

8 Epigram in praise of Bessarion's book *In Calumniatorem Platonis*

The epigram in hexameters in praise of Bessarion's book *In Calumniatorem Platonis* is handed down in five witnesses:

M = Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z. 198

Autograph, Rome c. 1466–1471 (see a description *supra*, § 6.1 [catalogue entry no. 53], with further bibliography). The text is found at fols 1v–2v.

L = Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 31.21

Paper, Rome c. 1460–1470. The text is found at fols 131r–132r, in the hand of Alexios Keladenos. *Cat.*: Bandini 1768–1770, vol. 2, col. 92. *Bibl.*: Speranzi 2011, 116 (with further bibliography).

P = Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 31.24

Paper, Rome c. 1460–1470. The manuscript belonged to Angelo Poliziano. The text is found at fols 145r–146r, in the hand of Georgios Hermonymos. *Cat.*: Bandini 1768–1770, vol. 2, cols 95–97. *Bibl.*: Speranzi 2011, 116; Speranzi 2016a, 79–80, 91.

V = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1373

Paper, Florence c. 1475. Also this manuscript belonged to Poliziano. The text is found at fols. 4r–5r. *Cat.*: –. *Bibl.*: Pontani 2002; Megna 2021, 297, 317, 321–322.

A = Athena, Ἑλληνικὸ Λογοτεχνικὸ καὶ Ἱστορικὸ Ἀρχεῖο, Kolybas 237

Paper, nineteenth century. The text is found at fol. 13r; it is a worthless copy of L. *Cat.*: Lampros 1922. *Bibl.*: –.

The epigram has been published for the first time (without translation/apparatus) in Legrand 1892, 220–221 from the manuscripts Laur. 31.21 and Laur. 31.24. A partial edition of vv. 35–48 (based on M, L, and P) newly appeared in Pontani and Weise 2021, 39–42.

Ἀνδρονίκου Βυζαντίου ἐπίγραμμα ἐν ἑξαμέτρῳ εἰς τὸ Βησσαρίωνος καρδινάλεως
καὶ πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὑπὲρ Πλάτωνος βυβλίον

Αἰγλήεις παράδεισος, Μουσῶν ἀγλαὸν ἄλσος,
ἦδε βύβλος τελέθει σοφίην αὐχοῦσα Πλάτωνος.
τὴν Χαρίτεσσιν ὑφήνας Βησσαρίων θεοειδὴς
παντοίης σοφίης ὑποθημοσύνας ἐνέπασσεν,
καὶ μιν ἐπισταμένως πραπίδεσσιν ἐῆσιν ἀρηρώς 5
θῆκεν ἅπασι βροτοῖς, μέγ' ὄνειαρ θαῦμα τ' ἰδέσθαι.
ὃς δὴ κεν ποθέησι Πλάτωνος δόγματα κεδνὰ
ἢ δ' ὑψηγορίην στήθεσσιν ἐοῖσι δαῖναι
δεῦρ' ἴτω ἡδυπνόου λειμῶνος ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο
ἄνθεα δρεψόμενος σοφίης καλὰ τηλεθόντα, 10
καὶ μιν οἷω μᾶλλον τέρψεσθαι φίλον ἥτορ
ἐνδυκέως ὃς μιν μετιῶν ἐπὶ θυμὸν ἐρείσει
ἢ τέρποιθ' εὐρών ἄφενος καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄλβον
Ἰνδίῃ ὅσσα φέρησιν ἰδ' Ἀραβίῃ ἐρατεινῇ.
τῇ μὲν γὰρ ψυχὴν ὀνίνησιν, τῇ δ' ἄρα σῶμα. 15
ἦδη καὶ πέπλον εἶδον Ἀθηναίης ἐνὶ βωμῷ
λαμπρόν τ' ἢ δ' ἐρίτιμον, δαίδαλα πάντα φέροντα,
ἀλλ' οὐ τόσσον ἔην δαιδάλμασι κείνος ἀγαυὸς
ὅσσον ἄρ αὐτὴ μαρμαίρησι βύβλος ἐραννῇ,
οὐδὲ τόσ' ἔργα ἔην ἀσκητὰ πέπλω ἐνὶ κείνῳ 20
ὀππόσ' ἄρ εἰν αὐτῇ θεοεῖκελα ἔργα τέτυκται,
τερπνὰ τε καὶ χαρίεντα Θεοῦ κεν ὑφάσματα φαίης.
ὅσσα γὰρ ἔργ' ἀριδεῖκετα τῆς φύσιος τελέθοντι
ἢ δ' αὖ ὅσσα ὑπὲρ φύσιν Οὐρανίης ἐριτίμου
δῶρα πέλοντι ἰδ' ὅσσα πρὸς ἥθος ρυθμίζοντι, 25
ὀππόσα τ' αὖ διαλέξιος ἔκγονα Καλλιόπης τε
πασάων ἐρικυδέα δῶρα, βύβλω ἐνὶ τῇδε
εὔδῃ πάγχυ γε καὶ κατὰ μοῖραν ἅπαντα γέγραπται,

4 σοφίης ὑποθημοσύνας] cf. *Il.* 15,412 5 πραπίδεσσιν ἐῆσιν ἀρηρώς] cf. *Od.* 10,553 6 θαῦμα–
ιδέσθαι] cf. e.g. *Il.* 5,725 7–8 κεδνὰ–δαῖναι] cf. *Musaeus* 144–146 9 ἡδυπνόου] cf. *Pind.,*
Olymp. 13,22, *Soph.* *El.* 480 et *Eur., Med.* 840 10 ἄνθεα–σοφίης] cf. *Hymn. in Cer.* 425
11 φίλον ἥτορ] cf. e.g. *Il.* 5,250 13 ἀθέσφατον ὄλβον] cf. *Theocr.* 25,24–25 17 δαίδαλα πάντα]
cf. e.g. *Il.* 5,60 et 19,13 18–20 οὐ–κείνῳ] cf. *Theocr.* 1,32–33 27 ἐρικυδέα δῶρα] cf. *Il.* 3,65
et 20,265

inscriptio εὐτυχῶς τῷ δεσπότη add. L P Legrand 2 τελέθῃ L 6 θαῦμα τ'] θαύματ' P V 7 κέδνα
V 8 δαμῆναι Legrand 12 ἐρείσει L P V Legrand 19 ὅσσον–ἐραννῇ om. P | βίβλος L V (ex βύβ-
λος correctum) Legrand | ἐραυγῇ Legrand 27 βίβλω V

Epigram in hexameter by Andronikos of Byzantium in praise of the book in defence of Plato written by Cardinal Bessarion, Patriarch of Constantinople

Radiant paradise, dazzling grove of the Muses,
 this book comes into being commending Plato's wisdom;
 having composed it with the Graces, godlike Bessarion
 weaved suggestions of every kind of wisdom,
 and having adapted it to their soul, he gave it
 to all of mortal men, a great advantage, a wonder to behold.
 If one desires to learn Plato's
 noble doctrines and the sublimity in his heart,
 go there, to pluck from the sweet-smelling immortal meadow
 the beautiful luxuriant flowers of wisdom,
 and I think his heart would much rather delight in the one
 who sedulously pursues it and plants it in his mind
 than the one who has found wealth and ineffable happiness
 which India and lovely Arabia can offer.
 She delights not only the soul, but also the body.
 I have already seen on the altar Athena's robe,
 brilliant and venerated, bearing many artful designs,
 but even that with its manifold decorations
 was not as brilliant as this beloved book shines
 and there were not in that robe so many magnificent artworks,
 as the divine ones which are kept in this book,
 the refined and elegant robe, one may say, of God.
 How many prestigious works of nature
 and how many gifts for her from the lot-venerated Urania
 exist and match the character,
 and how many wonderous gifts, sons of the style,
 of Calliope and all the Muses are,
 they all are properly written in this book

πάντα δ' Ἀληθείης ἱερῆς καλὰ τέκνα πέλοντι.
 ταύτῃ καὶ γὰρ χραισμῶν Βησσαρίων θεοειδῆς 30
 τήνδε μάλ' εὐφραδέως συνύφην' ἐριθηλέα βύβλον,
 παύσας γραμματολογιὸν νημερτοκτασιῶν
 ὅς βοῶν μὰψ κού κατὰ μοῖραν ἔριζε Πλάτωνι
 οὐδὲν ὅλως εἰδὼς σοφίης ὑποθημοσυνάων.
 ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρε, Πλάτων, πρόμον αὐχῶν Βησσαρίωνα 35
 δῖον. ὃ δὴ τοι αἰὲν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμύνει
 ὃς καὶ τήνδε τέτευχε καλὴν δέλτον, μέγα ἔργον
 ἥδ' ἐτεῆς σοφίης μνημῆϊον ἐσσομένοισιν.
 ἀλλ', ὦ Βησσαρίων μάκαρ, οὐλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαῖρε,
 σεῖο δ' αἰὲ φάτις ἄμβροτος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἰκάνοι 40
 οὐνεκά σ' ὑψιμέδων Θεὸς ἄφθιτος αἰθέρι ναίων
 ὄλβιον οἷς δώροισι μετ' ἀνθρώποισιν ἔθηκε,
 παντοίην ἀρετὴν ἥδ' ἐκλέος ἐσθλὸν ὀπάσσας.
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σέο καὶ μετέπειτα μνήσομαι αἰὲν
 σὴν σοφίην, θαμὰ κλείων πᾶσι μετ' ἀνθρώποισιν 45
 σὴν τ' ἀγανοφροσύνην σὴν μελιχίην τε,
 λισσόμενος κρατερόν Θεόν, ἄμβροτον ἀρχὸν Ὀλύμπου,
 ὄφρα τοι ἐς πολέας λυκάβαντας γῆρας ὀπάξῃ
 ὄλβιον ἄκρον ἄωτεῦντι σοφίης ἄγνὸν ἄνθος.

36 ἀεικέα–ἀμύνει] cf. e.g. *Il.* 1,341 38 μνημῆϊον ἐσσομένοισιν] cf. *Anth. Pal.* 9,197,6 39 οὐλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαῖρε] cf. *Od.* 24,402 et *Hymn. in Apoll.* 466 40 οὐρανὸν–ἰκάνοι] cf. e.g. *Od.* 8,74 41 ὑψιμέδων Θεός] cf. *Anth. Pal.* 8,5,1 | Θεός–ναίων] cf. *Orac. Sib.* 5,298 | αἰθέρι ναίων] cf. e.g. *Il.* 2,412 et *Hes., Op.* 8 42 ὄλβιον–ἀνθρώποισιν] cf. e.g. *Od.* 17,419–420 43 παντοίην ἀρετὴν] cf. e.g. *Il.* 15,642 | κλέος–ὀπάσσας] cf. *Arg. Orph.* 3 44 αὐτὰρ–μνήσομαι] cf. *Hymn. in Apoll.* 546 46 σὴν τ' ἀγανοφροσύνην] cf. *Il.* 24,772 et *Od.* 11,203 47 Θεόν–Ὀλύμπου] cf. *Orac. Sib.* 5,298 | ἀρχὸν Ὀλύμπου] cf. *Nonn., Dion.* 7,119 48 γῆρας ὀπάξῃ] cf. *Il.* 4,321 et 8,103

45 θάμα Legrand | ἀνθρώποισι L P V 46 μελιχίην P 47 Θεόν in textu, θυμόν supra lin. scr. P 48 γήρας P | subscriptio εὐτύχει μουσηγέτα (μουσηγεγίτα P) add. L P V Legrand

and are sons of the holy Truth.
For her sake the divine Bessarion
composed with the highest eloquence this thriving book,
keeping that disastrous grammarian from slaughtering Truth
who vainly and improperly quarreled with Plato,
being wholly unacquainted, as he was, with the precepts of wisdom.
Therefore rejoice, Plato, trusting the divine Bessarion fighting
in front. He always wards off shameful ruin from you
and composed this beautiful book, grand artwork
and record of your wisdom for posterity.
And you, blessed Bessarion, health and joy be with you,
let your immortal fame reach the wide sky,
because God, ruling on high, immortal, dwelling in heaven,
placed you blessed among men with these gifts,
having granted manifold virtue and good fame to you.
But nevertheless I will forever commemorate
your wisdom, often celebrating amongst men
your gentleness and your kindness,
praying to the almighty Lord ruling immortal over Olympus,
as long as old age accompany you for many years
as you pluck the blessed highest holy flower of wisdom.

