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THE USES OF PROGYMNASMATA: THE CASE OF "REFUTATIONS" AND DIO'S *TROJAN ORATION*[*]

Summary: Preliminary rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*) both originated from and influenced traditional literary genres and types of discourse. By analysing "refutation" and especially Dio's *Trojan Oration*, this paper points out certain features which distinguished this exercise from historical and literary criticism of myths, its possible antecedents.

Key words: progymnasmata, Dio, *Trojan Oration*.

In modern usage, the word 'rhetoric' can mean almost anything that has something to do with words or communication. In ancient Greek or Latin, however, expressions like 'rhetoric of power', 'rhetoric of imitation', 'rhetoric of architecture', etc. (just to quote a few recent book titles) did not exist. The omnipresence of rhetoric, however, was an idea that appealed to the ancient rhetoricians themselves. It formed a part of the justification of their vital role in society and education. That rules of rhetoric were followed even by pre-rhetorical Homeric heroes and the Poet as well was a good way of gaining more authority for the professional teachers of public speaking. The same idea could also be used as an argument against the opponents of rhetoric, namely philosophers whose attack was often deflected by pointing out that philosophers themselves made use of the same rhetorical methods whose existence they denied. In practice, however, rhetorical precepts were not quite so universal and unlimited. Their curricula contained very specific subjects taught for a very specific purpose, especially at the elementary level, from the first moment that introductory exercises, first called γυμνάσματα, later προγυμνάσματα made their appearance some time in the early Hellenistic period.[1]

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[1] The earliest extant version is that of Theon, probably from the second half of first century AD (PATILLON, M.: *Aelius Théon, Progymnasmata*. Paris 1997, VIII–IX). For the name and the most probable date of the evolution of these exercises see REICHEL, G.: *Quaestiones Progymnasticae*. Leipzig 1909, 16–21; K. BARWICK, Die Gliedrung der Narratio in der rhetorischen Theorie und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte des antiken Romans. *H* 63, 1928, 282–3; R. F. HOCK's introduction to *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*. Edited by R. F. HOCK and E. N. O'NEIL. Atlanta 1986, esp. 10–22.

If the quality of pedagogical work depends on how well the aims of instruction are defined and on how consciously and carefully these aims are achieved, it would be difficult to find any teachers who could match the ancient schoolmasters of elementary rhetoric. They had a very clear idea both of the input and the output of the training they offered. They could rely on what had been taught to their students by grammarians beforehand and they knew exactly what the next stage of their students' study would be. It is therefore not mere chance that even the tiniest details were put in their place and that all preliminary exercises were carefully organized into a compact system. This is strikingly clear from Aphthonius' textbook[2] that proved to be the most successful one in its genre, and especially from its commentaries.[3] Everything accidental was eliminated from this curriculum; each word of the master, ὁ τεχνίτης was elucidated and approved. Yet his authority did not seem to rest on the commentators' servile attitude; their explanations rather made the implicit logic of the system explicit. This is not to say, of course, that quality and success in teaching always depends on the degree of rationality in a teacher's intentions. The question I will try to answer concerns the problem of what sort of broader and perhaps unintentional effect a preliminary exercise might have had on those who went through such a training or, to put it differently, what were the goals of these exercises, including their methods and contexts.

Before discussing this problem, a brief outline of the system of *progymnasmata* seems in order.[4] In the canonized Aphthonian version fourteen exercises were employed: fable, narration, *chreia*, maxim, refutation, confirmation, common topic, praise, invective, comparison, *ethopoeia*, description, thesis, proposal of a law. These exercises, that existed side by side with several others, were of different provenance and it was no easy task for the rhetors to decide which one to keep and how to create the most logical sequence among them; in the course of centuries four principles proved to be most decisive.[5]

First, each *progymnasma* was believed to belong or at least be closely related to one particular type of real speech: fables, maxims and theses were regarded as a kind of deliberative speech; narrations, refutations, confirmations, common topics and

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[2] It was most likely composed in the second half of the fourth century, see H. RABE in his edition, *Aphthonii Progymnasmata*. Rhetores Graeci 10. Leipzig 1926, XXII–XXV and HOCK–O'NEIL, *op. cit.* (note 1), 211–22.

[3] Their long list is begins with Nikolaus in the fifth century, see J. FELTEN in his edition, *Nicolai Progymnasmata*. Rhetores Graeci XI. Leipzig 1913, xxi–xxvii; KENNEDY, G. A.: *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*. Princeton 1983, 66–8 and HOCK, *op. cit.* (note 1), 237–46.

[4] For a useful survey see SCHOULER, B.: *La tradition hellénique chez Libanios*. Paris 1984, 51–138.

[5] These principles were already effective in pseudo-Hermogenes' *techne*, but were made explicit only by Nikolaus, Aphthonius' first extant commentator. Theon's book clearly represents an alternative system. His list has ten exercises (maxims, refutation, confirmation and invective are left out) and five methods (reading, listening to lectures, paraphrase, elaboration, contradiction). At the first level the first eight exercises should be treated by the first three methods, at the second level the last two exercises and the first three again are treated according to all five methods. In the early Latin tradition translation (Cic. *De or.* 1.55; Quint. 10.5.2–3), *aetiologia*, probably a certain type of *chreia* (Suet. *De gr. et rhet.* 4.7; Quint. 2.4.26) and *problemata* (Suet. *De gr. et rhet.* 4.7; Quint. 2.4.26) are the 'extra' exercises; see PATILLON, *op. cit.* (note 1), VIII–XXXI.

proposals of laws of judicial speech; anecdotes, praises, invectives, comparisons of epideictic speech. This principle, however, proved inapplicable in the case of two exercises: *ethopoeia* and description. The place of *ethopoeia*, this extremely popular *progymnasma*, was assured on the grounds that it contributed to the acquisition of two modes of persuasion based on the speaker's ethos and pathos. The three possible modes of persuasion, however, were not taken into account systematically at the elementary level and, quite interestingly, in this particular exercise (along with the description) the student was not given an exercise in which he was required to speak with the aim of persuading someone. Assuming the role of a certain person obviously improved a student's ability of speaking persuasively – even if only indirectly – but an *ethopoeia* usually involved an unpleasant or painful situation in which the speaker, appearing alone, said a monologue. The student tries to come to terms with the situation, then arrives at a decision, but he should never attempt to influence others. Although an *ethopoeia* could not, in itself, be compared to any one of the three major types of speech, it refined not only the students' skills in emotional and moral representation, but could also be used as part of an oration of any type. This is also true of description.

Disregarding these two exceptions, each exercise was believed to have one central and characteristic intention whereby they could be incorporated into the traditional triad of deliberative, judicial, and epideictic type of speech. These exercises thus formed certain sequences of a triad. Each of these triads first had an exercise in deliberative speech, followed by one in judicial and, finally, one in epideictic speech. The first triad was made up of fable, narration and anecdote. The second triad began with *gnome*, followed by three exercises of judicial speech (refutation, confirmation and common topic), ending with three epideictic ones (praise, invective and comparison). Finally, breaking with the logic of this principle, came *ethopoeia* and description that were linked to all three types. The last two exercises (thesis and proposal of law) formed an incomplete triad in which they were nonetheless put in the usual order.[6]

Secondly, each *progymnasma* was believed to correspond to one of the five traditional parts of a speech (μῦθος corresponded to *prooemium*, διήγημα to narration) or to the entirety of a speech (e.g. a χρεία). In this way again a certain pattern was created in which 'partial' and complete exercises alternated with each other. Fable and narration were followed by two complete ones (*chreia* and maxim). In the next round the emphasis was placed on the last three parts of a speech. Refutation and confirmation contained all the parts, except the final one, and naturally focused on argumentation, i.e. the third and fourth part. Common topic, complementing the two previous exercises, corresponded to epilogue exclusively. These three partial *progymnasmata* were followed by three complete ones (praise, invective and comparison). The next exercise, *ethopoeia* did not really fit the pattern in this respect since it was unlike any part of a speech. Finally, there was description in which a type of nar-

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[6] The reason why these triads do not follow each other invariably is that there are other principles influencing their sequence.

ration (differing from διήγημα) was realized. Thesis was again a complete exercise, while the last one (proposal of law) contained all the parts, except for narration.

This repetitive or spiral progress was made possible by the fact – and corresponded to the third aspect I referred to – that the exercises were put in order according to their level of complication. In the language of the commentators, complication basically meant how many so-called circumstances[7] were involved in a particular exercise, in other words, whether the object of what is related, advised, argued for or against, praised or blamed, etc., is simply a deed or saying irrespective of who said it and when, where, how or why, or whether only some or all of these factors are taken into consideration. Naturally, the more advanced the exercise was, the more circumstances were put into play, and the more it resembled a ὑπόθεσις.

Finally, the age of the students was also taken into account when choosing a subject matter.[8] Topics familiar from previous studies at the grammarians, or simply more entertaining ones were put before unfamiliar themes or ones which contained moral lessons for more mature minds. It is interesting to note that several themes involved problems a student might have faced during his school years. The need for hard work, learning at night, endurance of corporal punishment, obedience to the pedagogue and the parents, and the like are all discussed in such popular anecdotes as "Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter, but its fruit is sweet"[9], or "Diogenes, seeing a youth misbehaving, struck the boy's slave attendant and said, 'Why do you teach such things?'"[10] Questions concerning choice of profession and way of life were put in comparisons such as "Comparison of rural and urban life", "Comparison of agriculture and navigation",[11] or in theses such as "Should one marry?".[12] Although the elaboration of such subjects was suitable for comprehending and helping to solve certain difficulties of the students, this aspect did not determine the order of the exercises.

Now, I turn to one particular exercise, ἀνασκευή. It was defined as the refutation of a traditional story.[13] Usually it is a refutation of a mythical story as told by a certain poet, very often, but not necessarily, a short passage from Homer. The student was required to judge the circumstantial elements of the story[14] on the basis of six or seven topics or principles; for example, he could be asked to demonstrate that it is improbable that Medea, being a mother, staying alone as a barbarian among the Greeks, would kill her sons. These principles are seven in number: unclarity, implausibility, impossibility, inconsistency (contradiction), impropriety and inexpediency.[15]

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[7] Actor (πρόσωπον), act (πρᾶγμα), place (τόπος), time (χρόνος), motivation (αἰτία), mode (τρόπος).

[8] Certain passages (e.g. Lib. *Or.* 34.3) suggest that students practiced preliminary exercises between twelve and fourteen; see FESTUGIÈRE, A. J.: *Antioche paienne et chrétienne. Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie*. Paris 1959.

[9] Aphth. *Prog.* 4–6 Rabe; Lib. *Prog.* 3.3

[10] Lib. *Prog.* 3.2

[11] Lib. *Prog.* 10.4 and 5.

[12] Lib. *Prog.* 13.1; Aphth. *Prog.* 42–6

[13] ἀνατροπὴ προκειμένου τινὸς πράγματος (Aphth. *Prog.* 10.9–10).

[14] Cp. note 7.

[15] Aphth. *Prog.* 10.16–7

Refutation could proceed in two different ways. Theon preferred a type of composition in which the speech was divided according to the principles and it was suggested that these principles created a hierarchy as well.[16] Libanius, on the other hand, as shown by his model speeches, proceeded chronologically and used the principles as it best suited him. Aphthonius seems to have taken a middle position. It must also be noted that this exercise can be regarded as the first one that can be said to be a 'genuine' speech, not only in the sense that it contained an introduction (an attack on the storyteller's personality) and a quasi-peroration (under the heading of expediency, discussing the moral or social effect of the story) beside the main part of argumentation, but in another sense as well: it assumed a fictitious situation as if there were a debate about the verisimilitude etc. of the story and thus came close a hypothesis, that is, a case with an issue.

The extant exercises reveal that this *progymnasma* had wider implications. It required a complete and detailed reconstruction of all the possibilities, of which only some had been realized in the story to be interpreted. The student was in effect required to rethink the story from the author's perspective, to repeat and revise the whole process of composition. This involved relating and comparing each explicit element to each other, as well as inferring from what was left unmentioned to make some details explicit, and, finally, examining each element in several different contexts. Of course, there was no guarantee that the student would touch on the weakest spots and his critique would be relevant, but even so he gained a deeper insight into the problems the original storyteller must have faced while composing. Still, this was certainly not the deliberate aim of a refutation exercise. While he was learning how to refute a narration (an essential skill for an orator) and how to quote poets as credible or incredible examples (another essential skill), he was provided, as a perhaps unintentional consequence, with a perspective on how to interpret poetical tradition, or, so to say, with a practical set of tools of literary criticism. But what was this criticism like?

In answering this question, I will focus on one particular oration that had already in antiquity been characterised as an ἀνασκευή. This is Dio Chrysostom's eleventh, *Trojan Oration*. This speech is a systematic refutation of Homer's account of events and a presentation of a true alternative. Helen was not abducted by Paris, but given to him in marriage by her father. The Greeks' war against Troy, therefore, was not justified; that is why the Trojans were unwilling to give Helen back. Events on the battle-field also happened in a different way: it was Achilles who was killed by Hector and not vice versa, with Patroclos being a mere fiction; the Greeks left Troy without capturing it, the wooden horse was an offering of propitiation to Athena, the only thing they could achieve was a peace truce with the Trojans.

Eustathius was the first to apply the verbal form of this term to Dio's critique of Homer: καὶ ὁ Δίων ἐπηγωνίσατο ἀνασκευάσαι τὰ Τρωϊκά.[17] In modern scholar-

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[16] Theon. *Prog*. 104.17–105.24 (refutation of *chreia*); 76.7–78.14 (of fable); 93.5–95.2 (of narration). The sequence of these principles, however, differ for each exercise; cp. PATILLON, *op. cit.* (note 1), XCIII–XCVII.

[17] *Ad Il*. 4.163–5.

ship[18] von Arnim uses the name of the *progymnasma* itself,[19] but it was Kroll who in his review of von Arnim's book pointed out some features of the oration that could be compared to such an exercise.[20] He observes that Dio begins with the accusation of the storyteller, then he invokes the topoi of clarity, plausibility and possibility, that are not fulfilled by Dio's analysis of Homer's poem, in both cases in accordance with the precepts of the textbooks.[21] Although Kroll's view was accepted by several editors and scholars, it was never supported by further arguments;[22] his view was rejected by Kindstrand.[23] He challenged the rhetorical approach, arguing that Dio's speech was in essence a philosophical pamphlet with a political message: as descendants of the Trojans, the Romans did not need to feel any shame for their ancestors' defeat. His main argument against Kroll was primarily that Dio's accusation of Homer is balanced with an excusation inasmuch as his fictions can be said to have some advantage for the Greeks, and also that the principles of plausibility and possibility may have come from a different source, namely from the Homeric scholia and exegesis. As a matter of fact this was not a new idea, only scholars such as Montgomery[24] who had previously pointed out certain parallels between Homeric philology and Dio's critique of Homer showed interest in detecting traces of the Aristotelian poetics. In the past three decades, then, this oration has aroused much more interest as a piece of literary criticism.[25] In a recent study, Zs. Ritoók has also argued for Aristotle's influence on Dio's aesthetic views,[26] although in contrast to Montgomery, he has left open the question of the actual way of influence. As for the addressee of the speech, Swain rejected the assumption that it was "an attempt to ennoble Rome's origins"; his audience was more likely to have been the inhabitants of Roman Troja.[27]

This brief overview reveals that there are two main points on which opinions are divided. Firstly, it is challenged whether in his reinterpretation of the Trojan War, Dio followed rhetorical principles, or whether his approach was rather influenced by other traditional forms of criticism (moral philosophy, Aristotelian poetics, Alexan-

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[18] It should be noted that from the 17th century Dio's oration 11 played a major role in the debate on Homer's historical authenticity; cp. BRANCACCI, A.: *Rhetorika philosophousa*. Napoli 1986.

[19] ARNIM, H. VON: *Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa*. 1898, 167 and 170 ff.

[20] KROLL, W.: Randbemerkungen. *RhM* 70, 1915, 607–9.

[21] He also points out a textual agreement: both Theon (93.8) and Dio (11.146) refer to Thucydides' critique of the popular story about Harmodius and Aristogeiton as tyrannicides (1.20). KROLL, *op. cit.*, 609.

[22] MESK, K.: Zur elften Rede des Dio von Prusa. *WSt* 42, 1921, 115–24; DESIDERI, P.: *Dione di Prusa. Un intellettuale greco nell'Imperio Romano*. Messina–Firenze 1978, 513–4 (a useful survey with further bibliography). G. ANDERSON calls the *Trojan Oration* "the ultimate extravagance of anaskeue". *The Second Sophistic*. London–New York 1993, 50.

[23] KINDSTRAND, J. F.: *Homer in der zweiten Sophistik*. Uppsala 1973, 153–5 and 159–61.

[24] MONTGOMERY, W. A.: Oration XI of Dio Chrysostomus. *Studies in Honour of Basil L. Gildersleeve*. Baltimore 1902, 405–12. Montgomery's point, however, is that Dio's argumentation is not an application, but "a perversion of some Aristotelian principle of Homeric criticism" (p. 406).

[25] E.g. SEECK, G. A.: Dion Chrysostomos als Homerkritiker (Or. 11). *RhM* 133, 1990, 97–107.

[26] RITOÓK, ZS.: Some Aesthetic Views of Dio Chrysostom. *Greek Literary Theory after Aristotle. A Collection of Papers in Honour of D. W. Schenkeveld.* Edited by J. G. J. Abbenes, S. R. Slings and I. Sluiter. Amsterdam 1995, 125–34.

[27] SWAIN, S.: *Hellenism and Empire*. Oxford 1996, 211.

drian philology). Secondly, it is also disputed whether this treatise should be taken as a serious attempt to rewrite the mythical tradition, or just as a jeu d'esprit.

As far as the first point is concerned, Kroll's arguments concerning Dio's principles of criticism and the structure of his oration seem to me to be more convincing than any lexical agreement between Dio's text and other sources. True enough, Dio's oration was hardly intended as simply a model speech for students, but this highly sophisticated and ambitious piece does not go beyond the rules of the original genre. Both in composition and way of argumentation, he remains a traditionalist, and despite certain undeniable innovations, his approach to poetry contains nothing that would go beyond the framework of an ἀνασκευή. As a result, any *direct* Aristotelian influence seems very doubtful. If there was any, it is too remote to be called an influence. Instead, we find the same attitude to poetry that is common to any one of these exercises, a characteristically rhetorical attitude. This is most conspicuous if we compare the principles of literary criticism applied by Dio to those of the Aristotelian poetics. As has already been mentioned, Dio's main strategy was to show that the events narrated by Homer were neither possible nor plausible. From this demonstration, however, he invariably comes to the conclusion that they are actually false. On the other hand, when offering his alternative version of the story, he corroborates it by showing its probability and plausibility. In doing so, probability and plausibility are always considered as a proof and direct consequence of factual truth, just as their opposites are taken as a proof and direct consequence of factual falsity. This concept of plausibility and possibility differs from what Aristotle had in mind, using the same words, εἰκός and πίθανον, and neither does it resemble the usage of the Homeric scholia. In the Aristotelian analysis of poetic plausibility and possibility, these features allow a story to express a universal truth, and the audience to emotionally identify with the characters.[28] What is more, his concept of εἰκός is not uniform and monolithic. It contains its opposite, too, as Agathon put it in his famous paradox quoted by Aristotle: it is probable that many things should happen contrary to probability.[29] There are several other cases of Aristotle regarding unexpected, illogical or improbable turns of event justified according to the logic of poetry.[30] In contrast to Aristotle, Dio assumes not only that Homer knew the exact factual truth, but also that he had two options: either to reveal or to distort this factual truth.[31] In Dio's reading, Homer must not be taken seriously when he defines his subject matter as Achilles' wrath; it is only a camouflage to confuse the reader and hide his deliberate contortion of truth.[32]

But this attitude differs also from that in the scholia. The aim of the ancient interpreters of Homer was to elucidate a certain passage in as many ways as possible. Different lines of argumentation did not exclude each other, but provided alternative solutions. More importantly, if a passage was judged to be plausible, they did not

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[28] *P.* 1451a37–51b19, cp. also the fragment of his *Homeric questions* (150 R).

[29] *P.* 1456a25–6.

[30] *P.* 1461b10–3, 1452a4, *fr.* 142 R, 167 R.

[31] ᾔδει τἀναντία λέγων τοῖς οὖσι καὶ τὸ κεφάλαιον αὐτὸ τοῦ πράγματος ψευδόμενος. *Or.* 11.27, 147–9.

[32] *Or.* 11.24.

automatically consider it a piece of evidence concerning its historical truth. On the other hand, if something was said to be implausible they inquired about its possible poetical functions, and usually even Homer's detractors find him faulty with writing *bad*, and not *false*, poetry. What is missing, therefore, in the commentators' attitude is the unambiguous commitment to either accepting or rejecting the factual truthfulness of the story. The close parallels, therefore, which can be detected between the Homeric problems preserved in the scholia and Dio's critique of Homer do not challenge that Dio wrote an ἀνασκευή – they simply indicate that in this *progymnasma* rhetoricians made use of the grammarians' and philologists' results.[33] Similar parallels can also be detected between the Homeric scholia and Libanius' refutations. All in all, neither Aristotle, nor the scholia seem to show a close resemblance to Dio's attitude.

As regards the structural similarities between Dio's oration and a refutation speech, Dio composed his critique of the narrative chronologically. The key concepts he uses during his examination are οὐκ εἰκός, ἀπίθανον, ἄλογον etc. There seems to be no essential difference or ascending order between these principles; occasionally he uses them almost as synonyms. In this he is closer to Libanius' practice than to Aphthonius' textbook. Furthermore, the three other topoi (ἀπρεπές, ἀσαφές, ἀσύμφο-ρον) also appear. Indecency or impiety concerning the representation of gods.[34] Secondly, before analyzing the narration, he judges Homer's poetry from the angle of its structure. He rebukes Homer for starting his narration in medias res. Dio tries to explain it as being a sign of an attempt to deceive because it causes confusion concerning the actual purpose of the poem.[35] This critique deserves our attention for two reasons. First, it is in clear contradiction to the Peripatetic tradition that saw one of Homer's poetical merits in that type of composition.[36] Secondly, such a rebuke is a usual element in the argumentation of an ἀνασκευή as its first part, in which one had to demonstrate that the story is unclear (ἀσαφές). One source of unclarity is disrupting the natural or chronological order of events.[37] Dio seems to follow this precept, even if it does not meet with everyone's approval. Likewise, at the end of his analysis, when excusing Homer of being a simple liar, he judges the poet according to the same principle which is advised by the text-books: that of advantage, σύμφορον.[38] Admittedly, it is rather unusual that the last point of evaluation be positive; still, the logic of composition required a statement to this effect.

Finally, I would like to mention some other aspects that suggest that Dio's oration is more than a simple exercise. First, it is quite unique in that it contains the true,

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[33] Before Montgomery, P. HAGEN pointed out such connections in his *Quaestiones Dioneae*. Kiel 1887, 42f.

[34] Even though Dio omits "what he has pictured concerning the gods in his poems that is shocking and unbecoming (οὐ πρέποντα) to them" (translation by COHOON, J. W.: *Dio Chrysostom I.* London–Cambridge/Massachusetts 1932), 11.19, see also 11–4 and 20–2.

[35] 11.24–7.

[36] διὸ ὥσπερ εἴπομεν ἤδη καὶ ταύτῃ θεσπέσιος ἂν φανείη Ὅμηρος παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους, τῷ μηδὲ τὸν πόλεμον καίπερ ἔχοντα ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος ἐπιχειρῆσαι ποιεῖν ὅλονP. 1459a30–2.

[37] Theon, *Prog.* 80.24–5.

[38] ἀνεμέσητον δὲ Ἕλληνα ὄντα τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ πάντα ὠφελεῖν. 11.147.

or at least most probable version of the events and that it is not a traditional one.[39] Dio's technique of reconstruction is also noteworthy. He does so exclusively on the basis of the Homeric texts. He does not contrast them with other, independent, sources. As a consequence, what he offers is not the product of a historian's investigation, even though his method draws heavily from the historians' rational critique of myths.[40] His rewriting is partly less, partly more than what a historian does. It is less, because he focuses on the analysis of only one traditional story. Admittedly, his scope comprehends the whole poem, not just a single passage. But by choosing a discourse type of ἀνασκευή the emphasis is put not only on the logical weaknesses of the original version and on the plausibility of his own, but on its display character as well. To an audience familiar with the characteristic features of such a preliminary exercise, his analysis no doubt evoked its 'artificiality'; his listeners were no doubt reminded that if a refutation is possible, its counterpart – confirmation – was also possible. They were undoubtedly delighted with Dio's main point and readily accepted it, but they were probably also aware of its playfulness. Dio's narration is far from naive[41] and it is reasonable to assume that he expected his readers to appreciate both the result of his reconstruction and the way of how he arrived at it. This speech, then, is more than a historical work in the sense that it reaches far beyond its audacious assumptions than is warranted by the facts. What might have fascinated the audience was just this ambivalence in the speaker's voice: on the one hand, he stressed his commitment to the truthfulness (or at least to a plausibility that came very close to truthfulness) of his version of the past, which was highly attractive and appealing to the listeners; on the other hand, by using a strikingly rhetorical form of discourse, he raised doubts about its absolute certainty and authenticity.

Secondly, as has already been mentioned, Dio makes it quite clear to whom he speaks, whom he addresses. His primary audience was made up by the descendants of the Trojans; whether it was simply a fiction or represented the real situation was an entirely different matter.[42] What I would like to underline is that he believed it important to stress that his speech was directed at a particular audience. It is in connection with this intent that he makes the gesture of lending credibility to his sources by alleging that he heard it from an Egyptian priest whose ultimate source was Menelaos himself. His own persona is also given some features slightly stronger than usual, inasmuch as he dwells a little longer on his experiences concerning human weakness against deception.[43] These features led Kindstrand to draw a sharp distinction between two possible interpretations. He spoke as if the actual message of the speech and its philosophical tone excluded its rhetorical character. But as I have

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[39] A similar combination of refutation and a new version can be found in oration 60 (Nessos and Deianeira) and 61 (Chryseis). The latter was a traditional theme of the preliminary exercises (cp. Libanius, *Prog.* 5.1. VIII 123–8 Foerster).

[40] 11.145–6.

[41] The fact that the authentic story is told by an Egyptian priest in Onuphis (11.37) should be taken as an indication of Dio's intentions to prove his point, rather than real proof.

[42] See SWAIN, *op. cit.* (note 27), 211.

[43] Both in general (11.1–5) and in connection with local stories (5–10).

argued above, there is no need to set up such an alternative.[44] Writing a refutation of Homer outside the schoolroom is hardly possible without offering some reason and motivation for doing so. If the references to his audience and his personality are true, it is all the more interesting that it was reasonable to elaborate a *progymnasma* even for adults.

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[44] This point is also stressed by Brancacci, *op. cit*. (note 18), 279–81, who offers a detailed analysis of the Nachleben of Dio's Trojan speech in the late antique and Byzantine period.