The Cycle of Troy in Geoffrey Chaucer

The Cycle of Troy in Geoffrey Chaucer: Tradition and “Moralitee”

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

I would like to express my gratitude and my incalculable debt to a group of people who have always encouraged me to go on with my research in Classical and Medieval studies, and to whom I want to dedicate now these lines: my family, my son, Dr Ricardo J. Sola Buil and Dr María José Muñoz Jiménez. Besides, I would like to remember some scholars whose role has always been decisive in this task: Dr Santiago González Fernández-Corugedo, Dr José Manuel Barrio Marco, Dr Antonio León Sendra, Dr Jorge Luis Bueno Alonso, Dr Ana María Aldama Roy, Dr Vicente Cristóbal, and some other colleagues from the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature, namely Ms. Margarita Giménez Bon.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of any researcher that is willing to discuss a significant literary topic is multifold: first, one wishes to please his audience; secondly, the author is concerned about the scope of the discussion; as a consequence, the reader is convinced of the importance of the topic; finally, the author wishes to be rewarded with the echoes of the publication. In this case, the aim of the author of this book is to bring around not only to researchers, but to every kind of audience the repercussion of a literary topic that was an essential part of Ancient education and even more, a crucial subject in and outside the academic world. In Ancient Greece and Rome, the Cycle of Troy was tiptoed as an essential compilation of information and educational models which was a vivid testimony throughout the history of Greek and Roman influence. Yet in the Middle Ages, Trojan myths as long as other characters like Hercules or Jason were transformed into models of human behaviour, i. e., suffering from the process of moralization. We say "Moralitee" to point out how Geoffrey Chaucer recreates those myths. Although we will extensively discuss how Chaucer recreates the Trojan myths in his works, we can anticipate what the reader will find. Chaucer manipulates his material from a multifold point of view: first of all, and according to what a Spanish researcher did pointed out,[1] Chaucer was a man of his times, an unquiet mind and personality that always plays different games with that material. We might consider heroic the fact that Chaucer would pour out on his work the great background that the European writers (mainly Boccaccio, Dante, and Petrarch) supplied him (we will remember how difficult to collect information was in a period of vast lack of what we might call "media"). Come what may, he projects his wisdom to tick on the most surmounting aspects of the formal characterization of the myths, and integrates them into the proper contexts of his works, as one of the key forces that the audience is expected to revive with the knowledge that it is supposed to own.

The studies in mythology involve a revision of cultural and social aspects that cannot be cut off from the formal and functional analysis of the different myths, whatever the features of them. In our analysis, we have focussed on a "minimum" part of the Classical characters that shape a great deal of Geoffrey Chaucer's works, but that have survived in all the

literary trends and authors during literary history, a fact that highlights the importance of Classical reception in Western literature or, speaking broadly, world literature. The question is to what extent do these characters shape Chaucer's or any other author's works? In these lines, we have discussed particular explanations for the appearances of myths just like Hektor´s, Achilles´, Paris´, etc., but the deep sense goes beyond the mere perspectives that deal with aesthetics or literary beauty.

First of all, we must remember that more than 200 myths appear in Chaucer's works. His knowledge of Ancient tradition was, therefore, ample, in spite of the bibliography, which was non available as in modern editions. With regard to it, the number of manuscripts was scarce and full of corrupted or lost parts. Moreover, there were few existent explanations, which were written on the margins or between the lines, and the texts were incomplete. We must not forget that there was no secure canon of mediaeval writers due to failures in the authorship of works. In these manuscripts, poems from different times (for example, from the 1st, 4th, 5th, 12th and 13th centuries) could appear in the same collection. One clear example occurs in *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. Alison discusses one of the books that his fifth husband, Jankyn, owned (*CT* III (D) 669-81) In it, he reads extracts from the Bible ("Salomon"), Ancient Greek prose ("Theofraste"), Ancient Latin poetry ("Ovides art"), some Church Fathers´ works ("Tertulan", "Seint Jerome"), a female doctor from the 11th century ("Trotula"), from Heloise ("Helowys") and Crisippus ("Crisippus"), a name mentioned by Jerome but otherwise unknown.[2]

According to Mc Call (1979, 1-2), Chaucer made Ancient and Contemporary literature be popular, including French and Italian authors like Dante, Petrarch, Machaut, Froissart or Boccaccio. Unfortunately for him and others, there was a serious drawback, that texts written in Greek could not be used. Therefore, Hoffman (1975, 162-175) thinks that Chaucer was influenced by Classical culture from a Latin point of view. If we analyse how Chaucer conceives Classical myths, we should take them further back to the origins. The Pre-Socratic philosophers had already held a positive or negative opinion about gods, a trend which was confirmed by the Late Republican Roman writer Marcus Terentius Varro, who in *Antiquitates Rerum Humanarum et Divinarum* or "Old Human and Divine Events" divided theology into three *genera* or types. The mythical theology was focused on how poets had described gods; the political one contained the official religion of the state, together with its institutions and the cult; the natural theology related to the meditation of philosophers, with regard to the theory of the nature of the divinity, as it later appears in the nature of reality. Saint Augustine, in *On the City of God*, specifically in

Book VI, exposes the Christian doctrine of the unique god, trying to justify his agreement with the deepest ideas of Greek philosophy. According to him, the only supreme representative of this philosophical trend was Plato, whereas the other thinkers were minor figures in comparison with him. Saint Augustine defends this *genus*, since it is the only authentic type of theology, as it is based upon true events. The reason why he accepts nothing but Plato's ideas looks back on Plato's and Aristotle's reflection of the gods. There are some important words which appear for the first in the history of philosophy precisely in Plato's and Aristotle's time. These words are *theológos*, *theología*, *theologeîn* and *theologikós*. All of them relate to the philosophical approach that deals with discussing the idea of God or the gods through the *lógos*. Regarding his ideal state, he thinks that poets should avoid mentioning Homer´s, Hesiod´s and other traditional poets´ references to gods in order to show them positively in accordance with the philosophical truth. Those mythical gods were characterized by means of human weaknesses, something which was contrary to the rational idea of divinity held by Plato himself and Socrates. Therefore, when Plato proposes in *The Republic* the discussion of some *týpoi perì theologías* or "sketches on theology", the specific new word or the rest of the concepts derived from it arose from the argument being between myth tradition and natural or rational approach to theology.[3] Saint Augustine takes into consideration all of this background to hold his opinion on religious matters. The application of this theory in Chaucer may be exemplified in two different stories: the tale of Ceix and Alcyone in *The Book of the Duchess* and Pluto's and Proserpine's appearance in *The Merchant's Tale*.

In the former, the tone and the form of the story are altered in comparison with Ovid's one. Indeed, Alcyone, who is a passive character and is featured with a deep devotion to Juno in Ovid, is turned into a distressing woman that is desperately waiting for the return of his husband in Chaucer. On the other hand, Ceix´s words to his wife, which are really Mercury's, are based upon love and delicacy in the Roman poet, whereas in Chaucer they are a request to cry for his death. The couple is, in the end, transformed into birds in Ovid, that is, it is an example of happy end, but in Chaucer there is nothing like this, as the Knight's words to Geoffrey show: "Therwith he wax as ded as stoon" (*BD* 1300). So, the tale turns out to be an excuse on behalf of Geoffrey's searching for his lost sleep, and the Knight's only comfort consists of homaging Blanche in his imagination. Pearsall (1985, 206-7) and Whittock (1970, 16) make a revision of the second story. Pluto and Proserpine are quite different characters when they occur in *The Merchant's Tale*. Originally, Pluto is a

symbol of impurity, and Chaucer makes him be a defender of inflexibility and purity of love feelings when he watches Damian and May, the two adulterous lovers in the story, who give free rein to their emotions in front of the miserable January, the cuckold husband; for her part, Proserpine, a symbol of chastity and virginity in any of the authors who dealt with the story of her abduction, finally defends women's integrity and defencelessness that females are subjected to in love relationships. All of which is a consequence of the moralization and allegorization of Classical myths in other mediaeval writers. So, Chaucer follows a clear Neo-Platonic trend, according to which there is nothing positive in determined features of myths attributed by Classical authors, a trend which is confirmed by Chaucer himself when he dares to say that he is one more "auctorite" in mythological matters: "Be God, I wolde hyt here write" (*HF* 382). Chaucer, then, would follow Saint Augustine, since he considers that myths are only relevant if their formal features are used conveniently (McCall 1979, 5). At the same time, Chaucer keeps up with the trend started in the late Antiquity, thanks to which a god like Zeus, almighty and unpredictable, is turned into a nice and prudent father.

These conclusions regard with my suspicions that Chaucer turns upside down the features of some myths, if we compare them with the Classical attributions. This process of moralization may have its topmost point in the anonymous *Ovide Moralisé*, which was the most serious attempt to turn Ovidian stories into virtuous examples, or to stand apart all those stories that threaten significantly the mediaeval morals. The mythographies by the Philosopher Albricus, the *Ovide Moralisé*, and mainly Dictys´ *De Ephemeride* and Dares´ *De Excidio* provide Chaucer with the essential material to make up a parallel story, or to design a precise framework for his aims. We must remember that Dares´ and Dictys´ versions of the Trojan War were the only records that the Medieval Ages had to better know that memorable and Classical event, for there was any other feasible testimony until the first editions of the Homeric works were published in the XVI century. That is why I think that Chaucer, who is thought not to have been a scholar, could at least take advantage from his trips to Europe. Actually, I must admit that this has been the key point whenever I have been involved in conversations with my closest colleagues and we have discussed to what extent Chaucer, if we take into account the aforementioned idea that he was not a scholar, could learn and, thus, memorize the stories and characters that best fitted in his poems. My medievalist colleagues hold that Chaucer used to attend literary performances at the most brilliant Europeans courts, and that was the essence of his background to pour out on the paper. On the other hand,

and admitting that this fact could be feasible, I defend that it is almost impossible to be so precise when one tries to list matchless features of a Classical myth if the writer has not previously look them up in an "ad hoc" book. That Chaucer paid some visits to determined libraries would be a landmark for most of the research fulfilled for the sake of Chaucer's sources, and a stimulus for scholars.

In order to outline the different parts of this book, I will firstly attempt to make a brief description of the appearances of the most outstanding mythological characters of the Cycle of Troy in Ancient Greek and Latin Literature; subsequently, our discussion will move forward in time to analyse how these characters were taken and revitalised in Medieval literary works, either written in Latin or in vernacular languages; finally, we will make a deep revision of how Geoffrey Chaucer handles the mythological stories.

Notes

[1] Virginia Cuevas Peñaranda, "Evolución y Revolución de la Mujer en la Edad Media, Aspectos y Realidades: Chaucer´s The Legend of Good Women, Troilus and Criseyde and Canterbury Tales" (PhD diss., University of Alcalá de Henares, 2002), 202.

[2] Bruce Harbert, "Chaucer and the Latin Classics," in *Writers and their Background, Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Derek Brewer (London: G. Bell and Sons Eds., 1974), 137-153.

[3] Werner Jaeger, *La Teología de los Primeros Filósofos Griegos*, trans. José Gaos (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978), 7-10.

PART I

THE CYCLE OF TROY IN ANCIENT LITERATURE

With regard to the history of the appearance of classical myths in Western literature, the Cycle of Troy turned out to be one of the most fruitful examples of adaptation and permanent "recycling". The evolution of this cycle, which in this respect is parallel to others that were successful since their occurrence in different periods of the Classical Ages (Hercules, Jason, Aeneas,), depends upon the social and cultural circumstances of those periods. The beginning of this tradition is indebted to the first two testimonies of both western literature and wisdom: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, whose author, being Homer or not, belongs to an oral tradition, since these poems are the result of a process in which epic poetry was made and transmitted orally before Greek alphabet was adopted by the Greeks themselves.[1] The Epic Cycle is the second stage in the evolution of the Cycle of Troy. It deals with the origins of the world and the gods, the Cycles of Thebes, and the Cycle of Troy. It comprises of a number of poems that pretended to fill up the gaps left by the Homeric ones. The "rhapsods" might have been responsible for agglutinating all these independent works in a unified composition, so that they could appear one after the other. The Cycle of Troy begins with the eleven *Cypria* or Ciprian Songs, attributed to Stasinus the Cyprian and whose probable date of composition is the first half of the 7th century B. C., which tells the antecedents of the Trojan War. The following text after the *Ilias* is the *Ethiopis*, which is attributed to Arctinus of Miletus and composed at the end of the 8th century b. C. The main character is Achilles and the subject matter deals with his last exploits (the fight against Penthesilea and Memnon) and his death. Next the *Parva Ilias* by Lesches of Pyrra appears; it tells a number of events occurred immediately before the conquest of Troy, such as the construction of the Wooden Horse or scenes from the fall of the city. The following work is *De Troiae Populatione* or "The Sacking of Troy" by Arctinus, which can be dated at the end of the 8th century b. C. The story begins when the wooden horse is carried into the city and

focuses on how the city was taken and sacked and the later destiny of the captives. The *Nostoi* by Agias of Troizen, of the 7th century b. C., tells how the Greek leaders returned to their homelands after the war, and it is here where the *Odyssey* was interwoven in the Cycle. This finishes with the *Telegonia*, written by Eugam of Kyrene, a poet that lived in the mid-6th century b. C. It tells Ulysses´s adventures after his returning home and his son Telegonos´s and Circe's (Bernabé 1988, 87-105).

Within the world of Greek lyric poetry, there are some representative writers that included certain episodes of the Cycle of Troy in their works. One of them is Stesichorus of Himera, who lived before c. 632/629 and 556/553 b. C. Stesichorus is a choral poet and he recasts myths and legends mainly derived from Homer and the Cycle, which are his main sources. There is a specific story in which Stesichorus was involved regarding one of his choral poems, *Helen*. In it, Stesichorus recalls her infidelity with Paris and, due to this, the poet is said to have lost his sight. Later on he regained it after rewriting a poem that salvaged his reputation. The revisionist poem, known as the *Palinode*, asserted that the Greeks and the Trojans had fought over a phantom, while the real Helen kept chastely in Egypt. Alcaeus of Lesbos´s "floruit" or maturity is usually dated at about 600 b. C. Alceaus finds in literary tradition, apart from being an innovator of Greek poetry, practical examples: from Homer, he takes the topic of Thetis, Helen, Achilles, Tantalus; from the Cycle, the topic of Ajax the Lesser, son of Oileus, who raped the priestess Cassandra in the temple of Athena during the sack of Troy.[2] Ibycus of Rhegium was born in "Magna Graecia", specifically in Rhegium, on the south of Italy, and his "floruit" must be dated in the 530s. In the preserved 48 verses of his only survived poem, *Ode to Polycrates*, dedicated to the tyrant of Samos, we can find a list of epic topics, which are regretted by the poet; famous characters mentioned thanks to their beauty by Greeks and Trojans; the praise to Polycrates´ beauty, who is compared with those before and the final recall to the poet's glory, thanks to his song.[3] Simonides was born in the island of Ceos and died in Acragan (Sicily). For our purpose, there are several mythological fragments that stand out for the lack of context: Achilles in the Elysium, Hecuba, etc. (Barron 1969, 119-149; West 1970, 205-215; Péron 1982, 33-56; Woodbury 1985, 193-220; Suarez de la Torre 1988, 210-214; García Gual 1989, 97-103; Mulroy 1992, 135-146). Pindar was known for his victory odes ("epiníkion"), which were distributed by Alexandrian editors in Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean odes; furthermore, he composed "partheneia", dithyrambs, "hyporchemae", "prosodia", hymns, paeans, encomiums and dirges. The Trojan saga is focused on Aeacus´ family (Telamon, Peleus, Achilles, Ajax) in the odes

dedicated to the athletes from Aegina as well as on Agamemnon.[4] Bacchilides was Simonides´ nephew and native of Ceos. In most of his odes we can find mythological references. In the odes dedicated to the athletes from Aegena Ajax reappears (XIII), and the embassy of Antenor´s sons is used in the "epiníkion" XV (Suárez de la Torre 1988, 226-231; Mulroy 1992, 147-156).

The tragedian writers also used "in extensis" the Cycle of Troy in his works. Aeschylus discusses the topic in the trilogy *Oresteia*, contending *Agamemnon*, *Choephori* and *Eumenides*. In *Agamemnon*, there are some famous episodes starred by the Mycenaean king after his returning home, namely Agamemnon´s death and Clytemnestra's confession of her assassination. In the second piece, *Choephori*, Apollo asks Oresthes to avenge his mother's murder, an order that the faithful avenger carries out and reaches Aegisthus, Clytemnestra's accomplice. In *Eumenides* Oresthes is judged, declared innocent and purified at the Areopagus in Athens.[5] Sophocles´ contribution to the history of tragedy engages with the proper evolution of the genre. *Ajax* deals with the events after Achilles´ death and the hero's reaction before an unjust decision. *Philoctetes´* plot deals as well with one of the decisive episodes in the siege of Troy, in which Philoctetes turns out to be almost an indirect main character for the outcome of the story.[6] Out of Euripides´ transmitted tragedies, the group concerning the Cycle of Troy is quite significant. *Andromache* tells the consequences of the war on the slaves captured by the winners, in this case on Hektor´s wife. *Hecuba* introduces a more bitterly vision of the horror of war in the eyes of a mother that has lost all of his family. In *Electra* and *Orestes*, the result of Agamemnon´s death comes again on the stage, and *Trojans* revives once again how useless the aims of war are. In *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the innocence of a young woman outstands as a primary excuse for the war, whereas *Helen* points out the importance of a singular character in the outburst of the conflict.[7] Finally, our knowledge of the later tragedy poets is rather poor. At least, it is known that Agathon tried to update tragic performances, as the introduction of themes and character from myth, which is substituted by characters and plots of his own. It is an anonymous work, *Rhesus*, which acts as an example of this trend. It has been transmitted among Euripides´ works and is based upon the "Dolonia" from *Iliad´*s Book X.[8] From the Hellenistic tragedy we can stand out Licophron of Calcis, whose *Alexandra* is one of few works that has been transmitted through Medieval manuscripts, in which Cassandra, who is the real main character behind that false name, wickedly forecasts Trojan events and the Greek warriors´

return, especially Ulysses´, which is similar to the Cycle poem *Nostoi* or *The Returns*.[9]

Latin Literature mirrored from the very beginning in Greek Literature, and, actually, the first testimonies confirm this idea. To attest this opinion, the second known poet in Latin literary history (the first one had been the great statesman Appius Claudius Caecus) was L. Livy Andronicus, whose knowledge of the Greek Language allowed him to write a Latin version of the *Odyssey*, called *Odussia*. From the transmitted fragments of his tragedies and related to the Trojan history, we can highlight *Equos Troianus* and *Hektor Proficiscens*. The Cycle of Troy is a prime topic in Cneaus Nevius´ *Bellum Poenicum*. Nevius supplied with mythological information the ancient enmity between Romans and Carthaginians: the root of it would the meeting between Aeneas and Dido in Carthage, which was later immortalized by Virgil. The third important archaic writer, Ennius, composes some tragedies following Euripides´ and Aeschylus´ style and using Trojan topics (*Hecuba*, *Iphigeneia*). The same topics appear in the works of the two great tragedy writers of that time: Marcus Pacuvius and L. Acccius. Pacuvius, Ennius´ nephew, was not a prolific author, but was interested in topics that had not been usually treated, as the ones from the tragic stage after Euripides. In *Dulorestes*, Orestes returns to Mycenae by dressing up as a slave; *Iliona* is one of Priam´s daughters: we are reported that Iliona´s son, Deiphilus, has been murdered; in *Teucer*, Telamon makes a speech that was famous even in Horace's time; *Niptra* is based on Sophocles´ work: it deals with Ulysses´ return to Ithaca and his nursemaid's recognition when she is washing his feet. L. Accius is known to have written forty-five tragedies on Trojan topics. Accius mainly takes his models from Euripides.[10]

Lucretius mentions the ancestor of the Roman people (Venus) at the beginning of *De Rerum Natura* ("On the Nature of Things"), and these people are described as *Aeneadum genetrix* or "Aeneas´ descendants". This reference to the Trojan background of the Romans was taken by Augustus, who encouraged Virgil to write a national epic poem that justified his reformation plan. For the completion of *Aeneid*, Virgil uses traditional sources, just like Homer (the work is divided into twelve books, which correspond with the twenty-four both in *Iliad* and in *Odyssey*. This fact implies a thematic division) and Ennius (Bickel 1982, 476-482; Kenney & Clausen 1989, 372-410).[11] Another example of the national objective that Augustus wanted to carry out is Horace, who belonged to Mecenas´ group, like Virgil. He wrote satires, called *Sermones*, epodes or *Iambi* and a collection of *Carmina* or odes. Out of the different thematic topics that appear in the epodes and odes, myths are used from a double

perspective: as an example or as plot of the poem. The former occurs in the hymns that tell stories with regard to the invoked god, as in the *Canctus Saeculare*, where Horace tells Apollo's and Diana's features along with Aeneas´ trip with the help of them. Exemplary myth supports the poet's intention to testify the principle of the universality of death (i. e., Tantalus), or that it is not a shame to love a female slave, as in the cases of Achilles and Briseis, Ayax and Tecmesa, Agamemnon and Cassandra (II, 4, 3 ff.). The other legendary writer from the Augustan age, Ovid, reports the different stories from the Trojan history in most of his works. These stories are more relevant in his *Metamorphoses*, his real masterpiece, but *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria* and *Heroides* help to understand the importance of the myth as more than a catalogue of characters. The erotic poems are useful handbooks for improving the art of love, and therefore myth examples are used as a joyous complement for the lessons. The collection of letters supposedly written by a wide variety of heroes and heroines are thought to be no more than a rhetorical exercise (the *suasoriae*, which Ovid was mainly interested in), but their value was increased in later times, especially in the Middle Ages, as it occurs with the rest of his works. The epic collection draws a multiform sequence of stories, from the beginning of human history to the apotheosis of Caesar (Bickel 1982, 488-490; Kenney & Clausen 1989, 464-504).[12] Two more important writers devoted their works to Trojan topics. Statius (c. 50 A. D. / c. 96 A. D.) is said to have read his *Thebais* successfully in Rome, and indeed he was rewarded in the Capitolium´ quiz during Domitian times. His *Achilleis* is abruptly interrupted in Book II, when Achilles is about to set out for Troy. The most extensive episode is Achilles´ stay in Eschirus, disguised as a woman, and how he raped Deidamia. All of this is darkened by the war that was commanded by the gods, in which Achilles shows his incalculable heroism (Bickel 1982, 491-2; Kenney & Clausen 1989, 639). L. Annaeus Seneca, son of the Rhetorician, devoted his life to philosophy, specifically to the Stoicism. He was accused of taking part in the Pisons conspiracy and condemned by Nero to commit suicide in 65 A. D. Seneca´s tragedies involve a moral purpose, and their background looks back on Attic tragedy, although the Postclassical tragedy should have influenced somewhat. Moreover, Augustan tragedy, namely Ovid's *Medea*, is behind the plot of his homonymous tragedy. In *Trojans*, Astianatte and Polixena´s death are the subject matter. Seneca's sources in this work seem to be Euripides´ *Trojans* and *Hecuba*, but the author is really concerned with innovating some traditional topics. The key point of the piece is the disgusting consequences of power for mankind: on one hand, evilness; on the other, suffering. For the first, Ulysses, Pyrrus,

Agamemnon and Calcas are the main prototypes; for the second, Hecuba, Andromacha, Astianatte and Polixena (Bickel 1982, 535-6; Kenney & Clausen 1989, 570-81).[13] In *Agamemnon*, Agamemnon´s death is the key topic of the work, since there is no main character that leads the plot, and the rest goes round the fact that Thiestes thinks that Agamemnon´s death is a just revenge on Atreus, and that Clytemnestra's murder means another revenge for Iphigenia's death (Bickel 1982, 535-6; Kenney & Clausen 1989, 570-581; Luque Moreno 1987, 135-9). As a summary, we can conclude that the Trojan Cycle suffered from a clear evolution in its treatment and discussion in Ancient Times: firstly, Homer, the great "magister" of the Greek, laid the educational and cultural bases of Greek civilization on one hand, and on the other of the "Homeric" development of the most famous Trojan and Greek heroes; secondly, the Epic Cycle complemented the other steps of this chain, and supplied the story with the pre-Homeric background and the post-Homeric one; later, the lyric poets sang their joys, their griefs and even their patrons or sponsors, in the case of the choral poets, with the help of Trojan characters; the tragedy writers used the Trojan history from a social and a political point of view, since Aeschyllus, Sophocles and Euripides were seriously involved in the historical events of their ages; finally, Roman writers adopted a quiet eclectic behaviour in the reception of Trojan history: as in the case of Greek culture, the first writers mirrored in it to spring off a Roman tradition and culture; Virgil assumed the importance of Augustan aims to definitely connect the Trojan family with the imperial dynasty, and Seneca revived the story and provided it with an obscure and a mean atmosphere.

Notes

[1] Ernest A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1986), passim. He insists of this fact and on the importance of the decisive change from an oral mentality to a literacy one. According to this opinion, see Ricardo Sola Buil, "Orality and Literacy in Chaucer. The Case of the Conquest and the Destruction of Troy in *The Canterbury Tales*," in *Medieval English Studies*, eds. Juan Camilo Conde & Mª Nila Vázquez (Murcia: Servicio de Publicaciones, Universidad de Murcia, 2004), 145-162. For a complete discussion on the features of Homeric poems, Antonio López Eire, "Homero", in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, ed. Juan Antonio López Férez (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 33-65.

[2] David A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982), 254; Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, "Lírica Arcaica Coral," in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, ed. Juan Antonio López Férez (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 179-

184; David D. Mulroy, *Early Greek Lyric Poetry* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 99-103.

[3] John P. Barron, "Ibycus: to Policrates," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 16 (1969): 119-149; Martin Litchfield West, "Melica," *Classical Quarterly* 20 (1970): 205-215; J. Péron, "Le Poème à Polycrate: une `Palinodie´ d´Ibycus," *Revue de Philologie* 56 (1982): 33-56; Leonard Woodbury, "Ibycus and Polycrates," *Phoenix* 39 (1985): 193-220; Emilio Suárez de la Torre, "Lírica Coral," in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, Juan Antonio López Férez, ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 206-9; Carlos García Gual, *Antología de la Poesía Lírica Griega (Siglos VII-IV a. C.)* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989), 89-97; David D. Mulroy, *Early Greek Lyric Poetry* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 105-108.

[4] Pythian XI; Nemean II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII; Isthmian V, VI, VIII; Olympian VIII.

[5] José Alsina, "Esquilo," in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, ed. Juan Antonio López Férez (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 297-303; trans., *Esquilo: Tragedias Completas* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990), 211-226.

[6] D. M. Jones, "The Sleep of Philoctetes," *Classical Review* 63 (1949): 83-5; Anthony J. Podlecki, "The Power of the Word in Sophocles´ *Philoctetes*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7 (1966): 233-250; David B. Robinson, "Topics in Sophocles´ *Philoctetes*," *Classical Quarterly* 19 (1969): 34-56; C. R. Beye, "Sophocles´ *Philoctetes* and the Homeric Embassy," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970): 63-75; O. Taplin, "Significant Actions in Sophocles´ *Philoctetes*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971): 25-44; William Moir Calder III, "Sophoclean Apologia: *Philoctetes,*" *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971): 153-174; J. P. Poe, *Heroism and Divine Justice in Sophocles´ Philoctetes* (Leiden, 1974), 6; Henry R. Hamilton, "Neoptolemos´ Story in the *Philoctetes*," *American Journal of Philology* 96 (1975): 131-7; P. W. Rose, "Sophocles´ *Philoctetes* and the Teachings of the Sophists," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*" 80 (1976): 49-105; Elizabeth M. Craik, "Sophocles and the Sophists," *L´antiquite classique* 49 (1980): 247-253; José Vara Dorado, trans., *Sófocles: Tragedias Completas* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1985), 297-300; "Sófocles," in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, ed. Juan Antonio López Férez (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 340-1; José María Gutiérrez Arranz, "How to Persuade Philoctetes or the Destruction of Troy," in *`Woonderous Lytterature´. Selim Studies in Medieval English Literature*, eds. Ana Bringas López et ali (Vigo: Servicio de Publicaciones, Universidad de Vigo, 1999), 75-9.

[7] José Luis Calvo Martínez, trans., *Eurípides: Tragedias* (Madrid: Gredos, 1985), 217-226; 275-287; 341-351; Carlos García Gual & Luis Alberto De Cuenca y Prado, trans., *Eurípides: Tragedias* (Madrid: Gredos, 1985), 9-17; 169-182; 251-9; Juan Antonio López Férez, trans., *Eurípides: Tragedias* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1985), 22-26; 309-311; 359-62.

[8] G. Björck, "Rhesos," *Arctos* 1 (1954): 16-18; "The Authenticity of Rhesos," *Eranos* 55 (1957): 7-17; Antonio Melero, "Otros Trágicos y Poetas Menores de los

Siglos V y IV," in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, ed. Juan Antonio López Férez (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 423-4.

[9] Emilio Fernández Galiano, "Poesía Helenística Menor," in *Historia de la Literatura Griega*, ed. Juan Antonio López Férez (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 854-6.

[10] Ernest Bickel, *Historia de la Literatura Romana*. trans. José María Díaz Regañón (Madrid: Gredos, 1982), 517-529; Edwin J. Kenney & Wendell Vernon Claussen, eds., *Historia de la Literatura Clásica. II. Literatura Latina* (Madrid: Gredos, 1989), 77-9; 152-163.

[11] Also see: Antonio Fontán Barreiro, trans., *Virgilio: Eneida* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998), 7-24; José Luis Vidal. & Tomás de La Ascensión Recio, trans., introduction to *Virgilio: Bucólicas. Geórgicas* (Madrid: Gredos, 2000), ix-xxx.

[12] Also see: Antonio Ruiz de Elvira, trans., introduction to *P. Ovidio Nasón: Metamorfosis* (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1992), ix-xxxii; Ana Pérez Vega, trans., introduction to *Ovidio: Cartas de las Heroínas. Ibis* (Madrid: Gredos, 1994), 9-25; Vicente Cristóbal López, trans., introduction to *Ovidio: Amores. Arte de Amar* (Madrid: Gredos, 2001), vii-xliv.

[13] Also see: Jesús Luque Moreno, trans., introduction to *Séneca: Tragedias* (Madrid: Gredos, 1987), 7-109; 181-4.

PART II

THE CYCLE OF TROY IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

The Cycle of Troy was an appropriate milieu for most of the outstanding writers of the Middle Ages. Indeed, Chaucer benefited from this reception, something that we will discussed later, and that includes a primary step: the reason why this Cycle and all of the characters that starred the different stories were used by these authors was the transmission of three works written in Latin: the anonymous *Ilias Latina* or "The Latin Iliad", the *De Ephemeride Belli Troiani* or "A Record of the Trojan War" by Dictys Cretensis and *De Excidio Troiae Historia* or "History of the Destruction of Troy" by Dares Phrygius. For the sake of the first work, since yet in Roman times almost nobody could read in Greek, the Trojan legend stopped to be known through Homeric *Iliad*, and so lots of translations and summaries in Latin from the 1st century b. C. came up, e. g.: Cneaus Matius and Ninnius Crasus in the Republican Age; Accius Labeon during the Empire, as well as Polibius, who wrote paraphrases in Latin. The only survived version is the one that we are discussing. It comprises of 1,070 Latin hexameters that summarize the 15,693 of the *Iliad*. It was amply issued in the Middle Ages, and took part of the *Libri Catoniani*, which was a textbook with the *Disticha Catonis* involved. The *Ilias* was continuously used as a reference book at least until the 13th century.[1] Dictys and Dares are thought to have been authors of two disappeared chronicles, one written in Greek and the other in Phrygian or Greek too, on the Trojan War, which were discovered in the Roman Age and later translated into Latin. Both of them meant to be faithful and contemporary testimonies of the war itself, but indeed they were previous to Homer and were composed by two warriors: Dictys, a soldier of the Greek army at Idomeneus´ service, and Dares, a Phrygian that had to bear the siege at Troy. The original Greek version seemed to be available in the case of Dictys, not of Dares. The mixture of different influences leads to think that the Greek texts were composed during the 2nd century A. D. and under the influence of the Second Sophistic, a philosophical trend with a

strong tendency to contradict the ancient educator of Greece.[2] In spite of their limited value as literary works, their influence in the Middle Ages was enormous, even more than the fame achieved by Homer or Virgil (Del Barrio & Cristobal 2001, 118-120).

Broadly speaking, these three works were the older testimonies of three "outsiders" of Classical literature, but whose contributions were as surprising as crucial to the reception of the Cycle of Troy in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, we think that these are not the only routes to a complete analysis of the influence of the Trojan history. The study and meditation of all the possibilities took us to other perspectives to balance the former works with others that raised the moral element for myth stories. The list would consist of the following topics:

1) Euhemerus of Mesene (3rd century b. C.). In *Hierá Anagraphē* or "Holy Book" he defended the existence of the myth as an allegorical story. He mentions the Isle of the Panchaei, which is situated in the Indian Ocean, where he would have found out a golden stela with news from Uranus, Cronos and Zeus sculpted. The gods would not stand by nature powers, but current men with overwhelming features that lived long ago. His ideas were really relevant during the Mediaeval Time.[3]

2) Saint Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (6th century). He believed the gods to have been human beings, and indeed he included them in mankind history, within the six ages into which Saint Isidore divided that history. The first age spanned from Adam to Noah, the second from Noah to Abraham, the third from Abraham to David, the fourth from David to Juda´s migration to Babilon, the fifth from the Babilonian migration to the Saviour's arrival and the sixth was occurring then and would last until the Judgement Day. Some of the civilizing heroes appeared in the succession: in the Third Age, Atlas invented astrology; Erictonius firstly yoked a four-horse cart in Troy, Cadmos invented writing in Greece, Apollo discovered the art of medicine and invented zither, Mercury the lyre, Priam was the king of Troy, Hercules launched into the flames, Paris kidnapped Helen, the fall of Troy occurred and Ascanius found Alba; in the Fourth Age, Carthage was founded by Dido, Romulus was born and Rome was founded by him. [4]

3) Mythographers. The list is certainly long, but we can highlight: the three Vatican Mythographers, usually called *Primus*, *Secundus* and *Tertius*; Fulgentius´ *Mythologiarum Libri XV*; John Ridewall´s *Fulgentius Metaforalis*; the anonymous *Ovide Moralisé* and the Latin version by Pierre Bersuire *Ovidius Moralizatus*; Alexander Nechkam´s *De Rerum Natura* and the Philosopher Albricus´ *Liber Imaginum Deorum* and *De Deorum Imaginibus Libellus* (Seznec 1987, 143-56; Allen 1987, 167-73).[5]

4) What we might call the "Mythological Revival". In this group, works that recreated the myth stories must be included: Guido delle Colonne´s *Historia Destructionis Troiae*; Benoît de Saint Maure´s *Le Roman de Troie*; Marziano Capella´s *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*; Giovanni Boccaccio´s *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum Illustrium*, *Africa* and *Il Filostrato*, and a group of "romans" just like the anonymous *Roman d´Eneas*, *Roman de Thèbes* and *Roman d´Alexandre* (Seznec 1987, 33-9).[6]

Beside the works that correspond to the aforementioned group and others that can be quoted concerning the mythological revival (i. e., *Phoenix*, a recreation in Anglo-Saxon of the poem by Lactantius´ *De Ave Phoenice*), the amount of mythological quotations in Middle English works are relatively poor, if we compare them with other European literatures of that time. For our purposes, the examples in which the Cycle of Troy evolves are scarce, and they are limited to John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer. In the former, the Classical influence is specially relevant with regard to Ovid in both *Vox Clamantis* and *Confessio Amantis*; in the latter that influence reaches all the nooks and crannies of the work and the sources are extremely eclectic. Taken Chaucer´ works as a whole, we can draw and comment on a list of Trojan characters.

In Medieval Times, the character of Achilles inherited some of the proper features that distinguished him. One of them was his pride: Euripides had put onto the stage a haughty Achilles in *Hecuba*, and this feature was discussed in two works of the 12th and 13th centuries. In Joseph of Exeter's *De Daris Phrygii Iliade*, a comparison appeared in Quintus Smyrnaeus´ *Posthomerica* (III, 536-9) is again used. It deals with the fact that Athena engraved Achilles´ face after his death in the sculpture dedicated to Teutras´ (Pandion´s son and king of Misia) tomb. According to this, Exeter compares Achilles with the childlike giants that broke into the Olympus. Achilles shows his anger in another incomprehensible attack against the enemies that were running away from him. In Albert of Stade´s *Troilus*, Achilles is not as violent as in Exeter's work. The hero defeats a whole army on his own, but actually there is no other great individual and foolish deed. As in Dares, Achilles does not feel pleasure when he attacks Misia, but he is commanded to. Both Stade and Exeter raise his bravery in accordance with Dares and other Classical sources, although Benoît de Saint Maure in his *Historia* does not agree with this. At the end of 13th century, Achilles had become a killing machine that was "switched on" or "off" in a randomly election and that lacked of principles. His most positive feature was his physical appearance, which was decisive in the conquest of Troy, since it is quite evident that, if Hektor and Troilus had

not been killed, Troy would never have been taken. Achilles is considered a real hero in *Libro de Alexandre*, but, owing to his Greek "hýbris" and his Christian arrogance, he was rejected as a model to imitate by Christian knights (Callen King 1987, 159-160; 232).

Achilles as "áristos Achaiôn" or "the best of the Achaians" is another typical Homeric feature that is recreated by the 12th century poet Simon Capra Aurea in *Iliad*. The post Homeric authors stressed the dichothomy between brain and muscle strength, according to which the *pietas* and/or *virtus* was applied to the great murderers, while the *consilium* and the lack of honesty were suitable for the great strategists. Achilles was included in this opposition for the sake of being an honest cause of the deeds and Odysseus for using words wickedly. Since Simon considers Hektor as the only savour of Troy (l. 268), Achilles, who defeated Hektor, is, as in Homer and Virgil, the only conqueror of the city: he is the *miles summus* (l. 215) and a *dux ducum* (l. 210). Achilles´ splendour is a main topic in *Libro de Alexandre*. The poet's main aim is to emphasize fame, which motivates every future deed, and fame is what really encourages Alexander. But the fact that he seeks for fame becomes an obsession, which causes him to succumb to pride, and therefore he is punished by God, as he dies very young. Alexander's obsession for fame looks back on Homer: Aristotle teaches him how to wish fame, a feeling that Hektor, Diomedes and Achilles used it. They are examples of bravery, and he is supposed to fight courageously to win a "preçio" that will last forever in books ("en escriptura") (stanzas 70-1). Achilles is the chosen hero for this supreme achievement, who inspires his actions and indirectly his physical and spiritual death.

The mythographer Fulgentius discusses Achilles´ life, from his birth to his death, and he compares it with dangerous "libido". He makes an allegory from the myth of Peleus and Thetis and tells that the former, which represents the earth or *caro* - "the flesh", Thetis (the water or "humour", i. e., the body fluids) and Jupiter (the fire or *anima* - "life blow") sprang off Achilles, a perfect man to whom Thetis put into the Stix in order to arm him against trouble. That she failed to wet his heel, whose veins are connected to the sex and passion organs, means that "human virtue, whatever fortified it is, is susceptible of lust attacks". According to Fulgentius, the time when Achilles stayed in Esciros stood by a first "libido attack", and his love for Polixena was fatal. In the heroic and Christian world, a conqueror with a military spirit that allows to be conquered by an inferior female element is worthless, he deserves to be censored and should be judged by putting his soul into serious danger, as well as impitched by the cosmic order. The topic of Achilles the lover

begins in Homeric poems and is developed in later authors. His friendship with Patroclus turns into a homosexual love in Aeschylus´ *Myrmidonoi*, Plato's *Symposium* and Aeschines´ *Contra Tymarchos*. In Licophron´s *Alexandra* (lines 308-313) we can read that Achilles´ love for Troilus was the reason why the former killed the latter. In the 4th century A. D., Servius retook the topic in *Comentarii in Vergilii Aeneidem*, where Achilles hugged Troilus to death. However, Achilles is usually a heterosexual man and his friendship with Patroclus is an example of deep feelings (Callen King 1987, 149-153; 171-2; 201-4).

Godfrey of Rheims´ *Hektor et Achilles*, a work based on the *Ilias Latina*, recreates *Iliad´*s books XV-XXII, which correspond to lines 790-946 of the *Ilias Latina*, and these are an "ékphrasis" or final description, followed by a pre-war biography of Paris and a description of the destruction of Troy. Rheims comments on how Hektor is, as in the *Ilias Latina*, Troy's only support (l. 451). We can see how Hektor *exilit urbe, furit, naves et vela perurit* ("Bound out of the city, rage, set the ships and sails aflame") (line 453) and how he comes back to the city *terribilis spoliis indutus Achillis* (line 455), an event due perhaps to Patroclus´ assassination.[7] Once in the battlefield, Achilles appears belligerent and with a warfare pride that derives from Homer. His anger is caused by the Trojans, not by Hektor, because, when they hide behind the walls, they make *quod male pugnatur, quod res in pace geratur* ("That the fight will not be favourable, that the matter will be solved peacefully") (line 471). The anonymous *Planctus ad Hektora* begins with Hektor, who has decided to fight against the *indignatus* or irascible Achilles, and finishes when Achilles beats him to death, while Hektor implores him. Andromache asks him not to fight against a semidivine foe, and it embodies some details from Statius´ *Achilleis*, as the catch of the lions or the skin that *sic est dura, quod nec ferrum ibi durat* ("Is so hard that iron is even more"). (lines 21-2). Hektor´s proud answer, by which he replies that he will kill Achilles as he had defeated Patroclus before with Achilles´ armour, recalls the *Ilias Latina*. Hektor´s requests for mercy make audience uneasy, and do not become effective to give his body back to their parents, as it occurs in *Iliad* and *Ilias Latina*. Hektor´s strength and nobility are questionable, and at the same time Achilles´ cruelty is more feasible when he rejects to whom makes those requests. Besides, that Hektor believes that Achilles´ conquest of Troy was achieved by means of the conquest of the hero himself enhances to balance Hektor with the Virgilian Turnus, who also begged for his life and thought that the risk that he run in the duel with Aeneas meant no more than the final victory in the war.[8]

Odo of Orleans (11th century) writes a poem usually entitled *Pergama Flere Volo*. Its interest lays in the 25-lines transmitted summary.[9] Achilles is mentioned to say that he outstood as a pro-Greek *ferus* and that his rival in the Trojan side was the *martius* Hektor: *Quantus pro Danais ferus exsurrexit Achilles / Pro Teucris quantus martius Hektor erat* ("As Achilles came up cruelly in favour of the Greeks, so the unswerving Hektor was in favour of the Trojans"). That only Hektor and Achilles deserve to be mentioned by the author means that Oto´s work is closer to the Homeric heroes than to the dull ones in Dares and Dictys. A short work entitled *Viribus, Arte, Minis*, written by Pierre de Saintes at mid-12th century and that follows Homer,[10] focuses on Achilles and Hektor, the latter as the Trojan keystone and the former as the killer of the latter. In Simon Capra Aurea´s *Ilias*, Hektor is the only safeguard of the city (lines 268; 274). Achilles, who defeats him, is, as in Homer and Virgil, the latest conqueror of the city: *At ferus Eacydes ut venit et Hektora vicit, / Vergit ad Eneam spes viduata Frigum* ("But when fierce Achilles came and conquered Hektor, the Phrygians´ widowed hope turned to Aeneas") (lines 275-6). Hektor´s grandeur is only worth for measuring Achilles´ one: *Si cor si vires, si bella requires Achillis, / Ut doceam paucis, Hektore maior erat* ("If you look into Achilles´ heart, strenght, battles, in order to explain them briefly, Hektor´s ones were even more important") (lines 207-8).

In *Libro de Alexandre*, the emperor, who is obssessed with fame, is instructed by Aristotle with regard to Homer´s story, and thus Hektor plays the game of being an incalculable example of a worthy warrior to seek, as we discussed before, for a "preçio" that will last forever in books ("en escriptura") (stanzas 70-1). When Diomedes and Ulysses turn up in the battlefield with Rhesus´ horses and the rest of the plunder, the Greeks feel so glad as if they had conquered "toda Francia" (stanza 624ab). When the poet states that Diomedes and Ulysses are not proud of it (stanza 624d), they are following a medieval "exemplum" of humbleness against which it is more feasible to judge Achilles´ unlike answer to Nestor´s comment on the irrefutable conquest of the Trojans (stanza 625d). Achilles seems to be angered because he thinks that the conquest of the city might be in charge of someone else, but Nestor´s reply does not confirm this (stanza 626). This turns out to be a recreation of the idea defended by Ulysses in Ovidian *Metamorphoses*. Ulises is there demanding for a compensation after having sacked Lesbos, killed Hektor and even brought Achilles back from Esciros. It is evident that Achilles wants everybody to recognize his sheer "mejoría". Only in the clamour of the battle next day is understandable Achilles´ indignation before Nestor´s words of the previous day. At the beginning of the battle, Hektor and the Trojans feel

terrified in the presence of Achilles, who, according to Hektor, was born for being one of his "pecados" (stanza 627d), nevertheless Hektor launches into the battlefield for some days and there is nobody to stop him, until Ajax appears by the ships (stanzas 629-635). The reason why is that Achilles is finally "dubdado", as can be seen in the following stanza when Patroclus, his "alfierzo" or usual support, feels so confused that he puts on the armour of his doubtful "señor", and gets out to fight against the Trojans (stanzas 636-7), and to die at the hands of Hektor (stanzas 638-645), as in the *Iliad*. After Achilles´ mourn for his friend´s death (stanza 647b) and his promise of revenge, he orders a "maestro" to build up new arms, among which a shield painted wittily by the master stands out, as an abbreviated version of the shield in the *Iliad*. Some Christian elements are added. The poet introduces the Tower of Babel, so that, instead of the city that is about to be sacked or shared in two lots due to the wealth that "ptolíethron epératon entòs éergen" ("High-walled cities in which quarrelling people go to law") (*Iliad* VIII, 512), "ciudades amuralladas y la torre que pueblo traidor construyó" appear (stanza 655bc). The poet seems to withdraw from the lawful systems that were invented by man to protect from the beasts and gets close to the impious tower that was built to achieve heavenly fullness, but that tower lacks of communication and cooperation. How haughtily Achilles behaves when he kills Hektor is repeated in his last action in the poem and results in Paris´ revenge. When "el peccado" recalls Paris, who does not know how to kill Achilles, Achilles´ vulnerability (the soles of his feet) (stanzas 722d-724b), it can be seen that the Devil´s intervening is similar to the one in Alexander´s death, since there the Devil knocks him down on one hand, and on the other Alexander knocks himself down for sucumbing to his pride (Michael 1970, 155-6; Callen King 1987, 144-158).

In *Ilias Daretis Phrygii*, Joseph of Exetes seems firstly to undermine Capua Aurea´s idea of overvaluing Achilles to the detriment of Hektor, because above all it is Juno's and Minerva's persistent incitement what persuades the hesitant Achilles that he should challenge and lately kill a greatest man (*tanto viro*) just like Hektor. He himself is capable of defeating a whole army three times (IV, 378-82; V, 208-19; VI, 361), one of them by screaming *solus eam, vincam solus* "Let me go alone, alone I will conquer" (V, 211). In the second defeat Hektor is present and he withdraws honourably but unavoidably. Since Hektor is never rewarded with the privilege of such a deed, it is evident that Achilles is a superior warrior.

In Benoît de Saint Maure´s *Roman de Troie*, Achilles´s disadvantage in comparison to Hektor is redundant. In six out of the eight combats that

they perform (lines 10684-724; 11270-94; 11541-56; 12507-50; 12789-96; 14148-203; 14491-504; 16180-99), Achilles is depicted as weaker than the Trojan hero. In one of the combats, Achilles is the first to be dismounted, in another one he rides again more slowly than Hektor, in another he is injured more seriously. Furthermore, Benoît leads the heroes out of the battlefield to perform a completely new event, which seems to be carried out to show Hektor´s vast superiority. A verbal combat that takes place during a long truce and that the writer uses to make them balance to each other (ll. 13121-85) allows the audience to check both warriors from the points of view of personality and pride. In the discourses, Achilles is that gets angry with Hektor´s provocative laughter and that speaks completely seriously about how hard he has been punched during the battle, about the great pain ("grant duel") that abides in his heart because Hektor has killed Patroclus and about how he will try to kill Hektor when they meet again (ll. 13135-62). Hektor wastes some words on his reciprocal hate, but he immediately challenges to a singular combat (ll. 13164-8). He is willing to stake the whole war on the outcome: if Achilles loses, the Greeks will go home without Helen; if Hektor does, the Trojans will give in and leave Troy to the Greeks (lines 13169-77). The combat does not eventually occur, because Benoît cannot change the end of the war; moreover, both armies reject the conditions of the duel. However, Benoît makes different the Greeks´ reject from the point of view of the Trojans: Agamemnon leads the unanimous opposition to the duel, while Priam, who trusts completely in Hektor´s capacity, rejects it because of his people's pressure. The effect of this episode as a whole is to raise Hektor as an ideal warrior, since he proposes the duel and he seems to be the most appropriate to be the winner and the leader, since his aim is to save the lineage of his people, in contrast with Achilles, who fights only for personal revenge and honour and who has wanted to hold on until the following combat with the whole army in order to fulfil his threatens.

In Guido della Colonne´s *Historia Destructionis Troiae* some important changes occur and they suppose Achilles´ degradation as well as Hektor´s raise even more than in Benoît´s version. Guido's Achilles begins talking to Hektor by stating that he is extremely willing of killing him. The reasons why he longs for are the same as in Benoît: the received injuries and his lost friend; besides, he says that Hektor will be dead in one year's time. Hektor´s answer deals with a long philosophical digression in which he rationalistically discusses that he also hates him and wants to kill him, not for personal reasons, but because Achilles hates him and he is attacking his homeland, his family and himself. According to Hektor, It is not just or feasible that love may derive from war or esteem from hate.