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

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

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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 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 version1, while the other two manuscripts, Vindobonensis Suppl. gr. 166 (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), designated X by van Dieteren4, and Scorialensis Ψ-IV-17 (early sixteenth century), designated S5, preserve the second. There is a further manuscript of N-M –Parisinus gr. 3142 – designated Y6, 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 another7, 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

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1. 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
2. For further details on this manuscript see NCH, I, pp. XXXII-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.
3. NCH, I, pp. XXXIX-XXX.
4. NCH, I, pp. XLVI-XLVII.
5. NCH, I, pp. XLIII-XXXVIII.
6. NCH, I, pp. XLIII and XXXVIII-XXXV.
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 μὲν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐφόνευσαν B
   πολλοίς μὲν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπέκτεινα 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 ἐπίσημον (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 δοκιμασίαν ἄρχην τῶν Θρακησίων (N400,77)
   τὴν δοκιμασίαν ν ἄρχην i
   τὴν δοκιμασίαν τῶν Θρακησίων ἄρχην B

5) B adds an item that does not correspond with N or i:
   οἱ ταύτης τύραννος (N370,93)
   τῶ οἱ ταύτης τυράννος Γιλιέλμῳ B
   τῶ ταύτης τυράννος Σ

   έκκλησαν μὲ ὡς ει μέλλοσσα κηρίον (N367,18)
   έκκλησαν μὲ οἱ έχθροι μοῦ ὡς ει μέλλοσσα κηρίον B
   έκκλησαν μὲ ὡς ει μέλλοσσα κηρίον i

6) i adds (in the form of expanding on a lexical item) where B corresponds with N:
   τὸ θῆνος ὅλον ἀνασύστατος (N369,58)
   τὸ ὅλον θῆνος ἀνασύστατος B
   τὸ ὅλον θῆνος ἀνασύστατος καὶ ταράζοντος 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 Ν 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 paraphrase and a reworking from Chônâtes' original, an hypothesis that presupposes our scribe/reviser, at least for this part of N-M, having two exemplars before him, a (draft?) paraphrase 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 Ν (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 economy\textsuperscript{9}, 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\textsuperscript{10}, Boethius’ \textit{Consolatione philosophiae}\textsuperscript{11} or Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}\textsuperscript{12}, as well as translations considered to have been undertaken by others\textsuperscript{13}, or even Galesiotes’ and Oinaiotes’ metaphrase of the \textit{Βασιλικός άνδριας} of Nikephoros Blemmydes\textsuperscript{14}, this principle does indeed seem to have been applied), then clearly \textit{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 ‘declassization’ of a high-style history, as well as a ‘metaphrase’.


\textit{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.), \textit{Boethius \textit{De topics differentiis und die byzantinische Rezeption dieses Werkes} (Boethius, \textit{De topics differentiis} und \textit{die byzantinische Rezeption dieses Werkes})}, Munich 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 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 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: 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 διαφορογενείς 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 Basmoulai, or has chosen to reinforce the phrase ὀσον ἀνήρειν καὶ μάχιμον (B) = ὀτιπερ κράτιστον μέρος καὶ μαχιμότατον Ν. (That these forces of Basmoulai 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 Βασμούλοι was written somewhere in the margin or interlinear spaces of a glossed text of Ν (or of the original N-M), close to the διαψορογενῶν 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 ἐδουκε. Therefore i seems to be attempting to produce simpler syntax at this point. Next (4), i reflects Ν more transparently (ἐπληροφορεῖτο ώς αὐτῆσβοηθήσωσιν i = τοῖς Ῥωμάιοις αὐτοῖς ὡς ἀρήξουσιν Ν), yet at the same time B does not render the text less correctly. In fact, in the case of the phrase τήν ἀπάσαν ἐλπίδα ἐξεν αὐτοῦ one could claim that ἐπερ τοῖς Ῥωμάιοις αὐτοῖς ὡς ἀρῆξουσιν (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 Ν 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’ History, 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 είπόντας ὥς to introduce the words of Kontostephanos. The difference between the two versions of Kontostephanos’ words is marked. I is more overtly first person, inserting ἐμόνι to give his words greater vividness: Οὔ δυνατόν ἐμόν καθαιρεῖν δὲξασθαι. On the other hand, B’s οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἀμοξεί ἤ τὸ στόλον ἀρχὴ clearly follows N more closely (στολαρχίας N = ἄρχῃ B; use of dative personal pronoun; προσηπούσης N = ἄρμοζει 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 βούλησιν N = ἐν εἷς καταλβαντικὴς Μ; 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 παραδοῦναι τὸν στόλον, threareby falling 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 ἐμβαλείν (=ἐπιστήσαι τριηράρχας ? N) while omitting παραδούναι τὸν στόλον. It is possible, however, that i is merely reworking a text similar to B, recasting the phrase παραδούναι τὸν στόλον as κεφαλάδας ἐμβαλείν 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 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 (λιδών, δοὺς, ἀναγνον). 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 B 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 copied. 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 ($\delta\nu\zeta \; B = \; \hat{\delta}dω\zeta \; i, \; \dot{\alpha}nαγγ\nu\zeta \; B = \; \hat{\varepsilon}z\varepsilon\iotaπε\nu \; i$), 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: μεγαλοφώνως ο 'Ανδρόνικος έξεβόησεν (B) is considerably closer to οπέρογκον φάσαν πρός όργην (N) than is the παρρησία είπε ταύτα (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...σνγγενικόν 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 αντός αύτφ, clearly a supplementary gloss for μεταχωρεΐ ές Λνορόνικον, since the metaphrast perhaps felt that άπέρχεται –the verb he uses at the beginning of the sentence– does not render sufficiently the full meaning of μεταχωρεϊ. Again, here, i may be copying indiscriminately, while perhaps B has used judgment and decided to be content with άπέρχεται πρός τόν Άνθρωπην.

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 καὶ ὑποστρεφόμενοι, εὑρηγετοῦντο, 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 κακῶς τοὺς ὑπὸ 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 δρας as lying behind the appearance of the word in i.

In 32, i expands by adding καὶ τῶν λόγιον αὐτὸν (not in N or B). Again this looks as if it may have crept in from the margin, where it properly belonged to N. 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, Τὰ μαθηματά τῶν ελληνικῶν σχολείων τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας, Athens 1993, (published by the Σύλλογος προς οἰκονομία Μαθηματικών 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 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 παρά τὴν πολιτῶν most probably lies in the grammatically driven desire to supply an agent for the passive verb ἐβάλλονταί. I then omits part of 33, while in 34 B and i show a pair of words for ἐγκλείονται (i.e. δεσμοῦνται, φυλαίζονται) and προσβάλειται ἡμέραν (i.e. εὐρηκέται καὶ ἀνεδέχετο Β, ἀνεδέχετο καὶ ἡγάπαι); 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 (συγγενεῖς 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 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 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 Ν, μεταστροφή Β, καταστροφής i;
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αὐθάδης καὶ λίαν ὑπέραυχος Ν, ἐπηρμένος καὶ μεγάλα καυχώμενος Β, ἀλαζών; περισσοφυλακός Ν, περιτριγυριζόμος Β, προσκυνομένος καὶ τιμώμενος; άνέστιος Ν, άοικος Β; ἐπιπτόν τοῦτο Ν, ἐλυπέτο ι; ἐφέτο Ν, ἰνεκτόδιον αὐτῶν Β, ἰνεκτόδιον αὐτῶ i).

I, interestingly, translates ἐπιπτόμενον (Ν) as κοιντοιντες, a word not used elsewhere in N-M.22 B adds a (banal) comment of his own in 41 (τοιαύτα γάρ εἰσί τὰ ἀνθρώπων), 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 B less adventurously translates ἱππω βραχυτάτφ ἐπικαθήμενος Ν as ἐπι ἱππφ λίαν ὑσμίκρο τοῦτον καθίσαντες, i renders it as ἐν ἀλόγω άπόρῳ καθίσαντες αὐτών, using ἐν as a preposition of movement, preferring ἀλόγω το ἱππω and interpreting βραχυτάτω as άπόρῳ. (It may well be, however, that i in fact reworked B at this point: άπόρῳ can also be seen as a free rendering of σμίκρφ rather than βραχυτάτω. Moreover, the apparent scribal error in 49 -πιει ν Β το ποιεί ν Ν- may explain the use of the word άβυσσους by i to describe the imperial treasury.) Yet further down it is B that uses ζαλάμιν (ζαλάμιον i), and βάλκαν (i σανδάλιον), forms which to a greater or lesser extent are more ‘vernacular’ in B than in i. Both B and i seem to be aiming at the same level with their rendering of the long conditional sentence in 46-48. The

22. The entry for κουντώ in E. KRIARAS, Λεξικό της μεσαιωνικής ελληνικής δημώδους γραμματείας, 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 medue et infimue 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 B is certainly more complete than i, but syntactically unsatisfactory. Perhaps with N’s neut. acc. ὀπλιτικόν in mind, B proceeds to use the neutor acc. participle ἐπάγον and adj. πλέον for the masc. acc. στρατάνοϊ 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 συνασπισμὸν παραθήκατοι N (=οθεν καὶ ὁμογενομονομαντες 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. 2\textsuperscript{v} of ms. Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 53\textsuperscript{33}: \textit{οὐκ οἶδα τί φής ἐνθάδε, Χωνειάτα, σοφόν τὸ σαφὲς συγγράφων εἶναι λέγεις, εἴτε γρυφώδη (sic) καὶ βαραθρώδη γράφεις.} The motives behind the production of a translation of the Chronikē Diegesis constitute the subject of an investigation that goes beyond the scope of this study. It cannot be denied, however, that the paraphrase as a whole, as well as this particular passage, represents an attempt to make the text \textit{σαφές}, thereby removing it from the almost metaphysical realm of \textit{γρίφος} or \textit{ἀσάφεια} (‘obscurity’), and placing it fairly and squarely within the reach of all moderately educated readers.

\[\text{διά τὴν τῶν ἀκροατῶν ἑπένειαν}\textsuperscript{24}.

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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.

24. \textit{Nicetas Choniates, Orationes et Epistulae}, ed. J.-L. \textsc{Van Dieten}, Berlin 1972, 170. It is worth comparing H.-G. \textsc{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 \textit{ἀσάφεια} and the Byzantine theoretical justification for obscurity in G. L. \textsc{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 \textit{Pollux}’ and \textit{Siceliotus}’ use of the term \textit{γρῖφος}). These two opposing phenomena appear to have coexisted, if not even nurtured one another, throughout the last centuries of Byzantium.
The text that follows gives both versions of the Niciæa Metaphræse and in case of reference and comparison the corresponding text of Niciæae Chonmatae Historis as edited by van Dnten in CTHB 311

N = Niciæae Chonmatae Historis ed van Dnten in CTHB 111 (Herpet 1975) 247 31 250 36 (= Beker [Bomn] 321 325)
B = Mon gr 450 (first half of 14th c) fol 80 81

δ = Vandemonensis Suppl gr 166 (14thc/15th c) fols 54r 57 (14th c) and Socratesus PS IV 17 (early 16th c) fols 121v 123r

The first paragraph (corresponding to N 346 29 247 30 30) is given simply to indicate the closer agreement between B and X5 outside the above passages.

The division of the passage into numbered sections seeks to present the text in easily manageable units for analysis and discussion. Gaps in the passages are inserted merely in order to keep them roughly parallel to one another. While they do not imply lacunae in the manuscripts, they do suggest that the metathra is deliberately abbreviating. Occasionally double square brackets are used to mark off sections that have no equivalent in the other versions.

The paragraph division in the Metaphræse passages is that of the manuscripts

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1. Οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν κατὰ τόλμαν διαφορετικῶν λατινών 2 άμηρι κρίτουν καὶ οὐκέτι μέρος 3 άιδος καὶ τα χρήσιν τοῦ ἡμεροῦντος ἐπεκλέξοντος 4 ἔλευς καὶ νῦνος, εὐκριτὸς μὲν οἱ καθοριστὶς τῆς ἐρημαθίας ἐπικορυφαιώντος καὶ παραδόντων τὸν αἰώνα τῆς, συνάντηται μὲς γέγονεν 5 ἐπεὶ τοῦ μεγάλου δούλου, τῶν Κοσμοπολίτων υπερασπισάντος καὶ τῶν σύμμαχός τοῦ τῶν ἐξερχομένων 7 τω, καὶ τοῦτο εἰς τὴν εἰσαγωγήν, 8 σημαντικής τοῦ διαλογισμοῦ μετατηθήναι. 9 καὶ δὴ τοῦ Κοσμοπολίτων Ἀνδρόνικος ἀρχηγὸς καταβαίνει τοῦ στόλου ταυταὶ. [καὶ καταφέροντος ἡμῶν τοῖς ἁγιοῖς κατάλημμαν, ἀπεκτάσιμον]
10 ην δε και μετα του Κοντοστεφανου, οικις τε και ουσίας συμμελεια του πρωτοσπασαν.
11 Μετα ην δε και πρεσβευσαν ποιο των βασιλεων των τον Άνδρονικον προσθεται, απο των αρχης των ακολουθουσθεν εστιν ο Σιμολίνος ουτος Γεωργιος, δε και εις δεν την τυραννωπος ειρηνην, αυτος ουτος Κοντοστεφανος, και αυτος των βασιλεων ουτος Κοντοστεφανος, εις δε των πρωτοσπασαν. Ας ην δε και μετα του Κοντοστεφανου, οικις τε και ουσίας συμμελεια του πρωτοσπασαν. Β Ας ην δε και μετα του Κοντοστεφανου, οικις τε και ουσίας συμμελεια του πρωτοσπασαν.
καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔργων ἐπήρε μὲν τῇ ἑπτά ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀποστάτη, ὡς τοῦτο τὸ πρῶτον καὶ τοῦτο τὸ τελεῖον, ἀπὸ τοῦτο ἀλλοίως ἀπασχοληθεῖτε τὸ πρὸς τὸν ἀποστάτην. τὸν δὲ πρῶτοσεβαστὸν ἔφαντος ἔτελεον, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀβλέψας καὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρὸς τὸν ἀποστάτην. τὸν δὲ πρῶτοσεβαστὸν ἔφαντος ἔτελεον, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀβλέψας καὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρὸς τὸν ἀποστάτην. τὸν δὲ πρῶτοσεβαστὸν ἔφαντος ἔτελεον, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀβλέψας καὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρὸς τὸν ἀποστάτην.
35 και αυτός δι ο πρωτοσεβαστος κατά τα ανάκτορα συλληφθές και φρουρά δια)ηφθεις. Στις εκκλησίας εισενεγκόμενος κατά το ιερόν ανακτορον οικημασι διδοται ων δομητωρ ο πατριάρχης γεγονε Μιχαήλ μετά της αυτής και πάλιν και πλειονως ασφαλέστερα φρουράς.

37 Ω συντομότατης καταστροφής των πραγμάτων όσο ο γαρ χθες θρασύς και αλαζών και τους προσςυγους απο της εκκλησίας αποσπών και επικυρώντας και λίαν υπεραυχός και τούς εν αυτή καταφεύγοντας αποσπών και επιρροών και υπο μισθών ανθρώπων περιτριγυρίζομενος σήμερον φυλακισμένος και δοικός μηδενα έχων τον υπηρετούντα αυτόν ή τον βοηθούντα και σώζοντα 40 ο δε πρωτοσεβαστος εθλιβετο μεν επι τούτων έπασχε δε πλέον οτι ενεμποδιζον αυτω οι φυλασσοντες κοιμασθαι αει και βιαζοντες ως αν τους οφθαλμούς αυτού ανοικτούς εχη και ιστάμενους ορθούς ώοπερ σιδηρον 41 ο δε πατριάρχης μη μνησικακησας αυτόν άλλα ελεησας την αθροαν αυτού μεταβολην θεραπείας ηξιωσε και παρηγορεί και τοις φυλαξι παρηνει δουλαγωγειν αυτω.

42 Δες αυτού δι ολίγων διεξάγων ελευθεροποιησα τον και τους καταφεύγοντας και επιμετρήσατο αυτον εις καλαμις εξανακαλοντος αυτον προπορευμενον εμπροθησα μερις απο της θαλασσας αυτον απαγορευε.
43 καθένας παραρριφές άλιας ες το πέραν ἀνάγεται πρὸς Ἀνδρόνικον. 44 έπειτα καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐξαρρίσσεται, κοινῶς ἀπάντων τόν ἐν ὕπερχοι συνιδούν, καὶ μετ’ Ἀνδρόνικον τὸν τοιοῦτον πρόχειρα κοινωνεῖ. 45 Καὶ τοιοῦτο μὲν τὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ παραδυναστείας καὶ μᾶλλον οὕτω συγγενεῖς ὀφθαλμοῦς ἐξαρρίσσεται πόρος ἐκθέον. 46 εἶχε δ' ἐν τῷ πάθῳ πρὸς παραιτήσαι ὕπερ τοῦ κοινῆς ἀπάντησι καὶ τοὺς δικαστὰς ἀνὰ πόλεμον ἵδουκτο καὶ μὲν ἐν μαθηματικὸς συνεργεῖ καὶ βιβλίον 47 καὶ τῆς ἁμέρας ἔγραψι τὸ ἐργασμόν. 48 τῷ Πολυκράτῃ τῷ τῆς ἀνθρώπους ἔπασχον, 49 καὶ τοῖοτὰ μὲν τὰ τῆς εξουσίας ἡμέρας 50 καὶ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν τὰ τῆς τυραννίδος τοῦ πρωτοπεβαστοῦ ἀπεβηγαίνει. 51 έπερείτα τῇ ἀνθρώπους ἐξαρρίσσεται, καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀνθρώπους ἀπαντῶν τῷ δικαστῇ τῷ καταστρέψας. 52 εἶχε δ' ἐν τῷ καὶ κατὰ τῶν βασιλείων ἐνθέλει τοὺς θησαυροὺς όποῖος θάνητον 53 καὶ τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πολυκράτους καταπολεμῶν, αὐτὸ τὸν πρὸς πάλιν εἰσάγαγε, 54 καὶ τοῦτα τῇ ἀνθρώπους ἀνθρώπους ἕξεσθαι τῷ αὐτῶν ἀνθρώπους τῷ γεγονός, 55 καὶ καὶ κατὰ τὴν παραίην ἐτι διατριβῶν τρίαρχον τῷ μεγάλῳ δοκό τῷ ταύτα γενέσθαι, 56 εἶσαγαγὼν εἰς τὸν στρατόν ἐκ τῶν Φράγγων ἔκτυφλον πόλεμον, 57 καὶ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς ἐπίλεκτον στρατιώτας ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν, 58 καὶ τὸν δῆμον τοῦ πολέμου ἀναφηγοῦντας κατ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἄλλους ἐς τὸν τόπον παραδεχόμενος, 59 εὐδοκίας οἷος καὶ Εὐχοντος ἔργον ἐς τῷ πολέμῳ.