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Abstract

Intellectually rich and editorially innovative the quattrocento period, along with the ensuing years of the early sixteenth century, ushered in an era of profound ideological ferment gradually culminating in a precocious conceptualization of a national Neo-Hellenic identity. Seen through this prism the first printed rendition of the *Iliad* in a modern language, which is undertaken in 1526 by Nikolaos Loukanes, calls for a meticulous and thorough analysis, since perusing it and paying close attention to the representation of the Achaeans and the Trojans found therein one cannot fail to observe that the treatment of the two contending armies is anything but dispassionate.

Key-Words

Loukanes, reception, *Iliad*, early Modern Greek literature, ethnic identity, Achaeans, Trojans

Flagrantly deviating from both the Homeric original and Konstantinos Hermoniakos’ fourteenth century version of the *Iliad*, from which the young author borrows profusely in certain sections of his work, Loukanes’ account is permeated by a palpable sense of pride in the

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1 In Vat. Barb. gr. 239 we find a marginal note, most probably written by the author himself, whereby his name is recorded as Nikolaos Loukanos. In this article we will refer to him as Nikolaos Loukanes, since this is the name used by all modern scholars thus far. For the scant information available on the author’s life, see: Κατράμης 1880: 248-252; Μανούσακας 1963: 161-172; Σάθας 1868: 135; Legrand 1870: ζ-η; Ζαβίρας 1972: 476-477.

2 Λουκάνης 1979. This is the edition that I am using. As no verse numbering is provided in it, I should note that the numbering of verses in all the citations is my own. With reference to Legrand’s edition (Legrand 1870) it should be known that it is partial, covering only the first half of the work. Aside from these more recent editions, the work was published thrice in the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First it was printed in Venice in 1526 (by
military prowess of the Achaeans, and by a concurrent profound antipathy towards their inveterate enemies, the Trojans. What is noteworthy is that even Zeus himself is envisioned as a stout supporter of the Danaans, his numerous affectionate references to the well-peopled city of Ilios being purposefully elided. The question then naturally arises: Why is Loukanes so willing to depict Homer’s «μεγάθυμοι» (great-hearted) Trojans as inherently «κακοί» (evil), «ἀδικοί» (unjust), «βάρβαροι» (barbarous), and «ἀπιστοί» (faithless) while at the same time he is

the Nicolini da Sabbio), and later it was reprinted twice in the same city, in 1603 (by Antonio Pinelli), and in 1640 (by Pietro Pinelli). A list of extant copies can be found in Evro Layton’s indispensable book (Layton 1994: 226).

Loukanes’ 1526 rendition of the Iliad, along with the appended 478 verse poem Ἁλωσις ἠγους ἔπαρσις τῆς Τροίας, whose composition belongs exclusively to Nikolaos Loukanes, has attracted the attention of several scholars, the most notable among whom are: Pedro Bádenas, Caterina Carpinato, Giuseppe Fischetti, Enrica Follieri, Evro Layton, Émile Legrand, Konstantinos Sathas and Francis R. Walton. For their interesting works, see: Badenas 2002: 159-172; Carpinato 1997: 411-440; Carpinato 1999: 487-505; Fischetti 1975: 11-20; Follieri 1969: 119-130; Layton 1994: 87-91, 183-184, 341, 547; Legrand 1885: 188-192; Sathas’ introduction in Legrand 1870; Walton’s introduction in Λουκάνης 1979. None of these works dwells on Loukanes’ skewed representation of the Trojans.


3 Four examples are provided below:

Νικόλαος Λουκάνης 4. 137-139
«Εἴδες πρόβατα καὶ αἶγας, κεκλεισμένας εἰς τὴν μάνδραν καὶ τὸ γάλ’ ἀμελγομένας, συνεχὼς βοῶσι πᾶσαι.
Οὕτως οἱ κακοὶ οἱ τῷ Ῥ θῷ εἰς, μὲ κραυγῆς ἔρχοντο τότε.»

Ὅμηρος 4. 433-436
«ὡς τ’ ὄις πολυπάμονος ἀνδρός ἐν αὐλῇ μορία ἐστήκασιν ἀμελγόμεναι γάλα λευκόν, ἀζηχές μεμακύια ἀκούουσαι ὅπα ἄρνων, ὡς Τ Ῥ ω ν ἀλαλητὸς ἀνὰ στρατὸν εἰρήν ὄρωρει’»

Νικόλαος Λουκάνης 6. 6-7
«Τελαμώνιος δὲ Αἴας, πῦργος μέγας τῶν Ἀργείων πρῶτος ἱθεμέε τῆν τάξιν, τῷ ν ἀ δικὼ τά τω ν Τ Ῥ ω ν.»

Ὅμηρος 6. 5-6
«Αἴας δὲ πρῶτος Τελαμώνιος, ἔρκος Ἀχαιῶν, Τ Ῥ ω ν Ῥῆξε φάλαγγα...»
remarkably unsparing in his praise of Achaean valor? Is he wittingly investing the Trojan legend with an inchoate national sentiment? Does his view of the present color his perception of the past? And, why do the inhabitants of the famed fortress-town of Hisarlik in his work bear an uncanny resemblance to the Ottoman Turks, who by the beginning of the sixteenth century were rapidly entrenching themselves in Europe?

In gauging the possible motives underpinning the author’s metaphrastic choices, it is crucial to elucidate the significance of theories developed already in Medieval Times, and widely revived later on, during the Renaissance Period, regarding the origins of the Turks, and the putative association of the latter with the Trojans. Harking back to the late seventh century the story of the Turks’ alleged Trojan origins had its roots in a Latin chronicle which is commonly ascribed to a fictitious author, Fredegar.

Despite the fact that Fredegar’s tale was largely eclipsed by subsequent chronicles, the semi-dormant theory of the Trojan pedigree of the Turks held on tenaciously until the

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Νικόλαος Λουκάνης 5. 25-27
«Οἱ δὲ ἀπεστάλοις αὐτῷ τρεῖς, ἀφ’ οὗ ἴδον τοὺς δύο παιδέας ἑνὸς μὲν περισσευμένον, φεύγοντα δὲ καὶ τὸν ἄλλον ὁμοίως κεχωλομένοι, κατ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Διομήδους.»

'Ὅμηρος 5. 27-29
«Τρὶς ὡς εἴς δὲ ὡς καὶ τὴν ἱδον τυχήτων τὸν μὲν ἀλειφόμενον, τὸν δὲ κτάμενον παρ’ ὀχυσθεὶς, πᾶσιν ὀρίνθηθε θυμός.»

Νικόλαος Λουκάνης 2. 67-70
«ἐστὶ γὰρ αἰσχύνη τόδε εἰς τοὺς ἀπανταῖς ἀνθρώπους, τόσους χρόνους νὰ σταθῶμεν εἰς τὴν χιωρίνην τὰς χρόνους, καὶ συχνὰ νὰ πολεμῶμεν, κη ἀπρακτοὶ εἰς τὰς πατρίδας, νὰ στραφῶμεν ως γυναίκες...»

'Ὅμηρος 2. 130-133
«ἄλλα’ ἐπίκουροι πολλών ἐκ πολίων ἐγκέκριθοι ἀνδρεῖς ἔκασι, οἱ μὲ μέγα πλάζοντα καὶ σοῦ εἰδότα ἐθέλοντα Ἰλίου ἐκπέμπει εὖ ναί ὑμεῖν πολίεθρον.»
Renaissance. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), whose treatises are brimming with reproaches against those who irresponsibly referred to the Turks as *Teucri*, the name by which the Trojans were widely known in the West through Virgil’s *Aeneid*, offers ample evidence of the considerable popularity the notion enjoyed still in the middle of the fifteenth century.

More than an innocuous slip of the tongue, the interchangeable use of the phonetically resembling ethnonyms Τοῦρκοι and Τεῦκροι could be attributed to both the humanist penchant for accomplishing an authentic antique style devoid of neologisms, and to the identity of the Turks’ power base in Asia Minor. The main aim of this paper will be to explore the fascinating way in which Loukanes might be responding to these theories through his intriguing recapturing of the hoary heritage of Homer. Specifically, our analysis will center upon some new epithets of the Achaeans introduced by Loukanes, an instance of minor plot change, and two examples of Zeus’ blatant favoritism towards the Achaeans, through which our narrator strengthens the position of the Achaeans, markedly amplifying their gallantry on the battlefield, and activating the readers’ sympathy for their unremitting perseverance in the face of insurmountable challenges.

Before probing the new epithets of the 1526 *Iliad* that encapsulate the bravery of the Achaeans, it is important to briefly comment upon Loukanes’ blithe disregard for the traditional epithets accorded by Homer to the two opposing armies. Although Loukanes is keen to preserve

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4 The present paper, a natural outgrowth of my abiding interest in the reception of Homer in early Modern Greek literature, forms part of a larger project - doctoral dissertation conducted under the supervision of professor Panagiotis Roilos - that seeks to fully explore the untapped hermeneutic potentials of Nikolaos Loukanes’ intriguing work.

5 The most important Homeric epithets for the Achaeans are the following: «ἐυκνήμιδες» (well-greaved), «χαλκοχίτωνες» (bronze-clad), «κάρη κομόσσοντες Αχαιοί» (long-haired), «ταρχύπωλοι» (with swift horses), «ἀρήοι υίς Αχαιῶν» (the warrior sons of the Achaeans), «ἐλίκωπες» (quick-glancing, bright-eyed), «θεράποντες Ἐρημος» (attendants of Ares), «ἀιχμηταί» (spearmen), «ἀρηήριοι» (near to Ares), «δοῖοι» (noble), «φιλοπόλεμοι» (war-loving), «μεγάθυμοι» (great-hearted), «ἄσπισται» (armed with a shield), «θορηκταί» (armed with stout cuirass), «ὦθιμοι» (strong, valiant), «χαλκοκκήμιδες» (bronze-greaved). An analogous list for the Trojans comprises the following Homeric epithets: «ιππόδαμοι» (tamers of horses), «μεγάθυμοι» (great-hearted), «ὕπέρθυμοι» (high-spirited, daring), «ἄγέρωχοι» (high-minded, lordly), «φιλοπόλεμοι» (warlike), «ἄγαουι» (illustrious, noble), «ἄσπισται» (armed with a shield), «χαλκοχίτωνες» (bronze-clad), «μεγαλήτορες» (greathearted), «ἄγιμηταί» (spearmen), «ἄγιγνορες» (manly, heroic), «θορηκταί» (armed with stout cuirass), «κέντορες ὑπων» (drivers of horses), «εὐθηρενεῖς» (wealthy). See also Dee 2000.
many of the key formulaic epithets attributed to heroes and gods, he is not comparably considerate of the Trojans’ and Achaeans’ standard appellations, which he passes over in silence. In the case of the Argives, their fixed epithets are completely omitted without any replacement in thirty-four instances, while the Trojans are similarly deprived of their basic attributives eleven times. What happens, however, in all the other instances when our author opts for a different characterization in lieu of the traditional?

On numerous occasions special emphasis is laid sheerly on the fact that the two sides are enemies, and hence we come across expressions such as «οἱ ἔχοροι οὖτοι οἱ Τρῶες» (sixteen instances), or «τοὺς ἔχθροὺς τοὺς τοὺς Ἀργείους» (six instances). In other cases the narrator, or a character portrayed by him seems to empathize with the warriors’ agonies regardless of their ethnic affiliation, and as a result, phrases like «τῶν ἄθλιων τῶν Ἀργείων» (four occurrences), «οἱ ταλαίπωροι οἱ Ἀργείοι» (two occurrences), «τοὺς Τρῶας τοὺς ἄθλιους» (one occurrence), «οἱ κακόμοιροι οἱ Τρῶες» (one occurrence) emerge repeatedly. Analogous compassion is being extended to individuals, both soldiers and civilians, who are severely afflicted with the calamities of war. Hecuba, Priam, Andromache, Hector, on the Trojan side, and Thetis, Achilles, Patroklos on the Greek are definitely among the characters who are most often dubbed «ἄθλιοι».

If Loukanes is generally not wholly stinting in his humane concern for the opponents’ vicissitudes, the same cannot be said with respect to his willingness to acknowledge their κόδος (glory) on the battlefield.

The epithet that best epitomizes this notion of martial valor in Loukanes’ work is none other than the adjective «ἀνδρειωμένοι» (valiant). Although Greeks are constantly awarded the

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6 Sometimes the exact form of the word is maintained i.e. the epithet «λευκώλενος» for Hera, while in other instances new words conveying the meaning of the Homeric words are chosen i.e. «ταχύπους» for «ποδάρκης Ἀχιλλεύς», «μακροβάλος» for «ἑκατηβελέτης Ἀπόλλων». Similarly, for the ships we encounter the phrase «νῆας ταχυπλεούσας», which is equivalent to the Homeric «θὰς νῆας».

7 At this point it should be noted that sometimes this specific word can have different connotations, as in the phrase used by Loukanes in Λουκ. 18.172, where the author speaks of the Trojans who have imprudently scorned the sound advice of Polydamas. These are characterized by Homer as «νήπιοι» (II. 18.311).

8 Six times the epithet is attached to the ethnonyms «Ἀργείοι» and «Ἑλληνες», one time the cognate term «ἀνδρεῖοι» accompanies the ethnonym «Ἑλληνες», while the term «μεγαλόψυχοι» (high-souled) modifies the ethnonym «Ἀργείοι» twice. The epithet «ἀνδρειωμένοι» is also given to individual heroes, and smaller groups
coveted accolade, to the point that it becomes almost synonymous with their various ethnonyms i.e. Argives, Hellenes etc., the Trojans are only begrudgingly given such a distinguished acclamation. The only Trojan hero who wins this type of praise is Hector, who is called «ἀνδρειωμένος» thrice. But aside from these scant instances of commendation, confined solely to an individual hero, there is a strikingly smaller number of citations associating the Trojans collectively as a group with «ἀνδρεία» (bravery) compared to the relevant passages in Loukanes celebrating the Greeks’ bravery.

Another way in which a differentiated treatment of the two contending forces manifests itself involves even greater divergences from the original version. In all such instances the Achaeans’ valor appears significantly augmented, while the Trojans’ heroism is systematically downplayed. Let us begin by providing some excerpts for the Argives, examining them in juxtaposition with the pertinent passages from Homer’s Iliad. The first example is taken from book one, and specifically from the scene in which Chryses, the priest of Apollo, beseeches the Achaeans to return to him his beloved daughter:

Νικόλαος Λουκάνης 1. 24-26
«Βασιλεὺς παίδες ἄτρεως, ἄχ ι ο ι τε πάντες ἄλλοι
ἀ π α ρ ά μ ι λ λ ο ἐν ἱπ π ο ις, κ’ ἐν φ ρ ο ν ἐσεὶ κ’ ἐν ἀ ν δ ρ η ἡ
within the Achaean camp on a plethora of occasions; five times it is used for Telamonian Ajax, two times for the Myrmidons, once for the Thracians, once for Patroklos, once for Odysseus, once for Aias Lokros, once for Thoas, once for Epeios and once for some unidentified Greek warriors. The epithet «ἀνδρεία» is also used several times, once for the foremost fighters of the Greeks who flank Menelaos, once for Patroklos, once for Agamemnon, Diomedes and Odysseus, who had been wounded in battle, once for Antilochos, once for Thoas, once for Telamionian Ajax and Teucer, and once for some unnamed warriors. Moreover, the adverbs «ἀνδρείος» (eight times) and «ἀνδρειωμένος» (one time) are employed on numerous occasions, either to incite the heroes to fight bravely or to convey their impressive gallantry on the battlefield. Once he is also recognized as «ἀνδρείος» (Λουκ. 16.41).

10 The Trojans are called «ἀνδρειωμένοι» only one time, in an exhortation that Hector delivers to the army (Λουκ. 8.302). They are also called «πολεμικοί» (warlike) thrice (Λουκ. 13.114, 14.6, 17.92), «ἀνδρείοι» twice (Λουκ. 13.40, 13.114), and «μεγαλόψυχοι» once (Λουκ. 20.116). It is interesting to note that the term «ἀνδρείοι» is bestowed upon them by the narrator. The adverb «ἀνδρείος» is used in association with their deeds four times (Λουκ. 13.128, 16.153, 21.131, 22.128), while the periphrasis «μετ’ ἀνδρείας» only once (Λουκ. 12.25).
As we may easily note, in place of a descriptive epithet focusing on the warriors’ leg armor, we find a quite eloquent display of their skills, according to which they far surpass all other nations in equestrian matters, in prudence, and in courage.

The second example is culled once more from book one, and reading the relevant passage we become acquainted with Achilles’ famous, cantankerous retort to king Agamemnon, when the latter requested that he be duly recompensed for the loss of Chryseis:

Loukanes here seizes the opportunity to praise the Achaeans by consciously inserting in Achilles’ speech the compound adjective «πανάριστοι». It is interesting to see that the already emphatic superlative «ἄριστοι» is not strong enough in Loukanes’ opinion- to express the greatness of the Greeks. The intensifying prefix παν- is added in the hope of better representing their superiority.

What is common in the two previous examples is a pronounced willingness on the part of the author to supplement the Argives’ excellence by dint of additional epithets and characterizations. Our third example, however, goes one step further, since it entails not merely additional epithets, but drastic changes to the plot itself. In the seventh book of the Iliad Hector is incited by his brother Helenos to challenge the best of the Achaeans to fight with him in single combat:

11 Metrical considerations could also justify the addition of «παν», but this observation does not necessarily detract from our argument.
In the original version everyone becomes hushed in silence, on the one hand ashamed to decline the challenge, but on the other shivering at the prospect of accepting it. Loukanes’ account, conversely, makes no mention of any ensuing silence, and furthermore suppresses the speeches of Menelaos, Agamemnon and Nestor after which nine heroes are finally moved to action. Granted the author’s economizing narrative technique, whereby the author wishes to condense the epic, the selection of the adverb «εὔθεως» is still startling in view of the fact that this is one of the rare occasions on which basic plot events are distorted. Besides, Loukanes could have pithily presented the gist of events without resorting to a loquacious digression, exactly as he does in so many other instances in the work.

It is now time to tackle Zeus’ staunchly pro-Achaean stance in Loukanes’ Iliad. As it has already been mentioned, there are two excerpts that attest to Zeus’ pronounced affinity for the Greeks. Let us begin with the passage from book one. At the behest of her disgruntled son, and much to the consternation of the Argives, Thetis has betaken herself to the abode of the gods, Mount Olympos, to beseech the son of Cronos to vouchsafe glory to Achilles by augmenting the power of the Trojans for as long as the injury to her son’s honor remains unatoned for. In this highly poignant scene of supplication, as narrated by Homer, Zeus is initially disinclined to fulfill Thetis’ request because he is well aware of the exceedingly nagging temperament of Hera:

"Ομηρος 1. 503-527
«Ζεῦ πάτερ, εἰ ποτὲ δὴ σὲ μετ’ ἀθανάτουσιν ὄνησα ἢ ἔπει ἢ ἔργῳ, τόδε μοι κρήηνον ἐέλδωρ˙ τιμήσων μοι υἱόν, ὡς ὀκυμορότατος ἄλλων ἐπλετ’ ἀτάρ μιν νῦν γε ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν Αγαμέμνων"
In fear of further disrupting the already strained relationship with Hera the father of gods is only halfheartedly acquiescing to Thetis’ earnest entreaty, fittingly reciprocating a favor he had received from her in the past. Turning, however, to Loukanes’ less mythically informed account, we are confronted with a quite jarring explanation of Zeus’ preliminary hesitance.

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12 The story of how Hera, Poseidon, and Pallas Athene were once minded to put Zeus in bonds is briefly recounted by Achilles in Il. 1. 396-406. According to the story Zeus was saved by the intervention of Thetis, who was prudent enough to summon Briareus (Aegaeon) to help.
Λουκάνης 1. 332-343

«Πάτερ Ζεύς θεών κ’ ἀνθρώπων, ποίσε μοι τήνδε τήν χάριν, ὃσπερ πράττεις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, ὅταν σε παρακαλῶσι· τίμησον καὶ τὸν ύιὸν μου, ἐπειδὴ ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων ἔλαβε τὸ δόρον τ’ ὀψε, τήν ὄραίναν Βρισήδα· ἄλλα σὺ πάτερ τῶν πάντων, τίμησον τὸν Ἀχιλλέα ἐν τοσούτω τίθει κράτος, πᾶσι τοῖς Τρώσι δὴ μέγα, ἐξως ἃν Ἕλληνες οὕτως, τὸν ύιὸν μου νὰ τιμήσουν, εἰ μὲν τὸ βούλει νὰ ποίσης, ὁμωσόν μοι μέγαν ὅρκον»
Οὕτως ἔλεξεν ἡ Θέτις. Ὅ δ’ ἐς Ζεῦς τοῦ τοῦ μίσας εἰναι πάθος τὸν Ἕλληνων, βαρὺ πλείστον τὸν ἐφίνη, ὅμως δὲ καὶ μὴ θελόντως, ἔταξέτο νὰ τὸ ποίση, κ’ ἔδωκε καὶ μέγαν ὅρκον.»

Rather than being apprehensive about the reaction of Hera, Zeus is here tenderly solicitous for the welfare of the Achaeans. Once more his response is unenthusiastic, but this time a deep-rooted desire not to cause pain to the Danaans is to account for his dithering. Such a doting fondness towards the Argives on the part of Zeus is anything but precedent in the Homeric account, where the sire of gods and men does not shy away from even personally bearing the brunt of war fighting on the side of the Trojans. Some memorable examples of this type of active divine intervention include but are not limited to the hurling of a terrifying lightning bolt before the horses of Diomedes, occasioning “a terrible flame of burning sulphur,” the breaking of “the well-twisted string on the incomparable bow” of Teucer (Illi. 15. 458-466), and the catalytic goading from Zeus’ “mighty hand” that spurs Hector on his raging advance towards the ships of the Achaeans (Illi. 15. 693-695).

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13 It is interesting to note that Zeus’ support of the Danaans is never direct.

14 See also Ill. 12. 252-255 where Zeus rouses “from the mountains of Ida a blast of wind that carries the dust straight against the ships” of the Achaeans bewildering their minds.

15 Ill. 8. 130-138. This is the only episode, among the three scenes cited here, where Zeus’ interference is acknowledged by Loukanes.
This is not to say that Homer’s Zeus is utterly devoid of compassion for the sufferings of the Greeks. Several Achaean heroes are beneficiaries of his pity. An eagle holding “the young of a swift hind” appears in answer to Agamemnon’s fervent prayer in book eight (Il. 8. 236-252), a resounding thunder fills the heavens not long after Nestor’s desperate plea in book fifteen (Il. 15. 370-378), the clouds enfoldiing Ida are dispersed at Telamonian Aias’ tearful entreaty in book seventeen (Il. 17. 645-650), and goddess Athena is dispatched to infuse nectar and ambrosia into Achilles’ chest when the hero doggedly continues to abstain from food as he mourns for Patroklos in book nineteen (Il. 19. 338-348). What is wholly lacking, however, in Homer’s epic is a statement as broad as the one mentioned above. Certain Argive heroes may individually partake of Zeus’ beneficence, but the Achaeans collectively as a group are nowhere expressly described as a nation that has availed itself of his philanthropy.

Of the two contending armies it is the Trojans who have attracted in the past Zeus’ sympathy. His feelings for them are vividly portrayed in book four (Il. 4. 44-49):

«αἳ γὰρ ὑπ’ ἠλιίῳ τε καὶ οὐρανῷ ἀστερόεντι
ναετάουσι πόλεις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων,
τάων μοι περὶ κῆρι τιέςκετο Ἡλίος ἰρή
καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαῶς ἐμμελέω Πριάμωι.
οὐ γάρ μοι ποτε βωμὸς ἐδεύετο δαῖτος ἔσης,
λοιβῆς τε κνίσης τε τὸ γὰρ λάχωμεν γέρας ήμεῖς.»

Sacred Ilios is the city that was “most honored in Zeus’ heart,” as Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae “are far dearest” in Hera’s sight. Zeus’ profound connection with the Trojans is anchored in their devout spirit. Never at any point has he been bereft of the proper sacrifices that gratifyingly redound to his honor. With so forceful a declaration of affection in mind we can move to the second excerpt from Loukanes’ Iliad that will concern us here. This particular scene is taken from book eight and it deals with the Trojans’ first attempt to cross the deep trench lying in front of the newly constructed by the Achaeans protective wall. Teucer, the skilled archer, has just been wounded by Hector, his bow-string broken by the jagged stone cast at him, and his brother

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16 In Il. 20. 304-305 Poseidon reveals that Dardanos, Priam’s illustrious forefather, was loved by Zeus “above all the children born to him from mortal women”.

Aias standing over him protects him while two trusty companions carry him to the hollow ships. It is at that very moment that Zeus arouses “force in the hearts of the Trojans; and they thrust the Achaeans straight toward the deep trench”. The Homeric narration runs as follows: «Ἄγε δ’ αὐτὶς Τρόας ὡς ε ἦς τὸν Ὄλυμπος ἐν μένος ὅρσεν/οι δ’ ἱθὺς τάφροι βαθείς ὅσαν Ἀχαιοὺς» (Il. 8. 335-336).

Loukanes, however, as he is wont to do elsewhere too, is quick to add a modifying word that completely changes the tone of the passage: «Ζεύς οὐράνιος δὲ πάλιν/ἐγειρε δύναμιν πλείστην, ἐ ἵ τοῦ Ὑμείν τοὐς Ἀργείους.» (Λουκ. 8. 209-211). Once immensely endearing to Zeus, the Trojans have now moved across to the opposite side of the emotional spectrum becoming his enemies. An analogous statement spoken for Hera, or Athena would engender no surprise, as the two goddesses are known to have been stalwart supporters of the Achaeans throughout Homer’s epic. Zeus addressing the two goddesses in book eight (Il. 8. 449) tauntingly remarks on the “dreadful resentment” they both cherish against the Trojans. So unmitigated is this kind of indignation that even if Hera were to infiltrate Troy and to devour raw Priam, the sons of Priam, and all the Trojans, still it would have been doubtful -according to Zeus- whether she would have been completely appeased.17

Less obdurate in their κότος against the Trojans, yet clearly inimical to them, Poseidon, Hermes, and Hephaestos18 also manifest their rancor in manifold ways. In book eight (Il. 8. 548-552), for example, they refuse to share in the savor emanating from the perfect hecatombs offered to the immortals by the Trojans, whereas in book eleven (Il. 11. 74-83), restrained in Olympos and compelled to desist from war, they among other pro-Argive gods condemn Zeus for his pro-Trojan attitude.19 But if steep Ilios, Priam, and the people of Priam were utterly hated (ἅπηξθετο) by the pro-Achaean gods (Il. 8. 551-552), could the same be said of the father of gods, Zeus, who often in pivotal moments resorted to his golden scales in order to decide upon the best course of action?

17 Il. 4. 34-36. See also Il. 18. 357-359 where Zeus exclaims to Hera: “The long-haired Achaeans must surely be children of your own womb.”
18 In Il. 15. 213-217 Poseidon speaking to Iris reveals the names of the gods who want to destroy Ilios.
19 For a similar scene, see also Il. 12. 179-180.
Homer’s account yields only two references that could be construed as evidence of Zeus’ less favorable disposition towards the Trojans. One is taken from Hector’s seething reprimand of Polydamas’ prudent warning not to remain outside the walls of Ilion in anticipation of Achilles’ long feared return to the battle in book eighteen, and the other from Poseidon’s prophetic speech in book twenty, whereby the lord of the sea foretells that Aeneas will prevent the extinction of the royal house of Troy, taking over the rule of the Trojans after the fall of Ilios. In the first excerpt (Il. 18. 288-292) Hector wistfully reminisces about Troy’s erstwhile glory, and bitterly deplores the latest dissipation of its wealth, which he attributes to the anger of great Zeus 

\[\varepsilonπει \mu\varepsilon \gamma\varepsilonς \ \omega\varepsilon\upsilon\sigma\varepsilon\tau\circ \ \varepsilon\upsilon\varsigma\].

In the second (Il. 20. 293-308) Poseidon takes pity on Aeneas and thwarts Achilles’ inexorable assault warding off woeful destruction from the cherished son of Aphrodite. As the god contemplates Aeneas’ fated future, he does not stop short of touching upon Zeus’ legendary infatuation with Dardanos. In stark contrast to his past besotment with the famed progenitor of the Trojans, Zeus –at least purportedly- has now come “to hate the race of Priam” 

\[\eta\deltaη \ \gamma\alphaρ \ Πρι\acute{a}μου \ \gammaενε\tilde{e}\nu \ \acute{h}\chi\theta\acute{e}ρε \ Κρονίων\].

Though these passages explicitly call attention to the lately taut relationship between Zeus and the Trojans, the same excerpts do not fail -at the same time- to allude to both Zeus’ past and future allegiance towards the inhabitants of Ilios. The city’s former affluence, Zeus’ special affection for Dardanos, the fated –and pleasing to Zeus- preservation of the race of Dardanos through the progeny of Aeneas, all betoken Zeus’ persistent regard for the continued prosperity of the Trojans. Moreover, in Hector’s reply to Polydamas, Zeus’ support of the Trojan army, and specifically of the beloved by Zeus Hector (Il. 22. 168) could well have implied that Zeus’ anger had been placated by that point, after the harrowing ordeal of a nine-year war. What we are left with, then, as an attestation of Zeus’ allegedly unfavorable stance towards the Trojans is, in fact, the foregoing statement of Poseidon, which is temporally restricted, as it doesn’t apply to a vast swath of time.

Can this tenuous claim of Poseidon, however, outweigh Zeus’ unequivocal acknowledgment of his wholehearted love for the Trojans in book four (Il. 4. 44-49)? And, what should one make of Zeus’ marked reluctance to annihilate the city of Priam (Il. 4. 14-19) and to vanquish its foremost defender, Hector (Il. 22. 174-176)? Furthermore, if the Homeric account does not warrant a pro-Achaean stance of Zeus or the narrator, why does our author opt for such an unmistakably slanted presentation of the two contending armies? To be sure, an extensive
analysis of the possible motives underpinning the author’s metaphrastic choices lies outside the purview of the present paper. Some thoughts have been sparingly provided at the beginning. I would like to end this presentation with something said by Demetrios Doukas for Markos Mousouros:

“It is through your efforts, Musurus, in the celebrated and very renowned city of Padua, where you teach publicly from that chair as from the height of a throne, that one sees depart each year from your school, as from the flanks of the Trojan horse, so many learned pupils that one could believe them born in the bosom of Greece or belonging to the race of the Athenians.”

How many and of what sort were the readers of Loukanes’ *Iliad*? Did they become active fighters themselves? Did his *Iliad* manage to travel to Greece, or was its dissemination unluckily hindered, as it can be inferred by a note on the margins of one of the surviving copies where a fascinating story is being narrated of how a ship that was carrying a large number of volumes was seized by Turkish pirates who threw them all in the sea? Considering that copies of his work were held among others by Martinus Crusius and Lord Byron, one can rather safely say that Loukanes didn’t indite his work in vain.

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