

The *Ephemeris* or Diary of Dictys of Crete is a text that purports to have been written by a companion of Idomeneus, the great Cretan leader who appears in Homer. This pretended eyewitness account of the Trojan War was known until about 100 years ago from a Latin translation of one Septimius, generally dated to the fourth century CE. The Latin Dictys, along with a Latin translation of a similar pretended narrative by Dares the Phrygian (a supposed member of the Trojan forces), provided the Latin middle ages with their major source for traditions about Troy and thus directly or indirectly influenced many medieval and later authors. It had been debated since at least the early seventeenth century whether the Latin Dictys was really a translation of a Greek work (as it claims to be). Even before 1907, the question could be settled to the satisfaction of most by the careful study of Johannes Malalas (the 6th cent. Greek author of a compendium of universal history called *Chronographia*) and some later Byzantine texts, for which it was implausible to claim (though a few scholars still did) that the Greek compilers who carried very similar details were translating from the Latin Dictys. The publication of volume 2 of *The Tebtunis Papyri* in 1907 put the question to rest once and for all, as it provided a scrap of the Greek original that was the ultimate source of Malalas and other Greek texts as well as the base text of the translation by Septimius. This is PTebt 268.

In the Latin version there are two slightly inconsistent versions of the “discovery” and translation of Dictys preceding the narrative. Both claim an accidental recovery from an old Cretan tomb of the work written on bark. The dedicatory epistle by Septimius claims that Dictys wrote Greek in Phoenician letters and his narrative was transcribed into normal Attic letters and that version was sent to Nero. A prologue claims that the bark writings themselves were sent to Nero and the emperor ordered them to be translated

into Greek. In either case, this discovery of writings in obscure scripts is a familiar motif for pseudepigraphic works from antiquity up to modern times. Many now take the references to Nero seriously, to the extent that they assign the Greek original to the 1st century CE (and some specifically to Nero's reign). Glen Bowersock, in his Sather Lectures *Fiction as History* (published 1994), highlighted Dictys as one of the important markers of what he called the fad of fiction as history in the age of Nero. More recently, Alan Cameron, in his *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (2004), gave a featured role to Dictys in his thorough debunking of the source claims of Ptolemaios Chennos (or Ptolemy the Quail) in his chapter on "Bogus Citations." Cameron concluded that "Interest in pre-Homeric Troica was widespread in the early imperial East, and the 'discovery' of Dictys's memoirs seems to have started a fashion." Assuming that Dictys belongs in the 60s, he places a Greek original of Dares later in the first century, written in reaction to and competition with Dictys. Around 100 CE Ptolemaios Chennos, he argues, knew both works: in his *New History* he got some of his unorthodox details from Dictys and he borrowed the name Dares for one of his alleged pre-Homeric poets.

The Greek Dictys of the first century CE thus responded to the contemporary passion not only for mythography in general, but also for the playful twisting and contradiction of Homeric tradition and the accumulation of *paradoxa* and alternative versions of myths. Cameron aptly compares Dio Chrysostom's *Eleventh Oration*, delivered at Ilium in the 2nd cent. CE, exposing Homer's falsehoods, and Philostratus' *Heroicus*, featuring reminiscences of a Protesilaus brought back to life for a third time. In Dictys, for instance, Philoctetes was not mistreated and abandoned by the Greeks: they sent a group of Greeks with him to Lemnos to help him get cured. Palamedes was not

killed after a trial using false evidence of treason, but was murdered treacherously (Diomedes and Ulixes trick him into descending into a well and throw stones down upon him). The Trojan people, who (as represented by the elders on the wall in *Iliad* 3) are in Homer of one mind with Priam and his sons, are shown in Dictys to be hostile to the royal princes and their misbehavior and repeatedly have to be cowed into allowing the war to go on. When disaffected from the army after the seizure of his concubine, Achilles contemplates attacking the Greeks *à la* Ajax. When the Greeks send an embassy to bring Achilles back into the fold, he does relent after five comrades appeal to him (Patroclus and Diomedes speak to him as well as the three pleaders of *Iliad* 9). Hector is killed in an ambush, and the ransom of his body takes place in daylight with full knowledge and sympathy of the Greek leaders and army. Incidents after the *Iliad* are also varied. The Palladium is stolen by Antenor and given to the Greeks who are in Troy negotiating a settlement. There is in fact an apparent peaceful settlement of the war, to which the Greeks swear oaths, but they nevertheless use the Trojan horse and their pretended departure to capture the city. The death of Ajax follows his loss to Odysseus in a contest not for Achilles' arms but for the Palladium. He is found murdered in his tent and Agamemnon and Ulixes are suspected and barely get away from the angry Greeks, departing from Troy before the others. Orestes has a whole army supporting him when he reclaims Argos and kills his mother and Aegisthus.

The revisionism regarding Achilles goes beyond the quarrel and reconciliation. Most significant is the incorporation of romance elements in his story. During a winter armistice, he attends a religious ceremony and falls in love with Polyxena at first sight. Hector tries to use Achilles' passion for his sister to make him betray the whole Greek

army or at least murder the other chieftains. Achilles determines to kill Hector because of this demand. It is Polyxena's presence with Priam at the ransoming of the corpse that finally persuades Achilles to release Hector's corpse. And negotiations for obtaining Polyxena as his bride create suspicion of Achilles among the Greeks in general (who therefore fail to mourn him when he is dead) and give Paris and Deiphobus the opportunity to murder him.

Homer is not the only target of such revisionist mythography. There are also some digs at the Roman tradition of *pious Aeneas*. In Dictys Aeneas is the Trojan speaker who insults Menelaus at the first negotiations after the Greek army encamps at Troy and causes the breakdown of what had been a promising meeting, and the Trojan people are highly critical of him for doing this. At the end of the war, he and Antenor and Helenus are involved in betraying the city to the Greeks, although this is partly for the high-minded reason that Paris and Deiphobus went too far in killing Achilles in a temple. After the Greeks leave, he is seditious against Antenor's rule and eventually forced to emigrate.

Furthermore, there is a rationalizing strain in Dictys' version of events. The Homeric divine apparatus is eliminated: there is no Thetis bringing new arms (Hector never captured Achilles' arms), no Athena or Apollo intervening to entrap or stun key heroes at the time of their deaths, no Aphrodite saving Paris from Menelaus when the duel goes against the Trojan (rather it is Pandarus' arrow shot that saves him). It is a vengeful Telamon and not Poseidon who destroys Odysseus' fleet. We can even see a few details using the kind of rationalizing recasting of myths in the fashion known from treatises *περὶ ἀπίστων* by Palaephatus and a certain Heraclitus and from authors in the Euhemerist tradition. In Dictys 6.7 Assandrus, a Thessalian friend of Peleus, tells the

emissaries of Neoptolemus the origins of the marriage of Peleus with Thetis the daughter of Chiron. “Many kings from all over were invited to the house of Chiron and at the banquet they honored the bride with great praise as if she were a goddess, calling her father Chiron Nereus and herself a Nereid. And to the extent that each of those kings present at the banquet had outshone others in choral dancing and the measures of song, they called them Apollo or Liber, and they called many of the women Muses. For this reason at that time that banquet was termed a banquet of the gods.”

This elimination of the unbelievable and supernatural, as well as the cynical view of the pagan Greek heroes, must have appealed to Christian writers, and thus Dictys or his imitators (like Sisyphus of Cos, a supposed comrade of Teucer) were valued sources for John Malalas and other Byzantine writers.

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I now turn briefly to the Tebtunis fragment of Dictys. This papyrus is a large piece with unusually ample columns of text. Apart from the many holes, there has been extensive abrasion in many parts of the fragment, not to mention the so-called wine stain. Although the original editors did not have modern imaging and image enhancement techniques available to them 100 years ago, they were able to work on this piece before mounting and before the wear and tear of a few decades in flexible vinylite mounting, many handlings of the piece in my own proseminars, and the wear and tear of removal from vinylite and mounting in glass. Some fibers at the edges have probably been lost since the original editors studied it. Even so, there was some hope that multispectral imaging might make it possible to improve readings in some places. Multispectral imaging involves making high-resolution digital images repeatedly of a grid of slightly

overlapping squares covering the papyrus. For this papyrus, the grid was 7 rows of 5 columns. Gene Ware of Brigham Young University performed this imaging in November 2005, making 13 computer-controlled passes with wavelengths filtered at intervals between 450 and 1000 nanometers and also with red, blue, and green filters. The filter is placed directly in front of the digital camera's lens, limiting the wavelengths allowed to reach the camera's image sensor to a bandwidth of only 40 nanometers. The initial result is 455 images of 8cm x 8cm portions of the papyrus, 7.9MB per image, about 3.5GB in all, provided to us on a DVD along with a printout of explanations and reduced images. On particular problems one may wish to examine all thirteen versions, but this was not something I had time to do constantly with such an extensive text, and it can be confusing to work with the overlapping images. The shortcut is to use a "stitched image": Roger Macfarlane of BYU kindly responded to my request for images that combined the separate pieces into one. He created a single mosaic from the 35 images, which contain overlaps, and then a stitched version in which the spaces between the separate pieces and the overlaps are eliminated. One version of the stitched image is enhanced using the levels settings in Photoshop.

The new images do make some letters more complete and more certain. But on the whole, study of them confirms that Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed were highly scrupulous and thorough editors. Just as in the case of the Inachos papyrus, where autopsy will show that the transcription of Grenfell and Hunt is more convincing than those offered by later Sophoclean scholars, so here the *editio princeps* provides a superior text in comparison to the version printed in Jacoby (included in TLG) or in Eisenhut's Teubner of the Latin Dictys. The interpretation of the traces was of course helped

immensely by the existence of the derivative Byzantine texts and the Latin translation, although it is now evident that the original Greek Dictys was quite spare in style and the Latin version has often indulged in an expansive paraphrasing with some rhetorical flourishes. Likewise, it appears that the intermediary Greek source, Sisypchos of Cos, may have made the Greek style more ornate and he certainly recast parts of the narrative into first-person accounts by particular heroes. The portion that covers the events present in the Tebtunis fragment appear in Malalas' account, credited to Sisypchos, as part of a story told to Neoptolemus by Teucer just before these heroes sailed separately away from Troy.

My transcriptions notes the addition and subtraction of dots under letters: the subtractions are a tribute to the MSI process (but some of them could also have resulted from use of the high-resolution scan); the additions may reflect damage to the piece in the last 100 years; there are some letters or traces reported by the editors at the edges that I cannot confirm. In only a few places have I seen a trace of a letter where the editors saw none and restored the letter in brackets (lines 24, 26, 76, 78, 80, 99).