

Dictys Cretensis's *Ephemeris belli Troiani* (here *De historia belli Troiani*) and Dares Phrygius's *De excidio Troiae historia* (here *Historia de excidio Troiae*) were, throughout the Middle Ages, the two chief sources of knowledge of the events of the Trojan war. For this reason, they were often copied together in medieval manuscripts. Dictys Cretensis (the legend goes) fought the Trojan war in the Cretan army of Idomeneus. Dares Phrygius figures in the *Iliad* as a Trojan priest.

The curator of this 1499 Venetian edition is Francesco Faraone (Franciscus Faragonius, c. 1460–c. 1525), a distinguished Hellenist active in Messina (Sicily). And in fact, the Venetian edition was preceded by one printed there in 1498 (by Wilhelm Schömberger). The choice of Venice was probably due to the success of the first edition. Not coincidentally, the Venetian publisher, Cristoforo Pensi (Christophorus de Pensis de Mandello) was a rather prolific printer – 113 editions between 1488 and 1505 – who specialised in scholarly titles of various kinds (medical, grammatical, rhetorical, poetical, historical), even though he did not disdain devotional and literary works for broader audiences. The dedicatee of this *De historia belli Troiani* is Bernardo Rizzo (Bernardus Riccius), a dear friend of Faraone: a lover of Greek culture, he conducted a political career in Messina, and financed the 1498 edition.

The book's paratext is very rich, and includes a letter-prologue addressed from Lucius Romanus (first Latin translator of Dictys Cretensis into Latin) to Quintus Aradius, and a letter of Cornelios Nepos (who allegedly translated Dares Phrygius) to Sallustius.

- a1: title page: "Iesus Maria. / Dictys Cretensis / De historia belli / Troiani et Dar / ses Priscus / de eadem / Troia / na".
1. a2-a3: Francesco Faraone, letter addressed to Bernardo Rizzo: "Dyctin Cretensem gravem historicum ... & me quod facias ama".
a3: Francesco Faraone, epigram dedicated to Bernardo Rizzo: "Ediderat mundo summum pia Creta tonantem ... Mox maiora dabo: spesque decusque vale".
a3: Francesco Faraone (?), hexastich: "Vndeni uersus partem si sumpseris imam ... Auctoris totum syllaba nomen habes".
a3: Francesco Faraone (?), tetrastich: "Tarpaei montis templum Dictynna colossus ... Illa soluta iacent: Dictys ad ora uolat".
a3-a3v: Francesco Faraone (?), distich: "Vertice nata dei quondam velut aegide Sais, / Gnosida trinacriae sic tulit arte caput".
a3v: Francesco Faraone (?), monostich: "Ilion obsedit bello gens Graeca bilustri".
a3v-a4v: Francesco Faraone (?), "Appendiculae ad libri interpretationem": "Minos, Iovis & Europae filius ... cibariis expleuerunt".
a4v: Francesco Faraone, epigram dedicated to Bernardo Rizzo: "Phoebigenam precibus mouit Dictynna sub orcum ... Longaquae Cumanae saecula uatis agas".
a5-a5v: Septimius Romanus, prologue addressed to Quintus Aradius, edited by Francesco Faraone: "Ephimeridem belli troiani Dictys Creten[sis] ... saue coeptis atque in legend dietim.
a5v-g8v: Dictys Cretensis, *Historia Belli Troiani* (six books): "Cvinctis refes qui Minois Iove geniti ... neque tamen inualidus virium".
g8v: first colophon.
 2. h1: genealogical note ("Historia de origine Troianorum"): "Origo Troianorum Dardanus fuit ... Nunc / qui Aeneam filium procreavit".
h1-h1v: Cornelius Nepos, letter addressed to Sallustius: "Cum / multa Athenis curiose ... Nunc / ad pollicitum reuertarum".

h1v-i9v: Dares Phrygius, *Historia de excidio Troiae*: “Pelias rex in Peloponneso Aesonem fratrem ha / buit ... Anchises Aeneam, Aeneas Ascanium”.

i10: Francesco Faraone, decastich addressed to the reader: “Tam sunt plena malis haec tempora nostra nefandis ... Bellis igne fame sulphure cuncta ruent”.

i10: second colophon.

i10v: blank.

Paper incunabulum, 4° (size: 210 X 154 X 18; size of leaf: 208 X 150). Printed foliation appears at the bottom right corner of the first four leaves of each gathering only (ai, aii, aiii, aiiii; bi, bii, biii, biiii etc.). Imprint: Venice: Christophorus de Pensis de Mandello, 1 February 1499 (first colophon) 1 March 1499 (second colophon). Collation: a–h⁸, i¹⁰. 74 leaves, 30 lines per leaf.

One woodcut initial at f. h1. Gatherings a and b have annotations (mostly corrections of the Latin text).

Bound in parchment over paper boards. On the front cover is noted: “Dytis [sic] Cretensis / Dares Phrygius”. On the back cover: “Dytis [sic] Cretensis de bello troiano”. On the book edge: “Dyctis Cretensis Historia Troi[a]na”.

Provenance: at f. a1v: “Fr[ancisci] Sini d[omini]Ant[on]ii Zeni alumni”.

References: *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*: id0018700.

Dr Giacomo Giudici, June 2017

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