

## LUCIAN AMONG THE WITCHES. THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE *PHILOPSEUDES* IN A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TREATISE

Ἐγὼ γέ τοι παρὰ Εὐκράτους ἦκω σοι τοῦ πάνυ, πολλὰ τὰ ἄπιστα καὶ μυθώδη ἀκούσας· μᾶλλον δὲ μεταξὺ λεγομένων ἀπιῶν ὀχόμην οὐ φέρων τοῦ πράγματος τὴν ὑπερβολήν, ἀλλὰ με ὅσπερ αἱ Ἐρινύες ἐξήλασαν πολλὰ τεράστια καὶ ἀλλόκοτα διεξιόντες<sup>1</sup>.

I come to you from Eucrates the magnificent, having listened to a great lot of incredible yarns; to put it more accurately, I took myself off in the midst of the conversation because I could not stand the exaggeration of the thing; they drove me out as if they had been the Furies by telling quantities of extraordinary miracles<sup>2</sup>.

With these words, Tychiades, the protagonist of the *Philopseudes*, introduces his interlocutor Philocles to the marvelous narrations that will unfold shortly thereafter. The *Philopseudes* is one of Lucian's later works, and admittedly not his most glorified one, especially in regards to its subsequent reception<sup>3</sup>. Generally speaking, in fact, Lucian fluctuated with an alternating fortune in the field of classical studies up until the previous century. In the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, Sommerbrodt observed that «Lucian ist in unsern Tagen von der Schule im Stiche gelassen worden»<sup>4</sup>.

Unflattering opinions had been attached to Lucian for centuries, as his trenchant wit did not meet a favorable judgment on the part of the Christians. Lactantius, for instance, labeled him a man *qui diis et hominibus non pepercit*<sup>5</sup>. The Suda lexicon declared that such a depraved liar κληρονόμος τοῦ αἰωνίου πυρὸς μετὰ τοῦ Σατανᾶ γενήσεται<sup>6</sup>. As will be shown below, prejudice of this kind would last for a long time and would still find supporters in the seventeenth century.

Nevertheless, the Byzantine world continued to preserve and read his works<sup>7</sup>, and personalities such as Arethas of Caesarea played an undeniable role in providing the text with a stable tradition.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Lucianic corpus landed in our times through an intricately path. Focusing on the *Philopseudes*, this paper will take into account a particular case of its modern reception which has not been pointed out so far, namely its appearance in a seventeenth-century English treatise against witchcraft-related superstitions. However, before delving into

<sup>1</sup> Luc. *Philops.* 5. Text from MACLEOD 1974, pp. 177-178.

<sup>2</sup> Translation by HARMON 1921, p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> Just to mention some scholars, GALLAVOTTI 1932, BOMPAIRE 1958, WHITMARSH 2005, MESTRE - GÓMEZ 2010.

<sup>4</sup> SOMMERBRODT 1872, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> *Div. inst.* 1. 9. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Suda. λ 683 ADLER (1933).

<sup>7</sup> BOMPAIRE 1993, p. LIII.

<sup>8</sup> For the reception of Lucian in Byzantium, see MARCINIAK 2016.

the reemerging of the *Philopseudes* in Early Modern times, it is essential to recognize Lucian's perspicacity in carrying out a true «Verspottung der Philosophen»<sup>9</sup>, a satire of bearded men of wisdom who placidly wallow in their alluring nonsense. Had the *Philopseudes* or its author been less caustic toward their contemporary society, they would not have been so impeded by censure over the centuries. On the one hand, Lucian unravels enticing and amusing stories; on the other, he distances himself from and ridicules them with skillful, corrosive taste<sup>10</sup>.

I will try to show how biased readers have misinterpreted this feature of Lucian's *Philopseudes* and his other authentic or spurious works, and how someone else, on the contrary, truly grasped the lively magma under the multifaceted veil of irony.

#### BEWITCHED BY THE WITCHES

The *Philopseudes* is but a short work of an enormously prolific author. Witnesses to Lucian's widespread fortune are one hundred eighty-five manuscripts earlier than the seventeenth century, which have handed down the Lucianic corpus to posterity. The *Philopseudes* is not to be found in each of them, which attests to its minor fame in comparison to other dialogues<sup>11</sup>. In fact, modern scholarship started taking an interest in the *Philopseudes* relatively late. The first complete modern edition of Lucian's works was Macleod's *Luciani Opera*, the first volume of which was published in 1972. It is still considered the reference edition, even though it was followed by subsequent editions by J. BOMPAIRE (1993), V. LONGO (1993), M. EBNER ET AL. (2001).

As regards the literary analysis of the *Philopseudes*, a pivotal study is offered by Daniel Ogden's *In Search of The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (2007), as it examines the contents of the *Philopseudes* in a thorough and unprecedented way. The title of Ogden's book harkens back to the most famous tale narrated in Lucian's dialogue, and the only one to have inspired later works in a way that is immediately recognizable<sup>12</sup>. Folkloric motifs also can be identified in the stories told by the liars gathered at Eucrates' place<sup>13</sup>.

Nevertheless, a peculiar reception of the *Philopseudes* has never – to my knowledge – been pointed out in scholarly contributions, i.e. the inclusion of this dialogue in a treatise written in England during the witch hunt in the seventeenth century. It is well known that the

<sup>9</sup> HELM 1927, p. 1755.

<sup>10</sup> ALBINI 1993, p. 38.

<sup>11</sup> Earlier documents preserving Lucian's works are, among others, the papyrus *P. Lit. Lond.* 94 and the Syrian paraphrase of the treatise Περί τοῦ μὴ ῥαδίως πιστεύειν Διαβολῆς. Cfr. BOMPAIRE 1993, p. LVII. Of the two groups of manuscripts containing Lucian's works, this dialogue is only present in Γ, Φ, V, C (γ group); and in P, A, N, Γ<sup>a</sup> (β group). See MACLEOD 1972. Noteworthy is the absence of the *Philopseudes* from ms. M, *Paris*. 2954, *olim Florentinus*. This fourteenth-century codex played a role of primary importance in the publication of the *editio princeps*, printed in Florence in 1496. For further information, see BELIN DE BALLU 1789; JACOBITZ 1896; FRITZSCHE 1896; NILÉN 1906; RABE 1906.

<sup>12</sup> Notably, in 1797 J.W. Goethe wrote a ballad on the sorcerer's apprentice after he had read the German translation of Lucian's text, published by C.M. Wieland a decade earlier. See the edition by MARTINI-SEIFFER (1968). Goethe's ballad inspired Paul Duka's symphonic scherzo, *L'apprenti sorcier* (1897), which was subsequently employed in Disney's animated film *Fantasia*. See OGDEN 2007, pp. 231-273, PEDRERO 2006, pp. 750 ff.

<sup>13</sup> By way of example, the tale about the Hyperborean magician (chaps. 13-15) meets some parallel in ATU type 562.

persecution of persons accused of witchcraft in the Early Modern Age was not restricted to England, but rather spread widely across Europe. Undoubtedly, the concept of witchcraft dates back to the ancient world and variously developed until the fifteenth century<sup>14</sup>.

However, a systematic persecution of witchcraft became a notorious mark of the Reformation period. According to ABBIATI - AGNOLETTO (1984, 7), studying the witch-hunts is a means to better understand Western society at the dawn of a new era. Indeed, the oppression sailed through the Atlantic and invaded the New World as well. It would be sufficient to remember the most famous trials of Salem Village in Massachusetts. And yet «so much Prominence has been given to what is called the *Salem Witchcraft*, that what had occurred in the country before and since 1692 is, and has been, overlooked or almost entirely lost sight of»<sup>15</sup>. Witchcraft was a broadly accepted superstition which few dared to question, in order not to discredit themselves and fall prey to dangerous charges.

For instance, it is not surprising to find such a record in the *Annals of Witchcraft*<sup>16</sup>:

1659.

To what Extent «Witchery» was practiced in Say Brook in Connecticut, in 1659, we are not informed; that it did exist, and disturb the People there is very sure, or the following Order would not have been passed by the General Court of that Colony; namely, that Mr. Samuel Willis «is requested to goe downe to Sea Brook, to assist y<sup>e</sup> Maior in examininge the Suspitions about Witchery, and to act therein as may be requisite»<sup>17</sup>.

A number of legal or administrative texts and registers related to witchcraft survive, because the witch hunt was, *in primis*, a judiciary matter: «as the hunt developed, the secular courts assumed an even greater role in the process, while that of the ecclesiastical courts declined. Governments defined witchcraft as a secular crime, and in some countries the temporal courts secured a monopoly over its prosecution»<sup>18</sup>. In sum, the Church gradually handed over the baton of the Inquisition to secular authorities, in some areas more than in others.

Apart from the victims of accusations, the other undisputed protagonists of the witch hunt were the inquisitors. In particular, Heinrich Kramer penned the *Malleus maleficarum*, a tremendously successful treatise whose thousands of copies had been printed since 1487<sup>19</sup>. It represents the interpretative *summa* of fifteenth-century demonology as a whole<sup>20</sup>. Its three parts thoroughly record situations deemed alarming and raise fastidious or even preposterous

<sup>14</sup> Countless pieces of scholarship have been published on this subject. Among others, see ROBINSON 1979; LEVACK 1987; BERTI 2010; CHERUBINI 2010; SCHIFF 2015.

<sup>15</sup> DRAKE 1869, p. viii.

<sup>16</sup> The *Annals of Witchcraft* is a collection of seventeenth-century court records, diaries, and other documents reporting accusations of witchcraft and demonic possessions. In them, Samuel G. Drake chose to narrate the history of witchcraft in the colonies from 1632 to 1728.

<sup>17</sup> DRAKE 1869, p. 112.

<sup>18</sup> LEVACK 1987, in particular pp. 88, 204-252.

<sup>19</sup> BERTI 2010, pp. 99-105. The name of Jacob Sprenger was added as an author a few decades after the first publication.

<sup>20</sup> ABBIATI - AGNOLETTO 1984, pp. 130-198.

questions, such as «whether the sexual pleasure is greater or lesser with incubus demons in an assumed body than with men in a real body»<sup>21</sup>.

It is worth noting that the *Malleus*, which became a «classic» itself in the sixteenth century, resorted to classical authors, among whom are Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca<sup>22</sup>. Ancient texts were referred to and conveniently interpreted (or re-interpreted)<sup>23</sup>. However, not only men who embodied the inquisitorial power but also those linked to the Inquisition as spectators drew from Latin and Greek authors. For instance, the *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex* by the theologian Martin Delrio went to press in 1599-1600. It is a dense handbook on demonology and cites about one thousand two hundred sources, among which are Galen, Heraclides Ponticus, Athenaeus, Phlegon of Tralles, Plutarch, Pliny, and many others<sup>24</sup>.

Overall, intellectuals of various kinds were deeply committed to witchcraft matters and expressed their more or less intransigent opinions by clutching ancient authors. The same applies to the Italian philosopher and literate Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, who had been present at interrogations of witches and had reached his verdict. I will now turn to his understanding of witchcraft.

#### A «MAULED» LUCIAN. THE *STRIX* OF GIANFRANCESCO PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469-1533), nephew of the more famous Giovanni, was the writer of the *Strix, siue de Ludificatione Daemonum*<sup>25</sup>. In 1523, the Duchy of Mirandola witnessed the execution of several individuals accused of charges of witchcraft and handed over to the secular arm in Bologna<sup>26</sup>. After listening to the accusations, the count Gianfrancesco Pico acknowledged them as trustworthy and set about composing a dialogue dealing with witchcraft. Hence the creation of the *Strix*, in which the character Phronimus (representing the author's opinion) manages to convince his friend Apistius of the reality of witchcraft. While accomplishing this task, Phronimus refers to ancient *auctoritates* in order to corroborate his arguments, but this is not only a display of erudition on the part of a highly educated author. Giuseppe Bonomo has noticed how Pico is the only sixteenth-century demonologist who identifies a close connection between ancient and contemporary magical

<sup>21</sup> English translation by MACKAY 2006, p. 314.

<sup>22</sup> I reproduce here the first lines of the dedicatory epistle by Nicolaus Bassaeus, the typographer who reprinted the treatise in Frankfurt, in 1580): *ita abominor eos, qui superiorum aetatum classicos scriptores (quos ut pote homines, quaedam latere, quaedam data quoque opera ipsi praeterire potuerunt) editis voluminibus temere et saepenumero absque iusta causa criminantur et impetunt. Siquidem ipsi hoc unum studere (mihi quidem) videntur, ut aliis, iisque bonis et bonorum auctoribus neglectis, ipsi soli magnifant, legantur et sapere credantur.*

The *classici scriptores* mentioned by Bassaeus do not only refer to writers of the ancient world. In fact, he also considers the Inquisition's classics, such as the *Directorium inquisitorum*, written in 1376 by Nicholas Eymerich, the most influential handbook for trials. See BERTI 2010, p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> Another example can be seen in the *Compendium Maleficarum* by the inquisitor Francesco Maria Guazzo, who did not abstain from calling on Terentius (ch. 13).

<sup>24</sup> BIBLIOTHECA LAMIARUM 1994, pp. 167-171; ARETINI 2000, pp. 219-225.

<sup>25</sup> For a general overview of Pico's life, see SCAPPARONE 2015; a most recent study on the *Strix* has been published by PAPPALARDO (2017).

<sup>26</sup> ABBIATI - AGNOLETTI 1984, pp. 230-247.

practices, so much so that ancient texts are referred to as trustworthy in terms of extraordinary events<sup>27</sup>. Below are two examples drawn from separate passages:

1) PH. *Caeterum succubus et incubus spiritus si admittis apud antiquitatem fuisse, quid est causae uti ad nostrum non admittas tempestatem: cum tot et tantis id approbetur testimoniis quae referam si libuerit. At de unguento te puto non ignorare. Quae cum Lucianus Syrius tum Apuleius Afer mandauerint memoriae posteritatis*<sup>28</sup>;

2) PH. *An memores et Luciani Samosatani et Lucii Madaurensis?*

AP. *Utique. Nam legi quandoque et te ea de re disserentem nudius tertius audiui. Sed ficta dubito, non facta, quae in graeco illo et latino in asino contineantur.*

PH. *Ut multa non dubito ficta etiam plurima, etiam, si malis, omnia. Sic non de nihilo ficta contendo*<sup>29</sup>.

In citing Lucian, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola had in mind the story of *Lucius or The Ass* – which was at that time attributed to Lucian – and the plot of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*<sup>30</sup>. What cannot be ignored is that fantastic tales linked to Lucian and nowadays read as pleasant *divertissements* were mistaken for truthful – or, at least, originated from some historical facts (*non de nihilo ficta*)<sup>31</sup>. In the eyes of Pico, magic and prodigious events did not only pertain to fantasy, but could be experienced in real life. In the *Strix*, the erudite reference to Lucian (alongside Apuleius) is an additional seal on the entire conversation, which culminates in a sort of conversion: Apistius, the one who initially casts doubts, eventually surrenders to the πίστις instilled by his φρόνιμος friend, and he also gains a new name, Pisticus<sup>32</sup>. In this context, recalling Lucian might bestow greater authority and credibility on Pico's ideas. The cloudy reputation attached to Lucian even by ancient sources (e.g. the Suda lexicon) could easily encourage the (mis-)interpretation of Lucian's works as referential to the existence of witchcraft.

#### SHIMMERING LIGHTS OF REASON

Although the Age of Enlightenment was not yet sufficient to definitively extinguish the atrocities still committed throughout Europe, new voices started putting forward a different interpretation of the witch-hunting plague. For example, in 1745 Lodovico Antonio Muratori published the treatise *Della forza della fantasia umana*, and in 1749 Girolamo Tartarotti wrote

<sup>27</sup> BONOMO 1985, pp. 355-356.

<sup>28</sup> The text has been sourced from the edition of PAPPALARDO 2017, p. 294.

<sup>29</sup> PAPPALARDO 2017, p. 460. For other mentions of Lucian's works (namely *Gallus* and *Vera Historia*), see PAPPALARDO 2017, pp. 368 and 406.

<sup>30</sup> About the debated authorship of the *Lucius*, see GOOLD 1967; CATAUDELLA 1992; NESSELRATH 2006.

<sup>31</sup> «Fronimo propone la propria interpretazione delle favole antiche, insistendo sul fatto che non possono essere completamente inventate dai poeti, ma devono aver avuto origine da effettivi inganni demoniaci». PAPPALARDO 2017, pp. 460-461.

<sup>32</sup> The name Apistius recalls the Greek adjective ἀπιστος «incredulous». It is worth mentioning that Ἀπιστῶν is the alternative title of the *Philopseudes*, as indicated by manuscripts. For further detail, see OGDEN 2007, p. 3.

the *Congresso notturno delle Lammie*. Both of these works passionately argued against superstition and described witchcraft as a product of human imagination<sup>33</sup>.

Generally speaking, the eighteenth century opened new paths to tolerance and put an end to the witch trials<sup>34</sup>. However, the prelude of this cultural change can already be glimpsed in the seventeenth century, and at that time the *Philopseudes* played a surprising role in the condemnation of the witch hunt. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England had been a theatre of unparalleled injustice against the so-called witches. In particular, the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth were marked by the cruel policies of King James I Stuart. After self-publishing a treatise entitled *Demonology* in 1597, at the beginning of the 1600s he sanctioned capital punishment for the crimes of witchery of any type. During the reign of his successor Charles I, and specifically in the years 1645-1647, the persecutory waves reached their peak.

The memory of such events must have been quite vivid when a controversy among erudite men arose in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The debate questioned the existence of incorporeal spirits and stirred a crowd of scholars as the end of censorship after the civil war made heterodox ideas on hell, demons, and spirits emerge once again<sup>35</sup>. Henry More, Lodowick Muggleton, Meric Casaubon, Joseph Glanvill, John Webster are only some of the names that took part in the debate<sup>36</sup>.

It is to one of these thinkers that I will now turn, namely John Wagstaffe, who lit the fuse.

#### A BRILLIANT NONCONFORMIST. SIR JOHN WAGSTAFFE AND THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE *PHILOPSEUDES*

John Wagstaffe must have been quite an outlandish man, a scholar devoted to the study of politics and to learning in general. Although he was «a little, crooked man, and [...] looked like a little wizard», he ushered in polemics by publishing a book on witchcraft that «created much mirth among the wits of Oxford»<sup>37</sup>. The work was entitled *The Question of Witchcraft Debated; Or a Discourse against their Opinion that affirm Witches*. It was printed for Edward Millington in London in 1669, but encountered severe disapproval among its learned readers and incited a rebuke from Meric Casaubon<sup>38</sup>. From this intellectual uproar a new version of Wagstaffe's book, *Considered and Enlarged*, appeared in 1671. The core of the chapters remained almost unaltered, but further considerations and conclusions were appended to each one.

<sup>33</sup> ABBIATI - AGNOLETTI 1984, p. 298.

<sup>34</sup> See BERTI 2010, pp. 181-185. Nevertheless, several trials and condemnations are still found in archives' records of the seventeenth century. For further detail, especially on death sentences passed in Italy, see BONOMO 1985, pp. lxxi-lxxiii. Other late trials are discussed in CLARK (2010).

<sup>35</sup> LOMBARDI 2008, pp. 69-94.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, DAVIES 2018.

<sup>37</sup> LEE 1899, pp. 432-433.

<sup>38</sup> Casaubon did not hesitate to publish the drafts of «supernatural» experiments that the Elizabethan wizard John Dee had conducted with the medium Edward Kelly. See LOMBARDI 2008, p. 74.

In short, the treatise aimed to debunk the beliefs in witches and in the connections between spirits and men. Though still far from the rationalism of the eighteenth century, Wagstaffe's opinion swam against the tide. Remarkable is also the outline followed by this scholar, who relied on a large number of sources<sup>39</sup>. In his treatise, the reader is lead through the following path: a meticulous analysis of the Scriptures and their incorrect translations, misinterpretations, and problems regarding etymology, the account of the pagan world and its impostures, the papal bulls and the responsibility of the Church in founding the Inquisition and empowering it<sup>40</sup>, and finally, the recourse to rational reasoning in order to destroy falsehoods.

What needs to be brought to the attention of classicists is that Lucian's *Philopseudes* is also found in this treatise. The Greek dialogue is not only mentioned in the heat of the dissertation, but it is also attached – in the English translation – as an appendix to the *Discourse*.

More precisely, in chapter six (*How the Opinion of Witches came at first into the World*), Wagstaffe derides the philosophers who claimed to be in touch with the deity and performed exorcisms to drive away evil spirits, after which he adds: «Lucian in his Dialogue, Entitled *Philopseudeis*, lovers of lyes, makes very good sport with these kind of knaves»<sup>41</sup>. In fact, in chapter sixteen of the *Philopseudes*, the character Ion talks in detail about a Syrian from Palestine who restores people possessed by demons<sup>42</sup>. Tychiades scoffs at him and wittily observes that exorcisms of that kind are nothing in comparison to the fanciful theories of Plato, i.e. Ion's master.

However, the passage of the *Philopseudes* that could most significantly mirror and summarize Wagstaffe's view is perhaps the one concluding the dialogue. Here, Lucian has his characters comment bitterly on the false stories that were told, in regards to which Tychiades states:

ΤΥΧ. Ἀλλὰ θαρροῦμεν, ὃ φιλότις, μέγα τῶν τοιούτων ἀλεξιφάρμακον ἔχοντες τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι λόγον ὀρθόν, ὃ χρωμένους ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν οὐ μὴ ταράξῃ τῶν κενῶν καὶ ματαίων τούτων ψευσμάτων<sup>43</sup>.

TYCH. Well, never mind, my dear fellow: we have a powerful antidote to such poisons in truth and in sound reason brought to bear everywhere. As long as we make use of this, none of these empty, foolish lies will disturb our peace.

<sup>39</sup> See WAGSTAFFE 1669 and ID. 1671.

<sup>40</sup> Figures like Sprenger, Spina, Nider, and Delrio are mentioned in ch. 3 of both editions. The history of the Inquisition had left its mark on the impressions of acute men who aimed to overthrow ancient prejudices.

<sup>41</sup> WAGSTAFFE 1669, p. 74; ID. 1671, p. 131.

<sup>42</sup> An amusing reaction to this account is offered by a scholium in ms. Vat. 1325, in which the scribe interprets (possibly correctly? See OGDEN 2007, p. 133) the figure of the exorcist as a reference to Christ. Here is my translation of the bitter note: «Woe betide you Lucian, atheist! Was my Lord and God a charlatan, and did he request money in exchange for restoring sick people? Why did the earth not create an abyss to swallow you, when you were talking nonsense? Or was the earth simply horrified?».

<sup>43</sup> HARMON 1921, pp. 378-381.

It seems that the English ἄπιστος Wagstaffe, who had to argue against modern and obstinate lovers of lies, gladly walked a mile in the shoes of ἀπιστῶν Tychiades. Wagstaffe, a graduate of Oxford, later incorporated at Cambridge, both brilliant and skilled in ancient languages, was able to correctly understand the irony in Lucian's text, instead of bending it to biased reading<sup>44</sup>.

#### HUNTING FOR A TRANSLATOR

Even though Wagstaffe himself knew ancient Greek very well, he preferred to rely on a professional for the translation of the *Philopseudes*<sup>45</sup>. Below are his words at the end of the *Discourse*:

by way of Appendage to the preceding Discourse, I thought to have translated one of Lucian's Dialogues, called *The Lovers of Lyes*; but being informed that it was already translated, I only ordered the Book-seller to Reprint it: Nor can I chuse but please the Reader, to see that the World is the same World still; and that fifteen hundred years ago, men had the same humours and thoughts, in relation to the question in hand, as they have now adayes; For between some men now alive, and those whom the incomparable wit describes in his Ingenious Dialogue, there is no difference to be perceived, but only this, that they in the Dialogue did wear long beards, whereas now 'tis the fashion to cut the beard off, or at least to cut it very short<sup>46</sup>.

As it seems, the text had already been translated into English, but who had been responsible for such a task? Lucian's writings – or at least part of them – were not circulating widely at the time of Wagstaffe. In fact, in the second edition of his *Question of Witchcraft*, Wagstaffe had even to defend Lucian from charges of atheism. These were unfounded charges, Wagstaffe said, «otherwise Sir Thomas Moore would never have taken the pains to translate it, out of Greek into Latine».

In 1634, Francis Hickes was maybe the first English translator who stated that Lucian's writings, though some subjects could prove to be impious, contained «many rules and documents both of virtue and good learning, more then the writings of Suetonius, Tacitus, and other famous authors»<sup>47</sup>.

Hickes' selection of dialogues, however, did not include the *Philopseudes*. The *Lover of Lies* was translated by Jasper Mayne four years later in 1638. Mayne was a clergyman and a man of letters whose translations of Lucian followed Hickes'<sup>48</sup>. In his dedicatory epistle to William

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<sup>44</sup> Wagstaffe also reports quotations in the original language and seems to be entirely at ease with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

<sup>45</sup> According to LEE 1899, «he contributed a Greek poem to "Britannia rediviva"» published in 1660.

<sup>46</sup> WAGSTAFFE 1669, pp. 81-82; ID. 1671, pp. 149-150.

<sup>47</sup> HICKES 1634, p. xvi. See also LOWNDES 1865, p. 1409.

<sup>48</sup> COUSIN 1910, p. 266.

Marquis of Newcastle, Mayne expresses the difficulties and dissatisfaction that may be brought by the challenge of translating:

I need not tell you Excellency, that Translations compared with their Originals are commonly pictures of very differing shapes; Or that the Conversion of the meanest Author from one Tongue into another is so hard a Taske, that the undertaker may as well contrive a Marriage between two disagreeing Elements; or beget a friendship between Fire and Snow, as reconcile the severall proprieties in which the severall Tongues speake<sup>49</sup>.

Later in the epistle, Mayne recounts the ill-treatment that Lucian had to undergo through the centuries and claims his complete rehabilitation, so much so that he writes: «the truth is, My Lord, in this Translation I am guilty but of one great Offence, [...] and that is, not an Offence against them (*scil.* the moralists who despise Lucian), but against you Excellency, for not Translating more»<sup>50</sup>. As it seems, Mayne too should be given an acknowledgment for recovering Lucian and his irony to fight against vain superstition. Just as Wagstaffe did a few decades later, thus Mayne had to face ingrained prejudice surrounding the author of *Samosata*.

#### CONCLUSION

Scholars seem to have ignored this peculiar stage in the reception of Lucian's *Philopseudes*, and Wagstaffe has not received the attention it would deserve. His treatise should be taken into account in depth, for it contributed to a change of mentality as regards witchcraft and the atrocities brought about by false beliefs. Not by chance, *The Discourse of Witchcraft Debated* was edited twice in England and subsequently translated and published in German, under the title *Gründlich ausgeführte Materie von der Hexery* (Halle, 1711).

Even though the work was later forgotten, I have briefly tried to draw attention to its importance both in the development of modern European culture and in the preservation and spread of Lucian's work through the filter of a modern language. I hope that future studies will soon expand on the *Discourse of Witchcraft*, as to not forget Wagstaffe's words, that «the world is the same world still». Regardless of the length of beards, we are always in need of someone who alerts us to credulity and superstition which often lead to tragic outcomes throughout history.

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<sup>49</sup> MAYNE 1638, p. iii.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* xiv.

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