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Looking Back at the Linguistic Situation of 16th-Century Balkan Slavic

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Languages, Nations and Standardization in Slavia: So Similar and Yet So Different
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Talk outline

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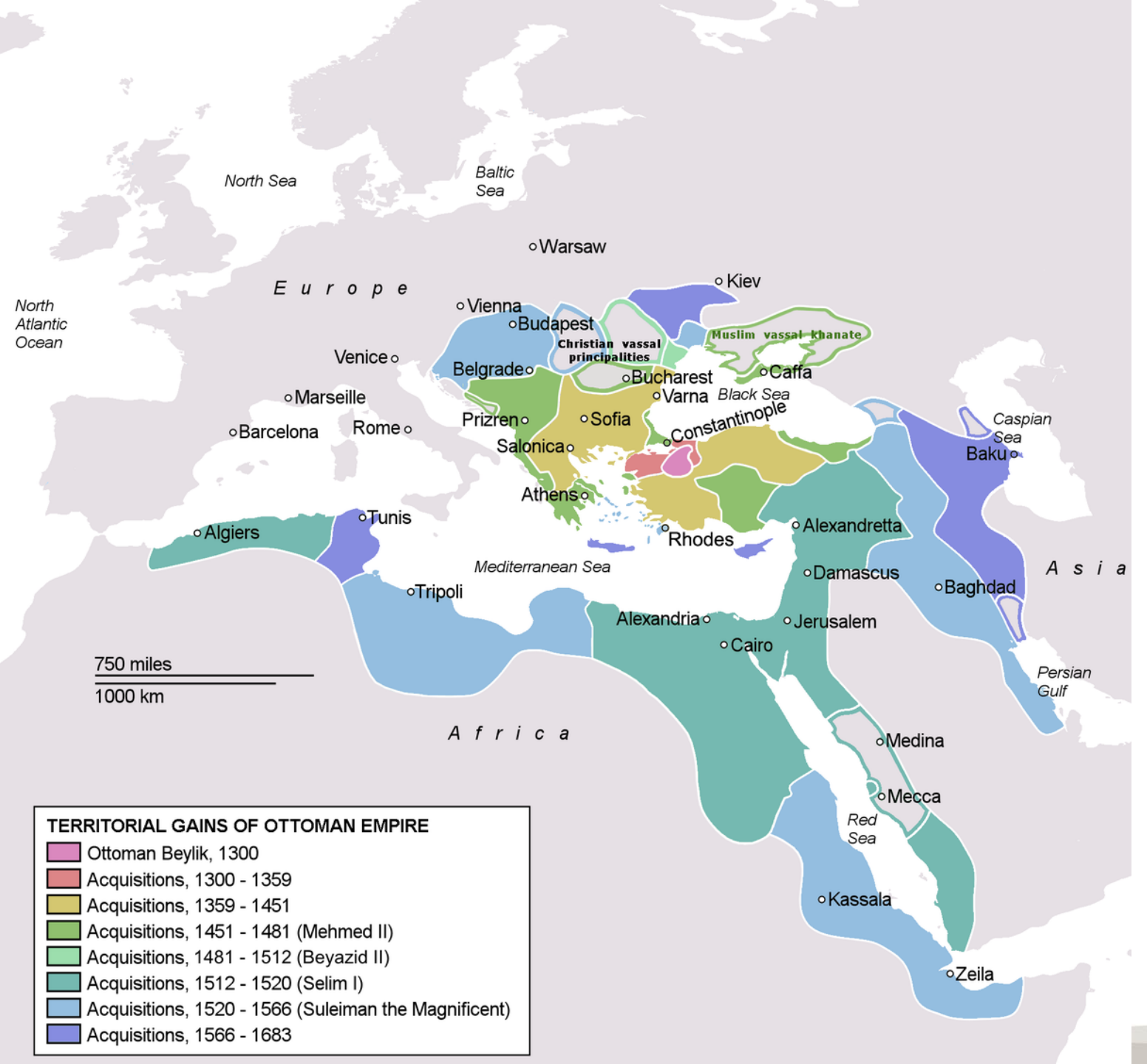
1. Two states of affairs: now and then
2. Sixteenth-century corpus of data: two translations (Sredna-Gora Translation & Macedonian Translation) of the same Greek text
3. Prerequisites for sixteenth-century translation activity
4. Language comparison of SG & MT in context
5. What happened afterwards?
6. Parallel processes in Slavia Orthodoxa and the Romanian Principalities

21st century: one dialect continuum but different countries and different standard languages

Source: GISGeography.com



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16th century: one dialect continuum, one country and one state language

Source: Atılım Güneş Baydin
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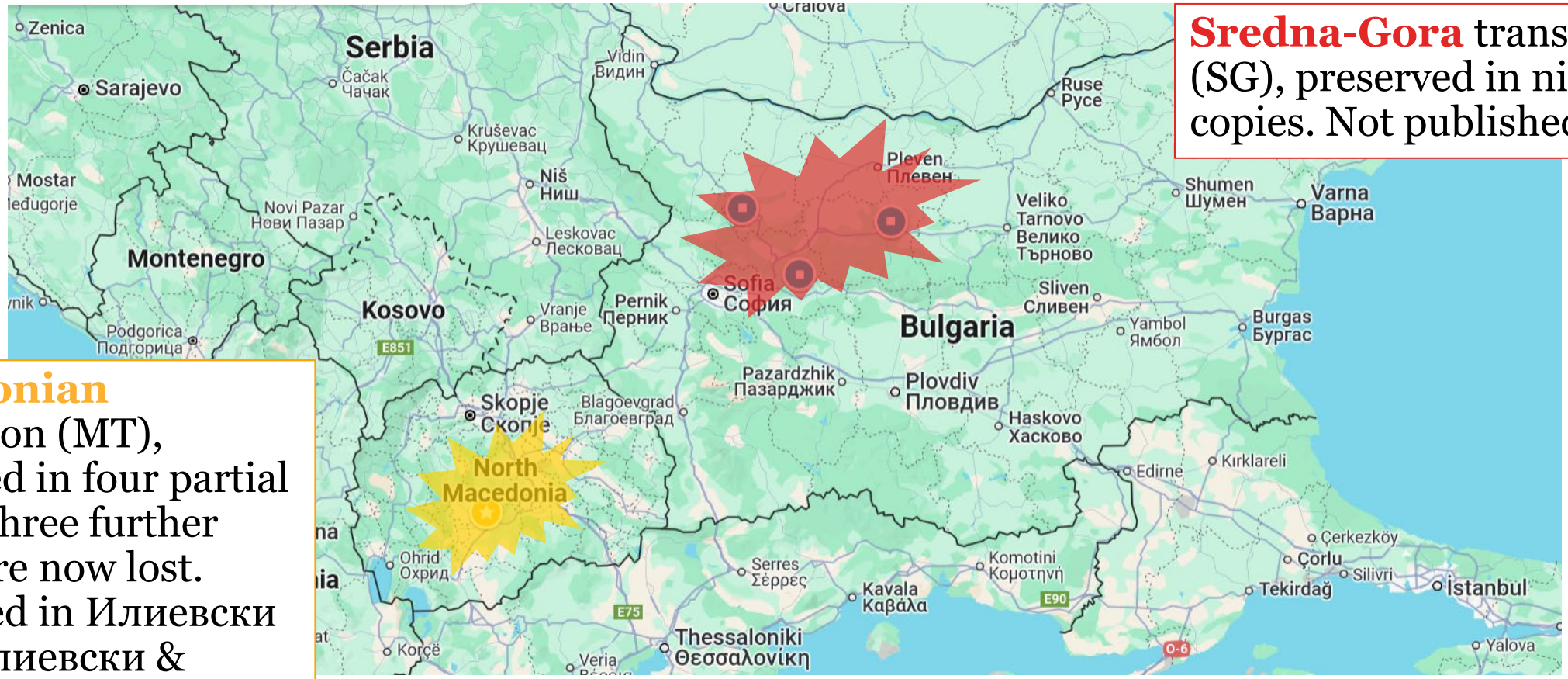
Two translations of the same 16th-century Greek text made in the second half of the same century



Sredna-Gora translation (SG), preserved in nine copies. Not published.

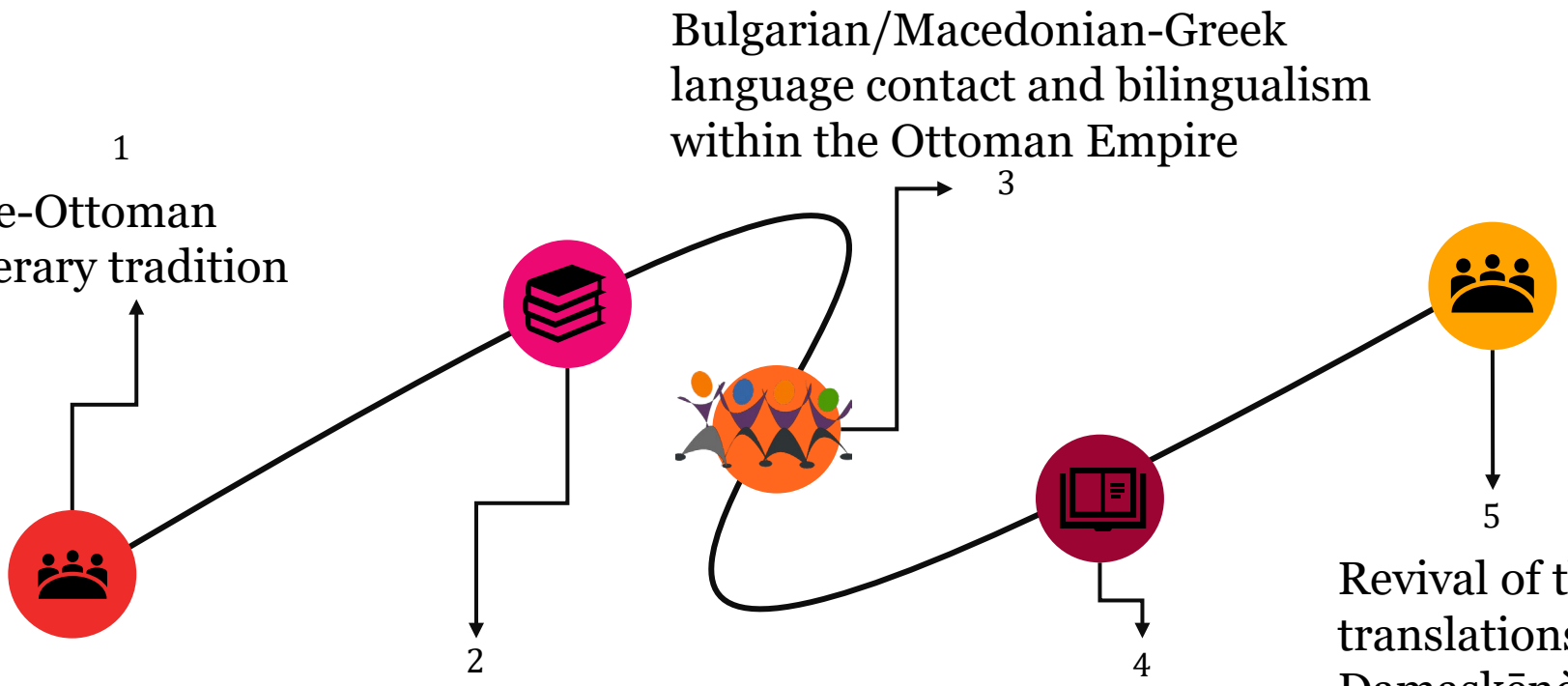
Macedonian translation (MT), preserved in four partial copies; three further copies are now lost. Published in Илиевски 1972; Илиевски & Илиевска 2015.

Source: Google Maps

16th-century editions of *Θησαυρός*

1557–1558
1561
1562
ca 1565
1568
1570
1580
1589
1594

Prerequisites for translation activity in the eastern parts of the Balkans during the sixteenth century



Church Slavonic, the traditional literary language of orthodox Slavs and Romanians

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Patriarch Euthymius of Tŭrnovo (ca 1325 – ca 1403) shaped its Bulgarian version.

INTELLIGIBLE
TO THE EDUCATED
POPULATION

DESPITE
CERTAIN GRAPHIC, ORTHOGRAPHIC AND
PHONETIC VARIATION,
AND SOME LEXICAL DIFFERENCES

See Василев, В. 1980. Правописната реформа на Евтимий и отражението ѝ в произведения на негови следовници и на български дамаскинари. В: *Ученици и последователи на Евтимий Търновски*, София: БАН, 2, 405-421; Райков, Б. 1981. Към историята на ресавския правопис в България. В: *Текстологија средњовековних јужнословенских књижевности,* Београд: САНУ, 213-222.

Euthymian orthography after Euthymius

Resava orthography, modelled after Euthymian Tŭrnovo orthography, was named after the 15th-century Resava Holy Trinity Monastery in Central Serbia, an important cultural hub.

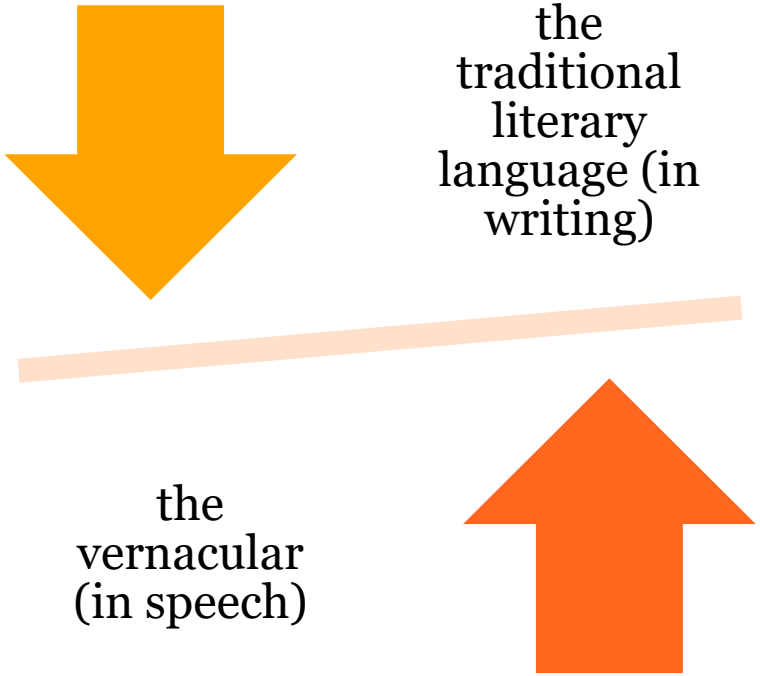
MAIN EUTHYMIAN-RESAVA CONTRAST

Euthymian	Resava
ѫ	оу (ꙋ)
ѧ	ѥ

The insider perspective

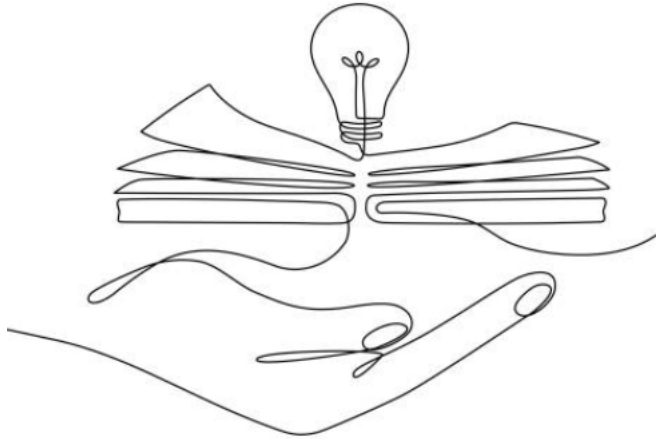
- CHURCH SLAVONIC AS LOCALS KNOW IT EQUALS BULGARIAN
  - MT блъга́рскы(и) (Kv: 138r, 246r)
  - SG no specific term

“OUR” LANGUAGE



LEARNING THE ART OF TRANSLATION WITHIN A LIVING TRADITION

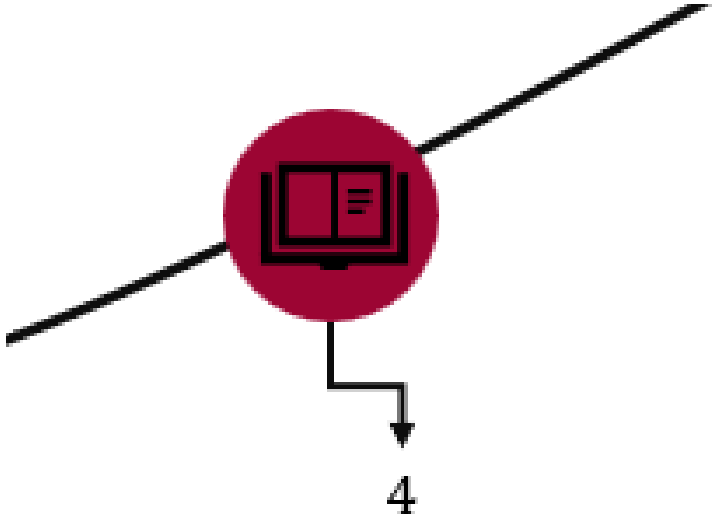
CREATIVITY IN A CULTURE OF SURVIVAL



Bulgarian/Macedonian-Greek language contact and bilingualism within the Ottoman Empire

KNOWLEDGE OF GREEK ALONE
(SPOKEN AND WRITTEN)
WOULD NOT OPEN ACCESS
TO THE GREEK LEARNED LITERATURE
FEATURING ATTICIST LEXICAL AND
GRAMMATICAL ELEMENTS

See Николова, Н. 2004. *Билингвизмът в българските земи през XV–XIX век*. Шумен, УИ „Св. Константин Преславски“.



Rise of a literature in vernacular Greek

A CIRCLE OF CLERICAL AUTHORS AROUND THEOPHANĒS ELEAVOULKOS ENGAGED IN THE PRODUCTION OF TEXTS ACCESSIBLE TO COMMON PEOPLE

See Jeffreys, M. J. 1975. The Literary Emergence of Vernacular Greek. *Mosaic* 8(4): 192-193.
Mladenova, O. M. 2019. Reception of Theophanēs Eleavoulkos in Bulgaria. *Balkanistica* 32(1): 323-354.

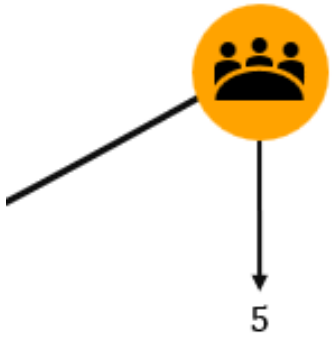
Two interrelated sets of MT vs SG research questions

Targeting translation

- Greek source(s)
- Two redactions or two translations
- Single translators or translator teams
- Translators' mode of work
- Treatment of quotations in the Greek original in comparison with the translations

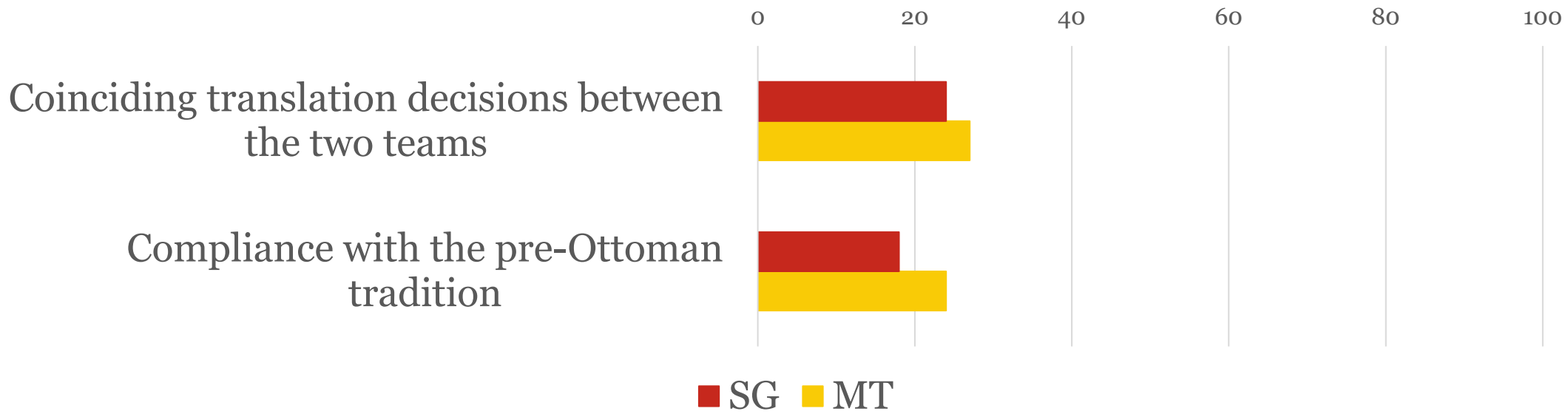
Targeting language

- Translators' proficiency in Greek
- Translators' level of familiarity with the literary tradition
- Translators' views on the permissible permeability of their literary language to vernacular influences
- Language comparison of the two translations



Revival of the literary tradition: translations of *Treasure* by Damaskēnòs Studítēs

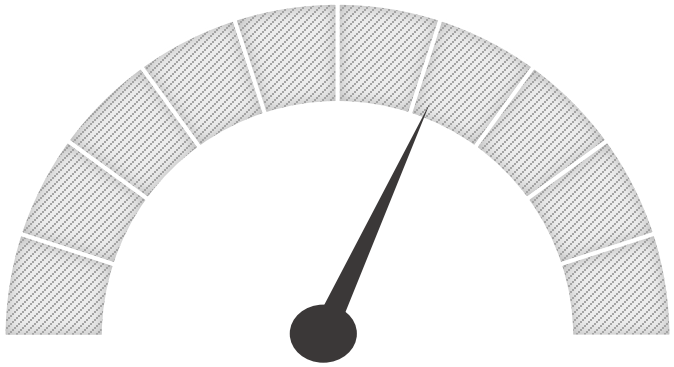
Roots and stability of the tradition



Source: Младенова, О. М. 2022. За съответствията на гр. ὕβρις, ὑβρίζω и ὑβριστής в българските дамаскини. *Sѣлw* 10(23): [1–36].

2453-word Greek running text (§3: 1-291)
Krn: 25r-31r; NBKM1050: 25v-29v

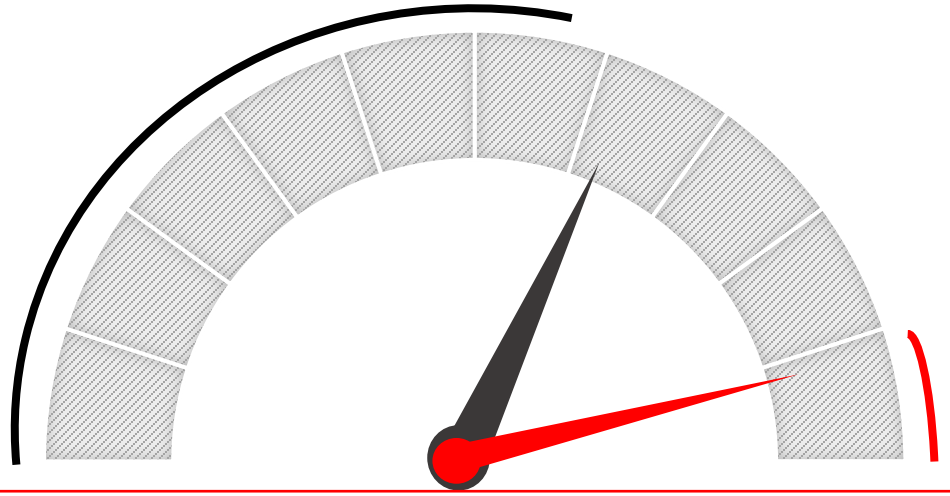
Around 63% of the tokens of the running text are forms of the same lemmas in MT and SG



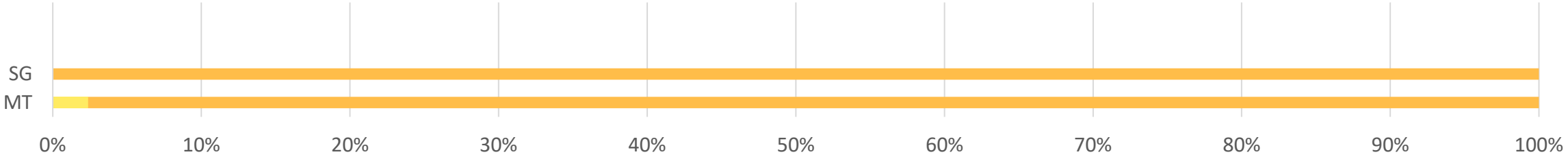
What about the remaining 37% of running text?

αὐτός
ἐγώ
εἰς
ἔρχομαι
λέγω
ὁράω
ἀκούω
γίνομαι
ἔχω
ποιέω
δίδωμι
λαμβάνω
εὑρίσκω
ἵστημι
καθίζω
ἀποθνήσκω
ἀναβαίνω
καταβαίνω
ἀπέρχομαι
ἀνίστημι
ἐσθίω
πίνω
ἀκολουθέω
ἀποστέλλω
ἀγαπάω
ἀφίημι
ἀποκρίνομαι
ἀπόλλυμι
ἀκολουθέω
ἀναβλέπω
ἀναπίπτω
ἀπέρχομαι
ἀπόλλυμι
ἀποκρίνομαι
ἀποστέλλω
ἀφίημι
ἀγαπάω
ἀναβλέπω
ἀναπίπτω
ἀνίστημι
ἀπέρχομα

Just under 10% of the tokens of the running text are forms of different lemmas in MT and SG



MT	SG	
поработити	плѣнѧти	αἰχμαλωτίζω ‘capture’
расыпати се	разлїати се	ἀναλύω ‘break up’
олеснити се*	облѣгчити се*	ἐλαφρόω ‘relieve, lighten’
настѫпити	попрати	καταπατέω ‘trample under foot’
оумекчити	оуттѣшити	καταπραΰνω ‘assuage (grief)’
древнь	ветхъ	παλαιός ‘old’
хилїада*	тысѫща	χιλιάδα ‘thousand’



повелѣвати = ὁρίζω

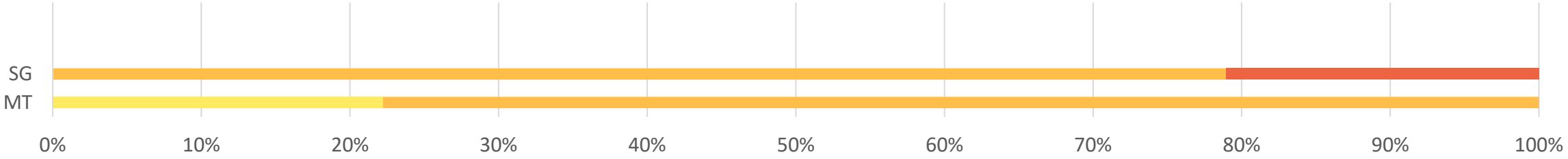
MT

Both

SG

ѿвѣщати = ἀπολογέομαι
повѣдати = διηγέομαι
глаголати = λέγω & ὁρίζω & συντυγχάνω ρεцιи = λέγω
въпрашати = ἐρωτάω

Verbs of speaking



мимоити = περάω прїити & ходити = ὑπάγω

поити & грести & приступити = ὑπάγω

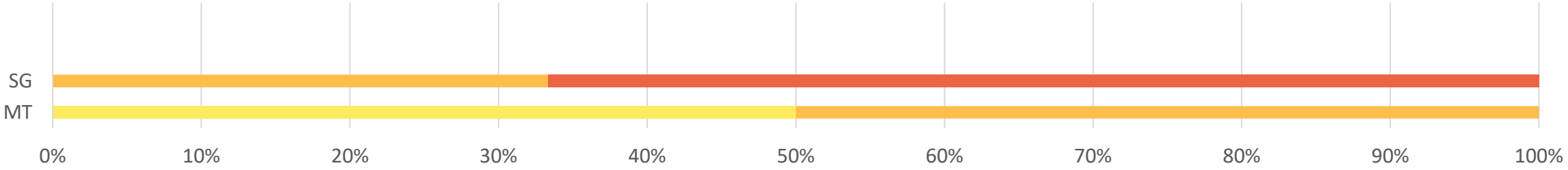
MT

Both

SG

сънити = καταβαίνω пѣити = περάω приходити = ὑπάγω прїити & грести = ἔρχομαι възити = ἀναβαίνω & ἐκβαίνω

Verbs of motion



чаѣти = ἀπαντέχω
надѣатисѧ = θαρρέω
ожидати = ὑπολαμβάνω

чаѣти = μέλλω
мнѣти = ἀπαντέχω & θαρρέω & ὑπολαμβάνω

MT

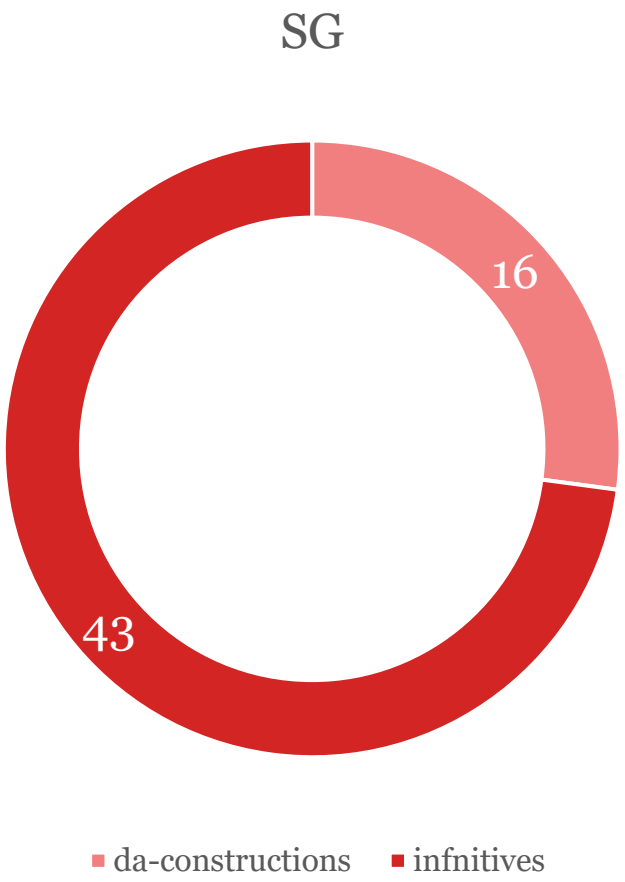
Both

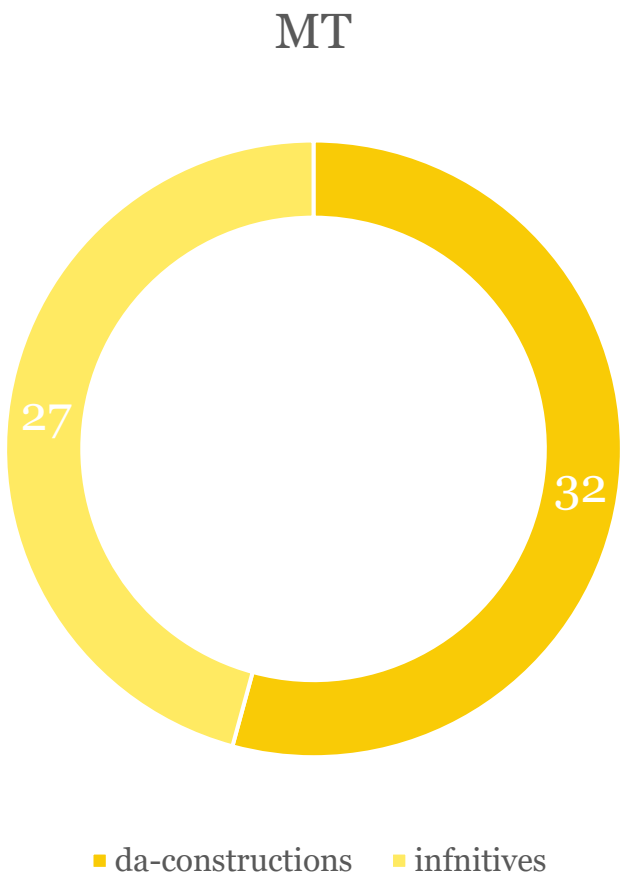
SG

хотѣти = θέλω & μέλλω

Wish, expect
hope, assume

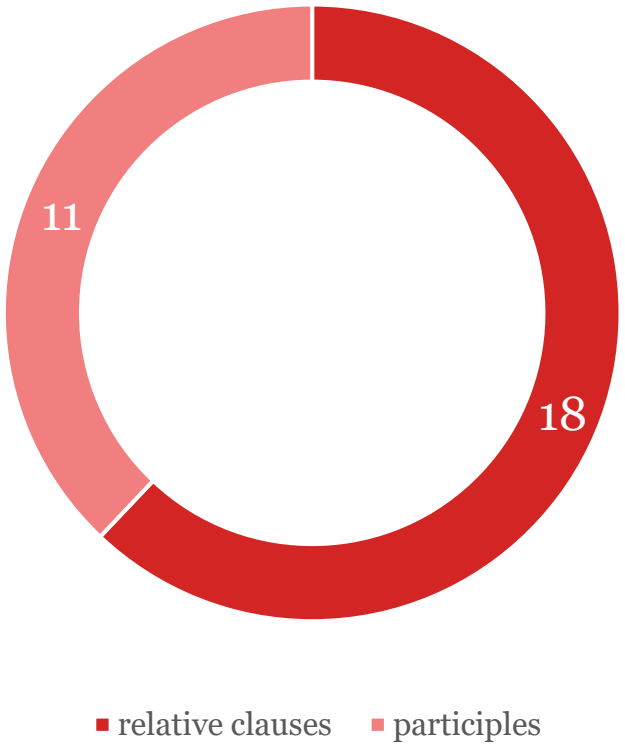
Counterparts of Greek *νὰ*-constructions



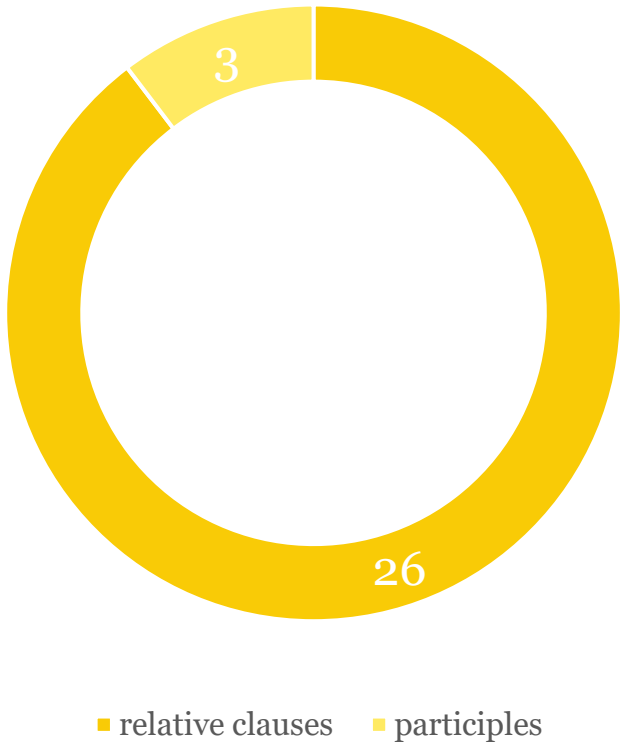


Relative clauses vs participles

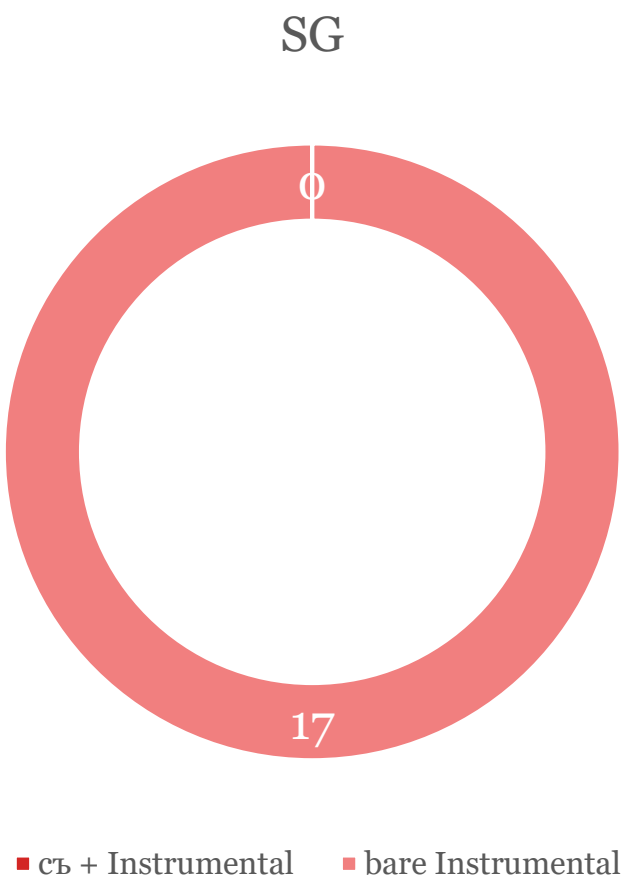
SG

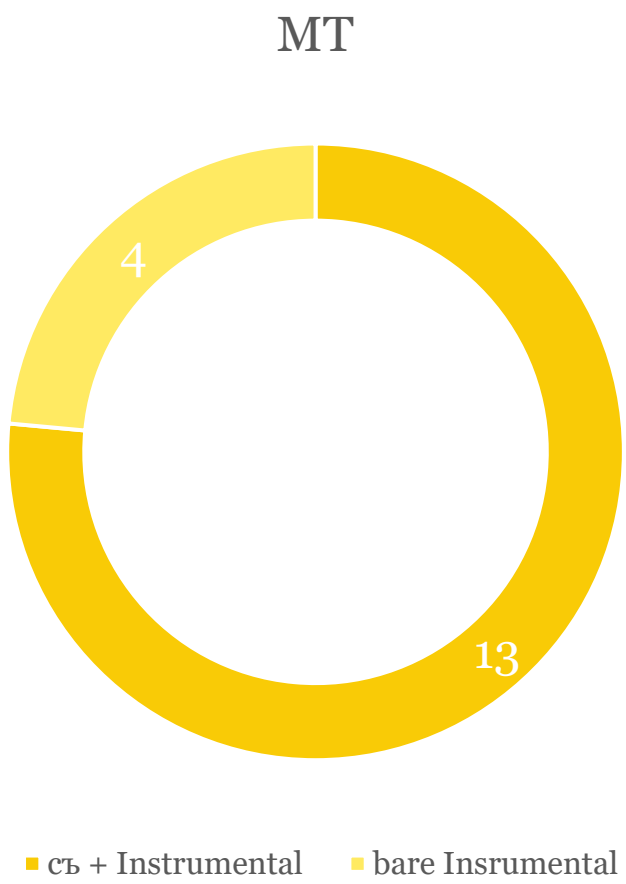


MT



Instrumental function of the Instrumental case: with or without a preposition?





Navigating the distance between text and language

ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ´ ἀγγέλους, δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν, καὶ κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου (*Septuagint*, Psalm 8: 5-6)—You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler of the works of Your hands (*Berean Standard Bible*)

§3: 20-21, 27	Krn: 25v	NBKM 1050: 25v
δόξῃ καὶ τιμὴ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτὸν …	славою и чъстїю вѣнчаль єси єго…	славою и чъстїю венчаль єси єго…
καὶ κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου …	постави єго на҆ дѣлы рꙋкꙋ твоєю…	и поставиль єси [Nezh єго] на҆дели роукꙋ твоєю…
Ηλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ’ ἀγγέλους	оумалиль єси єго малѡ҆ нѣчи҆ ѿ аг҃гль.	оумалиль єси єго малѡ҆ чимь ѿ аг҃гль.

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PRINCIPLE OF ASYMMETRIC INTERPRETATION

A FINAL WORD OF CAUTION