

Research Article

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Medieval Textbooks as a Major Source for Historical Sociolinguistic Studies of (high-register) Medieval Greek

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Abstract: This article proposes to consider medieval textbooks, designed for the study of Greek, as major sources for historical sociolinguistic analyses on texts written in (high-register) Medieval Greek. It additionally discusses some aspects of the definition of historical sociolinguistics as a discipline, and stresses the importance of recovering the speech community's perspective on Medieval Greek.

Keywords: Historical Sociolinguistics, High-register / Low-register Medieval Greek, Koine Greek

1 Introduction

Historical sociolinguistic studies on Medieval Greek consist of linguistic descriptions and interpretations of texts written in this language, all from the speech community's perspective.

The term “historical sociolinguistics” (HSL), a discipline that combines linguistic, social, historical, and philological sciences,¹ suggests that a language cannot be studied without its social dimension.² Similarly, the study of a language in its social dimension is nothing else than the study of the communication which takes place between members of an (extinct) speech community by the means of written texts.³ Consequently, the HSL analysis of a language consists of: 1) the diachronic or synchronic description of linguistic variation and change, on the basis of the recovered linguistic categories used by the original

¹ See Cuomo in press, and Bergs 2005: 12.

² See: Labov 1972: xiii: “I have resisted the term *sociolinguistics* for many years, since it implies that there can be a successful linguistic theory or practice which is not social.” See also Cuomo in press.

³ Evidently, such a selective definition, which excludes forms of communication other than written texts, pertains to HSL.

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speech community;⁴ 2) the study of the pragmatic function of these linguistic phenomena.⁵ As far as the first point is concerned, I stress the speech community's perspective, and the necessity of reconstructing the "sociolinguistic competencies of the native speakers" (see Chomsky 1965, 1986; Hymes 1972). Regarding the pragmatic aspects in HSL analyses, linguistic variations are "signs" by means of which an author encoded a message to a receptive and aware audience, and the correct interpretation of these "signs" can only take place in their original context of production and reception. Hence, as HSL aims to both describe and interpret linguistic phenomena, we can say that HSL expands into the fields of pragmatics and semiotics. According to this picture, it is evident that the greatest difficulty of an HSL analysis of a no-longer-spoken language is the recovery of the speech community's perspective.

In the present article, I will focus on the "bad-data problem" (Labov 1972; 1994) concerning HSL studies on Medieval Greek, by addressing the following questions: Whether, and if so, how medieval textbooks for the study of Greek enable us to recover the speech community's perspective, and the original "readers' cultural competence".⁶ With "readers' cultural competence", I understand "a certain set of knowledge that is necessary to describe linguistic phenomena, and to interpret texts". Paraphrasing Culler (1975: 113–114): To read and understand a text, or any other means of communication, it is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the phenomenon language, which tells one what to look for.

2 Data, and methods of HSL analyses on Medieval Greek⁷

A famous debate within the discipline considers HSL data to be either *bad* (Labov 1994: 11) or *imperfect* (as Joseph 2011; see also Janda and Joseph 2003: 14).⁸ More specifically, Labov (1994: 11) stated that "we usually know very little about the social position of the writers and not much more about the social structure of the community. Though we know what was written, we know nothing about what was understood [...]. Our knowledge of what was distinctive and what was not is severely limited, since we cannot use the knowledge of native speakers to differentiate nondistinctive from distinctive variants." Indubitably, Labov's words are applicable to the study of low-register / Vernacular Medieval Greek. In this (spoken?) variety, for example, there was no standard orthography, nor medieval systematic descriptions of what every (orthographic) variation was intended to mean.

Nevertheless, if we limit our HSL studies to the high-register variety of Medieval Greek, also known as "Atticized" Greek, it is not entirely true that we "know nothing about what was understood", and "cannot use the knowledge of native speakers". In fact, the "Atticized" variety of Medieval Greek was a standardized and codified Greek, which its medieval users (both authors and audiences) learnt at school. This variety of Medieval Greek was modelled on the language and style of Classical Greek and Hellenistic authors, and the Church Fathers. It was also characterized by constant references to the framework of shared cultural knowledge, which medieval authors and audiences inherited from their past. Texts written in "Atticized" Greek were not meant to (primarily) display sterile erudition, nor an anachronistic cult of the past. On the contrary, medieval authors aimed to renew and revitalize their glorious traditions, to convey actual messages, and to address their contemporaries; all in a manner which would bear comparison with the

⁴ On synchronic and diachronic sociolinguistic studies, see Aitchison 2012.

⁵ Regarding Ancient Greek, where the perspective of the speech community is only indirectly recoverable (if ever), historical linguists have to base their "sociolinguistic" considerations on speculative comparisons between various linguistic data. On methodology and bibliography concerning HSL and Ancient Greek, see: Lewis 2015; McDonald 2016; Jordi 2016. It is however hard to draw conclusions on the language of a social class, gender, etc. on the basis of *literary* texts. The language of these sources is so influenced by literary conventions and erudite factors, that all other "sociolinguistically relevant" factors play an imperceptible role in shaping the language. This implies that they cannot be recovered and adequately analyzed starting from the texts. See also the book by James Clackson (2015), especially chapters 3 to 5 and the "Conclusion".

⁶ See Culler 1975: *part two*, and Scholes 1982: 20.

⁷ Accurate linguistic surveys of the history of the (Medieval) Greek language are in Horrocks 2010² and Rollo 2008.

⁸ The data issue was also discussed in Nevalainen 1999 (esp. 503–504), and Nevalainen – Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 26–27. See also Nevalainen 2015.

linguistic and cultural models from their past. The use of “Atticized” Greek was not confined to the literature, but it was also at the heart of cultural events and business activities in the Byzantine Empire and its capital, Constantinople. There, tribunals, record offices, and ecclesiastical institutions (such as the chancellery of the patriarchate) constantly demanded functionaries with the highest education and managerial skills able to write in “Atticized” Greek.

One may well here remember the words which Robert Browning (1975: 3 and 5) wrote about education in Byzantium in the twelfth century: “even in the darkest age of the seventh and eighth centuries, still more in more enlightened epochs, there existed in the Byzantine world a complex and sophisticated apparatus of government, which had need of men who could not only read and write, but had some acquaintance, however superficial, with the heritage of Greek antiquity. [...] The spirit of education in the twelfth century was classicizing and formalistic. Form was more important than content. Pupils were steered towards literature, or belles-lettres, rather than towards thought. Men felt at their ease in a world which encouraged superficial imitations of antiquity.”

In conformity with this picture, the Greek society in the Middle Ages adopted, and adapted to its needs, an educational system, whose roots can be traced to the Mouseion of Alexandria. Rudolf Pfeiffer’s words about the rise of scholarship in Alexandria can be quoted here and, *mutatis mutandis*, referred to the most intimate and arcane spirit of the Medieval Greek education:

The *creative* resourcefulness of the Greek genius [...] manifested itself again under changed conditions. A strong desire to rebuild was slowly growing up in the field of poetry as in others too. Poetry had to be rescued from the dangerous situation in which it lay, and the writing of poetry had to become a particularly serious work of discipline and wide knowledge [...]. The *new writers had to look back to the old masters*, [...], not to imitate them – this was regarded as impossible or at least as undesirable – but in order to be trained by them in *their own new* poetical technique. Their incomparably precious heritage had to be saved and studied. This was felt to be, first of all, a necessity for the rebirth and *future life* of poetry, and secondly an obligation to the achievements of the past ages which had given birth to the masterpieces of Hellenic literature. [...]. Thus a novel conception of poetry, held by the poets themselves, led the way to the revival of poetry as well as to a new treatment of the ancient poetical texts and then of all the other literary monuments. Pfeiffer 1968: 88; emphasis in italics is mine.

In the Eastern Roman Empire, the programme of studies remained constant throughout the centuries (see Nousia 2016: 29–48). Nonetheless, according to their specific didactical needs, generations of scholars and teachers produced various kinds of textbooks, some of which became very popular and remained in use for generations. I say “various kinds”, because not only grammar books, but also specific Lexica (or Dictionaries) of “Attic” words; encyclopedic and anthological collections of texts;⁹ collections of model phrases and sentences to be used as syntactic models for composition; linguistic and syntactic commentaries on the Greek classics¹⁰, whose language (the Attic Greek, indeed) was to be imitated; etc. should all go under the label of “textbooks for the study of ‘Atticized’ Greek”.¹¹ All these works had taught medieval authors how to write, and audiences to read and demand that poetical forms and conventions be respected, and can still teach us what the Byzantines considered to be “Atticized” Greek.¹² So, textbooks can be seen as one of the

⁹ A characteristic of “Atticized” Greek is the constant use of quotations, allusions to, and imitations of themes from the literary heritage, which constitutes the socio-cultural framework, to which the medieval users of Greek would refer. Encyclopedic and anthological works aimed to collect texts to this purpose, as Ptolemaeus’ “New Stories for the Erudition”, in seven books. Ptolemaeus was a grammarian who worked and lived in Rome under the rules of Emperors Nero (37–68) and Adrian (76–138). His work is now lost to us. However, Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, summarized it. His words testify that the “New Stories for the Erudition” (and other works of the same genre) influenced authors’ language, at least as far as the choice of themes was concerned. Photius reports to have read the “‘New Stories for the Erudition’ in seven books. This work is really *useful* for those who aim to achieve a historical erudition.” (Photius, *Bibliotheca*, chapter 190, see Bianchi and Schiano 2016: 261 and 1084).

¹⁰ On anthologies in the Palaeologan era and broader bibliography, see Canart 2011.

¹¹ On textbooks in general and on textbooks in late Byzantium see, e.g., Arnesano and Sciarra 2010; Bianconi 2010; Nousia 2016.

¹² See my conclusions on point 3.3 below. The schooling system in the Greek Middle Ages has been object of investigation of interesting recent publications. For example, I can remember here: Gaul 2011; Giannouli 2014; Nousia 2016; and Finglass (in press).

factors of linguistic variations and changes towards high-register Medieval Greek.¹³ Their influence on the language was both direct and indirect: direct, as authors wrote according to the prescriptive rules contained in the textbooks; indirect, as authors wrote according to the expectations of their audiences, which had, in turn, been taught “Atticized” Greek by the same textbooks.

Even though “Atticized” Greek is an artificial register of Medieval Greek, which users of that time learned at schools, it can still be an object of HSL analyses (see point 4, below). In fact, HSL aims to understand the social role played by a language in a society, and to address the questions “*who writes what, how, to whom, when, and why*” (see Cuomo in press: § 1), regardless the fact that one or more varieties of the same language are artificial registers and do not mirror the spoken language.¹⁴

3 Textbooks and education as factors of linguistic variation and change

In this paragraph, I am going to discuss two examples, respectively from the Patriarch Photius (3.1), and the anonymous “byzantinisches Schülgespräch” (3.2). On the one hand, they are meant to show how broad the understanding of the term “textbook” is, and the impact of the linguistic prescriptions of the textbooks on “Atticized” Greek. On the other hand, these examples help us understand the importance of education in the Byzantine society. In 3.3, I will look at some interesting linguistic descriptions contained in very popular textbooks in late Byzantium, namely the comments on Greek classics – here, on Sophocles – written at the monastery of Chora, Constantinople, at the school of Maximos Planudes and Manuel Moschopoulos.

3.1 Photius

Photius (820ca.–893), polymath and Patriarch of Constantinople in 858–867 and again in 877–886, dedicated 13 chapters, from 145 to 158, of his *Bibliotheca* to the description of *Lexica*. Some of his considerations are worth discussing here.¹⁵ The following examples show that *Lexica* potentially played a role in influencing authors’ linguistic choices, and in forming audiences’ expectations. However, if one wanted to use these sources for HSL analyses, (s)he should investigate their real use and diffusion in time and space.

In chapter nr. 145, Photius reports on his lectures of a *Lexicon in alphabetical order* by Helladius (5th cent. CE),¹⁶ which is “the most ample of those <lexica> that we know. It is not a mere collection of words, but also, at times (ἐνίοτε), of some of the most effective and graceful phrases, which complete the composition of sentences. The most part of the words is taken from texts in prose, and not from poems.” Photius concludes by adding that this *Lexicon* is “useful (χρήσιμον) both for those who write and for those who esteem erudition, as it has testimonies from orators and also from those writers who have great fame in poetry.”

In chapter 146, Photius declares to have read a “*Lexicon of the pure style* (λεξικὸν ... καθαρῶς ιδέας)”, and that this work is useful (χρήσιμον), more than any other else, for those who pursue this style.

In chapter 147, regarding a “*Lexicon of the solemn style* (λεξικὸν σεμνῆς ιδέας)”, Photius writes that “this work (πραγματεία) is useful to those who want to elevate their writings in loftiness and majesty (ἡ πραγματεία ... χρησίμη τοῖς εἰς μέγεθος καὶ ὄγκον ἐπαίρειν τοὺς λόγους αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ συγγράφειν ἐθέλουσιν).”

In chapter 148, he describes a “*Lexicon of the political jargon*”, which is a very broad work, very useful for success, and very adaptable for discussions. “The reader – unless he never read ancient authors – will

¹³ Among other factors, one should not forget that the way they spoke, as well as other registers, influenced the way they used “Atticized” Greek remarkably. See Horrocks 2014, and Horrocks in press.

¹⁴ See Karyolemou 2014: 34–36, and 49–50.

¹⁵ Photius’ *Bibliotheca* has been edited by Robert Henry, Paris 1959–1977. For bibliographical and exegetical notes, see Bianchi and Schiano 2016.

¹⁶ See *Brill’s New Pauly* online s.v. *Helladius*.

not be required to learn; he will only need to make notes of the entries”.¹⁷

In chapter 150, Photius gives an account of the “*Lexicon of the expressions used by the ten rhetoricians*”, by Julian.¹⁸ This work is said to “explain the words of the Athenian legal jargon and if the rhetoricians attributed a particular meaning to these words according to their particular history, or if they used them according to some traditional custom”.

In chapter 152, Photius describes a collection of “Attic words” by Aelius Dionysius of Halicarnassus, also known as “the Atticist”, a grammarian from the 2nd cent. CE.¹⁹ He attests that “this work is extremely useful to those who want to “Atticize” their writings (τοῖς τε ἀττικίζειν ἔχουσιν φροντίδα) and decide to attend to works written by the Attics (καὶ τοῖς τῶν Ἀττικῶν συγγράμμασιν ἐνομιλεῖν προαιρουμένοις). In fact, from this work, it is possible to learn every term commonly employed by the Athenians concerning festivals and justice.” Apparently, this Lexicon also explained idiomatic expressions used by Attic writers.

Chapters 145 to 158 of Photius’ *Bibliotheca* testify that Lexica (as other textbooks) played a decisive role in shaping high-register Medieval Greek. These were useful both as interpretative tools, for those whose aim was to read the Greek classics, and as instruments for original compositions in “Atticized” Greek. Anyway, lectures of ancient authors were also seen as a means to learn how to properly write. Photius’ descriptions of these Lexica indicate that their prescriptive character contributed to the standardization of high-register Medieval Greek, and their influence on authors’ linguistic choices cannot be underestimated. Modern linguists will certainly be surprised and fascinated by the variety of Lexica as well as the fact that many of them were created, implemented, and used throughout the centuries.²⁰ If compared and studied in their diachronic evolution, Lexica would reveal how the definition and perception of “Atticized” Greek changed among its users.

3.2 The “byzantinisches Schulgespräch”

About three hundred years after Photius, during the first reign of Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195), a document known as the “byzantinisches Schulgespräch” (Treu 1893: 96–105) gives us a taste of the common knowledge, which every educated person in the Eastern Roman Empire was required to have. The document is in the form of a dialog, although only the teacher is actually speaking, and addresses weighty questions to a student concerning the degree program for lawyers (indeed, theology is not mentioned there). I say, “a teacher”, but the character, who asks questions in this document, may generally represent the voice of the “medieval Greek culture”, and the entire document does not necessarily have to be considered as an actual dialogue staged at a school. Personally, when I read this text, I feel as if a representative of the Medieval Greek speech community were even questioning me!

For the purpose of this article, I am going now to translate and briefly comment on the first part of the document, where the fundamentals of common knowledge, the grammar, is mentioned, and the textbooks and aims pertaining to this discipline are listed.

Here to me, o noble one, o celestial one, [...] answer whom is asking. In how many disciplines did you perfected yourself? Perhaps in grammar? And how did you learn it? Perhaps by using other textbooks and <the works of> those who have explained this discipline in detail? Or rather, did the *Ars Grammatica* by Dionysius Thrax suffice for you? And well then, if you have most perfectly learned grammar, tell me: Who else wrote on this subject alongside Dionysius Thrax? And how many are those who have accurately commented <on it>? What is this? You are silent and give no answer about the first discipline? You seem to have a lack of education and to be sick with arrogance.

And similarly, you also long to learn from me, today, who wrote about grammar alongside Dionysius Thrax, and hence, of course, who explained these works as well. Come now, learn the rest today, how Theodosius explained <the work of>

¹⁷ This sentence probably indicates that the scope of this work was only to provide its cultivated readers with expressions, technical terms, and examples ready to be used, and did not contain explanations of single terms.

¹⁸ See *Brill’s New Pauly* online s.v. *Julianos* (6), col. 1045.

¹⁹ See *Brill’s New Pauly* online s.v. *Dionysios* (21), coll. 484–485. This lexicon has been published by Erbse (1950: 95–151).

²⁰ See e.g. Photius’ *Bibliotheca*, chapters 152, 153, and the comments to these passages in Bianchi and Schiano 2016.

Dionysius. Oros and Herodian wrote treatises on grammar; Heliodoros and a certain Georgios, and more thoroughly Choroiboscus wrote explanations.

What is the method of grammar (ἡ μέθοδος τῆς γραμματικῆς)? The working out in detail of the words (λεπτολογία τῶν λέξεων), and the *Hellenismos* (i.e. the use of a pure Greek style).

What is the purpose (σκοπός) of grammar? To use the language without solecisms and without barbarisms (ἀσολοικίστως καὶ ἀβαρβαρίστως).

How many are the corollaries of grammar²¹? These are as many as it is required to polish expressions. [...]

Treu 1893: 97, ll. 1–21.

This passage, taken from the “byzantinisches Schulgespräch”, testifies that there was a structured system of linguistic knowledge, which was codified and required in the Medieval Greek speech community. This excerpt also shows that the characteristics of the high-register variety of Medieval Greek were listed and described in standard books. In other words: there were a coherent schooling system and canonic textbooks, which provided medieval authors and audiences with the necessary “linguistic competencies” to write texts in “Atticized” Greek, and to understand them.

Before looking at other examples, taken from the Palaeologan time (1261–1453), I would like to add some notes on the Greek words, which I wrote in brackets, as they may require an explanation. *Methodos* (μέθοδος) indicates a thorough and coherent study of a discipline. The fact that grammar has a *methodos* implies that this is a discipline (ἐπιστήμη), whose notions and rules are systematically organized, and has a target (σκοπός). In fact, the “working out in detail of the words (λεπτολογία τῶν λέξεων)”, and the use of a pure Greek style (*Hellenismos*) leads to writing in a language which has neither defects in syntax (ἀσολοικίστως), nor in vocabulary (ἀβαρβαρίστως). This scope can be reached by refining the expression according to the grammatical rules.

The specific teaching of the proper composition belonged to rhetoric. I will not translate this section, as it is a frightening list of technical terms and titles of treatises, which would distract us from the purpose of this article. However, I will only mention: 1) that Hermogenes of Tarsus’s works were the basis of the teaching of rhetoric; 2) that in lessons of rhetoric, pupils had to learn the principles of composition, followed by the Greek classic and Hellenistic authors, which in turn would enable them to make use of all possible linguistic effects, from amusement to persuasion. In this respect, rhetoric was considered to be a science, and the imitation of the models of the past was not a servile and blind imitation of their writings, but the imitation of their compositional art; 3) that texts in “Atticized” Greek were actual compositions, targeted to a contemporary audience, which conveyed actual messages in actual socio-historical contexts.

3.3 Manuel Moschopoulos’ commentary on Sophocles’ *Electra*

So far, we have seen that generations of teachers and scholars produced their own textbooks, which included commentaries on Greek classics and Hellenistic authors, and lists of “Attic” words and expressions. These textbooks were continuously shaped by their zeitgeist and also reflected the linguistic considerations, which circulated in a linguistic community in a particular period, while the programme of studies remained constant throughout the entire life of the Eastern Roman Empire. This implies that effective studies on textbooks must carefully locate them in time and space, as well as understand their use and distribution.

Now, with the help of some examples, we will focus on the content of textbooks, in particular of comments on Greek classics. The following examples are taken from the commentary on Sophocles’ *Electra*, written by Manuel Moschopoulos in the last decade of the 13th century, at the “school” of Maximos Planudes in Constantinople.²² The “school” of Maximos Planudes (1255–ca. 1305) and Manuel Moschopoulos (ca. 1265–ca. 1316), was located at the monastery of Chora. After the Byzantine reconquest of Constantinople in 1261, which had fallen into the hands of the Latins in 1204, the Eastern Roman Empire became more and more exposed to the invasive influences of its Latin, Slavic, and Muslim neighbors; in this context,

²¹ Or better: “of orthography”. See Treu 1893: 105.

²² What I am here talking about, is “the school of grammatikos, which introduced pupils aged twelve and up to the curriculum, meaning to classical literature, grammar, rhetoric, and other supplementary subject” Markopoulos 2014: 5.

“Atticized” Greek (and all its cultural significance) played a more and more important role in the Greek society of that time. To this end, a new series of textbooks was created in response to the cultural needs of the new Byzantine Empire. In particular, Manuel Moschopoulos’ textbooks became extremely popular not only in Constantinople, but also in other cultural centers of the Empire and, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, also in Western Europe during the early Renaissance.²³

The following examples and translations are taken from my forthcoming critical edition of Moschopoulos’ commentaries on Sophocles.²⁴ For the sake of brevity, I will give the text of the manuscript D (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, II.F.9).²⁵ The fact that I quote from a single manuscript – which is, by the way, one of the most important – should not be viewed as a limitation, particularly considering the scope of our article. In fact, the editing of Greek scholia requires the editor to consider every single manuscript to be a world *per se*; similarly, the linguistic descriptions have to be studied as they are contained and transmitted in each manuscript, because each of them constitutes a history unto itself.

One last note on the terms that I am going to use and on how these manuscripts look: Manuel Moschopoulos wrote his (almost exclusively linguistic) comments directly on a copy of Sophocles. Hence, we can describe it as a morpho-syntactic lexicon written between the lines and in the margins of a manuscript containing Sophocles. In the following, by the terms glosses/*glossae*, I mean interlinear notes aimed at explaining poetic, difficult or rare Attic words, by giving an easier synonym, often in Common Greek. By the terms comments/*scholia*, I indicate marginal notes, which provide readers with textual explanations, by often rendering the Attic text into Common Greek, and indicate when to use which of the two variants of Medieval Greek. When referring “to the exegetical work on Sophocles by Moschopoulos”, I use the word “comments” as a collective noun, referred to both glossae and scholia.

Example A: δῖφρων, κυλισθεῖς· ὧδ’ ὁ μῦθος ἐστάτω· (50)²⁶

...that he was hurled off his **chariot**: Let this be your story.

50 δῖφρων] ἀρμάτων καροῦχα κοινῶς

50 δῖφρων (gen pl)] ἀρμάτων (gen pl). καροῦχα (nom sg) in Koine Greek.

The neuter substantive καρούχιον (see LBG) derives from the Latin carrucha (> Italian carrozza).

Example B: ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρός τῦμβον ὡς ἐφίετο, (51)

We <will crown> the **tomb** of my father, as the god commanded.

51 τῦμβον] ἢ κοινῶς τοῦμπα· τάφον·

51 tomb (sg acc)] τοῦμπα (nominative), in Common Greek. Grave (sg acc).

Τοῦμπα or τοῦμβα is a term from Latin/Medieval Latin, which in Medieval Greek means hill, high ground (see LBG).

In A and B, the poetic words δῖφρων and τῦμβον, are explained by a more common (high-register) term: ἀρμάτων and τάφον, respectively. In both examples, the terms used in the glossae are written in the same case (genitive plural and accusative singular) of the explained poetical words. In addition, terms from the Common Greek are also provided: καροῦχα and τοῦμπα. These are given in the nominative. Interestingly, it is two loanwords / foreign terms that belong to low-register Medieval Greek.

²³ See Maisano and Rollo 2002, and Rollo 2011, 2012.

²⁴ The general purpose of my edition is to analyze Manuel Moschopoulos’ methods as a teacher and interpreter of the tragedies studied in Byzantine schools, and more broadly, to advance our knowledge of the Planudes – Moschopoulos’ circle in Constantinople, and to provide an instrument for the description of Medieval Greek from the speech community perspective.

²⁵ See Formentin 1995: 124–131; Cuomo in press’.

²⁶ I punctuate according to the system of Dionysius Thrax, which is the same followed by the Byzantines (Cuomo 2016: xlvii–lii). So, the upper dots are equivalent to English full stops, and the middle dots have the function of English commas. I replace the Dionysian ὑποστιγμαί and ὑποδιαστολαί with a single sign, the comma. A comma/hypodiastole links two words or phrases on a micro-syntactic level (like in example A, the verb κυλινδω and the complement of place where); whereas a comma/hypostigma indicates that what follows is the main clause. An Oxytone always carries the grave accent (like in example A κυλισθεῖς), unless it is immediately followed by a teleia or the next word is an enclitic.

Example C: ... καὶ **παρεστίους** (269)

σπένδοντα λοιβάς ἔνθ' ἐκείνον ὤλεσεν... (270)

... and pouring libations **at the hearth** where he killed him...

269 παρεστίους] ἔστία τὸ κοινῶς λεγόμενον εἰκονοστάσιον:

269 παρεστίους (acc pl)] In Koine Greek, ἔστία (nom sg) is said εἰκονοστάσιον.

This glossa comments on the adjective *παρέστιος* (by or at the hearth), which is etymologically composed by *παρά* and *ἔστία*. It focuses on the word *ἔστία*. In Attic Greek, *ἔστία* means *hearth of a house, home, household, family*, and metaphorically also *the last home, the grave*, as in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, verse 1726. Given the connotations of intimate, private, sacred, which pertain to this term, *ἔστία* also has the meaning of *altar, sanctuary*. And it is this meaning, which the gloss focuses and comments on. It reveals that the Koine Greek for *altar* (*ἔστία*) is *iconostasis* (*εἰκονοστάσιον*).

While the gloss is not actually informing about the proper meaning of *παρεστίους* (in this verse of Sophocles, it designates the intern of the house, where Agamemnon was killed), it still reveals to us an unknown nuance of the Koine Greek word *εἰκονοστάσιον*. *Εἰκονοστάσιον*, we learn, did designate not only the wall of icons, which separate the nave from the altar in an orthodox church (see LBG s.v.), but also metonymically the altar itself.

Example D: ὡς νῦν ἀπόντος **ἱστόρει**· τί σοι φίλον; (316)

As he is not here, **question me**: What is it you want?

316 ἱστόρει (present imperative active, 2nd person sing)] ἱστορεῖν τὸ διέρχεσθαι τόπους παρὰ τοῖς κοινοῖς παρὰ δὲ τοῖς ποιηταῖς, τὸ ἐρωτᾶν:

316 In Koine Greek, the verb *ἱστορεῖν* means to pass through/reach/arrive at places (*διέρχεσθαι τόπους*). In poetry, it means to ask (*ἐρωτᾶν*).

The verb *ἱστορεῖν* more commonly means *inquire into/about a thing, examine, observe*. From *ἱστορεῖν*, we have the word *ἱστορία* (> Engl. history). The gloss underlines here the particular connotation of *ἱστορεῖν*, which in this verse of Sophocles means *to ask*. The expression *παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς* literally means *among the poets*, and hence *in poetry*. *Παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς* is a synonym for “Attic” or “high-register Greek”, as in example F (see below).

Example E: ὅπως πάθης τί χρήμα; **ποῦ** ποτ' εἴ φρενῶν; (390)

So that what can happen? **Where** are you with your thoughts (i.e. Where are your wits)?

Ea 390 ὅπως] ἵνα

Eb 390 ποῦ] τὸ ποῦ Ἀττικῶς γενικῇ:

Eb 390 ποῦ (interrogative adverb)] The word *ποῦ* requires the genitive, according to the Attics (see GE, s.v.).

Example E contains two notes on syntax. In Ea, the word *ὅπως* can serve several functions in Greek. To avoid confusion, Moschopoulos indicates that *ὅπως* here is a final conjunction, by glossing with *ἵνα*. Even though *ἵνα* can carry several meanings (e.g. as an adverb of place where, of time etc.) as well, *ἵνα* is more commonly used as a final conjunction. By reading *ἵνα* every student would have been easily able to recognize the correct function of *ὅπως* in the text of Sophocles. In Eb, Moschopoulos notes that the interrogative adverb *ποῦ* must be used with the genitive, if one wants to write as the Attics did.

Example F: ὦ Πέλοπος ἀ πρόσθεν (504)

Πολύπονος **ἱππεία**, (505)

ὡς ἔμολες αἰανῆς (506)

τᾷδε γᾶ. (507)

O once (πρόσθεν adv of time) much-suffering (πολύπονος, adjective fem sg)

generation (ἀ ἱππεία substantive fem sg) of Pelops

505 ἀ (i.e. ἡ) ... ἱππεία] ἱππασία παρὰ τοῖς κοινοῖς· ἱππεία δὲ καὶ ἱπποσύνη παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς:-

505 ἄ (i.e. ἡ) ... ἵππεία (nom fem sg)] The Koine Greek for ἵππεία (= *riding* or *driving* of horse) is ἵππασία (= *riding* or *driving* of horse, *horsemanship*, *horse-exercise*). In poetry, ἵπποσύνη (*the art of driving the war-chariot*: generally, *driving* [*the chariot*], *horsemanship*) is also used as a synonym for ἵππεία.

Here, again, the gloss is not commenting on the particular meaning intended by Sophocles who actually uses ἵππεία (*breed of horses*) metaphorically, in order to designate the generation of Pelops, that is the house of Atreus, to which Agamemnon, Orestes, and Electra belonged. The Atreidai were the rulers of Mycenae, Argos.

Example G: ἀνθ' ὧν, βιασθεὶς πολλὰ **κάντιβας**, μόλις (575)
ἔθυσεν αὐτήν... (576)

For that reason, having been very much constrained and having resisted (i.e. reluctant), *with difficulty*
he sacrificed her...

575 κάντιβας] ἀντιβαίνειν, ἀντισπᾶν καὶ ἀντιτείνειν ταυτὸν· τὸ παρὰ τοῖς κοινοῖς ἀντιπατεῖν:-
575 κάντιβας (part sg aor act masc nom)] To *withstand/resist* (ἀντιβαίνειν, *pres inf act* < ἀντιβαίνω) has the same meaning of to *drag* (ἀντισπᾶν *pres inf act* < ἀντισπάω) and to *strive against/resist* (ἀντιτείνειν *pres inf act* < ἀντιτείνω), and of the Koine Greek ἀντιπατεῖν (< ἀντιπατέω).

Example H: κήρυσσέ μ' εἰς ἅπαντας, (606)
Denounce me to all

606 κήρυσσε] ἡγουν διαδίδου, τὸ κοινῶς γυβέντιζε (sic pro γιβεντίζω).
Denounce (κήρυσσε *pres imp 2nd sg* < κηρύσσω)] *that is* διαδίδου (*pres imp 2nd sg* < διαδίδωμι); *in Koine Greek*: γυβέντιζε (*pres imp 2nd sg* < γυβεντίζω).

The verb γυβεντίζω is known to lexica of Medieval and Modern Greek. For example see γεβεντίζω in Kriaras, and Somavera. Du Cange, s.v. γυβεντίζειν, spells this verb with upsilon, as the manuscript D. The LBG records the masculine substantive κιβεντιστής, attested in ExtrLex 107, 15th cent.).

According to Moschopoulos, κηρύσσω, διαδίδωμι, and the Koine Greek γυβεντίζω, or better γιβεντίζω, have the same meaning of “to denounce / hand over”. Considering the substantive κιβεντιστής, which is etymologically related to γιβεντίζω and means “barker, bell man”, this gloss suggests that these three verbs are synonyms, even in the acceptance of “to proclaim / spread (e.g. news) / denounce”.

This verb deserves a closer look. Γυβεντίζω (sic) is also recorded in the Metaphrasis of Niketas Choniates' Historia (790), where it replaces the verb “ἐπεμβόαω”, *raise a shout*. It is spelt with <υ> as in the manuscript D. This verb is probably a loanword from the Medieval French “gibet”, which by the way means *gallows, gibbet*.²⁷ We would spell it with a <ι>, if we look at κιβεντιστής in LBG, and κιβεντίζω in Simon (1973: I, 175).²⁸ Hence, both the γυβέντιζε of the ms. D and the γυβεντίζω of the metaphrasis of Niketas should be seen as misspellings due to iotacism.

Overall, this example suggests that loanwords did not belong to “Atticized” Greek. One of the reviewers of this article suggested that “it is certainly impossible to assign a Medieval Turkish or French loanword like γεβεντίζω/γιβεντίζω to Koiné Greek”. This claim is worth discussing. As far as I have seen while I was collating the ms. D for my critical edition, loanwords are systematically labelled as “Koiné Greek”. This did not surprise me, because *hellenismos* is the characteristic one expects in “Atticized” Greek, and not indeed in Koiné Greek (see Cuomo in press: § 1.1). If we look at the metaphrasis of Niketas Choniates' Historia, we see that loanwords very often replace high-register terms used by Choniates. If it is true, that the register used by the metaphrastes of Choniates' work mirrors the language used (and spoken?) by the upper classes of Constantinople in the early fourteenth century, we can conclude that loanwords belonged to (that) Koiné Greek. In my opinion, which cannot be proved at this stage of my research, users of Medieval Greek of that time could understand loanwords much better than “pure Greek” terms (see examples A, B, C, and H),

²⁷ See the Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500) www.atilf.fr/dmf/ s. v. gibet, last visit June 14, 2017.

²⁸ See also γεβεντίζω in Kriaras, Somavera; and Du Cange, s.v. γυβεντίζειν.

because loanwords replaced ancient Greek, literary, and Hellenistic terms in the commonly used language. However, I cannot here address the question whether the “Koiné Greek” mentioned in Moschopulean textbooks is the spoken language or not, nor provide an univocal definition of Koiné. I hope I will be able to engage with these issues in the future.

Overall, unlike the *Lexica, Comments on Greek classics* do not present the lexicographic and syntactic material systematically. These notes primarily have a double function:

- 1) to assist the reader in his approach to Sophocles, and as we have seen above, the reading of ancient models is also a form of learning how to write like them;
- 2) to improve his vocabulary and syntactic skills for his own compositions. Sometimes (see examples C, D, F), the text of Sophocles even seems to be the pretext for general lexicographic explanations.

This quick look into a textbook confirms that “Atticized” Greek was taught to students whose first language was a Greek similar (or identical?) to the variety known as Common / Koine (i.e. Vernacular?) Greek.²⁹ Consequently, Greek teachers often resorted to examples taken from this better known variety. As a result of this, textbook can be considered to be good – occasional nonetheless – instruments for studies of this low-register variety of Medieval Greek as well; particularly if they can be located in time and space with accuracy. This is not a negligible advantage, because then-current linguistic categories occasionally diverge from the modern categories in defining what is high-register Greek and what was not.³⁰ Since style switching matters in terms of meaning, looking at this phenomenon from the speech community’s perspective may even enable us to interpret texts less anachronistically.

These examples, which have been just discussed, also show that Moschopulos has an original system of tagging words according to their belonging to “Atticized” or to “Common” Greek. In his commentaries on Sophocles’ *Electra*, I have recorded the following labels that he uses in order to classify and describe the various linguistic registers:

- **Ἀττικῶς vs κοινῶς**
*Attic Greek vs Common Greek*³¹
- **ἀρχαίως = δοκίμως = ῥητορικῶς**
Ancient = excellent = rhetorically
- **κυρίως vs ποιητικῶς**
In the proper sense (literally) vs in the poetic sense
- **Ἀττικοί = παλαιοί = παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς**
Attic authors = ancient authors = among the poets (in poetry)

Understanding and defining all these terms on the basis of medieval speech community’s descriptions and examples is still a desideratum in the field of HSL studies on Medieval Greek.

4 To recapitulate

In this article, I wanted to show that high-register Medieval Greek is an artificial and standardized variety of Greek, whose rules and characteristics were taught at schools by means of textbooks. Despite being “artificial”, “taught at schools”, and “a variety acquired with great effort by a small minority”, Atticized Greek is worth HSL analyses on its own. In fact, “Medieval Greek, despite spanning a wider-than-usual range of registers, is nonetheless a single language shaped by a largely common underlying (as opposed to realizational) grammatical framework” and “the study of its learned/written varieties can no longer reasonably be regarded as irrelevant to a proper understanding of the ‘real’ Greek of the time. (see Horrocks

²⁹ On low-register Medieval Greek and the Vernacular see the recent work: Cupane forthcoming: 1–5; and Cupane 2016: Coll. 925–971.

³⁰ Examples in Cuomo in press: 20–24.

³¹ Garzya (1958 [1974]: 203, n. 8) describes as typically Moschopulean the opposition “κοινόν/ἀττικόν” in the linguistic glosses.

2014: 72)” As high-register Medieval Greek was modelled on the language of Greek classics and Hellenistic authors, and texts written in this variety constantly referred to the Greek cultural heritage, alongside Imperial Roman and Christian traditions, medieval teachers and scholars produced not only books on grammar and rhetoric, but also collections of words and expressions, which had been used by these canonic authors, and commentaries on their works. All these works, which are categorized under the label of “textbooks”, have been factors of linguistic variation and change and influenced the linguistic choices of medieval authors. They were of course not the sole factors, as spoken Greek, as well as other registers, also determined how the Byzantines defined and described “Atticized” Greek (see note 13 above).

Within this context, we can conclude that high-register Medieval Greek is a sociolect *sui generis*, because one was not born a user of “Atticized” Greek, but became one. And one became user regardless his social background, gender, age, or provenance: one could only master “Atticized” Greek after having been accordingly trained. An appropriate linguistic training was based on comments on canonic lectures of model texts, on standard grammar and rhetoric books. The educational system of that time was aimed at teaching not only the linguistic features of “Atticized” Greek, but also the “meaning” linked to the use of this register, and the framework of cultural competencies indispensable for the correct understanding the texts.

In respect thereof, one should avoid looking for the “social” as a direct factor of linguistic variation and change toward high-register Medieval Greek, because *a priori* no social factor directly determined the use of this register. I stress *directly*, because social factors played certainly a decisive role in determining who could have access to education, and to the places where “Atticized” Greek was actively used. In this article, I wanted to focus on the *education* and, in particular, on textbooks for the teaching of Greek as major sources for HSL studies on Medieval Greek, because they contain then-current descriptions of that language, and not on the *social*. Once we will have systematically collected then-current descriptions of Medieval Greek, we will look at the *social* at least under two aspects: 1) the social occasions where Medieval Greek was used,³² and 2) the social role granted to the different registers of Medieval Greek by the speech community of that time. In a future study, I will try to examine in depth the impact of “Atticized” Greek on medieval Greek society. I will then mainly focus on how high-register Greek impacts on the society, even if not all the members are active users of this language. For example, a multitude of illiterate might well have been exposed to “Atticized” Greek by hearing rhetorical speeches during public festivals, or sermons and prayers during the liturgy. In these social contexts, “Atticized” Medieval Greek might have had an effect on them, as the *latinorum* of Don Abbondio had to Lorenzo in *The Betrothed* by Alessandro Manzoni.

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In this article, I tried to show that linguistic descriptions preserved in textbooks affected the language directly, and taught authors how to write, and audiences what to look for, or listen to. Hence, I consider textbooks to be “major sources” for HSL studies on Medieval Greek. Moreover, textbooks help us recover the “readers’ cultural competencies” (see *Introduction*, above), and understand the social role granted to different registers by the speech community of that time.

**

Studies on textbooks encounter at least four major difficulties.

The first trouble consists in defining them and dating their period of action,³³ by which I mean the period when they influenced authors’ language and contributed to form the “cultural competencies” of medieval readers. As we have seen, the label “textbook” encompasses different kinds of works. And one should take into account not only these, which I listed above, but also manuscripts that “normally” transmit Classical, Hellenistic, and medieval works. Indeed, it may happen that a manuscript of Aristides, for example, carries notes added by a medieval author.³⁴ This would testify that he refined his “Atticized” Greek having that manuscript as a model. Hence, when analyzing his language, historical sociolinguists should take into account not only what he learned at school, but also what he assimilated from his private

³² For the Palaeologan era, see Marciniak 2007: 278–279; Gaul 2007: 263–267 and 2011, e.g. 17–53; Bianconi in press: § 1.

³³ See: Arnesano and Sciarra 2010 and Bianconi 2010, and in press.

³⁴ See Pérez – Martín in press.

readings. Similarly, a list of “Attic” words, drafted in the ninth or even the second century, may have been used even in the 12th/13th centuries and hence be relevant even to the historical sociolinguists who want to study the “Atticized” Greek of the Palaeologan era.

The second problem that we encounter when we study medieval textbooks is the lack of complete critical editions. As an editor of Manuel Moschopoulos’ commentaries on Sophocles, I noticed that only 45% of the material is edited in the Brunck and Dindorf editions, and this material is still fortunate to at least have a printed edition! If we want to get a general picture of what the users of Medieval Greek thought about their language, we need to rely on the largest collection of data possible. This can only be obtained by systematically editing the medieval textbooks and becoming familiar with their linguistic descriptions.

The third problem is related to the second. A critical edition of school books, which aims to be useful for historical sociolinguists, cannot be undertaken according to classical editorial principles, by which manuscripts are treated hierarchically. In fact, even *codices descripti* can turn into important HSL sources. Moreover, during the process of textual transmission, it often happens that several scribes autonomously alter the text by augmenting their copies with original notes, or notes belonging to other exegetical *corpora*. These additions, which would not appear in a “canonic” critical edition, are however very important to sociolinguists, as they register a change in the perception and description of Medieval Greek, and reflect the knowledge of the speech community in a particular temporal and social context.

The fourth major difficulty of studying textbooks pertains to the collection and use of their linguistic data. We have said that historical sociolinguistics aims to address the question “why texts are such as they are” by considering their original contexts of production and reception, and from the point of view of texts’ original users. HSL aims to do this as well as possible, at which point we resort to historical linguistics. In order to assess and quantify the impact of textbooks on the language of a particular author, historical sociolinguists should be able to compare one author’s linguistic choices with the prescriptions and descriptions contained in textbooks. To this end, I think that the linguistic information contained in medieval textbooks should be gathered in a searchable database, possibly linked to collections of texts in Medieval Greek available on the internet. In this way, historical sociolinguists, who want to study the language of Gregoras, for example, could click on a word or syntactic expression and be informed if and when a medieval textbook commented on it. This would enable them to determine whether Gregoras used that particular word or syntactic expression according to the prescriptions of the medieval textbooks.³⁵

★★

As a founding member of the Viennese Forum for Sociolinguistics, I am happy that this collective volume has been realized. I owe many thanks to the colleagues who attended the international symposium “*Strategies of Language Variation: Transcultural Perspectives*” on 25–26 April 2015, as well as to Chiara Barbati and Christian Gastgeber, also members of the Forum, who organized and coordinated the publication of this special issue of Open Linguistics.

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35 See Pérez – Martín in press, Manolova in press.

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