A Passage of the ‘Barbarograeca’ Metaphrase of Niketas Choniates’ Chronike Diegesis. Retranslated or Revised?

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RETRANSLATED OR REVISED?

The language of the ‘Barbarograeca’ version of the Chronike Diegesis of Niketas Choniates has been discussed on a number of occasions, chiefly in terms of its linguistic and stylistic level, and its relation to the vernacular of the late Byzantine period1. However, two short passages of the Niketas-Metaphrase (hereafter N-M) invite us to observe a reviser at work and to speculate on the likelihood that, for some reason, the original metaphorase
was reworked at this point, or that, on account perhaps of damage, it invited (or presented with the opportunity) a subsequent copyist to experiment or improvise slightly with the material he found before him, thus leaving us with two closely related but nonetheless quite distinct versions. These two passages occur in the chapter on the reign of Alexios II Komnenos (1180-1183). The earliest of the manuscripts, Monacensis gr. 450 (second quarter of the fourteenth century), designated B since Bekker's edition (Bonn, 1835), is the witness to the one version, while the other two manuscripts, Vindobonensis Suppl. gr. 166 (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), designated X by van Dieten, and Scorialensis Ψ-ΙΒ-17 (early sixteenth century), designated S, preserve the second. There is a further manuscript of N-M – Parisinus gr. 3142 – designated Y, but it does not preserve the part with these passages; evidence from other parts of N-M, however, indicates that Y belongs to the XS group, therefore making B the odd man out among the four manuscripts of N-M. In our discussion here, we shall refer to X and S collectively as i, implying that they descend from a common original which differed to some degree from the text witnessed by B.

In lieu of a detailed analysis of the relationship of all the N-M manuscripts to one another, it may be useful, firstly, to sketch briefly the way in which B and i relate to (and diverge from) one another in general, thus providing the likely context within which the present passage needs to be viewed, itself being only a part of a much larger whole. Firstly, the manuscript distribution of the divergences met with in the passage here, is

2. The first of the two passages is on fols 74-74v, while the second, presented here, is on fols 80-81 of ms. Monacensis gr. 450.
3. For further details on this manuscript see NCH, I, pp. XXXIII-XXXIV. For a quick orientation through the manuscript tradition of the Chronike Diegesis see H. Hunger, Die hochsprachliche protane Literatur der Byzantiner, I, Munich 1971, 432-433.
4. NCH, I, pp. XXXIX-XXX.
5. NCH, I, pp. XLVI-XLVII.
6. NCH, I, pp. XL and XXXI-XXXIII.
7. I am at present preparing a critical edition of the Nicetas-Metaphrase as part of my doctoral research under the supervision of Dr A. Angelou at the University of Ioannina. The introduction will contain a detailed analysis of the manuscripts and their relationship to one another.
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consistent with the pattern described above for the N-M manuscripts. Below are enumerated the kinds of variation encountered in B and i (scribal error and orthographical idiosyncracies apart):

1) Variation of lexical items (N[icetae Chon. Hist.]372,47-49):
   πολλοίς μὲν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐφόνευσεν Β
   πολλοίς μὲν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπέκτεινεν i

2) Simple alterations of word order (N356,26):
   μέχρι ταύτης ἐλθείν τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως Β
   μέχρι ταύτης τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως ἐλθείν i

3) B omits where i keeps items that correspond with N:
   τὸ γένος λαμπροῦ καὶ ἐπίσημοι (N390,93)
   ἐκ γένους λαμπροῦ Β
   ἐκ γένους λαμπροῦ καὶ ἐπισήμου i

4) i omits or abbreviates where B keeps items that correspond with N:
   τὴν δοικικὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν Θρακησίων (N400,77)
   τὴν τῶν Θρακησίων ἀρχὴν i
   τὴν δοικικὴν τῶν Θρακησίων ἀρχὴν Β

5) B adds an item that does not correspond with N or i:
   οἱ ταύτης τύραννοι (N370,93)
   τῶν ταύτης τυράννων Πιλιέλμω Β
   τὸ ταύτης τυράννων S
   οἽ
   ἔκτυλεσαν μὲ ὲσαι μέλισσαι κηρίον (N367,18)
   ἔκτυλεσαν μὲ τὴν ἐχθροῦ μου ὲσαι μέλισσαι κηρίον Β
   ἔκτυλεσαν μὲ ὲσαι μέλισσαι κηρίον i

6) i adds (in the form of expanding on a lexical item) where B corresponds with N:
   τὸ θῆνος ὄλον ἀνασφάλειτες (N369,58)
   τὸ ὄλον θῆνος ἀνασφάλειτες Β
   τὸ ὄλον θῆνος ἀνασφάλειτες καὶ ταιρατική i

A count of these variations for the bulk of N-M reveals that nos. 4 and 6 above are the least common types of variation. In other words, i appears to be less divergent from N in terms of lexical and phrasal amplification. It needs to be borne in mind therefore that, while both traditions of N-M must surely derive from the same original (so much of the text being identical in both branches), the version witnessed by B shows a tendency to more radical
departure from the phraseology of N. Yet in matters of accuracy and detail (placenames, grammatical features and scribal errors) the B text, in the vast majority of cases, is more reliable than the other manuscripts. It will become clear to what extent the passage here conforms to this pattern.

In the case of the two versions presented here, a number of questions immediately come to mind. Firstly, perhaps the one version is merely a reworking of the other. Secondly, one may ask whether they both record separate attempts at translation, uninfluenced by one another, although this seems highly unlikely when one considers how the rest of N-M (242 folia in B) does not present other divergences of this extent, and the fact that both B and I have so many shared features, even within this particular passage. Then again, and less improbably, perhaps one of the versions represents a combination of the already existing metaphrase and a reworking from Chomites’ original, an hypothesis that presupposes our scribe/reviser, at least for this part of N-M, having two exemplars before him, a (draft?) metaphrase and the original Chronike Diegesis. There is a fourth possibility, that of the intrusion of interlinear or marginal corrections or alterations, which will be considered below.

By selecting a number of points from the passage appended to this article it should be possible to propose some answers to the questions posed above. Although just one of the two passages concerned is presented here (neither has been previously published), it is the longer of the two, and best illustrates points which can also be found in the other.

A careful reading and comparison of N (the original Chronike Diegesis) and BXS indicates that N-M does deserve perhaps to be characterized as a ‘translation’ of sorts, rather than as a paraphrase proper. If one can take the

8 See H. Hunger, Anonyme Metaphrase zu Anna Komnene, Alexius XI XIII. Ein Beitrag zur Erschliessung der byzantinischen Umgangssprache, Vienna 1981, 7 n 2. ‘Daß man diese Schriften nicht als Paraphrasen, sondern besser als Metaphrasen bezeichnet, hat A. Pignani zu Recht betont: ‘Parafrasi o metafrasi (a proposito della Statua Regia di Niceforo Blemmida)’ Atti Acc Pontan 24 (1976), 219-225’ I use the description ‘metaphrase’ chiefly in order to preserve the looseness of character of the text, as well as to use the more frequently encountered Byzantine word for this kind of text. It generally hovers between paraphrase and translation proper, without apparent consistency or clear
liberty of applying the dictum of modern translation theory, namely, that the golden rule of translation is to fulfill the criteria of accuracy and economy⁹, to a text and linguistic undertaking of this sort (in the case of works such as Planudes’ translation into Greek of Latin works as, for example, Augustine’s treatise on the Trinity¹⁰, Boethius’ Consolatione philosophiae¹¹ or Ovid’s Metamorphoses¹², as well as translations considered to have been undertaken by others¹³, or even Galesiotes’ and Oinaiotes’ metaphrase of the Βασιλικός άναριας of Nikephoros Blemmydes¹⁴, this principle does indeed seem to have been applied), then clearly N-M falls lamentably short of satisfying such demands. Yet the looser designation of ‘paraphrase’, implying as it does a degree of explanation, although valid for many parts of the text, method. It has been variously described by others as ‘Barbarograeca’, ‘vulgärgriechische’, a ‘declassicization’ of a high-style history, as well as a ‘metaphrase’.  


10. For a discussion of the recent bibliography on Latin philosophical and theological works translated into Greek, chiefly in the second half of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, and some recent editions of these works, see L. G. BENAKIS, ‘Lateinische Literatur in Byzanz. Die Übersetzungen philosophischer Texte’, in Φιλέλλην, Essays presented in honour of R. Browning (forthcoming, Venice 1996).


13. That Maximos Holobolos also had translated some texts on logic by Boethius has been called into question by some scholars (see WILSON, op. cit., 224-5). A more recent study, however, accepts the Holobolos attribution: D. Z. NIKETAS (ed.), BOETHIUS’ De topics differentiis und die byzantinische Rezeption dieses Werkes (Boethius, De topics differentiis και οι βυζαντινές μεταφράσεις των Μανουηλ Όλοβολου και Πιεροχού Κιόδον. Παράμετροι/Anhang: Eine Pachymeres-Weiterarbeitung der Holobolos-Übersetzung, The Academy of Athens, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Philosophi Byzantini 5, Athens 1990.

can by no means be said to explain the general process that, with little consistency and less method, brought about the conversion of N to N-M. Failler, in his discussion of another "paraphrase", probably of the same century, described that text as 'more than a simple compendium, yet less than a true paraphrase'15. In comparing these two versions of this particular passage of N-M, therefore, we are faced with the added variable factor of dealing with a text whose precise identity, or self-awareness in respect of its linguistic status and literary objectives, is far from clear. But it nevertheless does seem to be the case that—to the extent his understanding of the original allowed—our metaphrast was indeed attempting to translate Choniates' work into a more easily understood idiom, keeping as closely as he was able to the thread and turn of phrase of the original, though as we shall see, not always successfully.

In just the first few lines one can discern a number of features that will be seen to recur throughout the passage examined here. In the words immediately preceding the section where N-M splits into two versions (this split occurs in mid-sentence, as is also the case with the first of the two passages, beginning on fol. 74, ms. Monacensis gr. 450) both B and i share the same misplacement of the word Basmouloi: the result is that the Basmouloi (in other words Latino-Romans of the city)16 are joined with the Rhomaioi in the first group of warships, thereby creating a racially based category of soldiers to fill the decks of the ships of the μεν clause, while Choniates places the Romans in the one part of the fleet without specifying

15. A. Failler, La tradition manuscrite de l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère (livres I-VI), REB 37, 1979, 164.

16. For the Basmouloi, or more commonly Gasmouloi, see G. Makris, Die Gasmuien, Thesaurismata 22, 1992, 44-96. On pp. 87-93 Makris discusses the two forms of the word (beginning with γ- and β-). His conclusions on the occurrence of the two forms, however, do not allow us to make any secure inferences about the use of the form Basmouloi in our text (he suggests that the two forms probably existed side by side in Constantinople in late Byzantium, reflecting simply Frankish (for γασ-) and Venetian (βασ-) dialectical differences in the pronunciation of the word. The metaphrast may have been translating the word διαφορογενών, a hapax legomenon (see NCH, II, p. 115) that is not closed, of course, to other, more likely, interpretations: διαφορογενείς Λατίνοι must surely indicate an assortment of Latin westerners, such as Pisans, Genoans, Venetians, etc.
the origins of those ready to fight on deck, and the διαφορογενεῖς Λατίνων in the other part. This looks as if either the metaphrast has understood διαφορογενεῖς as meaning something like διγενῆς ('of dual descent'), and interpreted this as Basmouloi, or has chosen to reinforce the phrase ὁσον ἀνήρειον καὶ μάχημον (B) = ὃτιπερ κράτιστον μέρος καὶ μαχιμότατον Ν. (That these forces of Basmouloi were considered to be crack fighters is attested also in Gregoras I 113.) An explanation for the curious position of the word in the text may be that Ὁσμοῦλοι was written somewhere in the margin or interlinear spaces of a glossed text of Ν (or of the original Ν-Μ), close to the διαψορογενών Λατίνων or κράτιστον ... μαχιμότατον, but became misplaced in a later copying. The fact that the divergence between the two texts occurs in mid-sentence may hold a clue to the reasons behind the sudden break in their correspondence. One would have thought that if a scribe, out of choice, were to set about recasting the words of the text he was copying, then he would do so at a point that provided a more logical starting place than mid-sentence.

In this same section i supplies a new verb, εἰσῆξαν, whose subject is presumably an impersonal 'they'. It looks as if i was not happy with leaving the verb εἰσῆρχοντο to apply for the rest of the sentence, although he then failed to harmonise the new verb—and new plural subject— with the subject (Alexios the protosevastos) of the verb ἔδωκε. Therefore i seems to be attempting to produce simpler syntax at this point. Next (4), i reflects Ν more transparently (ἐπληροφορεῖτο ὡς αύτοφβοηθήσωσιν i = τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῖς ὡς ἀφήξουσιν Ν), yet at the same time B does not render the text less correctly. In fact, in the case of the phrase τὴν ἀπασαν ἐλπίδα ἐγέν αὐτόδι one could claim that ἀπεν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῖς ὡς ἀφήξουσιν (Ν) was translated even more vividly by the B version. Here, however, it is evident that the exemplar (or exemplars) from which i and Β were copying was such that it was open to varying interpretation or remodelling. While Β seems to show more confidence than i, the latter appears to have some kind of window onto Ν or, more likely, a (draft?) metaphrase of Ν. This passage, as well as Ν-Μ as a whole, gives the impression that a text of some kind, with a number of minor corrections or improvements marked on it, at this point was heavily annotated, thus leading to a degree of confusion for future copyists.
hence the mixed quality of both B and i, and the uneven degree to which one can detect N now in B and now in i. This remark finds further support in B/i 5-8, where B looks to be interested chiefly in the content of the passage, i in the form, and, particularly, in B/i 8, although i keeps ‘Kontostephanos’ (as in N) it does not look as finished as B. The gap, shared by both B and i at the end of 9 would suggest that indeed B and i are both copying from a text containing the Metaphrase rather than the original Chronike Diegeisis.

A feature observed in the fourteenth-century ‘paraphrase’ of Pachymeres’ History17, and which is also the case in much of N-M, was the rendering into direct speech of parts of the text that could—however remotely—be understood as reported speech. B and i use the opening clause εἶπόντος ὅς to introduce the words of Kontostephanos. The difference between the two versions of Kontostephanos’ words is marked. I is more overtly first person, inserting ἐμόν to give his words greater vividness:

\[\text{Οὐ δυνατόν ἐστίν ἔτερος τὸ ἐμὸν κεφαλαττίκιον δέξασθαι.}\]

On the other hand, B’s οὐδὲν ἀλλο ἀρμόζει ἢ τὸ στόλον ἀρχὴ clearly follows N more closely (στολαρχίας N = ἐν τοῦ στόλου ἀρχῇ B; use of dative personal pronoun; προσηκούσης N = ἀρμόζει B), while i has completely rephrased the statement, picking up on the word he had used earlier κεφαλάδας (5) with κεφαλαττίκιον. I thus begins to assume the profile of a lively though less faithful (or, to put it another way, freer) translation; yet in the next phrase, 8, the pendulum swings away from i: i is suddenly much closer to N (τήν βούλησαν N = ὅ ἐίχεν σκόπον; μετατίθησι N = μετέθηκε i), while B has almost wholly recast the entire phrase. This alternation of greater lexical faithfulness of now B and now i towards N can be seen throughout the entire passage.

5 presents a puzzling mixture of choices on the part of B and i: B omits to use a dative construction with παραδούναι τὸν στόλον, threbery failing to

17. FAILLER, op. cit., 171. Many of FAILLER’s conclusions about the language of the paraphrase of Pachymeres’ History can equally well be applied to N-M: transformation of long sentences, occurring frequently in the original, into shorter and simpler units; replacement of indirect speech by direct speech; omission of rare or archaising particles and pronouns; translation of rare or arcane words into more commonly understood terms.
give grammatical shape to the sentence; i, on the other hand, supplies an indirect object with the είς construction, but prefers to keep κεφαλάδας ἐμβαλείν (=ἐπιστήσαι τριηράρχας ? N) while omitting παραδοῦναι τὸν στόλον. It is possible, however, that i is merely reworking a text similar to B, recasting the phrase παραδοῦναι τὸν στόλον as κεφαλάδας ἐμβαλείν είς τὰ κάτεργα in order to improve the syntax of the sentence. This may be seen therefore as evidence that i was perhaps revising a text similar to B. The confusion in Β at this point would seem to indicate, however, that B cannot have been working from i.

In 10 both B and i misinterpret N: συνήν...τι is rendered as a single person rather than as a collective pronoun, therefore suddenly introducing an unspecified character who is supposedly related to another unspecified character; one can only guess which of the names in the previous sentences the metaphrast had in mind.

Syntactical weakness is evident in Β in other places. 12-14 are grammatically incomplete, since we wait in vain for a main verb (with δς as its subject) that is expected after the string of participles (ἰδὼν, δοὺς, ἀνάγνοντις). This confusion on the part of Β is all the more mystifying since N does not seem obscure here. If one wishes to seek the logic behind this omission (the metaphrast is, after all, working on the basis of the original text and endeavouring –at times with more and at times with less success– to recreate meaning), and if one does not wish to attribute the absence of a main verb simply to scribal error (this possibility cannot be discounted, of course), then it may be because Β was expecting the main verb to appear further down in the sentence; however, no such verb that could have δς as its subject materialises, and the entire sentence remains hanging in the air. The conclusion to be drawn on the method of the Β text here is that he either did not take the trouble to revise his work, or that the passage in question gives evidence again of having been copied from a draft or annotated metaphrase, that did not indicate clearly which part of the text should be copied18. I does

18. Nevertheless, the metaphrast seems at this point to have understood Choniates better than his modern translator into English. H. J. MAGOULIAS, O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates. Detroit 1984, 139, fails to recognise the genitive absolute in
not share this error (δοὺς Β = ἐδωκε i, ἀναγνώς Β = ἐξετε i), and even shows resourcefulness by rendering γράμματα as χρυσόβουλλον (since the grammata confer privileges on Andronikos).

In the next section, 15-17, there are no major differences of interpretation, but i is far more free in its rendering, while B keeps closer to N and its literal formulation: μεγαλοφών τὸ Ἄνδρονικος ἐξεβόησεν (B) is considerably closer to ἀπέφυγον φάσαν πρὸς ὑγίαν (N) than is the παραφρασια ἐπε ταῦτα (i). The same applies throughout Andronikos’ speech to the mission from Alexios; both versions differ radically, B generally keeping closer to the lexical items of N, though, in the last phrase, 22, only i has retained the simile with στάχυς.

In 23-24 i goes to the trouble of giving the name of the megas doux with the family name Kontostephanos, rather than with his first name Andronikos, so as to avoid confusion with the rebel Andronikos. This may be seen to contrast with 10 above where the precise characters intended are not clear, although in that case the confusion arose out of the metaphrast’s preference to interpret τί ... σνγγενίκ καὶ οίκίδιον (N) as a single individual. In 23-24, therefore, the metaphrast is not simply working through his text word by word and line by line, but is generally taking pains to understand the relationship between its various elements, whether they be characters or events. Further, i 24 sees the interesting addition of προστίθεται καὶ αὐτός αὐτῷ, clearly a supplementary gloss for μεταχωρεῖ ἐς Ἄνδρονικον, since the metaphrast perhaps felt that ἀπέβη ο —the verb he uses at the beginning of the sentence— does not render sufficiently the full meaning of μεταχωρεῖ. Again, here, i may be copying indiscriminately, while perhaps B has used judgment and decided to be content with ἀπέβη πρὸς τὸν Ἄνδρονικον.

B and i 29-32 show striking differences that may very likely be due to the difficulty of N at this point. Characteristically both branches of N-M avoid the elaborate literary and biblical allusions of Choniates (31), but nonetheless struggle to incorporate some of their sense, albeit in drastically

the sentence, thus distorting the sense of the original by making Andronikos, rather than Xiphilinos, responsible for undermining the mission: *It is said that Andronikos undermined the negotiations undertaken by the envoy Xiphilinos and refused to yield etc.*
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abridged form, into the main narrative. The phrase καί ύποστρεφόμενοι, εύηργετούντο, looks suspiciously like a marginal or interlinear note that has crept into the main body of the text. In fact, our surviving versions testify to a degree of differentiation that becomes more easily explained if we take a supposition of this kind into account.

32 provides evidence for a subject that will not be developed here, but can be mentioned in passing: it is still unclear from which version precisely of the original Chronike Diegesis the metaphrast was working. Van Dieten proposes a hybrid text of the history as the exemplar used by the metaphrast, most probably a manuscript closely related to W (Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 105). W is a manuscript of the late fourteenth and mid-fifteenth century, and since it post-dates the oldest manuscripts of N-M cannot itself have constituted a source for the Metaphrase, although it may well of course be a copy of such a source. The participle δράσοντα in the phrase κακώς τους ἐπὶ κόλπον φέροντας δράσοντα (N33), however, is preserved only in W as δράκοντα, the same word used by i, though omitted entirely by B. One cannot insist on the reliability of this reading, however, since it may just be due to scribal error; however, it is tempting to see N's δράσις as lying behind the appearance of the word in i.

In 32, i expands by adding καί των λόγων αὐτοῦ (not in N or B). Again this looks as if it may have crept in from the margin, where it properly belonged to 30. I, paraphrasing, also preserves the second half of N32, which was entirely omitted by B, thus indicating again the greater accuracy and completeness of i during the first part of the passage discussed here. (This is

19. For an interesting discussion of medieval Greek school books, and the method of glossing ancient Greek texts in the interlinear spaces (termed ψυχαγωγίαι), see A. SKARVELI-NIKOLOPOULOU, Τά μαθηματικά τῶν ελληνικῶν σχολείων τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας, Athens 1993, (published by the Σύλλογος προς οἰκονόμοις Ωφελίμων Βιβλίων), 293f.

20. NCH, I, pp. LXXXVI-LXXXVIII.

21. NCH, I, critical apparatus, p. 248, line 75. Most readings of the manuscripts containing N-M are not included in the critical apparatus of the Chronike Diegesis for reasons outlined by van Dieten himself (see pp. ciii-civ). Thus van Dieten draws almost exclusively on B for readings from the Paraphrase, only using the other manuscripts (XYS) at those points where there are lacunae in B.
visually evident if one simply compares the amount of text in Β and i from sections 1 to 40, after which the proportions are reversed).

33 again shows i expanding and clarifying, though not necessarily supplying information that cannot be gathered from elsewhere in the text itself: ‘The two sons of Andronikos, John and Manuel, were released from prison by the citizens’. There is probably no need to seek the introduction of a new piece of information elsewhere. The latter agent noun could quite easily have been implied simply as a matter of inference from the context; in other words the explanation for the appearance of παρά τῶν πολιτῶν most probably lies in the grammatically driven desire to supply an agent for the passive verb ἔκβάλλονται. I then omits part of 33, while in 34 Β and i show a pair of words for ἐγκλείονται (i.e. δεσμοῦνται, φυλακίζονται) and προσβάλλεται ήμερον (i.e. εἰσρήτεται καὶ ἀνεβάζετο Β, ἀνεβάζετο καὶ ἀνέκφασκοι), again suggesting that we may be dealing here with interlinear or marginal notes that were later worked into a full text. 35 shows differences that reveal the uneven quality of both versions. Β makes no alteration whatsoever to the meaning of the text at this point, but i seems to have taken the first part of the previous period as belonging to the next, thus creating confusion in the syntax, with two objects (συγγενεῖς and πρωτοσεβαστόν), untidily subsumed under the singular relative pronoun αὐτῶν at the end of the sentence. Whereas i during the first sections of this extract read somewhat more cohesively than Β, from this point onwards it appears that Β starts to regain the generally better wrought character it displays throughout N-M as a whole.

Again, 36 indicates that i is attempting to improve on the original metaphrase, perhaps using Choniates as a basis for this improvement, but also using imagination: the phrase μετὰ σιδήρων ... καὶ προσοχῆς is invention on the part of i, revealing that this is not a retranslation as such of N, but an attempt to make the text easier to understand, sometimes with the help of N, but also simply on the basis of the original N-M as this is in general preserved for us in Β.

37-41 presents a broad range of lexical variations, again suggestive of the existence of alternatives noted in the interlinear spaces or margin of the scribes’ exemplar (παλινστρόφου φοράς Ν, μεταστροφή Β, καταστροφής ι;
αυθάδης καί λίαν ύπέραυχος Ν, επηρμένος καί μεγάλα καυχώμενος Β, ἀλαζών Ι, περίσσοφόμονος Ν, περιπτυχώμονος Β, προσκυνοσμονος καί τιμωμονος Ι, ἀνέστος Ν, άους ΒΙ; ἐδυσχέραινε Ν, ἐλυπείτο Β, ἐθλίβετο Ι, ἐφύτο Ν, ἰνεμότιθέναι αὐτον Β, ἰνεμότιθέναι αὐτοί Ι. Ι, interestingly, translates ἐπιπιπτόντων (Ν) as κοιντοφέντες, a word not used elsewhere in N-Μ. Β adds a (banal) comment of his own in 41 (τοιαύτα γάρ εἰσὶ τά ἀνθρώπινα), although yet again this looks like a marginal note, written at some stage by a reader or copyist of N-M, that perhaps became confused with the main text.

A legitimate question with regard to the two versions we have before us might be to what extent the one or the other version shows signs of being δημωδέστερον, that is, of using vocabulary or grammatical forms that are more obviously closer to the spoken language of the time. The answer is aptly illustrated in 42-51: neither can claim to be a more thoroughly vernacular reworking of the original. While Β less adventurously translates ἵππο βραχυτάτω ἐπικαθήμενος Ν as ἐπι ἵππο λίαν σμικρό τοῦτον καθίσαντες, Ι renders it as ἐν ἰάλογῳ ἰπτό χαθίσαντες αὐτόν, using ἐν as a preposition of movement, preferring ἰάλογο το ἵππο and interpreting βραχυτάτω as ἰπτό. (It may well be, however, that Ι in fact reworked Β at this point: ἰπτό can also be seen as a free rendering of σμικρό rather than βραχυτάτω. Moreover, the apparent scribal error in 49—πιει Β το ποιεί Ν—may explain the use of the word ἰπτόσαυς by Ι to describe the imperial treasury.) Yet further down it is Β that uses καλάμιν (καλάμιον Ι), and βάλκαν (ισανόλιν), forms which to a greater or lesser extent are more ‘vernacular’ in Β than in Ι. Both Β and Ι seem to be aiming at the same level with their rendering of the long conditional sentence in 46-48.

22. The entry for κουντώ in E. ΚΡΙΑΡΑΣ, Λεξικό της μεσαιωνικής ελληνικής δημώδους χρηματικής, Θεσσαλονίκη 1968—, makes no reference to an occurrence of the word in N-M since its source for N-M is the critical apparatus of Bekker’s edition (Bonn, 1835) of the Chronike Diegesis. Bekker’s edition did not use any of the other manuscripts containing the Niketas-Metaphrase. Kriaras therefore continues a tradition established by Ducange, who, in the seventeenth century, had included among his sources ms Monacensis gr. 450 (then in the Augsburg library) for his Glossarium ad scriptores medue et intimae graecitatis, Lyon 1688 (reprinted Graz, 1958).
distribution therefore of distinctly vernacular language appears not to be
guided by consistent linguistic preference, but more by chance, thus depriving
us of the opportunity of characterising the one or the other text as a more
radically popular recasting of the original Chronike Diegesis.

In 50-51 Β is certainly more complete than i, but syntactically
unsatisfactory. Perhaps with Ν's neut. acc. ὀπλιτικόν in mind, Β proceeds to
use the neutor acc. participie ὑπάρχον and adj. πλέον for the masc. acc.
στρατάνοι of B's previous clause. I (perhaps for reasons of national pride?)
altogether omits Choniates' comment on the braver Latin forces.

The last section (55-59) demonstrates very clearly the fact that the Β
and the i-texts are interdependent, yet at the same time appear to have
turned to N for guidance. The use of the genitive absolute in i would seem to
suggest that the subject of πέμψας is different. This was presumably not
intended, and was simply the undesired result of the i reviser 'improving' on
the original N-M by introducing a supposedly literary grammatical form. The
word συγκροτοῦσι (B57) implies a plural subject, not provided by Choniates,
and kept as singular in i. In 58, however, i omits καὶ ἀλλήλους ἐς
συνασπισάντως τωθηικηνος Ν (=οθθεν καὶ ὀμογγυμονομοσαντες Β).

The picture that emerges of the two versions is decidedly mixed and
uneven. I on a number of occasions appears to begin sentences with every
intention of improving the material he finds before him, but frequently loses
momentum, or declines into extemporisation that does not correspond
precisely with either B or Ν. At other moments, however, i corresponds
more closely to Ν than Β. The nature of the divergences between the two
traditions suggests, as already mentioned, that they in fact both derive from a
single original metaphrase that may have been annotated with interlinear or
marginal changes or corrections for which there was no clear indication for
subsequent copyists as to which of these changes should be included or left
out. An alternative interpretation is that the original metaphrase was written
in the interlinear spacing of a Niketastext, thus explaining why B and i on
separate occasions seem independently to bear witness to the Niketastext.
The mere logistics, however, of such a source for the surviving witnesses to
N-M would seem to rule out this hypothesis, implying as it does that here
there is a third set of notes or text. One may surmise that the B and the i
versions represent two separate copyings (or descendents of those copyings) from an original metaphrase that was itself altered or corrected in some parts, specifically in the passages discussed here. Our subsequent surviving texts of N-M are, partly, two attempts at imposing order and coherence on an assortment of text and interlinear or marginal glosses. Both versions share the same stylistic level, with a number of interesting though mutually balancing variations, but it is tempting to see them as the work of two separate individuals (alterations such as καλάμιν/καλάμιον, and –from elsewhere in N-M– a consistent preference for εἰς in B and πρὸς in i, while perhaps the result of a抄写者’s preference, may rather indicate a differing idiolect). This stylistic level is not only dictated by the target idiom (I hesitate to use the word ‘language’) of the translated text, but also conceals (and frequently betrays) much about the literary and linguistic ability of the metaphrast, which, in the case of passages where Choniates uses highly rhetorical or florid language and complex allusions or similes (drawn invariably from Biblical or classical sources) is not sufficient to capture the spirit or tone of Choniates, if indeed the reference is understood at all. At those points where the narrative describes actions and events, such as the imperial delegation sent to the rebel Andronikos, and exchanges of dialogue, then the metaphrast comes into his own, and is able to produce a text that often succeeds in holding the reader’s attention and even entertain for its immediacy and refreshingly simple style.

To answer the question posed in the title of this article, it would seem that both versions may well have been born of the same original metaphrase, but that one (i or its predecessor) revised, and, to a limited extent, retranslated N, guided, however, by a text similar to B. It remains a matter for conjecture (and will probably still remain so after an exhaustive collation of all the N-M manuscripts) what kind of exemplar the two branches of the N-M tradition descend from: it may well have been a single metaphrase that existed in an ante and post correctionem form, each of which resulted in the two subsequent branches of the N-M text. Perhaps the one version represents an experiment, carried out at random on these few folios of the Niketas-Metaphrase.
To close, we may once again draw attention to the famous marginal note found on fol. 2V of ms. Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 53\textsuperscript{23}: ούκ οἶδα τί φής ἐνθάδε, Χωνειάτα, σοφόν τὸ σαφές συγγράφων εἶναι λέγεις, εἴτε γρυφώδη (sic) καὶ βαθυθρώδη γράφεις. The motives behind the production of a translation of the Chronike Diegesis constitute the subject of an investigation that goes beyond the scope of this study. It cannot be denied, however, that the metaphrase as a whole, as well as this particular passage, represents an attempt to make the text σαφές, thereby removing it from the almost metaphysical realm of γρίφος or ἀσάφεια (‘obscurity’), and placing it fairly and squarely within the reach of all moderately educated readers, διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀκροατῶν ἀπόθεσιν\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{23} The manuscript is of the early fourteenth century, but the note discussed here is written in a later hand. See \textit{NCH}, I, p. xxxti.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Nicetas Choniates, Orationes et Epistulae}, ed. J.-L. Van Dieten, Berlin 1972, 170. It is worth comparing H.-G. Beck’s introductory remarks in \textit{Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur}, Munich 1971, 6, where he states that the translation of various historical works in the later Byzantine period into a simpler idiom was indicative of the desire of Byzantines ‘not to allow any linguistic barrier to come between them and their own historical self-awareness’, with a discussion of the rhetorical phenomenon of ἀσάφεια and the Byzantine theoretical justification for obscurity in G. L. Kustas, \textit{Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric}, Analecta Vlatadon 17, Thessalonica 1973, chapter 3, 63-100, and chapter 6, esp. 193-194, where he discusses the device of ‘emphasis’ (as well as Pollux’ and Siceliotis’ use of the term γρίφος). These two opposing phenomena appear to have coexisted, if not even nurtured one another, throughout the last centuries of Byzantium.
Αλάζων, διότι οι δάσκαλοι ήταν καλοί και έμπαιραν τα επιτόκια των παιδιών τους.« Τάκτης γλώσσας προς Αναφύλλον επιστάμενος, είπε: "Ο άνθρωπος δεν είναι ο υπάρχονς της ζωής, αλλά ο ποταπός της ζωής, αυτός με τη δύναμη να λέει μια θεωρία."

Ο διδάσκαλος οδήγησε συνεχώς τα παιδιά προς τους να μιλάνε γραμματικά και να επιτύχουν τις ζητήσεις τους. "Δεν είναι εύκολο να συμπεράνετε πως οι λέξεις που μεταφράζετε από τα εξωτερικά στα εσωτερικά και περιστατικά, άρχισαν να μιλούν ελάφως και να αρχίζουν να μιλούν με αποκρίσεις."

Το Πρόπτυχον καλύπτει τα μικρά παιδιά και τα μεγαλύτερα παιδιά και το Παιδικό εξετάζει τον τρόπο γέννησης και αναπτύξης των παιδιών. Ο δασκάλος έκθετε με προσεκτικότητα την αποφάσιση της κάθε ζωής και την ανάπτυξη της παιδείας. Επιπλέον, ο δασκάλος έκθετε με προσεκτικότητα και αποφάσιση την αποφάσιση της κάθε ζωής και την ανάπτυξη της παιδείας.
10 εν δὲ καὶ μετὰ τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου, φίλους τις καὶ οσίος, συνην δε τοῦ Κοντοστεφανοῦ και τις τοῦ πρωτοσεβαστοῦ συγγενίων και οίκων
11 Μετάβησαν δὲ καὶ προέρχονται απὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενοι τις τοῦ πρωτοσεβαστοῦ και των εντυπών του βήματος. 12 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ μεταβιβάσατο της του Βασιλέως ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 13 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ προς τον Βασιλέα ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των έντρομών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 14 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ μεταβιβάσατο της του Βασιλέως ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 15 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ προς τον Βασιλέα ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 16 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ προς τον Βασιλέα ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 17 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ προς τον Βασιλέα ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 18 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ προς τον Βασιλέα ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν. 19 ο Ξιφιλίνος αυτός δὲ προς τον Βασιλέα ες Ανδρόνικον, περιπλανούμενος τις των εντυπών του βήματος, εξ οὗ ηράτησεν τοὺς εξαγγειλθεντές τις πάλιν.
25 καὶ τοῦτο τὸ έργον ἔπρεπε μὲν τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ ὑπὲρυψωσάς τὸν αποστάτην, εὐφανῆς δὲ τὸν πρωτοσεβαοτὸν τιλιθῶς ήφάντως τέλεον, καὶ πάσας τὰς ελπίδας αὐτοῦ απεγνώσατο καὶ κατακλάσατο. 26 οὐκέτι γαρ οἱ Άνδρονίκος καταστάλοντες προσκείμενοι, ἀλλ' αφεθέντοις τῷ πρωτοσεβαοτῷ καί εὐφανεῖς τῷ τῷ προθυμίῳ καύσασιν καὶ τῷ Άνδρονίκῳ κατατέλεσαν καὶ εὐφανεῖσάν τις τῷ τῶν πραγμάτων μεταβολαὶς χαίροντες εἰς Χαλκηδόνα διεπάθοντός τις. 27 οὕτως γαρ τοῖς προτεινομένοις τοῖς προθυμοῦσιν τῇ προσεύχῃ τῷ τῇ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ αὐτοῦ οὐ καταθλιποῦσιν τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ, εὐθύμεις τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντές τις. 28 τοῖς τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ δὲ καταθλιποῦσι καὶ τοῖς τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ εὐθύμοις καὶ καταθλιποῦσι τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ, εὐθύμεις τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντές τις. 29 εὐθύμεις τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ καὶ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ εὐθύμοις καὶ καταθλιποῦσι τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ, εὐθύμεις τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντές τις. 30 εὐθύμοις καὶ καταθλιποῦσι τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ εὐθύμοις καὶ καταθλιποῦσι τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντές τις. 31 Προσεύχοντες τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ καὶ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ εὐθύμοις καὶ καταθλιποῦσι τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντές τις. 32 ἦσαν δὲ οἱ προτεινομένοι τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντες προσεύχοντες τῷ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ καὶ τῷ πρωτοσεβαστῷ εὐθύμοις καὶ καταθλιποῦσι τῷ τῷ Καλλικράτῃ καὶ τῷ Άνδρόνικῳ καταστάλοντές τις.
35 και αυτός δι ο πρωτοσεβαστός κατά τα ανάκτορα συλληφθείς και φρουρά διαφθείς Γερμανών οι κατωμάδοι τους εκτροποίησαν απόρριτοι μεγάλοι 36 αδέξιδες και παρά μικροί νοσταί εξαγονά τους. 37 Αυτός περιέχει την ιστορία του πατριάρχη Μιχαήλ, μετά της αυτής και παλιν και πλέοντας ασφαλέστερος φρουράς.

38 Ο πρωτοσεβαστός παλινιμηνίτης ψυχής και θανόν της μεγάλης παραμόρφωσης ενεπέλεξε τον άγιον να ζήσει και να μεταλαμπαδεί υπό τον θησαυρό του Βαραγγού. 39 Οταν η μεγάλη ασφάλεια και στρατόπεδο του πατριάρχη Μιχαήλ και η θεολογία της εκκλησίας της άγιας Σοφίας περιέχει τον θησαυρό του θυρείου, ο πρωτοσεβαστός κατά της αυτής καταβιβάζει τον θυρείο και την εκκλησία της άγιας Σοφίας. 40 Ο πατριάρχης καταφέρει να ανακάμψει, και ο πρωτοσεβαστός κατά της αυτής καταβιβάζει τον θυρείο και την εκκλησία της άγιας Σοφίας. 41 Ο πατριάρχης μη να θυσιάσει τον ανθρώπο, αλλά να ελεάσει την αλληλεγγύη του και τον ανθρώπο. 42 Η ιερων δε ολίγων διέλθωσαν εξάγεται τον ναό και αποφύγουν από την θαλάσση. 43 Ο πατριάρχης καταβιβάζει τον θυρείο και την εκκλησία της άγιας Σοφίας.
43 είς θάλασσαν ερμαλύλαται καὶ διαμαστεῖται καὶ επιφωνεῖται τοῦτον πρὸς τὸν Ἀνδρόνικον 44 καὶ ποινὴ γνωρία καὶ ψέμα πάντων μετ' Ἀνδρόνικον, ἐπικυριάται αὐτῶν. 45 καὶ τοιαύτα μὲν τὰ τῆς διακομής, ἡ μᾶλλον εὐθές τὰ τῆς εὐφροσύνης τοῦ ἐπιστευθέντος ἠπόθενσαν. 46 Πλὴν εἶ διημετέρησε, καὶ τὸ πάλιν πρὸς τῇς θεὑρίας καὶ γεύμας καὶ εὐθὺν ἐπὶ τῇς ἡμέρας καὶ ἔθρηκεν καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον τῆς ἡμέρας εἰκονεύεται. 47 εἶχεν δὲ καὶ καταθέτει τὸν Ἀνδρόνικον ἀποτροφοφοῦσαν, καὶ εἰσίνῃ δὲ καὶ διάθεσιν ἐπιτροπῆς καὶ αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὸν κακοῦν ὁππὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἐπάνω αὐτῶν. 48 Καὶ τοιότῳ μέν τὰ τῆς ἀυτοῦ παραδυναστείας ή μᾶλλον οὔπω παγείσης ακριβῶς τυραννίδος ἐλήφεν. 49 εἴχε δὲ εἰς τᾶς χείρας πρὸς παράταξιν ὠρασάτα καὶ τοὺς δάκτυλος πρὸς πόλεμον ἐδέδιδακτο καὶ μὴ ἦν μαλακός καὶ βατταλός 50 καὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ῥέγκων τό ἦπερμιστικαὶ, 51 ἔχειν αὐτόν Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ ἀποκρούσασθαι καὶ εαυτὸν διαφυλάξασθαι τοῦ τότε κακοῦ τοῦ τότε μὲν ταὐτάδε τοῦ πρωτοπεβαινοῦ απεβήσαν. 52 Καὶ τῶν παραγόντων ἐπὶ τοὺς Φράγγων ρογευθέντα στρατόν, 53 άνδρειότερον ὑπάρχον καὶ πλέον τοῦ Ῥωμαίου στρατοῦ ἑυρίσκετον 54 αλλ' ὡς έοικε τὸ μέλλον, έκφυγεν δὲν δυνατόν, 55 τότε δὲ καὶ τὸν πρωτοσεβαστὸν εἰς χαυνότητα ἐμπέσειν, 56 τόν δὲ Άνδρονίκον ἐντύς παρεχώρει, 57 πόλεμον ἔστειλε τὸν αὐτὸν τὸν μέγα δουξ πρὸ τῷ ταῦτα γενέσθαι, 58 καὶ εἰσάξας εἰς τὸν επίλεκτον στρατόν ἐκλεγμένον στρατόν, 59 πόλεμον θαλαττικὸς ἐμπέσειν καὶ εἰσάξας εἰς τὸν επίγειον πόλεμον.