Though much progress in the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century education in Byzantium has been made\(^1\), the humble type of grammatical exercise called σχέδος («sketch», «improvisation») has not received the detailed attention it deserves\(^2\). A more careful examination of the


manuscripts transmitting schedographic collections has hesitantly started in the past thirty years, while only a small percentage of the high number of surviving _schede_ has been actually edited³. There are a number of reasons why schedography has not been favoured by Byzantinists despite the available manuscript material and despite the presence of a number of references by Byzantine teachers and intellectuals to this type of grammatical exercise. Older scholars have tended to throw all relevant references to schedography into one pot and produce out of it the image of a peculiar, rather pedantic, sort of school exercise that was scorned by the truly educated.

Instrumental in drawing the negative image of this widespread teaching method has been the opinion of Karl Krumbacher, expressed in the second edition of his _Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur_ (= GBL), where he offered the first attempt at an overview of schedography⁴. Already in the introduction to the GBL, Krumbacher had formulated an axiom about a diglossic situation in Byzantium, where there existed a _Kunstsprache_ («learned language») and a _Vulgärsprache_ («vernacular language»), two linguistic systems supposedly standing in opposition to each other, especially since the twelfth century⁵. In his overview of schedog-


⁴ K. Krumbacher, _Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches_ (527–1453), Zweite Auflage, bearbeitet unter Mitwirkung von A. Ehrhard - H. Gelzer, München 1897 (Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, IX/1) [= GBL¹], pp. 590-593 (§ 250); this section did not exist in the first edition, that is, id., _Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches_ (527–1453), München 1891 (Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, IX/1) [= GBL¹].

⁵ GBL², p. 17.
raphy Krumbacher primarily occupied himself with discussing a passage from Anna Komnene’s *Alexiad*, wherein she talked about school education and schedography. It comes from the work’s last book, which Anna wrote some time before her death in ca. 1153–1154; by then the kaisarissa was almost seventy years old.

However, before examining more carefully the relevant passage, it might be useful to describe briefly what the function of schedography was. Referred to in the sources as *σχεδογραφία* or *σχεδουργία*, it started some time in the early eleventh century and quickly developed into an important part of language training at its secondary level. A *schedos* served a primary and a secondary aim. It drilled young pupils (ten to twelve years old) in the complexities of Greek spelling and grammar, while it also helped them in certain cases to understand the different types of *progymnasmata*. These two aims were achieved through the puzzling form in which the teacher presented the *schedos*, since the text, punctuated in an erratic manner, was filled with strange words and phrases giving no meaning. The pupils had to decode such a puzzle and to rewrite it correctly. The puzzles were based on *ἀντίστοιχα* («sound correspondences»); these could be similarly sounding verbal or nominal forms, or they could be wrongly written words and phrases.

*Schede* were usually written in prose (approximately twenty to twenty-five lines per page).

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6 See briefly Vassis, *Τῶν νέων φιλολόγων παλαίσματα* cit., pp. 41–42 on the three levels of language training at school, and the place of schedography therein.

7 See, for example, the remarks of an anonymous teacher preserved in the *Marc. gr.* IX.14, f. 11r and edited by Papadimitriou, *Feodor Prodrom* cit., p. 418: Τὸ σχεδογραφεῖν, ὦ νέε, διὰ τὸ ὀρθογραφεῖν ἐστιν ἀναγκαῖον· εἴ τις σπεύδει μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ γράφειν, οὐ σπουδάζει δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ ὀρθογραφεῖν, ἐπὶ κενῷ ἴδιε· τοίνυν καὶ οὐ εἰ ἀμέτρητα ὑπὸ τὸ ὀρθογραφήματα, ὑποθέτει καὶ ἵππον ὅπερ ὅσι ὑπὸ τοὺς τοῖς ἱκέταις καὶ τὸν ἐχθρόν δήσεις (*Pal. gr.* 92, f. 194v; Gallavotti, *Nota* cit., p. 27 n. 23).

8 Many of the surviving *schede* display forms that reflect the various types of *progymnasmata*, such as fables, narratives, mottoes, character monologues and the like; see the respective groupings as described by Vassis, *Τῶν νέων φιλολόγων παλαίσματα* cit., p. 42.

9 The puzzle-like form was described with terms such as *γρῖφος* («puzzle»), *αἴνιγμα* or *νόημα* («riddles») and *λαβύρινθος* («labyrinth»); for some references see Vassis, *Graeca sunt* cit., pp. 9–10.


11 E.g. *εἰ δεῖσιν θεον, ὦ παῖ, καὶ περὶ λόγων εἰδήσεις ιδίσεις, ἥρασεις σαυτὸν καὶ τὸν ἐχθρόν δήσεις* (*Pal. gr.* 92, f. 194v; Gallavotti, *Nota* cit., p. 27 n. 23).

12 E.g. ἐπήτην τελείαν σένεις ἢ ἔγει καὶ οὐ πω λάβον πυρετὸν instead of ἐπεί τήν τελείαν σένεις ἔγει καὶ ὑπὸ λάβον πυρετὸν respectively (*Marc. gr.* XI.34, f. 277v; Polemis, *Probleme* cit., p. 258).
in length), but they were also composed in iambic twelve-syllable verse. The collection of the Vat. Pal. gr. 92 (Salento, late thirteenth century) gives us a very good picture of the immense variety of the schedographic material.

In Book 15 of the Alexiad, Anna leads her narrative towards the dramatic description of her father’s death and the events concerning the imperial succession. Before this grand scene, the purpleborn princess presents some of her father’s benefactions and specific donations to various churches and ecclesiastical institutions. She then turns her attention to the emperor’s support of a «school of the grammarians» (παιδευτήριον τῶν γραμματικῶν) offering training to orphaned children; it is the famous school of St. Paul of the Orphanage close to the Hagia Sophia. The dense and complex passage is well-known because it has been used as a source for many different questions, such as ethnic (qua national) identity or imperial patronage of schools. It is therefore of some importance to understand exactly what Anna writes:


18 KATSAROS, Προδρομικοί «θεσποι» cit., passim.

...All these, unless you enter the city, these churches and holy cloisters are to be found on your left, while on the right side of the large church there stands a school of the grammarians for orphaned children gathered together from every kind of race. An educator holds there the directorship, while boys are grouped all around him, some passionately attending to grammatical questions, some being writers of the so-called improvised exercises. And one can see there a Latin being fully trained, a Scythian learning Greek, a Rhomaian occupying himself with the writings of the Hellenes, and an uneducated Hellene learning correct Greek.

But, once you have entered the city, these churches and holy cloisters are to be found on your left, while on the right side of the large church there stands a school of the grammarians for orphaned children gathered together from every kind of race. An educator holds there the directorship, while boys are grouped all around him, some passionately attending to grammatical questions, some being writers of the so-called improvised exercises. And one can see there a Latin being fully trained, a Scythian learning Greek, a Rhomaian occupying himself with the writings of the Hellenes, and an uneducated Hellene learning correct Greek. In this manner did Alexios strive to support literary edu-

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E.A.R. SEWTER, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, Harmondsworth 1969, pp. 495-496, is too free and inaccurate to be useful for the present analysis.

20 The church of St. Paul within the building complex of the Orphanage.

21 This is a sentence that has caused great difficulties to translators and students of the *Alexiad*. In my opinion, the interpretation given by Reinsch in his translation is the only cogent. I have attempted to translate the sentence in a way that something of Anna’s particular hierarchic perspective is preserved. She uses her words very carefully to express the lack of proper training for the Latin boy (he is being παιδοτριβούμενον), the need for full linguistic training in Greek (ἐλληνίζοντα) of the Scythian (Petcheneg), the potential of the Rhomaian (i.e. Byzantine) boy to actually
cation. The art of the schedos, by the way, is a modern invention and of our own times. I shall pass over people like Stylianos, the so-called Longibardos, and all those who artfully prepared collections of all kinds of words, as well as people like Attikos, and those who became members of the clergy of our Great Church, whose names I shall also pass over.

Presently, however, the study of these elevated poets and those historians, as well as the experience gained from their works, is not even granted second place, since the current pursuits are boardgames and other such immoral activities. I say this out of sorrow for the utter neglect of general education. For this inflames my soul, because I spent much time with this kind of studies, even if, after I had freed myself from the childlike pursuit of such things, assigned myself to rhetoric, had come into contact with philosophy, had – during my study of the sciences – turned eagerly to poets and historians, and hence smoothed the mound-like uneveness of my style, I rejected with the aid of rhetoric the overcomplicated complexity of schedography. Let this be added to my actual historical account, not, however, as a digression, but rather in connection to the following narrative.

If we follow Anna’s statements about schedography (here in italics), we will notice that these are explicitly made in three places and implicitly in a fourth: (a) the young pupils appear as «writers of the so-called improvised exercises», that is, they learn how to decode and to rewrite a schedos, deepening their knowledge of spelling and grammar by means of this difficult type of exercise; (b) «the art of the schedos» is a recent invention while the «pagan classics», the adjective referring to language and literature, rather than the intellect; see Alexias prol. 3.2 (ed. Rensch - Kambylis cit., p. 8.62) on Nikephoros Bryennios’ attention to λογικούς τινας πόνους («literary endeavours»), that is, his unfinished historiographical work.

22 This is how I understand λογική παιδευσις, the adjective referring to language and literature, rather than the intellect; see Alexias prol. 3.2 (ed. Rensch - Kambylis cit., p. 8.62) on Nikephoros Bryennios’ attention to λογικούς τινας πόνους («literary endeavours»), that is, his unfinished historiographical work.

23 On him see further below.

24 On Longibardos and his Παρεκβόλαια περί συντάξεως και ἀντιστοίχων πάνω ὁφελίμων τοῦ οἰκοποιητῆς ἄνδρον Λογγιβάρδου see N. Festa, Note preliminari su Longibardos, in Byzantinische Zeitschrift 16 (1907), pp. 431-453, and id., Longibardos, in Byzantion 6 (1931), pp. 101-222, being the critical edition of the text’s two redactions.

25 Scholars have not been able to identify this person. It is possible, however, that he is Michael Attikos, one of the schedographers in the collection of the Vat. Pal. gr. 92, f. 188r (see Gallavotti, Nota cit., p. 27, and Vassis, Τῶν νέων φιλολόγων παλαιότατα cit., p. 56).

26 A number of teachers can be found in the schedographic collections, who belonged to the clergy of St. Sophia, and later even became bishops; see the lists in Browning, Il codice Marciano cit., passim (with the older bibliography).
tion and of Anna’s own times; (c) implicitly, Anna includes schedography in the general education (ἐγκύκλιος παιδευσίς) with whose subject matter she busied herself for a long time, even though she freed herself from the childlike pursuit of these matters, once she devoted herself to higher studies and rhetoric; (d) Anna states that on account of her study of poets and historians she polished her style, and, then, with the help of rhetoric «rejected the overcomplicated complexity of schedography».

Between the second and the third statement Anna clearly moves from her school days to her authorial present (ἀλλὰ νῦν) in order to express her critique of contemporary education, where the pursuit of learning does not concern anymore the works of high poetry and historiography, but has rather become a «boardgame» (πεττεία) and other such «immoral activities» (ἐργα ἀθέμιτα) 27.

It is important to understand that Anna does not criticize schedography in general 28. The negative words she uses (ἀπήλλαγμαι, παιδαριώδης, κατέγνων) define the second stage of school education, concentrated on the technical mastery of Greek, from which Anna moved to the higher levels of rhetoric, philosophy, science and literature. «Smoothing the mound-like uneveness of my style» is the code-like phrase for signalling within a specific socio-cultural context the perfect identity of expression and meaning 29. Schedography, as a recent invention was very useful and

27 Already in 1138, Michael Italikos in his grand encomiastic oration on John II Komnenos, had used the negative characterization «cunning draught-players» (εὐφυεῖς πεττευταί, alluding to Plato) and «iamb-devourers» (ἰαμβειοφάγοι, alluding to Demosthenes) for writers who did not rise to the grandeur of the emperor’s military deeds; see P. GAUTIER, Michel Italikos. Lettres et discours, Paris 1972 (Archives de l’Orient Chrétien, 14), p. 253.13-18. GÄRZYA, Literarische und rhetorische Polemiken cit., p. 8 was the first to point to this passage, however, he was wrong in the assumption that these highly ironic attributes refer to Theodore Prodromos and his schedographic activity; the two men were close friends as Italikos’ letters to Prodromos attest. On Prodromos’ schedographic production see VASSIS, Graeca sunt cit., passim. 28 R. ANASTASI, Ancora su Anna Comnena e la schedografia, in Studi di Filologia Bizantina, III, Catania 1985 (Quaderni del Siculorum Gymnasium, 15), pp. 77-85, also proposed that Anna viewed schedography in a positive light. However, his overall reading of this passage differs substantially from the one offered here, because he believes that Anna comments on the situation in the time of Alexios. 29 This context is, on the one hand, the theatron of her mother Eirene Doukaina, on which see M. MULLETT, Aristocracy and patronage in the literary circles of Comnenian Constantinople, in The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries. Papers of the Sixteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (Edinburgh, March 1982), ed. by M. ANGOLD, Oxford 1984 (BAR International Series, 221), pp. 173-201 [repr. in M. MULLETT, Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium, Aldershot 2007, nr. viii]. On the other hand,
that is why Anna went through this training, but she did not consider it
the final stage of a more essential *paideia*. Therefore, it is only after Anna
has explained this course of rigorous training to her readers and her own
attainment of the highest level, that she can from her own exalted posi-
tion criticize the «utter neglect» of education in the first years of the
reign of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180), her flamboyant nephew,
whom she despised. In fact, the mention of schedography and its child-
like pursuits (i.e. for children and not childish) served Anna’s political
attack on an age that, in her eyes, had become superficial, uneducated
and degenerate.

Krumbacher, in his effort to defend Byzantine language instruction
from the scorn of classicists, presented these «schoolbooks» (*Schulbücher*)
as products of low-level education whose popularity grew, «the more
folk education shrunk to a humble measure of elementary instruction
along with the sinking of national welfare». However, as a result of this
distorted view of schedography, he misread the whole passage quoted
above, making the learned *kaisarissa* scorn this kind of training at «pri-
mary school» (*Volksschule*) as being below the dignity of a princely writer
and intellectual. Moreover, Krumbacher misunderstood the statement
about the «boardgame», thinking that Anna actually referred in this
derogatory manner to the *schede*, rather than to education as some form
of inappropriate entertainment. Krumbacher’s reading of *Alexiad* 15.7.9
and the resulting image of an inimical attitude of high to low culture
reflects his erroneous projection of a preconceived concept unto the evi-
dence. His negative view of schedography was so strong that he
remarked that «most of these elementary books deservedly rest in the
dust of libraries», a remark that went against his own declaration in the

Anna supported a circle of philosophers, as we know from a long passage in the
funeral oration George Tornikes wrote in her memory; see J. Darrouzes, *Georges et

30 *Alexiad* 14.3.9 (ed. Reinsch – Kambylis cit., p. 438.41–43); see P. Magdalino,
*The pen of the aunt: echoes of the mid-twelfth century in the Alexiad*, in T. Gouma-Peter-

31 Already Garzya, *Intorno al Prologo* cit., pp. 62–63, had recognized that this
passage in the *Alexiad* is acted out in two distinct chronological phases that serve
different purposes.

32 *GBL*², p. 590.

33 «Diese Lehrmethode […] gewann […] eine um so grössere Verbreitung, je
mehr der Volksunterricht mit dem Sinken der nationalen Wohlfahrt auf ein beschei-
denes Mass elementarer Unterweisung zusammenschrumpfte» (GBL², p. 591).

34 «Die meisten dieser Elementarbücher ruhen verdientermaßen im Staub der
Bibliotheken» (GBL², p. 592).
GBL’s preface that nothing Byzantine should be left unstudied, even if it was ugly or unimportant. We can see here how an ideological bias cancels a methodological principle.

In his study of the life and works of Theodore Prodromos, Synodis D. Papadimitriou (1859–1921), professor of Greek at the University of Odessa, collected and analyzed a substantial number of passages on schedography and edited two of Prodromos’ schede (see above n. 2). He used the passage from the Alexiad as a guide, quoted freely from other authors of the twelfth century and from some of the unpublished schedographic collections, pointing to Krumbacher’s misunderstanding of schedography as a training method and his misreading of the relevant passage. Georgina Buckler (1868–1953), in her pioneering study of Anna Komnene, discussed the passage in an intelligent manner, while she also pointed to Krumbacher’s misreading and biased perspective towards «high education». Paul Lemerle in his article on education in the eleventh century devoted a lengthy section on schedography at the time of Psellos and the «government of philosophers»; therein he discussed the passage from the Alexiad, agreeing, however, with Krumbacher that Anna rejected schedography as a whole. Papadimitriou’s and Buckler’s critique of Krumbacher were not taken into consideration by Herbert Hunger in the discussion of schedography in his handbook. In fact, Hunger also misunderstood the whole concept of eleventh- and twelfth-century schedography since he, like Krumbacher, based his analysis on

35 GBL1, pp. v-vii (reproduced in GBL2, pp. v-vii, but with some significant omissions).


37 He had studied the collections in the Marc. gr. IX.14, Mon. gr. 201, Par. gr. 2556 and Laur. V.10.


39 G. Buckler, Anna Comnena: A Study, Oxford 1929, pp. 176-178 and 187-191. Despite Buckler’s pertinent analysis, the passage was also misread by Schirò, La schedografia cit., p. 15, followed in his interpretation by Efthymiadis, L’enseignement cit., p. 268 and n. 37.


Manuel Moschopoulos’ manual of the early fourteenth century. Thus, Hunger retained his predecessor’s view of schedography, even quoting Krumbacher’s negative statement. Thus, we can say with certainty that an erroneous reading of Alexiad 15.7.9 has established itself as the communis opinio on Anna’s view of schedography. However, it has been shown that schedography was not seen by Anna as a worthless type of grammatical exercise but as appropriate to young pupils and to the technical type of linguistic training they had to go through. We should also not forget that Anna went through this training around the age of ten, whereas she directed her critique at the practices of her time when she was finishing the Alexiad, that is, at a distance of almost sixty years. The effect of such temporal disjunctions in historical (qua autobiographical) discourse is that the author’s experiences and opinions at the time of writing are projected upon the past and more often than not shape the narrative in a crucial manner.

The passage on education and schedography in the Alexiad is important for another reason. In my opinion, the narrative sequence of the passage reflects the chronological sequence of the rise and development of schedography from the early eleventh to the middle of the twelfth century. The surviving evidence in connection with Anna’s brief presentation of schedographic activity concur in setting the beginning of this «recent invention» to the early years of the eleventh century. An important reference that supports this date can be found in two poems of Christopher Mitylenaios, in which he praises the school of St. Theodore at the Sphorakios Quarter. The two poems were probably written

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45 On the narrative problems created by this temporal disjunction in autobiographical discourse see Ph. Lejeune, Le pacte autobiographique, Paris 1996, pp. 41-43.
46 They are nrr. 9 and 10 in the collection transmitted in the Cryptens, Z.a.XXIX (13th cent.); the former poem is composed in iambics (Εἰς τὸ σχολεῖον τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοδώρου τῶν Σφωρακίου), the latter in hexameters (Εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ σχολεῖον. ήρωικά). See now the new edition by M. De Groote, Christophori Mitylenaii versuum variorum collectio Cryptensis, Turnhout 2012 (Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca, 74), pp. 10 and 11 respectively. For a brief discussion of the two poems, along with poem 11, see K. Demoen, Phrasis poikile: imitatio and variatio in the poetry book of Christophoros
during the very late years of the reign of Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034) or the very early years of the reign of Michael IV (1034–1041). Although the two poems include references to schede, they have not been read carefully as to their details. The relevant verses run as follows:

Poem 9.1–8

Σχολὴ μεγίστου μάρτυρος Θεοδώρου
πτωθῇ μὲν οὐκ ἄν, πρώξιμον κεκτημένη
τὸν Στυλιανὸν, ἄρραγη τινα στῦλον–
ήτταν δὲ δεινὴν οὐποτε σχέδους ἰδῆ,
ἔως μάστορο εστὶ γεννάδας Λέων–
οὕτος γὰρ ἤδη καὶ στομώσας τοὺς νέους
καὶ τοὺς ἀγώνας ἐκδιδάξας τῶν λόγων,
ἐξεισὶ θαρρῶν τοὺς μαθηταῖς ὡς ὀπλαίς.

The school of the greatest martyr Theodore shall not fall down, having as teacher Stylianos – an unbreakable pillar; but the school shall never witness dreadful defeat of its schedos as long as the valorous Leo is its headmaster.

For he already, having both trained his youths and thoroughly taught them the contests of discourses, goes <into battle> having confidence in his pupils as weapons.

Poem 10.1–7+12–17

Δείματο οὐρανίη σοφίη δόμων, δὲν στῦλο ἐπτὰ ἀνέχουσιν ἄσφαλεος ἄνέχουσιν, ἐφεσταότες κατὰ κόσμον–
δείματο καὶ σοφίη ἐγκύκλιος οἴκον ἄστεος
ἀδέιος ἄμφι τόπον, τὸν Ἱερωμάκιον καλέουσιν
στυλιανὸν μουσόφρονα, εἰσόνθητα καὶ ὠκελά.


47 Mitylenaios’ poems in the Grottaferrata collection are placed in chronological order; poem 8 treats the death of Romanos III Argyros (11.4.1034) while poem 18 dates from 1035; see De GROOTE, Christophori Mitylenaii cit., pp. xxii–xxiii.
Heavenly wisdom built a building which seven pillars safely uphold, setting it up in good order; all-round wisdom also built a house for herself in that place of the city, which is called «of Sphorakios». She also erected a pillar inside that house to be a defense, the poetically minded Stylianos who knows many and good things. And she placed there sweet-speaking Leo as an admirable leader, [...] who then, having dipped his mouth in the innermost thought of poetry, always pours forth the stream of wisdom around the ears of boys; these, enriched and gathering eloquence, are victorious over all youths in the contests of schede, on account of which Leo is the best teacher, whose fame will indeed be ageless for all days to come.

Christopher wishes that maistor Leo, the school’s current headmaster (9.5, 10.20), will continue leading his pupils to victories in the schedographic contests (10.14-16), so that the school might never witness defeat in a schedographic contest (9.4-5). But the school of St. Theodore, Christopher writes, will not ever suffer ruin because it possessed Stylianos as its proximos (9.2-3, 10.5-6), an unbrakeable pillar.

The two verses clearly echo the famous verse of Proverbs 9.1 on the seven pillars of Wisdom: Ἡ σοφία Ἀικοδόμησεν ἑαυτῇ οἶκον καὶ ὑπῆρεσεν στύλους ἑπτά. At the same time, they can be read as a reference to Constantinople (the ἄστυ of v. 4) and its seven hills; on these see now A. BERGER, Das apokalyptische Konstantinopel: Topographisches in apokalyptischen Schriften der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit, in Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen, hrsg. von W. BRANDES - F. SCHMIEDER, Berlin 2008 (Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr., 16), pp. 137-155, with a discussion of all relevant texts.

In the second part of a poem On subjunctive verbs, probably by Niketas of Herakleia, also known as ὁ τοῦ Σερρῶν (ca. 1050-ca. 1120), a schedographic contest is described with the iconography of a horse race (vv. 85-123). The poem has been edited by Sp. LAMBROS, Ισοπάντον τοῦ Τζέτζου Περὶ Ῥημάτων Αὐθυποτάκτων στίχοι πολιτικοί, in Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων 16 (1922), pp. 191-197; for the attribution to Niketas see C. WENDEL, Tzetzes Ioannes, in Paulys Realencyklopädie (…), VIIA/2, München-Stuttgart 1948, cols. 1959-2011: 2005-2006, with the relevant bibliography. In my opinion, the poem is a schedos presenting to the pupils the grammatical problem first and, then, offering examples of usage in the second part; see similar verse schede in the Vat. Pal. gr. 92, nrr. 3, 6, 30, 34, 39, 41, 59, 60, 111, 168 (from the detailed list in VASSIS, Τῶν νέων φιλολόγον παλαιόματα cit., pp. 45-63).

For the term πρώξιμος, meaning «teacher», see Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität, erstellt von E. TRAPP unter Mitarbeit von W. HÖRANDNER - J. DIETHART,
(στύλος) planted in the very middle of the school by «all-round wisdom», that is, general education (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία). Stylianos is mentioned in the same prominent position and with the same wordplay in both poems. He must therefore have been either the school’s founder or its most prominent teacher at a time before Leo. It is highly probable that this person is the Stylianos mentioned by Anna. Stylianos therefore preceded Longibardos, who should be viewed as a contemporary of the maistor Leo and of Christopher Mitylenaios. The identification of the two Stylianoi is supported by the schedographic context in which they appear in the two poems and in the Alexiad.

Obviously, no negative attitude towards schedography can be detected in Christopher’s poems. In the immediately following poem of the Grottaferrata collection (nr. 11), Christopher addresses the maistor of the school of the Virgin Mary at the Chalkoprateia. The poet makes some scathing remarks on the avariciousness of the man who sells his schede to his pupils for gold instead of copper. Inappropriately, the maist-
Christopher has transformed the school at the «Coppermarket» into a «Schedomarket»57. This is not a critique of schedography but a satirical attack against a corrupt teacher who dishonours the Virgin under whose protection his school is placed. A closer examination of all other references to schedography in the eleventh century shows that they are unanimously positive58. It is therefore important to note that the evidence concerning schedography and its practice shows a coherently positive picture about this part of general education approximately until the middle of the twelfth century. In fact, the specific passage of the Alexiad, written around 1150, is the earliest evidence for a critique of schedography in the twelfth century59. As we saw, however, Anna Komnene’s negative phrases are related to political and moral issues concerning her nephew Manuel and his rule rather than to schedography as such.

The Alexiad also served Krumbacher as a chief witness to what he perceived as the elitist oppression of the learned language towards the copper in a manner somehow homonymous to the school of the Virgin, but rather for gold, being by nature a lover of gold). It seems that this maistor was infamous for his greed, as an equally scathing letter of Michael Psellus attests; see K.N. SATHAS, Μιχαήλ Ψελλοῦ ιστορικοί λόγοι, ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνέκδοτα, Paris 1876 (Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη, 5), pp. 428-430 (ep. 168).

57 Carm. 11.12-13: σχεδοπρατεῖον οὐ πρεπόντως, ὥ δίκη, ἵνα καταχωρήσῃς τὴν σχολὴν δεικνὺς τάλας. Christopher has allowed himself a splendid antistoiichic joke by placing the two five-syllable words in the beginning of the two consecutive verses; due to the identical pronunciation of omikron and omega, stressed by the pause after the fifth syllable of the iambic line, the listeners would be uncertain about the case (accusative singular or genitive plural) of the two neuter nouns until the very end of the second verse.

58 Beyond the already mentioned poem by Niketas of Herakleia (see above p. 100 n. 49), see, for example, Psellus, ep. 16 and 24 (ed. KURTZ - DREXL cit., II, pp. 19–20 and 30–31), on the good use of schede in school; Psellus, ep. 115 (ed. SATHAS cit., p. 361), on the ekdosis of a schedos by the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos himself; Mauropos, carm. 68 and 70 (P. DE LAGARDE, Iohannis Euchaitorvm metropolitae quae in codice Vaticanco græco 676 supersunt, Göttingen 1882 [Abhandlungen der historisch-philologischen Classe der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 28], p. 37), the latter poem again on a schedos written out in red ink by Monomachos; Mauropos, ep. 74 (A. KARPOZILOS, The Letters of Ioannes Mauropos Metropolitan of Euclaita, Thessalonike 1990 [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 34], pp. 189–191), on advising a young grammarian to complete all of his general education and not only schedography or poetry.

59 The other evidence comes from critical remarks expressed by Nikephoros Basilakes, Eustathios of Thessalonike and John Tzetzes; they are all dated after 1155; see now PA. AGAPITOS, Grammar, genre and patronage in the twelfth century: a scientific paradigm and its implications, in Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik 64 (2014) [forthcoming].
vernacular during the «Atticist Renaissance» of the twelfth century, since he considered the Komnenian era to be the turning point for the formal establishment of «literary diglossia» in Byzantium. The main passage supposedly showing this elitist perspective comes from the early part of the work. Anna describes in Book 2 how the young general Alexios, her father, became involved in a revolt against emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates (1078–1081). During the secret preparations, Alexios escaped from a trap set by his opponents and left Constantinople before the break of dawn on a cold winter night of 1081. The inhabitants of the capital showed their approval of his actions by praising him in a song:

Ὁ δὲ τλέξιος καὶ εξ αυτοῦ αἰτήσας ὄρκον καὶ λαβὼν δρομαίοις ὑπευγά τοῖς αὐτοῦ. Νὺξ ἦν ἡ τῆς Τυροφάγου Κυριακῆς, καθ’ ἣν οὕμοις πατήρ ταῦτα ἐσκέπτετο. Τῇ δὲ μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐξαπλέθαντο εἰς ἤδη τὸν ἄμφος μὲν ὑπερεύγησαν τῶν ἀρχαίων, δομάτων δὲ ἀνεπλέξαντο ἐξ ἴδιωτος μὲν συγκείμενος γλώττης, αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν τοῦ πράγματος ἐπίνοιαν ἔμμελέστατα πως ἀνακοινώμενον καὶ παρεμφαίνον τὴν τε προαίσθησιν τῆς κατ’ ἐκείνου ἐπιβουλῆς καὶ τὰ παρ’ αὐτοῦ μεμηχανήμενα. Τὸ δὲ ἀραίον εἶχεν ὑπέρευγαν τοῦ Σάββατον τῆς Τυρινῆς, χαρῇς, Βλέξη, ἐνόησές το, καὶ τὴν Δευτέραν τὸ πρωί ὕπακαλῶς, γεράκιν μου. Ἐξε δὲ οὕτως ἐννοίας τὸ διαφημιζόμενον ἐκείνον ἀραίον, ὡς ἄρα: «Κατὰ μὲν τὸ Τυρώνυμον Σάββατον ὑπέρευγε οṕ τῆς ἐγχονίας, Ἀλέξει, τὴν δὲ μετὰ τὴν Κυριακὴν Δευτέραν ἠμέραν καθάπερ τὶς ὑψιπετὴς ἱερὰς ἄφινασσα τῶν ἐπιβουλευόντων βαρβάρων».  

Alexios, after having also asked from him an oath and receiving it speedily returned home and reported everything to his people. It was the night of Cheese-Eating Sunday during which my father made these


61 Alexiad 2.4.9 (ed. REINSCH – KAMBLYS cit., pp. 65,92–12); German translation and notes in REINSCH, Anna Komnene: Alexias cit., pp. 80–81; SEWTER, The Alexiad cit., pp. 82–83 again offers a very free rendering of the passage.

62 This is Constantine Umbertopoulos, a Norman warrior in the service of Alexios.
preparations. In the early morning of the next day, he left the city with his companions. And so, the people, who had accepted Alexios because of his audacity and acumen, composed out of the very situation a little song for him; it was made out of everyday language, but it intoned the very foresight of the stratagem in a most melodious manner, while it hinted at his sensing the attack against him in advance, and at what he devised against this plot. The little song runs in its own words as follows: «On the Saturday of the Cheese-Eating Week, hail, Alexis, you grasped it; and then, on Monday morning, fare well, my falcon». The intended meaning of that popular little song was something like this: «On Cheese-Named Saturday, congratulations on account of your acumen, Alexios; but on the day second to Sunday, like some high-soaring falcon, you flew away from the plotting foreigners».

Here Anna quotes in full the original text of a «little song» (ἀοικήμαλι) composed in octosyllabic-couplets. The song is not a folksong in the modern sense of the term, but belongs to the kind of laudatory or derogatory songs addressed by the citizens to a specific person within a specific historical context. Such songs were mostly composed by the professional chanters (κράκται) of the capital’s circus factions (δήμοι). Obviously, these songs, aiming at an immediate communicative impact, were composed in a rhythmically organized colloquial discourse, but none of them employed the fifteen-syllable verse normally associated with Modern Greek folksongs. Krumbacher pointed to the vast distance between Anna’s studied Greek and the vernacular language of the song.

He refers to this and another song (Alexiad 12.6.5) as two examples of «folksongs» sung by the people against (!) Alexios, an obvious misunder-

63 The night of the Cheese-Eating Sunday, i.e. from Saturday to Sunday, which is the last day before the beginning of Lent; it was 14 February 1081.
64 Anna refers here to Borilos and Germanos, two officials of Botaneiates, who were acting as the emperor’s «prime-ministers» (παραδυναστεύουσικινωνευ), and who were of Pecheneg descent.
65 See M.D. LAUXTERMANN, The Spring of Rhythm: An Essay on the Political Verse and Other Byzantine Metres, Wien 1999 (Byzantina Vindobonensia, 22), pp. 45-99; unfortunately, the author omits this song from his discussion of early accentual metrics (ibid., p. 66 n. 147).
67 GBL¹, p. 81 n. 5, and GBL², p. 277 and n. 2.
standing of the relevant passages. Krumbacher also postulated that Komnene’s «failed translation» of the song showed the contempt which the learned kaisarissa felt for the vernacular language. Beyond this misreading, the actual text of the song presented problems to the previous editors of the Alexiad because they did not understand some of its colloquial phrases or its metrical structure. Other scholars made an effort to normalize the song’s «irregular» rhythm, for example, Nikolaos Politis (1852–1921), the founder of Greek folklore studies, who included the song in his influential anthology of Modern Greek folksongs. From there the Ἀσμάτιον found its way to further anthologies and overviews of (Early) Modern Greek literature.

Going back to the Alexiad, we will notice that Anna explicitly refers to the song as «made out of everyday language» and positively comments that the song «intoned the very foresight of the stratagem in a most melodious manner». By using the philosophical-rhetorical term παρεμφαῖνον, she also remarks that the song «hinted at» Alexios’ sensing beforehand the trap set for him. Therefore, she expounds to her readers the song’s «intended meaning» — this is what the technical term ἐννοια indicates — by including an exegesis of it. What she offers is not a failed translation into high Atticist diction, as Krumbacher and other scholars thought, but an expanded interpretation of the song in the stylistic level she uses throughout the Alexiad. It is the type of exegesis that any competent modern scholar would perform.
Anna had learned at school through her training in schedography, and that was applied to all kinds of texts needing paraphrastic interpretation, from proverbs\textsuperscript{74} to Homer\textsuperscript{75}. In fact, nowhere in the Alexiad do the terms ἰδιῶτις γλῶττα or ἰδιῶτις λέξις imply any negative characterization of everyday speech, nor is any opposition between learned and vernacular expressed\textsuperscript{76}. Moreover, ἰδιῶτις γλῶττα applies here to the actual everyday language of a popular song and not to a specimen of «vernacular literature», such as the verse narrative of Digenis Akritis would supposedly be. Schedography and everyday language were not rejected by Anna in their totality. Her attitude was defined by her political evaluation of concrete situations: the support offered by the capital’s citizens to a truly gifted young general, and Manuel’s decadent times when education had become a mere entertainment.

The preceding analysis has demonstrated the constraints imposed on understanding Byzantine texts in their proper historical and literary environment by interpretive models based on specific ideologies, such as «national culture, language and education», and «ethnic identity», projected unto the remote past. Obviously, Krumbacher created such models in an effort to elevate Byzantine literature to an independent field of study and to establish Byzantine philology as an autonomous academic discipline\textsuperscript{77}. However, his model cannot anymore interpret satisfactorily the available material, especially after the research of the past thirty years in matters of textual and literary criticism. The case of the Alexiad and the opinions of its author about schedography and colloquial discourse are just such a case where the model not only failed to do justice to the

\textsuperscript{74} For example, a large collection attributed to Maximos Planoudes, offering paraphrastic versions of actual Byzantine proverbs; see E. KURTZ, \textit{Die Sprichwörter-sammlung des Maximus Planudes}, Leipzig 1886.

\textsuperscript{75} See the presentation of various Iliad paraphrases from Byzantine school practice by I. VASSIS, \textit{Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der sogenannten Psellos-Paraphrase der Ilias}, Hamburg 1991 (Meletemata, 2), pp. 16-32.

\textsuperscript{76} See Alexiad 7.5.2 and 10.2.4. An indicative example of the absence of any negative remark concerning colloquial discourse can be found at 12.6.5, where Anna remarks on a derisory song composed by «actors» during the public humiliation of a group of rebels in ca. 1098; see REINSCH, \textit{Anna Komnene: Alexias} cit., pp. 418-419 (translation and notes).

textual material, but also created a specific negative image about «learned secondary education» and «everyday language» in the twelfth century, which had serious consequences for the study of Komnenian literature and its history.

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