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ON A TARENTINE INSCRIPTION

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The inscription we are going to deal with is quoted for the first time by M.Mayer in *Not.Scav.*, 1896, p.542, n.8, who describes it as follows:

"Piccola lucerna di terracotta a forma di una testa di bue, della provenienza stessa (Tarento): sul fondo è graffito:"

The image shows a hand-drawn sketch of an ancient Greek inscription in Tarentine script. The characters are stylized and somewhat irregular, typical of graffiti. The inscription reads ΓΡΑΒΕΟΝ ΕΧΟ. The first letter is a large Gamma (Γ), followed by Ρ, Α, Β, Ε, Ο, Ν, Ε, Χ, Ο. The final character is a stylized Omega (Ω) with a hook.

C.Santoro in *Ann.Fac.Mag.Bari* 12, 1972-1973, p.211, IV ("su lucerne"), n. 12 printed: γραβειος εχο, with the following: "Lettura estremamente incerta".

In my opinion, the seventh letter is a N; although its shape is a little careless, it appears often in the Tarentine inscriptions.¹

So I read ΓΡΑΒΕΟΝ ΕΧΟ, which I interpret as γραφειον εχω, taking into account two phonetic features of the dialect: the first, the phenomenon /-eio/ > [-eyo-] > [-eo-], demonstrated epigraphically, Ἀντίδορος ἐπόε, edited by C.Mariani, *Not.Scav.* 1897, pp. 231-232, tav. 5b, and the second, the spelling of /ph/ as [b], demonstrated by the proper name from the Heracleian Tables Βορμίων, I 180.²

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¹ See L.H.Jeffery, *The Local Scripts in Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961, p.183.

² Cf. A.Landi, *Dialetti e interazione sociale in Magna Grecia*, Napoli 1979, p.131.