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PhD student

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DEALING WITH BUILDING BLOCKS OF EXPRESSION :

Formulaic Elements & their Creative Variations in Byzantine Book Epigrams

The DBBE Project

The Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE) is an ongoing project at Ghent University that makes available textual and contextual data of **metrical paratexts** found in Byzantine manuscripts.

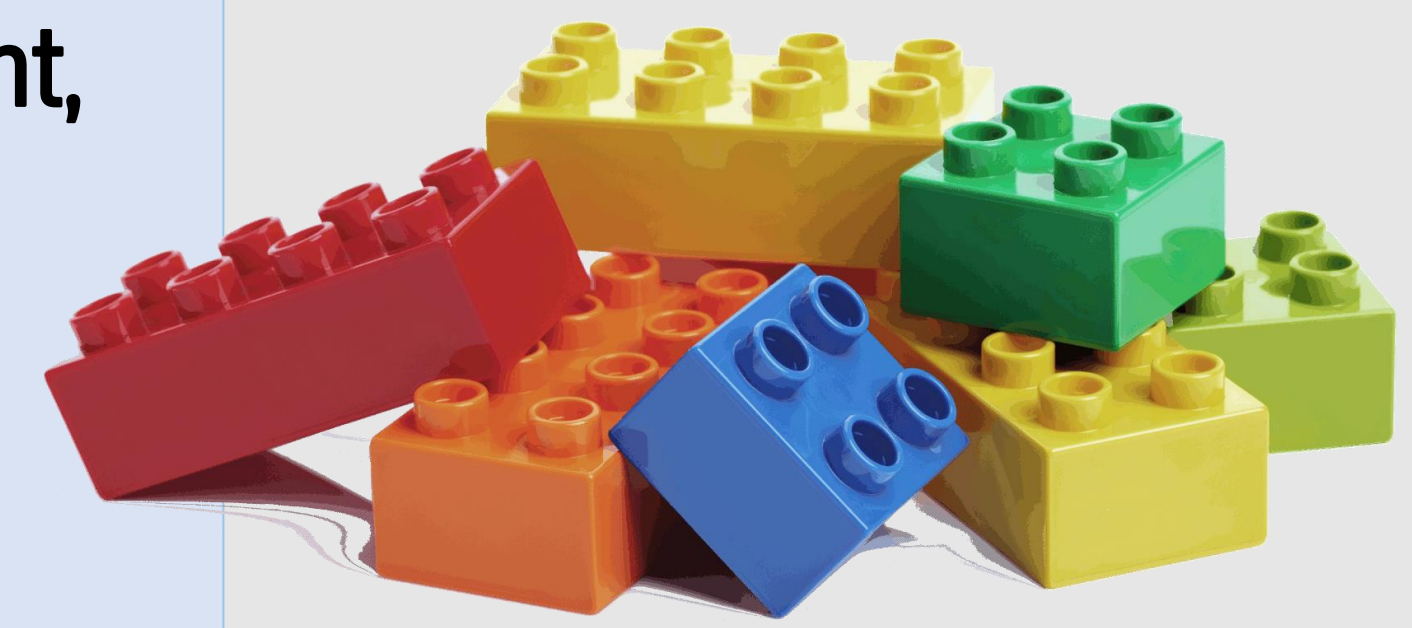
The Database currently provides around **12.500 distinct occurrences** to the academic community, alongside contextual information that places these epigrams within a wider cultural and historical setting.

The project is **interdisciplinary**, bringing together philologists, linguists, and computer scientists to collaborate toward a common goal: uncovering the relationships between linguistic patterns and the historical development of the texts.

The DBBE corpus (as of Nov. '24)	'Occurrences'	'Types'	
	12.471	4.970	
of which Scribe-related	3.886	1.853 epigram entries	8.738 verses

Starting points

- Byzantine Book Epigrams are composed of **recurrent, prefabricated linguistic chunks** which serve as compositional building blocks.
- Creativity** is certainly not absent: variation and creative elaboration



DBBE Type 4214

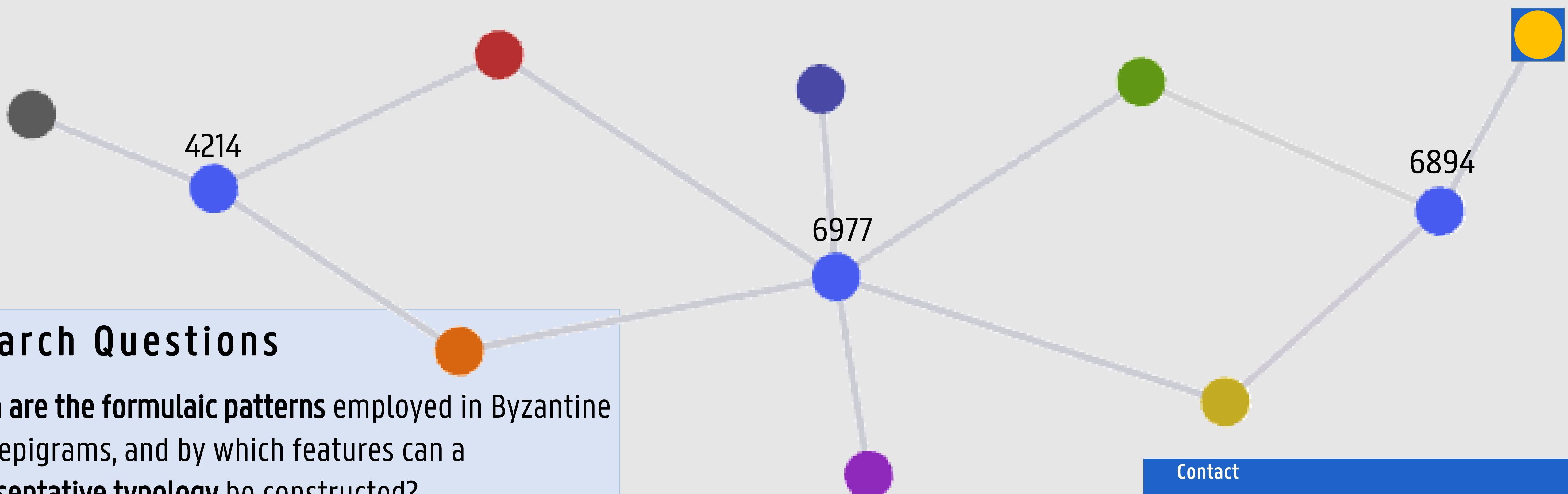
frequent V+N construction
Δῶρον μὲν Θεοῦ Ἰωακείμ δ' ὁ πόνος
εἴληφε τέλος **χερσὶ** τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

frequent V+N construction
Τῷ συντελεστῇ τῶν καλῶν Θεῷ χάρις·
Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ πόνος Γεωργίου
τὸ πίκλην Καρυκᾶ· ἐγράφη ἡ βίβλος
αὕτη **διὰ χερσὸς** ἐμοῦ τοῦ χωρικοῦ
γραφέως Γεωργίου Καρυκᾶ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ
ἐν ἔτει τρέχοντος, χιλιάδας ἕξ [...]
ὀκτῶ καὶ ἐπιφέροντα ἑκατοντάδας
δεκάδαν μίαν, πρὸ τῆς τετάρτης
Ἰνδικτον καὶ ἄγοντος δ' [...]
(date)
Τὸν ἀναγινώσκοντα σὺν π[ροθυμία / πολλῶ πόθῳ],
τὸν δακτύλοις γράψαντα, τὸν κεκτημένον,
φύλαττε τοὺς τρεῖς, ὧ̅ τριάς, **τρισολβίως**.

DBBE Type 6894

Novel element! CREATIVE elaboration
Τὸν δακτύλοις γράψαντα, τὸν κεκτημένον,
δὲ ἀναγινώσκοντα μετ' εὐλαβείας,
φύλαττε τοὺς τρεῖς, ὧ̅ τριάς **παναγία**.
Ὡς ἵππεὺς ταχυδρόμος, ἡ χεὶρ ἐνταῦθα
διαδραμοῦσα βυθὸν γραμμάτων τόσον·
ἦκ' οὖν πνευστιῶν εἰς τέλος τῆς πυξίδος
ἐπευχαιριστῶν τὸν συντελεστὴν **πάντα**.

DBBE Types ...



Research Questions

- Which are the **formulaic patterns** employed in Byzantine book epigrams, and by which features can a **representative typology** be constructed?
- What forms of **linguistic variation** and **creative elaboration** occur within these formulaic structures?
- How does this **formulaicity model** compare to the broader **epigrammatic traditions** and **formulaic oral traditions** (e.g. Homeric epics)?

Contact

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