

Introduction

The vocabulary of Byzantine classicizing and literary koine texts: A database of correspondences

is a research project conducted at the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Cyprus and funded by the A. G. Leventis Foundation during the period April 2014–April 2016.

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In the framework of this project a database was designed, which supports the collection of lexical correspondences between high-register and low-register literary Greek in Byzantine texts. This database will be fed with corresponding pairs of words from various texts from which at least two versions exist, a high-register and a low register. For the first stage of the project, we focused on corresponding terms in Niketas Choniates' *History* and the anonymous *Metaphrasis* of this text (early 13th c. and mid-14th c. respectively). On the one hand, this collection of data enables researchers to gauge the stylistic quality of specific lexical items, and, on the other, offers a kind of intralingual, Greek-Greek dictionary, juxtaposing highly literary terms and their equivalents in the 'standard/common' prose (literary koine) of the time.

Vocabulary is an important aspect of stylistic and linguistic register, though not the only one. Other such aspects include, of course, grammatical and syntactical features, which are not the object of focus in this particular project, but may be the object of more systematic investigation in the future.

Together with this introduction, you will find two pdf files, containing samples of the compendium of terms appearing in the *History* (NChonChron) and their equivalents in the *Metaphrasis* (MetaChon) (Sample A, letters β-δ) as well as, conversely, a compendium of words of the *Metaphrasis* and their corresponding terms in the *History* (Sample B, again letters β-δ).

Notes/Explanations concerning the two sample files:

References to the texts are based on J.-L. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (CFHB 11). Berlin 1975, and J. Davis and M. Hinterberger, *The Metaphrasis of Niketas Choniates' History* (Byzantinisches Archiv). Berlin – New York (in preparation) respectively.

On the left is listed the lemma/term together with its stylistic qualification/classification in brackets. The classification has four variants (high, low, both, ambiguous) and is based on the evidence so far collected in the database and/or our scholarly experience. 'Ambiguous' means that for the time being we do not have clear, or enough, evidence for any of the other three qualifications. Despite the fact that when comparing the two texts with one another it can be seen that the *History* is a high-register text and the *Metaphrasis* a low-register text, a specific term's appearance either in the *History* or in the

Metaphrasis does not constitute sufficient evidence for labelling it either ‘high’ or ‘low’, since both texts share a substantial portion of the vocabulary (i.e. terms with the stylistic qualifier ‘both’).

Under the lemma/word the term’s occurrences are listed. To the right follows the corresponding term or one of several corresponding terms (again accompanied by a stylistic qualifier). On the far right-hand side are listed the specific occurrences of the term.

The results of this project together with its future potential will be presented at the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Belgrade, 22-27 August 2016; see abstracts of the Round Table “Metaphrasis in Byzantine Literature”, linked to <http://byz2016.rs>).

For further information on the issue of stylistic levels and *metaphraseis*, see M. Hinterberger, “Between simplification and elaboration: Byzantine Metaphraseis in comparison,” in *Textual Transmission in Byzantium: between Textual Criticism and Quellenforschung*, eds. J. Signes Codoñer and I. Pérez Martín. Turnhout 2014: 33-60.

On request, the full compendium of terms of both the *History* and the *Metaphrasis* can be obtained (contact siebens@ucy.ac.cy). Comments and suggestions are also welcome at the same e-mail address.