

ON THE NORTH PICENIAN LANGUAGE*

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Introduction

In his well-known monograph *Prae-Italic Dialects of Italy* from 1933 J. Whatmough designated the inscriptions from ancient Picenum as 'Old Sabellian' (II, 207-257). He classified them as East Italic and divided them in North and South ones. The Osco-Umbrian provenance of the South Picenian inscriptions had been identified already by Blumenthal (1929). Thanks to the later edition of Marinetti (1985) Rix and others demonstrated a close relationship of South Picenian and the language of the Sabines, the northern neighbours of the Romans. As North Picenian were defined by Whatmough the inscriptions numbered in his edition (PID) as 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347. But the language of the inscription Nr. 347 was later determined as Umbrian and in the inscription Nr. 346 both Latin and Etruscan texts were recognized as such, each consisting of four words and two abbreviations. From the remaining inscriptions three are heavily fragmentary:

Amulet unearthed near Rimini [PID 342]: *ANOIAN | VESISĀ | TNEŠ | AVEI*
 Fragment of the stele from Novilara [PID 344]: ..] *LŪPES | ...MDEGEET·T*
 Sandstone perhaps from the locality Fano; on its opposite side there is depicted the scene of a battle against pirates [PID 345]: *·PA · SAT · IGOT | .. KEŠOTERI*
 | ...*AMDET : NK | ...] ...K ... I [*

At the end of the 19th century near Novilara by the Adriatic coast on the line connecting Fano and Pesara in the immediate neighbourhood of the South Picenian inscriptions a sandstone stele with reliefs and the longest North

* Throughout this text, I have used the following abbreviations: IE Indo-European, Lat. Latin, Marr. Marrucian, Mars. Marsian, Osc. Oscan, Pael. Paelignian, SPic. South Picenian, Umb. Umbrian, Venet. Venetic, Vol. Volscan, LL Liber Linteus. This study was prepared in cooperation with the Centre for the Interdisciplinary Research of Ancient Languages and Older Stages of Modern Languages (MSM 0021622435) at Masaryk University, Brno, and thanks to the grant No. IAA901640805.

Picenian inscription consisting of 12 lines was found. It is written in a script which is not too different from the North Etruscan script. It differentiates the signs \mathfrak{D} and \mathfrak{K} , transcribed as *g* and *k* respectively (with regard to existence of *k* the transcription *c* of the sign \mathfrak{D} , proposed by von Planta, Brandenstein, Rosenkranz and Pisani, makes no sense; Whatmough, Lejeune, Poultney, Eichner prefer the transcription *g*). The sign \mathfrak{R} should be transcribed as *d*, like in the Oscan script, in agreement with Whatmough, Pisani, Lejeune, Poultney, Eichner, more probably than *v/w*, proposed by von Planta, Lattes, Brandenstein, because for *v* the sign \mathfrak{A} was used in the North Picenian script. Doubtful remains the transcription of the last signs in the 4th and 5th lines. In the 4th line it is more probable to distinguish the pair of signs $\mathfrak{L}\mathfrak{A}$, read from the right to the left side as *vi* (Eichner), than the sign \mathfrak{M} , transcribed as *š* (Poultney). The last sign in the 5th line seems to be more probably \mathfrak{M} *š* according to Poultney than \mathfrak{M} *m*, proposed by Eichner. Poultney (1979, 53) thinks that the signs $\mathfrak{M}s$ and \mathfrak{M} *š* have the same origin, where \mathfrak{M} *š* should represent a palatalized variant of *s* before *i* as in *NEŠI* or before *û* as in *TASŪR*, *ET|ŠŪT*, *TISŪ*. He does not except that the palatalization could also touch the velar as in the case of Umbrian *d*, which is traditionally transcribed as *ç* or *š*. Accepting it, the equivalent of North Picenian *NEŠI* could also be Lat. *neci*. Whatmough used the symbol *û* to transcribe the sign \mathfrak{V} in agreement with the Oscan alphabet; it should be a vowel between *o* and *u*. The sign \mathfrak{B} is transcribed as *b* in agreement with its form and function in the West Greek, Old Etruscan (only in list of signs), Umbrian, and Oscan alphabets. Only one time the sign \mathfrak{O} (6th line) appears which is known in both West Greek and Etruscan alphabets and bears the phonetic value *θ*. This sign is also known in the Camunian script, where it is transcribed as *φ* or *ψ*. It is necessary to mention that in the poor North Picenian corpus the sign for *f* is missing. In Etruscan, Umbrian and Oscan scripts the sign \mathfrak{F} is used for this function, in the archaic Latin texts \mathfrak{A} , while some Etruscan and the Venetic alphabets prefer the digraph consisting of the signs *v+h*: $\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{A}$ (archaic Etruscan alphabet: from the right to the left side) or $\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{A}$ *vh* or $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{H}$ *hv* (Venetic alphabet: from the left to the right side). In the known North Picenian inscriptions the sign for *h* is also missing. The author of the following transcription is Poultney (1979, 50), who basically accepted the reading of Whatmough (1933):

Line		← - - →
1	$\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{D}$ - $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}$ - $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{M}$ - <i>MIMNIS · ERŪT · GAARESTADES</i>	
2	$\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{V}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{I}$ - $\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{V}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{D}$ - <i>ROTNEM · ŪVLIN · PARTEN · ŪS</i>	
3	$\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - $\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{I}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{J}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{I}$ - <i>POLEM · ISAIRON · TET</i>	
4	$\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}$ - $\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{M}$ - $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{M}$ - <i>SŪT · TRAT · NEŠI · KRŪŠ</i>	
5	(or \mathfrak{M} ?) $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{D}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{I}$ - $\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - $\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - <i>TENAG · TRŪT · IPIEM · ROTNEŠ (or -M?)</i>	
6	$\mathfrak{J}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{A}$ - $\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{I}$ - $\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{O}$ - $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{I}$ - <i>LŪTŪIS · ΘALŪ · ISPERION · VŪL</i>	
7	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{A}$ - $\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{D}$ - $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}$ - <i>TES · ROTEM · TEŪ · AITEN · TASŪR</i>	
8	$\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{J}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{K}$ - $\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{M}$ - $\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{M}$ - <i>SOTER · MERPON · KALATNE</i>	
9	$\mathfrak{V}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{A}$ - $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{I}$ - $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{J}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{A}$ - $\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{M}$ - <i>NIS · VILATOS · PATEN · ARN</i>	

- 10 Ἦ - ΜῆΓΑ - ὈΑἸἸἸἸἸἸἸἸἸ - ΜἸῪ - ὨἸἸ · BALESTENAG · ANDS · ET
 11 ἸἈἸἸἸἸἸἸἸ - ἸἈἸἸἸἸἸἸ - ἸῪἸἸἸἸ - ἸῪἸἸ - ḶḶḶḶ · LAKŪT · TRETEN · TELETAŪ
 12 MῆἸ - ΜἸKTOM - ῪἸἸἸἸ - ἸἸἸἸἸἸ - ἸἸἸἸ - NEM · POLEM · TISŪ · SOTRIS · EŪS

It was already Brandenstein (1941, 1190-1191) who formulated the opinion that the text was written in metrum. Poultney (1979, 54-55) proposed a use of the trochaic tetrameters with the initial stress. Heiner Eichner (1988-90, 201) also offered a metrical interpretation of the text which allowed him to connect some words continuing from one line to the other. Besides a rather different orthography ($\overset{\circ}{u} = u$, $\overset{\circ}{s} = s_2$) in his reading several marginal differences from the reading of Poultney appear which are designated by the bold letters (see the palaeographical analysis above). Another change consists in the separation of the segments *GAARES TADES* in the first line and, conversely, the connection of two segments separated by a dot in the word *TRATNES₂I* in the 4th line:

MĪMNIS ĒRUT GĀARES TĀDES
RŌTNEM ŪVLIN PĀRTEN ŪS
PŌLEM ISĀIRON TĒTS₂UT TRĀTNESI
KRUVĪTĒNĀG TRUT ĪPIĒM
RŌTNEM LŪTŪIS T^HĀLU ISPĒRĪON
VŪLTES RŌTNEM TĒŪ AITĒN
TĀS₂UR SŌTER MĒRPON KĀLĀTNENIS
VĪLATOS PĀTEN ĀRNUĪS
BĀLĒSTENĀG ANDS ĒTS₂UT LĀKUT
TRĒTEN TĒLETĀU NĒM
PŌLEM TĪS₂U SŌTRIS ĒUS

With regard to the lack of historical information concerning the inhabitants of this territory in the ancient period, the language of the inscriptions ## 342-345 is called North Picenian according to the location of the inscriptions. Numerous attempts to interpret these probable tomb inscriptions dated to the mid of the 1st millennium BC were not successful. Till the present time no personal names were identified. For this reason the genetic affiliation of the North Picenian language remains ambiguous. There are supporters of both the hypotheses of its Indo-European appurtenance (Herbig 1927; Durante 1962, 1978; Poultney 1979) and non-Indo-European characterization (Imperato 1994; Sverdrup 2009).

The following comments refer to specific features of the North Picenian language in comparison with other languages of ancient Italy.

Phonetic features

The occurrence of voiced stops: **b-** *BALESTENAG*; **-d-** *TADES*, *ANDS*; **g-** *GAARES*, **-g** *BALESTENAG*, *KRUVITENAG* / *KRUŠTENAG*. The presence of the voiced stops would exclude the Etruscan and probably Raetian languages, although the scarcity of

the voiced consonants can be more probably explained through borrowing from a language in which the voiced stops are typical.

A final *-m*: *IPIEM*, *POLEM* (2 times), *ROTEM*, *ROTNEM* (after Eichner 2 times), *NEM* or *TELETAUNEM*. This feature is characteristic of both Etruscan and many of the Indo-European languages, e.g. Indo-Iranian, Italic, Lusitanian, Celtic in Celtiberian, Lepontic and Gaulish of Gallia Narbonensis. The change **-m > -n* appears in the central and northern dialects of Gaulish, including Cisalpine Gaulish, further e.g. in Messapic, Greek, Phrygian, Anatolian.

The basic set of five vowels *i - e - a - o - u* is well documented in North Picene. The vowel *o* is foreign to Etruscan, but usual in the Italic and Celtic languages. The doubled *aa* in the word (or a foreign proper name, on account of the initial voiced *g*-?) *gaares* can indicate that the language differentiated /*a*/ and /*ā*/. It is natural to ask, if there are the long correlates to other vowels. In the inscription PID 344 the doubled *ee* appears (...*MDEGEET*). The long **ō* can be hidden behind *ū*, at least in the final syllables. Similar development is known from the Osco-Umbrian and Celtic languages. An unambiguous counter-argument is not provided by the word *SOTER* from the 8th line, although it represents an adaptation of Greek σωτήρ “saver, rescuer, saviour, liberator”, gen. -ῆρος, voc. σωτήρ. The adaptation is apparently late, and *o* is not in the final syllable.

In the text PID 343 there are 14 different consonants which occur 132 times in sum, in the following order: **⚭** *t* 33 (25,0%), **⚮** *n* 19 (14,4%), **⚭** *s* 18 (13,6%), **⚭** *r* 17 (12,9%), **⚭** *l* 10 (7,6%), **⚭** *m* 8-7 (6,1-5,3%), **⚭** *p* 6 (4,5%), **⚭** *š* 6-5 (4,5-3,8%), **⚭** *v* 4-3 (3,0-2,3%), **⚭** *k* 3 (2,3%), **⚭** *g* 3 (2,3%), **⚭** *d* 2 (1,5%), **⚭** *b* 1 (0,8%), **⊗** *θ* 1 (0,8%).

Remarkable is the high frequency of the stop *t*, it represents a quarter of all given occurrences. This fact cannot be explained only by the role of the final *-t* as a grammatical marker. In the final position *-t* appears 6 times (if the words *TET|ŠŪT* and *ET|ŠŪT* would be wrongly reconstructed, then 8 times), which is comparable with *-s* (8 or 9 occurrences, depending on connection or separation of *GAARES TADES*) and *-n* (7 times). It is necessary to propose that the sign **⚭** designated more consonants than only *t*. The voiced correlate *d* is the first candidate which should be taken in account. It is identified in the sign **⚭**, but only in medial position (*TADES*, *ANDS*), similarly in PID 345: *AMDET*. Maybe a similar prefix resembling the continuants of Italic **amb^hi-* in the Osco-Umbrian languages (Osc. *AMNŪD* “around”) is expectable in PID 344: ...*MDEGEET*. In the initial and final position only one dental appears – in the inscription PID 343 it was recorded by the sign **⚭**, up to this time transcribed as *t*. If this sign was read not only as *t*, but also as *d*, or, if need be, some other consonants with similar articulation. Thanks to this assumption other forms and idioms may receive a sense: *TEŪ · ... · ... · SOTER* resemble the Greek vocative *ὦ Ζεῦ σωτήρ* “ó Zeus liberator!” Original *d-* was preserved e.g. in Laconian and Boeotic *Δεύς*.

Among vowels and diphthongs the sign $\mathfrak{A} e$ is most frequent, it occurs 27 times, not taking in account the diphthongs, including $e\grave{u}$ with 2 and ie with one occurrence(s). The sign $\mathfrak{A} a$ follows with 15 occurrences, plus aa 1 time and the diphthongs ai 2 times and au 1 time. Further occurrences: $\mathfrak{Y} \acute{u}$ (13), plus $\acute{u}i$ (2), i (13-12), $\mathfrak{O} o$ (10), plus io (1). The significant difference in representation of the sign $\mathfrak{A} e$ in comparison with all other vowels indicates that this sign could express more vowels or diphthongs, e.g. \bar{e} , reflecting either the original quantity or the diphthong $*ei$; this one is not attested directly (with exception of PID 342, where the form *avei* appears).

Morphological features

In inscriptions of this type predominantly occur nominal forms, frequently proper names. For this reason the interpretation of the noun inflexion is most promising. Nom. sg. of o -stems: *VILATOS* – it can be an adaptation of Greek εὐήλατος “very merciful (epithet of Apollo and other deities)” (Durante 1962, 68) or of a proper name of the type Etruscan *Filatas*, which itself is apparently of Greek origin (Morandi 1985, §6).

Nom. sg. of \bar{a} -stems or n -stems, or nom.-acc. sg. ntr. of u -stems: $\Theta AL\grave{U}$, $TIS\grave{U}$ – cf. Osc. *víú*, Umb. *MUTU* or Lat. *homō*, Umb. *KARU* or Lat. *cornu*, Umb. *TRIFU*.

Nom. (or gen.?) sg. of i -stems: *MIMNIS*, *KALATNE|NIS* – cf. Lat. *turris*, Venet. *EKVOPETARIS*.

Nom. sg. of $\bar{o}r$ -stems: $TA\check{S}\grave{U}R$ – cf. Lat. *victor*, Osc. *KEENZSTUR*, Umb. *AŘFERTUR*, Mars. *CETUR*, Pael. *SALAUATUR*.

Nom. sg./pl. of \bar{e} -stems or nom. pl. of the consonant stems: *GAARES* & $(s)TADES$ (in orthography of the inscriptions the geminates are not reflected), $V\grave{U}L|TES$; further *L\grave{U}PES* in PID 344.

Gen. sg. of r -stems: *SOTRIS* from *SOTER* as Lat. *PATRIS* from *PATER*, Osc. *MAATREÍS*, Umb. *MATRES*, Marr. *PATRES*, all from $*-e\grave{i}s$. Although *SOTER* apparently represents an adaptation of Greek σωτήρ “saver, rescuer, saviour, liberator”, the genitive σωτήρος, and any other case cannot be a source of the form *SOTRIS*.

Dat. sg. of r -stems: $\dots KE(=)\check{S}OTERI$ (PID 345), cf. Osc. *PATEREÍ*, SPic. *PATEREÍH*, *MATEREÍH*, Mars. *PATRE*, Umb. *JUVEPATRE*, Lat. *patrī*, Venet. *VHRATEREI*.

Dat. or loc. sg. of i -stems: *AVEI* (PID 342), cf. Lat. $av\bar{i} < *-e\grave{i}/*-e\grave{i}e\grave{i}$ (dat. sg.) or $*-e\grave{i}$ (loc. sg.), Venet. dat. sg. *KANEI*, Umb. dat. or loc. sg. *OCRE*.

Acc. sg. of consonant or i - or \bar{e} -stems: *POLEM* (2x), *ROTNEM*, *ROTEM*, maybe also *IPIEM*, $TELATA\check{U}|NEM$, cf. Lat. *mentem*, *hominem*, *rēgem*, *diem*; Umb. *UVEM*. Poultney (1979, 59) added still the $-i\bar{o}$ -stems.

Dat.-abl. pl. of *o*-stems: *ARN|UIS*, *LŪTŪIS*, cf. OLat. *QUROIS*, Lat. *lupīs*, Osc. *FEĪHŪIS*, Umb. *VESKLES*, Vol. *UESCLIS*, Mars. *PUCLES*, Pael. *PUCLOIS*, SPic. *PUCLOH* (see also Poultney 1979, 60; Untermann 2000, 599).

In some words the pronouns may be identified:

ŪS – cf. Umb. *URU URU* “illo”, abl. sg. f. *URA-KU*, dat.-abl. pl. *URES*, where *-r-* < **-s-*.

EŪS – cf. OLat. *EIIUS*, Lat. *eius* - gen. sg. from OLat. *EIS*, Lat. *is*; the function of the gen. is supported by the preceding word *SOTRIS*, which was already identified as the gen. sg. *SOTER*.

ET|ŠŪT – it can correspond to the Lat. demonstrative *iste / ista / istud*, Umb. *ESTU* ‘istum’, *ESTE* ‘istud’ or Umb. abl. sg. *ESSU* < **EK-SŌD*.

Concerning verbs, Poultney (1979, 60-61) thinks that at least some words terminating in *-t* represent verbs in the 3sg. and the final *-n* indicates the 3pl. ending **-nt*. In the singular the following forms should be taken in account: *ERŪT*, *TRŪT*, *AKŪT*; maybe also *TRAT*, if it does not form one unit with the following word *NEŠI*. From the point of view of the internal structure of the Indo-European verb there is only one grammatical category which can be identified in the forms in *-ŭ-t*, namely the IE thematic optative in **-oi-*, originally from the thematic vowel **-o-*, plus the own optative marker **-ieH₁-/*-iH₁-* (Brugmann 1916, 557-561; Szemerényi 1996, 260). The development **-oi-* > *ū* is also known in the Italic languages: Lat. *ūnus* “one” m., Umb. *UNU* “one” ntr. < **oino-*. The final *-n* appears in the following forms: *ŪVLIN*, *PARTEN*, *ISAIRON*, *ISPERION*, *AITEN*, *MERPON*, *PATEN*, *TRETEN*, plus *ANOLAN* in PID 342. The development **-nt* > *-n* is known e.g. from the Venetic language. Durante (1962, 69) mentioned that the forms in *-on* can indicate their Greek origin, while in the final *-en/-in* the ‘postposition’ *en* can be identified. It is a feature characteristic for the Osco-Umbrian languages, cf. SPic. *AKREN* < **agrei en*, Osc. *HŪRTĪN* < **hurtei en*. Presence of verbal forms in other persons than the 3rd one is hypothetically possible, but less probable (naturally in this case their nominal functions discussed above are excluded):

1. sg. in **-eio-m(i)*: *ROTNEM* & *ROTEM*, *POLEM*, *IPIEM* (**epi-ei-(e)iom(i)?*);
1. sg. in **-(i)ō*: *ŌALŪ*, *TIŠŪ*;
2. sg. in **-ei-s(i)*: *ROTNEŠ* (: *ROTNEM!*), *NEŠI* or *TRAT-NEŠI*;
2. pl. in **-tes*: *VŪL|TES*.

Another hypothetical verbal form can be the word *TET|SŪT*. It is attractive to see here the form **dedstōd* of the verb **dō-* (**deH₃-*) “to give” or **(s)tist(V)tōd* from the verb **stā-* (**steH₂-*) “to stand”; the termination resembles the Umbrian 3 sg. imp. *TEŔTU* & *DIRSTU* < **dedH₃etōd* or *seSTU* < **sistH₂etōd* (cf. Untermann 2000, 175-178, 674).

Lexicon

Relatively easiest is the identification of loans. According to Durante (1962, 68) the following words are of Greek origin: *POLEM* ~ πόλις, *ISPERION* ~ ἐσπέριον, *SOTER* & *SOTRIS*, maybe also (-)ῶ*SOTERI* ~ σωτήρ, *VILATOS* ~ εὐίλατος, *MERPON* ~ deverbative of the verb μέλομαι, *BALESTENAG* 'ballistarius' ~ *βαλλιστή, *TELETAÚ* ~ τελευταῖος, *TISŪ* ~ θυσία. It is possible to add the form *TEŪ*, if it reflects the voc. sg. *Δεῦ (see above). Ribezzo (1950-51, 193-194) proposed several Etruscan etymologies of the words from the inscription of Novilara: *TRŪT* ~ *TRUT-NVT* 'fulguriator' (bilingual from Pesaro); *LŪTŪIS* ~ *LUT*, *LUØ* "temple" (LL; -*ui*- has to be a feminine marker); *VŪL|TES* ~ *VOLTA* 'infernal deity' = *VELØA* (LL); *ARNŪIS* ~ **Arnui*, female counterpart of the man's personal name *Arna*; *KALATNE|NIS* ~ *CALATNAM* (LL). As it seems, the Etruscan influence is visible especially in adaptation of the proper names, titles, and cultural terms, which do not allow us any unambiguous conclusions concerning the genetic affiliation of the North Picenian language on the basis of lexicon.

Conclusion

The language of the stele of Novilara and other Northern Picenian fragmentary inscriptions is written by the alphabetical script of Etruscan origin which did not differentiate the voiced and voiceless consonants, except when in some proper names or culture words, both of foreign origin. If the phonetic inventory is supplemented by the phonemes which merged in the script, it is possible to conclude that Northern Picenian seems to be a language with Indo-European morphology closely related to the Italic branch.

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