

e-Journal
degli
Scavi di Pompei



2026.
01

“Bruits de couloir”: Shedding New Light on Ancient *Graffiti*

Louis Autin ¹, Marie-Adeline Le Guennec ², Éloïse Letellier-Taillefer ³

Abstract

The “*Bruits de couloir*” project offers a comprehensive reinterpretation of the graffiti in the theatre corridor in Pompeii through a multidisciplinary approach combining epigraphy, archaeology, philology and digital humanities. Two field campaigns (2022 and 2025) have enriched the published corpus (around 200 *graffiti*) with 79 previously unpublished inscriptions. The project aims to restore these inscriptions to their spatial context, revealing through *graffiti* thematic/spatial clusters, interactions, and multiple forms of sociability within a public space. In this article, we detail our methodology, which includes the

use of a virtual grid, the documentation of spatial and thematic links between the inscriptions, and finally, full RTI coverage of both walls of the corridor. These tools profoundly renew the analysis of both texts and images, while ensuring the digital preservation of a fragile collection. The development of a 3D platform integrating photogrammetry, RTI data and epigraphic metadata will lead to a new tool for collaborative visualisation and annotation of the corpus. We conclude with some examples of previously unseen *graffiti* (a fragmentary declaration of love and a gladiatorial combat).

Keywords

Pompeii; theatre corridor; graffiti; public space; drawings; digital humanities; RTI; spatialisation

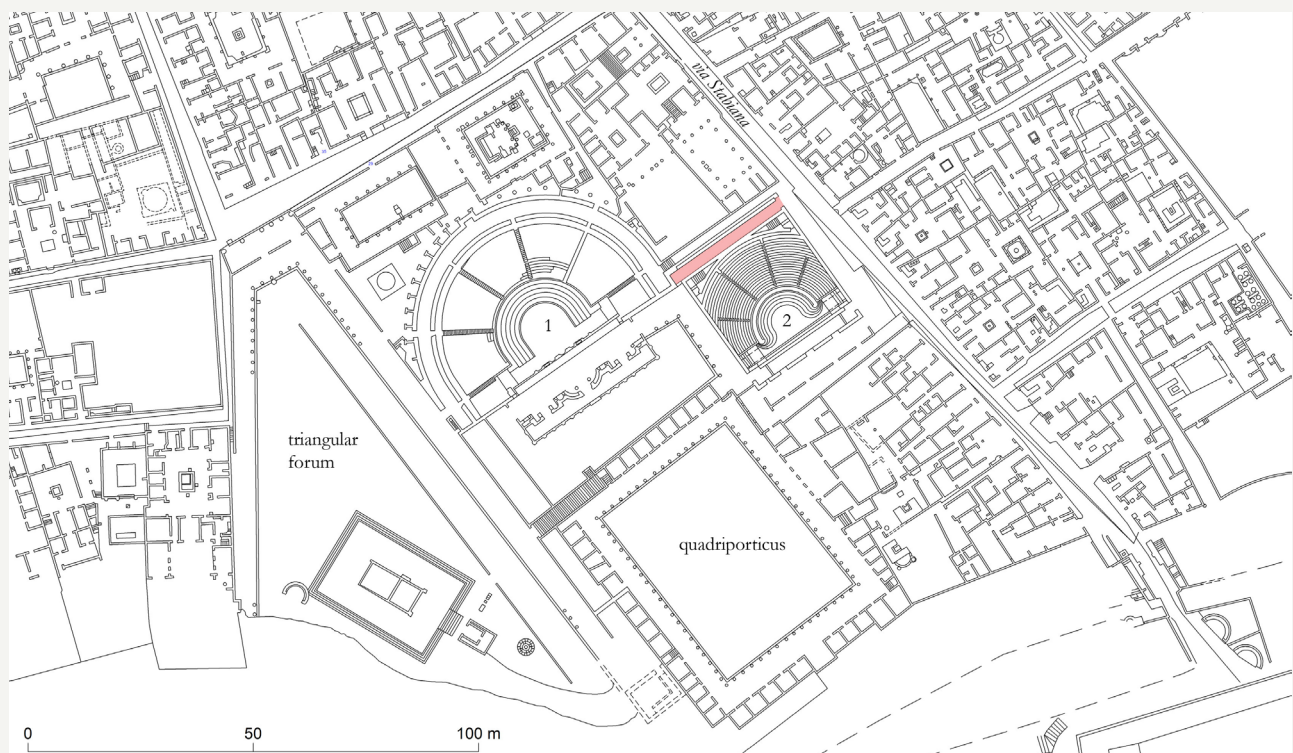


fig. 1

¹ Sorbonne Université, UFR de latin, UR 4081 Rome et ses Renaissances ; Institut Universitaire de France. E-mail: louis.autin@sorbonne-universite.fr

² Université du Québec à Montréal, Département d'Histoire. E-mail: le_guennec.marie-adeline@uqam.ca

³ Sorbonne Université, UFR d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie, UR 4081 Rome et ses Renaissances. E-mail: eloise.letellier-taillefer@sorbonne-universite.fr

The “*Bruits de couloir*” project aims at renewing the study of the corpus of *graffiti* in the theatre corridor of Pompeii (VIII 7, 20, *fig. 1*). This project is led by Louis Autin (associate professor in Latin language and literature) and Éloïse Letellier-Taillefer (associate professor in art history and archaeology of the Roman world) at Sorbonne University (France), and Marie-Adeline Le Guennec (professor of Roman history) at the University of Quebec in Montreal (Canada). It was financially supported by the Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et Culture, Sorbonne University through the Émergence programme, the Institut des Sciences de l’Antiquité, and the École française de Rome. It was based on two field campaigns, in the spring of 2022 (Autin, Le Guennec, Letellier-Taillefer 2023) and in September 2025. This multidisciplinary investigation in the sciences of Antiquity, combining the methods of epigraphy, archaeology and philology with the innovative tools of digital humanities, also includes a research-creation component through the involvement of the artist Javiera Hiault-Echeverria, who offers a complementary perspective on the act of writing and drawing on the walls. The invaluable support of the administrative and archaeological team of the Archaeological Park of Pompeii and its Director Prof. Zuchtriegel

offered us excellent work conditions, for which we are very grateful. Our particular thanks go to Giuseppe Scarpato, archaeology officer for the region VIII and head of the area *studio e ricerca*.

The theatre corridor, an exceptional space for the study of ancient *graffiti*

The theatre corridor is a multifunctional space in the city of Pompeii. It initially had a practical function of serving and connecting the two theatres of Pompeii, the large theatre, built during the Samnite period, and the “small” or “covered theatre” (*theatrum tectum*), built when the city became a Roman *colonia* (Fincker, Letellier-Taillefer, Zugmeyer 2017), in the 80s-70s BC, according to the inscriptions on its façade (*CIL*, X, 844a-b = *ILS*, 5636a-b). We can reasonably assume that the corridor has been built at the same time. Approximately 27 metres long and 3 metres wide, the corridor served the eastern aditus of the large theatre and the tiers of the small one, thanks to two staircases leading off its south wall. It opened onto the *Via Stabiana* to the east, and its two main entrances (east and west) could be closed by doors (*fig. 2*). Besides these practical functions, the corridor was also a place for passing through, walking, chatting,



fig. 2

spending time and socialising. It may have had a roof (already noted by Overbeck, Mau 1884, p. 173, note 75), providing shelter from the heat or from bad weather. It was therefore a public space in the full sense of the term, the best evidence of which is provided by the exceptional corpus of ancient *graffiti* inscribed on its walls between its construction and AD 79.

These *graffiti*, which are either textual or figurative (drawings), were engraved along the entire length of the corridor, on both north and south walls. They were incised into the decorative plaster of the walls, which is divided into three zones: the lower zone, which is red, was separated from the central yellow zone by a thin black band, of which only a few traces remain. In the upper zone, only the preparatory plaster remains. At the foot of the north wall, a masonry gutter ap-

proximately 60 cm wide was built after the corridor was constructed: it may have been used as a urinal (Overbeck, Mau 1884 p. 162) and, according to our latest observations, was repaired at least once during its period of use.

The hydraulic plaster of the gutter extends up to the wall. Applied directly to the red-painted plaster of the lower zone, it cuts off certain inscriptions that predate the installation of the gutter.

Our *graffiti* are therefore inscribed over a height of approximately 1 metre on the north wall and approximately 1.5 metres on the south wall (fig. 3), although numerous gaps, due to the gradual deterioration of the painted plaster, but also because several inscriptions were removed from the walls during the XIXth and XXth centuries, have led to some significant losses.

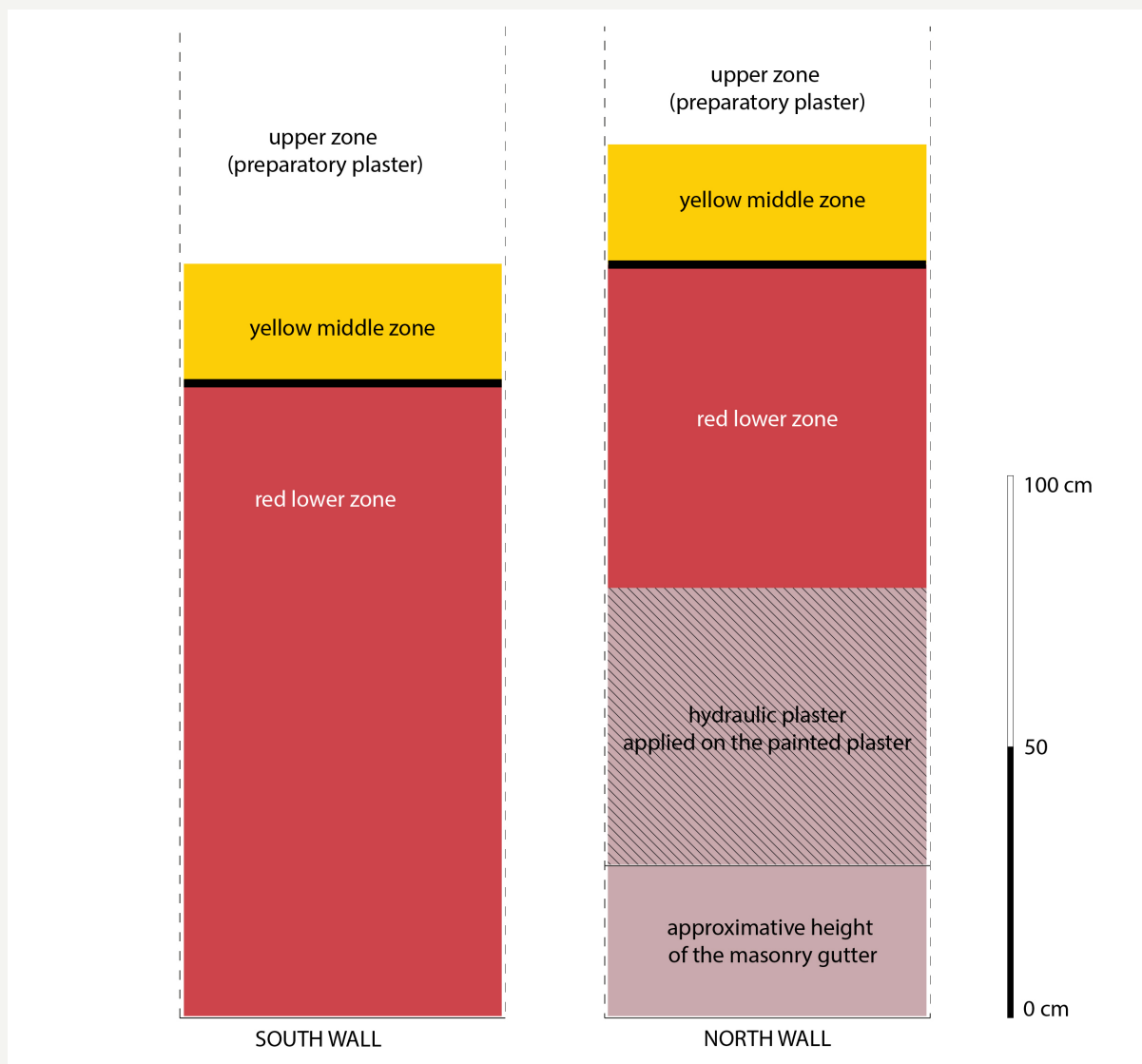


fig. 3

In any case, the remarkable concentration of *graffiti* in this space has few equivalents in Pompeii other than those in the *Basilica* (VIII 1, 1) and the *Palestra Grande* (II 7), where more precarious conservation conditions have nevertheless led to more massive losses (see Solin 2017, pp. 266-270 for examples of groups of *graffiti* taken from the *Basilica*). This cluster of texts and images has not been ignored by previous scholars. However, although first mentions and records of these *graffiti* date from the 1810s, circa twenty years after the corridor was uncovered in 1794 (Clarac 1813, pp. 87-93; Gell, Gandy 1817-1819, p. 243, note 3), the difficulty of reading these inscriptions and their banal, sometimes even salacious nature, meant that they were not systematically recorded. W. Gell notes, with subtle understatement, that the texts “were, of course, not always regulated by the strictest rules of propriety”. An initial survey was led by Jesuit priest Raffaele Garrucci, who may have been the inventor of the term *graffito* (Pressac 2018, p. 21), with two successive editions of his catalogue published during the 1850s. In the second edition (Garrucci 1856), 35 textual and figurative *graffiti* from the corridor were recorded. After R. Garrucci’s first attempt, our *graffiti* were part of the first comprehensive publication of the inscriptions of Pompeii in the fourth volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*, IV), published by Karl Zangemeister in 1871 (Zangemeister 1871), and then completed in *Supplementum* 2 of the *CIL*, IV (Mau, Zangemeister 1909) and most recently in *Supplementum* 4.2 (Varone, Solin, Kruschwitz 2020) and *Supplementum* 4.3 (Varone 2023). Eventually, taking these updates into account, the number of textual inscriptions published in 2023 amounted to 96 texts. With regard to figurative *graffiti* (drawings), which are not included in the *CIL*, the reference work is that of Martin Langner’s doctoral thesis on figurative *graffiti* in the Roman world, which includes those of the Pompeian theatre corridor (Langner 2001). Some of the drawings were also published elsewhere, for example in *Suppl.* 4.3 of the *CIL*, IV cited above. In total, we have identified 101 images that have already been published. To this collection of nearly 200 textual and figurative *graffiti*, for which we have been able to

propose some new (re)interpretations, we have added 79 unpublished inscriptions (32 texts and 47 figures), to which we will return at the end of this paper. All inscriptions received an ID number (T-xxx for texts and F-xxx for figures); our database preserves interoperability with other epigraphic databases through the integration of previously published references (see below).

This corpus of inscriptions is notable for its great diversity. The texts are of various types, ranging from isolated letters or *nota numeralis* to long declarations, sometimes relating to public life (including two inscriptions with the names of consuls in office in Rome), as well as numerous onomastic sequences (83 according to our account), which are themselves more or less detailed. Love stands alongside sex, in its trivial aspects, sometimes as a vehicle for insults and controversy. Latin inscriptions are the most common, but Greek is also to be found, and even a more unexpected language (see below); linguistic proficiency varies from one inscription to another. There is no less variety in the figurative *graffiti*: highly detailed representations of animals (fishes, quadrupeds...), gladiators or ships stand alongside more schematic drawings; human portraits are sometimes very rudimentary, but can also display a great sense of detail and take the form of caricatures. There are also numerous geometric drawings, in which we are sometimes tempted to recognise a number (I, X, etc.), and lines that are difficult to interpret or that simply affirm a presence or a gesture. In any case, these inscriptions highlight the multiple concerns, interests and aspirations of an undoubtedly heterogeneous population (Autin, Le Guennec, Letellier-Taillefer forthcoming a).

More specifically, the few *graffiti* referring to activities carried out in this place are far removed from the world of spectacles. One of them refers to a sex worker named Tychè, who was taken *ad locum*, “to this place”, for paid sexual intercourse with three men (T-88 = *CIL*, IV, 2450, lost). Two others refer to a group of individuals, the *Tertiani* (“those of the third”), who “lived” (*habitare*) “here” (*hic*, T-2 and T-8 = *CIL*, IV, 2415 and 2421). Taking up an interpretation already supported by K. Zangemeister (Zangemeister 1871, *ad loc.*), Kyle Helms suggested that these

Tertiani were soldiers of *Legio III Gallica*, which had been mobilised by Vespasian and Mucianus during the Year of the Four Emperors and had spent the winter of 69-70 in Campania (Helms 2021). The same scholar linked the two *Tertiani* inscriptions to the dozen Safaitic anthroponyms found in the corridor (Calzini Gysens 1990), whose presence in Pompeii had never been satisfactorily explained, since this Proto-Semitic language is not attested anywhere else in the Ancient West. According to K. Helms, the authors of these inscriptions were members (legionaries or auxiliaries) of the third legion Gallica; some of their fellow soldiers engraved the two *graffiti* of the *Tertiani*. We have evidence here that would suggest the visit, or even temporary stay – depending on the interpretation to be given to *habitare* (Le Guennec 2019, pp. 37-38) – of a group of soldiers in or near the corridor – according to the possible meaning of *hic* (Kruschwitz 2014). These inscriptions ultimately argue in favour of understanding the corridor not as a simple passageway but as an (ordinary) public space, used for activities that varied depending on the date or time of day and where multiple forms of social interaction took place. In this sense, epigraphy contributes to the functional analysis of the monument and, more broadly, to the urban history of Pompeii.

A space-sensitive methodology: traditional tools and digital innovations

This interest in the coherence and unity of a well-defined space in the city has guided the “*Bruits de couloir*” project since it started in 2022. Indeed, while work on *graffiti* has recently increased and emphasised the need to understand the context surrounding these inscriptions (Baird, Taylor 2011; Corbier, 2017; Corbier, Fuchs, Lambert 2020, to name but a few publications on the Roman world), research is still largely dependent on the logic of epigraphic catalogues, which does not allow us to grasp the specificity of the corpus we are studying as a whole. The *CIL* entries, like those in Langner’s work, implies a fragmentation, or even a typological series in the latter case, of the *graffiti*: the links between them and their inscription within the space of the corridor are lost in the segmentation that results from the list. This observation has been made by other scholars working on the publication of *graffiti* (Orlandi, Mincuzzi 2022, pp. 247-254 for reflections on the “three-dimensionality” of these inscriptions). Digital tools are sometimes used to that end, as in the *Ancient Graffiti Project* (Benefiel, Sypniewski, Zimmermann Damer 2019), which offers reinterpretations of the textual and figurative *graffiti* of Pompeii and Herculaneum in an interface that allows dynamic searches and provides access to an updated bibliography. However, the location information is limited to the scale of buildings, without going down to the position of each *graffito* within a given space. Nevertheless, the distribution of the inscriptions in the corridor, as well as their exceptional state of preservation despite the fragility of the plaster, invite us to consider new forms of editing and interrogating this corpus. In fact, the walls display areas that are sometimes particularly tangled (*fig. 4*), where textual and figurative *graffiti* are intermingled, and sometimes rather empty (*fig. 5*), according to a logic of distribution that remains to be explored and does not appear in traditional or digital catalogues.

To overcome this limitation, our first fieldwork in 2022 focused on recording various location



fig. 4



fig. 5

details in a relational database, in addition to the usual epigraphic data collected (dimensions, description, reading and translation for textual *graffiti*, etc.). First, we have located each *graffito* within a virtual grid on each of the two walls (fig. 6), which allows us to highlight the most salient effects of concentration or dispersion.

We have then documented the links between the inscriptions, using a standardised variable. These links can be semantic, for example when a name was repeated several times in various *graffiti*, as in the case of the name *Miccio*, inscribed four times in the same north-eastern area of the corridor (fig. 7 a-b). Here, the spatial approach



liberate. We have also distinguished between cases of superimposition (when *graffiti* intersect), juxtaposition (when *graffiti* are inscribed side by side), inclusion (when a *graffito* is integrated into another), and opposition (when *graffiti* face each other). Once again, these links – and we have recorded nearly 300 of them – are based on observations that we believe indicate a relationship, or even a conscious interaction, between two inscriptions. Not all *graffiti* located opposite each other are given a spatial link of opposition in our

database. However, the search for echoes is sometimes obvious. For instance, we find it highly significant that the three *graffiti* depicting a labyrinth in the corridor – using a pattern that is both very common and specific, which may echo here the shape of the covered theatre’s tiers (Letellier-Taillefer 2018) – reflect one another, two on the south wall and one on the north wall, directly facing each other (F-1, F-2 and F-66 = Langner 153, 154 and 152 see *fig. 8 a-b*). The same applies to the two inscriptions removed from the walls – probably at the end of the XIXth century – which recount, in a heroic-comic tone and parodying the official language of legal experts (Autin 2025, pp. 60-64), the intercourse between three men and the prostitute Tychè (T-88 = *CIL*, IV, 2450,

which corresponds to T-85 = *CIL*, IV, 2440). Although they can no longer be seen *in situ*, their original location, one on the north wall and the other on the south wall, can be identified thanks to traces of modern interventions and highlights their opposing positions, which cannot be coincidental.

To document these relationships and study the *graffiti* in the best possible way, another methodological strategy of the 2022 fieldwork consisted of not only systematically photographing each inscription in natural and raking light, which highlights the incisions, but also making a 1:1 scale tracing of the entire wall, which was then completely digitised. This apograph distinguishes between gaps in the plaster, textual *graffiti*, fig-

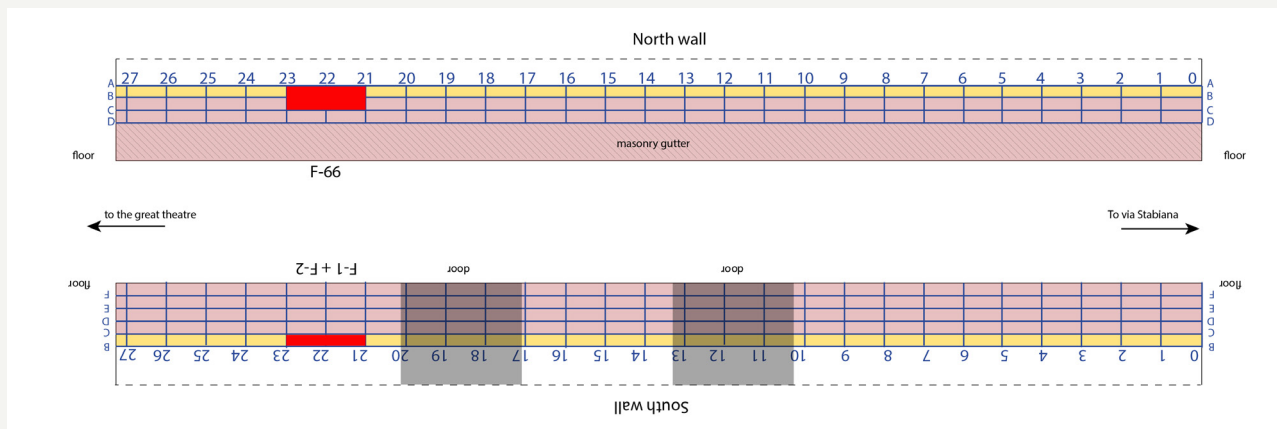


fig. 8a

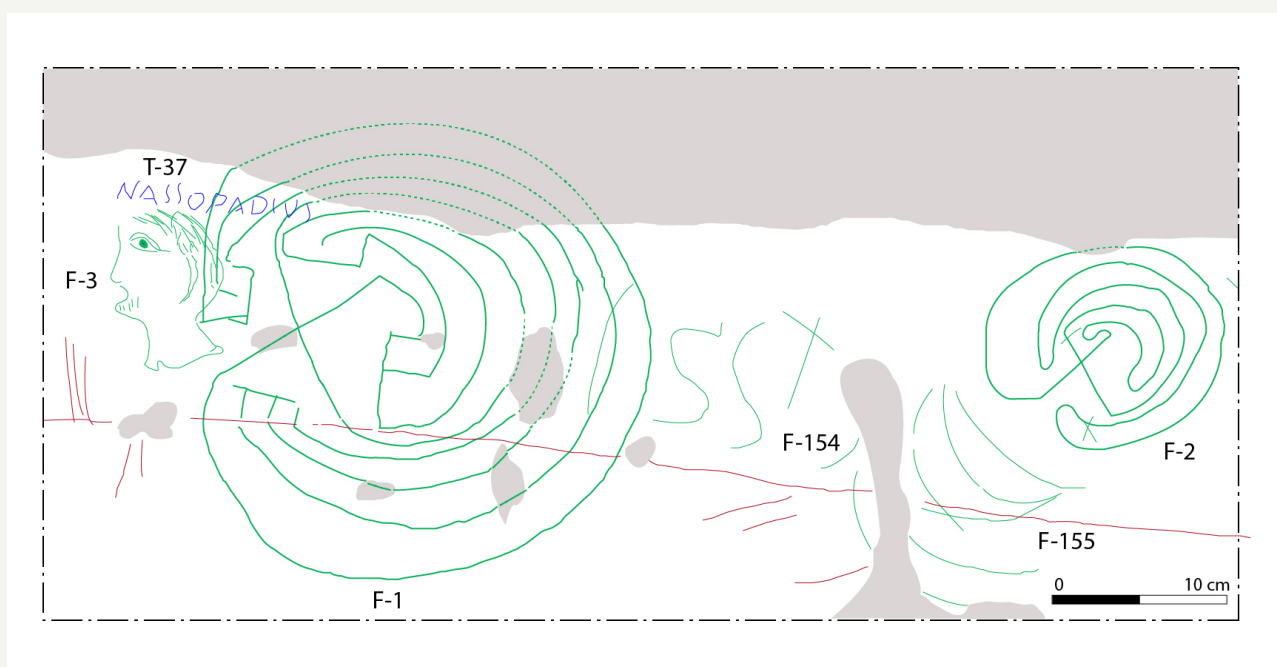


fig. 8b



fig. 9

urative *graffiti* and lines deemed nontextual nor figurative (“traits non signifiants”). This valuable visual tool makes it possible to quickly identify effects of grouping, echoing or, conversely, dispersion, which are difficult to grasp in the corridor itself due to the difficulties of reading in real conditions (fig. 9).

The aim of the September 2025 fieldwork was to collect additional data enabling such an understanding of the corpus (sensitive to spatialisation, operating on the scale of the corridor as a whole, allowing the interactions between inscriptions to be visualised) using more advanced digital tools. We carried out a complete RTI coverage of both walls of the corridor. The computational photographic method known as *Reflectance Transformation Imaging* (RTI) is particularly well suited to the study of *graffiti* incised into painted plaster, as it highlights micro-reliefs such as those of our *graffiti* on the walls. Already used for the study of isolated *graffiti* in the Vesuvian cities (see DiBiasie Sammons 2018), this technique had not been deployed on such a large scale until now, beyond the scope of a single photograph, except for a few innovative experiments such as the one carried out on an architectural block from the Greek period covered with *graffiti* found during the Alcazar’s site excavations in Marseille (<https://lejournal.cnrs.fr/videos/le-bloc-de-lalcazar-en-lumiere>).

To overcome this technical difficulty, we partnered with *Mercurio Imaging* and its founder and director, Éloi Gattet. The semi-automated dome camera (fig. 10 a-b) designed by É. Gattet enabled us

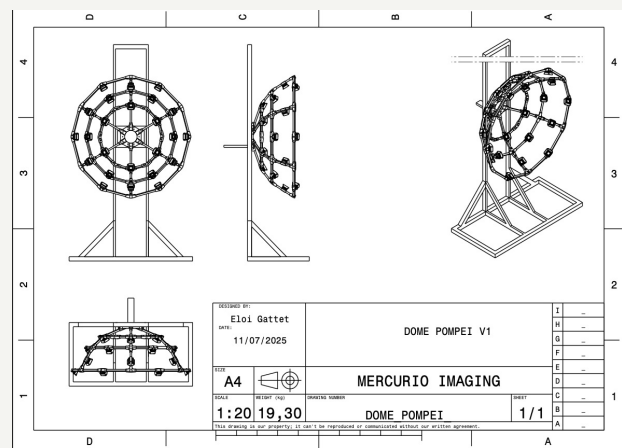


fig. 10 a



fig. 10 b

to capture complete consistent RTI coverage of all preserved plastered surfaces on both walls of the corridor. The resulting data was processed using an open-source software suite, combining the photogrammetric toolbox MicMac, developed by the French National Geographic Institute - IGN (Rupnik, Daakir, Pierrot Deseilligny 2017), and Relight, a compact and accurate RTI representation tool developed by Federico Ponchio and colleagues (Ponchio, Corsini, Scopigno 2019). Five nights of work were required in September 2025 to complete this acquisition, as the lighting conditions in such an open-air space did not allow for controlled daylight working (*fig. 11*). Nearly 15 000 images were taken to ensure the necessary coverage for modelling both walls, while providing high definition in both the photographic coverage and the RTI modelling (*fig. 12*). This process will ultimately make it possible to apply variable raking light to every point on each wall in a photogrammetric model, highlighting the smallest details of each *graffito*. This digital replication of the field observations made in 2022, using torches, will enable remote and



fig. 11

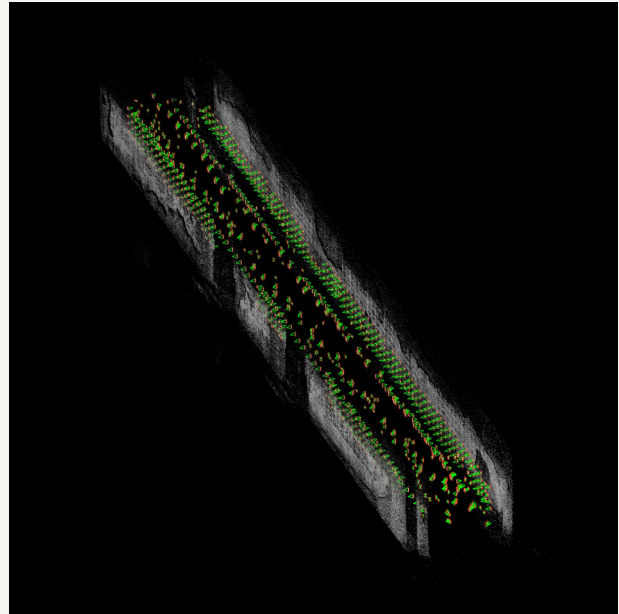


fig. 12

collaborative working on the corpus, refining or correcting certain readings, and even revealing new inscriptions. It will also open to a lot of stimulating opportunities for mediation of our scientific results and of this unique and fragile example of cultural heritage.

We are currently working with *Mercurio Imaging* to build a digital platform for collaborative online visualisation and annotation of *graffiti*. It will use a system of layers to display photogrammetry, RTI views, and our surveys in a 3D model, which will be linked to the data recorded for each *graffito* in 2022 and the archival documents associated with these inscriptions. This platform, designed for the spatialised scientific study of the corpus of inscriptions, will also be of interest for the preservation of *graffiti*, which are as exceptional as they are fragile. Indeed, while comparing our survey with older publications and archival documentation, we have noticed that the gaps in the plaster have sometimes widened in recent decades (*fig. 13*). Finally, once our work is complete, the platform will also become a tool for publishing and disseminating our results. The platform will be accessible in 2026 at the following address: <https://www.bdc-pompei.com>.

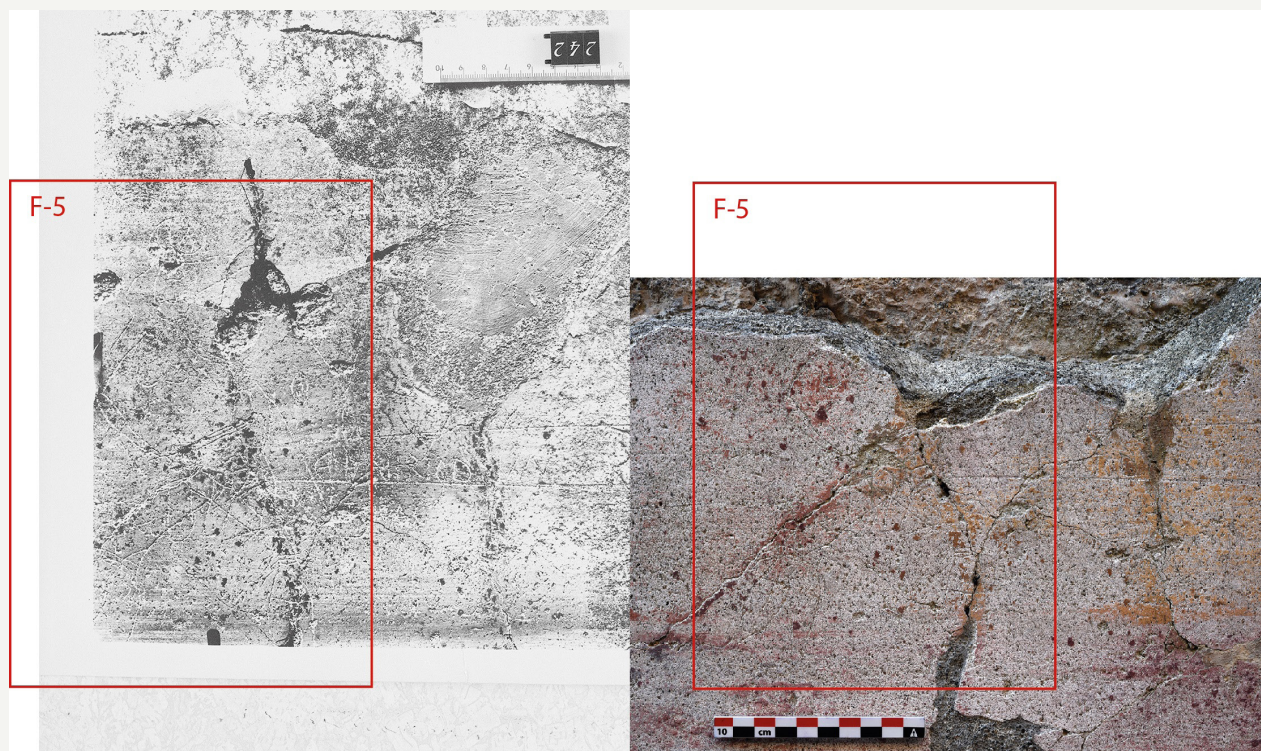


fig. 13

Some previously unseen graffiti

Our goal of documenting the inscriptions of the corridor as exhaustively as possible combined with an in-depth study of the two walls has enabled us to uncover several previously unseen and/or unpublished *graffiti*. We present three of them here as examples, two textual and one figurative; an edition of around twenty additional in-

scriptions is currently under publication (Autin, Le Guennec, Letellier-Taillefer forthcoming b). Among the unpublished texts identified during our fieldwork, we can mention two Latin texts on the south wall, numbered T-90 and T-91 in our dataset, which, in our view, may have formed a single inscription, although these two texts are now separated by a gap of about 30 cm in length (fig. 14). In fact, in addition to the possible com-

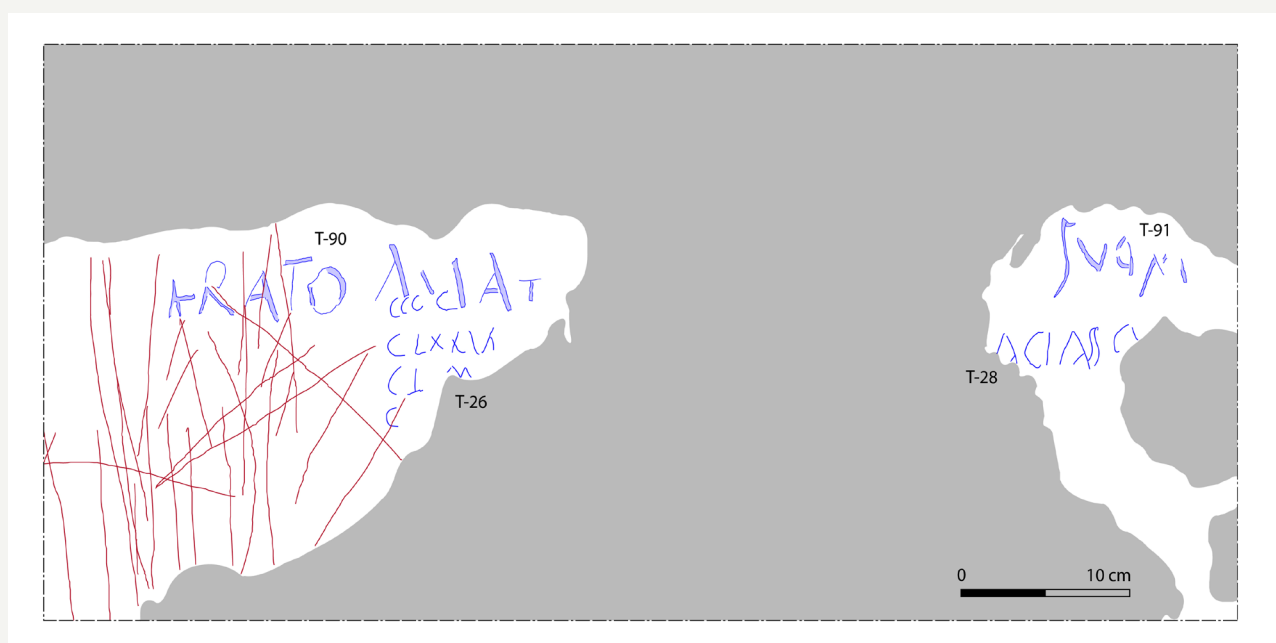


fig. 14

plementarity of their wording, they show great palaeographic similarity. The first of these inscriptions, located less than a meter away from the eastern end of the wall, on the *Via Stabiana* side, on the top part of the red painted plaster, cuts partly the beginning of T-26 (= *CIL*, IV, 2441). It is incised with a thicker line than most of the *graffiti* in the rest of the corridor, over a length of 25 cm with letters approximately 3.5 cm high, in a style reminiscent of the Pompeian

painted *programmata* (fig. 15). We propose to transcribe it as follows: *Erato amat* [---, and thus see it as the beginning of one of those declarations of love so common in Pompeian *graffiti* (Varone 1994), an example of which can be found in the corridor with the inscription T-43 = *CIL*, IV, 2457, where a certain Methè proclaims her affection for Chrestus. The name Erato is attested for female slaves or freedwomen (Solin 1996, p. 305) but has no parallel in Pompeii. The

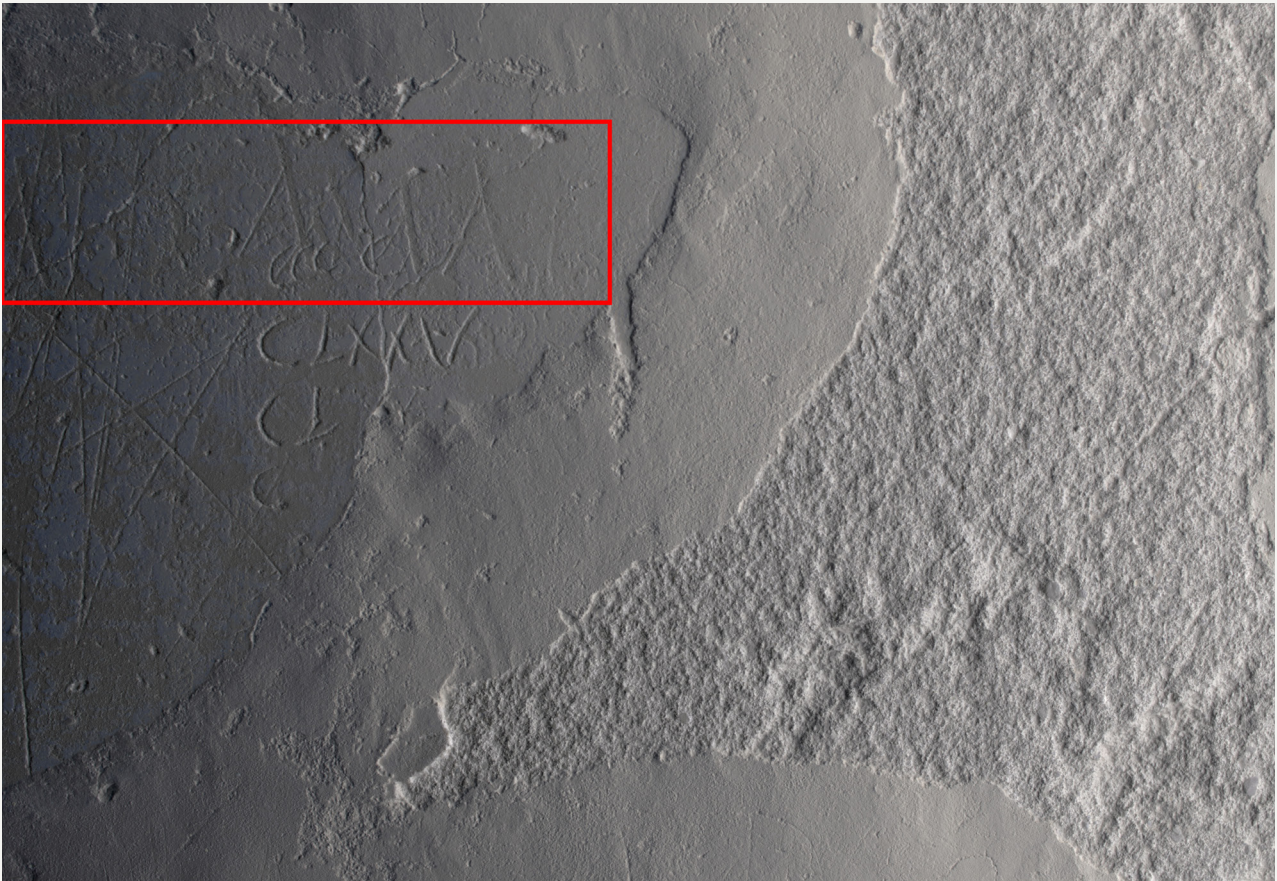


fig. 15

interpretation gains depth if we compare this first text with the one located a little further west (fig. 14), on the *Via Stabiana* side, at the same height, with letters of a style identical to that of T-90, although the lines of the letters are slightly finer and their height (5.5 cm) is slightly greater. It is located just above T-28 (= *CIL*, IV, 2442a). Here, these letters form the possessive *suom*. We assume that in the gap between the two words we would probably have found the name of the target of Erato's affection, designated by the possessive *suus*. The notation *-om* for the masculine singular ac-

cusative is archaic, but in this type of occurrence, after a vowel *-u-*, *-om* is maintained until the end of the Republican era (which allows us to propose a relatively early date for these two *graffiti*) with many epigraphic parallels (Väänänen 1966, pp. 27-30, especially p. 29; Väänänen 1981, pp. 36-37).

On the same southern side of the corridor, but in the middle of the wall, near the first staircase leading to the seats of the small theatre, we identified, in a very shallow incision, a pair of gladiators, the one on the right being incomplete

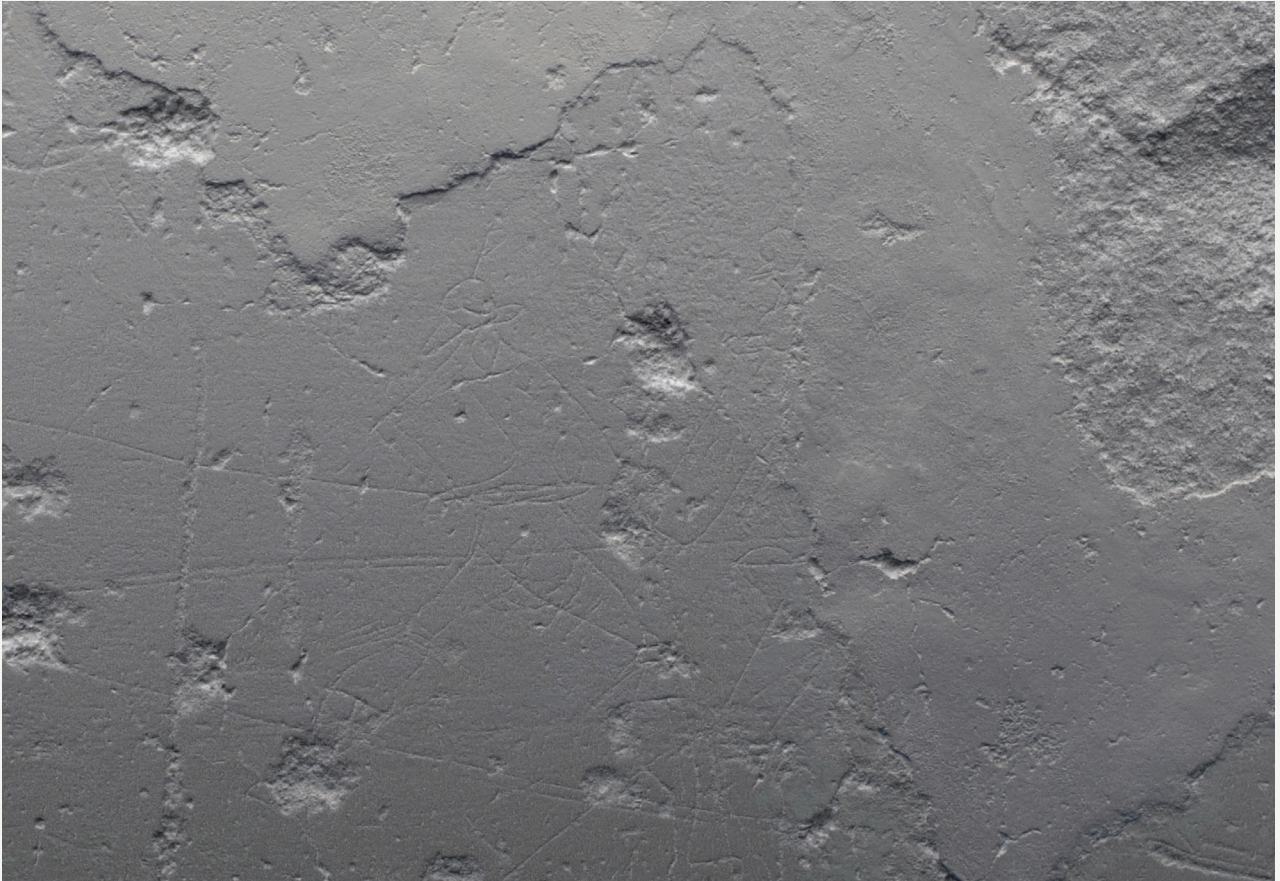


fig. 16

due to the plaster having fallen off in that spot (number F-148 in our database, *fig. 16* and *fig. 17*). The *graffito* is located on the upper part of the plaster, near the first staircase leading to the *theatrum tectum*, above the letters VE from T-31 (= *CIL*, IV, 2445). About 10 cm. high, the two figures are in a fighting position; the one on the left is standing up in profile, right leg forward, slightly bent, right foot clearly visible and left leg back, stretched out (the left foot is missing). His torso is leaning backwards, perhaps to represent a feint or a parry, while his right arm is bent, holding a sword pointed horizontally forwards, and his left arm is hidden by his shield. The face is not detailed. The gladiator wears a round helmet that appears to have a rim protruding at the front and back, with a plume-shaped element at the top. His rectangular shield is decorated with a circular element in the centre, probably the *umbo*. His sword is short and pointed. He also appears to be wearing *cnemides*, as suggested by the horizontal parallel lines at the knee joints

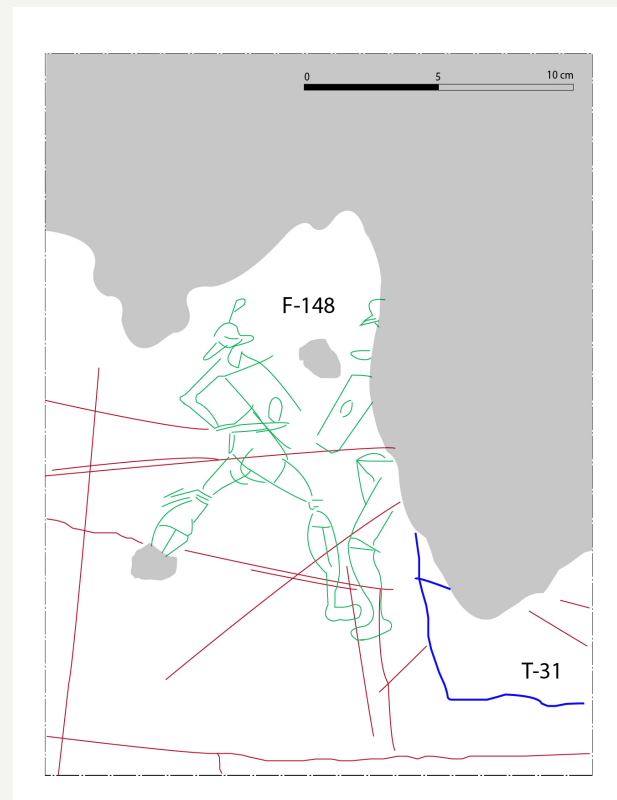


fig. 17

and the T-shaped lines on the calf. Although incomplete, the gladiator on the right appears to have been drawn in a similar posture and with comparable weaponry. This beautiful drawing takes up the theme of the confrontation between two gladiators, a very common pattern in figurative *graffiti* in the Roman world, particularly in Pompeii (Langner 2001, pp. 51-54). This representation is notable for its liveliness, with supple lines and a certain mastery of the expression of movement, in an overall composition that seems to “revolve” around the two feet facing each other and the two shields clashing. The comparison with other examples of images of gladiators, in Pompeii itself, highlights how skilled the person who traced these few lines in the plaster was at expressing the memory of a spectacle and not something he or she was actually looking at. We can ask ourselves if the numerous images of gladiators which surrounded the inhabitants of Pompeii in their everyday life, on the houses’ walls or floors or on common objects like lamps, vases or figurines, and even on tombs’ decorations (Jacobelli 2003, pp. 47-105) could have played a role as “models” in this graphic creation. But the movement depicted here, through the twisting of the left gladiator’s chest seems unique and appears to be rather reminiscent of the experience of a spectator at the amphitheatre, where the arena offered actually a view on a three-dimensional action. Thus, such a drawing, like others in this corridor, helps us to investigate in a new way the question of visual literacy and drawing abilities of their authors. They were probably not professional drawers or image-makers like the painters, mosaicists or other craftspersons creating the ancient images we are used to study and thus they offer us a precious insight in the imaginary world of ordinary Pompeians.

Conclusion

Combining a traditional approach to ancient inscriptions with recent methodological innovations of the digital humanities, the “Bruits de couloir” project aims to draw on an exceptionally well-preserved corpus to enable the scientific community and the general public to immerse themselves in the everyday world of ordinary users of a public place in the Roman world. The use of open tools and the provision of interoperable data on the project platform will ensure that they can be consulted by the public and exploited by the scholarly community, opening the way to voices that the passing of time rarely allow us to access (on this topic see also Zuchtriegel 2024, pp. 20-22).

Bibliography

- Autin L., Le Guennec M.-A., Letellier-Taillefer É. 2023, “*Bruits de couloir*”. *Étude spatialisée des graffiti du couloir des théâtres de Pompéi. Campagne 2022*, in “Bulletin archéologique des Écoles françaises à l'étranger” (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/bae.7609>).
- Autin L., Le Guennec M.-A., Letellier-Taillefer É. forthcoming a, “*Bruits de couloir*”: les graffiti du couloir des théâtres de Pompéi, du corpus épigraphique à l'approche anthropologique d'un espace public, in *Actes du Congrès International d'archéologie classique de Paris (3-9 juin 2024)*.
- Autin L., Le Guennec M.-A., Letellier-Taillefer É. forthcoming b, *Quelques graffiti inédits du couloir des théâtres de Pompéi (VIII, 7, 20)*, in Parco Archeologico di Pompei, (ed.), *L'altra Pompei. Voci, tracce. Atti del convegno internazionale (28-29 novembre 2024)*, Roma.
- Autin L. 2025, *Penser (contre) l'État grec et romain (2): James C. Scott et les formes antiques de la résistance des subalternes*, in “Anabases”, 41, pp. 45-74.
- Baird J. A., Taylor C., (ed.) 2011, *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, New York, London.
- Benefiel R. R., Sypniewski H. M., Zimmermann Damer E. 2019, *Wall Inscriptions in the Ancient City: The Ancient Graffiti Project* in C. F. Noreña, N. Papazarkadas, (ed.), *From Document to History. Epigraphic Insights into the Greco-Roman World*, Leiden, pp. 179-196.
- Calzini Gysens J. 1990, *Safaitic Graffiti from Pompeii*, in “Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies”, 20, pp. 1-7.
- de Clarac C. 1813, *Fouille faite à Pompéi en présence de S. M. la reine des Deux Siciles le 18 mars 1813*, Napoli.
- Corbier M., Fuchs M., Lambert P.-Y., Sylvestre R., (ed.) 2020, *Graffites antiques, modèles et pratiques d'une écriture. Actes du 3^e colloque Ductus - association internationale pour l'étude des inscriptions mineures*, Drémil-Lafage.
- Corbier M. 2017, *L'écriture en liberté: les graffitis dans la culture romaine*, in M. Corbier, G. Sauron, (ed.), *Langues et communication: écrits, images, sons*, Paris, pp. 11-26.
- DiBiasie Sammons J. F. 2018, *Application of Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) to the Study of Ancient Graffiti from Herculaneum, Italy*, in “JASc”, 17-Supplement C, pp. 184-194.
- Fincker M., Letellier-Taillefer É., Zugmeyer S. 2017, *Théâtres de Pompéi – Campagne 2016*, in “Chronique des activités archéologiques de l'École française de Rome” (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/cefr.1853>).
- Garrucci R. 1856, *Graffiti de Pompéi. Inscriptions et gravures tracées au stylet, recueillies et interprétées*, Paris.
- Gell W., Gandy J. P. 1817-1819, *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices and Ornaments of Pompeii. The Result of Excavations since 1819*, London.
- Helms K. 2021, *Pompeii's Safaitic Graffiti*, in “JRS”, 111, pp. 203-214.
- Jacobelli L. 2003, *Gladiatori a Pompei*, Roma.
- Kruschwitz P. 2014, *Aufidius was here. » (Really? And where exactly?)*, 2014, unpublished lecture, seminar at the University of Leeds, (on line: https://www.academia.edu/6052804/Aufidius_was_here_Really_And_where_exactly_).

Bibliography

- Langner M. 2001, *Antike Graffitizeichnungen: Motive, Gestaltung und Bedeutung*, Wiesbaden.
- Le Guennec M.-A. 2019, *Aubergistes et clients. L'accueil mercantile dans l'Occident romain (III^e av. J.-C. – IV^e s. apr. J.-C.)*, Roma.
- Letellier-Taillefer É. 2018, *Textes, images et imaginaire de l'architecture : dans le dédale des graffitis labyrinthiques du couloir des théâtres de Pompéi*, in R. Robert, G. Herbert de la Porbarré-Viard, (ed.), *Architectures et espaces fictifs dans l'Antiquité : textes - images*, Bordeaux, pp. 179-209.
- Mau A., Zangemeister K. 1909, *Inscriptionum parietariarum Pompeianarum Supplementum. Pars II. Inscriptiones parietariae et vasorum fictilium*, Berlin.
- Orlandi S., Mincuzzi A. 2022, *Scrivere sui muri nella Roma antica*, in J. Andreu Pintado, A. Redentor, E. Aguacil Villanúa, (ed.), *Valete vos viatores. Travelling through Latin Inscriptions across the Roman Empire*, Coimbra, pp. 229-258.
- Overbeck J., Mau A. 1884, *Pompeji in seinen Gebäuden. Altertümern und Kunstwerken*, Leipzig.
- Ponchio F., Corsini M., Scopigno R. 2019, *RELIGHT: A Compact and Accurate RTI Representation for the Web*, in "Graphical Models", 5 (DOI : <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gmod.2019.101040>).
- Pressac L., (ed.) 2018, *Sur les murs : histoire(s) de graffiti*, exposition, Vincennes, Château de Vincennes, du 6 juin au 11 novembre 2018, Paris
- Rupnik E., Daakir M., Pierrot Deseilligny M. 2017, *Mic-Mac - a Free, Open-Source Solution for Photogrammetry*, in "Open Geospatial Data, Software and Standards", 2, 14.
- Solin H. 1996, *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen: Ein Namenbuch*, Stuttgart, 3 vol.
- Solin H. 2017, *Iscrizioni parietali di Pompei*, in C. Capaldi, F. Zevi, (ed.), *La collezione epigrafica : Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli*, Milano, pp. 246-274.
- Väänänen V. 1966, *Le latin vulgaire des inscriptions pompéiennes*, Berlin.
- Väänänen V. 1981, *Introduction au latin vulgaire*, Paris.
- Varone A. 1994, *Erotica pompeiana: iscrizioni d'amore sui muri di Pompei*, Roma.
- Varone A. 2023, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum IV. Inscriptiones parietariae Pompeianae Herculanae Stabianae. Suppl. pars 4. Inscriptiones parietariae Pompeianae. Fasc. 3*, Berlin, Boston.
- Varone A., Kruschwitz P., Solin H. 2020, *CIL IV. Fasc 2. Addenda et corrigenda ad inscriptiones pictas parietarias Herculanae; auctarium addendorum ad inscriptiones pictas in fasc. 4.1 editas; novi tituli picti; addenda et corrigenda ad inscriptiones graphio inscriptas a Zangemeister et Mau editas*, Berlin, Boston.
- Zangemeister K. 1871, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum IV. Inscriptiones parietariae Pompeianae Herculanae Stabianae*, Berlin.
- Zuchtriegel G. 2024, *The Other Pompeii: Snapshots From the Dark Side of History*, in S.M. Bertesago, G. Zuchtriegel (ed.), *The Other Pompeii. Ordinary Lives in the Shadow of Vesuvius*, exhibition catalogue, Parco Archeologico di Pompei, 15 December 2023 – 15 December 2024, Napoli, pp. 17-29.

Images

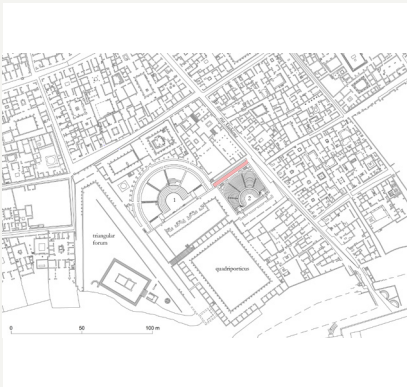


fig. 1



fig. 2

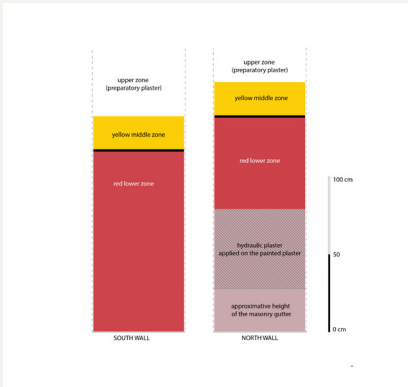


fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5

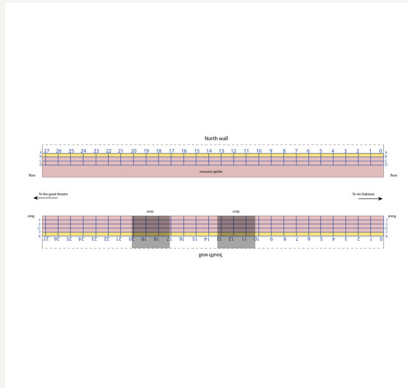


fig. 6

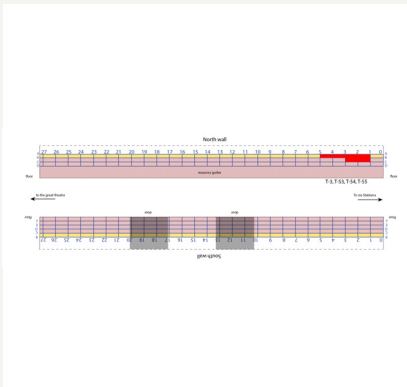


fig. 7a



fig. 7b

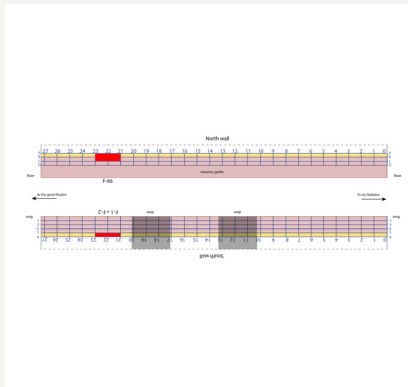


fig. 8a

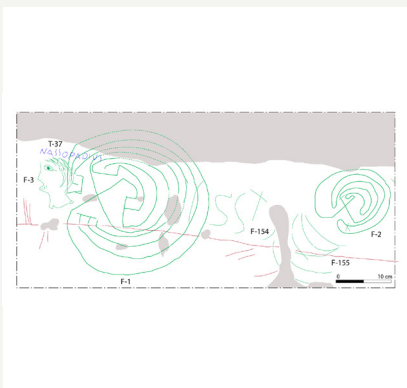


fig. 8b



fig. 9

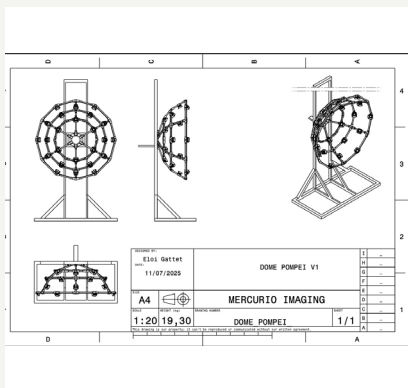


fig. 10a

Images



fig. 10b



fig. 11



fig. 12

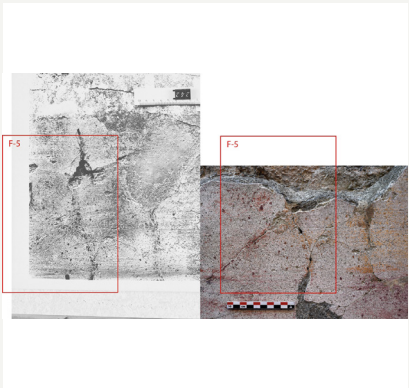


fig. 13



fig. 14



fig. 15

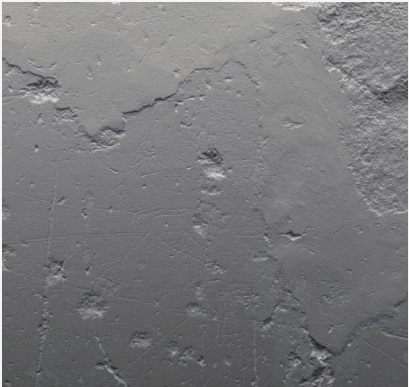


fig. 16

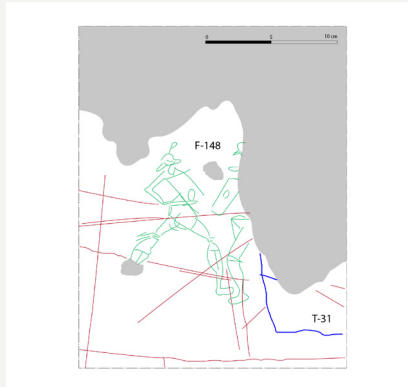


fig. 17

Captions for the figures

Fig. 1: location of the theatre corridor (VIII 7 20, in red) in the *insula*, scale 1:1000 (based on the RICA maps); 1 = large theatre, 2 = covered theatre.

Fig. 2: theatre corridor from the *Via Stabiana* (east entrance) (photography: T. Crognier / EFR-IRAA, 2017).

Fig. 3: schematic pattern of the painted plaster on both walls of the corridor.

Fig. 4: particularly dense cluster of textual and figurative *graffiti* on the eastern part of the north wall of the corridor (photography: “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022).

Fig. 5: 2-metre-wide section of the central part of the north wall almost free of *graffiti* (except for T-17 = *CIL*, IV, 2429 and T-62 on the right-hand side of the image) (photography: “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022).

Fig. 6: virtual grid used to locate the *graffiti* on each wall (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022).

Fig. 7: a. location of the four *graffiti* bearing the name *Miccio* on the virtual grid (T-3 = *CIL*, IV, 2416; T-53 = *CIL*, IV, 11673; T-54 = *CIL*, IV, 11672; T-55 = *CIL*, IV, 11671); b. localisation of the four *graffiti* on our apograph (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022).

Fig. 8: a. location of the three *graffiti* representing a labyrinth on the virtual grid (F-1 = Langner 153; F-2 = Langner 154; F-66 = Langner 152); b. tracing of all *graffiti* (blue : texts, green : drawings) and non-semantic lines (red) in the section containing the two labyrinths F-1 and F-2, on the south wall (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022).

Fig. 9: apograph on tracing paper. Cluster of *graffiti* on the east end of the north wall (blue : texts, green : drawings, red : non textual nor figurative) (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022).

Fig. 10 a and b: diagram and photograph of the RTI acquisition dome camera designed by Éloi Gattet (© Mercurio Imaging, 2025).

Fig. 11: the dome camera in use during the 2025 fieldwork (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2025).

Fig. 12: visual representation within a 3D model (seen from south-east) of the photographs taken for the RTI coverage during the 2025 fieldwork. Each cone represents a shot, each white dot (on the two walls) an image taken (Éloi Gattet, © “Bruits de couloir” project, 2025).

Fig. 13: observation of the deterioration of the wall plaster in the upper area of the *graffito* F-5 (= *CIL*, IV, 2451 = Langner 783) depicting a gladiator or gladiatrix. On the left, its state of preservation in 1957 in the PAP photographic archives (© PAP, D00095739 001); on the right, its state of preservation in 2022 (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2022). The original extent of the complete *graffito* is indicated by the red frame.

Fig. 14: tracing of the previously unseen *graffiti* T-90 and T-91 (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2025). In blue: texts; in red: non textual nor figurative lines; in grey: gaps.

Fig. 15: picture from the RTI model of the previously unseen *graffito* T-90 (end of the *graffito* within the red rectangle) (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2025).

Fig. 16: picture from the RTI model of the previously unseen *graffito* F-148 (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2025).

Fig. 17: tracing of the previously unseen *graffito* F-148. In green: images; in blue: texts; in red: non textual nor figurative lines; in grey: gaps. Letter *E* from the *graffito* T-31 = *CIL* IV, 2445. (© “Bruits de couloir” project, 2025).