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The Scribe Isidoros and Michael Gabras' Letter in the Ms Bremen b.23

With plates I–II

Abstract: Bremen, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, b.23 is a miscellaneous codex from the first half of the 14th century gathering different literary and astronomical school texts written by a student whose name, Isidoros, appears in f. 206v (only ff. 4–95v are by a second hand). The texts were copied by Isidoros in different periods and finally bound together as well as with independent leaves. One of them (f. 2r–v) is apparently the draft of a letter of Michael Gabras written and corrected by the author. Nevertheless, since the composition is full of syntactic mistakes and its copyist is Isidoros, it can not be an autograph but somehow be based on Gabras' composition. Some mistakes suggest that the text was dictated and that Isidoros could act as Gabras' secretary, while the presence of a small sentence from *Cyropaedia* I 4, 12 (one of the texts preserved by the Bremen codex) allows us to consider that Isidoros was also involved in the re-writing of the letter, a failed exercise that must be understood as aimed to the acquisition of composition skills.

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Time is a cleansing process and materials preserved by libraries in the shape of books prove it: the more recent the manuscript, the more options there are for it to lack quality standards such as clear organisation of the content or homogeneous format and appearance. In other words, it is more likely to keep drafts, preliminary materials and autographs – which is to say, evidence for literary composition – from the Palaeologan period than from previous epochs. But a shorter span of time is not the only reason for the preservation of a more varied evidence: Italian paper, more and more used from the end of the 13th century, prob-

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ably changed the way texts were studied and transmitted and allowed the existence and preservation of drafts by increasing the availability of good writing material.

The tangled example of literary composition I intend to present here is about a text preserved with the materials used in its writing. The text is a letter – without addressee nor author, but it never supplied this information, since nothing is lost above the first line of the text – found in f. 2r–v of the manuscript Bremen, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, b.23 (Pl. 1), which is a miscellaneous volume. The epistle was edited and correctly attributed to Michael Gabras by Diether REINSCH.¹ Even if the subject it deals with is common to other Gabras' letters, this precise letter was not included by him in his correspondence, that we can read only in the manuscript Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale, Marc. gr. 446, and henceforth it was not included by FATOUROS' edition of the epistolar.²

Despite of his letters, and other contemporary correspondences, we lack of specific data on Michael Gabras.³ According to Fatouros, he was born around 1290 and died after 1350. He was perhaps student of Manuel Bryennios.⁴ His elder brother John – who prematurely died in 1319/20⁵ – belonged to the circle of Maximos Planoudes (†1305),⁶ then of John Glykys (†1319) and Nicephorus Choumnos (†1326/27), as Michael himself.⁷

The letter mentions a *logos* on the presentation of the Virgin in the temple (November, 21st) that the brother of the author composed not long before dying. According to REINSCH, this work was the prayer drafted by John Gabras, the elder brother of Michael, and edited by BOISSONADE from manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 3010.⁸ We know from other letters⁹ that Mi-

1 D. REINSCH, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief des Michael Gabras. *BZ* 96 (2003) 211–215.

2 G. FATOUROS, Die Briefe des Michael Gabras (ca. 1290 – nach 1350). Teil I: Einleitung, Adressaten, Regesten, Register; Teil II: Text. Wien 1973.

3 *PLP*, no. 3372.

4 FATOUROS, Die Briefe (as footnote 2 above) 23.

5 *PLP* no. 3362 + 91571.

6 See M. TREU (ed.), *Planudis Maximi Monachi Epistulae*. Breslau 1890 (reimpr. Amsterdam 1960), 187, 203.

7 S.I. KOUROUSES, Ὁ λόγιος οἰκουμενικός πατριάρχης Ἰωάννης ὁ Γλυκὺς (Συναγωγὴ εἰδήσεων καὶ ἀνέκδοτα αὐτοῦ ἔργα). *EEBS* 41 (1974) 297–405: 317–319. Michael Gabras addressed to Glykys seven letters from 1307 to 1319.

8 J. F. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regiis*. Paris 1831, III 71–111.

9 On the Gabras' letters dealing with John's *logos*, REINSCH, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief (as footnote 1 above) 212. Interestingly, they were addressed to members of Saint Sophia's clergy such as Manuel Koutales (*PLP*, no. 13617), chartophylax (ep. 320, 347), the megas sakkelarios Alexios Kappadokes (*PLP*, no. 11047, ep. 241), Kalos Trikanas, sakkeliou (*PLP*, no. 29310, ep. 355).

chael Gabras was very concerned about this literary composition by his elder brother John and was obsessed with the idea of honouring his dead brother with a public performance of the *logos* in Saint Sophia.¹⁰ The year of John Gabras' death, 1319/20, provides a terminus post quem for the composition of the letter preserved by the Bremen manuscript.

The text of the letter can not be understood without the necessary corrections introduced by its "hand 2", which REINSCH identifies with Michael Gabras' hand as we know it from Marc. gr. 446,¹¹ but in our opinion that "hand 2" belongs to the very same scribe who wrote the draft. Consequently, we can not agree with REINSCH's conclusion that "könnten wir auch den Codex insgesamt der Person des Michael Gabras zuweisen",¹² concluded that the letter was an autograph. Indeed, since its scribe would have also written the rest of the manuscript, the entire codex could be assigned to him. Nevertheless, the text in its current form can not be an autograph of Gabras, because it was copied and corrected by the main scribe of the Bremen manuscript, who displays his name, Isidoros, in an invocation on f. 206v that has gone unnoticed: Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Ἰσιδώρῳ τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ (**Plate 2**). Even if we can not read clearly the entire name, in my opinion the only possibility is to read Isidoros. The place of the invocation is unexpected, since this page is the last of Aristides' *De rhetorica*, and this kind of invocations are usually written at the beginning of the copy, not at the end. But there is no doubt about the identity of the main scribe of the Bremen manuscript and the Isidoros who wrote the invocation. Now, this certainty demands the explanation of how a letter composed by Gabras was corrected by another person. But before that we need to look into the manuscript which preserves the letter.

¹⁰ A. KARPOZILOS, Books and bookmen in the 14th century. The epistolographical evidence. *JÖB* 41 (1991) 255–276: 264, 266.

¹¹ If we compare his handwriting with the corrections and notes in Marc. gr. 446 made by Gabras himself (see one example FATOUROS, Die Briefe, as footnote 2 above, 234–235), we discover that Gabras' handwriting is extremely formal, upright, and tidy, and that its more idiosyncratic features (β, ξ, γέν) are not shared by the Bremen scribe.

¹² REINSCH, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief (as footnote 1 above) 215.

The manuscript

The manuscript Bremen b.23¹³ became part of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Bremen with the library of the Swiss humanist Melchior Goldast von Haiminsfeld.¹⁴ It is a codex on Italian paper measuring 210/20 × 145 mm, the standard size of the period, which makes it a user-friendly book. In the 15th century, it belonged to Antonio Malaspina,¹⁵ as indicated by a note in f. 3v, after the citation of Xenophon, *Hellenika*, I, 1, 1–5: Σὺν Θεῷ κτῆμα ἡ παροῦσα βίβλος Ἀντωνίου Μαλασπίνα τοῦ Φωκαέως. Malaspina, allegedly a Genoese living in Galata, is the addressee of two letters by John Eugenikos (about 1439 and after 1453).¹⁶ He was also the owner of manuscript Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, Neap. II.E.20 (gr. 155), according to the invocation in f. 311v: Θεοτόκε βοήθη μοι τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Ἀντωνίῳ τῷ Μαλασπίνα.¹⁷ The first folia of the Bremen manuscript are independent from the volume and from each other;¹⁸ ff. 1 and 249 are in fact fly-

13 H. OMONT, Notes sur les manuscrits grecs des Villes Hanséatiques, Hambourg, Brême et Lübeck. *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 7 (1890) 351–377: 369–370 (published independently as: Catalogue des manuscrits grecs des Villes Hanséatiques, Hambourg, Brême et Lübeck. Leipzig 1890); I. STAHL, Katalog der mittelalterlichen Handschriften des Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen. Wiesbaden 2004, 123–126, describes carefully its content. The codex was exhibited at Hamburg University in 1992–93; see D. HARLFINGER, Die Wiedergeburt der Antike und die Auffindung Amerikas: 2000 Jahre Wegbereitung einer Entdeckung. Bildkatalog zur Ausstellung. Wiesbaden 1992, 46–50 (no. 21) and Abb. 32–34.

14 The ex-libris is in f. 3v: *Ex Bibliotheca Goldasti*. On Melchior Goldast's library, see TH. ELSMANN, Die Bibliotheca Bremensis bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts: Sammlung, Nutzung und der Weg zum Gestaltwandel, in Th. Elsmann et al. (eds.), Vom Katharinenkloster zum Hochschul-Campus. Bremens wissenschaftliche Literaturversorgung. Festschrift zum 350jährigen Jubiläum der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen. Bremen 2010.

15 *PLP*, no. 16458.

16 A. DILLER, Joannes Canabutzes and Michael Chrysococces. *Byzantion*, 42 (1972) 257–258: 258 note 3; *PLP* 16458. On a hypothetical relationship between the historian Doukas and Malaspina, see S. KOTZABASSI, Der Kopist des Geschichtswerkes von Dukas, in F. Berger et al. (Hrsg.), *Symbolae Berolinenses für Dieter Harlfinger*. Amsterdam 1993, 307–323: 309–310, and S. KOTZABASSI, Ist der Kopist von Dukas Dukas selbst?, *BZ* 96 (2003) 679–683: 682.

17 W. LAMEERE, La tradition manuscrite de la correspondance de Grégoire de Chypre patriarche de Constantinople (1283–1289). Bruxelles/Rome 1937, 63–65; F.W. LENZ / C.A. BEHR, P. Aelii Aristidis opera quae extant omnia, vol. I. Leiden 1976, XVI; L. PERNOT, Les Discours Siciliens d'Aelius Aristide. Étude littéraire et paléographique. New York 1981, 172–173, M.R. FORMENTIN, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Nationalis Neapolitanae*, vol. II. Napoli/Roma 1992, 91–94.

18 Perhaps Isidoros himself added in the outer margin of f. 2 a small text of which we can only read the beginning: + Εἰώθασιν οἱ πλείστοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων δι' εὐφημίας ὅτι [...]. The rest of the text was in the strapped part of the folium. In f. 2v, a later hand added a small list with the

leaves from a 12th-century Chrysostomos codex, also used in the restauration of the beginning of the manuscript, damaged in the outer bottom corner.

The Bremen manuscript contains an array of ancient texts of a very different kind, only sharing their quality of school texts. In the first part of the codex (ff. 4–95v),¹⁹ we find the triad of Sophocles, in the version prepared by Maximus Planoudes and Manuel Moschopoulos.²⁰ This is the only text which was not copied by the scribe and owner of the book, but by an irregular and fickle hand belonging to the so-called “geometrical style” which characterizes the copy of poetical texts commented and corrected by Planoudes and Moschopoulos.²¹ Even if we have not identified that script in other poetical texts copied in the same style, the watermark “nœud” Br. 11982 which appears in some folia of the Bremen manuscript provides a further nexus between its Sophocles copy and the most famous scribe of the geometrical style, the John who signed the copy of Par. Coisl. 169, where the same watermark “nœud” appears in ff. 285–358,²² as well as an unspecified “lettre G”, perhaps the same as in the Bremen manuscript. The scribe John, who collaborated with Maximus Planoudes in the copy of a Plato manuscript (Vindob. Phil. gr. 21) and with Nicephorus Gregoras in the copy of Theodoros Metochites’ *Astronomike stoicheiosis* (Vat. gr. 1087), has been identified in four more manuscripts. Other copies with the watermark “nœud” Br. 11982 are in the trail of Maximus Planoudes: Bruxelles, Bibliothèque royale, manuscript 18967 (Plutarch’s *Moralia*),²³ Vindob. Phil. gr. 169, a contemporary copy of Andreas Lopadiotes’ *Lexikon*, and Laur. Plut. 5745, partly copied by the monk Gabriel who donated his library to the monastery of St George of Man-ganes in Constantinople.²⁴

translation of some Latin nouns, inc. Περιμυγγλίων· βασιλικῶν τινῶν. Πρόξμος· ὁ πρῶτος ἢ ὁ πλησίον; des. σοῦφράγιον· ἀποστροφ[.]

19 Its quires (11 quaternios in ff. 4–91, plus a binio in ff. 92–95) are numbered at the inner bottom of the first and last pages: for example, in f. 27v γ’, f. 28 δ’, f. 75v θ’.

20 A. TURYN, The manuscript tradition of the Tragedies of Sophocles. Urbana 1952, 17 y 27 (ms. Jp); H. CH. GÜNTHER, The manuscripts and the transmission of the Palaeologan scholia on the Euripidean Triad. Stuttgart 1995, 71, note 1. The marginal commentary has been partially published by A. TURYN, The Sophocles recension of Manuel Moschopolus. *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 80 (1949) 94–173; 117–118. In ff. 7v–11v, some scholia are attributed to Planoudes by the mark μαξ (Μαξίμου).

21 GÜNTHER, The manuscripts (as before) 76; I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, La ‘escuela de Planudes’: Notas paleográficas a una publicación reciente sobre los escolios euripideos. *BZ* 90 (1997) 73–96.

22 Ibid. 80–83.

23 J. IRIGOIN, Les filigranes de Fabriano (noms de papetiers) dans les manuscrits grecs du début du XIVe siècle. *Scriptorium* 12 (1958) 44–50, 281–282; 50.

24 PÉREZ MARTÍN, La ‘escuela de Planudes’ (as footnote 21 above) 85–86.

Since the handwriting of Isidoros does not appear in the Sophocles part of the Bremen manuscript, the Sophoclean triad may not be linked to the rest of the codex. Nevertheless, according to the script, this first part of the manuscript is contemporary to the rest of it and, even if it is not a careful transcription of Sophocles, it could have been acquired or at least incorporated to the current volume by its main scribe.

The scribe Isidoros, the main copyist and owner of the manuscript, has an extremely erratic and unsettled hand, with frequent variation in the shape and size of letters, sloping lines of writing, many mistakes, *supra lineam* additions, and crossing-outs. The appearance of his script is so disparaging along the current manuscript that it could be argued that these pages show the intervention of several hands.²⁵ But, in truth, the analysis of the single shapes of letters, ligatures and abbreviations proves that the manuscript (except for the Sophocles part) and the letter in f. 2 were copied by an irregular and instable hand showing sometimes an undeniable chancelleresque air, and other times imitating the Hodegon style (f. 104), or trying a different, round and calligraphic handwriting (f. 107). These stylistic mutterings show an early and failed attempt to abandon the swift and difficult handwriting of the previous century, and they can be explained as experiments of different settings by a young hand that finally sticks to a quicker, more comfortable handwriting (Pl. 1, 2).

The second part of the manuscript Bremen b.23 (ff. 96–154v), with an independent quire numbering (nr. ζ' [6] marks ff. 136–143), preserves Cleomedes' *De motu circulari*, an elementary text of astronomy broadly read in the first Palaeologan century.²⁶ On the basis of this note in f. 147v: Τέλος τῶν τοῦ Κλεομήδους μετεώρων μηνι ἰουν(ῳ) ιη' ἰν(δικτιῶνος) ιε' ἡμέρα δευτέρα, the copy in the Bremen manuscript must be dated from 1302 or 1347, when the 18th of June of the 15th indiction was a Monday.

²⁵ HARLFINGER, Wiedergeburt (as footnote 13 above) 46, sees “different scholarly hands” in the manuscript.

²⁶ According to the editor of the text, R. TODD, *Cleomedes Caelestia* (Μετεώρα). Leipzig 1990, XVI, the Bremen manuscript is a twin copy of the almost contemporary Leiden B.P.G. 107. To their tradition belongs also the Cleomedes copy of Planoudes (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 18.7.15, ca. 1290) as well as other Constantinopolitan manuscripts such as Vat. gr. 207, copied after 1265/68 and linked to Maximos Holobolos' teaching. On the Edinburgh manuscript, see A. TURYN, Dated Greek manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the libraries of Great Britain. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*, 17 Washington D.C. 1980, 57–59. On Vat. gr. 207, see P. CANART, A propos du Vaticanus Graecus 207. Le recueil scientifique d'un érudit constantinopolitain du XIIIe siècle et l'emploi du papier à zig-zag dans la capitale byzantine. *Illinois Classical Studies* 7 (1982) 271–298.

The title in f. 96 has not been written by Isidoros, but probably by Nicephorus Gregoras in his role of librarian in the monastery of Chora, to which the volume could therefore belong.²⁷ Curiously enough, in another book from Malaspina's library, Neap. II.E.20, Nicephorus Gregoras added the name of the author (+ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Κυπρίου τοῦ καὶ πατριάρχου γεγονότος) in the top margin of f. 291. This coincidence suggests that both manuscripts belonged to the same library, perhaps the Chora, before being acquired by Malaspina. Indeed, we have identified Isidoros' hand in Vat. gr. 895,²⁸ which is, as the Bremen manuscript, a personal copy of elementary texts, this time a large collection of grammatical texts whose more recent pieces are in fact the *Syntax* of the patriarch John Glykys (ff. 31–67),²⁹ the *Epimerismoι* of George Lacapenus (ff. 116–217), a student of Planoudes, and the *Grammar* (ff. 220–221), the *Philomathes* (ff. 243–249), and other works by Nicephorus Gregoras. The copy is marked by many invocations on the upper margin that characterize him as a pious person, very devoted to the Virgin.

Cleomedes' text occupies 6 quires (ff. 96–143), plus 4 folia (ff. 144–147). The following quire (ff. 148–154, 7 ff.) includes some minor texts on stars and planets written also by Isidoros as elementary spin-offs of Cleomedes but in an independent way. His ductus and the layout of the text in these pages invites us to distinguish two separate additions: the texts in f. 149r–v (brief definitions and classifications of astronomical terms) and, in ff. 150–152, texts on the measuring of units of time according to the positions of the sun and the moon,³⁰ which end in f. 152 with this computing: τὰ ἀπὸ Αὐγούστου Καίσαρος ἔτη ἕως τῆς ἐνισταμένης ιγ' ἰν(δικτίωνος) τοῦ ζωλῆ' (6838 = 1329/30) ἔτους. The third and last section of the manuscript (ff. 155–248v) is composed by several smaller pieces. It opens with a single folium (f. 155) containing some excerpts of the first book of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, a book fully copied in ff. 207–223v. The collatio of this brief ekloge confirms that the selection of sentences was not made from the very copy of book I preserved by the codex but from its source, which is to say that the scribe used a manuscript of *Cyropaedia* twice, to transcribe the en-

²⁷ On this function carried out by Gregoras, D. BIANCONI, La biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora. Una questione di mani. *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005) 391–438.

²⁸ I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, El Libro de Actor. Una traducción bizantina del Speculum Doctrinale de Vincent de Beauvais (Vaticani gr. 12 y 1144). *RÉB* 55 (1997) 81–136, and Pl. 3.

²⁹ A. JAHN, Ioannis Glycae opus de vera syntaxeos ratione. Bern 1849.

³⁰ The codex was not described in vol. 7 of the *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, Bruxelles 1908, the one dedicated to German libraries.

tire book I and to select some sentences of the same book.³¹ The scribe added many glosses, some of them wrong, to the text of the *Cyropaedia*, and we must understand the copy as part of a learning process of ancient Greek. Also, the process of reduction to small units displayed in f. 155 can be interpreted as a way to the assimilation of linguistic skills.

The distribution of the quires as well as the fragmentary or incomplete copy of the texts prove that the last part of the manuscript is composed itself by pieces independently copied: Aelius Aristides' *De rhetorica ad Platonem* (ff. 156–206v), a work frequently diffused outside the corpus of Aristides,³² two famous speeches of Demosthenes on ff. 224–240v (*Philippica* I, *Olynthiaca* I), the fragmentary copy of Λιβανίου σοφιστοῦ ἐπιστολμαῖοι χαρακτῆρες, a widespread handbook for letters composition (ff. 241–244v) sharing the final quire of the actual volume (ff. 241–248v)³³ with an excerpt of Symeon Seth's Σύνοψις τῶν φυσικῶν (ff. 245–248v).³⁴

According to FOERSTER,³⁵ the Libanios text was copied from the manuscript Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Laur. C.S. 20, which mainly preserves Planoudes' grammatical works and apparently was copied in 1340/41.³⁶ This would provide us with a late terminus *post quem* for the copy of the Bremen

31 The text belongs to the branch of the transmission headed by the manuscript Escorial T.III.14, but it shows also variants characteristic of a different branch, to which belong Erlangen A.1 and Vat. gr. 129.

32 LENZ/BEHR, P. Aelii Aristidis opera (as footnote 17 above) LI (no. 96). We have identified Isidoros' hand in an Aristidean manuscript from Wien, Vindob. Phil. gr. 96, where he only copied f. 281–282v (scribe C). A plate in CH. GASTGEBER, Aus der Bibliothek des Ioannes Chortasmenos: Ailios Aristides, ONB, Cod. Phil. gr. 96, in M. D'Agostino / P. Degni (eds.), Alethes philia. Studi in onore di Giancarlo Prato. Spoleto 2010, I, 409–434, and Abb. 16.

33 Ed. R. FOERSTER, Libanii Opera, vol. IX. Leipzig 1927 27–47. On the interest of Michael Gabras in Aristides and Libanios, see N. GAUL, Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik: Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit. *Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik*, 10. Wiesbaden 2011, 185–188.

34 Ed. A. DELATTE, *Anecdota Atheniensia et alia*, vol. II. Liège/Paris 1939, who does not mention this manuscript.

35 FOERSTER, Libanii Opera (as footnote 33 above) 19–20.

36 A. TURYN, Dated Greek manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the libraries of Italy. Urbana/Chicago/London 1972, 191–192, Pl. 156. One of the scribes of Laur. C.S. 20, Leo Monomachos (who copied ff. 1–32, 41–77v, 94–98v), has signed his work in f. 73, but the date of 1340/41 has not been specified as for the copy, it is a simple number, ζωμθ', added after two brief texts in f. 73v.

manuscript and consequently would allow for a dating of the Cleomedes part to 1347 and not to 1302.³⁷

The letter

We must return now to the copy of the letter on f. 2, whose evidence is contradictory: on the one hand, REINSCH is undoubtedly right when he identifies its author with Michael Gabras; on the other, Isidoros was the scribe who copied and corrected not only the copying mistakes but also the compositional errors of the letter.³⁸ To figure out or try to solve the contradiction, we must take into account some more elements of the draft presenting an extremely artificial text, bordering on an incomprehensible syntax, careless and full of mistakes.³⁹

In the letter we find some completions without which the text can not be understood: a change in the word order (l. 8–9: τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρόδου ac; παρόδου τῆς τοῦ λόγου pc) and two additions that can not be oversights, but involve different mental operations: they are the subject (l. 2 λόγος) and the verb (l. 3 δέιται) of the first sentence.⁴⁰ These are the main reasons to consider the letter an autograph, which in fact, as we already know, is not possible.

Other mistakes require a different explanation: for example, l. 18, ὑπὸνῆροῦ corrected to εἰ πονηροῦ; or l. 16, δὴ καὶ ὅστις corrected to δίκαιος τις.⁴¹ These are not corrections made by a copyist or the author, but the amendments of a text heard and written in one of the possible ways, later corrected to restore the real spelling. Consequently, a possible explanation is an oral performance of the text that Isidoros tried to reproduce on paper. Our scribe could listen to a public reading or discussion of the letter and try to copy and later to correct it. But it is more likely that Isidoros had acted as Gabras' secretary or amanuen-

37 REINSCH, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief (as footnote 1 above) 211, uses the evidence provided by watermarks (cf. STAHL, Katalog, as footnote 13 above, 123) to support an earlier date, but the catalogue does not specify to which part of the miscellaneous codex belong each watermark. In any case, the watermark “équerre” (M.-T. 3693), dated to 1310, is too simple a figure to justify that or other datings. The other watermark identified in the catalogue is – much more characteristically – “nœud” Briquet 11982 (year 1316–18 [1317–23]) = Mošin-TRALJIĆ 6491 (a. 1322–24), cf. PICCARD Kreuz II 218–221, which supports a date of copy around 1320.

38 In Pl. 1 is noticeable that the text and the corrections were written with the same ink, which suggests that a short span of time passed between the copy work and the revision of the text.

39 REINSCH, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief (as footnote 1 above) 215.

40 REINSCH, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief (as footnote 1 above) 213.

41 There are other, less outstanding, examples: l. 4: ἐνῶ ac: ἐν νῶ pc; l. 5 δέει ac : δέη pc.

sis, writing down Gabras' tangled thoughts about his brother's logos, as well as his later corrections.

The third element we must consider is the presence of a small sentence in l. 10 – 11: μήποτε τοσούτον βλάξ ὦν τις ἀλiscoίμην καὶ ἡλίθιος, which is taken from *Cyrop.* I 4, 12: μή παντάπασι βλάξ τις καὶ ἡλίθιος γένωμαι. Gabras is saying that he will not attend the ceremony in which his brother's logos would be interpreted, avoiding the painful situation and to be caught being stupid and silly. The expression does not really fit here, even if it is not entirely inappropriate, but the point is that Isidoros is writing a sentence that he had copied in what is now a part of the same manuscript (ff. 207–223v) and that he had read one more time when he was selecting the sentences for the f. 155.

This circumstance suggests a closer connection between Gabras and Isidoros and even allows us to consider that Isidoros was somehow involved in the composition of Gabras' letter.⁴² Since Gabras' letter was probably copied soon after 1319/20, Cleomedes in 1302 or 1347, Libanios' *Characteres* after 1340/41, and the short astronomical texts in 1329/30, chronology is confirming here that the Bremen manuscript was a private copy, not a manuscript intended for sale, and that it gathered work materials used during an entire life.

⁴² Xenophon is not a very present author in Gabras' correspondence. According to his editor, the only allusion, and not a very clear one, to a Xenophontean text would be in ep. 35, inc. Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἂν οὐ δικαίως ἀλγοίην τῶν ἐπιδων ἁμαρτῶν, which Fatouros compares to *Anab.* I 2, 11: ὁ δὲ ἐλπίδας λέγων διῆγε.