A Cognitive Analysis of Metrical Irregularities in the Ὥσπερ ξένοι Book Epigrams

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Abstract. This article considers the variation in the meters of the ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams collected in the Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE). In its canonical form, these epigrams follow a dodecasyllabic metrical pattern. The seemingly unmetrical decasyllabic and decatetrasyllabic variants are explained from a cognitive-linguistic perspective as the pairing of different cola – 5+5 and 7+7 instead of the usual 7+5 or 5+7. From this perspective, cola can be equated with the cognitive 'idea' or 'intonation units' (IUs) used in ordinary speech.

1. Introduction

The study of Byzantine book epigrams has been largely neglected until the recent launch of the Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE).[1] This has sparked off a number of studies by members of the DBBE team,[2] but much investigation is still wanting, mainly due to the absence of critical editions for many of these texts. The meters of the book epigrams have never been studied before, even though this could provide new insights in the use and perception of meter in Byzantine times, because of the *ad hoc*-character of many of the book epigrams.

Byzantine meter in general has received more scholarly attention, most notably by Maas, Jeffreys,

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[1] The Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams is hosted by Ghent University at www.dbbe.ugent.be and funded by its Special Research Fund (BOF).

[2] K. Bentein, F. Bernard, K. Demoen & M. De Groote, "Book Epigrams in Honor of the Church Fathers: Some Inedita from the Eleventh Century," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 49 (2009) 281-294; K. Bentein, F. Bernard, K. Demoen & M. De Groote, "New Testament Book Epigrams: Some New Evidence from the Eleventh Century", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 103 (2010) 13-23; K. Bentein & F. Bernard, "A Cycle of Book Epigrams on the Four Evangelists", *Scriptorium* 64 (2011) 237-249; F. Bernard, K. Demoen, "Byzantine Book Epigrams from Manuscript to Digital Database," in C. Clivaz, J. Meizoz, F. Vallotton & J. Verheyden (eds.), *From Ancient Manuscripts to the Digital Era: Readings and Literacies* (Lausanne 2012) 431-440; F. Bernard, "Rhythm in the Dodecasyllable: Practices and Perceptions," forthcoming; F. Bernard & K. Demoen, "Book Epigrams," in A. Rhoby, N. Zaglas & W. Hörandner (eds.), *A Companion to Byzantine Poetry* (Leiden forthcoming); K. Demoen, "La poésie de la συλλογή: Les paratextes métriques des manuscrits byzantins et le (vocabulaire du) recueil," in C. Gastgeber [et al.] (eds.), *Pour l'amour de Byzance: Hommage à Paolo Odorico* (Frankfurt am Main 2013) 89-98; R. Meesters, "Byzantijnse boekepigrammen / metrische parateksten: Terminologie en classificatie," *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal- en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis* 70 (2016) in press; R. Meesters, "Ascending the Ladder: *Editio Princeps* of Four Poems on the *Ladder* of John Klimakos (Bodleian Baroccianus 141)", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 56 (2016) 556-571.

Mackridge, Lauxtermann and Rhoby.[3] These studies typically aim to determine the regular outlines of the two innovative types of Byzantine meter, i.c. the dodecasyllable and the decapentasyllable or 'political verse' (πολιτικὸς στίχος), and compare them with Classical and/or Modern Greek metrical patterns. Most of the research concerning the dodecasyllable thus focuses on the development from the (post)classical iambic trimeter to its Byzantine counterpart and especially on the loss of prosody.[4] Studies on the decapentasyllable, on the other hand, typically concentrate on its origin as a composite verse, i.e. as a combination of an octasyllable and a heptasyllable, which explains the fixed caesura after the eighth syllable.[5]

This article offers a cognitive-linguistic interpretation of the metrical irregularities in the ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams along the lines of Janse (for the Homeric hexameter)[6] and Soltic (for the Byzantine decapentasyllable)[7], rather than a revision of the regular Byzantine metrical patterns. Book epigrams constitute an ideal corpus for this type of research, since few epigrams maintain the artificial, quantitative prosody of ancient times and many bear witness to the rather limited level of literacy of the scribes who wrote them. Not surprisingly, then, irregularities and deviations occur rather frequently in this corpus.

2. The ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams

The popular scribal ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams[8] are the subject of the present analysis, since the abundant variation in the different occurrences of this epigram includes metrical variation on the dodecasyllabic type, which will prove to be important for our understanding of the pragmatics of Byzantine meter. Treu, Brock and Lemay have collected numerous occurrences of the ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams and concentrate on

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[3] P. Maas, "Der byzantinische Zwölfsilber," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 12 (1903) 278-323; M. Jeffreys, "The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974) 142-195; P. Mackridge, "The Metrical Structure of the Oral Decapentasyllable," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 14 (1990) 551-574; M.D. Lauxtermann, "The Velocity of Pure Iambs: Byzantine Observations on the Metre and Rhythm of the Dodecasyllable," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 48 (1998) 9-33; *The Spring of Rhythm: An Essay on the Political Verse and Other Byzantine Metres* (Vienna 1999); A. Rhoby, "Vom jambischen Trimeter zum byzantinischen Zwölfsilber: Beobachtung zur Metrik des spätantiken und byzantinischen Epigramms," *Wiener Studien* 124 (2011) 117-142.
[4] P. Maas, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 12 (1903) 278-323; A. Rhoby, *Wiener Studien* 124 (2011) 117-142.
[5] M. Jeffreys, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974) 142-195; P. Mackridge, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 14 (1990) 551-574.
[6] M. Janse, "Homerische metriek: Orale poëzie in de praktijk [Homer's Metre: Oral Poetry in Practice]," *Didactica Classica Gandensia* 38 (1998) 125-151; "The Metrical Schemes of the Hexameter," *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 343-348; *Inleiding tot de Homerische taal en metriek* [Introduction to Homer's Language and Metre] (Ghent 2016[7]).
[7] J. Soltic, "The Distribution of Object Clitic Pronouns in the Grottaferrata Manuscript of Digenis Akritis," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 36 (2012) 178-197; "Late Medieval Greek πάλιν: A Discourse Marker Signaling Topic Switch," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013) 390-419; "The Late Medieval Greek Vernacular Πολιτικός Στίχος Poetry: A Modern Linguistic Analysis into Intonation Units," *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 14 (2014) 84-116.
[8] This type of book epigram is called 'colophon verse' by M.D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres: Texts and Contexts* (Vienna 2003) 200.

lexical and grammatical variation.[9] However, neither of these studies had access to the collection of the DBBE, in which more than 150 occurrences of this type are now collected at the time of writing[10], nor did they focus on the metrical variation in the different occurrences. The following example, metrically an accentual dodecasyllable with strong caesura after the seventh syllable, has by far the most occurrences (22):[11]

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |ʙ7 ἰδεῖν π(ατ)ρίδ(α)·

οὕτως καὶ οἱ γρά(φοντες) |ʙ7 βιβλίου τέλος +

(DBBE 346[12]; Oxford, Bodl. Libr., Barocci 102, f. 210v)[13]

Just like strangers rejoice in seeing their fatherland,
So do writers at the end of their book.

The following, longer, variant with the same metrical structure has an impressive amount of occurrences as well (18):[14]

Ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |ʙ7 ἰδεῖν πατρίδα

καὶ οἱ θαλαττεύοντες |ʙ7 εὑρεῖν λιμένα

οὕτω καὶ οἱ γράφοντες |ʙ7 βιβλίου τέλος·

(DBBE 1900[15]; Athos, Monè Bathopediou 1486)

Just like strangers rejoice in seeing their fatherland,

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[9] K. Treu, "Der Schreiber am Ziel: Zu den Versen Ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν… und änlichen," in J. Dummer, K. Treu & M. Richard (eds.), *Studia Codicologica* (Berlin 1977) 473-492; S. Brock, "The Scribe Reaches Harbour", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995) 195-202; P. Lemay, *De functie en de evolutie van de verzen ὥσπερ ξένοι… in Byzantijnse manuscripten* (Ghent 2013), unpublished MA thesis.

[10] The ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams in the DBBE all date from the period between 900 and 1500.

[11] DBBE 22, 275, 799, 800, 1159, 1330, 1362, 1513, 1696, 1758, 1814, 1871, 2129, 3004, 3285, 3495, 3687, 3907, 4505, 4915, 4919, 5633. It should be noted that the exact number of occurrences may change in the future, as the DBBE is continually expanding. In September 2016, the total number of ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams in the DBBE was set on 159.

[12] Text source by DBBE.

[13] All cited epigrams in this article are what DBBE calls 'occurrences' (as opposed to 'types'), i.e. the faithful transcription of the text as it was found in the manuscript. No normalizations have been applied to these texts and all orthographic mistakes/variances are retained.

[14] DBBE 1116, 1275, 1369, 1393, 1561, 1640, 1733, 1898, 1900, 1921, 1985, 2173, 3067, 5920, 5956, 6072, 7910, 7979.

[15] Text source by F. Euangelatou-Notara, *Συλλογὴ χρονολογημένων σημειωμάτων ἑλληνικῶν κωδίκων, 13ᵒˢ αἰώνας* (Athens, 1984) 150.

And those at sea in finding a harbor,
So do writers at the end of their book.

The orthographical, lexical and metrical variation on this type is virtually endless, as authors added lines and words with apparently little regard for the pattern of the dodecasyllabic meter. The epigram was so popular – with over 150 occurrences we no doubt only glimpse the real extent of its popularity[16] – that it must have been widely known and scribes therefore must have had its blueprint in the back of their head as they produced their own version of it. This may to some extent explain the vast variation in the various occurrences, as every scribe could freely add to these poems as they pleased. What is interesting, however, is that there are discernible patterns in the recurring metrical deviations, which suggests that something more is going on here than simple idiosyncrasies or irregularities.

3. Metrical variants

We start with the least common variant, which includes a decasyllable in the third line:

Ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |ʙ₇ ἰδεῖν πατρίδα

καὶ οἱ θαλαττεύοντες |ʙ₇ εὑρεῖν λιμένα·

οἱ νοσοῦντες δὲ |ʙ₅ τυχεῖν ὑγείας,

οὕτω καὶ οἱ γράφοντες |ʙ₇ βιβλίου τέλος.

(DBBE 2049[17]; Athos, Monè Koutloumousiou 246)[18]

Just like strangers rejoice in seeing their fatherland,
And those at sea in finding a harbor,
And those who are ill in regaining their health,
So do writers at the end of their book.

Although the parallelism with the preceding and following verses is clearly intentional, the first colon

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[16] An interesting parallel can be found in Syriac and Arabic manuscripts, where the same, popular simile frequently occurs, cf. A. C. McCollum, "The Rejoicing Sailor and the Rotting Hand: Two Formulas in Syriac and Arabic Colophons, with Related Phenomena in Other Languages", *Journal of Syriac Studies* 18.1 (2015) 67-93.

[17] Text source by F. Euangelatou-Notara, *Χορηγοί-κτήτορες-δωρητές σε σημειώματα κωδίκων, Παλαιολόγειοι χρόνοι* (Athens, 2000) 257.

[18] A very similar variant is DBBE 2473 (Vatican, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana - Ross. 887).

of the third line is penta- instead of heptasyllabic, which in itself is of course a perfectly acceptable alternative for a dodecasyllabic verse, but the second colon is also penta- instead of heptasyllabic. The resulting verse is deca- instead of dodecasyllabic, which is remarkable. The following, definitely less elegant, variant has a decasyllabic first line with the same colometrical division:

Ὡς ὁδοιπόροις |B5 πατρίδα φθάσαι,

οὕτω καὶ τοῖς γράφουσιν, |B7 βιβλίου τέλος:-

(DBBE 59[19]; Athos, Monè Bathopediou 314)

As it is for travelers to reach the fatherland,
So is for writers the end of their book.

We thus find a pentasyllabic colon on either side of the strong caesura at B5, which is of course metrically irregular within the framework of the dodecasyllable. The opposite is actually more frequent: this variant has a decatetrasyllabic line with a heptasyllabic colon on either side of the strong caesura at B7. The following occurrence is typical:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίροντες |B7 ιδεῖν πατρίδα,

οὕτ(ως) (καὶ) οἱ γράφοντες |B7 ιδεῖν βιβλίου τέλος:-

(DBBE 170[20]; Paris, BnF, Coisl. 28, f. 269v)

The two extra syllables in the last line are caused by the repetition of ἰδεῖν in the second line, "gegen das Metrum" as Treu puts it.[21] This seems to suggest that the repetition here is due to inadvertence on the part of the scribe who may have copied the word unwittingly to create a stylistic parallelism with the first line at the expense of the metrical regularity of the verse. It looks as if this hypothesis is further corroborated by DBBE 22, where the second ἰδεῖν in the last verse seems to have been wiped away, possibly because the scribe realized he had written a decatetrasyllable instead of a dodecasyllable.[22]

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[19] Text source by S. D. Kadas, *Τὰ σημειώματα τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς ἱερᾶς Μεγίστης Μονῆς Βατοπαιδίου* (Mount Athos, 2000) 57.
[20] Text source by DBBE.
[21] K. Treu, *Studia Codicologica* 47.
[22] DBBE 22 (Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 60, Cod. 15, f. 205r).

However, stylistic parallellism does not account for the strikingly large number of occurrences with a decatetrasyllable in the last line (29), in which ἰδεῖν is sometimes substituted for εὑρεῖν,[23] nor for occurrences such as the following, where the decatetrasyllable occurs in the first line instead:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίροντ(αις) |ʙ₇ ἰδεῖν π(ατ)ρίδα γέν(ους)

κ(αὶ) οἱ θαλαττεύοντεσ |ʙ₇ ἐβρὶν λιμένα -

οὗτοσ καὶ οἱ γράφον(τες) |ʙ₇ βϊβλίου τέλο(ς)

(DBBE 1808[24]; Kalabruta, Monè Megalon Spèlaion 16, f. 193r)

In this case the two extra syllables are caused by the addition of γένους at the end of the first line, without any analogy to explain the metrical irregularity. The following occurrence even contains two decatetrasyllables, in the second and third line respectively:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |ʙ₇ ἰδεῖν π(ατ)ρίδα·

καὶ οἱ θαλατεύοντες |ʙ₇ εὑρεῖν καλὸν λοιμένα,

οὗτος καὶ οἱ γράφοντες |ʙ₇ ἰδεῖν βιβλίου τέλος.

(DBBE 2611[25]; Firenze, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 5, Cod. 25, f. 226r)

There are three more occurrences of this type with a decatetrasyllabic line somewhere other than in the last line,[26] which suggests that it was really not uncommon for scribes to produce decatetrasyllabic lines consisting of two heptasyllabic cola – with or without an analogy to spur this on. In this context, it is interesting that Lauxtermann mentions a potential predecessor of these decatetrasyllables, when he cites a ninth-century hymn from Barb. Gr. 310 that was presented in paired heptasyllables.[27]

Yet we must certainly not assume that we stumbled upon some new Byzantine metrical pattern here, since decatetrasyllables were despite everything still considered to be irregular: there are no examples of poems written entirely in decatetrasyllables, but instead they are always the odd ones out inside a dodecasyllabic epigram. In this regard they were irregular, but still not so irregular that it was felt to be

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[23] DBBE 801, 876 (εὑρεῖν), 972 (εὑρεῖν), 1146, 1499, 1700, 1941, 1988, 2305, 2611, 2955, 3472, 3673, 4055, 4156, 4223, 4572, 4590, 5403, 5514, 5614, 5618, 5799, 6049, 6052, 6782, 6907, 7647, 7846.
[24] Text source by F. Euangelatou-Notara, *Παλαιολόγειοι χρόνοι* 174.
[25] Text source by DBBE.
[26] DBBE 1811, 3185, 4689.
[27] M. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* 51. On the previous page, he mentions four other hymns in the same manuscript: three of them also in heptasyllables, the other one in octosyllables.

problematic to produce them on a relatively frequent basis.

There are some interesting variations on this pattern, such as the following:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |ᵦ₇ ἰδεῖν πατρίδας·

καὶ οἱ θαλαττεύοντες |ᵦ₇ εὑρεῖν λειμένα·

καὶ ὥσπερ οἱ αἰχμάλωτοι |ᵦ₇/₈ ἰδεῖν ἐλευθερίας,

τοιούτῳ καὶ οἱ γράφοντες |ᵦ₇/₈ ἰδεῖν βιβλίου τέλος·

(DBBE 3616[28]; Copenhagen, KB. Fabr. 94.8, f. 218v)

Just like strangers rejoice in seeing their fatherlands,
And those at sea in finding a harbour,
And like prisoners of war in seeing their freedom,
In the same way do writers rejoice in seeing the end of their book.

The last two lines of this occurrence, if read without synizesis, would consist of an octasyllabic colon before and a heptasyllabic colon after the caesura. In other words, they would result in two decapentasyllabic verses with strong caesurae after the eighth syllable. However, if read with synizesis (καὶ ὥσπερ = κι‿ὥσπερ and τοιούτῳ = τοι‿ούτῳ), the same lines would again scan like decatetrasyllables with two heptasyllabic cola on either side of the caesura at B7. Given the prevalent stress pattern of the first colon (x́xxx́xx), it makes more sense to read both lines as decatetra- instead of decapentasyllables.

There are, however, two occurrences with a decapenta- instead of a decatetrasyllabic line:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίροντες |ᵦ₇ ἰδεῖν π(ατ)ρίδα

καὶ οἱ θαλαττεύοντες |ᵦ₇ εὑρεῖν λιμένα
(…)
οὕτω καὶ οἱ βιβλογράφοντες |ᵦ₈ εὑρεῖν βιβλίου τελος

(DBBE 4853[29]; Milan, Bibl. Ambrosiana Q 14 sup. f. 476v)

[28] Text source by B. Schartau, *Codices graeci Haunienses* (Copenhagen, 1994) 435.
[29] Text source by E. Martini, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, Vol. 1* (Milan 1906) 753.

Ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |B7 ἰδεῖν πατρίδα,

καὶ οἱ θαλατεύοντες |B7 ἰδεῖν λιμένα,

οὕτω καὶ οἱ βιβλογράφοντες |B8 ἰδεῖν βιβλίου τελος.-

(DBBE 6320[30]; Vienna, med. Gr. 26 f. 118r)

The last lines would result in a decahexasyllabic verse if read without synizesis, which would be unparalleled. Read with synizesis (καὶ οἱ = κι‿οἱ), the line scans like a regular decapentasyllable, with an octasyllabic colon before and a heptasyllabic colon after the caesura at B8.

4. A cognitive-linguistic analysis

The occurrence of deca-, decatetra- and decapentasyllabic lines in what is essentially a dodecasyllabic epigram is usually explained away as a metrical irregularity or a scribal error. Additionally, there seems to be a correlation between orthographical mistakes in the text on the one hand and metrical irregularities on the other, which suggests that the educational level of the scribe was the reason for the absence or presence of metrical variants. However, this cannot be the entire explanation, since a highly literate epigram by John Klimax also employs the irregular decatetrasyllable (DBBE 3420, the fourth line in an otherwise perfectly dodecasyllabic epigram, with no orthographical mistakes)[31]. Level of literacy is therefore no doubt a contributing factor, but not the whole story. More revealing is the possible correlation between metrical irregularities on the one hand and a hasty, untidy handwriting on the other.[32] This suggests that metrical irregularities came about when the author was in somewhat of a rush and did not tend to the metrical scheme of his poem very much. We may therefore assume that these poems are more 'spontaneous' and follow the stream of thoughts of the author more closely.

But how do such 'errors' come about exactly? To understand this phenomenon, we have to take into account the cognitive mechanisms underlying the process of versification. The production (and interpretation) of verse is in important respects comparable to the production (and interpretation) of

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[30] Text source by H. Hunger, *Johannes Chortasmenos (ca. 1370-ca. 1436/37). Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften. Einleitung, Regesten, Prosophographie, Texte* (Vienna, 1969) 72.

[31] R. Meesters, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 56 (2016) 562.

[32] Only the manuscripts of which we could obtain a reproduction are taken into account here (36 mss). 'Untidy' is a rather subjective concept, but we have generally considered texts with many ligatures and frequent connection of letters and words as 'untidy' handwriting. A comparison with the main text was also revealing, as many of the 'untidy' epigrams were clearly written more hastily than the main text. What we see here is that of the metrically irregular epigrams almost every single one is written in an untidy fashion (while regular epigrams seem to be both tidy and untidy). For more about the interaction between handwriting and language, see: Bagnall, R. S., Cribiore, R. *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt, 3000 BC-AD 800* (Ann Arbor 2006).

speech. This is particularly evident in the case of (conceptually) oral poetry such as Homer,[33] but it is also true for 'fluid texts', such as the ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams.[34] Fluid texts are texts with numerous changes and variations in their different attestations, as they could often be rewritten and adapted to new needs.[35] These texts behave "similarly to oral tradition, with each manuscript representing a new 'performance' of the work in another context. Yet this occurs on the level of written text."[36] In a similar vein, Bakker calls the (conceptually) oral poetry of Homer 'special speech'.[37] Like speech, poetry is not composed of long, continuous stretches, but of shorter units, called 'idea units' or 'intonation units' (IUs) by the American linguist Wallace Chafe.[38] In recent years, Chafe's theory of IUs has been consistently and successfully applied to the analysis Byzantine poetry by Soltic, who has convincingly shown that the cola of the Byzantine meters are the metrical equivalents of IUs.[39] Cola are in essence cognitive units, both conceptually (qua 'idea') and formally (qua 'intonation') which function as the building blocks of the verse, an insight anticipated by Mackridge and Lauxtermann.[40] The latter's 'principle of pairing'[41] explains the origin of the decapentasyllable as the pairing of an octa- and a heptasyllable, two independent metres which were often paired to form decahexa- and decatetrasyllabic verses respectively.[42] Lauxtermann very appropriately observes that "the juxtaposition of two metrical segments rather rudimentarily corresponds to certain cognitive processes of the human mind."[43]

The principle of pairing suggests that the composition of a verse – any verse – is a cognitive process which not only helps the poets in producing their verses by stringing together cola as cognitive building blocks, i.e. IUs, but which also assists the poets' audiences in processing these IUs by tying them together, one after the other. The principle of pairing also explains the occurrence of 'irregular' verses within what is otherwise a standard dodecasyllable. The scribes write or rather compose their verses by

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[33] M. Janse, *Didactica Classica Gandensia* 38 (1998) 125-151, *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 343-348, *Inleiding tot de Homerische taal en metriek*.

[34] C. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature and the Ancient Novel. Rewriting the Past* (Oxford 2003).

[35] P. Van Nuffelen, "John of Antioch, Inflated and Deflated. Or: how (not) to Collect Fragments of Early Byzantine Historians" *Byzantion* 82 (2012), 446.

[36] C. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter* 40.

[37] E.J. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca (N.Y.) 1997).

[38] W. Chafe, "Cognitive Constraints on Information Flow," in R. Tomlin, R. (ed.), *Coherence and Grounding in Discourse: Outcome of a Symposium, Eugene, Oregon* (Amsterdam 1987) 21-51; "Prosodic and Functional Units of Language," in J.A. Edwards & M.D. Lampert (eds.), *Talking Data: Transcription and Coding in Discourse Research* (Hillsdale 1993) 33-43; *Discourse, Consciousness and Time: The Flow and Displacement of Conscious Experience in Speaking and Writing* (Chicago 1994); "The Analysis of Discourse Flow," in D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H.E. Hamilton (eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (Oxford 2001) 673-687.

[39] J. Soltic, *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 14 (2014) 84-116; *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 36 (2012) 178-197; *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013) 390-419.

[40] P. Mackridge, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 14 (1990) 551-574; M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm*.

[41] M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* 51.

[42] M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* 50.

[43] M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* 85.

pairing cola which, if paired improperly, may result in decasyllables (5+5), decatetrasyllables (7+7) or even decapentasyllables (8+7), since octasyllabic cola were as common as penta- and heptasyllabic cola during the period under scrutiny here. A good example is the following occurrence, which combines a dodecasyllable, a decatetrasyllable and a decapentasyllable:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |$_{B7}$ εἰδεῖν π(ατ)ρίδα,

καὶ οἱ θαλατεύοντες |$_{B7}$ τοῦ φθάσαι εἰς λϊμένα·,

οὕτω καὶ οἱ βιβλογράφοντες |$_{B8}$ εὑρεῖν βιβλίου τελος.

(DBBE 1956[44]; Udine, bibl. Arciv. 264 f. 232r)

The cognitive independence of the colon as an IU is further illustrated by the fact that it resembles the formula of epic poetry, as in the following occurrence:

ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν |$_{B7}$ ἰδεῖν π(ατ)ρίδα,

καὶ οἱ θαλαττεύοντες |$_{B7}$ ἰδεῖν λιμένα,

καὶ οἱ στρατευόμενοι |$_{B7}$ ἰδεῖν τὸ κέρδος

καὶ οἱ νόσῳ κείμενοι |$_{B7}$ ἰδεῖν ὑγείαν

οὕτω καὶ οἱ γράφοντες |$_{B7}$ ἰδεῖν βιβλίον τέλος.

(DBBE 2305[45]; Thessalonike, Monè Blatadon 93, end of ms.)

Just like strangers rejoice in seeing their fatherland,
And those at sea in seeing a harbor,
And those at war in seeing profit (?),
And those bedridden by illness in seeing health,
So do writers in seeing the end of their book.

The extension of the standard book epigram by several lines – in which seafarers, soldiers, ill people, merchants and sometimes fishermen or prisoners of war underline the parallelism with the writers – is quite common and different scribes often opt for different similes, sometimes only including the seafarers

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[44] Text source by DBBE.
[45] Text source by S. Eustratiades, "Ἁγιορειτικῶν κωδίκων σημειώματα", *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 3 (1919) 150.

or sometimes inventing even more comparisons. However, in this particular occurrence something seems to have gone astray in the third line. The simile with the soldiers is usually the following one: καὶ οἱ στρατευόμενοι |ᵦ₇ ἰδεῖν τὸ νῖκος,[46] while the idea of profit commonly occurs in a simile about merchants: καὶ οἱ πραγματτεύοντες |ᵦ₇ ἰδεῖν τὸ κέρδος,[47] both of which make more sense contentwise. What seems to have happened here, is that the scribe mixed up these two very well-known verses in his head and merged them into one.[48] More precisely, he paired cola belonging to two different verses, which confirms the idea of metrical cola as cognitive units and as building blocks of the verse.

6. Conclusion

If one applies the canonical rules of the dodecasyllable to the ὥσπερ ξένοι book epigrams, it seems as though most of the occurrences contain metrical irregularities (of the 159 occurrences, only 63 were written in correct dodecasyllables[49]) and thus supposedly have very little literary value. From a cognitive point of view, however, it looks as if the Byzantine scribes had a different perception of meter in that they were more concerned with the pairing of existing (penta-, hepta- and octasyllabic) cola than with the resultant meter per se. Deviant metres such as the deca- and decatetrasyllable were not considered irregular or even wrong, but simply resulted from a different application of the principle of pairing. *Variatio delectat* – as long as the εὐρυθμία, the fluency and eloquence of the verse, was not compromised.[50]

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[46] DBBE 60, 1499, 2305, 3472, 3673, 4055, 5514, 6782.

[47] DBBE 1499, 2045, 3472, 3673, 4055, 6907, 7647.

[48] The same phenomenon occurs in DBBE 4156 (Athos, Monè Megistès Lauras Θ 147, f. 137r), which displays a very similar text but with some minor differences: χαίροντες instead of χαίρουσιν in the first line, εὑρεῖν instead of ἰδεῖν in the second line, the fourth line is omitted, and βιβλίου instead of βιβλίον in the last line.

[49] There is no clear chronological evolution in the metrical irregularities of the ὥσπερ ξένοι epigrams: mistakes occur at random from the ninth to the fifteenth century. Combinations with decapentasyllabic lines only emerge from the tenth century onwards (i.e. the genesis of the decapentasyllabic meter) and become considerably more popular during the fifteenth century.

[50] For more about εὐρυθμία and its use in both poetry and prose, see M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Velocitiy of Pure Iambs* 19-20.