

## Name and address

Prof. Dr. Kristoffel Demoen  
Universiteit Gent  
Vakgroep Latijn & Grieks  
Blandijnberg 2  
B-9000 Gent  
[Kristoffel.Demoen@UGent.be](mailto:Kristoffel.Demoen@UGent.be)

## Preferred Panel

6. Turning Points in the Reception of Classical Antiquity

## Title of the proposed paper

The momentous *Anthologia Palatina* and its momentary impact: the classical and Byzantine epigram from John Geometres (X) to Christophoros Mytilenaios (XI)

**Length:** 20 min.

## Outline

Tenth-century Constantinople witnessed one of the main revivals of classical learning in the medieval period. Diversely labeled as ‘pre-renaissance’, ‘Byzantine humanism’ or ‘encyclopedism’, the classicizing movement of this age has produced such important works as the *Souda* and the *Anthologia Palatina*, one of the most important single manuscripts for students of Greek poetry. The ancient origins of the Greek anthology, and the circumstances leading Kephala and other Byzantine scholars to collect the ‘Hellenic’ epigrams, have been adequately studied, notably by Alan Cameron and Marc Lauxtermann. The former concluded his 1993 book as follows: “*by the middle of the 10th century this enthusiasm for the classical epigram seems on the wane. The epigrammatists of the later 10th and 11th centuries, John Geometres, John Mauropus, and Christopher of Mytilene, continue to write a fair number of poems in hexameters and elegiacs, but it is seldom possible to trace the direct influence of any particular model*”, whereas the latter ended his 1994 study with the words: “*it can hardly be a coincidence that the best Byzantine epigrams were written in the century after the completion of the Palatine Anthology. John Geometres Kyriotes, John Mauropous and Christopher Mytilenaios had at their disposal a convenient collection of ancient epigrams whenever they were in need for a powerful image, a rhetorical figure or a line of thought.*”

Of the three poets mentioned by both scholars, only John Geometres has received due attention in the last decade (Emilie van Opstall, among others). It is my aim to discuss all three epigrammatists as it comes to their creative reception of the ancient Greek epigrammatic tradition. My analysis will show that the anthology did have an immediate impact on the literary production in Constantinople, but also that one cannot make any generalizing pronouncements about the two Johns and Christophoros.