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Byzantine Oratorical Rhythm and the Classical Heritage

“The speech of those who not conclude their sentences with rhythm,” says Cicero in *Orator*, “seems to me to resemble the movements of those whom the Greeks call ἀπαλαίστρους, or ‘untrained in gymnastics,’ and it is far from being true that – as those are wont to say who, from lack of teachers, or slowness of wit, or shirking from hard work, have failed of success – careful arrangement of words enfeebles speech: on the contrary, without this it can possess no force or vigor.”¹ Again, when analyzing a particularly well-wrought sentence in a speech by the tribune Gaius Carbo the Younger, Cicero says that “it was marvelous what a shout arose from the crowd” at the sound of his closing rhythm.²

It is not difficult to see the importance Cicero attributes to rhythm. He speaks of it as part of the life force of oratory and devotes about a third of his treatise *Orator*, where he sets out to paint a picture of the perfect speaker, to a discussion of its intricacies. “I have often seen the whole assembly burst into a cheer,” he says, “in response to a happy cadence. For the ear expects the words to bind the sentence together.”³ Rhythm, he contends, is naturally in the ear,⁴ but good rhythm is something that the best of orators attain with much toil, yet even the worst of audiences are able to judge accurately.⁵ Proclivity toward rhythmical discourse is natural, he says, because rhythm gives pleasure, and it can only profit an orator to master its use in prose – since the goal of an oration is “to prove, to please, and to sway or persuade. To prove is the first necessity, to please is charm, to sway is victory; for it is the one thing of all that avails most in winning verdicts.”⁶

The presence of rhythm in prose should not be as obvious as in poetry: prose needs to be bound and restricted by rhythm, but should not contain actual verses.⁷ All of the rhythms used in poetry are suitable for use in prose; however, some are suited for certain purposes and parts of the oration, others for other: swift rhythms, for example, are suitable for parts meant to be sped along, and slow and steady rhythms are for the stately style. The rhythms in the beginning of an oration or even a sentence should anticipate its end and the overall effect that the speaker intends to produce.⁸ Rhythm in prose is contained not only in the use of poetic feet, which temper the style, but also in the use of certain rhetorical figures, which, by virtue of their symmetry, produce a rhythmical effect.⁹ Cicero discusses in detail the various types of

¹ Cicero, *Orator* 229 (68 WILKINS. Trans. adapted from HENDRICKSON – HUBBELL. Cambridge 1939, 501): *Itaque qualis eorum motus quos ἀπαλαίστρους Graeci vocant, talis horum mihi videtur oratio qui non claudunt numeris sententias, tantumque abest ut – quod ei qui hoc aut magistrorum inopia aut ingeni tarditate aut laboris fuga non sunt assecuti solent dicere – enervetur oratio compositione verborum, ut aliter in ea nec impetus ullus nec vis esse possit.*

² Cicero, *Orator* 214 (62 WILKINS): *tantus clamor contionis excitatus est, ut admirabile esset.*

³ Cicero, *Orator* 168 (50 WILKINS): *Contiones saepe exclamare vidi, cum apte verba cecidissent. Id enim exspectant aures, ut verbis colligetur sententia.*

⁴ Cicero, *Orator* 178 (53 WILKINS): *Aures ipsae enim vel animus aurium nuntio naturalem quondam in se continent vocum omnium mentionem.*

⁵ Cicero, *Orator* 173 (51 WILKINS): *In versu quidem theatra tota exclamant, si fuit una syllaba aut brevior aut longior; nec vero multitudo pedes novit nec ullos numeros tenet nec illud quod offendit aut curat aut in quo offendat intellegit; et tamen omnium longitudinum et brevitatum in sonis sicut acutarum graviumque vocum iudicium ipsa natura in auribus nostris collocavit.*

⁶ Cicero, *Orator* 69 (21 WILKINS): *Probare necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriae; nam id unum ex omnibus ad obtinendas causas potest plurimum.*

⁷ Cicero, *Orator* 187 (56 WILKINS): *Perspicuum est igitur numeris astrictam orationem esse debere, carere versibus.*

⁸ Cicero, *Orator* 191–203 (56–60 WILKINS).

⁹ Cicero, *Orator* 164–167 (48–50 WILKINS).

figures and poetic feet appropriate for one purpose or another as well as the vices of a style too rhythmical or rhythmically monotonous.¹⁰ “To express my opinion briefly,” he concludes, “the fact of the matter is that to speak with well-knit rhythm without ideas is folly, but to present the ideas without order and rhythm in the language is to be altogether speechless.”¹¹

Cicero, who received his rhetorical training under the Greek rhetoricians in Athens and Rhodes, is certainly not alone in recognizing the importance of rhythm in oratorical discourse. The first extant systematic – although rather sketchy – treatment of prose rhythm belongs to Aristotle. In Book 3 of the *Rhetoric* he recommends that “the form of prose composition [be] neither metrical nor destitute of rhythm,” because a highly regular, metrical rhythm – as in poetry – makes prose seem contrived and destroys the hearer’s trust, while “unrhythmical language is too unlimited, ... and the effect is vague and unsatisfactory.”¹² Aristotle explains rhythm in terms of mathematical proportion: the most popular poetic meters, such as the dactyl, the iamb and the trochee, he says, have a time ratio of 1:1 (one long to two short syllables, that is, four time lengths total) and 2:1 (one long to one short syllable, that is, three time lengths total); therefore, a ratio of 3:2, which is between those two (that is, the paeon, which has one long to three short syllables, or five time lengths total), is most suitable for prose, since its rhythm is neither encountered in poetry nor readily perceived by the ear.¹³ Aristotle’s reference, of course, is the poetic principle of ancient Greek poetry, which is based on syllable length, where a long syllable is assumed to be roughly twice the duration of a short syllable.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus puts forth a different explanation of the rhythmical qualities of prose. For him, the rhythm of prose only differs from that of poetry in degree, not kind. Poetic grace, he contends, is not reserved solely for poetry; good prose should partake both of the vocabulary and rhythms of poetry, if it is to give any pleasure. Thus, well-crafted prose is infused with poetic feet of all sorts; the only difference is that it is not manifestly metrical or rhythmical.¹⁴ Dionysius devotes two full chapters¹⁵ to arguing the point that prose and poetry are nearly convertible into each other; good prose contains metrical feet of all sorts, but they escape notice because they are either incomplete, inserted in unexpected places, or out of sequence. Poetry, on the other hand, is much like prose when it chooses to “syncopate” its rhythms by means of enjambment or by inserting other kinds of pauses in places other than the usual. In other words, poetry “embraces within its compass similar meters and preserves definite rhythms, and is produced by a repetition of the same forms, line for line, period for period, or strophe for strophe ... [Prose], on the other hand, ... contains casual meters and irregular rhythms, ... [and] is rhythmical, since it is diversified by rhythms of a sort, but not *in* rhythm, since they are not the same nor in corresponding

¹⁰ Cicero, *Orator* 230–235 (69–71 WILKINS).

¹¹ Cicero, *Orator* 236 (71 WILKINS): *Res se autem sic habet, ut brevissime dicam quod sentio: composite et apte sine sententiis dicere insania est, sententiose autem sine verborum et ordine et modo infantia ...*

¹² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1408b (157 ROSS [Transl. W.R. ROBERTS, New York 1954, 180]): Τὸ δὲ σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως δεῖ μῆτε ἔμμετρον εἶναι μῆτε ἄρρυθμον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀπίθανον (πεπλάσθαι γὰρ δοκεῖ), καὶ ἅμα καὶ ἐξίστησι. [...] τὸ δὲ ἄρρυθμον ἀπέραντον, δεῖ δὲ πεπεράνθαι μὲν, μὴ μέτρῳ δὲ· ἀηδὲς γὰρ καὶ ἄγνωστον τὸ ἄπειρον.

¹³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1408b–1409a (157–159 ROSS): ἔστι δὲ τρίτος ὁ παιάν, καὶ ἐχόμενος τῶν εἰρημένων· τρία γὰρ πρὸς δύο ἔστιν, ἐκείνων δὲ ὁ μὲν ἓν πρὸς ἓν, ὁ δὲ δύο πρὸς ἓν, ἔχεται δὲ τῶν λόγων τούτων ὁ ἡμιόλιος· οὗτος δ’ ἔστιν ὁ παιάν. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι διὰ τε τὰ εἰρημένα ἀφετέοι, καὶ διότι μετρικοί· ὁ δὲ παιάν ληπτέος· ἀπὸ μόνου γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι μέτρον τῶν ῥηθέντων ῥυθμῶν, ὥστε μάλιστα λανθάνειν.

¹⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De compositione verborum* 25 (252 ROBERTS): Πᾶσα λέξις ἢ δίχα μέτρον συγκεκλιμένη ποιητικὴν μοῦσαν ἢ μελικὴν χάριν οὐ δύναται προσλαβεῖν κατὰ γοῦν τὴν σύνθεσιν αὐτῆν· ὅπερ οὖν ἔφην, οὐ δύναται φιλή λέξις ὁμοίᾳ γενέσθαι τῇ ἔμμετρῳ καὶ ἔμμελεϊ, ἐὰν μὴ περιέχη μέτρα καὶ ῥυθμούς τινας ἐγκατατεταγμένους ἀδήλως. οὐ μέντοι προσήκει γε ἔμμετρον οὐδ’ ἔρρυθμον αὐτῆν εἶναι δοκεῖν (ποίημα γὰρ οὕτως ἔσται καὶ μέλος ἐκβήσεται τε ἀπλῶς τὸν αὐτῆς χαρακτήρα), ἀλλ’ εὐρυθμον αὐτῆν ἀπόχρη καὶ ἔμμετρον φαίνεσθαι μόνον· ἢ δὲ πεπλανημένα μέτρα καὶ ἀτάκτους ῥυθμούς ἐμπεριλαμβάνουσα καὶ μῆτε ἀκολουθίαν ἐμφαίνουσα αὐτῶν μῆτε ὁμοζυγίαν μῆτε ἀντιστροφὴν εὐρυθμος μὲν ἔστιν, ἐπειδὴ διαπεποικιλταὶ τισιν ῥυθμοῖς, οὐκ ἔρρυθμος δὲ, ἐπειδὴ οὐχὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸ αὐτό.

¹⁵ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De compositione* 25 and 26 (250–283 ROBERTS).

positions.”¹⁶ Dionysius illustrates his argument with a number of lines from the prose of authors such as Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Plato, which are comprised, as he claims, of one of the familiar poetic meters either fully or partially.

Cicero and Dionysius’ accounts of the power of oratorical rhythm may capture the imagination, but the pragmatic sense of the Byzantine rhetoric teachers rather followed what Hermogenes recommends in *Peri Ideōn*. His treatise on style comprises one of the standard textbooks in the rhetoric curriculum, as the numerous surviving commentaries and other references indicate.¹⁷ Just as Dionysius, Hermogenes borrows examples from poetry freely in order to make a point about prose. Rhythm, he says, is made up of word order (σύνθεσις) and cadence (ἀνάπαυσις), but its overall effect is not identical with the constituent parts, just as the shape of a house or a ship is separate from the materials that went into building it.¹⁸ Some musicians would even go as far as claiming that rhythm is more important than the thought itself, but Hermogenes disagrees, even though rhythm contributes much toward one quality of style or another.¹⁹ For certain types of style – for example, beauty (κάλλος) – appropriate rhythm is absolutely essential, while for others – for example, purity (καθαρότης) – the subject matter and diction are more important.²⁰ One can learn from poetry which meters are appropriate for the different qualities of style; for example, the conversational meters (iambic, trochaic) go well with clarity (σαφήνεια),²¹ while meters containing a greater number of long syllables (dactyl, anapaest, spondee, epitrite) are suitable for the solemn style (σεμνότης).²² Rhythm is produced by the flow of words, but is especially pronounced at the end of the sentence: If a cadence is awkward, it will ruin even the best composition.²³ As Dionysius, Hermogenes argues that metrical sequences in prose must be unobtrusive, i.e., they must infuse a passage with a particular feel but not be readily detectable by the ear.²⁴

My aim here is not to give an exhaustive account of the classical theory of prose rhythm, but to underscore its importance in rhetorical practice. In what follows I will argue that, as heirs and guardians of the classical literary heritage, the Byzantines substantially subscribed to the same principles of prose rhythm as their classical predecessors: Rhythm saturates the entire period and is most pronounced at the end, particularly in places that need emphasis. Good oratorical rhythm is not very far from the rhythms of Byzantine accentual poetry. And although the linguistic reality of the spoken language had changed dramatically, the Byzantine scholars make occasional references to good stress rhythm in the context of their discussions of the meters of classical literature as well as figures of speech.

As is well-known, even though the Byzantine ear had lost its sensitivity to syllabic quantity and relied on stress instead, Byzantine scholars rarely discuss stress accent and offer tantalizingly little explanation of what they considered rhythmical. The grammarians follow Dionysius Thrax and explain word accents according to the classical rules of pronunciation (i.e., raising and lowering of the voice),²⁵ while the

¹⁶ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De compositione* 25 (Transl. ROBERTS 255): ἡ μὲν ὅμοια περιλαμβάνουσα μέτρα καὶ τεταγμένους σφζουσα ῥυθμούς καὶ κατὰ στίχον ἢ περιόδον ἢ στροφὴν διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν σχημάτων περαινομένη κάπειτα πάλιν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ῥυθμοῖς καὶ μέτροις ἐπὶ τῶν ἐξῆς στίχων ἢ περιόδων ἢ στροφῶν χρωμένη καὶ τοῦτο μέχρι πολλοῦ ποιούσα ἔρρυθμός ἐστι καὶ ἔμμετρος ...

¹⁷ Cf. Joannes Doxapatres’ references to the books from the Hermogenic corpus in his commentary on *Peri heuresēōs* (ed. H. RABE, *Prolegomenon sylloge [Rhetores graeci XIV]*. Leipzig 1931, 367): His students had apparently just concluded their study of *Peri staseōn* and begun to read *Peri heuresēōs*, to be followed by *Peri ideōn*.

¹⁸ Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.1 (219–220 RABE): ἡ γὰρ ποιὰ σύνθεσις τῶν τοῦ λόγου μερῶν καὶ τὸ ὠδί πως ἀναπεπαῦσθαι τὸν λόγον ἀλλὰ μὴ ὠδί ποιεῖ τὸ τοιόνδε ἀλλὰ μὴ τοιόνδε εἶναι τὸν ῥυθμόν. [...] ὁ δὲ ῥυθμὸς ὡσπερ εἶδος τι ἐπακολουθεῖ τῇ τε συνθήκῃ τῇ ποιᾷ καὶ τῇ ἀναπαύσει ἄλλο τι ὄν παρὰ ταῦτα, καθάπερ οἰκίας ἢ πλοίου τῶν τοιῶνδε λίθων ἢ ξύλων τόνδε πως ἢ τόνδε τὸν τρόπον συντεθέντων καὶ μέχρι τοῦδε παυσασμένων τοιόνδε τὸ εἶδος ἢ τοιόνδε γίνεται, ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὴν συνθήκην καὶ τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν ὄν.

¹⁹ Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.1 (223 RABE).

²⁰ Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.3 (234 RABE).

²¹ Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.3 (232–234 RABE).

²² Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.6 (251–253 RABE).

²³ Cf. Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.6 (254 RABE).

²⁴ Cf. Hermogenes, *Peri ideōn* 1.12 (308–309 RABE).

²⁵ Cf. G. UHLIG, *Grammatici graeci*. Leipzig 1883, I/1 6–7 (Dionysius Thrax); I/3 22–24 (Melampous); I/3 125 (Choeroboscus); I/3 136 (Porphyry).

metricians are concerned with syllable quantity, not stress. Thus contemporary scholars have been forced to resort to quantitative research and discover preferred cadences by means of statistics.²⁶ Yet the Byzantine rhetoricians do rely on stress to create a rhythmical movement, which is apparent not only in the statistical findings, but also in occasional comments: Whenever they mention rhythm – and especially, pleasing rhythm (εὐρυθμία), it is in the context of words like κρότος (strike) and τόνος (accent).²⁷ Perhaps the clearest indication that they regarded accent as the basic carrier of rhythm comes from a passage by the fourteenth-century rhetorician Joseph Rhakendytes:

Ῥυθμός ἐστιν ἢ τοιαύδε τις ἀπήχησις τοῦ λόγου, γίνεται δὲ ἐκ τῆς τοιαύσδε συνθήκης καὶ ἀναπαύσεως [...] ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ τόνου γίνεται ἢ ποιά τις ἀπήχησις τοῦ ῥυθμοῦ, δηλονότι ἂν ὀξύτονός ἐστιν ἢ λέξις ἢ παροξύτονος ἢ τοιαύτη τις. ἐὰν γὰρ εἶπω, Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε, Χριστὸς ἐξ οὐρανῶν, ἀπαντήσατε, εὐήχον τὸν λόγον ποιῶ, εἰ δὲ οὕτως εἶπω, Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξαστέον, Χριστὸς ἐξ οὐρανῶν, ἀπαντητέον, διὰ τῶν παροξυτόνων ἀρρυθμότερον τὸν λόγον ποιῶ. σὺ οὖν χρῶ τῷδε ἢ ἐκείνῳ τῷ τόνῳ εὐκαίρως πρὸς τὸ εὐρυθμότερον.²⁸

Rhythm is the kind of ring of a discourse; it is produced by composition and cadence [...] but also clearly from whether a word is oxytone, paroxytone, or similar. For if I say, “Christ is born, glorify Him, Christ from heaven, welcome Him,” I make the phrase pleasing; but if I say, “Christ is born, He is to be glorified; Christ from heaven, He is to be welcomed,” I make the phrase unrhythmical because of the paroxytone word. Use, therefore, this or that accent suitably, with view to what is more rhythmical.

In the first version of the quoted lines from Gregory of Nazianzus’ Christmas homily, both parts of the phrase end on accentual “dactyls,” while in the second version, the stresses are so placed that they produce an odd number of syllables between the accents. Since the “rule” of the Byzantine *cursus* states that a cadence is intentionally rhythmical if there is an even number of syllables between the last two spoken stresses – with the most frequent form being the so-called “double dactyl” (as in γεννᾶται δοξάσατε and ἐξ οὐρανῶν ἀπαντήσατε) – the first form is therefore perceived as rhythmical, while the second is markedly unrhythmical.²⁹

Rhakendytes, however, does not limit his definition of rhythm to cadence. Echoing Hermogenes, he defines rhythm as a product of composition (συνθήκη) and cadence (ἀνάπαυσις), a point taken up often by the rhetoric commentators. Rhythm, they say, is an ordering of time units (τάξις χρόνων) possessing a strong and a weak beat (thesis and arsis); it is the result of composition (συνθήκη λέξεως) and clausular cadence (ἀνάπαυσις). Clausular cadence is defined as the endings of cola (κατάληξις τῶν κώλων). To make things confusing, however, the commentators do not explain what this might mean with reference to stress – they simply go on to enumerate the various prosodic feet appropriate for the different types of style listed by Hermogenes, in a way far removed from the Byzantine linguistic reality. One would be tempted to dismiss their discussions as an instance of the notorious Byzantine conservatism; however, the reference to clausular cadence and composition is very persistent and, at the very least, suggests

²⁶ The history of the research on prose rhythm has been reviewed and summarized by W. HÖRANDNER, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner* (WBS XVI). Wien 1981, where he streamlines and organizes the cumbersome statistical apparatus, contributes his own scansion of a large number of rhetorical texts, and offers valuable insights into the usefulness of rhythmical analysis for stylistic criticism. Another important contemporary study is that of C. KLOCK, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Rhythmus bei Gregor von Nyssa: ein Beitrag zum Rhetorikverständnis der griechischen Väter*. Frankfurt/Main 1987, where Klock discusses the issue of colon length and accentual respiration – an issue that will be among the subjects of the present article.

²⁷ For a more detailed argument, see W. HÖRANDNER, *Beobachtungen zur Literaturästhetik der Byzantiner: einige byzantinische Zeugnisse zu Metrik und Rhythmik*. *BSI* 56 (1995) 279–290 as well as M. LAUXTERMANN’s compelling observations in *The Spring of Rhythm: An Essay on the Origins of the Political Verse* (BV 22). Wien 1999 and IDEM, *The Velocity of Pure Iambs: Byzantine Observations on the Metre and Rhythm of the Dodecasyllable*. *JÖB* 48 (1998) 9–33.

²⁸ C. WALZ, *Rhetores graeci*, III. Stuttgart 1832–1836, 546.

²⁹ HÖRANDNER, *Prosarhythmus* 25–26.

that the notion of rhythm as something permeating the entire phrase, sentence, and paragraph carried on. The anonymous eleventh-century commentator of *Peri ideōn* gives the following brief definitions of cadence, arrangement, and composition:

Σύνθεσις ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν λέξεων ἀρμονία· ἀνάπαυσις δὲ ἡ πλήρωσις καὶ τὸ ἀπαρτίσαι τὴν διάνοιαν, ὅπερ ἐν ἀναγνώσει ἐστὶν ἡ στιγμὴ· ῥυθμὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ποιὰ ἀπήχησις· [...] συνθήκη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ποιὰ σύνθεσις καὶ ἀρμολογία τοῦ λόγου. ἀνάπαυσις δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ κατάληξις τοῦ λόγου ἢ τὸν τῶν κώλων ἢ κομμάτων, οἷς ἐκφέρεται. ῥυθμὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ποιὸς ἦχος τοῦ λόγου, ἰαμβόκροτος τυχὸν ἢ Ἀνακρεόντειος ἢ ἐλεγείος ἢ ἕτεροῖς τις.³⁰

Word order is the harmony of words. Cadence is the rounding off and smoothing out of the idea, the full-stop, as it were, when reading out loud. Rhythm is the particular ring [of an utterance]. [...] Composition is the particular word arrangement and prose harmony of a discourse. Cadence is the ending of a discourse, that is, of the cola or *kommata* through which it is carried out. Rhythm is the echo of an utterance, whether it be perchance iambic, anacreonteic, elegiac or some other kind.

Anonymous defines word order (σύνθεσις) as the harmony of words and explains that it is the kind of arrangement that makes up the composition. Cadence is defined twice, once broadly and once somewhat more literally; its function is to mark the endings of *kōla* and *kommata*. Rhythm figures as the prosodic “echo” of a discourse, i.e. as the meter which predominates, yet it also seems related to composition and cadence.

The relation becomes perhaps clearer in an extended simile (of a Neoplatonic flavor) used by the eleventh-century rhetorician Joannes Siculus:

οὐδὲ γὰρ δυνατόν δίχα λέξεως εἰς αἴσθησιν κινεῖσθαι τὴν ἔννοιαν· ἐν τῷ σώματι οὖν αἱ μορφαὶ ὥστε καὶ ἐν τῇ λέξει τὰ σχήματα· μόρια δὲ τῷ σώματι διάφορα. καὶ τῆς λέξεως κῶλα μεγάλα τε καὶ μικρὰ ἅ τοῦ μεγέθους εἰσὶ καὶ τῶν διαστάσεων ἴδια, ἀλλὰ καὶ σύνθεσις ὁμωνύμως ἢ παρωνύμως καὶ συνθήκη, συντίθεται γὰρ τὸ σῶμα τοῖς ἄρθροις, καὶ αἱ λέξεις ἀλλήλαις καὶ τοῖς στοιχείοις, ἡ βᾶσις καὶ τοῖς πέρασιν ἀναλογεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἀπαρτισμοῖς τῶν σωμάτων, ἐξ ὧν ἀμφοῖν ὁ ῥυθμὸς τῷ τοῦ μεγέθους σχήματι· [...] ὁ λόγος ζῶω ἀναλογεῖ, καὶ ἡ μὲν ἔννοια τούτου ἀναλογεῖ τῇ τοῦ ζώου ψυχῇ, ἡ δὲ μέθοδος τῇ τοιαύτῃ κινήσει τῆς ψυχῆς· διάφοροι γὰρ αἱ τῶν ψυχῶν ἐν διαφόροις ζώοις κινήσεις, ἡ δὲ λέξις τῷ σώματι, καὶ τὸ σχῆμα τῇ τοῦ σώματος μορφῇ, καὶ τὰ κῶλα τοῖς ὀστέοις, καὶ ἡ συνθήκη ταῖς τῶν ὀστέων ἀρμονίαις, καὶ τοῖς τούτων πέρασιν ἢ ἀνάπαυσις, καὶ ὁ ῥυθμὸς τῇ τοιαύτῃ κινήσει τοῦ σώματος ...³¹

For the thought cannot be moved towards perception without diction. Therefore, as the body has differently shaped [parts], so diction has different forms. For the parts of the body are different. So the *kōla* in diction are long or short and they are of their own kind with regard to length and dimension, and in the same manner or by analogy are the word arrangement and overall composition. For as the body is made up of its joints, so the words relate to each other and to the other parts. The *basis* [i.e., the rhythmical ending of a sentence] is analogous both to the ends of parts and to their completion, from both of which rhythm comes about through the form of length. The discourse resembles a living thing; its thought – the soul of the living thing; style resembles the kind of movement of the soul. For the movements of the soul are different in the different animals; diction is like the body, its form is like the shape of the body, the *kōla* are like the bones, the composition is like the harmony of the bones, the cadence is like their end parts, and rhythm is like the kind of movement of the body ...

³⁰ WALZ, *Rhetores graeci* VII/2 885–886. Similar passages can be found in VII/2 892–893, 905–906, 936–937, in V 450 (Planudes’ scholia on *Peri heurseōs*), and in III 544–545 (Joseph Rhakendytes’ *Synopsis rhētorikēs*).

³¹ WALZ, *Rhetores graeci* VI 118, 139.

Siculus describes rhythm as the overall movement of the body of a living thing; it is the product of cadence, word arrangement, and *kōla* composition all at the same time. He stresses the individual character of each element: it partakes of length and dimension according to its own nature. Rhythm is the overall effect of the combination of the separate elements as well as their movement in time. It certainly can contain various metrical feet – they will give it a particular “echo,” as the anonymous commentator says above, but the meter by itself will not create the rhythm – the movement of the speech units will.

In a similar sense, while analyzing the rhetorical prose of Gregory of Nazianzus, Michael Psellos declares that “the movement [of his prose] pulsates and hisses, and oftentimes the measure of his utterance throbs excitedly” (σφυγμούς τε γὰρ αὐτῶ καὶ σιγμούς ἢ κίνησις ἔχει καὶ πηδᾷ θαμὰ διεγειρόμενος αὐτῶ ὁ τόπος τοῦ πνεύματος) and he “often makes [the audience] wonder and often applaud and strike up a dance alongside his rhythms, and empathize with the subject matter” (καὶ ποτὲ μὲν θαυμάζειν ποιῶν, ποτὲ δὲ κροτεῖν καὶ ἐν ῥυθμῶ χορείαν ἀνελίττειν καὶ συμπεπονθέναι τοῖς πράγμασιν).³² Since it would be difficult to imagine a Byzantine congregation spontaneously bursting into a dance at the sound of a particular phrase, we should probably allow for some rhetorical amplification in interpreting this passage. Yet what Psellos’ comment highlights is that the flow of Gregory’s striking and varied rhythms seems not only to affect the whole discourse but also to be as distinctly measurable as a dance beat.

So we are in a quandary. Rhythm, according to the Byzantine rhetoricians, is created by the movement of the words/parts of the discourse, but it is also in the various metrical combinations. It seems to involve syllable quantity – which the Byzantines could not hear – but it also requires a beat. Perhaps a solution to this problem can be found in the persistent distinction that the grammarians and rhetoricians draw between rhythm and meter, similar to the one found in Choeroboscus’ *scholia* on Hephaestion:

Πατήρ δὲ καὶ γένεσις τῶν μέτρων ἐστὶν ὁ ῥυθμός· διήκει γὰρ καθολικώτερος ὢν οὐ μόνον ἐν τοῖς μέτροις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις τισίν· ἔστι γὰρ ὁ ῥυθμός ἐκτελούμενος καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν χαλκείοις σφυρῶν καὶ ἀπὸ ἵππου ποδῶν καὶ κρότου χειρῶν καὶ λύρας καὶ ἐτέρων τινῶν [...] πολλάκις ἐν πεζῇ φράσει εὐρίσκονται μέτρα καὶ διὰ τὸν ῥυθμὸν τῆς πεζῆς φράσεως λανθάνουσι (καὶ ἔμπαλιν ἐν μέτροις εὐρίσκεται πεζὴ φράσις καὶ οὐ νοεῖται εὐχερῶς), εἰ μὴ ἄρα ἡ ἀκοὴ καλῶς ἐπικρίνουσα εὐδῆλον καὶ φανερόν ποιήσει. ὅθεν καὶ παρὰ Δημοσθένει ἔστιν εὐρεῖν μέτρα.³³

Rhythm is the father and origin of meters. Being universal, it is found not only in meters, but in other things as well. For rhythm is achieved by the hammers in the smitheries as well as the horses’ steps, the clapping of hands, the lyres, and others. [...] Often meters are found in prose, but on account of the rhythm of the prose utterance they go unnoticed (and conversely, prose utterances found in metered discourse are not easily perceived), unless indeed the sense of hearing, with good discrimination, should perceive it distinctly and clearly. Whence meters can be found in Demosthenes as well.

Choeroboscus explains that meter pertains to quantitative verse, while rhythm – a broader term – applies to many things outside of verse. Meter pertains to the arrangement of long and short syllables, while rhythm is created by a beat and carries the utterance forward. Quantitative sequences in prose become obscured, because the rhythm of the prose utterance is not that of poetry.

That rhythm and meter are not the same thing to the Byzantines, even when they speak of quantitative poetry, comes across clearly in a passage from Eustathius’ *Commentary on the Iliad*, where he explains that the ancients frowned upon an overlap between metrics and rhythmic:

³² A. MAYER, Psellos’ Rede über den rhetorischen Charakter des Gregorios von Nazianz. *BZ* 20 (1911) 27–100, the quoted lines come from paragraphs 17 and 19 respectively. P. LEVY’s edition of the same text has been published concurrently (Michaelis Pselli de Gregorii Theologi caractere iudicium: accedit eiusdem de Ioannis Chrysostomi caractere iudicium ineditum. Leipzig 1912).

³³ M. CONSBRUCH, Hephaestionis enchiridion cum commentariis veteribus. Leipzig 1906, 177–178.

Ἐνθα δυσὶ στίχοις φιλοτιμεῖται τέσσαρα δῶρα ἐμπεριγράψαι, εἰπὼν “ἕπτ’ ἀπύρους τρίποδας, δέκα δὲ χρυσοῖο τάλαντα,/ αἶθωνας δὲ λέβητας ἑξήκοσι, δώδεκα δ’ ἵππους.” Τούτων δὲ τῶν στίχων ἑκατέρου ἢ εἰς ἀνὰ δύο ἐννοίας τομῆ οὐ πάνυ μετρικῶς ἔχειν δοκεῖ τοῖς παλαιοῖς, οἱ φασιν, ὅτι τὸ μέτρον χαίρει μὲν συνδεσμεῖσθαι τοὺς πόδας ἀλλήλοις, ὡς κατὰ μηδὲν εἰς μέρος ἀπαρτίζειν λόγου, οἷον “Ἰλιόθεν με φέρων ἄνεμος Κικόνεσσι πέλασσε.” Παραιτεῖται δὲ ὡσπερ τὸ κατὰ πόδα τέμνεσθαι, οἷον “ὕβριος εἵνεκα τῆσδε, σὺ δ’ ἴσχεο, πείθεο δ’ ἡμῖν,” ἔνθα καθ’ ἓνα ἕκαστον πόδα καὶ μέρος λόγου ἀπαρτίζεται, οὕτω καὶ τὴν δίχα τομῆν, ἡγουν τὴν εἰς δύο ἐννοίας, ὡς τὸ “ἔνθ’ οὔτ’ Ἰδομενεὺς τλῆ μίμνειν οὔτ’ Ἀγαμέμνων.” οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὴν τριχῆ καὶ ἐπὶ πλείον διαίρεσιν. Ῥυθμικὰ γάρ, φασί, ταῦτα ἢ μετρικά. Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὰ ῥηθέντα δύο ἔπη ῥυθμικώτερον διάκεινται. καὶ οὕτω μὲν τοῦτο.³⁴

Here he endeavors to encompass four gifts in two lines, saying, “Seven tripods untouched by the fire, ten talents of gold,/ twenty shining copper caldrons, and twelve horses” [*Iliad* 9.122-23]. The division of each one of these lines into two thoughts did not seem altogether metrical to the ancients, who say that the meter is graceful when the feet are conjoined with each other, i.e., when none is contained within a [single] part of speech, as in “From the city of Ilius the wind took me and brought me to the Cicones” [*Odyssey* 9.39]. The former is rejected since it is divided according to the feet, as for example, “On account of this hybris – but hold back, and obey us” [*Iliad* 1.214], where each foot is completed within one part of speech. Same with the division in half, that is, in two thoughts, as in “Neither Idomeneus suffered to stay there, nor Agamemnon” [*Iliad* 8.78]. Same with the division into three and more parts. For, they say, these things are rhythmical rather than metrical. Therefore, the two mentioned verses are rather too rhythmical. So much for this.

To paraphrase briefly what Eustathius says, the ancients thought that the meter suffered if the divisions between individual metrical feet or groups of two or three feet coincided with word boundaries or with divisions of thought. They rather liked a “syncopated” disjunction between word and foot boundaries. If the prosodic feet coincided with individual words, they considered that rhythmical rather than metrical. One cannot fail to notice that in both quoted examples of “bad” meter, that is:

— ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — — —
 ὕβριος εἵνεκα τῆσδε, σὺ δ’ ἴσχεο, πείθεο δ’ ἡμῖν [*Iliad* 1.214] and
 — — — ∪ — — — — — ∪ — — —
 ἔνθ’ οὔτ’ Ἰδομενεὺς τλῆ μίμνειν οὔτ’ Ἀγαμέμνων [*Iliad* 8.78],³⁵

we have almost regular stress alternation. The first line could be pronounced with the following stresses: ὕβριος εἵνεκα τῆσδε, σὺ δ’ ἴσχεο, πείθεο δ’ ἡμῖν (/ - - / - - ^(l) -, - ^(l) / - -, / - - - /), where τῆσδε and σὺ are possibly pronounced with weak/secondary stress. The underlying pattern is that of accentual dactyls, broken only by the last word. The second example could also be read quite rhythmically according to stress: ἔνθ’ οὔτ’ Ἰδομενεὺς τλῆ μίμνειν οὔτ’ Ἀγαμέμνων (/ - - - - / / - - - - /). It displays internal stress “responson,” that is, the first half of the line looks very similar to the second part, with four unstressed syllables between stresses. The ancients, as Eustathius explains, rejected this coincidence as too rhythmical. By pointing out these regularities, Eustathius achieves a twofold purpose: he makes a point about meter, which applies to Homeric verse, and a point about rhythm, which could apply to contemporary Byzantine verse or prose.

On another occasion Eustathius commends a line for its swift, appropriate and natural rhythm, but mentions nothing about the meter:

³⁴ Eustathius 739–740 (ed. M. VAN DER VALK, *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*. Leiden 1971–1991, II 671–672).

³⁵ Certain short syllables in proper names are scanned as long to accommodate the meter.

Ἔνθα ὄρα κάλλος ἐν τρισὶ ῥήμασι καὶ δυσὶ συνδέσμοις καίριον καὶ φυσικὸν καὶ γοργόν, οὐ μὴν περιέργον καὶ ἐπιτετηδευμένον κατὰ τὰ ὕστερον· τοιοῦτον γὰρ πάντως τὸ “θεαὶ ἔστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστε τε.” ὁ μέντοι γράψας πρὸς ἀστεῖσμον τὸ “νάρκη πνικτή, πέρκη σχιστή, τευθὶς σακτὴ,” ταῦτον δ’ εἰπεῖν κατὰ τοὺς ἰδιωτίζοντας παραγεμιστή, “γλαύκου προτομή, γόγγρου κεφαλὴ,” ἔτι δὲ καὶ ὁ παρισώσας τὸ “τυρὸς ξηρὸς, τυρὸς κοπτὸς, τυρὸς ξυστός, τυρὸς τμητός” καὶ ὅσα δὲ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα – μυρία δὲ εἰσιν ἐκεῖνα – καλλωπίζουσι μὲν γοργῶς καὶ εὐρύθμως, οὐ μὴν σεμνῶς καὶ φύσει καθ’ Ὀμηρον.³⁶

Behold here beauty in three words and two conjunctions, appropriate, natural, and swift-flowing, not indeed overwrought and belabored as what follows it. For such altogether is the phrase “goddesses you are, here you are, and you know.”³⁷ Indeed, the one who wrote wittingly, “a stewed electric ray, a split perch, a filled-up squid,”³⁸ that is, stuffed squid, to say the same in the common idiom, and “the first cut of a grey-fish, the head of a conger-eel,”³⁹ and still even the *parisa* “dried cheese, crumbled cheese, shaved cheese, sliced cheese,”⁴⁰ and as many such as there are – they are innumerable – are beautiful in a swift-flowing and rhythmical way, but not indeed in a way stately and Homeric in nature.

The quoted excerpt is from Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*, who in turn quotes Antiphanes the fifth-century BC comic poet; Eustathius commends it for its wit and swift-flowing, pleasing rhythm. The rhythm is created by pairs of isosyllabic words, whose accentuation patterns are identical from one pair to the next (except for the last one): the phrase *νάρκη πνικτή, πέρκη σχιστή, τευθὶς σακτὴ* (/ - -, / - -, - / -) shows internal accentual “responion.” So does the next phrase *γλαύκου προτομή, γόγγρου κεφαλὴ* (/ - - -, / - - -), as well as the next: *τυρὸς ξηρὸς, τυρὸς κοπτὸς, τυρὸς ξυστός, τυρὸς τμητός* (- / - -, - / - -, - / - -, - / -). Their rhythm is “natural,” according to Eustathius, and so is the rhythm of the Homeric line *ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἔστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα*, whose pattern (- / - - - - / - - / -) is also marked by stress regularity in that it shows one or two unstressed syllables between accents, although not as pronounced as the other three phrases. The keyword here is pleasing rhythm, not pleasing meter. Eustathius has singled out for commentary a line with a regular stress pattern, which he reinforces with other lines from classical texts, whose stress patterns are even more regular.

On yet another occasion Eustathius does not hesitate to praise Homer for achieving good rhythmic in lines that show regular stress alternation, internal stress “responion,” and the double dactyl. Commenting on *Iliad* 22.386–87, Eustathius says:

“Ὅρα δὲ καὶ ὡς ἐκαλλώπισε ῥυθμῶ προπαροξυτόνων λέξεων τὰ κατὰ Πάτροκλον, εἰπὼν “κεῖται πὰρ νήεσσι νέκυς ἄκλαυτος ἄθαπτος Πάτροκλος.” ἔχει δὲ κάλλος πρὸ τούτων καὶ τὰ ἐν τέλει στίχων δύο πάρισα τὸ “τοῦδε πεσόντος,” καὶ “Ἔκτορος οὐκέτ’ ἔόντος,” ἃ καὶ ἰσοδύναμά εἰσι.⁴¹

Behold also how he embellishes the things he said about Patroclus through the rhythm of proparoxytone words, saying, “By the ships Patroclus lay, dead, unlamented, unburied.” The two *parisa* before these at the end of the verses also have beauty: “this man having fallen” and “Hector being no more” (*Iliad* 22.383–84), and they are also equipotent.

The three consecutive proparoxytone words *ἄκλαυτος ἄθαπτος Πάτροκλος* (/ - - / - - / - -) conspicuously form a regular sequence of accentual dactyls, whose pattern is emphasized by the regularity of the preceding sequence *κεῖται πὰρ νήεσσι νέκυς* (/ - - / - - / - -). In addition to that, the line as quoted ends on

³⁶ Eustathius 261 (I 398 VAN DER VALK).

³⁷ *Iliad* 2.485.

³⁸ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 7.46 (II 151 KAIBEL).

³⁹ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 7.46 (II 151 KAIBEL).

⁴⁰ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 9.66 (II 376 KAIBEL).

⁴¹ Eustathius 1274 (IV 635 VAN DER VALK).

the Byzantine double dactyl, a preferred *clausular* cadence. As the boundaries of the prosodic feet do not coincide with individual words and therefore the meter would have been considered “good,” Eustathius would not have had any reason to comment on the metrical features of these lines, other than to point out their *rhythmical* beauty – as he plainly does. His next comment refers to the ends of the preceding two lines, which, he says, form a *parison* each and have beauty as well (i.e., rhythmical beauty) and, in addition, are equipotent. The two phrases show regular responsion between the spoken stresses of the last two words: τοῦδε πεσόντος (- - -/-) and Ἐκτορος οὐκέτ’ ἐόντος (- - -/-).

Parison seems to be one of the rhetorical figures singled out by the Byzantine rhetoricians for its heightened rhythmicity – or at any rate, the examples they use as illustrations show a heightened rhythmicity. The one used by Eustathius would fall under the category of perfect *parison* (πάρισον καθόλου), according to the definition of Gregory of Corinth:

ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἕτερον πάρισον τὸ λεγόμενον οὕτω πάρισον καθόλου, ὡς παρὰ τῷ θεολόγῳ· ἄλλα μὲν λεόντων ὀρμήματα, ἄλλα δὲ πιθήκων μιμήματα, καὶ πάλιν, τοιοῦτος ὁ τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς στόλος, τοιοῦτον τὸ τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς τέλος.⁴²

There is yet another *parison*, the so-called perfect *parison*, as in the example given by the Theologian: “some are the impulses of lions, others the mimicries of apes” and again “such are the means of the impious, such are the ends of the pious.”

The examples come from Gregory of Nazianzus’ *Contra Julianum imperatorem* 1 (somewhat altered) and *In laudem Heronis philosophi* respectively, and show perfect stress responsion between their two halves: ἄλλα μὲν λεόντων ὀρμήματα, ἄλλα δὲ πιθήκων μιμήματα (/ - - - / - - - / - - - / - - -) and τοιοῦτος ὁ τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς στόλος, τοιοῦτον τὸ τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς τέλος (- / - - - - / - / - - - - / - / -). Gregory of Corinth’s definition of the perfect *parison* involves stress regularity, and is quite similar to the definition found in an anonymous treatise on figures:

Τὸ δὲ πάρισον γίνεται, ὅταν δύο ἢ πλείονα κῶλα μάλιστα μὲν καὶ τὰς συλλαβὰς ἴσας ἔχη· εἰ δ’ οὖν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ γένος καὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ ἔτι τὸν χρόνον καὶ τὸν ῥυθμὸν, οἷον τὸ τίνα τῶν ἀνθρώπων κινήματα, τίνα δὲ τῶν πιθήκων ὀρμήματα. εἴ τι μὲν οὖν πάρισον, καὶ ὁμοιοκατάληκτον, οὐ μὴν εἴ τι ὁμοιοκατάληκτον, ἤδη καὶ πάρισόν ἐστι· τὸ μὲν γὰρ μόνας τὰς τελευταίας συλλαβὰς ὁμοίας ἔχει, τὸ δὲ ἐν πάσαις ἔχει τὰς συγκρούσεις καὶ ὁμοιώσεις.⁴³

We have *parison* when two or more *kōla* have, as a rule, an equal number of syllables. If this is not the case, then [if they are] equivalent with respect to gender, number, and besides tense and rhythm, as for example “some are the emotions of humans, while others the impulses of apes.” If therefore something is *parison*, it is also *homoiokatalēkton*, but if it is *homoiokatalēkton*, it is not a *parison* yet. For the former has only the same number of final syllables, while the latter has in everything similarity as well as an identical beat.

The phrase from the Nazianzene (this time quoted correctly) appears to illustrate the point that if two clauses have an identical number of syllables, we may have a *homoiokatalēkton*, but not necessarily a *parison*; we have a *parison* when they are identical with respect to endings and everything else, that is, gender, number, tense and rhythm. The two clauses differ with one syllable, perhaps due to the omission of μὲν, but they do show near-regular stress responsion, which explains the reference to identical rhythm.

⁴² WALZ, *Rhetores graeci* VII/2, 1228.

⁴³ L. SPENGLER, *Rhetores graeci*, III. Leipzig 1966, 185–186. An almost identical definition appears in a treatise on the figures attributed by Spengel to Zonaeus (SPENGLER, *Rhetores graeci* III 169); however, T. CONLEY has argued that the treatise is a forgery authored by the notorious sixteenth-century scribe Constantine Palaiokappa (Revisiting “Zonaios”: More on the Byzantine Tradition *περὶ σχημάτων*. *Rhetorica* 22/3 [2004] 257–268).

The perfect *parison*, therefore, also shows perfect or near-perfect stress responsion. Thus the stress responsion in *parisa* does not always have to be exact.

In Gregory of Corinth's examples above, we have both exact and approximate responsion (that is, plus or minus one syllable). One of Demosthenes' scholiasts, when pointing out what seems to be a perfect *parison* in *Olynthiac* 2.5, also shows tolerance for approximate responsion:

“συμβαίνει δεῖσθαι:” κατὰ τὸ τέλος πάρισον. καὶ ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ Ὀλυνθιακῷ πάρισον κατὰ τὸ τέλος “ἂν τὰ παρόντα ἀναλώσῃ πρὸς ἃ μὴ δεῖ, τῶν ἀπόντων εὐπορήσῃ πρὸς ἃ δεῖ.”⁴⁴

“requires to bring:” a *parison* at the end [of the clauses]. There is also a *parison* at the end in the *Third Olynthiac*: “should he spend the existing resources on what he does not need, in his lack would he fare well as far as what he does need.”

In *Olynthiac* 2.5 the phrase *συμβαίνει δεῖσθαι* (- /- /-) corresponds to *συμφέρειν εἰρηῆσθαι* from the next clause, which is the intended second pair of the *parison* (-/- -/-). The responsion is not perfect; it is a syllable short. In the next example (*Olynthiac* 3.19), however, *τὰ παρόντα ἀναλώσῃ* (- -/- - -/-) is accentually equivalent to *τῶν ἀπόντων εὐπορήσῃ* (- -/- - -/-), while the pair *πρὸς ἃ μὴ δεῖ* and *πρὸς ἃ δεῖ* is one syllable off and therefore partially equivalent. Possibly for the sake of clarity, the scholiast has reinserted the elided vowel in *τὰ παρόντα ἀναλώσῃ*,⁴⁵ producing hiatus. Perhaps the case was that prose rhythm did not comprise an exact art: in reading and declamation, the speaker would have been able to stretch out or shorten the time intervals between the stresses, so that the rhythmic beats could come at equal intervals.⁴⁶

Parison is not the only rhetorical figure seen as rhythmical. So are the *homoikatalēxis* and the *homoiooteleuton*, as pointed out by another of Demosthenes' scholiasts, who praises the speech against Androtion for its pleasing rhythms owing to the presence of these two figures.⁴⁷ *Homoiooteleuton* is grammatical rhyme, which normally displays accentual responsion, since the accents tend to fall either on the same morphemes or on the root preceding the morphemes (for example, *ἐποίησε – κατέστησε, θέσσω – μεδέσθω, ὀνειδίζω – ἐξετάζω*), while *homoikatalēxis* is a figure characterized by similar endings (not necessarily grammatically identical), which also often displays responsion (for example, *τυρὸς ξηρὸς, τυρὸς κοπτὸς, τυρὸς ξυστός*). Admittedly, all these examples contain some kind of rhyme. Rhyme alone is a powerful tool for marking off rhythmic units, as is obvious in modern Western poetry; creates strong aural paradigms, readily measured by the ear. In addition to rhyme, however, we have a clear pattern of stress regularity. The rhetorical and grammatical commentaries present a compelling case that the term “rhythmical” is associated either with accentual responsion or with some kind of regular alternation of stresses. The pattern affects the entire *kōlon* and includes the closing cadence. The Byzantine scholars point out these patterns as examples of good rhythm in the context of their discussion of the classical texts.

At least in theory this seems to be the case. But can we expect to find the same principles at work in oratorical practice? Since the most frequent rhetorical definition of rhythm is that it is the product of composition and cadence, it would be reasonable to conclude that composition refers to the placement of words in such a way as to ensure the formation of a pattern of regular stress alternation or responsion,

⁴⁴ M.R. DILTS, *Scholia Demosthenica*, I. Leipzig 1983, 57.

⁴⁵ Cf. S.H. BUTCHER, *Demosthenis orations*, I. Oxford 1903, 33.

⁴⁶ As Eustathius suggests in his remark on the actual number of syllables in the Byzantine political verse: a line could contain more than fifteen syllables, but adjacent vowels needed to be spoken quickly so as to not ruin the rhythm (Eustathius 11–12 [I 19 VAN DER VALK]); for more on this, see HÖRANDNER, *Beobachtungen* 280–285 and M. JEFFREYS, *The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse*. *DOP* 28 (1974) 142–195.

⁴⁷ DILTS, *Scholia* II 256: *προεῖρηκεν γὰρ Εὐκτῆμων, καὶ ἔστι δευτερολογία τοῦ Διοδώρου ὁ λόγος, τῇ ἐξαγγελίᾳ καὶ τῇ τῶν ὀνομάτων συνθέσει σφόδρα εὐρυθμὸς ὧν ἅτε πρὸς Ἰσοκρατικὸν ἄνδρα συγκείμενος· πολλὰς γοῦν παρισώσεις καὶ ὁμοιοκαταλήξεις καὶ ὁμοιοτέλευτα παρέσπαρται.*

while cadence refers to the *cursus*, which is used to complete and round off a clause, just as punctuation brings it visually to an end. Is it reasonable, however, to expect these patterns to occur regularly and predictably?

One of the basic principles of the rhythm of prose, frequently repeated by the rhetoricians, is that it is not the same as the rhythm of poetry. Dionysius' remark that prose should be metrical but not *in* meter and rhythmical but not *in* rhythm⁴⁸ appears several times in the Hermogenic commentaries.⁴⁹ In other words, the rhythms of prose *should not* be as regular as to be readily anticipated by the ear, and should change often. This would satisfy the demand for variety (μεταβολή), another principle spelled out by Dionysius and repeated by the Byzantines. Therefore regular stress patterns would be expected to occur not in every *kōlon*, but more conspicuously in places that need emphasis. Accordingly, the commentators do not discuss the rhythm of every phrase but of key passages only. In the following excerpt from a *scholion* on Demosthenes' *In Aristocratem*, for example, the author stresses that one of the chief virtues of the enthymeme is its pleasing rhythm. The enthymeme he identifies in the passage comes as a summary to a long line of arguments:

μικτὸν δὲ “ὥσπερ γὰρ εἴ τις ἐκείνων ἐάλω, σὺ τὰδε οὐκ ἂν ἔγραψας” καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. ἀρετὴ δὲ ἐνθυμήματός ἐστι βραχύτης κώλων καὶ εὐρυθμία κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων.⁵⁰

[An example of] the mixed kind is “Just as if one of them had been convicted, you would not have proposed these things” and so on.⁵¹ The virtue of the enthymeme is the brevity of its *kōla* and the pleasing rhythm, according to the arrangement of words.

The full period is ὥσπερ γὰρ εἴ τις ἐκείνων ἐάλω, σὺ τὰδ' οὐκ ἂν ἔγραψας, οὕτως ἐὰν σὺ νῦν ἀλῶς, ἄλλος οὐ γράψει (“Just as if one of them had been convicted, you would not have proposed these things; so if you are convicted now, another one will not propose”). It is a conditional sentence making an argument of probability: If one of those who in the past had been convicted for proposing decrees contrary to Athenian interests (apparently, no one was), then Aristocrates would not have proposed such a decree, and if he is convicted today (for treason), no one else will dare make any such proposals in the future. Thus the first *kōlon* pairs up with the last, and the second pairs with the third. The commentator identifies the type of enthymematic figure as ‘mixed,’ that is, a hybrid between a ‘syllogistic’ and a ‘refutative’ enthymeme. In terms of stress, the pattern looks like this: ὥσπερ γὰρ εἴ τις ἐκείνων ἐάλω (/ - - / - - / -) anticipates ἄλλος οὐ γράψει (/ - - / -), while σὺ τὰδ' οὐκ ἂν ἔγραψας (/ - - - / - -) looks forward to the following οὕτως ἐὰν σὺ νῦν ἀλῶς (/ - - - / / -). The *kōla* are of different length, yet the patterns show partial responsion. The first *kōlon* establishes a rhythm of accentual dactyls (three and a half), echoed briefly in the fourth *kōlon* (one dactyl and a half), which gives terse closure to the premise of the condition and to the period as a whole. Similarly, the second *kōlon* is made up of an accentual paeon and a dactyl,⁵² which is repeated in the third *kōlon* (with one extra stress at the end). The rhythmical principle is stress equivalency between *kōla* parallel in meaning. The entire period is, as the scholiast says, a ‘mixed’ enthymeme, i.e., a combination of a refutation and a syllogism, expressed in a pithy, antithetical, and striking manner, which functions as a cap to a long line of reasoning. It is intended to sum up the arguments in a memorable conclusion, and is not simply an argumentative unit but also a figure of speech.⁵³ And because of its emphatic function, it is expected to display pleasing rhythm as well.

⁴⁸ Dionysius, *De compositione* 25 (252 ROBERTS).

⁴⁹ For example, WALZ, *Rhetores graeci* VI 165–166 (Siculus) and VII/2 905–906.

⁵⁰ DILTS, *Scholion* 99.

⁵¹ DEMOSTHENES, *In Aristocratem* 99 (II/1 653 BUTCHER).

⁵² I count τὰδ' as having a secondary/weak stress.

⁵³ For more on competing and changing notions of the enthymeme as well as the enthymeme as a figure of speech, see T. CONLEY, *The Enthymeme in Perspective*. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984) 168–187 as well as IDEM, *Aristotle's Rhetoric in Byzantium*. *Rhetorica* 8/1 (1990) 29–44; M. KRAUS, *From Figure to Argument: Contrarium in Roman Rhetoric*. *Argumentation* 21 (2007)

Similar patterns of either perfect or approximate responsion can be observed, as early as the fourth century, in a key passage of Epiphanius' *Homily on the Entombment of Christ and Descent into Hades*, where he sets the stage for the later dramatic events by building on the suspense of the silence following Christ's burial:

γῆ ἐφοβήθη καὶ ἡσύχασεν,	(/ - -/ - - -/ - -)
ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς σαρκὶ ὑπνωσε,	(- - - -/ -/ -/ -)
καὶ τοὺς ἀπ' αἰῶνος ὑπνοῦντας ἀνέστησεν.	(- - - -/ - -/ -/ - -)
Ὁ Θεὸς ἐν σαρκὶ τέθνηκε,	(- -/ - -/ -/ -)
καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἐτρόμαξεν.	(- - / - -/ -)
Ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς βραχὺ ὑπνωσε,	(- -/ - -/ -/ -)
καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῷ ἄδῃ ἐξήγειρε.	(- - - -/ - -/ -)
Ποῦ ποτε νῦν εἰσιν αἱ πρὸ βραχέος ταραχαὶ, καὶ φωναὶ, καὶ θόρυβοι κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,	(/ - - / - - - - -/ - - -/ - - / - - - - -/)
ᾧ παράνομοι;	(/ -/ -)
ποῦ οἱ δῆμοι, καὶ ἐνστάσεις, καὶ τάξεις,	(/ - / - - -/ - -/ -)
καὶ τὰ ὅπλα, καὶ δόρατα;	(- - / - -/ -)
ποῦ οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς καὶ κριταὶ οἱ κατάκριτοι;	(/ - - -/ - - -/ - - -/ - -)
ποῦ αἱ λαμπάδες καὶ μάχαιραι	(/ - -/ - -/ -)
καὶ οἱ θρύλλοι οἱ ἄτακτοι;	(- - / - -/ -)
ποῦ οἱ λαοὶ, καὶ τὸ φρύαγμα,	(/ - -/ - -/ -)
καὶ ἡ κουστωδία ἡ ἄσεμνος; ⁵⁴	(- - - -/ - -/ -)

The earth was frightened and became quiet,/ because God fell asleep in the flesh/ and raised those who had been sleeping for ages./ God died in the flesh and Hades trembled./ God fell asleep for a little while and raised those in Hades./ Where is now the commotion, the shouting, and the din from not too long ago, [which were] against Christ?/ o, law-transgressors?/ Where are the factions, the prosecution, the bands of soldiers?/ The arms and the spears?/ Where are the kings, the priests, and the condemned judges?/ The torches, the daggers, and the disorderly babble?/ Where the crowds and the insolence?/ And the impious guard?

Epiphanius creates rhythmical parallels between key points. The theme of ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς σαρκὶ ὑπνωσε (- - - -/ -/ -) is repeated rhythmically in ἐν σαρκὶ τέθνηκε (- -/ -) and πρὸς βραχὺ ὑπνωσε (- -/ -) as far as the emphatic close packing of stresses. Similarly, καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἐτρόμαξεν (- - / - -) is echoed in ἐν τῷ ἄδῃ ἐξήγειρε (- - / - -), which adds the reason why Hades trembled. Then follow a series of enumerations, which resemble each other closely in that they are mostly composed of accentual dactyls: ταραχαὶ, καὶ φωναὶ, καὶ θόρυβοι (- -/ - -/ - -); οἱ δῆμοι, καὶ ἐνστάσεις, καὶ τάξεις (- / - - -/ - -); καὶ τὰ ὅπλα, καὶ δόρατα (- - / - -/ - -); καὶ κριταὶ οἱ κατάκριτοι (- -/ - -/ - -); ποῦ αἱ λαμπάδες καὶ μάχαιραι (/ - -/ - -/ - -); καὶ οἱ θρύλλοι οἱ ἄτακτοι (- - / - -/ - -); ποῦ οἱ λαοὶ, καὶ τὸ φρύαγμα (/ - -/ - -/ - -); echoed at the end of the last *komma* καὶ ἡ κουστωδία ἡ ἄσεμνος (- - - -/ - -/ - -). The rhythm of this list is broken by the phrase ποῦ οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς (/ - - -/ - - -/ -), which is composed of accentual paeons that lend weight to it and also hark back to the paeon in δῆμοι καὶ ἐνστάσεις (/ - - -/ - -), or the prosecution associated with the kings and the priests. Epiphanius has created a strong rhythmical pattern of accentual dactyls and paeons, pairing off themes and emphasizing the individual elements in the description.

3–19; H. HUNGER, Das „Enthymem“ in der liturgischen Dichtung des frühen Byzanz, in: Th. SCHIRREN – G. UEDING (eds.), *Topik und Rhetorik. Ein interdisziplinäres Symposium. Tübingen 2000*, 93–102.

⁵⁴ PG 43, 440.

Similar attention to thematic pairing we find in a climactic exegetical passage in Proclus' homily *On the Sunday of Thomas*.⁵⁵ It explains the divine providence of Thomas' absence at Christ's first appearance to His disciples after the resurrection:

Ἦν δὲ ἄρα καὶ τοῦτο τῆς θείας οἰκονομίας μυστήριον,	(- -/- -/- -/- - - - -/- -/- -)
τὸ μὴ παρῆναι τὸν μαθητὴν.	(- - -/- - - - -/-)
Εἰ γὰρ παρῆν, οὐκ ἂν ἠμφισβήτησεν,	(- - -/, / - - -/- - -)
εἰ δὲ μὴ ἀμφέβαλεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐψηλάφησεν,	(- - - -/- -, / - - -/- -)
εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐψηλάφησεν, οὐκ ἂν οὕτως ἐπίστευσεν,	(- - - - -/- -, / - / - -/- -)
εἰ δὲ μὴ οὕτως ἐπίστευσεν, οὐκ ἂν ἡμᾶς οὕτω πιστεύειν	
ἐδίδαξεν,	(- - - / - - / - -, / - - / / - - -/- -/- -)
ὥστε καὶ ἡ ἀπιστία τοῦ μαθητοῦ τῆς ἡμετέρας πίστεως	
μήτηρ γεγένηται.	(/ - - - - -/- - - - -/- - - - / - - / - -/- -)

Was not this a great mystery of the divine providence/ that the disciple was not present!/ For if he was present, he would not have disputed,/ if he had not disputed, he would not have touched,/ if he had not touched, he would not have believed in this way,/ if he had not believed in this way, he would not have taught us to believe thus/ so that the unbelief of the disciple has become the mother of our faith.

The first line begins on a sequence of regular dactyls, interrupted by the phrase *θείας οἰκονομίας*, which yields four unaccented syllables between the stresses, thus breaking the pattern and drawing attention to itself. The next line, *τὸ μὴ παρῆναι τὸν μαθητὴν*, repeats the “divine providence” pattern, drawing a rhythmical parallel between it and the absence of the disciple. The following line, *Εἰ γὰρ παρῆν, οὐκ ἂν ἠμφισβήτησεν*, continues to elaborate on the theme of divine providence, figurally as well as rhythmically, by having three unaccented syllables between the stresses and showing internal responson between the *kommata*. The fourth and fifth lines show approximate responson in the opening: (- - - - / - -) and (- - - - - / - -) and thus echo each other. Finally the seventh line, which begins on the same ‘divine providence’ pattern (*ὥστε καὶ ἡ ἀπιστία τοῦ μαθητοῦ, / - - - - -/- - - - -/*), eventually settles to a steady dactylic beat with the concluding phrase *ἡμετέρας πίστεως μήτηρ γεγένηται, - -/- / - - / - - / - - -*, which harks back to the opening line. Consciously or unconsciously, Proclus has created rhythmical parallels between key theme-bearing phrases, setting them off for the ear. The ‘double dactyl,’ employed as the final cadence, is used in the first and the last three *kôla*, rounding off and bringing the argument to completion.

The beginning of Photius' homily *On Palm Sunday* offers yet another example of creating a rhythmical paradigm between phrases similar in meaning:

Ὅτε τῶν παίδων ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις ἀναβοώντων	
ἡ ἐκκλησία σαλπίζει,	(- - - - / - - - / - - - - / - - - - / - - - - / - - - -)
καὶ τῆς λαμπρᾶς ἐκείνης καὶ θεοπρεπεστάτης φωνῆς ταῖς	
ἀκοαῖς τὸν ἦχον ἐλκύσω,	(- - - / - / - - - - - - / - / - - - / - / - - -)
μετάρσιος ὄλος γίνομαι τῇ προθυμίᾳ –	(- / - - / - / - - - - - / -)
δεινὸν γὰρ ἡ χαρὰ χρῆμα καινοποιῆσαι τὴν φύσιν	(- / - - - / / - - - - / - - - / -)
καὶ πόθος οὐκ οἶδε μένειν καιροῦ προσκαλοῦντος –	(- / - - / - / - / - - - / -)

⁵⁵ Proclus, *Λόγος εἰς τὴν νέαν κυριακὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀπιστίαν τοῦ Θωμᾶ* II.6 (ed. F.J. LEROY, *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople* [StT 247]. Città del Vaticano 1967, 238).

⁵⁶ I have followed the stress guidelines outlined in HÖRANDNER, *Prosarhythmus* 34–35. In the above passage, however, the context and the force of the negation seem to demand a full stress on *ouk*.

καὶ λογισμῶν θειοτέρων θειοτέρῳ δρόμῳ περιέρχομαι
 τὴν Βηθανίαν (- - - / - - / - - / - - / - - - - - / -)
 καὶ χεῖρας κροτῶ χορευῶν (- / - / - / -)
 καὶ συναγελάζομαι σκιρτῶν τοῖς νηπίοις (- - - - / - - / - - / -)
 τὸν ἐπινίκιον ὕμνον συγκαταρτιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τῷ
 δεσπότη, (- - - / - - / - - - - / - - / - - / -)
 ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις, (- - / - - - / -)
 εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου.⁵⁷ (- - - / - - - / - - / -)

When, as the children cry out, “Hosanna in the highest,” the Church sounds her clarion call/ and I draw into my ears that splendid and most God-becoming sound/ I am altogether transported with zeal/ (for joy is a mighty thing to renew nature/ and desire knows not how to wait when the time bids)/ and I go about Bethany in the course of godly thought,/ and I clap my hands and dance/ and leaping I join the troop of infants/ and fashion with then a victorious anthem for the Lord/ “Hosanna in the highest./ Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”⁵⁸

Compared to Proclus and Epiphanius’ excerpts, the clauses here are quite long and somewhat prosaic. The homily opens on a beautiful regular pattern (- - - / - - / - - / - - / - - - - - / -), but no sort of rhythmic regularity follows until the very end of the period. Photius moves through the successive *kōla* as if through a narrative – in fact, he does offer a narrative of sorts. He describes hearing the trumpet call, drawing it into his ears, then imagining himself journeying in Bethany, and celebrating together with the children. Despite the formal vocabulary, the rhythm of the opening period is quite informal and strengthens the personal touch of the first-person imaginary celebration. The last *kōlon*, in a rhythmically surprising turn, suddenly repeats the opening phrase: εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου (- - - / - - / - - - - - / -). It is a variation on the theme ὅτε τῶν παιδῶν ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις ἀναβοῶντων (- - - / - - / - - - - - / -) and rounds off the thought as well as the period most suitably.

In conclusion, one might say that the Byzantine rhetoricians, much like their classical predecessors, present a case that “rhythm is in the diction”⁵⁹ and it involves not just the clause, but also the period, the paragraph, and the composition as a whole. Prose discourse, they repeat after Isocrates, would be “dry” if it is not “mixed up with poetic feet of all sorts”⁶⁰ and then go on to elaborate on Dionysius’ comment that prose should “appear metrical but not be *in* meter.”⁶¹ A stress scansion easily reveals that by “poetic feet” they may have meant that, even though classical oratory contains quantitative feet, contemporary Byzantine oratory should resemble accentual poetry, i.e., its rhythm should be based on a regular alternation of stresses as well as on stress responsion. As a matter of fact, occasionally we do see similar parallels drawn between classical quantitative and contemporary accentual poetry:

“Τὴν δὲ λυρικήν ποιήσιν ἐμμελῶς:” Λυρική ποιήσις οὖν ἐστὶν ἢ τὰ ἄσματικά ποιήματα περιέχουσα. Δεῖ δὲ τὸν ποιητὴν ἔμπειρον εἶναι τῆς μουσικῆς, ἵνα μελίῳ καλῶς τὰ ποιήματα, οἷον ἐάν τις θέλῃ ποιῆσαι κανόνα, πρῶτον δεῖ μελίσαι τὸν εἰρμόν, εἶτα ἐπαγαγεῖν τὰ τροπάρια ἰσοσυλλαβοῦντα καὶ ὁμοτονοῦντα τῷ εἰρμῷ καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν ἀποσώζοντα.⁶²

“Lyric poetry [must be read] melodiously:” Lyric poetry encompasses musical poems. It is necessary that the poet be experienced in music, so that he can set the poems to music well. For example, if

⁵⁷ Photius, Homily IV. Ἡ ὁμιλία εἰς τὰ Βάϊα (ed. B. LAOURDAS, Φωτίου ὁμιλίαι. Ἐκδόσις κειμένου, εἰσαγωγή καὶ σχόλια [Ellenika. Parartēma 12]. Thessalonike 1959, 47).

⁵⁸ This poetic translation belongs to C. MANGO, Homilies of Photius. Cambridge 1958, 153.

⁵⁹ Cf. WALZ, Rhetores graeci VII/2, 893.

⁶⁰ The quote is found in a treatise traditionally ascribed to Isocrates, but of dubious authorship: [Isocrates], Technē rhētorikēs (BENSELER – BLASS), fr. 6.

⁶¹ Dionysius, De compositione verborum 25 (255 ROBERTS); WALZ, Rhetores graeci VI 165–166 (Siculus) and VII/2, 905–906.

⁶² UHLIG, Grammatici graeci I/3, 569.

someone wishes to compose a *kanōn*, he must first set the *heirmos* to music, then supply the *troparia*, which must have an equal number of syllables and the same accent placement as the *heirmos* and retain the same metrical shape.⁶³

The excerpt is from a *scholion* on Dionysius Thrax's manual, and explains one of the rules for proper reading: That lyric poetry must be read melodiously, or performed according to music. The grammar teacher seems not to have shied away from drawing a parallel between classical lyric poetry and contemporary Byzantine liturgical poetry, both of which were sung. It must have made it easier for his students to understand, since they were exposed to liturgical music almost daily. What is important, however, is that the comparison between classical and accentual poetry is there and is available for the students to draw their conclusions, especially because the passage does not make a generic distinction between lyric poetry and the *kanōn*.

Whether the examples from the three homilies above will make the case more convincing or not, it is clear from the discussions of the rhetoricians that rhythm was understood – at least in theory – as an important instrument in achieving a particular stylistic and argumentative effect and in lending harmony to a discourse. For the most part, they subscribed to the same principles as their classical predecessors: Oratorical rhythm is produced by composition, word order, and cadence, and it serves to bring out places that need emphasis; it resembles poetry in that one can find poetic lines of all sorts, but they are unobtrusive and varied. Unfortunately, I have no clear answer to the question why lines resembling accentual poetry seem to appear in prose as early as the fourth century – perhaps one needs to look to oratorical prose in order to pinpoint the origins of accentual poetry.⁶⁴

⁶³ On the various meanings of the word σκοπός, one of which is something like the metrical shape or structure of a poem, see W. HÖRANDNER, Court Poetry. Questions of Motifs, Structure, and Function, in: Rhetoric in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium on Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001, ed. E. JEFFREYS. Aldershot 2003, 75–85.

⁶⁴ Cf. LAUXTERMANN, Spring of Rhythm 68–77.

