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

DAVIS John

http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.809

Copyright © 2014 John DAVIS

To cite this article:

The language of the ‘Barbarograeca’ version of the Chonike 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 period. 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 Diemen, and Scorialensis Ψ-Iv-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 Chromike Diegesis see H. Hunger, Die hochsprachliche protane Literatur der Byzantiner, I, Munich 1971, 432-433.
4. NCH, I, pp. xxxix-xl
5. NCH, I, pp. xlvi-xlvii
6. NCH, I, pp. xli and xxxi-xxxviii
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.
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 (Nicetae Chon. Hist.]372,47-49):
   πολλοίς μέν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐφόνευσεν B
   πολλοίς μέν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπέκτεινεν i

2) Simple alterations of word order (N356,26):
   μέχρι ταύτης ἐλθείν τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως B
   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 B
   ἐκ γένους λαμπροῦ καὶ ἐπισήμου i

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

5) Β adds an item that does not correspond with Ν or i:
   τὸ ταύτης τύραννος (N370,93)
   τὸ ταύτης τυραννῶ Γιλιέλμω Β
   τὸ ταύτης τυραννῶ Σ

   or
   εκτάλλωσαν μὲ ὦσεὶ μέλλοσαι κηρίον (N367,18)
   εκτάλλωσαν μὲ οἱ ἐχθροὶ μου ὦσεὶ μέλλοσαι κηρίον B
   εκτάλλωσαν μὲ ὦσεὶ μέλλοσαι κηρίον i

6) i adds (in the form of expanding on a lexical item) where B corresponds with N:
   τὸ ἐθνὸς ὅλων ἀναπείσαντες (N369,58)
   τὸ ἐθνὸς ἄλλων ἀναπείσαντες B
   τὸ ἐθνὸς ἄλλων ἀναπείσαντες καὶ ταράζεται 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 ı 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 Chônates’ 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 ‘Parafraisi 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 economy, 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 Trinity, Boethius’ Consolatione philosophiae or Ovid’s Metamorphoses, as well as translations considered to have been undertaken by others, or even Galesiotes’ and Oinaiotes’ metaphrase of the Βασιλικός άνδριάς of Nikephoros Blemmydes, 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’.  


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 οἱ μεταφράσεις τῶν Μανουηλ Ὀλομπῶλου καὶ Προχόρου Κιόδων. Παράρτημα/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'. 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) 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 Gasmulien, 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 (flavo-) dialectical differences in the pronunciation of the word. The metaphrast may have been translating the word διαφορογενής, a hāpax legomenon (see NCH, II, p. 115) that is not closed, of course, to other, more likely, interpretations: διαφορογενεῖς 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 διγενής ('of dual descent'), and interpreted this as Basmouloi, or has chosen to reinforce the phrase ὄσον ἀνδρείον καὶ μάχιμον (B) = ὅπερ κράτιστον μέρος καὶ μαχιμότατον N. (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 Βασμοΰλοι was written somewhere in the margin or interlinear spaces of a glossed text of N (or of the original N-M), close to the διαφορογενών 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, εἰσήξαν, whose subject is presumably an impersonal 'they'. It looks as if i was not happy with leaving the verb εἰσήρχοντο 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 ἐδωκε. Therefore i seems to be attempting to produce simpler syntax at this point. Next (4), i reflects N more transparently (ἐπληροφορεῖτο ώς αὐτῷ βοηθήσωσιν i = τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῖς ὡς ἰρήξουσιν(N)), yet at the same time B does not render the text less correctly. In fact, in the case of the phrase τὴν ἀπασαν ἑλπίδα είχεν αὗτοι one could claim that ᾧπερ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῖς ὡς ἰρήξουσιν(N) was translated even more vividly by the B version. Here, however, it is evident that the exemplar (or exemplars) from which i and B were copying was such that it was open to varying interpretation or remodelling. While B seems to show more confidence than i, the latter appears to have some kind of window onto N or, more likely, a (draft?) metaphrase of N. This passage, as well as N-M 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 Diegesis.

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 εἰπόντος ὡς to introduce the words of Kontostephanos. The difference between the two versions of Kontostephanos’ words is marked. I is more overtly first person, inserting έμόνιο to give his words greater vividness: Οὐ δυνατόν εστίν έτερος τό έμόν κεφαλάττικιον δέξασθαι. On the other hand, B’s ούδενί ἄλλῳ ἄρμοζει ή τό στόλον ἄρχη clearly follows N more closely (στολαρχίας N = ή τό στόλον ἄρχη B; use of dative personal pronoun; προσηκούσης N = ἄρμοζει B), while i has completely rephrased the statement, picking up on the word he had used earlier κεφαλάς (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 βούλησα N = ἐν εἶχεν σκοπόν ἰ; μετατίθησα 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 τόν στόλον, thereby 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 εἰς construction, but prefers to keep κεφαλάδας ἐμβαλεῖν (=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 ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς 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 B 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 B in other places. 12-14 are grammatically incomplete, since we wait in vain for a main verb (with ὅς as its subject) that is expected after the string of participles (ἐνοικοὶν, ἔδωκαν, ἀναγνώσθη). This confusion on the part of B 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 B was expecting the main verb to appear further down in the sentence; however, no such verb that could have ὅς as its subject materialises, and the entire sentence remains hanging in the air. The conclusion to be drawn on the method of the B 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 metaphrarse, that did not indicate clearly which part of the text should be copied.18. I does

18. Nevertheless, the metaphrast seems at this point to have understood Choniates better than his modern translator into English. H. J. Magoulias, Ο City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates. Detroit 1984, 139, fails to recognise the genitive absolute in
not share this error (δούς B = ἔδωκε i, ἀναγνώς B = ἐξείπεν 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: μεγαλοφωνος ο Ἄνδρονίκος εξείπεν (B) is considerably closer to στάχυς φάσων πρὸς οὖργην (N) than is the παρρησία εἰς 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...ανεγενικόν καί 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 καί αὐτός αὐτῷ, clearly a supplementary gloss for μεταχωρεῖ ἐς Ἄνδρονίκον, since the metaphrast perhaps felt that ἀπέρχεται –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 ἀπέρχεται πρὸς τὸν Ἀνδρόνικον.

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
abridged form, into the main narrative. The phrase καί ὑποστρεφόμενοι, εἰγερτοῦντο, looks suspiciously like a marginal or interlinear note that has crept into the main body of the i 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 τοὺς ἐν κόλπων φέροντας δράσοντα (Ν33), 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 δρατα as lying behind the appearance of the word in i.

In 32, i expands by adding καί τῶν λόγιον 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. SKARVENI-NIKOLOPLOLOI, Τά μαθηματικά τῶν ελληνικῶν σχολείων τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας, Athens 1993, (published by the Σύλλογος προς οἰκείων Βιβλίων Βιβλίου), 293.

20. NCH, I, pp. LXXVII-LXXVIII.

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. 111-114). 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 B 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 παρὰ τῶν πολιτῶν most probably lies in the grammatically driven desire to supply an agent for the passive verb ἔβαλλονται. I then omits part of 33, while in 34 B and i show a pair of words for ἐγκλείονται (i.e. δεσμοῦνται, φυλαίζονται) and παρασβέστειν ἡμείς (i.e. εὑρισκέται καὶ ἄνεδέχετο B, ἄνεδέχετο καί ἡγάπαται i), 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. B 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 (συγγενείς and πρωτοσεβαστόν), untidily subsumed under the singular relative pronoun αὐτόν at the end of the sentence. Whereas i during the first sections of this extract read somewhat more cohesively than B, from this point onwards it appears that B 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 metathrase, 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 B.

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 N, μεταστροφή B, καταστροφής i;
A PASSAGE OF THE METAPHRASE OF THE CHRONIKE DIEGESIS

αυθάδης καί λίαν ύπέραυχος Ν, επηρμένος καί μεγάλα καυχώμενος Β, ἀλαζών ι; περιθυμούμενος Ν, περιτριγυρίζομενος Β, προκαλούμενος καί τιμώμενος ι; ἀνέστιος Ν, δούκος Βι; ἐνθαδεμένος Ν, ἐλεύθερος Β, ἐθλίβοντος ι.; ἔρητο Ν, ἰνεμόδιων αὐτῶν Β, ἰνεμόδιων αὐτὸν ι.; εὐγενικός. ı; επιστημώτοτος (Ν) καί κοιντοίντες, a word not used elsewhere in N-M22. Β adds a (banal) comment of his own in 41 (τοιαύτα γάρ εἰσὶ τὰ 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 ἵππῳ βραχύτατῳ ἐπικαθήμενος Ν as ἓπι ἵππῳ λίαν σμικροῦ τοῦτον καθίσαντες, ı renders it as ἐν ἀλόγῳ ἀπὸ ἵππον καθίσαντες αὐτῶν, using ἐν as a preposition of movement, preferring ἀλόγῳ το ἵππῳ and interpreting βραχυτάτω as ἀπόρω. (It may well be, however, that ı in fact reworked Β at this point: ἀπόρῳ can also be seen as a free rendering of σμικροῦ rather than βραχυτάτῳ. Moreover, the apparent scribal error in 49 –ποιείν Β ποιείν Ν—may explain the use of the word ἀβύσσους by ı to describe the imperial treasury.) Yet further down it is Β that uses καλάμιν (καλάμιον ı), and βάλκαν (ı σανδάλιον), forms which to a greater or lesser extent are more ‘vernacular’ in Β than in ı. Both Β and ı seem to be aiming at the same level with their rendering of the long conditional sentence in 46-48.

22. The entry for κουντω in E. KRIARAS, ΛΕΞΙΚΟ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΣΑΙΩΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΑΣ, Thessalonica 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 medieae et infimae graecitatis, Lyon 1688 (reprinted Graz, 1958).

http://epublishing.ekt.gr | e-Publisher: EKT | Downloaded at 27/12/2018 14:40:55 |
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 B is certainly more complete than i, but syntactically
unsatisfactory. Perhaps with N’s neut. acc. διστόμετρον in mind, B proceeds to
use the neutor acc. participle 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 B
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
συνασπίσας N (=οθεν καὶ ὁμογενομοιοποιησατο B).

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 N. At other moments, however, i corresponds
more closely to N than B. 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 copyist’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: οίκε οίδα τί φής ἐνθάδε, Χωνειάτα, σοφόν τό σαφὲς συγγράφων εἶναι λέγεις, εἶτα γρυφώδη (sic) καὶ βαραθρώδη 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 metaphorase 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 τῆν τῶν ἄγνωστων ἀπόθεσιν

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

24. NICETAS CHONIATES, Orationes et Epistulae, ed. J.-L. VAN DIETEN, Berlin 1972, 170. It is worth comparing H.-G. BECK’s introductory remarks in 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, 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 Siceliotes’ 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.
Δέχθηκα, ότι ήρθατε στην θέση μου, μετά την παρέλαση της 3ης Νοεμβρίου. Είμαι ευτυχής για την παράδοση της διαφάνειας που έχει παραμείνει στην πολιτική της τρίτης ομάδας στον ρόλο της Δημοσκόπησης. Αυτό είναι συνεπέρασμα της προειδοποίησης που έδωσα στους ομάδες να στέλνουν την πρότασή τους στον πρωθυπουργό. Είναι η διαδικασία της Δημοσκόπησης που είναι περαιτέρω ευελπιστική και εξαιρετική η αναγνώριση της Δημοσκόπησης από τους οικονομικούς αναλύτες. Οι πληροφορίες που λαμβάνεται από την Δημοσκόπηση είναι προμηθεία, εκτός εκείνης που συμπεριλαμβάνεται στην προειδοποίηση της Δημοσκόπησης, είναι ένας σημαντικός κινδυνόλογος, που επικρατεί των εκπαιδευμένων αναλυτών. Είναι η διαδικασία της Δημοσκόπησης που είναι περαιτέρω ευελπιστική και εξαιρετική η αναγνώριση της Δημοσκόπησης από τους οικονομικούς αναλύτες. Οι πληροφορίες που λαμβάνεται από την Δημοσκόπηση είναι προμηθεία, εκτός εκείνης που συμπεριλαμβάνεται στην προειδοποίηση της Δημοσκόπησης, είναι ένας σημαντικός κινδυνόλογος, που επικρατεί των εκπαιδευμένων αναλυτών.
10 συμφωνοῦν δὲ τῷ Κοντοστέφανῳ καὶ τις τῶν πρωτοσεβαστῶν συγγενέων καὶ συνετῶν
11 μετὰ βραχὺ δὲ καὶ προῆξε απὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐς Άνδρονίκον παλατίνων. 12 οἱ Σιλικίας ἢ οἵτινες Γεώργιος, δὲ καὶ εἰς δύον τῷ τῆς τρίχης εἰς τὰ τρίχης καὶ τὰ διαμεσολαβήσεις ἀποτελοῦσιν 13 ἡν ἀντὶ τῶν διαμεσολαβήσεων ἀποτελοῦσιν 14 καὶ χορης απὸ τοῦ κριτῶν καὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ πατρίδος. 15 οἱ δὲ, τὸ προειρήθη, ὡς φασίν, Σιλικίας τὴν πρεσβείαν ἀνείπωσαν, καὶ μηδὲν συμβάλλειν τις πολέμοι. 16 οί δὲ, τὸ προειρήθη, ὡς φασίν, Σιλικίαι τὴν πρεσβείαν ἀνείπωσαν. 17 καὶ οἱ μὲν δνοὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, μὲν ήτοι τὰ πρατήρια προστίθασιν καὶ τὸ χρήσιμόν, ὡς δὲ καὶ οἱ ἀσπίδιοι τῶν πολέμων, μὲν ήτοι τὰ πρατήρια προστίθασιν. 18 καὶ οἱ μὲν δνοὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, μὲν ήτοι τὰ πρατήρια προστίθασιν καὶ τὸ χρήσιμόν. 19 καὶ οἱ μὲν δνοὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, μὲν ήτοι τὰ πρατήρια προστίθασιν καὶ τὸ χρήσιμόν.
καί τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ἐπήρε μὲν ὑπέρ ἀπαν άλλο τὸν ἀποστάτην, 26 τὸν δὲ πρωτοσεβαοτὸν ήφάντωσε τέλεον, πάσας τὲς ἐλπίδας ἀργοσωτῆται καὶ κατακλασθέντα τὸ προθύμον. 27 οὐκὲτι γὰρ λαθραῖαι σύνοδοι τῶν Ἀνδρόνικων προσκειμένων ἐγίνοντο, 28 άλλ' ἀνέθη τὸν πρωτοσεβασμὸν ἐμεοχελοῦντες οἱ ταῖς τῶν πραγμάτων μεταβολαῖς χαίροντες εἰς Χαλκηδόνα διεπενδυόμενοι καὶ τὴν Ἀνδρόνικον κατὰ φατρίας συγγινόμενοι. 29 έπαινοῦντες καὶ μεγαλύνοντες τὸ τε γένος καὶ τὴν ήλικίαν αὐτοῦ καί τὸ γήρας, 30 καὶ τὸ τῆς γλώττης αὐτοῦ γλυκερόν 31 καί δροσιζόμενοι ὑπό τῶν εκείνου λόγων ώς ἀπὸ δρόσου ἀερίων, ἐπαναπροέρχοντο. 32 ήσαν δὲ καί τίνες αὐτοὶ πρώτης όψεως εὐθύς τὸν εν δέρματι προβάτου κεκρυμμένον λύκον ἔγνωρισαν καὶ τὸν οὓς μετά θάλψιν ἐπιθήσομεν οὐσὶ καί κακώς τοὺς ύπό κόλπον φέροντας δράσοντα. Έπί τούτων ανίενταί τε τῶν εἰρκτής τοῦ Ανδρόνικου οἱ παῖδες ὁ Ἰωάννης καί ὁ Μανουήλ καί οἱ λοιποὶ, οὓς ἐφυλάκισε ὁ πρωτοσεβαστὸς, 34 εγκλείονται δὲ πάλιν καί φυλακίζονται οὓς ὁ πρωτοσεβαστὸς εὗρητο καί ανεδέχετο.
35 καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ οἱ πρωτοσέβαστοι κατὰ τα ἀνάγκατα συλλέγοντες καὶ ἔγερον ἐπὶ τῇ προτεστασίᾳ τῶν ἐπιτύχεσες ἀρχών τοὺς ἀρχής 36 καὶ ἐκ τῶν μὲν ἀρχῶν ἡ ἁγίας καὶ παρὰ μὲν νότιας έλεγαν τοὺς δὲ κατὰ τὸ μέρος αὐτού πάντως οὐκ εὐθυγράμτως ἐν ἢ παραφάς ὁ πατριάρχης Ἐρακλῆς μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς καὶ παλν καὶ κιλεμένος ἀσφαλέστατας ὀρείσκει.

37 Ἡ ἐπιστροφὴ ἐπικαθημένην καὶ προοδευομένην διὰ λαμπροφωνίας καὶ παλαιοῦ καταφεύγοντας ἐς τὰ παλάτια καταφέρθηκεν ἕως ἔτοιμον τὸν πατριάρχην Ἐρακλῆς καὶ ἐν πάλιν μετὰ τοιαύτης ἀσφαλείας καὶ τῆς προτεστασίας τῆς αὐτῆς καὶ παλν καὶ κιλεμένος ἀσφαλέστατας ὀρείσκει.

38 ὁ πατριάρχης δὲ τῇ προφητείᾳ ἐκείνῃ χρόνος τὴν παλαιαρχικήν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὰ παλάτια ἐπεισοδίους κατὰ τὴν καθημερινὴν, ἐκείνη τὴν παλαιαρχικὴν καταφέρθηκεν ἕως ὁ πατριάρχης Ἐρακλῆς καὶ ἐν πάλιν μετὰ τοιαύτης ἀσφαλείας καὶ τῆς προτεστασίας τῆς αὐτῆς καὶ παλν καὶ κιλεμένος ἀσφαλέστατας ὀρείσκει.
43 κάτωθι παραρρίφης άλιας ἐς τὸ πέραν ἀνάγεται πρὸς Ἀνδρόνικον, 44 ἔπειτα καὶ τοὺς ἐφόδοις εὑροῦττεται, ἵνας ἀπάλης τῶν ἐν ἑπετηρίῳ συνωλυτήσεται, καὶ μετ’ Ἀνδρόνικον τὸν τοιοῦτον τράβηξεν κυριωτάτως. 45 Καὶ τούτῳ μὲν τὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ παραρριφήτικας, ἡ μέλλων εἶναι καταργήθη ἀναρρίφθησιν πέρας ἐξελέφθη. 46 έδέχ' ὧν, ἵν' ἐκ τῆς γῆς πρὸς παραμείναι ὑπάρῃ καὶ τοῖς ἔξωτοῖς πρὸς πόλεως ἐκεῖνοσ εὐθυδεξίως καὶ μὴ ἐν μαθήμασι συγγραμμάτως καὶ ὑπό τῆς θυραρχῆς 47 καὶ τῆς ἰματίας ἐχθροῦς τὰ ἐπιγράμματα. 48 Τῷ τῇ Ἀνδρόνικῳ τῇ ἀναφορᾷ, καὶ τοῖς οφθαλμοῖς ἐξορύττεται, κοινῶς ἀπάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ συνελθόντων καὶ μετ’ Ἀνδρόνικου τῆς τοιαίτης πράξεως κυρωσαμένων. 49 Καὶ τοιοῦτο μὲν τά τῆς αὐτοῦ παραδυναστείας ή μᾶλλον οὕπω παγείσης ακριβῶς τυραννίδος πέρας εἶλήφεν. 50 ἦτοι δ' αὖ τάς χεῖρας πρὸς παράταξιν ὥπλιστο καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους πρὸς πόλεμον ἐδεδίδωκε καὶ μὴ ἦν μαλακὸς αἰχμήτης καὶ βάτταλος 51 καὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ῥέγκων τό ἱππηρήμιος, 52 ἔχεν αὖ τάς χεῖρας πρὸς παράταξιν ἀποκρούσασθαι, καὶ εαυτόν διαφύλαξαι άτρωτον καὶ ἀβλαβῆ απὸ τοῦ κακοῦ οὗ έπάθην. 53 Τὸ πασχαλίτιος ομοού καὶ επίγειος ἐρις φύεται.