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A FEW NOTES ON THE LANGUAGE OF JOHN MALALAS' CHRONICLE

John Malalas' Chronicle (491–578) of the 6th century is, since the time of *Sextus Iulius Africanus* (2nd – 3rd century A.D.) when the main structure of world chronicle genre was being formed, the first “classic” example of this literary genre, which has been preserved almost in its complete form, and as such it simultaneously becomes the oldest preserved work in the world chronicle genre of the early Byzantine Empire. In eighteen books, written around 530 A.D. in Antioch, Syria, and partly in Constantinople (book XVIII around 570 A.D.), covers the period from the creation of the world until as late as 565 A.D., i.e. the period of emperor Justinian's rule. Malalas' Chronicle gained an immense popularity at its time and it influenced – which few works did – to a great extent further development of the genre of chronicles. It was the most favourite chronicle in Roman East until as late as the 12th century, being widely translated and used as a source by later chroniclers. For its simple and easy style, it was traditionally included among works providing a good picture of the spoken language of the 6th century. In this category it was placed by first modern scholars who examined the language of chronicles and the opinions of whom had not been questioned until late 20th century.

Karl Krumbacher considered the Chronicle to be the first evidence of the spoken language of the early Byzantine Empire, written by a simple monk whose primitiveness is evident not only from the language but also in the general absence of any historiographic skill at all.¹ Other comments of the first scholars examining the post-classical Greek are of the same nature; these consider Malalas' Chronicle to be a “poor patchwork” („*erbärmliches Machwerk*“).² A clear picture of the spoken or even vulgar language of the 6th century is spoken about, which thus enables us to equal it to the texts of the New Testament.³ Such a built-up tradition of Mala-

1 KRUMBACHER, K. 1897², 327ff., 659ff.

2 WOLF, K. 1911, I, 5.

3 CHARALAMBAKIS, C. G. 1978, 21: „είναι δικαιολογημένη ή σύγκρισις της χρονογραφίας του Μαλάλα με την Καινήν Διαθήκην. Τα δύο αυτά έργα μας δίδουν μίαν σαφή εικόνα της λαλουμένης γλώσσας του πρώτου και έκτου αιώνας αντίστοιχως.“
WOLF, K. 1911, I, 6: „[...] Malalas dazu kam eine so wunderlich gemischte Sprache zu

las' Chronicle led also the later scholars to the presumption of "vulgarity" as a phenomenon not only obvious at first sight but also proved many times. In a 1970's *Peter Helms'* language study, in the very introduction, we encounter a daring statement that Malalas' Chronicle is the first work of the literature of the Middle Ages in which popular language prevailed over the traditional literary language (the so-called „*Schriftsprache*“).⁴ *Apostolos Karpozilos* offers an assessment of a similarly generalising nature in his 1997 work⁵ and *Francisco R. Adrados* (2001) classes the extracts from Malalas' Chronicle without further comment among texts with a significant share of popular or even vulgar language elements (e.g. proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, acclamations).⁶ Thus the "vulgar style" of Malalas presented by Adrados and supplemented by the note on observing the "classical inflexion" sounds rather puzzling in this context.

Such statements are misleading. Particularly with texts written in a language that resembles popular language by its structure, it is necessary to realize that no author of Late Antiquity or early Middle Ages could learn to write without receiving an education. However superficial it was, it followed classical models whose pressure drove the author – perhaps even subconsciously – to yield to those classical models. No Greek literary work of Late Antiquity or early Middle Ages is clearly atticizing or "popular", but more or less obvious elements of the "other" register are always to be found.⁷ Furthermore, in the work of Malalas it can be hardly differentiated which characteristics of the classicizing language were common in the vulgar language, because we do not know the vulgar language of his period practically at all, even though some of its characteristics can be defined with the help of commented collections of papyri.⁸ Likewise we only have a very vague idea of what was exclusively a vulgar element in post-classical Greek and did not exist on any other language level, or what was rather a system change taking place at the given time period and penetrating all the levels of the language.

schreiben, die uns gleichwohl einen Einblick in die damalige Vulgärsprache bietet wie die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in die mündliche Koine der Zeit Christi."

4 HELMS, P. 1971–1972, 313.

5 „*Και πράγματι η Χρονογραφία τοῦ Μαλάλα, ἂν καὶ ἐνίοτε παραδίδει σπανίους λεκτικῶς τύπους, σὲ γενικὲς γραμμὲς ἀντικατοπτρίζει τὴν ὁμιλουμένη τῆς ἐποχῆς του.*“ In KARPOZILOS, A. 1997, I, 554.

6 ADRADOS, F. R. 2001, 232–234.

7 BROWNING, R. 1983², 4ff.

8 GIGNAC, F. T. (1976–1981). *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Period* I, II, Milano 1976–1981; HORN, R. CH. (1926). *The Use of the Subjunctive and Optative Moods in the Non-Literary Papyri. A Thesis*, Philadelphia 1926; MANDILARAS, B. G. (1973). *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary papyri*, Athens 1973; SCHUBART, W. (1927). *Griechische Papyri. Urkunden und Briefe vom 4. Jahrh. v. Chr. bis ins 8. Jahrh. n. Chr. ausgewählt und erklärt* I, II, Bielfeld und Leipzig 1927. Editions of "proto-Bulgarian" inscriptions are valuable for the language of the 8th century: BEŠEVILIEV, V. (1963). *Die protobulgarischen Inschriften*, Berlin 1963; BEŠEVILIEV, V. (1964). *Spätgriechische und spätlateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien*, Berlin 1964.

Stereotype comparison of chronicles to the New Testament texts is similarly problematic. Their specifications, e.g. Semite influences, are often forgotten to be taken into account, and we must not leave out of consideration the fact that the New Testament Koine shows from the linguistic-grammar point of view many characteristics common to the technical prose Greek of the 1st century A.D., where we list not only works such as *Epictetus' Discourses*, but also the speech of state authorities, the so-called "administrative style".⁹ Thus it necessarily distances itself from the affiliation to "popular" language (the so-called „*Volkssprache*“), whose traditional romantic definition as the real living language of the people seems to be indefensible in the light of Rydbeck's study. Also there cannot be found practically any language connection between the New Testament texts and really vulgar papyri, whose number is, in addition, very limited, because most non-literary papyri are again written in standard Koine (simultaneously the presupposition that the lower the language level of a given document, the closer it is to the spoken language is false).¹⁰ If then the language of Malalas' Chronicle is on the basis of similar language phenomena being compared to the New Testament texts, as it is done by e.g. *Stamatios Psaltes*¹¹ and *Karl Wolf*¹² in their studies, this does not at all prove its "popularity" or "vulgarity" in the real sense of the word.

Herbert Hunger marked Malalas' language as ennobled popular language which because of its readers purposely avoids the temptation of Atticism, but at the same time chooses in accordance with its will certain classicizing elements.¹³ *Kristen Weierholt* came up with a similar theory of purposeful choice from "new" and "old" language in the work of Malalas. In his opinion, Malalas lived in a certain "transition" period when two language registers existed at the same time and from which the author had to choose. This theory is surely more correct than the idea of a blank space in language that is created when one expression ceases to be used and that is why a temporary solution, which prevails in the end, has to be found in the popular language.¹⁴ Malalas' "popularity" does not originate in the inability of a foreigner to express himself or in insufficient feel for language either. The only difficulty of the "conscious" choice theory lies in secondary accumulation of language elements which penetrated the text in the centuries that followed and which are, considering how problematic the transmission of Malalas' text is, probable.¹⁵

9 RYDBECK, L. 1967, 186ff.

10 GIGNAC, F. T. 1976–1981, I, 42.

11 PSALTES, S. B. 1913, VIII.

12 See footnote No. 3.

13 HUNGER, H. 1978, II, 121ff.

14 Compare e.g. DIETRICH, K. 1898, 195: „*Durch das Aussterben des reflexiven Possesivums (i.e. εἰσπρόος) entstand eine fühlbare Lücke, da es nun an einem Ausdrucksmittel fehlte für dasjenige, was dem Subjekt gehört. Diese Lücke wurde nun ausgefüllt zunächst durch Verstärkung, sodann durch Ersetzung mit Hilfe des Adjektivs ἰδιος, später auch οἰκεῖος.*“

15 E.g. the whole commentary on the process of active participle becoming rigid in acc. sg.,

When examining the language of Malalas, the sources out of which he compiled his Chronicle cannot be neglected either. Even though he does mention his authors by name more often than other chroniclers, it is known that most of those were not at his direct disposal, but he had to use second or even third hand compendia, because a lot of “trustworthy” material that had been at disposal to the historians of antiquity (*Eusebios, Africanus*) was at that time already lost.¹⁶ The taken-over material does not seem to have influenced Malalas to such an extent that the sources could be considered the reason for the languages choices in his Chronicle. On the contrary, it seems that Malalas subjected its material to a uniform linguistic redaction in the scope of which he could also perform changes in content.¹⁷

Malalas himself labels his Greek as *ἡ κοινὴ διάλεκτος* (104, 61). *Ἡ κοινὴ διάλεκτος* in Malalas’ presentation seems a language idiom in which grammar, syntax and vocabulary of late literary Koine were mixed with the spoken Koine of the time, but not with its vulgar form. Malalas surely did not avoid certain elements of a higher style which penetrated the Chronicle from copied sources. *Roger Scott* noticed that the passages dealing with law legislation of emperor Justinian in book XVIII, which Malalas already turned for to contemporary sources, show a strikingly similar structure and phraseology. On the basis of a similar analysis of passages dealing with juridical orders in the whole Chronicle he assumed that for these passages Malalas as a civil servant could take use of official reports on the emperor’s credits that were to be made public by the imperial bureaucracy in churches or other public places (he probably did not have direct access to the state sources as *Procopius*), and those he incorporated – with certain mild variations – into the text of the Chronicle, not being puzzled by a certain change of style in the mentioned passages.¹⁸

Similarly he did not hesitate to incorporate a verse from *Vergil’s Aeneid*, quoted in connection with the comment on controversial and mysterious Antioch orgies, known as the Maioumas, which he most probably took over from *Domninos*. Malalas quotes the verse first in Latin, which is an interesting hint on the persisting

demonstrated on many instances which had been looked up in Dindorf’s edition of 1831 by Karl Wolf (1911, II, 24–29), the first scholar who examined Malalas’ Chronicle from the linguistic point of view in detail, remains after the publication of the new edition (*Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, ed. I. Thurn, CFHB, Ser. Berol. vol. XXXV, Berlin 2000) without factual basis. For most instances published in Wolf’s study were emended by the new editor and his conclusions in this respect cannot be considered valid any more.

16 Malalas drew his material probably only from several main sources he had direct access to: *Domninos* (a historian of Antioch; he composed most of his material on the basis of archives of Antioch), *Timotheos* (Orphic texts), *Diktys* (Greek mythology), *Nestorianos* (fragments from early ecclesiastical history), *Priskos*, *Philostratos*, *Eutykianos*, *Eutropius*, *Eustathios*, *Charax*, *Bassus*, *Brunichius*. In JEFFREYS, E. 1990, 167ff.

17 *K. Weierholt* puts on special place only book V (there are traces of Ionic dialect and of the language of Septuagint which Malalas quotes word-for-word) and book XVIII, the different character of which can be caused by the change of Malalas’ source or by problematic manuscript transmission. In WEIERHOLT, K. 1963, 8ff.

18 SCOTT, R. 1981.

interest in Latin in the Byzantine Empire of the 6th century, even more in the context of a relatively low cultural level of Malalas' Chronicle and its alleged audience: „τριετηρικὰ Βάκχω ὄργια νοκτούρνος κουέ βοκάτ κλάμωρε Κιθαϊρών“¹⁹ (Aeneid IV 302–303: *trieterica Baccho/orgia nocturnusque vocat clamore Cithaeron*). Then he offers a Greek version, attempting a word-for-word translation: „ὁ ἔστυ τῆ Ἑλληνίδι γλώσση τῷ τριετηρικῷ ἔτει, ὅτε ὁ Διόνυσος <καλεῖ> ἐν νυκτι τῆ φωνῆ τὴν ἑορτὴν τῶν ὀργίων ἐν τῷ Κιθαϊρωνίῳ ὄρει.“²⁰ ([...] *which means in the Greek language, “Every third year when Dionysos calls aloud in the night the festival of the Orgies on the mountain of Kithairon.”*).²¹ Malalas' reproduction seems to be very successful as far as his great imitation of Vergil's alliteration is concerned. By the alliteration, Vergil had created an atmosphere of a noise and rattle in the whole passage (see many sounds such as “k”, “t”, “r”). Malalas put eleven “t”, three “k” and six “r” into the Greek translation, by which he in an unusually successful manner (even if by chance) managed to approximate the Latin original, because his knowledge of Latin must have been, taking into consideration the other Latin “echoes” in the chronicle, rather superficial.²²

Malalas on purpose gets rid of neither morphological nor syntactic elements of the “higher” style, e.g. he did not eliminate optative from the Chronicle, even though he uses it rarely (mostly when a word-for-word quote of *loci laudati* is concerned; optative in dependent statements, potential optative and optative in purpose clauses is also present). With these archaisms we naturally have to consider the reflections of Malalas' historical sources. He only exceptionally – probably on purpose – uses innovated feminine forms of adjectives of two terminations that already acquire their new, “non-classic”, form of adjectives of three terminations known from Modern Greek.²³ It is possible that in this way he wanted to avoid the impression of a certain amateurism, and so he preferred the ample use of adjectives of three terminations known already from the classical period. Similarly he tries to avoid the new o-stem forms, derived from gen. sg. of adjectives with a consonant stem.²⁴ With verbs he rarely makes mistakes in the use of augment, he

19 *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, ed. I. Thurn, Berlin 2000, 216, 39.

20 *Ibid.*, 216, 39–41.

21 *The Chronicle of John Malalas, A Translation* (transl. by E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott), Melbourne 1986, 152.

22 BALDWIN, B. 1987, 86; JEFFREYS, E. 1990, 196.

23 Feminine forms of adjectives of two terminations in *-αι* occasionally occur as early as the classical period, the earliest instances published by CHATZIDAKIS, G. N. 1892, 27: *θριπήδεσται* (326 B.C.) and *ἀδόκιμαι* (C.I.A. II 808,b, 33ff.; 53ff., Meisterhans² 116). For the Roman and Byzantine period, the papyri document a clear tendency of language to create distinct feminine forms for newly emerging adjectives, while “traditional” adjectives of two terminations still keep their classical use in most cases. In GIGNAC, F. T. 1976–1981, II, 105ff.

24 E.g. he prefers *στρογγύλωσις/στρογγυλόσις* (with a round face) to *στρογγυλοπρόσωπος* (occurs in a papyrus from the 3rd century B.C.). Similarly, instead of *πυρρότριχος* we find *πυρρόθριξ* (with red hair). In CHARALAMBAKIS, C. G. 1978; JEFFREYS, E. – JEFFREYS, M. 1990.

adds it correctly even when there is a vocal or a diphthong at the beginning.²⁵ In the area of syntax he completely avoids the use of conjunctions *ὅταν* and *ὡσάν* (= *ὡς ἄν*) for temporal clauses, where he keeps to the older *ὅτε*, possibly *ὡς*. We must connect this preference for the “classical” conjunctions to a similar preference of *εἰ* instead of *εἰάν* in conditional clauses (in the times of Malalas the difference between *εἰ* and *εἰάν* had ceased to exist, *εἰάν* prevailed in popular language, but Malalas uses *εἰ* about five times more often than *εἰάν*). The author’s choice can be interpreted as a reaction towards the assertion of conjunctions *ὅταν*, *ὡσάν* and *εἰάν* in vulgar language, whereas Malalas could have thought that their absence would bring his language closer to the higher style.²⁶

When composing this article, another problematic phenomenon of Malalas’ Chronicle which at first sight makes an impression of an innovative popular element – the use of participle constructions – has been considered. Participle constructions in the work of Malalas tend to a special use – it seems that they leave their classic role of complementing the main clause, or replacing a subordinate clause,²⁷ but in many cases the participle is at the same level as the verb (1a) or is directly in the function of *verbum finitum* and there is no other finite verb in the sentence (1b), while the sentence-elements belonging to the adverbial participle in nominative are usually put behind it, i.e. in practically the same way as with finite verbs. Sometimes the participle construction joins the predicate with the help of the pleonastic *καί* (1c), which in such cases can help distinguish possible sentence-elements belonging to the verbal predicate only, possibly to another participle, and the sentence-elements belonging only to the participle construction (1d). Unless such cases are specially divided by conjunctions, the rection of sentence-elements must be evaluated from the context only (1e):

(1a) *Καὶ πέμψας αὐτῷ ὁ βασιλεὺς [...] καὶ συγκρούσαντες πόλεμον, ἔπεσον ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων πολλοί.* (355, 37–42)

*The emperor sent him [...] and when they joined battle many fell on both sides.*²⁸

(1b) *Ἦντινα [πόλιν] ἀνεγείρας ὁ αὐτὸς Κωνσταντῖος καὶ πολλὰ πάνν φιλοτιμησάμενος καὶ κτίσας καὶ τοῖς ζήσασι πολῖταις συγχαρήσας*

²⁵ For detailed analysis see Index graecitatis, in *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, ed. I. Thurn, Berlin 2000, 501–502; MERZ, L. 1910/11, 9–17.

²⁶ HELMS, P. 1971–1972, 354–357; 368–371; WEIERHOLT, K. 1963, 59–60.

²⁷ Participle has three main functions in a sentence: 1) adverbial function – the participle replaces casual, temporal, conditional and concessive clauses and clauses of manner, etc. (*ἠναγκάζοντο φεύγοντες ἅμα μάχεσθαι*), 2) adjective (attributive) function – an article usually comes before the participle, often substantivized (*οἱ νῦν ὄντες ἄνθρωποι*), 3) predicative function – the participle is in agreement with subject or object in gender, number and case, it functions as their predicate (*πατρικὸς ἡμῖν φίλος τυγχάνεις ὧν - ὀρώμεν πάντα ἀληθῆ ὄντα*). In MOSER, A. 1988, 3ff.

²⁸ *The Chronicle of John Malalas, A Translation* (transl. by E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott), Melbourne 1986, 246.

συντελείας [...], καὶ κτίσας διαφόροις κτίσμασι τὴν πρῶν μὲν λεγομένην Σαλαμιάδα, ἐξ ἐκείνου δὲ μετακληθεῖσαν Κωνσταντίαν. (240/241, 28–32)

*Constantius restored it, gave many extremely generous gifts, undertook buildings and remitted taxes from the surviving citizens [...]. As he provided a variety of buildings for what was previously known as Salamias, it had its name changed from the time to Constantia.*²⁹

(1c) Ὅστις Βασιλίσκος λαβὼν χρήματα παρὰ Ζινζηρίχου, ῥηγὸς τῶν Οὐανδάλων, καὶ προέδωκε τὰ πλοῖα [...]. (296, 49–52)

*Basiliscus accepted bribes from Geiseric, king of the Vandals, and betrayed the ships [...].*³⁰

(1d) Ἐκπορθήσας δὲ τὴν τούτου πόλιν καὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ πάντα λαβὼν καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ Τέκμησαν ἄγει καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ πλοῦτον [...]. (75, 45–47)

*When he had sacked his city and seized all his possessions, he took his daughter Tekmessa, his wealth [...].*³¹

(1e) Ὁ δὲ Ἰούνιος ὁ τῶν Περσῶν σατράπης εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν πόλιν κατὰ κέλευσιν τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς ἓνα τῶν πύργων σημεῖον Περσικὸν ἔθηκε [...]. (259, 4–8)

*But Junius, the Persian satrap, entered the city at the emperor's command, and set up a Persian standard on one of the towers [...].*³²

This use is typical for Malalas, but it does not concern a meaning expansion of the participle in the sense that an insufficient feel for language would not be capable of discerning participle, i.e. nominal way of expression from the verbal one, but it concerns an innovation in syntax, when a participle stands for a finite verb, not as one.³³ Unambiguous explanation of this phenomenon has not yet been presented. Classical theory understands the independent occurrence of such participles as a consequence of the auxiliary verb εἶναι being suppressed in periphrastic constructions such as participle + εἰμί,³⁴ the same way of interpreta-

²⁹ Ibid., 170.

³⁰ Ibid., 206.

³¹ Ibid., 51.

³² Ibid., 183. If sentences such as adverbial participle – predicate (271, 10: *Καὶ γινούσ ταῦτα ὁ Ὀνῶριος ἐμάνη. When he learned this, Honorius went mad.* Ibid., 190) or predicate – adverbial participle (253, 66–68: *Καὶ εὐθέως ἐμβαίνειν εἰς τὰ πλοῖα ἐπέτρεψεν, εἰσελθὼν καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς [...]. The emperor commanded them to embark immediately on the boats, and he went on the board [...].* Ibid., 179) contain an explicit or implicit subject, it usually functions as the subject of the whole sentence. If there are two different subjects in the sentence, pleonastic *καὶ* usually occurs (255, 5–6: *Ἐνθα ἔλθων ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰουλιανὸς καὶ ὁ πᾶς στρατὸς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐκεῖ ἐσκήνωσεν. The emperor Julian went there and all the Roman army camped there.* Ibid., 180).

³³ FRISK, H. 1929, 56.

³⁴ E. g. RADERMACHER, L. 1911, 205.

tion was also used by *Karl Wolf* in his study of Malalas.³⁵ Post-classical Greek, though, did not use the periphrasis through the help of a mere participle, i.e. a nominal phrase, in a considerably higher extent than the Greek of the classical period, not even in the texts that avoided classicizing language, and that is why it is rather problematic to understand this phenomenon exclusively as a matter of popular language; in the scope of papyri there is usually an explanation for them (handwriting mistakes, anacoluthon, syntactic or psychological reasons, etc.)³⁶ and periphrases of such a type are so rare in the New Testament (they only occur in the *Pauline Epistles* and the *Apocalypse*) that they apparently cannot be considered innovations of popular language (Semite influences are to be considered instead).³⁷ The existence of sentences without a finite verb with a mere participle, or a Genitive Absolute as the predicate is in Classical, Hellenistic and Byzantine Greek typical, above all, of administrative and royal decrees, verdicts, bills, excerpts from laws etc. (e.g. BGU VI 1211, 1: βασιλέως προστάξαντος· τοὺς κατὰ τὴν χώραν τελοῦντας τῷ Διονύσῳ καταπλεῖν[...], 221–205 B.C. ³⁸).

Hellenistic Koine and early Byzantine Greek still keep the three basic types of periphrasis that are already known to us from the classical period: 1-2) two so-called pseudo-periphrases (when the verb εἶναι is used independently, with the meaning of “to exist, to be”, or when the appropriate participle is completely adjectivized) and 3) periphrasis that describes a situation as it seems at a given moment (e.g. Herodotus VIII, 137, 18ff: Ἐνθαῦτα ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ μισθοῦ πέρι ἀκούσας, ἦν γὰρ κατὰ τὴν καπνοδόκην ἐς τὸν οἶκον ἐσέχων ὁ ἥλιος, εἶπε [...]).³⁹ The innovation of Koine is the so-called “progressive periphrasis”; it describes an action that was completed at a certain moment (e.g. Lk 13, 10ff: Ἦν δὲ διδάσκων ἐν μιᾷ τῶν συναγωγῶν ἐν τοῖς σάββασι. καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ [...]).⁴⁰ Gradually, new periphrastic forms (e.g. ἦν + aorist participle as a substitute for pluperfect) join the periphrastic constructions known to us from the classical period already (e.g. the periphrasis of passive perfect of the type τετελεσμένος ἐστὶ); their prevalence led, for example in the system of perfect, to full elimination of monolectic forms. But not even in the individual types or forms of periphrastic constructions is the variability between periphrases without a verb or with the verb εἶμι, or a progression of a mere participle, evident – in-

35 WOLF, K. 1911, I, 55ff; II, 77ff.

36 E.g. MAYSER, E. 1926–1938, II,1, 339ff. does not find for Ptolemaic papyri even one “inexplicable” instance of participle standing for indicative.

37 FRISK, H. 1929, 64.

38 MAYSER, E. 1926–1938, II, 3, 72ff.

39 AERTS, W. J. 1965, 52ff.

40 In Malalas' Chronicle there are extremely few instances of progressive periphrasis. AERTS, W. J. 1965, 55 mentions only six instances, e.g. 158, 68–70: ὅστις Σκηπίων ἐν ᾧ ἦν διατρίβων ὁ Ἄννιβάλ ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ ἔλαβε πλῆθος στρατοῦ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὴν χώραν τοῦ Ἄννιβάλ [...]. (While Hannibal delayed in Italy, Scipio took a large army and went off to Hannibal's land in Africa [...]). Ibid., 110).

dicative forms have never been threatened by it and there is not even a trace of such a kind of periphrasis in Modern Greek.⁴¹

As an explanation, the possibility that the extinction of the inflected participle led to the mergence of its syntactic functions with the functions of a finite verb should preferably be considered, whereas this change is rather in system and does not itself indicate the popularity of the text, a lack of feel for language or author's bad education. In the work of Malalas it could be the combination of this phenomenon with an effort to imitate a higher, administrative style or the style of ecclesiastical documents using a great number of participle constructions, which he, however, often managed to incorporate into the text only in that "clumsy" way in the function of *verbum finitum*. Considering the huge number of participle constructions that appear in Malalas' Chronicle, it seems natural that he also "makes mistakes" in long or too complicated constructions, where he cannot leave the parataxis the attribute of which is the overused conjunction *καί* (compare above). There are hundreds of adverbial participles in the work of Malalas and *Kristen Weierholt* in this context refers to an important detail – taking into account how rare a participle was in the spoken language of the 6th century, the extensive use of participle forms by the Byzantines can be only a certain mannerism, fashion, an attempt of a higher, artistic style, which was preferred not only by Malalas but also by other chroniclers, even though, given their genre, they had the opportunity of writing in the real vulgar language that would certainly use a less complicated form of expression.⁴²

When evaluating the style and the language of not only Malalas' Chronicle but early Byzantine chronicles in general, the terms "popular" and "vulgar", by which such a text could be easily labelled at first, must be used carefully. An attentive look at the use of certain language phenomena brings us to a conclusion that Malalas' Chronicle can be to a certain extent appreciated even from the linguistic point of view.

[transl. by Hana Babincová]

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RESUMÉ

Článek pojednává o problematice jazykového zařazení raně byzantské světové kroniky Jana Malaly (6. stol.), která je nejstarším dochovaným dílem v žánru světových kronik z období rané Byzance. I v současnosti řadí mnoho badatelů kroniku mezi díla odrážející mluvenou řečtinu 6. století. Tato téměř automatická presumce „lidovosti“ textu, která zřejmě pramení z tradice 19. století, budované kolem pozdně antických či raně byzantských textů napsaných neklasicizující řečtinou, je však poněkud zavádějící. Kronika dosud nebyla z tohoto hlediska dostatečně prozkoumána a nemáme ani žád-

nou soubornou jazykovou studií, jež by se navíc opírala o novou edici kroniky z roku 2000 (*Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*. Ed. I. THURN. CFHB, Ser. Berol. vol. XXXV. Berlin, 2000). Bližší pohled na některé morfologické, syntaktické či stylistické prvky v textu ovšem napovídá, že řada jevů, které na první pohled budí dojem hovorovosti (např. participium ve funkci *verba finita*), musí být přehodnocena a že kronika je spíše dílem „středního“ stylu.

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