Byzantine scholars and teachers stressed on every possible occasion the pivotal role of grammar in the training of students and how fundamental its mastery was to the acquisition of knowledge. In the Byzantine school, the principal method used for the teaching of grammar from the eleventh century onwards was schedography.¹ This method consisted of the application of grammatical rules students had already learned, by means of short texts (σχέδη) aiming at mastering orthography and enriching students’ vocabulary.

The schedography of Manuel Moschopoulos (ca. 1265–ca. 1316) became the standard textbook used for the teaching of grammar from the end of the thirteenth century onwards, replacing its convoluted predecessors to such a degree that Moschopoulos became the “schedographer” par excellence.² Cast in the popular question-and-answer format, Moschopoulos’ schedography contains twenty-two schede of both secular and religious content, accompanied by brief commentaries on lexicography, orthography, grammar, morphology, syntax, and etymology.

The vast number of extant manuscripts of Moschopoulos’ schedography preserved in major libraries in Europe³ attest to its widespread use for the learning of the Greek language not only by Greek teachers and students in Byzantium, but also by Westerners. In this paper, I examine the influence on, the relations with, and the reception of Moschopoulos’ Schedography in the West looking at four important sources of its transmission: the humanists who used it, its presence in two major Renaissance libraries (the Vatican Library and Bessarion’s book collection, now in the Marciana Library in Venice), some representative extant manuscripts from these collections, and the French editio princeps.

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¹ On schedography in Byzantium, see Nousia 2016, 49–92. See also, e.g., Ciccolella 2008, 113–118; Agapitos 2013, 2015a, and 2015b; Silvano 2015, and the bibliography quoted therein.
² Ciccolella 2008, 115.
³ A rough estimate of the Moschopoulean manuscripts containing his schedography in its entirety amount to ca. 121 (cf. Pinakes, s.v.).
1 Humanists

The learning of Greek in the West was marked by the arrival of Manuel Chrysoloras in Florence in 1397 as teacher of Greek. The previous independent self-study of Greek, based on a comparative reading mainly of bilingual theological texts, as Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) states in his letter to Francesco Coppola, gave way to the systematic study of Greek based on the grammatical manuals and texts, which, under the guidance of Byzantine teachers, facilitated first the acquaintance with and then the learning of Greek.

Chrysoloras and other Byzantine scholars and teachers, in their efforts to impart and teach Greek language and culture to Westerners, had to adjust their teaching to the levels and needs of their “new” students. Grammar continued to be considered fundamental to the mastery of Greek, and thus new grammatical manuals had to be composed. Those by Chrysoloras, Constantine Lascaris, and Theodore Gaza enjoyed great popularity. It seems that Demetrius Chalcondyles’ grammar was useful, too, though not very popular.

Grammatical theory as expounded in Greek manuals was abridged, sometimes translated into Latin, and adjusted to the level of difficulty expected for the Western student. However, theory was not sufficient for those who wished to learn to speak and write correctly in Greek. Practice was also indispensable: from the thirteenth century onwards, this demand was satisfied through the Moschopoulean schedography.

Before proceeding to the humanists who used or possessed Moschopoulos’ work, it is important to examine the reasons why it was used by non-native Greek speakers. First, its question-and-answer format was familiar to Westerners as was another feature of the schedographic commentary, the parsing of sentences, which was common to both Greek and Western educational traditions. Second, the Moschopoulean work constituted a unique bridge with a twofold goal: it was linked with grammatical manuals by citing the main points of grammatical theory and, at the same time, helped students to pass smoothly to the next stages of their training, namely, poetry and rhetoric, the latter being of crucial importance in the school curriculum. Moschopoulean schedography included many literary quotations from classical, post-classical, and Christian authors, which were used as examples to clarify difficult and

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4 Bertalot 1975, 262–263. See also Berschin 1988, 35, with n. 64 (with an English translation of this important text), and 290–291; and Nousia 2016, 142–143, with n. 8.
5 Cataldi Palau 2008b, 233.
6 Percival 2002, 104; and Robins 2000, 422.
7 See Keaney 1971, 305–308; and Nousia 2016, 79 and 158.