought of going far away’, ‘to live no longer with so many worries’ (figure 10).[76]

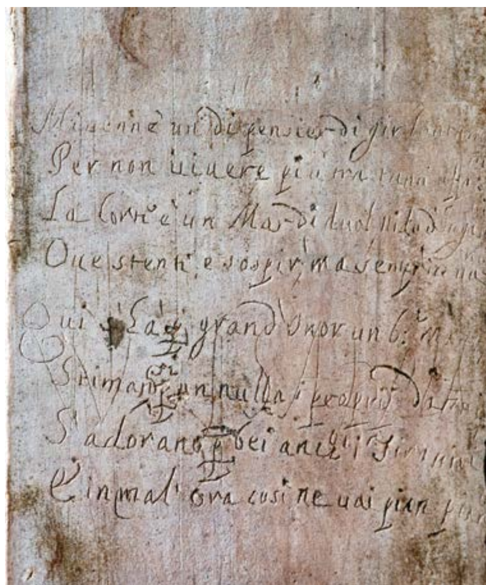

Figure 10 – Graffito ‘Mi venne un di pensier di gir lontano’. Photo by Manuele Marraccini

Mi venne un di pensier di gir lontano	One day I thought of going far away
Per non vivere piu tra tanti affanni	To live no longer with so many worries
La Corte è un Mar di duol, nido d’inganni	The Court is a Sea of pain, a nest of deception
Ove stenti, e sospir, ma sempr’in vano	Where you struggle and sigh, but always in vain
Qui si hà per grand’Onor un bona mano	A tip is here a great Honour
Stimansi per un nulla i propri danni	One’s strife is deemed as nothing
S’adorano per dei anch’i Tiranni	Even Tyrants are adored as gods
e in mal’ora cosi ne vai pian piano.	And thus little by little you go to ruin.

In the light of these verses, the myth of Urbino seems like a kind of mirage. Yet, on the other hand, such a poem, made up of two quatrains of dodecasyllables with an ABBA rhyming pattern, is a rather paradoxical confirmation of the refined literary life that took place in the Palace.

[76] GF, Loggia (Balcony). As can be seen in the picture, some words are abbreviated: ‘Af.$^{\text{ni}}$’ (Affanni); ‘Ingan$^{\text{ni}}$’ (Inganni); ‘inva$^{\text{no}}$’ (invano); ‘p’; (per), ‘b:$^{\text{a}}$’(‘bona’); ‘pian$^{\text{o}}$’ (piano), see also <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/37-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

6. *The Windy Urbino Between Myth and Boredom*

The negative opinions one can find on the walls do not even spare Urbino. According to one of our writers, 'Chi loda Urbino / in Urbino non nacque…' ('Those who praise Urbino / were not born in Urbino…').[77] Some seventeenth-century writers communicate with their graffiti the impression of a town where life was boring and tedious. In 1666 one carved bitterly ironic lines about the windy city (figure 11):

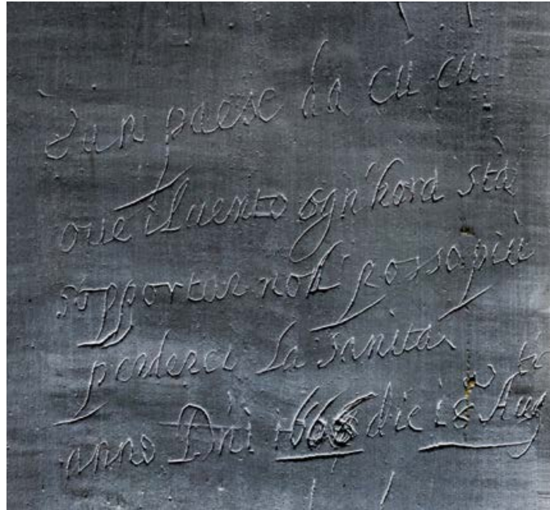

Figure 11 – Graffito 'È un paese da cùcù'. Photo by Manuele Marraccini

È un paese da cùcù
ove il vento ogn'hora stà
sopportar nol posso più
perderei la sanità
anno Dni 1666 die 18 Aug.^{ti}

It is a cuckoo land
Every hour blown by wind
No more can I withstand
I will surely lose my mind
Year of our Lord 1666, Aug. 18.[78]

These lines sound as odd precursors of the beautiful and well-known poem *L'aquilone* (*The kite*, 1897), where the great Italian poet Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912), who studied in Urbino, defined the city as windy ('Urbino ventoso').[79] Nowadays, to commemorate Pascoli and his poem, a kite festival is organised yearly. Those who visit Urbino between late August and early September will see the sky filled with dozens of kites: another amazing image of the city.[80]

The anonymous lines of 1666 that debase Urbino to a windy cuckoo land making people insane are also in sharp contrast with another well-known poem which defines Urbino as windy,

[77] FF, A-DSS, Guardaroba della Duchessa (Wardrobe of the Duchess), no. 27; Sarti 2017, 80-83.

[78] SF, AP-R, Fifth Room, no. 6. The date on the last line is in Latin and in the original has two abbreviations: 'anno Dni 1666 die 18 Aug.^{ti}'.

[79] The poem by Giovanni Pascoli *L'aquilone* (*The kite*) has been translated into English by the Nobel-prize winner Seamus Heaney and is now included in Brock 2012.

[80] On the festival see Festa dell'Aquilone, <http://www.festaquilone.it/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

that is, *To a wealthy Man who promised a second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery if it were proved the People wanted Pictures* by William Butler Yeats (1912). While in the graffito there is no trace of the myth of Urbino, rather the contrary, Yeats, in a sense, confirms Urbino's myth:

And Guidobaldo, when he made
That grammar school of courtesies
Where wit and beauty learned their trade
Upon Urbino's windy hill,
Had sent no runners to and fro
That he might learn the shepherds' will.[81]

Certainly, in 1666, when the anonymous writer engraved his verses, the golden days of the duchy had long gone; the city had been part of the Papal State for several decades. In fact, the decline of Urbino had begun very early. Already in 1523 duke Francesco Maria della Rovere had moved the main seat of the court to Pesaro: when Baldassar Castiglione published his enthusiastic description of Urbino (1528), the city was already losing lustre and importance. The Palace, however, under the rule of the della Rovere family was expanded and continued to be one of the residences of the dukes, as one can understand also observing the graffiti on the wall. 'Eleonora Ducissa Urbini De Rvere',[82] can be read on a door frame in one of the ground-floor rooms, which, at the time, as far as we know, were part of the ducal apartments (Fontebuoni 1985). It probably is the signature of the Duchess Eleonora Gonzaga (1493-1550), wife of Francesco Maria della Rovere, and her name is repeated a short distance away. Her son, Guidobaldo (1514-1574), is traditionally credited as the author of the Latin note carved on the wall of the balcony of the ducal apartments. The note informs us that at 21 hours, the duke saw his wife and expressed the wish for a long and happy married life. Duke Guidobaldo II married Vittoria Farnese (1521-1602) in 1548. He had recently lost his first wife, Giulia da Varano, who had died aged just twenty-three: it is plausible that he was hoping for a long, happy marriage.[83] Interestingly, a graffito writing in the so-called 'Duchess' Apartments' informs us that Vittoria arrived about an hour later, at 22 hours: 'Adi 30 di Genaro 1548 la Signora Illustrissima Vittoria duchessa di Urbino vene in Urbino la prima volta a hore 22 lunidi' ('On 30 January 1548, the Illustrious Lady, Vittoria, Duchess of Urbino came to Urbino for the first time at 22 hours, Monday').[84] Guidobaldo's wish was realised: he and Vittoria were together for twenty-six years, although their family's life was ravaged by the early deaths of six of their nine children. The Palace walls also tell us of their apprehension for their heir, Francesco Maria II: marks in a door jamb, accompanied by dates and celebratory exclamations, allow us to see how he grew in height.[85] Francesco Maria II became duke in 1574. When he died, in 1631, he had no male heirs, since his son Federico Ubaldo had died – perhaps murdered – in 1621 (Sarti 2009, 62-64; Sarti 2017, 41-55).

[81] CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork College Road, Cork, Ireland, <http://www.ucc.ie/celt>, Text ID Number: E910001-004, <https://celt.ucc.ie//published/E910001-004.html>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[82] GF, Door between Room no.12 and Room no. 13, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/20-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020; Sarti 2017, 44-46.

[83] FF, AP-D, Loggia (Balcony), see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/16-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/loggia-piano-nobile/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[84] FF, AP-DSS, Salotto della Duchessa (Salon of the Duchess), no. 25; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/19-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/salotto-della-duchessa/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[85] GF, Room no. 14.

Urbino became then part of the Papal State and was ruled by representatives of the Pope, his legates and vice-legates. Those who know how to read them, can see the signs of such a radical change of rulers on the walls. In the Sala della Jole, some meticulous drawings represent the coats of arms of the authorities who ruled the city around 1660: Pope Alexander VII Chigi; papal legate Scipione Pannocchieschi d'Elci, and vice-legate Carlo Montecatini.[86] The Palace walls offer a great deal of other evidence of the presence of legates and vice-legates: D'Elci and Montecatini appear in other graffiti, as do many of their successors: 'Viva Monsignor Lorenzo Fiesco Vicelegato Adi 7 1668 settembre' ('Long live Monsignor Lorenzo Fiesco, Vice Legate on this day 7 September 1668');[87] 'Gaetano de Cavalieri Vicelegato l'Anno 1711' ('Gaetano de Cavalieri Vicelegate in the year 1711');[88] 'Monsignor Antonio Spinelli Vice-legato in 1745 e 1746' ('Monsignor Antonio Spinelli Vice-legate in 1745 and 1746')[89]... The list goes on: there is also a graffito representing in detail the coat of arms of Pasquale Badia,[90] the penultimate papal representative in Urbino, before the city was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy (Sarti 2009, 60-62; Sarti 2017, 88-101).

The Swiss guards who were in service in the Palace also left innumerable signs of their presence on the walls, often carving their names deeply into the stone, sometimes with genuine penmanship: 'Nicolaus Stichter 1632';[91] 'Hans Hosng fon Crins 1633';[92] 'Hans Caspar Stubi 1663'; 'Caspar Schnrm 1715';[93] 'Jacob Huggenmatter 1682';[94] 'Giovanni Svegler svizzero 1732';[95] 'Niclaus Müler von Ruswil 1766';[96] 'Martin Burliman Ano 1775',[97] and others. Certainly, the carving of many of these graffiti required a good deal of time: the impression is that the Swiss did not have much else to do. It is also plausible that much of the evidence of games found on the Palace walls was left there by the Swiss guards, including a grid for noughts and crosses carved into a chair, and endless series of lines that probably mark the scores of who knows what games. The walls thus make us feel the weight of the boredom the guards tried to kill with

[86] FF, AP-J, First Room, no. 1; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/10-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/sala-della-jole/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[87] FF, Room no. 21; the graffito is written as follows: 'W M. Lor.º Fiesco VLeg.to 7bre Adi 7 1668'; see Sarti 2017, 95.

[88] GF, Door between Room no. 12 and Room no. 14; see also, about the same legate, in the same room: 'Monsignor de Cavalieri arrivò in legazione alli 4 di dicembre 1710 e fu promosso alla Prefettura della Sacra Consulta il dì 4 marzo 1712 sostenne il governo in capite dalli 2 aprile a tutto ottobre detto e partì dopo i Santi per Roma' ('Monsingor de Cavalieri arrived to the Legation on 4 December 1710 and on 12 March 1712 was appointed to sustain the government as chief from 2 April to the entire month of October and left go to Rome after the fest of Saints'), see <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/7-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[89] GF, Room no. 14, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/9-2/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[90] FF, Sala del Trono (Throne Room), no. 22, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/57-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/sala-del-trono/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[91] FF, AP-J, External door jamb of the entrance to the First Room, no. 1; the writing is in capital letters.

[92] GF, Cortile d'Onore (Honour Countyard), see Sarti 2017, 114; the writing is in capital letters.

[93] GF, Ingresso Principale (Main Entrance); the two writings ('Hans Caspar Stubi 1663'; 'Caspar Schnrm 1715'), both in capital letters, are on the the same door jamb.

[94] GF, Ingresso Principale (Main Entrance); <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/23-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/ingresso/>, accessed 10 January 2020. The writing is in gothic. In Sarti 2017, 12, 161, 179, is wrongly written Buggenmatter.

[95] GF, Cortile d'Onore (Honour Courtyard), see Sarti 2017, 115.

[96] GF, Ingresso Principale (Main Entrance); <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/22-2/>; <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/ingresso/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

[97] FF, Sala del Trono (Throne Room), no. 22, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/87-2/>, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/sala-del-trono/>, accessed 10 January 2020; the writing is in capital letter.

doodles and drawings, some of which are quite obsessive, such as the strange depictions of legs and shoes ...[98] In sum, these graffiti also reinforce an impression of boredom and tediousness.

The Palace was by now inhabited by mainly male people, and actually the traces of passionate courtship and love to be found on the walls, although often written without a date, seem to refer mainly to the Ducal period. However, the Palace continued to be the seat of several cultural activities. Some rooms of the huge building were used as University classrooms and theatre (Sarti 2009; Sarti 2017, 134-142). Moreover, Urbino experienced another flourishing phase at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Giovanni Francesco Albani, the member of a noble family from the city, became Pope Clement XI (1700-1721). Nonetheless, the lively cultural and artistic life of the Renaissance was no longer matched.

7. *Concluding Remarks*

In 1678 the author of a graffito sobbed: 'Ah if I could go to Pesaro, what a pleasure it would be'[99]... The idea that Pesaro could be more desirable than Urbino even today probably sounds like an offence to some people from Urbino, very proud of the glorious history of their city. In this article I have used a rather unconventional source – the historical graffiti engraved on the walls and door jambs of the Palace of Urbino – to analyse some aspects of the history of the city. I have shown that the lively literary and artistic life of the city during the Renaissance has left interesting traces on the walls: drawings and writings scribbled in the Palace, often far from being, or from being primarily, unarticulated or vandalising scratches, unveil literary and artistic references or even quotes, and are expressed with linguistic and handwriting mastery.

This confirms a rather different use and meaning, in early modern times, of wall writing and drawing in comparison to the present, as I have explained in detail in the Editorial to this volume, providing the readers with a survey of research on historical wall writing and drawing (see also Sarti 2007, 2009, 2011, 2017, 2018). The people who wrote on the walls of the Palace ranged from the very masters of the house to servants and guards. In the ducal period, the dukes themselves very likely wrote on the walls of their Palace. After 1631, when Urbino was included into the Papal state and was ruled by the representatives of the Pope, papal legates and especially vice-legates very often left their names, dates, information on their arrival and departure, sometimes their coats of arms on the walls of the Urbino Palace. In a sense, they marked their territory 'tagging' the Palace. Certainly wall writing was not, as such, an unauthorized and transgressive practice. The walls were surfaces available for writing and drawing, in many circumstances and/or for many people probably even more handy than paper. Reasons for exploiting this possibility were numerous and different, and different were the writings and drawings on the palace. From unarticulated scribbling to calligraphic masterpieces, the graffiti of the Palace represent a huge and rich set of sources, still largely unexplored, that has only begun to be systematically studied.

The analysis of such intriguing, sometimes challenging, writing and drawing reveals the potential of historical graffiti as a source not only for paleography, the history of writing or the history of literacy, but also for many other aspects of social, cultural and emotional life. In

[98] See <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/consulta/la-noia-delle-guardie-svizzere/>, accessed 10 January 2020; Sarti 2017, 112-121.

[99] GF, Room no. 11. The complete graffito goes as follows: 'A se potessi andare a Pesaro che un sollucaro (solluccano) sarebbe la mia sola mente perche non vi è altro che zovitude 1678' ('Ah if I could go to Pesaro what a pleasure it would be (this is) my only idea because there is nothing but youth 1678').

this article I have tried to understand whether we can find traces, on the walls of the Palace, of its courtly life, of the diffusion of the culture of service celebrated by Castiglione, and of the reception of the courtier's model he elaborated; and, finally, of the myth of Urbino. I have thus shown that the lively literary, musical, artistic life that took place in the palace, left traces on the walls; as mentioned, there are graffiti which are quotes of poems, madrigals, etc., contain references to such a culturally lively world, or are themselves poems and little masterpieces. Furthermore, on the walls I found traces of refined courtship. Some writers shared a culture of loyal service to one's masters, in some cases – it seems – even accepting the idea that it implied a certain dissimulation, as suggested by Castiglione. On the other hand, writings and drawings on the walls also illustrate much grosser and/or more trivial aspects of courtly life. Idealised ladies were likely to be insulted as whores by disappointed lovers, their names scratched with violent lines. Service was also described as a debasing experience and courtly life as a sea of deceits likely to ruin the courtiers. The very myth of Urbino does not find much support on the walls of the Palace (where the palace itself, however, was drawn, Sarti, 2017, 36, 84): several graffiti describe in fact the city as a boring and tiring place. Writings and drawings on the walls contribute to illustrate a variety of emotions linked to love, the ambivalences of service, and the tensions between the myth of Urbino and everyday realities, also establishing an interesting comparison or dialogue between sources written on paper and evidence carved into the wall.

The research carried out so far, that has implied extensive photographing of the walls of the Palace, and the interpretation of several hundreds of writing and drawings out of a total possibly reaching 5,000, showing the potential of such a source, calls for more systematic study: a good reason, in addition to many others, to consider wall writings and drawings as a component of the cultural heritage to be preserved, studied, interpreted and exhibited. Such an approach is much needed. Since I started my research in the late 1990s, and then more systematically in the 2000s, some door jambs that I luckily photographed, started to crumble, and have been recently removed and replaced with new ones. Furthermore, still in the 2010s, some otherwise welcome refurbishment works, have nonetheless made less readable or possibly even effaced the graffiti on some door jambs.[100] While in recent years a new awareness of the importance of historical graffiti has developed, the approach that considers them (especially those on artworks such as paintings and frescoes) as human damage to be removed is not overcome.[101] Hopefully, the little masterpieces like the lady illustrated in this article, alongside with the refined quotations, on the walls, of poems, the clues of the sad frustrations of some courtiers, or the moving testimonies of loves of the past, will contribute to convincing a larger number of scholars, curators of the cultural heritage, and simple history lovers of the value of wall writing and drawing, that cannot be dismissed as meaningless scribblings. On the other hand, while also the wildest scribblings tell us something about the past, they testify to writing and drawing practices and skills, ways of 'appropriating' spaces, of circulating of contents among different supports, and provide insights on a huge variety of themes, ranging from individual emotions to big snowfalls, from the statures of lackeys to the tags of a duchess, from the 1683 victory of the Holy Roman Emperor in the war against the Turks to the annoying blowing of the wind ... Over the centuries, a crowd of people entrusted words, drawings, and signs to the walls; in some cases possibly rather inadvertently and cursorily, in many other cases with the

[100] I refer in particular to the refurbishment in the so called Sala degli Angeli.

[101] See for instance the case of the chapel of Santa Maria dei Campi in Lenta (Vercelli, Italy), also called Madonna di Campagna, where recent restoration has rendered illegible, as reported by Plesch (2010, 143), several graffiti that could be read until a few years ago.

evident consciousness of the durability of writing and drawing made on stones and the more or less explicit will to leave a testimony 'A.P.R.M.' as written at least in one case, that is 'ad perpetuam rei memoriam', to eternal memory (Sarti 2017, 128, 161). It is our responsibility to take these messages from the past seriously.[102]

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[102] As I have explained in the Editorial to this volume, such an approach does not mean to allow new writing and drawings to be made on monuments and artworks; today we have other walls (especially digital ones) where we can write.

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Part Three

Organizing an Exhibition

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Urbino's Graffiti
From the Wall to the Exhibition

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Abstract

The article traces a journey which started with my MA thesis and has become a tangible reality in the pathway through the exhibition *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere* (Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche 29 marzo-21 maggio 2017). The cooperation of many specialists (historians, information technology specialists, photographers, graphic designers and communicators) has made it possible to realize this project. A hidden story has been revealed thanks to different media in order to offer the public a multimedia visit, an innovative and pioneering learning experience.

Keywords: *Database, Engravings, Light, Photography, 3D*

1. *Introduction*

The idea for my thesis arose during my first visit to Urbino's Palazzo Ducale, when my attention was drawn not only to the works of art, but also to the architecture of the Palace itself. While walking through the doors, looking at their frames and architraves, I noticed some engraved writings and, as a visitor, I realized that, in fact, writings and drawings covered the whole building (figure 1). These engravings, evidence left by different authors and dating from different times (between the sixteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries) instantly caught my attention, and so the idea of devoting my thesis to the study of such drawings and writings was born. After reading Raffaella Sarti's texts, I devoted attention to many of the actual graffiti and, on 1st April 2015, I discussed an MA thesis in Cultural Heritage Photography entitled *Un Palazzo da Leggere* (Marraccini 2015).[1]

[1] All photographs are by the author.

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Figure 1 – Graffiti on one of the walls in the main entrance to the Palace

2. *The Project 'La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere' ('Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace')*

My thesis was based on advanced photographic techniques that allowed me to closely analyse the graffiti. Although in my dissertation I examined only the graffiti of a few rooms (the first in the guided tour of the Palace), through pictures and digital design my project was the starting point of a bigger project focused on many aspects of this phenomenon which paid particular attention to the educational aspect: the project 'La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere' ('Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace'). The outcome was an interactive exhibition that employed a multimedia platform and QR codes as links to the cataloguing of engravings (figure 2).

Figure 2 – The thesis (left) and the exhibition catalogue (right)

The first step of this project was a photographic overview of the whole building (including parts that are normally closed to the public). These first pictures were subsequently sorted and arranged thematically.

About a hundred of the most meaningful engravings were selected to properly describe the phenomenon and a database of positions and categories was created. The classification used for the database is the same that appears in sections of the exhibition, of the exhibition catalogue and of the website (Sarti *et al.* 2017).[2]

In terms of photographic techniques, the work was challenging as it required the use of advanced techniques, macro lenses and appropriate lighting, in order to capture all the details. One of the techniques employed was that of radiating light (direct light shone on the surface). This procedure is used in artistic diagnostics to study surface decay in works of art, but in this particular case, the 'damage' itself was the object of our analysis. As the best way to study the engravings proved to be using direct lighting from the bottom up, a supporting structure was created to speed up the operations (figure 3).

Figure 3 – A high-resolution image (left), all the files making up such an image (top right), the magnification of a detail (bottom right)

Since the graffiti are quite small, it was necessary to take images using a macro lens. Despite the advantages of this technique, a single macro image can show only a small section of the item photographed, so multiple pictures of each item had to be joined together using specific software (Autopano). Through this technique, it has been possible to achieve high-quality images showing both the whole item and its smallest details (figure 4).

[2] *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere* (Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, 29 March-21 May 2017), <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

Figure 4 – Engraving without any specific illumination (left) and incision with grazing light from above (right)

Some of the engravings were more difficult to read, to the extent that even radiating light was not sufficient to reveal the smallest details. In these instances, some RTI (Reflectance Transformation Imaging) images were created. RTI images are dynamic images which make it possible to obtain a single image with adjustable light using specialized software in order to join together multiple pictures.[3] The final image can be viewed thanks to another piece of specialized software (RTI viewer, created by the CNR Institute in Pisa), which allows viewers to change the direction of the light and apply different filters to increase the readability of the image (figure 5).

Figure 5 – The RTI visualization program with a specific filter applied to the image

[3] RTI builder, <http://culturalheritageimaging.org/Technologies/RTI/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

The use of these techniques made it possible to obtain 2D images, but the project included an even deeper study thanks to high-precision 3D scanning using GOM technology.[4] GOM scanner technology is one of the most precise techniques available: it allow us to analyze every single point of the surface observed. All the different parts are then merged together thanks to a specific capability of software and a single image is thus created. Measure 3D[5] (a company specializing in 3D scanning) made an extremely important contribution to the project by working in detail on all the data. These images were available both at the exhibition (through touch screens) and on the website. Océ[6] (a company specializing in 3D printing) created 3D prototypes of these images (either in their original size or on a larger scale) adding a further level of experience for the visitors. Thanks to this, in fact, even visually-impaired visitors were able to access and enjoy the exhibition (figure 6).

Figure 6 – The GOM system during data acquisition

3. *An Innovative Exhibition*

The exhibition was organized in record time, thanks to the cooperation of many specialists (historians, information technology specialists, photographers, graphic designers and communicators), who created an organic product illustrating five hundred years of untold history (figure 7). The show allowed the public to interact with the Palace through different media specifically created for all kind of visitors (from the least to the most expert).

The exhibition was open to the public from 29 March to 21 May 2017, but has had a lasting impact on the Palace, thanks to the guided tour created with QR codes, which allowed visitors

[4] <https://www.gom.com/it/sistemi-di-metrologia/atos.html>, accessed 10 January 2020.
[5] <http://www.measure3d.it/>, accessed 10 January 2020.
[6] <https://www.oce.com/the-genius-of-the-great-masters-at-your-fingertips>, accessed 10 January 2020.

to discover the history of the engravings by simply using their smartphones.[7] In this way, not only could people visit the Palace and its works of art but they could also follow a path through the rooms, thus giving new life and value to engravings which would otherwise be difficult to notice and delving even more deeply into the Palace history. Furthermore, the virtual tour is still available on the internet.[8] In conclusion, this exhibition was, to my knowledge, the first to cover this topic in Italy (if we exclude prehistoric and contemporary graffiti). It is hoped it will be a starting point for a deeper study of and more careful attention to these signs, not only in order to preserve them, but also to develop a new area of study that could give a new view of the past, a new way to see history, as the sum of many small pieces of evidence left by its protagonists.

Figure 7 – The poster of the exhibition

[7] See figure 3, Rachiele in this volume.

[8] *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere*, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

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Sarti Raffaella, Manuele Marraccini, Angelo Rubino and Matteo Dellepiane (2017), *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere*, Urbania, Arti Grafiche Stibu, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

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Multimedia and Interaction Design in the 'Stone with a Story' Project

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Abstract

The article reports on the evaluation of the multimedia and interaction design for the exhibition 'La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere' ('Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace'), which opened in the spring of 2017 at the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino. I discuss the forms that the communication model took, using different technologies in different locations, offering visitors the opportunity to perceive the artifacts in a way that would not be possible in a traditional exhibition. The use of advanced technologies along with interaction-design research can truly transform and improve the museum experience, providing better learning and understanding, but only if there is collaboration among professional figures.

Keywords: *Graffiti, Interaction Design, Museum, Physical Interfaces, User Experience*

1. *Introduction*

For years, Italian museums and museums worldwide have been increasing the presence of technology and interactive devices in their institutions so as to allow visitors a more enjoyable and informative experience. With audio guides, interactive kiosks, videos and digital apps, museum goers no longer 'look' at an exhibition, but rather become proactive and even physically involved (Pekarik 2002). Consequently, as each exhibit takes visitors beyond just the visual and engages them in a sensorial experience where aspects of the art can be manipulated and combined to give a deeper understanding and meaning, the role of the visitor as passive observer becomes one of creator and even curator.

The aim of this article is to investigate how these forms of interaction and participation can create a synergy between historical research and curatorship of exhibitions through an examination of the real case study of 'La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere' ('Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace') which opened in the spring of 2017 at the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino.

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2. *'Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace': The Exhibition*

The initial idea that became the basis for the exhibition can be traced back to the 1990s when Raffaella Sarti (University of Urbino 'Carlo Bo') began to do research into the graffiti[1] on the walls of the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino. Names, dates, drawings, games, reflections on the meaning of life, signs and symbols – a veritable narrative chorus of stories had been carved and scratched into the stone or scribbled on the walls with sharp instruments, pencils and charcoal over the course of approximately five and a half centuries (Sarti *et al.* 2017, 28). Sarti conducted a systematic review of the graffiti which was recorded, transcribed and interpreted, thereby reconstructing a genesis and a context. In 2015 Manuele Marraccini, a Master student in Photography of Cultural Heritage at ISIA in Urbino, put forward a thesis proposal which would include the use of advanced digital photography to expand the previous research done by Sarti. The following year ISIA was invited by the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche to install and curate Marraccini's thesis exhibition which would involve not only Marraccini himself, but also Raffaella Sarti, students and faculty members at ISIA, and a collaboration with Matteo Dellepiane, the director of the Department of 3D Technology for Cultural Heritage at the Visual Computing Lab, ISTI-CNR in Pisa. This project is therefore the result of the successful collaborative effort of an inter-disciplinary group of historians, researchers, graphic designers, interaction designers, computer programmers and videographers.

The true protagonist of the exhibit was the graffiti itself which, due to its very nature, was spread throughout the rooms and external walls of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino as well as displayed in specifically designated exhibition spaces through photographic reproduction. Using this unique installation and curatorial organization, visitors were able to find information and details about the actual graffiti on the walls, door frames and columns through traditional information panels, charts and videos and at the same time they could experience the photography of cultural heritage through high-resolution photographic reproductions that revealed graffiti, or aspects thereof, which were otherwise not visible to the naked eye. The specific technologies of photography of cultural heritage, which include RTI (Reflectance Transformation Imaging),[2] 3D photography, image tracing using vector paths and 3D printing (Sarti *et al.* 2017, 198-214) were also used to decipher illegible graffiti and to correct earlier transcriptions and interpretations.

These innovative research and analysis technologies were part of a two-part communication model commonly found inside museums (Mandarano 2011, 214-215): the first being 'in loco' along the exhibition itinerary and in the rooms inside the Palazzo Ducale, the other being 'remote', i.e. allowing visitors access to information from wherever they are, not necessarily in Urbino.

The multimedia designed for the exhibition were therefore schematically sub-divided into the two aforementioned major categories, 'in loco' or 'remote'. In this specific case, the first category can be further divided into two sub-categories, 'in loco' being both the areas located within the specific exhibition itinerary (temporary exhibition spaces, the so-called 'Banchetti' area) and those areas immediately outside the itinerary yet still within the perimeter of the Palazzo Ducale.

[1] For convenience I will use the generic term 'graffiti', even if I must note that the corpus covered here consists of many miscellaneous artifacts – nevertheless all written, carved and scratched on the walls of Palazzo Ducale. This article has been translated from Italian by Christine Di Staola.

[2] Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) on <http://culturalheritageimaging.org/Technologies/RTI/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

3. *'In loco': Part One of the Multimedia Communication Model*

For this part of the multimedia communication model, touch screens were located along the exhibition itinerary and in two other points in the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino.

Visitors using the interactive multimedia started with a stylized floor plan of the exhibition rooms which were marked with the location of each of the graffiti (figure 1).

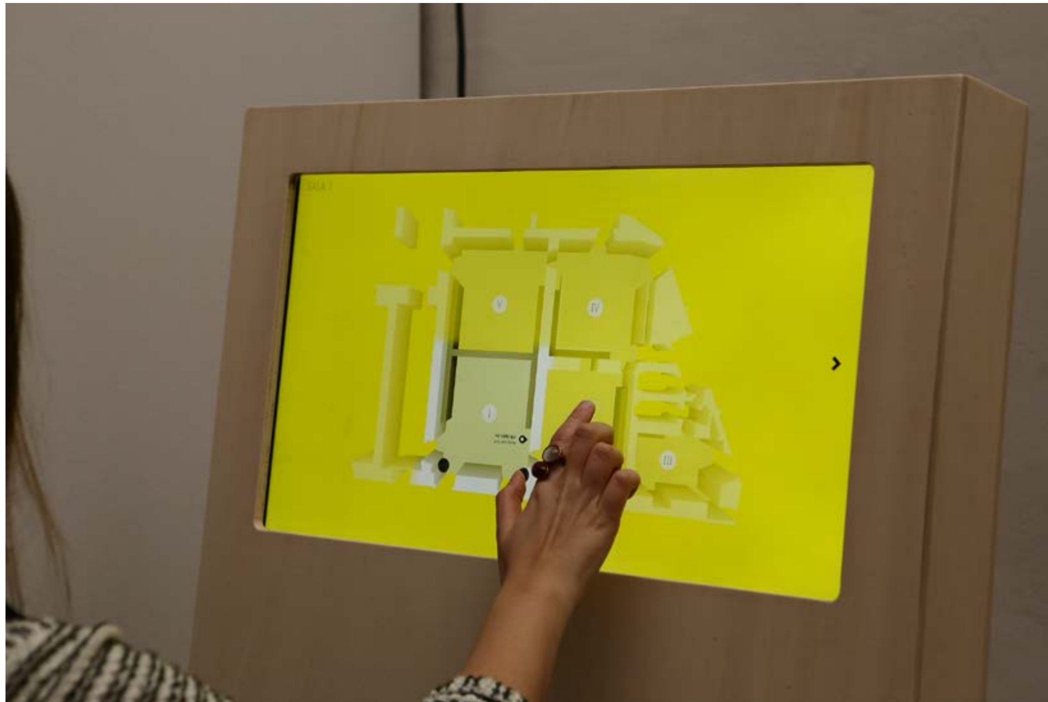

Figure 1 – Stylized floor plan of the exhibition rooms (<http://www.isiaurbino.net/home/archives/9159>)
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By tapping on each marker, visitors had immediate access to detailed charts for the graffiti and were able to view the multimedia reproductions (RTI, 3D, high-definition photography with vector tracing). The interactive kiosks, which served both as a physical anchor and a map inside the exhibition, were aimed at making the location and the characteristics of all graffiti in the exhibition as clear as possible. Interactive screens placed along the exhibition itinerary also allowed groups to participate in the interaction together, which in turn allowed for greater inclusion in the process of active and collaborative learning (Hornecker and Stifter 2006, 135). Visitors could also interact directly with the graffiti on the map, observing it in its original state and then analyzing it through digital manipulation; something that clearly would not have been possible with just an exhibition of the original writings and drawings (figure 2).

Figure 2 – A visitor interacting with the graffiti on the map (<http://www.isiaurbino.net/home/archives/9159>)
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The various levels of interaction (viewing the map with the markers, selecting a marker and visualizing the information charts, or digitally manipulating the 3D or RTI objects) allowed visitors to personally engage with the exhibition and actively participate in the learning process (Prince 2004; Birchfield *et al.* 2008, 965). The length of time and depth of engagement had been specifically calculated so as not to create long queues at the kiosks or to block visitor traffic.

Interactive kiosks with a website created ad hoc for the exhibit were designed to be located at the ticket desk on the ground floor of the Palace and at the entrance to the first floor (not part of the exhibition itinerary) so that any interactive content that might require lengthier viewer engagement would take place in areas away from the displays (Mandarano 2011, 218-219).

As previously mentioned, the graffiti was not only located in specific exhibition rooms but was also to be found in all the rooms and on some of the outer walls of the Palazzo Ducale. In this case, the informational organization included the use of QR codes in areas where there were one or more examples of graffiti (such as door frames, walls and other architectural supports). By framing the QR code with a mobile device, visitors could view a webpage that showed charts detailing the specific graffiti. The QR codes and their information charts were visible and available for consultation in the entire Palazzo Ducale and, as they are part of the website which in itself acts as a sort of permanent exhibition, have remained so even after the end of the exhibition (figure 3).

Figure 3 – QR codes in the Palazzo Ducale (<http://www.isiaurbino.net/home/archives/9159>)
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4. *'In Loco' and 'Remote': an Extension of Part One of the Multimedia Communication Model*

Created as a repository for an entire corpus of digital media including high-resolution photography, vector tracing, 3D photography and RTI, the website (which can be viewed or navigated anywhere there is an internet connection) is without a doubt the main multimedia element of the exhibition. Much in the way that the rooms along the itinerary act like display cases for objects being exhibited, the website contains all the graffiti from the Palazzo Ducale included in the exhibition and displays it in precisely the same manner. What is more, the website allows virtual visitors to 'handle' the works on display – rotate them along three spatial axes, modify the light sources in the RTI, zoom in and look at details literally down to the last millimetre – by way of digital manipulation of the photographs, something that would not be traditionally possible with the real graffiti.[3] In this instance, what is most interesting is the continuous exchange occurring between real and digital, between real and virtual, between real and enhanced. Initially, for example, the idea was to give visitors torches so that they would be able to see the less visible parts of the wall and therefore be able to better appreciate the graffiti. The idea, later discarded, was brought back through the digital potential of RTI which provided visitors with a sort of 'virtual torch'. By illuminating the graffiti from various angles,

[3] *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere*, <http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>, accessed 10 January 2020.

visitors have an enhanced understanding of the execution, drawing process and meaning of each specific example of graffiti.

The real-digital dichotomy, which creates a sort of 'hybrid' experience (Bannon *et al.* 2005, 64) within the exhibition itinerary, is also reflected in the structure of the website. According to user analysis, there is no ideal web user for this kind of exhibition. Due to the nature of the works on display – graffiti and high-resolution photography – the user pool is extensive and includes interest groups that range from researchers, historians and arts enthusiasts to members of the Urbino community, teenagers and children. What emerged as the most logical question to consider was the real physical museum experience: how does one actually 'visit' an exhibition? Museumgoers can be placed into two general categories: those who want to be accompanied or guided throughout the exhibition following information that has been taxonomically sub-divided, and those who prefer to wander freely and discover things by chance or luck instead. Knowing this, the information architecture on the website was structured so that visitors could choose how they wanted to navigate the site, either to 'consult' it or 'explore' it (figure 4).

The former is aimed at the first category of visitors, while the latter is aimed at the second category. 'Consult' divides the graffiti by theme, matching each with detailed descriptions and allowing viewers to visualize all the graffiti belonging to a specific category – with no particular attention paid to their layout in the space (figure 5). 'Explore', on the other hand, allows visitors to literally 'walk around' the inside of the rooms on a virtual tour and to locate graffiti by using the markers. By reproducing the physical experience of walking through the rooms of a museum, the digital is able to mimic reality (figure 6).

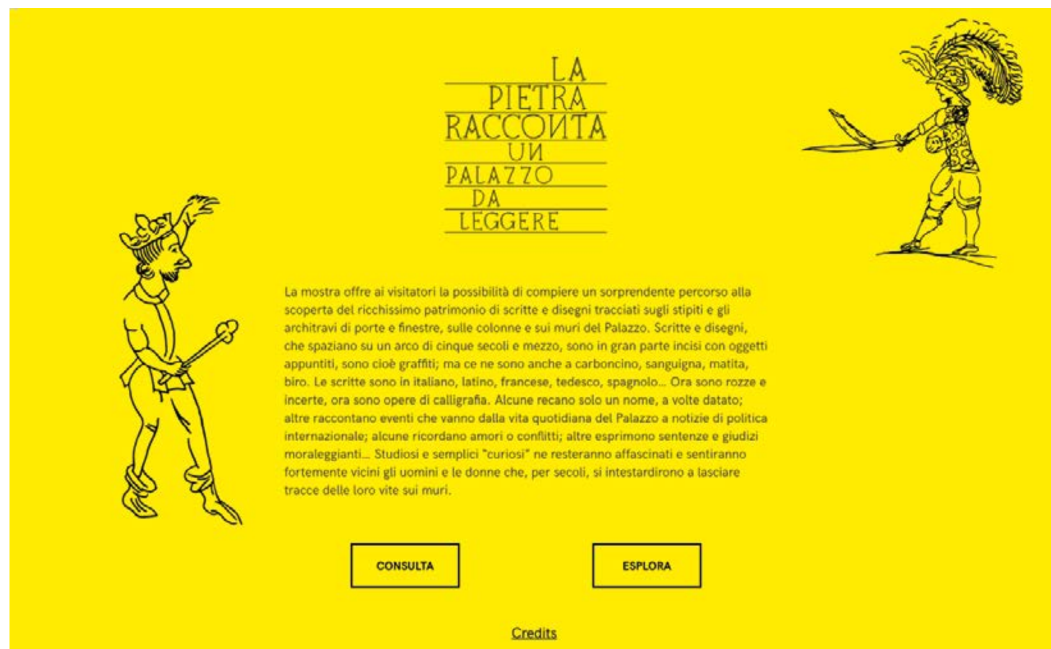

Figure 4 – The webpage that offers the possibility to 'consult' or 'explore' the website (<http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/>)

Figure 5 – An example of the taxonomy of graffiti
(<http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/consulta/amori-e-malinconie-al-balcone/>)

5. *'Remote': Part Two of the Multimedia Communication Model*

The best example of the real-digital dichotomy mentioned above is the creation of a virtual tour through the rooms in the Palazzo Ducale. It is perhaps more precise to call it a simulation of the Palazzo Ducale, given that virtual tours replicate the exact geography and geometry of the actual rooms through photography and software, as opposed to creating just a virtual version.

Moving from room to room on the virtual tour, visitors see markers that indicate the location of specific graffiti and can see it in detail and also view informational charts linked through the site. Even virtual visitors, who are not physically in Urbino, can wander through the rooms in the Palazzo Ducale and see the graffiti as if they were right before them – while they are seated comfortably on their living-room couch (Forte and Franzoni 1998, 199-200) (figure 6).

Figure 6 – An example of the virtual tour
(<http://www.isiaurbino.net/palazzodaleggere/appartamento-jole-quinta-sala/>)

6. *Conclusion*

As mentioned at the beginning of the article, many museums are currently exhibiting their collections through digital and multimedia communication models. It is now more important than ever to consider carefully the forms that these models take, at the level of quality in the experiences that they offer visitors, and at their value in terms of providing greater learning and deeper understanding of exhibitions. This case study demonstrates that these types of communication can become effective and can truly 'heighten' the museum experience, but only if professional figures – researchers, historians, scientists, museum directors, graphic designers and IT specialists – are involved in their creation and their preparation. Technologies such as advanced digital photography and disciplines such as interaction design have much in common with cultural heritage: they are all forms of communication essentially based on the impact, effect and experience of the visual (Mandarano 2011, 239). In this specific case, it was only when the graffiti of the Palazzo Ducale were made truly visible through the use of digital technology that researchers were able to fully comprehend and catalogue the work. In this sense, technology's gift to cultural heritage was rendering the invisible more visible, by giving museum visitors and researchers the 'glasses' they needed to be able to see reality more clearly.

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Manuele Marraccini attended the Fine Art Academy in Carrara and graduated in Cultural Heritage Photography from the Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche (Higher Institute for Artistic Industries) in Urbino. His MA thesis on the graffiti of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, entitled *Un Palazzo da Leggere*, initiated the project and exhibition *La pietra racconta. Un palazzo da leggere (Stone with a Story. Reading the Palace)*, (Urbino, Palazzo Ducale, 29 March-21 May 2017). For the exhibition catalogue, together with Angelo Rubino and Matteo Dellepiane, he wrote a chapter about the photographic techniques employed to prepare the exhibition. He is also an expert in pin-hole photography, chemigram/lucigram, film-camera building and repair, digital composition of images and video making. He currently works as a photographer.

Valentina Rachiele graduated in History and Management of Archival and Bibliographic Heritage from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, writing a dissertation on the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg and its classification and cataloguing system. In 2002, thanks to her collaboration to creating the online form of *La Rivista di Engramma. La tradizione classica nella memoria occidentale*, a journal researching the classical tradition in Western culture, her attention shifted to web design and coding. Later she specialized in Interaction Design, with a thesis on the meaning of gift-giving in the digital era. She is now a lecturer at the Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche (Higher Institute for Artistic Industries) and the Accademia di Belle Arti in Urbino.

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