Classical Antiquity and its Heritage

Research Seminars
Autumn 2016
Theme: Materiality and Text



Roberta Marchionni, Munich

"Faraway, so close: The anonymous writers of Minturnae and ourselves"

Minturnae was founded in 296 B. C. on the important Via Appia linking Rome to Brindisi. Of this ancient town, time has spared the theatre, the aqueduct, a part of the Via Appia itself and many other ruins – among them a latrina or ancient toilet, which is particularly significant for the many words and drawings scratched on its walls, Roman graffiti. The authors of these - like authors of graffiti generally - are almost always anonymous people who spent a moment drawing or writing on the wall and who did not care whether anyone read the message or not, or whether their scribbles had a future. In short, the purpose was the act itself. To study such graffiti, therefore, means to deal with witnesses unaware of us as readers and to stir up a cauldron of insults, school exercises and simple doodles. But it is only these unaware witnesses and their products that can carry us into a world which we could not reach via Latin literature alone, a world which is far away and yet so close to our present.

Wednesday 5 October 14.15, Antikmuseet

Organisers:

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