

Folklore Texts in Griko: Current Status

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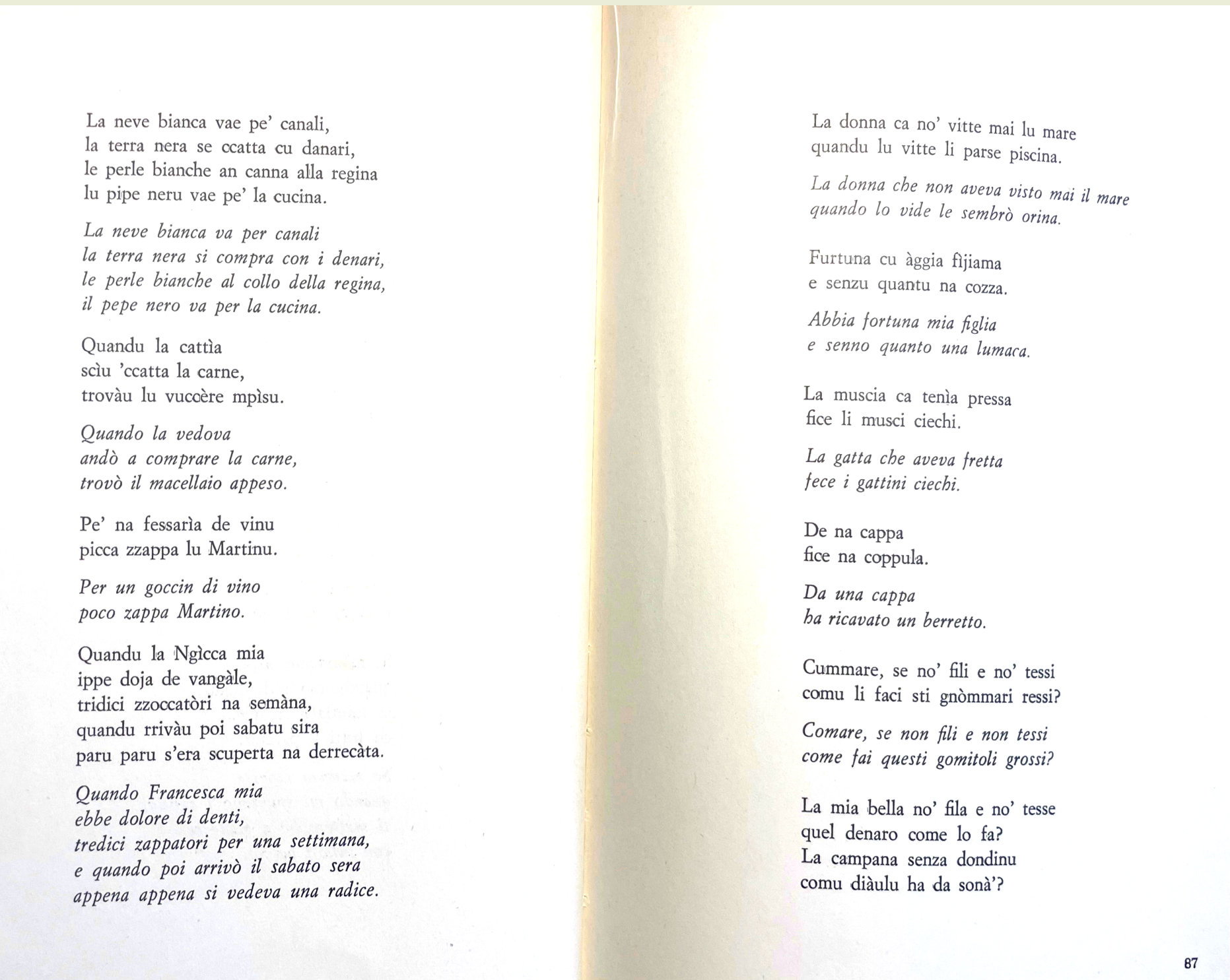
This citizen humanities project supports the PhD dissertation “*Greek-Salentine Literature of Oral Tradition: Retrieval, Classification, and Critical-Literary Analysis.*” It compares historical texts (19th–20th centuries) with contemporary oral memory, annotates obscure passages, and publishes new recordings in an open-access online archive.



Group interview with participants of the Griko learning workshop (Sternatia, December 18, 2025).



Assisted interview with A. Chiriatti, facilitated by G. De Pascalis, (Martano, July 10, 2026).



List of Greek-Salentine proverbs (published in 1980), used to stimulate oral memory during an interview (Corigliano d'Otranto, July 15, 2026).

Background

While Salento experienced a major folk music revival in the late 20th century, oral prose—such as folktales, prayers, and proverbs—remained largely overlooked. This project focuses specifically on these understudied folklore genres (see QR codes for selected bibliography).

Challenges & Limitations

Language Attrition: Low level of language retention among the local population.

Gender & Social Constraints: Limited access to elderly female informants due to traditional patriarchal dynamics.

Logistical Obstacles: Scarce public transport options connecting the target villages.

Methods

Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted with inhabitants across various villages to allow room for organic storytelling.

Community Gathering Events: Utilizing local language courses and elderly Griko speakers' meetups as the primary point of encounter.

Group Interviewing: Dialogue-driven memory recall.

Mediators & Activists: Partnering with cultural association representatives and language activists to act as facilitators and translators.

Textual Prompts: Utilizing published collections and texts as comparative materials to stimulate oral memory during interviews.

Conclusion

While documenting Griko folk prose poses significant challenges today, combining community facilitators with memory-recall methods effectively uncovers new textual variants and their contexts of performance.

Results

Uncovering of Lost Texts: Identification of unpublished oral accounts referenced by a 19th-century researcher.

Documentation of New Variants: Collection of previously unrecorded versions of prayers and proverbs in Griko.

Translingual Code-Switching: Documentation of intra-textual language shifts, specifically a Griko proverb paired with an Italian narrative providing its contextual explanation.

Ethnographic Insights: Acquisition of empirical data regarding the repertoire and categories of oral narratives circulating in the second half of the 20th century.

Open-Access Archiving: A selection of texts was deposited into the local online archive (see QR codes).



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