

Il libro di Bessarione

# in difesa di Platone

Vicende testuali  
e percorsi intellettuali



Edizioni  
Ca' Foscari

In difesa di Platone | In Defence of Plato

**The 24th International Congress  
of Byzantine Studies**  
Venice and Padua, 22-27 August 2022  
The Exhibitions

Series edited by  
Antonio Rigo

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**Edizioni**  
Ca' Foscari

## **The 24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies**

Venice and Padua, 22-27 August 2022

The Exhibitions

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**Il libro di Bessarione  
in difesa di Platone:  
nell'officina  
dell'ultimo filosofo  
bizantino**

Venezia, Museo Correr

23 agosto-31 ottobre 2022

**Bessarion's Book  
in Defence of Plato:  
Among the Papers  
of the Last Byzantine  
Philosopher**

Venice, Museo Correr

23 August-31 October 2022

## Il libro di Bessarione in difesa di Platone: nell'officina dell'ultimo filosofo bizantino

### Mostra organizzata da | Exhibition organised by

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana  
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### Con la collaborazione di | With the collaboration of

Claudia Benvestito (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia)



JOHANNES GUTENBERG  
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## Il libro di Bessarione **in difesa di Platone** Vicende testuali e percorsi intellettuali

Catalogo della mostra  
sui manoscritti bessarionei  
dell'*In Calumniatorem Platonis*  
custoditi nella Biblioteca  
Marciana

a cura di | edited by  
Sergei Mariev

Venezia, Museo Correr  
23 agosto-31 ottobre 2022 | 23 August-31 October 2022

Venezia  
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## Bessarion's Book **in Defence of Plato** Textual Developments and Intellectual Journeys

Catalogue of an Exhibition  
of the Manuscripts of Bessarion's  
*In Calumniatorem Platonis*  
in the Biblioteca Marciana

### **Acknowledgements**

In July 2020, it was announced that the *International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, which had initially been scheduled to take place in Istanbul in 2021, was to be postponed until 2022, “due to the ongoing and uncertain future impact of COVID-19 together with other concerns associated with issues of heritage management” (the AIEB newsletter *Byzantine News*, special issue of July 2020), and that the Congress would no longer be held in Istanbul. The search for a new venue was concluded one month later, in August 2020, when the national committees expressed their preference in favour of Venice and Padua. While the programme and structure of the Congress that had been carefully planned by the Turkish organising committee remained almost intact after this change of venue, the accompanying exhibitions that had already been prepared in Istanbul could not simply be transplanted to a new location. New exhibitions therefore had to be designed that focus on Byzantine heritage preserved in Venice. Byzantine manuscripts that had once been in the possession of Cardinal Bessarion, and were donated by him to the Republic of Venice, are an important component of this unique legacy. The limited amount of time between the announcement of the new venue and the actual date of the Congress made it impossible to prepare and arrange a large-scale exhibition of Bessarion’s manuscripts similar to those previously organised by Tullia Gasparri Leporace and Elpidio Mioni between 31 May and 30 September 1968 or by Gianfranco Fiaccadori between 27 April and 31 May 1994, to name just some of the more prominent examples of major exhibitions of Bessarion’s manuscripts that have taken place in the past. Given the constraints of time, I decided to produce a small cabinet exhibition that would illustrate Bessarion’s work on his major philosophical treatise, the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. This proposal was enthusiastically received by the President of the Organising Committee of the Congress, Antonio Rigo, and his colleagues Alessandra Bucossi and Niccolò Zorzi. However, the considerable uncertainties occasioned by the ‘second wave’ of the COVID-19 pandemic during the late autumn and winter of 2020-21 and the resulting closure to visitors of many cultural institutions in Venice, including the Biblioteca Marciana, prevented immediate preparations. It was not until the late summer of 2021 that the plans to produce this exhibition gradually became a reality. The final decision was taken during a meeting with the Director of Biblioteca Marciana, Stefano Campagnolo, on 6 September 2021. Over the subsequent months, the Museo Correr opened its doors to this project. A beautiful room overlooking Piazza San Marco, which meets all the special requirements for an exhibition of Byzantine manuscripts, was found during the first weeks of 2022 and so the work on the exhibition could finally start.

It is with this chronology of events in mind that I would like to express my enormous gratitude to the many individuals and institutions that have contributed to the success of this project. In the first place, I wish to express my profound gratitude to Antonio Rigo, the President of the Scientific and Organising Committee of *The 24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, for his constant support and for the invaluable help he offered throughout the entire preparatory stage of this project. I am also grateful to Niccolò Zorzi for his ideas, advice and assistance. I would like to express my particular gratitude to Stefano Campagnolo for the enthusiasm with which he first embraced this venture and made it possible. I am equally grateful to Andrea Bellieni for giving this exhibition a temporary home, for practical and logistical support and for his advice. My special thanks are due to Monica Viero of the Museo Correr for all the time and energy she dedicated to this project and for the invaluable advice and support she provided during my visits to Venice in the months preceding its inauguration. In the Biblioteca Marciana, the person responsible for the inspection and preparation of the manuscripts for this exhibition was Claudia Benvenuto, whom I would like to thank for all the effort, time and experience that she invested in this project, which would never have become a reality without her commitment, professional expertise and dedication to her work. This project would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the German Research Agency (DFG) and particularly of the Heisenberg-Programme. I am especially grateful to the Byzantine Studies Department of the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz for administrative and logistical support during the preparation of this exhibition and in particular to Johannes Pahlitzsch and Zachary Chitwood for their help and time. I am also grateful to Benjamin Furlas of the Leibniz ScienceCampus Mainz Frankfurt for his support in the earlier stages of the project and for the contacts with the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Mainz that he put at my disposal. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Peter Schreiner for his time, his ideas and suggestions, which he provided during our conversations on this subject, and to Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann for her time, advice and support.

Sergei Mariev

Chi viene chiamato a dirigere la Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana ha da subito la percezione dell'importanza dell'incarico, ma soprattutto ha la percezione che questa biblioteca è ancora 'la biblioteca del Cardinale Bessarione'. Certo, nel tempo – i 554 anni dalla fondazione, durante i quali non ha mai cessato di operare, unica fra le istituzioni della Serenissima Repubblica – è diventata molto di più, senza tuttavia che il nucleo dei manoscritti bessarionei perdesse di importanza e centralità.

È per questo motivo che ho ritenuto doveroso che, in occasione del 24° *Convegno Internazionale di Studi Bizantini*, la Marciana non solo fornisse tutto il sostegno possibile all'iniziativa, ma che il Congresso dovesse essere integrato con importanti esposizioni di manoscritti.

Molte sono state le mostre di manoscritti bessarionei, ma ogni nuova proposta è utile a misurare il progresso fatto dagli studi di bizantinistica, e così è anche questa volta: l'immagine che emerge dall'esposizione, e che certamente sarà confermata dal Congresso, è quella di una disciplina viva e attiva, capace di recepire ogni nuovo approccio metodologico e fare nuove sintesi storiche.

La proposta del prof. Sergei Mariev, centrata su una delle opere principali del grande Cardinale e sul fulcro dei suoi interessi filosofici, si presta particolarmente bene a illustrarne la figura e l'impatto avuto sulla cultura dell'Occidente. La mostra è stata resa possibile grazie all'aiuto di molti: dagli organizzatori del Congresso, i professori Antonio Rigo e Niccolò Zorzi, ai dirigenti e al personale del Museo Correr, Gabriella Belli, Andrea Bellieni e Monica Viero, al prezioso contributo organizzativo della funzionaria restauratrice della Marciana, Claudia Benvestito.

A tutti loro, e naturalmente al prof. Sergei Mariev, va il mio ringraziamento per aver voluto valorizzare un patrimonio che, oggi è possibile comprendere grazie alla lente prospettiva del tempo e a studi sempre più accurati, è cresciuto di importanza nei secoli.

**Stefano Campagnolo**

Direttore della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana

Il libro di Bessarione in difesa di Platone. Vicende testuali e percorsi intellettuali  
Bessarion's Book in Defence of Plato. Textual Developments and Intellectual Journeys  
a cura di | edited by Sergei Mariev

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**In difesa di Platone | In Defence of Plato**  
Vicende testuali e percorsi intellettuali | Textual Developments and Intellectual Journeys

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Part 1

# General Introduction

# **Bessarion and the Last Philosophical Treatise of Byzantine Civilisation**

## **An Introduction and a Short Guide to the Exhibition**

Sergei Mariev

Bessarion (1408-1472) was one of the most influential and at the same time fascinating Byzantine figures of the fifteenth century. Born in Trebizond on the Black Sea, he was educated in Constantinople and studied philosophy in the circle of Georgios Gemistos (Plethon), before embarking on a remarkable career: he became one of the main architects of the Union of the Byzantine and Roman Catholic Churches during the Council of Ferrara/Florence in 1438/39, a cardinal, three times a candidate for the papal throne, a renowned scholar and a patron of Byzantine learning after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Many of his political undertakings ultimately failed or remained without long-lasting impact: the Union of the Churches that he was so eager to bring about was rescinded a few years after his death; the crusade against the Ottomans he had hoped would liberate his fatherland never took place; his ambitions to become Pope were never realised. Nonetheless, it was his efforts aimed at the preservation of Byzantine cultural heritage after the Fall of Constantinople that left the most profound and enduring legacy.

Bessarion was an avid collector of books during his entire lifetime. He was not rich by birth and in his youth he had to save money to be able to buy books. Later in life, especially after he became a cardinal and had considerable financial means at his disposal, he managed to assemble one of the largest private collections of Greek and Latin manuscripts of his time. Shortly before his death, he donated his entire library to the Republic of Venice and made it a condition of this bequest that his collection should be kept in

# **Bessarione e l'ultima opera filosofica della cultura bizantina**

## **Introduzione alla figura di Bessarione e breve guida al percorso espositivo**

Sergei Mariev

Bessarione (1408-1472) fu una delle personalità più affascinanti e, al contempo, uno dei Bizantini più influenti del XV secolo. Egli nacque a Trebisonda sul Mar Nero e fu educato a Costantinopoli. Studiò filosofia alla scuola di Giorgio Gemisto (Pletone) per poi intraprendere una carriera prodigiosa: durante il Concilio di Ferrara/Firenze negli anni 1438/39 Bessarione fu uno dei principali artefici dell'unione tra la Chiesa bizantina e la Chiesa cattolica romana; fu cardinale per tre volte candidato al trono papale, studioso rinomato e patrono della cultura bizantina dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli nell'anno 1453.

Molte delle sue iniziative politiche alla fine non furono coronate da successo o non ebbero un impatto di lunga durata: l'unione delle Chiese, nella quale pure egli aveva profuso grande impegno, fu sciolta solo qualche anno dopo la sua morte; la crociata contro i Turchi nella quale riponeva la speranza di liberare la sua patria non ebbe mai luogo; le sue ambizioni di diventare Papa non poterono mai realizzarsi. I suoi sforzi volti a preservare il patrimonio culturale bizantino in Occidente dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli rappresentano invece il suo più profondo e duraturo retaggio.

Per tutta la vita Bessarione fu un avido collezionista di libri. Non era ricco di nascita; nella sua giovinezza aveva dovuto risparmiare per poter acquistare i libri. Più tardi, dopo essere diventato cardinale e avendo mezzi considerevoli a sua disposizione, riuscì a creare una delle più grandi raccolte private di manoscritti greci e latini del suo tempo. Poco prima della sua morte, Bessarione donò la sua intera biblioteca alla Repubblica di Venezia,

one place and not sold or otherwise dispersed, that it remain accessible to all who wish to consult it and that a library be built to house what he rightly considered a veritable treasure. His donation laid the foundations of the Marciana Library.

While the donation of his library to the city of Venice is a well-known event in the history of European civilisation, his other efforts to preserve and disseminate Byzantine heritage after the Fall of Constantinople may be less familiar today.

One of his most prominent achievements was a philosophical treatise entitled *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, which is now recognised as both the last philosophical work of Byzantine civilisation and the first major philosophical treatise to appear before the writings of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Bessarion started working on the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* towards the end of 1458. Earlier that year, Georgios Trapezuntios, a Byzantine scholar, papal secretary, teacher of rhetoric and translator from Greek into Latin, released a manuscript copy of his own treatise with the title *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* (A Comparison of the Philosophers Plato and Aristotle). In spite of its seemingly neutral title, this book was not a sober comparative analysis of Platonic and Aristotelian teachings, but an aggressive attack on Platonism. What is more, the book contained an explicit onslaught on Bessarion's teacher, Georgios Gemistos (Plethon), for professing Platonic views that Trapezuntios deemed not only heretical but potentially threatening to the whole of Western civilisation. In this treatise Trapezuntios assumed the role of a prophet who was warning the West of the grave dangers that the spread of Platonic philosophy might pose. The publication of the *Comparatio* was also a threat to the reputation of Bessarion himself, who was not keen on stressing his intellectual ties to his teacher Plethon especially during the run-up to the papal conclave of 1458.

It is now impossible to determine whether the publication of Trapezuntios' book actually played any decisive role in Bessarion's failure to become Pope during the conclave of 1458. What we know, however, is that later during the same year, after the conclave, Bessarion retired to the baths of Viterbo and asked his associates to procure for him some copies of Trapezuntios' work and other materials that reflected his adversary's views. It was then that the work on his book in defence of Plato began, or, as it later came to be called, *Against the Calumniator of Plato*. Bessarion's initial plan was to write a reply to each of the three parts of the tripartite treatise written by Georgios Trapezuntios and to show that his adversary's arguments were unfounded and, what is more, that he lacked the necessary understanding not only of Plato, whom he criticised, but also of Aristotle, whom he wished to eulogise.

It was not unusual for Byzantine scholars to engage in extensive polemical debates. Just a few years earlier, for instance, Bessarion's teacher, Plethon, upon returning home from the Council of Ferrara/Florence (1438/39), had written a book in which he had sought to underline the advantages of Platonic philosophy over the teachings of Aristotle. Plethon's book met with fierce criticism from Gennadios Scholarios, another important intellectual figure of the time, which in turn provoked a further response from Plethon.

Bessarion's reply to Trapezuntios could have become a mere episode in the scholarly controversy over Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy among Byzantine intellectuals. However, the political situation, the geographical location of the new debate and the overall cultural setting were very different this time. Bessarion and Trapezuntios resided in the West. The Byzantine Empire, their homeland, had been conquered by the Ottomans in 1453, leaving them as 'paladins' or at least 'ambassadors' of a culture that had become 'homeless' almost overnight. Their debate was taking place not on-

ponendo come condizione del lascito che la sua raccolta restasse in un singolo luogo, che non fosse venduta o altrimenti dispersa, che rimanesse accessibile a chiunque fosse interessato a consultarla e che una biblioteca fosse costruita per ospitare quello che egli – giustamente – considerava essere un autentico tesoro. Dalla donazione bessarionea sarebbe nata la Biblioteca Marciana.

La donazione della biblioteca bessarionea alla città di Venezia è nella storia della civiltà europea un evento ben noto; gli altri sforzi bessarionei rivolti a preservare l'eredità bizantina dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli, invece, sono per certi versi ancora poco conosciuti.

Una delle conquiste più luminose del percorso di Bessarione è rappresentata da un trattato filosofico intitolato *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. Tale trattato da un lato è l'ultima grande opera filosofica della cultura bizantina e dall'altro segna l'*incipit* della nuova epoca che sarà caratterizzata dalle opere di Marsilio Ficino e Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Bessarione iniziò a lavorare all'*In Calumniatorem Platonis* verso la fine del 1458. Qualche tempo prima, nello stesso anno, Giorgio Trapezunzio, uno studioso bizantino, segretario apostolico, professore di retorica, traduttore dal greco al latino, aveva messo in circolazione la copia manoscritta del suo trattato intitolato *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* (Comparazione tra i filosofi Platone ed Aristotele). Nonostante il titolo apparentemente neutrale, il libro del Trapezunzio non conteneva un'analisi imparziale delle dottrine filosofiche di Platone ed Aristotele, bensì un attacco durissimo al Platonismo. E c'è di più: nel libro Giorgio sferrava anche un'aspra critica al maestro di Bessarione, Giorgio Gemisto (Pletone), accusato di sostenere dottrine platoniche non solo eretiche ma anche pericolose e che avrebbero costituito, a suo dire, una minaccia per l'intera civiltà occidentale. Nel suo trattato, Giorgio si ergeva a profeta avvertendo l'Occidente dei gravi pericoli connessi alla diffusione della filosofia platonica. La pubblicazione

della *Comparatio* costituiva una seria minaccia per la reputazione dello stesso Bessarione, poco propenso ad attirare l'attenzione sul suo legame intellettuale con il maestro Pletone, soprattutto nel periodo antecedente al conclave per l'elezione del nuovo papa nell'anno 1458.

Non è possibile stabilire con certezza se la pubblicazione del libro del Trapezunzio abbia effettivamente giocato un ruolo decisivo nel fallimento del tentativo bessarioneo di diventare Papa durante il conclave del 1458. Ciò che è certo è, invece, che nello stesso anno, qualche tempo dopo il conclave, Bessarione si ritirò presso i bagni di Viterbo e chiese al suo *entourage* di procurargli alcune copie del libro del Trapezunzio insieme ad altri materiali rilevanti ai fini della ricostruzione della posizione teoretica del suo avversario. Fu questo il momento in cui Bessarione cominciò a lavorare al suo libro in difesa di Platone, libro che più tardi sarebbe stato intitolato *Contro il Calunniatore di Platone*. Il progetto di Bessarione era inizialmente quello di redigere un'opera in tre libri, ognuno indirizzato contro uno dei tre libri in cui si articolava la *Comparatio* di Giorgio; Bessarione intendeva così dimostrare che gli argomenti dell'avversario erano infondati e, soprattutto, che Giorgio non solo non comprendeva il pensiero platonico, da lui aspramente criticato, ma nemmeno quello di Aristotele, da lui pure tanto elogiato.

Non era cosa inusuale per gli studiosi bizantini il fatto di partecipare ad accesi dibattiti e polemiche. Ad esempio, solo qualche anno prima, il maestro di Bessarione, Pletone, al ritorno dal concilio di Ferrara/Firenze (1438/39), aveva scritto un libello, il *De Differentiis Platonis et Aristotelis*, in cui metteva a confronto la filosofia platonica con quella aristotelica ed evidenziava le aporie insite nei ragionamenti aristotelici dimostrando la superiorità di Platone rispetto a Aristotele. Il libro di Pletone aveva suscitato le critiche di Giorgio (Gennadio) Scolario, un suo contemporaneo, studioso di grande fama. La risposta di Scolario aveva a sua volta provocato una nuova replica da parte di Pletone.

ly in front of a Byzantine audience, but they also had to keep in mind a Western audience, which spoke another language (Latin) and relied on a different set of authorities to support their views and opinions.

All these factors had a significant influence on the course of the debate between Trapezuntios and Bessarion and ultimately shaped the work *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, which Bessarion started to write in 1458, but finished more than 10 years later, in 1469, at the time when the ripples created by the publication of Trapezuntios' *Comparatio* in 1458 had certainly subsided and the quarrel between the Papal secretary and a Roman cardinal must have been long forgotten. In 1469 Bessarion left to posterity a monumental work in six books and in two versions, Latin and Greek, which gave an important impulse for the study of the Platonic heritage in the West.

In addition to the significance of Bessarion's book in defence of Plato for the study of Byzantine Platonic traditions, the material preserved in the Marciana Library is also interesting from another perspective. It sheds a unique light on the working practices of a Byzantine author. The preserved documentation includes not on-

## 1 Final Redaction

This cabinet contains manuscripts Gr. Z. 198 (744) and Lat. Z. 229 (1695). These are the handwritten copies of Bessarion's monumental work in Greek and in Latin respectively, commissioned by Bessarion for his own use. They once had a place in his library in Rome. Use of parchment, an expensive writing material, and the presence of rich ornamentation with gilded elements underline the importance Bessarion attached to these two books.

To appreciate the unique character of these two manuscripts, it is important to bear in mind that Bessarion lived in a time that witnessed an important technologi-

cal transition in the way books were produced and distributed, namely the invention of the book printing. During his youth and most of his adult life, 'books' used to be copied by hand by learned scribes, as had been the case for centuries. Towards the end of Bessarion's life, the spread of new technology started to transform the culture of books. With the introduction of book printing, books became cheaper to produce and it was possible to print larger numbers of copies and thus reach a larger audience. Bessarion was quick to adopt this new technology for his monumental intellectual project and so the

ly the final copies of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* that had been in possession of its author, but also a number of drafts that Bessarion made in the process of composing the book, with handwritten remarks by him and the members of his learned entourage, whose advise he regularly sought in course of his work, as well as other manuscripts that he consulted during his work and even a text by his 'ghost writer' Giovanni Gatti, who provided him with much of the raw material he used for the completion of the final version of book 3.

All this material clearly demonstrates that writing a book is not a solitary activity practised in the solitude of a studio or a monk's cell, but a collective undertaking that implies intense collaboration with others over a long period of time and a continuous effort of rewriting and correcting. If this was the method that Bessarion followed while working on his book, then it is quite probable that other Byzantine writers before him worked on their texts in a similar way. As direct evidence for the working practices of Byzantine authors before Bessarion is very scarce, the material presented at the exhibition is particularly valuable and revealing.

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La risposta di Bessarione al Trapezunzio avrebbe potuto costituire semplicemente un ulteriore episodio all'interno della controversia platonico-aristotelica in atto tra gli intellettuali bizantini. Bessarione e Trapezunzio si trovavano però in Occidente: situazione politica, luogo del dibattito e contesto culturale in cui si inseriva la polemica erano quindi molto diversi. L'impero Bizantino, la loro patria, era stato conquistato dagli Ottomani nell'anno 1453, il che li aveva trasformati in 'paladini' o almeno 'ambasciatori' di una cultura che aveva perso la sua 'dimora' quasi da un giorno all'altro. Il loro dibattito si svolgeva ora non solo dinanzi agli altri eruditi bizantini, bensì anche dinanzi a un pubblico occidentale di cui essi non potevano non tener conto. Si trattava di un pubblico che parlava un'altra lingua (il latino) e si riferiva ad altre autorità per sostenere opinioni e teorie.

Tutti questi fattori influenzarono notevolmente il modo in cui si svolse il dibattito tra il Trapezunzio e Bessarione e alla fine plasmarono e diedero forma all'opera *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. Bessarione iniziò a redigere tale opera nel 1458 ma finì più di dieci anni dopo, ovvero nel 1469, in un periodo in cui le ripercussioni originate dalla pubblicazione della *Comparatio* del Trapezunzio nel 1458 si erano smorzate e la *querelle* tra il segretario apostolico e il cardinale romano era con ogni probabilità già caduta nell'oblio. Nel 1469 Bessarione lasciava ai posteri un'opera monumentale in sei libri e in due versioni (una latina e una greca), un'opera che avrebbe dato un notevole impulso allo studio dell'eredità platonica in Occidente.

Ma il libro bessarioneo in difesa di Platone non ha solo un significato per lo studio della tradizione platonica

## 1 La versione finale

La vetrina contiene i manoscritti Gr. Z. 198 (744) e Lat. Z. 229 (1695). Si tratta delle copie manoscritte dell'opera monumentale di Bessarione, rispettivamente

bizantina e della sua ricezione in Occidente. Il materiale relativo a quest'opera che è conservato nella Biblioteca Marciana è interessante anche da un'altra prospettiva, giacché esso getta una luce inedita sulla modalità di lavoro degli autori bizantini. I documenti conservati nella Marciana comprendono non solo le versioni finali dell'*In Calumniatorem Platonis* che erano appartenute all'autore stesso, ma anche un certo numero di bozze che Bessarione aveva realizzato nel processo di redazione dell'opera e che contengono delle note scritte a mano da Bessarione stesso e dagli studiosi, membri del suo *entourage*, con i quali Bessarione durante il suo lavoro regolarmente si confrontava, nonché alcuni altri manoscritti che Bessarione consultava durante il suo lavoro e persino un testo redatto dal suo *ghost-writer*, Giovanni Gatti. Questi fornì a Bessarione gran parte del materiale di base che il Cardinale usò per ultimare la versione finale del libro III.

Tutto questo materiale mostra chiaramente come scrivere un libro non fosse un'attività solitaria praticata nell'isolamento di uno studiolo o nella cella di un monaco, ma un'impresa collettiva che comportava l'intensa collaborazione con altri studiosi per un lungo periodo e un continuo sforzo di riscrittura e correzione. Se questo è il metodo usato da Bessarione per la redazione del suo libro, è molto probabile che altri scrittori bizantini prima di lui lavorassero ai loro testi in modo analogo. Il materiale esposto nell'ambito della presente mostra è tanto prezioso, proprio perché documenti testuali che illustrano il metodo di lavoro degli autori bizantini vissuti in epoche precedenti a quella bessarionea sono molto scarsi.

te in greco e in latino, commissionate da Bessarione per uso personale. Un tempo tali copie avevano avuto un posto nella sua biblioteca a Roma. L'uso della pergamena,

Latin version of his treatise appeared in print in 1469. The period of transition from hand-written manuscripts to printed books is somewhat similar to our times, when we use books on paper along with e-books that can be read on a variety of electronic devices, are cheaper to produce and easier to distribute. The unique character of

the copies on display here lies in the fact that Bessarion, who commissioned them, evidently preferred to have a richly decorated hand-written copy of his book be made for his own use along with and in addition to the printed version of his work, which was obviously intended for use by a larger audience.

## 2 Bessarion and Georgios Trapezuntios

Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis* was conceived as a response to Georgios Trapezuntios' *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*. This cabinet introduces Bessarion and his adversary Georgios Trapezuntios through their portraits and illustrates the beginning of the controversy by displaying a hand-written copy of the *Comparatio* that was in possession of Bessarion, together with a later, printed copy of this work.

The two portraits are taken from Paolo Giovio's *Elogia Virorum Literis Illustrium*. We should not expect these portraits to convey a realistic impression about what the two protagonists actually looked like in real life. They are highly stylised images, showing in the case of Bessarion two attributes of the Greek Cardinal: his pontifical hat and a beard, which was a visual sign of his Greek identity. Giovio's portrait of Bessarion is misleading in not suggesting his bulbous nose. The most realistic image of Bessarion is the tempera on wood by Gentile Bellini with the title *Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members*

*of the Scuola della Carità in prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary* (London, National Gallery). The only contemporary image of Trapezuntios (in a presentation manuscript Vat. Lat. 385, 121r) has him not only bald but also clean shaven, unlike the bearded figure with a fine head of hair on display here.

The Latin manuscript Lat. VI, 76 (2848), written by at least 15 different scribes, is the only hand-written copy of the *Comparatio* presently held in the Marciana Library. It was commissioned in 1458 by Bessarion, who was very eager at that time to have a copy of his adversary's book in a shortest possible time so that he could begin his work in defence of Plato. What is very surprising, however, is that this copy does not contain Bessarion's comments and remarks, as we would expect, had this been the Cardinal's actual working copy. It is therefore quite possible that this is only one of several copies that circulated in Bessarion's circle, but that he actually used a different copy in the process of his own work.

un materiale di scrittura costoso, e la presenza di una ricca decorazione con elementi dorati sottolineano l'importanza che Bessarione attribuiva a questi due libri.

Per capire cosa rende speciali questi due manoscritti, è importante ricordare che Bessarione visse in un'epoca che fu caratterizzata da un'importante transizione tecnologica nel modo di produrre e distribuire i libri, ossia l'invenzione della stampa. Durante la sua giovinezza e la maggior parte della sua vita adulta, i 'libri' venivano copiati a mano da scribi dotti, così come del resto era avvenuto per secoli. Verso la fine della vita di Bessarione, la diffusione della nuova tecnologia iniziò a trasformare la cultura del libro. Con l'introduzione della stampa, i libri divennero più economici da produrre e fu possibile stamparne un numero maggiore di copie, raggiungendo così un pubblico più vasto. Bessarione non tardò ad adottare

## 2 Bessarione e Giorgio Trapezunzio

*L'In Calumniatorem Platonis* di Bessarione fu concepito come replica all'opera di Giorgio Trapezunzio intitolata *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*. La vetrina presenta Bessarione e il suo avversario Giorgio Trapezunzio attraverso i loro ritratti e illustra l'inizio della loro controversia esibendo, da un lato, una copia scritta a mano della *Comparatio* che era in possesso di Bessarione, dall'altro lato, una copia a stampa di tale opera, risalente a un periodo più tardo.

Le due immagini sono tratte dall'*Elogia Virorum Literis Illustrium* di Paolo Giovio. Non dobbiamo aspettarci che queste raffigurazioni riproducano in maniera realistica l'aspetto che i due protagonisti avevano effettivamente nella loro vita reale. Si tratta di immagini altamente stilizzate, che evidenziano, nel caso di Bessarione, due attributi del cardinale greco: il cappello cardinalizio e la barba, che era un segno visivo della sua identità greca. Il ritratto di Bessarione realizzato da Giovio si disco-

questa nuova tecnologia per il suo monumentale progetto intellettuale e così la versione latina del suo trattato apparve a stampa nel 1469. La transizione dai manoscritti realizzati a mano ai libri stampati è in qualche modo simile a quanto stiamo vivendo al giorno d'oggi: attualmente si utilizzano infatti i libri su carta parallelamente agli e-book che possono essere letti su diversi dispositivi elettronici, sono più economici da produrre e più facili da distribuire. Ciò che fa delle due copie esposte in questa vetrina qualcosa di unico è il fatto che Bessarione, che le aveva commissionate, evidentemente voleva che una copia manoscritta riccamente decorata del suo libro fosse realizzata per il suo uso personale insieme e in aggiunta alla versione stampata della sua opera, ovviamente destinata a un pubblico più vasto.

sta dal vero in quanto non evidenzia il suo naso bulboso. L'immagine più realistica di Bessarione è la tempera su tavola di Gentile Bellini dal titolo *Il Cardinale Bessarione e due membri della Scuola della Carità venerano un reliquiario* (Londra, National Gallery). L'unica immagine del Trapezunzio realizzata nel suo tempo (e contenuta nel manoscritto di presentazione, Vat. Lat. 385, 121r) lo ritrae non solo calvo ma anche rasato, a differenza della figura con barba e folli capelli qui presentata.

Il codice Lat. VI, 76 (2848), realizzato da almeno quindici scribi diversi, è l'unica copia della *Comparatio* scritta a mano che sia conservata attualmente in Marciana. Fu commissionata nel 1458 da Bessarione, che all'epoca era molto desideroso di avere una copia del libro del suo avversario nel più breve tempo possibile, per poter iniziare la sua opera in difesa di Platone. Ciò che sorprende, tuttavia, è che questa copia non contiene commenti e osservazioni di Bessarione, come ci si sarebbe aspettati se questa

### 3 Working with Plato

This cabinet contains two manuscripts that illustrate Bessarion's interest in Platonic texts and his expertise in this subject. Cod. Gr. Z. 199 (604) is open at a section of the manuscript that contains Bessarion's criticism of the Latin translation of Plato's *Laws*. The main text on the page was copied for Bessarion by one of the scribes working for him in such a way as to leave large margins around the text, which Bessarion then filled with his own corrections and remarks. In the third section of this volume, an article by Sergei Mariev entitled

“Tracking Changes and Corrections in Bessarion's Manuscript” reconstructs in detail how Bessarion made corrections to his texts.

Cod. Gr. Z. 526 (776) contains excerpts from many Ancient Greek authors, which were produced by Bessarion himself either when he was a student in Constantinople and in Mystras on the Peloponnese or after his arrival in Italy, but the exact dating of these excerpts is disputed. The manuscript is open at a page that contains Bessarion's excerpts from Plato's *Laws*.

### 4 Bessarion's Plato

The foundations of Bessarion's profound knowledge of Platonic philosophy were laid during his period of study in Mystras in the Peloponnese under the supervision of Georgios Gemistos (Plethon). Cod. Gr. Z. 188 on display here contains a copy of Plato's *Laws* that had once belonged to Plethon. It was Plethon who deleted a number

of passages from the Platonic text. The codex is open at f. 6, which presents a passage of mutilated Platonic text. The passage erased by Bessarion's teacher contained lines 636c7-d5 of the dialogue and reads in English translation:

And we all accuse the Cretans of concocting the story about Ganymede. Because it was the belief that they derived their laws from Zeus, they added on this story about Zeus in order that they might be following his example in enjoying this pleasure as well. Now with the story itself we have no more concern.  
(Plato, *Laws*, transl. R.G. Bury, vol. 1, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1926)

Bessarion discovered a large number of mistakes in Georgios Trapezuntios' translation of Plato's *Laws* into Latin and severely criticised him. The criticism of Trapezuntios' translation of the *Laws* constitutes book 5 of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. While working on Trapezuntios' translation, Bessarion used a different copy of Plato's *Laws* that was also in his possession,

namely Cod. Gr. Z. 187 (742), also displayed here. The text Bessarion actually used in the process of correcting Trapezuntios' translation did not contain the passages that Plethon had deleted, but provided a number of readings that helped Bessarion to clarify the meaning of Plato's text, which had become obfuscated in Trapezuntios' translation.

copia fosse stata la copia di lavoro del cardinale. È quindi molto probabile che questa fosse solo una delle copie che

circolavano nella cerchia di Bessarione, ma che in realtà egli utilizzasse una copia diversa nell'ambito del suo lavoro.

### 3 Il lavoro sul testo platonico

La presente vetrina illustra l'interesse di Bessarione per i testi platonici e la sua competenza in materia. Il codice Gr. Z. 199 (604) è aperto alla sezione del manoscritto che contiene la critica di Bessarione alla traduzione latina delle *Leggi* platoniche realizzata da Giorgio Trapezunzio. Il corpo del testo venne copiato per Bessarione da uno degli scribi che lavoravano per lui in modo da lasciare ampi margini intorno al testo, margini che Bessarione poi riempì con le proprie correzioni e osservazioni. Nella terza sezione del presente catalogo si trova un saggio redatto da Sergei Mariev e intitolato «Tracking

Changes and Corrections in Bessarion's Manuscripts» che ricostruisce dettagliatamente la modalità con cui Bessarione apportava le correzioni ai suoi testi.

Il codice Gr. Z. 526 (776) contiene *excerpta* tratti da molti autori greci antichi e realizzati da Bessarione quando era studente a Costantinopoli e a Mistra, nel Peloponnese, oppure dopo il suo arrivo in Italia; la datazione esatta di questi brani è in ogni caso controversa. Il manoscritto è aperto su una pagina che contiene *excerpta* bessarionei tratti dalle *Leggi* di Platone.

### 4 Il Platone di Bessarione

È durante il suo periodo di studio a Mistra, nel Peloponnese, sotto la supervisione di Giorgio Gemisto (Pletone) che Bessarione getta le basi della sua profonda conoscenza della filosofia platonica. Il codice Gr. Z. 188 qui esposto contiene una copia delle *Leggi* di Platone un tempo appartenuta a Pletone. Fu Pletone a cancellare alcu-

ni passaggi dal testo platonico. Il codice è aperto al f. 6, che presenta un passaggio del testo platonico che è stato mutilato. Il passo cancellato dal maestro di Bessarione conteneva le righe 636c7-d5 del dialogo e recita in traduzione italiana:

Certo tutti noi biasimiamo il mito di Ganimede, ritenuto opera dei Cretesi. Costoro, in effetti, ritenendo che le loro leggi derivavano da Zeus, gli attribuirono, oltre agli altri, pure questo mito, per poter godere anche di un tale piacere con il pretesto di seguire il dio. Ma lasciamo perdere il mito.  
(*Platone - Tutti gli scritti*, a cura di G. Reale, trad. a cura di R. Radice, Milano, Bompiani, 2000)

Bessarione identificò molti errori nella traduzione latina delle *Leggi* di Platone eseguita dal Trapezunzio e lo criticò aspramente per essi. La critica della traduzione latina delle *Leggi* ad opera del Trapezunzio costituisce il libro V dell'*In Calumniatorem Platonis*. Durante il suo esame cri-

tico della traduzione del Trapezunzio, Bessarione usava però un'altra copia delle *Leggi* platoniche, che si trovava altresì in suo possesso, ossia il codice Gr. Z. 187 (742), copia che è anch'essa esposta nella presente vetrina. Il testo che Bessarione utilizzò effettivamente nel proces-

## 5 A Change of Plan: Gatti's *Notata* and the Reworking of the Treatise

Bessarion's book was born as a response to Georgios Trapezuntios. During the long ten year that Bessarion spent working on this treatise, he made significant changes to the original plan of the book. The most significant restructuring of the treatise occurred when Bessarion decided to replace the original third book with the material that had been provided to him by a member of his entourage, the Dominican Giovanni Gatti. More details on Giovanni Gatti and his work are provided in John Monfasani's article in the third part of this volume. Cod. Lat. Z. 226 (1636) on display here reflects an earlier phase of Bessarion's work on the treatise and is open at the beginning of the 'old' book 3, which was then replaced by the material provided by his theological advisor. The manuscript Lat. VI, 61 (2592), open here at the first section of Gatti's book, illustrates the initial stage of the process whereby Bessarion integrated Gatti's ma-

terial. The text visible at the top of the page to the right (f. 103r) reads "Ista sunt notata per Ioannem Gattum theologum" (These are the *Notata* by the theologian Ioannes Gatti). This line was crossed out by Bessarion when he started working on the material stemming from this 'ghost writer' in order to transform it into his own text. It is important to stress that Bessarion's use of Gatti's text is not a plagiarism, in the sense of a deceitful representation of another author's language, thoughts, ideas or expressions as one's own original work, but rather it is more comparable to the practices of a Renaissance artist's workshop, where gifted assistants were entrusted with creating, for example, the hands of the figure or a background scene for the work of the master, who subsequently integrated their preliminary work with the rest of his own masterpiece.

## 6 *De Natura et Arte*

*De Natura et Arte* (On Nature and Art) is the title of the sixth and final book of Bessarion's treatise *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. His work on this concluding section also goes back to 1458. In that year, Georgios Trapezuntios not only published his *Comparatio* in Latin but also caused an intrigue among the learned Byzantines who were close to Bessarion. He intercepted a letter Bessarion had written in reply to a question from Theodoros Gazes. Pretending to believe that the letter he had intercepted was not from Bessarion, but from Bessarion's secretary, Jesaia of Cyprus, Trapezuntios harshly criticised the arguments it contained, made several copies of the original letter and his critical remarks and circulated this *pamphlet* among Greek-speaking intellectuals. Being secretary to the Pope, Trapezuntios claimed

the right to criticise the missive of a cardinal's secretary, but counted on the fact that everybody who was close to Bessarion would know the true identity of the author of the letter he had criticised. In other words, by targeting Jesaia, Trapezuntios was ostensibly respecting the hierarchical conventions of his time, but was actually aiming at Bessarion himself. The nature of the argument, which revolved around Plethon's conception of the role of deliberation in art and nature, made this intrigue potentially even more dangerous for Bessarion in the year of the conclave in which, for a second time, he hoped to be elected Pope, because this letter put his intellectual ties to Plethon in the spotlight and misrepresented both Plethon's views and Bessarion's own explanation of them. It was not only natural, but imperative

so di correzione della traduzione latina eseguita dal Trapezunzio non conteneva dunque i passaggi che Pletone aveva cancellato, ma forniva una serie di lezioni che aiu-

tarono Bessarione a chiarire il senso del testo di Platone che era stato - a suo dire - stravolto e obnubilato dalla traduzione del Trapezunzio.

## 5 Cambio di programma: le *Notata* di Gatti e la rielaborazione del trattato

Il libro di Bessarione nasce come risposta a Giorgio Trapezunzio. Durante il lungo periodo (dieci anni) che Bessarione trascorse lavorando a questa sua opera, egli apportò modifiche significative al progetto originale dell'opera. La ristrutturazione più significativa del trattato avvenne quando Bessarione decise di sostituire quello che era originariamente il libro III con il materiale che gli era stato fornito da un membro del suo *entourage*, il domenicano Giovanni Gatti. Maggiori dettagli su Giovanni Gatti e il suo lavoro si trovano nel saggio di John Monfasani, contenuto nella sezione terza del presente catalogo. Il codice Lat. Z. 226 (1636) qui esposto riflette una fase precedente del lavoro di Bessarione ed è aperto all'inizio di quello che era originariamente il libro III e che in seguito fu sostituito dal materiale fornito dal suo consulente in materia teologica.

Il manoscritto Lat. VI, 61 (2592), qui aperto alla prima sezione delle *Notata* di Gatti, illustra la fase inizia-

le del processo durante il quale Bessarione integrò nella sua opera il materiale di Gatti. Il testo visibile in alto nella pagina a destra (f. 103r) recita «Ista sunt notata per Ioannem Gattum theologum» (queste sono le *Notata* del teologo Giovanni Gatti). Questa riga è stata poi cancellata da Bessarione quando questi ha iniziato a rielaborare il materiale proveniente dal suo *ghost-writer* per trasformarlo in un testo suo proprio. È importante sottolineare che l'uso del testo di Gatti da parte di Bessarione non rappresenta un plagio, ovvero la presentazione ingannevole della lingua, i pensieri, le idee o le espressioni di un altro autore come opera originale; piuttosto, esso è paragonabile alle pratiche in uso nella bottega di un pittore rinascimentale, dove assistenti talentuosi venivano incaricati di realizzare, ad esempio, le mani della figura o una scena di sfondo per l'opera del maestro, che successivamente completava e perfezionava il lavoro preliminare degli assistenti realizzando il suo capolavoro.

## 6 *De Natura et Arte*

*De Natura et Arte* (Sulla natura e l'arte) è il titolo del sesto e ultimo libro del trattato bessarioneo, *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. La stesura di questa sezione conclusiva risale anch'essa al 1458. In quell'anno, Giorgio Trapezunzio non solo pubblicò la sua *Comparatio* in latino, ma ordì anche un intrigo che coinvolgeva i dotti bizantini vicini a Bessarione. Egli intercettò una lettera che Bessarione aveva scritto in risposta a una questione posta da Teodoro Gaza. Fingendo di credere che la lettera inter-

ceettata non fosse di Bessarione, ma del suo segretario, Isaia di Cipro, Trapezunzio criticò aspramente gli argomenti contenuti in tale lettera, realizzò quindi diverse copie della lettera originale e delle sue osservazioni critiche e fece circolare questo *pamphlet* tra gli intellettuali di lingua greca. Essendo segretario del Papa, il Trapezunzio si appellava al suo diritto di criticare la missiva del segretario di un cardinale, ma confidava nel fatto che tutti coloro che erano vicini a Bessarione avrebbero ri-

for Bessarion to write a reply. This reply later became the final book of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*.

The manuscript Gr. Z. 527 (679) on display here transmits the text of *De Natura et Arte*, which is known to us in one Greek and two Latin versions. The earlier Latin version was completed by Bessarion himself and is writ-

ten in his own hand. The final Latin version, which eventually became book 6 of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, underwent an extensive process of correction in the hands of yet another member of Bessarion's entourage, Niccolò Perotti.

## 7 Printer's Copy

The manuscript Lat. Z. 228 (1671) on display here is the Latin version of *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, which was used for the production of the printed version of this book in 1469. The black stains visible to the right were caused by the typographer, who was handling this

copy during his work. This manuscript underlines the exceptional richness and variety of the material relating to Bessarion's work on his treatise, since even this small step is reflected in the trove of the documents preserved.

## 8 Latin editio princeps

Bessarion had in his possession two copies of the printed version of his book. The process of correction did not stop after he received the book back from the printer, as he felt the need to correct in his own hand a number of errors that he discovered in the printed version. Another interesting feature is the presence of Greek quotes integrated into the Latin text that are visible on the page on display here. The use of Latin and Greek

script side by side was no small technological achievement in the early days of book printing. The Greek passages integrated into the Latin text do not carry any diacritical marks and exhibit numerous mistakes that can be explained as originating from confusion of similar-looking Greek letters, which is a clear sign that the printing of these passages presented a challenge for the typographers.

conosciuto la vera identità dell'autore della lettera che egli criticava. In altre parole, prendendo di mira Isaia, Trapezunzio rispettava apparentemente le convenzioni gerarchiche del suo tempo, ma in realtà colpiva Bessarione stesso. L'oggetto della disputa, che verteva sul modo in cui Pletone concepiva la relazione teoretica sussistente tra la deliberazione da un lato, la natura e l'arte dall'altro, rendeva questo intrigo potenzialmente ancora più pericoloso per Bessarione nell'anno del conclave in cui, per la seconda volta, sperava di essere eletto Papa. La lettera di Giorgio finiva infatti col sottolineare i suoi legami intellettuali con Pletone e travisava sia le opinioni di Pletone sia la spiegazione che Bessarione stesso ne

dava. Per Bessarione era non solo naturale, ma imperativo scrivere una risposta. Questa risposta divenne poi il libro finale dell'opera *In Calumniatorem Platonis*.

Il manoscritto Gr. Z. 527 (679) esposto nella presente vetrina trasmette il testo del *De Natura et Arte*, che ci è noto in una versione greca e in due versioni latine. La prima versione latina fu completata dallo stesso Bessarione ed è scritta da lui di propria mano. La versione finale in latino, che alla fine divenne il libro VI dell'*In Calumniatorem Platonis*, fu sottoposta a un lungo processo di correzione da parte di un altro membro dell'*entourage* di Bessarione, Niccolò Perotti.

## 7 La copia del tipografo

Il manoscritto Lat. Z. 228 (1671) qui esposto è la versione latina dell'*In Calumniatorem Platonis*, che fu utilizzata per la realizzazione della versione a stampa del libro nel 1469. Le macchie nere visibili sulla destra sono state causate dal tipografo che maneggiava la copia durante il suo lavoro. Il manoscritto sottolinea l'eccezio-

nale ricchezza e varietà del materiale che riflette il lungo processo di gestazione e completamento del trattato bessarioneo fino alla stampa: persino di questo breve passaggio nel processo che conduce alla produzione della copia a stampa si conserva traccia nella infinita mole dei documenti trasmessici.

## 8 L'editio princeps latina

Bessarione era in possesso di due copie della versione a stampa del suo libro. Il processo di correzione non si concluse con l'uscita a stampa del volume: dopo aver ricevuto il libro dal tipografo, infatti, Bessarione sentì il bisogno di correggere di suo pugno una serie di errori che aveva scoperto nella versione a stampa. Un'altra caratteristica interessante è la presenza di citazioni greche integrate nel testo latino e che sono visibili nella pagina qui esposta. L'uso di caratteri latini e greci all'interno

dello stesso testo era una conquista tecnica di non poco rilievo agli albori della stampa libraria. I passi greci integrati nel testo latino non recano alcun segno diacritico e presentano numerosi errori che si possono spiegare riconducendoli alla confusione generata da lettere greche aventi un aspetto simile, segno evidente che la stampa di questi passi rappresentava una sfida per i tipografi del tempo.



## 9 Reprints of the *editio princeps*

This cabinet contains two reprints of the Latin version of the *editio princeps*, which were published after Bessarion's death. On the one hand, the reprints illustrate the technological progress achieved during the thirty years that separate the appearance of the *editio princeps* in 1469 and the first reprint in 1503. The Greek quotes in the Latin text have been thoroughly correct-

ed and it was now possible to use in print diacritical marks crucial for the correct representation of the system of Greek writing as it was practiced in Byzantium. In the second place, the existence of two reprints, issued in 1503 and 1516, is an indication that Bessarion's book enjoyed a considerable reception during the first half of the sixteenth century.

## 10 Modern Scholarship on Bessarion

The last cabinet of the exhibition is dedicated to the interest of the modern scholarship in Bessarion's philosophical treatise *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. The pioneer in the field of Bessarion studies was the German philologist and theologian Ludwig Mohler (16.07.1883-25.12.1943), who completed a first modern critical edition of a large part of Bessarion's philosophical work. Even though he published only books 1-4 and, in a different volume, the *De Natura et Arte* (book 6),

thus omitting the important book 5 containing Bessarion's criticism of the Latin translation of Plato's *Laws*, Mohler is undoubtedly the pioneer of modern philological research, who opened up Bessarion's oeuvre for the scholarship of the twentieth century. It was not until the twenty-first century, however, that new critical editions and translations of Bessarion's treatise and related texts have started to appear.

## 9 Ristampe della *editio princeps*

La vetrina contiene due ristampe della versione latina dell'*editio princeps*, pubblicate dopo la morte di Bessarione. Innanzitutto, le ristampe illustrano i progressi tecnologici realizzati nei trent'anni che intercorrono tra l'uscita a stampa dell'*editio princeps* nel 1469 e la prima ristampa nel 1503: le citazioni greche nel testo latino sono state intanto accuratamente corrette ed è ora possi-

bile utilizzare nell'ambito della stampa i segni diacritici. Questi segni avevano una importanza cruciale in vista della corretta rappresentazione del sistema di scrittura greco in uso a Bisanzio. In secondo luogo, l'esistenza di due ristampe, pubblicate nel 1503 e nel 1516, indica che il libro di Bessarione ottenne grande riscontro all'inizio del XVI secolo.

## 10 La ricerca bessarionea dei nostri tempi

L'ultima vetrina della mostra è dedicata all'interesse degli studiosi del XX e XXI secolo per il trattato filosofico di Bessarione *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. Il pioniere degli studi su Bessarione è stato il filologo e teologo tedesco Ludwig Mohler (16.07.1883-25.12.1943), che realizzò la prima edizione critica moderna di gran parte dell'opera filosofica bessarionea. Anche se Mohler pubblicò in un volume l'edizione dei libri I-IV dell'*In Calumniatorem Platonis* e, in un altro volume, l'edizione del *De Natura et Arte* (libro VI), scindendo l'opera bessarionea e

omettendo l'importante libro V contenente la critica di Bessarione alla traduzione latina delle *Leggi* di Platone realizzata da Giorgio Trapezunzio, Mohler è senza dubbio il pioniere che ha aperto la strada alla ricerca filologica, storica e filosofica sull'opera di Bessarione. Solo nel XXI secolo, tuttavia, sono apparse nuove edizioni critiche e traduzioni del trattato di Bessarione e dei testi correlati. Alcuni di questi lavori sono esposti proprio nella presente vetrina.



Part 2

# Catalogue

VICTOR  
GARDAT HVS  
FINGERAT

## Introductory Note

The following pages contain brief descriptions of all the manuscripts on display in the exhibition. In addition to the conventional information, the descriptions state briefly the role each manuscript played in the process of Bessarion's work on *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, record its location in Bessarion's library (*locus* or *topos*) and, on the basis of Lotte Labowsky's study, indicate whether it has been identified with an item in Inventory A, which accompanied the act of donation, and/or Inventory B, which documents the transferral of the books to Venice, both during Bessarion's lifetime and after his death. The description of each manuscript found in Inventories A and/or B is also quoted.

All this information is relevant for a variety of reasons. The fact that the *locus* ("pressmark", as Labowsky calls it) is present in a particular manuscript could be interpreted as an indication that we have a completed work (as opposed to a mere draft or a working copy), which had its place in Bessarion's library at his residence in Rome. The absence of such information can be an indication that we are dealing with a working copy or a draft that was used in the process of composing the *ICP* by Bessarion himself or by members of his learned circle. It is not unreasonable to suppose that works without a *locus* were at some point on Bessarion's desk or circulated among the members of his entourage. In some other rare cases, this information is missing simply as a result of re-binding and its absence has no interpretative value. It is important to stress that the *locus* is an indication of a place where the book was supposed to be stored, rather than a unique 'ID-number' assigned to a single book, as the number of manuscripts allocated to a single *locus* vary from 2 (*locus* 63) to 21 (*locus* 33). Sometimes the book was reassigned by Bessarion from one *locus* to the other, as is the case, for example, with Gr. Z. 187 (742). The information obtained from the inventories edited by Labowsky is also revealing. However, it should be noted that the identification of a manuscript with an item in the inventories is by no means straightforward. It might have been so, if Bessarion or his collaborators had given each manuscript a unique number or code that appeared both on the manuscript and in the inventory. However, there is no such unequivocal link between actual manuscripts and the entries in the inventories. The identification of the entries with the manuscripts is one important outcome of the titanic project completed by Labowsky. It was she who solved the complicated "puzzle" as to which manuscript now extant in the Marciana is most probably indicated by each descriptive entry in the inventories. Undoubtedly, Labowsky's solution is correct in the majority of cases. However, in a few instances, it must remain a hypothesis and not a certainty (e.g. Lat. VI, 76 below). I quote these descriptions to highlight the available evidence collected by Labowsky in her study. The inclusion of these quotes does not imply that, in all cases, I agree with Labowsky's identification or have verified it myself.

Finally, the "Literature" section of each entry contains selected references to the secondary literature where more detailed descriptions of each manuscript may be found. In the age of electronic databases, it appeared superfluous to include a full secondary bibliography to each manuscript as it would probably become incomplete and even obsolete before the first printed copies of the catalogue leave the publishing house.

**I Final Redaction**

**1 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 198 (744)**

Parchment, middle of XV c., mm 280 × 195 × 95, ff. 318, *lineis plenis* 29, *spatium scripturae* mm 170 × 110. Titles, incipit and explicit, marginal notes are in red. Initials at the beginning of each of the six books are red and gilded.

It contains six books of *In Calumniatorem Platonis (versio graeca)* in its final redaction. Bk. 1, ff. 3-31v; Bk. 2, ff. 31v-84; Bk. 3, ff. 84-162; Bk. 4, ff. 162-242v; Bk. 5, ff. 243-294; Bk. 6, ff. 294v-316v; ff. 317-318v + II are empty.

Bessarion's library	<i>locus</i> 56
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 536	"Opus domini Reverendissimi in calumniatorem Platonis, in pergameno"
Literature	Mioni 1981, 310



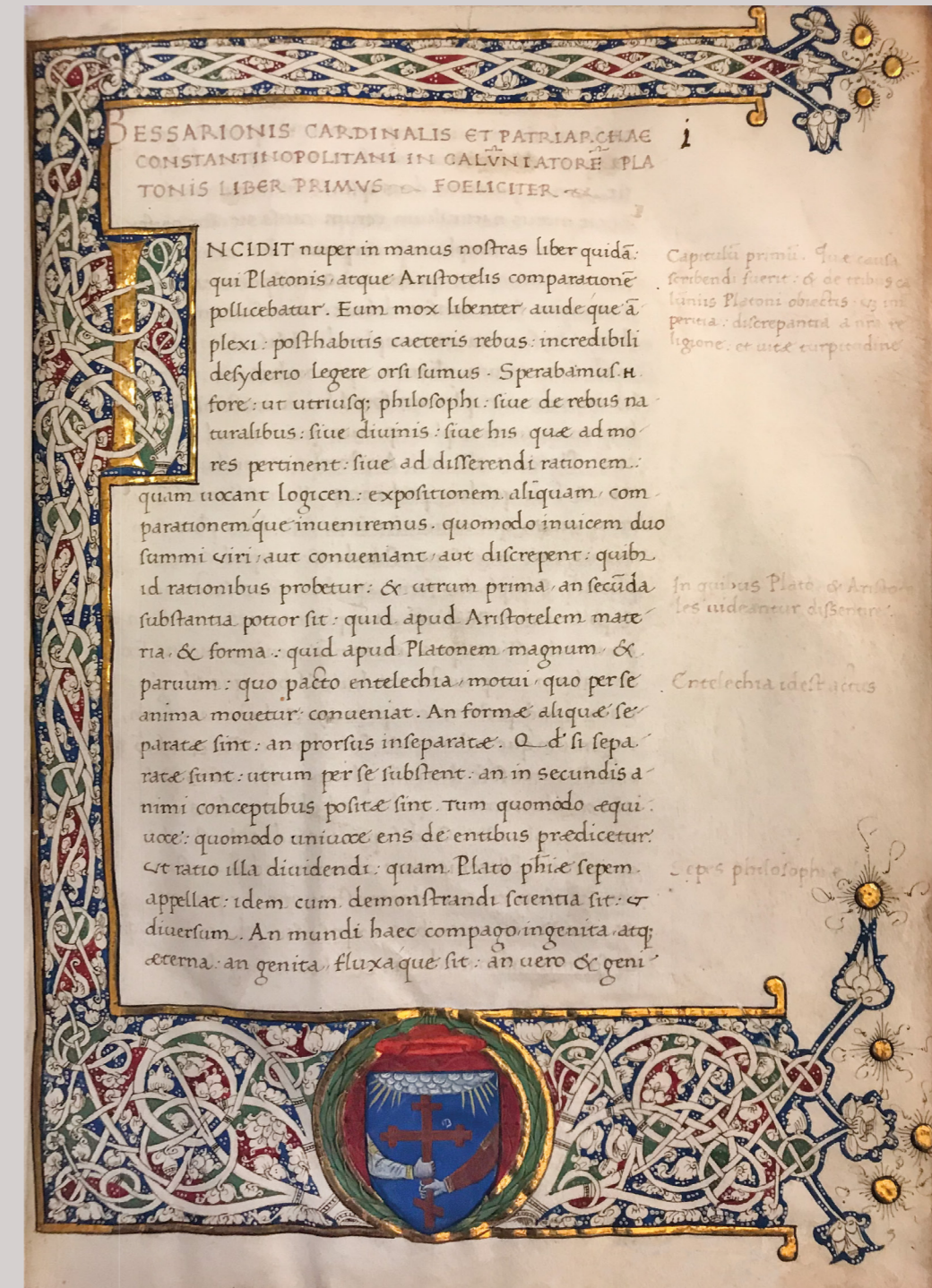
**1** Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 198 (744), f. 3r

## 2 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 229 (1695)

Parchment, middle of XV c., mm 280 × 195 × 95, *spatium scripturae* mm 180 × 110, *lineis plenis* 28, ff. IV, 364 with reclamants on f. 10v (I), 20v (II), 30v (III), 40v (III), 50v (V), 60v (VI), 70v (VII), 80v (VIII), 90v (IX), 100v (X), 110v (XI at the edge of the page), 120v (minimal traces of the Roman numeral barely discernible at the edge of the page), 130v (Roman numeral cut off, minimal traces), 140v (XIII), 150v (XV at the very edge), 160v (XVI), 170v (XVII), cut), 180v (traces), 190v (XVIII), 200v (XII/XVIII), 210v (XIII (crossed through) / XX), 220v (XIII / XXI), 230v (XXII), 240v (XXIII), 250v (XXIII), 260v (XXV), 270v (XXVI), 280v (XXVII), 290v (XXVIII), 300v (XXVIII), 310v (XXX), 320v (XXXI), 330v (XXXII), 338v (XXXIII), 348v (XXXIII), 358v (XXXV); ff. 270, 337v-338v, 360-364 are empty. Round humanist script, titles, incipit and explicit, marginal notes and Greek words and phrases embedded in Latin text are in red. Coloured and gilded initials at the beginning of each book.

It contains six books of *In Calumniatorem Platonis (versio latina)* in its final redaction. Bk. 1, ff. 1-36; Bk. 2, ff. 36v-101; Bk. 3, ff. 101-181; Bk. 4, ff. 181-269; Bk. 5, ff. 271-337; Bk. 6, ff. 339-359.

Bessarion's library	<i>locus</i> 33
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 717	"Opus Domini Reverendissimi in calumniatorem Platonis in pergamento, pulchrum"
Literature	Valentinelli 1871, 4: 5-6; Mohler 1923-42, 1: 364; 2: VIII; Gasparrini Leporace, Mioni 1968, 14-15



2 Venezia, BNM,  
Lat. Z. 229 (1695), f. 1r

## II Bessarion and Georgios Trapezuntios

## 3 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. VI, 76 (2848)

Paper, middle of XV c. (1458), mm 223 × 53 × 45, *spatium scripturae* mm 150 × 85 remains relatively constant across fascicles, number of lines varies according to the scribe of each fascicle from 23 to 29, ff. II + 178 + II ff., 18 fascicles written by 15 different scribes, ff. 6-8, 29v-30, 37-40, 79v-80, 98v-100, 116v-118, 137v-138, 164v-168 are empty; titles of the first three chapters (on ff. 1, 3, 4), catchword on f. 5v, and “finis” on f. 178v are written in brown ink by Bessarion, titles throughout the book in red ink, damage to the upper part of the page from f. 159 becomes progressively worse until f. 178, which is preserved only in part.

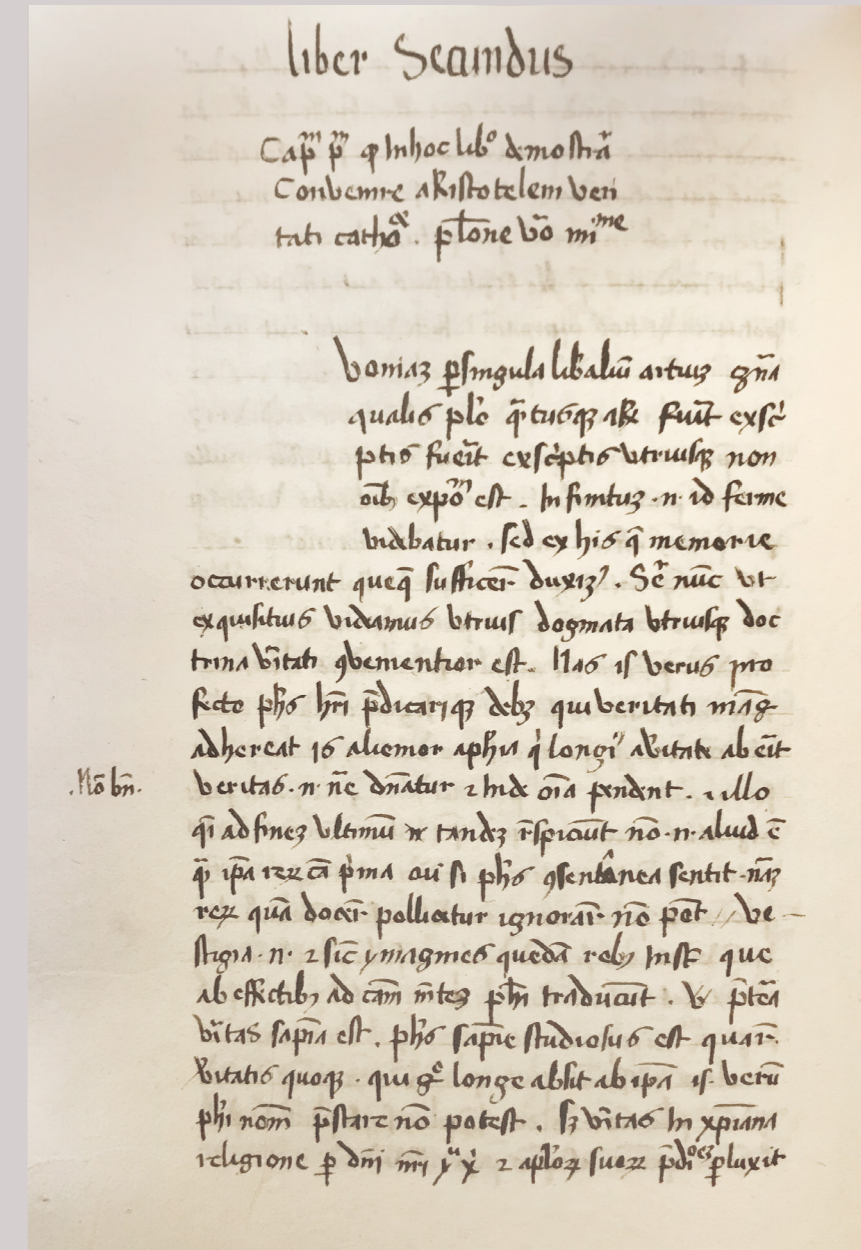
It contains *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*. Bk. 1, ff. 1-27; Bk. 2, ff. 27v-107; Bk. 3, ff. 107-178.

Bessarion's library no *locus*

Inventory A absent

Inventory B 893 “Trapezuntii contra Platonem, in papiro, sine tabulis” (identification with this item in the inventory is based on Labowsky 1979, 115, 238, *sed cf.* Monfasani 2021b, 366-7)

Literature Valentinelli 1871, 4: 10, Monfasani 2021b, 366-78



3 Venezia, BNM, Lat. VI, 76 (2848), f. 27v

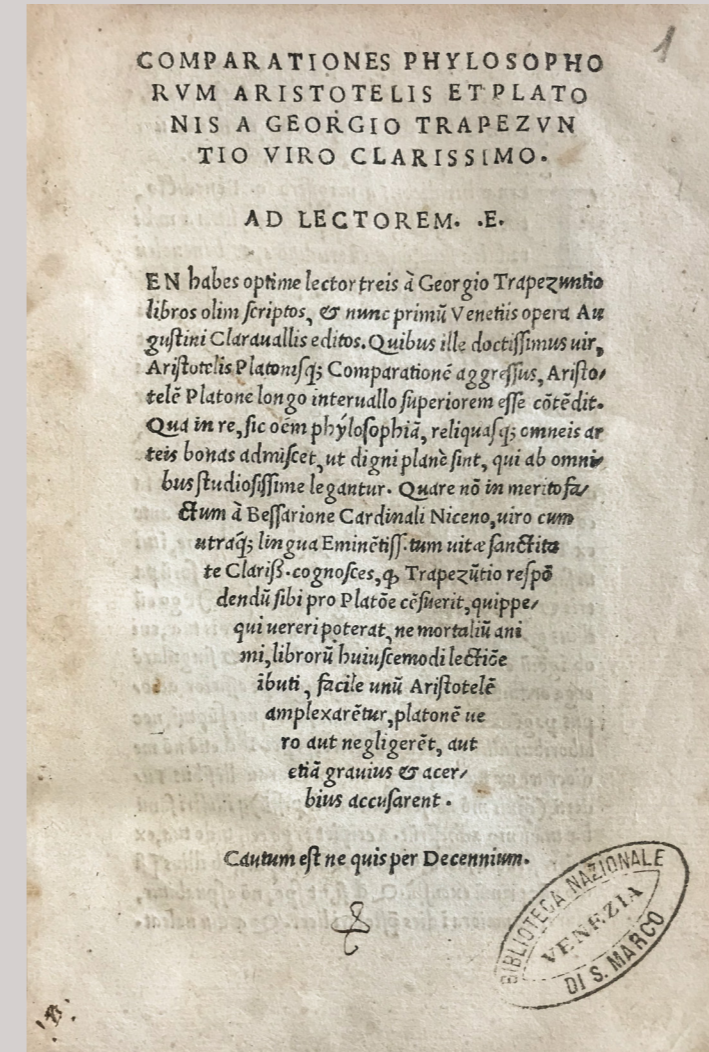
4 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 79.D.107

Printed in 1523, mm 155 × 115 × 25, ff. 168. Modern binding, probably in the 1950s. Title on f. 1: "Comparationes phylosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis a Georgio Trapezuntio viro clarissimo". Colophon on f. 168: "Venetiis per Iacobum pentium de Leuco, a partu Virgineo MDXXIII nonis Ianuarii".

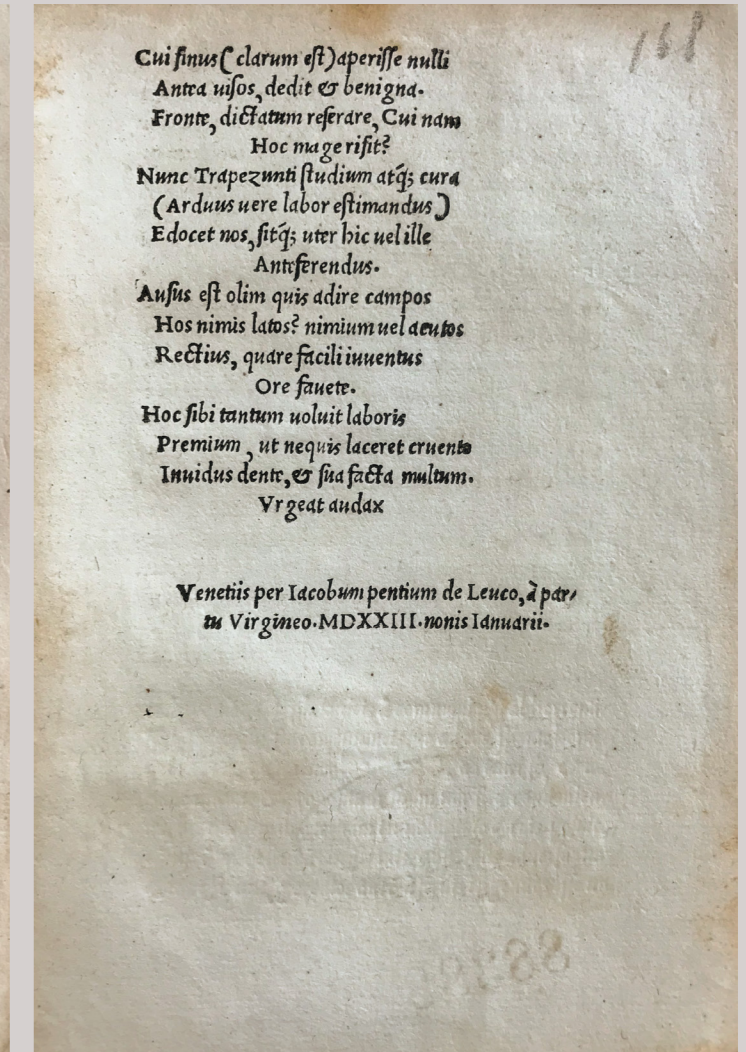
It contains a printed version of Georgios Trapezuntios *Comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis*.

*This book was never part of Bessarion's library (printed in 1523).*

Literature Monfasani 2021b, 428-38



4a Venezia, BNM, 79.D.107, f. 1r

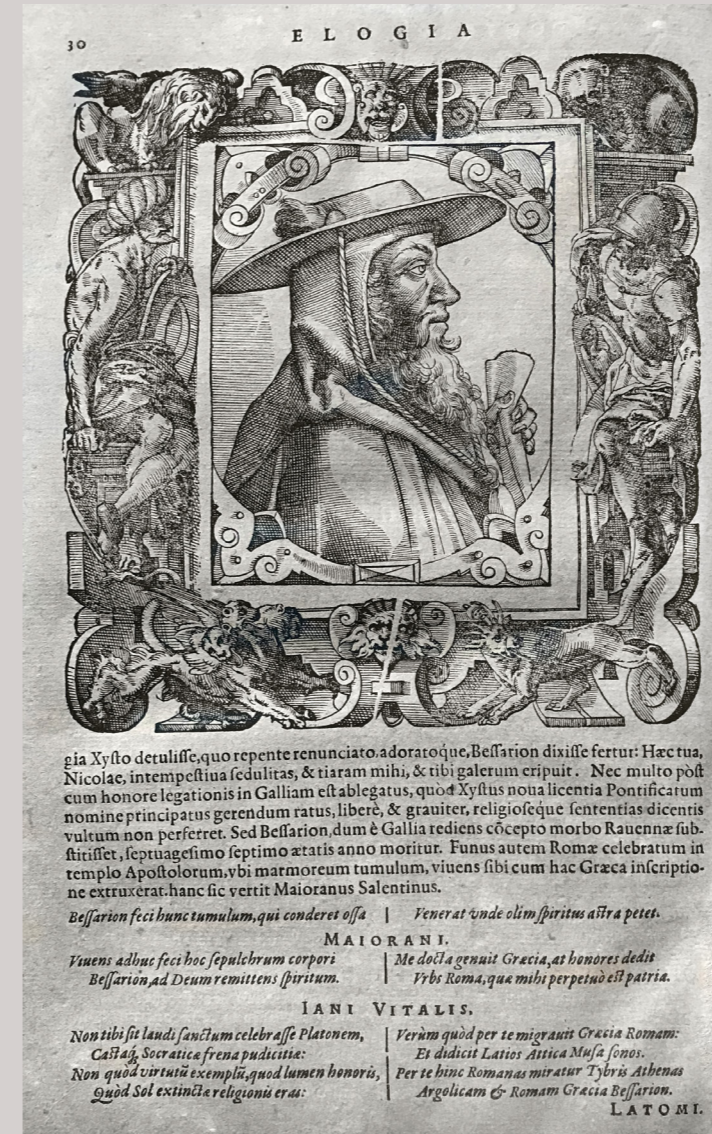


4b Venezia, BNM, 79.D.107, f. 168r

5 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 161.D.10

Printed in 1577, mm 345 × 220 × 20. Title page + [VII] + 151 pp. Title: "Pauli Iovii [...] Elogia virorum literis illustrium [...] quotquot vel nostra velavorum memoria vixere". [...] Petri Perna Typographi. Basil. Opera ac Studio.

*This book was never part of Bessarion's library (printed in 1577).*



5a Venezia, BNM, 161.D.10.4, p. 30: Bessarion



5b Venezia, BNM, 161.D.10.4, p. 31: Georgios Trapezuntios



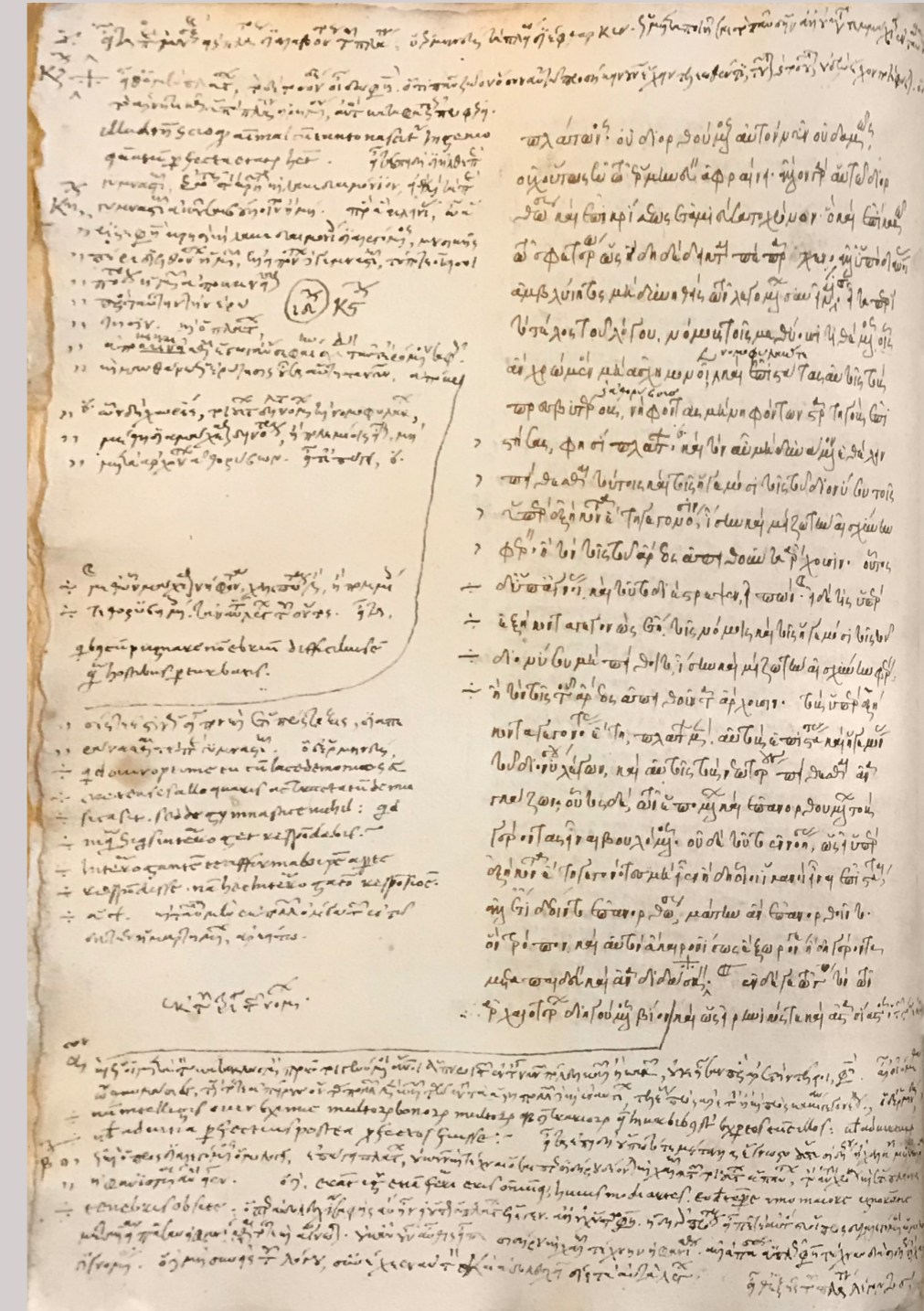
III Working with Plato

6 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 199 (604)

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 298 x 212, ff. VI + 225 (+ 176 bis), lineis plenis 16-21 in ff. 1-32, 87-96v, 20-27 in ff. 33-76v, 25 in ceteris foliis; spatium scripturae mm 180/195 x 110/135 in ff. 1-76v et mm 200 x 95 in ceteris foliis.

It contains Bessarion's working copy of the Greek version of Bk. 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the ICP (Bk. 1, ff. 1-39v; Bk. 2, ff. 39v-97; Bk. 4, ff. 97v-182v; Bk. 5, 183-224v).

Bessarion's library	no locus
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 518	"Eadem [sc. 'Defensio Platonis' ut B 516] in papiro, prima manu, consita in coperto pergameno"
Literature	Gasparrini Leporace, Mioni 1968, 7-8; Mioni 1981, 310-11; Mariev 2022 (forthcoming)



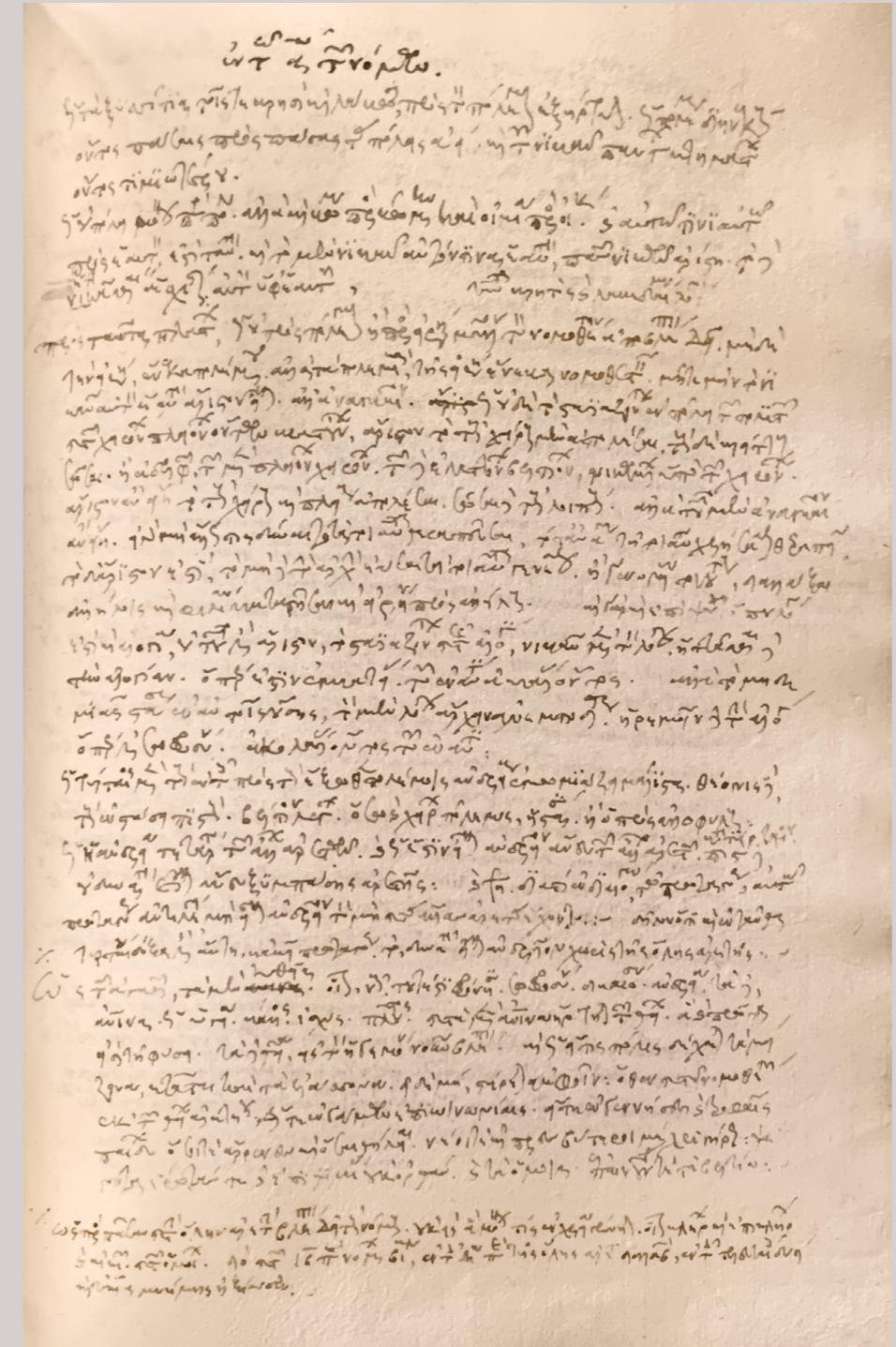
6 Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 199 (604), f. 197v

7 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 526 (776)

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 220 × 145 (mm 200 × 145 on ff. 64-100, 108-111), ff. I, 225, *lineis plenis* 26-39, *spatium scripturae* ca. mm 160/190 × 130/90. F. 1v index; 2-3v Plutarchus *Vitae parallelae*, *excerpta ex vitis Timonis, Luculli et Themistocli*; 4-24v Herodotus *Historiae Excerpta*; 25-47 Thucydides; 48-59v Xenophon historicus *Hellenica Excerpta*; ff. 60-63v are empty; 64-97v Plutarchus *Vitae parallelae*; 97v Porphyrius *Vita Plotini*; 100-107v Plato *Leges*; ff. 108-111v are empty; 112-135v *Compendium operum Platonis*; 136-148v Hermogenes rhetor *De inuentione Excerpta*; 149rv Plutarchus *Apophthegmata Laconica*; 149v-150 Plutarchus *Vita Homeri*; 150-151v Lucianus *De saltatione Excerptum*; 152-164 Proclus philosophus *Institutio physica*; 164v-167 *Sententiae ex auctoribus ecclesiasticis collectae*; f. 167v is empty; 176-195v Ptolemaeus Claudius *Syntaxis mathematica*; *praemittitur varia geometrica et astronomica in lingua latina* (ff. 168-175v); *sequuntur definitiones mathematicae latine* (ff. 196-199); ff. 199v-207v are empty; *sequuntur geometrica et quaedam calculatoria* (ff. 208-211 et 216-225); ff. 211v-215v are empty. Bessarion has been identified as the scribe of the entire volume with the exception of ff. 152-167.

It contains, most importantly, a collection of excerpts from Plato's *Laws*, attesting Bessarion's particular interest in this dialogue and his profound knowledge of it.

Bessarion's library	locus 76
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 592	"Excerpta quaedam ex Herodoto, Thucidide, et Xenophonte, et ex paralellis Plutarchi, et ex legibus Platonis, et epithoma legum eiusdem Platonis, et epithoma de ideis rhetoricis Hermogenis, et elementatio naturalis Proculi, et aliqua astronomica, in papiro"
Literature	Mioni 1981, 410 ff. ; Rigo 1991; Papademitriou 1968



7 Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 526 (776), f. 112r

IV Bessarion's Plato

8 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 187 (742)

Parchment, middle of XV c., mm 260 x 175, ff. III. 311 (+ 287 bis), lineis plenis 31/39, spatium scripturae mm 170/180 x 110/125. F. 1rv index; 2-107 Plato Republica; 107v-135v Plato Timaeus; 136-139v Timaeus De anima mundi et natura; f. 140 is empty; 141-153v Plutarchus De animae procreatione in Timaeo; 154-159v Plato Critias; 159v-162v Ps.-Plato Minos; ff. 163-166v are empty; 167-282v Plato Leges; 283-289 Ps.-Plato Epinomis; 289v-309 Ps.-Plato Epistulae. Numerous annotations in Bessarion's hand.

It contains, most importantly, Plato's Laws, which were used by Bessarion in the process of correcting Georgios Trapezuntios' translation into Latin.

Bessarion's library	locus 53, antea 77
Inventory A 430	"Item Platonis respublica, leges et epistolae, in pergameno, liber pulcherrimus"
Inventory B 525	"Eiusdem respublica, leges et epistolae, in pergameno"
Literature	Mioni 1981, 299; Pagani 2011



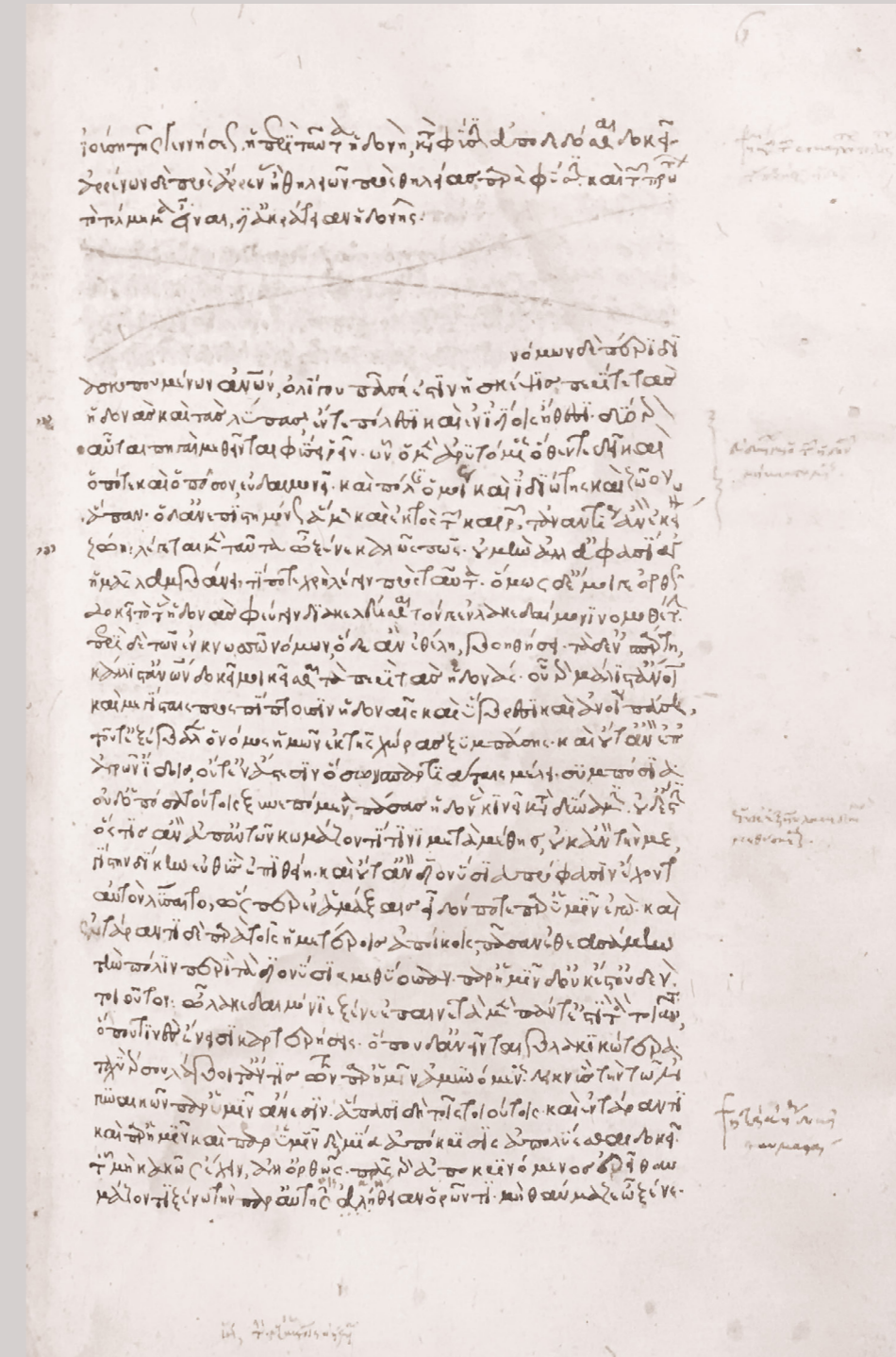
8 Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 187 (742), f. 176r

9 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 188 (1022)

Paper, beginning of the XV c., mm 245 x 170, ff. I. 178, lineis plenis 31/32, spatium scripturae 185 x 110. 1-131 Plato *Leges*; 131v-138v Plato / Ps.-Plato *Epinomis*; 138v-141v Ps.-Plato *Demodocus*; 141v-143v Ps.-Plato *Sisyphus*; 144-145 Lucianus *Halcyon*; 145-152v Ps.-Plato *Eryxias*; 152v-155v *Definitiones*; 155v-176 Plato / Ps.-Plato *Epistulae*; 176v-178 *Excerpta brevia ex operibus Luciani varii manu Bessarionis*.

It contains, most importantly, Plato's *Laws*, with some passages that had been 'censored' by Bessarion's teacher Georgios Gemistos (Plethon).

Bessarion's library	locus 53
Inventory A 421	"Item leges Platonis, dialogi quattuor noti, et epistolae eius, in papyro"
Inventory B 528	"Platonis leges, epistolae et dialogi nothi, in papiro"
Literature	Mioni 1981, 300; Pagani 2009



9 Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 188 (1022), f. 6r

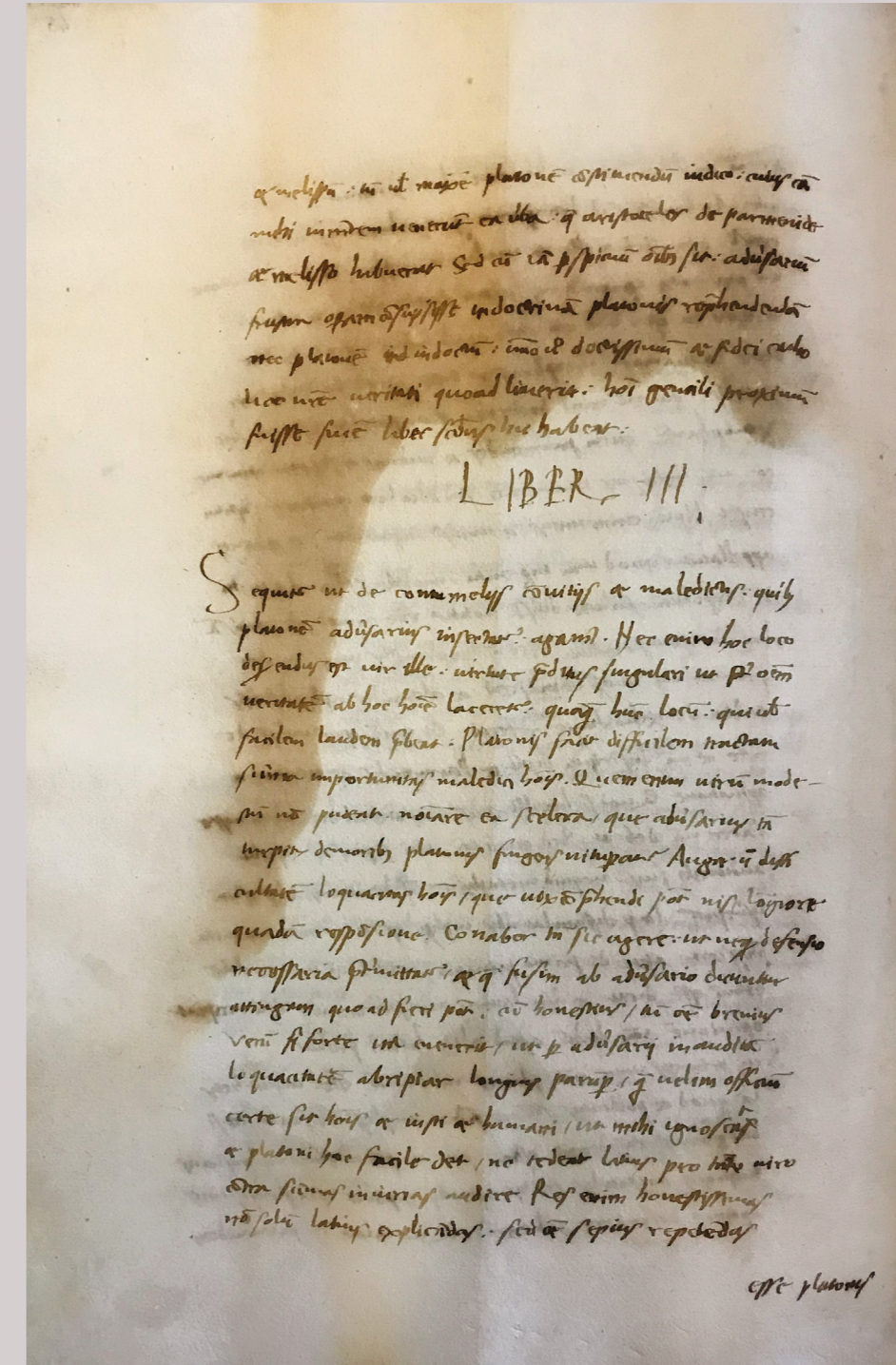
V Change of Plan: Gatti's *Notata* and the Reworking of the Treatise

## 10 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 226 (1636)

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 315 × 230 × 40, ff. 152, *spatium scripturae* mm 220 × 130, *lineis plenis* 25-27. The folios are numbered in the upper corner and in the lower corners (modern). The modern numbering is reported here with an asterisk. Numbers without asterisk refer to the older folio numbers in the upper corner. Viktor Tiftixoglou made a note about the foliation of this codex on the inner cover, his note is dated May 23 1985. 1\*-12\*=1-12; 13\*-48\*=49-84; 49\*-84\*=13-48; 85\*-151\*=86-152. Bk. 1 of *Liber defensionum* begins on f. 1\*=1; Bk. 2 on 31\*v=68v; Bk. 3 on 84\*v=48v; f. 138\*rv=139rv contains the letter of *Johannis de Rupeforti, iudicis maioris Fuxi civitatis, cardinali Albiensi*. The codex is written in Bessarion's hand (Mohler 1923-42, 1: 364; Gasparrini Leporace, Mioni 1968, 10).

It contains an early version of Bessarion's reply to Georgios Trapezuntios' *Comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* in Latin with the title *Liber defensionum contra obiectiones in Platonem*. After extensive revision, Bk. 1 and 2 of the *Liber defensionum* became Bk. 1 and 2 of the *ICP*, Bk. 3 became Bk. 4 of the *ICP*.

Bessarion's library	no <i>locus</i>
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 889	"De eadem materia [sc. 'Defensio Platonis' ut B 886], tres libri, in quinternionibus, litteris ser Petri"
Literature	Valentinelli 1871, 4: 5; Mohler 1923-42, 1: 364 and 2: VIII; Gasparrini Leporace, Mioni 1968, 10



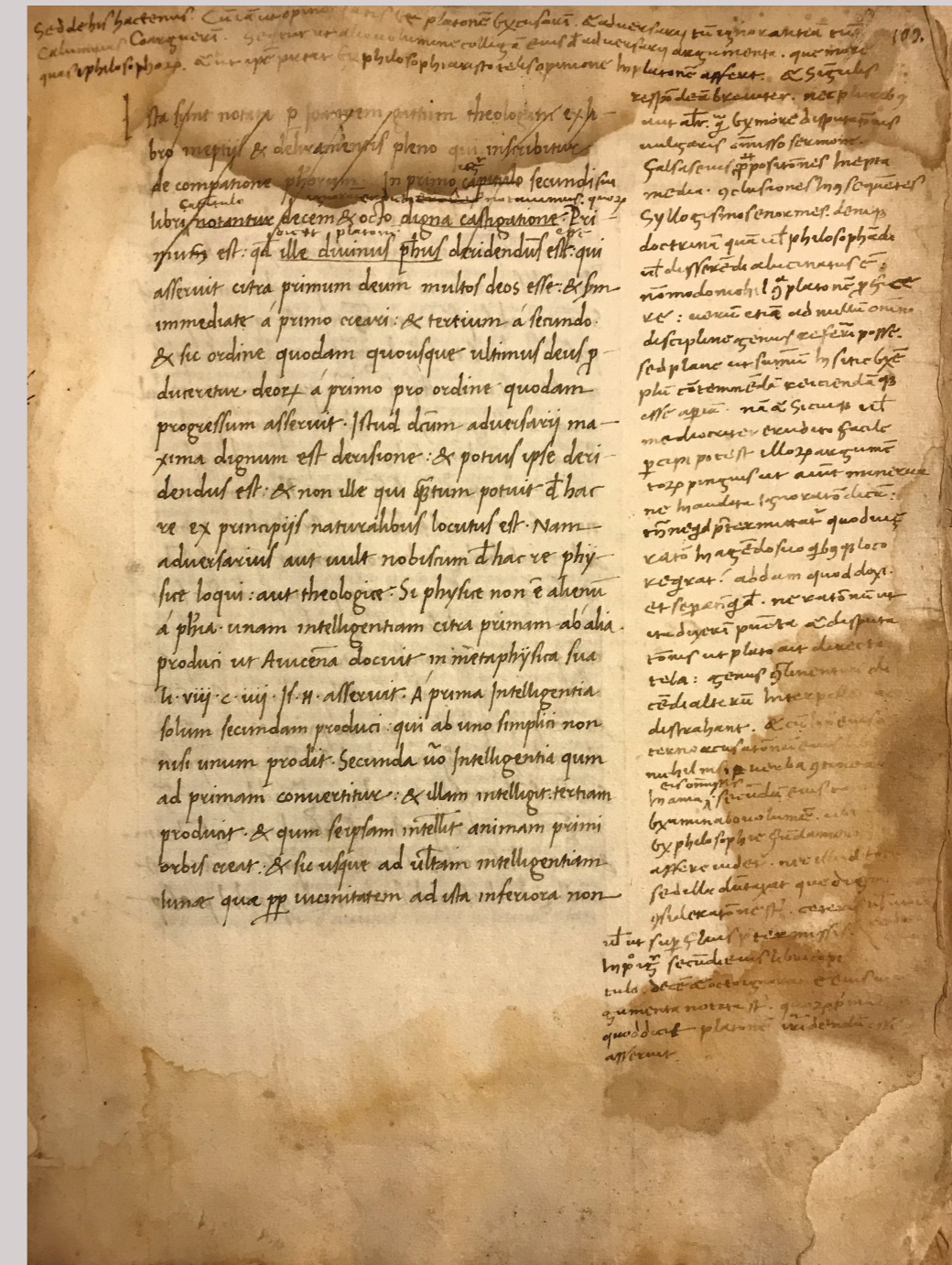
10  
Venezia, BNM,  
Lat. Z. 226 (1636),  
f. 48v = 84\*v

11 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. VI, 61 (2592)

Paper, middle of XV c. (ff. 1-152) and XVII c. (ff. 153-158) ff. II + 158 + I, mm 300 × 220 × 40. The following description refers to the first part (ff. 1-152) of the codex only. *Spatium scripturae* ff. 1-70v: mm 200 × 150, *lineis plenis* 31-32; *var. Spatium scripturae* ff. 71-152 185 × 115, *lineis plenis* 24.

It contains: ff. 1-70v a draft version of Bk. 3 of the ICP; 71-152 Giovanni Gatti *Notata ex libro ineptiis et deliramentis pleno, qui inscribitur De comparatione philosophorum* (on the significance of this work and its relation to Bk. 3 in the final redaction of the ICP, cf. the article of John Monfasani at the end of this volume). The quires are misbound, as established by Monfasani 2021a, XLIX, the correct order of folios is 103-104, 102, 109-111, 112, 107, 105-106, 113-152, 71-101, 108.

Bessarions' library	<i>no locus</i>
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 892	"Secundus liber pro Platone, in papiro"
Literature	Valentinelli 1871, 4: 6-7; Gasparrini Leporace, Mioni 1968, 10-11; Monfasani 2021a, XLIX-XLIX



11 Venezia, BNM, Lat. VI, 61 (2592), f. 103r

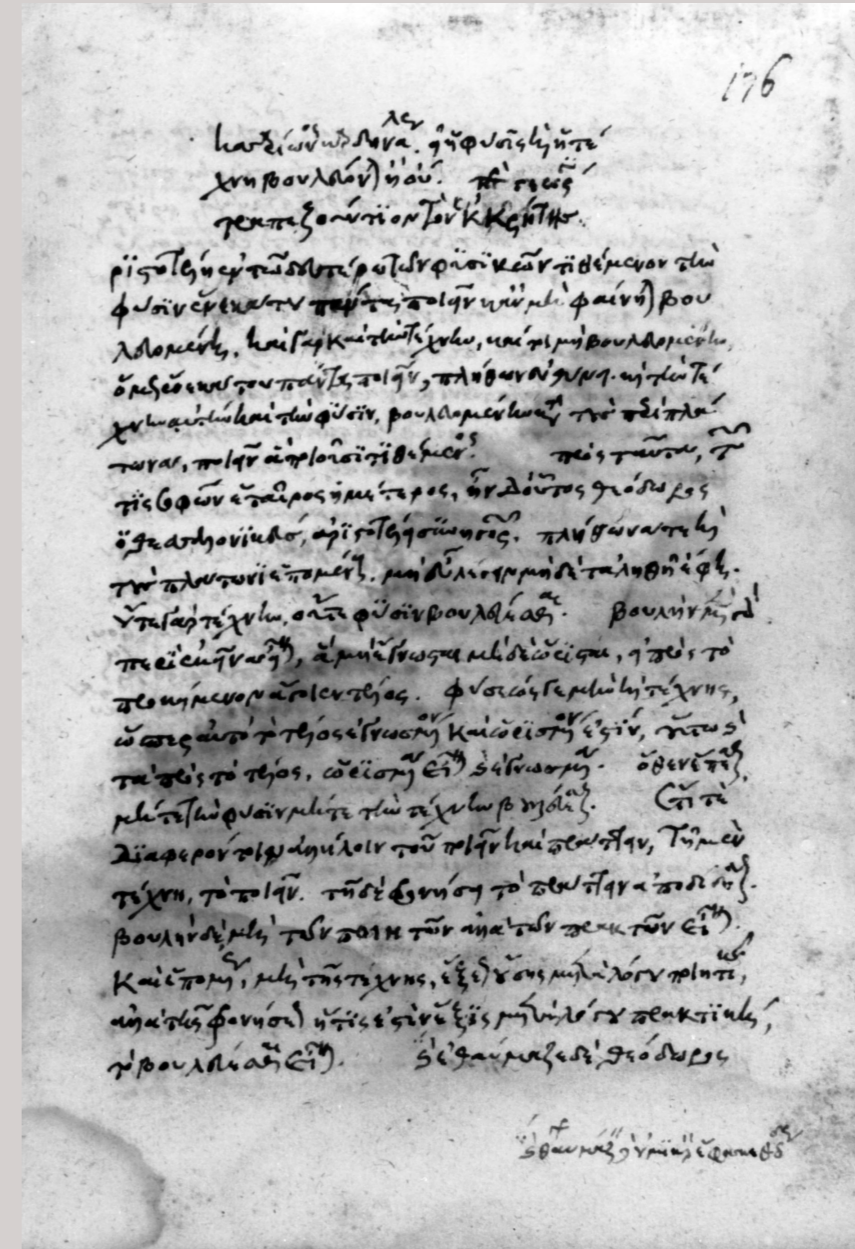
VI **De natura et arte**

12 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 527 (679)

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 210 × 145, ff. I 247 (+ 160 bis, 197 bis, 200 bis), *lineis plenis* 24-29, *spatium scripturae* ca. mm 145/160 × 80/100. Ff. 1-16v *De processione Spiritus Sancti*; 17-44v *Oratio dogmatica de unione*; 45rv *Ad dicta Plethonis in Aristotelem*; ff. 46-49v are empty; 50-54v *Refutatio syllogismorum Planudae De Spiritu sancto*; ff. 55-57v are empty; 58-92 *Refutatio Marci Ephesini De Spiritu sancto*; f. 92v is empty; 93-103 Marcus Eugenicus *Capita syllogistica adversus Latinos*; ff. 103v-105 are empty; 106-142v *De sacramento Eucharistiae*; 143-153v *Encyclica ad Graecos*; ff. 154-159v are empty; 160-174v *In Ioannem* 21:22-23; f. 175 is empty; 176-199v *De natura et arte (versio graeca)*; ff. 200-201v are empty; 202-234v *De natura et arte (versio latina)*; 240-244v *Epistulae*; ff. 245-247v are empty. A number of rubrications throughout the text. Several texts in Bessarion's hand, both in Greek and in Latin.

It contains the Greek version of *De natura et arte* (= Bk. 6 of the *ICP*) and an earlier Latin redaction of this work written in Bessarion's hand (published for the first time in Mariev, Marchetto, Luchner 2015), without the changes by Niccolò Perotti that characterise the final Latin version of this work.

Bessarion's library	<i>locus</i> 52
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 510	"Opera Domini Reverendissimi de spiritu sancto, et de sacramento eucharistie, et de 'sic eum volo manere', in papiro"
Literature	Mohler 1923-42, 3: 91 <i>et passim</i> ; Mioni 1981, 411 ff.; Mariev, Marchetto, Luchner 2015, XXIII-XXVII



12 Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 527 (679), f. 176r

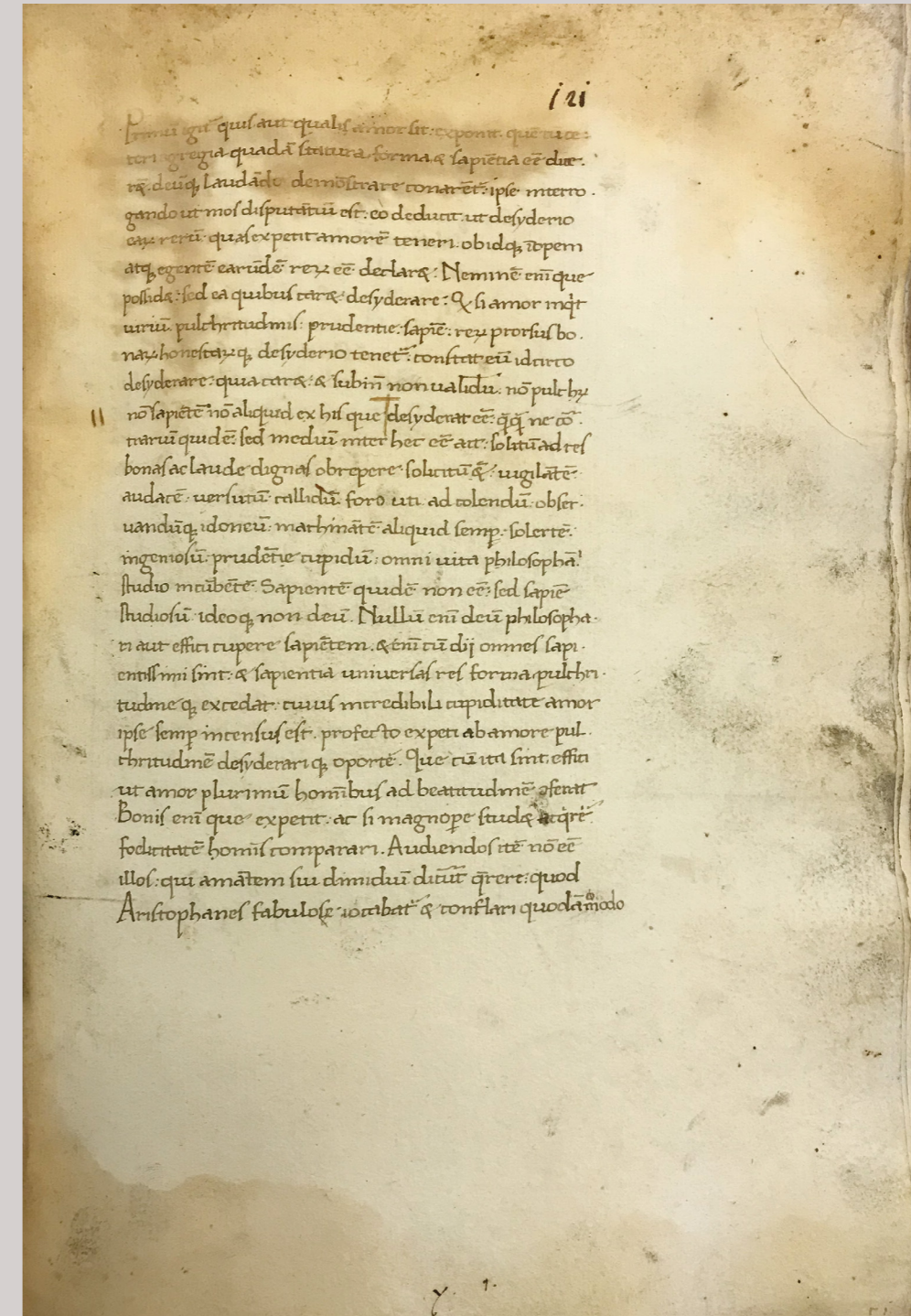
## VII Printer's Copy

## 13 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 228 (1671)

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 295 × 201 × 50, *spatium scripturae* mm 175 × 115, *lineis plenis* 28, ff. 182. Each quire is given a letter and its folios are numbered, e.g. A1-5 for the first quire (ff. 1-10), B1-5 (ff. 11-20), etc. The last, recto folio of each quire bears a catchword (f. 10v, f. 20v) that conventionally prefigures the first word of the recto of the next quire. This is the case for the composition of ff. 1-96 (labelled with letters A-K). There is no catchword on f. 96v and the next quire is numbered V1-5 (ff. 97-108), which means that there is a gap in between. The absence of a catchword on f. 96v may indicate that Bk. 3 of the *ICP*, which would fit this gap and for which it probably was made, actually never constituted part of this codex. However, the fact that next quire in order is labelled with a letter V may indicate that a certain space (L-V) was already allotted for this book. The final words of Bk. 4 on f. 180v confirm that, in the design of the work, this was already a book 4: "... quarto quoque volumine finem imponamus". Ff. 1-96 are written in a cursive script; ff. 97-180v in a humanistic round script. Already Valentinelli (1871, 4: 6) identified the black stains visible throughout the later part of the codex from f. 97 on as *typographorum maculae*. Hellinga (2015, 102 fn. 4) confirmed that this one of the exceptionally rare cases where a copy that was actually used for printing is preserved.

It contains a nearly complete version of Bk. 1, 2 and 4 of the *ICP*. Bk. 1, ff. 1-33; Bk. 2, ff. 33v-96; Bk. 4, ff. 96v-180v.

Bessarion's library	no locus
Inventory A	absent
Inventory B 888	"De eadem materia [sc. 'Defensio Platonis' ut B 886], omnes quinque libri, in quinternionibus, in papiro, manu nostrorum diversorum"
Literature	Valentinelli 1871, 4: 6; Gasparrini Leporace, Mioni 1968, 13 ff.; Hellinga 2015, 102 fn. 4



13  
Venezia, BNM,  
Lat. Z. 228 (1671), f. 121r



VIII *Editio princeps*

14 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 218

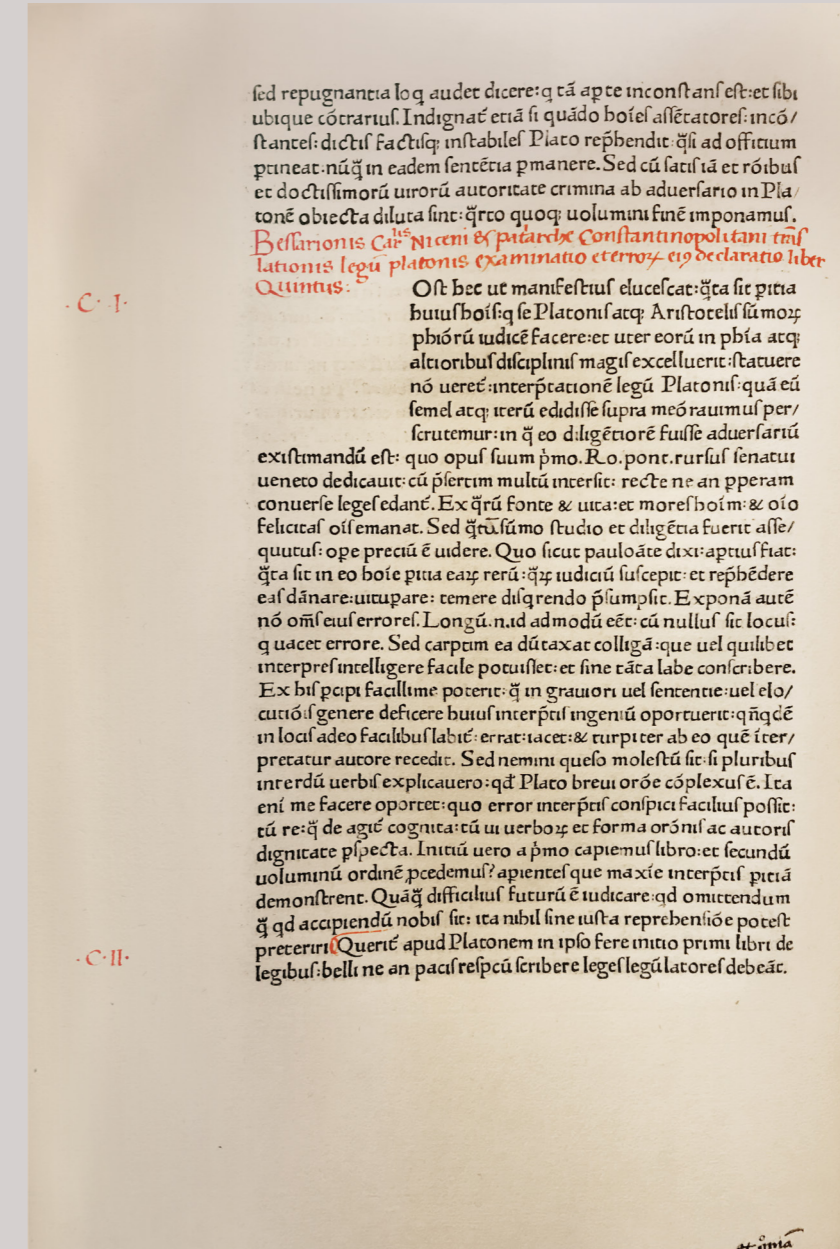
Printed in 1469, mm 335 × 230 × 70, ff. 233, f. 1 and f. 233 are empty. Colophon:  
 “Aspicias illustris lector quicumque libellos [...]”.

It contains *ICP* Bk. 1, ff. 16-36v; Bk. 2 37-74v; Bk. 3 75-124v; Bk. 4 125-176v;  
 Bk. 5 176v-219v; Bk. 6 220-232v.

Bessarion's library no locus

Inventory A absent

Inventory B 806/807 “Duo volumina defensionis platonicae, in papiro”



14  
 Venezia, BNM,  
 Inc. 218, f. 176v

## 15 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 219

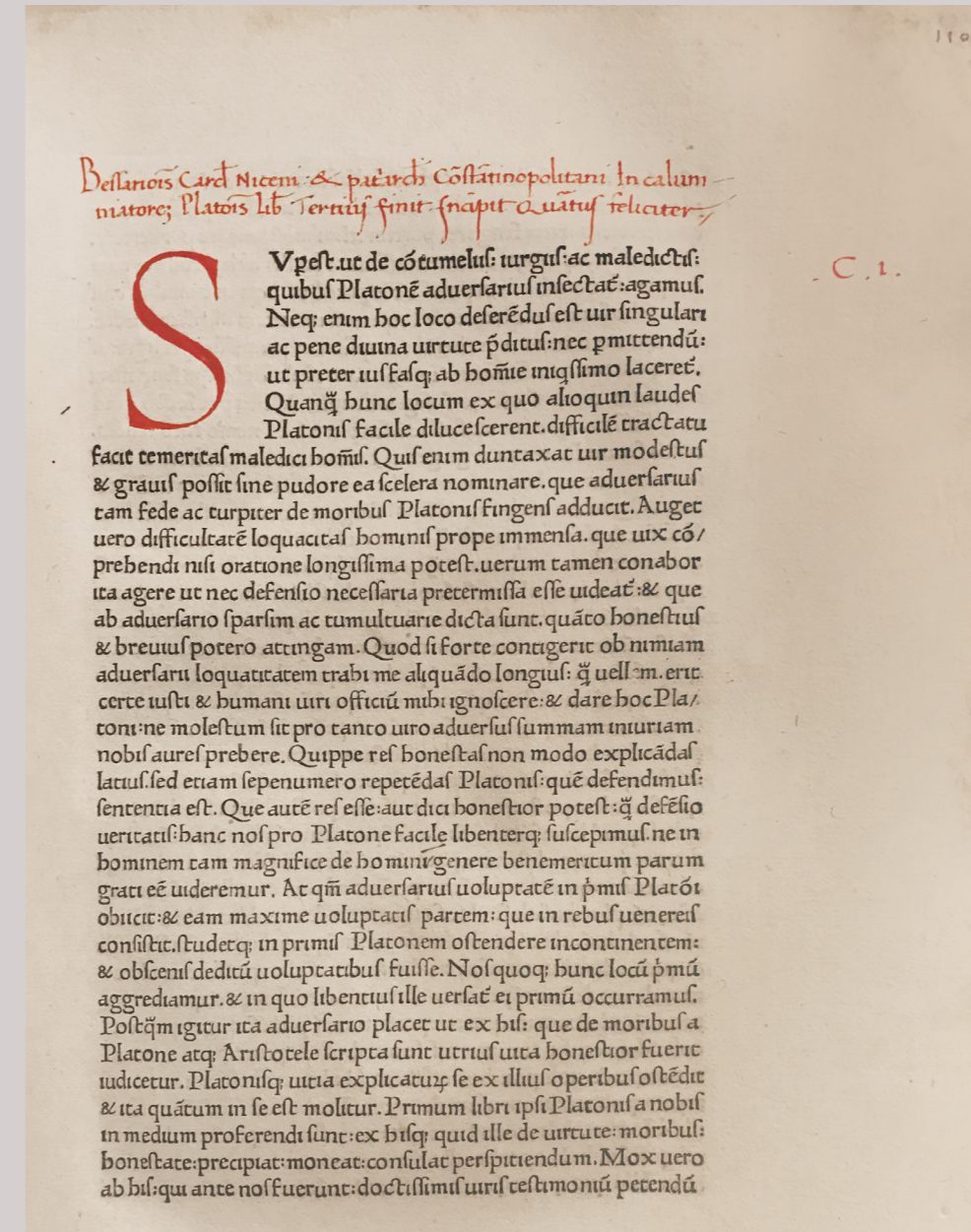
Printed in 1469, mm 335 × 230 × 70, ff. [I-VX] + 218, ff. 217-218 are empty; on f. 21v signs of a longer text that has been erased and is no longer legible; on f. 113v an extensive marginal note; on f. 49v at the bottom a long note in red ink "Quae sit auctoris in hoc tertio libro intentio"; on f. 204 an extensive marginal note. Colophon: see description of Inc. 218 above. Initial letters added on ff. 1 (red, blue and black), 22 (red), 50 (black), 110 (red), 160v (black), 204 (red). Corrections in Bessarion's hand throughout the text.

It contains *ICP* Bk. 1, ff. 1-21v; Bk. 2, ff. 22-49v; Bk. 3, ff. 50-109v; Bk. 4, ff. 110-160v; Bk. 5, ff. 160v-203v; Bk. 6, ff. 204-216v.

Bessarion's library no locus

Inventory A absent

Inventory B 806/807 "Duo volumina defensionis platonicae, in papiro"



15  
Venezia, BNM,  
Inc. 219, f. 110r

IX Reprints of the *editio princeps*

16 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Aldine 145

Printed in 1503, mm 320 × 215 × 27, ff. [IX] + 111 + [2]. Colophon: "Venetiis in aedib. Aldi Romani, Iulio mense MDIII".

It contains introductory material and "index eorum omnium, quae singulis libris pertractantur" (ff. I-IX, not numbered, first page is empty) and Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis* in six books (ff. 1-111). Final two pages are empty.

*This book was never part of Bessarion's library (printed in 1503).*

BESSARIONIS CARDINALIS NICENI: ET PATRIARCHAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANI IN CALUMNIATOREM PLATONIS LIBER PRIMVS.

Quae causa autorem ad scribendum impulerit.  
Confutatio de tribus vitis obiectis Platoni: imperitia: discrepantia a christiana religione: & uita turpitudine.  
Reprehensionem Platonis fidei Orthodoxae magnum detrimentum afferre.  
Cur a nostris doctoribus in primis Platonis testimonia citentur.  
Detrahentes Platoni infidelium impietatem adiuuare.  
Nostrae aetatis Latinos pauca habere Platonis opera: & raro ea legere.  
Maiores nostros Platonem omnibus philosophis praeposuisse.  
Qui sit ordo & series totius operis. Caput Primum.

INCIDIT NVPER IN MANVS NOSTRAS LIBER quidam: qui Platonis: atq; Aristotelis comparationem pollicebatur. Eum mox libenter: atq; amplexi: post habitis ceteris rebus: incredibili desiderio legere orsi sumus. Sperabamus enim fore: ut utriusq; philosophi: siue de rebus naturalibus: siue diuinis: siue iis: quae ad mores pertinent: siue ad differendi rationem: quae uocantur logicen: expositione aliquam: comparationemq; inueniremus: quomodo inuicem duo summi uiri: aut conueniant: aut discrepent: quibus id rationibus probetur: & utrum prima: an secunda substantia prior sit: quid apud Aristotelem materia: & forma: quid apud Platonem magni: & parui: quo pa-

sto entelechia: motu: quo per se anima mouetur: conueniat: An formae aliqua separatae sint: an profus inseparatae: q; si separatae sunt: utrum per se subsistant: an in secundis animi conceptibus positae sint. Tum quomodo equiuoce: quomodo uniuoce ens de entibus praedicatur: ut ratio illa diuidendi: quam Plato philosophiae sepe appellat: idem cum demonstrandi scientia sit: ut diuersum. An mundi haec compago ingenita: atq; aeterna: an genita: fluxa: q; licet an uero & genita simul: & ingenita: atq; aeterna: & quomodo genita: quomodo ingenita: tum haec tum anima dici possit. Vtrum praeterea deus ipsius substantia: an duntaxat motus naturalium rerum causa sit: atq; opifex. Quintum ne simplicium corporum dici caelum oporteat: an unum ex quatuor: quis praeterea ultimus hominum finis censeri debeat: uirtus ne atq; honestum: an scientia contemplandi. His aliisq; huiusmodi summorum philosophorum opinionibus: ne in singulis immeremur: plenum fore librum existimabam. Hoc enim ueteres pleriq; tum graeci: tum latini fecerunt: Platonis alii: Alii Aristotelis rationibus fauentes: & haec quidem probantes: illa repellentes. Fuerunt etiam qui conuenire inter se duos philosophos summo ingenio nixi sunt ostenderent: apud graecos i pleriq; Simplicius fecit: apud Latinos factum se pollicitus est Boetius: an impleuerit: nescio. Nullum enim tale illius opus aetate nostra uenit in lucem. Existimabam itaq; autorem huius libri: quo sibi gloriam apud posteros compararet: & doctrinam suam: ingeniumq; ostendat: hoc idem fecisse: & uel conciliasse inter se duorum philosophorum opiniones: uel alteri inhaerentem: quibus ad id rationibus duceretur: explicasse. Quod si praeferebas Aristotelis opiniones: Platonis uero contemnendas existimaret: causam eius rei demonstratione: ut par erat: ac necessariis rationibus exposuisse. Laetabar itaq; ea spe mirum in modum: & librum singulari quadam auiditate legebam. Quauis enim in ipso fere primordio iurgis: ac maledictis plenus occurreret: id tamen a quo animo patiebar: sperans fore: ut quod optabam progressu temporis appareret. Tam uero ubi perlecto libro pro thesauro quos sperabam: Carbones (ut dici solet) inueni: & desiderio frustratus nihil animaduerti praeter conuicia: & contumelias: & iurgia in Platone. His enim duntaxat erat liber ille referendus: in ista ueteris comedia: immo ut plane oes: quae unquam fuerunt: comedias excederet: obstupui uehementer tantae rei nouitate attonitus. Neque enim fieri posse existimassem: ut tale opus in lucem unquam prodiret: A ut quisq; ex omni hominum genere: tam aperte & ueritati: & communi omnium sententiae contradicens: non modo non erubesceret: sed potius quasi praefato quodam inuento gloriaretur: & more galli ignobilis: ut Plato iquit a disceptandi certamine dissiliens caneret: gestiret: seque ipsum circumspiceret. Quippe Aristotelem cui Platonem comparat extollit laudibus: quod quidem reprehendi non potest: Dignus est enim: qui maxime laudetur Aristoteles: Platonem uero contumelias afficit: & iurgis maledictisq; per-

to diuiden' quo a plone vocatur

Simplicius  
Io. Petrus hoc idem se factum e pollicetur

Pro thesauris carbonis

10.

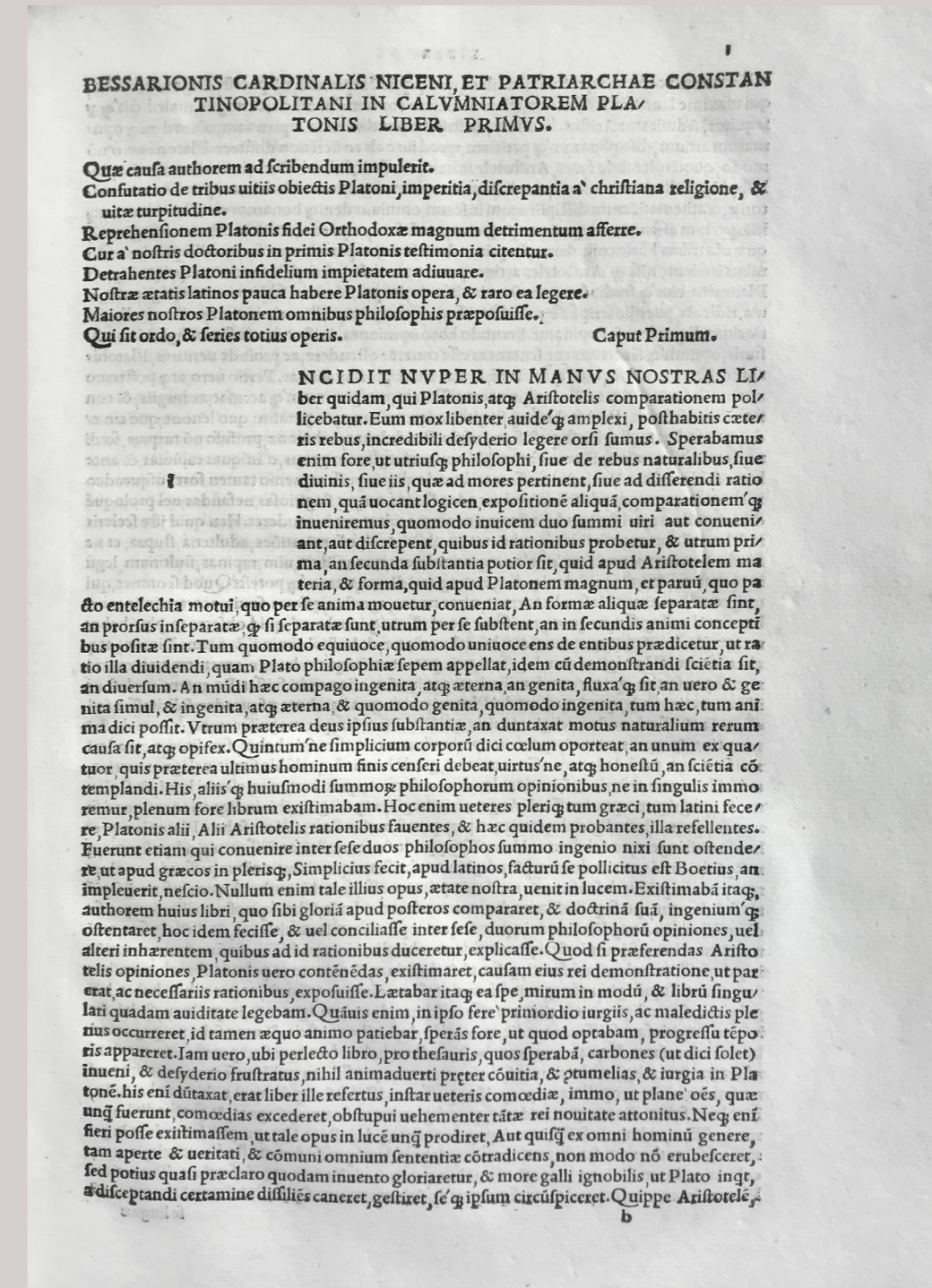
16 Venezia, BNM, Aldine 145, f. 1r

17 Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 387.D.29

Printed in 1516, mm 320 × 215 × 35, ff. VIII + 116 + 53. Colophon: "Venetiis in aedibus Aldi, et Andreae soceri mense septembri MDXVI".

It contains *In Calumniatorem Platonis* in six books (ff. 1-116), Bessarion's *Metaphysicorum Aristotelis XIII Librorum Tra[ns]latio* (ff. 1-50) and Teophrasti *Opusculum* (ff. 50v-53).

*This book was never part of Bessarion's library (printed in 1516).*



17 Venezia, BNM, 387.D.29, f. 1r

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Vindicatio Aristotelis

Works of George Trebizond  
Plato-Aristotle Controversy  
of the Fifteenth Century



Protectio Problematum Aristotelis

DE TESTI

III

FILOSOFICI

BESSARIONE

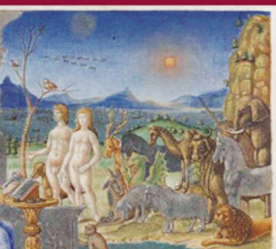
IL CALUNNIATORE  
DI PLATONE

Introduzione, traduzione e cura di  
EVA DEL SOLDATO

Nota critica di  
IVANOE PRIVITERA

Vindicatio Aristotelis

Works of George Trebizond  
Plato-Aristotle Controversy  
of the Fifteenth Century



Griechisch - Lateinisch - Deutsch

BESSARION  
TREASURE

QUELLEN UND FORSCHUNGEN  
AUS DEM GEBIETE DER GESCHICHTE,  
IN VERBINDUNG MIT IHREM HISTORISCHEN INSTITUT IN ROM  
HERAUSGEGEBEN VON DER  
GÖRRES-GESELLSCHAFT.

XXII BAND.

KARDINAL BESSARION  
ALS  
THEOLOGE, HUMANIST UND STAATSMANN  
VON  
LUDWIG MOHLER.

II. BAND.  
BESSARIONIS  
IN CALUNNIATOREM PLATONIS  
LIBRI IV.

PADERBORN,  
DRUCK UND VERLAG VON FERDINAND  
SCHÖNINGH  
MCMXXVII.

BESSARION'S  
TREASURE  
EDITING, TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING  
BESSARION'S LITERARY HERITAGE  
Edited by Sergei Marier

BASILIO BESSARIONE  
CONTRO IL CALUNNIATORE  
DI PLATONE

Introduzione, traduzione e cura di  
EVA DEL SOLDATO

Nota critica di  
IVANOE PRIVITERA



ROMA 2013  
EDIZIONI DI STORIA E LETTERATURA

BESSARIONE  
CULTURA DELIBERATA  
CULTURA E L'ARTE

Le Accendere  
di Ippolito Nievo  
Testo greco e latino a fronte  
di Ippolito Nievo



BOMPIANI  
IL PENSIERO OCCIDENTALE

Vindicatio Aristotelis

Two Works of George Trebizond  
in the Plato-Aristotle Controversy  
of the Fifteenth Century



Protectio Problematum Aristotelis  
Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis  
et Aristotelis

Edited and Translated

Philosophische Bibliothek

Bessarion  
Über Natur und Kunst

Griechisch - Lateinisch - Deutsch

Meiner

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PADERBORN,  
DRUCK UND VERLAG VON FERDINAND SCHÖNINGH  
MCMXXVII.

Philosophische Bibliothek

Bessarion  
Über Natur und Kunst

Griechisch - Lateinisch - Deutsch

Meiner

Part 3

# Scholarly Contributions

## Tracking Changes and Corrections in Bessarion’s Manuscripts

Sergei Mariev

Examining the drafts of masterpieces of world literature can often offer some remarkable insights into the creative processes of their authors. An investigation of this kind may be a challenging and very time-consuming task, which entails tracing minimal changes, emendations and alterations of the text through countless drafts and meticulously working through multiple layers of corrections and textual modifications. A good example of such an endeavour might be Kathryn B. Feuer’s *Tolstoy and the Genesis of “War and Peace”* (2018), perhaps in itself a classic on the subject. Having obtained access to the manuscript drafts of the novel, almost 4,000 pages, Feuer examined them in a truly indefatigable fashion and, in the end, was able to produce an exceptional study of how Tolstoy worked towards the final version of his famous opus. Obviously, her study was possible because a significant amount of Tolstoy’s handwritten material is preserved. This is unfortunately not the case with Ancient Greek and Latin texts. No drafts of Plato or Aristotle, Virgil or Tacitus have been transmitted to us. From secondary accounts, however, we can gather some fascinating bits and pieces of information about the fate of many ancient manuscripts and entire textual corpora at the earliest stages of their transmission, including stages for which we find no direct evidence in the extant manuscripts or papyri fragments. We even occasionally have accounts of drafts, changes and corrections. From the remarks of Diogenes Laertius (3.37), we learn, for instance, that Plato frequently revised the famous first words of his dialogue *Politeia*, “Κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος [...]”, before finding this stylistical-

ly perfect and well-balanced opening sequence of words, which then became the final version, already admired by rhetoricians in Antiquity and known to us today. This situation changes gradually as we move from Late Antiquity into Byzantium, and especially into the Late Byzantine period, from which we do possess a limited number of autographs, manuscripts with autograph remarks by the authors and their collaborators, and even drafts and earlier versions of texts alongside final versions.

In the case of Bessarion (1408-1472), who ‘outlived’ the fatal capture of Constantinople (1453) by almost twenty years, we are in fact fortunate enough to be in possession of several working copies that elucidate the process of revision of his philosophical treatise *In Calumniatorem Platonis* (*ICP*), which constitutes a focal point of the present exhibition in the Correr Museum. Using Bessarion’s material, it appears to be possible, at least in theory – as this research has not yet been completed – to reconstruct the process of revising and correcting a Late Byzantine text, following a very similar approach to Feuer’s charting of Tolstoy’s progression towards the final version of *War and Peace*. Remarkable in itself, such a reconstruction of Bessarion’s working practices would be a pioneering study that could also shed light on previous centuries, if we assume that the techniques Bessarion employed while correcting and revising his text were not his own idiosyncratic invention but a method that was common in Byzantium, not only during his lifetime but also in the preceding period.

Of particular interest to research into Bessarion’s method of correcting and re-writing are the changes he made to the text of book 5 of *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. Book 5 contains Bessarion’s critique of the Latin translation of Plato’s *Laws* by Georgios Trapezuntios. This fifth book was neglected by Ludwig Mohler in his critical edition of Bessarion’s work and is essentially un-

known to the larger scholarly community, with the exception of a few specialists who work on Bessarion and Georgios Trapezuntios, namely my colleagues John Monfasani, Fabio Pagani and the late Viktor Tiftixoglou, who had been working extensively on the text of book 5 during his frequent research stays at the Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani between January 1980 and December 1984. The secondary literature on this particular text is virtually non-existent. The few important references to this text are listed in the *Prolegomena* to my forthcoming critical edition of book 5.

The aim of this article is to offer a detailed reconstruction of Bessarion’s successive revisions to a few lines of his text. Given the present state of research into Bessarion’s manuscripts, it is not yet possible to offer an exhaustive and comprehensive overview of the entire compositional process leading to the final version of the *ICP*. Over the following pages, I will limit myself to an analysis of a few palaeographic traces of its textual evolution. I will not simply list the palaeographic evidence pertaining to each individual correction, such as deletions, insertions and other changes, but I intend to combine the available evidence so as to postulate interrelationships between several corrections relating to a single passage, thereby reconstructing not merely the corrections, but the process of making them. In a sense, this contribution will make it possible to ‘peer over Bessarion’s shoulder’, as he is working on a few lines of his text.

In particular, in what follows, I am going to examine the corrections at the bottom of f. 183v of Cod. Marc. Gr. Z. 199 [figs 1-15]. In the course of the corrective process, the first, underlying version of the text on the page was replaced by Bessarion with a new, corrected and enhanced version of the same text, which was subsequently copied into Cod. Marc. Gr. Z. 198 [fig. 16].

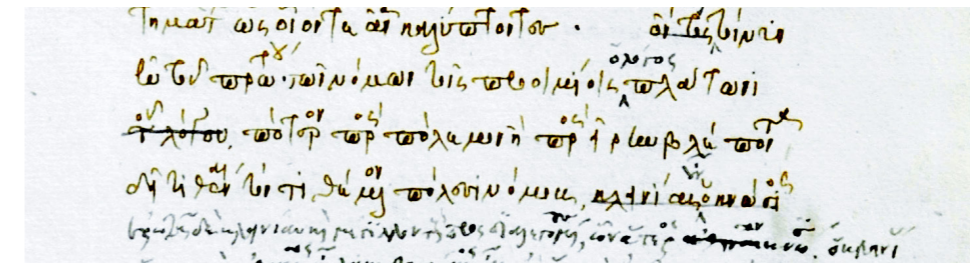


Figure 1  
Gr. Z. 199, f. 183v

The underlying text (lines 22-5) [fig. 1] reads as follows:

ὄντος τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίοις Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

After Bessarion’s corrective intervention, this underlying text was transformed into the following text, which is found in its final version in Cod. Marc. Gr. Z. 198, f. 143v, line 27-f. 144, line 4:

Ἔστι μὲν τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίοις ὁ λόγος Πλάτωνι, πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους. Ἐρωτᾷ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωι τε Κρητῇ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἶη δόξα. Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

For the sake of clarity and readability, I will present Bessarion’s handwritten corrections in a way that is now familiar to everybody who uses the ‘track-changes’ function in modern word-processing software. In addition, in the figures that accompany the text I will highlight relevant words and passages in red.



Let us start by looking at the first correction Bessarion made to this passage. It is the deletion of ὄντος, which is replaced by Ἔστι μὲν [fig. 2]:

ὄντος Ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

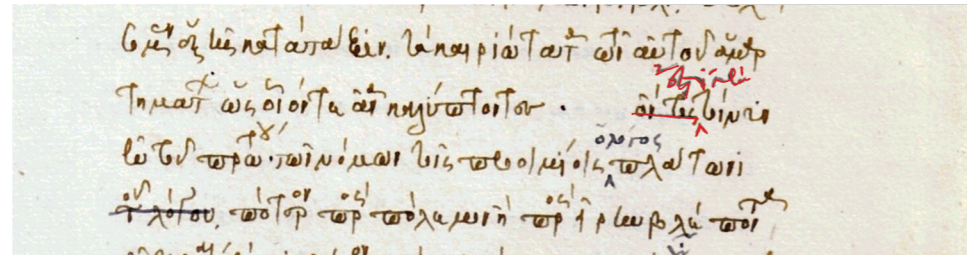


Figure 2

This change affects the participial element of the *genitivus absolutus* construction ὄντος ... τοῦ λόγου. Inevitably, the next change has to be made to the corresponding substantive of the same construction. This is in fact what we observe in the manuscript: Bessarion strikes through the words τοῦ λόγου [fig. 3]:

ὄντος Ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

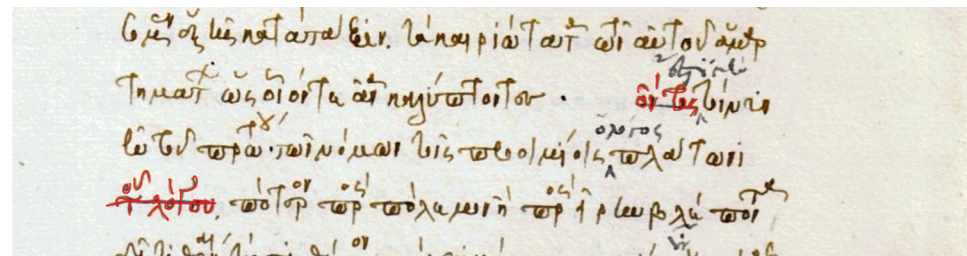


Figure 3

Subsequently, he inserts ὁ λόγος, which is the final stage of the correction of this sentence [fig. 4]:

ὄντος Ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

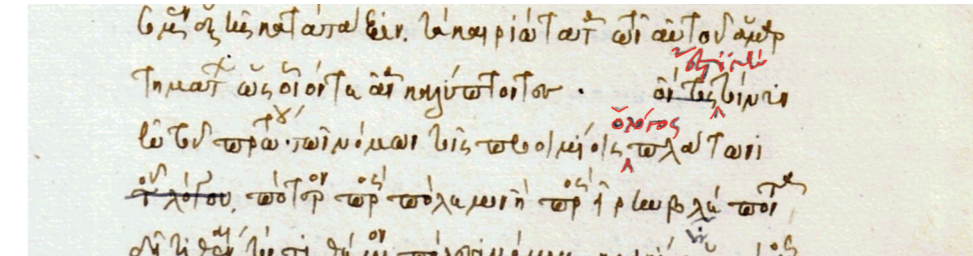


Figure 4

There are no further corrections to the text before the final words that were visible to Bessarion on the page at this point: Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος. And it is to these final three words that Bessarion must have next turned his attention.

ὄντος Ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

Bessarion applies two changes to these words, one after the other. First, he inserts an οὖν after Κλεινίας [fig. 5]:

ὄντος Ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

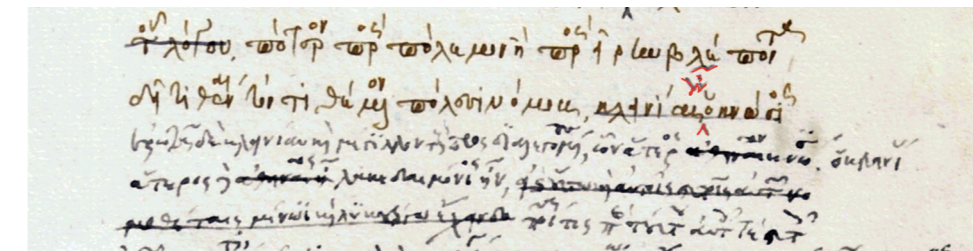


Figure 5

It is difficult, at this stage of the analysis, to provide a conclusive explanation for this insertion. It could be an inferential and transitional οὖν,<sup>1</sup> in other words, it signifies that something follows from what precedes, it states a conclusion or inference. We may thus suppose that, already at this point in the corrective process, Bessarion considers giving the phrase starting Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος an inferential meaning, by separating it more forcefully from the preceding clause and implying a conclusion. Whatever his intention might have been, he is not satisfied with the change he has just made, because immediately after the insertion of οὖν he draws a line through Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος marking its deletion [fig. 6]. As we shall see in a few lines, Bessarion later returned to these deleted words, picked them up from here and reinserted them into his text at the end of the modified passage, making them again the final words of the emended text.

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, **Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ Κνώσιος** [...]

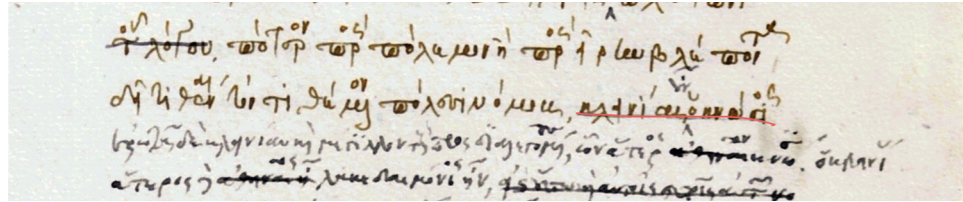


Figure 6

Having deleted the words Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος, Bessarion moves into the space at the bottom margin of the page by starting a new sentence [fig. 7]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, **Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιλλον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος**

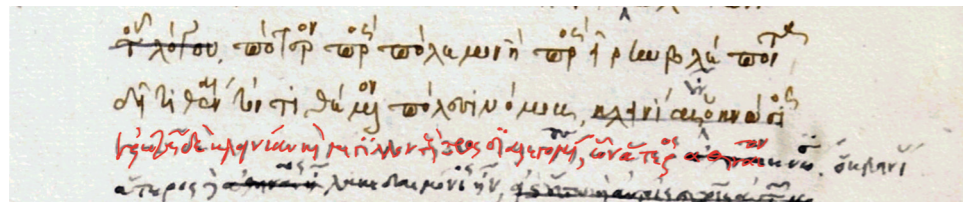


Figure 7

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, Cambridge (MA), § 2964.

Bessarion first writes this entire passage up to the word Ἀθηναῖος, then takes a step back and strikes through Ἀθηναῖος [fig. 8]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, **Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιλλον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος**

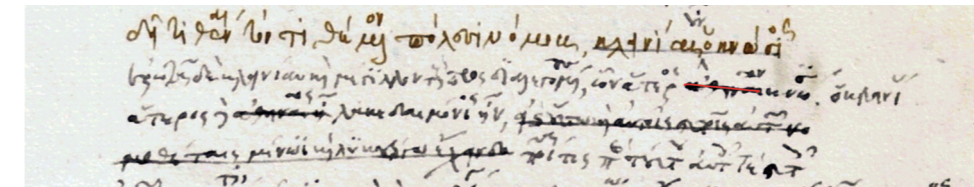


Figure 8

The syntax and sense suggest the reading Ἀθηναῖος at this point. However, a transcription of what is actually on the page yields Ἀθηναῖον. I can offer no explanation for the accusative form.

Bessarion continues by adding the words **Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ** [fig. 9].

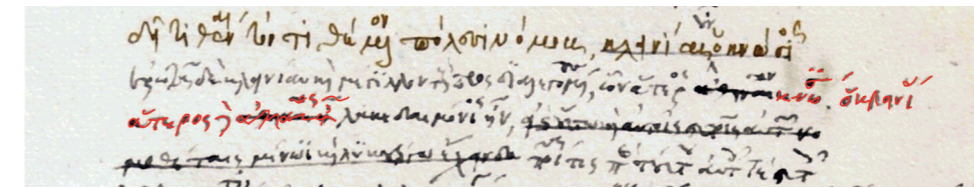


Figure 9

At this point of the corrective process, Bessarion actually has ἦ standing on the page in front of him [fig. 10]. This ἦ is an incomplete ἦν, but as Bessarion did not add the ν, he must have paused before he finished writing this verb. It appears, therefore, that he decided to turn back and strike through the last two words, namely Ἀθηναῖος and incomplete ἦ<ν>.

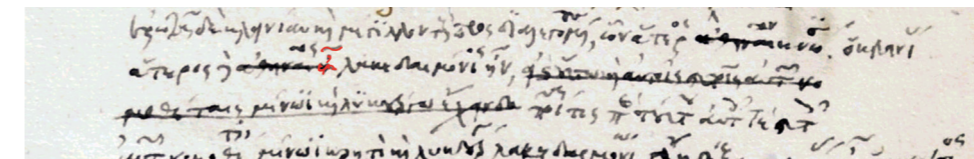


Figure 10

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ ὁ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ

He does so in order to replace Ἀθηναῖος with Λακεδαιμόνιος. It is probable that we encounter here a minor *lapsus calami* or possibly a *lapsus mentis* of Bessarion, who for a second seems to have forgotten that the other dialogue partner to whom he refers was not an Athenian but a Spartan. He thus immediately corrects himself and now finishes the ἦν that he left incomplete a moment ago [fig. 11]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ ὁ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν,

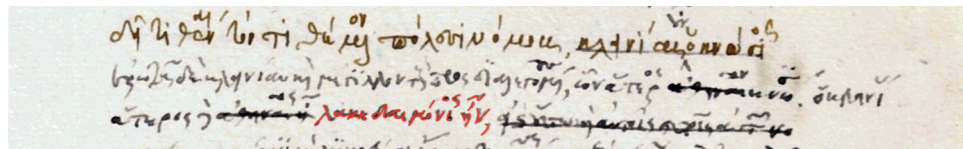


Figure 11

After this self-correction, Bessarion proceeds to write the following words: εἰ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε. The text at this stage reads as follows [fig. 12]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ ὁ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, εἰ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε

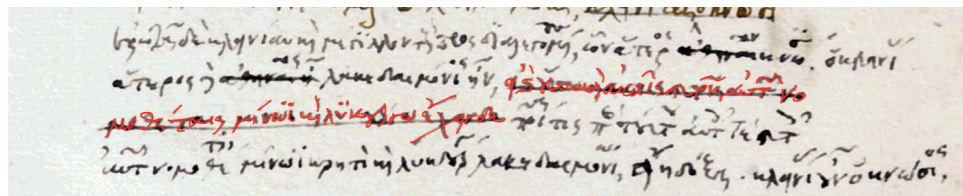


Figure 12

However, immediately after the completion of this sentence, Bessarion decides to delete it [fig. 13]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ ὁ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, εἰ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε

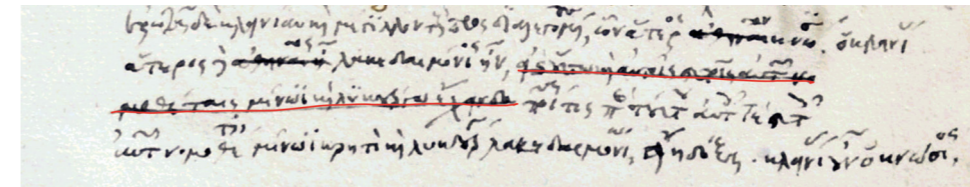


Figure 13

The passage he has deleted is replaced with a new, reformulated version of the same sentence, namely: ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωι τε Κρητὶ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἴη δόξα. After this change, the text on the page runs as follows [fig. 14]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν ἄ τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος ἄ Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ἄ ὁ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, εἰ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωι τε Κρητὶ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἴη δόξα.

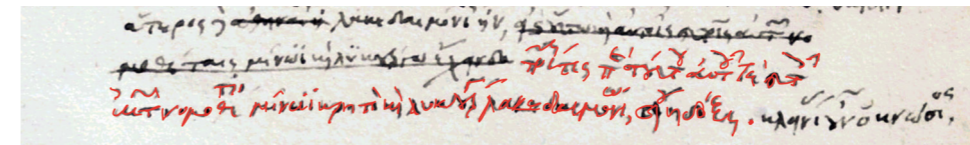


Figure 14

Comparing the two versions, namely the version before the correction “εἰ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε” with the subsequent “ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωι τε Κρητὶ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἴη δόξα”, we discover that Bessarion has provided a more precise wording for the question he wished to express. The somewhat vaguely formulated indirect question: “εἰ οὕτω [...] ἔχειν” (whether [...] is the case) has been reformulated as a pointed question “ποία τις [...] εἴη δόξα” (what is the opinion about [...]).

Having arrived at this point, all Bessarion needs to do is to reconnect the text now in front of him with the rest of the sentence on the following page. This connection already exists: Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος, which used to be the last words on the page before Bessarion started to modify the entire passage, and they links up with the text on the next page: “[...] πρὸς πόλεμον βλέποντα φησὶ [...]”. And so, as a final step in this process, Bessarion re-inserts these words, together with the οὖν that he had decided to insert before he previously deleted them. The text now reads as follows [fig. 15]:

ὄντος ἔστι μὲν τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος, Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Ἀθηναῖος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἢ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, εἰ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωί τε Κρητὶ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἴη δόξα. Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος

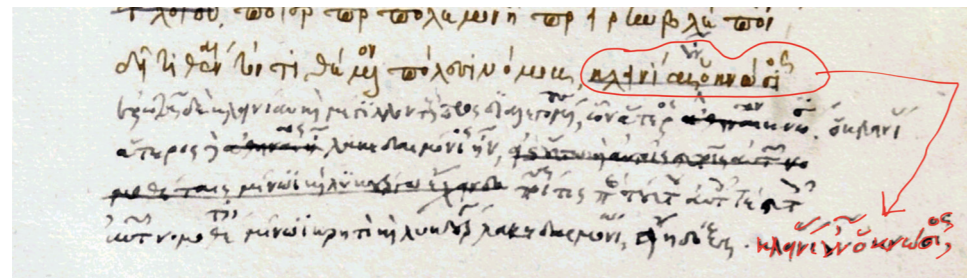


Figure 15

The transformation of text A into text B is complete at this point. If we ‘turn off’ the ‘tracking changes’ that I have employed throughout the text to illustrate the corrective process in way familiar to modern readers, we obtain the final version of the text, which is in fact found in Cod. Marc. Gr. Z. 198 (partially visible in the next figure [fig. 16]):

Ἔστι μὲν τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίαις ὁ λόγος Πλάτωνι, πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους. Ἐρωτᾶ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιστον τοὺς προσδιαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωί τε Κρητὶ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἴη δόξα. Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος [...]

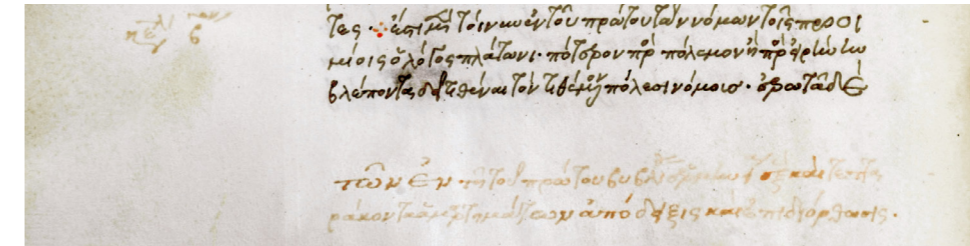


Figure 16  
Gr. Z. 198, f. 143v

Having examined the corrections in detail, I would like to point out that, while the palaeographic evidence for each individual correction in this particular case is not ambiguous in itself and can be described in clear terms as an insertion, deletion or addition, the actual order in which the corrections were made cannot be established beyond reasonable doubt and must remain a hypothesis. Specifically, we have no means of determining whether Bessarion in fact started at the beginning of the passage and proceeded from left to right, correcting ὄντος into ἔστι μὲν first and changing τοῦ λόγου into ὁ λόγος subsequently. It is equally possible to imagine that he started in the middle of the sentence with an alteration to the semantic nucleus of the construction, that is with the substantive τοῦ λόγου into ὁ λόγος, and only then glanced up the text to adjust the ὄντος-part of the clause. However, what is beyond reasonable doubt is that both changes belong together and one change requires the other. Similar assumptions can be made about Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος: the deletion of these words towards the beginning of the passage and their re-insertion at the end form part of one and the same corrective sequence and belong together. Some uncertainties concerning the aim of corrections remain. I have not been able to find a convincing explanation as to why the grammatically correct Ἀθηναῖος actually appears as Ἀθηναῖον in the text. Is the accusative form actually an indication that Bessarion had in mind yet another way

of continuing this sentence at the moment of writing, but never put this hypothetical alternative version onto paper? There are no traces of such a version to validate or refute this supposition. It must equally remain a hypothesis that Bessarion, at the moment of writing, confused an Athenian with a Spartan, but immediately corrected himself. In the light of this auto-correction by Bessarion and in connection with it, it appears plausible that the ἦ is an incomplete ἦ<ν>. Finally, the presence of two versions of the same phrase (εἰ οὕτω [...] ἔχειν and ποία τις [...] εἴη δόξα) illustrates that Bessarion considered stylistic alternatives during the process of writing and gives a clear indication as to which alternative he preferred. On the basis of this single instance analysed here, it is not possible, of course, to draw more general conclusions about Bessarion’s stylistic preferences, but additional examples of this kind, which are easily found throughout the manuscript, may add up during future research to a coherent picture of his stylistic choices and tastes. While we will never know the exact wording of the alternative version(s) of the famous Platonic opening “Κατέβην χθές εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος [...]”, in the case of Bessarion’s text we actually have a large number of alternative versions of the same passages of the same text by the same author and we know which version was deemed better by him, which constitutes, *per se*, a trove of raw material for further research.

διέφθαρκεν. Ἀρξάμενοι τοίνυν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων βυβλίου προχωρήσομεν ἐξῆς κατὰ τάξιν, τὰ καιριώτατα τῶν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτημάτων ὡς οἶόν τε ἀνακαλύπτοντες.

- Ἔστι μὲν<sup>a</sup> τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίοις ὁ λόγος<sup>b</sup> Πλάτωνι,<sup>c</sup> πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους.<sup>de</sup> Ἐρωτᾷ δὲ Κλεινίαν καὶ Μέγιλλον τοὺς προσ-  
διαλεγόμενους, ὧν ἄτερος Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωι τε Κρητὶ καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἶη δόξα. Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος
- <sup>a</sup> ex ὄντος corr. K3    <sup>b</sup> ins. K3  
<sup>c</sup> post Πλάτωνι del. τοῦ λόγου K3    <sup>d</sup> post νόμους del. Κλεινίας <οὖν> ὁ Κνώσιος K3    <sup>e</sup> post νόμους ins. Ἐρωτᾷ ... [Ἀθηναῖος] Κνώσιος ὁ Κλεινίας, ἄτερος δὲ [Ἀθηναῖος] Λακεδαιμόνιος ἦν, [εἶ καὶ οὕτω καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ ἔχειν δε] ... Κνώσιος deinde corr. K3

1 Τῆς : ἦς 3 Ἴνα : να 6 μὴ δὲ : μηδὲ T 7 ἦκει συνιέναι : ἦμισυ ιέναι T 13 μὴ δὲ : μηδὲ T 17 μὴ δὲ : μηδὲ T 21 τε αὐτὰ : τὲ αὐτὰ 21 τε οὗτος : τὲ οὗτος

9 πάντων ex ἀπάντων corr. K1 18 post ἐατέον puncto et virgula (“;”) distinxit K1 21 ἀπήγγελκεν ex ἀπήγγελκεν [sic!] corr. K1 22 λόγον ex λόγον [sic!] corr. K1 28 ad μεταγεγραμμένα in marg. γράφε μετενηγεμένα U, sed del. K1 30 ad περιλαβόντες in marg. γράφε περιειληφότες U, sed del. K1

**Figure 17**  
Traditional or ‘static’  
apparatus criticus  
for the text analysed  
in the article

In this article I have made an attempt to move beyond a ‘static’ listing of individual corrections, as is frequently found in the apparatuses of critical editions, towards reconstructing the corrective process of a text. While philological scholarship within Byzantine Studies has a relatively well-established traditional ‘instrumentarium’ (inherited from Classical Studies), which allows us to describe singular corrections in an apparatus, we have not yet developed an adequate methodology and terminology that would allow us to describe a corrective process. This is mainly due to the fact that only a limited number of manuscripts from Byzantium is suitable for this kind of analysis. In addition, it is only recently that the interest of Byzantine philology has turned from the paradigm of ‘reconstructing’ a text, with the practical objective of producing a critical edition, towards a more theoretical goal of exploring various aspects of textual production

and transmission. In the absence of such a methodology, the results of the kind of reconstruction I have presented here either remain unpublished and never leave the notes and annotations of a philologist who embarks upon the arduous task of working through changes and corrections or, if the results of this work are published, they are still documented in a ‘traditional’ format, namely by means of creating a ‘static’ critical apparatus, listing individual corrections. The last figure [fig. 17] shows an example of what an apparatus for the text analysed in this study could look like. It makes immediately clear the constraints and limitations of a ‘traditional’ approach. We may hope that advances in digital humanities will help us in the near future to overcome the constraints evident in this example. However, electronic critical editions in turn have their own significant limits and constraints, the discussion of which must remain outside of the scope of this article.

## The *Notata* of Giovanni Gatti OP

John Monfasani

By the time Cardinal Bessarion published in 1469 his great defence of Plato, the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, against the attack of George of Trebizond, he was no longer the young Greek theologian at the Council of Florence whose brilliance and support of the union of churches so impressed the Latins that in 1439 Pope Eugenius IV made him a cardinal. Rather, he had become a man with many heavy responsibilities, from campaigning for a crusade against the Turk and helping fellow Greeks who were the victims of the Turkish conquests to being the Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order and a major player in the politics of the papal curia. At the same time he had dedicated his life to salvaging as much of the Greek literary heritage as he could. We may add that as he aged, he frequented the baths of Viterbo to salve his painful infirmities. But power and status also brought another element to Bessarion’s life: wealth. For a man of Bessarion’s great intellectual attainment and wide culture this wealth enabled him to create and support a cardinalitial *famiglia* of exceptionally talented men, even called in his own time the *Academia Bessarionea*; and as he got older, he leaned on his *famiglia* not only to help with his official duties, but also to assist in his intellectual endeavours. Two notably helped with the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, the humanist Niccolò Perotti who helped to reshape Bessarion’s Latin and contribute references to Latin sources, and the Greek Aristotelian scholar Theodore Gaza, whom Bessarion invited as early 1459 to help revise the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* and who demonstrably contributed references to Greek sources as well as carefully advising on Bessarion’s critique of George of Trebizond’s translation of Pla

to's *Laws*, a critique that came to constitute book 5 of the 1469 edition of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. But there was a third major contributor to the 1469 *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, whose part in the enterprise was not understood until the discovery of the *Notata*.

The full title of Gatti's work is *Ista sunt notata per Ioannem Gattum theologum ex libro ineptiis et deliramentis pleno qui inscribitur De Comparatione Philosophorum*. The book "full of ineptitudes and mad ravings" which Gatti addressed was, of course, George of Trebizond's *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis et De Aristotelis Prestantia*.

Published at Rome in 1458, George's *Comparatio* was the culminating work of his campaign against Platonism and the Bessarion circle. After arriving in Venice from his native Crete in 1416 as a Greek scribe, George proceeded to make a brilliant career for himself as a teacher of rhetoric and then, starting in the 1440s, after he became a member of the papal curia, as an amazingly prolific translator of Greek patristic, philosophical, and scientific texts. For a time he was also Bessarion's teacher of Latin. Along the way, he conceived an intense hatred of Plato and Platonism, and, no less importantly, he came to see himself as an apocalyptic prophet who understood how Platonism had undermined Greek civilisation leading to its collapse before the Turks and now was threatening to do the same to the West because of Bessarion. The cardinal had been the disciple of the neopagan Platonic philosopher George Gemistus Pletho at Mistra in the Peloponnese; and now he was introducing into the West the subversive teachings of his Platonic pagan master. Consequently, George structured his *Comparatio* in such a way that it culminated in a passionate denunciation of Pletho and a dire warning against allowing a new Plato to sabotage the West from within. George's jeremiads were obviously directed against Bessarion and his clients, from whom he had become alienated in the 1450s. He divided his *Comparatio* into three books. The first compared Pla-

to and Aristotle as to their relative contributions to science and learning in general. Aristotle easily came out on top. The second treated their philosophic doctrines insofar as they compare to Christian dogma. George showed how Aristotle had intuited the trinitarian nature of God, had believed in the creation of the world *ex nihilo* as well as in divine providence, just as he had also asserted the divine creation of each individual soul, human free will, and the reward and punishment of humans in a life after death. Plato, on the contrary, had contradicted Christianity on nearly all these points, and where he agreed it was because he followed the teachings of the poets rather than out of any philosophical profundity. In the third book of the *Comparatio*, George compared the lives and moral teachings of the two philosophers, demonstrating how Plato was a megalomaniac hedonist who had as his successors first Epicurus, and then Mohammed. After explaining the wicked neopaganism of George Gemistus Pletho, George ended with a warning about the coming of a fourth Plato (after Plato, Epicurus, and Mohammed) who would subvert the Latin West.

A devout Platonist and an admirer of Aristotle, who, he believed, was in fundamental agreement with Plato, Bessarion completed the first draft of his response to George rather quickly, by January 1459. Several things about this response are unusual. To be sure, Bessarion sought to respond to George point by point, dividing his response into three books corresponding to George's three books, as he demonstrated in book 1 that Plato was not only a master of Greek science, logic, and rhetoric, but also, in book 2, very much in harmony with Christian beliefs, as opposed to Aristotle, and, in book 3, a paragon of pagan virtue. Yet, though his audience was the educated elite of Latin Christendom, Bessarion wrote his response in Greek. Furthermore, although George's anti-Platonic polemic culminated in an exposé of the Platonic paganism of Bessarion's teacher George Gemistus Pletho, Bessarion ignored completely this crucial aspect of George's *Comparatio* and

limited his work to a defence of Plato exclusively. Finally, though addressing a Latin audience, Bessarion's sources were overwhelmingly Greek, as he quoted only a limited number of Latin classical sources, and virtually no medieval sources despite the vast scholastic philosophical literature available on the issues in question.

Bessarion remedied the first problem by myself translating his Greek text into Latin, calling the resulting text the *Liber Defensionum*. He never addressed the second problem, deciding, quite rightly, that discussing Pletho's religious ideas and teaching would be dangerous for a Roman cardinal. As for the third problem, Bessarion initially ignored it. So, in 1466 he published the *Liber Defensionum*. However, almost immediately he withdrew the work from circulation. He must have taken to heart friendly criticism of the *Liber Defensionum*.

By having the skilled humanist Niccolò Perotti revise the Latin of the *Liber Defensionum* and changing its title to *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, Bessarion took care of the linguistic form in which his work presented itself to a Latin audience. The issue of George Gemistus Pletho he steadfastly continued to avoid like the plague. It was in order to address the third issue, namely, the lack of scholastic sources in a work meant to be read by Latin theologians and philosophers, that Giovanni Gatti enters the story.

Born in Messina about 1420, Gatti entered the Dominican Order in his native city. We know little else about him until 1451 when he scored a spectacular success in a scholastic disputation before Pope Nicholas V in Rome. From that point on we can trace his career as a university professor in various Italian cities and also, most crucially, as a visitor to the Genoese owned Greek island of Chios, where he either learned or greatly improved his knowledge of Greek. His career hit a speed bump, however, when his attempt to establish himself in 1466 at the court of King Matthias Corvinus in Hungary proved abortive and by 1467 he found himself back in Italy, in Rome, to be precise. Luckily for him, Gatti's failed Hungarian

gambit proved to be a *felix culpa* since in Rome Bessarion took him into his cardinalial *famiglia* and in doing so made Gatti's fortune. Eventually, after he had helped Bessarion with the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, the cardinal rewarded him by using his influence with Pope Sixtus IV to have him named the bishop of Cefalù in his native Sicily. Sixtus even tried to make Gatti the bishop of the larger diocese of Catania, but King John II of Aragon blocked that move. Gatti died in retirement in his birth city of Messina in 1484.

It is easy to see why Bessarion valued Gatti. He was already a diligent reader of Thomas Aquinas before he ever came to Italy because of the fourteenth-century translations into Greek of Thomas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, most of the *Summa Theologiae*, and other works by Demetrius and Prochorus Cydones. Once in Italy, as the evidence of his Latin library suggests, Bessarion absorbed Latin scholasticism primarily as a student of the great Dominican thinker despite being the Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order and having Franciscan theologians as part of his household. Probably most importantly, Gatti was a Thomist theologian who knew Greek. As a Roman cardinal, Bessarion always required his closest collaborators to know Greek. This confluence of Bessarion's needs and Gatti's competencies produced the *Notata*.

Initially, the plan was for Gatti to write the *Notata* in Bessarion's voice and for Bessarion to incorporate the *Notata* whole with some minor revisions into the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* as the new book 3, inserted between the original books 2 and 3 of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. The new book 3 would answer from a Latin scholastic perspective George of Trebizond's arguments concerning Aristotle's agreement with the fundamental dogmas of Christianity. In the event, the new book 3 took up fully one third of the 1469 *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, as Bessarion's original book 3 now became book 4 of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. But when Bessarion began to work on the stylistic revisions that would make Gatti's contribu-

tion more consistent with the style and format of the rest of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, he eventually threw up his hands and stopped half way through. Thereafter, he changed from revising the *Notata* to exploiting it as a storehouse of scholastic lore for the new book 3 that he would first write in Greek and then translate into Latin. Subsequently, a humanist, probably Perotti but possibly also another humanist in the cardinal's entourage, revised Bessarion's Latin, and it was this last version that one reads in the 1469 edition of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. This process of translation and revision, had one amusing result. The humanist reviser(s), looking at Bessarion's Latin and Greek, invariably and unintentionally gave the Latin of the myriad scholastic quotations of Gatti's *Notata* appropriated by Bessarion a humanistic and classical patina that they quite lacked in the original.

So, one may ask, what sort of scholastic storehouse did Gatti provide Bessarion? Not all of the *Notata* survives, but we have about four-fifths of it and therefore certainly enough to form well founded judgments about the work. Ridiculing the way George formulated his arguments, Gatti reframed them into what he deemed proper propositions, which he then methodically proceeded to refute. For instance, in what he called "chapter two" of book 2 of George's *Comparatio*, Gatti identified eighteen propositions deserving of refutation. He then answered them in order: *ad primum*, *ad secundum*, *ad tertium*, and so on. The result was that nowhere did Gatti actually quote George. Rather Gatti always responded to his own scholastic formulations. Also, though he might revise Gatti's Latin style, Bessarion really could not escape the scholastic structure of Gatti's text without discarding most of it, which of course he did not do. Not surprisingly, therefore, in the sixteenth century the French humanist Aristotelian Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples criticised the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* as the product of a team rather than of Bessarion himself because of the obvious heterogeneity of style and structure one found in the work. We may

note, however, that Bessarion did not carry over into the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* one striking characteristic of the *Notata*, namely, the scorn that Gatti, the professional theologian, expressed for the humanist George of Trebizond as a mere *grammaticus* who had made a fool of himself trying to navigate the deep waters of philosophy and theology. For Bessarion in the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* to mock George as a humanist would have meant deeply offending not only important members of his own entourage, but also a significant segment of the audience that he wanted to win over to his side.

The contentions of George that Gatti specifically refuted were: that Plato was a polytheist, worshipping not only multiple gods but also demons, and that Plato got his ideas on the immortality of the soul from the poets; that Aristotle placed God outside the universe beyond the first sphere and not within the first sphere; that Aristotle believed God to be the efficient cause of the universe, creating the universe freely *ex nihilo*; that Aristotle did not call God a divine animal; that Aristotle had an inkling of the divine Trinity based on the trinitarian vestiges imprinted all over creation and that he expressed this opinion in book 2 of his book *On the Heavens*. Gatti no doubt refuted George's arguments concerning Aristotle's belief in the divine creation of each individual soul and on the immortality of the soul as well as on human free will, but we have lost these sections of the *Notata*. I do believe, however, that it can be shown that Bessarion's arguments on these points in the new book 3 of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* were directly taken from the lost parts of the *Notata*.

In any case, on all these points Gatti heavily relied on quotations and citations of scholastic authorities to demonstrate the falsity of George's assertions. As to be expected and no doubt to Bessarion's satisfaction, the scholastic authority Gatti most cited by far was Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, to show how wrong George was, Gatti, speaking we should remember, in Bessarion's voice,

called Thomas a "great Platonist" (*magnus Platonicus*). Bessarion refrained from repeating this claim in the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, but otherwise appropriated whole cloth almost all of Gatti's quotations and citations of Thomas. Gatti's second most cited authority was Averroes, an author whom we may well doubt the extent to which Bessarion had read. Gatti also liked to cite the other great Arab authority, Avicenna, with whom, again, it is dubious that Bessarion had much familiarity through reading his works, though he did have at least one work of Avicenna in his library. To be sure, Gatti happily quoted Augustine's statements on Plato's compatibility with Christianity, but he quoted far more often medieval scholastic sources. As a Dominican, he of course quoted Albert the Great. However, he quoted many more times John Duns Scotus and other theologians of the Franciscan school. To this mix he added the Augustinian theologian Gregory of Rimini and secular theologians such as Henry of Ghent, Walter Burley, and John Wylton. In short, Gatti was intent on showing that the whole medieval scholastic tradition was arraigned against George's interpretation of Plato and Aristotle. Oddly enough, Gatti twice let slip that this depiction of the scholastic tradition may not have been as unanimous as he pretended, and both times he seems to have been referring to the views of fellow Dominicans, one of whom may have been the inquisitor and papal theologian Salvo Cassetta.

Bessarion accepted into the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* the majority of Gatti's scholastic citations, but he was more judicious when it came to Gatti's attempts to flaunt his Greek erudition. True, he took over Gatti's reference to what were at the time still untranslated orations of Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzenus, but he completely ignored Gatti's attempt to pronounce on the views of Plotinus and Proclus. One demonstration of Gatti's knowledge of Greek, however, is striking. George had argued that the medieval translator was wrong to translate as *animale* Aristotle's reference to God in *Metaphysics* XII

as the divine ζῳον when what was meant was a living thing, a being. Gatti condemned George as an ignorant and dishonest translator for rejecting *animale* as the correct translation. In his own translation of the *Metaphysics*, made in the 1440s and eventually dedicated to King Alfonso of Naples, Bessarion preemptively agreed with George and translated ζῳον as *vivens*, not *animale*; but now, in the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, reflecting the polemical spirit of the work, he appropriated Gatti's criticism and stated that George was quite wrong to change *animale* to *vivens*.

Gatti's *Notata* was never intended for publication. It was an in-house memorandum written by a client for the use of his patron. So, we are immensely lucky to have it at all, let alone something like four fifths of it. It has survived because when Bessarion left for his legation to France in April 1472 to promote the Crusade, he packed up his whole library and deposited it with Duke Federigo of Montefeltro on his way north. After Bessarion died on the way back to Rimini on 18 November 1472, Duke Federigo kept faith with his old friend and saw to the transfer of Bessarion's library to Venice as the cardinal's will specified. Gatti's *Notata*, as an unbound bundle of fascicles that had been kept in the library as still potentially useful in Bessarion's ongoing battle with George of Trebizond, was caught up in these movements. At some subsequent moment after arriving in Venice, the bundle containing the fascicles of the *Notata* escaped – if that is the right word – the cases containing Bessarion's manuscripts. Where it went is anybody's guess, but fortunately it remained in the Venetian book market and made it back to the Marciana as an external acquisition, bound in Lat. VI, 61 (coll. 2592), since at some point it was bound as part of a miscellaneous volume that consisted of an early draft of the new book 3 of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, which made sense, and a work of Antonius Lull, to which, of course, the *Notata* had no connection. Before the fascicles of the *Notata* were bound into Lat. VI,

61, however, some of them were lost as were also some individual folios and the surviving remainder was partly bound in the wrong order so that until recently it was difficult to understand its exact nature. Thus, inasmuch as Giovanni Gatti could never acknowledge the relationship of the *Notata* to the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, up

to today the spectacular display of scholastic erudition that appeared in the 1469 edition of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* plausibly seemed to have been the product of Bessarion's own broad culture, just as he and Gatti had planned it to be after the latter entered the cardinal's household in 1467.

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# The Greek Sources of George of Trebizond's Translation of Plato's *Laws*

Fabio Pagani

There is nothing new in the observation that Cardinal Bessarion was a highly erudite collector of Greek manuscripts who played a critical role in the effort to rescue Greek books at the time of the Fall of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, however, scholars have shed much light not only on the cardinal's work as a collector of manuscripts (both Greek and Latin), but also on the complex network of relationships and intellectual activities that developed around those manuscripts. The study of his extraordinary *Nachlass*,<sup>2</sup> in combination with new historical information, has allowed modern scholars to reconstruct in greater detail, and therefore to appreciate more fully, the intellectual life of the *Academia Bessarionea*.<sup>3</sup>

The current exhibition hosted in the Libreria Pisani at the Museo Correr in Venice is designed to document precisely this aspect of Bessarion's work, by focusing on his most important philosophical treatise, the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* (henceforth, *ICP*). In the eleven years between 1458 and 1469, Bessarion worked on the *ICP* in close connection with various members of his intellectual circle. While studying the text of Plato and jotting down his first Greek drafts, the cardinal was helped by Theodore Gaza, as we can see from Gaza's notes in MS Marc. Gr. Z. 199. To serve as the source of Bessarion's *ICP* book 3, the Dominican Giovanni Gatti assembled the treatise of *Notata* (Gatt. *Not.*), recently edited by John Monfasani. For the Latin text published in August 1469, the cardinal was indebted to his secretary Niccolò Perotti, as Monfasani has shown in a pair of ground-breaking studies from the beginning of the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Gaza, Gatti, and Perotti, along with many others, were members



of Bessarion's *Academia*. So, too, up to a certain point, was George of Trebizond, the 'slanderer' (*calumniator*) of Plato, against whom the *ICP* was aimed.<sup>5</sup> In an effort to expand our knowledge of those who belonged to this complex network of scholars, this chapter focuses on Trebizond and provides a study of the Greek manuscripts he used for his translation of Plato's *Laws* (Trap., *Plat. Lg.*).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, it was precisely on the basis of his own translation of the *Laws* that George composed some of the harshest passages of his *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis* (Trap. *Comp.*),<sup>7</sup> the vehement attack against Plato that prompted Bessarion to write the *ICP*.

George of Trebizond, a Cretan by birth who made a career in Italy as a professor of Latin rhetoric, was introduced to the Roman Pontiff by none other than Cardinal Bessarion himself at the time of the Council of Florence. Subsequently hired as *secretarius* in the papal curia, George became under Nicholas V (1447-55) one of the most prolific translators in Rome, producing a long list of Latin versions of Greek patristic and philosophical texts in the space of only a few years.<sup>8</sup>

Trebizond's extensive corpus of translations, still confined to unedited manuscripts (with only a few exceptions),<sup>9</sup> has been largely neglected by modern scholars.<sup>10</sup> No doubt this is due to the traditionally bad press given to humanistic translations, which have been judged to be biased (at best) or entirely unreliable (at worse).<sup>11</sup> It is true that the methodological assumptions of humanists make their work of little value, when not entirely misleading, for textual critics attempting to reconstruct the original form of an ancient text. Yet, for those who are interested in the re-appropriation and reception of classical texts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is a serious mistake to ignore the pivotal role played by translations in this process. For even if they do not fare well among modern philologists, some humanistic translations were widely disseminated among contemporaries. This was certainly the case for Trebizond's translation of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, which became

a milestone of Renaissance humanism. George's translation of Plato's *Laws* can hardly claim such an impact, since it circulated for no more than a few decades. This was certainly because of the devastating review, the *Correctio Legum*, that Cardinal Bessarion first published as the fifth book of his *ICP* in 1469. Yet, as I have argued in a recent article, the combined study of the translation and its review provides a treasure trove of information about scholarly practices of the fifteenth century, as well as representing the basis for Ficino's own translation of the *Laws*.<sup>12</sup>

In that same article, I presented some preliminary results of my work on both the translation and the review by Cardinal Bessarion; this research pointed to the necessity of philological study of the material as a whole.<sup>13</sup> To be effective, such a study needs to examine not only the accuracy of Bessarion's criticisms of George's translation, but also their fairness. In the case of a humanistic translation produced before the invention of printing, no comprehensive assessment of its quality is possible as long as there is no precise knowledge of the sources from which the translation was made.<sup>14</sup> We can have no real discussion of the translator's method, his fidelity, or linguistic competence without preliminary research into what was the actual Greek text he translated.<sup>15</sup> Since we still stand in need of such an investigation for Trebizond's translation of the *Laws*,<sup>16</sup> in what follows, I provide a first attempt to identify the sources employed for the translation. Based on my results, I conclude that George used at least two manuscripts for his translation, namely Laur. Plut. 80.17 (L) and Marc. Gr. Z. 187 (N). By placing these identifications in their historical context, in the final part of this chapter I compare George's Greek sources for his translation with those available to Bessarion, therefore bringing my contribution to a better understanding of the relationship between the two men within the broader context of the *Academia Bessarionea*.

A few words to clarify the methodology of this study and its limits. First, humanists generally translated *ad*

*sententiam*, that is, they sought to render the general sense more than the exact words of the original text. Consequently, the reconstruction of the Greek text underlying their translations is often speculative. In the particular case of George of Trebizond, the difficulties are even greater, since he regarded as his prerogative to skip passages that he did not want to translate. He only accepted literal renderings as a working methodology for the translation of the Bible, following Jerome, and for the treatises of Aristotle, where he *had left out nothing, and added nothing, and tried everywhere to render the very word order without alterations*.<sup>17</sup> For other 'profane' texts, such as historical works and Plato himself, he not only allowed more freedom in translating, but even recommended adopting a non-literal approach. So, from George of Trebizond's point of view, Poggio Bracciolini (with whom he was otherwise on bad terms) should not be criticised for his free rendering of Diodorus Siculus.<sup>18</sup>

1 George of Trebizond gives us no direct information to identify his Greek source(s) for his translation. Furthermore, no conclusive result could be achieved by merely gathering historical information about the circulation of manuscripts of the *Laws* at the time. The only way to define Trebizond's Greek text with certainty is to study the Latin text of the translation and identify passages that correspond to distinctive readings of the different branches of the manuscript transmission of Plato's *Laws*.

Second, my study compares large samples of the Latin translation with significant portions of the Greek manuscript transmission, but, due to the length of Plato's *Laws*, I cannot claim to have collated the entirety of the evidence available. In particular, I rely on the study of books 1-4 and of selected sections of books 6 (= Plat. *Lg.* 751a-762c), 8 (= Plat. *Lg.* 828a-836b), 10 (= Plat. *Lg.* 884a-893b), and 12 (= Plat. *Lg.* 941a-948a). On the other hand, the extensive portions of the text collated provide enough evidence to back my conclusions.

Therefore, the remaining part of this chapter is divided into the following sections: 1 identification of the textual family on which the translation should be placed through the examination of the readings; 2 within the textual family, identification of the principal manuscript used by Trebizond; 3 discussion about the second manuscript used by Trebizond; 4 consequences of the identifications.

It is Levi Arnold Post who has drawn up the *stemma codicum* of Plato's *Laws*. As Post has argued, the manuscript tradition of this dialogue is subdivided into two distinct families (codices A and O) from the beginning to the fifth book (*Lg.* 1.625-5.746b8). From book 5 to 12, O becomes a copy of A and the two families are reduced to one.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is the first part of the text that allows us to place Trebizond's translation into the family of one or the other of these two codices.

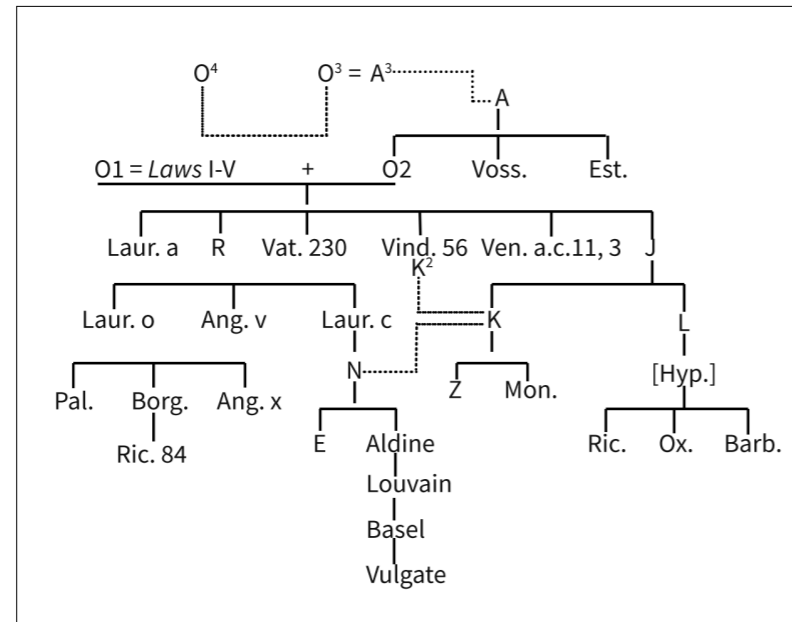


Figure 1  
Plato's Laws: Stemma codicum  
by L.A. Post (1934)

One need only skim the apparatus of Des Places' edition to realise that Trebizond's translation always follows the second family of the text of the *Laws*, namely O, against the readings of A. The following cases demonstrate this:<sup>20</sup>

**Book I** 625a1 *affirmamus* (φαῖμεν AO : φαμέν O<sup>c</sup> [i eraso]) 625a6 *nos* [...] *iocundius* (ἀηδῶς A : ἀηδῶς ἡμᾶς O) 627d6 *mihi quoque* (ἐμοὶ A : καὶ ἐμοὶ O [sed καὶ p.n.]) 635b4 *solis* (μόνοις O et i.m. a<sup>2</sup> : νόμοις A)<sup>21</sup> 638b4 *de ipsa re* (περὶ αὐτοῦ [...] ἐπιτηδεύματος O : περὶ αὐτοῦ [...] ἐπιτηδεύματος A) 638d4 *utentes* (χρώμενοι O : om. A) 640e1 *rem ipsam* (αὐτῶ τῷ πράγματι O<sup>4</sup> [i i.r. ex v et i s.v.] : αὐτῶν AO) 644b3 *per totam uitam* (διὰ βίου παντὶ A Eus. Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> et (i s.v.) O<sup>4</sup> : διὰ βίου παντὸς O) 645e4 *certe* (ναὶ O : om. A et alii sec. O<sup>4</sup> i.m. [τὸ ναὶ ἐν ἄλλοις οὐ κεῖται])  
**Book II** 654c1 *utrum et bona* (πότερον εἰ καὶ καλὰ A : πότερον καὶ καλὰ O) 659a4 *alio* (θεάτρον A Eus. et ἄ. i.m.O<sup>4</sup> : θατέρου O) 665b6 *saliat* (χορεύουσιν A : χορεύουσιν O) 668b6 *diximus* (ἔφαμεν O : φαμέν A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup>) 670a7 *nostris* (χωρικῆς A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> et [o s.v.] O<sup>4</sup> : χωρικῆς O) 674a7 *seruo uel serue* (δούλην μήτε δοῦλον A cum Eusebii ION Stobaei SMA : δοῦλον μήτε δούλην O Stobaei L δούλους Gal.)

**Book III** 678d3 *aliquid* (πού τι O : που A) 679b8 *iustissime* (γενναιότατα A Stob. et γρ. i.m.O<sup>3</sup> [Π sine τὸ βιβλίον superscr. O<sup>4</sup>] : δικαιοτάτα O) 682e4 *exules* (τὰς τότε φυγάδας A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> et [ὰς et ἄς s.v.] O<sup>4</sup> : τοὺς τότε φυγάδας O [sed τοὺς O<sup>c</sup> ex τὰς]) 683a8 *nunc* (νῦν O : πρὸ νῦν A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup>) 687c10 *uirī et* (ἄνδρες A et [ἐν τοῖς ἀντιγράφοις] i.m.O<sup>4</sup> : ἄνδρες καὶ O) 687d1 *precamur* (ξυνευχόμεθ' ἂν A [υχ i.r.] : ξυνευχόμεθ' ἂν O)  
**Book IV** 708d6 *tamen* (ὅντως A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> et [spir. len. et vt s.v.] O<sup>4</sup> : ὅμως O et γρ. i.m.a<sup>3</sup> γρ. οὕτως [eadem manu] superscr. i.m.a<sup>3</sup>) 712b5 *exaudiat*- (ἀκούσας A : ὑπακούσας O) 714c1 *si qua* (ἤτις A [sed in ἄλλ' alt. λ i.r. loco duar. litt. : an εἴ τις?] et [ἤ s.v.] O<sup>4</sup> : εἴ τις O) 716c5 *si* (ἤ A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> : εἴ O) 719b6 *ut dicant* (ποιεῖν A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> et s.v. O<sup>4</sup> : λέγειν O) 723c2 *prooemium* (προοίμια A Πι.μ.Ο<sup>4</sup> et [α s.v.] O<sup>4</sup> : προοίμιον O).

Once we exclude codex A, we can automatically exclude its apographs, namely Est. and Voss.<sup>22</sup>

2 So far I have established that Trebizond used either O or one of its copies. Now the question becomes: did he use O itself or a copy? And if a copy, which one(s)? At this point, the situation becomes more complex. According to Post's work, there are fifteen<sup>23</sup> complete<sup>24</sup> manuscripts of the text of the *Laws* that could correspond to Trebizond's working copy/copies.<sup>25</sup>

Since Post did not publish his own collations, we can know the readings of only nine of these fifteen manuscripts, thanks to the collations of Bekker<sup>26</sup> (O, Pal.,

Ang. v, E, R) and Stallbaum<sup>27</sup> (Laur. a, c, o, L). For the remaining six witnesses (J, Ox., K, N, Vat. 230, Vind. 56) we must rely on selected readings published by other scholars, especially Post himself. Based on the analysis of the available readings, I was unable to identify one single codex that George used as a constant exemplar.

If we follow Des Places' apparatus, we can observe how Trebizond systematically ignores the readings of A, but he occasionally deviates from O as well.

*Lg. 1.644a6* *Sed nos de verbo* (Ἡμεῖς δὲ μηδὲν ὀνόματι A O] Ἡμεῖς δὲ μηδὲν ὀνόματι Eus.).

*Lg. 5.744d7* *nam hec utraque ab utrisque hiis pariuntur* (ὡς ἀμφοτέρων τικτόντων ταῦτα ἀμφοτέρα ἀπογρ.] ὡς ἀμφοτέρα τικτόντων ταῦτα ἀμφοτέρα A O Stob.). As he often does, Trebizond turns an active sentence into a passive one. Nevertheless, one can clearly see how Trebizond identified in *uterque* (here: *ab utrisque*) the subject of the verb *pario*. Since, however, the verb in Greek is expressed with a genitive absolute, the subject translated by Trebizond with *ab utrisque* could only be in the genitive.

*Lg. 8.842b3* *in Creta uero nullus negabit re ipsa fieri* (ἐν Κρήτῃ δὲ οὐδεὶς ἄλλως ἂν ὑπολάβοι δεῖν γίγνεσθαι] ἐν Κρήτῃ δὲ οὐδεὶς ἄλλος ἂν ὑπολάβοι δεῖν γίγνεσθαι O). Critical apparatus by Des Places: ἄλλως L<sup>2</sup> : ἄλλος AOL. The translation with the verb *negabit* presupposes that the reading translated by Trebizond is ἄλλως rather than ἄλλος, because in this second case the verb would have no reason to be negative.

By their nature, such punctual correspondences could still have occurred by chance. Nevertheless, while according to the critical apparatus by Des Places, it would seem that Trebizond's translation reflects three different sources,<sup>28</sup> the collations printed by Stallbaum make it clear that there is only one manuscript where these various readings occur *all together*, namely MS L.<sup>29</sup> As Post has demonstrated, L contains some good conjectures not otherwise attested in the O family (except for L's copies, of course).<sup>30</sup> Since Trebizond's translation generally reflects readings of the O family, but also contains in some rare cases individual variant readings of L, I decided to study L in Florence.<sup>31</sup>

One only needs to leaf through the Laurentian codex to realise that the text of the *Laws* and the *Epinomis* has been submitted to careful study. Almost all of L's *folia* present *capitulatio* notes in a hand that writes using a rather sloppy script full of abbreviations.<sup>32</sup> These notes are no random thoughts about the text. Rather, they furnish the manuscript with an index that goes from the first to the last *folium* of the text of the *Laws* and *Epinomis*. This alone suggests a somewhat professional interest in these two dialogues, rather than Plato more generally.

Second, the hand bears certain similarities to that George of Trebizond himself.<sup>33</sup> A few letter's forms

In II circa principium. Indoctus ergo atque indisciplinatus ille dicendus qui nunquam chorea usus est.

This comment lends itself to comparison with a note written in the lower right margin on f. 22r of the Florentine codex L:

Ση(μείωσαι) ὁ ἀπαίδευτος ἀχόρευτος

seem characteristic: bilobular β, or what we might call 'telephone-receiver' with an enlarged upper lobe (β), an almost cruciform ψ with the middle stroke almost flattened, ξ inclined to the left, groups αρ and ερ with ρ always suspended. Nevertheless, the Trebizond of the autograph notes to Vat. Lat. 4534 generally writes a low γ, while the hand annotating MS L uses both the low and high forms of the same letter (an example of the low γ is 17r: λογισμός), and in the high form the letter is slightly curved. These slight divergences could be explained by the passage of time between the first notes and the second. Since we still have no study of the evolution of Trebizond's writing, this must remain only a hypothesis.

But the final settlement of this issue is only secondary, because there is additional evidence to be considered. There are tell-tell correspondences between Trebizond's writings and marginal notes in MS L. Already in 1984, Monfasani was able to discover and publish in MS Torino BNU G.II.36, some comments in Trebizond's hand.<sup>34</sup> These comments are no fully finished treatise, but they represent George's personal observations on various books of Plato's *Laws*. One of these comments in George's hand, about book 2, reads:

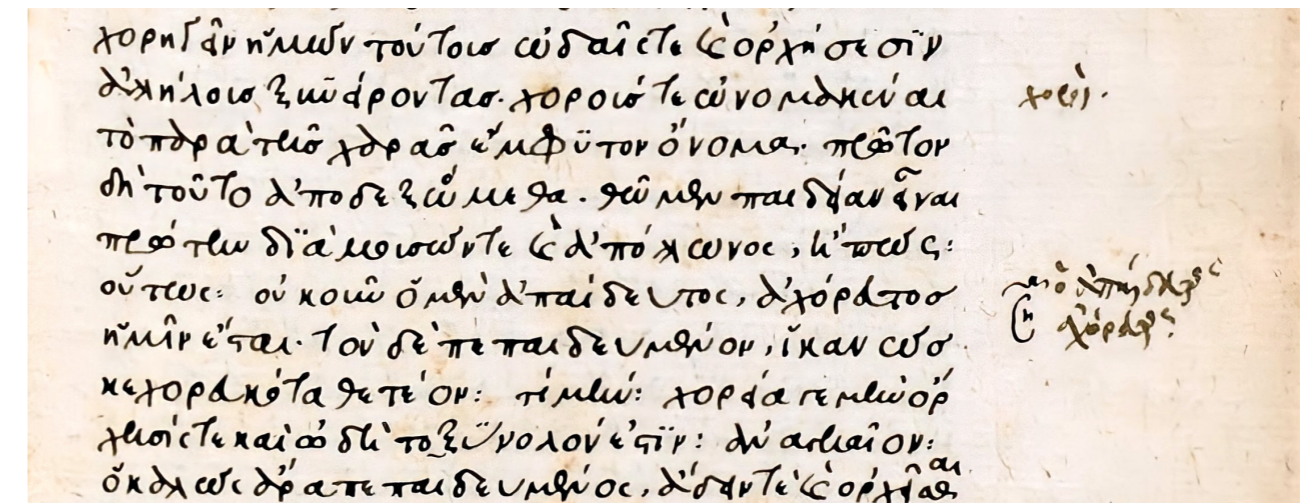


Figure 2 Florence, The Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Plut. 80.17 (L), f. 22r. (= Plat. Lg. 2.653d-654c)

It is evident that the annotator of L was struck by the essential correlation established by Plato between choirs and authentic *paideia*. This is another element that links the manuscript to Trebizond. But, in addition, it is also possible to cite two other pieces of evidence. First, the Latin *In II circa principium* coincides perfectly with the position in which the marginal note in manuscript L is located: on the second leaf from the beginning of book 2 of the *Laws*. It is therefore clear that both refer to precisely the same passage. (Incidentally, a generic reference, like the one given by Trebizond, would only seem useful in the presence of a system of indexing within the codex.) Second, Trebizond habitually uses either *indoctus* or *indisciplinatus* to translate the Greek ἀπαίδευτος, while *qui nunquam chorea usus est* is a clear rendering of the Greek ἀχόρευτος. Plainly, therefore, the Latin note is a slightly expanded translation (*dicendus*) of the Greek marginal note.

Nor is the case of f. 22r an isolated one. One may also cite some cases of general correspondence between

George's autograph comments in the Turin manuscript and the notes contained in L. For example, there is a shared interest in the notes of L (42v ὄρα ἄργος μεσσήνη λακεδαίμων. ἱστορία.) and Trebizond's notes on the affairs of the Doric states. In particular, the Dorians mentioned in Trebizond's Latin notes (*ubi Dorios et constitutionem factam post bellum Troianum reprehendit*) correspond to the marginal note δωριεῖς in L that spans the entire *folium* at f. 43v. And the attack against Plato for allegedly acting as a second Nestor (*quod Nestor ipse alter sit*), matches the note νέστωρ in MS L.

If all the arguments put forward so far are not enough to demonstrate the identity of the annotator of the Laurentian codex L, then further, unequivocal proof can be adduced. At f. 65v, Plat. Lg. 716c5, where Plato quotes the celebrated passage by Protagoras about God being the measure of all things, a marginal note, in a hand that can be identified with certainty as George of Trebizond's, writes: μέτρον ὁ θεὸς πάντων (God is the measure of all things).

In light of the philological correlation between the variants of L and Trebizond's translation, the 'professional' indexing of L, the identification of Trebizond's hand in L, and the relationship of dependence between the marginalia of the Laurentian codex and the comments written by Trebizond in his own hand, we can now conclude

that he must have used codex L as a Greek source for his Latin translation.<sup>35</sup> Although we cannot yet say how it came into his possession, there are two possibilities: either the manuscript was given to Nicholas V by a Florentine library (most likely that of St. Mark's),<sup>36</sup> or it was Trebizond's personal codex.<sup>37</sup>

3 This conclusion, however, raises new questions. I stated above that my analysis of the readings known by Bekker and Stallbaum did not lead to the identification of *one sole* witness. In fact, L itself has mistakes from

which Trebizond's translation is immune. For example, L contains two large *lacunae* which do not affect George's translation.<sup>38</sup>

*Lg. 1.634a3-4* πρὸς τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ κομψὰ καὶ θεωπευτικά ἀδυνατοῦσαν· ἢ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρω; ] κομψὰ καὶ θεωπευτικά ἀδυνατοῦσαν ἢ πρὸς *om.* J. (and therefore L) George translates: *secundis uero atque iocundis ac assentatiunculis nullo pacto fortitudinem esse sanxerunt? An qua utrisque?*<sup>39</sup>

*Lg. 1.635a8-b1* ἀλλὰ ἴασιν ἐξ αὐτοῦ συμβαίνει γίγνεσθαι τῷ μὴ φθόνῳ τὰ λεγόμενα ἀλλ' εὐνοίᾳ δεχομένῳ ] τῷ μὴ φθόνῳ τὰ λεγόμενα ἀλλ' εὐνοίᾳ δεχομένῳ *om.* J. (and therefore L) Trebizond's translation reads: *cum facile hinc, si quis non cum inuidia sed cum beniuolentia accipiat, remedium inueniatur.*

There is only one possible explanation: George had to have at least a second manuscript available for his use. Yet, before exploring this route, we should perhaps consider whether the use of a second manuscript would be uncharacteristic of George's translation habits.

Only for less than half of Trebizond's translations are we now able to define the particular recension of the Greek text with some precision.<sup>40</sup> Yet, it is a fact that for some of those translations for which we have information about the Greek recension, such as Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*, Aristotle's *De generatione et corruptione* and *Historia animalium*, Trebizond used two or even three different manuscripts (see "Appendix II"). Indeed, on occasion he even made use of previous Latin translations. This is not to say that occasionally he did not use one manuscript only, as he says about his translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. But the use of multiple sources for the translation

was certainly normal for him. Nor was Trebizond's practice as a translator an exception to that of other contemporary humanists active in Rome.<sup>41</sup> As a result, the philological necessity to postulate a second manuscript source is not contradicted by the historic evidence.

Which other manuscript(s) did Trebizond use? From a philological point of view, the best approach would be to study systematically the text of Trebizond's translation and discover which manuscript(s) complement those readings carried by L. Indeed, the additional source(s) should contain all the readings that could not have been derived from L. But since the text of Plato's *Laws* is very long and collations are not available for all the surviving manuscripts, we must at least choose portions of the text for careful analysis.

If we exclude those codices belonging to the same branch in the *stemma* as L, and therefore characterised

by the same *lacunae* (J, Ox., Ric., Barb.) and if we exclude those codices that arrived in the West only after George's death, there remains only a handful of manuscripts to examine (O, Vat. 230, Vind. 56, Laur. c, Laur. o, K, N, R). Yet, it is hardly necessary to collate all of them. We can start the investigation by looking at those manuscripts that were more readily available to Trebizond in Rome. Based on the information gathered in "Appendix II", the Greek codices with which Trebizond worked were generally obtained either from Bessarion's collection or from the papal library. In the papal library, which was growing rapidly in those years thanks to the hard work done by Nicholas V and his emissary Giovanni Tortelli, there are now only two Platonic manuscripts from the period that could be useful for our investigations: codex R and Vat. 230. In Bessarion's collection, there are three manuscripts of Plato's *Laws* to be considered. The famous MS E, the luxury codex written by John Rhosus was only

commissioned by Bessarion at a later date, which excludes it from consideration. Then, there is MS K, which had formerly been part of the library of his teacher Gemistos Pletho; yet, the significant textual differences<sup>42</sup> between this manuscript and Trebizond's own text allow us to rule out this option. Finally, Bessarion also owned MS N, which seems to be the most plausible candidate for Trebizond's second codex. Yet, no firm claims can be ventured as long as one cannot prove that Trebizond's translation depends from distinctive readings contained in N only.

Having fully collated MS N for *Laws* 1-4 and selected passages of books 6, 8, 10, 12,<sup>43</sup> I can furnish more solid evidence. A good example of the relationship between Trebizond's translation and MS N is provided by Plat. *Lg.* 3.700c5 δεδογμένον ] δεδομένον (γ erased) N. Trap.: *tribuebatur.*

Des Places prints the following text:

τὸ δὲ κύριον τούτων γινῶναι τε καὶ ἅμα γινόντα δικάσαι, ζημιῶν τε αὖ τὸν μὴ πειθόμενον, οὐ σύριγξ ἦν οὐδέ τινες ἄμουσοι βοαὶ πλήθους, καθάπερ τὰ νῦν, οὐδ' αὖ κρότοι ἐπαίνους ἀποδιδόντες, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν γεγρονόσι περὶ παιδείουσι δεδογμένον ἀκούειν ἦν αὐτοῖς μετὰ σιγῆς διὰ τέλους, παισὶ δὲ καὶ παιδαγωγοῖς καὶ τῷ πλείστῳ ὄχλῳ ῥάβδου κοσμοῦσης ἢ νουθητικῆς ἐγίγνετο (The authority whose duty it was to know these regulations, and, when known, to apply them in its judgments and to penalise the disobedient, was not a pipe nor, as now, the mob's unmusical shoutings, nor yet the clappings which mark applause: in place of this, it was a rule made by those in control of education that they themselves should listen throughout in silence, while the children and their ushers and the general crowd were kept in order by the discipline of the rod). (Transl. by Bury)

In Trebizond's translation (Trap., *Plat. Lg.*), the passage reads as follows:<sup>44</sup>

cognoscere vero ac iudicare et contra facientes damnare non clamoribus multitudinis, ut modo, sed prestantibus in doctrina tribuebatur, qui ad finem usque magno cum silentio audiebant, adulescentes vero pedagogos ac plebem universam virge castigatio exornabat.

As usual, George has exercised a degree of freedom in his rendering. He omitted altogether certain portions of the Greek text which he regarded as redundant, such as the reference to the ‘pipe’ (σύριγξ) and the ‘clappings’ (οὐδ’ αὖ κρότοι ἐπαίνους ἀποδιδόντες).<sup>45</sup> Then, in an effort to simplify the syntactic structure, he turned the series of infinitives depending upon τὸ δὲ κῦρος into subjects. Yet, in the second part of the sentence, it is hard to see why George would have translated the verb δεδογμένον ἦν (lit. ‘was established, decided’) with *tribuebatur* (lit. ‘was attributed, given’). Even less clear is the reason why George introduced the relative *qui* that has no equivalent in the

Greek text. But if we consider the corruption δεδομένον ἦν (lit. ‘was given’) carried only by MS N,<sup>46</sup> George’s translation becomes understandable. Having rendered δεδομένον ἦν with *tribuebatur*, George was 1) misled to take the dative as an indirect object (‘to those outstanding in knowledge’) rather than as the agent (‘by those in control of education’) and 2) he was unable to connect *tribuebatur* with the following ἀκούειν (originally an infinitive clause depending from δεδογμένον ἦν), a difficulty which Trebizond resolved by arbitrarily introducing a relative clause.

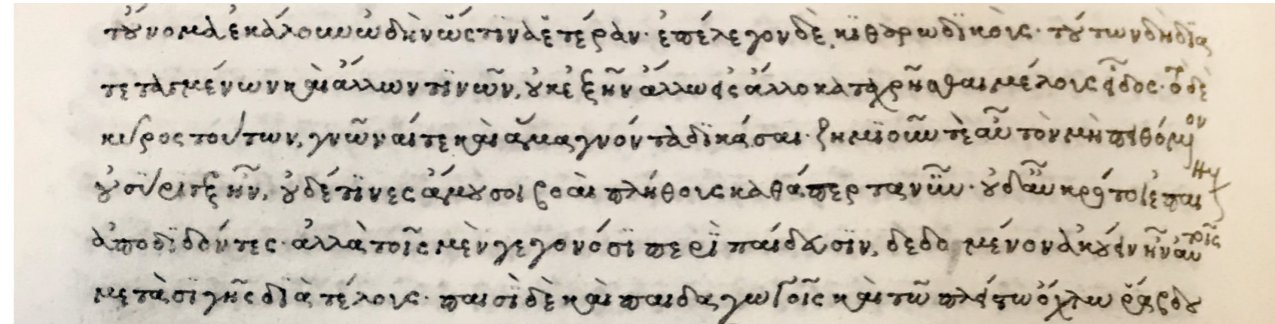


Figure 3 Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 187 (= 742) (N), f. 192v (= Plat. Lg. 3.700c)

In addition to Lg. 3.700c5, there are also some small omissions in the context of sentences that have been rendered

fairly literally. These omissions are specific to N and are reflected in George’s translation.<sup>47</sup>

[f. 167v] ὀρθῶς] *om.* N (post Trapezuntii versionem scripsit Bessarion s.l.) et Trap.

Plat. Lg. 1.627b5-8 δικαίους ἐλάττους ὄντας βιάσονται δουλούμενοι, καὶ ὅταν μὲν κρατήσωσιν, ἤπτων ἢ πόλις αὐτῆς ὀρθῶς αὐτὴ λέγοιτ’ ἂν ἅμα καὶ κακῆ, ὅπου δ’ ἂν ἠτῶνται, κρείττων τε καὶ ἀγαθῆ.

Trap., Plat. Lg. *iustos quoniam pauciores sint insurrexerint, cum quidem vicerint, tum civitas inferior se ipsa pravaque appellabitur, cum vero victi fuerint, superior atque proba.*

τότε ] *om.* N (post Trapezuntii versionem scripsit Bessarion s.l.) et Trap.

Plat. Lg. 678c5-9 ΑΘ. Ἄρ’ οὐχ ἄσμενοι μὲν ἑαυτοὺς ἐώρων δι’ ὀλιγότητα ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον, πορεία δέ, ὥστ’ ἐπ’ ἀλλήλους τότε πορεύεσθαι κατὰ γῆν ἢ κατὰ θάλατταν, σὺν ταῖς τέχναις ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν πάντα σχεδὸν ἀπωλώλει; συμμίσγειν οὖν ἀλλήλοις οὐκ ἦν οἶμαι σφόδρα δυνατόν·

Trap., Plat. Lg. *Nonne igitur libenter propter paucitatem alteri alteros temporibus illis conspiciebant? Presertim cum neque terra neque mari transitus ad alios facilis fuerit, omnibus fere deletis una cum artibus, quamobrem conventus hominum non erat ita possibilis.*

καὶ ] *om.* N et Trap.

Plat. Lg. 10.892b5 σκληρῶν καὶ μαλακῶν καὶ βαρέων καὶ κούφων

Trap., Plat. Lg. *duris et mollibus ponderosis et levibus.*

One could object that George deliberately omitted distinctive readings of MS N that are reflected in his those words while translating. Yet, there are also some translation:

[f. 208v] Plat. Lg. 6.752c1 μηδένας ] μηδένα N. Trap.: *neminem.*

[f. 209r] Plat. Lg. 6.753c7 πινακίων ] πινακῶν N. Trap.: *tabulas.*

And there are free renderings by Trebizond that can be explained in the light of a reading contained in MS N:

[f. 191v] ἄπειρον ] ἄπειρον N. Trap.: *tantam ut.*

Plat. Lg. 698b7-c3 καὶ πρὸς τούτοις διὰ τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ στόλου κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν γενόμενον, φόβον ἄπειρον ἐμβαλόν, δουλείαν ἔτι μείζονα ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς τοῖς τε ἄρχουσιν καὶ τοῖς νόμοις δουλεῦσαι, καὶ διὰ πάντα ταῦθ’ ἡμῖν συνέπεσε πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς σφόδρα φιλία.

Trap., Plat. Lg. *Et ad hec magnitudo terrestrium marinarumque copiarum tantam formidinem incussit, ut maiore nos et legibus et magistratibus servitute subiecerit, propter hec igitur omnia magnus amor nos alterum ad alterum connectebat.*

The decision to opt for a consecutive clause (*tantam ut...*) can only be explained as a (rather free) rendering for ἄπειρον, not for ἄπορον.

While one or two of these renderings might be attributed to chance, taken *all together* the various passages discussed above provide evidence that George had access to MS N and used it, at least to some extent, for his translation of Plato’s *Laws*. As he had done with his

translations of Basil’s *In Eunomium*, Ptolemy, and Aristotle’s *Historia animalium* and *Problemata*,<sup>48</sup> this secretary at the papal curia relied on Cardinal Bessarion’s library for the Greek manuscripts he needed for his Latin version of the *Laws*.

<sup>4</sup> This conclusion provokes a few additional thoughts. First, from a philological point of view, it is now possible to define the role played by George of Trebizond in the manuscript transmission of Plato's *Laws*. For his Latin translation, George employed a Greek text usually based on L, but he also took into account MS N as a secondary source, at a time before N acquired the signs of Bessarion's collation of it with K.

Second, it provides further evidence that George of Trebizond belonged to Bessarion's circle for a number of years and relied on the cardinal's collection for his translation of the *Laws*, as he had done for many of his other Latin versions. Bessarion did not merely lend his manuscripts to co-operate in the larger papal project of translating Greek texts into Latin, but he was directly supportive of George himself. As late as Autumn of 1453 (just 18 months after the fight between George and Poggio), Bessarion was still writing to George to express his personal support for his fellow Byzantine's financial difficulties and was even prepared to apologise to him, if any of his recommendations had caused him offense.<sup>49</sup>

As is well known, their relationship deteriorated catastrophically in the following years.<sup>50</sup> At first, controversy arose between George and Theodore Gaza, one of Bessarion's closest acolytes within the *Academia*.<sup>51</sup> Then, George felt the Cardinal was threatening the position of his son Andrea within the papal curia.<sup>52</sup> Finally, George published his controversial *Comparatio Philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis*. In that treatise, he used his knowledge of the text of Plato, and especially of the *Laws*, to attack not only the ancient philosopher, but also Cardinal Bessarion himself, whose Platonism George regarded as a dangerous threat to Christendom. Reacting to this onslaught, in 1458 Bessarion started to work on his *ICP*. As part of a broader plan to destroy George's scholarly reputation, in the *Correctio Legum* (*ICP* book 5) Bessarion set himself the goal of demonstrating his opponent's incompetence as a translator of Plato. The rationale for this

undertaking was simple – if George was not a competent translator of Plato's text, then his authority as an interpreter of Plato's philosophy was thoroughly undermined.

We are now in a position to compare the Greek sources used by George with those used by Bessarion for *ICP* book 5. George primarily worked with L. Yet, it was N, which figures prominently in this exhibition, that played a pivotal role in this story. A copy of the celebrated Laur. Plut. 85.9, N was produced for Cardinal Bessarion at the time of the Council of Ferrara-Florence by a scribe who has not yet been identified. After the council, the manuscript followed Bessarion to Rome, where it entered his personal library at the headquarters of the *Academia Bessarionea*. It was there that George of Trebizond found it, when in 1450 he started working on his translation of Plato's *Laws* for Pope Nicholas V. By the time George left Rome to go to Naples in 1452, and after his notorious fight with Poggio Bracciolini, the manuscript was returned to Bessarion's library, and George likely had no access to Greek manuscripts of the *Laws* while being away from Rome.<sup>53</sup> When Bessarion started working on the *Correctio* in 1458, it was once again MS N that was his primary source. But by that time he had also acquired a second manuscript of Plato's *Laws* (K), which ultimately came from his teacher Pletho's library. It was at this point that Bessarion produced his systematic collation of N against K (and vice versa), which is represented in Post's *stemma codicum* (see above, esp. the dotted line). This collation, by no means a purely mechanical process, yielded the present state of N. In short, the cardinal collated one of the sources of George's translation (MS N) against the manuscript previously owned by Pletho (MS K). Without mentioning him by name, Bessarion deployed Pletho's critical work on the text of the *Laws* as a weapon against George, by using it to improve MS N, which had been one of the codices used by George himself for his Latin translation. This manuscript was not only the starting point of the collation of the Greek text that represents the

first stage of Bessarion's work on the *Correctio Legum*, but also later served as the model for the Aldine edition, therefore leaving a lasting mark on the textual history of Plato's *Laws*.

This reconstruction lends itself to a comparison with the textual history of Aristotle's *Problemata*. George was charged with translating both Plato's *Laws* and Aristotle's *Problemata* from Greek into Latin, a task which he fulfilled in the space of a few months using a manuscript from Bessarion's library (alone or in combination with other codices, as we have seen). At least in the case of Aristotle's *Problemata*, the cardinal was aware of the less than satisfying quality of the text contained in his copy.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the cardinal's incessant thirst for new books led him to acquire additional copies of both Greek texts,<sup>55</sup> which proved to be of better quality than those that were initially available to him and to the circle of scholars who were allowed access to his library (including Trebizond). These newly acquired sources provided

the basis for Gaza's translation of Aristotle's *Problemata* and for Bessarion's *Correctio Legum*. In the controversies of the following years, George's (admittedly hasty) translations were compared with scholarship based on access to a substantially better Greek text than was available to him. While the distinction was not as important in the fifteenth century as it is now, the translator was judged as if he were a textual critic, with no sense of the difference between their resources, methodologies, and approaches.

Instead, a fair assessment of both George's and Bessarion's scholarly achievements will have now to take into account the Greek sources that were available to both of them at the time of their work, and acknowledge the difference between the responsibilities of a translator and those of the textual critic. Now that the dust on those centuries-old controversies has long settled, this investigation provides results that can help us to making better sense of this fascinating chapter in the history of Platonism.

## Appendix I

Already in 1962 Nigel Wilson noted the shortcomings of Post's work on Plato's *Laws*.<sup>56</sup> Eight further witnesses can be added to the twenty-six already noted by Post.<sup>57</sup> All of these are *excerpta* or collections of *excerpta* that have nothing to do with Trebizond's translation. Since Post, however, did not distinguish between complete and fragmentary witnesses, I provide below a brief report of these *excerpta*, which document a fragmentary circulation of the text, occurring mostly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>58</sup>

**A** London, British Library, Royal 16 C.XXV. Sec. XVI. *Excerpta brevia*; ff. 59v-61v (*Lg.* 1.640d4-7, 1.641c2-7, 1.643a3-4, 2.660c6-7, 3.687e5-6, 3.688d5-7, 3.691c1-4, 3.701a8-b3, 4.716d6-717a3, 4.722a8-b1, 5.727a3-4, 5.728a4-5, 5.730c1-2, 5.731b3-c1, 5.731d7-732b4, 5.738e2-5, 5.747b1-6, 6.762e1-7, 6.765e3-766a4, 6.776a3-7, 6.776d6-e1, 6.780d5-8, 7.803b3-5, 7.808b3-c2, 7.808d2-5, 7.808d5-e2, 7.819a3-6, 8.829a1-5, 8.832c5-6, 8.836a1-2, 8.843c4-6, 8.846d7-8, 8.846d8-e2, 9.854d5-e1, 9.870b7-c1, 11.929c5-7, 12.950b4-c8, 12.951a7-c5, 12.957c3-5, 12.963e5-6, 12.963e6-8). See G.F. Warner, J.P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collection*, vol. 2, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1921, 187. The catalogue entry, which speaks in general terms of "Extracts of Plato" without mentioning which portions of the text have been excerpted, is now completely insufficient.

**B** Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Gr. 4573. Sec. XVI ex. *Excerpta* at ff. 149-57 (*Lg.* 1, 3-9, 11-12). See G. De Andrés, *Catálogo de los códices griegos de la Biblioteca Nacional*, Madrid, Ministerio de Cultura, 1987, 52-4.

**C** Città del Vaticano, Barb. Gr. 4. Sec. XIV. *Excerptum*; f. 18 (*Lg.* 7). See *Codices Barberiniani Graeci*, tomus I (codices 1-263), recensuit V. Capocci, in *Bibliotheca Vaticana, typis poliglottis Vaticanis*, 1958, 2-6, esp. 3.

**D** Roma, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Gr. 22. Sec. XVI, ff. 151r. See *Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle Biblioteche Italiane (Riproduzione Anastatica)*, a cura di E. Martini, vol. 2, Milano, Hoepli, 1967, 36-40.

Regarding some of the witnesses mentioned only in passing by Post, I provide below more precise information about their content.

**A** Leyden, Voss. Gr. Q. 54. Sec. XV-XVI. *Excerpta selecta*; ff. 451v-458r. See *Codices Manuscripti VI. Codices Vossiani Graeci et miscellanei*, descripsit K.A. De Meyier, in *Bibliotheca Universitatis, Lugduni Batavorum*, 1955, 163-72.

**B** Leyden, Voss. Gr. Q. 51. Sec. XV. *Excerptum*; cc. 158rv (*Lg.* 715e7-716e5). See *Codices Manuscripti VI. Codices Vossiani Graeci et miscellanei*, descripsit K.A. De Meyier, in *Bibliotheca Universitatis, Lugduni Batavorum*, 1955, 159-61.

**C** Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Ambr. Gr. 329 (F 19 Sup). XV sec. *Excerpta*; ff. 129v-130r, 201v, 202r-202v, 203v-207r, 208r-209v (*Lg.* 715e7-716b5, 642d5-e5, 888a7-c3, 895e10-896a4, 896c5-d8, 903b4-905c4, 927a1-b4, 865d5-e6, 959a4-c7, 906a2-d6). See *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae*, digesserunt E. Martini, D. Bassi, vol. 1, Mediolani, Impensis U. Hoepli, 1906 (repr. [2 Bände in 1 Band], Hildesheim, New York, Georg Olms Verlag, 1978), 375-8.

**D** Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Ambr. Gr. 778 (& 146 Sup.). XVI sec. *Excerpta*; ff. 1r-1v, 2r (721a3-d6, condensed and paraphrased; 772c7-773e4, 774 e9-775c2, condensed and paraphrased 771e1-772a2). See E. Martini, D. Bassi, *Catalogus codicum graecorum*, 875.

## Appendix II

George of Trebizond's Translations: 1440-59

Chronology	Author	Text	Client & dedicatees	Greek source(s)	Criticisms & varia
1440-Jan. 1442	Basil	<i>Adversus Eunomium</i>	Client: Cardinal Bessarion	Marc. Gr. Z. 58 + Laur. IV.27	
1443-45	Aristotle	<i>Rhetorica</i>			In the <i>Scholia</i> George says that he has only one manuscript in front of himself. The analysis of the readings places his source in the family of codex Cambr. 1298 (see Monfasani 1984, 698). Research on the basis of the <i>stemma codicum</i> of the <i>Rhetorica</i> has not yet been done. If it is ever done, it will have to start from an analysis of the exemplars of the text in the Marciana or the Vatican Library.
1443-46	Aristotle	<i>Physica</i>	Dedicated to Antonius de Pago, papal <i>credenarius</i> , who pressed George to translate Aristotle (see Monfasani 1984, 141-4). Antonius repeatedly urged George to translate Aristotle's <i>Physica</i> , but even when it was translated, he found it obscure.		In the <i>Scholium</i> to Aristot. <i>Phys.</i> 2.197a6 George says that he used 3 manuscripts as a source, one of which is called <i>antiquitate antiquior</i> (see Monfasani 1984, 702).
	Aristotle	<i>De coelo et mundo</i>			No information (see Monfasani 1984, 704).
1446	Aristotle	<i>De generatione et corruptione</i>			Codex Par. Gr. 2032 + codex e (see "Introduction" by Rashed to Aristot., GC, 75-8).
Winter 1446-47	Gregory of Nyssa	<i>Vita Moysis</i>	Translation made by his own choice. Preface to Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan (see Monfasani 1984, 278-81).		Family of Vat. Gr. 1433. Note affinities with readings found only in papyri. Free translation.
1446-47	Aristotle	<i>De anima</i>	Preface to the reader. Preface to Cardinal Domenico Capranica (see Monfasani 1984, 189-92).		Close but not identical to Vat. Gr. 260 + a second exemplar + Moerbeke (see Monfasani 1984, 705).

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Chronology	Author	Text	Client & dedicatees	Greek source(s)	Criticisms & varia
1444-46	Demosthenes	<i>De Corona</i>	Preface to Vittorino da Feltre (see Monfasani 1984, 93-7). Dedication to King Alfonso of Aragon, 1452-53 (Monfasani 1984, 93-7).	No information.	
1447-Spring 1448	John Chrysostom	<i>Homiliae XC in Matthaëum</i>	Client: Nicholas V (Dedication: Monfasani 1984, 289-91). In this case (see Monfasani 1984, 735) it is known that Traversari already wanted to translate the homilies of Chrysostom but was not able to complete the project.	No certain information is currently available. The lack of the last two homilies (88-90) seems to imply codices lacking those texts, such as Marc. Gr. II, 25. But no data can be taken for granted.	George sent a copy of the translation to Francesco Barbaro.
March 1448-?	Eusebius	<i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>	Client: Nicholas V (Dedication: see Monfasani 1984, 291-3).	Monfasani's conclusions: a) George had only one manuscript in front of him; b) the manuscript arrived by chance in the city (there is no mention of Bessarion): <i>preparationem que in urbe forte reperta, primum agressi traduximus</i> ; c) stemmatically good codex and close to Marc. Gr. Z. 341.	Andreas Contrarius attacked the translation (see Monfasani 1976, 127). Edition of the text in preparation by Monfasani.
Second half of 1448-end 1449	Cyril	<i>Commentarium in Iohannem</i>	Client: Nicholas V (see Monfasani 1984, 293-8).	Vat. Gr. 593 (or perhaps his apograph Marc. Gr. Z. 121 owned by Bessarion). In par. 14 of the dedication, he says George had only one manuscript.	
1449-50	Aristotle	<i>De generatione animalium</i>	Client: Nicholas V (Dedication: see Monfasani 1984, 298-30).	No information.	
1449-50	Aristotle	<i>Historia animalium</i>	Client: Nicholas V (Dedication: see Monfasani 1984, 298-300).	Marc. Gr. Z. 208 + Vat. Gr. 262 + Moerbeke	Praised by Poliziano as much better than Gaza's version.
1449-50	Aristotle	<i>De partibus animalium</i>	Client: Nicholas V. (Dedication: see Monfasani 1984, 298-300).	No information.	
April 1450-March 1451	Plato	<i>Leges and Epinomis</i>	Client: Nicholas V. (Dedication: see Monfasani 1976, 360-4).	Laur. 80.17 + Marc. Gr. Z. 187	Bessarion attacked the translation ( <i>ICP</i> book 5). Edition of the text by F. Pagani.

In difesa di Platone

Chronology	Author	Text	Client & dedicatees	Greek source(s)	Criticisms & varia
March 1451-December 1451	Ptolemy	<i>Almagestus</i>	Client: Nicholas V (No dedication). In the 1460s George rededicated the translation and commentary to the Venetian patrician Iacopo Antonio Marcello.	His son Andrea (see Monfasani 1976, "Appendix" 4.7) says he used a codex from Bessarion's library. But Bessarion's codex was not necessarily the only one. In Bessarion's estate, there were 6 codices of Ptolemy.	Harsh criticism from Iacopo da San Cassiano of Cremona. The break between Nicholas V and George did not occur over this translation, but instead over the commentary on the <i>Almagestus</i> .
December 1451-April 1452	Gregory Nazianzenus	<i>Oratio de laudibus Sancti Basilii</i>	Client: Nicholas V. (Dedication: see Monfasani 1984, 300-1).	No information.	
December 1451-April 1452	Gregory Nazianzenus	<i>Oratio de laudibus Sancti Athanasii</i>	Client: Nicholas V. (Dedication: see Monfasani 1984, 300-1).	No information.	
1452 (first half of the year)	Aristotle	<i>Problemata per species collata</i>		Marc. Gr. Z. 216.	Bessarion says that this translation was the result of two months of work (see Trap., <i>adv. Gazam</i> , ed. Mohler 293.26). Trebizond published it in 1455 from Naples, as soon as he knew Gaza had made a translation of his own. Trebizond defends his translation and attacks Gaza in <i>adv. Gazam</i> (1456).
1453-beginning 1454	Ps.Ptolemy	<i>Centiloquium</i>	Client: Alfonso of Aragon.		
1453-54	Cyril	<i>Thesaurus</i>	Client: Alfonso of Aragon.	No certain information. No doubt it was a good exemplar, without the <i>lacunae</i> one would expect. The hypothesis that even here he used more than one source cannot be ruled out.	Criticised by Bonaventura Vulcanius in the sixteenth century.
1458-59	Plato	<i>Parmenides</i>	Client: Cardinal Cusano.	Ruocco does not identify a precise Greek source.	



## Notes

This chapter is the third of a trilogy of articles devoted to the philological study of the controversy between George of Trebizond and Cardinal Bessarion over the text of Plato’s *Laws*. In the first paper (Pagani 2020), I presented the historical background to Trebizond’s translation, along with a discussion of selected passages illustrating both George’s and Bessarion’s working methodology. In the second article (Pagani 2021), I provided the philological demonstration for the *stemma codicum* of the Latin manuscripts of Trebizond’s translation. In this article, I offer a study of the Greek manuscripts of Plato’s *Laws* used by Trebizond. For revising and improving this chapter, I am indebted to the kindness of Em. Prof. Jill Kraye, Prof. John Petruccione, Mr. Luke Maschue, Mr. Casey Knott. For the collation of Marc. Gr. Z. 187, I thank Mr. Luca Quagliarini (*Laws*, books 1-4), Mr. Luke Maschue (selected passage from book 6), and Mr. Casey Knott (selected passages from books 8, 10, and 12).

**1** See e.g. the presentation in Reynolds, Wilson 1968, 150-3, a book familiar to all students of classical philology. For essential and up-to-date literature on Cardinal Bessarion, I refer the reader to the extensive bibliography contained in Bess., *Or. Dogm.* pp. 62-8 and 119-24 (up to 2001) to be supplemented with the more recent bibliographies in Bess., *Nat.*, 283-95 and Pagani 2020, 125, esp. fn. 1. For the inventories of the manuscripts that Bessarion bequeathed to the Biblioteca Marciana, see Labowski 1979. On the history of the Marciana library, see Zorzi 1987 and 1988 (on Petrarch’s idea of establishing a public library in Venice, see Vianello 1976).

**2** Among the most significant works are the studies by David Speranzi: see Speranzi 2009 and 2011 (on Alexios Celadenus), 2013 (on the scribe called Nicola) and 2018 (on Athanasius Chalcheopoulos). On Theodore Gaza, see the references given in Pagani 2020, 147 fn. 50. These studies, along with works by other scholars, have substantially expanded and modified the image of Bessarion’s circle drawn by Mioni 1976.

**3** I use this name in the sense given to it by Perotti: a circle of scholars working around Bessarion, without any institutional implications. On Bessarion’s *Academia*, see Monfasani 2011, 61-76, esp. 65.

**4** See Monfasani 1981 and 1983.

**5** The standard work on George’s biography remains Monfasani 1976. On George’s youth in Crete, see also Ganchou 2008.

**6** I am preparing an edition of this text.

**7** Long available only in unreliable editions, this treatise has been recently edited by Monfasani.

**8** On the historical context of the translations produced by George of Trebizond and his relationship with Pope Nicholas V, see Pagani 2020, 125-36. For a list of Trebizond’s translations, see “Appendix II”.

**9** The exceptions are his translations of Plato’s *Parmenides* (Trap., *Plat. Parm.*) and Basil’s *In Eunomium* (Trap., *Bas. Eun.*), for which we have the editions produced by Ruocco in 2003 and Abenstein in 2015.

**10** For all Trebizond’s translations that have not yet been edited, the starting point remains Monfasani 1984.

**11** On this, see at least the incisive discussion by Berti 2004-05, esp. 198-205.

**12** See Pagani 2020, 131 and 161.

**13** See Pagani 2020, esp. 160-1.

**14** Such a preliminary study is generally not available for humanistic translations.

**15** As Ernesto Berti’s declares, “Quale greco sia stato effettivamente tradotto è la prima domanda che deve porsi l’editore critico di una traduzione” (see Berti 2007, 11). Very often the investigation only leads to identify a specific branch of the manuscript tradition that is reflected in the translated text. Since we cannot take for granted that the manuscript(s) have survived, I preferred to use the word ‘text’ rather than ‘manuscript’.

**16** As a result of this, it has been impossible to go beyond a more or less biased assessment of the quality of his work and his scholarly accomplishment.

**17** See Trap., *adv. Gazam*, 326: *nihil praetermisimus, nihil addidimus, ordinemque ipsum graecorum verborum ubique conati sumus inviolatum reddere*.

**18** See Trap., *adv. Gazam*, 326-7. In a nutshell, this is the golden rule for a translator according to Trebizond: *Hanc igitur regulam in traducendo tenendam studiosis putamus, ut graviora difficilioraque ad verbum de verbo paene reddant, historica et facilia latius angustiusve, sicuti indicabunt, complectantur*. The entire Latin passage is also quoted in Pagani 2020, 133-4.

**19** See Post 1934, 5. I follow the established *sigla*:

<b>A</b>	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Gr. 1807	<b>Laur. c</b>	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 85.9
<b>O</b>	Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. Gr. 1	<b>K</b>	Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 188
<b>Laur. a</b>	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 59.1	<b>L</b>	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 80.17
<b>R</b>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. Gr. 1029	<b>Pal.</b>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Pal. Gr. 177
<b>Vat. 230</b>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. Gr. 230	<b>Borg.</b>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Borg. Gr. 22
<b>Vind. 56</b>	Vienna, Staatsbibliothek, Phil. Suppl. Gr. 20	<b>Ang. x</b>	Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Gr. 80 (C.1.11)
<b>Ven. a.c.11,3</b>	Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, App. Cl. XI.3	<b>N</b>	Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 187
<b>J</b>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. Gr. 1031	<b>Est.</b>	Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, α.P.5.7 (Gr. 114)
<b>Laur. o</b>	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conv. Sopp. 180	<b>Voss.</b>	Leiden, University Library, Gr. F 74
<b>Ang. v</b>	Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Gr. 101 (C.1.7)		

For all the other abbreviations, see Post 1934, 1-4. Superscript Arabic numerals refer to the hands.

**20** In my list, I have quoted first the Latin translation by Trebizond and then the corresponding Greek word(s) of Plato’s *Laws* between round brackets. To avoid obscuring the cases of alignment of George’s version with the other witnesses (direct or indirect), I also report in full the apparatus of Plat., *Lg.* by Edouard Des Places. I have changed Des Places’ apparatus only in the following cases: a) I replaced the round brackets used by Des Places with square brackets; b) I have sometimes copied a larger portion of the text than that provided by Des Places, in order to make more evident where Trebizond’s translation positions itself. For the convenience of the reader, I add here a brief legend of the abbreviations used by Des Places in the cases cited above: p.n. = *puncto (vel punctis) notavit*; i.m. = *in margine*; i.r. = *in rasura*; s.v. = *supra versum*; á. = ἀλλαχοῦ; γρ. = γράφεται. As regards the *sigla* of the witnesses conversely: O<sup>c</sup> = corrections of the scribe of O; O<sup>4</sup> = *recensio saec. XI-XII*; Πι.m.O<sup>4</sup> = a group of readings that the hand O<sup>4</sup> explicitly indicates in the margins as coming from the so-called “Book of the Patriarch”; a<sup>3</sup> = *manus saec. XV*. For Post’s understanding of O<sup>2</sup>, O<sup>3</sup>, O<sup>4</sup>, see Post 1934, 9-14.

**21** One could object that the case of 635b4 does not provide a compelling example that George is following the text of O rather than the text of A, as the reading μόνους assumed in Trebizond’s translation appeared not only in O but also in a<sup>2</sup>. But, as I have demonstrated in Pagani 2012, 1027-52, this note (and others) is due to the scholar Janus Lascharis who imported it from the O family, and more precisely from MS L. Since the birth of Lascharis is dated to be around 1445, it can be safely ruled out that these notes were present in codex A at the time when Trebizond was making his translation. The same consideration applies also to Plat. *Lg.* 4.708d6, where Lascharis transcribed the two readings, namely ὁμως and οὔτως, which Des Places attributed to a<sup>3</sup>. In Pagani 2012, I have also shown that Des Places’ distinction between a<sup>2</sup> and a<sup>3</sup> is often misleading.

**22** See above [fig. 1].

**23** Post could count twenty-nine manuscripts of the text of the *Laws* (thirty if one wants to include the codex Urb. Gr. 30, of the seventeenth century and perhaps copied from a printed edition; see Post 1934, 4). If from this number we subtract the three codices of the A family and the eleven that transmit an incomplete text of the *Laws* – namely: Ven. a.c.11,3; Mon. (M<sup>o</sup> in Müller 1979); Matrit. Ψ.l.1 (E<sup>o</sup> in Müller 1979); Ric.; Barb.; Dep. 101; Ambr. 329 [F 19 Sup.]; Ambr. 778; Voss. Gr. 51, Voss. Gr. 54 and P – we end with fifteen.

Probably for the sake of brevity Post did not include the following codices in his *stemma*: Ambr. 329, Ambr. 778, Voss. Gr. 51 and Voss. Gr. 54. Because he had no collations, Post excluded Dep. 101 and Matrit. Ψ.I.1. The place of this last codex in the *stemma* has, however, been clarified by Müller, who shows that it is a twin of *Mon.* (see Müller 1979, 237-51), thus confirming what for Post was only a suspicion (see Post 1934, 22). Conversely, the *stemma* traced by Post includes some codices containing only the *Epinomis*, namely: Borg., Ric. 84, Ang. x, Z.

**24** There are also manuscripts that carry only portions of the *Laws*. For more information and a supplement to Post, see “Appendix I”.

**25** These are: O, Laur. a, Laur. o, Ang. v, Laur. c, Pal., R, Vat. 230, N, E, K, Vind. 56, J, L, Ox. An overview of their genealogical relationships can be obtained by looking at the *stemma* drawn by Post [fig. 1].

**26** See Plat. *Scripta*.

**27** See Plat. *Opera*.

**28** In one case it is the direct tradition of Eusebius; in another, the tradition of some not better defined ‘apographs’; and in the third case, it is from codex L.

**29** There are no other surviving codices in which the three variants appear altogether, save of course the copies of L itself. In particular, a close examination of J, copy of O and source of L, allowed me to confirm that J agrees with O against L.

At *Lg.* 644a6, Stallbaum mistakenly attributed to Ficino knowledge of the reading of L, whereas Ficino was simply copying Trebizond’s translation. Indeed, Stallbaum writes about *Lg.* 1.644a6 (at p. 14): “ἡμεῖς δὴ μ.ο.] ἡμεῖς δὲ Flor. δ. (= L) quam lectionem etiam Ficinus invenit, qui vertit: *sed nos de verbo quidem non contendamus*”. But in this passage, Ficino’s version is none other than Trebizond’s copied as it is. It is therefore Trebizond (and not Ficino!) who found the reading of the codex L.

**30** See Post 1934, 22-8, esp. 27-8.

**31** The codex Laur. 80.17 is fully available online at <http://mss.bmlonline.it/>.

**32** There is no doubt that the hand is the same throughout the entire manuscript. Even though the ink can vary in colour significantly (cf. e.g. the notes to c. 35r), this hand remains easily recognisable by its thickset and often coarse writing of the letters, in addition to its certain characteristic ligatures (e.g. τ linked at the bottom to the next vowel, group φρ).

**33** As a sample of the hand of Trebizond, I have used below the Greek *marginalia* contained in Vat. Lat. 4534, an autograph full of corrections of the Aristotelian translations conducted by the translator in the years 1443-47. This manuscript is best suited as a term of comparison, as George is often constrained to write in a narrow space. Professor John Monfasani, the leading expert on Trebizond’s autographs, has examined for me a selection of reproductions of the marginal notes carried by MS L (e.g. ff. 6r-9r, and then 22v, 42v, e 43v) and positively identified in them the hand of Trebizond (email to me on April 3, 2011).

**34** See Monfasani 1984, 746-7.

**35** This conclusion sheds light on the otherwise unknown history of the codex before its arrival in the Laurentian library. Currently, all we know is that: a) the manuscript was present in the Medici library when in 1508 the inventory of codices was compiled by Fabio Vigili (see Fryde 1996, 2: 803; 1: 287 and 393-4); b) according to Müller’s identification, MS L is mentioned in Las-caris’s inventory of codices in Lorenzo’s library contained in ff. 66r-69r of Vat. Gr. 1412 (see Müller 1884, 333-412). On the use – at times and in ways that I was unable to determine – of L by Las-caris for his collation against A, see Pagani 2012, esp. 1030 ff.

**36** The inventories of this library do not, however, record a Platonic codex containing specifically the ninth tetralogy and the pseudo-Platonic *opuscula*.

**37** The marginal intervention(s) added by Trebizond in the Florentine manuscript favour the second hypothesis – he would hardly have taken such liberties if the manuscript had been loaned to the pope. Nor would this be the only codex belonging to Trebizond that ended up in the Laurenziana, which now holds, for example, the dedicatory manuscript of his translations of Aristotle’s zoological works (the current Laur. Plut. 84.9, with autograph corrections by Trebizond).

**38** These two lacunae arose in MS J, model of L [fig. 1].

**39** The translation suffers from a resounding error caused by confusion over the quantity of the syllable in χωλήν (634a2: ‘lame’), which led George to translate instead *bilem* (χολήνι). Nevertheless, he must have had in front of him the Greek text he quoted (and not a *lacuna!*): if the translation of κομψά as *iocundis* is rather free and can still leave some uncertainty, there is no doubt that the rather *recherché* translation *assentatiunculis* renders with great precision the rare θωπευτικά. I know of only two attestations of the term, Plaut. *Stich.* 228 and Cic. *fam.* 5.12: it is likely that Trebizond knew the word through the second passage.

**40** The reasons for such a lack of information are essentially twofold, namely (a) the absence, for most of the translated Greek texts, of studies about the textual tradition that also describe with adequate precision the situation of the so-called ‘low branches’ (i.e. the most recent manuscripts) of the different textual traditions; and (b) George’s particularly free method of translation that nullifies the attempts to define the antigraph based only on the examination of very limited samples of text.

**41** A useful comparison is provided, for example, by Niccolò Perotti’s translation of Polybius. As Pace 1989, 145-54, has shown, Perotti used both Marc. Gr. Z. 371 (a manuscript from Bessarion’s collection) and Vat. Gr. 1005, which he insistently asked Giovanni Tortelli, via letter, to supply.

**42** See Pagani 2006, 5-20.

**43** As already mentioned, neither Bekker nor Stallbaum collated MS N. Post did collate it, but he did not print a systematic breakdown of the readings. Instead, he merely published those readings of N that were useful to support his argument that this manuscript was the model for the Aldine edition. The selected readings he quoted were not enough to clarify the relationship between this manusci and Trebizond’s translation. Not even *Lg.* 867b1 χαλεποῖ ] χαλεπὸν N difficile Trap. is a proof. (I have checked this reading in MS Vat. Lat. 2062 f. 116v l. 34). As a result, it was not possible to formulate a trustworthy argument without a more substantial collation of MS N. For a list of the collated passages, see *supra*, p. 87.

**44** I quote the text of Trebizond’s translation (Trap., *Plat. Lg.*) from the edition I am currently preparing.

**45** Nor did he translate ἄμα γνόντα.

**46** As appears above [fig. 3], this reading in MS N is the result of a scribal correction. MS Laur. Plut. 85.9, the model of MS N according to the *stemma* drawn by Post, carries the reading δεδογμένον. (I have also found the reading δεδομένον in MS K, where it is the result of a correction, likely due to Cardinal Bessarion).

**47** Usually, the omissions contained in MS N appear now to have been corrected by Cardinal Bessarion, who collated MS N with MS K, where he found the words omitted by the scribe. Yet, Bessarion’s collation dates to 1458, a few years *after* the translation by George, which was completed by the end of 1451. So, it is critical to remember that George had access to MS N at a time *before* it was collated by Bessarion against MS K.

**48** Speranzi 2017, 174 has convincingly argued that a couple of letters by Bessarion, contained in MS Marc. Gr. Z. 527 and published by Mohler as *Ep.* 32-3, are addressed to George of Trebizond. In *Ep.* 33, the cardinal asks George to return the two Greek manuscripts of Ptolemy’s *Almagest* and Aristotle’s *Problemata*, which proves that he used Bessarion’s manuscripts for these translations. While there is still no certainty about the identification of the manuscript of Ptolemy (perhaps Marc. Gr. Z. 310?), the copy of the *Problemata* is certainly Marc. Gr. Z. 216.

**49** See Speranzi 2017, 177-80 (for a detailed account of George’s financial difficulties) and 192-4 (for the edition and Italian translation of both letters).

**50** I simply sum up here the main steps of the story. For a more detailed account, see Abenstein 2013, esp. 319-25.

**51** On this, see Pagani 2020, 147 fn. 50.

**52** See Abenstein 2013, 319-20.

**53** See Pagani 2021, 158. This may well explain why George’s revisions of his translation do not presuppose any access to the Greek original.

**54** On Bessarion’s dissatisfaction for Marc. Gr. Z. 216, expressed in an autograph note of January 22, 1446 on f. 1r of that same manuscript, see Speranzi 2017, 168-9.

**55** I refer to K for Plato’s *Laws* and to Marc. Gr. Z. 259 for Aristotle’s *Problemata*.

**56** See Wilson 1962, 386.

**57** The eight further witnesses have been identified on the basis of data in the following catalogues: Wilson 1962, 386-95; Brumbaugh, Wells 1968, 94-5; Sinkewicz 1990. From the list of codices indicated in Sinkewicz 1990, the entry Ravenna – MS 490 ought to be removed, since the codex of the Biblioteca Classense with this shelfmark does not contain Platonic texts, which can be ascertained by consulting the catalogue card. I can also add that Martin 1884, 553-6 and the catalogue by Silvio Bernicoli (published in Mazzatinti 1894-95, 4: 226) indicate the presence in the Classense of a Platonic codex, MS 381, containing the twelfth book of the *Laws*; however, this information is incorrect, since the text at the end of this manuscript is not the twelfth book of the *Laws*, but rather Aristotle’s *Poetics*. The question about the pseudo-witness of the *Laws* preserved in the Biblioteca Classense has already been dealt with by Des Places in his study of the manuscript tradition of the dialogue (see Des Places 1955, 45-6). As an explanation of the confusion, Des Places hypothesises – and plausibly, all things considered – that the fundamental cataloguing error was due to a misunderstanding of the marginal annotation on the first folio of the text, *Plato in β<sup>ω</sup> de Legibus* 215.5: Martin thought that this note gave the title of an acephalous text, while, in reality, it is nothing more than a reference to a parallel passage in Plato.

**58** It is worth noting that the integration of the census of Post is limited solely to the medieval codices. An overall update of the fundamental witnesses related to the text of the *Laws* should not ignore the census of papyrus witnesses and the indirect tradition, which are beyond the remit of this chapter.

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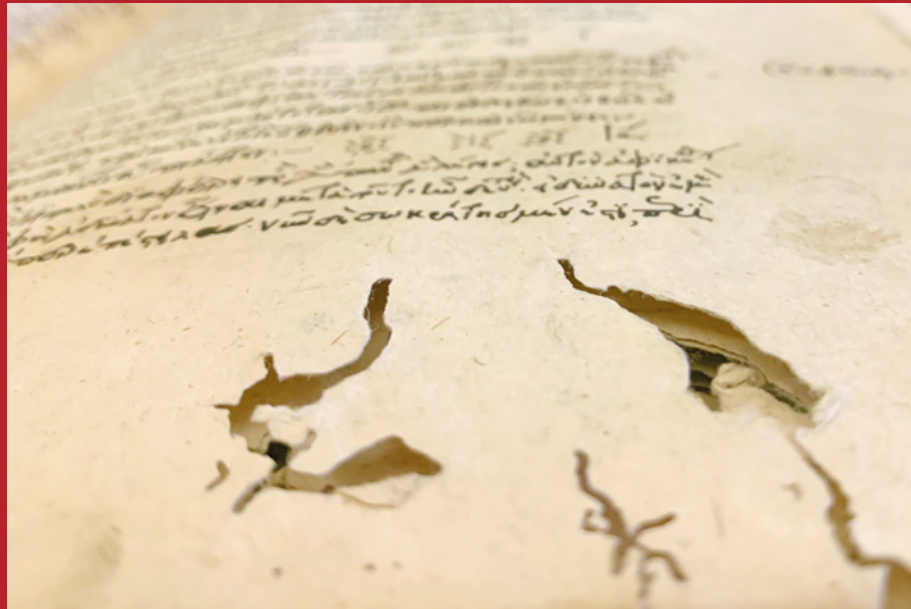
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Fragilità e fascino dei manoscritti: un particolare del codice marciano Gr. Z. 188 (= 1022), f. 174r custodito nella Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana

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