

Redefining the Margins: Abstract
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Byzantine Book Epigrams: Poetry from the Margins

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. So-called book epigrams are a good example of such little-explored marginalia and can in several respects be considered poetry from the margins. They are both physically located in the margins of the manuscript and have been wrongfully marginalised by scholars. Moreover, their composers were rarely mainstream let alone literary authors. Recently, however, a wealth of material has become publicly – and freely – available through the Ghent University *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams*, which has sparked off further research into this subject.

In this paper we will focus on one particular epigram (<http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/5310>) and present the manifold challenges that it poses to scholars. Two of these problems will be addressed, namely editorial issues and metrical irregularities. As with many book epigrams, its edition is highly complicated by the variety in which it has come down to us. This specific epigram, however, challenges the concepts of authorship and originality to such an extent that it complicates the (re)construction of an authoritative text even further. Secondly, our case study incorporates different metrical patterns and in fact does not distinguish (clearly) between prose and poetry. By comparing all known versions of this epigram in circulation, we will shed light on the indistinct poetic status of book epigrams in general.