

Anyone who has ridden the New York City subway system or traveled around in many major cities of the world is acquainted with its crude drawings, written obscenities, clever sayings, names and trademarks of persons and gangs, and other varieties of self-expression. The searched word is the plural of an Italian term, graffito (or sgraffito), derived from the Greek word for writing, graphein. Graffito means "scratching," and it has long been used to describe these drawings.