

Although not always so defined, "atticism", as a revival or restoration of Classical patterns of language, long continued as a potent force in Greek letters. As late as the twelfth century, tendencies which had been formalized in the second century CE are still evident in the poetic oeuvre of authors such as Nicolaos Callicles and Theodoros Prodromos.

Many of the meters of Byzantine poetry are Classically-based, with quantity, in some guise, playing a central role. Supposedly, though, Byzantine quantity was merely "eye-quantity", i.e., it is said that Byzantine poets had little or no sense of whether "doubtful" vowels (alpha, iota, and upsilon) were long or short; cf. Hörandner, W., *Theodoros Prodromos: historische Gedichte*, 1974, p. 124. The truth, however, is that Byzantine scansion is correct, by Classical standards, most of the time.

The Byzantine dactylic hexameter is probably the closest to its Classical prototype in terms of quantitative correctness. In one sample of 960 syllables from Theodoros Prodromos, for example, there are only 16 "incorrect" scansions. Even if one's calculation is limited to the 312 syllables which can be described as being "doubtful", the proportion is still pretty good – only 16 "wrong" scansions out of 312, i.e., about 5%. Comparison with the Homeric digamma is instructive. On almost any reckoning, Homer gets the digamma "correct" in a far spottier fashion than this, and yet Homer is thought to provide crucial evidence, vis-à-vis digamma – while Byzantine metrical "ignorance" is regularly scoffed at.

The situation may initially seem less promising in the case of the 12-syllable line, based on the old iambic trimeter. In Byzantine dodecasyllables, about 5 out of every 100 syllables exhibit quantitative irregularities, and the proportion is distinctly higher (about 1 in 4, i.e., 25%) in "doubtful" cases. Perhaps the most important fact behind these figures is an eschewal of resolution. For a word such as βασιλεύς, Byzantine poetry arbitrarily lengthens either the alpha or the iota, while in Classical scansion the word was accommodated as an anapest or as part of a tribrach or the like.

There is also an important accentual component. In Byzantine dodecasyllables, position 11 is regularly stressed, and there are additional accentual regularities connected with the mid-line caesura. Perhaps unexpectedly, though, the vowel in position 11, with its written accent, is historically short in a high percentage of instances. In a sample of 256 dodecasyllables from Nicolaos Callicles, there are 102 "doubtful" vowels in position 11, of which only 9 (i.e., fewer than 10%) show a historically incorrect scansion. It therefore emerges that some interplay of factors, going back to Classical times, is likely to have been at work. Occasionally, in fact, as with ἐνσπαρέντά μοι at the end of Nicolaos, 8.2, along with comparable instances at Nicolaos 19.12, 22.20, and 31.78, the accentual pattern is "Homeric", rather than "Attic"; cf. Romano, R., *Nicola Callicle: Carmi*, 1980, p. 41.

An important dimension of the interplay between Byzantine accent and quantity – however the latter term is understood – is undoubtedly that, already by the second century CE, the original pitch accent had begun to give way to stress, with the original quantities being pari passu obscured. The initially most economical response to these developments is likely to have been a conventional pronunciation with (1) stress for previously long syllables, along with (2) retention of higher pitch for accented syllables. Though somewhat arbitrary, the resulting combination is entirely workable – a point that can be vivified through an oral reading of one of Nicolaos' shorter poems, such as 8 or 19 in Romano's edition.