

AENEAS IN THE TROAS AND LATIUM REGIONS

Mythology and Archaeology

“On the Steps of Aeneas: a common cultural heritage between Italy and Turkey” was funded by the European Union in collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

The project, developed by the Aeneas Route Association, in partnership with the Sapienza University of Rome and the Municipality of Edremit (Türkiye), as part of the Common Cultural Heritage between the European Union and Turkey (IPA-II), constitutes one of the many international collaboration activities promoted and coordinated by the Association.

In the belief that culture plays a fundamental role in promoting dialogue and cooperation, it integrates two main objectives: the dialogue between civil society and institutions and the enhancement of a common European culture. The project activities include the creation of an interactive digital platform called ARISTE (Aeneas Route Information System for Tourism and Education) on the theme of the journey of the Trojan hero.

One of the main components of the project was the International Conference held in Edremit (Turkey) on October 26, 2021, “Aeneas in the Troad and Lazio: mythology and archeology”: the proceedings are published in this volume. The summary of the conference results will be also available in an informative form through the ARISTE platform for dissemination to a larger audience and to schools.



The Conference participants at Troy excavation

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“Grant Scheme for Common Cultural Heritage:
Preservation and Dialogue between Turkey and the UE-II (CCH-II)”
(TR2016/DG/03/A2-03-EuropeAid/167523/ID/ACT/TR)
“On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage
Between Italy and Turkey”

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edited by Sandra Gatti



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“On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage Between Italy and Türkiye”

Aeneas in the Troas and Latium Regions: Mythology and Archaeology

Proceedings of the International Symposium
Edremit, 26 October 2021

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Following the certification of the Aeneas Route as Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, the Aeneas Route Association promoted the project ‘On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage Between Italy and Türkiye’, in partnership with Edremit Municipality and Sapienza University of Rome. This project seeks to promote and further develop common cultural heritage activities jointly implemented by Turkish and EU Institutions. The overall objective of this grant scheme is to further improve civil society dialogue through culture, arts and cultural heritage as well as international cooperation for cultural heritage and to promote cultural values and assets in Türkiye.

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Daniele Fortuna

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF AENEAS' ESCAPE FROM TROY IN THE EUROPEAN FIGURATIVE CULTURE

*These were his words. But now the fire roars
across the walls; the tide of lame flows nearer.
"Come then, dear father, mount upon my neck;
I'll bear you on my shoulders. That is not
too much for me. Whatever waits for us,
we both shall share one danger, one salvation.
Let young Iulus come with me, and let
my wife Creusa follow at a distance."*

(transl. by Allen Mandelbaum)

Thus Virgil, in the second book of the Aeneid (verses 705-711), describes the escape from Troy, building an image full of meaning, emblematic of filial piety, a symbol of rebirth which could be defined as identity value. The escape of Aeneas from Troy is, in fact, the Virgilian theme that has enjoyed the greatest success in European figurative arts: through the various eras we find it painted on Greek vases, modelled on terracotta oil lamps, frescoed on the walls of Pompeii and represented in Roman sculptures, outlined by the fine brush of medieval miniatures, protagonist of cycles of frescoes, paintings and sculptures from the Renaissance to the present day. The fortune of the theme lies in the importance of the figure of Aeneas, the emblem of the human, civil and religious virtues, which are the basis of the origin of the greatness of Rome and depends on the variations, in terms of popularity and diffusion, that the Virgilian poem has gone through over the centuries.

The Aeneid is a text that has always met with success and popularity over the course of the various eras; however, in the Middle Ages, the figure of Virgil progressively loses its precise historical characteristics and fades into a mythical figure, wrapped in an aura of occult knowledge and magic. The figurative representations of the Aeneid deviate from the

classical model and disappear almost completely from the major arts, remaining alive exclusively in the field of book illustration. In this period, little use is made of the iconography of the escape from Troy, rare representations appear in the illustrated codes of the Aeneid or the 'Romanzo d'Enea', a chivalric narrative composition born in France around 1160, read and translated throughout Europe. The story of Aeneas is revisited in a courtly key and other moments and topics are preferred to the Hero's Escape, such as love with Dido.

The Virgilian iconographies, once again, became the protagonists of the major arts around the sixties of the fifteenth century in Florence, on the impulse of Cristoforo Landino. The renewed Virgilian interests of the humanists influence the literary and artistic production, in particular the works of Apollonio di Giovanni, a painter identified as the main channel of spreading the themes drawn from the Aeneid in the Florentine artistic environment¹, while remaining tied to a language that is still near the courtly fable. However, it will be an antithetical interpretation, in a Nordic and strongly actualizing key, to dominate the Virgilian iconography of the early decades of the sixteenth century: in 1502 in Strasbourg, the publication of the works of Virgil edited by the humanist Sebastian Brant, accompanied by an imposing set of illustrations.

The true iconographic success of the stories of Aeneas, and the theme of his escape with his father on his shoulders, a symbol of filial love, however, culminates in the Renaissance. In various Italian artistic centers during the first decade of the sixteenth century, a growing and solid interest in Virgilian themes can be observed.

In Siena, Gerolamo Genga, a student of Perugino and Signorelli, an artist whose style was also influenced by Raphael, creates a cycle of frescoes, now detached and partly lost, to decorate Palazzo Petrucci. The subject of a fragment of these paintings, now preserved in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, is precisely the *Fuga di Enea da Troia incendiata* (Escape of Aeneas from Troy on Fire), datable between 1508 and 1512 (fig. 1). The fresco presents a faithful elaboration of the Virgilian theme, the protagonists are divided into two groups: on one side are Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius, a few steps back, as if already about to lose track of her husband, is depicted Creusa who seems to be swallowed by earth, to allude to her disappearance.

¹ CALLMANN 1974.



Fig. 1 - Gerolamo Genga, *Fuga di Enea da Troia incendiata*, 1508-1512, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena

In Ferrara, around 1520, Dosso Dossi and his brother Battista painted 10 canvases on the story of Aeneas, commissioned by Alfonso d'Este to decorate a frieze of the Small Rooms (Camerini). Those paintings were originally exhibited on the upper part of the walls, creating an uninterrupted series of literary stories. A few years later, their possession was transferred to Cardinal Scipione Borghese, the nephew of Pope Paul V. Dosso's paintings remained in the Borghese collection until the early nineteenth century and then passed into the collection of José de Madrazo, a Spanish neoclassical painter, who stayed in Rome between 1803 and 1819 and later took them to Madrid: later the paintings were lost.

From the inventory of the Spanish painter dated 1856: we know that there must have been a painting depicting The Fire of Troy (Aeneid, book II, not traced).² In the same period, in Rome, with Raffaello Sanzio, a new approach was born, coherently historical-archaeological, in the illustration of the classical theme and therefore of the myth of Aeneas.

In the third room of the Apostolic Palaces there is the *Incendio di Borgo* (Fire in Borgo), a work created by the painter from Urbino, together with some of his best assistants, in 1514. This is the first fresco that Raf-



Fig. 2 - Raffaello Sanzio, *Incendio di Borgo* (part.), 1514, Musei Vaticani, Città del Vaticano (from *Michelangelo e Raffaello in Vaticano*, Città del Vaticano 2012, 182)

faello completed on behalf of the new Pope Leo X who had ascended to the Seat of San Pietro in March 1513, succeeding Pope Julius II. The fresco describes a legendary event according to which Pope Leo IV miraculously stopped the flames that were destroying the Roman district of Borgo, near the ancient Cathedral of San Pietro.

On the left of the fresco, which is striking for its theatricality, a young man carries an older man on his shoulders; beside him there is boy and a woman who follows him. In the representation we recognize the Escape from Troy (fig. 2). Raffaello quotes Virgil³. It is from a tragedy, from an exodus of a population on the run, that Rome is born. The Trojan hero escapes from a burning city, but does not lose his humanity. It is from the

² HUMFREY 2020.

³ MARTINA 2004.

family, from fathers and mothers, from the cult of the ancestors, from the *pietas* that civilization is founded. The destiny will lead Aeneas to establish the city of Rome from which an Empire will be born, a Kingdom that will dominate the world over the centuries. Each literary and figurative source is exploited by Raffaello and his collaborators to give back to the stories of Aeneas a strictly classical aspect, and at the same time, an absolutely current allegorical reading: Aeneas fully regains the Virgilian roles of the spotless hero, from the “exemplary *pietas*”.

The engravings produced in the second and third decade of the sixteenth century by the followers of Raffaello first of all Marcantonio Raimondi, but also Jacopo Caraglio, will constitute the most authoritative response on the Italian side to Brant's “Gothic” Aeneid. The iconographic invention proposed by Raffaello of the Aeneas-Anchises couple, thanks to the circulation in print, became the dominant model throughout Italy but also in Europe⁴.

Starting from the fourth decade of the sixteenth century, especially in central-northern Italy, the custom of setting up monumental narrative cycles of the events of the Trojan hero within stately palaces is asserted⁵. The frescoes painted by Nicolò dell'Abate for the Boiardo Fortress in Scandiano - later detached and now kept in the Galleria Estense in Modena - constitute one of the oldest known pictorial representations of the Aeneid stories. The artist, assisted by his collaborators, around the middle of the sixteenth century, takes up the same theme in the decorative scheme of Palazzo Leoni in Bologna. There are two frescoed rooms: the antechamber, with the stories of the fourth book divided into twelve sections, alternating with female figures; and the Hall, where, on the upper part of the walls, there are sixteen panels - eighteen originally - separated with puttos and lions, with stories taken from the second book of the Aeneid. The last of the episodes depicted is *Fuga da Troia* (Escape from Troy). In the scene, dominated by the group Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius, the youngest member of the family is represented in the act of raising a torch, a symbolic allusion to the future of the Trojan civilization and their transfer

⁴ WOOD 1988.

⁵ For an in-depth study of the first Italian pictorial cycles depicting events drawn from the Aeneid compare DE JONG 1990.

to Italy. On the left, in front of the high walls, once impregnable, of the burning city of Troy, is depicted the goddess Cybele, with a turreted headdress, sitting on the chariot pulled by lions, who welcomes Creusa in the Korybantes procession⁶.

In 1584 Count Filippo Fava entrusted the decoration of the entire noble floor of his palace, in Bologna, to the brothers Annibale and Agostino Carracci and to their cousin Ludovico: it was the first test of the young artists, who gave proof of their talent by creating two series of paintings, that of Giasone and Medea and that of Aeneas, absolute jewels of Bolognese and Italian art⁷.

With this important commission, the Carracci revolutionized the decorative system of the frieze, in use until then, clearly separating the narrative parts from the decorated partitions consisting of admirable sculptures of divinities in *trompe-l'oeil* in illusive dialogue with the real architecture of the room.

In the scene *Enea fugge da Troia in fiamme* (Aeneas escapes from Troy in flames), is presented an unusual depiction of the protagonists - Aeneas and Anchises - who are portrayed with their backs to the viewer. This compositional solution, which suggests the idea of excited movement and action and which emphasizes the narrative characteristics of the frieze, where each scene constitutes the snapshot of a broader and more articulated story, is certainly the result of a careful reflection on adherence to the nature, pursued through careful studies from life, which will distinguish the Baroque painting from the artificiality of the Late Mannerism. The Aeneas-Anchises group divides the pictorial space in two: on the one hand in the background flames, devastation and death, on the other a blooming rural landscape towards which they seem to be heading, the prophesy of a dawn of rebirth.

The fragment of a detached fresco, which is preserved in a room of Palazzo Ratta in Bologna, can be traced back to the same artistic climate (fig. 3). Recently identified with the *Escape* by Ludovico Carracci of which the seventeenth-century sources speak, the painting probably used to decorate the fireplace in another room in the same building. It is a work of the artist's early maturity (dating back to 1586) which already reveals his

⁶ LANDI 2018.

⁷ EMILIANI 1984.



Fig. 3 - Ludovico Carracci, *Fuga da Troia* (part.), 1586-1587, Palazzo Ratta, Bologna (from E. PANIZON, "Ascanio e Creusa nelle rappresentazioni pittoriche della Fuga di Enea: il caso dell'affresco di Ludovico Carracci in Palazzo Ratta", *Pan. Rivista di filologia latina*, VIII (2019), 130)

narrative talent and refinement in investigating the emotions of the characters. The painted scene, which we must imagine backlit by the glow of the fire lit in the fireplace, is one of the most dramatic versions of this theme: while Aeneas walks with great strides carrying his father on one shoulder, little Ascanius and his mother exchange desperate a final greeting, because Creusa is dragged away by an armed man⁸.

The fresco fragment presents an unconventional iconography compared to Virgil's story: Creusa was not lost, she was kidnapped.

The same image is shown in several works including a mid-sixteenth-century Urbino majolica plate painted on a drawing by Battista Franco, now preserved in the Museo Civico of Pesaro. On one side it shows the family of Aeneas on the way and Creusa kidnapped, on the other it bears the inscription 'I Coribanti a Enea rapir Creusa'⁹. So, Creusa was kidnapped by the Korybantes, the followers of Cybele, and not by the Achaean soldiers. In some comments of the humanistic times, including that of Cristoforo Landino, the goddess Cybele pitied by the sad destiny of Creusa, sent her ministers, the Korybantes, to kidnap her so that she would remain in Phrygia as her priestess. The work of Ludovico Carracci, well supported by literary sources, seems to be a personal interpretation of the painter who, attentive to the representation of human emotions,

⁸ PANIZON 2019.

⁹ FAGILIO 1981.

pays particular attention to the heartbreaking farewell between Ascanius and Creusa.

Even the depiction of Ascanius often differs from the iconography described by Virgil in the *Aeneid*. Already with Raffaello in the Vatican, the youngest member of the group leaves his father's hand, but in numerous pictorial representations starting from the second half of the sixteenth century, Ascanius is presented in the role of leader of the Trojan family. For example, in the painting by Bonifacio de 'Pitati, which was part of a series of eight works with an ancient theme that made up the decorative frieze of a room in Palazzo Pisani in Santo Stefano in Venice¹⁰, Ascanius takes a few steps ahead of the rest of the family, where Creusa no longer appears, and he points the way and lights it with a lamp¹¹. At the center of the composition, there is a tree with a severed trunk in correspondence with the representation of the city in flames, an allegory of death, and a leafy one on the other side, representing the resurrection, that is the rebirth of the Trojan nation, with Ascanius indicating the way of salvation. In the painting *Fuga di Enea da Troia* (Escape of Aeneas from Troy), preserved in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, the work of Paolo Farinati, another painter from Verona, like Bonifacio de 'Pitati, Ascanius precedes the group carrying a large torch. In the fragment of a detached fresco created by Guercino, now preserved in the Pinacoteca Civica of Cento, which originally decorated a chimney at the Pannini's house¹², Ascanius precedes the group continuing his run without taking his eyes off the city he leaves behind, perhaps in the hollow hope to see the face of the mother. In the work, the painter, still young, adheres to a representation of the body that descends directly from Michelangelo's ways and from the subsequent exasperations deriving from early mannerism: muscles, twists, exaltation of the drapery. All these elements emphasize the drama of the depicted scene. A common source of inspiration for this iconographic variant could be the woodcut illustrating the Escape in the Strasbourg edition of the *Aeneid* edited by Sebastian Brant (1502), an edition that had great success throughout Europe: here the little Ascanius is held by the hand by Aeneas but he anticipates

¹⁰ The location of the painting is unknown today.

¹¹ PAVANELLO 2006.

¹² BAGNI 1984.



Fig. 4 - Federico Barocci, *Fuga di Enea da Troia*, 1598, Galleria Borghese, Rome (from M. Barbanera, A. Capodiferro, *La forza delle rovine*, Exhibiton Catalog (Rome, 8 October 2015 - 31 January 2016), 152)

his father by a few steps and shows the way with his free hand. These works certainly offer an interpretative key to the story: Ascanius personifies the future of the Trojan nation and by opening the way to the rest of the family, he anticipates the final destiny of Aeneas' progeny.

Around the end of the sixteenth century another important artist painted the same theme; it is Federico Barocci, author of an extraordinary interpretation of Aeneas' Escape from Troy, preserved at the Galleria Borghese in Rome (fig. 4). The representation of this historical episode is a *unicum* the production of this painter from Urbino, constantly engaged on religious themes or portraits. The first version of the work, now lost, was made between 1586 and 1589 for Rudolf II, probably to pay homage to the House of Habsburg which claimed to be a descendant of Aeneas.

The reprise of the same subject promoted by the Borghese family, who commissioned the second version, is probably attributable to a Christian interpretation of the *pietas* of Aeneas, of which the represented episode is

exemplifying, or an allusion to the founding myths of Rome, of which the Borgheses were influential representatives. Barocci sets the scene inside a classical building. From the window on the left and in the center you can see the flames, on the ground are accumulated ruins, weapons and military banners, symbolizing the fall of the city. Ascanius' gesture of protecting his ears evokes the deafening uproar of the ongoing devastation. The dark nocturnal atmosphere is interrupted by the gaudy tones of the complexions and above all of the clothes of the protagonists in search of escape. The figures are distributed to form two distinct groups, Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius on one side, Creusa, who in the position recalls an Annunciation of the Madonna, not far away, according to an iconography faithful to the Virgilian tale, inspired by the fresco of the same subject by Genga¹³, a compatriot and relative of the painter. Some compositional ideas and background details are instead taken from Raffaello's fresco of the *Incendio di Borgo* (Fire in Borgo) in the Vatican¹⁴. In the background of the painting, you can see some buildings that reproduce real architecture of the city of Rome: the circular temple is the one that Bramante, also from Urbino, built in San Pietro in Montorio, the column is that of Trajan. Ancient Rome and modern Rome are therefore represented, a prophecy of the foundation of the city. What is remarkable is the ability to render the affections of the protagonists of the painting and the effective restitution of the excitement of the staged events. From a critical point of view, it is one of Federico Barocci's works with the most marked proto-baroque qualities, a forerunner of the painting of the following century.

The critical success of the work is partly due to an engraving by Agostino Carracci. Probably derived from a preparatory drawing by Barocci, the engraving, dating 1595, was widely distributed throughout Europe¹⁵. Several years after the entry of the Barocci's canvas into the Borghese collections, Cardinal Scipione commissioned a sculptural group of the same subject to a very young Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Made between 1618 and 1619 the sculpture is also still in the Galleria Borghese (fig. 5). The episode, described in the second book of the Virgilian Aeneid, offered the cue to

¹³ VERSTEGEN 2015.

¹⁴ WALTERS 1978.

¹⁵ TOSINI 2009.

convey a historical-theological and celebratory significance of the client: the *imperium*, transferred from Troy to Rome through Aeneas, would then pass to the Church and to the Pontiff and would be exercised thanks to the support of the young cardinal nephew Scipio.

This work had to be placed in the same environment, perhaps the will of the client was to create a comparison between the two works, thus creating a virtuous competition between the painting and the sculpture which since the Renaissance was the subject of interest and debate among theorists, art lovers and artists¹⁶. Bernini, while remaining faithful to the Virgilian text, interprets the subject with personal ideas and the profundity of thought. A dynamic spiral ascending composition, linked to Mannerist forms, includes three figures:

Aeneas carries on his shoulders the old father Anchises, paralyzed in the legs and with a curved back, holding the vase with the ashes of his ancestors in his hand; Ascanius follows the group holding in his hand the eternal fire kept in the temple of Vesta that will ignite the new life of Rome. The same moods give life to the sculpted faces: Anchises, although fearful, is optimistic and lovingly holds up the symbol of the abandoned homeland; Aeneas is marked by a virile resignation, and by the prophecies that want him to be



Fig. 5 - Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Enea, Anchise e Ascanio*, 1619, Galleria Borghese, Rome

¹⁶ PREIMESBERGER 1998.

the founder of the new Roman civilization, while the curly-haired Ascanius is frightened and yet hopeful, just like his grandfather Anchises. The different ages of the three protagonists are rendered through the differentiation of the skin in the sculpted surfaces: the soft skin of the child, the tight skin of the adult and the wrinkled and withered skin of the elderly¹⁷.

A series of works that deal with the intimate theme of filial piety date back to the seventeenth century.

In a painting dated 1615, now preserved in the Musée du Louvre, the author, Lionello Spada represents a moment of great tension: the preparation for escape. Aeneas bends down to take his father upon himself, Creusa turns to Anchises to entrust him with the Lares, and little Ascanius points the way to the hero. The dramatism and the strong chiaroscuro effects are counterbalanced by the expression of the characters, who seem to keep their calm firmly, by the light colors, by the balanced setting of the composition, by the classic features of the protagonists. The dramatic composure of the work is rendered in the typical style of this Bolognese artist who developed a way that synthesized the Caravaggesque drama with the Carracci measure.

The same subject is treated by Simon Vouet in the painting *Aeneas and His Father Abandon Ilius* dated around 1635, now preserved at the San Diego Museum of Art. The chiaroscuro is less accentuated, but the painting is pervaded by the baroque pathos that is manifested above all in the exchange of glances and in the aching expression of Anchises.

A small masterpiece by Carlo Bononi is the panel *Enea fugge da Troia in fiamme con Anchise e Ascanio* (Aeneas escapes from Troy in flames with Anchises and Ascanius) (1615-18) from the Grimaldi Fava Collection. The meticulously didactic approach employed, despite the small format, is typical of reasoning according to models still partly from the late sixteenth century: the old Anchise holds tightly to himself the penates that he did not want to abandon; the city of Troy is identified by the wooden horse, which in comparison with the small figures at its feet, reveals its colossal dimensions, the swinging ornaments of Aeneas's robes, as well as his exhibited muscularity, recall the mighty figures of the late Bolognese Mannerist season.

¹⁷ PINTON 2009.



Fig. 6 - Mattia Preti, *Fuga da Troia*, 1640-1645, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Corsini, Rome

In Mattia Preti's painting *Fuga da Troia* (Escape from Troy) which is preserved in the Galleria Nazionale di Arte Antica - Palazzo Corsini and dating back to the first half of the 1740s, Aeneas supports on his back all the weight of his father Anchises, which is represented resting on the helmet of his son while he is holding the statue of the Penates Gods, tutelary deities of the family (fig. 6). In the background, his wife Creusa can be distinguished, and to precede the group almost leading the way, his son Ascanius, half naked like a cupid. Between the family and the battlefield, Aeneas chooses the

former. He will leave for the beaches of Lazio, where his descendants will establish the city of Rome¹⁸.

The peculiarity of the work is that Aeneas and Anchises stand on a sort of pedestal carved in bas-relief as if they were a statuary group. In this sense, the canvas seems to establish a distant dialogue with Bernini's famous sculpture of an analogous subject, entering the discussion on the comparison between the arts, which Mattia Preti obviously resolves in favor of painting.

A century later, the theme of Aeneas' Escape was confronted by Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, a painter from Lucca. There are two canvases that depict the same subject in a completely different way. The first canvas, *Enea in partenza da Troia* (Aeneas departing from Troy), dated 1745, now preserved

¹⁸ MOCHI ONORI, VODRET 2008.

in the Musei Reali di Torino - Galleria Sabauda; the second version, *Enea e Anchise in fuga da Troia in fiamme* (Aeneas and Anchises escaping from Troy in flames), painted in 1748, preserved in the Museo del Monastero delle Orsoline in Calvi dell'Umbria, although similar in characters and mythological narration, is certainly more successful, in particular for the quality of the painting and the balance of composition. In few years the artist seems to have acquired a mastery of the scenic construction and of the remarkable glimpses of light, which combined with a more fluid brushstroke, succeed to render the intense historiographical drama and enhance the movement of the characters. Classicism is mitigated by Mannerist reminiscences in the anatomy of Aeneas, but above all, in the movement of the drapery rendered with a thousand floating folds; the bodies are represented tense and

frightened, flames all around, the strong but dark colors at the same time blend into a canvas that is unique in its beauty.

Carlo Angelini Paolucci of Urbino and Placido Lazzarini of Pesaro are the authors of the Stories of Aeneas painted in tempera from 1781 to 1786 on the vaults of the six rooms that overlook the gallery of Palazzo Pianetti in Jesi. The most representative image of the pictorial complex, also due to the high symbolic value with which it is loaded, is the central scene of the third room: Aeneas is forced to flee from Troy in flames, reminiscent of the destroyed civilization, with Anchises on his shoulders, allegory of the past, his son Ascanius by the hand, to represent the future, while his wife Creusa, who symbolizes family feelings, is about to be killed by the soldiers. Aeneas is the *pius* par excellence. The adhe-



Fig. 7 - Sandro Chia, *Enea*, 2005



Fig. 8 - Agostino Iacurci, *L'Antiporta*, 2021 Ugo Tognazzi Library of the Municipality of Pomezia

sion of the two artists to neoclassical poetics justifies and explains the renunciation of dramatic tones, excited feelings and passions.

There is no shortage of examples of contemporary art works inspired by the figure of Aeneas, his history and his mythical journey. For the 135th year of the establishment of the Province of Rome, in 2005, two bronze statues were commissioned to the artist Sandro Chia to be exhibited in front of Palazzo Valentini, the seat of the Province of Rome. One represents Europe, the other represents Aeneas with his father Anchises and his son Ascanius (fig. 7). Aeneas is still today a source of inspiration for his virtues and is a bearer of supreme moral values. Quoting the words of the then president of the Province Enrico Gasbarra: "Aeneas represents for us the myth that becomes history, but above all it will be the example that every administrator must follow, that is to operate by preserving and supporting those who preceded us and, at the same time, to build a better future for those who will come later, regardless of skin color, language and political and religious beliefs".

An interesting public art intervention dates back to 2021 in order to strengthen the relationship between history and territory and to modernise the importance of the figure of Aeneas (fig. 8). The Municipal Library of Pomezia, a city in the south of Rome near the ancient *Lavinium*, houses a large mural work by the *street artist* Agostino Iacurci, which runs along the entire perimeter of the building and tells episodes of Aeneas' journey through the reinterpretation of iconographic elements present in the Virgilian account: from ships to the golden branch. The inspiration comes above all from the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, in which the hero meets a sorcerer, the Cumaean Sibyl, in a cave with a hundred doors that open in unison at the moment of the response.

L'Antiporta of Iacurci - this is the name of the intervention, curated by Marcello Smarrelli and supported by the Municipality of Pomezia - was created as a part of the *Sol Indiges* project, which provides for the use of urban art as a tool to enhance the city, reconnecting its contemporary history to the myths of its origins.

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