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Greek in the Salento: Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Public Texts

Abstract: The article enumerates over one hundred Byzantine and post-Byzantine Greek inscriptions known from the Salento region of southern Italy, categorizing them as dedicatory, funerary, devotional, or didactic. It then offers the first English translation of two of these inscriptions. For an extant late twelfth-century metrical epitaph, it proposes that the usual left-to-right reading is purposefully augmented by a vertical constellation of key words that describe the deceased monk—in other words, that the epigraphic *mise-en-page* is significant. The second text is a lost mid-fourteenth-century account of the foundation of the *chora* of San Pietro at Galatina, apparently referring to an expansion of the town by a local nobleman. The hortatory text encourages readers to pray for this new founder.

The Salento, or the Terra d'Otranto, comprises all of the modern province of Lecce and most of the *provincia* of Brindisi and Taranto in the Apulian region of southern Italy—in other words, the tip of the heel of the Italian boot. After the Byzantine presence in the region in late antiquity weakened significantly following wars with the Goths and Longobard invasions, Basil I reconquered it about 870 and initiated population transfers from the Peloponnese and the Pontus. In the 960s the Katepanate of Italy was established with its capital at Bari, but the major Byzantine port remained that at Otranto, in the Salento.¹ There were ten cities, but most of the population lived in small *choria*, unwalled villages nucleated around churches.² The Byzantines lost political clout in the Salento with the Norman conquest of about 1070 (Bari fell in 1071), and they never regained their Italian holdings. Yet for two centuries this was an important part of the Byzantine Empire, and the region remained part of the Byzantine cultural sphere, linguistically and liturgically, for the rest of the Middle Ages and well beyond. Greek continued to be spoken—and sung—in some villages until the twentieth century, and it is enjoying a mini-renaissance today.

In previous publications I have discussed inscriptions in the Salento to examine different types of language mixing from a sociolinguistic perspective and to reveal commonalities among the region's Greek, Latin, and Hebrew public texts.³ More recently I catalogued all of the region's public texts (including graffiti) and images that offer information about its medieval inhabitants in any of the three local written languages.⁴ In what follows, I draw upon that database but consider only the Greek texts, maintaining the functional taxonomy employed in my earlier study of the Salento's textual cultures. These include dedicatory texts, which publicly proclaim a physical action such as building or decorating a church; funerary texts, which can manifest the status and piety of the deceased or merely acknowledge his or her death; devotional texts, which solicit attention or aid from a sacred figure who is often depicted nearby; and didactic texts, which instruct or inform. The category of hortatory texts is poorly represented in Greek, with only two examples known to me

¹ V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale dal IX all'XI secolo*. Bari 1978; EADEM, *Between Two Empires: Byzantine Italy in the Reign of Basil II*, in: *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. P. MAGDALINO. Leiden 2003, 135–159; EADEM, *Tra Occidente e Oriente: Otranto in epoca bizantina*, in: *Otranto nel medioevo tra Bisanzio e l'Occidente*, ed. H. HOUBEN. Galatina 2007, 13–60.

² P. ARTHUR, *Verso un modellamento del paesaggio rurale dopo il Mille nella Puglia meridionale*. *Archeologia medievale* 37 (2010) 215–228; IDEM, *Il Salento bizantino: alcune osservazioni*, in: *L'Adriatico dalla tarda antichità all'età carolingia*. Atti del Convegno di studio, Brescia 11–13 ottobre 2001, ed. G.P. BROGIOLO and P. DELOGU. Florence 2005, 183–194; J.-M. MARTIN, *La Pouille du VIe au XIIe siècle*. Rome 1993, 266–92.

³ L. SAFRAN, *Language Choice in the Medieval Salento: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, in: *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. L. HOFFMANN (*Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik* 7). Wiesbaden 2005, 819–840; EADEM, *Cultures textuelles publiques: une étude de cas dans le sud de l'Italie*. *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 52/3 (2009) 245–263; English version: *Public Textual Cultures, A Case Study in Southern Italy*, in: *Textual Cultures of Medieval Italy. Essays from the 41st Conference on Editorial Problems*, ed. W. ROBINS. Toronto 2011, 115–144.

⁴ L. SAFRAN, *The Medieval Salento: Art and Identity in Southern Italy*. Philadelphia 2014.

in addition to the epitaph discussed below: the ciborium of Sta. Maria di Cerrate (1269), on which the carver exhorts, “when you see it, visitor, give glory to the Highest, from whom all good things come,”⁵ and another funerary epitaph (from Vaste, 1330) that explicitly enjoins readers to pray for the deceased.⁶

There are over one hundred Greek texts datable between the tenth century and the early fifteenth, not including single-word graffiti or inscriptions so lacunose that they cannot be assigned to any functional category. The majority of these texts, including almost all of the dedicatory ones and a sizable number of the others, have been edited and analyzed by the inimitable André Jacob.⁷ A few inscriptions, however, remain underappreciated, and I translate two of these (marked with an asterisk) after briefly analyzing some patterns that emerge from the corpus. In the list of Greek inscriptions that follows, the solid line represents the “break” ca. 1070 between Byzantine and post-Byzantine rule in the Salento—a political change that had no negative effect on the production of Greek public texts. In fact, it likely had a positive effect, as the Norman rulers who succeeded the Byzantines founded a number of important Orthodox monasteries (including Sta. Maria di Cerrate) that have yielded numerous texts. The bracketed [Lecce] indicates an epigraphic work of unknown origin that is now in the Museo Provinciale “Sigismondo Castromediano” in that city.

Dedicatory Texts (11)

- Taranto city walls, by architect Nikephoros, 965–69
- Vaste church, by Michael the African, 1054
- Fulcignano hospital, by protopapas Theodore, 1148/49
- San Vito dei Normanni church, by abbot Benedict & M..., 1196
- Cavallino church, by Nicholas Markiantos, 1309/10
- Li Monaci church, by Souré & wife & child[ren], 1314/15
- San Cesario di Lecce church, by priest Nicholas, 1329
- Soletto church, 1347?
- *Galatina, *chora* of St. Peter in Galatina, 1354/55
- Andrano hospital, by George Longo & wife Gemma, 1372/73
- Carpignano tower, by village captain Paul, 1378/79

Funerary Texts (31)

- [Lecce], Arsakes, late 10th–early 11th c.
- Casaranello, L... Kephalas, early 11th c.
- Carpignano, John & Vincent, early 11th c.
- Apigliano, priest Leon & ? , first third 11th c.
- Apigliano, n.n., first third 11th c.
- Apigliano, n.n., first third 11th c.
- Quattro Macine, family of Constantine, first half 11th c.
- Casaranello, n.n., 1047/48
- Carpignano, Stratigoules, 1055–75
- Casaranello, n.n., 1076/77
- Casaranello, n.n., 1088/89
- Casaranello, John, 1094/95

⁵ τὸδε ὄρων, θε<α>τά, δόξαν Ὑψίστῳ νέμε ἐξ οὗ κάτεισιν ἀγαθῶν πᾶσα δόσις. A. JACOB, Le ciborium du prêtre Taphouros à Sainte-Marie de Cerrate et sa dédicace, in: Cavalieri alla conquista del Sud. Studi sull'Italia normanna in memoria di Léon-Robert Ménager, ed. E. CUOZZO and J.-M. MARTIN. Bari 1998, 117–133.

⁶ κ(αί) οἱ ἀναγνώσται εὐχεστ(ε) ὑπ(ερ) αὐτοῦ. Cf. A. JACOB, Vaste en Terre d'Otrante et ses inscriptions. *Aevum: Rassegna di scienze storiche, linguistiche e filologiche* 71/2 (1997) 255–256; IDEM, Notes sur quelques inscriptions byzantines du Salento méridional (Soletto, Alessano, Vaste, Apigliano). *Mélanges de l'École française du Rome, Moyen Âge – Temps modernes* 95/1 (1983) 65–88: 78–83; SAFRAN, The Medieval Salento 332–333.

⁷ Jacob's publications are less well known outside Italy than they should be, and several studies are in books or journals with limited circulation. For bibliography on all of the texts in the list, see the Database in SAFRAN, The Medieval Salento 239–337.

nr. Squinzano, hieromonk Nikodemos, 1096/97
 Casaranello, Maria, 1098/99
 Soleto, Asotes, 1109
 Quattro Macine, ...os, 1117
 Alessano, Hugh, 1130
 Taranto, Maria, 1135
 Vaste, priest Stephen, 1143
 Quattro Macine, n.n., 1175
 *nr. Squinzano, priest John, 1197/98
 Roca Vecchia, Basil, 12th c.
 [Lecce], deacon Constantine, 12th c.?
 Taranto, Eulalia, 12th c.
 Ruffano, deacon Pantaleon, 12th c.
 Cavallino, George, 1238
 Palmariggi, John, 1304
 [Lecce], Nicholas, 1322?
 Vaste, Nicholas, 1330
 Scorrano, James, 1347/48
 San Cataldo, Dymenos & widow Theokari, 13th–14th c.
 + n.n., n.d.: *Cerfignano, Collepasso, Quattro Macine, [Lecce]*

Devotional Texts (46)

Torre Sta. Susanna, ? & wife Veneria & children, 9th–10th or 7th c.
 Carpignano, priest Leon & wife Chrysolea & family, 959
 Carpignano, Leon, 978?
 Carpignano, Anna & child, late 10th c.
 Carpignano, n.n. & children, ca. 1000
 Casaranello, George & children, ca. 1000
 Casaranello, Demetrios, ca. 1000
 Casaranello, priest Akindynos, 988–1033
 Grottaglie (Riggio), n.n. female, 10th–11th c.
 Carpignano, Aprilios & wife & children, 1020
 Carpignano, Aprilios & wife & children, early 11th c.
 Casaranello, ? servant, early 11th c.
 Casaranello, John & wife, early 11th c.
 Casaranello, cleric Michael, early 11th c.
 Carpignano, ? & Anastasia, first third 11th c.
 Carpignano, priest John Pankitzes & children, 1054/55
 Nociglia, Andrew & wife & children, mid-third quarter 11th c.
 Carpignano, Blasios? & wife & children, third quarter 11th c.
 Otranto (S. Nicola), priest? Leon, 12th c.?
 Poggiardo, Leon & wife, 12th c.?
 Uggiano, Basil & father & mother, 12th–14th c.
 Miggiano, monk Leo & monk Nicholas, 13th c.?
 Taranto (Redentore), Maraldus & ?, 13th c.
 nr. Squinzano, ciborium, (monk) Symeon & priest Taphouros, 1269
 Massafra (S. Giovanni), Senatoros, 13th–14th c.?
 Massafra (S. Marco), n.n., 13th–14th c.
 Massafra (S. Marco), n.n., 13th–14th c.
 Massafra (S. Marina), n.n., 13th–14th c.
 Crispiano, Bosos & wife & children, 14th c.

Vaste, Antony & wife Doulitzia & children Maria & Ioanna, 1379/80
 Vaste, Kalia, 1379/80
 Vaste, priest George, 1379/80
 Vaste, Margaret, 1379/80
 Vaste, Stephen, 1379/80
 Vaste, Donna, 1379/80
 Grottaglie (Pensiero), n.n. priest & wife, 1392?
 Grottaglie (Pensiero), ...eka... & children, 1392?
 Mesagne, Porphyrios & wife & child, 14th c.?
 Nardò (S. Maria dell'Alto), Nicholas, 14th c.?
 Nardò (S. Maria dell'Alto), Luke, 14th c.?
 Taranto (Petrose), painter John, n.d.
 Taranto (Petrose), Benedict & wife & child[ren], n.d.
 Taranto (Petrose), Stephen, n.d.
 Taranto (Petrose), Antony, John, Dionysos, n.d.
 Palagianello (S. Andrea), monk Leonard, n.d.
 Palagianello (S. Lucia), Nicholas & brother?, n.d.
 + *n.n., n.d.: Massafra (S. Posidonio), Mottola (S. Nicola), Palagianello (S. Andrea), Palagianello (S. Lucia) x 2, nr. Squinzano, Taranto (Petrose), Torre Sta. Susanna*

Didactic Texts (5)

Soletto, childbirth, late 11th c.
 Gallipoli, trikerion, Magi...os, <1268
 Galatina, chapel of St. Catherine, early 14th c.
 Taurisano, sundial, late 14th c.
 Parabita cryptograms, early 15th c.
 + *Lecce (Aurio), graffiti, n.d.*

Texts of Uncertain Function (2)

Vaste, monks of Otranto & priest, third quarter 11th c.
 Faggiano, Nicholas? & priest Pigonatios, 13th c.?

The epigraphic data reveal that of the public texts in Greek that can be dated either precisely or within a reasonable range, there are far more preserved from the 350 years after the period of Byzantine rule (ca. 1070 to ca. 1420) than from the two Byzantine centuries (ca. 870–1070): 65 versus only 30 Byzantine-era inscriptions.⁸ This is logical, of course—more years should produce more texts. Calculating chi square values for both periods of texts makes it possible to assert statistically that the proportion of Byzantine texts does not differ significantly from the proportion of post-Byzantine ones.⁹

⁸ This excludes the texts listed at the end of each category as containing no name(s) and no criteria for dating, but includes the texts of uncertain function whose dates are probable.

⁹ Chi squared (χ^2) = (observed – expected)² ÷ by expected values, with the observed values being the number of identifiably Byzantine and post-Byzantine inscriptions (2 rows) in the four categories (columns) of dedicatory, funerary, devotional, and didactic texts, and expected values being row total x column total divided by raw number of citations. The problems here are that there should be no 0 values (but there are no Byzantine-era didactic texts) and not so many values under 5 (but there are 2 Byzantine dedicatory texts and 5 post-Byzantine didactic ones). The resulting degree of freedom is 3 and the χ^2 value is 4.55; therefore the p value is .208, or 21 percent. This indicates only a 21 percent likelihood that the Byzantine versus post-Byzantine difference reflects random—rather than meaningful—differentiation. Because the p value exceeds the 5 percent value that is conventionally held by statisticians as a boundary between significant and nonsignificant results, the proportions of Byzantine and post-Byzantine texts are treated as equal and the null hypothesis is confirmed. See D. S. MOORE – G. P. MCCABE, *Introduction to the Practice of Statistics*. New York ²1993, 606–613. I thank Professor Jason Plaks for introducing me to statistical methodology and reviewing my conclusions and Michael Safran for patient explanations and assistance with calculations.

The proportions of Byzantine and post-Byzantine Greek texts do vary significantly according to the type of text. While 39 percent of the devotional texts in the Salento can be dated to the Byzantine era, along with 29 percent of the funerary texts, only 18 percent of the Greek dedications and none of the didactic texts are, properly speaking, Byzantine. That fully 82 percent of extant dedicatory texts in Greek were produced *after* the Byzantines were gone shows the enduring economic strength of the Greek-speaking population; they were not languishing under the Normans, Hohenstaufens, and Angevins, but rather constructing hospitals, churches, towers, and towns. The notion of continued Orthodox religious vitality is strengthened by the high numbers of post-Byzantine devotional and funerary texts. These painted and incised supplications to the Lord and, later, to the Virgin and saints, coupled with records of the dead in graffiti and on tombstones, are vivid testimonies to the regional endurance of Greek and the continued vitality of the Greek-speaking community. I want to stress in particular the very large number of inscriptions of all kinds datable to the fourteenth century—an Angevin-era flowering of Greek that contrasts with the manuscript evidence for a diminution of Greek book copying after the first decades of the century.¹⁰

In the rest of this article, I propose to discuss two Salentine inscriptions that have not yet received their due: a late twelfth-century funerary text and a fourteenth-century dedicatory inscription. The first supplements what we know about an important Orthodox monastery in the post-Byzantine period and lends itself to a new way of reading, one that considers vertical connections among words in addition to a linear horizontal reading; the second offers insights into urbanism at a time when a once entirely Greek-speaking and Orthodox town was being enlarged to accommodate a new Latinate and Roman-rite population. At the time this article was submitted, neither inscription had been translated into a modern language. I do not doubt that experienced philologists will find much more to say about both, but I offer here a translation into English and an initial linguistic and contextual commentary.

NEAR SQUINZANO, STA. MARIA DI CERRATE, 1197/98

Sta. Maria di Cerrate was an Orthodox monastery founded by the Normans in the late eleventh century and still in use by Orthodox monks at least three centuries later.¹¹ The church visible today dates to the late twelfth century, and it has a ciborium with a Greek dodecasyllabic inscription dated 1269.¹² The architecture, sculpture, and wall paintings of the church have been the subject of repeated study, although no comprehensive monograph exists to date.¹³

¹⁰ A. JACOB, *Culture grecque et manuscrits en Terre d'Otrante*, in: *Atti del III° Congresso internazionale di studi salentini e del 1° Congresso storico di Terra d'Otranto*, Lecce 22–25 ottobre 1976, ed. P. F. PALUMBO. Lecce 1980, 51–77: 61–62; IDEM, *Gallipoli bizantina*, in: *Paesi e figure del Vecchio Salento*, ed. A. DE BERNART. Galatina 1989, III 281–312: 308; cf. A. PETERS-CUSTOT, *Les grecs de l'Italie méridionale post-byzantine (IXe–XIVe siècle): une acculturation en douceur*. Rome 2009, 549–566, who identifies an “explosion of Italo-Greek culture” from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century.

¹¹ G. LUNARDI – H. HOUBEN – G. SPINELLI, eds., *Monasticon Italiae*, 3: *Puglia e Basilicata: Repertorio topografico dei monasteri italiani*. Cesena 1986, no. 152; G. A. SPEDICATO, *Testimonianze sul monastero italo-greco di Santa Maria di Cerrate* (presso Lecce), in: *Studi bizantini e neogreci. Atti del IV Congresso nazionale di Studi bizantini*, ed. P. L. LEONE. Galatina 1983, 249–261. A letter of 1397 from Pope Boniface IX refers to Orthodox monks: C. D. POSO, *Il Salento Normanno: Territorio, istituzioni, società*. Galatina 1988, 114, and in 1420 Maria d'Enghien, wife of the Prince of Taranto, insisted that the Pope return the church to its monks after being commandeered by the local bishop (*ibid.* 104).

¹² JACOB, *Le ciborium du prêtre Taphouros*. See now A. RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein (= Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, vol. 3). Vienna 2014, 502–506, no. IT35.

¹³ D. KEMPER, *SS Niccolò e Cataldo in Lecce als ein Ausgangspunkt für die Entwicklung mittelalterlicher Bauplastik in Apulien und der Basilicata*. Worms 1994, 68–101; V. PACE, *La chiesa di Santa Maria delle Cerrate e i suoi affreschi*, in: *Obraz Vizantii. Sbornik statei v cest' O. S. Popovoi [L'immagine di Bisanzio: Raccolta di studi in onore di O. S. Popova]*, ed. A. VLADIMIROVA ZAKHAROVA. Moscow 2008, 377–398; F. GABELLONE, *Virtual Cerrate: A DVR-Based Knowledge Platform for an Archaeological Complex of the Byzantine Age*, in: *CAA 2008, Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology* (Budapest 2008): http://proceedings.caaconference.org/files/2008/CD26_Gabellone_et_al_CAA2008.pdf; M. MERSCH – U. RITZERFELD, ‘Lateinisch-griechische’ Begegnungen in Apulien. Zur Kunstpraxis der Mendikanten im Kontaktbereich zum orthodoxen Christentum, in: *Lateinisch-griechisch-arabische Begegnungen. Kulturelle Diversität im Mittelmeerraum des Spätmittelalters*, ed. M. MERSCH and U. RITZERFELD. Berlin 2009, 219–284: 237–238, 249; M. V. FONTANA, *Riferimenti islamici negli affreschi di Santa Maria di Anglona e di Santa Maria di Cerrate a Squinzano*. *ASCL* 76 (2010) 37–54; L. SAFRAN, ‘Byzantine’ Art in Post-

The inscription in question was inserted into the west façade of the twelfth-century church at an unknown date. The slab is just to the left of the doorway, about 2.6 meters above ground level. While it may well be contemporary with the church's construction, its excellent state of preservation means that it could not have been continuously exposed to the elements; it was probably inside the church for part of its existence, and it must have been thickly covered with plaster to have withstood its time on the façade.

The slab measures 0.82 m long and about 0.25 m high (its depth cannot be determined), and it contains seven lines of metrical text (Fig. 1).¹⁴ The date of the inscription—1197/98—was discussed at length by André Jacob in the course of correcting the published date of a smaller text also on the façade (that text was the epitaph of the monastery's founder, the hieromonk Nikodemos, dated 1096/97; its discovery pushed back the date of the establishment by a full century).¹⁵ It has not, however, been translated until now.¹⁶

(A) Diplomatic transcription

+ Οὐδης ὑπάρχη ὡς φηγι τὸν θανάτου δοθέντος υμῖν διὰ
τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Πῶς ἄραγε θνήσκου(σιν) ἐν νόμῃς ὄλη. ζοηφό-
ρω σώματι τὸ τοῦ δεσπότη; ἔμοι δοκοῖ πταιίσματι τοῦ
π(ρ)οτωπλάστου. τήνην ὁ π(ρ)ᾶος εὐτελις θιυπόλος. ζήσας μὲν
καλὸς τὴν νομῖν διατρέφον. λόγοις ται καλοῖς σοστηκοῖς καὶ ἐντί-
μοις. ταῦτα μὲν λεχθὲν π(ρ)ὸς Ἰω(άννην) θίτην. τοῦ καὶ λαχόντος [τοῦ] βίου τοῦ
τὸ τέλος. εὐχθεσθαι πάντες ἡ ἐλθόντες ἐνθάδε. ἔτ(ους) .ζ̄ {χ̄} ψ̄ ζ̄ ἡνδ(ικτιωνος) ᾱ̄

(B) Corrected text

Οὐδεὶς ὑπάρχει ὅς φύγη τοῦ θανάτου δοθέντος ἡμῖν διὰ
τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Πῶς ἄραγε θνήσκου(σιν) ἐν νόμοις ὅλοι ζοηφό-
ρω σώματι τῷ τοῦ δεσπότη; Ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ πταιίσματι τοῦ
πρωτοπλάστου. Τοῖνυν ὁ πρᾶος εὐτελής θυηπόλος. Ζήσας μὲν
καλῶς τὴν νομῖν διατρέφων. λόγοις τε καλοῖς σωστικοῖς καὶ ἐντί-
μοις. Ταῦτα μὲν λεχθὲν πρὸς Ἰω(άννην) θύτην τοῦ καὶ λαχόντος (τοῦ) βίου τοῦ
τὸ τέλος. εὐχθεσθε πάντες οἱ ἐλθόντες ἐνθάδε. ἔτ(ους) .ζ̄ {χ̄} ψ̄ ζ̄ ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) ᾱ̄

(C) Translation

There is no one who can escape death, which was given to us because of sin. How, I wonder, are all subjected to this law and die despite the life-giving body of the Lord? I think because of the protoplast's (i.e. Adam's) transgression. [This applies also to] the meek and wretched priest who spent his life nurturing the flock with comely, saving, and noble words. The above has been said about John the priest, who was allotted his life's end. All you who come here, pray [for him]. Year 6706 (=1197/98), first indiction.

The incised letterforms, which lack evidence of any infill, are fairly regular in size. Some are quite ornate: open triangular serifs adorn the horizontals of the letters A, Γ, Δ, Υ, and especially T; the letter P is sometimes represented as a volute lacking a vertical stem; the N is consistently rendered with a curving reverse-S diagonal that begins and ends about one-quarter of the way up or down the vertical strokes; and, most con-

Byzantine Southern Italy? Notes on a Fuzzy Concept. *Common Knowledge* 18/3 (= Fuzzy Studies: Symposium on the Consequence of a Blur, 3) (2012) 487–504, esp. 488–494; EADEM, *Betwixt or Beyond? The Salento in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, in: *Renaissance Encounters: Greek East and Latin West*, ed. M. S. BROWNLEE and D. GONDICAS. Leiden 2012, 115–144: 116–120; EADEM, *The Medieval Salento* 312–316.

¹⁴ D. KEMPER, Una iscrizione greca inedita a S. Maria di Cerrate. *ASP* 45 (1992) 309–313: 309.

¹⁵ A. JACOB, La fondation du monastère de Cerrate à la lumière d'une inscription inédite. *Rendiconti della Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, ser. 9, 7 (1996) 211–223: 216–217, correcting KEMPER, Una iscrizione greca.

¹⁶ A German translation has now appeared: RHOBY, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Stein* 500–502, no. IT34. I thank Andreas Rhoby for correcting several words in my transcription.

spicuously, a vertical line frequently doubles the thickness of the curved left side of the letters E and C (Fig. 2).¹⁷ There are certain similarities to a poorly preserved painted inscription of virtually identical date (1196) on the ceiling of the rock-cut church of San Biagio at San Vito dei Normanni, which also displays a curvy N diagonal and thickened, although not doubled, left edges of some letters (Fig. 3). The latter also contains some of the same ligatures as the Cerrate inscription, which in the incised text are quite numerous.¹⁸

A diplomatic transcription (A) reveals numerous confusions between H and EI, I, OI, and Y; O and Ω; I and Y; in addition, IY is used for YH; AI for E; and OI for EI. Less common, and more egregious, is the confusion between O and Θ in the middle of the third line (δεσπόθου); the cross bar of the theta is definitely visible in the stone. In line 2, the carver omitted the second α in ἄραγε and a different hand has added a minuscule α in the space above. This is reminiscent of a correction made in a later painted dedicatory inscription in the region, at Li Monaci, where Δη(μη)τριου, one of the artists, has had the minuscule μη added to his name above the line.

The first-person voice in this epitaph is striking. It is reminiscent of very few others in the region, most notably the moving dirge by the father of a dead boy, Stratigoules, buried in an arcosolium tomb at Carpignano in the third quarter of the eleventh century.¹⁹ In a non-funerary context the first person is also employed on behalf of a *trikerion* (lampstand with three candles) placed on an altar at Gallipoli, dated before 1268.²⁰ Both of these also share with the Cerrate text the distinction of being among the very few Greek metrical inscriptions in the Salento. Indeed, the only other one is found inside the same church, on the ciborium erected seventy-two years later; it too is dodecasyllabic and also in the first person.²¹

The focus of and *raison d'être* for the Cerrate epitaph is “John the priest,” but he is not signaled here in the usual way. In the Salento, the most important name and title in a text is normally placed at either end of a line for greater visual impact; indeed, it sometimes begins at the end of a line and continues at the start of the next one. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, this preference holds true for texts in all three of the region’s epigraphic languages: Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.²² The solution adopted here, by contrast, was to rigorously centralize Ἰω(άννην) θύτην (misspelled θίτην) in the penultimate line. This brought the name and profession of the deceased well within reading range of viewers, assuming that the original height of the stone was comparable to its current one, and accorded him quite literally a central place in the community’s memory (Fig. 4). Moreover, the two words are sandwiched vertically between λόγοις, words, and ἐλθόντες, “having come”—references, perhaps, to the tools John had used and the fact that he is gone. Higher up, above “words,” are a pair of adjectives that describe him, πρᾶος εὐτελής, meek and wretched, and directly above that the large, well-spaced letters of “Lord”, δεσπότου (misspelled δεσπόθου), shelter the priest and his epithets. The central words in the two initial lines, farthest from John the priest, are θανάτου and θνήσκου(σι)ν—death (Fig. 2).

At least some of the Orthodox monks who passed by this carved stone daily over several centuries may well have looked for deeper meaning than that afforded by a continuous left-to-right perusal. Indeed, a favored monastic activity was to wrestle with and puzzle out texts, such as cryptograms, although none survive

¹⁷ This last feature, the double thickness of the left curve of certain letters, may be seen in a nineteenth-century drawing of a lost epitaph from Cavallino, reproduced in A. JACOB, *Iscrizioni bizantine di Cavallino*, in: Caballino, ed. F. DE DOMINICIS. Cavallino di Lecce 1984, 241–246: 244. Here, however, the letters singled out for special treatment are O, Ω, E, and C; otherwise the letterforms are quite dissimilar from those at Cerrate.

¹⁸ Ligatures: AN, AP, ΗΓ, HN, HNN, HC, MH, MHN, NH, NHN.

¹⁹ A. JACOB, L’inscription métrique de l’enfeu de Carpignano. *RSBN* n.s. 20–21 (1983–84) 103–122. Another first-person epitaph is from Roca Vecchia, now Lecce, Museo Provinciale “Sigismondo Castromediano”, no. 52 (perhaps twelfth century): see A. GUILLOU, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques médiévales d’Italie*. Rome 1996, 169, no. 153. Cf. also an epitaph from Ruffano, now Lecce, Museo Provinciale, no. 5189 (*ibid.* 167, no. 150); SAFRAN, *The Medieval Salento* 265–266, 304–305.

²⁰ A. JACOB, *Le chandelier à trois branches de l’évêque Pantaléon: à propos de l’inscription de Georges de Gallipoli*. *BollGrott* n.s. 53 (1999) (= *Ἰστώρα: Studi in onore di mgr Paul Canart per il LXX compleanno*, ed. S. LUCÀ and L. PERRIA) 187–199.

²¹ See above, note 12.

²² SAFRAN, *Public Textual Cultures* 121; EADEM, *Cultures textuelles* publiques 252.

at Sta. Maria di Cerrate.²³ I propose that the vertical reading described here may have supplemented more traditional modes of reading and appealed to a certain subset of literate and meditative monks. Perhaps John the priest, a master of “comely, saving, and noble words,” encouraged this kind of textual contemplation during his lifetime and his epitaph became a model of it after his death.

GALATINA, 1354/55

The second text I present here is different in every way from the previous one except for its similarly personal sensibility. It no longer survives, so it is impossible to analyze its letterforms or orthography or propose alternative readings based on its *mise en page*. This unusual dedicatory text—for a town, not a church—was first published in the eighteenth century and corrected slightly in the nineteenth.²⁴ Its existence was signaled in a footnote by André Jacob,²⁵ but to the best of my knowledge it has never been translated or discussed at any length. Its support was presumably stone or it would not have survived as long as it did.

Ἦτει ς̄ ω̄ ξ̄ γ̄ [ινδ.] ἠ εἰληφεν ἀρχὴν ἢ χώρα τοῦ Ἁγίου Πέ-
 τρ(ου) τῶν Γαλατηνῶν τοῦ κτισθῆναι ἐπικρατοῦντος ρη-
 γὸς Λογησίου σὺν τῇ ρηγὶ Ἰωάννα. Κυριεύοντος τῆς χώρας
 ἁγίου Πέτρ(ου) εὐγενοῦς καμμαραρή(ου) κώμετος ραημούνδου τοῦ
 βα(ου)ξίως σὺν ὁμοζύγῳ αὐτοῦ [Ἰ]σαβέλλα. Ὑπάρχοντες τὸν τ(οῦ)
 τὸν καιρὸν Βικαρί(ου) τῆς χώρας Γ(ου)αρίνου Μοντεφούσκ(ου). Οὗτος
 γὰρ πρῶτος ἐσημαίσατο τὴν χώραν [ὡς δ]ε[ἰ] κτισθῆναι. Καὶ αὐ-
 τὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐποίησε. Τὸ ὄθεν ὀφείλομεν εὐχεσθαι ὑπὲρ αὐτ(οῦ).

In the year 6863 (=1354/55), eighth indiction, the *chora* of St. Peter of Galatina started being built when King Louis was ruling together with Queen Joanna. Lord of the village of St. Peter was the noble chamberlain count Raimondo del Balzo together with his spouse, Isabella. At the time Guarino Montefusco was the *vicarius* of the village. He first marked out the *chora* as it should be built, and he made the start. Hence we ought to pray for him.

Galatina, originally Sancti Petri (San Pietro) in Galatina, is a town in the southern Salento; in the fourteenth century it was part of the County of Soleto, which was indeed ruled by Raimondo del Balzo, scion of a noble Provençal family, who had been invested with this title in January 1308.²⁶ His Latin title, *dominus*, is well translated by the Greek used here, κυριεύοντος; both mean “lord.” In 1354, there really was a Louis in Naples; he was Count of Provence and Prince of Taranto and Achaia, and he acquired the royal title when he married Queen Joanna, daughter of the Angevin king of Naples Robert “the Wise,” in 1347. *Vicarii* in medieval Italy were officials who exercised local jurisdiction;²⁷ the same title is rendered here in Greek characters, which suggests that the term was familiar and that there was no native Greek equivalent. Like other officials of the Principate of Taranto, a vicarius would have come from one of the noble or patrician families,

²³ See, for example, R. SCHROEDER, Looking With Words and Images: Staging Monastic Contemplation in a Late Byzantine Church. *Word & Image* 28/2 (2012) 117–134; A. RHOBY, Secret Messages? Byzantine Greek Tetragrams and their Display, <http://art-hist.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=72>; L. SAFRAN, Greek Cryptograms in Southern Italy (and Beyond), *ibid.*, <http://art-hist.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=73>. Such cryptograms often appear on Byzantine and other Orthodox monastery walls (and garments, although I do not know when that tradition began).

²⁴ B. PAPADIA, Memorie storiche della città di Galatina nella Japigia. Naples 1792, 5, 67–68; *CIG* IV, pars XL, ed. A. KIRCHHOFF. Berlin 1877: online at www.mom.fr/digimom/Notice.php?id=1146&limit=0, p. 355, no. 8770, with corrections to Papadia. I follow here the word and line divisions and the misspellings in the published sources.

²⁵ A. JACOB, L’anthroponymie grecque du Salento méridionale. *Mélanges de l’École française du Rome, Moyen Âge – Temps modernes* 107/2 (1995) 361–379: 371, n. 55.

²⁶ San Pietro in Galatina remained a Del Balzo family possession until 1516. A. FOSCARINI, Armerista e notiziario delle famiglie nobili, notabili e feudatarie di Terra d’Otranto. Lecce 1927 (reprint Bologna 1971), 107–108.

²⁷ Medieval Italy: Texts in Translation, ed. K. JANSEN, J. DRELL, and F. ANDREWS. Philadelphia 2009, 558.

either French or Italian, or from the bourgeoisie who had risen socially through their service to the Angevins.²⁸ The Montefusco (or Montefusco) family, originally from Normandy, were well-established Salentine nobility who intermarried with families of comparable distinction, including the Guarini.²⁹ Both families continued to be listed as feudal landowners in the fifteenth century.³⁰ Although no individual named Guarino Montefusco is known from other sources, this combination of two surnames likely identified the product of a “dynastic” marriage.

The inscription was recorded in 1792 as being originally “over the door of the church of San Giovanni near the Porta Nuova.”³¹ We do not know where it was when the eighteenth-century author recorded it, but his language suggests that it was no longer on that church, and indeed no such church is known. This gate, formerly the Porta San Pietro, still exists, albeit in eighteenth-century form, on the north side of town near the *centro storico*. While more Greek inscriptions are found over doors inside churches, exterior texts over church doorways are attested in the region. In Galatina itself at the end of the fourteenth century, a two-line inscription in relief announces in Greek “Here is the chapel of Saint Catherine ... inside and ...” over the right side door on the façade of the Franciscan basilica dedicated to that saint by Raimondello del Balzo Orsini.³² A dedicatory inscription on a tower at Carpignano, dated 1378/79, must have been visible on the tower’s exterior, and its language is relevant here: “This tower has been built by the order of Paul of Sogliano, captain of this village (τῆς χωρᾶς [sic]), in 6887, first indiction” (Fig. 5).³³ There is no reason to doubt the placement of either the tower inscription or the one at Galatina; in both cases, the public context should have ensured the accuracy of the names and facts being recorded.

Yet San Pietro in Galatina is attested much earlier than 1354/55. Leaving aside the local tradition of the town’s foundation by St. Peter himself—widespread elsewhere in the Salento, too, as witnessed by numerous hagiotoponyms³⁴—there is documentary evidence for a place with this name already in 1188,³⁵ and several “Hagiopetrines”, Greek scribes from San Pietro in Galatina, are attested in the thirteenth century.³⁶ The community is referred to in other thirteenth-century documents as a *casale*, usually understood as a village.³⁷ In documents of the fifteenth century, however, Raimondo del Balzo is credited with providing the village with walls, enlarging it in his capacity as royal chamberlain.³⁸ The eighteenth-century local historian Baldassar Papadia records that these walls were rebuilt in 1355 following attacks by African pirates.³⁹ Thus *chora*, used twice in our text, cannot refer to the original enclave of San Pietro, which was well established by 1354; it must indicate a new neighborhood (*pittagio*), an extension of the existing space. The expansion may have been the product of seigneurial desires, or it might have been needed to accommodate a growing population

²⁸ M. A. VISCEGLIA, *Territorio, feudo e potere locale. Terra d’Otranto tra Medioevo ed età moderna*. Naples 1988, 186.

²⁹ FOSCARINI, *Armerista e notiziario* 210–211, 167–169.

³⁰ VISCEGLIA, *Territorio, feudo e potere locale* 189, 193.

³¹ PAPANIA, *Memorie storiche della città di Galatina* 67.

³² SAFRAN, *Cultures textuelles publiques* 254; EADEM, *The Medieval Salento* 51, 275; MERSCH – RITZERFELD, ‘Lateinisch-griechische’ Begegnungen in Apulien 261. Other above-door inscriptions include one in Latin, dated 1302, at San Domenico in Taranto, the former Byzantine imperial monastery of San Pietro Imperiale (SAFRAN, *The Medieval Salento* 326).

³³ The corrected text reads: Ἀνοικοδομήθη ἡ πυρ/γοποιήα αὐτή δ/ι<α> προστάξεως Παύλου / Σουλλιανού κεφαλικοῦ / τῆς χωρᾶς ταύτης .ζ ω̄ π̄ ζ / ινδ(ικτιών) ᾱ. It measures 47.5 × 21 × 5 cm and is now in the Museo Provinciale “Sigismondo Castromediano” in Lecce (no. 53). See A. JACOB, *Inscriptions byzantines datées de la Province de Lecce (Carpignano, Cavallino, San Cesario)*. *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* ser. 8, 37 (1982) 41–62: 58–62; GUILLOU, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques médiévales d’Italie* 176, no. 164.

³⁴ JACOB, *L’anthroponymie grecque* 365; SAFRAN, *The Medieval Salento* 33.

³⁵ “Maria filia Nicolai de Papadia Casalis S(ancti) Petri in Galatina” is attested in a donation to the monastery of SS. Niccolò e Cataldo in Lecce; see G. VALLONE, *Galatina tra storia e leggenda: problemi demografici e formazione del territorio (sec. XII–XV)*. *Bollettino storico di Terra d’Otranto* 3 (1993) 19–40: 19; Guida di Galatina. *La storia, il centro antico, il territorio*, ed. M. CAZZATO. Galatina 2002, 13.

³⁶ See, e.g., A. JACOB, *Les annales d’une famille sacerdotale grecque de Galatina dans l’Ambrosianus C7 sup. et la peste en Terre d’Otrante à la fin du Moyen Age*. *Bollettino storico di Terra d’Otranto* 1 (1991) 23–51: 25.

³⁷ VALLONE, *Galatina tra storia e leggenda* 27, n. 33.

³⁸ PAPANIA, *Memorie storiche della città di Galatina* 4–5.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 24; Guida di Galatina 124.

that is implied by the increased taxation of the community in the course of the fourteenth century. Although many of the region's villages were abandoned in the late medieval period, Galatina grew to such a degree that it would become, by the mid-fifteenth century, one of the most populous towns in the Salento.⁴⁰ Its growth must have increased after Raimondello del Balzo Orsini, the future Count of Soletto, moved his official residence to San Pietro in Galatina in 1385,⁴¹ but apparently it was already growing some three decades earlier when our text was carved.

Chora—χώρα—is the Greek word for a habitation or its hinterland, in Latin a *locus* or *terra*, often but not always small and distinct from a walled *castrum*.⁴² By the thirteenth century it was employed as the equivalent of *casale*, a village, which is what Galatina is called in the few extant fourteenth-century documents.⁴³ The term *chora* is used regularly in fourteenth-century Salentine manuscripts⁴⁴ and survives three times in the region's public texts: it identifies the village of Carpignano in the tower inscription cited above; it denotes the home town of the patron of a hospital in 1372/73 (George Longo του χωρίου Ανδράνου, of the village of Andrano);⁴⁵ and it indicates the origins of a family of supplicants, from the χωραξ Νούτζη, the village of Nociglia, shown in the apse of a rock-cut church at Vaste in 1379/80.⁴⁶ All these habitats were probably smaller than Galatina, so *chora* was likely used in our inscription in its broader sense, unrelated to size.

No one in Galatina remembers a church of St. John near the Porta Nuova, and I have found no record of it. A church dedicated to John the Evangelist and another to John the Baptist were objects of pastoral visits by the archbishop of Otranto in 1538–1540, but the location of both is unknown. Additional churches dedicated to each of those saints were apparently situated outside of the town, but the only churches possibly associated with Porta Nuova are a Sant'Antonio “de la nova” and a St. James “dela porta”.⁴⁷ The church might already have been destroyed by 1538, and the text itself is almost certainly lost. Nevertheless, even if it raises more questions than it answers, the Galatina inscription is a meaningful record of medieval Salentine history, language, and culture. Its author advertises his own fidelity to the region's Italian-French nobility and exhorts the locals, using a mix of familiar Greek terms (*chora*) and “officialese” (*vicariou*), to support that ruling hierarchy by praying for its local representative. Even if few could read the text on their own, the local Greek-speaking majority surely had the contents of such a public text made known to them. While it ostensibly speaks to them, the monumental text simultaneously redounds to the credit of the local *vicarius* and, beyond him, to a roster of increasingly distant rulers. The social hierarchy is thus manifested publicly and permanently; it is, literally, engraved in stone.

Greek inscriptions at the western margin of the Byzantine Empire, even those produced within the imperial borders and during those centuries, have not received sufficient scholarly attention. A 1996 compendium of medieval Greek inscriptions in Italy is very lacunose and sometimes unreliable, as numerous subsequent publications have demonstrated.⁴⁸ Even when they are well published, however, these texts have seldom

⁴⁰ VALLONE, Galatina tra storia e leggenda 27–31.

⁴¹ C. MASSARO, Economia e società di una ‘quasi città’ del Mezzogiorno tardo medievale: San Pietro in Galatina, in: Dal Giglio all’Orso. I Principi d’Angiò e Orsini del Balzo nel Salento, ed. A. CASSIANO and B. VETERE. Galatina 2006, 147–193: 147.

⁴² J. LEFORT, The Rural Economy, Seventh–Twelfth Centuries, in: The Economic History of Byzantium from the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century, ed. A. E. LAIOU. Washington, D.C. 2002, 231–310: 236–237, 275–81; MARTIN, La Pouille 268–270, 282.

⁴³ A. JACOB, Le nom de famille du dernier copiste grec de Gallipoli: à propos du colophon du Laurentianus 86,15 (an. 1347). *Bollettino storico di Terra d’Otranto* 2 (1992) 82–83; MARTIN, La Pouille 285; MASSARO, Economia e società 147, n. 5 for the identification of Galatina as a *casale*.

⁴⁴ JACOB, Le nom de famille 82–83; the terms πόλις and κώμη are also employed.

⁴⁵ A. JACOB, Fondation d’hôpital à Andrano en Terre d’Otrante (inscription byzantine du Musée provincial de Lecce). *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome, Moyen Âge – Temps modernes* 93/2 (1981) 683–693; L. SAFRAN, Jewish and Greek Patronage in Apulia: Two Texts (1313/14, 1372/73), in: *Medieval Italy: Texts in Translation* 258–260; GUILLOU, Recueil des inscriptions 174–175, nos. 162–163; SAFRAN, The Medieval Salento 226–227, 244–245.

⁴⁶ JACOB, Vaste en Terre d’Otrante 257–258; SAFRAN, The Medieval Salento 333–335.

⁴⁷ V. BOCCADAMO, Terra d’Otranto nel Cinquecento: la visita pastorale dell’archidiocesi di Otranto del 1522 (*Società e religione* 11). Galatina 1990, 114.

⁴⁸ GUILLOU, Recueil des inscriptions grecques médiévales d’Italie; cf. the publications cited supra by André Jacob.

been incorporated into wider Byzantine studies.⁴⁹ My recent book provides English translations of almost all of the extant Greek inscriptions and graffiti in the region (and the Latin and Hebrew ones as well) in an effort to make this corpus of texts more accessible to Byzantinists and others.⁵⁰ Much of this corpus is, politically speaking, post-Byzantine, but the Orthodox and Greek-language afterlife of the Salento merits the same kind of scholarly attention as post-Manzikert Cappadocia and the Frankish Peloponnese. The more we know about Greek texts such as those in Sta. Maria di Cerrate and San Pietro at Galatina, the more we will know about the Byzantine and medieval world as a whole.

⁴⁹ For example, the moving and detailed eleventh-century epitaph of Stratigoules at Carpignano was not included in a recent book about Byzantine childhood: *Becoming Byzantine: Children and Childhood in Byzantium*, ed. A. PAPAConstantinou and A.-M. Talbot. Washington, D.C. 2009.

⁵⁰ See above, note 4.

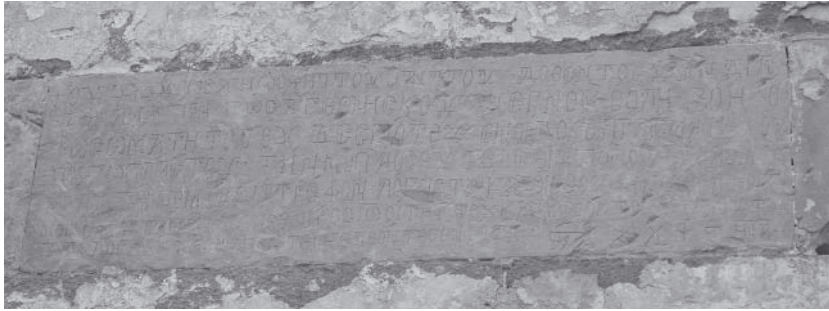


Fig. 1: Sta. Maria di Cerrate, west façade, left of doorway, funerary inscription of John the Priest, 1197/98

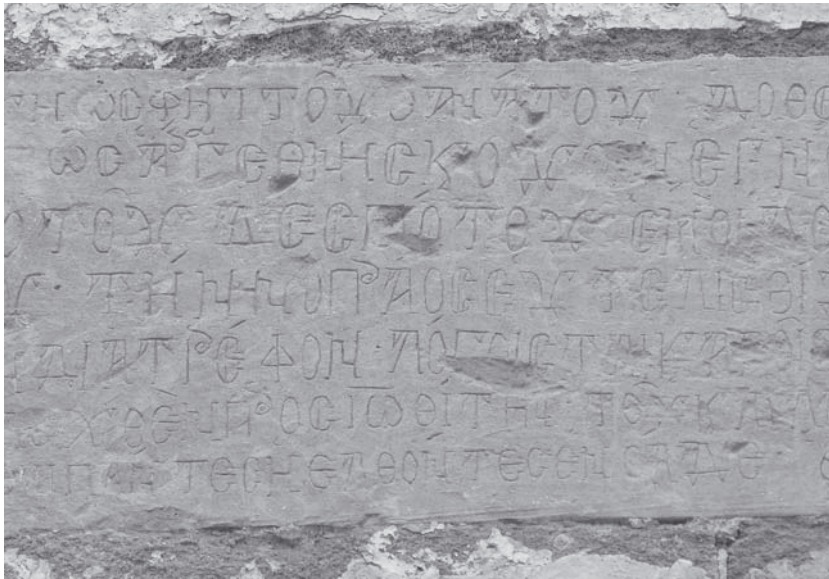


Fig. 2: Sta. Maria di Cerrate, west façade, left of doorway, funerary inscription of John the Priest, 1197/98, detail of central part

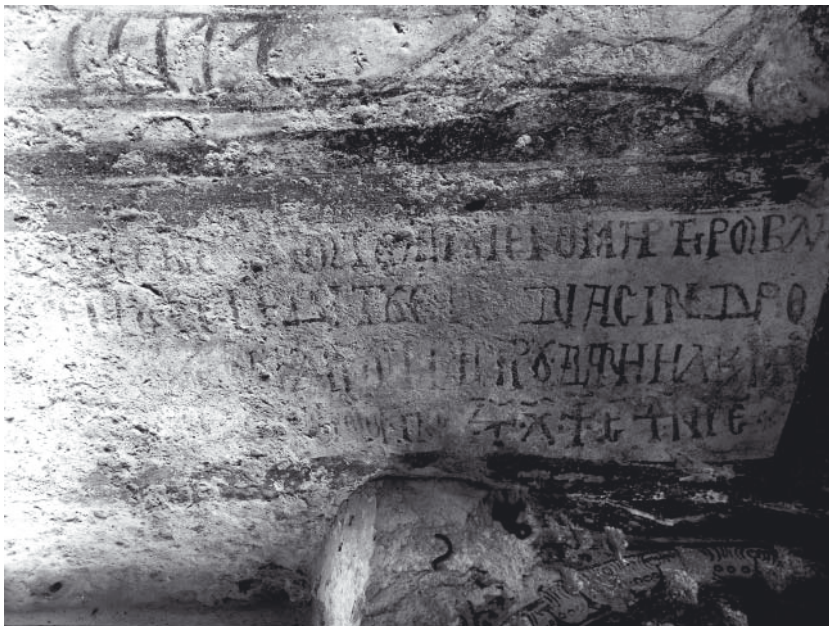


Fig. 3: San Vito dei Normanni, San Biagio, ceiling, dedicatory inscription, 1196, detail of right half

Οὐδεις ὑπάρχει ὃς φύγη τοῦ **θανάτου** δοθέντος ἡμῖν διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Πῶς ἄραγε **θνήσκου(σι)ν** ἐν νόμοις ὅλοι ζωηφόρω σώματι τῷ τοῦ **δεσπότης**; Ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ πταισμάτι τοῦ πρωτοπλάστου. Τοίνυν ὁ **πρῶτος εὐτελής** θυηπόλος. Ζήσας μὲν καλῶς τὴν νομὴν διατρέφων. **λόγοις** τε καλοῖς σωστικοῖς καὶ ἐντίμοις. Ταῦτα μὲν λεχθὲν πρὸς **Ἰω(άννην) θύτην** τοῦ καὶ λαχόντος (τοῦ) βίου τοῦ τὸ τέλος. εὐχέσθε πάντες οἱ **ἐλθόντες** ἐνθάδε. ἔτ(ους) .ϛ̅ {χ̅} ψ̅ ηνδ(ικτιωνος) ᾗ

Fig. 4: Sta. Maria di Cerrate, funerary inscription of John the Priest with vertical emphasis added, diagram

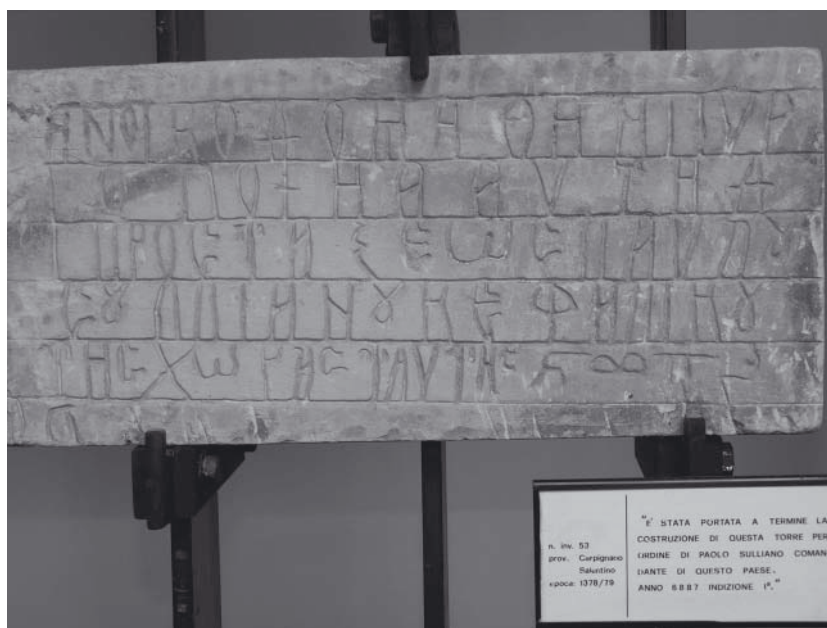


Fig. 5: Museo Provinciale „Sigismondo Castromediano“, from Carpignano, tower, dedicatory inscription of Paul of Sogliano, 1378/79

