

## ***Metrical variation in the “Ὡσπερ ξένοι book epigrams***

Greek manuscripts are generally being studied as witnesses of Ancient, Early Christian or Byzantine texts. By contrast, the (snippets of) texts found in the margins of these manuscripts have received very little scholarly attention. Book epigrams are a good example of such little-explored marginalia. Recently, however, a wealth of material has become publicly – and freely – available through the Ghent University Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams ([www.dbbe.ugent.be](http://www.dbbe.ugent.be)), which has sparked off further research into this subject.

The “Ὡσπερ ξένοι χάρουσιν ἰδεῖν πατρίδα”-colophon was a very popular one in Byzantine times. In the Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams over 160 occurrences of this type have been collected today and that number is still growing. Of these numerous occurrences, many contain metrical irregularities that at first sight seem to be blatant mistakes by the scribe. At a closer look, however, these “mistakes” seem to be not so much errors as simply metrical variations, that were not felt to be irregular by the scribe.

In order to come to this conclusion, this paper will investigate the commatic style that was typical of Byzantine rhetoric (and more specifically of asiatic and liturgical rhetoric), the modern linguistic concept of Information Units, and the Byzantine idea of εὐρυθμία.