

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

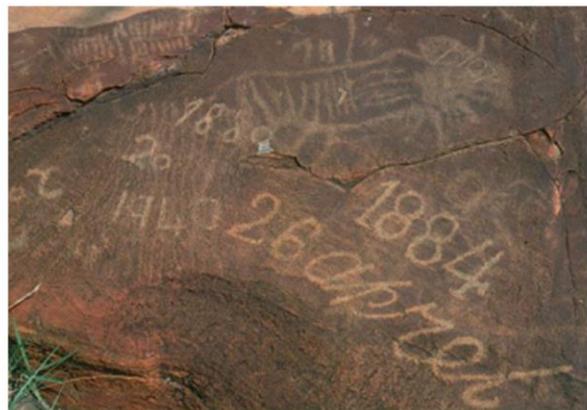
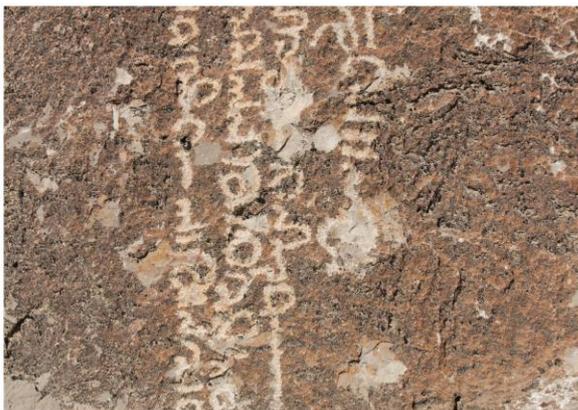
cordially invites you to the workshop

Scratched, Scrawled, Sprayed... and Drawn: Multigraphic Graffiti Across Times and Cultures

Friday, 2 July 2021, 01:00 pm–05:00 pm CEST

Zoom-Meeting

Registration: <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/register-workshop8.html>



Upper left: Middle Persian graffito, dated no earlier than the 7th c. CE. Southern part of the Kuh-e Hossein range, Iran. Original of the close-up published in Carlo G. Cereti and Sébastien Gondet (2015), 'The Funerary Landscape Between Naqš-e Rostam and Estahṛ (Persepolis Region): Discovery of a New Group of Late Sasanian Inscribed Rock-Cut Niches', *Iranica Antiqua*, 50: 388, Fig. 10. Courtesy of Carlo G. Cereti.

Upper right: Indigenous southern African rock engravings and colonial settler/invader graffiti, 19th–20th c. CE. From central South Africa. Photo by Sven Ouzman.

Bottom: GMS Crew, undated. Hamburg, building of Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek: "Futo's mistake, but Kid Crap saves the piece!". Photo by Malena Ratzke.

About the workshop

One of the most striking features of graffiti is their multigraphic nature. Graffiti artists, whether in ancient or modern times, have often felt the need to involve more than one sign system. A pierced heart by a lover, a gameboard on the temple steps – images, symbolic, and diagrammatic signs share the space with written graffiti worldwide. In some cultures, pictures outweigh the amount of text. Pictorial elements are integral to our understanding of graffiti as a universal practice.

This workshop explores graffiti as written artefacts that undogmatically use different modes of representation. By highlighting both textual and pictorial elements and their relation to each other, we aim at overcoming the separate treatment or lack of attention that resulted from a division of labour among the ‘textual’ and ‘visual’ disciplines. In what kind of dialogue have different cultures engaged these two modes of expression? How can the evidence be categorised, documented, and analysed? A series of case studies will address these questions, showcasing evidence from ancient Nubia to contemporary Australia.

Programme

First Session: 01:00 pm–02:30 pm

Chair: Michael Macdonald (Oxford)

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| 01:00-01:10 | Michael Friedrich (Hamburg): <i>Introduction and opening remarks</i> |
| 01:10-01:50 | Sven Ouzman (Perth): <i>Prose Has Its Cons: An Archaeological Understanding of Graffiti as Material Culture – Lessons from the Global South</i> |
| 01:50-02:30 | Polly Lohmann (Heidelberg): <i>Seeing and Being Seen? Visibility, Affordance and the Roman ‘Graffiti Habit’</i> |
| 02:30-02:45 | Coffee break |

Second Session: 02:45 pm–05:00 pm

Chair: Mia Trentin (Nikosia)

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| 02:45-03:25 | Carlo Giovanni Cereti (Rome): <i>Graffiti in the Iranian World: An Overview of the Middle Iranian Evidence</i> |
| 03:25-04:05 | Adam Łajtar (Warsaw): <i>Devotional Graffiti in Christian Nubia. Two Case Studies: Baganarti and Sonqi Tino</i> |
| 04:05-04:45 | Alexey Kirichenko (Moscow): <i>Beyond the Programmed? Multigraphic Content in Buddhist Monuments of Upper Burma</i> |
| 04:45-05:00 | General discussion and concluding remarks |

Abstracts and Contributors

Sven Ouzman (Perth): *Prose Has Its Cons: An Archaeological Understanding of Graffiti as Material Culture – Lessons from the Global South* (01:10 pm–01:50 pm)

Abstract: Archaeology has a ‘material culture as text’ school of thought that seeks to translate artefacts into a syntactical ‘code’ that can be ‘cracked’ and the past understood. I suggest this is a reductive and unhelpful approach that touches too lightly on artefacts’ materiality and use lives. Graffiti offers an ideal field of study by which to study ‘text as material culture’. ‘Text’ is here used broadly to include words, images and things in-between words and images. Indeed, the very word ‘graffiti’ is used almost indiscriminately to cover things that I suggest are not ‘graffiti’. I explore these issues through three case studies from the global South, starting with ‘San/Bushman’ gatherer-hunter rock art, The South African (Anglo-Boer) War 1899–1902 and a suite of modern urban and rural graffiti from southern Africa and Western Australia.

Sven OUZMAN is an archaeologist and heritage specialist at the University of Western Australia’s Centre for Rock Art Research + Management and works in northern Australia and southern Africa. His interests include archaeopolitics, contemporary archaeology, Indigenous Intellectual property issues, heritage and law, rock art. He has worked in academic, museum and non-government contexts. For further details see <https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/persons/sven-ouzman>

Polly Lohmann (Heidelberg): *Seeing and Being Seen? Visibility, Affordance and the Roman ‘Graffiti Habit’* (01:50 pm–02:30 pm)

Abstract: Our knowledge of Latin (or Roman) graffiti is mainly a matter of chance: Although graffiti very likely shaped cityscapes throughout the Roman Empire, they were only preserved in larger numbers in the Vesuvian cities. There, the perception is filtered by the edition of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, which is the most important source for graffiti research but follows its own scholarly traditions. This talk will give a brief overview of the research history, the types and spatial contexts of Pompeian graffiti, and the relation of text and image: What was the Roman ‘graffiti habit’? Which scholarly value do graffiti possess? Main points of discussion will be the audience and the public quality of graffiti which enabled modes of communication and interaction. The focus of the talk lies on wall graffiti that were found in situ, as opposed to graffiti on mobile, small objects like ceramic vessels or coins. A look at wall graffiti outside of Pompeii will complement the survey.

Polly LOHMANN holds the position of a senior lecturer and curator of the Collection of Classical Antiquities at Heidelberg University. After her dissertation on Pompeian graffiti, she organized a conference on graffiti in a comparative, diachronic perspective, covering evidence from antiquity to the 20th century. Her current research focuses on research networks of the 19th century and the provenance of objects of the Heidelberg Collection of Classical Antiquities (*Antikensammlung*).

Carlo Giovanni Cereti (Rome): *Graffiti in the Iranian World: An Overview of the Middle Iranian Evidence* (02:45 pm–03:25 pm)

Abstract: This paper aims at providing a bird's eye view on the use of inscriptional graffiti in the Middle Iranian period (ca. 4th century BCE – 8th century CE) in a vast area going from Central Asia to the Zagros range. Graffiti are attested in many Middle Iranian languages. However, considering the characteristics of the rugged Central and Western Asian territory and the only partial archaeological reporting, partly due to the unstable political situation in many regions, it comes as no surprise that a considerable number of graffiti has only come to light in recent years and many more are probably still to be discovered. Here, the main focus of the talk will be on graffiti in the Parthian, Middle Persian, Bactrian and Sogdian traditions, presenting two case studies, one from eastern Iran, the Lakh Mazar boulder and other evidence from the area of Birjand in Khorasan, including materials that clearly date to later strata; the other from today's Pakistan, being a vast collection of graffiti, mainly written in Sogdian, discovered in the Upper Indus valley in the late 1970s, while building the Karakorum Highway. Finally, the paper will briefly discuss Middle Iranian writing traditions, providing some general information on the palaeography of inscriptional Middle Iranian with specific reference to the known graffiti corpora, including a number of funerary inscriptions that may be productively compared to the graffiti themselves.

Carlo Giovanni CERETI is Full Professor of Iranian Studies at Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Ancient World Studies, and coordinator of the Class of Humanities at the Scuola Superiore di Studi Avanzati at Sapienza. His earliest research work focused on the history of the Zoroastrian Parsi community in India, an intellectual interest that continued throughout his academic career, though in time his main research field shifted to Middle Iranian Languages and Literatures and more specifically to the study of Zoroastrian literature in Middle Persian. His interest in the medieval and modern history of the Zoroastrian community, combined with an intimate knowledge of Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature and more of Sasanian and post-Sasanian written culture led him to prepare critical editions of Middle Persian texts such as the *Zandī Wahman Yasn* and many chapters of the *Bundahišn*, as well as a work of synthesis on the Pahlavi tradition (*La Letteratura Pahlavi*). From 2006 onwards, he has worked intensively on epigraphic Middle Persian, with a focus on Narseh's Paikuli inscription and on other epigraphic texts, including seals and sealings as well as ostraca and documents mainly dating to the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods. He is presently principal investigator of a national research project investigating the western regions of Ērānšahr in the first millennium CE through a multidisciplinary approach.

Adam Łajtar (Warsaw): *Devotional Graffiti in Christian Nubia. Two Case Studies: Banganarti and Sonqi Tino* (03:25 pm–04:05 pm)

Abstract: Graffiti left by visitors occur prominently in sacral spaces in Christian Nubia. They are either scratched into the plaster (graffiti proper) or painted black (dipinti). Their authors made use of one of the three languages of Christian Nubian literacy, Greek, Sahidic Coptic, or Old Nubian. The form of the graffiti ranges from simple items containing only personal names, through more complicated texts composed according to the pattern: 'I so-and-so wrote this', to sophisticated compositions with literary overtones owing much to Biblical and liturgical readings. In my paper, I would like to present the graffiti industry of Christian Nubia on the basis of the material coming from two churches, contemporary with one another, namely the so-called Upper Church at Banganarti and a church at Sonqi Tino, underscoring the similarities and differences between the two corpora.

Adam ŁAJTAR studied archaeology, classical philology, and ancient history at the Universities of Warsaw and Cologne. He is currently professor of Greek epigraphy and papyrology at the University of Warsaw. His main fields of interest are Greek epigraphy of Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique periods, Graeco-Roman Egypt, and Christian Nubia. He participated in archaeological excavations in Egypt, Sudan, Israel, Cyprus, Libya, Bulgaria, and Montenegro, and published extensively on Greek inscriptions originating from these regions.

Alexey Kirichenko (Moscow): *Beyond the Programmed? Multigraphic Content in Buddhist Monuments of Upper Burma* (04:05 pm–04:45 pm)

Abstract: The presentation aims at surveying the range of multigraphic materials in the interiors of Buddhist monuments of Upper Burma, discussing their possible definitions, and exploring the materials in the light of data on the social history of the monuments in question. One of the angles the presentation will take is the relationships between writings and images. By looking at the layers of content that were executed prior, after, as well as instead of programmed (or 'original') murals in temples of Bagan, Pakhangyi, Hsalingyi, and Aneint from the fourteenth century onwards, I will also seek to examine the extent to which later additions might be seen as the re-use or re-purposing of available surfaces. Summing up the evidence, complicating the definitions of non-original paintings and graffiti as intrusive, I will argue that the basic distinction between murals, inscriptions, and graffiti was often blurred in Upper Burma and there are compelling grounds to interpret a fairly wide range of materials as a continuum of practices.

Alexey KIRICHENKO is an Assistant Professor at Moscow State University, Russia where he teaches courses related to Burma, Southeast Asia, Buddhism, and Asian history. His PhD focused on Burmese royal historiography. Since 2009, he has been engaged in field and archival work in Burma aimed at manuscript cataloguing and digitization, documentation of archival practices, monastic networks and Buddhist monuments, and research on the history of Buddhism. He has published extensively on various aspects of Burmese history and historiography. His current writing priorities address the issues of epigraphy, religious identity, and knowledge production.