

# The Lost Poems on the Muses by Theodoros Gazes

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**T**HEODOROS GAZES (ca. 1400/10–1475/6) is best known as a teacher and translator of Greek in Renaissance Italy.<sup>1</sup> From two reports by his former student, Ludovico Carbone, we knew that he also composed poems on the Muses, inspired by a series of pictures in Leonello d’Este’s *studiolo* at the palace of Belfiore in Ferrara.<sup>2</sup> Until recently this poetic cycle was thought to be lost, with the partial exception of two poems preserved in Latin translation by Carbone. But the full cycle of epigrams has now come to light in a late-15<sup>th</sup>-century copy of Herodotus’ *Histories* made by Demetrios Raoul Kabakes (*Vat.gr.* 1359). Kabakes put the poems to a new purpose: as epigrams to decorate each of Herodotus’ nine books—traditionally named after the Muses. These poems were recently made available

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of Gazes’ life and career see *PLP* no. 3450; D. J. Geanakoplos, “Theodoro Gaza, a Byzantine Scholar of the Palaeologan ‘Renaissance’,” in *Constantinople and the West* (Madison 1989 [1984]) 68–90; C. Bianca, “Gaza, Teodoro,” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* LII (Rome 1999) 737–746.

<sup>2</sup> The *studiolo* was eventually destroyed and the paintings dispersed to several collections. On the now lost *studiolo* and the reconstruction of the pictorial cycle of the Muses see A. K. Eörsi, “Lo studiolo di Leonello d’Este e il programma di Guarino da Verona,” *Acta Hist.Art.Hung.* 21 (1975) 15–52; A. Mottola Molfino et al. (eds.), *Le Muse e il principe: Arte di corte nel Rinascimento padano* (Modena 1991); A. K. Eörsi, “Da Medea attraverso l’Amore a Tersicore: Nuovi appunti alle rappresentazioni delle Muse nello studiolo della Villa Belfiore,” *Acta Hist.Art.Hung.* 45 (2004) 3–23; G. Manni, *Belfiore: Lo studiolo intarsiato di Leonello d’Este* (Modena 2006); and the online resources available at <https://studiolobelfiore.unibo.it>.

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through the *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE)*.<sup>3</sup> Since the autograph copy has been lost and the only witness is in the hand of an often unreliable scribe, this article offers a critical edition and translation of one of the few known examples of poetry by Gazes.<sup>4</sup> The edition is preceded by an introduction, reviewing the circumstances in which the poems were composed, and an overview of their transmission and what it reveals about the contacts within the Greek diaspora in Italy after the Ottoman conquests.

1. *The occasion for the composition of the epigrams*

After a period in Mantua, Theodoros Gazes reached Ferrara in 1446 and remained there until 1449, teaching Greek litera-

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dbbe.ugent.be>; see *DBBE* Occurrences 27063, 27066, 27067, 27068, 27070, 27072, 27074, 27076, and 27077 (created by Bértola). The epigrams were transcribed from *Vat.gr.* 1359 by Girolamo Amati in the handwritten catalogue of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (*Inventarium codicum Vaticanorum Graecorum 993–2160*) preserved in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Sala Cons. MSS. 323, ff. 355<sup>v</sup>–356<sup>r</sup> (available online at [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/INV\\_Sala.cons.mss.323.rosso/0358](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/INV_Sala.cons.mss.323.rosso/0358)).

<sup>4</sup> Besides the cycle on the Muses, four other book epigrams can be attributed to Gazes with more or less certainty: two on Homer in hexameters in a manuscript commissioned by Francesco Filelfo (*Laur.Plut.* 32.1, ff. 17<sup>r</sup>, 654<sup>v</sup>; see *DBBE* Types 6586 and 3479); another on Homer in elegiacs in a manuscript which belonged to Bessarion (*DBBE* Type 5288); another in iambic trimeters in a manuscript which belonged to Filelfo (*Vat.gr.* 1334, f. 107<sup>v</sup>; see *DBBE* Type 6035). On Gazes as a scribe and on his books see D. Speranzi, “‘De’ libri che furono di Teodoro’: una mano, due pratiche e una biblioteca scomparsa,” *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 23 (2012) 319–354. There are also two poems in elegiacs dedicated to Ciriaco of Ancona: one edited by A. Olivieri degli Abati, *Commentariorum Cyriaci Anconitani nova fragmenta notis illustrata* (Pesaro 1763) 37, which is also preserved in MS. Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, *Allacci* 142, f. 231<sup>r</sup>, and another poem first edited by D. A. Zakythinos, “Poèmes inédits de Ciriaco d’Ancona (avec une épigramme de Théodore Gaza),” *ByzZeit* 28 (1928) 270–272, and, more recently, by F. di Benedetto, “Fetonte e i pioppi (e la zanzara) in un epigramma di Teodoro Gaza,” in S. Bianchetti et al. (eds.), *ΠΟΙΚΙΑΜΑ. Studi in onore di Michele R. Cataudella* (La Spezia 2001) 383–396. Fillippomaria Pontani is working on a new edition of the latter two poems, and the book epigram for Bessarion.

ture and studying medicine.<sup>5</sup> He made a lasting impression on his students. One of them, Ludovico Carbone, repeatedly celebrated his teacher in his orations and dialogues. In his *Dialogus de amoenitate, utilitate, magnificentia Herculei Barchi* (composed in 1475/6), a eulogy of the hunting reserve designed by Ercole d'Este at Belfiore,<sup>6</sup> Carbone refers to the *studiolo* of the Muses begun by Leonello and finished by his successor, Borso, who was in turn Ercole's predecessor. In a short excursus on painting and poetry, Carbone first mentions Angelo Maccagnino of Siena (described as the painter of two of the Muses) and Cosmè Tura (who painted the other portraits), and recalls four lines of Greek poetry composed impromptu by Gazes at Leonello's request, on the completion of the paintings.<sup>7</sup> While Carbone and his interlocutor roam the *studiolo*, the latter asks for a translation of the verses into Latin, because he does not know Greek. Carbone replies:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On Gazes' stay in Ferrara see J. Monfasani, "L'insegnamento di Teodoro Gaza a Ferrara," in *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy: Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century* (Aldershot 2004 [1994]) III.

<sup>6</sup> The dialogue was edited by A. Lazzari, "Il 'Barco' di Ludovico Carbone," *Atti e Memorie della Deputazione Ferrarese di Storia Patria* 24 (1919) 4–44; an Italian translation of the relevant passage can be found in A. Di Lorenzo, "Le Muse di Belfiore nelle descrizioni degli umanisti," in *Le Muse e il principe* 321–331, at 328–331.

<sup>7</sup> Lazzari, *Atti e Memorie* 24 (1919) 34–35: "Agnosco duas ex his picturis ab Angelo Senensi artificiosissime laboratas ... Caeterae a Cosmo nostro, pictore nobilissimo, non minori arte perfectae ... Nunc mihi in mentem veniunt quattuor versiculi graeci quos Theodorus ille magister meus, vir omnium qui vivant et doctissimus et humanissimus, a Leonello rogatus de his Musis, quae tunc absolutae erant, ex tempore edidit" ("I recognize two of these paintings made very artfully by Angelo of Siena ... The rest have been completed by our Cosmè, most noble painter, with no less art ... Now four Greek verses come to my mind, which that teacher of mine, Theodoros, one of the most learned and cultivated men alive, as requested by Leonello, spontaneously produced on these Muses, which had been finished at that time"). Note that Carbone refers to Gazes as still living. All translations in this paper are ours, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>8</sup> Lazzari, *Atti e Memorie* 24 (1919) 35.

Animadvertite quantum antiquitatem redolent. “Nomen mihi est Clio, quoniam virorum laudes canto. Auream vestem fero, et aureum animum habeo. Melpomene sum, o hospes, puella Iovis aeterni; cantu delectans mortales, aspectu vero immortales.”

Note how they breathe antiquity! “My name is Clio, because I sing the praises of men. I wear golden attire, and have a golden soul.” “Stranger, I am Melpomene, daughter of eternal Zeus, who delights mortals with her song and immortals with her look.”

Later, the interlocutor asks Carbone to versify his Latin translation. Carbone agrees and offers a display of his poetic skills:<sup>9</sup>

Clio mihi nomen celebranti gesta virorum,  
Aurea mî vestis, aureus est animus;  
Melpomene dicor superni filia Regis,  
Voce trahens homines luminibusque deos.

Clio is my name, as I celebrate the deeds of men,  
golden is my attire, golden my soul;  
Melpomene I am called, daughter of the celestial King,  
who attracts men with her voice and the gods with her eyes.

As the reader will notice, the prose translation of Carbone faithfully reproduces the Greek of poems 1 and 4 from the cycle published below. The poetic version is rather freer, though in a verse form which reproduces the elegiacs of Gazes’ original.<sup>10</sup>

The identification of these verses with Gazes’ Greek distichs in the MS. of Herodotus (*Vat.gr.* 1359) is conclusive. But we can delve deeper into the context in which the poems were produced and circulated. A preliminary question about Carbone’s report is why he cites only two poems from a series of nine. This may be connected with his claim to be reciting the verses from memory (“Nunc mihi in mentem veniunt...”), although the fictitious

<sup>9</sup> Lazzari, *Atti e Memorie* 24 (1919) 37.

<sup>10</sup> Before the poems of Gazes came to light, Nigel Wilson had attempted to reconstruct the original Greek from Carbone’s Latin version, with a number of successful suggestions: οὐνομ’ ἐμοὶ Κλειώ, ὅτι ἀείδω κλέα ἀνδρῶν. / εἴματα χρύσε’ ἐγὼ καὶ διάνοιαν ἔχω. / Μελπομένη ἴγώ, ξεῖνε, Διὸς παῖς αἰὲν ἐόντος, / τέρπω ὅπῃ θνητούς, σχήματι δ’ ἀθανάτους. See N. G. Wilson, “Guarino, Giovanni Tzetze e Teodoro Gaza,” in *Le Muse e il principe* 83–86, and “Greek Inscriptions on Renaissance Paintings,” *IMU* 35 (1992) 215–252, at 221.

setting of the dialogue should discourage us from accepting the scenario at face value. But his apparently spontaneous recollection of how the poems came to be composed seems to contain important details about the first performance and later transmission of these poems. Poetic improvisation (“*ex tempore edidit*”) could explain the paucity of manuscript evidence of Gazes’ poems. A fuller picture emerges from another text by Carbone. In an oration on the liberal arts, he implores Leonello d’Este to have Gazes’ verses inscribed in his *studiolo*. After declaring them comparable in style to the works of Callimachus, Propertius, and Tibullus, Carbone says that Gazes’ poems name the Muses, describe their various offices, and allude to the paintings.<sup>11</sup> Since

<sup>11</sup> The passage is quoted in Lilio Gregorio Giraldi’s *Dialogi duo de poetis nostrorum temporum*, first published in 1551, now edited with English translation by J. N. Grant, *Lilio Gregorio Giraldi: Modern Poets* (Cambridge 2011) 112–113: “Sed de Gaza quaeso audite quae Ludovicus Carbo in quadam de artibus liberalibus oratione ad Leonellum Estensem Ferrariae principem scribit, in qua inter ceteras Gazae praeceptoris laudes et hoc ait: ‘Dicam equidem quanto dignus Theodorus honore, quem plus quam dimidium animae meae semper diligam? Cuius versiculos, quos de Musis tuis elegantissimos edidit, in sacrario illo pulcherrimo incidi iubeas etiam atque etiam rogo et obsecro. Quid enim gravius Callimachus, quid suavius Propertius, quid pulchrius Tibullus dicere umquam potuisset? Nam et nomen et officium Musarum concinne exprimunt et earum laudem ad picturam alludentes brevius concinunt; nobile hominis ingenium tantum philosophum in huius modi deliciis praestare’” (“But please listen to what Ludovico Carbone writes about Gaza in an oration about the liberal arts, dedicated to Leonello d’Este, duke of Ferrara. Among all the plaudits he gives to his teacher Gaza he says this too: ‘What great honor shall I say Theodore deserves, a man whom I shall always love more than life itself? I ask and plead with you again and again that you give the order for Theodore’s very elegant verses on your Muses that were produced by him to be engraved in that most beautiful shrine. Could Callimachus have written anything more powerful, Propertius anything more sweet, Tibullus anything more beautiful? For the verses most pleasingly express the name and function of the Muses and express harmoniously and briefly his praise of them in their allusion to the painting. The noble genius of the man in composing such delightful verses surpasses his greatness as a philosopher’” [transl. Grant, slightly modified]). See also the editions by

the oration is addressed to Leonello, it is presumably to be dated to some point before his death in October 1450.<sup>12</sup> By that time, Carbone implies, Gazes had composed poems, taking the paintings as his inspiration. Nevertheless, his works seem not to have found a place in the *studiolo*.

Confirmation comes from the merchant and antiquarian Ciriaco of Ancona. In a letter dated July 1449 we learn that one of the paintings bore an epigram, though not one from the cycle composed by Gazes. Ciriaco first describes a visit to Ferrara in which Leonello showed him a painting of Christ's Deposition by Rogier van der Weyden. Then, at the palace in Belfiore, he saw the two Muses whose portraits had been completed, Clio and Melpomene, painted by Angelo Maccagnino.<sup>13</sup> Ciriaco's description of these two Muses closely matches the traits and

K. Wotke, *Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus: De poetis nostrorum temporum* (Berlin 1894), and by C. Pandolfi, *Lilio Gregorio Giraldi da Ferrara: Due dialoghi sui poeti dei nostri tempi* (Ferrara 1999), with Italian translation; the brief biographical essay on Theodoros Gazes by Allacci, reproduced in *PG* 161.973–974; and S. J. Campbell, "Sic in Amore Furens: Painting as Poetic Theory in the Early Renaissance," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 6 (1995) 145–168, at 154–155.

<sup>12</sup> In fact, this oration could correspond to *De litteris et studiis*, dated to 1448; see L. Paoletti, "Carbone, Ludovico," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* XIX (Rome 1976) 699–703, at 699.

<sup>13</sup> Latin text and English translation from E. D. Bodnar, *Cyriac of Ancona: Later Travels* (Cambridge 2003) 366–367: "Cuius nempe inclytæ artis et eximii artificum ingenii egregium equidem imitatore[m], Angelum Parrisium, quoque Senensem, recens picturæ in Latio specimen vidimus . . . At enim vero Clio Melpomeneque, quarum iam absolvisse figuras vidimus. . ." ("To be sure, we did see in Latium a recent example of [this kind of] painting, [by?] a remarkable imitator of famous art and of the extraordinary genius of artists, Angelo from Ferrara(?), also from Siena . . . But as for Clio and Melpomene, whose figures, we saw, had already been completed. . ."). For other translations of this passage see M. Baxandall, "Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras," *JWarb* 28 (1965) 183–204, at 187–188, and Di Lorenzo, in *Le Muse e il principe* 326–327. Note that the ascription of two Muses to Angelo Maccagnino, like the exclusive mention of Clio and Melpomene, square with the report of Carbone's *Dialogus de amoenitate*.

actions picked out by Gazes in the epigrams edited below. Clio, for instance, is attired in gold, holds a trumpet and an open book, and “appears to inspire men to glory” (“homines ad gloriam excitare perspicitur”). Melpomene, in turn, is also sumptuously dressed, plays a cithara and “seems to shape her voice with rose-red lips” (“roseis labiis vocem formare visa”), as if she were singing.<sup>14</sup> Ciriaco closes his ekphrasis by stating:<sup>15</sup> “Clio has this inscription, composed by our Guarino, written on the base:

Through histories, I preserve both fame and ancient deeds.”

This Latin hexameter is also attested in a famous letter from Guarino of Verona to Leonello d’Este, dated to November 1447, almost two years before Ciriaco’s account.<sup>16</sup> Guarino commends Leonello for his resolution to have the Muses depicted (“in pingendis musis”).<sup>17</sup> He then succinctly describes the attributes of each of the nine Muses (although he concedes that the number is contested), which he views as symbolic of various aspects of human inventiveness and intellectual endeavor. Guarino’s letter simultaneously instructs Leonello on how each Muse should be represented. Two poems in hexameters are appended to the letter in some manuscripts. The first poem is, in fact, a collection of nine monostichs, and its first verse corresponds to the inscription reported by Ciriaco.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Text and translation Bodnar, *Cyriac* 366–369.

<sup>15</sup> Bodnar, *Cyriac* 368–369: “Clio hoc ad basim ex Guarino nostro epigramma conscriptum habet: Historiis famamque et facta vetusta reservo.”

<sup>16</sup> R. Sabbadini, *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese* II (Venice 1916) 498–500, no. 808, with commentary in III (Venice 1919) 406. The Latin is reproduced with a facing Italian translation in Di Lorenzo, in *Le Muse e il principe* 322–325. See also Baxandall, *JWarb* 28 (1965) 186–189, 201–202; Eörsi, *Acta Hist.Art.Hung.* 21 (1975) 21–27, 30–43. On the poems attached to the letter see A. Tissoni Benvenuti, “Lettera a Leonello d’Este sulle Muse (5 novembre 1447),” in *Le Muse e il principe* 158–161.

<sup>17</sup> Sabbadini, *Epistolario* 498.

<sup>18</sup> Sabbadini, *Epistolario* 500.

## ΜΟΥΣΑΙ

Clio. Historiis famamque et facta vetusta reservo.

Thalia. Plantandi leges per me novere coloni.

Erato. Connubia et rectos mortalibus addit amores.

Euterpe. Tibia concentus hac praemonstrante figurat.

Melpomene. Haec vivos cantus et dulcia carmina format.

Terpsichore. Ista choris aptat saltus ad sacra deorum.

Polymnia. Haec docuit segetes acuens mortalia corda.

Urania. Signa poli, varias naturas monstro viasque.

Calliope. Materiam vati et vocem concedo sonantem.

## Muses

Clio. Through histories, I preserve both fame and ancient deeds.

Thalia. From me farmers have learned the laws of planting.

Erato. She gives marriages and fitting loves to mortals.

Euterpe. While she conducts, the flute weaves harmonies.

Melpomene. She composes lively songs and sweet poems.

Terpsichore. She provides the dancers with the steps for the rites  
of gods.

Polymnia. She taught of the crops, sharpening men's wits.

Urania. I show the constellations of the heavens, their various  
natures and ways.

Calliope. I offer the poet a subject and a resonant voice.

The verses summarize the allegorical descriptions which Guarino provides in the body of the letter as instructions for the pictorial cycle. Guarino's guidelines show a clear correspondence to Ciriaco's descriptions of the two Muses, and it seems likely that the letter and its poem influenced the preparation of the paintings.

Despite mentioning the Latin epigram with the painting of Clio, Ciriaco makes no mention of any corresponding epigram for Melpomene.<sup>19</sup> But a painting of the Muse Thalia, now in the Museum of Fine Arts of Budapest (inv. no. 44), preserves the

<sup>19</sup> In comparison to Clio, the painting of Melpomene described by Ciriaco follows the instructions of Guarino less closely (Guarino, for instance, recommends that the Muse hold a book with musical notes, whereas Ciriaco says that she holds a cithara). However, both Ciriaco and Guarino focus on Melpomene as representation of singing and vocals.



corresponding epigram from Guarino's letter.<sup>20</sup> The Muse is depicted in line with Guarino's recommendations: Thalia, as her name indicates, invented the agricultural art of sowing, and is thus adorned with flowers, branches, ears of grain, grapes, and other fruits.<sup>21</sup> The Muse is portrayed sitting on a bejeweled throne with her feet on a platform. Below the platform, the emblem of Borso d'Este (who ruled after Leonello, 1450–1471) and two wooden panels are depicted at the bottom of the painting. Each of these panels contains an epigram in majuscules, designed to resemble an inscription. The one on the right displays Guarino's hexameter: PLANTANDI LEGES PER ME NOVERE COLONI. The one on the left has a Greek hexameter, apparently a translation of Guarino's Latin verse: ΦΥΤΕΙΑΣ ΓΕ ΝΟΜΟΥΣ ΑΠ ΕΜΟΥ ΔΗ ΓΝΩΤΕ ΓΕΩΡΓΟΙ. There is yet another text in this painting: a small piece of paper protrudes from the pedestal, as if hanging from the top of it. On the paper is written EX MICHAELE PANONIO, an indication of the painter: Michele

<sup>20</sup> An image is available at the website of the Museum, <https://www.mfab.hu/artworks/the-muse-thalia/>, and at <https://studiolobelfiore.unibo.it/index.php/talia/>. On this painting see Eörsi, *Acta Hist.Art.Hung.* 21 (1975) 16, 23, and V. Tátrai, "La Musa Talia," in *Le Muse e il principe* 404–408; on the epigrams in particular see Wilson, *IMU* 35 (1992) 218–220.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, in *Le Muse e il principe* 83–84, maintains that Guarino's interpretation of some Muses as related to domains outside of literature depends on the 12<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Ioannes Tzetzes, although he admits more ancient antecedents. This conception of the Muses is not unparalleled in other Byzantine authors. For example, we can mention the polymetric cycle on the Muses by Euthymios Tornikes dedicated to Isaac II Angelos, edited by A. I. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Noctes Petropolitanae* (St. Petersburg 1913) 188–198; see N. Zagklas, "Metrical *Polyeideia* and Generic Innovation in the Twelfth Century: The Multimetric Cycles of Occasional Poetry," in A. Rhoby et al. (eds.), *Middle and Late Byzantine Poetry: Texts and Contexts* (Turnhout 2018) 44–70, at 52–55. On Guarino's instructions as embedded in Renaissance aesthetic polemics about poetry, art, and the decency of the classics, see Campbell, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 6 (1995) 145–168, and "The Traffic in Muses: Painting and Poetry in Ferrara around 1450," in L. Benedetti et al. (eds.), *Gendered Contexts: New Perspectives in Italian Cultural Studies* (New York 1996) 49–68.

Pannonio. The painting is commonly dated to 1456/7, the transition years after the death of Maccagnino and before Tura took over the pictorial enterprise.

The Greek inscription on the left seems to have an implicit priority over its Latin equivalent on the right, due both to the directionality of Greek and Latin script and to the traditional view of Greek as the bedrock of Latin literature. But it seems more likely that the Greek hexameter is a later translation of the Latin line, since the latter is part of a poetic series which precedes the paintings themselves, attested in the appendix to Guarino's letter.<sup>22</sup> The Greek line has been tentatively attributed to Gazes himself,<sup>23</sup> but does not correspond to the poem on Thalia edited below. The painted wooden panels may explain Carbone's unusual choice of words when he besought Leonello to have Gazes' verses *inscribed*.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the tablets give the impres-

<sup>22</sup> The translation's most notable departure from Guarino's verse—presumably the result of the translator's zeal to observe the metre—is the direct address to the farmers in the second-person plural, which can be either an aorist imperative or an unaugmented indicative: “Farmers, learn from me the laws of planting” or “Farmers, from me you learned the laws of planting” (Φυτείας γε νόμους ἅπ' ἐμοῦ δὴ γνῶτε γεωργοί).

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, in *Le Muse e il principe* 84–85, and *IMU* 35 (1992) 219.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, in *Le Muse e il principe* 85–86, and *IMU* 35 (1992) 220–221, voices puzzlement that Carbone specified that the epigrams of Gazes should be “carved out” (“incidi”), as if the Muses were sculpted in the *studiolo*, and suggests that Carbone imagined an inscription on the wooden frames or on the wall adjacent to the pictures; Manni, *Belfiore* 104, suggests that Carbone was thinking of wood-inlaid inscriptions. Now, the Muses were certainly not sculpted, as Carbone says that the poems allude to paintings (“ad picturam alludentes”). An explanation may lie in the representation of the verses in the Budapest Thalia. The location of the inscribed tablets in the painting of Thalia also fits Ciriaco's description (“Clio hoc ad basim ex Guarino nostro epigramma conscriptum habet”). At least two other paintings identified as part of the cycle from Belfiore show traces of similar panels painted into the portrait below the pedestal: Terpsichore, now in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan, inv. no. 1559 (<https://museopoldipezzoli.it/scopri/collezioni/catalogo/opera/?guid=8045de9e-43b6-437b-a222-abb087db54ca>) and

sion of being too big for the little text they contain, as if they might have been designed to accommodate a distich or even more verses.

Be that as it may, by the end of 1450 Leonello has died and Gazes has left Ferrara. The project of completing the *studiolo* was taken over by Leonello's successor, Borso d'Este, and the Muses were painted successively by Maccagnino and other artists, including Michele Pannonio and Cosmè Tura. Although one of Gazes' most devoted students still remembered these verses over two decades later, around the time of Gazes' death, they never seem to have been inscribed on the paintings that inspired them. When Ciriaco of Ancona visited Ferrara in 1449, the epigram he saw on the base of Clio was a Latin hexameter from Guarino's programmatic letter (1447). The painting of Thalia, completed in 1456/7, after Leonello's death, today also displays a Latin hexameter by Guarino, inscribed on a wooden tablet painted at the bottom, accompanied by a Greek hexameter translation. There is no trace of the cycle of epigrams written by Gazes and edited below.

Urania, in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Ferrara, inv. no. PNFc 399 ([https://gallerie-estensi.beniculturali.it/opere/collezioni/#/dettaglio/821427\\_La%20Musa%20Urania](https://gallerie-estensi.beniculturali.it/opere/collezioni/#/dettaglio/821427_La%20Musa%20Urania)). The lost panels were probably cut out when the paintings were removed from their original setting: see J. Anderson, "Il risveglio dell'interesse per le Muse nella Ferrara del Quattrocento," in *Le Muse e il principe* 165–185, at 174; A. Bacchi, "La Musa Polinnia," in *Le Muse* 408–416, at 410; D. Benati, "La musa Erato(?)" and "La musa Urania," in *Le Muse* 383–395, at 383, 389–390; A. Mottola Molino, "Le Muse dello studiolo: la diaspora, il collezionismo, il mercato, i restauri," in *Le Muse* 223–233, at 223–225; M. Natale, "La Musa Tersicore," in *Le Muse* 395–404, at 398; Manni, *Belfiore* 85. The digital reconstruction (<https://framelab.unibo.it/vt/belfioretour/>) implies the presence of similar tablets for each Muse. However, no traces of letters survive, so that the plates were either blank or the possible inscriptions and coat of arms were removed as a form of censorship or *damnatio memoriae*. Another Muse, now in the National Gallery in London, inv. no. NG3070 (<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/cosimo-tura-a-muse-calliope>) reveals what seems to be a portion of a painted piece of paper similar to the one that contains the name of the painter of Thalia.

It is uncertain whether Gazes wrote the whole cycle before he left Ferrara in 1449, that is, before all the paintings were finished and Leonello had died. But it seems that, in 1475, Ludovico Carbone could quote only the two epigrams corresponding to the first two paintings completed by 1449. Carbone indicates that the verses were composed at Leonello's behest, but the nature of the request remains obscure. Did Leonello formally commission written verses for inscription on his paintings? Or did he simply desire an impromptu performance to celebrate a glorious occasion in a suitably erudite manner? Did Leonello request a cycle of poems for all nine muses, or only for the two paintings which had just been completed? While it seems natural to assume that Gazes completed the full cycle in Ferrara with Leonello's sponsorship, it remains possible that Gazes wrote poems only for Clio and Melpomene during Leonello's lifetime, and that he finished the rest at a later date, whether as a literary exercise, for entertainment, or as a set of poems which he could offer to friends or to another patron.

Towards the end of Leonello's life, Ciriaco of Ancona saw two paintings from the *studiolo*, but only one was captioned with Guarino's verse. Ciriaco makes no mention of any Greek epigram—nor, for that matter, of any Greek text. But, as we learn from Carbone, by that time Gazes had already composed at least two poems for the same two Muses that Ciriaco saw. We also know for a fact that *two* wooden plaques were eventually painted below some of the Muses. This rather foggy scenario suggests that Leonello might have been considering various different options for furnishing his Muses with inscriptions. One might have been to complement Guarino's Latin verses with some Greek poems, with each cycle displayed in its own plaque. At least one of Gazes' students and supporters, Carbone, implored Leonello to have Gazes' epigrams inscribed, presumably to the detriment of other candidates and no doubt echoing Gazes' own aspirations. The situation suggests an environment of professional competition and intellectual tensions, if not outright

rivalry.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, Gazes did not prevail. As we saw, after Leonello's death, Guarino's monostich was chosen for the Budapest Thalia, supplemented by a hexametric Greek translation.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, Gazes' cycle of epigrams was preserved in full, presumably kept by Gazes in manuscript format, and the poems became part of the oral legend which students like Carbone remembered decades later. Within a few years of his death, the poems were in the hands of another member of the Greek diaspora in Rome, Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, who decided to

<sup>25</sup> Carbone's accounts reinforce this impression, as he remains oddly silent about Guarino's verses. His request might be interpreted as asking Leonello to add Gazes' poems to Guarino's cycle, or to inscribe only Gazes' verses—or even to inscribe Gazes' verses accompanied by Carbone's own Latin translations. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Gazes' epigrams do not differ drastically from the instructions of Guarino's foundational letter of 1447. In general, Gazes follows an etymological interpretation of the names of the Muses, and thus they become allegories for their primary domains along the same lines as Guarino's prescriptions: Clio for fame and glory, Euterpe for joy, Thalia for blossoming, Melpomene for singing, Terpsichore for dancing, Erato for love, Urania for (astronomical) knowledge, Calliope for the voice. Even the unexpected reference to sweat in Gazes' poem on Polymnia can be better understood when read alongside Guarino's poem which associates her with agriculture. Gazes also emphasizes the spiritual aspects of the Muses, albeit in a more balanced way than Guarino, through frequent parallelisms of body and soul, mortal and immortal, and so on. By contrast to Guarino, however, Gazes' Muses do not seem concerned with aetiological narratives of inventions and discoveries. In Gazes' elegiac couplets, the Muses speak entirely in the first person, whereas they do so in only some of Guarino's hexametric monostichs.

<sup>26</sup> It remains unclear why this happened. Perhaps Leonello wished to avoid offending Guarino and/or the scholar who had been asked to put the Latin hexameters into Greek—conceivably Guarino himself. Or perhaps Leonello was persuaded by Carbone's request but, after his death and Gazes' departure from Ferrara, the new plan was never executed, so that Leonello's successors simply inserted Greek translations. It is worth mentioning another possible reconstruction: that Leonello formally commissioned Gazes' poems for inscription and designed the plaque to house them, but for some reason abandoned or deferred that plan during his life.

copy them individually onto nine folia of his own codex of Herodotus.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. *Herodotus and the Greek diaspora in Renaissance Rome*

We would not have Gazes' poems today were it not for the fact that, since antiquity, each of the nine books of Herodotus' *Histories* traditionally bears the name of a Muse: Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polymnia, Urania, and Calliope. Some years after Gazes' death, his poems on the Muses were reused for a new purpose, one which their author had probably never envisaged. Instead of being inscribed on the nine paintings of the Muses in the palace of Belfiore, they were used to decorate the openings of each of Herodotus' nine books in a late-15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript, to which we now turn.

The poems are serendipitously preserved in *Vat.gr.* 1359, a copy of Herodotus' *Histories* produced in Rome in 1480 by Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, a Peloponnesian aristocrat who had spent his life in service to the Byzantine Imperial family, and had been living in Rome for a little over a decade. The exemplar from which he made his copy of Herodotus was Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, *Plut.* 70.6, a manuscript which had been edited and in places rewritten by the controversial philosopher Gemistos Pletho. Kabakes' copy of the *Histories* contains many marginalia and paratexts. Some of these were copied

<sup>27</sup> As if anticipating the fate of the paintings of Belfiore and the rediscovery of Gazes' epigrams, Carbone wrote the following before his quotation of the verses in Latin: "Unde pictorum vicem doleo, quod eorum tam egregia opera cuilibet minimo, vel aquae vel ignis, vel ipsius vetustatis quae omnia consumit periculo subiecta sint, at poemata bona et orationes cum dignitate conscripta immortalitatem et primum et praestant, ex unoque exemplari millia multa exemplorum quam servum fieri possunt atque in diversa loca transmitti" ("I pity the fate of painters, because their very excellent works are subject to any minor hazard of water or fire or aging itself, which destroys everything, whereas good poems and orations composed with merit preserve and confer immortality, and from one exemplar many thousands of exemplars can be made quickly and transmitted in different places"): Lazzari, *Atti e Memorie* 24 (1919) 35.

from his exemplar,<sup>28</sup> but most were added by Kabakes himself, apparently over the course of the 1480s.<sup>29</sup> Among these are nine

<sup>28</sup> For the textual history of Pletho's manuscript, and the relationship between its many copies, including *Vat.gr.* 1359, see J. Bértola, "A First Critical Edition of the Cycle of Epigrams on Herodotus in the Margins of Manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 70.6 and Some of Its *Apographa*," *JÖB* 72 (2022) 63–96, and A. Ellis, "A Neo-Pagan Editor in Late Byzantine Sparta, Or: How Gemistos Pletho Rewrote his Herodotus," *DOP* 78 (2024) 315–354.

<sup>29</sup> On *Vat.gr.* 1359 see H. Stein, *Herodoti Historiae* I (Berlin 1869) XVII; E. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles* III (Paris 1903) 262; S. Lampros, "Λακεδαιμόνιοι βιβλιογράφοι καὶ κτήτορες κωδίκων κατὰ τοὺς μέσους αἰῶνας καὶ ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας," *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 4 (1907) 152–187, 303–357, at 332–333; A. Colonna, "De Herodoti memoria," *Bollettino del Comitato per la preparazione dell'edizione nazionale dei classici greci e latini* 1 (1945) 41–83, at 54; B. Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits d'Hérodote et la critique verbale* (Genoa 1981) 31–32; Bértola, *JÖB* 72 (2022) 74–75. The manuscript is today divided in two volumes (ff. 1–230 and 231–491, mm. 231 x 162), available online ([https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.1359.pt.1](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1359.pt.1) and [.pt.2](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1359.pt.2)). It also contains Lucian *Herodotus or Aetion* (ff. 1<sup>r</sup>–3<sup>r</sup>), and a letter from Kabakes to his son Manilius (ff. 487<sup>r</sup>–489<sup>r</sup>), on which see H. Lamers, "Manilius Cabacius Rhallus of Sparta (c. 1447–c. 1523): A Study of his Life and Work," *HumLov* 62 (2013) 127–200, at 133–134, and F. Bacchelli, "La *Considération céleste* et les *Enseignements* de Démétrius Rhaoul Kavàkis (avec deux lettres inédites de Gemistus Plethon)," *Noctua* 3 (2016) 164–238, at 169 n.14. For the annotations left by Kabakes in the margins of *Vat.gr.* 1359 see the edition in preparation by A. Ellis, "A Renaissance Spartan Reads Herodotus: Demetrios Rhalles Kabakes' Marginal Notes on Ancient Greek History in *Vat. gr.* 1359." On Kabakes' textual supplements to lacunae (copied into the margins of both *Laur.Plut.* 70.6 and *Vat.gr.* 1359) see D. Bianconi, "L'Erødoto di Nicola Tricline, Giorgio Gemisto Pletone e Demetrio Raoul Cabace. Il *Laur. Plut.* 70.6 da Tessalonica a Roma, passando per Mistrà," *BollClass* 43 (2022) 61–110. A monostich was copied at the end of Herodotus' *Histories* in *Vat.gr.* 1359, f. 486<sup>v</sup> (ἰδὼν τὸ τέρμα τὴν χάριν θεῶ δίδου). This is a formulaic book epigram found in many other manuscripts (see e.g. *DBBE* Type 2244), and used by Kabakes elsewhere (e.g. *Vat.gr.* 2237 and 2238). On Kabakes as a copyist see M. Vogel and V. Gardthausen, *Die griechischen Schreiber des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Leipzig 1909) 102; P. Canart, "Scribes grecs de la Renaissance. Additions et corrections aux réper-toires de Vogel-Gardthausen et de Patrinélis," *Scriptorium* 17 (1963) 56–82, at

elegiac distichs, one dedicated to each of the Muses at the start of each of Herodotus' nine books, and copied into the lower margin in red ink—the same ink used for the names of the Muses in the upper margin.<sup>30</sup>

Since Kabakes never mastered traditional Greek orthography and had no grasp of Greek metrical quantities, there is no question of his having written these verses.<sup>31</sup> Their close correspondence to Ludovico Carbone's Latin translations is, in itself, sufficient to identify them as the work of Theodoros Gazes. But Kabakes knew full well who their author was and noted his name in the margin next to the first epigram: Θεοδώρου τοῦ Γάζεω (“by

62, 77; D. Harlfinger, *Specimina griechischer Kopisten der Renaissance I* (Berlin 1974) 33; E. Gamillscheg et al., *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten* (Vienna 1981, 1997) I no. 95, III no. 162; Bianconi 90–91.

<sup>30</sup> At ff. 4<sup>r</sup> (Κλειώ), 56<sup>v</sup> (Εὐτέρπη), 118<sup>v</sup> (Θάλεια), 175<sup>r</sup> (Μελπομένη), 235<sup>r</sup> (Τερψιχόρη), 276<sup>v</sup> (Ερατώ), 320<sup>r</sup> (Πολύμνια), 395<sup>r</sup> (Οὐρανία), 441<sup>v</sup> (Καλλιόπη).

<sup>31</sup> On Kabakes' “orthographe fantaisiste” see D. A. Zakythinos, *Le despotat grec de Morée. Edition revue et augmentée par Chryssa Maltzou II* (London 1975) 375; on his “atrocious” spelling and “lowly” style, I. Ševčenko, “The Decline of Byzantium Seen through the Eyes of its Intellectuals,” *DOP* 15 (1961) 167–186, at 174–175. For Kabakes' own oblique references to the gaps in his education, see the remark in his γνῶμα in *Vat.gr.* 2185, f. 33<sup>r-v</sup> (published by F. Bacchelli, “Di Demetrio Raoul Kavàkis e di alcuni suoi scritti,” *Unomolti* 1 [2007] 129–187, at 177–187, and most recently in Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 [2016] 222–230): ἐπιδεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἦλθον παρὰ τῆς φύσεως πρὸς θεωρίαν κόσμου καὶ πρὸς τὸν βίον τὸν ἀνθρώπινον, ἀνθρώπος ὄν καὶ ἰκανὸς κατὰ χρόνον, καὶ καλὰ καὶ ἡ τέχνη ἐπιστήμονα οὐδὲν με ἔπικεν ἢ ἀπὸ ἡμετέρας ραθειμίας ἢ καὶ ἐξ ἄλλου τιχεροῦ τινός, ὅμος ὁμοίλιστα μετὰ μεγάλων καὶ σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἐλλήνων καὶ λατίνων καὶ πολλῶν βιβλῶν διήλθον πρὸς ἐξέτασιν καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι καὶ ἐν Ἑταλία, ἐπειδὴ σχεδὸν πάσαι συνήχθησαν ἐνταῦτα μετὰ τὴν ἄλλοσιν τοῦ γένους (“When I departed from nature and came to the contemplation of the cosmos and to the condition of human life, being a man and of sufficient years—and fortune by no means granted me a good education, whether due to our own laziness or to some other circumstance—nevertheless I associated with great and wise men, both Greeks and Latins, and read many books both in Greece and in Italy, since almost all these had been collected here after the capture of my people”).



Theodoros Gazes”).<sup>32</sup> Fulvio Orsini (1529–1600), a later owner of the manuscript, seems to have taken this to mean that the whole codex had once belonged to Gazes.<sup>33</sup> But this is certainly incorrect: the subscription at the end of the text makes it clear that *Vat.gr.* 1359 was copied by Demetrios Raoul Kabakes in Rome in the year that the Turks seized Otranto (1480), some five years after Gazes’ death.<sup>34</sup>

Kabakes was certainly well-placed to encounter Theodoros Gazes’ unpublished poetry. The two men probably never met during their youth in Greece, since Kabakes was doubtless very young when Gazes emigrated to Italy at some point in the 1430s.<sup>35</sup> But in the decade or so between Kabakes’ arrival in Rome and Gazes’ death ca. 1475/6, these two distinguished émigrés moved in similar circles and probably knew one another well.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Vat.gr.* 1359, f. 4<sup>r</sup>. It is interesting that Kabakes uses the Ionic form of the genitive for Gazes’ name, since Ionic is the dialect used by Herodotus.

<sup>33</sup> For Orsini’s description see P. de Nolhac, *La bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini* (Paris 1887) 336: “Herodoto, che fù di Theodoro Gaza, libro integro, ligato in corame rosso, scritto in papiro in-4 foglio.” De Nolhac (146) understood this description to mean that this manuscript “provient d’une bibliothèque contemporaine de ce savant [sc. Gazes].” *Vat.gr.* 1359 also contains notes of possession by Orsini: βίβλος φουλβίου ούρσίνου ῥωμαίου ἦν, εὔτε τάδ’ ἐγράφετο (f. 3<sup>v</sup>, “The book belonged to Fulvio Orsini, the Roman, when these words were written”) and τὸ παρὸν βιβλίον κτήμᾶ ἐστὶ, φουλβίου ούρσίνου ῥωμαίου (f. 491<sup>r</sup>, “The present book is the possession of Fulvio Orsini the Roman”).

<sup>34</sup> F. 486<sup>v</sup>: δημητρίου ραοῦλ καβάκη· σπαρτιάτου καὶ βυζαντίου· ἐγράφη ἐν ῥώμῃ· ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ [ἔτει *suprascriptis*], ὄτροντῳ τούρκοι κατέλαβον (“By Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, Spartan and Byzantine. It was copied in Rome in the time [year] when the Turks seized Otranto”).

<sup>35</sup> For Kabakes’ birth date see Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 169 n.13, and Ellis, in preparation: he was certainly born between 1398/9 and 1415/6, probably much closer to the latter date.

<sup>36</sup> Due to his close links with the Imperial family, Kabakes arrived in Italy long after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the fall of the Despotate of Mistra in 1460. He seems to have remained in the northeast Aegean for a

One common link was Cardinal Bessarion. After his arrival in Rome, probably in 1466,<sup>37</sup> Kabakes was in close contact with Bessarion and the Greek diaspora that congregated around him after the progressive fall of Greece to the Ottomans.<sup>38</sup> In this phase of his life, Kabakes devoted much time to the copying of ancient Greek texts, and in several cases he seems to have copied manuscripts from Bessarion's growing library.<sup>39</sup> In the margins

number of years after 1460 acting as governor of Lemnos and Imbros on behalf of Demetrios Palaiologos, who stayed in Greece as an Ottoman vassal, and received these two islands as an appanage from Mehmed II. On this period of Kabakes' life see Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 179–184, and esp. the notes in *Vat.gr.* 173 (Strabo), as transcribed and interpreted by A. Diller, *The Textual Tradition of Strabo's Geography* (Amsterdam 1975) 144: ταύτας [sc. τὰς νήσους] ἤρξα καὶ αὐτὸς, ἔχοντες αὐτὰς Ἕλληνας, οὐ πάσας, ἀλλὰ λήμον καὶ ἴμβρον· οὐπω γὰρ ἦν τελέως ἐφθαρμένον τὸ βασίλειον τῆς ἐλλάδος (“I myself ruled these islands, when the Hellenes had them—not all of them, but Lemnos and Imbros. For the kingdom of the Hellenes had not yet been entirely destroyed”).

<sup>37</sup> Three subscriptions indicate the period in which Kabakes' Italian life began: one was written “in Rome” in 1467 at the end of a copy of Aristotle's *Poetics* (*Vat.gr.* 2238, f. 155<sup>r</sup>) and two were written in the “third year of Pope Innocent” (1487) in which Kabakes states that he has been in Rome for 21 years (*Vat.gr.* 173, f. 346<sup>v</sup>, and our *Vat.gr.* 1359, f. 491<sup>v</sup>), i.e. since 1466; see Bértola, *JÖB* 72 (2022) 74–75 n.62; Bianconi, *BollClass* 43 (2022) 63–64 n.10; Ellis, in preparation.

<sup>38</sup> L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist, und Staatsmann* I (Paderborn 1923) 249, 325–334; J. Monfasani, “Two Fifteenth-Century ‘Platonic Academies’: Bessarion's and Ficino's,” in *Renaissance Humanism, from the Middle Ages to Modern Times* (Aldershot 2015 [2011]) XIII.

<sup>39</sup> For the link between *Marc.gr.* Z. 517 (coll. 886) (fragments of ancient authors copied by Pletho in a manuscript bequeathed by Bessarion to Venice) and *Vat.gr.* 2236 (an identical series of fragments copied out in Kabakes' hand), see the detailed report in S. Lilla, *Codices Vaticani Graeci. Codices 2162–2254* (Vatican City 1995) 348–359. For *Vat.gr.* 2236 as an apograph of *Marc.gr.* Z. 517 and antigraph of *Laur.Plut.* 56.18, see A. Diller, “Pletho and Plutarch,” *Scriptorium* 8 (1954) 123–127, at 124 n.5, and “The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Plethon,” *Scriptorium* 10 (1956) 27–41, at 31 n.14, 40. G. De Gregorio, “Attività scrittorica a Mistrà nell'ultima età paleologa: il caso

of one of these manuscripts Kabakes records a dinner-time conversation with Bessarion about the memory of the philosopher with whom they had both studied—Gemistos Pletho. This encounter took place in Rome at some point between 1466 and the Cardinal's death in 1472, and bespeaks close familiarity.<sup>40</sup> Kabakes clearly commanded a certain prestige among his contemporary exiles: in 1472 he served as an ambassador to Moscow, representing the exiled Imperial family at a marriage which Bessarion had helped to broker between Ivan III of Russia

del cod. Mut. gr. 144,” *Scrittura e Civiltà* 18 (1994) 243–280, at 269 n.71, has suggested that *Vat.gr.* 2236 was copied after Kabakes left Mistra (between 1447/8 and the end of the 1440s) but before he arrived in Rome in 1466, since the memories of Pletho found in the marginalia seem relatively fresh and the watermark suggests an earlier date (late 1450s or early 1460s). This date cannot be ruled out, but the arguments are not persuasive: some of its marginalia (see next note) were certainly written *after* 1466 since they record a discussion between Bessarion and Kabakes which took place “here” (ἐνταῦτα), i.e. in Rome, the only place where Kabakes and Bessarion could have met after the late 1430s; moreover, the spread of watermarks in *Vat.gr.* 2236 (not dated by subscription) is similar to those in *Vat.gr.* 2238, of which one section is dated to 1467 (Lilla, *Codices* 366, compares the watermarks to those found on other manuscripts written between 1459 in Naples and 1503 in Vienna).

<sup>40</sup> *Vat.gr.* 2236, f. 141<sup>v</sup> in the lower margin: Ὁμηλοῦντος ἐμοῦ ἐνταῦτα περὶ τῆν σκολῆν τῆς τραπέζης μετὰ τοῦ ἐνδοξοτάτου γαρδονναλίου ἐκίνου κυρ. Βισσαρίωνος· ἐρέθει λόγος περὶ τοῦ Πλήθωνος· καὶ ἠρότισά τον ἐγῶ· “ἐμένη ἢ πρόληψις ἦν ὄριζες πολλάκις περὶ τοῦ Γεμηστοῦ, ἢ χαριζόμενος, τὰ ὄριζες.” ἀπεκρίθη ὅτι “οὐδὲν ἔλεγον χαριζόμενος, ἀλλὰ θέλο σε ἠπῆν μετὰ ἀλιθείας καὶ νῦν ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ Πλωτίνου τὸν κερὸν, ὃς ἦν πρὸ χιλίων τετρακοσίων ἐτῶν, σοφότερον ἄνθρωπον οὐδένα ἐποίησεν ἢ Ἑλλᾶς τοῦ Πλήθωνος.” Δημήτριος (“When I was conversing here [i.e. in Rome] at the leisure of the table with that august Cardinal Bessarion, there arose a conversation about Pletho and I asked him: ‘Does that opinion which you often proclaimed about Gemistos abide, or were you merely being obliging when you proclaimed it?’ And he answered ‘I said nothing to be obliging, but I wish to tell you in truth even now that since the time of Plotinus, which was 1400 years ago, Hellas created no wiser person than Pletho’. Demetrios”). Text from G. Mercati, *Opere Minore* IV (Vatican City 1937) 173–174 n.2, reprinted with slightly different punctuation by Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 187 n.40.

and Zoe Palaiologina, the daughter of the late Thomas Palaiologos (1409–1465) and niece of Demetrios Palaiologos (1407–1470).<sup>41</sup> During the same period, Theodoros Gazes was also a prominent member of Bessarion's circle. After his fame as a teacher of Greek grew, Gazes left Ferrara in 1449/50 and went to Rome, where he enjoyed the patronage of Pope Nicholas V and worked on various translation projects from 1451 to 1455, during which time he was also in close contact with Bessarion. In 1456 he went to the court of Alfonso the Magnificent in Naples (where he stayed until 1458 or 1459). In the controversy on Plato, Aristotle, and Pletho which flared up in the late 1450s, Gazes collaborated with Bessarion in his polemical exchanges with George of Trebizond. And in his later years, Gazes enjoyed Bessarion's direct patronage: in 1463 the latter appointed him to the benefice of San Giovanni a Piro in Calabria, which supported him until his death. But in 1467, at the behest of Bessarion and Pope Paul II, Gazes returned to live in Rome close to Bessarion's own residence in Santi Apostoli where he was viewed as the chief of Bessarion's academy. On his return, he would have found Kabakes a new resident in the city.<sup>42</sup>

Gazes and Kabakes certainly knew one another personally, and some evidence of direct contact survives. Kabakes developed a highly idiosyncratic theology based around the worship of the sun, and, prompted by this interest, he compiled a large collection of passages from ancient literature which mention the sun.<sup>43</sup> One extract is a fluent Koine Greek translation of Pliny's

<sup>41</sup> R. Croskey, "Byzantine Greeks in Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century Russia," in L. Clucas (ed.), *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe* (New York 1988) 33–56, at 37–39, 46–47. Kabakes' marginalia on his crossing of the Alps are printed by Diller, *The Textual Tradition* 145.

<sup>42</sup> See Bianca, in *Dizionario Biografico* LII 737–746. Note also the above-mentioned epigram by Gazes, dedicated to a manuscript of Homer which belonged to Bessarion, which also mentions the Muses (*DBBE* Type 5288).

<sup>43</sup> On Kabakes' helio-theology, and its uneasy relationship to the neo-Platonism of Pletho and other contemporaries, see especially Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 194–216.

Latin, and Kabakes notes that the translator was Gazes.<sup>44</sup> Kabakes was frank about his ignorance of Latin,<sup>45</sup> and it seems likely that he asked Gazes directly for a translation, since the latter had worked alongside Andrea Bussi on an edition of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, printed in Rome in 1470.<sup>46</sup>

Another connection between the two men was Kabakes' son, Emmanuel (Ἐμμανουήλ Ῥάλης Καβάκης). Although it was as a Latin poet that Emmanuel would gain renown—under the Latinized name Manilius Cabacius Rhallus—his Greek literary education<sup>47</sup> owed something to Gazes: Manilius studied Gazes' Greek grammar in a manuscript which he and his father had copied out.<sup>48</sup> After Gazes' death, around 1476, Manilius (not yet

<sup>44</sup> The note on *Vat.gr.* 2185, f. 75<sup>v</sup>, reads: ἐρμυνηεὺς Θεόδωρος ὁ Γάζεος. See further P. Beullens and A. Gottshelf, "Theodore Gaza's Translation of Aristotle's *De Animalibus*: Content, Influence, and Date," *GRBS* 47 (2007) 469–513, at 491 n.70, and Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 188 and n.43.

<sup>45</sup> At the end of his letter to Manilius describing their family history (copied at some point after 1480), Kabakes asks Manilius to translate the letter into Latin since he was unable to do so (*Vat.gr.* 1359, f. 489<sup>r</sup>): πρέπον δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὦ υἱέ μου, ποιήσε λατινηκὸς ταῦτα διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ γένους. καὶ νὰ βοηθεῖς καὶ τὸ σὼ πατρὶ ἀνεπιστήμονα ὄντα ("It is fitting for you, my son, to render this into Latin both for the love of your family, and so that you can help your father, who is ignorant").

<sup>46</sup> See here J. Monfasani, "The First Call for Press Censorship: Niccolò Perotti, Giovanni Andrea Bussi, Antonio Moreto, and the Editing of Pliny's *Natural History*," *RenQ* 41 (1988) 1–31, at 8 and n.28. On Gazes' work on Bussi's edition of Pliny see Beullens and Gottshelf, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 491–493.

<sup>47</sup> For an assessment of Manilius' Greek education—which must have begun during the progressive fall of the Byzantine world and presumably continued in Rome while he was acquiring the languages of his new home—see Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 187, and M. Manoussacas, "Cabacio Rallo, Manilio," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* XV (Rome 1972) 669–671, who speaks of a "solid literary formation" (669) in Mistra.

<sup>48</sup> *Vat.gr.* 1378 contains Theodoros Gazes' grammar with annotations by Manilius, who wrote a mark of possession on f. 1<sup>r</sup>: τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον ἐστὶν ἐμοῦ Μανουήλ Καβάκη τοῦ Ῥάλη. *Hic liber est mei Emanuelis greci et cet.* Cited from Bacchelli, *Unomolti* 1 (2007) 151 n.56, who thinks that the book played an

thirty) was invited to contribute to an anthology of poems composed in Gazes' honor by Greek and Italian humanists.<sup>49</sup> Whether the invitation reflects respect for his intimacy with Gazes, his poetic skills, or his aristocratic familial status, it seems likely that Manilius, like Kabakes, would have known Gazes well.

We do not know how Kabakes came by a copy of Gazes' cycle of poems to the Muses in 1480, almost half a decade after Gazes' death. For all his social prestige, Kabakes can scarcely have cut an impressive literary figure in Gazes' eyes. But he may have been an admirer of Gazes' poetry and might have requested the opportunity to make a copy of the poems. Manilius is another possible route: the budding Latin poet and the aged Greek poet were probably aware of one another's compositions and had friends in common, including the Neapolitan humanist Giovanni Pontano and Pomponius Laetus.<sup>50</sup> Alternatively, the poems might have come to light after Gazes' death in his papers, where they had sat since their composition over three decades earlier. Kabakes, an avid collector and compiler of Greek literature—ancient and contemporary—might have taken the chance to copy them before they were passed on to Demetrios

important role in Manilius' Greek education. Gamillscheg et al., *Repertorium* III no. 162, attribute ff. I<sup>v</sup>–10<sup>v</sup>, 21<sup>r</sup>, 22<sup>r</sup>–28<sup>v</sup>, 51<sup>r</sup>–148<sup>r</sup>, 149<sup>v</sup>–192<sup>v</sup> to Demetrios Kabakes and, in *Repertorium* III no. 412, attribute ff. I<sup>r</sup>, 29<sup>r</sup>–50<sup>v</sup>, and 149<sup>r</sup> to Manilius Kabakes. The composition of Gazes' grammar (first printed in Venice in 1495 by Aldus Manutius) seems to date to his period in Ferrara—see Bianca, in *Dizionario Biografico* LII 739; for a later date of composition, see now P. Botley, *Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396–1529: Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts* (Philadelphia 2010) 14–16.

<sup>49</sup> Lamers, *HumLov* 62 (2013) 160, 196; and now U. Mondini, "Greek and Latin Epigrams on the Death of Theodore Gaza," in K. Kubina (ed.), *Poetry in Late Byzantium* (Leiden 2024) 191–235.

<sup>50</sup> On these connections see Bacchelli, *Noctua* 3 (2016) 177–178, 187, who suggests that Manilius studied Latin in the school of Pomponius Laetus in Rome (who himself had studied with Gazes in the 1450s) and that he studied Greek with Gazes after 1467. There is, however, no direct evidence for this reconstruction.

Chalkokondyles, to whom Gazes left all his books with only a few exceptions. The fact that the first letter of many poems seems to be missing suggests that the copy Kabakes encountered was a calligraphic version awaiting rubrication or illumination—and that the accuracy of Kabakes' copy was not checked by the poems' author.

### 3. *This edition*

The only known Greek witness for our poems is *Vat.gr.* 1359. The text is generally copied with reasonable accuracy; a few imprecisions can be emended without much trouble (e.g. the breathings of οὐνομά 1.1 and οὔτις 8.2, οὐρανία and ἀθάτοι in 8.1; the case of τέρψαμόνη in 5.2 is more ambiguous: as it seems, it was corrected by Kabakes into τέρψαμένη, but the double accent and the general sloppiness of the word makes us wonder whether Gazes could have written τερψάμενοι or even τερψαμένην, instead of τερψαμένη). Another obvious correction is the degemination in ἄλλος (2.1). Degemination is a common phenomenon in medieval Greek, but, Kabakes' spelling mistake aside, the alpha needs to be long and the double lambda makes position.

The metre of Gazes' elegiac couplets is generally correct, with mostly penthemimeres caesuras in the hexameters—except for 3.1 (hephthemimeres) and 6.1 (trihemimeres and bucolic caesura)—and the regular caesura in the middle of pentameters. No vowel or diphthong is given the wrong length, but in 5.2 we have corrected κᾶρδίην to κᾶδίην, which fits the meter and avoids an odd correction.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, as in Homer, corrections are avoided in the contiguous vowels in αἰδοῖη (5.1) and in Μουσᾶων (6.1; cf. ἀδελφᾶων 8.2 after this model). Gazes made generous use of elision (e.g. 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1) and of particles (e.g. 6.2, 8.2) to avoid hiatus. In 5.1, we have also added the enclitic

<sup>51</sup> Kristoffel Demoen and Arnd Kerkhecker have independently suggested this conjecture. There is also correction in 4.2 (θέλξᾶ βροτοῦς), but this is a more common case of Attic correction with a voiced plosive.

accent in εἶπέ γε.<sup>52</sup>

It seems likely that the initial letters of every poem were left blank in the exemplar from which Kabakes made his copy, and that he only supplemented the evident cases, that is, when the poems start with the names of the Muses: τερψιχόρην 5.1, οὐρανία 8.1, καλλιόπη 9.1; probably μελπομένη 4.1 as well, but there the manuscript has a lacuna. In the other cases, he supplied the first words with breathings and accents to make some sense of them: ἔρπομ' 2.1, θρεῖ 3.1, ἦμ' 6.1, εἶνε 7.1.<sup>53</sup> The case of 1.1 is less clear, as both οὔνομά and τοὔνομά are possible.

In the edition we have sought to respect the punctuation of the manuscript, though we have introduced some simplifications. At the end of the first verse of each poem, punctuation is often present in the manuscript (raised dot in 2.1, 6.1, 8.1, 9.1; no punctuation in 3.1), but we have sometimes changed it (1.1, 4.1, low dot to a raised dot; 5.1, low dot to comma; 7.1, colon to raised dot). Within the verses, some commas are already present in the manuscript (3.2, 4.2, 6.2), some have been removed (be-

<sup>52</sup> This was a suggestion by Arnd Kerkhecker. Although the Byzantine practice of accenting enclitics does not always follow modern conventions for ancient Greek accentuation, we have chosen to normalize the enclitic accent here. In *Laur.Plut.* 32.1, f. 605<sup>v</sup>, Gazes himself copied *Iliad* 23.461: κείσέ γε. We have also added the enclitic accent in 8.1 ἀθάνατοί (see *Il.* 23.277 in *Laur.Plut.* 32.1, f. 598<sup>v</sup>). We have silently normalized some accents (e.g. 2.1 φρέν', where the manuscript seems to read φρέν', and 6.1 Ἐρατώ, where the manuscript seems to read Ἐρατώ). However, we have refrained from changing the grave accent of oxytone words to an acute before punctuation (4.2 βροτοῦς) following the common practice in Byzantine manuscripts, also widely attested in manuscripts copied by Gazes.

<sup>53</sup> Some of these corrections often force farfetched interpretations: ἔρπομ' could be taken as if coming from ἔρπομαι (but note the wrong breathing), θρεῖ as if from θρέομαι (very rare in active voice). Other interpretations are facilitated by common pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs: ἦμ' as if from εἶμ' and εἶνε as if from εἶναι. They suggest that Kabakes was not, himself, fully able to understand Gazes' poetic productions in archaic dialects. In any case, Kabakes always supplemented breathings or accents to render the words acceptable to the eye.



fore εὔχομαι 7.1, before and after γνῶσιν 8.2, before καὶ 9.2), one has been added (2.2, no punctuation), and several raised dots have been changed to commas (1.2, 3.1; a dash to a comma at 7.1). A full stop has been written at the end of every poem, where the manuscript has either a colon (1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 9.2) or a raised dot (4.2). Additionally, some poems have a colon before the start (5.1, 6.1, 9.1), which has been removed. The first letter of every poem and the initials of the names of Greek deities have been written in capitals. The only case of mute iota in our cycle is notably written on the line in the manuscript, as iota adscript (ἔχης 3.2). It seems likely that this is connected with the epigraphic framing which the author originally—and perhaps over-optimistically—envisaged for the cycle.<sup>54</sup>

The folio containing poem 4 is damaged and the beginning of both verses has been obliterated. Whereas the first verse is easy to reconstruct (Μελομένη 4.1), the second leaves more room for conjecture. Fortunately, it corresponds to one of the two poems

<sup>54</sup> If that is the case, we could venture that Kabakes' exemplar was written in Greek majuscules. Adscript iotas are not unexpected in Greek inscriptions in majuscules on Renaissance paintings: see e.g. Sandro Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity*, discussed by Wilson, *IMU* 35 (1992) 232–241. Wilson (234) rightly points out that the peculiar way of writing the iota adscript in this painting (on the line, but in a smaller size than the rest of the letters) resembles the typeface used by the printer Lorenzo de Alopa in collaboration with Janus Lascaris (see e.g. the *Greek Anthology* printed in Florence, 1494). However, this feature is also found in Gazes' autograph copy of the *Batrachomyomachia* and the *Iliad* preserved in *Laur.Plut.* 32.1, dated early in the 1440s, when Gazes was in Pavia. As noted by S. Rizzo, "Gli umanisti, i testi classici e le scritture maiuscole," in C. Questa et al. (eds.), *Il libro e il testo* (Urbino 1984) 225–241, at 237, the beginning and the end of this manuscript show a more distinctive majuscule script, and thus the mute iota is written on the line in a smaller size: see e.g. *Batrach.* 32 ποῦη in f. 2<sup>r</sup> (= Speranzi, *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 23 [2012] pl. II) and *Il.* 24.772–774 σῆ, τῶ, Τροίη εὐρείη in f. 653<sup>v</sup>. A. Pontani, "Le maiuscole greche antiquarie di Giano Lascaris. Per la storia dell'alfabeto greco in Italia nel '400," *Scrittura e Civiltà* 16 (1992) 77–227, at 118, lists iota adscript among the characteristics of the antiquarian majuscules in mid-15<sup>th</sup> century Italy, in whose development Ciriaco of Ancona played an important role.

recorded by Carbone in Latin. When translating more literally, in prose, Carbone renders the partially lost word as “cantu.” Elsewhere in Carbone’s prose translation, in the poem for Clio, ἀείδω (1.1) is the word rendered as “canto.”<sup>55</sup> The conjecture ᾠσμοσι for 4.2 thus seems quite likely.<sup>56</sup> In the versified version of his translation, Carbone renders the missing word as “voce,”<sup>57</sup> which might correspond to φθέγμοσι. But since the prose translation is more faithful to the original than the elegiac translation, the former seems preferable. Besides, “voice” seems rather to belong to the domain of Calliope (cf. φθέγμα, 9.2). In retroverting the Greek verses from Latin, Wilson conjectured ὀπί as the original behind “voce,” but the ending -μοσι, still visible in the new manuscript evidence, rules this out.

The critical apparatus is generally negative, meaning that we record the readings of the manuscript whenever we do not follow them, because we print our emendations or conjectures—more uncertain conjectures are indicated with “fortasse” in the apparatus. It is positive only when we are not entirely sure of the reading of the manuscript—such cases are indicated with “ut videtur.” For poems 1 and 4, the apparatus includes a small selection of relevant references to Carbone’s Latin translations (in prose and in verse) and Wilson’s retroversion of them into Greek, which was based solely on Carbone’s text. The references

<sup>55</sup> Lazzari, *Atti e Memorie* 24 (1919) 35.

<sup>56</sup> Before the authors became aware of Carbone’s translation, this conjecture had been suggested by Antonia Apostolakou. As for the iota subscript in ᾠσμοα, the most extended practice in Byzantine scribes was not to add it to the root of words: see e.g. Gazes’ autograph copy of Plato’s *Republic* 424C in *Laur.Plut.* 80.7, f. 43v, where ᾠσμοατα is copied without iota subscript (elsewhere marked with a small dot below the vowel in this MS.). However, we have opted to include the iota subscript, abiding by the established convention, for lack of any further evidence in these poems. Originally, there could have also been an iota adscript (as in ἔχητις 3.2), or an iota subscript, even if Kabakes’ exemplar was written in majuscule (see the title in *Laur.Plut.* 32.1, f. 17r, ῥαυφωδίας).

<sup>57</sup> Lazzari, *Atti e Memorie* 24 (1919) 37.

to Carbone and Wilson are limited to specific *loci desperati* and should not be understood as conjectures—the apparatus is neither positive nor negative in these cases.

#### 4. *The poems*

##### Sigla

V = *Vat.gr.* 1359 (anno 1480)

(...) = lacuna codicis

Carbone = translatio latina Ludovici Carbonis

Carbone<sup>2</sup> = translatio latina Ludovici Carbonis (versio poetica)

Wilson = coniecit in versibus graecis Nigel Wilson

##### 1. Κλειώ

Οὔνομά μοι Κλειώ κλέος ἀνδρῶν οὔνεκ' ἀεῖδω·  
χρῦσεον εἶμα φέρω, χρῦσεον ἦτορ ἔχω.

1 Οὔνομά μοι] οὔνομά μοι V, οὔνομ' ἐμοὶ Wilson, fortasse τοὔνομά μοι | κλέος V ut videtur

Clio

My name is Clio because I sing the glory of men.

I wear a golden garment and have a golden heart.

##### 2. Εὐτέρπη

Τέρπομ' ἀεὶ φρέν' ἐγὼ τέρω τ' ἄλλους Εὐτέρπη·  
κόσμιος εὐφύιαν, κόσμιος εὐστομίαν.

1 Τέρπομ'] ἔρπομ' V | ἄλλους] ἄλους V

Euterpe

I, Euterpe, always delight in my heart and delight others,  
seemly in my shapeliness and seemly in sweet sound.

##### 3. Θάλεια

Ἄθρει μου δέμας ἀνθηρᾶς, ὃ τέθηλε, Θαλείας  
ἄνθεά τε ψυχῆς, νῦν βλέφαρ' εἶπερ ἔχης.

1 Ἄθρει] θρεῖ V || 2 νῦν V ut videtur | ἔχης] ἔχης V

Thalia

Behold my body, that of blossoming Thalia, which has come into  
bloom,  
and behold the flowers of my soul, if only you have eyes to see.

##### 4. Μελπομένη

Μελπομένη ξέν' ἐγὼ κούρη Διὸς αἰὲν ἐόντος·  
ἄσμασι θέλξα βροτοὺς, ὄμμασιν ἀθανάτους.

1 Μελοπομένη] (...)πομένη V, Μελοπομένη Wilson || 2 ἄσμασι] (...)μασι V, *cantu* Carbone, *voce* Carbone<sup>2</sup>, ὀπὶ Wilson

Melpomene

Stranger, I am Melpomene, daughter of everlasting Zeus.

I enchanted mortals with my songs and immortals with my looks.

5. Τερψιχόρη

Τερψιχόρην με πατήρ αἰδοίη τ' εἶπέ γε μήτηρ,  
βήμασιν εὐρύθμοις τερψαμένη κραδίην.

1 εἶπέ] εἶπε V || 2 τερψαμένη] τέρψαμόνη ante correctionem,  
τέρψαμένη post correctionem V ut videtur, fortasse τερψάμενοι vel  
τερψαμένην | κραδίην scripsimus metri causa, καρδίην V

Terpsichore

Terpsichore my father called me, as did my venerable mother,  
delighted in her heart by my rhythmical steps.

6. Ἐρατώ

Εἴμ' Ἐρατὼ Μουσάων ἱρῶν εἶδος ἀρίστη·  
ἀθάνατος δὲ νέων, ὅστις ἐμοῦ γ' ἐράοι.

1 Εἴμ'] ἴμ' V

Erato

I am Erato, most beautiful in aspect among the holy Muses.  
Among the young, whoever loves me is immortal.

7. Πολύμνια

Ξεῖνε, Πολύμνια μὲν θυγάτηρ Διὸς εὐχομαι εἶναι·  
στέμματα δ' ἰδρῶσι χρύσεια βάψα τάδε.

1 Ξεῖνε] εἶνε V

Polymnia

Stranger, I proudly declare that I am Polymnia, the daughter of  
Zeus.

I moistened these golden garlands with sweat.

8. Οὐρανία

Οὐρανίαν με καλοῦσι θνητοί τ' ἀθάνατοί τε·  
οὔτις ἀδελφάων γνῶσιν ἔμοιγ' ἐρίσει.

1 Οὐρανίαν] οὐρανία V | ἀθάνατοί] ἀθάτοι V || 2 οὔτις] οὔτις V

Urania

Mortals and immortals call me Urania.

None of my sisters will contend with me in knowledge.

## 9. Καλλιόπη

Καλλιόπη πέλομαι Διὸς εὐειδέστατον ἕρνος·  
φθέγμα δέ μου στόματος καὶ μέλιτος γλύκιον.

Calliope

I am Calliope, most beautiful scion of Zeus.

The voice from my mouth is sweeter even than honey.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> This article is the result of the joint effort of its authors. The poems were discovered independently in the context of Ellis's research on the marginalia of *Vat.gr.* 1359 and Bértola's dissertation on verse scholia and book epigrams on historians; in this context, Bértola added the poems to *DBBE*. In this article, Bértola wrote most of section 1 and Ellis most of section 2, while the edition itself has been produced by both authors. Bértola has mainly written his share as a postdoctoral fellow of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) at Ghent University. We are grateful to Arnd Kerkhecker for his inspired suggestion that many poems appear to be missing an initial letter, which has proved extremely helpful in the reconstruction of many verses, and for his careful comments on the entire paper. Our thanks also go to Antonia Apostolakou, who has helped us with the conjecture in poem 4. Ugo Mondini generously shared with us his then unpublished chapter on the funerary epigrams on Gazes' death. Kristoffel Demoen and Filippomaria Pontani read earlier versions of this paper and provided very useful suggestions. Finally, this article greatly benefited from the comments by editors and the anonymous reviewers.