

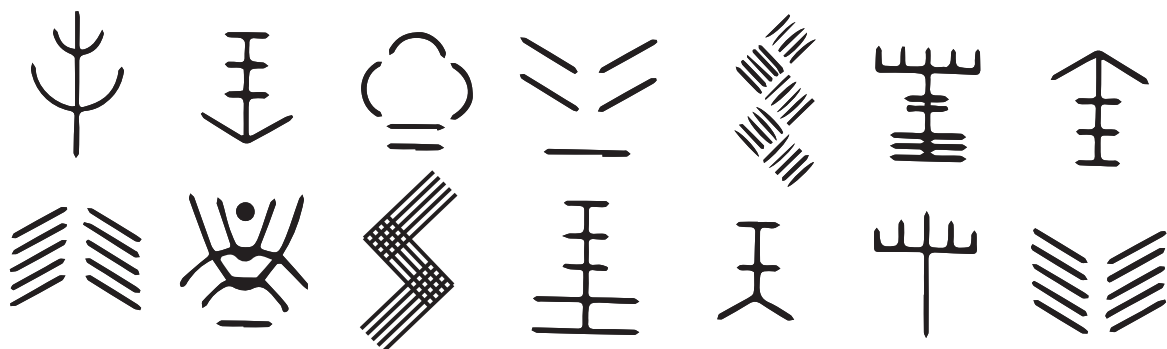
NUOVI QUADERNI DEL CIRCOLO SEMIOLOGICO SICILIANO

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# CULTURE DEL TATUAGGIO

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a cura di Francesco Mangiapane e Gianfranco Marrone





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ROSARIO PERRICONE





# THROUGH THE ENCRYPTED SKIN OF THE CITY

THE PECULIAR CASE OF TURIN “ANALGRAMS”

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*Gabriele Marino*

All through high school, whenever people came over, I would force them to listen to Varèse—because I thought it was *the ultimate test of their intelligence*. They also thought I was out of my fucking mind.

Frank Zappa, in F. Zappa (with P. Occhiogrosso), *The Real Frank Zappa Book*, New York, Poseidon Press, pp.32-33

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. THE CARELESSNESSY CITIZEN

The walls of our cities constitute a palimpsest whose texture can be continuously done and undone, by means of any suitable passersby's sign, drawing, or engraving. Such interventions interact both with the environment and each other, producing both a weaving and a projection of visual, verbal, and tactile texts. Whoever lives in the city without systematically embracing the lifestyle of the *flâneur* can do nothing but oppose a precise, radical strategy against this endless series of unrequested stimuli: carelessness. As we walk heading to a given place, we can do nothing but look away from all the writings, the drawings, the leaflets, the posters, the ads, from all these *visual mendicants* begging for our attention. Since we cannot dwell on each and one of them, we decide to skip them all.

This *necessary carelessness* lets us live our daily urban life efficiently: we are able to go from one place to another without getting lost, nor abandoning the main road. At the same time, this *efficient carelessness* prevents us from getting a complete picture of the places we go through every day; in order to accomplish our daily tasks, we force ourselves not to pay attention to certain aspects, details, or peculiarities of our surroundings. As if they did not exist at all, so that we cannot account for them. And, yet, our surroundings may not be completely “ours” until we do get to know even such aspects, details, or peculiarities. This *selective carelessness*, thus, prevents us from getting into a *serendipic dimension* of the city, wherein to find something we were not actual-

ly looking for, something useless to us by definition (“something we did not need”); it prevents us from tracking those signifiers that can be fertile not in terms of *efficiency* but *efficacy*. In other words, carelessness prevents us from getting distracted, from getting attracted by the unlooked-for: it prevents us from discovering, meeting the new.

It was just by distracting myself from such carelessness that I have had the chance to step into a peculiar – actually, *unique*, as far as I am concerned – urban practice.

## 1.2. METHODOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL DISCLAIMERS

This study is just a scraping of the surface; a rigorous both textual and ethnographic study would be needed, and what I provided here is far from that, aiming at being nothing more than a series of notes to what I have found working on such an interesting, obscure topic (which, still, has been a marginalia in my semiotic research). I am deeply convinced that this is the best object I have researched so far, as much as I am deeply convinced that this is not the best research I have done so far.

Most of the tokens to which I will refer to would need a visual companion, due to the richness of the textual matter displayed, which cannot be exhausted by a mere verbalization. In the impossibility to include dozens and dozens of pictures, I decided to make the entire – yet un-systematized, incomplete, and not-updated – visual corpus available to the reader. So that, a 200-token corpus, collected between 2014 and 2015 over the streets of Turin, Italy, can be accessed via the following Facebook album links: [bit.ly/crittorino1](https://bit.ly/crittorino1), [bit.ly/crittorino2](https://bit.ly/crittorino2), [bit.ly/crittorino3](https://bit.ly/crittorino3) (Fig. 1). By now, I have realistically collected some 300 tokens, overall, between 2012 and 2018, unsystematically and, more than often, making use of makeshift means. I did not create a dedicated Facebook album for the ones collected after 2015.

I intentionally broke down the essay into very small paragraphs, with self-explanatory titles, in order to help the reader follow my hypotheses and reconstruct my findings. I intentionally used English Wikipedia as a reference, since I needed just a very simple definition for phenomena or events that are well known in Italy but not as much abroad. Italian words are in *italic*, while quotations from the tokens are in *BLOCK LETTERS, ITALIC*. A map of Turin may be of great help to the reader, in order to let them reconstruct the position of the tokens in the city. All the URLs were last accessed on 9 July 2018.

A first Italian version of the paper has been published as: Marino, G., 2016, “Analgrammi: Politica, sesso, religione e attualità nei pizzini adesivi sparsi per il centro di Torino”, in M. Thibault, a cura di, *Gamification urbana. Letture e riscritture ludiche degli spazi cittadini* (I saggi di Lexia XX), Roma, Aracne, pp.249-271. The present is a considerably revised, extended, and updated version.



**FIG. 1.** A SELECTION OF "ANALGRAMS" (TURIN, ITALY; 2014-2015).

### 1.3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank a series of selected friends, colleagues, acquaintances, consultants, and informants in general to whom I talked about the artefacts, for their interest, enthusiasm, and/or contribution in my investigation. They are: Alberto Culotta, Giuseppe Zaffiro, Rosalba Nodari, Erica Boiano, Enrico Baldissara, Lorenzo Ligas, Eugenio Bison, Giacomo Balma, Simona Santacroce, Emanuele Miola, Vincenzo Idone Cassone, Mara Visonà, Marta Milia, Francesco Rigoni, Mattia Thibault, Bruno Surace, Alessandra Chiappori, Eliseo Greco, Michelle Rocco, Elena Grassi, Maria Elena Ferrario, Vera Roselli, Raffaella Sansoni, Sante "Egadi" Abbinente, Marco Cicio, Simone Garino, Alberto Vanolo, Caterina Marrone, Giuseppe Culicchia, Stefano Bartezzaghi.

But, first and foremost, I would like to thank Ilaria Fiorentini, a linguist – who happens to be my wife – whose contribution in the investigation has been simply fundamental.

## 2. THE “ANALGRAMS”

### 2.1. DEFINITION AND SUPERFICIAL DESCRIPTION

By “analgrams” I refer to a series of small handwritten sticky papers – henceforth, simply “notes” or “stickers” – scattered around the centre of Turin, Italy, which I identified for the first time in early 2012. These are small pieces of paper, written in block letters, generally with a blue or black ballpoint pen, all by the same hand; the notes are in white paper, mostly rectangular and irregular in size (from a few centimetres to about ten square centimetres), and they look cut (almost certainly by means of a cutter) from sheets of larger size (presumably, photocopy paper).

The verbal component, namely the text in block letters, is featured with a system of underlining, highlighting, and bold effects in red or green pen, and in yellow, green, orange, or light blue marker. Rarely, deleted words or whole sentences/lines can be found. The notes display an iconographic component as well, limited to the different renditions and adaptations of the very same drawing.

### 2.2. THREEFOLD SIGNATURE

Both the verbal and the iconographic components are prominently sexually connoted, as it is clear by observing the elements which constitute the actual signature of the notes (they recur in almost every single token): (1) the name *SIFFREDI ROCCO TANO* (or the acronym *SRT*), (2) the abbreviation *ANAG.* (presumably, for *anagramma*, “anagram”), and (3) the stylized representation of a violent scene of sodomy – a bottom bleeding due to the penetration of a cruciform penis – which serves as a frame to some words in the written text. By considering all these elements, I came up with the pun “analgrams” to identify the series.

Rocco Siffredi, whose real name is Rocco Tano, is the most famous Italian porn actor, with whom the enunciator is often identified in the notes by means of an enunciated enunciation (e.g. *IO SIFFREDI ROCCO*, “I Siffredi Rocco”). In the notes, Siffredi is sometimes associated with another Italian porn actor, *MALONE*, being the pseudonym-surname of Roberto Pipino (who happens to be born in Turin). From time to time, depending on the needs of thematization and figurativization dictated by the very single note’s topic, the stylized bottom can be penetrated, or co-penetrated, by objects other than a penis (e.g. a middle finger, a syringe, an airplane etc.).

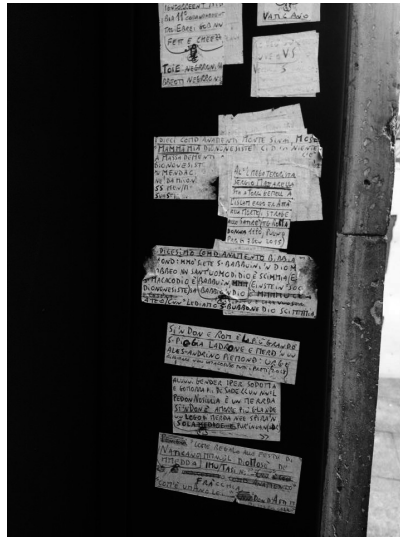
### 2.3. TEMPORAL COORDINATES

The notes often present temporal indications, both absolute (like a specific date, usually accompanied by a source; e.g. *LA STAMPA*, a prominent Italian national newspaper based in Turin, *ANSA*, the leading wire service in Italy, *GOOGLE*, *MTV* etc.) and relative (like the word *RIEDITO*, “re-issued, re-published”, which suggests that the note is the replica of an already “issued, published” one).

In some cases a specific time is indicated, which we imagine to be referable not to the billposting but, most likely, to the time in which the anonymous author either got in contact with the given news (which the note is about) or in which the note was actually manufactured. Some notes display a temporal interval; for instance, a note referring to the “Berlusconi-Ruby” judicial case<sup>1</sup> displays the dates of the appeal of the trial (28/6/14 18/7/14) and sarcastically, vividly summarizes the sentence as: *IL FALLO NON SUSSISTE*; a pun between the word *fallo*, “phallus”, and the formula *il fatto non sussiste* which is pronounced by the judge in order to claim the absolution of the accused, due to lack of evidence.

#### 2.4. SERIALITY AND (LIMITED) REPLICATION

The stickers can be found alone or in groups; the author returns several times in the same place, gluing new stickers next to and onto the ones previously positioned (Fig. 2). If one happens to return in the same stickers spot, they would notice that some stickers kind of seem to be eternal (“they are always there”), while others last just a few hours or days. This iterativity and continuous flow production, presumably on a daily basis (given the amount of new tokens and the stratification thereof), define a practice which is ascribable to the realm of seriality, but rarely expressed as replication proper.



**FIG. 2.** STRATIFICATION: ATM, BANCA POPOLARE DI VICENZA, VIA LAGRANGE, ON THE CORNER WITH VIA GIOLITTI (2015).

<sup>1</sup> “Silvio Berlusconi, a former Prime Minister of Italy, was accused and convicted but on appeal found not guilty of laying 17-year old Moroccan prostitute Karima El Mahroug, also known by the stage name Ruby Rubacuori (Italian for ‘Ruby the Heartstealer’) – for sexual services between February and May 2010 when she was under the age of 18”, according to English Wikipedia ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvio\\_Berlusconi\\_prostitute\\_trial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvio_Berlusconi_prostitute_trial)).

Among the 200 stickers circa I have photographed between 2014 and 2015, the copies, namely the replicated stickers, are just a few; this is the case with the already mentioned *riediti* stickers and, as far as I am concerned, of some replicas focussing on specific topics such as the public ostension of the Turin Shroud (19 April-24 June 2015)<sup>2</sup>, the visit of Pope Francis to Turin (21-22 June 2015), and the Torino-Juventus football derby that took place on 26 April 2015 (won by the *Toro* team).

## 2.5. LANGUAGE(S) AND PLAYFULNESS

The notes are written in Italian and make use of regionalisms such as Piedmontesisms (e.g. *PICIO*, “prick, prick-head”), Meridionalisms (e.g. *IET-TAT O SANG*, lit. “spit up your own blood”), English words, and Anglicisms; all of the employed, it would seem, with a certain degree of metalinguistic awareness, in particular as regards the connotation such words may confer.

The notes do not present any spelling errors, with the obvious exception of the idiosyncratic forms, intentionally incorrect, the author employs to convey a specific twisted meaning. The ludic component is prominent and it works on the very linguistic level, rather than on the content or narrative ones; so that puns, insisting on the morphologic and phonetic level, are recurrent and continuous, typically presenting the association between a given figure or institution and a part of the body, a sexual practice, or insults and dirty words in general.

An enigmatography component is central to the notes, with anagrams and/or missing letters to be reconstructed. This specific aspect will be addressed as particularly prominent and it will be properly analysed in the next paragraphs.

## 2.6. DIRTY WORDS AND PUNS

Here is a list of examples of recurring sexually connoted puns in the notes: *VATICANO* (the implied pun here is between *Vaticano*, “Vatican” and *ano*, “anus”), *VANATICO* (metathesis for *Vaticano*, where *natico* alludes to *natica*, “buttock”), *BERSCULONI* (metathesis for media tycoon and centre-right politician Berlusconi; *culoni* means “big butts”), *MERDUSCONI* (a pun between Berlusconi and *merda*, “shit”), *PEDIOFLI* (a pun between *dio*, “god” and *pedofili*, “pedophiles”), *EVADON* (a pun between *evadon* [*le tasse*], “[they] evade [taxes]” and *don*, “don, honorific for priest”), *FALSUDARIO* (*falso*, “false” and *sudario*, “shroud”), *ROTTA PEL MILLE* (a pun between *otto per mille*, “eight

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2 “The Shroud of Turin or Turin Shroud (Italian: *Sindone di Torino*, *Sacra Sindone* [ˈsakra ˈsindone] or *Santa Sindone*) is a length of linen cloth bearing the negative image of a man who is alleged to be Jesus of Nazareth. It is kept in the royal chapel of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin, northern Italy. The cloth itself is believed by some to be the burial shroud that Jesus was wrapped in when he was buried after crucifixion” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shroud\_of\_Turin).

per thousand”, *rotto*, “broken”, and *pel*, “hair”)<sup>3</sup>, *CARDIANAL BERTUCCIA* (a pun between *cardinale*, “cardinal”, *anal*, “anal”, *bertuccia*, “marmoset”, and the prominent Italian cardinal Tarcisio Bertone), *BALLONE* (a pun between *balla*, “humbug” and Pierluigi Baima Bollone, professor of legal medicine at the University of Turin and director of the International Centre of Sindonology, the centre dedicated to the study of the Turin Shroud).

### 3. MEET THE “ANALGRAMS”

I had already seen, with the corner of my eye, the sticky papers which I would have later identified as the “analgrams” (as I have been regularly visiting Turin since 2009), but it was only in early 2012, when I moved to Turin, that I realized I was fronting something different from the usual writings, graffiti, stickers, ads etc. one can spot all over the walls and along the streets of a city. Here is the story.

An unusually long wait at an ATM (it was around March or April 2012, if I can remember correctly), the one at the *Banca Popolare di Vicenza* subsidiary in *via Lagrange* (on the corner with *via Giolitti*, now dismantled<sup>4</sup>, made me repeatedly lay my eyes, in order to try killing time, on a series of sticky papers attached on the right side of the inner frame of the niche that housed the ATM itself. I realized I had already noticed those notes, there and elsewhere in Turin<sup>5</sup>. In spite of their all but immediate intelligibility, I did not think they were the graphomaniac delirium of a madman, but a kind of strange coded messages, written in some Romance language (but not in Italian), through which two parts (the writer and the reader) agreed on the times and places of who knows what illicit traffic. They kind of evoked in my memory the *pizzini* (lit. “little pieces of paper”, in Sicilian) used by *Cosa Nostra*’s mastermind Bernando Provenzano to communicate with his subordinates while he was at large<sup>6</sup>.

That time, not only I *noticed* but I actually *saw* those stickers for the very first time. I looked at them with different eyes, catching a glimpse, in terms of pure instinctive intuition, of a *system* that I had only vaguely guessed before. My then-fiancé – now my wife, who happens to be a linguist – and I had to catch a train; we were late, also due to the unexpected wait at the ATM, we

<sup>3</sup> “Eight per thousand (Italian: *otto per mille*) is an Italian law under which Italian taxpayers devolve a compulsory 8 ‰ = 0.8% (‘eight per thousand’) from their annual income tax return to an organised religion recognised by Italy or, alternatively, to a social assistance scheme run by the Italian State” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight\_per\_thousand).

<sup>4</sup> We have at least a *post quem* date: 6 May 2017, when I photographed some notes at the ATM.

<sup>5</sup> A snapshot captured by Google Street View in October 2008 shows, perhaps, just a shy hint of sticking compared to the intricate jungle I happened to observe, in that same place, in the following years (cf. [goo.gl/maps/qXi979EZH532](http://goo.gl/maps/qXi979EZH532)).

<sup>6</sup> Provenzano was eventually arrested in 2006. His *pizzini* were easily decipherable, as they employed the Caesar cipher, a simple substitution system in which each letter is replaced by a letter three number of positions down the alphabet.

had to move. I took a quick photo with my mobile phone, promising myself to investigate it in the future; she looked at the stickers one more time with the corner of her eye and almost absently whispered: “These are anagrams”.

## 4. WHERE TO FIND THE “ANALGRAMS”

### 4.1. WHERE I FOUND THEM

My interest – one may propose “obsession” as a more suitable word – in the Turin notes grew consistently, without ever having the possibility to become systematic, between 2014 and 2015. I photographically collected and, as far as possible, indexed some 200 tokens in the centre of the city; I always did it while I was – also and above all – *doing something else*, so that I did not have the readiness to take note of the place and date of census of many tokens.

I have found the notes along the arcades of *via Po* – a true cornucopia – and in the surrounding area (around the *Mole Antonelliana*, around and inside *Palazzo Nuovo*, the headquarter of the humanities faculties; and on the opposite side, e.g. *via Bogino*); in *via Roma*, *via Garibaldi* and – obviously – *via Lagrange* (and in their side-streets); around *piazza San Carlo*; in the *Quadrilatero* district (e.g. in front of the *San Giovanni Battista* Cathedral); around the *Rondò della Forca* (e.g. in *via Carlo Ignazio Giulio*); in *via Cernaia* and its side-streets (e.g. *via Ottavio Assarotti*); along the arcades of *corso S. Martino*; in the train stations of *Porta Susa* (concentrated at the entrance to one of the bars at the mezzanine floor, in the new *corso Bolzano* location) and *Porta Nuova* (where I counted only two tokens, one at a telephone booth and the other on a train timetable); in the area of the Polytechnic University (e.g. *corso Duca degli Abruzzi*, on the corner with *corso Stati Uniti*). I have been informed of the presence of some “analgrams” (or very similar stickers), in past or present times, at the *Murazzi del Po* (Po’s riversides), in *piazza Bernini*, and *piazza Statuto*.

### 4.2. WHERE I DID NOT FIND THEM

I cannot say that the phenomenon is limited to the streets or places I have mentioned or, more generally, to the centre of Turin, given my almost exclusive attendance of these areas of the city. Tautologically: one can observe only what they see.

However, I can say I have never found the notes beyond the river Dora (namely, beyond the *Rossini* bridge, on the side of *Lungo Dora Firenze*), nor in the suburb of *Madonna di Campagna* (I happened to frequent both areas for short periods).

## 5. HOW TO FIND THE “ANALGRAMS”

### 5.1. THE OBSESSION FOR THE RECESS

Our notes seem to programmatically refuse the traditional modes of urban billposting; even the irregular, protesting, or abusive ones. Albeit being often placed side by side or in overlap with other urban signs, they are mostly glued *onto* and *in the thresholds*, the liminal areas of buildings and components of the urban furniture: corners, frames, edges, niches, recesses (Fig. 3). Poles,



arcades, intercoms, telephone booths, parking meters, gates are their favourite spots.

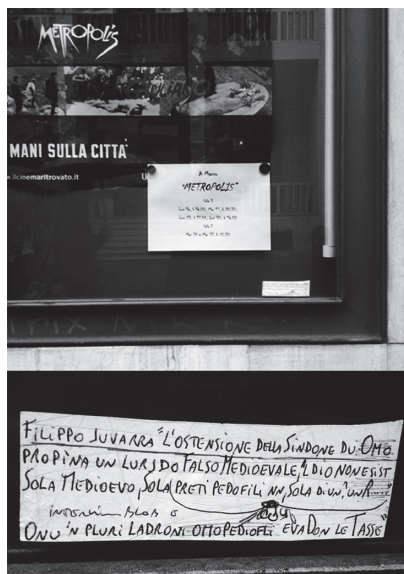


FIG. 3.

LIMINALITY: NOTE ON A SHOWCASE OF CINEMA MASSIMO, VIA VERDI (2015). TOP: FROM THE DISTANCE. BOTTOM: CLOSE UP.

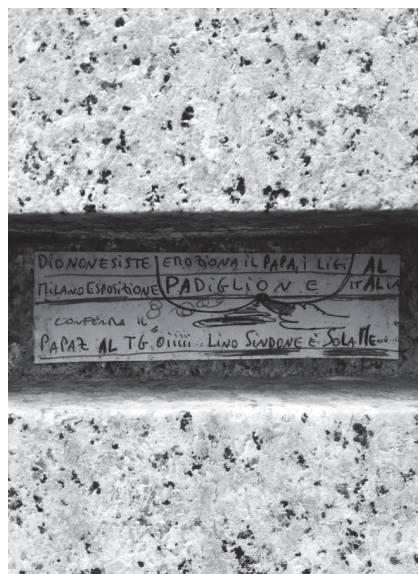


FIG. 4.

LIMINALITY: NOTE IN A HOLLOW OF A BUILDING IN VIA BERTOLA, ON THE CORNER WITH VIA ROMA (2015).

It may be of some interest to mention explicitly two of the most extreme cases of liminality observed: a small note nestled in a recess of the marble molding of the corner of a building in *via Bertola* (on the corner with *via Roma*; Fig. 4); one stuck on the inside edge of a rubbish bin in *via Montebello* (on the corner with *via Po*).

The notes are marginalia by definition. They are neither hidden nor in evidence, but – obliquely – under the eyes of everyone (of everyone who devotes more than a distracted look at the local, micro-urban landscape); I would say that they “want-to-be-found”, as long as the passerby do acknowledge their existence and their topographic logic, namely where it is most likely to find them.

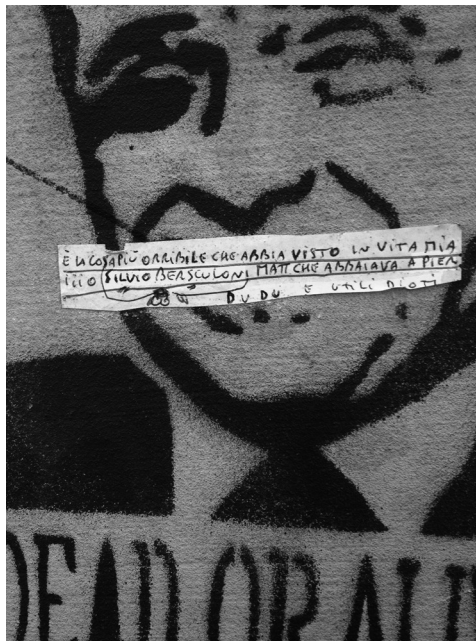
I am not an expert in psychoanalysis but, however, it is almost impossible not to hypothesise a deep psychological motivation, of an explicit sexual nature, in this insistent fondness for the edge, the recess, the access.

## 5.2. SITE-SPECIFIC “ANALGRAMS”

Despite their literal, physical *adherence*, their parasitic relationship with the surfaces of the city, most of the notes do not seem to be site-specific; in

other words, only few of them seem to entertain a motivated relationship with the place that hosts them.

For instance, this is the case with: the ones positioned in *piazza San Giovanni* and in the immediate surroundings (since they talk about the Turin Shroud, which is kept inside the eponymous Cathedral overlooking the square); those stuck onto the plaques or other details in the prospects of the banks located around *piazza San Carlo* (the notes talk about money and finance); those posted onto the gates of RAI Museum of radio and television in *via Verdi* (they talk about such media); the true palimpsest of notes about football and Torino football club in particular set under the arcade of *piazza Castello* on the side of *via Po*, right in front of the *Granata Store* point (a shop selling the official merchandise of the team; *piazza Castello* 10); with the one addressing both Silvio and Pier [Silvio] Berlusconi, as well as their dog Dudù, once stuck onto the famous Berlusconi stencil in *via Montebello* (on the corner with *via Po*; Fig. 5).



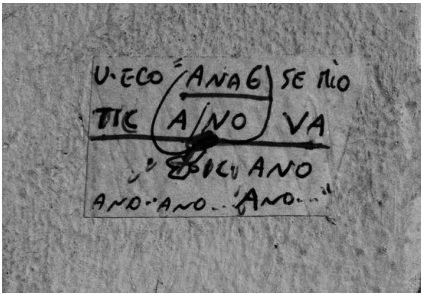
**FIG. 5.** SITE-SPECIFICITY: NOTE ABOUT BERLUSCONI STUCK ONTO THE FAMOUS BERLUSCONI STENCIL IN VIA MONTEBELLO, ON THE CORNER WITH VIA PO (2015).

It is odd that some notes are being regularly stuck at the entrance of the *Reale Accademia di Medicina* (“Royal Academy of Medicine”), in *via Po* 18, where both *CIRCe*, the Interdepartmental Centre for Research on Communication of the University of Turin, which gathers a large part of the semioticians active in Turin, and the Institute of Philosophy have their offices. In some

stickers, philosophers Gianni Vattimo and Umberto Eco, and even a *SEMIO TIC A [NO]* (a pun between the name of the discipline, “tic”, and “anus”), are mentioned (Fig. 6)<sup>7</sup>. I observed some stickers mentioning Vattimo stuck right at the entrance door at his house number (which is noted, *via Po 11*) and it has to be mentioned that Eco was particularly targeted also in coincidence with his statement “against” the social media (10 June 2015)<sup>8</sup>, via stickers stuck around the Mole and Palazzo Nuovo.

### 5.3. AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE PRESENT (FROM “ANALGRAMS” TO SOCIAL LIFE)

The following case of site-specific note made me think of a possible *archaeology of the present* as regards the phenomenon; namely, the possibility to reconstruct the present, by induction, from the notes. On 29 April 2017 I was in Turin to teach a class; I had some off-duty time to spend, so I wandered around the centre in search of notes. Being aware of some favourite spots, I went to one of them, the pole of a road sign just a few meters from the entrance of the *Circolo dei Lettori* (lit. “the Readers’ Club”, a prestigious cultural institution), *via Bogino 9*.



**FIG. 6.** SITE-SPECIFICITY: NOTE ABOUT UMBERTO ECO AND SEMIOTICS AT THE ENTRANCE OF REALE ACCADEMIA DI MEDICINA, VIA PO, WHERE PHILOSOPHERS AND SEMIOTICIANS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TURIN HAVE THEIR OFFICES AND CONFERENCE ROOMS (2015).



**FIG. 7.** SITE-SPECIFICITY: NOTE ABOUT ART CRITIC VITTORIO SGARBI IN FRONT OF THE CIRCOLO DEI LETTORI, VIA BOGINO; THE NOTE WAS FOUND ON 29 APRIL 2017, AND SGARBI HAD PRESENTED AN EXHIBITION OF HIS JUST TWO DAYS BEFORE, ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup>, AT THE CIRCOLO.

I found just one note on the pole that day (Fig. 7); among other things, it talked about Virginia Raggi (the *Movimento Cinque Stelle*, “Five Star Movement”, major of Rome), A. B. OLIVA (A[chille] B[onito] Oliva, the art critic

<sup>7</sup> As the reader can easily imagine, some doctorate colleagues of mine could not resist to explain such a coincidence by claiming, speaking half in jest, that I myself was the author of the analgrams.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. [youtu.be/u1oXGPuO3C4](https://youtu.be/u1oXGPuO3C4).

who launched the movement of Trans-Avantgarde in the Eighties, and that the note apostrophized as *TRANS*), and *VITTORIA SGORBI* (a pun between the art critic, polemicist, and TV personality Vittorio Sgarbi and *sgorbio*, “daub”; Sgarbi is an habitual harsh critic of both Oliva and Raggi).

The note seemed a *fresh one* to me, so that I thought all those references may have been related to something recently happened or that was just about to happen at the Circolo. I found another note, just a few meters away, nestled in the recess of a parking meter, talking about most of the same things, even though it was not a replica to all effects. I googled something like *Vittorio Sgarbi Circolo dei Lettori aprile 2017* on my mobile and found out that just two days before, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Sgarbi had actually presented an exhibition of his, about painter Caravaggio, at the Circolo.

## 6. WHAT THE “ANALGRAMS” ARE ABOUT

### 6.1. THE SATIRE OF A CONTEMPORARY PASQUINO

The analgrams talk about a heterogeneous set of topics: religion, politics, big industry, media, sports, and, more generally, current affairs. All the implicated themes and figures receive the same treatment: they are the object of sarcastic deprecation and insult. The insult is sexual and it is determined by a moral judgment.

The characters featured in the notes are all portrayed as negative *exempla*, reversed icons, heroes *au contraire*, “inverted” heroes: they are perverts, sodomites, pederasts. The institutions to which they belong represent what we can define “the Power” or “the System”, and they are described, as such, as agencies spreading falsehood, to be contrasted by any means pursuing a strategy of protest and revelation, accompanied by a consequent isotopy and rhetoric of unveiling.

A prominent example of blamed institution is the Catholic Church, perhaps the most favourite among the polemical totems in the series; the author does not fail to be blasphemous, although blasphemy proper, in the Italian sense of directly insulting God, is rare and always constructed via puns (e.g. *PORCO D’IOR*; *porco*, “pig”, *dio*, “god”, and *IOR* being the *Istituto per le Opere di Religione*, “Institute for the Works of Religion”, or, simply, the “Vatican bank”). Islam undergoes similar treatment. And, in general, the author presents themselves as atheist; *DIO NON ESISTE*, “there is no god”, is a recurring claim in the religion-connoted notes.

The author of the analgrams is a satirical author in their own way and, as such, just like the Latin poet Martial (think of his “forbidden epigrams”), seems to propose themselves as a moralizing figure; at the same time, the

anonymity and the modality of publication of such lampooning can only bring to mind the tradition of Pasquino and the pasquinades<sup>9</sup>.

## 6.2. RECURRING NAMES AND FIGURES

In the notes we can recurrently find TV personalities (e.g. comedians Macchio [Capatonda], [Luciana] Littizzetto, and Giacomo Poretti, journalist [Massimo] Gramellini, singer [Adriano] Celentano, scandal businessman [Fabrizio] Corona), local and national politicians (Fassino, Cota, Rodotà, Andreotti, Bossi, Maroni, Calderoli, La Russa, Marino, Salvini, Grillo, Di Maio), criminals (Mafia's abscond par excellence Matteo Messina Denaro), institutions (Unesco, BCE-European Central Bank and his President Mario Draghi), companies (automobile manufacturer FIAT; Turin's public transport corporation GTT), events (Turin festival of spirituality *Torino Spiritualità*, Turin international book fair *Salone del Libro*), football players and coaches (Pirlo, Marchisio, Nocerino, Allegri; it must be noted that the players of *Torino Football Club* or, familiarly, *Toro*, stand as the only positive heroes in the entire anagram series).

Public figures and notables such as Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio), Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), Silvio Berlusconi, entrepreneur and grandson of Gianni Agnelli – former CEO of FIAT Automobiles – Lapo Elkann, as well as other components from the Berlusconi and Agnelli families, are recurring presences as well.

Other prominent recurring characters are the ones involved in what the notes seem to delineate as a true conspiracy aiming at mystifying the real nature of the Turin Shroud: the scholar Pierluigi Baima Bollone, the archbishop of Turin Cesare Nosiglia and, even, the architect who designed the cathedral wherein the relic is now preserved, Filippo Juvarra (cf. Fig. 5).

We also find some names according to which the implied – “model”, according to Umberto Eco (1979) – author of the notes emerges as a well-educated person in the field of humanities: besides the already mentioned Vattimo and Eco, we can also find infamous criminologist Cesare Lombroso, philosopher Giordano Bruno, and – very opportunely – Marquis de Sade.

## 6.3. TRACKING CURRENT AFFAIRS

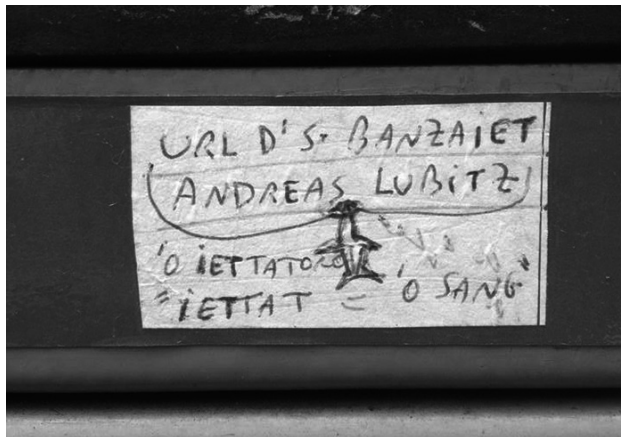
The author of the notes does follow current affairs with extreme punctuality, via news drawn from newspapers, television, and the Internet. The big “cases”, “affairs”, “issues”, crimes, and media events in general pour into the

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<sup>9</sup> “Pasquino or Pasquin (Latin: *Pasquillus*) is the name used by Romans since the early modern period to describe a battered Hellenistic-style statue dating to the third century BC, which was unearthed in the Parione district of Rome in the fifteenth century. It is located in a piazza of the same name on the southwest corner of the Palazzo Braschi (Museo di Roma); near the site where it was unearthed. The statue is known as the first of the talking statues of Rome, because of the tradition of attaching anonymous criticisms to its base” (en. wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasquino).

notes through their names, figures, and personifications: e.g. Roberta Ragusa and Antonio Logli, Sarah Scazzi and *zio Michele Misseri* (lit. “uncle Michele Misseri”), Yara Gambirasio and [Massimo] Bossetti (all of them referring to three big crime stories that monopolized Italian media). The issue of migration in Italy is being addressed via recurring buzzwords such as *BARCONI* (“cargoes”), *CLANDESTINI* (“clandestine immigrants”), or *ONG* (Italian acronym for “non-governmental organization”), and the names of the politicians who made the topic a corner stone in their political manifestos (e.g. Matteo Salvini, Beppe Grillo, Luigi Di Maio).

The author *does not waste time*; the names appear in the notes immediately after they have created a stir in the media. This is the case with pilot Andreas Lubitz, who deliberately caused the crash of German Wings’ flight 9525 on 24 March 2015. The related anagram links together, thanks to letters *I E T* written in bold, the word “banzai”, a traditional Japanese exclamation also associated with kamikaze attacks, the surname “Lubitz”, and the Neapolitan semantic root for “trowing”, employed in the words *IETTATORE* (“jinx”) and *IETTAT ‘O SANG* (“spit up your own blood”); in the drawn part, the penis that generally penetrates the buttocks is replaced by an airplane (Fig. 8).



**FIG. 8.** TRACKING CURRENT AFFAIRS: NOTE ABOUT GERMAN WINGS SUICIDE PILOT ANDREAS LUBITZ, WITH AN AIRPLANE, INSTEAD OF THE USUAL PENIS, PENETRATING THE BACKSIDE (2015).

Similarly, the author has real-time followed, among the others: the “Mafia Capitale” investigation (2014-2015)<sup>10</sup>; the inaugural ceremony of the Italian

<sup>10</sup> “The *Mafia Capitale* is the name given to a scandal involving the government of the city of Rome, in which alleged crime syndicates misappropriated money destined for city services. It operated in the city of Rome and the region of Lazio. [...] Among those investigated are former mayor Gianni Alemanno and Massimo Carminati, a member of the Banda della

Expo (1 May 2015); young Neapolitan rapper Rocco Hunt's win at *Sanremo Giovani 2014* (the section of the most popular Italian song contest dedicated to young and/or debutant singers); Donald Trump's campaign and election as President of the United States (2016-2017); the latest Italian political elections (4 March 2018) etc. I can say "real-time" since I happened to find these notes right in the very days when the single event occurred or when the news were under the spotlight all over the media.

## 7. CHARTING THE "ANALGRAMS"

### 7.1. A NEGLECTED PHENOMENON

Despite their conspicuous and pervasive presence, nobody seems to have dealt with the notes, neither from a journalistic, nor from an academic point of view. I did not find any reference to them in any publication, website, blog, or social page dedicated to the themes of graffiti, street, or outsider art in Turin.

For years, writer Giuseppe Culicchia run a column entitled *Muri e duri* (a pun between the way of saying *duri e puri*, meaning "hard-core" as concerns the moral aspect, "incorruptible", and *muri*, "walls") on the magazine "TorinoSette" (a weekly supplement of the newspaper "La Stampa"), dedicated to the collection and the interpretation of the graffiti around Turin (cf. Culicchia 2006). I contacted Culicchia via Facebook and he told me that he had noticed the phenomenon but never properly dealt with it<sup>11</sup>.

### 7.2. WEIRD STREET WRITING PRACTICES

I did not find any phenomenon that presented the same characteristics or that even looked similar to our notes, neither in Italy, nor internationally. One can obviously find numerous historical examples of weird writing practices, featured with different degrees of artistry (e.g. Milan homeless conspiracy theorist C.T. alias Carlo Torrighelli; Swiss hermit Armand Schulthess; some anonymous American *weirdos* documented by Ubuweb<sup>12</sup>), but none of them presents more than one or two of the different traits the analgrams all display in one.

The same applies to Italian graffiti series documented over the social media such as *Baal culo* (in Milan, documented since 1995, followed by the homonymous Facebook page)<sup>13</sup>, *Vero papa* (in Rome, followed by the homonymous blog between 2007 and 2008)<sup>14</sup>, and *Gulag Foibe Katyn* (always in Turin, followed by the homonymous Facebook page from 2010 to 2013)<sup>15</sup>; all these

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Magliana, as well as members of the 'Ndrangheta" ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mafia\\_Capitale\\_investigation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mafia_Capitale_investigation)).

<sup>11</sup> Private communication, via Facebook, 1 March 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. [ubu.com/outsidere](http://ubu.com/outsidere).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. [fb.com/BAALCULO](http://fb.com/BAALCULO).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. [web.archive.org/web/20111122034727/http://veropapa.splinder.com](http://web.archive.org/web/20111122034727/http://veropapa.splinder.com).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. [fb.com/Gulag-Foibe-Katyn-Lartista-delle-strade-di-Torino-125030200847623](http://fb.com/Gulag-Foibe-Katyn-Lartista-delle-strade-di-Torino-125030200847623).

phenomena definitely look “simple” and “easy”, as regards both their concept and manufacture, compared to our notes.

### 7.3. IN-BETWEEN STREET WRITING PRACTICES

As a matter of fact, in attempt at applying the topographic typology of the street art practices proposed by Cedar Lewisohn (2008, pp.16-17), the analgrams seem to put so many diverse dimensions together, such as the ones – in Lewisohn’s lexicon – of: political graffiti, poetry in the street, flyposting, sticker bombing, secret language, and toilet graffiti.

To sum it up, we may define the analgrams as a form of handwritten, graphomaniac, erotomaniac, protesting, anti-religious, ludic-enigmatographic sticking.

## 8. HYPOTHESIS ABOUT THE “ANALGRAMS” AND THEIR AUTHOR

### 8.1. SIGHTINGS

Over the years, I collected a series of alleged sightings of the author – or, at least, of a person – caught in the act of sticking the notes around Turin. According to the tradition of mysteries and legends, the versions never coincide with each other: a friend of mine described a middle-aged man, near *piazza Castello*; another one talked about a skinny, short-haired woman, doing her business at an unspecified ATM in the centre; another one, told me about a short, old man, operating around *piazza Statuto*.

### 8.2. SCHIZOGRAPHY (FIRST WRITE, THEN POST)

The features of the notes as manufactured goods suggest their preparation to happen at least in two different moments; due to the complexity of the written text and the required time thereof, it is hardly imaginable that the notes are being not only posted but also created, compiled *in situ*; most likely, the notes are being prepared elsewhere, “at home”.

Such a *schizography*, namely the idea that there is a physical separation between the act of writing and the act of publishing, between the making and the fruition of the text (I reconnect to and adapt the notion of “schizophonia” by Raymond Murray Schafer, 1969), authorizes us to hypothesize the existence of a *unique* author or writer (since the handwriting is the same all over the series) and *one or more* disseminators, publishers, or, if you wish, messengers.

Obviously, the actantial figures of the author and the messengers may be embodied by the very same actor; in other words, it is possible that who materially makes the notes is the same person who posts them onto the walls of the city.

### 8.3. PAPERMOUSING (FIRST CUT, THEN WRITE)

Another interesting element of the notes, suggested by the very topological distribution of the written text over the surface of many tokens (wherein the arrangement of the words seems to faithfully follow the eidetic irregularities of the support), is that the creator is best likely to remove the portion



of paper – that they are going to turn into a note of ours – off from a larger, “mother” paper. Only then, the author writes the text.

We may call such practice – connoted by a childish nuance, one may say – *papermousing*, by reconnecting to mickeymousing, a film technique, established by the early cartoons created by the Disney studio, “that syncs the accompanying music with the actions on screen” according to the logic of “matching movement to music”<sup>16</sup> (in other words, Disney artists composed the music first, and then drew the cartoons accordingly).

#### 8.4. ART? (OR GAZETTE?)

We have already sparsely outlined a tentative profile of the model author of the notes, according to some traits inferable from the notes themselves: a well-educated person in the humanities; with a wide and constantly updated knowledge of current affairs and media buzz; cheering for Torino football club (in fierce opposition to Juventus); an atheist; obsessed with sex, and anality in particular, of course. From now on, I will stop referring to the author with the neutral pronoun “they”<sup>17</sup> and I will start using “he”, since I am almost certainly convinced that we are dealing with a male person, born in Turin, of Southern-Italy origins, in his fifties-sixties.

As far as I am concerned, in attempt at defining the phenomenon as a cultural practice, the notes are not ascribable to street art (e.g. graffiti, murals, stencils, *papiers collés* etc.) and can be linked to outsider art (the non-artists’ art; a direct filiation of Jean Dubuffet’s *art brut*) only tangentially. I am convinced the analgrams not to be “art” at all, in the mind of their creator, but rather the bulletins published by the anonymous flogger: the updates, the episodes of a newsletter, of a column, his opinion articles.

#### 8.5. AN EXPERT OPINION

I asked Caterina Marrone, a semiotician specialised in invented (2004) and encrypted (2010) languages, to tell me her opinion on the basis of selection of analgrams. According to her, the pathological component of these texts, which is self-evident or, in any case, impossible not to be hypothesized, constitutes the fundamental key to understanding them: “These writings seem to me the manifestation of an obsessive and exhibited form of anal sexuality. I do feel a primitive roughness in them that shows how everything else (scholastic degree, politicization etc.) is a non-integrated superstructure”<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mickey\\_Mousing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mickey_Mousing).

<sup>17</sup> “Singular *they* is the use in English of the pronoun *they* or its inflected or derivative forms, *them*, *their*, *theirs*, and *themselves* (or *themselves*), as an epicene (gender-neutral) singular pronoun. It typically occurs with an antecedent of indeterminate gender” ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singular\\_they](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singular_they)).

<sup>18</sup> Private communication, via email, 20 March 2015; my translation.

It is still to be understood why the author has chosen this specific form of expression to communicate its contents, namely why he chose the form of the enigmatography game and the decoding challenge, which often sabotages the readability of the message. At the moment, I can only speculate about this particular point (for instance, imagining, very cinematographically, some kind of trauma linked to enigmatography); C. Marrone suggests that it may “be one of the traps the author has prepared in order to continue having an audience”.

#### 8.6. TO WHOM? (THE ANALGRAMS' AUDIENCE, IF THERE IS ONE)

Does such an audience exist? Does anybody actually happen to, even sporadically, notice and read the analgrams or, at least, one of them in the series? Does anybody answer to them? I guess not.

And, besides empirical readers, who are the readers designed by the analgrams themselves? Namely, who are the implied, model readers of the analgrams? This is an audience with contradictory traits: able to access an esoteric and initiatory language, and yet always in need of a continuous (anti)catechesis that reveals the true nature of institutions and public figures, so obsessively targeted by the anonymous author.

### 9. DECRYPTING AN “ANALGRAM”

#### 9.1. A LACUNOUS NOTE AS A TESTING GROUND (ARE THE ANAGRAMS SYSTEMIC, OR NOT?)

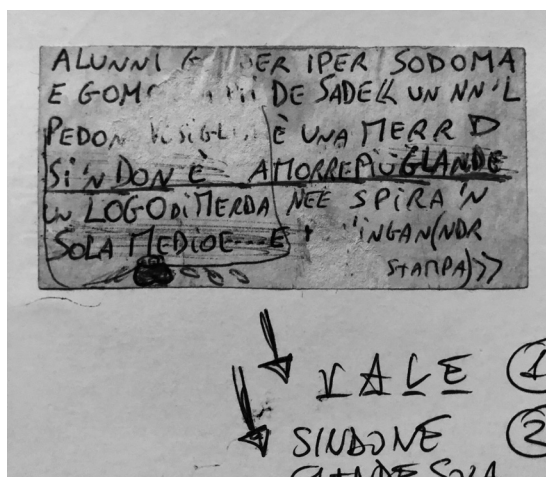
On 30 April 2015, my “study” of the analgrams received a substantial boost, once again serendipically patronised by a long wait. Indeed, I was waiting the traffic light to turn green, at the corner between *via Po* and *piazza Castello*, on the side of *Giardini Reali*, heading to *via Roma*; when I noticed that one of the usual notes stuck onto the pole which holds the traffic light<sup>19</sup> was half torn away. Until then, I had always refrained from intervening in any form on the artefacts, but that time I carefully finished detaching the note and kept it.

The note consists of six lines, four of them being lacunous, plus a half-line consisting of the syntagm “[LA] STAMPA” (a reference to the newspaper). Some words are underlined and highlighted in red pen and some are framed by the stylized sodomy (Fig. 9).

Until the encounter with this token, I did not have – or, better, I *did not want to have* – the time, the patience, and the concentration to verify the degree of systematicity of the enigmatic component I had recognized in the notes; I had not verified yet whether and to what extent the anagrams – easily recognizable and reconstructable in some passages – were correct and systematic. In other words, I asked myself: do the analgrams *look like* or actually *are* anagrams? And: is the note anagrammed *in its entirety*? This note was the first one that I forced myself to analyse in detail.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. [goo.gl/maps/PTUwdddkEiR2](http://goo.gl/maps/PTUwdddkEiR2).



**FIG. 9.** RECONSTRUCTING AN ANALGRAM: LACUNOUS NOTE FOUND IN VIA PO, ON THE CORNER WITH PIAZZA CASTELLO (30 APRIL 2015).

## 9.2. HYPOTHESIS OF RECONSTRUCTION (FROM CHARACTERS TO LETTERS)

If the anagrams are correct (they *are* anagrams) and systematic (the *whole* verbal text in the note is anagrammed, line by line), I thought, I should be able to reconstruct the paradigm of employed letters out of the intact lines and complete the lacunous ones.

I found 22 characters in the two intact lines, the fourth and the fifth, so that I reconstructed the paradigm of 13 letters employed: Ax2 (namely, letter “A” employed two times per line), Nx3, Ix2, Ex3, Dx2, Rx2, Ox2, L, U, G, P, S, M. I integrated the incomplete lines with the missing letters and, then, I proceeded in the re-segmentation of the words and in the integration of the ellipses (four suspension points, in the sixth line). This is the final result:

1. ALUNNI GENDER IPER SODOMA
2. E GOMORRA PII DE SADE «UNNN'L
3. PEDON NOSIGLIA E' UNA MERRD
4. SI'NDON E' AMORRE PIU' GLANDE
5. UN LOGO DI MERDA NEE SPIRA'N
6. SOLA MEDIOE[V A L E] E PUR'INGAN (NDR  
[LA] STAMPA»

It was possible to effectively reconstruct the lacunous lines by using the paradigm of letters derived from the two non-lacunous ones: the anagrams in the note are correct and systematically applied, namely each line is the combination of the very same set of letters; Q.E.D.

Furthermore, this note is actually one of the few replicas I have found; some months after the decoding, while I was looking back at the photos I had

took over the years, I discovered that a note with the very same text was already part of my collection, being one of the many stuck onto the famous ATM in via Lagrange (cf. Fig. 3; the second one from the bottom). Which gave me the final confirmation of my reconstructing effort.

### 9.3. THE MEANING OF THE NOTE (THE GENDER DANGER AND THE FAKE SHROUD)

Here is a very rough attempt at glossing the text for the English-speaking reader: *ALUNNI* (“students”) *GENDER* (“gender”) *IPER* (“hyper”) *SODOMA* (“Sodom”) / *E* (“and”) *GOMORRA* (“Gomorrah”) *PII* (plural of *pio*, “pious, devout person”) *DE SADE* (“Marquis De Sade”) « (it seems a quote to start here) *UNNN’L* (deformed form for *un*, “a”) / *PEDON NOSIGLIA* (Don Nosiglia, archbishop of Turin; the “ped” root in *PEDON* is probably a pun aiming at suggesting the semantic area of paedophilia) *E’* (“is”) *UNA* (“a”) *MERRD* (*merda*, “shit”) / *SI’NDON E’* (*sindone*, “Shroud”) *AMORRE* (*amore*, “love”) *PIU’* (*più*, “plus, more”) *GLANDE* (*glande*, “glans”; *L’amore più grande*, “The greatest love”, was the official motto of the public display of the Turin Shroud which took place between 19 April and 24 June 2015) / *UN* (“a”) *LOGO* (“logo”) *DI* (“of, made of”) *MERDA* (“shit”) *NEE* (*ne*, “of it, out of it”; but, maybe, also an allusion to typical Piedmontese pet word *neh*) *SPIRA’N* (*ispirano*, “they inspire, express”; but, maybe, also an allusion to *spirano*, “they expire, they pass away”) / *SOLA* (*sòla*, Rome regionalism for “con, cheat, scam”) *MEDIOE[V A L E]* (*medievale*, “Medieval”) *E* (è, “is”) *PUR’INGAN* (*puro inganno*, “pure hoax, deceit”) (*NDR*) (acronym for *nota del redattore*, “Editor’s note”) / [LA] *STAMPA* (newspaper; this syntagm is set outside of the anagrammed system) » (end of quote, which includes the source – “La Stampa” – as well).

It is clear that not every line does make sense, grammatically speaking, due to the presence of the redundant letters that are required to fulfil the anagrammatic rule; but an *atmosphere of meaning*, so to speak, may be inferred all the same.

The note talks about two different things: the “gender” [“ideology” or “theory”] as a social danger, capable of turning schools into contemporary Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Turin Shroud as a Medieval fake. The note can be dated using the year 2015 as a *post quem* term; as a matter of fact, the first topic, and expressions such as *ideologia gender* or *teoria del gender*, became a big issue in the Italian political debate and a big buzz all over the Italian media that year; which is the same in which the event alluded as regards the latter topic, the Turin Shroud, took place.

### 9.4. ADDENDUM: SAUSSURE AND THE ANAGRAMS (NOT THE “ANALGRAMS”)

My interest in the notes was revived once again, although I had already moved from Turin to Milan, when I have had the chance to meet and talk about them to noted semiotician and enigmatographer Stefano Bartezzaghi (16 May 2016).

Bartezzaghi enlightened me about the mysterious interest Ferdinand Saussure developed in the anagrams he claimed he had discovered within Latin poetry (and in Giovanni Pascoli's, as well); Jean Starobinski and Giampaolo Sasso, in particular, contributed to the exegesis of such an obscure Saussure's obsession (cf. Bartezzaghi 2017).

### 10. AUTOPSY OF AN "ANALGRAMMED" NOTE

Only a few days after I had met the lacunous note, on 6 May 2015, namely just the day before my first public presentation of the analgrams (at a research day about the role of play and games in the city)<sup>20</sup>, I found another note almost completely torn away, which simply "asked" for me to bring it home and analyse: it was one of the many glued onto the sculpted gate of RAI Museum of Radio and Television, *via Verdi* (the stuck area is clearly visible on Google Maps)<sup>21</sup>.

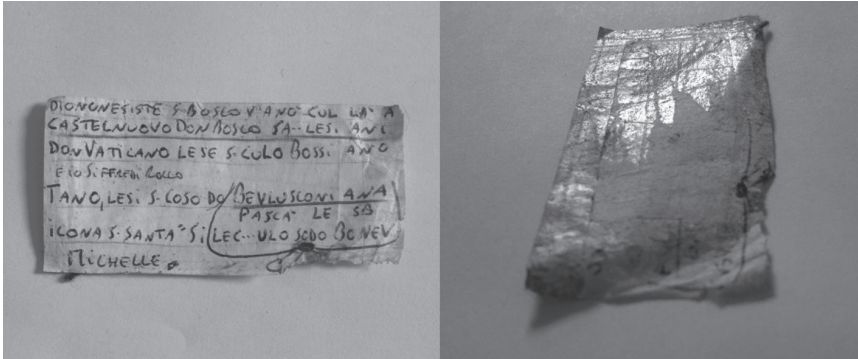
This is a standard note, glued onto a previously positioned one of smaller size (Fig. 10, *recto*): there is the emblem of the sodomy, the abbreviation *SRT*, the name *SIFFREDI ROCCO [TANO]*, the system of underlining (red, in this case), some points of suspension (corresponding to as many extra-anagram letters), there is the reference to political figures (*BOSSI, BERLUSCONI*), and the religious sphere (*DON BOSCO, VATICANO*; sparsely spiced with scurrilous word games, such as *SA .. LESI ANI*, a pun between *salesiani*, "Salesians", a religious order, *sa*, "he/she knows", and *lesi ani*, "injured anuses"). The name *MICHELLE*, which occurs in few other notes, can be found as well<sup>22</sup>.

I did not focus on the content of the note this time, but on its material features; in fact, I was interested in checking a particular aspect concerning their realization: the methodology of sticking. I am not an expert, nor an archaeologist, nor a philologist, nor a restorer but, according to the ripples and the scratches on the back of the paper (Fig. 10, *verso*), I would say that the note are not glued by hand, but that they are obtained by cutting them, by means of a cutter, out of a larger piece of industrial, adhesive paper. A confirmation of the "domestic preparation" hypothesis (cf. *supra*, par. 8.2).

20 *Gamification Urbana. Letture e riscritture ludiche degli spazi cittadini* ("Urban Gamification. Reading and rewriting urban spaces"), 7 May 2015, University of Turin, organized by Mattia Thibault; cf. [giochiurbani.blogspot.it](http://giochiurbani.blogspot.it). I have to confess I deciphered the lacunous analgram (par. 9.2) just the night before my talk.

21 Cf. [goo.gl/maps/tpniAcBBDiv](http://goo.gl/maps/tpniAcBBDiv) and [goo.gl/maps/uvbGsYHcmE82](http://goo.gl/maps/uvbGsYHcmE82).

22 A Turin friend of mine, named Michelle (cf. par. 1.3), told me she had found a note of ours, displaying "her name" (the name *MICHELLE*), glued onto the entrance door at her house number. Worried about such a coincidence she went to the police, where, however, the fact was minimized and she calmed down.



**FIG. 10.** AUTOPSY OF AN ANAGRAM: *RECTO* AND *VERSO* OF A NOTE FOUND ON THE GATE OF RAI MUSEUM OF RADIO AND TELEVISION, VIA VERDI (6 MAY 2015); THE GRAZING LIGHT HIGHLIGHTS THE INDUSTRIAL NATURE OF THE ADHESIVE LAYER.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS: STEPS TO A SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

### 11.1. ETHNOGRAPHY AND TEXT ANALYSIS

At the end of this first-person, non-exhaustive account of mine, I can only outline what the next steps to a systematic study of the anagrams should be (being aware that I hardly imagine myself embarking on such a project, at least in the immediate future).

First of all, a rigorous mapping of the phenomenon should be carried out; namely, a complete census of the individual tokens, of their position, and the date of their “discovery”. A statistically representative sample should be analysed, with the aim to verify how the systematicity of the anagrams found in the lacunous case is constant, or at least widespread, and not sporadic; I am almost certainly convinced that all the notes do share at least a partial anagrammed part.

An ethnographic observation should be conducted, as well as interviews with locals; for instance, with the merchants whose commercial activities overlook the places covered by the notes (the few shopkeepers I have had the chance to ask about, had simply no idea what I was talking about).

### 11.2. MENTAL HEALTH (TROUGH HANDWRITING AND INSTITUTIONS)

A handwriting analysis may be carried out to confirm the uniqueness of the hand, from the one side, and to outline a psycho-attitudinal profile of the writing subject, from the other.

Likewise, the relationship between the presence of mental health centres and the areas in which the concentration of notes seems to be conspicuous should be investigated (e.g. there is such an institution in *via Artisti*, not far from *via Po*, which is still the most note-stuck area).

### 11.2. BEYOND THE ANAGRAMS?

If I can say I have understood the logic of anagrammatic construction of the notes, as a set of horizontal lines, and that the different underscores are

used to link letters and words together in order to create a single sentence (e.g. “the Turin Shroud is a great Medieval rip-off”; cf. parr. 9.2, 9.3), I have not yet understood the sense of framing portions of the text with the little sodomy drawing; namely, I have not yet understood whether there is a functional-enigmatographic reason or not (in the latter case it would simply be a decorative use of that iconographic *σφραγίς*).

The notes should also be analysed to try understand whether there is a Uber-code which includes the anagrammed component, but which is not limited to that; that is, the research should seek whether there is a higher-level system that uses anagrams *to say more*, to say other than the simple message that can be inferred from the enigmatographic game per se.

### 11.3. SOCIAL ANALGRAMS

Lastly, just as for the cases of the already mentioned “socialized” street art phenomena (e.g. the Milanese *Baal culo*; cf. par. 7.2), a website and a Facebook group and/or page should be launched, for making it possible both to archive and share the corpus I collected so far, with the hope that they will become the reference for any report, testimony, or exegetical attempt concerning the analgrams. Still empty, the Facebook page *Analgrammi* (fb.com/analgrammi-torino) has been already created.

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