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Homer, Troy and the Turks: Heritage & identity in the Late Ottoman Empire 1870-1915

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Historical map of the Ottoman Empire in Europe 1792-1870 (Cambridge Modern History Atlas, 1912).

Preface & Acknowledgements

The motive for this study arose during an excursion to Istanbul and Troy with students of the Master Heritage Studies at the University of Amsterdam in 2006. The goal of the excursion was to investigate the function of heritage in Turkey and what contribution this heritage could make to the debate on the EU-accession negotiations. Although we expected to see many foreign tourists at the world heritage site of Troy, the bulk of the visitors were Turkish. It became more confusing when some of the Turkish visitors informed us about the Trojan origins of the Turks and the heroic deeds of the Turks in ‘the Last Trojan War’ in 1915 (Battle of Gallipoli). These statements suggested that Homer and Troy, the first *lieux de mémoire* for ancient Greek civilization and a fundamental part of the collective identity of European nations, were also part of the Turkish cultural memory.

The Turks have been present in Europe since the Middle Ages, but they are for the greater part excluded from most European cultural histories, in which Homeric epics have an exceptional position. Obviously, Homeric heritage did not only inspire European imagination but Turkish cultural traditions as well. A strong curiosity about the role of Homer and Troy in Turkey, his reputed homeland and the place where Troy is situated, was certainly awakened during the excursion to Troy. During various precious sparring sessions with professor Pim den Boer, this curiosity developed into ambitious research questions with the aim to explore the function of Homeric heritage in Europe by including the perspective of the Ottoman Empire. The Mosaic grant of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) provided the essential stimulus for this project and enabled me to conduct research. I am extremely grateful to my supervisor professor Pim den Boer for his contagious enthusiasm, groundbreaking views and sharp guidance. I wish to express my gratitude to my second supervisor professor Frank van Vree who gave me new insights and has been generously helpful in the complicated final stage of this research project. Without the generous support of my supervisors this research could not have

been realized.

This study relies for a large part on Ottoman documents found in the Ottoman State Archives and the library and archives of the Museum of Archaeology in Istanbul. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the librarian Havva Koç and the director Zeynep Kızıltan of this museum, for their support and assistance in finding and exploring of these valuable documents. Deciphering Ottoman Turkish manuscripts and literature was a great challenge. I am very grateful to my instructor Ottoman-Turkish, Mustafa Küçük, for his remarkable patience and enthusiasm during my process of learning to read and interpret nineteenth-century Ottoman-Turkish texts. I am grateful too to the librarian (ISAM Library) Selahattin Öztürk, who helped me in searching Ottoman-Turkish publications and articles related to Troy and Homer in periodicals and newspapers in various libraries in Istanbul, such as the Atatürk Library, Beyazıt State Library and ISAM Library in Istanbul. I am grateful to Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu for his invaluable support finding precious sources, for connecting me to the right persons and institutions in Turkey, but above all for the cooperation in organizing a symposium, an exhibition and accompanying publications on the subject of this survey.

In this context, a publication *Troy. City, Homer and Turkey* (2012) accompanied the exhibition of the same name – with exceptional loans from Turkish collections – in the Archaeology Museum of the University of Amsterdam (Allard Pierson Museum) between December 2012 and May 2013. The function of senior editor of the publication and member of the board of curators of the exhibition provided me with a brilliant insight and experience in making the subject of this PhD study appealing to the broader public. As a member of the organization committee of the symposium ‘New Perspectives on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in Turkey’ at the Allard Pierson Museum in 2013, I was able to immerse myself in the topic even more and had the chance to meet and work with leading scholars in the field of heritage related to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, among them Edhem Eldem, Zeynep Çelik, Wendy M.K. Shaw and

Murat Belge. Within the framework of the symposium, the exhibition and the publications, I would like to thank all people with whom it was a great pleasure to work with: Wim Hupperetz, Vladimir Stissi, Jorrit Kelder, Gert Jan van Wijngaarden, René van Beek, Floris van den Eijnde, Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, Paulien Retèl, Marian Schilder, Steph Scholten, Gökçe Ağaoğlu, Rüstem Aslan, Mithat Atabay, Cem Utkan, M. Hakan Cengiz, Enis Tataroğlu (Director of the Turkish Tourist Office in the Netherlands), Uğur Doğan (Turkish Ambassador in the Netherlands), and the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, Özgür Özaslan.

I would thank the staff of the Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens for granting me permission to explore the Schliemann Archive. I am most grateful to the staff of the Netherlands Institute Turkey in Istanbul (NIT), who were helpful in various ways, in particular the director Fokke Gerritsen. Special thanks go to the Archive of the Heinrich Schliemann Museum in Ankershagen, in particular to Gerhard Pohlen, and Bijzondere Collecties of the University of Amsterdam.

Parts of this survey have been published already. A version of the introduction has been published in ‘New Perspectives on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in Turkey’, a special edition of the Turkish art periodical *ST Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları* (2013). An adaption of chapter 1 has been published in *Tijdschrift voor Mediterrane Archeologie* (2009) and in the volume *Troy. City, Homer and Turkey* (2012). Also a version of chapter 4 has previously been published in the latter publication. Finally, a great part of the figures and captions of this survey has been published in the abovementioned publications and incorporated in various exhibition materials and texts.

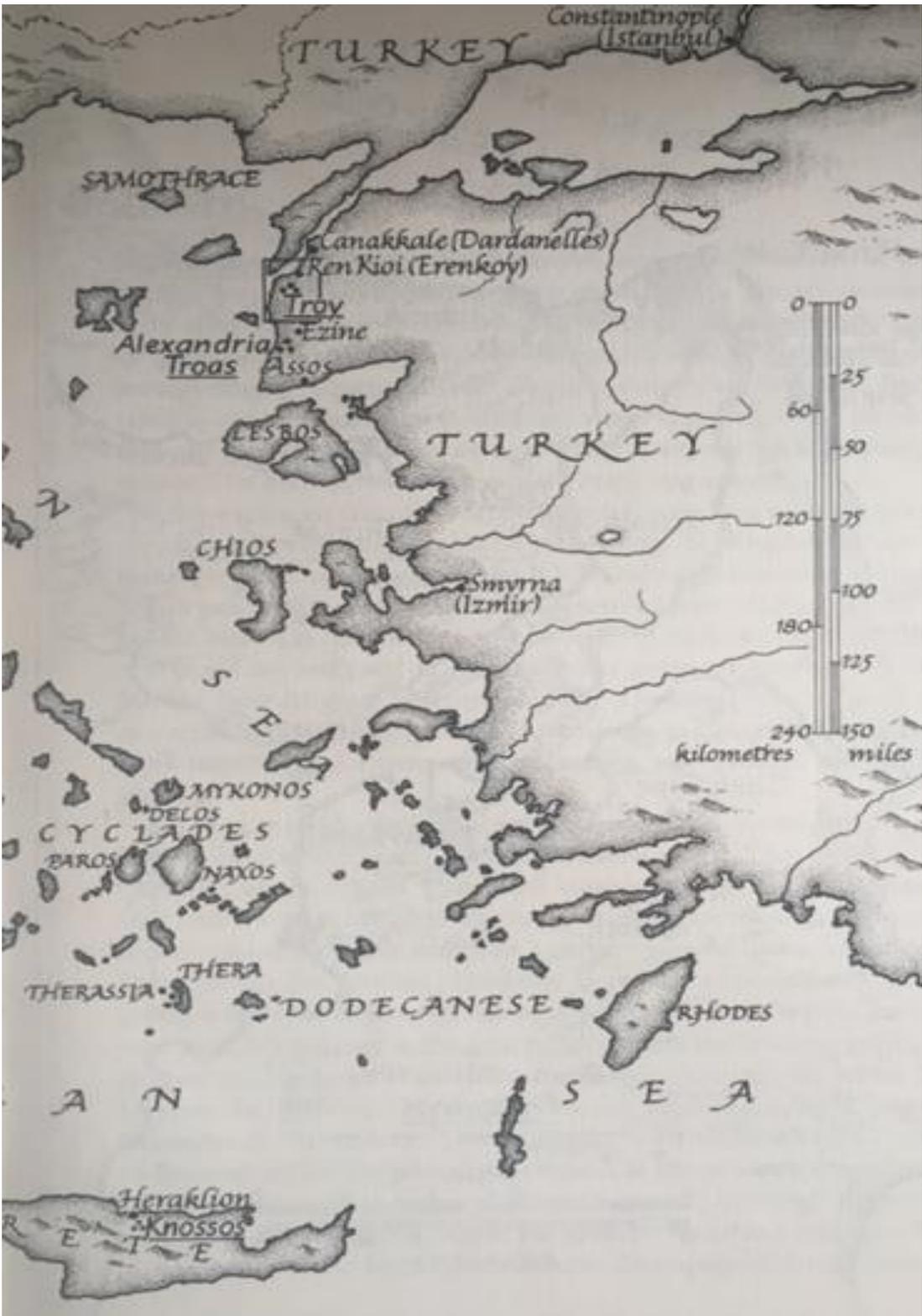
I thank Ans Bulles for the careful editing of the English text and Charlie Smid for her critical reading and great support in the final stage of this venture. Others to whom I am indebted include Mirjam Hoijtink, Alja Schmidt, Geert Snoeijer, Saffet Gözlükaya, Pieter Hilhorst, Friso Hoeneveld, Kazim Ayvaz, Huriye

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(Photo Geert Snoeijer, 6 November 2012)



Western Turkey (Traill, 2005).