Λέξις γλυκεῖα
The Importance of the Spoken Word in the Public Affairs of Carlo Tocco (from the Anonymous *Chronaca dei Tocco di Cefalonia)*

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The words spoken by Carlo Tocco (c. 1375-1429)[1] are among the subjects highlighted by the anonymous *Chronaca dei Tocco di Cephalonia*.[2] In this narrative-in-verse of Epirotic demotica from the first half of the fifteenth century, the Tocco ruler of the western Greek Ionian islands and Epiros was described as "a man able to make honey sweet sugar of his words," and "sweeter than sugar."[3] The words of sweetness, but also of flattering, promise, rumor and deception,[4] are frequently found in the chronicler's reference to the political affairs of Carlo Tocco. "Archonts and my youngsters, you who love me," was the way in which Carlo reportedly used to begin encouraging his soldiers before battles.[5] Carlo's "words of greeting and respect" were also frequently mentioned as a part of his diplomatic

[1] The Toccos were originally from Benevento in southern Italy. The first Tocco mentioned in Greece was Guillelmo (d. 1336), the governor of Corcyra on behalf of Philip of Taranto. The Toccos' prestigious status was based on privileges of administrative and military service to the Angevins of Naples, as well as on marriage alliances with other prominent Italian families who ruled some parts of Greece (the Orsini, the Buondelmonti, the Acciauoli). Carlo I, the "duke" of the islands of Leukas, Cephalonia, Ithaka and Zakynthos, further spread the family's interests to Epiros and Peloponese; in 1415, the Byzantine emperor bestowed on him the imperial title of despotes of Epiros. After his death (1429), his bastard sons and his nephew started a fierce inheritance dispute, which, on several occasions turned into actual wars. This facilitated the final Ottoman conquest of the Tocco domains in 1479.

[2] *Cronaca dei Tocco di Cefalonia di Anonimo*, ed. and trans. into Italian by Italian Giusepe Schirò (Rome: Accademia nazzionalc de Lincei, 1975) (henceforth: *CroToc*). A detailed critical analysis of the Chronicle in Giusepe Schirò, "Prolegomeni II," in *CroToc*, pp. 123-142, (henceforth: "Prolegomeni", II). According to "Prolcgomeni, II," pp. 137-139, the Chronicle is an autograph text which must have been written until 1429. Schirò' s chronology is adopted by Donald Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros 1267-1479* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 165. Elisabeth A. Zachariadou, "Οἱ χίλιοι στοίχοι στὴν ἀρχὴ τοῦ Χρονικοῦ τῶν Τόκκο." *Ἠπειρωτικά χρόνικα*, 25 (1983), pp. 158-181, on the other hand, considers the chronicle a work by several authors, continuously expanded until the mid-fifteenth century.

[3] *CroToc*, 5, 5, 1360; ibid., 5, 10, 1473.

[4] E.g., *CroToc*, 2, 5, 572; ibid., 3, 15, 907-908; 3, 30, 1130; ibid., 4, 2, 1177; 10, 2, 2695.

[5] E.g., *CroToc*, 7, 14, 2054-2057.

protocol.[6] On several occasions, the Tocco chronicle even distinguished them as expressions of some hidden diplomatic agenda. For instance, we know that Carlo spoke to a neighboring lord, Muriki Spata, with "sweetened words" (μὲ ζαχαράτους λόγους) not because of his joy about their newly concluded alliance, but because he wanted Muriki to agree to send troops to support him against another neighboring lord, Sguros; an additional reason to use the "sweetened words" on this occasion seems to have been Carlo's desire to keep this meeting secret from the Ottomans, who were frequent "visitors" in the region at the time.[7] Not only Carlo, according to the chronicler, was referred to as skillful in words, other Toccos were presented by the chronicler in a similar light. Carlo's bastard sons, Ercole and Memnon (Menuno), were mentioned as "sweet with people," and "of extraordinary sweetness, educated in eloquence."[8]

The image of Carlo Tocco and his family as unique for sweetness and polite language stands in contrast to the picture attributed by the chronicler to most of their neighbors. Some of these were remembered because of their "concealed words;"[9] if they were the fierce enemies of the Toccos, the chronicler depicted their oral communication as words of lying and hypocrisy.[10] In addition, the chronicler connected the practice of cursing only with the Tocco enemies, although his verses show that it was common among some of the Toccos as well.[11] Among those frequently mentioned for the habit of saying rude and indecent words in public were the most important Tocco adversaries, namely the neighboring Albanian kindreds and former rulers of Ioannina.[12]

The public significance of the Toccos' oral expression might, however, turn out to be a debatable subject. The first reason to believe this comes from several pieces of documentary material, namely documents issued by the Venetians, the Angevins of Naples, and Carlo Tocco himself, which attest that in his political affairs Carlo relied to a considerable extent upon written communication.[13] The

[6] *CroToc*, 5, 13, 1507; *CroToc*, 3, 10, 812-817; *CroToc*, 5, 10, 1466-1473. *CroToc*, 5, 9, 1442-1445, for a suggestion that oral expression was an important part of protocol in the diplomacy of Carlo Tocco.

[7] *CroToc*, 2, 14, 840-852.

[8] *CroToc*, 7, 2, 1941, for Ercole, and 7, 4, 1952, for Memnuno. *CroToc*, 4, 8, 1272, sometimes refers to the oral expression in diplomacy as to a "polite language" (γλῶσσαν παιδευμένην).

[9] *CroToc*, 4, 8, 1270-1274.

[10] *CroToc*, 6, 2, 1625-1626; *ibid*., 6, 14, 1779.

[11] *CroToc*, 9, 5, 2267.

[12] *CroToc*, 10, 14, 2908, describes how Carlo was kind to a relative of Yakub-pasha, who had reportedly said "bad words" against him. Cf. *CroToc*, 6, 14, 1779; *ibid*., 9, 5, 2267

[13] Cf. *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au Moyen Âge*, ed. George Sathas (Paris: Maisoneuve 1881), (henceforth: Sathas), II, 296 (April 13, 1402): *quod ad scribendum talia passione motus est*. Among the documents there are several pieces partly or entirely written by Carlo Tocco in person, cf. *Acta Albaniae Veneta saeculorum XIV et XV*, ed. Joseph Valentini (Palermo, Italy: Centro Internationale di Studi Albanesi, 1967–1977) (henceforth: *AAV*), 2: 7, 747 q (c. May 23, 1399); *ibid*., 761b (August 16, 1399, of the seventh indiction); *ibid*., 761 t; *ibid*., 847b (October 26, 1400); *ibid*., 847t (October 28, 1400); *ibid*., 847q (October 31, 1400). Although some of these letters are rare direct attestations of Carlo's real knowledge

second reason to doubt the reference of the *Chronicle* to Tocco's spoken words is based on the suspicion that some of the chronicle's references might have been only a fabrication of the Tocco family historian. The author never used negative attributes for any of the Toccos; neither did he hide his intention to ignore events that proved unpleasant for Carlo.[14] In addition, he was probably among Carlo's close supporters or officers;[15] consequently, he might have referred to the ruling family of the Ionian islands with a primary intention to panegyrize them. The chronicler might also have attempted to present the Toccos in the best possible light because of certain literary rules of his time.[16] His reference to the Toccos is sometimes identified as a literary *topos*; in addition, although the events were presented in a chronological order, they were narrated as a series of episodic sequences, most of which illustrated Carlo's success.[17]

Furthermore, the reference to Carlo's sweet words might have also been a part of the common public image of the Tocco, generally shared by most of his subjects or by some particular circles of his audience.[18] The notions of oral

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of the Venetian dialect, they say almost nothing about his view of the impact his words might have had on his political affairs.

[14] Glorifying the Toccos, *CroToc, passim*, used terms such as "wonderful," "splendid," "glorious," "blessed," "genuine master" (θαυμαστός, λαμπρὸς, δόκιμος, ἐπιδέξιος, ἀφένδης αὐθέντης). When the chronicler could not avoid recalling some unpleasant occasions, he would suddenly turn to fate and God's will, e.g. *CroToc*, 3, 25, 1082: "O my friend, listen about the great power of God" ("Ακουσον, φίλε, τοῦ Θεοῦ δύναμιν τὴν μεγάλην), or *CroToc*, 3, 30, 1155: "And listen what happened and what fate brought" ("Ακουσε τί ἐγίνετον καὶ τί ἤφερεν ἡ τύχης").

[15] "Prolegomeni, II," 139-142, concluded that the author was either from the circle of administrative officers or from Carlo's military entourage.

[16] Cf. Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 178-194. Regarding the presentation of the chronicle, the author seems to have perceived it both as a narration and a written work, cf. *CroToc*, 4, 4, 1214: "I cannot narrate this, nor can I write about it" (Οὐ δύναμαι τὸ ἐξηγηθῶ, ἀλλ' οὔτε νὰ τὸ γράφω). For an introduction to various aspects of orality and the significance of oral communication these works were of particular help: Michael Richter, *The Oral Tradition in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994); P. N. Johnson-Laird, "Introduction: what is communication," in *Ways of Communicating*, ed. D. H. Mellor (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-14; David Lodge, "The Novel as Communication," in *Ways of Communicating*, pp. 96-113; Noam Chomsky, "Language and Mind," in *Ways of Communicating*, pp. 56-81; Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; repr. 1993); Spiegel, *The Past*, pp. 20-23.

[17] An example of a *topos* of another work, in *CroToc*, 5, 13, 1507 "Τιμητικὰ τοὺς χαιρετᾷ, γλυκέα τοὺς ἐσπλαγχνίσθη", cf. "Τὸ Χρονικὸν τοῦ Μορέως," in *The Chronicle of Morea: a history in political verse relating the establishment of feudalism in Greece by the Franks in the thirteenth century*, ed. John Schmitt (London: Methuen & Co., 1904) (henceforth: *CroMor*), v. 3492-3494.

[18] An indication of the chronicle's distribution are its two copies, found in the Vatican archives, Vat.Gr. 1831 and Vat. Gr. 2214 (the second most probably the work by Nicola Sofianòs). Further on the manuscripts see "Prolegomeni," II, 143-159. As for the questions of its per-

communication were mentioned in the *Chronicle en passant*, with no additional explanation or definition for the audience. Finally, the references about the Toccos' special skills in oral communication might have come from the most common perception of communication practices, not only of the Toccos, but of the medieval society in general.[19] The sweetness of speech is one of those references that can be found in many written works across all medieval epochs and regions. Yet most of these works refer to *dulcia verba* and *dulcetudo* in the light of their sacral meanings.[20] Some, such as the writings of Dante, the humanism of which could have reached the Tocco region easily from Italy, mention the sweetness of speech not as a pragmatic political method, but rather as an indication of the elevated status of those who used it.[21]

The idea that the reference of the Tocco chronicle to Carlo's special way of oral communication was a part of a shared knowledge of oral communication is seen in two works close in time and place to the Tocco chronicle. The anonymous *Chronicle of Ioannina*, a local narrative of the end of the fourteenth century, similarly to the Tocco chronicle refers to oral communication *en passant*, as well as to the importance of public speech of masters to their subjects, and eloquence in general.[22] Like the Tocco chronicle, this work makes clear distinctions between various tones of words spoken in public.[23] The next similarity between the two chronicles is their vocabulary – words denoting a special way of speaking or a per-

formance in public, and of its audience, no definite answer can be reached at this point due to the lack of evidence.

[19] Cf. "Τὸ χρονικὸν τῶν Ἰωαννίνων κατ' ἀνέκδοτον δημώδη ἐπιτομήν," ed. Leandros Vranoussis, *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Μεσαιωνικοῦ Ἀρχείου*, 12 (1962) (henceforth: *CroIoan*), II, 86, 24-26, on how one of the rulers of Ioannina spoke in the manner of a wise man (ὡς σοφὸς προσηγόρευσεν λόγον). Some suggestions that Carlo's oral expression might have been in accordance with a "humanistic" background are found in Jean Froissart, *Les chroniques de sire Jean Froissart: qui traitent des mervailleuses emprises, nobles aventures et faits d'armes advenus et son temps en France, Angleterre, Bretaigne, Bourgogne, Escosse, Espaigne, Portugal et autres parties*, 3 vols. (Paris: Desrez, 1835), 16, pp. 53-54, and *AAV*, 2: 7, 849b (December 31, 1400). The "humanism" of Carlo Tocco might be argued from the basis of his origin, family, frequent contacts with Italy, or his education as suggested by his ability to write in several languages. *CroToc*, 7, 4, 1951, about the education of one of his sons.

[20] Cf. "Adelmannus Leodiensis, Rythmus de uiris illustribus sui temporis," in *Oeuvres de Julien Havet*, ed. Julien Havet (Paris: Leroux, 1896), col. 98, v. 7; *Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius* (Collection d'études et de documents sur l'histoire religieuse et literaire du Moyen-âge, IV) (Paris: Fischbacher, 1904), *passim*, e.g. cap. 74, 4; "Iodocus Badius Ascensius, In Parthenicen Catarinariam Baptiste Mantuani expositio," ed. A. P. Orban, in *Corpus christianorum. continuatio mediaevalis*, 119A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), lib. 3, ln. 858.

[21] Cf. "Dante Alighieri, De uulgari eloquentia, in Dante: Opere minori," ed. Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo (Milano and Napoli: Ricciardi, 1979), II, 1, 2, 10, 84, 1.

[22] *CroIoan*, I, 28, 94, 10-11, refers to the practice of Magdalena Tocco to deliver her speeches in public. *CroIoan*, I, 15, 85, 4-5, and I. 15, 85, 9-10, distinguished some people from the others as "decorated in their word and their deed", or, *ibid*., II, 8, 79, 16-17, as "educated to speak words", or, *ibid*., II, 10, 80, 9 "widely known for their words and deeds", or. *ibid*., I, 16, 86, 24-26, as "wise for speaking words".

[23] *CroIoan*, II, 4, 76, 18-19; *ibid*., I, 16, 86, 26; *ibid*., II, 10, 9, 24-26.

son skilled in words are almost the same.[24] The variety of the tones of oral expression was also similarly presented in the second work, the *Chronicle of Morea*. However, this chronicle was written at least a century before the Tocco chronicle, and as such must have reflected different political and social realities. Therefore, it might be that the similarities between the two accounts were a result of the direct influence of the *Chronicle of Morea* on the Tocco chronicler, rather than the resemblance of communication practices.[25]

Apart from the similarities, all three chronicles share knowledge of how oral communication was highly evaluated in regions with low level of literacy. [26] The predominance of the spoken word is found in other source material for almost all aspects of public life. We know of oral expression at local councils, public proclamations of concessions, announcements of edicts, orally made pleas, oral diplomatic messages.[27] Such a situation must have easily dictated the use of oral expression even if one – like Carlo Tocco – had preferred more sophisticated ways of communication.

Yet despite the similarities, the other chronicles compared with the Tocco account, as well as some other regional sources, do not directly mention the political pragmatism of the sweetness of words. Could it be possible that the *Chronicle of the Toccos* still correctly referred to the Toccos as to the masters of oral expression for their political needs? The evidence of regional affairs seems to suggest such a probability. From the beginning of his rule (c. 1394), Carlo Tocco, a Greek of Italian origin, a "westerner of Roman (= Greek) culture" or a "Roman (=

[24] *Croloan*, I, 12, 83, 32, for λαλώ; *ibid.*, I, 15, 85. 9, for λαμπρός.

[25] "Prolegomeni," II, p. 170, considers the Tocco chronicle an original work, strongly influenced by the Chronicle of Morea. Negative results of my comparison of adjectives referring to rulers in the Chronicle of the Toccos and the Chronicle of Morea seem to confirm Schiro's assumption.

[26] At this point it is important to remember that oral expression was differently practised by the Tocco surroundings. The illiterate local chieftains and most of the population predominantly relied upon oral expression, while some Greeks of Epiros, educated in the most sophisticated manner, together with some western merchants and intellectuals, relied also upon the written form of communication. Moreover, the letters of Demétrius Cydonès, in *Demétrius Cydonès: Correspondance*, ed. Raymond-Joseph Loenertz (Vatican City: Bibliotheca apostolica Vaticana, 1960), II, ep. 201, 17-20 (henceforth: *Cydonès*), mention that some Greeks of this epoch viewed their spoken and written language not just an ordinary method of communication, but also a valuable method of elevated expression. A similar reference to the elevated meaning of the written expression among the Greeks, is found *ibid.*, ep. 333, ln. 45, suggesting that "Latin" westerners' knowledge of letters was commonly not regarded as serious by the Greek educated elite.

[27] Cf. "Adaboldus Ultraiectensis, Uita Henrici imperatoris," ed. G. Waitz, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. SS*, 4 (Hannover: Hahn, 1841), p. 685, ln. 44: *sed rex erat prouidens ... leniter et blande respondit*; Dante, I, 5, 17, 134, 1 sq: *Nonne domestici sui reges marchiones. comites et magnates quolibe fama vincunt*?; AAV 2: 8, 2183 (July 9, 1417); CroMor, 2926; *Michael Attaliates. Historia*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Weber, 1853), p. 159, ln. 13. Also, cf. *CroToc*, 2, 2, 537-538; *ibid.*, 2, 5, 583-585; *ibid.*, 1605-1606. The words perceived as food, in *CroToc*, 3, 30,1154; *ibid.*, 5, 18, 1605-1607.

Greek) of western origin,"[28] was challenged on several fronts, which suggests that his skillful use of oral expression might have been one of his tools to overcome these challenges. In shortest, the land he inherited was poor and devastated through frequent incursions by the neighboring Albanian kindreds and Spanish or local pirates. At the same time, it was exposed to various offensive activities of the Venetians who laid territorial claim to it. Besides, unlike other parts of Greece, divided in 1204 among the French princes and the Venetian Republic, where there was a "co-ordination of the Greek social networks with the political, social, and economic superstructures instituted by the Latins," [29] the factual independence of Epiros between 1215 and 1259 laid the ground for a more aggressive separatist attitude of its nobility with which Carlo must have counted.[30] Moreover, fragments from the reports of Venetian officers hinted that even the *villici* of Carlo, escaping from his territory, contributed to a general instability,[31] as well as his army which often lacked discipline.[32] At the same time, many external problems were in sight. Among the significant ones was Carlo's hostility with Theodore Palaiologos (from 1395), the brother of the Emperor and the despot of Morea, as well as certain problems with his own suzerain, king Ladislas of Naples (noted in 1401).[33]

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[28] Cf. *Laonici Chalcocondilae historiarum demonstrationes*, ed. Eugene Darkó (Budapest: Akademiai Kiadó, 1922) (henceforth: *Chalcocondiles*), I, 194, 22-195, 3. for various identifications of the westerners as the "Franks", the "Celts" and the "Celtibers". These and many other similar identifications by the Greeks of the time all indicate that Carlo Tocco was still considered a foreigner despite the fact that he was born in Greece and that he took part in the Byzantine structures of power.

[29] David Jacoby, "From Byzantium to Latin Romania: Continuity and change," in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, eds. Benjamin Arbel, Bernard Hamilton and David Jacoby (London: Cass, The Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies and the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, 1989), p. 33.

[30] *CroToc*, 5, 4, 1390, and ibid., 10, 5, 3113, mentions how Ioannina was considered the "root of the Greeks" (ρίζα τῶν Ρωμαίων). About the power of the citizens of Ioannina, *CroToc*, 5, 1; *CroToc* 4, 10, and 4, 6; "Mihailos Nepotes Ducas, De rebus Epiri fragmenta," in *Historia politica et patriarchica Constantinopoleos; Epirotica*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Weber, 1834), fr. 2, 230.

[31] Sathas, II, 416 (July 25, 1407); *Regestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, ed. Freddy Thiriet. 2 vols. (Paris and La Haye: Mouton, 1958-1972) (henceforth: Thiriet, *Reg.*), I, 782, ~ 2; ~ 4 (December 12, 1390); *AAV*, 2: 6, 1600 (September 27, 1410); *Croloan*, I, 41, 101. About the claims of the Venetians to these people and the territory, Thiriet, *Reg.*, I, 829 (April 15, 1393, of the first indiction), and Thiriet, *Reg.*, II, 1345 (March 15, 1409).

[32] *CroToc*, 3, 25, 1085-1090; *ibid.*, 6, 15, 1817-1818.

[33] For various information on the instability of the Tocco domain during the first years of Carlo's rule, or even later, *CroToc*, 1, 5, 74; *ibid.*, 11, 4, 3110; A.T. Luttrell, "The Principality of Achaea in 1377," Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 57 (1964), p. 342; the notes by Nicolo de Martoni (1395) as from the reference in W. Miller, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)* (London: Murray, 1908), p. 352-353; *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, eds. Franz Miklosich and Joachim Müller (Vienna: Gerold, 1862), II, no. 413, 2, 139; *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croissades au XVe siècle*, ed. Nicolae Iorga (Paris and Bucarest: Leroux 1899), II, p. 101; *Chalcocondiles*, I, 196, 1-15; Thiriet, *Reg.*, I, 905 (March 23-27, 1396); Sathas, II, 244 (July 7, 1401); Sathas, II, 414 (July,

A confirmation of Carlo's pragmatism in his use of the spoken words comes from the Venetian documentary material. A document from the Venetian Secret Archives, dated April 18 1423, instructs the Venetian *baiulus* and the captain of the island of Corfu to find an expert and skillful subject who would go as an envoy to Carlo Tocco.[34] The Venetian Senate, deeply involved in both the political and economic affairs of western Greece and the Peloponesos,[35] needed a legate who would know how to negotiate with Carlo "in appropriate words."[36] Another Venetian emissary was instructed in this manner: "regardless of what words Carlo uses," he should try to gain the attention of the Tocco duke, even if this meant his own use of "sharp words".[37] An instruction from 1417 confirms that the Venetians, themselves masters of the spoken word, knew well the range of tones in Carlo's verbal expressions: "you shall present [the case], with adequate and selected words;" if Carlo accepts the proposal, "you shall say that you had expected such a decision from Carlo;" but, if Carlo does not say anything alike, "you should say that Venice shall do everything necessary to protect its honor."[38] The Venetians, furthermore, also seem to have known Carlo's preferences for certain words. In instructions to find adequate and necessary words, their commissions were usually adamant to avoid provoking the Tocco duke and despot. On several occasions the legates were strongly advised to start their missions first with casual conversations with Carlo, and thus create a more relaxed atmosphere for the presentation of their cases.[39] There were also situations when the Venetians recorded that *verba excusatoria*, transmitted orally to them by some envoys of Carlo Tocco for the frequent robberies and other injuries his men did to Venetian merchants, did not mean anything more than just empty explanations.[40] Finally, on several occasions, they called the spoken words of Carlo Tocco a "deception" and "lie."[41]

Although the Venetians gave rather neutral information, the account they provided might turn out to be only a picture viewed through their own eyes. Therefore, another question arises: what did Carlo himself think about the use of his spoken words? To answer this question is almost impossible because his personal correspondence, consisting of a few remaining autograph pieces, does not contain any direct information about his personal view on this subject. Even when the

1407); Thiriet, *Reg.*, II, 1498 (July 28, 1413); *AAV*, 2: 5, 1265 (July 25, 1407); *ibid.*, 1286 (September 14 1407); *AAV*, 2:6, 1530 (March 15, 1410). Nicol, *Epiros*, 169, seems to have disregarded some of these references while describing the region under the Tocco rule as rich.

[34] *AAV*, 2: 11, 2712 (April 18, 1423).

[35] On the situation after the partition of the Byzantine Empire by the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade, see G. Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State*, transl. J. Hussey, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969), p. 422-434.

[36] *AAV*, 2: 11, 2712 (April 18, 1423).

[37] *AAV*, 2: 11, 2689 (February, 28, 1423).

[38] *AAV*, 2: 8, 2183 (July 9, 1417). For a similar instruction, see *AAV*, 2: 11, 2610 (July 22, 1422).

[39] *AAV*, 2:7, 1839 (September 15, 1413).

[40] *AAV*, 2: 7, 1935 (February 6, 1415); *ibid.*, 2: 11, 2712 (April 18, 1423).

[41] Sathas, II, 296 (April 13, 1402). About Carlo's flattery words to the Venetians, *AAV*, 1: 886 (July 7, 1401).

spoken words were mentioned in documents issued by his chancellery, they might easily have been only the product of the correspondence postulates of the time or, equally, of Carlo's official presentation. Still, Carlo's correspondence reveals two cases of the reference to his spoken words that deserve more detailed attention. The first one comes from Carlo's letter to the Venetian Republic (1423) mentioning his kind words to the Ottomans. These words of kindness, as he wanted the Venetians to believe, were expressed in order to avoid being attacked by the Ottomans.[42] In other words, Carlo Tocco hinted at having deliberately spoken in a kind manner in order to ease his inferior position with the Ottomans. Another example of how Carlo referred to his own spoken words as to a method of his politics comes from his autograph letter to the Venetian doge on August 15, 1425, of the third indiction. In it, Carlo described his words exchanged with a Venetian envoy just prior to this letter as "simple" and "reasonable" (*quod quidem dixi ratiocinando sipliciter*), but also not as final (*Nec credo quod tales colloquutiones debent summi pro lege*). [43] In his attempts to persuade the envoy to accept his proposal for the solution of the case of Dragomesto, Carlo referred to having spoken out hidden threats: why not have the case arbitrated, suggested he, by the Angevins of Naples or even by the Pope instead of by the Venetians? [44]

To summarize, there seem to be many indications that the spoken word mentioned by the Tocco chronicle to describe the politics of Carlo Tocco was not a mere fabrication of the chronicler. The chronicle's comparison with other sources of various genres, epochs, and places indicates that the reference to the Tocco's spoken word might have been a part of a common regional or even wider practice of communication. In addition, the evidence of the Venetian documents and of those issued by Carlo Tocco suggest that the spoken word in the public affairs of Carlo Tocco, particularly in his diplomacy, was indeed considered a special method of communication. "Sweet" persuasive oral communication seems to have been a manner in which Carlo avoided conflicts unnecessary and dangerous for his ruling position. Any more detailed direct testimony of what Carlo Tocco thought

[42] *AAV*, 2: 11, 2807 (August 13, 1423). Another interesting conclusion coming out of this letter is Carlo's obvious awareness of the persuasive effects of his written words. As seen in the letter, Carlo used extraordinary superlative written words to address the Venetians as well as he stressed his devotion to the Republic highlighting thus his sincerity in the confession about the nature of his talks with the Ottomans. The reality was different, say the reports of the Venetian officers in the region, e. g. *AAV*, 2: 11, 2712 (April 18, 1423), indicating that they knew well about Carlo's factual and deliberate co-operation with the Ottomans against the Venetian territory.

[43] K. D. Mertzios, "Μία ἀνέκδοτος ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ Καρόλου Α' τοῦ Τόκκου πρὸς τὸν Δόγην Βενετίας γραφεῖσα ἐξ Ιωαννίνων τὸ 1425," *Akten des IX Byzantinischen Kongresses Thessalonike 1953*, (Athens, 1956), II, p. 557-558, presents the letter written in Latin, kept in the Archivio di Stato, Venice, Archivio della Scola di S. Maria del Rosario, busta 29, Commisaria Girardi, Processo No. X, with the translation into Greek.

[44] Mertzios, "Μία ἀνέκδοτος," p. 58: ... *cum in mundo sint plurimi judices, apud quos dicta causa posset discerni; experimendo Sacram coronam Neapolis et Curiam Romanam Pontificis.*

about his own words will make the Tocco chronicle not only a reliable historical source, but also a contribution to depicting an interesting strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean on the eve of the Ottoman conquest.

ORAL HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES
THE SPOKEN WORD IN CONTEXT

Edited by Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter

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Oral History of the Middle Ages
The Spoken Word in Context

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Cover illustration: The wife of Potiphar covets Joseph: "... erat autem Joseph pulchra facie et decorus apectu: post multos itaque dies iecit domina oculos suis in Ioseph et ait dormi mecum." ("... And Joseph was [a] goodly [person], and well favoured. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me."), Gen. 39: 6-7 (KJV). Concordantiae Caritatis, c. 1350. Cistercian abbey of Lilienfeld (Lower Austria), ms 151, fol. 244v (detail). Photo: Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (Krems an der Donau).

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Preface

Oral culture played an instrumental role in medieval society.[1] Due to the lack of any direct source evidence, however, research into the functions and importance of oral communication in the Middle Ages must confront a number of significant problems. Only indrect traces offer the opportunity to analyze phenomena that were based on or connected with the spoken word. The 'oral history' of the Middle Ages requires the application of different approaches than dealing with the 20th or 21st century.

For some decades Medieval Studies have been interested in questions of orality and literacy, their relationship and the substitution of the spoken by the written word.[2] Oral and literate culture were not exclusive and certainly not opposed to each other.[3] The 'art of writing' was part of the 'ars rhetorica' and writing makes no sense without speech.[4] Any existing written statement should also be seen as a spoken one, although, clearly, not every oral statement as a written one. Authors regularly wrote with oral delivery in mind. 'Speaking' and 'writing' are not antonyms.

It is also obvious that "the use of oral communication in medieval society should not be evaluated . . . as a function of *culture populaire* vis-à-vis *culture savante* but, rather, of the communication habits and the tendency of medieval man

[1] For the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, cf. Willem Frijhoff, "Communication et vie quotidienne à la fin du moyen âge et à l'epoque moderne: réflexions de théorie et de méthode," in *Kommuniation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Hundsbichler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), p. 24: "La plupart de gens vivait encore pour l'essentiel dans une culture orale et les procédés d'appropriation des idées passaient de préférence par la parole dite et écoutée, quand bien même on était capable d'une lecture visuelle plus ou moins rudimentaire."

[2] See Marco Mostert, "New Approaches to Medieval Communication?" in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 15-37; Michael Richter, "Die Entdeckung der 'Oralität' der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft durch die neuere Mediävistik," in *Die Aktualität des Mittelalters*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz (Bochum: D. Winkler, 2000), pp. 273-287.

[3] Peter Burke calls the construct of "oral versus literate" useful but at the same time dangerous: idem, "Mündliche Kultur und >Druckkultur< im spätmittelalterlichen Italien," in *Volkskultur des europäischen Spätmittelalters*, eds. Peter Dinzelbacher and Hans-Dieter Mück (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1987), p. 60.

[4] Michael Clanchy, "Introduction," in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), p. 6.

to share his intellectual experiences in the corporate framework."[5] Oral delivery was not "the sole prerogative of any socioeconomic class."[6]

For all these reasons, it is important to analyze the extent of and context, in which 'speech acts,' auditive effects, and oral tradition occur in medieval sources .[7] Research into the use of the spoken word or references to it in texts and images provides new insight into various, mainly social, rules and patterns of the communication system. It opens up additional approaches to the organization and complexity of different, but indispensably related, media in medieval society, and their comparative analysis.[8]

The spoken word is connected with the physical presence of its 'sender.' Speech may represent the authenticity of the given message in a more obvious way than written texts or images. Therefore, the use of 'speech acts' in written or visual evidence also has to be seen in context with the attempt to create, construct, or prove authenticity. Moreover, spoken messages contribute to and increase the lifelikeness of their contents, which may influence their perception by the receiver, their efficacy and success. Being aware of such a situation will have led to the explicit and intended use and application of the spoken word in written texts and images – to increase their authenticity and importance, too.

If one operates with a model of 'closeness' and 'distance' of communication with regard to the level of relation of 'senders' and 'receivers,' then the 'speech acts' or their representation have to be seen as contributors to a 'closer' connection among the participants of the communication process.[9] At the same time, however, speech might be evaluated as less official. One regularly comes across 'oral space'

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[5] Sophia Menache, *The Vox Dei. Communication in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 19.

[6] Ibidem, p. 21. Cf. also Jan-Dirk Müller, "Zwischen mündlicher Anweisung und schriftlicher Sicherung von Tradition. Zur Kommunikationsstruktur spätmittelalterlicher Fechtbücher," in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Hundsbichler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), p. 400: "Offensichtlich sind schriftliche und nichtschriftliche Tradierung von Wissen weiterhin relativ unabhängig voneinander, nachdem die Schrift längst dazu angesetzt hat, Inseln der Mündlichkeit oder praktisch-enaktiver Wissensvermittlung zu erobern. Die Gedächtnisstütze kann die Erfahrung nicht ersetzen, sondem allenfalls reaktivieren. Sie ist sogar nur verständlich, wo sie auf anderweitig vermittelte Vorkenntnisse stößt."

[7] Cf. W.F.H. Nicolaisen, ed., *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1995).

[8] See, esp., Horst Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen, Schrift und Bild. Kultur und Gedächtnis im Mittelalter* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1995), passim.

[9] See also Stefan Sonderegger, ">Gesprochen oder nur geschrieben?< Mündlichkeit in mittelalterlichen Texten als direkter Zugang zum Menschen," in *Homo Medietas. Aufsätze zu Religiosität, Literatur und Denkformen des Menschen vom Mittelalter bis in die Neuzeit. Festschrift für Alois Maria Haas zum 65. Geburtstag,* eds. Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde and Niklaus Largier (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 665: "Jedenfalls darf man sich bewußt bleiben, daß auch in den Texten des deutschen Mittelalters die Reflexe gesprochener Sprache eine bedeutende Schicht ausmachen, die besonders dann immer wieder hervortritt, wenn es um einen direkten Zugang zum Menschen geht, um einVerstehen aus unmittelbarer Partnerschaft heraus ..."

that has become institutionalized or more official by the application of 'written space.'[10] Simultanous employment of such different levels and qualities of messages must often have had considerable influence on their efficacy.[11]

The papers in this volume are the outcome of an international workshop that was held in February, 2001, at the Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, Budapest. Participants concentrated on problems of the occurrence, usage, and patterns of the spoken word in written and visual sources of the Middle Ages. They dealt with the role and contents of direct and indirect speech in textual evidence or in relation to it, such as chronicles, travel descriptions, court and canonization protocols, sermons, testaments, law-books, literary sources, drama, etc. They also tried to analyze the function of oral expression in connection with late medieval images.

The audiovisuality of medieval communication processes[12] has proved to be evident and, thus, important for any kind of further comparative analysis of the various levels of the 'oral–visual–literate,' i.e. multimedia culture of the Middle Ages. Particular emphasis has to be put on methodological problems, such as the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches,[13] or the question of the extent to which we are, generally, able to comprehend and to decode the communication systems of the past.[14] Moreover, the medievalist does not come across any types of sources in which oral communication represents the main concern.[15] Instead, she or he is confronted, at first glance, with a great variety of 'casual' and 'marginal' evidence.

We would like to thank all the contributors to the workshop and to this volume. Their cooperation made it possible to publish the results of the meeting in the same year in which it took place. This can be seen as a rare exception, at least in the world of the historical disciplines. The head, faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Medieval Studies of Central European University offered various help and support. Special thanks go to Judith Rasson, the copy editor of

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[10] This, e.g., could be well shown in a case study on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela: Friederike Hassauer, "Schriftlichkeit und Mündlichkeit im Alltag des Pilgers am Beispiel der Wallfahrt nach Santiago de Compostela," in *Wallfahrt und Alltag in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, eds. Gerhard Jaritz and Barbara Schuh (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), pp. 277-316.

[11] Cf. Bob Scribner, "Mündliche Kommunikation und Strategien der Macht in Deutschland im 16. Jahrhundert," in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Hundsbichler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), pp. 183-197.

[12] Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, p. 292.

[13] Cf. Ursula Schaefer, "Zum Problem der Mündlichkeit," in *Modernes Mittelalter. Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche*, ed. Joachim Heinzle (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1994), pp. 374 f.

[14] Frijhoff, "Communication et vie quotidienne," p. 25: "Sommes-nous encore en mesure de communiquer avec la communication de jadis?"

[15] Michael Richter, *Sprache und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Untersuchungen zur mündlichen Kommunikation in England von der Mitte des elften bis zu Beginn des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1979), p. 22.

this volume, who took particluar care with the texts of the many non-native speakers fighting with the pitfalls of the English language.

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Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter