Il libro di Bessarione
in difesa di Platone
Vicende testuali e percorsi intellettuali
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

Edizioni
Ca' Foscari
The 24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies
Venice and Padua, 22-27 August 2022

The Exhibitions

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

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

Venice, Museo Correr
23 August-31 October 2022

Venezia, Museo Correr
23 agosto-31 ottobre 2022
Il libro di Bessarione in difesa di Platone: nell’officina dell’ultimo filosofo bizantino

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nell’In Calumniatorem Platonis
custoditi nella Biblioteca custodied in the Biblioteca
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Venezia, Museo Correr 23 agosto-31 ottobre 2022 | 23 August-31 October 2022

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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 AIBD 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 Gasparrini 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 5 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.

Serge Hariev
Chi viene chiamato a dirigere la Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana ha da subito la percezione dell’importanza dell’inca
crici, ma soprattutto ha la percezione che questa biblioteca è ancora ‘la biblioteca del Cardinale Bessarione’. Certamente, 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 illustrare 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 funzionario restauratrice della Marciana, Claudia Benvestito. A tutti loro, e naturalmente al prof. Sergei Mariev, vuol il mio ringraziamento per aver voluto valorizzare un patrimonio che, oggi è possibile comprendere grazie alla lente prospettica 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 textuali 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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Gr. Z. 1(74) (74), f. 1r
Gr. Z. 1(75) (75), f. 1r
Lat. VI, 76, [284], f. 27v
79.D.107, f. 108v
1SL D.10, pp. 30-31
Gr. Z. 198 (= 604), f. 1v
Gr. Z. 199 (= 605), ff. 183, 197v
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Lat. Z. 228 (= 1695), f. 1
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Gr. Z. 187 (= 742), ff. 176, 192v
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In difesa di Platone | In Defence of Plato
Vicende textuali e percorsi intellettuali | Textual Developments and Intellectual Journeys

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Part 1

General Introduction
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 (Platon), 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; 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

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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 (Platon) 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 e 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. Però prima della sua morte, Bessarione donò la sua intera biblioteca alla Repubblica di Venezia,
Platonico che si riferisce a due idee fondamentali, la verità e il bene. Marsilio Ficino e Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

La donazione della biblioteca di Bessarione alla città di Venezia è un evento notevole nella storia della civiltà europea, un'importante figura dell'arte e della filosofia di questo periodo. La donazione della biblioteca servì a consolidare il legame intellettuale tra Bessarione e la città di Venezia, che era un centro culturale di rilevanza europea.

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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 authors. To appreciate the unique character of these two manuscripts, it is important to bear in mind that Bessarion left to posterity a monumental work in six books, containing not only his own treatment of the Platonic heritage in the West. In addition to the significance of Bessarion’s book in defining the course of the study of Byzantine Platonism tradi-
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pletion of the final version of the book.

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 followed after Bessarion left, then it is quite prob-
able 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 Bessari-
on is very scarce, the material presented at the exhibi-
tion in Calvari is particularly valuable and revealing.

1 Final Redaction

This cabinet contains manuscripts Gr. Z. 198 (744) and Lat. Z. 229 (1695). These are the handwritten copies of In Calumniatorem Platonis, which Bessarion started to write in 1458, but finished more than ten years later, in 1469, at the time when the ripples created by the publication of Trapez-
unzio’s Comparatio in 1695 had certainly subsided and the quarrel between the Papal secretary and a Roman cardinal must have been long forgotten. In 1469 Bessa-
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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 these developments is that they were more economic to produce and easier to distribute. The unique character of the period of transition from hand-written manuscripts to printed books is that they were more economic to produce and easier to distribute.

2 Bessarion and Georgios Trapezuntios

Bessarion’s Compinomotum Platonis was conceived as a response to Georgios Trapezuntios’ Comparatio philosoporum Platonis et Aristotelis. This cabinet introduc- es 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, togeth- er with a later, printed copy of this work.

The two portraits are taken from Paolo Giovio’s Elpis Vivorum Litteris Illustrum. 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 stylized images, showing in the case of Bessarion, with the title Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary. This is the most realistic image that was in possession of Bessarion, together with a later, printed copy of this work.

The Latin manuscript Lat. VI, 76 (2848), written by at least 13 different scribes, is the only hand-written copy of the Comparatio presently held in the Marciana Li- brary. 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 surpris- ing, however, is that this copy does not contain Bessa- rion’s comments and remarks, as we would expect, but this had been the Cardinal’s actual working copy. It is there- fore quite possible that this is only one of several copies that Bessarion made of the Comparatio manuscript, but that he actually used a different copy in the process of his own work.

2 Bessarione e Giorgio Trapezuzio

L’In Compinomotum Platonis di Bessarione fu concepito come replica all’opera di Giorgio Trapezunzio intitulata Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis. La ve- trina presenta Bessarione e il suo avversario Giorgio Tra- pezunzio attraverso i loro ritratti e illustra l’inizio della loro controversia esibendo, da un lato, una copia scri- ta a mano della Comparatio che era in possesso di Bes- sarione, dal l’altro lato, una copia a stampa di tale ope- ra, risalente a un periodo più tardo.

Le due immagini sono tratte dall’Elpis Vivorum Litteris Illustrum di Paolo Giovio. Non dobbiamo aspet- tarcche queste raffigurazioni riproducano in maniera realistica l’aspetto che i due protagonisti avessero effetti- vamente nella loro vita reale. Siamo certi che Bessarione, come ci si sarebbe aspettato se 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 manoscrit- ti realizzati a mano ai libri che sono oggi 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 co- pia manoscritta riccamente decorata del suo libro fosse realizzata per il suo uso personale insieme e in aggiunta alla versione stampata della sua opera, ovviamente desti- nata a un pubblico più vasto.
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 Peloponnesus 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.

Bessarion discovered a large number of mistakes in Georgios Trapezuntios’ 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.

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 displays 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, which had become obfuscated in 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.

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)

4 Bessarion’s Plato

Bessarion identified many errors in Georgios Trapezuntios’ translation of Plato’s Laws into Italian and severely criticized him. The criticism of the Latin translation of Plato’s Laws, which he gave his teacher 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.

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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 Montfaucon’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 material into his own text.

6 De Natura et Arte

De Natura et Arte (De Nature and Art) is the title of the sixth and final book of Bessarion's treatise In Columbium Natura Platonis. His work on this concluding section also goes back to 1458. In that year, Georgios Trapezuntios not only published his Comcastus in Latins but also caused an intrigue among the learned Byzantines who were close to Bessarion. He intercepted a letter Bessarion sent to his colleague in the year of the conclave in which, for a second time, Bessarion was close to Bessarion would know the true identity of the author of the letter he had criticized. In other words, by targeting Jesus, 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 Plotinus’s conception of the role of deliberation in art and nature, made this interpretation more plausible. Georgios Trapezuntios described this in the year of the conclave, in which, for a second time, he hoped to be elected Pope, because this letter put his intellectual rivals in the right to criticise the missive of a cardinal’s secretary. In his opinion, Bessarion had written in reply to a question from Théodoros Gazis. Pretending to believe that the letter he had intercepted was from Bessarion’s secretary, Jesus of Cyprus, Trapezuntios harshly criticized the arguments it contained, made several copies of this letter critical remarks and circu-
le del processo durante il quale Bessarione integrò nel suo 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 Nota 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 proprio. È importante sottolineare che l’uso del testo di Gatti da parte di Bessarione non rappresenta un plagio, ovvero la presentazione ingannevole delle idee, le idee o le espressioni di un altro autore come se fossero di origini proprie. In altri termini trasformò il materiale fornito da Bessarione quando questi ha iniziato a rielaborare il materiale di Gatti e la rielaborazione del trattato

5 Cambio di programma: le Nota di Gatti e la rielaborazione del trattato

Il libro di Bessarione nasce come risposta a Giorgio Trapezuntios. Durante il lungo periodo (dici anni) che Bessarione trascorse lavorando a questa sua opera, egli dovette apportare modifiche significative al progetto originale dell’opera. La ristrutturazione più significativa del trattato avvenne quando Bessarone 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 dominicano Giovanni Gatti. Maggiori dettagli gli spettano a Giovanni Gatti e il suo lavoro si trovano nel saggio di John Montfaucon, contenuto nella sezione terza del presente catalogo. Il codice Lat. Z. 226 (1636) qui esposto rappresenta una scena di fondo per l’opera del maestro, che successivamente completò e perfezionò il suo capolavoro.

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 Columbium Natura Platonis. La stesura di questa sezione conclusiva risale anch’essa al 1458. In quell’anno, Georgio Trapezuntios non solo pubblicò la sua Comcastus in latino, ma ordinò anche un’intrigo che coinvolgeva i dotti bizantini vicini a Bessarione. Egli interrogò una lettera che Bessarione aveva scritto in risposta a una questione posta da Teodoro Gazis. Fingendo di credere che la lettera inter-
non fosse di Bessarione, ma del suo segretario, Isaia di Cipro, Trapezuntios critico aspramente gli argo-
for Bessarion to write a reply. This reply later became the final Latin version, which eventually became book 6 of the In Columbiae Platonis. The manuscript Gr. Z. 527 (1679) on display here transmits the text of the book in 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 event-
tually became book 6 of the In Columbiae 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 Columbiae 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 print-
ed 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 num-
ber 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 achieve-
ment in the early days of book printing. The Greek pas-
sages 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 typographer.

7 La copia del tipografo

Il manoscritto Lat. Z. 228 (1671) qui esposto è la versio-
ne latina dell’In Columbiae Platonis, che fu utiliz-
zata per la realizzazione del volume a stampa del li-
bro nel 1469. Le macchie nere visibili sulla destra sono state causate dal tipografo che maneggiava la copia du-
rante il suo lavoro. Il manoscritto sottolinea l’esce-
ncialità e varietà del materiale che riproduce nel suo libro. Il processo di correzione non si con-
cluse con l’uscita a stampa del volume: dopo aver ricevu-
to il libro dal tipografo, infatti, Bessarione sentì il biso-
gno di correggere di suo pugno una serie di errori che aveva scoperto nella versione a stampa. Un’altra carat-
teristica 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 del libro stesso era una conquista tecnica di non po-
colo valore e che rifletteva il lungo processo di gestione e completamento del trattato. Bessarione stesso sottopose a un lungo processo di correzione da parte di un altro membro dell’en-
tourage di Bessarione, Niccolò Perotti.

8 L’editio princeps latina

Bessarion era in possesso di due copie della versione a stampa dello stesso testo. Il processo di correzione non si con-
cluse con l’uscita a stampa del volume: dopo aver ricevu-
to il libro dal tipografo, infatti, Bessarione sentì il biso-
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tourage di Bessarione, Niccolò Perotti.

The manuscript Gr. Z. 527 (1679) esposta nella presen-
tele 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 Bes-
sarione ed è scritta da lui di propria mano. La versione finale in latino, che alla fine divenne il libro VI dell’In Columbiae Platonis, fu sottoposta a un lungo pro-
cesso di correzione da parte di un altro membro dell’en-
tourage di Bessarione, Niccolò Perotti.
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 corrected 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.

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.

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 possibile 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.

La ricerca bessarioniana dei nostri tempi

L’ultima vetrina della mostra è dedicata all’interesse dei più 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 bessarioniana. 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), scendendo l’opera bessarioniana 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
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 transferal 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 rebinding 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 varies 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. 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.
Final Redaction

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

Parchment, middle of XV c., mm 280 × 195 × 95, ff. 318, †neis 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 re-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 Iunia 56
Inventory A absent
Inventory B 536 "Opus domini Reverendissimi in calumniatorem Platonis, in pergamenae"
Literature Mioni 1981, 310
In difesa di Platone

Parchment, middle of XV c., mm 280 × 195 × 95, spatium scripturae mm 180 × 110, linea scripta 28, ff. 4-364 with reclamants on f. 10 (I), 20 (II), 30 (III), 40 (IV), 50 (V), 60 (VI), 70 (VII), 80 (VIII), 90 (IX), 100 (X), 110 (XI at the edge of the page), 120 (mininal traces of the Roman numeral barely discernible at the edge of the page), 130 (Roman numeral cut off, minimal traces), 140 (XII), 150 (XIII (crossed through) / XX), 160 (XIV), 170 (XV), 180 (XVI), 190 (XVII), 200 (XVIII), 210 (XIX (crossed through) / XX), 220 (XX), 230 (XXI), 240 (XXII), 250 (XXIII), 260 (XXIV), 270 (XXV), 280 (XXVI), 290 (XXVII), 300 (XXVIII), 310 (XXIX), 320 (XXX), 330 (XXXI), 340 (XXXII), 350 (XXXIII), 360 (XXXIV), 370 (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. 339-358.

Bessarion’s library

Inventory A absent

Inventory B 717 “Opus Domini Reverendissimi in calumniatorem Platonis in pergamo, pulchrum”

Literature

Valentinni 1871, 3: 29; Mohler 1923-42, 1: 76-77, 2: 98; Gasparri Leporace, Monti 1888, 14-15.
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, 96v-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. 107v-178.

It contains Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis. Bk. 1, ff. 1-27; Bk. 2, ff. 27v-107; Bk. 3, ff. 107v-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, and cf. Monfasani 2021b, 366-7)

Literature  Valentrelli 1871, 4, 18, Hordern (2021b), 365-78
In difesa di Platone

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 philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis a Georgio Trapezuntio viro clarissimo”. Colophon on f. 168: “Venetiis per Iacobum pentum de Leuco, a partu Virgineo MDXXIII nonis Ianuarii”.

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

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

Literature

Monfasani 2021b, 428-38
In difesa di Platone

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

Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 161.D.10
In difesa di Platone

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

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 298 × 212, ff. VI + 225 (+ 176 bis), Aesia plenis 16-21 in ff. 1-32, 87-96v, 20-27 in ff. 33-76v, 25 in ceteris foliis; spatium scripturae mm 180/195 × 110/135 in ff. 1-76v et mm 200 × 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
Inventory B.518: “Quadro: ‘La difesa Platone’ ut B.516 in papiro, prima manu, consita in coperto pergamen”

Literature: GasparriniLeporace, Mioni 1968, 7-8; Mioni 1981, 310-11; Mariev 2022 (forthcoming)

III Working with Plato

6 Venezia, BNM, Gr. Z. 199 (604), f. 197v
Paper, middle of XV c., mm 220 x 145 (mm 200 x 145 on ff. 64-100, 108-111), ff. 1, 225, lineis plenis 26-39, spatium scripturae ca. mm 160/190 x 130/90. F. 1 index; 2-3v Plutarchus Vite paralleleae, excerpta ex vita Timonis, Luculli et Themistei; 4-4v Herodotus Historiae Excerpta; 25-47 Thucydidae; 48-59v Xenophon historicas Hellenicas Excerpta; f. 60-63v are empty; 64-97v Plutarchus Vite paralleleae; 97v Porphyrius Vita Plotini; 108-107v Plato Leges; ff. 108-111v are empty; 112-130v Compendium oporum Platonis; 130-136v Hermogenes rhetor De Inventione Excerpta; 136v Plutarchus Apophthegmata Lacoicis; 149-155 Plutarchus Vita Homer; 155-157v Lucianus De ablatione Excerptum; 152-156v Proclus philosophus instituto physico; 164v-167v Sententiae ex auctoris ecclesiasticis collectae; f. 167v is empty; 176v-199v Ptolemaeus Claudius Synthetica mathematica, praenuntiatur 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, attest- ing Bessarion’s particular interest in this dialogue and his profound knowledge of it.

Bessarion’s library: absent
Inventory A: absent

Parchment, middle of XV c., mm 260 × 175, ff. 311 (+ 287 hoi), lineae plenas 31/39, spatium scripturae mm 170/180 × 110/125. F. 1rv index; 2-107 Plato Respublica; 107v-139r Plato Timaeus; 136-139v Timaeus De animis mundi et natura; f. 141 is empty; 141-152 Plato Philebus 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 Epistolae. 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

Inventory A 410: “Item Platonis respublica, leges et epistolae, in pergamo, liber pulcherrimus”

Inventory B 525: “Quaderni respublica, leges et epistolae, in pergamo”

Literature

Mioni 1981, 299; Pagani 2011
Paper, beginning of the XV c., mm 245 × 170, ff. I. 178, lines plenas 31/32, spatium scripturae 185 × 110. 1-131 Plato / Ps.-Plato Leges; 131v-138v Plato / Ps.-Plato Epinomis; 138v-141v Ps.-Plato De demococracia; 141v-144v Ps.-Plato Sisyphus; 144v-145v Lucianus Haliçon; 145v-152v Ps.-Plato Eryxion; 152v-155v Definitions; 155v-176v Plato / Ps.-Plato Epistulae; 176v-178v Excerpta brevia ex operibus Luciani versis mata 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

Inventory A 421
"Item leges Platonis, dialogi quattuor noti, et epistolae eius, in papyro"

Inventory B 528
"Platonis leges, epistolae et diologognoti, in papyro"

Literature
Mioni 1981, 300; Pagani 2009
In difesa di Platone

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

Paper; middle of XV c., mm. 315 × 230 × 40, ff. 152, spatiae 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 Tiftinoglou 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. Bl. 1 of Liber defensionum begins on f. 1*=1; Bk. 2 on 31*=68v; Bl. 3 on 84v=84v; f. 130P=130v contains the letter of Johannes de Rupesfort, audess maioris Fusi chirotris, cardinal Albenla. The codex is written in Bessarion’s hand (Mohler 1923-42, 1: 364; Gasparrini Leporace, Mi-

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

Bessarion’s library

Inventory A absent

Inventory B 889

"De eadem materia [sc. ‘Defensio Platonis’ of B 886], tres libri, in quaternios, littera ser Petri"

Literature

Valentini 1871, 4-6; Wachter 1942-44, 1: 364 and 2: 71; Gasparrini Leporace, Mi-

V Change of Plan: Gatti’s Hototo and the Reworking of the Treatise

In difesa di Platone
Paper, middle of XV c. (ff. 1-152) and XVII c. (ff. 153-158) ff. 1-158 + 1, 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 ineptis 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.

\[\text{Spatium scripturae} f. 1-70v: \text{mm} 200 \times 150, \text{lineis plenis} 31-32, \text{var. Spatium scripturae} f. 71-152 185 \times 115, \text{lineis plenis} 24.\]

**Notes:**
- **Library:** re: bessa
- **Inventory A:** absent
- **Inventory B:** "Secundus liber pro Platone, manusc."

**Literature**
- Valenzelli 1871, 4:67; Gazarelli Capozzi, More 1963, 10-11,
- Monfasani 2021a, XLIX-XXXI.
VI De natura et arte

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

Paper, middle of XV c., mm 210 × 145, ff. 1-247 (+ 160 bis, 197 bis, 200 bis), lines pleno 24-29, spectrum scripturæ ca. mm 143/160 × 80/100. Ff. 1-16 De processione Spiritus Sancti; 17-44v Oratio dogmatica de unione; 45v Ad dicta Platonis in Aristotelem; ff. 46-49v are empty; 50-54v Refutatio syllogismorum Platonis de Spiritu sancto; f. 54v is empty; 55-105 Marcus Eugenicius Cupidit syllogisticæ adversus Lateranum; ff. 106-109v De sacramentis Eucharisticis; 110-127v Encyclia ad Graecos; ff. 134-135v are empty; 136-140v In Ioannem 21:22-23; f. 141 is empty; 142v De natura et arte (versio latina); 143-149v De sacramento Eucharistiae; 150-170v De sacramento Eucharistiae; 171-174v In Ioannem 21:22-23; f. 175 is empty; 176-199v De sacramento Eucharistiae; 200-234v De natura et arte (versio graeca); 235-244v Epistule; 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 (Inven. 52)

Inventory A absent

Inventory B 510 "Opera Domini Reverendissimi de spiritu sancto, et de sacramentis eucharistie, et de 'sic eum volo manere' in papiro"

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 was 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-BBB: "De oedem. materia jux. [De fefenso Platoni et B BBE], crever quinque libros; in quinquieservoir, in papiris, manu nostorum diversurm tern".

VIII  Edizione princeps

Printed in 1469, mm 335 × 230 × 70, ff. 233, f. 1 and f. 233 are empty. Colophon: “Aspis illustris lectus quicunque libellis […].”

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"
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 f. 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 “Quae volumina defensionis platonicae, in papiro”
Reprints of the editio princeps


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).
In difesa di Platone

Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 387.D.29

It contains In Calumniatorem Platonis in six books (ff. 1-116), Bessarion's Metaphysicorum Aristotelis XIIII Librorum Translatio (ff. 1-50) and Teophrasti Opusculum (ff. 50v-53).

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


Part 3

Scholarly Contributions
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 endeavor 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 papyrus 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-
process of revising and correcting a Late Byzantine text, research has not yet been completed – to reconstruct the materiel, it appears to be possible, at least in theory – as this exhibition in the Correr Museum. Using Bessarion's ma-

This fifth book was neglected by Ludwig Mohler in his in translation of Plato's Laws. Book 5 contains Bessarion's critique of the Latin translation of Plato's Laws. In the course of correcting the process of revising and correcting a Late Byzantine text, it is possible to postulate interrelationships between several corrections related 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. 143v of Cod. Marc. Gr. Z. 199 (fig. 16). In the course of the corrective process, the first, underlying text of the version 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).

For the sake of clarity and readability, I will present Bessarion's handwritten corrections in a way that is now familiar to everyone 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 ὅντος, which is replaced by Ἔστι μὲν (fig. 2):

 ámbοι, τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν νόμων τῆς προομίων. Πλάτων τὸ λόγον τιθέμενον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους. Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος […]

This change affects the participial element of the genitivus absolutus construction ὅντος … 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):

 ámbοι, τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν νόμων τῆς προομίων. Πλάτων ὁ λόγος Πλάτων τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους. Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος […]

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

 ámbοι, τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν νόμων τῆς προομίων. Πλάτων ὁ λόγος Πλάτων τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους. Κλεινίας ὁ Κνώσιος […]

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.

 ámbοι, τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν νόμων τῆς προομίων. Πλάτων ὁ λόγος Πλάτων 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 οὖν after Κλεινίας (fig. 5):

 ámbοι, τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν νόμων τῆς προομίων. Πλάτων ὁ λόγος Πλάτων τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους. Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος […]

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

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, 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 οὖν 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 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.

Having deleted the words Κλεινίας οὖν Κνώσιος, Bessarion moves into the space at the bottom margin of the page by starting a new sentence (fig. 7): οὖν τοίνυν ἐν τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίοις ὁ λόγος Πλάτωνι τοῦ λόγου πότερον πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην βλέποντα δεῖ τιθέναι τὸν τιθέμενον πόλεσι νόμους, Κλεινίας οὖν ὁ Κνώσιος,

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, ἅτερος δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἦ (fig. 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 ήν.
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He does so in order to replace Αθηναίος with Λακεδαιμόνιος. It is probable that we encounter here a mi-
nor 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 

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):

Comparing the two versions, namely the version before the correction "εἰ οὕτω 
...
ἔχειν" with the subsequent "ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν νομοθέταις, Μίνωί 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 for-
mulated indirect question: "εἰ οὕτω [...]

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

The passage he has deleted is replaced with a new, reformulated version of the same sentence, namely: Μίνωι καὶ Λυκούργῳ Λακεδαιμονίῳ, εἴη δόξα. After this change, the text on the page runs as follows (fig. 14):

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Figure 13

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 14
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: κληρονομίας τοῦ Κλεινίας, which used to be the last words on the page before Bessarion started to modify the entire passage, and they line up with the text on the next page: "[…] ποία τις περὶ τούτου ἐπικεφαλής ήτοι […]". And so, as a final step in this process, Bessarion re-inserts these words, together with the συνόπτης τοῦ Κλεινίας, which he had decided to insert before he previously deleted them. The text now reads as follows (fig. 15):

ἔστι μὲν ὁ λόγος τοῦ πρώτου τῶν νόμων τοῖς προοιμίοις ἑτερος, ὡς Πλάτων ἐπανέρχετο πάντως πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην ἐπικεφαλής διά τιθέμεν τοῦ τέλους πάλιν νόμον. \[\ldots\] ποία τις περὶ τούτου αὕτη τοῦ καὶ τῆς αὕτης νομοθέτησις. Μίνως τῷ Κρήτῃ καὶ Λυκούργῳ λειτουργεῖν, εὐνύχως εἶναι δύναμις. Κληρονομίας τοῦ Κλεινίας.

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. 2, 198 (partially visible in the next figure (fig. 16)).

"Esto μὲ τοὺς εἰς τὸ πρῶτον τῶν νόμων τοῦ προοιμίου ο λόγος Πλάτων, πάντως πρὸς πόλεμον ἢ πρὸς εἰρήνην ἐπικεφαλής διά τιθέμεν τοῦ τέλους πάλιν νόμον. Ἑμεῖς δὲ Κλεινίας καὶ Μίνως τῶν προοιμίων λέιτουργεῖσθαι, ὡς Κληρονομίας τοῦ Κλεινίας, ἔπειτα τὸ πρὸς πόλεμον αὕτη τοῦ καὶ τῆς αὕτης νομοθέτησις. Μίνως τῷ Κρήτῃ καὶ Λυκούργῳ λειτουργεῖν, εὐνύχως εἶναι δύναμις. Κληρονομίας τοῦ Κλεινίας (…)

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, at the moment of writing, confused an Athenian with a Spartan, but immediately corrected himself in the text. Is the accusative form actually ποία τις περὶ τούτου ἐπικεφαλής ήτοι […], or should this have been ποία τις περὶ τούτου ἐπικεφαλής ήτοι […]? Figure 15 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 “Κρείττων, ὃς ἐπήκοος ἄριστος καὶ τιθέμεν τοῦ πόλεμον […]” in the case of Bessarion’s text we actually have a large number of alternative versions of the same passages of the 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.
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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 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.

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

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 cardinalial ‘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 as 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 Plato.

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to a Lower, a critique that came to constitute book 3 of the 1469 edition of the In Calumniatorem Platonis. But there was a third major contributor to the 1469 In Calumin- iatorem Platonis, who played an important role even though his identity remained unknown at the time. It is easy to see why Bessarion valued Gatti. He was al- ready a diligent reader of Thomas Aquinas before he ever came to Italy because of the fourteenth-century translations into Greek of Thomas of Canterbury's Summa contra Gentiles, most of the Summa Theologica, and other works by Demetrius of Phaleron and Prochorus Cydones. Once in Italy, Bessarion's Latin in his Latin literature suggests, Bessarion absorbed Latin scholas- ticism primarily as a student of the great Dominican teacher 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 cardi- nal, Bessarion always reserved his closest collaborators to know Greek. This confidence 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 Calum- niatorem Platonis as the new book 3, inserted between the original books 2 and 3 of the In Calumni- atorem Platonis. The new book 3 would answer from a Latin scholas- tic perspective George of Trebizond's arguments concern- ing Aristotle's agreement with the fundamentals of Christianity. In the event, the new book 3 took up fully one third of the 1469 In Calumniatorem Platonis, as Bes- sarion had already made Gatti the bishop of Cefalù in his native Sicily. Sixtus even tried to make Gatti the bishop of the Diocese of Catania, but King John II of Aragon blocked that move. Gatti died in retirement in his birth city of Messina in 1484.
tion more consistent with the style and format of the rest of the In Columniatoren Platonis, he eventually threw up his hands and stopped half way through. Thereafter, he considered the Notata as a product of a team rather than the work of Bessarion himself because of the obvious heterogeneity of style and structure one found in the work. We may expect all of Bessarion’s quotes and citations of Thomas. Gatti’s second most cited authority was Aver- roes, 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, one more time Gatti was intent on showing that the whole medieval scholastic tradition was arraigned against George’s interpretations of Plato and Aristotle. Oddly enough, Gatti twice let slip that this depiction of the scholastic tradition may not have been as banal as he pretended, and both times he seems to have been referring to the views of several Dominicans, one of whom may have been the inquisitor and papal theologian Salvo Cassetta.

Bessarion accepted into the In Columniatoren Plato- nis the majority of Gatti’s scholastic citations, but he was more judicious when it came to Gatti’s attempts to flout his Greek erudition. True, he took over Gatti’s reference to what were at the time still untranslated orations of Bas- il the Great, Theodosius II, and Gregory Nazianzus, 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, most cited by far was the inconvertible assertion that the medieval translator was wrong to translate as animale Aristotle’s reference to God in Metaphysics X.

In any case, on all these points Gatti heavily relied on Iohannes Monfasani’s In difesa di Platone, which was bound into Lat. VI, 61 (coll. 2592), since at some point it was bound as an unbound bundle of fascicles. Where it went is anybody’s guess, but fortunate- ly it remained in the Venetian book market and made it back to the Marciana as an unbound bundle of fascicles that had been kept in the library as still potential- ly useful in Bessarion’s ongoing battle with George of Trebizond, was caught up in these movements. At some point in 1450 George was caught up in these movements. At some point in 1450 George made in the 1440s and eventually dedicated to King Alfonso of Naples, Bessarion preemptively agreed with George and translated Cive as vivens, not animale; but now, in the In Columniatoren Platonis, reflecting the po- lemical spirit of the work, he appropriated Gatti’s criti- cism 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 been preserved because when Bessarion left for France in April 1472 to promote the Crusade, he packed up his whole library and deposited it with Duke Federico da Montefeltro in Urbino. Later, in the wake back to Rimini on 18 November 1472, Duke Fe- derigo kept faith with his old friend and saw to the trans- fer of Bessarion’s library to Venice as the cardinal’s will specified. Gatti’s Notata, as an unbound bundle of fasci- cles that had been kept in the library as still potential- ly 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 manus- scripts. Where it went is anybody’s guess, but not surpris- ingly it remained in the Venetian book market and made it back to the Marciana as an extraordinary acquisition, bound in Lat. VI, 61 (coll. 2552), since there, where it went is anybody’s guess, but not surpris- ingly it remained in the Venetian book market and made it back to the Marciana as an extraordinary acquisition, bound in Lat. VI, 61 (coll. 2552), since there, where it went is anybody’s guess, but not surpris- ingly it remained in the Venetian book market and made it back to the Marciana as an extraordinary acquisition, bound in Lat. VI, 61 (coll. 2552), since there,
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61, however, some of them were lost as were also some individual folios and the surviving remainder was part-
ly 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 relation-
ship 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 Calumniato-
rem 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 cardi-
nal’s household in 1467.

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There is nothing new in the observation that Cardinal Bessarion was a highly erudite collec-
tor of Greek manuscripts who played a critical role in the effort to rescue Greek books at the
time of the Fall of Constantinople.1 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 al-
so on the complex network of relationships and intellectual activities that developed around
those manuscripts. The study of his extraordinary Nachlass,2 in combination with new his-
torical information, has allowed modern scholars to reconstruct in greater detail, and there-
fore to appreciate more fully, the intellectual life of the Academia Bessarionea.3

The current exhibition hosted in the Libreria Pisani at the Museo Correr in Venice is de-
signed to document precisely this aspect of Bessarion’s work, by focusing on his most impor-
tant 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 vari-
ous 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 Domini-
can Giovanni Gatti assembled the treatise of Notata (Gatt. Not.), recently edited by John Mon-
fasani. For the Latin text published in August 1469, the cardinal was indebted to his secre-
tary Niccolo Perotti, as Monfasani has shown in a pair of ground-breaking studies from the
beginning of the 1980s.4 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.4 In an effort to enhance the reputation 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 (Trat., Lg.).

Indeed, it was precisely on the basis of his own translation of the Laws that George composed some of the harshest passages of his Compendio philosophorum Aristoteles Platonis (Trat. Comp.),5 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.6

Trebizond’s extensive corpus of translations, still confined to unedited manuscripts (with only a few exceptions),7 has been largely neglected by modern scholars.8 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).9 It is true that the methodologies of humanists make their work of little value, when not entirely misleading, for textual critics at all. Yet, for those who are interested in the re-appropriation of the ancient sources and its representation in the Latin texts, the need of such an investigation for Trebizond’s translation is indisputable, with even the most exacting of modern critics being unable 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, which have been judged to be biased (at best) or entirely unreliable (at worse), are also their fairness. In the case of a humanistic translation produced before the invention of printing, no comprehen- sive assessment of its quality is possible as long as there is no precise knowledge of the sources from which the translation was made.10 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.11 Since we still stand in need of such an investigation for Trebizond’s translation of the Laws,12 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. Plat. 80.17 (L) and Marc. Gr. Ζ 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 his contemporary, and through my contribution to a better understanding of the relationship between the two men within the broader context of the Academic Current, I offer a new methodology for the study of the manuscript transmission of Plato’s Laws.

1. George of Trebizond gives us no direct information to identify his Greek source(s) for his translation. Furthermore, no conclusive result could achieve 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 translations 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 a discussion about the second manuscript used by Trebizond; 4 consequences of the identifications.

It is Levi Arnold Post who has drawn the stemmata 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. 1.625-5.746b). From book 5 to 12, O becomes a copy of A and the two families are reduced to one.13 Therefore, it is the first part of this text that allows us to place Trebizond’s translation into the family of the one or the other of these two codices.
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.26

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. 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.

Once we exclude codex O, we can automatically exclude its apographs, namely Est. and Voss.

So far I have established that Trebizond used either O or one of its apographs. 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 manuscript copies of the Laws of Socrates against which the text of the Laws that could correspond to Trebizond’s working copies.28 Since Post did not publish his own collations, we can know the readings of only nine of these fifteen manuscript copies, thanks to the collations of Bekker (O, Pal., Ang., v, E, R) and Stallbaum (Laur. a, e, c, l). For the remaining six witnesses (J, Ox., Eus. 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.

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.26

Book I 625a1 affirmaus (ἀφετέρους Α) : φημῶν Ο [ἐγραφαί] \(\rightarrow\) 625a6 nos […] (σεβαστός ἐν δὲ Α : ἐπιπλέον Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.] \(\rightarrow\) 625a8 εἰκοσάβδοι (Ἀλκυμίδης Α : καὶ ἑπτά Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.])

625a10 τὸ δὲ ἔστω (ἡκατέρων ἐπιτηδεύματος Α : ἐπιπλέον Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]) \(\rightarrow\) 625a11 ὡς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]

625a12 ὃς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.] \(\rightarrow\) 625a13 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a14 ὃς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]

625a15 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a16 ὃς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]

625a18 ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a20 ὃς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]

625a21 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a22 ὃς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]

625a23 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a24 ὃς ἄλλως Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]

625a25 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a30 τὸ δὲ ἔστω (ἡκατέρων ἐπιτηδεύματος Α : πολλοὶ οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματος Ο [κατὰ τὸν Π.]) \(\rightarrow\) 625a31 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a32 ὃς ἄλλως: Α Eus.

625a33 λόγος ἄλλως: Α Eus.
By their nature, such punctual correspondences could still have occurred by chance. Nevertheless, while according to the critical apparatus by De Placis, it would seem that Trebizond’s translation reflects three different sources,¹⁷ the collations printed by Stallbaum make it clear that there is only one manuscript where these various readings occur all together; namely MS L.¹⁸ As Post has demonstrated, L contains some good conjectures that otherwise attest in the O family (except for L’s copies, of course). 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.¹⁹

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 present capitalus notes in a hand that writes using a rather sketchy full of abbreviations. 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 of George of Trebizond himself. A few letter’s forms appear characteristic: bilobular β, or what we might call ‘telephone-receiver’ with an enlarged upper lobe (ϝ), an almost cruciform χ with the middle stroke almost flat-topped, Σ in inclined to the left, groups αψ and ω with ψ always suspended. Nevertheless, the Trebizond of the autograph notes to Vat. Lat. 4534 generally writes a low ψ, while the hand annotating MS L uses both the low and high forms of the same letter (an example of the low ψ is 171: λογισμὸς), 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, Montafoni was able to discover and publish in MS Torino BNU G.II.36, some comments in Trebizond’s hand. 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:

In II circa principium. Indocitus erat inde disciplinatus ille docentur qui nunquam chorum usus est.

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

Σημείωσαν δὲ ἀσώματος ἤχορας ἀχόρευτος

It is evident that the annotator of L was struck by the essential correlation established by Plato between (choreus 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 that given by Trebizond, would only seem useful in the presence of a system of indexing within the codex.) Second, Trebizond habitually uses either indicium or indici- plhnotas to translate the Greek ἀχόρευτος, while George of Trebizond’s notes on the affairs of the Doric states in particular, the Dorians mentioned in Trebizond’s Latin notes (in Dorio et constitutionem factam post bellum Troianum reprehendit) correspond to the marginal note δραμάτα in L that spans the entire future at I. 43v. And the attack against Plato for allegedly acting as a second Neutor (quod Nestor ipsae alter sit), matches the note νεύτορα 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 investigation of the collation by Stallbaum (see At 1.65v, Plat. Lg. 716c5, where Plato quotes the celebrated passage by Protagoras about God being the measure of all things, a marginal note that can be identified with certainty as George of Trebizond’s, writes: μέτρῳ ὁ θεὸς ἁπάντων (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 codices and the comments written by Trebizond in his own hand, we can now conclude that Trebizond’s translation is immune. For example, L contains two large lacunae which do not affect George’s translation:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{τὸ} & \text{κομψὰ} \\
\text{ἀλλὸ} & \text{εὐνοίᾳ}
\end{align*}\]

3 This conclusion, however, raises new questions. I stated above that my analysis of the readings known by Bekkers and Stallbaum did not lead to the identification of one sole witness. In fact, L itself has mistakes from other manuscripts (see “Appendix II”). But since the text of Plato’s Lg. (and therefore L) George translates:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{μὴ} & \text{φθόνῳ} \\
\text{ἀδυνατοῦσαν}
\end{align*}\]

Yet, before exploring this route, we should perhaps consider whether the use of a second manuscript would be uncharacteristic of George’s translation habits. Which other manuscript(s) did Trebizond use? From 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 Tartulli, 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 L is George’s translation read in N, according to secundum esse sasnuntur. But we can take a closer look.

There is only one possible explanation: George had to have at least a second manuscript available for his use. Yet, before engaging in this route, we should perhaps consider whether the use of a second manuscript source 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 reception of the Greek text with some precision. Yet, it is a fact that for some of these translations for which we have information about the Greek reception, 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 unusual, since it 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 one single manuscript.
In addition to Lg. 3.700c5, there are also some small omissions in the context of sentences that have been rendered fairly literally. These omission are specific to N and are reflected in George’s translation.48

In difesa di Platone

48 In addition to Lg. 3.700c5, there are also some small omissions in the context of sentences that have been rendered fairly literally. These omission are specific to N and are reflected in George’s translation.

Figure 3. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. 2.187 (f. 742v) (N), f. 192v, Venetian translation of Plato’s Laws.
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 translation 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 sign 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.
Appendix I

Already in 1962 Nigel Wilson noted the shortcomings of Post’s work on Plato’s Laws.44 Eight further witnesses can be added to the twenty-six already noted by Post.45 All of these are excerpts or collections of excerpts that have nothing to do with Trebizonde’s translation. Since Post, however, did not distinguish between complete and fragmentary witnesses, I provide below a brief report of these, which document a fragmentary circulation of the text, occurring mostly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.46

Regarding some of the witnesses mentioned only in passing by Post, I provide below more precise information about their content.47

Appendix II

George of Trebizonde’s Translations: 1440–59

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronology</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Client &amp; dedications</th>
<th>Greek source(s)</th>
<th>Criticisms &amp; varia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1440 Jan. - 1442</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Indicated to Antenorius de Paga, pope and cardinal; after approving George to translate Aristotle (see Monfasani 1984, 144–46); Antenorius repeatedly urged George to translate Aristotle (Philos.). But even when it was translated, it laid open to obloquy.</td>
<td>No information (see Monfasani 1984, 734).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1443-44</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Dedicated to Antenorius de Paga, pope and cardinal; after approving George to translate Aristotle (see Monfasani 1984, 144–46); Antenorius repeatedly urged George to translate Aristotle (Philos.). But even when it was translated, it laid open to obloquy.</td>
<td>No information (see Monfasani 1984, 742).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1446</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>De generatione et corruptione</td>
<td>Collected by Gr. 2034 in codex e (see “Introduction” by Rashed to Aristotle, PG 71:6).</td>
<td>Free translation (see Monfasani 1984, 736).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1447-48</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Dedicated to the Papal Credenarius (see Monfasani 1984, 141–4). Antonius repeatedly urged George to translate Aristotle (see Monfasani 1984, 702). Research on the basis of the different codices of the Novelle has not yet been done. It is now done, it will have to start from an analysis of the examples of the text in the Novelle of the Vatican Library.</td>
<td>No information (see Monfasani 1984, 736).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>De anima</td>
<td>Preface to Cardinal Domenico Giustiniani (see Monfasani 1984, 141–4). Antonius repeatedly urged George to translate Aristotle (see Monfasani 1984, 702). Research on the basis of the different codices of the Novelle has not yet been done. It is now done, it will have to start from an analysis of the examples of the text in the Novelle of the Vatican Library.</td>
<td>No information (see Monfasani 1984, 736).</td>
<td></td>
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44 Already in 1962 Nigel Wilson noted the shortcomings of Post’s work on Plato’s Laws.44 Eight further witnesses can be added to the twenty-six already noted by Post.45 All of these are excerpts or collections of excerpts that have nothing to do with Trebizonde’s translation. Since Post, however, did not distinguish between complete and fragmentary witnesses, I provide below a brief report of these, which document a fragmentary circulation of the text, occurring mostly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.46

45 Regardless of the witnesses mentioned only in passing by Post, I provide below more precise information about their content.47

46 Regarding some of the witnesses mentioned only in passing by Post, I provide below more precise information about their content.47

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## In difesa di Platone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronology</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Client &amp; dedicatees</th>
<th>Greek source(s)</th>
<th>Criticisms &amp; varia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1441</td>
<td>Poliziano</td>
<td><em>De Rafaello</em></td>
<td>Alfonso V</td>
<td>No information.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1447-Spring 1448</td>
<td>John Chrysostom</td>
<td><em>De Corona</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>No information.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1449-50</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td><em>De partibus animalium</em></td>
<td>Nicholas V (see Monfasani 1984, 293-8).</td>
<td>No information.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1451</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td><em>De generatione animalium</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>No information.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1450-March 1451</td>
<td>Plato</td>
<td><em>Logos et Dystomo</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>No information.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Client: Nicholas V (see Monfasani 1984, 300-1). |
| Client: Nicholas V (see Monfasani 1984, 293-8). |
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## The Greek Sources of George of Trebizond’s Translation of Plato’s Laws

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1451</td>
<td>December 1451</td>
<td><em>Ps. Platonis</em></td>
<td>Cassiano</td>
<td>No information.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1453</td>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td><em>Thesaurus</em></td>
<td>Alfonso</td>
<td>No certain information.</td>
<td>No doubt it was a good exemplar, without the lacunae one would expect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Client: Nicholas V (see Monfasani 1984, 293-8). |

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- The Greek Sources of George of Trebizond’s Translation of Plato’s Laws

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**Pagani**

### The Greek Sources of George of Trebizond’s Translation of Plato’s Laws

- *De Rafaello*
- *Praeparatio Evangelica*
- *De Corona*
- *De partibus animalium*
- *De generatione animalium*
- *Logos et Dystomo*
- *Ps. Platonis*
- *Thesaurus*
- *Peri Phylos*
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 method- ology. In the second paper (Pagani 2021), I provided the philological demonstration for thedropIfExists column of the Latin man- uscripts of Trebizond’s translation. In this article, I study the Greek manuscripts of Plato’s Laws used by Trebizond.

1 For the collection of Bessarion’s circle drawn by Mioni 1976.

2 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., Admon. v, ch. 326. See Pagani 2020, 131 and 161.

3 On the historical context of the translations produced by George of Trebizond and his relationship with Pope Nicholas V, see Trap., Parmenides 326; i.r. = supra versum. As regards the sigla, Hanc igitur regulam in rasura i.e. διάδοσις, 326-7. In a nutshell, this is the golden rule for a translator according to Trebizond: nihil praetermisimus, nihil addidimus, ordinemque ipsum graecorum verborum ubique conati su -

4 In difesa di Platone

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

6 As Ernesto Berti’s declares, “Quale greco sia stato effettivamente tradotto è la prima domanda che deve porsi l’editore critico...” See above Post, 1934, 326-7. This is the golden rule for a translator according to Trebizond:...in rasura, Πi.m.O4 = a group of readings that the hand O4...see Post’s under-
etiam Ficinus invenit, qui vertit: “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.”

32 Post noted that Bessarion had used another codex to collate this passage, presumably the codex Laur. Plut. 84.4, v. (cf. note 27).

33 See Post 1960, p. 20.

34 See Abenstein 2013, p. 319-20.

35 See Speranzi 2017, p. 177-80 (for a detailed account of George’s financial difficulties) and p. 192-4 (for the edition and Italian translation of I.4.69).

36 The results of this study do not, however, record a Platonic codex containing specifically the ninth and tenth tetralogies and the pseudo-Platonic pseudo-Pathēs.

37 The marginal annotations added by Trebizond in the Florilegium manuscript favor the second hypothesis – he would have received the same codex that was used by Bessarion to collate this passage against MS K. See Pagani 2012, p. 388.35.

38 For a list of the codices collated by George in I.4.69, see Speranzi 2017, p. 177-80 (for a detailed account of George’s financial difficulties) and p. 192-4 (for the edition and Italian translation of I.4.69).
Plato in error was due to a misunderstanding of the marginal annotation on the first folio of the text, explanation of the confusion, Des Places hypothesises – and plausibly, all things considered – that the fundamental cataloguing manuscript, see Speranzi 2017, 168-9.

The eight further witnesses have been identified on the basis of data in the following catalogues: Wilson 1962, 386-9; Burgenthall, Wells 1948, 34-5; Sirkiewicz 1990. From the list of codices included in Sirkiewicz 1990, the entry Ravenna – MS 490 ought to be removed, since the codes 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 1864, 153-6 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 pseudonym of the witness 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 et Pl. de Legibus 215.5: Martin thought that this note gave the title of an abridgment of the Poetics, while, in reality, it is nothing more than a reference to a parallel passage in Plato.

It is worth noting that the integration of the census of Pahl 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.

54 On Besançon's dissatisfaction for Marc. Gr. 2. 256, expressed in an autograph note of January 22, 1446 on f. 1r of that same manuscript, see this manuscript, 169-9.

55 I refer to R for Plato's Laws and to Marc. Gr. 2. 259 for Aristotle's Problems.

56 See Wilson 1962, 386.

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La mostra dal titolo *Il libro di Bessarione in difesa di Platone: nell’officina dell’ultimo filosofo bizantino* celebra la figura di Bessarione, una delle personalità più affascinanti e, al contempo, uno dei Bizantini più influenti del quindicesimo secolo. Oggetto dell’esposizione sono alcuni preziosi documenti conservati nella Biblioteca Marciana: manoscritti, incunaboli, prime versioni a stampa dell’*In Calumniatorem Platonis*, il capolavoro di Bessarione. Il percorso espositivo permette al visitatore di entrare nell’”officina” di Bessarione e di ripercorrere le tappe del lungo e travagliato percorso intellettuale che portò all’elaborazione e pubblicazione dell’opera bessarionea, seguendo insieme le vicende dei testi in cui il progetto filosofico e culturale di Bessarione andava via via concretizzandosi.

Il presente catalogo accompagna il percorso espositivo consentendo al visitatore una più proficua fruizione della mostra e aprendo al contempo interessanti orizzonti di approfondimento. Il volume si apre con un saggio che introduce al percorso espositivo; la seconda parte contiene le immagini dei documenti esposti, corredate da una breve descrizione; la terza parte ospita alcuni saggi critici che illuminano aspetti particolari dell’opera bessarionea.