The Byzantine Influence: Heredia’s *Tucídides* and the *Contiones Thucydidis* of Lapo da Castiglionchio

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The aim of this chapter is to compare the Aragonese translation of the anthology of Thucydides’ speeches, known as Heredia’s *Tucídides* (ms. 10.801 BNE), with the selection made some years later by the Italian humanist Lapo da Castiglionchio (ca. 1405–1438), preserved in the Vatican ms. *Urbinas Graecus* 131. They appeared only a few years apart; the *Tucídides* was compiled in the late fourteenth century in Heredia’s *scriptorium* in Avignon, while the *Contiones Thucydidis* were copied in the first third of the fifteenth century by Lapo himself in Italy. In our view, comparing the two texts will enable us to study the beginning of the process of creating and circulating anthologies of speeches by Greek historians, such as Thucydides, in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages and in the early years of the Renaissance.¹

More specifically, we shall examine two complementary issues in this study. The first one concerns the Byzantine influence that the two selections share and, indeed, if we want to understand the nature and purpose of the two anthologies of Thucydides’ speeches (an author almost unknown in the Latin West during the Middle Ages), it is necessary to consider beforehand the way in which the classical Greek historians were traditionally read in Byzantium. The second issue is to study the differences in the way the two anthologies were drawn up. In a previous study, we argued that Heredia’s translation was almost certainly based on a selection of speeches drafted earlier in a Byzantine cultural context, which he would have had access to during his stay in Greek territory.² This hypothesis is supported by a series of formal features and the content of the manuscript. Lapo, on the other hand, based his anthology on a detailed reading of a manuscript containing the complete work of Thucydides. Lapo’s manuscript reveals the process that he followed: the painstaking way in which he gathered together all the speeches in direct discourse, the annotations he used from the original marginal notes in the Byzantine manuscript,

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1 Cf. the overview offered by Iglesias-Zoido (2015).
and also the errors he made while copying the text and the solutions he adopted.

A comparison of the manuscripts in which the two anthologies are preserved clearly shows that they are the result of two very different ways of thinking. In Heredia’s case, the *Tucídides* is completed with a selection of speeches taken from the *Trojan Chronicle* by Guido delle Colonne,3 which shows that, despite the innovation implied by translating the Greek historian’s speeches into Aragonese, the authors of the manuscript continued to direct their gaze towards the medieval rhetorical tradition. In Lapo’s case, we find an anthology that is the product of the new humanist mentality, seeking to recover the classical texts with a selection in Greek of Thucydides’ historiographical speeches, completed with two of Lysias’s orations and brief speeches in direct discourse taken from one of Plutarch’s *Lives*. As we shall see, the cultural and rhetorical frameworks of the two anthologies present significant differences.

1 Anthologies of Historiographical Speeches in Byzantium

For a better understanding of how the two anthologies of Thucydides’ speeches were created and the purposes they served, it is essential to bear in mind the circulation of the Greek historians’ texts in Byzantium in the previous centuries.4 It was usual to find manuscripts of two types in Byzantine libraries: complete works and anthologies of speeches. This background is particularly important if we start from the hypothesis that Heredia’s *Tucídides* is a translation of an anthology that was circulating in Byzantium around the end of the fourteenth century, and that Lapo’s *Contiones Thucydidis* were copied from a Byzantine manuscript of the *History* that had recently reached Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Lapo’s source would have been a codex with *tituli* and *scholia*, written in the margins to help with the reading of a complex work, and to bring out the rhetorical usefulness of the speeches, epistles, or dialogues that it contained. This layout would have influenced the process of reading and selecting speeches that Lapo followed.5 The abundant annotations that mark the text throughout make it easier to access the content of Thucydides’ work, considered to be one of the most difficult histories to read, to the point that even the Byzantines found it difficult to understand. In spite

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3 Cf. Sanz Julián (2012) and her chapter in this volume.