Poetic Rhyme in Greek: insights from a pilot database

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Introduction & Aims

- Rhyme: sound correspondence between one or more syllables at – usually – the ends of poetic lines, e.g. κρίνα – ἀλφάντα
- Relatively understudied (Kohnlein & van Oostendorp 2014)
- Rhyme in Greek: almost unexplored (but see Kokolis 1993)
- This project: Construction of a pilot database with a sample of rhymes as they appear in the poetry of diverse Greek poets
- Descriptive aim: rhyme patterns in Greek and their frequency
- Theoretical and/or typological aim
  - e.g. Holtman (1996: 32), based on Middle English languages, with rich inflectional morphology prefer feminine over masculine rhymes. Does Greek confirm this claim?

Website & Database

- Website and database components
  - Online repository of rhymes (Library of poems)
  - Analyst expert knowledge integration productivity GUI (graphical user interface)
  - Rhyme detection/classification algorithm
- Basic Statistics
- Provision for expandability
- Rhyme Classification Chart

Rhyme detection rules

- Successive comparison steps of respective line representation nodes in reverse order
- Operator condition syntax
- Suitable repertoire of comparison operators
- Hierarchy support by rules inheritance
- Match if all queue comparison steps are true

Patterns

Rhygm Type

- M = masculine (tinal) / F2 = feminine penultimate / F3 = feminine antepenultimate

Rich Rhyme: onsets of stressed a match in RP
- total rich rhyme with singleton or complex onsets, i.e. TRS (span = Gorman) and TRCC (span = Cervi)
- partial rich rhyme with singleton & complex onset, i.e. PR1 (span = Cervi) or PR2 (West)
- partial rich rhyme with complex onsets, i.e. PRCC (span = Cervi) or PRCC2

Prephonetic Identical V: vowel in pre-stressed a is identical across all rhymes (shown in capitals)
- IDV: Anith - Aristi
- IDAV:2W (across words): o - oi - e - oth - oth

Masric rhymes: rhyme stretches across words
- MOS: Dákri - Dákri
- Imperfect rhyme or V within the rhyme alternates
- IWP: stressed V differs across targets
- IWP: one more Cs after stressed V differs across targets

COPY: rhyme as full reduplication (Dén to - pót to)

Phonological Implications

Poetry may put phonological proposals to the test!

- Solomos’ poem above is situated in 4-line verses that alternate between 87As and 87Bs
- Line 380 has τοῦ δάκρυος δόξα = ἄλογον
- Implies that “δάκρυα” should be [bakri]; but Soutats (2013: 276) only allows for [bakri]
  - In fact *[Cj]* for him is a basic argument against underlying glides in Greek (cf. Topintz 2011)
- Poetic evidence challenges Soutatzis’ claim

Statistics & Typology

- Current corpus has 89 poems; variety of types: long poems (Solomos’ “ İmnoa’ : 392 lines), many sonnets of 14 lines each (Mavlis, Kyratiskis, freer verse with some rhyme (Palamas)
- Basic, preliminary generalizations and stats
  - Of 5749 lines (corpus), 2457 lines (42.7%) presented some rhyme
  - Rhyme types: M=5%, F2=5%, F3=1%
  - F2 > M, but only slightly: no clear support for Holtman’s claim (see intro)
  - F3: extremely rare, although Greek has a lot of long words with antepenultimate stress
  - IWP: rhymes (12%), of those 30% are IWP and 70% are IWP
  - Rich rhymes (9%) with TRS (4.9%) > PRCC (2.1%) > all others (0.7%–0.8%)
  - Rich rhyme is almost twice as frequent in F2 compared to M
  - IDV is quite common (7%), esp. IDV:2W (5%)
  - MOS (1%) and COPY (1%) are very rare

Future Work

- Expand database
- Optimize GUI
- Integration of metric scheme attributes according to poem type (e.g. sonnets) or syllabification issues (recognition of synalephs)
- Extend to other phenomena such as alliteration
- Improve accessibility to philology/poetry scholars and school teachers? How? Ideas?

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