



University  
of Pardubice  
Faculty  
of Restoration

2nd International Conference

# SGRAFFITO IN CHANGE

Original Realization vs. Secondary Interventions

21. – 22. November 2019

Litomyšl Chateau – Congress Hall

The conference is held by the Faculty of Restoration, University of Pardubice  
in cooperation with Hornemann Institute in Hildesheim and Palacký University Olomouc

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## **Date / Venue**

21.–22. November 2019 / Litomyšl Chateau – Congress Hall  
Excursions will be organized on the 20. and 23. November

## **Conference language**

English

## **Form of contributions**

oral presentation (20 min long + 5 min discussion)

## **Proposal & Abstract Submission Deadline**

31 September 2019

## **Abstract characterization**

max. 4000 characters; ENG

## **Send to**

jan.vojtechovsky@upce.cz

## **Conference participation fee**

50 € (for participants without a paper/contribution)

## **Publication of papers**

All full papers will be published in proceedings book.

## **Excursions**

The programme of the conference includes the guided tour on the sgraffiti of the Litomyšl Castle. Facultatively, the tour on monuments with sgraffiti in eastern Bohemia (renaissance, 19th century, 20th century) and one day trip to Slavonice will be organized (excursions will be organized on the 20th and 23th November). More detailed informations will be sent to participants.

## **Other information**

Transport and accommodation are individual. Organizers can recommend or book accommodation in Litomyšl.

## **With best regards conference organizers**

Mgr. art. Jan Vojtěchovský, Ph.D., Mgr. Pavel Waisser, Ph.D.

## Annotation

Sgraffito, as a plastering technique, has a primarily decorative character; it usually forms the final layer of the building envelope, which also means sgraffito plaster is exposed to the weather. A number of corrective, conservation or restoration interventions have taken place on various facades since the time of finishing their original decoration. Some facades have completely lost their sgraffito character and acquired the character of paintings or even reliefs (lime mash), their original material is often marginal or non-existent, as has gradually been confirmed by modern interdisciplinary research. This finding applies not only to the sgraffiti of the Renaissance, but also to the sgraffiti of the nineteenth as well as of the twentieth century. The 20th-century sgraffito does not often have the status of a protected monument, and thus it is particularly threatened by damage or even complete destruction during standard restoration works. Nevertheless, the approach to Renaissance sgraffiti was very specific in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (i.e. before the advent of „modern heritage conservation“). So the question is, what is left of authentic sgraffito in such cases and how to perceive the authenticity in sgraffito realizations?

## Conference Topics

- **Sgraffito and Its Restoration** – Determinants of Care for Monuments in Individual European Countries in the Past and Today: Each European country has its specific history, specific territorial governance and specific laws, and all these aspects are reflected in the care of monuments and their restoration. The development also varies in individual historical regions (dividing regions due to border shifts – for example, after World War II). Educational practice in the field of restoration and heritage preservation is also a clearly self-evident factor – there existed (and somewhere still exist) clear local or national schools whose approaches may even contradict each other. The aim of this block is to demonstrate how these regional traditions manifest themselves in the care of sgraffito facades.
- **Sgraffito and Its Radical Transformation in the Facade Restoration and Renewal** – The sgraffito on exterior facades usually has shorter „renewal“ cycles than the work performed by other art techniques on the interior plaster. Every restoration intervention, to a greater or lesser degree, detracts from the material authenticity. In the restoration of sgraffito, there are cases when monuments have been explicitly disqualified from the artistic, material, or historical standpoints. The aim of the section is to present examples of renewal and restoration that have led to the poor state of the original artwork in this regard.
- **Sgraffito and Typology of Architecture** – Sgraffito is a technique based primarily on the practice of painter’s guilds or workshops, but its aim is usually to imitate sculptural relief or elements of architecture. In the early modern architectural treatises and later architectural theories (e.g. Gottfried Semper), its use was recommended on facades of specific types of buildings. Thus, in the Renaissance, it most often appears on the facades of palaces and town houses, as well as public buildings (town halls, etc.) and even

sacral buildings. In the 19th century, museums, schools and other public and society buildings were added to the house fronts, while the concept of palaces for the people was applied in a number of variations by strongly ideological (especially totalitarian) regimes, both for buildings of cultural use and in prefabricated social housing. It is often the very typology associated with the meaning and purpose of architecture (which may change over time) that determines the method of restoration.

- **Monuments with Sgraffito Facades That Have Been Destroyed or Preventively Covered and Documented** – Giorgio Vasari (Vite...) or later Jacob Burckhard (Cicerone) described, in their writings, monuments that are not in existence today or are in an unreadable state, which is to a large extent the case of the exterior facades. Their textual reflections stimulated the creation of copies of entire decoration concepts as well as individual compositions (e.g. for study purposes), thus now allowing us to know their approximate form. Thanks to the development of photography techniques, the monuments that disappeared during World War II or other military conflicts are documented. Economic interests, or, on the other hand, economic shortage and often also political decisions can be found behind the destruction of other buildings with decorations in the course of the 20th century. Vanished monuments with sgraffito decoration are an important mosaic-piece for the synthesis of our knowledge of this technique. Many of them were eventually reconstructed to reflect the original state as much as possible. There are also cases of facades where the original sgraffito realization has not disappeared, but has become very unreadable and consequently the original decoration was covered with a modern reconstruction that „preserves the remains of the original material for the future“.
- **Practise Case Studies of Re-restoration of Sgraffito Facades** – During the contemporary restoration of sgraffito facades, restorers often encounter the issue of significant shifts from the original realization, both in terms of aesthetic authenticity or original technique and technology, as well as from the point of view of themes and iconography, often misinterpreted or intentionally altered. The concept of restoration intervention must therefore often resolve how to cope with this “multi-layered” character of a particular building.