

Rediscovering Myths in the Renaissance: The Calydonian Boar and the Reception of Procopius' *Gothic War* in Benevento

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THE OBJECT of this paper is an unexplored page of Procopius of Caesarea's fortunes in the Renaissance, namely his reception in the Italian city of Benevento, where the rediscovery of a passage from the *Gothic War* dealing with Diomedes, the Calydonian Boar, and the origins of Benevento gave rise to an antiquarian debate in which problems connected with the identity of the city itself were discussed. Procopius' account even influenced the coat of arms of the city, giving it the form that it still preserves today.

The passage which provided the core of the Renaissance debate is *Gothic War* 1.15.8. In A.D. 536, after the successful siege of Naples (ch. 1.13),¹ Belisarius also conquered Samnium. On this occasion Procopius inserts an *excursus* on the main city of the region, Benevento, recalling its early history and foundation. After reporting the famous 'onomastic shift' from 'Maleventum' into 'Beneventum' carried out by the Romans after they conquered the city,² Procopius goes on to report the mythic origins of the city:

¹ For a detailed analysis of this event see G. Polara, "Between Classical and Modern Naples: 'Cultural forgetting' at the Time of the Gothic War," in C. Buongiovanni and J. Hughes (eds.), *Remembering Parthenope: Receptions of Classical Naples from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford 2015) 105–117.

² Cf. Liv. 9.27.14; Plin. *HN* 3.105; Fest. *De verb. sign.* p.458 Lindsay = p. 340 Mueller; Steph. Byz. s.v. Βεβεβεντός. For discussion of these sources and more generally of Benevento's Roman history see M. G. Torelli, *Benevento romana* (Rome 2002).

ταύτην [*scil.* πόλιν, i.e. Benevento] Διομήδης ποτὲ ὁ Τυδέως ἐδείματο, μετὰ Ἰλίου ἄλωσιν ἐκ τοῦ Ἄργους ἀποκρουσθεῖς. καὶ γνώρισμα τῇ πόλει τοὺς ὀδόντας συὸς τοῦ Καλυδωνίου ἐλείπετο, οὓς οἱ θεῖος Μελέαγρος ἄθλα τοῦ κυνηγεσίου λαβὼν ἔτυχεν, οἱ καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ ἐνταῦθά εἰσι, θέαμα λόγου πολλοῦ ἰδεῖν ἄξιον, περίμετρον οὐχ ἦσσον ἢ τρισπίθαμον ἐν μηνοειδεῖ σχήματι ἔχοντες.

This city was built of old by Diomedes, the son of Tydeus, when after the capture of Troy he was repulsed from Argos. And he left to the city as a token the tusks of the Calydonian boar, which his uncle Meleager had received as a prize of the hunt, and they are there even up to my time, a noteworthy sight and well worth seeing, measuring not less than three spans around and having the form of a crescent (transl. Dewing).³

In this passage, Diomedes is connected with the myth of the Calydonian Hunt, although generally he does not figure in this context according to the main mythographic sources.⁴ Meleager, however, is correctly said to be Diomedes' uncle, for his father, Oeneus, was Diomedes' grandfather, having fathered Tydeus by his second wife Periboea. Apparently on the basis of a local source, Procopius claims that Diomedes brought with him the tusks of the boar as a gift from Meleager, and then, after founding the city, left them in Benevento, where the citizens showed them to visitors even in Procopius' time.

³ The passage continues by reporting that Diomedes also brought to Benevento the Palladium stolen in Troy with Odysseus, and that there he gave it to Aeneas (1.15.9–11).

⁴ For an overview of the sources mentioning Diomedes see the seminal work by E. Bethe, "Diomedes," *RE* 5 (1903) 815–826; A. H. Griffiths, "Diomedes (2)," *OCD*⁴ (2012) 458. For the sources relating Diomedes to the Greeks' western colonization see E. Lepore, "Diomede," in *L'Epòs greco in occidente* (Taranto 1980) 113–132; D. Musti, "Il processo di formazione e diffusione delle tradizioni sui Dauni e su Diomede," in *La civiltà dei Dauni nel quadro del mondo italico* (Florence 1984) 93–111; L. Braccisi, *Hellenikòs kolpos* (Rome 2001) 39–43 (with references to previous relevant works of the same author); more specifically on Benevento: Torelli, *Benevento romana* 26–52; I. M. Iasiello, "La città dei miti: uso e abuso dell'antico a Benevento," *Samnium* 79 (2006) 39–74, at 41–51.

The passage is interesting for several reasons—for instance, the question of the tusks, which probably were fossil remains of a mammoth or similar;⁵ but here we will pass over the issues connected with Procopius' account in itself, in order to focus exclusively on its Renaissance reception.

Although more sources than one, as we shall see, connect Diomedes with the foundation of Benevento, Procopius is the only one who connects the Calydonian Boar with the Diomedean origins of the city. In the following pages we will try to reconstruct who read Procopius' text and how it was interpreted and used in Benevento in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Two episodes in particular witness its reception, one dating to the late fifteenth century, the other to the mid-sixteenth.

Benevento: political and cultural context

Before turning to the episodes connected with Procopius' fortunes, a brief profile of Benevento in the late medieval and early modern periods is needed.

After the early Middle Ages, when it was the capital of a powerful Lombard kingdom (the so-called *Langobardia minor*), Benevento became part of the Papal State, constituting an enclave within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Naples. On several occasions the city was occupied and ruled by the Neapolitan kings (Frederick II, for instance, and Alfonso of Aragon), but was repeatedly brought back under the Pope's control. In the fifteenth century, this delicate condition of being a border city caused the growth, in the urban community, of opposed parties, *pro* or *contra* the papal domination, which often sparked violence, riots, and assassinations.⁶

⁵ For an interpretation of this passage in its historical context see G. Traina, "Roma e l'Italia: tradizioni locali e letteratura antiquaria (II a.C.–II d.C.)," *RendLinc* 9 (1993) 585–636, who points out (592) how such 'tusks' may well have been fossils or, hypothetically, remains of Pyrrhus' or Hannibal's elephants preserved in local sanctuaries.

⁶ For the history of Benevento, S. Borgia, *Memorie istoriche della pontificia città di Benevento dal secolo VIII al secolo XVIII* I–III (Rome 1763–1769), is still

However, the frequent conflicts, and a peripheral position in the Italian context of the Quattrocento, did not hinder the development of a humanist culture in Benevento, thanks to the repercussions of what was happening in the larger centers like Rome and Naples. After all, among the cities of southern Italy, Benevento was (and still is) one of those in which the Roman past was more evident and could easily constitute a source of inspiration for local savants. It is not surprising that in such an abundance of Roman ruins a certain interest in the local past had developed throughout the late Middle Ages among the civic elites, as is witnessed by the numerous *stelae* and other relics incorporated in private buildings, as in the Duomo façade or in the Rocca dei Rettori (the papal Governor's palace). Furthermore, there were several visible monuments standing, above all the impressive triumphal arch of Trajan, which had been part of the city walls for a long time, the theatre, and the Leproso bridge.⁷

In Renaissance times we have clear testimonies that educated

fundamentally relevant. See also, more recently, E. Petrucci, "Benevento," *Enciclopedia Dantesca* I (Rome 1970) 219; G. Vergineo, *Storia di Benevento e dintorni* I–II (Benevento 1985); G. A. Loud, *Montecassino and Benevento in the Middle Ages: Essays in South Italian Church History* (Aldershot 2000); J.-M. Martin, "Benevento," *Enciclopedia Federiciana* (Rome 2005); also the essays collected in E. Cuozzo (ed.), *Benevento immagini e storia* (Atripalda 2010).

⁷ For an archaeological overview of Benevento between Antiquity and the Middle Ages see A. Meomartini, *I monumenti e le opere d'arte della città di Benevento* (Benevento 1889); Mario Rotili, "L'eredità dell'antico a Benevento dal VI all'VIII secolo," *Napoli Nobilissima* 14 (1975) 121–128; M. Giangiulio, "Benevento," in G. Nenci and G. Vallet (eds.), *Bibliografia topografica della colonizzazione greca in Italia e nelle isole tirreniche* IV (Pisa/Rome 1985) 34–35; Marcello Rotili, *Benevento Romana e Longobarda* (Ercolano 1986); D. Giampaola and E. Simon, "Benevento," *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica* Suppl. II.1 (Rome 1994) 658–668; P. Caruso (ed.), *Antiqua Beneventana. La storia della città romana attraverso la documentazione epigrafica* (Benevento 2013). On the Renaissance rediscovery of the Roman monuments see M. G. Pezone, "Benevento e l'architettura del classicismo tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento: un'occasione mancata," in A. Gambardella and D. Jacazzi (eds.), *Architettura del classicismo tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento. Campania, saggi* (Rome 2009) 148–158.

people in Benevento expressed an interest in antiquity as part of a broader classical education. This is the case, for instance, with Galeazzo Capialdi, a Beneventan *condottiero* who was a collector of antiquities and inscriptions;⁸ or Angelo Catone, perhaps one of the most intriguing humanists of the second half of the fifteenth century in the whole Kingdom of Naples, who acquired the semi-abandoned area of the ancient Roman town of Altilia, not far from Benevento, probably out of no other interest than pure antiquarianism.⁹

Benevento could also benefit from a close relationship with Rome, since the local governors sent by the Pope were usually influential prelates who gathered around themselves men of letters and local noblemen. Although the governors were often in conflict with parts of the citizenry, their presence was undoubtedly a resource for the cultural life of the city.¹⁰

If we proceed to consider what was known, or what was said, about Benevento's ancient history in the fifteenth century, we find, as a recurring theme, the city's foundation by the Homeric hero Diomedes. The reception of Servius had already spread, throughout the Middle Ages, the image of Benevento as a Greek foundation dating back to the Trojan War: in his

⁸ Galeazzo Capialdi (Latin for Capobianco) left Benevento when he was a young man of arms and settled in Monteleone (today Vibo Valentia) in Calabria, where he collected several inscriptions and antiquities and placed them on the façade of his house; he died in 1516. See V. Capialdi, *Inscriptionum Vibonensium specimen* (Naples 1845) 30–31; A. Zazo, "Capialdi Galeazzo," *Dizionario bio-bibliografico del Sannio* (Naples 1973) 62–63.

⁹ On Angelo Catone, who died in 1496, see the highly relevant work by B. Figliuolo, *La cultura a Napoli nel secondo Quattrocento. Ritratti di protagonisti* (Udine 1997) 279–343, which gathers and revises the whole preceding bibliography. The episode of the acquisition of Altilia's ruins is described in A. Zazo, "Note sul feudo sofiano di Supino e su Angelo Catone," *Sannium* 34 (1961) 173–181.

¹⁰ See for instance the case of the Florentine nobleman Maso degli Albizzi, who was governor of Benevento from 1515 to 1524 and was patron of some minor Beneventan poets (Giacomo Antonio Beneventano, Giovanni Pannachione, Adriano Topazio), as witnessed by the poems in the MSS. *Riccardiani* 2484 (S IV 42) and 2725 (O IV 22).

commentary on the *Aeneid* Servius states that Benevento, together with several Italian Adriatic towns, was founded by Diomedes: *Diomedes [...] civitates plurimas condidit. nam et Beneventum [...] ipse condidit, et Arpos* (“Diomedes [...] founded many cities. He founded Benevento [...] and Arpi [...]).¹¹ Other Latin sources make the same assertion, like Solinus (1.2.10) and Martianus Capella (6.642).¹² A hint of the medieval reception of this tradition about Benevento is in the fourteenth-century vulgar poem *Dittamondo*, composed by Fazio degli Uberti, where the author imagines making a journey and stopping off in Arpi (near the site where Foggia is today) and in Benevento in honor of these cities’ founder Diomedes: *in Arpi e in Benevento fei dimoro / per riverenza a Diomedès, il quale / porta ancor fama del principio loro* (3.1.58–60: “I stopped over in Arpi and Benevento in order to pay homage to Diomedes, who’s famous still today for being their founder”).¹³

Servius’ testimony is reflected in the fifteenth-century sources—especially works of chorography—that mention Benevento: so Biondo Flavio’s *Italia illustrata*,¹⁴ Pietro Ranzano’s *Annales*,¹⁵

¹¹ Serv. ad *Aen.* 8.9 (II 201 Thilo-Hagen). Cf. ad 9.246 (II 506), although this last passage is drawn from the so-called *Servius auctus*, which was virtually unknown until Daniel’s edition of 1600.

¹² And, from the Greek side, *Suda* β 237 s.v. Βερεβεντός, Steph. Byz. s.v. Βερεβεντός.

¹³ These verses are quoted for the first time, with reference to Benevento, by Leandro Alberti, *Descrittione di tutta l’Italia* (Bologna, Anselmo Giaccarelli, 1550) f. 239r.

¹⁴ Biondo Flavio, *Italia Illustrata*: “Quam urbem Servius in Virgilii octavum super verbo Diomede ‘ad urbem, dicit a Diomede conditam fuisse’” (edition quoted: Basel, Froben, 1531: 404).

¹⁵ Pietro Ranzano, *Annales* XV 1 ch. 86–90 of the edition cited below. Ranzano wrote, at the end of the fifteenth century, a description of Italy walking in Biondo’s footsteps and filling in Biondo’s *lacunae*. This work, which remained unpublished for centuries, is partly edited in A. Di Lorenzo, B. Figliuolo, P. Pontari (eds.), *Pietro Ranzano. Descriptio totius Italiae (Annales, XIV–XV)* (Rome 2007). For a detailed biography of Ranzano see Figliuolo, *La cultura* 87–276.

and Giacomo Filippo Foresti's *Supplementum chronicarum*.¹⁶

The Favagrossa codex and the Calydonian Boar

In the late Quattrocento, after Biondo and his followers had disseminated the image of Benevento as a 'Diomedaeian city',¹⁷ we encounter the first testimony regarding the reception of Procopius' *Gothic War*.

In 1489 Francesco Maria Settala, a nobleman and well-read Franciscan friar from Milan, who was also bishop of Viterbo, was appointed governor of Benevento by Pope Innocent VIII. Settala's career had progressed especially thanks to his close relationship with cardinal Pietro Riario; he had also received several appointments from Francesco della Rovere, both when he was still Minister General of the Franciscan order and when he became pope as Sixtus IV.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Supplementum chronicarum* (Venice, Bernardinus Benalius, 1483) f. 36^v (HC 2805*; IGI 5075; ISTC ij00208000), with several reprints. On Foresti see L. Megli Fratini, "Foresti, Giacomo Filippo," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 48 (1997) 801–803.

¹⁷ This image literally recurred in a now-lost inscription commissioned in 1530 by the city government, reported by seventeenth-century antiquarian sources, in which Benevento is defined *Diomedaea urbs*: see Iasiello, *Sammium* 79 (2006) 42.

¹⁸ A complete biographical profile of Francesco Maria Settala is yet to be written. In 1469 Francesco della Rovere, two years before becoming pope, appointed Settala Minister of Milan. See E. Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters* (Rome 1978) 21. Settala became bishop of Terni for a few months in 1472 and then bishop of Viterbo until his death (1472–1490). He was governor of Foligno and Assisi in the years 1475–1476; then he was commissary in Assisi in 1482. He was governor of Benevento from 1489 to his death. On his education and the main events in his life see further below. As governor of Benevento he was also known as Francesco Maria de' Scellonibus, and under this name he figures, for instance, in Ughelli's magnum opus about the Italian dioceses (F. Ughelli, *Italia Sacra, sive de Episcopis Italiae, et insularum adiacentium, rebusque ab iis praeclare gestis, deducta serie ad nostram usque aetatem I complectens ecclesias Sanctae Romanae Sedi immediate subiectas* [Venice 1717] 1419–1420). But, as was recently pointed out by Teresa d'Urso in the conference cited below (n.20), the name de Scellonibus is a (humorous) translation into the Beneventan dialect of the name Settala, which means in Italian 'seven wings' ('sette ali'): 'scella' is in fact the word for 'wing' in

In Benevento Settala promoted the compilation of a *regestum privilegiorum*, an official collection of documents and decrees relevant to the city's political life. This collection grew further after Settala's death (1490), until 1525, but its original core was redacted by his secretary Francesco Favagrossa; this codex is still preserved today, the *Codice Favagrossa*.¹⁹ As said above, the political climate in Benevento was tense, and the relationship with the Kingdom of Naples was delicate; Settala's purpose was to contribute to the social *concordia* by promoting all the rights obtained by the citizens in the past. In order to stress social unity, he made an insert at the beginning of the codex, in the central pages of a bifolio, a remarkable illustration representing the civic council, with all the delegates. In this illustration two portraits of Settala are also present, one per page: in both he is dressed in a Franciscan vest and sits in the middle of the assembly. On the second page, above the portrait of the governor, three coats of arms of Italian type are depicted (*fig. 1*).²⁰ The central and bigger one is the coat of arms of Pope Innocent VIII; on the right is that of Settala, and on the left the

several southern Italy dialects. This meaning was, however, assumed by the family itself, since their coat of arms was made up of the image of seven wings (see below, and *fig. 1*).

¹⁹ Biblioteca Capitolare of Benevento, MS. 63. A synthetic description of the codex is in A. Zazo, "Il *Regestum privilegiorum* Favagrossa della Biblioteca Capitolare di Benevento," in *Scritti di paleografia e diplomatica in onore di Vincenzo Federici* (Florence 1944) 317–323, although a more accurate and up-to-date study is still lacking. I am thankful to Francesco Senatore who let me consult his precious notes about this manuscript.

²⁰ MS. 63 f.[2]. Teresa D'Urso has recently discussed these illustrations, "Prime osservazioni sulle miniature del codice Favagrossa della Biblioteca Capitolare di Benevento," at the seminar *Il sistema urbano in Campania: gerarchia e funzioni nel lungo periodo*, organized by B. de Divitiis, Naples, 24 October 2012. I am grateful to her for sharing her impressions with me.



Figure 1: Biblioteca Capitolare of Benevento MS. 63, f.[2], detail
 Courtesy of the Biblioteca Capitolare and
 the Archdiocese of Benevento

city's coat of arms, characterized by a leftward-looking²¹ hirsute black boar on the upper part of the shield, while the lower part is divided into four squares, alternatively white and red, symbolizing respectively the Pope and the civic community (*fig. 2*).²² From this moment on, the boar is always present on the civic coat of arms up to the present day, although with some minor variants that will be mentioned below.

²¹ I.e. moving to dexter, according to heraldic terminology: here I prefer to use 'leftward' and 'rightward', taking the perspective of the observer rather than the ideal bearer of the shield.

²² For a history of the Beneventan coat of arms see E. Galasso, *L'arme del comune di Benevento* (Benevento 1989). In the Favagrossa codex the white color of the shield is now grey.



Figure 2: Biblioteca Capitolare of Benevento, MS. 63, f.[2], detail:
coat of arms of Benevento

As the Favagrossa codex is the earliest testimony of the city's symbol,²³ it is difficult to determine whether its form and iconography had predecessors or were an altogether new creation. In particular, the presence of the boar is striking. Unless the boar is totally independent of the tradition attested in Pro-

²³ Galasso, *L'arme* [3–5] (unpaginated).

copius, and this would be a highly improbable coincidence, then we can interpret it as the Calydonian Boar, as does, after all, the entire literature dealing with the city's symbol, from the early modern period on. This implies, as a consequence, that the boar must have been 'inserted' into the coat of arms not before the Western rediscovery of Procopius, as it is fairly improbable that it had remained a civic symbol throughout the centuries since Procopius' time, passing through the Dark Ages and the domination of innumerable princes and rulers, leaving, furthermore, no trace for centuries and then reappearing in 1489.

Thus, if the boar's presence depends on Procopius' rediscovery, how and thanks to whom was it possible to connect a Greek source directly to the political life of Benevento? In other terms: who 'brought' Procopius back to Benevento, and exactly when?

The beginning of Procopius' reception in Italy, as often happens, is a rather slippery question;²⁴ in 1489, in any case, when Francesco Favagrossa started to write his register, the text of the *Gothic War* was far from being easily available. A Greek manuscript of Procopius had come into the possession of the famous humanist Leonardo Bruni of Arezzo, who composed in 1442 a history of the Gothic War by translating some parts of Procopius' work, making a sort of résumé of other parts.²⁵ He never mentioned his source, and this fact gave rise to a polemic that involved several humanists, especially from the Roman milieu.²⁶ Bruni's work was printed in 1470, with reprints in

²⁴ The circulation of the early Byzantine authors in the Quattrocento is discussed by E. Gerland, *Das Studium der byzantinischen Geschichte vom Humanismus bis zur Jetztzeit* (Athens 1934); see also A. Pertusi, "Storiografia umanistica e mondo bizantino," in C. M. Mazzucchi (ed.), *Bisanzio e i Turchi nella cultura del Rinascimento e del Barocco* (Milan 2004) 3–111.

²⁵ A recent analysis of Bruni's *De bello Italico adversus Gothos gesto* is in G. Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2012) 278–299.

²⁶ Ianziti, *Writing History* 299.

1471 and 1485, and had a certain readership, but it is irrelevant for our purposes, for the section including Benevento's history is entirely omitted.²⁷

Slightly after Bruni, Biondo Flavio of Forlì completed his ambitious history of Italy from the fall of the Roman Empire to his own day.²⁸ Pointing to the fact that Bruni's work was, after all, a plagiarism, Biondo explicitly mentions Procopius as a source of his research, having probably consulted the *Gothic War* thanks to the mediation of a Greek scholar in Rome.²⁹ Not unlike Bruni's historical work, however, again in the *Decades* there is no trace of the episode of Diomedes in Benevento.

Biondo's polemic against Bruni's plagiarism and, more generally, the authority of these two celebrated humanists probably nurtured a greater interest in Procopius, but until the third quarter of the fifteenth century a translation of the complete text was still lacking.

Some decades later, Niccolò Leonicensi (1428–1524) composed an Italian vulgarization of the *Gothic War*, directly from a

²⁷ *De bello Italico adversus Gothos gesto*: Foligno, Neumeister and de Orfinis, 1470 (HC 1558; IGI 2188; ISTC ib01234000); Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1471 (H 1559*; IGI 2189; ISTC ib01235000); L'Aquila, Adam of Rottweil, ca. 1485 (ISTC ib01235200 [only three copies known]). Bruni passes directly from the end of ch. 1.14. to the beginning of 1.16, omitting the whole episode of the Byzantine conquest of the Samnium.

²⁸ *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romani imperii decades*, begun already in 1435, partially completed in 1443 (when Biondo sent a copy of the first eight books of the first *decadis* to Alfonso of Aragon, king of Naples), and completed in 1453. The work was published, largely after Biondo's death, in 1483, Venice, Octavianus Scotus (HC 3248*; IGI 1756; ISTC ib00698000).

²⁹ While P. Buchholz, *Die Quellen der Historiarum Decades des Flavius Blondus* (diss. Naumburg 1881), followed by Pertusi, in *Bisanzio e i Turchi* 16, excluded a direct access to Byzantine sources, Jakob Haury, "Über Prokophandschriften," *SBMünchen* (1895) 125–176, at 136, assumed that there had been contact with a Greek-speaking humanist, and was able to identify Biondo's manuscript of Procopius with *Vat.lat.* 152; followed in this by R. Fubini, "Biondo, Flavio," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 10 (1968) 536–558, and recently by Ianziti, *Writing History* 282 n.14.

Greek manuscript.³⁰ The work was dedicated to Ercole I d'Este Duke of Ferrara, the beginning of whose rule (1471) constitutes the *terminus post quem* for the composition, while the *terminus ante quem* is set slightly before 1500.³¹ This work, however, remained unpublished.

A complete Latin translation of Procopius' *Gothic War* was carried out in Rome between 1481 and 1483 by the humanist and priest Cristoforo Persona on the basis of *Vat.gr.* 152.³² Persona had earlier translated and published Latin versions of Greek Christian authors, like John Chrysostom and Origen, becoming a much esteemed translator under Pope Sixtus IV, as is witnessed by Theodore Gaza's prefatory epistle to Persona's edition of Origen, and by the fact that in 1483 he was appointed librarian at the Vatican Library.³³ Before Procopius, furthermore, he had also produced the first Latin translation of

³⁰ This vulgarization is witnessed by four manuscripts: Bologna, *Biblioteca Universitaria* 2 (1); Milan, *Ambros.* A 272 inf.; Modena, *Estens.Ital.* 463 (a H 4 2); Rome, *Bibl.Naz.* 1778.

³¹ Ercole died in 1505, but the Roman manuscript copy is dated to 11 February 1500. The others are undated, but they seem slightly earlier than the Roman one; it is probable that the work does not date back before the 1480s; see the useful file by G. Vaccaro on the website *ENAV – Edizione Nazionale degli Antichi Volgarezzamenti di testi latini nei volgari italiani* (www.ilitornodeiclassici.it/enav/).

³² The notice is in a register of the Vatican Library, cf. M. Bertola, *I due primi registri di prestito della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Codici Vaticani latini 3964, 3966* (Vatican City 1942) 24: "Ego prior S. Balbinae accipi a domino Bartholomeo Aristophilo bibliothecario Procopium historicum ex papyro in nigro cum catena die xxv octobris 1481. Restituit vi septembris 1483" (the transcription made by E. Müntz and P. Fabre, *La bibliothèque du Vatican au XV^e siècle* [Rome 1887] 287, is incorrect in some points).

³³ *Origenes, Contra Celsum et in fidei Christianae defensionem libri*, Rome, Herolt, 1481 (HC 12078*; ISTC io00095000); Theodore Gaza's prefatory epistle at ff. [1]^v–[2]^r. On Persona see P. Paschini, "Un ellenista romano del Quattrocento e la sua famiglia," *Atti dell'Accademia degli Arcadi* 19–20 (1939–1940) 45–56; A. Villani, "Cristoforo Persona et la première traduction en latin du *Contre Celse* d'Origène," in *Lire et traduire les Pères de l'Eglise entre la Renaissance et la Réforme* (Paris 2013) 21–54; on Persona's interest in Procopius and Agathias see also Ianziti, *Writing History* 285–286.

Agathias' *Histories*.³⁴ He died in 1485. Persona's translation of Procopius circulated in the Roman milieu gathered around the Papal library, and was printed in Rome in 1506 by Giacomo Mazzocchi.³⁵ According to this edition (the original manuscript is today lost), the passage in question is translated as follows (sect. c, p. [v]^v):

Urbem hanc cum Diomedes quondam post Ilium captum ex Argis eiectus diripisset, suis in ea dentes reliquit Calidonensis, quos Meleager venationis praemia tunc forte acceperat, et sane hi dentes vel ad nostra haec tempora manent, res proculdubio spectatu dignissima, quippe qui lunarem in speciem pedum trium perimetrum habeant.

Diomedes destroyed this city once he was repulsed from Argos, after the capture of Troy. He left the tusks of the Calydonian boar there, which Meleager had obtained as a prize for the hunt, and these tusks are still there up to my time, and are indeed a remarkable sight, as they have the shape of a crescent and the length of three feet.

Despite the fact that the word $\theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ('uncle') before Meleager is omitted and that $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\iota\mu\alpha\tau\omicron$ has been translated oddly with 'diripisset' ('ransack', 'destroy' etc.),³⁶ the translation is accurate enough to allow a full reception of the episode.

Thus, in the very same period in which the Favagrossa codex was being composed, Procopius' *Gothic War* was indeed seen as a relevant source, but was fully accessible only via two un-

³⁴ This work is witnessed by several MSS. (see Ianziti, *Writing History* 285). It was printed in 1519 by Giacomo Mazzocchi.

³⁵ *Procopius De bello Gottorum* (Rome, Joannes Besickem Alemanum, impensa Iacobi Mazzochii Romanae Academiae Bibliopole, 1506). On Mazzocchi's editorial activity see F. Ascarelli, *Annali tipografici di Giacomo Mazzocchi* (Florence 1961). Mazzocchi's edition of Procopius, with his prefatory epistle, is discussed in detail in Ianziti, *Writing History* 287–288, and interpreted as a piece of political propaganda under Pope Julius II aiming to stigmatize the foreign military influence on the Papal State.

³⁶ One may wonder, however, if the text in the printed edition is correct. Many errors may have been added in the transition from the manuscript to the book.

printed works, viz. one translation and one vulgarization—apart from, of course, via the Greek manuscripts. All these texts, however, circulated only in very specific and elite contexts. How did Procopius ‘arrive’ in Benevento?

More than Leonicensi’s vulgarization, whose circulation area seems to have had no relevant connections with Benevento, Persona’s Latin translation may well have played a certain role. The fact that Francesco Maria Settala was an important figure in Rome under Sixtus IV (and then under Innocent VIII) allows one to hypothesize, albeit only conjecturally, that behind the presence of the boar in the coat of arms lies his own initiative. The biographical documentation on him is far from exhaustive, but what we do know about his profile is consistent with this hypothesis. Endowed with a noteworthy culture, Settala graduated in theology at the University of Turin in 1460.³⁷ Ms. 56 of the Biblioteca Capitolare of Viterbo constitutes his autograph ‘learning book’ (*cursus philosophicus*) for the years 1455–1457 and contains several transcriptions of theological and philosophical works in his own hand.³⁸ His humanist interests are corroborated by his close relationship with the cultivated cardinal Pietro Riario and by his patronage activity as bishop of Viterbo.³⁹ The poet and humanist Giovan Battista

³⁷ On Settala’s degree in theology see R. Cooper, “Les échanges européens à Turin et dans l’Italie du nord,” in M. Bideaux and M.-M. Fragonard (eds.), *Les Échanges entre les Universités européennes à la Renaissance* (Geneva 2003) 247–268, at 251.

³⁸ Cf. P. O. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum. A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts II* (Leiden 1967) 306–307.

³⁹ The humanist Niccolò Perotti, in his funeral oration for Pietro Riario, claims that Settala never left his friend’s bedside when he was dying; G. Perotti and F. Bertini, *Memorie storiche dei Perotti: conti dell’Isola Centipera, nobili di Sassoferrato e di Perugia* (Sassoferrato 1999) 144. The monumental fountain in the papal palace in Viterbo is adorned with the coat of arms of Settala, alongside those of Riario and Sixtus IV. Settala also planned in Viterbo a restoration of the church of S. Lorenzo, entrusting it to the architect Danese di Cecco; see E. Bentivoglio, “Danese di Cecco,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 32 (1986) 558–560.

Cantalicio dedicated his commentary on Persius to him,⁴⁰ and he himself composed some poems dedicated to Sixtus IV.⁴¹ He frequented the papal court for at least two decades, and it seems very improbable that he did not have any contact with such a locally celebrated figure as Cristoforo Persona. Of course, we have no explicit testimonies about his reading of Persona's translation of Procopius, but, according to his connections and to his cultural interests, it seems far from impossible that Settala could have been the medium through whom the Procopian memory of the Calydonian Boar 'came back' to Benevento. It is however worth underlining that this episode does not necessarily presuppose the circulation of Procopius' text *in* Benevento itself; Settala may simply have had Procopius' passage in mind. He most probably became conversant with the passage whilst in Rome, and then decided to divulge it in Benevento.⁴²

⁴⁰ MS. *Paris.lat.* 8277. Cantalicio's preface to Settala is published in D. M. Robathan and F. E. Cranz, "A. Persius Flaccus," in F. E. Cranz (ed.), *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries III* (Washington 1976) 201–312, at 270–271. I am grateful to Federica Rossetti for discussing this subject with me. On Giovan Battista Valentini of Cantalice, also known as Cantalicius, see G. Germano and L. Monti Sabia (eds.), *Giambattista Cantalicio. Bucolica. Spectacula Lucretiana* (Messina 1996), and G. Germano (ed.), *Giovambattista Cantalicio. La vacanza fuori Roma del papa Leone X e altri carmi scelti inediti* (Naples 2004).

⁴¹ New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 417 f. 36; cf. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum V* (Leiden 1990) 322 (under the name of Franciscus Maria Septara). It is also known that Settala possessed a personal library: he donated a precious illustrated codex to the church of S. Francesco of Assisi: S. Nessi, *La Basilica di S. Francesco in Assisi e la sua documentazione storica* (Rome 1994) 452. He also was the possessor of MS. 58 of the Biblioteca Capitolare of Viterbo: L. Buono, R. Casavecchia, M. Palma, E. Russo, *I manoscritti datati delle province di Frosinone, Rieti e Viterbo* (Florence 2007) 147–148.

⁴² Establishing if Settala was also influenced by the intellectual milieu of Viterbo, the city of which he was bishop, and in particular by Giovanni Nanni, aka Annio of Viterbo, is even more difficult. Annio came back to his hometown Viterbo only at the beginning of 1489 (R. Fubini, "Nanni, Giovanni," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 77 [2012] 726–732), when Settala

According to our (conjectural) reconstruction, the presence of the boar in Benevento's coat of arms was an erudite creation conceived by Settala or by persons of his close entourage. Such an operation symbolically aimed to 'temper' the turbulent co-presence, in the coat of arms, of the Pope (white squares) and the Beneventans (red squares) by representing Diomedes' mythical gift to the city at the top of the shield, as a sort of symbol of collective identity.

The 'school' of Vincenzo Franco

After this episode, Procopius' *Gothic War* reappears in the cultural life of Benevento for a second time in the mid-Cinquecento. The ancient past of Benevento had begun to be fully researched by local antiquarians from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Classical sources—often available in recent printed editions—were read in parallel with the investigation of local *Realien* like inscriptions and relics. In Benevento, which was characterized by a very strong urban continuity from antiquity to the late Middle Ages—a continuity clearly visible in the stratification and coexistence of ancient and medieval elements in the city's monuments—isolating and investigating the classical relics separately was a far from simple operation. The pivotal figure in the development of the antiquarian debate on Benevento was Vincenzo Franco, a member of the local bourgeoisie who was born at the beginning of the sixteenth century and died in 1556.⁴³ Starting in the third decade of the

had already been appointed governor of Benevento and had already started the writing of the Codice Favagrossa, since the *praefatio* of the codex dates to 1 January 1489. It is true that Annio developed in Viterbo his antiquarian interests which flowed into his *Commentaria* (Rome, Eucharius Silber, 1498 [HC 1130*; ISTC ia00748000]), but he apparently began his studies after the illustration in the Codice Favagrossa was achieved. In Annio's lists of *auctores* which figure at the end of each chapter of his antiquarian work, furthermore, there is no mention of Procopius.

⁴³ The extant biographical information on Vincenzo Franco is collected in A. Zazo, "Franco, Vincenzo," in *Dizionario bio-bibliografico del Sannio* 185–186.

century, he directed in Benevento a private school teaching Latin and *humanae litterae* to young people, among whom was his younger and more famous brother Nicolò, a vernacular poet close to Pietro Aretino.⁴⁴

Vincenzo Franco's writings do not survive, but we know that he made several transcriptions of inscriptions that were visible in Benevento, which he later gave to the famous antiquarian Mariangelo Accursio, who was a guest of Franco when he came to Benevento.⁴⁵ The group that gathered around Vincenzo Franco, which one might dub the 'School of Franco', can be seen as a little humanist circle within which Latin classics, vernacular poetry, and local antiquarian issues were under debate.

In an epistle dated 1 March 1550, Nicolò Franco addresses the problem of the origins of Benevento and the Calydonian boar. At the beginning of this epistle, he congratulates his addressee, Nicolò Carbone, an Italian tragediographer, for having chosen as the subject of his latest work the mythic episode of the Calydonian Hunt:⁴⁶

Il soggetto de la vostra *Tragedia* m'è in modo piaciuto, che pochi me ne potrebbero piacer più, per trattar ella il successo di Meleandro [*sic*] e del Chinghiale da lui occiso, ch'oltre quello che le favole dicono, e l'histoire poi confermano, ne fa fede Benevento, mia patria, edificata da Diomede, come si sa, e a memoria del zio adornata dell'insegna di quel Cignale; memoria, veramente, che ne stupiscono gli occhi, che infin ad

⁴⁴ On the adventurous life of Nicolò Franco, who befriended Pietro Aretino in Venice, and then became one of his rivals, and was executed in Rome in 1570 for having written against Pope Paul IV, see the introduction by Domenica Falardo in *Nicolò Franco. Epistolario (1540–1548). Ms Vat. Lat. 5642* (New York 2007), with full bibliography.

⁴⁵ This fact is witnessed by a note of Accursio himself in MS. *Ambros.* D 420 inf, fasc. XII; see A. Pasqualini, "La scienza antiquaria e il recupero del patrimonio epigrafico di Beneventum," *Epigraphica* 48 (1985) 147–173, at 149.

⁴⁶ Ed. in G. De Michele, "Nicolò Franco. Biografia con documenti inediti," *Studi di letteratura Italiana* 11 (1915) 61–154, at 140.

hoggi la veggono in antichissimo marmo, anzi nell'istesso in che lasciò l'edificatore.

I enjoyed the subject of your tragedy to such an extent that few could be more pleasing to me, since it deals with the episode of Meleager and the Boar killed by him, an episode which, besides what myths relate and histories confirm, is witnessed by my hometown Benevento, built by Diomedes, as is known, and adorned by him with the symbol of that boar in memory of his uncle; an admirable memorial indeed, that is still today visible on an ancient marble, or rather in the very same marble left by the builder.

This passage is rich, dense, and elliptic at the same time. It also allows one to suppose that here Franco, more than expressing a thesis of his own, presents a report of a more extended discussion, probably developed in his Beneventan milieu, namely the one dubbed above as the 'School of Franco'.

Albeit without an explicit mention, here Nicolò clearly is using Procopius: while the foundation of Benevento by Diomedes is taken for granted (cf. "come si sa"), the focus is on the connection between Meleager, Diomedes, and Benevento, a connection which constitutes, one might say, the *rhetic* part of the discourse, i.e. the piece of information that Franco presumes to be unknown to his correspondent.

In order to underline the Diomedean foundation (and so Procopius' account), Franco mentions a marble relief which he assumes to have been offered to the city by Diomedes himself. The relief is still visible today in Benevento, incorporated in the Duomo bell tower: it probably dates to the first century A.D., and portrays a rightward-looking pig, or boar, with sacrificial stole and crown (*fig. 3*). The piece is probably a fragment of a *suouetaurilia* scene,⁴⁷ but in Nicolò Franco's letter it is interpreted as a depiction of the Calydonian boar.

⁴⁷ I am grateful to Luca Di Franco, who has discussed the main issues related to this relief with me, about which he has also written a note that will be published in the database of the ERC project HistAntArtSI (histantartsi.eu).



Figure 3: Roman relief, Benevento duomo

Franco almost paraphrases what Procopius says about the gift made by Diomedes to the city, consisting of a memorial of the boar (the tusks). The expression “memoria, veramente, che ne stupiscono gli occhi” is a translation of Procopius’ *θέαμα λόγου πολλοῦ ἰδεῖν ἄξιον* (“res proculdubio spectatu dignissima,” in Persona’s translation). The relevant difference is that Franco ‘transforms’ the tusks into the sculpted relief representing the pig/boar: while in Procopius Diomedes is said to have left the tusks as a gift to the city, here he is said to have left the “insegna” (probably an allusion to the city’s symbol) sculpted in marble relief. The correction of his own assessment (“in antichissimo marmo, anzi nell’istesso...”) also suggests that the words evoke arguments of some earlier debate on the relief.

It is difficult to understand why Franco and/or his Beneventan friends ‘modified’ the account. Perhaps they regretted the fact that their city, in Procopius’ times, could boast of possessing the remains of the boar but that were no longer extant in the sixteenth century. The presence of the relief (where, after all, the pig’s tusks are clearly depicted) made it possible for them to interpret this sculpted work as the gift itself. They probably wished to envisage a version of the myth that encompassed the extant archaeological data, even at the cost of assimilating or modifying the main textual source.

Despite Franco's testimony, however, the history of the relief still remains obscure: we do not know whether it had been visible in Benevento for a long time before, or was discovered (or re-discovered, or acquired) in about the same period in which the 'School of Franco' was active. Franco's words are phrased in such a way as to suggest that the relief had always been in Benevento, but we do not know on what grounds he could make this claim. We do not even know where the relief was situated exactly: its placement in the bell tower is certain for the year 1702, when the whole Duomo was restored after an earthquake, for this is attested by an inscription that today is situated just under the relief; it is purely a conjecture that the relief was located there before. It should have become, in any case, part of the bell tower only after the Calydonian boar had become a civic symbol, i.e. after Procopius' testimony became known.⁴⁸

Be that as it may, this interpretation of the relief soon became official. In the most important antiquarian work of the eighteenth century concerning Benevento, written by Giovanni de Vita in 1754, the pig is taken to represent the Calydonian boar; the identification is reinforced with a discussion of Procopius' text.⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that Procopius, instead of being seen as the cause itself of the boar's presence on the city's coat of arms, is quoted as a mere confirmation, as proof of the fact that the city's symbol has always been the same. De Vita placed the pig of the relief, with the stole and crown, on the front page of his work, with a *distichon* in which it is solemnly defined as 'boar' (*aper*).

Thus, it is not surprising that, if we look closely at the illustration in the Favagrossa codex, we find that a later hand

⁴⁸ The figure of a boar/pig with stole which was carved onto a pre-existing medieval capital, now conserved at the Museo del Sannio in Benevento, must be dated after this episode. See Iasiello, *Samnium* 79 (2006) 49 n.41.

⁴⁹ G. de Vita, *Thesaurus antiquitatum Beneventanarum* (Rome 1754) 15. Unlike Franco, however, he mentions Procopius explicitly.

has inopportunately added a white stole to the boar, clearly not consistent with the original picture (*fig. 2*). The identification of the two beasts—the boar of the Favagrossa codex and the pig on the relief—had become a local *vulgata*.

Only very recently,⁵⁰ in the official coat of arms of Benevento the stole on the back of the boar has been removed, restoring the symbol as it appeared (*ante correctionem!*) in the Favagrossa codex.

As for Franco's not explicit evocation of Procopius, it is difficult to define exactly what text of the *Gothic War* he and/or his *sodales* may have consulted. In 1550, Persona's Latin translation circulated not only thanks to the first edition of 1506, but also through two reprints made in Basilea in 1531 and 1533. In 1544, moreover, in Venice the first vulgarization by Benedetto Egio was published, in which Persona's translation was used as a model.⁵¹ When Franco wrote his letter, in his Beneventan milieu some of these editions may have been consulted. Furthermore, if we consider that Giacomo Mazzocchi, the editor of the 1506 edition, was a close collaborator of Mariangelo Accursio, who was in contact with Vincenzo Franco and received Franco's epigraphic transcriptions, as seen above, we may also presume that a debate on Benevento, possibly involving Procopius' account, developed during Accursio's visit to the city.

A further hint of this debate may lie in the problematic fact that Franco explicitly dubs Meleager as the uncle of Diomedes, while in all the editions of Persona's translation the word 'uncle' is omitted. Did Franco and/or his Beneventan *sodales* also consult a Greek manuscript or another source like, as a

⁵⁰ After the publication of Galasso, *L'arme del comune* (1989). A century before Galasso, Almerico Meomartini had pointed to the fact that the pig of the relief could not be confused with the boar (Meomartini, *I monumenti* 430).

⁵¹ *Procopio Cesariense de la longa et aspra guerra de Gothi libri tre, di latino in volgare tradotte per Benedetto Egio da Spoleti* (Venice, Michel Tramezino, 1544). The *editio princeps* of the Greek text is not to be taken into consideration, as it was accomplished by David Hoeschel and published at Augusta in 1607.

mere example, a copy of the unpublished vulgarization made by Niccolò Leoniceno? Or, alternatively, were they able to add a piece of information that had been obliterated by the modern translations? This would mean that, in analyzing Procopius' passage, they reconstructed the affinity between the two thanks to their mythographical erudition.⁵² According to either of these hypotheses, however, a quite extensive debate is to be postulated.

Conclusions

That the adoption of the boar as the symbol of Benevento was directly dependent on Procopius is striking, all the more so when we think that the text of the *Gothic War* was not yet easily available in 1489. When rediscovered, the foundation myth reported by Procopius made a great impression in Benevento. This Greek author not only confirmed Diomedes' role, but linked Benevento to such a famous and intriguing mythic episode as the Calydonian Hunt. It is not surprising that the Beneventans, in a period in which the classical past was being researched with great eagerness by humanists and cultivated members of the local civic elite in each town that could boast Greek, Roman, or pre-Roman origins, were quick to adopt the boar as their civic symbol. Although the whole episode of Procopius' presence in Benevento in the Renaissance is far from clear and can be reconstructed in detail only through conjecture, it seems beyond doubt that both external and local personalities contributed to the study and celebration of the city's classical past.

More generally, the episode of the Calydonian boar in Benevento's Renaissance is one of the (till now underestimated)

⁵² Not to mention the Greek sources, Franco may have read of the connection between Tydeus, his father Oeneus, and the Calydonian hunt in such common Latin sources as Hyginus *Fab.* 69 and Statius *Theb.* 1.390–403, where Tydeus is described as bearing a shield on which the image of a boar (the Calydonian boar) is depicted. These sources do not specifically mention Diomedes, nor, of course, Benevento. I wish to thank Ines Barletta and Francesco Pelliccio for discussing these passages with me.

examples of ‘public classicism’ among the cities of southern Italy between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century, that is, examples of the official engagement of local authorities and, more broadly, of local elites in underpinning and giving value to the classical heritage of their cities.⁵³

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⁵³ To this ‘public classicism’ characterizing the cultural life of several towns of the Kingdom of Naples in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is dedicated most of the research produced by the ERC project HistAntArtSI, an overview of whose publications and results is available on the project’s website (histantartsi.eu).

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