

THE TROJAN CHRONICLES OF DICTYS AND DARES IN THE EARLY ITALIAN HUMANISM: A REASSESSMENT

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Résumé : Dans cet essai, j'envisagerai la façon dont Francesco Petrarca et Coluccio Salutati abordent les récits troyens de Dycitis et Darès. Nos sources témoignent que Pétrarque connaissait bien ces textes. De façon analogue, à l'égard de Salutati, les recherches montrent qu'il employait implicitement les chroniques troyennes latines tandis qu'il les méprisait explicitement.

Abstract: *In this paper I examine the approach of Francesco Petrarca and Coluccio Salutati to the Trojan chronicles of Dictys and Dares. The sources in our possession show a relevant familiarity with those texts on the part of Petrarca. As for Salutati, careful examination shows that, despite his misgivings for those texts, he used them constantly for a number of purposes, documentary as well as literary.*

Mots clés : Dictys, Darès, Francesco Petrarca, Coluccio Salutati, Guerre de Troie.

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For Andrea Blasina, friend and colleague, *in memoriam*

Dictys' and Dares' pseudo-chronicles from Troy succeeded in their – involuntary – mystification thanks to a number of accidental factors that made them in the eyes of the readers a perfect approximation of historical truth.

I will not retrace what has been explained and investigated in much recent scholarship. Instead, I shall limit myself to stressing the original novel-like character of both texts and how they pertain fully to the Second Sophistic wave¹ and to the realm of fiction: a trait that is apparent if we abstract them from their chronological collocation and consider them alongside texts of modern narrative. The most significant example in this sense is the founding text of modern fictional narrative: *The life and adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, where the usage of fictive paratexts to validate the text as an authentic recording of facts strongly recalls the way such paratexts were cleverly exploited both in Dictys and Dares. However, the presumption of authenticity for *Robinson Crusoe* did not prevent the public from reading the text correctly as fiction²: so much so, in fact, that many editions of the book did not even report Defoe's fictive "editor's note" with which he advocated the text's authenticity.

When we consider the immense post-classical circulation and success of Dictys and Dares as historical texts, we might be tempted to dismiss the phenomenon as the stubbornly lingering remains of a medieval frame of mind: of the incapacity to differentiate between history and literature. However, I would like to draw attention to the strikingly similar example posed by the recent major Hollywood film "Troy", by classically educated German director Wolfgang Petersen. As Georg Danek has poignantly argued in a recent paper, the reaction of today's film-viewers to *Troy* is exactly the same as that of medieval and (as we shall see) early modern readers of Dictys and Dares:

«[Troy's] Screenwriter David Benioff was as ambitious about improving on the plot of the *Iliad* as his colleagues Dictys and Dares had been almost 2000 years ago. He succeeded in constructing a coherent plot with dramatic unity by condensing the myth to a few storylines and concentrating on the characters of Achilles and Hector and, to a lesser degree, Paris and Helen. Benioff's approach closely resembles the intertextual methods of Dictys and Dares, even if Benioff may have taken over some of their scenes from modern mythological handbooks [...] Contrary to the times of the Second Sophistic, nowadays only few people know the *Iliad* well enough to enjoy most of Benioff's allusions. [...] But most people will confine themselves to doing what readers of Dictys and Dares have done through the centuries: enjoy the old story in its "true version" that tells us "what really happened" with a seasoning of "modern" rationalism³.

¹ The best account of the Second Sophistic as a consistent literary movement is now Kim, Lawrence, *Homer between History and Fiction in Imperial Greek Literature*, Cambridge, 2010.

² See Nelson, William, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller*, Cambridge Mass., 1973, p. 111: just as it happened for Second Sophistic audiences, in Defoe's times «sophisticated readers remained skeptical despite the efforts made to convince them» and because of this attitude «protestations of the truth of stories are sometimes made with what amounts to a disarming wink».

³ Danek, Georg, «The Story of Troy Through the Centuries», in Winkler, Martin M. (ed.), *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic*, Singapore, 2007, pp. 68-84, notably p. 83.

⁴ On Dictys and Dares in the Middle Ages: Jung, Marc-René, *La légende de Troie en France au moyen âge: analyse des versions françaises et bibliographie raisonnée des manuscrits*, Bâle-Tübingen, 1996; Faivre D'Arcier, Louis, *La circulation des manuscrits du De excidio Troiae de Darès le Phrygien (viii^e-xv^e siècles)*, Paris, 2006; Punzi, Arianna, «Le metamorfosi di Darete Frigio: la materia troiana in Italia (con un'appendice sul ms. Vat Barb. lat. 3953)», in

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In fact, the analogy between filmgoers today and Second-Sophistic readers can fit even better the post-classical reception of Dictys and Dares, when medieval readers completely lost the ability to project the texts onto the appropriate Homeric backdrop and instead embraced them as the only reliable version of the Trojan war⁴.

Lest we all too easily ascribe such “naive” attitude to a “medieval” frame of mind though, I would like to draw attention to the humanistic reception of Dictys and Dares and to the fact that this attitude persisted into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, mostly unaffected by the resurgence of both Homer and ancient Greek⁵.

In this paper, I would like to consider the response of two leading early humanists – Petrarch and Salutati – to pseudo-documentary Trojan texts in the crucial decades that brought about the rediscovery of ancient Greek and of Homer, especially in the West.

PETRARCH

In 1355 Petrarch had received a codex of Homer’s *Iliad* from the Byzantine Nicholas Sigerus, but all he could do with it was to sigh and hold the manuscript to his chest which remained ‘dumb’ to him as he was ‘deaf’ to Greek:

sine qua [Sigerus’ voice] Homerus tuus apud me mutus, imo vero ego apud illum surdus sum. Gaudeo tamen vel aspectu [of the codex] solo et sepe illum amplexus ac suspirans dico: ‘O magne vir, quam cupide te audirem! sed aurium mearum alteram mors [of the Greek monk Barlaam, who had tutored Petrarch in Greek] obstruxit, alteram longinquitas invisae terrarum’⁶.

Despite his protestations to the contrary, Petrarch’s endeavours to actually learn Greek were only half hearted at best⁷, and in order to hear Homer’s voice, he resorted to have him translated. With Boccaccio’s financial and logistic support⁸, Petrarch commissioned a complete Latin translation of Homer’s works from Leontius Pilatus⁹, a Calabrian monk who produced

Paradisi, Gioia, Punzi, Arianna (eds.), *Storia, geografia, tradizioni manoscritte = Critica del testo 7/1*, 2004, pp. 163-211; Ead., «La circolazione della materia troiana nell’Europa del ’200: da Darete Frigio al Roman de Troie en prose», *Messana*, 6, 1991, pp. 69-108; Clark, Frederic, «Reading the ‘First Pagan Historiographer’: Dares Phrygius and Medieval Genealogy», *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 41/2, 2010, pp. 203-226.

⁵ On Dictys and Dares vs Homer a good starting point is Clarke, Howard, *Homer’s Readers. A Historical Introduction to the Iliad and the Odyssey*, Newark, 1981, chap. 1 («Homer Romanticized»). On Dictys and Dares in Italian humanistic and Renaissance culture, Prosperi, Valentina «Il paradosso del mentitore. Ambigue fortune di Ditti e Darete», in Capodiecì, Luisa, Ford, Philip (eds.), *Homère à la Renaissance. Mythe et Transfigurations*, Roma, 2011, pp. 41-57; Ead., «Strategie di autoconservazione del mito. La guerra di Troia tra Seconda Sofistica e prima età moderna», *MD*, 71, 2013, pp. 145-175.

⁶ Petrarca, Francesco, *Familiars*, XVIII, 2, 10. The later and famous *Epistle to Homer* (*Familiars*, XXIV, 12) also highlights Petrarch’s attitude towards Homer and the study of Greek.

⁷ Weiss, Roberto, *Medieval and Humanist Greek. Collected Essays*, Padova, 1977, pp. 150-165 («Notes on Petrarch and Homer»), pp. 166-192 («Petrarca e il mondo greco»).

⁸ Boccaccio hosted and supported Leontius in his home for the whole duration of his translating work, as he proudly mentions in *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, XV, 7: *ipse insuper fui qui primus meis sumptibus Omeri libros et alios quosdam grecos in Etruriam revocavi*. He also obtained for Leontius the first publicly-funded chair of Greek in Florence. See Ricci, Pier Giorgio, «La prima cattedra di greco in Firenze», *Rinascimento*, 3, 1952, pp. 159-165.

⁹ On Petrarch and Boccaccio as promoters of the first Latin translation of Homer the classic work is Pertusi,

a stilted, word-by-word version of the Homeric poems that would constitute the basis for most subsequent Homeric versions for the next two centuries¹⁰.

The manuscript of Leontius's version has come down to us, with the occasional handwritten note by Petrarch: none of which bears any mention of either Dictys or Dares. Given, as we shall see, Petrarch's familiarity with both texts, we might be tempted to overinterpret their absence in the marginal notes of Homer's manuscript as a sign of humanistic skepticism on the part of Petrarch.

Far from this being the case, in his writings Petrarch makes use of Dictys and Dares much in the same fashion as mediaeval readers had done.

First of all, in the centuries prior to Petrarch, it had been customary to comment on Virgil's *Aeneid* and all poetical treatments of the Trojan myth in the light of the *real* story of Troy, as related in Dictys and Dares: thus one (especially Dares) or both texts served as a sort of antidote to the unreliable poetical inventions of Virgil. As Arianna Punzi has shown, in the Middle Ages Dares had served as a veritable *accessus* to the text of Virgil: the *De excidio* was either copied sequentially with the *Aeneid* in the manuscripts of Virgil, or it was included in the apparatus of *scholia*, together with Servius. Furthermore, manuscripts often voiced explicit cautionary advice against the fables of the poets, who included Homer as much as Virgil, and much of the medieval poetical production on the Trojan war stemmed from an open distrust of the existing poetical (fictional) sources¹¹.

Although Petrarch does not use *Ephemeris* and *De excidio* to point out inconsistencies in Homer's poems, then, this could simply be due to the erratic character of his marginal notes. If we look instead at a text to which he devoted much more study and passion, the *Aeneid*, we shall see that at least in one instance Petrarch turned to Dares with exactly this purpose: when commenting on a Servian scholium Petrarch refers to the prefatory letter by "Cornelius Nepos" that preceded Dares' text, and precisely to the passage where Homer is accused of *insania*, of folly, for making the gods fight.

Where Servius noted that Virgil followed Homer's lead in having the gods fighting, Petrarch remarks that "according to Nepos" this was why Homer was regarded as a madman in Athens¹². Nowhere in the note is there any sign that Petrarch doubted the letter's or Dares' authenticity.

Agostino, Leonzio Pilato fra Petrarca e Boccaccio. *Le sue versioni omeriche negli autografi di Venezia e la cultura greca del primo Umanesimo* Venezia-Roma, 1964. See also: De Nolhac, Pierre, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, nouvelle édition, Paris, 1965; Di Benedetto, Filippo, «Leonzio, Omero e le "Pandette"», *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica*, 12, 1969, pp. 53-112; Rossi, Tiziano (ed.), *Il codice parigino latino 7880.1. Iliade di Omero tradotta in latino da Leonzio Pilato con le postille di Francesco Petrarca*, Milano, 2003; Pade, Marianne, «Un nuovo testimone dell'Iliade di Leonzio Pilato», in Montanari, Franco et al. (eds.), *Posthomeric III. Tradizioni omeriche dall'Antichità al Rinascimento*, Genova, 2001, pp. 87-102; Ead., «Boccaccio, Leonzio, and the Transformation of the Greek Myths», in Capodiecì, Ford, *Homère à la Renaissance*, op. cit., pp. 27-40; Ead., «The fortuna of Leontius Pilatus's Homer. With an Edition of Pier Candido Decembrio's "Why Homer's Greek Verses are Rendered in Latin Prose"», in Coulson, Frank Thomas, Grotans, Anna A. (eds.), *Classica et Beneventana. Essays presented to Virginia Brown on the occasion of her 65th birthday*, Turnhout, 2008, pp. 149-172.

¹⁰ Sowerby, Robin, «The Homeric Versio Latina», *ICS*, 21, 1996, pp. 161-202.

¹¹ I summarize the important essay by Punzi, Arianna, «Omero Sire?», in Montanari, Franco, Pittaluga, Silvia, (eds), *Posthomeric I. Dall'Antichità al Rinascimento*, Genova, 1997, pp. 85-98.

¹² Petrarch, handnote to Servius, VIII, 699: *Contra Neptunum Homerum sequitur, qui deos dicit contra se diversis partibus habere certamen – 1668. habere certamen] Unde Athenis pro insano habitus est, ut Cornelius Nepos ait [Dares, p. 1] Quod satis puto apud vulgus insanum iuxta illud nostrum: "Vitaque nostra furor sub iudice facta furenti" [Petr.,*

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In any case, we are not lacking in evidence that Petrarch knew and trusted Dictys and Dares as providing accurate first-hand reports of the Trojan war. Not only did he own – in Ms. Par. Lat. 5690 – a complete transcript of the *Ephemeris*, but we can assume that he read it and interpreted it as a historical text. The manuscript was put together at the request of bishop Landolfo Colonna, a friend of Petrarch's, and the texts it included show that it was meant to be a collection of historical texts¹³. True to mediaeval practice, Dictys was also drawn upon by Petrarch to comment on other classical texts: the *Ephemeris* is quoted as an 'auctoritas' (authority) on old age alongside Cicero in the *Seniles*¹⁴; his description of Chiron's cave is quoted in Petrarch's marginal glosses to Statius' *Achilleid*¹⁵.

As for Dares, the *De excidio* is the unnamed main source in the *De viris illustribus*' biography of Hercules. Nowhere to my knowledge in Petrarch's works is there any questioning of the authenticity of the two texts. On the contrary, there is a place in Petrarch's oeuvre where, despite a remark on contradictions in their accounts, Dictys and Dares are openly classified as historians. And this is a passage from a draft of the *Triumph of Fame*. The two authors are named among those «that help us reinforce our feeble memory through the aid of sound documents» («ond'ave appoggi ed elimenti / nostra memoria fragile e digiuna»), that is, among historians¹⁶.

COLUCCIO SALUTATI

It is with Coluccio Salutati, in the next generation of humanists, that Dictys and Dares experience their first serious downturn in fortunes and are openly branded as forgeries.

[...] Aliud [on Hector's appearance] autem apud Latinos non memini me legisse, nisi penes Guidonem de Columna Messana, qui, Dictym Daretaque secutus, librum qui Troianus vulgo dicitur ex duabus illis hystoriis compilavit et ex duobus apochryphis unum fecit, quem omnes quos eruditos vidi floccifaciunt, utpote carentem tam gravitate quam fide¹⁷.

Epyst. III 4,50]: Petrarca, Francesco, *Le postille del Virgilio Ambrosiano*, Baglio, Marco et al. (eds.), Padova, 2006, vol. II, pp. 916-17.

¹³ Billanovich, Giuseppe, *Itinera. Vicende di libri e di testi*, a cura di Cortesi, Mariarosa, vol. I, Roma, 2004, p. 238; in the same volume, chap. 1, «Petrarch and the textual tradition of Livy», pp. 1-101, notabl 33; Id., *Gli umanisti e le cronache medioevali*, «Italia Medioevale e Umanistica», 1, 1958, pp. 103-137. On the manuscript Par. Lat. 5690: Ciccuto, Marcello et al. (eds.), *Reliquiarum servator. Il manoscritto Parigino latino 5690 e la storia di Roma nel Livio dei Colonna e di Francesco Petrarca*, Pisa, 2012.

¹⁴ *Neque vero placere michi unquam potuit, quamvis adolescenti, et multo nunc minus seni, quod apud Ciceronem iure optimo Cato improbat cecilianum illud: "In senecta hoc miserrimum: sentire ea aetate se odiosum esse alteri"; neque illud Ditis Gnosii tertio Troiane historie scriptum libro: "Non dubium" inquit "cuiquam quin contemptui sit adolescentiae senecta etas"* (Petrarca, *Sen.*, VIII, 2, 51, in Rizzo, Silvia, Berté, Monica (eds.), *Res seniles*, libri V-VIII, Firenze, 2009, pp. 310-312).

¹⁵ *Signa tamen divumque thorique quisque sacrarat 9. sacrarat] Require Ditis Gnosii libro 6° circa medium [Dictys, VI, 7]*» Petrarca, *Le postille del Virgilio Ambrosiano*, op. cit., p. 454.

¹⁶ «e Dare e Dite / fra loro discordi e non è chi 'l ver cribri; / così rimansi ancor l'antica lite / di questi e d'altri e gli argomenti interi, / ché le certe notizie son fallite.», Petrarca, Francesco, *Triumphus Fame*, iia, 89-90; 107-111, *Trionfi, rime stravaganti, codice degli abbozzi*, ed. by Pacca, Vinicio, Paolino, Laura, Milano, 1996, p. 622. On this passage of *Trionfi* see the editor's *Introduction to Francesco Petrarca, De viris illustribus. Adam-Hercules*, ed. by Malta, Caterina, Messina, 2008, pp. LXXIV-LXXV.

¹⁷ Salutati, Coluccio, *Epistolario*, ed. by Novati, Francesco, vol. III, Roma, 1896, pp. 545-546.

In emphasising the derivative relationship of the discredited Guido delle Colonne from Dictys and Dares, Salutati clearly extends the damning judgement shared by men of letters on Guido (“omnes quos eruditos vidi floccifaciunt, utpote carentem tam gravitate quam fide”) from the medieval heir to his Latin models, thus implying a similar clarity of vision in his peers.

This clearly was not the case, as Coluccio’s letters testify, moreover I would surmise that up to a point he was himself a reluctant victim of the irresistible charms of the Trojan chronicles.

His fierce attack on the “apocryphal” Dictys and Dares originates from a peculiar circumstance: Salutati’s patron, Malatesta of Pandolfo Malatesta, lord of Pesaro, had turned to the Florentine chancellor for a reliable account on Hector’s appearance, as he wanted to include the Trojan hero in a gallery of portraits of *virii illustres*¹⁸. Salutati replied in dismay that the only available accounts on what Hector looked like were those in Guido and in the equally unreliable Dictys and Dares.

Despite this, Salutati’s epistles reveal that he set about the task to the best of his abilities: he searched for the books¹⁹, turned to more learned friends for help, when his doctrine was insufficient and, in sum, did all he could to satisfy Malatesta’s request. True, in the letters he never refrains from voicing his doubts on the Trojan chronicles – Dictys and Dares, together with Guido delle Colonne. More in general, Salutati was skeptical of the possibility of restoring the historical truth on events so encrusted with legends as to lose any historical semblance²⁰. Nevertheless, Salutati knew and read not only the main texts of the Trojan tradition, but also the minor ones, such as Joseph Iscanus’ *Bellum Troianum* which he tried to purchase at some point²¹, or the so-called *Ilias latina*²².

Let us now return to the epistle to Malatesta. Notwithstanding his doubts, Salutati had taken a description of Hector from the only available sources, Dares and Guido:

¹⁸ On the iconographic motif of *virii illustres* in the age of Salutati: Donato, Maria Monica, «Gli eroi romani tra storia ed *exemplum*. I primi cicli umanistici di uomini famosi», in Settis, Salvatore (ed.), *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte italiana*, II, *I generi e i temi ritrovati*, Torino, 1985, pp. 97-152. On Dares as an iconographical source for the description of the Trojan characters: Maffia Scariati, Irene, «La *descriptio puellae* dalla tradizione mediolatina a quella umanistica: Elena, Isotta e le altre», in Ead. (ed.), *A scuola con Ser Brunetto. Indagini sulla ricezione di Brunetto Latini dal Medioevo al Rinascimento*. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Università di Basilea, 8-10 giugno 2006, Firenze, 2008, pp. 381-400.

¹⁹ Salutati, *Epistolario*, letter to Pietro Turchi, July the 22nd 1398, pp. 310-311: *Frater karissime. parva litterula multa cogis et ego similiter tuum sequar exemplum. Daretem Phrygium, quem communis querit dominus, venalem nunquam vidi, sed incidi semel in non venalem. nec in Dictys Cretensis libris amplior michi fortuna fuit. utrunque queram, quoniam unus sine altero Troiani belli non complet hystoriam; cum invenero fiamque voti compos dominus meus agnoscet. interim bono sit animo, nec aliquandiu carere gravetur, quo semper hactenus caruit; eoque velim equiore patiatum animo, quod in illis libris nec eloquentiam admirabitur nec fidem hystorie, sicut cogitat, assequetur.*

²⁰ As he states in the remainder of the above-cited letter to Pietro Turchi (p. 311): [Malatesta] *videbit enim, cum id perfecero, quid illi scripserint; quid autem fuerit nec ab ipsis nec ab aliis expectet; usque adeo prisca illa permixta fabulis ab hystoria recesserunt.*

²¹ *Vellem eciam, quia non habeo, libellum illum metricum cuius inicium est ‘Iliadum lacrimas eversaque Pergama fato’ qui frigium Daretis secutus troianam historiam pertractavit. Si illos habes, mitte. Postquam enim exemplaria fecerim, curabo remittere.* Letter of 1387, quoted in Witt, Ronald G., *Hercules at the Crossroads. The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, Durham, 1983, p. 244, n. 61.

²² It appears from his letters that he managed to acquire them: see the letter to Iacopo della Massa Alidosi on 15 March 1398, in *Epistolario*, vol. III, pp. 264-276, notably 274.

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ex quibus Guidonis et Daretis verbis quantum ad Hectorei corporis habitum, quem scire cupis, attinet, videre potes heroem illum fuisse statura magnum, colore candido, capillo crispo, decente coma, vultu venerabili, barbatum, strabum oculis et, si credendum putas esse Guidoni, pilorum nube repletum. quibus pro latinorum scriptorum inopia nec satisfacere possum uberius nec tu non debes remanere contentus²³.

However, Salutati had heard of another text that he thought might be useful to his patron: a book rare and difficult to acquire; moreover, a Greek book, and thus for him unreadable. Not deterred by the difficulties that had beset him, he had retrieved the book through his friend Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia²⁴ and had the relevant passages on Hector translated by Florentine humanist Leonardo Bruni²⁵.

This episode might seem like a perfect example of cooperation among the most distinguished humanists of the time, as eager to retrieve authentic documents on the classical past as they were to get rid of dubious interlopers. But if we look at the source Salutati chose, we shall see how his investigation on Hector was doomed from the outset. The Greek text he turned to in order to make amends for Dares' flaws, the one he names as *De deorum imaginibus et heroum* is none other than Philostratus' *Heroicus*. The *Heroicus*, which has been the subject of much recent scholarship²⁶, is a quintessential product of the Second Sophistic vogue for Homer-centred, experimental literature. In other words, the *Heroicus* and the abhorred Dares and Dictys are in fact birds of a feather: a fact that could not be grasped by Salutati at the time. The translation into Latin and the long vicissitudes met by Dictys and Dares had completely effaced any resemblance they had originally had with Philostratus' dialogue, which ironically, according to scholars today, was written as a response to and parody of Dictys' *Ephemeris*²⁷. Nonetheless, the fact remains that, just as he was eschewing Dictys and Dares, Salutati got ensnared by a text which was to all intents identical.

I am not suggesting that when Salutati perused the *Heroicus* in search for evidence on Hector, he was unaware of the fictional character of the text. What I'd like to point out in-

²³ *Ibidem*, letter to Malatesta, pp. 546-547.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, letter to Iacopo Angeli da Scarperia on 4 August 1401, pp. 521-522: *ceterum Philostratus Atheniensis, ut nosti, multos describit heroas. volo quod michi quamprimum copiam habitus Hectoris et quid circa eius personam, vestes et arma describat, ut recitat, translatum mittas. satisfactorius equidem cuidam domino [Malatesta], qui me requirit, scire cupio quid ille diffiniat. vale et rescribe et quod de Hectore postulo fac absolvas*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, letter to Malatesta, p. 547: *Verum, quia Grecorum unum perceperam, Philostratum nomine, Samium vero tam origine quam gente, librum fecisse De deorum imaginibus et heroum, curavi non difficultate modica librum illum habere et per virum optimum dominum Leonardum Cecchi de Aretio, studiorum meorum emulum et lepidum socium, qui paucis annis non mediocriter ex Grecorum fontibus hausit, feci diligenter inquiri si possemus affectioni tue plenius aliquid exhibere; tandemque duobus in locis repertus est auctor ille fecisse specialiter Hectoris mentionem. uno quidem loco, quo verbis translatoris utar, sic locutus est: audi igitur, quandoquidem id commodum esse arbitraris, me diligenter imaginem Hectoris referentem. On Leonardo Bruni as translator of the classics, see Hankins, James, *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. I, *Humanism*, Roma, 2003, pp. 177-192 and 243-271; Botley, Paul, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti and Desiderius Erasmus*, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 1-62, notably 10; on Bruni as translator of Homer: Thiermann, Peter (ed.), *Die Orationes Homeri des Leonardo Bruni Aretino: Kritische Edition*, Leiden, 1993.*

²⁶ For a recent discussion and comprehensive bibliography see Whitmarsh, Tim, «Performing heroics: language, landscape and identity in Philostratus' *Heroicus*», in Bowie, Ewen, Elsner, Jàs (eds.), *Philostratus*, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 205-229.

²⁷ See Kim, *Homer Between History and Fiction*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

stead, is that the early modern dialogue with the Trojan past could not all of the sudden change its ways and cut off its centuries-long ties with the Dictys-Dares corpus because of the initiative and wisdom of one single humanist. Especially one who, like Salutati, was entangled in a web of intellectual and personal relationships where the Trojan discourse was common currency, and even an investigation into the physical appearance of the Trojan heroes was a matter of importance.

There is one episode from the early years of Salutati that will help reinforce this picture and show how the Florentine chancellor fully participated in the Trojan scenario whose foundations lay with Dictys and Dares.

Over thirty years ago Enrico Menestò published a new document by Salutati, a *Declamatio Priami*²⁸, a dramatic dialogue that stages an exchange between king Priam and other characters in the Trojan court. When he first published it, Menestò mistakenly assumed that there was an underlying Homeric model and this assumption led him to misinterpret the whole tone of the text. It is a short text, which ends abruptly, but some important points can be drawn from it if we read it correctly.

The dialogue opens with an address to King Priam by the Greek hero Diomedes. In what is a threat more than a request for peace, Diomedes promises the Trojans unrelenting war and havoc if they do not cease all hostilities.

«O rex, si solum nobis inspectis sine ira non estis, toto ergo tempore vite vestre non eritis absque ira, cum Graeci in tanta potentia vicini vestri existant. Et non est tempus ulterius differendi, quin videas nos et nostros coram civitate tua adversus te et tuos in armis continuis insultantes. Et si de solum nobis inermis tanto dolore compungeris, quanto potius condolebis, cum plusquam centum milia Grecorum contra te inspicias armatorum, contra quos nulla te poterunt cacumina conservare, quin tu et tui crudelis mortis non sentiatis interitus infelices. Et antequam tibi haec mala succedant, secreta libertate, verba potes effundere velut vana»²⁹.

At Diomedes' provocation the Trojans burst into a violent protest, reaching for their swords, but Priam rises from his throne and gives a speech to calm their spirits. He commands the Trojans not to harm Diomedes, but his speech is also very abrasive in tone, in that he taunts the Greek envoy as a *stultus* for whom forbearance is required from the *sapientes* (the Trojans):

Sed Priamus suo elevatus a solio adversus illos potenter exclamavit, ne iniuriam aliquam ulli presumant inferre, cum non sit sapientis stulto secundum suam stultitiam respondere et proprium stulti sit suas demonstrare stultitias et sapientis in sua sapientia tollerare stultorum errores.

«Sicut enim stulti libere est stulta verba diffundere, sic sapientis cedit ad laudem auscultare que dixerit et auscultata ridere. In verbis igitur stultis cognoscitur stultitia proferentis. et ego prius vellem in persona pati quam aliquis legatus in mea curia aliquam pateretur iniuriam; quod pro modico enim et vili excessu potuit se aliquis vituperare. Sedeant igitur universi nec amodo aliquis vestrum presumat amplius inhonesta verba proferre».

²⁸ Menestò, Enrico, «Nuove testimonianze su Coluccio Salutati», *Sandalion* 3, 1980, pp. 357-374. Menestò had first published the text in his *Coluccio Salutati. Editi e inediti latini dal ms. 53 della Biblioteca Comunale di Todi*, preface by Pizzani, Uberto, Todi, 1971.

²⁹ Menestò, «Nuove testimonianze», *op. cit.*, p. 372.

V. PROSPERI – THE TROJAN CHRONICLES

It is at this point in the text that a third, unnamed character speaks. It is clearly a Trojan, and he pleads with Priam that Diomedes be punished for his words. As I mentioned, the first editor of the text, Menestò, misunderstood the sense of this last speech. The reason is that he assumed that Salutati had drawn his inspiration from Homer, more precisely from the episode of Glaucus and Diomedes in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, which he would have «somehow learned about»³⁰. On this false presumption Menestò even imagined that Salutati developed his *Declamatio* to include a reworking of the celebrated Homeric scene of the two heroes exchanging armours³¹.

Instead, Salutati presents us with harsh, sarcastic characters, ostensibly trying to jeopardise the embassy; and with a situation charged with potential violence. For this characterisation of men and situations, Salutati had a familiar model in Dictys and Dares, both of which report episodes of antagonising and unsuccessful Greek embassies to Priam.

In Dares XVI, the Greeks send Diomedes and Ulysses to ask the Trojans for peace and the restitution of Helen, but Priam rejects all requests and brusquely dismisses the ambassadors³².

An episode in Dictys presents an even better template for Salutati's text: in *Ephemeris* II.20 ff, Diomedes and Ulysses, accompanied by Menelaus, present their requests to Priam: if the Trojans return Helen, the Greeks will release Priam's son Polydorus, now in their hands. When a vote is cast among the Trojan elders that grants the Greeks' request, Priam is incensed to the point of fainting³³. Despite the opposition of the elders and of the Trojan people³⁴, the king and his closer circle refuse to return Helen to the Greeks. Hector offers a Trojan princess in exchange, and, before Menelaus' indignant reaction, Aeneas³⁵ escalates to arrogant threats if the Greeks did not leave Troy immediately³⁶.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 366.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *De excidio*, 17, «Meanwhile the envoys had come to Priam, and Ulysses stated Agamemnon's demands. If Helen and the booty, he said, were returned and proper reparations were made, the Greeks would depart in peace. Priam [...] repudiated peace. He declared war and commanded that the envoys of the Greeks be expelled from his boundaries.» (all translations from *De excidio* and *Ephemeris* are taken from Frazer, R. M., *The Trojan War. The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*, Bloomington, 1966).

³³ *Ephemeris*, II, 24, «When Priam heard this report, he collapsed, utterly dumbfounded, in the presence of all. Soon, however, he got to his feet; those who were standing around helped to revive him. He wanted to go to the council, but the princes made him remain while they themselves went off».

³⁴ *Ephemeris*, II, 25.

³⁵ The role of Aeneas in this situation is consistent with his negative characterisation in the *Ephemeris*, which – like *De excidio* – portrays Aeneas as a traitor. Salutati himself shares the notion of Aeneas as traitor, as he states in *De fato*, even placing his trust in Dictys and Dares, that he refers to as *hystoricorum antiquissimi*: Salutati, Coluccio, *Il trattato «De Tyranno» e lettere scelte*, ed. by Ercole, Francesco, Bologna 1942, p. 38. On the motif of *impius Aeneas* see J. P. Callu, «*Impius Aeneas?* Echos Virgiliens du Bas-Empire», in Chevallier, Raymond (ed.), *Présence de Virgile* (Actes du Colloque des 9, 11 e 12 Décembre 1976, Paris E.N.S., Tours), Paris, 1978, pp. 161-174; Chiappinelli, Francesco, *Impius Aeneas*, Acireale-Roma, 2007; G. Scafoglio, «The Betrayal of Aeneas», *GRBS*, 53, 2013, pp. 1-14; M. Bettini, M. Lentano, *Il mito di Enea. Immagini e racconti dalla Grecia a oggi*, Torino, 2013, cap. VI, *Impius Aeneas. Controistoria di un eroe*, pp. 190-221.

³⁶ II, 26, «Then Aeneas replied: “You will not even be granted this favour since I and the other relatives and friends who advise Alexander strongly oppose it. Fortunately there are, and always will be, those who safeguard the house and kingdom of Priam. The loss of Polydorus does not leave Priam bereft of children, for he still has many other such sons. [...] Up to this time we have merely been bandying words. Now, however, unless

If we look at Salutati's text, it will be clear that the third unnamed character to speak after Diomedes and Priam, does so exactly in the spirit of Aeneas' speech in Dictys. His aim is not to soothe feelings and meet Diomedes half-way, but, on the contrary, to escalate the level of confrontation and to stress that the Trojans were not open to any request. After he speaks, in fact, Diomedes, much like Ulysses in Dictys, coolly replies with more threats. Diomedes' hope to meet the unnamed character «where he can aptly thank him for his words» is obviously sarcastic and alludes to one last fatal meeting on the battlefield. Equally sarcastic is Diomedes' last remark that Priam must deem himself fortunate to have such a wise advisor. Misled by Homeric characterisation in the *Iliad*, Menestò interprets Diomedes' words at face value and emends the last sentence of the text to make it comply with his own idyllic view of heroes that «manifest their human heart». Where Salutati's Diomedes says: *Bene video quod beatus est ille rex, qui te in consiliarum suum tenet, qui tam bene nosti regi consulere tuo, ut tuus rex iniuriarum auctor existat et sic de facili labilis ad pudorem*, Menestò changes it to: *ut tuus rex iniuriarum auctor «non» existat*, which alters the meaning of the sentence and of the whole text.

Despite his misgivings for those texts, Salutati's familiarity with the Trojan chronicles of Dictys and Dares was so ingrained that when he set down to write about Trojan scenarios he immediately deferred to them.

Anthony Grafton has said that the new philological approach of Humanism conjures up the image of a train. «A train in which Greeks and Latins, spurious and genuine authorities sit side by side until they reach a stop marked Renaissance. Then grim-faced humanists climb aboard, check tickets, and expel fakes in hordes through doors and windows alike [...] Only [...] genuine classics will remain on board to wind up as part of the canon»³⁷. When it comes to Dictys and Dares no one expressed their distrust more clearly than Salutati; and yet he used them as documentary sources on behalf of his patron and as literary models for his own sole pleasure. We may well conclude that he let them stay on the train. And it was not for another two centuries before they got off.

you flee our land within a reasonable time, and take your fleet, soon, very soon, you will be tasting Trojan valor and courage. Troy has more than enough young men who are ready for battle, and every day new allies are coming».

³⁷ Grafton, Anthony, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*, Princeton, 1990, pp. 102-103.