

The End of the *De excidio Troiae Historia* of Dares Phrygius

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The *De excidio Troiae Historia* ascribed to Dares Phrygius is a late antique work of inestimable influence on the literature and learning of the European Middle Ages¹. Together with the *Ephemeris* credited to Dictys Cretensis, the brief history of Dares offered what for centuries was among the most important surviving records of Troy lore². There is significant scholarly controversy as to the date and authorship of the *De excidio*, a relatively brief text written in highly paratactic, unadorned, grammatically correct prose³. Allegedly (and certainly not) a work of translation by the Ciceronian contemporary Cornelius Nepos, the *De excidio* is most likely a circa late fifth-century A. D. learned forgery, a work of the sort meant to appeal to an educated audience via its rich intertextual engagement with its literary predecessors⁴. Of immense popularity in bygone times, lamentably it has been relegated to relative obscurity, famous today in part for providing the most detailed extant account of the physical appearances of the heroes of Greece and Troy⁵. If there were a Greek original of Dares' history, it is lost⁶. Most of the scholarly work on the *De excidio* is devoted to its source material for medieval literature, or for its importance in preserving Troy lore not otherwise attested⁷.

¹ For the text see Meister 1873. I am grateful for the helpful corrections and insightful suggestions of the anonymous reviewers; any errors that remain are my own.

² The standard edition of Dictys is Eisenhut 1994, which includes the relevant papyri texts confirming the existence of a Greek original.

³ Cornil 2012 offers an introduction to the main problems; cfr. Schetter 1988; Beschorner 1992; Bretzigheimer 2008 and Bretzigheimer 2009. On the medieval popularity of Dares, foundational is D'Arcier 2006. Still useful is Griffin 1907.

⁴ For Dares as subversive historian, see Clark 2020.

⁵ Dares 12-13. Cfr. Griffith 1985, and especially Botto - De Biasi 1978 and De Biasi 1979.

⁶ The existence of such a text is assumed by, e.g., Cameron 2004, 137, n. 62.

⁷ For a good introduction to useful secondary studies, note especially Merkle 1996; Merkle 1999; Bretzigheimer 2009, and Gargubino 2015. There is a summary of recent work at Lentano-Zanusso 2016-2017.

Both Dares and Dictys offer strikingly different accounts of the Trojan War from that found in the poetic works of Homer, Virgil, and Quintus Smyrnaeus. Both authors present Antenor as a traitor to his own city, with Dares implicating Aeneas explicitly as well⁸. Antenor and Aeneas are thus cast as Trojan heroes ready to assist the Greeks in the takeover of Priam's city – a tradition of treachery that had been established long before the composition of the *De excidio* or the *Ephemeris*⁹. The Virgilian critic Servius, for example, attests that Livy subscribed to the view, through a misunderstanding of the historian's text¹⁰. Surviving sources do not permit us to know where the story first appeared¹¹. The question of Aeneas' possible betrayal of his city has relevance to the story of his eventual settlement in Italy and the engendering of the process by which eventually Rome was founded in Latium¹². Readers of Virgil's *Aeneid* have tried to discern traces in that epic of this problematic history of alleged treason¹³. This mining of Virgil's text has resulted in dark readings of certain passages that in fact may depict an innocent Aeneas¹⁴. Certainly medieval writers had access both to the Dares-Dictys accounts of Aeneas as traitor, and to Virgil's celebrated depiction of a very different *ultima nox* for Troy, one in which the son of Anchises is guilty of no connivance or treacherous intercourse with the Greeks. This somewhat schizophrenic inheritance resulted in the bifurcated hero of the vernacular Troy and

⁸ Virgil's Venus references Antenor in her address to Jupiter at *Aen.* 1,242-246, with mention of his successful landing; cfr. the passing mention of the *Antenoridae* at *Aen.* 6,484.

⁹ See further here Galinsky 1969, 48-49; cfr. also Andolfi 2019, 137.

¹⁰ Serv. *Aen.* 1,242, on which see Momigliano 1987, 276-277.

¹¹ Dict. 5,8 knows only of a betrayal by Antenor.

¹² On this note Moatti 2015, 275. On the complicated problems connected to the Trojan element in Rome's founding, the standard comprehensive treatment remains Perret 1942; cfr. Gruen 1992, especially 6-51.

¹³ Cfr. Quint 2018, 34-35. For the problem of Aeneas as *traditor* see further Scafolgio 2013.

¹⁴ E. g., Verg. *Aen.* 1,488: *se quoque principibus permixtum adgnovit Achivis*, on which see Giusti 2018, 166. Quotes from the *Aeneid* are cited from Conte 2019. On the vagueness of the temporal reference of Aeneas' depiction in the temple murals, see Papaioannou 2022, 123-126; cfr. also Thomas 1983; Clay 1988; Putnam 1988, and (on the possible Lucretian intertexts of the passage) Frantunuono 2023.

Aeneas epics, in which Aeneas at Troy is seen in rather a negative light, in contrast to the hero on arrival in Italy¹⁵.

Virgil as well as Homer are the major extant authors Dares' account of Troy's fall contradicts, with Virgil's characterization of Aeneas a particular target of the late antique chronicler's alleged dispute¹⁶. The divergence of the accounts of Virgil and Dares is undeniable, though the Augustan poet carefully presents the story of Troy's fall in the context of Aeneas' own account to Dido's court, such that at least some of Virgil's composition of Aeneas is presented as a self-portrait of the Trojan hero. We shall see that the Aeneas of Dares accords with certain key aspects of Virgil's character, with the late antique historian offering an account of the famous Trojan that concurs with at least one strain of judgment found in the *Aeneid*, indeed the verdict of the ultimate victors in the disposition of affairs in Italy.

We shall endeavor to examine in particular the closing movements of Dares' *De excidio*, wherein we shall find evidence of the influence of Virgil's *Aeneid* on his prose successor, as well as of implicit comment on the Augustan poet's account of Aeneas' Hesperian voyage and arrival in Latium. We shall find that Virgil served as not merely a source for Dares to rework in his narrative of Troy's fall, but also that a careful investigation of Dares' use of his predecessor sheds light on how the poet responded to the problem of the tradition of Aeneas as betrayer of Troy. The implications of this study will serve to offer some insight into the problems addressed by an Augustan program that confronted the question of Roman identity in light of the traditions of Rome's Trojan origins¹⁷. The depiction of Aeneas at the end of Dares' history of Troy's fall will be presented as both falling in line with certain crucial elements of Virgil's narrative, even as it diverges in a significant way from its Augustan poetic antecedent.

Dares' short work follows an interesting trajectory. It commences with an account of the Argonautic quest for the Golden Fleece, offering the story of Jason and Medea as a remote cause of the Trojan War (Dares 1-

¹⁵ So Lienert 2019, 28-29. An argument could be made that Virgil presents the opposite picture, with Aeneas as a noble figure in the context of Troy's fall, and a more ambivalent one as the epic advances to its Italian conclusion.

¹⁶ Cfr. Clark 2015, 203.

¹⁷ On this see further Farrow 1992.

2)¹⁸. Dares' Argonautic opening is not shared with Dictys, and in fact takes something of a novel approach to tracing the remote antecedents of the war at Troy. It may be relevant here to note that a significant model for Virgil's depiction of Aeneas was the Jason of Apollonius Rhodius particularly with respect to the influence of Apollonius on the crafting of the Aeneas-Dido affair¹⁹. The Apollonian influence on Virgil extends to the narrative of Aeneas' landing in Italy in *Aeneid* 7, where the invocation of Erato at 7,37 ff. echoes the Hellenistic poet's similar summons of the Muse from *Argonautica* 3. Dares' history begins with a story of a western man who travels east and returns with an eastern woman; it will close with the image of an eastern man journeying west to a destiny that includes a western bride²⁰.

Aeneas does not figure much in the earlier movements of Dares' history, emerging as a significant character in the drama only toward the end. One of the few references to him in the narrative of the progress of the war comes when he shields Paris and removes him from the fray after he wounds Menelaus with an arrow and is pursued by his quarry and Locrrian Ajax: *quem Aeneas clipeo protexit, et de proelio ad civitatem secum adduxit* (Dares 21). In context, Hector is described as noticing that his brother was in distress, and he comes to his aid with Aeneas, the latter taking charge of spiriting Paris safely out of harm's way. Apart from a passing reference to Aeneas' slaying of Amphimachus and Nireus in a rendition of the next day's casualties, this rescue of Paris constitutes the sole depiction of Aeneas in Dares' narrative of the war²¹.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Virgil's *Aeneid* offers relatively few direct references to earlier incidents from the long history of the Trojan War, reserving its most extensive treatment of the conflict to the story Aeneas tells Dido's court of the city's final night and the events that immediately preceded its capture and sacking. In the second half of the *Aeneid*, the reader is reminded of certain incidents of both the *Iliad* and other epi-

¹⁸ Galli 2013 considers the old thesis that Dares was familiar with the Flavian era *Argonautica*.

¹⁹ Foundational here is Nelis 2001.

²⁰ Mutual abductions are the heart of the Troy tale. Dares' Priam thinks that the abduction of Helen would lead to an exchange of Menelaus' wife for the previously abducted Hesione (Dares 11). Cfr. Hdt. 1,3. On the possible influence of Herodotus on Dares see Lentano 2014, in particular 16-17.

²¹ We may note the parallel to Homer's depiction of Aphrodite saving Aeneas (*Il.* 5).

sodes of cyclic epic, as the Trojan War seems to be reborn in Latium²². Now and again there are reminiscences of the earlier contest, as Aeneas' enemies view him as a new Paris, and as the varied exploits of Achilles and Hector are recalled on Italian soil. Aeneas' ally, the Arcadian Pallas, is struck down as if he were Homer's Patroclus, and Aeneas is consumed with thoughts of vengeance as if he were Achilles²³. One of the last hopes for the success of Turnus' alliance is the Volscian girl Camilla, who takes her place too in the catalogue of remembered figures from the Trojan past, a veritable reincarnation of the Penthesilea of cyclic epic, the heroine who came late to the aid of the ill-starred city.

We may consider now the closing movements of Dares' history, where we shall discern both the influence of Virgil, and the chronicler's implicit comment on his epic predecessor.

The Amazon Penthesilea arrives to relieve Priam's beleaguered forces (Dares 36)²⁴. Her advent leads to a major clash (*fit proelium ingens*), which lasts for several days. The Greeks suffer significant setbacks, driven back to their camp and under threat of having their ships set on fire and the entire army devastated. Diomedes alone stands against the threat, and barely so (*cui vix Diomedes obstitit*)²⁵. Agamemnon holds in men back in the fortified camp, waiting for the arrival of Menelaus, who had gone to Scyros to bring the arms of Achilles to his son Neoptolemus. Achilles' son returns to the fray, ready for the renewed battle of several days that ensues (balancing the combat that followed on Penthesilea's arrival). Neoptolemus is wounded, but he succeeds in slaying Penthesilea. The Trojans experience a reversal of fortune, as now they are penned inside their walls, unable to venture out under Argive siege.

Dares' account is noteworthy for having Neoptolemus vanquish Penthesilea after the death of his father. In Dictys, the usual version of events is followed, with Achilles slaying the Amazon in the aftermath of Hector's

²² For the theme of the Latin War as a rendition of Homer's Trojan conflict, see especially Gransden 1984.

²³ Cfr. here Farrell 2021, 200-201 (with bibliographical references).

²⁴ The most extensive surviving account of the "Penthesilead" is Quint. Smyrn. 1. For the possible influence of the imperial poet on Virgil see Gärtner 2005.

²⁵ In Virgil, the news of Diomedes' refusal to intervene in the Latin War in support of Turnus' coalition comes soon before Camilla's daring battle exploits (*Aen.* 11,225 ff.).

slaying²⁶. There is an obscure record of an account in which Penthesilea killed Achilles, only to fall to him after Zeus restored his life at the behest of Thetis²⁷. But even this version has Achilles as her slayer.

Virgil references Penthesilea twice in his epic, first among the subjects of the artwork in Dido's temple (*Aen.* 1,490-493), indeed as the last image Aeneas sees before the arrival of the Carthaginian queen. Later, Virgil compares the Volscian heroine Camilla and her retinue to Amazons like Hippolyta or Penthesilea in a memorable simile (*Aen.* 11,659-663), in case we had any doubt as to Camilla's evocation of Penthesilea. Camilla's appearance in the Latin war parallels Penthesilea's in the Trojan, though Aeneas is conspicuously absent from the action of the cavalry battle in which Camilla fights and dies. She is slain not by Aeneas (as some new Achilles, we might think), but by his enigmatic Etruscan ally Arruns, who functions as something of a doublet for the Trojan leader²⁸. To the degree that Aeneas is a new Achilles, he does not slay (or even encounter) Virgil's Penthesilea. As in Dares, the Amazon is slain by another²⁹.

Virgil's Camilla dies in the equestrian battle that follows immediately on the great war council and debate in Latinus' capital. This second major movement of *Aen.* 11 (following on the requiems for Pallas and the other war dead) comes at a moment of great crisis and consternation for Aeneas' Latin opponents³⁰. Turnus argues against those who would seek peace with Aeneas, and he cites Camilla prominently as one of the remaining powerful Latin allies. In Dares, in the aftermath of Penthesilea's death the Trojans convene a war council, in reversal of the Virgilian pattern: *Hoc postquam Troiani viderunt* [sc., the demise of Penthesilea], *Antenor Polydamas Aeneas ad Priamum veniunt, agunt cum eo, ut consilium convocet et deliberet quid de fortunis suis futurum sit* (Dares 37). This council is of incalculable consequence, directly leading as it does to the surrender of

²⁶ Dict. 4,3. On Dares' Neoptolemus cfr. Langella 2018.

²⁷ See Eust. *Hom.* 1696.

²⁸ On how Camilla's killer functions as a doublet of Aeneas, see especially Kepple 1976; cfr. Fratantuono 2006. For parallels between the Arruns-Camilla scene and the controversial Helen scene from Verg. *Aen.* 2, see Fratantuono-Susalla 2012.

²⁹ Dares' Penthesilea is slain without comment as to her *post mortem* fate; in Dict. 4,3 her body is maltreated, notwithstanding Achilles' protest.

³⁰ Verg. *Aen.* 11 is well served by the commentary tradition; note Gransden 1991; Alessio 1993; Horsfall 2003; Fratantuono 2009; Gildenhard-Henderson 2018, and McGill 2020.

the city. Virgil's pattern of council followed by battle is reversed, with battle and then council moving the reader swiftly toward the sequence of treacherous actions that lead to Troy's fall.

At Dares' council, Antenor urges that peace be made as soon as possible, noting that the Trojans are seriously discomfited and have lost their bulwark in Hector. Priam's son Amphimachus interrupts and urges aggressive, renewed war. Aeneas supports Antenor, and Polydamas gives his assent to the irenic proposal of the two leaders associated with the betrayal of Troy, the two leaders destined to find new homes in distant Hesperia³¹. As in Virgil, so in Dares the council has an identical point of conflict, between those who would continue to prosecute the war and those who would seek an accommodation with the enemy.

Priam responds with his own attack on the peace proposal, criticizing Antenor and Aeneas as being in their own way responsible for the current crisis. Priam raises the issue that Aeneas had been one of Paris' companions when Helen was abducted (Dares 38: *...deinde Aeneam qui cum Alexandro Helenam et praedam eripuerit*)³². In the wake of the failed council, Priam conveys his own wishes to Amphimachus. Care is to be taken to ensure that Antenor and Aeneas do not betray Troy to the Greeks, namely by assassinating them treacherously on the morrow.

The Trojan king's plan does not come to fruition, because the members of the peace party have their own secret initiatives, which involve sending Polydamas to Agamemnon to begin negotiations about breaking with Priam. The process is set in motion by which Antenor and Aeneas will take the leading roles in the betrayal of Troy to the Greeks. Antenor and Aeneas will be stationed at the Scaean Gate with its horsehead emblem, and there they would welcome the invading armies of Agamemnon and the Greeks³³. There is no question that Aeneas is a party to the be-

³¹ Dares does not describe in detail the departures of Antenor and of Helenus-Andromache from Troy, simply noting the numbers of those who followed (*secuti sunt*) Aeneas and the others. Dares' lack of specificity serves to highlight the one detail he does provide: Aeneas departed in Paris' ships.

³² Aeneas is not mentioned in this context earlier in Dares' history; he is however named as a companion of Paris on the fateful journey by Dracontius (*Helena* 238-241), and the tradition goes back to the *Cypria* (see further here Galinsky 1969, 40-41).

³³ The horsehead emblem on the gate is Dares' rationalized version of the infamous Trojan horse. In terms of equine imagery, in Virgil the war council is followed by an equestrian battle. On the depiction of the notorious horse in Dares (and Dictys) see van Mal-Maeder 2007, 101-128.

trayal of Troy, but Dares is careful to present a chronology wherein Antenor and Aeneas were marked for death by Priam before they committed their treasonous act.

There is no such treason in Virgil, though *Aen.* 11 – the book of the neo-Penthesilea and the war council – is not without trickery and deceit. Some scholars, for example, have raised the question of whether the Trojans violate the burial truce agreed to in the wake of the many deaths on both sides in *Aen.* 10, in part given the abruptness with which the war council is disbanded in the wake of the receipt of the sudden news of resumed Trojan military operations³⁴. This truce was the occasion for the Latin council, the sudden suspension of which came in response to Aeneas' surprise action. Both Aeneas and Turnus have secret plans in *Aen.* 11: Aeneas plans to use a cavalry feint to cover a surprise infantry assault on Latinus' capital, while Turnus responds to intelligence regarding this plan with an ambush strategy by which he hopes to entrap and destroy Aeneas. Both initiatives fail to come to fruition³⁵. *Aen.* 11 closes with Aeneas and Turnus bivouacked before the walls of the city, the opposing forces unable to meet in immediate combat because of the onset of night. The stage is set for the epic's last book, which reaches its climax with Aeneas' angry act of vengeance in slaying Turnus.

The end of Dares' history explains why Antenor and Aeneas – allies in the handing over of Priam's city to Agamemnon – swiftly suffered a rupture in their relationship in the wake of the fall of the city. On the night of the fateful invasion of Troy, Hecuba and Polyxena encountered Aeneas, and Priam's daughter entrusted herself to Aeneas' safekeeping. Aeneas kept her hidden, safe from the predatory Greeks who would seek her for concubinage or death. Agamemnon was incensed when he learned of Aeneas' action, and in punishment he ordered the expulsion of Aeneas and his followers from Troy: *Agamemnon iratus Aeneae quod Polyxenam absconderat eum cum suis protinus de patria excedere iubet* (Dares 43).

As with Neoptolemus' slaying of Penthesilea, so with Aeneas' attempted safeguarding of Polyxena we have a variant peculiar to Dares³⁶. The

³⁴ See here Carstairs-McCarthy 2015.

³⁵ Aeneas' scheme fails because Turnus learns in advance of the strategy, while the Rutulian's ambush is abandoned in the wake of his emotional reaction to the news of the loss of Camilla.

³⁶ Sophocles wrote a *Polyxena*, on which see Calder 1966. For her death cfr. the celebrated account at Eur. *Hec.* 18-82 (with Matthiessen 2010, and Battezzato 2018, *ad loc.*).

version of Polyxena's end in Dictys is rather more muted³⁷. Polyxena is a complicated figure in the tradition, not least in the question of Achilles' passion for her³⁸. This infatuation is a factor in at least some versions of the death of the hero³⁹. There is no parallel to Dares' version of events in Virgil's epic, though one controversial scene in that epic offers a depiction of Aeneas that is a polar opposite to Dares' presentation: Aeneas' recounting of his encounter with Helen in the doomed city of Troy, as recorded in the disputed "Helenaszene" from *Aen.* 2,567-588⁴⁰. As in Dares' account, Aeneas has a sudden meeting with a vulnerable, doomed woman. In the case of Helen, Aeneas is ready to slay her on the spot as the cause of the war and of the ruin of Troy. In Dares, Aeneas takes significant risks to try to rescue Polyxena, a decision that will be the proximate cause of his expulsion from his homeland. In Virgil, Aeneas spares Helen only after the intervention of Venus. In Dares – whose work is noteworthy for its eschewing of divine apparatus – Aeneas needs no supernatural prompting to seek to save Polyxena⁴¹. Venus' intervention to save Helen is one of several occasions on which the goddess takes significant, dramatic action in the narrative; in *Aen.* 12, she imparts to her son even the rash idea of attempting to set fire to Latinus' capital, notwithstanding the fact that Lavinia is within its walls⁴². Virgil's Aeneas is depicted near the end of his epic as considering a city's destruction; at the end of Dares' his-

³⁷ At Dict. 5,13 Polyxena's sacrifice to the shade of Achilles is mentioned in a miniature catalogue rendition of the fates of Trojans at the fall of the city. For reasons that are not explained, Aeneas clashes with Antenor, and seeks to drive him from power (5,17). Failing in this initiative, Aeneas and his followers leave Troy and found the city of Corcyra Melaena. The discrepancies between the accounts of Dares and Dictys are noteworthy, though in both authors there is a split between Aeneas and Antenor.

³⁸ See further Usener 2007, 402-406; cfr. both Brescia 2018, and Lentano 2018.

³⁹ Cfr. here Gladhill 2016, 124 ff.

⁴⁰ Foundational to the study of this passage is Berres 1992; the notes *ad loc.* of Horsfall 2008 and Casali 2017 provide extensive analysis. Still useful (with sober consideration of the many problems) is Austin 1964, *ad loc.* The question of the authenticity of the passage does not significantly affect one's reading of Dares' debt to Virgil.

⁴¹ The episode in Dares with Aeneas and Priam's daughter is reminiscent of Aeneas with Helen from Virgil (or Pseudo-Virgil).

⁴² Verg. *Aen.* 12,554 ff.

tory, Aeneas is a key figure in the surrender of the city of Troy to ruin and depredation.

Polyxena is never named in Virgil, but she is referred to allusively by Andromache, who in her exchange with Aeneas on his arrival in the Trojan exile settlement at Buthrotum includes a powerful reminiscence of the slain girl: *O felix una ante alias Primaeia virgo, / hostile ad tumulum Troiae sub moenibus altis / iussa mori, quae sortitus non perulit ullos / nec victoris eri tetigit captiva cubile!* (*Aen.* 3,321-324)⁴³. Andromache argues that Polyxena was fortunate to have succumbed to death rather than slavery; she follows up her pathetic apostrophe to the dead girl by contrasting her own fate as the concubine of Neoptolemus⁴⁴. The scene takes on additional resonance if there was any early tradition of Aeneas' attempted rescue of Priam's daughter.

Dares leaves his reader with the image of an Aeneas who suffers exile from his home because of his effort to save Polyxena from sacrifice to Achilles' shade⁴⁵. The end of the *Aeneid* presents Aeneas in a different light, as the slayer of Turnus, whose killing he presents as the action of Pallas performing his own *post mortem* sacrifice: ... *Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas / immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit* (*Aen.* 12,948-949)⁴⁶. This is not the image of a ghostly Achilles demanding sacrifice from beyond the grave to appease his spirit, but rather a reminiscence of the dread Achilles who slew Hector in vengeance for the death of Patroclus⁴⁷. The implications of the abrupt, ominous conclusion of the epic are many and diverse⁴⁸.

⁴³ See further here the note of Horsfall 2006, *ad* 321: *Primaeia virgo*, with consideration of both the metamorphosis of the Polyxena tradition from cyclic epic and Attic tragedy to her later, more romantically tinged depictions, and the rationale for Andromache's address to the slain virgin. Cfr. also Heyworth-Morwood 2017, *ad loc.*

⁴⁴ On the antecedents of this scene and topos from Attic tragedy see Panoussi 2009, 149.

⁴⁵ Dares gives no motivation for Aeneas' action; some have argued that it was designed as a «salve for his conscience» (so Federico 2003, 34). But speculation is all one has in this matter.

⁴⁶ See further here *ad loc.* Tarrant 2013 and Traina 2017.

⁴⁷ So Putnam 2016, 167.

⁴⁸ For a concise consideration of how the final duel of Aeneas/Turnus evokes both Achilles/Hector and Hector/Patroclus from the *Iliad*, see Newman-Newman 2005, 304.

Dares' Aeneas is compelled to depart from Asia Minor, and his final destination is left unspecified. The last paragraph of Dares' history gives a threefold division of Trojan survivors: those under 1) Antenor (in whose company was the alleged first-person narrator himself), 2) Aeneas, and 3) Helenus-Andromache. Significantly, Aeneas is said to have departed in the same ships in which Paris had traveled to Greece (Dares 44: *Aeneas navibus profectus est, in quibus Alexander in Graeciam ierat*) – a baleful association for the son of Anchises, who would be a new Paris in Latium (sc., in the matter of Lavinia), at least in the estimation of his enemies and detractors (Turnus, Amata). The close of Dares' work leads seamlessly into the narrative of Virgil's *Aeneid*. And we may recall that Dares had described Aeneas' sheltering of Paris in a rare mention of the hero's battle exploits, such that Aeneas is linked to Paris both with respect to the events related to the *casus belli* (sc., Paris' abduction of Helen), and in conjunction to the progress of the war.

What are we to make of the Aeneas of Dares, a figure who inspired medieval traditions that likened him to none other than Satan in light of his traitorous conduct in conniving with the Greeks to overthrow Priam's realm?⁴⁹ The close of Dares' history would seem to present a noble Trojan, one who was willing to take appreciable risks to save the innocent Polyxena, even to the point of expulsion from his homeland. But the author includes the significant detail that Aeneas' departure from Troy was as if a repetition of the history of Paris' westward voyage to Greece. The educated reader of Dares knows the rest of the tale: Aeneas' destined home is Latium, and there he will be a new Paris in the eyes of Turnus with respect to his betrothed, Latinus' daughter Lavinia.

We may note here an interesting detail that has gone unnoticed in criticism of Dares' text. We have noted that at the close of Dares' history, Aeneas is associated explicitly with Paris as he takes leave of Troy. In his account of Paris' own arrival to Cytherea earlier in the work, Dares noted that Paris sacrificed to Diana at a temple of Venus: *Argis Iunonis festus erat his diebus, quibus Alexander in insulam Cytheream venit, ubi fanum Veneris erat: Dianae sacrificavit* (Dares 9). Shortly after this, Dares notes that Helen soon enough came to the site, eager to see the newly arrived prince. She intended to make her own sacrifice, at the seaside town of

⁴⁹ Cfr. Spence 2010, 138, with reference to the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Saint-Maure.

Helaea, where there was a temple of Diana and Apollo: *oppidum ad mare est Helaea, ubi Dianae et Apollinis fanum est* (Dares 10).

Here is it all too easy to compare a passage of the *Helena* of Dracontius: *Cypro festa dies natalis forte Diones / illa luce fuit. veniunt ad sacra Cytheres / reddere vota deae quidquid capit insula Cypros, / quod nemus Idalium, quod continet alta Cythera, / quod Paphon exornat, tacitus quod lustrat Amyclas* (435-439)⁵⁰. One might think all too readily that Dares has misread Dracontius, and that for Venus' mother "Dione" his pen has slipped to the goddess "Diana"⁵¹.

But this analysis does not explain Dares' shift from Dracontius' holiday for Dione to a festal day of Argive Juno, let alone the geographical change from Cyprus to Cytherea. There is a better explanation here than mere misreading of a possible poetic source, by which Diana is somehow inserted into the Paris-Helen narrative in lieu of Dione. When Virgil's Aeneas arrives in North Africa, he encounters his mother Venus in the guise of Diana (*Aen.* 1,314 ff.). Later, Dido is compared to Diana (1,496-504), and Aeneas to Apollo (4,143-150). These Virgilian associations of Aeneas and Dido with the divine twins is indebted to the similar poetic associations in Apollonius Rhodius for Jason and Medea⁵². Aeneas is viewed as a neo-Paris by Dido's suitor Iarbas, in harbinger of the same situation with Lavinia in Italy: the Trojans have a reputation for stealing the women of others⁵³. The complaints of Iarbas in *Aen.* 4 are prolegomena for those of Juno, Turnus, and Amata later in the epic⁵⁴. The immortal siblings Apollo and Diana figure in the poet's depiction of the doomed dalliance of Aeneas and Dido; in Dares' reference to the festal day of Argive Juno, we may recall that the whole North African interlude of Aeneas with Dido is, after all, the consequence of Juno's fateful setting into motion of the storm sequence in *Aen.* 1⁵⁵.

We may not think of Virgil's depiction of Aeneas with the disguised Venus and with Dido when we read Dares' account of the events that

⁵⁰ The text is taken from Zwierlein 2017. On the *Helena* see further Bretzinger 2010.

⁵¹ On the connections between the two authors note especially Schetter 1987.

⁵² Cf. Ap. Rh. 1,307-309 and 3,876-884.

⁵³ Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4,215: *et nunc ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu*, and ff.

⁵⁴ Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 7,321; 362-363; 9,136-139; 10,79.

⁵⁵ The first third of Virgil's epic is framed by actions of Juno, first with respect to the tempest she solicits from Aeolus, and then in matter of her commissioning of Iris to sever the lock of Dido's hair to secure her death.

culminate in Paris' abduction of Helen. But at the very close of his history, the connection between the sons of Priam and Anchises is made explicit, as Dares composes an ominous close to his work, one whose next chapter is all too familiar to those who have read their Virgil⁵⁶.

Further, we may note that Aeneas is accorded his familiar Virgilian epithet *pious* by Dares, in the historian's description of the physical appearances of the Trojans⁵⁷. In the *Aeneid* the appellation is associated by the hero himself with the rescue of the Penates from the destruction of Troy⁵⁸. The only action in Dares for which Aeneas could be called *pious* is attempted rescue of Polyxena, which becomes the cause for his expulsion from his home: Aeneas' *pietas* in Virgil comes in response to his having to leave Troy, while in Dares it is the very reason why he needs to depart.

Were one to rely solely on Dares, the characterization of Aeneas on the negative side would be one of a traitor (albeit under threat of assassination by his monarch), and of potential neo-Paris. In his defense, one could offer the attempted rescue of Polyxena. In Virgil, the image of Aeneas as a new Paris is certainly the reputation he suffers both in North Africa and in Latium, whether justly or not⁵⁹. But what of the picture of a *pious Aeneas* from Dares, of a hero ready to risk much to ensure the survival and safety of a blameless girl?

Dares does not provide any explanation for Aeneas' concealment of Polyxena. Certainly it can be construed as the action of a man who was eager to preserve the life of the doomed princess. But Aeneas' hiding of Polyxena was also, in its own way, an act of encroachment on a woman who had been promised to another, in this case the great hero Achilles. According to this interpretation, Aeneas is expelled from Troy by Agamemnon because he was guilty of something akin to what Paris had done to Menelaus. It is particularly significant that Polyxena was with Hecuba when Aeneas encountered them: Hecuba had been the one to conjure the

⁵⁶ Aeneas' life in Troy is not explored in any appreciable detail by Dares; there is no mention, for example, of his wife or son (Anchises is cited twice, first in passing and then in a more significant reference in the mention of the signals exchanged between Greeks and Trojan collaborators before the fall of the city). The ancient authors are typically vague with respect to questions of the ages of heroes; on this problem with respect to Aeneas note Elftmann 1979.

⁵⁷ Dares 12.

⁵⁸ Verg. *Aen.* 1,378-379.

⁵⁹ The most extensive portrait in Virgil of Aeneas as perfidious is that drawn by Dido.

plan to have Paris slay Achilles treacherously, under cover of a purported agreement of Priam to see to a marriage union between his daughter and the greatest of Greek warriors⁶⁰. While the daughter may not have been culpable for the genesis of plot, Achilles' death was a direct consequence of chicanery involving alleged nuptials with her. The girl was Achilles' betrothed, at least according to the mendacious scheme of Hecuba to which Paris was willing party and indeed executioner, Polyxena as would-be prize and stage prop in all too murderous theater. After Achilles' death and the betrayal of Troy by the anti-Priam faction in the city, Aeneas seeks to hide Polyxena for unspecified reasons – an act that lends itself as easily to negative interpretations, as to positive verdicts of *pietas*.

And so fittingly, Aeneas departs the Troad in the same ships with which Paris and his retinue (of which he was a member) had traveled westward, to Helen and the ultimate ruin of Troy. Dares' Aeneas is portrayed as the neo-Paris, the same condemnatory characterization raised by several figures in Virgil's epic. The negative appraisal of Aeneas found in Dares is not peculiar to him or to Dictys, but finds its seeds in Virgil's subtle and ambivalent portrait of the Trojan hero, one where critical elements of the depiction relate in large part to the fact that the destined Roman polity will be Italian in its cultural composition, not Trojan. The Jovian declaration to Juno that Rome would not be a *Troia nova* (by way of significant concession to the goddess) is the climactic, quasi-surprise revelation of the epic⁶¹. The varied appraisals of Aeneas in extant sources are in part a reflection of this dichotomy⁶².

We may summarize our points and argument. The Aeneas of the *De excidio* is crafted carefully and ominously as a new Paris, sailing off at the close of the history to a future that is known to any reader of Virgil's epic. Associated with Paris both in the abduction of Helen and in the active defense of Paris in combat, Aeneas becomes a member of the peace (not to say anti-Priam) party in Troy, willing to collaborate in the betrayal of his city to the Greeks. Soon enough he incurs the disfavor both of his Trojan ally Antenor and his new Greek ally Agamemnon, given his attempt to hide Achilles' promised prize Polyxena. Dares' portrait of Aeneas accords as to the neo-Paris label with Virgil's account of Aeneas' reputation among his enemies both in North Africa and Latium. Swift to try to save

⁶⁰ Cfr. Dares 34.

⁶¹ Cfr. Verg. *Aen.* 12,791 ff. On this theme see further Bettini 2009, 273-301.

⁶² The classic study of Sage 1920 remains helpful here.

Polyxena for unspecified reasons in Dares, in Virgil he was ready to succumb to wrathful vengeance and slay Helen, sparing her only at the behest of Venus. Dares' Aeneas is ready to betray Troy to destruction, while Virgil's Aeneas is prepared to burn Latinus' capital, once again at the prompting of his divine mother. In the final scene of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas' diverse loyalties and shifting sensibilities come into full relief, as he recalls both the Greek Achilles with Hector, and the Trojan Hector with Patroclus – both heroes in moments of vengeful wrath. Fittingly, the man associated in at least some traditions with the betrayal of Troy succeeds in evoking both Trojan and Greek heroic models in his final action.

The climactic portrayal of Aeneas in his violent moment of revenge has elicited significant commentary, with critics arguing for or against a negative appraisal of the hero⁶³. Among the readers of Virgil, the enigmatic chronicler known to us as Dares Phrygius left behind his own verdict on his fellow Phrygian. For him, beyond question Aeneas was a new Paris, responsible in his own way for the fall of Troy just the same as Priam's son. This pessimistic view of Aeneas as new Paris from the tradition of fifth-century history follows on the ambivalent portrayal of Aeneas in Virgil, an ambivalence rooted ultimately in the fact that the destined glorious city to be born in Latium would not, after all, be a new Troy. The end of Dares' *De excidio* deliberately, we might well conclude, and artfully segues into the start of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In this it presents itself as veritable prequel to the *Aeneid*, in a manner reminiscent, perhaps, of Apollonius Rhodius with Homer. Dares commenced his *De excidio* with a reminiscence of the Golden Fleece, even as he embarked on doing for Virgil something of what the Hellenistic poet had done for Homer.

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⁶³ For the positive view of Aeneas, see Stahl 2016; contrast Putnam 2011, and note Renger 1985.

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Abstract: The *De excidio Troiae Historia* ascribed to Dares Phrygius has not been studied extensively for its relationship to Virgil's *Aeneid*. Close consideration of the ending of the work in particular reveals a significant degree of intertextual engagement with Virgil's epic, in particular with relationship to the problematic tradition of Aeneas as a betrayer of Troy, and with respect to the question

LEE FRATANTUONO

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