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Graffiti usually carry pejorative connotations of vandalism, defacement, and furtiveness when applied to the present; they are usually assumed to be transitory and ephemeral, but to their authors they are public statements or memorials commemorating their visit and ownership of space. They usually give the name or mark of their author, and range from the perfunctory to highly elaborate constructs. Their styles are deeply intertwined with changes in fashion and script, and whereas the modern use of spray paint and stencils enable the replication of a name, logo, or artwork in multiple locations, previous authors relied on more time-consuming techniques of carving, pecking, or painting.

The visual effects of graffiti vary according to period, cultural background, means available, place of display, and the surface on which it was added. With the passage of time they may acquire respectability or are sufficiently striking to merit preservation or encouragement as a modern urban art form. Over a long period of time they offer a glimpse into personal histories and onomastics, and their study is on a par with that of tombstones or public memorials.

These points are highly significant when it comes to appreciating those left by

past visitors to Persepolis, whether they were foreign travelers or local residents. Although usually condemned with hindsight, they are now part of the physical history of the site and represent another phase in the transformation of the monuments from living palaces to evocative ruined memorials of the past, alongside the earlier systematic iconoclastic defacement of exposed human faces, the addition of Sasanian and Buyid drawings and inscriptions (e.g., Simpson, 2007a; Frye, 1966; Razmjou, 2005), or the pecking of gaming boards into conveniently sited slabs (de la Fuÿe, 1928; Curtis and Finkel, 1999). Future study might usefully consider placing these into a typological sequence and social context alongside similar remains at other sites in Iran and elsewhere.

The foreign graffiti at Persepolis have attracted the attention of many visitors, partly because of the high visibility of many on the first major building to greet visitors to the site. Following his stopover in June 1818, Sir Robert Ker Porter (1821, I, p. 587) deplored that "on both [bulls], I am sorry to say, I found a cloud of initials, and names, and dates, of former visitants to the spot, to the no small injury of the fine surface of the stone." In January 1809 James Morier (1812, pp. 133-34) likewise commented that "Under the carcase of the first sphinx on the right [sic], are carved, scratched, and painted the names of many travelers; and amongst others we discovered those of Le Brun [see Cornelis de Bruijn], [John Albert de] Mandelslo, and [Carsten] Niebuhr. Niebuhr's name is written in red chalk, and seems to have been done but yesterday." Other writers were less condemnatory. T. S. Anderson (1880, p. 167) commented on "the names of travellers as far back as 1746, also 'Une Scientific Expédition à Perse, 1753'," and George N. Curzon was more forthright:

> From this proud memorial it is, I believe, with affected disgust that most travelers turn to the records of many generations of European visitors, who have either cut or painted their names on the lower surfaces of this gateway, in some cases even on the bodies of the bulls. I confess that I do not share this spurious emotion. A structure so hopelessly ruined is not rendered the less impressive – on the contrary, to my thinking, it becomes the more interesting – by reason of the records graven upon it, in many cases with their own hands, by famous voyagers of the past, with whose names and studies the intelligent visitor to Persepolis is likely to be almost as familiar as he is with the titles of Xerxes, and whose forms seem in fancy once more to people the scene which they have revealed and

> illumined by their writings to thousands of their fellow-countrymen, who may never have had the chance of setting foot on Persian soil themselves. It was with no irritation therefore, but with keen interest, that I read here in large characters the name of 'Cap. John Malcolm, Envoy Extraordinary, Pleni-Potentiary.'
> (Curzon, 1892, II, pp. 156-57)

Curzon recorded a total of 27 names during his visit to the site in 1889 and indeed added his own to the interior of the Palace of Darius. It is through his record of these graffiti that scholars have since relied, although Ernst Herzfeld meticulously copied many of the graffiti in his sketchbooks during his first visits to the site in 1923 and 1924. A more complete gazetteer of foreign graffiti has been published elsewhere (Simpson, 2005).

The foreign graffiti are concentrated in two particular spots, namely Xerxes' Gate of All Nations and the Palace of Darius. There is a rather surprising absence of graffiti recorded from the royal tombs above the site, despite the popularity of this point as a picnic spot and artists' viewpoint. The reason for the concentration of the graffiti therefore probably reflects a combination of factors: the prominent position of the Gate at the top of the staircase entrance, and the romantic and partly sheltered viewpoint afforded of the Mahidasht (Māhidašt) plain from the Palace of Darius. At a deeper and possibly subconscious level, the desire to add inscriptions to a spot already marked with graffiti may have contributed towards the repeated addition of names at these places. This phenomenon is well-known to social anthropologists and modern urban planners, but it is interesting to note that Niebuhr added his own name close to that of J. A. von Mandelslo, William Francklin (1763-1839) deliberately placed his below Niebuhr's, McIlrath (1897) emulated the style of Henry Morton Stanley's (1870; ; Figure 1) on the equivalent side of the entrance, and in 1905 Wagenvoort added his own graffito immediately below that of his earlier countrymen, de Bruijn and Adriaan de Backer, partly out of admiration for de Bruijn and partly arising from nationalistic feelings and regret that these were the only Dutch names he could find. His own published photograph was retouched to render these three names more clearly visible (Wagenvoort, 1926).

Most of the foreign graffiti belong to Englishmen and Scotsmen, occasionally accompanied by their wives. There are also a few Dutch, French, German, Russian, American, and (during the 20th century) Indian names, plus a single Hungarian name (Istvan). Excluding the equally numerous but more dispersed

Persian, Hebrew, and Armenian graffiti, a total of some 222 names have been recorded, of which 158 occur on the sides of the Gate of All Nations, and 64 on the door and window frames and walls of the Palace of Darius, plus four repeated at both locations. In some cases individual names are repeated, usually on the same monument, which implies separate visits, although usually only one (presumably the first) is dated. Exceptional visitors are Anna Amaury, who dates visits in May 1855 and 1856, and J. Hamilton, who records as many as four visits between the years 1864 and 1868.

The earliest dated names appear in the 17th and 18th centuries: in 1638 (J. A. von Mandelslo), 1704 (Adriaan de Backer with Cornelis de Bruijn), 1765 (the resident cloth merchant E. Hercules; Ia. Moore; and the famous Danish explorer, Carsten Niebuhr), 1767 (W. Robbins, G. Skipp, G. Slupp), and 1787 (William Francklin). Anderson's reference to graffiti dated 1746 and 1753 could not be verified by the author, but they may since have been obliterated or weathered. These dates and names attest the changing foreign commercial interests in Iran. From 1623 to 1708 the Dutch East India Company dominated the Persian Gulf trade, largely because of their monopoly over the Far Eastern spice trade, and it is significant that the first graffito thus reflects a visit by an early European trade mission sent by Frederick Duke of Holstein.

This situation began to change during the mid-18th century with the waning of Dutch power and a growth of interest by the British East India Company with the establishment of its first factory and Residence at Bushehr in 1764. This was followed by an agreement of almost-exclusive trading rights, and the development of the Company's political interests was reinforced by the provision of British naval support to ensure the security of maritime trade with India. Francklin (1763-1839) visited Iran in 1786/87 as an officer of the East India Company and spent some eight months in Shiraz. He visited Persepolis and Naqš-e Rostam on 1-3 September in the company of Mr Jones, Samuel Manesty's deputy in the East India Company factory at Basra, and published a description of the different buildings and reliefs at these sites, but in deference to Niebuhr he "refrained from entering into a diffusive account of this celebrated palace" (Francklin, 1790, pp. 201-38).

There is a dramatic increase in the number of graffiti during the 19th century with the greatest activity in the first quarter, as the numbers of names in the following years suggest: 1804 (6 names), 1809/10 (39 names), 1821 (10 names) and 1826 (15 names). This was a period during which the British Government in India was concerned not only with checking Napoleon's oriental ambitions

and the Afghan Zamān Shah's (r. 1793-1800) designs on India, but also countering Arab piracy within the Persian Gulf. It was during the latter part of this period that Claudius Rich visited the site on a special detour between postings as East India Company Resident in Baghdad and Member of Council in the Bombay Government. His graffito on the Gate of All Nations was his last, as he died of cholera shortly afterwards while quarantined outside Shiraz; Dr. Andrew Jukes, another visitor to the site in 1804, died in this same outbreak. The graffiti also serve as a sad memorial to two other young officers of the East India Company, George A. Malcolm and Charles Darnley Stuart, who both served under John Macdonald's command on his delegation to the **s**hah but who died within a day of each other en route to Tabriz, and only just over a fortnight after they had camped at Persepolis.

Many of the 19th century graffiti belong to British diplomats, Residents and Political Envoys (Capt. John Malcolm, dated 1800 and 1810; William Bruce, dated 1802 and 1810; Samuel Manesty, dated 1804; Sir Harford Jones, dated 1809; Capt. John Macdonald [Kinneir], dated 1810 and 1812; Claudius Rich, dated shortly before his death outside Shiraz in 1821; Col. Ephraim Stannus, ca. 1825/26; Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm Meade, dated 1898). All, apart from Rich and Stannus, were visiting on official business. These names are usually followed by those of officers of the Indian Army. The names of other European diplomats are rare but include the Frenchman Count Joseph de Gobineau (1816-1882; Figure 2), who was posted to Iran in 1854 as first secretary to M. Nicolas Prosper Bourée's (1811-86) mission to re-establish French political relations at the height of the Crimean War. He became chargé d'affaires in Tehran (1856-58) and later returned to serve as minister to Persia (1862-63). His undated graffito is on the Gate of All Nations.

There are also the names of a limited number of scientists and academics, such as the French naturalist Charles Paulus Belanger in 1826; the Islamic historian Christian Fraehn (1818-1842) in 1846; the geologist and excavator William Loftus (1820-58), who visited with a small party in 1850; the orientalist and Central Asian traveler Armin Vambéry (1832-1913) in 1862; the leading botanist Josef Bornmüller (1862-1948), who visited in 1893 as part of the first of two long expeditions to Iran; and the French architect E. André, who was attached to the Délégation Scientifique en Perse in 1899. Other names include George N. Curzon (dated 1889), the Dutchman Maurits Wagenvoort (dated 1905), and the celebrated journalist Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904), who stopped in 1870 en route to East Africa, where he sealed his reputation by

tracking down Dr. Livingstone.

Several names belong to individuals who played important roles in the early antiquarian investigations at Persepolis. Among the earliest foreign graffiti are those of Cornelis de Bruijn (ca. 1652-1726/27; Figure 3), who was born in Holland but spent most of his life traveling abroad. He was the first European traveler to spend more than a day or so at Persepolis, and he stayed in a nearby village from November 1704 to January 1705. Niebuhr (1776/80, II, p. 130) commented on how he saw several European names, including that of de Bruijn, marked in red crayon at the site. The next phase of antiquarian research supported by the graffiti falls within the early and mid-19th century. Two undated graffiti in the Palace of Darius record the name of Col. Stannus (1784-1850), who served as East India Company Resident in Bushehr in 1824-26 before retiring to England. Stannus excavated briefly at Persepolis in 1825 and was the first person to make molds of sculptures at this site, namely, along the north staircase of the Apadāna and the eastern and southern staircases of the Palace of Darius, and within one of the southern doorways into the Hall of a Hundred Columns (Simpson, 2000; 2005; 2007b, p. 159). The resulting casts were later presented to, and prominently displayed in, the British Museum (Simpson, 2003, pp. 195-96, fig. 183).

Almost twenty years later, the French explorer Pierre-Victorien Lottin (1810-1903), better known as Lottin de Laval (Figure 4), spent some time at the site in 1844 when he molded a total of 31 sculptures and inscriptions at Persepolis which he describes as being coated in sesame oil or sheep fat before the long voyage home; he added his name prominently on the Gate of All Nations. The quality of his casts is inferior to those of Stannus or the later Weld expedition but is interesting, as he pioneered a new technique of making casts using an artificial material he termed “lottinoplastique” and which he described in his *Manuel complet de Lottinoplastique* (Bernay, 1857).

Another important but little-researched phase in the early dissemination of images of Persepolis is captured by the presence of the names of two early resident photographers, each of whom made photographs of the ruins: the Neapolitan colonel Luigi Pesce (dated 1858) and Dr J. E. Polak (presumably in the 1850s). Later still, the photographer Anton Sevruguin (d. 1933) left his graffito on the Gate of All Nations in 1920. Sevruguin was a leading photographer of Iran in the late 19th century, who ran a commercial studio in Tehran from the 1870s onwards, and his photographs of the Qajar Court, daily life, and scenery are amongst the earliest and most important in the history of

Iran. Sevruguin spelt his name in several different ways, either in a more French form (as on his graffito: “Sevruguine”) or otherwise in a form closer to his Armenian roots (thus Serunian or Segruvian). He was commissioned by the German orientalist Friedrich Sarre (1865-1945) to record the ruins at Persepolis, and his photographs were used by Sarre and Herzfeld in their book *Iranische Felsreliefs* (Berlin, 1910).

The appearance of Russian names at Persepolis during the late 19th century underlines the growth of Russian commercial and academic interests in Iran from 1880 onwards (Count Andor Széchenya, 1892; A. Sultanov, 1900; Capt. P. E. Barthold, 1919; Batmanov, 1923; Melinitskii Semen, 1925; Aleksandr Romaskevich, n.d.). Other late 19th century graffiti include a member of the Indo-European (later Persian) Telegraph Company [IETC] (T. S. Anderson, 1876) and the English cyclist John Fraser, who used these same telegraph poles as a means of navigation on his Jules Verne-inspired bicycle journey around the world. His own graffito is dated 1897 with the motto “Cycling Round the World,” and its addition is actually mentioned in the author’s published autobiographical account of his journey:

> [the] ruins were wonderful. They were majestic; they were bewildering. There was a tremendous platform built of massive blocks of stone, fixed Jemsheed only knows how. There were imposing bulls, one much the worse for wear … All is lordly and forlorn, and no misty, sorrowful-countenanced, ghostly monarch disturbed our barbarian act as we scribbled our names on the marble slabs.
> (Fraser, 1982, pp. 102-3)

Thereafter there was a steady trickle of dated graffiti continuing until the end of World War I, with 15 additional names being recorded from 1918-1920. Names from this period include Indian troops of the British army, some identified as belonging to the 39th King George’s Own Central India Horse (Amaralikhan, Baligan, Dalal, Marker, Mulla, Natiman, Patel, Rustom, Singh; Figure 5).

The latest dated foreign graffito is from 1962, and the fall-off in foreign graffiti from the 1920s onward must reflect changing sensibilities and attitudes by European visitors to the site. In addition, the removal of the collapsed mudbrick walls and other deposits during excavations in the 1930s transformed the site from a romantic picnic spot into an archeological park. The great variety of styles, particularly over the centuries, is very striking.

Some resemble modern casual graffiti, whereas others are deeply carved in a monumental script and placed in positions of maximum visibility and were evidently intended as memorials designed to match the ambition of the sponsor and the magnificence of the site. Whereas some are deeply engraved, for instance that of the Central India Horse (in 1911-12) or Friedrich Werner Graf von der Schulenburg (1875-1944; ; Figure 6), others have been less carefully incised or very lightly scratched, and yet others have been pecked.

The manner in which some of the names in this last category were added closely resembles that of the crude silhouettes of animals which are also found on the Gate of All Nations and at Pasargadae and other monuments in the region. Furthermore, in some instances it may be queried who actually carved the names in question, as the spelling mistakes in the names (e.g., Amaralikhan [ca. 1912], W. Colebrooke [1810], J. Cormick [1810], L. Fagergren [1862?]) suggest that these may have been carved under instructions, perhaps by soldiers, servants, or locals keen to impress or earn some money; to those under temporary employment there may well have been misunderstandings over the purpose of such inscriptions. James Silk Buckingham (1830, I, pp. 212 ff.) describes how, during his visit to the Sasanian grotto at Ṭāq-e Bostān (see SASANIAN ROCK RELIEFS), his host was able to identify the letters of the foreign inscriptions but was unable to read them, and believed a reference to "Vive Napoleon" to be a divine invocation, whereas his followers believed the names to be proof that the site had religious value to European visitors.

In addition, some travelers may have simply added their names with colored pigment: Niebuhr comments that he saw de Bruijn's name marked in red crayon, which, given his customary accuracy of observation, implies either that there was a second graffito—perhaps in the Palace of Darius—which is no longer visible, or that de Bruijn highlighted his incised inscription with red crayon in order to make it more visible. In addition, Morier (1812, p. 134) comments that "Niebuhr's name is written in red chalk, and seems to have been done but yesterday." In either case, these observations underline how graffiti were added in different media and that some may no longer be visible because of weathering or the addition of later graffiti.

The extent and rate of weathering of the façades and the loss of pigment on the sculptures is a matter of continuing attention which requires long-term monitoring and detailed comparison of the exposed sculptures with removed pieces; photographs and casts offer a timeline. However, the cumulative effect of additional graffiti is effectively illustrated by M. Wagenvoort's addition of

his own name in 1905, which almost totally obliterated earlier graffiti left by Holst and Tweedy. This process was actually described by Wagenvoort (1926) himself as being rather difficult, given the hardness of the stone and because of having to kneel on the back of a Persian professional wrestler while doing it—a procedure which necessitated several rest breaks. This admission is particularly ironic, given that Wagenvoort's graffito is considerably less deeply incised than those of his Dutch predecessors, de Bruijn and de Backer, whom he emulated.

Finally, it might be noted that the simple addition of a name appears, on the whole, to be a relatively late development, whereas most early visitors ensured that the date was recorded. This suggests a subtle transformation of process from one where the travelers were embedding themselves in what they perceived to be an alien landscape to one where the two key monuments were already so heavily marked that the most important act was the addition of a name.

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